

### 1.3 .....*Life and Orders begin on Norfolk.*

Before dawn, in the twilight, everyone was ready for what the day would bring. The ten convicts were immediately given tools, as soon as it was light, and were told off to start clearing the first area picked by *Lt. King* for a vegetable garden. The three marines were to oversee their activities. Some of the trees were large and their roots were a long way underground making it strenuous work, but the bushes were easy to grub out.

Cooking fires were lit, and one of the Surgeons *Mr. Thomas Jameson*, who was from the *Sirius*, supervised the women convicts in preparing some food.

The rest of us under the orders of *Mr. Cunningham* and the other Surgeon *Mr. Turnpenny Altree*, from my ship *The Lady Penryhn*, started moving stores into areas, and prepared for use some of the Commissaries stores. According to *Mr. Altree*, there was about six months stores, but it needed fish and vegetables to make it last. He said that *Lt. King* intended to plant some vegetables as early as tomorrow.

"David, after we all stop and have something to eat, I want you to move the three barrels to the places I have marked, and fill them up with fresh water from that spring up that little hill. Clear the area a little and teach *James* when to fill them. That's one of his jobs from now on," said *Mr. Altree*.

*James* and I cleared a path to the spring, then cut bushes around it to make it easy to get to. Through the morning we carried enough water to fill the three large barrels. I showed *James* some level marks and told him not to let the water get below them.

"Finished, *Mr. Altree*."

"Good. Now get some kindling for the three cooking fires, near the water barrels."

"Why three fires *Mr. Altree*?"

"That place over there, is for *Lt. King* and other officers, that one over there for the three marines, and that one over there for the convicts. Teach *James* to always keep a pile of kindling and fire wood, and water for us officers, the rest can look after themselves."

After I had carried out his instructions, *Ann Innet*, a convict woman who was to cook clean and wash for *Lt. King*, came over to me and said she would help lookout for *James*, if I was on other duties.

"*Davie* come quickly!" It was *Lt. King*, calling me from the beach.

I immediately ran up to him. "Sir," I said knuckling my right hand to my forehead.

"Look there can you see those two turtles on the beach? We must go quickly and turn them on their backs."

We each grabbed the same flipper of one, and put a hand underneath its body. With both of us grunting with effort, we turned it onto its back. We then did the same with the other. It was far easier to capture a turtle on the beach than in the water.

"Aha! that was very good *Davie*, now we can have turtle meat to eat."

Over the camp fires that night, the turtle tasted a lot better than the salted pork.

All the people had been told what duties they were to start carrying out at twilight next day. I was to go fishing with others under the command of *Mr.*

*Cunningham*. The tide would be going out so we could get out through the reef entrance to the outer reef side. That would be a little after sunup.

My orders were to layout along the beach the anchor rope. It was still to be attached to the bow cleat, with the grapnel at the other end. I was to inspect the rope and if it showed signs of wear I was to cut the bad bit out and re bend the rope. I was also to measure from the grapnel back to the boat every fathom, and attach some twine to mark the length. My feet are quite big so I heel and toed my feet to six times, because that made a rough fathom. Then I tied on the twine and repeated it to the boat bow. There was nearly twenty fathoms.

When that was finished, I reported to *Mr. Roger Morley* the Sail Makers Mate from the *Sirius*, who immediately checked all my work.

"That's good *Davie*, now go and get *Mr. Cunningham's* haversack from our tent. Make sure his small writing slate and three pieces of chalk are in it. Then place it in the stern of the boat."

I knew what the masters mate wanted his haversack for. If we found a good fishing spot, he would hold up his slate and draw upon it the outline of the coast. He would then pick two prominent marks on the island's coast, then draw lines from the marks in a V towards the boat's position on the slate. He would then calculate how many miles or yards we were offshore. That should help us find the same spot again. He would also write down the depth of water from the anchor rope, and the time of the tide and wind direction. *Lt. King*, being a naval officer would discuss the drawing and notes with him.

While I was carrying out my orders, the other members of the crew, including a marine, were to help in looping fishing lines, tie on hooks and small lumps of rock for sinkers. We would have to use little bits of salt pork and bits of turtle meat, until we could catch fish to keep and use as bait.

