

CONFIDENTIAL

## THIRD NAVAL DISTRICT

considerably on the Merchant Vessel Boarding Report house and was  
crossed down the side. The SS WEST POINT was also severely  
SS JAMES LONGSTREET her Boarded at Sandy Hook, NJ Date Boarded 30 Oct 1943  
ships were able to proceed to Halifax for repairs, however.

2. On 7 October UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES AT SEA at Southampton, Eng.,  
to join convoy JM 206 for the U. S. Subject vessel, which carried  
only 1500 tons of sand ballast, occupied Stations 36 and 26 in this  
1. On 5 September, 1943, subject vessel left New York for the  
Southampton, England, with a cargo which included munitions. On  
7 September, 1943, on the way to Halifax, subject vessel encountered  
a dense fog. At 1655, 7 September, 1943, subject vessel was steering  
a true course, 335° true, making eight knots, which was the  
convoy speed, when the Master heard a klaxon blowing hard on the  
starboard bow. The Master believed this signal came from a fisher-  
man. At 1700, this klaxon was much closer on the bow. The Master  
then gave an order for a "right wheel" to clear him. When he  
gave the order to "steady", subject vessel was heading 40° true.  
At 1705, there were a few ships close to subject vessel and the  
Master gave the order to "stop" the ship. At 1710, the ships  
were clear and the Master gave the order for "left wheel" and  
engines "ahead" at forty (40) revolutions per minute, which is  
about six and a half (6½) knots. Subject vessel came around to  
the port slowly, as there were several vessels on her port side.  
When she got to 350°, the Master steadied the helm as she was  
getting too close to a ship on the port side. At 1714, the lookout  
in the bow reported a ship on the starboard bow. It was impossible  
to see this ship until it was very close due to the dense fog.  
This ship, which proved to be the SS WEST POINT (Br.), blew three  
whistles. Subject vessel was making six and a half knots at this  
time, and the Master states that he knew that he couldn't stop  
subject vessel, so he ordered the engines "full ahead" and "left  
wheel." At this time, subject vessel was heading 345°. At 1716,  
the stern of the SS WEST POINT struck the starboard side of sub-  
ject vessel at the No. 4 hatch causing considerable damage. The  
impact was very close to subject vessel's munition cargo. At  
1716½, the Master of subject vessel ordered the engines stopped.  
As the SS WEST POINT drifted aft, her bow caught the No. III  
life raft, ripping it from the skids. At 1719, a ship came up  
on the port side of subject vessel, getting very close. To avoid  
another collision, the master of subject vessel ordered the engines  
ahead at forty revolutions per minute. At 1722, he ordered the  
engines stopped because the sea-painter from the life-raft was  
getting close to the propeller. At 1724, he ordered the engines  
ahead forty revolutions per minute. The fog was very dense at  
this time and other ships were coming up. In order to keep clear  
of other ships, subject vessel kept going and did not stand by  
the SS WEST POINT. At 1719, subject vessel's bilges were sounded  
and found to be making water. About fifteen minutes of pumping  
every hour kept the water out. Subject vessel was caved in con-

complete report on subject vessel's condition is  
is time, it is stated that plans were underway  
ct vessel with the assistance of tugs and that  
made to put her back in condition, if possible. CONFIDENTIAL

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By DK NARA. Date 3/4/17

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siderably on the starboard side aft of the deckhouse and was creased down the side. The SS WEST POINT was also severely injured and her bow was pushed back and badly crumpled. Both ships were able to proceed to Halifax for repairs, however.

2. On 7 October, 1943, subject vessel left Southampton, Eng., to join convoy ON 206 for the U. S. Subject vessel, which carried only 1500 tons of sand ballast, occupied Stations 36 and 26 in this convoy, which encountered extremely heavy weather throughout the return voyage.

3. On 26 October, 1943, at 1533, subject vessel arrived at Pilot Station, New York Harbor, where she awaited a pilot. At this time, there was a rough, northeasterly wind blowing and a heavy ground swell, with rain and fog. Subject vessel rolled heavily. There was no pilot available and subject vessel received a message instructing her to remain in the vicinity. She attempted to comply with these orders, although it would have been safer to head out to sea again. During the day, the weather got increasingly bad, with a northeasterly wind, force #9, driving the ship in high seas with rain and fog. Subject vessel labored heavily. The weather got rougher and rougher, and the visibility was very poor as subject vessel circled around and around, as the wind force increased to a fifty or sixty mile gale. At 2052, subject vessel ran aground on Sandy Hook, opposite the Army Signal Corps Laboratories, and north of Spermacetti Cove, while steering 150° P.S.C. Flares showed subject vessel close to shore. Engine put at full speed, wheel hard left. Stopped engine at 2106. At 2120, seas breaking over forward of ship. Subject vessel was pounding heavily at this time. At 2128, subject vessel established contact with the shore by blinker message. At 2315, all lights went out due to the streamline breaking. At 2330, there was a loud crackling sound; the ship buckled; and a four inch crack was observed across the main deck just forward of the wheel house. At this time, there was no light, power, or heat, and subject vessel was pounding and listing to port. The wind force remained strong and high northeasterly seas were running with heavy rains. At 0135, 27 October, 1943, Ensign Geo. L. Clayton, USNR, Armed Guard officer, requested permission to leave vessel with his men. This request was granted. He communicated with shore and was advised to standby until 0230 and he would receive assistance to leave. At 0230, Coast Guard did not believe it advisable for Armed Guard crew to come ashore. At 0835, Coast Guard fixed line of contact to subject vessel via breeches buoy, made fast to after mast, and at 0930, the breeches buoy was all secure.

4. At the time of this boarding, subject vessel was still high and dry on the beach. All of the Armed Guard crew had been taken off and all Naval armament equipment and munitions were being removed. The merchant crew was still aboard the ship, however. While no complete report on subject vessel's condition is available at this time, it is stated that plans were underway to remove subject vessel with the assistance of tugs and that efforts will be made to put her back in condition, if possible.

Dissemination: CESF, PDO

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