

0. MUNITIONS ON BOARD? - Story Preface

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**3. MUNITIONS ON BOARD?**

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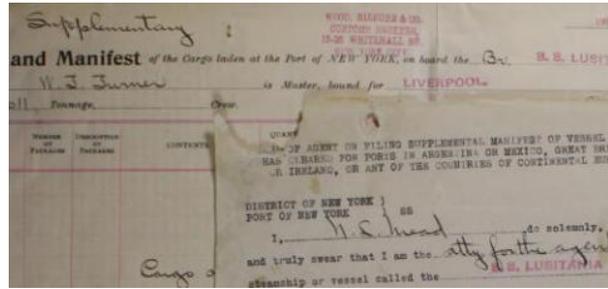
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This image depicts part of *Lusitania's Manifest* which the ship's underwriters released to the public at the time of the sinking. The question has always been: Is the Manifest accurate? Public-domain image online via Lusitania.net.

William Turner, who had commanded the ship during her first years at sea, replaced *Lusitania's* regular captain, Daniel Dow, in April of 1915. Dow was suffering from nervous exhaustion due to the constant threat of U-boat attacks.

With 1959 passengers on board, and cargo which remains uncertain to this day, the *Lusitania* left New York and headed for her home port of Liverpool on May 1, 1915. She would get there by sailing through the waters surrounding Britain and Ireland.

Because she was designated a British Navy Reserve ship, the *Lusitania* was considered a potential threat by German U-boats. But there was something else which put the *Lusitania* at risk during her last voyage. It was widely speculated at the time that America - although neutral in the war - was supplying Great Britain with supplies and war material.

Was the *Lusitania* loaded with munitions, as well as passengers?

In answering that question, Walther Schwieger (commander of *SM U-20*) decided to "shoot first and ask questions later."

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MUNITIONS-ON-BOARD-Lusitania-Sinking)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MUNITIONS-ON-BOARD-Lusitania-Sinking)

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## Questions 2 Ponder

### Can We Always Trust the Cargo Manifest?

When *Lusitania* left New York on her 202nd transatlantic crossing, on the 1st of May in 1915, she was sailing as a British Navy Reserve ship. As such, Germany considered her a potential target for U-boat attacks.

In addition, Germany suspected that America was sending Britain supplies and war materiel, even though the

U.S. was still a neutral power at that stage of World War One.

To this day, historians wonder whether *Lusitania* was carrying munitions, for Britain, during her last crossing. The cargo manifest could shed some light on that inquiry.

After *Lusitania* sank, the ship's insurance underwriters released the cargo manifest, which showed she was not carrying the kinds of munitions which would have caused the ship to explode. The question was, and still is, whether *Lusitania's* cargo manifest was accurate.

Do you think that we can always trust a ship's cargo manifest to reveal what cargo the ship is really carrying? Explain your answer.

If the cargo manifest is inaccurate, what consequences should the ship's owners face?

If a ship like *Lusitania* is carrying almost 2,000 passengers, how risky would it be to also carry weapons of war?

If *Lusitania* had been carrying weapons of war, what obligation did the ship owners have to let passengers know about that type of cargo?

## Media Stream



### William Turner

Image online, courtesy flickr.com website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/William-Turner>



### Lusitania at Sea

Image online, courtesy the [Imperial War Museum](http://www.imperialwar.com) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lusitania-at-Sea>

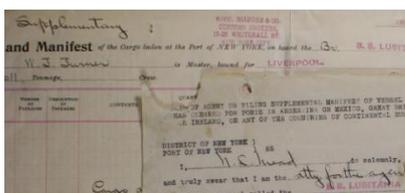


### Loading the Lusitania

Image online, courtesy the Leipzig press bureau.

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