“They’ll Go Like British Shells!”: A Historical Perspective on Commercial “Anzackery” in New Zealand

STEVEN LOVERIDGE

Abstract
The term “Anzackery” was regularly employed in New Zealand during the centenary of the First World War to condemn a sense of irreverent exploitation of Anzac remembrance, with commercial exploitation forming a particular concern. This article contends that such sentiments continue a much older dynamic and seeks to offer a historical perspective by surveying the relationship between marketing and war, circa 1914–1918. It examines the rise of a distinctive mode of branding goods and services in the decades leading up to and including the First World War, investigates the wartime mobilisation of this consumerism and contemplates the nature of the resulting criticism. In doing so, it provides some perspective on and insight into the contemporary concerns of the relationship between commercial activity and Anzac remembrance in New Zealand.

Across the centenary of the First World War, New Zealand enterprises displayed a remarkable capacity to brand diverse products with reference to the conflict and Anzac. Museum gift shops stocked a wealth of merchandise—including T-shirts, mobile phone cases, fridge magnets, stickers, coffee mugs, drink coasters and postcards—stamped with First World War iconography. Specialty remembrance poppies were produced for motorists to attach to their vehicles’ bumpers and rear windows. The Wellington Chocolate Factory created “The Great War Bar,” the wrapper of which depicted entrenched soldiers taking relief in small comforts. Accompanying marketing noted that “Thousands of chocolate bars left the hands of loved ones on their voyage to those on the front line. In honour of ANZAC day, our Great War Bar is $10 both in store and online until the end of next week” (fig. 1). On Anzac Day 2015, Pizza Hut distributed an email advertisement, noting their Anzac Day opening hours against a poppy-laden field, the words “Lest We Forget” and a special offer for three pizzas for $20. That same Anzac Day, advertising for Moore Wilson’s supermarket announced:

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. Though a deeply sombre and difficult occasion for many to remember, it does provide an opportunity to highlight the strong bond and the many similarities between Australia and New Zealand. Both nations have booming wine industries and have emerged as two independent branches onto the same global wine market. This month we’ve got some great specials on classy, flavour-packed NZ Whites and those BIG brassy Aussie Reds we’ve come to love. If you’re raising a glass on Anzac Day you can’t go past one of these fine antipodean offerings.

The phenomenon drew repeated critiques from New Zealand commentators and resonated with higher levels of commercialisation and louder censures coming from Australia. The term “Anzackery,” as well as the alternative “Brandzac,” were employed to critique or condemn the crass exploitation of war-related remembrance, with commercial exploitation forming a persistent point. A theme within such criticism was a sense that commercial engagement rendered the war in a glamorising, distorting and manipulating fashion. In April 2015, for example, a radical blog denounced an observed mix of jingoism and commercialism: “full fantasy, full consumption, ANZAC as video game and branding exercise and empty spectacle.
Join #theshadowbattalion, care of your local bank! Keep your memories fresh in the crisper over the ditch at Woolies! . . . Capitalism can commodify everything—even memories. . . .”7 Commercial engagement with remembrance was also regularly denounced as distasteful, exploitative and as an affront to appropriate decorum. For example, just before Anzac Day 2017, journalist and historian Ron Palenski noted a “creeping commercialisation of Anzac Day” as “trite and disrespectful.” “You can’t become a baker and produce an Anzac loaf of bread . . . and neither should you do anything else commercially in the name of Anzac Day.”8

Figure 1. Wellington Chocolate Factory’s The Great War Bar

Both commercial engagement, and the ensuing condemnation, possess a much older history in New Zealand. A comparable sense that commercial opportunism represented an affront to solemn remembrance was readily apparent when the vodka company 42 Below projected its logo onto the National War Memorial during the April 2010 world cocktail championships. Commentary accused the company of using the memorial as an advertising billboard with the Memorial curator stating “It’s pretty poor taste” and the National War Memorial Advisory Council chairman noting “You can’t treat [the memorial] as if it’s a bit of canvas.”9 Likewise, in 1948, the Western Bay of Plenty Returned and Services’ Association (RSA), in response to wage bargaining around Anzac Day as a statutory holiday, passed a motion that “This meeting views with regret the tendency to commercialise Anzac Day.”10 In a forerunner to some
contemporary sensibilities, progressive movements in the 1930s called to “disarm the nursery” and, in 1939, the poet Basil Dowling published “War Toys,” which noted:

The shops provide, at small expense,
A war’s complete accoutrements
And people say they’re wondrous toys
For all war-minded girls and boys . . .
And then, perhaps, you’ll learn one day,
When childish things are put away,
In man sized warfare, grim and real,
The things no child can ever feel.11

However, by far the most significant manifestation of what might be criticised as commercial Anzackery occurred while the First World War was raging. This development reflected the intense social and cultural mobilisation that accompanied the war and saw businesses and marketing interests vividly promote a vast array of wares with regard to the conflict. As during the centenary, this form of engagement stirred a degree of unease and criticism, rendered in sentiments quite familiar to the modern ear. This article examines the state of New Zealand marketing in the years leading up to 1914, exploring the ensuing phenomenon of war-themed marketing and analysing public criticism of this commercial engagement. In doing so it offers a historical perspective for contemporary concerns around Anzackery.

