History group project commentary

In our database, we included the names of officers who fought in the New Zealand war at Gate Pa and Te Ranga, the date they signed up for service, the date they were rewarded their highest rank, and any comments included. The source included every rank the officer had been awarded, but we only included the highest rank because we thought that was the most relevant. We thought the remarks column of the source was interesting, as it offered more detail into each officer. There were comments about the officers’ manner during the action at the battles they fought in; one particular officer fought with ‘coolness and courage under fire’, and another led skirmishes.

Some had only limited information, such as Arthur R. Close’s remarks just said ‘served in NZ war, 1864-5’, but some had more detail such as their injuries and any military commendations rewarded. Because of the limited information about some officers, it was difficult to know whether they actually fought at the battle of Gate Pa and Te Ranga, but we decided to include them in our database despite this uncertainty. We wanted to include as much detail about each officer, especially those with only limited information so we looked for more information on each soldier we thought we needed to find out more about.

The remarks column in the source also states that many of the officers were also present at battles in the Taranaki land wars, and also in other countries. We decided not to include the information about the officers’ duties in other countries in our database because we felt that battles fought by officers that were outside of Gate Pa and Te Ranga were not really relevant and we wanted to keep database specific to battle at Te Ranga and Gate Pa.

While the information we included involved those who fought at Gate Pa and Te Ranga, we also found small amounts of other information on certain soldiers from a range of other sources. This information mainly described how they died, which occurred for some, in New Zealand (or in other countries) or once they had returned home after retirement.