

# The Waikato War of 1863-64

A guide to the main events and sites



**Neville Ritchie**



Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

## **About historic battlefields**

There have been numerous wars and skirmishes on New Zealand soil between Maori groups prior to European settlement, and the colonial wars between Maori and European forces. Each battle affected the history and development of this nation to varying degrees and, in many instances, left tangible evidence on the landscape such as Maori pa, European fortifications and cemeteries. Historic battlefields evoke strong emotions of patriotism, sacrifice, valour, brutality and humanity. Unfortunately, the evidence of past battlefields is disappearing as urban development and modern farming practices modify the landscapes that dictated troop manoeuvres and positions, and ultimately, the outcomes of battles, campaigns, and wars. It is important to protect and interpret battlefields and sites that influenced the course of our history, and to raise awareness of the importance of preserving them for future generations.

## **The author**

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Photographs and illustrations in this booklet are from the Te Awamutu Museum collection unless otherwise referenced in captions.

## **Cover photo**

Old adversaries, James Adam Capper and Hekiera Te Rangi meet in peace at the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Orakau, 1914.

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# **The Waikato War of 1863-64**

Between 1845 and 1872 there were 13 major conflicts involving British and colonial forces against various North Island Maori iwi (tribes). Many confrontations stemmed from increasing Maori opposition to selling land to the growing influx of European settlers after the mid 1850s. Although comparatively small engagements, in proportion to New Zealand's population they were large in scale; in fact the number of men under arms at the time (early 1860s) was second only in the world to the huge forces involved in the American Civil War.

The invasion of the Waikato took place over 10 months between July 1863 and April 1864. It was one of the major campaigns of the New Zealand Wars, occurring about midway through the series of conflicts. It involved over 12,000 British and Colonial forces against Maori forces unlikely to have numbered more than 2000 at any one time. This booklet enables you to follow the course of the Waikato war, visit the sites where the main events occurred, and gain an understanding of the causes of the conflict and its aftermath.

## **Causes of the Waikato War**

The causes of the war go back beyond the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. According to the British interpretation, the Maori signatories acknowledged the sovereignty of Queen Victoria, while the Crown had sole right to purchase their lands, if they chose to sell. The system worked initially but by the late 1850s the government found itself under pressure to find land for a tide of would-be farmer immigrants.

In this period Maori farmers prospered in the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and areas surrounding Auckland. They raised much of the foods upon which Auckland depended. At the same time Maori resistance to selling land was increasing, especially in the Waikato, where the King movement developed. Tribal unity, particularly against land selling, had been discussed many times before, but became formalised in 1857 when Wiremu Tamehana persuaded the Waikato tribes to elect a King. In 1858, at Ngaruawahia, Te Wherowhero, a respected Ngati Mahuta chief, was proclaimed the first Maori King. He was known as King Potatau I.



*Wiremu Tamehana (left), was instrumental in persuading Waikato tribes to elect a king. Right: Tawhiao, Ngati Mahuta chief, was elected second Maori King in 1860, following the death of King Potatau. His reign was to last 34 years through the most turbulent period of Maori-European relations.*

The Government interpreted this move as a direct challenge to the authority of Queen Victoria and the Crown, further reinforced when Ngati Maniapoto supported Taranaki Maori in the 1860-61 war against the British. Both Governor Browne and his successor, Sir George Grey, considered the possibility of invading the Waikato to stem Waikato assistance to the Taranaki tribes. Rumours abounded that Auckland would be attacked. In fact the iwi later admitted they had a plan to do so, but placed it in abeyance when Grey replaced Browne.

Mistrust between the two cultures grew amidst many threats and incidents. Settlers fortified farmhouses and other buildings in the South Auckland area to act as refuges in the event of Maori attacks. Influential Auckland entrepreneurs openly promoted military conquest of the Waikato. Grey came to the conclusion that an invasion would neutralise, if not destroy, the Kingite movement (supporters of the Maori King) and open the Waikato to European settlement. So, while talking peace, he began preparing for war.

At the end of 1861 he ordered Lieutenant-General Duncan Cameron, in command of Imperial and Colonial forces in New Zealand, to extend the Great South

Road from Drury to the Waikato River. At the same time a chain of redoubts and stockades were built in South Auckland and along the lower Waikato River. By early 1863 a metalled road had been completed to Havelock (Pokeno) where a large redoubt, pointedly named Queen's Redoubt and capable of housing 450 men, was raised. One kilometre to the south lay the Mangatawhiri stream, which Waikato Maori considered their northern boundary. They had warned that any military incursions across it would be regarded as a declaration of war.



*The Great South Road from Auckland to the Waikato was extended during 1862-63.*

There was turmoil in the Waikato. War seemed imminent, particularly after the Auckland militia was called up on 22 June. The Waikato Maoris' concerns were further reinforced after 9 July when Maori in South Auckland were ordered to take an oath of allegiance to the Queen and give up their arms, or be banished across the Mangatawhiri. Most ignored the edict.

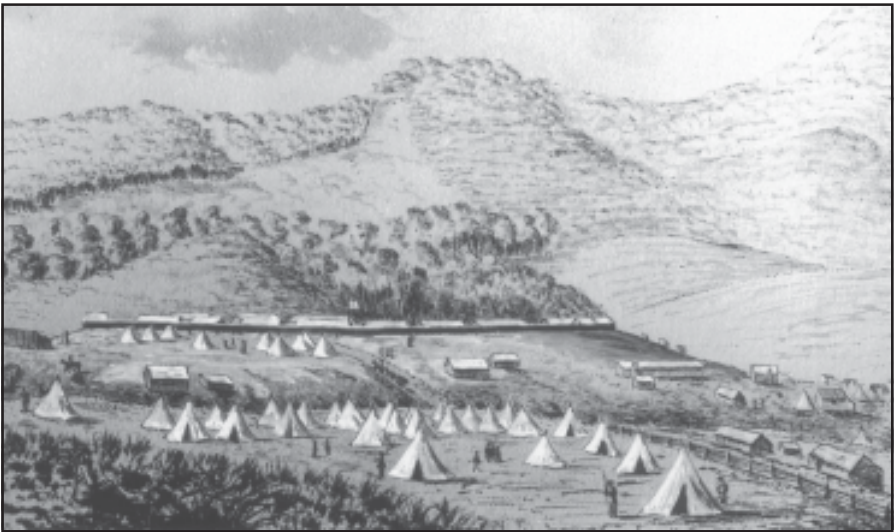
On 11 July Grey issued a virtual declaration of war - a long statement accusing the Waikato chiefs of threats to peaceable European settlers and disloyalty to the Queen. The notice indicated Government's intention to establish posts throughout the Waikato to maintain peace and order and advised: "Those who wage war against Her Majesty... will forfeit the right to the possession of their lands... which will be occupied..." On 12 July 1863 a small force of British troops crossed the Mangatawhiri - the Waikato campaign had begun.

## **Places to visit**

This booklet provides specific ‘access information’ on 23 places associated with the Waikato campaign (and several others are mentioned in passing). To visit them all, you need a full day, and it will involve 173km of driving, but using this trail guide you can, if you desire, divide the tour into northern and southern legs (and do them on different days) and start and stop where you like. Most sites are only a few metres walk from parking areas. The trail guide follows the British advance southwards from Pokeno in the north to the scene of the last engagement at Orakau near Kihikihi. The majority of the sites are on public lands accessible all year round. Information is included about a few important sites on private farmland but with a few exceptions they are clearly visible from adjacent public roads. Please do not enter private properties without first receiving the landowner’s permission.

### **Site 1 - Queen’s Redoubt, Pokeno**

Queen’s Redoubt was the largest earth-walled fortification built by British forces in New Zealand. One hundred yards square and capable of housing 450 men, it was planned and served as the launching-point for the invasion of the Waikato. Although housing along Selby Street now occupies part of the site, well over half still exists, albeit now beneath a featureless paddock sandwiched between State Highway 1 (S.H.1) and the road through Pokeno village.



*Queen's Redoubt at Pokeno, capable of housing 450 men in 1863.*



It is worth starting your trip here where the Waikato war began. The outcome of the war shaped the subsequent history of New Zealand, making this a key site, ranking among the country's most important historic places.

In June 1999 the Queen's Redoubt Trust was formed to acquire the property. The Trust has begun to rebuild some of the original earthworks and will establish an interpretation centre. The site has the potential to become one of the most visited historic places in New Zealand.

### **Access information**

*State Highway 1 now bypasses Pokeno. The redoubt site is accessed from the old highway, now called Pokeno Village Road, which goes through the village. If approaching from the north (Auckland end) leave S.H.1 at the northern entrance to Pokeno and drive through the village towards the southern end.*

*If approaching from the south (Hamilton end) turn off the highway at the Pokeno exit just after the railway overbridge on the south side of the village. The entrance to the paddock where the redoubt was located is on Pokeno Village Road, some 250m north of the southern entrance into Pokeno from S.H.1, opposite Hitchen Road. Turn into Hitchen Road for safe parking. Services in Pokeno include cafes, shops, toilets and petrol stations.*

### **Site 2 - Eglinton Redoubt**

After the troops crossed the Mangatawhiri Stream on 12 July 1863 they quickly established three redoubts in close proximity at the northern end of the Koheroa ridge. Known collectively as the Koheroa redoubts, only Eglinton Redoubt, on private farmland, on the north side of the Kellyville Road, remains largely intact.