Marketing in the Years Leading to 1914
Advertising is as old as New Zealand settler society, with the earliest newspapers including available goods and service as relevant news.12 Indeed, newspapers represented the key means of securing publicity, and they retained this position into the war. As one 1915 notice proclaimed, “Newspaper advertising is the best method of obtaining publicity, because everybody reads a newspaper.”13 In turn, advertising represented a major consideration within the business of a newspaper. One study of mid-1860 newspapers illustrates the sheer quantity of print space devoted to advertising: advertising constituted 57.4 percent of the New Zealand Herald, 67.4 percent of the Press, 73 percent of the Evening Post, and 72.3 percent of the Otago Daily Times.14 An 1890 verse within the Ponsonby Sentinel complements this sense of the privileged position of advertising within its pages:

Some there are who write for pelf,
And some because they’re wise;
Some tell us that they write for “fun,”
But we to advertise.15

More pragmatically, advertising revenue was essential for a newspaper’s survival: “from the very beginning, advertising was the main source of revenue for newspaper proprietors, and the difference between survival and crushing losses.”16

The approach to advertising underwent a transformation in the decades before 1914, in a development which provides some crucial context for wartime Anzackery. In the 1840s, an advertisement was a text-based notice, largely informative in tone, and standard newspaper formatting saw these notices listed in undifferentiated columns alongside other public information. This approach dramatically evolved in the later nineteenth century, taking a form more familiar to the modern eye. By the 1880s, the format of many papers shifted from standardised column notices towards advertisements, of various sizes, interspersed across the
issue, though the column format endured in many titles. One driver of change was a revolution in printing techniques, which permitted the more elaborate presentation of goods. In the 1850s, engravings provided some advertising graphics, though technological limits confined these to simple, standardised images: a ship for passage notices, a lion and unicorn for Crown land sales or a caduceus for medical products. The emergence of lithography, commercial art, illustration blocks and eventually photography notably expanded the possibilities for distinct presentations and advertisements, and advertising in newspapers at the turn of the twentieth century made use of more extravagant graphics.\(^1\)

The emphasis on distinction was also interlocked with a shift in marketing strategies as advertising moved beyond the tactics of promoting products as superior in quality, value or reliability. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, advertisers increasingly branded products with signature slogans and imagery, both to distinguish them from generic or competing commodities and to seek to influence consumer behaviour via spectacles and the stimulation of imaginations.\(^2\) This development reflected an emerging consumer culture, which offered an expanding and competing range of commodities and services, with much catering to wants rather than immediate needs.\(^3\)

Such branding also signalled the rise of a professional advertising industry. New Zealand advertising agencies have been tracked back into the late 1860s where, following trends in the United States, agents brought up newspaper space at discounted rates to on-sell for advertising purposes.\(^4\) By the late nineteenth century, advertising was emerging as a more professionalized enterprise, with agencies securing clients, establishing marketing plans, booking ad space and employing specialised staff to prepare copy and artwork.\(^5\) Major agents include Charles Haines and John Ilott, whose agencies were launched in 1891, and J. Inglis Wright, who opened shop in 1896. By 1910, these ventures were the managing agents for major clients including Shell, the Bank of New Zealand, Glaxo, Edmonds, Cremoata, Cadbury and several newspaper groups.\(^6\) Professionalization continued during the war years, and in 1916 a group of Auckland commercial artists established the Quoin Club in an effort to improve the status of graphic arts.\(^7\) In April and May 1919, several newspapers carried the claim that “Never before has advertising so thoroughly proved itself to be exactly what it is—an asset and not a liability—an investment and not an expense—as during the war times now almost past.”\(^8\)

Lastly, advertising mediums were developing in the years around 1914. While newspaper space remained the prime means of distributing advertising, new mediums for promoting products and services had emerged. Alternative platforms included specialist catalogues mailed out to potential customers, and the emergence of posters and hoardings as increasingly ubiquitous features of the urban landscape.\(^9\) Indeed, a 1901 scientific romance by the New Zealand author John Torrens had a traveller to Mars discover that the Martians had taught themselves English through “studying our large placard hoardings with their potent telescopes.”\(^10\) In 1904, an article observed a coming-of-age in New Zealand poster art: “The poster artist take himself seriously these days. He has even discovered that he belongs to quite an antique institution, for the ruins of Pompeii have shown some attempts at pictorial advertisement, though nothing equal to the poster art of to-day.” Interviewing a graphic artist, the article revealed some of the thought put into efforts to win hearts, minds and wallets. These included the effectiveness of feminine beauty in catching attention: “Nothing so good as the female figure. . . Men going home from business like to see a pretty face upon the hoardings and women are caught by the hat or skirt, and think they will get something like it.” The male figure and animals were, conversely, deemed less efficacious and, though the value of humour was acknowledged, it

[https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS32.6869](https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS32.6869)
was concluded that “It is not enough to make the public laugh; the question is, does the laugh always sell the stuff? . . . In the long run it is safer and better to paint a pretty picture than a merely funny one.” The effort to cater to a target audience was also noted: “we certainly try to please the women most of all. They are less in the streets, it is true, but they are the purchasers for the family, and therefore their tastes and prejudices must be considered.”

