

= SS Merion =

SS Merion was an ocean liner built in 1902 for the American Line , a subsidiary line of the International Mercantile Marine ( IMM ) . She also sailed for the Red Star Line and the Dominion Line ? both subsidiary lines of IMM ? during her passenger career . After the outbreak of World War I she was bought by the British Admiralty and converted to serve as a decoy resembling the Royal Navy battlecruiser HMS Tiger . In May 1915 , while posing as Tiger in the Aegean Sea , Merion was sunk by the German submarine SM UB @-@ 8 .

= = Career = =

Merion was built by John Brown & Company of Clydebank , Scotland for the American Line , a subsidiary of the International Navigation Company , and launched on 26 November 1901 . The ship was 161 @.@ 7 metres ( 530 ft 6 in ) long ( between perpendiculars ) and 18 @.@ 0 metres ( 59 ft 1 in ) abeam . She had a gross register tonnage ( GRT ) of 11 @,@ 621 . The ship had twin screw propellers powered by twin triple @-@ expansion steam engines , and , at top speed , could move 14 knots ( 26 km / h ) . As built , Merion had accommodations for 150 second- and 1 @,@ 700 third @-@ class passengers . She was a sister ship to Haverford .

Upon completion , the ship was chartered to the Dominion Line , a subsidiary line of International Mercantile Marine ( IMM ) with which International Navigation had merged in 1902 . The liner sailed for Dominion on her maiden voyage on 8 March 1902 from Liverpool to Boston . After completing eleven voyages on that route , Merion was returned to the American Line in March 1903 . The following month she began sailing on the Liverpool ? Philadelphia route on which she sailed most of the rest of her passenger career . She was briefly chartered to the Red Star Line in 1907 for one Antwerp ? New York voyage .

The liner had several mishaps during her passenger career . On 2 March 1903 , an article in The Washington Post reported that Merion had run aground shortly after leaving Queenstown while en route to Liverpool from Boston . The ship was freed from her perch near Chicago Knoll by the rising tide , but when she got underway again became stuck fast in almost the same spot . At press time , two British Admiralty tugs had been dispatched to free the ship . Almost exactly a year later , Merion collided with the steamer Clan Grant off Tuskar Rock on 30 March 1904 and was damaged . On 24 December 1912 , Merion collided with a tanker off the Delaware coast and sustained damage which included two flooded compartments . The ship was beached below Cross Ledge , but was refloated and made way under her own power back to Philadelphia , after discharging her cargo and passengers .

After the outbreak of World War I in Europe , Merion was equipped with four 6 @-@ inch ( 15 cm ) guns for defensive purposes . Merion was the subject of a protest by the German Consul at Philadelphia , when she docked at that port equipped with those guns , counter to rules regarding armed ships in neutral ports . The still @-@ neutral United States required that the guns be removed before they would allow Merion to sail ; her guns were stowed belowdecks when she departed Philadelphia on 5 September 1914 . Merion 's final voyage on the Liverpool ? Philadelphia route began on 31 October , after which she was sold to the British Admiralty .

Merion was employed as part of a program that disguised ocean liners to resemble Royal Navy capital ships . Merion was patterned after the British battlecruiser HMS Tiger and deployed in the Mediterranean . For this duty , the liner was equipped with canvas @-@ and @-@ wood replicas of Tiger 's guns , and her crew had to stow them whenever approached by neutral ships . The ship was also overloaded with ballast to make the ship ride lower in the water to match the profile of the real Tiger .

On 29 May 1915 , the German submarine UB @-@ 8 , apparently tempted by the prospect of sinking a British battlecruiser , allowed five loaded transports to sail past before launching a torpedo attack on Merion . One torpedo from UB @-@ 8 struck the liner and exploded , sending some of the " cement and stones " used as ballast into the air . Some of Merion 's crew that were knocked overboard by the explosion were able to float ashore on nearby Strati Island on remnants of the liner

's false guns . Despite being severely overloaded , Merion did not immediately sink , remaining afloat more than 24 hours before finally succumbing to the attack on 31 May . Four crew were killed during the . Merion 's sinking .