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# WAIU PA: 'KEEP OUT: HISTORIC PLACE'

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## Introduction

Waiu Pa (T21/1 and T21/2) is located in the tussock land to the north of the Hautapu Stream, within the New Zealand Defence Force's Army Training Area at Waiouru (Figure 1). It is a complex of two gunfighter pa located approximately 250 metres apart and separated by a gully wetland. There are remnant patches of bush to the northwest of T21/1 and southeast of T21/2 (there are obvious restrictions on public access to Waiu Pa as Waiouru is a Defence Area under the Defence Act 1990).

Waiu Pa was first observed by archaeologists from the air in 1954 and was eventually located on the ground after several extensive searches. It was recorded as an archaeological site in 1959 by Tony Batley and the Otaihape Field Group, and was subsequently visited by Simpson and Jones (1995) as part of their case studies on archaeological site stabilisation and vegetation management. Waiu Pa was recently visited by New Zealand Historic Places Trust (NZHPT) archaeologists Rick McGovern-Wilson, Emma Brooks and Jo Wylie as part of the Ruapehu ki Rangitikei Registration Pilot Project, which was run by the NZHPT Central Region Office.

The 1959 site record forms for T21/1 and T21/2 noted only that the pa were called Waiu. The site name was obtained from an 1880 surveyor's plan of the Rangipo–Waiu Block, and no historical information was provided as to the reason for the construction of the pa. Documentary sources do exist however, most notably the 1879–1880 diary of Captain Gilbert Mair, and these were subsequently consulted in order to better understand the historical context surrounding the construction of Waiu Pa.

## History

Waiu Pa is located in the former Murimotu–Rangipo district, an area that was favourably viewed by European settlers in the early 1870s because

