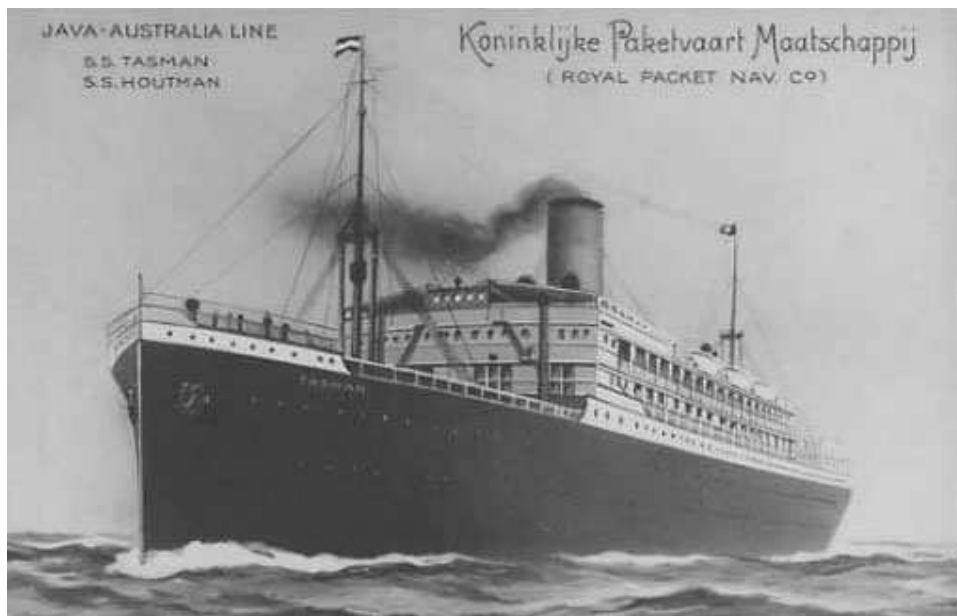
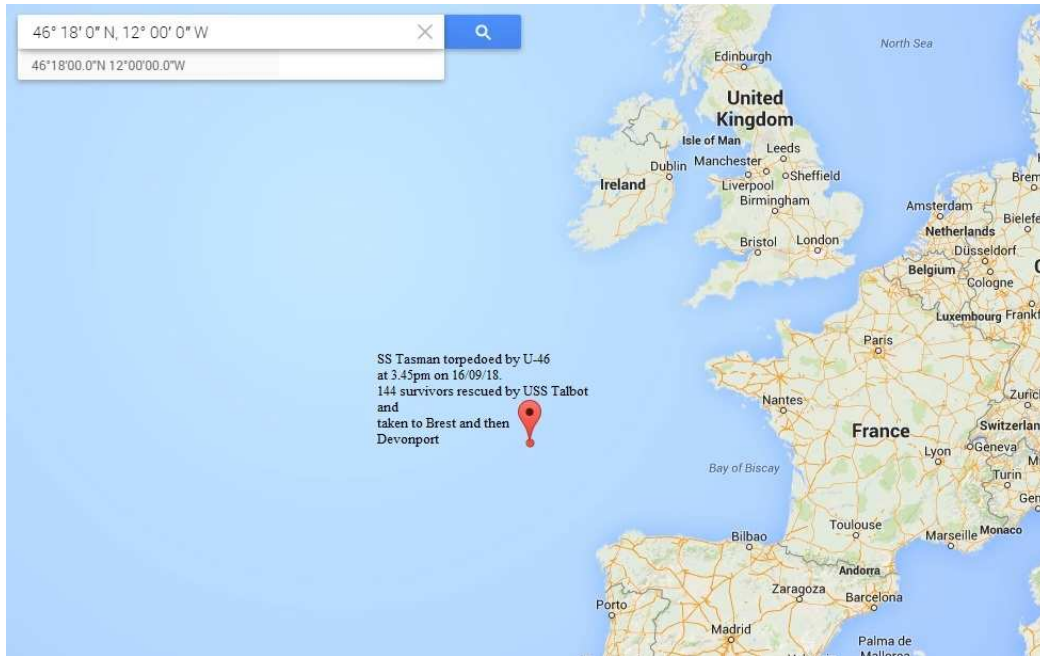


The Sinking of the SS Tasman - 16th September 1918 at 3:45pm

Col. Achilles Samut was on board the SS Tasman en route to Malta when it was torpedoed by a German U-Boat. 146 survivors were rescued from 5 life-boats by the USS Talbot after 16 hours.

This account includes the detailed log of the Rev George Woodford travelling to a new posting in India and also the ships log of the USS Talbot, with thanks to the US Naval Archive.



Achilles Samut (5th from left wearing life-jacket) just after the rescue by USS Talbot



The USS Talbot



Telegram to daughter Maggie on holiday in Christchurch , Dorset
From Brest on 18th September

N.B. -- This Form must accompany an inquiry respecting this Telegram.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

WIDE & SPENCERSON & Co. Ltd. London. If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than 1d. being reckoned 1d. and if it be found that there was any inaccuracy, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

Office of Origin and Service Instructions.

Brest 18th
15.0

Charged to pay *d*

Handed in at *M.* Received *at 11/10*

TO { *Again St Athelstane*
Belle Vue Road
Southbourne Beach
Angleterre
Forpedood saved writing Dad
Love Samut

OFF CAPE FINISTERRE
1918.

Telegram to Maggie on arrival in London

N.B. - This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Charges to pay

London

TO: Mr. Agnes Athelstone
Wells
Unwed Charing Cross Hotel Wells
have only clothes was wearing
ship sank in three minutes
lost everything was picked
up by one of ship's
boats very close shave with

Handed in at } Received here at }

Office Stamp.

N.B. - This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Charges to pay

TO: Come soon as possible buying
clothes love kisses to all
Dad

Handed in at } Received here at } 9.17 a

Office Stamp.

