

D/S Bessheim

Fred. Olsen & Co., Oslo

(Norwegian Homefleet WW II)



Received from Bjørn Milde, Norway (from his postcard collection).

Tonnage: 1774 gt

Built at Nylands mek. Verksted, Oslo in 1912, owned by A/S Ganger Rolf.

Passenger vessel in the Newcastle route.

Bessheim is listed among the ships in Convoy HN 9B from Norway to the U.K. in Jan./Febr.-1940, then went back to Norway with Convoy ON 11 on Febr. 9-1940. Later that month she's listed in Convoy HN 15, carrying passengers and mail, bound for Tyne (she had originally been in Convoy HN 14, but returned to port). Early in March she joined Convoy ON 18, returning to the U.K. later that month with Convoy HN 20, bound for Newcastle with a general cargo as well as passengers. At the very end of March she went back to Norway with Convoy ON 24, and, therefore, ended up in the Homefleet, as the Germans invaded shortly thereafter. As will be seen when clicking on the links, several Norwegian ships took part in all these convoys.

The website below says *D/S Bessheim* was torpedoed on Nov. 21-1941 near Hammerfest, Norway, about 1 n. mile from the harbour, when on a voyage from Kvalsund to Hammerfest. 3 (8?) died. This information is echoed by other Norwegian sources (adding that 2 passengers also died), as well as by Charles Hocking (see my sources), who says she was torpedoed and sunk by a British sub* on that date, but Rohwer says *Bessheim* struck a mine that day, position 70 39N 23 38E. Mine laid by the Russian submarine K-21 (Zhukov) on Nov. 11-1941. He also lists the same ship under Sept. 15-1941, torpedoed in LoppHAVet by the British

submarine *Tigris* (Bone), but not sunk.

*I've received an E-mail from Frode Figenschou, Norway, who says he has been informed that the British submarine *HMS Seawolf* claimed the sinking of *Bessheim* in her report, near the inlet to Hammerfest. Frode has made several dives to *Bessheim*, and can confirm that she is ripped up on the port side amidships. She is otherwise fairly intact, resting at a depth of 62 meters.

Related external links:

3 who died - "Steamship Girl" Engine Marie I. Fredriksen, Engineer Thoralf Wilhelm Hansen and Ship Manager Hjalmar Marenius Johansen are commemorated.

Astrup Nilsen has the story of K-21's attack on the Norwegian fishing fleet off Senja in Apr.-1943 (text is in Norwegian only). He is on a quest to prove that a large portion of Norwegian WW II accounts have been falsified, particularly with regard to the attack on Irma. He also mentions a couple of books written about the fishing fleet incident, one being a fairly new book by Bjørn Bratbak entitled "Svensgrunnen 12. april 1943 - Uskyldige måtte ofte lide", ISBN 8292217002.