### **Access information**

*The Eglinton redoubt is about 4km south of Pokeno. After crossing the bridge over the Mangatawhiri Stream on S.H.1 (3km south of Pokeno), turn into Pioneer Road, then proceed up Kellyville Road. Good views of the redoubt earthworks begin from a point about 300m up Kellyville Road opposite the first farm house. It is worth driving up the road for about 1km to an obvious high point where you can turn round. From here you can see 'the lay of the land' including the Koheroa ridge extending to the south, and the site of Queen's redoubt and the swampy Mangatawhiri wetlands (the Waikato Maoris' northern boundary) to the north. As you return down the road there are good views of the redoubt site and the sweep of the Waikato River to the west.*

### **Site 3 - Koheroa ridge**

On 17 July 1863 Maori were seen on the heights south of the Koheroa redoubts. Cameron ordered some 500 men to advance towards the Maori position. This led to a series of skirmishes. “It soon became evident that the enemy had taken up a position with a view to opposing our advance ... and strengthened it by the judicious disposition of rifle pits constructed in succession at the most favourable points...” Gradually however, the 400 Maori lead by Te Huirama (Ngati Mahuta) were forced back, eventually fleeing across the Whangamarino River. During the engagement 30 Maori warriors fell, Te Huirama among them. One officer and 11 British soldiers were injured, one mortally.

### **Access information**

*The Koheroa ridge consists of the high ground to the east of S.H.1, now all private farmland. The ridge extends from Kellyville Road southwards to the Whangamarino wetlands.*

### **Site 4 - Pioneer gun/rifle turret at Mercer**

The next feature associated with the war consists of one of the two turrets originally on the river gunboat *Pioneer*. The turret is now incorporated into a World War I memorial at Mercer. Complete with rifle hatches, it is the more original of the two surviving turrets (see Site 11). Even before the invasion was launched Cameron had begun to assemble an armoured river fleet - the Waikato flotilla. This water transport corp, New Zealand’s first navy, greatly aided the British advance into the Waikato.



*The 'Pioneer' gun turret at Mercer. Inset: Gun port in the side of the turret. (Des Williams photo.)*

Nine steamers in all served on the Waikato River over the period 1863-1870. Three of them - the *Avon*, and the *Pioneer* and *Koheroa* served during the period covered by the Waikato War (July 1863 to April 1864)

along with four armoured barges and several smaller barges (see Site 6 below).

The *Pioneer* had turrets fore and aft which housed 12-pounder Armstrong guns and were loop-holed for small arms. It was capable of carrying 500 men in light

order. The flotilla enabled rapid movement of forces and supplies into the Waikato heartland, as well as the shelling and outflanking of Maori positions.

### **Access information**

*Five km south of Pokeno, turn into Mercer Service Centre and head west towards the Waikato River. The turret is situated on the corner of Roose Road and the unnamed road along the riverfront.*

### **Site 5 - Whangamarino Redoubt and Te Teoteo's Pa**

The Maori force, which contested the Koheroa ridge (see Site 3), had first occupied Te Teoteo's pa, an old fortification on the end of a spur overlooking the confluence of the Whangamarino and Waikato Rivers. By 14 August 1863 Cameron's soldiers had occupied the pa and developed a redoubt nearby - the Whangamarino Redoubt (also known as Pickard's redoubt after the officer in charge). On 29 October two 40-pounder Armstrong guns were landed from the *Pioneer* and positioned below the redoubt facing the next Maori position - Meremere - some 2km to the south across the Whangamarino swamp. The same day Cameron boarded the *Pioneer* to reconnoitre the Maori fortifications.

Te Teoteo's pa and the Whangamarino Redoubt Historic Reserve form the main features on the Whangamarino Walkway, a short walking track accessed from Oram Road. From the Whangamarino redoubt you can see Meremere Redoubt behind the Meremere power station, and visualise the opposing forces readying for battle.

### **Access information**

*From Mercer proceed 2.1km south and turn into Oram Road. Drive over the railway lines (**take care, it's the main Auckland-Wellington line**) and proceed some 200m towards the concrete bridge/control gate over the Whangamarino River. As you cross the control gate structure you will see the Whangamarino Walkway sign in front of you and beside it a small parking area and a wooden gate. The latter is the entrance to a 500m loop walk, which passes Te Teoteo's pa and the Whangamarino redoubt and returns you back to your car. The first 50m of the track are flat, followed by 100m of stepped bush track, before emerging onto open farmland. From here you can obtain fine views of the Waikato River, looking upstream towards Meremere.*

### **Site 6 - Meremere**

Prior to the loss of their positions on the Koheroa Heights, Maori forces under the leadership of Wiremu Tamehana had begun to develop a strongly entrenched

position at Meremere, a prominent knoll on the south side of the Whangamarino swamp. The defences included three ships' guns (brought from Raglan) intended to prevent Pakeha vessels passing upstream.

On 31 October, Cameron embarked 600 men on his river fleet consisting, at that stage, of two shallow-draught gunboats, the *Avon* and the *Pioneer*, as well as four armoured barges. (Later, two more gunboat-transports - the *Koheroa* and the *Rangiriri* were added to the fleet.) While the Maori position was bombarded by the 40-pounder gun positioned at the Whangamarino redoubt, the *Avon* and the *Pioneer* with barges in tow steamed past Meremere before daylight. They were hit but not harmed by musket fire from the Maori positions. Outflanked, after a brief foray, the Maori forces abandoned the position. Lack of explosive shells, rather than siting, led to Meremere's downfall.

On 1 November, the British occupied the abandoned pa and established the redoubt that still crowns the hill. Although advancing Cameron's plan, the British forces had yet to engage the lower Waikato tribes in a decisive battle to destroy their resistance. Rangiriri would change that.

### **Access information**

*From Oram Road proceed south 2.5km on S.H.1 to the former Meremere power station. Here, turn left into Island Block Road. After 500m turn right and proceed up Te Puea Ave (past the former power station) to the second street on the left - Meremere Lane. The entrance to the redoubt is 50m from the intersection. A large concrete watertank just beyond the eastern end of the redoubt is an obvious landmark. After visiting the site retrace your steps to the highway, or drive through Meremere to the southern entrance.*

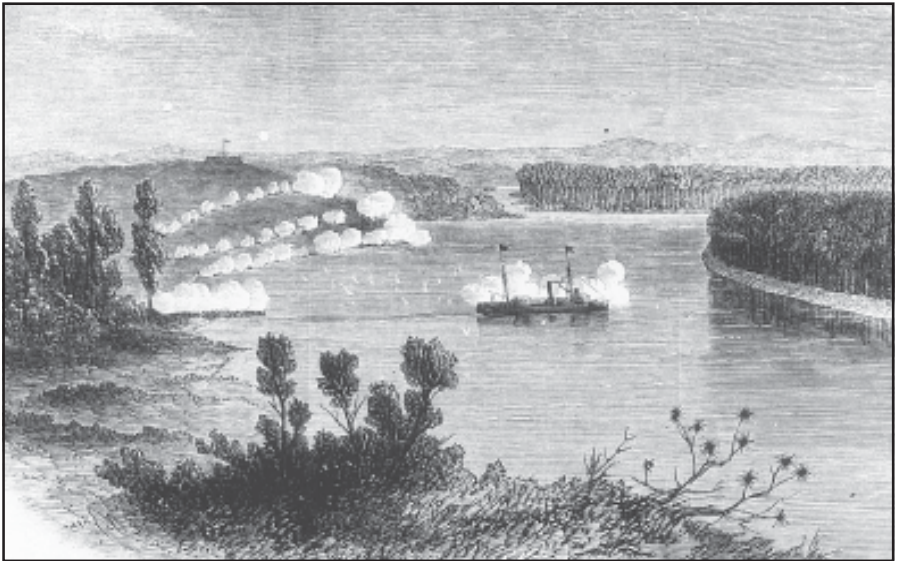
### **Site 7 - Rangiriri**

On 20 November 1863 a field force under Cameron marched from Meremere to Rangiriri where Maori forces had thrown up a formidable line of earthworks across the isthmus between the swampy margins of Lake Waikare (now a smaller remnant - Lake Kopuera) and the Waikato River. The fortification blocked the bullock track, which led to the south.

Cameron planned a two-pronged attack under cover of a heavy bombardment from the gunboats. As a 900-strong ground force attacked from the north (along the crest of the ridge east of State Highway 1), 520 men were to land simultaneously from the *Avon* and *Pioneer* and attack from the rear (i.e., up the slopes on the south side of the redoubt).



*A 40-pounder Armstrong gun at Whangamarino, firing on Meremere entrenchments, 29 October 1863. (Charles Heaphy water colour, Alexander Turnbull Library.)*



*An exchange of fire between the gunboat 'Pioneer' and Maori entrenchments on the Meremere Ridge, 29 October 1863. (Illustrated London News, 1864. Auckland Public Library.)*

After repulsing two advances the position finally fell the following morning when Kawhia chief Wiremu Te Kumete flew a white flag in response to one flown on one of the ships. He mistakenly thought the British wanted to parley, but the brief halt enabled British troops to enter the fortifications uncontested. “The General now told the Maoris to give up their arms which after some palavering they did.”

