

# NEW ZEALAND AT WAR

## THE FIRST WORLD WAR A TIMELINE

1914

### 28 JUNE

Archduke Franz Ferdinand (who was the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne) is shot and killed in Sarajevo. This causes old tensions in Europe to resurface.

### 4 AUGUST

Germany invades Belgium, so Britain declares war on Germany and its allies. This means that New Zealand, as part of the **British Empire**, is also at war. Within four days, fourteen thousand New Zealand men have volunteered to become soldiers.

### 16 SEPTEMBER

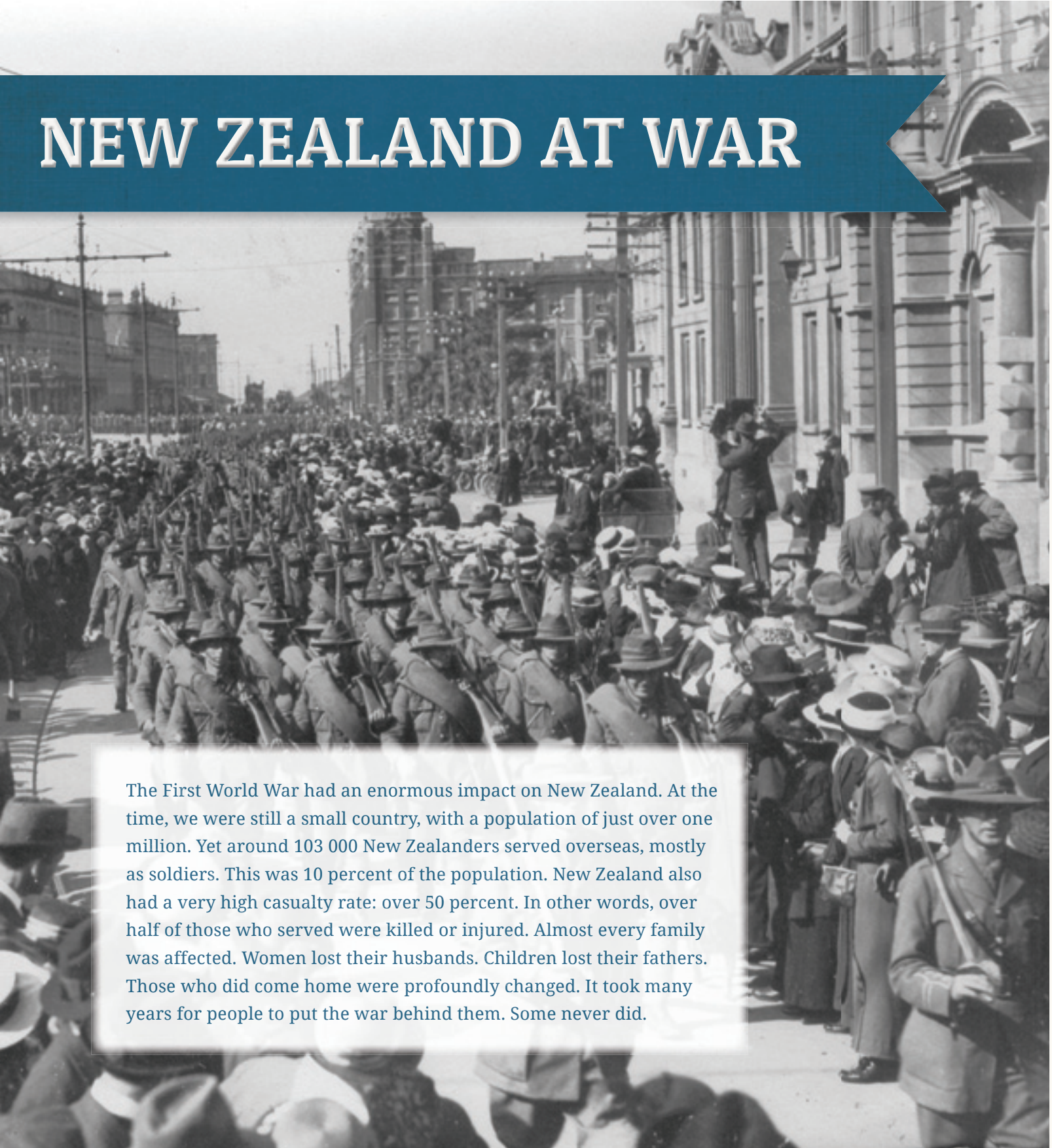
The New Zealand government announces there will be a Māori **Contingent** going to the war. Over the following weeks, hundreds of Māori sign up.

