

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL WAI 2500
 WAI 1501

UNDER The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF Military Veterans Kaupapa Claim

AND

IN THE MATTER OF a claim by Petunia Mahara-Taylor, Boss Mahara,
 Phillip Mahara and Ronald Miki Apiti (WAI 1501)

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF RONALD MIKI APITI

DATED 24 JUNE 2016

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Waitangi Tribunal

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Ministry of Justice
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Te Mata a Maui Law

PO Box 44331

Point Chevalier

AUCKLAND 1246

Tel: 0508-TEMATA (0508-836282)

Counsel Acting: David Martin Stone | Augencio Bagsic

David@tematalaw.co.nz | Gene@tematalaw.co.nz

MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

We went as Warriors of Tu we return as Warriors of Tu.

1. *Who am I?* Ronald Miki Apiti. Regimental number 42476. I am a Vietnam Veteran of two Tours of duty to the Republic of South Vietnam with Victor 2, 1967/68 and with 161 Battery 1971. I am Ngāti Te Wehi, Ngāti Hikairo and Ngāti Wairere. Aotea and Tainui are my waka.
2. I was born at Kawhia 22 June 1946. My birth parents were Moka Hopa of Ngāti Wairere and Rahui Hopa nee Edwards of Ngāti Rahui/Ngāti Hikairo of Waipapa Marae Kawhia. But my whaangai parents were Te Kaha and Te Ru Apiti of Ngāti Te Wehi. I grew up treading the waters of Aotea just like my tupuna Te Wehi did. This is who I am.
3. I am the Chairman of Okapu Marae at Aotea Moana, Aotea. I also hold the position of Kaumaatua for the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association (“RNZR&SA”). These positions are voluntary.
4. Presently I work full time as a Kaumaatua for Maaori Health, Te Kaahui Ora at Middlemore Hospital, Counties Manukau District Health Board, Auckland. I have been in this role for 4 years. My previous role was with the New Zealand Army for 21 years followed by a further 24 years with Broadcasting, Tainui Radio and with Maori Programmes, Television New Zealand (“TVNZ”).
5. *Why am I here?* Many of us Vietnam veterans really didn't know what this Inquiry was all about, but after attending the Whakatane hearing and listening to their Brief of Evidence, I decided to support this Inquiry and to give my evidence. I have to say good on them because it takes courage to talk about their experiences spent during the Vietnam War.

6. I think the South Island is the right place to give my evidence because this is where I joined the Army as a 20- year old in August 1966 and this is where I left the Army in March 1988.
7. I also would like to make it clear that the purpose of submitting my brief of evidence is because of my overriding desire to help and support the families of Vietnam Veterans, both Maori and Pakeha, in particular their children.
8. I understand that while this Veterans' Claim concerns how the Crown treated Maori soldiers and what the impact has been on them and their families, I want any benefit from this Inquiry and this Veteran's Claim to help benefit the Pakeha Vietnam Veterans as well. I say this because the army treated us the same, we got the same pay, we sat in the same trenches, we shot the same enemy and we got punished the same. And I think we suffered the same.
9. In the army we were soldiers first and foremost. Once you put on the green uniform you stop being Maori and you become a New Zealand soldier and that's how I viewed myself: a soldier and that was that. *Does that make it right? Did it feel as though I was abandoning my identity and culture?* It didn't matter. I wanted to survive. We had times where we could be 'Maori' and that was when we were part of the kapa haka group. In my day the kapa haka was called 'Haka Bludge' and it played an important role in the army based overseas especially among us Maori. We performed in front of dignitaries and the High Commission etc. So I suppose that while we were soldiers, there was a large part of us that still needed to be 'Maori' and kapa haka filled that need. But that was all we had.
10. *Was there any tikanga Maori in the army?* With Te Reo, no, there was no use of Te Reo, However some units in the armed forces did send personnel on language courses to learn Te Reo and other languages like the Malay language because 1RNZIR was based in Malaya then to Singapore. so we learned it primarily for strategic reasons I think.
11. *What about whakanoa?* Nothing. When I first got out there was no whakanoa so no tikanga there. The only time there was a whakanoa for me was after my second tour and my own tribe did it. Karakia, whakanoa, whakawatea, it was done by my kaumatua

and not the army. In 2008 everyone got a whakanoa at Wellington during Parade 08. The photos of those who had died were put in the waka. I didn't see the parade as a form of relief but I acknowledge that the apology helped.