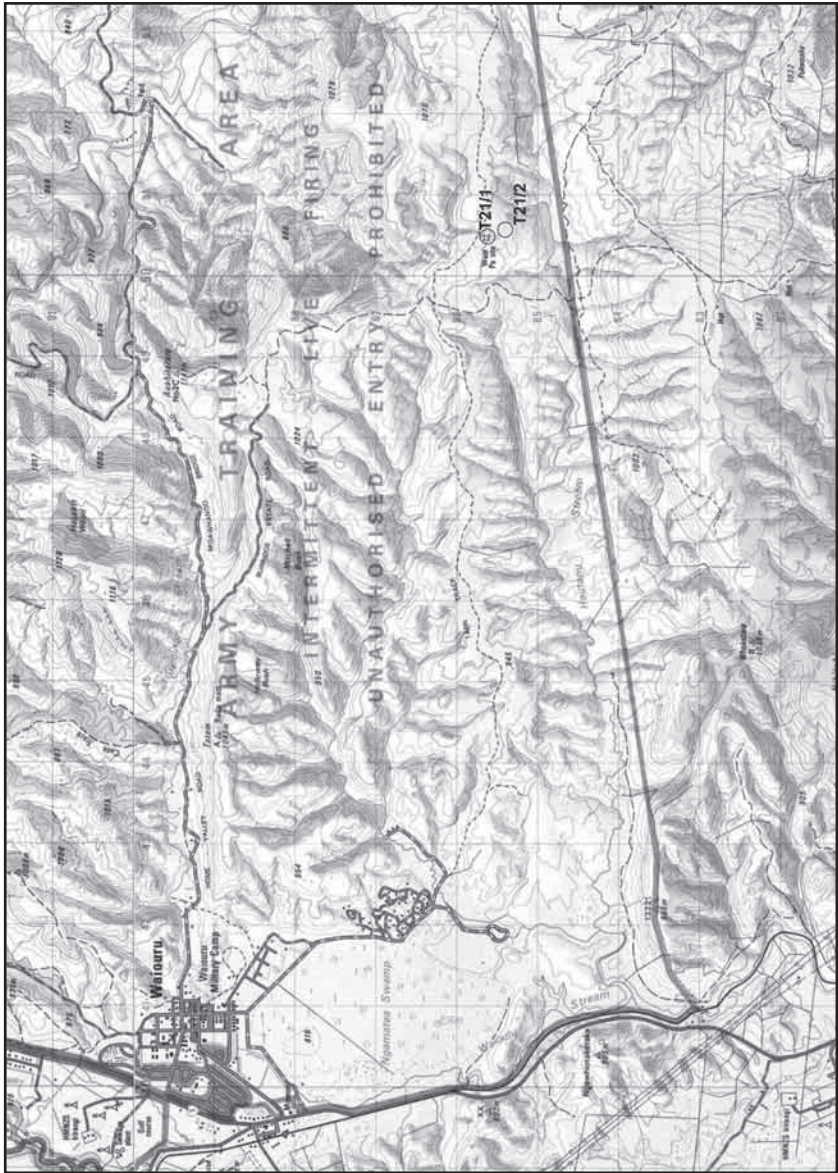


Figure 1. Extract from NZMS 260 Map showing Waiu Pa at bottom right.

of its grasslands and “vital position in opening up the interior from the Whanganui side” (Cross and Bargh 1996: 64). It was hoped that the leasing of this area would lead to later purchases (Cross and Bargh 1996: 64). Various leasing negotiations were made in 1872 and 1873 but governmental negotiators spoke of considerable delay as a result of “dissensions amongst the claimants” and it was felt that the only way to resolve these difficulties was to have the land surveyed and passed through the Native Land Court (Cross and Bargh 1996: 66). The issue was discussed at a meeting held at the Government Buildings in Wellington in September 1874, by which time the Murimotu Block of 46,000 acres had been surveyed and passed through the Court (Cross and Bargh 1996: 70). Those present at the meeting included Native Minister Donald McLean, W.S. Moorehouse (agent for Murimotu runholders Morrin and Studholme) and Maori claimants, notably Te Keepa Rangihiwini (Major Kemp), Winiata Te Puhaki, Nehenera Tekahu, Aropeta Haeretuterangi and Aperahama Tahumiarangi (Cross and Bargh 1996: 70). It was eventually agreed that this block was to be leased to the Government for a fee of £10 per 1000 acres for 14 years and then £11 per 1000 acres for a following seven years, though Te Keepa had requested a yearly rent that would rise every five years, starting at sixpence per acre (Cross and Bargh 1996: 66).

Te Keepa’s decision to lease the Murimotu block to the government provoked debate amongst the various groups with interests in the region including Ngati Tamakopiri, Ngati Tuwharetoa, Ngati Whitikaupeka, Ngati Te Ika, Patutokotoko and Rangituhia (Cross and Bargh 1996: 73). The issue of the Murimotu Block was discussed at hui in 1876 at Ranana and Aomarama, where Te Keepa outlined the reasons why he approved the Government lease. The leasing of the Ruanui block (40,000 acres), Rangiwaea block (15,000 acres) and inland block at Patea (100,000 acres) was also discussed at these hui but there was considerable opposition from chiefs such as Hohepa Tamanuiti of Ngati Tuwharetoa, who preferred to wait until such time as the Native Land Court had decided title.

Lease negotiator James Buller wrote to the Under-Secretary of the Native Affairs Department in 1877, stating that given the current feeling amongst the Murimotu and Whanganui iwi and the absence of any survey of hapu boundaries, “it is useless to attempt to make further negotiations for the present” (Buller 1877, cited in Cross and Bargh 1996: 74). Maori in favour of selling or leasing could apply to the Native Land Court for an investigation of title however, and land in the Murimotu Block began going through the Court in 1877:

despite Buller’s statement that land purchase negotiations should be suspended until Maori were more willing to engage in them, and de-

spite continued concern about the effects of alienation on Maori, land fell to the land court system, leases were obtained and validated, and purchases were made (Cross and Bargh 1996: 82).

