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NAVY DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Op-16-B-5

MEMORANDUM FOR FILEALL TIMES GCTRECEIVED  
INT  
18 August 1944

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SUBJECT: Summary of Statements by Survivors of the SS EDWARD M. HOUSE, U.S. Cargo Ship, 7240 G.T.; owned by War Shipping Administration, operated by A. L. Burbank and Co., Ltd., on Government service.

1. The EDWARD M. HOUSE was mined or torpedoed at 1335 GCT on 29 June 1944, in 50.07 N - 00.47 W (approximately 30 miles south of St. Catherine's Point, U.K.), having sailed from Southampton 29 June in convoy enroute to "Utah" Beach, Normandy, via "Omaha" Beach with U.S.A. personnel and an unknown tonnage of U.S.A. equipment; draft before damage, 14'6" forward, aft 19'; after damage, 15' forward, aft 19'. Ship did not sink but completed her mission and returned to U.K. 1 July, under her own power. Ship was drydocked for repairs at Tyne, 11 July.
2. Ship was on a generally southerly course, speed 8 knots, not zig-zagging, radio silent, degaussing on, entire crew at general quarters. The weather was hazy, sea moderate swells, slight breeze from port, visibility fair. Convoy consisted of approximately 20 ships formed in 2 columns. There were also LSTs astern. The EDWARD M. HOUSE was the 3rd or 4th ship in the port column.
3. At approximately 1332 the H. G. BLASDEL was hit. The engines of the EDWARD M. HOUSE were stopped at this time and then started up again. At 1335 an explosion occurred under the forefoot, possibly more to port than starboard. There was a muffled roar and a high column of water was thrown up several hundred feet on both sides of the bow. One survivor stated water was mixed with gravel and shells, apparently from the ocean bottom. Concussion knocked many crew members down. No smoke, flames or odor was noticed. No. 1 hold was half flooded with water and oil from forepeak tank and #1 port and starboard deep tanks. Flooding was controlled by pumps. There was no fire. The main and emergency radio antennae parted. There was no damage to the ship's control machinery. Engines were stopped briefly immediately after the attack until it was ascertained that the damage did not prevent the vessel from continuing with the convoy. No distress message was sent. No counter offensive was offered since no target was sighted. At approximately 1700, 29 June, cargo and troops were discharged at "Utah" Beach and at 1600, 1 July, ship arrived at Southampton. Confidential codes retained on board in the custody of the Captain.

After ship was beached at Southampton it was possible to examine the holes in her bow. One of the survivors stated that on the port side there was a hole 3' or 4' wide with the plates blown inward beginning at the stem. Aft of the hole there was a dent at least 5' or 6' long. On the starboard side there was a hole corresponding to the first, but slightly smaller and with the plates blown outward. There was a double wrinkle around the hull amidships just forward of the settling tanks. A diver who examined the vessel off the beach reported that the keel was broken at this point. The deck plates between #1 and #2 holds also buckled.

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4. Ship was not abandoned. Total ship's complement unknown, but there was approximately 42 crew, 28 Armed Guard and 520 troops. All survived with only minor casualties.
5. No mine, torpedo or submarine was sighted at any time.
6. Steel, copper and brass fragments believed to have come from the torpedo or mine were found on the forepeak and in the forward gun turret. The brass fragments were about 1/16" thick. The copper was paper-thin, about 22 gauge. Most of the pieces were not more than 3" or 4" long. There was one large cone-shaped fragment of brass about 3" in diameter at the top and 4" in diameter and threaded at the bottom. This large piece and samples of various other pieces were turned over to U. S. naval authorities by the Armed Guard officer.

Three soldiers in #1 hold claimed to have heard a high-pitched whirring noise of 3 or 4 seconds duration immediately before explosion. There were no planes around.

One survivor condemned as dangerous the practice of ordering the troops to sleep with their trucks stowed in #1 hold.

NOTE: While dispatches received by the Navy Department state ship was mined, survivors from another ship, damaged in the same convoy, stated that an investigation conducted by the Royal Navy in Southampton indicated that the ship was damaged by an acoustic torpedo. The British Admiralty Minesweeping Report covering the period in which ship was damaged does not carry the EDWARD M. HOUSE as having been mined.

The H. G. BLASDEL, JOHN A. TREUTLAN, JAMES A. FARRELL were also damaged in the attack on the convoy.

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