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# THE RURAL HOME FRONT

A New Zealand Region and the Great War  
1914-1926



Hall of Remembrance, Stratford, Anzac Day, early-1990s.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in History at Massey University

GRAHAM HUCKER  
2006



This thesis is gratefully dedicated  
to the memory of my grandparents,  
Mary Hucker (née Steel) and Private Walter Hucker, 72660,  
Canterbury Infantry Regiment.





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## Abbreviations

AD	Army Department
AJHR	<i>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</i>
ANZ	Archives New Zealand
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
BTWH	<i>Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald</i>
EA	<i>Eltham Argus</i>
HNS	<i>Hawera and Normanby Star</i>
IRWA	<i>Inglewood Record and Waitara Age</i>
MSRAF	Military Service Record and Attestation File
MP	Member of Parliament
NEB	National Efficiency Board
NPBC	New Plymouth Borough Council
NPCC	New Plymouth City Council
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
NZF	<i>New Zealand Farmer, Stock and Station Journal</i>
NZOYB	<i>New Zealand Official Year Book</i>
NZPD	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
OT	<i>Opunake Times</i>
PWP	<i>Patea and Waverley Press</i>
SBC	Stratford Borough Council
SCC	Stratford County Council
SDC	Stratford District Council
SEP	<i>Stratford Evening Post</i>
TH	<i>Taranaki Herald</i>



## Map

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Map of Taranaki Region with Place Names, North Island,  
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## Introduction

### A New Zealand Region and First World War Studies

Historian Cyril Falls told his friends in the late 1950s that he was writing a book about the First World War. He recalls that they all responded with virtually the same question, 'What's your thesis?'<sup>1</sup> Falls was 'taken aback. I had not started with a thesis consciously in mind', he says 'I was, as I always had been, intensely interested in the subject'.<sup>2</sup> I too, like Falls, admit feeling the same when asked about the topic of my doctoral research. Questions about a thesis caused me some degree of concern too. However, as Falls says, 'before long I felt gratitude to those who had asked the question. They had helped me to clear my own mind. I began to realize that there had always been a thesis at the back of it.'<sup>3</sup> Again, I concur with Falls. So, what is this thesis that has been circling in the back of my mind as a result of my long-held interest in the subject matter; how will it contribute to the historiography of the First World War; what methodology will I use to articulate this thesis? It is these questions that this introduction will address.

Place and the family environment have long been influential in shaping my interest in the First World War. Visits to my grandparent's home in Stratford, Taranaki, in the 1960s brought me into regular contact with vestiges of that war. My grandfather, Walter Hucker, served with the Canterbury Infantry Regiment on the Western Front in 1918 and in the army of occupation in Germany in 1919. For over sixty years he displayed the cultural materials of his war service in the family home on Orlando Street. I recall that at the end of the hallway there hung a sepia-toned photo portrait of Walter in his army uniform. A certificate of Walter's war service in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force

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<sup>1</sup> Cyril Falls, *The First World War*, London: Longmans, 1960, p. xv.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

hung above the coal range in the kitchen. On the mantelpiece in the living room the War Medal and Victory Medal lay alongside a German bayonet, a 'war trophy' no doubt. Walter had also kept his identification tags, Certificate of Discharge from the Army and another medal, a replica of the Victoria Cross, which he made at the local foundry, his place of work. Collectively they are reminders of a pivotal event in Walter's life – the First World War.

Thoughts about the war must have surfaced periodically for both of my grandparents; their home certainly had the potential to stimulate war memories. That would have been especially so on Anzac Day with my grandfather's participation in the annual street parade. With 179 veterans from the war living in Stratford Borough, and 254 in Stratford County at the time of the 1936 *Census*, there would have been no shortage of returned servicemen for Walter to converse with.<sup>4</sup> A controversial event that did stimulate memories took place in 1930 when the film adaptation of Erich Maria Remarque's book *All Quiet on the Western Front* screened in Stratford. My father recalls Walter arriving home from work and telling him to quickly get ready because 'I'm taking you to the pictures tonight so that you can see what war is like.'<sup>5</sup> My father interpreted this as a lesson about the horrors of war and possibly its futility as well.

I recall a similar situation thirty-five years later, but in more restrictive circumstances. As a family we always had Sunday evening meals together, after which we would retire to the living room to watch television. When a BBC television programme, *The Great War*, screened here in 1965, I was permitted to watch it, but not to ask questions, especially of my grandfather.<sup>6</sup> I had always been cautioned by my parents not to question Walter about his war experiences because recalling such events could upset him; at least that is how it was

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Census of New Zealand, 1936*, appendix B, pp. 4, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Personal Communication, Len Hucker, 18 October, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> All 26 episodes of *The Great War* screened on television in the Wellington region from 8 August 1965 (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chunuk Bair) to 6 February 1966. See the *New Zealand Listener* editorial, 3 September, 1965, p. 10.

explained to me, even though the display of war items throughout the house contradicted that explanation. It did not occur to me that my grandmother, who, as a young adult lived in Auckland at the time of the First World War, may have had stories to tell about life on the home front, but as a schoolboy in the 1960s, the First World War *was* the Western Front, *not* at home somewhere in New Zealand. Through the black and white film footage I could see that the war was horrible, but I never understood what I was watching. What I needed was my grandfather's commentary to make some sense of it all. Unfortunately that never came, not even in my adult life.

I do not think my grandfather could ever have forgotten the First World War, and I now wonder what my grandmother would have recalled about that conflict had I thought to ask her. Nor do I believe the community in which they both once lived could ever forget either, because venturing forth from their home was like stepping into a site of war remembrance, not only to the First World War, but the Second World War as well. A short virtual tour of the town demonstrates this point. Across the road from my grandparent's home is Victoria Park. The arched gateway that forms the main entrance is Stratford's memorial to the dead of the First World War. Inscribed on the gates is a verse from Rupert Brooke and significant place names - France, Gallipoli, Palestine, Samoa - that connect Stratford globally with the First World War. Within sight of those gates is King Edward Park and another arched gateway. That memorial was erected in memory of a local hero, Lieutenant-Colonel William George Malone, commander of the Wellington Infantry Regiment at Gallipoli in 1915. Beyond 'Malone's Gates' stands a Lone Pine tree brought back as a seedling from Gallipoli. Looking back towards the town, a clock tower can be seen which commemorates those soldiers from the district who served and died, not only during the First World War, but the South African War as well. Across the main street from the clock tower, in the now disused Municipal Building, is the Hall of Remembrance in which hang inscribed photo portraits of 129 soldiers from



Stratford and the surrounding district who lost their lives during the First World War, and 55 portraits of those soldiers who died during the Second World War. Elsewhere in the town honour boards and plaques, like those in the Anglican and Methodist churches, convey more names of soldiers who did not return from the war. Further out into the countryside more memorials can be seen: north of Stratford at Midhirst, and on Stanley Road in the form of a commemorative peace tree; to the west at Cardiff and Kaponga; to the south on Bird Road and at Eltham; to the east at Douglas and Kohuratahi - each one erected in the 1920s and still standing today.

Stratford must be the only town in New Zealand that annually commemorates two events from the First World War: Anzac Day on 25 April and Chunuk Bair Day on 8 August. It is not difficult, even for casual visitors today, to gain an impression that the First World War has a presence in the town of Stratford and the surrounding districts, and that it made an impact on the generation of 1914-1918 who lived there. Given the number of war memorials in the district and throughout Taranaki, questions arise about what it meant to people who fought in, and lived through, what they called 'the Great European War 1914-19'?<sup>7</sup>

Stratford's war memorials, in particular, the Hall of Remembrance, provides the impetus for my thesis. Even though the memorials primarily commemorate the soldiers from the region who did not return, they were erected by people who had known them as family, friends, neighbours, workmates and residents; who had farewelled them at the railway stations before they left for camp; who concerned themselves with their welfare by raising funds and materials for their comfort, and who worried about them in their absence. It is the people whom the soldiers left behind who are at the core of this thesis. People like William Skinner, the prominent land surveyor from New Plymouth, who followed with fatherly interest the movements of his

soldier-son, and Marc Voullaire, the farmer from Riverlea, who was distraught at the devastation the influenza epidemic wrought on his farming community: both of whom diligently recorded the daily events of the war in their diaries; the recently widowed Annis Hamerton from Inglewood, whose letters to her daughter in England record her thoughts and observations of the war in the local community; the travails of Mary Ann Hamblyn who lost six men from her family during the war; Stratford's mayor, James McMillan, who instigated a memorial to the town's dead soldiers which became a site of remembrance unique in New Zealand; and William George Malone a prominent public figure in Stratford, who was rapidly promoted to a military leadership role that cost him his life. All of these people experienced the war differently. The thesis I want to advance then, is that far away from the frontline of the battlefield, different war experiences took place on another 'front' that the soldiers left behind; experiences that included patriotic fervour and displays of 'war enthusiasm' at public gatherings, the relentless drive for voluntary recruits and the raising of funds, the impact and shock of modern war personified by the silent reading of casualty lists, the disruptions to peoples' lives caused by conscription, anxieties over the cost of living, sombreness and sorrow over deaths through war and influenza. First World War experiences were not the sole preserve of soldiers. Civilians experienced the impact and effects of war too, not just at the national level and in the nation's main urban areas, but in the boroughs and counties of rural New Zealand. Hence the geographical setting for this thesis in the predominantly rural region of Taranaki.

The timing of this thesis is appropriate, sitting as it does inside the decade leading to the centenary of the First World War and following on from high profile events in recent years that keep the memory of the war before the public. These events include the New Zealand government's recognition of Lt. Col. W. G. Malone with the unveiling of a plaque in Parliament's Grand Hall on

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<sup>7</sup> Inscribed in the Hall of Remembrance in Stratford.

8 August 2005 dedicated to his memory; the raising of public concerns in April 2005, both in New Zealand and Australia, about the way the Gallipoli 'landings' were being commemorated at Anzac Cove; a state funeral for New Zealand's Unknown Warrior, who, on 11 November 2004 was interred in the newly constructed tomb at the National War Memorial in Wellington; an international conference titled *Zealandia's Great War* held in Wellington on 7-10 November 2003 devoted almost exclusively to New Zealand's First World War experiences; and the death in February 2003 of Bright Ernest Williams, New Zealand's last surviving veteran from the First World War.

It will be helpful to outline the current trends in First World War historiography, internationally and in New Zealand, before locating this thesis within it. The First World War has been the subject of renewed interest from the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> Some historians attribute the 'international boom' in First World War studies to world events, in particular, 'post-Cold War insecurities' and the war in southeast Europe.<sup>9</sup> Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker believe that war on European soil in the 1990s refocused attention on the First World War because of the historical resemblance:

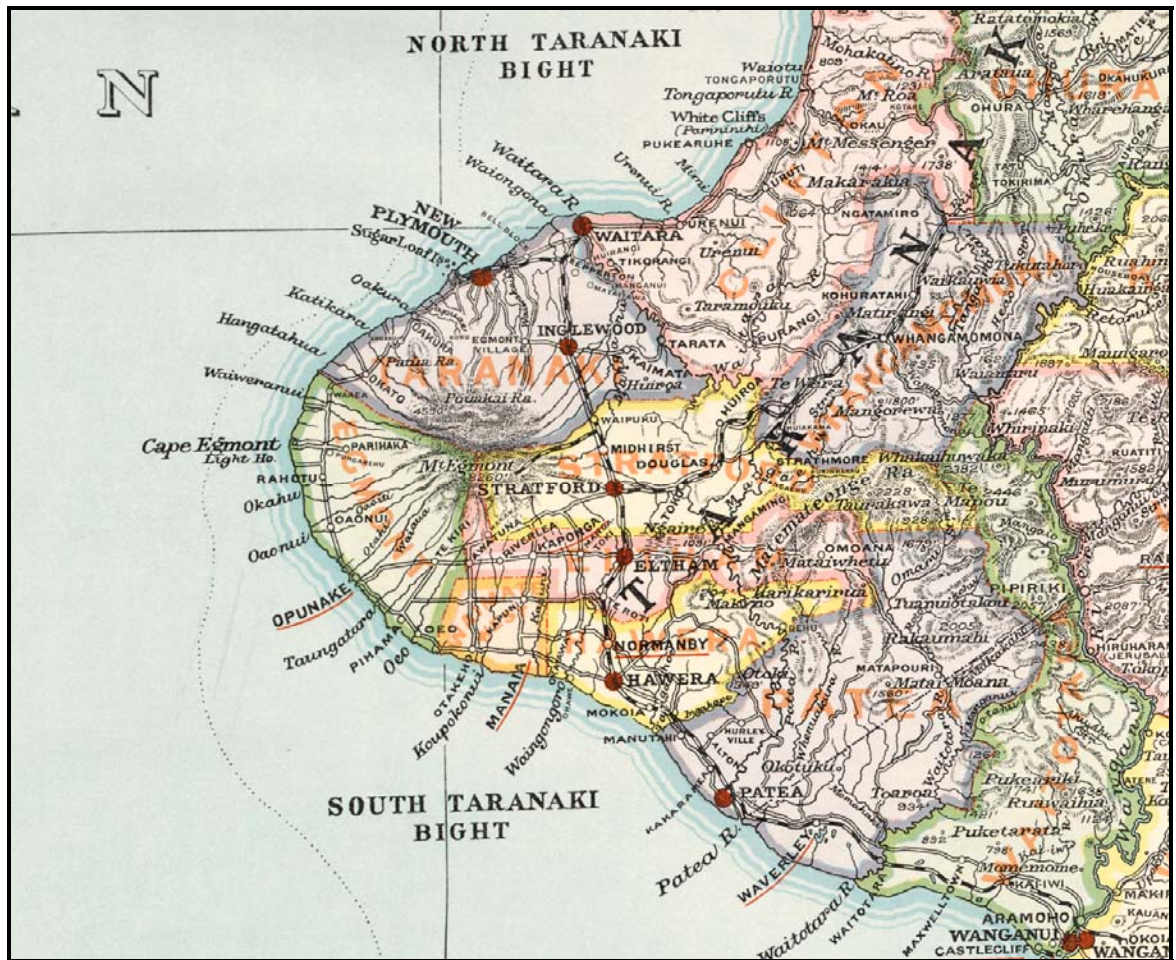
In 1992, for the second time since the summer of 1914, Sarajevo was in the news. When war broke out in the former Yugoslavia, a link was re-established with the Balkan conflicts of 1912-13 and, of course, with the European crisis of July 1914 .... An enduring historical link was re-established with the Great War .... The roots of the century were re-emerging and could be better understood .... No doubt these events made people think afresh, and differently, about 1914-18.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gail Braybon, 'Introduction', in *Evidence, History and the Great War. Historians and the Impact of 1914-18*, Gail Braybon, (ed.), New York: Berghahn Books, 2005, p. 5. Pierre Purseigle and Jenny Macleod, 'Introduction: Perspectives in First World War Studies', in *Uncovered Fields. Perspectives in First World War Studies*, Jenny Macleod and Pierre Purseigle, (eds), Leiden: Brill, 2004, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Sven Oliver Müller, 'The Never Ending Story: The Unbroken Fascination of the History of the First World War', in *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 25:1 (2003), p. 25. David Stevenson, *1914-1918. The History of the First World War*, London: Allen Lane, 2004, p. 593. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History. Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 204-05.

<sup>10</sup> Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau & Annette Becker, *1914-1918 Understanding the Great War*, London: Profile Books, 2002, pp. 7-8.



Map of Taranaki Region with Place Names, North Island,  
New Zealand, c.1914.

Reference No. MapColl 830A/[1914?]/Acc.7378-81 (ATL).

Historians did 'think afresh, and differently', but international events aside, Stig Förster believes the popularity of First World War studies is 'due largely to the currency of new methodologies in historical scholarship'.<sup>11</sup> Before the 1990s, research on the war focused on diplomacy, politics, economics, and 'more often on narrow military aspects', claims Förster, but 'recent research on the history of modern warfare, by contrast, has encompassed social dimensions, gender, culture (broadly speaking), and "mentalities," to name but a few of the new areas of interest'.<sup>12</sup> What historians of the First World War have subsequently produced are studies focusing on people's experiences both in the frontlines and at home, which Jay Winter and Antoine Prost outline best when they say:

Now the spotlight is on survivors, writers, artists, victims, the wounded, crippled, mutilated veterans, as well as their families, their widows, their orphans. Representations of armies have fragmented too. They are no longer seen as units which manoeuvre or solid collectives, but as sites where men suffer, know hardship or despair, and kill in the heat of battle. In a sense, the army has become hidden behind the individual and collective image of the soldier, a man broken by an instrument of suffering and death, which cannot be resisted.<sup>13</sup>

Yet the attention given to individuals and groups of people from different regions and across nations clarifies larger wartime issues. The interest in recent years in the 'August experience' of 1914 is a case in point.<sup>14</sup> To this, Keith Grieves in his study of *Sussex in the First World War* (2004), adds that:

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<sup>11</sup> Stig Förster, 'Introduction', in *Great War, Total War. Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 1. Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, pp. 204-05.

<sup>12</sup> Förster, p. 1. See also the review article by Belinda Davis, 'Experience, Identity, and Memory: The Legacy of World War I', *The Journal of Modern History*, 75:1 (2003), pp. 112-13.

<sup>13</sup> Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*, p. 205.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Verhey draws on examples from throughout urban and rural Germany. Adrian Gregory, 'British "War Enthusiasm" in 1914: A Reassessment', in Braybon, *Evidence, History and the Great War*, pp. 67-86. Gregory draws on examples from Wales and London.

In the history of British society in the Great War locality matters alongside the dimensions of nation, class and gender. As the grand narratives of the era of the two world wars implode, the quest for analysis of sub-national contexts and cases is feverish. The micro-histories of individuals and communities challenge long held preconceptions.<sup>15</sup>

Whether or not New Zealand studies of the First World War mirror international trends is open for discussion. A flurry of publications in New Zealand on the war pre-empted the renewed international interest by nearly a decade.<sup>16</sup> This is probably best explained by moves to commemorate the seventieth anniversaries of 1914 and 1918. It could also be explained by the new methodologies available, namely oral history, and the realization that veterans of the First World War were going to their graves without having their experiences recorded. To establish a perspective on New Zealand's First World War historiography I have analysed my own database of 216 books, articles and pamphlets published or printed between 1914 and 2005. These include PhD and Masters theses as well as Honours degree research exercises listed in the *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH) as being completed between 1968 and 2005. Analysis shows that New Zealand literary interest in the war is not just recent. It is characterised by a diversity of topics, with the soldier, the battlefield and military campaigns comprising nearly half (46%) the titles. The next most popular topics are on war remembrance (7%) and recruiting/conscription (6%). An explanation for the popularity of the soldiers' experiences is, of course,

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<sup>15</sup> Keith Grieves, *Sussex in the First World War*, Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 2004, p. ix. An example is Pierre Pursiegle, 'Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War', in *Uncovered Fields*, pp. 95-125. Pursiegle's local communities are Northampton, England and Béziers, France. Michael Senior, *No Finer Courage. A Village in the Great War*, Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 2004. The village is The Lee in Buckinghamshire.

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, Auckland: Sceptre, 1984. Paul Baker, *King and Country Call. New Zealanders, Conscription and the Great War*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1988. Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack, E. P. Malone, *The Great Adventure. New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1988. Nicholas Boyack, *Behind the Lines. The Lives of New Zealand Soldiers in the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1989. Nicholas Boyack and Jane Tolerton, *In the Shadow of War. New Zealand Soldiers Talk About World War One and Their Lives*, Auckland: Penguin, 1990.

beyond the aim of this introduction, but it does show a preoccupation with a singular topic by historians and other writers on the war.

An important task now facing New Zealand historians of the First World War is to nurture a range of research topics, in particular, those focusing on both frontline and home front experiences, which is the current approach internationally. The future does look promising. Christopher Pugsley's book, *The Anzac Experience* (2004), adopts a trans-national approach in examining New Zealand, Australia and the British empire during the war.<sup>17</sup> Of the theses listed as 'in progress' in the October 2005 issue of the *NZJH*, 4 (6%) of the 68 MA's and 5 (8%) of the 61 PhD's are on First World War topics. The number of PhD theses on the First World War listed as 'in progress' in 2005 equals the total number completed on the war for the entire period from 1968 to 2005.<sup>18</sup>

In *Rural Australia and the Great War* (2001), John McQuilton writes that the regional approach 'allows the researcher to test arguments presented in the general literature', and it provides 'some of the building blocks for the historians interested in the general picture.'<sup>19</sup> More specifically, McQuilton wanted to redress the balance between the First World War as a recognised national and urban experience with the equally real but unrecognised rural experience.<sup>20</sup> This thesis adopts a regional approach by focusing on the rural home front in Taranaki, New Zealand, with emphasis on Stratford Borough and County. It aims to delineate and assess the impact and effects of the First World War on Taranaki.

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<sup>17</sup> Christopher Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience. New Zealand, Australia and the Empire in the First World War*, Auckland: Reed Books, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Since 1969, the *NZJH* has listed 150 PhD theses as 'completed' of which 5 (3%) have been on First World War topics. Since 1968, 871 MA theses in history have been listed as 'completed' of which 18 (2%) were on First World War topics. Of the 508 Honours research exercises in history listed as 'completed' since 1991, 11 (2%) have been on First World War topics.

<sup>19</sup> John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War. From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> See McQuilton, pp. 1, 2.

The structure of this thesis consists of eleven chapters that span the period from July 1914 to 1926. Chapter one focuses on the July Crisis. The aim is to assess local reactions to a distant crisis. This foreshadows chapter two as people in Taranaki reacted to news at the start of a major European war. This chapter assesses 'war enthusiasm' in the regional setting, a popular topic for reassessment amongst historians. Chapters three and four are about how people responded to the war through raising funds, materials and recruits for the army. A key resource used in chapter four is volume one of the *Nominal Rolls of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force* which enables historians to establish information about who volunteered for service in 1914 and 1915, where they lived and the location of their next-of-kin. Chapter four also assesses reasons why males of military age enlisted for military service, and conversely, why some did not. A key primary source consulted in that chapter, and in the next two chapters, is the Military Service Records and Attestation files for over 300 volunteer soldiers. Chapter five continues with the theme of voluntarism, while also investigating concerns over the realities of modern war and the shift towards conscription in chapter six. What happened to the normal, every-day life of the region once the recruits had left for the training camps and eventually to the battlefield, is the focus for both chapters seven and eight. Chapter seven assesses the absence of males in the rural workplace, namely on the farm and in the dairy industry, and the impact their absence had on marriage. Chapter nine assesses public responses to the deaths of Taranaki males in the frontlines. Chapter ten is about how the war ended for people in Taranaki. Here I argue that it ended ambivalently. Joy and relief over victory did not sit easily alongside misery and death through war and then during the influenza epidemic. The final chapter assesses the form, place and meanings surrounding Taranaki's war memorials with a focus on those unveiled in Stratford. It is Stratford's Hall of Remembrance that concludes this thesis while also providing its opening in chapter one.





## Chapter One

### Distant Crisis, Local Concerns

On an official tour of New Zealand in 1920, Edward, Prince of Wales, stopped at Stratford. Mayor John McMillan and other prominent citizens greeted the prince at the railway station and then escorted him through a cheering, flag-waving crowd to the ceremonial dais on Broadway, a short walking distance from the station. The prince spoke to the crowd, after which he unveiled this:

#### ROLL OF HONOUR TO THE MEN OF STRATFORD DISTRICT WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-19<sup>1</sup>

Widows and mothers of 'fallen soldiers' had been especially invited to attend the unveiling, along with returned soldiers and Boer War veterans. The prince 'greeted them all; while in [some] cases a conspicuous medal or maimed limb were the subject' of inquiry.<sup>2</sup> After a brief unveiling ceremony the prince was escorted back through the cheering crowd to the train 'which soon afterwards steamed out on its journey southwards, the last seen of the Prince being his smiling, good-humoured face as he bowed from the rear platform'.<sup>3</sup> Irony surrounded the prince's brief visit because nearly six years earlier there had been similar scenes in Stratford due to 'excitement in connection with the despatch of the first contingent for the front .... There was a big crowd at the railway station, and hearty cheers were given as the train steamed out' to the south.<sup>4</sup> The prince had been greeted and farewelled in 1920 in a manner similar to the departing soldiers in 1914, some of whom never returned. Prince Edward

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<sup>1</sup> Plaque Inscription, Hall of Remembrance, Broadway, Stratford.

<sup>2</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 3 May, 1920, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 4 May, 1920, p. 3.

had unveiled their roll of honour before travelling south by train, himself never to return.

The visit of a prince and the departure of soldiers to a war are emotional public occasions. Campbell McAllister – son of the prominent early twentieth-century photographer, James McAllister – recalls feeling ‘juvenile pride when the racket of [his] drumming heels [on a restaurant façade] was heard above the cheering and drew an upward glance’ from the prince.<sup>5</sup> It is clear why Campbell felt proud. He had seen royalty, and the prince had seen him. Similarly, the crowd was cheerful because the prince was actually there in Stratford on behalf of King George ‘to thank New Zealand for helping defend the British Empire during World War I’.<sup>6</sup> It was also a chance to see the future king of England. Less clear, however, is why a crowd in Stratford cheered its citizens off to war in August 1914 knowing that they would be shot at, wounded, maimed and that some would not return. It seems a thoughtless act, but then what did people in Stratford and throughout Taranaki think about the ‘war crisis’ in Europe as it unfolded in late July and early August 1914? Furthermore, did the crisis give them cause for concern, if so, in what ways, and upon what basis did an agreement to act stem from that war crisis period? These are the key questions that this chapter must address.

It is a convention of First World War studies to begin with the July Crisis, that period of time between the assassination of archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, and the start of a major European war. It is a crisis that has been the subject of much scrutiny by historians often in minute and ‘obsessive’ detail, but less so in New Zealand.<sup>7</sup> That New Zealand historians writing about the First World War have focused so little attention on the crisis

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<sup>4</sup> SEP, 18 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell McAllister, *Old Taranaki and Its Mountain*, Wellington: Millwood Press, 1976, p. 82.

<sup>6</sup> *New Zealand Official Yearbook (NZOYB)*, Wellington: Department of Statistics, 1990, p. 96.

<sup>7</sup> For example K. M. Wilson, ‘Understanding the “Misunderstanding” of 1 August, 1914’, *The Historical Journal*, 37:4 (1994), pp. 885-9. Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War. Controversies and Consensus*, London: Pearson Education, 2002, p. 1.

when compared with their counterparts in Britain and Europe is probably due to its sudden timing. In Europe the crisis came as 'a shock to many people who were given little time to reflect on what was actually happening'.<sup>8</sup> In a distant part of the British empire, in the Taranaki region of New Zealand, news of the crisis also came 'suddenly like an eclipse of the sun'.<sup>9</sup> Little of it was understood, which Stratford's mayor, J. W. Boon, confirmed in 1915. At a social gathering to honour the town's municipal brass band, Boon stated that 'when the war broke out, it came as a thunderclap and surprised everybody. The people did not realize what it meant'.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, there are few sources, especially those providing social commentary. James Belich's contention that 'New Zealanders in 1914 did not investigate the causes of conflict, and we can follow their example' may explain further why historians here have not studied the July Crisis, but it should not be ignored based on the assumption that contemporaries were not interested.<sup>11</sup> The news reports and editorials in Taranaki newspapers during the period of the crisis show otherwise. The *Opunake Times*, for example, pondered: 'The great question is, why has it come?'<sup>12</sup>

The newspapers in Taranaki anticipated something major about to occur during the period of the crisis, but what exactly - another localized war in the

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<sup>8</sup> James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London: Longman, 1992, p. 200. An abridged version of Joll's chapter on 'The Mood of 1914', is published in Holger H. Herwig, (ed.), *The Outbreak of World War I*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997, pp. 15-21. On the crisis, Jean-Jacques Becker states that the 'French were caught unawares', in *The Great War and the French People*, Leamington Spa: Berg, 1985, p. 3. Matthew R. Bray writes that Canadians 'were taken very much by surprise', in "'Fighting as an Ally': The English-Canadian Patriotic Response to the Great War", *Canadian Historical Review*, 61 (1980), p. 142. Cyril Parry refers to news of the crisis in August 1914 as 'unanticipated' in 'Gwynedd and the Great War, 1914-1918', *Welsh History Review*, 14:1 (1988), p. 78.

<sup>9</sup> *Hawera and Normanby Star (HNS)*, 29 July, 1914, p. 4. The crisis came like 'a suddenly-appearing thunder-cloud', *HNS*, 31 July, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> *SEP*, 28 June, 1915, p. 4. Michael King confirms that 'few New Zealanders understood' the sequence of events surrounding the July Crisis. *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin Book, 2003, p. 293.

<sup>11</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged. A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> *Opunake Times*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

Balkans, or a war in Europe between the great powers that could involve Britain? Newspaper headlines about a possible war shunted aside news about Irish Home Rule and agitation by suffragettes. The news from Europe in late July 1914 was thought to be 'the gravest that has been received in years'.<sup>13</sup> Not since the Bosnian Crisis of 1908 had newspapers in Taranaki printed such worrying headlines about the possibility of a major war in Europe.<sup>14</sup> During the crisis people read of 'ALARMING POSSIBILITIES', of 'PEACE TREMBLING IN THE BALANCE', of 'A GRAVE SITUATION EUROPEAN POWERS ARMING', and that Europe is 'IN THE SHADOW OF WAR'.<sup>15</sup> To the *Stratford Evening Post* it seemed to have 'all the elements of a catastrophe'.<sup>16</sup> The *Patea and Waverley Press* believed it would 'be little short of a miracle if England is not drawn into the conflict'.<sup>17</sup> Newspapers expressed concerns about what a clash between Europe's great powers would mean, especially for Britain and its empire. If Britain became involved in such a clash then New Zealand would be affected, as it had been by the war in South Africa at the turn of the century.

On at least two occasions the *Taranaki Herald* traced the events leading to the crisis.<sup>18</sup> The newspapers had knowledge of the geo-political and military background. The press considered a localised war between Austria and Serbia to be the most likely outcome of the crisis, mainly because Serbia had been weakened by recent wars in the Balkans. Austria's war strength of 1.8 million soldiers could be increased to 3.5 million whereas Serbia could only mobilize 270,000 and these figures are reasonably accurate.<sup>19</sup> Austria clearly occupied a

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<sup>13</sup> *Patea and Waverley Press (PWP)*, 29 July, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *TH* headlines read, 'A WAR CLOUD' on 6 October, 1908, p. 5 and asked 'WILL THERE BE WAR?' on 9 October, 1908, p. 5. 'The Bosnian Crisis has frequently been considered a rehearsal of the crisis which ended with the outbreak of the First World War.' Felix Gilbert, *The End of the European Era 1890 to the Present*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971, p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> *TH*, 27, 28, 30, 31 July, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *SEP*, 28 July, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *PWP*, 29 July, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *TH*, 1 August, 1914, p. 3. *TH*, 3 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *PWP*, 29 July, 1914, p. 2. *SEP*, 29 July, 1914, p. 5. *TH*, 27 July, 1914, p. 3. *HNS*, 31 July, 1914, p. 4. Niall Ferguson put Austria-Hungary's war strength in 1914 at 1.3 million and Serbia's at 247,000

more advantageous position, and 'if no other power intervenes the struggle will be short', claimed the *Taranaki Herald*.<sup>20</sup> However, if Russia, as patron of the Slavs, intervened and took up Serbia's cause then:

it may be that the greater part of Europe will become involved, for if Russia opposes Austria, Germany is almost bound to support her ally. France may then feel in honour bound to go to Russia's assistance, and the third member of the Triple Alliance, Italy, would have to range herself alongside Austria and Germany.<sup>21</sup>

This demonstrated that contemporaries understood some of the 'contextual issues' that helped shape the framework of international politics in 1914, namely the European system of alliances.<sup>22</sup> The press also understood that 'the primary causes of the trouble' included the 'racial aspirations of the Balkan Slavs', and that the assassination of Franz Ferdinand was 'merely a link in the long chain of circumstance[s]'.<sup>23</sup> The *Herald* concluded that 'in the light of the history of the last forty years it would seem that another readjustment of the map of that corner of Europe is imminent'.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to geo-politics the press also provided information about the military capabilities of European states. Russia reportedly could mobilize 5.4 million soldiers, Germany 4.35 million, France 4.5 million and Italy 3.22 million.<sup>25</sup> Recent memory could not recall armies of that size.<sup>26</sup> The size of their

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in *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 92. David G. Herrmann cites the Austro-Hungarian estimation of Serbia's war strength in 1914 at 420,000 in *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 208.

<sup>20</sup> *TH*, 27 July, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel R. Wilkinson, 'The Origins of the War', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, Hew Strachan, (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 11. Other 'contextual issues' cited by Wilkinson include the arms race, imperialism's legacies, economic rivalries and virulent nationalism.

<sup>23</sup> *HNS*, 29 July, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> *TH*, 27 July, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *SEP*, 29 July, 1914, p. 5. In 1914, Russian wartime strength was 3.4 million soldiers, Germany's strength was 2.1 million, and France 1.8 million. Ferguson, p. 92.

<sup>26</sup> One million soldiers fought at Koniggratz (Sadowa) in 1866 during the Austro-Prussian War, 'which in terms of numbers, remained the biggest battle in history until the First World War.'

respective navies was just as formidable. The *Taranaki Herald* also printed an extensive and detailed index covering nearly two columns of each European power's military capability.<sup>27</sup> When the fighting did begin between Austria and Serbia, the *Stratford Evening Post* informed its readers of the '**FIRST SHOTS EXCHANGED**', of a '**RUSH TO JOIN THE COLOURS**', and of the '**BOMBARDMENT OF BELGRADE**'.<sup>28</sup> Unease could be detected in the *Hawera and Normanby Star's* reaction that 'the threatened wreckage of European civilisation' seemed likely, and an 'ominous darkness' surrounded the crisis.<sup>29</sup> It is no wonder then, given the geo-political and military facts presented by the press, that some people feared the '**BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON**' was about to begin.<sup>30</sup>

Cablegrams brought news of the European situation which the press interpreted with uncertainty, judging by the headlines late in July of '**EUROPE IN SUSPENSE**' and '**NO DECISIVE MOVE AS YET**'.<sup>31</sup> Amidst the uncertainty the newspapers sounded a note of hope, that a European war would be avoided. 'Every hour gained is an advantage, as it gives an opportunity for calmer counsels to prevail', claimed the *Taranaki Herald*.<sup>32</sup> The *Hawera and Normanby Star* saw Britain as that calm counsel, believing it had the 'political genius' and 'masterly influence' to produce peaceful results.<sup>33</sup> News reports also suggested that the powers did not want war. There was 'a hopeful sign [that] the money markets, although naturally depressed, [did] not point to any grave fear of so

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Norman Rich, *The Age of Nationalism and Reform 1850-1890*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, 1971, p. 94.

<sup>27</sup> See *TH*, 5 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> *SEP*, 28, 29, 30 July, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> *HNS*, 29, 31 July, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age (IRWA)*, 27 July, 1914, p. 2. *PWP*, 29 July, 1914, p. 2. The 'expectation of Armageddon' had been a feature of the pre-First World War generation, claims historian Robert Wohl in *The Generation of 1914*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979, p. 212. In Britain, 'anxiety and the expectation of war were a part of the Edwardian consciousness', claims Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> *TH*, 28 July, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

stupendous a disaster as a general European war'.<sup>34</sup> But, each new cablegram seemed to erode any hope for containment of the Austro-Serbian conflict. The *Taranaki Herald* reported that 'the position in Europe is very serious, all the Powers are preparing for the worst, and something approaching a panic exists in financial circles throughout the world'.<sup>35</sup>

The question of 'EUROPEAN PEACE OR WAR?' still remained undecided on 1 August, and a widening of the crisis can be detected as newspapers extended their coverage to include 'remarkable' and 'unusual' scenes from New Zealand's Parliament.<sup>36</sup> A more decisive shift in reactions occurred early the following evening when an 'extraordinary' cablegram arrived containing the 'startling' news that Germany had declared war on Russia following the latter's refusal to stop mobilization. Hope for a repeat of the situation during the Bosnian Crisis of 1908, when Russia backed away and war was avoided, dissipated as uncertainty gave way to excitement and alarm grew over the possibility of a European war.<sup>37</sup> The impact and effects of the July Crisis can be detected from early August when the press began to report reactions from the local region. The *Stratford Evening Post* wanted people to know about the declaration of war by Germany, so they printed an extra edition on Sunday for posting throughout the borough and for distribution to the town's churches. Similarly, the *Taranaki Herald* sent out runners to deliver a thousand 'extras' around New Plymouth.<sup>38</sup> In early twentieth-century New Zealand, that is how important news was conveyed en masse and with haste. At Whiteley Memorial Church in New Plymouth:

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<sup>33</sup> *HNS*, 29 July, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *TH*, 29 July, 1914, p. 2. *SEP*, 28 July, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *TH*, 30 July, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *TH*, 1 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> *SEP*, 3 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *TH*, 3 August, 1914, p. 2.



the whole service was characterized by the influence of the serious news just received from Europe. At the commencement of the service the Rev. A.B. Chappell announced the cabled particulars, and emphasised the gravity of the turn European affairs had taken. It was, he said, not a time for panic, but a time for prayer.<sup>39</sup>

Over the next few days other examples indicated how seriously people in Taranaki viewed the situation in Europe. The *Taranaki Herald's* correspondent in Inglewood reported, 'of course, as elsewhere, the war is the talk of the town at present'; and that, 'every available copy of the *Herald* [is] being demanded immediately upon its arrival'.<sup>40</sup> Newton King – Taranaki's most prominent businessman – on holiday with his family in America also considered the news serious. He 'immediately' began the return journey home.<sup>41</sup>

The diaries of William Skinner, a 57 year-old land surveyor with a 'fierce affection for the Taranaki region' record the crisis as it unfolded.<sup>42</sup> After a church service on 2 August, Skinner wrote:

the vicar announced at the opening that Germany had declared war against Russia. Now we are in for a most awfull [*sic*] war, as France must go to Russia's assistance, & England can scarcely hope to keep out of it this will be one of the most dreadful wars of all time. Consider the numbers engaged prodigious!<sup>43</sup>

The next day Skinner had further reason to write pessimistically in his diary after learning about '**THE CLASH OF ARMS**' and '**THE GREAT POWERS AT WAR**'.<sup>44</sup> 'War news is pouring in', he wrote, 'things look most ominous'.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>40</sup> *TH*, 4 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Skinner's parents were amongst the original European settlers to disembark at New Plymouth in 1841. Skinner was born there in 1857. He was raised and educated in New Plymouth, and worked there, and throughout Taranaki until 1911. After that he lived and worked in Marlborough, Hawke's Bay and Canterbury before returning to New Plymouth to retire in 1919, where he died in 1946. Skinner had been a Taranaki resident for 81 years. Giselle M. Byrnes, 'William Henry Skinner 1857-1946', in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography 1901-1920*, vol. 3, Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books and the Department of Internal Affairs, 1996, p. 479.

<sup>43</sup> W. H. Skinner, 2 August, 1914. Diaries 1913-18. MS-020/6 (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>44</sup> *TH*, 3 August, 1914, p. 2. *SEP*, 3 August, 1914, p. 5.

W. H. Oliver once wrote, to New Zealand, 'Russia was the nineteenth century nightmare, Germany, more realistically, that of the twentieth'.<sup>46</sup> German involvement in the crisis was not unexpected; that Germany would be at the centre of a major European conflict would not have been surprising with pre-1914 'invasion scare' literature popularizing that belief.<sup>47</sup> In Taranaki, newspaper editors demonstrated hostility towards Germany by sounding 'A WARNING NOTE' about 'THE GERMAN MENACE'.<sup>48</sup> Alleged German breaches of abstract notions such as 'international honour' formed the basis of that vilification. The newspapers cited the Bosnian Crisis of 1908 as an example. Assumptions that Germany had much to do with the current crisis gained popularity with Kaiser Wilhelm's refusal to act as a mediator alongside Britain at a conference aimed at settling the Austro-Serbian conflict. But, as Hew Strachan infers, who can blame Germany for refusing to participate when experiences at such conferences following the Moroccan crises ended in 'humiliation'.<sup>49</sup> Further breaches of international law came with the alleged German violation of Luxemburg's neutrality and Germany crossing the French frontier without making a declaration of war.<sup>50</sup> The newspapers claimed that Germany had taken on the mantle of a 'dictatorial dominant power' with 'Napoleonic aims'.<sup>51</sup> 'The present crisis is therefore one of the most momentous

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<sup>45</sup> Skinner Diary, 3 August, 1914.

<sup>46</sup> W. H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, London: Faber and Faber, 1960, pp. 168-9.

<sup>47</sup> For example, *The Invasion of 1910* by William Le Queux was serialised from May to September, 1906 in the *New Zealand Herald*. Guy du Maurier's play *An Englishman's Home* was performed in the Opera House in Wellington on 4 December, 1909. Reference is made to du Maurier's play in the *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD)*, vol. 148, 1909, p. 1011 and in the *New Zealand Military Journal*, April 1912, p. 109. Le Queux and du Maurier are cited by Simon Johnson, 'The Home Front. Aspects of Civilian Patriotism in New Zealand During the First World War', MA Thesis in History, Massey University, 1975, pp. 13-14. Books written by Le Queux and H. G. Wells did reach Taranaki. See the list of new books held by Stratford's Public Library in *SEP*, 28 July, 1915, p. 4. *SEP*, 6 January, 1916, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> *TH*, 28 July, 1914, p. 5. *IRWA*, 31 July, 1914, p. 4. *PWP*, 31 July, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, Vol. I, *To Arms*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> *SEP*, 3 August, 1914, p. 4. *HNS*, 3 August, 1914, p. 4. Skinner Diary, 3 August, 1914.

<sup>51</sup> *HNS*, 3 August, 1914, p. 4.

in the history of the human race', exclaimed the *Hawera and Normanby Star*, because Germany was trying to 'destroy the national life in Europe and subvert the civil liberty of the world'.<sup>52</sup> With German and Russian armies on the move in Europe, a key question arose – '**What Will Britain Do?**'<sup>53</sup>

For Taranaki, and New Zealand, that was *the* question.<sup>54</sup> Britain found itself in a most invidious position in early August 1914, and it presented Herbert Asquith's government with a moral dilemma. Should Britain stand aside and avoid military entanglements on the continent, or mobilise in support of Russia and its *entente* partner France? To do the former would leave Britain without friends in Europe, regardless of who was victorious; the latter would inevitably lead to an escalation of the war. The decision that Britain had to make, therefore, was momentous for all concerned.

People in Taranaki following the developments in Europe waited to see what course of action Britain would take. In answering the question '**WILL BRITAIN BE INVOLVED?**' the *Taranaki Herald* could only speculate that 'a German attack on France might quite possibly bring Britain to the support of her ally'.<sup>55</sup> Underpinning that answer was a belief that Britain would do the 'right thing', by 'loyally keep[ing] faith' with France and Russia.<sup>56</sup> Honour and the 'right' thing to do characterised the discourse in the press. Prior to news of French involvement in the 'war crisis', a *Herald* editorial felt that 'it is difficult to imagine that she [Britain] can stand looking on while her friends are engaged in a death struggle'.<sup>57</sup> Even though British involvement would mean war and

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *SEP*, 3 August, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Niall Ferguson understands that to be 'the biggest question of 1914 – the one which would decide the war', p. 154.

<sup>55</sup> *TH*, 1 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>56</sup> *HNS*, 3 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> *TH*, 3 August, 1914, p. 2.

hardship, war was preferable to losing self-respect. As historian 'James Joll once reminded us, "honour" really meant something' to people in 1914.<sup>58</sup>

Following news of Germany's '**INVASION OF FRANCE**' the headline, '**Without [a] Declaration of War**' suggests that the *Herald* considered Germany's actions to be dishonourable.<sup>59</sup> When Sir Edward Grey, Britain's Minister for Foreign Affairs, announced his government's intentions to mobilize if German warships should enter the English Channel and bombard the French coast, the *Stratford Evening Post* responded: 'Britain's practical sympathies are, and rightly too, with her good neighbour, France. It is, at any rate, a step in the honorable direction'.<sup>60</sup> Ominously, the *Herald*, and the *Post*, too, felt that Grey's veiled warning to Germany had 'put an end to any chance of England keeping clear of the trouble'.<sup>61</sup> Britain, the *Post* told its readers on 5 August, 'is perilously near the brink of war.'<sup>62</sup> Only by 'loss of honor' or 'by Germany realising the falsehood of her cause', could Britain avoid war in Europe, claimed the *Post*.<sup>63</sup> Avner Offer says that 'what took place during those days was a reversal of preferences: the short-term consideration of honor displacing the prudential, longer-term preference for survival'.<sup>64</sup> As a predominantly 'British' community Taranaki kept its faith too, and clearly stood '**WHERE BRITAIN STANDS**'.<sup>65</sup> Despite the unswerving loyalty to the empire, concerns were raised about how a European war would affect the region if Britain got involved.

The concerns focused primarily on economics. The *Stratford Evening Post* believed that:

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<sup>58</sup> Joll cited by Michael Howard, 'Out of the Trenches', in *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)*, 13 November, 1998, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> *TH*, 4 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> *SEP*, 4 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> *TH*, 4 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> *SEP*, 5 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Avner Offer, 'Going to War in 1914: A Matter of Honor?', *Politics and Society*, 23:2 (1995), p. 223.

we should suffer in a very direct way if England should be involved. The war vessels of the European Powers would, without doubt, endeavour to prevent all supplies from entering Great Britain, and would keep a special eye open for the big Australian and New Zealand liners with their valuable cargoes of frozen meat, dairy produce and other articles for human consumption. Great difficulty would also be experienced in getting ships away from the Old Country with export goods, and, for those goods which we are in the habit of obtaining from England, a great rise in prices would be experienced.<sup>66</sup>

Since the late 1880s, Taranaki had been considered one of the prime dairy producing regions in New Zealand. Nearly a third (30.8%) of the total value of butter and cheese production in New Zealand in 1910 came from the factories in Taranaki.<sup>67</sup> In 1914, 132 butter and cheese factories operated there, far more than anywhere else in New Zealand.<sup>68</sup> Many of the region's settlers depended on dairy farming for their livelihoods. In the central Taranaki settlements of Cardiff and Ngaere, 91% and 80% respectively of occupations were directly related to farming.<sup>69</sup> Of Kaponga settlement, Rollo Arnold says:

The British market was the very *raison d'être* of their colonial economy. Without the British consumers and freedom of the seas the whole Kaponga enterprise would become meaningless. A blow that laid Britain low, a rival who swept her commerce from the oceans, would concurrently destroy settler Kaponga .... So, only as part of the larger imperial world did either New Zealand or Kaponga make sense.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *SEP*, 3, 4, 5 August, 1914, p. 4. *TH*, 3, 4 August, 1914, p. 2. *HNS*, 3 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> *SEP*, 31 July, 1914, p. 4. See 'Business Prospects and The War', which outlines differing views from Auckland and Christchurch about how the war could affect New Zealand, in *TH*, 4 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1914, vol. III, p. 81. The total value of butter and cheese produced in the Dominion in 1910 was £3,919,184 of which Taranaki produced £1,209,243. The total value of butter and cheese exported from New Zealand to Great Britain in 1910 was £3,007,348. *NZOYB*, 1911, p. 343. For an overview of the importance to New Zealand of the dairy industry in Kaponga and Taranaki, see Rollo Arnold, *Settler Kaponga 1881-1914. A Frontier Fragment of the Western World*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, p. 236.

<sup>68</sup> Otago and Southland combined had 97 factories. Butter and cheese were New Zealand's third biggest export earners in 1913. *NZOYB*, 1914, pp. 612, 347, 348.

<sup>69</sup> Based on analysis of occupations in Stratford and Whangamomona Counties listed in *Parkinson's Star Almanack and West Coast Directory*, 1914, pp. 334-46.

<sup>70</sup> Arnold, p. 201.

Jock Phillips wrote that 'if Britain were lost as a market, there would be few alternatives' for New Zealand, 'if Britain fell, our economy also fell'.<sup>71</sup> A fear of economic blockade of Britain with its associated loss of export revenue and a rise in prices occupied the minds of some people. Economic survival depended on the Royal Navy's command of the sea-lanes so that dairy produce from Taranaki would reach the port of London.

In addition to economic considerations, the involvement of Britain in a European war had strategic implications for New Zealand, and indeed, Taranaki. Imperial association assured that New Zealand could eventually become embroiled in affairs in Europe not of its own making, and its geographical isolation would not be a guarantee of security in the age of the Dreadnought. After all, the Russian naval fleet had traveled half way around the world to engage the Japanese navy in battle in 1905, and the American fleet had visited New Zealand in 1908. So it was conceivable that the German navy could reach the South-West Pacific. Strachan believes that Germany had territorial possessions in the Pacific that 'pointed menacingly at the coastal trade of Australia and New Zealand'.<sup>72</sup> Some research also shows 'that New Zealand and Australia were considered prime targets of opportunity for the German cruiser squadron operating in Australasian waters'.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, Germany's territorial possessions in the Pacific – the closest to New Zealand being Samoa – were all within reach of the German navy.

The *Taranaki Herald's* resident agent in Stratford expressed a pessimistic local view about the international nature of the crisis:

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<sup>71</sup> Jock Phillips, 'Was the Great War New Zealand's War?', in *The Great War. Gains and Losses – Anzac and Empire*, Craig Wilcox, (ed.), Canberra: Australian War Memorial and Australian National University, 1995, pp. 70, 71.

<sup>72</sup> Strachan, *To Arms*, p. 444.

<sup>73</sup> Glyn Harper cites the research of Jurgen Tampke in 'The Germans Really Were Coming', *The Dominion*, 11 January, 2001, p. 10.

I hope our people are not making the mistake of imagining that our part in this tremendous drama is going to be one of mere sentiment, little removed from that of the spectators at a play. There will be a sharp disillusionment if that is the case. It may be highly unlikely that the actual strife will extend beyond the bowels of Europe, but the effects of the convulsion must be world-wide.<sup>74</sup>

Hence the concern in Taranaki over Britain's response, and what the wider imperial community would do. Having been taught that they belonged to an empire 'upon which the sun never sets', New Zealand would not have been able to escape the responsibilities associated with imperial solidarity and survival. It was expected that New Zealand would support Britain, just as it had done previously in South Africa.

On the evening of 5 August, an audience in New Plymouth's Empire Picture Palace stood and sang the National Anthem 'with enthusiasm'.<sup>75</sup> On that day they heard that Germany had invaded Belgium. The newspaper headlines read, '**England at War**'.<sup>76</sup> The waiting that had begun only a few days previously was over as '**BRITAIN TAKES ACTION**'.<sup>77</sup> Mobilization of the army and navy began. Over a period of fourteen days from 23 July to 5 August, Taranaki moved irrevocably from a state of peace to knowing that Britain was engaged in a European war, which had not occurred since the Crimean War of 1854-56. What New Zealand, and ultimately Taranaki, would be required to do had yet to be determined.

What Taranaki understood though, was its immediate role: 'knowing how dependent England is upon imported foodstuffs, our first duty is to supply these to the fullest extent of our power without regard to price'.<sup>78</sup> Less clear, however, was the extent of involvement. 'New Zealanders, except perhaps a few, will be onlookers at a distance', stated the *Taranaki Herald*.<sup>79</sup> While the

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<sup>74</sup> *TH*, 5 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> *SEP*, 5 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> *TH*, 5 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> *TH*, 6 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

*Stratford Evening Post* pondered the future, it looked without answers. 'What this fearful struggle now upon us will cost the world in human life and treasure is almost beyond conception. How long the clash of arms will affright the world before peace is restored to Europe it is impossible to say.'<sup>80</sup>

The Taranaki region's experience of the July Crisis can be divided into two periods, each with its own distinct character. From late July to 1 August 1914, there was uncertainty and a growing anxiety about the crisis in Europe, but hope that war would be avoided. From 3 August, following news of the German declaration of war on Russia, to 5 August, and the British declaration of war on Germany, alarm and excitement eclipsed earlier reactions as the circle of those people affected by the crisis grew. Key concerns arose over what Britain would do, and how a European war would affect New Zealand, in particular, Taranaki's economy. Economic security, imperial affirmation and survival, vilification of Germany as the foe, and the idea of honour, surfaced in the Taranaki press. Subsequently, those concerns provided a basis for that 'British' community's agreement to act. The strongest concern though, the one that underpinned the sense of foreboding demonstrated by Newton King's decision to return home, which can be read in Skinner's diary and in the newspapers, was that European powers were on a collision course. That collision would entangle the Houses of Hohenzollern (Germany) and Habsburg (Austria-Hungary) with the Houses of Romanov (Russia), Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (Britain) and Republican France. Those 'lords of human kind', as Victor Kiernan once described them, were at war in August 1914.<sup>81</sup> With Britain involved people in Taranaki must have known that they, as part of an empire, would be called upon to do their duty. Whether or not they reacted 'with enthusiasm' to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>80</sup> *SEP*, 6 August, 1914, p. 4.



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<sup>81</sup> Victor Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes Towards the Outside World in the Imperial Age*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969.

## Chapter Two

### Local Reactions, *With Enthusiasm?*

Cyril Falls once wrote, 'little room can be found for the life of the nations at war. It seems opportune, however, to open a few loopholes bearing on it and to risk the reproach that the glimpses are so slight as to be hardly worthwhile'.<sup>1</sup> Ever since Falls took those first tentative steps in 1960 towards examining life on the home front, historians have been curious about how people reacted to the outbreak of war in 1914. 'With enthusiasm' is considered to be the most common answer, the longevity of which has established it as an axiom of First World War historiography. Typical is Jim McAloon's comment about the town of Nelson in New Zealand where 'enthusiasm for the war was high in the first fortnight of August 1914'.<sup>2</sup> 'In every town in New Zealand', wrote Christopher Pugsley, 'cheering crowds took to the streets'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, across the Tasman Sea in Australia, 'patriotic enthusiasm' characterised the rural Victorian shire of Yackandandah's reaction to the declaration of war.<sup>4</sup> Further afield in the British Empire, 'a floodtide of enthusiasm' characterised the South African reaction.<sup>5</sup> Robert Rutherford's research found 'unprecedented excitement and demonstrations of war enthusiasm' in Canada; while Desmond Morton noted that 'American delegates to a conference at Winnipeg got a special dose of cheering so that they could take home word that British patriotism was at fever

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<sup>1</sup> Cyril Falls, *The First World War*, London: Longman, 1960, p. 207. See chapter seven: 'How They Fared at Home', pp. 207-17.

<sup>2</sup> Jim McAloon, *Nelson. A Regional History*, Whatamango Bay: Cape Catley Ltd in association with Nelson City Council, 1997, p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Pugsley, et.al., *Scars On the Heart. Two Centuries of New Zealand at War*, Auckland: David Bateman Ltd, 1996, p. 68. 'New Zealand was joyously at war', wrote Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, Auckland: Sceptre, 1990, p. 38. Michael King, *New Zealanders at War*, Auckland: Heinemann Publishers, 1981, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> John McQuilton, 'A Shire at War: Yackandandah, 1914-18', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, 11, (1987), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Bill Nasson, 'A Great Divide: Popular Responses to the Great War in South Africa', *War & Society*, 12:1, (1994), p. 48.

pitch on the Canadian prairie.’<sup>6</sup> Historians are now reassessing that once popular view.

A. J. P. Taylor’s view in 1963 that, ‘the peoples of Europe leapt eagerly into war’, sits in marked contrast to Jean-Jacques Becker’s research in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Becker argued convincingly that:

it is no longer possible to claim that France was swept by a wave of enthusiasm for the war as troops mobilized. Some outward signs of this have been unduly emphasized, leading people to draw false conclusions. A certain portion of the French population did respond enthusiastically, but this portion was a small minority.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of Becker’s research, ‘the history of mobilization was thus entirely revised’, say Jay Winter and Antoine Prost.<sup>9</sup> Historians are now more inclined to follow Becker’s lead than Taylor.<sup>10</sup> Niall Ferguson has studied ‘war enthusiasm’ and he branded it a myth. Ferguson asked ‘was the war, as is often

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Rutherford, ‘The Home Front: Consensus and Conflict in Lethbridge, Guelph and Trois-Rivieres During the Great War’, PhD Thesis in History, York University, Ontario, 1993, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, *The First World War. An Illustrated History*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Jean-Jacques Becker, ‘That’s the Death Knell of Our Boys’, in *The French Home Front 1914-1918*, Patrick Fridenson, (ed.), Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1992, p. 35. Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, Leamington Spa: Berg, 1985, pp. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History. Debates and Controversies 1914 to the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 90.

<sup>10</sup> Adrian Gregory, ‘British “War Enthusiasm” in 1914 a Reassessment’, in Braybon, *Evidence, History and the Great War*, pp. 67-85. John Horne, (ed.), ‘Introduction: Mobilizing for “Total War”, 1914-1918’, in *State, Society and Mobilization in Europe During the First World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 2. Sven Oliver Müller, ‘The Never Ending Story: The Unbroken Fascination of the History of the First World War’, *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 21:1 (2003), pp. 24, 31, 43-4. See also the essays in Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt’s edited book, *August 1914: Ein Volk Zieht in den Krieg*, Berlin: Nishen, 1989, which ‘challenge the view that the war was greeted everywhere in Germany with jubilation’, cited by Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany. A Historiographical Companion*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 504. Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience. The Story of an English Community’s Opposition to the Great War*, London: Francis Boutle Publishers, 2001, pp. 60-73. E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 43-6. Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction. War, Genocide and Modern Identity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 11. Richard Bessel, *Germany After the First World War*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, pp. 3-4. Holger H. Herwig, *The First World War. Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914-1918*, London: Arnold, 1998, pp. 34-5.

asserted, really greeted with popular enthusiasm?’<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Verhey, whose research focuses on Germany, has a similar view that, ‘until recently most historians simply accepted contemporaries’ accounts of German public opinion in 1914 as “enthusiastic” without systematically analyzing or investigating it’.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, ‘the mood of the population in July and August 1914 cannot be adequately explained by the adjective “enthusiastic”’.<sup>13</sup> Judith Smart’s research on Australian reactions found that in Melbourne people showed ‘interest rather than popular enthusiasm for the war’, and ‘other emotions’ were evident, such as violent assaults on Chinese as well as German property.<sup>14</sup> In New Zealand, ‘most adults who congregated in the streets did so less for celebration than for reassurance in the face of frightening uncertainty’, writes Paul Baker.<sup>15</sup> Where then, does a region like Taranaki fit into a reassessment of reactions to the outbreak of war in 1914? Did ‘war enthusiasm’ predominate or were there more measured reactions? It is these questions that this chapter will address.

Taranaki’s reactions to the outbreak of war do not sit comfortably within the popular view of single-minded mass bellicosity. To claim that they do, is to generalize and deny people diversity of thoughts and actions. In 1914, Taranaki was not isolated. It was connected to the outside world via ports at New Plymouth and Patea, and a railway that linked the region with Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand. Over 25% of the region’s 54,000 people (including an indigenous Maori population) had been born outside New Zealand in at least 22 countries. At least 25 religious denominations existed in the region. Over 15%

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<sup>11</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, chapter 7, ‘The August Days: The Myth of War Enthusiasm’, pp. 174-212. See pp. 442, 444.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Judith Smart, “‘Poor Little Belgium’ and Australian Popular Support for War 1914-1915’, *War & Society*, 12:1, (1994), pp. 30-1. Smart notes the presence of ‘general racism’, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Baker, ‘New Zealanders, The Great War and Conscription’, PhD Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1986, p. 20. Baker also cites four New Zealand newspapers that did not see the war as a cause for celebration. See also Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, Auckland: Sceptre, 1984, p. 38.

of all females were in paid employment. Nearly three-quarters of the male 'breadwinners' were employed in the primary production (46.4%) and industrial (27.4%) sectors of the economy. Taranaki had seven daily newspapers, and most of the population had some formal education with 82% being literate.<sup>16</sup> With such diversity, the popular view does not seem plausible. What follows is the antithesis of the popular view.

Three days after hearing of the British declaration of war, Lewis Edward Coster, from Onaero, near Waitara in north Taranaki, wrote a depressing letter to Lillian Beachamp that indicated acceptance, but also despondency over what the conflict would entail. 'This war is going to be very serious dear & we may all be needed yet. I do hope Germany gets quietened down soon as after a war there is always such depression & misery & so many fine chaps loose [sic] their lives & it means so many widows & orphans does it not' [?]<sup>17</sup> Coster was not alone in expressing a lack of enthusiasm for the war. On 5 August, the *Taranaki Herald's* own correspondent in Stratford observed:

From the manner in which the folks about the street this afternoon received the news that we were at war with Germany, they might have been born and bred in war's alarms. A shrug of the shoulders, and a remark that if it had to come then the sooner the better was the average attitude. I have seen much more excitement over a mayoral election.<sup>18</sup>

The *Herald* also reported that in New Plymouth the declaration of war caused 'little or no surprise, for it has been accepted as a forgone conclusion during the last two or three days'.<sup>19</sup> News of the declaration provided a 'sense of relief from the suspense and anxiety which [had] oppressed the nation', claimed the *Herald*.<sup>20</sup> However, the *Eltham Argus* in an editorial on '**THE WAR!**', could not

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<sup>16</sup> *Census of New Zealand*, 1911.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis E. Coster to Lillian Beachamp, 8 August, 1914. Lillian Annette Beachamp - Letters From Lewis E. Coster, Beachamp Family Papers, MS-Papers 5580-08 (ATL).

<sup>18</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 5 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> *TH*, 6 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

entirely accept the news, and instead of supporting Britain's mobilisation, adopted a gloomy position:

The cable news cannot for one moment be accepted as wholly reliable. Any press information coming from the war-centre is strictly censored, and must be accepted with a considerable amount of reservation .... Whatever the outcome maybe there must be widespread misery and disaster, and the luckiest of the surviving nations can scarcely hope to emerge from the struggle other than sorely crippled .... Though war may bring misery, desolation and the direst of distress and indescribable suffering to hundreds of thousands of widows and orphans, yet there is always a section of people who can fatten and batten upon the death and desolation of thousands of their fellow creatures.<sup>21</sup>

Indifference and passive acceptance of the war was not confined solely to press reports and editorials. The actions of some groups also greeted the outbreak of war with silent resignation. In New Plymouth, the Taranaki Employers' Association postponed indefinitely their annual dinner, 'on account of the war'.<sup>22</sup> While in Stratford, rehearsals for the amateur operatic society's production of "Merrie England" were also 'postponed indefinitely'.<sup>23</sup> The organisers of the Queen Carnival closed their contest one week after the declaration of war.<sup>24</sup> The actions of these groups can be explained by the distractions that accompanied a state of war, which William Skinner affirmed in his diary: 'work somewhat disorganised by the war & unrest generally'.<sup>25</sup>

Anxiety was also evident. The Merchants' Association, imagining economic blockade of Britain and the subsequent dislocation of trade, 'notified Patea storekeepers that there will be a 10 per cent rise on all food stuffs from' 5 August.<sup>26</sup> Not surprisingly the *Patea and Waverley Press* reported that there has 'been a great run on necessaries such as flour, sugar etc. Within the last few days

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<sup>21</sup> *Eltham Argus (EA)*, 5 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *TH*, 6 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 8 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> W. H. Skinner Diary, 12 August, 1914. MS-020/6. (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>26</sup> *Patea and Waverley Press (PWP)*, 5 August, 1914, p. 2.

one wholesale house having disposed of its entire stock of flour some days ago, whilst its stocks of sugar, kerosene and benzine are practically exhausted'.<sup>27</sup> In New Plymouth, grocers reported 'a somewhat quieter trade, though the demand was still abnormal. The opportunity was taken to deliver huge loads of sugar and flour'.<sup>28</sup> A mechanic living in New Plymouth who faced economic hardship expressed his anxiety in a letter to the editor of the *Taranaki Herald*. 'Yesterday the boss put me on half-time because of slackness of trade owing to the war. I have been getting 60s 6d a week and working 44 hours; in future I shall work 22 hours and get 30s 3d .... I know I am going to be hard put to live on 30s a week with a wife and family to keep'.<sup>29</sup> That immediate effect of the war was not unexpected by the Department of Labour, or New Plymouth's Inspector of Factories and Awards, who reported, 'it was the general opinion that the effect would be immediately disastrous to industries and employment throughout the Dominion'.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the Department of Labour reported 'panic' in New Zealand following the outbreak of war.<sup>31</sup>

Panic may have been one of the reactions of some of the 337 Germans and 36 Austrians residing in Taranaki in 1914.<sup>32</sup> As early as 7 August, New Plymouth police began visiting local Germans and Austrians informing them 'that they were not to leave the country' and that 'any movements they wish to make must first be communicated to the Police'.<sup>33</sup> The German-Polish residents of Ratapiko in Taranaki had to report weekly to the Inglewood police.<sup>34</sup> A decidedly unfriendly act, especially when the *Eltham Argus* reminded readers

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<sup>27</sup> *PWP*, 7 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> *TH*, 6 August, 1914, p. 7. The *Post* editorial noted, 'there is some evidence that extra-cautious or over excitable people have of late bought very much more extensively in ordinary commodities than is their custom.' *SEP*, 15 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Report of the Department of Labour, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1915, vol. III, H-11, pp. 2, 18.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Census of New Zealand*, 1911, p. 182.

<sup>33</sup> *TH*, 7 August, 1914, p. 2.

not to 'forget that we have in the Dominion many Germans who have proved themselves most admirable colonists' and that we should 'treat our German fellow colonists as friends'.<sup>35</sup> The *Taranaki Herald's* own correspondent in Stratford also remarked that, 'it cannot be said that Germans are unpopular here, too many are excellent neighbours and fellow settlers'.<sup>36</sup> Despite that support, local residents with German sounding names who could be misconstrued as the 'enemy' did receive some unfavorable treatment. Laura Lehmann, aged nine in 1914, lived on a farm on Brookes Road near Stratford and she could still recall nearly eighty years later being teased by other children at school because of her German name.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Van Heck, a musician at Bernard's Pictures in Stratford, in an attempt to preserve his security, had printed in the newspaper, 'though of German extraction [he] is an Englishman, born in London', and that he, 'fought with the British in the Boer War and was seriously wounded'. Furthermore, 'if the authorities would pass him [he] would again offer his services for the front against Germany'.<sup>38</sup> Nearly a week later, while conducting the orchestra, Van Heck publicly demonstrated his loyalty by giving a 'vigorous and well deserved tongue-lashing' to 'members of the audience who remained seated during the playing of the National Anthem', for which the audience applauded him.<sup>39</sup>

For the residents of Ratapiko and others like the Lehmanns and Van Hecks, their security was largely in the hands of the government. While a proclamation of 19 August protected their rights it ambiguously declared that in time of war it was the king's prerogative 'to do with such persons according to

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<sup>34</sup> Richard S. Hill, *The Iron Hand in the Velvet Glove*, vol. II, Wellington: Dunmore Press, 1995, p. 354.

<sup>35</sup> *EA*, 8 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *TH*, 5 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Personal Communication with Laura Lehmann at Marire Home, Stratford, 28 March, 1993.

<sup>38</sup> *SEP*, 11 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup> *SEP*, 17 August, 1914, p. 2. 'We remember some instances during the period of the Boer War when people who did not take off their hats were hooted, and in some cases roughly jostled', *EA*, 17 August, 1914, p. 4.



his good pleasure'.<sup>40</sup> That could mean state repression in the form of internment even if they had been residing peacefully in Taranaki for some years. Any serious setbacks in the war could jeopardise their civil liberties and security. With only 27 policemen in Taranaki to uphold the law amongst a predominantly 'British' population, German and Austrian residents remained insecure.<sup>41</sup> They had the least cause to be enthusiastic about the war.

Voluntary enlistment in the army is usually considered evidence of 'war enthusiasm'.<sup>42</sup> An editorial on enlistment in the *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age* could not have been more unenthusiastic. 'We cannot see the startling necessity for sending men to die on foreign soil in somebody else's quarrel', stated the *Age*.<sup>43</sup> 'The necessity for sacrificing New Zealand's and Australia's population seems hard to find', it said, especially when Britain had 'three-quarters of the world with her and with men enough from overpopulated countries to [b]eat her foes'.<sup>44</sup> The *Age* editorial questioned the enlistment of soldiers and even New Zealand's involvement in the war:

Is it a fair deal merely on the grounds of sentimentality to take away the very flower of our population to die at the hands of an enemy devoid of honour and whose cause has not a particle of justice in it [?] What is to happen in the future to New Zealand and the Commonwealth devoid of population and with nothing but the medical inspectors rejects to repopulate our country, occupy and cultivate our idle lands and at the same time defend our dominion from the many nations who look with jealous eyes on our unoccupied country and gloriously fertile lands? Surely a much better method of helping the Old Country could be adopted than the sacrifice of our all that is physically best and the retention of our all that is worst.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, vol. II, 1914, p. 3179.

<sup>41</sup> Annual Report on the Police Force of the Dominion, *AJHR*, 1915, vol. III, H.-16, pp. 16-17.

<sup>42</sup> Ferguson, p. 197. Gregory, p. 79. Verhey, pp. 98-102.

<sup>43</sup> *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age (IRWA)*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

The *Age* reinforced its position succinctly in its closing comment: 'It is on this account that we cannot enthuse over the departure of our young men, that we cannot help taking the unpopular side of this great Empire movement.'<sup>46</sup>

In Taranaki, some individuals and groups of people did not react in accordance with the popular view. The *Age* wanted to preserve New Zealand's future rather than commit its young men to a war in Europe. Their stance was not in opposition to the war, but one of resigned acceptance. A sentimental attachment to the 'Old Country' ran second best to a patriotic loyalty to 'our dominion'. The underlying source of Lewis Coster's lack of enthusiasm lay in his dour understanding of what war meant, and in the perception that war posed a threat to the individual. For resident Germans and Austrians the underlying source of their lack of enthusiasm is, perhaps, the easiest of all to explain. People like the Van Hecks and Lehmanns found themselves caught in someone else's quarrel. They had to preserve their own security by remaining inconspicuous or overtly supportive of Britain's position because they were a representation of the 'enemy' within. Judith Bassett says, 'while "alien" minorities may have been accepted, even valued, in peacetime, the heightened tensions created by war made their position increasingly uncomfortable. The First World War was a war of nations, and non-British minorities were not eligible to be part of the British nation'.<sup>47</sup> To say that people in Taranaki reacted with enthusiasm at the outset of war is misleading. Evidence clearly exists to support the antithesis of the popular view of 'war enthusiasm'.

Some people did get excited at the outset of the war. On the day that people in Taranaki heard of Britain's mobilization, Stratford's piano tuner and musical instrument retailer, Thomas Grubb, decorated the entire space of his shop window with a 'representation of mimic military operations. Tin soldiers

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Judith Bassett, 'Colonial Justice. The Treatment of Dalmations in New Zealand During the First World War', *New Zealand Journal of History (NZJH)*, 33:2 (1999), p. 156.

of all descriptions [were] in evidence in addition to aeroplanes and warships'.<sup>48</sup> Syd Bernard reacted to the news by going to the Stratford Post Office where he played 'God Save the King', 'Rule Britannia' and 'The Marseillaise' on his cornet to a 'good crowd'.<sup>49</sup> Later that evening, William Diamond, the manager of His Majesty's Theatre, read the latest war news to the audience who reacted by singing 'God Save the King' 'enthusiastically'.<sup>50</sup> The next day some advertisements placed by retailers in local newspapers were expressed in war metaphors. 'War Declared! Ladies Tweed coats - no German shoddy ... They'll go like British shells at 2s 6d ... Robinson's are straight shots', claimed one retailer.<sup>51</sup> By the end of the week, Nicholson's Pharmacy in Stratford had been posting war news in their shop window daily, and in the window of the Egmont Clothing Company's shop on Broadway a map of Europe attracted 'a good deal of attention'.<sup>52</sup> And in New Plymouth, one shop displayed in their window a model of a Dreadnought 'composed entirely of many of the lines stocked by an ironmonger'.<sup>53</sup>

Communication was important in feeding the excitement. The *Stratford Evening Post* employed runners to circulate two 'extras' around the town on the eve of war to keep people 'aware of the movements in the European struggle'.<sup>54</sup> At Waitara, workers were told that the freezing works bell would herald the announcement of any important war news.<sup>55</sup> In Inglewood, T. C. Nicholls wanted to give the authorities 'every assistance in his power', because his bread carts 'were in touch with nearly everybody'.<sup>56</sup> And in Stratford, it was suggested that a bed should be made up near the Post Office for Syd Bernard so

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<sup>48</sup> *SEP*, 5 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *SEP*, 6 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> *SEP*, 8 August, 1914, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> *SEP*, 5 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> *IRWA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

that in the event of further developments he could sound the alarm on his cornet. In the rush to learn more about the war people gathered at post and newspaper offices. Crowds 'eagerly devoured' cable news posted in the windows of the *Taranaki Herald's* office in New Plymouth on the first evening of the war, and they did not disperse until 11.00pm.<sup>57</sup> 'At an early hour' on the first Sunday morning of the war crowds began to assemble near the *Herald's* office where news was received with 'great enthusiasm'. In the evening 'a still larger crowd assembled'.<sup>58</sup> That weekend the *Stratford Evening Post* printed a small edition so that people could 'learn the very latest to hand regarding the European conflict', because from Saturday afternoon until Monday makes too big a gap in such a time of tension and anxiety'.<sup>59</sup> Even though the *Post* admitted there was '**NO FRESH NEWS**', 'not a single line of telegraphic matter is to hand .... There is nothing to report', the *Post* chose to perpetuate the rumour that 'a German warship had found its way into Westport harbor [sic]'.<sup>60</sup> Early the following week, the *Herald's* own correspondent in Inglewood reported that 'excitement over the war is growing more intense than ever and all hours of the day see small knots of men talking over the situation and waiting eagerly for extras'.<sup>61</sup> Railway stations also presented 'a lively scene on the arrival of the various trains; crowds [made] their way to the platform in expectancy of hearing fresh news from other towns'.<sup>62</sup>

Clearly war news gripped people's imaginations and they accepted Britain's course of action with a mixture of enthusiasm, excitement, concern, and even fear. A method of assessing the popular view is to analyse crowd behaviour and the speeches at patriotic gatherings held throughout Taranaki

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<sup>57</sup> *TH*, 6 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> *SEP*, 8 August, 1914, p. 1. The *Post* printed editorials on 63 war related topics in August 1914, which decreased to 35 in October.

<sup>60</sup> *SEP*, 8 August, 1914, p.1.

<sup>61</sup> *TH*, 11 August, 1914, p. 4. *Hawera and Normanby Star (HNS)*, 8 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> *TH*, 12 August, 1914, p. 6.

during the first week of the war. Historians have much primary evidence to work with here. Rutherford used newspapers in his research on Canada's reactions because 'their descriptions of crowd scenes were highly detailed and provide a useful source for historians'.<sup>63</sup> Verhey also studied newspapers in his research on crowds in Germany. The same can also apply to New Zealand because reports of Taranaki crowds reveal not only the surface elements of patriotic sentiment – the 'conspicuous froth' as Hew Strachan calls it – but the underlying source of their excitement and enthusiasm.<sup>64</sup> The latter having driven the revisionist interest in war reactions.

