

Op-16-B-5

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
 OFFICE OF CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
 WASHINGTON 25 D C

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR FILES

3 May 44

ALL TIMES GMT

SUBJECT: Supplement to Summary of Statements by Survivors of (SS FORT LAMAUNE)  
 British Merchant Vessel, 7130 G.T., operated by Booth Steamship Co., Ltd.

Reference: (a) Op-16-B-5 Memorandum for Files, same subject, dated 16 Mar 1944.

1. No additional information.
2. Degaussing was on.
3. Torpedo was seen just before it struck with a violent explosion. There was no flash but a huge column of water was thrown up, which cascaded down on port side smashing #2 lifeboat, which was swung out, and wrecking everything on the bridge. Davits of #2 boat were bent at right angles, #2 hatches blown off, and 2 planes stowed on #2 hatch were blown away. Engines were secured. Distress signal sent and received. Ship's back was broken and as she sank by the bow, the forward end broke off, then stern reared up and sank vertically.
4. Ship was abandoned by survivors in 3 boats upon order from the captain. Survivors landed 3 Feb at Atab on the Arabian Coast. On 6 Feb the HM Corvette NIGELLA took the survivors aboard and landed them at Aden. Total complement on board was 56, including 4 Navy and 3 Army gunners; all 56 survived.
5. Sub surfaced and closed the motor lifeboat. A voice which was definitely Japanese hailed the third officer. Answers were given and the Japanese said, "That is not our information; our information is that you are a new ship, out from London." Third officer thought that sub was German manned by Japanese with a German commander since a man was observed on the conning tower, larger than the average Japanese, wearing what looked like a German Naval cap. This man did not speak. No marks were observed on the conning tower.
6. Ship had been zigzagging continuously until 25 Jan when this was discontinued since ship had reached the area where, according to instructions, it was not necessary to zigzag during the dark hours.

BARBARA CONARD,  
 Ensign, W-V(S)

CC: 16-E-2, 16-P-1, 16-Z(5 copies), Op-20-G-M, Op-23-L, Op-30-M, Op-39-P-3(2 cop),  
 Cominch F-20, F-21, F-41, FX-37(C&R), FX-43, FX-45, AFASU, BuOrd, BuShips, CG(4 cop),  
 Coord Res & Dev, JAG, DIO 1,3,4,5(2 copies),6,7(3 copies),8(2 copies),10(4 copies),  
 11(3 copies),12,13,14(4 copies), 15NDS, Op-28, BuOrd RE-6-a, 16-W, F-42, BuPers 535

P-2

CONFIDENTIAL