

FAREWELL TO WINDSOR CASTLE



Pictures: A. J. Mayrath-Norton

Windsor Castle sailed for the last time from Table Bay Harbour exactly at 4 p.m. on September 6. For many thousands of travellers, enthusiasts and staff this was the most poignant goodbye to a gracious ship.

For those not fortunate in witnessing this moment in history, these are some of the random impressions gathered on that lovely Cape spring evening.

Four tugs surrounded Windsor Castle, dressed overall and flying a 17-yard paying-off pennant. Fountains of water sprayed fore and aft. All ships, tugs, boats and power stations blasted off their whistles in a long crescendo of noise. Yachts, launches and rescue craft gathered at her stern as she slowly moved out of Duncan Dock to the strains of Auld Lang Syne played by the Cape Field Artillery Band and Pipers, accompanied by the thousands of people "seeing her off."

Escorted by the South African Navy frigate, SAS President Pretorius, she slowly moved into Table Bay. The frigate fired a shot across the bows of Windsor Castle and ordered her to heave-to. A party of 'pirates' from the frigate boarded Windsor Castle and dashed up to the bridge to present to Captain Beaden an embroidered commemorative mailbag.

As a finale to the farewell Albatross aircraft from Maritime Command flew overhead.

For all those on board and on the quayside there was an emotional atmosphere which will long be remembered.

Two tugs give water-cannon salutes as Windsor Castle leaves Cape Town.



SAS President Pretorius escorts Windsor Castle out of Table Bay.



The party of 'pirates' from the frigate dash up to the bridge on Windsor Castle.

