

Commentary For A Film

We here reproduce the commentary, illustrated by "still" photographs, of "Country Lads," a "short" about troop departures, which has just been made by the New Zealand National Film Unit. This commentary, written by E. S. Andrews of Wellington, is worth reading for itself, but although it is only a part of "Country Lads," it also serves to indicate the high standard of documentary film-making now being reached in this country by enthusiastic workers.

WEEK after week thousands of us have been in training—ever since we in New Zealand undertook to pull our weight in this war.

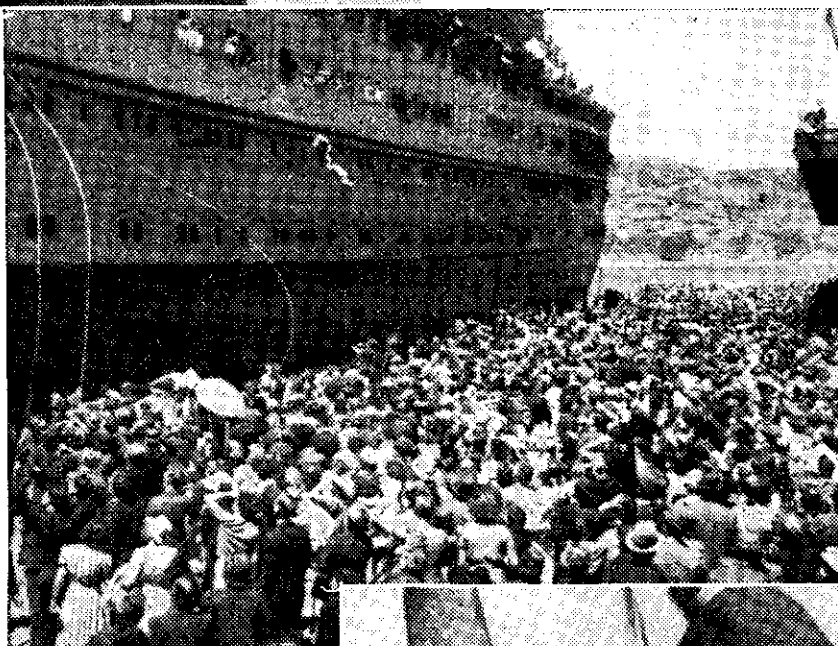
We knew, and the men in camp knew, that the training was for a war that would be fought on the other side of the world. We knew that ships would take the New Zealanders there; and already many of those who went have fought and suffered in the front line.

Yet until now only a handful of us have known what troop departures look like, how it feels to say au revoir to soldier friends and relations at the ship's side, the sorrow and the pride of it.

Just a few months ago these men were working alongside of us in shops, factories, cowsheds and offices—good workers and good friends. We might be talking to a man in the tram or in the pub one day and find him in uniform the next week—an Anzac.

Or we might be Anzacs ourselves. This is a war with everyone in it—women, too. It is just a matter of taking our turn. In a few weeks or a few months we may be on the inside too, trained, skilled and proud of it.

So we look on at what might be ourselves.



IT'S not just another army marching past, but **OUR** army. They weren't used to marching in step then, but if marching had been a useful job in civvy life they would have done it. If it's milking, they can milk; if it's building roads, they can navvy; if it's banking, they can bank, and if it's fighting, they can make a pretty thorough job of that, too.

Any time we see them they are marching or on parade. with only their shoulder patches to show that here's a group of men skilled in every trade and profession—soldiers who used to be civilians, and took all their skill into the army with them.

Artillery, nurses, army service corps, signallers, air force and plain P.B.I. Gunners, doctors, grocers, telegraph

operators, men from the public works and women from the hospitals, workers and employers—**OUR** army, **OUR** selves.

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CIVILIAN into soldier. It is an old story, but this time it is about us and that makes it different. There is no goose stepping here. Just the swinging stride of free men who have put on their working clothes and got into step for the biggest job ever tackled.

They are soldiers and fighters because, as things are, only soldiers and fighters can make the world safe for civilians to live in—safe for women and children, and decent ordinary people.

"Poor deluded country lads," Hitler called them, though no army in all history has known better what it was up against, or what it was fighting for. They helped to make this country the way it is, happy, prosperous, free. Country lads and town lads, they have gone right across the world to help those who feel like us, to be free and happy too.

MOST of these men have never been to sea before, except perhaps to cross the Straits. In the good times in summer the surf of Muriwai has drawn them away from home; or the pines at Waikuku; or the scarlet carpet of pohutukawa petals on the road to Ohope Beach—or maybe just the fun of taking the kids to St. Kilda or Sumner, or Takapuna.

This time it is no picnic, and the end of the journey is halfway round the world and back again. It is the adventuring of men going off to war. There's pageantry and excitement and laughter, and under it all a grim purpose—a war to be fought by men who have the courage to say "au revoir" when they know that for some of them it must be "good-bye."

Canoes and ships brought the New Zealanders here long ago, fighting New Zealanders, pioneers looking for elbow room, men and women who couldn't be shut in against their wish. We still feel the same way, though we cannot all stay here, and remain free. Some of us must fight—these men, and more of us when the time comes. And so ships still plough down through the Pacific, not for tourists any longer, but for the men who can help to beat back repression and dictatorship.

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AS a people we are a little reserved, and very determined. We usually know which way we want to go, and when we've made up our minds about it, we go there. The men in the army know what they are fighting for, and the rest of us feel with them that what they are undertaking is the right thing to do.

We are proud of them, and our pride is mixed with sorrow at their leaving us. But we have never gone in for anything without knowing what lies ahead, what difficulties and hardships there are.

Our men know that, too. They will be back amongst us some time, not fighting then, but helping to re-make the world—a world fit for people who have risked so much for the right to be free.