Social commentary likewise demonstrated an awareness of such techniques (fig. 2).

Reactions to this commodity culture included recurrent aesthetic and moral concerns, some of which resonate in later critiques. Aesthetic objections considered much modern commercialism as tawdry, with the City Beautiful Movement denouncing placard advertising in particular as a degrading blight on the urban landscape. One critic lamented that “the beauty of our scenery is defiled by advertisements of someone’s soap, or pills, or ointment.” A cartoonist depicted the attitude with a newcomer to Auckland befuddled by a cityscape rendered unrecognisable by billboards. Moral concerns were notably informed by a traditional Christian ethos which perceived a tension between pious asceticism and worldly materialism. Advertising was easily grouped with the latter, and, in the view of an 1890 sermon, the “fulsome advertisements” confronting the public “in every railway carriage and on every blank wall” were soul-destroying distractions, signalling that the present was “an age of advertisements, of egregious frauds, of monstrous assertions and lamentable credulity.”

The impulse to separate God and Mammon is consistent with sociological understandings of the sacred–profane dichotomy, in which the affording of a sacred status (to an object, place, ritual, person and/or principle) innately demands a need to shield the sacred from contact with the everyday or profane. This tradition saw commercial activity banned on religious holidays, and Sunday trading restricted, with stricter sabbatarians opposing leisure and recreational activities as well—sports and cinema attendance proving notable concerns.
Cultural Mobilisation and Marketing

Following the outbreak of war, commercial interests, advertising space and techniques all became intensely entwined with the war effort. This resulted in newspaper advertisements incorporating war themes, advertising hoardings being repurposed to display patriotic posters, and mailing catalogues blending advertising with commentary on the war.34 This reflected a broader process of cultural mobilisation, a phenomenon which saw various meanings publicly layered on the collective experiences of the war.35 The resulting “war culture” has been defined as “a term alluding to the mental furniture men and women draw on to make sense of their world at war.”36 While centralised authority has often been a focal point in the mobilisation process, and was a crucial aspect in the restriction, manipulation and presentation of information and sentiments, the decentralised nature of cultural production has been well recognised. A study of Great War France, for example, notes French war culture as the product of “vast and extraordinarily diverse creative activity,” the origins of which “lay in individuals and not in governmental institutions. Tens of thousands of people created the images that mobilized the French between 1914 and 1918—journalists, teachers, writers, actors, popular singers, photographers, painters, designers, film directors, artisans, industrialists, and many others.”37

This decentralised dynamic is evident within New Zealand, too, and various studies impress how representations of the war emerged within diverse cultural spheres, including newspaper editorials and cartoons, church pulpits, popular music, postcards and various ephemera.38

Commercial activity and marketing constitutes a curious instance of war culture. Scholarship has typically gravitated towards examples of war culture that rendered the conflict in terms of high ideals, hallowed traditions and ardent convictions.39 Indeed, some studies have considered such weightiness almost as a defining characteristic. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, for example, define war culture as “a collection of representations of the conflict that crystallised into a system of thought which gave the war its deep significance.”40 Others, however, have recognised war culture as capable of addressing war “in a radically different way,” via association with popular culture and aspects of daily life, and advertising has been considered as part of this cultural engagement.41 Indeed, mass marketing arguably constitutes one of the leading forms of acknowledging the war, representing it in an overwhelming kitsch and exceedingly banal manner.42 Certainly the sheer scale of war-themed advertising is significant, and while popular imaginings of the media landscape of 1914–1918 give prize position to official efforts, notably stony-faced visages of Lord Kitchener or Uncle Sam, marketing incorporating war-related themes massively outstripped officiodom’s endeavours.43 Indeed, if we want to consider how the war was publicly presented to the New Zealanders of 1914–1918, then we should recognise that war-themed advertisements were a significant feature within mass media, and one that penetrated into parlours, tram commutes and smokos.

This productivity was married to a rapid adaptability. British postcard sellers are noted to have stocked war-related cards within three days of the outbreak of hostilities.44 New Zealand businesses were similarly responsive. On 5 August 1914, the day the British declaration of war was announced in New Zealand, products were already being advertised with war-themed puffery. Morris Household Stores, for example, proclaimed: “WAR!!! MAY BE AVERTED! But nothing can stop the appeal made by Morris’ Prices; they are like the British Fleet—IRRESISTIBLE.”45 Over the following years, an array of war-themed products were put before the public. An advertisement for Coates and Co. Jewellers, for example, proclaimed “Patriots Wear this Badge” and described its brooch as “An artistic symbol of our National spirit
depicting the British Bull Dog on the good old Union Jack, surmounted by a Crown and surrounded by the Overseas Dominion Emblems." Likewise, A. W. Moran and Son Company stocked the dying Kaiser toy—"WHEN blown up [sic] look full of importance. They die down and look dejected and comical." Arriving in mid-1915, the board game Allies’ Race to Berlin was sold on the promise of its instructive value in demonstrating "the taking of the different fortifications and obstacles that are to be met with by the Allies’ Armies," as well as the titillating claim that it had been "prohibited by the Kaiser." Similarly, the Submarine Versus Dreadnought toy was touted as capturing an essence of the war’s naval actions: "Fire a torpedo from the Submarine, hit the red spot on Dreadnought, and behold! the Dreadnought is blown to pieces"; "WAR TOYS MAKE HAPPY BOYS."