But Rangiriri was hard won. It was a formidable earthwork fortification, its steep defensive ramparts and trenchworks not being readily apparent from a distance. The action cost the lives of more Government forces than any other during the New Zealand Wars. Cameron was shaken by the losses sustained by his forces. Two officers and 35 enlisted men fell, and 93 were wounded. Ten of the latter died of their wounds. Forty-one Maori died, including six chiefs. The Maori dead were buried in the trenches and in a mass grave next to the Maori church that served as a hospital during the battle (see Site 9). One hundred and eighty-two Maori were taken prisoner, and many of those who escaped (some 200 slipped away during the night) had sustained serious injuries.



*British forces in occupation of Rangiriri Redoubt. (Auckland Public Library.)*

Only a small portion of the Maori position at Rangiriri still survives, part of the central stronghold. Now a historic reserve, it is conveniently sited beside S.H.1, although widening of the highway in the 1960s destroyed part of the surviving earthworks. Walk the earthworks today and picture the defenders firing and

exchanging muskets loaded by women who fought and died with their men. As night fell, dead and wounded soldiers littered the approaches to the redoubt, while the survivors were lying in the ditches waiting the command for a further attack. Fortunately, both sides were spared further losses when the Maori forces mistakenly laid down their arms before another assault was ordered.

### **Access information**

*From Meremere drive 15km south down S.H.1 to Rangiriri. The redoubt (signposted) is beside S.H.1 on the north side of Rangiriri village. There is a parking area below the site on the western side of S.H.1.*

### **Site 8 - Te Wheoro's Redoubt**

After the battle at Rangiriri, the British established a depot for military stores there. Most of the troops headed for Ngaruawahia on 2 December 1863 but a



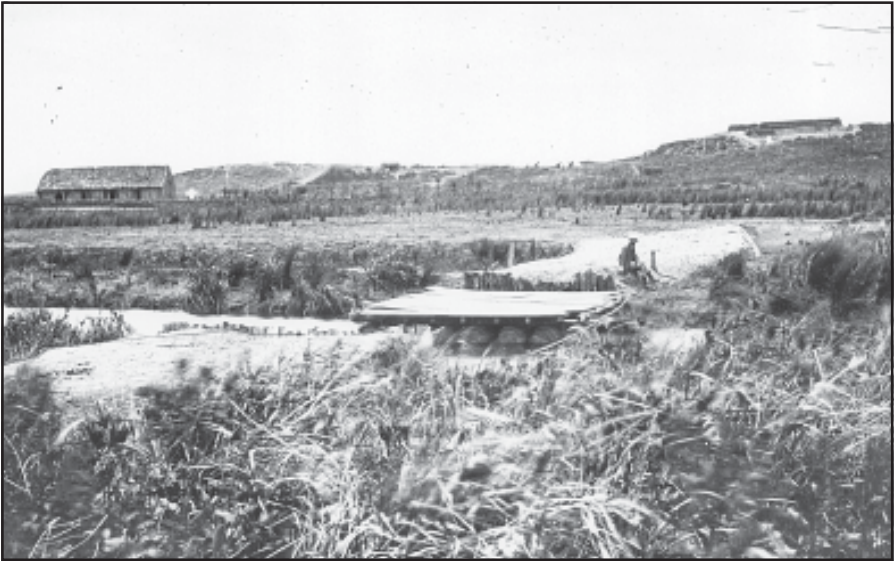
*Wiremu Te Wheoro  
(Auckland Public Library.)*

small garrison remained to protect the supplies and prevent the re-occupation of Rangiriri. For their protection, a redoubt was thrown up on a small knoll, which had been outworks behind the main line of the Rangiriri entrenchment.

In the latter half of 1865 the garrison was withdrawn and the redoubt abandoned until late 1868, when it was feared another war might break out in the Waikato. As part of a move to upgrade defences, the redoubt was repaired and occupied by the pro-Government chief, Wiremu Te Wheoro and about 30 of his tribesmen. During this period it was called Te Wheoro's Redoubt. His men maintained a presence off and on until August 1869.

### **Access information**

*Te Wheoro's redoubt is barely 400m from the surviving Rangiriri pa entrenchment. From Rangiriri cross S.H.1 and go south along Rangiriri Road, past the school and turn left into Talbot Street. Then proceed 50m to the entrance of the redoubt. After visiting the site, drive 400m down Talbot Street to the Maori War and Early Settlers' Cemetery and the Heritage Centre. Services in Rangiriri include the historic Rangiriri Hotel, a petrol station and a tearoom.*



*Rangiriri in 1864. The British redoubt (later Te Wheoro's redoubt) is situated on the hill to the right, and the Maori church and graveyard are on the left. The desolate quality of the landscape is clearly shown in this photograph. (DM Beere collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.)*

### **Site 9 - Maori War and Early Settlers Cemetery**

Originally the site of a little thatched Maori church (see photo above), which served as a field hospital during the battle; this site contains two memorials to the 35 British soldiers and naval men who died at Rangiriri. Unmarked concrete slabs cover the soldiers' graves. A grassed mound marks the mass grave of some of the Maori defenders.

#### **Access information**

*The cemetery is opposite the Rangiriri tavern which is clearly visible from S.H.1, or from Te Wheoro's redoubt.*

### **Site 10 - Rangiriri Battle Site Heritage Centre**

This is a privately operated interpretation centre focused on the Waikato War and especially the battle of Rangiriri. It is well worth a visit. A very informative audio-visual presentation can be seen on request, and there is a good model of the Rangiriri ramparts, and a small collection of military artefacts. The centre includes a tearoom, and public toilets are available.



### **Access information**

*The Heritage Centre is near the Rangiriri tavern and opposite the 'Maori War' cemetery.*

From Rangiriri the British advanced, reaching Ngaruawahia unopposed on 8 December 1863. They immediately occupied the site of the Maori King's headquarters on the point between the confluence of the Waikato and Waipa Rivers, and established a small shipyard, a redoubt and a storage depot. By the New Year, Gustavus Von Tempsky of the Forest Rangers noted "The Waikato ... was alive with small craft. Little river steamers panted upstream, sometimes towing barges filled with soldiers. Slim gunboats attracted the admiring gaze of friendly natives, whose canoes filled the river, carrying stores to the British camps."

Before the war the Waipa valley lands above Ngaruawahia had been the main Maori population and food growing centre in the Waikato basin. Besides the rich soils in the area, the Waipa River was favoured because upstream canoe travel was much easier than on the main river.

After receiving reports of Maori defensive activity up the Waipa River valley, Cameron turned his attention in that direction, but did not overlook the Waikato River and the potential threat it posed to his invading forces. In early February 1864 he dispatched a small force up river to the abandoned Maori settlement at Kirikiriroa (later Hamilton) to protect 'the left flank'. The redoubts and other buildings established by Imperial and militia forces in 1864 were the first European structures in what later became the towns of Hamilton and Cambridge.

### **Site 11 - Pioneer gun/rifle turret at the Point, Ngaruawahia**

The other turret from the *Pioneer* is in the public domain at the Point, the triangle of land between the confluence of the Waikato and Waipa Rivers. It was presented to the town by the government in 1927. You can imagine the scene as the naval men fired and reloaded their weapons within its tight confines. The Point served as a staging depot during the campaign from where Cameron consolidated his grip on the lower Waikato. Towards the southern end, a redoubt of unusual construction was established on a former pa site but the ground has undergone substantial levelling over many years and no trace of earthworks remains.

### **Access information**

*From Rangiriri proceed 30km south down S.H.1 to Ngaruawahia. Take the first turn to the right after crossing the bridge over the Waikato River, cross the rail-*

*way lines, then turn right again into Broadway Street and drive down to the Point. The turret is to your left, near the bank of the Waipa River, as you drive towards the band rotunda. It is less complete than the one at Mercer. The Point is a pleasant picnic site and there are modern public toilets. If commencing your tour from Hamilton, you may wish to do the northern and southern sections on different days. This location is a good starting/finishing point for each section. The distance between Pokeno and Ngaruawahia is 63km.*

*If you are proceeding with the tour, drive out of the Domain and turn right, then left on to Herschel Street. Proceed 500m south (through the roundabout) to Ellery Street, and turn left. Drive toward the railway line (100m) and just before the tracks turn right into Whatawhata Ave. Proceed to the outskirts of the town, and then follow the road signs to Whatawhata (18km from the Point) via Te Kowhai. (See historical information below.)*

*Turn left at the Whatawhata service station, and almost immediately turn right and proceed down Tuhikaramea Road (the road to Pirongia and Otorohonga). About 3km past the small settlement of Ngahinapouri (16.5km from Whatawhata) turn left onto Meadways Road, which leads to Te Awamutu. 1.3km from the intersection (on the west side of the road) is the site of the large outwork - Pikopiko Pa, long supplanted by a farmhouse. Nothing remains of the pa (see access information for Paterangi below).*