Verhey says that in Germany the war was greeted 'with a chorus of patriotic outbursts, people yelling hurrah and singing patriotic songs, [which] many contemporaries and most historians have characterised as "war enthusiasm".<sup>65</sup> Adrian Gregory has identified similar crowd reactions in England, even though he views that sort of characterisation as stereotypical.<sup>66</sup> The same description applies to crowds that gathered in Stratford, New Plymouth, Hawera and Inglewood in August 1914. Within one week of the declaration of war, crowds gathered outside the Post Offices in Stratford and New Plymouth, inside the Winter Show buildings in Hawera, in Inglewood's Town Hall, and in other such places. People were attracted by the sounds of marching bands playing patriotic songs, and because the occasion was understood to be extraordinary, even historic. Reverend E. O. Blamires from the Methodist Church told a crowd in Hawera that, 'never had such a tornado of events come upon any people as had come upon the people of this generation

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<sup>63</sup> Robert Rutherford, 'Canada's August Festival: Communitas, Liminality, and Social Memory', *The Canadian Historical Review*, 77:2 (1996), p. 228.

<sup>64</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War. To Arms*, vol. I, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 162.

<sup>65</sup> Verhey, p. 2. See also chapter 3 on 'The "August Experiences"' in *The Spirit of 1914*, especially the section, "'War enthusiasm": Volunteers, Departing Soldiers, and Victory Celebrations', pp. 97-115.

<sup>66</sup> Gregory, p. 78. Rutherford, 'Canada's August Festival', pp. 225, 231.

during the past seven days'.<sup>67</sup> 'It was a thing that only happened once in a life-time - once in two or three life-times - and it was a time to act', said councillor J. Gibbs to a crowd in Inglewood.<sup>68</sup>

Three days after the declaration of war, Stratford's mayor, W. P. Kirkwood 'hastily' arranged a 'patriotic demonstration' to raise funds and 'say a few words on the events now taking place'.<sup>69</sup> Patriotic sentiments, which characterised what Verhey, and to a certain extent Gregory, see as 'war enthusiasm' were made evident by 'ladies' who moved amongst the crowd with a 'Union Jack, into which coin of the realm of all denominations was thrown'.<sup>70</sup> A procession stopped outside the Post Office where 'a representation of Britannia, with a sailor boy as partner', sang patriotic songs in 'which the crowd joined'.<sup>71</sup> After which speeches called for support because, according to Dr Paget, 'Great Britain was faced with the greatest war in the history of the world'.<sup>72</sup> 'And we will win it!' yelled someone from the crowd.<sup>73</sup> J. B. Richards, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, explained to the crowd that, 'the war was none of Britain's seeking. New Zealanders for their party [*sic*] merely desired liberty to go about their business - to milk their cows, till their fields and generally engage in ordinary peaceful occupations', but Kaiser Wilhelm, reasoned Richards, prevented them from doing so.<sup>74</sup> 'Germany not only challenged Britain's trade and commerce', he said, 'but they also challenged Britain's national life and character.'<sup>75</sup> That was an issue at the heart of the 'call of Empire'.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *HNS*, 12 August, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> *IRWA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> *SEP*, 8 August, 1914, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.* Kirkwood reportedly stated that to a crowd in Stratford.

In New Plymouth that evening a similar patriotic gathering took place. 'Great enthusiasm prevailed among' a crowd of 'over two thousand people' (about 25% of the town's population) who paraded in Devon Street singing the national anthem and waving the Union Jack, and the flags of Britain's allies.<sup>77</sup> A band played patriotic tunes for about an hour before marching to the Post Office where mayor J. E. Wilson had convened an open-air meeting. 'Here the crowd was considerably augmented, and proceedings opened with the singing of the National Anthem, accompanied by the Band, which also played "The Marseillaise."<sup>78</sup> Over the next few days similar displays of 'war enthusiasm' were reported from meetings held in Hawera and Inglewood.

Displays of 'war enthusiasm' were made possible by the existence of what Rutherford labels a 'commonness of feeling', where 'prior differences of class, ethnicity, gender, or other social constructs are momentarily displaced', thus allowing a 'commonness of feeling' to emerge.<sup>79</sup> Whether or not prior differences of ethnicity could be extended to include Maori is difficult to say for certain because Maori were absent from the press reports. Taranaki's war experiences on their own land in the 1860s did not provide favourable instances in social memory, especially amongst Maori. However, there was much in the press and in the reports of patriotic gatherings to support the existence of a 'commonness of feeling'. A *Patea and Waverley Press* editorial, for example, stated that 'in engaging in war with England it is not only the little "sea girt isle" that has to be reckoned with but her sons beyond the seas as well'.<sup>80</sup> Reverend Blamires told a crowd in Hawera that:

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<sup>77</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7. New Plymouth's estimated total population for 1914 was 7,983. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1913, p. 24.

<sup>78</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> Rutherford, 'Canada's August Festival', p. 239.

He had been struck with the magnificent readiness of our Empire to respond to the call of duty and one was pleased to notice how all classes of the community, all kinds of conditions of people, had been ready to sink all political, all religious, and all other differences and stand shoulder to shoulder in the presence of a common enemy. (Applause).<sup>81</sup>

Furthermore, a contemporary photograph of Stratford's 'patriotic demonstration' on 8 August shows a large, diverse crowd gathered in a public place, all looking in one direction at the entertainment. That same commonality was evident in New Plymouth. 'Up to a late hour the streets were thronged, the crowd continuing to sing patriotic songs'.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, patriotic songs 'in full strength, closed the most enthusiastic and unanimous meeting ever held in Inglewood'.<sup>83</sup>

It is in the discourse of the speeches though, not in the 'conspicuous froth', that the underlying source of the popular view can be detected. People in Taranaki were not enthusiastic about war in August 1914, but by the opportunity to show their devotion to the 'Motherland'. The press had already made much of Canada's offer of 30,000 soldiers, and of Irish Unionists and Nationalists having set aside their differences in support of Britain.<sup>84</sup> Australia too, it was known, had offered 20,000 soldiers and people knew that the New Zealand government had decided to send an expeditionary force to assist Britain. The supportive mood was no different in Taranaki, as exemplified by a speech at a meeting in the small settlement of Moumahaki near Patea:

The British Empire was involved in the most serious conflict the world has ever known. It therefore Behoved all as true Britishers to assist to the utmost in upholding the traditions of the country and keep the Union Jack in the place it has held for centuries ... every man in the meeting would stand shoulder to shoulder in the defence of King and Country (Cheers).<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *PWP*, 5 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> *HNS*, 12 August, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> *IRWA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> *PWP*, 5 August, 1914, p. 2. *SEP*, 6 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> *PWP*, 12 August, 1914, p. 3.





Patriotic Demonstration at Stratford, 8 August 1914.

Ref. No. PAColl-3255-001 (ATL).

Similarly, an *Opunake Times* editorial stated that the 'British Empire must stand together .... Blood binds us together, common freedom is another bond, gratitude for the vast favours received from the [imperial] centre is another'.<sup>86</sup> In New Plymouth too, Wilson expressed patriotic sentiments in a familial way: 'I have called you together to-night because a call has come across the seas - a call which we, as part of the British Empire, cannot disregard. (Applause.) Britain is at war'.<sup>87</sup> Wilson outlined what he considered the righteous and just position of Britain in a defensive war against German aggression. It was in defence of 'our honour' and by honouring 'our obligations to our friends in France and Russia', stated Wilson, which 'impelled us to the steps we have taken.'<sup>88</sup> He went on:

Now that Britain is in the thick of things she has told her Dominions across the seas that she will welcome their assistance. As they have done before, so her Dominions are doing again. (Cheers.) They have rallied to the flag - (renewed cheers) - and we are proud that they did not wait to be asked - that they offered help before they knew whether it would be wanted or not. (Loud cheers).<sup>89</sup>

Wilson added, 'we must be prepared to take our part in helping the Mother Country .... Now is the time for us to show that there is more in our pride of Empire than only words. (Cheers)'.<sup>90</sup> Sending soldiers to the 'Mother Country' was one way of helping, but also of demonstrating that 'the sons of this young and favored land [can] prove themselves worthy of the noble heritage which was theirs. (Applause)', said Catholic minister Dean Power to the crowd in Hawera.<sup>91</sup> Raising funds was another way, which Inglewood's mayor stated with conviction:

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<sup>86</sup> *Opunake Times (OT)*, 7 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *HNS*, 12 August, 1914, p. 5.

It was our way of proving that we were a part of the Empire; it was our way of shewing [*sic*] our measure of support. We were a dairying district and entirely dependent on the ocean highway for getting our produce to the market, and that open highway depended on the British navy. Our district was second to none in the world, and it was now our time to prove it.<sup>92</sup>

It did not matter whether it was Moumahaki, Opunake, Inglewood, Hawera or New Plymouth mobilising in support of the 'Mother Country', everyone in Taranaki had an important duty to perform, which a speaker at a patriotic gathering in Waverley stated succinctly. 'These meetings are being held from North Cape to the Bluff, and it is only fair Waverley should do its part. We are only a small part of the British Empire, but each of us thinks we are an important part.'<sup>93</sup> In standing 'shoulder to shoulder', Taranaki's patriotic gatherings produced an agreement to act. In New Plymouth it 'was carried amid great enthusiasm':

That this meeting of citizens of New Plymouth entirely supports the action of the Government in giving aid to the Motherland in her hour of need and pledges itself to do all in its power to help in the way of money, horses and material. It further expresses the belief that the war is none of Britain's making, being entirely provoked by the enemies of peace, and trusts that, now that she has been embroiled, the British Empire, together with her allies, will strike hard and effectually and so speedily bring about a period of enduring peace.<sup>94</sup>

In Hawera, a similar agreement was launched in the form of a public resolution whereby 'the citizens of Hawera offer their support to the Government of the Dominion in the common defence of the Empire'.<sup>95</sup> Underpinning those agreements to act was the cry, '**For King, Country and Empire**', which the *Taranaki Herald* highlighted in its editorial on the eve of New Plymouth's first patriotic demonstration.<sup>96</sup> That cry was not a call to arms, rather a call for all to

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<sup>92</sup> *IRWA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> *IRWA*, 19 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> *HNS*, 12 August, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>96</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1914, p. 2.

serve, to do one's duty to the 'Mother Country' because according to the *Herald's* editorial, 'they [Taranaki] must swim, or sink with her [Britain]'. Self-preservation and economic survival was as much a part of the patriotic sentiments as the sentimental imaginings of belonging to an empire.

James Joll says, 'the more we study it [the reactions in August 1914] in detail, the more we see how it differed from country to country'.<sup>97</sup> Some historians would add that it differed even within urban settings, and between urban and rural areas.<sup>98</sup> In Taranaki, reactions differed considerably and 'war enthusiasm' did not dominate peoples' experiences in August 1914. For instance, on 30 August, the recently widowed Annis Hamerton from Inglewood wrote anxiously to her daughter Frances in England saying, 'Oh how terrible it [war] is, accounts are so conflicting, it is difficult to judge, but one knows there is awful carnage. I lie awake at night & think & pray, I never knew how dearly I loved the Mother-Land'.<sup>99</sup> That letter became one of many that Annis wrote to Frances with news and comments about the war. In contrast, Duncan Stevens, a farmer from north Taranaki, seems to have accepted the war with indifference because his work diary for 1914 contains only one comment about the war: 'all the bushmen called in the morning & R. Fulton, Yarrell & Baldwin left for Waitara to volunteer for the front'.<sup>100</sup> Church ministers entered the war ambivalently. They were at the forefront of popular reactions to the war in fulfilling a role of legitimising Britain's actions. However, Dean Power considered his presence and that of Reverend Blamires and Presbyterian

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<sup>97</sup> Joll, p. 229.

<sup>98</sup> Strachan, *To Arms*, pp. 142, 149, 154-5, 158. Ferguson, pp. 176-7, 178-9. Verhey, pp. 40, 89, 91, 113. Gregory, pp. 70-1, 83.

<sup>99</sup> Annis Bracken Hamerton to Frances Hamerton, 30 August, 1914. Hirst Family Letters, MS-Papers-5507-12 (ATL). The letters written by Annis to Frances are an invaluable primary source for historians because they document experiences and understandings from the rural home front in Inglewood, Taranaki.

<sup>100</sup> Duncan Burrell Stevens Diary, 12 August, 1914. MS Papers 1794 (ATL). Stevens farmed sheep on a property named 'Raupata' somewhere near Waitara in north Taranaki. He embarked for duty on 10 July 1916 with the 14<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, New Zealand Mounted Rifles. He was killed

minister Reverend J. R. Shore at Hawera's first patriotic gathering a 'paradox' because they were representatives of the 'Prince of Peace', and yet they asked the crowd to endorse the 'Mother Country's' action 'in taking up the sword'.<sup>101</sup> For some individuals, like Nicholls, the bread vendor in Inglewood, the prospect of the war providing an economic opportunity fuelled his excitement. And 'war enthusiasm', of the type characterised by Verhey, showed how some people entered the war. For example, at the Stratford sale yards, Percy Budd, the auctioneer, 'lifted his voice in song, [and sang] the "British Navy"'. This was taken up by the crowd, and at a later stage "Sons of the Sea" resounded over the yards', which concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.<sup>102</sup> Diverse reactions like these and others throughout this chapter show how people in Taranaki greeted the First World War in August 1914.<sup>103</sup> How they responded to the call for money, materials and soldiers are the subjects of the next two chapters.

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in action in Palestine on 1 April 1918, age 35. See Auckland Museum Cenotaph Database <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

<sup>101</sup> *HNS*, 12 August, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> *SEP*, 24 August, 1914, p. 3. The crowd would have sung the traditional anthem 'God Save the King', not 'God Defend New Zealand'. The latter was a national hymn from 1940 to 1977, thereafter formally adopted as New Zealand's national anthem.

<sup>103</sup> See Gregory, p. 83 for a summary of the ways Islington in north London entered the war.

## Chapter Three

### 'Raising the Necessary' For Defence of the Empire

An *Opunake Times* editorial told its readers in August 1914, that, 'the greatest war in history has just begun and the British Empire is up to its neck in it .... The Empire in fact, is fighting for life'.<sup>1</sup> The *Patea and Waverley Press* also recognised the seriousness of the situation. It reasoned that war in 1914 would not be as it was in 1899, and regretted that 'a large number of people ... do not yet seem to have grasped the full significance of the meaning of war with two great European powers':

too many, we fear are ready to class the present struggle with that against the Transvaal Government some 14 years ago. As a matter of fact it is nothing of the kind. Instead of our forces being opposed to an untrained and undisciplined foe limited in numbers they are now face to face with an army of five millions of men who are acknowledged to be the most highly trained and disciplined on the face of the earth.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout August the *Press*, and other Taranaki newspapers, conveyed the impression of a conflict of global proportions:

**WORLD WIDE WAR  
AUSTRIANS ADVANCE TO GERMANY'S AID  
BRITISH FORCE IN BELGIUM  
Japan Joins in the Fray  
IMPERIAL FLEET COMMANDS NORTH SEA  
ITALY'S INTERESTS IN THE ADRIATIC  
THREATENED<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> *Opunake Times*, 21 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Patea and Waverley Press (PWP)*, 17 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Eltham Argus (EA)*, 12 August, 1914, p. 4. For other references to a 'great' and global war, a 'War of Nations', see *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 7, 11, 18 August, 1914, p. 4. *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 6 August, 1914, p. 2.

Such headlines suggested that this war was not just another European conflict, but perhaps 'the greatest war that had ever been fought in the history of the world'.<sup>4</sup> Faced with what seemed to be a '**Great World War**' looming Taranaki mobilised with urgency.<sup>5</sup>

On the first day of the war, Prime Minister William Massey spoke to a crowd of 'several thousands' from the steps of old Parliament Buildings in Wellington.<sup>6</sup> 'We will be called upon to make sacrifices', he said, and 'I am confident that those sacrifices will be made, individually and collectively .... My advice at this trying moment is to keep cool, stand fast, and do your duty.'<sup>7</sup> A trickling down of messages soon followed Massey's address. Lady Liverpool, wife of the Governor-General, appealed to women to organise fund raising committees under the auspices of local mayoresses. John Bird Hine, Stratford's Member of Parliament (MP), sent mayor Kirkwood a telegram from the government asking for donations of horses and gifts of money for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF). At the patriotic demonstrations held throughout Taranaki during the first week of the war, mayors informed people of what was needed to raise items necessary for defence of the Empire. This chapter will assess the monetary and material response by people in Taranaki to the empire's call during the first two years of the war when the voluntary spirit was at its height.

Historians have always recognised, if only in a cursory manner, that 'raising the necessary' for defence of the empire required people to voluntarily commit themselves to the war effort.<sup>8</sup> In recent years historians have been

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<sup>4</sup> *Hawera and Normanby Star (HNS)*, 12 August, 1914, p. 5. Councillor E. Dixon reportedly told that to a crowd in Hawera.

<sup>5</sup> *SEP*, 8 August, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *SEP*, 6 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Erik Olssen, 'Waging War: The Home Front 1914-1918', in *An Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920*, Judith Binney, Judith Bassett, Erik Olssen, (eds), Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990, p. 308. P. J. Gibbons, 'The Climate of Opinion', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, W. H. Oliver, (ed.), Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 313. An exception to Olssen and Gibbons is

reassessing patriotic activities of the Great War.<sup>9</sup> Bruce Scates sees Australia's wartime volunteers as a 'vast army' of 'unpaid workers', whose 'war work was much more than a tiresome tally of socks, balaclavas and pyjamas', rather they invested 'enormous emotional labour ... in even the most prosaic commodities'.<sup>10</sup> In short, they could be likened to an industrial work force that drew heavily on the total amount of resources found in the local area.

People focused initially on '**WHAT WE MAY DO**'.<sup>11</sup> Some understanding about how to operate in a war crisis had already been established during the South African War.<sup>12</sup> Besides men enlisting in the army, this meant management of resources, providing horses, materials, and raising money. Len Jury, a labourer from Upland Road, motivated by economic opportunism thinly disguised as a patriotic contribution to the war effort, 'took his horse "Punch" up to Inglewood to try and sell him to the Government', but 'Punch' was rejected for being too heavy.<sup>13</sup> Army regulations required horses to be of a suitable standard for both cavalry and artillery purposes.<sup>14</sup> John Hucker,

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Simon Johnson, 'The Home Front. Aspects of Civilian Patriotism in New Zealand During the First World War', MA Thesis in History, Massey University, 1975, especially pp. 28-31, 33-5, 45-69.

<sup>9</sup> In Canada, Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay. Soldiers' Families in the Great War*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004. See especially chapter 3, 'The Patriotic Fund', pp. 50-89. In Australia, Bruce Scates, 'The Unknown Sock Knitter: Voluntary Work, Emotional Labour, Bereavement and the Great War', *Labour History*, 81 (2001), pp. 29-51. In Britain, Simon Fowler, 'War Charity Begins at Home', *History Today*, 49:9 (1999), pp. 17-23. In Australia, Melanie Oppenheimer, 'Alleviating Distress. The Lord Mayor's Patriotic Fund in New South Wales, 1914-1920', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 81:1 (1995), pp. 53-75.

<sup>10</sup> Scates, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> *SEP*, 11 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> See Army Department (AD) 31/345 Patriotic Funds. South African War 1899-1902. General File. Archives New Zealand (ANZ). John Crawford with Ellen Ellis, *To Fight For the Empire*, Auckland: Reed Books, 1999, pp. 25-31.

<sup>13</sup> Jane Earp Diary, 26 August, 1914. MS 218/1 J7 in Fred Earp Papers MS 218. (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>14</sup> Horses had to be of 'good cobby stamp, and between rising 5 and 8 years.' *SEP*, 26 August, 1914, p. 6. 'Cobby' refers to a small, thick-set horse. 'Horses for Mounted Rifles must be from four to seven years of age, practically sound, from 14.2 to 15.2 hands in height, but animals under 14.3 hands will only be accepted if otherwise specially suitable. No greys, duns, or light chestnuts will be taken. Geldings are preferable to mares!' Colonel Robin cited by Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, Auckland: Sceptre, 1984, p. 47. British army specifications for a light artillery horse were between '15 hands two inches to 16 hands two inches' on height and weighing 'about 1200 pounds' and for a heavy artillery horse to weigh



who farmed property on Surrey Road near Tariki, organised a working bee on his farm to dig twenty acres (8 hectares) of carrots, after which three truckloads were sent to Wellington.<sup>15</sup> Farmers at Waverley contributed 10 bags of oats, 20 bags of chaff, 7 horses, a saddle and a bridle.<sup>16</sup> The Stratford Defence Committee sent 11 saddles and bridles, 16 cavalry and two artillery horses.<sup>17</sup> The Defence authorities in Wellington were inundated with 50 hams from the Inglewood Bacon Company; 200 hams from the South Taranaki Bacon Company; 10 boxes of butter from the North Taranaki Dairy Company; 2 'Ambulance outfits' from Manaia School; 2 tons of cheese from the Eltham Dairy Company; artificial teeth from the Stratford Empire Defence League; 61 pairs of socks from St Andrew's Presbytery in Waverley; 3 trucks of cattle and 7 trucks of sheep from the Waverley Defence Fund Committee.<sup>18</sup>

In August 1914, the government passed the first of two War Contributions Validation Acts so that the heavy influx of contributions to the Empire Defence Fund could be controlled. At the local level the response required focused work directed by committees so that goals could be systematically achieved through coordinated activities. At a meeting in Stratford, that was 'exceedingly representative' of the district, a management structure was organised 'in connection with the share this district will be called upon to take in the Empire work'.<sup>19</sup> From that meeting a local war fund was established as part of the Government's Empire Defence Fund initiative. A central committee was appointed, initially called an emergency committee, later the Empire Defence League, through which:

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'not less than 1400 pounds.' Horses had to be less than 20 years old. Peter Young, 'The War Horses', in *Purnell's History of the First World War*, 8:1 (1971), p. 3154.

<sup>15</sup> *SEP*, 20 August, 1914, p. 8. AD 46/62/9 Empire Defence Fund 1914 (ANZ).

<sup>16</sup> *PWP*, 17 August, 1914, p. 3. AD 46/62/9.

<sup>17</sup> AD 46/62/9.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *SEP*, 11 August, 1914, p. 4.

all contributions, donations and collections will go. Another committee will direct the working guilds, and a men's country collecting committee is a special branch of the organisation, and also one to control, direct, and assist in connection with entertainments that may be devised for augmenting the fund.<sup>20</sup>

More sub-committees emerged from that meeting. One attended to the requirements of Lady Liverpool's appeal, and another advised the community on how to promote activities in the best interests of the local war effort.

During the first fortnight of the war local meetings organised Taranaki's patriotic work force. The Stratford Patriotic Committee was formed at a public meeting convened by mayor Kirkwood on 10 August 1914. During its first year of operation that committee worked towards equipping soldiers, then assisting with recruiting, attending to the requirements of soldiers in camp and on active service, and providing relief to soldiers and their dependants. Elsewhere virtually every locality had some form of committee in connection with the war effort. Toko had a branch of the Lady Liverpool League, Waitara had a Patriotic League, and workers engaged on public works at Kohuratahi and Tahora established their own war fund. A 'work-force' is evident in the activities listed in the annual report and balance sheet of the Stratford Ladies' Patriotic Committee. From its inception on 4 August 1915 to July 1917, the 'workers' and 'helpers' of that committee 'made ninety leather waist-coats', sent equipment for ten hospital beds, made two bales of sand bags, operated a market and sewing guild on a weekly basis, collected and donated funds for military hospitals, the Belgians, the Red Cross, as well as 'comforts for [the] sick in Egypt'. They packed '120 parcels' per month for the soldiers, and in addition to the numerous 'housewives' and 'holdalls', the committee since October 1916, had made and sent 480 anti-vermin shirts to the front.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *SEP*, 3 August, 1916, p. 5. *SEP*, 16 July, 1917, p. 3.

When the *Taranaki Herald's* resident agent in Stratford visited the depot of the Empire Defence League in August 1914, he described it as 'the briskest business in town' because:

parcels of underclothing, caps, wrappers, etc. are constantly arriving from the working guilds, being sorted, listed and stowed handy for distribution. A motorcar and its owner are attached to the establishment for transport service, telephone and electric light laid on, and everything ready for a long campaign.<sup>22</sup>

The lines of support, transport, communication, and the stockpiling of materials for general issue reflected precision and military organisation. Like standing armies of old, the patriotic workforce asserted itself over the local people with a sense of urgent, business-like thoroughness. In Inglewood, that assertion took the form of an inclusive and 'systematic canvas' of the whole district, where 'every inch of main road and every byroad should be traversed, and every farmer and every resident visited so that none would be able to say they never had an opportunity of contributing to the fund'.<sup>23</sup> Women workers from the Lady Liverpool League who employed a systematic, yet voluntary division of labour invaded Patea district :

Mesdames Pearce and Whitehead offered to canvass the country districts northwards of Patea for subscriptions and material. Mrs Shield offered to undertake the work of collecting funds in the Whenuakura District. Other canvassers were appointed as under:- Mrs Booth: Whenuakura Hill to Bridge. Mrs Glenny and Mrs Grainger: Bedford Street to the Quay. Mrs Shield: Whenuakura School to Little Taranaki. Mrs Robbie: Victoria Street to Borough Boundary. Mrs Adams and Mrs Holtham: Victoria Street to Bedford Street. Mrs Death: Victoria Street.<sup>24</sup>

Women workers from the Patriotic League in Waitara aimed to visit every house each week to collect a small sum of money 'during the currency of

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<sup>22</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> *IRWA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

the war'.<sup>25</sup> When not collecting money they met during the evenings in sewing bees at each other's homes, or in the supper rooms of the local town hall. During the day, in Stratford, for example, the Lady Liverpool committee opened a shop where goods were received and kits full of comforts prepared for distribution to local volunteer soldiers in the NZEF. By mid-August, 57 volunteer soldiers had received full kits that included:

1 pair blankets, 2 over-shirts, 2 under-shirts, 2 pairs under-pants, 2 pairs socks, 1 towel, 1 kit bag, 1 hold-all furnished with knife, fork and spoon, 1 housewife (furnished) [sewing kit, otherwise known as a hussiff], 1 clasp knife, 1 lanyard [short rope], stationery, ink pencil, shaving glass.<sup>26</sup>

The material items were utilitarian, but also comforting representations of the home and domesticity. The blankets provided security and warmth; the change in clothing and the shaving glass upheld the social mores of cleanliness and standards of appearance; the 'hold-all' and the 'housewife' discouraged slovenliness; while the stationery items linked the soldier with home. Absent were cigarettes and playing cards. The kits demonstrated thoughtfulness in patriotic work.

Anne Else has described women's patriotic work as 'laborious'.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps it was, but also a way that women could fight back at the enemy.<sup>28</sup> The 'pile of

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<sup>24</sup> *PWP*, 12 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *EA*, 12 August, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> *SEP*, 20 August, 1914, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Anne Else, (ed.), *Women Together. A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand*, Wellington: Daphne Brassell Associates Press and Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1993, p. 293. Else states that 568 women's patriotic organisations existed in New Zealand during the Great War, and it could even have been as high as 920. See p. 292.

<sup>28</sup> An example from Ashburton in the South Island shows this was a war fought by another means:

'When they [Germans] sank the *Lusitania* and murdered Edith Cavill [*sic*], that made our Mother so angry that she took off after them in the only way she knew how. She cast about for a weapon. She couldn't find anything deadly that she could wield, but she could and did find something that demanded all her zeal. She flung herself into Red Cross work'.

shirts, singlets and hold-alls' in the Patea town hall, for example, showed that 'not many idle moments had been passed', at least in south Taranaki.<sup>29</sup> It was considered purposeful work, judging by the numbers of women who participated. For thirteen women in New Plymouth, twenty in Waverley, thirty-three in Patea, and twenty in Eltham who comprised the Lady Liverpool League committees of those towns, as well as twenty guilds in the Stratford district, war work provided women with an enhanced role in the local and national community.<sup>30</sup> Research also shows that patriotic work provided a 'valuable social outlet for women' who lived in 'small and sometimes isolated rural' communities.<sup>31</sup>

Taranaki had yet to experience any mourning, which they knew from their memory of the South African War would come. Anxieties could be minimised if faced together with some conviviality. People in central Taranaki had done that before in the immediate pre-war period. The Stratford Municipal Band had given a benefit performance in Victoria Park for a 'distressed family', which raised a small sum of money; and at Lowgarth, a farewell function had been held for a family that had fallen on hard times.<sup>32</sup> Singing, violin solos, sword dancing, recitations, speeches and dancing 'until the small hours of the morning' made that gathering in Lowgarth 'most enjoyable'.<sup>33</sup> The *Taranaki Herald's* resident agent in Stratford observed a seemingly incongruous aspect of the war effort. 'It is instructive to note what high spirits seem to prevail in the town. In fact, it would appear that a state of war is productive of a very

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Alison Ryde and M.B. Thompson, (eds), *The Essays on Pioneer Women. Ashburton Centenary, 1878-1978*, Ashburton: Bruce Printing Co., 1978, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *PWP*, 17 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> *PWP*, 12 August, 1914, p. 3. *EA*, 10 August, 1914, p. 5. *SEP*, 14 August, 1914, p. 8. *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7. See Sarah Luxford, "'Partners in the Welfare of the Nation'': The Involvement of Cambridge Women in Local Patriotic Organisations During the Great War', B.A. (Hons) Research Exercise in History at Massey University, 2002. See also Fowler, p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> Sonia Inder, 'Middlemarch 1914-1918', PGDip.Arts Research Exercise in History, University of Otago, 1992, p. 28. For women in Australia, 'patriotic work proved an avenue to companionship, it loaned women solace midst the anguish of war.' Scates, p. 45.

<sup>32</sup> *SEP*, 22 June, 1914, p. 4. *SEP*, 8 July, 1914, p. 7.

considerable amount of human happiness'.<sup>34</sup> A state of war certainly existed, and 'we are in for a very serious business', prophesied a *Stratford Evening Post* editorial on the patriotic fund, 'but it is a blessed thing that we need not always be mourning: difficulties faced cheerfully fade all the more quickly.'<sup>35</sup> It is not surprising then, what the *Herald's* resident agent noted. Those same 'high spirits' and 'happiness' helped characterise the nature of fund raising activities in 1914.

From the second week of the war, people in Stratford and the surrounding district, and 'Out East', had no shortage of public and private entertainments to attend. No less than fifteen publicly advertised social activities in aid of the war fund took place in August. Dances were held at Cardiff, Stratford, Midhirst, and Whangamomona; concerts were held at Ngaere, Huiroa, Te Wera and Douglas; Ngaere held a euchre party; Tuna held a social; the Egmont Club held a social and musical evening; a 'War Tea' was held in Stratford; 300 people, possibly 'well-to-do' folk, attended a garden party at Ngaere, and on Broadway in Stratford:

**BERNARD'S PICTURES**  
**SATURDAY NEXT, AUGUST 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**In Aid of War Funds**  
**England Expects Every Man Will Do His Duty**  
**A special picture performance**  
**Help the Empire that protects you, and you help yourself<sup>36</sup>**

'Out East' at Huiroa, Te Wera and Douglas, the Kiore Minstrels entertained 'large and appreciative' audiences in aid of the patriotic fund 'with ready wit and humour, which caused much merriment', after which the hall was cleared for the 'enjoyment of dancing'.<sup>37</sup> At the Egmont Club rooms, Henry

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<sup>33</sup> *SEP*, 8 July, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> *SEP*, 25 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *SEP*, 19 August, 1914, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *SEP*, 22 August, 1914, p. 3.

Saint George, examiner for the Board of Trinity College of Music, London, and 'an artiste of repute', gave a performance that provided people with a 'pleasant memory of a musical treat'.<sup>38</sup> The farmers' social held in Johnson's barn at Kahouri Bridge proved to be a 'pleasant affair' with 'one of the most enjoyable features of the evening' being the musical items. 'Miss Sullivan's song, "Absent," was sweetly sung and received an encore.' Sports activities like the bowling competition 'caused immense amusement' and 'shrieks of laughter.' The evening in Johnson's barn concluded with an 'abundant and delicious' supper followed by singing the 'National Anthem'.<sup>39</sup> Gaiety still characterised fund raising activities later in the year. In Stratford, military items featured in a 'free concert' held in the Town Hall for the British and Belgian Relief Fund, even though members of the local Defence Rifle Club circulated amongst the crowd carrying 'collection boxes'. 'Standing room was at a premium' as the High School Cadets 'formed a pyramid in workman-like fashion', and Lieutenant Grey responded to 'an insistent encore for his club-swinging exhibition, the clubs being illuminated with electric globes'. The singing of 'Tipperary' and 'La Marseillaise' could be heard and at 11.00 pm the concert concluded with 'God Save the King' with the 'Cadets and Territorials on the stage making a nice closing picture'.<sup>40</sup>

Historians can be forgiven for feeling perplexed when assessing patriotic fund raising activities. Armies were on the march, and yet people who attended those activities mingled, laughed, donated money, sang and ate in a joyous manner as if peace had suddenly come to the empire. Were there no visible reminders of the South African War hobbling along Stratford streets? Had people in Taranaki forgotten what damage war could do? The conjunction of 'merriment' with a war crisis in 1914 seems paradoxical. An explanation is that the war was an opportunity for helping Britain; of demonstrating loyalty by

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<sup>38</sup> *SEP*, 26 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> *SEP*, 1 September, 1914, p. 3.

coming to the rescue of the 'Motherland'. A letter written by Annis Hamerton to her daughter Frances in England after the NZEF had embarked provides a subtle clue. 'Our men are on their way to you', wrote Hamerton assuredly, as if family members were coming to the aid of another.<sup>41</sup> It is also possible that in the popular mind the war had not yet fully become New Zealand's, or Taranaki's. Nobody had been injured, or killed; no event related to the war had impacted tragically on New Zealand. 'Here in this distant overseas Dominion we have suffered hardly at all', admitted the *Stratford Evening Post* in its editorial on the annual Agricultural and Pastoral show, 'and [we] can but fall far short of a realisation of what our fellowmen and women are suffering in the Old lands.'<sup>42</sup> Had that realisation existed, 'hoodlums' at the Kohuratahi Relief Fund Social and Dance may not have destroyed in minutes the giant cobweb consisting of seven miles of string that took local people ten hours to construct.<sup>43</sup> People knew from the press that a great war existed abroad, but for the moment, inside Johnson's barn at Kahouri Bridge, or the Egmont Club rooms, or Bernard's Picture theatre, the reason for being there was momentarily forgotten it seems; replaced instead with familiar forms of social entertainment calculated to enthuse and enliven, punctuated only by calls to include them in the war effort by contributing money for the comforts of Taranaki's soldiers and 'Brave Little Belgium'.

Before the war Belgium would never have been thought of, but from 1914 it came to the forefront of peoples' minds. In August 1914, according to the press, the Belgian army had been 'fighting the greatest military force in the

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Annis Hamerton to Frances Hamerton, 18 October, 1914. Hirst Family Papers, MS-Papers-5507-12. (ATL).

<sup>42</sup> *SEP*, 2 December, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *SEP*, 28 November, 1914, p. 8. It seems that some young men had a propensity towards anti-social behaviour, or 'larrikinism' in 1914. In a newspaper report about a concert given in the Bird Road School near Stratford on 28 May 1914, a reporter unwittingly noted much about expectations of male behaviour as about their actual behaviour. An excerpt from the report read,



world's history', and had shown strength in barring Germany's way through their country to attack France.<sup>44</sup> That delaying action, it was understood, had enabled the British Expeditionary Force to get to the European continent, thus preventing the German occupation of Paris, and ultimately the invasion of England.<sup>45</sup> In delaying Germany's advance, Belgium had suffered casualties.<sup>46</sup> For propagandists eager to galvanise a public into supporting the war against Germany, Belgium's 'resistance and suffering' showed 'Germany's guilt and perfidy'.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, there developed in the popular mind a reverential, yet paradoxical image of a 'little country' to be admired, yet also pitied. Annis Hamerton felt that 'the whole world is their debtor for their marvellous bravery & self sacrifice.'<sup>48</sup> However, the press constructed an image of Belgium as a brutalised nation often with women portrayed as the victims.<sup>49</sup>

In an attempt to contextualise Belgium's situation the *Stratford Evening Post* told its readers that Belgium was a 'tenth of the area of New Zealand with a population seven times as great'.<sup>50</sup> It was 'no larger than the Wellington and Taranaki provinces'.<sup>51</sup> Taranaki, they were told, was part of 'these favored isles - where the rainfall was good, the cows coming on nicely and everything promising well', and whose people 'enjoyed the blessings of peace and prosperity'.<sup>52</sup> Belgium, however, had been 'rendered destitute' and was on 'the

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'another thing worthy of mentioning was the excellent behaviour of those young men who were compelled to stand in the porch during the whole of the performance.' *SEP*, 2 June, 1914.

<sup>44</sup> *SEP*, 17 October, 1914, p. 2. *SEP*, 1 December, 1914, p. 3. *IRWA*, 24 February, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *SEP*, 17 October, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Belgium's wartime casualties totalled 92,889, Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin, 1999, p. 295. Belgium's total number of military deaths as a proportion of the total number of men mobilised was 10.4%, Ferguson, p. 299.

<sup>47</sup> Judith Smart, "'Poor Little Belgium'" and Australian Popular Support for War 1914-1915', *War & Society*, 12:1 (1994), p. 31.

<sup>48</sup> Annis Hamerton to Frances Hamerton, 25 October, 1914.

<sup>49</sup> An atrocity story from the *Christchurch Press* read, 'some girls of good family are stripped, and made to wait nude upon the Germans; then they rape them and cut off their breasts. Also, the men are mutilated, and all the young boys, so that the Belgian race shall be exterminated.' Cited in *SEP*, 20 November, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *SEP*, 9 November, 1914, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> *SEP*, 17 October, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.* *SEP*, 9 November, 1914, p. 8.

verge of starvation'.<sup>53</sup> When Stratford's town clerk, Philip Skoglund, addressed those present at the British and Belgian Relief Fund concert, he asked, 'had New Zealanders done their duty to the Belgians? They had not suffered a millionth of what the Belgians had .... What had New Zealand done? Only a tithe of what it should do.'<sup>54</sup> 'Though suffering worse than death', Belgium still 'had strength to suffer further.'<sup>55</sup> Skoglund continued his appeal to the consciences of those present by asking, 'had New Zealand, far removed from the fighting area, suffered [?] Certainly some had suffered in sending their boys away to the front; but great as such a sacrifice was it was nothing compared to the sacrifice and suffering of the Belgians.'<sup>56</sup> People were asked to think of Belgium and some may have even imagined Taranaki *as* Belgium. After listening to Skoglund, reading about Belgium in the newspapers, and no doubt discussing its 'plight' in day-to-day conversations, people sought to show their support for 'brave little Belgium'.

The only practical way was by contributing to the many Belgium relief funds that existed throughout the war such as the Children's Christmas Appeal, Orphan Children's Fund, Belgians in England Relief Fund, Refugees Food Fund, Children's Fund, London Lord Mayor's Belgian Relief, Belgian Christmas Shilling Fund, Babies Fund and the Orphan Children in England Fund.<sup>57</sup> Belgium exercised an extravagant hold on Taranaki from which children were not exempt. As Guy Fawkes day approached in 1914, children in Inglewood were made aware of what their Belgian peers had experienced. The *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age* said, 'it should be remembered and impressed on the children here that the unfortunate little Belgians are in dreadful straights, eighty per cent of them being fatherless, a very large per cent orphans.'<sup>58</sup> Those parents

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<sup>53</sup> *SEP*, 9 November, 1914, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup> *SEP*, 1 December, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> See AD 153/17 War Funds - Belgium Relief Funds (ANZ) for amounts contributed.

<sup>58</sup> *IRWA*, 2 November, 1914, p. 2.

who survived 'had not in their possession either clothing for their kiddies or means wherewith to purchase it, the poor little mites being clothed, or practically wrapped, only in brown paper.'<sup>59</sup> Instead of buying fireworks, children were persuaded to give their 'cracker' money to a school fund for Belgian children. The *Age* did not feel as though it would be a 'hardship for New Zealand children to forego their fireworks', because 'Old Country ideas and customs cannot have the fixed hold or associations on the youth as in' Britain.<sup>60</sup> That was a sacrifice Inglewood children were expected to make for the Belgians.

With the approach of the first Christmas of the Great War, Belgium and its people had an impact on the central Taranaki settlement of Cardiff. To the local patriotic committee Belgium did not warrant charity, but something more lofty and abstract: 'it is their right to claim and our bounden duty to give'.<sup>61</sup> The committee exerted social pressure through the press by taking advantage of a time in the year when giving was customary:

we shall have our three to six meals a day, but for pity and duty's sake remember the hundreds and thousands of homeless, starving Belgians who are to-day in that state in [sic] your behalf and pay, pay, pay, and then sit down to your Christmas dinner with the feeling that you have been instrumental in providing for at least one person's comfort on that day of days. Then stroll out onto the verandah, look around at your farm and cattle, picture to yourself the splendidly brave Belgian with his farm in ruins, and then kick yourself for not thinking of it sooner and doing a bit more.<sup>62</sup>

Eighty-five subscribers from a population of about 300 in Cardiff donated an average amount of 17 shillings in less than a fortnight to the Belgian fund.<sup>63</sup> That amount is about what a female farm worker with board was paid per week

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *SEP*, 8 December, 1914, p. 3

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> On census night 1916, 316 people resided in Cardiff. *Census of New Zealand*, 1916, p. 28.

in Taranaki in 1914.<sup>64</sup> The response was more generous in other central Taranaki towns as table one shows.

**Table One : Summary of Subscriptions to the Belgian Relief Fund Raised in Selected Central Taranaki Towns in 1914**

	Cardiff	Toko	Ngaere	Eltham
<b>Fund Raising Period</b>	9-22 December	By 12 November	By 19 September	12-30 September
<b>Range of Amounts Subscribed</b>	1s-£14 3s 3d	2s-£24 7s 6d	5s-£22 10s 6d	2s 6d-£10
<b>Total Number of Subscriptions</b>	85	22	15	57
<b>Total Amounts Subscribed</b>	£73 2s 3d	£109 4s 3d	£65 6s 9d	£59 15s 6d
<b>Average Amount Subscribed</b>	17s 0s 2d	£4 19s	£4 7s	£1 0s 9d

Source : *SEP*, 19 September, 1914, p. 6. *SEP*, 17 October, 1914, p. 2. *SEP*, 22 October, 1914, p. 5. *SEP*, 29 October, 1914, p. 6. *SEP*, 4 November, 1914, p. 4. *SEP*, 12 November, 1914, p. 8. *SEP*, 22 December, 1914, p. 5. *EA*, 12 - 30 September, 1914, p. 8.

Taranaki had some previous experience in raising money during a war. New Plymouth, Hawera, Stratford, Waitara and Eltham had altogether raised at least £1,227 19s 7d for the 'equipment of men enrolled for service in South Africa' in 1900.<sup>65</sup> Stratford alone raised in excess of that amount in one month as shown in table two, which indicates the gravity of the war crisis in 1914 when compared with 1900.<sup>66</sup> The amount Stratford raised can be explained further by its geographical location at the junction of the main roads and railways leading

<sup>64</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book (NZOYB)*, 1915, pp. 814-15.

<sup>65</sup> *New Zealand Contingents for South Africa, 1900, Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, vol. III, H.- 6c, 1900, p. 1. Of that amount New Plymouth had contributed £532 4s 9d, Hawera £343 8s 6d, Stratford £229 17s, Waitara £65 and Eltham £57 9s 4d.

<sup>66</sup> In tables one, two and three a single subscription could be from one person or a group of people because in tables two and three one of the subscriptions in Stratford came from the County Hotel Domestic. How many people actually made up that group is not known,

north to the port of New Plymouth, south to Hawera, west to Opunake and 'Out East' to Whangamomona, which contributed to its economic success as a market and service centre for the dairy farming industry. Stratford also had some wealthy residents in Charles Bayly, a farmer; William Kirkwood, mayor and hotelkeeper; G.N. Curtis, a land agent, and Newton King, an auctioneer, land agent and general merchant who was 'as obvious in Taranaki as Egmont itself'.<sup>67</sup> Together these men gave £250 to Stratford's Patriotic Fund in 1914, which was nearly equal to the deposit on a 100-acre (40.5 hectares) freehold farm that King had for sale.<sup>68</sup> Eltham, like Stratford, also had some wealthy subscribers in Charles A. Wilkinson, a merchant and MP for Egmont, who gave £100, and the Eltham Dairy Company, which gave £130.

**Table Two : Summary of Patriotic Funds Raised in Selected Taranaki Towns in 1914**

	<b>Inglewood</b>	<b>Stratford</b>	<b>Eltham</b>	<b>Patea</b>
<b>Period of Fund Raising</b>	5-17 August, 1914	5 August-10 September 1914	14 August-28 September 1914	5-17 August 1914
<b>Range of Amounts Subscribed</b>	5s - £10 10s	1s - £209	5s - £130	1s - £15
<b>Total Number of Subscriptions</b>	113	245	105	155
<b>Total Amounts Subscribed</b>	£321 19s 1d	£1,528 2s 0d	£827 0s 6d	£182 18s 0d
<b>Average Amount Subscribed</b>	£2 16s 9d	£6 4s 7d	£7 17s 5d	£1 3s 6d

Sources: *IRWA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 3. *IRWA*, 17 August, 1914, p. 2. *SEP*, 10 September, 1914, p. 2. *EA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 5 - 28 September, 1914, p. 8. *PWP*, 17 August, 1914, p. 3.

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therefore it is not possible to ascertain the proportion of Stratford's population who subscribed to the fund.

<sup>67</sup> Brian Scanlon, *Taranaki People and Places*, New Plymouth: Scanlon, 1985, p. 49.

<sup>68</sup> The farm was 'all in grass, situated between Stratford and Kaponga, and in close proximity to factory, school and Post Office. Good substantial residence, cowshed and other farm buildings. Price £26 10s per acre. Terms £285 cash, balance easily arranged.' *SEP*, 20 August, 1914, p. 8. The 1914 deposit of £285 on that farm in 2002 dollar terms would be about \$25,365.

Residents in those towns gave significant amounts of money within a short period of time as shown in table two. The average amounts subscribed were £2 16s in Inglewood, £6 4s in Stratford, £7 17s in Eltham and £1 3s in Patea. An indication of how significant those amounts were is to use a selection of average wage rates for Taranaki in 1914. One shilling was a gardener's hourly wage; 10 shillings was a day's wages for a painter; £2 was a grocer's assistant's minimum weekly wage; £4 was a month's wages for a shearer; £6 was just over a month's wages for a farm labourer with board; and £100 would have bought nearly four acres of land on one of the farms Newton King had for sale.<sup>69</sup>

Most of the funds were probably raised by door-to-door canvassing and from street corner appeals, rather than by mailed donations. Table three suggests the prevalence of those methods of donation because nearly half (42%) the total number of subscriptions were under £1 and nearly two-thirds (61%) were less than £2. Large amounts, in particular, those over £6 in table three were usually donated by groups of people, such as the residents of Beaconsfield Road or from the proceeds of charitable events, such as Stratford's 'War Social'. Only 8 of the 32 subscriptions in Stratford came from individuals. In Inglewood, subscriptions over £6 came from local land agents, Percival and Messenger, and from individuals who included a medical doctor, settler, cabinetmaker, auctioneer, butcher, sawmill proprietor and a clerk. Individual subscriptions over £6 may not necessarily suggest wealth, but a level of concern about the war.

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<sup>69</sup> NZOYB, 1915, pp. 814-15.

**Table Three : Patriotic Fund Subscriptions (Numerical Totals and Proportions) Raised in Selected Taranaki Towns in 1914**

<b>Amounts (Ranges)</b>	<b>Inglewood</b> 5-17 August 1914		<b>Stratford</b> 5 August-10 September 1914		<b>Eltham</b> 14 August-28 September 1914		<b>Patea</b> 5-17 August 1914	
<b>1s-5s</b>	3	2.6%	55	22.4%	1	0.9%	57	36.7%
<b>5s-10s</b>	5	4.4%	20	8.1%	2	1.9%	21	13.5%
<b>10s-£1</b>	17	15%	38	15.5%	9	8.5%	35	22.5%
<b>£1-£2</b>	32	28.3%	42	17.1%	18	17.1%	23	14.8%
<b>£2-£3</b>	21	18.5%	11	4.4%	20	19%	4	2.5%
<b>£3-£4</b>	5	4.4%	4	1.6%	3	2.8%	1	0.6%
<b>£4-£5</b>	7	6.1%	31	12.6%	14	13.3%	10	6.4%
<b>£5-£6</b>	11	9.7%	12	4.8%	11	10.4%	1	0.6%
<b>Over £6</b>	12	10.6%	32	13%	27	25.7%	3	1.9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>99.6%</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>99.5%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>99.6%</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>99.5%</b>

Sources: Same as table two.

Such large amounts of publicly donated money presented problems. Melanie Oppenheimer's research in Australia found that 'a certain amount of controversy surrounded the patriotic funds. There was criticism over the number of funds established, and the consequent overlapping and wastage associated with so many separate groups pursuing the same war work.'<sup>70</sup> Simon Johnson's research on civilian patriotism discovered that 'criticism of certain aspects of fund raising was common throughout New Zealand'.<sup>71</sup> In Taranaki, social pressures influenced people into giving what they could afford, or what they felt was expected of them by others for honourable causes in a time of tension and uncertainty. Consequently, criticism and complaints surfaced, unreasonable expectations were placed on people, allegations of separatism and gambling arose, along with questioning about the destination of funds and the appearance of divisiveness in local patriotic activities.

'What is Stratford doing in connection with raising funds for the Hospital Ship?', asked Skoglund critically after seeing only a newspaper advertisement

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<sup>70</sup> Oppenheimer, p. 90.

<sup>71</sup> Johnson, pp. 64-6.

inviting contributions rather than a major activity promoted by the Stratford Patriotic Committee.<sup>72</sup> James McMillan took umbrage over the criticism, especially when Skoglund donated his 'little bit' totalling only £1 to the Hospital Ship Fund after publicly criticising the Stratford Patriotic Committee's management. McMillan, in turn, went further and criticised some wealthy residents for 'contributing a paltry £5 or £10' when he knew they 'could better afford a £1000'.<sup>73</sup> 'The people who can least afford it are the ones contributing the best', claimed McMillan.<sup>74</sup> To make contributions more equitable, councillors in Taranaki were asked by the Mount Herbert County Council in Purau in 1915 to consider striking a 'patriotic fund rate'.<sup>75</sup> Some people, like S. H. Wicksteed, who did subscribe to the funds felt the need to complain, especially when he had not been acknowledged in the published lists of subscribers in the local newspaper:

I do not think that some of the subscribers to the War Fund have been treated fairly. We have given a cheque for £5; family gave 10s to Mrs Penn's department, I gave a heifer that cost £7 10s to the gift auction, and we never heard what she brought or a word about her. If no lists had been printed, it would have been alright; now people will say that we are a mean unpatriotic lot of beggars.

P.S. Others are complaining as well as us.<sup>76</sup>

Wicksteed's complaint demonstrated the social importance of patriotic contribution. It also demonstrated an early sign of people experiencing unreasonable pressure occasioned by war.

In an editorial on '**EXERCISING DISCRETION**', the *Stratford Evening Post* cautioned its readers about the 'danger of communities being carried away

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<sup>72</sup> *SEP*, 21 May, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* *SEP*, 22 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> *SEP*, 22 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> W. A. Carpenter, County Clerk, Mount Herbert County Council to the Chairman, Whangamomona County Council, 1 November, 1915. Whangamomona County Council War File 1909-1946, Box 5. (Stratford Public Library).



by over-zeal'.<sup>77</sup> 'What we all have to guard against as much as possible is irresponsible and continuous badgering of the same people for trifling sums at every street corner', warned the *Post* because 'there is a real danger of the public being unduly harassed'.<sup>78</sup> The *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age* made a similar observation:

a very heavy drain has already been made on the pockets of the public ... the "cheerful givers" have in many cases come to the end of their "cheer," and heavy thoughts are beginning to control the liberality springs, and demand a brake being placed on too cheerful giving.<sup>79</sup>

A small amount collected from a dance held in the Cardiff school hall in August 1914 – the second in aid of the war fund – suggests that financial limits may have been reached in some households, even though a report in the *Post* blamed the low amount on 'the absence from the district of many and the illness of more'.<sup>80</sup> To address the problems of 'badgering' and low subscriptions, street collections in Stratford ceased until further notice following instructions from the central committee, and at Cardiff, a committee was appointed solely to prevent 'undue solicitation.'<sup>81</sup>

'A pertinent question regarding the monies now being raised by the Scottish Society' in connection with the Sick and Wounded Soldiers' Fund also attracted critical attention.<sup>82</sup> A critic perceived the patriotic fund collection of the Scottish Society to be that of a separatist group and not in step with the Stratford Patriotic Committee's desire to maintain 'unity of control'.<sup>83</sup> Would

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<sup>76</sup> *SEP*, 15 September, 1914, p. 7. The heifer in 2002 dollar terms would have been valued at about \$712. Wicksteed did eventually get acknowledged in *SEP*, 29 October, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> *SEP*, 17 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *IRWA*, 2 September, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> *SEP*, 22 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> See *SEP*, 22 July, 1915, p. 4. *SEP*, 23 July, 1915, p. 5. *SEP*, 24 July, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> See *SEP*, 19 August, 1915, p.3 for attitudes towards fund raising.

the funds reach their destination asked people seeking assurance.<sup>84</sup> And in the vestry at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Stratford, 'an informal discussion took place concerning the gambling spirit in connection with the raising of Patriotic funds, and the hope was expressed that if [the] opportunity offered, our delegates would speak against this'.<sup>85</sup> A key example that shows the potential for divisiveness surrounding fund-raising was the Taranaki War Relief Association's plan to hold a 'Battle of the Bullion' to raise money for the Wounded Soldiers' Fund.<sup>86</sup>

The scheme was perceived to be New Plymouth based and not inclusive of the rest of the region. 'Independent' wrote to the editor of the *Stratford Evening Post*:

Stratford is, I think, well able to manage its own affairs, and, like Hawera, its people have not yet given any indication of desire to join New Plymouth's "Battle of the Bullion." The sound of "bullion" has too much New Plymouth sea air "bluff" to make Stratford simply sit down quietly and carry out the orders [Stratford] is well able to row its own boat, and not ask New Plymouth to supply the skipper.<sup>87</sup>

Besides the fear of losing identity and inter-borough competitiveness, some districts were concerned with the costs of such a carnival. Eltham's Patriotic Committee recognised 'that a good many appeals have been made in the district' and subsequently did not feel justified in committing Eltham to 'New Plymouth's "Battle of the Bullion" scheme'.<sup>88</sup> The idea of compulsory participation for all residents with "mock courts" fining people until they joined did not find favour during a time of voluntarism.<sup>89</sup> At a poorly attended

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<sup>84</sup> *SEP*, 23 February, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Minute Book, 2 November, 1915, Session Records, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Stratford: 1914-1920. (St. Andrew's Church, Stratford).

<sup>86</sup> See Johnson, pp. 61-4 and *SEP*, 15 January, 1916, p. 3.

<sup>87</sup> *SEP*, 27 January, 1916, p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *SEP*, 25 January, 1916, p. 8.

meeting in Stratford to discuss the scheme, the discourse ranged widely. Church representatives raised the issue of gambling; businessmen saw it as a way 'to catch money from the men who had not paid'; and to Presbyterian minister Reverend J. Pattison, 'the scheme would be a burden on an almost exhausted community'.<sup>90</sup> Adoption of the scheme in Stratford was lost on the chairman's casting vote.

After nearly eighteen months of war and a familiarity with what 'raising the necessary' entailed, the concept of a 'Battle of the Bullion' had a bold, new, invigorating feel to it, but parochialism and frugality inhibited its implementation. Perhaps Reverend Pattison's observation of an 'exhausted community' had merit. After all, a lot had been expected of people, especially in giving to the array of patriotic funds. For instance, in 1914, people had been expected to donate money to the Empire Defence Fund, the Relief for the Poor of the United Kingdom and Belgium Fund, and to the multifarious Belgian Relief Funds that were established from September onwards. Appeals were also made in 1914 to contribute to a relief fund for families affected by the Huntly Mine disaster.<sup>91</sup> In 1915, people were expected to give to the Hospital Ship Fund, the Wounded Soldiers' Fund, and the Countess of Liverpool Fund. Children were also encouraged to collect grass seed from the roadsides and 'waste places' during the summer and donate the proceeds from the sale to the Wounded Soldiers' Fund.<sup>92</sup> From 1916, people were expected to give to the Sailors' Relief Fund, the Serbian Relief Fund, the Red Cross Fund, and the Widows of the North Sea Fight Fund. Continual expectations to give to patriotic charities coupled with depressing and often shocking war news from abroad placed a strain on social cohesion.<sup>93</sup> Despite some disgruntlement people

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<sup>90</sup> *SEP*, 27 January, 1916, p. 8.

<sup>91</sup> A coal mine explosion at Huntly in the North Island killed 44 miners on 12 September 1914.

<sup>92</sup> W. R. King, Secretary, Board of Agriculture to the Chairman, Whangamomona County Council, 20 September, 1915. Whangamomona County Council War File 1909-1946, Box 5.

<sup>93</sup> Similar fractures can be detected in Australia and Canada. Oppenheimer dates the questioning of the role and use of patriotic funds in Australia from about mid-1915 when soldiers began to

continued to give money because it was a patriotic service, even a passive form of sacrifice judging by a war loans advertisement in 1917, which stated: 'Our men are giving their lives; you are only asked to lend your money.'<sup>94</sup> By July 1916, some towns in Taranaki had contributed 'over £16,800' to the patriotic funds, but what did the committees do with it all?<sup>95</sup>

The War Funds Act (1915) provided for the control and administration of money raised in connection with the war. Under the Act every organisation that collected funds had to supply the Department of Internal Affairs with information about the amounts received and expended. This applied to at least 42 committees that were specifically engaged in patriotic fund collection in Taranaki.<sup>96</sup> Each year they collected large sums of money as table four shows. Soldiers and the Belgians were the main recipients of the funds.

**Table Four: Total Amounts Collected By Patriotic Societies in Taranaki 1915-1919**

Date	Total Amounts Collected Up To Date Stated	Total Amounts Collected At the Close of Each Financial Year
At 31 December 1915	£38,425	<i>na</i>
At 31 March 1917	£79,439	£41,014
At 31 March 1918	£218,659	£139,220
At 31 March 1919	£262,070	£43,411

Source: *AJHR*, 1916, vol. II, H.-41. *AJHR*, 1917-19, vol. II, H.-46.

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return from Gallipoli. See p. 90. Morton's research in Canada discovered that Canadian Patriotic Fund organisers 'found disturbing signs that volunteering was close to its limits in fundraising' in 1917, and that controversy surrounded the fund from that year. See pp. 178, 186.

<sup>94</sup> *SEP*, 28 August, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> *SEP*, 11 July, 1916, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> A sample of the organisations that collected patriotic funds are; North Taranaki Patriotic League, Awakino Branch; Eltham Patriotic and Wounded Soldiers' Fund; Inglewood War Fund; New Plymouth Womens' Patriotic Committee; Omata Sewing Guild. For a full list see Patriotic Society Funds, *AJHR*, 1918, vol. II, H.-46, pp. 6-7. Information on Patriotic Societies and their funds is located in *AJHR*, vol. II, H.-46 annually from 1916 to 1920.

By 31 March 1917, £15,133 (19% of the total amount collected) went directly to the relief of soldiers and their dependents, equipment, farewells, presentations and comforts for troops, the Red Cross, St John's Ambulance, Lady Liverpool, and Victoria Leagues. Nearly 18% (£14,158) went to Belgian relief, which indicates the importance people attached to Belgium's wartime situation.<sup>97</sup> Only 2% was expended on Navy relief and other allies. The remaining funds stayed with the patriotic societies.

People in Taranaki continued to contribute to the patriotic funds in the immediate post-war period as shown in table five, although the amount and rate of donations slowed from £43,411 (20%) during the period 1918 to 1919 to £11,762 (4%) between 1919 and 1920. Expenditure each year remained high with soldiers' needs paramount especially during the period of demobilisation from 1919 to 1920 when the amount expended on providing relief for soldiers and their dependents increased by 11.4%. Belgium, too, remained relatively high on the expenditure list, much more so than other allies. What is striking are the large amounts donated and expended. For instance, the total amount collected during the 1917-1918 financial year could have bought about fifty-three 100-acre farms in Taranaki.<sup>98</sup> Such large amounts indicate the gravity of the situation and an understanding that raising money, as well as materials, was a necessity in helping secure victory.

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<sup>97</sup> *AJHR*, 1917, vol. II, H.-46.

<sup>98</sup> This figure is based on a farm Newton King had for sale in Stratford in 1914. See fn. 68

**Table Five : Summary of Taranaki's Patriotic Fund Raising and Expenditure  
From March 1918 to March 1920**

<b>Patriotic Effort</b>	<b>At 31 March 1918</b>		<b>At 31 March 1919</b>		<b>At 31 March 1920</b>	
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>£218,659</b>		<b>£262,070</b>		<b>£273,832</b>	
Relief	£3,949	1.8%	£7,107	2.7%	£38,854	14.1%
Equipment	£6,761	3.0%	£6,790	2.5%	£8,476	3.0%
Comforts	£18,926	8.6%	£24,103	9.1%	£24,750	9.0%
Red Cross	£10,005	4.5%	£10,633	4.0%	£11,017	4.0%
Belgian Relief	£16,428	7.5%	£16,646	6.3%	£16,990	6.2%
Other Allies	£3,251	1.4%	£3,300	1.2%	£3,250	1.1%
Navy Relief	£2,660	1.2%	£2,660	1.0%	£2,855	1.0%
Expenses	£2,591	1.1%	£3,894	1.4%	£4,627	1.6%
Transfers	£102,044	46.6%	£131,410	50%	£135,285	49%
<b>Total Expended</b>	<b>£166,615</b>	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>£206,543</b>	<b>78.9%</b>	<b>£246,104</b>	<b>89.9%</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£52,044</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>£55,527</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>£27,728</b>	<b>10.1%</b>

Source : *AJHR*, 1918-1920, vol. II, H.-46

Note : Transfers refer to the amounts of money sent to the National War Funds Council in Wellington.

The Great War had its most immediate impact on peoples' financial and material resources. There was an expectation that everyone would voluntarily contribute money and other items considered necessary for defence of the empire. By contributing to the patriotic funds and producing comforts for New Zealand soldiers, and allies like the Belgians, people at home were considered to be helping fight an enemy abroad. Hence, the pressure placed on people to contribute their all. Giving to the war effort in the name of patriotism became a key activity, which initially was conducted with enthusiasm, but as the war escalated tensions emerged. Concomitantly, people in Taranaki also had to respond to the call to raise the necessary numbers of soldiers for the duration of the war, which is the subject of the next chapter.



## Chapter Four

### Volunteer Soldiers For the Duration

In a letter to the Malone family in 1932, General Sir Alexander Godley wrote about one of his 'most treasured possessions' - a book given to him by Taranaki's most well known soldier from the Great War, Lieutenant-Colonel (Lt. Col.) William George Malone of Stratford.<sup>1</sup> The book was *The Crown of Wild Olive* by John Ruskin, and in the third chapter, on war, Malone had marked what Godley described as a 'striking passage'.<sup>2</sup> It read:

I found, in brief, that all great nations learned their truth of word, and strength of thought, in war; that they were nourished in war, and wasted by peace; taught by war, and deceived by peace; trained by war, and betrayed by peace: - in a word, that they were born in war, and expired in peace.<sup>3</sup>

By marking Ruskin's words Malone revealed his attitude towards 'great nations' and war. Defining events in history, it seems, came in the form of a trial in which war decided the greatness of nations. For individuals too, like Malone himself, it meant the difference between personal success and mediocrity. Ruskin's words provided Malone with a set of guiding principles.

Malone arrived in Taranaki in 1880, and he busied himself with demanding tasks in farming and public service. As a young man, he chaired the Ngaere Road Board, sat on the Hawera County Council, the Taranaki Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, and was the Stratford County Council's first clerk and treasurer. In the 1890s, he became a Land and Commission Agent in Stratford, diligently studied law, and later became a solicitor and a barrister. He

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<sup>1</sup> General Sir Alexander Godley to I. K. Malone, 7 June, 1932. W. G. Malone. MS Papers 2198-1 (ATL). Those papers comprise Malone's diaries from August 1914 to August 1915.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*



even entered national politics, albeit unsuccessfully.<sup>4</sup> It was the soldier's life that had special appeal for Malone, and one most likely to provide him with a Ruskin-like trial of greatness.

Malone's military career began in London during the mid-1870s. At the age of 16 he enlisted in the City of Westminster Rifle Volunteers followed by service with the Royal Artillery Volunteers. In Taranaki, Malone joined the armed constabulary at Opunake in 1880 and he took part in the assault on Parihaka in 1881. As a Captain during the South African War, Malone helped raise the Stratford Rifle Volunteers. In the decade preceding the Great War, he commanded the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Wellington (Taranaki) Rifle Volunteers as a Lieutenant-Colonel. Later he was appointed commander of the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment (Taranaki Rifles).<sup>5</sup>

Soldiering, wrote Godley, was 'in his bones'.<sup>6</sup> To toughen himself to the soldier's life it has been alleged that Malone 'rationed himself, eschewing all luxuries, and [that he] slept on a military stretcher instead of a soft bed'.<sup>7</sup> He also put into daily practice the 'age old customs and traditions' of the local Rifles regiments whereby:

He marched his men at the unique Rifles rate of 140 paces to the minute, he adopted the Rifles drill system and used all the traditional Rifles vernacular, such as referring to bayonets as "swords." He even had the distance from his home to his office perfectly worked out and would walk it every working day at the Rifles pace. He would always hit the office step with the same foot and right on the exact second of time.<sup>8</sup>

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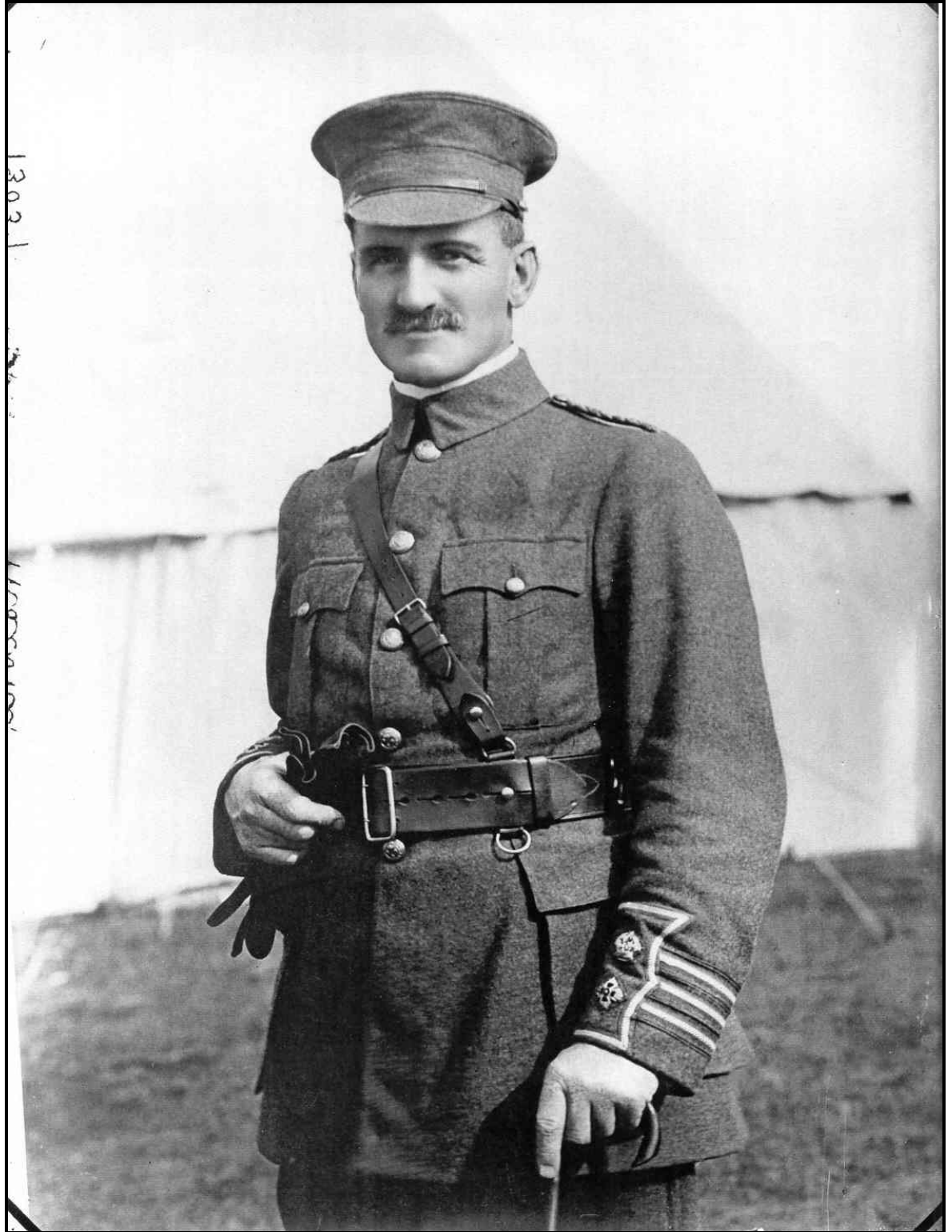
<sup>4</sup> Christopher Pugsley, 'William George Malone 1859-1915', in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 3, 1901-1920, Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books and the Department of Internal Affairs, 1996, p. 327. E.P. Malone, 'The Diaries and Letters of Lt. Col. W. G. Malone, August 1914-August 1915', in *The Turnbull Library Record*, 22:1 (1989), p. 45. The Wellington West Coast Regiment in their regimental history room in Wanganui also holds a photocopied transcript of Malone's diaries.

<sup>5</sup> Pugsley, 'William George Malone', p. 327.

<sup>6</sup> Godley to I. K. Malone, MS Papers 2198-1.

<sup>7</sup> 'A Fearless Leader', (writer unknown), MS Papers 2198-1.

<sup>8</sup> Murray Moorhead, *First and Strong. The Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regimental Story*, Wanganui: Wellington West Coast Battalion, 2002, p. 81.



Lt. Col. William George Malone.

At the outset of the Great War, Malone volunteered immediately, along with his sons, Edmond and Brian. Malone was 'achieving a lifelong ambition of going to war'.<sup>9</sup> By volunteering he set 'A FINE EXAMPLE' for others, claimed the *Stratford Evening Post*, because 'at duty's call he offers everything'.<sup>10</sup> Within days Malone had been appointed commander of the Wellington Infantry Regiment and he brought to that position 'knowledge of the art of war' from his studies of the Napoleonic and American Civil War campaigns.<sup>11</sup>

In the immediate pre-war period, about 10,000 males of military age (ie. between 20 and 40 years) lived in Taranaki.<sup>12</sup> By 14 December 1914, at least 416 of them, including Malone, had volunteered and embarked with the NZEF

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<sup>9</sup> Pugsley, 'William George Malone', p. 327.

<sup>10</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 13 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> 'A Fearless Leader', MS Papers 2198-1.

<sup>12</sup> The contemporary historical record shows 9,964 males (including Maori) of military age in Taranaki in 1911. This figure comprises males aged between 20 and 40 in the boroughs of New Plymouth, Stratford, Waitara, Inglewood, Eltham, Hawera, Patea, and in the counties of Clifton, Taranaki, Egmont, Stratford, Whangamomona, Eltham, Waimate West, Hawera and Patea. See *Census of New Zealand*, 1911, pp. 236-38, 252 and Appendix A, p. v. The military age did fluctuate throughout the Great War. This can cause confusion depending on what source is used and what period of the war the researcher is focusing on. The Defence Act (1909) does have a section on 'liability for service in time of war' that refers readers to three age classifications in section 27 sub-section 3. The Act empowered the Council of Defence to determine the age group for military service. At the outset of the Great War, the *Stratford Evening Post* reported 20 as the minimum age for volunteers. (*SEP*, 6 August, 1914, p. 2). Christopher Pugsley states that, 'the enlistment age for overseas service was 21 years, many in the Territorial Force were not old enough to go to war in August.' (*Anzac. The New Zealanders at Gallipoli*, Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett Publishers Ltd, 1995, p. 14). Pugsley also states that 'only those between 20-34 were to be included' in the Main Body in 1914. (*Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, Auckland: Sceptre, 1990, p. 47). Ian McGibbon agrees with the latter age range in *The Path to Gallipoli*, Wellington: Historical Branch Department of Internal Affairs, 1991, p. 251. A January 1915 recruiting poster in Paul Baker's thesis on p. 29 shows 20 to 40 years as the age range of enlistment. A contemporary pamphlet states, 'THE MEN WHO ARE WANTED - Healthy men between the ages of twenty and forty-five years of age who are British subjects.' (*"England Expects" The Recruit's Handbook. NZEF Reinforcements. Conditions of Enlistment, Pay, Service, Promotion, Pensions, etc.*, Wellington: John MacKay Government Printer, 1915, p. 5). The Military Service Act of 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1916 set enlistment between 20 and 46 years. For the entire Great War period J.L. Sleeman focused on 19-45 as the military age. ('The Supply of Reinforcements During the War', in *The War Effort of New Zealand*, H.T.B. Drew, (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1923, p. 11). James Cowan, a contemporary historian, cited the 'Kahiti', or *Maori Gazette* as notifying Maori that the age of enlistment was between 21 and 40. (*The Maoris in the Great War*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1926).

along with another 128 by 17 April 1915.<sup>13</sup> The enlistment and embarkation of these men from rural Taranaki raises questions. What did the voluntary system of enlistment entail; who enlisted and why, conversely why did some men not enlist; and how did enlistment and departure for camp affect people closely associated with them? These are the questions to be addressed in this chapter on the mobilisation of Taranaki's volunteer soldiers in the pre-Gallipoli period.

**Table Six : Number of Recruits From Taranaki Who Embarked With the NZEF During the Pre-Gallipoli Period**

NZEF	Date of Embarkation	Number of Recruits
Samoan Advance Party	15 August, 1914	20
Main Body	16 October, 1914	311
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements	14 December, 1914	85
3 <sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements	14 February, 1915	56
1 <sup>st</sup> Maori Contingent	14 February, 1915	6
Samoan Relief Force	27 March, 1915	8
New Zealand Army Nursing Service Corps	8 April, 1915	3
4 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	17 April, 1915	55
Total	-	544

Source: *Alphabetical Roll of New Zealand Expeditionary Force. From 15<sup>th</sup> August 1914 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1915*, vol. 1, Wellington: Government Printer, 1917.

The voluntary system of enlistment in New Zealand was conducted in an organised manner. The objective was to form and maintain an expeditionary force in the field based on reinforcements from an equal system of quotas provided by the four military districts. In August 1914, Taranaki, as part of the

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<sup>13</sup> *Alphabetical Roll of New Zealand Expeditionary Force From 15<sup>th</sup> August 1914 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1915*, vol. 1, Wellington: Government Printer, 1917, (*Nominal Roll of NZEF*). Copies of vol. I are held at City Library, Palmerston North and all four volumes are held at New Zealand Defence Force Library, Wellington. Volume 1 consists of 808 pages that alphabetically lists recruits in the NZEF during 1914-15. It categorises each recruit according to serial number, rank, name, body or reinforcement, unit or regiment, marital status, last known New Zealand address, military district, name and address of next-of-kin. It does not contain tables of statistics or summary information. Researchers must collate their own data from each volume to establish information.

