

Lloyds
(00A)

SURVEY OF SS MONAGAS

The undersigned left Maracaibo by truck on Sunday, February 22, 1942, at 11.15 a.m. for Castilletes on the Colombian border, arriving there about 10.00 p.m. that night. Next morning we proceeded to Tucacas (Colombia) where we were informed that we could only travel a little distance further along the coast by car and would then require a schooner to proceed to the position where the MONAGAS was ashore.

We made a bargain with the owner of a small schooner called the ANITA, who agreed to make the round trip to the MONAGAS for the sum of Bs 325.

We proceeded by truck along the coast and then boarded the schooner which immediately sailed Northwards and anchored off the MONAGAS, which we boarded by a small boat.

The only place possible to board the ship was at the after end of the main deck on the port side. After making our survey we left the ship at about 4.00 p.m. Feb. 23 and returned on board the schooner ANITA.

The following was found:

The vessel was lying aground in a position about four miles North of Punta Espada (Goajira Peninsula, Colombia) and about 400 feet from the shore. She had a very slight list to starboard and was lying quite steady. She was burning fiercely, heavy smoke and flames coming out of what appeared to be No's. 1, 2, & 3 tanks on the port side. On the starboard side of these tanks smoke was also visible and whenever the seas washed aboard the starboard main deck a cloud of steam arose from the expansion trunk side and main deck plates which appeared to be nearly red hot.

As it was impossible to get any further forward than No. 4 tank on account of the heat of the deck, all observations had to be taken at a distance.

On the port side in way of No's. 2 & 3 cargo tanks there was a hole which appeared to be about 10 to 12 feet long in the main deck. Due to the heavy black smoke it was impossible to ascertain how far this extended in the ship's side. The expansion trunk side appeared to be buckled and torn and the main deck aft of the fire was more or less buckled between frames for its entire length, the ship's side plating being also buckled for a considerable distance in the same direction.

The Mast was lying over to port at an angle of about 15°, also aft at an angle of 10°. The forward stay and starboard rigging appeared to be its only supports and prevented it from falling over the side.

The Bridge and amidship accommodation were entirely burnt out, stanchions, frames, etc. on port side being all buckled and twisted. Stanchions, frames, etc. on starboard side were not damaged to the same extent, this no doubt being due to the wind being on the starboard side.

Wood deck planking on Port and starboard boat deck was entirely destroyed and all plating under same badly buckled. The shell of the port lifeboat was lying on its side, all inside woodwork having been burnt away and the copper air tanks having collapsed. The wooden workboat was missing, having apparently been burnt.

Wood deck planking, port and starboard sides in way of after accommodation, was also entirely destroyed, deck plating under same being badly buckled. Engineers' Flag Captain's and Stewards' accommodations, also pantry, saloon, bathroom, lavatory, and Engineers' top store on starboard side were entirely gutted, the steel plating on side house in way of bathroom being badly buckled and lap edge of plates torn open.

© 2020
Lloyd's Register
Foundation
WHS1 - 0063 1/2

steel deck plating, also steel bulkheads in port and starboard Engineers' alleyways buckled.

W's quarters below Engineers' quarters on port and starboard sides gutted, port side all smouldering.

Plating on port side in way of fireroom and engineroom and extending aft partly over counter were buckled in places, the fire having apparently extended as far as the ship's name and port of registry on the vessel's stern, part of paint work being burnt same.

Starboard side of ship's hull and directly under lifeboat all paintwork was burnt off.

Engineroom: Steel plating forming Engineroom bulkheads in way of accommodation, paintwork burnt off and electric wiring in way of same destroyed. Main engines appear to be undamaged, having been stopped before the vessel was abandoned, but a thorough examination could not be made as there was about 5 feet of water in engineroom.

Fireroom: Paintwork in top of entrance badly burnt.

Boilers: Smoke box fronts and uptake as far as could be seen undamaged; impossible to make further examination of boilers due to there being about 5 feet of water in fireroom. Without a doubt these boilers must have sustained a considerable amount of internal damage. The Engineer on watch had not time to shut off the fuel pumps and thereby extinguish fires before abandoning the ship.

presence of the water in engine and fire rooms cannot be accounted for unless the vessel sustained some bottom damage after grounding or through water service lines.

Cabin: Apparently undamaged.

In conversation with the Indians living in the vicinity, the vessel appears to have grounded the evening of Wednesday, February 18.

Had intended to leave the vessel in charge of a guard but this was found to be impossible due to the ship being on fire, and also due to the presence of about fifty Indians ashore on the ship who appeared to be hostile and who kept shouting at us the whole time we were ashore. These Indians had been aboard previous to our arrival as we found that certain parts of the ship's equipment had been gathered on deck in readiness to be taken ashore.

In conclusion, we the undersigned consider that as the ship is still burning fiercely and due to the amount of damage already sustained, also the locality in which she is ashore, cost of possible salvage, also cost of repairs, would be prohibitive and therefore in opinion she should be regarded as a total loss.

A. Francis
A. FRANCIS,
Chief Engineer ss MONAGAS

W. Adams
W. ADAMS, Master Mariner

Laiba, February 25, 1942



© 2020

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W1151 - 0063 2