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SUBMISSION FOR PROVISIONAL PROTECTION

SAS PIETERMARITZBURG SHIPWRECK, SIMONSTOWN, FALSE BAY, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE

LOCATION OF SITE

Place/Coordinates: S 34° 13.303' E 018° 28.465'

Location	False Bay
City	Cape Town
Province	Western Cape
Owner	None (abandoned under Salvage Law)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The SAS Pietermaritzburg started out her career as the HMS Pelorus, an Algerine Class Ocean Minesweeper, in June 1943. On 6 June 1944, HMS Pelorus achieved prominence when, under the command of Captain George Nelson she led the Allied Armada in the D-Day invasion of Normandy. She was also one of the Allied vessels to first arrive in Singapore after the Japanese surrender in 1945.

In 1947, after the end of World War II, she was sold to the South African Navy and initially renamed the HMSAS Maritzburg. However, after submissions by the Council of Pietermaritzburg she was renamed the HMSAS Pietermaritzburg on 21 January 1948. She was used for the training of midshipmen and later refitted and used as a dormitory ship in Simon's town until 1991.

Due to the ship's historical significance a committee was formed and considerable effort was put into preserving the PMB, as she was affectionately known, in order to save her as a floating museum ship. However, the cost of berthing and refitting the PMB amounted to too much and the campaign abandoned. The ship was then scuttled off of Millers Point near Simon's Town in a ceremonial fashion on November 19, 1994.

The significance of the Pietermaritzburg is encapsulated in its historical value due to the roles she had played in World history during World War II and South African history during her time served in the South African Navy.

MOTIVATION FOR PROVISIONAL PROTECTION OF PIETERMARITZBURG WRECK SITE, SIMONSTOWN, FALSE BAY, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE

The wreck site of the Pietermaritzburg is being threatened by salvaging enterprises. Recently large chunks have been removed and this has greatly upset many stakeholders invested in the long term preservation of the site which is still used today as a popular diving site for recreational divers and as an artificial habitat for many marine species that have made their home on the remains of the PMB.

Due to the wreck being less than 60 years old and not a natural resource it is currently afforded no legal protection under the National Heritage Act 25 of 1999 or the Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998, respectively. Salvagers with legal salvage permits can, therefore remove items or pieces from the wreck without any hindrance from local authorities. Wreck sites are non-renewable resources and once they have been destroyed all that remains of them are photographs and memories.

However, in terms of section 29 (a) (i) and 35 (1) of the NHRA Act 25 of 1999, SAHRA may protect any wreck that lies within South Africa's territorial waters which it considers to be conservation-worthy or under threat. Currently the site is being nominated as a National Heritage site by Simon's Town Historical Society and parts of the wreck are still being removed. The Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit therefore supports that the Pietermaritzburg site be provisionally protected due to its historical significance and the fact that it is currently under threat from salvaging exercises.

RECOMMENDATION

The SAHRA's MUCH Unit, after discussion with stakeholders and assessment of the current situation regarding the wreck site of Pietermaritzburg, recommends that Council approve the Provisional Protection of the Pietermaritzburg wreck site based on the above motivation. The wreck site being the wreck itself and any part thereof including 'any cargo, debris or artefacts found or associated' with it, as is defined in terms of Section 2 (ii) (c) of the NHRA Act 25 of 1999.