Hist 316 Group Project Commentary

When constructing our database of people who fought at Te Ranga based on the information provided to us, we agreed that it was essential to produce a spreadsheet that was easily searchable, making the information it contained as accessible as possible to those wishing to view it.

In order to achieve maximum efficiency in the way the information was presented, the first two columns of information were left relatively unchanged as the layout in which they were provided was already conductive of a spreadsheet. The names of warriors were grouped according to Hapu so that information regarding the capability of a specific Hapu could be easily garnered, and then the names of individuals were listed alphabetically to aid location within the database.

The final column of information was expanded to produce 15 separate columns which encompassed the range of weapons and tools found on the Maori fighters following the battle which each object given its own column and included the categories of ‘no arms’ and ‘never been to fight’. It could then be easily conveyed what items an individual had in their possession by placing a ‘Y’, indicating ‘yes’, in each objects respective column in the database. Additional notes could then be added in the relevant columns to indicate if they had multiple weapons of the same type or whether they were wounded, a cripple or a preacher. The chosen layout to express the information of the final column was decided on as it provided the most readable format for someone wanting to locate specific information as quickly as possible.

Although the information provided a good initial assessment of the capability and strength of the Maori warriors, it is limited in scope and does not elaborate on the specifics of an individual other than the weapons that they carried. The limitation of this source is that it is only a preliminary field report meant to give a basic indication of a party’s numbers and resources, with more information to be established at a later date which would likely be included in further correspondence. It could have been useful to find out the degrees of seniority held by individuals and whether there were any people that bore more importance than others. Who were the leaders amongst the captured fighters? Although the document makes mention of any people who were old or infirm, it does not elaborate on the ages of any of the other people listed. It would be useful to know if the majority of those held were fit, experienced fighters or teenagers or older men that might not be as effective a fighting force.