



April 6th: (Sunday) Germany declared war on Greece. Piraeus Harbour was full of shipping and three British cruisers (*Calcutta*, *Ajax* and *Perth*). At 8am gave orders to have steam ready to put to sea if ordered and stopped all shore leave for officers etc. Admiral Turle called on board in the afternoon. Vessel now discharging military equipment and TNT all day and continuing by moonlight.

About 9.30pm the alert was sounded and soon after, enemy planes appeared and a heavy barrage was opened from the shore and ships. The entrance to the harbour was mined by the dropping of parachute mines. More planes appeared and a major air battle developed. The scene was terrible and indescribable. Between 10.30pm and 11pm a bomber dived and let go a stick of bombs directly over the ship. There was a



terrific whistle and explosion. We were hit by three bombs. I was standing on the lower bridge at the time with the 2nd Wireless Officer. The explosion of the bomb near the No 3 hatch blew us across the deck and head on against the bulkhead. When I 'came to', by Higgins, the C/O (Chief Officer) falling over me, I had a big bump on my head and my uniform coat was completely split from top to bottom. The Wireless Officer (Ollason) was lying in the wreckage by my side with his neck broken. The ship was on fire, forward, amidships and aft and all the quay sheds down and blazing. The whole of the amidships accommodation was wrecked. All the bridge ladders and doors etc were torn away and the ship blown about 100ft off the quay. We got the wounded along to the fore-deck and a 'sea-cunny' (a Lascar seaman from the countries south-east of India) swam ashore with a line and made it fast to a toppled over crane. We then dragged the wounded ashore and then went ashore hand over hand along the line ourselves and abandoned the ship. Banks, the 2nd Officer, was doing much the same thing from the poop. He had Gentle (Apprentice) with a broken leg and others more or less injured. The ship was full of military equipment, stores and ammunition.

She burned until about 2am when she was red hot fore and aft and then went up in a terrific explosion, due I think, to the 700 tons of fuel oil in the double bottom. The explosion did heavy damage to other vessels and property ashore. The *SS Cite of Roubaix* was set on fire and sank. The *Clan Gumming* was badly damaged. *SS Ceylonese Prince* had her fore-deck driven in, due to some part of the ship falling on her. The *SS Devis* was also among other ships badly damaged by the explosion, and so ended the life of the good ship *Clan Fraser*, just 2 years old. Killed: Mr Hogg (Chief Engineer), Owen (3rd Engineer), Ollason (Wireless Officer), Anderson (6th Engineer died of burns in hospital), Howard (AA Gunner) and two native firemen killed. Gentle (Apprentice) seriously wounded, the remainder suffering from burns, bumps and bruises. I had both eardrums fractured by the explosion and slight concussion. We lost all our belongings. After going to a dressing station, I was taken to a military hospital north of Athens and remained there a week.

April 13th: Left the hospital and with most of the others joined the *TSS Cameronia*. Banks, Black and Pryde (2nd Officer and 2nd and 7th Engineer) and Gentle (Apprentice) also Cooper (3rd Officer) not well enough to leave. (Ed: All repatriated to Alexandria before the fall of Greece). Passing down the harbour we saw all that remained of the *Clan Fraser*, just her stern sticking up out of the water. At 7pm sailed from Pireaus with a mixed bag of DBSs