However, the ongoing engagement between marketing and the war is perhaps most evident in how businesses continually responded to the conditions and collective experiences the war wrought, and attempted to tailor marketing to appeal to consumer’s hopes and anxieties. The material nature of New Zealand’s military commitment, for example, was readily recognised with a range of products promoted as essential for men anticipating military service. Thus Dawsons jewellers impressed the “absolute necessity of the soldier having a thoroughly reliable watch”; Whitcombe and Tombs proclaimed that “The Soldiers’ Diary” was “the handiest book ever put together for a Soldier. Its 365 perforated pages make letter-writing easy”; Kodak advertisements claimed that photographs from enlisted men, in training, in exotic cities and with comrades, offered a “heart gripping Kodak story for the folks at home” (fig. 3); and advertising for H. W. Trotman’s financial services were headed with “SOLDIERS’ LIFE ASSURANCE.” More custom and exotic commodities also played to this tune; “BULLET-PROOF Body Shields for Soldiers. Proof against Shrapnel, Revolver, and Bayonet. Give comfort, warmth, and safety in the Trenches. Delivered free in War Zones.”

Enlistment also produced a growing demographic of New Zealanders with loved ones at the front, and marketing presented a wealth of commodities as coveted comforts or a small respite for soldiers. Typical examples include Three Castles, which portrayed soldiers cheerily coping with adversities while smoking its cigarettes; Wrigley’s, which claimed its chewing gum was “greatly appreciated by the soldiers in Europe. It quenches thirst, gives long-lasting refreshment, steadies the nerves”; and Beaver Baking Powder, which depicted a soldier gratefully receiving a cake as a treat and a memory of home (fig. 4). A common technique was the use of endorsements to lend measures of credibility. Kirkcaldie and Stains, for example, quoted the Australian war correspondent Charles Bean’s observations on the harsh winter conditions of the Dardanelles, before adding, “How that ‘soldier boy’ will welcome a ‘Kayaness’ Leather Waistcoat...A very sensible and particularly necessary present.” Havelock Tobacco similarly linked their product with alleged communications between military authorities:

What do the Men at the Front WANT?
THE ABOVE INQUIRY WAS MADE BY
The Minister of Defence (Sir James Allen)
‘Brigadier-General Richardson (Commandant N.Z. Expeditionary Force, England)
REPLIED—
‘HAVELOCK’ TOBACCO.

Beyond appeals to authority, references to common soldier’s accounts were also employed. An advertisement for medicated ointment, for example, quoted a letter from the front as a representative of the common soldier with the headline “ONE OF OUR GALLIPOLI HEROES GIVES ZAM-BUK GREAT PRAISE...OUR SOLDIERS WANT MORE ZAM-BUK.”
Figure 3. *New Zealand Times*, 23 August 1918, 2

Figure 4. *Wanganui Herald*, 2 February 1918, 8
Into 1915, war casualties became another collective experience of New Zealand’s war, with regular casualty lists circulated, telegrams informing next of kin of war deaths, and ships of wounded soldiers returning home. Such realities brought a series of responses in war culture, most notably high-minded remembrance efforts and charity work. A commercial reaction is also evident. Advertisements for artificial limbs, for example, were directed at returned wounded with prosthetics presented as offering prospects for independent pursuits of labour and leisure: “The up-to-date artificial arm is quite a miracle of mechanism. With it a man can carry a stick or umbrella or hold a book, etc. He can use knife and fork quite dexterously, write a legible hand, hold a cricket bat or a billiard cue, a hammer or an axe, and pick up a pin!” Commerce also reacted to the widespread impulses to commemorate the war dead and to console the living, with advertising adopting themes of succour and charity. The 1917 patriotic war book Historic Trentham, for example, was advertised with the prominent pledge that sales would be used to help fund scholarships for the sons of fallen soldiers: “A scholarship will never make up for the loss of a father, but it will enable the lad to get the start in life that his own father would have liked to give him.” Advertising for the Art Union’s fundraising similarly proclaimed:

“Sons of Digger!” KEEN, HAPPY, ALERT—worthy sons of the men who fought and died for Freedom and the Fernleaf—these are the lads who will thank you one day for your help in putting them on the road to success. It is to build men out of such material as this that you are asked to buy tickets in The Trentham Dominion Art Union—to provide Scholarships for the Children of New Zealand’s fallen and disabled heroes.

Other businesses linked their services with impulses for remembrance. An advertisement for Laidlaw Leeds’s photographic services prominently featured a photograph of a soldier and asked “HAVEN’T you at least one photograph which you wish to preserve for a lifetime? . . . as a memento of someone for whom you have the tenderest regard, it will become one of your most valued possessions.”

