

JOSEPH W. CUDAHY (May 4, 1942)

As soon as the vessel was torpedoed, the Master went to the wheelhouse and stopped the engine, and it was arranged that the engineer would put the engines in reverse as soon as he got that signal, to take the way off her.

No. 1 boat was rendered useless by the explosion from the torpedo. The raft which was on the forward part of the vessel was released, and the No. 2 lifeboat.

The following is quoted from the chief pumpman's testimony. He was apparently the only one who survived out of the after guard crew of 27 men.

"He was telling me he saw about 15 men get in No. 4 boat, and somebody went back on the deck to get a hold of another seaman who was running around there kind of frantic. So, in the meantime, this fellow got this fellow and put him down in the boat, and an Ordinary Seaman had cut the forward boat fall, which left these two fellows hanging on the boat fall, and when the rest of the crew seen that, they seemed to rush forward and, in doing so, they swamped the boat. So when the boat became swamped, why, the First Engineer, I understand, jumped overboard. Then they all followed suit—one after another went overboard. So the Pumpman—he instructed them to follow him; so somebody in the crowd said, 'No, let's all stick together.' So the Pumpman said he used his own head and kept on swimming, and was in the water for about two hours when the moon came up and he sighted the lifeboat again—that's that No. 4 lifeboat—which he bailed out and got into it and drifted around the rest of the night until he was rescued in the morning about an hour before us—that would be around 8:00 o'clock. So that's about all I know about that after bunch, is what he told me."

The following is quoted from the Master's testimony:

"Q. How long before the torpedoing was it that you saw this red light?

"A. I should judge about 40 minutes.

"Q. Was that on the same side that you were struck?

"A. Yes, sir, Starboard side.

"Q. Did you make any change of course at that time?

"A. No, sir, I kept going right full speed ahead.

"Q. Did not change your course?

"A. No, sir, I just veered a little; I just zig-zagged about ten degrees; that was all, knowing that this thing would eventually overtake us, being a faster boat, because I had encountered one boat previous and I was saved at that time by a patrol plane."

"Q. Was there any defective material, as regards life-saving apparatus?

"A. No, sir.

"Q. No fault on the part of the personnel?

"A. No, sir."

Vessel caught fire immediately she was torpedoed.

The boats were not kept swung out on this vessel, but when they knew they were being pursued by submarines, they had the gripes taken off and the boats all ready to swing out.

Master believes the steam smothering line was turned on the tanks, in accordance with prearranged instructions, as soon as the vessel was torpedoed, and if so, this probably accounts for the fire not spreading over the entire length of the ship until after she was abandoned.

Master suggested that lifeboat bilge pumps should be fitted with longer discharge pipes. "The pumpman was telling me he tried to use it but couldn't use it because the spout didn't extend out over the gunwale and he couldn't get it far out, ^{over} far enough over the side of the boat."

Question by Ensign Reed:

"Q. You were saying that in dangerous submarine zones you had two lookouts--do you consider that a sufficient number of lookouts?

"A. Well, we haven't got the men; we haven't got the crew complement.

"Q. If you had four-hour on and four-hour off watches, you would have additional lookouts, wouldn't you?

"A. Yes, we would.

"Q. Do you consider that in wartime, for such an emergency, you could require the crew to stand such watches, in case it is necessary for the preservation of the vessel?

"A. Yes, it would help considerably. It would help more if we had a gun crew, because the only thing I can do if I could see one at daylight would be to try to head for it and ram it.

"Q. You feel that the present war conditions warrant you in using your judgment as to working your crew more than eight hours a day?

"A. My hands are tied under these conditions, though, more or less. To put extra men on requires a whole lot of extra expenses to the Company.

"Q. You mean extra men or extra hours?

"A. Extra hours, extra overtime.

"Q. But if there was danger of submarines, it is worthwhile?

"A. Yes.

"Q. So you feel justified in demanding more, if the occasion warranted it?

"A. Yes, sir."

The following is also quoted from the Master's testimony:

"Q. The only recommendation you have is the extended spout on your

bilge pump in the lifeboats?

"A. Yes, sir, that's the only thing. Outside of that, the boats are perfect, and you could sail a couple of months with them, as far as provisions are concerned, and water.

"Q. The boats were equipped and in good order otherwise?

"A. Yes."

Ensign Reed:

"Q. If you had a Navy gun crew, would you consider that that would relieve you as Captain and your crew of any responsibilities?

"A. No, it wouldn't, because, after all, we're all in one boat. I know if we had a gun on the forecastle head, we would have got that submarine, and he was only 400 yards away and we were on that ship for 20 minutes after we were struck, and the forecastle head was still clear, and he probably knew that we didn't have any guns.

"Q. That is your opinion?

"A. Yes, sir.

"Q. You did not see the submarine in the daylight?

"A. No, sir."

FEDERAL (April 30, 1942)

Vessel was sunk by shell fire. All boats were carried swung out and ready. No. 3 lifeboat was smashed by shells and the men who belonged in it left the vessel in one of the life rafts. The falls of No. 4 lifeboat were also shot away by shells. No. 1 lifeboat was lowered away and the shell fire was then so heavy it was not possible to lower No. 2 lifeboat, so an attempt was made then to let go the remaining life rafts. The ship had lost headway when the boat was lowered. The forward raft on the starboard side stuck and would not let go. The forward raft on the port side was let go and finally slipped into the water.

Master also stated, in regard to the lifeboat equipment:

"And I want to go on record as saying that the way those lifeboats are fitted out, they are an encumbrance; that rail, they had to throw that overboard. All that stuff was in the way, the lifeboats were not large enough for the men, too much gear for the boat. That canopy is all right for the North Atlantic but down here it's not necessary and shouldn't be required."

He also stated:

"Q. You stated that one of the rafts struck. Can you tell why? In the short time you had could you determine why?

"A. Yes sir.