Wellington military district, had to supply a quota of 320 Territorials for the first lot of reinforcements, or Main Body, of the NZEF.<sup>14</sup> Intending volunteers received information about enlistment from posters in defence (recruiting) offices, railway stations, post offices and newspapers. Under the regulations governing enlistment, preference was given to unmarried Territorials over the age of 20, or men with previous military experience aged between 25 and 30 (Reservists).<sup>15</sup> No man under the age of 20 was to be accepted, or any less than 160cms (5 feet 4 inches) in height, or over 75.6kgs (168 pounds) in weight.<sup>16</sup> The age eligibility regulation presented a problem. At Hawera, volunteers were called for at a parade and 'every man stepped forward', but half of them were under age for the NZEF and only 24 could be accepted.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in New Plymouth, Captain McDonnell reported that 600 of the 900 local Territorials were under 20 years-of-age.<sup>18</sup> This meant that defence authorities had to include those men in the Reserve. Stories abound both in New Zealand and abroad of enthusiastic volunteers who deliberately misinformed military authorities about their real age, and of recruiting officers who ignored, or misjudged the minimum age limitation. Campbell McAllister from Stratford recalls that:

The First World War naturally raised a fervid military ardour among the boys. Some of them quietly disappeared from their homes and by overstating their ages in other towns were taken into camp as recruits. For most of them ignominious discovery brought them back to school, crestfallen, but soon recovering under the approval, open among their fellows and only thinly disguised in some of the official quarters. Two or three years later they would be old enough to be swallowed by the increasingly greedy maw of "reinforcements".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1914, p. 4. *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> The Defence Act of 1909 abolished the volunteer system in New Zealand and replaced it with compulsory military service for all males aged between 12 and 30 years. Junior cadets were aged between 12 and 14, but this section was abolished in 1912. Senior cadets comprised 14-18 years; Territorials 18-25 years; Reserve 25-30 years.

<sup>16</sup> *SEP*, 6 August, 1914, p. 2. Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, pp. 47-8.

<sup>17</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Campbell McAllister, *Old Taranaki and Its Mountain*, Wellington: Millwood Press, 1976, p. 106.

It is not difficult to see why McAllister's classmates were initially accepted as recruits. Volunteers were not required to provide evidence of age and recruiting officers had to judge their 'apparent age'.

From 6 August 1914, Lieutenant William Furby commenced voluntary registrations at the Stratford Defence Office where 'quite a large crowd' had gathered, and a 'good number of names were taken'.<sup>20</sup> An intending recruit either registered at the local defence office, or he obtained a registration card from the post office. Personal information then had to be provided by the recruit for the defence authorities. An acknowledgement notice was then sent to the recruit, which included his registration number, a warning not to give up his job, and information about the medical examination. A second card was sent later informing the recruit about where and when the examination would take place. The medical examination, like age eligibility, determined who would move on in the process.

Jock Phillips says, 'only about two-thirds of those who voluntarily registered were eventually sent to camp'.<sup>21</sup> In Stratford, Lieutenant Gray kept a register since August 1914 of all recruits who had passed through the local Defence Office. By 1916, Gray's register listed about 700 names, of which 160 (22.8%) had been medically rejected.<sup>22</sup> A volunteer rejected on medical grounds

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<sup>20</sup> SEP, 7 August, 1914, p. 7. See Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, p. 47 for a general outline of the enlistment process. See Provision of Reinforcement Drafts for the Expeditionary Force, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, (AJHR), 1915, vol. II, H.-19E, pp. 2-6 for details about the enlistment process in New Zealand.

<sup>21</sup> Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male-A History*, rev. ed., Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 160. Pugsley writes that 'medical rejections totalling 25 percent of all applicants further reduced the numbers.' *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, pp. 48, 54. In 1914, 8,223 recruits for the Territorial Force in New Zealand were medically examined and 246 (3%) were classified as unfit to serve that year, while 415 (5%) were declared totally unfit for service. Report on the Defence Forces of New Zealand: 25 June 1914-26 June 1915, *AJHR*, 1915, vol. III, H.-19, p. 11. Conscripts in New Zealand in 1917 give an indication of the proportion of males who failed the medical examination. Out of a total of 20,557 conscripts aged between 20 and 40 years, 842 or 4% were considered to be 'permanently unfit for active service' in any capacity to do with the war. NZEF Return Showing Age and Weight of Members of Reserve Called Up By Ballot According to Medical Classification, *AJHR*, 1917, H.-19T.

<sup>22</sup> SEP, 1 August 1916, p. 4.

received a certificate 'as proof that he tried to do his duty to the Empire, and that it [was] not his fault'.<sup>23</sup> Alternative service for those men rejected could be found locally in the National Reserve for Home Defence, such as Stratford's Foot and Mounted Rifle Corps, which began forming in the opening weeks of the war.<sup>24</sup> The *Stratford Evening Post* reported early in September 1914, that 'there is certainly a wide feeling that the older men – those between say twenty-five and fifty years of age – would like to be able to do something practical which would be useful in the case of emergency.'<sup>25</sup>

If medically fit, the recruit was then attested whereby he had to answer eighteen personal questions read aloud by the attesting officer. A key question asked of the recruit was 'are you willing to serve in the Expeditionary Force in or beyond the Dominion of New Zealand ... For the term of the present European war and for such further period as is necessary to bring the Expeditionary Force back to New Zealand and to disband it'.<sup>26</sup> Agreeing to that question moved the recruit from a voluntary position to one of obligation where he had serve 'for the duration' of the war. What took place next was a defining moment in the enlistment process. The recruit swore a formal oath of attestation where he 'sincerely promise[d]':

I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to our Sovereign Lord the King, his Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully serve in the New Zealand Military Forces, according to my liability under the Defence Act, and that I will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me, until I shall be lawfully discharged. So help me, God.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *AJHR*, 1915, vol. II, H.-19E, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> W. J. Reeve to James Allen, 14 August, 1914. AD 1 10/155/21 Home Defence-Stratford-Offers Services in Raising Corps (ANZ). H.M. Whittington to Allen, August, 1914. AD 1 10/155/31 Home Defence-Hawera-Proposals re. Raising Corps (ANZ). W. J. Kirkwood to Allen, 27 August, 1914. AD 1 10/155/37 Home Defence Stratford re. Formation of Corps (ANZ). C. P. Baker to Defence Department, 10 September, 1914. AD 1 10/155/55 Home Defence Eltham. Proposals re. Raising Corps. 1914 (ANZ). *HNS*, 11 August, 1914, p. 4. *SEP*, 4 September, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> *SEP*, 2 September, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Attestation of Irving Blackstock, 19 August, 1914. Military Service Record and Attestation File (MSRAF) 10/680. Blackstock lived in Cardiff, west of Stratford in central Taranaki.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

By that oath the civilian became a soldier by legal process. The soldier then had to continue with his job until called to camp. The 'call-up' took the form of a 'Notification of Acceptance of Service with the Expeditionary Force'. An example from Owen Kinsella reads: 'You are required to parade at 7.30 pm on August 23, 1915 at Inglewood Railway Station, and will proceed to Camp, Trentham, Wellington, by the Special Troop train.'<sup>28</sup>

The following illustration shows soldiers on parade north of New Plymouth at Waiwakaiho in 1915, and it suggests much about the volunteers. They have a ramshackle appearance judging by the different styles of military caps worn in the front row, which is made more obvious by those soldiers in the second row who are still dressed in civilian clothing. It seems not all soldiers met the physical specifications set out in the recruitment regulations. The soldier sixth from the right in the front row looks to be over the regulation weight, whereas the soldier fourth from the left is possibly under the minimum height. Some training is evident by the uniform splaying of feet in the front row, but they have yet to attain the stiff soldier-like appearance as exhibited by the officers in the foreground and to the left of the illustration. In the background ill discipline can be seen in the form of a fight and a soldier with his cap held aloft on a rifle. From where in Taranaki society did these volunteer soldiers come from? Men who volunteered in the opening weeks of the war, and who embarked with the first contingent, or Main Body of the NZEF are a representation of Taranaki's soldiers in the pre-Gallipoli period. Constructing a social profile of them is a methodical way of finding some answers about who the volunteers were.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Letters to Mrs A. R. Matthews from Owen Kinsella, 1913-28, Anne Matthews Papers, Box 1, Bag 20/21 (Wanganui Regional Museum).

<sup>29</sup> *Census of New Zealand, 1911, Nominal Roll of NZEF* vol. 1, and the NZEF Military Service Records and Attestation Files of 311 soldiers from Taranaki who served with the Main Body are the sources of information for the profile. All 311 files are held at New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Archives, Trentham Military Camp.





C COMPANY XI REGT.  
MAJOR ARTHUR LEECH.  
ENCAMPMENT AT WAIWAKAIHO 1915.

**"C" Company XI Regt. Major Arthur Leech. Encampment at  
Waiwakaiho 1915.**

**(Wellington West Coast Regiment HQ, Wanganui).**

Their military experience, age at enlistment, physical dimensions, birthplace, locations of next-of-kin, last known place of residence, religious denomination, marital status, and occupation will determine the profile.

Most of the recruits, especially those under 34 years-of-age, would have had some military training since 1909 as Senior Cadets, or Territorials, or as Reservists. Some of the older recruits aged 35 and over would have trained under the pre-1909 volunteer system, or even saw military service in South Africa.<sup>30</sup> Malone, at age 55, was the oldest man from Taranaki to serve with the Main Body. Most of the recruits were considerably younger. Some underage recruits did go undetected, like Eric Kivell, a telegraphist from Stratford, and E. J. Harris, a cycle mechanic from Inglewood, both of whom turned 18 in 1914. Table seven shows that the predominant age range of Taranaki recruits in the Main Body was between 20 and 39, with most being in their twenties; this statistic is corroborated by other researchers.<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere, for example in Western Australia, the age of recruits was comparable to New Zealand and Taranaki, with the average age of enlistment in the mid-twenties.<sup>32</sup> The age limits were more difficult to discern for the recruiting authorities than the physical dimensions of the volunteer. A sample of 66 recruits shows that the median height of recruits was 170 cms (5 feet 8 inches) and the median weight was 69.3 kgs (154 pounds), all within the regulations.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas James (11/488), age 29 in 1914 served with the Stratford Volunteer Regiment from 1904-1906 and the Stratford Mounted Rifles from 1910-1914. Others had served in the South African War. Archibald Bonar (10/1116) served with the 3<sup>rd</sup> New Zealand Contingent from February 1900 to July 1902. John Bell (11/703) served for one year in South Africa with the Queensland Mounted Rifles; James Elmslie (11/629) with the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Contingent; William Whelan (13/599), also with the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Contingent and the South Australian Light Horse. Matthew McGlade (10/1115), also served in South Africa and with the Imperial Army for twelve years.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Baker says of New Zealand volunteers in August 1914, that 'their average age was just twenty-three'. 'New Zealanders, The Great War, and Conscription', PhD Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1986, p. 15. 'In the Main Body 56 per cent were under the age of 25, and 85 per cent were under 30.' Phillips, *A Man's Country*, p. 161.

<sup>32</sup> Suzanne Welborn, *Bush Heroes*, Freemantle: Freemantle Arts Centre Press, 2002, p. 186.

<sup>33</sup> Of that sample only 5 were over the 168 pounds (75.6kgs) weight limit and no one was under the 5' 4" (160cms) height minimum.

**Table Seven : Age Upon Enlistment in August-October 1914 of Taranaki Recruits in the Main Body, NZEF**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number of Recruits</b>	<b>Proportion of Total</b>
<b>Under 20 Years</b>	5	1.6%
<b>20-29</b>	253	82.1%
<b>30-39</b>	47	15.2%
<b>40-49</b>	2	0.6%
<b>50-59</b>	1	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	308	99.8%

Source : NZEF Military Service Records and Attestation Files.

Note : Files for three recruits did not show dates of birth.

The recruits' birthplaces are diverse. Niall Ferguson says that the British Expeditionary Force, although predominantly English, was a 'multinational force' that included Scots and Irish; so too, it could be said of Taranaki recruits.<sup>34</sup> They formed from three distinct groups; New Zealand, British and Australian-born, with smaller numbers of American, Swedish and Samoan-born recruits. Most (75.5%) of them were born in New Zealand, nearly a third (32.1%) in Taranaki. This reflects the growing demographic trend to a New Zealand-born population. It suggests a mobile population, too, because just over two-thirds (67.8%) were born outside the Taranaki region, with nearly a quarter (24.4%) born overseas. This could be explained by the wish of non-New Zealand-born male residents to return to the land of their birth, or home as a motive for enlistment, or perhaps the need to be with their fellow 'country-men' during a crisis. The same could be said of some New Zealand men resident in Britain at the start of the war who volunteered for service with the NZEF. A maximum of 250 volunteers were accepted there and they became part of the British section of the Main Body in Egypt.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 355.

<sup>35</sup> The names of those recruits are recorded in volume one of the *Nominal Roll, NZEF* held by the Defence Force Library in Wellington. There is no indication where they came from in New Zealand, but the names and addresses of next-of-kin in New Zealand are listed.

**Table Eight : Birthplaces of Males Living in Taranaki During the Pre-War Period and of a Sample of Recruits From the Region in the Main Body, NZEF**

Place of Birth	Pre-War Male Population in Taranaki	Taranaki Recruits In Main Body	
New Zealand	70%	188	75.5%
England	15%	28	11.2%
Australia	4.3%	11	4.4%
Ireland	4%	7	2.8%
Scotland	3.2%	9	3.6%
Elsewhere in the World	3.1%	5**	2%
Wales	0.3%	1	0.4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>99.9%*</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>99.9%</b>

Source : *Census of New Zealand, 1911*, p. 182. NZEF Military Service Records and Attestation Files.

Note : Birthplaces for 62 recruits in the Main Body were not recorded in their service records.

\* Does not include 76 males whose place of birth was 'at sea', or 'unspecified'.

\*\* Elsewhere in the world includes USA (3), Sweden (1), and Samoa (1).

The geographical location of the recruits' next-of-kin is an indicator of mobility. Volume one of the *Nominal Roll of the NZEF* names at least 51 recruits who enlisted with the Australian Expeditionary Force in 1914-1915 and whose next-of-kin addresses were in Taranaki. Table nine indicates that nearly half (49%) of the recruits had next-of-kin living outside the Taranaki region. But just over half (51%) of the recruits' next-of-kin lived closely, which suggests that about every second recruit had been sedentary, and were motivated to 'step out from hearth and home' and enlist. The recruits' last known places of residence upon enlistment is commensurate with the size of the male population of military age in each of the region's counties. Most of the recruits - at least 91 of them - came from Taranaki County in the north-west, where the main town of New Plymouth and the region's main port is located.

**Table Nine : Location of Next-of-Kin Belonging to Taranaki Recruits in the Main Body, NZEF**

Location of Next-of-Kin	Number of Recruits	Proportion of Recruits
Same Place as Recruit	123	40%
Outside Taranaki	103	33%
Overseas	50	16%
Within Taranaki	34	11%
Not Stated	1	0.3%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source : *Nominal Roll of the NZEF*, vol. 1.

Nearly half of the recruits indicated on their attestation papers that they were Anglicans, a statistic found throughout New Zealand and in Australia.<sup>36</sup> Jock Phillips accounts for this by saying that ‘Anglicans, those linked closest to England by culture and race, were obviously more enthusiastic’.<sup>37</sup> Elaine McFarland’s research on the recruitment of Irish Catholics in Scotland tends to suggest otherwise. McFarland states that the Irish ‘were not immune to the practical imperatives, shared values and collective enthusiasm which fuelled voluntary recruitment in the wider population.’<sup>38</sup> Similarly, David Fitzpatrick’s research in Ireland demonstrates that Ulster, for example, ‘was remarkable for the enlistment of catholics as well as protestants’.<sup>39</sup> The high proportion of Anglicans amongst the Taranaki recruits is probably best explained by how people identified their religious denomination on census night 1911, rather than a propensity to fight. Table ten suggests that Presbyterians were just as likely to volunteer as Anglicans, whereas Methodists were less inclined

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<sup>36</sup> Anglicans comprised 46.44% of ‘all recruits (including the Samoan force) up to and including the 25<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements’. Baker, p. 554. Research in Australia shows similar findings. See John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001, p. 225 and Welborn, p. 189.

<sup>37</sup> Phillips, *A Man’s Country?*, p. 162.

<sup>38</sup> Elaine McFarland, ‘“How the Irish Paid Their Debt”: Irish Catholics in Scotland and Voluntary Enlistment, August 1914-July 1915’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, LXXXII:2 (2003), p. 262.

<sup>39</sup> David Fitzpatrick, ‘The Logic of Collective Sacrifice: Ireland and the British Army, 1914-1918’, *Historical Journal*, 38:4 (1995), p. 1030.

**Table Ten : Religious Affiliations of Taranaki Recruits in the Main Body, NZEF**

Religion	Proportion of All People	Proportion of All Males	Proportion of Recruits	Number of Recruits
Anglican	45.4%	45.6%	48.2%	150
Presbyterian	15.2%	15.1%	16.7%	52
Catholic	14%	13.7%	13.1%	41
Methodist	14.8%	13.9%	7.7%	24
Not Stated	4.8%	5.8%	7.7%	24
Protestant	0.4%	0.5%	3.5%	11
Others	5.1%	5.3%	2.8%	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>99.7%</b>	<b>99.9%</b>	<b>99.7%</b>	<b>311</b>

Source : *Census of New Zealand, 1911*, p. 104. NZEF Military Service Records and Attestation Files.

Married recruits from Taranaki in the Main Body were a minority group with only 18 (5.7%) actually married. That proportion conforms to Jock Phillips' research where 'almost 95 per cent declared themselves unmarried'.<sup>40</sup> Such a low number of married recruits is not surprising because preference was for unmarried men. State and social pressure on married men to enlist did not exist in 1914. Contemporaries considered it 'neither economical, wise, nor just', to allow 'married men with children to take the risks of war, while single men without responsibilities are available', because, in part, 'the death of a married man with children when on active service [meant] a heavy financial burden on the state for many years'.<sup>41</sup> For five married recruits from Taranaki who served with the Main Body the risks were high. Not only did their wives risk becoming widows, but between them eight children under ten years of age were at risk of losing a father. Furthermore, the wife of one of the recruits was six months pregnant at the time of his enlistment.<sup>42</sup> Bronwyn Dalley's research on the New Zealand family in the twentieth century shows that at the time of the Great War

<sup>40</sup> Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, p. 160.

<sup>41</sup> Sleeman, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> MSRAF for J. T. R Bell (11/703), W. G. Fargie (11/545), E. W. Hine (10/4), W. Janson (11/487) and W. Woods (5/83).

'an already intense public and political interest in the quality, as well as the quantity, of the populace' existed, which meant enlistment of married men to serve in the NZEF during a time of war could be counter-productive to the future well-being of the nation.<sup>43</sup> Harry Spratt, from Stratford, actually got married on the day he enlisted.<sup>44</sup> Even though the enlistment of married men had been discouraged, 81 married recruits from Taranaki embarked during 1915.<sup>45</sup>

Collectively, the soldiers in the Main Body came from diverse occupations. Forty-nine (16%) of the 311 Taranaki soldiers in the Main Body indicated that they were farmers, which was the single biggest occupation group amongst all of the recruits from Taranaki. Clerks (9%) and labourers (6%) comprised the next two largest groups respectively.<sup>46</sup> The social profile suggests that a typical recruit from Taranaki in the Main Body in 1914 would have been an unmarried farmer in his twenties who was New Zealand-born, from an Anglican household in the northern part of the region, and that his next-of-kin would have lived close-by. Furthermore, he enlisted in mid-August and would have had some military training before the war. Why he, and those recruits he typified should volunteer for war service is a popular question for historians.

The current literature, as exemplified by Avner Offer and Niall Ferguson, has diverse explanations for enlistment.<sup>47</sup> Offer focuses his attention on the British Empire, in particular, Canada and Australia. 'The people who rushed to volunteer did so for a variety (and often a mixture) of motives', asserts Offer,

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<sup>43</sup> Bronwyn Dalley, *Family Matters. Child Welfare in Twentieth-Century New Zealand*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> MSRAF for Harry Spratt 11/503.

<sup>45</sup> *Nominal Roll of NZEF*, vol. 1.

<sup>46</sup> By 1917, the three most populous occupational groupings in the NZEF consisted of 18,396 (23.2%) farmers and farmhands, 11,091 (14%) labourers and 5,443 (6.8%) clerks. NZEF Return Showing Occupations of All Ranks Embarked for Active Service Up to and Including the 28<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, *AJHR*, 1917, H.-19V, pp. 1-2.

<sup>47</sup> In *The Pity of War*, Ferguson outlines five motives that affected British volunteers; 'Successful recruitment techniques', 'Female pressure', 'Peer-group pressure', 'Economic motives', and 'Impulse'. See pp. 204-07.

such as unemployment.<sup>48</sup> 'Others sought an escape from intensely competitive occupations, especially in urban white collar employment', he says, 'yet another reason for enlistment was the pursuit of novelty.'<sup>49</sup> New Zealand historians concur.<sup>50</sup> Christopher Pugsley believes men enlisted 'for a variety of reasons, with patriotism not always prominent.'<sup>51</sup> The view by some French historians, notably Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, that, 'we cannot know the exact motivation of the men who signed up' leaves the question open to further interpretation.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps such a question, because of the diversity of answers, is best assessed at the local level.

A New Zealand-wide explanation of voluntary enlistment was provided in October 1916 by James Allen when he asked eighteen prominent officers in the military camps in New Zealand what they considered was 'the motive which has impelled men to enlist voluntarily?'<sup>53</sup> The responses Allen received showed mixed understandings. Captain G. H. Woolley, Musketry Instructor at Trentham, replied: 'In the early stages of the war it may have been either: the colonial love of a fight, patriotism, spirit of adventure and travel.'<sup>54</sup>

In Taranaki, Walter Carruthers, a bank clerk from Hawera, enlisted in August 1914 because he wanted 'to escape from his, as he described it, boring job.'<sup>55</sup> Other clerks may have felt the same way as Carruthers because a *Taranaki Herald* correspondent in New Plymouth reported that the 'majority of the

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<sup>48</sup> Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 314.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, pp. 159, 162-63. Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, pp. 12, 35. Baker, pp. 15-16. Nicholas Boyack, *Behind the Lines. The Lives of New Zealand Soldiers in the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1989, p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Pugsley, *Anzac*, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau & Annette Becker, *1914-1918 Understanding the Great War*, London: Profile Books, 2002, p. 97.

<sup>53</sup> AD 1/10/471 Statistics:- Moral, Mental & Social Changes in Soldiers in Consequence of the War and Life in Training Camps (ANZ).

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack, E.P. Malone, (eds), *The Great Adventure. New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1988, p. 257.



applicants were clerks.<sup>56</sup> Clerks had even been prominent in volunteering to help restore order during New Zealand's industrial troubles in 1913.<sup>57</sup> Historians have answers to explain the enthusiasm of some clerks to enlist. Avner Offer's view about competitive white-collar occupations is plausible, but the contention by Jock Phillips, that, 'by 1914 Pakeha men had been taught that war was the acid test of their masculinity', and that they had to prove it is a more likely explanation.<sup>58</sup> After all, clerks were urbanites and there was concern in New Zealand around the turn of the century about the city as an attraction and trap for the 'unfortunate, the degenerate, the weak-willed and the idle', and 'the effeminate influence of urban life'.<sup>59</sup> Captain M. J. O'Doherty, a Catholic Chaplain at Featherston camp, believed that 'the town man is more refined, more effeminate [*sic*']'.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, that concern was universal. 'Germans, like the British, worried that urban life made sissies of young men', claims John H. Morrow Jr.<sup>61</sup> However, the statistical data in table eleven suggests that urban men in Taranaki were more likely to enlist than their rural peers in the counties. New Plymouth, the largest town in the region, supplied 13% of Taranaki's soldiers who embarked with the NZEF between August 1914 and April 1915. The rural borough of Inglewood and Taranaki County had the most number of men of military age, yet supplied only 3%. During the Great War, numbers of soldiers mattered, not their manner, nor their department, nor their residence

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<sup>56</sup> TH, 6 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Erik Olssen, 'Strife in the Laboratory 1906-1914', in *An Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920*, Judith Binney, et.al., Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990, pp. 293-4.

<sup>58</sup> Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, p. 158. See also pp. 139, 143, 144, 152. A contemporary attitude towards clerks can be found in, 'Epitaphs of the War' to an 'Ex-Clerk' in *Rudyard Kipling's Verse, Inclusive Edition, 1885-1918*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918 [?], p. 440:

'Pity not! The Army gave  
Freedom to a timid slave:  
In which Freedom did he find  
Strength of body, will, and mind'

<sup>59</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'The Rural Myth and the New Urban Frontier', *New Zealand Journal of History (NZJH)*, 9:1 (1975), p. 4. Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, p. 139.

<sup>60</sup> O'Doherty responds in March 1917 to James Allen's Memorandum of 5 February, 1917. AD 1 10/471.

<sup>61</sup> John H. Morrow, Jr. *The Great War. An Imperial History*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 19.

and 'the clerk makes as good a soldier as most', observed Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew.<sup>62</sup>

**Table Eleven : Soldiers From Taranaki Who Embarked  
With the NZEF During the Pre-Gallipoli Period (incl. Maori)**

Districts	Number of Males of Military Age in Each District*	Number of Soldiers of Military Age From Each District	Proportion of Soldiers of Military Age From Each District (%)
New Plymouth Borough	833	112	13
Hawera Borough and County	1,343	114	8
Stratford Borough and County	1,403	101	7
Eltham Borough and County	1,109	56	5
Whangamomona County	498	20	4
Patea Borough and County	960	39	4
Waimate West County	570	20	4
Inglewood Borough and Taranaki County	1,756	48	3
Waitara Borough and Clifton County	762	19	2
Egmont County	730	13	2
<b>Totals</b>	9,964	542**	-

Sources : *Census of New Zealand, 1911*, pp. 236-38, 252. Appendix A, p. v. *Nominal Roll of NZEF*, vol. 1.

\* There are 370 Maori aged between 20 and 40 included in the column labelled Number of Males of Military Age in Each District.

\*\* The total number of recruits of military age is 544. It differs slightly from the second column above because the county for two recruits is not clearly indicated in the Nominal Roll. One recruit indicated 'Mt. Egmont' as his county. The boundaries of five Taranaki counties met at the summit of Mt. Egmont in 1914. The recruit probably meant Egmont County.

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<sup>62</sup> Drew in March 1917 responding to James Allen's Memorandum of 5 February 1917. AD 1 10/471.

At a farewell function for recruits in New Plymouth, mayor Wilson understood their enlistment to be 'actuated by the desire for adventure', and to prove 'loyalty by action'.<sup>63</sup> Malone's son, Brian, and Harry Voyle from Stratford, were with the Samoan Advance Party. They wrote en route that, 'we will do our bit for our town, and feel that we have the hearts of all in Stratford with us', as if a duty to prove themselves as soldiers were reasons why they were on board the *S.S. Moeraki* as it steamed towards Samoa.<sup>64</sup>

For Brian's father it was unequivocal why he had enlisted. In addition to his prominent military background, Malone was conservative and a traditionalist, both in the home and in the public sphere. After meeting Lt. Col. Johnson's wife, Malone noted that she 'seems nice and sensible. I was pleased to hear her voice Mater's feelings as to "society" women golfing and bridging. She too, like Mater, prefers to be at home to receive her husband and look after him and her children.'<sup>65</sup> Malone also showed his values in admiring the Japanese. 'They appear to me to be patriotic, abstemious, industrious, brave and clean', he noted, 'they worship their ancestors and their children. They would make A.1. Christians. They are, I believe, honest.'<sup>66</sup> During the pre-war period, Malone strongly supported compulsory military training and when war began in 1914 he confided in a friend that 'if we can stave off the trial of strength, well and good. British tenacity and resource will win through'.<sup>67</sup> He was adamant that 'we must finish things and not leave our children to the German menace'.<sup>68</sup> 'This war is the redemption of England', he wrote, 'and [it] will leave the Empire better and greater in every sense'.<sup>69</sup> For Malone enlistment was about putting Ruskin's words into practice; 'truth of word', 'strength of thought',

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<sup>63</sup> *TH*, 18 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> *SEP*, 14 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> 25 August, 1914. MS Papers 2198-1. Malone always referred to his wife as 'Mater'.

<sup>66</sup> 14 October, 1914. MS Papers 2198-1.

<sup>67</sup> 'A Fearless Leader', MS-Papers 2198-1.

<sup>68</sup> Phillips, *et.al.* *The Great Adventure*, p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> Phillips, *et.al.* *The Great Adventure*, pp. 25-26.

nourishment, teaching, training and birth 'in war'. More specifically, enlistment was about patriotism, duty, love of king and country, and standing against the empire's enemy.

Keith Jeffery reminds us that, 'among the motives for enlistment there was a widely accepted moral justification for going to war against Germany. It has been described as the war for Big Words: King, Country, Freedom, Duty, Democracy, Liberty, and Civilisation'.<sup>70</sup> Some of those 'Big Words' also applied to volunteers like Jacob (Jack) Moller who enlisted at Opunake a few days after the declaration of war. Moller could recall seventy-five years later why he volunteered. It was 'adventure for a start', 'getting away', and 'going overseas'.<sup>71</sup> But, like Malone, he was also motivated by patriotism. 'Britain was involved', Moller said, 'we were a part of Britain'; and it was about 'giving a hand out when in trouble. Same as we had done in the Boer War.'<sup>72</sup>

Social interactions through work and family influenced enlistment. All the settlements in Stratford county had small populations.<sup>73</sup> It is highly likely that some recruits knew each other through work or residence. Murray Urquhart (age 33), a farmer, and William Jamison (age 22), a fireman, both lived on Gordon Road in Toko, and both served in the Main Body. A study of the recruits from Stratford borough and county reveal these interconnections. The attestation papers of Harry Spratt (25), Timothy Sullivan (28), George Kerr (23), William Everiss (30), and Henry Dewer (29) show that they all lived on Juliet Street in Stratford.<sup>74</sup> They must have known each other, at least by sight. All of

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<sup>70</sup> Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> Jacob Randrup Moller (Jack) interview by Jane Tolerton and Nicholas Boyack, 6 November, 1989, OHInt-0006/57, World War One Oral History Project, Oral History Archive Centre (ATL).

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> The population of Ngaere would reach 648 by 1916, Cardiff 316, Midhirst 711, and Toko 525. *Census of New Zealand*, 1916, pp. 28-45. Stratford's population was 2,639 in the *Census* of 1911, p. 35, and it was estimated to be 3,076 on 1 April 1915. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1914, p. 24.

<sup>74</sup> MSRAF for Murray Urquhart 10/660, William Jamison 10/676, Spratt 11/503, Timothy Sullivan 10/682, George William Kerr 10/768, William Everiss 10/696, and Henry Dewer 11/448.

them enlisted for service with the NZEF within a week from 12-18 August 1914. All of them worked in different places - Spratt for W. G. Malone Solicitors, Sullivan as a telegraphist with the Public Works Department, Kerr as a clerk in the Post Office, Everiss as a grocer's assistant for John Masters and Son, and Dewer as an iron moulder for Bertram Harkness, whose workplace was on Juliet Street. Nine of the recruits from central and eastern Taranaki also worked in those places, including Hugh Jickell (23), who worked with Dewer as an engineer. Jickell lived on Fenton Street, in Stratford, as did the under-aged Eric Kivell.<sup>75</sup> It is highly likely that the young men from Juliet Street talked about the war in their daily interactions, and in turn, brought their views into the various workplaces, thus mobilising further opinions surrounding enlistment.

Other connections amongst the Stratford recruits were through employment in the building trade. J. W. Boon, building contractor, employed Cornelius Bowler (27) as a labourer, and Robert Cameron (21) as a carpenter. Bowler and Cameron enlisted with Edward Evans (26), a self-employed cabinet maker, and Robert Houlden (35), a builder. Thomas Laverty (21), also a builder, lived on Hamlet Street as did Charles Milner (20), a plumber with McHillary and Frederick of Stratford.<sup>76</sup> All served in the Main Body and almost certainly knew each other.

Family ties intersected employment, too. The publicity surrounding the enlistment of Malone and his sons may have influenced others, like Spratt and John King (25), a motor-driver with Malone's business. Cornelius Bowler's older brother Michael (29), a self-employed painter and paperhanger, enlisted two days after Cornelius on 20 August; he also served with the Main Body.<sup>77</sup> Royden Okey (21), a clerk with Newton King in Stratford, and his brother

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<sup>75</sup> MSRAF for Hugh Nelson Jickell 11/65 and Eric Henry Kivell 10/765.

<sup>76</sup> MSRAF for Cornelius Patrick Bowler 11/166, Robert Dudley Cameron 10/760, Edward Douglas Evans 11/548, Robert Houlden 11/452, Thomas Laverty 10/762 and Charles William Milner 10/10.

<sup>77</sup> MSRAF for John William King 3/121, Michael Bowler 10/720 and Royden Lydiard Okey 10/761.

William, from New Plymouth, are part of at least six sets of brothers in Taranaki who served with the Main Body.<sup>78</sup> Their cousin Sydney, son of Henry Okey, MP for Taranaki, also served in the Main Body.

Family pressure to enlist must have been strong in some households, particularly those of public figures like Malone and Henry Okey. Malone noted in his diary, 'I am glad that three of my boys volunteered without hesitation to serve and fight for their country.'<sup>79</sup> Perhaps he preached Ruskin's words to his sons and imbued them with a view that, 'we have a great hurdle before us'.<sup>80</sup> Malone certainly preached Ruskin to the recruits on board the *Arawa*. 'We are putting up an Extract from Ruskin on War; beginning "Never waste a moment", he noted in his diary on 19 October 1914.<sup>81</sup> Another father, T. Soffe, at a public farewell of Waitara recruits reportedly stood up and told the crowd that he 'was an old soldier himself, his wife's people were soldiers, some of his sons were soldiers, and he was a proud man that night to see another son going away to fight the battles of his country.'<sup>82</sup>

On a grander scale, the assumption that the war would be short must also be considered as a motivation for early enlistment. When William Fraser delivered the Ministry of Public Works statement in 1914, 'the general impression was that the war would not last much more than one year.'<sup>83</sup> Malone also held that view.<sup>84</sup> At the local government level in New Plymouth the short-war assumption manifested itself in the actions of its borough councillors. At the monthly meeting held on 10 August 1914, a motion was carried to keep jobs open for the duration of the war for those permanent employees of the council

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<sup>78</sup> *Nominal Roll of NZEF*, vol. 1. The other known sets of brothers from Taranaki who served in the Main Body were Frank and James Barnard of Eltham; Cornelius and Michael Bowler of Stratford; Frederick Espiner from Ngaere and William Espiner from Manaia; Andrew and Donald McLeod from Eltham; Reginald and Leslie Sole from New Plymouth.

<sup>79</sup> 25 August, 1914. MS Papers 2198-1.

<sup>80</sup> 'A Fearless Leader', MS-Papers 2198-1.

<sup>81</sup> Phillips, *et.al.* *The Great Adventure*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>82</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> Ministry of Public Works Statement, *AJHR*, 1915, vol. III, D.-1.

who enlisted.<sup>85</sup> At the September meeting, councillors heard of an offer by C. Skitrop, the borough engineer, to donate a quarter of his salary for the duration of the war.<sup>86</sup> Elsewhere in Taranaki, notably in Patea and Stratford, subscribers to the patriotic funds signalled their intentions to donate sums of money regularly 'while [the] war lasts.'<sup>87</sup> To assume that the war would *not* be short was considered by some, like the *Eltham Argus*, an 'unduly pessimistic opinion'.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the *Argus* believed that, 'the duration of the war is more likely to be measured by months than years.'<sup>89</sup> And indeed, that assumption was universal.<sup>90</sup> After all, what major war over the past fifty years, except for the South African conflict, had lasted longer than fifteen months? Volunteers who enlisted in 1914 did so under the same assumption that the war would be short. They did not want to miss out.<sup>91</sup>

The 'rush' to enlist in peoples' memories of August 1914 partly reflects that concern about missing out. Typical is A. H. Wilkie's reflection in 1924:

There was no need to call for volunteers, for thousands of trained officers and other ranks, embracing all classes of professions and trades from cities and country, rushed to the recruiting offices, sacrificing their business prospects and disregarding pecuniary considerations, to record their names for service.<sup>92</sup>

Some historians have persisted with that reflection. Christopher Pugsley wrote, 'young men flocked to the drill-halls to enlist, worried that the war would be

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<sup>84</sup> W. G. Malone, 4 September, 1914. Letterbook MSX 2548. (ATL).

<sup>85</sup> New Plymouth Borough Council, Minutes of Meetings, vol. 5, 1914, p. 924.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 926.

<sup>87</sup> *Patea and Waverley Press (PWP)*, 17 August, 1914, p. 3. *SEP*, 10 September, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> *Eltham Argus (EA)*, 17 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> *EA*, 17 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> L. L. Farrar, Jr. *The Short-War Illusion*, Santa Barbara: ABC Clio Press, 1973. Writing in the Foreword to Farrar's book, James Joll informs us that, 'the strategy and the diplomacy of the war had everywhere been based on the assumption that the war would be a short one', p. xi.

<sup>91</sup> Phillips, et.al, *The Great Adventure*, p. 257. Christopher Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, p. 9.

<sup>92</sup> A .H. Wilkie, *Official History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiment 1914-1919*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1924, p. 2. 'Defence Offices throughout the country were besieged

over before the ships from New Zealand could reach Europe.<sup>93</sup> Statistical data, however, shows a different view. Some New Zealand historians accept that 14,000 men had volunteered' within the first week of the war.<sup>94</sup> If that figure is correct, it represents 6-7% of all the males of military age in New Zealand in 1914.<sup>95</sup> That means about 93% of New Zealand males of military age did not 'rush' to volunteer during the first week of the war. In Taranaki, on the second day of the war, enlistments in New Plymouth were reported to have proceeded 'quietly all day' with 'about sixty men' enlisting.<sup>96</sup> A week later, enlistments in Stratford were reported to be 'fairly satisfactory', and in Patea, 'very satisfactory.'<sup>97</sup> The language used by the press does not suggest an enthusiastic 'rush'. Overall, most of Taranaki's recruits in the Main Body enlisted within a fortnight of Britain declaring war. Enlistment on 11, 12, 15, 17, and 18 August yielded nearly 70% of those recruits.<sup>98</sup> Nearly a third of the recruits enlisted on 11 and 12 August, another third on 17 and 18 August. The 'rush' seems to have been sporadic, and even then by only a small proportion of the 10,000 males of military age in the region. What motivated enlistment on, or shortly before those five days is not easy to determine, but the Prime Minister did announce on 10

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with applicants for enlistment', wrote W. H. Cunningham, C. A. L. Treadwell, and J. S. Hanna, *The Wellington Regiment. NZEF 1914-1919*, Wellington: Ferguson and Osborn Ltd, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> Christopher Pugsley, 'New Zealand: "from the uttermost ends of the earth"', in *The Great World War 1914-45*, vol. II, John Bourne, Peter Liddle, and Ian Whitehead, (eds), London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001, p. 211.

<sup>94</sup> McGibbon, p. 248. McGibbon cites Baker, p. 15 as the source of the figure of '14,000'. Baker, in turn, cites John McK. Graham, 'The Voluntary System: Recruiting 1914-16', MA Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1971, pp. 28, 178 as the source of the figure. However, the figure of '14,000' is not mentioned on p. 28, or p. 178 of Graham's thesis. From where does the figure of '14,000' originate?

<sup>95</sup> Sleeman understood there were 243,376 males of military age - 19 to 45 years - in New Zealand in 1914, p. 11. There were 201,282 males (excluding Maori) of military age - 20 to 40 years - in New Zealand during the immediate pre-war period. *Census of New Zealand*, 1911, p. 223.

<sup>96</sup> *SEP*, 7 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1914, p. 4. *PWP*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup> Of the 311 recruits from Taranaki in the Main Body, 24 enlisted on 11 August, 76 on 12 August, 18 on 15 August, 43 on 17 August, and 56 on 18 August. On each of the other days in August, enlistment numbers ranged from 0 to 8 with the exception being 25 August when 20 enlistments were recorded.



August that the NZEF was actually going to the front, and the *Taranaki Herald* did print that news item, which suggests that the announcement had an impact on recruiting.<sup>99</sup> Based on the statistics presented in table eleven, about 5% of the men of military age in Taranaki embarked during the pre-Gallipoli period; nation-wide it was about 8%.<sup>100</sup>

Why some men did not enlist is an equally compelling question for historians. Phillips believes that social and economic obligations persuaded some men not to enlist.<sup>101</sup> Duncan Burrell Stevens, for example, was a busy sheep farmer in Taranaki. He did not enlist in 1914. His diary is a working record of commitment to work and making the farm pay. When his 'Bushmen' enlisted, Stevens would probably have found it difficult to leave his farm. Captain McDonnell of New Plymouth defended local Territorials who had been criticised for not enlisting because of their family commitments. They were 'desirous of service, but quite unable on account of family affairs - such as illness, dependents on them as breadwinners, and so on - to offer themselves', he said.<sup>102</sup> For some of McDonnell's 'breadwinning' recruits enlistment may not have been economically viable because early in the war a Private's pay was four shillings per day (including Sunday) for the first month (ie. £1 8s per week), thereafter five shillings per day (ie. £1 15s per week). This is comparable to the wages some farm labourers and women received in Taranaki in 1914 as shown in table twelve. From late 1914, married soldiers had to provide a portion of their pay to dependents under a scheme known as 'allotment'.<sup>103</sup> From June

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<sup>99</sup> See *TH*, 10 August, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> The figure for New Zealand is compiled from Baker on p. 562 where he writes that 16,811 recruits embarked with the NZEF during the pre-Gallipoli period and the pre-war census of 201,282 males of military age in New Zealand. An assessment of J. L. Sleeman's New Zealand-wide enlistment statistics shows that 6.5% of males of military age mobilised and 5.1% embarked at the end of 1914, p. 11.

<sup>101</sup> Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, pp. 160-61.

<sup>102</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 2. *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age (IRWA)*, 12 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> Melanie Nolan, *Breadwinning. New Zealand Women and the State*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000, p. 95. For a detailed account of finance, family and pensions during the Great War, see pp. 87-102.

1915, wives received separation allowances of one shilling per day, which increased the family income to £2 2s per week, but it still fell short of the income received by some occupations as shown in the following table.<sup>104</sup>

**Table Twelve: Comparative Weekly Wages for Selected Occupations in Taranaki, 1914**

<b>Wage Ranges</b>	<b>15s to £1 15s</b>	<b>£2 to £3</b>	<b>£3 3s to £4 18s</b>
<b>Occupations Receiving Wages in Those Ranges</b>	Farm servants (women <i>with</i> board), shepherds and stockman ( <i>with</i> board), farm labourers ( <i>with</i> board), tailoress, dressmakers, milliners, sewing machinists.	Storekeepers and assistants, drapers and assistants, butchers, bakers, storeman.	Plasterers, bricklayers, cabinetmakers, coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, wheelwrights, plumbers, saddlers, shoemakers, watchmakers, farm labourers.

Source: NZOYB, 1915, pp. 814-15.

Note: Wages are without board unless stated otherwise. Within each range, wages can vary per occupation. For example, a plasterer received a minimum of £4 18s per week in 1914 and a cabinetmaker £3 17s.

Avner Offer reminds us of fundamental considerations such as ‘the obligations of family and intimacy [which] pulled the other way against enlistment.’<sup>105</sup> For some civilians like Lewis E. Coster, a farmer at Onaero near Waitara, affairs of the heart proved more persuasive in the decision not to enlist than economic considerations. In a letter to Lillian (‘Dolsy’) Beachamp, Coster told her that: ‘I would like to join in myself only I wouldn’t like to now I have you to love I think of Dolsy dear. War; money; farms; everything can go to blazes now as far as I’m concerned as long as I have my little Dolsy to care for.’<sup>106</sup>

<sup>104</sup> ‘England Expects’. *The Recruit’s Handbook*, pp. 8, 10.

<sup>105</sup> Avner Offer, ‘Going to War in 1914: A Matter of Honor?’, *Politics and Society*, 23:2 (1995), p. 234.

<sup>106</sup> Coster to Beachamp, 8 August, 1914. MS-Papers 5580-08.

Besides social and economic considerations, a lack of enthusiasm for the army may also have worked against enlistment in Taranaki. R. L. Weitzel's research on pacifism and anti-militarism shows that not everyone supported the military ethos in pre-war New Zealand.<sup>107</sup> In Stratford, for instance, military defaulters were regularly brought before the court and fined heavily for failing to attend parade.<sup>108</sup> Whether the defaulters had political intentions, or their unwillingness to get involved is best explained by a youthful lack of commitment, one thing is for certain, not everyone was imbued with a military spirit in 1914. Certainly not 'Carlisle' from Taranaki. In letters to the *New Zealand Farmer*, 'Carlisle' protested, 'I do not think that war can be justifiable in any way nothing can justify the slaughter of thousands of our fellows, and the sorrow and suffering caused in thousands of homes.'<sup>109</sup>

For Bill Tume, a Maori farmhand from Purangi near Inglewood, indifference to enlistment was political and historical. He could recall over seventy years later why Maori from Taranaki did not voluntarily enlist early in the war. Maori had 'a grudge against the government', claimed Tume, because of the land confiscations during the Taranaki Wars of the 1860s.<sup>110</sup> Tume recalls people saying that 'the Germans had done nothing to us why should we go and kill them'?<sup>111</sup> Maori elders, in particular, were 'unsympathetic' to recruitment in Taranaki and 'only a few men had volunteered.'<sup>112</sup> Consequently, 'there wouldn't be twenty Taranaki boys [who] went to war', claimed Tume.<sup>113</sup> He is probably correct. Records show that only one Maori, from Patea in south

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<sup>107</sup> R. L. Weitzel, 'Pacifists and Anti-militarists in New Zealand, 1909-1914', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 7:2, (1973), pp. 128-48.

<sup>108</sup> Leslie Young, a senior cadet in Stratford, failed to attend parade in January 1914 and was fined 40 shillings and 7 shillings costs. He reneged on the fine. Consequently, he became the first Stratford cadet to be sent into military detention. *SEP*, 30 January, 6 March, 1914.

<sup>109</sup> *The New Zealand Farmer*, November, 1914, p. xiv.

<sup>110</sup> William Bertrand (Bill Tume) interviewed by Jane Tolerton and Nicholas Boyack, 3 November, 1989. OHInt-0006/06. World War One Oral History Project (ATL).

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> P. S. O'Connor, 'The Recruitment of Maori Soldiers, 1914-18', *Political Science*, XIX:2, (1967), p. 54.

Taranaki, embarked with the First Maori Contingent on 14 February 1915; by 19 September, at least another six Maori from Taranaki embarked with the Second Maori Contingent.<sup>114</sup> James Cowan writing in 1926 confirmed that 'Maori tribes were denuded of their young men during the war', but, 'with the exception of the Waikato, Taranaki and Urewera districts'.<sup>115</sup>

A short, British victory gradually proved illusory. While the Main Body was encamped at Awapuni in September 1914, a report by *The Times* (London) correspondent brought 'terrible' news that all was not well with the British Expeditionary Force at Mons on the Western Front:

The Germans did not give the retreating army a moment's rest. The pursuit was relentless and unrelenting. Assisted by aeroplanes, a Zeppelin, and armed motors, the cavalry looked like arrows from the bow, and harassed the retiring columns .... Falling back southward continually the army fought desperately, with many stands, but were forced ever back by the numbers of the enemy, who were prepared to lose three or four men to every British life .... Our losses were very heavy .... "Some lost nearly all their officers. The regiments were broken to bits."<sup>116</sup>

For soldiers in the Main Body it was too late to turn back because they had committed themselves, but it was not for men of military age still at home. From early September alleged German atrocities were reported in the press, and in December came news of German assaults by sea and air on Britain. Skinner's diary also testified to the 'disquieting' nature of the war as it unfolded in 1914. In August, he noted 'the slaughter is awfull [sic]'; in September, '[the] war news is still depressing'; and in October, 'frightful carnage [is] going on'.<sup>117</sup> To the *Stratford Evening Post*, this was '**MORE THAN WAR**' it was '**A Climax of**

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<sup>113</sup> William Bertrand interview.

<sup>114</sup> Recruits from Taranaki in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Maori Contingent came from New Plymouth (3), and one each from Waitara, Midhirst and Hawera.

<sup>115</sup> Cowan, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> *PWP*, 2 September, 1914, p. 2. The Battle of Mons on 23 August 1914, was the first engagement between British and German forces, which resulted in a British retreat.

<sup>117</sup> W. H. Skinner, 28 August, 4 September, 31 October and 2 November, 1914.

**Violence**'.<sup>118</sup> Prophecies of Armageddon, it seems, were ringing true. News of such events and discussions on war developments at work, and at home, may have tempered the enthusiasm of potential volunteers.

Families experienced anguish over their men enlisting and going into camp. An anxious wife from somewhere in New Zealand wrote to Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, the commander of the Main Body:

I write this to hope if it is in your power, should our men be called to this war, you will not allow married men to go. It is not right, when there are so many single ones who could go. My husband is so mad, he would never stop to study his home & wife & child, but get excited & rush into anything. His health still suffers through South Africa.<sup>119</sup>

That excerpt shows the strength of feeling some women attached to enlistment. Anne Matthews, a Stratford resident, received a letter from her sister in Auckland that enquired, 'I suppose you have many anxious mothers round you owing to this dreadful war'.<sup>120</sup> This was echoed by 'Jack' Moller in 1989 when he recalled that his mother did not like the idea of him going away to the war because she might not see him again.<sup>121</sup>

On 2 December 1914, Skinner received a telegram from his daughter Irene concerning his son Henry. "Harry enlisted, passed medical test", the telegram read.<sup>122</sup> Skinner records, 'this was a bit of a shock to me, meaning what this might mean to all of us. So many things might happen, & as a matter of fact have happened to men we know, or know of fighting in this dreadful war'.<sup>123</sup> Skinner recorded an array of thoughts as he came to terms with the news. Drawing on the twin comforts of faith and duty, he resigned himself to what

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<sup>118</sup> *SEP*, 17 October, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>119</sup> AD 1/29/113 Enlistment of Married Men in the Expeditionary Force, (ANZ).

<sup>120</sup> Letter to Anne Matthews from her sister (E.S. Lounsbrough), 6 June, 1915. Anne Matthews Papers, Bag 15 (Wanganui Regional Museum)

<sup>121</sup> Moller interview. OHInt-0006/57.

<sup>122</sup> W. H. Skinner, 2 December, 1914.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

possibly awaited Harry. 'We are in Gods [*sic*] hands' for 'it is plainly the duty of all young able & fit men, to defend their country at such a time, so we must bear it trusting that He will shield him & bring him back to us safely'.<sup>124</sup> Skinner thought of his wife Margaret, and Harry's girlfriend, Eva Gibbs, sensing their reactions. 'I'm afraid it will be a great blow to Margaret, but he has done the right thing. Poor Eva too!'<sup>125</sup> Upon receiving the news, Margaret was 'very much overcome by the idea of Harry going off to the war', recorded Skinner. She reminisced about Harry's 'childhood days, his army of tin soldiers, canon [*sic*] & such like.'<sup>126</sup> 'Ah well, this is our great sacrifice', noted Skinner as he resigned himself to the situation.<sup>127</sup> Skinner's entries in his diary for March and April 1915 are characterised by separation and emotional finality. On the eve of his son's departure, Skinner noted that 'we had a lot to talk about. This would be our last evening together before he leaves for the war. Sad reflection.'<sup>128</sup>

The departure for camp entailed a dramatic farewell. Robert Rutherford's research in Canada highlights the social importance of farewells, where the recruit was 'constructed as the modern hero', and 'send-offs marked a fundamental sense of connection between hometown setting and a nation engaged in the complex social and cultural processes of dispatching fighting forces' to the front.<sup>129</sup> When 35 recruits gathered at Coronation Hall in New Plymouth on the eve of their departure for the training camp at Awapuni, they participated in a public ritual that sealed their commitment to the empire. Three large tables had been placed across the hall. On each table were parcels containing comforts that would 'prove useful when on the march.' Members of the various patriotic committees sat behind the tables. The rear of the hall and

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<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> W. H. Skinner, 8 December, 1914.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> W. H. Skinner, 27 March, 1915.

<sup>129</sup> Robert Rutherford, 'Send-offs During Canada's Great War: Interpreting Hometown Rituals in Dispatching Home Front Volunteers', *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 36:72 (2003), p. 427.

the gallery were 'crowded' with relatives and friends. The recruits paraded in front of the tables and then proceeded in single file, each receiving a parcel from the mayoress.<sup>130</sup> Mayor Wilson then spoke to them, affirming expectations of their role as representatives of Taranaki. 'You are leaving us in a few hours on the first stage of your journey.'<sup>131</sup> Wilson informed the recruits that they could 'fight with a clear conscience' because the European war was not of Britain's making:

That you will have hardships to endure you will naturally expect, but we feel no doubt that you will do your duty wherever you are, and under all conditions readily and uncomplainingly, and justify the confidence of the Homeland in the loyalty of its Dominions and the confidence of the people of your native land that they are sending worthy men to represent them.<sup>132</sup>

'Three ringing cheers' were given to the recruits. Major Fletcher spoke on behalf of the regiment. 'Cheers were again given for the men, who in turn gave cheers for the ladies' committees'.<sup>133</sup> At the close of the ceremony 'friends and relatives simply took charge of the Territorials, stripping their uniforms of regimental badges ... and surplus buttons' because they were now soldiers of the Wellington Infantry Regiment and must appear as a unit.<sup>134</sup>

The farewell intensified the following morning. 'Reveille' was at '5 o'clock.' Recruits in 'uniform' were soon on 'parade'. They all 'marched' to breakfast, and each recruit received a 'parcel of sandwiches' for the journey. 'At 6.30 the men fell in at the Coffee Palace corner in the presence of a large crowd, and, headed by the band marched to the railway station.'<sup>135</sup> 'Here a great crowd had assembled, and it was with difficulty that one was able to move about the

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<sup>130</sup> *TH*, 13 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.* Inglewood's recruits were referred to as a 'little band of travellers' at a railway send-off in the town. *IRWA*, 14 August, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> *TH*, 13 August, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*

platform at all', observed the *Taranaki Herald*.<sup>136</sup> At one farewell the *Herald* reported 'fifteen hundred people' on the platform.<sup>137</sup> The following illustrations from the Stratford Railway Station show how popular the farewells were, and how pensive the crowd could be. After all, soldiers, family, friends and well-wishers converged for what was an emotional situation of goodbyes, messages, and, no doubt, last minute advice. The railway platform was the soldiers' threshold from where they boarded the train and became separated from the crowd and their town - some forever:

The band played the National Anthem and the Marseillaise and other patriotic airs, while the crowd cheered again and again and sang "God Save the King." The men, who were in the best of spirits, cheered the townspeople and their officers, and as the train steamed out of the station amid the cheers of the crowd the band played "Auld Lang Syne" and "God be with you till we meet again."<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *TH*, 18 August, 1914, p. 2.

<sup>138</sup> *TH*, 13 August, 1914, p. 4.





**Soldiers Farewelled at Stratford Railway Station, c.1915.  
Collection Ref. No. PACol-3065. Ref. No. G-17778-1/2 (ATL).**



**Crowd at Stratford Railway Station, c.1915.**

**Collection Ref. No. PAColl-3065. Ref. No. G-17780-1/2 (ATL).**

By late August 1914, at least 200 soldiers had left Taranaki by train for camp. The *Taranaki Herald's* resident agent in Stratford reflected that, 'there are sore hearts in the families of men who are leaving, and many a week of anxiety to follow'.<sup>139</sup> At Awapuni, where the Main Body encamped, Malone consoled anxious parents. 'I shall be only too pleased to do what I can for your boy as well as all his comrades', he said to one, 'their mothers needn't worry about them. I have taken the responsibility of their care and will do my duty.'<sup>140</sup> It was not only mothers who contacted Malone, but anxious fathers too. 'Tell your wife from me she need not worry. Her son is doing a man's job', he wrote.<sup>141</sup> An anxious W. H. Skinner visited Harry at camp before embarkation. 'All very interesting but sad, sad', he noted, 'as we looked around on all the splendid young manhood gathered there and wondered how many would perhaps never return to their homes.'<sup>142</sup> After Harry had embarked the Skinners received a letter, which 'broke Margaret up, both of us in fact'.<sup>143</sup> Embarkation had the same effect on Ida Malone, too.<sup>144</sup> Skinner consoled himself with the knowledge that, 'whatever happens it is for the best what higher glory can a man seek than offering his life, & dying if necessary for his Country.'<sup>145</sup>

On 15 August 1914, at least twenty recruits from Taranaki embarked for duty with the Samoan Advance Party.<sup>146</sup> Two months later, a southern 'armada' of ten troopships carrying '8574 men and 3818 horses', escorted by four warships from Britain and Japan, left New Zealand waters.<sup>147</sup> That 'armada' was the Main Body of the NZEF, which had the grand objective of assisting the

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<sup>139</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>140</sup> W. G. Malone to Mrs. Lepper, 26 August, 1914. Letterbook, MSX 2548.

<sup>141</sup> W. G. Malone letter, 4 September, 1914, MSX 2548.

<sup>142</sup> W. H. Skinner, 28 March, 1915.

<sup>143</sup> W. H. Skinner, 20 April, 1915.

<sup>144</sup> Malone noted that when 'we went out and anchored in stream .... Poor Mater broke down, but is a brave woman and will soon be all right.' 14 October, 1914. MS Papers MS-2198-1.

<sup>145</sup> W. H. Skinner, 20 April, 1915.

<sup>146</sup> Included in the Samoan Advance Party were 9 recruits from Hawera, 4 from Stratford, 2 from New Plymouth, and 1 each from Inglewood, Waverley, Kapuni, Normanby and Cardiff. *Nominal Roll of NZEF*, vol. 1.

'motherland' in a European war. It was the largest military force ever to leave New Zealand. On board the troopships were at least 311 soldiers from Taranaki, including Malone on the *Arawa*.<sup>148</sup> New Zealand's military force was now on the move. Shortly after embarkation, Warea resident, Walter Rumball, wrote to a family member: 'I am afraid this will be a sad Xmas in many homes. From the highest to the lowest many faces will be missed that will never be seen again. There will naturally be much sorrow.'<sup>149</sup>

Of all the events experienced by individuals and families during the pre-Gallipoli period, enlistment and departure for service with the NZEF had the most impact. The young soldiers on the move were about to engage in combat with powerful enemies of the British Empire. A variety of reasons had mobilised them. Collectively they had volunteered for a venture that approached a crusade to help Britain, which explains why people cheered their young soldiers off to war. Enlistment, farewells and embarkations were proud events, but they prompted contradictory feelings. Departure for the front had the effect of disrupting the lives of families, the work place, and social connections, but the sacrifice that parents made, mothers, in particular, 'who gave their consent whilst their hearts ached', was considered to be 'great and noble'.<sup>150</sup> Some solace may have come from the appointment of Lt. Col. Malone, a soldier 'idolised' in Taranaki, to command the Wellington Infantry Regiment. Malone had the task of leading the region's young soldiers away to their Ruskin-like trial of strength

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<sup>147</sup> Pugsley, *Gallipoli. The New Zealand Story*, p. 62.

<sup>148</sup> *Nominal Roll of NZEF*, vol. 1.

<sup>149</sup> Walter Rumball to Amy, 12 November, 1914. Walter Rumball Letters, 1895-1920. ARC 2003-36. (Puke Ariki).

<sup>150</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1914, p. 4.

and greatness; a trial that would also test the endurance of those left behind at home as the succeeding chapters will show.

## Chapter Five

### The Perennial Quest

Early in December 1914, the *Taranaki Herald* announced to its readers:

#### OUR MEN IN EGYPT TO STAY THERE BEFORE GOING TO THE FRONT<sup>1</sup>

The 'New Zealand and Australian contingents' disembarked in Egypt to 'undergo training and assist in the defence of the country [before] proceeding from there direct to the front. They will thus avoid the unpleasant English winter', wrote the *Herald*.<sup>2</sup> The public did not anticipate a lengthy stay in Egypt, because in 1914 'the front' lay in France, not the Middle East. Christopher Pugsley explains that New Zealand and Australian soldiers disembarked there as part of the British government's strategic search 'for other options to the Western Front'.<sup>3</sup> By the time the Main Body of the NZEF arrived in Egypt, New Zealand defence authorities had already dispatched the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements and the 1<sup>st</sup> Maori Contingent. The 4<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements would soon follow.

The succession of embarkations prompted the *Stratford Evening Post* to report on a Defence Department statement concerning the maintenance of Expeditionary Force numbers at full strength for the duration of the war. 'Most people are not aware of what this means', claimed the *Post*:

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<sup>1</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 3 December, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Pugsley, *The ANZAC Experience. New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War*, Auckland: Reed Books, 2004, p. 71.

even a most superficial glance at the figures will show that the Dominion is setting itself a very big problem indeed; and should the war be a lengthy one – as there is every reason to fear it will be – the ultimate result must be that practically every man in New Zealand capable of rendering efficient military service will be called upon.<sup>4</sup>

The *Post* referred to the government's intention to call '900 men per month' during 1915, whilst keeping '3,400 men continually in camp at Trentham, undergoing preliminary training'.<sup>5</sup> In May, the *Post* reported on a recruiting meeting in Dunedin where the Minister for Defence, James Allen, stated that, 'considering the magnitude of the operations that were developing .... close on 16,000 men and nearly 5,200 horses' would be needed by April 1916.<sup>6</sup> The *Post* had written earlier that the task of providing so many men was 'one of very great magnitude, and to carry it out loyally and thoroughly will tax our resources to the utmost.'<sup>7</sup> How people in Taranaki responded to the call for more soldiers, and whether or not the realities of war affected recruitment are key questions that this chapter must address.

In October 1914, Turkey entered the war. Pugsley informs us that, 'the seizing of the Dardanelles Straits had been the subject of ongoing [British] staff studies over the years', and now that Germany had a new ally, 'it was again examined as one of a range of options involving the projection of British naval power'.<sup>8</sup> Against that strategic background, New Zealand military authorities continued to call for more volunteers to reinforce the Main Body. In December, the *Taranaki Herald* observed that, 'much misconception exists as to whether there is a sufficient response to the call for men'.<sup>9</sup> The military authorities,

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<sup>4</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 8 January, 1915, p. 8

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *SEP*, 1 May, 1915, p. 5. *TH*, 26 May, 1915, p. 3. That number can be broken down into 2,250 recruits required for the 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements; 1,745 for the 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements; 3,857 for the 7<sup>th</sup>; 2,346 for the 8<sup>th</sup>; 2,597 for the 9<sup>th</sup>; and 2,530 for the 10<sup>th</sup>. See a confidential statement from New Zealand Military Force Head Quarters, 29 April 1915 in Army Department (AD) 1/9/74 Expeditionary Force Reinforcements (ANZ).

<sup>7</sup> *SEP*, 8 January, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Pugsley, *The ANZAC Experience*, p. 71.

<sup>9</sup> *TH*, 21 December, 1914, p. 2.

however, considered the response to be 'quite satisfactory'.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps their intention to send away 2,000 soldiers per month seemed daunting given the state of the enlistment process. The *Herald* understood that:

In the past there has been a lack of system, with resulting dissatisfaction and discouragement to the best class of men, many of whom, understanding that men were required, left their employment in the country and proceeded to the nearest recruiting station to offer their services, only to find that they could not join the forces possibly for weeks.<sup>11</sup>

Early in 1915, a new system of enlistment advertised exactly what an intending volunteer had to do, which included a simple instruction to fill in a registration card from the Post Office, send it to the nearest defence office and wait for further instructions. The system allowed the volunteer time to plan his withdrawal from civilian society, unlike the wrench of the volunteers in August-September of 1914. Jock Phillips says as a consequence of the new system 'in the early months of 1915 recruiters filled the necessary quotas with ease'.<sup>12</sup>

Following the British proclamation of a protectorate over Egypt in mid-December 1914, the *Taranaki Herald* began printing regular news items on 'Our Boys in Egypt'. The press also printed letters from NZEF soldiers describing their journey to Egypt. From early 1915, place names like, Suez, Turkey and the Dardanelles featured increasingly in the headlines. The *Stratford Evening Post* introduced the Dardanelles to its readers in classical terms and as the land of Lord Byron; a land 'shrouded in myths and legends' where the tomb of Achilles could be found, where Alexander the Great and his army had passed on their way to conquer Asia; where Xerxes, too, had crossed the Hellespont in an attempt to conquer Greece.<sup>13</sup> An increase in Turkish military actions in the

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *TH*, 18 February, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male-A History*, rev. ed., Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 159.

<sup>13</sup> *SEP*, 13 March, 1915, p. 8.



region combined with British strategic aims, especially the wish of Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, to eliminate Turkey from the war, saw 'an amalgam of everything available' in the Middle Eastern theatre committed to the operation, including the NZEF.<sup>14</sup> The plan to eliminate Turkey involved New Zealand, Australian, French and British troops who had the task of securing the Gallipoli Peninsula, while the British navy secured the Dardanelles before pressing on to capture Constantinople. By invading and eliminating Turkey a free passage would then be open to the Black Sea, thus enabling supplies to reach southern Russia.

People in Taranaki first knew of the landings at Gallipoli on 29 April 1915, four days after it occurred. The *Herald* announced to its readers:

### **OUR MEN AT THE FRONT TAKE PART IN DARDANELLES FIGHTING<sup>15</sup>**

The *Stratford Evening Post* embellished the NZEF's '**LANDING ON THE PLAIN OF TROY**' in a heroic manner.<sup>16</sup> '**Stories of Dash and Courage**' headlined the news.<sup>17</sup> 'The landing of the Australians and New Zealanders', it was reported, 'was opposed by heavy fire at point blank range, but they carried the position with a rush, and the attack was pushed forward with the greatest dash.'<sup>18</sup> In a '**Running Fight of Three Miles**' Australians and New Zealanders 'took three ridges in succession'.<sup>19</sup> It seemed as if nothing could stop the '**Australasians Under Fire**'.<sup>20</sup> The reality of military action quickly followed for the public in

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<sup>14</sup> See Pugsley, *The ANZAC Experience*, pp. 71, 78-9.

<sup>15</sup> *TH*, 29 April, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *SEP*, 1 May, 1915, p. 5.

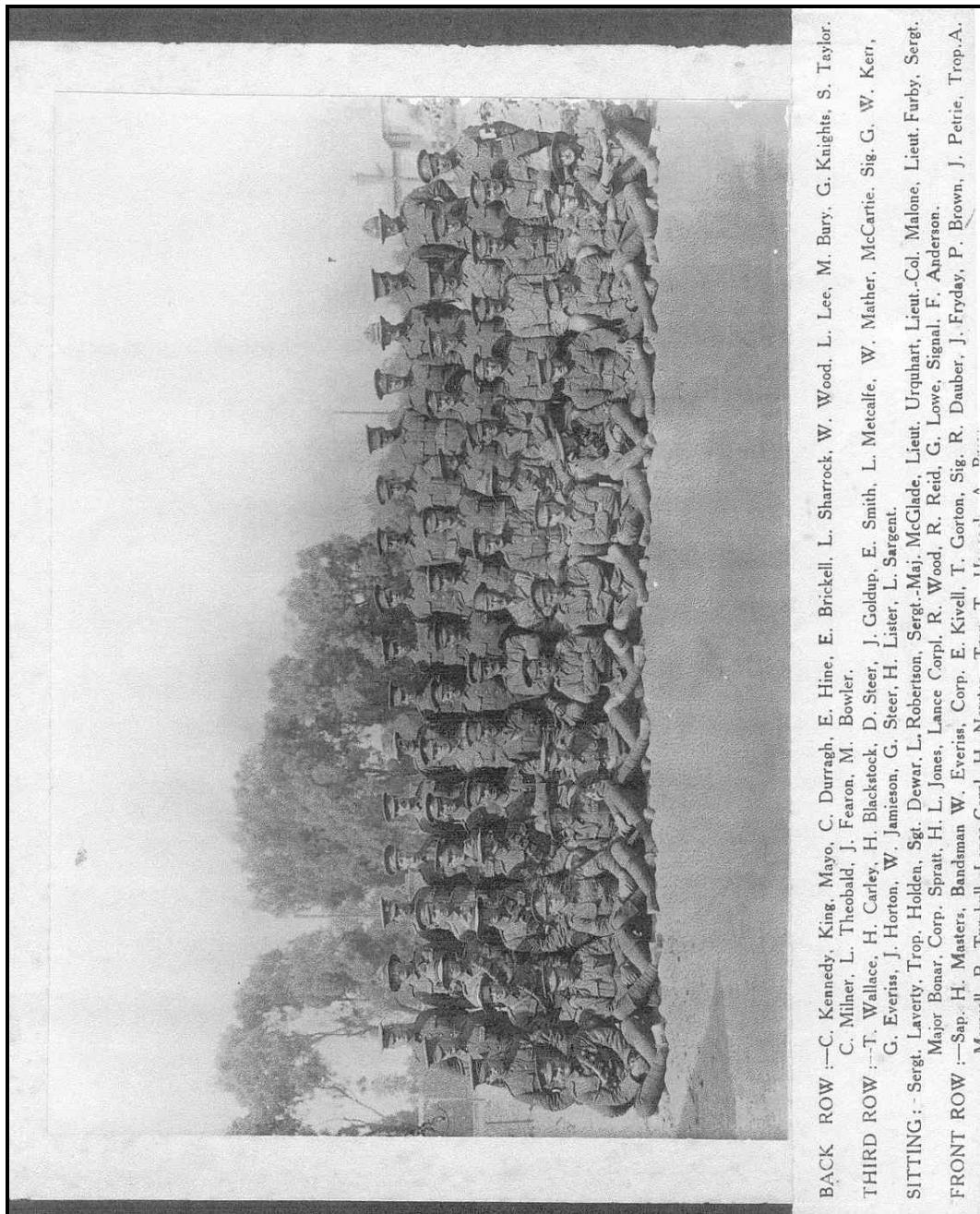
<sup>17</sup> *SEP*, 6 May, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> *SEP*, 7 May, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> *SEP*, 6 May, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

the form of casualty lists, and for the defence authorities in the form of a request from the imperial centre for four thousand more men by mid-June.<sup>21</sup>



**Stratford Soldiers in Egypt (1915)**  
**(Stratford District Council Photo Index, no. 129).**

<sup>21</sup> TH, 30 April, 1915, p. 2.

News of dead, wounded, sick, and missing soldiers began to circulate almost immediately after the invasion of Turkey. 'ZEALANDIA WEEPS' headlined the *Stratford Evening Post* on 4 May 1915.<sup>22</sup> The *Taranaki Herald* announced to its readers on that same day:

**FIRST LIST OF NEW ZEALAND  
LOSSES.  
EIGHT OFFICERS KILLED.  
107 MEN WOUNDED, NUMBER KILLED NOT  
AVAILABLE.<sup>23</sup>**

The region learnt of 'TARANAKI MEN AMONG THE WOUNDED' on 5 May.<sup>24</sup> A subdued mood settled. A pantomime booked for the Stratford Town Hall was cancelled on 11 May because of a 'general depression caused by the crisis'.<sup>25</sup> News from Gallipoli indicated that 'a tremendous conflict is raging' which is 'being brought home to us more forcibly than ever in the long casualty lists which are now appearing' stated the *Stratford Evening Post* in an editorial titled 'THE FALLEN BRAVE' on 5 May.<sup>26</sup> The casualty lists were numbered sequentially, as if encoded with inevitability. 'The Thirty-Third Casualty List' was published on 25 May.<sup>27</sup> 'The Fifty-Fifth Casualty List' was printed on 9 June.<sup>28</sup> The sequential numbering stopped on 19 July after 'List No. 119', probably because of the depressing implications.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *SEP*, 4 May, 1915, p. 5. *SEP* printed its first casualty list on 15 March 1915, titled, 'NEW ZEALANDERS WHO HAVE FALLEN IN ACTION'. See p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> *TH*, 4 May, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> *SEP*, 5 May, 1915, p. 5. *TH*, 4 May, 1915, p. 3. The *Herald* reported that 273 wounded and invalided soldiers would return to New Zealand in mid-July aboard the *Willochra*. *TH*, 24 June, 1915, p. 6. Military authorities expected over 2000 sick and wounded soldiers to return by the end of October 1915. AD 1 9/169/1 Recruiting for Expeditionary Force. General File. (ANZ).

<sup>25</sup> *SEP*, 11 May, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> *SEP*, 5 May, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> *SEP*, 25 May, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *SEP*, 9 June, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> *SEP*, 17 July, 1915, p. 5.

Three days after receiving news about local men wounded at Gallipoli, people were shocked to hear of the sinking of the Cunard passenger liner *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland by a single torpedo fired from a German submarine. Over 1,200 people lost their lives. The sinking was reported with horror within 24 hours of its occurrence. To the *Stratford Evening Post* it was an 'ASSASSINATION'; to the *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 'COLD-BLOODED PIRACY'; and it left 'THE WHOLE WORLD-HORROR STRICKEN' according to the *Taranaki Herald*.<sup>30</sup> The shock was unprecedented.<sup>31</sup> Not even the sinking of the White Star passenger liner *Titanic* three years earlier with the loss of over 1,500 lives had the same impact, mainly because the *Titanic* had been sunk in a tragic accident, not as the result of a deliberate act of war. On the day the press reported the *Lusitania*, the *Stratford Evening Post* printed an item on the use of gas on the Western Front and explained that it was 'the most awful form of scientific torture'.<sup>32</sup> Three days later the *Taranaki Herald* headlines read:

**ANOTHER ZEPPELIN RAID  
INCENDIARY BOMBS DROPPED  
ON ESSEX<sup>33</sup>**

Jay Winter informs us that such stories had the effect of bringing 'home to both combatants and neutrals the ugly and deadly nature of modern war'.<sup>34</sup>

An indicator of the strength of feeling throughout New Zealand in May 1915 was the £3,565 15s 5d received by patriotic societies for the Comforts Fund

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<sup>30</sup> *SEP*, 8 May, 1915, p. 5. *Hawera and Normanby Star (HNS)*, 8 May, 1915, p. 4. *TH*, 10 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> 'For the early 20<sup>th</sup> century sinking the *Lusitania* was the defining act of terrorism against innocent civilians', claims David Reynolds in 'Too Proud to Fight', *London Review of Books*, 28 November, 2002, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> *SEP*, 8 May, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> *TH*, 11 May, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Jay Winter, *The Experience of World War I*, London: Macmillan, 1980, p. 80. The sinking of the *Lusitania* impacted on other parts of the empire. See Bill Nasson, 'A Great Divide: Popular Responses to the Great War in South Africa', *War & Society*, 12:1, (1994), pp. 48, 54.

