

By my direction the detailed orders for the disembarkation were drawn up by Captain H. J. T. Marshall, of H.M.S. "Psyche." I reviewed and approved of these orders on 26th August, and a meeting of officers to discuss the procedure was held on board "Australia" during the same day.

The expedition sailed from Suva at 9 a.m. on 27th August. On 28th August, owing to strong east wind and head sea, I had to reduce speed from 11 to 9 knots. The "Psyche," "Philomel," and "Pyramus" were experiencing difficulty in steaming against the head sea, and the transport "Monowai" had been gradually dropping astern. At the reduced speed, however, she was able to resume her proper station.

The weather improved towards the evening and maintained its improvement the next day, and I was able gradually to increase speed again to 11½ knots by 1 p.m. on 29th August. I had hoped to have arrived at daylight on 30th August (Eastern time), but owing to the weather I did not arrive off Apia until 7.45 a.m. on that day.

The "Psyche" approached the harbour flying a flag of truce, and sent in her boat with my letter to the Governor demanding his surrender to me of the Town of Apia and the dependencies under his control.

The estimates of German residents and armed police varied from four hundred to one thousand, and it had been represented to me, both at Noumea and Suva, that it was probable that the harbour was mined. With the force under my command there was no need to take any unnecessary risks, and the picket boats of "Australia" fitted for sweeping were sent to "Psyche"; and on the flag of truce being hauled down, the channel was swept under the supervision of Lieutenant-Commander John M. Jackson, of H.M.S. "Sealark." This officer had volunteered to accompany the expedition for this purpose. He is experienced at this work, and his services were accepted.

The Governor was reported to be absent from Apia. The same thing was noticed when I tried to get into communication with the Governor of Herbertshohe on 12th August. It may be only a coincidence.

My letter was delivered to the Acting-Governor, and the substance of his reply is given in enclosure 2.

The disembarkation was arranged to take place almost opposite the British Consulate. It would have been easy for a body of determined men to make the operation very unpleasant; I therefore had every reason to inform him of what the consequences would be in the event of such opposition. It will be observed that my instructions to the ships inshore were not to fire more than absolutely necessary to overcome such opposition.

With regard to the wireless station—it was observed at Herbertshohe that, as soon as the ships were sighted, urgent calls were sent out. Exactly the same procedure was followed at Apia, and I therefore sent a wireless signal in English, "Cease signalling instantly," which had the desired effect, and the only signal made was "S.G.," repeated four times very rapidly. Such high-power stations cannot be ignored, but must be regarded as primarily intended for hostile purposes, and therefore come under Convention IX, Chapter I, Article II, of Second Hague Conference.

About 10.15 a.m. the Acting-Governor gave an assurance that resistance would not be offered, and stated verbally that no mines had been laid in the harbour. The assurance was passed by signal from "Psyche," but the channel into the harbour was already being swept by "Australia's" picket boats. No mines were found, but it was observed that one of the leading-marks of the channel had been removed.

"Psyche" and transports entered the harbour about 11.30 a.m., and the disembarkation began. The Union Jack was hoisted on shore at 1.0 p.m., and the flag over the Governor's residence hauled down at 1.30 p.m. All the troops were landed without mishap by 2.35 p.m. Suitable lighters were obtained from the shore, the stores and guns were landed expeditiously, the transports being finally cleared by noon on 31st August (Eastern time).

The organization for the disembarkation, and the manner in which the operation was carried out, reflected great credit on Captain H. J. T. Marshall, of H.M.S. "Psyche," and those under his orders.

During the afternoon of 30th August the American Consul, representing British and French interests, called on "Psyche." He also came at the request of the late Lieutenant-Governor of Samoa. At 2.0 p.m. Colonel Logan landed with the American Consul to visit the late Lieutenant-Governor and take over control.

During the night of 30th–31st August the "Australia," "Montcalm," and "Melbourne" stood out to sea, returning in the morning of the latter day.

At 8.0 a.m. on 31st August (Eastern time) the Union Jack was hoisted over the Courthouse, and "Psyche" fired a salute of twenty-one guns.

No enemy ships were at Apia, nor had there been any there recently. The last one was believed to be the "Cormoran," in May, 1913. It is certain that none have been there during 1914.

There were 1,500 tons of Westport coal at Apia, the property of Samsen and Company. This coal arrived by a Norwegian barque about three weeks previously.

The expedition having been established, and all stores, &c., landed, I left Apia at noon on 31st August.

Enclosure 1 in No. 13.

LETTER TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, the Imperial Station, Apia.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,— H.B.M. Australian Ship "Australia," off Apia, 30th August, 1914.

I have the honour to inform you that I am off the port of Apia with an overwhelming force, and in order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed I will not open fire if you surrender immediately.