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1st Endorsement on
District Intelligence Officer confidential
letter of August 18, 1942

Office of the Commandant, Fourth Naval District
(District Staff Headquarters)
Building #4
Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pa.

A6-S/A16-3

August 19, 1942

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commandant, Fourth Naval District.
To: The Chief of Naval Operations (2 copies)
VIA: Commander Eastern Sea Frontier (1 copy)
Subject: Interview with survivors - SS "MALDONADO"
(Uruguayan) formerly Italian SS "FAUSTO".

Enclosures: (A) Summary of statements by survivors (copy of)
(herewith) (B) Copy of form NNI-142.
(C) Copy of crew list.

1. Forwarded for information.

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COMMANDER IN CHIEF
U.S. FLEET
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W. L. HECK
Chief of Staff and Aide

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FOURTH NAVAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE OFFICE
1432 Bankers Securities Building, Juniper & Walnut Streets
Philadelphia, Pa.

18 August 1942

From: District Intelligence Officer
To : Commandant, Fourth Naval District

Subject: INTERVIEW WITH SURVIVORS - SS "MALDONADO"
(URUGUAYAN) (FORMERLY ITALIAN SS "FAUSTO")

Enclosures: (herewith)

- A. Summary of statements by survivors
- B. NNI-142
- C. Crew List
- D. Copy of report for the Chief of the Bureau of
Medicine and Surgery
- E. Copy of report to Federal Communications Comm-
ission, dated 18 August 1942. (Original for-
warded direct)
- F. Copy of report to the Harbor Defense Headquarters,
Fort DuPont, Delaware, dated 18 August 1942.
(Original forwarded direct)

1. This report is predicated upon information furnished to the District Intelligence Office, Fourth Naval District to the effect that thirteen survivors of the sinking of the SS "MALDONADO" (Uruguayan) would arrive at the Section Base, U. S. Naval Base, Cape May, New Jersey.

2. Enclosures (A), (B), (C), (D), (E) and (F), forwarded herewith, constitute the official report of the intelligence inter-
viewing party with respect to said sinking.


W. T. SMITH

NAVY DEPARTMENT
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
Washington

COMMANDER IN CHIEF
U.S. FLEET
August 25, 1942
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MEMORANDUM FOR FILE

1942 AUG 27 10 38

Subject: Summary of Statements by Survivors of SS "MALDONADO", (Ex Italian FAUSTO) Uruguayan Freighter, 5285 G.T., Operated by the National Administration of the Port of Montevideo.

1. The "MALDONADO" was torpedoed at 2355 EWT, August 1, 1942 at a point 260 miles South, 18° west of Bermuda, plotted as 27° 55' N., 66° 27' W., (conflicting report says attack was in 28° 20' N., 63° 10' W.); while enroute from Montevideo to New York with 5800 tons of tinned corned beef, 1000 tons of leather and wool, and about 1000 tons of general cargo. The ship was seen to sink at 0005 EWT, August 2, 1942.
2. The freighter was on course 312° true; (conflicting reports states 308°), speed 10 knots in 2800 fathoms, not zigzagging, fully lighted, with two reflectors illuminating the Uruguay flag on the stern, radio silent, two officers on watch on the bridge, two crew members topside. The weather was clear, sea calm, light east wind, full bright moon, with good visibility; no other ships in sight.
3. The sub had been sighted earlier and is reported to have followed the ship for five hours. At about 2345 EWT, three warning shots were fired across the bow and the sub by Morse blinker signal ordered abandon ship; and this was done on Master's order. (A conflicting report states the sub used warning flares to convey order to abandon ship, then shelled the ship). After ship was abandoned, the sub, which was lying awash about 1000 meters off the port beam, fired a torpedo that hit at the engine room, causing undetermined damage and blowing out all lights. Approximately 10 minutes later a second torpedo fired from off the starboard beam hit the ship, and she immediately sank. (Conflicting report mentions only one torpedo). No distress signals were sent, and ship was unarmed. There were no secret codes aboard, and routing instructions sank with the ship.
4. The crew of 49 abandoned ship in 4 lifeboats on Master's orders and got safely away before the ship was torpedoed. The sub commander called for both the Master and the Chief Engineer to come aboard, but only the Master was taken aboard, the sub proceeding without waiting for the Chief Engineer. The Master was taken prisoner but all others survived; one boat with 13 being picked up by the U.S.S. OWL, and landed at Bermuda on August 6, another with 13 being picked up by the U.S.C.G. 491 and landed at Cape May on August 16, and the remaining 22 in 2 lifeboats were rescued by the "CAPETOWN CASTLE" and landed at Halifax on August 8, 1942.
5. The sub was described as very large about 70 meters long, 700 tons, newly painted light blue gray, no net cutter, cruiser type bow, two periscopes, elliptical conning tower, 4-5 meters high forward, cut away aft mounting machine guns; and was also armed with 2 deck guns placed one forward and one aft of the tower. The craft was powered by Diesel motors and its speed was estimated between 18-20 knots. The number on the conning tower is variously reported as U-16-19 and 27; but one group of survivors were unanimous in identifying the sub, from ONI-220, as of the 740 ton German class.
6. When last seen the sub was submerging, headed Northwest..

E. D. Henderson
Ensign, U.S.N.R.

CC: ONI B-8, 16-2 (4 copies), F-10, Cominch, Cominch F-21-22, J-252, F-353, F-37 (C & R), Op-20-G-II, Op-23-L, Op-28, Op-30, Op-39, BuShips, BuOrd, (Re-6-B), BuOrd, Atlantic Fleet Anti-Submarine Unit, BuPers-6.

CBW