

Love from bliff.



H.M.N.Z.T. TAHITI,

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JANUARY 20TH, 1917.

"Here we are Again."

THE success...editorial modesty hints that we should not say marked success... which attended the publication of the first number of "The Oilsheet," and the generous welcome accorded its valuable and influential pages of rich literary gems, calculated to infuse vivid illumination into the Inky Way, have stirred the slumbering genius of our grossly underpaid literary staff to such an extent that they clamour for further scope in which to liberate their talents. Aided and abetted by some unknown factor which appears to take particular care to keep us wandering about strange seas much longer than we originally supposed would be the case, our highly ingenious literary staff points out that we are consequently supplied with ample time in which to muster and parade its talents before our ship-load of "Innocents Abroad." And so it comes to pass that after careful deliberation...in which the question of salaries was uppermost in the minds of the staff...we have decided upon a second edition of "The Oilsheet." But let it be said here, acting under the complete authority of the

editorial power, that the frequently mentioned literary staff is not going to be allowed that freedom which it enjoyed before, for in our second edition we seek to supply news features which were absent from our first edition. We aim in the pages which follow at creating the "atmosphere" of the transport, in giving more space to the daily happenings and incidents associated with our journey both afloat and ashore, and in frequently re-sounding that personal note of the doings of the men, which, we hope, will fill every page with pleasant thought and happy reminiscence. It is thus that we come before you again seeking no reward, but trusting that our appearance may assist towards brightening our prolonged voyage across the seas.

THE VERY LATEST.

Yesterday I was talking to a chap during smoke-oh. He looked a sensible kind of fellow, as if he, at least, hadn't been deprived of his reasoning faculties, an operation which is usually performed on a man when he joins the army.

"Have you heard the latest news?" said he. I looked up eagerly. "At

last," I thought, "this will be something official. This fellow would not pass on laud and luscious rumours."

"Well," said he, "we are going to Iceland to coal; then to Jamaica to pick up an escort of Allied warships; after which we are going to the Black Sea to help the Russians. It must be true, for I heard it from the second cook, who was told direct by the medical sergeant!"

I turned away in grief: a sadder and a wiser man.

I heard a rumour to-day also. The ninth engineer told the ship's cat that the Kaiser intended "throwing up the sponge" on the arrival of the Nineteenth Reinforcement within the firing zone. I don't boubt for an instant the Kaiser's unholy terror at the mention of our name; but I am very cautious about believing any rumour that is not passed as true by the censor...this one seems to have a decidedly fishy source, so nehov.

You can't get away from these rumours. They are part of the stock-in-trade of officers and other notorious characters; they are swallowed like pills by N.C.O.'s and men; they permeate the crew's quarters; the R.N.A.P. place them regularly on the menu at meal time. Like snakes go these rumours, silent, unseen, invidious. A rumour let loose at noon is guaranteed to have gone the rounds of the ship by 12.10 p.m.; and this more thoroughly than the daily ship inspection (which is saying a lot). A peculiar characteristic of these dangerous amphibians is their remarkable ability for rapid growth. A rumour born in the morning is full grown by noon; by tea time it is old, decrepid, hoary, and bewhiskered. During this period it has undergone many curious changes, so as to be quite unrecognisable except by the parent. For instance, I heard a rumour the other day to the effect that the Maunganui was coming near us next day to borrow a corkscrew off the M Coy. Quartermaster. Soon it had changed to this: The Maunganui was going to give some beer and a corkscrew to the M Coy. Quartermaster. At tea time the orderly said to me: "Heard the latest? Well the G Coy. Serg.-Major is placed under arrest for stealing 6 hogsheads of beer from the pub at Mangonui, up north of Auckland; the corkscrew in his pocket was circumstantial evidence, and he is to be shot tomorrow. Nuff sedl

"HEADS" AND THEIR WAYS

There's one from the Navy, the Navy there's one from,

He's "Evans, Commander," and what not,

He doesn't believe in the regiment's canteen,

And soldiers demolishing "gut rot,"
Surrounded by "Heads" he looks under the beds

His little flash lamp starts to wink,
And God guard the foolhardy mouse he finds hiding,

It's ten days C.B. or the clink,
He's the Naval Commander, well rather I

On the Tahiti he is king pin I
He thinks it is wrong for the soldiers to long for

Stone ginger or fish in the tin,
It's all very well for his lordship,
A plausible tale he doth tell,
If he wants his shandy, his fish, or his candy,

He just has to tinkle the bell.

