



Maunganui Minotaur Ibuki Waimana Star of India Ruapehu Hawkes Bay Athenic Arawa Tahiti Orari Limerick

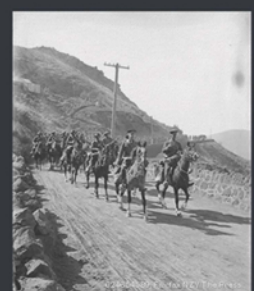
Warships and troopships of New Zealand's main expeditionary force in Wellington Harbour on the eve of departure. P&G-413, Alexander Turnbull Library

Departure for the First World War

The largest group of New Zealanders ever to leave the country at one time boarded ships in this harbour in October 1914, bound for the First World War. Ten troopships carried 8,500 men and nearly 4,000 horses. Four warships escorted them across the Tasman Sea.

They went first to Egypt for training, then to Gallipoli to fight alongside their Australian comrades as 'Anzacs'. Many went on to the battlefields of France and Belgium, where New Zealand's losses were heaviest.

A long goodbye



Canterbury Mounted Rifles arriving in Lyttelton on 22 September 1914.



Crowds gather in Ousem Street to farewell Auckland soldiers on 23 September 1914.

The men who left New Zealand in October 1914 enlisted with a sense of duty and adventure. They left behind shops and offices, farms and factories, friends and loved ones to travel to mobilisation camps in Auckland, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Farewells took place in August – at railway stations, wharves, public halls,

theatres and hotels – and communities from the deep south to the far north said goodbye to their troops with pride.

In September further farewells were held at the camps and in the main centres, with concerts and civic functions attracting thousands of well-wishers. In Wellington, a holiday was observed and the farewell drew up to 30,000 people.

The men then boarded ships at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Port Chalmers, ready to rendezvous in the Tasman Sea.

“The gate to the wharf was thrown open... The crowd poured in, and merry banter ensued between its members and the khaki clad men who swarmed over the decks. Last farewells had to be shouted from the wharf to the high decks of the steamers...”
Otago Daily Times, 23 September 1914

Departure from New Zealand was delayed, however, as authorities feared that German warships might attack the troopships. Instead, troops progressively assembled in Wellington. During the day they trained; at night they were entertained.

The arrival of two powerful cruisers, *Ibuki* from Japan and the British *Minotaur*, signalled their impending departure.

Their journey



10 troopships



nearly 4,000 horses



about 8,500 men

Off to war

On 16 October 1914, Wellingtonians rose at dawn and travelled to the harbour entrance to watch the convoy depart.

Around 100,000 New Zealanders served overseas in the First World War, most departing from Wellington. Although the majority of them returned home, more than 18,000 died in or because of the war. Memorials across New Zealand – and in Belgium, France, Turkey and elsewhere – pay tribute to those who served.



Wellington Infantry Battalion embarking on the Arawa in Wellington on 15 October 1914.

Follow in their footsteps

Ngā Tapuwāe means 'in their footsteps'. It is the name of the New Zealand First World War Trails. These trails enable New Zealanders to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors in Turkey, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom. To find out more visit www.ngatapuwaee.govt.nz

