Japan participated in World War One in an alliance with the Entente Powers - originally the French Republic, the British Empire and the Russian Empire. Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro and Romania were affiliated members of the Entente. Japan had been an ally of the United Kingdom since 1902. On 7 August 1914, the British government officially asked Japan for assistance in destroying the raiders from the Imperial German Navy in and around Chinese waters.

In response to an unanswered ultimatum to Germany in August, Japan declared war on Germany on 23 August 1914. Japan was particularly important in guarding the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean and the West Pacific Ocean against the Imperial German Navy.

On 18 December 1916 the British Admiralty again requested naval assistance from Japan. Two of the four cruisers of the First Special Squadron at Singapore were sent to Cape Town, South Africa, and four destroyers were sent to the Mediterranean for basing out of Malta. The Japanese squadron made a total of 348 escort sorties from Malta, escorting 788 ships containing around 700,000 soldiers, thus contributing greatly to the war effort. A further 7,075 people were rescued from damaged and sinking ships. Toward the end of the war, Japan increasingly filled orders for needed war material for its European allies. The wartime boom helped to diversify the country’s industry, increase its exports, and transform Japan from a debtor to a creditor nation for the first time.
THE FIRST CONVOY

From New Zealand
HMSNZT 3 Maunganui; HMSNZT 4 Tahiti; HMSNZT 5 Ruapehu; HMSNZT 6 Orari; HMSNZT 7 Limerick; HMSNZT 8 Star of India; HMSNZT 9 Hawkes Bay; HMSNZT 10 Arawa; HMSNZT 11 Athenic; HMSNZT 12 Waimate.

From Melbourne
A1 HMAT Hymettus; A2 HMAT Geelong; A3 HMAT Orvieto; A4 HMAT Pera; A5 HMAT Omrah; A9 HMAT Shropshire; A10 HMAT Karroo; A15 HMAT Star of England; A18 HMAT Wiltshire; A20 HMAT Hororata; A21 HMAT Marere; A22 HMAT Rangatira; A24 HMAT Benalla; A25 HMAT Anglo-Egyptian; A26 HMAT Armadale; A27 HMAT Southern ; A28 HMAT Miltiades.

From Adelaide
A7 HMAT Medic; A11 HMAT Ascanius.

From Sydney
A8 HMAT Argyllshire; A13 HMAT Katuna; A16 HMAT Star of Victoria; A19 HMAT Afric; A23 HMAT Suffolk.

From Brisbane
A14 HMAT Euripedes.

From Albany
A6 HMAT Clan MacCorquodale; A12 HMAT Saldanha.

Escort Ships
HMAS Sydney, HMAS Melbourne, HMS Minotaur (pictured on banner four) and the Japanese cruiser Ibuki.

www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2014/08/15/4068010.htm
www.nzhistory.govt.nz/war/japan-facts
www.flotilla-australia.com/hmat.htm
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Many of the images used in the display have been provided by the Center for Military History, National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan Ministry of Defense. Others have been sourced from the Australian War Memorial. Captions are provided on the banners.

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