Ultimately, commercial engagement with the collective experiences of the war endured until the end of the conflict, which was also marked by proclamations of the event as an opportunity for consumption:

AFTER ALL New Zealand’s Boys and New Zealand’s Homes have gone through, and their glorious achievements on the field of battle during the last four years and more, a truly happy Yuletide should surely be New Zealand’s by right. . . . Let us all, then, unite to make Christmas, 1918, a joyful celebration, a thanksgiving, a giving of expressions of our love one to the other—a time of happiness which shall augur well for the future of our Dominion. Of course some preparation is necessary, and with this object in view, the D.I.C. has arranged a magnificent CHRISTMAS BAZAAR on its usual site on the first floor.

Returning soldiers were also a target market, with the return to civilian life addressed with classic marketing themes of relief, hope, comfort and opportunity. Thus suits were advertised as a marker of normality for the repatriated soldier: “You’ve had a good many experiences in many lands and many climes, but you’ll all be glad to get back to home and kindred. You’ll be nearly as glad to get back into ‘Civvies.’ And you’ll be still more pleased if you get those ‘Civvies’ from Hugh Wright’s.”

Journal of New Zealand Studies NS32 (2021), 134-152 https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS32.6869
Indicative of the dynamics of modern branding, commercial war culture went beyond marrying the utility of products, however tenuously, with the collective experiences of the war. Thus the consumption of various goods and services were associated with the war, even when they had little or no practical application, and various spectacles and themes were used to market products in this manner. The most basic examples employed simple rhetorical links building on word associations. Examples include a retailer’s claim to be “at War with the balance of the season’s left-overs”; Aulsebrook and Co.’s pledge to “make war against antiquated methods”; Dunlop’s promise that there was “nothing ‘Neutral’” about their tyres; or Cerstena proclamation that it was “The ‘Big Gun’ In Cereal Food.” Basic word play was also employed to promote goods with patriotic or anti-enemy sentiments; as one New Zealand historian notes “Advertising one’s company as a supplier of quality, British-made goods became a regular feature during the conflict.” Examples include “Ladies Tweed Coats—No German shoddy... They’ll go like British shells” and calls to “Shun the shoddy German-made Underwear—and support honest British [sic] labour and brains—you will get better value for your money!”

Other advertisers attempted more complex themes in seeking to capitalise on public sentiments and aspirations. The alcohol industry placed ads associating a celebratory toast with patriotic causes: Perfection Whisky pressed consumers to “DRINK SUCCESS TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT”; Johnnie Walker compared British commitment to Belgium with its own commitment to uphold its Whisky’s eminence; and Kaka Ale toasted “the unconquered Army of Great Britain” (fig. 5). As the war was observed as a protracted struggle, other commercials readily adapted advertising tropes of fitness endowed by consumption towards the endowment of fighting fitness. Thus Cremoata promised that its porridge promoted the mental and physical qualities needed to fill enlistment quotas, and Champion flour that “Our Medical Corps at the front (in fact, always) reports that our ‘Champion’ Muscle Raiser Lads are impervious to Kaiser Bill’s bullets and gas.” The meat extract Bovril was sold as a source of endurance: “Whether you are engaged in fighting or in working, or even only in the dull strain of waiting, the present times are drawing heavily on your store of vital energy. Victory is to those who have the strength to win through to the end. Bovril gives that strength to the system.”
Lastly, and in a first-rate example of how tenuous the relationship between product and branding could be, the image of some products and businesses were rapidly reworked as the war developed. This is particularly clear in cases where products might be associated with the enemy. Certainly, the number of butcheries with newspaper advertisements touting stocks of German-style delicacies plummeted between August 1914 and the start of 1915. For example, Gisborne’s Vernon Nossiter who, prior to the war, had made a feature of noting that “GERMAN SAUSAGE SAVELOYS, HAM, BRAWN & PIES” were “always on hand,” underwent a rebranding strategy in the first weeks of the war. Three months after the outbreak, the German nature of his wares was no longer touted and the butchery instead announced: “the Proprietor respectfully solicits the patronage of British consumers for British-made goods, which are as delectable as any put on the Local Market.” Schneideman Bros, “THE EMPIRE TAILORS,” went further and, weeks into the war, took out a full page advertisement announcing the owners were “true British subjects (formally of Riga, Russia).” Several companies took out similar advertisements notably after a spate of vandalism targeting businesses that were German-owned (or suspected to be so).

