**HIST 316 Group Project Commentary**

This assignment asked our group to construct a searchable database containing the information given to us about the Pakeha soldiers in the Battle of Te Ranga. Excel provided the perfect means for creating this database because it allowed our group to easily divide the information into specific categories and allow a rearrange of the data based on the different categories. Furthermore, excel gives the option of creating graphs, meaning that if we wished, we could arrange the data visually in hopes of discerning patterns.

After deciding to use Excel as our formatting tool, the decisions for entering the data were fairly straightforward. We designated each soldier a row in our spreadsheet where we listed all the available information about him. The soldiers who died offer less information than the soldiers who were wounded. For each deceased soldier, our spreadsheet includes their name (or as much of it as possible), regiment, rank, and that they were killed in battle.

The soldiers that were wounded during the battle offer more information. In addition to their name, regiment, and rank, we included where they sustained the injury, its severity, and in some cases, how they acquired the injury, i.e. gunshot or bayonet wound. Due to the way we constructed the spreadsheet, we can order the list of soldiers by the type, severity, and location of their injury, as well as by their rank, or regiment.

Interestingly, by organizing the data in this way, it became quickly evident that we had more information about the 43rd Light Infantry Regiment than we did about the 68th Regiment. The list of wounded soldiers in the 43rd includes how every soldier sustained their injury. Of perhaps even greater interest was that all of the injuries were caused by gunshot. Data from the 63rd regiment is less specific, and only in the case of two wounded soldiers does it specify how they acquired their wounds, one from a bayonet and one from a spear. Maybe this inconsistency is due to poor battlefield reporting, or maybe one person simply took more care recording the casualties of the 43rd than the person recording those of the 68th. However, this could also point to the respective roles of each regiment. Perhaps the 68th regiment did most of the close, hand-to-hand combat, while the 43rd exchanged volleys of bullets from afar; therefore, doctors or reporters were unable to discern how members of the 68th regiment received some of their gruesome wounds.

By placing this archaic, analog data into the digital format of Excel, we are better able to manipulate, understand and interpret this information, thus gaining a better understanding of the Battle of Te Ranga.