



ss Mendi

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment



SS MENDI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Prepared by:

Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
WILTSHIRE
SP4 6EB

Prepared for:

English Heritage

April 2007

Ref: 64441.01

SS MENDI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Ref: 64441.01

Summary

‘Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die...but that is what you came to do...Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers. Swazis, Pondos, Basutos, we die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries, brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies’.

These words are ascribed to Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha, and are believed to have been used to address members of the South African Native Labour Corps as they stood upon the listing deck of the sinking troopship, ss *Mendi* on 21st February 1917. The sinking of the *Mendi* resulted in the loss of 649 lives, the majority of them non-combatant black labourers from South Africa, en route to the Western Front in France.

The loss of the *Mendi* soon drifted into historical obscurity, and for much of the 90 years since the event, it has been a story which with few exceptions has been largely forgotten in both the United Kingdom and South Africa. In the year of the 90th anniversary of the loss of the *Mendi*, English Heritage has commissioned Wessex Archaeology to produce a desk-based assessment of the state of knowledge relating to this event.

Using the physical wreck as a starting point, this assessment has examined information relating to the loss of the *Mendi*, from both primary and secondary sources. An appraisal of what is known about the wreck itself has also been carried out, based on available survey data and information gathered from the diving community. The project has then considered the wreck of the *Mendi* in its wider social and political context, particularly as a means of addressing a neglected and forgotten chapter of the history of World War I – the vast system of British and foreign labour corps which provided vital logistical support for the fighting forces of the Empire, but which is virtually invisible in the literature of the war.

The project has highlighted a range of themes and issues related to the wreck of the *Mendi*, its wider story and the history of the labour corps. It has attempted to demonstrate the potential this particular wreck site has for acting as a focus for a wide range of different interests and research themes, and to show how widely differing meanings of ‘place’ can be ascribed to a single archaeological site.

SS MENDI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Ref: 64441.01

Acknowledgements

This assessment was commissioned by English Heritage. The assistance provided by Mark Dunkley of English Heritage is gratefully acknowledged.

Martin Woodward, Dave Wendes, Keith Rimes and James Cowden have made particularly valuable contributions to the project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank the following people (in alphabetical order):

- Gavin Anthony, Gosport BSAC;
- Ian Barefoot, Nautical Archaeology Society;
- Tim Brant, National Secretary, Merchant Navy Association;
- James E. Cowden, Researcher;
- Ryan Crawford, GrownUpSAC (part of the University of Portsmouth Sub-Aqua Club);
- Richard Davies, Defence & Civil Contingency Planning, TRANSEC, Department for Transport;
- June Dillon, Wrecks Section, United Kingdom Hydrographic Office;
- Simon Dootson, Romsey Sub-Aqua Club;
- Sophia Exelby, HM Receiver of Wreck;
- Jenny Fabbri, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum, Port Elizabeth
- George Gardner, Archives Technician, Glasgow University Archive Services;
- James and Jill Gribble, Cape Town;
- Jan Hargreaves, Senior Archivist, Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester;
- Graham Harman, SA Navy News, Simonstown;
- Susan Hayward, Heritage Manager, Bournemouth Borough Council;
- Susan Hill, Archivist, Southampton City Council;
- David Jones, Triton Scuba Ltd.;
- Grahame Knott, weymouthdiving.com;
- Tony Lees, Greater Manchester County Record Office;
- Rebecca Loader, SMR/Archaeological Projects Officer;
- Amanda McKelvie, CNS Heritage 1, Ministry of Defence;
- Andrea Mason, City Gate Church, Brighton;
- Members of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society;
- Jeff Opland, Historian and researcher;
- Brian Overton, St. Edwards Sub-Aqua Club;
- Dave Parham, University of Bournemouth;
- Julian Putkowski, Institute for European Studies, Bloomsbury;
- Chris Pater, Romsey Sub-Aqua Club

- Adele Peck, Senior Administrator, City Gate Church, Brighton;
- Keith Rimes, GrownUpSAC;
- Jonathan Sharfman, Maritime Archaeologist, South African Heritage Resources Agency;
- Marika Sherwood, Black and Asian Studies Association;
- Richard Smout, Archivist, Isle of Wight Archive Service;
- Pete Street, wightwreck.co.uk;
- The Dive Connection, Portsmouth (Steve);
- Graham Thompson, Curator, Historic Photographs & Ship Plans; National Maritime Museum;
- Gina Turner, Archives Assistant, Hampshire Record Office;
- Gerda Viljoen, South African National Museum of Military History;
- Dave Wendes, Wight Spirit Charters;
- John Winrow, Assistant Curator, National Museums Liverpool;
- Dr Steven Winstanley, Romsey Sub-Aqua Club;
- Martin Woodward, Offshore Marine Services Ltd and owner of the Arreton Shipwreck Centre and Maritime Museum;
- Susan Woolgar, Archives and Records Manager, Southampton City Council;
- Rachel Wragg, Assistant Curator, Arts and Heritage, Southampton City Council.

Graham Scott and John Gribble carried out the assessment and compiled the report. John Gribble edited the report and quality assurance was carried out by Dr Antony Firth. Kitty Brandon prepared the illustrations and Tom Goskar designed the associated web pages. Dr Andrew Fitzpatrick drafted the web page text and advised on the communication strategy. The project was initiated and managed for Wessex Archaeology by John Gribble.

Data Licences

The material derived from the UKHO is subject to licence 820/020220/11 and the conditions on End-Users and Third Parties contained therein. The following charts and wreck requests have been added to Schedule 1 Annex A:

- Digital use of Chart 2045 (1998).

A copy of the report will be sent to UKHO.

SS *MENDI***ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT****Ref: 64441.01****Dedication**

Questing from the stormy Cape
Of hope and sailing up Africa's west
Shore, we saw the shifting sands
of Skeleton Coast, and kept eyes
cast for death in the undersea dark.

In tropical waters we began
to doubt our task: that, said
the captain, fingering the haze,
is the Slave Coast. Lamenting,
we threw into the sea broken
bits of bread for brothers
and sisters who once crossed
this spot, going west,

and despair silently embarked.
What could we win, who would
never see the earth shattering
foe we fought? We had no arms, and
the enemy who ground away our liberty
was left at home to storm the Cape.

The Gold and Ivory Coasts tempted
us from our task with the allure
of romantic Africa, but we stuck
to our guns, so to speak, rounding
those desert sand seas: our quest,
some said, our end, at hand.

It seemed strangely apt, somehow,
that a friendly ship should sink us,
that we should drown in futile humility
unarmed, sea-borne land warriors,
but down we went, as though drowning
were the end we sought. So be it.
We were taught it was God's way.

But we danced at last as warriors,
to show death our earthly best
before swirling in the whirligig
of time, where we still turn
in currents of change. The liberty
we sought was a whirlpool, our lot,
a sinking ship: our task, our death.

But we became all people: we are
the skeletal dance of war, the ivory
of sacrifice, the slavery of race,
the sunken gold of liberty:
we have turned into your quest.

Poem by Brian Walter (1994)

This report is dedicated to the members of the South African Native Labour Corps, particularly those who lost their lives as a result of the sinking of the *Mendi*, and to the families and communities they left behind.

SS MENDI**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT****Ref: 64441.01****Contents**

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. ASSESSMENT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	2
2.1. Aims.....	2
2.2. Objectives	2
3. METHODOLOGY	3
3.1. Desk-Based Assessment.....	3
3.2. Data Availability	3
4. RESULTS	4
4.1. The British Labour Corps.....	4
4.2. The ss <i>Mendi</i>	5
West African trader	6
War Transport	6
4.3. The Loss of the <i>Mendi</i>	9
4.4. Aftermath and Enquiry.....	12
4.5. South Africa and World War I.....	14
Political Background.....	14
Black Labour in the African Campaigns.....	17
4.6. The Foreign Labours Corps.....	18
The Chinese Labour Corps.....	19
The Egyptian Labour Corps	20
Other Foreign Labour Contingents	20
4.7. The South African Native Labour Corps	21
The Beginnings	21
Government Agreement and Conditions.....	22
Recruiting	23
Reasons for Enlisting	24
4.8. The Common Experience of the Foreign Labour Corps in Europe.....	25
Terms of Employment.....	25
Areas of Deployment	26
Segregation and the Closed Compound System	27
Labour Unrest.....	29
4.9. The <i>Mendi</i> as an Archaeological Site	31
Site Location	31
Hydrodynamic Environment.....	31
Geological Environment	31

Site Ecology	32
Site Formation	32
Subsequent Site Formation Processes: 1917-1945.....	32
Subsequent Site Formation Processes: 1945-2007.....	33
Artefacts from the Site	36
The Future of the Site.....	37
4.10. The Significance of the <i>Mendi</i> to Britain and South Africa.....	37
World War I	37
The Invisibility of the Labour Corps System	38
World War I Troopship Losses	39
Black Post-War Expectations and Realities in South Africa	40
The Political Effects of the Loss of the <i>Mendi</i>	41
Burial, Memorialization and Remembrance	43
Commemoration and Reconciliation.....	44
Descendants.....	45
Diving on the <i>Mendi</i>	46
Local Perspectives.....	47
The Liverpool-West Africa Trade and the end of the Atlantic Slave Trade	47
Shipbuilding on the Clyde.....	49
Ecological Significance.....	49
Life Saving at Sea	49
A Tale of Two Sea Captains	50
The <i>Amistad</i>	51
5. CONCLUSIONS	52
5.1. Archaeological Characterisation of the Site.....	52
Modified after Watson and Gale	52
‘Statement of Importance’ framework	53
5.2. Management Characterisation of the Site.....	54
General	54
Ownership	55
Vulnerability.....	55
War Grave Issues	55
Practicalities	56
5.3. Fieldwork.....	56
5.4. Further Desk-Based assessment	56
5.5. Outreach	56
6. REFERENCES.....	57
7. ARCHIVE.....	64
APPENDIX I: UK ARCHIVE MATERIAL	65
APPENDIX II: LIST OF POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES	66
APPENDIX III: ARTEFACTS RECOVERED FROM THE WRECK OF THE <i>MENDI</i>.....	69
APPENDIX IV: DESCRIPTION OF THE <i>MENDI</i>.....	71
APPENDIX V: SERVICE HISTORY OF THE <i>MENDI</i>.....	75
APPENDIX VI: LIST OF CASUALTIES	80
APPENDIX VII: <i>MENDI</i> GRAVES AND MEMORIALS	88

APPENDIX VIII: THE <i>DARRO</i>	90
APPENDIX IX: POSSIBLE MARINE LIFE ON THE SITE	91
APPENDIX X: OUTLINE HISTORIES OF ELDER DEMPSTER AND THE BRITISH AND AFRICAN STEAMSHIP NAVIGATION COMPANY	93
APPENDIX XI: HISTORY OF ALEXANDER STEPHEN & SONS LTD	97
APPENDIX XII: ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE NON-STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION UNDER THE PROTECTION OF WRECKS ACT (1973) 99	
Protection of Wrecks Act (1973)	99
Non-Statutory Criteria For Designation	99
Assessment Scale	99
Assessment	100
APPENDIX XIII: SUITABILITY FOR DESIGNATION UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MILITARY REMAINS ACT 1986	104
Protection of Military Remains Act 1986.....	104
Assessment	104
APPENDIX XIV: WA RECORDING LEVELS	106
APPENDIX XV: DEFINITIONS	107
APPENDIX XVI: TROOP AND HOSPITAL SHIPS LOST DURING WORLD WAR I 108	
APPENDIX XVII: MEDIA COVERAGE GENERATED DURING DBA	109

Figures

Cover	The Sinking of the <i>Mendi</i> by Hilary Graham (courtesy Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum of Art, Port Elizabeth)
Figure 1	Plans of the <i>Mendi</i> and <i>Karina</i> (with photo of the <i>Mendi</i> inset)
Figure 2	Last voyage of the <i>Mendi</i> and wreck site location
Figure 3	Schematic diagram of the wreck site based on diver reports

Plates

Plate 1	The ss <i>Darro</i>
Plate 2	Cape Corps in Palestine
Plate 3	Ceramic dish recovered from the wreck site. Note the British and African Steam Navigation Company logo, which was used to identify the wreck as the <i>Mendi</i>
Plate 4	Bridge telegraph from the <i>Mendi</i> at the Arreton Shipwreck Museum
Plate 5	Bronze sliding sash window from the <i>Mendi</i> at the Arreton Shipwreck Museum
Plate 6	Possible propeller, although this identification is speculative
Plate 7	A scuttle and shell plating
Plate 8	Flanged and bracketed pipes, possibly associated with the boilers or engine room
Plate 9	A possible powered windlass
Plate 10	Two bits and possible deck plating
Plate 11	Pipe with chain, probably chain cable and navel pipe

- Plate 12 King George V inspecting members of the SANLC at Abbeville, France, July 1917
- Plate 13 Rev Isaac Wauchope Dyobha
- Plate 14 Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton
- Plate 15 One of the *Mendi* panels at Hollybrook

SS MENDI

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Ref: 64441.01

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. Shortly before 5a.m. on the morning of 21st February 1917, the Liverpool registered ss *Mendi*, sailing in the company of the destroyer HMS *Brisk*, was rammed by the steamer *Darro*, about 11 nautical miles off St Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight. Such was the damage to the *Mendi* that it sank within 20 minutes.
- 1.1.2. At the time of its loss the *Mendi* was contracted by the British government for war service and fitted out as a troop ship. On its last voyage the vessel was carrying 823 men and officers of the 5th Battalion, South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC), bound for France and the Western Front.
- 1.1.3. Of the 802 black servicemen aboard, 607 were recorded officially as lost when the *Mendi* sank, along with 9 of their white countrymen and 30 members of the ship's crew. It is possible that up to 140 men died trapped inside the hull, but most drowned or died of hypothermia in the cold waters of the English Channel.
- 1.1.4. A Court of Enquiry was held into the disaster but otherwise it received little official attention. It also received little public notice in a Britain inured to loss by three years of war and seems to have been quickly forgotten. However, memory of the disaster has never gone away in South Africa, where it persists in raising questions of identity and unity in the post-Apartheid state. As a result, commemorative events continue to take place, both there and in the UK.
- 1.1.5. The vessel itself was rediscovered in the 1970s, largely due to the efforts of the Isle of Wight diver Martin Woodward. Since then it has been regularly visited by sports divers. Despite this very little information about this archaeological site has entered the public domain. Initially treated as a source of interesting or valuable artefacts, there now seems to be growing recognition amongst divers of the significance of the site as a 'war grave'.
- 1.1.6. English Heritage (EH) commissioned Wessex Archaeology (WA) to undertake an archaeological assessment of the site to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the disaster: to assess what is known about it; what its significance is and could be in both the UK and South Africa; and to present an appraisal of current knowledge about the foreign labour corps, using the wreck of the *Mendi* as a focus. This report presents the results of that assessment.

