



PRESS RELEASE

"81st S.S. TILAWA COMMEMORATION, THE FIRST IN THE UK"

by www.tilawa1942.com

LONDON, UK

The first ever commemoration in the United Kingdom of the ill-fated S.S. Tilawa will be held at the London Greenwich National Maritime Museum. This historic event on British soil will officially acknowledge the forgotten tragedy, and memorialize the loss of 280 lives. The commemoration will fall on the 81st anniversary, Thursday November 23rd 2023 at 6pm, by invitation only.

This is a story mainly of the Indian people. The S.S. Tilawa was a British ship bound for Durban, South Africa. It departed from Bombay India on November 20th 1942. The ship carried over 6,000 tons of cargo, including 60 tons of silver purchased by the Republic of South Africa for the purpose of coinage. There were 732 passengers, 222 crew members, and 4 gunners. The passengers were mainly Indian nationals. The ship was twice torpedoed by the Japanese Imperial Army in the early hours of the morning on November 23rd 1942. Hundreds fought for dear life, in life boats or floating for 2 days in the middle of the Indian Ocean. There were random barracuda and shark attacks to contend with, in addition to the weather and stomach churning sea movement. Thanks to the rescue mission of HMS Birmingham and S.S. Carthage, 678 people were rescued. It is believed this is the only passenger cargo-liner attacked in the Indian Ocean during the Second World War.

In the U.K, there are countless families connected to the tragedy who either had loved ones perish or survive. In South London Mr. Arvindbhai Jani age 83, was 3 years old when his mother the late Mrs. Vasantben Jani, "wrapped him in her sari and jumped into the lifeboat". Mr. Mervyn Macial from South London, in his mid 90's was a teenager when he lost both his parents and 3 young siblings and is looking forward to the event. Mrs. Tejparkash Manget, age 90, is living in Cincinnati Ohio, and hopes to attend the commemoration. She was 9 years old at the time, and lost her 3 brothers and mother.

There are countless stories to be told. An informative and memorable program is being prepared for the 81st anniversary.



Last year the Solanki family from Canada and the U.K hosted the first ever commemoration in history of the forgotten tragedy at the Grand Hotel, South Mumbai India on its 80th anniversary. Over 100 people attended. The location was fitting since Tilawa last left this port, and the survivors were brought back here on November 27th 1942. His Majesty's British Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Alan Gemmell was chief guest and delivered a speech including a pledge for the commission to place a wreath each year in memory of the S.S. Tilawa incident and lives lost.

Recently the U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's office wrote a letter to the Solanki family. Emile Solanki, great-grandson of the drowned and founder of tilawa1942.com says: *"The tragedy was acknowledged, our efforts commended, mentioning of the commemoration and Mr. Gemmells support, and commitment to the Tilawa wreath. In response to that letter, I asked Mr. Sunak for his support with access to archives, featuring Tilawa in U.K. maritime museums, etc. I also wrote to the Prime Ministers of India and Japan to provide us similar support, and acknowledge the tragedy. At this juncture the Foreign Secretary as well as the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport are unable to attend the upcoming commemoration. We shall see what happens in 2023. So far we have not heard from the Prime Ministers of India or Japan"*

Tilawa 1942 The Forgotten Tragedy and our website tilawa1942.com is beyond a one time project. It has become a comprehensive resource and mission to increase awareness, memorialize the loss of life, help bring closure to hundreds of families, and continue to seek answers as to why this tragedy took place.

Please visit www.tilawa1942.com for a comprehensive review on S.S. Tilawa. Any remaining survivors, descendants of victim's, or others with information are encouraged to share what they know and email info@tilawa1942.com

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