

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**WAI 898
WAI 2351
WAI 1112
WAI 1113**

IN THE MATTER of The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 (as amended)

AND Claims in the King Country Inquiry consolidated under Wai 898

AND the Wai 2351 claim by Frank Thorne on behalf of himself and for the benefit of Ngāti Hikairo

AND the Wai 1112 claim by **MANIHERA FORBES** and **MERE GILMORE** on behalf of themselves and Ngāti Hikairo

AND the Wai 1113 claim by **MANIHERA FORBES** and **MERE GILMORE** on behalf of themselves and Ngāti Hikairo

**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF
METO HOPA**

Dated this 25th day of March 2013

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Introduction

1. This brief of evidence will discuss our tupuna Ngātūerua Hēmi Erueti. It is not easy to give this evidence. The Erueti whānau feel great mamae about him. He has been accused of leading General Cameron and his troops into Rangiaowhia. He has been made a demon.
2. We want to give our kōrero on Ngātūerua Erueti to this Tribunal. We want to record our kōrero for the iwi generally. I give this evidence as a direct descendant of Ngātūerua Erueti so my kōrero is our whānau position.

Ngātūerua Hēmi Erueti

3. Ngātūerua Hēmi Erueti was born in 1841 in Ōpārau. His mother was Te Rangiwahakarato of Ngāti Rāhui and Ngāti Puhiaawe. His father was John Edwards, a European. His key iwi are Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāti Puhiaawe, Ngāti Rāhui, and Ngāti Apakura.
4. Ngātūerua is thought to have attended the Ōtāwhao Mission School in Te Awamutu. He later spent time in

Auckland living with Pākehā friends.

5. Ngātūerua Erueti was commonly known as Hēmi Erueti or James Edwards. We have also seen records of him being called “Himi Manuao”. This is curious to us as we have no whānau records of this name. We wonder whether it is in fact a name given to him later. We only know of the name “Manuao” being given to the Crown gun-ship that came up the river to Rangiriri.
6. His name “Ngātūerua” has been interpreted by some as meaning “the two standings” or “the half caste” and being “half Crown half Māori”. His name is actually a tuturu Ngāti Puhiauwe name coming from Apakura.

During the wars

7. By 1863, he was employed as a scout for General Cameron. Ngātūerua has been largely demonised for his role at Rangiaowhia. He is said to have purposely led the troops to Rangiaowhia, contributing to the death of his own people. However, whānau traditions maintain that Ngātūerua never intended that one bit. He

gathered his whānau on his death bed and gave his version of the events.

8. He had enlisted as a scout prior to the Waikato invasion. Our kōrero is that on learning that he was expected to enter his homeland, Ngātūerua desperately tried to warn his Ngāti Apakura, Ngāti Rāhui and Ngāti Puhiawe whānau of the impending raid. He didn't know the Crown's forces wanted to hurt anyone – it was just a village without warriors, but he did want to warn his people to leave.
9. Our tradition has it that he covertly arrived at Rangiaowhia, but the age and ill health of many of the villagers meant a speedy escape was virtually impossible. Further, the inhabitants of Rangiaowhia believed they occupied a neutral zone and would remain safe. He then went back to the redoubt.
10. When he arrived at the Crown's redoubt he found the Crown's forces had already left for Rangiaowhia. He doubled back on his horse to Rangiaowhia and arrived as the Crown's soldiers were just entering Rangiaowhia.
11. He believed that the first shot was fired at him, because

he was with the Crown's forces. He also believed that after this first shot the Crown's forces open fire.

12. I once heard my mother, Rahui Hopa nee Erueti, talking of this event to some persons who had criticised Erueti. She said:

“Kaore i tahuna i a koutou, i tahuna i a ia ano”.

She said of her grandfather Hemi Erueti (Ngātūerua) to them, “he didn't burn you, he burnt himself.”

13. Her kōrero was that Ngātūerua Erueti didn't burn Rangiaowhia - that was the mahi kino of the Crown forces. He was unable to prevent the people being attacked and the kāinga being burnt. His inability to protect his people was what he deemed the burning of himself. Also the first bullet being fired at himself, was his burning.
14. Some of our traditions are that he was able to save Matapura and Te Wera.

After the wars

15. Following the war, Hēmi Erueti lived variously in Ōpārau,

Paetonga and Puketūtū in Kāwhia. He was never himself awarded any lands in the confiscation area. We don't believe he even tried to obtain any lands. He went into a state of depression after the wars. He later became an Assessor for the Native Land Court. He developed an extensive knowledge of tribal history and whakapapa, which extended far beyond Ngāti Hikairo.

16. Our kōrero is that Ngātūerua Erueti played an important role in ensuring Ngāti Apakura were awarded the Mangaora Block in Kāwhia in 1889. Our view is that he was trying to heal the wound that he had opened. He wanted to ease the burden that he and his whānau held in relation to Rangiaowhia. Our tradition is that Ngātūerua Erueti persuaded his Ngāti Hikairo people that Ngāti Apakura should get these lands.
17. We also have a tradition that members of the Erueti whānau sought to ease the burden by trying to give evidence in support of Ngāti Apakura in a 1947 Commission of Inquiry into the confiscation.
18. Ngātūerua Erueti died in 1920.

Conclusion

19. My evidence shows how no one escaped the pain of the wars. The Crown put Ngātūerua Erueti in this horrible situation. He has the stigma of being seen as leading the Crown forces to Rangiaowhia.
20. Our whānau continue to carry mamae about Ngātūerua Erueti and Rangiaowhia. We don't believe Ngātūerua Erueti ever intended that his own whānau would be hurt, but he had been unable to control the horrors that the Crown forces did. He took the burden of responsibility for his actions.