

A PILGRIM'S GUIDE

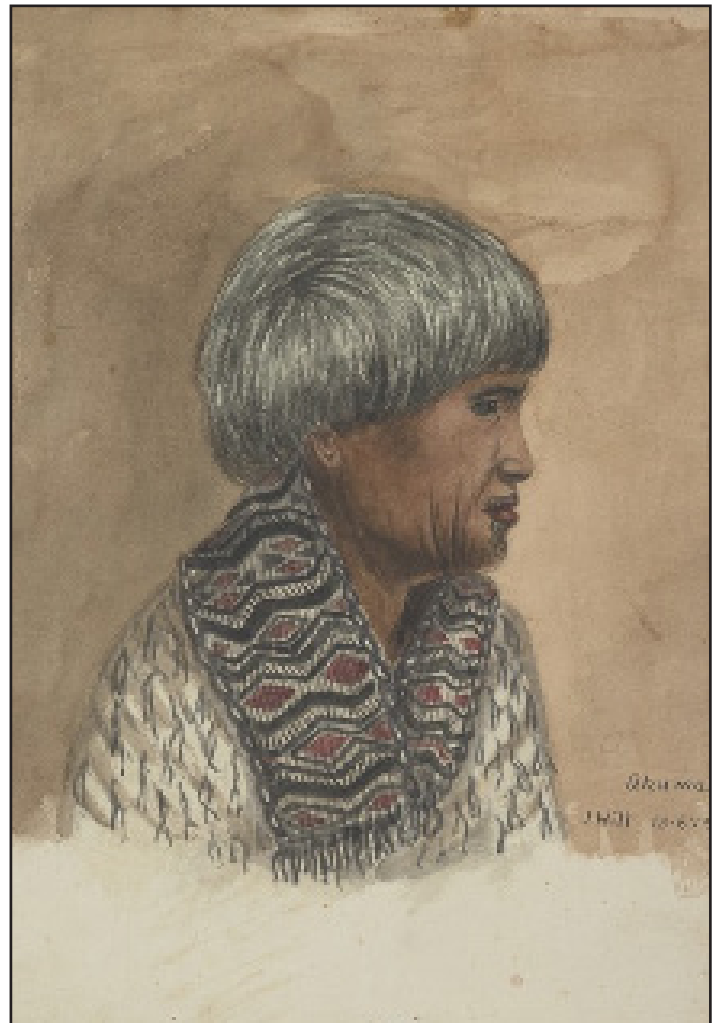
**THE KAITAKA OF
REWI MANGA MANIAPOTO**

THE BACKGROUND TO THE PROCUREMENT AND
RETURN OF THE LONG LOST
KAITAKA OF REWI MANGA MANIAPOTO
PARAMOUNT CHIEF, GENERAL, EARLY MISSION SUPPORTER
AND STATESMAN: 1807-1890



Many people in Aotearoa New Zealand will be aware of the events that led up to the battle of Orākau in March 1864, otherwise known as “Rewi’s last stand”. The battle was featured in this country’s first locally made movie of the same name. The relevant Waitangi Tribunal report makes it clear that Rewi and his people were simply defending their land and their way of life when the colonial troop invasion occurred in the Waipā area. The courage and resilience of Ngāti Maniapoto and their allies at the time has gone down in history.

