

D/S «Lorna» (W. L. M. D.) av Bergen.

Reg.ton br.: 3286, last: stykgods, ødelagt 7de august 1918 paa reise fra New York til Havre. Omkommet: 1 mand.

Copy of Maritime declaration

made before The Consulate in Plymouth, on August 16th 1918, administered by Orlando J. H. Davis, R.S.O.O., V. Consul, Plymouth, with nautical assessors Frederik C. Rollin, Master Mariner, Thomas Ellis, Master Mariner, in connection with the above ship's having been sunk at sea on a passage from New York to Havre on the 7th August, 1918, at 4.5 p.m.

Captain Ferdinand Johnsen, age 34 years, appeared and, upon a request being made for log books of the steamer, he informed the Consul that they were lost at the time of the explosion on his ship, which sank her, the books were in the office on deck and this room was blown up by the explosion.

In reply to the first question:

1. How did the casualty occur?

The Master made the following statement and said he proceeded in the steamship «Lorna», of Bergen, in command, from New York, on the 17th July last, with a cargo of general goods bound to Havre, sailed about 4 p. m. and as ordered by the Naval Authorities in New York proceeded for Hampton Road for convoy. Arrived there on the 19th of July and on the 21st of July steamer proceeded to sea to continue her voyage at noon. The steamer was in good order and condition, variable winds and weathers were encountered during the voyage. All went well until the 4th August, when at 4.50 a. m. the steering chain broke in the sheave on the starboard side, whereupon the steamer was stopped. He immediately set to repair the damage and this was completed by 9 a.m. the same day, whereupon he continued his voyage. Nothing further to remark happened until 4.5 p. m. on the 7th August, 1918, when in Lat. 47.00 North, Long. 12.00 west, slight sea swell, fine

weather, and steamer making 8 knots speed, the appearer was on watch on the bridge when he heard heavy sounds like those of an explosion on his steamer. The sounds were like dead thumps or blows low down in the steamer and at once he saw clouds of coal dust rising from the deck on the starboard side and bunkers of his vessel, mixed with a volume of steam. Immediately the steamer began to sink by the stern and the after deck soon filled with water. The boat on the starboard side hanging in the davits was mashed by the force of the explosion. The watch below rushed on deck and together with the men on watch, excepting the Second Engineer, H. M. Hansen, who was at the engines, at once made for the port lifeboat, which was placed in the water and, after taking his sextant and ship's papers, the appearer also went into the lifeboat and ordered it to be rowed away from the steamer. The boat was rowed clear of the ship and when about 20 fathoms off he saw a submarine rising on the starboard bow about 100 fathoms distant. The submarine approached the boat and when she was a short way off someone shouted from her in English, «Hands up. Bring ship's papers.» The boat went alongside and the appearer went on board of the submarine which he found to be of German nationality. The Commander of her took the ship's papers and the Captain's certificate, and retained them, declining to give any receipt for them. He asked the appearer whether he had any secret instructions from the Admiralty; upon receiving a negative reply he ordered the appearer to return to his boat. Upon the appearer asking to be towed toward the land the Commander declined and the submarine submerged. In the meantime the «Lorna» had sunk and disappeared. The appearer ordered the lifeboat to be rowed over the spot to try to find any trace of the Second Engineer Hansen, but could not find any. In his opinion the unfortunate man being in the engine room was killed by the force of the explosion

in that part. Upon finding no trace of Hansen, a course was set to the East for France. The course was continued, weather fine, with westerly wind and slight swell, and at about 7 a.m. on the 9th August he saw smoke on the horizon right ahead. He steered for it and at about noon they came alongside a British patrol boat which took off all the crew and took the lifeboat also aboard. The crew remained on the patrol boat until the 11th August, when they were transferred to another patrol boat and on the 13th August, at 4 a.m., they were landed at Plymouth. The German submarine was painted for about 2 feet from the waterline black band, then all green. She carried two guns, one forward and one aft, and was about 200 feet long. The Norwegian flag was hoisted on the «Lorna» at New York and was kept flying throughout the voyage.

