**THE DIARY OF SX49 H M ROBINSON**

**1940**

May 5th

Up at 4am and on fatigue duty. Seen good fight between Bluey the dog and another. Joe and I detailed for duty in the Officers Mess. Polished off the grog and finished up with a bottle of champagne. Left camp at 0600 arrived Pymoint Wharf and sailed in RMS Mauretania at 1330 hours.

Lovely ship obtained nice cabin. Rocked a bit after passing the heads. Few sick. Pork for lunch. Lost cabin HQ boy going down the hole on Fdeck but quite comfortable. Extra good night’s sleep. 6am passing the Heads the rest of the convoy were waiting for us. The Queen Mary, Andras, Aquitania, Empress of Canada, Empress of Britain. The cruises Australia and Canberra our escorts. The position of convoy was

May 6th

Troops happy, cigs and beer cheap 2500 aboard, good sleep.

May 7th

Empress of Japan joined us pulling in behind the Canada. Can't be far from Melbourne.

May 8th

6am duty on the Bridge. The captain seems a good sort. In the Bight and the weather calm.

May 9th

SW corner of WA with planes overhead.

May 10th

Convoy altered formation. Slower vessels dropped behind. 10.30 passed Rottnest Island. Berthed Fremantle 1300 hours. Went ashore with Max and Tex and caught taxi for Perth. Posted letters. Had a few spots at the Grand and then down to the Swan River and hired a motorboat and went upstream and pulled into Swan Brewery. Hospitality too great. Met Abdul later on and off to Rose Street.

May 11th

Pulled out Empress went in.

May 12th

Riot on the Mary on account of no leave. Away at 12.30. Fouled a buoy and the Commodore from the Britain signaled as is necessary so we clapped on 24 knots. Leander with us in the middle of the convoy. Last of Australia sighted at 2.30pm when will I see it again. NW direction.

May 13th

Rain and NNW. Ship rolling, Lucky at 2 up. Now have £43.

May 14th

Crossed Tropic of Capricorn last night. Warm below decks, swimming, baths opened. In vicinity of Cocos Islands. Japan lost a man overboard. Cruiser and Japan went back to search.

May 15th

Getting warmer. Swell on man of Japan drowned, was mounting aft gun. Sailor from off the Leander overboard, picked up by Andras. Max and I enjoying it. Scotty looking after my gear

May 16th

Course altered overnight, owing to Italy, being warlike. Indian ocean deep blue course SW.

May 17th

Still SW doubt whether Aquitania has enough fuel. Water restrictions imposed. Leander left convoy. We have rails and cheer boat rolling. Few cases Mumps and sore throats.

May 18th

Boxing. 10th went very well Kite especially. Poor Tex got bowled early. Got Ron Whitaker to go in his corner.

May 19th

Birthday. Had a few drinks and won £12 on 2 up. Wrote letters to Jess, Sandy and the others

May 20th

Canberra returns and now joined by Shropshire. Pipe the decks and farewelled Canberra.

May 21st

Boxing, Kite and Nolan win, looks like being good, very fast.

May 22nd

Cold and windy. George Newcombe and self, good friends. Sold 3000 photos of ship for him. Pouty always in his cabin for supper.

May 23rd

Got the tip may go into action when landed. Speed reduced to save Aquitania's fuel as she came from New Zealand.

May 24th

One case of Scarlet, the Mens Lounge converted into Hospital. Heard wireless possibly nearing Durban.

May 25th

9th Battalion lost one chap. Body commuted to deep. Red Ensign flown half mast, pulled down as body lowered. Last post.

Convoy zig zag this am. Ship passed going opposite direction all lights out. Wary of anything afloat in these waters. Travelling north. We head starboard and Aquitania port side, whose steering went mad and she bolted.

May 26th

As 0600 are headed East still. Dark, but Lighthouse is visible on Port beam. Berthed 10am at Victoria Pier. View coming in magnificent with mountains etc. Troops gave eggs to niggers on Wharf. Police smart with white helmets and chased niggers with truncheon’s. Lots of mine sweepers with guns mounted. Went on leave with Max and Scotty. Cabled Jess £20. Lady in bank very courteous. Invited us to go for drive.