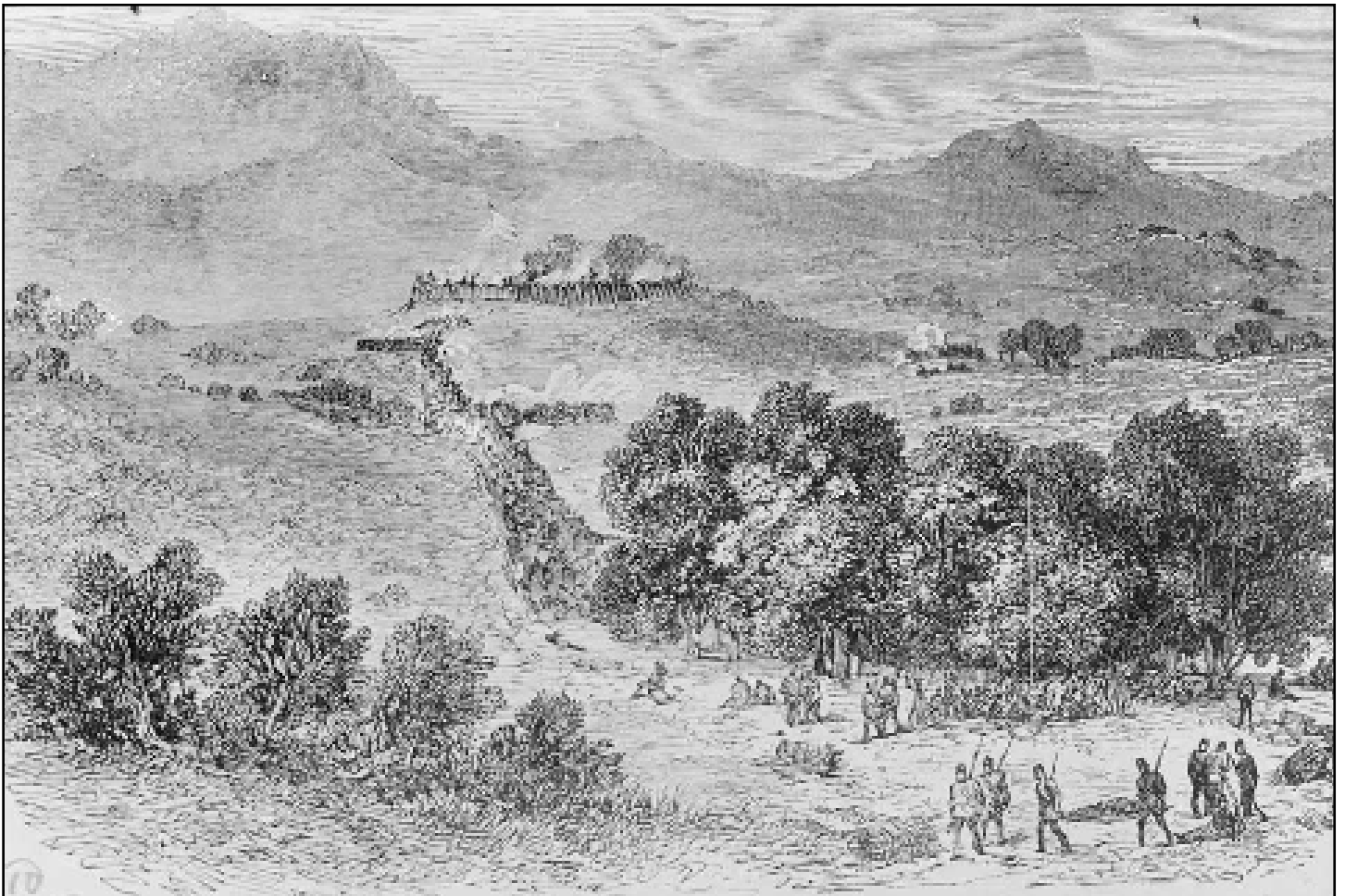
The decision to fight on for ever and ever and ever, mo “ake ake ake”, later became the catch cry of the Māori battalion in World War II, such was its clarity and moral high ground. One of Rewi’s close supporters was Ahumai te Paerata. Here is a 18 September 2018 Herald record of her involvement in Rewi’s last stand:



Even in the face of certain death, Ahumai Te Paerata - the woman who became known as the heroine of Ōrākau - was fearless. The 19th Century was a time of war in New Zealand, waged by the Government against the Kīngitanga movement, which started as a form of resistance to land sales in the Waikato.

The Battle of Ōrākau was fought between March 31 and April 2, 1864 near Kihikihi. The Māori forces were made up of warriors from Tūhoe and Ngāti Raukawa who had arrived to help Ngāti Maniapoto.