Q. 2. Is the casualty attributable to any fault or defect in ship, engines, boilers, its equipment or manning, or consequent upon any want of precaution?

A. 2. No.

Q. 3. Is the casualty attributable to the nature of the cargo or overloading or unseaworthily loaded?

A. 3. No.

Q. 4. Is the casualty attributable to want of precaution or fault or neglect of anybody?

A. 4. No.

Q. 7. What was, according to the opinion of Master, the cause of the casualty?

A. 7. The firing of a torpedo without warning from a submerged submarine, the torpedo striking the steamer «Lorna» amidships on the starboard side and causing a rent of the ship's plates and exploding internally, whereby water entered steamer and she sank.

The Nautical Assessor having no questions to put the Master retired.

F. Johnsen.

The first witness was:

Hjalmar Jensen, 3rd Engineer, 35 years of age, of Bergen, who stated he proceeded in the steamer «Lorna» of Bergen, from New York, as the 3rd Engineer, on the 17th July, for a voyage to Havre. All went well on the voyage with the exception of slight damage to steering gear which was repaired. The voyage continued some hours later, but the convoy was lost by the delay, and the steamer continued alone. All went well until 4.5 p.m. on the 7th August, 1918, when an explosion occurred in the centre of the engine room and water was admitted into the bunkers and engine room. The apperar had at 4 p.m. relieved the 2nd Engineer in the engine room and had left him down below in front of the engines, and the appearer was proceeding to the deck and had reached the top platform when he felt a heavy shock and explosion and saw the top of the low pressure cylinder blown off and smashed and water flowing into the engine room and bunkers on starboard side. He saw the 2nd Engineer thrown by the force of the explosion into the engines and at once all became dark by reason of clouds of coal dust and steam water was rushing in and filling the engine room and he found himself pressed to the ceiling of deck by the water, but eventually saved himself through a small door and got on deck. He found the starboard lifeboat smashed and he went at once to the other lifeboat, where he found the reaminder of the crew and the Master. Before the crew were in the boat the after part of ship was under water. The boat was rowed away from ship'sside and when about 10 fathoms away the «Lorna» sank, that is in about 4 minutes after she was struck. Soon after he saw a submarine appear ahead and came toward the boat when the Commander ordered the Captain to come on board with his papers. He had a conversation in English with the Captain. The appearer heard him tell the Captain that the «Lorna» carried and had 2 guns on board on the

after poop and that he had not seen the Norwegian flag. He said he took the «Lorna» for an American steamer. The appearer states that the «Lorna» carried no guns whatever. The Captain in about 5 minutes returned to the boat and the submarine disappeared. The course of boat was set for land and two days later, on the 9th August, at 12.40 p.m., the crew were taken off by an English patrol boat, and two days later on the 11th August they were placed on another patrol boat and landed at Plymouth at 4 a.m. on the 13th August, 1918. The Norwegian flag was flying from the time the steamer left New York.

A. 2. No, everything was in good condition.

A. 3. No, she was not down to her marks.

A. 4. No.

The witness would like to say the Commander of the submarine asked whether anyone on the «Lorna» had seen the periscope of his ship, but the answer was in the negative for no one had seen the periscope or a submarine until after the casualty.

A. 7. That through a torpedo striking the starboard side of the steamer and splitting the plates which allowed water to enter and fill the vessel causing her to sink.

The Nautical Assessors have nothing to ask.

Hjalmar Jensen.