2. ASSESSMENT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. AIMS

- 2.1.1. The aim of the project was to investigate the issues and areas of potential historical, archaeological, social and political interest associated with the wreck of the *Mendi*.
- 2.1.2. The project first aimed to search for historical and artefactual information about the *Mendi* as a ship, its loss and the archaeological site that the wreck of the *Mendi* now comprises. Thereafter the project sought to look beyond the ship and the event to consider the wider social and political context of the loss of the *Mendi*, and to suggest why this particular archaeological site is of special international importance.
- 2.1.3. A key aspect of the appraisal was the identification of other, current and future studies or actions related to the *Mendi*, through liaison with other agencies and programmes in the UK and abroad, with the aim of creating potential synergies in work relating to the site.
- 2.1.4. It is hoped that the appraisal will in due course also lead to and inform, amongst other things:
 - The archaeological investigation of the physical remains of the wreck by geophysical and Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV)/diver methods. This will be aimed at answering outstanding questions relating the wreck, assessing its condition, addressing issues of site vulnerability, and gathering data for future outreach;
 - A programme of public awareness-raising to consider the meaning of the *Mendi* and its social and political context for the UK and South Africa today, specifically including the views of people of African descent in the UK;
 - The possible management of the site as a monument.

2.2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.2.1. The objectives of the assessment were:
 - To conduct a desk-based appraisal of the sources relating to the career of the ss *Mendi*, its conversion and use as a troopship, and its loss in the English Channel.
 - To place the *Mendi* and those aboard her when she sank within the wider social and political context of both early 20th century South Africa and the system of labour contingents that formed part of the war effort of the British Empire during WWI.
 - To consider the meaning of the *Mendi* and its social and political context for the UK and South Africa today, taking into account the different meanings of 'place' that are likely to be attached to the wreck by different constituencies in both the UK and South Africa.
 - To consider the importance of the wreck itself as a heritage site of special international interest, to include addressing the question of the differing values

that are likely to be attached to the site by the various stakeholders with an interest in the site.

- To present ideas for further research and investigation, related to the wreck of the *Mendi*, both in the UK and South Africa.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 3.1.1. In accordance with the project design, the appraisal has been carried out as a desk-based exercise; that is without fieldwork having been undertaken on the site. The appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001).
- 3.1.2. WA has sought to identify the principal primary and secondary published and unpublished sources, including websites, and to examine them, where possible directly. In addition WA has also sought to identify a wide range of stakeholders and to contact those who may have data relevant to the aims and objectives of the project, such as avocational scuba divers, archive and museum curators and professional and avocational researchers.
- 3.1.3. Although this report would not wish to have to distinguish between those involved in the story of the *Mendi* on the basis of race or population group, the historical facts require it. We have therefore used the terms ‘black’, ‘white’ and ‘coloured’ to describe the South African population groups in the *Mendi* story of African, European and mixed descent respectively. Although these terms have been carried forward from the past they should not be interpreted in the context of this study to carry or imply any pejorative meaning or discrimination on the basis of colour.

3.2. DATA AVAILABILITY

- 3.2.1. A list of references and description of the primary sources consulted is contained in the References section of the report and in **Appendix I** respectively.
- 3.2.2. There is a lack of published data concerning the history of the wreck of the *Mendi* and of its current condition. In the absence of archaeological fieldwork, limited but helpful data, including some photographs, has been obtained from the UKHO and various avocational divers who have visited the site, notably Martin Woodward, Dave Wendes and Keith Rimes. The shipbuilder’s plans were obtained from the National Maritime Museum and have also been used in this respect.
- 3.2.3. The principal primary sources consulted for consideration of the *Mendi* as a ship, its loss and its significance have been the builder’s plans and records of the Court of Inquiry into the loss. A number of secondary sources have also provided very significant quantities of data, principally Clothier’s *Black Valour* (1987) and a number of histories of the Elder Dempster Shipping Line. Correspondence and an archive provided by James E. Cowden, author of one of the two Elder Dempster fleet histories, has also contributed important information.

- 3.2.4. The available primary and secondary source information related to the labour corps system is very limited. There is only a handful of books and published articles that deal with the South African Native Labour Corps, and as far as this study has been able to ascertain, only a few published sources related to the other labour corps – both British and Foreign. Albert Grundlingh's *Fighting Their Own War* (1987) has been an important source of information, as has Brian Willan's groundbreaking article (1978). Julian Putkowski's (1998) chapter on labour unrest in the foreign labour corps also provided valuable information. In certain areas of the study therefore, extensive use has been made of web-based material and publications.
- 3.2.5. An assessment of the primary documents related to the labour corps, the majority of which are held at the Public Records Office in London, has indicated that a wealth of information potentially exists within this and other archival repositories. The scope of this study however, has been such that no more than a cursory exploration of the available primary documents has been possible.

4. RESULTS

4.1. THE BRITISH LABOUR CORPS

- 4.1.1. The story of the *Mendi* and the South African Native Labour Corps has its roots in the huge military labour structure which developed during World War I to provide logistical support to the British Empire's fighting troops. When the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) landed in France after the beginning of World War I, it did so without any formal labour component or Pioneer formations within its ranks. As a result, the movement of stores and munitions, the repair or construction of roads and railways, and the building of defences fell to the fighting troops and rapidly became an established part of their 'fatigue' routine.
- 4.1.2. This work often took precedence over periods of rest for the infantry behind the lines and led to a decline in the physical and mental condition of the frontline troops. The situation was clearly not ideal and as the war escalated, the army grew and casualties mounted, so more and more men were needed for the vital logistical support that was required to keep the army moving (<http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>).
- 4.1.3. The need for a non-combatant labour force to support the fighting units was obvious to the War Office as early as 1914 when the French civilian labour available to unload BEF ships proved inadequate. The War Office moved quickly to fill this gap, and by December 1914 five Labour Companies, each consisting of roughly 500 men, had been formed within the Army Service Corps (ASC) – known amongst the troops as Ally Sloper's or Aunty Sally's Cavalry (see www.toonopedia.com/sloper.htm; www.wakefieldfhs.org.uk for explanations) - and despatched to France (<http://www.1914-1918.net>).
- 4.1.4. During the next two years the military infrastructure for meeting the labour requirements of the various fronts on which the British Army was engaged expanded phenomenally, but in a rather haphazard and *ad hoc* manner. These units differed widely in their purpose and make-up and initially (1915-1916) can perhaps best be described as extensions of traditional military formations and units.

- 4.1.5. For example, in August 1915 the Royal Engineers created 11 Labour Battalions which employed navvies, tradesmen and semi-skilled men for the construction of rear lines of defence and other works. Attempts to address frontline labour requirements were made by creating labour battalions within infantry divisions. These Pioneer battalions were trained as infantry but were normally engaged in labour and were composed of men who had mining and road laying experience, or who had other usable trades or skills (<http://www.1914-1918.net>).
- 4.1.6. Further labour was provided from within military structures through the creation in 1916 of 12 Infantry Labour Battalions and, following the passage of the Military Service Act in March 1916, a Non-Combatant Corps comprising eight companies. The Infantry Labour Battalions were composed of men graded medically unfit for combat, whilst the Non-Combatant Companies were made up of conscientious objectors (<http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>).
- 4.1.7. In January 1917 the British Army's labour apparatus was consolidated within a new worldwide body, the British Labour Corps (BLC) upon which the responsibility was placed for supplying the labour needs of the army. The BLC reorganised and streamlined the labour corps system, drawing the many disparate units into a more coherent structure under the badge of the ASC. On the Western Front the new BLC comprised 68 Pioneer Infantry Battalions, ASC Companies totalling 90,000 men, and 47 prisoner-of-war companies (<http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>).
- 4.1.8. By the end of the war in November 1918 the BLC was some 389,900 men strong, making up 11% of the total strength of the British Army.
- 4.1.9. But despite the size of the BLC it was clear to the British Government by 1917 that the unprecedented scale of the conflict and toll in men, on the Western Front in particular, and the amount of labour required to ameliorate the burden of labour fatigues on frontline infantry could not be met from within the United Kingdom.
- 4.1.10. The decision was therefore taken to recruit foreign labour on fixed term contracts from British overseas territories and beyond, and in the last two years of the war roughly 300,000 foreign labourers were engaged, of whom 195,000 served on the Western Front. These foreign labourers were additional to the BLC, so that by the end of the war Britain had engaged a labour force, in units of various sorts across all fronts, which numbered close to 700,000 men. These foreign labour corps are discussed in more detail in **Sections 4.6–4.8** below.

4.2. THE SS *MENDI*

- 4.2.1. During World War I the British government relied upon transport ships to move its troops from disparate parts of its Empire and Dominions to the combat zones. Without sufficient troopships to carry these forces and, later, the enormous tide of American troops, the war would undoubtedly have been lost.
- 4.2.2. In the 19th century British Empire troops were usually transported in regular naval vessels. Merchant ships were normally only used when there was a shortfall of naval vessels. However the enormous numbers of troops that had to be transported between 1914 and 1918 meant that large numbers of merchant ships had to be purchased or chartered. Some of these ships were passenger liners and they required very little

modification and were often capable of sailing independently because of their speed. There were insufficient numbers of such vessel however, and passenger-carrying cargo ships like the *Mendi* and ordinary cargo ships had to be chartered and converted to purpose. Such vessels lacked the speed of the liners and therefore had to be escorted in convoy through danger zones.

- 4.2.3. The *Mendi* was a typical British merchant steamship of the early 20th century. It was built at Linthouse, Glasgow by Messrs. Alexander Stephen & Sons Ltd (**Appendix XI**) in 1905 and launched on 19th June (see **Figure 1**).
- 4.2.4. The ship was one of two ‘Karina’ class sister ships built by Stephens for the British and African Steam Navigation Company (B&ASNC), the other being the *Karina* (Cowden & Duffy 1986). The Karina class was a modified Zungeru class design (Haws 1990).
- 4.2.5. Gross tonnage was 4,229.53 tons and registered tonnage, 2,638.72 tons. The vessel is recorded as having been 370.2 feet (112.84m) long, 46.2 feet (14.08m) in breadth and with a depth of hold of 26.96 feet (8.22m) (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1). Clincher (clinker) built in steel and schooner rigged, the *Mendi* was powered by a triple expansion steam engine, driving a single screw and capable of 13 knots in 1917 (Lloyds Register). Further recorded particulars of construction are given in **Appendix IV**.
- 4.2.6. British registered, the ship’s official number was 120875. It was owned throughout its life by the B&ASNC, a company capitalised in Edinburgh. By the time of its loss however, B&ASNC had become part of the group managed or owned by the Elder Dempster Line.

West African trader

- 4.2.7. Until 1916 the *Mendi* was engaged exclusively in the important Liverpool-West Africa trade. As a result, the ship was managed from and based at Liverpool.
- 4.2.8. Although the surviving archives of Elder Dempster do not appear to contain any reference to the vessel (John Winrow, National Museums Liverpool, pers. comm.), the surviving Board of Trade inwards passenger lists (PRO/BT 26/257-626) suggest that it made 53 scheduled round trip voyages between Liverpool and regular ports of call in West Africa between 1906 and September 1916, an average of five to six per year (**Appendix V**).
- 4.2.9. The *Mendi* carried a mix of cargo and passengers during these voyages. It was capable of carrying a maximum of 100 first class and 70 second class passengers (Cowden & Duffy 1986; Haws 1990). Records of the cargo carried have not been traced and may not exist as little of the Elder Dempster and therefore B&ASNC records prior to 1932 survive (Davies 1973). However the *Mendi* does not appear to have been a specialist vessel and it may therefore be assumed that typical cargoes for the routes were carried, such as palm products when inbound to Liverpool.

War Transport

- 4.2.10. The *Mendi* was chartered by the Ministry of Transport in autumn 1916, presumably after the vessel’s return on 16th September from Calabar in West Africa (PRO/BT 26/626/4). It left Liverpool in October of that year, bound for West Africa as a

freighter (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2). Using fittings brought from Liverpool, it was then fitted out as a troop transport at Lagos, the terminal port of its outward voyage (Elder Dempster 1921).