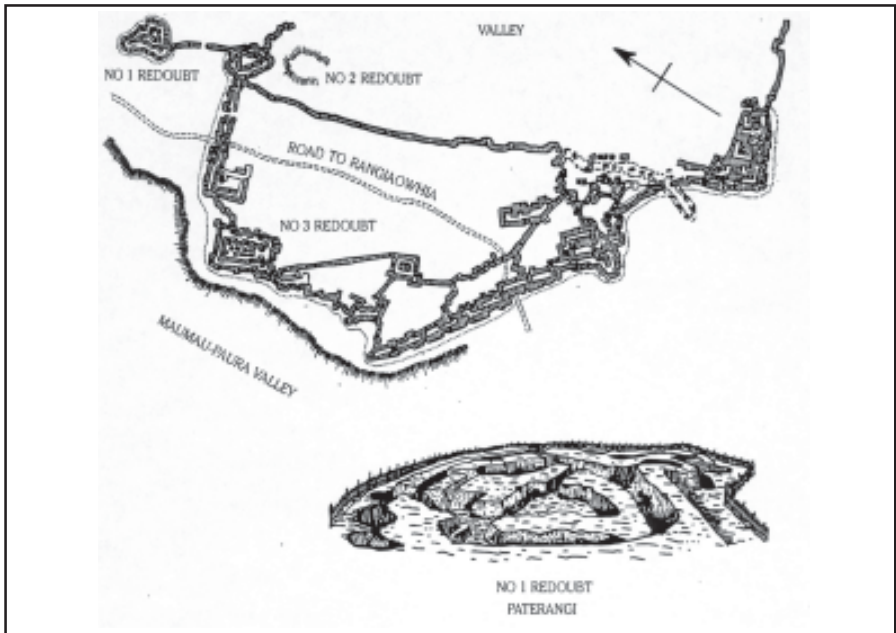
In late December 1863 the British forces began advancing up the Waipa valley and within the next month established redoubts at Whatawhata (the destroyed site is on the east bank of the Waipa River opposite the hotel), Tuhikaramea, Ngahinapouri and Te Rore. A major supply depot was established at Te Rore, from where Maoris under missionary John Morgan had built a dray road to Te Awamutu.

At dawn on 28 January 1864 the field force began to advance overland. It numbered 2183 personnel, supported by three 6-pounder Armstrong guns and 121 horsemen of the Royal Artillery, Colonial Defence Force and Volunteer Cavalry. The two companies of Forest Rangers under Captains Jackson and Von Tempsky protected the front and flanks of the column. “For miles and miles there was an unbroken stream of soldiers, bullock-drays, artillery, and pack-horses meandering over the plains and fern ridges ...”

In front of the advancing force lay Paterangi, the largest Maori fortification ever built in New Zealand.

## **Site 12 - Paterangi**

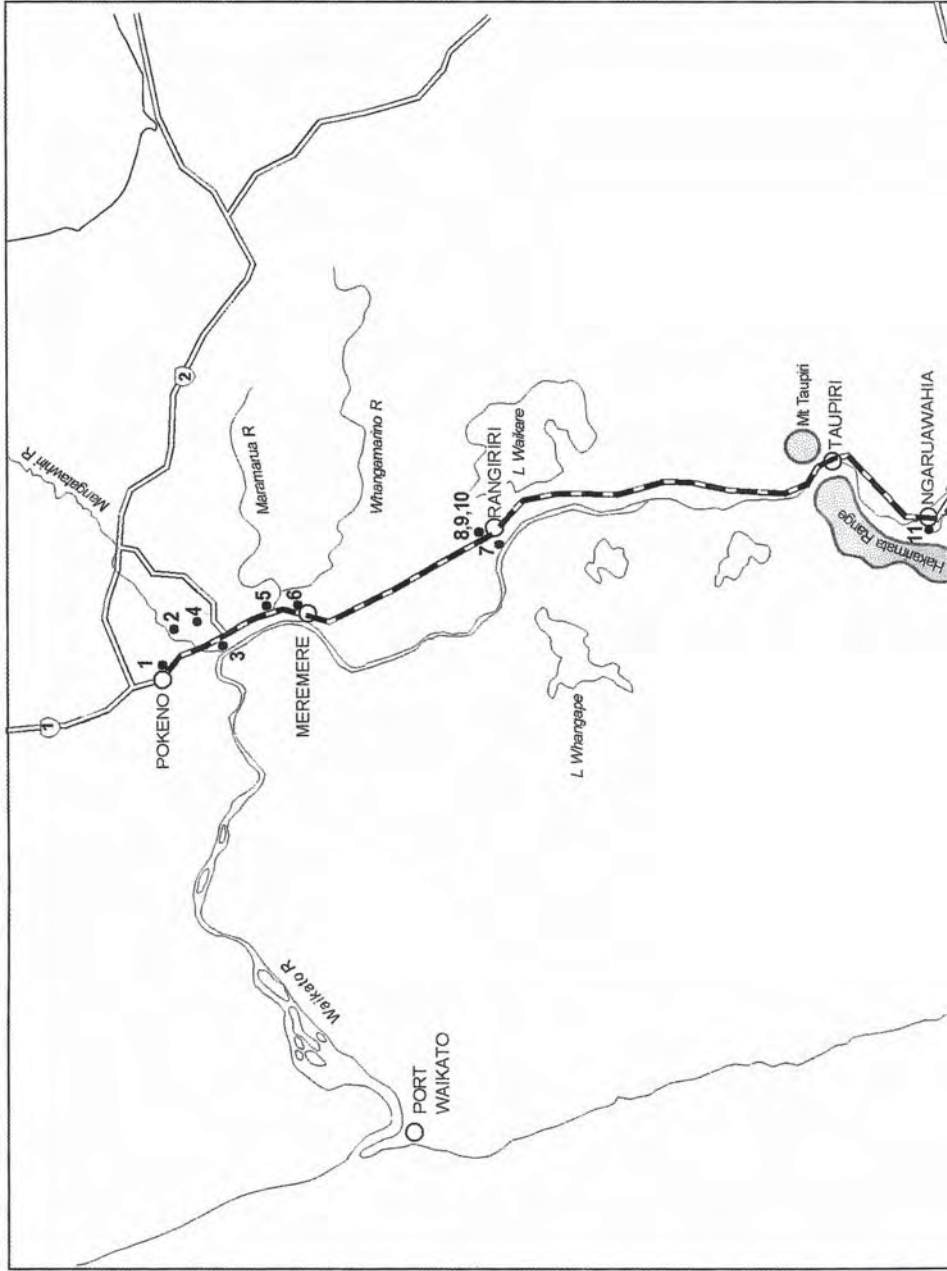
Paterangi was a formidable feat of engineering, consisting of some 2km of trenches with single and double lines of parapets enclosing most of the top of the hill. Six major earthwork strongholds constructed at critical points along the trench-lines anchored the defences, while deep interconnected bunkers provided shelter from artillery barrages. Rewi Maniapoto assembled some 3000 warriors from 20 tribes to build and garrison the pa, but they were critically short of just about everything - including artillery, shot, rifles, food and water, had they been forced to withstand a prolonged siege. The British officers were astounded at the strength of the fortifications, and the soldiers appreciated “It would be a fearful place to storm.” No doubt their losses during the storming of Rangiriri were still fresh in their mind.