The witness retired and thereupon the second witness presented was:

Ernst Nygaard, 52 years of age, of Bergen, Carpenter, states he was carpenter on the steamship «Lorna» of Bergen and proceeded in her from New York on 17th July for Hampton Roads and on the 19th July Arrived there and proceeded on the 21st with a large number of other steamers under convoy for a voyage to Havre. Nothing to remark occurred until the 4th August when the chain of the

steering gear broke in the sheave. The steamer was stopped and after a few hours the new chain was fitted and she proceeded on her voyage alone, for the convoy had by this time been lost to sight. At about 4 p.m. on the 7th August the witness was on the after deck at work when he heard an explosion and by the force of the air thereby he was thrown bodily against the hatch and as the water came over the deck he was washed back. He saw a volume of black and steam rise at the time of the explosion. When he recovered himself he made his way to the bridge deck and upon finding the starboard lifeboat had been broken and smashed he made his way to the port lifeboat and assisted to get her into the water. The steamer was in the meanwhile sinking and by the time the boat was in the water she was nearly level with the deck aft. The crew went into the boat and she was rowed away. When about a ship's length off, the steamer sank by the stern. The boat returned to the spot to try to rescue the 2nd Engineer, but without success. He saw only wreckage from the ship floating. Later he saw a submarine coming to the boat and when alongside the Commander shouted for Captain to bring his papers, which he did. About 5 minutes later the Captain came again into the boat and the submarine went away and disappeared. A course was set on the boat for land. After 44 hours a British patrol ship took off the crew at 12.40 p.m. on the 9th, and on the 11th transferred the crew to another ship, which brought them to Plymouth, where they arrived on the morning of the 13th August. The witness states the Commander shouted asking how many guns the «Lorna» had, and upon being told none he insisted that she had two on her quarter or poop deck. The Norwegian flag was flying throughout the voyage.

A. 2. No.

A. 3. No.

A. 4. No.

A. 7. The cause of the casualty was the side of the ship being blown out and

burst by a torpedo fired from a German submarine without any warning, whereby the ship was flooded with water and sank.

E. Nygaard.

The Assessors having no questions to ask the witness retired.

The third witness presented was:

Thoralf Warner, 19 years of age, of Wenersberg, Sweden, Able Seaman, who states he proceeded from New York in the steamship «Lorna» of Bergen for a voyage to Havre on the 17th July. All went well during the voyage until 4.5 p.m. of the 7th August, when witness was at the wheel on bridge steering the course, when he felt the ship shake and almost immediately he saw a column of coal, water and steam rise from the starboard deck of the ship and on looking aft saw the after deck full of water. He at once went to the starboard lifeboat, but seeing it had become smashed he went away to the port lifeboat. He went into her and so soon as the crew were in her she rowed away, and about 5 minutes later the «Lorna» sank stern first. He then saw a submarine which came to the boat and the Captain went on to her. He returned and the submarine then went away. The lifeboat was set on her course for land, and after 44 hours the crew were taken off by a British patrol boat and 2 days later were transferred to another patrol boat and landed at Plymouth at 4 a.m. on the 13th. The Norwegian flag was flying aft during the voyage.

A. 2. No.

A. 3. No.

A. 4. No.

A. 6. Nothing further to add.

A. 7. The cause of the casualty was through a torpedo going through the ship's side into the engine room and flooding her with water, whereupon she sank.

The Nautical Assessors have no questions to ask.

Thoralf Warner.

The witness having retired, the fourth witness presented was:

Osman Nordal, 23 years of age, of Namsos, A. B., states he proceeded in the steamship «Lorna» from New York on the 17th July, 1918, for a voyage to Havre with a cargo of general goods. He says all went well until Sunday, the 4th August, when the steering gear chain broke and all hands were set to repair it. Meanwhile the convoy in which the «Lorna» was proceeding had left and continued their voyage. The repairs to the chain were completed and the «Lorna» resumed her voyage alone on the same day after a delay about 3 hours. All went again well until the 7th August, 1918, at 3.30 p.m. appearer went on look-out from the fore-castle head, weather clear and fine. He saw no sail or steam on the horizon nor any periscope. He had strict orders as to this and kept a good look-out. At 4.5 the appearer felt the ship shake and once he saw a column of coal smoke and steam rise from the steamer. He at once went over the rail intending to jump into the water but later he went to the port lifeboat and went into her to clear her. He saw by this time the after deck was full of water and the steamer was sinking rapidly. The boat rowed away with the Captain and crew, excepting the 2nd Engineer, who was missing. They had just cleared the steamer when he saw her sink by the stern. After this he saw a submarine approaching and when she came to them the Captain went on board. The Commander of the submarine shouted. «Hands up,» and «Where's the gunner?» He was answered by all, «There is no gunner.» The submarine then left. The boat set a course for land. About 44 hours later the crew were taken off by British patrol boat and eventually landed at Plymouth on the 13th August, 1918, at 4 a.m.