They call him the Major, the Major they call him,

He's tall, but he's Little, yes really I
He's kind, sympathetic, and so energetic,
His hospital's full...pretty nearly,

The Sisters, of course, are the central attraction,

Soldiers all are susceptible cusses
The patients lie there and watch every small action

And long for attention and fusses,
So here's to the Medical Major,
The orderlies too, do their bit;

You have to make sure of a temperature
To hear all the hospital wit.

When I get red jelly, each patient
Yells out he wants jelly too,

But when I get measles they're as silent
as weasels,

Oh, it's hard going back to the stew.

When in a recent port we had the privilege of attending the Cathedral on two Sundays, and other denominations attended their respective churches in the city. On Christmas Day many attended the Holy Communion services at the various churches. On ship, the work goes quietly. New Year's Eve services and Holy Communion on New Year's Day were well attended. On Wednesdays we have special services for the Maoris.

CRICKET ON SHORE.

At our second port of call cricketers on our two ships were able to get some games ashore, and greatly enjoyed the opportunity. In all three games were played, two on the Green Point track and one on the Newlands ground. The matting wickets were a little strange and the outfielders slow. The latter ground is very prettily situated and is beautifully green in a country where the grass is not always so; it is the "Oval" where all big matches are played.

Mr. Green, the President of the Sea Point Club, met us upon our first match with a most kindly welcome and our opponents (in our interest) kept the refreshment rooms open. Unfortunately the match was lost by 36 runs, but might have been won but for the missing of a catch at a critical stage. Major Robinson captained our side, and the following players got into double figures; Sgt. Donaldson, 21, Cpl. Taylor, 16, Lieuts. G. T. Weston 15, and Baxter 14. Pte. Holland and Cpl. Taylor secured 7 and 2 wickets respectively.

The next match was played between the officers and N.C.O.'s of the Reinforcement, the latter being the winners by about 50 runs. Lt. Baxter was top score for the losers, and Sergts. Donaldson and Dhering, Cpls. Taylor and Groves got into double figures for their side. Sergt. Clifton, Cpls. Taylor and Johnson secured wickets for the winners, while Lieuts. Blanfield, McClure and White did most of the damage for the officers.

The last match was played on a beautiful day, and Major Robinson's team was most hospitably looked after by Mr. Sewell, of the Newlands Club, a most enthusiastic cricketer, to whom our best thanks are due. Here again we lost; but our defeat by about 26 runs was no disgrace, as the team opposing us comprised some strong players, including Whitehead, a first-rate left-hand bowler. Had it not been for our fielding, which was excellent, the beating would have been a severe one. Lieut. Baxter again scored well, and Q.M.S. Spears and Pte. Bensley assisted. Sgt. Clifton, Corpls. Taylor and Johnson secured wickets for us.

LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY.

One of the most popular recreations on the Transport is the Literary and Debating Society, and the executive (President, Sgt. T. Auton; Vice-President, Sgt. A. R. Rudkin; Secretary, Corpl. H. O'Brien) has provided a programme which has met all tastes.

The first meeting took the form of Impromptu Speeches. For the most part the speeches were versatile, with logic and humour pleasantly interspersed, while the criticisms of the speeches added considerably to the attractiveness of the evening. At the next meeting the pertinent subject "State Control of the Liquor Traffic" was debated. The arguments advanced by both sides were educational in their nature, and the judge, Mr. G. T. Weston, in declaring the affirmative side (Pte. H. Andrews and Sgt. Rudkin) the winners, stated that the negative side (Lieut. Patrick and Pte. Barclay) put up a very strong case.

A Parliamentary Election provided both politics and humour of a high order. The ballot showed Sgt.-Major Foster at the head of the poll.

"The Abolition of the Totalisator" was affirmed at the next meeting by Sgts. Auton and Rudkin; Sgt.-Major Foster and H. Fraser took the negative, and after an interesting debate the judge (Capt. Northcroft) gave his decision in favour of the negative side.

