

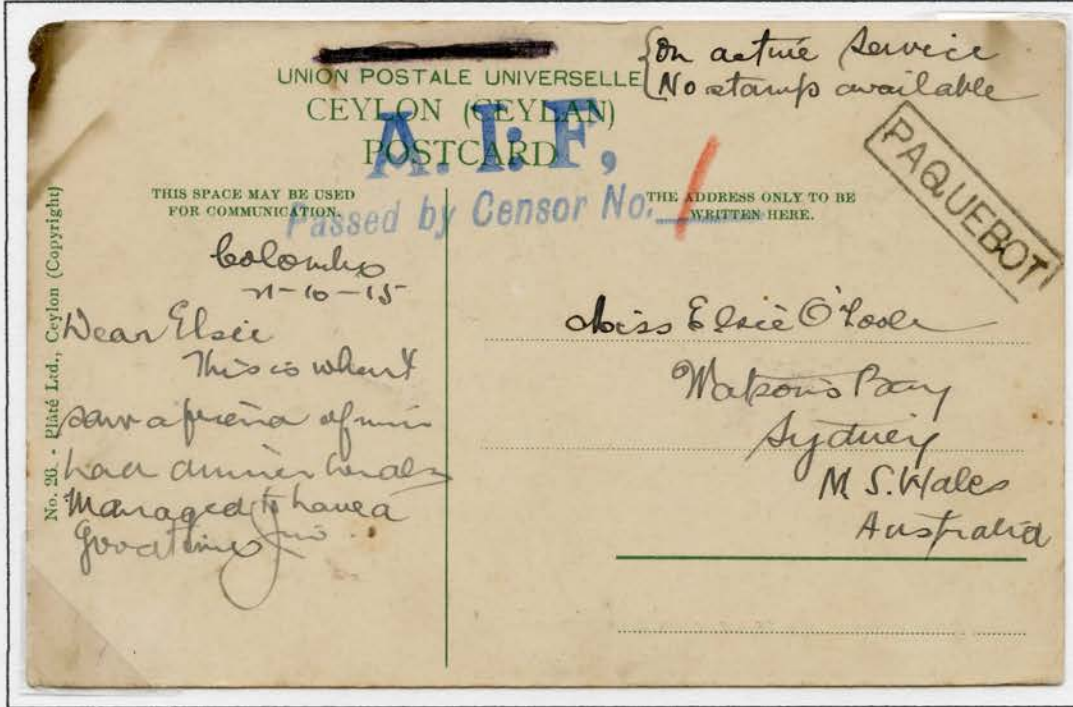
The Eleventh Convoy

1st September - 16th November 1915

Comprising nine ships, the Eleventh convoy had only one stopover at Colombo for the A1 "Hymettus" with all other troopships docking directly at Suez or Port Said in Egypt.

The only stopover of the A1 "Hymettus" - Colombo, Ceylon

21st October 1915



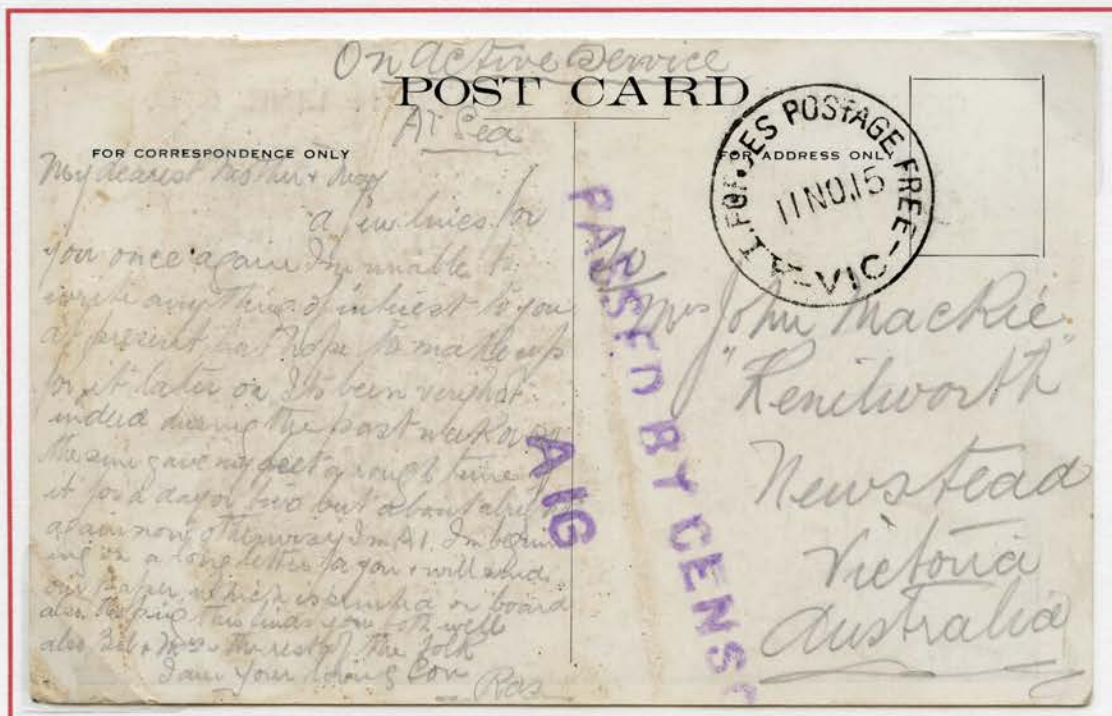
Postal markings:

"A.I.F./Passed By Censor No...." handstamp (Finlayson Type MCM1/F) in blue with "1" in manuscript.
 "PAQUEBOT" handstamp in black applied at Colombo.

A1 "Hymettus": Used from Colombo, Ceylon on the 21.10.1915 to New South Wales

The final destination of the A16 "Star of Victoria" - Suez, Egypt

11th October 1915



S.S. "Makarini": Suez, Egypt 11.10.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "PASSED BY CENSOR/ A16" handstamp in violet (not listed by Finlayson).

Note: The S.S. Makarini was a single voyage vessel chartered by the Australian government for the 11th Convoy. Since there were no censorship facilities, the mail was transferred to the A16 "Star of Victoria" where it was processed and censored. It was then sent in the "bagged mail" from Suez and entered the postal system in Victoria on the 11th November 1915. The postcard was written by Private John Mackie of the 5th Battalion who was killed in action in France on the 1st May 1916.

Cross censorship of mail from a chartered ship to an official troopship is rare

The Eleventh Convoy

1st September - 16th November 1915

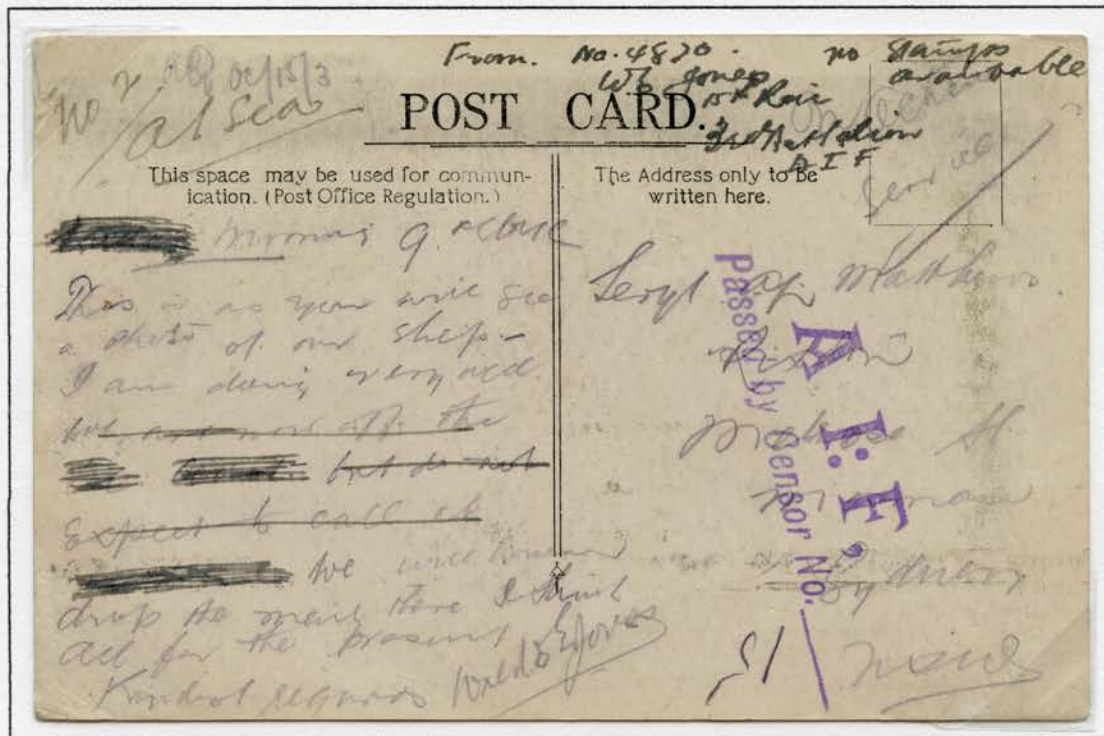
The final destination of the A15 "Star of England" - Suez, Egypt

18th October 1915

A15 "Star of England":

A real photo postcard of troops from the 9th Reinforcements of the 10th Infantry Battalion in clown costumes for a recital concert on board the "Star of England".

