

SECTION
No.

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No.

Wreck Report No. 15963

WRECK
SECTION
No. 159

REPORT OF TOTAL LOSS, CASUALTY, &c.

No. 07192 in R.B. Wreck Book, p. 180/61 Date of writing this report 29th November, 19 61.

Ship's Name s.s. "CLAN KEITH" of Glasgow Tons { Gross 7129
Net 4342

Built at Richmond When 1942 6 Casualty notice sent to Owner 15.11.61. Owner's reply 24.11.61.

Owners The Clan Line Steamers Ltd.

Managers Cayzer, Irvine & Co., Ltd.

Address 2, St. Mary Axe, London, E.C.3.

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Classification details

+100AL	LMC 2,59
with freeboard	BS ML,61
DTa-vegetable oil	sp 2,60
1,61	
ss 2,59	ts 1,61 CL

Date of Casualty 5th November, 1961.

Details of Casualty

Blew up and sank off N.W. Tunisia in very heavy weather.

The Owners concur but suggest no reference be made to actual cause of loss because Ministry of Transport have not completed their enquiry.



SOURCE OF INFORMATION

CLAN KEITH.—Land's End Radio, Nov. 6.—Following received from American steamer Jean, KUTL, at 8 1 a.m., G.M.T.: Following heard at 7 18 a.m., G.M.T.: XXX (urgency signal) de GC (unread), have picked up five survivors from lifeboat from steamer Clan Keith (Middlesbrough for Malta, Port Said, Aden, Bombay, Trincomali and Colombo), which blew up at 6 30 p.m., Nov. 5, in estimated position off Ecueil des Sorelles. Total crew of Clan Keith 68. Am searching for more survivors (remainder unread).

Following received from Marseilles Radio at 8 36 a.m., G.M.T.: At 7 45 a.m., G.M.T., we intercepted following XXX, addressed Malta Radio, VPT, from GOMU (motor vessel Durham Trader): Have picked up five survivors from Clan Keith, estimated position off Ecueil des Sorelles, near Cap Bon, Tunisia.

—Portishead Radio, Nov. 6.—Following received from Malta Radio: Following broadcast by 3VX (Tunis Radio): Following received from motor vessel Durham Trader: Have picked up five survivors from lifeboat from steamer Clan Keith. Am searching for more survivors. Our present position 11 miles south of Galita Lighthouse.

Following received from motor tanker Nunnalahti, OFXS: Wreck of Clan Keith sunk. At 12 5 a.m., G.M.T., in position lat. 37 15 N., long. 9 5 E. We are still searching but as yet nothing seen. Have seen in an empty lifeboat of Clan Keith but no survivors.

Following received from Malta Radio: Following received from Nunnalahti via Tunis Radio: Wreck of Clan Keith sunk. At 7 5 a.m., G.M.T., in position lat. 37 15 N., long. 9 5 E., here still searching, as yet nothing. Have seen another empty lifeboat in position off Clan Keith sunk, but there three boats and one lifeboat. One lifeboat is drifting, no sign of other boats. (Later) We saw in two lifeboats and both were empty. Now, at 9 a.m., G.M.T., found a capsized lifeboat and two survivors and we are picking them up.

—Malta, Nov. 6.—A Royal Air Force Shackleton and Royal Navy ships have been sent to the rescue following reports that British steamer Clan Keith had blown up. There were heavy seas and torrential rains during a gale in the central Mediterranean last night and reports reaching Malta say that the Clan Keith blew up and sank during a storm yesterday.—British United Press.

—London, Nov. 6.—Ships of the Mediterranean Fleet are converging at full speed on an area south of Galita Island, where steamer Clan Keith sank, an Admiralty spokesman said. H.M. cruiser Blake has taken over command of the search for survivors.

—London, Nov. 6.—A spokesman for British India Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., at their head office in London said that steamer Clan Keith was carrying normal general cargo. A Clan Line Steamers, Ltd., spokesman in London, said the crew were mostly Indians, with British officers.

—London, Nov. 6.—Steamer Clan Keith: Motor vessel Durham Trader reported this afternoon that she was landing survivors at Slax, having discontinued the search owing to darkness.

11/11/61

P.T.O.

Suggested Record

Date of Committee

Committee's Minute

"SANK 11,61"
FRIDAY - 8 DEC 1961

Sank 11.61

Rout.

NOTED FOR POSTING



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CLAN KEITH.—Tunis, Nov. 6.—Steamer Clan Keith blew up south of Galita at 6 30 p.m., G.M.T., Nov. 5. "Six" survivors picked up by "HDPSD KBORADER" (? motor vessel Durham Trader). (See later report in issue of Nov. 7.)