12. *What did my tribe and family think of me joining the army?* Unlike World War 2 there was no hui among the people to discuss supporting the Vietnam War or not. Some of the Maori Battalion said fight, some said don't fight. Some said it would be good for discipline especially an uncle of mine Mr John Taua (US Silver Star) member of the 28 Maori Battalion, who wished me well.
13. My parents were strong followers of the Kingitanga and Te Puca, and my parents were still holding strong to what she said so they opposed me going. Like Te Puca, my parents didn't want me to fight because of the land wars. Ngati Te Wehi didn't lose any lands under confiscation but Waikato certainly did. And that's why they weren't happy with me.
14. *Is there a Treaty obligation between the Crown and myself, a Maori who fought for the Crown?* I never really felt that there was a feeling of reciprocation or a 'Treaty partnership' on part of the Crown towards me, but I felt that there should have been. I think the situation between a soldier and the Crown is a unique one. I think it is more than a simple 'employment relationship'. In what other 'employment relationship' are you trained to kill and expected to die as part of your job? Nowhere. Our job is not a normal job. So I think there are greater expectations on behalf of the soldiers towards the Crown to look after us in return for us putting our lives on the line.
15. When I enlisted I didn't have the same hangovers that my parents had towards the Crown. Later in life my views changed and I have a greater appreciation of why they viewed things as they did. Today people want to move on in terms of their land claims and I want to keep the land claims separate from the veteran issues, but the reality is my parents view of me was marred by their views of what happened with the land wars and our grievances, so they are connected. My mother said to me, 'you will never wear a korowai because of what you have done', which means in her eyes I had lost mana because of my decision to ignore her to fight for the Crown.

16. I returned home to my Marae in Aotea to a very hostile whanau who were angry that the Crown had put a road through our land and waahi tapu at Te Papa o Whatihua to a place called Maukutea. We, Ngati Te Wchi gave evidence about this in the Te Rohe Potae hearings. They absolutely hated the Crown for doing that and here I was, returning from war having fought for the same Crown had had desecrated our waahi tapu. So my whanau and my mother held both of those things against me. She was not a happy person nor was she happy to see me.
17. I remember her plating a Korowai and I asked if I could have it? She stopped doing what she was doing, looked at me and said in Maaori, "I will never ever agree for you to wear a Korowai to say that you are a man of stature in this world, to me, you are nothing, you will be nothing. You defied me and your ancestors, you went to war without our knowledge, why? It was not your fight. Therefore, from this day forth you are not to wear a korowai ever". I was too young to understand, what it all meant until many years later.
18. That's why I think the Crown obligation is greater to Maori soldiers who fight for the Crown, because of the history. The Crown has to make right that which it did wrong.
19. I had trouble settling down. I met my first wife Paku Raroa from Rangitukia, Tikitiki, East Coast and on 28 December 1969, we had our first child Desmond James Te Kaha Apiti. He was named after my buddy Des, who was killed in Vietnam during the T.E.T Offensive of 1968.
20. *What access to services did I have after I left the army?* Those of us in Waikato were lucky because we were not far from Hamilton so we had access to services but I know that for many on the East Coast, they found it hard getting essential services because of where they lived. Ra Paenga a Vietnam Veteran and a very good friend of mine was brought all the way from the coast to Hamilton for treatment. He like many others is no longer with us.
21. The access to services issue is a main reason why I decided to give evidence. It's not just about the veterans getting access to services; it's about our *whole* family getting

access to services, including our wives and our children. Today I get my pension, but what do my kids get? They get nothing and yet they have suffered. Many of our kids, they too are parents now and they cannot afford the medical bills, so who helps them?

