

FIRST ECHELON

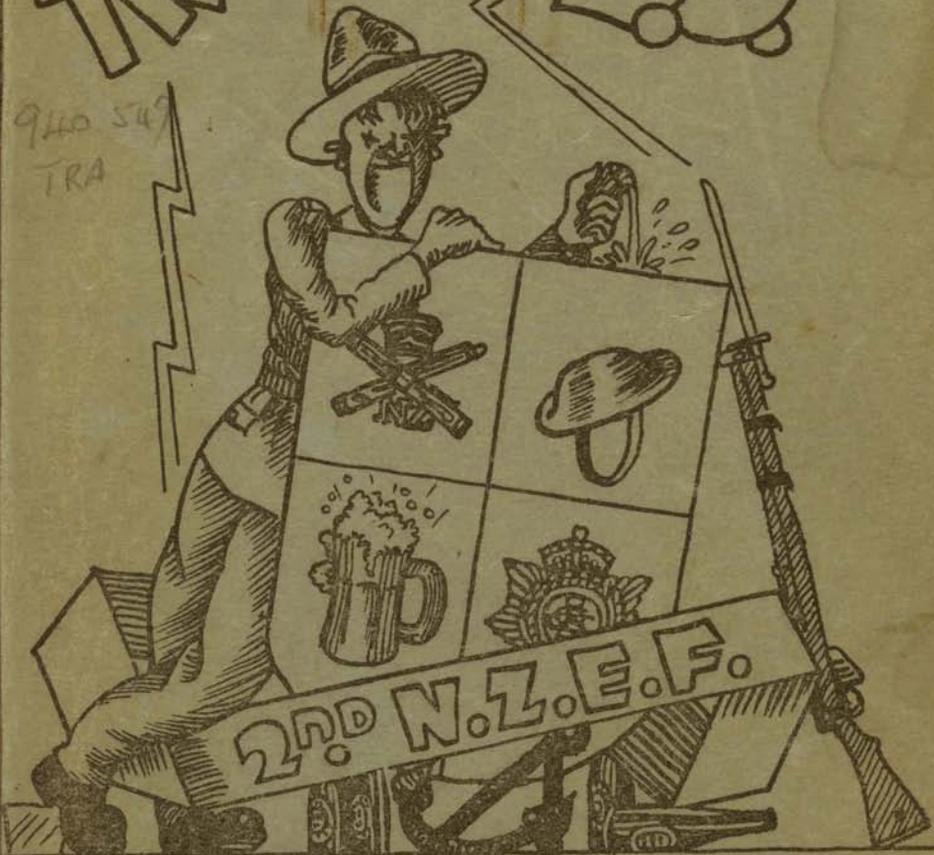
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TRANSPORT Z.6

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M. S. SOBIESKI

W.R. GIBSON 7491

L. I. - No. 1

JAN. 14th 1940.

Printed on board M.S. SOBIESKI

Vol. I, No. I.

Sunday, January 14, 1940.

FOREWORD

This is the first issue of "The Transport," the name chosen for a small magazine which it is hoped will be published weekly during the voyage. The objects are twofold: to record the events of the historic journey of this part of the First Echelon, 2nd N.Z.E.F., from New Zealand to our destination; and secondly to provide a medium of expression reflecting the daily life of the troops on the good ship Sobieski. In the week that has passed since our beloved native shores faded from sight fortune has been kind to us. All ranks settled down rapidly to the new routine; the weather has been all that could be desired; the food is good, and the health of the troops excellent. No effort on the part of the ship's company has been spared in seeing to our comfort and welfare. We regard these favourable circumstances as happy auguries for the future. Let every man do his utmost to maintain the harmony and goodfellowship between all ranks and units with which we have commenced the big adventure.

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THE O. C.'s MESSAGE

"Après la guerre" the committee responsible for the editing and publication of "The Transport" as a weekly record of life aboard H.M.N.Z. Transport 26 will congratulate itself on having undertaken the task, and those of us who have the good sense to procure our copies of this newspaper will value it highly.

We are peculiarly fortunate to be carried from our own distant islands in a ship of the people whose rape was the immediate cause of the present war, and whose liberation is one of Britain's chief objectives, for in the crew of M.S. Sobieski most of us are making our first contact with representatives of the Polish nation. The majority of us, never having left our

small, isolated country, are apt to be too insular in outlook and unable to appreciate the qualities, difficulties and views of foreigners. Indeed we have had little opportunity to develop any broader outlook. It is therefore a salutary experience for us to discover at first hand what a splendid, courteous people we are setting out to help as our allies.

