

funeral service was read by the Australian chaplain, who landed at Melbourne, and the captain of the ship; and his officers were present, and I was there myself with my officers, and the officer commanding the man's regiment, and the adjutant, and the squadron officers were paraded, and as many more who liked to come could come. In regard to the second case, the chaplain had left the ship, and I had to read the service, although I dislike the duty very much. I do it out of consideration for the feelings of the friends of the deceased, instead of ordering any one else to do so. Both the burials were carried out in a proper manner.

297. *Mr. Millar.*] Do you remember what the tonnage of the "Tagus" was?—Yes, 5,545.

298. And the tonnage of the "Britannic"?—That I could not tell you, but it is slightly smaller.

299. How many troops did you bring back on the "Tagus"?—About 750; but she was fitted up for 1,500.

300. I think you stated you had 1,005 troops in the "Britannic"?—Yes.

301. That does not include the officers?—No. The number of officers would not have affected it, because she could hold 200.

302. You said that the troops were all carried on two decks?—Yes.

303. Were there electric fans on the lower deck?—Yes, right through.

304. Was the ventilation good on the fore part of the ship?—Not so good as on the after part. The ventilation would have been much better but for the westerly winds we had all the way to Melbourne.

305. You do not think the ventilation could have been improved?—No, I do not think so. There were ample windsails, and everything was done that could be done.

306. How many hatches had she—three or four?—I do not remember.

307. Were the hatches closed, or were they used for ventilation?—Some were closed, some open.

308. What was the total of the hospital accommodation?—I think it was thirty-two cots.

309. They were only occupied to the full within two or three days of arriving in New Zealand—I do not think there were ever more than fifteen men in it at a time.

310. Was the hospital in the 'tween decks?—The hospital was on the deck immediately below the upper deck.

311. There was only one galley for cooking?—Yes.

312. You never had a complaint made that hammocks had not been provided for the troops?—No.

313. As far as you are aware, the men never need have slept on the deck?—As far as I am aware, no. There was never any necessity. There is always a difficulty in getting men to go below—to go from the fresh air.

314. It has been stated by troopers that they desired hammocks, but the ship had not got them, and they had to sleep on the deck right through?—I never heard of it. It never came to my notice.

315. It is customary to issue a sea-kit to troopers coming on a transport?—Not coming from Africa. They give them a gratuity of £1 5s. to buy plain clothes. There were no sea-kits issued.

316. There were none issued on the "Britannic"?—No.

317. Were they given their £1 5s.?—Yes; they were supposed to buy plain clothes with it. I am not prepared to say they all had the £1 5s. given to them before they started. It was included in their last pay.

318. Although they were not given a kit, they were given £1 5s., which is equivalent to the kit?—Yes.

319. *The Chairman.*] Is there anything you would like to add to the questions already asked?—I think not, sir. There is my voyage report. [See Exhibit A.]

Surgeon-Major PEARLESS sworn and examined. (No. 2.)

320. *The Chairman.*] Your name, please?—Walter Ralph Pearless.

321. Your rank?—Surgeon-Major, New Zealand Militia.

322. You have been in practice where?—At Wakefield, Nelson.

323. Were you senior medical officer on board the "Britannic"?—Yes, sir.

324. Were you on board the "Britannic" before the men embarked?—No, not before.

325. Did you make an examination of the ship either when they embarked or shortly afterwards?—Yes; I went to the principal medical officer to see what steps they had taken.

326. Who was he?—I do not know.

327. Did he inspect the ship?—I suppose the transport officer did that.

328. You do not know whether the principal medical officer did?—No.

329. What did you go to him about?—To see what arrangements he had made about drugs and instruments.

330. Were you satisfied that the proper drugs and instruments were put on board?—Yes, quite satisfied.

331. You were quite satisfied with all the medical supplies that were put on board?—Yes.

332. Was it part of your duty to inspect the bedding and men's quarters?—No, I did not. I inspected the hospital arrangements.

333. But was it not part of your duty to inspect the men's quarters to see as to their sufficiency of accommodation as to cubic measurement?—No, I had nothing to do with that.

334. You were placed on board the ship in medical charge of the men, and you had no power to remonstrate whether the cubic space was sufficient or not?—No.

335. Was it part of your duty to see that they had sufficient bedding?—No, I had nothing to do with that.