An appreciative audience of over four hundred listened to a singularly instructive lecture on "Artillery Warfare," delivered before the society by Capt. Northcroft. On another evening Lieut. Grant interested a large audience with an address on the machine-gun.

Every member of the Nineteenth Reinforcement on board the Transport Tahiti received an Xmas gift, which was very much appreciated. Contributions were received from the following Patriotic Societies: Lady Liverpool Fund, Christchurch and Wellington; Dominion Gift Committee, Auckland; Otago and Southland, Timaru, and Marlborough Women's Patriotic Societies; Blundell, Moorehouse and Coates, Auckland.

GIFTS FOR JACK TARS.

Hearing that the men on the H.M.S. _____, which was recently our escort, were not blessed with a very generous menu, the troops on the Tahiti started a collection with the result that some £33 was collected, with which we purchased large quantities of butter, cheese, tinned fruits, dates, and other luxuries. These gifts were forwarded to the cruiser shortly before she left us, and the following message was received from the Commodore :

"The petty officers and men of H.M.S. _____ desire to convey their deepest thanks for the luxuries which have been sent to them by the troops and petty officers of the R.N.A.P. on board the Tahiti, and they all wish to express their thorough appreciation of the sentiments which prompted the gift. We all feel that men who have come so far as you have to bear a hand, will meet with every success in whatever scene of action you may be. We consider it an honour to have been entrusted with the duty of escorting you on a part of your voyage."

CROSSING "THE LINE."

To the general regret of all the troops the submarine danger prevented Father Neptune from venturing out on the day we crossed "The Line," and the usual ceremony which marks his visits to ships was therefore not held. The occasion did not pass unnoticed, however, for that evening a Mock Court was held, and provided splendid amusement. The Court was situated on the after well deck, where the officials, in their quaint and grotesque robes, dispensed injustice to a large number of prisoners in a way which kept the audience thoroughly amused. Shortage of space prevents us from describing the proceedings at any length, suffice it to say the Court was generally voted one of the best entertainments which we have had during the voyage.

CONCERTS ON BOARD.

On a voyage such as this, when several long weeks have to be accounted for, without the pleasures and amusements that characterise the passenger steamer, it is necessary to make some forms of entertainment to fill in our leisure hours. For the day, then, sports are regularly held, while evening amusements are provided by the Debating Society and the Concert Committee. The latter holds concerts as often as possible, and these have been much appreciated by the troops.

To get a suitable variety in the programme has been the aim of the Committee. Privates Butler and Simpson render excellent piano solos, the latter singing as well; Sergt.-Major Holder and Sergt. Price are the violin virtuosos; Major Powell, Lieut. Davy, Mr. French and Corpl. Christie sung some stirring and sentimental songs, well chosen to suit the tastes of a male audience. The humorous side of the programme is well and ably upheld by Sergt.-Major Foster, Corpl. Luks, Pvte. Yates, and others, who so tickle the funny bones of the listeners, by song and recitation, that they invariably receive hearty encores. Besides this collection of artists, quartettes, duets, and orchestral items woo the muse of harmony with gusto.

The orchestra consists of Pvte. Simpson, piano; Sgt.-Major Holder, Sergts. Price, Campbell, and Pvte. Paterson, violins; Corpl. Inwood and Pvte. Powell, cornets; L.-Corpl. Cooper, piccolo; Pvte. Crooks, flute.

Concert by the Sergeants.

The Sergeants have arranged an impromptu concert for next year. Some of the songs will be: "Those Eyes of Grey(town)," Sergt. Rogers; "Dear Little Jammy Face," Sergt. Philip; "Just Whisper, and Mine's Another," Sergt. Minihan; "Speak to me not in Words so Coarse," Sergt. Jones; "Summer Nights in Cairo and Some-are-not," Sergt. Arnold.

The Editor wishes to thank Sergts. E. M. Samuel and M. Fuller for their assistance in providing posters and drawings for "The Oilsheet."

BREEZY BITS ON THE BRINY

- It is whispered :--

That whitebait soup is one of the luxuries which can only be obtained in the men's mess. And some whitebait they are, the naughty little things.

That some of the boys have been very ill at different times during the voyage. They thought they had abdominal peritonitis or similar ailments. The doctors seemed to think it was mal-de-mer. I think it was just seasickness.

