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## EXCERPT FROM BOARDING REPORT WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S OFFICE &amp; COAST GUARD:

lookout called out a warning at the same time the Second Officer saw the unidentified ship. After the collision, the other ship backed away and someone aboard "About 0215 Queen on May 10th at 12-09N 64-00W the day after leaving Port of Spain in convoy for New Orleans, an unidentified vessel struck the SS FIRMORE on the starboard side, abreast the #5 cargo hatch, about 12 feet aft the #2-3 bulkhead, causing a three inch wide, 27 feet long perpendicular cut from the deck down the side of the hull. Deck plating from the hatch side to the coaming was buckled. Subject vessel took an almost immediate five degree list to port.

Two minutes after the collision, pumps were started in #3 hold and in the three starboard side tanks to give the ship buoyancy. She was loaded to capacity with 11,649 tons of bauxite. Immediately after she was struck, the FIRMORE dropped out of station in the eight knot convoy, which was making nine knots in the current. She had been keeping good station at position 43. The night was overcast, visibility about 4, with moderate sea and swell. The convoy was on a northwesterly course and had not been conducting special maneuvers. It was made up of some 18 ships with the Dutch destroyer, QUEEN WILHELMINA, two four-stacker U.S. destroyers and two U.S. PC boats serving as escorts.

The FIRMORE stopped to inspect her damage. With her light she flashed, "Had collision, cannot save vessel". She wirelessly sent the same message and turned on her two red lights on the flying bridge. She blew seven short blasts and one long one to stand by the lifeboats to abandon ship. At no time did she receive any response from the Commodore. No escorts came near. The heavy ship turned around and headed for Port of Spain. At full speed she was able to make seven knots. At 0320, an hour and five minutes after the collision, the first water showed in #2 cargo hold bilge. Pumps were started in this hold and in two more starboard side tanks. At 0400, the vessel listed six degrees to starboard. At 0500, #3 cargo hold was water logged. Bauxite began to wash through a two-square-foot hole in the deck. At 0800, the vessel listed seven degrees to starboard. At noon the FIRMORE had an eight degree list and her starboard rail was awash. She began pumping out her starboard fuel oil tank. Four hours later, she had reduced her list to six degrees. At 1800 she finished pumping out her starboard fuel oil tank. At 2000, shortly after anchoring off Port of Spain, her list was only five degrees. Three salvage pumps were put aboard, two by the Navy and one by an engineering company, and her damage was under control. The FIRMORE was repaired at this anchorage. At 0718 of the morning following the accident, a U.S. Navy blimp, and later seaplanes, began to cover the damaged vessel's return to port.

The Second Mate was on watch when subject vessel collided with the unidentified ship. The SS DOMINO (US) was in the next column to starboard, two points off the bow. When sighted, the unidentified ship was about 2 points abaft the DOMINO's port beam. She came in rapidly at a right angle to strike the FIRMORE. The Mate of the latter ship blew the danger signal, eight short blasts, just before the collision. Visibility was #4 and both ships were completely blacked out. The Second Mate was on the flying bridge, and it "seemed" to him he saw a stack aft and a bridge forward on the offending ship. The unidentified ship was listed as a tanker on subject vessel's log. The bow

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lookout called out a warning at the same time the Second Officer saw the unidentified ship. After the collision, the other ship backed away and someone aboard her was heard to sing out "is anybody hurt?" She herself switched on her two red emergency lights. At no time did she sound her whistle."

SOURCE: 3ND Boarding Report, SS FIRMORE (US), dated 6/7/43.

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