

## The Second Convoy

25<sup>th</sup> December 1914 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 1915

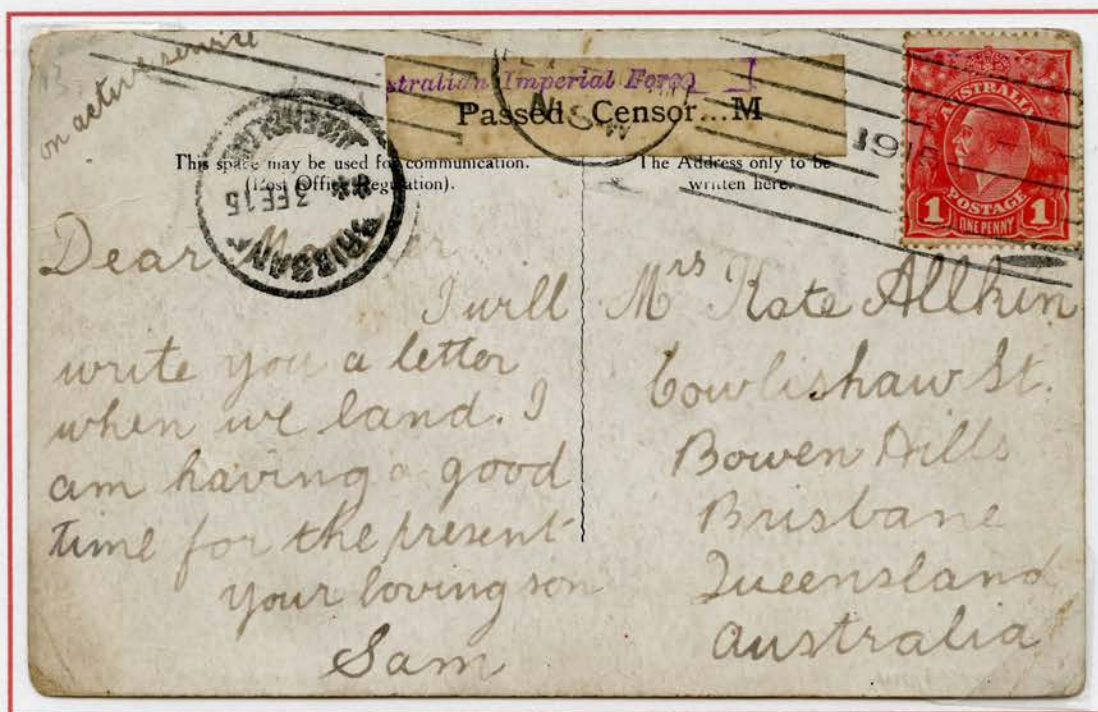
The Second Convoy consisted of sixteen troopships numbered A29 to A44, and comprised principally of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Brigade. All vessels assembled at Albany and sailed on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1914. The A34 "Persic", A29 "Suevic" and A40 "Ceramic" went directly to Aden, whilst the rest of the convoy sailed to Colombo, with all ships except the "Persic" docking at Aden between 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> January. They arrived at Suez on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1915, before disembarking at Alexandria on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Mail embargoed at Albany

28<sup>th</sup> December 1914

From the 28<sup>th</sup> December all mail was collected from the Second Convoy troopships and processed by Divisional Headquarters on board the A38 "Ulysses". The mail was landed at Colombo on the 14<sup>th</sup> January and picked up by the SS "Egypt" the following day, landing in Adelaide on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January for distribution by rail to the eastern states.

### Scarce use of the 'Passed Censor....M' censor label



A40 "Ceramic": Undated postcard addressed to Queensland

**Censor label:** "Passed Censor...M" label (Finlayson Type CM 24), and tied by an unframed "Australian Imperial Force" handstamp in purple.

### Origin of the censor label

The processing of this card was at the Headquarters on the A38 "Ulysses", where this censor label originated. Other cards from this voyage show the censor label also originating from this troopship.

Firebrace states that this censor label was privately produced by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Beeston on the A35 "Berrima". However, given that all the known examples of this label have originated from the "Ulysses", this statement is now considered incorrect.

The postcard was written at Albany and transferred to the Divisional Headquarters on the A38 "Ulysses" before leaving port on the 31<sup>st</sup> December. The evidence of the embargoed mail is the Brisbane arrival postmark of the 3.2.1915. All arrival date stamps in the first week of February 1915 in the eastern states were transported by the S.S. "Egypt", which picked up the mail in Colombo on the 15<sup>th</sup> January. The A40 "Ceramic" from which Private Allkin embarked, did not go to Colombo, instead sailing directly to Aden, where she docked on the 21<sup>st</sup> January. The mail from Aden did not reach the eastern states until the 15<sup>th</sup> February.

**Embargoed mail from the Second Convoy is rare**



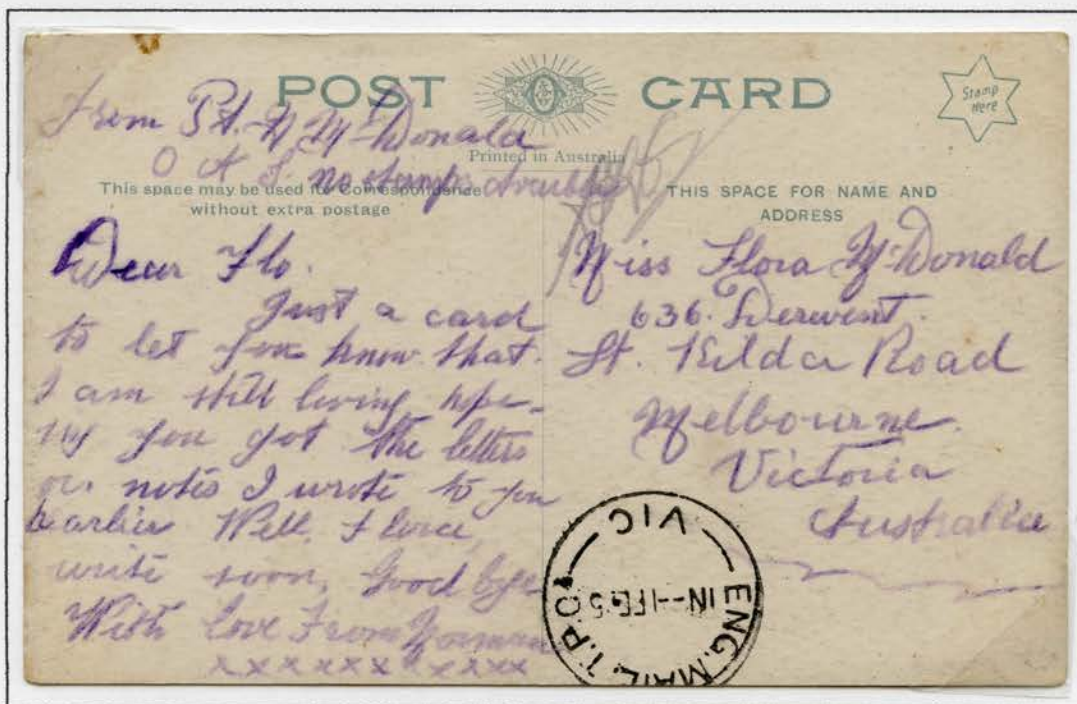
## The Second Convoy

25<sup>th</sup> December 1914 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 1915