Grandson Francis was born shortly after this, the 5th child of Philip Pullicino and Maude nee Samut, and given the name Francis Talbot Pullicino.

Rev. George Ernest Woodford's diary, 1918, from Jerome Woodford, his grandson.

MY GRANDFATHER WAS A MISSIONARY ON HIS WAY BACK TO INDIA,
BUT HE HAD TRAINED AS A NAVAL DRAUGHTSMAN AT CHATHAM IN
THE 1890S

Diary of the sinking of the "Tasman"

Sat 7.9.18

Hear I sail on Tuesday and Tasman instead of Thursday.

.....

Tues 10.9.18

Went to Fenchurch St with M.... Mission House said goodbye to Hartley. Met Frank [at F St he went to Tilbury with me. JM (?) went ½ way. The boat is a Dutch boat with an Australian crew. All in a big muddle 5 stewards short. Got under weigh in the afternoon. Boat all wonderfully camouflaged.

Wed 11.9.18

All along the coast no escort. Went Coldborough. Glad to get into Solent for the night. The lights search & were wonderfully pretty. Our porthole was not quite dark & steward got very excitedSaid Naval authorities would not hesitate to put a shot through an unauthorised light.

Thur 12.9.18

My cabin companion is a merchant captain going to his ship at Bombay. Proceeded close along S coast shipped Paravam (?) and others. Spent night in Torbay.

Fri 13

Off at daybreak. Plymouth harbour at noon. Many other boats and several seaplanes. The survivors of Galway Castle brought in by destroyers. Took some military & naval officers on board for Gibraltar also addl stewards.

Sat 14

Off at daybreak in thick mist. Our convoy consists of 13 ships including one mystery ship & 6 destroyers. Speed not more than 8 knots we were on outside left.

Sun 15

Preached on board at 10.30. No hymn or prayer books on board.

Mon 16

Convoy escort left at 3 am now the only boat insight is the Colara. Went to tea at 3.35 pm. At 3.45 we were struck by a torpedo in the front hold on S side. Ship sank at 3.49(?) All the boats got lowered but only just in time Many of us had to jump into the water and swim to the boats. We were holding onto the lines from the boats like bloaters on a string. I managed to clamber in. The rest had to be pulled in. Immediately she was struck, the ship took a strong list to S but fortunately she almost righted herself before she disappeared. If she had gone over, all the S boats would have been knocked out & taken under as none of them were more than 10 or 12 yards from her when she sank. She sank by the head and there was very little turmoil or suction as she glided down. She was an oil ship, and there was much oil on the water unfortunately for us.

All 5 boats got safely clear & turned their heads to wind by means of sea anchor & oars. Nearly all the tillers were smashed.

The weather (?) was squally with heavy showers. Sea was rough with strong SW wind.

Sighted submarine on horizon at 6pm don't think she saw us. Boat torpedoed about 350 miles SSW of Ushant. There was a cross sea out – it was difficult to keep boat head to the waves espy (?) after moon went down. Saw a wonderful lunar rainbow, the bands of colour were fainter and much wider than in the day solar rainbow. We know that our boat had no time to send out an SOS with our position. Could only hope that the Colara had done so. She of course made off at top speed as soon as we were torpedoed.

The seas were literally mountains high & I had no hope at first that we would last the night in it. Many of the folks in our boat as we dragged them aboard lay as dead in the bottom of the boat. Others were awfully sick, perhaps due to their having swallowed some sea water. I took an oar and stuck to it all night in order to keep my blood going, otherwise I would have been frozen in my wet clothes. Home seemed infinitely sweet then. I felt that the chances were all against us & was inclined when things were looking exceptionally gloomy to envy the people who had perished with the ship. I had practically decided to leave off my lifebelt if the boat capsized. I had as well as a ship's belt. I had neither coat nor hat. My rug was wet but I had to lend it to who had only a vest on. It was awful in the rain – one could not see a yard ahead. The worst part of the night by far came after the moon had gone down.

17.9.18

Day broke at length & we were gladder to see it than thousands before. It was a glorious morning. We decided to drift about until noon waiting to be picked up before setting any course. The weather was much too rough for us to hoist a sail. One ship's biscuit was served out with a mouthful of water. At 7 am we sighted smoke on the horizon and got very excited but after a while it disappeared and left us feeling a bit sick. At 9 am sighted smoke again and after a while a vessel which turned out to be the USA destroyer Talbot. One of our boats had lost her sea anchor and was separated from the others which kept fairly close together. This single boat was picked up at 7 am & had directed the destroyer the wrong way, hence the disappearing smoke. All boat crews were eventually picked up. Boats were abandoned. Some collapsed as soon as they got aboard. I then got my flask into operation. Had kept it dark before. The Yankees were kindness itself – fed us up royally. I slept in my clothes in the engine room on some flags. US Talbot is q8 (?) boat – it can do 40 knots – carry 120 men & is the last word in sophistication, she had been escorting the other ships that had left Weymouth with us to We made for Brest and got into harbour at daybreak (?).

Wed 18

We went to the English consul who offered to send any wire to England & advance any money we required. We fed at the hotel He went wireless to Plymouth asking that Talbot might take us there but no reply came before 6 pm. The consul had arranged for us to go to, a mile distant but it rained hard & we were not keen so he sent some to (?) the hotel and others to the USA YMCA in We dined in state & afterward the consul turned up with instructions for us to assemble on the wharf at 7.30. Had a shave in a shop where there was a lady barber.

Thursday 19.9.18

Left on the Talbot at 8am & had a glorious run to Plymouth. At 10 am the crew went to quarters & we thought that a submarine had been sighted or heard. Some of the passengers went very white. It turned out to be nothing more serious than The sirens sounded and made many of us jump out of our skins. Our nerves were more shaken than I had thought. Reached Plymouth about 4 pm & disembarked soon after 5. Gave three cheers for the captain & the crew. Hot tea and coffee were provided for us on land & after passport formalities a 1st class ticket was given for our destination. Dinner was provided at the hotel near the station & I caught the 7.30 pm for Birmingham. Wired mission house and Daisy.

