

**IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL      WAI 2500**  
**WAI 1344**

**IN THE MATTER OF**    The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

**IN THE MATTER OF**    The Military Veterans Kaupapa  
Inquiry

AND

**IN THE MATTER OF**    A claim by Turi Stone, Tamati  
Pohatu, Most Reverend  
Archbishop Brown Turei and  
Nolan Raihania.

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF TEDDY TOROA**

**DATED 14 AUGUST 2015**

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## **MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL**

- [1] We grew up thinking that the violence was normal.
- [2] Was the violence widely known among Maori families? I think so. We thought it was normal and that was how things were. We were brought up in Mangakino and then Rotorua as kids. In both places we lived next to other people who also lived with violence. That's why we thought it was normal.
- [3] Do I think things would have been different if we were brought up at Muriwai? I visited Nannies in Muriwai and they were always good to us kids. I think we would have received greater support if we had been brought up in Muriwai, that said there were relations at Mangakino, but they were always getting drunk. Once they started partying Dad wouldn't come home. The local cop, Scotty, would lock Dad up as he knew him and would lock him up for his own safety.
- [4] Dad hit us and our mum. It went on for years. He gave two of my sisters and one brother away to live with other people. My brothers and sisters asked ourselves why we were given away as we didn't understand it and we tried our best to keep in contact while we were separated.
- [5] There were horrible episodes for us and for Mum. After Dad died I sat Mum down and said to her, 'spill your guts. Tell me everything' and she did. She relived the violence that Dad did against her. Physical violence. Sexual violence. Stuff we didn't see. It made me feel terrible. I felt for Mum.

- [6] Not all of us were hit but those who were made up for those that weren't. In the middle of the night he would come home drunk and would get us up out of bed and would make us recite this poem, the Requiem and we would all have to say it. These are the words to the poem:

Under the wide and starry sky  
Dig me a grave and let me lie  
Long did I live and gladly die  
And I lay me down with a Will

This be the verse you gave to me  
Here he lies where he longed to be  
Home is the sailor home from the sea  
And the hunter home from the hill

- [7] Can we make a connection between the violence and the war? I blame the war. The poem is about the war and not making it back home. He never spoke about the war. All those families that we grew up with at Mangakino that were hit by their fathers were all World War II veterans. I'm not a psychologist or have any medical degrees or done any research or anything like that, but all I know is what I saw and what I lived through. And what I saw were families getting beaten up by fathers all of who had served in the war. I'm sure some expert could make a link, but I'm not an expert. But I think there has to be a connection.

- [8] When I was a probation officer we had a hui and the kaupapa was to ask why so many inmates were Maori? I asked the question if we could connect the violence among Maori men to the war? The lecturer taking the hui, a woman named Smallman, cut me off and said, 'leave sleeping dogs lie' and she didn't want to go there. No one wanted to talk about it or even put it on the table. Smallman looked

at education and lack of employment but she would not look at the impact of the war. I think she was hiding something.

[9] Dad didn't get a farm and I think that added to his anger.

[10] While we were young he never apologised nor expressed any remorse. But I think he tried in his own way to say sorry when he got older. I had him stay with me at Muriwai and while he was here he spoke with me in a manner that suggested that he was sorry and I got the feeling that this was his way of apologising. This was when he was in his 80's.

[11] When all us kids had left home Mum left Dad. She wanted nothing more to do with Dad. That's what she wanted.

[12] All my life I had grown up with hate. I had reasons more than most to hate. Just before Dad died I had started attending church and there I learned the gift of forgiveness. At Dad's tangi I forgave him in front of everyone. In front of his mates, everyone, I forgave him for what he had done to us and to Mum. As I said my korero to Dad I was only looking at him, not the people so I don't know how it was received by the people. All I know is that it was silent. But I made my peace with my father before we buried him. I purged all the hate out of me and buried it with him. Today I feel at peace. Total peace.

[13] What is my father's legacy to me? I was violent for a little while. I hit my wife. It made me sick. I knew it wasn't right. When it happened I woke my boss up early in the morning and told him what had happened. He helped me. I haven't drunk since 1986. My wife has always been patient and I'm very lucky to have her. At the time I didn't realise that I was becoming my father. I apologised to my wife, we made up

and we started again. Our kids are stable. This all happened when we were young and I'm so glad that we were able to work it out. Violence begets violence. But you can overcome it with the right support which I received.

[14] Did my father receive support? No, my father received nothing. No professional help or anything like that. The only support Dad got was the support that Mum gave him. But she got nothing either. Let's not forget that. And nor did we, the kids, we got nothing either.

[15] Our siblings and I are close. The next generation, we're careful to raise them and our mokos well. I suppose you could say that is Dad's legacy to us.

[16] He was always happy go lucky. I didn't know how to reconcile the two extremes. But for Mum's love and patience we would have ended up like that too.

[17] Is violence the legacy of the Maori Battalion? Without doubt for many families the memories they have of their fathers is one of violence. I can relate to that. But no, the violence is the legacy of the war, not the Maori Battalion. I got help, but they didn't and I don't think it was their fault.

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Teddy Toroa