THE MERCHANT SHIPS IN THE SANTA MARIJA CONVOY

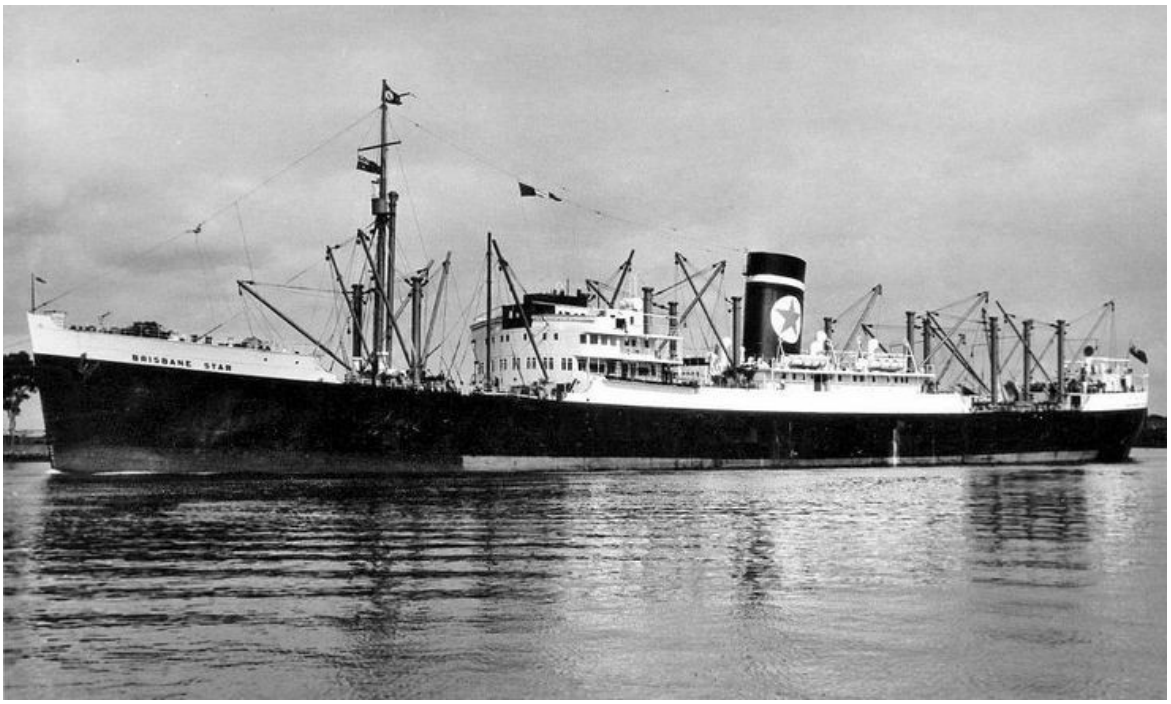
SURVIVORS



MV Port Chalmers of Southampton **Owner Port Line Captain H.G.Pinkney**
Reached Malta undamaged on August 13, suffering no fatal casualties.



MV Rochester Castle of Southampton **Union Castle Line Captain R. Wren**
Reached Malta relatively undamaged on August 13, suffering no fatal casualties.



MV Brisbane Star of Southampton **Owner Blue Star Line Captain R. Riley**
Torpedoed by T/B aircraft at c. 2300 on 12 August at Skerki Bank. Although appreciably damaged at its bows, the ship reached Malta safely on August 14. There was one fatal casualty.