20.9.18

Birmingham New St 4.30 am. Slept on station waiting room until 6.30 when train left for Four Oaks at home at 7 am. Found Daisy & the children just down in the kitchen. Joyce saw me through the window & didn't recognise me. "Oh, here's a man, mummy" I must have looked a wreck. Had not undressed for 6 days. Had a hot bath & went to bed where I stayed all day & most of Sunday.

.....
29.9.18

Three things mainly responsible for our deliverance

- 1 No women & children on board
- 2 An oil fuel boat
- 3 A white crew (doubt if a lascar crew would have got the boats afloat in time).

There was second explosion just as the ship disappeared, probably due to boiler bursting or a bulkhead.

PART OF HIS REPORT WRITTEN AFTER THE WAR

Then the date of the sailing was altered to September 4th, then Sept 12th and finally Sept 10th on which date we actually left Tilbury. John Mitchell an old Bengal colleague at whose house at Richmond I had spent the night before sailing went to Fenchurch St with me and there I met my brother [Frank] who accompanied me to Tilbury, but was unable to get beyond the barrier.

Our passports and steamer tickets had to be shown and our ration books given up, after which we went to the tender and set off for our steamer. I had quite a shock when I discovered what a small boat she was. On board, everything appeared in confusion. The cabins had not been cleaned and some of them were so full of rubbish that we could not get the luggage into them. I was surprised and disappointed to find that there were no Indian stewards on board. The crew and stewards were all white, Australians in fact. There was evidently something wrong with them and my cabin steward soon told me what it was. They were 5 stewards short and those on board had refused to sail in a boat so undermanned. It appears that 5 other men had signed on but had failed to turn up. There was an interview with the Captain who promised for 5 extra stewards to be taken on at Plymouth and we started, but there was a bad spirit present all the time and the passengers, especially those of us in the main deck cabin felt that we had very just cause for complaint, war conditions notwithstanding.

We found a notice in the saloon, as soon as we came on board, to the effect that we could have telegrams sent to our friends to tell of our safe arrival at Port Said if we would enter their name and address in the book provided This was the first intimation many of us had received as to the route we were to take. I was very relieved to find there were no women and children on board. The vessel was a Dutch boat that had been taken over in Australia. An Australian crew had brought her home and were taking her back to Calcutta, where they expected to pay off. A lascar crew were, we understood, to be shipped there.

All the notices to passengers in the cabins and the name plates over the various conveniences and offices were in Dutch. The bath room was a Dutch one too. I went to get a bath the first morning on board and found a couple of levers over one outlet above the bath. I pulled one and steam was the result, steam noisy and very voluminous, so much so that the place was full of it before I could shut it off, and as there was no electric light that I could find, I had to continue operations by sense of touch alone. When I pulled the second lever, salt water came but was cold. I pulled the 1st lever again and found I had solved the riddle for the steam entered into the water before it came out of the opening, and lo it was beautifully warm.

But my experiences were not quite completed. There was a shower bath of fresh water for use after the salt tub. I took up my position under the hose and pulled the handle. The water came freely enough but instead of coming vertically as I had expected, there was a decided tendency to the horizontal and I saw my slippers floating and the tail of my dressing gown saturated before I realised what was wrong.

The door fastenings were not quite what we had been used to. Now the electric light was turned off entirely at 7 pm and we had to grope our way about in absolute darkness. One passenger told me how with great difficulty he had managed to grope his way into the bathroom at night, but that he had been unable to grope his way out again. He had a very trying experience until another passenger more apt in the darkness came to his help and piloted him back to his cabin. He had wondered what he should do if the ship were torpedoed.

Clear of the River, we hugged the coast all the way round to Plymouth, anchoring in some safe water every night. In the Solent the first night and in Tor Bay the second. In the Solent, the lights upon the water combined with those on the shore including a number of search lights produced an indescribably beautiful effect that the consciousness of danger and the sense of silent efficiency and power all tended to make more bewitching.

I discovered the chief steward rushing from cabin to cabin in a very excited condition; he said that the authorities on shore had signalled that there was a light showing in one of our cabins and he went to say

“You know, the naval authorities here would think nothing of putting a shot through an unauthorised light in these waters.”

We were travelling alone with no escort. At no time were we more than 3 or 4 miles from the coast. The captain was a very illusive [sic] individual. The passengers only saw him once when he appeared at dinner one night as the ship lay at anchor, but then he hardly spoke 6 words to those sitting at his table. We reached Plymouth at about mid-day on Friday and found quite a number of ships in the harbour. Here we took on some additional passengers, military and naval ratings chiefly, and some additional stewards. We also took 600 bags of mail and 100 tonnes of fresh water.

The ships were all wonderfully camouflaged; sometimes we found it hard to distinguish a vessel as she lay moored alongside a pier or quay. There were a number of seaplanes in the harbour and I was very interested in watching their flights especially their rising from and return to the water and their clever manoeuvring on the water's surface. Whilst we were at Plymouth, the survivors and some of the victims of the “Galway Castle” were brought in.

We left on Saturday morning in a thick mist. When it cleared we discovered that there were 13 ships in our convoy, including a mystery ship and that we were escorted by 6 destroyers, some American and some British. The ships formed up in three lines and the destroyers were distributed round the outside of the formation. It was cold and rough and a number of passengers were far from comfortable. It was interesting watching the other boats in the convoy and the sense of their companionship was very reassuring. We met another large convoy about dusk on Saturday evening. They came right across our bows and to the uninitiated amongst us at least it seemed that collisions were only avoided by a miracle.