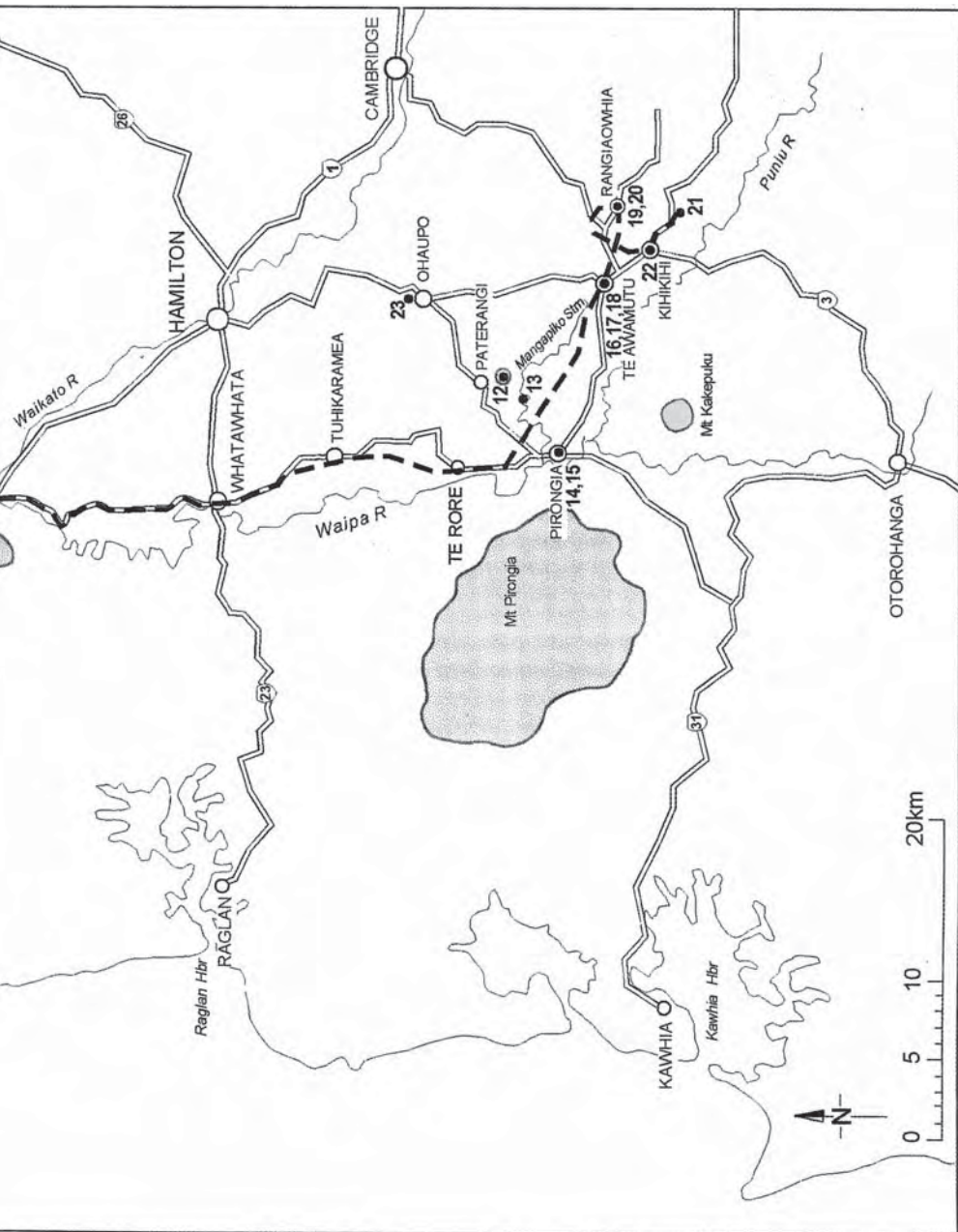


*Paterangi Pa. By John Topham, based on 1864 survey by Captain E Brooke R.E.  
(Source: The Colonial New Zealand Wars.)*

Upon reconnoitring the fortifications at Paterangi, Cameron prudently and surreptitiously outflanked them, and occupied Rangiaowhia, the recognised ‘food bowl’ of the Waikato Maori. This area produced resources essential for their continuing resistance. “Through the night, the long column of soldiers led by two part-Maori guides (John Gage and James Edwards) quietly shuffled along

The Main British Line of Advance Waikato Campaign 1863–1864





the track through the fern.” The dawn arrival of the force surprised the inhabitants at the mission station in Te Awamutu, and a few hours later Rangiaowhia lay before them (see below).

Bypassing the Maori defences on Paterangi hill during the night of 20 February 1864 (and earlier its outer defences, notably the Pikopiko pa, where “the Maori garrison hakaed on the parapets and urged us to attack”), was Cameron’s masterstroke and arguably the most decisive act of the war.

### **Access information**

*Proceed along Meadways Road 4.1km and turn right into Bell Road. Despite the scale and complexity of the Maori fortifications on Paterangi, little remains of this great engineering feat today. The earthworks have been levelled over the years. However, if you drive about 1km to the highest point on Bell Road heading towards Pirongia you reach the middle of the huge defended area, now part of three farms. Armed with a good plan, you can determine the general position of the main defences but there is virtually nothing to see now on the ground surface (note: this is private property). [Further historical information below]. Then proceed west on Bell Road to Bird Road (also known as Pirongia-Paterangi Road) which goes towards Pirongia (3km). At the end of Bird Road turn left and proceed into the township (1km). See next section for access information about the military grave adjacent to Bird Road.*

### **Site 13 - The Waiari massacre and New Zealand’s First Victoria Cross**

To consolidate his supply lines Cameron paused his advance for three weeks before Paterangi but an advanced post (long built over) under Colonel Waddy for 600 men of the 40<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Regiments was established on a high point near the junction of Bell and Bird Roads. From the ridge the 6-pounder Armstrong guns shelled the Paterangi defences. A period of long range and largely ineffective sniping between the forces ensued during which Maori forces attempted to seize the initiative.

On 11 February 1864 some 100 warriors hid in the old Waiari pa. They planned to attack Waddy’s camp that night, but instead found themselves tempted by an easier target. Near the pa was a bathing hole in the Mangapiko stream, frequented by the soldiers. As the soldiers entered the water that day, the warriors opened fire. A running close-quarters battle ensued with both sides being reinforced; the soldiers by Forest Rangers under Von Tempsky. Darkness ended the fighting and both sides pulled back.

During the fight Captain Charles Heaphy and three others attempted to rescue a wounded man, but they came under close range attack. With one of his party killed and another badly wounded, Heaphy and the remaining soldier protected the two wounded until help came - but all in vain as both died, one while being carried back to camp. Promoted to Major for his action, Heaphy agitated for further recognition. In 1867 he became the first member of any locally raised or colonial military unit in the British Empire to be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Despite having the advantage of surprise, Maori casualties at Waiari numbered some 35 dead and 30 wounded. The British lost six dead and seven others suffered wounds. The six soldiers, all privates, are buried in a small military grave 50 metres west of Bird Road. A stone monument surrounded by a pipe-rail fence marks the site (see below).

### **Access information**

*The impressive Waiari pa occupies a bend on the south bank of the Mangapiko Stream about midway between Bird Road and the Pirongia-Te Awamutu Road. For further historical information see Cowan (Vol.1). The Waiari redoubt site, built after the engagement, is situated on the north bank of the stream some 100 metres northeast of the pa. Both these sites are on private farmland and over 1km from the nearest road. Permission must be gained before attempting to visit them. For these reasons they are not normally visited during "Follow the Waikato War" fieldtrips. To visit the military grave on the western side of Bird Road, stop at a point about 300m past the Bird/Waiari Roads intersection (on the Pirongia side of the intersection). The gravesite, under a big old oak tree, is clearly visible about 40m below the road. Although it is not marked there is a gazetted public access easement across the paddock to it.*

### **Site 14 - Alexandra East & West Redoubts**

The site of the large Alexandra East redoubt (often called the East Pirongia redoubt) occupies a flat grassed area on a slight rise overlooking the Waipa River, part of a new subdivision at Pirongia. The 2nd Waikato Regiment established the short-lived redoubt, built for 300 men, in June 1864. In addition to the officers' and soldiers' huts and tents within the redoubt, there was a large commissariat store and hospital building nearby, and some structures near the river landing between the two redoubts.

Although there is little surviving surface evidence of this strategically important frontier military settlement, the redoubt site is notable as the scene of a recent battle between the residents of Pirongia and the Waipa District Council. After



*Alexandra East redoubt site in 1998 - an archaeologist explains features of the excavated earthworks to local school children. (Neville Ritchie photo.)*

archaeological excavations on the site in 1998, Council planned to sell the redoubt sections for housing, while the locals and heritage agencies fought successfully to retain the site. Among other things, the excavations revealed a small bastion had been thrown up initially, presumably to afford protection while the soldiers worked on the redoubt. To its credit, Council later voted to preserve the Alexandra East redoubt site as a historic reserve. The outline of the redoubt is marked by pavers, and there is an informative interpretation panel on site.

The Alexandra West Redoubt, also designed for 300 men, was in a paddock across the river and downstream. Built at the same time as the East redoubt (although of different layout), it formed part of a chain between Pirongia and Cambridge intended to hold the forfeited land “should any sudden incursion be made by the Maoris.”

### **Access information**

*To visit the site of the Alexandra East redoubt go down Crozier Street (opposite the Alexandra hotel in the main street – Franklin Street), then turn right into Aubin Close (a cul-de-sac). The redoubt site, marked by a rustic fence, is in Aubin Close.*



*To visit the nearby Alexandra Armed Constabulary redoubt, after leaving Aubin Close turn right into Crozier Street, left into Parry Street, and left into Bellot Street and proceed about 150m to the NZHPT noticeboard.*

### **Site 15 - Alexandra Redoubt, Pirongia**

In late 1868, following the abolition of the Waikato Militia, the residents of Alexandra (later Pirongia) considered themselves inadequately protected and petitioned for the construction of an Armed Constabulary redoubt. As a temporary measure earthworks were raised around St Saviour's Anglican Church on Piquet Hill. In 1871 the Government bought the site for an Armed Constabulary camp. The church was shifted back into the town and a new redoubt (the present one) built on the hill in 1872. In May 1886 the Armed Constabulary left Alexandra and the redoubt was abandoned.

It is the best preserved of the surviving redoubts in the Waikato. Although built more than four years after the Waikato War concluded, its construction arose from lingering insecurity among the frontier settlers caused by the existence of armed Maori factions in the King Country. Walk along the parapet and try to



*Alexandra redoubt, Pirongia.  
(Waikato Museum of Art and History.)*

imagine what it was like living so close to the frontier in the 1860-70s before a peace agreement was formally signed in 1881. Less than two kilometres to the south, just beyond the aukati (confiscation line), and clearly visible from the redoubt, lay Whatiwhatihoe, the main settlement of Tawhiao, the Maori King, after the Waikato War. Despite some settlers' fears of armed incur-

sions, relationships with King Tawhiao and his people were remarkably amicable. Alexandra storekeepers encouraged Maori trade over the aukati and erected buildings to store traded goods that were later shipped to Auckland.