- 4.2.11. The Board of Trade enquiry into the loss of the *Mendi* gives a fairly good general description of the layout of the vessel subsequent to her conversion (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732). The *Mendi* had four holds, two each forward and aft of the central engine and boiler rooms. Holds 1, 2 and 4 (numbered respectively from forward aft) were each fitted with 'tween decks (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1). It was on these 'tween decks that the troops were intended to be quartered. Their precise form is unknown, although they are likely to have been constructed of wood. Hold 3 was reserved for cargo (see **Figure 1**).
- 4.2.12. Access to the new 'tween decks was improved by fitting a wide ladder reached through a booby hatch in the starboard side of each hatchway cover. The larger Hold 2 had two of these, one on each side (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1). The booby hatches appear to have provided the only means of access to the 'tween decks. Although the hatchways were covered by the usual portable wooden gratings, they do not appear to have been covered with tarpaulins and battened down, possibly because of the presence of the booby hatches.
- 4.2.13. Following conversion, the *Mendi* embarked a contingent of the Nigerian Regiment at Lagos, further Nigerian troops at Calabar and then sailed to Dar-es-Salaam on the East African coast, via Cape Town. A photograph of the vessel embarking troops at Calabar has been published in a book privately produced by Elder Dempster to pay tribute to the contribution of the company and its employees to the war effort (Elder Dempster 1921). In addition, photographs of the Nigerian troops on the deck of the vessel and of officers embarking are held by the Imperial War Museum, London (see project web pages at <http://www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/marine/eh/ssmendi> for one of the images).
- 4.2.14. After disembarking the troops, the *Mendi* then returned via Durban to Cape Town. There, the 5th battalion of the South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC), comprising five officers, 17 non-commissioned officers and 802 enlisted labourers, was embarked, together with about 1,500 tons of government cargo. The labourers were quartered in the 'tween decks. The officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, were quartered in the normal passenger accommodation. The crew were berthed forward, under the quarterdeck. The cargo appears to have included boxes of ammunition as these are reported to have been found on the wreck (see **Section 4.9**).
- 4.2.15. A number of other military passengers were embarked: officers returning to England after convalescing or leave; and recruits for the Royal Flying Corps (Clothier 1987). They were subsequently disembarked at Plymouth, so the total number of crew and passengers aboard at the time of loss was 89 and 824 respectively (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 6).
- 4.2.16. At Durban the 'tween decks accommodation had been overhauled and the Board of Trade report is careful to state that the provisions made for accommodation were the same "in every respect" as those that would have been made for European troops (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2).

- 4.2.17. There is evidence to suggest that different standards may have been considered acceptable for the labour corps. In a telegram found during this study from the Senior Naval Officer, Simonstown to the Admiralty in London, with regard to vessels and arrangements for shipping the SANLC to Europe the writer asks the question: ‘May ships carry larger proportion of natives than troops: if so to what extent?’ A heavy red pencil cross in the margin next to this question suggests that this was not to be the case, but the fact that the question was asked shows that there was a distinction made in the minds of some between the labour corps and regular troops (PRO/MT 23/630).
- 4.2.18. It is likely, however, that almost all of the passenger accommodation was cramped and uncomfortable, particularly for those on the ‘tween decks. Using the builder’s plans for the *Mendi*, this project has calculated that there was a combined total of roughly 22,267 cubic feet of space available on the ‘tween decks in Holds 1, 2 and 3. This equates to approximately 27 cubic feet of space per person for the 802 men housed there and suggests that each man probably had a space roughly 6 feet x 2 feet x 1.5 feet for his bunk. The height of the ‘tween deck would have allowed bunks to be stacked four high, with a small space on the floor under the lowest bunk for storage. Access is likely to have been down narrow corridors, probably no more than two feet wide, between the tiers of bunks.
- 4.2.19. The ship left Cape Town under convoy with the *Kenilworth Castle* and other liners, bound for Le Havre via Plymouth on 25th January 1917 (Uys 1993). The vessel was under the command of her master, Henry Arthur Yardley.
- 4.2.20. The convoy was escorted by the armoured cruiser HMS *Cornwall*. This was probably fortuitous, because the convoy was sighted on the same day by the German raider *Wolf*. The *Wolf* did not attack, almost certainly because of the presence of the warship but also possibly because it’s main mission was in fact to lay mines (Clothier 1987).
- 4.2.21. The *Mendi* called at both Lagos and Freetown in Sierra Leone. The vessel stayed at the Lagos for about three days, transferring a £5 million consignment of government bullion to HMS *Cornwall*. The vessel then spent four or five days in Freetown to wait for a convoy and to have a deck gun fitted (Elder Dempster 1921). The *Mendi* then left under convoy with a number of other transports for Plymouth, arriving on 19th February. The convoy was apparently unescorted (Clothier 1987; Uys 1993) (see **Figure 2**).
- 4.2.22. During the voyage from Cape Town to Lagos and from Freetown to Plymouth, the Board of Trade enquiry report records that fire, boat and muster station drills (including life belt drills) were carried out on a regular basis. During the last few and most hazardous days of the voyage these exercises were carried out daily. Boat drills, including the lowering of the lifeboats into the water, were carried out in Lagos and Freetown (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2). The boats were found to be in good order and a couple of the liferafts thrown into the water floated satisfactorily (Clothier 1987).
- 4.2.23. The *Mendi* had seven boats capable of being used to evacuate the vessel in the event of her sinking. These had an aggregate capacity of 298 persons and comprised a gig

and six lifeboats. This was clearly not sufficient for the total number of passengers carried, but this was normal for troopships of this era.

- 4.2.24. About 80 labourers were allocated to Nos. 1-4 lifeboats on the amidships upper decks, with the remainder allocated to the life rafts, which were apparently nearer to where they were quartered. The two stern lifeboats, Nos. 5-6, were allocated to the sick and their hospital attendants (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2).
- 4.2.25. To supplement the lifeboat capacity, the *Mendi* carried 46 life rafts of the buoyant air tank type and fitted with lifelines. Each of these had a capacity of 20 persons (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1). Each man aboard was also issued with a life belt.

4.3. THE LOSS OF THE *MENDI*

- 4.3.1. The *Mendi* left Plymouth in the afternoon of 20th February under escort by the destroyer HMS *Brisk* on an up-Channel course. The weather was overcast and threatening mist, with light winds and a smooth sea (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2). The *Mendi* was able to proceed at full speed, about 12 knots.
- 4.3.2. By 17:30 it was almost dark and lookouts were posted. Navigation lights were shown at about 19:30. These comprised oil side lights and a stern light (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2). The master was of the opinion that oil lights had greater visibility than electric lights in fog.
- 4.3.3. By 23:30, with the vessel still making full speed, the conditions became foggy. The ship's whistle was therefore sounded at intervals. After midnight 'the weather became thicker', with fog patches (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2). Speed was reduced in stages until about 03:45 when Yardley put the engines to slow. A number of other ships' whistles were heard, mostly to port, but they were not seen. Conditions worsened.
- 4.3.4. At about 04:45 HMS *Brisk*, which had been following stern of the *Mendi*, drew alongside and hailed that it would be easier for the escort to keep station if the speed was increased. However Yardley decided not to increase speed.
- 4.3.5. Immediately after this, Yardley left the bridge to the Second Officer and went to the chart room in order to fix a new position from the sounding that had just been taken. The vessel's course was S.75(degrees) E magnetic. Meanwhile the Fourth Officer on the bridge heard a vessel approaching through the water and sounded the ship's whistle. He then saw the masthead light and port side light of an approaching steamer, which was on a collision course with the starboard side of the *Mendi*.
- 4.3.6. The Second Officer immediately rang 'full speed astern' on the bridge telegraph and gave the order 'hard a starboard', blowing three short warning blasts on the whistle. However it was too late. The master, hearing the telegraph wires and whistle, got back to the bridge just before the two vessels collided.
- 4.3.7. At 04:57 on the 21st February 1917, the bow of other vessel, the ss *Darro* (**Plate 1**), struck the *Mendi* with a heavy right angled blow between No. 1 and No. 2 Hold hatches, about 12 feet forward of the watertight bulkhead which divided the holds (**Figure 1**). The depth of the cut was about 20 feet and therefore, crucially, below the waterline (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 3).

- 4.3.8. Yardley was thrown to the deck by the force of the collision. He described later to the enquiry that after one or two seconds he was able to get up and go to the fore part of the bridge. The mist was apparently so thick that he said that he could not see the bow of the *Darro*. Simultaneously the *Darro*, her engines now going astern, backed out of the opening that she had made in the *Mendi* (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 3).
- 4.3.9. Yardley stopped the *Mendi*'s engines and despatched the fourth officer to get the carpenter to sound the ship. He also gave orders to lower the boats to the rail and four blasts of the whistle were given to signal boat stations. He sent for the radio operator but he did not come and therefore no SOS was sent.
- 4.3.10. The boats were then ordered into the water. The starboard No. 1 and 3 boats were quickly afloat. However the *Mendi* was developing a very heavy list to starboard and although No. 5 boat was got into the water, it then capsized because it became overloaded with men sliding off the deck. None of the port side boats were launched successfully. No. 2 got stuck, No. 4 capsized because it was overloaded and No. 6 was stove in on the ship's side. The fate of the gig is unknown.
- 4.3.11. Yardley must have realised quite quickly that the ship was going to sink and eight or nine minutes after the collision ordered the life rafts to be put over the side and for the ship to be abandoned (Clothier 1987). The Board of Trade enquiry states that this was done in a disciplined fashion and without panic (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 4). Yardley himself stayed on board until the level of the water was nearly up to the bridge, before walking over the port side of the ship into the water.
- 4.3.12. Examination of the surviving eye-witness accounts suggests that the situation may have been rather more confused and chaotic than the enquiry concluded. It is clear that many men were thrown into the water and that many jumped into the sea rather than onto the life rafts. Although the evidence is contradictory, there is some indication that panic and confusion in the darkness played a part.
- 4.3.13. For example, one of the SANLC officers wasted time by attempting to untie the ropes securing life rafts rather than cutting them (Clothier 1987: 58). The officer concerned, Van Vuren, stated that 'All my men got off the boat except a few of them who could not be got to leave go of the ropes'. An abandoned liferaft was seen by the SANLC trooper Jacob Koos Matli, still tied to a railing (Clothier 1987; Uys 1993).
- 4.3.14. The fate of those labourers billeted in No. 1 Hold is particularly uncertain. The subsequent affidavit of Lieutenant van Buren of the SANLC stated that they did not fall in at their muster stations and he suggested that this was because the hatch had been jammed shut as a result of the collision. However, Vincent Capner, an ordinary seaman who had gone forward to check whether any of the crew were still in their quarters in the foredeck stated that he saw labourers emerging from the hatch to No. 1 Hold (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 4). This suggests that if any died below decks it was probably as a result of the impact and the subsequent inrush of water, although Clothier (1987) states that the 'tween decks were above the waterline.
- 4.3.15. The evidence given to the enquiry suggests that the ship righted itself before sinking (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 4). Yardley was briefly knocked unconscious by the trunk of the foremast at this point, but survived by hanging onto a raft until rescued.

The ship appears to have then gone down by the head, about 20 minutes after the collision.

- 4.3.16. An expert witness testified at the Board of Trade enquiry that the *Mendi* would not have sunk had the integrity of the watertight bulkhead separating No. 1 and 2 Holds been preserved (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 4). It therefore seems likely that it was not and that both holds therefore flooded. The speed of the sinking suggests that the flooding, particularly in No. 1 Hold, was very rapid and it appears unlikely that any attempt to save the ship could have been successful.
- 4.3.17. It is clear from all accounts of the accident that large numbers of SANLC labourers and crew members ended up in the water rather than in the boats and life-rafts. Matli and crew member William Brownlee recalled a whirlpool or “great hollow” that sucked many men who had been in the water down as the ship finally sank (Clothier 1987: 63). It is clear from the often harrowing accounts given by the survivors that many subsequently died from hypothermia as a result in the delay in assistance reaching them and their inability to find or get into life-rafts.
- 4.3.18. This delay has never been fully explained. The Board of Trade Inquiry found that although the master of the *Darro* had acted appropriately towards his own vessel, he had failed to render assistance to the *Mendi*. The *Darro* and the *Mendi* drifted apart in the fog but nevertheless the master and crew of the *Darro* heard shouting from the *Mendi*. No boat was sent to investigate or assist, even after two boats and a raft with survivors came alongside and even though the shouts of men in the water could still be heard by the *Darro*'s crew until about 06:30 (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 5). Although the conditions were foggy, the sea state was benign and there was nothing physically preventing rescue operations. The *Darro* did not leave the scene until 08:57.
- 4.3.19. The *Darro* was seen by HMS *Brisk* just before the collision was heard. The helm was put hard a starboard and speed increased to take the *Brisk* clear. Once clear the *Brisk* came about and returned to the scene. Attempts were made to hail the *Mendi* by megaphone and searchlight to no avail. Although an SOS was received from the *Darro*, nothing was heard from the *Mendi*. A lot of shouting was heard and a boat was sent to investigate. When this returned with men recovered from the water, the *Brisk*'s other boats were sent to assist.
- 4.3.20. *Brisk*'s boats continued to search for survivors until 09:00 when the exhausted boat crews were called back. The vessel then cruised amongst the floating wreckage looking for survivors on boats or rafts. When none were found, *Brisk* escorted the *Darro* to St Helen's Road on the east coast of the Isle of Wight. The *Brisk* then proceeded to Portsmouth and landed 137 survivors (Clothier 1987). Thereafter the *Darro* went to an unknown port, probably Portsmouth, where 107 further survivors were landed (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 5).
- 4.3.21. The steamer *Sandsend* of West Hartlepool, under the command of Captain George Sheldrake had arrived at about 07:30, possibly as a result of receiving the *Darro*'s SOS. The *Sandsend*'s boats joined the search for survivors. *Sandsend* eventually gave up and moved on. The twenty three survivors that her boats had picked up were subsequently transferred to the mine-sweeper *Balfour* before being landed at Newhaven in Sussex (Clothier 1987).

