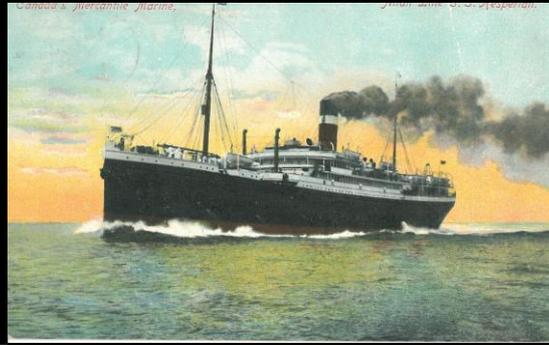




## SS Hesperian



One of the lesser known casualties of the First World War was the *SS Hesperian*, a British 10920 gross tonne vessel, belonging to the *Allan Lines Company*.

On 4<sup>th</sup> September 1915, on a voyage from Liverpool to Montreal, the ship was torpedoed by a German U-Boat, *SM U-20*, under the command of Captain Schweiger, who had sunk the famous *RMS Lusitania* four months prior to this. The sinking of the *Lusitania* played an integral role in bringing the U.S.A. into the First World War. There were 814 passengers and 300 crew members, under the most able Captain William Main.



Captain Schweiger



SM U-20



Sinking of The Lusitania



Attack on The Hesperian

Captain Main ensured that the evacuation was carried out in the most orderly manner possible. This resulted in only 32 lives lost, and that too, because of one of the lifeboats capsized while lowering. The Captain, further tried to save the ship and get it towed, but in vain. On 6<sup>th</sup> September 1915 the *SS Hesperian* sank to its last resting place.

On board the *Hesperian* were wounded Canadian soldiers, returning home from the War. One soldier, who had been blinded on the Western Front, had his eyesight miraculously restored due to the shock of the explosion.

Also, on board was the casket of Frances Stephens, a Canadian widow who had lost her life in the Sinking of the *Lusitania*. She was therefore sunk twice by the same U-Boat under the command of the same Commander, with her final resting place at the bottom of the Atlantic, rather than by her husband.



The RMS Hesperian was carrying the body of Lusitania victim Frances Stephens

The *sinking* of the *SS Hesperian* also played a part in a major political fallout between the German and U.S. governments, as the Germans had previously assured the U.S. that passenger liners will not be sunk without warning after the Sinking of the Lusitania.

Less than 5 covers salvaged from the *S.S. Hesperian* are known today. They have the cachet-

***“RECOVERED FROM THE S.S. HESPERIAN”.***



(This Cover is a part of The Rudraksh Collection)

One of the 5 known covers