A. 2. No.

A. 3. No.

A. 4. No.

A. 6. Nothing further to add.

A. 7. He confirms previous witnesses that steamer became flooded and sank.

The Nautical Assessors have no questions to ask.

Osman Nordahl.

The evidence was read over in each of the above cases and acknowledged.

The witnesses, none of whom had heard the evidence of the others, then confirmed their evidence on oath.

The Assessors have nothing to remark respecting the proceedings and the record.

The Maritime Declaration was terminated.

Plymouth, 16th August, 1918.

Orlando J. H. Davis,
V. Consul.

Frederick Charles Rollin.	Thomas Ellis
Master Mariner.	Master Mariner.
Nautical Assessors.	

D/S «Sommerstad» (M. S. C. R.) av Kristiania.

Reg. ton br. 3875, ballast, ødelagt 12te august 1918 paa reise fra Bergen til New York. Omkommet: Ingen.

Aar 1918 den 14de august avholdtes efter berammelse sjøforklaring paa det norske generalkonsulat i New York i anledning av at s/s «Sommerstad» paa reise fra Bergen til New York blev torpedert den 12te august 1918.

Forretningen bestyrtes av vicekonsul Tostrup. Som bisiddere forrettet:

1. Georg Høst, tidligere fører av d/s «Nordanger» av Bergen.
 2. Trygve Helliesen, fører av d/s «Cathrine Cuneo» av Kristiania.
- Fremstod

Georg Emil Hansen, hjemmehørende i Sandefjord og forklarte at han

var fører av s/s «Sommerstad», hjemmehørende i Kristiania, av 2503 tons netto drægtighet, 3875 tons brutto og med kjendingmerke M. S. C. R. S/S «Sommerstad» var bygget i 1906 og hadde sidst gjennomgaat besigtelse i Norsk Veritas i ca. 1914 og hadde klasse 1. A. 1, i Norsk Veritas.

«Sommerstad» avgik i ballast fra Bergen den 23de juli for New York via Halifax.

Der hændte intet bemerkelsesværdig paa reisen før skibet blev torpedert den 12te ds.

Angaaende torpederingen fremla kapteinen en rapport som oplæstes og hvortil han henholdt sig.

Rapport:

D/S «Sommerstad» av Kristiania avgik fra Bergen den 23de juli bestemt til New York via Halifax for inspektion, hvortil ankom den 5te august. Paa grund av torpederinger paa kysten av Nova Scotia blev skibet av autoriteterne opholdt til fredag den 9de august, da reisen fortsattes styrende efter instruktioner.

Intet at bemerke indtraf før kl. 8.15 fmd. den 12te aug. ifølge bestikket paa N. br. ca. 40°, lw. 69°, da man fra broen observerte en torpedo paa bakbord side kommende ret mot skibet. Maskinen blev øieblikkelig stoppet og umiddelbart efter git fuld fart agterover for at forsøke at undgaa torpedoen. Denne gik imidlertid under skibet og fortsatte over til styrbords side. Der blev da git fuld fart forover, men pludselig begynder torpedoen at gaa i cirkel og gaar forenom skibet, hvorefter den fortsætter mot dets bb.-side og rammer mellem nr. 3 og 4 rum og eksploderte. Mandskapet blev da ordret til baatene, og tok det ca. 3 minutter til disse var paa vandet. Hele agterskibet og den agterste del av midtskibsbygningen stod da under vand. Det ene brak høretes efter det andet fra skibet, og ca. 6 á 7 min. efter stod skibet ret op og ned med bakken over vandet, i hvilken stilling den blev liggende saalænge den ob-