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# **REMEMBERING SEAFARERS**

The (Missing) History of New Zealanders  
employed in the Mercantile Marine  
during World War 1

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## ABSTRACT

The story of the New Zealand men and women who were employed in the Mercantile Marine during World War 1 is absent from the historiography. This thesis contends that this workforce of New Zealanders existed, was substantial in number and that their human stories are missing from historiography despite there being extensive wartime stories to tell.

A workforce of New Zealand merchant seafarers existed during World War 1 and is definable and recognisable as a group. Each individual within this group is not easily identifiable because detailed and completed records of their identity and service were never centrally maintained.

New Zealand maritime and World War 1 histories have not addressed the seafarers' intimate human stories and have instead focus on either Naval or industry stakeholder's organisational history of the war period. This is clearly evident from a detailed review of relevant material published during the century since the declaration of World War 1 in 1914.

The crew employed on the Union Steam Ship Company's twin screw steamship *Aparima* provide a small but enlightening example of the human stories that are absent. Their individual stories encompass many aspects of everyday experiences such as the ever present danger of enemy attack and the impact of the war on the crew and their families and loved ones. A microhistory of New Zealanders employed on *Aparima* refutes by example, the argument that World War 1 New Zealand merchant seafarers did not have a unique story to tell and therefore they are absent from historiography.

The history of New Zealand maritime and World War 1 historiography provides possible reasons for the missing history, as does the demographics of this workforce. The primary rationale identified include government and military editorial influence, a sense that merchant seafarers belonged to the British rather than New Zealand Mercantile Marine, and a belief that they did not fit alongside the ANZAC legend of the heroic soldier sacrificing all for King and Country.



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## **GLOSSARY**

Allies / Allied	Countries that fought against the Central Powers in WWI.
Bark or barque	Type of sailing vessel with three or more masts.
Bhandary	Cook.
Black Gang	Trimmers, Stokers and Firemen work in the engine room. They were called 'black' because of soot and coal dust in the engine room made everything black.
Bosun (Boatswain)	Oversees maintenance and deck activity over the entire ship.
Butler	Saloon Second Class Steward.
Cassab or Kussab	Lamp trimmer.
Deck Serang	Deck Bosun.
Deck Tindal	Bosun's Mate.
Donkeyman	Oversaw the operation and maintenance of any and all assorted machinery and assisted with the maintenance of ship's main engines.
Engine Room Serang	Engine Room Donkeyman.
Engine Room Tindal	Donkeyman's Mate.
Fireman	Boiler Stoker.
Greaser	Monitoring and lubricating the engines.
Lamp trimmer	Leading hand on deck under the Boatswain.
Military Age	Males not less than twenty years and under forty-six years of age who were unmarried were mandated under the National Registration Act, 1915 and the Military Service Act, 1916 to enrol for Military Service.
Officer Commanding	Commander of the army formation.
Commanding Officer	In the merchant service, this is the ship's master or captain.
Prize Crew	A group of men placed aboard a captured vessel in order for it to be sailed to a friendly port.
Prize	A captured merchant ship that was captured and taken to a friendly port for sale, rather than destroyed. Prize money obtained from the sale was distributed amongst those involved in its capture and return.

Punkha Boy	Fan Cord Puller Boy.
Rating	An articulated member of a ship's crew but not an officer.
Red Duster	Ensign flown specifically by British Merchant Seamen.
Stern	Rear or aft-most part of a ship.
Stem	Most forward part of a boat or ship's bow.
Stokehold Grating	Exhaust ventilation from the engine room stokehold.
Topas	Sweeper, cleansed the "heads" (on board lavatories), washed utensils, scrubbed the decks.
Trimmer	Supplies the coal from the bunkers to the stokers.
War Grave	Burial place for members of the armed forces or civilians who died during military campaigns or operations. They are provided by the Commonwealth nation-state and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AD	Army Department, New Zealand
AJHR	Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives
ANZ	Archives New Zealand, Wellington
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
AWA	Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Limited
AWMM	Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland
BT	Board of Trade, United Kingdom
CWGC	Commonwealth War Graves Commission
HMNZHS	His Majesty's New Zealand Hospital Ship
HMNZT	His Majesty's New Zealand Troopship
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World, also called Wobblies
NA	The National Archives (of United Kingdom), London
NFSA	National Film & Sound Archive (of Australia)
nhp	Nominal horsepower
NLNZ	National Library of New Zealand, Wellington
NZDF	New Zealand Defence Force
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
P&O	Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company
RN	Royal Navy
RNR	Royal Naval Reserve
SS	Steam Ship
SY	Steam Yacht
TSS	Twin Screw Steamer
USSCo	Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand Limited
WCA	Wellington City Archives, Wellington
WWI	World War 1



## INTRODUCTION

*Believe me, you can never hear too much of them. These men are going through trials and dangers every day and every night so that they may bring to our shores the necessities for our existence. No words of gratitude can be too great for their service.*

Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Jellicoe, April 1917 <sup>1</sup>

*Neither the nation, nor the mercantile marine had the faintest conception of the heroic part that the latter was destined to play. Yet the whole trend of events at sea has been to concentrate the enemy's naval violence against merchantmen.*

*Evening Post, 27 March 1917* <sup>2</sup>

*The Mercantile Marine had faced horrors even worse than the battlefields. Fifteen thousand had fallen victim to the cruellest and most dastardly piracy ever perpetrated.*

British Prime Minister Lloyd George, 6 August 1919 <sup>3</sup>

Despite the highest praise, the stories of New Zealand's men and women who were employed in the Mercantile Marine during World War 1 have gone largely untold, overshadowed instead by the great ships, great commercial achievements and great leaders of the great shipping companies, especially the Union Steam Ship Company. In the introduction to his history of the New Zealand Seamen's Union, Conrad Bollinger summarised the issue in a single sentence, which is also at the heart of this thesis. "The men who provided the labour and the skill to drive those ships don't often receive a mention in the history books".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 2 May 1917, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Evening Post*, 27 March 1917, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Evening Post*, 8 August 1919, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Conrad Bollinger, *Against the Wind. The story of the New Zealand Seaman's Union*, (Wellington: New Zealand Seaman's Union, 1968), p. 2.

For many years I have had been interested in the history of New Zealand's wars, but from the perspective of the "man behind the medal". The human stories behind medal groups that include a Mercantile Marine Medal for World War 1 service, especially those awarded to New Zealanders, have remained elusive. In 1986, a photograph of William Arthur Fox with other World War 1 veterans was published in the *RSA Review*.<sup>5</sup> After seeing the photo I arranged to meet Bill, but regrettably without the historian's tools and skills. In hindsight, an oral history interview would have become a precious relic of a young steward off New Zealand Shipping Company's World War 1 troopship *Tainui*, whose own passion for a fair deal for merchant seafarers led him to a trade union and political career which culminated as Minister of Marine and Housing in Walter Nash's Labour Government. The meeting with Bill convinced me that the story of the New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile Marine was missing from the country's World War 1 history, inspiring a long standing interest. The subject of this thesis is therefore about Bill Fox's seafaring brothers and sisters.

My contention is that the history of New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile Marine during WWI is missing from the historiography. In the process of arguing this point, it is also intended to suggest possible reasons for this absence.

## **W W I N E W Z E A L A N D M E R C H A N T M A R I N E R S**

The phrase 'New Zealander employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine' has remained difficult for historians for a number of reasons, particularly the concept of a New Zealander during the 1914 to 1918 war period. Prior to enactment of the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act 1948 on 1 January 1949, New Zealanders were British subjects and the concept of New Zealand nationality did not exist.<sup>6</sup> So what was a New Zealander prior to the citizenship legislation?

The continuous residency requirement for New Zealand voting entitlement in 1914 defined a New Zealander as "a British subject by birth or by naturalisation in New Zealand, [who] has resided in the Dominion for twelve months at any time and for one

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<sup>5</sup> *RSA Review*, 1 February 1986, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Dept of Internal Affairs, "Celebrating 60 Years of New Zealand Citizenship" accessed 15 February 2013. [http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/Services-Citizenship-Celebrating-60-Years-of-New-Zealand-Citizenship](http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Citizenship-Celebrating-60-Years-of-New-Zealand-Citizenship).

The British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act 1948 created for the first time the status of "New Zealand Citizen". Prior to its enactment on 1 January 1949, citizens of the Dominion were British subjects.

month immediately preceding application has resided in the electoral district in which he claims registration.”<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, the Legislature Amendment (No 2) Act passed in 1914 provided further clarity regarding seafarers’ residency, by acknowledging the itinerant nature of this occupational group. The Act did not materially change the New Zealander definition, just the specific location of residence.

Every seaman qualified for enrolment, and having a settled residence in any electoral district, shall be enrolled in that district. A seaman having no settled residence in any electoral district may be enrolled in the district comprising any port, where his ship usually calls, provided that when such port is comprised in more than one district, it shall be deemed to be situated in the district containing the office of the Collector of Customs.<sup>8</sup>

New Zealand seafarers therefore comprised those who were in the Dominion either prior to or during WWI and, either perished during the War, continued to be resident after the War, or settled elsewhere other than New Zealand at a subsequent point in time.

The other criteria for franchise entitlement required a voter to be at least 21 years of age on Election Day and be a British subject. These conditions were more stringent than the entry requirements for those employed in the Mercantile Marine. Employment on Allied merchant vessels was restricted to British subjects as well as aliens who were of Neutral nationalities such as Italian, Norwegian or American. Many seafarers were younger than 21 years of age, the most notable examples being the officer cadets on Union Steam Ship Company’s training ship *Aparima*, who ranged in age from 15 to 20 years of age.<sup>9</sup>

Given the international, itinerant and youthful elements of the merchant service, it is proposed to use here, the twelve month residency requirements for electoral entitlement as one of the dimensions of the definition of a New Zealander employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine, but without the age or British subject constraints.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ashburton Guardian*, 18 November 1914, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> *NZ Herald*, 10 October 1914, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Neill Atkinson, *Adventures in Democracy. A History of the Vote in New Zealand*, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, in association with the Electoral Commission, 2003); Valerie C. Burton, “Counting Seafarers: The Published Records of the Registry of Merchant Seamen 1849-1913” in *Mariner’s Mirror* 71, no. 3, (1985), p. 317.

The other dimension of the seafarer definition is ‘WWI Mercantile Marine’. From a British Empire perspective, there was a clear recognition that merchant seafarers (as opposed to naval seafarers who served in the Royal Navy) who worked on ships in areas of enemy threat were considered different from those who were never exposed to that danger. In the British Isles, nearly all seafarers were considered under enemy threat, including fishermen on trawlers and crews of passenger liners, troopships and cargo vessels. In New Zealand waters, those who worked on the coastal trade were not exposed to the same danger as their British counterparts, whereas those employed on foreign-going ships operating from the Dominion’s ports were under enemy threat.

After WWI and with Royal sanction, the British Board of Trade issued an official medal called the Mercantile Marine War Medal. The medal entitlement criteria were clearly defined in government regulations and this provides a precise definition of WWI service in the Allied Mercantile Marine:

In the United Kingdom [recipients of the medal will have been members of] the British, Dominion, Colonial and Indian Mercantile Marine [who have] served at sea for not less than six months between the 4th August 1914 and 11th November 1918 inclusive, [and include] Licensed Pilots, Fishermen, and crews of Pilotage and Lighthouse Authorities’ Vessels, and of Post office Cable Ships.

In other parts of the Empire, the qualifying service will be the same but all details will be determined by the several governments. In each case, the seafarer must have “served at sea on at least one voyage through a danger zone. For this purpose, a voyage through a danger zone means:

A voyage on a ship which entered or cleared a United Kingdom port, or a French port, or a Mediterranean port;

Such other voyages in other parts of the world as shall be specified in a further notice.<sup>10</sup>

The Marine Department of the New Zealand Government promulgated a subsequent notice containing the specific criteria for a Danger Zone Voyage in “other parts of the world”:

Voyages in all seas of the world - (a) From 4th August, 1914 to 11th April, 1915 (on account of ‘Dresden’ and ‘Kronprinz Wilhelm’); - (b) from 1st

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<sup>10</sup> Marine Dept, “Notice to Members of the Mercantile Marine - War Medals”, August 1920, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1178 Record 25/1104 Part 1, ANZ.

January, 1916 to 4th March, 1916 and from November, 1916 to 28th February, 1918 (on account of 'Möewe', 'Seaddler', and 'Wolf').

1. Any voyage in the Atlantic Ocean north of the Equator, the Mediterranean, White Sea, and United Kingdom waters – from 1st February, 1917 to 11th November, 1918 (on account of unrestricted submarine warfare).
2. Any voyage in the North Atlantic and Arctic Ocean between 10° West and 44° East from 4th August, 1914 to 11th November, 1918.
3. Any voyage in the Sea of Japan or the Yellow Sea from 4th August, 1914 to 7th November, 1914.
4. Any voyage in the Indian Ocean, including Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, any coasting voyage on the West Coast of India in a ship which entered or cleared an Indian or Ceylon port - (a) from 4th August, 1914 to 9th November, 1914 (on account of 'Emden'); (b) From 18th January, 1917 to 11th November, 1918 (on account of 'Wolf').
5. Any voyage in a ship which entered or cleared any of the following ports, viz: Cape Town, Colombo, Bombay, Aden; or which rounded Cape of Good Hope, or Cape Gabo, Australia; or Cape Farewell or Three Kings Islands, New Zealand; or which proceeded between Singapore and Hong Kong from 18th January, 1917 to 11th November, 1918 (on account of 'Wolf').
6. Any voyage in a ship on the West Coast of Africa from 4th August, 1914 to 4th March, 1916 (on account of 'Möewe').
7. Any voyage in a ship which rounded Cape Verde from 15th May, 1918 to 11th November, 1918 (on account of ocean going submarines).
8. The following are also considered as having served in a danger zone: Masters, officers and crew of British merchant ships employed or in the Baltic Sea between February, 1915 and March, 1918.<sup>11</sup>

The New Zealand Government provided considerable input into this detailed definition of the Danger Zone Voyage. In a letter to the Acting Prime Minister James Allen, the Attorney General warned that:

[It] cannot possibly [grant the medal] to men in the New Zealand coastal trade, or in the Intercolonial trade, without derogating altogether from the value of the medal as a war medal.

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<sup>11</sup> Marine Dept, "Notice to Members of the Mercantile Marine - War Medals - Additional Danger Zone Voyages", September 1920, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1178 Record 25/1104 Part 1, ANZ.

But with regard to men who have voyaged on the San Francisco and Vancouver [mail services] routes, and perhaps also with regard to men on ships engaged in the Island trade [ships which carried the Advanced Force to Samoa and ships which maintained communication with Samoa], the medal might not improperly be granted, because it seems clear that there was the same degree of danger incurred as was incurred by the class to whom the Imperial Government ... proposed to award the ordinary war medal.<sup>12</sup>

The Attorney-General also suggested that those involved in minesweeping on the coast of New Zealand were possible recipients of the British War Medal.

There is a special class, namely the trawlers lately engaged on the coast of New Zealand in minesweeping service, which perhaps should be considered if they have been at sea for at least six months. They have been carrying out a dangerous war operation.<sup>13</sup>

The service duration of six months, subsequently explained as 180 days, precluded seafarers whose qualifying service was cut short by the Armistice or by misadventure such as illness, injury or death. It is therefore intended to use the Mercantile Marine War Medal entitlement criteria, but exclude the six month service requirement, as the definition of 'employment in the WWI Mercantile Marine'.<sup>14</sup>

The definition of a New Zealander employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine is technically complicated and requires inspection of each seafarer's career details to ascertain if that individual fell within the definition. The difficulty is that the only record of a seafarer's career was contained in his or her Certificates of Continuous Discharge documents.<sup>15</sup> These documents were certified by the ship's master and the Superintendent of Marine in the port of discharge. When a seafarer made application for the Mercantile Marine War Medal, the Certificates of Continuous Discharge were required to be produced as proof that the qualifying duration of service was rendered

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<sup>12</sup> Attorney-General to Acting Prime Minister, 15 February 1919, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1178 Record 25/1104 Part 1, ANZ.

<sup>13</sup> Attorney-General to Acting Prime Minister, 15 February 1919, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1178 Record 25/1104 Part 1, ANZ.

<sup>14</sup> A.D. Park to Superintendents of Mercantile Marine, 9 July 1923, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1178 Record 25/1104 Part 2, ANZ.

Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918 effectively ending WWI. Enemy threat from submarine mines continued to endanger shipping beyond 1918 and until Allied mine-sweeping operations cleared shipping lanes of remaining mines.

<sup>15</sup> A Certificate of Continuous Discharge is a legal document detailing the name of each ship, description of the associated voyage, duration (sign on and sign off dates), efficiency and conduct of the seafarer. At the time of signing on to a ship, the book is surrendered to the Master and returned at the end of the voyage with the details entered and certified by the Ship's Master and by the Superintendent of Marine in the port of discharge. There were two forms of the documentation, Dis-A (passport-like book containing entries for multiple voyages) and Dis-I (one page document covering a single voyage).

and that the requisite Danger Zone Voyage conditions had been achieved. This requirement of proof suggests that the Marine Department did not have its own authoritative records and therefore relied on the discharge documents as its single source of proof.<sup>16</sup>

Illustration 1: Certificate of Discharge (Dis I version) issued to Walter Findlater who was employed on His Majesty's N.Z. Hospital Ship "Maheno" as a ship's painter from 11 January to 10 May 1917 (Author's Collection)

Using a combination of the definitions discussed, a 'New Zealander employed in the Mercantile Marine during World War 1' encompasses any person who was resident in New Zealand either prior to or during WWI and, either perished during the War, continued to be resident after the War, or settled elsewhere other than New Zealand at a subsequent point in time, was employed on an Allied articulated ship during the period 4 August 1914 to 11 November 1918 inclusive, and worked at least one voyage through a Danger Zone during that period.

## EVIDENCE OF ABSENCE

The structure of my thesis embraces an "Evidence of Absence" argument which in this case is that the missing history of New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile

<sup>16</sup> The example discharge certificate shown as Illustration 1 has stamped in the top left corner "BM" and "WM". This indicates that the certificates have already been signed as proof for a successful Mercantile Marine War Medal (WM) and British War Medal (BM) application.

Marine during WWI is merely absent from the historiography, rather than non-existent.<sup>17</sup>

The initial chapter entitled *N.Z. Maritime Historiography Review* will address the issue of absence and argue that the history of New Zealand's WWI merchant seafarers is not present in the historiography. Only an exhaustive review of every relevant publication will conclusively prove the absence argument. Practicalities dictate that an analysis of prominent works must suffice in this historiographical review. As part of my review, I will discuss the history of the identified publications as this partially explains the absence of the seafarers' story.

Chapter Two and Three concentrate on the other dimensions of the absence argument, which is that there was New Zealand merchant seafarers employed during World War 1, and they did have their own unique history to tell. Chapter Two, *Counting Seafarers*, provides workforce estimations based on data from Government official sources, to show that New Zealand WWI merchant seafarers did exist. This statistical approach was required as centralised registers and personnel records detailing the service of New Zealand merchant seafarers were not kept for those seafarers employed in the industry during this time.

Chapter Three entitled *TSS Aparima - A Microhistory* demonstrates by example that New Zealand merchant seafarers employed during WWI had a history that was additional or different to their peacetime employment. The argument uses the microhistory of a merchant ship, well known to New Zealanders at the time, to illustrate the extensive and unique experiences of the seafarers who provided the labour and the skills to drive this ship.

My final substantive chapter, *Workforce Demographics*, asks what if anything was so different about New Zealand WWI merchant seafarers that might account for their absence from historiography. The demographics of the merchant seafarer workforce will be analysed to illustrate deviations from the populace that might account for the absence. Non-demographic reasons why their history is missing forms part of the seafarers' wartime story, and are included throughout the thesis argument.

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<sup>17</sup> Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*, (New York: Ballantine, 1997), p. 213.

## SOURCES USED

Providing evidence that New Zealand merchant seafarers were employed during WWI and that they had a rich story to tell, has required reviewing a considerable number of primary sources. This thesis has relied heavily on the Union Steam Ship Company records held by Wellington City Archives, and the Army Department and Marine Department series held by Archives New Zealand. Official reports and newspapers accounts were accessed through the National Library of New Zealand's digitised *PapersPast* and *AJHR* collections.

The material used in the historiographical review is mostly in the public domain, except for the wartime troopship magazines which were held in library, museum and private special collections. A by-product of the review was the digitisation of all located troopship magazines for a collection to be managed by Auckland War Memorial Museum. The background relating to the WWI histories produced by the New Zealand and British governments was taken from reports and correspondence held at Archives New Zealand and at The National Archive in London. *Counting Seafarers* relies on statistical data from official reports included in *AJHR* as well as digitised copies of *The New Zealand Official Year Book*. The timeline for the *Aparima* microhistory uses newspaper reports retrieved from *PapersPast*. It is upon this framework that the narration of individual's stories gleaned from the Union Steam Ship Company files and from newspaper articles is hung. The photographs were mostly provided either by or with the assistance of descendants of *Aparima's* crew. The demographic analysis was reliant upon Marine Department index cards recording the award of the Mercantile Marine War Medal to those New Zealanders who successfully applied for it, housed at Archives New Zealand.

With the absence of WWI merchant seafarers from New Zealand's historiography, the microhistory of *Aparima's* crew was extremely difficult to research. I had hoped that surviving diaries or letters could be located by contacting the families of *Aparima's* white crew using an internet genealogy database. The considerable effort expended on this strategy delivered limited results despite the obvious genealogical interests of the database members contacted. Some gems were uncovered through contact with the families of Captain Gerald Doorly, Chief Steward James Mackie and Cadets Cadwallader, Every-Clayton, Millward and Newton. Despite the limited results, the diary or letters strategy remains a sound approach for similar projects to this thesis, as evidenced by Gavin McLean's use of John Duder's diary in his 2013 history of New Zealand's WWI Hospital Ships.



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW**

The historiography of New Zealand's Mercantile Marine during WWI has focussed on ships and the business of shipping and its management, with little attention given to the thousands of individuals employed in the industry on war service during that time. Newspapers and magazines provided the earliest documented histories of the wartime Mercantile Marine, publishing possibly the only stories from a rating's perspective. Memoirs by officers and senior ratings documented personal accounts of war experiences.

It is my contention that the New Zealand merchant seafarers' wartime story is missing from historiography and this is partly attributable to the editorial direction of government and shipping Company sponsors, the limited availability of suitable source material resulting from wartime censorship regulations, and a disconnect between merchant seafarers and the government and general population. This chapter considers a range of published material to justify this contention. The history surrounding the predominant historical works provides some explanation as to why merchant seafarers have not featured in New Zealand's WWI historiography.

This historiographical review is divided into four different time spans. Contemporaneous histories are those published during wartime and were intended to be immediate recollections. Reflective material was published in the decade immediately following the end of the war and primarily included the official histories. Retrospective histories are published decades after the Armistice and covered wider periods of history and included WWI. These histories often included organisational histories of shipping companies and were not war specific in their scope. Recent histories are those written in recent years and often provide a reinterpretation of wartime events, often from an alternative perspective.

### **C O N T E M P O R A N E O U S   H I S T O R I E S**

There were two sources of wartime publications relating to New Zealand merchant seafarers; the magazines of the northbound troopship voyages and the hospital ship series compiled by New Zealand's then Governor General, Lord Liverpool.

These publications are important elements of New Zealand's WWI historiography. Despite their shipboard setting, they are largely silent on the all important ships' officers and crew.

A total of 111 troopships departed New Zealand on northbound voyages during WWI.<sup>18</sup> With few exceptions, an editorial committee was formed on each voyage to publish regular news sheets and or a troopship magazine. In his essay on these publications, Peter Hoar suggested that they were produced for "news and gossip, [to] alleviate boredom and increase morale, and to provide a souvenir".<sup>19</sup> The magazines varied in quality and size and most comprised a single edition, although multiple news sheets were produced for some voyages. The larger magazines were produced as souvenirs and provided more comprehensive accounts of people and events during the voyage.<sup>20</sup> Aside from their original intent, the magazines were recognised by the military hierarchy of the time, as potential sources of historical material for contemplated histories of New Zealand's role in the war.<sup>21</sup> The publications contained considerable social history associated with the voyage, and sometimes included details of the ship and its officers and crew. As a contemporary history of New Zealand WWI merchant seafarers, the magazines could have played an important role; however the editorial focus was primarily on the troops aboard rather than the ship or crew.

A total of 82 northbound New Zealand troopship publications were located and analysed to ascertain the extent to which seafarers were mentioned. Of those located, 61 magazines named the troopship's master, 42 named the senior officers and only four named the entire crew. A further seven provided a count of the total crew either as a standalone fact, or in addition to the names of the ship's officers and or master. Approximately one third of the magazines provided some details or mention of the master, officers or crew. By contrast, most magazines listed all of the troops being

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<sup>18</sup> John Studholme, *New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Record of personal services during the war of officers, nurses, and first-class warrant officers and other facts relating to the N.Z.E.F.*, (Wellington: W.A.G. Skinner, Government Printer, 1928), pp. 10, 373-376.

<sup>19</sup> Peter M. Hoar, "A Qualitative Content Analysis of the New Zealand Troopship Publications 1914-1920", (Master's essay, School of Communications and Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, 2001), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Rev William Grant, ed., *The Orari Tattler: a souvenir of the voyage of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force from Wellington to Alexandria, Oct. 16th - Dec. 3rd, 1914*, (1915).

This troop ship magazine is subtitled, "a souvenir of the voyage of the N.Z.E.F. from Wellington to Alexandria, Oct 16<sup>th</sup> - Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1914" illustrative of its souvenir intent.

<sup>21</sup> H.C. Nutsfield to Ship's Quartermasters on HMNZT 91 HMNZT 92 and HMNZT 93, 23 July 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291, ANZ.

Nutsford requested that at least two copies of any troopship magazines published on forthcoming voyages should be forwarded with voyage reports. He said that copies of magazines and pamphlets published on N.Z. Transports will be held by the Parliamentary Library and the Dominion Museum.

transported. Any references to the host ship itself were usually limited to criticism of the cramped accommodation, the food, the monotony of the long voyage, the filthy process of coaling at the ports such as Albany and Colombo, and the sea conditions.

The attitude of the troops to the ship's complement was typified by the nature of the articles and illustrations included in the magazines. Some were serious and respectful whilst others were humorous. Caricatures, such as the examples below, were used to communicate an aspect of a prominent seafarer's appearance or personality.



Illustration 2: Caricatures of masters, officers and senior ratings of N.Z. Troopships<sup>22</sup>

Articles were also included in some magazines which discussed aspects of the ship's operation and or crew. A short article on wireless included in *Orari Tattler*, the magazine of HMNZT 6, is a typical example. The writer breaks from his informative storyline to make mirth of the ship's wireless operator. "With the emergency set

<sup>22</sup> F.A. de la Mare, ed., *The Waitemata Wobbler. N.Z. Expeditionary Forces XXI Reinforcement*, 1917, pp. 7, 11; A. Allen, S.D. Waters and J. Carmody, eds, *Tiki Talk. Epistles of the Corinthians - Souvenir Left Wing 23rd Reinforcements*, 1917, pp. 13, 22; Anon, ed., *The Kia-Ora*, 1917, p. 12; O. Cardston, ed., *The Remuerian: Being a record of the voyage en route of the 38th Reinforcements*, 1918, pp. 28, 29; H.N. Roberts, ed., *Bubbles from the Thir(s)ty Sevens*, 1918, p. 4.

however it is possible to work as long as the ship is afloat, providing that the operator does not bolt". The article then explained the key responsibilities of the wireless operator in the event of an emergency.

A course of instruction in wireless telegraphy includes sending, receiving, magnetism, electricity and heroism. The last subject includes all that is necessary for the operator to know concerning wrecks, attitude to lady passengers who interrupt during the transmission of SOS messages, how to take a flying leap from the masthead as the ship's funnel disappears beneath the waves, and other essentials.<sup>23</sup>

It would appear that the crew, and often the master and officers, kept to themselves, remaining focussed on their seafaring duties and did not interact much with the troops onboard. The exceptions were those under the command of more socially outgoing masters such as Captain James Gerald Stokely Doorly of *Aparima* (HMNZT 76). In that ship's magazine, *The Moa* profiled Captain Doorly and his senior officers comparatively fully and very favourably.

Captain Doorly has been the life of the ship in more respects than one. When it was decided to form a sports committee and a social committee aboard, he was elected unanimously ... His kindly interest in the men is such that the latter could not help noticing and remarking upon it. As a raconteur he is out on his own ... Many amusing yarns are told of his weird sense of finding things which are out of place.<sup>24</sup>

Of the First Officer, the same magazine described Harry Daniel as "a manly officer, fine athlete, he has the capacity for sorting out a real grievance from a fancied one and when there is anything which he thinks should be fixed up for the benefit of the ship or those aboard."<sup>25</sup> Daniel was also vice president of the sports committee and provided training facilities for the ship's rugby team which included All Black Dave Gallagher.<sup>26</sup> Chief Steward James Mackie organised a number of sports events for the troops onboard. "He's an authority on boxing and enjoys nothing more than a good old mill in the ring".<sup>27</sup>

In addition to sport, Captain Doorly was involved in the production of the ship's magazine which was unusual for a master, but symptomatic of a raconteur. One of his

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<sup>23</sup> *The Orari Tattler*, 1915, pp. 33-34.

<sup>24</sup> H.T.B. Drew and H.W.L. Digby, eds, *The Moa: Being the literary pickings of a troopship*, 1917, p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

contributions to the magazine was a poem, entitled *Troopship 76*. The poem has a strong military theme which is surprising for a merchant mariner but less so given his pre-war career in the Royal Navy Reserve. It was clearly intended to be motivational and is consistent with the “morale boosting” purpose argued by Peter Hoar in his essay, discussed earlier.<sup>28</sup>

Troopship 76

We're against the Hun for all his dirty tricks.  
Certainly her antics sometimes made us rather sore,  
But when the Germans meet us they will not be wanting more;  
They'll shout 'Mein Gott! they've landed: we will have to stop the war'  
Here's Troopship 76.<sup>29</sup>

Analysis of the troopship magazines supports a general conclusion that minimal, if any, reference is made to seafarers or their activities and therefore the publications provide little insight into the wartime history of the New Zealand merchant seafarers. *The Moa* was atypical of the troopship magazines surveyed as it included an unusually high number of articles and illustrations relating to the ship's master, officers and crew, explainable by Captain Doorly's social disposition and his active participation in *HMNZT 76's* magazine publication committee.

It was not until after the Gallipoli Landing on 25 April 1915 that a New Zealand decision was made to deploy its own hospital ships as ambulance and treatment centres for wounded and sick troops. Initially *Maheno* (officially known as *HMNZHS 1*) was chartered from the Union Steam Ship Company by the Government and fitted out as a hospital ship. She was soon joined by *Marama* (*HMNZHS 2*), also chartered from the Union Steam Ship Company. Both these vessels were originally passenger liners and in their wartime role as hospital ships, continued to be operated and managed by the Company, using its own employed officers and crew. The hospital services onboard were delivered by army doctors and orderlies of the New Zealand Medical Corp and by the nurses of the New Zealand Army Nursing Service Corp.

Whilst the cost of operating these vessels was borne by the New Zealand Government, funds for medical equipment and additional patient comforts were raised from public donations through a fundraising campaign led by Lord Liverpool. One of the fund raising activities was the publication of a series of four volumes which

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<sup>28</sup> Peter M. Hoar, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> J.G.S. Doorly, p. 11.

described the work of these two ships.<sup>30</sup> Each volume covered specific charters and voyages. The books were “compiled” by Lord Liverpool from “an official diary” that he requested be maintained to record “the principle [sic] incidents of the voyage, together with notes of the work done by the medical and surgical staffs”.<sup>31</sup> As well as an account of the medical activities onboard, a narrative of notable events was included, such as the high seas rescue of the crew of a torpedoed British ship. These narratives provided an interlude between the day by day accounts of wounds, sickness and death amongst the hospitals’ patients, rather than the main story line of the books. In its review of one volume, the *Evening Post* concluded that “the most important portion of the little history, however interesting as the chronicles of the voyages are, is the medical section”.<sup>32</sup>

Whilst Liverpool’s small books were important contemporary war histories of New Zealand’s most well known and popular ships, little mention was made of the seafarers who sailed them. Each book does acknowledge the ship’s complement by providing a full list of the master, officers and crew for each charter. In its review of Volume Two, the *Evening Post* concluded that “there is much information too as to the personnel of the ships. Altogether the record will be most valuable one in the days to come after the war”.<sup>33</sup> What is not apparent from this review is that the word “personnel” referred to the medical personnel onboard. Seafarer related anecdotes are included throughout each book but these were not, as the *Evening Post* noted, the main focus of the publication. When included, reference to individuals is minimal. This is best illustrated by the description of a man overboard rescue that was carried out whilst *Maheno* was sailing through the Indian Ocean.

The episode caused considerable excitement, and it is worthy to note that he was pulled out of the water within ten minutes of the time he jumped overboard, a remarkable performance, and one that reflects considerable credit on Captain McLean for the efficient manner in which he had his staff trained for all emergencies.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Earl of Liverpool, *The New Zealand Hospital Ship Maheno. The first voyage July 1915 to January 1916*, (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1916); Earl of Liverpool, *The Voyages of His Majesty’s New Zealand Hospital Ships Marama and Maheno*, vol. 2, (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1917); Earl of Liverpool, *The Voyages of His Majesty’s New Zealand Hospital Ships Marama and Maheno*, vol. 3, (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1918); Earl of Liverpool, *The voyages of His Majesty’s New Zealand Hospital Ships Marama and Maheno*, vol. 4, (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1919).

<sup>31</sup> Earl of Liverpool, 1916, p. Foreword; *Press*, 19 April 1918, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Evening Post*, 13 April 1918, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> *Evening Post*, 26 May 1917, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Earl of Liverpool, 1918, pp. 137-138.

As a valuable historical record “in the days to come after the war”, the *Evening Post* prediction for Lord Liverpool’s volumes did not eventuate for the masters, officers and crew of *Maheno* and *Marama*. His desire to publicise the valuable humanitarian work being undertaken by the medical personnel onboard these ships, and to solicit funds for this purpose, ensured that the labour and the skill of the seafarers who sailed these important and well known vessels barely received a mention.

## REFLECTIVE (POST WAR) HISTORIES

Throughout WWI, the British and New Zealand governments implemented processes to collect historical material with the intent of writing official histories of their country’s involvement in the War. New Zealand established within its Defence Department and at the request of the Minister of Defence, a Base Records unit in New Zealand and a Record Office in London to “collect material for a history of the war as it relates to New Zealand”.<sup>35</sup> A much more expansive British project, established under direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, was tasked with recording the war history of all Allied countries into the *Official Imperial History of the War*.<sup>36</sup>

The editorial direction for New Zealand’s project was provided by Defence Minister, Sir James Allen, who was strongly influenced by senior New Zealand Forces officers probably eager to portray their efforts as worthy of the enduring recognition. From the outset, the New Zealand WWI history was destined to focus on the army with reference to “soldiers’ history”, “troops” and “New Zealand Expeditionary Force” dominating the project’s exploratory correspondence. General Sir A.J. Godley (General Officer Commanding, New Zealand Expeditionary Force) was consulted before appointment of the editors and writers was finalised. Major-General Sir A.W. Robin (General Officer Commanding, New Zealand Forces) wrote to the Minister outlining his views on how the history should be written.

Whilst it will not omit to record the achievements of our soldiers, its main objective should be to provide an intimate human record of the war from the soldier himself. To enable the author to do this, he should have access not only to contemporary publications and newspapers, but also to the

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<sup>35</sup> A.W. Robin to Hon Sir James Allen, 26 January 1918, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 1005 Record No 51/669, ANZ.

<sup>36</sup> E.Y. Daniel, “Proceedings of a sub-committee of the committee of Imperial Defence held at 2 Whitehall Gardens”, 7 February 1918, Records of the Cabinet Office, CAB 24/42 GT 3662, NA.

private letters and diaries of soldiers who have served in the war. With their assistance, an author gifted with sympathy and imagination will be able to hand down to future generations an inspiring record of the thoughts and experiences of N.Z. soldiers who served their country in the Great War.<sup>37</sup>

Allen was of a similar mind, summarising his thoughts in a letter to a potential author:

The objective of the Popular History, which is apart from the Official History, is to present to the public a sympathetic story of the New Zealand soldiers and nurses [and] it is desired that the material should be made as interesting as possible, anything requiring a large number of figures being inserted as an appendix. The value of the article would be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of a few suitable photographs.<sup>38</sup>

The New Zealand Government initially planned three volumes, the first dealing with the Gallipoli campaign, the second covering Sinai and Palestine and the third covering France. A fourth volume was subsequently added to the scope “which will be devoted to the subsidiary campaigns and will also include short readable accounts of organisations and services common to the whole of New Zealand’s War efforts”.<sup>39</sup> The outcome was the four volume set entitled *Official History of New Zealand’s Effort in the Great War*, subtitled a Popular History (hereinafter referred to as *Popular History*).

