



MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention editor/chief of staff

Japan's Forgotten Link to the ANZAC legend

Previously unseen photographs and new details of the Japanese battle cruiser, *His Imperial Japanese Majesty's Ship (HIJMS) Ibuki*, and the pivotal role it played in the protection of the Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Force in late 1914 were revealed at a report launched in Albany at the weekend (April 24).

It is a little known fact that during World War I, the Japanese people were party to the Commonwealth Alliance, and their military forces supported that alliance on land and at sea.

After many months of investigation, Smithson Media launched its research project titled, *Japan's Forgotten Link to the ANZAC Legend*, before invited guests including Mr Torao Sato the Japanese Consul-General in Western Australia; Captain Brett Dowsing representing the Royal Australian Navy and Lieutenant Warren Dohnt from the Royal New Zealand Navy.

Also present were Federal and State politicians, presidents and councillors from councils around the Great Southern, along with local business identities.

In March 2009, Smithson Media was the recipient of funding from the Australia-Japan Foundation to research the HIJMS Ibuki as Japan's Forgotten Link to the ANZAC Legend.

Smithson Media director Denise Smithson said the report's launch was the culmination of research to date conducted in Australia's capital cities, New Zealand (NZ), Singapore, the United Kingdom (UK) and Japan, and represented the conclusion of stage one of the project.

"There was minimal information published about *HIJMS Ibuki* and its place among the naval escort of transport ships that assembled in Albany's King George Sound in November 1914, so my objective was to find out more about Ibuki and bring together all the reference material I could find," Mrs Smithson said.

"The most vital piece of information I wanted to establish was the exact dates and places of *HIJMS Ibuki's* voyage," she said.

"Thanks to the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) in Tokyo, Japan, it can be revealed that *HIJMS Ibuki* entered each of the ports of Fremantle, Albany and Hobart twice during her escort duties that saw her travel from Singapore to Wellington, NZ, and then back again on to the Middle East."

Mrs Smithson said one of the most exciting finds during the research program was the discovery in the National Library of Australia of the Souvenir Album of HIJMS Ibuki which includes photos of every part of *Ibuki's* involvement in that first convoy.

"That album includes rare and historic photos of Albany taken by *HIJMS Ibuki's* crew during both of their visits to Albany," she said.

Having read the Royal Navy ship's logs in the National Archives in the UK and other primary sources, Mrs Smithson (a former editor of the Albany Advertiser newspaper) believes the



publication, *The Australian & New Zealand Expeditionary Forces - Assemblage at and Departure from Albany Western Australia* – should add *HMS Philomel* to the list of the Naval Escorts.

The *HMS Psyche* is recorded as being part of the naval escort, which is definitely true as it escorted the New Zealand troop contingent and sailed from Wellington to Hobart and left Hobart, but it apparently suffered boiler problems on route to Albany and did not make it to King George Sound, Mrs Smithson said.

Evidence indicates that *HMS Philomel* and *HMS Pyramus* continued with the *HMS Minotaur* and *HIJMS Ibuki* and together with the NZ transports all arrived together in Albany to join the Australian transports and *HMAS Sydney* and *HMAS Melbourne*.

Smithson Media has also discovered never-before-published photographs of the *HIJMS Ibuki* in collections held in the Imperial War Museum in the UK and the Alexander Turnbull Library in NZ - all are an insight into the naval ship and men of the *Ibuki*.

Smithson Media has located personal accounts by Captain Kato, the commanding officer of *Ibuki* during the 1st ANZEF convoy, and newspaper reports from 1914 that are yet to be translated. These are expected to shed more light on *HIJMS Ibuki* and the Captain's impression of convoy participation and will be incorporated into subsequent research programs.

Smithson Media is now investigating opportunities for the publication of this material.

"It is plausible that a TV documentary and DVD presentation may be the ideal and most accessible format to present this research," Mrs Smithson said.

"This research into the *Ibuki* adds to Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Japan's understanding of each other's place in history.

"The story of *HIJMS Ibuki's* convoy duties is underlined by a spirit of cooperation, trust and respect between countries and should not be forgotten in the telling of the World War I ANZAC story."

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