'to promote the well-being of soldiers overseas'.<sup>35</sup> The first instances in New Plymouth of the white feather being presented by 'misguided people' to men not in uniform also occurred in May.<sup>36</sup> Paul Baker claims that, 'together, Gallipoli and the Lusitania revived the recruiting mentality of 1914.'<sup>37</sup> The *Stratford Evening Post* supports Baker's claim:

Registrations in the Taranaki district for the past 12 weeks to date have reached 786, an average of 65 per week, which is believed to be a record for any group (sub-group) in the district in the Dominion. As many as 250 registrations have been received in three days since New Zealand took part in the initial attack at the Dardanelles, shows that, pro-rata of population, the Taranaki group leads the Dominion in registrations.<sup>38</sup>

The *Post* did not say what three days exactly, but it could have been some time immediately following news of the ANZAC landings. The *Post* also reported on 22 May that, 'during the past fortnight a large number of volunteers have been enrolled', a time frame inclusive of the shock accompanying news about the *Lusitania*.<sup>39</sup>

In response to the request for more soldiers, the press printed full-page advertisements about the enlistment process. The word '**REINFORCEMENTS**' would have caught the attention of the reader. Instead of the word, contingents, as used in the South African War, 'reinforcements' suggested the need to give support judging by the order to '**REGISTER NOW**'. The advertisement was directed at the individual, in particular, the 'man' of military age not yet in khaki. However, he was already part of a military-industrial process as a resource in waiting to be manufactured.

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<sup>35</sup> Patriotic Society Funds, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1917, vol. II, H.-46A, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald (BTWH)*, 15 May, 1915, p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Baker, 'New Zealanders, The Great War and Conscription', PhD Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1986, p. 38. John McQuilton's research on rural Australia found that Gallipoli and the *Lusitania* 'strengthened patriotic sentiment'. *Rural Australia and the Great War*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> *SEP*, 22 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

By appealing to 'MANHOOD' and patriotism the advertisement reminded him that he 'owes a duty to his **EMPIRE**'. Failure to do so had the aim of making him feel guilty by labelling him as somebody not of this empire and an irresponsible shirker.

The New Plymouth Patriotic Committee organised a 'patriotic recruiting demonstration' to be held in all of the borough's churches on 16 May, and on the following evening at the Theatre Royal.<sup>40</sup> At St. Mary's Anglican Church, Reverend A. H. Colville directed his speech at men not in uniform, and at women. Colville defined the terms of service upon which soldiers from the region had already enlisted and encountered the enemy. They were 'fighting for us and our homes and lives and liberties just as truly as if they were protecting these shores from invasion'.<sup>41</sup> It had been an 'inspiration', he claimed. But far from inspiring men to enlist, he shamed them into doing so:

Who on reading the list of those who have already shed their blood in their country's service does not feel a sense of shame to be living in comfort and security while others are suffering and dying for him? What man who knows in his heart that he ought to go and still holds back, will not when all is over, feel mean and little besides those who have gone.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *TH*, 17 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

NEW ZEALAND  
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



NEW ZEALAND  
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

# REINFORCEMENTS

TO THE MANHOOD OF NEW ZEALAND BETWEEN THE AGES OF 20 AND 40 YEARS.

## HALT!

### YOUR EMPIRE CALLS YOU—AND ENGLAND EXPECTS

IN order to maintain a regular supply of REINFORCEMENTS for the NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, every man of the required age who is a British subject and is medically fit owes a duty to his EMPIRE.

REGISTER YOUR NAME AS A RECRUIT TO SERVE YOUR KING AND COUNTRY

Due to the patriotism of your forefathers, ENGLAND is to-day able to assert the principle of JUSTICE and RIGHT. Are you by your neglect going to deprive our Empire of this privilege and power?

PROVISION IS MADE FOR YOU WHEN SERVING YOUR COUNTRY to receive PAY at the following rate:—As a Private, from the day of leaving for Camp you will receive 4s. per diem for seven days in the week. This will be paid to you in full at intervals of ten to fifteen days for the first calendar month. After that date the daily rate will be 5s. You will be fed and clothed until discharged. Arrangements can be made to enable you to allot any portion of your pay to relatives or friends, or to a bank until your return, but only 2s. a day can be drawn after embarkation. The balance, if not allotted, will be held as deferred pay, and paid to you on discharge or on return to New Zealand.

## REGISTER NOW

Registration Cards can be obtained from any Post Office or Defence Office. When filled in send to the nearest Defence Office, or Officer commanding your unit.

DON'T GIVE UP WORK UNTIL ORDERED TO DO SO

Don't feel for the rest of your life you shirked your duty when your Empire's existence depended on your help.

## GOD SAVE THE KING.

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### CONDITIONS.—Information for Intending Recruits.

<p><b>1. HOW TO ENLIST:—</b> Apply to the nearest Defence Office or Post Office for information and registration card. Fill in the card and send it to the nearest Defence Office (no stamp required). When you are called on for medical examination, do not give up your civil employment. Medical examination is only a stage in the proceedings, after which you return to work and wait until you are ordered to parade. Due notice will be given so that arrangements may be made to settle private affairs. Serving Territorials must register through their Unit Commanders.</p>	<p><b>5. OATH OF ALLEGIANCE:—</b> Every soldier is required to take the Oath of Allegiance to His Majesty the King in a prescribed form.</p> <p><b>6. REQUIREMENTS:—</b> Age must be between twenty and forty years. Height must be over 5ft. 4in. Weight must be under twelve stone. Fit for service.</p> <p><b>7. MEDICAL TEST:—</b> The medical examination requires, amongst other matters, that a recruit should have good eyesight, good hearing, no ruptures, no defects, not subject to fits, and be possessed of sufficient teeth for efficient mastication.</p> <p><b>8. VACCINATION AND INOCULATION:—</b> In the interests of himself and of his comrades, every soldier is required to have been vaccinated and inoculated for enteric. No recruit will be accepted unless he agrees to vaccination and inoculation.</p> <p><b>9. EQUIPMENT:—</b> All equipment, clothing, blankets, etc., will be provided free by the New Zealand Government.</p> <p><b>10. TRAINING:—</b> Before leaving New Zealand men are liable to be trained for four (4) months at Trentham or for any shorter period ordered.</p>	<p><b>11. PAY:—</b> Men who enlist for service with the Expeditionary Force receive pay at Territorial Force rates for the first month in camp—that is 4s. per day in the case of privates. The whole of the money is paid direct to the men at intervals of ten to fifteen days. At the end of the first month pay is increased to Expeditionary Force rates—that is 5s. per day in the case of privates. From this pay is deducted any allotments that the men desire to make. Only 2s. a day can be drawn after embarkation, the balance, if not allotted, being held as deferred pay, and paid to the soldier on discharge or on return to New Zealand; in case of death, paid to next-of-kin or legal representative.</p> <p><b>12. CLAIMS BY DEPENDENTS FOR MAINTENANCE:—</b> Each man on arrival at Camp, at the same time as he is attested will have to sign a form giving the Defence authorities power to utilise any portion of his deferred pay, or half of his total pay, for the benefit of any of his family left unprovided for, on claim being made on dependent's behalf. (Family means and includes parents, wife, legitimate children and any person in whose favour a Maintenance Order has been or may hereafter be made under "The Destitute Persons Act, 1910.")</p>
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Recruitment Poster - Reinforcements (1915).

Colville also directed his appeal to ‘mothers, wives, sisters, [and] sweethearts’ as unofficial ‘recruiting sergeants’ who had a role in urging men to serve their country.<sup>43</sup> After all, ‘the responsibility is upon us all. None can evade it’, he claimed, ‘the call comes to you no less than to your men’.<sup>44</sup> In performing that role, Colville explained that they would be ‘laying him upon the altar of a great idea’, and ‘you would see him a man among men, playing the part of a real man, taking his place among the makers of history’.<sup>45</sup> In Colville’s mind, women had a sacrificial role to play in recruiting, which would bring ‘glory’ and ‘greatness’.<sup>46</sup>

The following evening, J.T.M. Hornsby, the MP for Wairarapa, as a guest of the patriotic committee, made an ‘appeal to the British manhood’ of Taranaki in New Plymouth’s Theatre Royal.<sup>47</sup> The *Taranaki Herald* described the ‘recruiting rally’ as an important social occasion, just like the farewell functions for recruits. It was felt at the time that, ‘the pulses of young men may be stirred by platform oratory’, and, ‘a brass band playing martial music, especially if heading a column of men in uniform, is a capital means of arousing the spirit’.<sup>48</sup> Defence authorities also thought that young men were more likely to enlist under the ‘influence of temporary excitement’.<sup>49</sup> ‘When the doors were opened, there was a dense crowd, with the results that the theatre was very quickly packed with an enthusiastic crowd. There was not even standing room, and hundreds had to be turned away’, said the *Herald*.<sup>50</sup> Simultaneously, a procession made its way along Devon Street, of ‘Territorials, Defence Rifle Club, Railway Reserve, Cadets and Boy Scouts, and members of the Fire Brigades carrying torch lights [bringing] up the rear.’ The footpaths on either side of the

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* *TH*, 15 May, 1915, p. 2. *TH*, 6 May, 1915, p. 2. *TH*, 18 May, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *TH*, 17 May, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *TH*, 18 May, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> *TH*, 15 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> *AJHR*, 1915, vol. III, H.-19E, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *TH*, 18 May, 1915, p. 6.



street were 'lined with spectators'.<sup>51</sup> Inside the theatre prominent New Plymouth citizens sat on the stage and for over an hour everybody was entertained by patriotic singing. This included 'Death of Nelson', 'Your King and Country Need You', 'Land of Hope and Glory', and 'The Deathless Army', before Hornsby appeared on stage from having made a patriotic address at another venue in New Plymouth attended by people who could not gain admission to the Theatre Royal. Hornsby told the audience that the findings of the Bryce Commission on German atrocities were correct. Belgium also featured prominently in his speech, after which he asked the young men present, 'what are you going to do about it?'<sup>52</sup> The crowd had an answer. They unanimously supported a motion 'that this meeting is of the opinion that the time has come for every man of military age and who is physically fit to offer his services to the defence forces'.<sup>53</sup>

New Plymouth's patriotic demonstration in the Theatre Royal created an anti-German mood in some members of the public, because shop-front windows along Devon Street belonging to Hart Bros, Nippert Bros, and Hallensteins, were damaged by 'rioters' considered by a reporter to be in an 'ugly mood'.<sup>54</sup> Police action soon 'had the crowd well in hand, and shortly after eleven o'clock the crowd quietly dispersed'.<sup>55</sup> The *Post* reported in Stratford that mayor Boon had enlisted the help of 'special constables' because of rumours that 'a demonstration against aliens' was imminent.<sup>56</sup> The *Stratford Evening Post* cautioned people against becoming 'hysterical' and wreaking 'vengeance on harmless or innocent persons'.<sup>57</sup> The anti-German behaviour in New Plymouth had the effect of forcing John Hart to publicly declare his 'Britishness' in the

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *SEP*, 18 May, 1915, p. 4. *TH*, 18 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> *SEP*, 18 May, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> *SEP*, 19 May, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> *SEP*, 22 May, 1915, p. 4.

press.<sup>58</sup> It was not the only occasion that people in New Plymouth had experienced xenophobia.

In 1914, the press helped propagate the idea of an 'enemy within' by printing news items and unsubstantiated letters from citizens warning readers about 'foreign residents amongst us'.<sup>59</sup> Tom Buxton, secretary for the New Plymouth Fire Board, wrote to James Allen concerned about the unprotected state of New Plymouth's water supply and urged that 'steps should at once be taken either to guard the system or to place under effective control all enemy subjects who are now at large in the district'.<sup>60</sup> Buxton's concern was prompted by an Austrian oil driller, named Herr von Fedorowicz, whom he alleged was a Lieutenant of artillery in the imperial Austrian army, and who visited various waterworks around the country in his own motor car enjoying 'unrestricted liberty'.<sup>61</sup> New Plymouth Borough Council had 'no special reasons' for suspecting any danger to its waterworks, but mayor Wilson instructed Detective-Sergeant Boddam to investigate Fedorowicz.<sup>62</sup> On 17 November, Boddam reported that:

There certainly is a strong feeling among a certain section of the community here that there is a possibility of such a thing eventuating ... at the hands of the Austrians or some other enemy subject resident here but up to the present time there are no indications that such a thing is probable.<sup>63</sup>

The recruiting strategies initiated by New Plymouth's Patriotic Committee certainly aroused a passionate response from some people, but J. B. Hine, MP for Stratford, was not convinced by the efficacy of platform oratory.

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<sup>58</sup> *TH*, 17 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *SEP*, 20 October, 1914, p. 4. John Buchan's spy novel, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, was added to the Stratford Public Library in December 1915. See the following for news items on 'enemy aliens' *TH*, 21 October, 1914, p. 4. *TH*, 19, 22, 23 October, 1914, p. 6. *TH*, 24, 28, 29 October, 1914, p. 2. *TH*, 31 October, p. 7. *SEP*, 25 November, 1914, p. 4. *SEP*, 12, 13 April, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Tom Buxton to James Allen, 3 November 1914. AD 23/82. Guarding of New Plymouth Waterworks During European Crisis. (ANZ).

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> New Plymouth Borough Council (NPBC), Minutes of Meetings, vol. 5, 9 November, 1914.

Hine believed that 'very few had come forward in response to those who had gone round the country on a recruiting mission'.<sup>64</sup> What was more conducive to enlistment, according to Hine, was the visible presence of service, such as 'a returned soldier with, say an arm or leg off'.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps, but it may have had the reverse effect too, because a fortnight after the *Willochra* berthed in Wellington on 16 July 1915, with about 2,000 wounded and invalid returned soldiers on board, enlistment plummeted, not only in Taranaki, but also in the wider Wellington Military District and throughout the rest of New Zealand, as the following graph shows.<sup>66</sup> With a couple of thousand wounded returned soldiers back in New Zealand – each probably telling their own stories – it is possible that it was the 'visible presence of service' which explained the decline in enlistments during August 1915. For instance, A. P. Stapp from New Plymouth, an invalid on board the *Willochra*, said in an interview that, 'the training in Egypt ... was very hard, and consisted chiefly of route marching. It was nothing for the men to go out and do 25 miles a day across the desert, carrying their full kit, weighing all over 60Ib' [27kg].<sup>67</sup> When asked about fighting the Turks, Stapp replied, '[we had] a very trying time indeed'.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Boddam to Wilson, 17 November 1914. AD 23/82.

<sup>64</sup> *SEP*, 11 October, 1915, p. 3. Lt. Col. J. E. Hume, officer commanding the Auckland Military District, also believed that 'platform speaking by the Mayor, Politicians... will only bring very few to register.' See Hume's letter to military headquarters in Wellington, 13 October 1915. AD 1 9/169/1. Hornsby also toured eastern Taranaki in October 1915. See reports in *SEP*, 20, 25 October, 1915, p. 3.

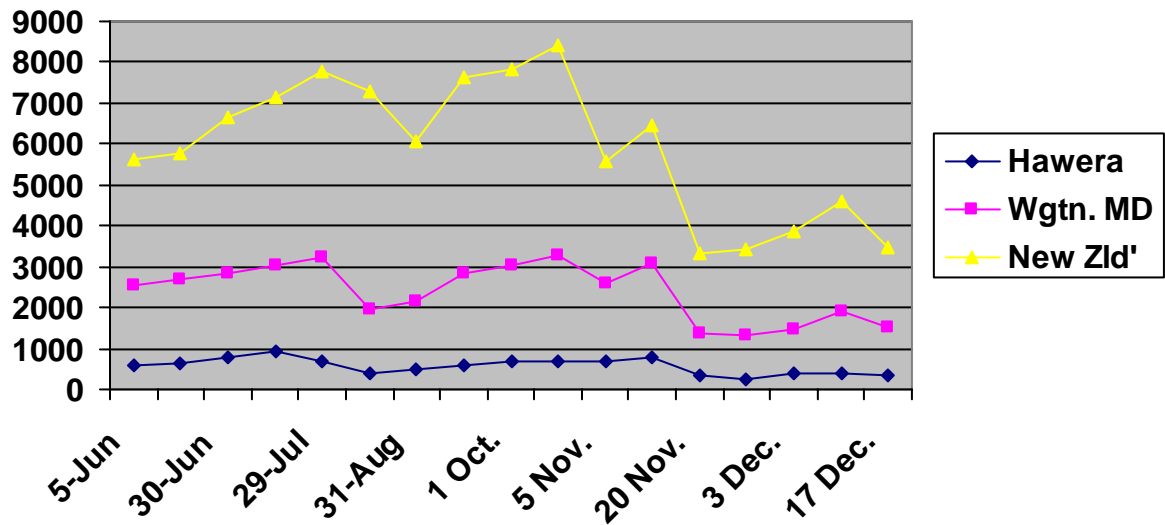
<sup>65</sup> *SEP*, 18 October, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> *TH*, 16 July, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *TH*, 17 July, 1915, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

Graph One : Number of Enlistments in NZEF, 5 June to 17 December 1915



Source : Compiled from Progress Reports of Those Men Registered and Passed Medically Fit for Active Service, AD 1 10/180

Note : Wgtn. MD is an abbreviation of the Wellington Military District. New Zld' is an abbreviation for New Zealand.

Depressing news from Gallipoli throughout August resulted in a surge in enlistments nation-wide during September as the graph shows:

It is quite natural that in this part of the Empire we should watch the operations there [Gallipoli] with special interest, but the events of the past week or so have drawn wider attention .... the New Zealanders have had heavy fighting in which many casualties have been sustained - the officer's casualties lead us to expect a hundred to two hundred among the rank and file.<sup>69</sup>

The surge lasted for about five weeks, thereafter the graph indicates a fluctuating downward trend in enlistments from early October, which, no doubt, was as a consequence of the realities of war, rather than a failure in recruiting strategies. The presence of wounded and invalided returned soldiers, the publication of casualty lists, soldiers' letters from the battlefield, newspaper reports and articles; all had the effect of influencing peoples' attitudes towards

<sup>69</sup> TH, 14 August, 1915, p. 2.

the war, including enlistment. The outbreak of influenza, measles and spinal meningitis at Trentham military training camp midway through 1915 would not have assisted enlistments either.<sup>70</sup> If a surge in voluntary recruitment could result from military engagements at Gallipoli, then it is equally plausible that fluctuations in recruiting could occur as a consequence of the gloom and shock that accompanied the realities of modern war.

Casualty lists were understood by W. Hill, chairman of the Wellington Patriotic Committee speaking at a conference of patriotic societies in Taranaki, to be 'the grim reality of war'.<sup>71</sup> The names of dead and wounded soldiers on those lists were not the healthy departing 'heroes' at the railway stations. The lists de-personalised soldiers as casualties of war by recording only their service numbers, ranks, names and those parts of the body wounded. People become aware of an 'amputated right arm and wounded left elbow'; of 'sick, wounded, convalescent and discharged', and those 'dangerously ill' with dysentery and the scourge of the South African War – enteric fever; and of soldiers who had 'recovered and sent [back] to the Front.'<sup>72</sup> This was not another South African war, but a very different conflict in 'this year of Armageddon'.<sup>73</sup> The casualty lists said that something dreadful was happening far away. The 103<sup>rd</sup> list, published on 6 July 1915, covered two full columns of the *Stratford Evening Post*; a list on 19 July, nearly a full column; on 28 August, three columns; on 1 October, two columns. So many names stunned.

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<sup>70</sup> Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1980, p. 108. In Australia, outbreaks of meningitis in the training camps were also blamed for the decline in recruiting. McQuilton, p. 39.

<sup>71</sup> *SEP*, 2 September, 1915, p. 7.

<sup>72</sup> *SEP*, 5 May, 1915, p. 5. *SEP*, 17 July, 1915, p. 5. *SEP*, 19 July, 1915, p. 2. Enteric Fever claimed the lives of four Taranaki soldiers in the South African War, and dysentery, one. *AJHR*, 1903, vol. III, H.- 6A, pp. 3, 13. A cerebro-spinal meningitis epidemic plagued Trentham Camp in July 1915.

<sup>73</sup> *SEP*, 17 June, 1915, p. 4. Editorial commentary.

'One hardly likes to read these lists for the fear of seeing our own name, or others well known to us', wrote W. H. Skinner.<sup>74</sup> This happened to the Skinner family on numerous occasions in 1915.<sup>75</sup> When Skinner read in the newspaper of the death of Private Leslie Sole – second cousin to the Skinner children – he wrote that 'this brings the war home to us in a personal way.'<sup>76</sup> The most unsettling news came on 8 August. Skinner wrote that, 'we all got a shock tonight in reading upon the Post Office notice board amongst Casualties List = "Corporal Skinner admitted to Daeiness[sic] Hospital, Alexandra Cause of illness not yet diagnosed."<sup>77</sup> The Skinner family thought the worst, that it was their son, Harry. Enquires later revealed it was another Corporal Skinner, not Harry. This did not stop Skinner reading the casualty lists though, presumably as a way of following the fortunes of Harry's battalion. An example is in his diary after the assault on Chunuk Bair:

[14 August 1915] News through today again of nine officers killed & wounded. One of these was the Captain of Harry's Co, also the Colonel of his battalion .... Nothing so far as to the casualties amongst the men & non coms. Makes one very anxious.

[16 August 1915] Still no news through of casualties of the non coms & privates of our force in the recent heavy fighting in the Dardanelles.

[17 August 1915] A big list posted up tonight of wounded in by engagement of last week. Harry thank God has apparently come through safely.<sup>78</sup>

To read the casualty lists for familiar names, yet all the time hoping to find none, was tormenting. In Stratford, the cablegram board at the Post Office

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<sup>74</sup> W. H. Skinner Diary, 13 June, 1915.

<sup>75</sup> The first recorded occasion was 17 May, 1915 with the death of Private Leslie Percy Sole. The second occasion was on 22 May with the wounding of Sergeant S. Okey, and the third was on 8 August with the illness of Corporal Robert Low Skinner of Field Artillery. Others included the deaths of Canon Luke's son on 23 June, and Lt. Col. W. G. Malone on 11 August, 1915.

<sup>76</sup> W.H. Skinner Diary, 17 May, 1915.

<sup>77</sup> W.H. Skinner Diary, 8 August, 1915. For a descriptive outline of how relatives were notified of casualties see an official report from Lt. Col. R. Heaton-Rhodes in *AJHR*, 1916, vol. II, H.-19B, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> W.H. Skinner Diary, 14, 16, 17 August, 1915.

became the centre of 'ever-increasing and anxious interest' for local citizens.<sup>79</sup> 'The posting of a casualty list is soon known and a small crowd is quickly perusing, many with obvious hopes and fears', observed the *Taranaki Herald's* resident agent in Stratford.<sup>80</sup> The lists assumed a contradictory role in their daily lives. They not only conveyed bad news, but good news as well because the absence of a familiar name provided momentary reassurance that a loved one was not a casualty, at least until the posting of the next list.

Soldiers' letters published in local newspapers had a similar effect. Letters conveyed much about the soldiers' war experiences, even if, as historian J. G. Fuller states, 'magazines produced by the troops on active service overseas poked fun at the prevalence of exaggeration in letters'.<sup>81</sup> Even though all letters from Gallipoli 'were supposed to be censored', research indicates that, 'in fact very few were'.<sup>82</sup> Private Frederick Voitrekofsky of Hawera, wrote in a letter from Lemnos Island to his girlfriend that, 'the letters received by us from home are never censored, so you can write as much as you like'.<sup>83</sup> Letters from Gallipoli generated much daily conversation. The increased volume of letters in 1915 indicated growing public interest in the war. Letters and letter-cards from the postal district of New Plymouth to other parts of New Zealand increased by over a third (34.5%) in 1915 from what it had been in 1914. The number of letters and letter-cards delivered in the New Plymouth postal district increased by nearly the same amount (27.1%) during that time.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *TH*, 18 May, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Nicholas Boyack, *Behind the Lines. The Lives of New Zealand Soldiers in the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1989, p. 3. See also p. 4 on letter censorship. Jock Phillips writes that, 'censorship was not foolproof', in *The Great Adventure. New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> Frederick Voitrekofsky to Florence Journeaux, 5 November, 1915. Frederick Voitrekofsky Letters 1915-18, MS199 (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>84</sup> 3,413,580 letters and letter-cards had been posted in the postal district of New Plymouth in 1915 compared with 2,536,738 in 1914. 3,691,064 had been delivered in 1915 compared with 2,901,834 in 1914. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1914, p. 226, 1915, p. 230.

Some New Zealand historians believe that 'soldiers writing home preferred to reassure relatives about their safety than to worry them unduly by long descriptions of the horrors of no man's land'.<sup>85</sup> On the contrary, W. H. Skinner's son, Harry, warned his family that, 'if I seem to dwell on the terrible remember that it is that which attracts one's attention and sticks in the memory. And nothing I can say will convey one thousandth part of the horror of the reality'.<sup>86</sup> A letter from Private R. Reid conveyed that 'reality' as a 'none too pleasant' experience.<sup>87</sup> Reid had been wounded while fighting in the Dardanelles, and from a Heliopolis hospital he wrote a graphic account of his ordeal to his father, which was eventually printed in the *Stratford Evening Post*:

It was an awful night with flashing of rifles, rain, and the groans of the wounded who did not get shifted, and there were a lot of dead lying about. When I got hit, I thought my head had been blown off. The bullet went in at the right of my nose and came out just in front of my left ear – plenty near enough for me! .... Sergeant-Major Bonar and Lieut. Urquhart tied my face up, and I made my way back to the ship, where we had a very rough time, as there were some hundreds of us and only two doctors. It was impossible for them to attend to all of us .... It was five days before we got to a hospital.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Phillips, et.al., *The Great Adventure*, p. 6. The British experience shows that, 'in spite of censorship, servicemen regularly sent horrifying stories back to family and friends at home.' Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male. Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, London: Reaktion Books, 1999, p. 22. Similarly, Lawrence James writes, 'the national and provincial press printed reports and letters from soldiers that did not shun the nastiest aspects of the battlefield as they had done in previous wars.' *Warrior Race. A History of the British at War*, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2003, p. 416. 'The shock of the landing [at the Dardanelles] and the ensuing stalemate went undisguised in letters home, including those which were printed in local newspapers in September 1915.' Keith Grieves, 'Remembering An Ill-Fated Venture: The Fourth Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment at Suvla Bay and Its Legacy, 1915-39', in *Gallipoli Making History*, Jenny Macleod, (ed.), London: Frank Cass, 2004, p. 113.

<sup>86</sup> New Plymouth-born Henry Skinner wrote this letter to his parents from St. David's Hospital in Malta on 18 August 1915 while recovering from wounds. Henry Devenish Skinner Letters MS019 (*Puke Ariki*)

<sup>87</sup> Private R. Reid to A.W. Reid, 8 May, 1915 printed in *SEP*, 18 June, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> *SEP*, 18 June, 1915, p. 3. Sergeant-Major Archibald Earle Bonar from Stratford corroborates news of Reid's wound in his diary with a brief comment that 'Reid No 9 Platoon shot through Nose.' Notebook/Diary 1915 of Merle Bonar. Bonar Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 9, Item 142 (Canterbury Museum Research Library, Christchurch). Private John Petrie's letter to his family in Stratford also corroborated news of Reid's wound. *SEP*, 16 June, 1915, p. 5.



Similarly, a wounded Private Michael Bowler wrote a letter from hospital to his parents in Stratford, which was published in the press. Like Reid's letter it conveyed unpleasant news:

W. Surgenor, W. Woods (baker), Jim Fearon (he went back to Gallipoli with me), Clyde Kennedy (I was talking to him just before he died), Ted Early and Bill Early and Norhey [?] Dewar were all killed; poor old Furby was wounded in the leg (the second time); Maurice Flynn was wounded, and poor Jack Petrie was badly wounded again; this time in the chest and arm with shrapnel. I was speaking to him, but he seemed pretty bad. I can't find out how he is getting on. George Loach is amongst the missing, but I am afraid he is dead.<sup>89</sup>

Bowler's letter would have been disturbing for a home audience reading about local 'heroes' who had become casualties. 'The Wellington Regiment had 403 killed and missing, and 300 wounded in taking Hill 971. It was a shock to us', wrote Bowler, 'to hear the roll call with only 280 out of a thousand men.'<sup>90</sup> Even Lt. Col. Malone in a published letter to T. Harry Penn in Stratford inadvertently slipped unwelcome news home. 'I cannot tell you of the losses', wrote Malone, 'the hardships are solid - really solid'.<sup>91</sup> A letter printed in the *Taranaki Herald* from a soldier on board the No. 1 Stationary Hospital ship did tell of those 'hardships':

Some of the men come in an awful condition - noses blown off leaving large holes into the head, backs with great holes, chests pierced through with bullets, limbs splintered to pieces practically, eyes damaged to such an extent that many will lose their total sight - it has all to be seen to be realised .... The conditions over there [on the Peninsula] must be awful now - not only are there the great dangers of the battle constantly before our fellows, but the smell from the dead men lying about is becoming an awful nuisance, and leading to a great deal of disease.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Michael Bowler's letter written on 24 September, 1915 and printed in *SEP*, 6 November, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>90</sup> *SEP*, 6 November, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> W. G. Malone to T. Harry Penn, 14 May, 1915 printed in *SEP*, 15 July, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> *TH*, 27 October, 1915, p. 6.

Such letters did not encourage recruitment.<sup>93</sup> Helen B. McCartney's research on the British city of Liverpool's territorials during the war supports this view.<sup>94</sup> McCartney found that letters conveyed honesty about the soldiers' experiences of the war.<sup>95</sup> Press reports did not encourage recruitment either.

Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, who reported the Dardanelles Campaign for the London based Newspaper Proprietors' Association, wrote of the landing at the Dardanelles:

The country in the vicinity of the landing place was formidable and forbidding .... The enemy's sharpshooters were hidden everywhere, and they concentrated their fire on the boats when close in. At least three boats broke away from their tow and drifted down the coast controlless, sniped at the whole way and steadily losing men.<sup>96</sup>

This was not what the press had printed earlier about the landings, and eventually it drew a critical response. People could get the impression that 'we are losing' claimed S. B. Hunter at a Stratford Borough Council meeting where councillors discussed and eventually passed a resolution to:

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<sup>93</sup> See these letters as examples of what was printed in the region's press; Trooper A. Evans to his sister in Stratford, *SEP*, 19 June, 1915, p. 6; a British soldier, *TH*, 21 June, 1915, p. 8; Private H. J. Andrews of Eltham, *BTWH*, 7 August, 1915, p. 37, in which he wrote, 'we had to bury thirteen men at sea from off the hospital ship on the way back here. Of course they were badly wounded, and it was a wonder they lived to reach the boat'; Serjeant Alf Jennings of New Plymouth, *BTWH*, 28 August, 1915, p. 61; Lt. Murray Urquhart's letter to the parents of Private Terence Foley told them of his death. 'He was shot through the head while on "observing duty" in our trenches at 10 p.m .... And died about three hours later.' *SEP*, 10 September, 1915, p. 4; Lt. William Furby, dated 22 July, 1915 to a Stratford resident, *SEP*, 17 September, 1915, p. 2, in which he wrote about 'hundreds' of disabled soldiers; Tom Sheahan, *SEP*, 9 October, 1915, p. 5; Lt. Urquhart to J.B. Hine, *SEP*, 12 October, 1915, p. 5, in which he wrote about 'ghastly wounds', and Private Sydney Paul writes to his mother in New Plymouth with an array of news topics that include death, shrapnel, snipers, and dysentery, *TH*, 23 October, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> Helen B. McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers. The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

<sup>95</sup> In a review of McCartney's *Citizen Soldiers*, Nathan Greenfield writes, 'their [territorials] letters home painted remarkably complete pictures of life in the trenches and the gruesomeness of war'. *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)*, 24 March, 2006, p. 33.

<sup>96</sup> *SEP*, 8 May, 1915, p. 2.

join with the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce in enfeigning [*sic*] an emphatic protest against the unpatriotic and ill advised utterances of irresponsible war correspondents of the Ashmead Bartlett type and others who for apparently selfish ends, are doing their best to damage their country's interests and the interests of our allies.<sup>97</sup>

At that meeting, J. H. Thompson claimed 'there were a lot of truths in Bartlett's articles' and that he had heard 'stories from returned soldiers which were worse than those of Bartlett.'<sup>98</sup> Pugsley informs us that 'veteran war correspondent', Ashmead-Bartlett, 'was unprepared for the grim reality of the campaign as it unfolded'.<sup>99</sup> The realities of modern war in the Dardanelles presented correspondents 'with a dilemma of how to portray this reality to the audience at home'.<sup>100</sup>

Soldiers' letters did, however, corroborate aspects of Ashmead-Bartlett's reports. Reid wrote that, 'the Turks on the shore did deal it into them ['Australasians']; out of some boat-loads, only five got ashore'.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, Private Bowler wrote that 'the Turks are putting up a very fair fight; don't believe any tales you hear about them'.<sup>102</sup> And even Lt. Col. Malone's letter to Penn noted that the Turks 'have crowds of snipers who are dead shots'.<sup>103</sup> Nicholas Boyack's extensive study of New Zealand soldiers' letters corroborates those views. 'Instead of ill-will and bitterness', states Boyack, 'they showed a respect for the Turks as soldiers and a marked degree of sympathy for them as

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<sup>97</sup> Stratford Borough Council, Minutes of Meetings, vol. 5, 8 November, 1915, p. 150. *SEP*, 9 November, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> *SEP*, 9 November, 1915, p. 5. It is conceivable that Thompson had engaged returned soldiers in conversation about their war experiences in the Dardanelles because sick and wounded soldiers began arriving back in Taranaki from mid-September 1915. A wounded Private R. Reid was one of the first soldiers to return to Stratford along with Private Charles Darrah. See news reports of returned soldier arrivals *SEP*, 13, 14 September, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>99</sup> Christopher Pugsley, 'Anzac Stories', in *Gallipoli. Making History*, Jenny Macleod, (ed) London: Frank Cass, 2004, p. 45.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>101</sup> *SEP*, 18 June, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>102</sup> *SEP*, 6 November, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>103</sup> *SEP*, 15 July, 1915, p. 5.

fellow human beings'.<sup>104</sup> A view of Turkey 'long crumbling and effete' may itself have crumbled upon receipt of communications from the Dardanelles.<sup>105</sup>

The grimness of the war was reported not only from Gallipoli, but elsewhere. While en route between Salonika and Alexandria in the Aegean Sea, the troopship *Marquette* was sunk by a torpedo. Twenty-eight people on board – including ten nurses – lost their lives. The survivors included nurse Elizabeth Buchanan Young from New Plymouth who spent nearly ten hours in the water before being rescued. Simultaneously, the press reported the death of Edith Cavell, an English nurse. 'ANOTHER GERMAN CRIME', headlined the *Taranaki Herald*, 'AN ENGLISHWOMAN MURDERED IN BELGIUM'.<sup>106</sup> The *Stratford Evening Post* considered nurse Cavell's death as 'DWARFING THE LUSITANIA!'<sup>107</sup> People in Taranaki who read, thought about, and discussed the casualty lists, soldiers' letters, experiences of returned soldiers, and newspaper reports would not have been entirely ignorant of the war at Gallipoli, and elsewhere. After all, as Denis Winter once wrote, 'all that people wanted, they got from the local press'.<sup>108</sup> McCartney's research on territorials from Liverpool supports Winter's claim. 'Liverpool's local papers published individual accounts which, when read together told remarkably complete pictures of battles and losses'.<sup>109</sup>

In New Zealand, some historians have written that for decades, 'apart from the "legend" of Gallipoli New Zealanders remained extraordinarily unaware of the Great War in all its awful detail'.<sup>110</sup> This view supports the idea

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<sup>104</sup> Nicholas Boyack, 'A Social History of New Zealand Soldiers in World War One, Based Upon Their Diaries and Letters', MA thesis in History, Victoria University, 1985, p. 132. MSX-5889 (ATL).

<sup>105</sup> *SEP*, 2 November, 1914, p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> *TH*, 22 October, 1915, p. 3. See *TH*, 25 October, 1915, pp. 2-3 for more news on Cavell.

<sup>107</sup> *SEP*, 22 October, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>108</sup> Denis Winter cited by Mike Finn, 'The Realities of War', *History Today*, 52:8 (2002), p. 27.

<sup>109</sup> McCartney's *Citizen Soldiers* reviewed by Greenfield in *TLS*, 24 March, 2006, p. 33. Greenfield also commented that, 'the local press presented a more honest picture of the war than did national papers like *The Times*'.

<sup>110</sup> Phillips, et.al., *The Great Adventure*, p. 4.

that a 'gulf of perception' existed between soldiers and civilians; an orthodoxy established by historians, Arthur Marwick and John Williams.<sup>111</sup> Marwick referred to what civilians knew about the soldiers' experiences as 'a confused murmur'.<sup>112</sup> Williams wrote that, 'a gulf separated them, a gulf that could never really be bridged'.<sup>113</sup> Even Paul Fussell, writing in a more rarefied manner in 1975 generated the orthodox view. Fussell wrote that, 'what we can call gross dichotomizing is a persisting imaginative habit of modern times, traceable, it would seem, to the actualities of the Great War'.<sup>114</sup> One of the actualities Fussell describes is the 'utterly unbridgeable distinctions between "the scarlet Majors at the base" and the "glum heroes" of the line'.<sup>115</sup> Such a 'gulf' could be extended to include civilians.

Since the early 1990s, the international literature on the Great War has challenged that orthodoxy. 'The idea of a home front population utterly ignorant of the real nature of the war waged in their name is a myth that survives to this day', states Mike Finn.<sup>116</sup> John Fuller has also written that 'the war was not quite the chasm, cutting across individual and collective experience and sundering past from future, that it is sometimes depicted'.<sup>117</sup> Joanna Bourke, too, believes 'the gulf between civilians and servicemen was not as wide as historians have sometimes portrayed it'.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, 'David Englander

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<sup>111</sup> Finn, p. 26.

<sup>112</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge. British Society and the First World War*, London: Macmillan, 1975, p. 135.

<sup>113</sup> John Williams, *The Home Fronts 1914-1918*, London: Constable, 1972, p. 67.

<sup>114</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 75.

<sup>115</sup> Fussell cites Siegfried Sassoon's poem *Base Details* on pp. 82-3.

<sup>116</sup> Finn, p. 26. Finn's article focused on a study of the press in Liverpool to see 'what people back home were told about conditions on the Western Front'.

<sup>117</sup> John Fuller cited by Jay Winter, 'Catastrophe and Culture: Recent Trends in the Historiography of the First World War', *The Journal of Modern History*, 64:3 (1992), p. 530.

<sup>118</sup> Bourke, p. 21.

dismisses the often-presented argument of the front line's alienating effects as "a modernist myth".<sup>119</sup>

True, 'no one who has not been shot at or subjected to hostile shellfire for long periods of time can begin to have the slightest conception of what battle is really like'; or as Fuller states, 'the soldiers' experience cannot be understood without a knowledge of time behind the lines as well as time in the trenches.'<sup>120</sup> However, civilians would have had some awareness, at least, of what was happening at Gallipoli. W. H. Skinner, for example, heard about how his son 'Harry' had been wounded at the Dardanelles from a returned soldier whom he invited to the house one evening. The soldier told Skinner that he 'picked up Harry's lost coat on Rhododendron Spur on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1915. It was marked with his name inside & his Regt. - Otago. It was smothered with blood'.<sup>121</sup> That discussion would have led Skinner to a possible understanding about the Great War in 1915, that it produced battlefield casualties as distinct from soldiers dying from disease as was the norm in nineteenth century warfare.

That knowledge must have been unsettling to people who were not used to violent deaths, either in war or in accidents. In the South African War, only 12 soldiers from Taranaki had lost their lives over a four-year period, mostly as a result of illness.<sup>122</sup> And in 1914, only 18 males in Taranaki had died by violent means; 24 in 1915.<sup>123</sup> From May 1915, war casualties had become a new and salient feature in the life of the region. At a time when literacy levels were high

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<sup>119</sup> David Englander cited by Dennis E. Showalter, 'Mass Warfare and the Impact of Technology', in *Great War, Total War. Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, Roger Chickering and Stig Forster, (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 89.

<sup>120</sup> Cathryn Corns and John Hughes-Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone. British Military Executions in the Great War*, London: Cassell & Co., 2001, p. 60. See Ch. 5, 'The Shock of Battle', pp. 60-8. Fuller, p. 176. Of the British experience in the Great War, Lawrence James writes, 'extremely gruesome descriptions of fighting and injuries did find their way into the provincial press, so that by mid 1915 the volunteer knew something of what was in store for him', p. 479.

<sup>121</sup> W. H Skinner Diary, 4 October, 1916.

<sup>122</sup> Died of illness (8), died of wounds (1), accidentally killed (1), killed in action (2). South African Contingents, *AJHR*, 1903, vol. III, H.-6A, pp. 1-15.

<sup>123</sup> Numbers refer to males over the age of five. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1914, p. 72, 1915, p. 66.

amongst the population and there was an abundance of newspapers in Taranaki through which information could be disseminated, a wide cross-section of society was exposed to the realities of war, and in a position to inform and influence others through daily discussions. This could threaten the voluntary system of registration, and ultimately, the maintenance of the NZEF at full strength. Colonel C. M. Gibbon, Chief of the General Staff, believed it would be 'an everlasting disgrace to New Zealand if before the war came to an end she had to confess that she could not maintain her Expeditionary Force in the field'.<sup>124</sup>

Besides the impact on society of war's realities, the system of enlistment based on voluntary registrations instigated by the government in August 1914 must also bear some responsibility for the uneven profile of recruitment in 1915. As a process, voluntary enlistment had its problems. An equal number of recruits from each military district were set as quotas up to and including the 7<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements. This proved to be inequitable. Even the military authorities themselves recognised that 'this system did not take into consideration the fact that some districts have not as many available recruits as others'.<sup>125</sup> Only after the 7<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements had embarked for the Dardanelles on 9 October 1915 did the system of equal quotas change to one based on proportions. Furthermore, there were irregularities with the selection of recruits, which drew criticism not only from the press, but from James Allen himself. The *Taranaki Herald* stated in an editorial that 'men are complaining that there [sic] services are not accepted for trifling reasons, and they are kept in suspense after having offered their

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<sup>124</sup> *AJHR*, 1915, vol. III, H.-19E, p. 8.

<sup>125</sup> Memorandum on Provision of Reinforcement Drafts for the Expeditionary Force, *AJHR*, 1915, vol. III, H.-19E, p. 5. The *Auckland Star* on 6 October 1915 believed that a 'recruiting problem' existed in the Dominion partly because of the inequity surrounding enlistment. Lt. Col. J.E. Hume wrote to Military Headquarters in Wellington on 13 October saying that the 'attached clipping is generally speaking correct'. The clipping to which Hume refers is the *Star's* noted above. See AD 1 9/169/1.

services'.<sup>126</sup> The *Herald* also advocated modification of the age-weight-height restrictions so that recruiting officers could have some latitude in their selection. W. P. Kirkwood, chairman of Stratford's Patriotic Committee, believed that 'recruiting would be brisker' if volunteers could be given financial security if disabled through war injuries. The economic consequences for farm workers and family men of being disabled could be catastrophic, especially at time when mechanisation was increasingly overtaking manual work. Families had every reason to calculate the risks as they read letters and news reports from Gallipoli.

Irregularities in rejecting volunteers on medical grounds contributed to the uneven profile of enlistment. In a communication to the Chief of General Staff, Allen sternly noted:

I have examined the Return of Registrations to the 15<sup>th</sup> May last and have taken particular notice of the medically unfit and I desire to call your attention to what appear to be strange anomalies with respect to the medical examination, or at any rate with respect to the number of medically unfit in the different districts. You will notice that in Auckland the unfit are approximately 12% of those medically examined. In Wellington 5%, Canterbury over 22%, and in Otago over 25%[.] An examination of the details discloses the most extraordinary variations. In Auckland in No. 3 & No. 4 Groups, in Wellington No. 5 & No. 7 Groups, in Canterbury No. 11a & No. 12 groups of all who have been examined none have been found medically unfit. These discrepancies are so huge that I desire to have an explanation. Is the medical examination of the same standard? If so, how can you account for this discrepancy?<sup>127</sup>

The statistical record confirms Allen's anxiety. By 17 December 1915, about 5,590 volunteers had been rejected for service throughout New Zealand.<sup>128</sup> In the Wellington Military District, the number of rejections reached 2,270, of which 332 came from Taranaki.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *TH*, 25 May, 1915, p. 2. See the critical editorial on 'The Recruiting Movement' where examples from Taranaki are cited. *TH*, 15 May, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> James Allen to C. M. Gibbon, 25 May, 1915. Registration for Reinforcement Drafts. Return of Volunteers Available 1915. AD 1 10/180. (ANZ).

<sup>128</sup> Statistics compiled from Progress Reports of Those Men Registered and Passed Medically Fit for Active Service, AD 1 10/180.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*



Rejected volunteers emerged as an additional enlistment issue. They were perceived to be 'heartbroken' and people 'pitied' them.<sup>130</sup> The Stratford Patriotic Committee suggested issuing a certificate to them because 'it is not always desirable to herald the fact that a man has been rejected for physical defect, and in some instances the thoughtless judgement of those who are unaware of the facts may cause great pain to brave fellows'.<sup>131</sup> Defence authorities favoured the issue of medical certificate and badges, but in practice the idea did not meet with success. Baker's research shows that men awarded badges did not like wearing them in public, because of a social stigma attached to being rejected for military service.<sup>132</sup>

Defence authorities also had to contend with 'a large number of bogus registrations' and recruits who 'failed to answer the call owing to being untraced or having given wrong addresses, [and] false names'.<sup>133</sup> The system of enlistment based on voluntary registrations, coupled with the growing realities of war, must be considered as causal factors in the fluctuating numbers of recruits in 1915. For in that year the fighting at Gallipoli brought the Great War home to people in Taranaki. War experiences for the rural home front would not be confined to raising the necessary items for defence of the empire. Perhaps the time had arrived for state intervention in the perennial quest for more soldiers because of the New Zealand government's obligation to the imperial authorities

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<sup>130</sup> *SEP*, 29 September, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> See Baker, pp. 27, 51.

<sup>133</sup> Memorandum from Brigadier-General, Commanding New Zealand Military Forces to James Allen, 22 September, 1915 and Col. C. M. Gibbon to Defence Districts, 23 October, 1915. AD 1 10/180.

in London to maintain the NZEF at full strength. State intervention would necessitate a recourse to compulsion which is the subject of the next chapter.



## Chapter Six

### Recourse to Compulsion

On Friday evening 23 February 1917, Edwin Lyford, an unmarried, 35 year-old farmer from Denbigh Road, Midhurst, went missing from his home. The following morning his body was found hanging from a tree close to the house. An inquest concluded that 'being of unsound mind', Lyford had 'committed suicide'.<sup>1</sup> Evidence shows that in the fortnight prior to his death Lyford had been conscripted in the 4<sup>th</sup> ballot for service with the NZEF.<sup>2</sup> The timing of his death so close to the ballot is coincidental, but it does suggest a connection; Lyford may have taken his own life because he was afraid of what awaited him in France. If his death was linked to the ballot, then it raises other questions about attitudes in Taranaki towards conscription and how it affected other people in the region. It is those questions which this chapter seeks answers to.

'Conscription is not exclusive', wrote John Keegan, 'by definition, it includes all who can march and fight, irrespective of wealth or political rights.'<sup>3</sup> To the French, conscription has been associated with citizenship; to the British and Americans it was a 'burden imposed by the government'.<sup>4</sup> In New Zealand, some people have considered conscription an 'ugly word'.<sup>5</sup> Its implementation had to be carefully considered by the government, judging by opposition to compulsory military training during the pre-war period. Conscription in New Zealand had its origins in the Defence Act of 1909, but more immediately with the National Registration Bill in 1915 when politicians debated a scheme to

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<sup>1</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 26 February, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 13 February, 1917, p. 560.

<sup>3</sup> John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, London: Pimlico, 1993, p. 233.

<sup>4</sup> George Q. Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002, p. 3. Writing about the American Civil War, James M. McPherson wrote that in general, 'compulsory service was contrary to the country's values and traditions', and more specifically, 'conscription was the most unpopular act of the Confederate government'. *Battle Cry of Freedom*, London: Penguin Books, 1990, pp. 605, 432.

provide 'for the national stock-taking of the manhood of the country'.<sup>6</sup> 'The probability is that we may be called upon for greater efforts than we have yet attempted', reasoned Sir Francis Bell, Minister of Immigration.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the scheme would enable the New Zealand government 'to measure not alone the numbers available for war, but the willingness of those who remain to help the Empire'.<sup>8</sup> The debate also raised the issue of conscription because for some politicians it was the real purpose of such a scheme. With the passing of the National Registration Bill into law, the government on 1 October 1915 authorized the gathering of intelligence about 'manpower' resources. A New Zealand socialist politician, Harry Holland, interpreted that action as 'the first real step towards Conscription'.<sup>9</sup>

The National Registration Act, or 'war census' as it was more commonly known, provided for the compilation of a 'National Register of Men' between the ages of 17 and 60. Each male had to supply personal details about dependents, employment, physical condition and military experience. More specifically, all males aged between 19 and 45 had to indicate their willingness to serve in the expeditionary force. The 'war census' was advertised throughout New Zealand and registration forms were obtainable from Post Offices. In the absence of individual letters from the government all males were under a personal 'obligation' to register during the period 26 October to 9 November 1915, or face prosecution. The results, when made public in December, provoked a mixed response.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sir Francis Bell in *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD)*, 174, 20 September-12 October, 1915, p. 257.

<sup>6</sup> *NZPD*, 174, p. 249.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>9</sup> H. E. Holland, *Armageddon or Calvary*, Wellington: H. E. Holland, 1919, p. 8. Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1980, p. 109. Britain held a 'war census' on 15 August 1915, so did Australia the following month.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Baker, 'New Zealanders, Conscription and the Great War', PhD Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1986, pp. 116, 118-20.

A total number of 303,704 males between the ages of 17 and 60 registered, of whom 193,341 were between 19 and 45 years of age.<sup>11</sup> Table thirteen shows that well over half of the men in the 19 to 45 age group indicated a willingness 'to become members of an Expeditionary Force' if required, with Hawera exceeding the national figure. Of concern to the defence authorities would have been the 41.5% of men in New Zealand who were 'not prepared to volunteer' for the expeditionary force. To Harry Holland this was proof that 'a huge majority of eligible men were against Conscription'.<sup>12</sup> However, Jock Phillips has refuted that claim.

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<sup>11</sup> National Register. Summary of Area Groups, Ages and Birthplaces Under the National Registration Act, 1915, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1916, vol. II, H.- 35, p. 2. An outline of the 'war census' results can be found in *NZPD*, 175, p. 116. Differences exist between some primary sources showing 'war census' statistics for the 19-45 age group. The official statistics in the *AJHR* noted above and the *New Zealand Official Year Book (NZOYB)*, 1916, p. 199 are the same, yet they differ from those found in newspapers like the *Stratford Evening Post* (eg. 9 December, 1915, p. 7) and the *Auckland Star* (eg. 8 December, 1915, p. 4). Baker cites the latter newspaper source (see note 2, p. 116). Jock Phillips uses the same newspaper statistics in *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male-A History*, rev. ed., Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 162, as does Gustafson on p. 109. Phillips cites J. McK., Graham, 'The Voluntary System: Recruiting 1914-1916', MA Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1971, as the source for 'war census' statistics.

<sup>12</sup> Holland, p. 8.

**Table Thirteen: 'War Census' Results Showing Numbers and Proportions of Males of Military Age**

Categories	New Zealand	Wellington Military District	Hawera, Taranaki
'Willing to become Members of an Expeditionary Force (if required)'	112,778 58.3%	37,541 58.7%	8,310 64.7%
'Not prepared to volunteer for Expeditionary Force, but Willing to serve in a Civil Capacity'	44,838 23.1%	15,086 23.6%	2,196 17.1%
'Not prepared to volunteer for Expeditionary Force, nor to serve in a Civil Capacity'	35,725 18.4%	11,280 17.6%	2,327 18.1%
<b>Totals</b>	193,341 99.8%	63,907 99.9%	12,833 99.9%

Source : Compiled from data in the National Register. Summary of Area Groups, Ages and Birthplaces Under the National Registration Act, 1915, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1916, vol. II, H.-35.

Phillips suggests that men who indicated an unwillingness to serve had a variety of reasons for doing so. The *Stratford Evening Post* printed a sample of these reasons from nearly 500 respondents, with well over a third (41.4%) citing health factors as seen in table fourteen.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the registration card used for the purpose of compiling the 'war census' was explicit in stating that national registration was 'purely a civil register for the purpose of ascertaining the resources of the Dominion in men, and the registration here required does not involve enlistment nor is it in substitution for the present system of enlistment'.<sup>14</sup> No doubt some people were not convinced. As Trevor Wilson says, some women in England viewed their 'war census' as 'the beginning of a plan to take away their men-folk'.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> Holland, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> NZOYB, 1916, p.24.

<sup>15</sup> Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988, p. 181.

**Table Fourteen: A Sample of Reasons From the 'War Census' Indicating Why Some Males in New Zealand Were Not Willing to Serve in Any Capacity**

Reasons	Number of Respondents
'No reason stated'	97
'Bad health'	75
'Farm requires attention'	59
'Religious and conscientious objection'	46
'Financial reasons'	44
'Suffering from rheumatism'	37
'Bad sight'	25
'Deafness'	17
'Crippled foot'	14
'Business requires attention'	11
'Varicose veins'	10
'Bad back'	9
'Indigestion'	8
'Awaiting conscription'	8
'Enlisting in Australia and elsewhere'	6
'Producers should stay at home'	5
'Heart trouble'	5
'Family reasons'	4
'Engaged in making military supplies'	3

Source : *Stratford Evening Post*, 17 December, 1915, p. 7.

The *Stratford Evening Post* took a dim view of men who were not willing to serve, labeling them the 'unwilling class', 'shirkers' and the '34,000', but an important question presents itself.<sup>16</sup> After 15 months of war why had 112,778 males of military age in New Zealand, including 8,310 from Taranaki, not volunteered for service with the NZEF even though they had indicated in the 'war census' a willingness to do so 'if required'? It is difficult to know for certain, but analysis of the 'war census' data suggests that families, marriage and dependents may have played a key role in their decision-making. Over two-thirds (69.7%) of the men willing to serve in the NZEF 'if required' had dependents; three-quarters (75.3%) of the men not willing to serve in any capacity had dependents and so did most (80.5%) men who were prepared to

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<sup>16</sup> *SEP*, 17 December, 1915, p. 7.



serve only in a civil capacity. It would appear that maintaining family and household security was an early twentieth century priority; a reflection of what Erik Olssen has referred to as a 'male breadwinner culture' in New Zealand.<sup>17</sup> Melanie Nolan explains that 'the state promoted male breadwinning by institutionalizing a "male breadwinner" (or family) wage, whereby a man was paid a premium on the basis that he was responsible for dependents — his non-earning wife and their children.'<sup>18</sup> That provider role was endorsed by military authorities who emphasised the need for recruits to care for their families before enlistment so that they would not become dependent on the state. At a military concert in Stratford in October 1915, W. P. Kirkwood, the recruiting officer, told those people in attendance that, 'married men had a responsibility, but if they could make provision for their wives and families, they should enlist also'.<sup>19</sup>

Men were less inclined to volunteer for war service during the second year of the Great War compared with August and September 1914, probably because of a growing awareness of what modern war meant. Consequently, attitudes in Taranaki intensified over voluntary enlistment, which in turn raised the issue of conscription. An early indication in Taranaki of public feelings on conscription emerged at a farewell for Charles Bayly in Toko in October 1915. N. B. Fryday stated at Bayly's farewell that while he 'had always believed in volunteering, he had come to the conclusion that now there was nothing else to do but to institute conscription (Applause)'.<sup>20</sup> Fryday's change of attitude can be explained, in part, by the loss of his son at Gallipoli five months earlier, and probably by what he observed occurring around him, namely the absence of

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<sup>17</sup> Olssen cited by Melanie Nolan, *Breadwinning. New Zealand Women and the State*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> *SEP*, 13 October, 1915, p. 5. In a letter to the secretary of the Recruiting Board dated 11 July 1916, Brigadier-General A.W. Robin suggested they consider 'that married men will not be accepted for service with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force at present unless they have made such a provision for their families.' Army Department (AD) 1 29/113 Enlisted Married Men 1916-1918. (ANZ).

<sup>20</sup> *SEP*, 15 October, 1915, p. 5.

good news from the Dardanelles, lengthy casualty lists, fluctuations in volunteering, and life for some people continuing as normal. Frustration and disappointment over a perceived inequality in doing one's duty — as exemplified by the '34,000' — through serving New Zealand and the empire during a war crisis underpinned Fryday's attitude, and that of the audience, judging by their reaction. The *Stratford Evening Post* adopted a similar position in an editorial headed '**MORE MEN WANTED**'.<sup>21</sup> The *Post* felt that 'there are those who are failing in their duty, and will continue to fail until conscription compels such laggards to come out'.<sup>22</sup>

Other events involving death, disaster and defeat also emerged at the time of the 'war census', making people look more favourably on conscription. The appearance of a local name — Eliza Young — amongst the list of nurses on board the *Marquette* brought the war closer to the public, just as Lt. Col. Malone's death did in August. Sadness over the deaths of Malone and other soldiers from Taranaki, public shock over what could happen to nurses on active duty, publication of 'war census' results in early December, as well as news shortly before Christmas of the allied evacuation from Gallipoli, found expression in a growing impatience with men who would not volunteer. The *Stratford Evening Post* reported instances of:

'single men seeking employment in the district and promptly being turned down and told that there is plenty of work at five bob a day (seven days in the week) at the front! Little courtesies such as giving a man a lift along the road in a trap or motor car are being denied to pedestrians eligible for active service.'<sup>23</sup>

The *Post* added that 'there are plenty of signs of real bad times ahead for the shirker, slacker, or waster'. Individuals like L. Hall from Hawera wrote to James Allen saying, 'as I am unable to be accepted for the Front, being suffering from Severe Heart Disease, I offer you my services in [my] spare time to send you any

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<sup>21</sup> *SEP*, 12 October, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

names of shirkers, around this district'.<sup>24</sup> The Stratford Patriotic Committee passed a strongly worded resolution that viewed 'with alarm the cowardice that exists among the so-called shirkers, and is of the opinion that in fairness to those who have been fighting for the Empire during the last twelve months, and the others that have enlisted, the time has arrived when Conscription should be resorted to'.<sup>25</sup>

A correspondent to the *Stratford Evening Post* supported the committee's stance, saying that such resolutions 'give a fair indication of public feeling', which the writer said, was 'decidedly in favour of Conscription'.<sup>26</sup> Even the resolutions of local government bodies tacitly supported conscription. The Taranaki County Council approved a resolution that undermined the civil liberties of men of military age by 'dismissing all eligible [*sic*] single men and that no eligible [*sic*] single men be employed during the continuance of the war'.<sup>27</sup> W. Jordan, a farmer, felt the brunt of that decision when he attempted to explain to the council that it would be impossible for him to enlist because he had to look after his parents. Councillor Morton apparently investigated the claim and reported in January 1916 that 'Jordan's explanation for not enlisting for military service is not considered as satisfactory and that the notice already served on him take effect'.<sup>28</sup> Jordan's resistance could not have come at a more inopportune time, especially when a reflective view of 1915 revealed despondency:

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<sup>23</sup> *SEP*, 15 November, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> AD 1 10/284/5 Shirkers, Hawera District 1915. (ANZ).

<sup>25</sup> *SEP*, 17 November, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> *SEP*, 20 November, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ordinary Meeting, 7 December, 1915. Taranaki County Council (TCC), Minutes of Meetings, 6 July 1914 to 6 December, 1920, p. 146. (New Plymouth City Council, NPCC). The resolution originated in the Raglan County Council.

<sup>28</sup> Ordinary Meeting, 10 January, 1916. TCC Minutes, 6 July 1914 to 6 December, 1920, p. 155.

The year has been a trying one to the Empire, reverses overbalancing the successes attained; indeed, there is so little satisfaction in the so-called victories that it is questionable whether we have gained anything except the knowledge that we were short of ammunition, and machine guns, and men.<sup>29</sup>

The provision of men for military service continued to dominate New Zealand defence considerations well into the second year of the Great War. A key consideration was the government's obligation to the imperial centre to maintain its expeditionary force at full strength. Judging by the actions of defence and government authorities, that task became more urgent following publication of the 'war census'. Early in January 1916, William Massey issued a manifesto to the press with an 'appeal to the manhood' of New Zealand in which he reinforced the view that 'the need is for men; more men; and still more men!'<sup>30</sup> In arguing the case for immediate enlistment, Massey's appeal ranged across a variety of topics that included Gallipoli, 'the drowning of our nurses, [and] the murder of Miss Cavell'.<sup>31</sup> The appeal was aimed at the individual's conscience. By neglecting duty, 'lifelong tribulation and anguish of mind' could result, stated Massey.<sup>32</sup> The Recruiting Board also sent out a letter to every mayor and county council chairman throughout New Zealand informing them that 'the country will carry out its promise to provide 2350 reinforcements every 4 weeks so long as the war lasts'.<sup>33</sup> Massey, as chairman of the recruiting board, along with Joseph Ward and the Minister of Defence, James Allen, appealed to local authorities:

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<sup>29</sup> *SEP*, 4 January, 1916, p. 5. From a news report titled, 'Au Revoir to Suvla and Anzac', 'Report of Withdrawal Continued.'

<sup>30</sup> *SEP*, 14 January, 1916, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> AD 1 9/169/1A Recruiting for Expeditionary Force. General File.

We ask you to find the recruits required in your district by arranging a canvas under which every man of serviceable age who has not already enlisted will be approached by someone considered by the local committee to be likely to have most influence. It will be the duty of this delegate to try and induce the men to enlist and if unsuccessful to enter on a printed card to be supplied the reasons given for objecting to enlist.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, the appeal asked local authorities:

To use all possible influence to get the armband (or badge) worn by all men entitled to wear it, as it is expected that if this badge is generally worn the public will quickly recognise those men who have not offered their services. Public opinion can do more to bring a hesitating recruit to the enlistment office than much private argument.<sup>35</sup>

The appeal to local authorities indicated the urgency felt by the Recruiting Board early in 1916, especially concerning un-enlisted men. The appeal was, in effect, a subtle form of coercion. It encroached on the civil liberties of un-enlisted men by inducing, reporting-on them, and making them conspicuous in the community. The second year of the Great War was not a comfortable period for the '34,000'. Pressure on un-enlisted men to volunteer became more acute than at any time during the Dardanelles Campaign. With the knowledge that a Compulsory Service Bill had begun its passage through the British House of Commons in January, the formation in March of the New Zealand Division, the continued shortages of volunteers, and the growing receptiveness towards conscription in New Zealand, it became socially unacceptable for men of military age not to be enlisted, more especially if they were unmarried.

The region began to turn on un-enlisted men, with actions and language intended to shame them and weigh heavily on their conscience. A Kohuratahi resident wrote to the Whangamomona County Council in June 1916 with allegations about local men:

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

I wish to inform you of the address of at least one or two men who are sheltering behind those men who are willing to go [.] The first named man was working at Featherston when the register cards were issued and I doubt if he is on the Whangamomona roll [.] Kohuratahi is his permanent address [;]

Spencer Stephens (wheelwright) age 26 single working in the public works here as a carpenter

James Watt about 30 labourer Public works

Campbell MacDonell guard of Ballast Train Public works age about 35

All of those Cleland Bros. Farmers Tahora

Hugh Bennet farmer Kohuratahi

David Hight farmer Kohuratahi<sup>36</sup>

At the Egmont Clubrooms in Stratford on the eve of the departure of the 12<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, J. Masters, chairman of the recruiting committee, said that 'the club had sent thirty of its members, and it admired them, but there were other members who would be more admired if they enlisted'.<sup>37</sup> Masters predicted that 'the time would come when men would be forced to join the colors [*sic*], and his advice was go now, as it was no credit to go when forced'.<sup>38</sup> 'What would young men who had not enlisted look like, what would they be and where would they hide themselves', he said, 'when the war was over and the troops were welcomed home!'<sup>39</sup> The *Taranaki Herald* also looked to the future, printing a speech by Massey asking 'every eligible young man' to:

Think what it will mean to him if when all is over and victory is won he cannot say to himself "Thank God I went!" What will his feelings be in the years to come if he is haunted by the reflection that in the greatest trial the nation has ever been called to undergo he did not do his duty, but let others defend him and all that he holds dear?<sup>40</sup>

When Taranaki did not reach its quota for the infantry in the 14<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements the conscience of the un-enlisted man was appealed to again by Masters, 'as a conscript, would you be pleased to meet your volunteer fellow-

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<sup>36</sup> John Rae to Coleman, Whangamomona County Council, War File 1909-1946, Box 5. (Stratford Public Library).

<sup>37</sup> *SEP*, 8 January, 1916, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

countrymen on the field of battle? Do not be compelled! Be a volunteer!’<sup>41</sup> The *Stratford Evening Post* editorial on ‘**THE CALL TO ARMS**’ continued to assault the conscience of the un-enlisted:

To those able to fill the ranks it is not only a duty but a high privilege which many of the unfit and otherwise disqualified for service in the trenches would give all they possessed to share. What must the thoughts of such men be when they rub shoulders with the carelessly indifferent and the wilfully negligent?<sup>42</sup>

The ‘carelessly indifferent’ and the ‘wilfully negligent’ male became the focus of James Allen’s speech in New Plymouth’s Theatre Royal on the first anniversary of the Anzac ‘landings’ at Gallipoli. Allen cautioned un-enlisted men against marrying in the hope that they would be spared enlistment. He even appealed to women ‘that you should not marry a man who is going to hide behind you and so escape his duty.’<sup>43</sup> At a time when protective duties of men included the preservation, not only of the empire, but also the sanctity of the home, Allen asked women to ‘remember, if a man does not think you are worth fighting for, then he is not worth being your husband.’<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Allen concluded, ‘no man who can go and who refuses to go is worthy of being called a citizen of this country or of any country on God’s earth.’<sup>45</sup> The un-enlisted man had become a pariah by early 1916, and the call for conscription had become more strident.

Taranaki people were ambivalent towards conscription.<sup>46</sup> As early as May 1915, the *Taranaki Herald* warned its readers that the introduction of compulsory service in Britain would give Germany an advantage because it

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<sup>40</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 14 January, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> *SEP*, 28 February, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> *SEP*, 29 March, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *TH*, 26 April, 1916, p. 6. *Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald (BTWH)*, 29 April, 1916, p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Hugh MacKenzie, *Conscription. To Be, Or Not To Be? or The Commandeering of the Lives of our Young Men – Two Sides of the Question*, Wellington: *Evening Post* Printing Works, 1916.

would signal the failure of the voluntary system.<sup>47</sup> The *Herald* also noted that ‘when there are signs of a shortage of men it will be time enough to make service compulsory’.<sup>48</sup> Nearly a year later that time seemed to have arrived, as indicated by the following tables, which show Wellington Military District with the highest number of infantry shortages.

**Table Fifteen: Infantry Shortages in New Zealand’s Military Districts: April 1916**

Military District	15 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	16 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements	Totals
Auckland	69	148	217
<b>Wellington</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>651</b>
Canterbury	102	272	374
Otago	59	136	195
Totals	466	971	1437

Source : AD 1 9/169/68 Recruiting Wellington District. Expeditionary Force. General File.

**Table Sixteen : Number of Voluntary Registrations Required and Available for the Infantry, 16<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, Wellington Military District, April 1916**

Area Group	Recruits Required	Recruits Available	Excess/Deficit
Wellington	173	50	-123
Palmerston North	124	39	-85
Napier	111	21	-90
Masterton	83	38	-45
<b>Hawera</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>-72</b>
New Zealand Totals	1816	845	-971

Source : AD 1 9/169/68

Comments in the press too, seemed to show that the time had arrived to consider conscription. J. Masters sounded a note of alarm in a letter to the editor of the *Stratford Evening Post* concerning Taranaki’s shortages in the 14<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements. Masters felt that the introduction of conscription would cause embarrassment. ‘Surely, New Zealanders do not want it to go forth to the world that compulsion was necessary to secure the requisite number of fighting men’,

<sup>47</sup> *TH*, 31 May, 1915, p. 2. Editorial on ‘Compulsory Service’.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*



he claimed.<sup>49</sup> It would seem Masters was wrong. At a soldier farewell held in the rural community of Tuna in January 1916, the *Stratford Evening Post's* own correspondent reported that 'about three-quarters of the settlers here are patriotic; the others are conspicuous by their absence. It is about time we had conscription, then they would not, perhaps, be so indifferent.'<sup>50</sup> Stratford and Clifton County Councils shared that view. Stratford councillors were of the opinion that because there were 'few men in their respective districts now available for enlisting', the 'only equitable way' of solving the recruiting problem was 'to call Parliament together and pass a Bill making National Service compulsory'.<sup>51</sup> The Clifton councillors agreed, adding that the government had to 'sound the trumpet call of duty, demand compliance thereto and effectually enforce it'.<sup>52</sup> At the Stratford Town Hall the audience applauded James Allen when he told those gathered that, 'if they failed under the voluntary system in New Zealand to get the men they must bring in another system by which the required number of men would be obtained. (Applause)'.<sup>53</sup> With continuing shortages in volunteers, that other 'system' to which Allen alluded began its passage through New Zealand's parliament in May 1916, the same month in which compulsory service became law in Britain.

The Military Service Act became law in New Zealand on 1 August 1916. It provided for the immediate formation of an Expeditionary Force Reserve, which would consist of male 'British subjects' over the age of 20 and under 46, thereafter known as Reservists. The Act also gave the government authority to conscript men of military age, single and married, with or without children, whenever it desired. It divided eligible men into two divisions based on marriage and family, and classified them according to health. The First Division

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<sup>49</sup> *SEP*, 28 February, 1916, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> *SEP*, 1 February, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *SEP*, 17 February, 1916, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> Council Meeting, 3 March, 1916. Clifton County Council, Minutes of Meetings, 7 October 1904-19 November 1920, p. 382 (NPCC).

consisted mainly of unmarried men, but also married men whose marriages had been solemnized after 1 May 1915, widowers, and men who were legally separated from their wives, or whose marriages had been 'dissolved'. The only exception were men with children under 16, who would be placed in the Second Division. That division consisted of married men, with or without children. Married reservists were classified according to the number of children they had. For instance, class A reservists had no children; class B, one child; class C, two children; class D, three children; class E, four children, and class F, five children. Reservists would be called up by ballot, with First Division reservists called ahead of the Second Division. Each class was to be balloted in consecutive order, depending on the depletion of first division reservists — as shown in table seventeen — with the aim of reducing as much as possible the impact of military service on a family. That systematic approach to the 'call-up' for military service would, in the case of death and injury of second division reservists, lessen the dependence by large numbers of family members on the state. By protecting married men, the state 'indirectly' reinforced 'the male breadwinner ethos'.<sup>54</sup>

Paul Baker said that the Military Service Act was 'the most important piece of legislation passed during the war'.<sup>55</sup> Not only did the Act give the government power to conscript, but it affected peoples' lives. For Reservists, war service now seemed likely; for employers labour shortages loomed; for women and families, the loss of a 'breadwinner' had economic implications for the household. The appeals by some Reservists, the actions of the farming community and the Second Division League show how the Act affected people in Taranaki.

A register of the Expeditionary Force Reserve had to be compiled based on the 'National Register of Men.' Reservists who had not registered in late 1915

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<sup>53</sup> *SEP*, 25 April, 1916, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> Nolan, p. 90.

<sup>55</sup> Baker, p. 177.

now had fourteen days to do so by 16 September, 1916. 'Neglect or delay in this duty may give a man a sad memory of the number 14 for the rest of his life', stated the *Stratford Evening Post*, because 'the Act has penal clauses to impress that number 14 indelibly on the mind of a delinquent.'<sup>56</sup> As with the 'war census', registering under the Military Service Act was a personal obligation. Those who failed to register risked three months imprisonment or a fine of £50; these penalties also applied to those who employed unregistered men of military age.

From what he had observed on the railway platform, Lieutenant Gray from the Stratford recruiting office applauded registration:

Sad partings and among them, mothers sobbing out farewells, while little children in their arms were waving their hands and crying out, as the train moved away .... At the same time there were standing on the platform eligible young men who were not put to shame by the sight of these fathers parting with every earthly endearment to go out and fight for single slackers at home.<sup>57</sup>

Gray observed mixed emotions: sympathy for the mother, sadness for the children, respect for the father, and disgust at the 'single slackers', but he believed redemption 'from an indelible stigma' existed for 'slackers' simply by reporting to the nearest recruiting office where they could 'seal their allegiance by taking the oath of fealty'.<sup>58</sup> To the *Stratford Evening Post*, in its editorial on the Military Service Act, the oath was a 'contract to serve', and the volunteer became a soldier. It stated further that 'the day of the evasionist volunteer is almost over', because:

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<sup>56</sup> *SEP*, 1 September, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> *SEP*, 19 September, 1916, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

A man who enlisted received a badge and the publication of his name in the paper; in return, he gave no binding contract – merely his word of honour. Should he break the latter, he still continued to enjoy the glory of the above-mentioned publicity and of the badge upon his arm, the face value of which was unaffected by the betrayal. But after September there will be no more of this. Men may still volunteer ... but if a man volunteers he will on registering be sworn in as a member of the Expeditionary Force, and will thus become a soldier, liable to arrest as a deserter if he does not parade when required .... The old voluntary enlistment was merely a promise to serve; the new one is a contract to serve, with a deserter's penalty for any breach.<sup>59</sup>

The coercive nature of the Act was made clear. Nearly a year later reservists were 'warned' to have their 'Certificate of Enrolment in their personal possession, as systematic and concerted action will then be taken by the police'. Furthermore, returned soldiers and members of the NZEF not in uniform 'should, for their own protection', carry their certificates.<sup>60</sup>

Some men did not heed those directions, and attempted evasion. At least 14 reservists from Taranaki whose names had been drawn in the ballots failed to report for duty late in 1917.<sup>61</sup> Sally Doyle, a Taranaki resident recalls:

I had an uncle who took to the bush instead of going to the war. He'd come down to our place for a meal and a wash and you could spot the police coming from miles away, so he'd take off again. Anyway, he was having a wash one day outside when they came – he stuck his head in the water and kept it there but they caught him.<sup>62</sup>

Like Doyle's uncle, some Maori in Taranaki resisted enlistment. Judge Jack, the census enumerator for all the counties in Taranaki reported difficulties in gathering information from local Maori. Jack reported that:

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<sup>59</sup> *SEP*, 27 September, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> *SEP*, 7 July, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> *AJHR*, 1917, vol. III, H.-19k, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Sally Doyle cited by David J. Cooney, 'An Exercise in Oral History: Rural Life and Labour in Taranaki From World War One to the Depression', MA Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1980, p. 8.

the cause of this difficulty is the existence of a strong suspicion in the Maori mind that the taking of the census at the present time is allied in a sinister manner with the intended enforcement of compulsory military service, and, as this is a question to which the Maoris of Taranaki have strong antipathy, they have in nearly all instances been passively antagonistic.<sup>63</sup>

Initially Maori had been exempt from the conditions of the Military Service Act, but in June 1917 the government extended the regulations of the Act. By 20 February 1918, all Maori males aged between 20 and 46 had to register at the nearest police station. Failure to register carried a penalty of £50 or three months imprisonment. The response in Taranaki, according to P. S. O'Connor, ranged from Maori in Hawera refusing to register, to rumours of rebellion and the preparation of fortifications at Parihaka.<sup>64</sup> However, Michael King says that the application of the Military Service Act 'was to be on Waikato alone'.<sup>65</sup> The reason for that was historical, as well as the perception amongst some Maori that Waikato were not doing their share of volunteering for service with the Maori Pioneer Battalion.<sup>66</sup> It would seem that an equality of sacrifice was not confined solely to the 'British' community in New Zealand.

