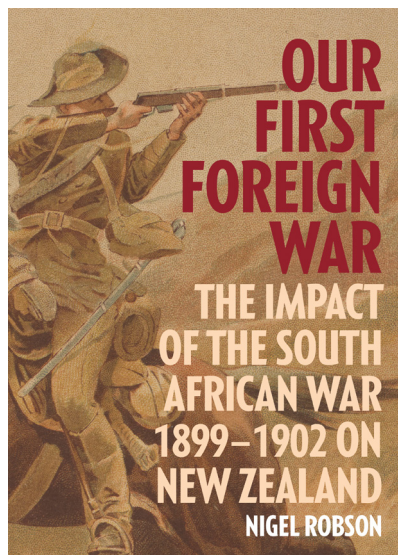


Our First Foreign War

The impact of the South African War 1899–1902 on New Zealand

NIGEL ROBSON



\$55

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THE FASCINATING ACCOUNT OF AN OFTEN OVERLOOKED WAR

Foreshadowing our unseemly haste to fight for King and Country in 1914, New Zealanders were enthusiastic supporters of the colonial war between Britain and the Boers when it was declared in 1899. The country welcomed the chance to prove itself and its loyalty to the British Empire on an international stage. Our contribution was small — just 6500 troops sent to fight — but our response to the conflict was on a grander scale. In an outpouring of patriotic sentiment, many thousands followed the stories of the sieges of Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith. There was memorabilia everywhere, and it seemed as if everyone was either raising funds or joining cadet corps, including many women and girls.

Little has been written of this important period in New Zealand's history. This is the first book to offer a finely grained analysis of the nation's perceptions and expectations of the war, Māori responses to the conflict, the effect of war-related deaths, injuries and disease on the country, and its economic impact. It also demonstrates that the building of our national identity through military engagement began well before Gallipoli and the Western Front.

'... an engaging read ... This is quite an achievement, and long overdue. Robson's analysis is wide-ranging and thorough.' — Peter Wood, *New Zealand Journal of History*

'... an important and timely study. It has taken far too long for a scholar to analyse the domestic impacts of the South African War — hopefully Robson's compelling lead will soon inspire many other researchers to follow' — David Littlewood, *Kete*

SALES POINTS

- The first book to examine in detail the social, political and economic impact of the South African War on New Zealand society, including the Māori response, and the huge involvement of women in supporting the troops.
- Describes the outpouring of patriotic sentiment and the building of our national identity through military engagement.
- Over 50 colour and black and white photographs, many not published before.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nigel Robson is a senior historian at the Office of Māori Crown Relations Te Arawhiti. He has contributed articles to journals, including 'A Warrior Chief: Tuta Nihoniho, Porourangi and Māori in the Second Boer War 1899-1902', *The Volunteers: The Journal of the New Zealand Military Historical Society* (2012), and presented conference papers, including 'Chinaman and trooper', a paper examining the impact of the South African War on New Zealand's Chinese community and 'What a Trophy for one Christian to loot from another!', a paper which examined the looting of religious items by New Zealand soldiers in South Africa during the South African War. This is his first book.