MV Melbourne Star of Southampton **Blue Star Line Captain D. Macfarlane**

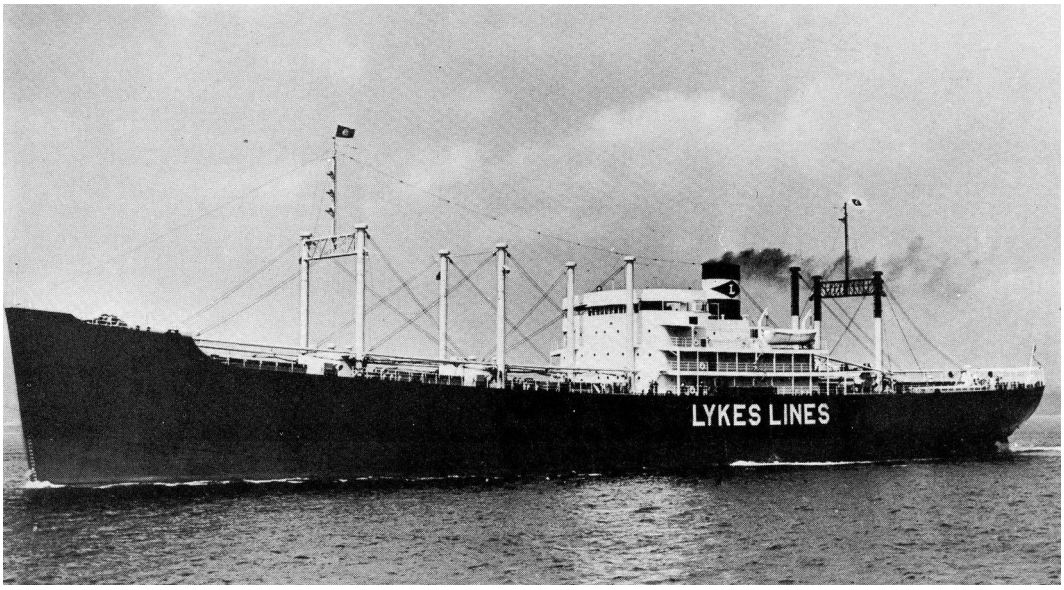
Crew 36. Nine crew members died and 5? Royal Artillery gunners.. 22 men were rescued by HMS LEDBURY.



SS Ohio of Southampton **Owner Texas Oil Co .**
Captain Dudley Mason, Eagle Oil & Shipping Co. London

This was the only tanker in the convoy and it was carrying a very important cargo that was desperately needed in Malta: 11,500 tons of kerosene and diesel oil. It was hit by an underwater explosion on the port side amidships in the pump room, either a mine or a torpedo, at Skerki Bank at 2000 on August 12. Captain Mason and the Naval Liaison Officer came to the conclusion later that the explosion was probably caused by a mine and not a torpedo as was first thought. There were near misses in the morning and evening of August 13 and the ship lost power including rudder control. OHIO was taken in tow by destroyer HMS PENN. The tow proved unsuccessful as the line broke and the following day at 1400 HMS PENN took off the OHIO crew but then the crew decided to re-board as the ship was towed into Grand Harbour by HMS RYE on August 15, lashed to two destroyers – HMS PENN and HMS BRAMHAM – one on either side, providing the power to slowly move the ship . A brave Maltese pilot, Wenzu Attard, agreed to go on board and guide the ships in with the destroyer HMS LEDBURY nudging the bow to stop the ship veering into the minefields on either side of the channel. In Valletta harbour the remaining cargo was pumped out into oilers before SS OHIO gently sank. The ship was later raised and used as a storage hulk. Finally on 19 September 1946 it was towed out to sea and sunk by gunfire. Unbelievably, on the OHIO there was just one fatality and Captain Mason was awarded the George Cross.

MERCHANT SHIPS SUNK



SS Almeria Lykes of Galveston **Owner Lykes Brothers Steamship Co. New Orleans Captain W. Henderson**

On 2 August 1942, *Almeria Lykes* departed from the Clyde as part of Convoy WS 21S. Passing Gibraltar on 10 August, the convoy became then became Convoy MW 12 , consisting 14 merchant ships escorted by a total of 23 warships at various times from 2 August. On 12 August, gunners on board *Almeria Lykes* shot down two enemy aircraft. Also on that day, an unexploded torpedo mine was caught on the bridge of *Almeria Lykes*. It was safely deposited into the sea. On 13 August, *Almeria Lykes* was torpedoed at 3:14 AM by German E boat *S-36* and later, at 3:40 AM, by Italian MAS 554 off Kelibia, Tunisia. She had been under attack for 60 hours. *Almeria Lykes* was badly damaged, and was scuttled to prevent her capture. During this period, gunners on board *Almeria Lykes* sank an E boat. HMS SOMALI rescued all hands: 51 merchant seamen, 15-man Armed Guard, and 39 passengers and they were landed at Gibraltar. [Wikipedia]