The passengers were not numerous, 50 or 60 perhaps. But they were a cosmopolitan lot. My cabin companion was a sea captain going out to Bombay to his boat. The list contained a High Court judge, a member of the ICS, businessmen bound for the Strait Settlement, Madras, Calcutta, Assam, Bombay and Mesopotamia, a young Indian returning after some years at Oxford, an old Indian pleader who had been to England to instruct counsel in a Privy Council appeal, 4 YMCA workers for Mesopotamia, two of whom were American and the other two English one being an ordained minister. I was the only missionary on board. The few military and naval personnel were all bound to Gibraltar. The YMCA men and I shared a little table in the dining saloon and three of the occupied the cabin next to mine in the most inaccessible part of the boat where cabins were found.

The other padre was not feeling at all well on Sunday morning so it was arranged that I should take the service. The boat was provided with neither hymn nor prayer books and the addition to the notice of service "please bring your own books" did not have much effect. We opened with the National Anthem but the only hymn we managed was "Holy, Holy, Holy," I had to spread my legs and wedge myself up against the side during the sermon, the ship was so unsteady – but in spite of all the disadvantages a gracious influence was felt by most of us during the service. All went well on Sunday, we carried our life belts about with us and few of us ventured to take our clothes off at night. On Monday morning when we came on deck, we discovered that our escort had left us and that there was only one other ship in sight which was said to be the "Colaba" bound I believe for Bombay. The disappearance of the convoy and the escort caused a feeling of loneliness in most of us.

The American YMCA men, in spite of seasickness thought we were wasting time and came to me with the suggestion that we should have a gathering each morning in which I should tell them something about the conditions of life in India, about missionary activity and problems etc. The other padre was anxious that an early announcement should be made of the service which he was to conduct the following Sunday. But they need not have worried themselves.

I rather held my breath all Monday morning, believing as I did that if we were going to be torpedoed that was the most likely time for it to happen. But all went well and I began to breathe more freely.

At 3.30pm the tea bell went and a good number of the passengers trooped down for a cup. At 3.40 there was a very intensive BANG in the fore hold a little bit forward of the saloon in which we were sitting. All the glass came out of the windows and we were all jumped out of our chairs. Nobody said a word. We all knew what had happened, I noticed how tense and white everybody's face was and wondered if my face was like all the others. We all rushed for the stairs leading to the promenade deck. The ship gave a mighty lurch and threw us all onto the handrail on that side of the steps. We managed to get onto the deck but the slope to starboard was so great that my feet went from under me – in spite of the rubber on my boots – as soon as I stepped onto it. I managed to recover my legs and rushed to where my boat was, grabbing my ship's life-belt and my rug from my deck chair as I passed. I put the life-belt on over my Gieves waistcoat and then saw the boat being lowered past the deck on which I stood, but owing to the list it was yards away from the side of the ship. I pitched my rug into it as it went down and decided to go down the rope ladder into it as soon as it was afloat meanwhile I started to try to inflate my waistcoat. But as I had prophesied I would do in such an emergency, I soon found I had forgotten to open the valve and that all my puffing and blowing was wasted. I soon rectified the omission and had the satisfaction of seeing the thing inflate. Then casting my eye forward I was horror struck to find that the forward end of the boat had disappeared and the water was fast coming along the promenade deck on which I stood. I found I had badly miscalculated the time the ship would take to sink and that if I wanted a chance of safety I must act promptly. I was over the side and down the rope into the water in less time than it takes to write it. The [life] boat was afloat but it was evident it never would or could come to the foot of the ladder so I stuck out for it. My two lifebelts rather impeded me but presently I was able to grasp the lifeline fixed all around the boat in my hand and I breathed a sigh of relief. There were a crowd of us hanging on all round the stern of that life boat, for all the world like herrings on a string. I was more buoyant than the others and managed to scramble on board without help, but I was the only man who did so.

I shall never forget looking up as I hung onto that lifeline, seeing the mast, rigging and wireless of the sinking ship hanging right over us. It seemed certain that she was coming over side ways and that we must all be dragged down by her top hamper. By what seemed to us a miracle, she appeared to shake and almost right herself before she disappeared, and the doom that seemed so certain was avoided. Another fear I had as I hung there was that we should be sucked in as the ship went under, or capsized by the upheaval of the water displaced but these fears proved groundless.

We were only a yard or two from the ship – could almost have put out our hands and touched her – as she went down, yet none of us felt anything at all of the suction, nor was there any danger whatever of our capsizing. The explanation probably lies in the fact that the "Tasman" was an oil fuel boat and she carried large quantities of oil instead of coal in her bunkers. The oil, as soon as she was struck, spread thickly and rapidly over the surrounding water. It certainly helped us very materially in getting the boat launched in a very rough sea. But the poor fellows who got a mouthful of it did not appreciate its services as much as the rest of us did. The "Tasman" sank at 3.49 pm; that is in 4 minutes from the time the torpedo struck her. Her stern hung high in the air for a second before she took the final plunge. We all saw one poor fellow standing at one of the windows with his arm on the frame looking out over the sea as if lost in contemplation whilst the ship rushed to the depths.

The torpedo must have torn a gaping hole in the ship's starboard side at the fore end, if it did not actually blow the fore end right off her, for boxes and other cargo, including a couple of railway trunks which had been lashed on the forward well deck simply lurched from her into the sea. Fortunately, at our end of the ship we were fairly clear of it all; but the forward boat must have been endangered by it.

When the people who were hanging to our boat had all been hauled aboard, we got about the oars and tried to keep her head to the seas. The tiller had been smashed and when we got outside of the oil area, we discovered how rough the sea was. The waves were mountain high, we rushed up one side of them, hung for a giddy moment on their crests and then down the opposite slope into a deep gulf before we began the next ascent. I didn't know what these lifeboats were capable of and I dared not hope even that the boat could live out the night at sea.

We did not know whether all the other boats had got off or not but we soon caught sight of one or two of them. There were 30 in our boat and it was badly crowded. Many collapsed in the bottom of the boat as soon as they were hauled in out of the water. We only had three or seamen on board and as several of them were frightfully sick, all the able-bodied amongst us had to do our best at the oars and the bailing.