The experiences of Whanganui Maori in the 1870s had strengthened their resolve over the control of their land and the 1880s bore witness to “determined and strenuous efforts to regain this authority” (Cross and Bargh 1996: 82). There were a series of land disputes in the Murimotu–Rangipo region in the early 1880s and in two instances the commencement of European survey work led to the arrival of armed forces from outside the inland Patea district, and earthworks were subsequently constructed by the local iwi as defensive measures. A gunfighter pa was created on the Owhaoko Plateau north of the Taihape–Napier Road and has been attributed to 20 armed men from Ngati Upokoiri who were sent by Renata Kawepo to put stop to a survey of the Mangaohane Block in February 1880 (Batley 1960).

Another instance took place in early 1880 when Ngati Whitikaupeka and Ngati Tamakopiri of Moawhango constructed gunfighter pa at Waiu in response to the threat of Te Keepa, Ngati Rangituhia and upper Whanganui iwi who had occupied the southeastern portion of the Rangipo–Waiu block:<sup>1</sup>

The survey dispute was in 1880; it took place at Waiu and Auahitotara, between Winiata & Te Oti, and Kemp and their tribes. These were disputing with N'Tama and N'Whiti. Kemp was accompanied by N'rangituhia. Their pa was at Auahitotara; this pa was built last year, by N'rangituhia, including Te Oti, Winiata & Kemp. They came to take the land; they had guns. N'tama also took up arms. This was the first time I saw N'rangituhia on this land (Henare Keepa, Taupo Minute Book 2: 192).

Te Keepa had taken up arms in defence of his interests in this area in response to the Government's attempts to undertake a comprehensive survey (Cross and Bargh 1996: 83). Captain Gilbert Mair was sent to the area in late 1879 with the task of carrying on with the survey of Te Waiu but Te Keepa was proposing that a survey of the Rohe Potae (King Country) be completed first. Ngati Whitikaupeka and Ngati Rangituhia strongly objected to Te Keepa's plans and wished to carry on with the Waiu survey as soon as the surveyor returned from Napier. Mair arranged several meetings between the disputing parties in an attempt to resolve the situation without success. He had intended to leave for Wanganui on January 6th 1880 but felt that he had to stay and “...shepherd

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<sup>1</sup> Steedman (n.d.) notes that the area of Waiu Pa was originally used as an overnight resting-place for those using the Waipuna Track, the traditional Maori track between Mokai Patea and the rohe of Tuwharetoa. There are believed to have been three wharepuni situated at Waiu for this purpose.

Kemp or he will stop the survey” (Mair 1879–1880). Mair’s diary over the ensuing weeks provides a fascinating insight into the conflict between the local iwi and Te Keepa’s forces at Auahitotara and the subsequent construction of Waiu Pa. An excerpt from his diary on Wednesday February 18th 1880 reads: “old Wiki came from Riu a puanga [?] saying that Ngatiwhiti 42 in number had established themselves at Waiu – that he saw them there.” Mair visited Waiu himself on Sunday February 22nd where he found “Ngatiwhiti and Ngatitama about 45 strong besides a dozen women. They have built a fine pa and got it well rifle-pitted” (Mair 1879–1880).

On Sunday February 22nd 1880, Mair wrote:

I had a korero with Ngatiwhiti, regretting that they had been led away by K’s forces [?] into building a pa...They explained that building the pa was only for the purpose of defending themselves – that they were naturally exasperated at Kemp’s threats made to a deputation of this people who went to Ngamatia to “Houhou Te Rongo” [make peace] namely Kerei Tanguru – Te Oti Tamaiti Ropoama and Rihionia ... Kemp told these people that his quarrel was now with the govt who were trying to steal his land ... I replied that I could not blame them for defending their own property ... at the same time I regretted that they had occupied Te Waiu.

Mair’s diary indicates that Te Keepa was threatening to drive the sheep of European runholders such as Moorhouse and Studholme off the disputed Murimotu Block. Te Keepa asked Ngati Whitikaupeka to remove their sheep so that the land would be free for him to fight the government and he and his forces also threatened to set fire to the woolsheds and wool washing apparatus of the European settlers. These events never transpired but Te Keepa did prevent the transportation of the Karioi wool belonging to Moorhouse and Studholme during the dispute.

