



PRESS RELEASE: Bollywood legend Johnny Lever attends the 80th commemoration of the ill-fated S.S. Tilawa

Written by www.tilawa1942.com

MUMBAI, INDIA

Bollywood legend Mr. Johnny Lever attended the first ever commemoration of the ill-fated S.S. Tilawa on its 80th anniversary, November 23rd. The well known artist was delighted to accept the invitation. He was extremely moved by the subject and commemoration program. Mr. Lever said *"It was very sad what happened, and I am happy I made the effort to attend. It was an inspirational program, and a movie should be made about the tragedy."*

The commemoration was held at the iconic Grand Hotel in Ballard Estate South Mumbai India. The intent was not only to officially acknowledge the incident, but to also memorialize the loss of 280 people who sadly perished. During the Second World War, Tilawa was hit by 2 torpedoes fired by the Japanese Imperial Navy's I-29 submarine. 678 were rescued and brought back to Bombay on November 27th 1942.

Mr. Lever met several families connected to the Tilawa incident including one of two known survivors Mr. Arvindbhai Jani, now age 83. Mr. Jani was age 3 at the time of the Tilawa incident. His late mother Mrs. Vasantben Labshankar Jani strapped him in her sari on her back, and jumped into the last of 9 lifeboats. They were at sea for 2 days until HMS Birmingham and SS Carthage came to the rescue.

Mr. Lever presented a commemoration plaque to the Engineer family, who are proud owners of the historic Grand Hotel. The location was chosen by the Solanki family, hosts of the commemoration. Tilawa last left the nearby Ballard Pier, and survivors were brought back to the same area. *"It was the perfect spot for the first ever commemoration, and we are extremely grateful the Grand Hotel accepted our application to host the event in such a historical setting. To think that some of the Tilawa crew or passengers may have visited the hotel is quite a thought"* says Emile Solani, descendant of the drowned the late Mr. Nichhabhai Chibabhai Solanki.



S.S. Tilawa was a passenger cargo liner built by the British India Steam Navigation company in 1924 named after a Burmese port, and used for about 18 years. Its last route from Mumbai was planned for South Africa via the Seychelles, Mombasa, and Maputo, ending in Durban. Passengers were mainly Indian nationals. On November 20th 1942 at 17:00, the ship left the Ballard Pier Mumbai. There were 222 crew members, 732 passengers, 4 gunners, 9 lifeboats, over 6,000 tons of cargo, including 60 tons of silver bullion. The Tilawa wreck site was recently discovered, and silver bars were salvaged in 2017 by a British company, Argentum Exploration Ltd.

More information on the S.S. Tilawa incident can be found on a website founded by Emile www.tilawa1942.com. This website was created for families connected to Tilawa to gain some closure, and meet fellow victims.

6 photographs attached on page 3.

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