

CONFIDENTIAL.

11
ED/139/1307.
1968 May, 1942.

R.

SHIPPING CASUALTIES SECTION - TRADE DIVISION.

REPORT OF AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MASTER, CAPTAIN A. HENNEY.

S. S. HELPOMENE.

7,011 Gross Tons.

CONVOY No. O.S.19.

Sunk by torpedo from
submarine on 5th March.

Captain Henney.

We were bound for New Orleans and sailed from Belfast on 12th February. We were armed with 1 - 90 m.m. gun, 2 Twin Maxims, 2 Hotchkiss, 4 P.A.C. Rockets and a Kite. The crew numbered 149, including 3 Naval and 4 Military Gunners. There were no casualties but 3 of the crew were badly injured and 2 slightly injured. The Confidential Books were all thrown overboard in a weighted box. Degaussing was on.

2. We sailed from Belfast at 0500 on the 12th February and formed up in Convoy O.S.19. We proceeded in Convoy, without incident, until we were in a position South of the Azores when on the 22nd February we received instructions to proceed independently. After leaving the Convoy we received Admiralty Instructions by wireless to proceed through the Bahamas Channel, but on the 27th February we received another Admiralty Message instructing us to proceed through the Windward passage instead. We sighted nothing although we frequently received submarine warnings, and we proceeded until 2110 on the 5th March and when in a position $25^{\circ} 35' N. - 62^{\circ} 39' W.$ we were struck by a torpedo.

3. The torpedo struck us on the Port side under the bridge in way of No. 4 tank. The explosion wrecked the bridge, accommodation and the main wireless transmitter and badly damaged the auxiliary transmitter. The alarm bell rang and acting on my standing orders the Engineer on duty stopped the engines and the crew mustered on the lower bridge and were checked up by the Officers. I sent the 2nd Officer round to see that the guns crews were closed up and ordered a strict lock-out for the submarine to be kept. There were 3 men in the accommodation at the time and all these men were badly injured. We brought them out on deck and put them into the Port lifeboat which was partly lowered down the ship's side. I now decided that as the ship was fairly steady and she did not appear to be settling down I would try and get her under way again, and asked the Chief Engineer to take a fireman and another Engineer down to the Engine room and start the engines. They managed to get the engines working but the ship went round in circles and I found that the steering gear on the bridge was damaged. The time was now 2130 and I decided the best thing to do was to

Distribution.

Commander in Chief, America and West Indies.
I.M.N.G.
D.T.D.
D.T.D. (D.E.M.S.)
D.A.S.W.
D.T.S.D.
D.T.M.I.
N.P.D. (Car. Edwards)

N.I.D. (Odr. Robertson MacDonald)
N.I.D. I/P.W.
N.I.D. Odr. Winn.
D.N.O. London.
D.N.C. Bath.
Captain Beswick.
Mr. R. Allen.
Files.

M. P. M. S. V.

to abandon ship and wait till daylight before attempting to repair the damage. We lowered 3 boats and at 2140 just as I had pulled away of the ship in the last boat another torpedo struck the ship in the Port side and at 2200 a third torpedo hit her in way of the main mast between No. 7 and No. 8 tanks on the Port side. The ship began to settle by the stern and the bows reared up and when she was vertical she disappeared stern first at 2225. Just after the ship sank there was a big splash and a flash about 1,000 yards from where the ship had been. I heard a thud, I thought it might have been a shell from the submarine, but we did not see anything of a gun flash.

4. The three boats were brought together and we adjusted the numbers of the crew in each of the boats. I put the Chief Officer in charge of one, the 2nd and 3rd Officers in the second boat and I took charge of the 3rd one. We put one of the wounded men in each of the three boats and the Chief Steward and the 5th Engineer who was an excellent first aid man into the boat with the cabin boy who was the most seriously injured of the 3. I told all the Officers to use the boats together until daylight but to continue looking in a westerly direction. The Wireless Operator had sent out a message from the ship but as the transmitter was damaged he did not know that the message went out.

5. At 0600 on the 6th March I sighted a vessel in the vicinity of the sinking of our ship and we made towards it. We sent out radio signals with the lifeboat emergency set but the vessel did not take any notice, she just manoeuvred in circles, eastward and then giving out belugas of redish smoke which came over the ship. I think this vessel must have been a supply ship for the submarine. Realizing that we were not going to get any help from this vessel I ordered the crew to make for San Juan. We all hoisted sails and started a motor for San Juan. By the morning of the 7th the boats were out of sight of each other, but just before dusk I sighted the 2nd Officer's boat some distance ahead. On the morning of the 8th March at 1021 I sighted a vessel steaming towards us and sent out a radio message and the boat came over and picked us up at 1115. When we boarded the vessel I told the Captain that there were two other boats in the vicinity one of which I knew to be ahead, and the Captain altered course to search for it. This vessel was the American H.M. IDAHO. We sighted the 2nd Officer's boat and picked the crew up at 115 and then went back along our search looking for the third boat, and at 1500 we picked the 3rd boat up. The IDAHO was bound for Capetown but the Captain considered that the Cabin Boy was too badly injured to stand the journey and decided to return to San Juan.

