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MONUMENTAL MOMENTS
Albany Anzac 2014-18

A Brief History of the Albany Anzac legend of WW1, from *'The Australian & New Zealand Expeditionary Forces – Assemblage at and Departure from Albany, Western Australia'*

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Foreword

The matter contained in the publication was prepared and placed in the hands of the printer, W.F. Forster & Co., Proprietors "Albany Advertiser" Printers and Publishers, early in 1915.

When all but complete, a copy was submitted to the Censor, who totally forbade its issue. So it is that it has taken five years to reach the public. It is obvious that any attempt to revise the contents from the point of view of to-day would have altered the character entirely.

At the outset, the dispatch of a force of 30,000 men overseas appeared a big effort. Ten times as many were sent before peace came; indeed, a second contingent rendezvoused at Albany within a few months of the first.

It would have been impossible to make the body of work more comprehensive, because after a while the necessities of war made it imperative to vary organisation, and ports other than Albany were used by departing transports.

In these circumstances, it was decided to issue publication as originally designed. The purpose at the beginning was to let the world know how the first Australian Army left the Commonwealth. It still remains so.

To understand the letterpress which follows, the reader must remember that they are viewing events from the early days of 1915, and that the dates quoted belonged to the year 1914.

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Photographs by W.H. Campbell and A.G. Sands

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Assemblage at Albany

Germany declared war against Russia on 01 August 1914. It was not until 04 August 1914 that a condition of war developed between Germany and Great Britain. The intervening days were days of suspense, and while the issue was yet in doubt, the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia cabled the Imperial authorities with offers of naval and military assistance should the necessity arise.

As a matter of fact, the Federal Ministry met and discussed the situation on the night of 03 August 1914, and subsequently the Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher (Labor) made the following announcement :

> *"The Government has decided in the event of war to place the Australian vessels under the control of the British Admiralty. We have also decided to offer to the Imperial Government an expeditionary force of 20,000 men of any suggested composition to any destination desired by the Home Government, and the cost and dispatch and maintenance will be borne by the Commonwealth Government."*

Thus it came to pass that when the Prime Minister announced on 05 August 1914 the outbreak of war between England and Germany, adding "Australia is now at war", he also read the following cablegram received by the Governor-General The Right Hon. Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, GCMG, DL from the Secretary of State for the Colonies :

> *"Referring to your telegram of 03 August 1914, His Majesty's Government greatly appreciate the prompt readiness of your Government to place the naval forces of the Commonwealth at the disposal of the Admiralty, and your generous offer to equip and maintain an expeditionary force."*

From His Majesty King George V, the following message was also received :

> *"I desire to express to my people of the overseas dominions the appreciation and pride with which I have received the messages from their respective Governments during the last few days. These spontaneous assurances of the fullest support recall to me the generous self-sacrificing help given by them in the past to the mother country. I shall be strengthened in the discharge of the greatest responsibilities which rest upon me by the confident belief that in this time of trial my Empire will stand united, calm and resolute, and trusting in God."*

Two days later, the Imperial authorities formally notified their "grateful acceptance" of the offer of the Commonwealth Government to send 20,000 men to the assistance of the Empire, and steps were taken forthwith to organise the force. It had first to be decided what form the expeditionary force should take. All details in this regard were completed by 10 August 1914, and that same day instructions were issued to officers in the different military districts of Australia to enrol volunteers. The response on the part of the young manhood of the country was immediate. Within the week, the full number of men called for had passed the medical examination and were in the different camps constituted in the several States. Then followed months of hard training to the day of embarkation.

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The title chosen for the contingent was the Australian Imperial (Expeditionary) Force (the 1st AIF), and it was arranged that it should consist of a Light Horse Brigade and a Division of Infantry, every branch of the Australian Army being thus fully represented.

A Light Horse Brigade on its war establishment is made up of :

- Three Regiments (each of 530 men)
- A Field Artillery Battery
- A Light Horse Brigade Ammunition Column
- A Signal Troop
- A Light Horse Brigade Train
- A Field Ambulance
- An Army Service Corp, and
- The Headquarters Staff.

