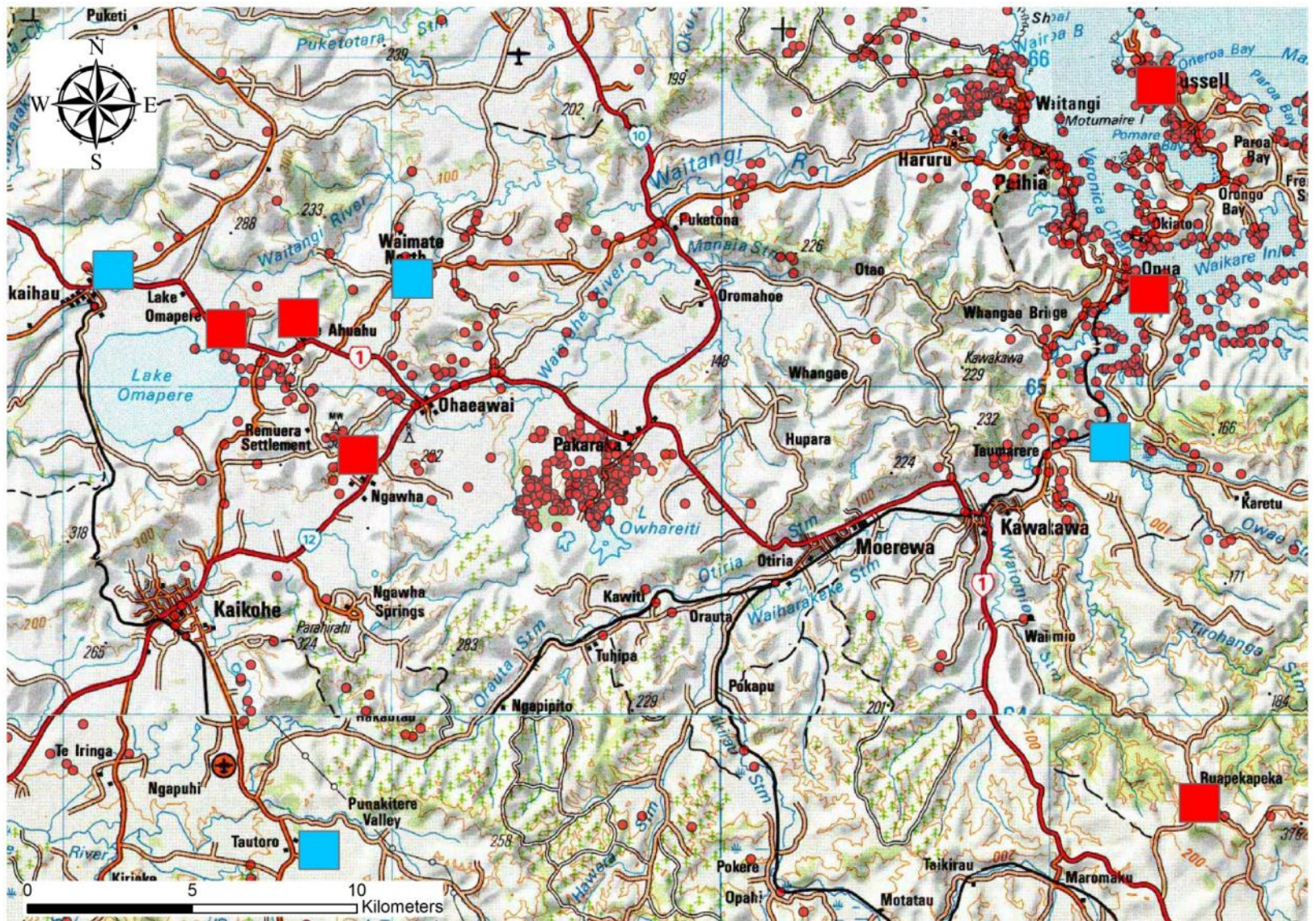




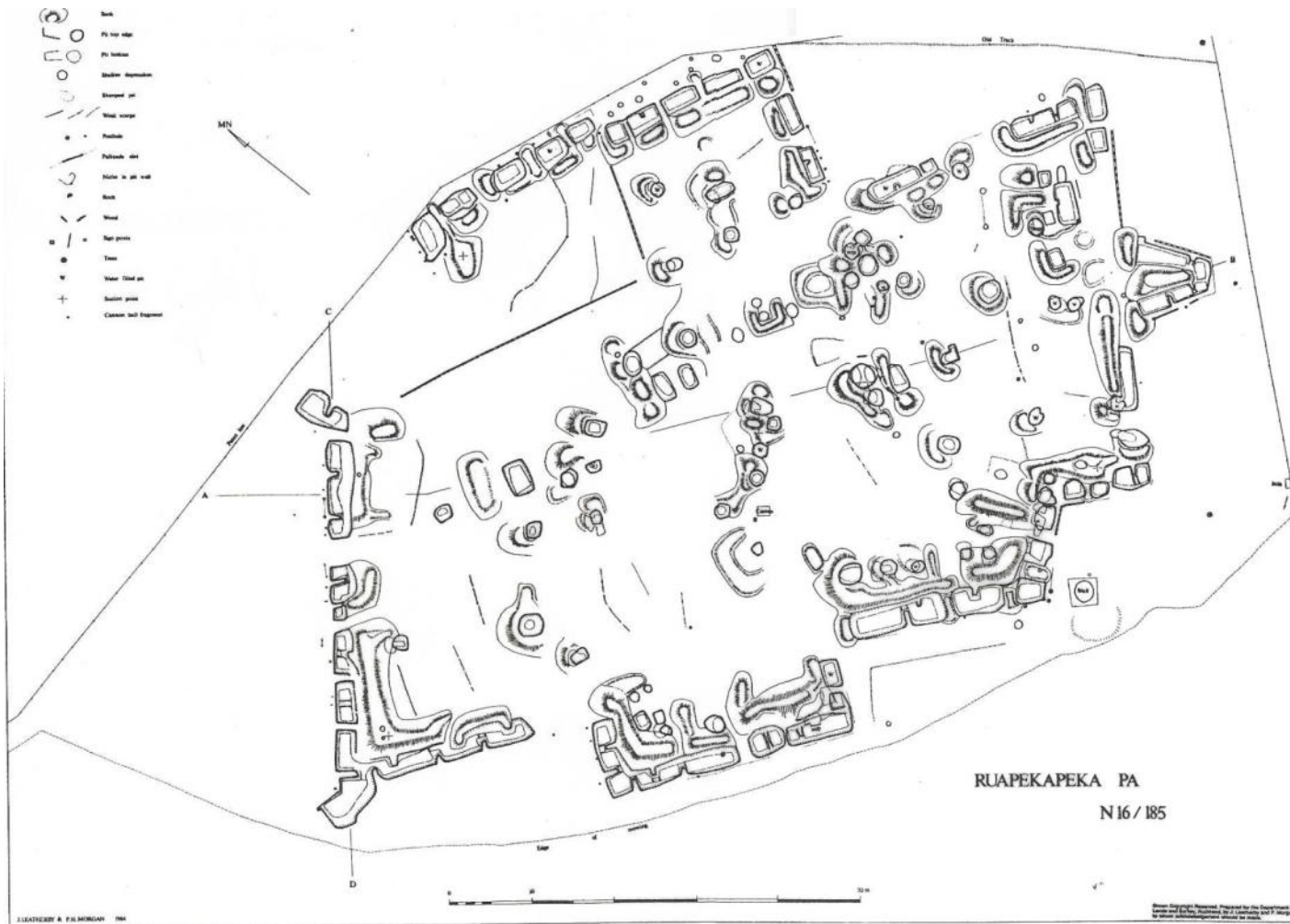
Fighting Fit: The Battle of Ruapekapeka 1845-46