All the YMCA men were down for our boat, but we found we had only three of them on board and feared the other had been lost. The old Hindu was in our boat, he lay in the forepart all the time inert and apparently hopeless. I was glad for his sake that we did not spend longer in the lifeboat than we did spend. One of our seamen had been bathing at the time of the explosion, he got away with only pants and vest on. Another was a greaser, he had been in the engine room somewhere and had only a vest and a part of trousers on. I lent him my rug but did not see it after we were rescued.

About the most marvellous escape of all I think was that of a man in our boat who had been in the crow's nest when the explosion occurred. He told us that the explosion had jolted him clean out of the nest, but he managed to grab the rigging in his fall and to get safely down it to the deck, whence he jumped into the sea and swam to the lifeboat.

I found myself in the boat near the other padre. Poor little man, he had evidently lived a sheltered life and was not built for roughing it. I remember when we had been discussing the service of Sunday morning, he had remarked that it would be rather awkward having a congregation of men only. I replied that it would be grand to have the opportunity to address such a crowd and he replied

"I don't know; I must confess I like nice sprinkling of ladies in my congregation."

Poor fellow, he was very upset when he found himself in the lifeboat. He knew that I had a spirit flask in the pocket of my life saving waistcoat. He began to tell me how bad he felt, but not finding me particularly responsive, he went on to inform me that a little rum would put him right. He kept on in that strain wondering whether or not the boat carried anything of that kind and at length he came to the point and said

"Old man, I suppose you couldn't give me a little drop of yours?"

Well, I felt about to ... but I had to reply “Man, buck up and don’t be a fool, goodness knows how long we may have to remain in this boat. It is not time for rum yet, that kind of thing must be kept for a more urgent need.”

He did pull himself together after that, and really played the man until we were picked up.

There was a cold wind blowing and as volunteers for the oars were hard to get, I took on although not much of an oarsman. The exercise helped keep me warm and I liked it. The pulling was not often very strenuous, there were two of us on each oar most of the time, and all we had to do was keep her head to the seas. I stuck to my oar from soon after 4pm to 7 am and I think I owe my immunity to bad effect largely to that fact. My hands got punished but that was a minor consideration.

Did we see anything of the submarine? I don’t think anybody saw anything of her or of the torpedo before we were struck. I did hear a second class passenger, I think he was, say afterwards that he saw the submarine appear a few miles on our starboard bow, saw the hatch of the conning tower open and the commander step forth and sweep the sea with his glass and retire again to the depth just before we were struck, but I put it down that his imagination had suffered a shake up. We did however see the submarine an hour or so after the “Tasman” sank. She came up a long way off and we only caught sight of the conning tower as we rose on the crests of the waves. But there was no mistaking her identity. Some of the passengers wanted to attempt to signal to her – thinking her a boat come to rescue us, but were prevented. I quite expected that she would begin shelling us and wondered which of us the shell would get if it came. It was dusk, the sea was rough and I doubt if she saw us at all. She soon disappeared.

The 3rd Officer was in charge of our boat. He told us that there had not been time to get off our position by wireless before the ship went down. He thought that an SOS had gone but he knew that our latitude and longitude had not gone. The question in all our minds was as to whether the other ship that had seen us go down and had made off at top speed had sent it out for us. If she has not there was little if any hope of our being picked up and as we only had one tin of ship’s biscuits and one little cask of water on board, the prospect was gloomy in the extreme.

The night was cold and rough. A number of showers came that soaked us through again and again. I would just begin to feel a little bit dry when down would come rain, or we would get our boat a bit broadside on to the sea and over would come the sea or spray and we would be as wet as ever. It was bad enough before the moon went down but it was worse after. We could not see which way the seas were coming and tried to steer by the feel of the wind on our cheeks. Even now, I think that the danger of our being capsized was a very real one; there, at times, it seemed almost a certainty. Several times I was inclined to envy the people that had gone down with the ship.

We had an awful lot of time to think that night. “Home” certainly seemed far, far dearer than it had ever seemed before. I had plenty of time to think out the question of the advisability in the case of our being capsized in the darkness of taking off my lifebelt and going Home quickly. I thought of the yarns of shipwrecks that I had read, and of one in particular going into the details of a man’s experience ... in an open boat for many days.

One bright message of Hope came to us. I felt that it came to me in particular – straight from the skies. We saw between two of the showers a beautiful lunar rainbow. He who holds the sea in the hollow of His hands had set His bow in the clouds and all was well. The colours were fainter than those of a solar rainbow and the bands of colour were wider.

We got our sea anchor over the bow of the boat and this considerably helped us in keeping her head to the wind and sea. One ship's biscuit was served out to each of us about dinner time. They were as hard as bricks and my poor new teeth refused to negotiate mine. So I broke off a piece and sucked it until I was able to chew it. The rest of the biscuit I put in my jacket pocket until required. The second bit I broke off was a bit softer on account of the moisture it had absorbed from my jacket, but the moisture alas was that of salt water. I finished the biscuit by degrees nevertheless.

The dawn was a long time coming that Tuesday morning, but it came at length, and we were more thankful than we had ever been to see a day break before. Fortunately for us it broke bright and clear although the wind was still strong and the sea rough. We soon saw another of our boats; presently four of us were in sight of each other. We wondered what had been the fate of n° 5. It was decided to hang about as we were doing until mid-day if necessary, in the hope of being picked up, and then in nothing came to try and set a course for some land. The 3rd Officer said we were about 350 miles SSW of Brest. We had sails in the boat but the wind and sea were far too rough for us to dream of attempting to use them, so that the prospects of making land were poor in the extreme. The old Indian recovered a bit when the sun began to shine but he was very agitated because we were going W rather than E – we had to keep the boat's head that way because of the sea.

