

Nz 48 Klipfontein (II) Verenigde Nederlandsche Scheepvaartmaatschappij (V.N.S.) 1939. Model depicts the situation in 1939.

Nz 48A Klipfontein (II) V.N.S. Situation 1939/1940 in J.P.L. colours and neutrality markings.

Nz 48B Pionier ex Oranjefontein, Situation 1942. Zielschiff of the Luftwaffe.

Nz 49 Klipfontein (II) W.S.A. U.S.Army Trooptransport. Model depicts the situation in 1944

Yard: N.V. Machinefabriek en Scheepswerf van P.Smit Jr. Yard number 517. Launched 4 March 1939.

Tonnages: 10 544 Gross, 6321 Net, 10092 Deadw.

Dimensions: 158,94 x 19,19 x 9,22 m.

Propulsion: 2, 5 cyl. diesels, Smit-B&W, double screw, 12000 apk, 11800 BHP. Max. speed 20,5 kn., service speed 17 kn.

Passengers: 106 1st, 42 tourist class.

Crew: 120.

Troop capacity in 1944: approx.3000

Main Armament in 1944:one L.A.4", two H.A. 3", six 20mm Oerlikons in single mountings.

The V.N.S. was established in 1918 by the 8 largest Dutch shipping companies. The plan was to fill up the gaps in the market which occurred when the greater part of the remaining fleet from the German shipping companies was confiscated after the first World War. After a merger with the Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaanse Stoomvaart Maatschappij, (N.Z.A.S.M.) in 1932, and the devaluation of the Dutch Guilder with 20% in 1936, business finally picked up for V.N.S. and in order to improve its position, new, fast passenger/cargo ships were needed for the "Holland-Africa-Line".

When "Klipfontein" made its maiden trip to South Africa on August 18 1939, the war in Europe broke out. In order not to expose the ships to the German U-Boot war, it was decided to place "Klipfontein" together with "Bloemfontein", "Jagersfontein" en "Boschfontein" in the "Java-Pacific Lijn". When the war in the Pacific broke out, Klipfontein was made available to the US WSA.

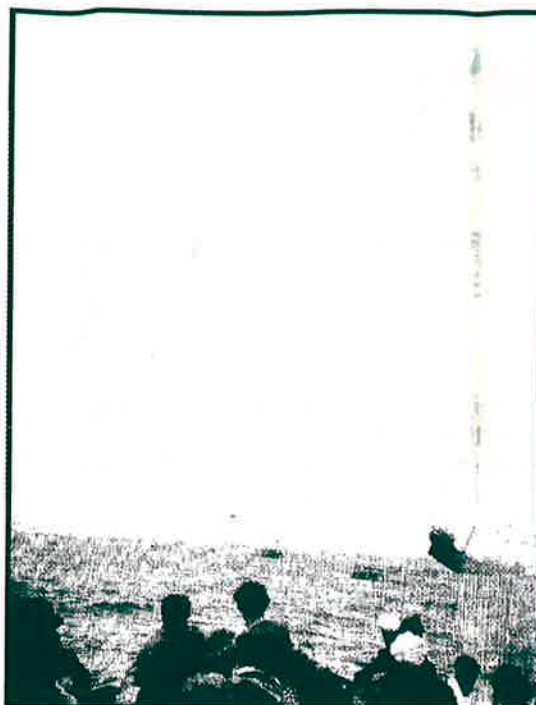
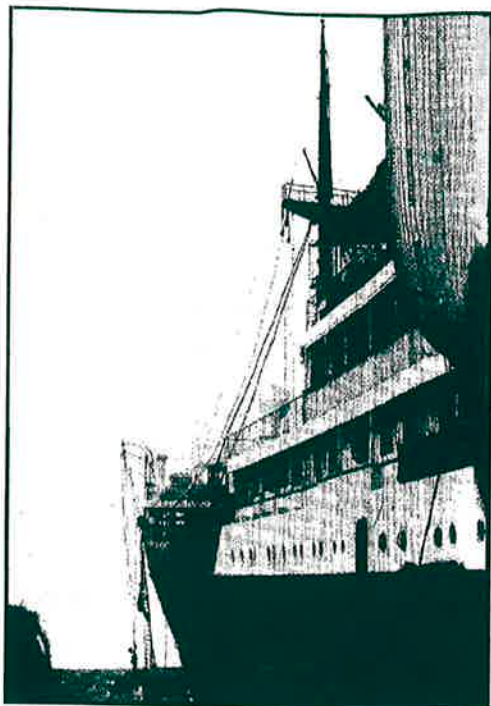
After the first refit in the U.S., "Klipfontein" left for Australia in March 1942. On her return in May, alterations were made to carry troops. In June 1942 she started a large series of voyages across the Pacific.

In 1942 she sailed between San Francisco/Los Angeles and Suva, Wellington, Auckland, Melbourne, Fiji Islands, Sydney and Brisbane. In 1943 she sailed to Suva, Tongatabu, Noumea, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane (3). Between October 1943 and the end of 1944, Klipfontein sailed to 25 ports and beaches. The vessel returned to San Francisco in January 1945 and made six more trips, also to Japan. In January 1946 she was released from troopship service and returned to V.N.S.

From February 1st 1946, "Klipfontein" sailed for the Dutch Government, bringing troops to the Dutch East Indies, taking refugees back to Holland. On January 15 1947, "Klipfontein" returned in the Africa Service.

In 1948 "Klipfontein" was given a docking service whereby also the passenger accommodation was changed into 130 1st and 68 tourist class.

On January 8, 1953, near Ponta Zavora in East Africa, "Klipfontein" struck an unknown object under water. Number 1 hold exploded and she sank within 3 hours. The sea was calm and passengers and crew could leave the ship, although one starboard lifeboat failed to land in the water. The survivors were picked up by the Union Castle liner "Bloemfontein Castle".



The "Klipfontein" was the first of three identical ships, planned for the service between Rotterdam and South Africa. The second ship was the ORANJEFONTEIN, also built by Smit, (yard number 532). She was launched 21-3-1940 and confiscated by the German authorities and renamed PIONIER, handled by the Deutsche Afrika Linien, later "Zielschiff" and depot ship of the Luftwaffe and in 1942 placed in the 27. U-Flottille. In 1945 "Oranjefontein" was used to evacuate German refugees from the German East Sea areas. In July 1945 she was returned to V.N.S. and in 1967 sold to Spain for demolition.

The third ship was to be built by F.Schichau GmbH, in Elbing, Germany. Initially she was named RIET FONTEIN, later renamed ELANDSFONTEIN. The building was stopped after she was launched in 1940. In 1945 she was sunk by artillery fire and confiscated by Poland and Russia, in 1947 returned to V.N.S. and completed by Scheepsbouw Maatschappij de Schelde in Vlissingen. In 1948 she was renamed JAGERSFONTEIN. She entered service in 1950 and was sold to Embajada Company Naviera S.A. in Greece. She was renamed DEVON and wrecked in Taiwan in December 1967.

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