### ◀ 16 OCTOBER

The **New Zealand Expeditionary Force** (NZEF) leaves Wellington on ten troopships. On board are 8454 soldiers and around 3000 horses.

### 8 DECEMBER

The NZEF joins with the Australian Imperial Force and the word **ANZAC** is born.



The First World War had an enormous impact on New Zealand. At the time, we were still a small country, with a population of just over one million. Yet around 103 000 New Zealanders served overseas, mostly as soldiers. This was 10 percent of the population. New Zealand also had a very high casualty rate: over 50 percent. In other words, over half of those who served were killed or injured. Almost every family was affected. Women lost their husbands. Children lost their fathers. Those who did come home were profoundly changed. It took many years for people to put the war behind them. Some never did.



## 1915

### 3 FEBRUARY

New Zealand soldiers see their first **combat** when they help to defend the Suez Canal against the Ottoman Turks. William Ham becomes the first New Zealander to die in the war.

### 25 APRIL

The landings at Gallipoli, Turkey: Wiremu Moeke becomes the first Māori soldier to be killed in the war.

### 6–10 AUGUST

The Battle for Chunuk Bair, Gallipoli: This was a short-lived victory for the New Zealanders that cost many lives.

### 15–19 DECEMBER

**Allied soldiers** are evacuated from Gallipoli. Around a fifth of all New Zealanders who fought there died (2721).



### 1 AUGUST

**Conscription** is introduced in New Zealand. By the end of the war, around 32 000 men will become soldiers in this way.

### 4 AUGUST

The Battle of Romani: The New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade (1800 men) fight against the Ottoman Turks in the Sinai Desert.

### SEPTEMBER

New Zealanders fight in the Battle of the Somme. Six thousand of our men are wounded, and two thousand are killed.

### NOVEMBER

Archibald Baxter is called up for military service, but he refuses to go to war. He becomes one of New Zealand's most famous conscientious objectors.

## 1916

### FEBRUARY

After training in Auckland, the first soldiers from Niue and the Cook Islands sail for Egypt. They are eventually sent to the **Western Front** (see the map on page 37) as part of the New Zealand Pioneer Battalion.

### APRIL

New Zealand soldiers arrive in France. They are headed for the Western Front. For the rest of the war, this is where most New Zealanders will fight.

### 25 APRIL

The first anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. Anzac Day services are held around New Zealand.



## 1917

### 7–9 JUNE

New Zealand soldiers help to capture the village of Messines. They suffer heavy **casualties** from German shells (3000 wounded, 700 killed).

### 12 OCTOBER

The Battle of Passchendaele: the worst day of the war for New Zealanders. By the afternoon, the New Zealand **Division** had 2700 casualties, with 845 men either dead or dying on the battlefield.

*An officer's funeral, the Western Front, August 1917*





# 1918

## JANUARY

Fighting continues on the Western Front. Over five thousand New Zealand soldiers will be killed in this last year of the war.

## MARCH

The Germans launch a major **offensive** in a final effort to win the war.

## 4 NOVEMBER

Le Quesnoy: New Zealand troops liberate this French town from the Germans. They take two thousand German prisoners.

