

# WEAPONS PRE EUROPEAN NZ WARS GALLERY

## *Patu Onewa*



### Teacher's Notes

Name of Object: **Patu Onewa** (Basalt)

Category: Pre European Weapon

Physical Location: NZ Wars Gallery, National Army Museum

Accession Number: 1978.2331

### Facts

- Pre European Maori were a warrior race. Inter tribal conflict was common.
- Maori did not use projectile weapons, i.e. no bows and arrows, firearms etc. Fighting was hand to hand, using patu, mere, and taiaha.
- A Patu was generally used with a thrusting motion to attack the enemy's upper body, or to finish off a wounded enemy with a downward blow to the head, using the reke, or butt.
- Patu were made from rock, stone, bone or wood using local resources.

### Links

- [www.armymuseum.co.nz](http://www.armymuseum.co.nz)
- <http://folksong.org.nz> has links to traditional folk songs including tītī tōrea to be sung while playing tī rakau.
- School journals also feature traditional Maori songs/ weapons. Use the "Journal Surf" database on-line catalogue to search back issues.
- "Maori Weapons in Pre European New Zealand" by Jeff Evans ISBN 0-7900-0826-2
- "With Honour – our army, our nation, our history" by Richard Wolfe ISBN 978-0-67-004565-5

### **Physical Location**

Pre European Maori weaponry is located within the New Zealand Wars/ Colonial Gallery located on the upper display area of the National Army Museum.

### **Patu Paraoa**



### **Teacher's Notes**

Name of Object: Patu Paraoa (Whalebone)

Category: Pre European Weapon

Physical Location: New Zealand Wars Gallery, National Army Museum

Accession Number: 1978.2329

### **Facts**

- Pre European Maori were a warrior race. Inter tribal conflict was common.
- Maori did not use projectile weapons, i.e. no bows and arrows, firearms etc. Fighting was hand to hand, using patu, mere, and taiaha.
- A Patu is a clubbing weapon. The initial strike was to the shoulder of the opponent hoping to disarm them by breaking or dislocating the shoulder causing them to drop their weapon so that the next strike, to the head (the fatal strike) was unopposed.
- Patu were made from rock, stone, bone or wood using local resources.

### **Links**

- [www.armymuseum.co.nz](http://www.armymuseum.co.nz)
- <http://folksong.org.nz> has links to traditional folk songs including tītī tōrea to be sung while playing tī rakau.
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### **Physical Location**

The whalebone patu is in the hand held weapons cabinet in the New Zealand Wars Gallery of the National Army Museum.

## **Taiaha**



### **Teacher's Notes**

Name of Object: Taiaha

Category: Pre European Weapon

Physical Location: New Zealand Wars Gallery, National Army Museum

Accession Number: 2000.27

### **Facts**

- A taiaha is the equivalent of a Quarter staff.
- It is a chief's "weapon of authority", used in both attack and defence.
- The tufts of feathers around the neck of a taiaha are to distract an opponent.
- Maori warfare was predominately hand-to-hand combat. It was a major activity for Maori. It was a strenuous and emotional activity, but very full of ritual and ceremony at every part of the process.
- Land, food, slavery and especially utu, or revenge for loss of mana, were major incentives for war.

### **Links**

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### **Physical Location**

The taiaha, Pounamu Mere and other traditional Maori weapons are in the first cabinet you see as you enter the museum's upper gallery from the Roimata Pounamu Memorial Area.

## **Mere Pounamu**



### **Teacher's Notes**

Name of Object: Mere Pounamu

Category: Pre European Weapon

Physical Location: New Zealand Wars Gallery, National Army Museum

Accession Number: 1998.2234

### **Facts**

- Pre European Maori were a warrior race. Inter tribal conflict was common.
- Maori did not use projectile weapons, i.e. no bows and arrows, firearms etc. Fighting was hand to hand, using patu, mere, and taiaha.
- A mere was basically a thrusting weapon, mainly attacking vital points of the head or body. Favoured strikes included a horizontal thrust to the temple or an upward thrust to the ribs.
- Mere Pounamu were the most revered weapon of Maori, Some were buried with their owners however most were passed from generation to generation gathering prestige from their famous owners. Many were given personal names and acquired particular virtues. Te Rauparaha's mere was "Tuhiwai" and supposedly had the power to tell the future by changing colour.

### **Links**

- [www.armymuseum.co.nz](http://www.armymuseum.co.nz)
- <http://folksong.org.nz> has links to traditional folk songs including tītī tōrea to be sung while playing tī rakau.
- School journals also feature traditional Maori songs/ weapons. Use the "Journal Surf" database on-line catalogue to search back issues.
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### Physical Location

Pre European Maori weaponry is located within the New Zealand Wars/ Colonial Gallery located on the upper display area of the National Army Museum

## Wahaika



### Teacher's Notes

Name of Object: Wahaika

Category: Pre European Weapon

Physical Location: New Zealand Wars Gallery, National Army Museum

Accession Number: 1999.2346

### Facts

- Wahaika literally means “mouth of the fish”
- Traditionally made from whalebone and wood, the wooden ones have a far more intricately carved surface.
- The Wahaika have a concave back and a peculiar carved notch on the back edge.
- Many are carved on the reke, or butt and significant numbers also had small human figures above the handle.
- They were not only used in battle but often in ceremony and speech making where Rangitira accentuated delivery of particular points.
- Primarily used in close in fighting Wahaika were used in a thrusting motion rather than smashing down like a club. The favoured strike was made with the sharpened leading edge.

### Links

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### **Physical Location**

The wahaika, taiaha, Pounamu Mere and other traditional Maori weapons are in the first cabinet you see as you enter the museum’s upper gallery from the Roimata Pounamu Memorial Area.

### **Possible Activities**

- Maori warriors trained from a young age, building up the skills and strength necessary to become a warrior.
- Design a week long training programme you could use to build fitness and upper body strength for a sport that you play.
- Male Maori would have used Poi to strengthen their wrists and also to give more flexibility to their wrist joints. Make some Poi to use.
- Traditional Maori Stick games (tī rakau) were another way to improve strength and coordination. “*E Papā Waiari*” is a traditional Maori song which has the required beat for the stick games. Research traditional Maori stick games and put on a performance for the school or parents in a concert.