

W466-0004
(1/4)

COPY.

Lloyd's Register of Shipping.



Port CALCUTTA.

September 11th, 1935.

This is to Certify that

B. PESKETT

the undersigned Surveyor to this Society did at the request of Lloyd's Agents, Calcutta, acting on behalf of Lloyd's Agents, Akyab, proceed to Kyaukpyu on the 18th August 1935 accompanied by a Diver, two mates, and equipment for the purpose of ascertaining and reporting upon the possibilities of salvaging the steel screw steamer "BURMESTAN" 3035 tons gross register of Bombay, which struck Reliance Shoal and sunk in Kyaukpyu Harbour on the 30th July 1935. Kyaukpyu was reached on the 23rd August 1935 after being joined by Captain E. Baker, Master of the vessel, en route at Rangoon, to facilitate the work of locating the wreck. This was accomplished on the day of arrival, but two days were necessary before the Diver's launch could be suitably moored in position directly above the vessel. The position of the wreck as given by the Nautical Surveyor, Akyab, is 92½ degrees 34 cables from the Jetty. As far as could be ascertained, prior to leaving Calcutta, no difficulty was to be anticipated from tides, but reverse conditions were encountered on arrival at Kyaukpyu and great difficulty was experienced with mooring line purchased locally, carrying away, and anchors dragging due to strong currents and eddies. It is estimated that on normal tides the current

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Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W466-0004
(2/4)

- 2 -

runs between 6 and 8 knots in way of the wreck.

Perhaps it would be advisable at the outset to mention that considering matters from a point of view of possible salvage, Kyaukpyu is merely a native fishing village where there are no workshop facilities for making or supplying any materials required. This also applies to stores of every description, including the housing and feeding of Europeans. The only labour available are fishermen, who are quite good at laying lines, but otherwise useless. The housing of imported native labour would present great difficulties, facilities for which are non-existent. Launches and the necessary attendant boats could be hired from the Arracan Flotilla Company, whose launch "TANKO" was used by us and suits admirably as a Divers' boat. From the foregoing it will be appreciated that all gear and supplies will have to be imported.

Continuing the experience gained during my visit to Kyaukpyu, an opinion of the possibilities of the salvage may be formed if the difficulties encountered as the work of surveying the vessel progressed are described. As mentioned earlier, the mooring difficulties which presented themselves at the outset continued right through and at each tide the mooring lines had to be slackened on account of a large rise and fall of tide, necessitating the re-positioning of the launch each tide before diving could be recommenced. It might also be of interest to mention that heavy rain showers which are frequent in the district, set up a "freshet", the force of which cannot be ignored, as, if diving should be attempted during these periods, the divers would be swept off their feet and there is no slack water at low tide. Kyaukpyu is not a harbour in the ordinary sense, but is a large creek fed by several smaller creeks which in turn are fed from the mountains in the surrounding district. After the second day's work we were able to dive daily at both tides, but the maximum under water was thirty five minutes at water slack and



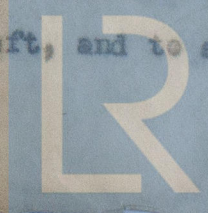
Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W466-0004
(3/4)

- 3 -

water slack it was only possible to remain under for fifteen minutes. Had the wreck been cleared the divers might have been able to have remained below for slightly longer periods, but it must be borne in mind that apart from the loose falls of lifeboats that the vessel had on her upper deck, awnings fore and aft fitted with canvas side screens which formed part of the vessel's equipment, and these moving with the tides and current, made work extremely difficult and dangerous. To have cleared the vessel of all cordage and canvas would have taken an indefinite period.

The vessel is lying over on her port side at approximately 20 degrees to the horizontal with the damage uppermost and it will be easily understood that these large masses of canvas floating about greatly impeded the Diver's work. After the turn of each tide the cordage and canvas were found in a different position and to clear these each tide hampered the progress of examination and frequently the Diver's man-ropes became entangled and carried away, causing further delay. The information regarding the extent and position of the damage given by the Divers was not very concise or detailed, but it is definitely known that Nos. 1 & 2 holds and the stokehold are badly torn just above the turn of bilge. There is a deep scour made by the ebb tide in way of the vessel's bottom and it is felt in time the vessel may slip into a more upright position. The hatchboards and beams were only loosley laid in place when the vessel entered port and all these were cast adrift when she turned over and sank. The sealing up of these openings alone at the vessel's large angle of list would present a formidable task with such limited diving time. Pontoon salvage could not be applied in this instance due to the angle at which the vessel was lying. The S.S. "BURMESTAN" was a vessel specially designed for the deck passenger trade on the Indian Coast and there are numerous openings on the top deck, while on the sides in the shade deck 'tweens, there are large side openings both fore and aft, and to seal these would



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Foundation

be long and tedious. In the cablegram sent you by Lloyd's Agents, Akyab, I have suggested that to salve the S.S. "BURMESTAN" would not be a financial proposition, and I feel it would clarify matters if I were to enumerate my reasons for coming to this decision.

1. Angle of list of vessel makes work of sealing up of all hatchways and openings extremely difficult, due to hatch beams having been dislodged and lost.
2. Limited diving periods, strong undertow and scour, and difficulty of maintaining position of salvage craft due to strong currents on both flood and ebb tides.
3. Expense of importing labour, materials and adequate salvage equipment.
4. Housing problem, both European and Indian.
5. Length of time labour would require to remain at Kyaukpyu owing to limited diving periods.
6. Outlandish place in relation to nearest salvage plant.
7. Cost of necessary repairs to Hull and renovating accommodation.
8. Although not definitely ascertained, it is most probable that the main machinery has torn away from its seating.
9. Cost of towing vessel to nearest drydocking port.
10. Cost of repairs to boilers which had a full head of steam at time of casualty.
11. Vessel is twenty one years of age and the necessary cost to entirely recondition the vessel, together with salvage expenses would greatly exceed the insured value.

Copy of photographs taken while the vessel was sinking are enclosed as a point of interest and will indicate how near to success were the beaching attempts.