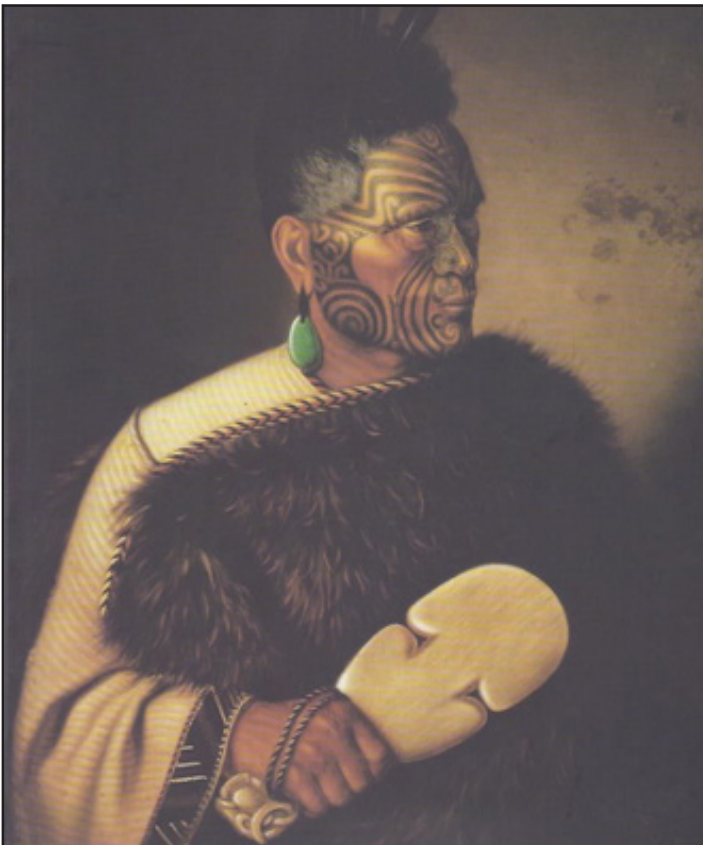
They began to build a pā, or fortified village, at Orākau - a development soon noticed by British troops stationed at Kihikihi. Before it was completed, British troops arrived and started their attack. Their numbers would reach more than 1400. The Māori defenders made up about 300, a third of whom were women.



The British offered the defenders a chance to surrender, but the Māori replied: “Friend, we will fight on forever, forever!” An offer to allow women and children a safe passage was then offered.

A young woman later identified as Te Paerata bravely stood up and said: “Ki te mate ngā tāne, me mate anō ngā wāhine me ngā tamariki!” “If the men are to die, the women and children will die also!” Her words would be the last said before they fled the pā. Many Māori were killed or severely injured. Te Paerata suffered horrific gunshot wounds, but survived.

In the year after the battle, her bravery was admired again when she wordlessly stood up for a Pākeha man who had been offered for sacrifice during a religious ceremony. Before a brutal attack occurred, Te Paerata, wearing a shawl, walked across the marae and calmly sat in front of him. Still bearing scars from Ōrākau, her poignant and forgiving actions would save his life.”



It is said that she placed her own korowai around his shoulders and lead him away.

The decision by Rewi and his people to escape from the doomed Pā at Orākau in 1864 in the face of overwhelming firepower, was based on the determination to live to continue the struggle for justice in another way.

Ngāti Maniapoto regrouped in ‘the king country’ with king Tāwhiao in and around Otewa, for over 10 years.

Then Rewi decided to try and offer a creative way forward for both sides to enter a new future together, without loss of mana or any more land. The rangatiratanga of Rewi continued as he made peace with the crown in 1878, and sought to re-establish the long lost trade he had originally offered his pākehā neighbours when they first arrived.

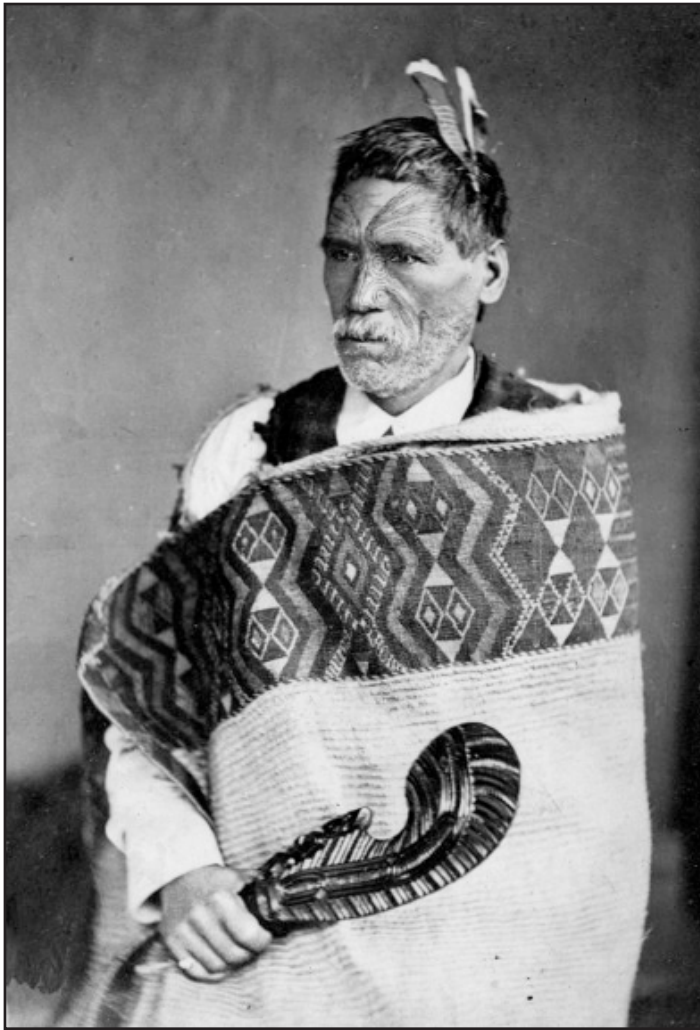
Rewi had also supported the first missions in the Waipā area, in the 1840s and 50s, including the significant horticultural projects of Ngāti Apakura and Ngāti Hinetu at Otawahao and Rangiaowhia, in partnership with the Church Missionary Society.