The approximate total of the personnel is 104 officers and 2,122 of other ranks, while 2,315 horses, 8 machine guns, six 18-pounder quick-firers, 20 carts, 408 wagons, 4 motor cars, 66 bicycles, 3 motor cycles, and field wireless equipment go to make up the strength.

A Division includes roughly 17,747 troops of all ranks, attached to headquarters, three infantry brigades, two light horse squadrons, headquarters divisional artillery, three field artillery brigades, a divisional ammunition column, headquarters divisional engineers, two field companies, a signal company, a divisional train, three field ambulances, and an army service corps. The Division also has associated with it 5,328 horses, thirty-six 18-pounder quick-firers, 24 machine guns, 125 carts, 654 wagons, 8 motor cars, 271 bicycles, and 9 motor cycles.

Infantry Brigades are made up of four Battalions (each 1,046 strong), field artillery brigades of three batteries with four guns and four ammunition wagons, each drawn by six horses. The complete expeditionary force was thus constituted as follows :

Light Horse Brigade

	Personnel	Horses	Guns
Headquarters	34	26	
Three Regiments	1,608	1,689	6
Field Artillery Battery	162	173	4
Ammunition Column	100	118	
Signal Troop	43	45	
Train	150	158	
Field Ambulance	120	106	
Totals	**2,217**	**2,315**	**10**

Division

	Personnel	Horses	Guns
Headquarters	80	54	
Three Infantry Brigades	12,351	768	24
Two Light Horse Squadrons	321	334	
HQ Divisional Artillery	22	20	
Three Field Artillery Brigades	2,178	2,112	36
Ammunition Column	607	734	
HQ Divisional Engineers	12	8	1
Two Field Companies	412	114	
Signal Company	163	80	
Divisional Train	645	638	
Three Field Ambulances	762	300	
Totals	**17,553**	**5,162**	**61**

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The grand totals for the two units were : Personnel 19,779; Horses 7,477; Guns 70; and there besides 221 officers and men employed in various capacities.

Each State contributed to the force on a population basis.

New Zealand offered an expeditionary force of 10,000 men, and this joined the Australian force at Albany. The two groups were kept entirely separate, but they sailed together on 01 November 1914, and fought side by side.

Twenty-eight transports were employed to carry the Australian force, and it took a further ten to accommodate the New Zealanders. Those loaded up at different ports and only at Albany were they seen together. King George's Sound was the rendezvous appointed, and between 24 and 28 October 1914, they assembled.

The fleet of transports comprised some of the largest and finest commercial steamers trading with Australia, and they came from all of the five States of the Commonwealth, as well as from New Zealand. The ships, on entering the Sound, steamed to anchorages already allotted them, and there they rode at anchor, forming four lines running east and west.

H.M.A.T. Orvieto was the flagship, with General Bridges on board.

In twos and threes, the vessels came into Princess Royal Harbour; some took water and others coal. Many also took provisions, but these were delivered to those in want of them while at anchor in the Sound.

For the first three days, operations were considerably delayed by one of the most violent easterly gales experienced for many years, but once the weather cleared up rapid progress was made. From the first, numbers of troops were landed in detachments for marching exercise, as many as 1500 coming ashore at one time.

With the men came bands and regimental mascots in the form of all conceivable breeds of dogs, and in some instances a march of 10 miles was made. There was little leave, but not much, and really only officers and men with business to transact spent any time in the town.

Night and day the scene was one pulsating with life. Signalling was constantly kept up, and the military and naval authorities ashore worked at fever-heat day in, day out, meeting calls made on them by the fleet.

Naturally, among so many, illness was not absent. One officer and seven others were admitted to hospital and several operations were performed by local medicos. One death unfortunately resulted. Trooper Leslie White of the 1st Light Horse Regiment, New South Wales, succumbed on 12 November 1914 to meningitis, and his body was buried with full military honours.