Acquaintance with these new friends leads us to offer them our sympathy in the anxiety so many of them suffer through being unaware of the lot of their families living under enemy domination, and teaches us that however difficult it may have been to leave our own relatives at the other end of the earth for an uncertain time, we are at least lucky to have left them secure and well provided for in New Zealand, far from the European turmoil.

-L. M. INGLIS, Lt.-Col., O.C. Transport.

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COMMANDER'S GOOD WISHES

Colonel Inglis, Officers, Sisters and Men,

On behalf of the officers and ratings of the ship I thank you for the opportunity given to me to contribute a few lines to the first edition of "The Transport." I would like to convey to you all how proud we are to have the honour of carrying you in our ship, more especially so with the knowledge that you are the vanguard of New Zealanders going forth to combat for the cause which we all hold dear - justice and independence. It has been with great interest and gratification that I have observed the close co-operation which has existed between you and



my crew since your embarkation some nine days ago, and you will understand how very much your splendid team work has meant to us.

We wish you God-speed and good luck in your noble undertaking, and when you return to your native land we hope to have the privilege of bearing you back to New Zealand, home and beauty, in the not-too-distant future.

Z. Knoetgen, Commander, Transport Sobieski.

-oOo-

ON THE LANGUAGE FRONT

SOME STORIES WITHOUT WORDS

Comment is heard all over the ship on the obvious determination of the ship's staff to give the troops a trip which will be remembered. That the soldiers appreciate this kindness is shown in the cheery way in which they greet members of the crew. Whenever there is an opportunity groups of soldiers gather round members of the crew, cheerfully gesticulating in their patient efforts to learn something of the language of their temporary shipmates. It is evident from the greetings bandied about that some success is being attained.

One of the senior officers of the M.G.Dn. wanted some gloy. He could not make himself understood, so he took a piece of paper, gave it a good lick and pressed it down on the table, to show that he wanted something to stick. After a short absence, the obliging steward returned with a piece of blotting paper!

"Njea! Njea!" pleasantly smiled our 2 I.C., and licked again at the piece of paper, this time pressing two pieces together.

"Ah! Yess, very goot!" And this time the steward brought back good English gloy.

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BOAT DRILL

How Not to be Saved

We have been informed by a correspondent from 'tween decks, which, we understand, is abaft the poop on the port side, that our training at Burnham was all preparatory to boat drill in the transport. Our correspondent is so certain of his facts that he gives an outline of the procedure which is recounted here.

Boat Drill is a parade. The Staff, we understand, after a lengthy conference has decided that these parades should be ceremonial. In the event of an alarm, which will be recognised by at least one resounding explosion, and the sharp end of the boat parting from the blunt end, the following rules will be observed :-

1. Marching kit will be worn by all ranks.
2. Men will march to stations in not more than column of fives, horseplay and singing to be encouraged.
3. When marching to stations, officers will see that the standard set on board the transport is rigidly adhered to.
4. Any man wishing to leave the parade may do so but those wishing to swim are warned against the danger of diving into the swimming pool.
5. On arrival at stations, troops will immediately be given stand - or - lie - easy. Smoking is compulsory, but troops must be warned of the danger of fire caused by the throwing of cigarette ends and matches over the ship's side. Any troops halted outside a bar may drink as much as they please, but are warned against taking liquor in lifeboats - N.Z. Regs para. 0410E.
6. Troops having made themselves comfortable, will not be disturbed until the decks of the ship are awash, when it is the duty of every officer to see that men do not get their clothes wet.
7. All ranks are forbidden to enter ship's boats routine order 4/40, 8th January, '40.

The following messages have been received from the Governor-General of New Zealand and Major-General Sir Andrew Russell. We are certain that the First Echelon of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. will fully maintain the traditions of the New Zealand Division of 1914-1918, and that all will appreciate these messages.

The Governor-General's message is: -

'On the eve of their departure from their Homeland of the First Echelon of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, I should like to convey to you, as Commanding Officer, and to the officers and men under your command, my warmest congratulations on having been chosen to comprise the main body of this Dominion's force for service overseas. The prompt response of all those leaving to-day to answer the nation's call is a further proof to the world of the unwavering devotion and loyalty of the people of this country to King and Empire, and the spirit which has imbued all concerned to attain the maximum degree of efficiency within the minimum time, is in

keeping with the splendid traditions of the Division of 1914-1918 - traditions which I know the members of the First Echelon will do their best to maintain. Will you please accept for yourself and convey to those under your command my very best wishes for a good passage and a safe arrival at your destination."

Major-General Russell's message is: -

"To General Freyberg, O.C., 2nd N.Z.E.F.: Good luck to you and your command. We men of the old Expeditionary Force have confidence in you all."



