

REPORT OF TOTAL LOSS, CASUALTY, &c.

34936 in R. B. Wreck Book, p. 94/39

Date of writing this report 4th December, 1939.

Ship's Name Steel Twin Motor "Terukuni Maru" of Tokyo Tons {Gross 11930 Net 7156

Wrecked at Nagasaki When 1930 6 Casualty notice sent to Owner 28/11/39 Owner's reply 30/11/39

Owner's Name Nippon Yusen Kaisha

London Address: 88, Leadenhall Street, London, E.C.3

Previously before
Sinking Committee.

Date
Last Minute

Particulars of Classification.

F10091
with freeboard
9.39
S.S. No 2-38
OIL ENGINE
FILMC CS12,38
7.38
DBS 9.39
Lloyd's
RMC 9.39
TS5, 37CL

Casualty 21st November, 1939

Particulars of Casualty This vessel is reported to have sunk in forty minutes after striking a mine off Harwich on the 21st November, 1939.

She is lying with a starboard list in 8 fathoms of water on a level sandy bottom, and it is stated that refloating would entail removing the greater part of the superstructure.

Her name is included in the List of War Losses periodically published in Lloyd's List.

In reply to the casualty notice, the Owners' London Office state it has not yet been decided whether it is possible to save the ship, so that at present it would be premature to record her as lost.

Here considered

SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

The Japanese motor liner Terukuni Maru, of 11,930 tons gross, was bound from Japan to England, and sank following an explosion off the East Coast yesterday. Her crew of 177 and 28 passengers were saved. The sinking was seen by a large number of people from the shore. An eye-witness said he heard no explosion but great volumes of water rose high in the air. The ship partially submerged, remained in this position for a little while, and then sank.

A lifeboat and other craft immediately left for her. A number of people on board the liner were picked up by rescue vessels. She disappeared in 40 minutes. Mr. S. Okamoto, Counsellor of the Japanese Embassy in London, accompanied by Mr. Sugiyama, the Consul-General, proceeded to the port to interview survivors and investigate the sinking.

The Terukuni Maru, which was engaged on the Japan-European service of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, Tokyo, was a 16½-knot twin-screw motor liner built by the Mitsubishi Zosen Kaisha, Ltd., Nagasaki, in 1930.

LL 22/11

200 SAVED

When the Terukuni Maru, crack ship of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, struck a mine yesterday her 28 passengers and crew of 120 were saved by a fleet of rescue vessels which rushed to her aid.

Three passengers were slightly injured, but were able to travel to London by special train with other survivors.

The thirteen British passengers included a woman of over 70, who suffered from shock when she was thrown off her feet.

SEEN FROM SHORE

People walking along the promenade of an east coast town saw the liner sink.

"She was steaming smoothly along," said one eye-witness, "and then I heard an explosion and saw a huge column of water rise in the air."

"Ships in the vicinity quickly drew near the liner, which was going down slowly, stern first."

People on the quay waved as boats steamed in with the survivors, towing behind them lifeboats from the sunken liner, which was on a voyage to England from the Far East.

N.C. 22/11

Suggested Record

Report of Committee

Committee's Minute

TUE 5 DEC 1939

Deferred

2nd

Write Lloyd's

10/8/39

W238-0116



© 2020

Lloyd's Register Foundation

LOST JAPANESE LINER

ANOTHER VICTIM OFF EAST COAST

ALL ON BOARD SAVED

The Japanese steamer Terukuni Maru (11,930 tons), bound from Japan to England, sank off the East Coast yesterday after an explosion. She is thought to have struck a mine laid by a U-boat. The whole of her crew of 177 and her 28 passengers were safely taken off by rescue ships and a lifeboat. The survivors were landed and brought to London yesterday evening.

The sinking was witnessed by large numbers of people from the shore. The liner remained afloat for a long time after striking the mine, and this, together with the fact that several rescue vessels were quickly at hand, prevented a heavy casualty list. There were 13 British passengers.

Mr. Okamoto, Counsellor of the Japanese Embassy in London, accompanied by Mr. Uchiyama, the Consul-General, on being informed of the sinking, went at once to the port to interview survivors and investigate the disaster.

The Terukuni Maru was owned by the Nippon Yusen K.K. and registered in Tokyo. She was the principal liner on the company's service from Japan to Europe, and was commanded by Captain Matsukura, commodore of the line.

It was stated last night that three passengers were injured, but not seriously.

CAPTAIN'S STORY

Mr. B. Matukura, the captain of the liner, in conversation last night with a representative of *The Times*, said:—

We arrived in the Channel on Sunday morning. Two naval officers came on board and advised us which route to take in order to clear the mines, and we were also advised to fly a special signal in accordance with routine instructions. This indicated that the ship had cleared the contraband. This morning at about 8 o'clock the pilot came on board, and we left the anchorage about 8.30 a.m.