Accounts of the battle of Ruapekapeka Pa have tended to focus on the size and innovation of the fortification, in contrast to typical (or classic) Maori defensive works and approaches to warfare. In her 2003 book Taua, Angella Ballara followed the threads of Maori warfare from the mid to late prehistoric period into the early historic period and the so-called musket wars and described a continuity in Maori approaches to warfare, adapted to the use of muskets but by no means characterised by them. This paper identifies elements of continuity in the battle of Ruapekapeka of 1845-46 (which takes place shortly after Ballara concludes her study). It uses archaeological and historical sources to suggest an evolution rather than a revolution in Maori warfare, and that for the combatants, adaptation to fit the new circumstances went both ways











Ruapekapeka in History

Episodic narrative of advance, encampment, bombardment, victory and defeat, peace overtures

Primary and secondary accounts stress:

- Isolation and difficult access
- Actions of the main protagonists
- Novelty of the defences

Based largely on British accounts

“Five big men and one big pa”



Towards an Anthropology of Ruapekapeka

Understanding the tikanga of Maori warfare

Viewing Ruapekapeka in the context of “musket wars”

Close reading of primary sources, especially maps and paintings

New information from:

- Waitangi claims research
- DOC oral history project

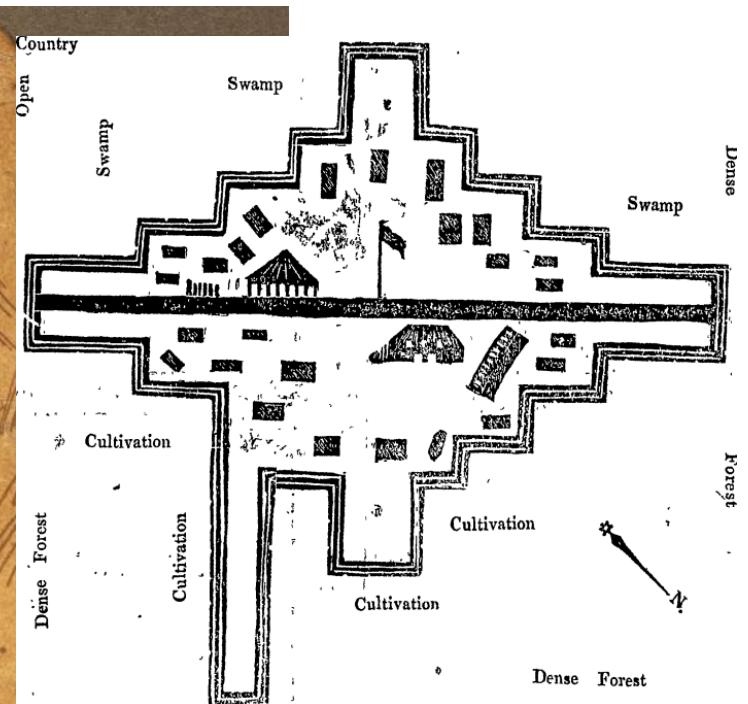
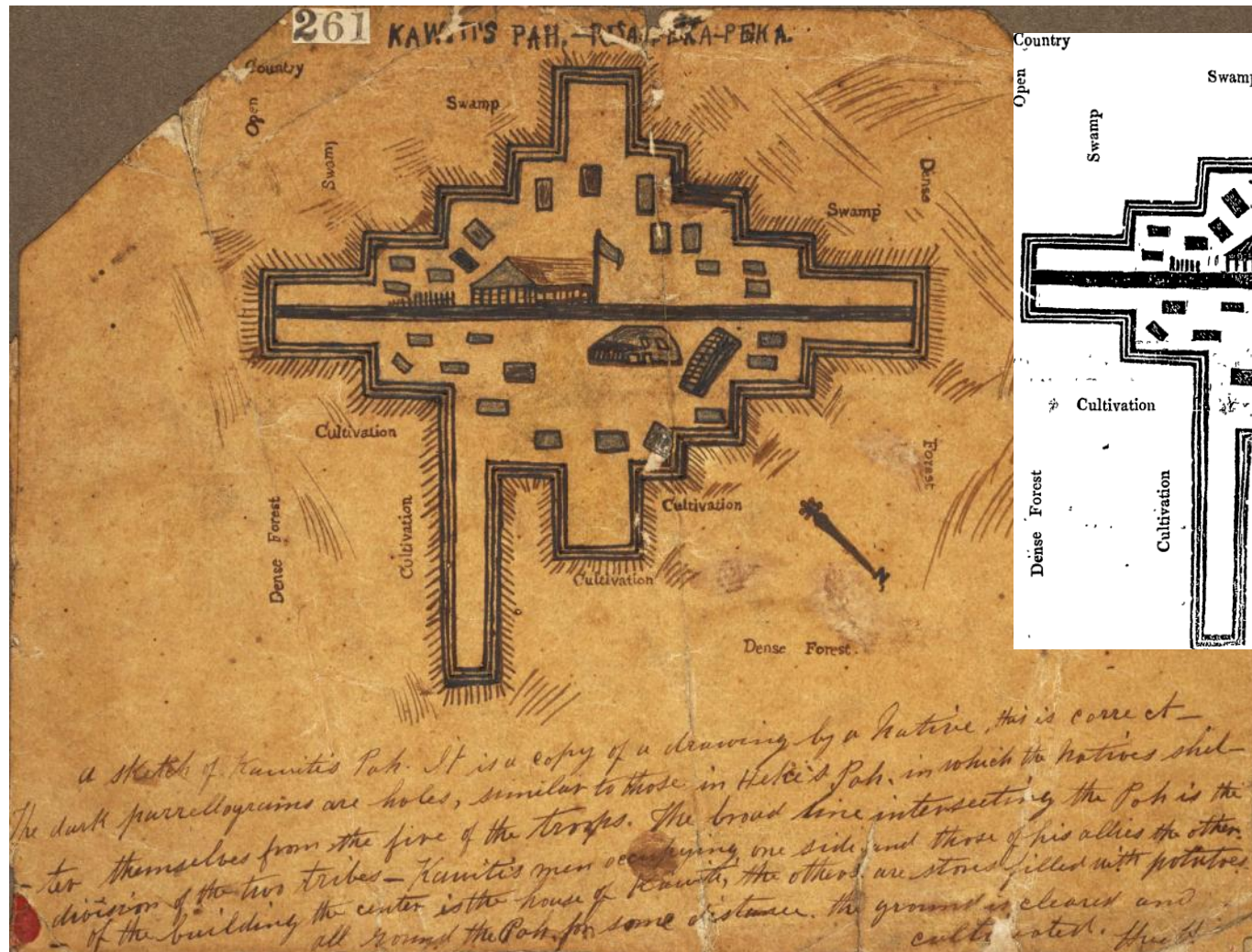
New information from:

