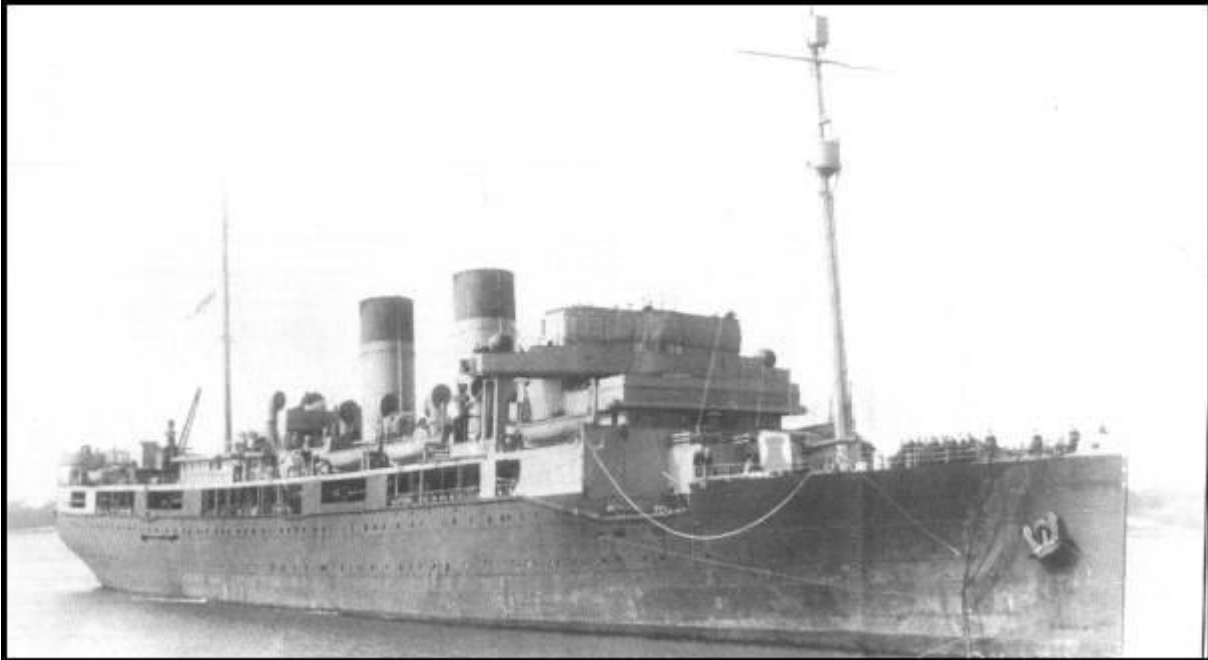


Pattern: Monowai (F 59), Armed Merchant Cruiser (AMC); Introduced in to NZ Service: 1940; Withdrawn: 1943
Builder: Harland & Wolff Ltd, Greenock, Scotland. Launched as a liner 16/10/24.
Tonnage: 10,852 grt; Dimensions: 519 x 500 x 63.2 ft (158.2 x 152.5 x 19.3 m)
Machinery: 2 shaft, 4 cylinder Quadruple expansion reciprocating engines plus double reduction exhaust turbines, 14,740 bhp; Speed: 18 knots.
Armament: Guns – 8 x 6 in, 2 x 3 in AA, 6 x 20 mm plus 2 x 20 mm with radar added in 1942, MGs, 8 x depth charges.
Complement: 366



New Zealand Service

Bought from P & O in 1930 by the Union Steamship Co for the NZ to USA passenger/cargo service and later trans Tasman run, *Monowai* was chartered by the NZ government in October 1939. She proceeded to Auckland where her conversion took place at Devonport Dockyard and she commissioned on 30/8/40. After trials and work up she commenced escort duties around New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, on several occasions acting as a troopship. A gun drill error during firing practice on 30/12/41 resulted in an explosion in No 1 Port Gun killing four and injuring two. While escorting the troopship *Taroona* from Suva to Auckland she was attacked by the Japanese submarine *I20* just 10 miles out of Suva on 16/1/42. Having missed with four torpedoes *I20* surfaced and engaged her with her 5.5 in gun, but was driven off by 23 rounds from *Monowai*, the two ships then making a high speed escape. In April '42 she joined the ANZAC Squadron, operating from Suva with Australian and US ships in the Pacific.

By 1942 it was realised that the AMCs were vulnerable to submarine attack and so they were converted for other duties. *Monowai* was deemed surplus in the Pacific and sailed for England in April '43, paying off as an AMC at Liverpool on 18/6/43. She was handed over to the British Ministry of War Transport and was converted to an assault landing ship (LSA(L) at Glasgow for 1800 troops and 20 assault landing craft. Her armament was also reconfigured as follows: 1 x 4 in, 2 x 12pdr, 2 x 2pdrAA, 2 x 40 mm, 8 x RP, 8 x 20 mm AA. Conversion was completed in February 1944 when she carried troops to Egypt. She was involved in the D Day Normandy landings carrying 75,000 troops in a total of 45 channel crossings. Many voyages followed transporting refugees and repatriating POWs and troops taking her to the Black Sea, Italy, India and Singapore where she arrived in September '45. After more repatriation voyages back to England she arrived at Sydney in September '46 for conversion back to a passenger liner and return to her owners. Returning to the trans Tasman passenger service in early '49, she was withdrawn and sold for scrap in 1960 and broken up in Hong Kong.