London, Nov. 6. — Steamer Clan Keith was employed on the P. & O. and B.I. joint service and was outward bound from Middlesbrough for Malta, Port Said, Aden, Bombay, Trincomali and Colombo. A spokesman for the British India Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., said that the vessel was carrying normal general cargo.

London, Nov. 6. — The owners of steamer Clan Keith report that the crew comprised 14 British officers, three South African officers and 54 Pakistani ratings (not Indians as before reported).—Reuter.

Tunis, Nov. 6.—The French naval base at Bizerta has sent planes and ships to search for survivors from steamer Clan Keith. Vessels also reported as searching include motor tankers Blue Ranger and Toscana. — Reuter.

Portishead Radio, Nov. 6. — Following received from Malta Radio at 7 p.m., G.M.T.: Following is latest news from Tunis Radio re survivors from steamer Clan Keith: The search is in progress. There are five survivors and three dead on board motor vessel Durham Trader. On board motor tanker Nunnalahti there are one survivor and one dead. This was the latest news as received by Tunis Radio at 5 8 p.m., G.M.T.

Land's End Radio, Nov. 6.—Following received from Niton Radio at 9 24 p.m., G.M.T.: Steamer Clan Keith: Distress traffic ended with caution from Tunis Radio.

London, Nov. 6. — Steamer Clan Keith: An Admiralty spokesman said that H.M. cruiser BLAKE had reported sighting a large area of wreckage two miles south of Cap Serrat, but no sign of life. He said that a force-seven (moderate gale) wind was blowing and there were frequent rain squalls.

Tunis, Nov. 6. — Steamer Clan Keith: Tunis Radio officials said an empty lifeboat and debris of a plane, believed to have been part of the cargo of the Clan Keith, had been sighted by rescue vessels. Naval headquarters in Valletta, Malta, said some of the naval vessels ordered to search for survivors had been damaged by the storm, in which H.M. frigates Plymouth and Rhyl at one stage had to heave to. H.M. destroyer DIANA had whaler and lifeboat carried away and H.M. cruiser BLAKE had inflatable life-rafts washed overboard.

London, Nov. 6. — Steamer Clan Keith: An Admiralty spokesman said that a message from the search area reported that, apart from H.M. cruiser BLAKE, all other naval ships were ordered back to Malta. H.M.S. BLAKE will continue searching until noon to-morrow, unless ordered away earlier.—Exchange Telegraph Company.

London, Nov. 6. — The master of steamer Clan Keith is one of five survivors on board motor vessel Durham Trader.

Tunis, Nov. 7.—Tunis Radio officials said that the search at sea for more survivors from steamer Clan Keith has been called off. Finnish motor tanker Nunnalahti, which is carrying a survivor, is expected to dock at Bizerta to-day, shipping sources said.—Reuter.

CLAN KEITH.—Tunis, Nov. 6.—Steamer Clan Keith blew up south of Galita at 6 30 p.m., G.M.T., Nov. 5. "Six" survivors picked up by motor vessel Durham Trader. (See issue of Nov. 8.)

Stax, Nov. 7.—Captain L. G. W. Pitts, master of British steamer Clan Keith, said here to-night that a big explosion broke his ship in two before she sank off north-west Tunisia. Captain Pitts was one of five survivors of the Clan Keith who arrived here to-night in the British motor vessel Durham Trader. A sixth survivor is on board the Finnish motor tanker Nunnalahti, according to radio reports.—Reuter.

Stax, Nov. 8.—Captain Pitts, master of steamer Clan Keith, told a Press conference on board motor vessel Durham Trader that he was in his cabin on Sunday night (Nov. 5) when there was a terrific explosion. He said he thought it was an underwater explosion. A force-nine gale was raging. Captain Pitts said he was on the fore-

part of the broken ship, which was labouring violently. "The only thing to do was to abandon ship," he said. "No radio signal could be sent because the radio-room was wrecked. One lifeboat and an inflatable rubber raft were launched from the forepart of the ship. Captain Pitts said he left the ship soon after the explosion. He was on the raft at first with four others but was thrown off by the rough seas and swam for about an hour before finding the lifeboat. The master and three others spent the night in the lifeboat in very high seas. They sent up flares and the Durham Trader and a tanker arrived about eleven hours after the explosion. — Reuter.

Stax, Nov. 8. — Five of the six survivors from steamer Clan Keith were leaving here to-day by special plane for Tunis on their way to Britain. The second engineer said a lifeboat was launched from the Clan Keith with 40 or 50 people on board. He himself stayed on the afterpart of the ship until it started sinking and he was washed overboard. The master of motor vessel Durham Trader said they had picked up four bodies.— Reuter.



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