



Rescue Operation in the North Atlantic

From a report of former Swiss seamen (received from Captain Domingo Bücheler) the SAENTIS rescued on June 3, 1942 on a voyage to the USA the 20 men crew of the small Swedish steamer ANNA, which was sank the day before off the East Coast of North America by the German submarine U-404. A radio message from the SAENTIS said:

3 JUNI 1942 = LEFT BERMUDA TUESDAY, PICKED UP 20 MEN FROM SWEDISH STEAMER

The Swedish freighter [ANNA](#), built 1924 (1345 BRT as from "Lloyd's War Losses", 1574 BRT as from Swedish informations), sailed on May 31, 1942 from Norfolk VA bound for St. Georges, Bermuda. The cargo was coal and two motor boats of the US-Navy on deck.

On the evening of June 2, 1942 a submarine (U-404) was discovered on port side. At this time it was dark already and only a weak new moon was shining. The ship sailed without light, however after the submarine was sighted, all lights were turned on and the crew of the submarine must have been able to see the Swedish flag and the other nationality markings. Another reason to put the lights on was to lower the life boats and to abandon ship, as the Germans opened the fire immediately with their board cannon. The life boats with the entire crew came clear of the ship before it sank. After a long night in the open boats in the Atlantic, the seafarers were picked up the next day by the SAENTIS and landed on shore in Brooklyn on June 5, 1942. Three men had to be hospitalized.

One of the oilers on board the ANNA was a Swiss, Otto Luem, called "Otto the Seafarer". Shortly before, he signed off in a US-port with four colleagues from the Swiss flag vessel CALANDA, his main reason to leave the ship was the "appalling conditions on board Swiss ships". For the farewell the five invited the sparky of their ship to a spaghetti dinner on shore and probably after a few glasses of Chianti Otto declared solemnly "I will never again set foot on the deck of a Swiss ship".

Otto was able to sign on the "good" Swedish vessel ANNA, but his luck lasted only for a few days. When finally the life boats were found, he noted to his dismay, that "SWITZERLAND" was painted on the ship's side. We assume, despite this, Otto was perhaps quite happy to set his foot again on the deck of a Swiss ship.

One day before arrival in New York, the SAENTIS picked-up another 18 survivors from a life boat of the American steamer WEST NOTUS. The other 18 men in the second life boat were already rescued two days earlier from the Greek cargo vessel CONSTANTINOS H. The [WEST NOTUS](#) was also sunk by U-404, using her board cannon and explosive charges attached to the ship's side.