### **Access information**

*At the southern end of the main street of Pirongia (Franklin Street) turn into Bellot Street. Proceed 100m to a small parking area adjacent to the NZHPT noticeboard. The redoubt is clearly visible on a low knoll behind the noticeboard. Pirongia village has food, petrol and other services and public toilets.*

### **Site 16 - Te Awamutu**

Cameron selected Te Awamutu, site of the Church Mission Society's Otawhao mission station established in 1841, as his frontier headquarters and the winter camp for the Waikato army. Shortly after their arrival, troops of the 40<sup>th</sup> regiment had "thrown up a large redoubt capable of holding 500 men, protected by a ditch 10 feet deep and a high parapet". The 57<sup>th</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> regiments constructed two further redoubts, as well as outlying positions. There is a noticeboard on the site of the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment redoubt beside the Manga-o-hoi Stream near the intersection of Gorst and Mutu Streets (see photo back cover). The site is a feature on the Te Awamutu Heritage Trail (heritage trail brochures are available at the Te Awamutu Information Centre and the Museum). The 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment redoubt was on the western side of the present Albert Park.



*Troops of the 40th Regiment - part of the 4000 military personnel living in Te Awamutu during the mid-1860s. Soon after their arrival, 40th Regiment troops had "thrown up a large redoubt capable of holding 500 men."*

Within the triangle formed by the redoubts, buildings were erected or commandeered for the general staff, commissariat, artillery and engineers, as well as a post office, a bakery and a general hospital. At its peak in 1864 some 4000 military personnel lived there - a large military base even by today's standards. Although all the structures associated with the garrison town (1864-67) have been levelled or built over, their locations are well documented. Selwyn Park (beside the rose gardens) is the site of the mission station, and nearby St John's church, is one of New Zealand's oldest wooden buildings.

### **Access information**

*From Alexandra redoubt in Pirongia proceed 500m east to the end of Bellot Street and turn left into McClure Street (a T-intersection). Now drive 150 metres and turn right into Crozier Street which, after about 500m, becomes Frontier Road. Now drive approximately 11km to Te Awamutu. At a point about 8km from Pirongia the road begins to rise, affording good views of the Puniu River valley - the one time frontier. A few hundred metres south, on high ground overlooking the Puniu, stood the Ford redoubt, one of the frontier fortifications. Nothing remains to be seen. Kakepuku is the prominent peak about 3km to the south. Near the outskirts of Te Awamutu, Frontier Road becomes Rewi Street. Follow the latter until you reach the roundabout in the main street (Alexandra Street). Now turn right and drive into the main shopping area (see information below).*

### **Site 17 - St John's Anglican Church, Te Awamutu**

The church was built as part of the Otawhao mission station in 1854, nearly a decade before the beginning of the Waikato War. In February 1864 the mission station became the military headquarters and from this time on was called Te Awamutu. For nearly three years the church, then surrounded by trees, served as an interdenominational church for British and colonial troops. Soldiers killed in action at Orakau were buried beside it, as were British and Maori casualties who died in the following weeks. Today, you can walk around the churchyard and see the memorial erected by the government "In memory of the Maori Heroes who fell in the Battles of Hairini and Orakau". Nearby there is another memorial "To the Imperial, Colonial and Friendly Native Troops" who died in engagements around Te Awamutu.

### **Access information**

*St John's Church is a prominent landmark in Arawata Street, opposite the Rose Gardens (originally the mission station) and Information Centre/toilets. A key to the church is available from the Visitor Information Centre.*

### **Site 18 - Te Awamutu Museum**

The Te Awamutu Museum in Roche Street has the best collection of Waikato War artefacts in New Zealand. Open everyday, it is well worth a visit. A 12-pounder Armstrong gun, believed to have been used at the battle of Rangiriri, is also on display in the museum. Right next door, in the appropriately named Redoubt Street, is the site of the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment Redoubt, now occupied by the Te Awamutu police station. Artefacts recovered from excavations on the redoubt site in 1990 are housed in the museum.

### **Access information**

*The museum is 300m up Roche Street (off the main street, Alexandra Street). For location information on other War sites in Te Awamutu see Barber (1984) or inquire at the Museum, or the Information Centre in Arawata Street (opposite St John's Church).*

### **Site 19 - Rangiaowhia**

By 1864 Rangiaowhia (often spelt 'Rangiaohia') was a thriving Maori community where Ngati Hinetu and Ngati Apakura cultivated hundreds of acres of wheat,



*The former Rangiaowhia Catholic Church which, with the extant St Paul's (Anglican), dominated the 1860s skyline.*

maize and potatoes for the Auckland market; a source of Maori pride and European envy. The settlement, between two churches - one Roman Catholic, the other CMS (Anglican), extended for 3km along the low ridge marked today by Rangiaowhia Road. Flourmills, stores, schools, thatched whares, timbered houses, and a race-course set among peach orchards were features. You pass one of the flour mill sites on the road into Rangiaowhia.

The tranquil scene soon faced destruction, however. On 21 February 1864, Colonel Nixon's cavalry galloped into Rangiaowhia, surprising the remaining inhabitants. Most of the men still manned the Paterangi defences,

unaware that the British had outflanked them. Men, women, and children ran to escape the galloping horsemen. Some took refuge in the churches, while others dashed into whares and opened fire on the soldiers.

This led to one of the saddest incidents of the war. After several soldiers met death trying to rush a defended whare, either a deliberate match or musket fire caused the thatch to ignite and set the whare ablaze. When heat and smoke drove out three Maori they were summarily gunned down by 'the concentrated volleys of the soldiers'. Seven more charred bodies were found inside. Twelve Maori died that morning, a further 12 taken prisoner, and 33 women and children detained. Colonel Nixon was also killed during the engagement.

St Paul's Anglican Church, the only war-era structure surviving at Rangiaowhia today, opened in 1856 and remains in use. Te Waru erected its spire in 1858. The N.Z. Historic Places Trust rates it as 'nationally significant'. A Trust noticeboard in the churchyard tells of the events. Make sure you walk round to the back and see the historic stained glass windows obtained by Bishop Selwyn while visiting England in 1854-55.

After the actions at Rangiaowhia in 1864 the British erected a redoubt. The site of the redoubt, behind the Rangiaowhia hall, is a good place from which to view the Rangiaowhia ridge and imagine the picturesque productive Maori settlement that once existed there. The 'burning of the whare' incident mentioned above took place in the gully to the east of the redoubt site. After the engagement, laden with food and loot, Cameron's forces withdrew to Te Awamutu. But the battle for Rangiaowhia was not yet over.

### **Access information**

*From the roundabout at the northern end of Te Awamutu proceed along the Cambridge Road, about 4.5km to Mandeno Road. The point where it intersects Rangiaowhia Road marks the midpoint of the one-time thriving Maori settlement at Rangiaowhia. About 200m north of the intersection you can see the site of three successive Roman Catholic churches (marked by headstones in the cemetery), while about the same distance to the south stands historic St Paul's church, a prominent landmark.*

*En route to Rangiaowhia on the Te Awamutu-Cambridge Road you pass the site of the next engagement at Hairini, 3km from Te Awamutu. Hairini today is a forgotten battlefield with little to see and no signpost to mark it. The battle occurred along the low ridge on the north side of the Cambridge Road, opposite its intersection with Puahue Road. Here the Maori force had hastily dug a ditch and bank fortification. Today no sign of the earthworks remain, and the ridge is crowned by a picturesque 'woodland garden' of mature trees on private land.*

### **Site 20 - Hairini**

The following day (22 February 1864) a large body of Maori came from Paterangi and re-occupied Rangiaowhia. At the same time British scouts reported that Maori forces had begun entrenching a position on Hairini ridge, about one kilometre west of Rangiaowhia. Cameron decided to attack immediately before the defensive works had progressed too far. As Armstrong guns pounded the Maori position, the hasty defence appeared to be no match against the concerted attack by Cameron's disciplined troops backed by cavalry and artillery support. But

historian James Belich contends it was all a bluff, a rearguard action to gain time for the Maori to get their people, guns and ammunition out of the Paterangi-Rangiaowhia district. The Maori forces at Paterangi dispersed. Rewi Maniapoto's forces withdrew south of the Puniu River, while the warriors under Tamehana retreated eastwards to Maungatautari to block a British advance in that direction.

From the British perspective the battle of Hairini was a rout but it was a somewhat hollow victory. The bulk of the Maori defenders at Hairini, said to be 400 men, got away. Nonetheless, after the engagement, with no Maori opposition, the soldiers entered Rangiaowhia again and began looting. Then they tightened their grasp on the rich district around it.

