

Op-16-B-5

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

CONFIDENTIAL

9 June 1945

Subject: Summary of Statements by the Survivors of the SS HORACE BINNEY, U. S. Freighter, 7191 G. T., owned by War Shipping Administration.

1. The HORACE BINNEY was torpedoed or mined at 0945 GCT, 8 May 1945, in approximately 51.21N - 02.27E, about 36 miles West of Ostend, having sailed from Avonmouth, 3 May, in convoy TAM-62 for the Ghent, loaded with a general Army cargo. Draft 23'10" forward, 24'10" aft. Vessel did not sink but was taken in tow and beached at midnight 9 May at the Downs South of Deal.

2. Ship was on course 88° true, speed 7.5 knots in 10 fathoms, not zig-zagging, degaussing on 140 plus, radio silent, daylight, 6 lookouts; 1 merchant and 1 Navy on forecastle, 2 Navy on wings of bridges, and 2 Navy aft; Navy lookouts equipped with binoculars. The weather was clear, sea calm, visibility unlimited. Ship was in convoy station #41, the last ship in the starboard column; other ships ahead and to port.

3. At 0945 an explosion occurred at #3 hold near the keel. Torpedo track was not sighted. Explosion was loud and heavy, no smoke, odor or flame was apparent, and no water was thrown up. Decks were dry after the explosion. Explosion split the double bottom and broke ship's back. Decks were cracked across and steam lines on deck broken. Engines stopped because of lack of steam. The steering gear, radio and gyro-compass ceased to operate. Vessel went dead in the water and was anchored. Later a British tug took ship in tow and beached her at Deal. No counter offensive possible, and no distress signal sent. Confidential publications were in custody of the Master. After ship was beached, #1, 2, 3, 4 holds and engine room were tidal.

4. At 1045 all hands except the Master, Chief Engineer, Chief Mate, First Assistant Engineer and Second Mate abandoned ship in good order. Survivors were taken off the vessel by the British ML #1456, and landed at Dover, some on 9 May and some on 10 May. Total complement on board was 74, including 49 merchant crew and 25 Armed Guard; all survived.

5. The origin of the attack was not sighted.

B. A. CONARD,  
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DISSEMINATION: Op-16-E-2, 16-P-1, 16-PT, 16-Z(5 cop), Op-20-G, Op-23-L, Op-30-M, Op-39-A-1(2 cop), COMINCH F-20, F-21, F-41, FX-43, FX-45, AFASU, BuOrd, CG(4 cop), Coord Res & Dev, DIO 3, 4, 5(2 cop), 6, 7(3 cop), 8(2 cop), 10(4 cop), 11(3 cop), 12, 13, 14(4 cop), 15NDs, BuOrd, RE-6-A, BuPers-535.

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