Information Sheet No 24

THE PORT HACKING COUGH

The end of the First World War meant the return of soldiers to Australia. However, with so many soldiers eager to return home and long voyages across the sea, the soldiers did not arrive in Australia until 1919, with the last ships arriving in early 1920.. Training centres were set up in England so that soldiers could learn or pursue a trade or further their education. These were made to help returning soldiers adjust to civilian life.

One of the ships that left to take surviving soldiers back to Australia was the HMAT D. 34, named the Port Hacking. It carried 700 Anzacs or, as they called themselves, "1914 men." The port Hacking left England on 3rd December 1914, the first troop ship to leave England, and arrived back in Australia in early February 1915. As these soldiers boarded the ship; their long journey home began.

SS Port Hacking passing through the Panama Canal en route
To England with Australian Troops (Moore Collection)

Boredom was one key factor in such a long journey, so to keep the soldiers occupied a magazine was produced called the Port Hacking Cough. It was a 'record of the 1914-1919 men returning home on D. 34.' In this publication were drawings, stories, reports, funny anecdotes and poems; things that the soldiers could read, relate to, and enjoy. It also advertised many of the ships various activities that were held, including concerts and boxing matches. Soldiers enjoyed reading this and many wrote letters to the editor, or tried their hand at writing a short story or poem.

Mr Chas A Sims of the YMCA played a key role in making the journey aboard the Port Hacking an enjoyable one. He provided a library, piano, musical equipment, props for actors, organising the games and activities and ensuring that everything was ready for when the soldiers boarded the ship in Devonport, England
In many ways, the ship was made to be like a 'normal' place with 'normal' activities. There was a library aboard, church services held, debating, balls and concerts, along with sporting events such as boxing. In the spirit of the larrikins these soldiers were supposed to be they also came up with fun, different things to do such as blindfold

boxing and water pillow fights. Concerts held on board the Port Hacking provided enjoyment and merriment to all. Soldiers were willing to have a go at playing in the orchestra, give recitals or sing.

There was a sports committee created on the Port Hacking. The committee was responsible for organising games and events for the soldiers, both physical sports such as boxing, and mental ones including chess and draughts. A number of boxing matches were held. Two well know boxers, Ron Wells from Australia and Fireman Ellis from England, were aboard and great excitement was made over the match between the two, with other soldiers having a go in preliminary Bouts. All this was recorded in the Port Hacking Cough.

Along with all this fun, the roles of the army were still implemented onboard, including parades and duties that the soldiers were expected to fulfil.

Problems waiting at home were not unknown to the returning soldiers. The Port Hacking Cough was constantly reminding soldiers of the want for Australia to begin manufacturing more of their own goods and grow the agricultural industry. Before the war, Australia had relied heavily on other countries, including Germany, for timber, metal, etc and the contributor strongly suggested that Australia should begin to produce much of their own and build up these industries. One contributor produced a number of informative articles on Antartica

After a long few months travelling the soldiers were keen to arrive back home. The day caused excitement for many, but mixed with it a sense of sadness. This was the first time they would have seen their loved ones for four years. However, it would also mean parting with the men whom had become brothers to each other; with whom they had so very closely shared their lives. As the boat pulled in and the soldiers left the decks, their journeys were only beginning.

The list of Returning Tasmanian's aboard the Port Hacking Cough was placed in the back of the Port Hacking Cough and is as follows:

Allington, V.H.   no. 101   Cpl
Bantick, E.A.   no. 374   Pte.   12th Bn

Bellinger, A.F.	no. 420	Sgt.	12th Bn.	.MM with bar
Bennet, L.	no. 1949	Cpl	3FAB	
Blyth, W.O.	no. 523	Sgt	AOC	
Bracken, H.J.	no. 1203	L/Cpl	12th Bn.	
Clayton, C.E.	no. 203	Pte.	12th Bn.	
Colbourn, R.F.	no. 926	A/Sgt.		
Crawford, R.W.	no. 75	Sgt.	12th Bn.	
Crook, C.A.	no. 399	l/Cpl	12th Bn.	
Duke, N.	no. 1980	Gnr.	9 Fd. Bty.	
Fisher, W.M.	no. 408	T/RSM	12th Bn.	
Fox, R.F.	no. 1010	L/Cpl.		
Geary, A.E.	no. 384	Dvr.	12th Bn. and 51st Bn.	
Hart, O.R.	no. 2056	Gnr.	9 Bty.	
Honeysett, L.R.	no. 1421	Pte.	15 Fd. Amb. (ex Bglr. 1 ACH)	
Hodson, G.H.	no. 5219	S/QMS		
Jubb, C.C.	no. 304	Cpl.	12th Bn.	
Kilmartin, J.T.	no. 2325	Sgt.	3 FAB	
Lapthorne, R.	no. 510	Sgt.	12th Bn.	MM
Lawler, C.E.	no. 1060	L/Cpl		
Lahmann, J.	no. 5263	Cpl.		
Miller, F.R.	no. 259	Sgt.	12th Bn.	MM
Ponsonby, F.H.	no. 661	Cpl	3rd ALH	
Priest, C.J.	no. 1939	Bdr.	9 Fd. Bty.	
Ralph, L.I.	no. 335	Pte.	12th Bn.	
Reid, M.M.	no. 2037	Gnr.	9 Fd. Bty	

IT INTERESTS THEM AS MUCH AS IT DOES YOU

THE PORT HACKING COUGH

A RECORD OF THE 1914 - 1919 MEN RETURNING HOME ON D. 34.

AUSTRALIA.

Vol. 1 [Kelly's Eye] No. 1 [AT SEA "D34" SATURDAY, 14th DEC., 1918.] Published { Sometime, Somewhere, Somehow.

THE PORT HACKING COUGH.

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This ship's magazine is being compiled to record the trip from England to Australia on the D. 34.

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It is also to amuse and entertain the diggers of the 1914 leave draft on their homeward voyage. We ask all our readers to send us contributions of short stories, sketches poems, jokes, etc., and to give us their assistance to make this magazine interesting, amusing, and if possible, educating.

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Naturally we do not endorse all the remarks made by our contributors, nor are we responsible for the remarks of our readers.

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We will do our best to make a worthy souvenir of the doings of our voyage home to our own sunny shore.

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