

1st MA^S Melbourne.

Capture of SS. Hamborn.

October 1915.

"MELBOURNE".

91/15.

27th October, 5.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that I received your signal giving names of certain vessels to be captured at 8.25 p.m. last night, while on Patrol Area No. 3.

I took up a position so as to meet the south bound outward traffic from New York. At about 1 a.m. I followed a vessel which would not answer my signals. She was identified by searchlight.

I then steered to the Northward, the ship being darkened, I steamed slowly off the New Jersey coast.

At 5.10 a.m. when in a position 8.65.N. (magnetic) 5½ miles from Barnegat Light and steering N.25.N., speed 6 knots, I called up a vessel which was sighted ahead, and steering on an opposite course. She gave no reply. The vessel passed on the starboard hand, distant about 4 cables. A searchlight was put on to her and she was found to be the "Hamborn". I altered course to starboard and followed her. Keeping her on the port hand and increasing speed came up to her on her beam. She was steering to the south westward, but did not appear to make any appreciable alteration. She made no reply when signalled to stop.

At 5.50 a.m. I put a searchlight on the vessel and fired a blank charge. The vessel then stopped - position 8.27.N. 6½ miles from Barnegat Light. She was then boarded, the Visiting Officer, Mr. S.B.A. Stuart, Paymaster, and Lieutenant L.C. Rowland as Witnessing Officer reported the vessel fulfilled the details given by signal. I did not observe any other British or Allied ship in the vicinity.

Navigating crew and armed guard were sent on board and the Prize Officer, Lieutenant H.V. Creer instructed to take the vessel to Halifax for examination.

The position of "Melbourne" was again verified.

7.25 a.m. "Hamborn" proceeded to the Eastward.

7.35 a.m. "Melbourne" proceeded to the Eastward.

Barnegat Light bore N.31.W. 6½ miles before going ahead.

The capture of the vessel was reported by Wireless to the Senior Naval Officer with the proposal

Original to
The Commander-in-Chief,
H.M. Ships and Vessels,
North America and West Indies.
Copy to
The Secretary to the Admiralty,
London.

to take the prize to Halifax. This was approved by the Senior Naval Officer.

As circumstances did not admit of affidavits being sworn, before departure of prize, Lieutenant Rowland, R.N. was retained in the prize in accordance with paragraph 6 page 25 "Instructions to Boarding Officers."

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd:) M. SILVER,

Captain.

H.M.A.S. "Melbourne".

27th October 1915.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that at about 5 a.m. today, I boarded the S.S. "Hamborn" in company with Lieutenant Louis Claude Rowland.

Upon making quite certain of the identity of the ship I reported by signal to you. Upon the arrival on board of Lieutenant Herbert Victor Creer, whom you had ordered to take over the ship, as Prize Officer, I turned over all the Ship's papers, then in my possession, to him.

From the time of my arrival on board I had kept the Master and Steward under constant supervision, Mr. Rowland having done the same with the Mate.

I did not make a thorough search of the ship, leaving this for the Prize Officer, but in the examination I was able to make in the limited time, I elicited the following facts:-

Ship was S.S. "Hamborn" of 742 tons, Owners being the Hamborn Steam Ship Company, Limited, of Rotterdam.

She had a general cargo under Charter for the Munson S.S. Line of New York, consigned to Cuban Ports, when she was to return with a cargo of sugar and finish her Charter. It was expected she would then return to Holland.

In bills of lading I noticed such items as:- Railway cars in pieces and other railroad stores. Auxiliary motor engines and accessories. Large quantity of Cement. Limited quantity of liquid fuel and lubricating oil.

The Master confessed to a connection between his Owners and the Vulcan Company.

The ship was originally of Austrian Nationality. It was then transferred to Norwegian Colors under the name of S.S. "Trim" of (7 Christiania).

In February, 1914, it was again sold and came under Dutch Registry.

Sea Certificate, page 107, Mercantile Ships Papers, was incompletely filled, the marginal note commencing at "Issued at" being blank. Upon the Master pressing for a reason for his detention I allowed him to suppose that this was the reason. I did not actually state such was the case.

Captain Mortimer L. M. Silver,
Royal Navy,
H.M.A.S. "Melbourne".

I

I gathered that the S.S. "Bruckhausen" was controlled by the same Owners, under similar conditions, and that her former name was the "Bobun".

The Witnessing Officer, Lieutenant Rowland, having proceeded in the "Hamborn", his report is not at present available.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd:) S. E. A. STUART,

PAYMASTER & VISITING OFFICER.

H.M.A.S. "MELBOURNE"

27th October 1915.

Sir,

With reference to page 31, Article 17, of Instructions for Boarding Officers, I have the honour to report that the Master of the S.S. "Hamborn", upon being asked, had no complaints to make as to the manner in which my visit had been conducted.

He complained of his ship being sent into Halifax, upon which I informed him that if he thought necessary he should lodge his formal protest on arrival at Halifax.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd:) S.E.A. STUART,

PAYMASTER AND VISITING
OFFICER.

Captain Mortimer L.S. Silver,
Royal Navy.

H.M.A.S. "MELBOURNE".

Confidential.

