

THE OLD TRANSPORTS

(By "23/762")

NOW that the impending departure of the 2nd New Zealand Division overseas has been announced, interest will turn to the ships which will take them. No doubt some of the former troopships will be commissioned again, but many of them no longer sail the seas. Some have been wrecked and others sold.

But the Maunganui, flagship of the Expeditionary Force, is still afloat. On October 16, 1914, when she sailed for Egypt, as troopship No. 3, the Maunganui began the first of many war-time voyages, carrying thousands of New Zealanders to and from the ports of Egypt, England, and New Zealand. Each time a troopship sailed she carried a distinguishing number, changed for each voyage. Over the war period the Maunganui bore the following numbers: 3, 17, 24, 30, 37, 49, 56, 68, 86, 96, 103, 109, 148, 203, and 259. The Tahiti, another of the Main Body fleet, carried these numbers: 4, 18, 25, 31, 38, 50, 57, 69, 87, 97, 107, 149, 204. Still another well-known troopship, the Willochra, was variously numbered 14, 21, 27, 35, 47, 54, 66, 85, 95, 102 and 105. The first draft of men of the N.Z.E.F. to return from England came on the Willochra. She sailed on January 10, 1917, carrying wounded men and those unfit for further service.

Demobilisation began on December 30, 1918, and the first ship to leave England was the Matatua, No. 213, with a total of 652 officers and men. From then onward ships left regularly, bringing members of the N.Z.E.F. home again. Similarly ships were leaving Egypt with men and officers of the Mounted Division. The last official troopship, the Ionic, did not leave England until March 31, 1920, but she carried only 24 New Zealanders.

Prize Ships Requisitioned

Apart from the ships mentioned above, the following vessels served as troopships: Ruapehu, Orari, Limerick, Star of India, Hawke's Bay, Arawa, Athenic, Waimana, Verdala, Knight of Garter, Talune, Aparima, Warrimoo, Knight Templar, Tofua, Waihora, Devon, Manuka, Moeraki, Port Lyttelton, Pakeha, Navua, Turakina, Ulimaroa.

In order to speed up the return of the soldiers to New Zealand, three prize ships were requisitioned, the Giessen, the Adolf Woermann, and the Prinzessin. Some of the larger troopships were the Zealandic, with 1,021 officers and men; Port Melbourne, 1,214; Hororata, 1,505; Northumberland, 1,334; Waimana, 1,674; and Briton (once the Greyhound of the Capetown-Southampton run), 1,073.

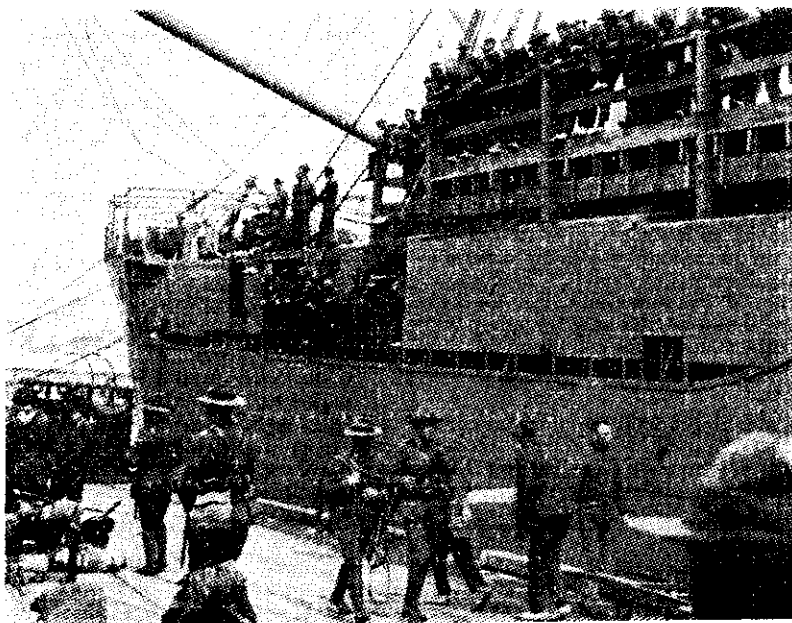
Some of the voyages during the war were exciting and interesting. Perhaps the most interesting of all was that of the 35th Reinforcements, who went to Port Suez on the Tofua, travelled across Egypt to Alexandria by train, were shipped across the Mediterranean to

Marseilles; then by train to Havre and by boat across the channel to England. Others, as when influenza broke out, had a tragic time.