4.3.22. It appears that a raft with a few survivors onboard made it safely to the Dorset coast. The last survivors to be rescued appear to have been Alpheus Moliwa Zagubi, a Ndebele, and two SANLC companions. His family subsequently recounted that they drifted in a raft for 2-3 days before being picked up and taken to safety (Clothier 1987).

4.4. AFTERMATH AND ENQUIRY

4.4.1. The survivors were taken to hospital or to army camps. From there they were shipped to France where they went to work as part of SANLC (Clothier 1987).

4.4.2. Most of the dead were not recovered. The Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton commemorates those lost at sea who have no known graves and lists 559 men from the *Mendi*. Eight black labourers were buried at the Milton Cemetery at Portsmouth, one at Hastings, one at Littlehampton, one at Wimeraux in France (south of Calais) and two in Holland (Wassenaar and Bergen-op-Zoom) (Clothier 1987). It is not known how the bodies reached these places, but it is probably a mixture of survivors taken into Portsmouth who then died and bodies that were either picked up by vessels or drifted ashore. Details of known graves and commemorative monuments are given in **Appendix VII**

4.4.3. An inquest into the deaths of four of the crew was held at Portsmouth on 24th February 1917. A verdict of accidental death was reached, death being caused by exposure and cold as a result of the time spent in the water (Portsmouth Evening News 24/02/1917).

4.4.4. News of the disaster was slow in reaching the South African relatives of those involved. It was not until 9th March that an official announcement was made in the South African parliament, although some of the officers appear to have already telegraphed news of their survival home. Telegrams were then sent out to magistrates so that the relevant headmen and chiefs could be informed.

4.4.5. A formal investigation into the sinking under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894 was held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London over five days in July and August 1917 (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732). At the request of the Admiralty a Formal Investigation was held. This was unusual as a collision at sea during wartime would normally have been subject to a routine enquiry by the Board of Trade.

4.4.6. The hearing was presided over by a magistrate, a Mr Halkett, and three assessors chosen for their sea-going experience. The witnesses called included the two masters, Yardley and Henry Winchester Stump of the *Darro*, and other crew members. Expert witnesses were also called. Some SANLC witnesses serving in France gave evidence by affidavit. Various parties, including the Board of Trade and the South African Government were represented.

4.4.7. Although none of the witnesses specifically blamed Stump, the inquiry concluded that the collision was caused by the excessive speed of the *Darro* and the master's failure to use sound signals. The evidence presented to the inquiry suggested that the vessel had been proceeding at full speed (about 14 knots) from 10:06 the previous evening until the collision occurred. It decided that the *Mendi*'s failure to display a mast light had not contributed to the accident. Given that it also concluded that a

good look-out had been kept by both vessels, it therefore seems unlikely that the collision would have occurred had it not been foggy.

- 4.4.8. The inquiry concluded that the loss of the *Mendi* and those onboard had been caused by the master of the *Darro*, Henry Winchester Stump. Some allowance was made for war conditions, but his failure to render assistance to the *Mendi* and to survivors in the water was described as ‘inexcusable’ (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 5). His master’s certificate was therefore suspended for 12 months (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 6).
- 4.4.9. Stump was a highly experienced captain with no previous blemish on his record. Although heavily censured and capable of offering only a weak justification for his lack of action following the collision, his employers kept faith with him and he commanded ships for them after the war, taking command of the *Cortes* in July 1919 (Clothier 1987). It may be that he simply lost his nerve due to the stress of wartime service. However his apparent inaction that morning remains a mystery.
- 4.4.10. The inquiry also concluded that the provision of life saving equipment and the training given in its use to the SANLC labourers had been adequate. It decided that the heavy loss of life had instead been caused by a combination of the following factors (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 6):
- the heavy list to starboard the *Mendi* took which prevented some of the lifeboats being launched successfully;
 - the speed at which the *Mendi* sank;
 - the lack of assistance from the *Darro*;
 - the low temperature of the water (February surface water temperatures in the English Channel average about seven degrees centigrade).
- 4.4.11. This was not quite the end of the matter. A faction within the Board of Trade thought that Stump had got off lightly and that his master’s certificate should have been cancelled rather than suspended. In one memo Stump was described as “a standing menace to seafarers” (Clothier 1987: 92). However after some internal wrangling it was decided not to take any further action.
- 4.4.12. The Board of Trade Maritime Department had clearly been anxious to reassure the inquiry that sufficient lifesaving equipment was on board the *Mendi* for the number of passengers it was carrying. However it did admit in letters sent to both the Admiralty and the South African High Commissioner that had the *Mendi* set out from a United Kingdom port rather than Cape Town, then the UK regulations would have required it to carry more lifeboats and fewer life rafts (PRO/MT 9/1115, M32925, letters dated 18/07/1917). Whether this would have resulted in fewer deaths is however highly uncertain, given the difficulties experienced in launching the available boats.
- 4.4.13. The official number of deaths was 646: 30 crew members, two military officers, seven non-commissioned officers and 607 black labourers (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 6). The total number of survivors was given as 267 (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 5).

- 4.4.14. However there is some reason to doubt the accuracy of these official figures. Elder Dempster records suggest that 31 crew members died, the additional casualty being L.J. Adams, a steward (Elder Dempster 1921). Clothier suggests this was the true figure. Furthermore he suggests that evidence exists that up to 615 of the labourers may have died, although he does not offer evidence to substantiate this (Clothier 1987).
- 4.4.15. Yardley's reputation does not appear to have suffered as a result of the loss of the *Mendi*. He was given command of RMS *Burutu* and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross following an action with a German submarine off Liberia in 1918. After the war he continued to captain ships for Elder Dempster until his retirement in 1928. The career of Captain Yardley is discussed in more detail below.
- 4.4.16. The *Darro* survived the collision and the war. It was broken up in 1933 (Lloyd's Register of Shipping).
- 4.4.17. HMS *Brisk* also survived the war. It was decommissioned and sold to breakers in 1921 (Ward-McQuaid 2007).
- 4.4.18. The *Sandsend* survived until 6 September 1917, when it was torpedoed by a submarine off Minehead in the Bristol Channel. Three lives were lost. Captain George Sheldrake, who had been in command when the *Mendi* was lost, survived and stayed at sea until his retirement in 1959 (Clothier 1987).

4.5. SOUTH AFRICA AND WORLD WAR I

- 4.5.1. How did the *Mendi* and those aboard her come to find themselves in the English Channel on that fateful morning? In August 1914 the Union of South Africa was a British Dominion and bore a constitutional obligation to support Britain in the event of an armed conflict (Mohlamme 1995). At the outbreak of World War I therefore, the South African Prime Minister, General Louis Botha informed the British Government of the Union's support and released the Imperial garrison in South Africa so that it could be deployed elsewhere.
- 4.5.2. Shortly thereafter, in early 1915 South Africa actively entered the war with a successful campaign in which it captured German South West Africa (now Namibia). There was a large South African presence in the long campaign against the elusive General von Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa (now Burundi, Rwanda and Tanganyika, the mainland portion of Tanzania), and South African troops were also despatched to the other theatres of war, serving in the Middle East, the Dardanelles and on the Western Front (Gleeson 1994).
- 4.5.3. Although on the face of it, South Africa's entry into the war was a fairly rapid and apparently easy one, the involvement of the Union in the war was strongly influenced by the prevailing political climate and the recent history of the country. This is nowhere more apparent than in the history of the SANLC.

Political Background

- 4.5.4. For black South Africans the period between the 1902 Peace of Vereeniging, which ended the South African, or Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), and the outbreak of

World War I in August 1914 was marked by a series of political setbacks which were to have a distinct bearing on their reaction to and experience of the war.

- 4.5.5. The 1902 peace treaty set in motion the processes that resulted in the political unification in 1910 of the former British Cape and Natal colonies and the former Boer republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State. The 1910 Act of Union paved the way for the emergence of a modern, industrial and self-governing South African state. At end of the South African War, there was an expectation amongst black South Africans that the British victory held out the promise of a better future for them, but this did not materialise. The terms of the Peace of Vereeniging and ‘the calculated indifference of the subsequent British administration’ to the social and political aspirations of South Africa’s black majority were a bitter disappointment, particularly since large numbers of black South Africans had served the British as both combatants and non-combatants in the war (Grundlingh 1987:5).
- 4.5.6. In 1910 the new constitution of the Union of South Africa dealt another blow to black political aspirations. It denied the franchise to all but a minority of black South Africans in the former Cape Colony which had historically enjoyed a limited franchise, and thereby perpetuated the exclusion of the vast majority of South Africans from the formal political process (Grundlingh 1987).
- 4.5.7. A further major blow came in the form of the 1913 Natives Land Act, which restricted black ownership of land to 7.3% of the total area of the Union. The legislation was designed to destroy a thriving, independent or semi-independent rural black peasantry by forcing it off the best land. The landless black majority was concentrated into small pockets of poor land which could not possibly support the population, and which became pools of wage labourers to supply South Africa’s mines and burgeoning heavy industry (Grundlingh 1987).
- 4.5.8. As a result, the years immediately prior to World War I were a time of increasing black political ferment and struggle. The political setbacks served to unify black political activity, and in 1912 several hundred of South Africa’s educated black elite formed the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) to protest against racial discrimination and to appeal for equal treatment for blacks under the law. The SANNC was renamed the African National Congress in 1923.
- 4.5.9. Despite the political setbacks of the previous decade, the educated black elite who formed the backbone of the SANNC still maintained a belief that Britain would not completely abandon black interests in South Africa.
- 4.5.10. This position led the SANNC to take up a loyalist stance at the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914. The honorary President of the SANNC, Dr Walter Rubusana conveyed to the Union’s Defence Minister, General Jan Smuts, a pledge by the Congress of loyalty to the cause, a promise not to criticize the government during the course of the conflict, and the offer to raise 5,000 black troops for service in the planned military campaign in German South West Africa (Clothier 1987; Grundlingh 1987; Mohlamme 1995).
- 4.5.11. The cooperative stance by South Africa’s main black political party must not, however, be viewed as an indication of passive acceptance of a subservient position. It was entirely motivated by political considerations. With virtually no avenue still

available to black South Africans to bring about constitutional change, the SANNC leaders believed that ‘in identifying themselves with the white ruling class in a common cause and openly proclaiming a common allegiance to the British crown’ black South Africans could expect to be rewarded for their loyalty. They hoped that such an attitude might enable them to then pressurize the authorities into granting meaningful political recognition (Grundlingh 1987:13).

- 4.5.12. The offer of recruits was turned down by the Government, which expressed its ‘great appreciation of the loyal sentiments ... of the native citizens of the Union’ (Clothier 1987:11) but made it clear that it had no desire to use people of non-European descent in a combative capacity in the current conflict: ‘Apart from other consideration, the present war is one which has its origins among the White people of Europe and the Government are anxious to avoid the employment of its Native citizens in the a war against Whites’ (Plaatje 1916:281; Clothier 1987). This was a ‘White Man’s War’ (Grundlingh 1987: 3).
- 4.5.13. This apparently magnanimous response was pure dissimulation on the part of the Government though, and disguised the truth that the exclusion of blacks from the armed forces was a direct result of the racial fears and prejudices which permeated white South African society. If blacks were allowed to join the Union Defence Force on a basis of equality in an armed capacity, most white South Africans believed that the existing nature of South African’s black/white social relations would be threatened and ‘the position of the white minority jeopardised by blacks trained in the use of firearms’ (Grundlingh 1987:37).
- 4.5.14. Furthermore, according to Grundlingh (1987:38) the establishment of the Union Defence Force in 1912 by the white ruling class ‘was in part an effort to ensure their continued dominance and control of the subordinated majority.’ The South African army was conceived therefore, not merely as a safeguard against external military threats, but also as a force to be deployed in the event of black insurrection.
- 4.5.15. A secret Colonial Office report in 1915 by Bonar Law, the Secretary of Colonies stated that ‘no proposal for training Natives upon a large scale is likely to be acceptable to ... the British and Dutch inhabitants of the Union, as the return, after peace, of a large body of trained and disciplined men would create obvious difficulties and might seriously menace the supremacy of whites’ (CO 537/604/46680).
- 4.5.16. The opinion expressed in one South African newspaper, the East Rand Express, on the proposal by the War Office to use Indian troops perhaps best captures the prevailing view of the white minority in South Africa with regard to the use of blacks as combatants: ‘If the Indians are to be used against the Germans they will return to India disabused of the respect they should bear to the white race. The empire must uphold the principle that a coloured man must not raise his hand against a white man if there is to be any law and order in either India, Africa or any part of the Empire where the white man rules over a large concourse of coloured people’ (Willan 1978:63).
- 4.5.17. Despite Bonar Law’s appraisal of the sentiments prevailing in South Africa, the need for troops was such that in 1916 the Colonial Office, at the behest of the War Office made a tentative approach the South African government regarding the possibility of

raising an armed black corps for service in Europe. Predictably the SA Government's reaction was negative: 'under no condition would the government allow a black combatant force to proceed to Europe as this would endanger white South Africa' (Grundlingh 1987:39).

