

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

30 April 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR FILEALL TIMES GCT

SUBJECT: Summary of Statements by the Survivors of the SS JAMES W. NESMITH, U. S. Freighter, 7176 G.T., owned by WSA, chartered to McCormick Steamship Co.

1. The JAMES W. NESMITH was torpedoed at 1625 GCT, 7 April 1945, in 53.22N 04.52W, having sailed from New York 24 March in convoy HX-347 for Mersey, loaded with 3375 tons of tobacco, fertilizer, 4 crates of plane parts, also a deck cargo of 8 P47's, 3 forward, 5 aft, mean draft 21'. Vessel did not sink but was taken in tow and beached off Holyhead the night of 8 April. Vessel has been refloated and arrived Liverpool in tow 23 April for repairs.

2. Ship was turning from course 006° to 050° true, speed 10 knots, not zigzagging, convoy position 4th ship in port column, normal amount of current in the degaussing coils, radio receiving only, 7 lookouts; 2 forward, 2 aft, and 2 midships all Armed Guard, 1 merchant marine officer on bridge. The weather was clear, sea smooth, no wind, daylight, visibility good, other ships of convoy in sight.

3. At 1625 a torpedo struck, probably on the port side, in No. 5 hold. Explosion appeared to be delayed a matter of seconds. Considerable smoke and water was thrown up. Track of torpedo was not seen. Steering gear damaged. No. 5 hold ruptured. There was no fire. Machinery was damaged by flooding. Engines were secured immediately. Flooding was immediate, watertight doors were secured. Radio not damaged. A distress signal was sent but no reply received. Ship was taken in tow and beached. No. 4 and No. 5 holds, engine room, and boiler room were flooded. Engine room flooded through the shaft alley. Vessel has been refloated and towed to Liverpool for repairs. No counter offensive possible. Confidential publications were retained on board.

4. Ship was not abandoned. Total complement on board was 80, including 39 merchant crew, 41 Armed Guard; all 80 survived, 2 AG were bruised by the explosion.

5. The sub was not sighted.

BARBARA CONARD  
Lt.(jg) USNR

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