

MEDIA RELEASE



FIRST SHOT OF THE GREAT WAR (1914 -1918) COMMEMORATION FORT QUEENSCLIFF STOP THE PFALZ!

GEELONG AMATEUR RADIO CLUB TO ACTIVATE HISTORIC SITE

At the invitation of the First Shot Organising Committee the Geelong Amateur Radio Club Inc' were invited to establish a radio station within the Fort Queenscliff precinct in recognition of the role played by terrestrial and wireless telegraphy during WW1.

The Commemoration and Memorial Service will take place in the Fort at 10.30 am on Tuesday 5th August, 100years to the hour when a shot was fired across the bow of the German merchant ship SS Pfalz, to stop the ship from leaving Port Phillip Bay

(Additional information below)

The Federal Department of Veteran Affairs and the Australian Communications and Media Authority have granted the Geelong Amateur Radio Club, through the Wireless Institute of Australia, authorisation to use a special event callsign **VI3ANZAC**. The first allocation of a callsign representing the ANZAC Centennial Commemoration.

Communication by wireless telegraphy, the transmission of messages by Morse Code, from this historic site is particularly significant, as it was in the vicinity of this location that the first Shore to Ship transmission in the Southern Hemisphere occurred on 5th May 1901, when Henry Walter Jenvey sent a message to the ship Ophir carrying the Duke and Duchess of York and Cornwall, for the opening of the first Federal Parliament.

On the 12 July 1906 the first wireless transmission from the Australian mainland to Devonport was carried out by the Marconi Company, in the presence of the Governor General, Prime Minister Deakin and many other dignitaries.

Additional information from

Barry Abley (VK3SY) 0438290718

Jenni Blasco (VK3FJEN) 52511909

STOP THE PFALZ

The first shot of the Great War

The July Crisis

Following the assassination of Franz Ferdinand a month of diplomatic maneuvering between Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia, France, and Britain has been called the **July Crisis**.

Germany mobilised on 30 July 1914, and Russia responded by declaring a full mobilisation that same day. Germany's war plan, the **Schlieffen Plan**, relied on a quick, massive invasion of France to eliminate the threat on the West, before turning east against Russia. On 4 August, after Belgium refused to permit German troops to cross its borders into France, Germany declared war on Belgium as well. Britain indicated that if Germany did not withdraw its threat against neutral Belgium, a state of war would exist from Midnight, Berlin time. August 4th eleven-thirty London time.

London indicated to the Colonies that belligerent ships could be fired upon from midnight London time 4th August. 10am on the 5th August Australian Eastern Standard Time.

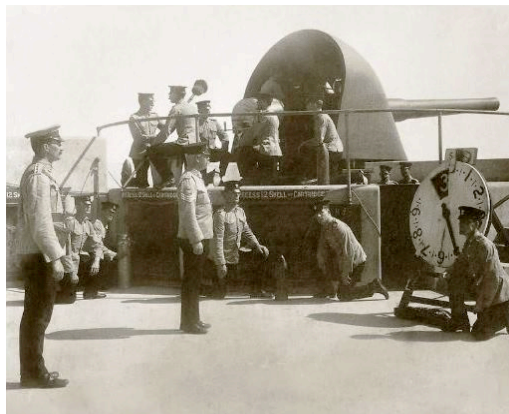
The Norddeutscher Lloyd ship Pfalz was unloading general cargo at Victoria dock when her captain received a plain language message instructing all German merchant ships to make for the nearest neutral port.



Steam Ship Pfalz

Captain W. Kuhiken sailed at daybreak with a Pilot, Capt' Robinson, and a full coal bunker sufficient to take the ship to South America, not knowing he needed to be through the heads before 10am.

The Fort Queenscliff had been instructed by telephone to fly a signal requiring the Pfalz to stop. The ship approached the heads sometime after 10am and either did not see the signal, or chose to ignore it.



On orders from Fort Queenscliff, the 6" Mark 7 naval gun at point Nepean was loaded with a full charge of 123 lbs of cordite and a 100 lb projectile. On the Pfalz the roar of a 6-inch gun at close range and the scream of the shell across the bows at such an angle that the missile struck the sea at the ship's side, drew Pilot Robinson's attention to the signal flying on the high mast ashore on Point Nepean. He rang for "full speed astern" to check the ship's way. The ship was arrested and later converted to a troop transport ship HMAT Boorara and took part in the second Australian convoy.