The fourth volume was published in 1923 and included two chapters containing nautical content, specifically “The Work of the *Philomel*” and “The New Zealand Hospital Ships”. The *Philomel* chapter was written by Captain Percy Hall-Thompson. He was the Naval Advisor to the New Zealand Government and Commanding Officer of *HMS Philomel* during its cruise from New Zealand to the Mediterranean in the early years of the War. The hospital ship chapter was written by Lieut-Colonel James Sands Elliott who was the senior medical officer and Officer Commanding *HMNZHS 1 (Maheno)*.

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<sup>37</sup> A.W. Robin to Hon Sir James Allen, memorandum, 26 January 1918, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 1005 Record No 51/669, ANZ.

<sup>38</sup> Hon Sir James Allen to Rev. W.E. Gillam, 15 September 1918, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 1005 Record No 51/669/4, ANZ.

Rev. William Eugene Gillam was Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel and served on the New Zealand Hospital Ships *Marama* and *Maheno* during WWI. James Allen approached Gillam to write a chapter relating to the work of the New Zealand Hospital Ships, which he declined.

<sup>39</sup> Hon Sir James Allen to Rev. D. Dutton, 1918, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 1005 Record No 51/669/4, ANZ.

The scope of Hall-Thompson's chapter was to encompass "New Zealand's share in the Naval War - The *Philomel*, etc." however he reduced this to "the story of the *Philomel*", reflecting his entire war service, which comprised commanding this almost unseaworthy hand-me-down cruiser on escort duty to Samoa, and subsequently on a futile mission to the Mediterranean and Middle East to protect Allied shipping from Ottoman interference.<sup>40</sup> As New Zealand's only naval presence (even if under the auspices of the Royal Navy) it was probably his career minded motivation to sympathetically and imaginatively tell the only story he knew, and no more. Unfortunately, Hall-Thompson omitted to discuss the "etcetera" in any depth. His only reference to Mercantile Marine was the fishermen employed on the New Zealand trawlers *Simplon* and *Nora Niven*, and later the whaler *Hananui*, which were chartered by the New Zealand Government to sweep mines laid by the German merchant raider *Wolf*, in sea lanes around the New Zealand coast. The efforts of these fishermen and the naval ratings that worked alongside them earned a single paragraph of acknowledgement which also included two sentences of praise.

Considering the small number of craft available they did most excellent work. Forty-seven mines out of a total of sixty, which the Germans now state they had laid, were actually accounted for. The men employed in this work, which was strange to them and to which was attached considerable danger, deserve the greatest credit.<sup>41</sup>

Elliott's hospital ship chapter focussed on the medical services provided on the *Marama* and *Maheno*, although he did discuss a number of events and issues facing the vessels during their charters. He summarised the war perils that the vessels faced, such as the floating mines and the submarine menace, as well as the rough weather and the cramped living and working conditions.<sup>42</sup> During its first voyage, Elliott mentioned that *Maheno* was present at Gallipoli and that stray bullets from the shore action landed on the ship's deck, a fact that is validated in the diary of Third Officer John Duder who was on the ship at the time.<sup>43</sup> He also wrote of two high seas rescues

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<sup>40</sup> Percy H. Hall-Thompson, "The Story of *Philomel*" in *Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War. The War Effort of New Zealand*, edited by H.T.B. Drew, 63-86, (Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1923), p. 68.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> James S. Elliott, "The New Zealand Hospital Ships" in *Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War. The War Effort of New Zealand*, edited by H.T.B. Drew, 127-137, (Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1923), p. 128.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

John Duder, "Diary, 11 July to 31 October 1915", Duder Papers, MS1160, AWMM.

This diary was kept by Third Officer John Duder on board the New Zealand Hospital Ship *Maheno* (First Charter) covering a period from the ship's departure from Wellington, New Zealand, its voyage to the Dardanelles, and then on to England. It is unknown if this diary formed part of the reference material collected at Robin's request (26 January 1919) and used by Elliott when writing this chapter of the *Popular History*.

undertaken by *Maheno*, firstly the towing of a disabled ship carrying military invalids and then the rescue of survivors of a torpedoed ship. Other than the captain of *Maheno*, Elliott made no mention at all of individual crew members of either ship.

In his editorial preface to Volume Four, Henry Drew discussed the Mercantile Marine and the steamers that provided vital transportation of troops and trade to the northern hemisphere. He concluded that “on the whole the Dominion came extremely well through the war in the matter of shipping, and that is to her credit, and to the credit of her merchant service, and equally to the British Navy, which guarded the waterways, the record of 160 million pounds worth of produce shipped to Great Britain from these distant ports during the war”.<sup>44</sup> Drew had first-hand knowledge of the merchant service through his editorship of the troopship magazine *The Moa* and the working relationship he formed with Captain Doorly during the northbound voyage of *Aparima* (HMNZT 76).

Drew offered an apologetic afterthought for the Mercantile Marine in his preface, maybe realising that their contribution to the war effort was deserving of better coverage than that afforded by Hall-Thompson. “It would be very easy to compile an interesting volume solely upon the records of the New Zealand transport service during the war. Experiences were many and varied”.<sup>45</sup> It is this comment, and the absence of any detailed reference to the merchant service in his volume of the *Popular History* dedicated to the “services which are not fully dealt with in the campaign volumes”, which justifies the contention of this thesis that the history of New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine is missing.<sup>46</sup>

From the outset, the New Zealand Government sponsored *Popular History* was intended to be supplementary to the grand narrative that was *The Official Imperial History of the War*. This intent was outlined in a letter from James Allen to newspaper editors.

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<sup>44</sup> Henry T.B. Drew, “Preface” in *Official History of New Zealand’s Effort in the Great War. The War Effort of New Zealand*, edited by H.T.B. Drew, xi-xxii, (Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1923), p. xvi; NZDF, “Military Personnel File: Drew, Henry Thomas Bertie - WWI 24354 - Army”, 1914 - 1918, NZDF Personnel Archives Collection, Accession W5537 Box 50 Record No 0035464, ANZ.

Lieutenant Henry Thomas Bertie Drew served in the Canterbury Infantry Regiment during WWI. Prior to the war, he was employed as a journalist with the *Evening Post* newspaper in Wellington. At the end of the war, he gave his intended discharge address as Press Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

<sup>45</sup> Drew, 1923, p. xvi.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

In addition to the Official Imperial History of the War, which will be prepared under the authority of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the Government of New Zealand has decided to publish a special history of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, in which the deeds of our soldiers in the 'far flung battle line' will be written.<sup>47</sup>

The objectives of the *Official Imperial History of the War* communicated by Lieut-Col. Sir Maurice Hankey (Secretary to the War Cabinet) were formulated by the Imperial Defence Committee and were specific to each operation, such as "War in the Air", "Medical History of the War" and "Naval and Military Operations". The Merchant Navy volumes of *The Official Imperial History of the War* (hereinafter referred to as *Official History*) were required to:

Instruct the public in the magnificent work performed by the Mercantile Marine in the war. It will embrace the organisation of the Mercantile Marine, its relations with the Admiralty and other government departments, the manner in which these relations have developed during the war and the service which it has rendered.<sup>48</sup>

The scope of the history was intended to cover the entire Imperial war effort, and there was no distinction to be made between those employed in the British, Dominion, Colonial or Indian owned merchant ships.

As with the material used for the *Popular History*, a wide variety of original records such as reports, diaries, deck logs and signal and wireless logs, supplemented by interviews with officers, as well as information from other non-government sources, were used for the *Official History*. Approval to undertake the Mercantile Marine volumes of the *Official History* was provided by the British Cabinet on 12 July 1917. Archibald Hurd, the appointed author, commenced work on 1 August 1917.<sup>49</sup>

The *Official History* is a substantial work comprising 1,337 pages contained in three volumes. Hankey described it as "a complete summary of every notable action between merchant ships and submarines" and that "every attention is being also devoted to fights between armed merchant cruisers in the early part of the war". The focus of the work was also required to acknowledged seafarers. Hankey suggested that Hurd "lay special stress on the personal and psychological aspects of the merchant

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<sup>47</sup> *Evening Post*, 10 June 1918, p. 7; *Grey River Argus*, 11 June 1918, p. 4; *Auckland Star*, 10 June 1918, p. 6; *Wanganui Chronicle*, 11 June 1918, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Maurice Hankey to Cabinet, October 1919, Records of the Cabinet Office, CAB/24/92, NA.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

service and will ignore, so far as possible, pure economic factors”.<sup>50</sup> A separate document was published detailing the statistical history of the merchant shipping losses.<sup>51</sup>

When it was finally published in 1924, Hurd’s work was widely acclaimed by the press. *The Times* was one of the few to offer adverse criticism, by highlighting the challenge of telling potentially repetitive stories of Allied shipping casualties.

The burden which Mr Hurd has to carry as an historian is that he must needs record events which could not vary, and which therefore becomes monotonous ... as we read incident after incident of the same kind we begin to realise what the threat was which hung over all our seafaring men in the world for years.<sup>52</sup>

As Secretary of the Historical Section, Hankey expressed his concern to the British Cabinet regarding issues of impartiality and political interference of the historians who were preparing the *Official Imperial History of the War*.

Is it feasible to write Official Histories of events that have only just occurred? The author, however discreet he may be, is in a very awkward dilemma. However sparing he may be of personal comment, the manner in which he marshals his facts, more especially when unsuccessful operations have to be recorded, is liable to reflect on one leader or another, or on this department or on that. Is it fair to publish the narrative when events are so recent that all the principal actors are still on the stage of public life?<sup>53</sup>

Concern regarding impartiality and political interference may also have had relevance for New Zealand’s *Popular History*. From a New Zealand perspective, the *Popular History* scope and content was directed by Sir James Allen who was Minister of Defence and the Naval content was controlled by Hall-Thompson who was RN Naval Advisor as well as Commander of *HMS Philomel*. The consequences of Hankey’s inference could well have resulted in an enthusiastic history of the Navy at the expense

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> HMSO. *British Vessels Lost at Sea, 1914-18*, (Cambridge: Patrick Stephens, 1979). This was originally published on 19 August 1919 by O.A.R. Murray, Secretary to the Admiralty under order of The House of Commons.

<sup>52</sup> Maurice Hankey, “Collection of newspaper reviews of the first volume of Hurd’s History of the Merchant Navy that was circulated by direction of the Prime Minister in support of approval for publishing the second volume”, 15 March 1921, Records of the Cabinet Office, CAB/24/121, NA.

<sup>53</sup> Maurice Hankey to Cabinet, 28 October 1921, Records of the Cabinet Office, CAB/24/92, NA. The note was written by Hankey on the eve of publication of the Naval History following a factual dispute with the Admiralty over content and interpretation. Churchill would not agree to the volume being published without the simultaneous publication of official documents in defence of his interpretation of events.

of the Mercantile Marine, motivated by self aggrandisement and political prejudice against what they considered to be troublesome seafarers and union organisations.

Whereas the *Popular History* was intended to complement the *Official History*, a gap remained which is best illustrated by the historiographical treatment of three of the more prominent merchant shipping incidents that involved New Zealand seafarers.

The attack on New Zealand Shipping Company's *Otaki* (9,575 tons) by the German commerce raider *Möewe* on 10 March 1917 was a remarkable story with a strong New Zealand connection. *Otaki* was registered in Plymouth, England, and therefore had mainly British articulated officers and crew aboard. The complement did comprise several New Zealanders including Fourth Engineer Herbert Lionel Sommerville, Sixth Engineer Leonard Charles Smart and Ordinary Seaman Alfred Broomfield Clulee, who were taken prisoner of war during this attack.<sup>54</sup>

Despite *Otaki's* only defence being a single inferior gun mounted on the stern of the ship, the officers and crew maintained a gallant counter attack against *Möewe*. The superior range of the German guns eventually resulted in *Otaki* being sunk after a duel that lasted about twenty minutes. The master, Captain Archibald Bisset Smith, went down with his ship. He was posthumously granted the honorary rank of Temporary Lieutenant in the RNR, making him eligible for the Victoria Cross which he subsequently received "for most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of the s.s. *Otaki*".<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ministry of Transport, "List of Merchant Seamen and Fishermen detained as Prisoners of War in Germany, Austria - Hungary and Turkey", 31st May 1918, Ministry of Transport Collection, MT 9/1238, NA; Board of Trade, "Medal Card of Smart, Leonard Charles", 1920, Board of Trade Collection, BT 351/1/130094, NA; *Auckland Star*, 21 July 1917, p. 6. Contains the following letter to the Editor from Leonard Charles Smart dated 28th March 1917:

Dear Sir,

I am a prisoner of war in Karlsruhe Germany, having been captured when the s.s. *Otaki* was sunk by German raider on March 10th. I was sixth engineer on the *Otaki*. I saved nothing from the ship but what I stood in. So you see I am in rather an awkward position, having no clothes or gear, and money with which to buy any. My home is at Milton Street, Christchurch, New Zealand, and it will be some months before I can receive anything from there. I have no friends or relations in England, and I can assure you that any small parcels of comforts would be most acceptable.

I am, yours faithfully.

(Signed) Leonard Charles Smart.

Offiziersgefängenenlager. Karlsruhe".

<sup>55</sup> CWGC, "Find War Dead", accessed 5 January 2013. <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx>; Archibald Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. II, (London: The Imperial War Museum, 1924), pp. 412-413; Sydney D. Waters, *Clipper Ship to Motor Liner. The Story of the New Zealand Shipping Company 1873-1939*, (London: The New Zealand Shipping Company Limited, 1939), pp. 66-78.



Illustration 3: K T Roussell, *Sinking of "Otaki" by the German Raider "Möewe"*, c.1917

(National Collection of War Art, Archives New Zealand, Ref AAAC 898 NCWA Q200. Reproduced by permission of right's holder.)

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The story of this David and Goliath struggle between a trained naval crew armed with superior guns and the civilian crew of a merchant steamer, which resulted in the award of the highest decoration for bravery to the master, did not feature in the *Popular History* acclaimed as the “sympathetic story of New Zealanders” in the War.<sup>56</sup>

The second episode of note was the sinking of *Aparima* on 19 November 1917, resulting in New Zealand’s single largest source of Mercantile Marine casualties. Hurd recorded this event in which 55 seafarers lost their lives, in just one sentence. “An even heavier casualty list resulted from the sinking of the *Aparima* (5,704 tons), just after midnight on the 19th, when fifty-six were drowned including seventeen out of twenty-nine cadets who were on board”.<sup>57</sup> The brevity of Hurd’s narration of the *Aparima* story is unexplainable other than to suggest that he may have succumbed to the monotony warned of in *The Times* review discussed earlier. The lone sentence afforded by Hurd was however infinitely more than that written by Hall-Thompson in his naval war chapter of New Zealand’s *Popular History*.

Finally, one of the largest single references to New Zealanders and the Mercantile Marine in Hurd’s work was his relatively lengthy coverage of the 444 day cruise of the

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<sup>56</sup> Hon Sir James Allen to Rev. W.E. Gillam, 15 September 1918, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 1005 Record No 51/669/4, ANZ.

<sup>57</sup> Archibald Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. III, (London: The Imperial War Museum, 1924), p. 280. Reconciliation of *Aparima* casualties listed in a number of sources confirms that there were 55 killed when the ship was sunk, not 56 as indicated by Hurd.

German raider *Wolf*, especially its destructive period in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, including the eastern coast of Australia and around New Zealand. After capturing the Union Steam Ship Company's steamer *Wairuna* (3,947 tons) near the Kermadec Islands and taking the entire crew prisoners, the raider "headed for North Island, New Zealand where mines were laid in the neighbourhood of Three Kings Island. The raider then made her way to Cook Strait where another minefield was laid and from then she sailed to the Australian coast laying further mines in the region of Gabo Island".<sup>58</sup> One of the most notable *Wolf* minefield casualties was the steamer *Port Kembla* (4,700 tons) which was sunk on 18 September 1917 in the Cook Strait minefield near Cape Farewell.<sup>59</sup>

From a New Zealand perspective, the *Port Kembla* story is illustrative of the "awkward dilemma" Hankey wrote of in his report to the British Cabinet expressing concern about possible interference from "principal actors ... still on the stage of public life".<sup>60</sup> At the time *Port Kembla* was sunk, Hall-Thompson, as the Government Naval Advisor, denied that the sinking was caused by a German mine. This claim was endorsed by the subsequent Government inquiry which concluded that "in the opinion of the Court the weight of evidence shows that the explosion was internal and due to the placing of a quantity of high explosives in the after part of No. 1 lower forehold or 'tween decks."<sup>61</sup> Responsibility for the explosion was popularly attributed to German sympathisers and to Industrial Workers of the World scoundrels. The seafarer unions had continually disputed pay and working conditions and challenged authority, therefore the supposed sabotage explanation for the *Port Kembla* sinking suited the Government's anti-union agenda. "This trades union 'Red Fed' tyranny is becoming beyond all endurance. Let us have done with it once and for all".<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. II, pp. 429-430.

<sup>59</sup> Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. II, p. 435.

<sup>60</sup> Maurice Hankey to Cabinet, 28 October 1921, Records of the Cabinet Office, CAB/24/92, NA.

<sup>61</sup> *Evening Post*, 28 September 1917, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> *Free Lance*, 19 October 1917, p. 8.



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Illustration 4: Advertisement promoting the movie 'The Spy System'<sup>63</sup>

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The timely Wellington screening of the movie *The Spy System* “further inflamed the passions of those who think superficially” according to *Maoriland Worker*.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, promotional advertising was quick to reinforce the propaganda associated with the sinking by asking “Who put the Bomb in the Port Kembla?” and “Who laid the minefield off Gabo?”

*The Spy System* was followed in 1918 by the Australian produced silent movie entitled *The Enemy Within*, which was apparently funded by the Australian Government, although this claim is unsubstantiated. The movie addressed a number of topical issues including conscription and, as with *The Spy System*, repeated claims that German sympathisers had infiltrated the country including its docks.<sup>65</sup>

It was not until July 1918 that Hall-Thompson, the yet-to-be-appointed author of the *Popular History's* naval war chapter, admitted his mistake. He confirmed that “the existence of this extensive minefield placed beyond doubt the truth of the assertion ... that the raider had more than once been very close to the coast of New Zealand”

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<sup>63</sup> *Maoriland Worker*, 30 January 1918, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Maoriland Worker*, 13 February 1918, p. 2; *The Spy System*. Directed by Richard Stanton, produced by Fox Film Corp, (Fox Film Corp, 1917).

<sup>65</sup> *The Enemy Within*, DVD, Directed by Roland Stavelly, 1918; The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, accessed 23 October 2012. <http://nfsa.gov.au/collection/search-collection/>. According to The National Film and Sounds Archive of Australia: “*The Enemy Within* are a gang of traitors intent on causing civil mayhem and led by a seemingly legitimate society businessman, Henry Brasels. It is up to the athletic Australian agent Jack Airlie to thwart the enemy and rescue his girlfriend, Myee. The would-be saboteurs are identified as low class types who preach dissension in Sydney’s Domain. Although promoted as ‘not a War picture’, the real life counterparts of the enemy were the Industrial Workers of the World (the IWW or Wobblies) movement who were much reviled at the time because of their opposition to World War One”.

thereby overturning the Government's advised position that *Port Kembla* was sunk by an internal explosion set by saboteurs.<sup>66</sup> Despite this reversal, negative public sentiment against merchant seafarers was well established and the Government's desired impressions had been reinforced in the public mind.

The *Popular History* that did eventuate was editorially directed by the cabinet and armed forces hierarchy to suit their own purposes. This is evident from the *Popular History* planning correspondence between Sir James Allen and the senior army officers and naval advisor. Did these officials succumb to the "awkward dilemma" by avoiding self criticism for secular prejudice or convenient political posturing? It is not possible to prove such an assumption; however it is evident from the treatment of the *Otaki*, *Aparima* and *Port Kembla* events that the history of New Zealand's Mercantile Marine, and the men and women employed in it, is missing.

Compounding the silence in the histories just discussed, there appears to have been very few personal accounts of the war written by New Zealand merchant seafarers, in all likelihood because of wartime censorship regulations, the disinclination of seafarers to keep personal diaries, and the loss of official records as the result of ships sinking. In a memorandum from the Director of Transports and Shipping addressed to ship's masters, he forbade personal records of any details regarding war operations and outlined the penalties that would result from a breach of the regulations.

Every master should warn his officers and crew that they must not write anything about the war operations in their private correspondence or diaries. Any information, however trivial it may seem to be may prove of value to the enemy. Failure to comply with, or attempted evasion of, this Regulation, is a serious offense punishable under the War Regulations of the various nations of the Empire.

In order to ensure that this instruction is properly obeyed it is found necessary to make the master responsible that no letter, postcard, telegram or parcel leaves the ship without being examined by him or by a responsible officer acting as ship's censor.<sup>67</sup>

As the result of this regulation, source material available to support the writing of memoirs would have been limited, thereby possibly contributing to the paucity of personal accounts. One notable exception was the memoir of Captain James Gerald

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<sup>66</sup> *Marlborough Express*, 2 July 1918, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> G. Thompson to Masters of Military Transports Hospital Ships and Merchant Fleet Auxiliaries (including Colliers, Oilers, Store Carriers and Merchant Vessels employed on Government Service), 14 June 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 1005 Record No 51/669/4, ANZ.

Stokely Doorly who was the final master of New Zealand's troopship *Aparima*. In 1937, Doorly published his memoir entitled *In the Wake* dedicated to his daughters "Geraldine and Dorothy who wished to know what Dad did".<sup>68</sup> The book covered major episodes in his career such as his initial training at *HMS Worcester*, his early days on sailing ships, and as Third Officer on the supply ship *SY Morning* supporting Captain Robert Falcon Scott's 1902-04 Antarctic Expedition, but predominantly his WWI experiences.

Doorly's account of the *Aparima* sinking is detailed and was based on his formal report to the Union Steam Ship Company.<sup>69</sup> He narrated the events in an engaging, conversational style naming key officers and crew in aspects of the story. He conveyed the emotions and actions of the moment, such as describing the fatal attack on *Aparima* by the German submarine *UB40*.

'Torpedo, Sir!' shouted the Second, as he dashed across the bridge and swung the engine room telegraph handles to Stop.  
'Aft, there - the stern's blown off, sir!'<sup>70</sup>

The surrounding chapters describe his time as master of troopships during the earlier phases of the war and subsequently as master of *Tahiti* when she returned to New Zealand in February 1918 with 800 wounded troops.

The German commerce raider *Wolf* operated in the Pacific and had a direct impact on New Zealand seafarers. The *Wolf* story has been recalled multiple times, most recently by Richard Guilliant and Peter Hohnen.<sup>71</sup> Personal accounts of the *Wolf* events by the *Wairuna*'s Australian wireless operator and the *Beluga*'s U.S. master were for the most part, stories common to a number of New Zealand merchant seafarers who were imprisoned by *Wolf*, and are further examples of memoirs that were published immediately post-war. Wireless Operator Roy Alexander maintained a diary from the eve of *Wairuna*'s capture by the German raider *Wolf* in June 1917 until his

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<sup>68</sup> J. Gerald S. Doorly, *In The Wake*, (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1937), p. Dedication.

<sup>69</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Marine Superintendent USSCo London, 20 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:201, WCA.

<sup>70</sup> Doorly, 1937, p. 258.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Guilliant and Peter Hohnen, *The Wolf. How a German Raider terrorised the Southern Seas during the First World War*, (London: Bantam Press, 2009).

release from a German prisoner of war camp in November 1918. He retold his story in the journal of the Wireless Institutes of NSW and Victoria.<sup>72</sup>

Captain John Stanley Cameron was master of the U.S. bark *Beluga*.<sup>73</sup> His published memoir tells the story of his capture and imprisonment aboard the German raider and subsequently on the captured *Igotz Mendi*, which was a Spanish steamship with a German prize crew. Cameron was married to an Australian and along with their youngest daughter Juanita were onboard *Beluga* during its voyage from San Francisco to Sydney with a cargo of 15,000 cases of benzene. His ship was captured in the Pacific on 9 July 1917, the cargo was plundered, the ship was stripped of anything of value, and then all those onboard were taken prisoner of war before the vessel was sunk. The passengers and crew including Cameron's family remained prisoners of war until their release in Denmark on 26 February 1918. Cameron's book is a very human recollection of WWI New Zealand Mercantile Marine POW's and an example of the intimate human stories that could have formed the *Popular History* envisaged by Sir James Allen.

## RETROSPECTIVE HISTORIES

The major companies who employed New Zealand seafarers during the war were the Union Steam Ship Company, New Zealand Shipping Company, Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation, and Shaw Savill & Albion. Christchurch born journalist Sydney Waters was one of New Zealand's most productive maritime authors, writing the histories on each of these major companies, with the exception of P&O which was completed by Frederick Hook in 1920.

Water's short history of the Union Steam Ship Company was sponsored by the Company to mark its 75th anniversary. That a Company formed in New Zealand in 1875 had survived a technological revolution when steam replaced sail, suffered frequent maritime accidents, a banking crisis, a global depression and a world war, yet remained a leading participant in the global maritime industry, would have been reason enough to make the Company, its board of directors and senior management the focus of an anniversary history. What is unfortunate is that Waters maintained this focus without

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<sup>72</sup> Roy Alexander, "Diary", June 1917 - November 1918, Mitchell Library - State Library of New South Wales, accessed on 2 November 2013. [http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/\\_transcript/2011/D11991/a3038.htm](http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/_transcript/2011/D11991/a3038.htm) ; Roy Alexander, "A War Prisoner's Diary", *Sea, Land and Air* II no. 16, (July 1919).

<sup>73</sup> John S. Cameron, *Ten Months in A German Raider - A Prisoner of War Aboard Wolf*, (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918).

acknowledging the seafarers in the Company's employ. Of the war, Waters summarised the Union Steam Ship Company's effort without mention of the shipboard employees, other than its masters and chief engineers.

Not only did the Company provide steamers as transports, supply ships and hospital ships, but the unstinted labour of the expert staff in fitting out of these and other vessels, in victualling and storing them, and in solving many novel problems associated with the operation of shipping under wartime conditions, were of greatest service to the nations.<sup>74</sup>

Acknowledging the Company's greatest wartime loss, Waters provided casualty statistics and recalled the often told story of the extraordinary escape and rescue of one of its youngest officer cadets. The capture of its ship *Wairuna* by the German raider *Wolf* was simply recorded as the loss of more than 1,000 tons of coal and quantities of fresh provisions and other stores before the ship was sunk, but no mention was made of the seafarers who were taken prisoners of war, or the two crew who lost their lives whilst attempting to escape by swimming ashore under the cover of darkness.<sup>75</sup>

Waters dedicated a total of seven of his 148 page work to the Union Steam Ship Company's WWI engagement, a period which saw the Company's steamers transport "61 percent of the total 100,444 New Zealand soldiers who went overseas".<sup>76</sup> For such an important deployment of Company resources spread over the duration of the War, and at considerable commercial benefit to the shareholders, it is surprising that such limited coverage was provided.

The acknowledgement that "the manner in which the men of the British Merchant Navy acquitted themselves in the face of dangers [is] unprecedented in variety and character in any previous war at sea" in Waters' introduction to the New Zealand Shipping Company's role in WWI indicates that Company's generosity of spirit to its seafarers. NZSC's self published history marking its 65th anniversary was not profusely illustrated with personalia, but focused on the major events.<sup>77</sup> On the subject of WWI, considerable space was devoted to the loss of its ships and employees' lives, with special acknowledgement of *Otaki* which fought a hopeless defence against the German raider *Möewe*.

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<sup>74</sup> Sydney D. Waters, *Union Line. A Short History of the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand Limited. 1875-1951*, (Wellington: The Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand Limited, 1951), p. 71.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-77.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>77</sup> Sydney D. Waters, 1939, pp. 66-78.

Waters also wrote a history of Shaw Savill & Albion to mark its 100th anniversary.<sup>78</sup> This volume adheres to the consistent approach apparent through each of his works which was to emphasise the criticality of merchant shipping to the total viability of Britain and the war effort, and then recall the great achievements the Company had made to satisfy this dependency. He again focused on shipping casualties and costs and acknowledged the crew as an afterthought.

The then chairman of Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation, Lord Inchcape, introduced in the foreword to his Company's history that "the aid of the Mercantile Marine of Great Britain towards winning the war needs today no laboured emphasis". This sentiment permitted historian Frederick Arthur Hook to devote his entire volume to the history of the Company and its merchant seamen's "noble duty". The history was based on the war records of P&O and was "undertaken by desire of Lord Inchcape".<sup>79</sup> Unlike the three histories written by Waters, Hook attempted a balanced view of the employees' achievements by listing all officers of the Company (both ship and shore based) who were killed or died on war service, and elsewhere describing the maritime events and the roles individual officers and crew played in them. The account of the *Aparima* sinking is the most extensive of those reviewed and is based on Doorly's official Company report.

In recent times, new angles on the history of the Union Steam Ship Company have emerged. Gavin McLean's *The Southern Octopus* is by his own admission a business history tracing the rise then fall of the Company as it struggled to meet the challenges of containerisation.<sup>80</sup> As expected by its scope, matters relating to those employed shipboard during WWI were not included although discussion of the financial performance of the Company during that period was discussed in detail.

Rae McGregor's relatively recent history of the Union Steam Ship Company's officer cadet scheme provides only brief coverage of *Aparima* and her cadets, despite the focus of the book. This is surprising because the torpedoing and sinking of this ship contributed to New Zealand's and the Union Steam Ship Company's worst single cause

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<sup>78</sup> Sydney D. Waters, *Shaw Savill Line. One Hundred Years of Trading*, (Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs Limited, 1961), pp. 99-105.

<sup>79</sup> F.A. Hook, *Merchant Adventures 1914-1918*, (London: A. & C. Black Limited, 1920), p. v.

<sup>80</sup> Gavin McLean, *The Southern Octopus. The Rise and Demise of the Union Steam Ship Company 1875-2000*, (Wellington: Museum of Wellington City & Sea, 2001).

of wartime maritime casualties, including the 17 cadets who belonged to the officer cadet scheme that was the primary scope of McGregor's work.<sup>81</sup>

The other maritime industry stakeholders were the workers' collectives such as the unions, institutes and guilds that represented the seafarer workforce. Unlike the regimental associations that published their own war histories, the New Zealand seafaring unions did not, for a number of reasons, including the lack of public interest, limited resources and higher priorities.

During wartime, the government had been concerned about the influence of external organisations such as the Wobblies on the maritime unions. The Solicitor-General had used the *Port Kembla* sinking to strengthen censorship and stamp out what was referred to as seditious behaviour not only by the Wobblies but also the complicit unions with which he drew no distinction. "Such war hysteria, coupled with state repression made it near impossible for New Zealand Wobblies to raise their heads above ground during the later years of the war".<sup>82</sup> This government created "hysteria", and the resultant censorship, impacted the historiographical treatment of New Zealand's WWI seafarers. Firstly, the censorship resulted in much of the archival material that could be used for a seafarer history being destroyed. Secondly, the negative sentiment towards the "seditious" seafarers would have reinforced earlier negativity remaining from the 1913 General Strike. As the result, public interest in the wartime heroics of merchant seafarers may have been minimal.

It was not until the 1960s, and coinciding with the emergence of Labour History as a field of study, that there was a historical realisation that merchant vessels were actually sailed by working men and women who had their own story to tell. Until this epiphany, the focus of New Zealand's WWI maritime history had remained centred on the great companies, great ships, great commercial achievements and great leaders.

Leading the change was the New Zealand Seamen's Union which commissioned Conrad Bollinger to present the Union's view of its history. Bollinger, who was a New Zealand merchant seaman and trade unionist, provided only minimal mention of the wartime experiences of New Zealand seamen, preferring instead to focus on the political, organisational and financial issues that threatened the Union's existence

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<sup>81</sup> Rae McGregor, *Sailing to Success. The Union Company Cadet Scheme*, (Wellington: New Zealand Ship & Marine Society (Inc.), 2009).

<sup>82</sup> Jared Davidson, *Remains to be Seen. Tracing Joe Hill's Ashes in New Zealand*, (Te Whanganui a Tara (Wellington): Rebel Press, 2011), pp. 54, 63.

during that period. He did acknowledge the efforts of “the men who sailed those ships” but suggested that the dangers from sinking by the enemy was just another peril added to the seamen’s life and work.<sup>83</sup> Bollinger’s portrayal of seamen as a closed workforce focussed on their own struggles against ship owners and the government for fair wages and conditions, and protection of the industry have been consistent throughout contemporary New Zealand maritime labour historiography.

As the result of the 1913 Great Strike, the Seamen’s Union was in disarray with ideological divisions between branches in each of the major ports, resulting in establishment of a breakaway union in Auckland. Further divisions existed between those employed on home trades and those engaged on foreign-going ships. Bollinger summarised this period of the union’s history, and the impact of war, as a period of rebuilding.

Horrible as that event was for the thousands of New Zealand workers’ homes which lost fathers and brothers and sons, that enabled the Seamen’s Union (and other industrial organisations which had suffered even more) to rebuild the strength and unity which had been shattered by the events of 1912 and 1913.<sup>84</sup>

Prominent union members accused the Seamen’s Union of “contributing to its own defeat through being crippled from the start by bad finances, bad management and misunderstandings”.<sup>85</sup> The health of the union was dire and rebuilding was its highest priority. Diverting scarce resources to documenting its history of a war would have been considered unjustifiable, especially as many members had opposed being forced to fight in an “imperialist bloodbath” on behalf of the “wool kings and moneyed classes”.<sup>86</sup>

In his recent work, David Grant followed the theme of Bollinger when covering the wartime period. His history of the New Zealand Seamen’s Union focussed on the industrial and political troubles of 1913, the factional infighting and near destruction of the union and the post-war drop in trade, ship mothballing and widespread labour layoffs. He acknowledged the perils faced by seafarers from the ever present danger of enemy mines and torpedoes, then briefly mentioned the *Wairuna* capture near the Kermadec Islands, the *Port Kembla* sinking and also the sinking of the *Wimmera* by

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<sup>83</sup> Bollinger, 1968, p. 121.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

German mine. He suggested that recognising the enemy perils seamen faced had motivated the Arbitration Court to award substantial wage increases, in December 1915 and again in March 1917, as compensation for the added risks.<sup>87</sup>

In his preface to the history of the New Zealand Merchant Service Guild, Gavin McLean explained that the brevity of the Guild's published history was partly due to the lack of source material, as many of its records were lost through poor archival practices. The book was published by the Guild with financial assistance from a number of New Zealand based shipping and oil companies. The focus of this history was the organisation itself and not specific members. McLean points to other sources for "the life histories" of the "colourful characters" who were Guild members.<sup>88</sup>

## RECENT HISTORIES

In the ten years between the 1997 Maritime Heritage conference in Auckland and the 2007 Zealandia's Great War conference in Wellington, the scope of New Zealand's WWI maritime historiography has extended beyond *HMS Philomel*, Naval Intelligence, Minesweeping on the New Zealand coast and New Zealanders who served in the Royal Navy and the Royal Navy Motor Boat Reserve.<sup>89</sup> Gavin McLean commenced his 2007 Zealandia conference paper by quoting a retired merchant seaman, Ted Coggins, as having proclaimed "about bloody time", in response to Christchurch City Council finally erecting a war memorial to the Mercantile Marine.<sup>90</sup> McLean suggested that the same comment may well apply to the historiography of the Mercantile Marine finally standing alongside that of the other services at a conference dedicated to New Zealand's WWI History.

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<sup>87</sup> David Grant, *Jagged Seas. The New Zealand Seamen's Union 1879-2003*, (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2012), p. 84.

<sup>88</sup> Gavin McLean, *Masters or Servants? A short history of the New Zealand Merchant Service Guild*, (Wellington: New Zealand Merchant Service Guild, 1990), p. 10.

<sup>89</sup> Peter Dennerly, "New Zealand and the Naval War 1914-1918" in *Half a World Away. Seventeen Papers Presented to a Maritime Heritage Conference in Auckland, New Zealand. 1997*, edited by David Johnson and Peter Dennerly, 105-118, (Auckland: Royal New Zealand Navy Museum, 1998).