So there N.Z! Where the hell do they go when the tide comes in?

By a Nurse

The first night on board we were summoned to life boat drill, and wended our way down to our respective cabins to don the familiar appliance. Imagine our surprise when we found that the cupboard was bare. A steward was called, and the ensuing conversation was in this wise:

Sister: "No life-belt here." Steward just smiles; no glimmer of comprehension.

Sister attempts to make the position clear by various movements of arms around chest - swimming motions, etc. Still not an answering glimmer from the steward. Eventually, in despair, sister says: "We drown!"

Light dawns. The steward rushes to his own cabin, which is nearby, shows us his belt, and apparently trusting that we are not drowning rapidly, puts it away again.

We emerge from the depths, and are met later by the senior steward, who comforts us by saying: "No danger tonight; life-belt tomorrow."

-oOo-

CENSORED LETTER, SAMPLE

Troops, for the Guidance of

Somewhere at Sea.

Dear - -,

We are -. Please remit - - to - urgently.
How is - -? Give - - all my love, and don't tell the wife.

Your loving - -, Ima Dumbell, Pte.

-oOo-

Life of a machine-gunner: Cool. Calm. Then collected!

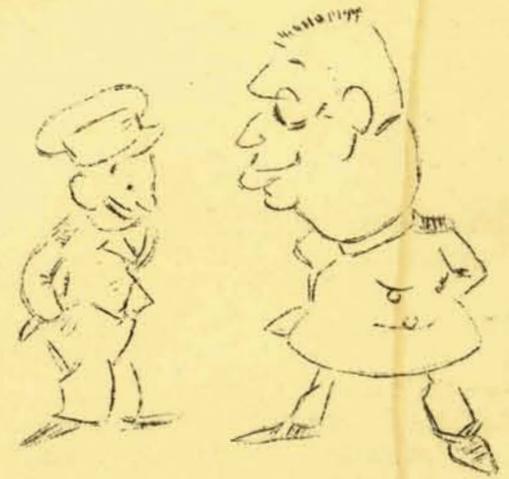
IN FLAGRANTE DELICTO

Unfailing courtesy and tact of Polish doctors is a fact - a fact which incidentally shows in startling ladies minus clothes. A nurse once, feeling warm or more so, had amply laved the limbs and torso, and in a nearby cabin stood - we blush to mention - in the nude! Quite unaware the Polish Doc surprised the nymph without a sock! Oh, high and bright the blushes flew like sunrise upon Ben Venue. Instantly the Doc did stop - for he was definitely de trop. Sir Philip Sidney, we aver, could not have capped his "Sorry, sir." Verb. sap., etc. Tact inspired, the good physician slick retired from circumstance beyond control. To Heil with Hitler! Cheers - The Pole.

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"SAVEE ENGLISH, KADDIE?"

"YES. PERFECTLY."



INTELLIGENCE TEST

Prizes: 2 N.Z. Reserve Bank 5lb notes, cashable at the canteen up to the value of 1/2/2d.

1. How many wrinkles in 1 lb of tripe?
2. Do sergeants-major devour their young?
3. Is the length of a bayonet the width of a blanket, or vers vicer?
4. Will you stay in this nutshell until you are a colonel?
5. Would you or wasn't it?

UNKINDLY LIGHT

The Porthole Peril

Scene 1. Two officers on B deck, taking the ozone after a couple of John Gillinses. The silhouette of a warship is barely discernible half a mile away on the starboard beam. Suddenly, Morse signals flash rapidly from the cruiser.

Captain Mc.: "That warship seems to be sending us a message."

Lieut. J.: "You're telling me." He walks to the rail, looks over and bolts along the deck and down.
Curtain.

Scene 11. Third-class cabin on D deck. Enter Lieut Mc., who switches on the light; enter also Lieut. H. Both remove their tunics and flop down on their bunks.

Lieut. Mc., wiping his forehead: "Gosh, it's hot tonight."

Lieut. H.: "Wouldn't be so bad if we could have our portholes open to let in some cool air. How about a John Coll - "

The cabin door is thrown open, and Lieut. J. bursts in, beads of perspiration on his brow.

Lieut. J.: "Don't youse blokes know that your B---- porthole is wide open? The b----- warship has been signalling furiously for the last five minutes."

Lieuts. Mc. and H.: "Good God!" Both bound to their feet and gaze in horror at the open porthole. Two seconds suffice to shut it and close down the dead-light. They collapse on their bunks again.

Lieut. J.: "You're for it now. See you at the court-martial." Exit.