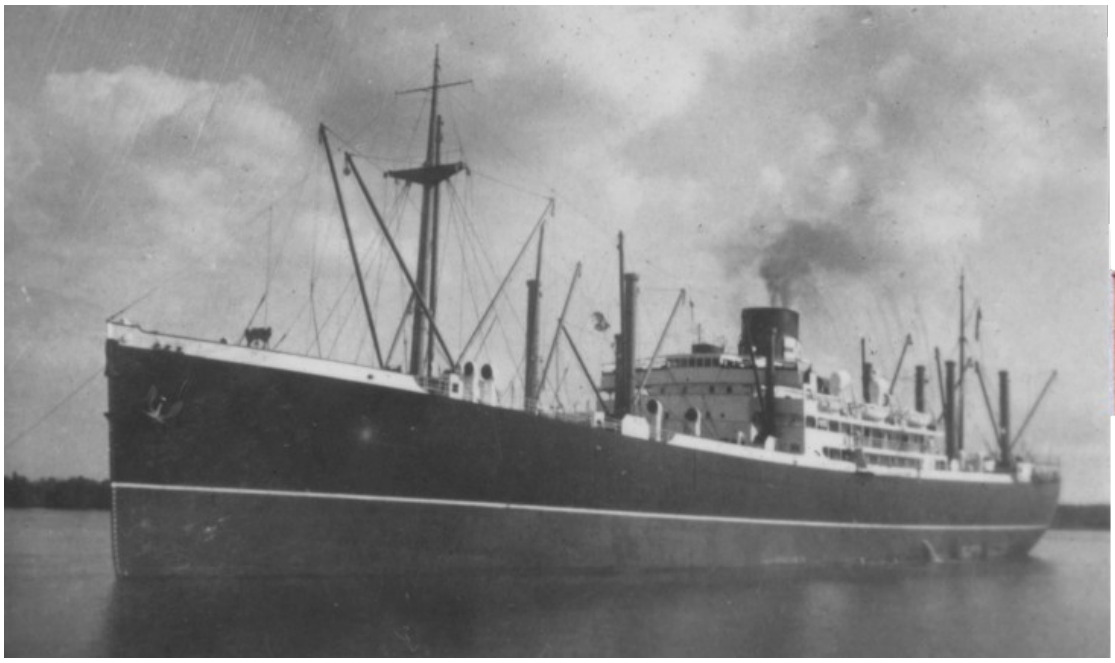
MV Clan Ferguson of Southampton **Owner Clan Line Captain A. Cossar**

Crew 101 plus 13 passengers. It was hit by a torpedo from an aircraft and blew up and sank around 2110 on 12 August with 13 fatal casualties - 11 crew, one gunner and six passengers. Total 70 crew, 19 gunners and seven passengers taken prisoner.



MV Deucalion of Southampton **Owner Blue Funnel Line Captain R. Brown**

Crew 122 plus 2 passengers. On August 12 at 12.30am, it had a near miss by a bomb but proceeded independently, escorted by HMS *Brabham*. Later, at 2120, it was attacked by two aircraft, torpedoed and set on fire and sank sometime after 2230. The survivors were picked up by HMS *Bramham*. There was one fatal casualty. [Times Malta]



TMV Dorset of Liverpool **Owner Federal Steam Navigation Co. Captain J. Tuckett**

Crew 91 and 7 service passengers At 1140 on 13 August, it was dive-bombed and hit, starting a fire; its engine room flooded and ship was abandoned. The crew were picked up by HMS *Bramham*. It was again dive-bombed at about 1630 and hit again. It sank stern-first at 1920. There were no fatal casualties.