That not long ago a certain O.C. made a good haul at a quiet gaming table, and went away the richer by a pocketful of canteen coupons. A better "bluff" was never seen. Next morning he held "a full house" in his orderly room.

That the mess orderlies at No. 1 table, Sergeants' Mess, have never known a thirst for coffee and tea to equal that of J Coy.'s Sergeant-Major. And he comes from Laver-cargill.

That J Coy.'s two dwarfs, Midget and Rangi, are trying to reduce their weight by shovelling coal in the stokehold. It is thought they may qualify as jockeys by the time we reach our destination.

That Page (J Coy.) is still looking for a permanent job as Ship's Chief Electrical Engineer. He evidently knows his job, because he turned off the electric switch the other night, and the light went out.

That the Sea-Dog's Cobber, "Shorty Boy," H Coy.'s mascot, is often to be seen on the chain led by "Tiny Boy," the white pine chip flick of the King Country. Mellowed by frequent visits to our dry canteen the said "Tiny Boy" waxed so enthusiastic that his bark chipping claims have reached the ears of Reef-ton's Gallipoli-worn sergeant, who claims, that, in Reef-ton on one Saturday night, he smashed more soap boxes than the number of bottles "Tiny Boy" ever smashed in Te Kuiti.

That Sangwell (H Coy.) found his earlier warfare days so strong that he could not allow a peaceful Turkey alone in port recently. His scheme to spread a knowledge of French amongst his comrades was worthy of the success it met. "Sangy," the naughty boy's friend,

That L.-Corporals Bill Halligan, Tom Dorling, and Loo Lyons have a bet on as to when Refrigerator Bob McKeage starts "shearing" this season.

That "Johnny," one of H Coy.'s sergeants, often soars over Berlin during the silent hours of the night's repose. A chimney top on the palace at Potsdam collapsed as he passed it the other night. If he does not wake up and realise that he is one of the "mud splashers" his "top piece" might meet with the same fate.

That "Mac," the lad from Kaiapo, is hoping to return to New Zealand before long to enter into the hairdressing business. You want to lather well. "Mac"

That "Sambo," of B Coy., has some prime Gisborne mutton on board, and intends to show the High Commissioner that New Zealand produces prime "lambs."

That H Coy.'s pen-driver in the orderly room claims the Munster Fusiliers as his ideal. He answers the roll call as Shad-el-be, but denies that he has any leanings towards Turkey, though he looked on Sangwell's capture with fond and hungry eyes.

That J Coy, has produced a helper-in-chief for the ship's carpenter. He makes a quoit peg daily. [This should not be confused with a whisky peg. Ed.]

That H Coy.'s "Yep, right," sergeant-major is some soldier. So wide has been his experience in the military world that he can do you anything from extra fatigue, ship's medicine, and tales of summer skies in Egypt. He is now busily engaged on his book "What's what is what in the Army,"

That Algy, of B Coy, never sings
"Gladys" now, I wonder does his
wife know. Ask "Doc" Hooper.

Said a sergeant named Hardie, ye
ken,

I want permanent orderlies ten,
It's not for the sergeants
Or any Jack tar-gents,
It's just for the ordin'ry men.

That "The Long, Long, Trail"
wasn't in it with the eternal chase
for skirt at our last port. The offi-
cers led all the way, the non-coms.
came a bad second but the rest of
the field were sorely tried by a hot
wave of black gins.

That Curl and Marcus were hated
rivals for the hand of the fascinating
merry widow, but they joined forces
for sentry duty when our debonaire
"Doc" made his thrilling appear-
ance.

That Ernie Stackhouse, the well-
known Amberley Cattle King, has
accepted the responsible position of
head waiter in the sergeants' mess.

That Meredith temperance guard
king of C Coy., will lecture on his
enforced stay on St. Helena, which
extended over four days. The lecture
will be most interesting, inasmuch,
as the lecturer is an adept at fairy
tales, and can recount happenings
which occurred in the days of Noah.

Rip van Winkle, of the canteen
staff, threatens to outclass the fat
boy of Pickwick, and the pity is that
no anti-fat is available on board.
"Casey" Irvine, C.'s orderly clerk,
was running a close third, but we
are pleased to learn that he is now
doing plenty of physical exercise.

