

State if Report has been sent on the Freeboard of the Vessel. YES.

F REPORT OF TOTAL LOSS, CASUALTY, &c.

No. 19192 in R. B. Wreck Book, p. 90/39

Date of writing this report 7th December, 1939

Vessel's Name Steel Twin M.S. "Africa Shell"

of Mombasa

Tons (Gross 706
Net 332)

Built at Greenock When 1939 2

Casualty notice sent to Owner 11/12/39 Owner's reply 4/12/39

Owner's Name Shell Company of East Africa, Ltd. (Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Board Mgrs.)

Address 110/113, Tavistock Road, Plymouth.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

Case previously before

Date

Particulars of Classification.

Classing Committee.

Last Minute

H 100A1

H LMC-239

239
Carrying
Petroleum
in bulk

CL

OIL ENGINE

RAIDER OFF EAST AFRICA

Times

17/11

BRITISH SHIP SUNK IN PORTUGUESE WATERS

CAPETOWN, Nov. 16.—The Naval Staff Office here announced to-night that the British steamer Africa Shell, owned by the Shell Company, has been sunk by a German raider inside Portuguese territorial waters off Zabora Point, about 180 miles north-east of Lourenço Marques.

No exact information is available as to the identity of the raider, but reports from Durban suggest that it was a ship of about 10,000 tons, possibly an armed merchantman. Rumours that the raider was a pocket battleship are authoritatively discounted.

Immediately it became known that the Africa Shell had been sunk a warning to all shipping was broadcast from Lourenço Marques. A dispatch from the same source states that the crew of the Africa Shell were allowed to land, but that the captain was taken prisoner.

The pilot of an aeroplane which arrived at Lourenço Marques from the north yesterday reported that he had seen a steamer in a sinking condition near Inhambane Bay, about 200 miles north of Lourenço Marques. Two lifeboats were seen by the pilot on the beach between Quissico Lighthouse and Macanza, surrounded by a number of men whom he presumed to be the crew.

The aeroplane dropped a message to Zavala Administration Post, and the pilot later saw several people leave in the direction of the sinking ship.—Reuter.

British Tanker Sunk by Raider

LL 18/11

Reuter reports from Cape Town that the British motor tanker Africa Shell, of 706 tons gross, has been sunk by a German raider inside Portuguese territorial waters off Zabora Point, about 180 miles north of Lourenço Marques.

A pilot of an aeroplane, on his arrival from the north at Lourenço Marques on Wednesday, stated that he had seen a steamer in a sinking condition near Inhambane. He reported what he had seen to the Zavala administration post, and later saw several people leave in the direction of the sinking vessel.

According to a message from Lourenço Marques the crew state that the Africa Shell was ordered to stop by a German cruiser, which fired one shot. A German officer and men then boarded the vessel, seized her provisions and ordered the crew to leave. They took the master prisoner, and the vessel was sunk by two bombs, which blew a large hole in the stern. Lloyd's surveyor reports that the Africa Shell has capsized. Only a small part of the vessel is showing above water, and salvage is improbable.

Rumours that the raider was a pocket battleship are authoritatively discounted at Cape Town. Reports from Durban suggest that the raider was a 10,000-ton armed merchantman. Immediately it became known that the Africa Shell had been sunk a warning to all shipping was broadcast from Lourenço Marques.

The Africa Shell is owned by the Shell Company of East Africa, Ltd., a subsidiary of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd. She was built by George Brown & Co., Ltd., this year, making the voyage out to East Coast Africa in February.

Date of Casualty

15th November, 1939

Details of particulars of Casualty

This vessel is reported to have capsized after having been sunk by a German raider near Inhambane, Portuguese East Africa, on the 15th November, 1939. Salvage prospects are considered to be negligible.

The Owners concur.

Suggested Record

SUNK-WAR LOSS. 11/39

Date of Committee

FRI. 8 DEC 1939

Committee's Minute

Sunk-War Loss 11. 39

Times 18/11

SINKING OF THE AFRICA SHELL

RAIDER THOUGHT TO BE A WARSHIP

NAVY IN CHASE

From Our Correspondent

DURBAN, Nov. 17

The German raider which sank the Africa Shell on Wednesday is believed to be a warship but not a pocket battleship. According, however, to messages from Lourenço Marques, the crew of the tanker state that the raider was either the Deutschland or the Admiral Scheer, although the South African authorities consider this improbable.

The Africa Shell was ordered to heave to by the firing of a shot across her bows. The tanker was then boarded by an officer and men, who seized all the provisions and ordered the crew to take to the boats, and took Captain Dove, who was in charge of the tanker, captive. The Africa Shell was then sunk by two bombs, which blew a large hole in her stern.

Lloyd's surveyor reports that the Africa Shell is lying upside down with reef rocks between her and deep water and with only



a small part showing above water. The crew of the tanker, who landed at a point on the Mozambique coast between Quissico and Macanza, are not expected to reach Lourenço Marques before Sunday. The five officers will, however, fly to Lourenço in two special aeroplanes tomorrow afternoon. No time has been lost by the naval authorities in South Africa to hunt down the raider, who was only 450 miles north of Durban at the time of the sinking of the Africa Shell. The French Navy can cooperate with the British Navy in this task, the former having the advantage of the close proximity of the Madagascar naval bases to the scene of the attack.

RAIDER'S STRATEGY

The raider used clever strategy in selecting her hunting ground. She showed herself off a neutral coast—an unconfirmed report states that the Africa Shell was actually sunk in Portuguese territorial waters. At the same time she did not proceed too far up the Mozambique channel to run the risk of being blocked from both ends.

Since the raider disclosed herself special precautions have been advised, and one British passenger vessel, which put to sea early yesterday morning, put about and returned to port to-day. Steps are being taken to protect tankers and to divert them along devious routes.

NAIROBI, Nov. 17.—A blackout of the East coast of Africa under British control has been imposed as a consequence of the sinking of the Africa Shell.—Reuter.

LL 20/11

IDENTITY OF SHIP THAT SANK "AFRICA SHELL"

CAPE TOWN, Saturday
The Naval Authorities stated here to-day that from evidence of officers of the Africa Shell, which was sunk off the East African coast, the intercepting vessel was undoubtedly a warship. There is no indication, however, they added, that it was the Admiral Scheer or any other pocket battleship.—Reuter.

D.Tel 21/11

It is much more likely that both ships are carrying supplies to the raider which sank the small oil tanker Africa Shell

in the Mozambique Channel last week. This raider is believed to be a "pocket battleship," possibly the Deutschland, and her action in sinking an unimportant vessel in a position where the news would travel fast has given rise to the belief that she is short of fuel and possibly of other supplies.

NC 28/11

the Rawalpindi's end makes it plain that the quality of British Naval personnel remains as high as ever.

This news puts an end to the theory that the raider which sank the tanker Africa Shell off the East African coast nearly a fortnight ago was the Deutschland, which has now reappeared in the waters where she had previously been active in October.



© 2020

Lloyd's Register Foundation