

On Land and Sea

Update – February 19, 2011

Hope is on its way!

It's hard to believe that it has been about 5 ½ weeks since I left Atlanta! The first 2 weeks were spent at the Appelsbosch College campus while work continued on the ship in the Durban shipyard. Each weekday, however, a large group of us loaded up into mini-vans and traveled 2 hours to the ship to clean. We were all able to leave Appelsbosch and return to the ship to live on Jan. 28 – what a procession! Two large busses, a moving van, and a dozen or so Land Rovers taking our 100+ crewmembers home! We were warmly welcomed by the crewmembers who have been living onboard while shipyard work was ongoing – very warmly welcomed since the A/C was not yet turned on! After another week and a half we were ready to head out on a 3 day “shake down” sail to Cape Town, S. Africa. During this time the engines and new systems were being put to the test – speeding up, slowing down, even stopping; maneuvering around in a big circle...



Welcome Home!



Emergency Drill

We had a bit over 24 hours in Cape Town on Sunday afternoon and Monday morning to get off the ship and be tourists while the ship was refueled and some adjustments were made on the new systems. We certainly made the most of the time –our last taste of “civilization” before heading on to our destination in Freetown, Sierra Leone.



Sighting land again as we round the Cape



Seals greeting us as we approach Cape Town

While in Cape Town I got to go to the Boulder Beach penguin colony, up to the top of Table Mountain for the sunset, and around the town on a sightseeing bus – stopping for a little while at the World of Birds. There’s so much more to see there! It would be a great place to take a vacation sometime!



Penguins at Boulder Beach



Sunset from Table Mountain

Preparation

Now we’re on our way to Sierra Leone, a voyage of almost 2 weeks. When we arrive we’ll really have to hit the ground running! If you can imagine having less than 2 weeks to fully deploy a working hospital with 6 operating rooms, 5 wards, lab, radiology, pharmacy, etc. And also set up a dental clinic, eye clinic, off-ship “ward” (we call it a Hospitality Center) where patients who don’t required acute nursing care can stay before and after surgery, admissions, post-operative care, and physical therapy... We also have to unload vehicles, load supplies that have been shipped to Freetown ahead of our arrival and have instruments set up, serviced, and/or calibrated.

A week after we arrive there is a major screening event where patients come to be screened to determine if they are candidates for the services we are equipped to offer. Several smaller screening events have been held in the outlying areas prior to our arrival. This screening involves almost everyone on the ship.

We’ll also be having 100-150 or so new crew joining us during our first few weeks in Sierra Leone. All these new crewmembers have to be oriented to the ship and their responsibilities. Whew! It’s tiring just thinking about it!

But we’re truly “blessed to be a blessing!” While the shipyard work seemed so long – around 5 months – those who know and understand the extent of the refit work done on the ship are amazed that it was completed in so short a time and that it all went so well. We’ve been blessed with great sailing weather, as well, running ahead of a weather front, but experiencing pretty smooth sailing.

Pray!

- Do continue to pray for us as we sail toward Sierra Leone, and for the advance team who have been in the country for several months already preparing the way for our arrival.
- Pray for the people of Sierra Leone. Many will come for help who cannot be helped by the medical services we are equipped to offer. Many need spiritual healing even more than physical healing.
- Pray our crew will truly be ambassadors of the Lord in what we do and say.

Keep in Touch

I miss all of you lots! Keep in touch... and email, note, or card is always great! Take care & God bless.

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Note: If you'd prefer not to receive these updates, rather get them at a different email address, or know of someone else who'd like to receive them, just let me know! Feel free to pass this on to others who might be interested, too.

Financial Support

I serve as a volunteer and am reliant on the support of others for all of my expenses. If you are led to share in my ministry financially, please make checks payable to Mercy Ships and send to: Mercy Ships, Donor Services, P.O. Box 2020, Lindale, TX 75771 with a note designating for the support of missionary Claudia Juarez (#2793). Or, you can make a contribution online at: <https://connect.mercyships.org/page/outreach/view/crewmates/juarezc>