- Geophysical subsurface survey and laser scanning

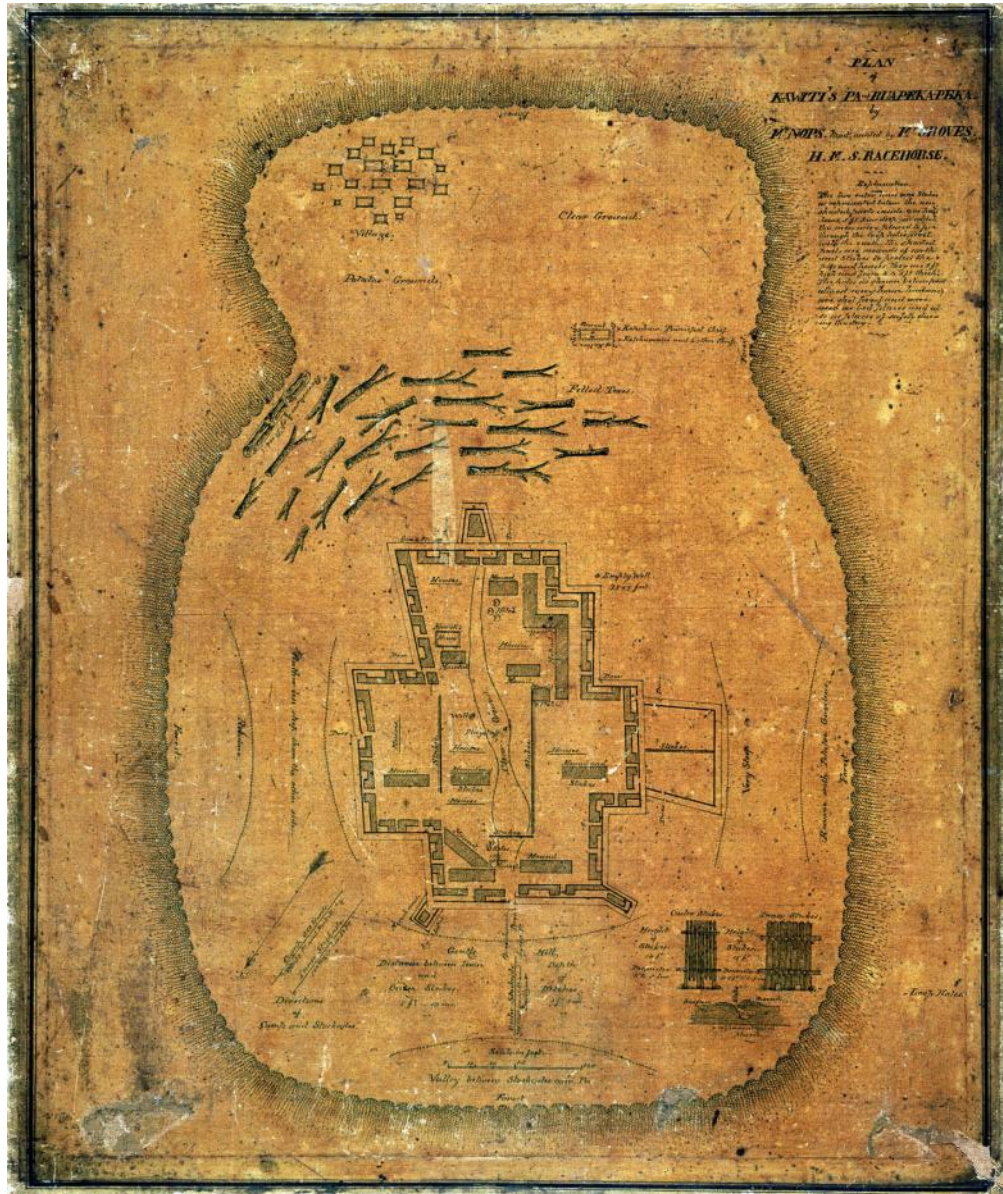


Taua and Pa Taua

- Maori society organised for warfare along hapu lines, each quite small 100-400
- Joined in battle as one unit but not always and makeup of taua were fluid
- Taua often travelled or manoeuvred on their own, sometimes recognised a paramount chief but usually there was multiple leadership.
- Hapu could sue for peace individually, continue to campaign when others tired of it, and was often difficult to stick to concerted plans.
- Wars were fought according to expected behaviours, tikanga.
- Open warfare often preceded by other efforts to resolve disputes including direct and indirect peacemaking attempts between the parties, ritual warfare, taua muru (raiding parties), and continued until a balance in the form of utu or restitution had been achieved.
- Often, kin from other descent groups could be dragged into the conflict, or would involve themselves to take action on parallel disputes.
- Importance of set-piece battles, matching forces, balancing casualties
- Economic considerations limited the possibilities for action



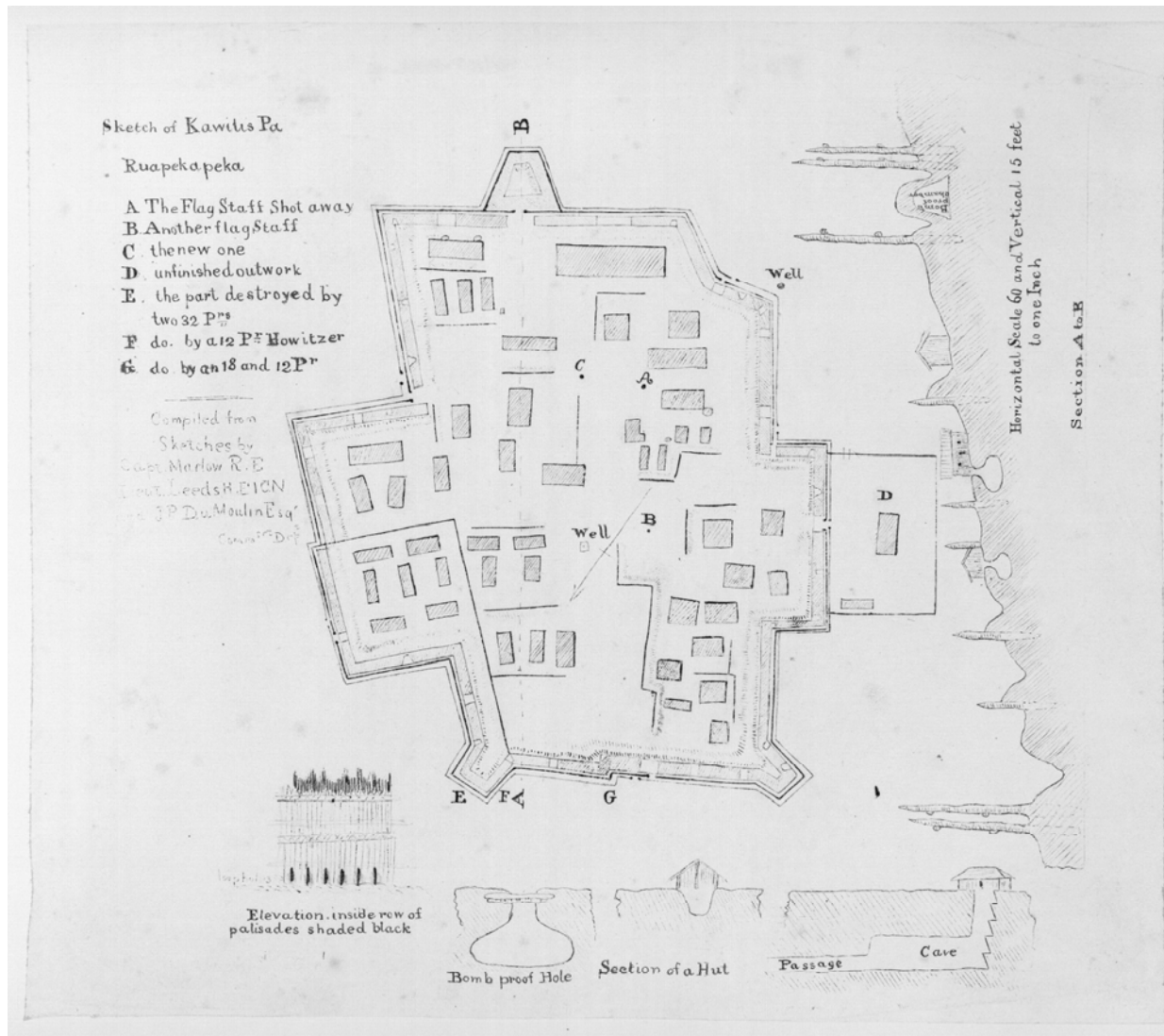
Sketch of Kawiti's Pah. Reproduced in The New Zealander, 27 December 1845



Plan of Kawiti's Pah, Ruapekapeka.

