

## Chapter One:

# The Fathers of the Regiment

*Let us now praise famous men  
and our fathers that begat  
us.*

*Eccelesiasticus XLIV*

Old soldiers love to argue about the origins, traditions and seniority of their regiments. Aged veterans, and even some not so old, are well pleased if they can win a 'beer' from a 'mate' by proving that their regiment or corps is older and more deserving, through its battle honours, of a place on the right of the parade ground, than the regimental corps once served in by their friends. Even the circumspect Chaplains' Department sometimes enters the fray, with a claim that the founder of their corps was Bishop Odo of Bayeaux, who came to England in 1066 with his half-brother, William the Conqueror, and set about his foes with a gigantic mace at the Battle of Hastings.

The Sixth Battalion (the Haurakis), Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment, need not be hesitant in wagering on their unit's tradition. While the Hauraki regiment (at first the second Battalion, Auckland Rifle Volunteers) must formally date its birth at 9 July 1898, its descendants may claim as their parents the Imperial Regiments that fought in the Bay of Plenty in the Land Wars of the 1860s, and the colonial Volunteer Corps that sprang into existence to defend settlements from Maori attack, and to protect settlers from invasion from imaginary Russian foes who haunted vulnerable New Zealand coastal villages in the 1870s and 1880s.

Of the British regiments to serve in the Bay of Plenty, the traditional recruiting ground for the Haurakis, the 68th and 43rd Regiments of Foot, were the most notable. The 68th (First Battalion Durham Light Infantry) arrived in Tauranga in April 1864 and took part in General Cameron's deployment of troops and guns to Pukeraia Hill, about forty-seven metres from Gate Pa, on 27 and 28 April, 1864. In preparation for Cameron's attack on Gate Pa, about six kilometres from present-day Tauranga, the 68th were ordered to occupy a vital neck of land between two swamps at the rear of intricate Maori earthworks. The 68th Regiment were meant to block the escape route to Te