Under the Military Service Act, reservists could seek exemption by appeal to the Military Service Appeals Board. They consistently availed themselves of that entitlement for two years. Over a six-day period in August 1917, 85 appeals were scheduled for hearing in Hawera; over an eight-day period in October 1917, 123 appeals were scheduled in Hawera and New Plymouth; and over a three-day period in December 1917, 48 appeals were again scheduled in Hawera.<sup>67</sup> Throughout the whole Wellington Military District the First Wellington Military Service Board sat at least 83 times in 1917, and heard a

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<sup>63</sup> Papers Related to the Census of the Maori Population, *AJHR*, 1917, vol. II, H.-39A, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> P. S. O'Connor, 'The Recruitment of Maori Soldiers, 1914-18', *Political Science*, 19:2 (1967), p. 73.

<sup>65</sup> Michael King, *Te Puea*, Auckland: Sceptre, 1990, pp. 84-5.

<sup>66</sup> Christopher Pugsley, *et.al.*, *Scars On the Heart. Two Centuries of New Zealand at War*, Auckland: David Bateman, 1996, p. 99.

minimum of 1,663 appeals, 491 (29.5%) of which came from Hawera and New Plymouth.<sup>68</sup> Public interest in the appeals was high in Taranaki as exemplified by newspaper coverage.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, in Australia, John McQuilton's research on the appeals in North-Eastern Victoria shows a 'flood' of applications before the Exemption Courts, and detailed coverage in the press.<sup>70</sup> In Britain, too, studies by Ivor Slocombe on Wiltshire and Philip Spinks on Stratford-upon-Avon have shown that 'the sheer numbers of cases which the tribunals had to hear is striking', which generated much interest in the press.<sup>71</sup> Internationally, the appeals have provided historians with an invaluable resource to assess the impact of the war and military service on society.

Under New Zealand's Military Service Act a reservist could seek exemption because of occupation, where being 'called-up' was 'contrary to the public interest'; or domestic circumstances, which could cause 'undue hardship to himself or others'; or not being of military age; or classified medically unfit for service; or a 'conscientious religious belief'; or a combination thereof.<sup>72</sup> Analysis of 173 appeals heard in Taranaki and reported in the press from November 1916 to April 1918 reveals that most reservists based their appeals on undue hardship, or a combination of occupation and hardship. Very few appealed on the basis of conscience. Surprisingly, given the urgency with which soldiers were needed, the Appeals Board in Taranaki applied the full range of available decisions from allowing appeals to reserving decisions *sine die* —

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<sup>67</sup> See *SEP*, 13 August, 1917, p. 3. *TH*, 2 October, 1917, p. 4. *SEP*, 3 October, 1917, p. 8. *SEP*, 24 November, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> AD 82 Box 1. 1/3 First Wellington Military Service Board - General. September 1916-December 1918 (ANZ).

<sup>69</sup> See Nelle M. Scanlan, *Tides of Youth*, London: Jarrolds Publishers, 1933, pp. 268-72 for a fictional account of an appeal in the Wellington region.

<sup>70</sup> John McQuilton, 'Doing the "Back Block Boys Some Good"'. The Exemption Court Hearings in North-eastern Victoria, 1916', *Australian Historical Studies*, 31:115 (2000), p. 239.

<sup>71</sup> Ivor Slocombe, 'Recruitment Into the Armed Forces During the First World War. The Work of the Military Tribunals in Wiltshire, 1915-1918', *The Local Historian*, 30:2 (2000), pp. 109, 105. Philip Spinks, "The War Courts": The Stratford-upon-Avon Borough Tribunal 1916-1918', *The Local Historian*, 32:4 (2000), p. 210.

meaning indefinitely – to dismissing appeals outright, sometimes granting the appellant some days leave before having to report for duty. This suggests that the Board listened to and considered each appeal on its merits. The appellants' arguments and the counter-arguments of the military authorities did demonstrate, though, how contentious enlistment had become by the third year of the Great War. One example of such an appeal is that of Thomas Billing, a farmer from Rahotu who appealed his call-up on grounds of public interest and undue hardship. Billing stated that:

He was 36 years of age and was married on September 30, 1916, having now one child. He had two brothers now at the front and another one had been killed, all three being volunteers. There were six in the family including himself, and the other two were married and had farms of their own. Before marrying [Billing] saw a doctor, who said he would never get through on account of his eyesight. He held, on a 10-year lease from his father taken out in 1915, a farm of 240 acres, and the rent he paid was £144 per annum, with a reduction of £14 8s if paid within 21 days. [Billing] was milking 48 cows by machine with the assistance of a brother-in-law whose health was not good. His wife was unable to help with the milking. On the cows he had a bill-of-sale for £480, of which £255 6s 8d was still due, and he also owed £120 on the milking machine and £50 on his life policy. His wife's parents and three children were living on the farm and the support he gave them would amount to £1 or £2 10s a week.<sup>73</sup>

Had the Board dismissed Billing's appeal, what appeared to be a fragile family-farming situation would have been disrupted. However, the Appeals Board showed some sympathy, because they reserved their decision *sine die* and granted Billing an exemption provided he stayed in the same position and reported monthly to the defence authorities.

The least problematic appeals for both appellants and the Board usually involved age or medical condition. George Were, a farm assistant from Toko, appealed on the grounds that he was not a reservist because he would not be 20 until September 1917. He submitted a birth certificate and the appeal was

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<sup>72</sup> See NZOYB, 1916, pp. 203-04.

<sup>73</sup> TH, 27 November, 1917, p. 3.

allowed.<sup>74</sup> Ronald Land, a freezing worker from New Plymouth, appealed on similar grounds. Land was 'aged 19 years 10 months', so the appeal was allowed.<sup>75</sup> In the case of George Westfield, a dairy farmer from Auroa, the Appeals Board decided on a *sine die* adjournment. Westfield had produced evidence that he would be 46 in April 1918. The Appeals Board probably based their decision on a practical understanding that by the time he had made final arrangements in Taranaki, completed military training in both New Zealand and England, and reached the front line in France he would be ineligible to serve because of his age.<sup>76</sup> Westfield had been saved by date of birth; Were and Land, however, may have been playing for time.

Not all appeals were as easily decided as in the aforementioned cases. Appeals involving 'undue hardship' and peoples' livelihoods proved the most problematic to decide. Furthermore, they demonstrated the diversity of peoples' lives and the rearrangements occasioned by war. Gerald Flynn, a farm labourer from Te Wera, appealed on the grounds of undue hardship. As a single, 32 year-old, Flynn, along with his 18 year-old brother supported their widowed mother, who was an invalid. Four other brothers were already serving in France. Another brother, who was married with five children, farmed property in Taumaranui. Still another brother had been wounded and returned from the front about a year previously and was only now able to work. Flynn also had three sisters, one of whom was married. Captain Walker, the military representative on the Appeals Board, asked no questions of Flynn, believing this to be a difficult case. Nevertheless he felt that the evidence presented did not constitute 'hardship'. The Appeals Board 'found it rather hard to ask the appellant to go into camp' because of the 'splendid record put up by the family', but in view of the urgency surrounding enlistment the Board felt the need to

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<sup>74</sup> SEP, 22 May, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>75</sup> TH, 17 August, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> SEP, 26 October, 1917, p. 7.



persuade Flynn to withdraw his appeal, which he did; and the Board granted him two months leave.<sup>77</sup> Reginald Marsh, a dairy farmer from Egmont Village, also appealed on 'grounds of public interest and undue hardship'. He farmed 180 acres of land owned by his mother and a brother who was at the front. He milked 38 cows by machine with the assistance of an 18 year-old man. Another brother had recently returned from the front 'suffering from shell-shock', and now lived in Auckland. Marsh could not call on a third brother for help because he already farmed property on Durham Road, which belonged to a reservist who had gone to the front. The Appeals Board decided to adjourn the appeal *sine die*.<sup>78</sup> Joseph Taylor, a dairy farmer, also appealed on the grounds of hardship. He milked 22 cows by hand on a 112-acre property on Egmont Road already owned by his invalid father. Two of Taylor's brothers were already at the front. One of them, aged 20, had been reported missing, believed killed in action. Taylor also had two sisters of school age. Furthermore, Taylor had been rejected for military service on medical grounds. The Board reserved its decision.<sup>79</sup>

If Were and Land had been playing for time, then perhaps Marsh and Taylor were as well, even the Board, because to dismiss their appeals would impact adversely on both families' farming operations. Some appellants had already made arrangements, and appealed to the Military Services Board for more time, which made the latter's task easier. Morton Saywell's appeal is an example. Saywell farmed a 136-acre leasehold property on which he milked 50 cows single-handed. He was married with one child, and as his representative explained to the Board:

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<sup>77</sup> SEP, 21 May, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> TH, 18 October, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

He was quite willing to go to the war, and had arranged with a Mrs Taylor, whose husband was at the front, to go upon the farm to assist his wife while he was away. The two women intended to run the place and a neighbour had consented to supervise the farm. He desired time until December to enable him to give the womenfolk a good start.<sup>80</sup>

The Appeals Board was full of praise, labelling the arrangements as 'patriotic actions'. They granted Saywell the leave he desired. The chairman of the Appeals Board described it as a 'refreshing' case. Not all appeals were like that of Saywell's, and the Board did not always respond in such a positive manner. Cases that proved fraudulent, or were based on conscience, were decisively dismissed.

Arthur Henwood, a 24 year-old farmer from Waiongona, who based his appeal on undue hardship, tested the patience of the Appeals Board. Henwood began to outline his circumstances by saying that he got married in March 1916, and that he farmed a 107-acre leasehold property held from his 74 year-old father. On that farm he paid £64 in rent, and milked 24 cows by hand with assistance from his wife. His 70 year-old mother also lived on the farm, along with a 15 year-old female and a 'married sister who was sick'.<sup>81</sup> Their welfare and the successful operation of the farm depended on Henwood. He outlined the extended nature of his family, which included three brothers, all married with children, each with farms in close proximity to his own, with another brother working on the railways at Hawera, and seven sisters, all married except one. To support the appeal Henwood produced the lease agreement, dated 1912, to demonstrate to the Appeals Board the longevity of his provider role on the farm.

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<sup>80</sup> *SEP*, 23 August, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> *TH*, 17 October, 1917, p. 2.

The lease agreement, however, came under close scrutiny from the Board. Captain Orr Walker and the chairman of the Appeals Board questioned Henwood about it:

[Walker] The stamp duty in September, 1912, was 5s, [shillings] and was increased in 1915 to 6s. Don't you think it a remarkable thing that you should have put this unnecessary shilling on?

[Walker] What would you say if I told you that this shilling stamp was not being sold at that time?

[Chairman] Are you positively certain this lease was signed on September 1, 1912?

[Chairman] Now, what have you got to say if I tell you that that shilling stamp did not come into issue until 1916?

[Henwood] Well, I don't know. I suppose it couldn't have been put on in 1912.<sup>82</sup>

Captain Walker sensed the agreement was fraudulent and 'declared that the whole thing was a fake for the purpose of evading military service'.<sup>83</sup> When Henwood's father gave evidence, he too, came under some searching questions from Captain Walker, who concluded that 'anyone could see that the whole thing had been fixed up at the same time as the stamps were put on. The ink was quite new'.<sup>84</sup> Even the Prime Minister heard of Henwood's appeal. A. L. Herdman wrote to Massey saying:

We had a glaring case in New Plymouth this week when an old man drew up a lease in favour of his son stamped and dated 1912. Father and son both swore to the genuineness of the date, but unfortunately for them had used a stamp that was only issued in 1916. In the end they admitted that it was fixed up in 1916.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.* In New Plymouth, Walter Sutton, appeared in court on charges of giving false information when registering for military service. Sutton had indicated that he was married when apparently he was single. *TH*, 22 August, 1917, p. 2. There is a full report on this case in *TH*, 23 August, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>84</sup> *TH*, 23 August, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Herdman to Massey, 23 October, 1917. AD 82 Box 1. 1/3 1<sup>st</sup> Wellington Military Service Board - General. September 1916 - December 1918.

Henwood's appeal was subsequently dismissed.

Appeals on grounds of conscience were treated with similar disdain. Albert Magon, a motorbus proprietor from New Plymouth, based his appeal on public interest and undue hardship, but also that he objected to going to war. Like the Henwoods, Magon had to answer some difficult questions from Captain Walker. For instance, Walker asked Magon, 'did you say at Rahotu that you would rather cut off your hands than fight?', and, 'did you ever say you would tear off to America to avoid fighting?', and, did you get 'married a few months ago to avoid fighting?'<sup>86</sup> Magon replied in the negative to each question. Henry Plews, a farmer from Tuna, appealed on the grounds of conscientious religious beliefs. Plews 'urged religious objection to military service and also to military ambulance work on the grounds that it was assisting militarism'. The Appeals Board reminded him that, 'as a farmer producing food for soldiers, he was assisting militarism, and suggested that he was not therefore very consistent in his principles.'<sup>87</sup> Both appeals were dismissed. Gustav Kuhtz, a 27-year-old married labourer from Toko, also based an appeal on religious objection. Kuhtz was a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and was opposed to the bearing of arms. He told the Appeals Board that:

He was so conscientious about the matter that if the Germans were to raid the present building, he would not even then take up arms. He would do all he could to prevent the Germans committing atrocities, but he would not take life, even if that was the only way in which he could prevent the Germans from violating his women-folk.<sup>88</sup>

That argument from a man with a German-sounding name must have angered the Board, judging by an outburst from one of its members - 'What sort of a man are you? Thank God, you may never be placed in such a position.'<sup>89</sup> The reaction to Kuhtz is not surprising, or that Magon and Plews should have been

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<sup>86</sup> *TH*, 16 August, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> *SEP*, 16 January, 1918, p. 5.

<sup>88</sup> *SEP*, 2 February, 1917, p. 5.

regarded with contempt. They had stepped outside the bounds of a 'British' community at war, and presented themselves as the anti-thesis of the region's 'heroes' serving in France and Palestine. The public airing of their beliefs could not have come at a more inappropriate time because of the prevalent attitude towards men of military age who objected to war service.

Before the war James Allen had circulated a letter to mayors and county councils throughout New Zealand reminding them of provisions under the Defence Act of 1909 for exemption from compulsory military service on grounds of conscientious and religious objections. Allen asked for suggestions on how best to occupy men who conscientiously objected to military training. The response from Taranaki was diverse. Tree planting, maintenance of country roads, and eradication of noxious weeds were positive suggestions; but as early as August 1914, responses from some councils revealed intolerance towards conscientious objectors. The Hawera Borough Council had 'little sympathy with objectors'; the Taranaki County Council believed that 'delinquents should be compelled to beautify if they will not protect the country', and the Eltham County Council wanted to disenfranchise conscientious objectors.<sup>90</sup> In 1916, a *Stratford Evening Post* editorial indicated that men like Magon, Plews and Kultz were '**Not Wanted In New Zealand**':

There is to-day absolutely no room in New Zealand, or in any other part of the British Empire for that matter, for the so-called "conscientious objector" to military service. Every able bodied young man must, now that we know what war means, take his part, or take the consequences .... We confess that we have no longer any patience with the "conscientious objector."<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Alternative Service for Religious and Conscientious Objectors to Military Training, 26 March, 1914. *AJHR*, 1914, vol.III, H.-19c, pp. 3-5. In 1914, 21 applications for exemptions from military training due to religious beliefs had been received by the authorities in the Wellington Military District; 21 in 1915. All of which were granted. See AD 1 10/22/14 Return of Religious Objectors, 1914 and AD 1 10/22/15 Return of Religious Objectors, 1915. (ANZ).

<sup>91</sup> *SEP*, 12 April, 1916, p. 4.

That belief had as much to do with the war as it did society's intolerance towards military defaulters, which is why the Appeals Board had no sympathy towards reservists who objected in conscience to military service. Even though P. S. O'Connor's research shows that 'there was widespread sympathy' for certain religious groups like the Quakers and that 'many who were in favour of conscription did not want to see men gaoled because of their religious beliefs'.<sup>92</sup>

Slocombe's research in England reminds us that 'attempts to escape enlistment were not confined to the conscientious objectors, but that a high degree of eligible young men applied for exemption'.<sup>93</sup> Prejudice and inconsistency could arise in their cases as well. F. Tyrer, the headmaster at Stratford District High School, appealed on behalf of Frederick Bowler, a teacher at the school. Bowler was the sole male teacher left at the school, the rest having been replaced by women. Tyrer explained that:

The secondary department could not be efficiently run without at least one male assistant, whose work was principally with the boys. The women were doing excellent work inside the school, but it was absolutely necessary to have a male assistant among the boys to take an interest in their outside work.<sup>94</sup>

Tyrer told the Board that he had been trying for two years to find a replacement for Bowler. The Appeals Board reserved their decision *sine die* because they 'understood' the difficulties in finding 'suitable male teachers'.<sup>95</sup> In the appeals of Ashley Macdonald and Walter Ardern, both married from New Plymouth, inconsistent decisions by the Appeals Board had ramifications for their families. Macdonald, a 29 year-old draper's assistant, appealed for time to care for his ill wife and child. He hoped that in three months time she would be able to travel

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<sup>92</sup> P. S. O'Connor, 'The Awkward Ones — Dealing With Conscience, 1916-1918', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 8:2 (1974), p. 119.

<sup>93</sup> Slocombe, p. 105.

<sup>94</sup> *SEP*, 29 October, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

to her mother's home in Dunedin, and presumably into her care.<sup>96</sup> Ardern, a railway employee, found himself in a similar situation. He, too, appealed for more time and hoped that his mother-in-law would come and stay with his wife and child while he was away. Ardern also mentioned that he had been experiencing financial difficulties. The Board dismissed Macdonald's appeal and granted him two months leave without pay; but in the case of Ardern they adjourned the appeal to the next sitting of the Board, where he had to produce a medical certificate. When the Board sat two months later a decision on Ardern's appeal was reserved even further.<sup>97</sup> Another appeal, by Bernard McSweeney, a 28-year-old farm labourer from Toko, mirrored Ardern's case. The Appeals Board reserved its final decision, deciding instead to review McSweeney's position six weeks later.<sup>98</sup> What swayed the Board's decision in the appeals of Ardern and McSweeney over that of Macdonald's is difficult to discern, but it does suggest a certain degree of inconsistency, even indecision.

These cases provide insights into Military Appeals Board operations in Taranaki. Certain characteristics of the Board emerge. It admired resourcefulness, as in the appeal of Saywell; it respected reservists desiring to do military service, as in the appeal by Flynn, and exemplified further by the appeal of William Jones, a law clerk for King and Malone, Barristers and Solicitors of Stratford. Jones wanted to enlist when the war started, but his employer, Lt. Col. Malone, 'advised him not to as he did not think he was strong enough for active service'.<sup>99</sup> Jones, however, was attorney for Malone's estate. He was also managing clerk for several others, including his brothers who were at the front, one of whom had a 1,100-acre farm. Jones appealed for extended leave to finalise business arrangements so that he could then follow six other clerks from the firm who had gone to the front. The Board agreed to his appeal

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<sup>96</sup> *TH*, 17 August, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> *TH*, 18 August, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>98</sup> *SEP*, 20 February, 1917, p. 3.

and granted him three months leave. However, it viewed with contempt those appellants who failed to appear and whose appeals lacked conviction, as in the case of John Aylward. He previously appeared before the Appeals Board and had been given three months to find share-milkers for his farm, which he failed to do. Consequently, the Board dismissed the appeal and gave Aylward one month's leave before having to report for duty.<sup>100</sup>

The Military Appeals Board also demonstrated its power over the futures of reservists, as Edward Kirkwood and Herbert Winmill discovered. Both reservists were farmers, from Stratford and Pohokura respectively. After appearing before the Board, Kirkwood had to consider selling his freehold property of 190 acres, which included 40 dairy cows, 300 sheep and 60 other head of stock. Kirkwood was concerned that if he had to sell at the time of his appeal he would get only freezing-works prices for his stock.<sup>101</sup> Winmill, a 21-year-old, had inherited a 906-acre freehold property with 500 sheep, 48 cattle and three horses. His concern was that if he went to the front he would have to let the land 'go back'. The Board adjourned its decision for one month. At a second appearance before the Board, Winmill asked for more time to enable him to hand over his farm to the *new* owner.<sup>102</sup> Recognition by the farming sector that decisions made by the Military Appeals Board had disruptive effects on their community mobilised them into defensive action.

The perception Taranaki farmers had of themselves during the Great War was at odds with the needs of military authorities in the months following the passing of the Military Service Act. The farmers' own perception of their wartime duty was to produce, but the military authorities were only 'after men for military service, no matter what other service goes short'.<sup>103</sup> In February

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<sup>99</sup> *SEP*, 26 October, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> *TH*, 18 August, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>101</sup> *SEP*, 23 February, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.* *SEP*, 15 June, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> *TH*, 22 August, 1917, p. 2.



1917, farmers met to discuss their grievances about decisions made by the Military Service Appeals Board. Between 300 and 500 farmers from throughout Taranaki attended a meeting in the Eltham Town Hall, which was followed a week later by another in Stratford.<sup>104</sup> The meeting in Eltham was reported to be 'one of the most important that had ever been held in the district, and the questions for it to consider were of paramount importance'.<sup>105</sup> Both meetings discussed the First Wellington Military Service Board's understanding of their respective roles, as articulated by Captain Orr Walker:

The farmers should organise the labour available to carry on their industry. The object of the Government and the Service Boards was to carry the war to a successful conclusion, and to assist this purpose, and at the same time to maintain the production to a maximum degree was the duty of the farmers.<sup>106</sup>

Farmers were concerned that 'indiscriminate calling up of labour' diminished their ability to perform their patriotic duty of producing foodstuffs for the empire, and consequently their livelihoods.<sup>107</sup> Conscripted farmers like Herbert Winmill, faced the task of having to make alternative arrangements for the farm. Finding a suitable manager, or leasing the farm, or offering farms for sale, were immediate options. Some farmers were forced to sell quickly, at low prices, losing equity in the property:

### **FARM FOR IMMEDIATE SALE**

**Owing to my sons going to the Front, my farm containing 550 Acres,  
Situated at Pukearuhe, White Cliffs is for absolute sale.<sup>108</sup>**

Councillor McCluggage from the Whangamomona County Council cited a case where a local farmer's equity in the farm was £1,500 above the mortgage, but

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<sup>104</sup> *SEP*, 26 February, 1917, p. 7, 1 March, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup> *SEP*, 26 February, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *SEP*, 1 March, 1917, p. 7.

because of the ballot he now had to sell the property for a price at only £100 above the borrowed amount.<sup>109</sup> Farmers who could not sell, according to McCluggage, would have to allow the farm:

to run to fern and scrub, and [it] will depreciate in value to such an extent through not being stocked, that by the time these men return from the war, their interest in the land will have disappeared, representing their hard earnings for years all wiped out by a stroke of the pen by the Military Service Board.<sup>110</sup>

That meant economic ruination for the farmer.

The tensions that existed between the Military Service Appeals Board and the farming community revolved to some extent around the farmers' own view of the war. Ernest Mander, a dairy farmer from Cardiff, appealed against conscription on the grounds of public interest and undue hardship. He milked 23 cows by hand, by himself, on a 74-acre farm, with returns that were amongst the highest in the district; he produced evidence to support that claim. Mander argued before the Appeals Board that 'he was doing his duty to the country as a producer':

[Captain Walker] You would rather remain on the farm than fight?

[Mander] That's not it. I think I am doing my duty by remaining on the farm and assisting to keep up the production of the country. I know that soldiers are wanted and I know that soldiers have to be fed.<sup>111</sup>

Mander's appeal was adjourned, but his view of the farmer's place in the war was common. At the meeting of farmers in Stratford, that view was expressed to Sir James Allen, who was in attendance: 'Take away the farmer', stated a

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<sup>108</sup> *TH*, 16 August, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>109</sup> *SEP*, 28 February, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.* See 'Farms Being Abandoned', *New Zealand Farmer (NZF)*, March, 1917, p. 355. It refers, in part, to the King Country.

<sup>111</sup> *SEP*, 26 October, 1917, p. 7.

speaker, 'and they lost everything. The producer once gone, and the food supplies not available, the men in the trenches were in a very unfortunate position.'<sup>112</sup> The *New Zealand Farmer* also espoused that view:

The country's prospects of passing through its present great trial successfully, and of doing its duty to the Empire, depend to a very great extent on its ability to maintain its output of agricultural produce. If the Dominion's supplies of meat, grain and dairy produce fail, not only would the main sources of national wealth disappear, but the Mother Country would be threatened with famine.<sup>113</sup>

The *New Zealand Farmer* soon after endorsed an American writer's view that 'the man behind the plough who can provide the surplus is a patriot of the first order'.<sup>114</sup>

Attempts were made by both the farming community and the military authorities to resolve the tensions between them. Farmers said, 'the operation of the Military Service Bill [*sic*] is depleting the Dominion of so much skilled labour that it must shortly create a very serious and dangerous diminution of products that are of the utmost importance to the Empire'.<sup>115</sup> Farmers wanted the government to organise the industry, to include 'practical' dairy farmers on the Military Service Appeals Boards and National Efficiency Board. To bring practical effect to their resolutions, farmers' committees were formed in northern and southern Taranaki to 'watch over and present appeals to the Military Service Board', as well as consult with the authorities on wartime matters related to farming.<sup>116</sup> The Whangamomona County Council wanted the government to make provisions for farmers who had to leave the land to serve in the NZEF, either by appointing men with 'practical knowledge of farming' to continue their farm operations, or buying the land and giving the farmer 'right

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<sup>112</sup> *SEP*, 1 March, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>113</sup> *NZF*, February, 1917, p. 222. The view is expressed further in the items titled, 'Conscripting the Producer', and 'Farmers and War Service', *NZF*, April, 1917, pp. 462, 464.

<sup>114</sup> 'Conscription and the Farmer', *NZF*, June, 1917, p. 707.

<sup>115</sup> *SEP*, 26 February, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*

of redemption on their return from the war'.<sup>117</sup> The Stratford Borough Council even moved that the government should protect the farms of soldiers 'from being bought in by Aliens, or sacrificed at low prices'.<sup>118</sup>

Sir James Allen welcomed their suggestions, but he declined to commit the government to any of the proposals. Although Allen may have seemed evasive, National Recruiting Board documentation presented to Parliament throughout 1917, shows he recognised the need for farms to remain in full production, and that the 'last man on the farm' should not be called-up for military service.<sup>119</sup> Allen insisted to Military Service Boards that it was not government policy 'to force any farmer Reservist who is actively engaged in working his own property, whether freehold or leasehold, to dispose of his farm in order to serve'.<sup>120</sup> Agriculture, and dairy farming, in particular, were recognised as essential wartime industries by the National Efficiency Board (NEB). Allen hoped that Military Service Boards would 'not hesitate' to use the services of the newly created NEB when in doubt over an appeal.<sup>121</sup> It would seem from the documentation Allen presented to Parliament that the NEB provided the government's answer to the farmers to resolve tensions over the appeals.

Another way was by direct intervention by notable people. An example was the farming family of Charles and Mary Ann Hamblyn of Tariki. Five of their sons had served with the NZEF overseas; four of them had been killed and one wounded. The remaining son of military age had stayed behind to help on

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<sup>117</sup> *SEP*, 28 February, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> Stratford Borough Council (SBC) meeting, 15 January, 1917, Minutes of Meetings, vol. 5, 23 October, 1914 to 11 June, 1917, p. 307.

<sup>119</sup> The documentation is in the form of memoranda laid before Parliament on 5 October 1917. See 'Appeals of Farmers and Agricultural and Pastoral Workers', AD 82 Box 2 1/11/1 Military Service Boards-General (ANZ). The press in Taranaki also printed news about 'Allen's Advice' to 'The Farmer-Soldier' and the 'Last Man on the Farm.' See *SEP*, 13 March, 1917, p. 6. *TH*, 13 October, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>120</sup> Memorandum from Sir James Allen to Military Service Boards, 16 March, 1917. AD 82 Box 2 1/11/1.

the farm, but was balloted. An appeal was lodged and dismissed. Taranaki MP, H. Okey, became interested in the Hamblyn family and their record of service, and he approached James Allen, who authorized the release of both Ernest and Len Hamblyn from further military service. The *Stratford Evening Post* remarked that 'this gracious act will be appreciated by the public of Taranaki'.<sup>122</sup>

The government also had to face another group representing the interests of a larger sector of society than farmers – the Second Division League. The League emerged in New Zealand in 1917 in direct response to the Military Service Act and conscription. Branches were formed in both New Plymouth and Stratford in anticipation of a 'call-up' of second division reservists. The League mounted a New Zealand-wide campaign to secure 'decent provisions' for the dependents of married reservists. A potentially divisive issue that involved the League, the government and society in general was news of a proposal by politicians in August 1917 to lower the age limit of conscription to 19. The Stratford Borough Council was 'strongly' opposed to the idea believing that 'the second division men want their chance to serve before such a step is taken'.<sup>123</sup> They felt that 'it will never be necessary to enlist lads of 19'.<sup>124</sup> Given that the vast majority of 19-year-old males would be unmarried, they would be placed in the first division and likely to be balloted before second division reservists. That put the League in an invidious position. Second division reservists, could, if the military age was lowered, be accused of sheltering 'behind lads of 19, mere school boys'.<sup>125</sup> For the League not to oppose the move and to continue focusing attention solely on securing 'decent provisions' for married 'family-men' would run the risk of it losing credibility. A letter to the *Taranaki Herald* from 'ONE OF THE MOTHERS' demonstrated the League's predicament by inferring that the

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<sup>121</sup> Memorandum from Allen to Military Service Boards, 23 March, 1917. AD 82 Box 2 1/11/1.

<sup>122</sup> *SEP*, 1 October, 1917, p. 5. *SEP*, 8 October, 1917, p. 4

<sup>123</sup> SBC meeting, 20 August, 1917. Minutes of Meetings, vol. 6, 18 June, 1917 to 27 June, 1921, p. 15.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*

situation was the League's fault because by lowering the military age Allen was 'simply [trying to] save his face while he gains a little more time to discover another means of evading the task of facing the Second Division reservists' demands of justice for their families'.<sup>126</sup>

Nineteen-year-old males never officially got the call to serve in the NZEF, and very few married reservists from Taranaki embarked in 1918. Instead, as table seventeen shows, large numbers of first division reservists from Taranaki were systematically balloted around the time of the Battle of Messines (June 1917) and in the months leading to the Battle of Passchendaele (October 1917), after which second division reservists were balloted as replacements; and then again in 1918, coinciding with the last German offensives of the Great War. In total, table seventeen shows that nearly two-thirds (60.1%) of the conscripts from Taranaki were unmarried, while nearly a third (30.5%) were married with at least one child. Second division reservists from Taranaki with more than two children were never balloted. Baker's research shows that only 832 second division reservists in all of New Zealand left for overseas service. Together, Baker says, 'the Government and the Second Division League had managed to keep all married conscripts out of the firing line'.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *TH*, 14 August, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Baker, p. 329.

**Table Seventeen : Number of Reservists From Taranaki Balloted Under the  
Military Service Act, November 1916 to October 1918**

<b>Date of NZ Gazette</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Division</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Division Class A</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Division Class B</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Division Class C</b>	<b>Totals</b>
23/11/16	170	-	-	-	170
14/12/16	100	-	-	-	100
<b>Total 1916</b>	<b>270</b>	-	-	-	<b>270</b>
12/1/17	202	-	-	-	202
13/2/17	331	-	-	-	331
13/3/17	144	-	-	-	144
17/4/17	166	-	-	-	166
8/5/17	427	-	-	-	427
6/6/17	407	-	-	-	407
4/7/17	439	-	-	-	439
1/9/17	569	-	-	-	569
2/10/17	352	-	-	-	352
3/11/17	71	201	-	-	272
4/12/17	34	201	-	-	235
<b>Total 1917</b>	<b>3,142</b>	<b>402</b>	-	-	<b>3,544</b>
15/1/18	40	149	-	-	189
19/2/18	55	10	-	-	65
26/3/18	21	4	-	-	25
25/4/18	34	1	428	-	463
21/5/18	35	2	350	-	387
19/6/18	19	3	3	456	481
24/7/18	35	1	0	253	289
21/8/18	28	1	1	233	263
18/9/18	23	0	1	173	197
10/10/18	34	0	1	1	36
<b>Total 1918</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>1,116</b>	<b>2,395</b>
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>3,736</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>1,116</b>	<b>6,209</b>

Source: *New Zealand Gazette*, 1916, vol. III. 1917, vols. I-III. 1918, vols. IA, IB, II. See NZOYB, 1918, p. 227 for a table showing total numbers of reservists in New Zealand balloted up to 24 July, 1918.

The appeals by men 'called-up' under the ballot, the concerns of the farming community and the presence of the Second Division League indicate how the Military Service Act affected people in Taranaki. If Edwin Lyford did actually take his own life in response to the ballot, hundreds of reservists throughout Taranaki demonstrated their feelings towards the 'call-up', and ultimately going to war, by appealing through judicial process. The Military Service Act had the effect of forcing individuals and groups of people to confront the Great War through a reconsideration of their roles. The government's recourse to compulsion by legislative means had a disruptive impact on Taranaki by forcing men of military age, their families, and employers to make decisions that would rearrange their lives and livelihoods. For some reservists that meant volunteering before being conscripted; for others it meant avoiding service by legitimate means by right of appeal. For families, the ballot and the subsequent 'call-up' meant a change in circumstances in terms of familial structure and economics. For all, it continued to provide meanings about the impact of war in the early twentieth-century, namely that everyone became totally involved. In addition to those who still volunteered, the Military Service Act conscripted 6,209 men in Taranaki by October 1918. How the dwindling of men in large numbers from the rural home front affected Taranaki during the war is the subject of the next chapter.





## Chapter Seven

### In the Absence of Heroes

By August 1914, the Stratford-Main Trunk railway had been completed as far east as Whangamomona and the construction of the Tahora section had begun. An observer noted that the Tahora Valley in north-east Taranaki was 'becoming a busy little place with the railway works and workers, of which there are a good few camped in the valley'.<sup>1</sup> One year later the valley presented a different, 'somewhat deserted appearance':

Just lately a large number of men were to be seen busy at work on the railway works in and around the township; now one only sees barrows and planks piled up in heaps, and we are caused to enquire what has happened to the men .... The men have simply left to fight and mine in the trenches for their country and Empire.<sup>2</sup>

A visitor to Stratford made a similar observation early in 1915:

What has struck me very forcibly on each of my visits to Stratford of late is the absence of familiar faces. When I enquire where so-in-so is, I am invariably met with the same answer: "Gone to the front". Col. Malone, Tom James, Murray Urquhart, Furby, and others - the reply is the same: "At the front".<sup>3</sup>

The Holy Trinity (Anglican) Church in Stratford made a similar observation. 'We shall find it necessary to make alterations in the country services shortly', claimed the *Church Gazette*, because 'we have not sufficient lay preachers to carry on all the services'.<sup>4</sup> The Church consoled itself that its lay preachers 'are now serving their country in the great cause for which we have taken up arms'.<sup>5</sup> At St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Stratford, Dr Stephen reported to their

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<sup>1</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 3 September, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 29 October, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *SEP*, 26 January, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Church Gazette*, 1 September, 1915, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

annual meeting that, 'owing to the great European war, many of our young men are absent at the front and for this reason the Young Men's Bible Class roll has decreased'.<sup>6</sup> So too, had the roll of male teachers from the region's classrooms. From 1916 to 1918, Taranaki schools lost 16 male teachers with a concomitant increase of 18 female teachers.<sup>7</sup> When Stratford's quota for the 36<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements assembled for departure to camp the local band was unable to attend owing to a 'shortage of players'.<sup>8</sup> Early in 1917, Stratford's Acclimatisation Society reported a 'falling off' in revenue.<sup>9</sup> The Society had always relied on the 'sportsmen' of the district to purchase hunting and fishing licences. However, there had been a noticeable decline in applications for licences because the war had 'made demands on the manhood of the district for services abroad'.<sup>10</sup> It is evident that the mobilisation of men for war service had disrupted aspects of life in Taranaki.<sup>11</sup>

Since the 1960s, historians have sought to understand the impact of the Great War on society. Arthur Marwick has been industrious in this area. Marwick believes that 'war is destructive; it shares in the characteristics of disaster: it is certainly discontinuity.'<sup>12</sup> Perhaps that is why he titled his

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<sup>6</sup> SEP, 12 July, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1916, vol. iv, p. 6. 1917, vol. iv, p. 6. 1918, vol. iv, p. 4. See p. 169, ch. 6, of this thesis regarding male teachers at Stratford District High School.

<sup>8</sup> SEP, 6 February, 1918, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> SEP, 30 May, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> For the year ending 31 March 1915, the Society collected £117 19s 6d from shooting licences and £40 10s from fishing licences. Exactly two years later those amounts had decreased to £59 9s 6d and £28 2s 6d respectively. SEP, 29 May, 1915, p. 6. SEP, 30 May, 1917, p. 7. A licence fee cost applicants £1 in the period 1915 to 1917.

<sup>11</sup> For example, 'Whangamomona was at its peak in 1915 when there were 340 ratepayers and 500 rateable properties. But the number of young men drawn away to the war was a presage of the population's long decline.' Ian Church, *The Stratford Inheritance*, Waikanae: The Heritage Press, 1990, p. 179. For other examples of how the absence of males disrupted local developments see pp. 89, 162.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Marwick, 'The Impact of the First World War On British Society', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3:1 (1968), p. 60. In that article Marwick refined his methods of how war affects society from an earlier version published in *The Deluge*, pp. 289-90. Similarly, H. P. Willmott, writing about the Great War stated that, 'the outbreak of war, like the war itself, was a deluge', in *When Men Lost Faith in Reason. Reflections on War and Society in the Twentieth Century*, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002, p. 58.

pioneering study on the subject, *The Deluge*. Similarly, Rex Pope sees the Great War as a 'disruption', the sheer scale of which 'shocked and horrified people'.<sup>13</sup> Richard Wall and Jay Winter considered the war to be an 'upheaval' for European families, and Noel Whiteside used the phrase, 'a period of acute social upheaval' to describe its impact.<sup>14</sup> Richard Bessel's research on German society during the Great War found similar disruptions.<sup>15</sup> To what extent could the same be said of the Taranaki region, thousands of miles from the battlefields? After all, at least 1,109 men and seven nurses from Taranaki had embarked with the NZEF by December 1915.<sup>16</sup> In addition to them and those who volunteered during the period 1916 to 1918, 270 men from Taranaki were conscripted in 1916; another 3,544 men were conscripted in 1917; and a further 2,394 in 1918.<sup>17</sup> The total number of men conscripted in Taranaki represents about 35% of the region's male work force in 1916. The presence of a great war and the mobilisation of in excess of 7,300 men from Taranaki by November 1918 must have caused *some* disruptions to life in the region.<sup>18</sup> If so, in what ways? This chapter and the next will address that question. This chapter focuses on two key aspects of life in Taranaki: rural labour supply and marriage.

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<sup>13</sup> Rex Pope, *War and Society in Britain, 1899-1948*, London: Longman, 1996, p. 13. See ch. 2, 'Theories on the Impact of War on Society', pp. 9-19.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Wall and Jay Winter, (eds), *The Upheaval of War. Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Noel Whiteside, 'The British Population at War', in *Britain and the First World War*, John Turner, (ed.), London: Unwin Hyman, 1988, p. 85.

<sup>15</sup> Bessel wrote, 'the abrupt removal of four million men from civil society caused enormous upheaval. Once war broke out, mobilizing German society profoundly disrupted the lives of millions of people. Families were split, housing arrangements disrupted, employment patterns drastically altered, and schools closed'. See Bessel's chapter, 'Mobilizing German Society For War', in *Great War, Total War. Combat and Mobilisation on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, Roger Chickering and Stig Forster, (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 439.

<sup>16</sup> Compiled from data in *Alphabetical Roll of New Zealand Expeditionary Force From 15<sup>th</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1915*, vol. I, Wellington: Government Printer, 1917.

<sup>17</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, 1916-18. Volunteering continued throughout the Great War, but it is difficult to know the actual number of volunteers from Taranaki during the period 1916 to 1918 because volumes 2-4 of the *Nominal Rolls* of the NZEF do not provide the last known address of the enlistees. An indication of an enlistee's last known place of residence is given by the next-of-kin's address.

<sup>18</sup> *Census of New Zealand*, 1911, p. 423.

At the outset of the Great War, the Taranaki dairy industry maintained its favourable position as a supplier of produce to Britain, as it had been doing for about a quarter century. In Taranaki, nearly half (47.3%) the male 'breadwinners' worked in the agricultural sector; 75 dairy factories existed in the region, which was the highest number for any provincial district in New Zealand; it employed the most dairy 'hands' (397); and it produced the most butter (£709,384) and cheese by value (£498,476).<sup>19</sup> From 1915, dairying in Taranaki extended its economic role to include a patriotic duty of serving the needs of the 'motherland' as a consequence of the British government's commandeering of New Zealand's dairy produce, in particular, cheese, thus providing predetermined stable prices and a guaranteed market for the region's farmers. Consequently, headlines in the *New Zealand Farmer* announced '**Good Times for Taranaki Cheesemakers**' with 'the only concern for the farmer just now is the probable shortage of feed for winter'.<sup>20</sup> However, labour shortages overshadowed that concern late in 1915 as pressure on men of military age to enlist increased. From 1915, the Department of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce reported on the 'extreme difficulty of obtaining sufficient help on the farm, and also in many of the dairy factories, owing to such large numbers of experienced men joining the Expeditionary Forces'.<sup>21</sup> A year later the situation in the countryside had deteriorated further. The Minister of Agriculture reported that:

the agricultural industry of New Zealand has come under the many-sided influences of the Great War in steadily increasing degree. The phase of semi-detachment enjoyed by this favoured land from the profound economic and industrial changes brought about in the Motherland and other countries situated round the main storm-centre appears, indeed, to be rapidly passing away.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, vol. iii/iv, 1913, p. 95.

<sup>20</sup> *New Zealand Farmer* (NZF), April 1915, p. 478.

<sup>21</sup> Report of the Director of Dairy Division, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce for 1915-16, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), 1916, vol. II, H.-29, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce for 1916-17, *AJHR*, 1917, vol. II, H.-29, p. 1.

The Minister added that, 'the depletion of rural man-power necessitated by the requirements of the Expeditionary Forces has begun to tell heavily', and this was especially noticeable on the dairy farms and in the butter and cheese factories of Taranaki.<sup>23</sup>

The shortage was noticeable in the farming calendar. November and December are traditionally the time for haymaking, but a letter to the editor of the *Stratford Evening Post* warned readers that 'a very serious situation faces farmers this season, owing to the shortage of labour'.<sup>24</sup> J. B. Murdoch, chairman of the Hawera County Council, shared that view. He informed James Allen, Minister of Defence, that 'the position as regards to labour is becoming serious'.<sup>25</sup> By census night, October 1916, in excess of a thousand men from Taranaki had already volunteered, which is reflected in the following table. It shows very little growth in the number of men employed within each occupation classification when compared with the pre-war period. While the agricultural and pastoral sector shows slow growth by 1916, marked declines are revealed in the trade and industrial sectors, suggesting that volunteers for the NZEF were largely recruited from occupations in those areas.

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *SEP*, 16 November 1915, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> J. B. Murdoch to J. Allen, 22 February 1916. Army Department (AD) 1/29/68 Enlistment of Farm Labourers in Expeditionary Force. (ANZ).

**Table Eighteen: Numbers of Males Employed in Each Occupation  
Classification in Taranaki : 1906-1921**

Occupation Classification	No. Males 1906	% Change	No. Males 1911	% Change	No. Males 1916	% Change	No. Males 1921
Professional	763	10.8	846	8.6	919	30.3	1,198
Domestic	363	4.6	380	-6.5	355	1.9	362
Commercial : Property and Finance	285	55.0	442	-6.3	414	17.3	486
Commercial : Trade	1,343	21.0	1,626	-16.5	1,357	32.5	1,799
Commercial : Storage	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transport, Communication	786	51.2	1,189	6.3	1,264	15.4	1,459
Industrial	4,106	23.6	5,078	-16.0	4,264	0.8	4,301
Agricultural, Pastoral, Mineral and Other Primary Producers	7,465	15.2	8,602	3.6	8,917	15.6	10,315
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15,122</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>18,163</b>	<b>-3.7</b>	<b>17,490</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>19,920</b>

Source: *Census of New Zealand*, 1906, p. 354. 1911, p. 423. 1916, p. 139. 1921, pp. 24-25.

Note: Table eighteen excludes males categorised as 'dependent' and as 'indefinite', the latter term meaning that the nature of their paid employment could not be determined.

Agricultural historian, H. G. Philpott, says that during the 1916-1917 dairying season:

the depletion of rural-manpower necessitated by the requirements of the Expeditionary Forces began to tell heavily .... Labour difficulties in regard to dairying were so acute that a number of dairy-farmers were compelled to milk fewer cows. It was also difficult to get experienced men for dairy factories.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> H. G. Philpott, *A History of the New Zealand Dairy Industry 1840-1935*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1937, p. 150. The dairying season usually covered the period from September to March.

In an editorial on 'Dairy Factory Labour', the *Taranaki Herald* confirmed that the factories in Taranaki 'were fully twenty per cent understaffed'.<sup>27</sup> In 1917, the Military Service Act (1916) began to make its presence felt in Taranaki because 'each ballot takes its toll of the farmers, and everywhere the farms are short-handed', reported the *New Zealand Farmer*, 'great is the discontent'. On one farm 'the sheep were turned into 60 acres of oats because no labour was obtainable' to harvest the field.<sup>28</sup> A sample of those men balloted from Taranaki shows that of the 803 names called in the first four ballots from November 1916 to February 1917, 421 (52%) were employed in agriculture and pastoral pursuits.<sup>29</sup> Of that latter number, 260 (62%) were farmers. In November 1917, the chairman of the Stratford County Council reported at their monthly meeting that, 'owing to the shortage of labour, we have had to utilise our men to carry out a lot of the work that otherwise would have been done by contract'.<sup>30</sup> A further indicator of the labour shortage could be seen in 'the masses of blackberry that are invading the grasslands of Taranaki', reported the *Stratford Evening Post* early in 1918.<sup>31</sup> Travellers 'by train between Stratford and New Plymouth can hardly fail to appreciate the extent of the menace to the productiveness of the province', added the *Post*.<sup>32</sup> Clearly signs of labour shortages existed in the Taranaki countryside for most of the war. This situation caused anxiety and prompted local concerns about how best to cope with the strains labour shortages placed on the seasonal nature of farming and the skilled work of the dairy factories.

In early November 1915, the Stratford Patriotic Committee expressed concerns about the recruitment of dairy factory employees in a discussion at one of its meetings. The discussion moved between the fighting needs of New Zealand to suggestions about how to maintain essential industries. The

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<sup>27</sup> *TH*, 22 August, 1917, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *NZF*, March 1917, p. 357.

<sup>29</sup> *New Zealand Gazette*, vol. III, 1916, pp. 3670-71, 3864-65, vol. IV, 1917, pp. 147-48, 559-61.

<sup>30</sup> *SEP*, 8 November, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *SEP*, 19 January, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*



employment of 'rejected men' and returned soldiers and by refusing to allow 'expert men' to enlist featured prominently in the discourse.<sup>33</sup> In May 1916, the Taranaki Dairying and Farming Industrial Union of Employers held a meeting in Hawera 'to consider the question of next season's labor [*sic*] for the factories'.<sup>34</sup> R. Dingle, the president of the union, explained that cheese manufacturers 'felt a little bit alarmed because so many of their employees were enlisting, and they were afraid that they would not get sufficient hands to carry on the industry during the next season'.<sup>35</sup> In February 1917, a meeting of 'between four and five hundred farmers' took place in Eltham's Town Hall to discuss the effects of the Military Service Act on the dairying industry.<sup>36</sup> A week later a delegation of farmers met Sir James Allen in Stratford to present their grievances over the 'great dearth of labour in the dairying industry':

Not only to milk cows and run milk to the factories, but to crop and prepare winter feed for maintenance of cows till spring. Then there was the question of noxious weeds, all spare time was required to keep down the weeds now, owing to the shortage of labor there was little or no chance of dealing with this nuisance.<sup>37</sup>

'The back country of Taranaki was shutting its gates', a farmer from Eltham told Allen, 'and leaving stock and everything else to take care of itself till they [soldiers] came back. No one could replace the men who were going away'.<sup>38</sup> Another farmer told Allen that, 'the farmers' business was essentially a "one man" business. He had only himself and his sons coming on to carry out necessary work and make the farm a paying proposition. Take away the farmer,

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<sup>33</sup> The term 'rejected men' refers to those volunteers who had failed the medical examination upon enlistment with the NZEF. The term 'expert men' refers to skilled labour in the dairy industry. The manufacture of butter and cheese required skilled labour especially with developments being made in the manufacture of cheese. Labour shortages, especially of skilled workers, threatened the quality of the dairy product. Philpott, p. 147.

<sup>34</sup> *SEP*, 2 May 1916, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *SEP*, 26 February, 1 March, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *SEP*, 1 March, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

and they lost everything'.<sup>39</sup> A farmer from Matakawa looked 'with dread to the beginning of the next season (September), when labour will not be available', and suggested that 'gaps could be filled by retired farmers or other men, say from 45 to 65'.<sup>40</sup> That suggestion overlooked women residing in Taranaki as a potential solution to the labour supply problem.

On census night in October 1916, 15,753 women between the ages of 15 and 65 resided in Taranaki.<sup>41</sup> Of that number, over half (57%) resided in the counties. Most of them would have been classified in the census returns as 'dependents' and 'non-breadwinners'. These labels disguise the fact that women did work without pay in the households and on the farms in Taranaki, especially family-owned farms. The work activities of New Zealand women in the countryside are well documented.<sup>42</sup> Eric Warr says that 'the earlier responsibility of the wife for butter and cheese-making was such that the farm dairy had frequently been thought of as a mere adjunct of the kitchen'.<sup>43</sup> Miles Fairburn says that, 'women had always played a vital role in the running of the family farm', and '26% of [dairy farmers'] wives worked on the farm at least forty hours a week'.<sup>44</sup> When the *New Zealand Farmer* asked its readers for their opinion on the extent to which country women could relieve men for war service, two correspondents from Taranaki had answers which confirmed that women already worked in a variety of jobs on the farm. 'Awatea' said that:

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Census of New Zealand, 1916*, pp. 19-20, 35-36.

<sup>42</sup> Claire Toynbee, *Her Work and His. Family, Kin and Community in New Zealand 1900-1930*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1995, pp. 47-55. Eric Warr, *From Bush-Burn to Butter*, Wellington: Butterworths, 1988, pp. 114-17. See Sarah Luxford, 'Passengers For the War? The Involvement of New Zealand Women in Employment During the Great War 1914-1918', MA Thesis in History, Massey University, 2005, pp. 21-22 for a statistical analysis on Taranaki.

<sup>43</sup> Warr, p. 116.

<sup>44</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'The Farmers Take Over (1912-1930)', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Keith Sinclair, (ed.), Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 191, 186.

There are a number of farm jobs that women could undertake and relieve men. Look at the dairying industry for instance. Thousands of cows are milked by women, and why not thousands more? And much of the work incidental to dairy farming could be done by women. Then gardening, orchard, poultry and bee work are all duties which I think women could undertake almost "on their own".<sup>45</sup>

That work was no novelty for women already living on farms is clear from 'Brown Eyed Ruby' of Sentry Hill in Taranaki, who wrote in response to the *New Zealand Farmer's* question: 'What can the colonial woman do to let the men get away to the front? Well, not much':

We country women and girls are willing and do endure hardships on farms now through shortage of male labour, and do so willingly. On farms you will find girls helping fence, cutting black berries, grubbing gorse, carting out feed to the cows, helping feed the pigs and other animals, and milking .... We country girls and women are doing these things now as a matter of course; what more can we do?<sup>46</sup>

Eric Warr confirms that 'milking the cows was generally the responsibility of the farmer's wife and children, since this freed the principal breadwinner to carry out the more important and also the more physically demanding tasks around the farm'.<sup>47</sup> Claire Toynbee says that 'farming meant much labour-intensive work for everyone concerned, especially on farms employing only family labour'.<sup>48</sup> Toynbee adds that, 'the most noticeable thing about women's and girls' work on family-owned farms which used only their own labour was the wide range of tasks they undertook, not only in the house, dairy and garden, but on the farm as well'.<sup>49</sup> A veritable army of unpaid women workers already lived and worked on farms in Taranaki at the time of the Great War.

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<sup>45</sup> *NZF*, August, 1916, p. 1204.

<sup>46</sup> *NZF*, September, 1916, p. 1352.

<sup>47</sup> Warr, p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> Toynbee, p. 60.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p. 47.

Some women did work for pay, but only a small proportion (17%) of the total number of females residing in Taranaki at the time of 1916 census.<sup>50</sup> Erik Olssen explains that by 1914, 'most married men in New Zealand considered it a humiliating confession of their inadequacy if their wives had to accept paid work. By the same token, a wife's respectability, and her husband's, had come to depend upon her not having to seek paid work'.<sup>51</sup> A comment in the *New Zealand Farmer* reflected that attitude in 1918: 'three years ago the only women who were working for wages were the "daily-breaders" and those who were frankly looked upon by their friends as cranks and extraordinary people'.<sup>52</sup> In spite of that view 4,603 women in Taranaki were classified as 'breadwinners' (working for wages to support themselves and/or others) in the 1916 census, with nearly two-thirds (61%) in the domestic, and agricultural and pastoral sectors of the region's economy. The agricultural and pastoral sector employed 1,491 (32.3%) 'breadwinning' women and most were classified in the census as 'dairy farmer and relative assisting'. Of that number only 16 resided in the boroughs of Taranaki, while the majority lived and worked out in the counties.<sup>53</sup> Table nineteen shows that of all the occupation classifications, the agricultural and pastoral sector remained high in numbers and stable to 1916, whereas other sectors generally experienced slowed growth and decline.

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<sup>50</sup> 27,117 females lived in Taranaki in 1916. *Census of New Zealand*, 1916, p. 140.

<sup>51</sup> Erik Olssen, 'Working Gender, Gendering Work: Occupational Change and Continuity in Southern Dunedin', in *Sites of Gender*, Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper and Robin Law, (eds), Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003, p. 60.

<sup>52</sup> 'Three Years of Women's War Work', *NZF*, April 1918, p. 516.

<sup>53</sup> *Census of New Zealand*, 1916, p. 158.

**Table Nineteen: Numbers of Females Employed in Each Occupation  
Classification in Taranaki: 1906 - 1921**

<b>Occupation Classification</b>	<b>No. Females 1906</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>No. Females 1911</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>No. Females 1916</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>No. Females 1921</b>
Professional	440	31.3	578	29.5	749	28.1	960
Domestic	1,083	15.0	1,246	5.4	1,314	11.7	1,468
Commercial: Property and Finance	31	54.8	48	37.5	66	21.2	80
Commercial : Trade	237	56.5	371	18.5	440	28.8	567
Commercial : Storage	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transport, Communicatio n	30	40.0	42	107.1	87	35.6	118
Industrial	375	13.8	427	-13.5	369	13.5	419
Agricultural, Pastoral, Mineral and Other Primary Products	519	70.3	884	68.6	1,491	-21.5	1,170
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,716</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>3,596</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>4,516*</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4,782</b>

Source: *Census of New Zealand*, 1906, p. 355. 1911, p. 424. 1916, p. 140. 1921, pp. 26-27

Notes: Table nineteen excludes women categorised as 'indefinite'. \* Does not include 87 women classified as 'indefinite'.

With the Great War thinning the ranks of the male labour supply, a greater involvement in the Taranaki workforce came to be expected of women. The Stratford Patriotic Committee discussed women workers as early as November 1915. One committee member observed that in 'other parts of the world women were doing the work of men, and in time, they would most likely have to do the same here. Women could do some of the work in the factories'.<sup>54</sup> Stratford's Presbyterian minister, Reverend J. Pattison agreed. He 'thought girls,

<sup>54</sup> SEP, 3 November 1915, p. 3.

in a few cases, could take the places of men'.<sup>55</sup> Others on the committee were not so certain. Mayor Kirkwood, for instance, seemed astonished to learn that, 'it had even been said that women could do the work' of factory employees.<sup>56</sup> The chairman of the Stratford Dairy Company expressed his uncertainty by explaining that 'employees had to work all hours and in all weather', and while 'at work they perspired all over. No woman could stand that seven days a week'.<sup>57</sup> Robert Masters was also adamant that 'women were not able to do the work in the factories'.<sup>58</sup> Clearly, some members of the Stratford Patriotic Committee believed that the skilled and physical nature of work in the dairy factories was beyond the capabilities of women, but labour shortages presented a major concern, which necessitated local action, and that meant considering the inclusion of women to alleviate some of the stress.

The idea of including women in the workforce gathered momentum during 1916. In February, the *Stratford Evening Post* stated that, 'women must play a more active part among the workers', even though the 'stress in this Dominion has not yet become nearly so acute as in Britain, but there is certainly much work that women and girls could undertake'.<sup>59</sup> With headings like, '**English Women and Farm Labour**', newspaper editorials and magazine articles publicised the work British women were doing on the farms, presumably with the hope that it would act as an inspiration to women living in both town and country to become involved in farm work.<sup>60</sup> However, an editorial in the *New Zealand Farmer* commented early in 1917 that, 'so far no attempt has been made

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *SEP*, 1 February, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> *NZF*, September, 1915, p. 1230, 'Women Farmers', an article which affirmed the idea that women could work on farms. *NZF*, November, 1915, p. 1533, 'Women Labour on Farms' in England. *NZF*, December, 1915, p. 1702, 'A Woman Farmer' in Sussex. *SEP*, 26 February, 1916, p. 4. *NZF*, June, 1916, p. 909, 'Farming For Women' in Leeds. *NZF*, June, 1916, p. 909, 'Englishwomen and Farm Labour'.

to attract city women to the many phases of rural work'.<sup>61</sup> The *New Zealand Farmer* saw the practical advantage to the war effort of including women in the work force. 'It is obvious if women are not encouraged to take up farm work the production of essential primary products must decline, and we will not be able to do our share in the important work of feeding the Empire.'<sup>62</sup> It advocated, 'to make the employment of women for farm work possible it would be necessary to provide [a] course of training, which could very well be done at the Government experimental farms'.<sup>63</sup> A demonstration farm did exist in Stratford from 1917, but there is no evidence of training for women.<sup>64</sup> The *New Zealand Farmer* supported the idea of women working on farms by publishing articles and news reports throughout the war about women farm workers in New Zealand, Britain and France.<sup>65</sup>

The government and its agencies accepted the idea that women were needed for farm work. The Minister of Agriculture felt that:

The prolongation of the war is placing an increasing strain on the agricultural industry, the provision of the necessary labour being the principal problem to cope with ... The time appears to be approaching when the women of the country must be called into the agricultural ranks in no inconsiderable numbers. Here also we have the example of the Motherland.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *NZF*, January, 1917, p. 82.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> The first meeting of the Stratford Model Dairy Farm and Experimental Area Society was held on 17 June, 1917. It became known as the Stratford Demonstration Farm Society from 1930. Colin Y. Brown, *A History of the Stratford Demonstration Farm Society (Inc.), 1917-1992*, [no pub. details]. For progress reports on the demonstration farm see *SEP*, 10, 25 October, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> For New Zealand examples see 'Women and the Land. A Good Opportunity', *NZF*, January 1917. 'Women For Farm Work', April 1917, p. 463. 'Woman's Work In The Country', with examples from southern Hawke's Bay and Waikato, April 1917, p. 480. 'Wanted, A Thousand Milkmaids', September 1917, p. 1081. 'The Woman Cow Tester', December 1917, p. 1424. For British examples see 'Englishwomen as Farm Workers', January 1917. 'Three Women on a Farm', April 1917, p. 480. 'Women as Farm Workers in War Time', May 1917, pp. 593-4. 'Women For English Farms', July 1917, p. 332. For a French example see 'French Farm Women', January 1917.

<sup>66</sup> Department of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce. Annual Report for 1916-17, *AJHR*, 1917, vol. II, H.-29, p. 5. The annual report of the Minister of Agriculture was presented to Parliament on 6 August 1917. Reference was made to the report in *NZF*, October 1917, p. 1213, under the heading, 'Women and Children's Work for the War'.

The newly formed National Efficiency Board (NEB) had as one of its duties, 'to make recommendation[s] for the more extensive utilization of the labour of women in suitable industries during the war'.<sup>67</sup> In 1917, the NEB disseminated a British War Office pamphlet, '*Women's War Work in Maintaining the Industries and Export Trade of the United Kingdom*', through the branches of the Women's National Reserve. The aim was 'to let the women of New Zealand realize what is being done by their sisters in Great Britain and to stimulate them to action in the present crisis'.<sup>68</sup> The NEB believed the 'immediate want is for women to undertake milking and other work on dairy farms, and replace men who have been or are to be called up, and for other open-air and country occupations'.<sup>69</sup> A section in the pamphlet on agriculture commented favourably on the work women were doing in Britain, in particular, as 'milkers' on dairy farms 'in large numbers and with success'.<sup>70</sup>

Late in the war, the *New Zealand Farmer* noted that the emulation of British women working on the farms has occurred only in 'isolated instances' here.<sup>71</sup> The Minister of Agriculture confirmed that in the department's annual report to Parliament in 1918. 'Although a little help was given from the towns at harvest-time, there was practically no general call for organized assistance from that direction, nor were women volunteer workers from outside forthcoming as in Britain.'<sup>72</sup> Melanie Nolan's research confirms that the hope of the NEB that, 'the example of British women doing men's work would inspire New Zealand women, at least into rural labour ... did not happen'.<sup>73</sup> Why was this so?

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<sup>67</sup> Reports and Memoranda in Connection With the National Efficiency Board, *AJHR*, 1917, vol. II, H.-34, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Report of the National Efficiency Board, *AJHR*, 1917, vol. II, H.-43, Appendix X, 'Women's War Work', p. 34.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>71</sup> *NZF*, June 1918, p. 806.

<sup>72</sup> Department of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce. Annual Report for 1917-18, *AJHR*, 1918, vol. II, H.-29, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Melanie Nolan, *Breadwinning. New Zealand Women and the State*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2000, p. 16.



As has already been mentioned in this chapter, a large number of women already lived and worked on family farms in Taranaki, which obviated the need to employ extra labour. H. Belshaw says that where the family farm is predominant, 'there is little hired labour'.<sup>74</sup> If extra labour was needed then a 'hired boy' did the work.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, Belshaw says that on dairy farms some labour requirements were 'satisfied by co-operation amongst the farmers themselves'.<sup>76</sup> The increased use of mechanisation also lessened the recourse to labour outside the family. Warr says that, 'labour on farms had always been scarce and therefore expensive. Consequently efforts were made to minimise labour inputs and to maximise levels of productivity with existing labour by the adoption of mechanisation.'<sup>77</sup> Rollo Arnold would agree. In his study of Kaponga in south Taranaki, Arnold drew on examples from 1901 and 1903 to show the ongoing scarcity of labour for milking.<sup>78</sup> Arnold found that the solution to the labour for milking problem in Kaponga before the war was through Swiss immigrant labour, sharemilking and milking machines.<sup>79</sup> The use of milking machines is a suitable example of mechanisation alleviating the scarcity of milkers. Sarah Emma Lund and her husband Fritz farmed a property on Ball Road at Alton in Taranaki, and in a letter to her family in England in June 1917 she proudly stated that, 'we are going to milk 100 cows, I suppose you will think it a lot ... I suppose you will think we are milking them by hand (oh no) we have got Machines, we have had to buy them, they milk 6 cows all at once ... they cost us £140 to buy them'.<sup>80</sup> Even though milking machines existed

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<sup>74</sup> H. Belshaw, et.al., *Agricultural Organization in New Zealand*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1936, p. 33.

<sup>75</sup> Toynbee, p. 52. See NZF editorial on 'The Boy Asset', January, 1917, p. 82.

<sup>76</sup> Belshaw, p. 202.

<sup>77</sup> Warr, pp. 114-5.

<sup>78</sup> Rollo Arnold, *Settler Kaponga 1881-1914. A Frontier Fragment of the Western World*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, pp. 252-3.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 253-7.

<sup>80</sup> Smith Family: Letters from Sarah Emma Lund, 26 June 1917, p.2. MS-Papers-7368 (ATL). This folder comprises four letters Sarah wrote to her family back in England whilst living on farms

on farms before 1914, 'wartime labour shortages hastened developments so that by 1918-19 7,577 machines were installed. As a result nearly 50% of all dairy cows were machine milked' in New Zealand says Warr.<sup>81</sup> Belshaw adds that the increased use of the milking machine paralleled the decline of women employed in dairying.<sup>82</sup>

Women from the boroughs like New Plymouth and Stratford were not necessarily needed on family-farms because work often included the local community, or what Toynbee refers to as 'sociability'.<sup>83</sup> Toynbee believes that what made farming families unique were the 'sociable' activities of 'sharing of tasks directed towards commodity production, the sharing of leisure for all family members, and the strength of these families' community ties.'<sup>84</sup> The Minister of Agriculture recognised the 'sociability' of the farming community in his report of 1918, stating that with the harvest that year 'practically all credit is thus due to the farmers and their wives and families, together with the regular rural labour remaining'.<sup>85</sup> However, school inspectors in Taranaki were not so congratulatory. Some localities were affected by irregular school attendance of pupils. The inspectors blamed the irregularity on 'war conditions, as there is a tendency to make use of the older pupils on the farm to the detriment of school attendance [and] there are some instances of the overwork of children in connection with the dairy industry'.<sup>86</sup>

Even though a labour shortage existed for the duration of the Great War, and reached what Philpott described as 'a very acute stage' in 'a year of

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on Oeo Road, Awatuna and Ball Road, Alton in Taranaki. The letters are dated 25 March 1913, 26 June 1917, 8 December 1918, and 19 March 1917 (or 1918?)

<sup>81</sup> Warr, p. 124. The use of cream separators at home on farms in Taranaki increased over the period from 1911 to 1921. Only eight were in use by 1911; 233 by 1916; and 389 by 1921. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1913, vol. iii/iv, p. 95, 1916, p. 93, 1920, p. 96.

<sup>82</sup> Belshaw, p. 34.

<sup>83</sup> Toynbee, pp. 136-7.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>85</sup> Department of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce. Annual Report for 1917-18, *AJHR*, 1918, vol. II, H.-29, p. 1.

difficulties' from 1918 to 1919, very few women were employed in dairy factory work.<sup>87</sup> A delegation of dairy factory leaders from the Wairarapa region who met with the Prime Minister in December 1915 claimed that, 'in Taranaki, women were already working in the factories and doing uncommonly well'.<sup>88</sup> Statistics do not support their claim. Seventy women were employed throughout New Zealand in butter and cheese manufacturing in March 1916, of which only two were located in Taranaki.<sup>89</sup> Nor does the discourse from meetings already mentioned in this chapter where concerns about dairy factory labour shortages were discussed, support the claim of the Wairarapa dairy delegates.

Why women were not employed in the factory system of making butter and cheese was probably due to factories not been attractive places to work in, and the absence of training provisions for women. The NEB discovered 'a certain amount of reluctance upon the part of employers' in general, except in commercial work, to train women assistants to take the place of men who had been called away for military service.<sup>90</sup> The *Taranaki Herald* reported in August 1917, that in the June ballot, 16 cheesemakers and 'seven or eight other dairy factory hands, managers or assistants' had been called for war service.<sup>91</sup> No mention was made of employing women to take their place. Erik Olssen says

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<sup>86</sup> 'Abridged Reports of Inspectors of Schools, 1917', *AJHR*, 1918, vol. II, E.-2, p. ii. The report was dated 2 March, 1918. See Warr, pp. 116-17 for description of children, work and school.

<sup>87</sup> 'It was very bad season climatically, being severely cold and wet' which impacted on farming in Taranaki, Philpott, p. 154. D. Cuddie, the Dairy Division Director of the Department of Agriculture, Industries and Commerce reported for the 1918 to 1919 season that in Taranaki, 'there was a heavy mortality of dairy cows, due to the lack of sufficient feed for these animals during the winter and early spring months. Even many of those that survived were in such a low condition owing to semi-starvation that they gave considerably less milk for sometime after the season began.' See *AJHR*, 1919, vol. II, H.-29, p. 17. The 'year of difficulties' was exacerbated by the influenza epidemic in November 1918.

<sup>88</sup> Wairarapa delegation to William Massey, 1 December, 1915. AD 1/29/68.

<sup>89</sup> By comparison butter and cheese manufacturing employed 580 males in Taranaki in March 1916. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1916, p. 93.

<sup>90</sup> Report of the National Efficiency Board, *AJHR*, 1917, vol. II, H.-43.

<sup>91</sup> *TH*, 22 August, 1917, p. 2. The *New Zealand Gazette* confirms the accuracy of the *Herald's* claim. See the list of names in the *Gazette* for June 1917, pp. 2242-45.

that, 'despite the strong recommendations of the Efficiency Board, nobody willingly challenged existing patterns of gendered segmentation. Deep customary beliefs and values undoubtedly explain this situation'.<sup>92</sup> An insight into how the factories coped with labour shortages is provided by a *Taranaki Herald* editorial, which said that factory managers and their chief assistants 'will have to work harder themselves and at the same time have to exercise closer supervision upon those under them, because they will practically have to take whatever casual assistance is offered'.<sup>93</sup> They just had to 'carry on', whatever the adversity.<sup>94</sup>

Women living on farms had to 'carry on' as well doing more of the farm work as *New Zealand Farmer* correspondents 'Awatea' and 'Brown-Eyed Ruby' stated earlier in this chapter. As more men left the countryside for war service, women on the farms recognised or redefined themselves more as 'working proprietors' or farm 'managers' for the duration. Table twenty shows the rise and fall in numbers of female employees on farms in Taranaki around the end of the Great War. In a *New Zealand Farmer* article on 'Women's Work in the Country', published towards the end of the war, the idea of farming being a 'new field for women's energies' did not find favour; instead the idea of 'making homes for farmers' after the war, 'not in any rivalry in the fields' was given support.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Olssen, 'Working Gender, Gendering Work', p. 80. Nolan, p. 16.

<sup>93</sup> *TH*, 22 August, 1917, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> The Minister of Agriculture, W. D. S. MacDonald, in his annual report to Parliament stated: 'Perhaps the most salient feature of New Zealand agriculture during the year [1917-1918] ... has been its remarkable ability to "carry on".' Department of Agriculture Annual Report for 1917-18, *AJHR*, 1918, vol. II, H.-29, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> *NZF*, June 1918, p. 806.

**Table Twenty: Farm Employees (Female) in Taranaki 1917-1921**

	<b>1917-18</b>	<b>1918-19</b>	<b>1919-20</b>	<b>1920-21</b>
<b>Dairy Farms</b>	3,321	3,643	3,518	3,362
<b>All Farms</b>	3,773	4,088	3,909	3,684

Source: *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, vol. II, 1917-1920, p. 28.

Note: The numbers refer to females 'ordinarily employed on holdings of one acre or over' outside the borough boundaries.

The first part of this chapter has shown that the shortage of men in Taranaki occasioned by the Great War affected aspects of life in the region, in particular, the rural labour supply. The second part of this chapter examines the affects of the shortage of men on marriage in Taranaki. The *New Zealand Official Yearbook* claimed that the Great War had 'rudely upset' the trend of a gradual increase in the rate of marriage.<sup>96</sup> It specifically blamed the National Registration Act or 'War Census' of 1915 for this. There was a 'desire of many men to be shown in the register as married', claimed the *Yearbook*, 'with a view to obtaining certain advantages or escaping certain obligations'.<sup>97</sup> The number of marriages solemnized in 1915 was the highest ever recorded at the time in New Zealand and the rate of marriage exceeded the previous record set in 1864.<sup>98</sup> The *Yearbook* lamented the impact of the National Registration Act on the marriage rate because it believed 'the year 1916 was robbed of these "hastened" marriages'.<sup>99</sup> The introduction of conscription through the Military Service Act, which took into account only marriages solemnized before May 1915, further reduced the number of males of marriageable age in 1916. The marriage rate in 1916 fell to its lowest level since 1899, and in '1917 the rate descended to a level

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<sup>96</sup> *New Zealand Official Year Book (NZOYB)*, 1919, p. 135.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

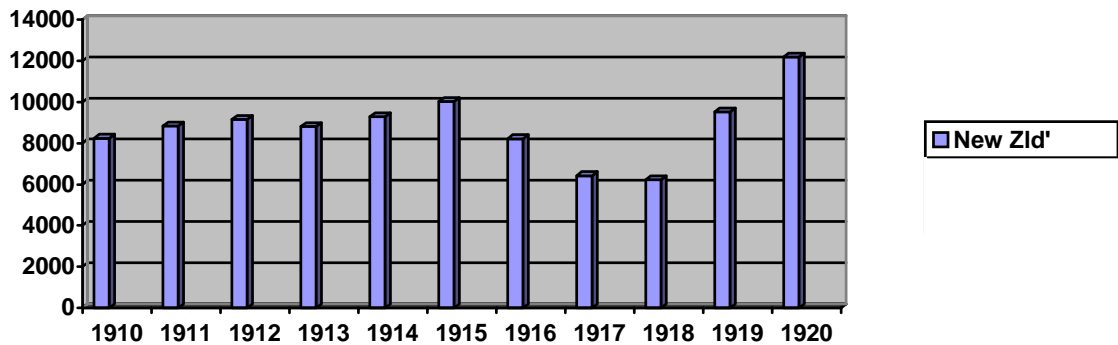
<sup>98</sup> *NZOYB*, 1917, p. 80. The highest number of marriages 'ever recorded' in Australia also occurred in 1915. See *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia (OYBCA)*, 1901-1918, p. 172.

<sup>99</sup> *NZOYB*, 1917, p. 80.

never previously reached; a position accentuated in 1918'.<sup>100</sup> Only with the cessation of hostilities and the demobilisation of the NZEF in 1919 did the rate of marriage begin to resemble its pre-war trend.

The marriage patterns during the Great War in New Zealand and Taranaki, and even in specific localities like St. Mary's Church in New Plymouth are remarkably similar. Graphs two, three and four show a peak in 1915 followed by a decline to 1918, thereafter a rise in the post-war period. Can the 'War Census' be held accountable for the marriage peak reached in 1915? The *Yearbook* suggests that it can because the number of marriages registered in New Zealand in the 'December quarter of 1915 exceeds [the] December quarter of 1914 by 814'.<sup>101</sup> It is a claim in need of assessment because it suggests that state policy was responsible for the marriage pattern in late 1915.