That small-foot Franks and Dusty
Arthur, C Coy., created a distur-
bance in port recently by lip-meeting
with two blondes, without first ob-
taining the necessary permission.

Courtship and lovemaking stories,
by Billy Allen, C Coy., are to be
heard daily adjacent to the Maori
quarters from 7 to 8.30 a.m. All are
cordially invited.

That Nat Could (better known as
circus Jack), C Coy., is anxious to
get back to Brighton to see a Rose.
And why not?

That since our recent vaccination
some of the boys are doubting the
saying that the touch of the weaker
sex is more gentle than that of man.

That C Coy, possesses a famous
astronomer in the person of "Grand-
ma" Jackson. At 1.30 a.m. in the
vicinity of the after well tank is the
time and place where he may be
consulted.

That "Bishop" Julius, the famous
mutton expert, C Coy., will, upon
arrival in England, apply through the
Imperial Supply Board, for a position
as such, and it can be relied upon
that he will carry it out to advantage
(to himself).

That "Dad" Hampton, chief sani-
tary engineer, is in receipt of the
following wireless message from
Signor Marconi: "Your Latrinogram
rights accepted by governments of
Iceland and Spitsbergen. Congratu-
lations."

There was a young fellow called
"Doc"

Whose Big Amy caused quite a shock
We'll hope that his second
All things being reckoned
Was not the renowned Amy Bock,

That Bob Bamber is always hum-
ming "Oh, the moon shines bright
on Charlie Chaplin." Hardie might
know why.

That the merry widow's plaintive
wail from the little boat has become
a password, "Where's Algy? I can't
see Algy!" The boys all agree that
the Ship's Sergeant-Major would
have been quite within his rights had
he chucked that unblushing bride-
groom overboard. Algy would prob-
ably have got into the small boat and
waited to be rescued,

Said a girl on a tram:
"Now I don't care a hang if that
sergeant thinks that I am bold," so
she sat beside Murray and murmured
"Don't hurry, although I'm not hot
I'm not cold;" and Murray replied,
"Dear, with you by my side, I could
sit here until I grow old!" (And
he's a married man too!)

That Private Winter (J Coy.) is in
favour of a "public summer." (On
the English mixed bathing beaches!)

That two well-known subalterns surreptitiously broke away from a route march at a recent port of call, and entered into conversation with some charming female friends of theirs. Oh, envious soldiers!

That Charlie Parsons, the J Coy. flirt, fell violently in love at a recent port. He cannot eat; he groweth thin; he smiles no more, Alas! he pineth away.

That Sergeant Hamon had his Xmas dinner, and knew no more. He always was a big eater. He shows us some photos of the pudding very proudly (taken before the feast not after).

That Hazlett and Marshall, of J Coy, have a yearning for sleeping in weird and mysterious places. At a recent port the former chose a motor garage for his downy couch, the latter preferring the unorthodox railway carriage in which to snore undisturbed.

That Sergeant Price made the acquaintance of a charming Dutch maiden, whom we will call Cretchen. All terms of endearment he now expresses in the Dutch language---from force of habit.

That the recent mild epidemic of sickness amongst the troops was attributed by one of the "Heads" to the men getting too much animal food. There can be no doubt what animal he was referring to.

That some of H Coy.'s boys are wondering if they will get a trip to Scotland before they go to France. "Dick," our large-hearted sergeant, assures us that they never trouble you with cups of mere tea when you pay visits, and he insists that it would be rare fine to go up north for a week and have such a time that you would not remember having been there.

That the Oamaru card fiends, of 33 platoon, have left their "hearts" in New Zealand. "Diamonds" they have none. "Clubs" will be plentiful in London. "Spades," more so, in the trenches. But "Jokers" there are by the million here on board.

That some of the "Quarters" are sad at the thought of the fast approach of the end of their sea trip. Won't it hurt when they lose the stars, and suddenly blossom out as full-blown sergeants. Any "Manuals" wanted "Quarter."

Have you heard of the R.N.A.P. Who thought they were here for a spree,

But their thoughts they soon went
When at work their backs bent
To the numbers of one, two, and three.

