

# Basic Detail Report

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**Title**

Migrants boarding the GENERAL STUART HEINTZELMANN  
at the Port of Bremenhaven, West Germany

**Date**

1947

**Primary Maker**

Armands Laula

**Medium**

Black and white photographic print on paper.

**Dimensions**

Overall: 83 mm

**Name**

Photograph

**History**

GENERAL STUART HEINTSELMAN was under charter to the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) to carry the first group of European displaced persons to be resettled via the Australian government's post-war migration program organised by Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell. Of the 843 migrants most were from the Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. One of the Latvian migrants was 21 year old on Armands Laula. His diary records his impressions on boarding the GENERAL STUART HEINTSELMAN at Bermen on 30 October 1947: 'Our train stopped in front of the ship where we could see some men from the advance contingent. That ship will be our next mode of travel. Not long after the train stopped we were going aboard. The time was several minutes after three. I was not overcome with any strange feelings when I took my first steps on deck. Perhaps that was because everything happened in such a hurry. We had just settled in when the German tugs came and we were away. Fifteen minutes after four we left the shores of Europe and there was no going back. If one did not think about earlier days then there were no regrets about leaving Europe. But, thinking about earlier days at school, which will never come back, then I began to feel a bit strange. Thinking also about my home [in Latvia] and what everyone was doing just now and thinking, I felt a bit strange, regretful, I don't really know how to describe it. Goodness knows what mother would say if she knew that I am going away from Europe and so far - to Australia? With longing we awaited dinner because we wanted to see what that was like on the ship. We wanted to know whether we would get away from the ghost of DP [Displaced Person] hunger or not'. On arrival in Fremantle, the migrants were transferred to the KANIMBLA for their onward journey to Melbourne. They disembarked on 7 December 1947 and were taken to the Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre

near Wodonga, becoming the first residents of Australia's largest and longest-serving migrant reception centre. From there the new Australians were dispersed to various labouring and domestic jobs around the country, where they were required to work for two years in exchange for their assisted passage.