**Graph Two: Total Number of Marriages Registered in New Zealand, 1910-1920**

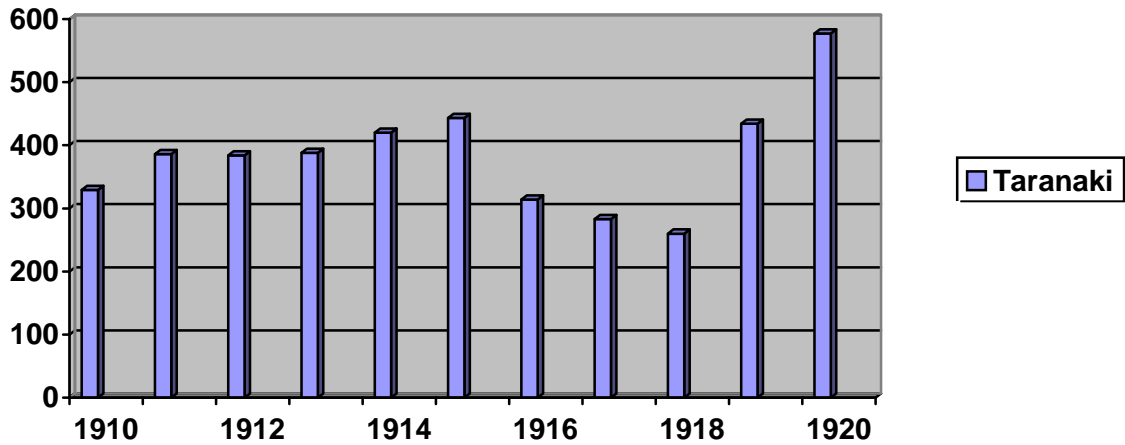


Source: NZOYB, 1920, p. 29. 1921-22, p. 76. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1910, p. 277. 1911, p. 303. 1912, p. 309. 1913, p. 37. 1914, p. 33. 1915, p. 33. 1916, p. 31. 1917, p. 31. 1918, p. 31, 1919, p. 33. 1920, p. 41.

<sup>100</sup> NZOYB, 1919, p. 136. Also in Australia, 'in 1916, 1917 and 1918 a heavy falling off was recorded [in the number of marriages], unquestionably owing to the European War'. OYBCA, 1901-1918, p. 232. Britain also experienced a similar pattern. See Pope, p. 28.

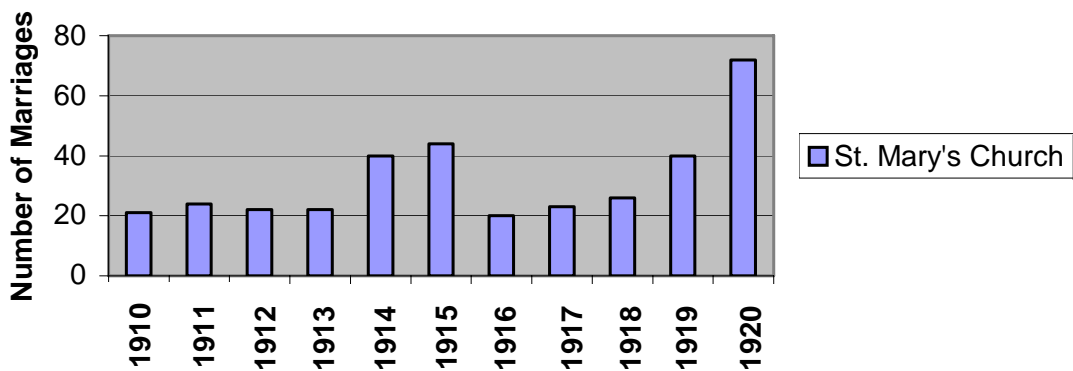
<sup>101</sup> NZOYB, 1916, p. 88.

**Graph Three: Total Number of Marriages Registered in Taranaki, 1910-1920**



Source: NZOYB, 1920, p. 29. 1921-22, p. 76. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1910, p. 277. 1911, p. 303. 1912, p. 309. 1913, p. 37. 1914, p. 33. 1915, p. 33. 1916, p. 31. 1917, p. 31. 1918, p. 31, 1919, p. 33. 1920, p. 41.

**Graph Four: Number of Marriages Registered at St. Mary's Church, New Plymouth From 1910-1920.**



It is reasonable to assume that men wanting to evade war service through marriage would have done so some time from August to 9 November 1915, or more specifically, during the 'War Census' registration period of 1 October to 9 November. But this may not have been practical; marriages do not just take place. The bride would have to be compliant with the wishes of her fiancée; so too, would the bride's parents, who by custom paid for the wedding. An indication of whether or not the 'War Census' did influence the decision to marry would be the number of marriages that actually took place during those months in 1915. Of the 78 marriages registered in central and eastern Taranaki in 1915, at least 23 (29%) are known to have taken place between August and 9 November; five of them, during the actual period of 'War Census' registration. The 23 marriages are a significant number because in the pre-war period, June, July and April were the popular months in which to marry in central and eastern Taranaki. In 1915, it was July, October and November. Also, the total number of marriages that took place in October 1915 in central and eastern Taranaki was three times higher than for the same month in 1914.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> At least nine marriages are known to have taken place in central and eastern Taranaki in October 1915, compared with three in October 1914.



**Table Twenty-One: Total Number of Marriages Registered in Central and Eastern Taranaki, 1910-1919**

	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919
<b>Stratford Registrar's Office</b>	8	11	12	8	14	10	8	2	11	7
<b>All Saints Anglican Church, Eltham</b>	5	17	12	8	11	12	9	6	4	7
<b>Holy Trinity Church, Stratford</b>	8	14	11	8	15	15	8	13	9	6
<b>Roman Catholic Church, Stratford</b>	7	6	9	11	14	4	6	7	7	10
<b>St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Stratford *</b>	7	9	4	12	13	24	17	12	10	8
<b>Methodist Churches</b>	7	7	11	11	7	13	11	6	11	27
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>65</b>

\* Includes Presbyterian marriages registered in the district of Whangamomona

Sources: Register of Marriages, 1887-1929, Books 1-7. Marriages Registered in the District of Whangamomona, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 1911-1925. Marriages Registered at the Catholic Church, Stratford, vols. 3, 4, 5. Stratford Methodist Marriage Register, 3 June-11 November 1920. St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Marriages, Stratford, 2 September 1908-18 December 1915. Methodist Church, Eltham, Marriages, August 1918-January 1923. Primitive Methodist Church, Stratford, Marriages, May 1908-November 1915. Methodist Church, Stratford Marriages, 1908-November 1921. Methodist Church, Kaponga, Marriages, July 1912-December 1928. All Saints Anglican, Eltham, Marriages, 25 January 1899-25 May 1911. Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, Marriage Register, vol. 6, July 1912-May 1921.

Australia and Britain conducted a 'War Census' in 1915, and the resultant wartime and immediate post-war marriage pattern for both those countries was

similar to New Zealand and Taranaki.<sup>103</sup> G. R. Searle says that Britain's 'War Census' of August 1915 produced a 'rash of weddings' in England.<sup>104</sup> Jay Winter's research found that the 'surge' in marriages in Britain from March 1915 to March 1916 was attributed to the dissipation of the short-war illusion and a 'tendency for people of all ages to marry while they still had the chance', but it was not exclusively due to the 'War Census'.<sup>105</sup> The larger than usual number of marriages registered in Taranaki and throughout New Zealand in 1915 can be attributed to a combination of what the *Yearbook* referred to as 'abnormal conditions prevailing' that year, which included the compulsory requirement of 'War Census' registration.<sup>106</sup>

There is a distinct correlation in the marriage patterns for both New Zealand, Taranaki and St. Mary's Church in New Plymouth, shown in graphs two, three and four, when compared with the birth rates shown in graphs five and six. The low marriage rate in 1916 to 1918 was responsible for the low number of births in 1918 and 1919. The *Yearbook* states that 'the rate for 1919 [of 21.4 births] was easily the lowest on record, a fact due to the greatly reduced marriage rate of the two preceding years, combined with other causes arising out of the war'.<sup>107</sup>

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Year	NSW	Vict.	Q'Land	Sth. Aust.	West. Aust.	Tas.	Nth. T.	Fed. T.	Total
1914	17,357	11,829	5,894	4,010	2,660	1,543	17	1	43,311
1915	18,095	12,832	6,135	3,965	2,581	1,600	12	4	45,224
1916	16,316	11,342	5,208	3,602	2,365	1,433	19	4	40,289
1917	13,246	9,505	4,868	3,252	1,621	1,138	34	2	33,666
1918	13,194	9,156	4,815	3,190	1,612	1,131	39	4	33,141

Source: OYBCA, 1901-1918, p. 172.

Total Number of Marriages Registered in the Commonwealth of Australia : 1914-1918

The marriage rate for England and Wales increased from 15.9 in 1914 to 19.4 in 1915 and then fluctuated to 15.3 by 1918. Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 252.

<sup>104</sup> G. R. Searle, *A New England?*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p.686.

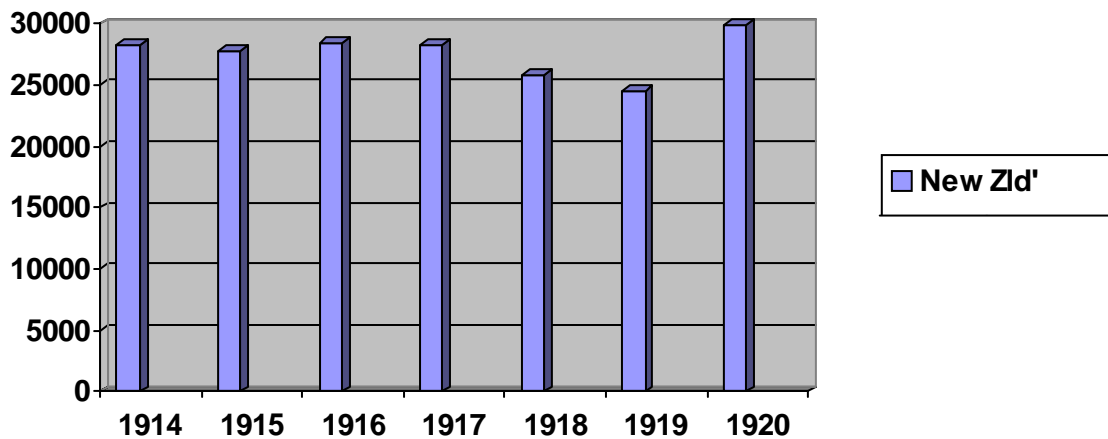
<sup>105</sup> Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, pp. 250-1.

<sup>106</sup> NZOYB, 1916, p. 88.

<sup>107</sup> NZOYB, 1921-22, p. 61.

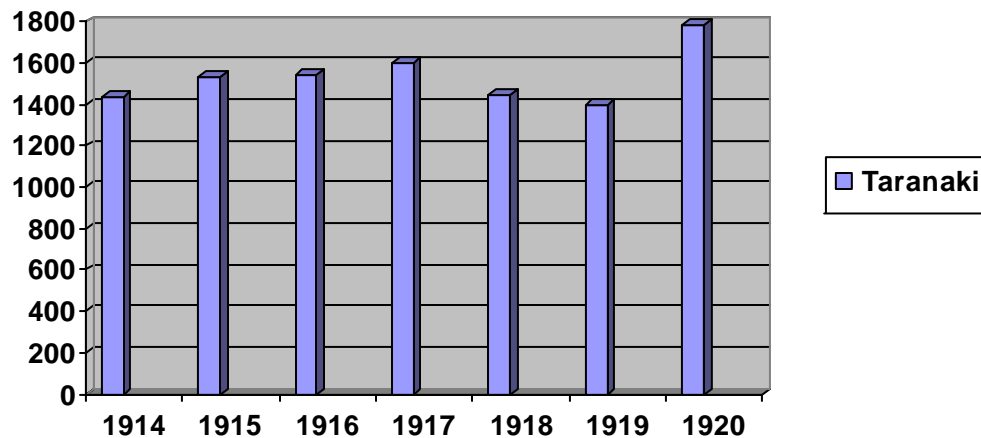
Only when the soldiers began returning home in 1919 is there a noticeable increase in the number of marriages and births in the immediate post-war period.

**Graph Five: Total Number of Births Registered in New Zealand, 1914-1920**



Source : NZOYB, 1921-22, p. 61. 1923, p. 74. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1914, p. 33. 1915, p. 33. 1916, p. 31. 1917, p. 31. 1918, p. 31. 1919, p. 33. 1920, p. 32.

**Graph Six: Total Number of Births Registered in Taranaki, 1914-1920**



Source : NZOYB, 1921-22, p. 61. 1923, p. 74. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1914, p. 33. 1915, p. 33. 1916, p. 31. 1917, p. 31. 1918, p. 31. 1919, p. 33. 1920, p. 32.

There was also a noticeable increase in divorce. In 1915, only 3 petitions for divorce were filed in New Plymouth and a total of 249 throughout New Zealand. Four years later it had increased by 600% in New Plymouth and 171% throughout New Zealand. Roderick Phillips believes the Great War had an effect on some marriages because there was an increase in divorce before the end of the war, which predated changes to the divorce laws under the Matrimonial Causes Amendment Act of 1920.<sup>108</sup>

**Table Twenty-Two: Total Number of Petitions Filed for Divorce in New Zealand and New Plymouth: 1917-1920**

Year	New Zealand	New Plymouth
1917	282	11
1918	380	16
1919	675	21
1920	748	17

Source: NZOYB, 1919, p. 268, 1920, p. 90. 1921-22, p. 150. *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1917, p. 216. 1918, p. 221. 1919, p. 219. 1920, p. 219.

Statistics show that males were less prominent in Taranaki during the period of the Great War than they had been before the war. The ratio of females to males had risen from 85.6 females to every 100 males in 1911, to 94.6 in 1916. By 1921, the ratio had fallen to 91.<sup>109</sup> It is evident from the examples presented at the start of this chapter that the dwindling number of men as a consequence of war service had the effect of disrupting many facets of life in Taranaki. Some disruptions could be considered small-scale and banal, like the shortage of players in the Stratford band; others, however, like the thinning out of the ranks of workers on the railway in the Tahora Valley, had social and economic implications for both local services and regional progress. The lower than usual

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<sup>108</sup> Roderick Phillips, *Divorce in New Zealand: A Social History*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 147. See pp. 57, 59, 60 and 71 for other references to the Great War's influence on divorce.

number of men for a period of four to five years from the rural labour supply and from a key institution like marriage had consequences for Taranaki. A labour shortage resulted in the countryside, which gave rise to concerns about productivity and necessitated a search for labour reserves. The conjugal condition was temporarily disrupted causing irregularities in the pattern of marriage, which subsequently affected the birth rate, and even divorce. It was through these disruptions that the absence of men as a consequence of the Great War had an impact on Taranaki. How the presence of war manifested itself further in some normal aspects of life in Taranaki is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>109</sup> *Census of New Zealand*, 1911, p. 9, 1916, p. 5.

## Chapter Eight

### Business as Usual?<sup>1</sup>

Late in 1915, a divisive situation emerged in Stratford. W. P. Kirkwood, a former mayor, chairman of the local patriotic committee and hotel-keeper, was appointed as the town's recruiting agent. Some people did not support the appointment, and there was 'talk of a petition being circulated asking [for] his withdrawal'.<sup>2</sup> At an executive meeting of the patriotic committee, Kirkwood, 'being chairman refused to allow discussion on the subject'.<sup>3</sup> Some high profile members of the community complained that Kirkwood used the County Hotel as a place of enlistment for NZEF recruits. James Masters, another former mayor, Justice of the Peace, storekeeper, and also a member of the patriotic committee, wanted defence officials in Wellington to 'remove this scandal from our midst'.<sup>4</sup> C. D. Sole, also a Justice of the Peace and a local house-painter, was particularly incensed. He wrote to James Allen, Minister of Defence, to tell him so:

Surely you have had enough trouble with the liquor business to stop this sort of thing. Fancy your Department appointing a Licensed Victualler as a recruiting agent! No wonder you are short of men. We have in this North Island empty churches and empty choirs because all the so-called wousers [*sic*] have given and are giving their services to the Empire. But the Government appear spineless when it comes to deal with the Liquor enemy.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'Business as Usual' originates from England in 1884. Then, it had a specific economic meaning, but from 1914 it assumed a wider application of carrying on as normal in adverse circumstances.

<sup>2</sup> Josephiah Boon to James Allen, 17 November, 1915. Army Department (AD) 1 9/169/4 Recruiting for Expeditionary Force at Stratford (ANZ).

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* The underlining is in the original source.

<sup>4</sup> James Masters to James Allen, 6 December, 1915. AD 1 9/169/4.

<sup>5</sup> C. D. Sole to James Allen, 6 December, 1915. AD 1 9/169/4.

Kirkwood had defiled the noble act of enlisting. Masters added to the tension by claiming that Kirkwood's two sons refused to enlist, thereby inferring the presence of 'shirkers' in the household of Stratford's recruiting agent.

In receipt of communications from Masters, Sole and Josephiah Boon defence officials in Wellington investigated. They found nothing to substantiate local concerns. They learnt that volunteers did not go to the County Hotel to enlist, but met at a hall provided by the local patriotic committee. When interviewed by defence officials in Hawera, Masters and Sole stated that 'Kirkwood is in every way a most estimable man and citizen of Stratford, that his character is exemplary'.<sup>6</sup> Their objection to Kirkwood's appointment, claimed Sole, 'is simply that he is a licensed liquor seller and a public house is no place for boys to go to see a recruiting officer'. He added that, 'the liquor trade is doing more harm to the returned soldiers than all the wounds and Enteric put together'.<sup>7</sup>

By accepting such a position in Stratford's war effort, Kirkwood had unwittingly stimulated a pre-war social issue which invoked the sensitivities of some people, especially 'a few of the Ministers and church people' who opposed the liquor trade.<sup>8</sup> The convergence of war with the 'drinking' issue raises the question how the Great War manifested itself in peoples' daily lives, and with what results. This chapter seeks answers to this question by focusing on some normal aspects of life in Taranaki; drinking liquor, horse racing, playing rugby, watching the 'picture shows' and the cost of living.<sup>9</sup>

The consumption of alcoholic beverages, in particular, beer and spirits, has always been a New Zealand concern. Stratford had three hotels and there

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<sup>6</sup> Colonel R. W. Tate to James Allen, 5 January, 1916. AD 1 9/169/4. The underlining is from the original source.

<sup>7</sup> Sole to Allen, 19 January, 1916. AD 1 9/169/4.

<sup>8</sup> Tate to Allen, 13 December, 1915. AD 1 9/169/4.

<sup>9</sup> A useful comparative source is 'The Banality of War' in Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, Leamington Spa: Berg, 1985, pp. 113-49. Becker examines some normal aspects of life on the home front in Cotes-Du-Nord, Paris, Charente and Le Creusot.

was one each in Midhurst, Tariki and Toko in 1914. They were open from 6.00am to 10.00pm daily, except Sunday. The lengthy opening hours concerned some people. In April 1914, a drunken male passenger caused a disturbance on the east branch train to Toko, which had a sequel in court. The railway guard stated that as soon as the train left the station the 'drunk' had 'his legs around the neck of a passenger', and at Huiroa he 'had his coat off and was offering to fight someone'.<sup>10</sup> The magistrate fined the man, who 'had a history of drunkenness', over £14, which was a considerable sum in 1914.<sup>11</sup> Instances like that were not uncommon in the pre-war period.<sup>12</sup> For example, Police at Whangamomona made 100 arrests from December 1911 to 1914, of which 94 were for drunkenness.<sup>13</sup> During the Great War, opposition to liquor consumption gathered momentum. It became entangled with patriotism, morality and wartime efficiency, which attracted the attention of prohibitionists, the government and local communities. At the centre of it all stood the soldier.

People reasoned that the soldier had been entrusted to perform a dignified and heroic mission with sobriety. That mission could be corrupted not only by liquor consumption, but by prostitution and gambling as young men in uniform moved beyond the boundaries of moral constraint imposed on them by pre-war social mores. Once beyond those boundaries the 'country men', whom Captain F. G. Rands, a Methodist chaplain at Trentham training camp, believed were 'more content, eager to learn, and enduring', mingled with the 'town man [who] has seen more of the dark side of life, is more restless and indulgent', and

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<sup>10</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 15 May, 1914, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* A stockman's annual wage could amount to £80 in 1914. See *New Zealand Official Year Book (NZOYB)*, 1915, pp. 814-15.

<sup>12</sup> See the case of a married man sentenced to one month's imprisonment for stealing a coat from the County Hotel in Stratford, and also remanded to appear in Wellington for failing to provide for his wife and family. The police claimed that there were 'more than the ordinary number of loafers about the town. They had no money and to get money for drink their most convenient method was to steal an overcoat'. *SEP*, 6 May, 1914.

<sup>13</sup> Police Files: P-WOA 1/1 Whangamomona Charge Book: 1911-1968 (ANZ). Of those arrested 89 were labourers.



hence a likely source of trouble.<sup>14</sup> Josephiah Boon was aware of the problems that could befall young men, and so in a farewell to recruits he told them to 'leave the drink alone'.<sup>15</sup> Carlisle' from Taranaki had seen the effects liquor had on soldiers and in a letter to the *New Zealand Farmer*, asked:

cannot we fight more strongly, too, against the drink traffic, with its ill effects to all, and specially to our soldier boys? Does it not make our blood boil to see some of them in their uniforms, reeling down the street and standing about hotels, while the hotel-keeper is growing rich on this ruin of body and soul [?]<sup>16</sup>

It was hoped that returned soldiers would act as recruiters, but drunken soldiers proved to be a problem. One such case took place in Stratford in July 1916 — the year in which beer consumption reached a record peak in New Zealand of 10.4 gallons per head of population.<sup>17</sup> Paul Zimmerman, a returned soldier, and a 'German-born Britisher', had served at Gallipoli where he contracted enteric fever. He had been 'wandering' the North Island for about nine weeks without any money, living instead 'on his uniform'.<sup>18</sup> While in Stratford, Zimmerman had been 'treated too kindly by his friends, and as a consequence had molested women and girls asking [for] "the loan of a match"'.<sup>19</sup> A police constable arrested him. On Monday morning Zimmerman appeared in court before Sole and Masters, the local magistrates, on charges of drunkenness, obscene and indecent language, and resisting arrest. He was fined on the first two charges and handed over to military authorities on the third because it was alleged that by his actions he had 'disgraced his uniform'.<sup>20</sup> Sole and Masters in their closing statement from the bench drew 'the attention of the

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<sup>14</sup> Captain Rands responds in April 1917 to James Allen's Memorandum of 5 February, 1917. AD 1 10/471.

<sup>15</sup> *SEP*, 7 February, 1916, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *New Zealand Farmer (NZF)*, March, 1916, p. 453.

<sup>17</sup> *NZOYB*, 1919, p. 281.

<sup>18</sup> *SEP*, 10 July, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

police to the number of returned soldiers who partook of liquor in too liberal a manner'.<sup>21</sup> Christopher Pugsley's research into military discipline during the Great War affirms heavy liquor consumption was 'borne out by the diary entries of the time'.<sup>22</sup>

The research of Stuart Mews in Britain has found that 'within months [of the Great War starting] every pressure group and school of thought was re-deploying its arguments and putting its own programme forward as an essential ingredient for victory or as the only appropriate response to the challenge of the wartime situation'.<sup>23</sup> In Taranaki, the prohibitionists believed a correlation existed between sober soldiers, a manacled liquor trade, and victory. In a letter to the *Stratford Evening Post*, Sole blended anti-drink zeal with wartime patriotism by reminding people that 'no more liquor until the war is over is the King's command. Be loyal, "follow the King" [and] close the liquor bars'.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the anti-drink rhetoric of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) made their cause indistinguishable from the war effort. An advertisement for a meeting on the subject of early closing claimed that:

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Christopher Pugsley, *On The Fringe of Hell. New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War*, Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, p. 28. Owen Kinsella, a soldier from Inglewood in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Rifle Brigade wrote to Anne Matthews in Stratford from a military hospital in Codford on 28 December, 1916: 'this was a very quiet Xmas although there was plenty of beer etc.' On 4 December, 1918, he wrote about the armistice celebrations: 'On that night there was free beer in our canteen, and I can tell you there were quite a few sore heads the next morning.' Anne Matthews Papers, Box 1, Bag 20/21, Letters to Mrs A.R. Matthews from Owen Kinsella: 1913-28 (Wanganui Regional Museum).

<sup>23</sup> Stuart Mews, 'Urban Problems and Rural Solutions: Drink and Disestablishment in the First World War', in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, Derek Baker, (ed.), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979, p. 451.

<sup>24</sup> *SEP*, 21 February, 1916, p. 2. On 1 April 1915, King George V had pledged abstinence for the duration of the war, but Mews' research shows that 'he had in fact continued to drink his normal amount "under doctor's orders" but had had to do so privately'. Furthermore, the king was of the belief that wartime inefficiencies were more the result of government mismanagement than the influence of liquor. 'The idea that slackness and drink, which some people talk so much about, are the chief causes of delay, is mostly fudge.' King George cited by Mews, p. 476.

The Citizens of Stratford Are sure to win the War, and like Dunedin, Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland, and other Centres know we must curtail the hours for the sale of Alcoholic Liquor which is the basis of all inefficiency .... CLOSE ALL BARS AT 6 p.m. AND HELP TO WIN THE WAR<sup>25</sup>

At the same time the WCTU printed a manifesto urging the 'immediate prohibition of the sale of all alcoholic liquor during the period of the war and for six months thereafter' as a way to halt the 'ravages of the drink traffic' and secure the 'speedier winning of the war'.<sup>26</sup> With the abolition of liquor 'all that is noblest, holiest, and best in our family and National life would flourish and increase' reasoned the WCTU.<sup>27</sup> If the war being fought against Germany was for the preservation of 'civilization' would not victory on the field of battle bring such rewards to society as well? Late in 1918, prohibitionists continued to draw attention to their cause using the war as a focus. An advertisement showed 'Boose' in league with the Kaiser, and a statement allegedly from David Lloyd George equated '**Drink**' with German militarism. '**While our boys abroad are fighting the Germans let us at home "settle with the Drink"**', stated the advertisement, with its focus more on the inefficiencies caused by the liquor trade than on how prohibition would bring victory.<sup>28</sup> During the Great War, prohibitionists focused their attention on winning *a* war against liquor at home as much as they supported winning *the* war against Germany abroad.

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<sup>25</sup> *SEP*, supplement 11 June, 1917.

<sup>26</sup> *SEP*, 12 June, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *SEP*, 21 August, 1918, p. 3.



**Lloyd George said:** “We are fighting against Germany, Austria and Drink, and as far as I can see the greatest of these deadly foes is *Drink*. Drink is doing us more damage in the war than all the German submarines put together. If we are to settle German militarism, we must first of all settle with the drink.”

**Leading Men of New Zealand**

Recognise also that drink is the greatest enemy to efficiency and production, and agree with the National Efficiency Board that it will be “a sound investment” to compensate “The Trade” and abolish the drink traffic at once. The direct annual cost of the drink traffic in New Zealand is not less than £4,500,000. Indirectly the cost is probably much greater. Its negative influence on the community cannot, however, be estimated in cash.

Under the present Statute if an ordinary Poll could be secured in 1919, and if National Prohibition were then carried, it would not come into effect until 1924, and “the trade” would thus enjoy a further four to five years trading. The payment of Compensation of 4½ million pounds will save the Nation the

amount of money which would otherwise be spent directly and indirectly during the four to five years above mentioned, and will in one sweep remove its degrading influence.

**The New Zealand Alliance**

Has fallen into line with the business men’s proposal promising as it does the immediate abolition of the liquor traffic.

**The People of New Zealand**

Are fully aware of the ravages of the drink traffic, of the National economic waste occasioned thereby, and of the extent to which the harmful influences are eating into the moral fibre of the community, and are determined to carry into effect the impartial recommendations of the National Efficiency Board and the leading business men.

**Now is Our Opportunity**

The New Zealand Alliance Monster Petition will give us the poll. It is the duty of every adult British subject to sign the petition, which will be presented to Parliament during the forthcoming session.

Remember, Parliament alone cannot sanction the National Efficiency Board’s Proposals, but Parliament plus Public Opinion can and WILL. This is why every voter, male or female, 21 years of age or over, should sign the Monster Petition.

While our boys abroad are fighting the Germans  
let us at home “settle with the Drink.”

**SIGN THE MONSTER PETITION**  
*Then get your friends to sign it!*

N.Z.A. H. Holmes Series.—1

**Advertisement – ‘Booze in League With the Kaiser’ (1918).**

The government also responded. In the interests of promoting sobriety and efficiency in wartime, the tax on beer was changed from a flat rate to one based on alcohol content. The government also proposed changes to the licensing laws, early closing of hotel bars being the most contentious. This never met with unanimous approval. As early as 1915, contradictory 'cries of No! Yes', greeted Stratford's MP, John Hine, when he confessed to a crowd farewell to soldiers in Toko that he supported hotels closing at 6.00pm.<sup>29</sup> Nearly two years later at a public meeting that attracted about 100 residents to discuss the proposed changes, mayor James McMillan 'admitted he was not altogether in favour' of early closing.<sup>30</sup> When the government did pass the Sale of Liquor Restriction Act in 1917, W. H. Skinner recorded that the news caused 'great excitement' and that it came as a 'big surprise to everyone' to hear that in December 1917 all hotel bars would close at 6.00pm, and not 8.00pm. Early closing became a feature of life in New Zealand for the next 50 years.<sup>31</sup>

Drinking beer, especially in hotels, could not be disentangled easily from the polemical situation occasioned by a great war. Other forms of social interaction also attracted critical attention: placing bets on horses at the racetrack, playing rugby football, watching the 'picture shows', and attending the 'amusements' at the town hall. From August 1914, these activities were intruded upon by the Great War. Primary sources reveal a tension between the continuance and abandonment of these pleasurable activities. In the aftermath of the Chunuk Bair offensive, *The Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald* drew attention to what it called the 'evident determination of New Zealand to maintain "Pleasure as Usual" in spite of the war'.<sup>32</sup> To *The Budget*, 'all this pleasure-seeking seems incongruous when so many are mourning and when the nation is engaged in so desperate a conflict, money spent on idle pleasure,

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<sup>29</sup> *SEP*, 11 October, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *SEP*, 13 June, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> W. H. Skinner Diaries, 20 September, 1917. MS-020/6. (*Puke Ariki*).

whether it be in large sums or in modest sixpences at the picture shows, is economic waste'.<sup>33</sup> *The Budget* believed it had a valid point, and the racetrack, the rugby field, the 'picture' theatre and other 'amusements' provided the evidence.

Organised horse racing had been a popular summer attraction in Stratford since 1891, with the New Year's Day race meeting a major attraction on the social calendar. An indication of its popularity was the presence of 91 motor cars parked in the grounds of the Stratford Racing Club on New Year's Day 1914. 'The motor traffic is growing by leaps and bounds, and the wisdom and foresight of the 1915 Committee in purchasing five acres at the back of the grandstand is becoming more and more apparent' stated the racing club's Annual Report for 1917, 'practically the whole of this land was utilised this year as a motor and vehicle enclosure'.<sup>34</sup> The club attempted to maintain some degree of normality during the Great War with 'a very considerable amount of tree and shrub planting', even though the Annual Report for 1917 acknowledged that 'owing to war conditions no new building operations were embarked upon'.<sup>35</sup> But, the club's president did state that 'the whole of the Club's buildings, plant, and appointments have been kept in a good state of repair, and the property is in first class condition', probably because the club could afford to do so.<sup>36</sup> The Stratford Racing Club's Annual Report for 1917 indicated that totalisator and gate receipts 'constitute[d] a record in the Club's history', as table twenty-three shows.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald (BTWH)*, 28 August, 1915, p. 3. An editorial on '**PLEASURE AS USUAL**' reported on a speech by the chairman of Dunedin's Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *SEP*, 27 August, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> *SEP*, 27 August, 1917, p. 7. War regulations forbade the construction of non-essential buildings. Housing Act (1919), *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1920, vol. II, H.- 11A, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> *SEP*, 27 August, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

**Table Twenty-Three: Stratford Racing Club Totalisator and Gate Receipts, 1912-1918**

Year	Totalisator and Gate Receipts
1912	£18,525
1913	£21,951
1914	£30,525
1915	£33,305
1916	£38,862
1917	£43,328
1918	£29,511

Source: *SEP*, 8 August, 1918, p. 7.

At the New Year's Day meeting in 1918, the press reported that 'a bigger crowd or better racing has never been witnessed on a Taranaki racecourse'.<sup>38</sup> Marc Voullaire, a farmer from Riverlea, recorded in his diary that, 'a great number of motor cars came past [the farm] en route to [the] Stratford races .... It is stated that the town was absolutely packed'.<sup>39</sup>

Not everyone got enthused over horse racing. The racetrack drew criticism because of gambling — another major pre-war social issue — and accusations of people wasting money when patriotic fund-raising campaigns called for public contributions. In August 1916, Skinner recorded with dismay that in Canterbury 'in spite of war there was some thousands more put through the totalisator this week than in the last two years!! This is a shocking state of affairs.'<sup>40</sup> Betting on horse racing through the totalisators reached a peak of £5,095,480 in New Zealand during the period 1916-1917.<sup>41</sup> The amount of money placed on horse racing would actually have been a lot higher because 'on race-

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<sup>38</sup> *SEP*, 2 January, 1918, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Marc Frederic Voullaire Papers, 31 January, 1918. Catalog No. 2002-318, Box 1. (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>40</sup> Skinner, 19 August, 1916.

<sup>41</sup> *NZOYB*, 1919, p. 754.

days many bookmakers continued to trade in paddocks or on roadsides adjacent to courses'.<sup>42</sup>

In mid-1915, Skinner had refused a staff request to attend a race meeting:

In my opinion it is absolutely wrong at such a time of stress & peril & the heavy death toll on the best of our young lives now being made in this afull [sic] war, that races should be held at all. Consequently I could not give any officer leave to attend a race meeting. We should all be doing our utmost to help officially & in a way try & fill the gaps made in staff by those who have gone to the front.<sup>43</sup>

Dr Paget from Stratford felt 'ashamed' that race meetings still took place.<sup>44</sup> Paget believed that during a time of peace sport was 'responsible for good fellowship' and the 'sporting spirit' which the 'New Zealand boys had gone in-to fight at Gallipoli with', but during war sport 'should be stopped'.<sup>45</sup> In a letter to the *New Zealand Farmer*, 'Carlisle' objected to horse racing too, but widened objections to include other forms of entertainment:

Race meetings, to our shame, are more crowded than ever; picture shows, picnics, Sunday concerts - we go to them all. Can we not, seriously and soberly, make a stand against these things at the present time; not in a pessimistic spirit, but in earnest thought of our position, and against needless expenditure of time and money?<sup>46</sup>

At the opening of the Stratford Bowling Club's new season in October 1917, James McMillan spoke persuasively for the continuance of sports. 'Some people did not agree with the playing of bowls in wartime', he said, but 'this pastime was helpful in relieving the great strain which some members were undergoing

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<sup>42</sup> David Grant, *On a Roll. A History of Gambling & Lotteries in New Zealand*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1994, p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> Skinner, 25 June, 1915.

<sup>44</sup> *SEP*, 12 November, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *NZF*, June 1916, p. 916.



as a result of the war'.<sup>47</sup> Another speaker affirmed that playing bowls was a good cure for an 'attack of the blues'.<sup>48</sup>

As with horse racing in the summer, rugby matches were very popular during the winter, and it was regarded as Taranaki's 'premier' sport.<sup>49</sup> Rugby was considered 'manly' and at a farewell concert hosted by the Toko Football Club in October 1915, Robert Masters made a speech that connected the sport with war:

The characteristics of a good footballer ... were those of a good soldier — self-control, discipline and determination .... The football grounds of the Dominion was possibly one of the finest recruiting agents they had .... The football field had been a fine training ground for the soldiers at the Dardanelles.<sup>50</sup>

Masters made his view clear by mentioning the names of some local rugby players who had achieved success on the playing field: Henry 'Norkey' Dewer, who represented New Zealand in 1913, and Taranaki representative, Lt. Col. W. G. Malone, who had been 'keen to get matches going' during the 1880s.<sup>51</sup> Tom Cleland from Riverlea was also noted for his rugby playing ability, and after he had been awarded the Military Medal, the local newspaper reported: 'All who know Tom will quite understand his winning of the coveted medal, for he was always a daring chap on the football field, and that he should prove the same on the battlefield is not surprising.'<sup>52</sup> But rugby drew criticism too, as recruiters for the NZEF made appeals to the men to 'play the greatest game of all' at Gallipoli and in France. Consequently, very little rugby was played in central Taranaki

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<sup>47</sup> *SEP*, 19 October, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *SEP*, 20 May, 1914.

<sup>50</sup> *SEP*, 11 October, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> William McLaughlin Kennedy, 'Stratford History'. Unpublished manuscript, MS-091, c.1939. (Stratford Public Library).

<sup>52</sup> News clipping, c.1918, Voullaire Papers, Box 1.

during the Great War, and the Toko Football Club was forced to go into recess at the end of the 1916 season.<sup>53</sup>

Horse racing and rugby were just as popular in the pre-war period as the 'picture shows'. There were matinees at 2.30pm for the children and nightly shows at Bernard's Pictures located in Stratford's Town Hall. The doors opened at 7.00pm and the show started at 8.00pm. It cost one shilling for a seat in the stalls and an extra six pence in the circle; 'ladies' paid one shilling for a seat anywhere in the theatre. During the Great War, the 'picture shows' performed an important wartime function, yet immersing oneself in the fantasy world of the 'picture shows' drew criticism because it was considered an extravagance at a time when sacrifice and self-denial was expected of everyone.

'Most people', according to George Robb, 'viewed the conflict through the lens of popular culture'.<sup>54</sup> Jay Winter also sees popular culture as having had a 'critical role' to play in mobilising opinion and informing wartime society.<sup>55</sup> With its focus forwards to a screen and a stage where in the dark patrons could vicariously enter a different world, the 'picture' theatre lent itself to influencing public opinion. In February 1915, a 'picture show' advertised aspects of the war to be shown at a matinee featuring *Pathe's Big War Gazette*:

Belgian Refugees flee from the Invading Prussians to Good Old England, Wounded Belgians quickly attended by English Nurses, From the Sacking of Louvain, Belgian Nun relates her war experiences, British Tommies Wounded at Mons, convalescent, and nearly ready for Kaiser Bill again, Ulstermen and Nationalists join hands under the one good flag.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to newsreels, theatre managers included the singing of patriotic songs at their 'picture shows', which they hoped would entice patrons to

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<sup>53</sup> *Touchline*, 29:16 (16 July, 1978).

<sup>54</sup> George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War*, New York: Palgrave, 2002, p. 160.

<sup>55</sup> Jay Winter, 'Popular Culture in Wartime Britain', in *European Culture in the Great War. The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914-1918*, Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 330-31.

<sup>56</sup> *SEP*, 6 February, 1915, p. 1.

contribute more to war charities.<sup>57</sup> Through imaginative advertising, people were attracted to see 'your soldier sweetheart, your brothers', in *The N. Z. Expeditionary Forces*, in *Warfare In The Skies*, where 'two gigantic aeroplanes meet in mortal combat', and *War Is Hell*, 'the most elaborate war production ever undertaken'.<sup>58</sup> Recruiting agents for the NZEF appealed to audiences from the stage during intervals. 'Picture shows' included 'magnificent recruiting drama[s]' like *What Are You Doing For Your Country?*, *Will They Never Come?* and *A Hero of the Dardanelles*.<sup>59</sup> War 'picture shows', like *The Defence of Verdun*, were popular and attracted large audiences, as Skinner discovered at a screening of the *The Battle of Ancre*, not only did he observe a 'crowded house', but because of it he had to sit close to the front of the theatre.<sup>60</sup>

Undoubtedly the most popular and influential war picture was *The Battle of the Somme*. It was advertised as the 'First Official Pictures of THE BIG PUSH', and it played to an 'immense audience which completely packed every seat, nook and corner of His Majesty's theatre' in Stratford in 1917.<sup>61</sup> A report on the film confirmed its universal popularity. An 'overflowing house' in Stratford watched a 'film lasting nearly an hour and a half [which] practically transported the audience into the front line of the trenches'.<sup>62</sup> *The Battle of the Somme* was a film in five parts:

Parts I and II look at the preparations, including the preliminary artillery bombardment; Part III looks briefly at the attack itself and then its initial consequences, notably the treatment of the wounded; Parts IV and V continue with the consequences of the battle – the wounded, German prisoners, the devastated landscape.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> *SEP*, 14 May, 1915, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.* *SEP*, 1 December, 1915, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> *SEP*, 17 July, 1916, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> *SEP*, 10 August, 1917, p. 1. Skinner, 19 July, 1917.

<sup>61</sup> *SEP*, 2 January, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Nicholas Reeves, 'The Real Thing At Last: *Battle of the Somme* and the Domestic Cinema Audience in the Autumn of 1916', *The Historian*, 51, (1996), p. 5.

Nicholas Reeves says the film 'offers the audience some understanding of the reality of the human experience of war' in at least three ways.<sup>64</sup> Firstly, it showed 'the common humanity of British and German soldiers' who are seen to be helping each other on the way back from the frontline. Secondly, the British soldiers are presented to the audience in different ways, at first, smiling and waving, then in 'anticipation', 'stress', and 'fear', followed by stares 'unseeing, at the camera.' Thirdly, images of dead and wounded soldiers comprise no less than 13% of the whole film.<sup>65</sup> Samuel Hynes says *The Battle of the Somme* 'changed the way civilians imagined the war'.<sup>66</sup>

Jay Winter says that 'by the middle of the war, the film industry emerged as both the centrepiece of popular entertainment and the most important vehicle for projecting the meaning of the war as a struggle of Good against Evil'.<sup>67</sup> Stratford's experience of motion pictures supports his view. In October 1916, a meeting was held in the County Hotel to form a picture company called Stratford Pictures and Amusements Limited. Directors were elected after which a mortgage valued at £2,750 was signed, sections on Broadway leased and films ordered for screening from Universal, Metro, Fox and Paramount studios, and from New Zealand Picture Supply. The theatre would be constructed out of concrete — a modern building material — which was in short supply.<sup>68</sup> On New Year's Eve, 1917, the theatre opened in Stratford. The press greeted its presence favourably as 'An Up To Date Picture Theatre';

A substantial and imposing addition to Broadway's business buildings is the King's Cinema House. Higher than the usual two-storeyed structure and of ferro-concrete, the "King's" stands out prominently. The Stratford Pictures and Amusements Ltd, who are the owners, have spared no expense in the construction and furnishings.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined*, London: Pimlico, 1992, p. 126.

<sup>67</sup> Winter, 'Popular Culture in Wartime Britain', p. 341.

<sup>68</sup> Housing Act, 1919. *AJHR*, 1920, vol. II, H.-11A, p. 5.

The growing popularity of the 'picture shows' is revealed by the building of the 'King's' theatre in Stratford during wartime, and the amount of ticket sales; £2,645 5s 5d by 31 March 1918 and one year later that amount had increased to £3,883 9s 2d.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the 'picture shows', other entertainments were staged at the Town Hall. In May 1916, *The Man Who Stayed At Home* dramatised the so-called German 'Spy Problem' and brought to the attention of a 'medium house' in Stratford what the press described as 'the patriotic indictment of England's generous toleration towards her enemies'.<sup>71</sup> Drawn from what the press saw as 'ugly and insidious realities' the play was set in a boarding house on the east coast of England where:

A young man named Christopher Brent, a clever secret service agent, detects, baffles and brings to justice a quartette of German spies in the landlady, who had assumed an English name; her son Carl Sanderson, actually in a responsible position in the British transport service, but all the time in the pay of the Germans; another son, Fritz, who covers his machinations under the guise of a waiter, and a very hypocritical old maid, Fraulin Schroeder, who boasts of having been naturalised and lived in England for over twenty years.<sup>72</sup>

Whether patrons left the Town Hall alert and suspicious is near impossible to determine, but people did imagine the presence of enemy spies, as in the case of Fedorowicz and the New Plymouth water works in 1914.<sup>73</sup> By including

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<sup>69</sup> SEP, 29 December, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Minutes of the Meetings of Stratford Pictures and Amusements Ltd, 31 March 1917-1933 (Stratford District Council). The minutes are an important documentary source on the business of entertainment in an early twentieth century New Zealand town. The building where the 'King's' first screened 'pictures' still stands and screens 'movies' today.

<sup>71</sup> SEP, 5 May, 1916, p. 2. SEP, 7 August, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> SEP, 5 May, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> See chapter two for the case of Fedorowicz. W. H. Skinner wrote that the sinking of the British cruiser *Hampshire* and the subsequent drowning of Lord Kitchener in June 1916 was 'the work of a spy.' Skinner, 9 June, 1916. For other examples of the alleged presence of German spies in New Zealand see Graham Hucker, ' "When the Empire Calls" Patriotic Organisations in New Zealand During the Great War', MA Thesis in History, Massey University, 1979, pp. 43-4. Graham Hucker, ' "Bundling Out the Hun" The Women's Anti-German League During the First World War', 1991, pp. 2-3, 9, 11-12. MS-Papers-5163 (ATL).

wartime related material, theatre managers no doubt wanted to entertain and inform audiences, but it may also have served to negate anti-amusement attitudes.

In letters to the *New Zealand Farmer*, two correspondents from Taranaki explored the issue of amusements during wartime. 'Carlisle' wrote:

I think amusements should cease altogether at the present time, and that it would be better, both for the nation and the individual. It does not seem right or fitting that at this great crisis in our Empire's history we should seek entertainment and distraction at races, theatres, and picture shows. They are not necessities, and it should only be the necessities, not the luxuries of life that we need just now .... Then another argument is, that in almost every instance a portion of the profits of these amusements goes to swell the various relief funds, and that in going to that race meeting, or to that concert, or that garden party, we are helping a good cause, and "helping the poor soldiers".<sup>74</sup>

'Brown-Eyed Ruby' wrote a compelling, humanitarian argument for the continuance of entertainments during wartime:

A lot of our entertainments are got up for the wounded soldiers and Belgian refugees, etc. We don't forget them. We sow, and knit, and make for them. One cannot forget the war. At the picture shows, when something concerning soldiers is shown, you will sometimes see the tears falling when an aching heart is reminded of a loved one lost or at the front. Amusements at a terrible time like this act like a safety valve acts on a boiler. I heard one mother say at a concert one night that if she didn't get away from home sometimes she thought she would go mad; she had a son missing at the front, and knitting quietly at home thinking of the possible fate of her loved one nearly drove her frantic. No, the defenders of the Empire are not forgotten, or ever will be, but for the sake of the aching hearts and little children let the people have their pleasures, if they help to take the mind off the terrible struggle going on.<sup>75</sup>

The government's position, however, remained ambiguous. From 1917 they introduced a tax on 'amusements' of an extra penny, rising to one shilling, paid on admission to entertainments. 'Pleasure as usual' for some, it seems, meant 'business as usual' for others.

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<sup>74</sup> NZF, June, 1916, p. 916.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 917.

The first part of this chapter has shown how the Great War affected some normal aspects of life in Taranaki, the second part will assess how war affected the cost of living. As early as August 1914, an editorial on '**HOW WAR AFFECTS COMMERCE**' said that 'very few of us can realise from experience of previous events what a state of war means to us in our business and private life'.<sup>76</sup> For consumers and retailers answers lay in rising prices and commodity shortages, which became a feature of life on the home front for the duration of the war as the following examples show. At the outset of the war there was a 'rush for groceries' to fill the larder with staple food items.<sup>77</sup> In New Plymouth:

there is something of a panic among local hotel and boarding-house keepers and housewives, judging by the extraordinary large orders being received. In some instances flour and sugar is being ordered by the ton and in other lines goods are being ordered by the case. One well-known firm had sufficient orders on hand a short time after the premises were opened this morning to keep the whole staff engaged throughout the day.<sup>78</sup>

Throughout 1915 the price of meat, sugar and shoes increased. So did the price of milk in April, because farmers advanced the price for the winter supply.<sup>79</sup> The return railway fare from Stratford to New Plymouth increased by between 6d and 8d.<sup>80</sup> In 1917, the price of newspapers doubled 'due to conditions arising out of the war', namely the shortage of paper.<sup>81</sup> Butchers in Stratford were forced to take action over the 'scarcity of wrapping paper and the high cost' by asking consumers to 'bring along their own bags or wrappers for meat

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<sup>76</sup> *SEP*, 10 August, 1914, p. 4. For sources on the cost of living in New Zealand during the Great War, see Barry Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1980, pp. 95-105. Erik Olssen, *Building the New World. Work, Politics and Society in Caversham 1880s-1920s*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995, p. 218. Erik Olssen, 'Waging War: The Home Front 1914-1918', in *An Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920*, Judith Binney, Judith Bassett and Erik Olssen, (eds), Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990, pp. 303, 305-6.

<sup>77</sup> *BTWH*, 8 August, 1914, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *SEP*, 27 March, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *SEP*, 23 September, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>81</sup> *SEP*, 1 April, 1917, p. 4. *SEP*, 18 May, 1917, p. 4. The price of a newspaper rose from 1d to 2d.

supplies'.<sup>82</sup> In 1917, a nip of spirits increased in price by 50% followed by a rise in the price of tobacco in 1918.<sup>83</sup>

How much the price rises could be attributed to the war itself is not known for certain because there had been a 'perceptible' rise in New Zealand in the pre-war period.<sup>84</sup> A Royal Commission on the cost of living in 1912 reported that 'staple foodstuffs had risen on average by twenty-one per cent since 1895'.<sup>85</sup> Table twenty-four shows that retail prices for staple food items fluctuated in New Plymouth throughout the war, even though the Cost of Living Act (1915) established a Board of Trade to fix minimum prices for commodities like sugar.<sup>86</sup> All items shown in the following table had risen in price between 1914 and 1918. Most food items show their highest price rise in the latter part of the war from 1916 to 1918, and these appear to be locally produced goods with dairy products having increased the greatest. The rising prices did not affect New Plymouth consumers or Taranaki alone, but were New Zealand-wide and universal during the Great War.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *SEP*, 12 July, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> *SEP*, 2 October, 1917, p. 6. The price rose from 6d to 9d a nip. *SEP*, 2, 3 April, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> J. B. Condliffe, 'New Zealand During the War', *Economic Journal*, 29 (1919), pp. 176-77. M. Fraser, *Report on the Cost of Living 1891-1914*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1915, p. 86. *NZOYB*, 1915, p. 801. Gustafson, p. 95.

<sup>85</sup> Gustafson cites the *Report of Royal Commission on the Cost of Living* (1912), p. 95.

<sup>86</sup> *NZOYB*, 1990, p. 623. Other commodities included timber and wheat.

<sup>87</sup> K. H. Mathieson, 'A Study of Auckland Society in the First Year of the Great War, August 1914-August 1915', *Research Essay in History*, University of Auckland, 1979, pp. 13-14. N. G. Garson, 'South Africa and World War I', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 8:1 (1979), p. 73. Tan Tai-Yong, 'An Imperial Home-Front: Punjab and the First World War', *The Journal of Military History*, 64 (2000), p. 378. Alun Howkins, *Reshaping Rural England. A Social History 1850-1925*, London: Harper Collins, 1991, p. 255. Robert G. Moeller, 'Dimensions of Social Conflict in the Great War: The View From the German Countryside', *Central European History*, 14:2 (1981), pp. 148-53. J-J. Becker, pp. 120-3.



**Table Twenty-Four: Proportional Changes in Retail Prices for Selected Items  
in New Plymouth, 1914-1918**

Food Item	1914-1915	1915-1916	1916-1917	1917-1918	1914-1918
<b>Bread (per 2 lb loaf)</b>	15.2	0	6.9	-0.7	<b>22.3</b>
<b>Flour (per 25 lb bag)</b>	27.4	-17.2	13.9	5.3	<b>26.7</b>
<b>Tea (per lb)</b>	-3.5	7.5	3.6	6.6	<b>14.6</b>
<b>Sugar (per 56 lb bag)</b>	15.2	1.4	2.8	5.2	<b>26.6</b>
<b>Salt (per lb bag)</b>	0	0	38	89.1	<b>161</b>
<b>Potatoes (per 14 lb bag)</b>	-15.5	24.1	-8.4	27.1	<b>22.1</b>
<b>Onions (per lb bag)</b>	-14.6	-13.8	53.8	22.5	<b>38.6</b>
<b>Tobacco (per lb bag)</b>	1.4	0.5	-1.5	10.8	<b>11.3</b>
<b>Milk (per quart)</b>	2.1	6.5	20.5	10.1	<b>44.5</b>
<b>Butter (per lb)</b>	16.4	3.9	4.6	3.4	<b>31</b>
<b>Cheese (per lb)</b>	20	2.5	14.4	3.4	<b>45.6</b>
<b>Eggs (per dozen)</b>	1.8	7.2	8.2	7.1	<b>26.6</b>
<b>Ham (per lb)</b>	0	0	12.2	34.5	<b>51</b>
<b>Mutton Chops (per lb)</b>	0	2.1	9.6	0.4	<b>12.5</b>
<b>Beef Sausages (per lb)</b>	0	4.2	15.1	-1.3	<b>18.4</b>
<b>Pork Sausages (per lb)</b>	0	3.6	-3.4	8.3	<b>8.3</b>

Source: NZOYB, 1915, pp. 804-07. 1916, pp. 638-42. 1917, pp. 679-83. 1918, pp. 742-46. 1919, pp. 771-75. M. Fraser, *Report on the Cost of Living 1891-1914*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1915, pp. 129-67.

Price rises also affected rental accommodation in Taranaki. Table twenty-five shows a fluctuating, but upward trend in weekly rents in New Plymouth with price peaks reached during the period 1915 to 1916. These peaks show large rent increases of over one-third for three and four room accommodation; increases of nearly half for five rooms, and increases in nearly two-thirds for eight and nine room accommodation. All rental accommodation in New Plymouth increased in price between 1913 and 1918 as the table shows.

**Table Twenty-Five: Average Weekly House Rents in New Plymouth, 1913-1918**

<b>Number of Rooms</b>	<b>1913</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>1915</b>	<b>1916</b>	<b>1917</b>	<b>1918</b>	<b>Rent Increase 1913-18</b>
<b>3 or less</b>	6s 6d	7s 6d	8s	8s 10d	7s 4d	7s 10d	<b>20.5%</b>
<b>4</b>	9s 1d	11s	12s 3d	11s 9d	10s 8d	10s 11d	<b>20.1%</b>
<b>5</b>	10s 8d	14s 9d	15s 4d	15s 8d	14s 11d	15s 6d	<b>45.3%</b>
<b>6</b>	13s 7d	15s	18s	18s 6d	18s 3d	18s 6d	<b>36.1%</b>
<b>7</b>	16s 4d	19s	£1 2s 6d	£1 2s 2d	£1 11d	£1 2s	<b>34.6%</b>
<b>8</b>	15s 9d	£1 2s 6d	£1 5s	£1 3s 7d	£1 3s 1d	£1 4s 1d	<b>52.9%</b>
<b>9</b>	16s 8d	£1 5s	£1 7s 6d	£1 5s 5d	£1 3s 8d	£1 6s 5d	<b>58.5%</b>

Source: NZOYB, 1912, p. 759. The statistics for 1913 are based on the *Census* of 1911. 1915, p. 808. 1916, p. 642. 1917, p. 683. 1918, p. 746. 1919, p. 775.

The war also affected housing. Walter Rumball from Warea observed that, 'there was very little building done during the war, the materials being so dear and hard to get and labour so scarce'.<sup>88</sup> The Stratford Borough Council reported that not one building permit had been issued in April 1917.<sup>89</sup> According to the Stratford Building Society's annual report for 1918 people were putting their money into immediate and short-term ventures, or not investing at all. The report stated that 'many shareholders' have 'temporarily suspended paying their subscriptions' because of 'the war and the consequent rise in the prices of the necessities of life'.<sup>90</sup> The declining number of mortgages registered in Taranaki during the war was indicative of economic uncertainty and people expressing caution.

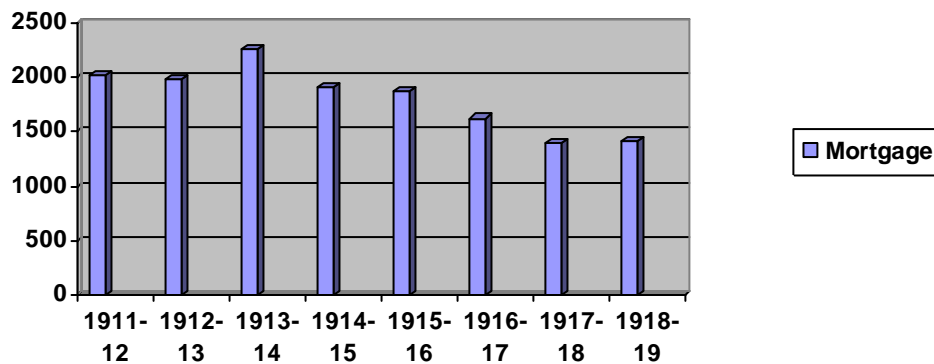
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<sup>88</sup> Walter Rumball to Amy, 11 May, 1920. Walter Rumball Letters, 1895-1920, ARC 2003-36. (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>89</sup> *SEP*, 1 May, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup> *SEP*, 9 May, 1918, p. 7.

**Graph Seven: Total Number of Mortgages Registered in Taranaki, 1911-1919**



Source: *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand*, 1911, p. 687. 1912, p. 704. 1913, p. 220. 1914, p. 203. 1915, p. 206. 1916, p. 215. 1917, p. 205. 1918, p. 217.

Price rises, commodity shortages, and economic uncertainties during the Great War had the effect of placing strains on people. A 'housewife' in a letter to the *Stratford Evening Post* complained about the price of meat and general cost of living:

Now, I had a row with my butcher today because he charged me the advanced price, and I had to pay, because he assured me that all the butchers had agreed to raise the price .... Goodness knows, the cost of living (not to mention hair-cutting), is high enough here [Stratford] as it is, compared to Eltham and New Plymouth, where both bread and butter has been lowered in price.<sup>91</sup>

Butchers were just as prone to the effects of the increased cost of living as other people; three butchers were reported bankrupt in 1915.<sup>92</sup> 'Owing to the high price of stock', a butcher in Midhirst 'decided that the only way to keep the price of meat down to its level, is to trade entirely FOR CASH'.<sup>93</sup> The Broadway Butchery in Stratford had to close its business late in the war 'owing to the further increased price of stock, and the great difficulty experienced in obtaining

<sup>91</sup> *SEP*, 21 August, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> *SEP*, 20 January, 1915, p. 6. See fn. 112.

<sup>93</sup> *SEP*, 3 July, 1917, p. 1.

assistance'.<sup>94</sup> Butchers were also affected by consumers who bought their meat supplies from the freezing works. Sarah Lund and her husband Fritz, who farmed property on Oeo Road, Awatuna, acknowledged in a letter to her family in England that food prices had risen in both countries.<sup>95</sup> In one of these letters Sarah said they bought meat from the 'works', presumably at wholesale prices, because they were 'cheaper' than the retail prices at the shop, and she provided two shopping lists to illustrate the differences.

**Table Twenty-Six: Wartime Shopping Lists of Sarah and Fritz Lund.**

<b>Sarah Lund's Shopping List</b>	<b>Price per lb from the Shops</b>	<b>Fritz Lund's Shopping List</b>	<b>Price per lb from the 'Works'</b>
<b>Sirloin</b>	8d	Sirloin	4d
<b>Leg of Mutton</b>	7d	Leg & Loin Mutton	6d
<b>Shoulder</b>	6d	Shoulder	4d
<b>Lard</b>	1s	Suet	3d
<b>Stake [sic] Bone</b>	9d	Cow Tail	6d
<b>Bacon</b>	1s 2d	-	-
<b>Ham</b>	1s 3d	-	-

Source: Smith Family: Letter from Sarah Lund, 19 March, 1917 or 1918 [?]. MS-Papers-7368 (*Puke Ariki*).

Note: The letter 'd' refers to a penny and 's' refers to a shilling. There were 12 pennies to one shilling. One 'lb' equals 0.45Kg.

Unlike Sarah and Fritz Lund, people living in town would have bought some of their food at retail prices from the shops. As a child living in Hawera during the war Merle Crawford recalls not so much the high price of goods, as the shortages, and how they coped:

<sup>94</sup> *SEP*, 25 October, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> A table of 'English Grocery Prices' for the pre-war period, and for January, May and July 1917 was printed in *SEP*, 29 September, 1917, p. 7.

They say there were shortages, but I don't remember actually being short of anything but sugar. My mother, always practical, overcame that situation fairly well. She saved all remaining boiled lollies from the shop shelves and somehow rendered them into a syrup which we used on our porridge and puddings.<sup>96</sup>

'Brown-Eyed Ruby' in a letter to the *New Zealand Farmer* spoke for 'us farmers' daughters' by telling readers how they coped:

we are economising to have more money to help patriotic purposes. We bake bread because it's cheaper, we garden to have vegetables, we turn our old dresses, and with a bit of different trimming we are content to go without a new dress; we dye our summer hats, and re-trim for the winter; we do these things gladly and willingly.<sup>97</sup>

Not all sources on aspects of the wartime economy like that of Sarah Lund, Merle Crawford and 'Brown-Eyed Ruby' are so generous in their recollection; some were bitter. In a letter to Anne Matthews of Stratford, Owen Kinsella stated that, 'I am sure there are numbers who would like to see it [the war] go on for another ten years because they are getting well paid, are well out of danger, and not much to do. Of course you know the class I am alluding to.'<sup>98</sup> Kinsella's comment presented an acrimonious side to peoples' responses to the cost of living.

Bernard Waites explains the acrimony based on his study of England during the Great War. 'Issues such as excess profits, high food prices and inequalities of distribution were affronts to the "moral economy" of the English working class, and particularly explicit affronts given the lip-service paid to the ideals of self-sacrifice and communal effort in war.'<sup>99</sup>

Because 'economic inequality' existed between producers, retailers and consumers, Waites believes that 'fairness' underpinned worker expectations of

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<sup>96</sup> Merle Crawford, *Out of My System. An Autobiography*, Stratford: Thurlstone Press, 1996, p. 17.

<sup>97</sup> *NZF*, September, 1916, p. 1352.

<sup>98</sup> Owen Kinsella to Anne Matthews, 7 August, 1917.

<sup>99</sup> Bernard Waites, *A Class Society at War. England 1914-1918*, Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1987, p. 222.

the relationship.<sup>100</sup> This did not just apply to England, but New Zealand and Taranaki. Erik Olssen's research on Caversham found that the major wartime issues in Hillside 'centred on the notion of fairness'.<sup>101</sup> When 'fairness' was not honoured, attitudes turned bitter resulting in acrimonious outbursts by consumers, and accusations of exploitation and profiteering by workers directed at millers, bakers and farmers.

Public perceptions of unfair practices by millers aroused resentment early in 1915. A 'Worker' protested that 'people who are exploiting the masses of the country in cornering the prices of foodstuffs ought to be hanged!'<sup>102</sup> 'Another Worker' asked, 'who are the biggest enemies of the people? I say they are those who at the present time are exploiting the people'.<sup>103</sup> In that letter, millers were accused of increasing the price of pre-war stocks of flour and were now selling at a profit.<sup>104</sup> Millers were accused of using a 'national crisis' for 'private enrichment' at a 'large' meeting held in New Plymouth in May 1915 by the local branch of the Engine Drivers, Firemen and Cleaners' Association.<sup>105</sup> Workers at the meeting considered that the 'unreasonable charges ... now being made [on] the necessaries of life', were an 'unjust imposition', and they passed a resolution calling on the government to 'fix the maximum price for all common necessaries'.<sup>106</sup>

Bakers too, were subjected to accusations of exploitation and profiteering. In September 1914, bakers notified consumers that:

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<sup>100</sup> Waites found in his study of England during the Great War that, 'the inflation of food and other basic commodity prices (especially coal) was the cause of a much more intense and widespread feeling of working-class "unfairness"', *ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>101</sup> Olssen, *Building the New World*, p. 215.

<sup>102</sup> *SEP*, 20 March, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, 22 March, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.* *SEP*, 22 March, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>105</sup> *SEP*, 28 May, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

We have hitherto refrained from raising the price of bread, but owing to the rise of £3 10s in the cost of flour in the last two months, and the advance in the price of horsefeed and bakehouse requisites, we are compelled to notify that the price of bread on and after September 14, 1914, will be 4½d [pennies] per 2lb [pound] loaf cash, and 5d per 2lb loaf booked.<sup>107</sup>

Letters to the newspapers accused bakers of taking advantage of the war crisis by raising the price of bread made from flour bought before the war.<sup>108</sup> In 1915, bread prices continued to rise — as can be seen in table twenty-four — due to a reported wheat shortage. Accusations were also directed at some bakers for baking and selling ‘lightweight’ bread.

Central government took action late in 1915 by directing health officers to test the weight of bread. Russell, Minister of Public Health, was unhappy with the results; he warned people in the bread trade that no consideration would be given to those who sold lightweight bread. Russell also tacitly recognised the existence of ‘unfairness’, warning that ‘other crusades will from time to time be undertaken to prevent the exploitation of the public’.<sup>109</sup> But the evidence Russell gathered in support of his warning to bakers, and subsequently published in the press, does not stand up to scrutiny. Apparently, a total of 1,845 loaves had been weighed. Of these 1,607, or about 87% were full, or overweight. How many loaves were overweight is not stated, but that high proportion surely rests in the consumers’ favour. Of the loaves tested, only 238, or nearly 13% were short, which is hardly incriminating.<sup>110</sup> The fact that the test revealed discrepancies in the weights suggest inconsistency in bread making rather than any deliberate attempt at profiteering. Bakers, like consumers, were not exempt from problems associated with the cost of living during a time of war. In 1915, F. A. Cramer, a baker from Stratford, was forced to stop baking bread for delivery because of

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<sup>107</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 14 September, 1914, p. 7.

<sup>108</sup> *TH*, 16 September, 1914, p. 7. *TH*, 26 September, 1914, p. 6.

<sup>109</sup> *SEP*, 9 September, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

the shortage of flour and high prices.<sup>111</sup> Of the 40 people in Taranaki reported bankrupt in January 1915, three were bakers.<sup>112</sup>

Just like the millers and bakers in Taranaki, farmers were accused of profiteering. Sustained criticism was new to farmers largely because of the prosperous times they enjoyed during the war as a consequence of the commandeered system. Under that system the British government bought farm produce from New Zealand at fixed prices, which guaranteed a regular income for farmers and protection from market fluctuations. Consequently, the wartime prosperity of the farmer is well documented.<sup>113</sup>

H. G. Philpott says that the demand for butter and cheese 'due to causes governed by the war' led to high returns for farmers.<sup>114</sup> Even though production of cheese had begun to rise before the war, the demand for it by the British War Office ensured its position as a growth industry for the entire war period. As early as April 1915, the *New Zealand Farmer* reported that 'the war conditions prevailing have certainly put thousands of pounds extra into the pockets of the Taranaki cheese producers'.<sup>115</sup> The number of cheese factories registered in Taranaki, for example, increased by 105% over the period 1911 to 1918, while the output of cheese increased by 159% from 1910-1911 to 1919-1920.<sup>116</sup> Newspaper commentaries on the annual reports of the Stratford Dairy company in 1915 and 1916 indicated 'a record price for their output', and that, 'previous

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<sup>111</sup> *SEP*, 30 January, 1915, p. 4. *SEP*, 1 February, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> *SEP*, 20 January, 1915, p. 6. Of those bankrupt, ten were from occupations associated with price rises; baker (2), baker and confectioner (1), confectioner (1), grocer (1), grocer's assistant and confectioner (1), butcher (1), butcher's assistant (2) and boot-and-shoe importer (1).

<sup>113</sup> Ron Lambert and Gail Henry, *Taranaki. An Illustrated History*, new. ed., Auckland: Reed Publishing Ltd, 2000, p. 157. David J. Cooney, 'An Exercise in Oral History: Rural Life and Labour in Taranaki From World War One to the Depression', MA Thesis in History, University of Auckland, 1980, p. 6. H. G. Philpott, *A History of the New Zealand Dairy Industry 1840-1935*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1937, pp. 8, 146, 147, 149, 150.

<sup>114</sup> Philpott, p. 149.

<sup>115</sup> *NZF*, April, 1915, p. 478.

<sup>116</sup> Annual List of Creameries, Factories, Private Dairies and Packing Houses, 1910-1920. (Bagnall Collection, Massey University Library).



years can show nothing approaching the new record'.<sup>117</sup> The prosperity of the farmers in both cheese and butter production led the *Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald* to comment that the return on exports to March 1916, 'are so remarkable', that 'they arrest the attention'.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the *Stratford Evening Post* considered the exports from the three Taranaki ports of New Plymouth, Patea and Waitara in 1917 to be 'a record for the world'.<sup>119</sup>

The *Taranaki Herald's* correspondent in Stratford considered farmers to be 'exceptionally favored in comparison with other classes'.<sup>120</sup> The annual report of Stratford's Chamber of Commerce for 1916 reflected on the spending power of the farmer with a comment that would not have been pleasing to the non-farming community:

It is pleasing to reflect that this extra money has been distributed, generally speaking, among a section of the community who work early and late, and whose industrious efforts and tiresome toil richly deserve reward and probably more general good will accrue in this way.<sup>121</sup>

Therein lay the contemporary affront to 'fairness', which the *Taranaki Herald's* Stratford correspondent ably articulated:

Upon almost every other class the effect of the war has been to diminish income and increase the cost of living. Farmers' incomes have been increased by the war, and their living expenses, owing to their being less dependent upon outside sources for supplies, less affected than those of other classes.<sup>122</sup>

During the war farmers were the most maligned of all producers, as Erik Olssen discovered with his research on Caversham: 'farmers replaced squatters as the demons of democracy, and joined the city merchants and financiers as part of a

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<sup>117</sup> *SEP*, 27 July, 1915, p. 4. *BTWH*, 5 August, 1916, p. 29. *SEP*, 1 August, 1916, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> *BTWH*, 29 April, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>119</sup> *SEP*, 17 May, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>120</sup> *SEP*, 12 March, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>121</sup> *SEP*, 29 May, 1916, p. 7.

<sup>122</sup> *SEP*, 12 March, 1915, p. 8.

pantheon of villains skilled in the parasitic vices'.<sup>123</sup> The idea of 'fairness' lay at the core of criticism levelled at them. Even the *Stratford Evening Post*, located in a town that depended on the dairying industry, put a potentially divisive question to its readers - '**FARMERS AND THE WAR ARE THEY BEARING A FAIR SHARE?**'<sup>124</sup> And economic opportunists, like the Egmont Coach and Carriage Company of Stratford, inadvertently criticised farmers in an advertisement:

### **DAIRYMEN AND THE WAR!**

#### **Probably not one Dairyman gloats over the HIGH PRICES PROMISED**

For this season's produce, because our brave boys are  
Paying the great price of liberty. Do your duty to the  
National Funds, and expend a share of your profits in  
An "EGMONT" MILK-CART OR WAGGON<sup>125</sup>

The guarantee of fixed prices for the farmer provided an assurance of income for retailers as well. Some critics and commentators in the towns focused their attention more on equivalency and less on the farming community's economic role as suppliers of produce for overseas markets, and export earnings. It was one of the ironies of the Great War that service and market towns like Stratford needed the farming community for their own economic prosperity, yet some critics failed to see the connection.<sup>126</sup> The war had provided a patriotic opportunity for farmers to produce food for the imperial centre, but in doing so unwittingly aroused resentment within the non-farming

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<sup>123</sup> Olssen, *Building the New World*, p. 260.

<sup>124</sup> *SEP*, 16 May, 1916, p. 7.

<sup>125</sup> *SEP*, 4 October, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> Olssen also came to that same conclusion in his research. 'Nobody in Caversham or The Flat remarked on the ironic fact that their society could exist only because of an export sector organised on fundamentally different lines and periodically hostile.' *Building the New World*, p. 260.

community, which, no doubt, widened the view, real or imaginary of the town versus country divide.<sup>127</sup>

The *Stratford Evening Post* had made an attempt early in the war to quieten down the whole acrimonious issue of the rising cost of living by putting it into a war context. It reminded readers of what they were fighting for; that there were other more exalted 'THINGS UP IN VALUE' such as:

Our Homes.  
The boys who are protecting them.  
The love of husband and wife.  
The babies and all children.  
The romance of love.  
The sacredness of women.  
The sanctity of motherhood and fatherhood.  
The influence of women.  
The quiet of the countryside.  
The farmsteads and rural life.  
The English gardens.  
A walk in a country lane.  
An hour on the river.  
The security of Peace.  
Law and order.  
The progress of the race.  
Time for spiritual things.  
The Sabbath calm.  
The joy of reading.  
Our daily bread.  
Ability to pay our way.  
Taking no thought for the morrow.  
Freedom to travel.  
International goodwill.  
The Parliament of Man.  
Respect of Treaties.  
The pledged word.  
Personal honour.  
National righteousness.  
Rights of little nations.  
Parliaments as against autocrats.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> 'Urban New Zealand resented rural prosperity' writes Olssen in 'Waging War: The Home Front 1914-1918', p. 303.

<sup>128</sup> *SEP*, 9 October, 1914, p. 7.

These seemingly 'British' representations of 'freedom' and 'civilisation' belonged to the pre-war period, which from 1914 people had mobilised to defend. These values converged with the ordinary 'bread and butter' issues facing retailers and consumers during the Great War.

The daily rhythm of life continued, callous as it may have seemed in the face of casualty lists.<sup>129</sup> New Zealand's two largest cities, Auckland and Wellington, experienced 'rapid wartime growth'; and the fast growth of secondary towns in the North Island, which included New Plymouth, 'created a new urban frontier of opportunity'.<sup>130</sup> Public utilities were also moved forward in a time of war. In 1916, Stratford ratepayers authorised a loan for the purchase of an electricity supply; in 1917, the Model Dairy Farm Society was formed; in 1918, a tender was accepted for the erection of a suspension bridge over the Patea River, and the road in central Broadway was sealed with tarred macadam.<sup>131</sup> Newly formed cooperative dairy companies purchased small local creameries. In 1916, the Te Popo Company acquired the Stanley Road creamery; in 1917, the Tuna Company bought the Beaconsfield Road creamery, and the Waingongoro and Pembroke Companies took over creameries in their district.<sup>132</sup> Mechanisation increased with greater numbers of cream separators been used at home on farms.<sup>133</sup> Motor vehicles became more prominent with 18 registered in Stratford in 1911, increasing to 120 in 1916.<sup>134</sup> An analysis of the names to whom the vehicles were registered reveals over a third (38.3%)

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<sup>129</sup> J-J Becker cites an unknown contemporary source about France: 'The list of those who "died for their country" grows longer, but the countryside is bustling with activity', p. 117.

<sup>130</sup> Penny Isaac and Erik Olssen, 'The Justification for Labour's Housing Scheme. The Discourse of "the Slum"', in *At Home in New Zealand*, Barbara Brookes, (ed.), Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2000, p. 110. Olssen, 'Waging War: The Home Front 1914-1918', p. 313. Olssen also cites Napier and Palmerston North as fast growing secondary towns.

<sup>131</sup> *Carved From the Bush. Stratford 1878-1928*, New Plymouth: McLeod & Slade Ltd, 1928, p. 31.

<sup>132</sup> *Stratford District Centenary 1878-1978*, Stratford: District Centennial Committee of the Stratford Borough Council, 1978, p. 57.

<sup>133</sup> See fn. 81 in chapter 7 for statistics.

