

# Researching Australian Military Service Troopships, First World War

## Ships

- Arthur W. Jose, *The Royal Australian Navy 1914–1918* Official history of Australia in the war of 1914–1918, vol. IX (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1941)  
Appendix 6: "Merchant ships employed in government war-service" provides considerable information about individual ships, including a list of troopships by number, [http://www.awm.gov.au/cms\\_images/histories/10/chapters/20.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/cms_images/histories/10/chapters/20.pdf)
- R.C.C. Dunn wrote a series of eight short articles entitled "The Australian troopships 1914–1918", which were published between January and October 1939 in *Mufti*, vols. 4 and 5. They give specifications and a brief history of each troopship, in numerical order.
- Ross Mallett's *Transports* website, <http://www.unsw.adfa.edu.au/~rmallett/Transports.html>, lists troopships by number and provides tonnage, speed, company who owned the ship and when Commonwealth control of the ship ended. In the case of captured enemy ships it includes their original name.

## Convoys

- Greville Tregarthen, *Sea transport of the AIF* (Melbourne: Naval Transport Board, n.d.) is a comprehensive resource which lists:
  - the names of ships (with numbers of troops and dates at each port, arranged by convoy)
  - previous history of ships
  - arrangements regarding hospital ships
  - plans of ship layout, menus, requisition schemes, transport of horses
  - detailed accounts of first and second convoys, including cruising order and anchorage order.
- Charles Bean, *The story of ANZAC* Official history of Australia in the war of 1914-1918, vol. I (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941) : Chapters 5 and 6  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/chapter.asp?volume=2>
- Arthur W. Jose, *The Royal Australian Navy 1914–1918* Official history of Australia in the war of 1914-1918, vol. IX (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1937) : Chapters. 6, 7 and 13  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/chapter.asp?volume=10>
- Peter Plowman, *Across the sea to war: Australian and New Zealand troop convoys from 1865 through two world wars to Korea and Vietnam* (Dural, NSW: Rosenberg Pub., 2003, 35-74).

## Commanding officers of troops

- "AIF Order 25, 25 September 1914" lists ships, sailing dates, officers commanding troops on board the first convoy.
- For other convoys, Official Record series AWM7, "Troopship records, 1914–1918 War", item 6.

## Voyages

### Dates, itineraries of voyages

The most comprehensive sources are:

- Greville Tregarthen, *Sea transport of the AIF* (Melbourne: Naval Transport Board, n.d.)
- Official Record series AWM244, "Troopship and cargo carrier movement cards, 1914–1918 War". Arranged by ship, these record the movement of each ship within and outside Australia in the period 1914–1919. The cards record date, trip number, convoy number and remarks.

"Remarks" may include arrivals at and departures from particular ports, troop embarkations, date of transfer to the UK (Imperial) Government control, etc. To identify relevant items in this series, search RecordSearch, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>, using name of ship.

- Voyage reports: Official Record series AWM7 "Troopship records, 1914–1918 War". Includes voyages leaving and returning to Australia (reports not included for all voyages). There is wide variation between contents of reports, but they may include:
  - Reports of ship's commanding officer, doctors, sports officer, education officer, chaplains, YMCA
  - Lists/roles of passengers (officers, other ranks, women and children, detainees, sick and wounded including nature of illness or disability)
  - Plans of ship and cabins, and locations of lifeboats
  - Reports of attack and sinking by enemy submarines.

To identify relevant items in this series, search RecordSearch, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>, using name of ship.

### Other sources

- "List of departure of transports by date of sailing August 1914 – November 1918", Official Record AWM7 27. Includes all ships carrying army personnel leaving Australia, not just the main (numbered) troopships.
- "Orders to and from Australia", Official Record AWM7 9. Arranged by ship's name, give date of departure and indicate whether the voyage was to or from Australia.
- "Returns to Australia chart", Official Record AWM7 5. Arranged by date showing final port and date of arrival and numbers of different categories of troops.
- Troopship routine orders, Official Records AWM25 707/20\* [\* indicates "wildcard" for searching]
- "Ships standing orders", Official Records AWM25 709\* [\* indicates "wildcard" for searching]
- Official Record AWM25 963\* [\* indicates "wildcard" for searching]. These are 31 miscellaneous files relating to troopships, including several voyage reports, orders for the first two convoys, and various other orders and reports.
- "1st Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train and HMNZT Willochra records", Official Record series AWM37
- Letters, diaries and other papers of some who travelled on the troopships are held in the Private Records collection. Use the Collections Search to identify items.
- Newspapers and magazines were published aboard troopships to help relieve the boredom of the long journeys. To identify those held in the Memorial's Research Centre, use the Books Database, <http://www.awm.gov.au/firstopac/> – you can search by name of publication or name of ship.

### Embarkation rolls

- Lists of those who were departing Australia are available in the Embarkation Rolls, <http://www.awm.gov.au/nominalrolls/ww1/embarkation/>. The rolls are arranged by unit and provide details of where and when they embarked, and on which ship.
- "Troopship passenger lists, 1 October 1915 – 30 September 1920", Official Record series AWM31. Nominal rolls of Australian Imperial Force members returning to Australia from the United Kingdom and Middle East during or at the end of the First World War. The rolls are arranged first by name of ship, then by military district, then by category, e.g., "sick and wounded". There is not a list for every ship returning with troops. Search RecordSearch, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/recordsearch.aspx>, using name of ship.
- Lists of names can be found in some voyage reports (Official Record series AWM7).

## **Sickness and deaths at sea**

- Chapter 14: "Sea transport of Australian soldiers" in A.G. Butler, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the war of 1914– 1918*, vol. 3, is quite detailed and includes the repatriation process at the end of the war together with statistics.  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/chapter.asp?volume=15>
- Chapter 25: "The clearing of the wounded" in Charles Bean, *The story of ANZAC* describes the evacuation of sick and wounded from Gallipoli.  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/chapter.asp?volume=2>
- "Troopships: deaths at sea", Official Record AWM7 4, provides statistics and alphabetical lists of names (with service number, unit, and date and cause of death) of those who died at sea of illness or wounds, including a list for those who died en route from Egypt to Gallipoli.

## **Photographs and film**

Over 500 photographs and some films showing transport ships, including images of life on board, are listed on the Collections Search, <http://www.awm.gov.au/database/collection.asp>.