

AUSTRALIANS IN RUSSIA DURING THE CIVIL WAR

1918-1919

Many Australian servicemen visited Russia during the Civil War (1918–1919). In some cases, they were escapees from German or Ottoman captivity, but most served as part of British military missions. During this period, Australian soldiers and officers remained within the armed forces of Great Britain, which was able to deploy troops from across its empire, including those born far from the shores of the historic motherland. It should be noted that soldiers from the British dominions—Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa—fought bravely on the fronts of the First World War for “King and Country.” Notably, at least a quarter of all British soldiers killed in action were from the dominions.

The British intervention in the Russian Civil War was no exception. Many Australians came to Russia as part of the expeditionary forces in the Russian North, Transcaucasia, and Turkmenistan; as military advisers in Admiral Kolchak’s army in Siberia; and aboard the Australian naval ship *Swan*, which conducted a reconnaissance mission in Russia in December 1918.

Memoirs of Australians and publications about their role in the intervention clearly show that foreign involvement only delayed the collapse of the White movement and ultimately contributed to the growth of patriotic sentiment among the Russian people, as well as to the rising popularity of the Bolsheviks.