

# Official History of 28 (Māori) Battalion

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Level: NZ Curriculum - Years 11-13 NCEA Levels 1-3)

Learning Area: Social Sciences - History

## **Strand Focus:**

Identity, Culture and Organisation

Continuity and Change

Place and Environment

## **Achievement Objectives**

Students will:

Understand how Māori soldiers contributed to New Zealand's efforts in WWII.

Examine the historical and cultural significance of the 28 (Māori) Battalion.

Explore themes of courage, identity, leadership, and sacrifice.

Analyse primary and secondary sources to interpret and evaluate historical perspectives.

Discuss the long-term legacy and representation of Māori in military history and New Zealand society.

## **Lesson Duration:**

3-5 Class Periods (with scope for extension project)

## **Lesson Outline**

### **Lesson 1 – Introduction to the 28 (Māori) Battalion**

#### **Learning Intentions:**

Understand the formation and unique identity of the 28 (Māori) Battalion.

Students will consider the reasons Māori enlisted in WWII.

#### **Activities:**

Present a short video or slideshow introduction to the Battalion (e.g. from NZ

On Screen or Te Ara).

Read selected passages from the introduction and early chapters of the book (formation and early training)

Class discussion: Why did Māori volunteer in such large numbers for WWII service?

Small group task: Create a short presentation on the 5 companies (A–E) and tribal affiliations

## **Resources:**

Book excerpts

NZHistory.govt.nz – Battalion page

Video: 28th Māori Battalion – Te Toa Takitini

## **Lesson 2 – Campaigns and Combat**

### **Learning Intentions:**

Learn about the campaigns the Battalion fought in (Greece, Crete, North Africa, Italy)

Interpret how battlefield experiences shaped the identity and legacy of the Battalion

### **Activities:**

Examine one campaign per group and create a fact sheet or timeline (e.g., North Africa – El Alamein)

Use maps to trace the Battalion's movements

Read and discuss excerpts from Cody's text, especially battle descriptions

Class debate: Was the 28 Battalion "New Zealand's best fighting unit"? Use evidence

### **Assessment Opportunity:**

Source analysis: Analyse a selected excerpt from the book alongside a photo or map

## **Lesson 3 – Leadership, Bravery, and Loss**

### **Learning Intentions:**

Understand the impact of individual leaders and acts of bravery

Consider the emotional and cultural cost of war on Māori soldiers and their communities

### **Activities:**

Case study of VC winner Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngarimu – read the account from the book

Group analysis: How does Cody's text represent Māori bravery and cultural values (e.g., haka, funerals, faith)?

Students write a journal entry or letter in role as a Battalion member

### **Extension:**

Explore Māori concepts of whanaungatanga, mana, and tapu in the context of war

## **Lesson 4 – Homecoming, Legacy, and Representation**

### **Learning Intentions:**

Understand the post-war experiences of the Battalion

Explore how the Battalion is remembered in modern New Zealand

**Activities:**

Read Cody's final chapter and view excerpts from ANZAC commemoration materials

Discuss: How did service affect Māori leadership, land rights, or Treaty issues?

Class discussion: Why is the 28 Māori Battalion significant in Aotearoa New Zealand's history?

**Optional Activities:**

Invite a local veteran or iwi representative (where possible)

Virtual tour of 28th Māori Battalion Memorial at Waitangi or via online museum resources

**Assessment Ideas**

**Essay/Report:** The 28 (Māori) Battalion – A Legacy of Service and Sacrifice

**Creative Task:** Write a fictional diary entry or short story from the viewpoint of a soldier

**Presentation:** Group campaign timeline or map with key events

**Source Interpretation:** Use excerpts from Cody's text and compare with a soldier's oral history

**Cross-Curricular Links**

English: Narrative and biographical writing

Te Reo Māori: Key vocabulary, karakia, haka

Geography: Campaign mapping, environments of battle

Drama: Enactment of haka, trench scenes

**Key Competencies**

Thinking

Using language, symbols, and texts

Relating to others

Participating and contributing

Managing self

**Supporting Resources**

NZHistory 28th Māori Battalion site

28th Māori Battalion website

Ministry of Culture & Heritage WWII teaching resources

Te Ara: Encyclopedia of New Zealand