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EXCERPT FROM 3ND BOARDING REPORT, SS CHARLESTOWN (U.S.), 18 NOVEMBER 1943.

Contact A reported that subject vessel collided with the SS TK VIRGINIA while leaving Milford Haven preparatory to forming convoy on 29 October 1943. Subject vessel had been designated the Commodore of this convoy and according to orders, was to be the first ship to pass through the boom. On board subject vessel was the Commodore, Commander FIELDS, USN, who was on the bridge and observed the collision. Subject vessel was anchored on the north side of Milford Haven just off the port, picked up her anchor and was moving at a speed of 3 knots over the ground aided by a knot and a half current toward the boom. The VIRGINIA, which was anchored on the south side of Milford Haven pulled up her anchor and moved down toward the boom on the port side of subject vessel. She came up at a greater speed than subject vessel apparently intending to beat her to the boom. When subject vessel was about 1,000 yards from the boom, the VIRGINIA which was about abeam, apparently saw that she was unable to beat subject vessel to the boom and reversed her engines. The combination of reversed engines and the tide threw the VIRGINIA directly across the bow of subject vessel and despite reversed engines and a dropped anchor, in an effort to stop subject vessel, her bow rammed the VIRGINIA about midway between the bridge and bow making a hole from the waterline to the weather deck about 2 feet deep.

This accident was thoroughly investigated at Milford Haven and according to Contact A, both Commander FIELDS and the Captain of the Port of Milford Haven, who observed the accident from the shore, completely exonerated subject vessel and complimented the Master on his attempt to avoid the collision.

The damage to subject vessel is above the weather deck. There is a hole in the forecastle head at the bow, oval in shape, about 5 feet long and having a maximum width of about 2 feet.

Dissemination: COMINCH F-20, J.A.G., ✓ Coast Guard.

Op-16-B-5

EMH/mg

27 Nov. 43.

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