### **Access information**

*To reach the next stop (Orakau) from Rangiaowhia you have to travel via Kihikihi as follows. Drive south to the end of Rangiaowhia Road and turn right into Kihikihi-Hairini Road. Continue along it for about 3km until you reach the outskirts of Kihikihi, where it turns into Herbert Street. Proceed along Herbert Street for about 200m then turn left into Oliver Street and drive down it until you reach the Kihikihi-Arapuni Road (also called Parawera Road). The Kihikihi School is on the opposite corner. Turn left here and proceed towards Orakau (further information below).*

### **Site 21 - Orakau**

General Cameron's aspirations were satisfied with the taking of Rangiaowhia in late February 1864 and for him the Waikato campaign was over. But there was to be one last stand. Te Paerata of Ngati Raukawa persuaded Rewi Maniapoto, despite his strong misgivings, to lead further Maori resistance. With a strength of less than 300, little food, water or ammunition, they started building a small pa on the low rise at Orakau. On learning that Maori forces were digging in, Brigadier-General Carey, in command of the force at Te Awamutu, immediately mobilised all available manpower (1200 troops) and marched for Orakau.

Although the pa was unfinished, it was a much stronger defensive position than it appeared. Three times full frontal attacks were driven back, with British forces suffering five dead and 11 wounded. Finding the pa much more formidable than he first thought, Carey drew back his forces and opted "to play upon it with artillery" before initiating any further attacks. Two 6-pounder Armstrong guns were brought up and emplaced on the highest point of Karaponia ridge, about 350 metres SSW of the pa. But the shelling caused little damage to the earthworks, which were protected by packed fern.



*Above: scene from the 50th anniversary (1914) of the Battle of Orakau. Bottom left: Rewi Maniapoto. Bottom right: Gustavus Von Tempsky of the Forest Rangers.*

Carey then decided to surround the pa and began constructing a sap - a zigzag trench that affords protection to soldiers as they work towards the outer walls of a fortification. They can then place explosives beneath the walls to create a breach.

Early in the afternoon of 2 April, after General Cameron arrived, a cease-fire gave the defenders a chance to surrender. They were told there was no escape from their position and they would all be killed if they continued to resist. The celebrated reply came back, "Ehoa kotaki anake kupu a te Maori, ka whawhai ki a koutou, ake ake, ake." ("Friend, the Maori have only one word to say - we will fight you forever and forever and forever.") The women and children were then given the opportunity to leave. The reply was "Ke taki ano tikanga me te tangata, me te wahine, me te katoa." ("There is one rule for the men and the women; all will die together.")

At this, the firing recommenced but at 3.30pm the surviving defenders broke out through the line of the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment towards the swampland to the south. As they ran for cover they scattered into smaller groups, hotly pursued by the Forest Rangers and cavalry. "A storm of bullets seemed to encircle us like hail." Of the 300 in the pa, at least 160 died, either inside or in the course of fleeing. Many of the latter were badly wounded. Some who were captured or unable to walk, including several women, were bayoneted by the troops.

In the course of the engagement 17 British soldiers were killed and 52 wounded. Cameron now readied his forces to attack Te Tiki o te Ihingarangi, the pa of Wiremu Tamehana and his Ngati Haua people at Karapiro on the Waikato. Upon hearing of the disaster at Orakau, Tamehana and his people abandoned the pa and the attack was aborted.

Although Orakau was a bitter defeat for the Maori, Cameron's forces received severe criticism for the slaughter that occurred after the engagement. It tarnished their achievement, whereas over time the stubborn resistance and bravery of the Maori defenders has become celebrated, "turning a fruitless siege into an epic."

### **Location and site information**

*Virtually nothing remains of the Orakau pa. In 1865 the area was subdivided for settlement and when the Kihikihi-Arapuni road was formed it followed the line of the sap and cut through the centre of the pa. From Kihikihi, drive 5km along the Kihikihi-Arapuni Road until you see a monument on the right. It was*



*erected in 1914 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the siege. You can park beside it. Be wary of the bronze map near it. It is mounted side-on!*

*Although the monument bears testimony to the event, sadly the road was formed right through the pa site leaving virtually no trace of it. Again it requires a good map, permission from landowners and some effort to work out where the various British forces were disposed, the line of the sap, and the scene at the time of the engagement. As at Rangiriri, modern shelterbelts make determining the lay of the land difficult. The **'Forest Rangers'** (1996) contains a good map of the Orakau engagement. From Orakau retrace your steps back to Kihikihi.*

*If you have time, you can drive about 1km past Orakau to Tiki Road. If you drive 3km to the end of Tiki Road you get a good view of the Puniu River valley (the frontier), and an appreciation of the long exposed slopes that had to be traversed by Maori escaping from Orakau before they reached sanctuary south of the Puniu River. It also gives one a better appreciation of how provocative the location of Orakau was to the British forces. In 1869 a blockhouse was built to protect local settlers (see back cover). It was sited very close to the high point where Armstrong guns were positioned to shell the Orakau pa five years earlier. A gum tree planted by the Armed Constabulary in the 1870s marks the site.*

## **Site 22 - Kihikihi**

Following their establishment at Te Awamutu and the engagements at Rangiaowhia and Hairini, Cameron's forces moved swiftly to destroy the morale of the local Maori people. On 24 February 1864, just two days after the fall of Rangiaowhia, troops occupied Kihikihi and looted and burned Rewi Maniapoto's house. In the interim Rewi and his people had abandoned their homes and extensive plantings in the area. A Forest Ranger patrol reported seeing hundreds of Maori driving their horses and cattle to safety on the southern side of the Puniu River. Cowan states Kihikihi "was an attractive place in those days, with its clusters of thatched houses spaced over a considerable area of hill and valley, shaded by peach groves and surrounded by cultivations of potatoes and maize..."

Military surveyors accompanying the invasion force began surveying Kihikihi 10 days after the battle of Rangiaowhia. It was the first of the Waikato military towns to be surveyed. Some 400 one acre lots were created plus a 10-acre Commissariat reserve and 3.5 acre military reserve for the redoubt. A large military presence was established on the frontier at Kihikihi and a redoubt constructed on the highest point. According to militiaman-settler George McGhie it contained a building surrounded by a deep trench with drawbridge access. It

was occupied initially by Imperial troops and later the Forest Rangers. A water tower now stands on the elevated site of the redoubt above the main street on the west side. The location of Rewi's house and gravesite, on the corner of Whitmore and the main street, is now a small public park and memorial. A Historic Places Trust noticeboard outlines the events there. It also features a useful map of the historic places in the town. Kihikihi became the base of the Waikato 2<sup>nd</sup> Militia, as did Alexandra (Pirongia).



*Major Jackson, Forest Rangers leader.*

Other features associated with the Waikato campaign include the house of Major Jackson, leader of the Forest Rangers, and the still grazed Commissariat paddock where cavalry horses and stores were maintained. The Forest Rangers was a small colonial force specifically trained to fight Maori on their own ground – in the bush. Maori called the Rangers 'manu-rau', meaning 'many birds' because of their speed and agility. They saw more action than any other British or Colonial Unit during the New Zealand Wars. While they were undoubtedly effective, they were seen by many 'as a law unto themselves', guilty of looting and ill-discipline.

### **Access information**

*To visit Major Jackson's former house and the Commissariat paddock, proceed down Whitmore Street (the road to Orakau), take the second turn on the left (Rolleston Street), then proceed one block to Grey Street, where the house is situated at No. 10. Now proceed along Grey Street and turn right into Hall Street. This completes a circuit of the Commissariat paddock and brings you back to Parawera Road. Here you have the choice of turning left (east) to Orakau, or right (west) towards the main street of Kihikihi where there are services such as toilets, petrol stations and shops.*

### **End of the Tour - onward travel options**

Kihikihi was the southern-most point of Cameron's advance, and the southern-most feature of this tour. From here you may follow a variety of routes.

## **Northwards**

From Kihikihi, most travellers will probably return north along S.H.3 to Hamilton. About 4km north of Te Awamutu, you will pass the site of Rangiatea on a low knoll about 100 metres west of the S.H.3/Ngaroto Road intersection. Although there is nothing to see there now, it was the third of the great Maori defensive works intended to prevent the British reaching the Rangiaowhia heartland (the others, Paterangi and Pikopiko, you visit on the way south).

## **Site 23 - Ohaupo Redoubt**

Further north, at Ohaupo, there is another easily accessed redoubt site you can visit. The 40th Regiment built the Ohaupo Redoubt in April 1864. The 4th Waikato Militia later occupied it. In the 1980s, during the construction of a large water tank west of the redoubt, workers uncovered a rubbish pit during formation of an access road. It contained artefacts discarded by the garrisons. They are now housed at the Te Awamutu Museum.

## **Access information**

*The redoubt is on the west side of the Hamilton-Te Awamutu highway, on high ground about 1km north of Ohaupo township. The site is obscured from the north (by Ohaupo School), but as you approach from the south the low earthworks (and the trig inside the earthworks) are clearly visible on the hill. The redoubt is on a Local Purpose (Water) reserve. The land is leased for grazing but you can park near the gate into the paddock and walk up to the site.*

## **Southwards**

For travellers on S.H.3 to Te Kuiti and other destinations - about 1.5km south of Kihikihi you will cross the Puniu River, which marked both the frontier and the boundary (aukatī) between confiscated lands settled by Europeans to the north, and the “King’s Country” to the south. (For information about the King Country and Maori defences south of the aukati see ‘The Aftermath’ discussion below).

