

Basic Detail Report



00049112

Title

SS BENALLA fights submarine off Crete, Mediterranean, 3 December 1915

Date

1919

Primary Maker

John Allcot

Medium

Watercolour on paper

Dimensions

Framed dimensions: 490 × 1130 × 35 mm

Name

Painting

History

The SS TORILLA was on her way unescorted from Port Said to Marseilles with a full complement of troops when the German submarine U39 was sighted on the surface shelling another steamer. The TORILLA promptly turned tail and sent out a call for help. She was pursued by the submarine and was fired upon. She had returned fire when HMAS BENALLA responded to her call. The BENALLA had been on her way from Alexandria to Malta with troops aboard, when she received the distress signal from TORILLA, "proceeding to her assistance at full speed, Cockburn brought the BENALLA'S 4.7-inch gun into action at about 8,000 yards range, and after two or three accurate rounds the enemy commander was persuaded 'to turn tail and proceed Westward" (D.S.C. London Gazette, 22 December, 1916). She then remained with the smaller ship, TORILLA, until naval forces arrived. The Commander of the BENALLA, Commander George Cockman, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions on the day and "In recognition of zeal and devotion to duty shown in carrying on the trade of the country during the War".