

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.

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF WHIRIMAKO BLACK

DATED 21 MARCH 2016

Te Mata a Maui Law

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MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

- [1] My name is Barbara Whirimako Black.

- [2] My father was Stewart Tai Paraki of Tuhoe. Dad was Maori Battalion, B Coy. Officially Dad was 19 when he went to war but I doubt this. The birth certificates for Ruatoki Valley were kept at Tawera School including Dad's and the school burnt down so there is no way to verify his actual age, but I am positive he was underage when he enlisted.

- [3] Dad's father, Eru Te Whiti (Jack) Black served in World War 1 and he was from Whakatohea and Te Whanau-a-Apanui. Jack was part of the Maori Pioneers and saw action at Gallipoli. Koro Jack was devastated when Dad enlisted. Koro Jack and Dad were very close to each other. Koro Jack was a solo father but despite that he won the Bledisloe Farming Cup for being the best Maori farmer 2 years in a row. Dad would go out to accompany Koro when he went out to drink, but he didn't drink himself. He would go out just to sit and be with him. Koro Jack remarried which upset Dad very much. It upset Dad so much that he enlisted.

- [4] We thought life was normal. But our life was a violent one. There were dangerous times in our home. Dad suffered from flashbacks. One time Dad aimed his gun at my brother and it went off. He thought my brother was the enemy. My brother is in denial about it, but it happened. There is an element of honouring Dad's memory, which is why he doesn't acknowledge it.

- [5] It is extremely difficult for me to give this korero. I thought long and hard about whether I should bring this korero out, or not. In the end I decided to do so because

I wanted the cycle to stop. I think by talking about this issue we can move forward.
No more lies.

[6] No one really lets on what is going on behind closed doors. It doesn't matter what your status is, violence happens everywhere.

[7] My friends and I would go to school and compare our marks with each other. I got my marks from Dad's belt. The older brothers got it more than the younger ones. They laugh it off now and say that's how it was. That is how it was. But that doesn't make it right. There are many examples of the incidents that happened to us. Let's just leave it there as I think people get the message.

[8] Our neighbours knew about the violence. I had to run next door to get them to help. I put the blame on our fathers not being de-briefed when they got back and not receiving any help.

Tokanui Hospital

[9] Dad was put into Tokanui hospital mental ward in the 1960's. I was 5 years old at the time but I still remember the trips to Tokanui. I remember the long trips and I always had to stay and wait in the car while Mum went in. I travelled there about 6 years ago when I was nearby doing a gig. I only went there because of the memories.

[10] I ask Mum about Tokanui. She said electric shocks were the only treatment available. I was horrified when I heard how Dad was treated. I don't know of any other 28 who went to Tokanui. Was my father the only one? I don't know.

[11] There was a definite shame about Dad being put into Tokanui and we were all tarnished by it. People would say, 'you Blacks are crazy, just like your old man'. That still haunts us today. That's a whakama that continues to wrongly exist.

[12] I want our father's medical records for when he was at Tokanui. Is this something the technical research for this kaupapa can find out for us, please, as we want to know?

Ta Henare

[13] On ANZAC day some time ago the Mahurehure marae ANZAC hall was opened and a contingent from Nga Puhī turned up. After the opening they came to our house and they filled it. They were sitting all around the house and they spent the day and night with Dad talking with Dad about the war and sharing their korero with each other. That's how much Nga Puhī knew and respected Dad. My father got his orders from Ta Henare. They called him Te Kehua – the Ghost; that's what Nga Puhī called him.

[14] At Ta Henare's tangi when Dad was going on with an ope, Nga Puhī stopped the ope because they found out that *Te Kehua* was in the ope and they asked that he come to the front of the ope because they respected Dad that much. Nga Puhī told my brother how much they respected Dad.

[15] My father would go out at night to do dangerous jobs. He would always volunteer for these dangerous missions. He did it because he knew that these missions could save lives, the brother's lives, and he wanted to save them. He knew that taking people with you endangered them, so he went out at night by himself. On one

mission he slit the throats of 18 sleeping Germans. He was found back at camp drenched in blood smoking cigarette after cigarette.