Note: Concert recitals were a common form of entertainment throughout the war, with many soldiers demonstrating quality amateur singing and acting performances.



A15 "Star of England": A postcard of the troopship used from Suez, Egypt 3.10.1915 to New South Wales
Postal markings: "A1:F,/Passed By Censor No." handstamp in violet (Finlayson Type MCM I/F) with "15" in manuscript. The card shows censor erasures in the message as well as on the reverse where the ship's name has been deleted.

The card was written by Private Walter Jones who served throughout the war and returned to Australia on the 22nd August 1919.

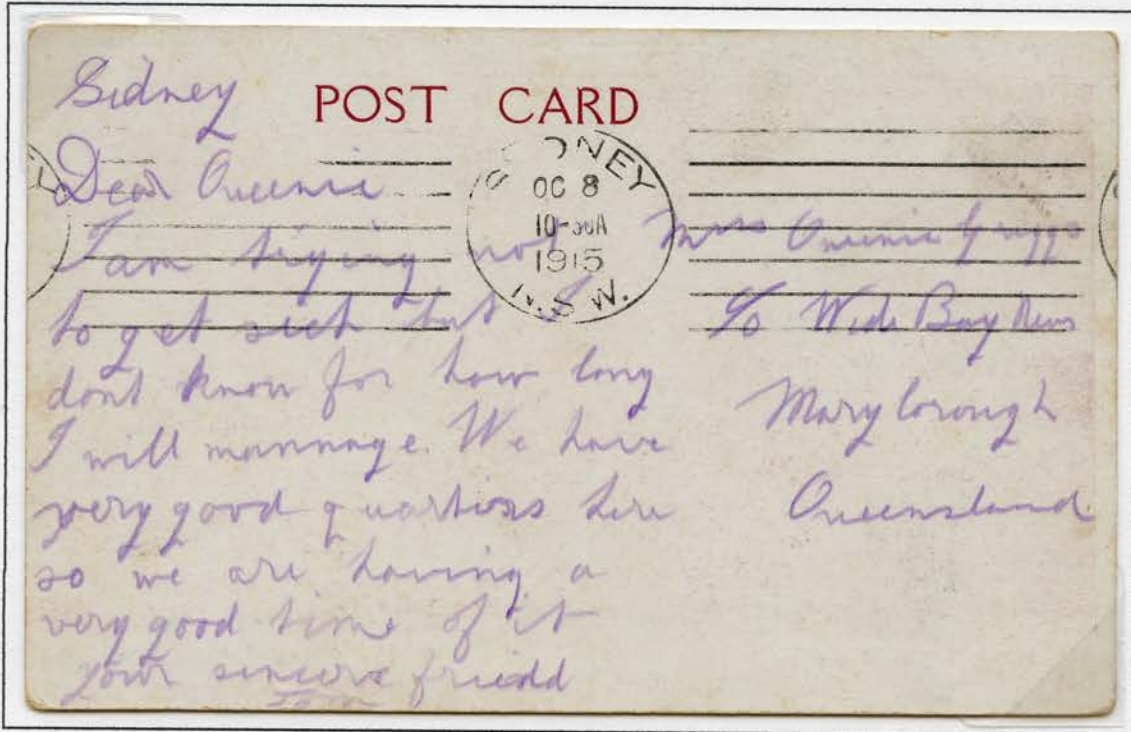
The Twelfth Convoy

6th September - 15th November 1915

There were only five troopships in the Twelfth Convoy, all docking at either Suez or Port Said in Egypt.

The second soldier embarkation port of the A69 "Warilda" - Sydney

8th October 1915



A69 "Warilda": A postcard of the troopship used from Sydney, New South Wales 8.10.1915 to Queensland

Note: This postcard is unusually not endorsed "On Active Service" and not taxed. It was posted at the second embarkation dock at Sydney where she had picked up the first soldiers three days earlier in Brisbane. The soldier writes "I am trying not to get sick but don't know for how long".



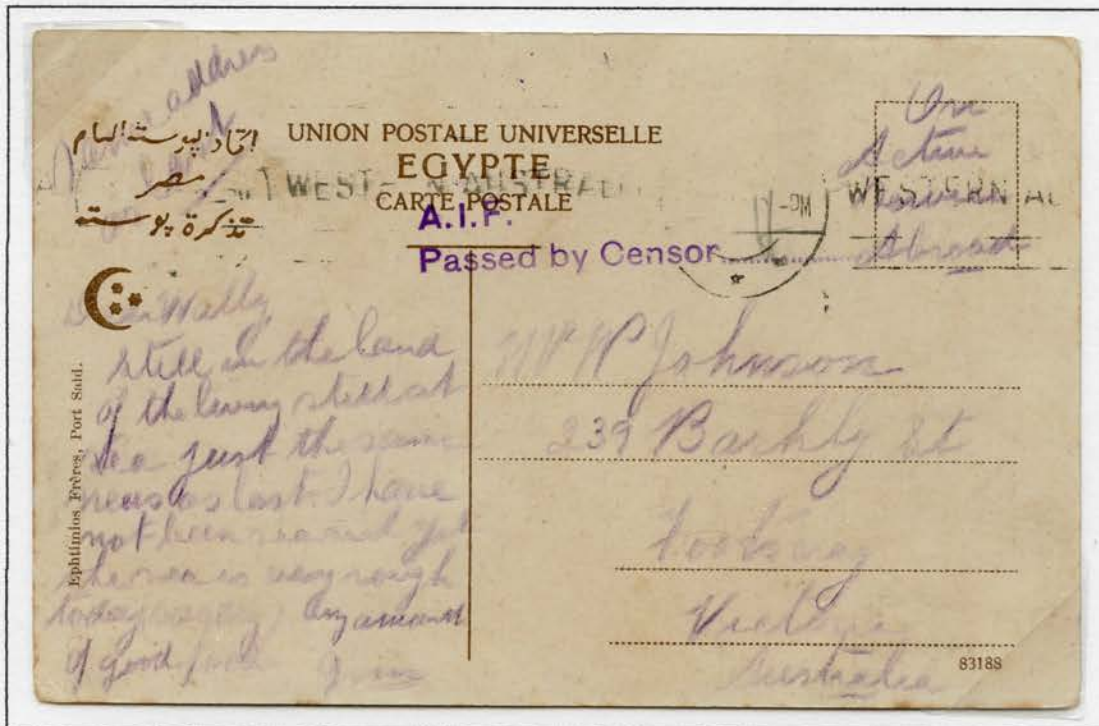
A69 "Warilda":

The reverse of this card showing reference to its status as a troopship with the prefix "H.M.A.T.", although there are no other indicators in the illustration of a troopship number. It is believed that this is a photo of the "Warilda" in her civilian liner days before the war.

The Twelfth Convoy

6th September - 15th November 1915

The final destination of the R.M.S. "Osterley" - Suez, Egypt



R.M.S. "Osterley": A postcard of the troopship used from Alexandria, Egypt 15.11.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "A.I.F./Passed by Censor....." handstamp in purple (not listed by Finlayson). In addition, the name of the ship has been excised by censors on the front of the card.

Note: The Royal Mail Ship "Osterley" was requisitioned by the Australian Government for the 12th Convoy leaving Melbourne on the 29.9.1915.



R.M.S. "Osterley": A real photo postcard of the troopship in her days as a civilian liner before the war.

The Thirteenth Convoy

2nd October - 21st December 1915

There were only six troopships in the Thirteenth Convoy, all docking at either Suez or Port Said in Egypt.

Prior to the embarkation of A71 "Nestor" - Melbourne, Victoria

11th October 1915



A71 "Nestor":

A rare photograph of the troopship looking over the Melbourne pier dated the 11.10.1915, prior to embarkation of the 13th Convoy.

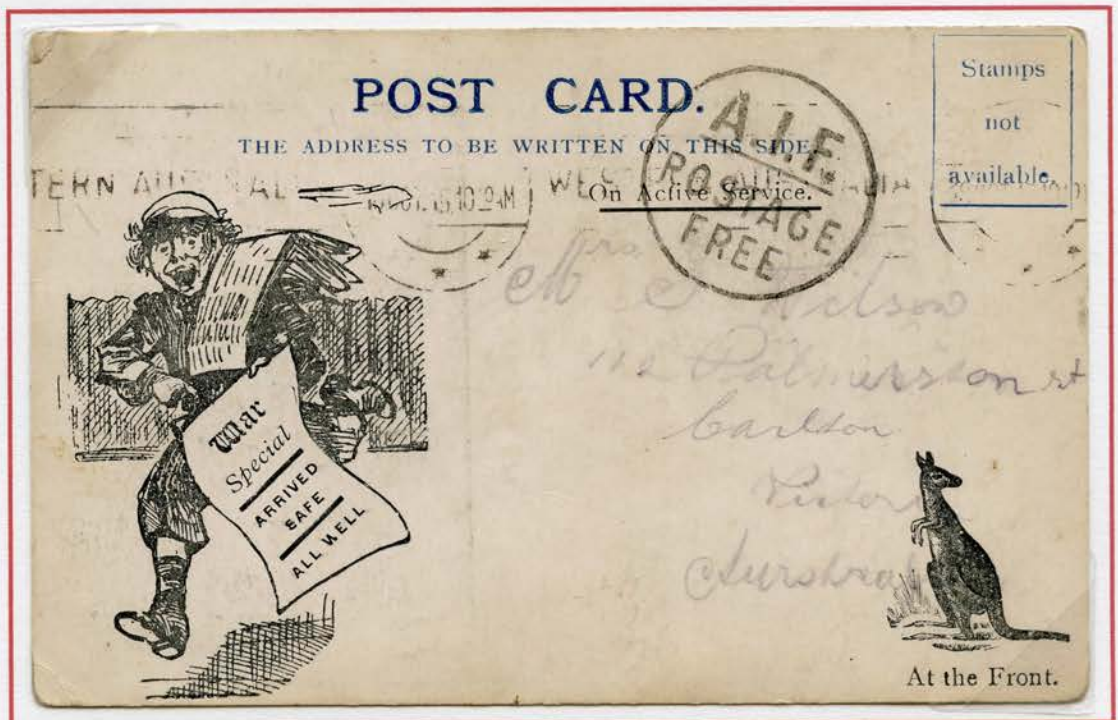
The image was taken by Captain Arthur Clayton of the First Australian General Hospital. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order as Acting Commander of the 8th Australian Field Ambulance at Ypres in late 1917 for devotion to duty. He served throughout the war and returned to Australia on the 22.8.1919.

