

REPORT m/v "KERLOGUE"

I was appointed Master of m/v "KERLOGUE" on the 19th November 1943, at Rushbrooke, Co. Cork. I signed on a crew of ten the same day.

I left Rushbrooke on the 20th November and anchored in Cobh. We left there November 21st and arrived at Rosslare 5 p.m. the same day.

Commenced discharge 22nd November at Rosslare and completed on the 23rd.

We left Rosslare on November 24th for Port Talbot via Fishguard. Arrived Fishguard the same evening where we were examined and passed, but failed to sail owing to weather conditions.

We sailed 25th November and arrived at Port Talbot at 8 p.m. Commenced loading 27th November and completed 5.30 p.m. same day. Left Port Talbot 1st December for Oporto. We had a fairly good passage and all went well until December 6th when the Cook reported unable to carry on duty any longer. I then appointed one of the sailors, T. Grannell, to act as Cook. At 10.30 pm the vessel struck obstruction at the north of the river Duro when entering Oporto. (for further details see Mate's log). Arrived Oporto December 7th and completed discharging cargo on 8th December, but owing to repairs not being completed did not sail until December 15th. (Separate report regarding repairs). At Oporto had the Doctor on board twice to examine the cook. (For further details see Log Book)

Sailed for Cadiz 15th December and arrived there 10pm December 17th. We immediately commenced loading but owing to the condition of the fruit we stopped work for that night. On December 18th we resumed loading and at 7 p.m. stopped work. On Sunday the 19th December commenced loading and completed all cargo on Monday 20th December at 3.30 a.m. We sailed 5.15 a.m. for Lisbon and arrived there 8 a.m. December 22nd. I again had the cook examined and removed to hospital and he died at 8 p.m. the same day. (For further details see Log Book)

At 11 a.m. December 26th we left Lisbon for Dublin via Fishguard and encountered very heavy weather until Wednesday 29th December. The weather then slightly improved and at 9.45 a.m. two planes circled around the vessel and Morsed S.O.S. signal lifeboats.

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They directed us by flags to steer in a South Easterly direction. I immediately altered course South East and at 11.30 a.m. sighted flares and proceeded in that direction where we saw several rafts and men. I cruised around picking them up at various points and finished picking up the last survivor at 9pm. To the best of my belief they were members of crew of two German torpedo boats and one destroyer. One of the survivors was the Commander of the Torpedo Boat and he asked me if I would leave him in La Rochelle, Brest or a Spanish Port. This I refused to do. I told him there was a perishable cargo on board and I also had my own(ers) interests to protect, that I was bound for Dublin and to Dublin I was going. He did not say any more but thanked me and I carried on. I left the Wheelhouse after I rang the "KERLOGUE" away and went down and saw some of the wounded men, seven of these were very badly injured. I did not know the number of men we had on board at that time. They were counted next day and we found that we had 165 and two dead.

On Thursday I sent for the Commander and told him that I wanted these two men buried. I stopped the vessel at 4 o'clock and the German read the burial service and we passed them overside. I rang "full speed" again and at 2 a.m. on Friday it was reported to me that another man had died. I again sent for the Commander and told him that I would like to get this man buried before arrival at Cobh. He asked me as a special request, this man being a Catholic, would I see my way to bring him into Cobh and have him buried in a Catholic Cemetery, as he had a wife and family. I complied with the request. At 8 p.m. on Friday, 31st December I sighted Galley Head. I called to Valentia Radio giving this message "KERLOGUE" proceeding to Cobh. T. Donoghue Master, expect arrive 2 am. Have on board 164 survivors, 7 badly injured and 1 dead". Please instruct Port Control that I require urgent medical assistance. Have no food water or clothing. Kindly telegraph my owners circumstances, Telegraphic address "Steam" Wexford. On behalf of Master, Officers, Crew and Survivors, we wish you a Happy New Year. T. Donoghue, Master". They replied "Well done KERLOGUE" will see your message will get through."

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At 10 a.m. (G.M.T.) on Saturday stopped off Roches Point. By Motor T.B. doctors boarded vessel and sent some of the Survivors ashore. I then proceeded in to the Harbour and picked up Pilot and wharfed at the Deepwater Quay Cobh. I was boarded by my owners together with Naval, Military and Red Cross as well as A. R. P. and Citizens of Cork. The wounded men were removed ashore together with the other survivors.

The Crew and myself went to the hotel for a wash, food, and needless to say sleep. I had the beds and bedding removed. Crew quarters cleaned, washed, and fumigated by shore people. Supplies of food, water, oil and also bedding etc. were obtained. We left Cobh at 4.20 p.m. on Sunday bound for Fishguard for examination.

On Monday January 3rd 1944 we were stopped by Examination Boat off Fishguard, received signals and proceeded in. At 10.40 a.m. Master was ordered ashore. I went to interview the Naval people and was introduced by the Commander of the Port, Naval Lieutenant and Military Officer. First he accused me of anchoring in Rosslare the previous night and wanted to know the reasons. I told him that I did not anchor at Rosslare. He then told me that he had it on very good authority that I did anchor there which I flatly denied as it was absolutely untrue and told him that he could inspect the Log Book but he did not take advantage of this offer. However, he then got to the saving of the survivors and wanted to know why I did not proceed to either Milford or Fishguard. I told him I had some seriously wounded men on board who needed immediate medical attention and also that I was without food or water. The Chief Engineer had also reported that he had only sufficient lubricating oil to carry on until 10 a.m. in the morning and of course I could have gone to either Waterford or Rosslare but not to Fishguard and so I decided to send a message to Valentia and proceed to Cobh. After several sarcastic remarks he released me. He also stated that as far as he was concerned that the Kerlogue always seemed to be in trouble and that on her previous voyage she was shelled by a British Plane which she deserved as she was in a prohibited area. I told him I did not

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want to know anything about previous Masters and that I was doing my duty which I thought was right and that what I had done was an act of humanity. I pointed out to him that he had mentioned about the previous Master of the Kerlogue being in prohibited water and he had wanted me to take men either to Fishguard or Milford and by doing so I would have to go through the prohibited area.

He also mentioned that he had a darn good mind to take the Navicerts away from the Wexford Ships, especially the "KERLOGUE". After about an hour he released me and told me I might have to wait a day or two before the ship could be released. I pointed out that my cargo was now over two weeks on board and I was very anxious to get a way to avoid further damage.

I got a message on board from the Naval Lieutenant at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, signed by the Commander asking for the radius to which my wireless could transmit. I gave them that, approximately 300 miles. He also wanted to know why I did not wireless before that to the effect that I had 164 German survivors on board. I sent back word that I did not think it was wise to do so, and what was to prevent a German Destroyer or even a submarine coming up to my vessel and steering me to Brest. As I had already stated, I had only one interest and that was my owners, to get the ship home as soon as possible. At 11 p.m. the following night I received orders that I could proceed to Dublin. I immediately proceeded on voyage, arriving in Dublin 12.30 p.m. 5th January 1944.

We berthed at Alexandra Basin at 12.30 p.m. and commenced discharge at 1.45 p.m. At 4 p.m. I paid the Crew off and sent them to their respective homes.

We completed discharge 12 p.m. 6th January 1944.

P.S. I think it as well to mention the fact that the behaviour of the Crew during the whole voyage was a credit and there was no incident whatever during the difficult times. I might also mention the fact that the conduct of the German Survivors was beyond reproach.

Signed T.Donohue