

CONFIDENTIAL

DIREKTOR-GENERAAL VAN DE OEREN GROOTHOF KWARTIER EN
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PRETORIA GENERAL HEADQUARTERS DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF NAVAL FORCES

No. 2/5. Original on Nr 3/12/5

Copy for

H.M.S.A.S. "Natal"
CAPE TOWN

8th February, 1950.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS: CRUISE CAPE TOWN TO
TRISTAN DA CUNHA: 25TH JANUARY TO 8TH FEBRUARY 1950.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following Report of Proceedings for the period 25th January to 8th February, 1950 during which time H.M.S.A.S. "Natal", under my command, carried out a Reserve Training Cruise from CAPE TOWN to TRISTAN DA CUNHA, and return, as instructed by you in your minute N.F.3/12/5 dated 12th January, 1950.

2 ... The following passengers were embarked before sailing:-

Mr H.F.I. Elliot
Mrs D. Wilkinson and two children
Mrs Handley
Mr and Mrs De Wit and one child
Master G. Botha
Father F. de Manu
Mr de Viar

3 ... The personnel from the South African Reserve Base Cape Town consisted of Lieutenant Commander T.E. Clarke and 28 ratings and Lieut B. Du Plessis S.A.M.C. WAS appointed as Medical Officer for the cruise.

4 ... H.M.S.A.S. "Natal" sailed from CAPE TOWN at 1105B on Wednesday 25th January when course was set for TRISTAN DA CUNHA, speed 12 knots.

5 ... During the first 20 hours a fresh to strong South Easterly wind made conditions onboard rather uncomfortable for the passengers and Reserve ratings. Ideal conditions prevailed on Friday 27th January and the opportunity was taken to exercise the Sea-boats crews on three occasions. A large school of hump-back whales also provided a certain amount of interest.

6 ... At 0115Z Sunday 29th January when in position 35 degrees 38 minutes South 01 degrees 23 minutes East the Norwegian tanker "PONTOS" was passed bound from the RIO PLATE to ABADAN via CAPE TOWN. Divisions and church had to be cancelled owing to bad weather after which the weather remained generally fair.

7 ... TRISTAN DA CUNHA was detected by Type 277 at dusk on the 30th January distant 83 miles and the ship anchored in FALMOUTH BAY $3\frac{1}{2}$ cables off JULIA POINT in 13 fathoms at 0519N on Tuesday 31st January. All passengers and baggage were soon landed in the Island boats under perfect conditions. H.M.S. "CARONIA" arrived at 0819N after which all the Island boats concentrated on ferrying the Tourists to and from the shore. By the time the Cunarder had sailed at 1600N weather conditions had deteriorated and all boats returned ashore. The anchor was weighed at 1845N and the ship spent the night drifting in the lee of the Island.

8 ... H.M.S.A.S. "NATAL" returned to her anchorage at 0640N the following morning and commenced embarking empty drums and the heavy baggage of the passengers returning, in rather unfavourable weather. A total of 700 empty drums, 32 empty casks and 13 cases and crates of Wireless Stores etc. were embarked on behalf of the Department of Transport. By 1400N the weather had improved and approximately 70 ratings were landed in 2 watches for a run ashore.

9 ... The following passengers came off at 1800N :-
Mr and Mrs Fenton and child
Mr Martin
Miss Harvey

10 ... The night was again spent drifting in the lee of the Island until 0710N Thursday 2nd February when the ship returned to the anchorage. It was intended to carry out a swing for variation but this was not possible due to low cloud. The weather deteriorated gradually throughout the day and no personnel were allowed ashore. At 1730N one of the smaller Island boats came off with the last mails under unfavourable conditions which were not improved when one oar was broken while leaving the ship. The anchor was weighed for the last time at 1916N and course was set for CAPE TOWN, speed 12 knots. After an uneventful return passage H.M.S.A.S. "Natal" entered Table Bay Docks at 0911B on the 8th February and berthed alongside at "G" berth in the Duncan Dock.

11 ... All the Reserves and passengers including the Medical Officer were disembarked the same day.

12 ... COMMUNICATIONS.

Communications on 12790 K/C's with SALISBURY ISLAND were generally satisfactory during the night but during the daylight hours contact could not be maintained on 12790 or 7460 K/C's when West of 2 degrees East. Communications with CAPE TOWN Radio were good at all times. TRISTAN DA CUNHA was contacted on 11.6 M/C's at 1310Z on 28th January and on 500 K/C's at 1100Z on 30th January.

13 ... NAVIGATION.

After clearing the Cape Area the weather was mainly from the North West and South West and as a result an apparent Easterly set of a $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 knot was experienced for the remainder of the passage to the Island. On the return voyage to CAPE TOWN similar weather conditions and sets prevailed. East of 14 degrees East the current setting 320 degrees speed $\frac{1}{2}$ knot as shown on chart 2202.A was experienced on both occasions.

On the return voyage large kelp fronds were sighted at 1620Z on 3rd February in position 38 degrees 33 minutes South 02 degrees 32 minutes West and at 0600Z on 4th February in position 36 degrees 12 minutes South 04 degrees 09 minutes West when distant approximately 229 miles and 396 miles respectively from TRISTAN DA CUNHA.

On Sunday 5th February a variation swing was carried out in position 35 degrees 39 minutes South 01 degrees 42 minutes East. The details will be forwarded to the Officer Commanding Hydrographical Survey but it is feared that the results may not be satisfactory due to the prevailing swell. The swell and overcast skies precluded any further attempts.

Now that the M.V. "PEQUENA" is fishing regularly off the Islands, the following additional marks have been set up on TRISTAN DA CUNHA by the Tristan Exploration Company in the approximate positions detailed:-

- (a) A Fixed White Light visibility approximately 4 miles in position 37 degrees 02.82 South 12 degrees 17.52 West.
- (b) White Square Beacon in position 37 degrees 02.78 South 12 degrees 17.9 West.

14 ... TRAINING.

The Flotilla Gunnery Instructor was embarked in DURBAN and, with a large number of Reserves onboard carrying out "Part of Ship" training, the opportunity was taken to give the Permanent Force ratings as much gunnery instruction as possible. Many of these ratings had not been to sea before and benefitted considerably as did the new Gunnery Control Officer when the A.A. armament was exercised on two smoke bursts on the 6th February.

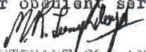
15 ... MEDICAL.

The health of all onboard was generally excellent and there were few calls on the services of Lieut Du Plessis S.A.M.C. who was himself only slightly troubled by sea-sickness. Three ratings, all of whom went ashore on the Island, developed colds shortly afterwards. This was probably due to the mild influenza epidemic which swept through the Island after the "PEQUENA" arrived on approximately the 24th January. (A similar epidemic, attributed to the "PEQUENA", is said to have caused the death of 5 Islanders in 1948). One rating developed Jaundice and has been discharged to Wynberg Military Hospital.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant


LIEUTENANT COMMANDER,
COMMANDING OFFICER,
H. M. S. A. S. "NATAL".

Director General Naval Forces, (2)
General Headquarters,
PRETORIA.

Commanding Officer,
South African Naval Base,
DURBAN.

Senior Officer, Escort Flotilla,
H. M. S. A. S. "GOOD HOPE",
ST. JOHNS TOWN.