Painting by Anthoney Batey - Facebook

MV Empire Hope of Southampton

Owner Shaw, Savill & Albion Line
Captain G. Williams

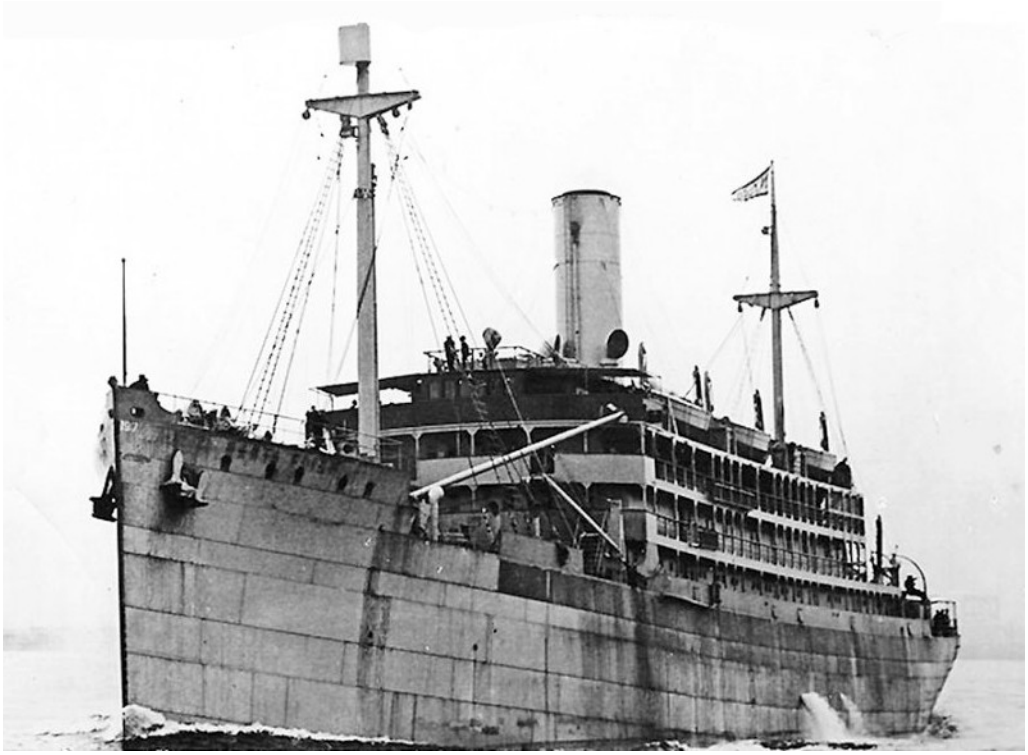
Empire Hope was a refrigerated cargo liner with a crew of 120. On 11 August 1942 around 2000 *Empire Hope* was bombed by Junkers Ju 88 and Heinkel He 111. Her engines were put out of action by eighteen near misses and two direct hits which set her on fire. As she was carrying coal, kerosene and explosives, her crew abandoned ship and at about 2220 were rescued by HMS PENN. There were no fatal casualties. Just before midnight on 12 August, *Empire Hope* was torpedoed by the Italian Submarine *Bronzo*. The wreck was deemed a hazard to shipping and sunk by HMS PENN off Galeta Island.



MV Glenorchy of Southampton

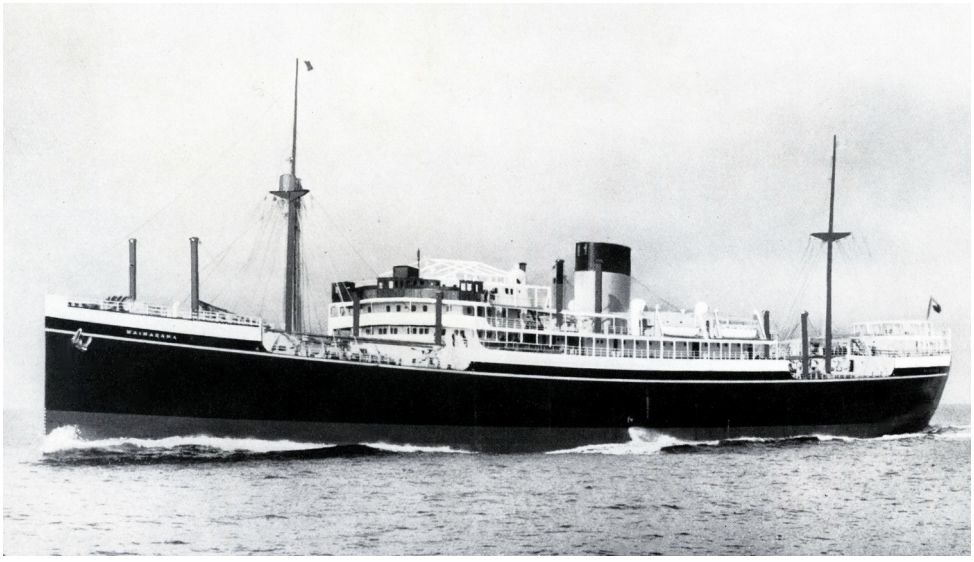
Owner Glen Line Captain G. Leslie

Crew 99 plus 25 passengers. At 0208 on 13 August it was torpedoed probably by an E-boat and the crew abandoned ship. sunk at 0400. There were eight fatal casualties.