He prayed me to get the officer to put her head about and attempt to run east instead of W since there was no hope of making land in that direction. The idea of keeping as near stationary as we could until 12 o'clock in the hope of being picked up did not appeal to him at all.

The presence of danger during the night did not tend to solemnize the minds at least to cleanse the language of that Australian crew. Perhaps the only way they knew of emphasising their words was by means of oath. From this point of view their conversation was very empathic indeed. They reminded us all, and they were right of course, that that we were not carrying any passengers on this trip and that we must all take our share of what had to be done to keep the boat afloat. Some of them did not like the poor old Indian taking things so philosophically and the language they used concerning him must have hurt intensely. The idea of dropping him overboard if he did not put a hand to an oar was freely mooted. Poor old man would have done more harm than good if he had attempted anything of the kind. But apart from all such practical considerations, was he not a Brahmin?!

A sip of water and half a biscuit a piece were allowed in the morning. But we were too wet to be very thirsty and none of us was yet very hungry.

At 7.30, somebody spotted smoke on the horizon away to the SE and hope revived in all our hearts. One of the boats near us hoisted a boathook with a number of handkerchiefs tied to it, and we hoisted an oar, but we were not seen and presently the smoke disappeared and we feared that we were forsaken. A sharp lookout was kept however, and in a little more than an hour the smoke reappeared and presently the funnel of a boat. We signalled frantically to the best of our ability and pulled for dear life in the direction of the oncoming boat. Soon it was clear she was coming our way and presently she was near enough for the 3rd Officer to talk to her with his arms. We were all frantically excited and when she stood by to pick us up we crowded to the port side of our boat to be ready to spring onto the rope ladders she had lowered as soon as we could reach them. Our officer feared we should capsize and shouted

“Trim the boat!”

He had not a very strong voice and one of the YMCA men attempted to pass his order along, but he was so elated with the prospect of deliverance that the message became in his mouth

“Skin the Goat!”

The officer was not satisfied with the response to his first order and thinking perhaps that those land lubbers of passengers did not grasp its importance, he shouted again

“Sit on the starboard side!”

This time the little minister attempted to echo the word of command, but in his mouth it became

“Sit on the sideboard!”

The boat did not capsize, however and we were soon skinning up the side of the USA SS Talbot and welcomed by an eager kindly American crew and also by a number of men from our own ship. Some of our boat’s crew collapsed as they reached the deck of the Talbot and then my spirit flask came into play with good effects. The padre got a sip of its contents after all.

We were the third boat picked up and soon the occupants of the other two boats were also safely on board. One boat had been picked up early in the morning. She had lost her sea anchor and so had drifted a long way from the rest of us, and fortunately had drifted in the direction from which help was to come.

REMARKS.

Commences and until 4 A.M.

Steaming under boilers numbers 3 and 4, on base course 310° (psc) 292 (true), standard speed 10 knots, in company with H.M.S. Bayana and convoy of 9 merchant ships, zig-zagging across front of convoy. At 12:38 went ahead at standard speed 15 knots, ceased zig-zagging and made course so as to clear left wing of convoy. At 12:46 steadied on course 148° (psc) 133 (true). At 12:49 changed standard speed to 18 kts, proceeding to assistance of S.S. Tasman in accordance with instructions from Commander-in-Chief, Devonport, England. At 1:22 C.C. to 143° (psc) 128 (true). Oil expended during watch, 1765 gallons, av. rev. 180.8, av. steam, 170 lbs.

R. Dudley
LIEUT.

4 A.M. to 8 A.M.

Steaming as before going to assistance of S.S. Tasman, course 143° (psc) 128 (true), standard speed 18 knots. At 6:09 C.C. to 129° (psc) 114 (true). At 7:49 sighted one boat with survivors of Tasman, sounded general quarters and circled to pick up survivors. Oil expended during watch, 2108 gallons, av. rev. 196, av. steam, 170 lbs.

E. M. Nixon
LT. COMMANDER

8 A.M. to Meridian.

Steaming as above, maneuvering to pick up survivors. Stopped both engines at 8:05, picked up first boat of survivors under charge of R.W. Buckell, a passenger and 28 men. At 8:13 went ahead at standard speed 15 knots, on course 80° (psc) 66 (true) in search for four other boats. At 8:23 #2 4" gun was accidentally fired by Ensign, W.H. Parsons. Secured from general quarters at 8:25. At 8:50 C.C. to 260° (psc) 249 (true). Sighted second boat at 9:33 on starboard bow. Changed standard speed to 18 knots, at 9:34. At 9:37 sighted a third boat on port bow. At 9:40 sighted a boat on port beam. At 9:42 sighted the fifth boat on port bow. At 9:50 maneuvered to pick up second boat. Took survivors aboard at 10:00, under charge of Third Officer and thirty men. Picked up third boat near by at 10:18 under charge of Fourth Officer and twenty eight men. Picked up fourth boat near by at 10:28 under charge of Second Engineer and thirty three men. Picked up fifth boat near by at 10:43 under charge of Chief Engineer and 20 men. Total number of survivors on board 146, names as per attached list. Headed on course 260° (psc) and standard speed 18 knots searching for other survivors. Changed course to 84° (psc) 66 (true). At 12:00 survivors were given food and medical attention. Oil expended during watch, 2021 gallons, av. rev. 166.3, av. steam, 187.5 lbs. On casting one of the boats adrift, it caught in the stbd. propeller, guard slightly bent the top of the blade.

Meridian to 4 P.M.

Steaming as before, on course 84° (psc) 66 (true) standard speed 20 knots. At 1:05 all clocks set ahead one hour. At 2:12 passed French steamer heading Westward, on starboard beam, distance about two miles. At 2:55 passed steamer heading to Eastward on starboard beam distance about 5 miles. Oil expended during watch, 1910 gallons, av. rev. 220, av. steam, 190 lbs.