**Anzackery, Circa 1914–1918**

The remarkable capacity of marketing to associate commodities with the War was accompanied by a series of negative reactions. Many bear a remarkable likeness to those around centenary-era Anzackery. Thus the *Maoriland Worker* denounced “toys that teach hate” and urged parents to favour alternatives: “Instead of buying toy soldiers in bright uniforms mothers can buy toys that teach some knowledge of other races, and lessons to break down race prejudice.” Others, observing an “inclination on the part of the pushful shopkeeper to make business capital out of this war,” proclaimed a conflict between the reverence afforded to parts of war culture and the profane, superficial and banal qualities ascribed to commercialism.
Anzac proved a particular subject for disquiet. In 1915 the term emerged as a fixation in public consciousness, sustained by ongoing news of Anzac efforts at Gallipoli. Parents were soon reported as naming newborns “Anzac” and “Dardanell,” and *Australasia Triumphant!*—one of the first books on the Anzac role at Gallipoli—practically became an obligatory award at school prizegivings. Commercial interests were likewise attracted to Anzac, seeking to tap its appeal as a familiar, evocative and positively-perceived term. By October 1915, the Anzac Tea Rooms were open for business in Queen Street, Auckland; by May 1916 similarly branded establishments were operating in Wellington and Thames. In April 1916, a property presented for auction in Andersons Bay, Dunedin was advertised as an “Anzac township.” In May 1916, the Anzac Studio, of Willis Street Wellington, claimed it was “the place to have your Photograph taken, day or night.” In June 1916, Aspey, White and Co. applied to register “Anzac” as a trade mark for dried fruit products. Sensing the trend, one editorial dourly predicted that the country would soon be “deluged with advertisements of Anzac Tooth Powder, Anzac Antibilious Pills, Anzackilla, the Infallible Rat Poison, or such abominations as ‘Try Our Best Anzac Tea—Double Strength,’ or ‘Step Right In and Inspect Our Anzac Silk Nighties at three and elevenpence three farthings—Just the thing For the Soldier’s Best Girlie.’”

Indeed, critiques of what would later be called Anzackery date to the war years, as commercial interest in Anzac collided with public sensibilities. Consistent with pre-war reactions to commercialism, as well as more contemporary commentators, reactions included strong convictions that commercialisation, alongside other activities deemed insufficiently respectful, was a profane affront to what was held as sacred. One letter to the editor aptly showcases the aforementioned sacred–profane dichotomy and claimed Anzac’s sacred status: “It is a name that is written deeply in many a New Zealand home, and is rendered sacred to us by those loved ones who now silently repose beneath an alien clime.” The correspondent then proceeded to state the need to preserve this status from debasing “commercial exploitation”:

> Cold indeed must be whose heart is a stranger to the finer and nobler feelings which this name inspires. but what must we thing [sic] of those who for paltry gain heedlessly inflict pain by the indiscriminate use of this name which awakens at once our holiest aspirations and the tenderest of all human emotion.

It was in this context that many sought to guard Anzac from activities deemed to be profane. When regulations, gazetted on 6 April 1916, proclaimed 25 April as a half holiday to commemorate Anzac Day, official recommendations called for a reverent ambience, and specifically noted that “the Government is of opinion that the day should not be marked by the holding of sports or similar forms of entertainment.” Many also called for comparable regulations to those passed in Australia, in May 1916, which prohibited the use of Anzac, “or any word resembling Anzac,” in “connexion with any trade, business, calling or profession” without permission from the Governor-General or of a Minister of State. The *New Zealand Free Lance*, for example, called for legislation “which will prevent the abuse of that sacred word, Anzac, by a base commercialism which can only look at the noblest things in life through the spectacles of its own sordid spirit . . . for the sake of common decency, do not let us have the noble name of Anzac so degraded.” This was achieved as regulations, gazetted in August 1916, prohibited “the use of the word ‘Anzac’ in connection with any trade or business.” Consequently, various enterprises that had incorporated Anzac into their marketing now found themselves in breach of regulations. In September 1916, for example, Wellington’s H. M. Rosenberg was informed by police that the Anzac Studio would need to be renamed.
Rosenberg’s consequent effort to rebrand as the “Banzac” photography shop was also deemed unacceptable.89

Further measures to separate Anzac and commercial activity were called for over the war years. In May 1918, for example, the Auckland RSA protested that hardly any large businesses had voluntarily closed on the afternoon of Anzac Day. The Association called for Anzac Day to be made “a close holiday, on which all business premises should be closed” in adherence to the “strong feeling that the day should be kept as sacred as Good Friday.”90 One commentator concurred, noting:

   We fully expected that every shop in this city would have closed their doors for a few hours out of respect to the men who gave their lives for the Empire, and also out of respect for the dear ones of the sacred dead. In most cases the small suburban shopkeepers closed their places of business. Not so the large Queen Street business premises. Trade was more to these men than the memory of the men who had given their lives that these “money-making men” might continue in peace and safety.91

Another front occurred overseas as Australia and New Zealand sought to influence other governments to prohibit the commercial use of Anzac. Some success was achieved in the United Kingdom where the British Government passed legislation restricting the use of Anzac as a trade term in December 1916, though some argued this was not sufficiently enforced.92 In January 1917, for example, a correspondent complained that the British Government had failed to ensure that Anzac was not subjected to “sordid ends” in the United Kingdom, arguing that the term should “be tapu to soap and pill merchants and other enterprising traders disposed to make use of the word for purposes of advertising their wares.”93 Less success was achieved with regard to the United States, and while petitions were sent to Washington regarding the issue, by May 1919 five trademarks using Anzac had been registered there.94

Conclusion

A historical perspective on the relationship between war and marketing holds several insights for contemporary understanding and concerns of commercial Anzackery in New Zealand. Foremost is the enduring nature of the issues at hand, alongside certain shifts. Both the War and the War’s centenary saw marketing efforts seek to tap public awareness, interest and emotional investment, and a wealth of goods and services were accordingly associated or branded with regard to the conflict.

