

REPORT OF TOTAL LOSS, CASUALTY, BREAKING UP, ETC.

Ship's Name ~~SS~~ "W.D. ATLAS" Gross tons 746 Date of Build 8-1949  
 Casualty notice sent to Owners --- Owners' Reply --- Owners Westminster Dredging Co., Ltd.

Details of classification

+ 100A1	+ LMC 3,65
dredger	BS M3,65
10,64	sp 9,61
ss 3,65	ts p&s10,64 OG

Details of casualty

This ship foundered off Nowra, N.S.W., in heavy weather. Declared a total loss.

The owners concur.

Date of casualty 20th May, 1966.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

W.D. ATLAS (dredger).—London, May 20.—The owners of bucket dredger W.D. Atlas advise that the vessel has sunk 12 miles off the coast Australia.

W.D. ATLAS (dredger).—Sydney, May 21.—Dredger W. D. Atlas is reported to have sunk off Point Perpendicular, near Jervis Bay. Late last night Sydney Radio reported that the dredger had radioed that the crew was abandoning ship.—British United Press. (See issue of May 21.)

—Sydney, May 21.—Seventeen seamen clung to lifeboats in mountainous seas after abandoning steam bucket dredger W. D. Atlas, which sank about three miles north of Jervis Bay, about 150 miles south of Sydney. A large-scale air and sea search was immediately put into effect. Motor vessel Van Noort was trying to take the crew on board but lost sight of them after standing by for several hours, police reported here. Other ships raced to the scene. The Australian Broadcasting Commission reported that the lifeboats, understood to be rubber craft, had been seen bobbing about on waves up to 40 ft. high. The radio said that a helicopter was ordered to help in the search but was forced to return to base because of high winds.—Reuter.

—Sydney, May 21.—Australian Air Force helicopters today rescued four members of the crew of the dredger W. D. Atlas, which sank last night after being battered by gale-force winds and rough seas off the New South Wales coast. Mr. Charles Bie, acting regional controller of the Shipping Department, said that two of the men winched to safety were plucked from the icy seas and the other two from a rubber dinghy. Unconfirmed reports said that two bodies had also been recovered. A full-scale air and sea search is continuing for the rest of the 17-man crew. Two of the survivors, Jeffrey Mulder and Sam Devries, said that they managed to jump overboard with a liferaft just before the dredger capsized and sank. "She listed and went down in seconds," Devries said. Mr. Bie said that four vessels, including Dutch motor vessel Van Noort and Australian destroyer Vendetta, and aircraft were searching the area, where weather conditions were "about as bad as they could be."—Reuter.

—Sydney, May 21.—Dredger W. D. Atlas, owned by Westminster Dredging Australia Pty., Ltd., on voyage from Whyalla to Sydney, reported sunk south coast May 20-21 in heavy weather with loss 13 of 17 crew.

—Sydney, May 22.—The sea and air search for eight men missing from the foundered dredger W. D. Atlas off the coast of New South Wales was called off at midday to-day. The senior marine surveyor in the Department of Shipping, Captain G. W. Ross, said that there was no hope of anyone surviving the rough and bitterly cold seas. The dredger sank in a gale about 150 miles south of Sydney on Friday night (May 20). Naval helicopters picked up four survivors yesterday and the destroyer Vendetta picked up five bodies.—Reuter.

W. D. ATLAS (dredger).—London, May 24.—The News and Information Bureau has received the following from Radio Australia, dated May 23: A preliminary inquiry will be held in Sydney later this week into the sinking on Friday night (May 20) of dredger W. D. Atlas off the south-eastern coast of Australia. The dredger sent out a radio message about 5 p.m. that she was going to heave to. Another radio call to Sydney four hours later said that the vessel was in difficulties and needed help. This was the last message received before an SOS went out at about 10 p.m. Soon afterwards the W. D. Atlas keeled over and sank. (See issue of May 24.)

—Sydney, May 24.—Bucket dredger W. D. Atlas sank p.m., May 20, near Nowra, New South Wales, while on voyage from Whyalla, South Australia, to Sydney. Survivors interviewed by us indicate main power lost as result of water in fuel oil, source unknown. Due to gale-force winds and extraordinarily high seas, vessel became unmanageable, broached to and developed list, cause not ascertained, eventually capsizing. Exact location of sinking unknown, however, vessel (mutilation) east, where depth of water well in excess of 100 fathoms. Further inquiries being instituted in collaboration with Navy in respect of position of sinking. All parties here agree no moves for salvage warranted until actual depth and location established. In any event, no suitable salvage equipment considered available. Inquiry commences May 26. Coroner's inquiry date still to be fixed.—Lloyd's Agents per Salvage Association.

W. D. ATLAS (dredger).—Sydney, May 24.—Bucket dredger W. D. Atlas sank p.m., May 20, near Nowra, New South Wales, while on voyage from Whyalla, South Australia, to Sydney. Survivors partly interviewed by us indicate main power lost as result of water in fuel oil, source unknown. Due to gale-force winds and extraordinarily high seas, vessel became unmanageable, broached to and developed list, cause not ascertained, eventually capsizing. Exact location of sinking unknown; however, motor vessel Van Noort, standing nearby, reports radar contact just prior to sinking indicated position lat. 35 30 S., long. 150 56 30 E., where depth of water well in excess of 100 fathoms. Further inquiries being instituted in collaboration with Navy in respect of position of sinking. All parties here agree no moves for salvage warranted until actual depth and location established. In any event, no suitable salvage equipment considered available in Australia. Further interviews with survivors to-morrow. Commonwealth Departmental inquiry commences May 26. Coroner's inquiry date still to be fixed.—Lloyd's Agents per Salvage Association. (See issue of May 25.)

W. D. ATLAS (dredger).—Sydney, May 26.—Bucket dredger W. D. Atlas: Nothing conclusive regarding cause of sinking derived from further interview with survivors and conference with shipowners' representatives. Our surveyor still considering situation and will submit formal report after thorough examination of all available evidence. As Regional Director of Commonwealth Navigation Department not advised of any sighting of dredger by air and sea rescue search parties or other source after lost to motor vessel Van Noort radar, seems to confirm vessel sunk as previously reported and any direct salvage search and operation considered impracticable and uneconomical.—Lloyd's Agents per Salvage Association. (See issue of May 26.)

Suggested record

"FOUNDERED 5,66"

Date of Committee

"FRIDAY - 3 JUN 1966"

Minute

Foundered 5/66

Im,11,64 (MADE IN ENGLAND)

Noted By

Publications

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