- 4.5.18. That the Colonial and War Offices accepted this reply without demur is perhaps not surprising, for Grundlingh (1987:39) suggests that although the British war apparatus was desperate for troops, there were strong reservations in important quarters in Britain which echoed South African concerns that

'There would be no more peace for South Africa if it were to be put in the power of the natives to say to the Whites there: "You tried to beat your White enemies in Europe without us, but you failed and had to call us in to finish the war". The moral effect throughout the Union of sending native contingents to fight in the battlefields of Europe would be incalculably disastrous to the prestige of the Whites there'.

- 4.5.19. This is a position clearly at odds with the SANNC's view and belief that the British government could be relied on to support black demands for political reform in South Africa.

Black Labour in the African Campaigns

- 4.5.20. Although the obligation to do armed service in the Union Defence Force was limited to white South Africans, Article 7 of the South African Defence Force Act (Act 13 of 1912) specified that blacks could be called upon to enrol as non-combatants. As South Africa embarked on its two campaigns against German interests in Africa, the South African government and public showed little squeamishness at making use of large numbers of black labourers as logistical support for white, and coloured fighting troops.
- 4.5.21. Grundlingh (1987) and Willan (1978) both suggest that the equanimity with which this was accepted can be ascribed to the established precedent that blacks, as unarmed workers, had previously - and without any qualms on the part of the whites - been employed in other South African conflicts, most recently the South African War (1899-1902).
- 4.5.22. The South African authorities seem to have felt that the use of blacks in an inferior military role as non-combatants in colonial territories elsewhere in Africa was ideologically acceptable. The established black/white relationship remained undisturbed and 'there was little chance of South African blacks being exposed to significantly different ideological influences' which could later pose a threat to the white hegemony in South Africa (Grundlingh 1987:40).
- 4.5.23. In addition, Solomon T. (Sol) Plaatje, a black court translator, author and newspaper editor and General Secretary of the SANNC, recognised with great insight that 'it seems to have occurred to the authorities that the best course is to engage the Natives in a capacity in which their participation will demand no recognition' (1916: 268).
- 4.5.24. As a result, when South African invaded German South West Africa in January 1915, the 40,000 strong fighting force was supported by a black labour contingent of

more than 33,000 men. As described at the time by Colonel S.M. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour these labourers were utilised ‘for that class of employment that was exclusively or ordinarily suited to Natives – such as Drivers, [Wagon] Leaders, and general labourers’ (Willan 1978:64). The largest contribution of the black labour contingent though was in the construction of a rail link between South Africa and the German territory, and the repair of railway lines destroyed by the German forces as they retreated.

- 4.5.25. The South West African campaign was an unqualified success. It was the first successful Allied campaign of World War I and the labour contingent played no small role in its success.
- 4.5.26. It was followed by a long and bitter campaign in German East Africa (Burundi, Rwanda and Tanganyika, the mainland portion of Tanzania). A total of over 18,000 black South African labourers again played a vital role, as transport drivers and dock and railway workers, but particularly as porters in areas not accessible by vehicular transport. This work was arduous, and made even more so by tropical diseases like malaria which took a particularly heavy toll on the labour force, to a large extent because of a lack of adequate medical facilities for non-white servicemen (Grundlingh 1987).
- 4.5.27. By April 1917 the death rate amongst the black labour contingent in East Africa was so high that despite protests from the military authorities there, the South African government ceased recruiting labourers for this campaign. How much this decision was motivated by humanitarian concerns is impossible to accurately gauge, although according to Grundlingh (1987), Louis Botha himself seems to have been genuinely concerned at the plight of the black labourers. However, the decision could have been motivated by other considerations, one of which was the need to speed up recruiting for the labour contingent deployed in France, which is discussed below.
- 4.5.28. Despite the vital role they played in both German South West Africa and East Africa, the common experience of the South African black labour contingents was that whilst the white personnel involved in both campaigns were lauded for their efforts, there was no similar praise for the black labourers. Grundlingh (1987:86) describes it thus: ‘the work force was taken for granted unless it caused problems; if it performed satisfactorily it could be ignored’.
- 4.5.29. Whether official or not, the South African government’s *de facto* policy seems to have been to withhold any official acknowledgement that black South Africans were playing a role in the global conflict, as this might raise the sort of expectations that the SANNC was keen to see accrue to them through their participation. As Sol Plaatje (1916:267) summed it up, ‘lest their behaviour merit recognition, their deeds and acts must on account of the colour, not be recorded’.

4.6. THE FOREIGN LABOURS CORPS

- 4.6.1. As already stated, despite the eventual size of the BLC it was clear to the British Government by 1917 that the labour required to meet the demands of the army could not be met from within the United Kingdom. This was due in large part to the unprecedented scale of the conflict and toll in men, on the Western Front in particular.

- 4.6.2. The decision was therefore taken to recruit foreign labour on fixed term contracts from British overseas territories and beyond. In the last two years of the war roughly 300,000 foreign labourers were thus engaged, of whom 195,000 served on the Western Front.
- 4.6.3. Indian labour units had been working in France and Belgium since 1915, but as a result of the new recruitment policy, labour contingents soon began arriving from Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Caribbean. These labour corps were in almost all circumstances employed outside the UK due to trade union pressure not to allow foreign labour into Britain (Grundlingh 1987; Fawcett 2000).
- 4.6.4. By the end of the war there were labour contingents in France enlisted from China, Egypt, Fiji, Malta, Mauritius, the Seychelles, the British West Indies and South Africa. The following sections provide a brief introduction to the foreign labour contingents, and are followed by a more detailed discussion of the South African Native Labour Corps, which identifies some common areas of experience of the foreign labour corps.

The Chinese Labour Corps

- 4.6.5. In late 1916 China was neither part of the British Empire, nor was it yet a belligerent in the global conflict. As a neutral power, Chinese nationals were not allowed to participate in the fighting, and the recruitment of Chinese labour, by both Britain and France, had therefore to be delicately handled.
- 4.6.6. First France, and then Britain were able to circumvent the neutrality issue by only recruiting non-combatant labourers, and by having their employment contracts negotiated and drawn up privately, although with the knowledge of the Chinese government. A confidential telegram to the War Office from the British Military Attaché in Peking dated 3 October 1916 contains a précis of the French contract and conditions, and it seems that the British recruited their Chinese labourers on a similar basis (PRO/WO 106/33). Despite the fact that Chinese nationals were only recruited as labourers, the arrangement met with fierce protests from the German Embassy in Peking (Payne, on <http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>).
- 4.6.7. The recruitment of Chinese labour seems to have been approached as a purely commercial undertaking, with a syndicate of Chinese businessmen agreeing to supply the labourers (PRO/WO 106/33). In contrast, the recruitment of the other foreign labour contingents from various British territories and dominions across the globe was a more political issue.
- 4.6.8. With reference to the legal position of the Chinese labourers, Fawcett (2000) remarks that the basis on which they were employed meant that they were considered as mercenaries. What effect this may have had on official and military attitudes to them is something that seems not yet to have been explored.
- 4.6.9. The first contingent of 1078 Chinese labourers left Weihai Wei, a Chinese port on the Yellow Sea leased by Britain (1898-1930) in January 1917, and arrived in France in April of that year (Fawcett 2000).
- 4.6.10. By the end of 1917 Britain had deployed a Chinese Labour Corps (CLC) of 50,000 men in France, and by the end of the following year this number had risen to 96,000.

In addition, the French employed a further 30,000 (<http://www.1914-1918.net>). The Chinese were to remain in France for far longer than any of the other foreign labour corps. Many recruits only returned to China in 1921, having been engaged in salvage and battlefield clearance, and reconstruction work following the end of the war (Fawcett 2000; Commonwealth War Graves Commission (no date); Payne, on <http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>).

- 4.6.11. The apparent stability of the CLC, in comparison to the other foreign labour corps which were disbanded both before and immediately after the cessation of hostilities for reasons that will be discussed below, is perhaps linked to their non-partisan position: they were not British subjects and so had no political agenda to their participation in the war. Their enlistment was a commercial transaction that was not bound up in the sort of political issues that were a feature of the other foreign labour corps.

The Egyptian Labour Corps

- 4.6.12. Egyptian workers accounted for the next largest portion of Britain's total foreign labour contingent, with nearly 100,000 employed in France, Greece and Mesopotamia (Killingray 1987; <http://www.1914-1918.net>). Beyond these basic statistics very little other information is available concerning the Egyptian Labour Corps (ELC), particularly the contingent that went to France.
- 4.6.13. One thing that does seem to be clear though is that the methods applied in recruiting for the Egyptian Labour Corps were robust. Elgood (1924), Killingray (1987) and Putkowski (1998) all refer to it as a new form of *corvée* – the unpaid labour obligation exacted by a feudal lord - and suggest that it amounted to 'compulsory volunteering' in many instances, with huge labour extractions were placed on the Egyptian *fellahin*. Official figures give a total of 327,000 Egyptians recruited for military labour service throughout the war period, seventy-five percent of the total being forced labour (Killingray 1987).
- 4.6.14. An alternative view is presented by Caddy (1982) who argues that labour recruitment in Egypt was only slightly resisted, and that in fact many *fellahin* sought such employment because it paid relatively well.
- 4.6.15. According to Putkowski (1998), the majority of Egyptians in France were employed as stevedores in seaports, but this project has been able to find little else about their activities or experiences in the available literature. There are numerous references to primary documents related to the ELC in the holdings of the Public Records Office, but an assessment of these fell outside the scope of the current project.

Other Foreign Labour Contingents

- 4.6.16. Over 21,000 Indians, the same number of South Africans and smaller numbers of labourers recruited from Bermuda, the West Indies, the Seychelles, Mauritius and Fiji were employed by the British in France and Flanders (<http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>). In addition, Killingray (1987) mentions that recruits from North and West Africa and Madagascar also went to the Western Front.
- 4.6.17. In other theatres of the war foreign labour contingents employed by the British included Russians, Maltese, Kurds, Arabs, Persians (Iranians), Adeni (Yemenites)

(PRO/WO 95 & 329, PRO), and a Jewish Labour Corps (<http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org>, PRO/WO 329/2359).

- 4.6.18. Having described the broad make up of the foreign labour corps, questions arise as to the wartime experience of these contingents: the conditions under which they served; and the attitudes – official and otherwise – displayed towards these labour corps. The information that has been examined during this study indicates that the experiences of the various foreign labour corps on the Western Front were to a large extent quite similar.
- 4.6.19. The following section will outline in more detail the history of one of these corps. The link between the *Mendi* and the SANLC provides a means, through the SANLC, of examining and identifying some of the issues and common experiences of the foreign labour corps in France between 1916 and 1918.

4.7. THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE LABOUR CORPS

The Beginnings

- 4.7.1. On 11th April 1916 the Lord Buxton, Governor-General of the Union of South Africa sent a telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, reporting that the South African government was willing to consider sending a contingent of coloured, ‘Cape Boys’, for service in special labour battalions in France (PRO/LAB 2/169).
- 4.7.2. Botha’s government had hesitated at sending non-white South Africans to Europe, citing both ‘climatic and moral grounds’ for their reluctance, but had given in to growing pressure from Britain, and a 1,000 strong battalion was enrolled and despatched in the autumn of 1916. This was the start of a process that would ultimately see 21,000 black South Africans serve in the European theatre of war.
- 4.7.3. The South African government appear to have been less reluctant to despatch coloured labourers to Europe than they were to consider the same proposal for the black labour. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact that the Cape Corps, a coloured fighting unit with a history extending back to 1781 (Gleeson 1994), had readily been despatched to fight in East Africa and from there went on to serve in the Middle East (Mohlamme 1995) (see **Plate 2**).
- 4.7.4. Service by black South Africans in Europe, however, was regarded as something qualitatively different to their deployment in German South West Africa and East Africa and there was strong opposition in South Africa to initial requests by the British authorities for such a labour contingent (Willan 1978).
- 4.7.5. According to Grundlingh (1987:41) there was equally no consensus in Britain about the recruitment of black Africans to alleviate the labour shortage. The suggestion that black South African labourers could be employed in Britain ‘was given short shrift [and] objections were raised on the grounds of race, discipline, efficiency and housing. In addition, British trade unions were implacably opposed to the possible displacement of their members by foreign workers’.
- 4.7.6. But as the War Office clamoured for more labour, the Colonial Office reluctantly agreed to pursue the matter of employing black labour in France with South Africa, after obtaining the approval of the French government. One senior Colonial Office

official 'regarded "the whole thing as an experiment and a very doubtful and hazardous one" and "considered it a pity that we could not have managed without employing them [black Africans] in Europe"' (Grundlingh 1987:42).