The photograph is endorsed on the reverse: "Nestor, Melb Pier, 11/10/15"

Stopover of the A71 "Nestor" - Albany, Western Australia

15th October 1915

The postcard below was written at Albany on the 15th October, a stopover not recorded in the official records. It was transported by rail and processed in Fremantle, before being sent to Victoria.



The card was written by Private William James of the 12th Field Ambulance who was killed in action in France on the 29.7.1916.

A71 "Nestor": Albany, Western Australia 15.10.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "A.I.F./POSTAGE/FREE" Type 2 handstamp in black. When free postage was provided to the Australian troops in February 1915, these types of handstamps became necessary to avoid the Post Office taxing unmarked mail in Australia.

Note: The reverse of this privately printed postcard of the troopship with a newsboy on the front (Finlayson Type 303).

Five examples of the "Nestor" cards have been recorded for this convoy

The Thirteenth Convoy

2nd October - 21st December 1915

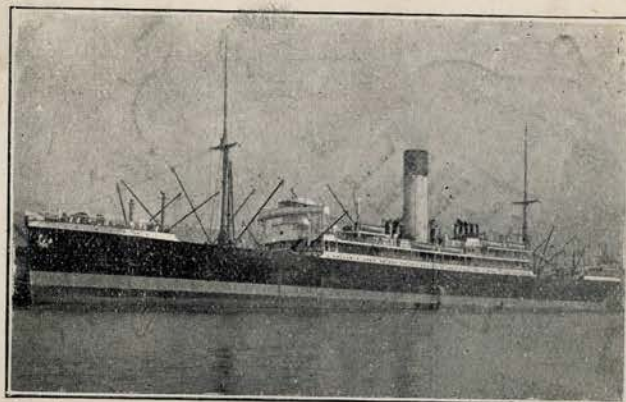
Stopover of the A71 "Nestor" - Albany, Western Australia

15th October 1915

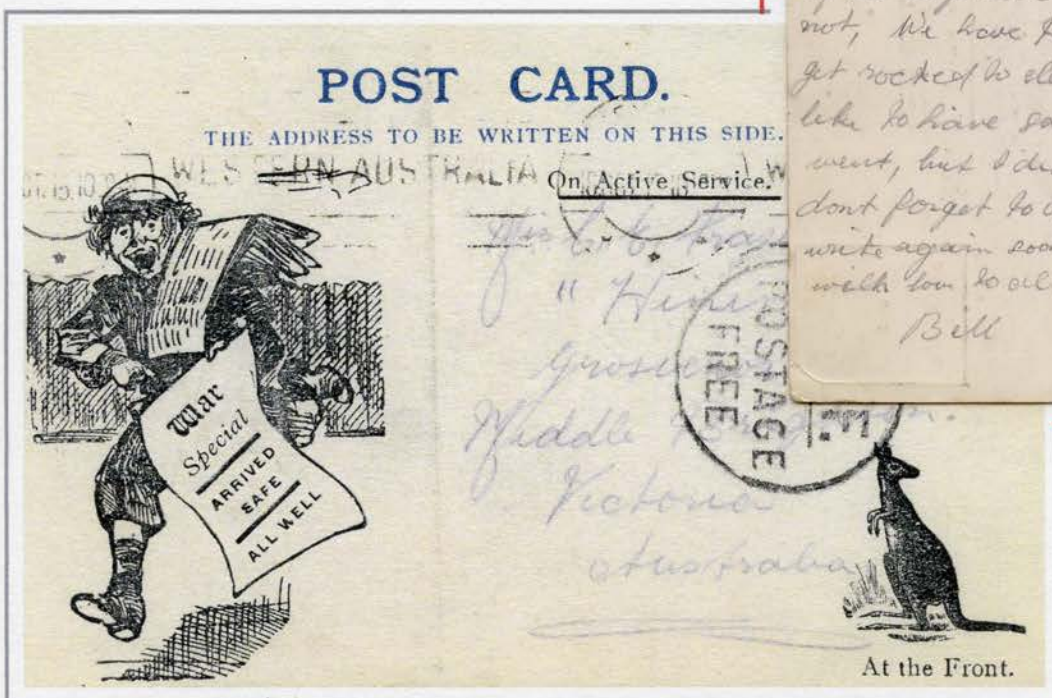
The postcard below was written at Albany on the 15th October, a stopover not recorded in the official records. The cards were transported by rail and processed in Fremantle before being sent to Victoria.

The reverse side of the privately printed postcard showing the Troopship A71 H.M.A.T. "Nestor" with space provided for the soldier's message.

The card was written by Private William James of the 12th Field Ambulance who was killed in action in France on the 29th July 1916.



Dear Sir At Fear
15-10-15
I was told to write, so I did.
We are at Albany, & doing well, we have had some rough weather and a lot of the boys have been sea sick, but I have not, we have to sleep in hammocks & get rocked to sleep of a night, I would like to have said good-bye before I went, but I didn't seem to get a chance, don't forget to drop me a line, I will write again soon so I will grow close with you to all.
Bill
No 3308. 11th Rein. for 5th Battalion
On active Service



A71 "Nestor": Albany, Western Australia 15.10.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "A.I.F./POSTAGE/FREE" Type 2 handstamp in black. When free postage was provided to the Australian troops in February 1915, these types of handstamps became necessary to avoid the Post Office taxing unmarked mail in Australia.

Note: The reverse of this privately printed postcard of the troopship with a newsboy on the front (Finlayson Type 303).

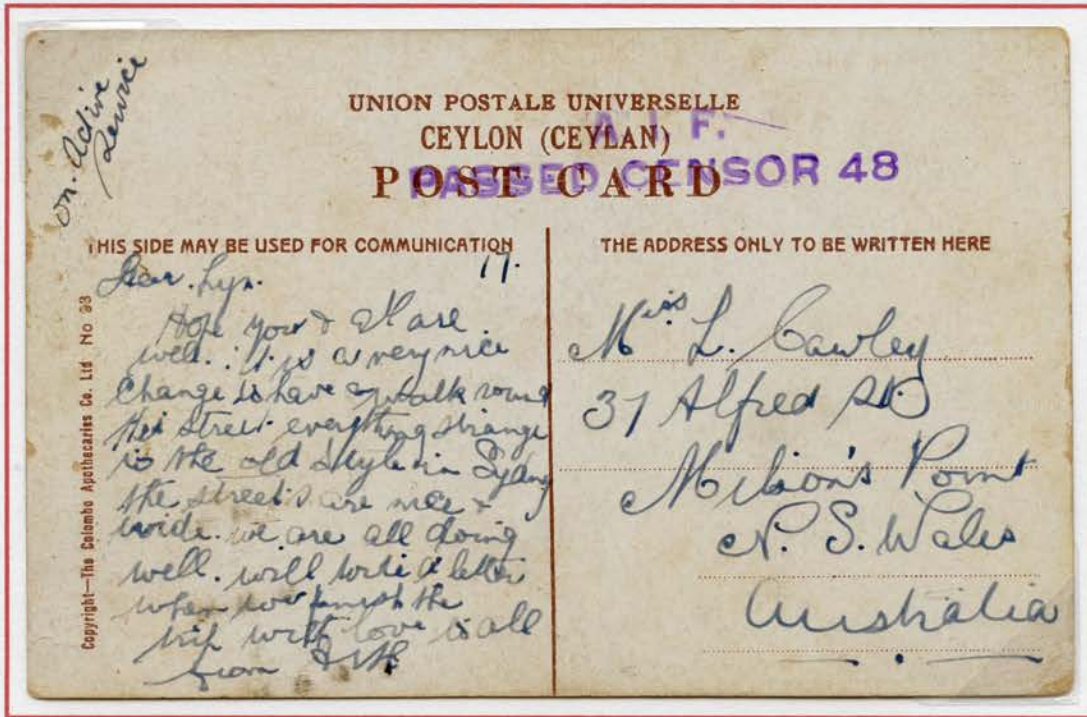
Five examples of the "Nestor" cards have been recorded for this convoy

