

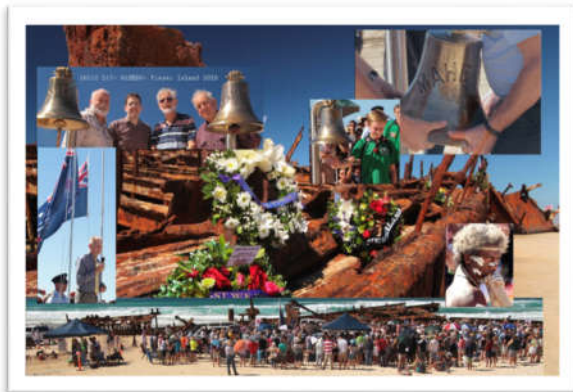
ANZAC DAY 2017

PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO THE N.Z.H.S. MAHENO

This hospital ship was at Anzac from 26 August 1915 and later assisting the injured from the Western Front

This shipwreck on Seventy Five Mile Beach at Fraser Island connects Australia and New Zealand with the Anzacs at Gallipoli and to all of those who fought in France and other battlefields as part of WWI.

Background of the TSS Maheno



The Maheno was owned by the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand and more significantly for 2015, it was the NZ Hospital Ship Maheno (NZHS Hospital Ship No 1) in WW1.

The TSS Maheno, a passenger ship launched in 1905 operated as regular passenger ship primarily on the cross Tasman run between Australia and New Zealand. The Maheno held the speed records for almost two decades. Following the start of WW1, the Maheno was chartered by the New Zealand

government and converted to be HMNZ Hospital Ship No 1. Much of the medical equipment on board came from a public appeal.

The first voyage of the Maheno as a hospital ship was from 7 July 1915 to 1 January 1916, arriving at Anzac (beach) on Gallipoli for the first time on 26 August 1915.

The journey was recorded in detail and published in a book by Lord Liverpool, the Governor of NZ, in August 1916.

The book details the dates when the NZHS Maheno visited Anzac to collect the sick and wounded and the numbers and nationalities collected. The book refers to the location as just Anzac.

These records show that most of those brought on the ship at Gallipoli over its many visits to Anzac beach were primarily Australians. They were transported to Mudros, Malta and Egypt and Southampton.

At Gallipoli the Maheno retrieved those injured of all nationalities and transported them to Lemnos, Malta, Alexandria before ultimately returning to New Zealand with the injured residents of New Zealand.

On 8th October the Maheno sailed for Southampton with cases requiring major surgery. These records show that from arrival at Anzac on 26 August 1915 until 8th October when the Maheno sailed for Southampton, it had embarked 2,350 cases of which 331 were New Zealanders.

Later hospital ship journeys saw it assist at Fromelles and the Somme.

After WW1 the Maheno was refitted as a passenger liner and returned to the cross Tasman run.

As a result of the combination of the Great Depression and the better efficiency of the newer ships, the Maheno was laid up from 1931 to 1934. The ship returned to service briefly in 1934 before being retired in 1935.

The ship was sold to a Japanese company to be broken up for scrap.

In July 1935 when it was being towed to Japan to be broken up for scrap, a rare winter cyclone caused the tow line to break and the Maheno was pushed onto the eastern beach of Fraser Island.

Another cyclone in March 1936 dashed any remaining hopes of refloating the ship. In WWII the wreck was used for commando training by the Z Force (precursor to the SAS) and for bombing practice by the RAAF.

Today the remains of the ship rest defiantly on the eastern beach of Fraser Island with the remains of the ship slowly succumbing to the forces of Mother Nature.

The wreck of the Maheno is one of the essential stops for most of the 15,000 annual tourists to Fraser Island with many not appreciating the historical significance of the ship for its ANZAC links and the role it played as a hospital ship throughout the remainder of World War I.

And the broad significance of the ship in forging transport links between Australia and New Zealand.

A hospital ship is central to the concept of mateship and looking out for each other - these concepts are central to the Anzac theme.

For those standing on the beach at Anzac Cove with the Maheno clearly visible, resplendent in white with its green stripe and three red crosses on each side there would have been great comfort knowing that their mates who were injured would be cared for by the medical crew on the hospital. And those same diggers could continue to battle in the knowledge that if misfortune should befall them, that those on the hospital ships would provide them with the medical assistance they might need.

Whilst the Maheno was one of many hospital ships in the days of WWI, today it is a lone survivor, now representing all of those hospital ships that provided support and which were the difference between certain death and life for so many troops.

The Project

The project is to establish a permanent memorial to record the role that the Maheno played as a hospital ship in WWI. The history of the Maheno and its contribution is not well known. And with the wreck of the TSS Maheno being slowly reclaimed by the elements it is important that the history of the ship and all those who served on the ship is not forgotten.