The 1997 Maritime History conference in Auckland covered a wide range of maritime subjects from early settlement of New Zealand through to modern day shipping. The 2007 Zealandia conference was dedicated to history of NZ's involvement in WWI and covered all of the services including the Mercantile Marine. From a WWI perspective, the 1997 conference discussed the involvement of New Zealand's in the Naval War but only from a Royal Navy perspective whereas the Mercantile Marine was discussed in detail in a dedicated paper delivered to the 2007 Zealandia Conference.

<sup>90</sup> Gavin McLean, "The Fourth Service: The Merchant Marine's War" in *New Zealand's Great War. New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War*, edited by John Crawford and Ian McGibbon, 406-424, (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007), p. 406.

McLean's paper represented a further milestone in New Zealand's WWI Mercantile Marine historiography. He not only talked about the companies and the assets, but discussed the seafarers as well. He acknowledged the difficulty of identifying and quantifying New Zealanders employed on British ships. Whilst not addressing completely the issue of numbers, he suggested that 5,477 seamen and boys were employed on the Dominion's shipping, although this number reduced dramatically when a number of larger vessels were transferred to British registry.

We have no idea how many New Zealand seamen perished aboard British - flag blue water traders, tramp vessels as well as reefer vessels and passenger/cargo liners from established companies. Most [New Zealand] Shipping Company and Shaw Savill crews were British, but New Zealanders had always signed on and off these ships to replace dead or deserted crewmen.<sup>91</sup>

In recent years a number of histories from the New Zealand seafarer's perspective have emerged. The intent of these works is best summarised by the introduction to *Crew Culture* by Neill Atkinson who stated that "while there have been many books published on famous ships, master mariners, shipwrecks, and shipping lines, and many stirring tales told of mountainous seas and heroic deeds, the lives of ordinary sailors have remained obscure".<sup>92</sup>

Atkinson did not dwell on the involvement of New Zealand seafarers in WWI as an isolated phase in their history, instead he chose to follow the changes in the maritime industry and considered the impact of these on sailors generally. Of the war, Atkinson highlighted the shortage of experienced seafarers and the resulting improved bargaining position for better wages and conditions.<sup>93</sup> In his chapter entitled *A Murderous Occupation*, the ever present risk of death and injury as the result of all manner of incidents associated with this "dangerous business" is most evident. The war was just another on the list of dangers and challenges to be faced. In terms of scale, he claimed that the outcomes of enemy attack were minor compared to perishing from all manner of means including the drowning at sea as the result of foundering, stranding, collision, or fire, being swept overboard, falling from rigging, being killed or injured by

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>92</sup> Neill Atkinson, *Crew Culture. New Zealand seafarers under sail and steam*, (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2001), p. vii.

<sup>93</sup> Atkinson, 2001, p. 128.

shipboard machinery, illness or disease often as a result of poor living conditions or diet.<sup>94</sup>

Another historian to acknowledge the dearth of published material relating to New Zealand's merchant mariners was Bill Laxon who wrote in his introduction to *Davey and the Awatea* that there had been "comparatively few books written about the merchant navy and even fewer about the men themselves. This is an attempt to redress the balance and through one of its outstanding members pay tribute to all those employed at sea."<sup>95</sup> Laxon's book focused on the career of Arthur Davey who was a prominent Union Steam Ship Company ship's master primarily associated with the Company's vessel *Awatea*. The source material for this book is not quoted, however Laxon acknowledged museums and archives in the text, especially the Union Steam Ship Company Archive, and also mentions Davey's wife and family "who assisted with material". The WWI chapter of Laxon's book is largely a reprint of a report Davey prepared at the Company's request describing the deployment of their vessel *Katoa* on Admiralty work in the Indian Ocean. The reproduced report provides for entertaining reading, and as with Doorly's stories discussed earlier, confirms that there was an untold seafarers' story relating to this period of New Zealand maritime history.<sup>96</sup>

Two recent histories have focussed specifically on the WWI period and each provides previously untold accounts of New Zealand merchant seafarers. The first is the story of the German raider *Wolf* which inflicted a high proportion of New Zealand's merchant marine casualties and prisoners of war. The *Wolf* was a German raider that spent 444 days cruising the high seas including the Indian and Pacific oceans, sinking 30 ships including *Port Kembla*, *Wairuna* and *Wimmera* which were all mined in New Zealand waters. *Wolf* took hundreds of prisoners including children and women, one of whom was Agnes MacKenzie, a New Zealand born stewardess off the Burns Philp steamer *Matunga*. The book is the result of extensive research including access to records and diaries not previously used. Guilliant and Hohnen did not specifically focus on New Zealanders but included extensive material relating to them.<sup>97</sup>

The second is Gavin McLean's recent history of New Zealand's WWI hospital ships, *Maheno* and *Marama*. His predominant sources were the four volumes compiled

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>95</sup> William A. Laxon, *Davey and the Awatea*, (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1997), pp. 8-9.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., pp. 59-63.

<sup>97</sup> Richard Guilliant and Peter Hohnen, *The Wolf. How a German Raider terrorised the Southern Seas during the First World War*, (London: Bantam Press, 2009).

by Lord Liverpool along with shipboard magazines published on the *Maheno* and material from Union Steam Ship Company and New Zealand Defence Department archives. The book covers a number of aspects of these hospital ships including the medical services provided and the ships' operation, the later based on the previously unpublished account by *Maheno's* Third Officer John Duder.<sup>98</sup>

The timeline for McLean's story of *Maheno* in the Mediterranean during 1915 was provided by the diary of Third Officer John Duder.<sup>99</sup> This gave McLean a number of new stories including seafarers assisting medical staff during patient evacuations from Gallipoli, the crew being under enemy fire and the presence of New Zealand civilians at Gallipoli.<sup>100</sup> Duder's description of the workings of the black gang in the engine room provided one view which McLean balanced with a quotation from the *NZ Truth* newspaper. In response to Duder's criticism that "the Maltese proved so poor that the engineer's staff 'had to buck in and work like niggers to keep the necessary pressure of steam'"<sup>101</sup>, McLean defended with the *NZ Truth's* statement that "they were worn out with overwork and excessive heat".<sup>102</sup>

## S U M M A R Y

This discussion of the histories of New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile Marine during WWI confirms that the stories of seafarers are missing from the historiography.

During the contemporaneous period, the focus was on the military operations of the troopships and hospital ships rather than the merchant seafarers. The predominant publications were the troopship magazines and Lord Liverpool's hospital ship volumes. These publications were primarily sources of gossip and news, morale boosters, souvenirs, and fundraising ventures. Mentions of the ships' officers and crew were minimal, except when a vessel's master and senior officers took an active involvement in the troops' shipboard activities.

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<sup>98</sup> John Duder, Diary, 11 July - 31 October 1915. Duder Papers, MS1160, AWMM.

<sup>99</sup> Gavin McLean, *The White Ships. New Zealand's First World War Hospital Ships*, (Wellington: New Zealand Ship & Marine Society, 2013).

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-72.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

The four volume *Popular History* entitled *Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War*, published immediately after the War, was New Zealand's only Government sponsored history of WWI, and was therefore the most likely platform for the exploits of New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile Marine to be documented. The editorial direction set by Minister of Defence Sir James Allen and Major-General Sir A.W. Robin resulted in this not happening. The strained relationship between the trade unions and the Government, especially the latter's reluctance to acknowledge the achievements of its political and class adversaries may have been a root cause of this direction, although an explicable preoccupation with the Army is likely to be the main reason. Implementation of editorial direction was further influenced by Captain Percy Hall-Thompson RN who was limited by his own wartime experiences, commanding *HMS Philomel* and as naval advisor, when he wrote the naval war chapter. This imbalance was not corrected by the volume's editor Lieutenant Henry Drew NZEF, who was well aware of the Mercantile Marine's contribution to the War effort but appeared powerless to have Hall-Thompson provide a more expansive or balanced view, choosing instead to acknowledge the apparent problem in the forward to his volume.

The *Official History* covered the activities of the entire British Empire. Despite these extensive three volumes written by Archibald Hurd, the magnitude of the Mercantile Marine activity in WWI made it practically impossible to provide any level of intimate history of seafarers. Hurd did manage to include a number of New Zealand related events such as the attacks on *Otaki* and *Aparima* but of necessity they were brief. The net result was that the intimate human record envisaged by Sir James Allen did not eventuate for the Mercantile Marine in either the *Official* or the *Popular* histories.

Retrospectively, the opportunity to address the historiographical shortcomings has not fully eventuated and as the result it has focussed on organisational and economic history rather than wartime labour or social history during that period. The shipping Company histories were preoccupied with operational and Company achievements and with presenting positive commercial stories for their own business purposes. The workers' organisations contributed even less to the historiography for a number of reasons including greater membership priorities such as current industry trends, seafarer wages and working conditions, and a possible reluctance to glorify a cause that was counter to their political and working class ideals.

The paper delivered by Gavin McLean at the 2007 Zealandia's Great War conference in Wellington landmarked an increasing awareness of merchant seafarers in

New Zealand's WWI history. On a social dimension, Atkinson's 2001 venture into New Zealand seafarers' "vibrant subculture" revealed that these men and women had their own often closely held stories.

The imminent centennial of WWI may result in the re-evaluation of WWI Mercantile Marine history especially from the seafarers' perspective. To date, this has been constrained by the same underlying source material availability challenges experienced since WWI. The work by Richard Guilliant and Peter Hohnen on *Wolf* demonstrated that the intimate human record, originally contemplated by Sir James Allen when he framed the New Zealand's *Popular History* project, remains a viable albeit difficult but yet to be fulfilled possibility.

This thesis seeks to take the historiography of New Zealand's WWI merchant seafarers a few steps further by clearly identifying and quantifying this workforce and then, using the Union Steam Ship Company's steamer *Aparima* as an example, demonstrate the extent of the seafarers' human wartime stories that have remained absent for the historiography to this point.



## CHAPTER 2

# COUNTING SEAFARERS

As part of the Evidence of Absence argument, the hypothetical argument that no New Zealanders were employed in the World War 1 Mercantile Marine must be eliminated as a possible reason for their absence from historiography.

There were three major stakeholder groups in New Zealand's maritime industry during WWI. Notwithstanding their governance responsibilities, none maintained a register of all New Zealand merchant seafarers and as a consequence complete service records of every individual employed in the Mercantile Marine during WWI do not exist. Without the benefit of a membership roll or other authoritative records, my argument is reliant on statistical estimation using a number of different data sources to prove that New Zealanders employed in the World War 1 Mercantile Marine were an identifiable workforce.

### MARITIME INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

The organisation responsible for regulation and control of seafarer employment in the Dominion was the New Zealand Marine Department. In Britain, this responsibility rested with the Board of Trade which included the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen. The Marine Department governed most aspects of merchant shipping including engagement and discharge of seamen and competency of masters, mates and engineers.<sup>103</sup> The department was centrally controlled from Wellington, reported to the Minister of Marine and was led by the Secretary of Marine. Regional offices at the ports of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton and Dunedin were managed by a local Superintendent of Marine, providing day to day governance services.

The shipping companies were responsible for employing individual seafarers, requiring them to sign Articles of Agreement for either a fixed term of employment, or for a specific voyage. The Marine Department was responsible for overseeing this sign-

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<sup>103</sup> Christopher T. Watts and Michael J. Watts, *My Ancestor was a Merchant Seaman. A Guide to sources for Family Historians*, (London: Society of Genealogists Enterprises, 2002), p. 19.

on process thereby ensuring that crew and officers were properly qualified, ships correctly manned and seafarers' certificates of discharge signed at the time of discharge. The latter requirement ensured that during wartime, seafarers had been exempted military service and had not deserted their previous ship. The ship's Articles of Agreement for each voyage were the authoritative record of those employed on a specific ship, for a specific voyage, and copies of these documents relating to New Zealand ships were collated by the local Superintendent's of Marine. Records of the pivot view, namely individual seafarers and the ships and voyages of employment have not survived and probably never existed.<sup>104</sup>

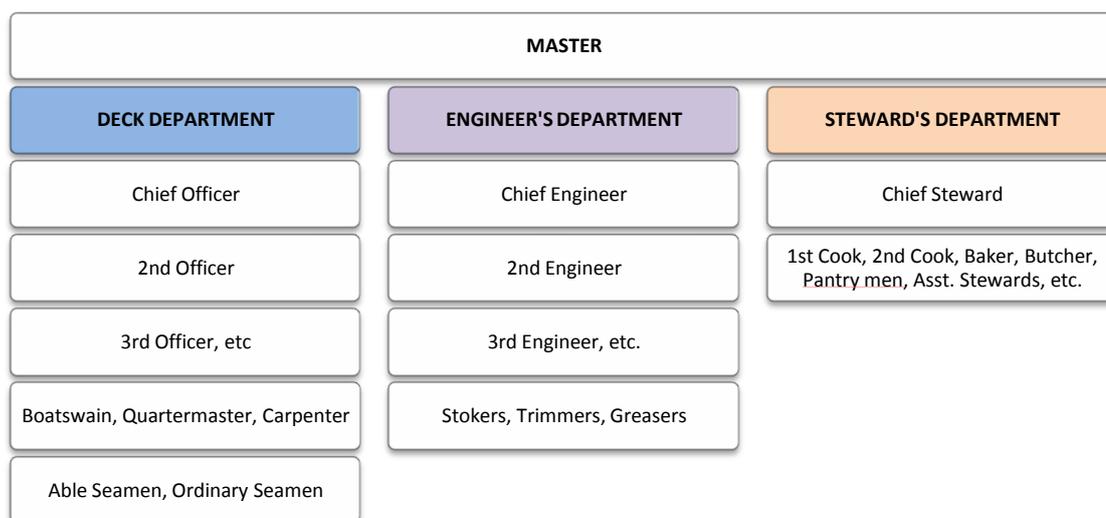
A steamship's complement was organised into three major departments each headed by a senior officer reporting to the ship's Master. The Deck Department comprised those responsible for the vessel's passage including command, sailing and navigation of the ship. The deck officers were organised according to their rank and had specific responsibilities for aspects of the ship's operation. The deck ratings or seamen roles were rated according to experience and reported to the boatswain, often referred to as the bosun. In addition to the seamen, specialist deck roles such as carpenters and wireless operators existed, the later often employed by the wireless equipment provider and employed on ships as a turnkey service.<sup>105</sup> The Engineer's Department was responsible for running the vessel's propulsion systems and infrastructure for crew, passengers and cargo. Like the deck department, they were organised into a graded hierarchy reporting to the Chief Engineer. Each graded role was allocated responsibility for running specific areas of the ship. For instance, the Second Engineer was responsible for the day-to-day running of the steam engines and was usually in charge of main engine maintenance. The Third Engineer was responsible for the boilers and auxiliary engines. Engine room ratings such as coal stokers, trimmers and greasers operated the ship's boilers and engines and were sometimes referred to as the Black Gang. The Steward's Department was responsible for housekeeping onboard the ship, including provisioning, cooking and cleaning for the crew and any passengers. This department was organised under the management of the Chief Steward.

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<sup>104</sup> Articles of Agreement - also called "ship's articles". The document contains all particulars relating to the terms of agreement between the master of the vessel and the crew. It comprised the terms and conditions of service and was signed by the seamen and the master and duly witnessed by the Superintendent of Marine. One copy was provided to the Master for display on board ship and other retained by Marine Dept; Watts and Watts, *My Ancestor was a Merchant Seaman*. p. 52.

<sup>105</sup> W.V.J. Clarke, *Cole's Shipmaster's Handbook to the Merchant Shipping Acts*, (Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, 1949), p. 38. Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Limited, known as "AWA", and Marconi were the predominant wireless providers.

Figure 1: Departmental Structure of a Steam-Powered Foreign-Going Ship



The workforce was divided into four industrial groups, each represented by a union. These groups mirrored the departmental structure of a ship. The deck officers were members of the New Zealand Merchant Service Guild. The deck and engine room ratings such as the seamen and firemen belonged to the Federated Seamen's Union of New Zealand although those employed by the Northern Steamship Company belonged to the Auckland Seamen and Firemen's Union between November 1913 and November 1915.<sup>106</sup> The engineers, who were also qualified marine engineers, belonged to the Australasian Institute of Marine Engineers and the steward's belonged to the Federated Cook's and Steward's Union.<sup>107</sup>

Vessels servicing New Zealand ports worked four major trades, namely Inshore, Coastal, Intercolonial and Pacific Island, and Foreign-Going routes. With few exceptions, vessels consistently worked their designated trades. A sample of shipping departures from the Port of Auckland during 1916 indicated that a wide selection of companies and trades were in operation through the port.<sup>108</sup> Of the 364 vessel departures in the 1916 Auckland sample, 13% were engaged in Foreign-Going trade, 7% were engaged in Intercolonial and Pacific Island trade and the remaining 80% were on the Coastal trade, with the majority of these serving North Island eastern ports between the Far North and Napier. It is the voyages covering the Foreign-Going and

<sup>106</sup> Grant, 2012, pp. 65, 82.

<sup>107</sup> McLean, 1990; Atkinson, 2001, p. 117.

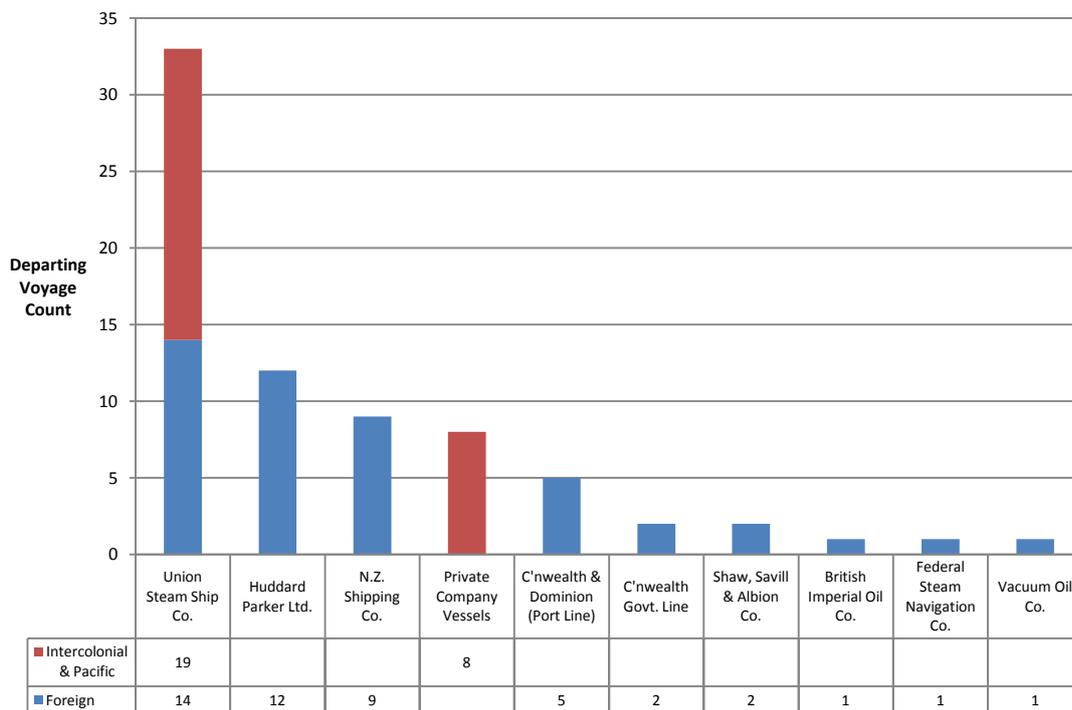
<sup>108</sup> *Auckland Star*, 1 April - 30 June 1916.

Details of ships departing Waitemata Harbour between 1 April 1916 and 30 June 1916, inclusive.

Intercolonial and Pacific Island routes that comprised WWI deployment and are the scope of this thesis.

The largest Company engaged in New Zealand’s Foreign-Going, Intercolonial and Pacific Island trades was the Union Steam Ship Company which was headquartered in Dunedin. The Company was locally owned until 1917 when it was sold to the British based Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O).<sup>109</sup> The 1916 sample indicates that Union Steam Ship Company accounted for 45% of departures, with Huddard Parker and New Zealand Shipping Company being ranked second and third with 16% and 12% respectively. The remaining 27% of departures were undertaken by vessels operated by Commonwealth and Dominion Line (which became Port Line later in WWI), Commonwealth Government Line (an Australian Government owned Company), Shaw Savill & Albion, British Imperial Oil, Federal Steam Navigation, Vacuum Oil and smaller Company vessels. The following graph illustrates this vessel ownership and trade distribution.

Figure 2: Ownership and Trade of non-coastal ships departing Waitemata Harbour between 1 April-30 June 1916<sup>110</sup>



<sup>109</sup> Gavin McLean, *Ships of the Union Company*, (Wellington: GP Books, 1989), p. 3.

<sup>110</sup> *Auckland Star*, 1 April - 30 June 1916.

The ownership and frequency of ships departing Auckland's Waitemata Harbour suggests that the Union Steam Ship Company was the predominant but not exclusive employer of New Zealand merchant seafarers. The remaining New Zealand merchant seafarers were employed by non-New Zealand companies, some of which may never have operated through the Dominion's ports.

There are estimates that "upwards of 1,130,000 men" were directly involved in Allied shipping during WWI. This estimate included seafarers as well as the shipbuilders, harbour and waterside workers, shipping management and other workers who directly supported seafaring operations in all of the Allied countries, including New Zealand.<sup>111</sup> The proportion engaged in New Zealand cannot be accurately determined but different sources indicate that in excess of 2,500 may well have been engaged on vessels trading on Foreign and Intercolonial and Pacific Island routes during wartime. The remainder of this Chapter considers different estimates of New Zealand seafarers employed in WWI Mercantile Marine.

## **N E W   Z E A L A N D   C E N S U S**

New Zealand population censuses conducted during 1911 and 1916 are of limited value in quantifying New Zealand merchant seafarers. From a seafarer's perspective, the census enumerated persons who were shipboard at ports in New Zealand at the time however the count excluded from the employment related statistics, those seafarers at sea, unemployed, or ashore for any reason including leave.

The population trend over the intervening five year period between 1911 and 1916 does illustrate the impact of the War on the number of seafarers employed on vessels registered in New Zealand. The 1911 census recorded a total of 4,865 people onboard ships in New Zealand ports of which 409 were female. The total recorded in 1916 was 3,085 of whom 162 were female, indicating a possible 36.6% reduction during the five year period. During the same period, tonnage of New Zealand registered shipping

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<sup>111</sup> Lloyd George to Mon. Georges Clemenceau, "British Man-Power Effort", 30 August 1918, Records of the Cabinet Office, CAB/24/62 Ref 0072, NA.

S Lloyd George was British Prime Minister from 7 December 1916 to 22 October 1922 and Georges Clemenceau was French Prime Minister from 16 November 1917 to 20 January 1920.

reduced by 44.5% from 136,891 tons gwt to 76,008 tons gwt.<sup>112</sup> These reductions were the result of vessels being transferred to British registry and seafarers relocating to Britain to remain with their ships. Seafarer reductions were also a consequence of those who filled vacancies in the Royal Navy, as well as those who joined the Army, especially in the early war years.<sup>113</sup>

## SEAFARERS EMPLOYED ON NEW ZEALAND REGISTERED VESSELS

According to the Marine Department, in 1914 there were 4,335 men and boys, excluding ship's masters, employed on New Zealand registered ships. In addition, each of the 413 New Zealand registered vessels required a master, increasing the total employed to 4,748. This total is less than the 5,487 recorded elsewhere by the Marine Department as earning a living at sea. The difference of 739 included those employed on non-New Zealand registered merchant ships and those who were unemployed at the time of the count.<sup>114</sup>

Of those seafarers employed in 1914, the Marine Department recorded 3,095 employed on the Home trade, 1,475 employed on dual Home and Foreign trade (including 88 under sail) and the remaining 178 solely in the Foreign trade (including 97 under sail). The number employed on steam powered ships working the dual trade (partly in the home and partly in the foreign trades) dramatically reduced at the commencement of WWI when many seafarers left the sea to enlist with the forces. The

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<sup>112</sup> "Census, 1911. Return showing the population of the Dominion (exclusive of Maoris and the population of the annexed Pacific Islands), with particulars as to dwellings, sexes, density, etc." in *AJHR*, H-14, (1911); "Census, 1916. Return showing the population of the Dominion (exclusive of Maoris and the population of the annexed Pacific Islands), with details for counties, boroughs, electoral districts, etc." in *AJHR*, H-39, (1917); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1910-11" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1911); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1911-12" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1912); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1912-13" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1913); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1913-14" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1914); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1914-15" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1915); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1915-16" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1916); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1916-17" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1917); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1917-18" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1918); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1918-19" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1919); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1919-20" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1920).

<sup>113</sup> Howard Williamson, *The Collectors and Researchers Guide to the Great War Vol. 1: Medals and Medal Research*, (Harwich: Anne Williamson, 2003), pp. 325-326; In this context, Royal Navy includes the related "sworn" services such as Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR), Royal Navy Reserve (RNR), Merchant Fleet Auxiliary (MFA), Mercantile Marine Reserve (MMR), Royal Naval Patrol Service (RNPS); David Littlewood, "'Should He Serve?'. The Military Service Boards Operations in the Wellington Provincial District, 1916-1918", (MA thesis in History, Massey University, 2010), pp. 30-31.

Littlewood explained that all seamen with at least twelve months' experience would be exempted from compulsory military service on the basis that they were employed in essential occupations. Those with lesser service were not routinely exempt and were often declined their appeal and conscripted into the Army.

<sup>114</sup> *AJHR*, H-15, (1914), p. 28; *AJHR*, H-15, (1915), p. 31.

number reduced further in 1917 following the sale of the Union Steam Ship Company to P&O, as already discussed.

What is apparent from the analysis of seafarers employed, and illustrated in Figure 3, is that the number engaged is relatively static, with the exception of those engaged on steam powered vessels on the dual Home and Foreign trades, which was the primary domain of the Union Steam Ship Company. The number of seafarers employed on New Zealand registered vessels that were deployed either fully or partly on foreign trade peaked at 1,653 in 1914 and fell to 931 in 1918. This trend is supported by the census numbers and observations discussed earlier.

Figure 3: Crew and Masters of Registered Vessels of the Dominion of New Zealand employed wholly in the Home Trade, partly in the Home and partly in the Foreign Trade, and wholly in the Foreign Trade <sup>115</sup>



There are deficiencies in using seafarers employed on New Zealand registered vessels as a data source to quantify the subject group, as the statistic excludes the many New Zealanders who were employed on foreign registered vessels. Adding the 739 identified in 1914 as being employed on non-New Zealand registered merchant ships or

<sup>115</sup> AJHR, H-15, (1911), p. 32; AJHR, H-15, (1912), p. 40; AJHR, H-15, (1913), p. 36; AJHR, H-15, (1914), p. 28; AJHR, H-15, (1915), p. 31; AJHR, H-15, (1916), p. 27; AJHR, H-15, (1917), p. 30; AJHR, H-15, (1918), p. 33; AJHR, H-15, (1919), p. 34.

In addition to the crew numbers documented in the Marine Dept statistics, one additional person (Master) for each New Zealand registered vessel has been added to the workforce totals.

those who were unemployed, adjusts for that deficiency to provide a peak of 2,392 in 1914 and a minimum of 1,670 in 1918.

The Marine Department statistics are understated as they do not take into account seafarer turnover during the reported year and only include those engaged on New Zealand registered vessels at the time the statistics were gathered, rather than the total number of individuals who were employed on any vessel at any time during the 12 month period.

## **M E M B E R S H I P   O F   N E W   Z E A L A N D   S E A F A R E R I N D U S T R I A L   U N I O N S**

The usefulness of the union membership as a source for calculating the number of New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine is underpinned by the award Preference Clause which entitled union members priority employment on New Zealand articulated ships.<sup>116</sup> It was therefore highly desirable for seafarers to belong to their relevant trade union in order to gain preferential employment. Conversely, few belonged to the union who were either not currently locally employed or not seeking employment, as is apparent from correlation between fluctuating shipping tonnage during 1916-1917 and the variation in membership numbers during that same period.<sup>117</sup> Union membership rolls could have provided a strong estimate of those employed on New Zealand registered and articulated ships however they have not survived for the period in question.

Despite the absence of rolls, membership counts were maintained and published. In accordance with the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1908, unions were required to furnish membership numbers annually to the Labour Department. The following table (Figure 4) summarises the membership counts for the Seafarer Industrial Unions in New Zealand during the WWI period.

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<sup>116</sup> *Auckland Star*, 24 July 1914, p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> "Marine Department Annual Report for 1915-16" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1916); "Marine Department Annual Report for 1916-17" in *AJHR*, H-15, (1917).

Figure 4: New Zealand Seafarer Industrial Unions Membership for 1914-1918<sup>118</sup>

Seafarer Industrial Union	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918
Auckland Federated Cooks and Stewards of New Zealand	108	81	141	216	213
Wellington Chief Stewards Guild of New Zealand	57	50	40	38	69
Wellington Federated Cooks and Stewards of NZ	551	627	727	733	705
<b>Total Cooks &amp; Stewards</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>987</b>
Auckland Australasian Institution of Marine Engineers	181	224	190	170	170
Wellington Australasian Institution of Marine Engineers	509	446	546	578	584
<b>Total Engineers</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>754</b>
Auckland Merchant Service Guild	29	52	88	103	88
Auckland Shipmasters	41	34			
Lyttelton Merchant Service Guild	34	33	34	25	31
Wellington Merchant Service Guild	208	263	373	394	316
<b>Total Deck Officers</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>435</b>
Auckland Australasian Federated Seamen	538				
Auckland Local Federated Seamen		820	922	1,022	999
Auckland Seamen and Firemen	418				
Dunedin Australasian Federated Seamen	526				
Dunedin Local Federated Seamen		450	659	583	559
Wellington Australasian Federated Seamen	1,611				
Wellington Local Federated Seamen		1,730	1,678	1,547	1,414
<b>Total Deck &amp; Engine Room Trades</b>	<b>3,093</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,259</b>	<b>3,152</b>	<b>2,972</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,811</b>	<b>4,810</b>	<b>5,398</b>	<b>5,409</b>	<b>5,148</b>

From this table, it is apparent that the combined Cooks and Stewards Union, Seamen Union, Merchant Service Guild and Engineers Institute memberships averaged 5,115 during the war years with the peak of 5,409 in 1917 and a low of 4,810 in 1915. Using the Marine Department data relating to crew and masters employed on New Zealand registered vessels in Figure 3, the calculable portion of union membership employed either part-time or full-time in the foreign trade averaged 28.42% during the 1914-1918 war period. This is summarised by year in Figure 5.

<sup>118</sup> “Return Showing the Number of Members in Each Industrial Union registered under the Act (IC&A Act 1908) to 31st December 1914” in *AJHR*, H-11A, (1915); “Return Showing the Number of Members in Each Industrial Union registered under the Act (IC&A Act 1908) to 31st December 1915” in *AJHR*, H-11A, (1916); “Return Showing the Number of Members in Each Industrial Union registered under the Act (IC&A Act 1908) to 31st December 1916” in *AJHR*, H-11A, (1917); “Return Showing the Number of Members in Each Industrial Union registered under the Act (IC&A Act 1908) to 31st December 1917” in *AJHR*, H-11A, (1918); “Return Showing the Number of Members in Each Industrial Union registered under the Act (IC&A Act 1908) to 31st December 1918” in *AJHR*, H-11A, (1919).

Figure 5: Distribution of Crew and Masters of New Zealand Registered Vessels which were employed partly in the Home and partly in the Foreign Trade, and only in the Foreign Trade<sup>119</sup>

Trade	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	Average
Dual Home and Foreign	31.07%	20.33%	18.23%	19.19%	7.53%	<b>19.27%</b>
Foreign Only	3.75%	9.11%	7.90%	7.93%	17.07%	<b>9.15%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.82%</b>	<b>29.44%</b>	<b>26.13%</b>	<b>27.12%</b>	<b>24.60%</b>	<b>28.42%</b>

Applying the trade distribution from Figure 5 to the trade union membership numbers summarised in Figure 4 indicates a peak estimate of WWI New Zealand merchant seafarers of 1,675 in 1914 and a low of 1,266 in 1918. Again, what is missing from this estimate are those who were not New Zealand union members, that is, non-union labour or those employed on foreign articulated vessels. Adding the 739 identified and previously discussed, adjusts for that deficiency to provide a peak of 2,414 and a minimum of 2,005.

## MERCANTILE MARINE WAR MEDAL RECIPIENTS

In the Introduction chapter, the entitlement criteria for receiving the Mercantile Marine War Medal was suggested as part of the definition of a New Zealander employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine. A roll of all recipients of this medal, irrespective of country of issue and including New Zealanders, was prepared by the Registry of Shipping and Seamen.<sup>120</sup> A card index of those recipients who received their medal from the New Zealand Marine Department also exists. The cards contain the recipient's name, place and year of birth, medals and ribbons awarded, and the date and place of issue.<sup>121</sup> (See the example on page 115.)

The New Zealand Marine Department cards identify 1,725 Mercantile Marine War Medal applicants (of whom all but 27 were successful) who were resident at some time following the end of WWI. Because each medal was impressed with the seafarer's name on the rim, there was often a delay in issuing them because of the preparation

<sup>119</sup> AJHR, H-15, (1915); AJHR, H-15, (1916); AJHR, H-15, (1917); AJHR, H-15, (1918); AJHR, H-15, (1919).

<sup>120</sup> Registry of Shipping and Seamen. *Index of First World War Mercantile Marine Medals and the British War Medal, 1919-*, Board of Trade Collection, BT 351/1/1 and BT 351/1/2, NA.

<sup>121</sup> Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - A to K", Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 50, ANZ; Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - L to Z", Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 51, ANZ.

time. As the result, a piece of ribbon used to suspend the medal was issued for wearing on the seafarer’s uniform meanwhile. It was not unusual for the ribbon to be issued to an individual by one country and the medal by another. Different combinations of ribbon and medal dates and countries of issue indicate whether or not a seafarer was a New Zealander according to the definition adopted in the Introduction. The New Zealand applications are categorised and summarised in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Quantification of New Zealand Mercantile Marine Ribbon and or Medal applicants <sup>122</sup>

Medal Country of Issue	Ribbon Country of Issue				Total
	New Zealand	Other	Unknown	None Issued	
New Zealand	1,340	168	17	-	1,525
Other	37	5	1	-	43
Unknown	62	8	60	-	130
None Issued	-	-	-	27	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1,725</b>

In total, 1,439 applicants (shaded green in Figure 6) were New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine because the medal ribbon country of issue was New Zealand indicating that they were resident in the country immediately after the War and remained so for sometime after that. A further 78 (shaded blue in Figure 6) may be New Zealanders because their application was recorded by the Marine Department but the country where application was originally made, and therefore resident at the time, is unknown. It is possible that 17 of these were non-New Zealanders who migrated to New Zealand after 1919. A further 176 (shaded red in Figure 6) also migrated to New Zealand after 1919 and may also not have satisfied the residency criteria described in the Introduction. The remaining 32 (unshaded in Figure 6) were either unsuccessful applications or referred to other jurisdictions for consideration.

Using the Mercantile Marine War Medal recipients approach, the number of WWI New Zealand merchant seafarers was therefore at least 1,439. There are a number of challenges with this data source as an accurate estimate. The medal was issued on application, rather than proactively, and as the result many seafarers did not apply. Using a small sample of officers and crew from qualifying New Zealand registered or articulated ship voyages (Figure 7), it would appear that between 23.1% and 44.1% of those

<sup>122</sup> Marine Dept, “War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - A to K”, Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 50, ANZ; Marine Dept, “War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - L to Z”, Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 51, ANZ.

entitled actually applied for their medals in New Zealand. In addition, the medal was only available to those who were employed at sea for a minimum of six months and therefore this estimate also excluded seafarers with foreign-going route employment of less than 180 days in total.

Figure 7: Sample of Qualifying Ship Crew's who applied for the Mercantile Marine Medal in New Zealand<sup>123</sup>

Ship	Voyage	Total Crew	Minimum Applications
<i>Aparima</i>	Final voyage. Torpedoed	115	28 [23.1%]
<i>Maheno</i>	HMNZ Hospital Ship 3rd Charter	111	50 [44.1%]
<i>Marama</i>	HMNZ Hospital Ship 2nd Charter	136	47 [34.6%]
<i>Willochra</i>	HMNZT 95. 31st & 32nd Reinforcements	110	42 [38.2%]
<i>Mokoia</i>	HMNZT 72. 20th Reinforcements	79	22 [27.8%]

On the basis of these samples, it is possible that the number of New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine could be more than double the 1,439 minimum calculated above.

