

The Tragic Sinking of the Llandoverly Castle

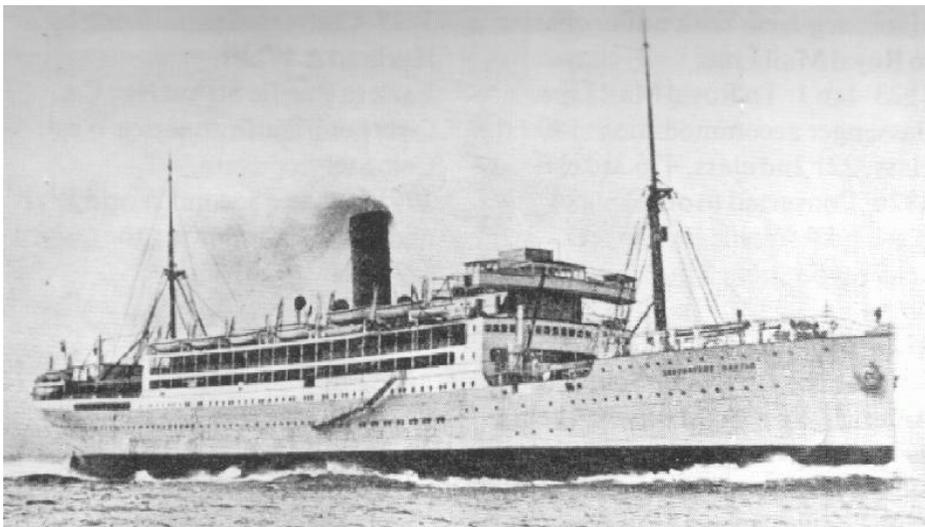
On June 27, 1918, the Canadian hospital ship HMHS *Llandoverly Castle* was sunk by the German submarine, U-86.

The sinking violated international law protecting hospital ships from attack. *Llandoverly Castle* was attacked off the Irish coast while returning to England from Halifax, Nova Scotia, after delivering over 600 wounded and sick Canadian soldiers. The torpedo hit the engine room and knocked out the radio preventing a distress call. The ship sank in less than ten minutes. The crew of 258 included 97 Canadian medical personnel of whom 14 were nursing sisters directed by Matron Margaret Marjory Fraser.

International law protected hospital ships if they visually distinguished themselves in three ways. First, their hull must be painted with Red Cross markings. Second, they must not travel in convoys, and third, during the nighttime, the ship must have its bright red and green running lights illuminated to show its protected status. According to survivors, *Llandoverly Castle* was alone, the running lights were on, and it showed a characteristic red cross on its hull.

The torpedo killed and injured an untold number, but the survivors launched as many as five lifeboats. One lifeboat was sucked into the sinking ship's whirlpool but at least three got away. What happened next was unimaginable. U-86 surfaced and attacked the lifeboats. Only one boat escaped carrying the Captain and 23 crew members who were rescued two days later. The British navy search of the area recovered only corpses.

After the war, the U-boat commander and two officers were indicted for war crimes. The commander, Helmut Patzig, escaped prosecution, but Ludwig Dithmar and Johann Boldt were found guilty and sentenced to prison.



For more information, see:

i- The Case of Llandoverly Castle: Was Justice Served? (Valour Canada website)

<https://valourcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Case-of-Llandoverly-Castle-v2020.pdf>

ii- Canadian Naval Review Journal Article (4 pages – Daniel Demers website)

<http://danieldemers.com/SINKING-THE-LLANDOVERLY-CASTLE.pdf>

Lost in the Atlantic: Survival Puzzle

The Scenario:

You are aboard HMHS *Llandoverly Castle* almost a thousand kilometres off the coast of Ireland when it is sunk by the German U-boat 86 (27 June 1918). The ship is quickly sinking. It appears that there is very little chance for you and your friends to survive.

However, after deciding not to give up so easily, you and your friends split up to scavenge some gear. Within sixty seconds you have found a **rubber dinghy** as well as a **box of matches** and decide that you should prepare the dinghy for disembarking once your friends return. Within moments of inflating and then launching the dinghy, your friends are tossing equipment to you. One has salvaged nine items; another scored six. Your other friends return empty-handed, but perhaps there is a chance for your group after all!

For this scenario, assume 3 things: (i) that U-86 has departed and is not a threat, (ii) that your ship's location was unknown when sunk, and (iii) that you, your friends, and your dinghy are all that's left.



The Task:

Part 1, as an individual, you have 5 minutes to complete Part 1 (see over) by providing a ranking to the 15 items, with “1” being the most important, “2” being the second most important, “3” the third, and so on, all the way to the least important (ranked “15”). It may be best to write a few notes describing your reasoning beside each item.

Part 2, as a group, you have 15 minutes to complete Part 2 (see over) by ranking the same list of items as a Group. (Note: all members of a group should have the same rank #'s)

Part3, record the professional sailor ranking (Part 3). Then figure out your score (Part 4) and your team score (Part 5). (5 minutes)

Lastly, take a moment to reflect upon the challenges of the activity and the advantages/disadvantages of working as an individual or within a group. Be prepared to discuss.

Name: _____

Your Salvaged Items:

ITEM	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4 (You)	Part 5 (Group)
	Your rank	Group's Rank	Pro's Rank	Difference between Part 1 & 3	Difference between Part 2 & 3
2 boxes of chocolate bars					
A shaving mirror					
Some mosquito netting					
A compass					
Full container of water (25 L)					
A case of army rations					
Maps of the Atlantic Ocean					
Bottle of rum (80% alcohol)					
Oil/gasoline mixture (10 L can)					
Nylon rope (5 m)					
AM/FM radio (non-transmitting)					
Opaque plastic sheet (6 x 6 m)					
A floating seat cushion					
Shark repellent (Yes, this is real!)					
An ocean fishing kit & pole					
TOTAL	NA	NA	NA		

Note: "Differences" are always a positive number.

How did you do?

Did you and your friends survive?

Did your group do better or worse than yourself individually?

Scoring:

Over 70

Fish food!

56-70

You barely survived after a last second rescue. One of you didn't make it.

46-55

Thirsty, ravenous, and many pounds lighter, but you all made it.

33-45

You're all worse for wear, but in decent shape.

26-32

Above average survival skills. Nice work!

0-25

Just another day at the office and home in time for dinner!

Adapted from:
"Lost at Sea"
G. Knox
www.insight.typepad.co.uk

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A floating seat cushion					
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An ocean fishing kit & pole					
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- 46-55 Thirsty, ravenous, and many pounds lighter, but you all made it.
- 33-45 You're all worse for wear, but in decent shape.
- 26-32 Above average survival skills. Nice work!
- 0-25 Just another day at the office and home in time for dinner!

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