

3 Die when U-Boat Waylays Refugee Ship Bound Here

Nazis Seize 2 Americans, Threaten to Sink Craft, then let it Proceed

BABY KILLED IN TEMPORARY ABANDONING OF LINER

A German submarine overhauled and stopped a neutral Portuguese ship laden with refugees on its way to Philadelphia last Friday, took two American citizens prisoners and threatened to torpedo the vessel but finally permitted her to proceed after an infant and two men had lost their lives in abandoning ship.

The story of the incident, which occurred in mid-Atlantic, was released by the Fourth Naval District today with the arrival of the ship, the Serpa Pinto, to disembark the refugees at Pier B, Port Richmond.

The American citizens taken prisoner were Virgilio Magina, of New Bedford, Mass., and Manuel Pinto, of Waterbury, Conn.

A 16-month-old baby, Beatrice Trapunski, daughter of Polish refugees en route to Canada, was one who died. The exact manner was unannounced.

The ship's doctor fell into the sea from a Jacob's ladder while attempting to reach a lifeboat. The ship's cook was struck in the head and killed by a swinging lifeboat tackle. He was buried at sea the next day.

230 Passengers

The ship carried 230 passengers and 155 crewmen. The refugees—many of them Europeans bound for Canada—were traveling under sponsorship of the American Joint Distribution Committee.

After abandoning ship they spent approximately seven hours in open lifeboats awaiting fulfillment of the submarine commander's threat to torpedo the vessel, an order which he subsequently reversed and permitted them to reboard the liner, ap-

3 Die as U-Boat

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parently on wireless orders from Berlin.

"The Serpa Pinto," the Navy said, "was stopped by gunfire and signals from the submarine at 12.05 A. M. Friday. The night was clear, the sea calm.

"The captain, Americo Dos Santos, was summoned to the bridge when blinker signals were sighted. The submarine blinker ordered a boat put over the side. The chief officer and second officer were sent with the ship's papers, passport lists and cargo manifest."

The chief, Manuel Valente Pinho, was held as hostage aboard the U-boat, while the liner's lifeboat returned with a submarine officer and a sailor armed with a sub-machine gun.

Passengers Lined Up

The German officer, speaking English, ordered the crew and passengers lined up in the salon.

The U-boat officer informed Captain Dos Santos that he intended to take Camilo Grandé Perez, 24, native of Canada and a British citizen, back to the submarine.

Perez went to his cabin and failed to reappear.

The U-boat officer informed Dos Santos that the ship would be sunk unless Perez were produced within five minutes. Search was instituted and Perez was found and put aboard the ship's boat which returned to the submarine with him and the two Germans. That was at 1.40 A. M.

Threat is Made

Chief Officer Pinto returned in the boat with a message from the submarine captain that the vessel would be torpedoed in 20 minutes.

Captain Dos Santos immediately gave the order to abandon ship.

The submarine then moved among the lifeboats in the darkness. Its commander had ordered the Serpa Pinto not to use its wireless. Five hours after the boats were launched the submarine approached the cap-

tain's lifeboat and took Dos Santos aboard.

The U-boat commander, who appeared to be about 28 years old and wore a beard, said he was awaiting an answer to his radio message to Berlin whether to sink the ship.

Gets Order from Berlin

Calling from the submarine deck, Dos Santos ordered the boats to remain near the liner while the U-boat awaited a decision. Perez was released and put aboard one of the boats.

At 7.30 A. M., the German wireless operator handed the captain a message. The captain turned to Dos Santos and said the answer from Berlin was not definite, there would be a further delay.

A half hour later he announced that he would not sink the ship.

Returning the liner's papers to Dos Santos, but keeping the crew and passengers' lists and the manifests, the commander permitted the captain to return to the ship. The reboarding was completed about noon.

Listed as Farmer

Pinto, one of the Americans taken aboard the submarine, was listed as a farmer. He is a native of the United States and his passport listed his birthplace as Blackstone, but gave no state. Magina, who is 25, is a barber. Both the prisoners had been in Portugal for a number of years and were traveling on passports issued by United States consuls in that country. The addresses given on their passports were presumed to be those to which they were traveling.

The Serpa Pinto left Lisbon May 16 and touched at Oporto, Portugal, May 1, and at Ponta Delgada, The Azores, May 21.

Veteran of Refugee Service

The Serpa Pinto has been carrying European refugees from Lisbon to eastern American ports since early in the war.

On her second voyage in 1941 she brought more than 600 refugees into New York, who reported that the ship had been ordered into Bermuda by a British auxiliary cruiser and held there for a three-day fruitless search of those aboard for German nationals.

In February, 1942, the Serpa Pinto was back in New York with more than 300 passengers, mostly Jewish refugees.

Her first voyage to Philadelphia brought her here in November 30, 1942, to disembark 23 repatriated American-born Portuguese residents.

In January, 1943, the mercy ship brought 188 refugees to this city, 43 of them repatriated Americans, and 55 children among the remainder.

The Serpa Pinto's largest refugee contingent was disembarked here as recently as last April 7, when 354 fugitives from Nazi terror were brought in, 28 Americans, 276 refugees headed for Canada, and 50 for Latin-American points.