## **N Z E F 1 9 1 6 / 1 9 1 7 R E S E R V E S & T R O O P E M B A R K A T I O N S**

In September 1916, the New Zealand Government required all males of military age to register for the Military Reserve and failure to do so was punishable by imprisonment, then automatic enlistment into the forces. Employing an unregistered man, or even having knowledge of an unregistered employed person, resulted in substantial fines for both parties. This stringent enforcement made the 1916 Reserves Register a very accurate record of all New Zealand resident males not enlisted in the armed forces at that time. Between August and October 1917, a Second Division roll was prepared comprising those excluded from the 1916 roll because they had dependents. Amongst those included on this later roll were all New Zealander residents of military age who were employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine. In total, 179,538 individuals, along with details of occupation and address, were on the combined rolls.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - A to K", Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 50, ANZ; Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - L to Z", Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 51, ANZ.

<sup>124</sup> New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc., *New Zealand WWI Service Personnel and Reserves Index* Version 2, (Auckland: New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc, 2005), CD-ROM; *Dominion*, 30 August 1916, p. 6.

Many of the seafarer occupations such as seaman listed on the Reserves rolls are conclusively shipboard roles, whilst others are ambiguous such as engineer or baker. For the purposes of analysing these reservists, the conclusive roles were deemed to be probable seafarers whereas those ambiguous roles are deemed possible seafarers. The complete set of occupations used on both Reserves rolls were coded and analysed to determine the number of probable and possible seafarers. For those with possible roles such as engineers, the individual addresses were inspected to determine any connection with shipping. In this case, an individual was reclassified probable rather than possible. The analysis summarised below (Figure 8), concludes that 2,518 were probably seafarers and a further 3,681 were possibly seafarers and together they represent the maximum number of military reserves who were seafarers.

Figure 8: 1916 & 1917 Reserves with Probable or Possible Seafarer Occupations <sup>125</sup>

Likelihood	Department	Seafarer Occupation	Reservists	Total		
<b>'Probable'</b>	Deck	Master	200	<b>1,460</b>		
		First Officer	45			
		Second Officer	20			
		Third Officer	4			
		Deck Officer	83			
		Boatswain	7			
		Wireless Operator	3			
		Seaman	1,063			
		Carpenter	25			
		Plumber	5			
		Painter	2			
		Rigger	2			
		Cadet	1			
	Engineers	Chief Engineer	7		<b>786</b>	
		Second Engineer	2			
		Third Engineer	11			
		Fourth Engineer	2			
		Engineer	326			
		Trimmer	48			
		Fireman (Stoker)	363			
		Donkeyman	13			
		Storekeeper	3			
		Greaser	11			
	Stewards	Purser	24		<b>190</b>	
		Clerk	1			
		Chief Steward	2			
		Steward	127			
		Cook	31			
		Butcher	4			
		Baker	1			
	Other	Mariner (non-specific)	82		<b>82</b>	
	<b>Total 'Probable' Seafarers</b>				<b>2,518</b>	
	<b>'Possible'</b>	Deck	Deck Officer		3	<b>1,909</b>
Wireless Operator			10			
Cadet			53			
Engineers		Chief Engineer	23	<b>1,909</b>		
		Second Engineer	8			
		Engineer	1,263			
		Chief Electrical Engineer	2			
		Fireman (Stoker)	530			
		Greaser	65			
		Lamplighter	18			
Stewards		Chief Steward	24	<b>1,706</b>		
		Steward	203			
		Chief Cook	6			
		Cook	565			
		Baker	908			
<b>Total 'Possible' Seafarers</b>				<b>3,681</b>		
<b>MAXIMUM MILITARY RESERVES WHO COULD BE SEAFARERS</b>				<b>6,199</b>		

<sup>125</sup> New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc.; *Dominion*, 30 August 1916, p. 6.

There are a number of shortcomings associated with using the Reserves rolls, apart from the ambiguity of occupational descriptions.

The rolls were limited to those between the military ages of 20 and 45. Using the age distribution of the New Zealand Mercantile Marine War medallists discussed in the later Workforce Demographics chapter, those aged 20-45 represented 72% of the total number of recipients. Those younger than this group comprised 18% and those older represented the remaining 10%. This would result in the number of probable and possible seafarers being adjusted upwards to 3,495 and 5,109 respectively to account for the age exclusions on the Reserves rolls.

By August 1917 when the Second Division Reserves roll was commenced, the Main Body and the NZEF Reinforcements numbered the 1st through the 28th had left New Zealand. Because they were overseas, they were not required to register for the Reserves. Statistics presented to the House of Representatives during 1917 showed a summary of the occupations of all who had embarked for active service up to and including the 28 Reinforcement. Using the same codification process applied to the Reserves rolls, and subject to the same ambiguity limitations, analysis of these 78,990 embarked soldiers (Figure 9) revealed an additional 1,670 probable seafarers who resided in New Zealand during wartime but came ashore, joined the forces and embarked with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force prior to commencement of the 1917 Reserves registration.

Figure 9: New Zealand Expeditionary Force up to 28 Reinforcement embarked who were Probable Seafarers<sup>126</sup>

Likelihood	Department	Seafarer Occupation	Reservists	Total
<b>'Probable'</b>	Deck	Deck Officers	38	
		Seamen	1,017	<b>1,055</b>
	Engineers	Marine Engineers	10	<b>0</b>
		Firemen, stokers, &c.	379	<b>389</b>
Stewards	Stewards	226	<b>226</b>	
<b>TOTAL PROBABLE SEAFARERS EMBARKED WITH NZEF TO 28 REINFORCEMENT</b>				<b>1,670</b>

No attempt is made to estimate the additional possible seafarers employed in the ambiguously titled roles such as Engineers, Bakers and Cooks. According to evidence

<sup>126</sup> John Studholme, *New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Record of personal services during the war of officers, nurses, and first-class warrant officers and other facts relating to the N.Z.E.F.*, (Wellington: W.A.G. Skinner, Government Printer, 1928), pp. 373-376; NZEF, "Return Showing Occupations of All Ranks Embarked for Active Service up to and including the 28th Reinforcements" in AJHR, H-19v, (1917).

provided by the Seamen's Union to the Otago Military Board in December 1916, the number of Mercantile Marine voluntarily sent to war was 1,800 men, indicating that the embarked possibles could be some hundreds in addition to the 1,670 probables, based on the numerical and time difference between the 1,800 estimate and completion of the Second Division Reserves rolls in 1917.<sup>127</sup>

Combining the mutually exclusive New Zealand Expeditionary Force and age adjusted Reservist statistics provides an alternative estimation of the total number of New Zealand merchant seafarers. The maximum estimate of New Zealanders seafarers using this method is probably 4,893 and possibly as many as 9,605.<sup>128</sup> Using the Marine Department statistics of distribution of seafarers across the trades (Figure 5), the portion of seafarers employed either part or full time on foreign trade vessels during 1916 (the year of the Reserves rolls compilation) amounted to 26.13% of the overall industry. Applying this ratio to the maximum estimates above indicates that the New Zealand seafarers employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine is probably 1,279 and possibly exceeds 2,500.

## S U M M A R Y

Counting New Zealand seafarers employed in WWI Mercantile Marine has proven to be very complex, yet useful task, yet largely impossible as demonstrated by the alternatives presented. All of the estimation methods have relied on the records of the New Zealand Defence Department, Department of Labour and Marine Department and each produce different conclusions, rather than a consistent estimate.

The challenge of accurately determining the number of seafarers in existence at a point in time has been a long standing problem and not yet satisfactorily resolved. Valerie Burton (Chair of the Maritime Studies Research Unit and Associate Professor, Department of History at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada) in her paper *Counting Seafarers*, attempted an estimation of seafarers in the United Kingdom during the 19th and 20th centuries to demonstrate changes in the number and role of seafarers as the result of the transition from sail to steam propulsion. She claimed that there was a predictable ratio of seafarers to vessel tonnage, concluding that by 1912

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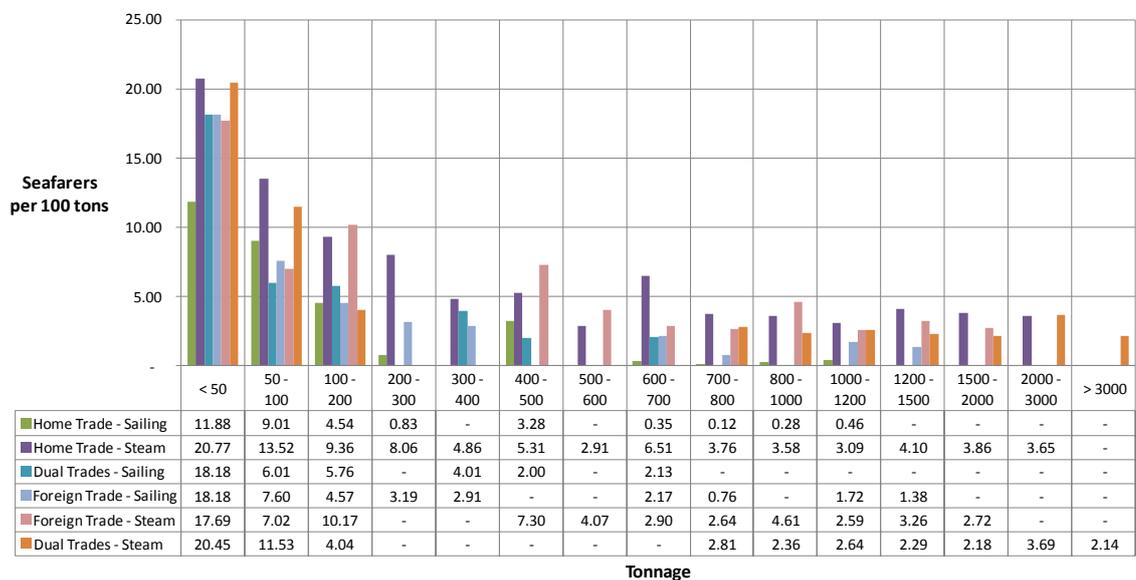
<sup>127</sup> *Evening Post*, 22 December 1916, p. 5.

<sup>128</sup> Age-adjusted Reservists (3,223) plus New Zealand Expeditionary Force embarkations up to 28 Reinforcements (1,670).

there averaged 1.98 seafarers (excluding the master) on foreign trade vessels per 100 tons gwt. On smaller home traders, the ratio was 8.32 seafarers per 100 tons.<sup>129</sup> Her findings provide an alternative method to validate my estimates.

The Marine Department published annually, figures of seafarers employed on New Zealand registered vessels. The numbers were segmented by trade and by vessel size. Using the Marine Department report for New Zealand registered vessels over 3,000 tons, the seafarer ratio calculates to be 2.14 per 100 tons (Figure 10), including the master, which is comparable to Burton’s calculations.<sup>130</sup>

Figure 10: Seafarers employed (including Master) per 100 Tons of Registered Vessels of the Dominion of N.Z.<sup>131</sup>



The Union Steam Ship Company provided the largest proportion of the vessels on which New Zealanders were employed during WWI. The 35 Union Steam Ship Company vessels deployed on war service (e.g. hospital ships, troopships, colliers following the fleet, and steam tramps) had a total tonnage of 188,637. Using the seafarer tonnage ratios, the number of New Zealanders employed on these vessels ranged between 2,262 (Burton model ratio) and 2,442 (Marine Department data ratio).

<sup>129</sup> Burton, 1985, p. 312.

Burton acknowledged that the ratio differed with different tonnage ranges, recognising the need for a minimum number of roles required for any vessel and therefore the manning ration for smaller commercial vessels was higher per tonnage (gwt) than for larger ships.

<sup>130</sup> The majority of New Zealand ships on war service were in excess of 3,000 tons gwt. The USSCo which was New Zealand’s largest ship owner, had approximately 35 vessels on war service and of these thirty were in excess of 3,000 tons and the remainder were in the range 2,000-3,000 tons.

<sup>131</sup> AJHR, H-15, (1916).

As with other counting methods, there are weaknesses with the tonnage method. These estimates are based on the tonnage totals for the Union Steam Ship Company only. Whilst this represents an estimable portion of the overall tonnage of vessels deployed out of New Zealand on war service (see Figure 2), the calculation excludes those who were employed on foreign vessels and again does not take crew turnover into account.

A greater weakness in the tonnage method is the impact of replacing New Zealand seafarers with Lascar labour. Lascar was a term used during the early 20th century to describe non-white seafarers:

Lascar, Indian, native and Asiatic were interchangeable terms used for seafarers of non-European origin from the vast Indian Ocean region sailing on European vessels. In some early sources, one finds Arabs, Africans and even Turks referred to as Lascars. During WWI, Chinese seafarers have been engaged in India on modified Lascar agreements.<sup>132</sup>

The trend of employing Lascars was not limited to British ships. The Union Steam Ship Company employed a high proportion of Lascars on some of its ships in response to labour shortages and the increasing pressure on profits from falling cargo commission and fixed government charter rates. As an example, *Aparima* had a complement of 115 on its disastrous 1917 voyage, of which 62 (nearly 54%) were Lascars who filled all the rating positions in the engineers' and stewards' department.<sup>133</sup> It is not apparent if this high ratio was prevalent on many other Union Steam Ship Company ships and for this reason the Burton methodology provides a useful but limited validation of the other data sources used.

It has not been possible to conclusively quantify the number of New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine.

The Mercantile Marine Medal roll of successful New Zealand resident recipients contains the names of 1,439 seafarers who fall into the category of New Zealanders employed in WWI Mercantile Marine. It is possible this might represent only 23-42% of those who were entitled and therefore the numbers of seafarers was at least 1,439 and possibly double that number. The minimum number is supported by approximations

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<sup>132</sup> Gopalan Balachandran, *Globalizing Labour? Indian Seafarers and World Shipping, c. 1870-1945*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 30, 33.

<sup>133</sup> USSCo., "Aparima Crew - List of European crew members, 1917-1918", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

derived from the 1911 and 1916 census, seafarer trade union membership and employment returns from New Zealand registered ships during the wartime years.

Validating the maximum number is difficult. A combination of the New Zealand Reserves rolls prepared in 1916 and 1917, together with details of soldier embarkations up to 1916 when compulsory Reserves registration was mandated, provides names and occupations of every military age New Zealander. Hindered only by the ability to unambiguously interpret each occupation as being a seafarer, and adjusting to counter the military age limitation, the reserve and embarkation rolls together indicate that the number of New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine exceeds 2,500.

The table below summarises the results of the different quantification methods applied and indicates a probable minimum and maximum.

Figure 11: Summary of Quantification Models

Quantification Model	Minimum	Maximum
Seafarers Employed on Foreign or Dual Trades	1,670	2,392
Membership of New Zealand Seafarer trade unions	2,005	2,414
WWI Mercantile Marine War Medal - New Zealand recipients	1,439	2,878
Reserves (1916 & 1917) plus NZEF Embarkations up to 28 Reinforcements		2,510
<b>Probable Range</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>2,878</b>

The value of these estimates presented lies not in their accuracy or completeness but in the notion that alternative, independent models each point to a workforce substantial enough to counter the argument that they did not exist, thereby eliminating this as a possible reason for their absence from New Zealand's WWI historiography.



## CHAPTER 3

# TSS APARIMA - A MICROHISTORY

New Zealand Mercantile Marine's WWI historiography is focussed on the grand narrative of assets and logistical achievements summarised in cargo tonnages carried, troops transported and vessels lost. The famous identities are the ships and the senior officers, especially the masters, in whom these well known vessels and their critical cargoes were entrusted during peace and war. The time honoured narratives of Archibald Hurd, Sydney D. Waters, Frank D. Bowen, Frederick A. Hook, and others, attempted to condense into single works the wartime history of a shipping Company or even the entire Allied Mercantile Marine, omitting in the process, the human endeavour of entire crews whose lives were dictated by the random events of nature and war.

Using microhistory as an alternative approach to the existing narratives, this chapter demonstrates, by example, the extent of the seafarers' stories that succumbed to these organisational perspectives of events.

By reducing the scale of observation, microhistorians argued that they are more likely to reveal the complicated function of individual relationships within each and every social setting and they stressed its difference from larger norm.<sup>134</sup>

Giovanni Levi positions microhistory as an effective response to the generalisations of grand narratives, which in this case has led to individual seafarer's stories remaining untold.

The unifying principle of all micro historical research is the belief that microscopic observation will reveal factors previously unobserved.<sup>135</sup>

This chapter is a story of those New Zealanders employed on the Union Steam Ship Company's steamship *Aparima* during WWI. Of the estimated 2,500 New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile Marine during WWI, the 115 seafarers including

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<sup>134</sup> Sigurdur G. Magnusson, "The Singularization of History: Social History and Microhistory with the Postmodern State of Knowledge" in *Journal of Social History* Vol. 36 No. 3, 2003, p. 709.

<sup>135</sup> Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory" in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, edited by Peter Burke, 97-119, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), p. 101.

non-New Zealand Lascars employed on the Company's twin screw steamship *Aparima* represent a small but enlightening example. A comprehensive history of *Aparima* from a seafarers' perspective does not exist. It was never documented at the time and there are now no survivors to tell the tale. Their stories are not typical of all foreign-going crews that worked New Zealand's trade routes during WWI but they do encompass many aspects of a seafarer's everyday experiences, the ever present danger of enemy attack and the impact of the War on the crew and their families and loved ones.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate, using one of New Zealand's most well known WWI merchant ships as a case study that an alternative history of the wartime seafarers is missing from New Zealand's WWI maritime historiography and that despite assumptions to the contrary it is possible to reconstruct this history.

## THE SHIP

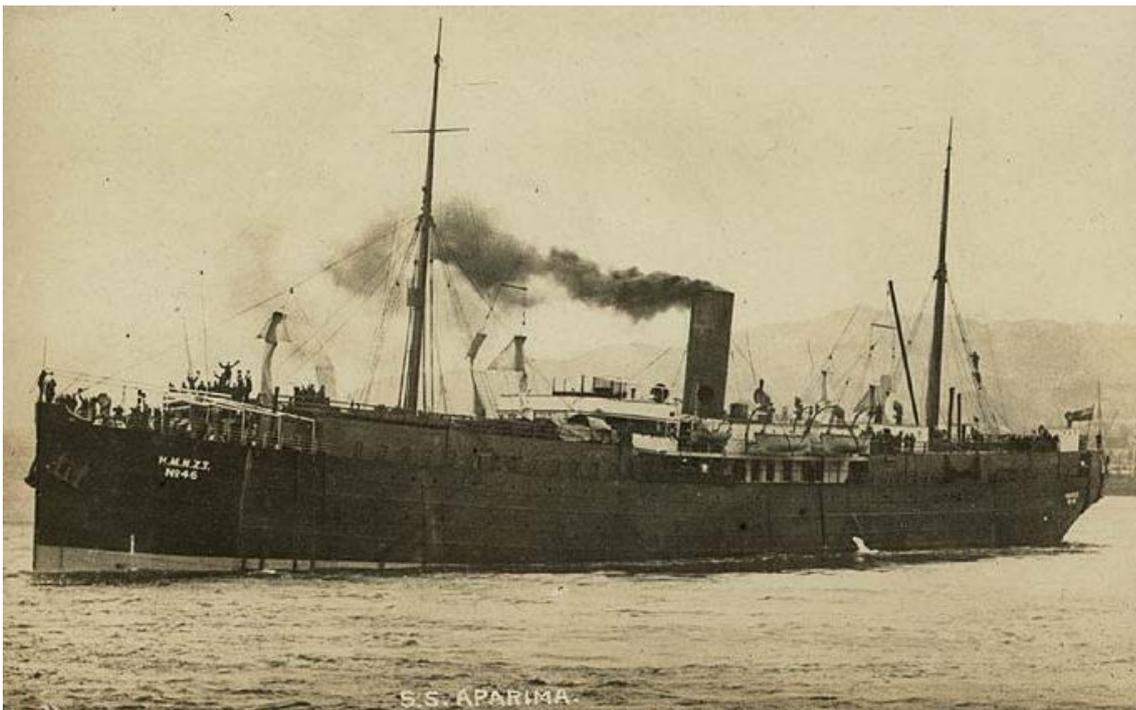


Illustration 5: ss *Aparima* as HMNZT 46  
(Private Collection)

The twin screw steamship *Aparima* was built in Scotland at Dumbarton shipyard of William Denny & Bros for the Union Steam Ship Company and was launched in 1902. The ship was designed specifically for the New Zealand - Calcutta trade and as a result was fitted with twin screws as a contingency against failure of a single screw on long voyages. Her dimensions were 430 feet long, 54 feet beam and 31.5 feet depth of

hold and had a gross register tonnage of 5,704 tons, deadweight capacity of 8,500 tons and cargo capacity of 488,770 cubic feet. She was powered by two triple expansion steam engines generating 284 nhp enabling a speed of 11 knots fully loaded. The ship was intended to have a crew of 71 and was fitted to carry a small number of passengers.<sup>136</sup>

## **P R E W A R**

During the war years, publication of shipping movements and related news was censored for fear that the details would fall into enemy hands and therefore jeopardise the safety of all shipping. Because of this, the operational news of individual ships and crews was not publically documented and therefore not available for historians to use as the basis of a history of the Mercantile Marine during this period. The pre-war stories are therefore valuable clues as to the baseline normality of the Mercantile Marine seafarers' working life and provide some context and background for the 'business as usual' dimension of their operation. The experiences of wartime were incremental to this baseline.

Until May 1907, the *Aparima* operated on the Calcutta - New Zealand trade route. She ran a timetabled service completing the round trip every three months. From New Zealand, the vessel typically sailed to Newcastle in Australia where it loaded coal, general cargo and horses for India. Her return voyage to New Zealand included ports in Singapore and Java, loading a variety of eastern goods such as tea, rice, jute corn sacks, wool packs and bone meal.<sup>137</sup>

The ship was well known to the New Zealand public as an economically critical source of imported goods. Coinciding with its quarterly arrival from Calcutta and Singapore, the commercial pages of local newspapers announced the availability of the ship's economically vital cargo of commodities.

The next important arrival is the *Aparima*, due on Friday, with a large shipment of Calcutta bone dust and general Eastern goods. The bone dust is badly wanted as there has been a heavy demand for the spring sowing and planting, and stocks have run very low. When the *Aparima* arrives almost

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<sup>136</sup> *Evening Post*, 7 March 1902, p. 6; *Press*, 8 April 1902, p. 6.

<sup>137</sup> *Evening Post*, 18 May 1907, p. 4.

all stocks will be in full supply. Corn sacks by the same vessel are wanted, and will command a full price.<sup>138</sup>

In the import market we have to report heavy arrivals, so that importing houses are now well supplied in most lines. Any scarcity in important lines will be met by the arrival of ... the *Aparima* from Calcutta and Singapore. In Eastern goods there is a slight easing in corn sacks, but as stocks are almost nil this will not take effect till arrival of the *Aparima*. The same vessel brings sago and tapioca to a bare market at lower prices.<sup>139</sup>

Following a downturn in the eastern trade during 1907, the *Aparima* was transferred to the Fiji sugar trade.<sup>140</sup> In May 1907 she landed a record cargo of raw sugar at Birkenhead wharf then returned to Fiji to collect a record 7,520 tons of sugar for shipment to Vancouver, followed by a cargo of wheat from Seattle for the port of Hamburg. These shipments resulted in the establishment of new regular trade routes to Canada and the west coast of North America. Long round the world voyages taking most of 12 months to complete became routine.

During peacetime years, the crew experienced numerous extraordinary challenges. On at least three occasions, spontaneous ignition of either the bunker coal or jute cargo required them to initially extinguish the fire, unload the burned material and then restore the ship to a working condition. The initial *Aparima* fire was on the high sea during her maiden voyage and challenged the crew for several days until the vessel was able to make port in Albany (Australia) and the cargo hold flooded to extinguish the blaze.<sup>141</sup> After completing the dirty task of pumping out the flooded hold, the crew were “employed in restoring the cargo removed from the hold and turning over the coal in the bunkers” before continuing the voyage to New Zealand.<sup>142</sup> Two years later in 1904, whilst loading in Calcutta, the cargo caught fire requiring the crew to again extinguish the fire then unload the smouldering cargo and make good the ship before reloading and sailing for New Zealand.<sup>143</sup> On a third occasion, whilst loading at Singapore, a fire broke out in a hold containing gunnies (a coarse heavy fabric made of jute or hemp, used in New Zealand for corn sacks) and bone meal. Once extinguished,

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<sup>138</sup> *NZ Herald*, 31 August 1904, p. 3.

<sup>139</sup> *NZ Herald*, 11 April 1906, p. 2.

<sup>140</sup> *Evening Post*, 18 May 1907, p. 4.

<sup>141</sup> *Evening Post*, 21 August 1902, p. 5.

<sup>142</sup> *Evening Post*, 22 September 1902, p. 5.

<sup>143</sup> *Wanganui Herald*, 30 November 1904, p. 5.

the now familiar task of unloading, restoring and reloading the cargo was completed by the crew who worked continuously throughout the night and following day.<sup>144</sup>

There were also a number of fatal accidents involving the *Aparima* crew during the pre-war years. On a journey between Newcastle and Calcutta, Charles Chamberlain, who was the ship's purser, was lost overboard and presumed drowned. In 1907, Chief Steward Henry Hawkey was helping to load stores at Auckland's Chelsea wharf when a cargo sling swung around and knocked him off the ship and onto a lighter 30 feet below, killing him almost instantly. In addition to these, numerous injurious accidents occurred that went unreported, save for the accident statistics published by the Marine Department and Department of Labour.<sup>145</sup>

The crew were also exposed to deadly anthrax. A Southland outbreak of the disease was conclusively linked to the shipment of 17,000 sacks of bone meal imported from Calcutta on *Aparima's* maiden voyage. The crew had clearly risked infection when initially loading the cargo at Calcutta, when they re-stowed it following the fire at Albany in August 1902, and finally when they unloaded the cargo in New Zealand.

These anecdotes illustrate a number of points regarding *Aparima's* crew. There was considerable commercial and general interest in the ship and its crew as evidenced by the number of newspaper stories published on the subject during the pre-war years. Even in peacetime, the ship and its crew were achieving remarkable milestones in terms of record cargoes, distances travelled and voyage durations. They were exposed to life threatening occupational hazards that claimed or impaired the lives of officers and crew. They risked their health and safety to fight fires in port and on the high seas and to handle disease contaminated cargoes.

Because *Aparima* was not initially engaged in either Trans-Tasman or Pacific Island routes, it was partially exempt from the earlier mentioned Preference Clause contained in the New Zealand maritime union's employment awards. Whilst the ship was considered New Zealand registered, the exception meant that the crew of the vessel were international rather than predominantly New Zealanders. Evidence that a lower proportion of *Aparima* crew members applied for the Mercantile Marine Medal in New Zealand compared to other vessels, emphasises this point (refer to Figure 7). There

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<sup>144</sup> *Evening Post*, 13 May 1907, p. 6.

<sup>145</sup> *NZ Herald*, 3 February 1904, p. 5; *NZ Herald*, 5 August 1907, p. 8.

were two other significant differences in *Aparima* manning, specifically the employment of Lascar crew and the inclusion of Apprentice Cadets on the Articles.

Trading with the Far East provided the Union Steam Ship Company with an opportunity to replace many of the white crew on *Aparima* with Lascars. The first public discussion of this replacement appeared in the newspapers of February 1905. "It is said that between 30 and 40 white sailors have been replaced by about 150 Indian coolies of various degrees of cheapness and inefficiency. Only the chief officers remain as white controllers and superintendents".<sup>146</sup> The initiative was criticised by the public and the maritime trade unions. The *Tuapeka Times* reflected the public's opinion, claiming the Company was disloyal to New Zealanders and denied white workers the opportunity to earn a living.

New Zealand at heart is as passionately devoted to the cause of a white Australasia as is the Commonwealth. It comes with a very bad grace from the Union Co., whose money and power have been derived from the patronage principally of the people of New Zealand, that it should adopt a policy whose ultimate tendency is to deny the chance of a seafaring career to the enterprising youth of the colonies. Are the white workers of Australia and New Zealand to be denied the chance of making a decent living upon it?<sup>147</sup>

In a letter to the editor of the *Evening Post*, Tom Young (who was then Wellington branch secretary of the Australasian Federated Seamen's Union), criticised the Company for its coolie employment, suggesting that the initiative was purely an economic decision.

The only argument adduced in support of carrying the coolie is that he is better able to stand the heat of the Indian climate than a white man, but in reply to that I would ask if he is better able to tolerate the cold of the Southern Hemisphere, especially that of New Zealand? I venture to predict that he is not, but beneath the surface will be found the true reason, and that is he is about 75 per cent cheaper in wages, works on seven days of the week and costs less to feed than a white man.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> *Tuapeka Times*, 15 February 1905, p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> *Tuapeka Times*, 15 February 1905, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> *Evening Post*, 21 September 1907, p. 11.

In response to the letter, the *Evening Post* reported that *Aparima* “is always manned by a Lascar crew” and stated that when the vessel was reassigned to other trades the Lascars were replaced.<sup>149</sup>

With the passing of time, the Lascar crew became accepted by the public. An article published in *The Press* in 1909 suggested that officers of *Aparima* considered the Lascar crew members to be “steady and reliable”. That article then proceeded to outline Lascar pay and shipboard living conditions.

To the white man’s mind the pay of the Lascar is miserably poor, but the Lascars themselves esteem themselves well paid. The pay of the deck hands ranges according to their rank from 28 to 12 rupees per month, that of the firemen and engine room hands from 32 to 12 rupees per month. The cooks and higher grades of stewards receive from 25 to 35 rupees, and the lower grades range down to 12 rupees per month, while a few of the boys receive only 8 annas (eight pence) per month! The rupee is worth one shilling and four pence, so that no man’s pay is higher than £2 6s 8d per month.

The Lascars live on board in strict conformity to roles of their respective religions, and special provision is made by the Company for their accommodation. They do all their own cooking, and live sheep are carried on board to provide their meat supply.<sup>150</sup>

General acceptance of the Lascars by the maritime unions resulted in them becoming a permanent feature of *Aparima*’s complement. When the ship was deployed on Trans-Tasman or Island routes, the Lascars would be replaced by members of New Zealand unions. On voyages to Fiji for instance, the Lascars remained on the ship as paid passengers and the crewing was taken over by New Zealand union members. Despite the general acceptance, antagonism remained between the white and lascar crew members and sporadic comments continued to appear in the press.<sup>151</sup>

In 1908, the Union Steam Ship Company established an apprenticeship cadet programme intended to provide boys with the training and experience necessary to become junior deck officers. Applicants for training were required to be British subjects of European race with a preference for those born in New Zealand, although boys from elsewhere, including Australia and Canada were sometimes selected. The four year

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<sup>149</sup> *Evening Post*, 24 September 1907, p. 6.

<sup>150</sup> *Press*, 13 January 1909, p. 3.

<sup>151</sup> *Auckland Star*, 1 January 1910, p. 8; *NZ Truth*, 15 January 1910, p. 4; *Auckland Star*, 20 April 1910, p. 6; *Auckland Star*, 22 April 1910, p. 2; *NZ Herald*, 13 September 1910, p. 7; *Dominion*, 19 December 1912, p. 4.

training programme included seamanship, navigation, morse signalling, sail making, wire splicing and gear rigging as well as physical drill, rowing and swimming.

In 1913 the Union Steam Ship Company replaced *Dartford* with *Aparima* as its training ship. The ship was selected by the Company because it was engaged in overseas trade and was sufficiently large to accommodate the boys without disrupting the normal operation of the vessel. The steerage passenger accommodation was converted into a dining room, school room and accommodation was fitted either side of the No. 4 cargo hatch each providing room for 18 cadets.<sup>152</sup>



Illustration 6: ss *Aparima* Cadets at Study (1914)<sup>153</sup>

Ernest Sutherland was one of many boys who were selected for a position as an Apprenticed Cadet on *Aparima*. He was the son of John Sutherland, who owned a coopering and general woodworking business in Christchurch. Ernest was born on 5 January 1897 in Christchurch and was accepted for his cadetship on 20 November 1914 making him more than 17 years old and therefore outside of the normal acceptance age range. As the applications at that time were “not too numerous”, and “three other

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<sup>152</sup> Rae McGregor, 2009, pp. 11-12; *Press*, 20 December 1912, p. 8; *Auckland Star*, 3 January 1913, p. 3; *Press*, 11 January 1913, p. 13; *Dominion*, 13 January 1913, p. 4; McGregor, 2009, p. 16.

McGregor suggests that the accommodation was located either side of No 5 Hatch (hold) however the ship had only 4 holds, two forward and two aft. It is accepted from multiple accounts that the cadets' quarters were in the stern and therefore would be alongside the aft-most hold which was No 4.

<sup>153</sup> Swanage Dive Holidays, s.s. *Aparima* Cadets at Study 1914, accessed on 20 July 2013, <http://www.kyarra.com/Images/Wrecks/Aparima/image013.jpg>; McGregor, 2009, p. 17.

candidates failed to pass eyesight examinations”, vacancies remained enabling the Company to “stretch a point in his case”. Ernest’s application was supported by his high school headmaster, his commercial teacher and neighbour, his local church minister and a Justice of the Peace who had “known his people for many years and could testify as to his upbringing”. There is no evidence in the cadets’ personal files of an interview selection process. Acceptance for the scheme appears to have been subject only to good references, a clean bill of health, good eyesight and the ability to pay the premium charged by the Company for training.<sup>154</sup>



*Illustration 7: Cadet Ernest Sutherland*  
(Clifford’s Studio (1917), Author’s Collection)

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Mr Sutherland agreed to pay Ernest’s £120 premium in three annual instalments of £50, £40 then £30 in advance as was the norm. There was no fee in the fourth year. The year-on-year reducing fee reflected the increased efficiency that cadets provided to the operation of the ship through the seaman’s duties that they were assigned. At the end of the four years, the Company refunded £12 as a reward for completing the course. This was the only form of remuneration provided to Ernest and the other cadets during their four year indenture. Ernest’s parents were also required to provide a regulation

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<sup>154</sup> Christchurch Branch Manager USSCo to D.A. Aitken, 25 November 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:10, WCA; C.H. Hughes to Christchurch Branch Manager USSCo, 31 December 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:10, WCA; A.S. Bruce, “Letter of Reference for Ernest Sutherland”, 17 November 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:10, WCA; A.F. Burchell, “Letter of Reference for Ernest Sutherland”, 19 November 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:10, WCA; G.J. Park, “Letter of Reference for Ernest Sutherland”, 17 November 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:10, WCA; J.W. Caughley, “Letter of Reference for Ernest Sutherland”, 18 November 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:10, WCA.

uniform, a complete kit specified by the Company and pocket money that was dispensed by the Captain. The cost of a cadet's indenture represented a significant investment for the parents. In addition to the premium, the estimated cost of the uniform and full kit was nearly £34 and pocket money of approximately 10/- per week covered incidental costs. By comparison, the wages of a cooper employed by Mr Sutherland was approximately 10/- per week (that is £26 per annum) so affordability of a cadetship was limited to those better off.<sup>155</sup>

Sutherland joined the ship on 13 February 1915 with three other lads who were also commencing their training. One of these, Leon Massey, was a top achieving apprentice on the New Zealand Government training ship *Amokura* and had been offered a free cadetship under a scheme announced by the Company in 1913. Massey was from a Gisborne family of 8 children. His parents did not have the means to pay for his training, so the scholarship provided a career opportunity that would have not otherwise been possible.

In addition to their education in maritime related subjects, the cadets were required to accumulate four years sea service. To achieve this, the Company dispensed with the Lascar deck hands and allocated their work to the cadets. The boys were divided into three watches. "One watch attends school every morning and a second every afternoon, the routine being changed weekly, so that one watch is standing off school in alternate weeks." Their seaman duties included chipping rust and repainting, maintaining the general cleanliness of the deck, knot tying, loading, unloading and stowage of cargo and the launching, navigating and retrieving of lifeboats. Despite these being normal seamen responsibilities, they did not receive any pay for this work, with wage savings being offset against the overall cost of the training scheme.<sup>156</sup>

## REQUISITIONED AS A TROOPSHIP

WWI introduced additional occupational issues and risks over and above those experienced by merchant seafarers during peacetime. The wartime events of *Aparima*

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<sup>155</sup> USSCo, "Conditions attaching to applicants for position of Apprenticed Cadet on Board USSCo's Training Ships", December 1912, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA; USSCo, "Conditions attaching to applicants for position of Apprenticed Cadet on Board USSCo's Training Ships", 20 November 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:10, WCA; Statistics N.Z., "Range of Average Rates of Wages in each Provincial District of New Zealand during the Year 1914" in *The New Zealand Official Yearbook 1915*, accessed 28 December 2013. [http://www3.stats.govt.nz/New\\_Zealand\\_Official\\_Yearbooks/1915/NZOYB\\_1915.html#idsect1\\_1\\_269349](http://www3.stats.govt.nz/New_Zealand_Official_Yearbooks/1915/NZOYB_1915.html#idsect1_1_269349).