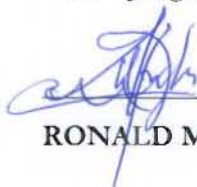
22. I'm also supporting this kaupapa because there is no recognition of the suffering caused to the family of Vietnam veterans in all its various forms. I have four children from my first wife and without going into details, they all suffer medical problems, as do their children, my mokopuna. None of my children wanted to talk about their medical conditions or have their medical records put on the record. So I ask, where is the assistance for them? *(However my daughter from Melbourne has decided to come and support).*
23. I believe that I am the cause of my children's ill health due to my service in Vietnam. I say this because both my biological parents lived long lives, with my father dying in his eighty's and my mother died when she was ninety. There was nothing wrong with them.
24. My children, they didn't want me to talk about their mother either. She too was a victim of the Vietnam War. Many wives were. She suffered too. Where was their support? Where was our support to help us support our wives? I believe she suffered from PTSD as accepted by the Veteran Affairs of New Zealand ("VANZ") due to anger and violence associated with the psychological, physiological and medical conditions suffered by myself as a result of my service in Vietnam. Paku died of lung cancer in 2002. We took her body back to Rangitukia Tikitiki East Coast.
25. Paku and I, we had our problems. I know my children may have issues with me because of that. My children today, 3 of them are now parents. They now have mortgages. They have kids to feed, bills to pay and people to worry about other than themselves. And they have partners to help them with those issues. For the most part, I brought up my kids on my own. And I did it all while suffering from the effects of war. I hope that now my kids have had to provide and look after their own children they now realise that it wasn't easy. I know there are unresolved issues, but what has happened has happened. I tried my best to be the best father I could be. I'm not looking for excuses and I'm not offering any. I'm just looking for understanding and I hope that they do. Kaati.

26. The PTSD that I suffered was further compounded by the actions of the New Zealand government, who rejected Vietnam veterans completely, not only by the government of the time, but by every successive government after that until 2008 when we finally received an apology.
27. I met my second wife Donna Kim Heke in 1990 and today we are still together. Thankfully I owe my life to her and so in 2012 we married. Donna has been unable to conceive and has had recurrent miscarriages (4 to 5 miscarriages) and other medical issues. When one of her cousins offered us her child we both quickly agreed. Donna also suffers from stress due to my moods and my constant nightmares. Our daughter suffers too as she gets frightened from the screaming and nightmares that I have.
28. I currently receive a NZ Veterans Disability Pension of 180%. My accepted medical conditions include the following: Fracture Dislocation Left Ankle with internal Fractures and Osteoarthritis, Sensory Neural Deafness, Tinnitus, Throat Infection, Alcohol Dependency, Eczema, Chronic obstructive airway disease, Stomach Problems, Cervical Spondylosis, Ischaemic Heart Disease with Aortic Dissection, Recurrent Lumbar Strain, Hypertension, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Diabetes Type 2.
29. In 2005 I was on 120% but after I had my Heart and Gut Operation 2011 I applied for Section 23 and got an increase to 180 %, Sadly my children and grandchildren do not get any support other than a Veterans Card to say that they are children of Vietnam Veteran.
30. I understand that Maori generally are less well off than Pakeha but Pakeha suffer too. I have veteran friends who are Pakeha who suffer and cannot afford the medical bills for their kids and I don't want to leave them out. Right from the start I made it clear to my lawyer that this journey is for Maori and Pakeha Vietnam veterans as we fought side by side and we are all in this kaupapa together and I feel strongly about this. We Vietnam veterans suffered together while we were together.
31. *What did the army do for me when I got out of the army?* Nothing. We had to look after ourselves when we got out of the army. No one was going to hire me. Who was going

to hire an ex-killer? I had to put myself and my children through education. It wasn't easy, but I did it. I went to a film and television arts school. I did it on my own – the army didn't help. It cost me \$12,000.00 which I paid myself. Being a Morse code and radio operator and musician helped I think. Some veterans were sent on settlement courses for 'civy street' but I wasn't because I didn't 'qualify' for it.

