

*Kia hiwa rā, kia hiwa rā!*

*Kia hiwa rā ki tēnei tuku*

*Kia hiwa rā ki tērā tuku*

*Tihē Mauriora!*

The B Company, 28<sup>th</sup> NZ (Māori) Battalion History Trust was established in 2014 to “protect, maintain and preserve the integrity, honour and mana of the company.”

The Trust is a registered charitable organisation created to fund and manage the research and publication of the stories of B Company.

When the formation of the Trust was proposed to the mōrehu of B Company in 2012-2013 they agreed to be the whakaruruhaua for the kaupapa and to act as Poutiaki, to provide guidance and to ensure that the kaupapa remained true to the memories of those who fought and died for New Zealand, and those who returned home.

In 2013 only a handful of our B Company mōrehu were still alive:

- Arthur Midwood was one of the last 39ers who enlisted at the outbreak of World War II
- Haare Te Nuku Raiana and Robert Gillies went overseas with the 10<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements in 1943 and joined the battalion at Cassino in early 1944
- Puhi Patara joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements in mid-1944 and saw action from Faenza until the end of the war in Italy

Arthur died in March 2015. Haare and Puhi passed on later that year. This left Tā Robert Gillies as our Poutiaki, as our ‘last man standing’ – a burden he graciously endured as the sole survivor and advocate for the 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion until his death in November 2024.

The culmination of this kaupapa was the publication of two print editions of *Ake Ake Kia Kaha E! Forever Brave! – B Company 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion (1939-1945)* by the late Tā Wira Gardiner, KNZM in 2019.

It is now time for the B Company, 28<sup>th</sup> NZ (Māori) Battalion History Trust to be reviewed and we are looking for the guidance of the B Company whānau to determine the future direction for the preservation and protection of the B Company legacy, as contributors to our rohe and wider national memory and nationhood.

This direction for the future includes the consideration of the legacy oversight of the extensive research and stories collected by the Trust, and the extensive collection of

taonga that sit in the care of the Rotorua Museum Te Whare Taonga o Te Arawa as a lasting and tangible memorial for the descendants of our tūpuna of B Company.

We would like as many whānau as possible to attend the upcoming Trust hui:

**Date:** Saturday 24 May 2025, 1pm – 4pm

**Location:** Te Ao Mārama Hall, Ōhinemutu, Rotorua

**RSVP:** To [canaan.tuhura@rotorualc.nz](mailto:canaan.tuhura@rotorualc.nz) by Friday 16 May 2025

Copies of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of *Ake Ake Kia Kaha E!* will be provided to attendees to the hui.

We would like to acknowledge the sponsors and supporters who made the book possible: 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion B Company History Trust, Ministry of Education, Ngārimu VC and 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion Memorial Scholarship Fund, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Te Puni Kōkiri, Rotomā No.1 Incorporation, Carrys Corporation, Bateman Publishing and Rotorua Lakes Council.

Kind regards

Graeme Vercoe, QSM

Chairman, B Company, 28<sup>th</sup> NZ (Māori) Battalion History Trust