<sup>156</sup> *Press*, 11 September 1913, p. 2.

during its charter to the New Zealand Government are illustrative of what was experienced by New Zealand merchant seafarers generally, but not recalled in the historiography of the time. Often there were no survivors or the recorded history in the form of ship's logs and crew diaries went to the bottom along with the unfortunate seafarers. Some stories have survived and these exist as family anecdotes, published recollections in newspapers and entombed in shipping company correspondence archives.

*Aparima's* first wireless was installed in 1913 by Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Limited, more commonly known as AWA. Not only did AWA provide and install the 1½ kilowatt powered Marconi transmitter, it also provided a qualified wireless operator, who was articulated on the ship's crew but employed by AWA under a turnkey service agreement with the Company. Whilst at sea, the wireless operator reported directly to the ship's master and was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the equipment. The initial transmitter did not remain on board for long.<sup>157</sup>

On the outbreak of WWI, *Aparima* was sailing between Calcutta and Singapore. She departed Calcutta on 29 July 1914 and reached Singapore by midnight on 6 August 1914 where she was boarded by a harbour pilot who informed the master, Captain James Edward MacDonald, of the news. In the days that followed, and while the ship was loading further cargo for New Zealand, she was boarded by a representative of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company who removed the wireless for use on shore. The wireless operator was also ordered to leave the ship to take charge of the shore station. Once loaded, the vessel continued its voyage to New Zealand, but without its radio defence.<sup>158</sup>

On arrival back in New Zealand, *Aparima* was taken over by the New Zealand Government at Wellington on 15 January 1915 under a charter arrangement, for use as a troopship. Because the ship was built for cargo with only limited passenger accommodation, a refit was required to accommodate hundreds of troops and their horses on deck and in part of the cargo hold space. Much of the cargo space was

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<sup>157</sup> L.L. Meredith of AWA Sydney to D.A. Aitken, 1 May 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>158</sup> *NZ Herald*, 4 September 1914, p. 7.

retained though as this was used to carry munitions and supplies for the troops and to transport commercial cargo on the return journey to New Zealand.<sup>159</sup>

The terms of the government charter provided for the ship to be managed by the Company using its own employed and waged crew. Apart from the usual turnover of officers and ratings, the core deck officers and engineers remained with the ship as did the cadets who continued their training and deck duties. Contractually, the Company continued to manage the entire operation of the ship under the direction of the Wellington based Military Director of Movements and Quartering.

All costs associated with the operation of the ship were incurred by the Company but refunded by the New Zealand Government War Expenses under the terms of the charter. These costs included wages and victualling for the crew, bunker coal and troop accommodation fit out, and subsequent make good of the vessel at the end of the charter. The costs varied depending on availability and cost of supply however crewing levels were fixed at the commencement of the charter and the wages controlled by standard pay rates determined by the Arbitration Act and enshrined in the union awards and Articles of Agreement. There were some variations to the wage bill and these became a matter of conjecture between the Company and the Government in later years. The costs associated with cadets and the tutor were not covered by the charter except where some portion of their time was spent in the operation of the ship, for example when the tutor was used as an extra deck officer or the cadets were used as replacement seamen. The army remained responsible for all direct costs associated with the troops and horses being transported.

The departure of *Aparima* from New Zealand on 14 February 1915 as troopship *HMNZT 19* received little publicity and was not specifically mentioned in the shipping news of the leading newspapers as had previously been the case.<sup>160</sup> In a related article concerning the interest in the Union Steam Ship Company cadetship programme, passing mention was made that *Aparima* “left New Zealand last week on one of her periodical trips” but no mention that the destination was Port Suez, not Calcutta, that

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<sup>159</sup> USSCo, “*Aparima* - First Voyage”, report, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:205, WCA.

<sup>160</sup> When deployed as troopships, the identity of the vessels was protected by renaming them after the troopship voyage number. The New Zealand troopships were numbered from 1 through 111 for the north bound voyages and prefixed HMNZT. South bound voyages tended to retain the north bound name except for those voyages that commenced in the northern hemisphere, typically British ships. *Aparima* therefore had six troopship names for each of its return voyages commencing in New Zealand (namely *HMNZT 19*, *HMNZT 26*, *HMNZT 32*, *HMNZT 46*, *HMNZT 61* and *HMNZT 76*).

her cargo included 482 troops and 490 military horses destined for war and that the crew were now operating under a wartime charter.

Her return to New Zealand on 24 May 1915 occurred unannounced apart from a mention that her normal Master, Captain MacDonald, “was also a passenger [on the Government steamer *Tutanekai*] from the south, having come to Wellington to regain his vessel”.<sup>161</sup> Shipping movements such as departure and arrivals occupied at least a column of every major daily newspaper such was the importance of the news to the local economy. That *Aparima*’s departure and arrival was not published, as previously done, reflects the desire not to publicise military movements for the possible benefit of the enemy.

Captain MacDonald summarised the events of note relating to *Aparima*’s second troopship voyage as *HMNZT 26* in a two page typed letter to the General Manager of the Union Steam Ship Company on 15 September 1915, when the ship arrived at Port Chalmers after a round trip to Suez via Albany, Colombo and Madras. The majority of matters covered in MacDonald’s letter related to the mundane associated with the voyage such as weather, seas encountered, coal quality and consumption, and the loading and unloading of cargo. The remainder of his letter related to the then current inadequacies of the ship as a troopship. He reported that “the general health of the ship has not been good; the hospitals have been full to overflowing all the time. Measles were prevalent the whole way up, both among troops and ship’s Company”. He also reported that one of the troops onboard, Private John Joseph Merrick, died of meningitis during the trip.

It wasn’t only the humans that suffered. 574 horses were also being transported to Suez for use in the Sinai and Palestine campaign. A total of 74 perished during the voyage due to poor ventilation, especially during the bad weather when the hatches had to be closed. They also suffered from the heat, “having been sent away unclipped” and still carrying their winter coats when they departed in June 1915. MacDonald recommended to the Company that a number of modifications be made to the accommodation to address these issues, to make the quarters and hospital watertight and ensure that the new deck build in No 1 hold for the horses was more secure from

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<sup>161</sup> *Press*, 24 February 1915, p. 10; *Dominion*, 20 May 1915, p. 8.

moving in heavy seas. Both the troops and crew suffered the same inadequate living conditions and resultant health problems.<sup>162</sup>

Sergeant John Wilson of the New Zealand Field Engineers was one of the 400 troops aboard *HMZNT 26*. His description of the voyage from New Zealand to Suez reinforced the observations raised by MacDonald in his report. He implied that the ship had embarked with sick soldiers in Wellington and that a fellow Sergeant, Dave Mansfield, was hospitalised almost from the outset of the trip until 24 June. Wilson's description of the condition of the artillery horses painted a harrowing experience for the animals and their attendants. "Poor horses had a bad time with the rough weather, many developed strangles, and on the 27th we dropped our 14th horse overboard". After leaving Albany bound for Colombo, Wilson reported that the troops moved all of the horses "from the lower tween decks to tween deck and the main deck", most likely to address the poor ventilation and stability issues that MacDonald referred to in his report. Wilson observed it was "very sad to see the poor things suffering - most of the hair coming off their faces - we had become quite attached to them". The remaining horses were unloaded at Madras and "once ashore they revelled and rolled in the dust".

Wilson was very critical of the ship's officers.

We lost a total of 80 horses since leaving Wellington; it was a hell ship with some very poor officers. For fresh water to drink, you had to pay the purser 3d a glass, none to wash or bath with only salt water, and they tried to make us all parade naked past the poop deck while an officer played a hose on us. I set a bad example by refusing point blank to do so.<sup>163</sup>

The troops of the Fifth Reinforcement New Zealand Expeditionary Force that were carried on *HMNZT 26* published a souvenir troopship magazine. The magazine, which was subject to military censorship, contained articles of interest to the troops and recalled shipboard events but no mention of the difficult conditions that the troops and their horses endured. The magazine was written by the troops for the troops and their families back home, and there was little mention of the ship's Company apart from the senior officers.

We inclined to suspect Captain MacDonald of facetiousness in telling us of what to do and what not to do in Colombo; has he forgotten Albany? In any case, we thank him for stirring our hopes. Chief Officer Knowles is an

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<sup>162</sup> J.E. MacDonald to D.A. Aitken, 15 September 1915, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:205, WCA.

<sup>163</sup> John Wilson, "Diary of Gallipoli by Sgt. J. Wilson N.Z. Engineers: 1915", 1915, MS2007/28, AWMM.

elocutionist of the very best ‘that reminds me’ species. As a rule we can’t tolerate elocution, but in this instance we pretended that Chief Officer Knowles was merely reciting in an extra special manner.<sup>164</sup>

The wireless officer Mr Anton Frederick Vipian, who was a member of the ship’s Company, was the subject of a comedic letter to the editor of *The Oily Rag*. The letter claimed he was “very much interested in the latest wireless wonder, the stoomer wireless apparatus”.

It seems that the reign of the Marconi apparatus ... is drawing rapidly to a close being completely put in the shade by this wonderful invention - hence the lack of press news from our now out-of-date apparatus.<sup>165</sup>

In response to the letter, the editor claimed “that the rival system of telegraphy is infinitely more efficient than the ordinary electric sort. For one thing it needs no instruments, and apart from a special course of work, and dieting, its operators need no particular training”.<sup>166</sup>

During the voyage, Captain MacDonald had to deal with an attack by a Goanese steward on the ship’s butler. According to the master, the steward “entered the butler’s room a few nights ago at 2 am apparently to steal as [sic] when the butler woke up he was rummaging in one of the drawers. He turned on the butler with a carving knife hacking him severely”. MacDonald locked up the suspect until he could be dealt with by the New Zealand Police. A lesser charge of common assault was subsequently entered by the magistrate because *Aparima* was only remaining in New Zealand waters for a short time. The steward was found guilty, “a sentence of one month’s imprisonment was imposed and the accused ordered to be placed on his vessel before it leaves New Zealand”.<sup>167</sup>

Approximately one month after its arrival back in New Zealand, *Aparima* departed Port Chalmers on 21 September 1915 for yet another round trip to Port Suez, this time as *HMNZT 32*. MacDonald’s recommendation regarding a refit of the ship’s accommodation was unlikely to have been actioned, as the short time in New Zealand would have been taken up with unloading the phosphate cargo brought back from Safaga Island and making good the ship for its next voyage. The difference between this

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<sup>164</sup> *The Oily Rag: Just Another Transport Production*, 1915, p. 3.

<sup>165</sup> *The Oily Rag: Just Another Transport Production*, 1915, p. 6.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* Within the context of the letter and reply, Stoomer suggests a meaning of hot air and gossip.

<sup>167</sup> J.E MacDonald to D.A. Aitken, 15 September 1915, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:205, WCA; *Otago Daily Times*, 20 September 1915, p. 4; *Dominion*, 27 September 1915, p. 14.

and the previous voyage was that no horses were carried however the number of troops being transported more than doubled to 863. Whilst the experiences with horses on the previous voyage may have dissuaded the authorities from taking horses on this ship, it is more likely that the impracticality of using horses at the eventual destination of Gallipoli Peninsula was the real motivation.

From all accounts, the voyage was uneventful and without the challenges of the previous trip. The editor of the troopship magazine painted an idyllic voyage. The contrasts between this and the previous trip appear extreme, blessed this time no doubt by the late spring departure.

Since those rolling days we have pressed forward smoothly over a blue and glorious ocean, and have generally revelled in that exuberant health for which for which the Seventh [Reinforcement] is already remarkable. These pages claim to be the representative of a thoroughly cheerful voyage, of a long but enjoyable journey under the guidance of a much appreciated Ship Master and most capable Officers.<sup>168</sup>

Unlike the departure, the arrival of *Aparima* back to New Zealand on 1 January 1916 was announced in the newspapers, including the *Otago Daily Times*.

H.M.N.Z. Troopship No. 32, more readily recognised by the name of *Aparima*, arrived at Port Chalmers on New Year's morning, direct from Suez. The vessel had a swift and uneventful passage, favoured by fine weather all the way, with the result that she reached her destination a week earlier than was expected.<sup>169</sup>

Upon arrival back at Port Chalmers, *Aparima* entered dry dock for survey and maintenance including cleaning and painting the hull. This provided time for the crew to have a break away from the ship to spend time with families ashore. The maintenance work was undertaken by workers employed by the Union Steam Ship Company at the port, including John Lawrie.

Lawrie was a widower aged 58 with a family of five daughters, the youngest being 15 years old. On Friday 15 January he was painting *Aparima* from scaffolding erected alongside the side in the dock. It was reaching the end of the working day and Lawrie was eager to get the section of work completed and get home to his family. Whilst standing on the scaffolding he reached out towards the area of the ship to be painted

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<sup>168</sup> *The Dry Rations, or The Aparima Apparition: with which is incorporated the Waikanae Wash - Out and The Tauherenikau Trumpeter: unofficial organ of the 7th Rfts, Transport No. 32, 1915, p. 1.*

<sup>169</sup> *Otago Daily Times*, 3 January 1916, p. 4.

and in doing so leant against the ship. At the same time the planks moved outwards from the ship and eventually he lost his footing falling about 27 feet to the bottom on the dock. He received serious head injuries and died the following morning in Dunedin Hospital.

A coronial hearing found that the planking was not properly secured, but stopped short of deciding on negligence by the Company in not ensuring that the rigging was built in a secure manner. Whether the rigging was erected in haste or Lawrie was rushing to complete the painting, and that either action was motivated by pressure to get *Aparima* turned around quickly because of the shortage of shipping, is speculative but possible. If this were the case, Lawrie may well have been an innocent war casualty. Had he been a rating in the Royal Navy under similar circumstances, he would have been given a war grave and remembered amongst New Zealand's war dead. Instead he shares an unmarked family plot with his late wife and late parents in Northern Cemetery, Dunedin.<sup>170</sup>

The ship departed Port Chalmers on 25 January 1916 as *HMNZT 46*, but not before one of *Aparima*'s Lascar crew, Abdul Aziz, was arrested and charged with stealing £5 from a local fisherman who had earlier agreed to purchase a pair of boots from him. A convoluted series of circumstantial evidence, but no direct proof, was sufficient for the magistrate to find Aziz guilty and he was sentenced to four months jail with hard labour. The court also directed that cash found on Aziz when he arrested should be "refunded" to the fisherman.

On leaving Port Chalmers, *Aparima* called first at Bluff to load chaff and oats for the 665 horses that were being transported to Suez for the Sinai and Palestine campaign, along with 194 soldiers of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles. Before leaving New Zealand, *Aparima* called at Wellington. Soon after departing for Wellington, it was discovered that one of the recently apprenticed cadets, Arthur Roi Waller aged 15, had died of head injuries as the result of being struck on the head by wire tug hawser. The mishap was only apparent after he was discovered missing. Initially it was thought that he had gone ashore and missed his passage however he was subsequently located during a complete search of the ship. On further investigation, it was discovered that the accident happened as the ship was leaving port and Waller was looking out of a

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<sup>170</sup> *Otago Daily Times*, 18 January 1916, p. 2; Dunedin City Council, "Cemeteries Search" accessed 7 August 2013. [http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/facilities/cemeteries/cemeteries\\_search](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/facilities/cemeteries/cemeteries_search)

porthole. Originally it was thought that the casualty was Ernest Sutherland and the death was reported as such by MacDonald.<sup>171</sup>

Just four days out from Port Chalmers on the homeward leg, Allan Campbell who was a quartermaster on *Aparima*, died of cardiovascular disease aged 45. Like a lot of New Zealand based seafarers, Campbell was born in Scotland and migrated to New Zealand as a young man. His life was the sea. He was single and had no family in New Zealand, his closest relative being a cousin in Scotland. Campbell lived at the George Hotel which was a public house in Port Chalmers that also provided lodgings when not at sea. At the coronial hearing, a fellow seafarer described him as a steady man and a very good shipmate. He was buried in Port Chalmers cemetery on 28 July 1916, the day the ship arrived in port, and his grave has remained unmarked.

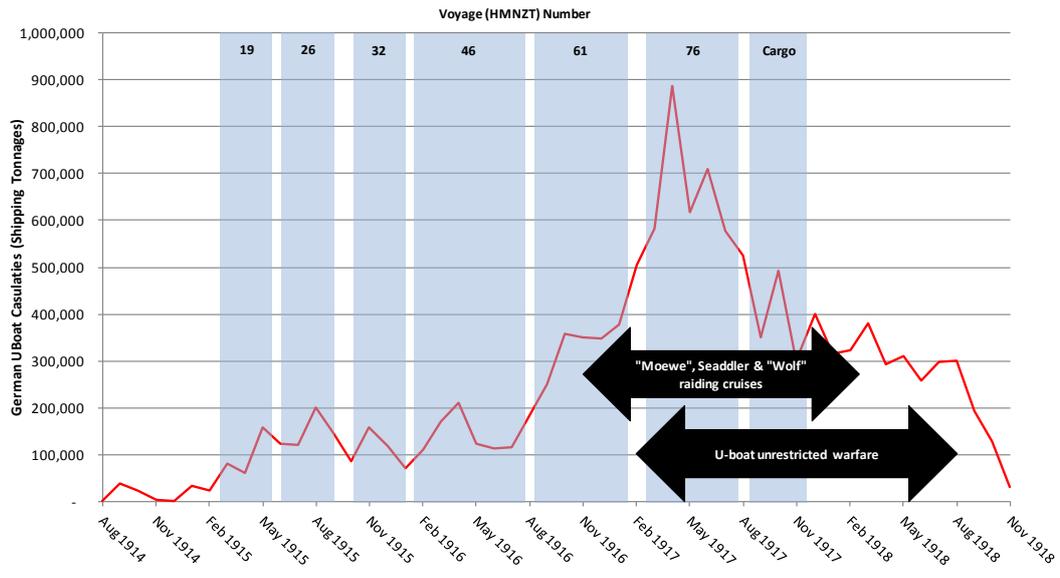
Up until *HMNZT 61*, the threat of enemy action against *Aparima* had been minimal however this changed dramatically as the result of the German decision in February 1917 to commence unrestricted submarine warfare against Allied shipping. In addition to this U-boat activity, Germany also operated three commerce raiders in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans during the latter part of 1916 through to the end of February 1918. These provided additional danger to foreign-going New Zealand shipping. The chart below illustrates the total Allied shipping tonnages that were lost as the result of U-boat actions alone, with a peak of 886,000 tons sunk in April 1917. In addition to this number, a further 128,000 tons were either damaged or taken prize during this month. A further 5-10% gross tonnage was lost to mines during the same month and the number of British seafarer lives lost exceeded 1,125. During the rest of 1917, casualties remained within 40-50% of this casualty level.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> *Evening Post*, 24 February 1916, p. 8; *Colonist*, 26 February 1916, p. 4; *North Otago Times*, 29 February 1916, p. 4.

<sup>172</sup> HMSO, *British Vessels Lost at Sea*, pp. 162-163.

Figure 12: German U-boat and Merchant Raider activity coinciding with *Aparima's* wartime voyages<sup>173</sup>



The Union Steam Ship Company was well aware of the increased danger that its vessels and crew faced. On 5 August 1916, prior to the departure of *HMNZT 61* and in consultation with the New Zealand Government, the Company wrote a circular letter to the parents and guardians of the apprentice cadets on *Aparima*. It was headed confidential and contained in a Company wax sealed envelope marked ‘secret’. It explained that the usual destination (Port Suez) was likely to change; however as it was a state secret they were unable to provide further details. The Government granted the Company permission to provide the parents with this information and gave them the option of withdrawing their sons from the ship.

Approve advising parents terminus is likely to be changed and giving them the option of withdrawing the boys, at the same time indicating to them that the risk is not serious, but to regard information as confidential and destroy any written communication they may receive on the subject.<sup>174</sup>

With some exceptions, parents chose not to withdraw their boys from the ship. It was reported in the newspaper of the time that about sixteen apprentices were transferred from *Aparima* to the Union Steam Ship Company’s steamer *Waikawa* which had been fitted out with special accommodation.<sup>175</sup> Of the remaining boys, the general position taken by the parents and boys was that they were doing their duty and withdrawing would let their fellow shipmates down. In reply to the letter, Mrs Bevan

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> A.W. Wheeler, 5 August 1916, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:207B, WCA.

<sup>175</sup> *Evening Post*, 5 September 1916, p. 6.

deferred the decision to her son, Cadet Thomas Ewart Bevan. “I do not wish to withdraw my son from *Aparima* but think it would be the right thing to do to put the question to Ewart himself - whatever his answer is will be mine also”. In his follow up letter, Tom replied that “since my Mother has no objection to my going with the ship, I have no objection. So hoping I have made it quite clear”.<sup>176</sup>

A similar decision to allow their son to remain with *Aparima* subsequently resulted in considerable family disharmony. The father of Cadet Sydney Allison Newton had tried to convince his son to transfer to another ship but had conceded to the son’s wishes, without the knowledge of the boy’s mother.

On several occasions I tried my best to induce my boy to transfer into some other boat, but he always resolutely refused to entertain the idea, stating that he would stick to his ship, and that he would never be called a ‘Shirker’, as he had his duty to perform and he intended doing it at all costs.<sup>177</sup>

In a subsequent internal letter, the Union Steam Ship Company Melbourne Branch Manager suggested to Mr David Aitken (General Manager, Union Steam Ship Company) that “it appears that the boy was sent to sea without his mother’s consent, and she is now blaming Mr Newton for letting him go”.

The reference to “shirker” in Newton’s letter is indicative of a widespread sentiment that existed in New Zealand and Australia towards those who avoided their obligation to the war effort. In an address to the annual conference of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, a captain to the New Zealand Forces at Gallipoli “strongly condemned those who were hanging back from enlisting”. He said that “all New Zealand was strongly obliged, and the sooner their obligations were carried out the better, to seriously fight the shirker in the country”.<sup>178</sup> In an article on conscientious objectors, the *Free Lance* as usual didn’t mince its words.

The fact is that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the conscientious objector is a dodger, a shirker, a cowardly ‘rotter’ who would cheerfully see the gallant fellows who go to the front spill every drop of their good blood so

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<sup>176</sup> Mrs Bevan to A.W. Wheeler, 8 August 1916, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:5, WCA; T.E Bevan to A.W. Wheeler, 11 August 1916, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:5, WCA.

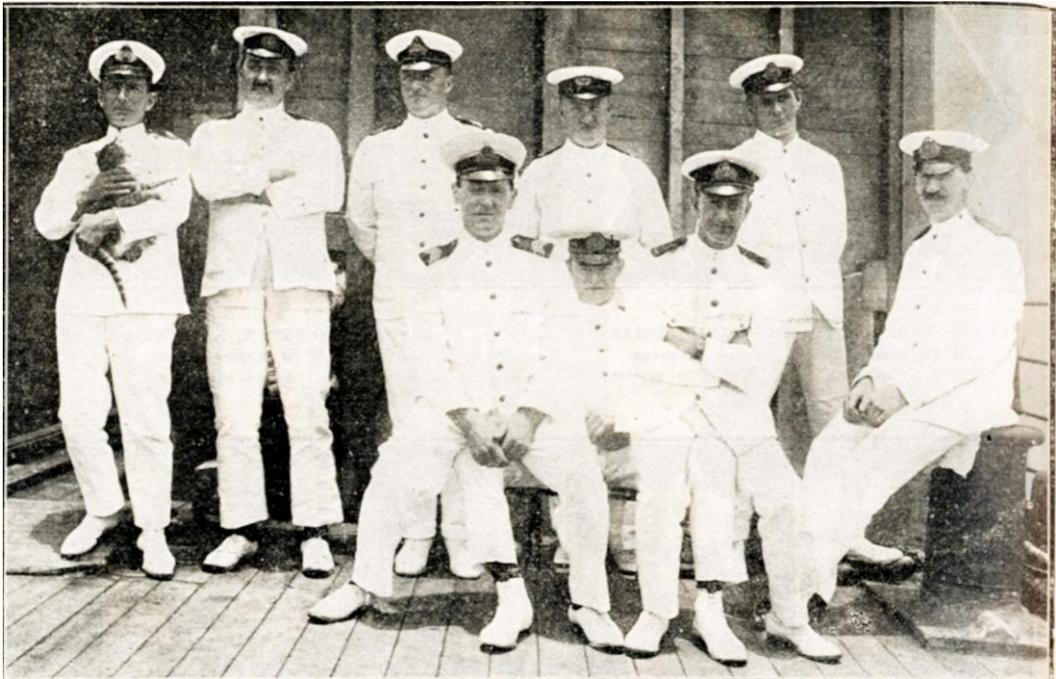
Mrs Bevan called her son ‘Ewart’ but was addressed as Tom or Tommy as he was named after his father Thomas.

<sup>177</sup> J.A. Newton to D.A. Aitken, 27 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; C.H. Hughes to D.A. Aitken, 11 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>178</sup> *Auckland Star*, 24 February 1916, p. 8.

long as they, the shirkers and dodgers, can only sneak out of the duty to which feelings of true patriotism and loyalty should direct them.<sup>179</sup>

From these two quotations, and numerous other reported examples, the Bevan and Newton comments demonstrate two important factors pertinent to positioning employment in the Mercantile Marine during WWI. Firstly there was a strong community belief that all men of military service age had an obligation to put on the uniform and serve the country in war and failing to do so was “shirking” obligation. Secondly, and by implication, Bevan and Newton believed that service in the Mercantile Marine was an execution of their obligation.



*Illustration 8: Officers of ss Aparima*

*From left to right those standing are: George McKenzie (2nd Officer) with the ship's cat, Thomas Rogerson (Chief Engineer), Harry Daniel (Chief Officer), James Mackie (Chief Steward), Norman Fleming (5th Engineer).  
Sitting Front Row: Arthur Dalglish (Tutor), William Hirst (2nd Engineer), Anton Vipan (Wireless Operator),  
Maurine Mayo (7th Engineer)*

*(Auckland Weekly News, 13 December 1917, p. 42.)*

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*Aparima* departed Wellington harbour on 20 August 1916 as *HMNZT 61* under the command of Captain MacDonald. His senior officers were Chief Officer Harry Daniel, Chief Engineer Thomas Rogerson and Chief Steward James Mackie. The tutor in charge of the cadets was Arthur Dalglish. As foretold in the letter to parents, the destination was Plymouth, rather than Port Suez, as the focus of the war with Germany

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<sup>179</sup> *Free Lance*, 28 July 1916, p. 6.

was Western Europe rather than the Ottoman Empire. The voyage to Plymouth transported the 949 troops of the 16 Reinforcement and was largely uneventful.<sup>180</sup>

The U-boat campaign launched by Germany against Allied merchant shipping necessitated the British Admiralty to adopt a widespread policy of defensively arming merchant shipping. These defended ships were called Defensively Armed Merchant Ships or DAMS. *Aparima* was therefore fitted with a 4.7 inch calibre gun mounted on the stern of the ship. The Admiralty also provided two RNR gunners who formed part of the ship's complement and were responsible for operating the gun under the command of the ship's master. A photograph provided by the grandson of a cadet aboard *Aparima* shows the gun and the two RNR gunners. It is marked "shipped in Dakar, West Africa" suggesting that the armament was fitted at Dakar enroute to Plymouth on 13 October 1916 during a three day stopover.<sup>181</sup>

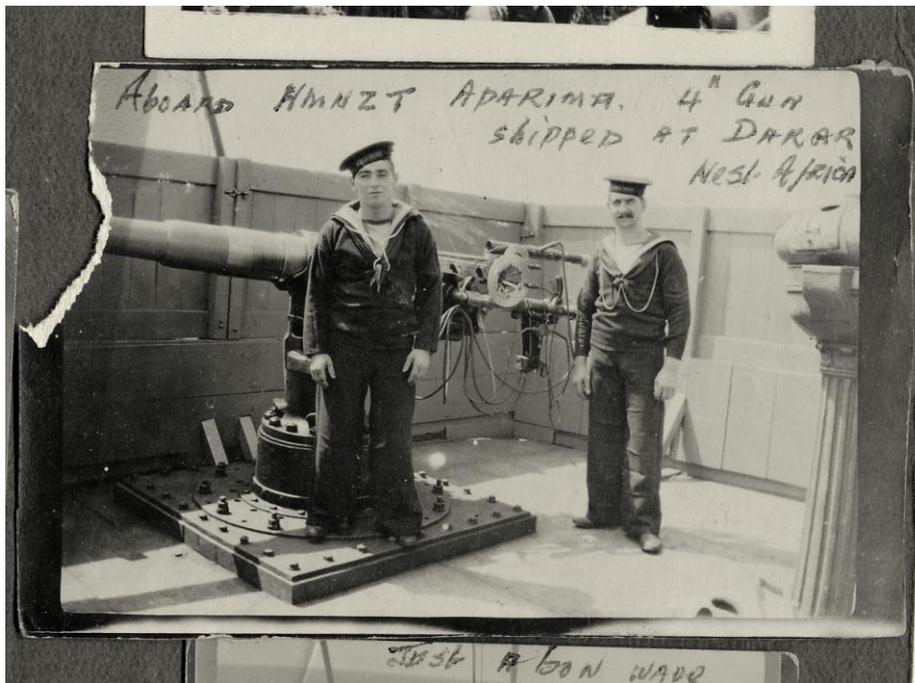


Illustration 9: Aboard HMNZT *Aparima*. 4inch Gun shipped at Dakar, West Africa  
(William H. Cadwallader, October 1916, Nils Enrum Collection. Reproduced by permission of right's holder.)

Because there was a shortage of guns, a limited supply was initially sent to the ports of Gibraltar, Port Said and Dakar, for mounting on inward voyages to the United Kingdom. They were recycled on the outward voyage. The *Aparima* gun was therefore

<sup>180</sup> *The Dominion Afloat, or Soldierly Spirit: with which is corrupted, Hot Water, The Six o'clock Aim, The Porirua Perpetrator and The Troopship Triad: The non-officious organ of 16th N.Z. Reinforcement Transport 61*, 1916, p. 10.

<sup>181</sup> William H Cadwallader, *Aboard HMNZT Aparima. 4in. Gun shipped at Dakar, West Africa*, photograph, (October 1916), Nils Enrum Collection; USSCo, "HMT *Aparima*, Summary of Voyage Distances and Speeds", memorandum, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:205, WCA.

not a permanent fixture on the ship other than when entering and leaving the U.K.<sup>182</sup> A more important reason for removing the gun was that merchant ships were not naval vessels and carrying a gun even for defensive purposes would classify them as naval, precluding entry to neutral ports as the result.

Explicit instructions on the deployment of the gun were issued to the masters of armed ships, including *Aparima*. The gun was for purely defensive purposes and the instructions left little doubt of this. The right to exercise self defence was the responsibility of the master of *Aparima* who was responsible for ordering the opening and ceasing of gun fire. In the case of being attacked, *Aparima* was required to display the British colours prior to opening defensive fire, and if it was overcome by the enemy forcing it to surrender, the gun was no longer to be used in defence. The shells used were not permitted to comprise expanding or explosive projectiles.<sup>183</sup>

Captain MacDonald had earlier reported to the Company that the general health of the ship was not good. Clearly, the living and working conditions from the outset were difficult, bordering on dangerous. Whilst remedial work may have been undertaken, the issues relating to accommodation onboard the ship remained. The Medical Officer of *HMNZT 61* prepared a report of his observations, together with recommendations, as the result of the journey north. On the matter of sanitation, the doctor observed that

as the hot weather advanced, the desirata of a cargo boat transferred into a troopship became more evident. The abundance of corners and the large amount of rafts etc stowed on deck make thorough cleaning very difficult. The surroundings of the cook houses have in place a continued malodorous in spite of the strict attention of the ship's officers.<sup>184</sup>

He was also critical of ventilation, blaming the need to prevent lights showing through skylights, ports and doors and suggested that whilst men were encouraged to sleep on deck, alternatives to the "primitive sheet of canvas used to cover ports" might be replaced with something that shades the light but still allows the flow of fresh air. The inadequacy of hospital facilities aboard the ship led to the recommendation that "before being utilised during another voyage with troops, the whole of the accommodation provided for the sick should be reconsidered". The specific issues

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<sup>182</sup> Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. II, p. 238.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>184</sup> Medical Officer HMNZT 61, "Report by Medical Officer, Transport No 61", 24 October 1916, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/290/1, ANZ.

raised included the lack of a proper means of disinfecting, washing and drying, as well as the heat and smoky air emanating from the stoke hold gratings. The report provided tangible and recognisable examples of the difficulty that the crew and soldiers on board would have endured.<sup>185</sup>

During this voyage north, Louisa Ferris, wife of Able Seaman Richard John Ferris, was facing her own war at home in Auckland. Louise and Richard were married in March 1909 and subsequently had two children. When ashore, Richard was a drunkard and had been charged with being drunk and disorderly after involvement in a fight in June 1916 outside a hotel where his wife worked as a barmaid.<sup>186</sup> He was also violent towards Louisa, and she later claimed he used abusive, offensive and threatening language to her, beat her and habitually left her without means of support.<sup>187</sup> It was this lack of financial support that forced Louisa to work as a barmaid.

Apart from Richard, Louisa's primary challenge was retaining her job as a registered barmaid because she was married and also her parents were German born but Australian naturalised although she was Australian born. Whilst Richard was at sea on *HMNZT 61*, Louisa was fired from her job at the Shakespeare Hotel in Auckland for supposed dishonesty for which she was not arrested or charged. In an attempt to clear her name, she brought a civil action against the hotel for damages in an attempt to clear her reputation as she had been unable to obtain subsequent employment. During the court hearing, it was apparent that the real issues were that she was married and that there was an intolerance of her German background.

The court was told she didn't wear a wedding ring and that she called herself Miss Ferris. When asked by the judge why she did this, Louisa responded that "most hotelkeepers won't employ a married barmaid if they can get a single one". More importantly the timing of her dismissal was linked to information the publican received about a riot in the hotel where she was previously employed which had resulted from an alleged conversation that she had in German. After much questioning, Louisa acknowledged that she could not speak German but could understand the language when it was spoken to her. She denied causing a riot and also said she understood Italian but could not speak that either. Louisa was unsuccessful in receiving damages

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> *Auckland Star*, 5 June 1916, p. 2.

<sup>187</sup> *Auckland Star*, 18 August 1921, p. 4.

on a legal technicality however the judge stated that his decision did not imply that she was guilty of the dishonesty claimed by her employer.<sup>188</sup>

After the War, Richard and Louisa were divorced. Richard continued his troubled life ashore. In 1927 he was convicted of robbing a 70 year old man in Tokomaru Bay of £3 10s of his wages and as a consequence sentenced to three years jail.<sup>189</sup> Stories of violence, drunkenness and family hardship were not uncommon and seafarers, especially ratings, appear to have attracted their share of trouble ashore. Louisa's story is unusual, though illustrative of the extent of difficulty many seafarers' wives faced, made all the more challenging because of the casual nature of their husband's employment and the absence of partial wage repatriation that was implemented for soldiers of the NZEF to avoid exactly this hardship.

It was also during the voyage of *HMNZT 61* to Plymouth that Captain MacDonald suffered first from a lung infection and subsequently from a severe attack of influenza. He recovered somewhat by the time the ship had arrived in Cardiff, sufficient for him to transact ship's business with the Company's agents and Transport Office and then travel by train to London. A few days later MacDonald returned to Cardiff, having suffered a relapse of his illness. After initially refusing to leave the ship, the First Officer convinced him to go to Cardiff Nursing Institution when his condition had significantly worsened. He died on the evening of 2 November 1917.

The funeral was organised by the Company after consultation with MacDonald's Dunedin resident widow.