We arrived at San Juan during the evening of March 9th and the wounded men were immediately taken to hospital, while the rest of the crew put up at hotels which the American Red Cross had arranged to await transportation home. Five of the crew volunteered to join H.M.S. ARCHER as she was short of crew and the remainder left on the 9th March in the s.s. SEMINOLE bound for New York on the night of the 12th April. The crew did not sail on the 12th April and sent to the New York pool while the Officers and Engineers waited for further instructions. Eventually we received orders from the Ministry of War Transport to proceed home, and I and some of the Officers came home in the SOURABAYA and JAMARA PLANTER. The 2nd Officer came back in the EMPIRE RANGELL as Chief Officer and Mr. Wheller, the Chief Cook, took passage in the EMPIRE IRWIN, while the Chief Officer obtained passage in the OCEAN VENTURE and the 1st Radio Officer in the PETER BOGAN.

UTICA OBSERV
DISPATCH
APR. 5
APLON

BRITISH/US
Melpomene four
~ Fr

19
10

DUNDIN

SMH

S.S. MELPOMENE

PAGE 3

7. The Chief Engineer, Mr. Andrews, The Fireman, Mr. Beard and the 2nd Engineer Mr. Dremald volunteered to go into the Engine room and start the engines not knowing the extent of the damage to the ship. While the 5th Engineer Mr. Ford's knowledge of first aid and his care of the wounded men probably saved them from further suffering, particularly the Cabin boy Howell who had had his left leg badly shattered.

8. I should like here to make two suggestions: firstly, that we should have the hoods of the boats split fore and aft and fitted permanently to the gunwales of the lifeboats to keep out the water and draft, and secondly, that a small piece of chain should be fitted to the sea anchor painters where it chafes badly as it passes over the boat's bow.

BUY DEFENSE BONDS AND STAMPS

Boston Store

You'll Be Delighted With

FOREST BREATH SPRAY

Made from Fir Balsam Needles



\$1.

Bottle Complete with Atomizer!

FOREST BREATH SPRAY—made direct from Fir Balsam needles brings to your home the richest, true fragrance of deep forests.

FOREST BREATH—not only gives you the very tang and freshness of Fir Balsam but, sprayed in your home, battles all "unpleasant" household odors. Buy a bottle today!

You'll like the genuine woodland fragrance! Attractively gift wrapped.

Buy Boston Store

GOP Favors Local Rent Regulation

Albany—A statement of a state subcommittee on the subject of local rent regulation today was made available to the public. It is the first of a series of reports to be published after an earlier report of the subcommittee.

Willfully raising rent regulation to meet some emergency conditions in the city of Albany, the subcommittee report says that the state legislature should take steps to prevent such a situation from occurring in the future.

It is suggested that the state legislature should take steps to prevent such a situation from occurring in the future.

It is suggested that the state legislature should take steps to prevent such a situation from occurring in the future.

Two Men Held In Kidnaping

Chicago—Two Chicago men were held today in connection with the kidnaping of Mrs. Mary Jacobson, 33, of Chicago City, Ill., after she was reported to have been directed to a rooming house where the other was awaiting her.

Federal Bureau of Investigation agents and Chicago police officers today held the two men, according to reports from Mrs. Jacobson to accompany them here from Hammond, Ind., last Thursday night, and leaving her bound and gagged in a suburban park after she had attended her.

Detective Chief Ernest D. Murphy said the men, registered as George S. Smith, 28, and Joseph J. Smith, 28, would be held until for federal or Hamilton County authorities, whichever would file the more serious charge.

"Smiths surrendered to Chicago, yesterday afternoon, saying he wanted to give up because his partner planned 'to pull another job' last night," Murphy was quoted in a nearby rooming house. The detectives said Smiths were being held in connection with the kidnaping of Mrs. Jacobson.

MELTON

Boston Store

GREATEST COAT SALE EVER! CONTINUES THURSDAY

Coats That Should Sell for 18.98 to 24.98

Superb Fabrics!
Tweed
Twill
Mixtures
Fleeces

\$15

Women's, Misses', Juniors', Reekers, Dressmaker, Box Style!

All styles, colors and sizes in the best of fabrics and materials! This big attempt includes the most beautiful fabrics and styles! Hurry drive tomorrow for the Greatest Coat Sale Ever!

COMPANION SALE OF COATS AND SUITS

20 styles to 11 and 12 to 14. Every one made to fit for best wear.

\$10

Buy Boston Store—Great Value!

Please Carry Small Packages!