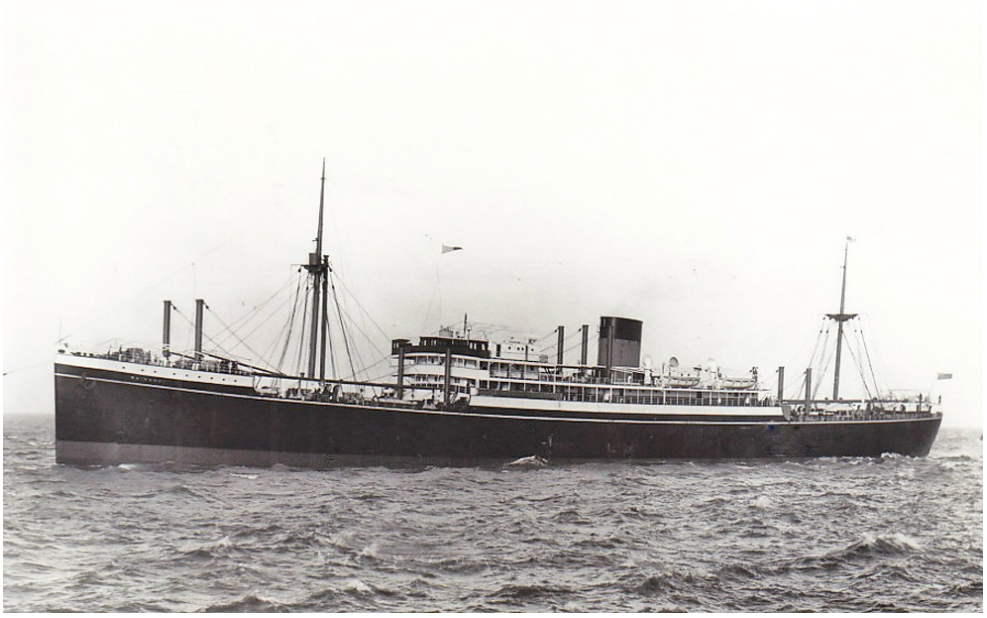
USS Santa Elisa of Southampton **Owner Grace Line, New York Captain T. Thomson**

Crew 83. On the night of 12/13 August 1942, freighter *Santa Elisa* was torpedoed approximately 20 miles southeast of Cape Bon. She was abandoned when her cargo of aviation gasoline caught fire. Four of the 33 embarked army passengers were killed, but the 56-man merchant complement suffered no fatalities. Two gunners died. British destroyers HMS PENN and HMS BRAMHAM rescued the survivors and transported them to Malta. The vessel was finished off by bombs later that day.



MV Waimarama of Southampton **Owner Shaw, Savill & Albion Line**
Captain R. Pearce

MV *Waimarama* was a refrigerated dry cargo vessel. In the war she had been converted into a defensively equipped merchant ship DEMS). For a cargo ship that typically meant one 4-inch or 4.7-inch naval gun on the stern, a small number of machine guns for anti-aircraft cover and, on larger cargo ships such as *Waimarama*, possibly a 3-inch anti-aircraft gun as well. For the convoy, she was fitted with extra anti-aircraft guns. *Waimarama*'s cargo included ammunition below deck and deck cargo included containers of aviation spirit. On 13 August 1942 at 0810 she was bombed by a Junkers JU88 and within minutes she "blew up with a roar and a sheet of flame with clouds of billowing smoke". Burning fuel also covered the surface of the sea. *Waimarama*'s wreck lies at 36°25′N 12°00′E, upright in 9 metres (30 ft) of water. Of the crew of 107, 86 members of the crew died; 24 were rescued by HMS LEDBURY and *Melbourne Star:*



MV Wairangi of Southampton

Owner Shaw, Savill & Albion Line
Captain H. Gordon

Wairangi was a dry cargo ship with a crew of 119 including service passengers. On 13 August 1942 at about 0320 *Wairangi* was torpedoed by an Italian E-boat and sunk with no loss of life. **B**y 0845 Her crew were picked up safely to HMS ESKIMO. Together with survivors from HMS MANCHESTER they were all landed in Gibraltar.