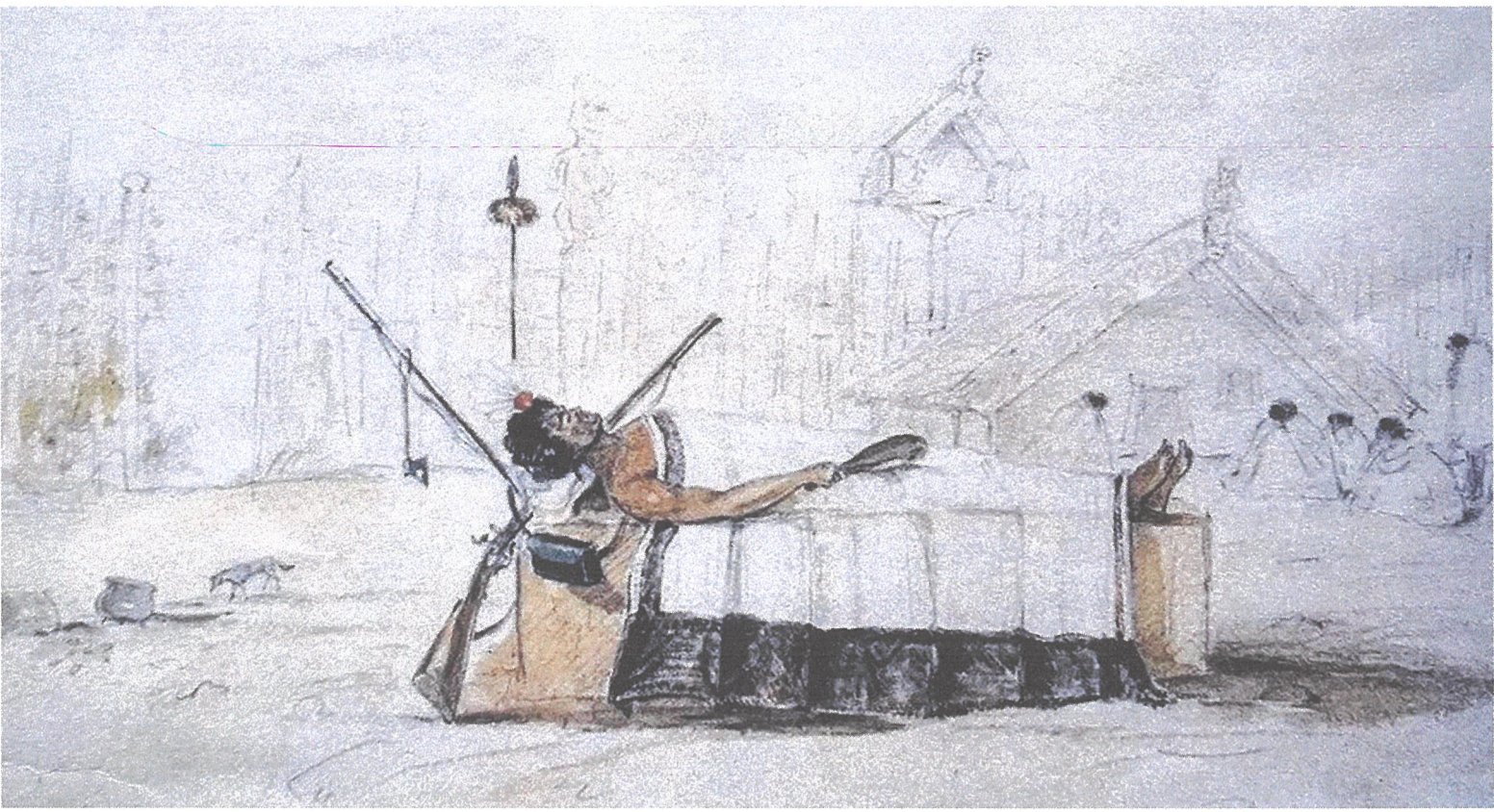




RANGATIRA PUKERANGI ORA
by Charles Heaphy
w/ the Tory
NOV 1839



URUPĀ
from
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Neighbours' discovery stirs archaeological curiosity

David Barton

The discovery of a possible cannonball close to the surface of an intertribal 1839 battleground in Waikanae Beach has baffled the finders.

Local neighbours Simon Leeming and Chris Turver, adjacent to the Kaitiaki battlefield involving Te Aui-Awa and Ngāi Raukawa, and now known as the Karewarewa urupa off Tamariki Place, discovered what they believe to be a cannonball, weighing 4kg, in early March.

Leeming was wandering through the overgrown area when he saw something glinting in the long grass. "I poked it around with my staff walking stick and pushed it out from where it was, and said 'On this has to be a cannonball and figured it was probably something quite important'."

They sent photographs to Heritage New Zealand which contacted several archaeologists who concluded the item was a natural phenomenon, possibly a concretion, and not man-made.

The pair turned to metallurgist Karl Purdie who determined from scientific analysis of samples it was a conventional made of lead and tin alloy.

Leeming and Turver briefed local kaumātua at Te Aui-Awa ki Whakarongotai and advised they were continuing their research and would present the find with the cannonball once their research had been completed.

"What stands out is that while hundreds of warriors fought at Karewarewa, and many died, there is no record of any field artillery being used," Turver said.

"They contacted Trevor Bentley, a historian and published author on Māori artillery whose research had demonstrated Māori had scripted cannons from the early 1800s."

"His opinion was that the Karewarewa cannonball may be an important link to early Māori use of cannons as many tribes had scripted them from traders and become skilled in their use."

The story gains added intrigue with the arrival of the New Zealand Company ship *Tory*.

In his book *Tribal Guns and Tribal Generals: The Story of Māori Artillery in 19th Century New Zealand*, Bentley said the *Tory* sailed past Kaitiaki Island and saluted Te Ōpārāhā with cannon fire, which was a custom established among ships' captains entering tribal waters.

"The chiefs were returning these compliments with their own cannon from the late 1820s," he wrote.



Simon Leeming, holding a possible cannonball, with Chris Turver.

'Ancient cannonball' found in Waikanae Beach urupa

What stands out is that while hundreds of warriors fought at Karewarewa, and many died, there is no record of any field artillery being used

Chris Turver

"It could have been from Te Ōpārāhā, or from the *Tory*," Leeming said.

Turver said: "It could be the answer because at the moment there's no explicable reason why a cannonball was there when all the homework we've done shows that neither Raukawa nor Te Aui-Awa had cannons, but

we can't prove it, so they may have had."

Leeming said both Purdie and Bentley believed the cannonball had been in the ground for a long time.

"The only other theory is that someone came in and put it there for whatever reason but it doesn't make sense."

Turver said there had been heavy rain, and it may have cleared some of the stuff off the top and exposed enough for Simon to see it.

Although much background information had been found, the mystery of how a large 19th-century lead and tin composite cannonball got into a Māori battleground remained.

"It's a little inside a mystery," Leeming said.

Anyone who could shed some light on the find could email Leeming via sleeming@gmail.com or Turver via chris.turvernz@gmail.com



A possible cannonball found in a urupa in Waikanae Beach. Photo: David Barton





Tribal Guns AND Tribal Gunners



The Story of Māori Artillery
in 19th Century New Zealand

Trevor Bentley