The Thirteenth Convoy

2nd October - 21st December 1915

The first port of call of the A48 "Seang Bee" - Colombo, Ceylon

16th November 1915

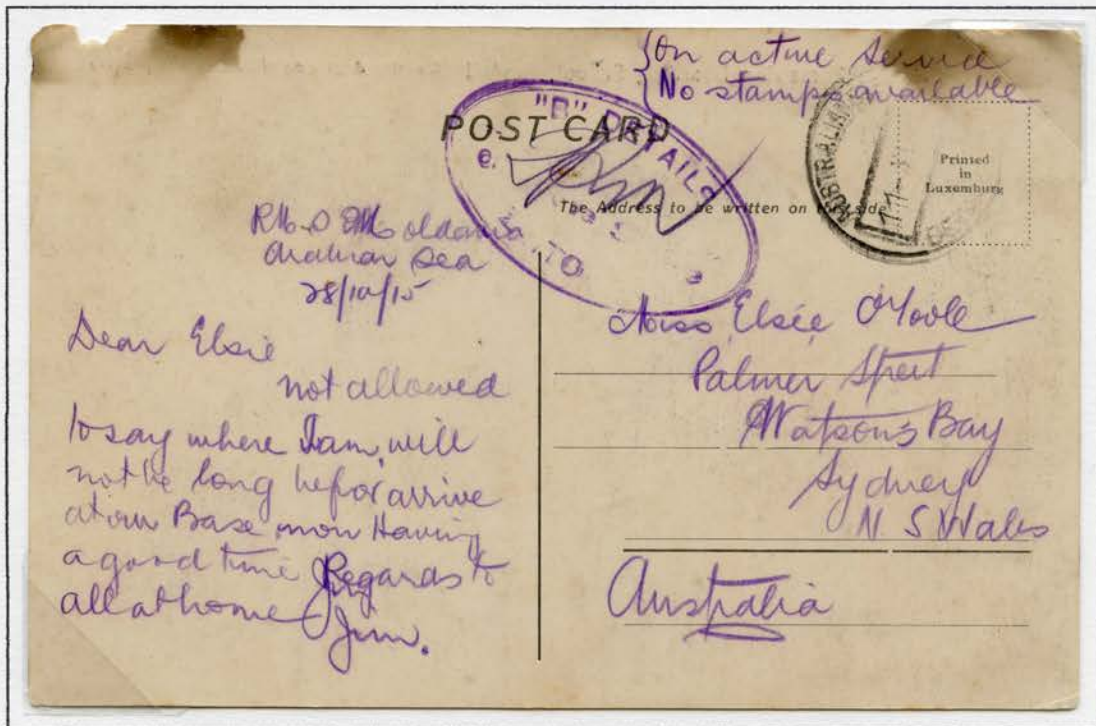


A48 "Seang Bee": Colombo, Ceylon 16.11.1915 to New South Wales
Postal markings: "A.I.F./PASSED CENSOR 48" handstamp in violet (Finlayson Type MCM 5)

Two examples recorded of this troopship handstamp

The final destination of the R.M.S. "Moldavia" - Cairo, Egypt

11th November 1915



R.M.S. "Moldavia": Cairo, Egypt 11.11.1915 to New South Wales
Postal markings: "B DETAILS/ON ACTIVE SERVICE/ ZEITOUN" handstamp in purple (Firebrace Type CA 21) and initialed for censorship. The card is dated 28th October and was embargoed until reaching Cairo for censorship and forwarding.

Note: The Royal Mail Ships were not allocated a transport number so there is no maritime censor marking. This is the only voyage made by the "Moldavia" as a troopship.

The Fourteenth Convoy

5th November 1915 - 12th January 1916

Stopover of the A62 "Wandilla" - Albany, Western Australia

12th November 1915

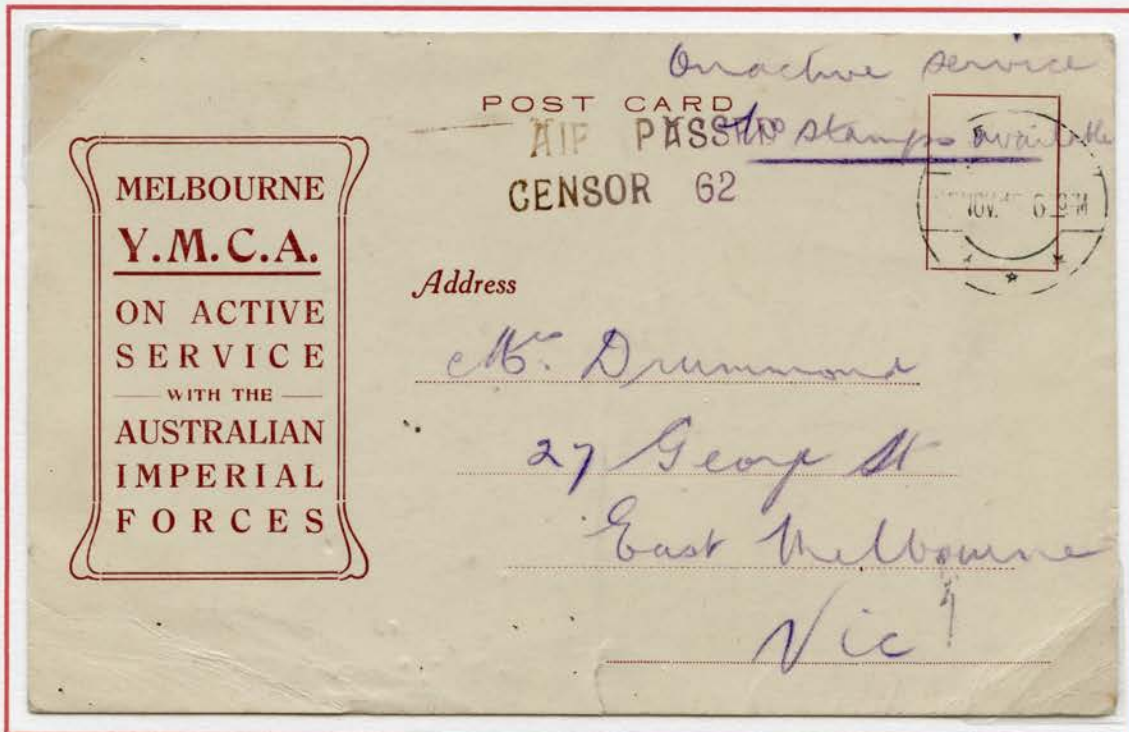
There are no records of the A62 "Wandilla" docking at Albany, however, it is certain that the ship docked here based on the evidence of the two cards below. The Fremantle machine cancel is dated the 15th November, three days after the ship left Melbourne, and is similar to the cards from the A71 "Nestor" on Convoy Thirteen.

The card was written by Private George Maxwell of the 31st Infantry Battalion who served throughout the war and returned to Australia on the 15th May 1919.



A62 "Wandilla": Albany, Western Australia 12.11.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "AIF SED/ CENSOR 62" handstamp in green, unusually with the letters "PAS" missing, (Finlayson Type MCM 18).



A62 "Wandilla": Albany, Western Australia 12.11.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "AIF PASSED/CENSOR 62" handstamp in black (Finlayson Type MCM 18).

Less than ten covers recorded of this ship censor hanstamp

Ex Kornan

The Fourteenth Convoy

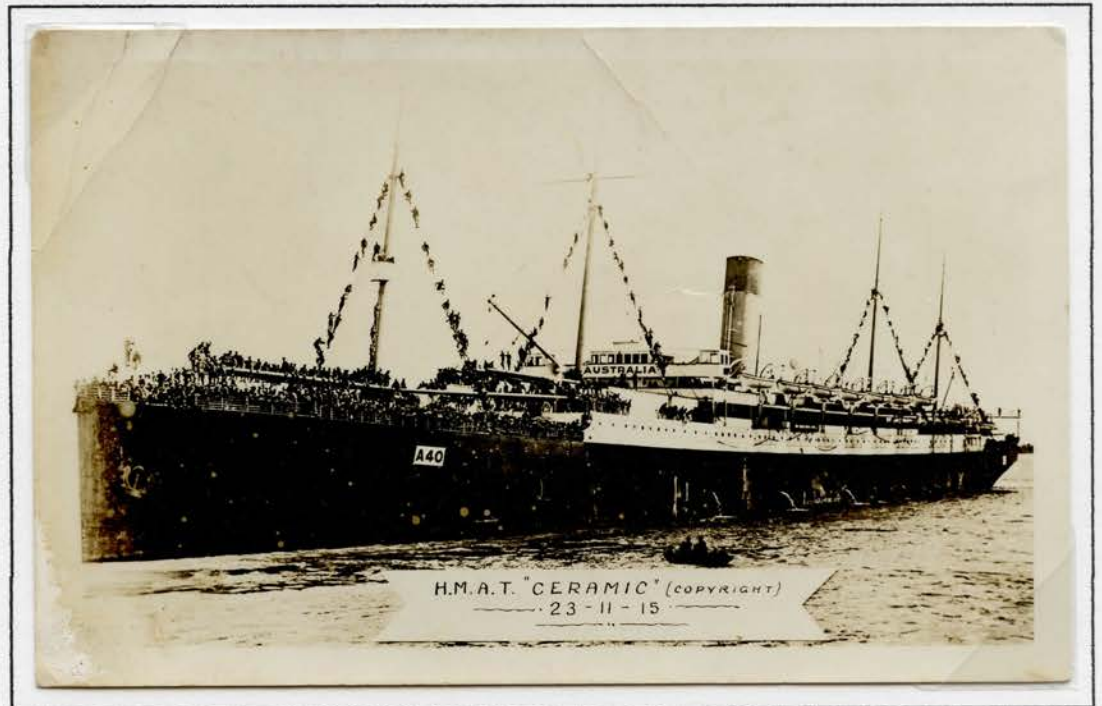
The departure of the A40 "Ceramic" - Melbourne, Victoria

