

MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

**He karanga riri, e karangatia Paeko
He karanga kai, te karangatia Paeko**

- [1] In regards to the proverb above “Nothing has changed”.
- [2] Those who were in the army in my era, we all share a Facebook page. There isn’t 1 positive comment on that page about the army. The most common comment is they use you, abuse you and spit you out. There is no kawa: as soon as you walk out the gates you’re on your own.
- [3] I was in the army for 28 years.
- [4] To leave the process is that you submit a MD717. Normal practice is 1 year notice but I only had to give 3 months due to my amount of service. Nothing changes once your MD717 is submitted you still have to carry on (BAU) until the day you leave.
- [5] Depending on your unit and your unit commander you could get a farewell – but that’s not the norm. If the unit is engaged in full operations you might get a pat on the back and a letter. It doesn’t matter whether you’ve seen Operational service or your length of service or your rank. I left with rank there were two of us as WO2 our Command Team gave us a great farewell. However I know of privates, corporals and lieutenants who got nothing as they’re not guaranteed a formal send off. It all depends on how busy the unit is. A young staff sergeant after me didn’t get a farewell in the Unit I had just left.
- [6] I enlisted because I didn’t want to be a farmer. Dad and his cousins spoke about the 28. Dad was a 39’er. Paratene Kohere was his name. That influenced me immensely. I’m Ngati Porou and Rongowhakaata. I was 17 and a half when I

enlisted but I was accepted despite being too young because I would turn 18 during basic training with my legal guardian consent.

[7] I've listened to Vietnam veterans and I know the issues affecting them with their health and about the battles with veteran's affairs office. The issues that they have are the same issues that we have. That's what I mean by nothing has changed. The main issue is dealing with the stress and those suffering from post traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD"). I see it all the time on Facebook. "Brothers, so and so needs a hand". If it's not PTSD then it's something medical and we have a constant battle with those agencies that are here meant to be there to help. As one of my brothers said all we have is each other brother. That's how we help each other.

[8] You only get help while you're in the army. Once you leave their responsibility to us ends. Once you're out, you're out.

[9] All vets respect each other. Vietnam, Korea, Malaya, they are all our tuakana. The 28 are our pakeke.

Culture and the value of the marae

[10] In the early 80's the army didn't recognise Maori tikanga or values. That had to change over time. Early on there was only one warrior culture: English. There was only token Maori gestures here and there.

[11] When did it all change? When Des Ratima as part of the Senior Leadership brought in the marae concept. Before then there was nothing. The cultural change is embedded now and it has spread to the other services. It is a big positive. It's not every day you see the Chief of Defence Force giving his pepeha in a wananga being held at the marae, but that's what happens now in the army.

- [12] We had to fuse the British and Maori warrior culture and it couldn't be just tokenism. What the Senior Leader Team and Des started has grown. Today every soldier has to pass through that marae. It's not an option. They all have to do it. When they're in that wharenui they have to say who they are, where they're from and it is enforced by senior leadership. It ties them together.
- [13] What is it about Tumatauenga that has brought about this change? Before people join the army people have their beliefs systems all of which are based on how they are brought up, the people who surround them and it is hard to reconcile that belief system when you've only ever been brought up to know one side of the story. The army and the marae forces them to challenge those beliefs and makes them change.
- [14] The wananga that are held in the marae, they are entrenched now and are held every year and everyone has to go. Everyone. That marae has brought about a real change for the army. It hasn't eradicated everything and there is still friction between the races but it has improved massively.

The effect on my family

- [15] There's rage inside me from what's happened in the army.
- [16] We've seen stuff and my last couple of years I saw the damage that IMping process do and how they impact on the trust and loyalty between those in Higher HQ and the Officers and soldiers who were made redundant.
- [17] The rage is from what I've put my family through and the loss of trust due to the actions of those in higher command. My family came a distant second to the army.

The army always came first. There was nothing available for my family while I was away.

[18] I was a young corporal just starting out when my first born son was born. I was there for the birth and when I saw him next he was walking. That was during peace time.

[19] My daughter has a chip on her shoulder towards the army because I was never there. She's 21 today. She has made her thoughts and feelings known. I think she is justified to feel like that. The needs of the army came first. We learnt that from the Vietnam vets. Service. Duty. It was drummed into us. Service. Duty.