It was about 12.53 to-day when we struck the mine. At the time we were proceeding at about 15 knots, the normal speed of the boat. There was a terrific explosion in No. 2 and No. 3 holds. The ship shot up, several plates were broken, and three of the passengers were injured. Altogether there were 206 on board—28 passengers, 177 crew, and the pilot. The engines were disabled by the explosion and the pilot suggested that we should take the ship to shallow water, but we could not do this. The boat sank about 45 minutes after she was struck, and this gave time for all to get in the boats. Eight boats were lowered. All got on board safely, and even a passenger's dog was rescued. There were many British vessels on hand to come to our assistance. The ship went down heeling to starboard.

Crowd See Japanese Liner Sunk

Mined off E. Coast

HITLER'S sea terror—the mines he cannot control—claimed as victim yesterday the crack Japanese luxury liner Terukuni Maru (11,930 tons), sinking her within sight of crowds on an east coast promenade.

There were 177 crew and 28 passengers—15 of them British—on board the liner.

So prompt was rescue work that all were saved, without even wetting their feet. Only three were slightly hurt. Even a dog was saved.

Japan now becomes the second former Axis partner to lose a vessel within a few days. The Italian steamer *Grazia* was mined during the week-end, with the loss of four lives.

During and since the week-end at least 15 British and neutral vessels have been sent to the bottom by Nazi murder mines. The total tonnage is more than 50,000.

WATERSPOUTS

IT was just after midday that the twin funnels of the Terukuni Maru, oil-driven "flagship" of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha Line, were seen shining in the pale sunshine off the east coast.

Under Captain O'Kuno, commodore of the line, she was on her way to England from Marseilles.

Suddenly people, soldiers among them, who had gathered on the promenade to watch her pass, saw great columns of water spout in the air. Then borne on the wind came the thunder of an explosion.

Almost at once the liner began to sink slowly by the bows.

Immediately a lifeboat and other rescue craft put out, and soon were beside the liner, taking off passengers and crew.

Although badly holed, it was more than 40 minutes before the liner dived to the bottom—plenty of time for all on board to be taken off without difficulty.

"REMAINED STEADY"

MR. W. Potter, an eye-witness, said: "After the explosion, the liner remained for about half an hour with her bows well down, but otherwise steady."

"Then her stern seemed to heel up, and she went down by the head."

"By that time the passengers and crew were being brought to safety."

SPECIAL TRAIN

ON landing, passengers and crew of the Terukuni Maru were placed on a special train for London, to be taken to the Great Eastern Hotel, Liverpool-street, where the Simon Bolivar survivors were given shelter.

A contingent of men from the Emergency Medical Service waited at the hotel to meet them.

When the rescued men and women

arrived in London—the Japanese crew in their white calico overalls and straw hats—elaborate precautions were taken to see that they spoke to no one before passing through the hands of immigration officials.

The three injured—two members of the crew and a first-class passenger—were taken to St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Most of the rescued had lost all their belongings.

Among the British passengers were a woman of 70 and a Scarborough man, Mr. Philip Outwin, who was coming home from the East to join a Yorkshire regiment.

Mr. Outwin said: "I was in the smoke-room and we had just tuned in the wireless when we were thrown from our seats by the explosion."

"I rushed up on deck and saw trawlers coming towards us. They soon took us off. It was about half an hour afterwards that we saw the last of the liner as she sank beneath the waves."

JAPAN AND LOST LINER

"GRAVE CONCERN"

OFFICIAL PROTEST TO BE MADE

From Our Own Correspondent

TOKYO, Nov. 22

The Japanese were proud of the Terukuni Maru, one of the best ships of the Nippon Yusen K.K., their premier line, and its loss startles the public more than anything yet reported in connexion with the European war. Every newspaper to-night quotes The Hague Convention of 1907, drawing attention to the clauses which prohibit the use of unmoored mines and require belligerents to notify neutrals of mined areas.

Whatever kind of mine was employed, it is certain that Japan was not notified of the existence of a minefield where the explosion occurred. A protest and claims for compensation will therefore be made when it has been determined which of the belligerents was responsible for laying the mine.

Meanwhile the Press notes that the ship carried a British pilot, which is presumptive evidence that the mine was not British. It is also noted that the Terukuni Maru is the thirty-seventh neutral victim of the European war. The Japanese Government feels "grave concern," according to the Foreign Office, and will take appropriate measures when responsibility has been established.

Three points must be investigated before fixing responsibility under The Hague Convention: (1) Was the mine moored or loose? (2) If the mine was moored, was it laid within a zone of which the neutral Power had been warned? (3) Was the mine laid by Great Britain or by Germany? One official expressed the opinion that The Hague Agreement was too old to cover present requirements. Even if, as some reports suggest, the mine belongs to a new magnetic type, neither moored nor loose, Japan has good reasons for complaint against the country which laid the minefield without carrying out its obligation to warn neutral shipping. While profoundly thankful that all on board have been saved, the Japanese fully realize that if the explosion had occurred at night the crew's splendid discipline could not have prevented a tragedy.