- 4.7.7. If there was concern in the UK about the scheme, it is not surprising that this was even greater in South Africa. Opposition to the undertaking was voiced by the opposition National and Unionist Parties, and even members of Botha's ruling South African Party objected to the proposals.
- 4.7.8. The core of these objections was the white belief that service overseas would raise black political consciousness. This was expressed by arguing that the scheme might result in blacks being 'socially and morally contaminated' in France. The need for war-time labour was recognised, but the consensus was that 'to send blacks to a European country in the turmoil of war meant that [they] might be exposed to less inhibited contact between blacks and white'. This was therefore an undertaking which for white South Africans posed a considerable threat to the existing ideological order (Grundlingh 1987:42).

Government Agreement and Conditions

- 4.7.9. Despite its own deep-seated reservations, the Botha government nevertheless informed the British in late 1916 that they were willing to raise a black labour contingent, to be known as the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC), for service in France. Because the cost of the 'experiment' was to be borne by the British government, General Botha was able to proceed with the establishment of the SANLC and its recruiting without reference to the South African parliament, effectively by-passing opposition to the scheme (Willan 1978).
- 4.7.10. An explanation for the apparent paradox of the South African government agreeing to a scheme about which there were such deep reservations can perhaps be found in the conditions which it required the War Office to meet. These were: 'that the natives should not only be under strict military discipline during the whole period of their employment in France but should also be housed under the closed compound system' (PRO/CO 323/757).
- 4.7.11. Colonel Pritchard, who was appointed to command the SANLC, was sent to France in October 1916 to meet the Imperial War Council and agree the terms of the SANLC deployment. At the meeting he expanded on the Botha government's conditions for cooperating in the scheme: the members of the SANLC were to be segregated from other labour and military units; they would be administered under military law by South African officers; and they would be employed outside the war zone, where it was easier to maintain segregation (Willan 1978). It was agreed that the most suitable employment 'would be quarrying, road making and forestry' because the 'difficulties of segregation which would arise in towns would be reduced if the Natives were engaged in such work' (PRO/VO 107/37).
- 4.7.12. These conditions were an attempt by the South African authorities to insulate the members of the SANLC from 'contamination' which contact with 'the social conditions of Europe' would - it was widely believed in South Africa - be the inevitable result of sending the SANLC to France (Willan 1978:71). These arguments are couched in a manner which suggests that the welfare of the black members of the Corps was the primary concern. The truth is that white South

Africans wanted to keep any blacks sent to France cocooned from any possible outside influences that might make them question their subservient social, political and labour position at home. How these conditions were translated into reality in France, and how they also seem to have come to be applied to other foreign labour contingents, will be explored below.

- 4.7.13. Willan (1978:71) suggests that once the difficult decision had been taken to allow the SANLC to be formed some white South Africans – some missionaries, officials of the Native Affairs Department, and ‘others with an interest in the “native problem”’ - realised that the scheme ‘provided an ideal opportunity for testing – in what would, it was hoped, be carefully controlled conditions – the practicability and effects of the implementation of certain segregatory devices of social control’. There appears to have been a belief that the results of the exercise could be utilized in South Africa after the war, and it has been suggested that General Botha’s apparent personal enthusiasm for the formation of the SANLC may have owed something to the potential future uses the scheme could be put to in South Africa (Willan 1978).

Recruiting

- 4.7.14. Recruiting for the SANLC commenced in September 1916 with an initial target of raising five battalions of 2,000 men, each with about 60 white South African officers and NCOs.
- 4.7.15. Appeals for volunteers were made through local Native Commissioners and magistrates, black newspapers, and at special recruiting meetings. Some of these were addressed by the Prime Minister and by the Governor-General, Lord Buxton, pointing to the importance in which the success of this scheme seems to have been viewed by the authorities.
- 4.7.16. The educated black elite also lent their support to the recruiting drive, and leading members of the SANNC, like Sol Plaatje and the President of the Congress, John L Dube became involved in the campaign (Willan 1978; Grundlingh 1987). A propaganda pamphlet which painted the SANLC in glowing terms was published by a flamboyant, black, former-newspaper editor from the Cape rejoicing under the unusual name of F.Z.S. Peregrino, who seems to have enlisted in the corps (Peregrino 1917).
- 4.7.17. To a large extent the support of the black elite can probably be best viewed as politically motivated, but a considerable number of well-educated men actually enlisted with the contingent, supporting the idea through action and not just rhetoric. These included clergymen, like the Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha (of whom more later), teachers, translators, clerks, businessmen and other black professionals. There were also a number of members of various black royal houses: Henry Bokleni and Dokoda Richard Ndamase from the Pondo royal houses; Chief Bota and a grandson of King Moshoeshe from Basutoland (Lesotho); Chief Mamabola from the Transvaal; a nephew of King Cetshwayo and a grandson of King Dinuzulu from Zululand, to name but a few (Clothier 1987).
- 4.7.18. The bulk of SANLC recruits, however, were poor, uneducated, and usually from rural areas, many of whom enlisted in desperation and simply because the contingent offered an opportunity to earn a living as the reality of the Natives Land Act and other sorts of discrimination began to be increasingly felt by South Africa’s black

majority. This seems to have been particularly the case in the (former) Transvaal province, where a severe drought meant that the SANLC offered an alternative to possible starvation. As a result, this area of the country eventually provided the vast majority of recruits for the SANLC (Grundlingh 1987).

- 4.7.19. Interestingly, the catchment area for recruiting extended beyond the borders of the Union, and large numbers of men were recruited from the neighbouring British Protectorates of Basutholand (Lesotho), Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Swaziland. A short article in the Botswana Daily News commemorating the role of Batswana men in both World Wars in fact refers to the 5th Battalion of the SANLC as the 'Protectorates Battalion' (<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20020705>). Medal roles for Swazi, Sotho and Batswana members of the SANLC examined at the Public Records Office show that more than 2,000 non-South Africans served in the contingent, making up nearly 10% of its final total strength of 21,000 (PRO/WO 329/2359; 329/2368; 329/2372).
- 4.7.20. There is a good deal of evidence presented by both Willan (1978) and Grundlingh (1987) to suggest that recruiting the required numbers of men was not easy, and that in many areas of the country the response to the call for men was poor. They suggest that various forms of coercion became widespread. Local chiefs, for example, were often pressured by recruiters and government officials to provide recruits from their communities. There also seems to have developed an unofficial, although tacitly sanctioned system of paid incentives for recruiting agents, which is likely to have had the effect of promoting more ruthless recruiting practices. The political, social and economic context within which the drive to recruit men for the SANLC took place, and the ramifications of enlistment for the men and their families and communities – perhaps primarily in social and economic terms – is an area which further research is certainly possible.

Reasons for Enlisting

- 4.7.21. The reasons for why men enlisted are described in some detail in the available sources (Willan 1978; Grundlingh 1987). They range from economic necessity, to the desire for self-improvement and to see something of the world (which would have worried the authorities), to patriotism. Again, the full range of reasons is impossible to examine in more detail within the context of this study. By the same token there are many reasons why recruiting was slow, and many black South Africans were not interested in joining the corps.
- 4.7.22. The recruiting of men for the SANLC is clearly a far larger story than is possible to present here, bound up as it is in the complex political, economic and social milieu of early 20th century South Africa. A good deal of work on the topic has been done by both Willan (1978) and Grundlingh (1987), but there is the potential for a lot more research to be done before the subject can be judged to have received the attention it deserves.
- 4.7.23. Likewise, although some information has been traced in the sources used above, regarding the recruiting of other foreign labour corps, this remains largely unstudied. It can be expected that political and economic issues would have influenced the recruitment of the ELC. Like black South Africans the Egyptian *fellahin* were a politically and economically marginalized group in a country under the sway of a colonial power and a comparison of the South African and Egyptian experiences

would be potentially very interesting. In contrast, the issues around the recruiting of the Chinese Labour Corps are perhaps less complicated. However, just how the system of recruiting worked, how free it was, and what the expectations were of those that enlisted are all issues that could usefully be explored in relation to the CLC too.

- 4.7.24. Given the current limited extent of research related to the recruitment of the foreign labour corps as a whole, there is thus good reason to suggest that there is enormous potential for a good deal of further historical research, both at the level of the individual corps, and on a comparative level, between the corps.
- 4.7.25. Like the black South Africans who supported the formation of the SANLC on political grounds in the hope that this would translate into political change after the war, other British subjects around the world seem also to have viewed their participation in similar terms. An example of this is the support by West Indian middle-class blacks for the war effort. Although in this instance it was support for the creation of a West Indian regiment, rather than a labour corps, Howe (<http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>) suggests that in their protestations of patriotism there is 'a clear link between support for the war effort and the grant of the [political] reforms they desired'.
- 4.7.26. Lastly, the British side of the policy of recruiting foreign labour seems also to have been a neglected area of research. It is clear that there was opposition, in a range of quarters, from government to labour unions, to the idea of using foreign labour within the UK itself. However, the idea of deploying such non-European labourers across the Channel in someone else's backyard was one which appears not to have raised much, if any opposition. What this says about British attitudes to its colonial subjects and the social and political milieu within which the foreign labour corps was conceived and born would seem to be a topic certainly worth investigating. By way of example, the language of primary documents from the time, and contemporary secondary sources relating to the foreign labour corps is very revealing for its almost casual racism and paternalism and the attitudes and world view these suggest.

4.8. THE COMMON EXPERIENCE OF THE FOREIGN LABOUR CORPS IN EUROPE

- 4.8.1. By January 1917 the initial quota of 10,000 promised by the South African government had been recruited and despatched by sea to France. During the next 18 months, another 11,000 black South Africans would make the same trip. At the same time, other foreign labour corps were pouring into France from across the world, until they numbered 195,000 by November 1918.
- 4.8.2. Once there, the available documents seem to suggest that despite their diverse origins, the experiences of the foreign labour corps on the Western Front were similar, if not identical, and that in many respects they were marked by various forms of overt and covert discrimination.

Terms of Employment

- 4.8.3. From the available evidence, the conditions under which the foreign labour corps were employed seem to have been fairly standard. The recruits were hired on fixed terms contracts – a year in the case of the South Africans and three or five years in

the case of the Chinese (Clothier 1987; Fawcett 2000). Conditions were onerous with the labourers expected to work 10 hours a day, and in the case of the Chinese contingent, 7 days a week (PRO/WO 106/33).

- 4.8.4. They received a daily wage, the greatest part of which was automatically remitted to their families every month, or deferred, to be paid out on completion of their contracts. The scale of pay for the SANLC was somewhat higher than the going rate for labourers in South Africa (Clothier 1987), and as mentioned already, Caddy (1982) has suggested that many *fellahin* sought such employment in the ELC because it paid relatively well.
- 4.8.5. The foreign labour corps were provided with clothing, a food ration and were accommodated in specially constructed camps. However, the uniforms they were issued, problems associated with their rations and the closed compounds in which they were housed proved to be a source of immediate and ongoing dissatisfaction, unhappiness and unrest within the SANLC, and there are suggestions that similar issues marked the employment of both the Chinese and Egyptians in France (Grundlingh 1987; Putkowski 1998; Fawcett 2000). Contradictory interpretations of the terms of the employment contracts by South African and Egyptian labourers on the one hand, and the military authorities managing them on the other, were also to prove to be a serious source of friction, and in more than one instance resulted in bloodshed and death (Willan 1978; Putkowski 1998).
- 4.8.6. Perhaps the common denominator that had the most marked impact on the wartime experience of all the foreign labour contingents was that these units were attested under military law. The members of the foreign labour corps were recruited and enlisted as labourers, and not as soldiers. They were, nevertheless managed in terms of and subject to military discipline, including field punishments and courts martial, conviction at which could carry the death penalty (Willan 1978; Fawcett 2000). The use of beating and the lash seem also to have been common. The often heavy-handed manner in which the military authorities dealt with what were legitimate labour disputes with the foreign labourers will be touched on later in this report. However, these issues serve to highlight the problems of the rather peculiar legal relationship the foreign labour corps had with the British authorities.

Areas of Deployment

- 4.8.7. Another common feature of the foreign labour corps experience was that their terms of employment stipulated that they were to be employed outside the combat zone and in areas behind the front lines. An exception to this was some of the Indian labour units who were involved in building fortifications and transporting munitions closer to the front (<http://www.westernfront.co.uk>). This is also in contrast to the British labour companies and units which performed their duties in forward areas, often coming under intense enemy fire.
- 4.8.8. The deployment of the foreign labourers in the rear however, did not exempt them from attack, and Willan (1978), Clothier (1987), Grundlingh (1987), Putkowski (1998) and Fawcett (2000) all cite instances of South African, Chinese and Egyptian labour units suffering shelling, or bombing during air raids. To a large extent this may have been the natural result of the deployment of many of the units at large ports, which were the targets of German artillery and aircraft. However, there may

have been reasons for these attacks, as is suggested by the experiences of a South African units stationed near Dieppe in 1917.

- 4.8.9. Willan (1978:73) recounts the description by a SANLC veteran of an attack on his unit's camp by German aircraft which dropped bombs and propaganda leaflets addressed to the black labourers. The pamphlets read 'In this war I hate black people the most. I do not know what they want in this European war. Where I find them, I will smash them'. There is no way of telling at present whether this was an isolated occurrence, or part of a wider German campaign, and whether it was something that foreign labour units other than the South Africans experienced. The apparent use of pre-prepared leaflets suggests it may have been part of a wider propaganda campaign, and it would be surprising if the Chinese labour contingent were not targeted, given the obvious German unhappiness at their involvement in the conflict. The labour corps may have been targeted for specific propaganda and other attacks because of the vital role they were perceived by the Germans as playing in the Allied war effort. Further research in the UK and in Germany may throw some light on this intriguing occurrence.