[20] I was lost after I left. I was lonely. The army was everything for 28 years. I didn't know anything else. I had nothing else. Service. Duty. The army came first. We knew nothing else. That's common among ex-army. When we're together we open up to each other. We talk. We all feel the same way. Our wives complain about that, that we talk with our mates but can't talk with them. Why? Because of what we've been through together. It's hard to explain. The bonds you build in the army. I'm closer to my army mates than my own brothers.

Transition into home life

[21] Before I got out I spoke with other veterans before I finished. I followed their advice and if I hadn't it would have been much harder. They said don't go straight into employment. Take time off they said. They said I needed to 'get the green out of me'. So I took 6 months off. That time was hard. The comradeship was gone. Re-adjustment was hard. The army installs its ethos and values and you don't find those values and ethos in civvy street.

- [22] Courage. Moral and physical. Courage to do what's right.
- [23] Commitment. 110% to everything you do.
- [24] Comradeship. Brothers before yourself.
- [25] Integrity. To do what's right and to take ownership of your mistakes.
- [26] Courage, commitment, comradeship and integrity: you don't see these things in everyday society. The army doesn't prepare you for life after the military.
- [27] Post army, what's the biggest difference? Colour. In the army you only see green. Post army there is no green. Only black and white. In the army everyone is treated the same.
- [28] When I got out it struck me how separate the rest of New Zealand really is on civvy street. Why do I think that is? It's the lack of leadership, mainly from the Crown. If our white senior officers can embrace Tumatauenga and all the tikanga and kawa involved what's stopping the rest of the country? It's the leadership that's stopping it.
- [29] Joe Bloggs on civvy street isn't forced to confront what's right in front of them. It isn't an easy road to take. The prejudice is still there in civvy street. I see it. I see it quite a lot. Joe Bloggs hasn't been challenged to think outside their comfort zone.
- [30] Many of my mates went into security in the Middle East. Most go to farming. Many just fall off the face of the earth. I still have mates today who are still security operators overseas so they haven't come onto civvy street yet. I think they went

looking for what we had in the army somewhere else. I don't think they'll ever get on to civvy street and they will struggle harder than me. I would have gone to the Middle East but my wife put her foot down and said 'over my dead body'.

[31] I've been on civvy street for 2 years.

[32] The main person in my family is my wife. She had to be everything: father, mother, banker, accountant, taxi, netball coach, everything. Every time I came home I put the routine out which lead to friction. I was only home for 2-3 weeks and then I was gone again.

[33] My daughter is still my princess and I'm still her father. However the closeness is gone now. It will take a while but it can be fixed. We are not close like we were when she was younger and I failed her when she needed her Dad the most because I was overseas and in her words I was caring about others more than her and her siblings. No mokos yet. What type of Koro will I be? I'll know how to rectify my mistakes. Put it that way.

[34] I have 2 sons.

[35] My wife and I live apart because of work. We were meant to be living in Gisborne but she hasn't found work here but if she does she'll come here. We're used to the separation. Effectively we've just carried on with what we're used to. Every 3 months I go home for 10 days.

[36] My 19 year old son is going into the army. He's waiting for his call up. I gave him 2 options if he was going to follow me into the army. Either be an officer or get a trade. Why? I don't want him to be an infantrymen because I don't want him to be

compared to me and no one knew me outside of the infantry. The infantry are called grunts and are the backbone of the army. As an officer you have to get a degree which gives you options outside of the army that's why I gave him those two choices.

[37] There is a higher percentage of Pakeha officers than Maori. There are many Maori and Pacific Islanders in the lower ranks e.g. soldier ranks. The tests to get into the infantry are not as high as other trades. Trades require higher qualifications so you don't see as many Maori or Pacific Islanders there.

[38] My generation swore we wouldn't be treated like the Vietnam veterans were, including how they were treated by the RSA and the country. The RSA doesn't represent us. Most RSA's are run by civvys who don't have the same ethos and values as us. The RSA do not and will not engage on behalf of Veterans like the RSL in Australia to improve & get better outcomes for us and they are non-political and to my generation the RSA is hopeless. That's why we don't go to the RSA. The only day we go there is on ANZAC day but only to pay homage to those giants whose shoulders we stood on: the 28 and everyone else that followed.

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