Thirty seconds later. Sounds of shouting in the distance and of running feet coming closer. A knock. The door opens. A bearded Pole pokes his head in: "Your porthole - eet ees open!"

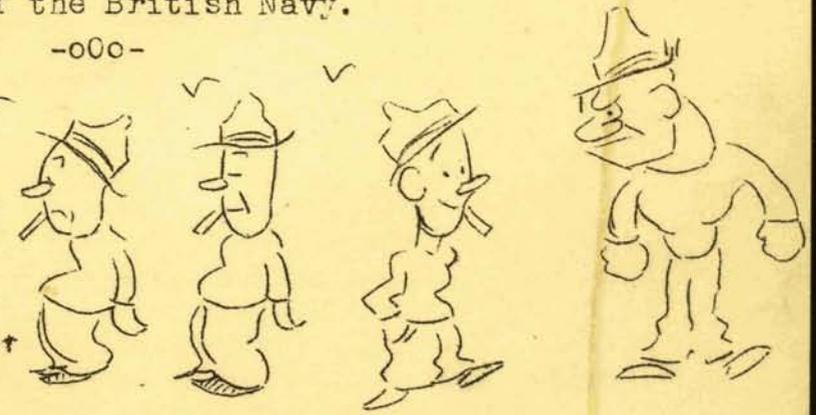
Lieuts. Mc. and H. smile blandly and point to

the closed deadlight. The Polish sailor mutters something under his breath, looks puzzled and closes the door. Sounds of retreating footsteps.
 Lieut. H.: "Close shave, Stinker."
 Lieut Mc.: "Too b----- close. Let's have one."
 Curtain.

Epilogue: At 8.30 next morning, two subalterns were on the mat. The Naval Commander and the O.C. had quite definite information from the warship that between 2230hrs. and 2236hrs. a bright light was visible on the starboard side of the Sobieski, amidships, in cabin --- on D deck. Humbly the subalterns confessed their awful crime, but their discomfiture was overshadowed by admiration for the unceasing vigilance and efficiency of the British Navy.

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P. T. SARGE:
 Did you hear about TURN?"
 Common Pongo:
 No - what about him?"



ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

- Pte. Grouser - Amendment 42a, relating to kit lay-out will appear - perhaps - in orders tomorrow. In the meantime continue to put the toothbrush on the left side of the pugaree.
- Curious - Try Epsom's Salts.
- Const. Reader - See reply to curious.
- S.M. - We know nothing about tattooing. 'Urry up and get felled in.

-oOo-

Wanted to exchange, life-jacket, size XDS, for life-jacket, size SSW. Apply cartoon dept. - Advt.

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Book of the Month: "Cheese It," by Dr. Gaughan Zola.

January 5 - January 12.

- Jan. 5: 27th M.G. Bn., 2nd Div. Supply Col., 4th R.M.T. Coy., and section N.Z.M.C. and N.Z.D.C., with three nursing sisters, embark from Lyttleton in Polish M.S. Sobieski - Z6. Sailed 5 p.m. with troopship Dunera - Z2. Warm, blue sky.
- Jan. 6: Joined N.Z. transports Rangitata, Orion, Strathaird and Empress of Canada in Cook Strait. Escorted by H.M.S. Ramillies, Leander and H.M.A.S. Canberra. Convoy manoeuvres. Mt. Egnont last glimpse of N.Z. at 6 p.m.
- Jan. 7: Church parade and first issue of beer. Bathing pool popular. Sharp blow during night; a few sea-sick.
- Jan. 8: Training, lectures and P.T. organised.
- Jan. 9: Sailing west at 12 1/2 knots on a sea like glass.
- Jan. 10: Approaching Australian coast. Visited by patrol planes from mainland. Empress of Canada goes ahead and disappears over the horizon.
- Jan. 11: Weather very warm. Land visible about 4.30 p.m. Convoy slows down and swings south. Four Australian troopships - Orcades, Orontes, Orford, and Strathnaver - join convoy, making ten in all. Escort strengthened by H.M.A.S. Adelaide and Sydney and other warships.
- Jan. 12: Headed south all night. Weather fine but windy and much cooler. Passed through Bass Strait between 5 and 7 a.m. At 1 p.m. Australian troopship Empress of Japan joined convoy.

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In re 'tween deck smoking
Joe King is not joking!

REFERENCE DEPT
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EPITAPH: Rest quietly, dear R.S.M.,
For you our hearts do yearn
We know you've gone to Heaven,
You were too dam' tough to burn!

REFERENCE ONLY
THIS BOOK MAY NOT
BE BORROWED.

Yes, there are no Virgin Islands around Australia.