Boston Store

STARTS THURSDAY - AFTER-EASTER SHOE SALE

In Our Downstairs Shoe Department

400 Pairs of Women's 2.50, 3.00

DRESS SHOES 1.94

New Spring models in slip black, brown and tan. Sizes 5 to 9 in practically all last styles. See them!

Your Last Opportunity To Buy Them at This Price! Medico Pedic

NURSES OXFORDS 2.44

After Easter Sale of Children's

STRAPS, OXFORDS 1.00

Many styles in quality styles. Sizes 5 to 12.

Men's 2.50 Flexible Sole

WORK OXFORDS 1.99

Special shoe Department

Revived Provisionals

Under the revised measure, at request of the OPA, the federal government would designate a rent-control area. A federal purchase order would be issued to the landlord if he made a misstatement, punishable by \$500 fine or a year in jail, also was included for such a penalty might encourage collusion between landlord and tenant in a circumventive scheme.

Legislative leaders believe posting of rentals should be required in order to prevent the kind of themselves aggrieved permitted to appeal to the court.

OPA Wants Results

The OPA, which is authorized by federal law to interfere in a rent situation, is necessary, "is willing to go along with us until we see how our plan works out."

Further amendments to the proposed civil protection act, disputed by the OPA, have been recommended by Governor Lehman and majority leaders, were scheduled before a vote on the measure, expected next week. Leaders said proposed changes were "minor and non-controversial."

Gov. Lehman Vetoes Rights-of-Way Bill

Albany—Gov. Lehman vetoed a bill today which he said would "impose a wholly unjustified cost" upon the state for the acquisition of rights-of-way for state highways located on the strategic network of highways.

The Governor said the bill, sponsored by Arthur L. Passons, Schenectady County assemblyman, would "also require the state to pay the entire cost of the construction of bridges, on such highways," even though the bridges are located within the boundaries of a city.

"I am most anxious to facilitate the construction of strategic highways in the State of New York," Lehman's veto message said. "However, the bill should be limited to such highways for which the state is already liable under the provisions of the defense highway act of 1941."

In addition, Lehman said the bill should be limited to July 1, 1942, because of its "defence" nature.

Lehman also vetoed the Strong-Kelly bill which provided that civil service employees should not be required to serve compulsory periods in the military, the Lehman said that Messrs. Carl Casella, New York City, the Association of State Civil Service Employees and the Conference of Mayors, had opposed the bill.

Lehman approved the Barrett bill extending the maximum number of hours an eight-hour workday.

Italian Sub Credited With 3 New Sinkings

London—The British radio said yesterday that an Italian submarine returning from operations in the Atlantic lost of sinking three vessels aggregating more than 20,000 tons. The British radio said the three were:

Milpome, British motor tanker, 7,011 tons.

Chaffin, British steamer, a tanker, 8,837 tons.

Recon, Swedish freighter, 4,312 tons.

The Milpome tanker was a French vessel, trading with Mexico, and was sunk before the war began in 1939. The British radio news on Aug. 2, 1940, when British naval submarines at Port Said, Egypt, refused to permit her to sail for France, stating that the oil would reach Nazi hands.

DIAMONDS RESET JEWELRY AND WATCH REPAIRING SIMS

107 Ganong St. One of 104 Up City, N.Y.

Boston Store A Thrilling Value Opportunity!

Start your cotton pickin' here tomorrow! These are new cottons you'll live in, work in, serve in—and love from now on! Washable colors in the daintiest of styles for your selection! But be early for better choice!

SENSATIONAL SALE! 3500 BEAUTIFUL WASH DRESSES

These Are NOT House Dresses!

\$139

4 for 6.50

Arranged on Tables According to Sizes: 14 to 20, 38 to 44, 46 to 52

Finer Quality Percaloes, Chambrays, Broadcloths

All washable! Not in years have you seen such a sale! Not House Dresses, but one of the most remarkable Finer Dress buys this store has ever made!—The finest, longest-wearing qualities these fabrics could be!

A Veritable Rainbow of Refreshing Colors

Pastel colors in their brightest and most liveliest moments! Deep shades to rival the liveliest dress you have! Colorfast (Sunfast and Tuffast), they'll retain their colorful charm throughout their life.

Very Newest Patterns and Trimming Details

Prints, Stripes, Floral Designs, Checks, Plaids, Geometric Designs with Novelty Trimming or contrasting trim! Designs and patterns to make you look even more slender! You can easily choose several that you'll love!

EVERY ONE OF THEM IS GUARANTEED WASHABLE!

Special Purchase FROM FAMOUS MAIL ORDER HOUSE

Some Are Labeled "Crown Tested"!

WASHABLE SPUN RAYON DRESSES 1.09

All are WASHABLE! All are new SPRING STYLES! Solid colors, prints, stripes in sizes 14 to 20, 38 to 44, Junior sizes 11 to 17. All are high-grade spun rayon made to sell for much more! Plenty of styles and colors!

Buy Boston Store—Great Value!

APRIL 8, 1942