

Inq. 1.



ISSUED BY THE  
MINISTER OF WAR  
TRANSPORT

# EXAMINATION ON OATH.

IN PURSUANCE OF THE 465TH SECTION OF THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894, 57  
AND 58 VICTORIE, CAP 60.

ALEXANDER PELHAM MOFFOOT of Kent. Lea, Kendal,

Westmoreland.

being duly sworn,

deposes as follows; namely,

1. That he, being the holder of a certificate of Competency, numbered 28214  
~~was~~ Master of the Steam ship EMPIRE PLOVER,  
 is of the port of London of the gross tonnage of 6,109 tons, her  
 official number being 168189; that the ship was built of Steel  
 at Oakland, Cal. in the year 1920, that she was classed by Lloyds  
 as 100 A1, that her engines were of 638 M.N. horse-power,  
 and that she was rigged as a schooner

2. That the ship ~~was~~ is owned by Goulandris Bros. Ltd.  
 of St. Mary Axe, in the City of London  
~~and is~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~

3. That the ship carried a crew of 38 hands including deponent, and 2  
 passengers. The name of the pilot was -

4. That the ship had on board a ~~box of~~ General Cargo  
 of the weight of 7,681 (Approx) tons shipped by various  
 of and consigned to various  
 of and that - tons of - were carried on deck.

5. That the ship sailed from Buenos Aires on her intended voyage to  
 U.K. for orders in on the 15th day of January,  
 1947, at 6.20pm.; that the draught of water of the said ship at the time of sailing was  
 23 feet 9 inches forward and 25 feet 4 inches aft.

6. That at the time of sailing as above the said ship was well found and in  
 good condition. She carried four fully equipped lifeboats, and all  
 other regulations were complied with. The vessel went through survey  
 at Liverpool in October 1946.

7. That the said ship was proceeding on the intended voyage as above stated  
 and at 18.57 G.M.T. on the 18th March, 1947, the deponent received a  
 wireless telegraph S.O.S. message from M.C.D.Y. which was later  
 identified as being the FAMAUSTA bearing 102 degrees estimated  
 distance 90 miles. The Empire Plover was on a course of 037 standard  
 compass 028 magnetic and at noon the vessel was in a position 44.51 North

ACM  
11

10.40 West. The weather at this time was moderate S.W. gale with a high-following sea. The message was answered and deponent also broadcast to all ships in the vicinity asking if anyone was nearer. No reply was received to his message, and at 20.29 G.M.T. a further message was received from the Famagusta requesting assistance. The deponent at once altered course to 132 degrees true to intercept. The estimated speed of the Empire Plover was 8½ knots.

The deponent was on the Bridge together with the Officer of the watch and a lookout man and at 2 a.m. on the 19th March, 1947, a steamer's lights were sighted ahead, the weather being clear and at 3 a.m. by signal lamp it was confirmed that this was the Famagusta who requested deponent to stand by. It was too dark to see the condition of the vessel excepting that it was a small ship. By signal lamp the Famagusta gave his course which was 220 degrees true, speed 4 knots and requested deponent to stand by and escort him to Corunna. The Master of the Famagusta gave no reason for this

[Continued on page 4 if necessary].

8. That on ~~day the~~ day of ~~19~~, at ~~am.~~, the weather being ~~the wind blowing at force~~ from the ~~the tide being~~ with a ~~sea from the~~ the said ship

request though deponent asked by radio what his trouble was. The deponent took up a position on the Famagusta's starboard bow about ½ mile distant and reduced his speed to keep in this position. When daylight broke at about 6.30 a.m. the deponent could see that the Famagusta had a heavy list to port and was dipping her bows under. The weather was gale force with heavy squalls and high seas. No further wireless messages were received from the Famagusta despite frequent calls being made to him and the escort proceeded. At 12.45 p.m. the Famagusta was observed to be displaying flag signal P.E.T. a request to be towed. The deponent could see that the list on the vessel was gradually increasing and she appeared to be more by the head. Deponent manoeuvred his vessel to windward in order to pass a line. At 1.30 p.m. Schermuley Rocket line was successfully fired across the fore part of the Famagusta but the line was unable to be taken on board for reasons unknown to deponent. Ten minutes later the line parted and deponent then steamed off and encircled Famagusta in order to make a further attempt to establish connection. When rounding starboard quarter of Famagusta the deponent suddenly noticed that she had launched a lifeboat with a number of persons in it (he could not see how many) which was pulled towards the Empire Plover. At this time the vessels were about 300 feet apart but before reaching the Empire Plover the boat capsized throwing all its occupants into the water. This occurred close to the Empire Plover and ladders and scrambling nets and lines were at once brought into action and deponent's crew went down the ladders in efforts to pass lines round those in the water. By this means 6 persons were rescued. In the meantime deponent had stopped his engines and being in the weather position he drifted down on to the Famagusta, the port side forward of the bridge eventually contacting the starboard quarter of the latter vessel, no apparent damage being sustained. Whilst the vessels were in contact the second Officer of the Famagusta jumped aboard the Empire Plover. The deponent still with his engines astern cleared Famagusta and deponent then brought his vessel with the wind and sea on his port quarter and launched his starboard No. 1 lifeboat in charge of the second Officer with 6 men, as in the meantime, the remainder of the personnel on board the Famagusta took to the water on Carley floats, and other floatable equipment. The second Officer despite the heavy sea managed to pick up the Master, Mate, Chief Engineer and one other member of the crew and brought them safely aboard the Empire Plover. The weather was too bad to get the lifeboat on board and it was abandoned.

All this time the Famagusta lay helpless and stopped in the trough of the sea. Deponent could see no further people on the



[Continued from paragraph 7 page 3.]

of the intention to abandon ship he would have manoeuvred his vessel accordingly and feels certain that all hands would have been saved.

The deponent wishes to put on record the gallant behaviour of three of his crew, namely T. Kelly E.D.H. T. Hughes, second cook and J. Garbett O.S. These men stripped and swam to assist those floating from the upturned boat. Unfortunately, the man Kelly who saved the second engineer, who was badly injured, and one other person then went to assist a woman who was struggling nearby, but on reaching her was over whelmed by a heavy sea and not seen again. He also wishes to mention the good work of the second Officer, Mr. P. Burn, who was in charge of the lifeboat under conditions of great difficulty.

The deponent considers the conduct of these four men cannot be too highly commended.

The survivors were given all possible care and attention aboard the Empire Plover and were landed at Falmouth on the 21st March, 1947.

*Famagusta was sighted at 2 am. in position  
45° 10' N 8° 55' W. At noon the position was approximately  
44° 27' N 9° 04' W.*

*A. P. Mallett*

*Master*

*s/s Empire Plover*

*V. Pharo*



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