32. *Why did I not qualify?* I don't know if it was mainly Pakeha or selected Maori that qualified for that training or not, but all I know is that I didn't qualify. But clearly the army recognised the need to train soldiers to make the transition from army life to civy street, but they selected who got on. I'd like the Waitangi Tribunal to research what the criteria was for selection as we all should have been selected. We were soldiers trained to kill. We weren't trained or taught how to transition from army life to civilian life. However, I have heard that today there is now support given to today's soldier transitioning from Military life to civilian life.
33. Also just before I left the Army 8 March 1988, I was told I had to move out of the house that they provided for my family and I, straight away. I felt that all my loyalty and dedication including work in the army amounted to nothing when they told me this. Where was the care and loyalty from the army to me? Nothing. I was devastated about this. Because I had to quickly find accommodation in Christchurch, Schooling for my children and find work or return to School to upskill. I chose to upskill by attending a Film and Television Course.
34. Of the 30 students I was the only Maori and I topped the course. I then did a script writers course for 6 months and that was it. After that I got a job with television New Zealand and I was incredibly fortunate to interview many Maori Battalion veterans from all over the country.
35. I interviewed many of them, Rangi Logan, Charlie Mohi, the Reedy's, Noel Raihania, heaps of them, Hastings, Gisborne, Whangarei, everywhere.
36. They're nearly all gone now. I'm fortunate to have met these rangatira and to have listened to their korero.

37. I tell you now, every soldier, it doesn't matter what war they went to, they all tip their hats to the Maori Battalion. They are the tuakana to us all and they are second to none. Nga mihi kia ratou.
38. As cohorts many Vietnam veterans, thought we would all be gone before members of the Maori Battalion. Many of us were so sick because of our tour of duty to Vietnam. I don't hold anything against the Maori Battalion, but when we got back we didn't get any respect let alone the type of respect which the 28th Maori Battalion received and deserved. Instead we were called murderers, killers rapist etc and in terms of mana we got nothing.
39. A Medical team also served in Vietnam but I am not sure if there were any Maori Nurses in their team during my tour of duty.
40. Before I end my korero/ brief, here is a whakatauki / proverb from a very good friend of mine a Mr Hank Emery a Vietnam Veteran, it encompasses everything that I have said,
*"Let us stand united under the cloak of peace, Te Korowai o Te Rangimarie.
The protective Mantle of Tu-Ma-Tauenga,
And the love of God on High:"*
And to remember just quietly, the sacrifice made by those Fallen comrades.
41. Finally, I've attached the history of my military service, my medical conditions and the list of 'grievances' that I have on Attachment 'A' to my korero.
42. Judge Issac and members of the Tribunal thank you very much.


RONALD MIKI APITI

Attachment 'A'

POSTING – 1RNZIR TERENDAK CAMP MALAYA

43. January 1967, I was posted to Poananga's Battalion, 1RNZIR, based at Terendak Camp, Malacca, Malaysia under command of 28 Commonwealth Brigade as part of South East Asian Treaty Organisation ("SEATO").
44. New Zealand was also part of ANZUS (Australia New Zealand United States). So when America said we needed to increase our commitment to South Vietnam, New Zealand obliged by sending two Infantry Company, Victor and Whiskey Companies. 161 Battery Royal New Zealand Artillery was already based in South Vietnam since 1965. Other supporting Units followed.

MILITARY SERVICE IN SOUTH VIETNAM

45. I served two tours to South Vietnam. My first tour was with the second Company Victor 2, 14 November 1967 to May 1968. Our Officer Commanding was Major Worsnop.
46. My second tour was with 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery from January 1971 until May 1971, based at Nui Dat Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam. We returned to New Zealand the same Month. Our Battery Commander was Major John Masters MC.
47. During my first tour to South Vietnam I was a Rifleman with 3 Section 4 Platoon, Victor 2. My Section Commander was Cpl Gary King. Our Platoon Commander was Lieutenant Tony Howell and Platoon Sergeant was Greg Hill. Greg's elder brother Tiny Hill (ex All Black) was the BSM 161 Battery, Vietnam. We were under Command of the First Australian Task Force (1ATF) attached to 2 R.A.R. (2nd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment) & later with 4 R.A.R. (4th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment).
48. Midnight, 14 November 1967, Victor 2 Company left for Changi Airport, Singapore by bus and we were air lifted to Vung Tau, South Vietnam by Bristol Freighters. We then

flew to the Horse Shoe by Chinook Helicopters relieving Victor 1 of its Operational duties to South Vietnam.

