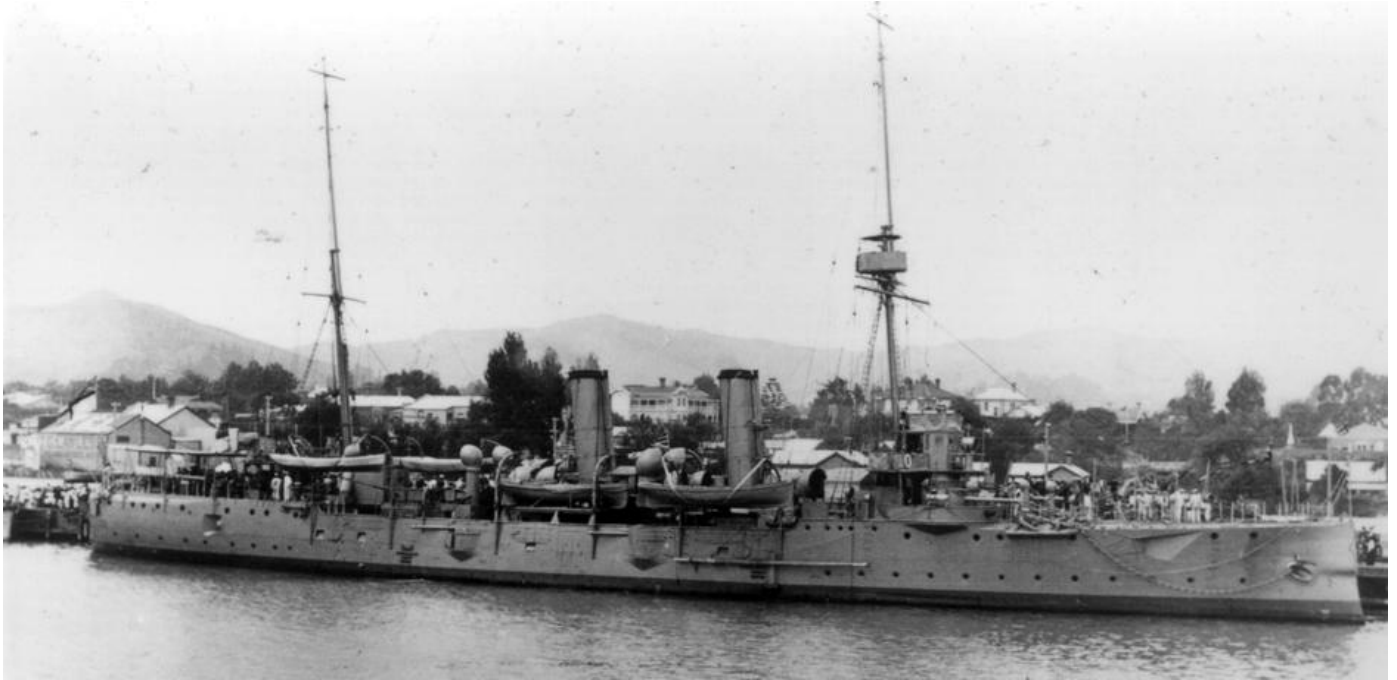


Pattern: HMZ Philomel, Pearl Class Light Cruiser; Introduced in to NZ Service: 1914; Withdrawn: 1946  
Builder: HM Naval Dockyard Devonport, UK; Launched: 9/5/1889; First commissioned in RN: 10/11/91.  
Tonnage: 2575; Dimensions: 278' x 265' x 41' x 17.5' (84.7 x 80.8 x 12.5 x 5.3 m).  
Machinery: 2 shaft, coal fired Triple Expansion, 7500 ihp; Speed: 19 knots.  
Armament: Guns - 8 x 4.7 in single, 8 x 3 pdr single, 4 MGs. Torpedo Tubes - 2 x 14"; Complement: 221.



### **NZ Service**

In the years immediately prior to the outbreak of the First World War, the New Zealand government had been actively trying to establish its own naval forces to complement those of the Royal Australian Navy. The Minister of Defence, James Allan persuaded the British government to provide New Zealand with a cruiser to use as a seagoing training ship. The Royal Navy offered the aging and outdated Pearl-class cruiser *HMS Philomel*. Command of the ship was given to the New Zealand Naval Forces – which were established under the Naval Defence Act 1913 – but would revert back to the Royal Navy in times of war.

The *Philomel* was commissioned in New Zealand on 15 July 1914, The ship was under the command of [Captain Percival Hall-Thompson](#) of the Royal Navy, who also served as naval advisor to the New Zealand government. On 30 July the *Philomel* was in Picton on the first day of her shake-down cruise with the first class of New Zealand naval recruits, (60 men) when it was ordered back to Wellington to prepare for imminent war with Germany. When war was declared on 5 August (New Zealand time), *Philomel* reverted to Royal Naval command. However, the New Zealand government continued to pay for the entire crew's wages as well as the maintenance of the ship throughout the conflict.

*Philomel's* first task, in late August, was to escort the Advance Party of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force to Samoa, with the aim of [capturing the German colony](#). Sailing as an escort for the main body of the NZEF in October 1914, she undertook patrols against Turkey in the Red Sea, Eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf losing six crew members killed. A docking in Bombay in January 1917 revealed that her hull was in poor condition and she returned to New Zealand and paid off in April 1917. She was now presented to the NZ government and was disarmed to become a stationary depot ship based in Wellington.

With the formation of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy in 1921 *Philomel* moved to Devonport, Auckland where she remained for 25 years as a training ship and from late 1942 – 45 as a depot ship for Harbour Defence Motor Launches (HDMLs). *Philomel* was sold in 1946 to the Strongman Shipping Co. and after being stripped of all useful material was sunk in 100 fathoms 12 miles off Cuvier Island on 6/8/1949.

*Acknowledgements:* <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/hms-philomel>; *New Zealand Naval Vessels* by RJ McDougall.