

AMERICAN AMONG BOAT'S VICTIMS

When Hospital Ship Warilda Was Torpedoed in English Channel

WOUNDED HEROES SLAIN

Wiped Out by Explosion and Total Death List Is 123

Special Cable to Evening Public Ledger

London was shocked by the news of the torpedoing in the channel of the ambulance transport Warilda, with the loss of 123 lives.

The Warilda had on board about 500 wounded soldiers, a large proportion of whom were stretched helplessly on cots.

The vessel was attacked in the middle of the channel, and it was only by the greatest of good luck that the damaged ship was kept afloat for a sufficient period to enable the great majority of the wounded men to be transferred to lifeboats and afterward to destroyers, which arrived promptly on the scene of disaster in response to signals of distress.

That so many wounded heroes lost their lives is attributed to the fact that one of the wards on the ship was wiped out by the torpedo. These men, unable to help themselves because of wounds received on the field of battle, must have had a terrible experience.

The torpedo which hit the Warilda severed the ladder or gangway, which allowed a tremendous rush of water to enter the bowels of the ship, which took a very serious list.

It is difficult to ascertain the total number of persons on board. In addition to the hundreds of wounded, there were a full medical complement and a number of members of the woman's army auxiliary corps, as well as a crew of nearly 120 men.

Captain Sims was in command of the Warilda. She was one of the biggest boats of the Adelaide Steamship Company, and was magnificently fitted for her task of transporting the wounded, of whom she has carried many thousands.

The vessel left a foreign port Friday last, and was making a very good passage when she was attacked in mid-channel. The time was between 1:30 and 2 o'clock on Saturday morning, and such was the amount of the work of rescue that some of the crew made an unexpected appearance at their homes in time for the midday meal.

Crew Quickly at Stragglers

One stalwart sailor said he was awoken from a deep sleep by the terrible impact. He immediately fought his way to the deck, and for a moment or two "knew" he meant the deck crew was snatched by the force of the explosion.

"However," he added, "we soon realized that there had been some dirty business, and our men knew exactly what was expected of them in such an emergency. The order that every man should take his station was promptly obeyed.

As first one big shot of the war was fired, the vessel tilted, which meant that for a time, at any rate, there was always the fear that the vessel might disappear from under our feet at any moment.

"I don't know," he said, "I can tell you what went through my mind when the thought of the wounded men first came into my mind."

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