5th November 1915 - 12th January 1916

23rd November 1915

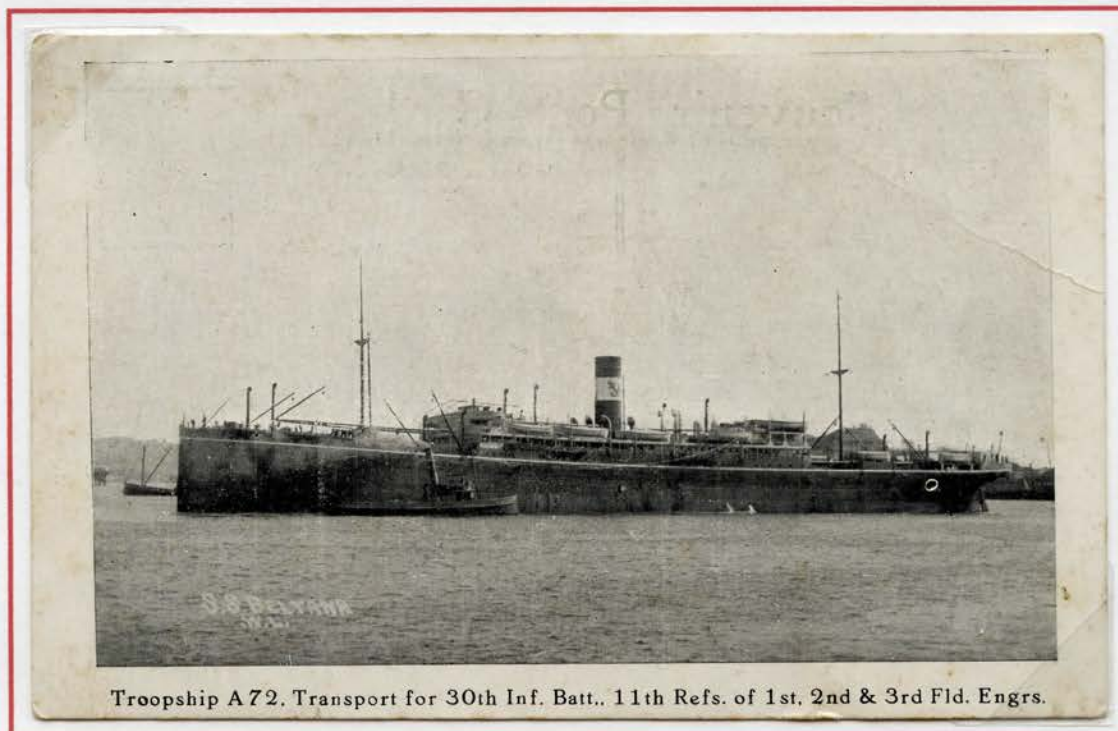
A40 "Ceramic":

A real photo postcard of the troopship dated the 23rd November 1915 and published by Josiah Barnes, an official embarkation photographer of WW1.



Pre-embarkation postcard of the A72 "Beltana" - Sydney, New South Wales

14th December 1915



A72 "Beltana": An unused postcard prior to departure in the 14th Convoy

A rare pre-embarkation postcard of the "Beltana" which left Sydney on the 14.12.1915. This card contravened the censorship laws by detailing the troopship number and the units of the soldiers deployed.

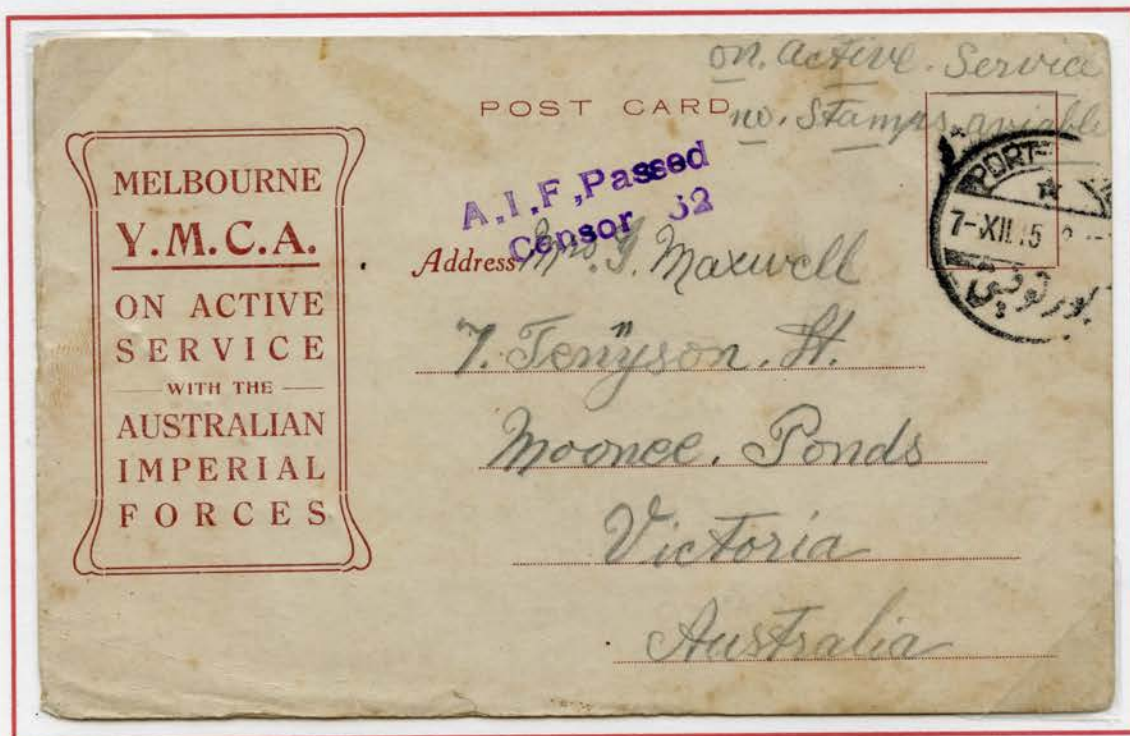
The Fourteenth Convoy

5th November 1915 - 12th January 1916

The final destination of the A62 "Wandilla" - Alexandria, Egypt

11th December 1915

An unlisted troopship cachet



A62 "Wandilla": Port Taufiq, Egypt 7.12.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "A.I.F, PASSED/ CENSOR 62" cachet in purple (not listed by Finlayson).

Note: The font of this censor cachet is different to other known examples. It confirms that each transport ship carried more than one censor cachet on board.

The final destination of the A34 "Persic" - Suez, Egypt

18th December 1915



A34 "Persic": Port Taufiq, Egypt 20.12.1915 to New South Wales

Postal markings: "PASSED BY/LIEUT.COLONEL/CHIEF CENSOR/ THE CENSOR" handstamp in violet (Finlayson Type CM 13) and initialed for censorship.

The Fourteenth Convoy

The final destination of the A40 "Ceramic" - Alexandria, Egypt

5th November 1915 - 12th January 1916

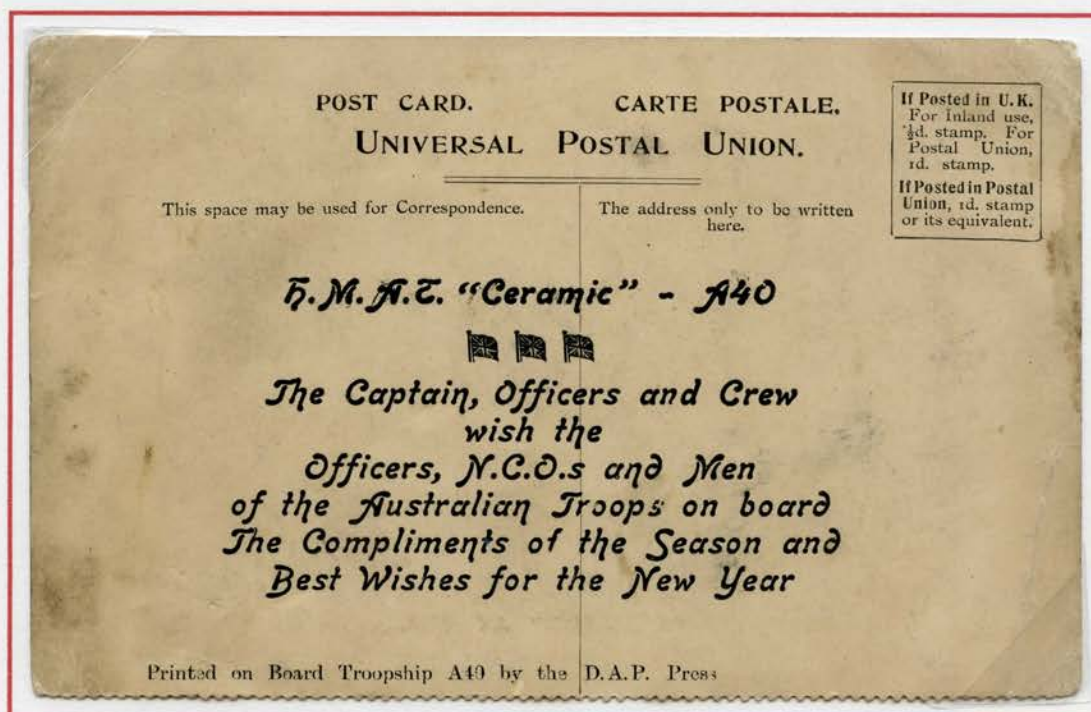
24th December 1915



The envelope was written by Private Noel Nicholas of the 14th Infantry Battalion who was killed in action at Villers Bretonneux on the 6th August 1918.