## **Eastwards**

Some travellers may choose to drive from Te Awamutu to Cambridge and link up with S.H.1 there. About 10km along the Te Awamutu-Cambridge Road, in the vicinity of Cox Road intersection) you can see a low hill, about 2km to the south, crowned by a large water tank. This is the site of Rotorangi redoubt, another in the chain of colonial fortifications stretching from Pirongia to Cambridge. It was built in 1873, after an “alarming tragedy, a murder of a particularly savage character” of a farm labourer, Timothy Sullivan. His head and heart were taken into the King Country as trophies.

Cambridge was a large military settlement, second only to Te Awamutu, with a peak military presence of nearly 2000 troops centred on the Cambridge redoubt (also known as the Star redoubt). The Cambridge Museum at the southern end of Victoria Street is one of several structures now standing on the former redoubt site. Open from Tuesday to Saturday, the museum is well worth a visit. It has a small collection of Armed Constabulary artefacts. In nearby Fort Street there is a Historic Places Trust plaque noting that the 3rd Waikato militia built the redoubt in July 1864.

It also features on the Cambridge Historic Heritage and Tree Trail. On the hill on the south side of the Karapiro dam, some 7km east of Cambridge, is the site of Wiremu Tamehana's large and complex pa, Te Tiki o te Ihingarangi, which Cameron was readying to attack, before the Maori defenders abandoned it on 5 April 1864. The Crow's Nest redoubt was built nearby. These sites are on private land. Beyond the redoubt the modern farm boundary fences still follow the old confiscation line.

### **The aftermath**

Although the battle of Orakau was the final and decisive act of the campaign in the Waikato, Ngati Maniapoto expected the British to invade their heartland south of the Puniu River. The scattered hapu came together and made plans to block any advance. They strengthened the defences of an old pa at Haurua (visible on a ridge immediately to the south of Waitomo golf course on the west side of S.H.3) between Otorohanga and Hangatiki. It was backed by a stronger position, Te Roto-Marama, on an entrenched hill near the present settlement of Hangatiki – part of the so-called 'Hangatiki line'.

A third pa was built at Paratui, south of Hangatiki (on the high ground south of Lees Block Road, west of S.H.3). Although great effort went into these fortifications (but not on the scale of Paterangi) they were never tested. Cameron's advance had ended and no attempt was made to drive the Kingites further south. The military encampment at Kihikihi and the Orakau blockhouse, remained the southernmost outposts.

With Maori resistance effectively eliminated, the Government fixed the confiscation line, making the Puniu River the frontier – the 'aukati' to the Maori. The Crown confiscated virtually all of the Waikato heartland north of the Puniu River, some 1.2 million acres. Of this 225,000 acres became designated native reserves and 50,000 acres were returned to tribes. About 150,000 acres were subdivided for military settlements and allocated to soldiers who had fought in

the campaign. Government put the rest up for sale intending to cover the cost of the campaign and on-going security but the revenue fell far short of the target.

Before Cameron moved to Tauranga in mid-1864 to begin a new campaign, he directed his forces to establish outposts on the frontier and elsewhere in the Waikato to hold the occupied lands. The soldiers were set to work “levelling Maori pa in the area” to prevent re-occupation. Further redoubts were built and garrisoned by the Waikato militia, but not for long. In February 1865 the government ordered that most of the militia be struck off pay, with only those required to maintain selected redoubts retained, namely those at Hamilton, Pukekura, Kihikihi, Cambridge and Alexandra. In May 1865 Wiremu Tamehana signed a peace covenant subject to return of the Ngati Haua lands. It was not honoured.

The compulsory reduction in the garrisons caused great uneasiness among the soldier-settlers, of whom most (some 2500) had been recruited in Australia between September 1863 and March 1864. Barely sufficient forces remained to defend the redoubts (and the supplies they protected) if they were attacked, and none could be spared for further public works, particularly the construction of roads and bridges. There was little incentive for the would-be farmers to expend time and effort on developing farms, which were virtually cut off during the wet winter months. By 1866 many had had enough. They and their families sold or walked off their allotments. Others deserted the force and headed for the Thames goldrush.

Set up to fail through lack of government support, the militias were no longer able to muster units of sufficient size to defend the frontier and were disbanded on 1 November 1867. The same day a new force of frontier guardians came into being, the Armed Constabulary. Some 40 blockhouses and redoubts were built throughout the Waikato between 1863 and 1867. Most of the redoubts are recorded archaeological sites but all the blockhouses are gone and, with the exception of the Orakau blockhouse, their former locations poorly documented.

The ‘forgotten part’ of this story, because the main actions occurred in the Waipa valley, are the redoubts established beside the Waikato River, upstream of Ngaruawahia. Some of them, notably those established at Hamilton (Hamilton East and West, and Narrows redoubts) and Cambridge (the Star redoubt), were the first European structures erected in these locations - the forerunners of the European towns to come. The military-settler townships were to be the nodes from which settlers would spread out on to the land.

Apart from the *Pioneer's* gun turrets at Mercer and Ngaruawahia, the other major surviving relic of the river fleet is the hulk of the *Rangiriri*. It lies high and dry on the bank of the Waikato, opposite the Waikato Museum, 100 metres or so downstream of the *Waipa Delta* landing, in Hamilton. A major restoration effort is about to begin (mid-2007).

For some 17 years after the Waikato War ended in 1864 few Europeans dared enter the Ngati Maniapoto lands south of the confiscation line. It became known as the 'King Country' (a name which survives to this day) and was almost a separate state until King Tawhiao decided it was time to sign a peace treaty. Together with some of his tribe he walked into Alexandra (Pirongia) in 1881 and symbolically laid down his arms to formally end hostilities.

### **Some comments on the landscape**

In 1863-64 the Waikato landscape looked very different to what it does now, but it was, for the most-part, an open landscape. Contemporary photographs and historical records indicate that bracken fern and stunted brush growth covered the ridges and higher ground, while the low-lying areas were swampy and difficult to cross. Around the margins of the wetter areas stood copses of kahikatea trees. Good building timber and firewood often had to be brought some distance to where it was needed.

While the Waikato River has not changed much, the Waipa River has silted up considerably. Large vessels used to steam to the rapids between Te Rore and Pirongia. During the war the British forces mined coal to fuel the gunboats from the exposed Kopu Kopu coal seam on the west bank of the Waikato, about 1km upstream of the present Tainui Bridge at Huntly.

### **Epilogue**

The Waikato campaign is now seen for what it was - a well orchestrated and deliberate land grab. Simultaneously it was intended to undermine the status of the Maori King and eliminate any armed opposition, under the pretext of ensuring peace and security for the European settlers in the South Auckland area. While it secured vast tracts of the Waikato for European settlement, its legacy has been over 100 years of land grievances by the descendants of the original Maori settlers, culminating in the historic Waikato Raupatu Lands Settlement Act 1996, when the Tainui people received compensation for their claims against the Crown. As the new millennium begins it is hoped that the grievances of the past are finally settled and that the European and Maori people in the Waikato can live together in peace and prosperity.

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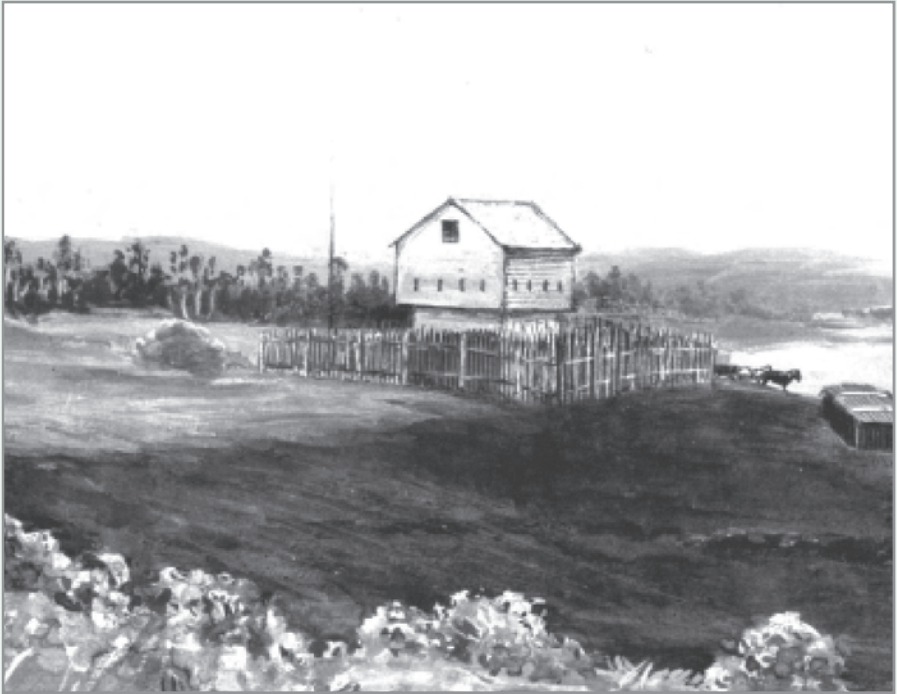
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Above: a view of the two-storied Orakau blockhouse, built in 1867. (Cowan collection, Alexander Turnbull Library.) Below: 57th Regiment redoubt beside the Manga-o-hoi Stream, near the intersection of Gorst and Mutu Streets, Te Awamutu.