49. We spent the first 6 weeks at the Horse Shoe on T.A.O.R (Tactical Area of Responsibility) patrols. Whilst standing at the Horse Shoe we were told there will be some aerial spraying to our front. The spraying looked orange in colour. We were not told what it was other than there is spraying to our front. We now understand it to be some type of defoliant / insecticide. Today however, I believe it to be Agent Orange.
50. I also remember clearly on one occasion when we ran out of drinking water and the area we were patrolling was mangroves and no fresh water but salt water. I tried using paladin tablets to try and purify and make the water drinkable. Even boiling it did not work.
51. We were not allowed to radio/signal in for fresh water supply because our mission was a covert operation and the locals and enemy Viet Cong had no idea that we were in the area.
52. I remember this very clearly because on midnight 1967 New Year's Eve whilst on sentry with my mate Eddie Harner, I said to him, "Mate I got a little bit of fresh water in one of my water bottle, I saved it for this hour and I will share it with you". Midnight hour 1967/68 we toasted the New Year with what little water I had and it was the most delicious water we both ever tasted even though it only wet our tongue. Two or three days later we returned to the Horse Shoe and re-deployed to Nui Dat, Australian Task Force Base Area. In the meantime the first Whiskey Company had already arrived in South Vietnam November/ December 1967, based at Nui Dat.
53. From Nui Dat our Company went on a number of operations inside the Phuoc Tuy Province and north of Saigon into the Bien Hoa Province. We saw action on several occasions *i.e.* Operation Duntroon and Operation Pinaaroo, but one in particular that comes to mind is Operation Coburg during the TET Offensive.

THE TET OFFENSIVE (Vietnamese New Year)

January 31 – March 1968.

54. It was called the Big Push South by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). During this push we made contact with the enemy (Contacts, front, left, right or rear). It was also during this Offensive February – March 1968, we lost two of our comrades KIA (Killed in Action).
55. The first was Private Des Hirini from Kawerau (KIA) 1 February 1968. The contact was late in the afternoon and his body was kept overnight because it was near on dark. Today as I am speaking to you I can still see clearly Des' body and an enemy (NVA) lying side by side together, their bodies silhouetted by moonlight lying next to our perimeter track. Next morning Des' body was airlifted by helicopter to Bien Hoa Air Base, and then to Saigon, now known as Ho Chi Minh City. We buried the enemy soldier (NVA) where he laid.
56. Gunner Elwood's body was airlifted out on the same day to Saigon. *I also might add that Gunner Elwood and I did our military training together (Basic 54 August / September 1966).*
57. 0500 the following morning 7 February 1968 we could hear the enemy NVA (North Vietnamese Army) moving into position to launch a Dawn Attack, unfortunately for them we were ready and we, 4 Platoon opened fire with our Claymores. Hell broke loose and we were completely surrounded by a Company to a Battalion Strength. However we managed to repel the attack at a cost of 8 of our members wounded from 5 and 6 Platoon. We continued on with the task in hand and later returned to Nui Dat after spending a short stay at Firebase Anderson.
58. There were another two comrades, Killed in Action whilst I was in Vietnam. They were Cpl George Hoerara of Te Araroa 26 January 1968 and Private Bill Awatere of Ruatoria, 12 April 1968, both soldiers was with the first Whiskey Company. However another friend Cpl Jim Gatenby who served with the first Victor Company was on his second tour with Whiskey 2, KIA 5 June 1969 and a relative, Lcpl Barry Wahanui Whiskey

Company who died fatally road accident Jahore Bharu Malaya whilst on R&R from Vietnam late 1968.

