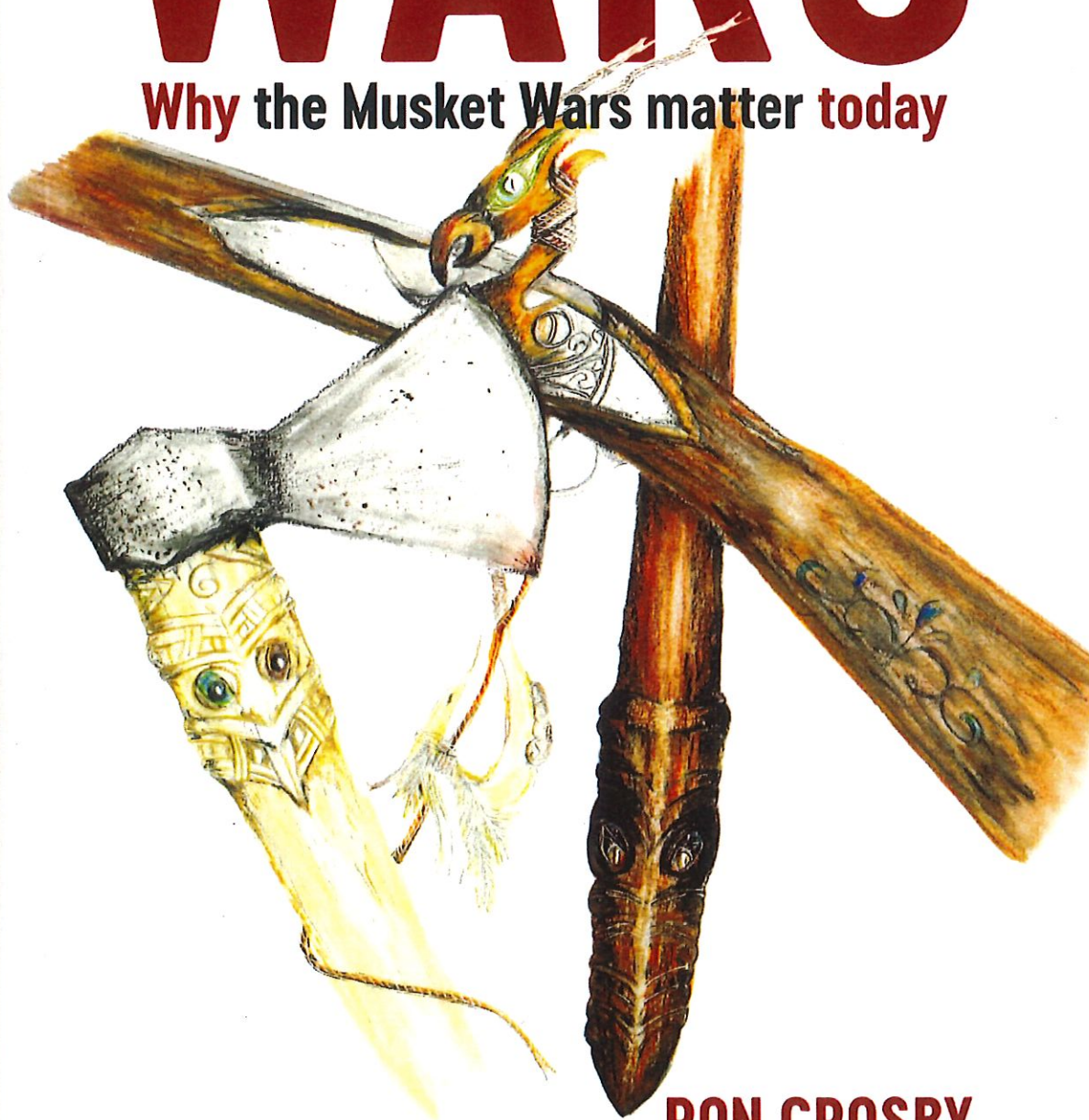


Crosby, 2020

THE FORGOTTEN WARS

Why the Musket Wars matter today



RON CROSBY

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THE PLACE OF THE MUSKET WARS IN THE TEACHING OF OUR HISTORY

The lack of awareness of the significance of the Musket Wars era in both historical and contemporary terms was demonstrated as late as 2019, when the government announced that New Zealand history would finally become part of our national education curriculum. It was a very sound and long-overdue decision.

