



0. A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE - Story Preface

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Because the British Admiralty knew that a lurking German U-Boat had already sunk three ships off Ireland's southern coast, its staff directed *Lusitania* to head for Queenstown. That directive put the great ship in a much-worse position, enabling *SM U-20* to fire a well-aimed torpedo at *Lusitania*. Map image online via [Eyewitness to History](#).

The great ship was making good time. Just west of the Old Head of Kinsale on Ireland's southern coast, she was about 14 miles offshore. *Lusitania* had passed this familiar landmark before.

The morning (May 7th) had been foggy. Captain Turner had reduced his speed to about 18 knots. Despite the fog, Kapitän-Leutnant (Kptlt) Walther Schwieger and his *SM U-20* crew had been busy.

The British Admiralty became alarmed when they heard a submarine was successfully plying the waters along the south Irish Channel. Three ships had already been attacked and sank.

Admiralty officials knew *Lusitania* was on her way to Liverpool. They issued a warning:

Submarine active in southern part of Irish Channel, last heard of twenty miles south of Conningbeg light vessel. Make certain Lusitania gets this.

Captain Turner was directed to make port at Queenstown instead of continuing to Liverpool. That would get the ship and her passengers off the water, and out of potential danger, much more quickly.

There was, however, a serious problem with the effect of that directive. As the *Lusitania* changed course, she put herself in a much-worse position.

She was now within range of the lurking, unseen *U-20*.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-TERRIBLE-COINCIDENCE-Lusitania-Sinking>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-TERRIBLE-COINCIDENCE-Lusitania-Sinking>

Questions 2 Ponder

Does War Change Our View about Protecting Women and Children?

On the 7th of May, 1915, a German U-boat sank three ships in the Irish Sea before setting its sights on

Lusitania.

When U-20 - the U-boat which attacked Lusitania - was within sight of the large passenger ship steaming toward the Irish coast, its crew had to know that women and children were aboard the vessel.

By sending a torpedo toward the passenger ship, the crew of U-20 had to believe that women and children, aboard the huge vessel, would die as a result of the attack.

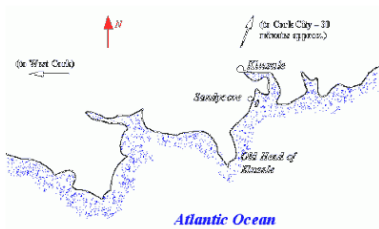
Does war change a person's viewpoint about protecting women and children? Why, or why not?

Do you think war changes a person's humanity, generally speaking? Explain your answer.

Does morality have anything to do with how submarine crew members, during war time, do their jobs?

What is the job of a submarine crew, during war? Do they ever have to be concerned with women and children who might be aboard the vessels they attack?

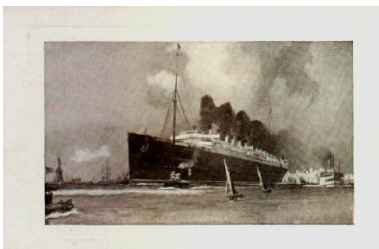
Media Stream



Old Head of Kinsale

Image online, courtesy the walyunga.com website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Old-Head-of-Kinsale>

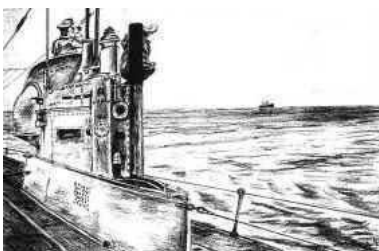


Lusitania Near the Harbor

Image online, courtesy the ww1-propaganda-cards.com website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lusitania-Near-the-Harbor>



U-Boat Searching Targets

Image online, courtesy the lusitania.net website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/U-Boat-Searching-Targets>



A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE

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Luxury at Sea

This video clip is from the BBC's recreation of the ship, and the story of her 1915 sinking, entitled *Lusitania: Murder on the Atlantic*.

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



Lusitania - At Sea, Before the Torpedo Strike

This video clip is from the BBC's recreation of the ship, and the story of her 1915 sinking, entitled *Lusitania: Murder on the Atlantic*. Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the production.

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Lusitania - U-20 Patrols the North Atlantic

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