59. Cpl Jim Gatenby is buried at Terendak Camp Malacca, Malaya. Cpl George Hoerara buried at Hinerupe Marae Te Arararoa, Bill Awatere at Ruatoria and Gunner Elwood at Foxton. Pte Des Hirini is buried at Kawerau Cemetery and Lcpl Barry Wahanui at Mokai Kainga Aotea Road Kawhia.
60. However apart from Jim Gatenby it was many years after the Vietnam war that I found out where my friends were buried. It was a a lifting of my wairua/spirit to know where they were so I can visit their graves whenever I am in the area.
61. We had nearly completed our six months tour of duty to South Vietnam when 4 platoon's position was Mortar Bombed. Five of my comrades were hit and wounded by shrapnel. They were medivac to Vung Tau / Saigon and back to Singapore, before returning home to New Zealand.
62. I was not with 4 Platoon but instead I was a machine gunner of a 15 man two section patrolling near the Hai Hill's West of Nui Dat. Corporal JTD Runga whose daughters Boh and Bic Runga are famous NZ singers/musicians, was our Patrol Commander. Rihari (Dick) Dargaville was one of the Section 2IC. When we returned to Nui Dat, the rest of Victor 2 Company was already back at Base. The following day 14 May 1968 we were relieved by Victor 3.
63. On our return to Terendak Camp Malacca Malaysia. Most of the members of Victor 2 Company returned to NZ. Few of us including myself remained behind because we still had six months to serve in South East Asia. I and many of my comrades were very fortunate indeed to be selected to serve alongside Veterans of the Malay and Borneo conflict, because they were professional soldiers. I was one hell of a lucky young soldier to have served in a theatre of war alongside them.
64. Whilst on leave a few of my friends and I visited our five wounded comrades at BMH, British Military Hospital in Singapore. They were full of laughter, which was good to see and that made us happy and proud.

THE RETURN HOME

65. Later that year we returned to New Zealand amongst a barrage of protest. I could not understand why, because when I left for Malaya January 1967 I did not see any protest at all. I came to resent this protest more so in later life when I realised that the defoliants/insecticide that were sprayed in areas that we patrolled would come to play a very big part in my health and that of my children and grand-children in later years.
66. In September 1969 I left the Army and I drifted from one job to the other. I drank one bottle of whiskey every day for six months and smoked 3 to 4 packets a day. I became a drifter and a looser. I also met my wife earlier that year and we had our first child 28 December 1969.

SECOND TOUR VIETNAM 161 BATTERY

67. Early in 1970 I said to my wife that I was sorry that she had met me, because I have to go back to Vietnam. I viewed my life as worthless and I thought it would only get worse if I didn't do something. My wife reluctantly agreed and in May 1970, I re-joined the Army serving with 161 Battery Royal New Zealand Artillery based at Papakura Camp. I was fortunate also that I was able to buy back my service, giving me a continuous service in the NZ Army.
68. My second child Noeline Patricia Te Ru Apiti was born on the 30th of December 1970 two or three days later I was on my way to South Vietnam, alongside other members of 161 Battery RNZA. During this tour, the Battery was deployed on a number of fire support bases in the Phuoc Tuy Province.
69. April 1971, I can remember one incident during Fire Base Tobin when we were giving fire support to Victor 5 who was in contact with the enemy. An Iriquois Helicopter flew towards just outside of our perimeter hovering approximately 50 to 60 meters and just

dropped to the ground and made a loud thud. The pilot jumped out threw his helmet on the ground. His co-pilot was all shot up. I remember this vividly.

70. Our last month in South Vietnam Gunner RJ Rameka and I flew to Chi Lan near the Cambodian Border to take some of 161 Battery's equipment to 1 NZATTV (One New Zealand, Australia, Training Team Vietnam) who were based there. They were training Cambodian and South Vietnamese soldiers. We were stuck there for one week. I met some of my ex-comrades like Paul Hunter who was a Section Commander with Victor 2. (*Gunner Rameka completed his tour in Vietnam with 1NZATTV*).
71. 1 May 1971, 161 fired its last Round in Vietnam and on the eighth 161 Battery paraded on the Airfield at Vung Tau and each soldier was presented with the Vietnamese Presidential Unit Citation of the Cross of Gallantry with Palm Leaf. We flew back to NZ via Singapore. We stayed two nights at Neesoon Barracks. We arrived in New Zealand in darkness. As the proverb says, "I Haere i roto i te Po, i hoki mai i roto i te Po". (We went in darkness we arrived home in darkness).