Some differences are evident, however. The manner in which war-themed consumerism dominated the advertising landscape of 1914–1918 makes the 2014–2018 effort look small by comparison. One part of the explanation for this is that the centenary simply had fewer prospects to market goods in the manner wartime enterprises did, in the context of a vast social and material mobilisation. The shift in cultural attitudes since 1918, which makes so many of the advertisements of 1914–1918 appear as something from a different world, is also undoubtedly significant. Though advertising associating the centenary with opportunities for consumption was certainly capable of crass exploitation, it is difficult to imagine contemporary advertising presenting the First World War, a conflict popularly taken as defined by tragedy and dark irony, with cheery optimism, solicitous solutions and satisfied consumers in the way that the 1914–1918 vintage did.
In both eras, this phenomenon stirred degrees of public unease and criticism, and spurred arguments that martial materialism was a bad influence, particularly on the young, and that commercial engagement was distastefully irreverent. In both periods, this informed calls to defend the boundaries between revenue seeking and reverence, with Anzac proving a particular point of focus. The result was a sustained campaign to guard Anzac against contact with the profane. In 1920, horse racing was prohibited on Anzac Day, and licensed premises were required to remain closed “in the same manner as they require the closing of such premises on Christmas Day and Good Friday.” In 1927, legal prohibition on the “Use of certain Words having Reference to the Great War” were inscribed in the Police Offenses Act. Likewise, section 17 of the 1981 Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act noted that the Governor-General may by Order in Council: “prohibit, regulate, or control the use in connection with any business, trade, or occupation of the word ‘Anzac’ or of any other word that so closely resembles the word ‘Anzac’ as to be likely to deceive or mislead any person.” Current laws still ban most businesses from opening and trading until 1 pm on Anzac Day.

This post-war campaign continued to possess an international dimension which has made Anzac “the most regulated word in the world.” Most significantly, in April 2003, the New Zealand and Australian governments applied to protect the term “Anzac” from commercial use internationally under the World Intellectual Property Organization. Within weeks the word had been registered as an international trademark in 176 countries adhering to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. Some concerns around the use of the term are remarkably reminiscent of earlier ones. The submission to the World Intellectual Property Organization, for example, is noted as having been taken in response to a request lodged with the Turkish Patent Institute to register “Anzak” as a trademark. As with the post-war United States, efforts have not always been successful. Turkish businesses pitched towards remembrance tourism in the seaport of Çanakkale, which adjoins the Gallipoli peninsular, have been attracted to Anzac branding and include the “Anzac Hotel”, the “Grand Anzac Hotel” and the “Anzac House Youth Hostel.”

Interestingly, this campaign and the sentiments evoked have continued as sabbatarian prescriptions have decidedly waned as a cultural force. Indeed, it is conventional to note New Zealand as having become an increasingly secular society, and a 2007 assessment proclaims New Zealand as “one of the most secular countries on earth.” This has shifted some boundaries around what is taken as sacred and profane. Restrictions on Sunday trading, for example, were overturned in 1990 and the lobby group Retail NZ has argued that laws restricting trading on Anzac Day—alongside Christmas, Good Friday and Easter Sunday—are “a hangover from outdated laws.” Nevertheless, the sentiment stirred by projecting a vodka logo on the National War Memorial, for example, indicates that the sense that things held as sacred should be shielded from profane commercialism still holds, and remarkably resembles those of a century prior.
The acronym ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) was created during the First World War to denote Australian and New Zealand servicemen. It has long been used more broadly to reference the ethos those servicemen were held to embody and the nature of the societies they represented.

1 The acronym ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) was created during the First World War to denote Australian and New Zealand servicemen. It has long been used more broadly to reference the ethos those servicemen were held to embody and the nature of the societies they represented.

2  https://www.facebook.com/thewellingtonchocolatefactory/


4 Email advertisement from Moore Wilson. Copy in the author’s collection.


6 “Anzackery” is thought to have been coined by Australian historian Geoffrey Serle in 1967. The 2016 Australian National Dictionary defines the term as “the promotion of the Anzac legend in ways that are perceived to be excessive or misguided.” See Bruce Moore (ed.), The Australian National Dictionary: Australian Words and Their Origins, Vol.1 A–L, second ed. (South Melbourne: Victoria Oxford University Press, 2016), 33.


10 Bay of Plenty Times, 14 May 1948, 6.


13 Press, 5 May 1915, 6.


22 Phillips, “Advertising.” The claim that Haines’ was “The first advertising agent in New Zealand” is incorrect (see Grant, “Agents of Prosperity”, 26). See also Ian F. Grant, “The Early Years,” *AdMedia* 17, no. 1 (February 2002): 4; Ilott, *Creating Customers*, 17–21. Arrangements with commercial media were also increasingly regulated through the Newspaper Proprietors’ Association, established in 1898, which, in 1907, standardised advertising commissions and fees across newspapers.


24 See for example *Press*, 29 April 1919, 10.

25 For examples of billboard advertising in early twentieth century New Zealand see Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/2-002109-G; 1/1-011835-G; 1/1-009709-G; 1/1-011128-F.