Wahine's Interesting History

Although she was never used as a troopship, the Wahine, still running regularly between Wellington and Lyttelton, had an interesting history. Fresh from the shipyards, she made her first voyage to New Zealand in 1913, but in July, 1915, she returned to London where

Tofua was sold to Japan in 1934, to be broken up for scrap metal. The Tahiti sank in the Pacific when she lost her propeller, but no lives were lost. Hector McQuarrie, the New Zealand writer, who was making a world tour in a "baby" car, was a passenger on that ill-fated trip, and lost the "baby." The Warrimoo was sold to a Singapore firm in 1916, during the war. The Navua went to Egypt in 1926 to join the fleet of the Khedivial Mail Co. The Maheno became a wreck on the Queensland Coast in 1935, after having been bought by Japan. Japanese soldiers are transported from the China battle regions by the Marama, which was sold to China some years ago and has since become a Japanese hospital ship.



EMBARKATION: This photograph will revive memories for many New Zealanders. It shows members of the Mounted Rifles (Main Body, Auckland contingent) embarking at Auckland for service overseas in the Great War of 1914-1918. The horse-box in the left background belongs to the pre-mechanisation period.

she was fitted out for special services and ran as a despatch ship between Mudros and Malta. In May, 1916, the Wahine was taken over by the Royal Navy and became a mine-layer in the North Sea, finally returning to New Zealand at the end of hostilities.

Sunk at Scapa Flow

Few people know that the old Aorangi was sunk as a block-ship at Scapa Flow during the last war, when old ships were employed to block the various channels and make the refuge for the British Grand Fleet as impregnable as possible. The present Aorangi, on the Auckland-Sydney-Vancouver run, is named after her.

Duty In Other Parts

Some of the old transports are still doing duty in other parts of the world. There is the Willochra, for example, which was sold after the war and is now running regularly between New York and the island of Bermuda, a beautiful holiday resort for Americans. The

Harbour Protective Works

Two of the troopships have been used in harbour protective works. The Mokoia was dismantled in 1928 and her hull was sunk in the building of a mole by the Otago Harbour Board; the old Monowai (not the present ship), was sold to the Gisborne Harbour Board and used as part of a breakwater and jetty. The Moeraki went to Sydney in 1932 and was broken up for scrap. Meantime the Maunganui is still in service, at the moment moored in Evans Bay, Wellington. She took a contingent of returned men to Sydney for the 1938 Anzac Day celebrations. No doubt, when the time comes, she will once more become a troopship for the men of the 2nd New Zealand Division.

Recent cable messages have made reference to the Adolf Woermann, a German ship scuttled to avoid capture. This is not the ship of that name which was used as a transport for returning New Zealanders, but another built in 1922 and named after the first one — one of our captures in the last war.

Personal

Lieut. Commander R. T. Roberts, R.N.V.R. (N.Z.), has been granted a temporary commission in the Royal Naval Reserve for duty at Wellington with the Naval Control Office.

Squadron Leader Barry Nicholl has been appointed chief instructor at Woodbourne Air School, Blenheim. He recently arrived on transfer to the Royal New Zealand Air Force from England.

Capt. R. S. Judson, V.C., D.C.M., M.M., who retired from the permanent staff last January, has been posted to guard duty in Auckland.

Captain S. Frickleton, V.C., who has been employed by a Wellington motor firm since his retirement from the army, has again enlisted.

Captain R. J. Quilliam, formerly Crown Prosecutor at New Plymouth, has been attached to Army Headquarters in Wellington.

Hector Bolitho, the New Zealand author, is working in the Air Ministry, Whitehall, London, with the rank of Flight-Lieutenant.

Second Lieut. E. D. Blundell, who has just received his commission, was formerly a Wellington solicitor.

Percy S. Crisp, former New Zealand journalist and now of the "Daily Express," London, has been working temporarily with the London Bureau of Information.

SOLDIERS' WILLS ARE VALID

Informal wills, made by soldiers on active service for the disposal of real and personal estate, are valid in a court of law. This applies also to those under twenty-one years of age who, in civil life, are not permitted to make a will. During the last war wills were, in the first instance, included in soldiers' pay-books, but later they were made separately and included on each man's personal file at the Records Office. This latter practice is being followed in the Army to-day. A soldier is deemed to be on active service as soon as he begins to march for the scene of war. Special legislation governing soldiers' wills was adopted to cover men serving during the 1914-18 campaign and it is probable that similar action will be taken by the present Government. The making of a soldier's will is an ancient privilege going back to Roman times, and is expressly preserved for our soldiers in the Wills Act of 1837.

New Zealand Recruiting Song

New Zealand has a new recruiting song, "New Zealand Will Be There." The words, by Mrs. E. M. Keatinge, of Morrinsville, have been set to music by Harry Hiscocks. The song will be heard shortly from Y.A. stations throughout the Dominion.