Captain Doorly advises that the body was escorted to the station at Cardiff. Had the cadets leading, then the hearse and cadets on either side of it. Next came the Officers of *Aparima* and *Navua* and the rear was brought up by the Military they had on board and two gunners [RNR defensive gunners of *Aparima*]. He describes it as an impressive procession.<sup>190</sup>

Captain MacDonald was buried in his family's burial ground in Inverness. Had MacDonald been serving in the Royal Navy, his death would have been considered a war casualty and he would have been provided with a military funeral and buried in an official war grave. The New Zealand Government did have financial responsibilities to MacDonald's widow and family under the Shipping & Seamen's Act. Fair and

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<sup>188</sup> *NZ Truth*, 16 September 1916, p. 12; *Auckland Star*, 9 September 1916, p. 6.

<sup>189</sup> *NZ Truth*, 23 June 1927, p. 3.

<sup>190</sup> H.A. Daniel to Captain Col. McDonald, 14 November 1916, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:195, WCA.

reasonable burial expenses were paid by the Government and the Company agreed to bear the expenses incurred in addition to that amount. The Company held an insurance policy for MacDonald and the proceeds of this, together with outstanding wages, holiday pay, gratuity for Safe Navigation and a bonus in connection with the training of the cadets on *Aparima* were paid to his widow. They also provided her with a cheque for £150 in recognition of his “loyal service to the Company”. Mrs Zoe MacDonald, in her thank you letter, told the Directors of the Union Steam Ship Company that the money “will all be spent on giving his sons the education he would have wanted for them”. The Union Steam Ship Company’s treatment of MacDonald’s widow was exceptional, but recognised his rank, the esteem in which he was held within Company and the years of service he had provided. This high level of generosity was not evident in other cases where employees had passed away for whatever the reason.<sup>191</sup>



*Illustration 10: Captain James Gerald Stokely Doorly RNR*<sup>192</sup>  
(Roger Wilson Collection, Wellington. Reproduced by permission of right’s holder.)

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<sup>191</sup> A.W. Wheeler to Green, 26 April 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:195, WCA; A.W. Wheeler to W.A. Kennedy, 23 February 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:195, WCA; T.S. Donaldson to D.A. Aitken, May 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:195, WCA; Mrs Zoe MacDonald to Directors of USSCo, 28 November 1916, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:195, WCA.

<sup>192</sup> Neville W. Poulson, *The White Ribbon. A medallic record of British Polar Expeditions*, (London: B.A. Seaby Limited, 1968), pp. 40-41, 182; *Evening Post*, 11 October 1958.

The photograph of Captain Doorly shows a white medal ribbon above the left breast pocket. Doorly served as a junior officer on the barque *Morning* which was relief supply ship to Captain R F Scott’s first expedition to the Antarctic during 1902-04. As a member of the *Morning* crew, he was awarded the Polar Medal in bronze, the white ribbon of which is evident on Doorly’s jacket.

Captain James Gerald Stokely Doorly, who had been in command of the Company's vessel *Navua*, was appointed Master of *Aparima* to replace MacDonald and Harry Daniel, who was First Officer of *Aparima*, replaced Doorly on *Navua*. *Navua* was considerably smaller than *Aparima* with a gross tonnage of 2,930 tons compared to *Aparima*'s 5,704 tons, so this appointment was considered a promotion for Doorly.<sup>193</sup>

*Aparima* left Cardiff in late November 1916 for New Zealand with a cargo of munitions and Red Cross equipment for British East Africa. As the ship was not carrying troops, it was neither assigned to a convoy nor provided with a naval escort and was therefore left to its own devices to avoid enemy contact on its journey back to New Zealand. The constant danger of collision with other vessels was an added anxiety as none displayed navigation lights and all steamed at maximum speed as a defensive measure. During the first night of the voyage, *Aparima* missed colliding with a blacked out steamer by ten feet. Later when passing near the Irish coast the ship passed an enemy submarine but fortunately it had surfaced to charge its accumulators and was therefore not in a position to attack. Later when passing the Canary Islands, the ship received wireless warning of a German raider nearby, possibly the *Möewe*, and also the presence of German submarines in the area. *Aparima* reached Durban safely, the munitions were unloaded and she continued on to New Zealand with a load of coal.<sup>194</sup>

About one thousand troops were taken on *Aparima*'s next voyage as *HMNZT 76*, departing for England via Cape Town on 16 February 1917. Owing to the presence of a German commerce raider in the Indian Ocean, which subsequently proved to be the *Wolf*, the route from Western Australia to the Cape took a more southerly latitude than normal. During this leg of the journey the coal bunkers caught fire and the crew, assisted by squads of troops, worked for days to turn the coal over to extinguish the fire and prevent it spreading to the troops' accommodation and the cargo of wool. The poor quality of the coal also meant that the ship made slow progress, achieving only nine knots maximum speed.

During April 1917, the enemy submarine menace was at a peak and from Sierra Leone onwards SOS wireless calls were received from multiple vessels that had been attacked and required assistance. *Aparima* was sailing in a convoy with other troopships, including the Union Steam Ship Company's *Mokoia*, and escorted by a

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<sup>193</sup> Ian J. Farquhar, *Union Fleet 1875-1975. Being a list of ships owned by the Union Steam Ship Company of N.Z. Ltd. since its inception in Dunedin in 1875, together with a list of some of the significant dates in the history of the Line*, (Wellington: New Zealand Ship and Marine Society, 1976), p. 13.

<sup>194</sup> J.G.S. Doorly, "Aparima - Voyage Notes", 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:205, WCA.

naval cruiser and a destroyer. Approaching the entrance to the English Channel, *Aparima* received wireless information of a submarine active thirteen miles south of the Lizard, her activity having resulted in the sinking of a steamer and a sailing vessel. Doorly recalls the story vividly.

By dusk as we were approaching the danger spot a trawler was sighted ahead which to our surprise suddenly opened fire. The *Mokoia's* escort being the handiest dashed off at full speed towards the trawler and fired four shots with her bow gun in her direction. The projectiles splashed just short of the trawler and as we drew up to the scene of the action we saw heaving grimly on the water the whale backed shape of a submarine floating bottom up. She had evidently risen to attack the trawler (which was an Admiralty decoy) and failing to see us coming along in the mist was caught red handed before she could submerge.<sup>195</sup>

After disembarking the troops at Plymouth, the ship was directed to Manchester to discharge the cargo of wool but was subsequently diverted to Liverpool because the ship would not fit under a Manchester canal bridge. The diversion exposed the ship and its crew to extensive submarine and mine threat during the voyage through the Irish Sea, but fortunately no enemy contact was made.

The return voyage to New Zealand was again unescorted, stopping at Cape Town where one hundred invalid troops from Palestine were transhipped from a Hospital ship to *Aparima* for the journey home.

Following Voyage 76, it was decided *Aparima* would revert to cargo duties. The supposed reason for ceasing to use the ship as a troop carrier was that she was slow and unable to maintain the necessary speed to remain in contact with a defensive convoy. The ship was purpose built for cargo and a designed speed of 11 knots fully laden. It is known that *Aparima* was often supplied with poor quality coal, other than that taken on at Newcastle. Coal quality (calorific content) dictated the ability of boilers to generate sufficient steam pressure to maintain maximum speed of the engines. This, and the need for a major upgrade of the accommodation as suggested by MacDonald, is the more likely causes of her redeployment.<sup>196</sup>

The troop accommodation was dismantled in Port Chalmers by Union Steam Ship Company employees and the ship readied for a full cargo of Imperial supplies

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> J.E. MacDonald to D.A. Aitken, 15 September 1915, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:205, WCA.

which were loaded in Port Chalmers, Wellington and Auckland. The cost of removing the accommodation and restoring it back to cargo configuration was anticipated in the charter agreement as the responsibility of the Government. The Company requested reimbursement for a number of cost items including “Reconditioning the Ship”, board and lodgings for crew members while [the] vessel [was] reconditioning” and “fee for supervising reconditioning of [the] ship”. The costs were argued between the Imperial Government Supplies Department which benefitted from the additional cargo capacity between New Zealand and England, and the New Zealand Defence Department which was required to make good the ship at the end of its charter.<sup>197</sup>

With the transfer of the vessel from troopship to cargo, responsibility for control of the vessel also shifted from Defence Department to Munitions and Supply on account of the vessel being engaged in the transport of private cargo.<sup>198</sup>

*Aparima*’s final journey to England was via Panama and Newport News then to New York where she joined a convoy of 28 ships supported by the US cruiser *Albany*. The vessels were formed up in seven columns each consisting of four ships. For the later part of the voyage they zigzagged day and night as a further defensive measure against submarine attack. When about 500 miles off the English coast the convoy was met by an escort of seven destroyers which guided them to England. During this phase of the voyage, two ships got lost in fog and became detached from the convoy. Both ships were attacked by submarine although one of them was fortunately beached after being torpedoed.

## TRANSFERRED TO ADMIRALTY CONTROL

By late 1917, there was significant pressure on shipping capacity as the result of the considerable tonnage that had been sunk or damaged during the German submarine offensive in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. In a secret telegram to the Governor General of New Zealand, the Secretary of State for the Colonies stated that “every sea-going vessel is now of the utmost importance and the Shipping

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<sup>197</sup> D.A. Aitken to Dir Movements & Quarters Defence HQ, 9 October 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291, ANZ; Director Movements & Quarters Defence HQ to Controller Imperial Government Supplies Department Wellington, 12 October 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291, ANZ. Note that the argument was not resolved and was overtaken by events in November 1917.

<sup>198</sup> Director Movements & Quarters Defence HQ to Controller Imperial Government Supplies Department Wellington, 11 August 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291, ANZ.

Controller earnestly trusts that your Ministers will be able to see their way clear to agree the release of the two vessels named". These two vessels were *Aparima* and *Waitemata*.<sup>199</sup>

The requisition was hotly debated by both governments, each claiming priority access for economic reasons. Much of New Zealand's shipping tonnage had been requisitioned for war service resulting in a considerable reduction of available capacity for export of wool and other commodities important to New Zealand's economy. Conversely, Lord Liverpool argued to Premier Bill Massey that additional shipping was needed to "carry oils and essential cargo from the United States, required for industrial and other purposes" because "stocks of oil for lighting and power are running perilously short". The New Zealand Government conceded but sought assurances from Britain that *Aparima* and *Waitemata* would be returned to the New Zealand Government when the Imperial Government had no further use for them, and certainly before New Zealand troops were demobilised, by which time these ships would be required to bringing the men home.<sup>200</sup>

## LOSS

On 15 November 1917, *Aparima* was transferred from the New Zealand Government charter to control by the Imperial authorities. Once the cargo of New Zealand wool and general cargo was discharged at Victoria Dock London, she was loaded with 1,000 tons of coal and water ballast. Secret sailing orders were issued to proceed to the Barry Roads in the Bristol Channel where she was expected to load coal for an unconfirmed voyage to New York. The route from London to Barry was perilous with a number of shipwrecks, possible presence of enemy submarines and the usual navigation hazards justifying the allocation of a Sea Pilot to assist with navigation through the unfamiliar waters. The ship departed for Barry by its prescribed zigzag defensive track on the evening of 18 November 1917. "The night was intense dark, heavily overcast, wind westerly and a slight sea".<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Secretary of State for the Colonies to Lord Liverpool, 24 September 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291/1, ANZ.

<sup>200</sup> Secretary of State for the Colonies to Lord Liverpool, 24 October 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291/1, ANZ; Secretary of State for the Colonies to Lord Liverpool, 29 October 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291/1, ANZ.

<sup>201</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Marine Superintendent USSCo, 20 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:201, WCA.

In dramatic style, Captain Doorly prefaced his necessarily brief description of what was to become the final minutes of the ship by describing the known hazards that existed in the vicinity and the care with which he navigated the ship.

Some distance westward of the Isle of Wight and a mile or two to the southward of our track was a wreck, to be avoided. The passage north of our track was a prohibited area. I had, therefore, to be especially careful with the course I was making. Added to this there was the dangerous area to the eastward of the Shambles Light Ship, to clear which it would be necessary to haul the ship out slightly to the southward. Owing to the wreck I could not do so until well clear of it, and yet I had in my mind the possibility of over-running my distance and so passing the Shambles danger area too closely. It was while I was thus exercised in my mind that a violent explosion occurred in the after part of the ship. The time was 0.52am Monday, 19th November - no ships craft of any description, land or shore lights were visible at the time of the explosion.<sup>202</sup>

The final six minutes of the ship's existence were played out in Doorly's official Company report in which he documented the methodical execution of his duties during the sinking and before saving his own life became the priority.

The ship shook heavily with the concussion and settled down immediately by the stem. I hurriedly pricked off the position of the ship on the chart, which was approximately 7 miles S by W  $\frac{3}{4}$  W (mag) from Anvil Point.

I rushed along to the Wireless House on the after part of the boat deck and shouted out the position. The wireless operators had only time to get out 'SOS A' when the sea smashed along and hissed like a boa up to the after part of the boat deck, as the stem sank rapidly.

I scrambled up to the bridge, blew the 'abandon ship' signal on the whistle and rang the engine room telegraph to 'stop'. I then dived into the chart house on the upper bridge, grabbed the weighted canvas bag containing all secret papers, codes and instructions and hove it over the side.

The ship was now at the angle of about 45°, the stem evidently on the bottom (20 to 22 fathoms depth) and the funnel just clear of the sea surface.

I leapt down on to the foredeck and noticed the starboard boats' painters still fast to the rail abreast of the fore end of the No. 2 hatch. I cast two of these adrift, stripped off my coat and sea boots and slung my life belt round

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<sup>202</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Marine Superintendent USSCo, 20 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:201, WCA.

me. I slid down a line over the starboard side and flopped into the water. My watch stopped at 0.58 am which was at G.M.T.<sup>203</sup>

Doorly recorded his own rescue and in the process acknowledged those who had assisted him. He also summarise the efforts of those who worked hard to locate and save as many fellow crew as possible.

I swam directly away from the ship and in a minute or two came across our gig (No 5 boat). Mr Cooper, 3rd Officer, Cadet Sutherland and the Pilot pulled me into the boat. The gig was overcrowded, so we pulled round to where the other starboard boats should be and found No. 1 life boat close by. There were only three or four men in this boat, so I transferred the majority of the gig's complement into the life boat and told the 3rd Officer to scout about and pick up any men he could. The life boat was very cumbersome to manoeuvre and our work was considerably hampered by the number of natives in it who appeared to be absolutely terror stricken and incapable of movement.

Presently a sudden glow and smoke belched from the funnel and an eerie moaning rumbled from the boiler room as it became submerged. The ship sank in about ten minutes after I left her, i.e. 1 am.

Then followed the maddening cries of frenzied men struggling in the water. It was all the more dreadful and uncanny on account of the pitch blackness of the night. We pulled towards the shouts and rescued two or three more men - the port boats were of course some distance away. Our boat filled rapidly with water and it was only by using very forceful means to shift the Natives out of the way that we could get at the plug hole and put the plug in again.<sup>204</sup>

One of the officers who died as the result of the attack was Chief Steward James Mackie. In his letter to Sophia Mackie (widow of the James Mackie), Doorly confirmed the circumstances of her husband's death and also attempted to provide comfort for her loss. Apart from the personal messages of sympathy and testimony to Mackie's widow, the narration was practically identical to that included in Doorly's official report of the sinking to the Company. In all probability the reason for this is the lack of any further information and also the desire to maintain a consistent Company story.

Mackie was at his boat station, but was not seen again until daylight next morning when his body with a life belt on was found floating near some wreckage. He was taken on to a patrol vessel to Weymouth. Mr Hirst the 2nd Engineer of the *TSS Aparima* identified Mackie's body before the

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

Coroner at Weymouth. There was a nasty scar across his right eye, which points to the assumption that he must have dived off the ship and struck some wreckage or a boat.

The British and Foreign Seamen's Society took the matter in hand and carried out the funeral and burial arrangements. I know that this will come as a deep blow to you, and I extend my heartfelt sympathy to you and his children in your sad loss. Mackie was the most capable Chief Steward I was ever shipmates with, and the loss of so good and obliging a man is deeply felt by me.<sup>205</sup>

Whilst Doorly's duties as Master during the sinking focussed on the wellbeing of his crew, the individual seafarers were concerned with self preservation at all costs. In a letter to his brother, Cadet Jack Adams describes the moment of impact and the subsequent few minutes he had to abandon the ship and save himself.

I was in bed less than no time when the explosion took place (12.50). It woke me up instantly, and our lights went out. I caught a pair of trousers as I cleared the door in a bound and ran for my life to the boat. When I reached the boat the stern was under and by the time I had cleared off her half the funnel was under so you can imagine what a hopeless game it was for those who had not cleared our companionway before the water poured down in its merciless and fearful torrent and broke the advance of the least prompt.

Just before she sunk our boat fouled and turned turtle leaving its contents except what was lashed at the mercy of the Channel. When I came to after that, I swam under the water to prevent our native firemen from holding on and drowning me as well. I then came to the surface coughing and spitting ashes and salt water from my innermost self. Apparently the boilers had burst and sent their contribution towards the heavens. A hatch cover was the next assistance to me which I sat upon and repelled borders until I distinguished our boat overturned and covered with men.<sup>206</sup>

The story of Cadet Thomas Bevan has been well told in the newspapers of the time and is the only recurring narrative relating to the *Aparima* sinking, most probably because of the incredulous nature of the circumstances.<sup>207</sup> The story quoted here is one

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<sup>205</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Sophia Mackie, 6 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:201, WCA.

A photograph of the original signed letter was provided to the author by grandson, Keith Mackie of Llandudno, South Africa. The letter is a treasured family keepsake, was typed on official USSCo letterhead paper and signed "G S Doorly"; J.G.S. Doorly to Sophia Mackie, 6 December 1917, Keith Mackie Collection.

<sup>206</sup> J.L. Adams, letter from "Jack" to "My Dear Brother", 29 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>207</sup> T.E. Bevan, "Application for Appointment", 20 February 1914, USSCo Collection, AF016:1:5, WCA.

Thomas Ewart Bevan was born 12 July 1899 at Manakau, Horowhenua and commenced his cadetship at the age of 15 years in 1914 with the USSCo aboard *Aparima*; Doorly, 1937, pp. 262-263; Waters, 1951, pp. 73-74; McGregor, 2009, p. 18.

of the few recalled relating to New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine.

Bevan and two other cadets were in a cabin together, when the torpedo struck the vessel. Two of the cadets were killed by the explosion which followed, but Bevan was blown up through the cabin ventilator ten feet high, his clothes stripped off by the violence of the blast. He was thrown quite unconscious on to a raft, and after lying there stunned for a while, the ship having meanwhile gone down, he recovered his senses, remembered that the raft tank contained signalling flares, and used one to attract attention, with the result that he was picked up by a rescuing boat.<sup>208</sup>

In Australia, Cadet Stuart Shakespeare's experience of *Aparima* sinking was detail in the local newspaper of his parents' home district. The report was written based on a detailed account written by Shakespeare in a letter to his parents and was the lead story of the day.<sup>209</sup>

When the explosion occurred I was thrown up from my bunk, and hit the bulk-head above, landing in the water, which was then coming in. Of course all the lights had gone out at the first shock, so that we were in total darkness. However, I managed to get to the companion way, down which the water was flowing. As we were then under the water by the stern I was about the fifth one up on deck, so that the other poor fellows must have been caught below like rats in a trap. After that I made my way to the boats, which was pretty difficult, as by that time the ship had assumed an angle of about 20 deg. from the level. The whole time the roar of the water rushing in could be heard, and any moment we were expecting the boilers to blow up as it reached them.

By the time I reached the boats, the ship had become almost steady, at however, a very perilous angle. It was pitch dark, so that it was very awkward lowering boats. But after I had chopped some of the lashings through with an axe we got ours into the water somehow. What made things worse was that there were only about five to get the boat clear, where there should have been about 20. The water was by this time awash with the alleyway below the boats; thus they did not have far to go. Up to then only about two minutes had passed so that the way was not yet off the ship. Consequently when we got our boat down there was some difficulty in getting it clear of the falls, etc. But about three minutes after we were struck the ship was quite at a standstill, with only the funnel top, the foremast, and

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<sup>208</sup> *Free Lance*, 28 March 1918, p. 4.

<sup>209</sup> *Border Watch*, 26 February 1898, p. 2.

William Stuart Shakespeare was born 15 February 1898 at Mt Gambier, South Australia and was one of a number of Australian born and resident cadets that signed on for officer cadetships with USSCo aboard TSS *Aparima*. The USSCo had a significant Australasian presence, operating many vessels between the two countries as well as on the coast of Australia, especially in the Bass Strait.

a wee piece of the bow visible. Before this forepart went under the boilers exploded with a terrific roar, and we were absolutely smothered with dirt, mud, coal, etc. Then, I should say about 3½ minutes after the first explosion (that is the torpedo) the poor old 'Appy' simply slipped down with a deafening roar, like an angry bull. Fortunately there was very little suction. Only sufficient to capsize our boat, which however, was even before then, full to the gunwales with water.<sup>210</sup>

There was an account published of one of the more junior engineers, Sixth Engineer James McKeegan,<sup>211</sup> taken from a letter he wrote home to his Wellington based father, which provides a less emotive recollection of events.

There was very little time to think. I hopped up to the middle platform to shut the watertight door in the tunnel. By the time I got there the water was rushing out of the tunnel full bore. The chief engineer arrived on the scene, and we managed to close it, but it was no good. The pressure of water was too great, and it forced the bulkhead door out. By this time the water was half-way up the engine columns. There was no chance of doing anything further.

When I got up on deck the water was level with it. It was pitch dark and the decks awash, and her bow stuck up in the air. I made tracks for No 3 lifeboat on the starboard side. All the clothes I had on were a boiler suit, a pair of socks, and a 'sweat rag.' I had just stepped into the lifeboat when the ship took her last plunge, and in doing so the lifeboat davit caught the boat and capsized it. All hands landed in the cold briny; some of them, poor fellows, never to come out.

When the boat overturned all the gear dropped out and I got tangled up in it. I managed to get a lump of wreckage, and hung on with one hand, while with the other I succeeded in clearing myself of the rope. I started to swim for it. Gee whizz! The water was not half cold -54deg. I had been swimming about half an hour, when right in front loomed up a lifeboat. My temperature went up bang. I called out, and, thank God, they heard me.<sup>212</sup>

Doorly in his reports and correspondence to the Company took the opportunity to offer praise and recommendations for those who particularly excelled during the

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<sup>210</sup> *Border Watch*, 26 February 1898, p. 2.

<sup>211</sup> Dept of Internal Affairs, "Birth, Death and Marriage Historical Records", accessed 10 August 2013. <http://www.bdmhistoricalrecords.dia.govt.nz>; James John McKeegan was born 1890, son of Mary and Charles McKeegan of Wellington, New Zealand.

<sup>212</sup> *Evening Post*, 16 January 1918, p. 7.

sinking, the rescue and the subsequent “task of squaring up the accounts”.<sup>213</sup> Most notable of the commendations is a rare reference to individual Lascar crew members.

I should like to state here that the Cassub Hassanuoola, and the Saloon Topass, Moni Lall, are worthy of the highest praise. They worked away continuously at bailing the boat out and were the only two Natives who were of any assistance in our dire predicament. The Cassub found matches and the blue flares and after much difficulty we got a lamp alight and burnt several flares.<sup>214</sup>

Doorly also reported in correspondence to his Marine Superintendent, the comparative behaviour of the Third Officer and the lowly ranked Seventh Engineer. Of the Third Officer, Doorly is intensely critical stating that

the only deck officer saved, Mr A W Cooper, 3rd Officer, has been no use to me in my worrying time. I asked him to come to the office each day to help with the vast amount of work which has accumulated over the wreck. He came the first day only and has showed such a poor spirit that I could see he would be no help to me. He has since written to say that he does not feel up to office work and is not cut out for it. This is not only mean spirited, but decidedly insolent. He is therefore loafing his time away.<sup>215</sup>

By comparison Doorly praised the behaviour of Seventh Engineer Maurice Mayo, stating that he had

turned to most cheerfully and helped me out at the office for a fortnight. As he has had to train it up to the City everyday he is a little out of pocket. But apart from that I should esteem it a great favour if the Company would give him a small Bonus for his ready and willing assistance to me. I could hardly have got through the work without him.<sup>216</sup>

In addition to Doorly’s official Company report, the individual recollections are representative of those published in the newspapers of the time. They were chosen because each related to different departments of the ship and provide varied perspectives of the sinking and the roles played in the events that followed. Doorly was in command and had formal responsibilities which he was obligated to execute and record in his report. Ever loyal to the machinery, the engineers attempted to stem the flooding water by closing the bulkhead doors in the hope they could prevent or delay the sinking, before escaping. The cadets’ focus was executing the boat drill they were

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<sup>213</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Marine Superintendent USSCo, 11 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>214</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Marine Superintendent USSCo, 20 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:201, WCA.

<sup>215</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Marine Superintendent USSCo, 11 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>216</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Captain Col. McDonald, 31 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

taught and responsible for. The Lascars were absent from the recollections, other than the two individuals called out in Doorly's report. Their plight was the same although seemingly secondary as suggested by Cadet Adam who felt the need to keep distant from the natives to prevent them from drowning him. Each report told of a harrowing experience in the sea, trying to stay afloat with the aid of wreckage or a partly submerged lifeboat. The sinking was catastrophic and is illustrative of the "horrors even worse than the battlefields" that British Prime Minister Lloyd George referred to in the vote of thanks he delivered to the House of Commons.<sup>217</sup> The recollections highlight an extreme of the intimate human stories of New Zealanders who were employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine.

## A F T E R M A T H

Once the news of the sinking of *Aparima* reached New Zealand, the Company and the public wanted to know exactly who was on board at the time and their fate. Company correspondence indicates that it was unsure who were onboard, who had been saved and who had perished. Managing Director Charles Holdsworth explained in a telegram to General Manager David Aitken that the four day delay in advising the loss of *Aparima* was "solely due [to the] impossibility [of] getting even approximately (sic) [the] names [of those] saved [any] earlier".<sup>218</sup> When news of *Aparima*'s sinking reached Aitken, he notified Premier Massey stating there were "no changes [to the] crew since leaving Auckland". The published names of the confirmed survivors were provided by the Company but missing from the initial lists were the casualties, and the Lascars who represented more than half of the *Aparima* crew.<sup>219</sup>

As it later transpired, there had been crew changes as the result of hospitalisation and transfers. The daughter of Cadet William Henry Millward recalled that her father spoke little of the ship but "I do know that he was in hospital with a broken ankle at the time the *Aparima* was torpedoed". The grandson of Cadet William Herbert Cadwallader told a similar story confirming that his grandfather "by a fantastic stroke of luck was hospitalised in London hours before *Aparima* left for Barry".<sup>220</sup> Tutor

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<sup>217</sup> *Colonist*, 9 August 1919, p. 5.

<sup>218</sup> C. Holdsworth to D.A. Aitken, 23 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>219</sup> D.A. Aitken to Rt.Hon. W.F. Massey, 23 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>220</sup> Email from Paulin Voice (daughter) and Gillian Foster (grand daughter) to author, 6 November 2012; Email from Nils Enrum (grandson) to author, 11 February 2009.

Arthur Selby Dagleish had also left the ship to take a role in the Royal Naval Reserve. During his time with the Company, Dagleish had taken a commission as a naval reservist and was eligible to be called upon to take a role in the Navy if required. On 18 August 1917 he wrote to the Company requesting he be released until the end of the war so he could fulfil his obligations to the RNR. The Company was very reluctant to release him but finally agreed and he transferred on 9 November 1917, less than a week before the vessel was transferred to the Admiralty.<sup>221</sup>

Preparing a definitive list of those onboard at the time the ship was torpedoed has remained a difficult task. Appendix A presents a list of the ship's Company at the time of sinking, prepared from a number of different partial lists. The white crew names reconcile accurately across the different data sources and with Doorly's tally provided in his official Company report. The list of the native crew remains problematic. The Company's only list of the native crew, signed as "correct" by Captain Doorly and Chief Officer Harry Daniel, contains phonetic spelling whereas Commonwealth War Graves Commission database contains possibly correct spelling albeit for the casualties only. As Harry Daniel drowned when *Aparima* sank, the list of the native crew must have been prepared prior to 19 November 1917 and will therefore not include any last minute crew changes that occurred prior to the ship's departure from London Docks on 18 November.<sup>222</sup> The inability to accurately identify those who were onboard this well known ship, which suffered New Zealand's largest single loss of WWI merchant seafarers, is an illustration of the extent to which the history of those employed in the Mercantile Marine is absent.

When she sank on 19 November 1917, *Aparima* had 115 on board of whom 55 perished. Figure 13 below illustrates the ethnic and departmental composition of the entire ship's complement and also the distribution of casualties and survivors. There appears to be no significant difference in the casualty rate between the different ethnic groups. Generally those located on the deck appear to have had a higher survival rate than those below. The cadets did suffer a higher death rate than any other department,

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<sup>221</sup> USSCo. "Captain A.S. Dagleish", USSCo Collection, AF007:1:37, WCA; Arthur S. Dagleish to Coll. McDonald, USSCo Collection, AF005:11:21, WCA; Admiralty, *Dagleish, James Rank: Temporary Lieutenant*, Records of the Admiralty, ADM/304/37 Image Ref 9, NA; *Evening Post*, 3 December 1917, p. 2.

<sup>222</sup> USSCo. "*Aparima* [White] Crew", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; J.G.S. Doorly to D.A. Aitken, "Native survivors", 5 January 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; USSCo., "Cadets - *Aparima*", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; J.G.S. Doorly and H.A. Daniel, "T.S.S. *Aparima* Native crew", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; USSCo., "List of Officers, Engineers and Crew (White) Saved from the late SS *Aparima*", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:198, WCA; USSCo., "List of Officers, Engineers and Crew (White) Lost from the late SS *Aparima*", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:198, WCA; J.G.S. Doorly, "Report of Loss of s.s. *Aparima*", 20 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:201, WCA; CWGC, *Find War Dead*.

primarily because the torpedo hit the stern of the ship, exploding adjacent to their sleeping quarters.

Figure 13: Ethnic and Departmental Composition of *Aparima*'s Casualties and Survivors<sup>223</sup>

	European	Chinese	Lascars	Total	% of Dept.
<b>CASUALTIES</b>					
Cadets	17	—	—	<b>17</b>	<b>60.7%</b>
Deck Department	6	1	1	<b>8</b>	<b>38.1%</b>
Engineer's Department	1	—	19	<b>20</b>	<b>42.6%</b>
Steward's Department	2	—	8	<b>10</b>	<b>52.6%</b>
<b>TOTAL CASUALTIES</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>47.8%</b>
<b>% of Ethnicity Group</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>47.8%</b>	
<b>SURVIVORS</b>					
Cadets	11	—	—	<b>11</b>	<b>39.3%</b>
Deck Department	10	1	2	<b>13</b>	<b>61.9%</b>
Engineer's Department	6	—	21	<b>27</b>	<b>57.4%</b>
Steward's Department	0	—	9	<b>9</b>	<b>47.4%</b>
<b>TOTAL SURVIVORS</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>52.2%</b>
<b>% of Ethnicity Group</b>	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	

The next of kin of those aboard *Aparima* were notified four days after the sinking, by similarly worded telegrams from the Union Steam Ship Company General Manager David Aitken. One such telegram was sent to Mr J.A. James (Manager of the Dunnolie State Collieries in Greymouth and employer of Mr William Shaw) informing him that Mr Shaw's son William was amongst those missing.

Regret exceedingly to advise you training ship has been torpedoed and sunk and Cadet Shaw is amongst those missing. Please accept and convey to parents the deepest sympathy of the directors and staff including that of Sir James Mills Chairman of Directors and Mr Holdsworth Managing Director who have cabled from London that their personal feelings of sympathy should be conveyed to parents. We trust that in their grief they will derive consolation from this fact that their son died in the execution of his duty and on service of vital importance to his country.<sup>224</sup>

The survivors' next of kin were also sent telegrams on the same day informing them of the sinking and that their family member was saved. Because of the delay, some families had already received brief messages from their seafarer saying that he was safe. Mr John Sutherland, father of Cadet Ernest Sutherland, was sent the official message.

<sup>223</sup> This summary data is derived from the table included in Appendix A: Ship's Company on Final Voyage of *Aparima*.

<sup>224</sup> D.A. Aitken to J.A. James of Dunnolie Greymouth, 23 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

“While advising you with deepest regret that training ship torpedoed and sunk with loss of part of ship’s Company. Am pleased inform you that your son saved”.<sup>225</sup>

In his reply, Mr Sutherland stated that he had already received a cable from his son with assurances that he was safe and that he was now with family in Scotland. Initially, George Shakespeare, father of Cadet William Stuart Shakespeare was disturbed by a telegram stating “Safe Shakespeare” which arrived prior to the Company’s reassuring telegram that his son was saved.<sup>226</sup>

A notable absence from the Company’s notification telegram list was the next of kin of missing assistant wireless operator, Robert Perrett Taipo Millington. When the wireless was installed on *Aparima*, a qualified wireless operator, Anton Frederick Vipan, was articulated on the ship’s crew. An additional assistant wireless operator was later provided by AWA for the voyages between New Zealand and England. As Vipan and Millington were employed by AWA, the Union Steam Ship Company did not see it as their responsibility to inform the families of the sinking. From correspondence between the widow of Robert Millington and the Company, it is evident that Mrs Millington was never officially informed of her husband’s death. Millington’s insurer later raised the matter with the Company in correspondence relating to the settlement of his estate.

So far his widow has received absolutely no official intimation from any person concerning his death, in fact all she know of her husband was obtained from news of the mishap published in the newspapers, and verbal notification conveyed by a lady messenger from your office here.<sup>227</sup>

Mrs Millington followed up National Mutual’s letter two months later, reiterating the point that she had never been notified formally of her husband’s death. “Neither your Company, the Wireless Company or the Govt notified me of the death of my husband or volunteered any information on the matter, which I consider was a grave negligence on somebody’s part”. The Company responded to National Mutual by stating that Millington was an employee of AWA and as such they had passed all

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<sup>225</sup> D.A. Aitken to Survivors’ Next of Kin, 23 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>226</sup> C.H. Hughes to D.A. Aitken, 27 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>227</sup> Robert Dixon of National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Limited Wellington to Manager USSCo, 15 February 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

available information, and responsibility, to the wireless Company and left them to deal with Mrs Millington.<sup>228</sup>

The next of kin of the survivors were shocked to hear *Aparima* had been torpedoed and sunk, relieved that their son or husband had survived, yet sad that others were not so fortunate. A few days after receiving the positive news concerning his son, Mr Sutherland wrote to the Company offering his condolences for the loss of life and the ship. He specifically mentioned Cadet Newton who was a friend of his son and also First Officer Daniels, of the latter recalling that the boys had always spoken highly of him and although strict had never been unkind. Despite reporting that he may have lost all of his possessions, Mr Sutherland was “thankful” his son had “escaped with his life”.<sup>229</sup> Likewise, George Shakespeare, father of Cadet William Stuart Shakespeare, acknowledged the Company telegram by thanking General Manager Aitken for his “very kind message giving details of the steamers fate and the happy rescue of my only child”. He looked forward to hearing further details in due course and “only hope my boy proved worthy and noble in the hour of danger”.<sup>230</sup>

The cadet’s parents were disbelieving of the news that their son had been lost in the sinking, and with remarkable calmness sought additional information from the Company. The father of missing Cadet Robert Joseph Marshall was a typical example. On the morning after receipt of Aitken’s telegram, Mr Marshall replied to Aitken thanking him “for his information regarding his boy” and stating that he “shall be grateful for a detailed account when available”.<sup>231</sup> Mr S.P. Townsend, father of Cadet Philip Townsend, wrote to Aitken two days after receiving notification that his son was amongst the missing. He was clearly in denial, as indicated by his seeking confirmation that “he was not picked up as there is always a chance of this happening”, and also slightly angry that he wanted fuller details rather than the “bald statement in the cable”. The mother of Cadet William Harry Williams, who was postmistress at Clevedon near Auckland, telegraphed Aitken immediately on hearing that her son was lost, to confirm

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<sup>228</sup> D. Millington to D.A. Aitken, 20 April 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA; A.W. Wheeler to Robert Dixon of National Mutual Life Association of Australasia Wellington, 18 February 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>229</sup> John Sutherland to Company Secretary USSCo, 26 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>230</sup> G. Shakespeare to D.A. Aitken, 24 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>231</sup> A.G. Marshall to D.A. Aitken, 24 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

that the information was correct, asking “is there a doubt about the initial of Williams missing *Aparima* as my son has two initials”?<sup>232</sup>

There were five Australian cadets on the ship at the time of the sinking namely Geoffrey Walter Chalmers, Sydney Allison Newton, William Stuart Shakespeare, Aubrey Beckingham Neale Stacey, and Philip Mervyn Maunsell Townsend. All but Shakespeare perished. The reaction of their next of kin was one of sustained anger and contempt towards the Company as well as Germany. Mr J.A. Newton was the most vociferous and most likely the instigator of a sustained stream of correspondence from each of the Australian parents to the Company. The feelings of the Australian next of kin are more likely to be attributable to Newton’s reaction to the disaster than a general national feeling.<sup>233</sup>



*Illustration 11: Cadet Sydney Allison Newton*

(Elaine Hunter Collection, Victoria, Australia. Reproduced by permission of right’s holder.)