A particular feature of Rewi's offer of reconciliation and good will for a renewed partnership, was the gift of one of his personal

chiefly kaitaka to a near pākehā neighbour, Mr Thomas Grice, probably around 1878.

This gift is of incalculable worth, being the personal cloak of an Ariki, worn next to his skin on major occasions. The kaitaka is finely woven with a magnificent tāniko border befitting an ariki, a paramount chief.





Thomas Grice later returned to England where his descendants eventually lost all memory of this treasure, being hidden in a linen board. The chiefly kaitaka was discovered again by chance in 2019 by Mr Grice's current descendant, Mr Stephen Squires of Battle, Sussex.

A 19th century ticket attached to the kaitaka described it as belonging to Rewi Maniapoto who used to it make peace with the Europeans after the battle of Orākau. A New Zealand museum curator in London, Julia Gresson, has verified its authenticity.

Stephen Squires was advised to offer the kaitaka to the international market by auction. However a

careful intervention was organised by Kaawhia Te Muraahi, on behalf of the Ngāti Maniapoto Māori Trust Board to return this taonga to Rewi's own people, and thereby to Aotearoa as a whole.

The full ownership and use of this kaitaka is rightly the prerogative of Ngāti Maniapoto. Kaawhia Te Muraahi approached the Anglican church care of Archbishop Emeritus Sir David Moxon and Archdeacon Ngira Simmonds for confidential, diplomatic, financial and practical help, to reach out to the owners in Sussex, being Anglican.

Much diplomacy and negotiation followed overseen by Kaawhia, involving the Anglican churches' family network, through the in depth, careful mediation of Mr Roderick Forsyth, a



retired New Zealand lawyer in London. Rod Forsyth initiated a voluntary, careful and effective dialogue with Stephen and Mary Squires over time. Later help support came from Archbishop Philip Richardson and Canon Michael Hughes of “Tuia”, the General Synod office.

The kaitaka was eventually purchased care of Rod Forsyth’s legal skills using an Anglican church grant on behalf of the tribe. Thanks to Kaawhia, Rod and Julia, the kaitaka was secured in a storage museum in London, awaiting re-patrition. The Bryant church associated Trust in Kirikiriroa Hamilton also gave a similar grant for the exhibition of Te Kaitaka on return, following an approach by the Ngāti Maniapoto Maori Trust Board chair Mr Keith Ikin and Kaawhia te Muraahi, with Archbishop Sir David Moxon to the Bryant chair Mr Vicary Arcus, and Bryant Chief Executive Raewyn Kirkman.



The return of this national taonga treasure to Ngati Maniapoto (2021) at Orakau, became of great value and interest to many people, locally, throughout Aotearoa and globally.

Te kaitaka o Rewi Manga Maniapoto is one of the most venerated symbols of our past as well as our present and future. This kaitaka reminds us of the need to strive for a new tomorrow with everything we have, and also to make peace whenever we can, based on a measure of restorative justice.



*E te Ariki, Ko Rewi,
the highest mountains gather the most clouds.*

*You stood tall and true,
you rose above the clamour and the strife.
you found a way through turbulence and war.*

*We look to you still for guidance;
how to strive and to endure,
how to find a way where the way seems impassible.*

*You never surrendered, never lost hope, never gave up,
a chief paramount, a chief for all seasons.*

*Your hīkoi of justice and peace is ever new,
āke ake ake*