**Mr Nops assisted by Mr Groves,
HMS Racecourse, January
1846**



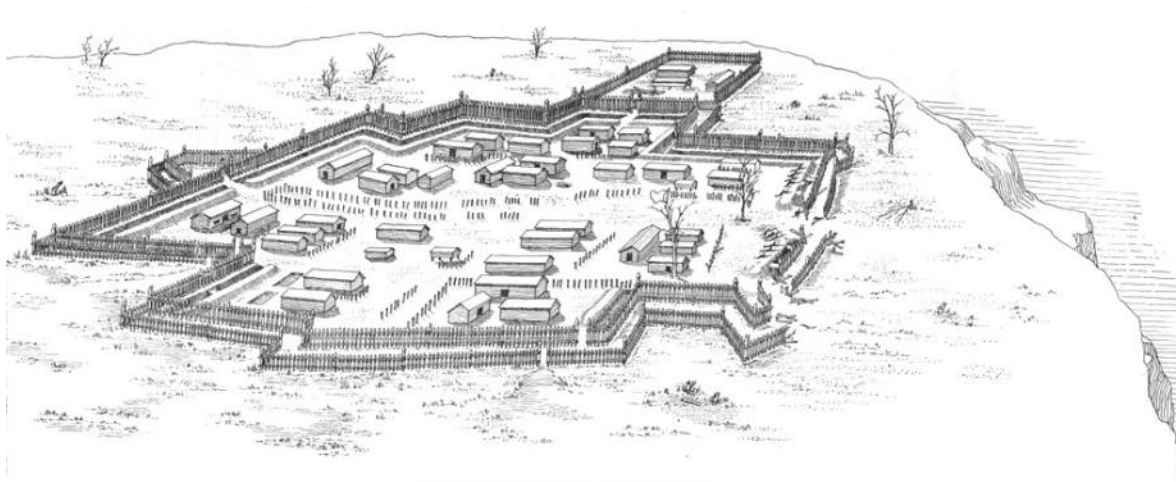


Sketch of Kawiti's Pa Ruapekapeka

**Topham compilation of
sketches by Marlow,
Leeds and de Moulin,
1846**



Model of Ruapekapeka
Col Wynyard, 1851.



Sketch of model
JPS 41

NEW ZEALAND MAORI WAR, 1842: STOCKADE WARFARE.
Sketch view of Ruapekapeka, showing defences demolished. Original model, by Lt-Col. Wynyard of 58th Regiment in 1851, in case 6 feet square in Royal United Services Institution Museum, England.
See Cowan, *New Zealand Wars*, I, p. 72.



Elements of Change and Continuity

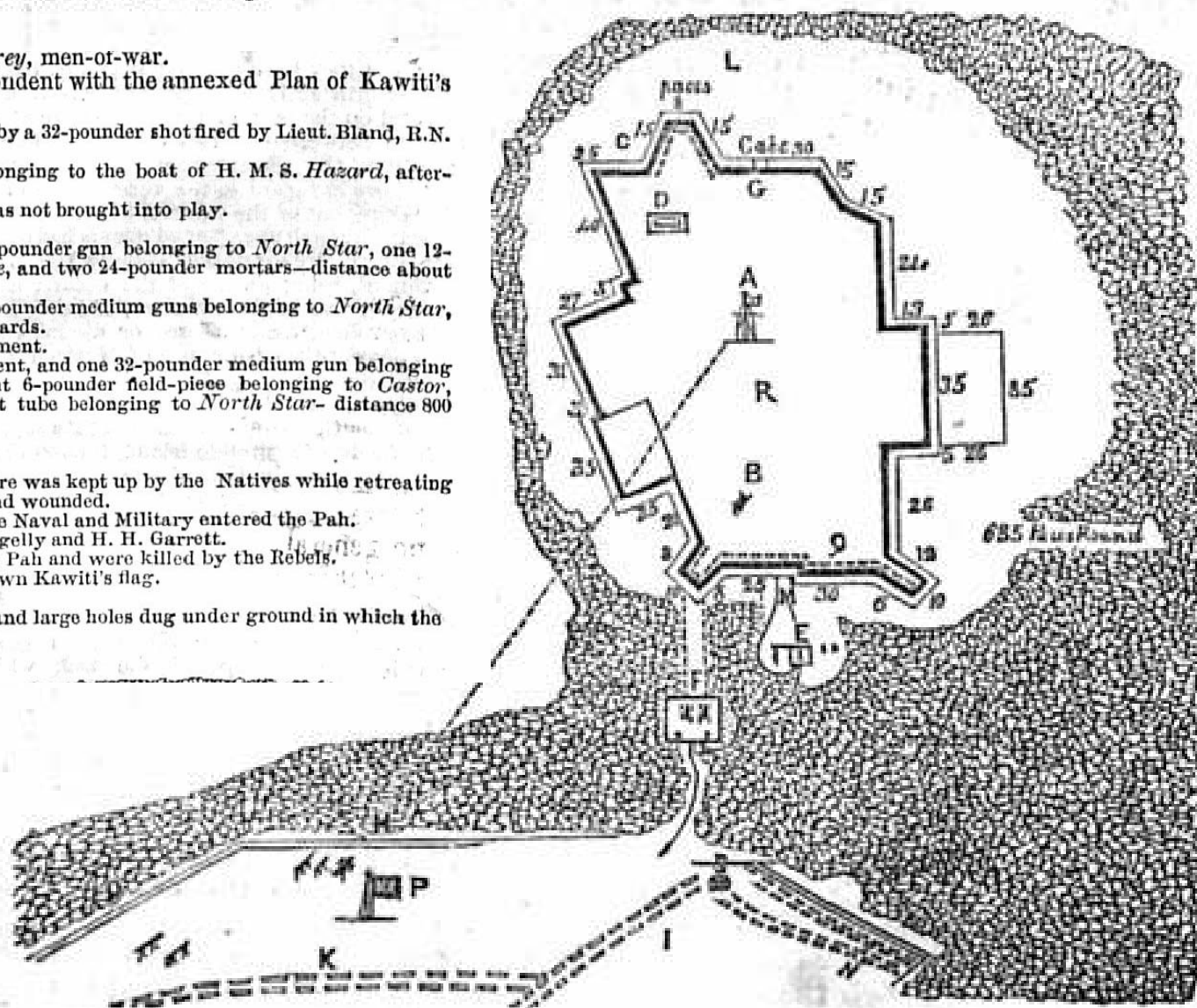
- Elevated chiefs house and platform/verandah
- Central cleared area or Marae
- Internal divisions reflecting hapu and whanau (as well as tactical concerns)
- Cultivations nearby to supply pa
- Storage structures e.g. pataka and probably rua
- Separate kainga (older settlement and/or used during pa construction)
- Final shape of the pa appears to be the result of evolving tactical situation but also a lack of tight centralised leadership/multiple semi-independent parties building the pa
- Use of flags and wells
- Orientation of some whare e.g. Kawiti's, with doors and windows on the long axis
- Defensive arrangements, most of which had been in use from 1830 if not earlier (Flanking angles, bastions, earth and timber covered ways, traverses in ditches/rifle pits, tunnels providing access under earthworks and palisades, lighter curtain palisades, as well as strong main palisades)

The use of hardened bunkers as the single major novel component?

main there, with the *Racehorse* and *Osprey*, men-of-war.