However, when the initial list of subject matter was revealed, there was a disappointing absence of specific recognition of the Musket Wars era and its long-term effects. Areas to be covered included:

- › the arrival of Māori in Aotearoa;
- › initial contacts with Europeans; and
- › early colonial history;

then there was a leap forward to:

- › the Treaty in 1840 and its history;
- › colonisation, and immigration to New Zealand; and
- › the New Zealand Wars;

followed by later events.

If the term 'initial contacts' was supposed to cover the 30-year Musket Wars era, this can only be described as a demonstration of classic Euro-centric thinking as to the 'real' history of our nation, given that the Musket Wars era involved minimal 'initial contacts' apart from the supply of actual muskets by Pākehā to Māori.

It is to be hoped that by the time this book is in print the curriculum will have been revised to include what was the longest period of continuous, tumultuous warfare throughout the length and breadth of Aotearoa, which in large part laid the basis of contemporary inter-iwi and inter-hapū relationships. Māori, and all New Zealanders, deserve to have that crucial period of our history identified and taught in our schools.

ing in alliance with the Wars of 1845–46. Ngāti Maru wiped out Māori occupants of the great pā. In the area. Again the casualties were earlier ones by Ngāpuhi. In the Crown in 1864 at nearby when these are added to the losses inflicted at Ōpōtiki

erangiora pā to Waikato, Tainui, let alone the losses in the total of all casualties in campaigns from 1860 to 1863. In the north between 1819 and Ōhāra, Ngāti Ira, were either eaten and be absorbed within effects massively exceeded any in and kūpapa in 1846 in the

these localities during the Musket War, because of the imbalance of only a few examples of the events

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dominantly spread from north to the upper half of the North Island. On the North Island iwi, they too raided in the late 1820s. In addition, in the 1824–25 in the Kaipara and Te Kōwhiri followed by the oft-overlooked Haurangi in 1828 and 1832. In major temporary displacements. Initially, particularly in the

early and late 1820s, these migratory movements tended to be to more southerly areas of refuge. Some of those migrations led to worse outcomes as the former refugee iwi, such as Ngāti Toa and their allies, gained access to large numbers of muskets from about 1826 onwards. They then proceeded to launch repeated taua into Te Tau Ihu (The Top of the South) and right down the east and west coasts of Te Waipounamu (the South Island).

From the mid 1830s further major taua occurred repeatedly in the Bay of Plenty, East Coast, Taupō and Whanganui areas, continuing in a few limited locations even after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. By 1835, the Musket Wars had even moved offshore to Rēkohu/Wharekauri, with devastating effects for Moriori there.

HUGE NUMBERS AFFECTED BY DEATH, PERMANENT MIGRATIONS AND TEMPORARY DISPLACEMENTS

In the absence of any reliable census data, population figures and casualty estimates will always be uncertain. However, a reasonable assessment would suggest that impacts from deaths, wounds, permanent migrations and temporary displacements could have affected over 50,000 people over the approximately 30-year course of the Musket Wars, out of a likely population of between 100,000 and 150,000.

Human impacts on such a level and rate were massively beyond those of any previous or subsequent warfare in Aotearoa over a similar time scale. In the later New Zealand Wars, while imbalances in forces and logistics existed, these were not as devastating in terms of direct human casualties as the effects of the imbalance in firepower provided by the musket. Any direct imbalance in the New Zealand Wars was principally limited to that created by artillery, and in the limited cases where it could be brought to bear, by the impact of massed bayonet use by well-drilled soldiers. Otherwise, the imbalance was far less direct, taking the form of much-higher-quality ammunition and more reliable food supply logistics.

MAJOR PERMANENT MIGRATIONS DISPLACED OR SUBJUGATED THE ORIGINAL OCCUPYING IWI

The major permanent migrations of the loose coalition led by Ngāti Toa occurred particularly from 1822 to 1832, when iwi from the areas around Kawhia down to north Taranaki, and the Matamata/Maungatautari (Cambridge) areas, headed