

inner cabin which then cost £28 of which I had to pay half £14. I found that there would be ten of us and myself going over on the Gaika. Two were going to continue their studies as Veterinary Surgeon and the other eight were going over like myself to join some Unit.

We eventually got away four of us sharing a four berth cabin which was very comfortable and we had a nice trip round to Cape Town. Here I was told by the Union-Castle that the management had decided to grant me a free passage and so my £14 was refunded.

On account of enemy submarines being on the prowl in the Atlantic and we being not escorted had to travel way out towards the American coast. Here we experienced some rough weather. Those big Atlantic waves on two days reached the boat deck occasionally and it was a job getting ones food down. Well after four weeks travel, the Gaika only did 10 miles an hour should I say knots, we reached St Helena where we were to anchor for the day to take on water and a few stores. These ships then of course used coal and not oil as today. We decided to go ashore and see what was to be seen. It was raining and the walking was not too pleasant but we eventually reached Yellow Woods where Napoleon was interned and where he died. He was of course not buried there but in France. We had a look at the town and Jacobs Ladder which has 70 steps but you can only see 69 as the bottom one is buried. People do walk up the steps but I believe there is a special way - keep one knee stiff or something similar. The young boys slide down the rails and apparently come to no harm.

Leaving St. Helena we travelled to Ascension Island where we were not allowed to go ashore. It is here that a great number of turtles are caught which I think are exported for soup. During the last war a lot of use was made of this island for landing of aeroplanes carrying men and war material for the North African campaign. Here too was one of the Cable Company stations.

Leaving Ascension we made for Free Town where we were to join a convoy for England. There were of course booms guarding the entrance to the inner anchorage as a protection against German Subs. Here we went ashore and what a dirty town we struck. There were actually crows and one or two vultures scavenging in the streets. We did not spend much time in the town but returned to the old Gaika and tried our hand at fishing but there was too strong a current running so we soon gave up.

We eventually got away in a convoy of about ten ships and two destroyers. As there were of course no lights each ship trailed a large white barrel as I suppose they had also clamped down on wireless. What speed the convoy was supposed to maintain I don't know but the poor old Gaika battled to keep ten knots. During the day we often saw the ship ahead of us signalling in semaphore with flags - which I could read - Gaika please keep your position. On the second day one of the ships must have had some trouble for she suddenly stopped and one of the destroyers went to her but soon came on and we left the Blue Funnel ship. We had been at sea about seven weeks and were getting a bit tired of the sea, I wonder how these sailors who travel in ships for years get on. I am afraid I would never make a sailor. We eventually reached Plymouth where everyone got ready to land and very pleased to do so. Many of the passengers were fairly broke by now and I am afraid the poor stewards had a thin time as regards tips. One old chap was approached by his steward and I heard him say all I have is three pence and hoping my people will meet me otherwise I will have to borrow my fare to London. Anyway his people did meet him. The rail fare to London was about two pounds and when I handed the booking clerk two golden sovereigns his eyes opened and wanted to know where I had got the gold. England then of course was not using gold.

So here we were/