

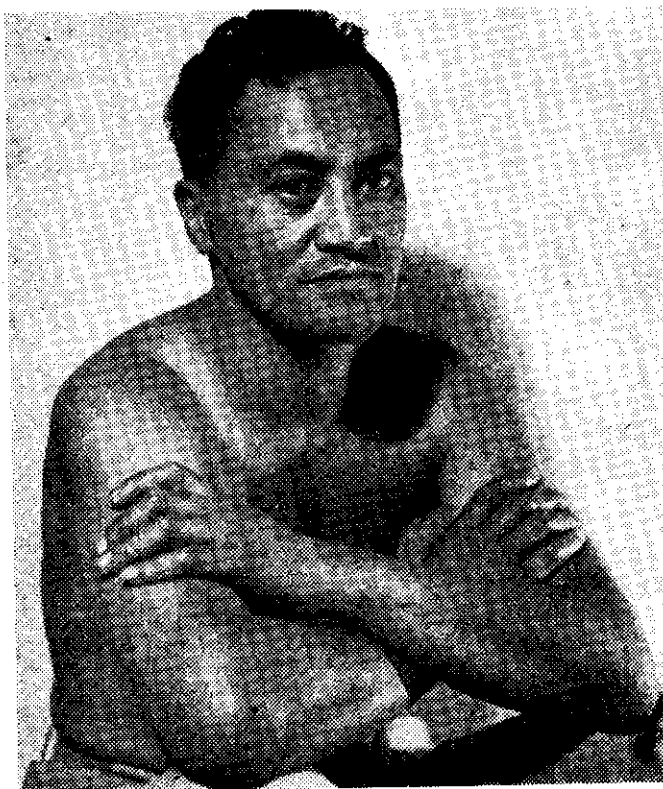
# "My Fellow New Zealanders -The Maoris"

FOR three years now the Maoris have fought in one action after another in this war, so that the impression I have come across here in Britain, that there are several battalions of them in the Middle East, is easily understood. Actually, there is only one battalion. It certainly is a good one. Its record shows that from the first day it went into action in the Olympus Gorge in Greece, then through Crete, and across Libya and Tunisia and now in Italy. That it should earn a reputation as a first-class regiment is not surprising when you know a little of the history of the race it comes from.

There are 90,000 Maoris in New Zealand to-day. A hundred and fifty years ago there were fully 200,000 of them. But after their first contact with the white man, with his strange ways of living — his muskets and his rum — and with their own fierce tribal wars of the early 19th century, they dropped to 30,000. Tuberculosis was rampant. They were unsettled by too much prosperity because of the money they received for their land. They were tempted to leave their villages, to seek a new and easier life in the towns. Then, in the last 50 years, because of a better understanding between the two races, or perhaps even more because of the influence of a group of young leaders, the Maoris have shown a steady and vigorous increase again.

## One People

These young leaders—James Carroll, Pomare, Ngata, Te Rangi Hiroa and others — led their people back to their land and to their villages. Now they are safe. In the past 100 years there has been a progressive blending of the two bloods — Maori and Pakeha, as they call the white man—and in another century we New Zealanders will be in fact what to-day we are in spirit: one people. There are no difficulties in this blending of the Maori and the white. The child of both races compares more than favourably with any other, in intelligence, in culture and in appearance; in fact, the natural dignity of the Maori is a dominant feature in the new mixed generation. He is light brown in colour. He has a very strong head set on broad shoulders, and he has dark, straight hair. He has full, dark eyes, and you cannot help being impressed by the nobility of his features. You often hear it said that New Zealand has managed its racial problems better than most countries. That is true. Much of the credit is due to the Maoris themselves, and to the fact that the early white administrators really tried hard to gain their confidence.



## By Brigadier James Hargest

IN the brief period between his escape from Italy and his return with the invading army to Normandy, Brigadier Hargest found time to broadcast a tribute to the Maori Battalion. Though he spoke for English and not for New Zealand ears, many of our readers will be glad to have the text of what was probably his last public address. We quote from our contemporary, the English "Listener."

Where did the Maoris come from? They had no written language before the arrival of the missionaries, but in every tribe there were tohungas trained in history and in legend. They passed their stories down through generations with such accuracy that the family trees of tribes widely spread in New Zealand go back to common ancestors 700 years ago. They are Polynesian people who came from the outer rim of islands in the Pacific—from the legendary isle of Hawaika, which to-day is believed to be the island of Tahiti. But there is no doubt that before that the Maoris came out into the Pacific through the Straits of Malaya, and they passed over the tropics in their southward march from island to island towards New Zealand. This march took centuries, and after a time, the lithe, slight figure of the Malayan gave place to the immensely strong, broad-shouldered Maori.

One fact arises out of the mists of the past: the Maoris were born navigators, moving from island to island over long distances with absolute certainty. In the last stages of their journey—the migration to New Zealand—they drove their huge double canoes through 2000 miles of rough seas, and they made their landfall with dead accuracy; and this was at least 200 years before Columbus sailed west to America.

They found New Zealand inhabited by another race, whom they overpowered. But there were no animals of any kind, and this may be one reason why they were cannibals. Apart from the kumara, or sweet potato, which they brought with them, they lived on roots, on fish, and on birds which abounded. So they found a welcome change of diet when they killed and ate an enemy. There were limitations in this, however; they would not eat cowards or slaves; they ate only the brave, believing that the virtues of a bad enemy passed to them through his flesh. There were, until quite recently, a few old Maoris who remembered cannibal meals, and they said they were quite all right. But that's all ended, of course. The Maoris to-day are surely amongst the gentlest and kindest people on earth.

## Then the White Man

The white man arrived. He came first as the discoverer, then the exploiter, next the missionary, and lastly the colonist. In the early 19th century, the whalers and sealers came, and then the traders. Some treated the Maoris honourably, others cheated them, stole their women; and the Maoris exacted vengeance. Vice and violence were widespread. By 1814, the little town of Russell, in the lovely Bay of Islands, near the north of New Zealand, had become the cesspool of the Pacific. Then Samuel

Marsden, an English missionary, came. He taught the Gospel and a new way of life. He brought wheat to sow and horses to ride and cattle to graze. His coming coincided with the period of bitterest tribal wars between the Maoris. Tens of thousands were killed, but 20 years later, Marsden was able to say that not only had none of his missionaries ever had their lives endangered, they had never even had to suffer discomfort. Once, when a furious battle was going on between two tribes, some missionaries got mixed up between the opposing lines. The Maoris ceased fire and sat amiably around until the missionaries disappeared; then they carried on with the battle again.

Something had to be done to stop the state of outlawry that the white man and his muskets and his drink had brought, and the missionaries pleaded that England should take the country under protection. But English Governments were sick of colonies. They were expensive and ungrateful; and the Government declined. Then after years of hesitation, Lord Melbourne decided. He sent Captain Hobson to New Zealand with a definite mandate. Hobson came; he explained; because he saw the dangers ahead of the Maoris unless they were protected, he pleaded. On

(continued on next page)