



## Features

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and refugees etc from all countries in the Balkans. Men, women and small children in *Cameronia* bound for Alexandria.

**April 14th:** Three vessels in convoy. *Cameronia*, *Pennland* and *City of?* (Ed: unreadable) During the day we were twice attacked by enemy bombers. All passengers were below decks. Bombs fell dangerously near the bow and beam of *Cameronia* but fortunately no damage was sustained.

**April 16th:** 7pm arrived in Alexandria.

**April 17th:** Sent by British Consul General (Mr Heathcote Smith) to Gordon Pension with all other officers. In the afternoon called and drew money from the Agents (Messrs Moss) and started getting some gear together.

**April 19th:** Consul asked me if I would take command of SS *Benrennie* and take her to Greece, which I decided to do, her Captain being in hospital. Captain Collins by name – Hastie Chief Off.

**April 20th:** *Benrennie*'s crew refused to sail unless she went back thru the Canal (Chinese crew) and not to Piraeus. It was decided to prosecute them the following day and sail to Piraeus with a scratch crew.

**April 21st:** *Benrennie* has been released from Govt Service and is to proceed to China. Her Captain rejoined his ship and sailed for Port Said. He reported well and fit for duty.

**April 22nd:** Started treatment under the ear specialist. Having quite a peaceful time waiting for a ship home. Several quite nice people at the Pension. Had lunch with the Consul General one day. Mr Hole, Consul of Salonika and his wife were also there. They came down in the *Cameronia* with us.

HJ Giles's diary continues with names of agents and friends he met up with in Alexandria including Clan Line friends and colleagues as they arrived and sailed again. When family friend Capt Worthington arrived, he was able to tell HJ that his wife had met HJ's daughter (Anne) in Burton, and 'all at home were very well'. His wife and family had been in Neston after having been bombed out and during that time often visited old friends in Burton. During the entire voyage home, HJ received no letters from his family so had no idea what was really happening after they were bombed out, other than Capt Worthington saying that they were now in digs on the Wirral. HJ bought a suit and enough gear to 'take me home'. Whilst in Alexandria he underwent a 'very unpleasant half an hour or so with the ear specialist every day while he picks away at the drums of my ears'. Following his treatment in Alexandria, he took command of the *Llanstephan Castle*. HJ served at sea until the end of the war and received an OBE in 1942. He retired in June 1945. During WWI, he had served as an RNR Officer aboard Admiral Jellicoe's flagship and was present at the Battles of The Falklands, Jutland and Dardanelles campaign. He also had the honour of being an ADC to Edward VIII in 1936.

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