

HMNZS Tamaki Established on Motuihe Island 1941

The Navy moved on to Motuihe Island during the early years of WWII and established HMNZS Tamaki. This move was not without its critics. There were complaints from the public concerning the loss of the island for recreation. The Auckland City Council also wanted compensation for the use of the buildings on the island. The Health Camp had to close down and they were reluctant to do so. The following are some quotes from correspondence at the time.

Auckland City Mayor to Naval Authorities

“I had the opportunity before action was taken by the Naval Authorities of discussion of the whole matter with the right Honourable the Prime Minister, who agreed with me that it would be fair for the Naval Vote to reimburse Council for interest and sinking fund charges on capital cost of the Corporation’s buildings on the Island. I have noticed some criticism of the use of the Island for Naval training purposes. This, of course, does not call for any serious comment, because it is obvious that the exigencies of the war have an immeasurably superior claim to civil amenities.

With reference to the suggestion concerning the removal of the Children’s Health Camp, I would just like to point out that, in the event of Auckland being bombarded, Motuihe would be right in the line of fire, and would indeed be no place for either children or civilians.”

However, it would seem that the Navy was happy with the assistance given it by the Auckland City Council.

14 January 1941 extract from letter written by Commodore of the New Zealand Division’s Royal Navy, Commodore W.E. Parry

“I have been meaning for some time to write and thank you for the very helpful way in which the Auckland City Council have dealt with the question of our taking over Motuihe Island. We fully realize that they have made a considerable sacrifice in forbidding the public to use the island. I feel in every way we have a great deal to be grateful for, both to you and your Council.”