<sup>134</sup> List of Cars and Bicycles Registered by the County Council. Stratford County Council Letterbook 1897-B. (Stratford Genealogy Society).

belonged to farmers.<sup>135</sup> The Taranaki newspapers continued to publish daily, with their advertisements of meetings, socials and business; institutions such as the churches, and schools continued to perform their social functions. 'In spite of this world-struggle, school-life everywhere is progressing in the usual way'.<sup>136</sup> During the Great War 'life went on pretty much as usual', writes Erik Olssen.<sup>137</sup> That is why Taranaki soldiers were fighting in France and the Middle East, to protect a way of life; normality, no less. It was the unwritten agreement civilians had with soldiers, 'to keep the home fires burning'. Although the war affected life in Taranaki in ways this, and the previous chapter have shown, attempts to maintain normality are discernible, especially in the public sphere. Private experiences during the war are not always accessible, but Merle Crawford's recollections provide some glimpses:

Then the shocking news came through that Uncle Pearce had been killed in action. They had one son, Roy Pearce, and Aunty Edie had given birth to their daughter Vesta, at Dr Harvey's nursing home in Waverley on the day her husband was killed. When we heard the news, Mother, unbeknown to any of her family, was almost seven months pregnant. By this time she was already a very disillusioned lady as my father's drinking habits did not improve. At the time I noticed nothing more than a certain quietness about my much loved mother. But she was devastated. It was a miracle she did not lose the babe but she carried on bravely. Business was deteriorating and money was scarce but behind a brave façade, life went on as usual with its picnics, friendships and visits from relations who were probably helping mother in her sorrow. Dad, never able to save money, became more unreliable than ever. The returning heroes were meeting at our wine bar and never left without the gift of a bottle. It was only when Mother explained why she was dressmaking that I understood that all was not well.<sup>138</sup>

How people responded to the deaths of Taranaki soldiers is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>135</sup> *ibid.* Stratford Electoral Roll, 1914.

<sup>136</sup> *Te Kura Mounga. The New Plymouth Girls' High School Magazine*, 2:5 (December, 1917), p.4.

<sup>137</sup> Olssen, 'Waging War: The Home Front 1914-1918', p. 306.



## Chapter Nine

### War Deaths and Local Responses

In May 1917, Thomas and Robert Fryday had been working in a 'field about 300 yards' from their home on Climie Road near Stratford. At 4.30pm Thomas returned to the farmhouse to find his mother, Joanna, alone. She 'appeared to be quite well' and offered Thomas a cup of tea, after which he returned to work. At 5.05pm Robert returned to find 'his mother lying at [the] back of the house near the dairy. There were no signs of a struggle. He spoke to her and getting no answer called his brother and they carried her into the house', after which they called for Dr Steven. He later pronounced Joanna dead. She was aged 59. At the inquest, Nicholas Fryday, Joanna's husband, said that she 'made no complaint about her health', but:

about two years ago she had fainted in a paddock about the time when their son [Edward] was killed at the war. This was very unusual, as she was a healthy woman. On Saturday night last, another cable was received saying that her second son was slightly wounded but doing well. She had no doubt grieved a good deal about the dead son.<sup>1</sup>

Joanna Fryday was not alone in her grief. Merle Crawford recalls from her childhood in Hawera that 'George Tasker wept in 1917 when three of his fine young men, including mother's youngest brother gave their lives for their country.'<sup>2</sup> After the battle of Messines in 1917, and the subsequent casualty lists, a *Stratford Evening Post* editorial on '**WAR'S DREADFUL TOLL**' stated that this has 'brought more closely home to us all what the sacrifice of war means. In all the belligerent countries the total of losses is now almost beyond conception, a

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<sup>1</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 7 June, 1917, p. 5. Joanna's son, Private Edward James Fryday, 10/1072, age 29, of the Wellington Infantry Regiment, died at Gallipoli on 12 May, 1915. For information about Fryday and other soldiers in this chapter visit Commonwealth War Graves Commission <http://www.cwgc.org/cwgcinternet/search.aspx> and Auckland Museum Cenotaph Database <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com>

rough estimate making the total number of soldiers killed as seven millions'.<sup>3</sup> The numbers were a measure of the Great War's ferocity. Adrian Gregory reminds us that 'a death in war was not a number, it is a life cut short'.<sup>4</sup> Table twenty-seven shows the pattern of lives 'cut short' in the Stratford district from fighting in some of the major military campaigns of the Great War: Gallipoli (1915), the Somme (1916), Messines and Passchendaele (1917). The distribution of deaths in the monthly totals across each year coincides with the military campaigns in the northern hemisphere summer bringing grief to people in Taranaki during the winter. By early August 1915, more men from Stratford district had been killed than Taranaki's total death toll from the Boer War.

**Table Twenty-Seven: Numerical Chronology of When Soldiers from The Stratford District Died During the Great War**

Month/Year	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	Monthly Totals
January	-	0	0	0	4	4
February	-	0	0	1	1	2
March	-	0	0	0	2	2
April	-	3	0	0	5	8
May	-	3	1	0	5	9
June	-	0	2	10	0	12
July	-	3	1	7	1	12
August	-	11	1	1	4	17
September	-	0	14	1	9	24
October	-	0	5	14	4	23
November	-	0	2	2	6	10
December	-	0	2	3	1	6
<b>Yearly Totals</b>	-	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>129</b>

Source: Compiled from photo inscriptions in Stratford's Hall of Remembrance.

<sup>2</sup> Merle Crawford, *Out of My System. An Autobiography*, Stratford: Thurlstone Press, 1996, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> SEP, 7 July, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Adrian Gregory, 'Lost Generations: Impact of Military Casualties', in *Capital Cities at War. Paris, London, Berlin 1914-1919*, Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 86.



From 1915, local communities throughout Taranaki began hearing the news that their young men were being wounded and killed in large numbers.<sup>5</sup> ‘Over one hundred Toko boys [had] gone to the war [and] eighteen have paid the supreme sacrifice’, reported the *Stratford Evening Post* in August 1917.<sup>6</sup> That represents a casualty rate of about 18%. Other settlements realised similar and even higher casualty rates than Toko by 1918, as table twenty-eight shows.

**Table Twenty-Eight: Casualty Rates for Selected Taranaki Settlements During the Great War**

Settlements	No. of Men Who Served With NZEF	No. of Men Killed	Casualty Rate
Manaia and Waimate West County	336	36	11%
Omata	61	11	18%
Midhirst and Waipuku District	58	20	34%
Bedford Road District near Inglewood	26	10	38%
Egmont Village	50	20	40%

Source: Field research in Taranaki. See fn. 9.

Institutions like New Plymouth Boys’ High School learned that of the 294 ‘old boys’ who served during the Great War, 64 had been wounded and 44 were dead, which represents a casualty rate of 37%.<sup>7</sup> By November 1918, 54 of the Taranaki volunteers from the Main Body, NZEF, had been killed in action; 25 had died of wounds; 8 had been posted missing, presumed dead; 7 had died of sickness; one had died in a flying accident; 28 had been wounded, but survived, and 15 had suffered illness and injury, which is a casualty rate of 44%.<sup>8</sup> By the

<sup>5</sup> For Australian examples see Vivienne Caldwell, ‘Illawarra at War. An Examination of the Characteristics and Experiences of the Illawarra Volunteers During World War I, and the Impact of Death on the Home Front’, BA (Hons) Research Exercise in History, University of Wollongong, 1999, pp. 73-81.

<sup>6</sup> *SEP*, 17 August, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Taranakian*, 8:1 (May, 1919), pp. 75-8. (New Plymouth Boys’ High School Library).

<sup>8</sup> The casualty statistics have been compiled from the attestation files and military personnel records of 312 soldiers from Taranaki who served in the Main Body, NZEF.

end of the Great War, over one thousand men from Taranaki who served with the NZEF had died, as table twenty-nine shows. That total number of war deaths as a proportion of the men of military age in Taranaki during the immediate pre-war period is a casualty rate of 11%.

**Table Twenty-Nine: Numbers of Men From Taranaki Who Died in the Great War.<sup>9</sup>**

<b>Taranaki Locations (including Boroughs)</b>	<b>Number of Men Who Died</b>	<b>As a Proportion of Men of Military Age in 1911</b>
Clifton County	80	10.4%
Taranaki and Inglewood Counties	225	<i>na</i> *
Egmont County	134	18.3%
Stratford & Whangamomona Counties	186	9.7%
Eltham County	175	15.7%
Waimate West County	50	8.7%
Hawera County	185	13.7%
Patea County	106	11%
<b>Total for Taranaki</b>	<b>1,141</b>	<b>11.4%</b>

Source: Compiled from fieldwork in Taranaki; see fn.9 for details. June Springer, *New Zealand Cemetery Records. A List of Holdings, 9<sup>th</sup> Supplement*, Auckland: New Zealand Society of Genealogists, 2004 and the accompanying New Zealand Cemetery Records microfiche.

\* Inglewood County did not exist in 1911.

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<sup>9</sup> The statistics in table twenty-nine have been compiled from my own fieldwork in Taranaki by visiting and recording data from most, if not all the sites of remembrance in the region from 2001 to 2005. I also consulted central Taranaki's Roll of Honour compiled by Cardiff resident, John Moore, and a list prepared by the Eltham Historical Society. A very helpful starting guide to the fieldwork was plate 78 in Malcolm McKinnon, (ed.), *Bateman New Zealand Historical Atlas*, Auckland: David Bateman, 1997, which shows a map locating most of Taranaki's war memorials. Sites of remembrance that I visited in Taranaki include, Omata Church memorial, St. Mary's Church in New Plymouth, Inglewood District's war memorial, Waitara war memorial, Uruti centennial and war memorial, Urenui school, Waihi memorial hall, Tikorangi school, Bell Block war memorial, Kaponga District Roll of Honour, Rahotu School, Opunake war memorial, Okato war memorial, Stratford's Hall of Remembrance, Stratford's Anglican Church, Midhirst School, Bird and Skinner Road's Roll of Honour, Eltham school, Kohuratahi war memorial, Hawera Returned Services Association Roll of Honour, Hawera war memorial, Manaia war memorial, Normanby school, Otakeho School, Pihama School, Patea war memorial, and the Waverley clock tower. See war memorial images at <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Anzac/memorial/mem-index.html>

How these deaths affected local communities is a not unreasonable question for the historian to ask, but it is problematic. It is impossible to know exactly how the deaths of so many young men in war affected individuals and groups of people. Historians who seek to understand the social effects of war deaths are confined to assessing rituals rather than emotions. It was equally difficult for contemporaries too, because death in war challenged their general understandings about death in peace, where grief focused on a dead body within close proximity to the home, and attendance, either at the scene of death or at the funeral, signalled participation in the end.<sup>10</sup> But, during the Great War, people had to cope with the violent deaths of young men in large numbers, far from home; finding out how they actually died; how, in the absence of a body and a funeral last respects could be paid; and where one went to be close to the deceased when there was no grave? These new considerations for people underpin this chapter on the impact of war deaths and how people in Taranaki responded.

Jay Winter informs us that people responded by 'gathering together' so they could 'provide knowledge, then consolation, then commemoration'.<sup>11</sup> Knowing that a loved one had died was the first step in that process. In Taranaki, that came from a 'telegram boy.' Thirteen-year-old, Paddy Ryan, delivered telegrams for the Hawera Post Office. He recalls that, 'instinctively everybody dreaded seeing the telegram boy; they didn't like him'.<sup>12</sup> Paddy would often cycle eight or nine miles out into the countryside to deliver news of casualties. On one occasion he recalls having to deliver a telegram to his mother, which informed her of the death in war of her brother.<sup>13</sup> Soon, other people

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<sup>10</sup> See Philip Cleaver, 'Dealing With Death: The Pakeha Treatment of Death 1850-1910', MA Thesis in History, Victoria University, 1996.

<sup>11</sup> Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup> Paddy Ryan interviewed by Judith Fyfe for the Oral History Centre, 16 November, 1984, OHInt-0070/14, Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

<sup>13</sup> Paddy Ryan interview.

discovered the news through conversation, by letters, or from the newspaper, which is how the loss was shared.

News of a soldier's death was usually confined at first to the home, and shared with relatives and close friends. Annis Hamerton's letters to her daughter and W. H. Skinner's diary provide a glimpse of how they responded to news of war deaths. Annis had recently lost her husband in New Zealand as a result of ill health, and was more sensitive to the grief other people experienced. In her letters to Frances in England, she talked about people she knew. In October 1914, she visited Mrs Cornwall, perhaps for comfort, but instead found her own grief aroused. 'I am so grieved & she can talk of nothing but the War', Annis wrote tersely.<sup>14</sup> Not long after visiting Mrs Cornwall, she wrote:

you should feel thankful that he [Annis's husband] was spared the terrible sorrow of these sad times, how he would have grieved, I keep reading the papers you send & missing his comments, only now do I fully realise what his companionship & wise words were to me, my heart aches & aches for the sorrow of the words, and you being so much nearer, it will be worse for you than for us.<sup>15</sup>

Annis learned from a conversation that a Mrs Gibbs's three brothers-in-law had fought at Gallipoli, and now they 'are all dead! Two from wounds & one from Dysentery, it is awful'.<sup>16</sup> During the fighting at Messines in 1917, Annis informed Frances about the Hamblyn family from Tariki. The Hamblyns had 'sent six sons to the war, one was killed some weeks ago, this week they had a cable that two! more were killed, it so terrible.'<sup>17</sup> She did not tell Frances that Henry Hamblyn (age 26) was killed at the Somme, and that his brothers, Thomas and William were both killed on 8 June 1917 at Messines. Annis went on to say, 'we

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<sup>14</sup> Annis Hamerton to Frances Hamerton, 6 October, 1914. Hirst Family Letters, MS-Papers-5507-12 (ATL).

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, 18 October, 1914.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 3 January, 1916.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 19 June, 1917.

are all sadly grieved for [Samuel] Arnold Atkinson, he left six children one he never saw, he was a grand man fine in every way & oh the bitter loss'.<sup>18</sup>

W. H. Skinner wrote similar instances in his diary. Shortly after the first anniversary of Anzac Day, Skinner visited Mrs Lepper 'to console with her over the loss of her soldier son' who had recently been killed in action in Mesopotamia.<sup>19</sup> Skinner always wrote of the losses of friends with respect and in a familial way. 'Our old friend Canon Luke, received news today that his second son with the N.Z. force in the Dardanelles had died of his wounds on the hospital ship in transit to Malta .... poor fellow he was greatly concerned at loosing [*sic*] such a good son & true citizen.'<sup>20</sup> He sometimes made vicarious connections between other peoples' losses and his own circumstances. His son 'Harry', for example, who served with the NZEF, had a close relationship with a young woman whom Skinner knew and admired. On two occasions Skinner recorded with sadness news about young women who had lost their fiancées in the war. The thought of 'Harry' dying was ever present as his comments about the main character in H. G. Wells's book *Mr Britling Sees it Through* show:

Deals with the war in a manner that appeals directly to me. Britling's thoughts about the war & things in general and the moving of his mind seem identical with what I myself went through - the great blow, the death of his son Hugh, thank God I have not had to face.<sup>21</sup>

Skinner was fortunate in not experiencing loss in the immediate family, unlike some parents, whose grief motivated them to seek more information about the deaths of their sons. Askew Keightley from Midhurst knew that his son, Private Ernest Keightley, had been a prisoner-of-war, but 'except for a very

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.* Captain Samuel Arnold Atkinson 14/714, New Zealand Rifle Brigade 'D' Company 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, married, age 43, was killed on 5 June, 1917. He is buried at La Plus Douve Farm Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium. He was a son of Sir Harry Albert Atkinson, a former New Zealand premier and resident of New Plymouth.

<sup>19</sup> W. H. Skinner, 27 April, 1916. Diaries 1913-1918, MS-020/6, (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 23 June, 1915.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 15 April, 1917. The loss of fiancées are recorded on 18 January, 1917 and 4 April, 1918.

brief official cablegram announcing the death of his son ... has been quite in the dark as to what befell his boy'.<sup>22</sup> Letters expressing condolence may have put to rest the anguish of Askew Keightley. They were 'important means of dealing with and understanding loss' by families far removed from the battlefield.<sup>23</sup> They revealed 'the extent to which people shared news of death, often around the world'.<sup>24</sup> Letters from prisoners who knew his son at Hadji-Kiri in Turkey had many of the characteristics of wartime condolences, namely expressions of sympathy, endearing comments, and detailed descriptions of a painless, noble death and the subsequent burial. One of the letters to the Keightley family read:

It is with deep personal regret and sincere sympathy that I write to you of the death of your son Ernest. He passed away on the night of the 25<sup>th</sup> October in the Hadji-Kiri Hospital. His end was painless, and it was deeply and sincerely regretted by the whole camp. His fellow prisoners wish me to convey to you their sincere sympathy. Your son, by his kindly modesty had endeared himself to the whole camp. I know it will give you much comfort that one of his comrades can tell you without qualification that he lived a good clean life and bore his illness with cheerful fortitude.<sup>25</sup>

That letter also informed the Keightleys that personal items belonging to Ernest would be returned to the family; they would, no doubt, in the absence of a body be forever cherished as his material remains. Another letter described how the interment of Ernest was attended by everybody in the camp.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *SEP*, 7 February, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>23</sup> Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory*, Freemantle: Curtin University Books, 2004, p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *SEP*, 7 February, 1917, p. 6. Private Ernest Keightley 12/779 an unmarried 25 year-old from Midhirst served with the Main Body, 16<sup>th</sup> Waikato Company, Auckland Infantry Battalion. He is buried at Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq.

<sup>26</sup> *SEP*, 7 February, 1917, p. 6.



Private Ernest Keightley, Main Body NZEF, Prisoner of War,  
Died of Sickness at Hadji Keri in Turkey, 25 October, 1916. (*Puke Ariki*)

Roy Coutts from Tariki enquired on 18 November 1917 about his brother, Lance- Corporal Wyman Coutts, who had been killed at Passchendaele on 17 October 1917.<sup>27</sup> The letter that Roy Coutts received in reply was similar in expression to those received by the Keightley family. It described in detail how Wyman died, including the actual parts of the body wounded. It also gave the Coutts family what historian Pat Jalland believes grieving families needed during the war: 'reassurance that their loved one had died bravely in a just cause'.<sup>28</sup> The Coutts family were informed that 'the loss of L/Cpl Coutts was felt very much throughout the Company by all who knew him he was a thorough soldier & nobly gave up his life while performing his duty'.<sup>29</sup>

Families in receipt of condolence letters also discovered detailed news about the manner of death. The Carruthers family learned in a letter from France that their son, Lieutenant Walter Carruthers, had been killed in action on 29 September 1918. The letter began with condolences, and continued, 'I am sure you will like to learn of the exact circumstances in which he was killed so I will let you know how it occurred.'<sup>30</sup> The letter praised Walter, and regretted 'that he should have met his death under circumstances brought about by his humanity and clean fighting qualities'.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Letter from Head Quarters-2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Machine Gun Company to Mr Roy Coutts, 14 January, 1918. Accession No. 1986.2502 (Kippenberger Military Archive and Research Library, Waiouru). Wyman Coutts 10/3864, age 22, is buried at Nine Elms British Cemetery, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

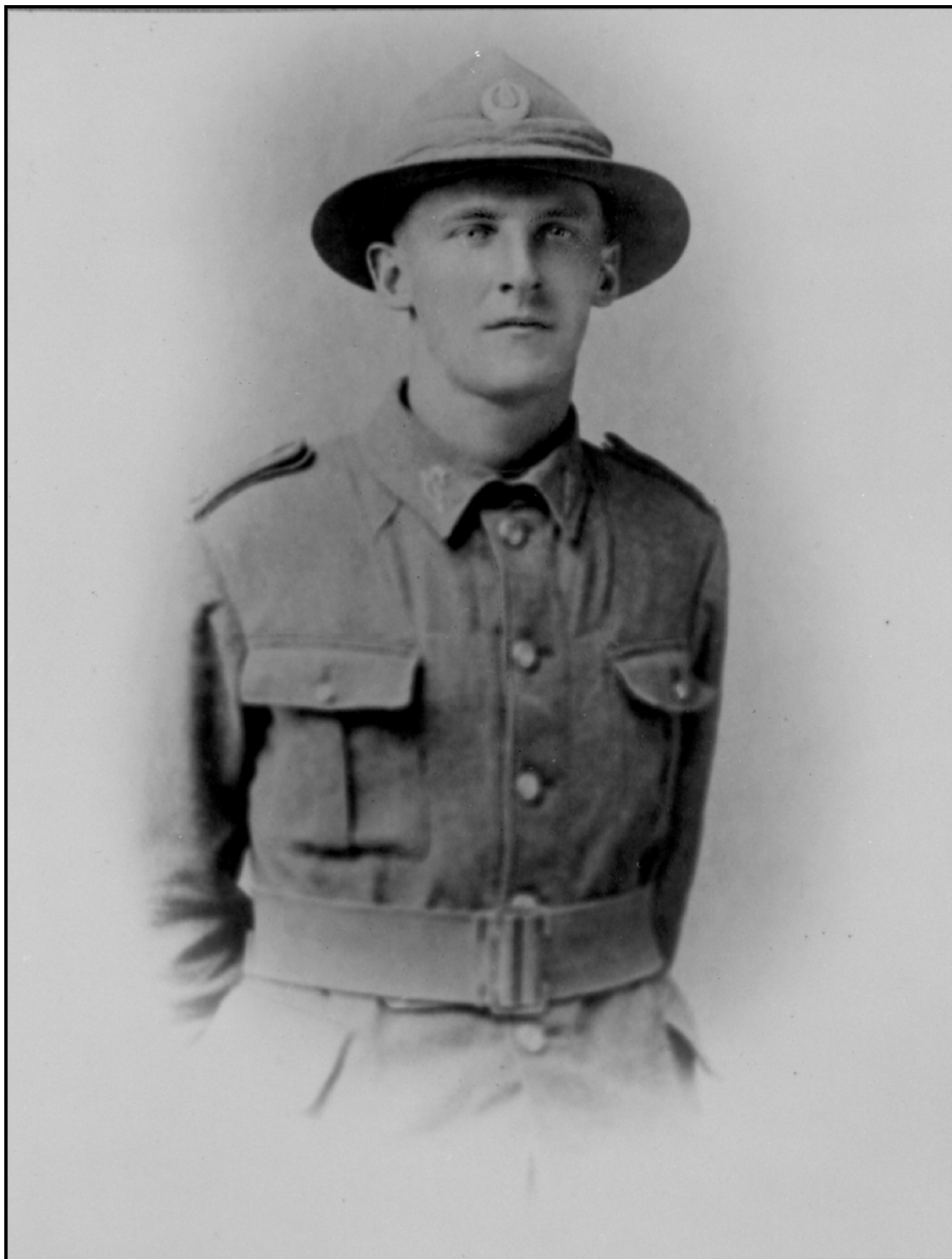
<sup>28</sup> Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 372.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Head Quarters-2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Machine Gun Company to Mr Roy Coutts, 14 January, 1918.

<sup>30</sup> Letter to Mr Carruthers from Captain 2<sup>nd</sup> Wellington Infantry Battalion, 16 October, 1918. Walter Carruthers MS Papers 1429-1 (ATL). Lieutenant Walter Carruthers 3/85, Military Medal, age 24, unmarried, born in Fitzroy and late of Hawera, died on 29 September, 1918. He also served with the Main Body, NZEF, in Egypt and at Gallipoli. Carruthers is buried at the Fifteen Ravine British Cemetery, Villiers-Plouich, Nord, France.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*





Lance-Corporal Wyman Coutts, Died of Wounds, France,  
17 October, 1917. (*Puke Ariki*)

In a sentence directed specifically at Mr. Carruthers, the family learnt that, 'he had the most glorious death a soldier can have, leading his men into action .... and you have the consolation that he did not suffer the least pain, having died instantaneously'.<sup>32</sup> It added, that Walter had been 'buried in the famous Hindenburg line near a village called Ribecourt', and that, 'his personal effects have been sent on to you'.<sup>33</sup> Much had been conveyed to the Carruthers family in that letter, and its survival to the present day suggests its importance as material remains of his life.

Other condolence letters contained similar information and sentiments. A letter to the brother of Lance-Corporal Eric Irving, who was killed in action at Gallipoli, noted that, 'he met his death whilst doing his duty like a true Briton, and that death was instantaneous'.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the parents of Lieutenant Holloway Winder, a lawyer from Stratford, learnt that he:

Died a soldier's death while leading a charge ....The bullet that robbed the regiment of a gallant officer took him through the heart killing him instantly .... at the head of his men, cut off without a second of pain or regret! What better ending to a young life could a father ask for?<sup>35</sup>

The letters always emphasised the gallantry of the dead, yet it is impossible to know if they assuaged a family's grief, especially in the absence of a body, the geographical distance between the family and the dead man, no family in attendance at either the death or the burial. It is not surprising that Jalland's research found condolence letters differed in their efficacy. She found them to be 'ineffectual because they never restored past happiness', and, 'in the

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Lieutenant A.B. McColl. Eric Cecil Irving Papers. MS 2002/224 (Auckland War Memorial Museum Library). Private Irving 10/624, an unmarried, 25 year-old, served in 11<sup>th</sup> Taranaki Company, Main Body, Wellington Infantry Regiment, died on 29 April, 1915. Irving is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial, Turkey.

<sup>35</sup> *SEP*, 23 October, 1915, p. 3. Lieutenant Holloway Elliott 'Paddy' Winder 13/758, unmarried, age 28, died on 8 August, 1915 at Chunuk Bair. Winder is commemorated at the Chunuk Bair (NZ) Memorial, Turkey. See *SEP*, 21 August, 1915, p. 3 for Winder's obituary.

context of mass deaths in wartime, condolence letters seemed to underline the hopelessness of the bereaved', presumably because there were just so many deaths.<sup>36</sup> Equally though, Jalland believes 'they had been valuable in expressing and activating the sympathy and affection of support networks'.<sup>37</sup>

The sharing of loss was not just confined to the home. It also operated locally where people learned of deaths through casualty lists and the newspapers, which, in turn, activated sympathy and support from the wider community who had to find new ways to pay their last respects. The death of Lieutenant-Colonel William George Malone shows how the local community responded. Malone was killed on Chunuk Bair on 8 August 1915. Stratford learned of his death four days later:

**THE DARDANELLES**  
**Brave Soldiers Fall**  
**Stratford's Personal Loss**  
**Colonel Malone Killed in Action**<sup>38</sup>

Family and town immediately shared the loss: '**STRATFORD MOURNS HIS FATE**'.<sup>39</sup> Through memories, people in Stratford consoled themselves for their 'personal loss' by recalling Malone's life and achievements.<sup>40</sup> In place of a funeral, memorial tributes to Malone were expressed at various meetings in Stratford during the week following news of his death. At a farewell social for recruits in the 8<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements held at the Egmont Club rooms on 12 August, J. Masters moved a 'motion of sympathy' and spoke about Malone's life. On 13 August, business at the Magistrate's Court was temporarily suspended while more sympathies were expressed. At a meeting of the Stratford County Council

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<sup>36</sup> Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 372. Pat Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death. A Social and Cultural History 1840-1918*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 305.

<sup>37</sup> Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 372.

<sup>38</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *SEP*, 13 August, 1915, pp. 4, 5. *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age (IRWA)*, 13 August, 1915, p. 2. *SEP*, 18 August, 1915, p. 8. *Budget and Taranaki Weekly Herald (BTWH)*, 21 August, 1915, p. 57.

on 18 August, and at a 'special' meeting of the Stratford Borough Council on 17 August, votes of sympathy for Malone's relatives were passed. As a mark of respect, everybody in attendance at all of those meetings stood in silence.<sup>41</sup>

The County Council and the Magistrate's Court wanted to remember Malone with a photograph. W. Hathaway of the County Council wanted 'the photograph to be of some material that would not fade, so it would be good for all time'.<sup>42</sup> John Taylor wrote that, 'during the war, the [photographic] industry made a virtue out of its ability to produce the illusion that time was fixed in photographs. By apparently stopping the passage of time, the photograph could keep a dead relative in the family.'<sup>43</sup> Later in 1915, memorial photographs of Malone were unveiled in both the County Council offices and at the Magistrate's Court.<sup>44</sup>

In Stratford and throughout Taranaki, people considered Malone's death to be nothing short of a 'national disaster'.<sup>45</sup> 'It is a matter for national regret', lamented the *Stratford Evening Post*, 'that he should have fallen so early in the campaign' and 'his place will indeed be hard to fill, but he has left an example behind him that should provide a stimulus to the recruiting movement'.<sup>46</sup> The *Taranaki Herald's* resident agent in Stratford who understood that:

Probably no event of the [past] twelve months has created so profound an impression and brought hard facts of the war so vividly to the minds of the people of this district as the death of Colonel Malone. Prepared, as commonsense bids us to be for such happenings, the shock was great. Now, the first feeling of almost incredulity over it is slowly dawning upon us what it means to lose from a small community a strong, capable man, whose activities in various spheres touched the lives of so many.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See *SEP*, 13 August, 1915, pp. 4, 5. *SEP*, 18 August, 1915, p. 8. Stratford Borough Council, Minutes of Meetings, vol. 5, 23 October, 1914-11 June, 1917, p. 122. (Stratford District Council)

<sup>42</sup> *SEP*, 18 August, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> John Taylor cited by Catherine Moriarty, "'Though in a Picture Only': Portrait Photography and the Commemoration of the First World War', in *Evidence, History and the Great War. Historians and the Impact of 1914-18*, Gail Braybon, (ed.), New York: Berghahn Books, 2005, p. 43.

<sup>44</sup> *SEP*, 25 November, 1915, p. 4. *SEP*, 3 December, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *SEP*, 13 August, 1915, p. 4. *BTWH*, 21 August, 1915, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> *BTWH*, 21 August, 1915, p. 31.

It was not only Taranaki that felt a sense of loss; the rest of New Zealand also knew that a 'strong, capable man' had been lost, judging by the Press Association's report from Wellington:

the heartfelt sympathy of the whole Dominion will go out in their [Malone family] heavy bereavement, but their sorrow will, we trust, be tempered by the deep and genuine feelings of regret that will be expressed by everyone at the untimely yet noble death of their distinguished husband and father.<sup>48</sup>

Malone's death captured peoples' imaginations in 1915, as it still does today.<sup>49</sup> It is not the intention to reinvestigate his death here, but to signal an aspect of grieving, namely the desire for more information to help de-mystify death in war. The press believed Malone 'died the death of a soldier, the death he himself had chosen'.<sup>50</sup> 'With his face to the foe, "in action" Colonel Malone has fallen', announced the *Stratford Evening Post*.<sup>51</sup> Such a death 'will be at least some consolation to those he leaves behind', claimed the *Post*.<sup>52</sup> To die 'fighting for his King and the Empire in the cause of justice and righteousness', is how

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<sup>48</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1915, p. 5. *New Zealand Observer*, 21 August, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> See the following newspaper articles on Malone. Jessica Poulsen, 'A Town's Hero Finally Recognised', *Stratford Press*, 46:30 (2005), p. 1. Virginia Winder, 'Tough Man With a Soft Heart', *Daily News*, 25 April, 2003, p. 12. Mark Birch, 'Outstanding Member of a Very Gallant Old Taranaki Family', *Daily News*, 30 October, 1999, p. 18. Neil Reed, 'Honours Call For Kiwi Hero', *Evening Post*, 15 August, 1998, p. 13. Pauline Swain, 'Lest We Forget', *The Dominion*, 25 April, 1998, p. 18. Ron Taylor, 'Unsung Hero', *New Zealand Herald*, 10 January, 1998. 'Honour For a Man and a Moment', *Daily News*, 12 July, 1997. Jim Anderton, 'Recognising Gallant Actions of the Past', *Otago Daily Times*, 11 July, 1997, p. 8. Jim Anderton, 'Late Recognition Sought For Exceptional Conduct', *New Zealand Herald*, 8 July, 1997. 'Recognition Sought For WWI Stratford Soldier', *Stratford Press*, 25 June, 1997. Delwyn Masters, 'Gallipoli Hero's Biography a Labour of Love', *Daily News*, 24 April, 1993, p. 7. John Thomson, 'Guts and Gallantry', *New Zealand Herald*, 23 November, 1991. Annabell Ross, 'Unfinished Story', *Wairarapa Times Age*, 5 October, 1991, p. 1. J.B. Thomson, 'An Anzac Ghost Returns', *The Daily News*, 24 April, 1990, p. 29. John Thomson, 'A Medal For Malone: The Man On Top of Gallipoli', *Evening Post*, 27 January, 1990. Jock Phillips, 'Letters From the Front', *Listener*, 17 December, 1988.

<sup>50</sup> *IRWA*, 13 August, 1915, p. 2. *SEP*, 13 August, 1915, p. 4. *SEP*, 18 August, 1915, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1915, p. 5. See also *SEP*, 13 August, 1915, p. 4. *IRWA*, 13 August, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *SEP*, 12 August, 1915, p. 4.

some people had imagined Malone would meet his death.<sup>53</sup> Malone also believed 'no death could be better'.<sup>54</sup>

General Godley informed James Allen about the circumstances of Malone's death as early as 14 August; Captain Harston – Malone's staff officer – did so in a letter to Malone's wife on 13 August. Both letters eventually made their way into the *Stratford Evening Post*.<sup>55</sup> Harston's account of Malone's death recalls that:

He was up and down the line, always where the fight was thickest, encouraging and helping the battalion by words and examples. I tried and tried to make him take more care and let his juniors do the work, but he refused. His rifle was shot out of his hands. Bullets landed everywhere about him, and it was not until the very end of the day that a shrapnel ball hit him in the head and killed him instantly. I was beside him at the time and he fell into my arms, but did not speak.<sup>56</sup>

Questions about Malone's death have challenged writers and historians from Australian war correspondent, C. E. W. Bean, to Christopher Pugsley, Peter Stanley and John Crawford. All have reached the conclusion that Malone was killed by shell-fire, but they differ slightly in their explanations as to whose artillery was responsible.<sup>57</sup>

The deaths of lesser known soldiers became public knowledge through notices in the press. Under the title, '**ROLL OF HONOUR**', or '**FOR THE**

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<sup>53</sup> *SEP*, 13 August, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> E. P. Malone cites W. G. Malone in 'The Diaries and Letters of Lt Col W. G. Malone, August 1914-August 1915', *The Turnbull Library Record*, 22:1 (1989), p. 46.

<sup>55</sup> Godley informed Allen that Malone 'is buried in a Turkish fort'. *SEP*, 14 October, 1915, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> *SEP*, 16 November, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> 'There is good evidence that he was killed by friendly gunfire', writes John Crawford in *No Better Death*, Auckland: Reed, 2005, p. 319. 'Malone had been killed by a New Zealand shell falling short' and his body was never found wrote Peter Stanley in *Quinn's Post*, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005, p. 143. Pugsley tends to agree with Stanley, 'Malone was dead, killed by what was probably a New Zealand artillery shell'. Christopher Pugsley, *The ANZAC Experience. New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War*, Auckland: Reed Books, 2004, p. 106. In 1924, Bean wrote that Malone had been killed by 'a shell bursting near his headquarters', but unlike Stanley he does not say directly whose shell it was. C. E. W. Bean, *The Story of Anzac. From 4 May, 1915, to the Evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula*, St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1981, p. 678.

**EMPIRE'S CAUSE'**, the press notified people whether the soldier was killed in action, or died of wounds, where and when death occurred, age, occupation, place of residence, names of parents and his place in the number of siblings. Typical of such a notice was the death of:

DIVEHALL. - On September 15, Killed in action in France, Claude W. J., the second dearly-beloved son of Harry and Mary Divehall of Toko; age 23.<sup>58</sup>

Obituaries were more informative, and often they identified someone prominent in the local community, like Lieutenant Robert Spence, a Stratford lawyer, who was 'killed in action' late in 1917. Spence was considered by the *Stratford Evening Post* to be 'one of the most brilliant and successful of [Stratford's] younger men'.<sup>59</sup> The obituaries contained details about the character, family, education and sporting accomplishments of the deceased. Captain Tom James served with the Main Body, NZEF, at Gallipoli and he was killed at Chunuk Bair. James started his military career in 1901 in the 'old volunteers'. He was described as 'tall and muscular ... a soldier in every sense of the word .... Unassuming, kind, but just, gentle yet strong, with a heart as big as his frame'.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *SEP*, 30 September, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> *SEP*, 1, 3 November, 1917, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> *SEP*, 21 August, 1915, p. 5.



Private Claude W. J. Divehall, Killed in Action in France,  
19 September 1916. (*Puke Ariki*)



Obituaries and death notices sometimes included more personal information, illustrative of Adrian Gregory's point about lives 'cut short'. For example, people learned that the family of Private Charles Edgecombe of Stratford, 'were much distressed to have been visited by the authorities' in search of him as a 'deserter' only a few days before news reached them of his death in action in France; that Private Irving Blackstock of Cardiff, who was killed in action at Gallipoli on 26 April 1915, was engaged to be married, and that he was Private Edward Fryday's tentmate; that Private Francis P. McCullough of East Road, Stratford, was 'a young soldier, who was killed in his teens. He was very keen to go to the war, and enlisted before he was eighteen years of age, and now it is Finis at the age of nineteen'; that Norman Pollard of Rawhitiroa Road, Eltham, had suffered from 'severe shell shock' before being sent back to the trenches where he was killed in action in July 1917.<sup>61</sup>

On the first anniversary of a soldier's death, family and friends usually placed memorial notices in the press. The text often indicated how and why they thought death had occurred, where it took place, and what happened to the body. An example is a notice inserted by Fanny Barker from Stratford, who lost her 20 year-old son, Private Leslie Lee, at Gallipoli in August 1915. The notice that Barker inserted was from the 'sorrowing mother' and it included information about her son's death 'in action'.<sup>62</sup> Jay Winter and Antoine Prost issue a caution to historians wishing to understand the memorial notice as a representation of a family's response to death. 'The way families fashioned mourning rituals varied enormously', they say, 'we know only the surface of this subject, the intimacy of which always shields much of it from view.'<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *SEP*, 18 June, 1915, p. 6. *SEP*, 1 November, 1917, p. 5. *SEP*, 23 October, 1917, p. 4. *SEP*, 17 July, 1917, p. 4. McCullough was not the only teenager to be killed in the war. Joseph Bernard Scarlett, formerly from Toko, was reported 'Killed in action in France, September 28', 1916, 'age 19 years'. *SEP*, 21 October, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> *SEP*, 15 August, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History. Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 169-70.



**Private Irving Blackstock, Main Body NZEF, Killed in Action  
at Gallipoli, 28 April, 1915. (*Puke Ariki*)**



**Private Francis P. McCullough, Age 19, 23<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements NZEF,  
Killed in Action, France, 12 October 1917. (*Puke Ariki*)**



**Private Leslie Lee, Killed in Action at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli,  
9 August 1915. (*Puke Ariki*)**

Similarly, Joy Damousi informs us that, 'on an individual level, the war redefined the rituals and etiquette of mourning and people developed their own personalised ways of memorialising the dead'.<sup>64</sup> Adrian Gregory adds that, 'whilst it is possible to delineate the salient points of public grief, private grief and the methods of coping with it are harder to gauge'.<sup>65</sup> Public displays like 'standing with uncovered heads in respectful and silent sympathy with those who [on Anzac Day] mourn the loss of loved ones', is an example of what Gregory means in the first instance, but any attempt to penetrate the grief experienced by someone like Fanny Barker or Joanna Fryday will encounter problems.<sup>66</sup> So, with respect to the caveats raised by Winter, Prost, Damousi and Gregory, can historians proceed any further in their understandings than the readily identifiable threads of information, such as date and place of death? In short, yes, there is an approach.

By identifying and categorising the predominant imagery in the text of memorial notices printed in the *Taranaki Herald* and *Stratford Evening Post* from 1916 to 1918, assumptions can be made about their inclusion by family and friends. Sacrifice, the graves of dead soldiers, and death as sleep, were predominant images. Sacrifice appeared often in notices that included an imperial context accompanied by 'the words of Jesus as John records them, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13 KJV)'.<sup>67</sup> The memorial notice inserted for Fred Swindlehurst by 'his loving brothers and sisters' conveyed a sacrificial image: 'our boy was killed that we all lived'.<sup>68</sup> The 'parents, sisters and brothers' of Private Clyde Kennedy, who was killed in action at Gallipoli, said patriotic duty lay behind his

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<sup>64</sup> Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss. Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 58.

<sup>65</sup> Gregory, p. 91.

<sup>66</sup> *SEP*, 20 April, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good. Chivalry, Sacrifice and the Great War*, Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 2004, p. 257.

<sup>68</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 8 August, 1916, p. 2.

death, for 'in loving memory of dear Clyde ... who with so many others, gave his life for the Empire'.<sup>69</sup> Private Irving Blackstock was the first soldier from Stratford to die in the war. His family memorialised their 'noble son' with: 'For King and Country, Freedom, Truth'.<sup>70</sup> These words were a reassurance that the death was not in vain. A similar message is conveyed in the memorial notice for David Shewry, who 'died of wounds' in 1917:

He nobly did his duty,  
And answered his Country's Call,  
On the far off slopes of Messines,  
He gave his life, his all.<sup>71</sup>

In a more practical and local image of patriotic duty, Sergeant Henry Dewar, killed in action at Gallipoli, died to preserve a way of life: 'for we see you in the Photo in the Home you tried to save'.<sup>72</sup> The families who chose words intimating a chivalrous death may have had a more positive and supportive view of the war.

In addition to the image of the sacrificial death, the grave as the last resting place of a soldier is also found in memorial notices. The 'soldier's grave', the 'lonely grave', and the 'silent grave', all far away from home, predominate. All three converge in the memorial notices for Rifleman Claude Divehall from Toko, who was killed in action at the Somme:

Nameless his grave on a battlefield glory,  
Marked by a cross o'er a mound of brown earth ...  
Far from his home and the land of his birth.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *SEP*, 7 August, 1916, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> *SEP*, 25 April, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> *SEP*, 7 June, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> *SEP*, 9 August, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> *SEP*, 15 September, 1917, p. 4.



Private David J. Shewry, Died of Wounds in France, 6 June 1917.

*(Puke Ariki)*



**Sergeant Henry Dewer, Killed in Action at Gallipoli, 9 August 1915.**

*(Puke Ariki)*



Because people understood that a grave marked the end of a life, solace could be drawn from the belief that somewhere in Turkey or France interment had taken place, even though in reality large numbers of soldiers had no known graves, or no grave at all. The Department of Internal Affairs reported in 1924, that of the 16,474 NZEF soldiers who died overseas, exclusive of those buried at sea, 61% had 'known graves' and 39% were 'unlocated'.<sup>74</sup> Of the 129 dead soldiers whose photo portraits hang in Stratford's Hall of Remembrance, just over half (56%) were buried in cemeteries, over a third (36%) have no known graves, and for a small proportion (8%) there are no known graves or memorials, but their names are recorded.

Death as sleep was another frequently used image. Claude Divehall's 'loving friend', Mary Baskin, imagined him 'lying' in 'a silent grave' and 'sleeping without dreaming'.<sup>75</sup> The mother of 23 year-old Private H. A. Mace of Lepperton inserted the message: 'Our dear lad sleeps in a far-off land among the honoured dead.'<sup>76</sup> The 'sorrowing father, Mother, Sisters and Brothers' of Private Francis P. McCullough, who was killed in action at Passchendaele, inserted a notice that: 'They are sleeping somewhere in France — no matter where, they are just as near to heaven as though they had lain in their beds at home when the signal of "Cease" was given.'<sup>77</sup> To imagine death as sleep suggests that some people could not accept a violent end; rather, a quiet, painless death dominated their thinking. The peaceful image of death as sleep may have helped some people with 'the idea of an eventual reunion between the living and the dead'.<sup>78</sup> This could have been in the thoughts of Private William Tanner's family from Fitzroy, who, one year after his death at Chunuk

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<sup>74</sup> Department of Internal Affairs, Annual Report, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*, 1924, vol. III, H.-22, p. 7.

<sup>75</sup> *SEP*, 19 September, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> *TH*, 10 August, 1917, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> *SEP*, 12 October, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Sarah Tarlow, 'An Archaeology of Remembering: Death, Bereavement and the First World War', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 7:1 (1997), p. 117.

Bair had inserted in a memorial notice: 'I am gone to that Bright Land. Where there is no more pain. Safe in the arms of Jesus.'<sup>79</sup> And Private Fred Swindlehurst's family placed their 'trust in Heaven to meet him again'.<sup>80</sup>

Historians write that some grief-stricken people turned to spiritualism during and after the war because 'it allowed bereaved families to believe they could communicate with [their] dead sons'.<sup>81</sup> And there are contemporary examples from central Taranaki to support this. 'WHERE ARE OUR DEAD SOLDIERS'[?] asked a letter writer to the *Stratford Evening Post* in the closing months of the Gallipoli campaign.<sup>82</sup> 'Many an aching heart has asked this question', claimed the correspondent, 'longing for the smallest crumb of knowledge that would stop the pain of hopeless separation':

Our gallant fellows slain in the war are not dead, but are more alive to-day than ever they were before. Their mortal bodies are dead, yet the men live. They are alive in the Spiritual Body, which is a real and effective body. They are possessed of all their faculties; they do not forget us; they still love us; and we can still help them, and they us. The dead are alive and very near and close to us .... Thousands are around their loved ones today whispering: "I am not dead; cannot you see me. Cannot you hear me?"<sup>83</sup>

Part of the memorial notice for Irving Blackstock suggests that his family considered him to be close-by: 'And still he speaketh, being dead.'<sup>84</sup> The epitaph on the memorial to the dead at Kaponga reads:

They trod the same green fields we tread.  
The played the games we play.  
The part of them that is not dead.  
Is still with us to-day.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death*, p. 14. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 371. Tarlow, p. 117, Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, ch. 3, 'Spiritualism and the "Lost Generation"', pp. 54-78.

<sup>82</sup> *SEP*, 3 November, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *SEP*, 25 April, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Kaponga District Roll of Honour Great War 1914-1918.

How people reacted to such beliefs is unknown. Statistically the number of people in Taranaki who indicated that they were Spiritualists in the census returns in 1911 (29) and 1916 (64) were very low, and numbers declined in 1921 (52) and 1926 (49).<sup>86</sup> A further indication of their small support base was a notice placed in the newspaper by Stratford's Spiritual Science group advertising a meeting. In 1914, they used to hold a 'clairvoyance and after circle' in Forester's Hall, where 'Truth seekers were heartily welcome'.<sup>87</sup> It suggests membership was not robust.

Some people may have attempted to contact a loved one by means of a spirit medium, especially if they had no idea about what happened to the body, as intimated by the 'nameless ... grave ... marked by a cross o'er a mound of brown earth' in the memorial notice for Claude Divehall, and when a press article on 'WHERE THE FALLEN LIE' claimed that 'individual resting places' for some dead soldiers could not be marked.<sup>88</sup> Such news would have been disturbing because at least 66 soldiers from central Taranaki had been killed by July 1917, 45 of them in France. When commonly understood funerary procedures from the pre-war period no longer seemed applicable, recourse to a spirit medium to assuage grief may have appealed to some people.

Signs of war weariness can be detected in the discourse of reported events from 1915 onwards indicating that the rising death toll was a contributing factor. An example was the meeting held in the Stratford Town Hall on the first anniversary of the declaration of war. Mayor Josephiah Boon told the 'crowded' hall that, 'we have a long fight in front of us' and the 'Germans have plenty of ammunition', and he was 'certain that many of [the] boys would not return'.<sup>89</sup> The following day, local magistrate, C. D. Sole, commented that all the funerals 'I have taken part in were quite cheerful

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<sup>86</sup> *Census of New Zealand*, 1911, p. 104, 1916, pp. 10-19. 1921, p. 19. 1926, p. 13.

<sup>87</sup> *SEP*, 12 September, 1914, p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> *SEP*, 22 May, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>89</sup> *SEP*, 5 August, 1915, p. 7.

compared with last night's function'.<sup>90</sup> The *Taranaki Herald's* Own Correspondent in Stratford hoped that 'we will have no more meetings like that of this evening. We will take our gruel with a laugh and a joke, even if we hide sore hearts'.<sup>91</sup>

A further example is the reaction to the death toll from the third battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele, in October 1917. Glyn Harper believes this battle 'affected more New Zealand families and shattered more lives on a single day than any other event in the nation's history'.<sup>92</sup> Forty Taranaki soldiers were killed in the battle, five of them were married. A National Day of Prayer was held on Sunday 7 October. In New Plymouth the service was held in Everybody's Theatre. There was not a vacant seat, many people stood throughout the service, and some were unable to gain admission. Reverend W. A. Sinclair gave the opening address in which he spoke briefly of Russia being a 'broken reed', of German submarines attempting 'to starve Britain into submission', of German aeroplanes striking 'terror into the hearts of the people of the Old Land', and that the time was approaching when New Zealand's 'married men would be called upon to serve, when homes would be disrupted and the grim reality of war would be forced upon us more than ever before'.<sup>93</sup> 'The question on every lip was "How much longer will it last? When will it end?"', said Reverend Sinclair, 'Men and women were wearily crying "How long, O Lord, how long!"<sup>94</sup> At the service in Stratford, Reverend Madill said, 'we have prayed and longed for victory throughout the past three years — and sad years they have been to many of us — and we have sometimes wondered why it has been so long in coming'.<sup>95</sup> Hiding 'sore hearts' and public acknowledgement of 'sad years' partly reveals the general effect war deaths had on society. Its

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<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> *SEP*, 6 August, 1915, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> Glyn Harper, *Massacre at Passchendaele*, Auckland: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000, p. 103.

<sup>93</sup> *TH*, 8 October, 1917, p. 6.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *SEP*, 8 October, 1917, p. 5.

particularities though, can never be known publicly. What was made public in the form of numbers of lives 'cut short', obituaries, death and memorial notices, and in the case of memorial services for Lt. Col. W. G. Malone, enables some assessment only of the impact and effects of war deaths. Having known about the deaths of their young men from 1915, a weary people in Taranaki late in 1917 hoped and prayed for war's end. How they responded when the war did actually end is the subject of the next chapter.





## Chapter Ten

### An Ambivalent Ending

In the aftermath of the Great War, Inglewood resident Annis Hamerton, wrote to her daughter Frances in England. 'We have had a turmoil of joy & sorrow thankfulness to[o] deep for words, that God in his great mercy has sent us Peace, though there is & will be for long great turmoil.'<sup>1</sup> Sarah Lund wrote to her family in England from her farm at Awatuna, with similar feelings, 'we are glad the War is over, & that all the boys will soon be back home, but all the poor lads will not come back, [and] there will be some hard times for some of them'.<sup>2</sup> The *Taranaki Herald* also sounded a note of unease, warning that 'the problems of peace will be hardly less serious than those of war'.<sup>3</sup>

In New Plymouth on Armistice Day, the *Taranaki Herald* reported that:

There were many sore hearts hidden by more or less superficial smiles among yesterday's crowds; others perhaps could not venture to take part for fear their feelings might overcome them. There were many, too, whose hearts were full of anxiety respecting those dear to them who were taking part in the final scenes on the battlefields of France and Flanders. The fate of many of our boys is yet uncertain.<sup>4</sup>

And in Stratford, the *Evening Post* reported that:

There was such a sigh of relief that it could almost be felt. People beamed in each other's faces. Not much was said. There were a few silent hand-shakes. The pent-up feelings of years could not be expressed in words all at once. Perhaps, it was the thought of a dear one for ever gone, of the empty sleeve, maimed limb, or disfigured feature of a relative or close friend; may be, the thought of the Hell of the past four years welled up in the heart and made all else matter nothing for the time being. It almost seemed good to be sad for a moment, and then Joy won.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Annis Hamerton to Frances Hamerton, 22 November, 1918, Hirst Family Letters, MS-Papers-5507-12, (ATL).

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Sarah Lund, 8 December, 1918. Smith Family: Letters from Sarah Emma Lund, MS-Papers-7368, (ATL).

<sup>3</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 15 November, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *TH*, 14 November, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 13 November, 1918, p. 5.



Exhaustion and ambivalence was as much a part of the Armistice Day mood in Taranaki as it was in Europe. Jay Winter's research on Armistice Day discovered that:

fatigue marked the faces of the crowds in the celebrating Allied capitals, just as it did in the sombre streets of Berlin and Vienna. Exuberance in some urban crowds was real enough, but it was superficial. It was a passing mood, thinly disguised veiling too many sacrifices, too many wounds, too many losses.<sup>6</sup>

'Sore hearts', 'superficial smiles' and 'anxiety' were evident to the *Herald's* reporter, not only because of what they had endured over the previous four years, but because the war was not officially at an end: it was a ceasefire only, as the *Herald* informed its readers.<sup>7</sup> There had already been three other cessations of hostilities with Bulgaria on 1 October; Turkey on 1 November and Austria-Hungary on 4 November, yet soldiers from Taranaki were still marching into camp, still being killed in action, still being wounded, injured and returned to duty. The 47<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements were farewelled shortly after Bulgaria surrendered. Lance-Corporal Albert Chard, a farmer from Egmont Village, had been killed in action 'somewhere in France' on the day that Taranaki celebrated Bulgaria's surrender.<sup>8</sup> Rolls of Honour in the press reminded people that amidst the heightened expectation of peace sacrifices were still being made to win 'the war in the interests of humanity'.<sup>9</sup> So, too, did the hospital progress reports that often accompanied the Rolls of Honour. On the day Taranaki learnt '**THE GOOD NEWS**' about Turkey's surrender, a Roll of Honour and Hospital Progress Report was published in the *Hawera and Normanby Star* insensitively alongside news of 'CELEBRATIONS IN HAWERA'.<sup>10</sup> It was a striking juxtaposition. The 'Roll of Honor' for the Wellington District listed the names of

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<sup>6</sup> Jay Winter, 'A Taste of Ashes', *History Today*, 48:11 (1998), pp. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> *TH*, 9 November, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *TH*, 2 November, 1918, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *SEP*, 11 October, 1918, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Hawera and Normanby Star (HNS)*, 1 November, 1918, p. 4.

soldiers who had 'previously [been] reported missing, [and were] now reported killed in action'; and there were names of Taranaki soldiers who had 'DIED OF WOUNDS', or 'SICKNESS', or were 'MISSING', or 'WOUNDED' and admitted to hospital.<sup>11</sup> The hospital progress report listed ten soldiers from Taranaki who had either been 'removed from [the] dangerously ill list', or were 'still dangerously ill', or were 'removed from [the] seriously ill list', or were considered 'severe cases'.<sup>12</sup> Along with the premature Armistice celebration on 8 November, following a false news report from New York that Germany had surrendered, some people must have wondered if this Armistice celebration on 12 November was premature also. Add the death and misery that accompanied the influenza epidemic which had begun to sweep through the region early in November and it becomes clear why some people could not celebrate with happy hearts and smiles.

So mixed reactions greeted news of the Armistice. The *Taranaki Herald*, wrote that, 'at the moment it is impossible to write or even think collectedly'.<sup>13</sup> The *Hawera and Normanby Star*, felt that 'no one mind can grasp what the cessation of hostilities means to the whole world', so proceeded to label it grandiloquently as 'THE GREATEST DAY IN HISTORY' and 'THE DAY OF DAYS'.<sup>14</sup> The *Stratford Evening Post* view was expressed more simply, but boldly, on one whole page of the newspaper next to a column- long casualty list and news about the influenza epidemic:

## END OF THE WAR Armistice Signed By Germany<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *TH*, 12 November, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> *HNS*, 12, 13 November, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *SEP*, 12 November, 1918, p. 5.

The juxtaposition of celebration, disease, war casualties, and their concomitant emotions of jubilation, misery and sorrow, characterised the ambivalent ending of the Great War for people in Taranaki, which this chapter will assess as the region reflected on the past four years and contemplated the future.

Early in November 1918, attention quickly shifted from the battlefields of Europe to the streets, boroughs and rural settlements of Taranaki as whole communities suddenly found themselves trying to counter the randomness of a virulent strain of influenza.<sup>16</sup> Municipal and health authorities warned against public gatherings during a time of epidemic, but people defied the warnings and gathered anyway because of 'the absence of an agreed framework of explanation, comprehension, and management of influenza's randomness'.<sup>17</sup> A notable example was the funeral for 17 year-old Osborne Hamblyn, which was held in Stratford's Town Hall on 30 November 1918. The influenza epidemic and the Great War had a devastating impact on the Hamblyn family. Besides Osborne, Mary Ann Hamblyn's husband, Charles, had died of influenza and four of her sons had been killed on the Western Front. Despite the epidemic and warnings by local authorities people gathered to pay their respects, and to support Mary Ann, her daughters and sons, Ernest and Len, both of whom had been removed from the frontline by defence authorities late in 1917 to avoid further devastation to the family. The Hamblyn family epitomised the sorrow and misery at war's end.

People also gathered to celebrate the Armistice as Dr Doris Gordon, a medical practitioner in Stratford, recalls:

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<sup>16</sup> Graham Hucker, "A Time of Sorrow and Misery": Representations of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic in a Rural Region of New Zealand', PG DipArts Research Exercise in History, Massey University, 1999.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. 21.

Unfortunately many moderately infected cases got out of bed on that Armistice Day; for youth in full flush of adolescent enthusiasm could not remain in bed for an ache and a cough when Stratford's Broadway was *en fete*. As a result mild cases developed complications, and as the disease leapt on from case to case it enhanced its virulence until many people were stricken from the outset with a lethal infection.<sup>18</sup>

Gordon called the closing month of the Great War 'dark November' because of 'the holocaust which had descended'; a period of 'Black Death Plague'.<sup>19</sup> A farmer recorded its deadly impact on the settlement of Riverlea:

[14 November 1918] Very late this morning from factory owing to entire staff being down with influenza.

[15 November 1918] Influenza spreading rapidly & is now in at least half a dozen houses.

[16 November] Harry Walker was taken away to Hawera Hospital yesterday. His recovery is not expected.

[17 November] Len Walker was taken away last night.

[19 November] Ralph [?] very bad with pneumonic [*sic*] influenza.

[20 November] Len Walker is dead.

[21 November] Sis, Julia and Rod down with influenza? Symes helping us to milk & I went over and got cows in at other place & commenced milking by hand.

[22 November] Ralph [?] still dangerously ill. Others fair. Harry Walker is dead.

[23 November] Owing to pressure of work on both places failed to take weather records ... Still struggling along. Ralph's condition serious but not so bad as yesterday.

[24 November] Rowan men working factory knocked off pretending sickness. Suppliers & [?] running things. Little change in patients condition. Jim's wife taken to temporary hospital in Kaponga dangerously ill with pneumonia.

[26 November] Teddy Luinn [?] is dead.

[27 November] Jack Gardiner is dead.

[2 December] Julia is now out. The others are progressing. Besides Bert & Dot all now down also .... Lizzie is out of danger ... & Archie Gibson has at last turned the corner.<sup>20</sup>

Geoffrey Rice says that 497 people died of influenza in Taranaki, but that statistic hides the full impact on peoples' lives.<sup>21</sup> Bill Tume arrived home from the war to find that all of his Maori relatives had died from the 'flu'. Tume later

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<sup>18</sup> Doris Gordon, *Back-Blocks Baby-Doctor*, London: Faber and Faber, 1955, p. 138.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 135, 137.

<sup>20</sup> Diary of 1918. Marc Frederic Voullaire Papers 1890-1960. Box 1, MS160. Catalog No. 2002-318 (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>21</sup> Geoffrey Rice, *Black November. The 1918 Influenza Epidemic in New Zealand*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1988, p. 196. The figure includes both European and Maori. A second revised edition of *Black November* was published by Canterbury University Press in 2005.

recalled that, 'my old people were buried. I didn't see them at all. It wasn't a very happy home coming.'<sup>22</sup> In just over three weeks from 17 November to 10 December, the 'flu' made 19 women widows and 12 men widowers in central and eastern Taranaki; 67 children under 15 years-of-age suddenly found themselves with only one parent.<sup>23</sup> In the central region, influenza killed 64 people, nearly a third of whom were young men between the ages of 26 and 40, as table thirty shows. That statistic was not unique to central Taranaki, but characteristic of New Zealand, and indeed, the world during the pandemic of 1918.

**Table Thirty: Age and Sex of Influenza Deaths Registered in Stratford and Whangamomona Districts in 1918**

Age Groups	Males	Rate Per 1000	Females	Rate Per 1000
0-5	-	-	2	0.2
6-10	-	-	-	-
11-15	-	-	2	0.2
16-20	3	0.3	1	0.1
21-25	4	0.4	-	-
26-30	6	0.6	5	0.5
31-35	6	0.6	1	0.1
36-40	7	0.7	2	0.2
41-45	2	0.2	2	0.2
46-50	5	0.5	4	0.4
51-55	-	-	3	0.3
56-60	2	0.2	2	0.2
61-65	1	0.1	1	0.1
66 and older	2	0.2	1	0.1
Total	38	4.1	26	2.8
Proportion of Total	59.3%	-	40.6%	-

Source: *Death Register, D1918, vol. 229A.*

Note: Rate per 1000 is based on the total population for Stratford Borough, Stratford County and Whangamomona County recorded in the census of 1916.

<sup>22</sup> Bill Tume (William Bertrand) interviewed by Jane Tolerton and Nicholas Boyack, 3 November, 1989. OHIInt-0006/6, World War I Oral History Archive (ATL).

<sup>23</sup> Death Register, D1918, vol. 229A, pp. 3468-81. (Central Registry Births, Deaths and Marriages, Lower Hutt).

The 'flu' compounded the uncertainty about how to celebrate the Armistice. Circumscription was needed, because celebrations could upset those in mourning, and crowds of people could spread influenza. The *Hawera and Normanby Star* in an editorial on '**PEACE PREPARATIONS**' acknowledged that there were 'reasonable and unreasonable ways of celebrating such a great event' as the Armistice, and that 'unseemly conduct' would be inappropriate on a day of 'sacredness'; 'the great conflict had cost millions of lives, and there are few families in our nation who cannot point to some dear one killed by the enemy.'<sup>24</sup> Following news of Turkey's surrender, Presbyterian minister, Reverend J. D. C. Madill reminded a crowd in Stratford to be 'careful how they rejoiced on these occasions. Lest they injured the feelings of others who simply could not rejoice, and who were beneath a dark cloud of sorrow, mourning for their departed loved ones.'<sup>25</sup> When news arrived of the signing of the Armistice with Germany, distinctions between responsible and irresponsible behaviour, self-preservation and the need to celebrate, became blurred. The *Taranaki Herald* explained:

After four years of the keenest anxiety it was to be expected that the nation would give way, upon sudden relief coming, to a sort of hysteria, showing itself in various ways. To some would come, impossible of restraint, silent tears of joy: to others shouts of gladness would be necessary to hide the deeper feelings of which they strived to avoid a public display. To some quietness appealed, while with others there must be noise and motion.<sup>26</sup>

The array of emotions showed even amongst some of the local authorities. The settlement of Kaponga took no chances, and postponed the Armistice celebrations indefinitely because of the 'flu'. In Inglewood, the local newspaper ceased printing until further notice, and unlike the previous ceasefire celebrations, 'owing to so much sickness the firebell rang only for a short time,

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<sup>24</sup> *HNS*, 4 November, 1918, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *SEP*, 4 November, 1918, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> *TH*, 14 November, 1918, p. 2.

and the tin-can band was conspicuous by its absence', but an 'open-air thanksgiving service' was held.<sup>27</sup>

Doris Gordon was also ill with influenza when she heard the 'joy bells' of peace. Gordon recalled an immediate thought that her husband would be coming home alive. For years she had 'lived and prayed' for that moment:

And now it found me pickled in toxins, aspirins, and quinine. In the next bedroom was my sister-in-law equally ill with gastric influenza. I staggered into her room and pitched myself onto the foot of her bed – I had just enough humour left to think what a queer pair of jubilant soldiers' wives we looked – and croaked, "Dot, that's *peace*, and they are not killed yet!"<sup>28</sup>

The '*peace*' which Gordon referred to was one devised by diplomats, but her husband would not be returning home to a peaceful region free of doubts and uncertainties. Influenza still rampaged in December 1918, and would be felt well into 1919. Returned soldiers had to be settled, which was difficult especially for those suffering wounds and the effects of gas and 'shell-shock'. What the war meant, in particular, Gallipoli, was still unresolved in the popular mind. Comprehending the loss of so many lives, and deciding how best to remember them, outweighed any sense of practical gains from the war. All this contributed to an ambivalent ending: the diplomat's peace did not necessarily mean civilian joy.

At Christmas 1918, while the *Taranaki Herald* and the *Stratford Evening Post* welcomed demobilisation and the thought that returned soldiers would soon be with their families, the *Herald* wondered 'whether or not there can be the old-time merriment associated with the season'.<sup>29</sup> For some families, like Wilfred Fargie's from Stratford, it would have been a joyous occasion because he survived the war with distinction, having been awarded the Military Medal. When discharged from the army in February 1919, Fargie had been away from

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Gordon, pp. 137-38.

<sup>29</sup> *TH*, 24 December, 1918, p. 2. *SEP*, 24 December, 1918, p. 4.

his wife and two children for four years and 106 days.<sup>30</sup> Not all families were as fortunate as the Fargies. A woman from Mahoe in central Taranaki, placed an advertisement in the local newspaper, which read, 'WANTED - By soldier's wife with two children, position as housekeeper', suggesting her husband had returned with a disability.<sup>31</sup>

Hawera public hospital had admitted at least 172 returned soldiers in 1918 and 1919.<sup>32</sup> Sixteen had respiratory complaints associated with the 'flu', such as pleurisy, bronchitis and pneumonia; 23 had malaria and dysentery; 27 had gun shot wounds, and another six had been 'Gassed'.<sup>33</sup> For one of those gassed, 'dark glasses' were ordered because the 'eyes [were] not so well'. They had to be protected from the light, but also hidden from the public gaze, in an attempt to conceal the effects of war. Four returned soldiers had been admitted for deafness and defective vision; one soldier had typhoid, while another had 'trenchmouth'.<sup>34</sup> As a consequence of illness, injuries, or wounds, some soldiers had been discharged and sent home as early as 1915. William Barber from Inglewood, married with two children, served with the Main Body. In September 1915 he had been hospitalised in Cairo, discharged from the army in October 1916, and died prematurely in September 1922.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, William Crockett from Stratford, who got married shortly after enlistment in 1914, was discharged as an invalid in October 1915 and died in April 1923.<sup>36</sup> Their wives and families had to cope with death and disabilities when others celebrated the Armistice.

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<sup>30</sup> Military Service Records and Attestation Files (MSRAF), 11/545 Wilfred Grant Fargie, (New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Archives, Upper Hutt).

<sup>31</sup> *SEP*, 2 November, 1918, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Hawera Hospital Board. Register of Soldiers 1918-1919 (1 vol.), Box 14, Catalog No. 2003-488 (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> MSRAF, 10/711 William Henry Barber.

<sup>36</sup> MSRAF, 10/682 William Crockett.



Of the volunteers from Taranaki in the Main Body, NZEF, nearly a third (30.4%) were discharged throughout 1919 and 1920 as table thirty-one shows. Not all returned home unscathed. James Dallinger from Hawera, Herman Honnor from New Plymouth, Ernest Botten from Hawera, Philip Clemow from Stratford, and Percival Clee from Eltham were discharged from the NZEF between November 1917 and June 1919. Nearly eighteen months after his discharge, Dallinger 'committed suicide while temporarily of unsound mind'.<sup>37</sup> A local doctor had been treating him for 'recurrent malaria', which he suffered from at Gallipoli and previously in South Africa. A week before he died Dallinger had 'been suffering very badly from boils on the neck', and was considered to be 'in a highly nervous state'.<sup>38</sup> Honnor had been hospitalised with gastroenteritis and dysentery at Gallipoli. While in France in 1917, he was hospitalised with 'torn/ruptured back muscles' and 'shellshock'.<sup>39</sup> While serving with the NZEF, Botten had suffered influenza, rheumatism, dysentery and was 'gassed'.<sup>40</sup> He was subsequently discharged. Clemow had been discharged because he was 'no longer physically fit for overseas service on account of illness contracted' on active service. He died from tuberculosis on 21 October 1920, age 26.<sup>41</sup> Clee was discharged as a result of being gassed. He, too, like Clemow died of tuberculosis in Eltham on 16 June 1923, age 32.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *TH*, 24 June, 1920, p. 2. MSRAF, 10/162 James Type Dallinger.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> MSRAF, 11/704 Herman William Honnor.

<sup>40</sup> MSRAF, 10/749 Ernest Botten.

<sup>41</sup> MSRAF, 11/537 Philip Crago Clemow.

<sup>42</sup> MSRAF, 10/866 Percival Harry Clee.

**Table Thirty-One: Number of Soldiers From Taranaki in the Main Body, NZEF, Discharged From Service During the Period 1915 to 1920**

Year	Number Discharged
1915	23
1916	56
1917	21
1918	18
1919	89
1920	6

Source: Attestation Files and Personal Military Records.

Research published in the *New Zealand Medical Journal* during the early 1930s suggested a link between being gassed on the Western Front and respiratory health problems amongst returned soldiers.<sup>43</sup> Respiratory system disabilities, which included pulmonary tuberculosis, were second only to wounds as reasons cited in the total number of war pensions granted in 1924.<sup>44</sup> Central government welfare was one way in which families coped financially with invalided returned soldiers. At least 24 women in central Taranaki from late 1915 to 1921 received a widow's pension to help support themselves and a total of 52 children under the age of 14 in their care.<sup>45</sup>

The dislocation of families as a consequence of the male 'breadwinner' being disabled or killed in the war had wider implications for society. A recurrent theme had been the welfare of the soldier and society's duty to look after the men and their families. Failure to do that could lead to trouble, stated

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<sup>43</sup> W. N. Abbott, 'A Clinical and Pathological Appreciation of the Late Effects of Pulmonary Damage by Poison Gas in War', *New Zealand Medical Journal* (NZMJ), 30: 160 (1931), pp. 387-92. A. D. Carbery, 'Residual Effect of Warfare Gasses', *NZMJ*, 34: 181 (1935), pp. 160-66. W. N. Abbott, 'The Late Clinical and Pathological Sequelae of Gas Exposure', *NZMJ*, 34: 181 (1935), pp. 166-71. 'The Chemical Arm in Warfare', *NZMJ* editorial, 34: 181 (1935), pp. 185-87. See Allan Marriott, *Mud Beneath My Boots*, Auckland: Harper Collins Publishers, 2005, pp. 9-13 for a description of his uncle's health problems associated with being gassed on the Western Front.

<sup>44</sup> A. D. Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Services in the Great War 1914-1918*, Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, 1924, pp. 549-50. See also the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Pensions Department, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), 1924, H.-18, vol. III.

<sup>45</sup> Widows' Pensions 1912-21. Hawera District Court, ABIB Box 1, Accession W4228 (ANZ).

the *Hawera and Normanby Star* in an editorial on 'SOME AFTER-WAR DIFFICULTIES'.<sup>46</sup> The *Star* viewed the returned soldier with some anxiety, especially over the pre-1914 relationship between labour and capital; if assistance was not given to the 'defenders' on their return then 'extremist agitators' similar to the 'Bolsheviks' could cause trouble.<sup>47</sup> Bolshevism to the *Star* was worse than Prussian militarism:

It is the duty of the nations to guard against the serious danger that a spirit, perhaps worse than militarism, does not enter in when Prussianism has been driven out. Such a spirit is Bolshevism, the most terrible form of warfare, wherein class fights against class and anarchy prevails, breaking down all institutions of State and bringing long days and nights of horror.<sup>48</sup>

German militarism had been feared before 1914, and the British Empire and its allies had just conducted a great war against it, but Bolshevism seemed set to supersede the 'frightfulness' of 'Prussianism'. How could Bolshevism be any more 'frightful', when for the past four years people had been exposed to news of alleged atrocities in Belgium, submarine warfare, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the execution of nurse Edith Cavell, gas warfare and the aerial bombing of English towns? Motivated by this new ambivalent threat, Marc Voullaire wrote in his diary, 'Austria seems to be going the way of Russia & Bolshevism appears to be getting the upper hand.' A few days later he wrote a wavering, conciliatory comment about Germany: 'I only hope the horrors of Bolshevism will be spared the country.'<sup>49</sup>

Reflecting on the past four years was a more immediate consideration than Bolshevism. According to the *Taranaki Herald*, 'many children can hardly remember the days before the war and even older persons find it difficult to

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<sup>46</sup> *HNS*, 18 November, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *HNS*, 2, 7 November, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Marc Voulliare, 6, 11 November 1918.

think back to the time before August 1914'.<sup>50</sup> Some ordering of the war was needed so that people could start to make some sense of it all. The formation in popular culture of 'before the war' and 'during the war' was part of that process. A good example, by accident or design, was James McMillan's Armistice Day address to a crowd in Stratford where he reflected on why Britain and the empire had gone to war in 1914:

In the first place, to vindicate the sanctity of treaty obligations; in the second place, to assert and enforce the independence of free States relatively small and weak against the encroachment of the strong; and, in the third place, to withstand the arrogant claim of any single Power to dominate the development and destinies of Europe. Briefly, we went to war for liberty and justice.<sup>51</sup>

The public discourse outlined by McMillan remained relatively unchanged during the war. Months later, the *Stratford Evening Post* attempted to give some order to the war years with a chronological review of events over the period 1914 to 1919. The editor reached a conclusion: 'one is struck by the number of occasions [that] were indeed dark', and then speculated, 'it is improbable that such a war will ever again be permitted in the future', which suggests the Great War was perceived to be cataclysmic.<sup>52</sup>

To the editor of the *Stratford Evening Post* it had been 'modern war on a grand scale', which called for the involvement of 'all civilians no less than on the part of the Empire's young manhood'.<sup>53</sup> It had been:

a truly Titanic struggle - a war unprecedented in history, which will in all probability, be described as The Great War, even after future wars ... are forgotten. The war we have just ended was unprecedented in the number of men engaged in the field, in the number of nations involved, in the amount of territory occupied, and, on the part of our enemies, in the almost unbelievable cruelty, destructiveness and bitter feeling which has been shown.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *TH*, 13 November, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> *SEP*, 13 November, 1918, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> *SEP*, 21 July, 1919, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> *SEP*, 24 December, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

Methodist minister, Reverend W. A. Sinclair, told an Armistice Day crowd in New Plymouth that, 'when these boys and girls were grown up they would tell their children and their grand-children of these four years from 1914 to 1918 when the whole world united to overthrow the greatest military power and menace the world had ever known'.<sup>55</sup> By assisting Britain, Taranaki soldiers had taken part in what was understood to be 'THE GREAT WAR FOR CIVILISATION 1914-1919', the inscription which can be found on the Victory Medal awarded to all returned soldiers. Of all the military campaigns during the period 1914 to 1918, Gallipoli featured prominently in the public discourse at the time of the Armistice. Contemporaries considered Gallipoli to be a 'sacred tract of land' because of the 'heroic courage, sublime devotion and unselfish sacrifice displayed on that memorable occasion'.<sup>56</sup> Lindsay McCluggage, a primary school pupil, referred to the Anzac 'landing' as the 'memorable 25<sup>th</sup>' in his award winning Stratford schools' Anzac essay competition in 1917.<sup>57</sup> By stating in his conclusion that 'some people say that the Gallipoli campaign was a failure', McCluggage had signalled the existence of debate.<sup>58</sup>

Speaking to a crowd in New Plymouth on the day Turkey surrendered, the mayor stated, 'we had our disappointment at Gallipoli, and whether that campaign was a failure or no[t] time and history will tell'.<sup>59</sup> Eltham's mayor was unequivocal in his assessment, referring to Gallipoli as 'all but successful'.<sup>60</sup> In Hawera on Armistice Day, Methodist minister, Reverend A Liversedge put Gallipoli amongst 'the dark days' of the war alongside the 'retreat from Mons' and the 'Battle of the Marne'.<sup>61</sup> No consensus was reached about the Gallipoli campaign, not even in the post-war period. On the fourth anniversary of Anzac

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<sup>55</sup> *TH*, 14 November, 1918, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> *HNS*, 4 November, 1918, p. 7. *SEP*, 4 November, 1918, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> The essays are printed in full in *SEP*, 21, 22 November, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> *SEP*, 22 November, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> *TH*, 1 November, 1918, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> *HNS*, 2 November, 1918, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> *HNS*, 12 November, 1918, p. 8.