When the boat was fully prepared, all of us in the crew would shove it into the water, and row out the entrance. The boat was not a large gig, about thirty feet long, with a small freeboard, but it was quite heavy for the five of us. We may have to put small logs underneath it to roll it over the beach from where it was drawn up, to the water.

The darkness of the night was only lit by the three small fires that were glowing, and someone had tied several dead palm branches together, stuck them in the ground, and lit them to mark the perimeter of the settlement area, but that was also very weak.

The shoreline of the reef with the big surf thundering and breaking all along its length, occasionally showing its white surf through the gloom, was deafening. No stars were out tonight. The rain lightly fell. I supposed that this was the way it would always be here.

In the twilight the next day, we quickly put into the boat some ships biscuits and water pannikins, and the bait, then pushed and dragged the boat into the water. The jagged edges of the reef on the starboard and port side were awash with foaming water. We all quickly scrambled aboard into our rowing positions. I was in the bow.

"All together pull. Pull. Pull." *Mr. Cunningham* stood at the tiller in the stern. It was too late to be frightened, we were in *Mr. Cunningham's* hands now.

"Steady, steady, stroke lightly, we will let a couple of waves go past us, then I'll tell you to stroke long and hard, and don't rush your strokes."

"Now! Pull one two three four, pull one two three four, take your time from me.!"

All of a sudden the bows of the boat was lifted high, I was much higher than the crew member in front of me. Some moments later, I was down lower than the stern of the boat, looking up to the crew member in front of me. Suddenly I could see from the corner of my eyes, we were through the gap.

"You, Mr. second oar, keep your eyes on me," roared *Mr. Cunningham*.

Pull one two three four, pull one two three four, pull, that's all we seemed to do. Just as we were starting to feel exhausted we were told to rest on our oars. What a relief.

Time to look around. We had rowed straight out from the entrance and we looked to be about two miles from it. The surf was not very big breaking on the reef, because the tide was going out. The water was a little lumpy, but it didn't look dangerous. The Island looked huge. A little smoke was slowly climbing upwards from a camp fire. We could just make out some tents but not all. Where are we going to fish?

Over a period of several weeks, we fished and fished, for none or sometimes very few. It was exhausting and we felt everyone on shore were depending upon us.

Several turtles were caught on the beach, but eventually *Lt. King* had to order another barrel of bread and flour as well as salt beef had to be opened from the Commissary stores.

During that time, I did not go out in the boat fishing every time. I sometimes worked in the crew that were digging the Saw Pit, so that the pine trees could be cut into planks to build a Store House and other houses that *Lt. King* wanted built.

The Saw Pit was under the supervision of the Marine from the *Sirius*, *William Westbrook*. *Lt. King* selected him for service on the Island because before he joined the Marines he had been a carpenter.

*Lt. King* started conducting a religious service on Sundays. Everyone had to be there. After the service, everyone had a small amount of time off. We were free to wash and mend clothes, dig up a small garden for ourselves, or do nothing. However everyone knew that the Officers could order anything to be done for the good of the settlement at any time.

One day I was helping drag a tree that had all its branches cut of, towards the Saw Pit. We were nearly there when suddenly several convicts started fighting because some thought others were not pulling their share of the weight. It got very serious when someone knocked John Mortimer down, and when he was on the ground started kicking him. His son Noah raised an axe and charged into the fray, I tried to stop him.

"Hey you, come here! Caught you at last hey?" It was the *Marine, John Bachelor*.

He was advancing towards me, with his musket and bayonet pointing in my direction.

" I am only trying to stop the fight."

"*Lt. King's* favorite. Gotcha, you come with me! You are in trouble now."

"Leave him alone," a loud voice shouted. It was *Marine William Westbrook*.

"The boy works with me in the Saw Pit, he is not a trouble maker."

He came over to me and stood alongside me. He was normally a big man, but he waved his musket towards *Batchelor* in such a strong manner, that *Batchelor* backed away muttering to himself.

'Listen you men," *Westbrook* said loudly to the convicts, " Stop carrying on stupidly, Bachelor will be only too glad to get you into trouble. *Lt. King* will punish offenders"

" Are you alright *Davie*? Listen to me, don't get involved in any convict disputes.

Alright all of you start heaving now! I want this log put into the proper sawing position in the pit."