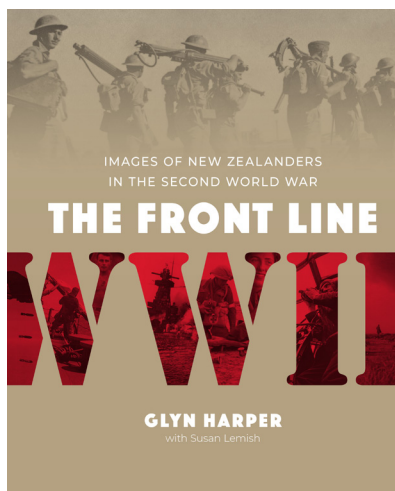


The Front Line

Images of New Zealanders in the Second World War

GLYN HARPER WITH SUSAN LEMISH



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NEW ZEALAND'S WAR THROUGH THE LENS OF THOSE WHO SERVED

From the dust of the North African deserts and the slaughter in the skies over Europe to the war at sea and in the jungles of the Pacific, the 800 images in this landmark book show New Zealanders at war during the bloodiest conflict in human history.

The photographs span every battle and theatre in which New Zealanders fought. Many have never before been published and include live-action shots taken by those at the front.

The accompanying text, by one of New Zealand's leading military historians, places the images in context. As well as covering our war in North Africa, Europe and the Pacific, chapters on prisoners of war, the home front and New Zealand's role in Japan after the end of hostilities round out this rich visual account of a conflict that dominated all aspects of New Zealand life for seven years.

'Pity, pathos, pomp and many other emotions are evoked in this collection . . . An authoritative and frequently affecting book.' — David Hill, Kete

'*The Front Line* is rich in facts and figures, which come at the reader with the rapidity of machine gun fire. But that is no bad thing because context is everything and they bring a perspective in depth to the book that elevates it way beyond being just another pictorial account of the war.' — Alister Browne, *Stuff*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

GLYN HARPER is author of many books, including *Acts of Valour* (with Colin Richardson), *Johnny Enzed*, and *Images of War: New Zealand and the First World War in Photographs*. His most recent titles include *The Battle for North Africa* and *For King and Other Countries*, part of the First World War Centenary History Project. He is Professor of War Studies at Massey University and was Massey Project Manager of the New Zealand and the First World War Centenary History Project.

SALES POINTS

- Of deep interest to all those whose family members fought in the war
- Hundreds of images, many never before published
- Photographs have been sourced from all three forces museums – army, navy and airforce — and the families of those who served
- Includes every battle and theatre in which New Zealanders fought
- Written by one of New Zealand's leading military historians

PRINTED A2 AND A1 POSTERS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST



ABOVE | Members of 27 Machine Gun Battalion ready to disembark from Lyttelton with the First Echelon in 1940.
STEVEN HARRISON COLLECTION

RIGHT | The Sobieski, pictured here and the Dorset left Lyttelton on 5 January 1940, carrying the South Island members of the First Echelon. The North Island troops departed from Wellington on the same day on the Empress of Canada. Scott, O'Brien and Sangster. All the companies sailed together to Egypt.
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND NAVY, CC BY-SA



ABOVE | An air-to-air view of two Fairy Gannet flying in formation over the coast near Blenheim. The Fairy Gannet is a biplane used by the New Zealand Air Force during the war.
AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND, ALBION COLLECTION



RIGHT | A formation of Buffs over the Wairarapa valley near Blenheim.
AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND, ALBION COLLECTION



RIGHT | Flying Officer William Christensen about to climb into a Tiger Moth at RNZAF Enderbury in 1940. Christensen, who later served with the 47 Squadron RAF in the air battle over Britain, and reported missing between 1940 and 1941. He was 22 years old.
AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND, ALBION COLLECTION



ABOVE | A fire crew spray from a fire-fighting New Zealand Coastal Fighter. This photograph was taken at Christchurch in August 1940.
AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND, ALBION COLLECTION

CHAPTER 2

The Air War over the Pacific

As well as sending several thousand men to fight with the SAS, the RNZAF played many more in New Zealand who were then deployed to the Pacific, where they fought alongside their American and Australian allies.

From late 1941 through to the end of war, as the Japanese advanced steadily through the Pacific, the home defence of New Zealand was also a vital consideration. In 1941, in response to a request from New Zealand for more modern aircraft to respond to the looming Japanese threat, Britain supplied 36 Hudson bombers. That year, too, New Zealand created the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) to replace the part of the RAF that was sent to New Zealand, as they were known, served during the war years. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the RNZAF had just four aircraft in New Zealand, most of them visitors. Only the recently acquired Hudson bombers were up-to-date and combatworthy, but all available aircraft in New Zealand were pressed into service under the Forces Available for Air Operations scheme (FAAO). These included such antiquated aircraft as Tiger Moths, Vildebeests, Buffs and Vincents. From then on there was a huge build-up of air assets and an increase in personnel.

It was the RNZAF that made New Zealand's main contribution to the Pacific theatre, where it provided air support for several significant land campaigns. The 484 Squadron, 100 strong and the first fighter squadron formed in New Zealand, took part in the disastrous Singapore and Malaya campaigns. Flying old and poorly performing Brewster Buffalo fighters. The squadron had only just arrived in Singapore and was still training to pilots when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. When Singapore fell on 15 February 1942 most of the RNZAF personnel were evacuated, but some were taken prisoner and endured long years of brutal captivity. An Aerobatics Construction Squadron of RNZAF also served in this campaign, holding artillery in southern Malaya. Around 400 strong, and consisting primarily of men recruited from the Public Works Department and private construction companies, the unit had been the first RNZAF presence in the region, arriving there in October 1941.

After this catastrophe New Zealand agreed urgently to Britain and the United States for newer and better fighter planes to be made available to the RNZAF.