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

72. For 44 years I would get extreme pain in my stomach and I would buckle up into a foetus position to try to control the pain. Every time I felt the pain coming on I would run and hide in the toilet or anywhere, where people could not see me. There were periods I would go without feeling any pain for months and for some unknown reason it comes back on. When I visit my doctor the pain would go away and I could not explain to the Doctor what was wrong with me.
73. In 1998 I was told by my GP I had a quarry of stones in my stomach and I needed to have the Gall Stones removed which I did and I thought this could be the cause of my stomach pain. Unfortunately, it wasn't.

74. On one occasion while I was on patrol in Vietnam I remember getting this excruciating pain in my stomach and I asked one of my mates to hold onto to me very tight until the pain goes away.
75. January 1969 Burnham Camp Hospital, I was being treated for some type of Hookworm I received during my tour of South Vietnam. I was told I had two deferent types of hookworm which I contracted in Vietnam. Despite the treatment I received I kept getting stomach pains.
76. 4 July 2011, I was admitted to Auckland Hospital ICU for Heart Operation, Ischaemic Heart Disease with Aortic Dissection, and a further 3 Gut / Stomach operations. I was also diagnosed with insufficient blood supply to my Gut – bowel ischaemia and my family was told that 30% of my small intestines were dead had been dead for a long period of time. This could be the reason for my stomach pain over the years.
77. Inadequate blood flow to the bowel causes a serious surgical illness that, if not promptly treated, leads to death in most patients. It has a high mortality rate of 6 to 9 patients in every 10. It is rare, but occurs in patients after major cardiac surgery, and commonly caused by poor heart function. I guess I was knocking on heaven's door. I was told I was 1 in 100 to have lived through the operation.
78. I was asked to take part in a Pilot study investigating the usefulness of novel biomarkers in diagnosis of NOMI. I agreed. I was given a STOMA and on release from Auckland Hospital I returned home. I went back to work but six months later I returned to Auckland Hospital to have the STOMA removed and have my bowel motions operating normally. And I thank my wife very much for taking very good care of me through my recovery and I Praise the Lord.
79. Because of my medical condition, I voluntarily left my job as Producer of Waka Huia Maori Programmes TVNZ on the 28 of February 2012 after serving 20 years with the Company.
80. On 3 December 2012, I accepted a Full Time position as a Kaumaatua at Te Kaahui Ora Maori Health Service, Middlemore Hospital Counties Manukau District Health

Board. It was the ideal place to keep an eye on my health and in November 2014 I accepted a voluntary position as the Maori Representative / Kaumātua Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association. (NZR&SA).

GRIEVANCES

81. GRIEVANCE 1: It was an unnatural state in an environment filled with anguish and anxiety. We were removed from our support circles.
82. GRIEVANCE 2: On return from leave, there was lack of counselling, support, failure to help reintegrate into society. There were no help line phone numbers. There was also humiliation and inadequacy. The Government and RSA had spurious support. We were paraded down Queen Street in Auckland and were subjected to a barrage of abuse.
83. GRIEVANCE 3: The Crown “clobbering machine”, public admonishment by our employer, the Crown. Veterans retreated into unhealthy lifestyles, denial, alcohol, deepening existing deep psychological wounds and damage diagnosed PTSD and depression.
84. GRIEVANCE 4: The Crown seemed happy for us to bear brunt of derision, failure to support or protect or stand up for us war veterans. This gave rise to accusations of delusion and feelings of abandonment. I started to even doubt myself. The Government denied our accusations causing further stress in particular that we were not sprayed/or we were not in an area that was sprayed with defoliant/ insecticide.
85. GRIEVANCE 5: Being taxed whilst in country on active service annoyed me. I understood there would be full refund at next tax return. I want a full refund in today's dollars. No taxation without representation. We gave away our rights to representation when we were in the country.
86. GRIEVANCE 6: The Army or government's failure to tell me about my entitlements and how to access them caused me and my family prejudice. The government is quick to post out leaflets informing other entitlements about what is available. Why did they

not do the same for my family and I? I had no knowledge of disability assistance until 1998.

