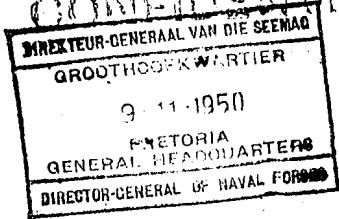


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Tvl. 21/1.



H.M.S.A.S. "TRANSVAAL"  
SIMONSTOWN,

NOVEMBER 1950.

MARION ISLAND 5th RELIEF VOYAGE - REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
FOR THE PERIOD 12th OCTOBER to 24th OCTOBER 1950.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit the following Report of Proceedings for the period 12th October to 24th October 1950, during which time H.M.S.A. Ship "Transvaal" under my command carried out a relief voyage to Marion Island and returned to Simonstown for docking and refit.

2. The Report is divided into the following appendices for ease of reference :

- Appendix A - Marion Island Stores.
- " B - Weather.
- " C - S.A.N.R. Personnel and Training.
- " D - Civilian passengers embarked.
- " E - Certified true copy of Department of Transport Certificate.

Results of Sea Surface Temperatures and observations for Magnetic Variation have been forwarded to S.O.(Navigation) in accordance with Temporary Navigational Memorandum.

3. After adjusting compasses during the forenoon, the ship slipped and proceeded at 1700 on Thursday 12th October. I had previously experienced some doubt that the ship would be ready in all respects for sea on this day, but I was most gratified at the way the Ship's Company cheerfully worked through the two public holidays and "Make and Mend" days in order to make a timely departure possible. In addition, contractors workmen were busy until 1645 on the day of sailing, making it necessary to clear up their debris on passage.

4. On leaving harbour, courses and speeds were as requisite to carry out calibration of the M/F, D/F installation off Cooper Lighthouse, Bluff, and at 1850 course was set for Marion Island. In order to "run the Main Engines in" after their extensive refit, the ship proceeded at a speed of 8 knots until 0630 on Friday 13th October, when it was increased to 10 knots. A further increase was made at 1100.

5. On Saturday 14th October, a moderate Southerly gale and heavy swell developed in the late afternoon, causing the ship to pound heavily. Speed was reduced at 1200, and by 1630 it was necessary to proceed at 7 knots to avoid heavy pounding. At 1815 it was possible to increase to 9 knots, but it was not possible to resume a speed of 12 knots until 0625 on Sunday 15th October.

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6. A rapidly rising barometer and improving weather conditions on Sunday afternoon indicated the possibility of a spell of fair weather at the Island, so speed was increased to 13 knots at 1430 and to 13.5 knots at 1700.
7. The Prince Edward Islands were detected by radar at a range of 45 miles at 0954 on Monday 16th October, and the ship anchored in 30 fathoms off Gunners Point at 1410. The excited party of men ashore fired off a number of rockets to celebrate our arrival, one of which started a fire, making it necessary for them to devote their immediate attention to dealing with the emergency.
8. Favourable weather conditions made it possible to make an immediate start on the landing of stores and exchange of personnel. Mr. Cooke of the Department of Transport, proceeded ashore in the first boat to carry out his inspection, accompanied by Mr. Lorentz, who had come to investigate the problem of the fresh water supply on the island. Unfortunately the latter gentleman had suffered so acutely from seasickness on passage, and had become so ill, that it was necessary for him to return to the ship almost immediately.
9. By sunset, all stores and livestock had been landed, and portents were so favourable that I decided to remain at anchor during the night, making it possible to resume operations at first light on Tuesday morning. Empties and returned stores were embarked, and the opportunity was taken to allow those ratings whose duties had not allowed them to do so, to step ashore for half an hour. All work was completed by 1100, and the ship weighed and proceeded 1119 on Tuesday 17th October, just as an increasing Westerly wind and swell was beginning to make boatwork difficult. Before sailing a certificate was obtained from Mr. Cooke of the Department of Transport that he was entirely satisfied with the relief, a certified copy being attached as Appendix E.
10. During the night a fresh NNE wind increased to moderate gale force and backed to North, and by 0630 on Wednesday 18th October the ship was pounding heavily. Course was adjusted to bring the wind a point on the bow, and speed reduced to 7 knots. Course and speed were resumed at 1245. It was again necessary to reduce speed from 1430 to 1850 on the following day in a rough NW sea and heavy Westerly swell, and from 1300 to 1645 on Friday 20th October under similar conditions.
11. The course was laid off to pass to the westward of the Agulhas Bank, and the loom of Danger Point light was raised at 2120 on Saturday 21st October. Arrival was made in Table Bay at 0615 on Sunday 22nd October, and the ship secured in a very tight berth between two merchant ships at H Berth, Duncan Dock, in a strong South East wind. On surveying the available berth, and in view of the light condition of the ship, I deemed it advisable to request the assistance of a tug for berthing. Subsequent measurements disclosed that only 15 feet were available at either end when the ship was finally secured.
12. Ammunition was discharged on the forenoon of Monday 23rd October, and the ship slipped and proceeded at 1316, anchoring in Simon's Bay at 1819. Entry was made into the dry dock at 1500 Tuesday 24th October where the ship was secured overnight. The ship took the blocks at 0855 on Wednesday 25th October.

