

Maori battalion report

What was the Maori Battalion

The 28th Maori battalion was composed of 700-750 men that were separated into 5 groups. The rifle companies were called ABCD and the 5th group was the HQ.

Why was the 28th (Māori) Battalion created and how was it organized?

The 28th Maori battalion was formed in October 1939 to encourage Maori men to join. They wanted to prove they were equal with their pakeha. The Maori battalion was made out of 700-750 men, and they were split into 5 groups: the 4 rifle groups containing 125 men and a headquarters group made out of 200 men. Each of them had a captain or major. The headquarter group has 6 smaller platoons, anti aircraft, mortars, gun carriers, pioneers and transport.

Part 2: What was life like for a 28th (Māori) Battalion veteran when they came home?

The battalion sailed for home on boxing day in 1945. They arrived at Wellington in 1946 the remaining soldiers, specifically 780 soldiers, were welcomed as heroes. When the war was over. Lieutenant-Colonel James Henan dismissed his men with these exact words: Go back to our mountains, go back to our people, go back to our marae. But this is my last command to you all - stand as Māori, stand as Māori, stand as Māori. The Maori made connections with their Pakeha. The Maori were treated with respect that would last a lifetime after the war. The Maori after the war were still poor and got the lowest paying jobs. Some Maoris were scarred after the war because of the gruesome things they had seen. Some had pride because they had survived the war. Some missed the excitement and purpose of the war, so they also found it hard to settle back into civilian life.

Part 2: What was some of the reasons Maori men joined the 28 (Maori battalion)

Some joined the Maori battalion because of poverty or boredom of life in the back blocks, some to follow their mates or seek adventure. They also joined the 28 Maori battalion because they wanted to protect their country, friends and family. Some also joined the air force and navy.

Part 2: life in the 28 (Maori) battalion.

Inside the Maori battalion was boring. So they used sports and entertainment to keep soldiers occupied while maintaining morale and fitness. The haka was useful for the Maori battalion because it intimidates the enemies, and they have been praised many times for it. Most of their time was spent on square bashing, a military drill performed by soldiers. The haka the Maori battalion did was the Te Arawa peruperu or in english dance with weapons it is meant to intimidate the enemies. So it was important to give the Maoris the upper hand.

What were the roles of men and women during the war?

The role of men and women was both equal. Women served as nurses and took care of crops, livestock and children. Women knit hot clothes for men because of the harsh conditions of the battlefield. Women also bake food for men and women send them in care packages. Women organized events to raise money for war related causes. Women take care of the soldiers while the soldiers fight for their country.