87. GRIEVANCE 7: We had little or no meaningful contact with those in the Army on return from Vietnam. There were ad-hoc returns and no transition. We had no feeling of worth or brotherhood from the Army. Vietnam Vets were the only ones continuously armed then “dumped” into a peace time context when suddenly there was no weapon! My brain is unable to process this information or make sense of it. No wonder many of us relied on alcohol and cigarettes to avoid emotional reality. I for one relied heavy on booze.
88. GRIEVANCE 8: Hiding and avoiding the issues behind emotional problems contributed to disintegrated relationships. In turn removing one of the few support structure available wreaked havoc with my equilibrium. There were limited resources. It is my view that these multiplied and I suffered quite severe social and economic loss. It had an impact on ability to earn and on potential lifetime income. Business, work, family, friends all were an escalating struggle which need not have been (to the extent) had intervention happened, as I now know I was entitled to. When this was going on - unnecessarily prolonged - how do I know when the suffering actually started?
89. GRIEVANCE 9: The other most humiliating of my experience in March 1988 when I was told my services in the Army is no longer needed, in other words your service is no longer required after serving 21 years. I remember at Burnham Camp asking the Camp Orderly Clerk if I can go on a Rehabilitation Settlement Course to prepare myself for Civilian Life. I was told no I do not qualify.
90. GRIEVANCE 10. I asked the Camp 2IC if I could remain in the Army Housing area at Burnham until I could find accommodation for me and my 4 children. At that time, my late wife Paku had left us and I was bringing up my children on my own. I was told NO and I was to vacate the camp housing area on my last day in the Army. It was heart breaking to see my children wondering what is next. I managed to find accommodation in Christchurch.

91. GRIEVANCE 11 With no counselling from the army prior to leaving the Army, it was very heart breaking especially when you have children to bring up. How was I meant to go make the transition from Army soldier – a machine ready to fight and kill, to father?
92. GRIEVANCE 12. Normally when one leaves the Armed Forces he gets a clean bill of health and Dental Care. Unfortunately for me two weeks after I left I had an awful toothache and two of my back teeth literally fell out. I was also diagnosed with high blood pressure and the problems with my stomach.
93. GRIEVANCE 13. The loss of mana in my parents' eyes. The stigma of fighting was due to the public perception: a perception which the government themselves were fuelling! The government added the hatred that the public felt towards us, yet we were only doing our job.
94. GRIEVANCE 14. Lack on honouring the Treaty. The Government allowed things to happen to my hapu and iwi and to our land, yet had no problem sending us off to fight. They did not reciprocate to us and failed to do the right thing by our land. In particular, was the failure to consult with us by putting a power line right through our marae and as a result we can't re-new our whare tupuna and wharekai and to do so would cost \$80,000.00 to move the Power Line and Transforma before we could do any restoration.
95. GRIEVANCE 15. The desecration of waahi tapu: the loss of my parents' dignity because of the road put through from Te Papa o Whatihua at the Landing Aotea Road to Maukutea during the 1960's without their consent. Here I am fighting, what respect does my family get in return for my putting my life on the line?

POST WAR VIETNAM

96. Post war Vietnam I stayed on in the Army for further 17 years serving with the following Units, 1 Ranger Squadron NZSAS Papakura, 161 Battery Papakura Camp, 32(E) Battery, Burnham Camp, 4 Medium Battery, Hamilton, 2 RNZIR Burnham

Camp, 1 RNZIR Singapore, C Company, 5 Wellington West Coast Taranaki Regiment (5WWCI) Palmerston North. Training Wing Burnham Camp.

97. March / April 1988 I got a call from my Marae it was time for me to return home to take up my position on the Paepae as one of their leaders and speaker. I accepted and the old people taught me everything in terms of reo and Tikanga.
98. If my evidence will help in any way to help the children and grandchildren of Vietnam Veterans then I have repaid my debt to society particularly my mother and to my ancestors of Ngati Te Wehi.
99. There is a proverb they use to say to me "Ma te hee ka kite ai te tika" "from the wrong you will eventually see the truth".
100. Waitangi Tribunal thank you very much.



RONALD MIKI APITI