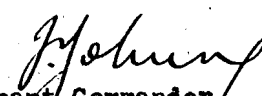
GENERAL REMARKS.

- (a) The kelp at Marion Island is now nearly as thick as it was in December 1947, and is the chief limiting factor in choosing an anchorage. The buoy laid at that time is still watching.
- (b) Living conditions ashore are now greatly improved and the crane and catwalk have made a tremendous difference in the operation of landing stores.
- (c) The absence of bird life compared with the large numbers and varieties visible in 1947 is most noticeable. I do not know whether this might be due to a seasonal migratory or breeding season or merely the advent of man.
- (d) The health of the Ship's Company was generally good. There were a large number of cases of seasickness, one of which, Signaller Munro, is probably a chronic case. Leading Telegraphist Frost was a solitary case of influenza.

, I have the honour to be,

Sir,

your obedient servant,

  
Lieutenant Commander,  
Commanding Officer.

The Director General of Naval Forces,  
General Headquarters,  
Pretoria.

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COMMANDING OFFICER "TRANSVAAL'S" 21/1 dated 3rd NOVEMBER 1950.

## APPENDIX A

### MARION ISLAND STORES.

1. A factor which caused some anxiety was the late arrival of the trucks containing the relief stores and livestock. The trucks were actually shunted alongside at 1430 on Wednesday 11th October. Had it been intended to make an early A.M. departure on the following day, this factor would have delayed the ship.
2. Once more a number of cases were between 200 and 300 lb. in weight. Although the fine weather at the island made it easy to handle these cases using the ship's derricks and shore crane, the picture would have been very different had this been a heavy swell and unfavourable weather. It was observed that a number of the large heavy cases were the original cases in which meteorological instruments were packed in 1947. Without being aware of their present contents, the writer suspects a reluctance on the part of the Department of Transport to cease using these original cases for more mundane purposes.
3. Although the speed the stores were discharged was largely due to the fine weather conditions, it was also due to the careful organisation of the First Lieutenant, Lieutenant B. Grindley. This organisation consisted of :-
  - (a) The integration of all reservists into ship's company.
  - (b) With this achieved, the sub division of the men into derrick, gangway, boat, crane and catwalk working parties during the outward passage, so that each man knew exactly where to go on anchoring. This had the effect of causing each man to work with enthusiasm, and to feel he had a full part to play.
  - (c) The disposal of the stores at Durban, so that all the heavy items were lashed in the close vicinity of the derricks, and all easily portable items readily accessible to the gangway.
  - (d) The planned use of the motorboat. The boat first loaded light stores at the gangway, leaving room for two heavy cases in the sternsheets. By the time it reached the derricks the derrick parties had the heavy cases slung ready for lowering. This was repeated in reverse inshore, and it was possible to keep all parties busy without periods of waiting.
  - (e) The rigging of all gear on deck the day before arrival.although the above may be stating the obvious, it is recorded here, as without detailed planning beforehand, an hour or two lost through haphazard methods could easily have delayed the ship by a day or more.
4. The landing of the livestock presented a special problem. The docile sheep were carried into the motorboat, but the pigs objected strongly to being removed from their comfortable sty under the 4" Gun Deck. Commencing on the smallest pig, a "storming party" enticed the two lesser pigs out of the sty, secured them fore and aft and slipped a sack with a breathing hole for the snout over their respective heads. The larger of these two struggled violently and managed to wriggle free while being embarked in the boat. He fell in the icy water, the shock of which just kept him still long enough for him to be rescued by his ears. Thereafter his impromptu bath made him more amenable to discipline. The big sow, weighing in the region of 300 lbs. was a different matter. She charged all intruders, so a cargo net was spread out near the sty

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Sty.....

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Appendix A Page 2.

sty and a tempting half loaf of bread placed in the centre. Her greed overcame her suspicion and she ambled slowly on to the net. With a concerted rush the "storming party" enmeshed her in the net. Her squeals were appalling and her convulsions Herculean. The expression "squealing like a stuck pig" has a new meaning in the "Transvaal" now. The position was aggravated by the fact that she was in farrow, and it was impossible to handle her without considerable force. Once secured she was lifted into a very large crate with inch thick sides, which was then strengthened with wooden strong backs. In this way she was lowered into the boat by the derrick purchase. Her struggles had so enmeshed her in the net, that although I did not witness it, I understand her release ashore was an even more difficult operation.

It is submitted that this animal was far too heavy for ease handling, and had conditions been unfavourable there is little doubt the animal would have been injured and had to be destroyed, or retained on board and returned to the Union.

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