It is apparent from further diary entries that Mair continued in his attempts to diffuse the situation between Te Keepa’s forces and Ngati Tamakopiri and Ngati Whitikaupeka. On Saturday February 28th 1880 Mair wrote Te Keepa a long letter stating that he had sent back the surveyor, and “begged him to be more reasonable.” Mair received word on Tuesday March 9th 1880 that Te Keepa had lost his government appointments as a Land Purchase Officer and assessor in the Resident Magistrate’s Court. Diary entries on Tuesday 16th March and Sunday 21st March 1880 indicate that Te Keepa had become more reasoned, stating that he “would not go to exchanges [?] unless the Ngatiwhiti attack him, and that he will not interfere with the sheep on the 46 000 acre block.”

On March 10th 1880 Mair received a letter from land purchase officer James Booth urging him to return to Wanganui. He left the Murimotu–

Rangipo district on March 27th 1880 and it appears that the gunfighter pa at Waiu and Auahitotara were abandoned not long after his departure. Steedman (n.d.) notes that the Maori missionary Herekau acted as a negotiator between the two opposing parties, and that peace was made. Henare Keepa stated in his evidence to the Maori Land Court on May 16th 1881 that Auahitotara was abandoned when they were travelling through to the Taupo Court (Taupo Minute Book No 2: 192).

## The site

### T21/1

T21/1 is the northern pa and Simpson and Jones (1995: 96) contend that its construction and layout is not dissimilar to Maori gunfighter pa of the mid to late 1860s (Figure 2). It is an open gunfighter pa, defended along three sides by a ditch and bank, with a bank and rifle pits in the NNE corner. The defensive perimeter of the pa measures approximately 33 m in length, 14 m wide at the NNE end and 21 m wide at the SSE end. There is a solitary rifle trench and pit located roughly 12 m to the southwest of the main defensive area and a whare floor roughly 20 m to the southeast of the main defensive area, with a raised bank along three sides. The entrance to the pa is located at the SSE end, and consists of an undug causeway across the ditch.

Within the defensive perimeter is a central rectangular area, c. 6 x 25 m, with an offset whare floor measuring c. 8 x 4.5 m. This central area is sunken at a depth of between 500 and 1100 mm, and is connected to the main defensive perimeter via rifle trenches on two sides. The larger rectangle (C on Figure 2) is buttressed in locations, and these buttresses have been interpreted as further subdivisions for whare. While the overall design is typical of gunfighter pa dating to the mid to late 1860s, the fully enclosed whare floor is regarded as unusual, as whare typically open directly onto the trench perimeter in other pa. An *in situ* post was recorded amongst dense vegetation in the central rectangular area during the recent NZHPT visit and the surface of this post indicates that it has been chopped. It is speculated that this post is actually the stump of a flagpole but this claim has not been substantiated.

The bush to the west of T21/1 contains numerous low-growing hardwoods, including Halls Totara, which show evidence of bark stripping. Simpson and Jones (1995: 98) state that the bark would have been used for roofing whare, but Steedman (n.d.) believes that the totara was used for making papa huahua, bark vessels used for potted food supplies such as birds. On one of these trees, the scar measures approximately 4.5 m high by 500 mm wide. There is a notable absence of cedar and a rarity of red beech in this patch of bush, presumably because these were utilised by the occupants of Waiu Pa for palisades, shelter and firewood (Simpson and Jones 1995: 98).