### The first port of call - Colombo

14<sup>th</sup> January 1915

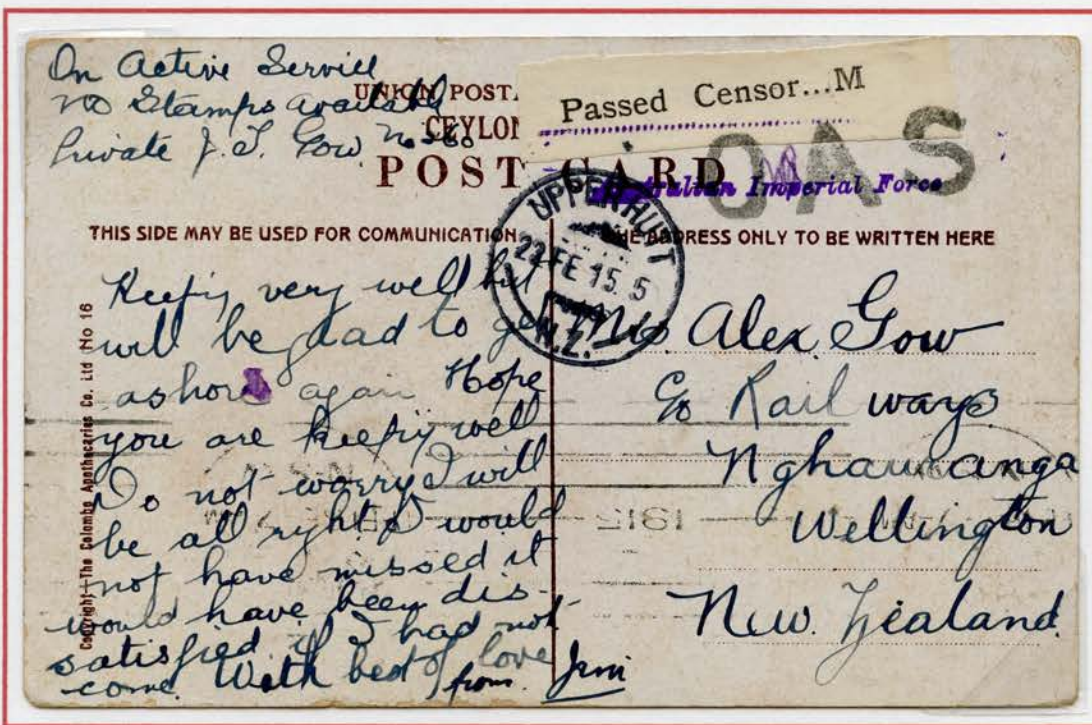
The mail from Colombo was delivered on the 14th of January and picked up by the "Egypt" the following day before being shipped to Adelaide on the 30th of January. It was then transported by rail to the eastern states.



A35 "Berrima": Used from Colombo, Ceylon to Victoria.

Endorsed "OAS", the card was written by Private Norman McDonald of the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, arriving in Melbourne on the 1.2.1915.

### An unlisted On Active Service handstamp



The "OAS" cachet in black (not recorded by Finlayson) is difficult to interpret.

It seems likely to have been applied on board the A38 "Ulysses", however, no other examples are recorded.

A similar cachet is known on First Convoy mail addressed to Australia, so a theory that it was struck at Sydney to prevent the taxing of mail in New Zealand seems remote.

A38 "Ulysses": Used from Colombo, Ceylon to New Zealand

Postal markings: "OAS" handstamp in black (unlisted by Finlayson); Censor label: "Passed Censor...M" label (Firebrace Type CM 24), and tied by an unframed "Australian Imperial Force" handstamp in purple.

Note: The postcard was written by Private James Gow of the 13th Infantry Battalion who embarked on the A38 "Ulysses", providing further evidence that the censor label was used on this troopship.  
Ex Finlayson

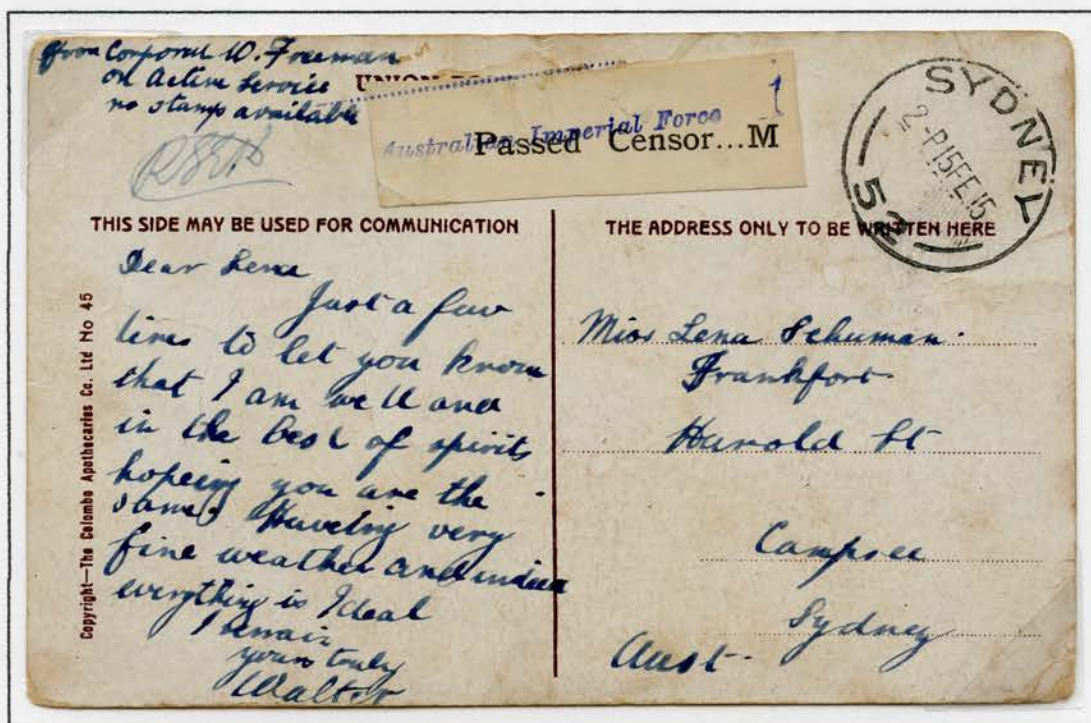


## The Second Convoy

25<sup>th</sup> December 1914 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 1915

The second port of call of the A38 "Ulysses" - Aden

21<sup>st</sup> January 1915



A38 "Ulysses": Used from Aden 21.1.1915 to New South Wales

Censor label: "Passed Censor...M" label (Finlayson Type CM 24), and tied by an unframed "Australian Imperial Force" Handstamp in purple.

**Note:** The card was written by Corporal Walter Freeman of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion who embarked on the A38 H.M.A.T. "Ulysses". Written at sea, the card was sent from Aden on the 21<sup>st</sup> January, arriving at Sydney on the 15<sup>th</sup> February.

The second port of call of the A39 "Port Macquarie" - Aden

23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915



A39 "Port Macquarie": A rare real photo postcard of the troopship docked at Aden on the 23.1.1915.