91/15.

"MELBOURNE".

27th October, 5.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that when on Patrol off the New Jersey coast and distant 45 miles from Ambrose Light, at 5.10 a.m. this morning the S.S. "Hamborn" passed close to this ship "outward bound".

2. The ship would not answer my signal when called up, so that a searchlight was put on to her and her name seen on her bows. I chased and "brought her to".

3. A visiting officer was sent to establish her identity, and subsequently a Navigating Party to take her into port.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Captain.

The Senior Naval Officer,

H.M. Ships and Vessels,

H a l i f a x.

C O P Y.

H.M.A.S. "Melbourne".

27th October, 1915.

Memorandum.

You are hereby directed to take the S.S.
"Hamborn" to Halifax for examination.

2. On your arrival at Halifax you are to
report to the Senior Naval Officer for instructions.

(Sgd:) M. SILVER,

Captain,
Royal Navy.

Lieutenant Herbert Victor Greer,
Royal Australian Navy.

S.S. "Hamborn".

30th October, 1915.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that in accordance with your orders I boarded the steamer "Hamborn" of Rotterdam at 6.40 a.m. on the 27th October 1915 and proceeded to carry out your instructions, i.e. to take the vessel to Halifax, Nova Scotia, for examination, reporting myself on arrival to the Senior Naval Officer.

The Prize Crew consisted of Lieutenant Louis Claude Rowland, Royal Navy, Mr. Arthur Brown, Gunner, Royal Navy, Mr. Ernest Baker, Artificer Engineer, Royal Australian Navy, 1 Engine Room Artificer 4th cl., 1 Chief Petty Officer, 1 Petty Officer, 2 Leading Seamen, 12 Able Seamen and 2 Signalmen.

At 6.40 a.m. (New York time) I proceeded, steering N.85.E. speed 8 knots. I divided the crew into three watches one being in charge of the Petty Officer, the other two in charge of the Leading Seamen. Chief Petty Officer Frank Ta carried out the regulating duties. The posts were as follows:-

1. The boat deck for the control of hatches Nos. 1 and 4.
2. Saloon, in charge of case containing Ship's papers.
3. Engine Room, in charge of Arms.

Lieutenant Rowland, Mr. Brown and I kept the Deck Watches while Mr. Baker and E.R.A. 4th cl. Johnston kept the Engine Room Watches.

On my invitation the Master continued to carry out the Navigation of the ship. The Ship's company were mustered and found to be correct according to the Ship's Articles.

In accordance with your signal I prepared an Inventory of the Ship's Stores, furniture and cargo and made the necessary arrangements for their safe custody. I examined and sealed the hatches. The Inventory was handed over to the Collector of Customs, the receipt for same is attached hereto.

There was no accommodation of any kind for the Prize Crew, so I rigged a tarpaulin over No. 3 hatch, where the men were as comfortable as the circumstances would permit. The Master and Officers of the "Hamborn" assisted me in every way.

Ship's Papers. These, with the Master's assistance were mustered and placed under lock and key, also the Official Log and the Fair Log.

Copies

Captain Mortimer L'E. Silver,
Royal Navy,
H.M.A.S. "Melbourne".

Copies of the Bills of Lading were taken for information.

At 9 p.m. on 29th October 1915, a thick fog was experienced, this lasted until 1 p.m. on the 30th, October during which time the usual regulations were complied with, soundings being taken every quarter to half hour. At Noon the weather being too thick to make the land, I stood out to sea until 1 p.m. when the fog lifted. The course was then altered to the Westland at 2 p.m. Chebucto Heads were sighted bearing West 5 miles. At 2.20 p.m. Whistle Buoy No.2 was abeam distance 2 miles. Course was then altered as requisite for entering harbour. 3 p.m. Pilot boarded and vessel proceeded to Examination Anchorage. On arrival Examination Officer boarded and instructed me to proceed into harbour and to anchor off Customs House. 4.30 p.m. anchored and proceeded to report myself to the Senior Naval Officer.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd:) HERBERT V. CRUICK,

Lieutenant, R.A.N.

H.M.A.S. "Melbourne".

3rd November 1915.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that shortly after 5 a.m. I boarded the S.S. "Hamborn" in company with the Visiting Officer, Mr. S.B.A. Stuart, Paymaster.

Upon making certain of the identity of the vessel, the fact was reported to you by signal.

The Master had no complaints as to the manner in which the visit was conducted, but protested against his vessel being diverted to Halifax.

The Visiting Officer kept the Master and Steward under supervision, whilst I took charge of the Mate.

In accordance with your orders I made certain that the vessel had the necessary Charts for the voyage to Halifax.

In the course of the examination, it was found that the Certificate of Nationality was incomplete. Also the Master admitted the connection of his ship with the Vulcanian Company.

Upon the arrival of Lieutenant Herbert V. Creer, The Prize Officer, I, in conjunction with the Visiting Officer, turned over the Ship's Papers to him and carried on duty as part of the Prize Crew.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd:) L. C. ROWLAND,

Lieutenant, R.N., and
Witnessing Officer.

Captain Mortimer L. R. Silver,
Royal Navy.

H.M.A.S. "Melbourne".