

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

In the last few days I have been asked so many individual questions regarding details of the voyage that I think it advisable through the medium of your magazine to give certain information.

Our probable ports of call and the distances between them are as follows

Lyttelton	to	Sydney	.....	1377	Miles
Sydney	"	Fremantle	.....	2166	"
Fremantle	"	Colombo	.....	3134	"
Colombo	"	Tewfik	.....	3408	"
Tewfik	"	Port Said	.....	86	"
Port Said	"	Gibraltar	.....	1914	"
Gibraltar	"	English Channel	...	930	"
Total Mileage			.....	13015	"

Our final port of destination is uncertain but news of this will be advised as soon as received.

Questions have been asked about the speed of the ship. This varies according to circumstances. In the first place a daybreak at ports is necessary to transact the essential business with the shore authorities. Secondly, the welfare of the patients is always a deciding factor on this particular Hospital Ship. Undoubtedly the majority are anxious to get home as soon as possible but there are always a few very sick patients for whom comfort is more important than speed. When all circumstances are favourable the average cruising speed is 14.5 knots.

It is probable that the time spent in ports is approximately 24 hrs though there is no guarantee of this, especially if the ports are crowded with shipping. From now on all ports worked will be either roadsteads or bays and the Ship's boats will have to be used for shore contact. This necessitates a degree of physical fitness which unfortunately may limit the number allowed to go on leave. It is very unlikely that there will be any leave at all at Tewfik.

It will be seen from the above table that the longest leg of the journey is from Colombo to Tewfik. Unfortunately this coincides with the hottest weather and there is an increased temptation to use more water. The Ship however carries only 800 tons of fresh water and there will be an urgent need for economy.

We expect to cross the line at 4 a.m. on the morning of December 17th.

Yours faithfully,

A.H. PROSSER (Master RNZHS "MAUNGANUI")

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

One scheduled entertainment for Xmas Day is an entertainment by patients. No definite arrangements have yet been made about this and the whole affair is subject to approval by patients. No committee has been appointed and the ward representatives are asked to give it their attention. A Xmas tree has been suggested and if this idea is adopted the staff will willingly give assistance, advice and the loan of properties.

It is intended to broadcast radio plays from time to time. These are being arranged by Sgt Bowen-Jones. The first will be on the air tonight at 1900.

The patients' concert is controlled by Capt Blair and Mr Olive.

We regret our inability this week to publish all the manuscripts received. Some will appear later. Particularly we are sorry to disappoint some who have submitted material based on an appreciation of the ship and its staff. We have been proud to publish these in the past and we are grateful for the obvious sincerity of the present contributors. The magazine however, has a large circulation outside the ship and we are anxious to avoid giving the impression that the official magazine of the Unit is being used for singing its own praises. We feel also that the long association that most of the staff have had with many patients on board has now developed beyond the courtesies of those associated on service to a deeper stage of personal friendship, and that formal acknowledgements of appreciation are no longer necessary. It has therefore been decided as a policy matter that for the time being we will be unable to publish any references to the work of the staff, unless they are constructive or critical.

A Chess Tournament is projected to embrace the whole ship. Will those willing to compete hand their names in as follows:- All Officers to Lt. Col. Bennett, patients to one of the Padres, Staff O/Ranks to Cpl. Paulsen, Merchant to Mr. A. Diamond. Entries close on Thursday night next.