4 P.M. to 8 P.M.

Steaming alone on course 84° (psc) 66 (true) standard speed 20 knots. At 4:30 passed red nun buoy adrift with black flag and ball on staff. Oil expended during watch, 2483 gallons, av. rev. 220, av. steam, 194 lbs.

8 P.M. to Midnight.

Steaming as above on course 84° (psc) 66 (true) standard speed 20 kts. At 11:35 passed three destroyers on stbd. beam, 1 mile distance.

R. Dudley
LIEUT.

E. M. Nixon
LT. COMMANDER

E. M. Nixon

ADDITIONAL SHEET.

Talbot (#114)

Date Sept. 17th, 1918

8 P.M. to Midnight continued.

Oil expended during watch, 2579 gallons, av. rev. 220, av. steam, 196.25 lbs.

List of Survivors of S.S. Tasman.

Adamson, W.W.	Pass.	Henshaw, O.	3rd deck officer
Appleton, R.S.	Pass.	Halliwell, F.	6th. Eng. off.
Abrahams, A.	RMLI	Hughes, A.	2nd. stoker
Anderson, D.	YMCA	Hunter, A.	Pass.
Armes, C.R.	Pass.	Hornby, W.H.	Pass.
Ajrekar, K.G.	Pass.	Halliwell, J.F.	Chief Eng.
Butcher, P.	Sea	Hopper, G.	Pass.
Buckell, R.W.	Civil	Hopkins, J.	Pass.
Barnes, N.J.	4th. Eng. Off.	Jones, G.	3rd. cook
Boom, A.	Pass.	Jacobs, G.	Sea RN
Brotherington, J.B.	Pass.	Johnston, H.	ICS
Braws, P.	Pass.	Kirkwood, T.	Std.
Brackenbury, J.	Asst. std.	Kempster, A.	Fire.
Betts, S.	YMCA	King, A.	AB
Brooks, A.W.	Civil.	Kemp, W.	Std.
Bailie, L.A.	3rd. Officer.	Kennedy, G.	Fire.
Cameron, E.	Surgeon R.N.	Lumsdane, A.	Pass.
Cole, H.	Stkpr.	Leese, A.	Civil.
Currie, R.W.	Civil.	Lees, J.	Civil.
Collison, L.H.	Civil.	Lodge, C.	Sub. lieut. RNR
Copeland, A.J.	Wire. O.S.	Moss, J.L.	Capt. ACS
Clarke, F.	Std.	Morris, M.	AB
Collett, G.	AB	MacGregor, A.D.	Civil.
Clarke, O.	ICS	Morrison, I.	Fire.
Charlton, W.	OS, RN	Murray, T.	Greaser
Chester, F.	Pass.	McBride, E.	Stoker
Chapman, J.	Pass.	Morgan, E.	2nd. Lieut.
Cookson, T.	AB	Mc Lean, G.	Donkeyman
Christison, J.T.	Pass.	Metzen, F.	Gun 2nd.
Dufton, V.S.	Pass.	McMorran, D.	Pass.
Davis, T.	Asst. std.	Muldoney, J.	Oil
Dutton, W.	Fire.	Meikle, R.	Oil
Dyer, W.	Fire.	Moss, J.	2nd. Lt. RWF
Davis, W.	1st stkpr.	Meise, V.	3rd. Eng.
Dunlap, Jas.	Std. 1c	Mallifigan, J.	Std.
Dince, R.	Std. 2c	Norman, A.	PORN
Donald, A.	Pass.	Osborne, A.V.	Asst. Std.
Douglass, S.	2nd. lieut.	Owen, J.R.	Capt.
Dickson, A.B.	Pass.	Orr, S.	Fire.
Doddrell, E.	Pass.	Pennel, A.N.	Capt. RFC
Esplin, G.	AB	Paul, B.W.	Pass.
Elvines, C.A.	Sub. Lieut RNR	Pearce, S.T.	Pass.
Egan, W.	Std.	Pollock, A.J.	Surg. RN
Facwett, E.G.	Civil.	Pyott, F.	AB
Flemming, R.	Ptyman.	Phillips, J.	Std.
Ferrell, J.E.	Pass.	Phillips, G.R.	YMCA
Flemming, T.	AB	Payne, A.	Stoker
French, S.	RN	Pollard, J.	Pass.
Flannigan, C.	B'tsn.	Panikkar, K.M.	Pass.
Gardner, W.	Sea	Ryan, J.	AB
Geir, F.	Std.	Ryan, T.	Fire.
Galleymore, G.R.	Lieut AOD	Rogers, A.B.	5th. Eng.
Gawn, T.	Sea	Ralston, R.	2nd. Eng.
Guest, E.	Lieut, RA	Robinson, F.	Std.
George, Mr.	Civil.	Robinson, J.C.	Sub. Lieut.
Hutchings, S.C.	3rd. deck off.	Robb, J.	Pass.
Hales, J.	Sea	Reker, A.J.	Pass.
Hogge, C.	Civil.		

proved:

Examined:

EDMUND
LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, U. S. N.,
U. S. N., Navigator.

Rees, H.
 Samut, Colonel,
 Scott, W.
 Sturrock, A.
 Strachan, Jas.
 Sherry, E.
 Stepburn, W.
 Shaphird, E.
 Stodd, H.
 Solomon, E.H.
 Skeels, A.
 Skiles H.R.
 Skinner? J.
 Tellett, C.
 Thorlhill, F.J.
 Taylor, A.
 Thompson, A.
 Thornton, A.H.
 Warren, A.
 Walsh, W.
 Williams, F.T.
 Warren, F.T.
 Wenham, C.
 Warnken, R.
 Webb, A.
 Webb, C.F.
 Woodford, C.E.
 Willson, W.
 Witinshaw, J.
 Wilson, A.S.
 Young, C.W.