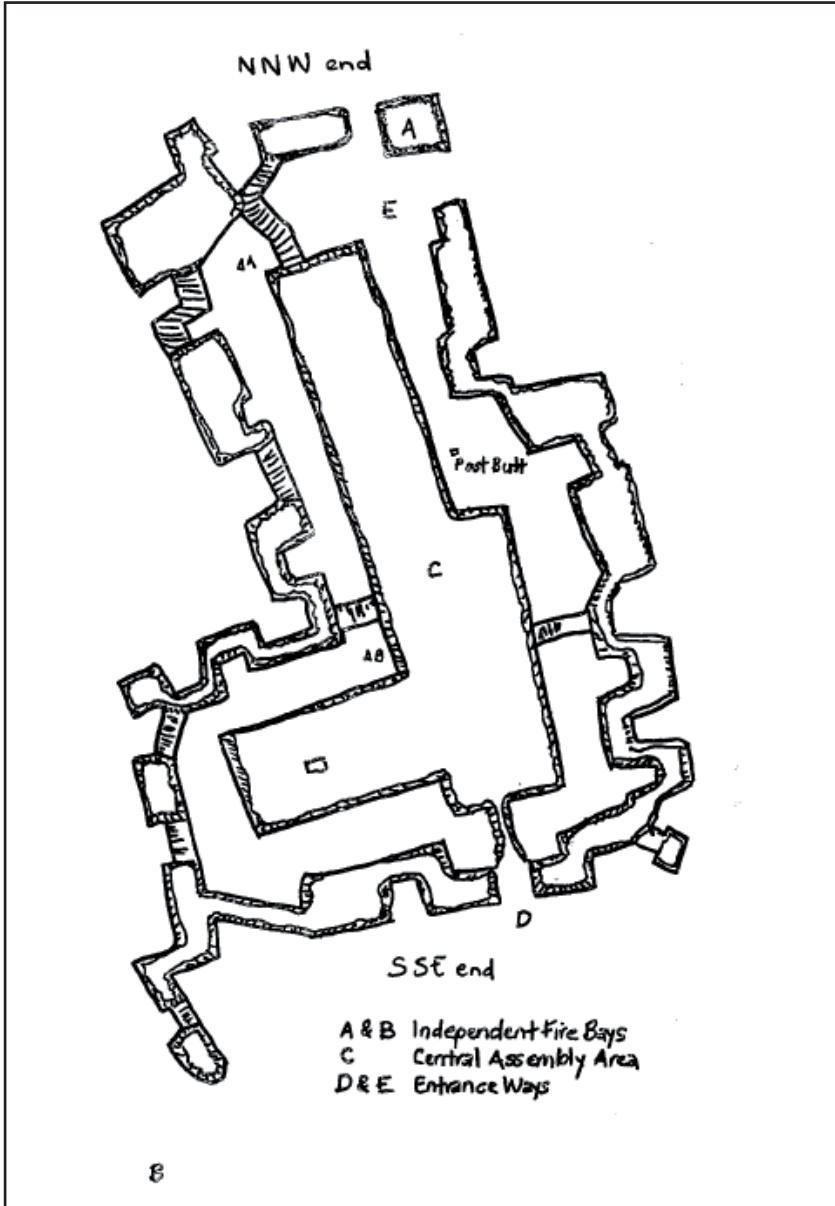


Figure 2. Plan of T21/1 copied from Wanganui City Council (1976-1977). Not to scale.



## T21/2

T21/2 is to the south of T21/1 and the key features are still visible (Figure 3). There is a central sunken rectangular area c. 12 x 13.7 m with an *in situ* palisade at the southern end (Figure 4). This post measured 150 x 150 mm and stood 210 mm above the ground. The central rectangular area is surrounded by a bank measuring up to 1 m high in places, outside of which is an irregular perimeter of rifle trenches and pits. A number of fallen palisades were also noted lying around the exterior of the central area during a visit in the mid 1990s and some of these are still visible today. A possible whare floor, c. 6 x 4 m, was located roughly to the southeast of T21/2 and has a raised bank on three sides (Figure 5).