The majority of the other patients, having become convalescent, returned to the State of their enlistment. No fewer than 89 men were discharged at Albany, the majority of whom were found medically unfit, and these returned to the Eastern States during the week after the departure of the transports.

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One fatal accident was reported while the ships lay at anchor. Colour-Sergeant O'Meara of the Victorian Light Horse fell into the sea from H.M.A.T. Hororata while 'sky-larking'. A sad feature of the fatality was the fact that the body was never recovered.

The fleet of transports left on Sunday 01 November 1914 at 05.45 am. At that hour, H.M.S. Minotaur left the harbour, followed by H.M.A.S. Melbourne. The Minotaur took the lead, and H.M.A.T. Orvieto then left her anchorage in the Sound and was followed by the transports in order, each line taken in turn.

Thus in Indian file they ranged past Breaksea Island, where two cinematograph operators were stationed to get a permanent record of the event. The last boats to leave were the New Zealand transports, which went out in three lines.

The Australian division proceeded out to sea, and abruptly turned and went west, it being understood that this order was maintained until the fleet was finally formed in three lines. It was roughly 06.00 am when the departure was entered upon, but it was 10.00 o'clock before the last ship had disappeared from view round Bald Head.

The different vessels of this magnificent fleet arrived without announcement, and took up the positions allotted to them as if the movement had been thoroughly rehearsed. When all assembled they presented a magnificent sight, and the fact that Albany was selected for so notable a gathering is eloquent testimony to the natural resources of the port.

All reference to the subject was forbidden at the time, and it was only at noon on Wednesday 13 November 1914, that the ban of the censor prohibiting publication was removed.

The Port of Albany

Reference to so important a shipping achievement as that recorded would be incomplete without some information of the port chosen for it.

Albany, situated on the northern shore of Princess Royal Harbour (King George Sound), possesses the distinction of being the oldest settled portion of Western Australia. It can indeed claim three years seniority of Perth.

In June 1825, the French vessels Thetis and Esperance were cruising about the southern coast. It was at that time strongly suspected that France, recognising the maritime strength derived from the possession of suitable colonies, desired to found a settlement in Australia.

Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Darling, then Governor of New South Wales, sent Major Edmund Lockyer of the 57th Regiment to found a settlement at King George III Sound, so named by Captain George Vancouver in 1791.

The party comprised all told about 75 persons, made up of officers and rank and file of the 39th Regiment and convicts. The expedition, consisting of H.M.S. Fly and the Brigs Amity and Dragon, sailed from Sydney on 09 November 1826, and landed at the Sound on the following Christmas Day, 25 December 1826.

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To the town which was built was given the name of Frederick Town (or Frederickstown), but the name was subsequently changed to Albany.

Albany is a fortified town situated in latitude 35°2' South and longitude 117°54' East. As the land at this point, however, stretches out into the Indian Ocean, the position is open to ocean breezes from the south, east and west, and the climate is thus rendered the coolest in Australia.

Because of its climate, Albany enjoys the distinction of being the place at which the official summer residence of the Governor is located. King George's Sound is a stretch of water some seven miles from north to south and five miles from east to west. It faces south.

Princess Royal Harbour opens out to the westward and measures about two miles by three. The Town itself nestles between two hills, which rise from the verge of the harbour on the east and the west.

At the present time Albany is a port of call for all interstate steamers, vessels of the White Star Line, and indeed all shipping following the cape route. It is an important coaling station. The population of the town is 4,500, but a large and productive area surrounds it.

Naval Escort

The naval military escort supporting the 1st Detachment of the Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Forces comprised six surface warships from the British, Japanese, Australian and New Zealand Navys :

H.M.S. Minotaur	Flag Ship of the China Station. Cruiser of 14,600 tons; armament, four 9.2 in. guns and ten 7.5 in. guns; speed, 23 knots.
H.I.J.M.S. Ibuki	Japanese Battle Cruiser of 14,620 tons; armament, four 12 in. guns and eight 8 in. guns; speed, 21 knots.
H.M.A.S. Sydney	Cruiser of the Australian Navy, 5,400 tons; speed, 24.5 knots.
H.M.A.S. Melbourne	Cruiser of the Australian Navy, 5,400 tons; speed, 24.5 knots.
H.M.S. Psyche	Light Cruiser of the New Zealand Squadron, 2,135 tons; speed, 20 knots.
H.M.S. Pyramus	Light Cruiser of the New Zealand Squadron, 2,135 tons; speed, 20 knots.

