



Navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Countries](#)
- [Fleets](#)
- [War-time Stories](#)
- [Survivor Stories](#)
- [Shipping News](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

[Fleets](#) > [The Anglo Saxon Petroleum Company \(Shell\)](#) >

Ceronia

Ceronia 12.000 tons owned by N.I.T. Under command Dutch Master Captain H Velthuis. On 5 February on voyage from Las Piedras to Rotterdam, with a full cargo of crude oil. The ship was in a position 125 miles from Land's End when at three-thirty in the morning, a violent explosion and vivid flash of flame was experienced. Captain Velthuis stopped engines when a large area of deck amid-ships was torn wide open. Severe damage was caused to 4 and 5 wing tanks the flying bridge, pipe lines and valves were damaged, the pump room was flooded, 150,000 gallons of crude had been blown out from the high explosive blast and all over the ship. Ceronia remained seaworthy, continuing underway the damaged tanker proceeded past Lizard Lighthouse, through the English Channel, and past Beachey Head. A U.K. certificate of sea-worthiness was obtained for the completion of the voyage across the North Sea to Rotterdam, she arrived on 9 February and discharged her cargo. The vessel had been weakened to such an extent that she would have broken in two in a moderate sea.

The capitulation of France on 21 June and the entry of Italy as a belligerent altered the whole complexion of the war, and created more problems and dangers to merchant shipping. Oil supplies from Rumania were denied completely. The Mediterranean was closed temporarily to tankers and cargo carriers, and ships were now routed via the Cape Of Good Hope with the closure of Suez. Traffic increased on the routes from the East via the Cape.

Britain was short of ships even with those now made available by the Free French, Dutch, Norwegian, and other nations that had evaded the Nazis. American oil companies co-operated and helped in delivering oil to Australia and New Zealand in particular the Norwegian Fleet of Tankers now under control of Nortraships London and New York.

The salient points of these foregoing narratives will serve as a reminder of the episode recorded of the tanker San Demetrio, when a convoy of thirty-seven ships escorted by the armed merchantman Jervis Bay under the command of Captain E.S.Fogarty-Fegan R.N. the convoy was being attacked by the German 11-inch gun pocket battleship Admiral Scheer 5th November Captain Fegan headed towards the enemy to draw her fire away, and enabling the convoy to scatter. His crew were mostly Royal Naval reservists, who had been reinforced by merchant seamen, serving under T.124 Articles. This is a little known fact, that enabled Merchant Navy Seamen being granted permission to man a war auxiliary without joining either of the services, and signing Articles of Agreement the same as when sailing on Merchant Ships, common practice during wartime. The Jervis Bay went down with colours flying, Captain Fegan was awarded a posthumous V.C. Only sixty-five members of the crew were rescued by Captain Sven Olander, of the Swedish ship Stureholm who, though he had escaped, turned back during the night to search for survivors.