We have been favoured by a Correspondent with the annexed Plan of Kawiti's Pah, and the operations of January 11.

- A. The Flag-staff, afterwards knocked down by a 32-pounder shot fired by Lieut. Bland, R.N. of H. M. S. *Racehorse*.
- B. 12-pounder gun taken at Kororarika, belonging to the boat of H. M. S. *Hazard*, afterwards disabled from a shot from E.
- C. 3-pounder gun taken at Kororarika, but was not brought into play.
- D. Kawiti's House.
- E. The Outer Stockade, consisting of one 18-pounder gun belonging to *North Star*, one 12-pounder howitzer belonging to *Elphinstone*, and two 24-pounder mortars—distance about 150 yards.
- F. The Inner Stockade, consisting of two 32-pounder medium guns belonging to *North Star*, and two 24-pounder mortars—distance 300 yards.
- G. Stockade round Tomatie Walker's encampment.
- H. Breastwork in front of Military Encampment, and one 32-pounder medium gun belonging to *North Star*, one howitzer and one light 6-pounder field-piece belonging to *Castor*, one 24-pounder and one 12-pounder rocket tube belonging to *North Star*—distance 800 yards.
- I. The Naval Encampment.
- K. The Military Encampment.
- L. That part of the wood where the heaviest fire was kept up by the Natives while retreating and endeavouring to carry off their killed and wounded.
- M. The largest Breach made, and by which the Naval and Military entered the Pah.
- N. The Warry, or that occupied by W. M. Pengelly and H. H. Garrett.
- O. The gate by which our forces got out of the Pah and were killed by the Rebels.
- P. Union Jack hoisted the day we knocked down Kawiti's flag.
- Q. Trenches dug about four feet deep.
- R. All round the Flag-staff they had Warry's and large holes dug under ground in which they used to retire directly we began to fire.
- S. Naval Mess Warry.



PLAN OF KAWITI'S PAH, NEW ZEALAND.

Annexed, too, are translations of Kawiti's Letters to the Governor and to Arch



***Ruapekapeka. Taken
on 11 January
1846.***

**George Hyde Page Esq,
58th Regiment.**





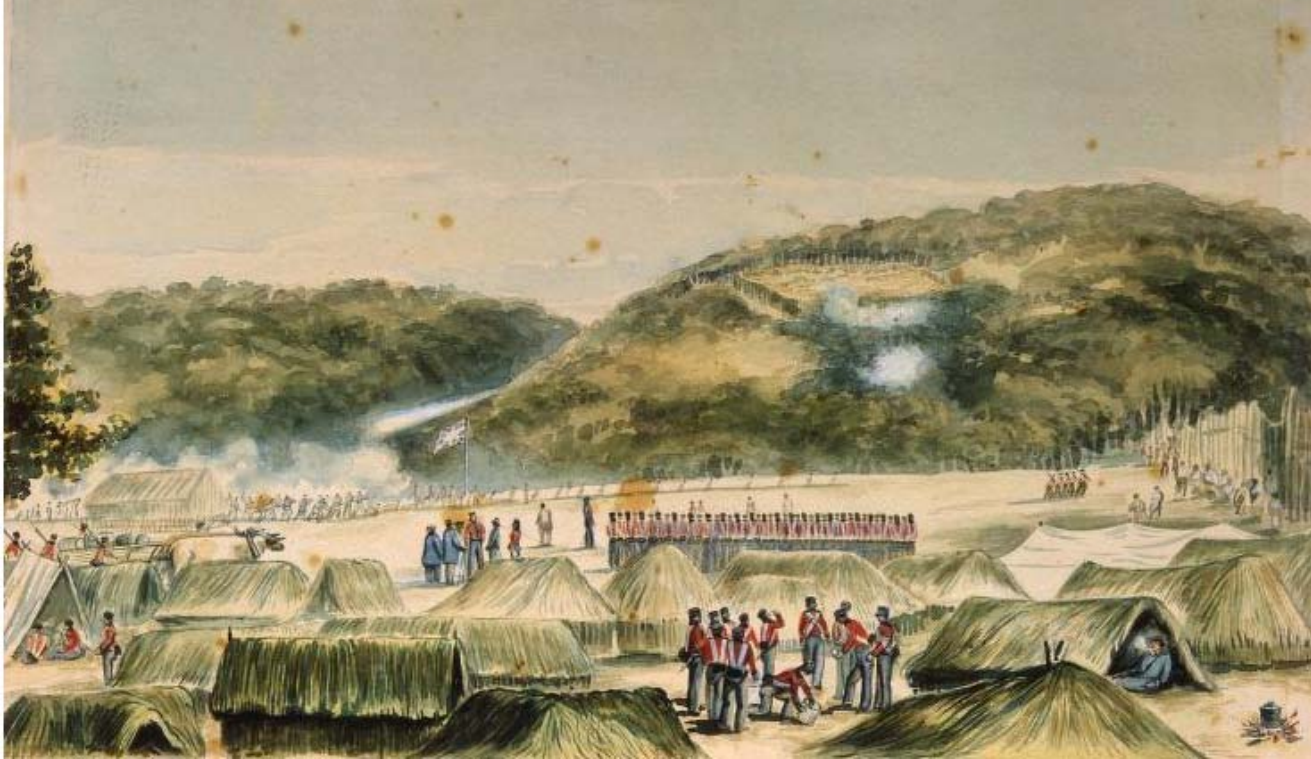
Ruapekapeka. NZ.