## 11 NOVEMBER

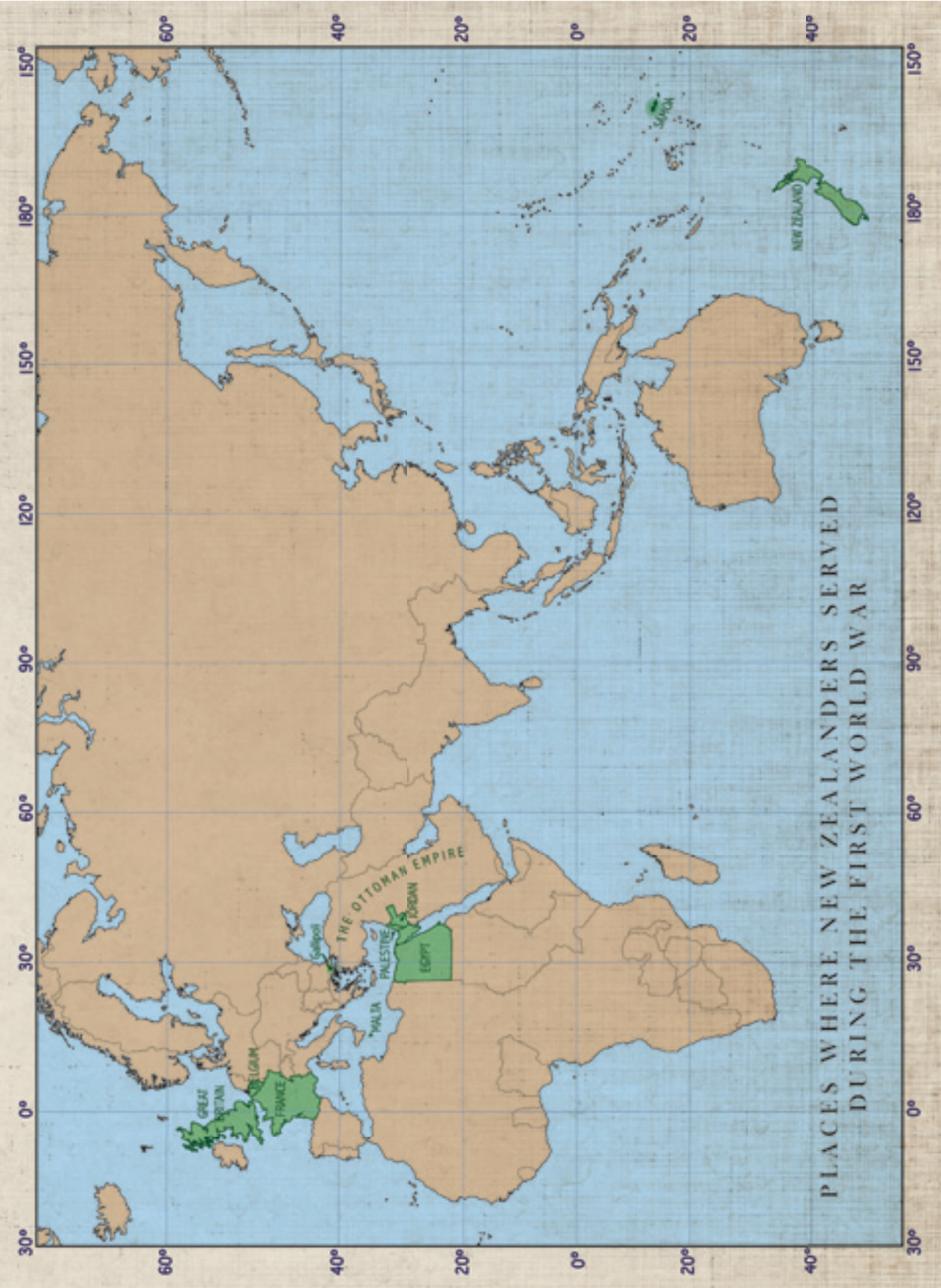
**Armistice Day:** The war is over.

# 1919

## 15–16 MARCH

New Zealand troops riot at Sling Army Camp on the Salisbury Plain. They are angry at having to stay in England. They want to go home.

Around five hundred public memorials to the First World War have been put up around New Zealand to help us remember those who fought and died. This page shows the opening of the National War Memorial in Wellington in 1932. If you want to learn more about the war or war memorials, go to [www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/first-world-war](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/first-world-war)





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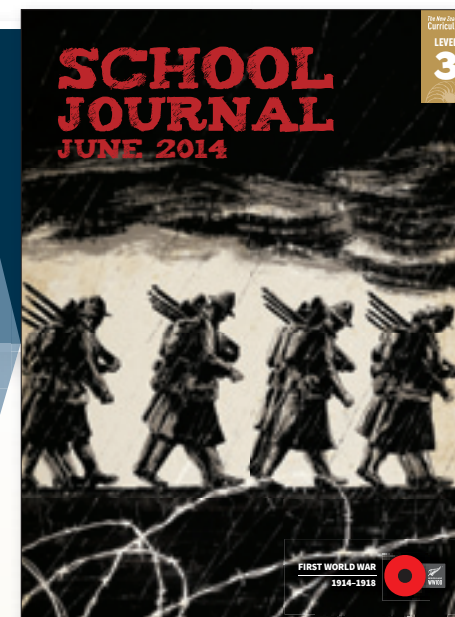
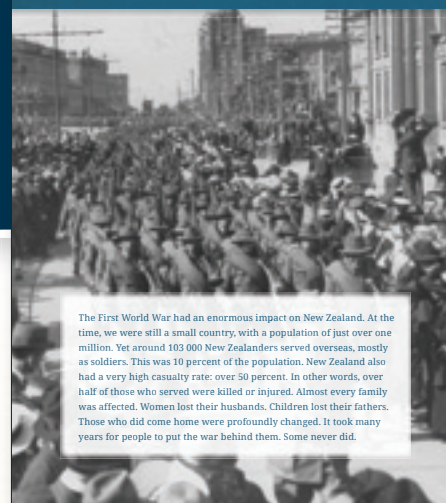
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