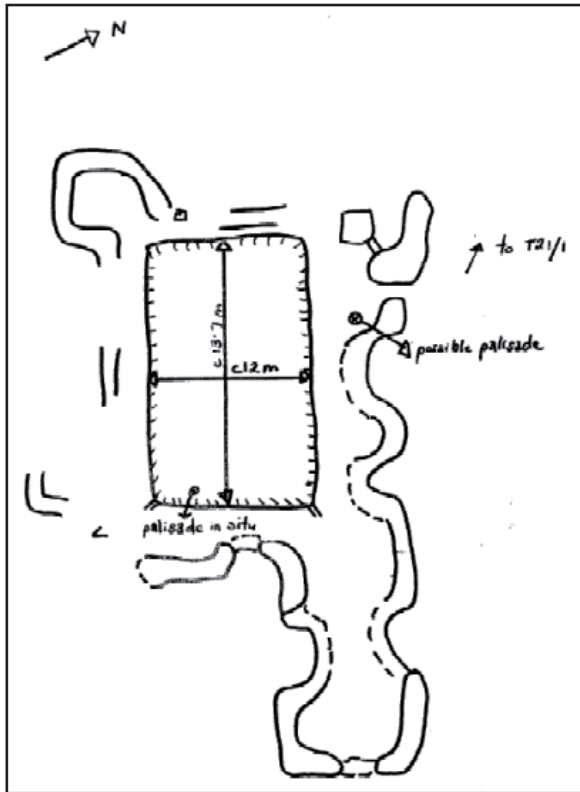


Figure 3. Sketch plan of T21/2 completed during NZHPT site visit in 2004. Not to scale.



*Figure 4. In situ palisade as marked on sketch plan of T21/2.*



*Figure 5. Centre of photo shows probable house floor located to the southeast of T21/2.*

## Site Management

Waiu Pa is currently managed by the New Zealand Defence Force who have marked a 500 metre exclusion zone around the site. Army vehicles are prevented from travelling within this exclusion zone and no rounds are to impact in this area. T21/1 is generally in good condition, but a thick vegetation cover of red tussock and shrubs such as small-leaved coprosma largely obscures the archaeological features. A barbed wire fence currently surrounds the pa and it is marked with the sign 'Keep Out: Historic Place' (Figure 6). A notice-board was prepared by the NZHPT in 1962 but was lost in transit and has not been relocated. This fencing acts as a semi-deterrent against the Kaimanawa horses in the area but more permanent fencing would provide better protection, and would also limit the effects of hare and possums on the vegetation cover.

T21/2 is poorly defined in comparison to T21/1; the general outline of the rifle trenches is detectable but the edges of the earthworks have been subject to horse-induced erosion as there is no fencing around the pa. Simpson and Jones (1995: 98) note that the vegetation also differs from that of T21/1 as a result of horse grazing and trampling, with a low browntop grass sward covering most of the site (though red tussock still occurs in place).

## Future Directions

Waiu Pa was recently registered as a Category I Historic Place on the basis of its outstanding archaeological, cultural and historical significance



*Figure 6. Army sign erected on the barbed wire fence around T21/1.*

(NZHPT Register No. 7651). It is one of the last gunfighter pa ever constructed in New Zealand and is a physical reminder of an important period in the history of the Whanganui and Murimotu districts. Waiu Pa also has considerable historical value through its association with Te Keepa and Captain Gilbert Mair, both leading figures during the New Zealand Wars. Waiu Pa is an integral part of the historical and cultural landscape of Waiouru Military Camp and its value is well recognised by the New Zealand Defence Force. The management recommendations of Simpson and Jones (1995: 100) need to be revisited however in order to ensure the site's long-term protection. As advocated by Simpson and Jones (1995: 100), "both pa, the gully wetland and at least the closest bush remnants should be protected as a landscape unit. The pa would not have been possible without the essential landscape setting of water and building materials." Hopefully the site will be accurately surveyed prior to fencing to ensure that all archaeological features are included in the protected area.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Gary Pennefather of the New Zealand Defence Force for arranging the NZHPT visit to Waiu Pa and to the Range Control Staff at the Waiouru Support Centre who transported us to the site. Thanks also to Rick McGovern-Wilson and Emma Brooks for assisting with the fieldwork and to the National Library of New Zealand for enabling access to the diaries of Captain Gilbert Mair. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Richard Steedman of the Otaihape Maori Komiti who provided invaluable information about the cultural and traditional significance of Waiu Pa.

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