Segregation and the Closed Compound System

- 4.8.10. On an operational level the deployment of the foreign labour corps behind the lines (with the noted exception of the Indian units referred to above) can be understood in terms of the location of the work they were employed to carry out. However, there were other reasons for employing foreign labourers behind the front and these were to a large degree based on the requirement to keep them segregated from other units.
- 4.8.11. It has already been mentioned that one of the key conditions under which the South African authorities agreed to supply a labour contingent in France was that they were to be kept segregated (PRO/CO 323/757). This involved segregating the labourers from military canteens, nearby towns and villages, and from the civilian population in general, but particularly from white women. When not at work the SANLC labourers were confined to their camps, which were secure, closed compounds to and from which access was carefully controlled, and which were physically isolated from their surroundings (Grundlingh 1987).
- 4.8.12. The closed compound system was one with which the South African government in 1917 was very familiar, and it is hardly surprising that it was transplanted to France along with the South African labour contingent. However, what this study has shown is that at very least the Chinese and Egyptian Labour Corps, and in all likelihood some or all of the other foreign labour corps, were also intentionally segregated and housed in identical camps to the black South Africans (Putkowski 1998). This new evidence of a shared attitude to foreign labour by the South African and British authorities is a notable result of this research, and one which needs to be explored further.
- 4.8.13. The closed compound system was first introduced on the diamond mines in Kimberley in South Africa in 1885, fifteen years after diamonds were first mined there. They were soon taken up by mine owners on the Rand gold mines. Open labour compounds had been used for some years, and were initially held up to be models of social welfare and in the best interests of the labourers. These open compounds provided barrack-type accommodation, and although enclosed by corrugated iron fences with guarded gates to regulate the movement of black

workers, the labourers were largely free to move in and out of the compounds and into the neighbouring locations and townships (Turrell 1984).

- 4.8.14. Closed compounds were something altogether different and as ‘self-contained institutions’ they increasingly bore the marks of a brutal model of labour control. In construction they resembled the earlier open compounds, except that many had the addition of a mesh roof over the entire compound, and workers moved between the compound and the mine through enclosed subways. The key difference to the open compounds however, was that the compound gate no longer stood open. Once a worker entered such a compound he found himself isolated from the outside world, and did not leave the compound, except in the case of severe illness or death, until the expiry of his contract (Turrell 1984).
- 4.8.15. Within the context of late 19th and early 20th century South Africa these compounds played an increasingly important role as a means of labour control as the country developed its mining and heavy industry sectors. Charles van Onselen (1977) described the closed compound thus: ‘The compounds served to isolate, regiment and exploit the ... black working class ... It was the compound acting as the college of colonialism, that did much to rob Africans of their dignity and help mould servile black populations’. The system allowed employers to maintain and control a pool of experienced labour, while at the same time preventing - or limiting the development of - an organised working class. The system was applied to the SANLC for many of the same reasons for which it was used in South Africa.
- 4.8.16. Grundlingh (1987:106) suggests that ‘of all the labour contingents in France ... the SANLC was the only one to be housed in compounds [and that] only the German prisoners-of-war ... were likewise confined’ However, there is strong evidence to suggest that the system was applied to the other foreign labour corps.
- 4.8.17. In fact the comparison of the foreign labour corps camps with prison camps is not far fetched. Lieutenant-Colonel Godley, second in command of the SANLC is recorded in December 1917 as having stated that ‘the conditions of our men in France as regards freedom of movement are similar to those applying to prisoners-of-war, and the camps occupied by our men and the prisoners-of-war are identical in every respect’. Apparently the only difference was that the ‘locality of those occupied by the prisoners are in the majority of cases more favourably situated’ (Grundlingh 1987:106).
- 4.8.18. According to Julian Putkowski (pers. comm.) the layout and construction of the foreign labour compounds differed in only minor details from the layout and construction of British military prisons on the Western Front; camps such as the No.1 Military Prison, Blargies North near Abancourt. He has made this assessment on the basis of descriptions of the labour corps compounds and a generic set of plans for the military prisons he has located.
- 4.8.19. According to him, during the first 18 months of the war, no single or common blueprint existed for British prison camps in France. But as large numbers of conscripted troops and the first groups of non-white labour began to arrive, the need arose for clear plans and instructions for the design and construction of such camps. The success of the design of a prison camp built near Rouen to accommodate 600

British military prisoners led to the layout of this camp being chosen by the Director of Military Prisons as the type plan for future prison camps.

- 4.8.20. The similarity between the form of the British military prisons and the foreign labour corps compounds should perhaps not be surprising. It must be remembered that the British authorities had been in discussions with the South African government since mid-1916 about the requirements for the accommodation for the SANLC and had probably been provided with detailed specifications for the camps. In fact, by late 1916 the Directorate of Labour had produced an *Appendix to Notes for Officer of Labour Companies (South African Native Labour)* (PRO/WO 107/37). They must have been aware of what an exceptionally well-refined system of control the closed compound system of the South African mines represented, and based on this it doesn't seem unreasonable to suggest that the correspondence between the design of the labour corps compounds and the prison camps was no accident.
- 4.8.21. The *Appendix* laid out rules for the construction of the compounds, which were to be 'surrounded by an unclimbable fence or wall, in which all openings should be guarded'. Fences were to be six feet high and topped with barbed wire 'to prevent natives from climbing over'. If considered necessary a corrugated iron screen could also be added around part or all of the compound, something generally used in more populated areas (PRO/WO 107/37).
- 4.8.22. There were also strict rules for the SANLC about entering and leaving the camp, and it is likely that similar strictures were placed on other large foreign labour contingents too. No black labourer was allowed outside the camp unless accompanied by a white officer or NCO. They were not allowed into any establishment that served liquor, they could not enter any shop unless accompanied by a white escort and they were not allowed to enter or be entertained in local houses. The *Appendix* also stressed that 'care should be taken to prevent unauthorised persons from entering the Camp and conversing with Natives and especially to prevent all familiarity between Europeans and Natives, as this is subversive to discipline and calculated to impair their efficiency as working units' (PRO/WO 107/37).

Labour Unrest

- 4.8.23. These camps and the restrictions placed on the members of the SANLC left a deep impression: 'The compounds ... cannot be forgotten as they were like prisons' were the words of one SANLC veteran (Grundlingh 1987: 112). They were blatantly discriminatory, and designed to denigrate those who were forced to occupy them. Yet philanthropic bodies like the Aborigines Protection Society in London accepted and approved of the compound system as a necessary measure for the 'welfare' of Africans in a foreign environment. Without questioning the assumptions underlying the compound system, members of the Society who visited the camps 'reported in the best traditions of paternalism that they were impressed by the way in which Africans were cared for' (Grundlingh 1987: 107).
- 4.8.24. The official descriptions of the camps are painted in glowing terms and give the impression of a happy and contented labour force. But within a very short space after arriving in France the SANLC, CLC and ELC all experienced labour unrest and strikes.

- 4.8.25. Not surprisingly, the main thrust of SANLC resistance to the conditions in France was directed at the closed compound system, although there was also dissatisfaction with clothing, food and other contract terms. It seems that the same issues were also the reason for and focus of resistance and defiance by the other labour corps.
- 4.8.26. Putkowski (1998) describes a number of labour disputes and strikes by the various labour corps, which presents a starkly contrasting picture to the official version of conditions within the closed compounds. During 1917 and 1918 there was ongoing and persistent labour unrest in many camps, which in a number of cases resulted in the death of some of those involved, usually as a result of military heavy-handedness in dealing with what were largely genuine grievances by the labourers.
- 4.8.27. For example, Egyptian workers at a camp in Marseilles were involved in a spontaneous revolt over repatriation at the expiry of their contracts. The uprising was brutally suppressed, and as a result one of the labourers was court martialled and executed. There were similar incidents at a number of Chinese camps, in some cases resulting in the death of labourers (Putkowski 1998). In July 1917 four members of the SANLC were killed and 11 wounded when British troops opened fire on them during a confrontation over the arrest of a SANLC member who refused to obey an order to wash his clothes only within the compound (Grundlingh 1987). This incident was never reported in South Africa.
- 4.8.28. These incidents could have been dealt with as labour issues, but they were instead dealt with in terms of military law, and those involved were accused of mutiny. This is perhaps not surprising given the context of the war. However, it does seem from reports and descriptions of the incidents that there was more than a hint of racism and intolerance involved in the way they were dealt with, which is perhaps indicative of the prevailing attitudes to non-Europeans.
- 4.8.29. During the course of 1917 and 1918 resistance against the compound system within the SANLC increased and incidents of ‘unruly behaviour’ became so frequent that the authorities became very concerned. Lt.-Col. Godley admitted in a confidential letter in late 1917 that ‘the temper of a large proportion of the men is distinctly nasty’ and that there was a ‘constant undercurrent of feeling amongst the Natives that they of all the King’s soldiers are singled out for differential treatment’. It was becoming increasingly difficult for the authorities to maintain the compound system which was on the verge of collapse in the face of persistent and effective black resistance (Grundlingh 1987:113).
- 4.8.30. Godley wrote at the time that ‘it is unfair to ask, or even allow men to bind themselves down indefinitely under conditions which are unique, as all other units in France, both white and black are free to move about’ (Grundlingh 1987:113). In his opinion serious consideration needed to be given to abandoning the closed compound system.
- 4.8.31. In early 1918 the South African government, which was under increasing political pressure seems to have taken fright at the worsening situation and disbanded the contingent and shipped the SANLC back to South Africa.
- 4.8.32. From this brief description of some of the issues related to the foreign labour corps it should be clear that this is an area of immense potential – for research, for

acknowledgement, for recognition, and for reconciliation. It is quite clear that there is far more to the story of the foreign labour corps than is acknowledged by the single lines they warrant in the few historical sources that do mention them. It is also clear that there is a glaring omission in official histories and other literature relating to World War I. Lastly, the experience of the foreign labour corps poses some potentially uncomfortable questions about the true nature of Imperial and colonial attitudes and prejudices with regard to non-Europeans during the early 20th century.

4.9. THE *MENDI* AS AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

- 4.9.1. It is clear from the preceding sections that the wreck of the *Mendi* provides an exciting point of departure for interrogating a little known and ignored aspect of World War I history. However, while this study has so far highlighted the potential of the historical aspects of the *Mendi* and its wider context, another key aspect of the work has been to consider what is known about the archaeological site which is the wreck itself.

Site Location

- 4.9.2. The wreck of the *Mendi* lies roughly 11 nautical miles south west of St Catherine's Point, Isle of Wight, in 35-40m of water (see **Figure 2**).
- 4.9.3. The position for the wreck given by UKHO is:

Lat.	Long.
50° 27.467' N	01° 19.900' W
WGS 84	

- 4.9.4.

Hydrodynamic Environment

- 4.9.5. Insufficient data is available to comment on the site specifically. It appears though that the maximum speed of tidal streams in the area may exceed 1.5 metres per second at mean spring tide (Hamblin et al. 1992). On the flood the tidal stream travels across the site in an easterly direction, and westwards on the ebb.
- 4.9.6. Net sand transport direction in the vicinity of the site is eastwards. A bed-load parting zone runs across the English Channel west of the site (Hamblin et al. 1992). The net effect of the ebb and flood of tidal currents in this zone is to remove material up to medium-grained sand size.

Geological Environment

- 4.9.7. Sea-bed sediments in the area are mapped by BGS as being predominantly gravel, possibly of limited thickness (perhaps 0.5 meters or less) and abundant gravel furrows (BGS 1989; Hamblin et al. 1992). Solid geology is Upper Cretaceous chalks (BGS 1995).
- 4.9.8. Diver observations of the seabed correspond closely with this description. The seabed is described as being hard and flat, with a layer of coarse gravel resting on chalk bedrock (Dave Wendes, pers. comm.).

Site Ecology

- 4.9.9. Insufficient data is available to comment on the ecological status of the site. However previous experience of similar wrecks suggests that the site is likely to constitute an ‘oasis’ habitat, with a rich variety of marine flora and fauna typical of the 30+m depth range.
- 4.9.10. **Appendix IX** is a non-exhaustive list of species that may be expected on the site. Analysis of the limited number of photographs of the wreck available suggest that the exposed structure of the vessel is covered with various types of algae, tunicates, bryozoans and porifera, together with a form of barnacle.

Site Formation

- 4.9.11. As noted above, the evidence given to the enquiry suggests that the ship righted itself before going down by the head (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 4). Yardley recalled that ‘She sank forward first with a heavy list to starboard...except that when the ship finally sank she went over on the port side’. (Clothier 1987: 62)
- 4.9.12. Jacob Koos Matli stated that the ship “blew three times” as it finally sank (Clothier, 1987, 63). This suggests that there may have been three explosions, possibly connected with water entering the boilers, although it may also have been from large volumes of air escaping as the vessel rolled.
- 4.9.13. The wreck is known to have been partially intact along its full length when dived by Martin Woodward in 1974. This indicates that the ship did not break up as it sank from the surface to the seabed, and this and the limited water depth (see below) suggests that the horizontal distance between where it sank and where it settled on the seabed is not great. The weight of the vessel probably precludes any significant movement once it impacted the seabed.
- 4.9.14. Diver descriptions (see below) suggest that the *Mendi* settled at an angle to starboard on a flat or fairly flat seabed. Two areas of debris to the north identified by Gardline in 2002 (see below) may be associated with the wreck.