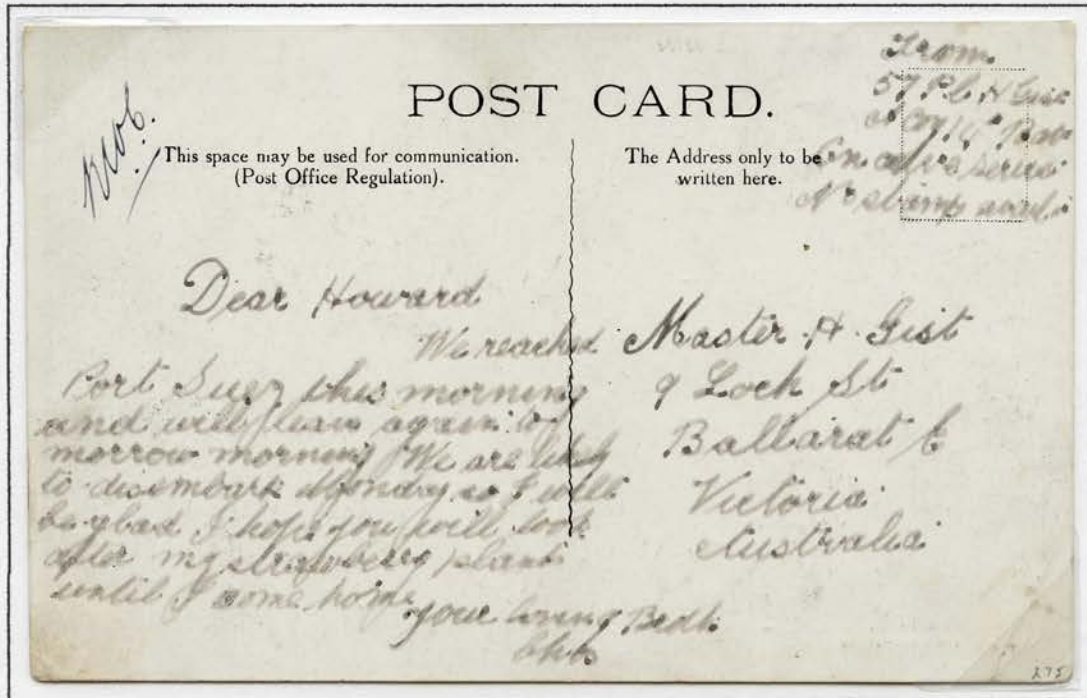


## The Second Convoy

The third port of call - Suez, Egypt

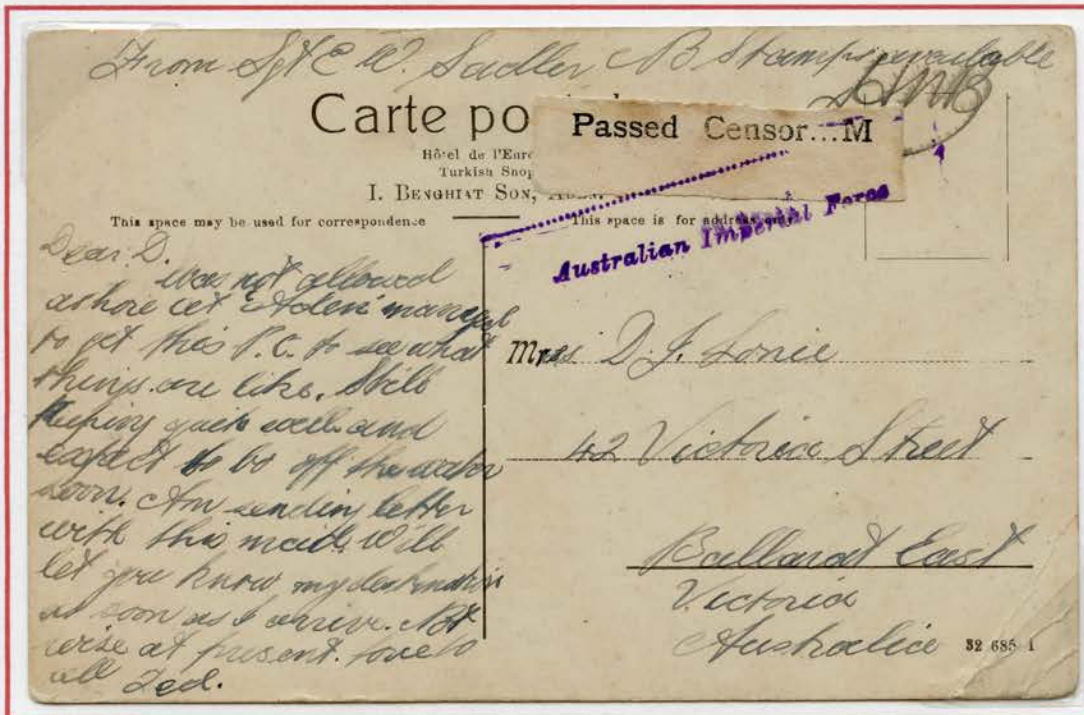
25<sup>th</sup> December 1914 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 1915

28<sup>th</sup> January 1915



A38 "Ulysses": Suez, Egypt 28.1.1915 to Victoria

A postcard written by Private Charles Gist of the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion who writes "We reached Port Suez this morning and will leave again tomorrow morning". He was killed in action at Gallipoli on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1915.



Sergeant Sadler of the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion writes:

"Was not allowed ashore at Aden....keeping well and expect to be off the water soon. Will let you know my final destination when I arrive."

Sergeant Saddler was wounded at Gallipoli and returned to Australia on the 11.5.1916.

A38 "Ulysses": Suez, Egypt 28.1.1915 to Victoria

Censor label: "Passed Censor...M" label (Finlayson Type CM 24), and tied by an unframed "Australian Imperial Force" handstamp in purple.



## The Second Convoy

The third port of call - Suez, Egypt

25<sup>th</sup> December 1914 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 1915

28<sup>th</sup> January 1915

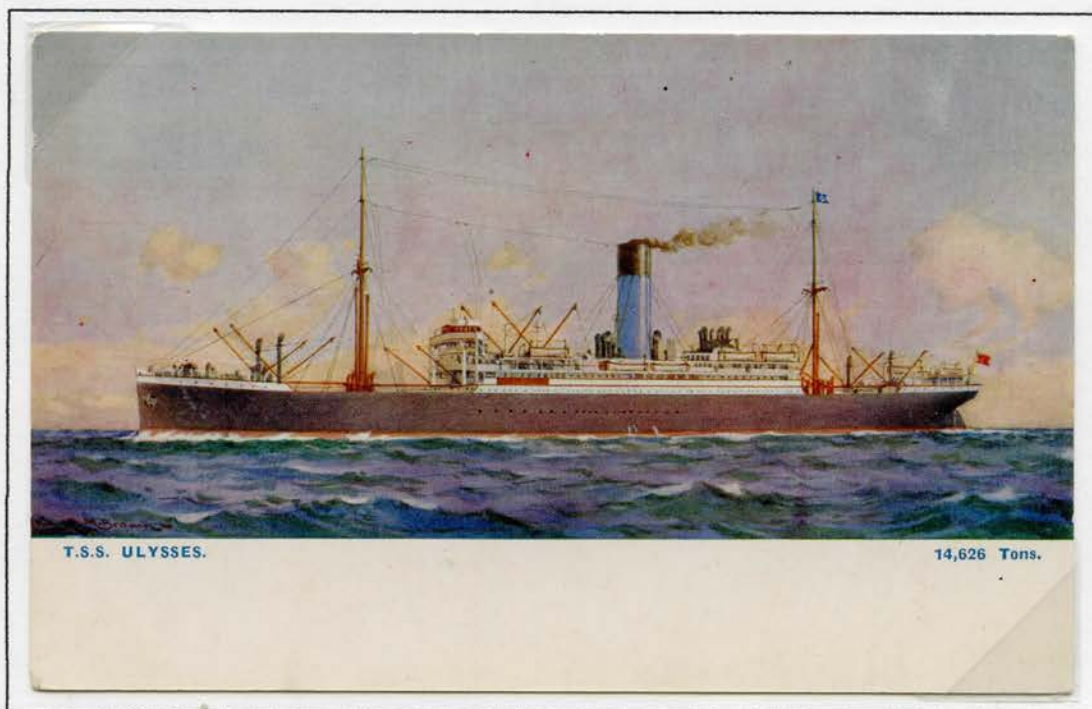


A38 "Ulysses": Used from Suez, Egypt to New South Wales

A "newspaper boy" pre-printed postcard for the Second Convoy written by Corporal Frederick Setchell of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He writes *"We have left Colombo and called at Aden where we stopped 12 hours and then left and are on the move again"*. Corporal Setchell was wounded in the face at Gallipoli and discharged as medically unfit for duty in May 1916. The newspaper boy illustration is identical to those printed for the A71 "Nestor" postcards on the Thirteenth Convoy.

*Ex Finlayson*

This is the only recorded example of the "newspaper boy" postcard from the A38 "Ulysses"



A38 "Ulysses": A picture postcard of the ship during its civilian liner days before the war

