

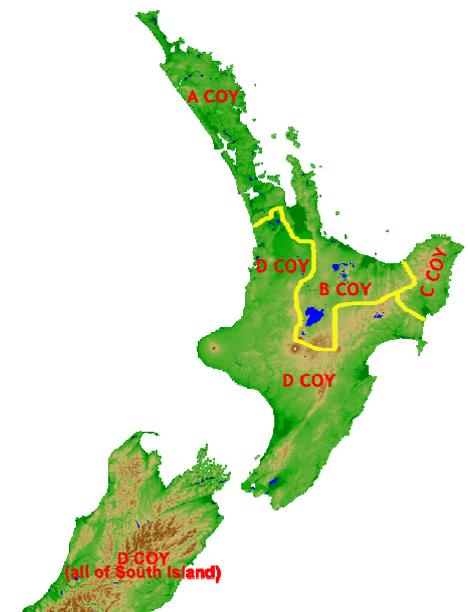
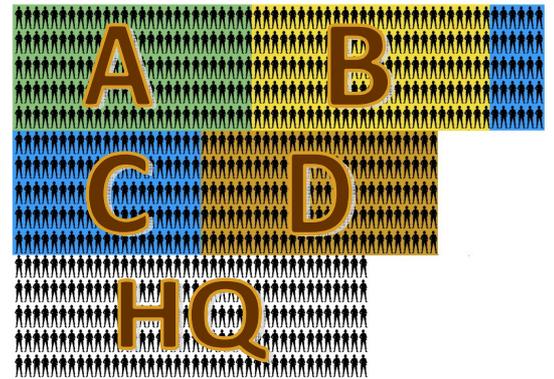
# Fast Facts

# NGA PAKANGA TE ARAWA AT WAR

## AKE! AKE! 28 MAŌRI BATTALION

- The exhibition on display is a memorial to the men of **B Company 28 Māori Battalion**
- The volunteer battalion was divided into **four infantry companies along tribal lines (A, B, C, D) and one command or headquarter (HQ) division**. The men who made up B Company, were drawn from **Rotorua, Bay of Plenty, Taupo and Thames-Coromandel**. They were known as 'The Penny Divers'. At any one time there could be 750 men away as Māori Battalion made up from all five divisions
- You will see **photographs** of many B Company men. This is not all men who served. Family members of the soldiers are encouraged to submit photos and information to the museum.
- The exhibition also includes a **Roll of Honour** – the men of B Company who died during World War Two
- The story of the Māori Battalion begins in 1939. As war loomed, **Sir Apirana Ngata** urged the New Zealand government to form a Māori unit
- The first echelon left Wellington on **1<sup>st</sup> May 1940** They saw active service during the disastrous **Greek campaign of April 1941**
- By May 1941 the battalion had been **evacuated from Crete**. The Māori Battalion lost more than 140 men

(suitable for pre/post visit)



- From November 1941 to May 1943 the New Zealand Division fought in North Africa. The Māori Battalion performed with distinction
- Crucial battles were fought at Minkar Quaim in June 1942, and El Alamein in October 1942
- A pinnacle in the desert of Tunisia called Takrouna was the site of bitter fighting in May 1943. Lance Sergeant Haane Manahi fought with distinction, receiving a VC (amended to DCM)
- The battalion was involved in the battle for Italy from September 1943
- Tasked with the capture of the railway station at Cassino in February 1944, the Māori Battalion suffered huge losses. Captain Monty Wikiriwhi received the Military Cross for his actions
- German forces in Italy surrendered on May 2nd 1945
- The battalion arrived in Wellington on 23rd February 1946. Trains carried soldiers to welcoming marae throughout the country
- The Māori Battalion ceased to exist. It lives in legend, having suffered the highest casualty rate of any battalion in the New Zealand Division
- Of 3,578 men who served in 28 Māori Battalion, 640 did not return home
- One man in six was killed



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