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Memo for C.O.S.

M/V "FAMAGUSTA" (ex L.C.T. Mark III No. 430)

Built during the war (1943) at Glasgow as a Tank Landing Craft for the Admiralty.

Purchased in 1946 by The Neptune Shipping & Trading Co. for conversion into a cargo ship.

For this type of ship the class A with a limited service and draught was approved by the Committee.

Plans of this particular ship, including the proposed and required modifications were examined in this Office and the Class A1 "With Freeboard", "For Service in the Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea" was eventually recommended to the Committee.

The alterations and special survey for classification were carried out at the New Medway Steam Packet Co. Ltd., Rochester under the survey of Mr. C. Lloyd Roberts and Mr. E.N. Sellex on the Hull and Mr. Sellex and Mr. F.H. Tickell on the Machinery. The survey lasted from 2nd July, 1946 to 10th January, 1947.

The alterations included the fitting of a continuous trunk on the deck and the addition of a forecastle.

On the basis of the increased structural strength afforded by the above-mentioned alterations, the Society assigned a freeboard corresponding to a maximum summer moulded draught of 6'-6" (corresponding freeboard 2'-4 $\frac{1}{4}$ "). The certificate to be valid only whilst engaged on Service Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea.

In a reply (dated 28th December, 1946) to the Owners' enquiry regarding Freeboard Certificates, it was pointed out "that while a freeboard certificate will be issued by this Society, on receipt of a satisfactory report from the Surveyors, covering the service in the Mediterranean, the issuing of a limited Freeboard Certificate for the voyage to the Mediterranean is the concern of the Ministry of Transport".

This is in accordance with a circular covering such cases issued by the Committee in 1929.

On the 30th December 1946 a telephone request was received from the Ministry of Transport, (London Outdoor Office), that the freeboard certificate for the voyage should be issued by the Society in this case as notice was so short. It was then stated that the vessel was due to leave two or three days later.

As a result of this message it was agreed that the Society should issue the certificate for the voyage (see endorsement 30/12/46).

The departure of the ship was, however, delayed.

The London Outport Surveyors were accordingly instructed on the 13th January, 1947 to issue a provisional Loadline Certificate for the voyage to the Mediterranean, valid until 14th April, 1947; the freeboard assigned being 3'-0".

In connection with the issue of this certificate the preparations for the voyage, which included additional battening down arrangements and temporary additional shoring of decks, were carried out under the supervision and to the satisfaction of the Society's Surveyors (see London Report No. 114901). An Interim Certificate for this voyage dated 13th March 1947 was issued by the London Surveyors.

Owing to the delay in the departure of the ship for the Mediterranean the Committee had, meanwhile, agreed to the Owners' request made in January, 1947 for her to trade for a short period between London and Boston, Lincs (see Interim Certificate dated 20/1/47.)

The ship eventually sailed in March from the Thames with a cargo of lorries for the Mediterranean and was reported on 20th March in distress in the Bay of Biscay during - (as the report stated) appalling weather. The ship was abandoned in a sinking condition, survivors being picked up by the S.S. "EMPIRE PLOVER". Seven persons were lost.

As to the cause of the casualty, the final press report stated that:

"... vessel developed leaks through fore deck while in Bay of Biscay on March 10th, and water filled the store hold. The electrical pump in the hold was put out of action and engine room pump was unable to cope with the water. A port list developed and the port engine stopped. Other leaks which could not be controlled developed and the vessel became a total loss."

14th April, 1948.



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