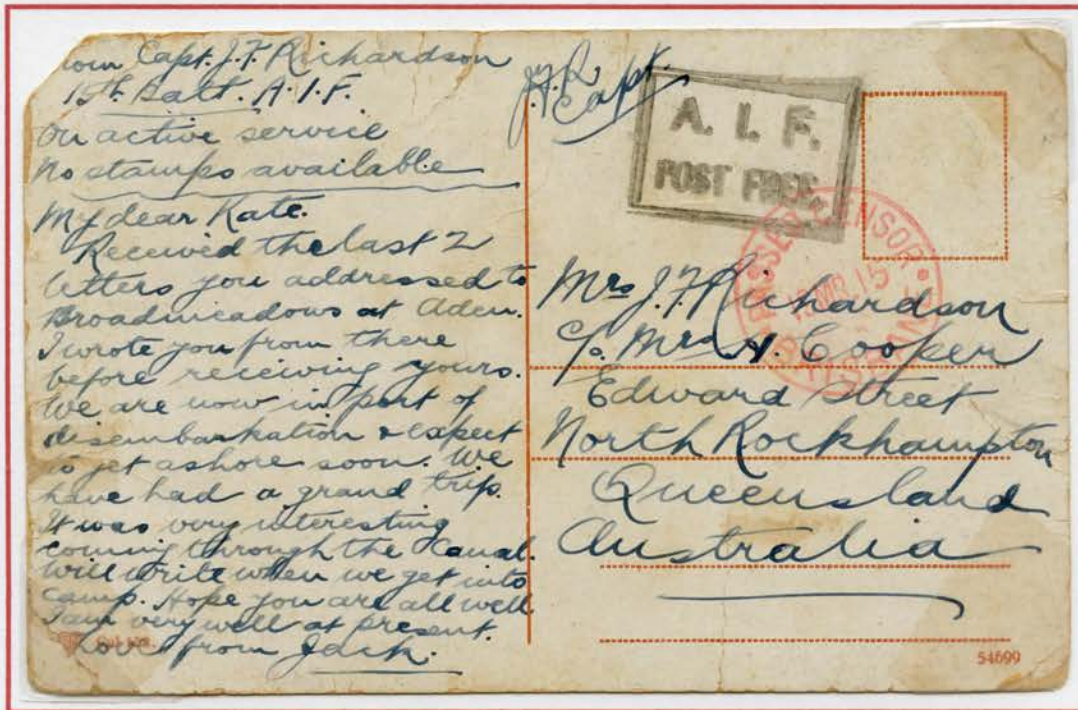


## The Second Convoy

25<sup>th</sup> December 1914 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 1915

The final destination - Alexandria, Egypt

31<sup>st</sup> January 1915



**A40 "Ceramic":** Used from Alexandria, Egypt 31.1.1915 to Queensland

**Postal markings:** "A.I.F./POST FREE" handstamp in black (not recorded by Finlayson) and is believed to have been applied on board the A40 "Ceramic". It is possibly a handstamp used by officers given that it has not been seen on mail from enlisted troops.

**Note:** The postcard was written by Captain John Richardson of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He writes that he has received two letters at Aden, and that "We are now in port of disembarkation and expect to get ashore soon". Both cards were "Bagged" and sent back to Queensland on the next ship home as there are no Egyptian postal markings.

Ex Finlayson

Forward destination - London, England

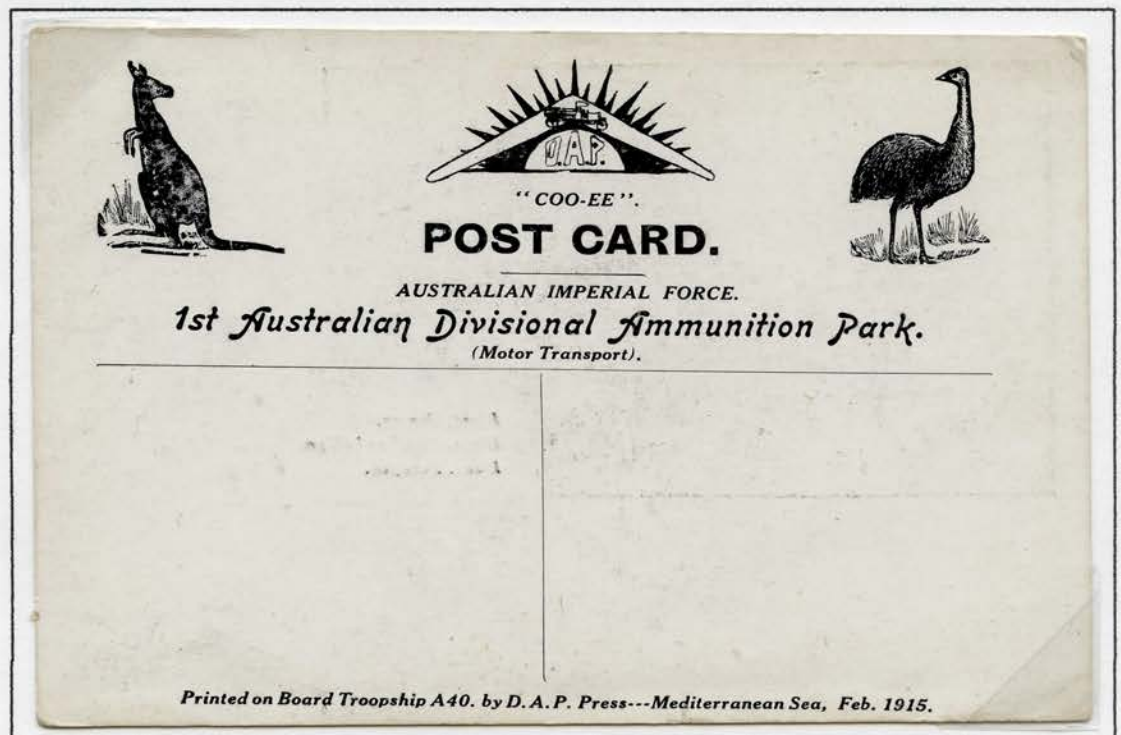
February 1915

The official troopship records are incomplete, however, it is almost certain that the A40 "Ceramic" continued to London with supporting ordnance for the war in Europe. The postcard below supports this assumption.

**A40 "Ceramic":**

An unused postcard printed on board the troopship in the Mediterranean Sea just after leaving Alexandria on the way to London.

On the reverse is a small photographic image of three of the officers. Other images are recorded from these cards which are quite scarce.



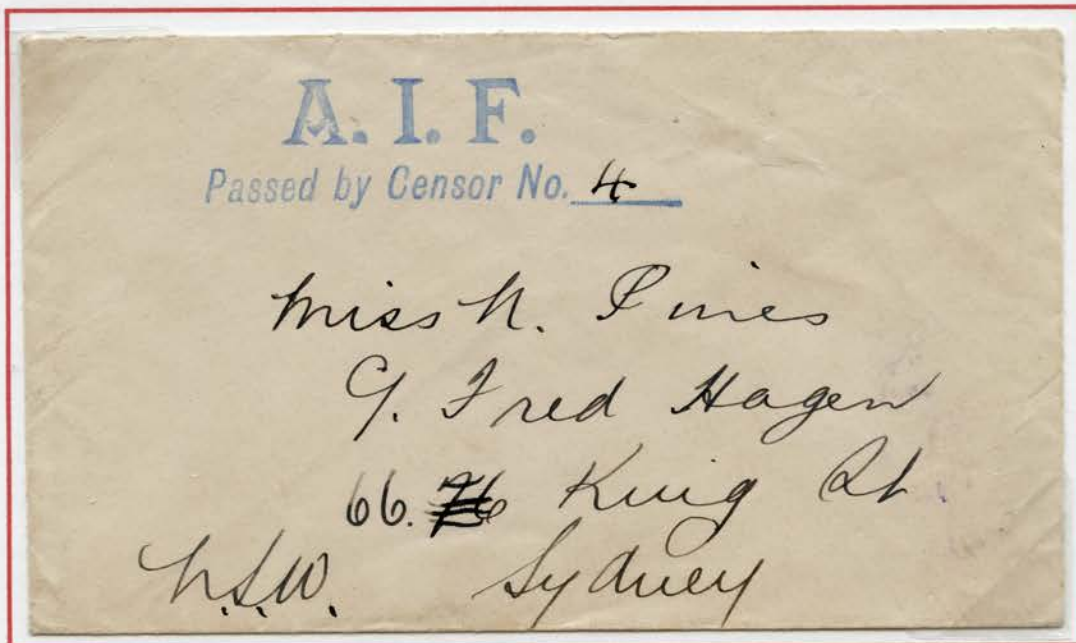


## The Third Convoy

29<sup>th</sup> January - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

### Introduction of maritime censor handstamps

The introduction of maritime censor handstamps is detailed in Section 2. All of the items in the next two pages were sent from the Third Convoy, illustrating the range of new censorship implements available to each troopship.