That three officers walking along a street in a recent port got the glad eye from a young lady. "G Whiz!" said one as he Fullard at his cigarette. "Great Scott," said another (and newly married he was, too), "Well, here goes," said the other "I will take her out for a Row---an as I have got a Strongarm I bet we will have a good time."

That the "old soldiers" will look well when their group appears in the London illustrated papers. They say one of them felt more at home having his photo taken than he did with the prospect of a trip to the Balkans.

That it is not true that a young sergeant of G Coy, fell madly in love with a red-headed young lady in ---, and that he spent all his spare cash in train fares out to that beautiful bathing resort. Bob and Jack say he did: but we think they were jealous.

That H Coy. have found a "last hope" in England. Keep fit "Snowy," and only take one meal a day, and you'll be fit for "Dad" Hampton yet.

That John Stokes, C Coy., got "A. Bussell" prior to leaving New Zealand, and his sole ambition is now to get a bustle back to New Zealand, so as to take "A. Bussell" unto himself.

That C Coy.'s Sergt.-Major is trying hard to improve the thatch. You want to look up "Johnny," he can recommend a good restorer.

THE SPORTS.

The sports programme, which was started early in the voyage, and has been carried on successfully up to the present, has given some very fine enjoyment both to contestants and onlookers. The following are the results:

Rifle Competition: No. 10 platoon C Coy. (Sgt. Petrie) 1; No. 5 platoon B Coy. (Sgt. Fuller) 2; No. 30 platoon H Coy. (Sgt. Boyd) 3.

Relay Race: Maori team (Tamehane, Waititi, Kopu, and Arapeta).

Sack race: Hoskin, C Coy., 1; Hawira, Maoris, 2.

Quoits: Sgt. Dhering, C Coy., 1; C. Bagnall, G Coy., 2.

Potato race: Ford, R.N.A.P., 1; McWhannell, C Coy., 2.

Tug-o'-war: Maori team 1. C Coy., team 2.

Skipping: Morgan, B Coy., 1; Wixon, Maoris, 2.

Obstacle race: Sgt. Dhering, C Coy., 1; Arapeta, Maoris, 2.

Pillow-fighting: Sgt. Te Whetu, Maoris, 1; Jackson, B Coy., 2.

Hop, Step, and Jump: Q.M.S.R. Spear, J Coy., 1; Topi, Maoris, 2.

Three-legged race: Pemberton and Murdock, J Coy., 1; Kopu and Te Whetu, Maoris, 2.

Wheelbarrow Race: Symons and Crotty, H Coy., 1; T. Auton and R. Spear 2.

The Boxing results are as follows:

Feather weight, M. Schenkel, C Coy.

Light weight, J. Rutledge, C Coy.

Middle weight, T. Body, G Coy.

Welter weight, E. L. Hawken, H Coy.

Heavy weight, J. Smith, Maoris.

Bob Ward (ship's crew)—E. L. Hawken (H Coy.) gave a very interesting exhibition bout which was greatly appreciated.

The Wrestling resulted as follows:

Light weight, J. E. Clegg, B Coy.

Middle weight, T. Te Whetu, Maoris.

Heavy weight, S. F. McIndoe, H Coy.

THE HYMN OF HATE.

(As heard in the officers' quarters.)

I say, you've heard of this beastly Hymn of Hate that the Germans have written, why the devil don't some of our fellows write one back? What the deuce are Maeterlinck and Ibsen doing? The fact of the matter is that the whole thing has been left to me, don't cher know, and I think I've done jolly well. I had some difficulty to find a word that would rhyme with "rotter," so I chose the word "blotter," because the beastly Germans "blot" up such an enormous amount of lager beer—eh, what! It goes like this:

You bounders, you blighters, you rotters

You'd like to be boss of the show. You beerswilling banded blotters

We'll show you're most horribly low,

We'll jolly well disintegrate you, You'll burn in the fires that you've lit.

We hate you, we hate you, we hate you,

In fact we don't like you a bit.

There you are, don't you think that's rather good, bai jove, I really think I'm the only British johnny that's written a really good Hymn of Hate. Eh, what!

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

We are informed on good authority that we will arrive at

next , and from there will proceed to . We will remain there weeks, then going to , where the troops will

(The remainder of the paragraph has been excised by the Ship's Censor.

It is to be impressed upon troops that this information must not be put into letters to friends abroad.