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Lest we forget.

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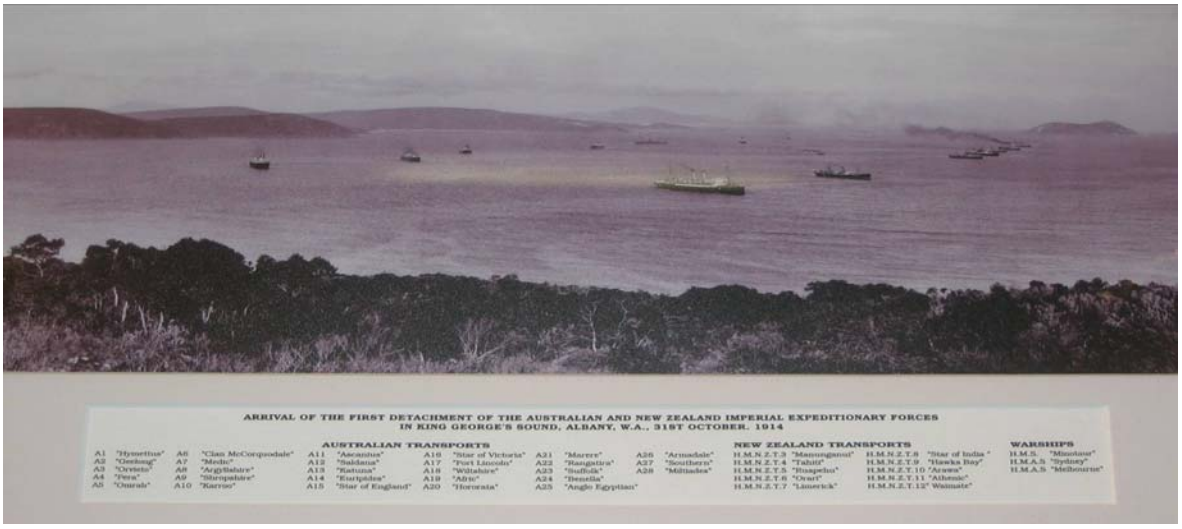
The New Zealand Transports

Officer Commanding : Major-General Sir Alexander John Godley KCB KCMG.

His Majesty's New Zealand Transport Ships

No.	Name of Ship	Tonnage	Speed	No.	Name of Ship	Tonnage	Speed
3	Maunganui	7,527	16	8	Star of India	6,800	11
4	Tahiti	7,585	17	9	Hawke's Bay	6,800	12
5	Ruapehu	7,885	13	10	Arawa	9,372	12
6	Orari	7,207	13	11	Athenic	12,234	12
7	Limerick	6,827	13	12	Waimana	10,389	14
	Total	**37,031**			**Total**	**82,626**	

Note : H.M.S. Psyche & H.M.S. Pyramus are believed to be ships 1 & 2 in the NZ fleet.



Note : Further information available from the

Digger History: an unofficial history of the Australian & New Zealand Armed Services.

Note : Further information available from the Australian Defence Force Academy - UNSW

ADFA Australian Defence Force Academy
University College (UNSW)

The Australian Transports

Officer Commanding : Major-General Sir William Throsby Bridges KCB.

