

## **New Zealand and the First World War**

### **(Lead up to War)**

Although there were a number of causes for World War 1, the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the main reason for starting the war. After the assassination, Austria declared war on Serbia. Then Russia prepared to defend its ally Serbia. Next, Germany declared war on Russia to protect Austria. This caused France to declare war on Germany to protect its ally Russia. Germany invaded Belgium to get to France which caused Britain to declare war on Germany. This all happened in just a few days.

The New Zealand government was informed of the outbreak of war just before 1 p.m. on 5 August (NZ time). At 3 p.m. the governor, Lord Liverpool, announced the news from the steps of Parliament to a large crowd. Most New Zealanders regarded themselves as British and Britain as home, so there were few doubts about fulfilling our obligations to the Empire in its moment of crisis.

### **Quick facts and figures**

- The total population of New Zealand in 1914 was just over one million.
- In all, 120,000 New Zealanders enlisted, of whom 103,000 served overseas.
- A total of 2688 Maori and 346 Pacific Islanders served in the New Zealand forces.
- At least 3370 other men served in the Australian or imperial forces, among them four Victoria Cross winners.
- In all, 550 nurses served with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and many others enlisted in the United Kingdom.
- A total of 18,500 New Zealanders died in or because of the war, and nearly 50,000 more were wounded. Of the total number who died, over 2700 died at [Gallipoli](#), and 12,500 died on the Western Front.
- The names of those who died are recorded on approximately [500 civic war memorials](#) throughout New Zealand.