**John Williams, 58th
Regiment**



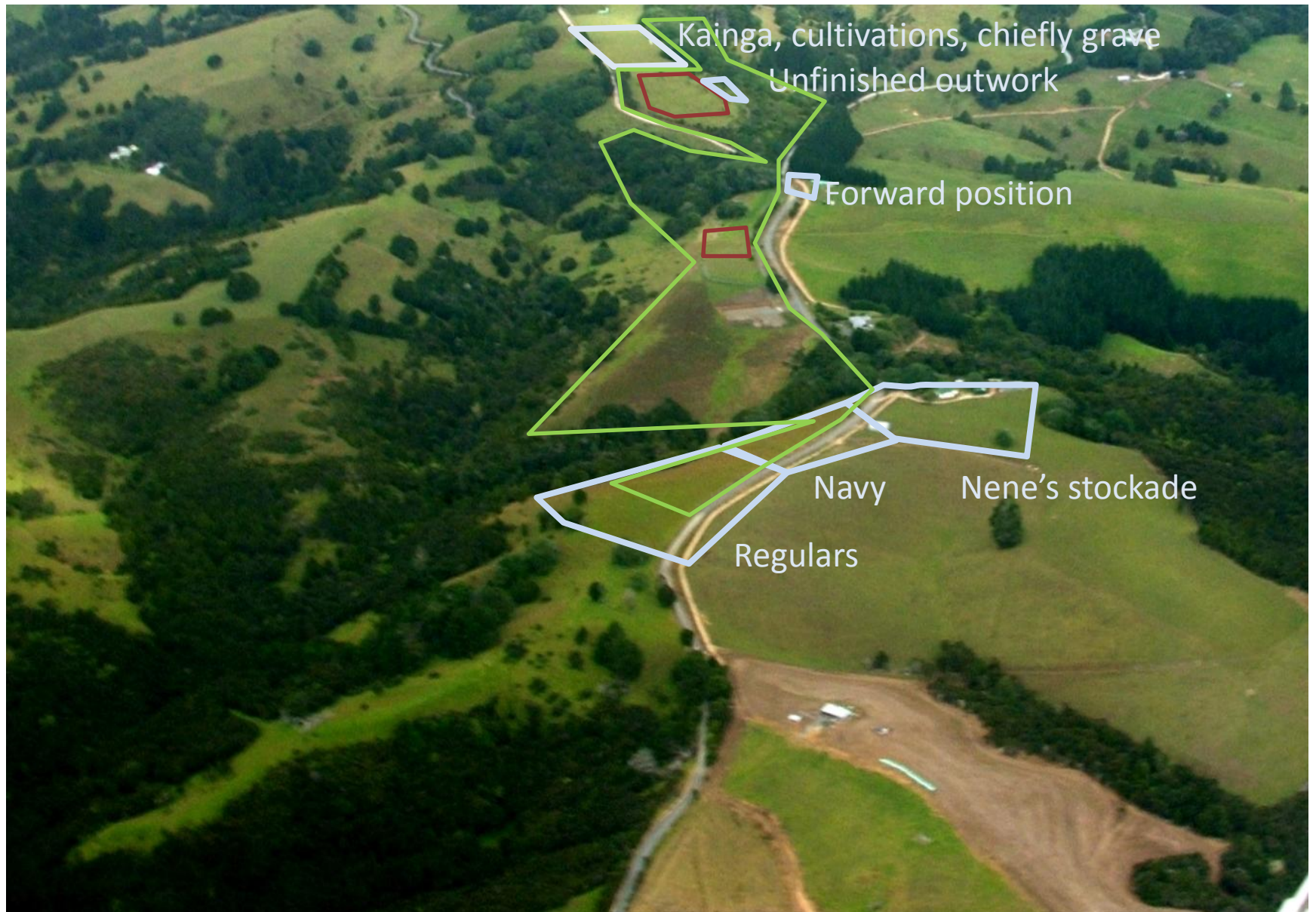
Ruapekapeka. The bombardment.

Cyprian Bridge or John Williams, 58th regiment



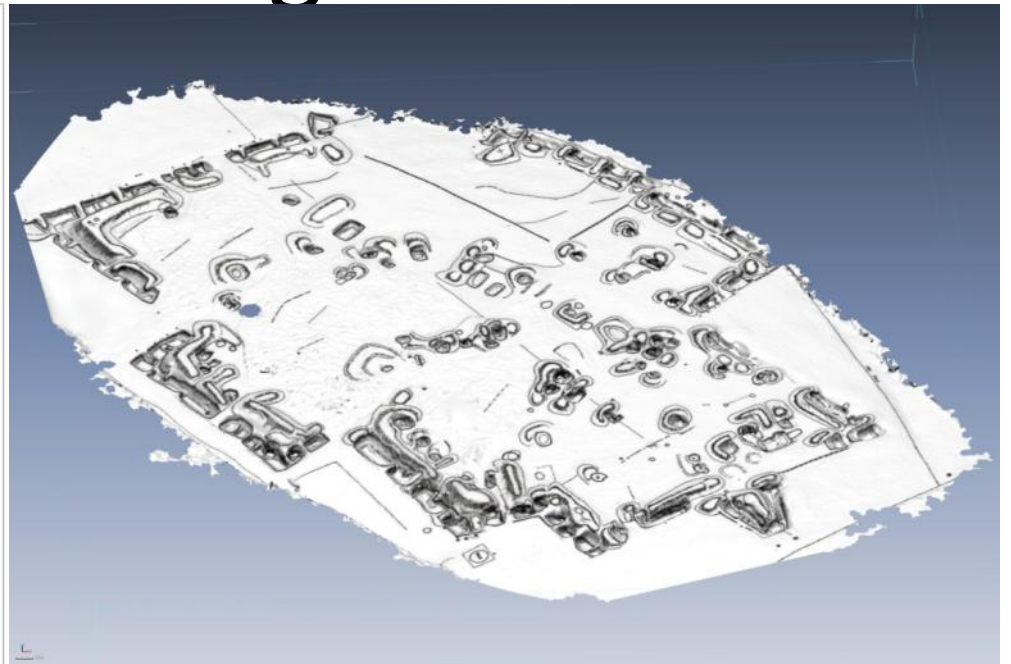
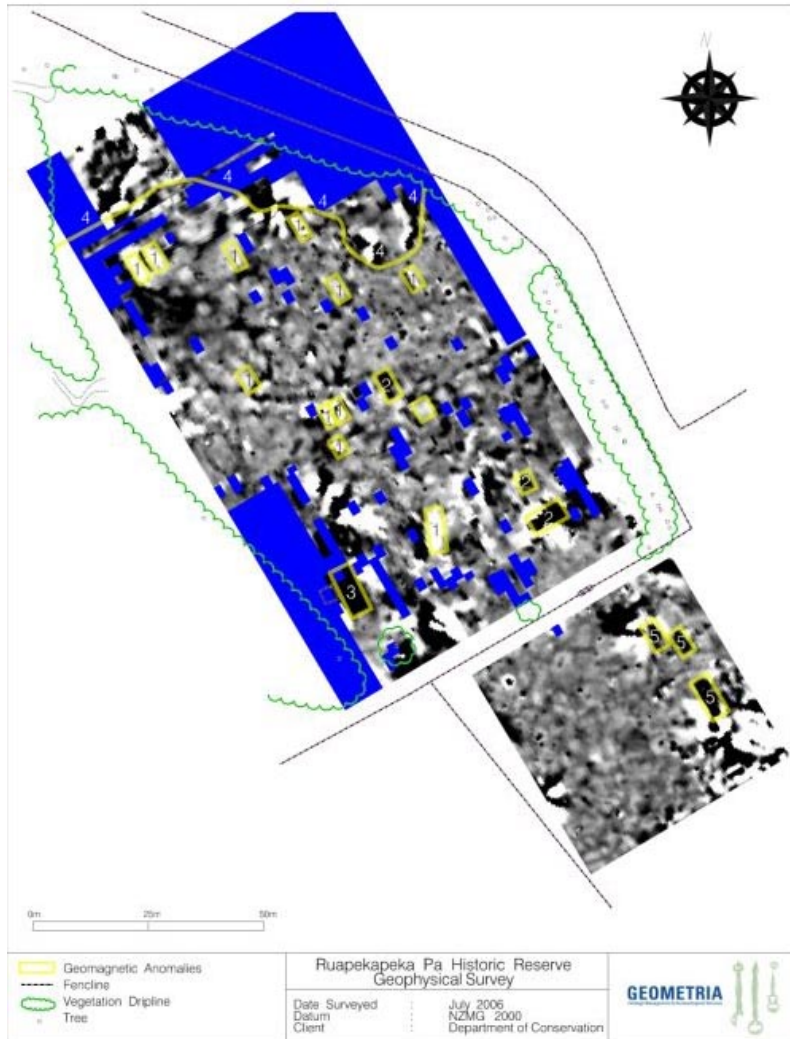
Ruapekapeka. NZ.