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Newton opened the stream with an attack on the management and directors of the Company for having risked the lives of the cadets in such a dangerous situation. He held them personally accountable for their deaths. “I think it is a wicked, crying shame that *Aparima* which was ostensibly a training ship carrying a number of quite young

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<sup>232</sup> S.P. Townsend to D.A. Aitken, 26 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; Mrs Pat Williams to D.A. Aitken, 27 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>233</sup> C.H. Hughes to D.A. Aitken, 19 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

lads should have ever been delegated to such dangerous work as she was on” and that the boys were “simply at the mercy of a lot of German murderers”.<sup>234</sup>

Not content with telling the Company his views, he placed a death notice in *The Age* newspaper announcing that his son was “murdered by the cursed Germans ... without warning” and that he “died doing his duty to his country, done to death along with 17 of his cadet mates by the German Devils”. The advertisement was noticed by the Company’s Branch Manager in Melbourne who forwarded a copy to head office, commenting that *The Argus* had refused to publish the same notice “which under the circumstances is not to be wondered at”.<sup>235</sup>

It became apparent that Newton’s anger was fuelled by the guilt of having agreed to his son remaining with the ship “without his mother’s consent” when there existed the opportunity for him to be withdrawn “and she is now blaming Mr Newton for letting him go”.<sup>236</sup> After a visit from Newton in January 1918, George Stacey who was father of Cadet Aubrey Beckingham Neale Stacey commenced a similar letter campaign in a similar vein. He accused the Company of acting “indiscreetly in sending such valuable lives to such an infested submarine zone ... it seems they were placed in the jaws of Death and it will remain for all times a stigma on the Union Company”.<sup>237</sup>

In 1918, both Newton and Stacey started questioning the Company on the location of the defensive gun magazine, suggesting that it was located in the stern and adjacent to the cadets’ accommodation. They both suggested that the torpedo directly hit this location, and as the result of the explosion, the cadets were immediately killed rather than drowned as the result of the vessel sinking. Newton asserted that his claims were true and that the Company had shown “a callous indifference ... amounting almost to criminal negligence”.<sup>238</sup>

In reply, Aitken acknowledged that the gun and a small amount of ammunition was located in the aft of the ship but reiterated that the casualties resulted from the ship sinking as the result of a torpedo attack. He also made an interesting supposition that normally a torpedo would be aimed at the engine room in the middle of the ship and, as *Aparima* was struck so close to the stern, they were most unlucky as the

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<sup>234</sup> J.A. Newton to D.A. Aitken, 27 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>235</sup> C.H. Hughes to D.A. Aitken, 11 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>236</sup> C.H. Hughes to D.A. Aitken, 11 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>237</sup> T.G. Stacey to D.A. Aitken, 7 January 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.; J.A. Newton to D.A. Aitken, 15 February 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

torpedo nearly missed its mark. Assertions aside, the formal registration of the wreck of *Aparima* filed by the Receiver of Wrecks specifically mentions that the “ship’s magazine exploded”. This information was probably obtained through interviewing Doorly.<sup>239</sup>

Newton was refunded the entire premium he had paid for his son’s indenture and also an additional amount as compensation in the hope that this would appease the situation. This sparked an even stronger emotional response. Newton suggested that the money was paltry and laid responsibility for the murder of his son entirely with the directors of the Company, and more particularly the Chairman and Managing Director. His letter was all guns blazing, throwing all of his previous as well as new accusations at the Company. He mentioned again the “callous indifference” shown to the boys and also raised accusations of drunkenness amongst the boys, allowing women into their quarters, disgraceful food quality and lack of adequate bathing facilities. Of these new accusations, he suggested that the boys had been reluctant to complain on account of possible career prejudice.<sup>240</sup>

In a carefully considered written response, Sir James Mills who was Chairman of the Company told Newton that his holding the Chairman and Managing Director directly responsible was “unjust”. On the matter of gun placement and magazine location in relation to the boys’ accommodation, he stated that the ship was under Imperial Government control and the gun placement was its decision but did explain that the accommodation was located in the only available space on the ship. He also denied another allegation that the ship was bound for New York and that this was outside of the area that parents had authorised their sons to be employed. Mills finished his reply by distancing his feelings from “callous and indifferent” and instead saying that the loss of the cadets had “given us the most keen regret of any incident in connection with the war”.<sup>241</sup>

The desperation of the events was not limited to the cadets’ next of kin, although their cases are much more prevalent in the archival files of the Company. The tragedy tore the very fabric of Chief Steward James Mackie’s young family. Mackie’s home port was Dunedin, he had accommodation in Auckland and Sydney and his wife Sophia and

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<sup>239</sup> D.A. Aitken to J.A. Newton, 5 March 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; G.P.A. Atkinson, “Shipping Casualties - Return for Wreck Register”, 21 November 1917, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 806 Record No 25/291/1, ANZ.

<sup>240</sup> J.A. Newton to D.A. Aitken, 26 March 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>241</sup> Sir James Mills Managing Director USSCo to J.A. Newton. 15 April 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:202, WCA.

two children lived in Cape Town, South Africa. James was born in Scotland. Mrs Mackie received her telegram on 8 December 1917 which was later than most because the Company did not have her contact address on file.<sup>242</sup>



*Illustration 12: Chief Steward James Mackie (second from left)*<sup>243</sup>  
(Keith Mackie Collection, South Africa. Reproduced by permission of right's holder.)

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The telegram to Sophia Mackie breaking the news that her husband had perished in the sinking was followed up with a letter from Captain Doorly. Apart from condolences, Doorly outlined details of outstanding wages due and also advised Sophia to seek legal advice regarding her husband's estate. In letters to other families, Doorly did not dwell on practical family matters, so clearly he had an understanding of the dire predicament that Mackie's widow would have found herself in. A series of letters were received by the Company from Mrs Mackie over subsequent months. They conveyed the desperation of being alone without support and of trying to locate her husband's effects from the ports he called at, and especially his bank records and papers as she was aware that he had money deposited in New Zealand and Australian bank accounts.

In her first letter, she explains the predicament, "there are two children in family a little girl and boy" and that "I am his wife - no doubt he has told you of us over here" in South Africa. On receipt of Doorly's letter, Sophia again contacted the Company to locate papers and to determine what outstanding wages, seaman's insurance policy and

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<sup>242</sup> J.G.S. Doorly to Sophia Mackie, 8 December 1917, Keith Mackie Collection.

<sup>243</sup> This untitled photograph is owned by the Mackie family in South Africa and they were uncertain which of the five men in the photo James Mackie was. It was not until grandson Keith Mackie was contacted in relation to this research and a different captioned photograph from the *Auckland Weekly News* (13 December 1917, p. 42) provided to the family that they were able to identify James Mackie with any certainty.

Company compensation might be due to her and also whether the Company could help her locate belongings at addresses in Sydney and Dunedin. Illustrative of her plight and unpreparedness, she explained that she was “without any money to keep house”.<sup>244</sup>

Mrs Mackie initiated administration of her husband’s estate through her South African solicitors. She also commenced a search for his bank accounts in the hope of repatriating savings which were needed to fund the children’s education but had little success in locating his stored belongings. In June 1918, Mrs Mackie wrote to the Company with information suggesting that his belongings, including his bank books, were with his landlady in Auckland. She also suggested that the landlady’s 21 year old daughter had Mr Mackie’s diamond ring for safe keeping and that he carried a photo of the young lady in his wallet. Mrs Mackie sought the assistance of the Company, and specifically Doorly, to locate the photo “then we will be able to trace who these people are that has all these things and belongings of my husband”.<sup>245</sup>

During the probate process it became evident that Sophia and James had never married on account of her still being legally married to a man named Roberts, as only a decree nisi had been granted. As the result, settlement of the estate became a long drawn out process. The matter took a turn for the worse for Sophia when the Auckland landlady and daughter made a claim for bank accounts and belongings they held. After a Supreme Court hearing, the judge decided that the funds (£192 2s 9d) would be awarded to the daughter who it turned out “was on affectionate terms” with James, and the remaining belongings were to be sent to Sophia. This decision was made in spite of the existence of a Will naming Sophia as sole benefactor.<sup>246</sup>

Family tragedy may have been inevitable for Sophia and the two children she and James had together, however the sinking of *Aparima* certainly accelerated the possibility of her becoming a solo mother with no means of support. The doubly painful circumstance of losing her husband and the father of her children as the result of a submarine attack on his ship, and then learning that he possibly had a girl in every port and certainly one in Auckland, was a tragedy that has remained emotionally raw in Sophia’s family to this day.

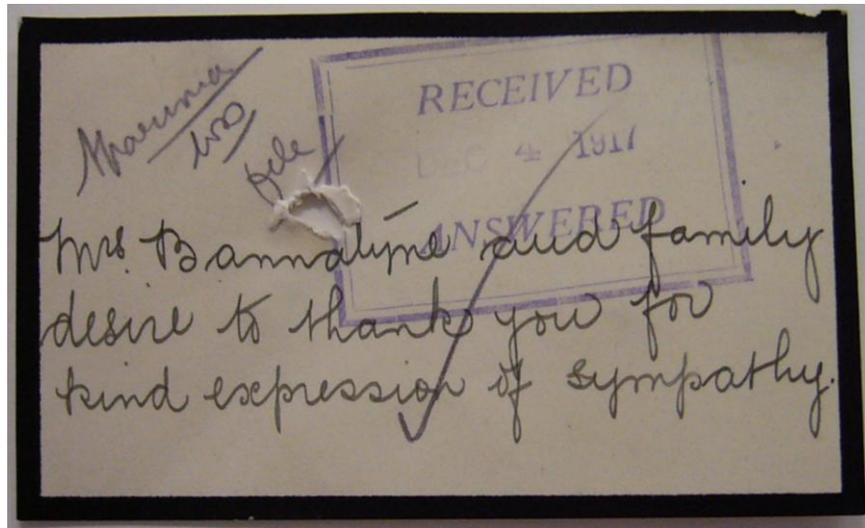
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<sup>244</sup> Sophia Mackie to USSCo, 19 January 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>245</sup> Sophia Mackie to USSCo, 7 May 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; Sophia Mackie to USSCo, 13 May 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; Sophia Mackie to USSCo, 27 June 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>246</sup> Sophia Roberts (Mackie), “Affidavit sworn by Sophia Roberts of Cape Town”, 23 October 1918, Keith Mackie Collection; James Mackie, “Mackie, James - SS *Aparima* - Chief Steward”, (1918-1918), Box 348 Record No 23438, ANZ; *Auckland Star*, 1 December 1921, p. 5.

The sad acceptance of the fate of a son and brother is succinctly illustrated by the short formal unsigned black bordered note of thanks sent to the Company by Mrs Bannatyne, mother of Cadet Walter James Bannatyne. “Mrs Bannatyne and family desire to thank you for your kind expression of sympathy”.



*Illustration 13: Acknowledgement from mother and family of Walter James Bannatyne*  
(USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA. Reproduced by permission of right's holder.)

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Robert Chalmers, father of Cadet Geoffrey Walter Chalmers, wrote to Aitken thanking him for his message of sympathy. The pain of coming to terms with the loss of his son is evident, “this loss is very hard to bear”, and he sought as much information from the Company as was available no doubt to help him come to terms with the disaster. He also asked “to be put in touch with some of the survivors, so I should indeed be thankful to hear as much as I can about my son”.<sup>247</sup>

Florence Hoare was the mother of Cadet Donovan O’Bryen Hoare. She had raised her only child alone after his father, who was a failed share broker from Christchurch, abandoned his family and moved to Australia. The news of young Hoare’s death was a tragic loss for a mother who had struggled on a nurse’s wage to fund her son into his cadetship. Her sadness is apparent in a letter of response to Aitken. “I would like to thank you for the very kind way in which you broke the news, so terrible to me, of my son’s death. He was all I had and I had made many plans for his future”.<sup>248</sup>

Compensation for death and injury had been addressed in a scheme established by the Board of Trade and administered by the Committee of War Risks Association. Its

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<sup>247</sup> Robert H. Chalmers to D.A. Aitken, 4 December 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

<sup>248</sup> Florence Hoare to D.A. Aitken, 27 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

relevance to the New Zealand Mercantile Marine was not considered until 1917, when the impact of naval warfare on New Zealand ships and seafarers became relevant after the loss of a number of vessels including *Aparima*, *Wairuna*, *Aurora* and *Matunga*. In correspondence between the Ministers of Marine and War Pensions, the concerns of the officers and crew of the New Zealand Mercantile Marine was noted. As the result, the Prime Minister sought clarification from England whether the “New Zealand Mercantile Marine [could] be included in Board of Trade scheme, and if so on what terms”.<sup>249</sup>

The War Pension Act 1916 prescribed entitlement in the case of “death or injury happening cause during the period of the war” however pensions “could only be provided ... for officers and men who have contracted to serve onboard ... for the whole period of the war”.<sup>250</sup> In his review of the Act’s provisions, the Solicitor-General was of the opinion that the War Pensions Act was not relevant because seafarers did not contract their services indefinitely and the provisions of the Workers Compensation Act covered compensation for work, not enemy related death or injury. He recommended that the War Pensions Act be made relevant to the Mercantile Marine.

The outcome of the deliberations and legal opinions was that the Board of Trade compensation scheme applied to all British ships wherever registered and therefore covered New Zealand ships as well as ships registered in the United Kingdom. This decision led the Minister of Marine to provide an undertaking to Captain Macindoe on behalf at the Merchant Service Guild “that if any of the dependants of those who were lost in *Aparima* put in their claims in New Zealand, I will forward them to the proper authorities in England, in order that compensation may be paid under the scheme”.<sup>251</sup>

Whilst the Board of Trade scheme eventually provided compensation, it did not provide immediate assistance until payment was approved and this involved considerable delay. Emily Gibson, who was a key member of the Auckland Women’s Political League, a socialist and worker on issues concerning women, compared the plight of seafarer’s families with those of soldiers, in a letter to the *New Zealand Herald*.

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<sup>249</sup> Hon Sir James Allen to Hon Thomas M. Wilford, 27 November 1917, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1168 Record No 25/875 Part 1, ANZ.

<sup>250</sup> John W. Salmond Solicitor-General to Attorney-General, 10 January 1918, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1168 Record No 25/875 Part 1, ANZ.

<sup>251</sup> Hon Thomas M. Wilford, statement, 1918, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 1168 Record No 25/875 Part 1, ANZ; *Dominion*, 4 March 1918, p. 6.

The people of New Zealand have insisted that our soldiers shall go overseas satisfied that their dependants will have sufficient to live on in their absence, and receive pensions in the event of their deaths, but seamen who take equal risks every time they go on a voyage at present have no such comfort.<sup>252</sup>

Despite the lack of immediate assistance from the Board of Trade and New Zealand Government, it was fortunate that the Union Steam Ship Company generally treated *Aparima* casualties next-of-kin and survivors fairly in the months after the sinking, as is evident from the correspondence that has survived.

After a number of hostile letters received from the parents of Newton and Stacey, the Union Steam Ship Company decided to refund them the third year's cadetship premium paid in the hope that this would appease their anger.<sup>253</sup> Newton reacted adversely to the £30 refund stating that he considered the amount "paltry and quite inadequate".<sup>254</sup> Aitken believed that, given the history of correspondence from Newton, there was little to be gained from continuing the letter exchange. He did not want Newton to harbour any "impression that we are parsimonious in the matter of the refund" and therefore decided to refund him the remaining £90 for the earlier two years and to extend that refund to Stacey also.<sup>255</sup> Because of the Newton decision to refund the premium, and as the result of more enquiries from other parents, Company Secretary Wheeler proposed to Aitken that premiums totalling £1,110 be refunded in full to all parents and guardians of the drowned cadets.<sup>256</sup> Wheeler's recommendation was adopted by the Company "as an act of grace and a mark of sympathy with parents who have been bereaved".<sup>257</sup>

The response to this decision, other than from Newton and Stacey, was of intense gratitude. Donald Marshall, father of Cadet Adam Marshall, thanked the directors "very much" and stated that the "Company had carried out its part of the agreement faithfully and I never looked for any refund".<sup>258</sup> Mrs Proudfoot, mother of Cadet John Proudfoot,

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<sup>252</sup> Megan Hutching, "Gibson, Emily Patricia" from Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 30 October 2012. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/biographies/3g7/gibson-emily-patricia>; *NZ Herald*, 25 March 1918, p. 7.

<sup>253</sup> C.H. Hughes to D.A. Aitken, 6 March 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>254</sup> J.A. Newton to D.A. Aitken, 26 March 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>255</sup> D.A. Aitken to C.H. Hughes, 4 April 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>256</sup> A.W. Wheeler to D.A. Aitken, 19 April 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>257</sup> D.A. Aitken to C.H. Hughes, 8 May 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>258</sup> Donald Marshall to D.A. Aitken, 11 May 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

offered her “thanks to the Directors for their kindness and sympathy”.<sup>259</sup> Others replied in the same vein.

The Board of Trade Compensation Scheme was eventually extended to provide compensation for New Zealand members of the Mercantile Marine who were killed or injured as the result of a war risk. The scheme provided for payment of an annuity purchased from a nominated War Risks Insurance Association. The value of the annuity was calculated as a fraction of the annual wages plus any victualling allowance paid to the seafarer. The formula was dependent on the number of children, existence of a surviving spouse and whether the seafarer was either killed or injured to the extent they could not work. The annuity was paid for children until they reached the age of 16 years and for widows until death or re-marriage.<sup>260</sup>

The following illustrates the pension entitlement for a childless widow of an officer who received £10 per month plus a victualling allowance of 3/- per day. His total pay would have been £174 per annum and the amount of compensation under the Workers Compensation Act would have been £300.

Figure 14: Example of Compensation Entitlement for a childless widow

	£	s	d
Widow's pension (no children) is deemed to be one-third of £174.	58	0	0
plus Annuity which could be purchased with £300 (according to Post Office Tables, and dependent on the age of the widow which for this example was 30 years old)	15	12	2
<b>TOTAL ANNUITY PAYABLE</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>

The widow would therefore have received the Widow's Pension of £73.12s.2d per annum.

Many if not all of the next of kin of those killed on *Aparima* applied for War Risks Seamen's Compensation provided by the Board of Trade however there were difficulties with the cadet claims. Under the terms of the scheme, it was not contemplated that a parent or sibling was entitled to make a nearest surviving relative claim because of the dependency condition. In the case of the cadets this was doubly difficult as they were

<sup>259</sup> Mary Proudfoot to D.A. Aitken, 15 May 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:194, WCA.

<sup>260</sup> Marine Dept, The Mercantile Marine and War Risks - Details of the Compensation Scheme, 18 July 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA.

not paid a wage and instead were actually dependent on parents and guardians to pay their annual premium and all other living expenses.

Despite eligibility questions, the claims submitted by parents were supported by the New Zealand Government. Mrs Florence Hoare submitted a claim in respect of her son, Cadet Donovan O'Bryen Hoare. She stated an emotional case in justification of her claim.

Although not actually a dependent, I was looking forward to the expiry of his three years cadetship when my son and only child would make such progress in life as to enable him to make some return for money spent on his education, etc. and later on help to keep me from poverty in old age. I am not a widow but had to divorce my husband who married again. I had to support myself and my son for the last nine years.<sup>261</sup>

The Secretary of New Zealand Marine Department pointed out that Mrs Hoare appeared to have no claim, as the scheme only refers to dependents or partial dependents. He did undertake to submit her claim along with "a statement of position" for consideration by the Imperial Government.<sup>262</sup> Similar responses were sent to other parents of cadets.

## S U M M A R Y

This chapter uncovers some of the stories of the master, officers and crew of the Union Steam Ship Company's steamship *Aparima* during World War 1. It illustrates a story that was additional or different to seafarers' peacetime lives, and it is this that is missing from the historiography. This microhistory of *Aparima's* master, officers and crew affirms the proof of absence by negating the cynical argument that there was no intimate human history to be told of the New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile Marine during World War 1.

*Aparima* provides an extreme example of the impact of World War 1 on a master and his officers and crew. The ship was well known to the public and there was considerable peacetime interest in her and her crew. Apart from the documented commercial achievements, the ship was used by the Union Steam Ship Company as its

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<sup>261</sup> Florence Hoare, Particulars of Claim by Dependents, 31 July 1918, Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 923 Record No 13/428, ANZ.

<sup>262</sup> Secretary Marine Dept to Stephenson BNZ Patea (acting for Mrs Florence Hoare), Marine Dept Collection, M1 Box 923 Record No 13/428, ANZ.

cadet training vessel and was the first deployment of Lascar labour replacing white New Zealand unionised seafarers. She was chartered by the New Zealand Government during World War 1 as a troopship, making six return voyages transporting more than 4,000 troops and 1,700 horses to war, returning each time with invalided soldiers and much needed cargo. *Aparima* was finally requisitioned by the Imperial Government as a tramp steamer to carry cargo to Britain. It was in this role that she was sunk by a German torpedo on 19 November 1917 with the loss of 55 lives including 17 cadets between the ages of 15 and 19.

Despite the many human stories of the New Zealand seafarers aboard this well known ship, the prominent historical references to *Aparima* during WWI barely discuss her from a seafarer's perspective. The fullest account is contained in the history of the P&O during WWI written by Frederick Hook. His account is limited to the *Aparima* sinking, quoting extensively from Captain Doorly's official Company report, and the subsequent rescue including the much repeated story of the miraculous rescue of Thomas Ewart Bevan.<sup>263</sup> Archibald Hurd was commissioned by the British Government to write the definitive history of the Merchant Navy during WWI. He only briefly mentions *Aparima* and without any intimate human story.<sup>264</sup> Sydney Waters wrote the Union Steam Ship Company history published in 1951. He spared only two paragraphs for *Aparima*'s war service.<sup>265</sup>

Throughout his involvement with *Aparima*, Captain James Gerald Stokely Doorly was the leading figure as master, the leader during the abandon ship, the manager of the settlement of the ship's affairs in London after the sinking, and counsellor to the widows and parents of those lost in the sinking. His was the fullest account of the disaster on record at Union Steam Ship Company. It was his account that was used by Hook in the P&O history and it was his version of events that was included in the correspondence to Chief Steward James Mackie's widow and all of the cadets' families. It was Doorly that spoke at public lectures back in New Zealand after the war. According to family accounts, he was a story teller. It is therefore hardly surprising that he should dedicate so much of his own book to *Aparima*, and disappointing that only he contributed the ship's story to New Zealand's WWI historiography.

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<sup>263</sup> Hook, pp. 1920, 242-248, 237, 305-307.

<sup>264</sup> Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. III, p. 280.

<sup>265</sup> Waters, 1951, pp. 73-74.

In addition to the war related implications of repurposing a cargo vessel as a troopship, fitting defensive guns and undertaking long transport and supply voyages under constant enemy threat, there existed multiple facets of the industry that remained as undercurrents that were largely silenced during the war years but would rise during subsequent peacetime. These themes were in many ways incidental to the war and more akin to the commercial nature of the ship such as the employment of lower cost Lascar labour, ongoing industrial related accidents and sickness, conflict between the greater good and the commercial expectations of Company shareholders, the ability of trade unions to renegotiate their award renewals in 1916, compensation for loss at the hands of the enemy, and on a more individual note, the personal tragedies suffered by the seafarers and their next of kin.

Despite the limited coverage of the wartime career of *Aparima* in New Zealand historiography, especially in relation to her officers and crew, it is evident from this microhistory that a rich story exists that encompassed many important aspects of New Zealand's World War 1 merchant seafarers.



## CHAPTER 4

# WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

The history of the *Official History* and the *Popular History* discussed in Chapter 1 provide possible explanations for the absence of New Zealand’s WWI merchant seafarers from the historiography. There are demographic characteristics of this workforce which suggest additional possible reasons for their historiographical silence. This chapter uses the demographics of New Zealand’s Mercantile Marine War Medal recipients to explore these additional reasons.

At any one time during the wartime period, approximately 5,000 New Zealanders earned their living at sea. Of these, the number employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine was at least 1,439 and possibly double that number. Apart from those who applied for and received the Mercantile Marine War Medal for the wartime service, most have remained anonymous and what individual details remain are minimal. The application forms and supporting documentation lodged by those who applied for their medals have not survived which is unfortunate as much career information was required to justify each application. Medal index cards of the 1,698 successful applicants recorded in New Zealand have survived and these contain a small amount of personal information recorded, specifically name, gender, date and place of birth and date and place of ribbon and medal issue.<sup>266</sup>

Be-Bh    Bi-BI

Deceased

Application No. 778

**WAR MEDALS.**

Name: Bannatyne, Walter James  
(Surname) (Christian names)

Born at Wairoa in year 1900

Ribbon for B.M. W.M. medal.

Issued at Port of obedate issued to mother.

Date of issue: 13/9/22

Medal: B.M. & W.M.

Issued at Wairoa P.O.

Date of issue: 13/9/22

[10584-20]

*Illustration 14: Medal Index Card for Cadet Walter James Bannatyne, ex Aparima*  
 (Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - A to K", Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 50, ANZ.  
 Reproduced by permission of right's holder.)

<sup>266</sup> Gender was derived from the seafarer’s given name.

A comparison of this information with the demographic profile of the New Zealand population, the soldiers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and the Empire's merchant seafarers, highlights the anomalous demographics of the New Zealand WWI merchant seafarer workforce. This disparity may have contributed, to some extent at least, to their historiographical silence.

## G E N D E R

Almost without exception, New Zealand merchant seafarers were male and only two of the New Zealand medallist sample were female.<sup>267</sup> With such a low representation, the role of women in New Zealand's WWI Mercantile Marine has been overlooked as evidenced by the gender language in maritime historiography, which almost without exception refers to the masculine role of 'seaman' rather than 'seafarer'.

Although only two New Zealand women were issued with the medal, there were undoubtedly others and their roles were no less perilous than those of their male counterparts. New Zealand stewardess, Mrs Agnes Ellen MacKenzie is a case in point. Mrs MacKenzie lived in Wellington and her husband Alexander was second engineer on the Union Steam Ship Company steamer *Kotuku*. He died in 1911 following an accident involving a mooring line whilst his ship was berthing at Onehunga wharf. Following his death, Agnes worked as a stewardess on a number of ships including the Burns Philps' steamer *Matunga*.

On the 6 August 1917 while on a voyage from Sydney to Rabaul in Papua New Guinea the *Matunga* was captured by the German commerce raider *Wolf*, her crew and passengers were taken prisoners of war, the cargo of coal offloaded and the ship then scuttled. Mrs MacKenzie and three *Matunga* passengers were subsequently transferred to the German captured Japanese steamer *Hitachi Maru* and finally, the captured Spanish steamer *Igotz Mendi* on which they remained prisoners for nearly seven months. The *Wolf* and *Igotz Mendi* continued their marauding cruise through the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans before heading home to Germany through the North Sea. The *Igotz Mendi* ran aground in fog on the neutral Danish coast on 22

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<sup>267</sup> Amy Doyle (nee Gardner), born 1889 in New Zealand. Amy's medals were claimed very late and issued on 8 June 1966 to her family who were then resident in Manly, NSW. Mary Bessie Wright, born 1873 in Devon, England. Mary's medal application was approved and medal ribbons sent on 5 January 1937 and her medals were issued 4 June 1937. Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - A to K", Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 50, ANZ; Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - L to Z", Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 51, ANZ.

February 1918. Mrs MacKenzie's fellow *Matunga* crew members, who had remained aboard *Wolf*, were interned in Güstrow prisoner of war camp following their arrival in Germany two days later. Fortunately Mrs MacKenzie and her fellow *Igotz Mendi* borne prisoners were rescued and repatriated home, avoiding imprisonment in Germany by a few hours.<sup>268</sup>

## A G E

New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine were younger than the average Allied merchant seafarer. Furthermore, the age distribution of New Zealand seafarers reflected the Dominion's population except that the absence of males of military service qualifying age from the New Zealand population, is not evident in New Zealand's Mercantile Marine.

The medal index cards of New Zealand recipients provide the only demographic sample of New Zealand merchant seafarers. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) has recorded all WWI casualties including the Mercantile Marine and this provides a large sample of all Allied merchant seafarers for comparative purposes. CWGC records 13,342 readily identifiable WWI Mercantile Marine casualties, of whom 12,175 have recorded ages.<sup>269</sup> Hurd suggested in his history of the Empire's Mercantile Marine that the total casualties on merchant vessels were 14,287, with another 434 lost on British fishing vessels.<sup>270</sup> The difference between this and the CWGC count is attributed to data accuracy and completeness issues with the CWGC database.

An age comparison of New Zealand and Allied merchant seafarers, using these data sources, indicates that there were fewer older New Zealand seafarers and that they were generally younger than their mainly British counterparts, as illustrated in the following graph (Figure 15).

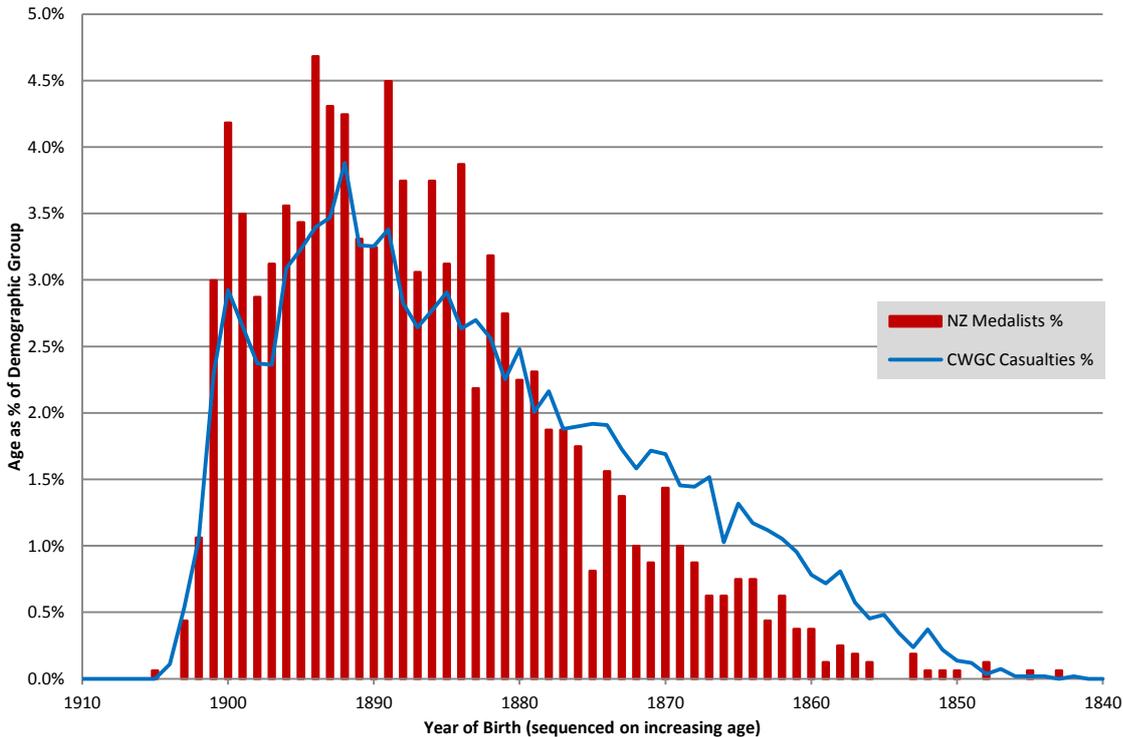
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<sup>268</sup> *Auckland Star*, 8 July 1911, p. 8; *Auckland Star*, 10 July 1911, p. 6; *Auckland Star*, 10 July 1911, p. 12; *Colonist*, 19 March 1918, p. 4; *The Argus*, 14 March 1918, p. 7; *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 27 May 1918, p. 2; Guiliant and Hohnen, 2009, pp. 111-112, 143-144, 170, 174-176, 204-206, 248, 262; John Cameron, *Ten Months in a German Raider. A Prisoner of War Aboard Wolf* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), pp. 167-168; Ministry of Transport, *Prisoners of War*, Ministry of Transport Collection, MT 9/1240 BT Reference M3265, NA.

<sup>269</sup> CWGC, Find War Dead.

<sup>270</sup> Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. III, p. 379.

Figure 15: Age distribution of WWI Allied Mercantile Marine casualties compared to successful New Zealand Mercantile Marine War Medal applicants



The greatest influence on this age distribution difference was the probable impact of marriage and family responsibilities on seafarer employment preferences. The life of a seafarer was more suited to the young, especially on foreign trades, because of the working conditions and the long periods away from home. Anecdotal evidence suggests that once married, New Zealand seafarers tended to either go ashore or take employment on Home or Trans-Tasman trades, as this resulted in them being away from home less. The outcome was that seafarers on foreign-going trades were generally either younger, or single.

Former *Aparima* cadet Ernest Sutherland, who later became chief officer on the Union Steam Ship Company steamship *Kairanga*, is an example of this point as evidenced by a letter he wrote to the Company seeking a shore job.

In the event of any vacancy occurring in the shore staff, I would esteem it a favour if you would enter my name for any such position that falls vacant. The reason that I desire a shore position is owing to my wife being in indifferent health.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>271</sup> John Sutherland to USSCo, 1929, USSCo Collection, AF005:44:27, WCA.

Sutherland, aged 32 years at the time, was married and his young family were resident in Christchurch. His application for shore employment was unsuccessful and he consequently resigned from the Union Steam Ship Company to take the position of tug master for the Lyttelton Harbour Board, a role that ensured he was close to his home and family.

The New Zealand age skew was unlikely amongst its counterpart British merchant seafarers employed on war service. Whilst the married employment preferences may have been the same for New Zealand and British based seafarers, this would not have impacted the age of British merchant seafarers because every trade, not just foreign going, was considered war service. Mercantile Marine war service comprised a minimum of six months service during which time the seafarer must have completed at least one voyage through the danger zone. Because of the proximity to war, these criteria were satisfied by nearly every British seafarer, including those employed on home trades such as coastal shipping, fishing and harbour tug and pilot crews, from which group a considerable number of casualties were experienced.

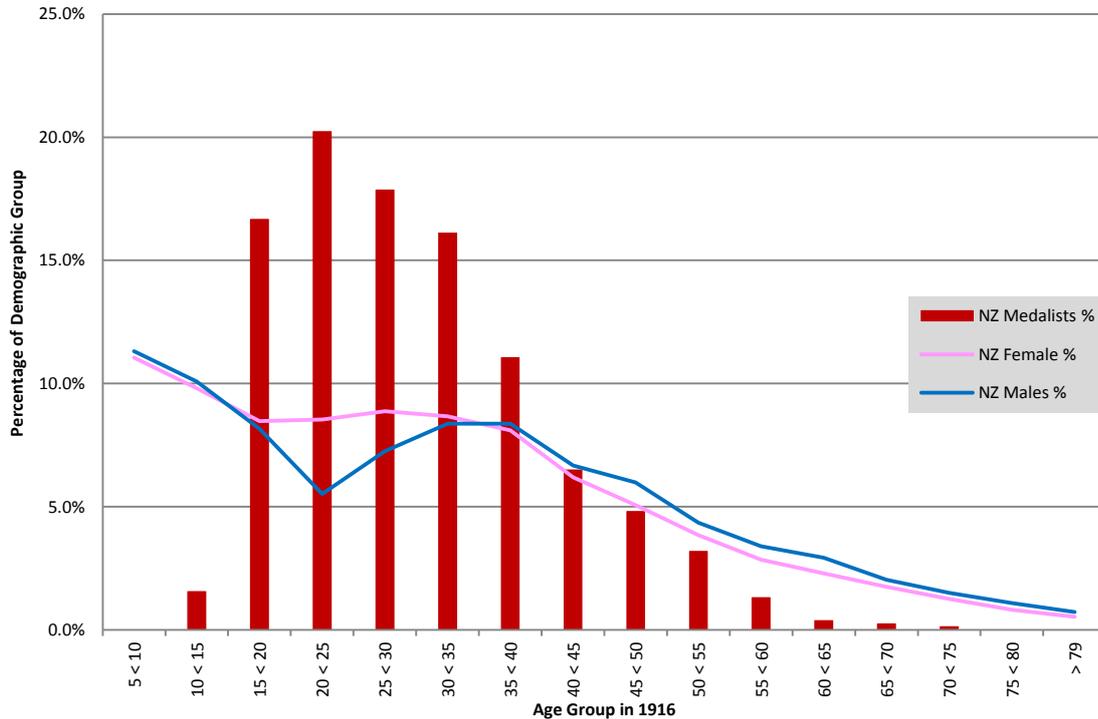
The age distribution of New Zealand merchant seafarers, except those within military service age, did match the 1916 New Zealand census male age distribution, as illustrated in Figure 16.<sup>272</sup> By census time in October 1916, 58,704 New Zealand soldiers had embarked for service overseas with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. This number represented 10.64% of the then remaining male population of 551,775.<sup>273</sup> This age group depletion evident in the New Zealand male population is not reflected in the age distribution of WWI Mercantile Marine, but is quite apparent when compared to the New Zealand female population.