His Majesty's Australian Transport Ships

No.	Name of Ship	Tonnage	Speed	Port of Embarkation	Troops, etc. detailed	Navigating Officer	Military Officer Commanding
A1	HMAT Hymettus	4,606	11.5	Sydney, Melbourne & Adelaide	ASC & Horses	Captain H.A. Evans	Major Holdsworth
A2	HMAT Geelong	7,951	12.0	Melbourne & Tasmania	Mixed	Captain R. Bidwell	Lieut.-Col. L.F. Clarke, DSO
A3	HMAT Orvieto	12,130	15.0	Melbourne	GOC & Mixed	Captain P. Layton	Major-General Bridges
A4	HMAT Pera	7,635	11.0	Sydney	Artillery Horses	Captain S. Flinch	Lieut. E.W. Richards
A5	HMAT Omrah	8,130	15.0	Brisbane	Infantry & ASC	Captain V. Seymour	Lieut.-Col. Lee
A6	HMAT Clan Maccorquodale	5,058	12.5	Sydney	Horses	Captain A. Clarke	Major A.T. Bennett
A7	HMAT Medic	12,032	13.0	Adelaide & Fremantle	2 Co. Infantry, Artillery, ASC & AMC	Captain T. Roberts	Major A.T. Bessel Browne
A8	HMAT Argyllshire	10,392	14.0	Sydney	Artillery	Captain W. Chicken	Major S.E. Christian
A9	HMAT Shropshire	11,911	14.0	Melbourne	Artillery	Captain B. Hayward	Col. J.J.T. Hobbs
A10	HMAT Karroo	6,127	12.0	Sydney & Melbourne	Signallers & AMC	Captain E. Ryder Large	Major H.L. Mackworth
A11	HMAT Ascanius	10,048	13.0	Adelaide & Fremantle	Infantry & ASC	Captain E. Chrimes	Lieut.-Col. Weir
A12	HMAT Saldanha	4,594	11.0	Adelaide	Horses	Captain A. Mulholland	Lieut. P.A.MacE. Laurie
A13	HMAT Katuna	4,641	11.0	Sydney & Tasmania	Horses	Captain H. Jackson	Major S. Horley
A14	HMAT Euripides	14,947	15.0	Sydney	Infantry	Captain W.H. Douglas	Col. H.L. MacLaurin
A15	HMAT Star of England	9,150	13.5	Brisbane	Light Horse	Captain P.W. Whyatt	Lieut.-Col. R.M. Stoddart
A16	HMAT Star of Victoria	9,152	13.5	Sydney	Light Horse	Captain E.C. Beck	Lieut.-Col. J. Merrydith
A17	HMAT Port Lincoln	7,243	12.0	Adelaide	Light Horse	Captain J.C. Hutchison	Lieut.-Col. Rowell
A18	HMAT Wiltshire	10,390	14.0	Melbourne	Light Horse & AMC	Captain J. Prentis	Lieut.-Col. L. Long
A19	HMAT Afric	11,999	13.0	Sydney	Infantry, ASC & Engineers	Captain W. Marshall	Lieut.-Col. Dobbin
A20	HMAT Hororata	9,491	14.0	Melbourne	Infantry	Captain J.J. Lawson	Lieut.-Col. Semmens
A21	HMAT Morere	6,443	12.5	Melbourne	Horses	Captain P.E. Mollo	Capt. C.H. Spurge
A22	HMAT Rangatira	10,118	14.0	Brisbane	Artillery, Infantry & AMC	Captain R.L. Lowden	Lieut.-Col. C. Rosenthal
A23	HMAT Suffolk	7,573	12.0	Sydney	Infantry	Captain P. Davis	Lieut.-Col. G.F. Braund
A24	HMAT Benalla	11,118	14.0	Melbourne	Infantry & ASC	Captain W.C. Simonds	Lieut.-Col. Botton
A25	HMAT Anglo-Egyptian	7,379	12.0	Brisbane & Melbourne	Horses	Captain P.J. Greenhill	Lieut. Stansfield
A26	HMAT Armadale	6,153	11.0	Melbourne	Line of Communication Unit	Captain A. Hunter	Major P.W. Smith
A27	HMAT Southern	4,763	10.5	Sydney & Melbourne	Horses	Captain R. Salland	Lieut.-Col. Southerland
A28	HMAT Miltiades	7,814	13.0	Fremantle	Imperial Reserves	Captain J. Burge	Major Griffiths
	Total tonnage	**238,988**					

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