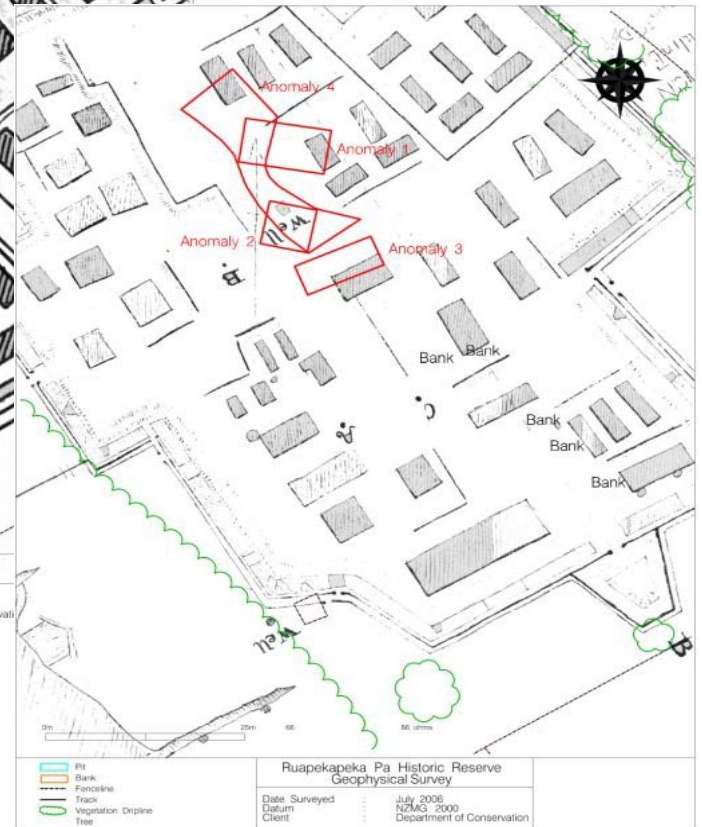
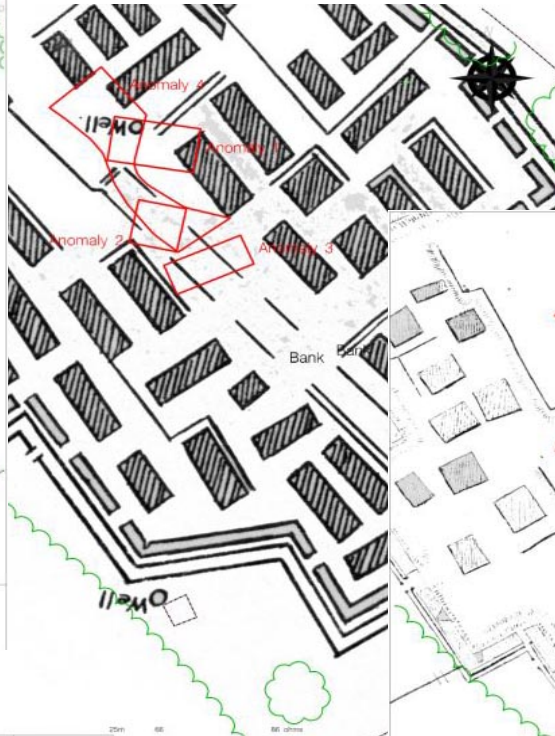
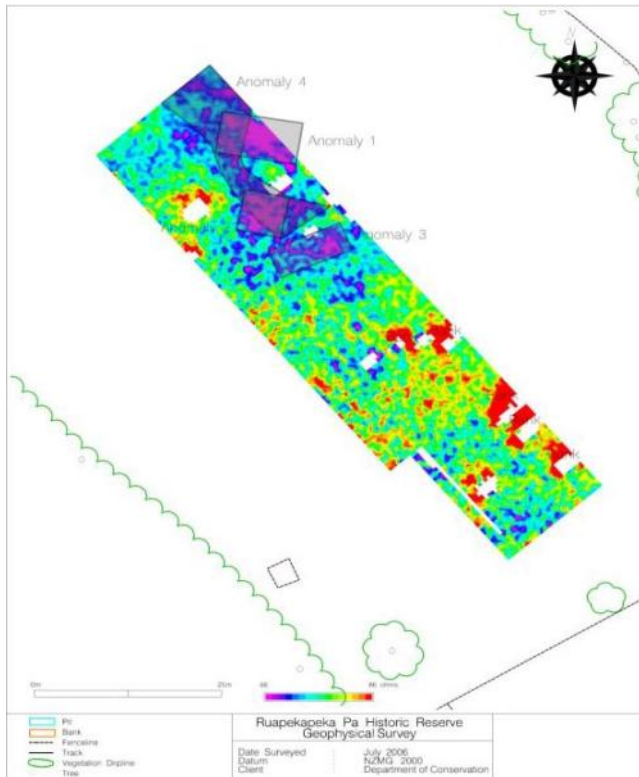
John Williams, 58th Regiment.

