

SPIRIT OF THE NAVY

Those who are under the guardianship of the Royal Navy for the first time have had on this trip a true glimpse of the warmth and friendship they extend to the soldiers on the sea. Twice now our escort warship has pulled alongside and entertained us with band music; when a live shoot or depth charge practice has been necessary she has come close enough for us to observe. And those of us who already owe our lives to other escorts and evacuation task forces have added to a store of memories of navy friendliness. Yesterday our warship was relieved by another escort and, as a farewell gesture, drew up alongside our transport, played "Sussex by the Sea," "Maoris' Farewell" and "Auld Lang Syne," gave us three hearty cheers and departed. If the heartiness of our response was not in proportion to our numbers, that was due only to lack of organisation, certainly not to lack of appreciation. Following is the exchange of messages between ships on parting:

M.U.

GREETINGS

O.C. Troops to Captain Escort.

"Kiwis thank you for safe escort. Your fine displays of naval efficiency have increased our pride in the British Navy. All ranks regret this parting but hope when the war is won your ship will be able to fire the final salute of victory. Au revoir. Kia Ora."

Captain Escort to O.C. Troops.

"Many thanks for your kind signal. Having fired the last salvo we hope to close the breach and watch you and your Kiwis slap your bayonets home into something yellow. Au revoir and the very best of good luck to you all."

RESCUE AT SEA

An incident of our trip which provided some excitement was the sight of our escort in a new role, when she pulled up alongside a slow-moving tanker and took aboard about 34 men. These men were survivors of a vessel sunk by enemy action and had been on the water in lifeboats for 17 days.

A collection is being raised on this ship to alleviate their distress.

MILESTONES

The crossing of the Line marks an important stage in our journey. Most of us, at the outset, fixed in our minds certain milestones on the route we believed we would follow, and, as our course generally has been in accordance with our expectations, we have measured our progress by our arrivals and departures from our ports of call.

The fact that we had not been long at sea alleviated the disappointment which we felt when we learned that we were not to go ashore at our first port of call and our enforced confinement to the ship perhaps enabled us to appreciate all the more our spell on shore when we reached our second port and to our delight found ourselves in the midst of a people who were hospitable in a remarkable degree and, in a memorable couple of days, treated us with such kindness as we shall never forget. What awaits us in our next port of call, the name of which we know, we have, at the time of writing, yet to learn. We know, however, that we are going to a country, of which we have learned much in picture and story and with which, we feel, actual contact would be an enlightening and valuable experience. We believe, too, that we may be reasonably sure of the route to be followed on the somewhat shorter final stages of our journey.

If this journey has entailed its trials and deprivations, if there have been times when it has been something of an ordeal, we must accept that as part of our soldierly experience — part of a sacrifice which, we feel, is being made in a fine cause. For this there is, for most of us, ample compensation in the experiences we have enjoyed and the memories they will provide.

1st. Private : "I feel like telling that Sergeant where to get off again."

2nd. Private : "What do you mean, again?"

1st. Private : "I felt like it yesterday too."

Recruit : "They can't make me fight."

Drafting Officer : "Maybe not, but they can take you where the fighting is and you can use your own judgment."