

Lieutenant King, of C battery, who has joined B.-P.'s police, and all our men who are remaining in South Africa; also Captain Mackie, who is going home via England. The British war ships manned the rail, and the crews of the merchant ships cheered in succession as we passed out into the bay and had our last view of Cape Town and Table Mountain bathed in the golden light of a southern summer afternoon.

General Forrestier Walker and Sir Alfred Milner addressed the troops on the wharf before we embarked and spoke very nicely.

Lieutenant-Colonel Drury is in command on the Rosslyn Castle and we have 42 officers, 7 nurses and 900 men on board. At the last moment the guns of C battery were left at Cape Town at the request of the military authorities, as they are short of field guns thereabouts.

The first day or so out there was a rolling sea on and a good many were seasick. Then it quieted down and the weather was delightful until Christmas morning, when a rough northeast (wholesale) trade wind came on and did much to spoil the enjoyment of the Christmas dinner. Apart from these little incidents we have been leading a superlatively lazy life. There is hardly anything to do, and all hands are eating, sleeping and loafing with an industry that has turned lean, dusty subs into fat, clean-shaven loungers. Think of the luxury of hot and cold baths with water ad lib. to men who for ten months have had to shave, wash and bathe in a quart cup of water (and that's no vain veldt vitticism!) We have no horses, guns or harness to look after; nothing to do but live; nothing to eat but food; nowhere to go but to sleep; nothing to drink but what is laid down on the wine card. The steamer is very comfortable, but the feeding of the men was not satisfactory at first.

On Saturday the 23rd there were sports on board. The weather was very warm. The same evening we passed across the line without ceremony. On Christmas eve D battery officers and a few friends had a re-union and drank to "absent friends" both at home and in Africa. I do not know but what everybody on board was not a