

S/S "ETHEL RADCLIFFE"

SWANSEA.
22.10.40.

Dear All,

Just a line to let you know that we all but sailed last night. We reached the lock gates but the air raid warning prevented us from going through. The raid was not very serious. The skipper has been ashore to get another permit from the Admiralty, and he says we shall go tomorrow morning. I turned in at 7.30 pm last night, thinking I had to go on watch at midnight. I woke up at about 3 am. and realised the engines weren't going!

Really, it's been a rare scream down here lately. We have been going to sail every day for a week, but each time something has turned up. First the pumps broke, then ~~the~~ a galley boy was wanted, then the firemen were missing; people kept slipping ashore in an attempt to leave the ship. When eventually we did get everyone on board just as we were due to sail, "Chippy", to sailors and an A.B. went ashore. The police were informed, everybody on the docks practically was looking for them. Eventually they were found. To-night we shall have very restricted leave. At the shipping

office, when the ^{2.}agents are trying to find a fireman or an A.B or someone, everybody slips behind odd corners, and are not to be found anywhere! The one magic word "Ethel Radcliffe" does it.

I am going ashore in about an hour's time, to receive a little instruction in the handling of a "Hotchkiss" machine-gun. She's a very nice job.

I hope things are still quiet at home and that travelling has improved a little. How is my key?

I think it will be quite safe for you to write up to the end of this month (to Canada of course). Perhaps two or even all three of you could write eh? back on a different day, naturally. I don't want you to strain yourselves mind you, but it would be nice.

Give my love to all; I have written to Grandma; see you all again soon,

Your very affectionate son and brother,
Len.