By recording the history of the Maheno people can reflect on the contribution made by all hospital ships.



A bronze plaque of approximately one metre square is to be placed on a plinth in the fore-dune area beside the beach where the wreck rests peacefully. This will be a story plaque with a combination of text, pictures, a ship profile and a map of travels.

The plaque is being sculptured by Australia's leading historical sculptor Ross Bastiaan - his plaques are scattered around the world including the Gallipoli peninsula, Kokoda, Great Britain and Australia. See <http://www.plaques.satlink.com.au/>

The plaque will sit on a piece of volcanic cooked sandstone that has been drawn from a quarry near Maheno in New Zealand

The Maheno is a former New Zealand hospital ship now forever resting on an Australian shore. The plaque is an opportunity to further develop the Anzac links.

Organisations that have confirmed support include:

- Fraser Island Association
- Queensland Maritime Museum
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Fraser Island Retreat

The plan is to install and unveil the plaque on Sunday 23 April 2017 prior to Anzac Day 2017.

Project coordinator

The project is being coordinated by the Rotary Club of Brisbane High Rise as a community project.

Other activities that will be undertaken in conjunction

Anzac Day service

A service will be held beside the wreck of the Maheno at 10am on Anzac Day. Attendance at the Anzac service is free to all.

Display of memorabilia

In conjunction there will be a display of memorabilia at the Fraser Island Retreat access to which will also be free. We hope to have much of the memorabilia on display for an extended period, although the fragile documents will only be on display for a short period to avoid deterioration.

The Fraser Island Retreat display will include Maheno memorabilia and historical photos for free public access. (the township of Happy Valley is the closest community to the shipwreck)

There is a scale model made of the Maheno in its Hospital ship format as it was when it was at Gallipoli at a scale of 1:96 (about 1.4 metres long).

The intention is to add to the display of Maheno memorabilia presently on display at the Retreat to highlight the hospital ship history and how the ship impacted on so many Australians and New Zealanders.

Access to the display of memorabilia at the Retreat is free.

Maheno School visit

Maheno is a small community between Dunedin and Christchurch and is the town after which the ship was named.

The original TSS Maheno ship's bell has hung at the Maheno (Primary) School in NZ since 1967. The bell was removed before the ship was sold to be scrapped, and retained by the former owners of the ship Union Steamship Company of New Zealand until the bell was donated to Maheno School.



The school currently has approximately 49 students.

The original bell from the Maheno was at the wreck on Fraser Island for the 2015 Anzac service, and was escorted by a group of seven children from years 7 and 8 at the school accompanied by parents and the school principal.

The replica bell at the Fraser Island Retreat was cast from this original bell. A group of children who will be in years 7 and 8 at the school in 2017 accompanied by parents and the school principal will be travelling to Australia to be at Fraser Island for the unveiling of the plaque and the Anzac Day service.

Lunch using original 1918 Hospital Ship menu

The Fraser Island Retreat will be offering a commemorative lunch on Sunday 23 April 2017 following the unveiling of the plaque - the menu being used is the actual Christmas Day 1918 lunch menu from the NZHS Maheno as a hospital ship (roasts were the order of the day!).

This lunch will be by pre bookings only.

Children's book

In conjunction with the unveiling of the plaque it is planned to release a children's book touching on the history of the Maheno and its hospital ship significance. The book will be dual language - English and Butchulla, recognising the Butchulla people who have now been granted native title to K'gari (Fraser Island)

Social media

A Facebook page was established for the 2015 Anzac celebrations and is continuing.

<https://www.facebook.com/Maheno-Fraser-Island-810136739024241/?fref=ts>

Connection with other activities

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa based in Wellington has a display focused on the First World War and the Anzac legend.

At Te Papa, a model of part of the hospital ship interior of the NZHS Maheno has been created by the leading NZ model business Weta Workshops (known for their work on Lord of the Rings).

We have exchange information on the Maheno with the curator of the museum and we will look for opportunities to further develop this.

Summary

This project offers the following

- the spirit of Anzac since the Maheno was a hospital ship that was actually at Anzac during the campaign that established the legend of the Anzacs
- highlights the connection of the hospital ship Maheno with both Australia and New Zealand
- highlights the contribution that the hospital ships and the medical teams made in the both the war effort and the safe return of those injured during the course of the war;
- the connection of youth with Anzac through the involvement of the Maheno school and of Australian youth

- provides a lasting legacy with the plaque story board
- provides an enduring legacy with the display of memorabilia at the Fraser Island Retreat over an extended period
- a series of activities that reflect Anzac since the Maheno was a NZ hospital ship at Anzac retrieving Australian soldiers and Australia is now its permanent resting place.