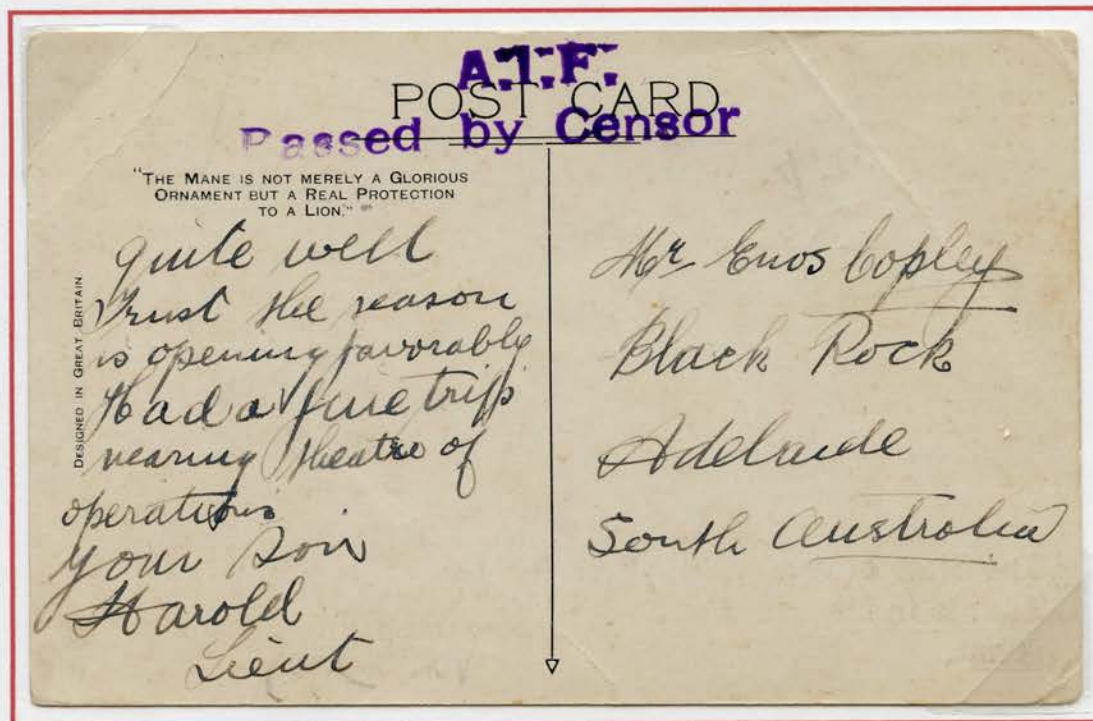


**A4 "Pera":** Used to New South Wales

**Postal markings:** "A.I.F./Passed by Censor No....." handstamp in light blue (Finlayson Type MCM/J) with number "4" inserted in manuscript allocated to the A4 "Pera".

**Note:** Mail from the A4 "Pera" is quite rare. She sailed in four convoys, generally transporting horses and later with some reinforcements for the Light Horse. Hence, there were very few soldiers to write home on this vessel.

### An unlisted troopship censor cachet



The card was written by Lieutenant Harold Copley of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Brigade, who by the end of the war had been promoted to Major, and returned to Australia on the 19.2.1919.

**A47 "Mashobra":** Used to South Australia

**Postal markings:** "A.I.F./Passed by Censor" handstamp in purple (not recorded by Finlayson). This troopship used four different types of maritime censor cachets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Convoy.



## The Third Convoy

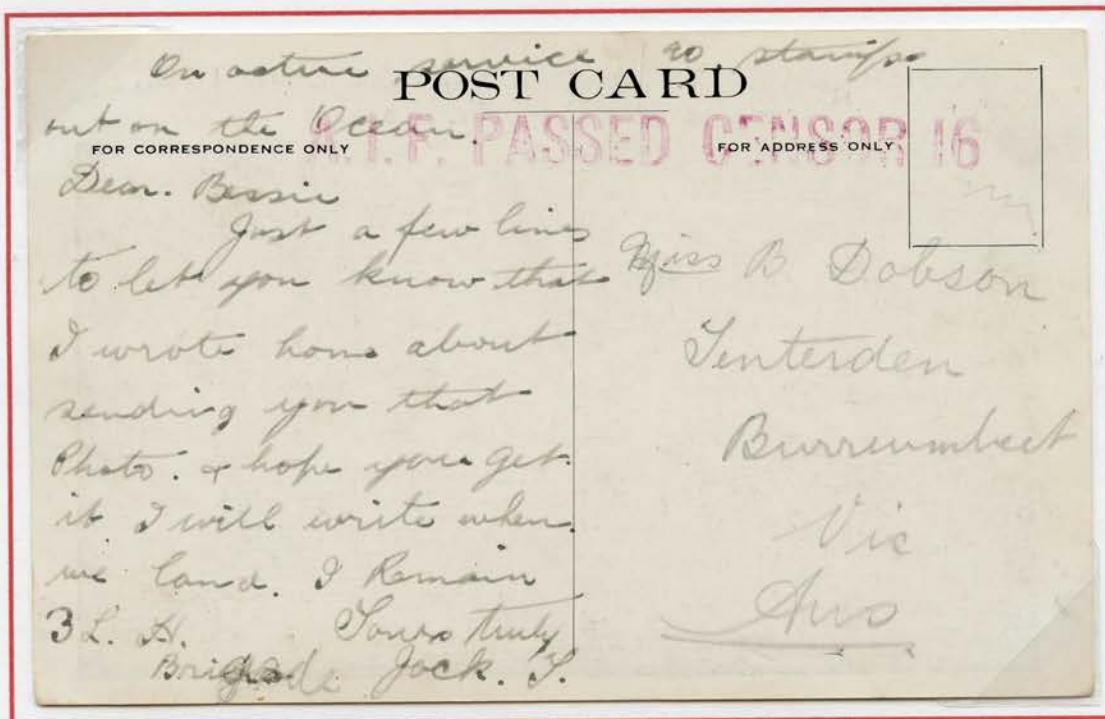
29<sup>th</sup> January - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

### The secondary type of troopship censor cachets

The grouping of the secondary type of troopship censor cachets is very broad. They essentially have the "Passed by Censor" in addition to the specific number of the troopship within the cachet.

### Rarity of the secondary type of troopship censor cachets

In nearly all cases, the secondary cachets are very scarce to rare, with most having only a couple of examples recorded. Since the publication of the Emery books in the late 1980's, a number of new examples have been discovered.



**A16 "Star of Victoria":** Used to Victoria

**Postal markings:** "A.I.F. PASSED CENSOR 16" cachet in purple (Finlayson Type MCM 8). The card is endorsed "3 L.H. Brigade" at the lower left, confirming that this card was posted on the Third Convoy.



**A16 "Star of Victoria":**

A picture postcard of the ship during its civilian liner days before the war.