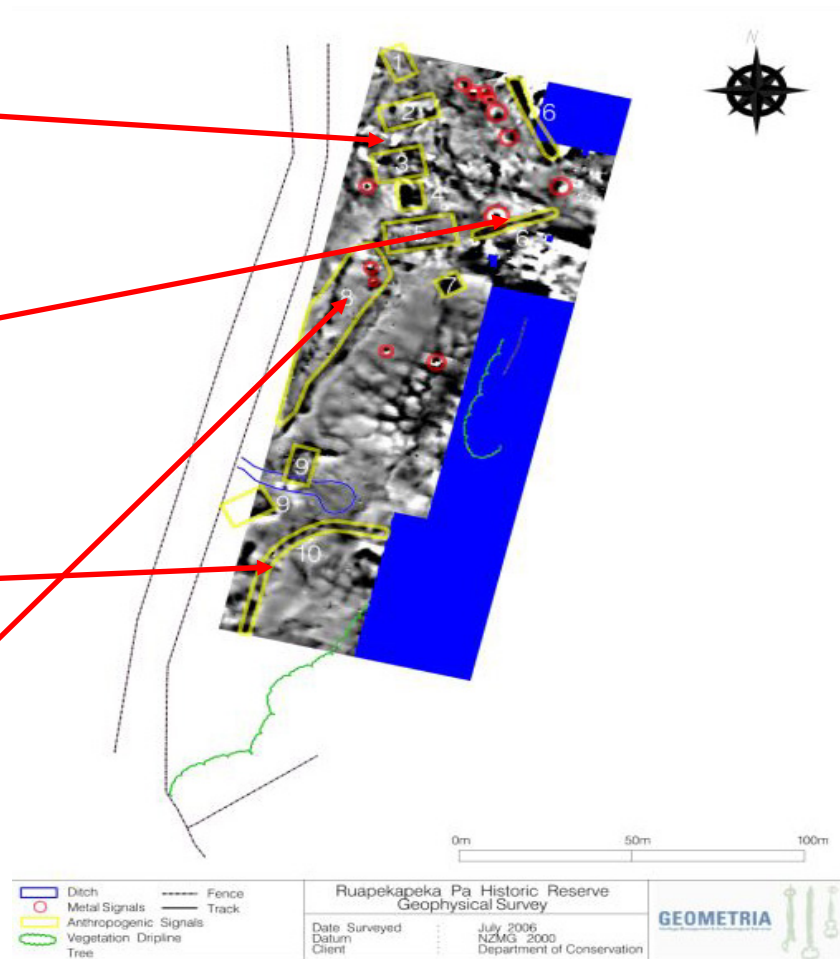


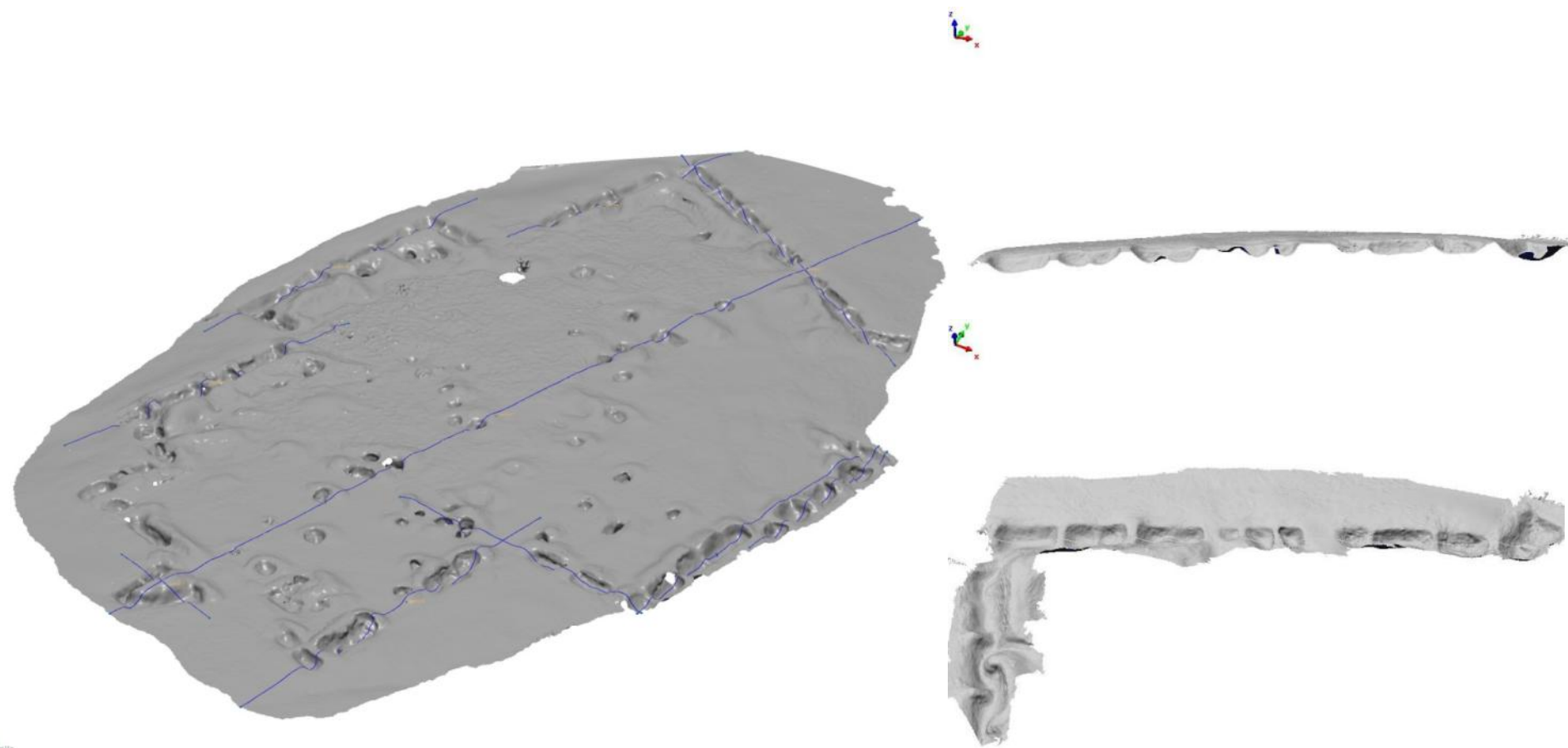


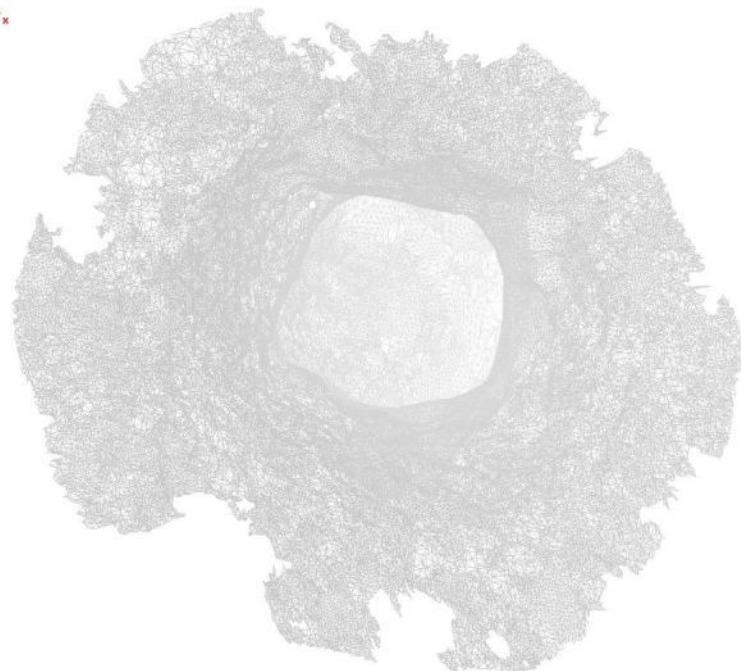
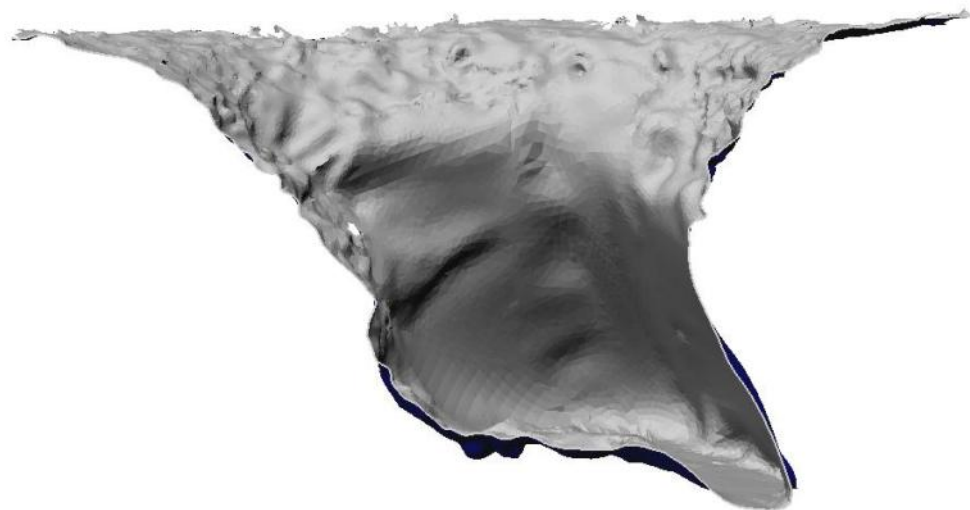
Recent Investigations













Directions

Specific Actions

- Locating British and Maori graves
- Investigation of the British Camp/Nene's stockade
- Limited investigation of defensive features at Ruapekapeka to assess structural integrity and help develop plans for an off-site reconstruction
- Identification, investigation, management and protection of the other marching camps
- Relocating and investigating other lost sites of the Northern war: the Okaihau camps of Despard and Nene, Heke's new pa at Tautoro/Hikurangi etc

Broader Questions

Culture contact in the British camps

Individual agency and genius in pa construction

Evolution of pa building techniques within the "Musket Wars" period, and particularly in the north in the period immediately preceding the Northern War (e.g. the Oruru War of 1843).

