

Atiria Pomare (Tai Tokerau) of Wellington: Who only just moved from Auckland.

Whaingaroa Walker (Ngati Porou) of Wellington: Keen Rugby League player in the city, and

Makere Love (Ngati Toa/Kahungunu) of Porirua: Who intends to continue her studies at Raukawa University.

Chas Rihari, from Te Ti, in the far north, joined us for the field visit to the east coast. Postmaster in Wellington, he lent weight to our class.

Our tutors (Kaiako) were: Te Ariki (Derek) Mei of Waimako Marae in Tuai, near Waikaremoana, Huiranga Waikarepuru of Hawera, and Roimata Kirikiri of Te Poho-o-Te-Rehu Marae in Nuhaka.

The Ministry of Defence has always encouraged its serving personnel to apply for language courses and it is attracting more servicemen.

There is a lopsided advantage servicemen enjoy when attending courses of this nature, compared to civilian students. Whereas the course fees are paid for us, salary and rank status are unaffected, and accommodation is provided at either Fort Dorset in Seatoun, or the Air Force Base at Shelley Bay. A number of civilian students actually sacrificed a lot to get here.

Defence however, expects its money's worth. On completing the course, the soldier can offer advice to his superiors on:

- a. Funerals, if the deceased is a Maori serviceman.
- b. Military funerals for Maori servicemen when liaison is necessary between the bereaved family and the Army.
- c. Protocol on the Marae, and

d. Military visits to a Marae, where the soldier may have to perform the task of kai korero on his commander's behalf.

As the Level 4 Course covers the art of whaikorero, much is taught on Level 3 that the student could competently speak on the paepae without jeopardising the formality expected.

Week 1-2

The first day began in Building 3A with a powhiri and speeches from the tutors, concluding with some of the students replying.

Building 3A became our home.

At this level, all lessons were in Maori and most of us had difficulty in understanding initially, until we got to work on "Nga Mahi A Nga Tupuna". This book contained classical Maori and it was a great help.

Other books were read, waiatas were sung at every opportunity, karakia spoken throughout the day, and gradually things started falling into place.

The dialectal differences between tribes was most noticeable when listening to Huirangi and Te Ariki.

The Taranaki tribe completely ignore the letter "h" from its vocabulary, so that the word "aroha" is actually "aro'a".

It can be quite unsettling as I, in my naive way, thought Maori spoken was all the same in this country.

Te Ariki made reference to Tuhoe, of which he is part, dropping its "g". "Tangata whenua" became "tanata whenua" or "tanata wenua".

On our field trip to Tuhoe, the letter "h" was sometimes omitted, depending on personal preference we assumed.

Week 2 was a mixture of studying and raising money for our field trip and it passed quickly, although Friday night preceding our departure was spent convivially at the clubrooms of the Eastern Suburbs Rugby League clubrooms in the city.

Week 3

Sunday morning (12th June) saw us heading north for a week in the East Coast and Tuhoe regions.

About 20 of us, including children made the trip and a student of the evening classes Chas Rihari, took time off to be with us.

The first stop was in the afternoon at Te Huki marae in Raupunga, where Te Ariki was re-united with his wife after some weeks of batching with his son in Wellington.

Te Huki was a famous ancestor of the Kahungunu and the picturesque meeting house in memory of him was very appropriate.

After a belated lunch, it was on to Wairoa and Takitimu marae before nightfall. We were made welcome and some members of the culture group who entertained us at Te Huki, were present also at the rehearsals held that evening in Takitimu.

We spent two nights at this imposing place, Monday's travels included the Taihoa marae, in which the eponymous ancestor is Te-O-Tane.

One of its famous sons was Sir Turi Carroll, who apparently initiated the name to the marae after a query by a frustrated landowner who demanded some speedy governmental action in regards to some land at issue at the time. I was told this story, I swear.

Te Poho-O-Te-Rehu marae is nestled on farmland just north of Nuhaka where an impromptu waiata by the tangata whenua was well received.

The Mahia peninsula was visited.

Monday evening was a teacher/student participation forum where we asked and the kaumatua answered to the best of their ability.

We thanked them very much, especially the connections of the outer tribes, such as Waikato, to Ngati Kahungunu; for most of us, it was one of the highlights of the field trip.

Tuesday and we were on our way to Tuhoe. Bruce Aranga, the Community Officer for the Maori Affairs Dept in Wairoa joined us for this phase.

A brief halt at Waimako marae, then a 3½ hour jaunt inland to the Maatata marae in Ruatahuna.

The road in is, well, driveable. Being from the Waikato, I sensed a twinge of claustrophobia at times with the tall native bush either side of the road dominating the landscape for miles on end.

The only indication of habitation was farmland or pockets of it as we neared Te Whaiti marae, and horses meandering about, untethered, of course.

Left to right: Rana Tahī, Whare Biddle, Pera Tahī on the Maatata marae Ruatahuna.