27 *Otago Witness*, 7 December 1904, 69.


29 *Dominion*, 8 January 1910, 3.

30 *New Zealand Observer*, 23 February 1907, 16.

31 *Evening Star*, 14 November 1890, 4.


34 For examples of hoardings being repurposed, see Wanganui Herald, 6 October 1915, 4; Sun, 8 February 1916, 12. For examples of catalogues integrating war themes, see Anti-German Trade Campaign, War Pictures and their Obvious Lessons (Christchurch: Smith and Anthony Publication Date, 1915); ATL, EPH-A-Horticulture-1917-01-Front.
35 Steven Loveridge, Calls to Arms: New Zealand Society and Commitment to the Great War (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2014).
39 For leading examples, see Martin Van Creveld, The Culture of War (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2009); and Jay Winter, War Beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
42 For further consideration of the dynamic, see Michael Billig, Banal Nationalism (London: Sage Publications, 2004).
44 Aulich, “Graphic Arts and Advertising.”
45 New Zealand Herald, 5 August 1914, 13.
46 Press, 30 September 1916, 11.
47 Dominion, 1 September 1915, 1.
48 Dominion, 3 July 1915, 10; Dominion, 24 June 1915, 7.
49 Dominion, 14 December 1917, 4. An illustration of this toy is featured in David Veart, Hello Girls and Boys!: A New Zealand Toy Story (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2014), 107.

51 *Otago Daily Times*, 1 July 1915, 3; *New Zealand Times*, 8 November 1917, 2; *Auckland Star*, 29 November 1918, 7; *Otago Daily Times*, 8 August 1918, 6.

52 *Press*, 26 March 1918, 9.


54 *Southland Times*, 15 October 1918, 8; *New Zealand Herald*, 18 February 1916, 8; *Wanganui Herald*, 2 February 1918, 8.


56 *New Zealand Times*, 7 July 1917, 11.

57 *New Zealand Herald*, 22 January 1916, 8.


59 Loveridge, *Calls to Arms*, 205–43.

60 *Dominion*, 15 January 1917, 3.

61 *Auckland Weekly News*, 30 April 1920, 44.

62 *New Zealand Times*, 5 May 1919, 7.

63 *Auckland Weekly News*, 14 March 1918, 41.

64 *New Zealand Free Lance*, 2 December 1918, 2.


66 *Stratford Evening Post*, 6 August 1914, 6; *Press*, 7 May 1915, 3; *New Zealand Free Lance*, December 1915 (Christmas annual), 17; *New Zealand Truth*, 7 October 1916, 2.

67 Andrew Francis, “*To Be Truly British We Must Be Anti-German*”: New Zealand, Enemy Aliens and the Great War Experience, 1914–1919 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012), 181.


69 *Thames Star*, 12 June 1916, 3; *New Zealand Truth*, 31 March 1917, 10; *Otautau Standard and Wallace County Chronicle*, 10 April 1917, 4.

70 *New Zealand Free Lance*, 18 January 1918, 5; *New Zealand Free Lance*, (Christmas annual) December 1915, 40.

71 *New Zealand Herald*, 5 April 1916, 3.

72 *Poverty Bay Herald*, 2 July 1914, 9.

73 *Poverty Bay Herald*, 21 November 1914, 1.

74 *New Zealand Observer*, 29 August 1914, 7.

75 For examples of such notices, see *Evening Post*, 2 January 1915, 9; *Evening Post*, 21 May 1915, 10; and *Evening Post*, 30 June 1915, 2.


77 *Maoriland Worker*, 12 December 1917, 7.

78 *New Zealand Free Lance*, 1 June 1916, 8.


80 *New Zealand Herald*, 1 October 1915, 10; *Thames Star*, 26 May 1916, 1.

81 *Otago Daily Times*, 4 April 1916, 10.

82 *Evening Post*, 25 May 1916, 1.


84 *New Zealand Free Lance*, 1 June 1916, 8.

85 *Thames Star*, 5 December 1916, 4.

Journal of New Zealand Studies NS32 (2021), 134-152 https://doi.org/10.26686/jnzs.iNS32.6869
85 *New Zealand Gazette*, 6 April 1916, 977.
87 *New Zealand Free Lance*, 1 June 1916, 8.
88 *New Zealand Gazette*, 31 August 1916, 2893–94. A predecessor to this action appeared in section 33 of the 1916 War Legislation Amendment Act 1916, passed 7 August 1916: “The Governor may from time to time, by notice in the Gazette, prohibit the use in connection with any trade or business of any word having reference in any way to the present war, on the ground that the use of the said word for any such purpose may be offensive to public sentiment” (“War Legislation Amendment,” *New Zealand Statutes* no. 13 [1916]: 135).
89 Reports of Constable R. G. Black, 21 September 1916 and 5 October 1916, in “Miscellaneous—‘ANZAC’ Protection of Use of Word,” ANZ, R22436256-AAYS-8638-AD1-65-89,
90 *New Zealand Herald*, 11 May 1918, 6.
91 *New Zealand Observer*, 11 May 1918, 15.
93 *Star*, 14 December 1916, 4.