Day, the *Taranaki Herald* claimed that, 'whether the occupation of Gallipoli was justified as a military undertaking is a matter upon which great difference of opinion exists'.<sup>62</sup> 'Undoubtedly they were unsuccessful', concluded the *Stratford Evening Post*, but it was of a 'minor nature' having been 'overshadowed by the major operations on the West Front'.<sup>63</sup> The *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age* understood Gallipoli to have been a 'miserable failure', and was vociferous in its assessment by taking sides with the 'best fighting men the world has ever seen [who] were uselessly slain through a hideous mistake of the war authorities, being sent to work an impossibility'.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the editor of the *Age* had Lt. Col. Malone and the Wellington Infantry Regiment in mind. The *Age* also cast doubts on whether Anzac should be 'a day for public holiday making' because, as it reasoned, unlike Waterloo and Trafalgar, Gallipoli did not have a 'distinct bearing on the result of a big war'.<sup>65</sup> By 1919, equivocation characterised Taranaki's view on Gallipoli, as Reverend J. Napier Milne's statement to an Anzac Day gathering in New Plymouth suggested. 'Gallipoli', he said, 'was an expedition about which there is going to be endless debate amongst the historians of the future'.<sup>66</sup>

The equivocal attitudes to Gallipoli are best explained by the recentness of the event and the lack of ordered thinking about it. After all, by the time of the Armistice only three years had passed. What is perhaps most surprising is that Lt. Col. Malone was not remembered in the reported public discourse at the time of the Armistice. Malone is conspicuous by his absence. Instead of ascribing him 'hero' status and remembering his death as a 'national disaster' in 1918, as they did in 1915, Stratford's mayor proclaimed Britain's prime-minister, David Lloyd George, as 'our national hero', to which the crowd agreed through

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<sup>62</sup> *TH*, 25 April, 1919, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> *SEP*, 25 April, 1919, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age*, 28 April, 1919, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *TH*, 26 April, 1919, p. 6. For an example of the historiography see Jenny Macleod, (ed.), *Gallipoli. Making History*, London: Frank Cass, 2004.

their applause.<sup>67</sup> Failure to mention Malone during the Armistice, when in 1914 he was held aloft as a 'FINE EXAMPLE' of patriotism was a striking example of ambivalence.

In the attempt to make some sense of the war the *Taranaki Herald* stated at the time of the Armistice that 'our whole mental outlook has changed during the last four years and we cannot simply go back to the old conditions as if the war had never taken place.'<sup>68</sup> The *Hawera and Normanby Star* also felt that 'there cannot be a return to the old order of things. Men have had their outlook on life entirely changed, and we live in a totally different atmosphere from that of the few years preceding the war'.<sup>69</sup> When news reached Taranaki in late June 1919 that Germany had signed the peace treaty, the *Stratford Evening Post* felt that it 'marked the passing of a terrible danger. It marked the defeat of the ruthless German effort to dominate the civilised world. It marked the coming of a new character of freedom, and a new era of justice and fair dealing between nations'.<sup>70</sup> In New Plymouth, 'there was no demonstration of any kind', upon receiving the news, instead it 'was received very quietly', unlike the reactions to the cessation of hostilities preceding the Armistice.<sup>71</sup> Doubts were also expressed in the *Taranaki Herald* about 'whether there is really substantial guarantee of an enduring peace, or whether it is only a temporary cessation of hostilities'.<sup>72</sup> When the celebrations did begin to mark the actual end-of-the-war, the *Herald* observed that 'there was not the wild abandon of Armistice Day', and W. H. Skinner wrote, 'peace celebrations throughout the British Empire took place today, processions, speeches [sic] fireworks at night etc, but little enthusiasm it seemed to me. We were onlookers only'.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps that mood is

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<sup>67</sup> *SEP*, 13 November, 1918, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> *TH*, 13 November, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> *HNS*, 12 November, 1918, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> *SEP*, 21 July, 1919, p. 4.

<sup>71</sup> *TH*, 30 June, 1919, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> *TH*, 18 July, 1919, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> *TH*, 21 July, 1919, p. 6. W. H. Skinner, 19 July, 1919. Diaries 1919-1924, MS 020/7 (*Puke Ariki*)

best explained by the time that had passed between the two events, when reflection on the war focused more on the region's soldiers who would not be returning.

The '**VICTORIOUS PEACE**' was celebrated in Stratford, as the illustration shows, but 'there was not the same excitement that day as when they had gathered previously' on Armistice Day, observed the county chairman.<sup>74</sup> Instead, sadness could be observed amongst the rejoicing:

From the balconies along the route, crowds looked down upon an epoch in the history of Stratford, the like of which had not been seen before, and in importance is not likely to be equalled for generations to come. It was a day of rejoicing, much rejoicing, yet the Fallen were not forgotten. Punctually at noon, the tolling of the fire bell was the signal for the stoppage of all traffic, and heads were uncovered for a few minutes as a silent tribute to those brave lads who sacrificed their all for us. The "Last Post" was sounded at the conclusion of the interval. The sight of the flag pageant as it passed silently and without beat of drum, quickened many pulses, and thoughts flow back to its true representation: the fateful 4<sup>th</sup> of August, 1914.<sup>75</sup>

New Plymouth had the same spectacle, with a similarly dour observation from the local member for parliament, S. G. Smith:

in the midst of our rejoicing we can think of those men - nearly 17,000 - who will never come back. I say that we should keep the remembrance of those men constantly before us and the keynote of the future should be that by the sacrifice they have made we are enjoying the freedom we have to-day.<sup>76</sup>

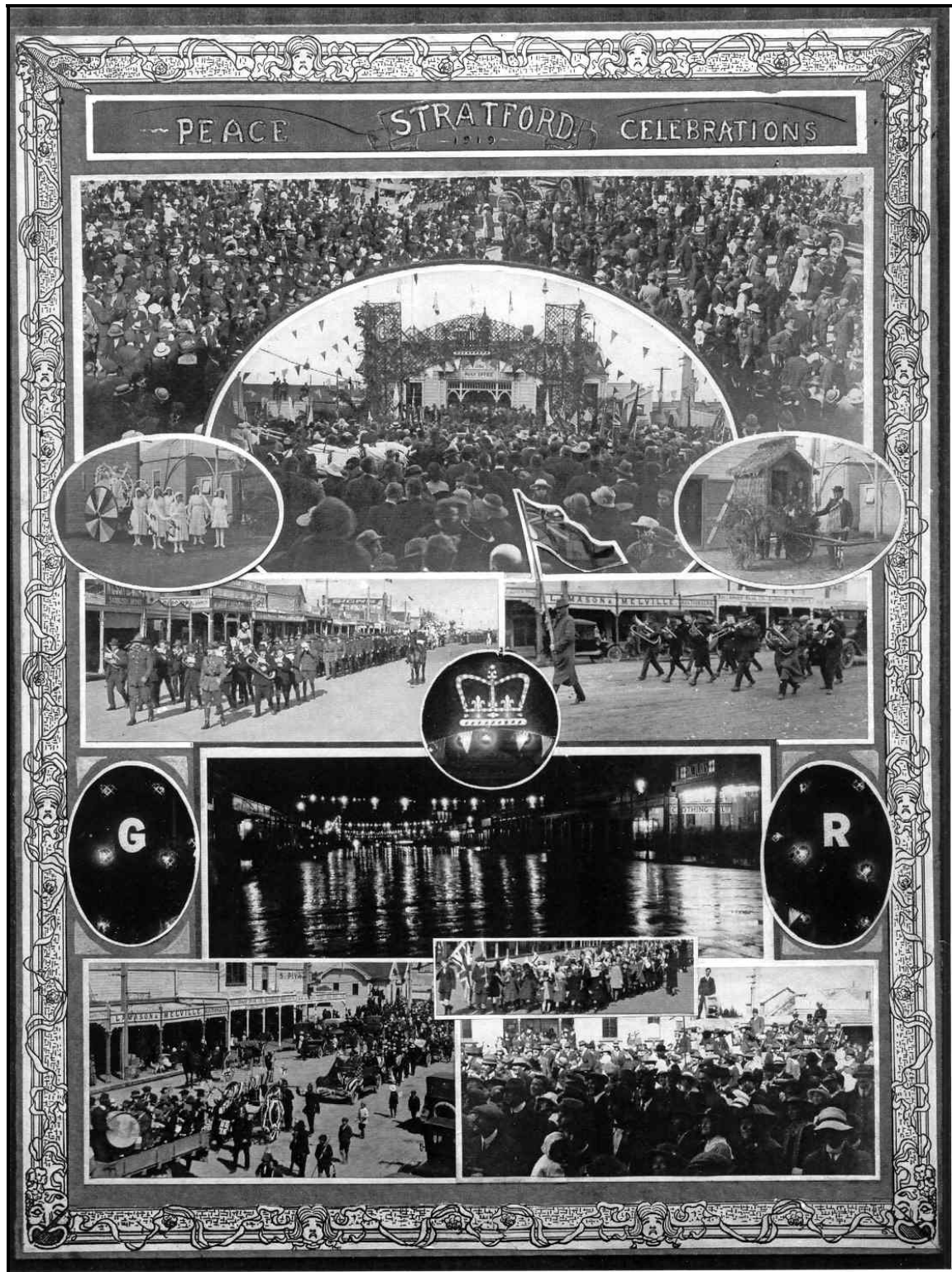
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<sup>74</sup> *SEP*, 21 July, 1919, p. 7.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> *TH*, 21 July, 1919, p. 6.





Stratford Peace Celebrations, 1919.  
Collection Ref. No. PAColl-3065. Reference No. G-10110-1/1 (ATL).

With victory, people in Taranaki gained a peace, but judging by contemporary observations the loss of '17,000' soldiers from throughout New Zealand outweighed any gains. There could not have been a more ambivalent outcome to the Great War.

The loss of '17,000' men represents about 17% of the soldiers serving overseas with the NZEF at the cessation of hostilities. While it is difficult to ascertain the proportional loss of Taranaki's war dead in relation to the numbers of soldiers from the region serving overseas by November 1918, it is possible to indicate the numbers of men lost. Table thirty-two shows that Taranaki's male population of military age in 1914 was affected markedly by war losses, but the extent of the damage is startling; the entire age group of 20 to 40 year-olds had not recovered their pre-war population levels by the 1926 census.

**Table Thirty-Two: Numbers of Males in Taranaki in Selected Age-Groups 1911-1926**

Years	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60
1911	2,359	2,719	2,811	2,479	1,988	1,591	-	-	-
1916	-	1,449	2,087	2,406	2,309	1,783	1,651	-	-
1921	-	-	2,323	2,504	2,528	2,251	1,773	1,382	-
1926	-	-	-	2,239	2,544	2,425	2,171	1,658	1,273

Source: *Census of New Zealand, 1911 - 1926.*

The same pattern is predominant in each county and borough except New Plymouth and Hawera, where the war does not seem to have impacted as much on the numbers of males of military age as tables thirty-three and thirty-four show.

**Table Thirty-Three: Numbers of Males in New Plymouth in Selected Age Groups 1911-1926**

Years	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60
1911	194	224	226	199	184	162	-	-	-
1916	-	170	282	316	333	274	238	-	-
1921	-	-	372	401	425	416	308	284	-
1926	-	-	-	398	471	445	436	328	301

Source: *Census of New Zealand: 1911-1926*

This is probably explained by economic opportunities and the urban-drift to those main boroughs. Angela Wanhalla made a similar discovery in her research on the Taieri area of the South Island of New Zealand, where the Great War:

Had a disruptive effect on the settlement patterns of Taieri Kai Tahu, and played a role in dispersal. A number of men returned to find their land had been leased, mortgaged or sold, and others never returned to the Kaika preferring to follow the industry into the cities.<sup>77</sup>

How such losses affected Taranaki in the post-war period is in need of assessment.

The nature of New Zealand society during the 1920s forms the backdrop to this assessment. New Zealand historians have never viewed the 1920s with optimism. Miles Fairburn writes disparagingly of the years 1912 to 1930, referring to them as a period of 'degeneration'.<sup>78</sup> W. H. Oliver described the two decades after the war as 'perplexed'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Angela Wanhalla, 'Marrying "In": The Geography of Inter-marriage on the Taieri, 1830s-1920s', in *Landscape/Community. Perspectives From New Zealand*, Tony Ballantyne and Judith A. Bennett, (eds), Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2005, p. 89.

<sup>78</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'The Farmers Take Over (1912-1930)', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Keith Sinclair, (ed.), Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 185.

<sup>79</sup> W. H. Oliver, *The Story of New Zealand*, London: Faber and Faber, 1960, p. 168.

**Table Thirty-Four: Numbers of Males in Hawera in Selected Age Groups  
1911-1926**

Years	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60
1911	117	137	149	149	106	83	-	-	-
1916	-	101	141	151	138	100	112	-	-
1921	-	-	182	201	162	157	122	98	-
1926	-	-	-	156	152	167	122	110	76

Source: *Census of New Zealand: 1911-1926*

James Belich and Keith Sinclair made comparisons with other difficult decades in New Zealand's past in their descriptions of the 1920s. Belich believes that the period '1912-22 ranks with the 1820s ... as New Zealand's worst decade for conflict, tragedy and death'.<sup>80</sup> Subsequently, Belich makes an observation about other 'historians studying markedly different subjects [who] speak of a semi-tangible sense of crisis and insecurity in the period, especially in the early 1920s: a "general post-war unease", a "nervousness" that society was "in grave danger of decline and collapse"'.<sup>81</sup> Sinclair also observed something unsettling about the 1920s by comparing it with the economically depressed 1880s. 'Where-ever one looks at life in New Zealand during the nineteen-twenties there is evidence of a loss of confidence, hesitancy, disillusionment. Life seemed more circumscribed than at any time since the eighties'.<sup>82</sup>

The consensus amongst these historians on the nature of the 1920s raises questions about whether the Great War was primarily responsible, or whether it merely accelerated changes already taking place; or more explicitly, whether the loss of '17,000' soldiers was to blame. It is a difficult set of questions to answer. Wolfgang J. Mommsen provides a general caution because in his study of

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<sup>80</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged. A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 113.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, rev. edition, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1991, p. 245.

wartime Germany he says that, 'it is no easy task to assess its consequences'.<sup>83</sup> Jay Winter would no doubt agree. Winter raises the 'classic conundrum embedded in all writing on the consequences of the Great War. Were these changes caused by the war or did they merely coincide with it?'<sup>84</sup> In his study on *The Great War and the British People*, Winter believes that the significance of war losses 'lies more in the realm of the social and cultural than in the statistical and demographic'.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, he claims that:

it would be absurd to limit discussion of the consequences of war-related mortality to the purely statistical questions .... Anyone who does this is bound to miss the most profound impact of the human costs of the Great War, which was on the minds of the survivors.<sup>86</sup>

Winter proceeds, in part, to assess the 'human costs of the Great War' by examining the collective memory of soldiers through their writings. A similar methodology can be used by New Zealand historians. By focusing on the public discourse at the unveiling of war memorials, historians can investigate how the deaths of so many young men impacted 'on the minds of the survivors' during the 1920s. The '17,000' soldiers who died were the ultimate consequence of the Great War for New Zealand. The memorials that were erected in their memory during the 1920s are an enduring and visible representation of that consequence. As a representation of New Zealand's war deaths, Taranaki's war memorials, in

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<sup>83</sup> Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'The Social Consequences of World War I: The Case of Germany', in *Total War and Social Change*, Arthur Marwick, (ed.), London: Macmillan Press, 1988, p. 25.

<sup>84</sup> Jay Winter, *The Great War and the British People*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 264.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

particular, those in the Stratford district, are the subject of the next and closing chapter of this thesis.



## Chapter Eleven

### Remembrance in Perpetuity

Ten years after the Great War ended, Stratford celebrated its fiftieth jubilee. The jubilee booklet – *Carved From the Bush* – recorded fifty years of progress and achievements in the borough and surrounding district. It also recorded that 1914 was ‘the Great War year’; that ‘the Borough Council minutes for 1915 contain a great many resolutions of condolence with relatives of soldiers who had fallen at the Front’; that in 1923, ‘on August 8<sup>th</sup>, the handsome gates at the entrance to King Edward Park were officially opened as a memorial to the late Colonel W.G. Malone’; that in 1924, ‘the clock in the Post Office was purchased from a Borough loan, and is a memorial to Stratford district soldiers who fell in the Great War and the South African War’; and that on Anzac Day, 1926, ‘the gates at Victoria Park, erected as a memorial to Stratford soldiers who fell in the Great War, were officially opened’.<sup>1</sup> Remembrance of the Great War in the jubilee booklet suggests that a decade after the Armistice the loss of so many young men from the district still weighed heavily on peoples’ minds. By focusing on Taranaki’s war memorials, especially those in the Stratford district, the intention is to proceed with the issue raised in the previous chapter about how the impact of war deaths ‘on the minds of the survivors’ manifested itself during the 1920s.

An evening dedicated to ‘OUR FALLEN NEW ZEALANDERS’ in St. Mary’s Church, New Plymouth, in June 1915, was perhaps the first public commemoration service held in Taranaki during the Great War. The public discourse showed reverence towards the nation’s soldiers. They were likened to knights ‘engaged in a knightly and chivalrous undertaking’, and those who had died a promise that ‘their memory will never die’.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1915, rolls of

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<sup>1</sup> *Carved From the Bush. Stratford 1878-1928. The Town and District’s Record of Effort*, New Plymouth: Jubilee Executive, 1928, pp. 31-2, 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Taranaki Herald (TH)*, 28 June, 1915, p. 5.



honour were to be a popular way of keeping their memory alive. From September 1915, New Plymouth Boys' High recorded in the school's magazine the names of former students and teachers who had died in the war. The headmaster believed that 'we must have some memorial to our Old Boys who have fallen in the Great War' because 'it would be a lasting disgrace to the school and to all who have been in anyway connected with it, did we do nothing to keep green visibly the memories of those who received their early training here'.<sup>3</sup> The school kept alive their memory by printing a roll of honour in each issue of the *Taranakian*, which included photo portraits, memorial notices and lists of names in alphabetical order of those 'old boys' who had 'laid down their lives'.

In April 1917, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Stratford, a Union Jack was unfurled to reveal a roll of honour, and 'after a short pause', the minister read aloud its 46 names.<sup>4</sup> Three months later the Methodist church at Huiroa unveiled its roll listing 24 names, after which Reverend W. A. Sinclair delivered an address on 'The Law of Sacrifice'.<sup>5</sup> In September, the Methodist Church at Midhirst was 'beautifully decorated with white flowers and flags' for the unveiling of its roll of honour. 'By the pull of a cord the Union Jack fell away from the front and a handsome tablet was seen.' The 'Tablet' was set in 'dark stained kauri with a shield and pillars on either side. The Union Jack with the flags of the Allies form[ed] the centre at the top, and the Red Cross in the corners. A crown [wa]s placed just under the flags, and then follow[ed] the names of the boys in gold lettering', which were read aloud to the congregation. Reverend Sinclair gave an address on 'Love and Sacrifice'. A recitation followed titled, 'In the Trenches', which was 'descriptive of the Taranaki boys'.<sup>6</sup>

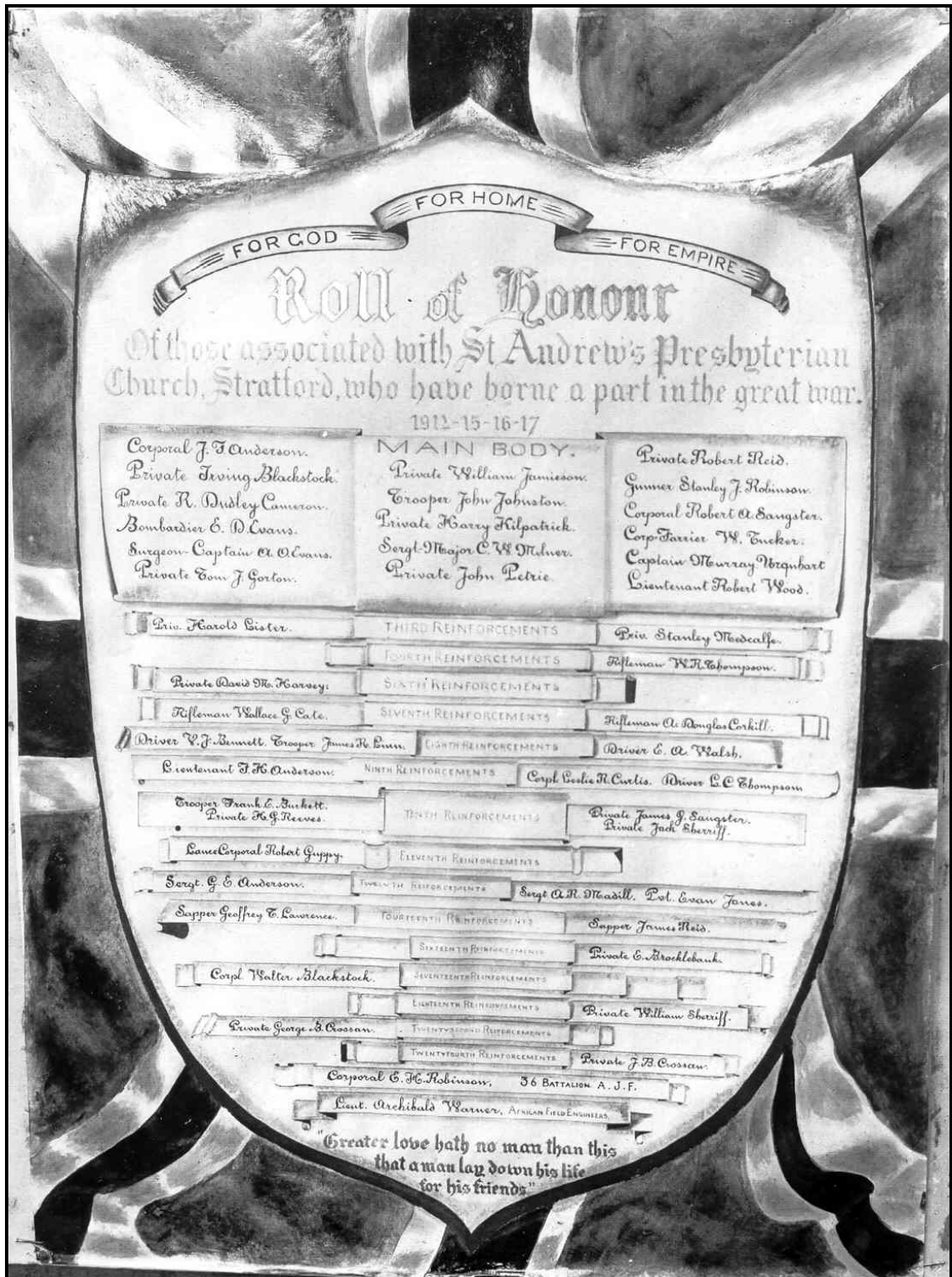
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<sup>3</sup> *Taranakian*, 4:3 (December, 1915), pp. 73-4, (New Plymouth Boys' High School Library).

<sup>4</sup> *Stratford Evening Post (SEP)*, 1 April, 1917, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *SEP*, 27 July, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *SEP*, 8 September, 1917, p. 3.



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Stratford, Roll of Honour, 1917.  
Collection Ref. No. PAColl-3054. Reference No. G-9644-1/1 (ATL).

In November 1917, mayor James McMillan 'thought the time had arrived for the institution of a Roll of Honor in Stratford in memory of the fallen men in the Borough and County'.<sup>7</sup> McMillan believed that the district 'should have something that indicated more than a name, and so he suggested that 'it take the form of a photograph of each man'.<sup>8</sup> At the Egmont Club in Stratford on the third commemoration of Anzac Day, about 'fifty members' and 'a few ladies' attended an unveiling of photographs of four club members who had been killed in the war. Reverends J. D. C. Madill (Presbyterian), C. W. Howard (Anglican) and Father Maples (Catholic) each gave an address before the Union Jack covering the portraits was removed and the audience 'stood to attention and sang the National Anthem'.<sup>9</sup>

These commemorative actions during the war coincided with similar acts in France and Britain. France began the task of gathering its war dead for reburial at the end of 1915. In Britain, street shrines to the dead began to appear in 1916. The work of Fabian Ware and the Imperial War Graves Commission began in 1917, and was reported locally in the *Stratford Evening Post*.<sup>10</sup> How best to commemorate dead soldiers exercised peoples' minds in Taranaki as much as it did in Britain and France during and after the war. What resulted were permanent, often large structures erected in prominent places and unveiled in public ceremonies characterised by ritual and solemnity.

From 1917 to 1926, four memorials became the cornerstones of Stratford's commemoration; the Hall of Remembrance (1917), 'Malone's Gates' (1923), the memorial clock (1924) and Victoria Park gates (1926). A brief description of the unveiling ceremonies followed by an outline of the public discourse for each memorial will provide a basis for some answers to this chapter's main question.

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<sup>7</sup> *SEP*, 20 November, 1917, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1918, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> 'WHERE THE FALLEN LIE', in *SEP*, 22 May, 1917, p. 7. 'OUR SOLDIERS' GRAVES', in *SEP*, 5 February, 1918, p. 8. See also David Stevenson, *1914 1918 The History of the First World War*, London: Allen Lane, 2004, p. 545.

The most informative memorial erected in Taranaki to the war dead is Stratford's Hall of Remembrance. McMillan had given some thought to the town's roll of honour including local participation, location, costs and form. It would include soldiers from both the borough and county, and be located in the corridor of the municipal building. Public subscription lists would defray costs. It would take the form of photo portraits of each soldier, with accompanying inscriptions. In July 1918, McMillan reported to council that 'he had taken steps to have a frame made for the first section' of the roll.<sup>11</sup> On the fourth anniversary of the 'landings' at Gallipoli, 28 photo portraits hung in the municipal building with 28 more in waiting. A poignant description of the decorated roll of honour shows that as early as 1919 it had gained a respected place in the town's cultural landscape and in the imaginations of its inhabitants:

One of the most touching silent tributes to those of our brave ones who fell on Anzac Day, at the "Landing in the Dawn," and on other glorious fields was the decoration of the Roll of Honor portraits in the Stratford Municipal Arcade. Lovely wreaths were hung at intervals over the groups of portraits, and festoons of white and purple ribbon artistically draped the length of the walls. The idea was that of the Mayor and Mrs McMillan.<sup>12</sup>

Stratford's Municipal Arcade on Anzac Day resembled a shrine, like those in Britain where, in streets or churches, photographs and lists of names surrounded by flowers and ribbons commemorated those soldiers from the district who did not return from the war.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Stratford Borough Council, Minutes of Meetings, vol. 6, 16 July, 1918, p. 122, (Stratford District Council).

<sup>12</sup> *SEP*, 25 April, 1919, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Catherine Moriarty, "'Though in a Picture Only': Portrait Photography and the Commemoration of the First World War", in *Evidence, History and the Great War. Historians and the Impact of 1914-18*, Gail Braybon, (ed.), New York: Berghahn Books, 2005, p. 34.



Hall of Remembrance on Anzac Day, early 1990s

The official unveiling of Stratford's roll of honour was planned to coincide with the visit by the Prince of Wales in May 1920. Returned soldiers were especially asked to attend, and were requested to 'parade in mufti, wearing medals and ribbons'.<sup>14</sup> The Stratford branch of the Returned Soldiers' Association explained that to 'parade in mufti' would maintain a uniform appearance:

When the number of different details in the uniform of units is considered [it] would be practically impossible to arrange a really uniform parade of men belonging to Artillery, A.S.C., Rifle Brigade and the various Infantry Regiments, and a mixture would appear motley, and spoil any attempt at military effect.<sup>15</sup>

On the day of the prince's visit 'more than five thousand' people assembled on Broadway, including about 1,700 school children and 193 returned soldiers.<sup>16</sup> After some short speeches, the prince passed into the municipal building to unveil the portraits. He shook hands and conversed with Maori War veterans and returned soldiers before being led into the council chambers, 'where he spoke sympathetically with a gathering of about forty mothers of men killed in the war'.<sup>17</sup> After that he returned to the crowd and then to the railway station.

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<sup>14</sup> *SEP*, 24 April, 1920, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1920, p. 5. The request originated in a circular letter from the headquarters of the Returned Soldiers' Association.

<sup>16</sup> Guy H. Scholefield, *Visit of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales to the Dominion of New Zealand, April-May, 1920*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1926, pp. 63, 64.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p. 65.





**Crowd on Broadway at the Unveiling of Stratford's  
Hall of Remembrance.**

The prince would have seen a total of eight panels on both sides of the corridor displaying the photographs of 121 soldiers – later increased to 129 – who died in the Great War. The accompanying inscriptions gave the names of the soldiers, which reinforcements they mobilised with, where, when, and generally how they died.<sup>18</sup> By deconstructing the inscriptions some understanding emerges about what might have been on the minds of McMillan and his councillors when they devised the memorial.

The photos appear not to be arranged in any order such as military rank, or according to an alphabetical listing of names, but it is likely that McMillan aimed to show equality of service because they had all fought and died in the same war and presumably for similar beliefs.<sup>19</sup> However, there were clusters of family members. The photos of twins, William and Leonard Hansen from Douglas were placed alongside each other; so too, were brothers Stanley and Charles Rowson from Stratford, Frank and Ernest Keightley from Midhirst, and Henry, Thomas, William and James Hamblyn from Tariki. The grouping of some photos by family and the absence of any overall pattern reflects the importance of family and equity of service in McMillan's idea of remembrance.

Some of the inscriptions indicate local pride. The inscription, 'Main Body NZEF', on eight of the photos invokes the voluntary spirit of 1914 and shows those men who responded early to the patriotic call to duty. The inscriptions for Private Albert Johnson, a farmhand from East Road, and Sergeant George Syme, a carpenter from Tariki, show that they were awarded the Military Medal and Distinguished Conduct Medal respectively.

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<sup>18</sup> Graham Hucker, 'Defying Those Who Would Forget. A Hall of Remembrance and Its Narrative', *History Now*, 9:2 (2003), pp. 10-14. The photo portraits that visitors see today are the post-World War II reconfiguration, which was subject to a major renovation by Detlef Klein and a team of conservators from *Te Manawa*, Palmerston North, in year 2000.

<sup>19</sup> The inscriptions show that of the 129 soldiers, 64 held the rank of private, 17 were sergeants, 12 riflemen, 7 lance-corporals, 6 corporals, 6 lieutenants, 3 gunners, 3 captains, 2 tappers, 2 sappers, 2 troopers, 1 navy mechanic, 1 farrier, 1 lance-sergeant, 1 sergeant-major, and 1 colonel.



Pride and gallantry aside, the abiding impression from the inscriptions is that something dreadful happened to them all. Inclusion of the manner of death in all the inscriptions would convey that impression. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the inscriptions indicate that the soldiers were 'killed in action' and nearly a quarter (23%) had 'died of wounds'. The inscription on Private Thomas Gorton's photo reads, 'gassed and died'. It is a significant inscription because 'gassed' is the only reference to a technological means of death in the Hall of Remembrance. Its inclusion suggests abhorrence at the immorality of such a method, which historians say was meant to torment, not necessarily kill.<sup>20</sup> Private Francis P. McCullough's photo reads 'age 19 years'. It is the only inscription that refers to age. It conveys the impression of sorrow, even anger, over losing a 'boy' in the war – the council had expressed dismay in 1917 over rumours that the government was considering lowering the age of enlistment to 19. Uncertainty is in some of the inscriptions. J. R. Moir's reads, 'wounded and missing'; and Private William A. Jameson's simply reads, 'missing'. Both disappeared at Gallipoli. 'Surely "missing" is the cruellest word in the language' for families and friends unable to bring any resolution to the disappearance of soldiers like Moir and Jameson.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Denis Winter, *Death's Men*, London: Penguin Books, 1979, pp. 121-22 for a description on the effects of being 'gassed', and Geoff Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994, p. 48.

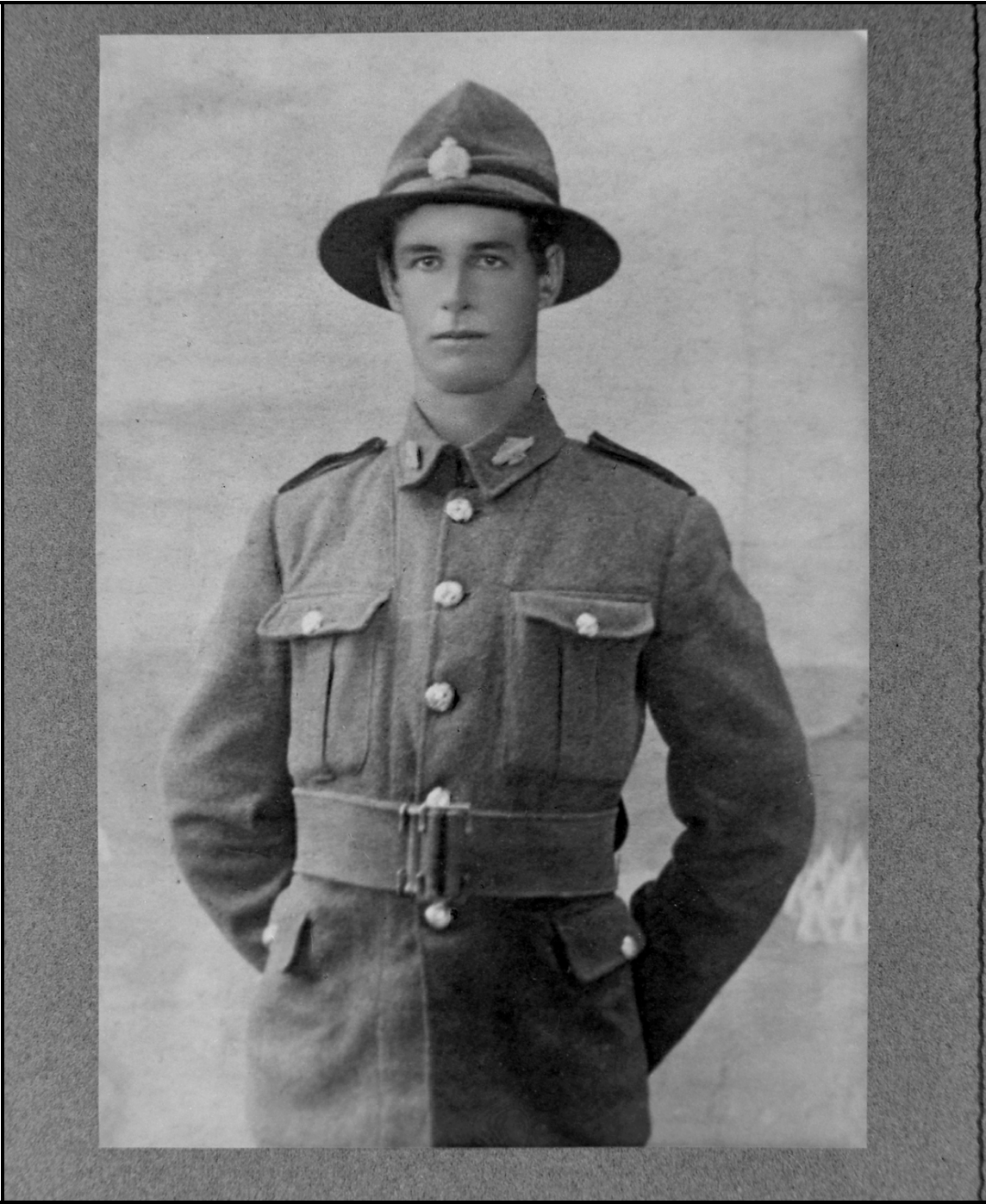
<sup>21</sup> Joanna Bourke cites Anon, (*To My Unknown Warrior*, London, 1920, pp. 25-6) in *Dismembering the Male. Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, London: Reaktion Books, 1999, p. 210.

**Table Thirty-Five: Manner of Death During the Great War of Soldiers From Stratford and the Surrounding Districts Whose Portraits Hang in the Hall of Remembrance**

<b>Manner of Death</b>	<b>Number of Soldiers</b>
'Killed in Action'	83
'Died of Wounds'	30
Died of Non-Specific Illnesses	5
'Died of Influenza'	5
'Gassed'	2
'Missing' Presumed Dead	2
'Died of Enteric Fever'	1
Unknown	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>

Source: Hall of Remembrance inscriptions, Stratford.

Some soldiers died from sickness and disease. The inscription on Gunner G. W. Falder's photo reads, 'died of enteric fever in Malta Hospital'. Charles Rowson and Anselm M. Flynn died in Stratford during the influenza epidemic. Rowson, a 22 year-old farmer, was Stratford's first 'flu' fatality. He served on the Western Front in 1916 and 1917, and had been discharged from the NZEF at the time of his death on 8 November 1918. The inscription on his photo reads, 'died of illness'. Flynn had also been discharged from the army at the time of his death. He had been 'badly gassed' on the Western Front in October 1917, and his photo reads, 'died of sickness (Gassed)'. The brackets suggest that the gas had weakened his resistance to the 'flu'. The inclusion of Falder, Rowson and Flynn in the Hall of Remembrance, as well as others who died of sickness, marks a convergence of the commemoration of death through disease with the commemoration of death in war. Perhaps McMillan felt that duty and sacrifice mattered more than *how* they died; that in death discharged soldiers were just as deserving of recognition because of their service to the empire.



Private Charles H. Rowson, 13<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, Died of Illness,  
8 November 1918. (*Puke Ariki*)

Place names locating where soldiers from Stratford died were included in the inscriptions because of their importance in satisfying family understandings about their loved one's death. It enabled families and friends to cast their thoughts towards that place when remembering.<sup>22</sup> Just over two-thirds of the soldiers from Stratford died in France as table thirty-six shows. The inclusion of places indicates the global nature of the Great War and it must have seemed incredible to local people that some of their men had died in Europe, and previously unknown places in the Middle East, and that some did not die on a battlefield at all, but death for some men came in institutions, through imprisonment, at sea, or somewhere unknown.

**Table Thirty-Six: Where Soldiers From Stratford and the Surrounding Districts Whose Portraits Hang in the Hall of Remembrance Lost Their Lives During the Great War.**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Soldiers</b>
France	87
Gallipoli	17
Not Known	11
Hospitals in England	5
'At Sea'	3
Palestine	2
Hospital in Malta	2
Prisoner of War camp in Hadji Keri (Turkey)	1
Zeebrugge	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>

Source: Hall of Remembrance inscriptions, Stratford.

The words used in the inscriptions had the potential to shock a community into never forgetting the sacrifices of the district's young men –

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<sup>22</sup> The inscriptions do not say where the soldiers are buried. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website shows that over half (56%) were buried in cemeteries; 41 in France, 15 in Belgium, 5 in Britain, 4 in Turkey, 2 each in Malta and Stratford. Memorials record the names of just over a third (36%) of the soldiers 'whose graves are known only to God'; 21 names were inscribed on memorials in Belgium, 12 in France, 11 in Turkey, and 3 in Karori, Wellington. For ten soldiers there are no known graves or memorials.

'age 19 years', 'gassed', 'missing', 'killed in action', 'died of wounds', and 'died of sickness'. They all convey an anti-war component to the Hall of Remembrance, or at least a realisation or 'brutal honesty' in McMillan's mind that the Great War was different to anything the town had ever experienced before.<sup>23</sup>

In 1923, a memorial to Lt. Col. Malone was unveiled. Members of the Wellington Regiment had been gathering funds for the memorial. On the eighth anniversary of Malone's death at Chunuk Bair, 'a great gathering of military people' in Stratford, including Malone's sons, Bryan and Terence, attended the unveiling of a stone at the top of a large arched concrete gateway leading into King Edward Park. Speeches outlined Malone's life and achievements before the flags fell away for all to see the inscription on the commemorative stone:

**To the memory of  
Lt. Col. W. G. Malone, Wellington Regiment, N.Z.E.F.,  
Killed in action, Chunuk Bair, Gallipoli,  
August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1915.**

The 'ceremony was concluded by the singing of a verse' from Rudyard Kipling's *Recessional*, followed by the Last Post, and the national anthem.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> When examining an American Civil War memorial, an historian found 'something odd about the monument'. 'What caught my eye was the manner in which the town had chosen to list the score or more names of those who had died in Maryland, North Carolina, and Louisiana. Behind each name appears not only a date and a place but, most peculiarly it seems to me, the cause of death....The first name on the monument is Edwin L. Howe: died of "disease", Annapolis, Md., November 1861. Somehow the brutal honesty of the Barre Civil War monument undermines the alleged valor of war itself....I wonder aloud whether more recent generations of young men who had grown up in this town appreciated the antiwar ironies of their beautiful monument.' T. H. Breen, 'A Monument For Barre. Memory in a Massachusetts Town', in *American Places. Encounters With History*, William E. Leuchtenburg, (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 131-32.

<sup>24</sup> *SEP*, 9 August, 1915, p. 2. *TH*, 9 August, 1923, p. 5.



Malone's Gates, early 1990s

The public discourse at the unveiling ceremony focused primarily on Malone as an inspiration to good citizenship. The crowd was told that his memorial would 'be a reminder also of the other 16,000 men who had given their lives in the war, that they had given their lives liberty, and that we should strive in our lives to promote loyalty, patriotism and unselfishness'.<sup>25</sup> Preparedness and duty were directed at the territorials and cadets by Colonel Cox. He 'urged them to train in peace time so that if the time ever came when the country needed men again they would be ready to do their duty as Colonel Malone had done'.<sup>26</sup> That same theme of preparedness emerged again in the evening at a dinner held in the Town Hall by the Returned Soldiers' Association, the South African War Veterans' Association and the Malone Memorial Committee. 'Some people said "Let us be done with war," ' claimed A. H. R. Amess, headmaster of the Technical High School, 'but so long as human nature was what it is there would be war. The only thing for all to do was to be prepared for war.'<sup>27</sup> Colonel Cox agreed, 'they should be prepared to defend their Empire'.<sup>28</sup> However, that opinion would not have found favour with everyone. At the Anzac Day address in Stratford earlier that year, Dr W. P. Gordon, President of the local Returned Soldiers' Association asked, 'must we act on the principle that the only way to prevent war was to prepare for war?'<sup>29</sup> 'The Great War showed the fallacy of [that] opinion', he argued. To Gordon, 'it appeared certain that if war was prepared for war would come'.<sup>30</sup>

The unveiling of 'Malone's Gates' on the anniversary of a key event set a precedent for future memorials in Stratford. The Stratford borough council, in June 1923 proposed a utilitarian memorial in the form of a town clock, using

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<sup>25</sup> *TH*, 9 August, 1923, p. 5. *SEP*, 9 August, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *TH*, 9 August, 1923, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> *SEP*, 9 August, 1923, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1923, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

funds gathered from local citizens.<sup>31</sup> On Armistice Day, 1924, the post office on Broadway was set for the unveiling ceremony. Motor vehicles had been stopped in the main street, and 'a good attendance of the public', including school children, waited for the unveiling of the clock. 'Just before 11 o'clock the Mayoress ... pulled a rope which disengaged a flag from in front of the Broadway face of the clock and set the clock in motion.'<sup>32</sup> A two-minute silence followed the eleven chimes. Mayor McMillan then spoke to the crowd. The clock was a 'memorial to the soldiers who had fought in the Great War and in that "dress-parade for Armageddon" as Kipling had prophetically labelled the Boer War'.<sup>33</sup> He asked Dr Gordon to speak to the crowd. Gordon wanted to interest the children in Armistice Day, so he chose the liberation of the French town of Le Quesnoy as his subject. 'As Stratford children heard the mellow chimes of the memorial clock he hoped the sound would remind them of the freedom the New Zealanders brought to Le Quesnoy, of the freedom which was brought to France'.<sup>34</sup> Large numbers of children were in attendance at unveiling ceremonies as the illustration of the opening of the Hall of Remembrance has shown. Children had an important, yet passive part to play because they were the next generation who would hopefully carry on the ideals of good citizenship through remembrance of the past.<sup>35</sup> The illustration of the unveiling of Cardiff's war memorial in 1920, shows children in the front row so that they could listen and learn. The adults by contrast are seated further away from the monument on church pews.

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<sup>31</sup> IA 29 150/63 War Memorial - Permission to Erect and Maintain Town Clock - Stratford Borough Council (ANZ).

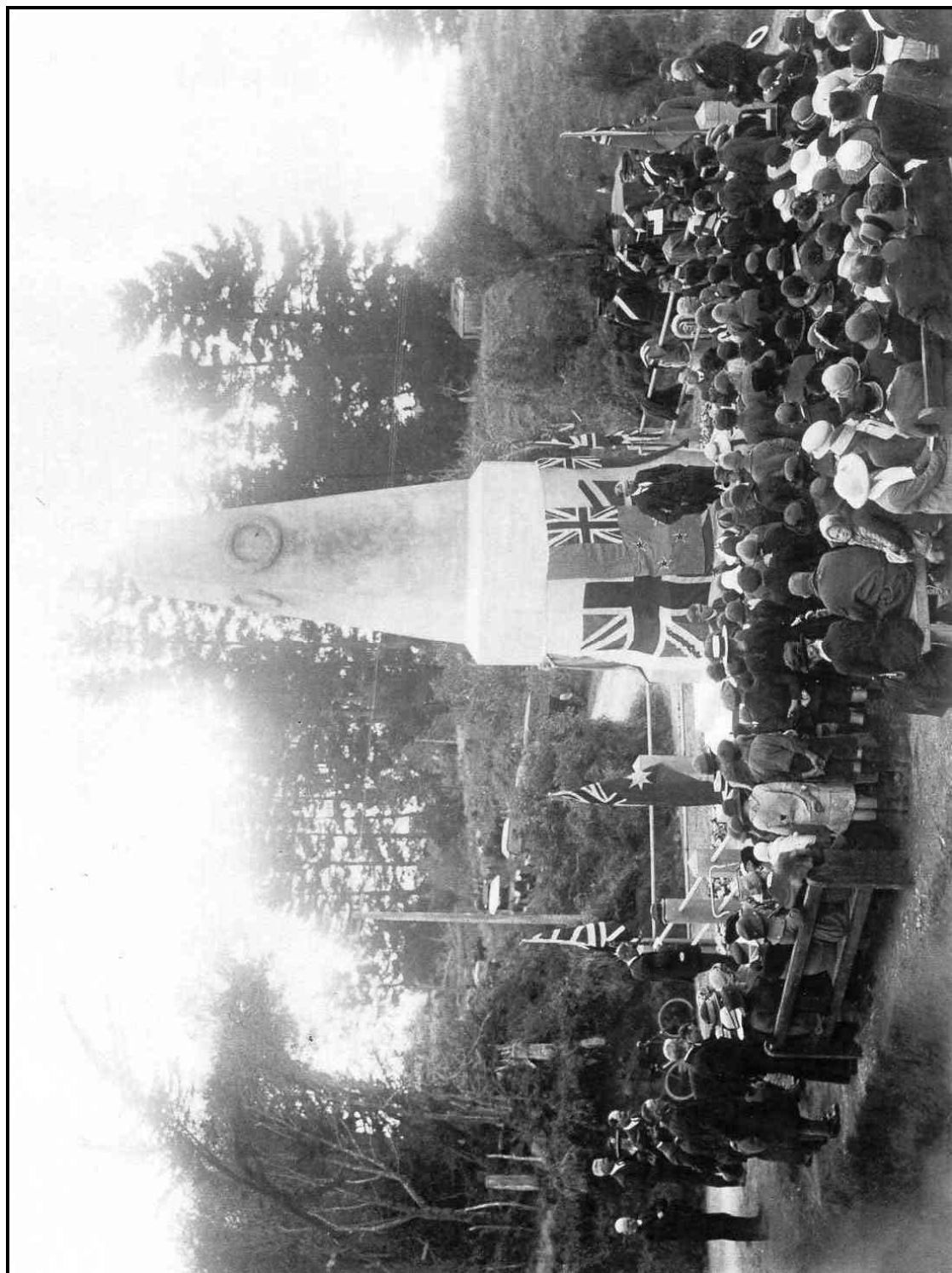
<sup>32</sup> *SEP*, 11 November, 1924, p. 5. The prominent clock tower above the post office was demolished in the late 1960s. The original clock face and bells were built into the new clock tower on Miranda Street.

<sup>33</sup> *TH*, 13 November, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *SEP*, 11 November, 1924, p. 5. *TH*, 13 November, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> See Chris Maclean and Jock Phillips, *The Sorrow and The Pride*, Wellington: Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1990, p. 72.





**Unveiling of the Cardiff War Memorial, 1920.  
Collection Reference No. F-154967-1/2 (ATL).**

On 8 May 1923, McMillan and his councillors set out to construct another non-utilitarian memorial in a form to be decided by the town's citizens rather than the council. An appeal was launched for the proposed memorial, which would represent:

- (1) A small but tangible expression of gratitude from the present generation to its honored Dead.
- (2) A monument at which the relatives of the fallen, and the public generally, may pay reverent tribute.
- (3) Symbol to our children, and generations yet unborn of the sacrifices of those who died, that they might live and enjoy peace and liberty.<sup>36</sup>

An appeal for a Cenotaph by New Plymouth's mayor in 1923 espoused similar sentiments:

Another seemly result of a memorial is the solace we can give to the parents and kindred of the heroic dead by creating an emblem of remembrance, a proxy of that sacred spot in Gallipoli or Flanders, around which centre their tender thoughts .... The cenotaph should be a spot to which they can repair and gain a little comfort from the concrete expression of an abstract local or national gratitude .... The cenotaph will be an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual appreciation we cherish. It will tell future generations that much of the freedom and blessing they enjoy have not been achieved by themselves.<sup>37</sup>

In both Stratford, New Plymouth and throughout Taranaki, public meetings were held, committees appointed, a form of memorial decided on and a sum of money set.

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<sup>36</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1926, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1923, p. 6.

Three years later, on Anzac Day, 1926, the last of Stratford's memorials to its dead of the Great War was unveiled in a public ceremony at the entrance to Victoria Park. A 'raised platform draped with flags had been erected just outside the gates'.<sup>38</sup> Guests included General Sir Andrew Russell, who had been the commander of the New Zealand Division in France in 1916 and a former president of the New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association. Russell had been invited to unveil the memorial. In front of the platform sat the relatives of soldiers who had died in the war. After Russell had inspected the guard of honour, Presbyterian minister, Reverend J. McGregor, delivered an address, which focused on citizenship and sacrifice:

They could look on the memorial as a means of teaching the generations to come, and they were handing it down together with the names of the fallen to the children. The stones do live, and have a tremendous meaning, and we want them to live for all generations. We want to bring a noble vision of the future before the boys of our land - we want to show them the spirit of sacrifice.<sup>39</sup>

The idea of the memorial serving future generations was apparent in each speaker's address. Russell said:

The best memorial that could be raised in honor of a soldier fallen was to try and imitate the example of unselfish determination he had set, to cultivate the spirit of self-sacrifice, and in truth and in deed to try and make the world a better place to live in.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1926, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*



**Stratford War Memorial, King Edward Park, 1926.**

**Collection Ref. No. PAColl-3065. Reference No. G-17593-1/2 (ATL).**

The Victoria Park monument has no architectural resonance with the Great War, but it is a construction to the war. An excerpt from Rupert Brooke's poem, *1914 - The Dead*, is inscribed to the right of the gates. The excerpt has been chosen to remind people about 'the supreme sacrifice' that the town's young men made during the war:

**These laid the world away; poured out the red  
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be  
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,  
That men call age; and those who would have been,  
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.**

**FRANCE, GALLIPOLI, PALESTINE, and SAMOA** are inscribed on the gates, which show people the global extent of the war and where the town's young men had served. The place names also serve to remind people of where 'these [men are] laid the world away'. Young men are the focus of the sacrificial image in Brooke's poem. They could be Stratford men who gave up prospects of fatherhood and a long life of work, but by their selflessness they passed onto future generations certain ideals to be remembered, hence 'their immortality'. With the unveiling of the Victoria Park gates, Stratford's commemorative landscape to the Great War was complete.

Stratford's Great War memorials raise questions. Firstly, why four sites of remembrance? Most places in Taranaki have only one main memorial dedicated to the Great War. Secondly, can any significance be attached to their size and location? The arched gateway dedicated to the memory of Lt. Col. Malone was at the time of unveiling purported to be the largest memorial to an individual in New Zealand. Thirdly, do they tell us anything about what was 'on the minds of the survivors'?

Why the commemorative landscape in Stratford was so well served has much to do with the popular need to remember the war dead in the years

immediately following the Armistice. 'How to provide suitable memorials for the dead' was a prominent question in the public's thinking wrote Christchurch architect Samuel Hurst Seager in 1920.<sup>41</sup> 'There is scarcely a journal or magazine which does not refer in every issue' to that question.<sup>42</sup> The two files of press clippings held at Archives New Zealand on proposed war memorials gathered from both the North and South Islands for the year 1919 alone, supports Seager's claim.<sup>43</sup> The official unveiling of Stratford's Hall of Remembrance in 1920 came at the time when war memorials were a major current issue. Three years later the rest of Stratford's memorials were either unveiled, or planning had at least begun on their construction. Maclean and Phillips explain that the lengthy delay was largely due to economics. New Zealand had to endure a recession in 1920-21, which held up commemoration plans in most places. Also central government made a decision not to subsidise the costs of local memorials, which left financing such projects in the hands of local committees. Finally the returning soldiers occupied the attentions of local communities in the immediate aftermath of the war. It was 1921-22 before most memorial committees began their work, thus 'the optimum years for the unveiling of memorials in New Zealand were 1922 and 1923 — when 45% of recorded memorials were opened'.<sup>44</sup> New Plymouth's mayor, W. J. Elliott, alluded to the delays in a public appeal for a proposed cenotaph for the town. 'The time is opportune', he said, 'indeed, we have been too tardy, and if we fail to surmount the difficulties much longer, our tribute will be a very belated one.'<sup>45</sup> McMillan also intimated that in Stratford 'there has been in the past some criticism

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<sup>41</sup> S. Hurst Seager, *War Graves and Memorials*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1920, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* See *Patea and Waverley Press*, 20 March, 1920, p. 3 for a list of towns in New Zealand and their plans for erecting war memorials.

<sup>43</sup> IA 141 Box/Item 18 and 19. Newspaper Cuttings War Memorials 1919 (ANZ).

<sup>44</sup> Maclean and Phillips, pp. 108-09.

<sup>45</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1923, p. 6.

regarding the design of the monument' planned for the entrance to Victoria Park.<sup>46</sup>

Stratford was well served with memorials because of its central location at the confluence of all the main routes in Taranaki. The town's geographical position would have suited the commemoration aims of individuals like McMillan and groups like the Wellington Regiment. Stratford's deputy-mayor, E. Carryer, did tell the crowd at the unveiling of 'Malone's Gates' that 'the citizens were not unmindful of the claims of both New Plymouth and Palmerston North' on Malone's memorial, but Stratford was, after all, his home town.<sup>47</sup>

Stratford's memorials, other than the Hall of Remembrance, were unveiled at a time when the press perceived a waning of interest in remembering the Great War. At the Anzac Day address in Stratford in 1923, Dr Gordon told the crowd that, 'the Great War was to be a war that would end all wars':

But on a contemplation of present-day conditions were there not grounds for pessimism? Almost five years had passed since the war was finished, yet how far was the world from the much hoped-for consummation [?] Russia was in revolution, Austria and Hungary were in the grip of famine and France was again in arms against the beaten nation. Contemplating these things it was pardonable to form the conclusion that all that had been fought for in the Great War had been lost and that the world was drifting back to the state existing before 1914.<sup>48</sup>

On Armistice Day, 1924, a *Taranaki Herald* editorial followed a similar theme to that of Gordon's:

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<sup>46</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1926, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *TH*, 9 August, 1923, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1923, p. 5.

Six years have passed and how many of us remember? In a sense perhaps we all do, but too many have dismissed the war from their minds as a horrid nightmare carrying with it no lessons for our future guidance .... The world is forgetting what it went through so recently and what those who fought between 1914 and 1918 went through in order to make the world a better place to live in ... we have drifted far back towards the old condition of things. On all sides there are evidences that the lessons of the war are being forgotten.<sup>49</sup>

In a review of Anzac Day in Stratford in 1925, the *Stratford Evening Post* observed 'it would appear that the great day is losing some of its significance and each year sees a dwindling in the number of people who attend the memorial service'.<sup>50</sup> It is conceivable that those dour commentaries and observations influenced McMillan, the Wellington Regiment, Carryer and other town councillors as they put their plans into action for memorials in Stratford during the mid-1920s. If so, then the number of memorials may partly explain the need to keep the commemorative ideals before the public because the need to remember is as much about the fear of forgetting, which would explain their size and location.

Stratford's war memorials — and those throughout Taranaki — are large and located in prominent places because their designers wanted them seen, and the reasons for their presence not forgotten. The Hall of Remembrance was located in the corridor of the municipal building where residents conducted daily business with the borough. Across the main street from the Hall of Remembrance, the memorial clock towered over Broadway with chimes that resonated throughout the town every fifteen minutes reminding people, especially children, of their 'special meaning'.<sup>51</sup> Looking westwards from the southern end of the main street, 'Malone's Gates' standing at '22 feet [6.7 metres] high and 26 feet [7.9 metres] wide' had 'been so placed that it could be

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<sup>49</sup> *TH*, 11 November, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *SEP*, 27 April, 1925, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> *TH*, 13 November, 1924, p. 2.



seen from Broadway.’<sup>52</sup> Looking eastwards from ‘Malone’s Gates’, the memorial gates leading into Victoria Park could be seen from the south-end of Broadway. That memorial was strategically placed so that it could be viewed daily ‘by the hundreds of children attending the Public School and by the senior scholars on their way to the Technical High School and [it] will be the portal through which thousands will throng into our sports grounds’.<sup>53</sup> The view of some historians in Australia and New Zealand that ‘many’ war memorials ‘in both countries are at the entrance to sporting grounds’, in particular, rugby fields because of the ‘association between playing rugby and soldiering’ is debatable.<sup>54</sup> Memorials were often erected at the entrance to sports grounds and schools to maximise the impact of their messages to as many people as possible. West of Stratford is Cardiff’s large memorial located at the intersection of key roads. To the north of Stratford, Tariki’s memorial, unveiled on Armistice Day 1921, is ‘ten feet [2.7 metres] high and stands on a solid concrete base, facing the main road’.<sup>55</sup> And New Plymouth’s Cenotaph is located at the intersection of two main roads and it can be seen clearly off-shore; all other memorials in Taranaki were located either at school entrances, or on the main street in the centre of towns.<sup>56</sup>

Obelisks and arched gateways were the main types of war memorials erected in Taranaki. Jock Phillips believes that Taranaki ‘seems to have taken a special liking to’ arches and gateways as memorials. ‘These “Taranaki gates”, as we might call them, were ... a local culture; but they were never exclusively so – echoes of them are to be found throughout the country, and in Europe too, but

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<sup>52</sup> *TH*, 9 August, 1923, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1926, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> K. S. Inglis and Jock Phillips, ‘War Memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Survey’, in *Packaging the Past? Public Histories*, John Rickard and Peter Spearritt, (eds), Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991, p. 188.

<sup>55</sup> *SEP*, 12 November, 1921, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Visit <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Anzac/memorial/mem-nth.html#tara> to see images of Taranaki’s memorials from the Great War.

rarely with the density to be found in Taranaki' claims Phillips.<sup>57</sup> Further research by Maclean and Phillips shows that arched gateways 'constitute almost 42% of all memorials' in Taranaki.<sup>58</sup> However, the percentage of arched gateways in Taranaki presented in table thirty-seven differs from their assessment. Nevertheless, both sets of statistics pertaining to arched gateways in Taranaki are well above the national figure. Table thirty-seven indicates that the types of memorials in Taranaki are more monumental and less utilitarian than for both New Zealand and Australia.

**Table Thirty-Seven: Types of Memorials From the Great War. A Comparison.**

<b>Types</b>	<b>Australia (%)</b>	<b>New Zealand (%)</b>	<b>Taranaki (%)</b>
Soldier	13.8	10.2	6.9
Female Figure	0.7	3.6	2.3
Cenotaph	6.2	8.0	2.3
Obelisk	19.9	34.8	30.2
Column	5.9	2.8	0
Cross	2.1	6.1	4.6
Arch/Gate	8.1	16.6	30.2
Cupola	0.3	2.2	0
Urn	0.5	2.5	0
Hall	19.7	5.8	9.3
Clock	2.4	1.1	4.6
Hospital	2.4	0.3	0
Band Rotunda	2.1	0.6	2.3
Avenue/Park	4.0	0.3	0
Other/Unknown	12.6	5.1	6.9
<b>Monumental</b>	<b>57.7</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>83.7</b>
<b>Semifunctional</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Buildings</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.3</b>
<b>Greenery</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Numerical Totals</b>	<b>(1455)</b>	<b>(366)</b>	<b>(43)</b>

Source: The data for Australia and New Zealand and the form of the above table are from K. S. Inglis and Jock Phillips, 'War Memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Survey', p. 187. The data for Taranaki is mainly from my own fieldwork in the region. See chapter 9, fn 9.

<sup>57</sup> Jock Phillips, 'Marianne and Zealandia: The War Memorial in France and New Zealand', in *Proceedings of the Fifth George Rudé Seminar in French History*, Peter McPhee, (ed.), Wellington: History Department, Victoria University, 1986, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Maclean and Phillips, p. 100.

By deconstructing war memorial epitaphs, attempts can be made to access what might have been on the minds of the people who erected them. The memorials in Taranaki were clearly erected to the men who had died in the war. A common epitaph is best represented by Waitara's memorial. It reads: **'Erected by the citizens to the memory of the men of Waitara who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918'**. There were no memorials erected specifically to those who 'served' or 'returned', but convergences do exist. The memorial at Egmont Village reads: **'In reverent memory of the Fallen and in Honour of those who served and safely returned'**. Why the dead are the main focus of remembrance is best explained by who they were, how they died, and for what reasons. Those who died were labelled in epitaph rhetoric in masculine terms as 'boys' or 'men' who had performed a duty as soldier 'heroes'. For the residents of Omata their memorial was in honour of the 'lads' who had 'died for their fellow men'. At Opunake, Waihi and Pihama, 'boys who fell' is predominant in the epitaphs. Youth as exemplified by 'Our Boys' was a dominant trope used throughout the Great War period, and it underpinned the post-war concept of a 'lost generation'.

Maclean and Phillips say 'it is remarkable how frequently God is mentioned in the inscriptions' on war memorials in New Zealand.<sup>59</sup> In Taranaki, 'For God' seldom appears on the epitaphs. Table thirty-seven shows that the cross on memorials in Taranaki is also below the national figure. Taranaki's war memorials are secular in form, but a religious context is observable. The memorials record that Taranaki men had given something more precious than duty, they had sacrificed their own lives. The concept of sacrifice, for example, is predominant in the epitaphs and it is often expressed as 'Greater Love Has No Man Than This', or in lofty terms as 'supreme', or the 'greatest of all sacrifices', or more eloquently as they 'laid down their lives'.

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<sup>59</sup> Maclean and Phillips, p. 106.

Contemporaries interpreted men who sacrificed their own lives as a noble act. The men from Taranaki did not just die on the battlefield, rather in more noble terms they 'fell'.<sup>60</sup> The epitaphs indicate reasons for why they had 'fallen', which give justification and purpose to their deaths. An excerpt from Reverend Howard's Anzac Day address in the Egmont Club's rooms in Stratford in 1918 prefaces that point:

What was uppermost in most hearts at the moment was the thought of the boys who had gone West in the fullness of their lives, when at a time they might reasonably look forward to lives as usefulness as citizens of the British Empire. There was a sadness in the thought of what might have been.<sup>61</sup>

To offset any thoughts about lives wasted in vain, the men who 'fell' were considered to have done so for a variety of reasons such as 'For Home and Country', or for more imperialist sentiments such as 'For King and Country' and 'For Empire'. There is a strong protector and defender role present there in the epitaph rhetoric. The men from Taranaki were also considered to have died for more abstract ideas like, 'Liberty', because the threat of Prussianism had been removed; 'Justice', because 'right' had triumphed over 'might'; 'Truth', because honourable ways had prevailed; and 'Humanity', because people understood the war had been fought to preserve civilisation. For those reasons people throughout Taranaki felt the need to express their thanks in words. Hawera did so: **'In grateful memory of our heroes who died and thanks giving for those who returned'**. Waverley did so: **'In proud and loving memory and as a thanks giving that such men were of their number'**.

Entirely absent from the epitaphs are references to Taranaki, whereas towns and settlements are referred to. For example: **'Erected by the residents of Tariki to the memory of their men who fell in the Great War 1914-18'**. It

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<sup>60</sup> See Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 21-3 for an outline of 'raised' or 'high' diction in contemporary use.

<sup>61</sup> *SEP*, 26 April, 1918, p. 3.

expresses Tariki's loss, *not* Taranaki's. Marc Voullaire noted the issue of identity in his diary as he attempted to organise a commemorative honours board for Riverlea in 1918. People 'generally were strongly of the opinion that each district should have a local record of its soldiers, and objected to the idea of centralising these records in the bigger places'.<sup>62</sup> New Zealand is seldom mentioned on Taranaki's memorials, but the inclusion of imperial sentiments, the words of Rupert Brooke, or Rudyard Kipling suggest a largely 'British' minded community looked more to the imperial centre than to Wellington. For example, the appeal by New Plymouth's mayor for a local memorial claimed that 'the memorial of our dreams is a cenotaph somewhat after the make-up of the one in the heart of the Empire, if on a smaller, yet withal on no less sublime a scale'.<sup>63</sup>

'Lest we forget' is inscribed on some of Taranaki's war memorials.<sup>64</sup> Kipling's *Recessional*, from where those words are taken, is about empires passing. 'Lest we forget' is a coded message 'open to interpretation what should be remembered' speculate Maclean and Phillips.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps it was intended to ward off forgetting the men who had been killed. What might happen 'Lest we forget' has never been enunciated. Although writer Geoff Dyer thinks that Kipling's words:

'Lest we Forget' admonish us from memorials all over the country. Forget what? And what will befall us if we *do* forget? It takes a perverse effort of will to ask such questions – for, translated into words, the dates 1914-18 have come to mean "that which is incapable of being forgotten".<sup>66</sup>

In Waitara, avoidance of forgetting was simply expressed by the words, '**Think and Thank**'. In New Plymouth, the mayor considered their cenotaph to be a

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<sup>62</sup> Marc Frederick Voullaire Papers, Box 1, 1918, Catalog No. 2002-318. (*Puke Ariki*).

<sup>63</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1923, p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> 'Lest we forget' was originally published on the front page of *The Times* (London) opposite Queen Victoria's Jubilee letter to the nation on 17 July, 1897.

<sup>65</sup> Maclean and Phillips, p. 106.

<sup>66</sup> Dyer, p. 18.

'gentle protest and guarantee against public forgetfulness'.<sup>67</sup> In Stratford, the memorial clock was 'guaranteed to last a hundred years', and McMillan hoped that the town's children would hear its chimes and remember its meaning for the best part of a century.<sup>68</sup>

The deaths in war of young men had the greatest impact on people in Taranaki, and it is they and what might have been that was 'on the minds of the survivors' in the 1920's. This is evident by the large number of memorials erected throughout Taranaki during the 1920s, and the messages conveyed by the epitaphs. Men who had 'fallen' were the main subject of the memorials, not just any men, but men from the local area who had died for causes. The memorials show they were erected by local people, and they chose words like 'ever lasting memory' and 'Lest We Forget' with hope that the years 1914-1918 would not be forgotten. By erecting memorials to the men who had 'fallen', local communities throughout Taranaki, not only sought to honour them, but they wanted contemporary and future generations to remember, not forget, the sacrifices they had made.

This study closes as it began with Stratford's Hall of Remembrance. That memorial reveals in words and pictures contemporary thoughts about what Stratford and the surrounding district had endured, and lost, between 1914 and 1919, which McMillan felt had to be kept before the public. In conducting daily business in the municipal building, people unwittingly took part in a subtle ritual of remembrance as they walked down the corridor passing by the photos of the dead soldiers, not once, but twice, as they entered and exited the building. It would have been difficult not to look at the photos. All of the men who died in the Great War and whose photos hang in the Hall of Remembrance once lived and worked in Stratford and the surrounding district. During the war they had been scattered to places far beyond New Zealand from which only two ever

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<sup>67</sup> *TH*, 8 August, 1923, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> *SEP*, 11 November, 1924, p. 5.

returned, and even then to die. In the Hall of Remembrance they have all been symbolically brought back and gathered together once again, into the centre of their town, to help form part of a New Zealand region's collective remembrance of the Great War.

## Conclusions

### On the Impact and Effects of the Great War

At Kohuratahi, 'out east' of Stratford, set amongst rugged, bush-covered hill country there stands a war memorial 'erected by the residents of the Whangamomona, Kohuratahi and Tahora districts to the memory of their soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War 1914-1918'. If there could be a memorial that symbolised the 'uttermost ends of the earth', then the monument at Kohuratahi would be a strong contender. Looking about at the surrounding landscape one is struck by the memorial's incongruity. It is incredible to think that the 41 now 'nameless names' listed on that memorial volunteered or were conscripted from eastern Taranaki to fight in a war on the other side of the world in the equally rugged landscape of Gallipoli, and in French fields. The memorial at Kohuratahi is an isolated reminder of the global extent of the Great War, and of how that war impacted on peoples' lives regardless of where they lived.

The setting for this study has been the home front in the predominantly rural region of Taranaki, New Zealand, during the period 1914 to 1926. The aim throughout has been to delineate and assess the impact and effects of the Great War on a largely rural population, whom Dr Doris Gordon once described as 'a simple, lovable people'.<sup>1</sup> It is their experiences that have been at the core of this study, and it is the intention here to write some concluding comments.

The cultural landscape of Taranaki presents constant reminders that a past generation once experienced a great war. These reminders in the form of war memorials, commemorative plaques, Anzac Days, and more recently, Chunuk Bair Day in Stratford, show that a global event once made its presence felt there. To rediscover that presence, this study began with Stratford's Hall of Remembrance because it is a portal through which the impact and effects of the



Great War can be contemplated. Some of the men whose photo portraits hang in the Hall of Remembrance, like Private Irving Blackstock and Lt. Col. William Malone, volunteered for war service almost immediately. Not everyone in Taranaki shared their enthusiasm. Lewis Costner moved in an entirely different direction to that of Blackstock and Malone, as did the views of the *Inglewood Record and Waitara Age* editorials on occasions. Reactions to the outbreak of war have traditionally been described as enthusiastic and this study has sought to assess that tradition. It found that the Great War had diverse effects on Taranaki in 1914, and that people entered the war in a variety of ways, ranging from hoarding foodstuffs; to fearing the worst and returning home from holiday as with Newton King; to resigned acceptance as in the case of resident Germans and Austrians; to Syd Bernard playing patriotic airs in Stratford's main street; to mayor Kirkwood mobilising a patriotic demonstration; and, of course, to young men volunteering for military service.

Defending the British Empire called for funds and materials to equip volunteer soldiers, which provided most people with their first experience of the war. A veritable industry emerged in 1914 geared towards raising the necessary items for Taranaki soldiers and 'Brave Little Belgium'. This study has shown that, while financial and material support from people was strong, tensions arose. The discourse surrounding fund-raising revealed social concerns, parochialism and competitiveness. Concomitantly, New Zealand's participation in the Great War necessitated the raising and equipping of an expeditionary force. The inscription, Main Body, NZEF, on some of the photo portraits in the Hall of Remembrance shows who volunteered early. The long-held belief of a 'rush to enlist' does not find strong support in Taranaki in 1914. Furthermore, this study found that men who volunteered did so for a variety of reasons, and there were equally compelling reasons why some men did not volunteer.

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<sup>1</sup> Doris Gordon, *Back-Blocks Baby-Doctor*, London: Faber and Faber, 1955, p. 134.

The realities of the Great War came home to Taranaki in 1915. The fighting at Gallipoli, the casualty lists, the return of wounded soldiers, the local dissemination of family war news and the shocks of modern war impacted markedly that year, which had the effect of interrupting recruiting for the NZEF, and shifting people's thoughts from voluntarism towards conscription. As a consequence of these factors, the government introduced conscription through the Military Service Act (1916). Of all the wartime legislation passed by the New Zealand government, that act had the most impact. This study has shown that its effects on Taranaki were wide-ranging. It made war service inevitable for men of military age – especially unmarried men – and it made families and employers think about the prospect of men absent from the home and the workplace. Foremost, the Military Service Act in tandem with volunteering contributed to the dwindling numbers of men from all aspects of life in Taranaki, as exemplified in this study through rural labour supply and marriage. The Great War intruded on people's lives in ways other than conscription. This study has shown that the war manifested itself in fundamental aspects of life in Taranaki such as the cost of living, and leisure and entertainment activities, which became areas of tension for groups like the prohibitionists, and citizens morally offended by others who wanted to maintain some sense of normality.

This study has shown that the war's greatest impact on Taranaki – the one that has provided a legacy – was the deaths of its young men, the effects of which can never be accurately assessed, at least in the private sphere of the family. All through the war, Taranaki people showed concern for the welfare and safety of their soldiers. They were, after all, the region's representatives. All 129 men whose photo portraits hang in the Hall of Remembrance died in places and ways probably unimaginable before 1914; Private Thomas Gorton, 'gassed and died' in France; J. R. Moir, 'wounded and missing' at Gallipoli; Gunner George Falder, 'died of enteric fever in Malta Hospital'. All of their deaths had

the effect of eroding any feelings of enthusiasm, rather their deaths contributed to war weariness made evident by many of the Taranaki men balloted in 1917 and 1918 who appealed their call-up; and by the national day of prayer late in 1917, which called for an end to the war. This study has shown that ambivalence characterised the way people in Taranaki exited the Great War. The Armistice brought joy and relief, but it sat uneasily alongside the sorrow and misery wrought by death in war and through influenza. It was a cruel irony that the cessation of hostilities abroad coincided with the escalation in Taranaki of the home front's battle against epidemic disease.

A concern that arises with any study on the Great War is its post-war effects. These can be shown demographically, as this study has done, but it is best achieved by the war memorials that proliferate in the towns and countryside because they speak through the epitaphs about 'what was on the minds of the survivors'. The epitaphs are about young lives lost for great causes. Contemporaries and future generations were meant to read and heed the epitaphs. This study has shown that the sacrifices made by the region's young men were in the thoughts of people who lived in the 1920s. Those sacrifices were considered by contemporaries to be for real issues facing the Great War generation. That is why soldiers were cheered upon their departure from the region's railway stations; that is why the words 'grateful and loving memory' appear on many of Taranaki's war memorials. This study of the rural home front ended with Stratford's Hall of Remembrance because it is a representation of Taranaki's Great War experiences. It tells us much about who served, where they went, what happened to them, who were lost, and a rural community's sorrow. Its format and location remind us not to forget. The Hall of Remembrance, like all other memorials in Taranaki, were meant to last for at least one hundred years, such was the impact that the Great War had on the rural home front in Taranaki.

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