Sea
 RA
 Chief Std.
 Pass.
 Scullery
 Fire.
 Butcher
 2nd. Ptyman?
 Pass.
 Pass.
 2nd. Std.
 Lieut. RE
 Pass.
 Sig. RNVR
 Civil.
 Pass.
 7th. Eng.
 Asst. Ck.
 Pvt. RMLI.
 Sea
 Pvt. RMLI
 Cptr.
 Baker
 Ch. Ck.
 Std.
 Gun RNVR
 Pass.
 Pass.
 Pass.
 4th. officer.
 Pass.

Approved:

Examined:

MAH

Edmonson

U. S. N. Navigator

UNITED STATES SHIP Talbot (#114) Wednesday September 18th. 1918.

REMARKS.

Commences and until 4 A.M.

Steaming under boilers numbers 3 and 4, course 84°(psc) 66 (true), standard speed 20 knots, sighted Creach Point Light, 3 points on port bow and C.C. to 45°(psc) 27(true). At 3:14 changed speed to two thirds. At 3:20 C.C. to 260°(psc) 242(true). At 3:30 C.C. to 130°(psc) 112(true). At 3:35 C.C. to 150°(psc) 132(true). At 3:53 changed standard speed to 15 knots and steamed standard speed. Oil expended during watch, 2123 gallons, av. rev. 206.6 av. steam, 193.75 lbs.

R. D. Dwyer
LIEUT.

4 A.M. to 8 A.M.

Steaming off entrance of Brest, France, on course 150°(psc), 132(true), standard speed 15 knots. At 4:10 C.C. to 225°(psc) 207(true). At 4:23 sighted Chauvée Light on starboard bow and C.C. to 106°(psc), 88(true). At 5:17 changed standard speed to 20 knots and steered various courses in conformity to channel. At 6:31 changed standard speed to 15 knots. At 6:39 passed thru break-water off Brest. At 7:00 moored to buoy #13, with two parts of port anchor chain, draft 8' 6" fwd, 11' aft. Transferred survivors of S.S. Tasman to U.S. Naval Base, at 7:15. At 7:30 set ships clocks ahead one hour. Oil expended during watch, 1625 gallons av. rev. 146.2, av. steam, 195.2 lbs.

E. O. Minton
LT. COMMANDER

8 A.M. to Meridian.

Moored as before, At 8:40 secured number 4 boiler, using number 3 for auxiliary purposes. At 9:37 Commanding Officer, made official call on Commander-in-Chief Naval Forces, Brest France. Various U.S. Destroyers, maneuvering, entering and leaving harbor.

St. Jones
ENSIGNET

Meridian to 4 P.M.

At 12:20 oil barge came alongside and commenced discharging fuel oil, draft before fueling 9' 4" fwd, 10' 6" aft. At 3:15 finished fueling, having taken on board, 29538 gallons, draft after fueling, 10' 3" fwd, 10' 6" aft. Following commissary stores received from Supply Officer, Naval Base, 700 lbs. bread, 25 lbs. bologna, 591 lbs. beef 2200 lbs. potatoes, 180 lbs. apples.

St. Jones
ENSIGNET

4 P.M. to 8 P.M.

At 5:05 U.S.S. McDougal moored alongside. At 7:47 oil barge unmoored.

St. Jones
ENSIGNET

8 P.M. to Midnight.

No remarks.

St. Jones
ENSIGNET

Approved:

Examined:

E. O. Minton
U. S. N., Navigator.

Sept 16 - 1918

COPY

9-18-18 SLL AMNAVPAR COMFRAN

2345 6 AM 15 Sept latitude 41-29 English steamer Newby Hall,
allo. Remark. British steamer Wellington and Tasman (17th) ?
yesterday sunk by torpedo 19518 Jackson.

Sept 16 - 1918

COPY

9-18-18 BKS AMNAVPAR COMFRAN

2337 11 a.m. 16 September lat. 45-48 Long. 10-58 British vessel
Wellington torpedoed, 6 p.m. 16 September Lat. 46-18 Long. 12 degrees
British vessel Tasman torpedoed. 10 a.m. 16 September Lat. 41-29
Long. 64-15 submarine sighted 5 a.m. 15 September Lat. 39-25 Long. 72-16
unknown vessel shelled. 4.30 a.m. 16 September Lat. 39-38 Long 73
degrees five submarine sighted. 20317 Jackson.

6743

NAVAL FORCES IN FRANCE
COMMUNICATION OFFICE

16
Sept 18 1918

DATE	DUTY	ORIGIN	DESTINATION	VIA	ACTION		
9-18	BKS	COMFRAN	SIMSADUS		COPY TO	NONE	ANSWERED ACKNOWLEDGED

#6743 U.S.S. Talbot proceeding Brest with one hundred forty four survivors from Tasman. U.S.S. Warrington proceeding Brest with survivors from Wellington Wilson

220 miles n. by W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W. from Cape Villano.

THIS IS A TRANSLATION, SHALL NEVER BE TRANSMITTED.

6472

NAVAL FORCES IN FRANCE
COMMUNICATION OFFICE

16
Sept 18 1918

DATE	DUTY	ORIGIN	DESTINATION	VIA	ACTION		
9-19	RBWH	SIMSADUS COMFRAN	COMFRAN		COPY TO	NONE	ANSWERED ACKNOWLEDGED

#6472 Urgent USS TALBOT may be utilized to bring survivors to
Devenport before proceeding NY 172518 6472 Sims

Note: Tasman torpedoed Sept. 16-1918 - 220mi n. by W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W. from Cape Villano. 17 including master.

Note: Talbot landed 6 Naval Officers
11 ratings 8 military officers and 76
passengers from Tasman

THIS IS A TRANSLATION, SHALL NEVER BE TRANSMITTED.

STW

Cablegram Sent

¹⁹Sept 27, 1918 Y-12

To Opnav Washington

Serial No. 5170

Prep. by 01

D.R.

42 RD

September 19, 1918

CONFIDENTIAL

5170 USS TALBOT rescued survivors at sea from British ship TASMAN and landed them Devonport 19 September sailing same day for New York. 141420 5170

Sine