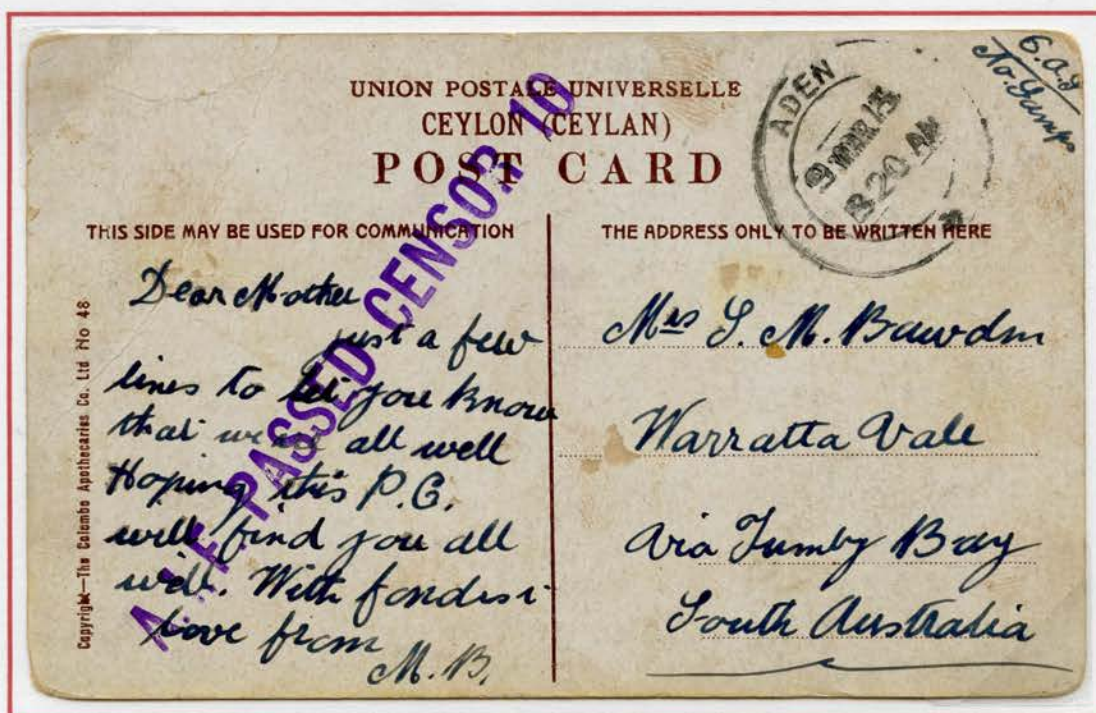
## The Third Convoy

The first port of call - Aden

29<sup>th</sup> January - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

9<sup>th</sup> March 1915

### An unrecorded stoppage at Aden

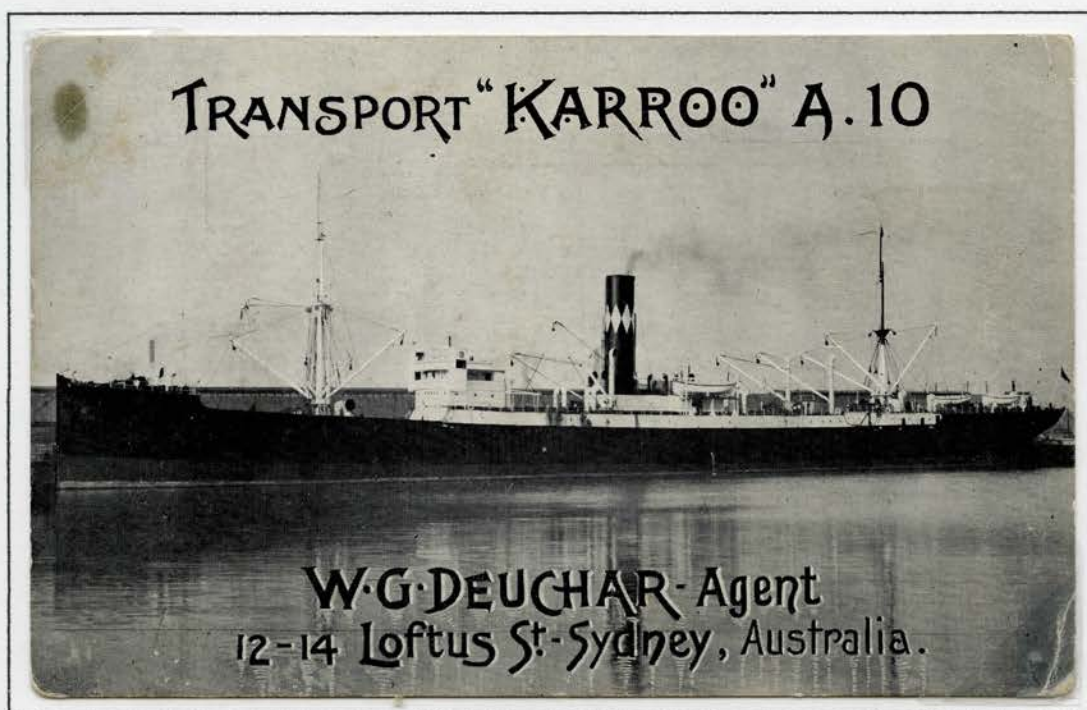


A10 "Karoo": Aden 9.3.1915 to South Australia

Postal markings: "A.I.F. PASSED CENSOR 10" handstamp in purple (not listed by Finlayson) which was allocated to the A10 "Karoo".

**Note:** This convoy is not recorded as stopping at Aden, however, the Aden datestamp of the 9<sup>th</sup> March confirms this, with the next port being Suez on the 11<sup>th</sup>. The card was written by Driver Milton Bawden of the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment who served throughout the war and returned to Australia on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1919.

*Ex Stern*



#### A10 "Karoo":

A picture postcard of the ship just before it commenced troopship duties. It is interesting to note that the pre-war shipping agent details of the "Karoo" are printed on the card as well.

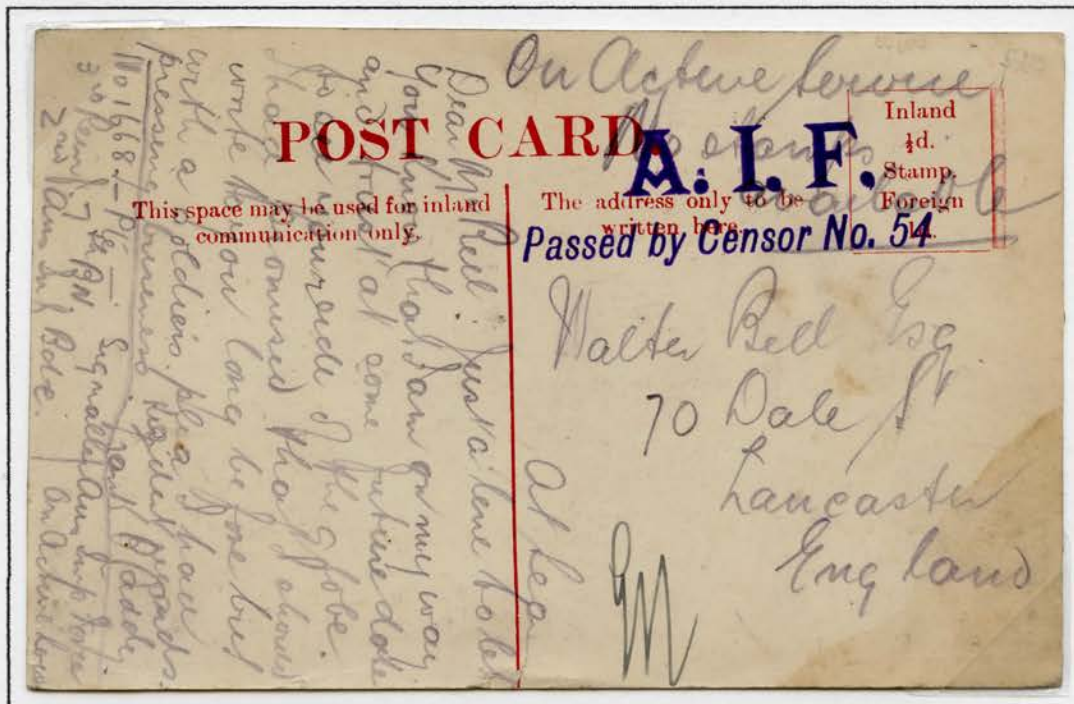


## The Third Convoy

The second port of call - Suez, Egypt

29<sup>th</sup> January - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

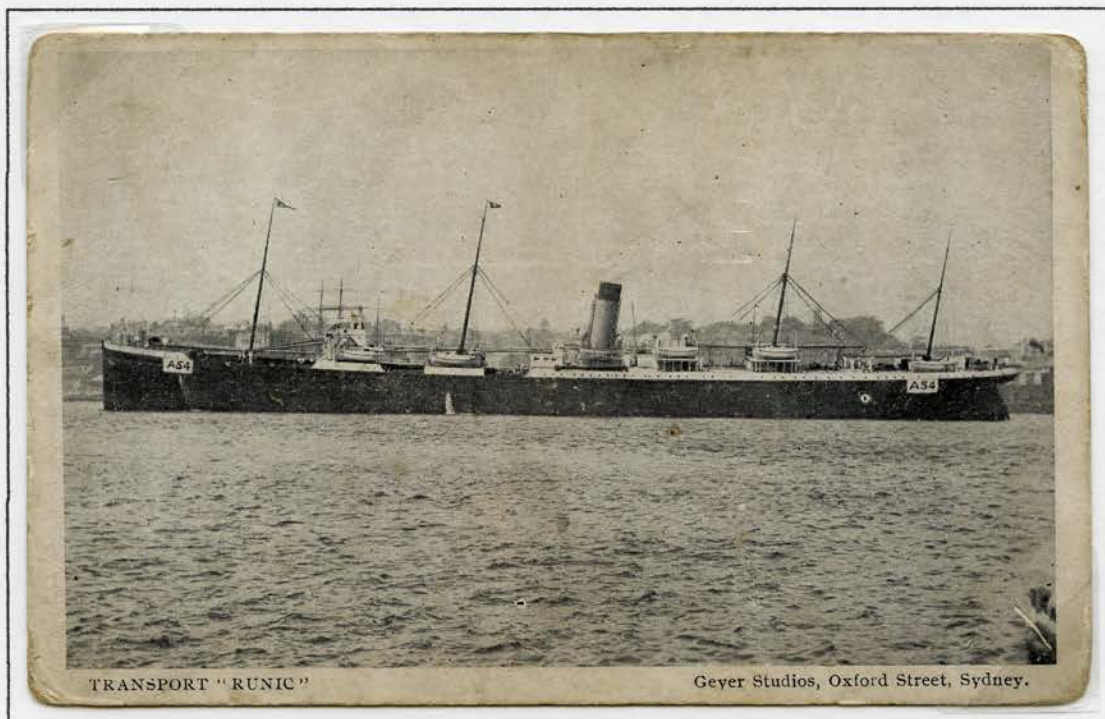
11<sup>th</sup> March 1915



A54 "Runic": Suez, Egypt 11.3.1915 to Lancaster, England

Postal markings: "A.I.F./Passed by Censor 54" in purple (Finlayson Type MCM I/G).