[16] Dad was part of a volunteer group who were trained to deactivate mines. They were given 2 hours training. The people who were actually trained to deactivate mines were not Maori Battalion and refused to go on the mission they were going on. They went out at night and had to feel around for the mines. They were nervous doing it, but they did it. They had to clear a path for the rest of the battalion. They actually went further than what they were meant to do and went past the Germans. There is a photo of 4 of them after they had just come out of de-arming the mines. That's what my Dad did.

[17] Dad got injured and he woke up in hospital. He said he thought he was in heaven because everyone was dressed in white. The hospital he was put in was filled with Indian people because they didn't know what he was and thought he was Indian.

[18] Dad blew up a tank but didn't want the recognition. The recognition didn't matter to him.

[19] Dad said that Ta Henare said our men had to go back and replenish the ranks by having children to replace those who were lost. Dad said that was one of Ta Henare's last orders and he took it seriously. There are 10 of us.

[20] Dad couldn't read or write when he enlisted. That was Koro Jack's fault as he didn't ensure that Dad went to school. Dad was invited to go to Officer's school when he was in the army but because he couldn't read or write it didn't happen.

[21] Dad was a sergeant. He was a sniper and because of that he was a marked man.

- [22] Dad loved the underdog and loved working with the kids. When he went hunting at Ruatoki if would take kids with him if they were doing nothing and taught them hunting and survival skills, shooting, horse and bush skills.
- [23] When Dad got back Koro Jack brought him a farm to help bring all the kids together. I think Koro Jack knew what Dad had experienced and what he was going through. Koro giving Dad a farm was rare: not many Maori could afford to do that. But Koro would always give things away to other people.
- [24] George Marsden through Maori Affairs gave Dad a loan to build a house. George was a veteran, A Coy, he didn't interview Dad when he applied for the loan: he just talked with Dad about the war.
- [25] Dad had trouble keeping down his job. He would just walk off the job. He would go to the bush in the Uruera and would go to the river. Many of them did that. It was a healing place for many Tuhoe as it was for my Dad. Dad must have had a very understanding boss. Coast people would go to the coast. Tuhoe would go to the bush. Our Maori people didn't have anything else.
- [26] What do I want from this? I want the people who have gone through, this like we have, to know that they are not alone. We have to share with each other so that we can move on. The witnesses to the violence have to come together. I want to know, what has the Crown done to help families like mine? I want that researched by the Waitangi Tribunal.
- [27] I want answers. Why didn't our fathers get the help they needed? I want that researched by the Waitangi Tribunal.

- [28] I want greater education. I want our people to know what Dad went through so there can be greater understanding so the stigma of Tokanui hospital can be removed.
- [29] I went to Italy after Dad died. For me it was about re-grouping and filling in so many missing gaps. It was really sad being there. I felt privileged being there. It was about sharing our grief.
- [30] Tuhoe: our stories are no different. If anything, they're worse.
- [31] The men have to be thanked for giving us a better life. You got rubbished growing up for simply being Maori and I think the actions of the men helped address that. The Crown and Pakeha have not honoured what the Maori Battalion have done.
- [32] Dad's mother was Tuhoe and Tuwharetoa. Mum had brothers who fought in the war, Tahae and Ihaea Trainor. Tahae lies at Monte Cassino. Dad was literally his Uncle's reinforcement: he replaced his Uncle. The other brother, Ihaia trained as a bomber pilot in France.
- [33] Tuhoe gave many people to the war. The Hohua family, a father and 6 of his sons. The father, Hori Mautaiaha, was a first war veteran but he re-enlisted for the second war to look after his sons.
- [34] The stress of our people dying was massive on our people. Our great grandfather, he went blind when he found out that they were killed. Takarua Tamarau, a Tuhoe chief, his son, George Hori Takirua (who was a Lieutenant) died with Tahai. When Takarua found out that his son had died, he scratched and mutilated his body. They didn't want to lose their kids. That's why I think the war had such an impact on

Maori: how can you say they were violent people when they clearly loved their children so much? That was the impact of the war on our people.

WHIRIMAKO BLACK