

778. How many had the "Orient" on board coming back?—About eleven hundred.

779. On how many decks were you stationed?—On two.

780. The "Orient" was returning with troops during the war?—Yes. We left South Africa on the 16th June twelvemonths.

781. When the "Britannic" was sent the war had ended and the troops were being sent away all over the world in thousands?—Yes.

782. You would expect to be packed in this case, would you not?—Yes; but there was plenty of transport service there.

783. Do you know of any vessel that left South Africa with troops for Australia within a month before the "Britannic" started, or during the month after, with less troops in proportion to her size?—I do not know.

784. Do you know of any of the transports that left South Africa for the Mother-country with fewer troops in proportion to her size than the "Britannic"?—No.

785. Why do you say there were plenty of transports?—Because there were plenty of transports at Durban when we left.

786. Do you know what transports were left at Durban?—No.

787. Did you complain at any time during the voyage to your orderly officer about, first of all, the cooking of the food?—On one occasion only.

788. You complained?—The men complained through me as orderly sergeant.

789. To whom?—To Lieutenant O'Callaghan.

790. What was done as the result of the complaint?—There was an issue of preserved meat. The uncooked meat was called in, and they issued preserved meat.

791. That matter was attended to?—Yes.

792. And that was the only formal complaint you made regarding bad meat?—Yes; the only complaint I made myself was attended to by Lieutenant O'Callaghan.

793. Do you remember how many hooks were provided over each table for the men to hang their hammocks on?—It was a subject I never paid much attention to, and I cannot speak absolutely, but I think there were ten or eleven hooks, and there were between twelve and sixteen men at the table.

794. If every hook was occupied there must be some men who had to lie on the table or on the floor?—Yes; I slept on the floor every night.

795. Did you notice if the atmosphere was very hot?—Yes, especially in the morning.

796. Was it worse in the lower deck or in the upper deck?—In the lower deck, because they could not open the ports on account of the sea. On the upper deck they were open in fine weather.

797. Did you lose any men from your squadron during the trip or since you landed?—Since we landed we lost one man that I know of.

798. You were in the upper 'tween decks?—Yes.

799. When was it he commenced ailing?—I noticed it myself just after leaving Durban. He was a big, strong man of about 14 stone. He was in No. 2 and I was in No. 3 troop. I used to "barrack" him about his falling away, and he said he caught a slight chill coming down from Elandsfontein. It was a day or two before we got into Wellington he went into hospital. It was between Melbourne and here.

800. He caught his chill before going into the ship?—Yes.

801. What was he admitted for?—I think it was measles. I know he used to attend the hospital for a chill, and he got medicine from Dr. Pearless which he took, and afterwards went in for measles.

802. *Mr. Millar.*] You said you occupied the position of sergeant?—Yes.

804. Did you have a separate mess from the men?—Yes.

805. For all the voyage?—For the first four or five days we did not, and then we arranged a mess.

806. Was the discipline good?—It was very good. Of course, for the first two or three days it was indifferent, but afterwards it was very good.

807. How did it compare with that of the troops in the "Orient"?—It was as good. I may add that we could not have had anything better than we had in the "Orient." The food was good, and accommodation was good, and the cooking was good. We were a little packed, that is all.

808. The 'tween decks were a little higher in the "Orient"?—Yes. That is one of the faults in the "Britannic."

809. The height is only 6 ft. on the "Britannic"?—Yes. Standing up I could reach it by stretching my arm.

810. Was it not 8 ft. in the "Orient"?—Between 8 ft. and 9 ft., and that makes a lot of difference.

811. Did you have many men catching cold from going up on deck from the hot atmosphere of the 'tween decks?—Yes, they were likely to.

812. Did you see them yourself?—Oh, yes; I saw many of them go up. A lot of the men slept upstairs if the deck was dry.

813. Do you think the officers paid due attention to the comfort of the men?—Yes.

814. You do not know of any case that was brought under their notice that they did not attempt to rectify?—No; I have nothing to say against the officers.

815. The cooking was very bad?—Yes.

816. Do you think the size of the galley would interfere with the cooks?—Yes; the galley was too small.

817. That would account for part of the bad work turned out of the galley?—The galley was too small, and the cooks not good, and the place too dirty.