

## Eruption of Mt Tarawera: 10 June 1886



Painting of Mt Tarawera erupting by Charles Blomfield

*On 10 June, early in the morning, people were wakened by violent shaking of the ground. Outside, the sky was lit up by lightning flashes.*

*Eyewitnesses later reported that Mount Tarawera had split open, and that a huge column of fire could be seen shooting up into the air and forming a black cloud of smoke and ash. Molten rocks were flung out of the volcano, landing in the lake with a hiss.*

*Just before 2am the sky darkened again. A rain of rocky ash and mud fell from the huge black cloud.*

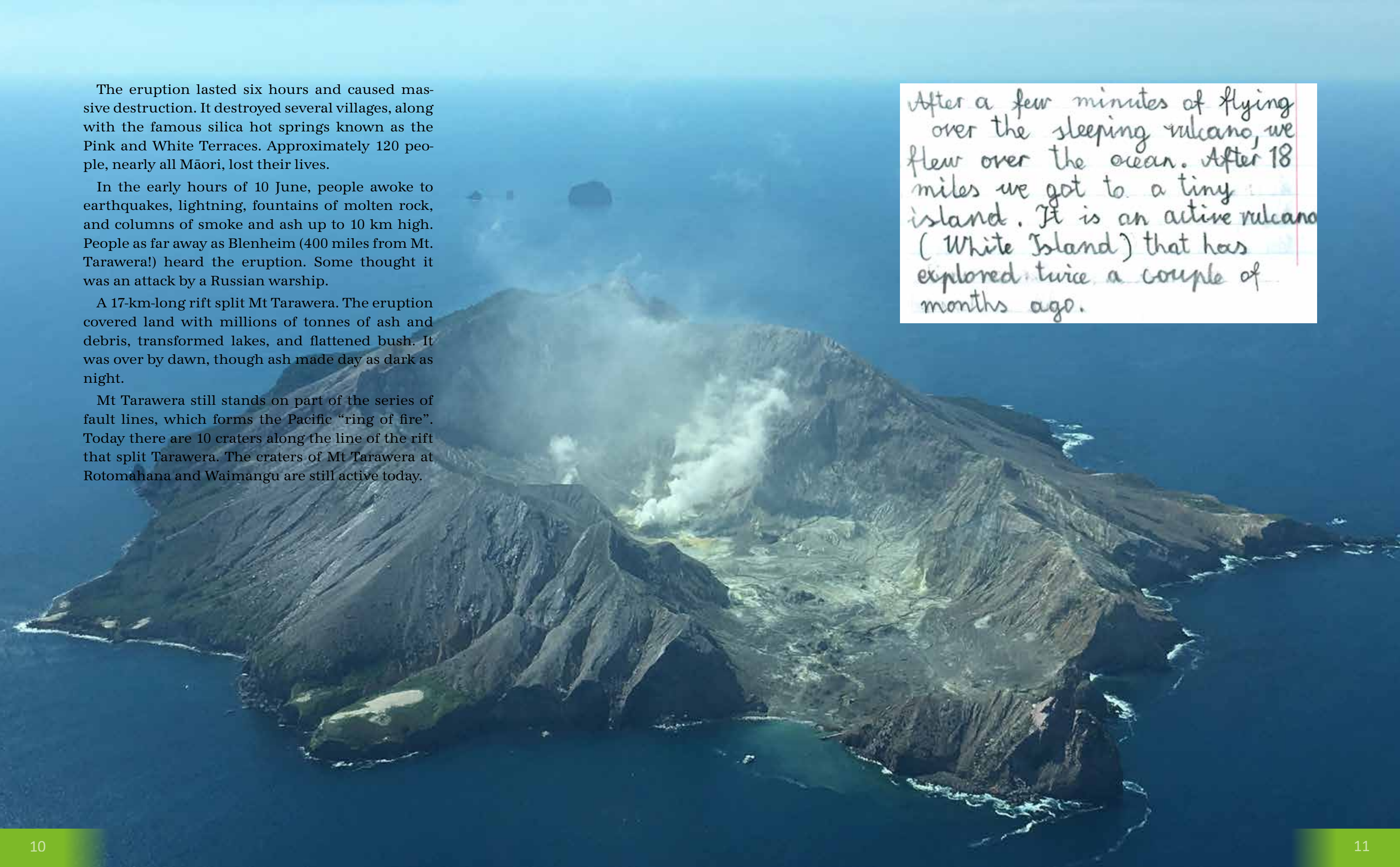
*The ground kept shaking, and a hail of ash and hot mud struck the villages. All houses, with their inhabitants still inside, were buried...*

The eruption lasted six hours and caused massive destruction. It destroyed several villages, along with the famous silica hot springs known as the Pink and White Terraces. Approximately 120 people, nearly all Māori, lost their lives.

In the early hours of 10 June, people awoke to earthquakes, lightning, fountains of molten rock, and columns of smoke and ash up to 10 km high. People as far away as Blenheim (400 miles from Mt. Tarawera!) heard the eruption. Some thought it was an attack by a Russian warship.

A 17-km-long rift split Mt Tarawera. The eruption covered land with millions of tonnes of ash and debris, transformed lakes, and flattened bush. It was over by dawn, though ash made day as dark as night.

Mt Tarawera still stands on part of the series of fault lines, which forms the Pacific “ring of fire”. Today there are 10 craters along the line of the rift that split Tarawera. The craters of Mt Tarawera at Rotomahana and Waimangu are still active today.



After a few minutes of flying over the sleeping volcano, we flew over the ocean. After 18 miles we got to a tiny island. It is an active volcano (White Island) that has exploded twice a couple of months ago.