The postcard was written by Private Frank Caddy of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reinforcements, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion who died of wounds at Gallipoli on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1915.



A54 "Runic": A real photo postcard of the Transport "Runic" with the "A54" inserted at the bow of the vessel.

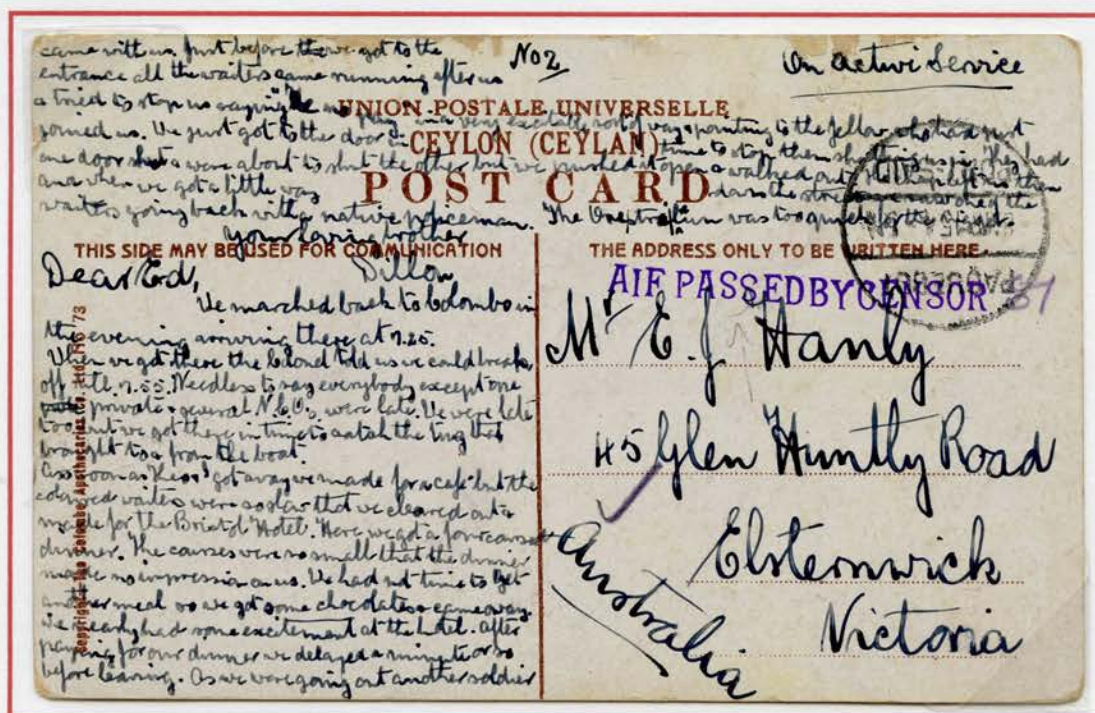


## The Third Convoy

29<sup>th</sup> January - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

The final destination of the A51 "Chilka" - Port Said, Egypt

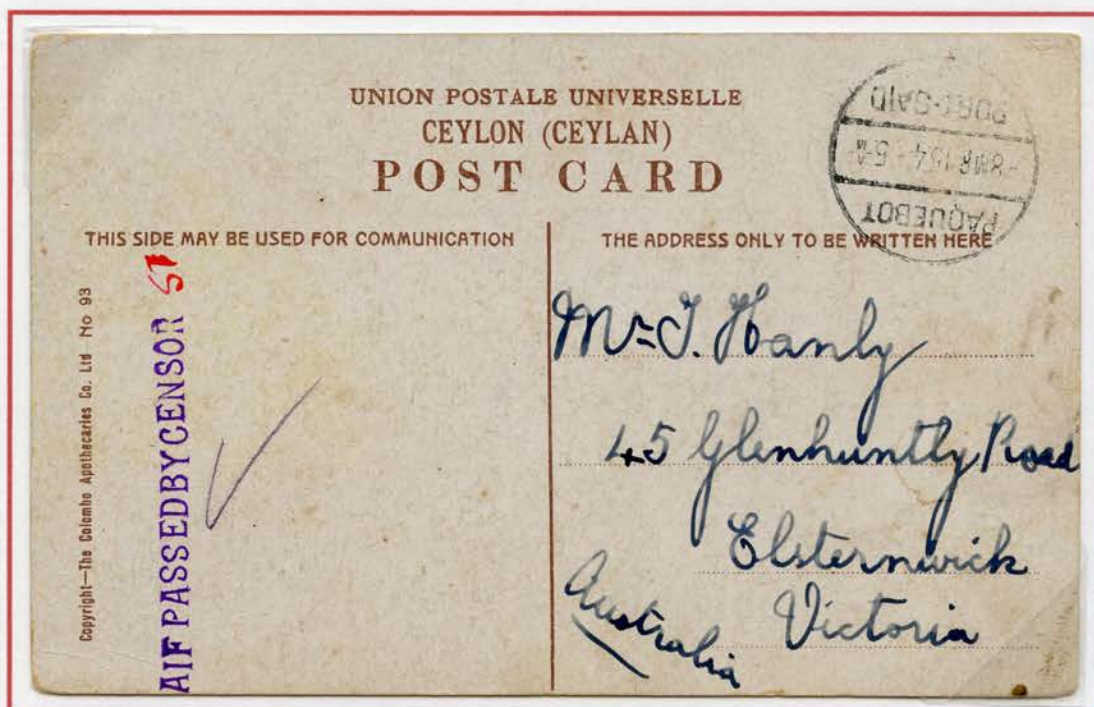
8<sup>th</sup> March 1915



A51 "Chilka": A picture postcard of Ceylon used from Port Said, Egypt 8.3.1915 to Victoria

Postal markings: "AIF PASSED BY CENSOR" cachet in purple (not listed by Finlayson) with "51" inserted in manuscript of the A51 "Chilka".

The card was written by Private Joseph Hanley of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Field Ambulance who served throughout the war and returned to Australia on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1919.



Postal markings:

"AIF PASSED BY CENSOR" handstamp in purple (not listed by Finlayson) with "51" inserted in red manuscript for the A51 "Chilka".