A40 "Ceramic": Used from Alexandria, Egypt on the 24.12.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "A.I:F,/ Passed by Censor No.40" handstamp in violet (not listed by Finlayson)



A40 "Ceramic": An unused picture postcard of the troopship with a printed Christmas message on the front from the crew and troops on route to Egypt. The "Ceramic" docked at Alexandria on the 24th December 1915, the day before Christmas.

Note: At the base of the card is "Printed on Board Troopship A40 by the D.A.P. Press". This is a rare card, with no used examples having been recorded.

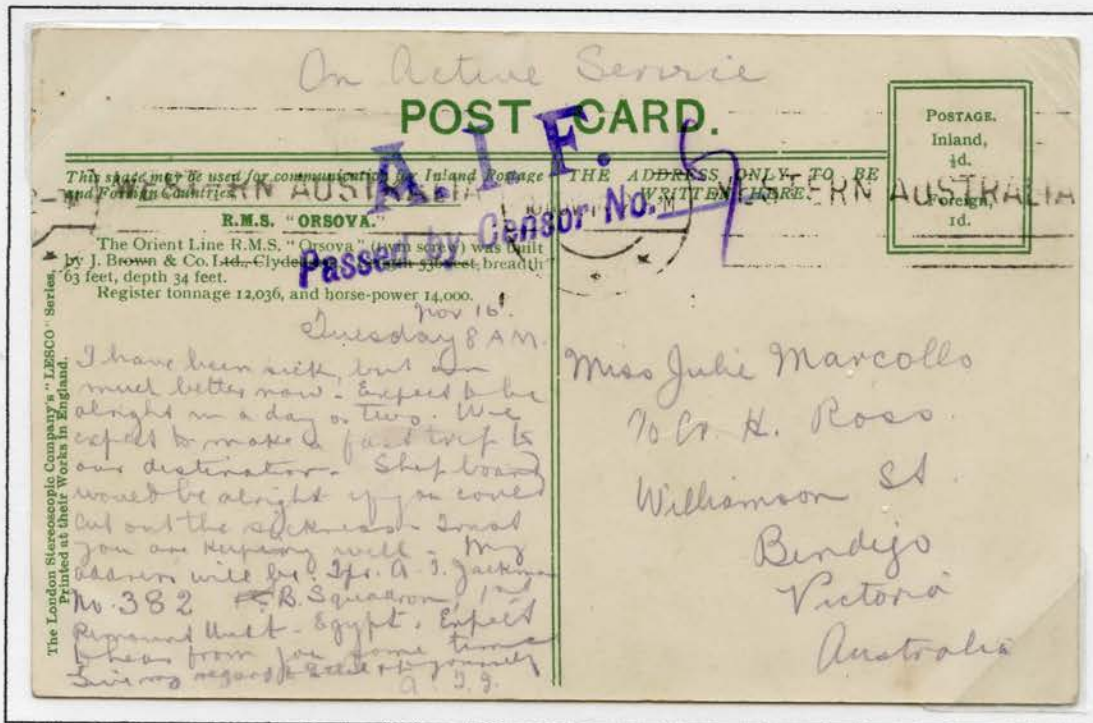
The Fifteenth Convoy

10th November 1915 - 5th February 1916

There were eleven troopships in the Fifteenth convoy, including four government requisitioned Royal Mail Steamships. With the end of the Gallipoli campaign, troopships were diverted and landed in London for the Western Front campaign, and also Malta, Italy and Egypt.

The embarkation of the A67 "Orsova" - Fremantle

18th November 1915



A67 "Orsova": Fremantle, Western Australia 18.11.1915 to Victoria

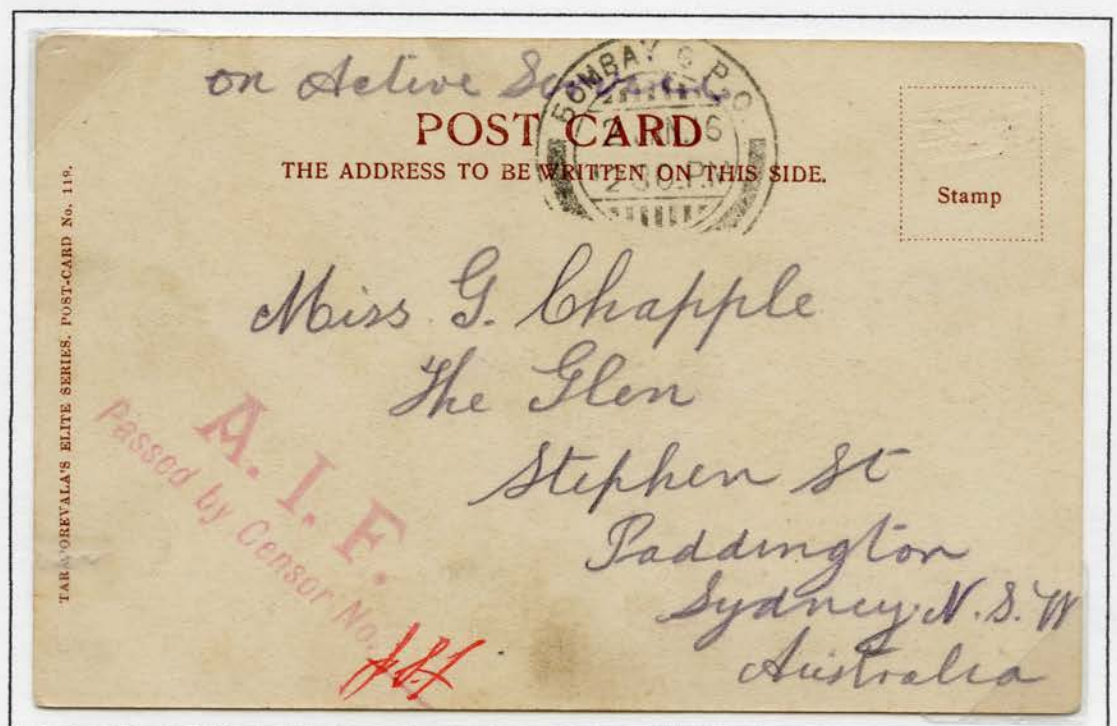
Postal markings: "A.I.F./Passed by Censor No. ____" and manuscript "67" in purple (Finlayson Type MCM I/J).

Ex Finlayson

The first port of call of the RMS "Mooltan"- Bombay, India

2nd January 1916

The postcard was written by Private Sid Chapple of the 1st Infantry Battalion who returned to Australia in July 1917.



R.M.S. "Mooltan": Bombay, India to New South Wales

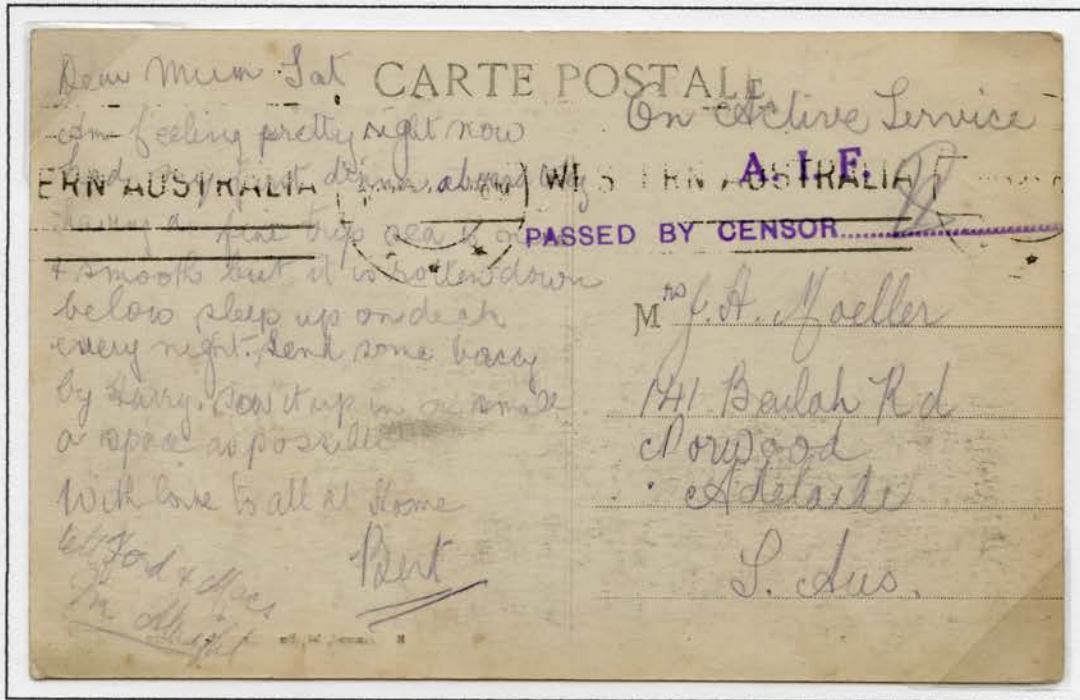
Postal markings: "A.I.F./Passed by Censor No. ____" unusually in rose (Finlayson Type MCM I/J) and initialled for censorship. The R.M.S. "Mooltan" was not allocated a troopship number since it was a ship requisitioned by the Australian government. In addition, "Bombay" has been excised by the censor on the reverse.

