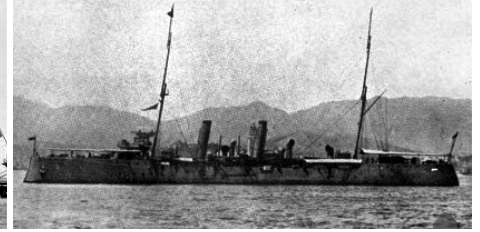
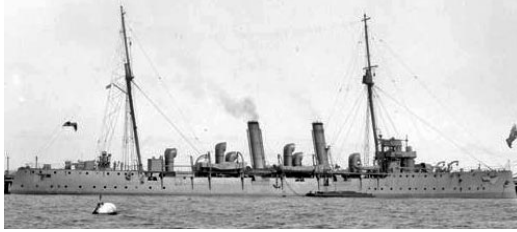


NZAR ID A80 New Zealand's first military action in World War I

compiled by Dr John Osborne MG DTT PhD FSG May 2014 reviewed Feb 2016

On 7 August 1914 New Zealand agreed to the British governments request for New Zealand forces to seize the German wireless station near Apia in German Samoa, one of several radio stations used by the German East Asia Squadron. A 1,370-man New Zealand 'Samoa Expeditionary Force' mainly volunteers from New Zealand Territorial Force units sailed on 15 August 1914 in the cruisers HMS *Philomel*, *Pyramus* and *Psyche*. The convoy stopped in Fiji to collect guides and interpreters and to rendezvous with the battle cruiser HMAS *Australia*, the cruiser HMAS *Melbourne* and the French cruiser *Montcalm* which acted as escorts. The NZ force landed at Apia on 29 August 1914. The local German authorities offered no resistance and the occupation of German Samoa by the NZ Force took place without any fighting.



Left: In 1913 The British Admiralty loaned HMS (HMNZS) *Philomel* to New Zealand to form the nucleus of the newly established New Zealand Naval Forces being a new NZ division of the Royal Navy. *Philomel* was armed with 8 x QF 4.7 inch guns, 8 x 3-pounder guns, 4 x Maxim machine-guns, and 2 x 14 inch torpedo tubes. Center: HMS *Pyramus* was armed with 8 x 4-inch quick-firing guns, 8 x 3-pounder quick-firing guns, 3 x Maxim machine guns and 2 x 18-inch torpedo tubes. Right: HMS *Psyche* was armed with 8xQF 4 inch guns, 8xQF 3-pounder guns, 2x4.7-inch guns, 2 field guns, 3x Maxim machine guns and 2x14 inch torpedo tubes



Above: Troopships and convoy in Samoan waters August 1914. After escorting the NZ 'Samoa Expeditionary Force', the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force sailed to Port Moresby and met with the Queensland contingent aboard the transport *Kanowna*. The force then sailed for German New Guinea on 7 September, for another takeover of a German colony. The German cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* hastened to Samoa after Admiral von Spee learned of the occupation. He arrived off Apia, Samoa on 14 September 1914, three days after the departure of the Dominion cruisers and transports. However, he realised that a landing would only be of temporary advantage in an Allied-dominated sea, and instead sailed to Tahiti. He then rejoined the rest of his fleet and headed for South America.



NZ Samoa Expeditionary Force arrives 29/8/1914.

NZSEF Maxim Machine Gun Section in Samoa 1914

The NZ Samoa EF were armed with either .303 MLE rifles and bayonets, or .303 ShtLE rifles and bayonets. The machine gun section with .303 Maxim medium machine guns. Officers with .455 revolvers.



Two 6 pdr Nordenfelt Field Guns of D Battery and guard party encamped on the beach at Apia, Samoa c1914, courtesy ATL

Nearly all of the NZ Samoa Expeditionary Force went on to join the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Middle East and France. By the war's end 210 of these men had been killed in action or died of wounds (163 died in France). A further five were killed while serving with the Australian Imperial Force.

After WWI New Zealand governed the islands as the Western Samoa Trust Territory from 1920 until independence in 1962 – firstly as a League of Nations Class C Mandate and after 1945 as a United Nations Trust Territory.

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