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<sup>272</sup> Littlewood, 2010, p. 30; *Evening Post*, 14 February 1917, p. 8.

<sup>273</sup> Statistics N.Z., *The Ages of the People*, 1918.

Figure 16: Age distribution of successful New Zealand Mercantile Marine War Medal applicants compared to the New Zealand Population at 1916 Census<sup>274</sup>



The exemption of many seafarers from military service on account of the Mercantile Marine being an essential industry is the key reason why depletion of military aged males is not evident in the New Zealand maritime workforce. Whilst exemption was not automatically granted, those with longer sea service, and deemed indispensable, could successfully apply for exemption through the Military Service Board:

seamen who have had not less than twelve months' sea service, and who are regarded by the Minister for Munitions as indispensable for carrying on the mercantile marine, it was intended to recommend the Military Service Boards to exempt such reservists from military service while they are following their calling as seamen. Men coming under this category, who are selected for service, and desire exemption, have been recommended by the union to appeal to the Military Service Board, producing their certificates of discharge, or any other evidence they may be in possession of, to show they are engaged in operating the mercantile marine.<sup>275</sup>

<sup>274</sup> The percentages are based on the count of Population New Zealand Males and Females or New Zealand Mercantile Marine War medal recipients in each case. The 1916 Census count of males and females was 551,775 and 547,674 respectively. The number of medalists with recorded dates of birth was 1,602 (the remaining 96 had no recorded date of birth).

<sup>275</sup> *Evening Post*, 9 November 1916, p. 7.

There was considerable resentment amongst the New Zealand population, especially from females and those soldiers who were already serving overseas, against those males including merchant seamen who for one reason or another had not joined the military. The level of feeling was reported by the Attorney-General of New South Wales after his visit to Christchurch in 1915.

I made inquiry in Christchurch and was told there by one of the girls that they were not walking out with any single men at the present time. When I asked why, they told me that all the men who were worth having had either volunteered or were giving up their evenings in training; and those who had not volunteered and were not training were not worth walking out with. These fine girls not only refrain from discouraging the men from doing their duty, but where the men are slow in realising their responsibilities they show their disapproval, by giving them white feathers. In one instance I heard of a band of five girls who went out to a sports meeting and distributed white feathers to likely looking young men.<sup>276</sup>

Although this behaviour was not condoned by the Government, the resentment was widespread and manifested in many ways, including verbal or physical assaults. “A returned soldier was fined 5s at Wanganui Magistrates Court last week for calling another man a shirker. Offers to pay the fine were quickly forthcoming from a Fordell farmer who had soldier sons and from the Auckland Returned Soldier’s Association”.<sup>277</sup>

## PLACE OF BIRTH

The maritime workforce by nature was itinerant and international and this is reflected in the diversity of those who were employed in New Zealand’s WWI Mercantile Marine. Analysis of the birthplaces of the 1,698 New Zealand recorded medallists, and comparison to those of the general population, highlights that the portion of seafarers who were born in New Zealand is significantly lower than in the total population.

What is immediately evident (Figure 17) is that there is a predominance of United Kingdom born seafarers employed in New Zealand’s WWI Mercantile Marine. Together they formed 51.1% of this total workforce compared to 21.1% of the total New Zealand population at the 1916 census, with English and Scottish born seafarers comprising the majority of these. New Zealand born, whilst still the largest single group, contributed

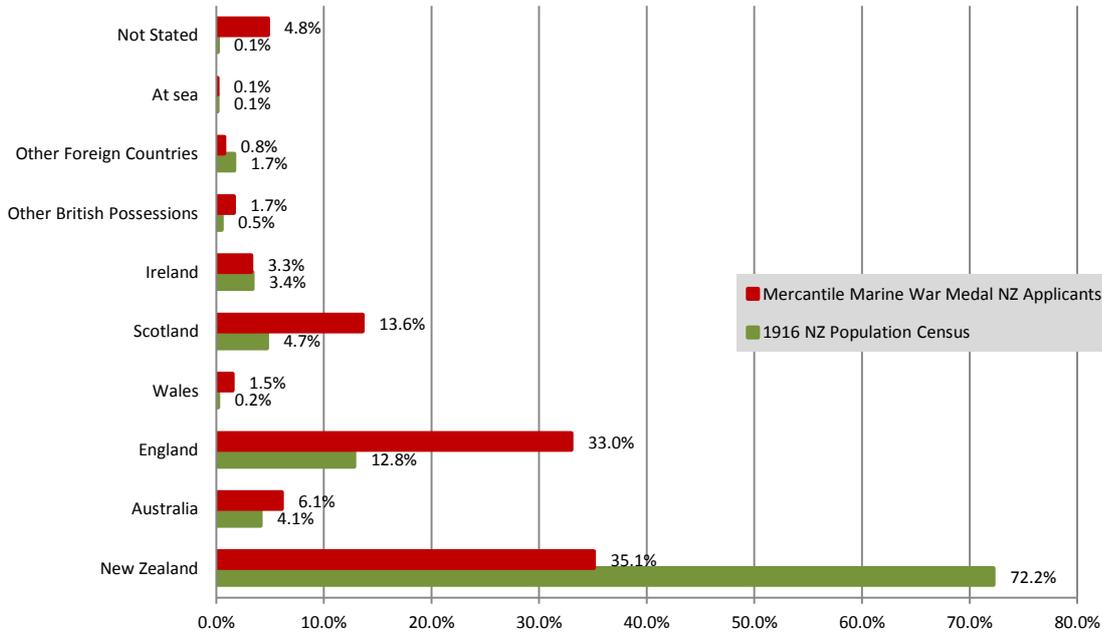
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<sup>276</sup> *Northern Advocate*, 2 March 1915, p. 1.

<sup>277</sup> *Poverty Bay Herald*, 14 February 1917, p. 2.

only 35.1% of the seafarer workforce yet constituted 72.2% of the population. Those considered British, including New Zealanders and Australians, maintained their share at approximately 98%.

Figure 17: Place of Birth of successful New Zealand Mercantile Marine War Medal applicants compared to the New Zealand Population at 1916 Census<sup>278</sup>



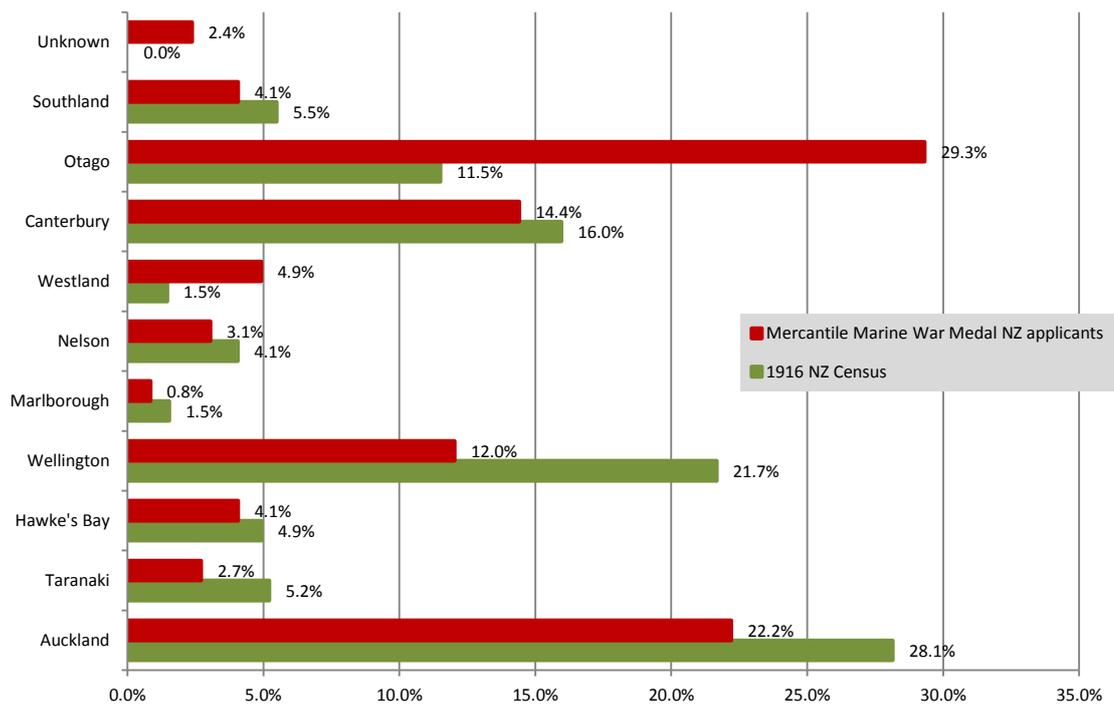
There are a number of contributing factors which explain this variance. The expanding merchant fleet, constraints on seafarer training capacity, and the growing preoccupation with naval rather than merchant marine training, led to recruitment of non-New Zealanders to fill merchant seafarer roles and the United Kingdom was an excellent source. Employment of British seafarers was particularly influenced by the Union Steam Ship Company's preference for Scottish built ships from William Denny's Dumbarton yard. When new ships were delivered, they invariably included Scottish engineers who then joined the Company and remained with the ship, often in senior officer roles. This was an ideal arrangement for the Company as there was otherwise no ready source of trained marine engineers in New Zealand. The qualified seafarer shortfall was further exacerbated in 1914 when the Royal Navy relocated *HMS Philomel* to New Zealand, making the Government responsible for recruiting and retaining its crew. The Minister of Defence James Allen was reported in the *Evening Post* as saying

<sup>278</sup> Statistics N.Z., *The Ages of the People*, 1918; Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - A to K", Card Index, Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 50, ANZ; Marine Dept, "War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - L to Z", Card Index, Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 51, ANZ.

that “a considerable number of applications have been received from young men who are desirous of entering on a period of training, both as officers and seamen, and there appears to be every prospect of the *Philomel* entering on her new career as a training ship for the navy under the most auspicious conditions”.<sup>279</sup>

Comparison of the geographic distribution of the New Zealand population with locally born seafarers’ place of birth (Figure 18, below) indicates that available employment may have been the primary motivation for New Zealand males joining the Mercantile Marine. It is also apparent that males did not generally move to major shipping centres outside of their home province to seek employment in the industry. The significance of this observation is that they may have simply considered seafaring as a job that was readily available locally.

Figure 18: Place of Birth distribution of Mercantile Marine War Medal New Zealand applicants compared to the New Zealand Male Population at 1916 Census of New Zealand born seafarers<sup>280</sup>



What is evident is that Otago and Westland each provided a disproportionately higher number of locals as seafarers than elsewhere in New Zealand. Otago which

<sup>279</sup> *Evening Post*, 18 May 1914, p. 8.

<sup>280</sup> Statistics N.Z., *The Ages of the People*, 1918; Marine Dept, “War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - A to K”, Card Index, Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 50, ANZ; Marine Dept, “War Medals Issued: 1914-1918 War - L to Z”, Card Index, Marine Dept Collection, Accession W4963 Box 51, ANZ.

constituted 11.5% of the 1916 population produced 29.3% of the WWI seafarers (255% of its population share) and Westland's 1.5% of the New Zealand population produced 4.9% (335% of its population share). Canterbury, which had strong agricultural exports through the Port of Lyttelton, was the next largest per capita contributor of seafarers with 90% of its population share. The Auckland province, which included 28.1% of the 1916 population, produced only 22.2% (79% of its population share) by comparison.

Port Chalmers was the major port of the Otago province and the location of the Union Steam Ship Company head office. The Port therefore had the largest tonnage of the registered vessels belonging to any location in New Zealand, with a total of 89 vessels having a combined tonnage of 84,252 grt. Whilst this was not the greatest number of vessels associated with a port, the tonnage indicates that the ships were larger and therefore more likely to be working the Foreign and Intercolonial trades that comprised wartime service. Bearing in mind the crew tonnage ratios discussed earlier, it is to be expected that the largest concentration of New Zealand seafarers would therefore be in Otago.

Figure 19: Table showing the number and tonnage of the Registered Vessels which belong to each of the Ports of New Zealand on 3 December 1915<sup>281</sup>

Registry Port	Sailing Vessels		Steam Vessels		Total	
	Vessels	Tons (gwt)	Vessels	Tons (gwt)	Vessels	Tons (gwt)
Auckland	139	8,883	201	23,006	340	31,889
Napier	4	266	29	3,990	33	4,256
Wellington	12	2,305	40	11,619	52	13,924
Nelson	8	199	13	2,714	21	2,913
Lyttelton	12	3,656	18	5,900	30	9,556
Timaru	1	733	1	942	2	1,675
Dunedin	18	7,132	71	77,120	89	84,252
Invercargill	2	372	12	1,258	14	1,630
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>23,546</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>126,549</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>150,095</b>

Westport and Greymouth were New Zealand's major distribution gateways for coal supplies to home as well as overseas destinations. These harbours were also home port for a number of colliers belonging to the Union Steam Ship Company, the Blackball Coal Company and the Westport Coal Company. "Westport had 1,173 vessels [movements] of an aggregate tonnage of 691,809 tons for the year, Greymouth had only 774 vessels [movements] of an aggregate tonnage of 361,341 tons. The average tonnage of the vessels entering Westport was 592 tons and of those entering Greymouth 471

<sup>281</sup> AJHR, H-15, (1916), p. 26.

tons".<sup>282</sup> This represents a considerable number of shipping movements and ample justification for locals to seek employment on one of the many colliers passing through these ports.

## S U M M A R Y

The typical New Zealander employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine was male and slightly younger than his Allied counterpart. Approximately half of the seafarer workforce was born in the United Kingdom or Ireland with only 35.1% being born in New Zealand. Of those born in New Zealand the majority were from the major provinces of Auckland, Otago, Canterbury and Wellington. Otago was the largest provider of seafarers and its share was significantly disproportionate to its population size. The second largest source was Auckland which had the largest population base but contributed disproportionately fewer. These demographics suggest possible reasons for their absence as a collective in New Zealand WWI histories.

In 1925, the Union Steam Ship Company published a short history to mark its 50th anniversary.<sup>283</sup> This was followed up by a more comprehensive volume in 1951.<sup>284</sup> As the majority of New Zealand seafarers were employed by the Union Steam Ship Company which had greater access to the necessary financial and archival resources, it could be assumed that seafarers left the writing of their history in the hands of their employer.

Aside from the Union Steam Ship Company factor, overseas born seafarers represented approximately half of the seafarer workforce. When considered in conjunction with the itinerant nature of this workforce, there is a strong possibility that most seafarers did not consider themselves New Zealanders and therefore saw no need to have a recorded history separate from the Imperial Mercantile Marine histories.

A more powerful rationale for the oversight may have been the unacceptability of the merchant seafarers' story equally alongside those of the New Zealand soldiers who fought at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. Unlike the general male population, the

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<sup>282</sup> *Grey River Argus*, 14 January 1913, p. 5.

<sup>283</sup> Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, *50th anniversary of the founding of the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand Limited: an account of the Company's history during the period 1875-1925, with a report of a dinner held at Wellington on the 15th May 1925*, (Wellington: Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, 1925).

<sup>284</sup> Sydney D. Waters, *Union Line. A Short History of the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand Limited. 1875-1951*, (Wellington: The Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, 1951).

seafarer workforce was not overly depleted by conscription into the military. New Zealand's WWI seafarers were mostly of military age, with those aged 20-45 representing 72% of this workforce. Significant animosity existed towards those excused military service, including seafarers in the Mercantile Marine, who were exempt on the basis of being employed in an essential industry. The level of animosity towards shirkers was widespread and motivated by the perception of injustice. The volunteer and conscripted soldiers sacrificed security and livelihoods, health and life, whereas those exempted military service continued with their lives without penalty or inconvenience. Seafarers were included in the exempt category and therefore suffered the scorn of the community, despite the protestations and support from ship owners, union leaders and government. Soldiers on the other hand were the heroes of New Zealand's WWI historiography.

In their essay on the politics of war memory, historian Timothy G. Ashplant, and his co-authors, suggested that "the nation-state is ... central to the politics of war commemoration" and that "nation-state formations, political parties or movements and other social agents are all involved in constructing versions of the national past and national identity, selecting from or reworking the repertoire of national stories and symbols to fashion effectively useable public memories for their particular ends and purposes".<sup>285</sup> Given the choice therefore, the Government, the Army and the Returned Soldiers Association preferred to tell soldiers' stories that supported the desired ANZAC legend, and not those of the so called shirkers. The seafarer unions who had pleaded exemption of military service for their members, and ship owners who had profited financially from the war, would not have been politically credible or acceptable national story tellers.

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<sup>285</sup> Timothy Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, "The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration: contexts, structures and dynamics" in *Commemorating War. The Politics of Memory*, edited by Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, 3-85, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), p. 16.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The hypothesis here is that the history of New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine is absent from historiography. The term ‘New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine’ encompasses any person who was resident in New Zealand for twelve months duration prior to or during WWI, was employed on an Allied articulated ship between 4 August 1914 and 11 November 1918 inclusive, and worked at least one voyage through the War Danger Zone during that period. This definition is based on a combination of the continuous residency requirements for the right to vote in New Zealand, and the award entitlement for the Mercantile Marine War Medal.

Historical obscurity has been suggested in a number of works relating to New Zealand merchant seafarers. In his history of the New Zealand Seamen’s Union, Conrad Bollinger claimed that “the men who provided the labour and the skill to drive those ships don’t often receive a mention in the history books”. Neill Atkinson asserted in his history of New Zealand seafarers that the “lives of ordinary sailors have remained obscure”. In his paper to a New Zealand conference on WWI history, Gavin McLean quoted a retired merchant seaman as saying it was “about bloody time” a memorial to the Mercantile Marine had finally been erected.<sup>286</sup>

My argument is that the historiographical issue discussed here is one of absence, rather than the obscurity suggested by Bollinger, Atkinson and McLean. To demonstrate this, New Zealand maritime and WWI historiography spanning the 100 years since the war was reviewed to determine the extent to which the New Zealand merchant seafarers’ wartime story was covered. Apart from a small number of memoirs, WWI history from the New Zealand merchant seafarers’ perspective is absent from the material reviewed.

The most substantial relevant work is Archibald Hurd’s *Imperial History of the Merchant Navy*, which covers the entire British Empire and Allied nations. It was acknowledged by the New Zealand Government of the time that this work would form

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<sup>286</sup> Bollinger, 1968, p. 2; Atkinson, 2001, p. vii; Gavin McLean, “The Fourth Service: The Merchant Marine’s War” in *New Zealand’s Great War. New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War*, edited by John Crawford and Ian McGibbon, 406-424, (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007), p. 406.

the Official account and would be supplemented by a New Zealand written *Popular History* that would provide “an intimate human record” of this country’s involvement<sup>287</sup>. Hurd’s *Official History* provides accounts of events rather than individuals and includes narrative of major actions of New Zealand interest such as *Wolf*, *Aparima*, and *Otaki*. The two maritime related chapters included in the *Popular History* focussed on *HMS Philomel* and the New Zealand Hospital Ships but the promised seafarers’ intimate human record was not included. Of the remaining maritime industry stakeholders, the seafarer unions were not motivated to address their members’ wartime history, preferring instead to focus on then current industrial issues. The shipping companies, especially the Union Steam Ship Company which profited significantly from the war, were well placed to influence historiography and did so but from an organisational history perspective. The most notable shipping company exception was the history written for P&O which acknowledged its sea-going employees and included a chapter on *Aparima* and her final crew.<sup>288</sup>

Although the history of New Zealand merchant seafarers employed during WWI is absent, this was not the consequence of them being either non-existent as an entity or not having their own history to tell.

There was no definitive roll of these merchant seafarers maintained, however a number of different estimates suggest there were New Zealanders employed in the Mercantile Marine during WWI. Using New Zealand Government data, estimates indicate that these seafarers numbered at least 1,439 and the probable count exceeding 2,500. Whilst these estimates contain a significant margin of error, they indicate a substantial workforce and confirm that ‘New Zealanders employed in the WWI Mercantile Marine’ existed as a distinct service.

The microhistory of *Aparima*’s seafarers proves by example the existence of a story that differs from either the government or companies’ historical perspectives. With the possible exception of New Zealand’s two hospital ships, public interest in *Aparima* during wartime was the strongest of any vessel and this was motivated by the vessel’s role as troopship, its economic importance and its use as an officer cadet training ship. Despite her having been sunk, inflicting New Zealand’s largest single incident of WWI merchant seafarer deaths, it is remarkable that *Aparima*’s human story was not included in the *Popular History*. A thorough search of archival material

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<sup>287</sup> A.W. Robin to Hon Sir James Allen, Army Dept Collection, AD1 Box 1005 Record No 51/669, ANZ.

<sup>288</sup> Hook, 1920.

and contemporary New Zealand newspapers provided a strong timeline of events, upon which a rich array of the stories of the master, officers, cadets and crew of the Union Steam Ship Company's *Aparima* and their families have now been narrated.

The dominant New Zealand narrative of WWI Mercantile Marine has remained great ships, great companies and great masters. The seafarers' story 'from below' is missing from the historiography, as is any evidence of a struggle to change or influence the dominant narrative, however it appears that a long standing animosity remains. The editorial in a recent *New Zealand Company of Master Mariners Journal*, entitled "almost 100 years on and still no proper recognition", is an example of this feeling. The article protested that "it took ninety six years before the work of the New Zealand Merchant Navy received any real recognition of war effort and consequent sacrifice ... there still appears to be a general unawareness of the role played by the merchant seaman or even who we are."<sup>289</sup> The editor's recent experience illustrates his point.

I am 83 and a 5th generation Master Mariner. My father was both at Gallipoli and also had his ship sunk and captured in WW2. Like many, he never bothered to collect any medals as he felt, rightly, the MN war efforts were not properly recognised. I attended the Anzac service here in Levin earlier this year and took along a Merchant Service flag 'Red Duster'. One of the officials told me it was a Maori flag and not appropriate at the service. I told him what the flag was but he replied Oh yes but they were civilians not proper navy!<sup>290</sup>

Why were the merchant seafarers not included in New Zealand's WWI historiography, especially the Government sponsored *Popular History*?

Whilst the demographics of New Zealand's merchant seafarers provide a possible explanation as to why their story is missing from the *Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War*, the primary reason appears to have been the editorial direction from government and military leaders. When the *Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War* was mooted, the government and the military had the power and resources to establish the "dominant national narrative" of the country's involvement in WWI, which they did.<sup>291</sup> Captain Percy Hall-Thompson RN was

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<sup>289</sup> Nic Campbell, "Editorial. Almost 100 Years On and Still No Proper Recognition" in *On Deck. The Official Journal of the N.Z. Company of Master Mariners Inc*, (March 2013), p. 5.

<sup>290</sup> Nic Campbell to author, 17 November 2012.

<sup>291</sup> Ashplant, et.al, p. 16.

In this essay on the politics of war memory and commemoration, Ashplant, Dawson and Roper use the phrase "dominant national narrative" to describe the product of conflict between competing versions of wartime events.

allocated the chapter covering “New Zealand’s share in the Naval War - The *Philomel*, etc.”. Hall-Thompson omitted to discuss the “etcetera”, focusing instead on the role of *HMS Philomel* with which he was intimately involved as Commander. Despite being intimately aware of the Mercantile Marine’s contribution to the War effort, the *Popular History* editor, Lieutenant Henry Drew N.Z.E.F., did not direct Hall-Thompson to deliver a more inclusive naval view, choosing instead to apologetically acknowledge their absence in his introduction to the volume.

The New Zealand Marine Department recorded the issuing of 1,698 Mercantile Marine War Medals for WWI service. Each issue was itemised on index cards which also included the recipients’ basic demographic data. This data indicates statistical skews in the seafarer demographics, suggesting possible reasons for the missing history. When compared to the 1916 New Zealand population census, there is a notable absence of males of military service age in the general population when compared to females of the same age. This absence is not apparent in the seafarer sample, primarily because military service exemption was granted to many merchant seafarers. Being of military age and exempt from service in the forces created animosity from soldiers and the public, who despised what they called “shirkers”. Merchant seafarers were included in this category as their service was not considered military.

Other possible reasons included a much higher proportion of merchant seafarers being born outside of New Zealand. Whereas 72.2% of residents were New Zealand born, only 35.1% of seafarers were. Fewer merchant seafarers would therefore have considered themselves as New Zealanders whereas the majority of NZEF soldiers would have had a strong affinity for the country. This possibly resulted in seafarers having a greater sense of belonging to the British, rather than the New Zealand, Mercantile Marine.

Merchant seafarers’ sense of non-participation in the war is apparent in the stories recalled by Gavin McLean and Nic Campbell. The feeling of not belonging was further reinforced by merchant seafarers not qualifying for RSA membership. This would have created further isolation. It was not until 1935 that seafarers were permitted to join the Wellington RSA after its rules were altered to admit those “who served in or with the British Mercantile Marine Service or transports in war zones, and

who had been awarded the British War Medal and Mercantile Marine War Medal, and either had been honourably discharged or was awaiting discharge from such forces”.<sup>292</sup>

Of the New Zealand born seafarers, most originated from major port towns with a disproportionate number coming from Otago. This is not surprising given that the Union Steam Ship Company was headquartered in Dunedin and the majority of shipping tonnage was therefore registered at that port. This skew does not of itself indicate a reason for a missing history however it does indicate a strong employment correlation between New Zealand born seafarers and the Union Steam Ship Company. It is therefore likely that most New Zealand merchant seafarers identified with Union Steam Ship Company and left the matter of history to their employer.

The demographic-related observations suggest that without an established New Zealand identity, a sense of belonging and an identifiable heritage, there was little interest in a separate wartime history as few would have acknowledged the existence of a separate New Zealand Mercantile Marine.

Publication of New Zealand’s WWI histories was controlled by the wartime powerbrokers, namely the government and the military. They sought to maintain a mutually supportive narrative that endorsed past decisions, reinforced preferred values and maintained political favour with WWI veterans. The story of seafarers who were exempted military service and continued employment for ever increasing wages did not fit with the ANZAC legend of the heroic soldier sacrificing all for King and Country.

The lack of awareness and acknowledgement of New Zealand’s WWI merchant seafarers’ history remains. With the looming WWI centennial commemorations, there is an opportunity to rework the national narrative to incorporate these stories that did not fit the original picture of the heroic New Zealander at Gallipoli, Palestine and France; but will it happen? Australian historian Henry Reynolds suggests that this is unlikely as the history of WWI has been dominated by the military and is now “so powerful and so pervasive that it is rarely questioned”.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Peter Cooke, *All Formed Up. A History of the Wellington Returned and Services’ Association, 1916-2007*, (Wellington: Ngaio Press, 2008), p.56; *Evening Post*, (22 November 1935), p.9.

<sup>293</sup> Henry Reynolds, “Are nations really made in war?” in *What’s Wrong with ANZAC? The militarisation of Australian History*, edited by Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, 24-44, (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010), p. 25.



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# APPENDIX A

## SHIP'S COMPANY ON FINAL VOYAGE OF *APARIMA*

This is a roll of those on *Aparima's* Articles of Agreement, plus the Sea Pilot who joined at Gravesend, for its passage from London through the Bristol Channel to Barry Roads, when it was torpedoed on 19 November 1917.<sup>294</sup>

### DECK DEPARTMENT

Rank / Rating	Crew name	Ethnicity	
Master	DOORLY, James Gerald Stokely	White	
First Officer	DANIEL, Harry Archibald	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Second Officer	MacDONALD, George McKenzie	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Third Officer	COOPER, Alfred Mowbray	White	
Wireless Operator	VIPAN, Anton Frederick	White	
Asst. Wireless Operator	MILLINGTON, Robert Perrett Taipo	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Carpenter No 1	AH KONG	Chinese	
Carpenter No 2	AH SENG [SING]	Chinese	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Boatswain	JOHNSON, Alfred	White	
Quartermaster	PERRY, Frank	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Able Seamen	DWYER, Anthony	White	
Able Seamen	ELDER, Arthur Eber	White	Ashore
Able Seamen	FERRIS, Richard John	White	
Able Seamen	FOX, Reginald Valentine	White	
Able Seamen	McINTYRE, Alexander	White	
Able Seamen	MCKINNON, L.	White	
RNR Gunner	COWIE, James	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
RNR Gunner	SMITH, John William	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Winchman	NOOROO [NURU]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Deck Cassab	DIN MAHOMED	Lascar	
Topass	BIDESHY [BEEDASHY]	Lascar	
Sea Pilot	POSGATE, W.G.	White	Not on Ship's Articles

<sup>294</sup> *Evening Post*, 13 March 1918, p. 10; "Aparima White Crew", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; J.G.S. Doorly to D.A. Aitken, "Natives' survivors", 5 January 1918, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; "Cadets - Aparima", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; J.G.S. Doorly and H.A. Daniel, "T.S.S. Aparima 'Native' crew", USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:193, WCA; J.G.S. Doorly, "Report of Loss of Aparima", 20 November 1917, USSCo Collection, 2004/301:13:201, WCA; CWGC, *Find War Dead*.

The Lascar crew are listed with two names, the first is that as recorded by Doorly and Daniel on their list of "T.S.S. Aparima 'Native' crew" and the second in [brackets] is the name recorded by Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

## ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Rank / Rating	Crew name	Ethnicity	
Chief Engineer	ROGERSON, Thomas	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Second Engineer	HIRST, William Bramley	White	
Third Engineer	GUNN, Keith Alexander	White	
Fourth Engineer	BARRS, Herbert Harold	White	
Fifth Engineer	FLEMING, Norman Frederick	White	
Sixth Engineer	McKEEGAN, James	White	
Seventh Engineer	MAYO, Maurice Hamor	White	
1st Tindal	ISRAILALEE [ALI IMAN]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
2nd Tindal	JAN MOHOMED [JAN MAHD]	Lascar	
3rd Tindal	MONTAZOODIN	Lascar	Ashore in Hospital
Cassab	REHANOLLA [HASANULLAH]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Coal Trimmer	ABASSALLEE [ABBAS ALI]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Coal Trimmer	ABDOOL RAHIM [ABDOE ROHIM]	Lascar	
Coal Trimmer	AHAMADEOOLLA	Lascar	
Coal Trimmer	APSUROOLLAA [AFSARULLAH]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Coal Trimmer	ARJANALLEE [ALIJANALEE]	Lascar	
Coal Trimmer	ARJANALLEE [ARKAN ALI]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Coal Trimmer	CORBANALLEE [CORCANALLEE]	Lascar	
Coal Trimmer	ESMAIL [ESMILE]	Lascar	
Coal Trimmer	HASARALLEE [NAZAR ALI]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Coal Trimmer	REASUDALLEE [RIYASAT ALI]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Coal Trimmer	SEEDOXK ALLEE [SADIQ ALI]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Coal Trimmer	WAZIDALLEE	Lascar	
Donkeyman	IOBOOLLA [JO CALLEE]	Lascar	
Fireman	BHONIDE [BHONDI]	Lascar	
Fireman	BOSSO MEAH [BASHIR MIYAN]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Fireman	EMANOOLLA [G. MANOOLLA]	Lascar	
Fireman	ENAETH [INAYAT]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Fireman	HASONALLEE [HASSONALLOEE]	Lascar	
Fireman	KHOAZALLEE [KHOAZAEM]	Lascar	
Fireman	KHOORSHIDALLEE [KHURSHID ALI]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Fireman	MAHODEWAN [MAHD DEWAN]	Lascar	
Fireman	MOBASERALLEE [MUBASSIR ALI]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Fireman	MOXOREALLEE [MOZOREALLEE]	Lascar	
Fireman	OSMANALLEE	Lascar	
Fireman	RAKIBOODIN [KABIRUDDIN]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Fireman	TAHER MEAH	Lascar	
Fireman	WAZIDALLEE	Lascar	
Fireman	ALI HAMID	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Greaser	ABASSALLEE [ABCASSALLEM]	Lascar	
Greaser	ABDOOL HELLIM [ABDUL HALIM]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Greaser	ABDOOL RAZACK [ABDUR RAZZAQ]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Greaser	ALLEE BUX [ALI BAKHSH]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Greaser	ARFANOODY [IRFANUDDIN]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Greaser	AZIS KHAN [AYYUB KHAN]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Punkha Boy	HYDER MAHO [HYDELL MAHOI]	Lascar	
Serang	RUCKMOTHOOLLA	Lascar	

## PROVIDORE DEPARTMENT

Rank / Rating	Crew name	Ethnicity	
Chief Steward	MACKIE, James	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet's Steward	CHRISTIAN, W.	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Butler (Second Steward)	RAJUB [RAJAB]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Chief Cook	FRANCIS GOMAS	Lascar	
2nd Cook	ADOO REZARIO [ADDOO ROZARIO]	Lascar	
3rd Cook	BABOO GOMEZ [BABOO GOMES]	Lascar	
4th Cook	KANGALEE [KANEYALLEE]	Lascar	
Bhandary	MOOSA [MOOSSA]	Lascar	
Bhandary Mate	HARMOOZALLEE [HARMAZALLEE]	Lascar	Ashore
Captain's Boy	AHAMODE [AHAMOILE]	Lascar	
General Servant	ABDOOL RAZACK [ABDUR RAZZAQ]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
General Servant	ADUL HOSSIM [ABDUL HASAN]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
General Servant	AMOO [AMMU]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
General Servant	MOBARUCK [MUBARAK]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
General Servant	ROHIM BUX [ROHIM BOX]	Lascar	
General Servant	SAMDOO [SAMAD]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
General Servant	SHEIK ROHIM	Lascar	
Mess Room Steward	MAHDJAN [MAHO JAN]	Lascar	
Pantry man	ABDOOL HAMID [ABDUL HAMID]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Saloon Topass	MONI LALL [MONI HALE]	Lascar	
Servant	SOBAN [A.N. LOBO]	Lascar	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917

## CADETS

Rank / Rating	Crew name	Ethnicity	
Tutor	DALGLEISH, Arthur Selby	White	Ashore with RNR
Cadet	ADAMS, John Lewin	White	
Cadet	ANNANDALE, Victor Hubert	White	
Cadet	BANNATYNE, Walter James	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	BARGROVE, Robert Geoffrey	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	BEVAN, Thomas Ewart	White	
Cadet	CADWALLADER, William Herbert	White	Ashore in Hospital
Cadet	CHALMERS, Geoffrey Walter	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	DAVIS, Thomas Henry John	White	
Cadet	DENHOLM, Alexander Henry	White	
Cadet	EVERY-CLAYTON, John Oswald	White	
Cadet	HOARE, Donovan O'Bryen	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	MARSHALL, Adam Houliston	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	MARSHALL, Robert Joseph	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	MASSEY, Leon Joseph	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	McDONALD, Colin Boyd	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	McKENZIE, Ian Kenneth	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	MILLWARD, William Henry Churchill	White	Ashore in Hospital
Cadet	MURRAY, Joseph John	White	
Cadet	NEWTON, Sydney Allison	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	PROUDFOOT, John Frederick	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	RAMSAY, Alexander McKinley	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	SCANTLEBURY, William Rimmel	White	
Cadet	SHAKESPEARE, William Stuart	White	

Rank / Rating	Crew name	Ethnicity	
Cadet	SHAW, William	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	SMITH, John Gordon	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	STACEY, Aubrey Beckingham Neale	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	SUTHERLAND, Ernest	White	
Cadet	TOWNSEND, Philip Mervyn Maunsell	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917
Cadet	WILLIAMS, David Wadham	White	
Cadet	WILLIAMS, William Harry	White	Drowned, 19 Nov 1917