



# **Te Hokowhitu a Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War**

*Christopher Pugsley*

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Maori soldiers signing up for the First World War representing a formidable fighting force – Te Hokowhitu a Tu, or the Seventy twice-told warriors of the war god, Tumatauenga. Some 2,227 Maori and 458 Pacific Islanders enlisted with the Maori Pioneer Battalion, providing an essential element in the New Zealand Division's fighting effort, and earning a reputation for bravery and dependability in France, Flanders and beyond. Prejudice kept the Maori Pioneer Battalion well back from the front lines as support troops, but their war efforts won them rights as full citizens of their homelands. Drawing on rare archival material and previously unpublished diaries and letters, Te Hokowhitu a Tu is the authoritative account of Maori and Pacific Islanders in the First World War, and balances the wider story of the Pioneer Battalion's exploits with a portrait of daily life for soldiers who labored not only against the enemy but also racism behind their own lines. It includes numerous photographs and a full list of those who fought with the Battalion.

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