A51 "Chilka": A picture postcard of Ceylon used from Port Said, Egypt 8.3.1915 to Victoria

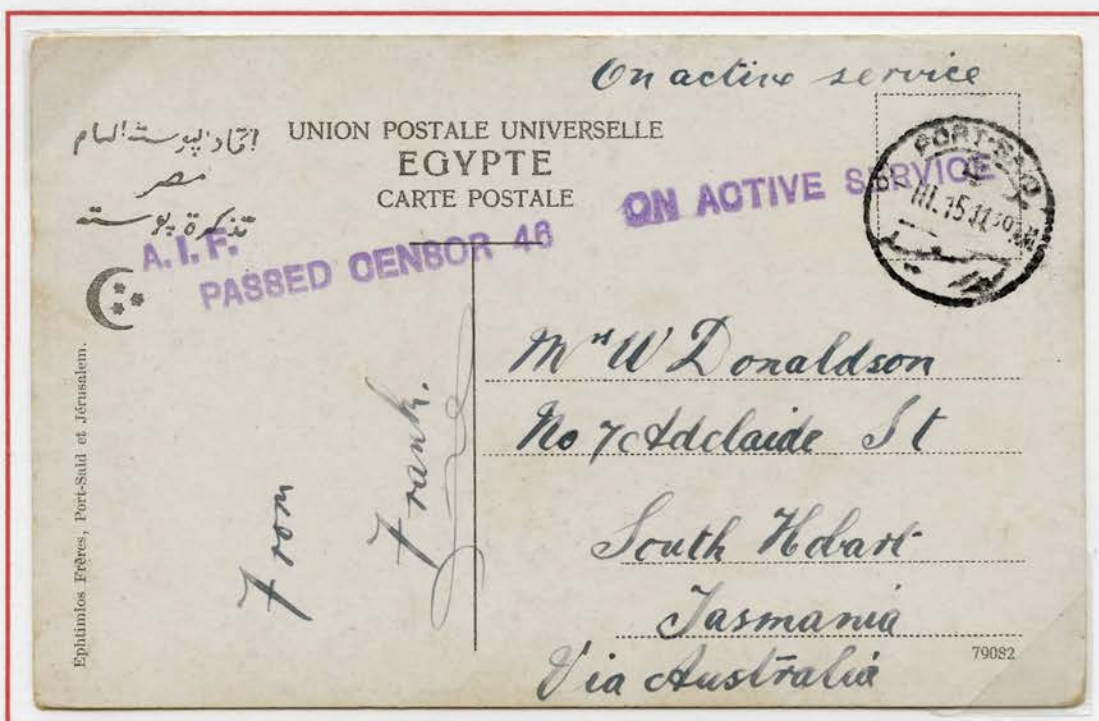


## The Third Convoy

29<sup>th</sup> January - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

The final destination of the A46 "Clan MacGillivray" - Port Said, Egypt

8<sup>th</sup> March 1915



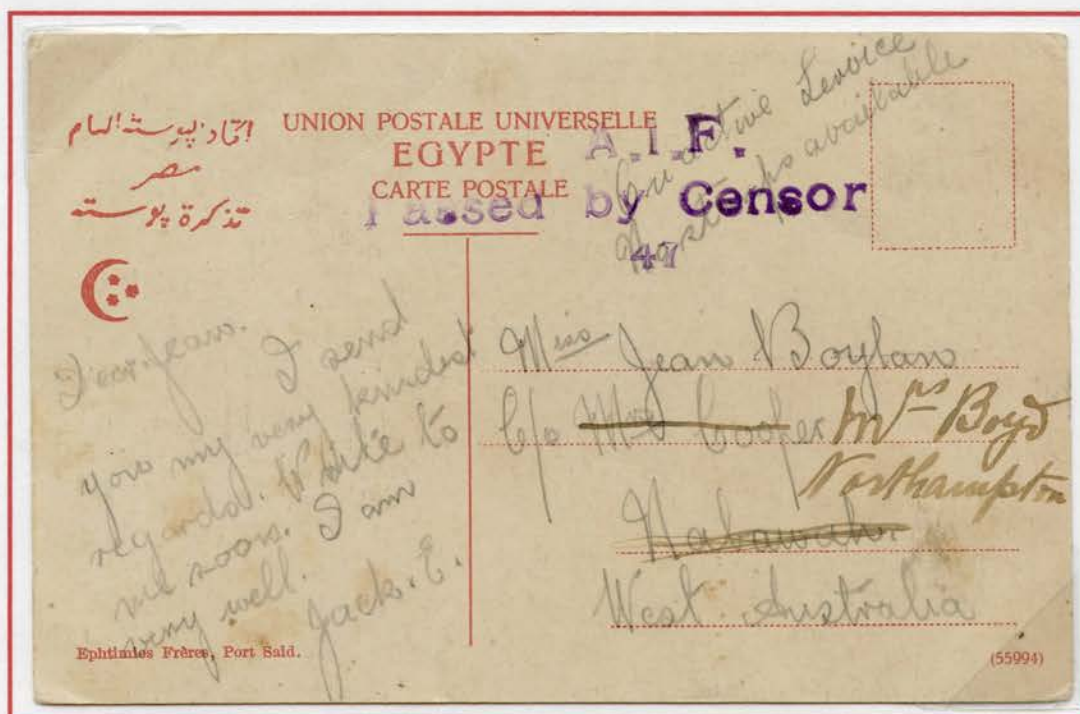
A46 "Clan MacGillivray": Port Said, Egypt 8.3.1915 to Tasmania

Postal markings: "ON ACTIVE SERVICE" and an "A.I.F./PASSED CENSOR 46" handstamps in violet (Finlayson Type MCM 15).

Less than five examples recorded of this ships handstamps

The final destination of the A47 "Mashobra" - Port Said, Egypt

8<sup>th</sup> March 1915



A47 "Mashobra": Port Said, Egypt 8.3.1915 to Western Australia

Postal markings: "A.I.F./Passed By Censor/47" handstamp in purple (not listed by Finlayson)

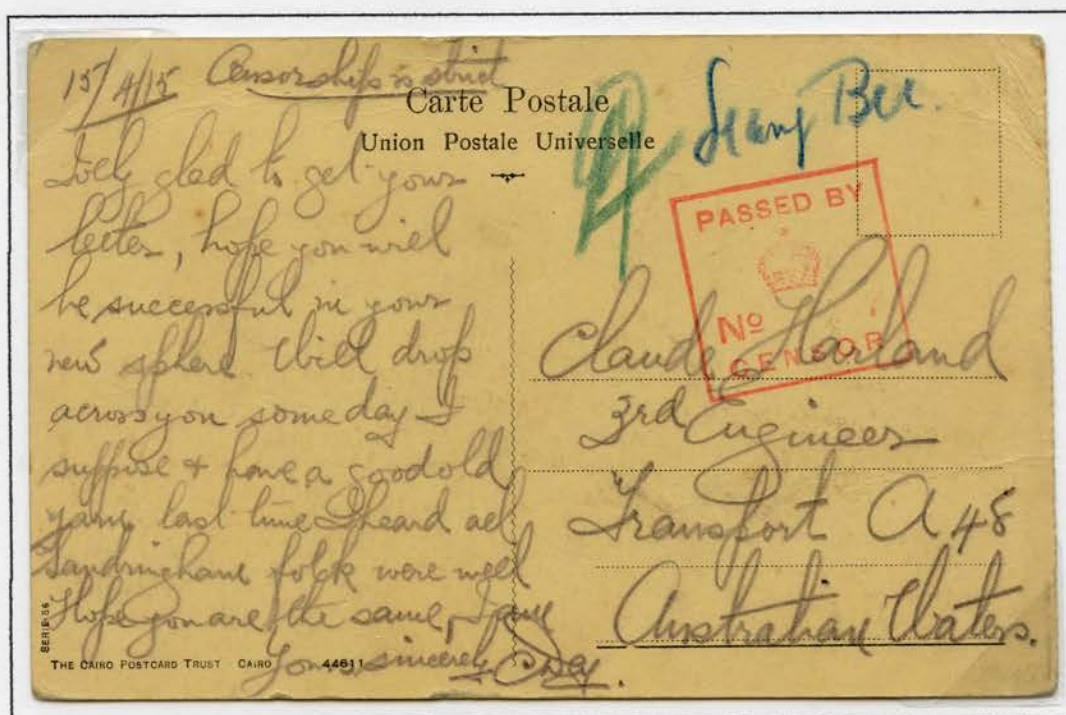
**Note:** Although not listed by Finlayson, about half a dozen examples are known, written by soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment from the Third Convoy, all addressed to Western Australia.



## The Third Convoy

29<sup>th</sup> January - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1915

### The return voyage to Australia of the A48 "Seang Bee"



**A48 "Seang Bee":** A postcard of Port Said, Egypt dated 15.4.1915 addressed to "Transport A48 in Australian Waters".

**Note:** The "Seang Bee" arrived in Alexandria on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1915 and had departed for Australia when this card was penned. At the top is written "Censorship is strict".

**Inwards mail to sailors on the troopships is rare**

#### A48 "Seang Bee":

A rare real photo postcard of the troopship with the number A48 clearly painted on the side of the ship.

This is one of the few real photo postcards of the troopships recorded. The image shows the ship full of Australian troops, probably leaving port bound for Egypt.