The Fifteenth Convoy

10th November 1915 - 5th February 1916

The final destination of the R.M.S. "Mongolia" - London, England

December 1915



The postcard was written by Private Egbert Moeller of the 10th Infantry Battalion who embarked at Adelaide on the 18th November 1915. He served throughout the war and returned to Australia on the 4th July 1919.

R.M.S. "Mongolia": London, England December 1915 to South Australia

Postal markings: "A.I.F./PASSED BY CENSOR....." handstamp in purple (Finlayson Type MCM 9) and initialed for censorship. The card was placed in the bagged mail to London and sent to Australia where it received the Perth machine cancel of the 14th January 1916.



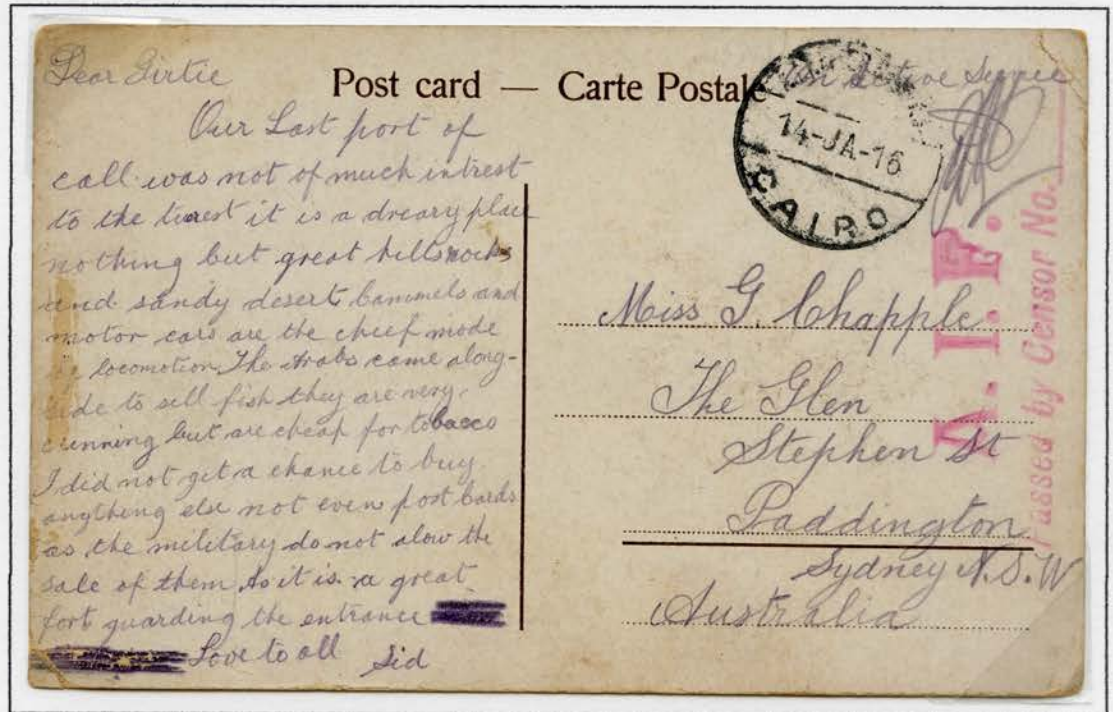
R.M.S. "Mongolia": This troopship sailed on four convoys. On the return trip from the 30th Convoy, the ship struck a mine off Bombay laid by the German raider "Wolf" and sank with the loss of 23 lives.

The Fifteenth Convoy

10th November 1915 - 5th February 1916

The final port of call of the RMS "Mooltan"- Egypt

12th January 1916



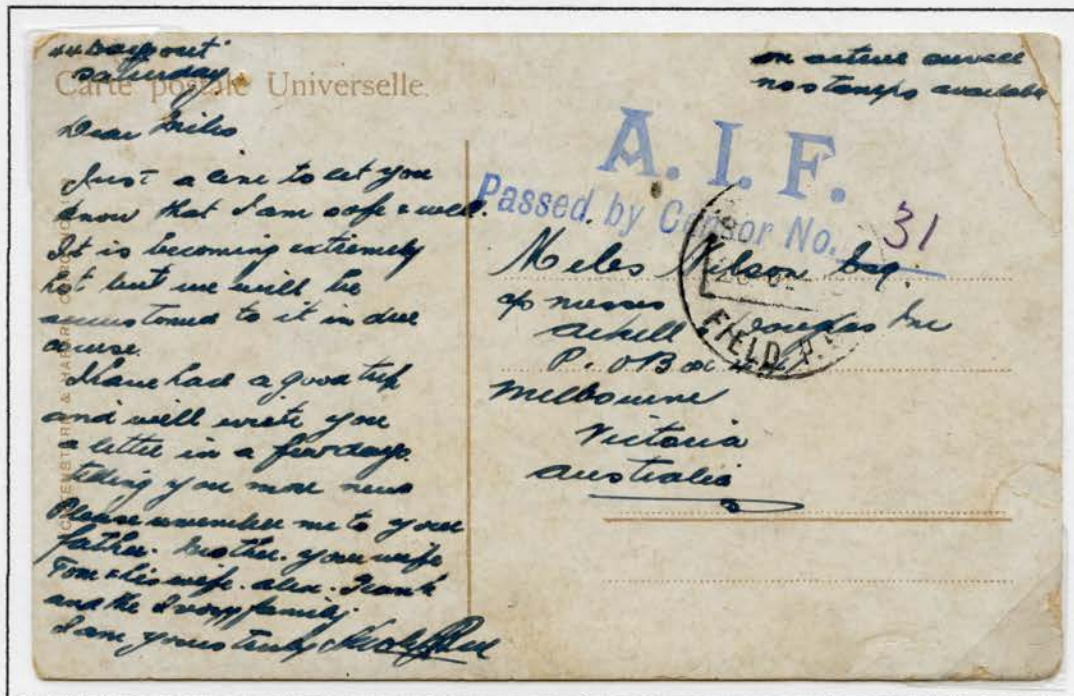
Note: This card was censored on land at Cairo with the troopship censor cachet allocated to the R.M.S. Mooltan and not on board the ship.

R.M.S. "Mooltan": Cairo, Egypt on the 14.1.1916 to New South Wales

Postal markings: "A.I.F./Passed by Censor No. ____" handstamp in rose (Finlayson Type MCM I/J) and initialled for censorship. Remarks of a sensitive nature have been excised by the censor.

The final port of call of the A31 "Ajana"- Alexandria, Egypt

25th January 1916



A31 "Ajana": Alexandria, Egypt 25.1.1916 to Victoria

Postal markings: "A.I.F./Passed by Censor No. ____" in bright blue (Finlayson Type MCM I/J) with manuscript "31" inserted.

The Sixteenth Convoy

17th December 1915 - 8th March 1916

There were eleven troopships on the Sixteenth convoy, landing at three principal destinations including London, for the Western Front campaign, Italy and Egypt.

The first port of call of the A64 "Demosthenes" - Colombo, Ceylon

16th January 1916



A64 "Demosthenes": Colombo, Ceylon 16.1.1916 to Victoria

Postal markings: "Passed by/ Censor" handstamp in violet (Finlayson Type MCM 11).

The envelope was written by Private Joseph Truscott of the 21st Infantry Battalion.

Ex Emery, Finlayson

The only recorded example of this censor handstamp

The first port of call of the A35 "Beltana" - Suez

22nd January 1916



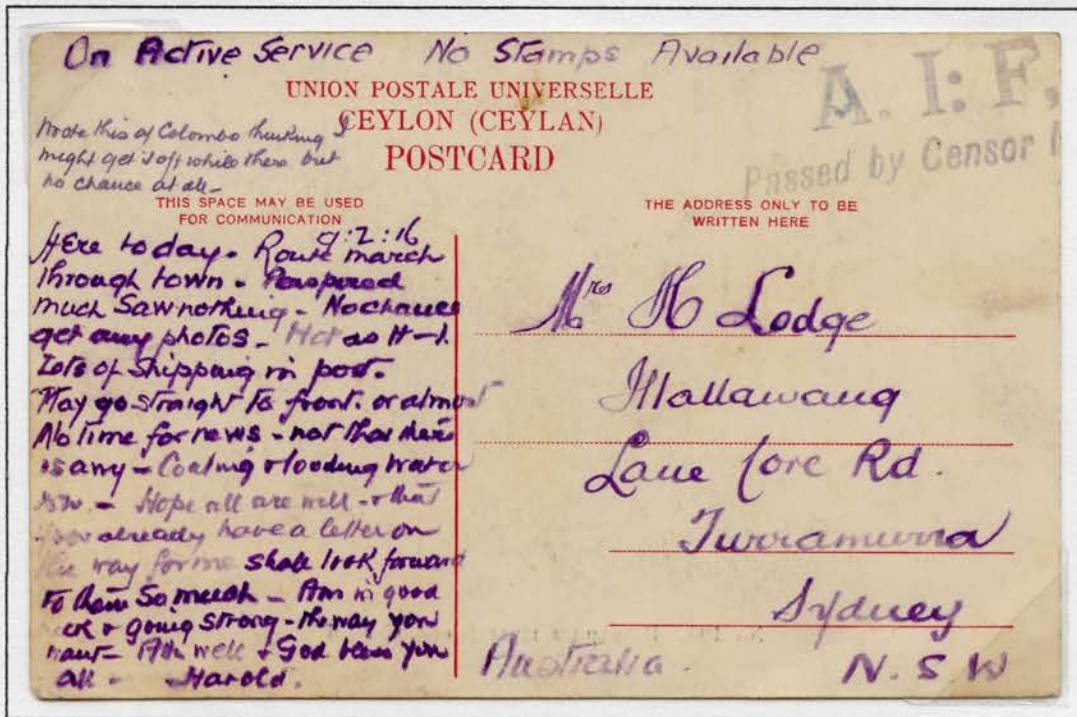
A35 "Beltana": A postcard of the "Beltana" with the reverse dated the 18th January whilst still at sea and signed by members of the First Field Artillery Brigade. The card was sent back home under cover.

The Sixteenth Convoy

17th December 1915 - 8th March 1916

The third port of call of the A54 "Runic" - Alexandria, Egypt

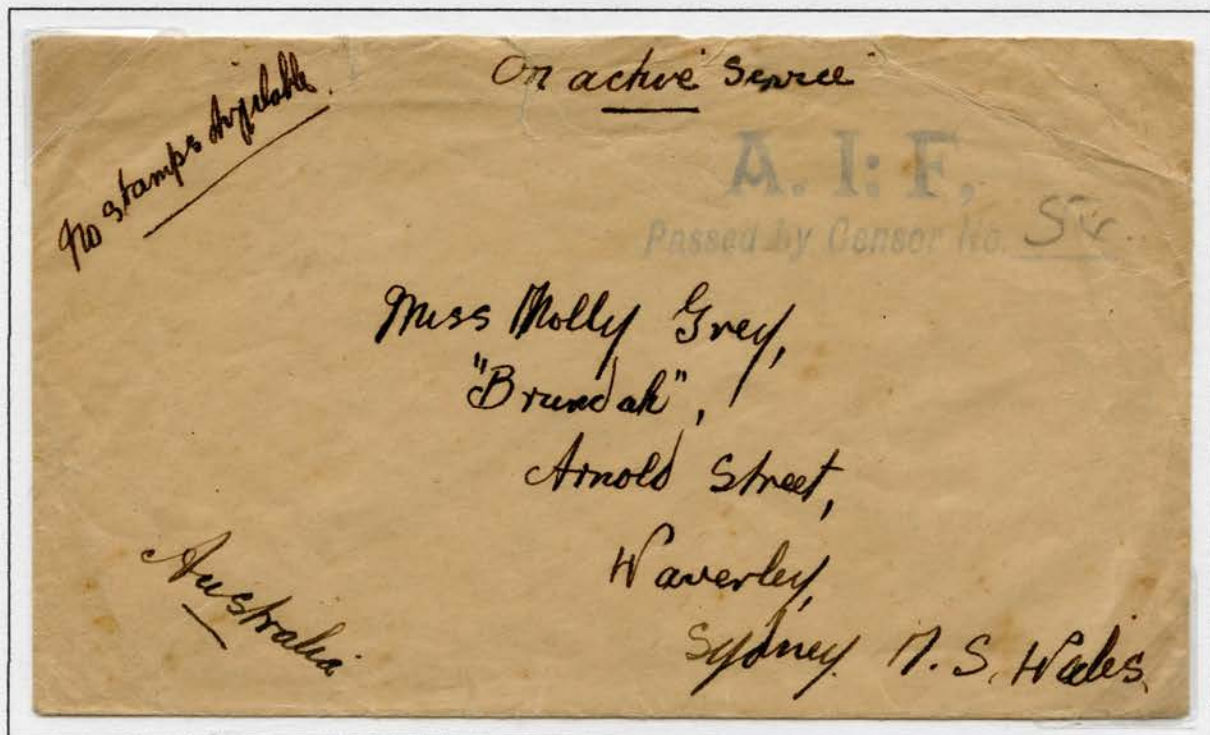
29th February 1916



A54 "Runic": Alexandria, Egypt 29.2.1916 to New South Wales

Postal markings: "A.I:F,/Passed by Censor No._____" handstamp in grey black (Finlayson Type MCM 1/F).

The card was written by Driver Harold Lodge of the 1st Field Company Engineers who writes "Wrote this of Colombo thinking I might get off while there but no chance".



A54 "Runic": Alexandria, Egypt 29.2.1916 to New South Wales

Postal markings: "A.I:F,/Passed by Censor No._____" handstamp in dull blue (Finlayson Type MCM 1/F) with "54" inserted in manuscript.

Note: It is interesting to note that this censor handstamp is different from the one on the Third Convoy. Letters, as opposed to postcards, written on board the troopships are scarcer and this was penned by Private William Jones of the 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station who served throughout the war, returning to Australia on the 6th May 1919.

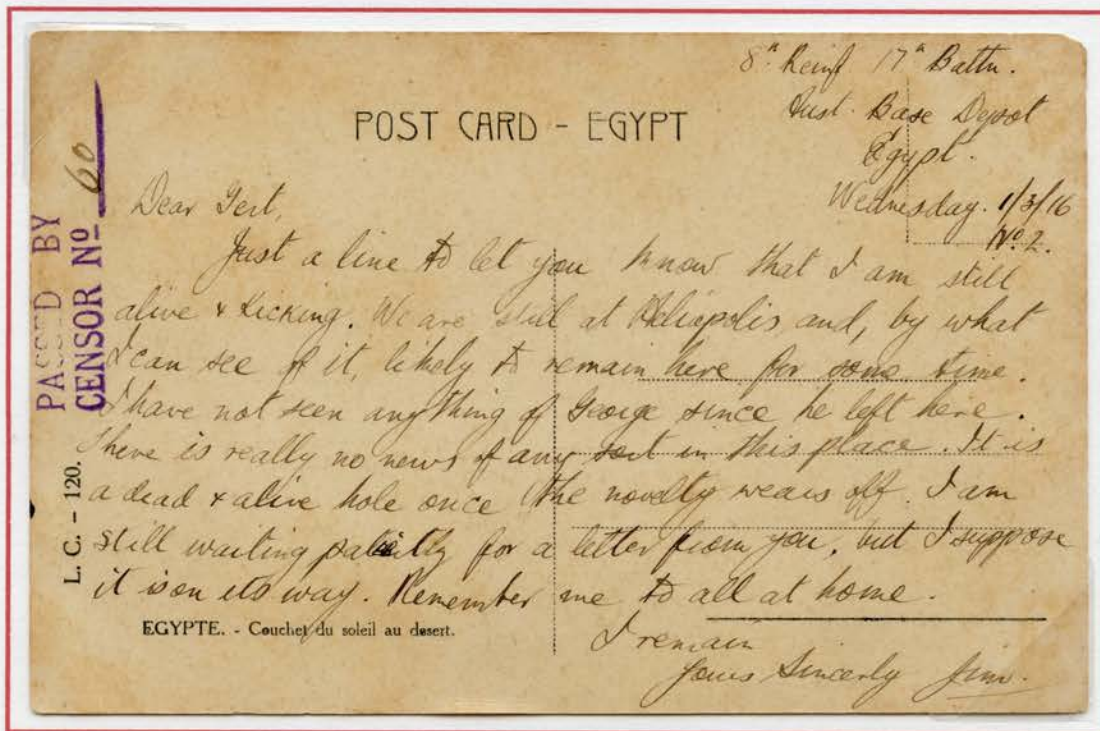
The Sixteenth Convoy

17th December 1915 - 8th March 1916

The final destination of the A60 "Aeneas" - Alexandria, Egypt

18th January 1916

Rare usage of a troopship censor cachet on shore



A60 "Aeneas": Alexandria, Egypt 1.3.1916 to New South Wales

Postal markings: "PASSED BY/ CENSOR No. _____" handstamp in purple (not listed by Finlayson) with "60" inserted in manuscript.

Use of the maritime censor handstamp on shore: This postcard written by a soldier from the 8th Reinforcements, 17th Battalion on the 1st March 1916, six weeks after the A60 "Aeneas" had docked at Alexandria. This troopship cachet has been used on shore and the trooper writes "this is a dead & alive hole once the novelty wears off".



A60 "Aeneas":

A postcard of the ship prior to the war when the "Aeneas" was a passenger liner.