Subsequent Site Formation Processes: 1917-1945

- 4.9.15. The history of the site from 1917 until 1945 is unknown. The wreck does not appear to have been charted by the UKHO during this period. Given the limited available data, it is possible to say very little without straying into speculation.
- 4.9.16. Corrosion of metal surfaces is likely to have commenced almost immediately and will undoubtedly have led to some structural collapse during this period. Exposed or shallow buried wooden or other organic materials, including human remains, will have deteriorated rapidly, but material buried by structural collapse or subsequent sedimentation is likely to have achieved equilibrium and been preserved. The wreck is likely to have been impacted by currents and suspended particles carried by those currents, but the extent of this impact is unknown. Impacts from fishing activities may also have occurred.
- 4.9.17. In addition the wreck is likely to have been colonised rapidly and thoroughly by types of marine flora and fauna common to the inshore and continental shelf waters of the UK and become a rich ecosystem.

4.9.18. The wreck appears to have been located during a hydrographic (sonar) survey, probably carried out by the Royal Navy, in 1945 (UKHO, 18958, H0121/45 and AUBD 304/56). It was not however recognised as the *Mendi* and was instead identified as being a probable lighter, possibly because it was erroneously measured as being only 100 feet long. It is also conceivable that the wreck may have been fully or partially buried during part of this period and that this may have been a factor in its early misidentification. When charted in 1945 the small size of the anomaly is perhaps more likely the result of the limited resolution and accuracy of the survey equipment available at the time.

Subsequent Site Formation Processes: 1945-2007

- 4.9.19. In 1953 the *Mendi* was charted as a non-dangerous wreck, with a position given as approximate (UKHO, 18958). Two years later, in 1955, it was resurveyed and an improved DECCA position obtained. Least depth was given as being 11 metres in a general depth of 19 metres, which is at odds with the actual general depth of 35-40m.
- 4.9.20. In 1974 the charted position was investigated by Martin Woodward. Mr Woodward was one of the first recreational divers using scuba equipment to investigate wrecks off the south coast of the Isle of Wight. He found that the wreck, considered likely to be a lighter, was in fact a large steel steam ship. He recovered several artefacts from the site including, crucially, a small white ceramic bowl that was transfer printed with the name 'British & African Steam Navigation Company' (see **Plate 3**). Given that the wreck he was investigating was a steamer and of the correct approximate length, and given that the *Mendi* appears to be the only B&ASNC ship lost in the area, Mr Woodward concluded that the wreck was that of the *Mendi* (Martin Woodward, pers. comm.). This conclusion appears to be reasonable and WA are not aware of any evidence to contradict it.
- 4.9.21. Mr Woodward recalls from memory that the vessel was lying upright. He was able to identify the bow and stern. He observed the vessel to be laid over on its starboard side. The hull was partially intact and it survived on the port side to a height of several metres (Martin Woodward, pers. comm.). The starboard side of the hull was level with the seabed for most of the wreck's length. The bow was upstanding more than the stern. Two pairs of cylindrical tube boilers were observed. Aft of these was the engine, which Mr Woodward observed to be laid over or partially inverted. The boilers and engine were in the correct approximate position within the wreck (Martin Woodward, pers. comm.) (**Figure 3**).
- 4.9.22. Mr Woodward has stressed to WA that the above description should be regarded with caution. He last dived the site in 1984 and due to work commitments abroad had not yet had the opportunity to review the notes on the site that he compiled in his dive logs at the time.
- 4.9.23. Mr Woodward recovered a number of artefacts from the site in addition to the bowl, including a bridge telegraph marked with the name 'Harrison Engine Company' (**Plate 4**). A square saloon window was also recovered (**Plate 5**). Other finds salvaged by Mr Woodward are described below. He observed no human remains (Martin Woodward, pers. comm.).
- 4.9.24. Since his identification of the site it has been included in various wreck catalogues and dive guides and is known to have been dived by recreational scuba divers. The

depth of the site and its distance from shore appear to be restricting factors in the regularity of these visits.

- 4.9.25. Kendall McDonald authored an article on the wreck entitled 'The 20-Minute Tragedy' in *Diver* magazine (date unknown). The condition of the wreck was described as follows:

She lies north-east to south-west, with her bow still pointing towards France. The wreck is on a hard sand seabed and is over 12m proud. She is breaking up and much of her decking has collapsed, leaving her boiler up above the main bulk of the wreckage. In the main tangle there are many cases of shells for her gun and other cases of rifle ammunition. Most of her portholes are still firmly attached to the plating and are of a distinctive square shape.

This description may describe the condition of the wreck in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

- 4.9.26. In 2001 Pritchard and McDonald (2001: 163) reported that the condition of the site was as follows, although the date of their information is not given:

Today the wreck lies in a north-east to south-west direction and is over 12m proud. She is breaking up. Much of the decking has collapsed and this leaves the large boiler standing above the main wreckage, in which there are many cases of shells and rifle ammunition. Distinctive square portholes can be seen.

- 4.9.27. In 2002 the wreck was surveyed by Gardline and an improved DGPS position obtained. Least depth was given as 28.9 metres in a general depth of 36 metres, indicating that having been on the seabed for 85 years, the wreck was still upstanding by as much as seven metres. The wreck was recorded as being partially intact and on its side with two small areas of debris to the north. It was described as being a poor magnetic anomaly. Anomaly dimensions were 121 meters long by 31 meters wide. (UKHO, 18958, HI 962).

- 4.9.28. In 2003 the wreck was reported by Gardline as having been swept clear at 29.7 metres depth (UKHO, 18958, HI 962). The wire sweep fouled at 30.0 metres. No scour was reported in 2002, which suggests that no substantial part of the wreck was upstanding from the seabed by much more than six metres. WA has been unable to obtain the original survey data to date.

- 4.9.29. Steven Winstanley states by e-mail that he dived the site in 38m+ depth about three years ago (2003/4). He has given the following description from memory:

She is a large wreck and I went from the prop, along the starboard side (she is to starboard), up onto the top of the superstructure...I did not get to the bow. I remember that she does stand proud of the seabed, there is quite a bit of the side still intact. On top of the vessel, she is quite flat as though she had been cabled; the superstructure is relatively non-existent. There was more than the average amount of

spidge, although nothing of “value”. I remember pieces of blue/white porcelain plate and bits of brass in the superstructure.

- 4.9.30. The e-mail account given by another Steve of ‘Dive Connection, Portsmouth’(surname not given) about a dive in 2005 suggests that significant deterioration in the wreck may have occurred between 2003/4 and 2005:

The wreck is somewhat scattered and there are mostly plates rather than upright structure. The boiler area is still intact as is a portion of the bow.

- 4.9.31. However Pete Street, a charter boat operator, states by e-mail that when he last visited the site in 2005:

Feedback from the sonar image (echo sounder?) and divers’ comments suggest she is still standing some 12 metres or more from the sea bed and is a very large wreck.

- 4.9.32. GrownUpSAC, a branch of the University of Portsmouth Sub-Aqua Club, dived the site in July 2005. Photographs of the site appear on their website and are credited to Keith Rimes (<http://www.tnt.co.uk/diving/>). These show the following features and suggest a considerable state of collapse:

- A possible prop (the picture is unscaled), missing at least one blade and possibly still *in situ* (**Plate 6**). This interpretation is speculative as Mr Rimes cannot recall where exactly he was on the site when he took the photograph (Keith Rimes, pers. comm.);
- A scuttle and shell plating (**Plate 7**);
- Various flanged and bracketed pipes, possibly associated with the boilers or engine room (**Plate 8**);
- A possible powered windlass (**Plate 9**);
- Two bits and possible deck plating (**Plate 10**);
- Collapsed wreck structure;
- Pipe with chain, probably chain cable and navel pipe (**Plate 11**)

- 4.9.33. The *Mendi* archive held by Mr James Cowden contains an unsigned description of the wreck entitled ‘Recent Diving Activities on the ss *Mendi*’. This appears to have been written for the magazine of the Elders of Elders. It is undated but was probably written in the late 1980s or early 1990s. It describes the wreck as lying on a gravel/sand seabed and as being mainly broken up. The most distinguishable parts of the wreck are described as being the bow and stern and the boilers.

- 4.9.34. The stern is described as standing over eight metres high. Forward of this the wreck is described as *becoming more flattened until there is no discernable edge to the wreckage and the remains trail off onto/into the seabed*, with part of the propeller shaft visible.

- 4.9.35. The bow is described as the most intact portion of the wreck and as being *canted over to starboard*. The foremast is described as being *largely intact*. Four inch shell cases are described as being found in this part of the wreck.
- 4.9.36. The remains of the galley were visible *in another part of the wreck*. Two large stacks of soup bowls with B&ASNC and African Steam Navigation Company (ASNC) crests were observed, together with plain white china. The author stated that *items of silver tableware (cutlery, dishes, etc.) have been recovered*. A row of six or seven toilet bowls could be seen in one part of the wreck, still attached to decking.
- 4.9.37. Dave Wendes has visited the site on a number of occasions and has written an account of it in a guide to the area's wrecks (Wendes, 2006). His account of the state of the wreck is the most detailed received by WA to date (Dave Wendes, letter, January 2007) and was accompanied by a rough sketch of the site which was used in conjunction with the original plans and the various divers' descriptions above to produce **Figure 3**.
- 4.9.38. Mr Wendes states that the wreck lies approx east/west, bows to the west (and) stands 7-8 metres off seabed amidships in 40 metres on [high water]. He describes the wreck as lying half over on its starboard side. He describes the rudder and screw as being in situ. Nearby was the stern steering hub, fixed. The bow was originally upright but is described as now lying on its starboard side. Mr Wendes describes seeing four boilers and the engine largely inverted, together with pumps/valves/copper pipe roughly amidships. Between the boilers and the bow is a break in the hull, with 'frames and girders' visible at this point, together with a spread of broken crockery and cutlery. On the starboard side and roughly amidships, an area of collapsed hull plates, girders, frames is described. At the stern of the ship Mr Wendes describes seeing the stern mounted gun on its teak mounting platform on end.

Artefacts from the Site

- 4.9.39. A number of finds were recovered from the site by Martin Woodward between 1974 and 1984. These included a silver salver and a small ceramic dish, both with the logo of the B&ASNC, which enabled Mr Woodward to positively identify the site as that of the wreck of the *Mendi*. Also recovered was a bridge telegraph made by Chadburns of Liverpool, an unusually early survival of a famous make (see **Appendix III**).
- 4.9.40. A number of finds recovered by other parties have been loaned or donated to Mr Woodward's collection which is housed at the Arreton Shipwreck Museum. These include two sliding windows and a silver salver stamped with the logo of B&ASNC. The circumstances of their recovery are not known.
- 4.9.41. According to Admiral Söderland (South African Navy (retired)) (pers. comm.) the bell of the *Mendi* is reported to be in a pub somewhere on the south coast.
- 4.9.42. The Receiver of Wreck has been notified about the recovery of 14 artefacts or artefact groups from the site. These include the salvers, scuttles, sliding window with winding gear, ammunition and Indian nickel coins (**Appendix III**). None of the finds recovered from the site appear to have been fully recorded.

- 4.9.43. Brian Overton (via e-mail) states that the wreck has earned the nickname ‘Sainsbury’s’ in the recreational diving community because some divers believed that it was *easy to fill your bags [with artefacts]*. Mr Overton has not dived the site himself. This comment appears to represent a general perception of how the site has been treated since its discovery. It is therefore likely that the artefacts reported to the Receiver represent only a small proportion of those salvaged from the site by an unknown number of divers. These unreported finds appear to be unrecorded and are almost certainly highly dispersed.
- 4.9.44. Mr Overton’s comments appear to be confirmed by Mr Wendes. He states that the wreck was heavily dived in the early 1990s by dive boats from much of the south coast.

The Future of the Site

- 4.9.45. The available data does not suggest a particularly hostile environment. There is little evidence of scour or other signs of significant erosion.
- 4.9.46. The site will continue to deteriorate through gradual corrosion and erosion. Metal ship structure that is currently upstanding is likely to collapse. Insufficient data is currently available for the timescale, but it would be surprising if significant deterioration does not occur within the next five to ten years, with complete collapse within 20-50 years.
- 4.9.47. Any organic material that is currently exposed is unlikely to have been exposed for long and is likely to suffer catastrophic levels of deterioration in the short and medium terms.
- 4.9.48. Wreck material that is buried in a stable anaerobic environment is likely to fare better and may survive in the long term. Material that is generally stable, such as ceramics, may achieve a degree of long term stability.
- 4.9.49. As noted above, the fate of any surviving human remains will probably depend upon the continued stability of their current burial environments. Insufficient data is currently available to assess this.

4.10. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *MENDI* TO BRITAIN AND SOUTH AFRICA

- 4.10.1. The following discussion is not intended to be comprehensive. It aims instead to consider something of the meaning of the *Mendi* and its social and political context for the UK and South Africa today, based on the information presented thus far in the report. The objective being to highlight the wide range of potential themes and different meanings of ‘place’ that are associated with the site, and which can be expected to be of interest to a range of British and South African audiences.
- 4.10.2. It is important to stress that it is the wreck itself that provides the physical and cultural link or ‘portal’ between 21st century society and the story of the *Mendi*. Without this physical link, the cultural significance of the *Mendi* is likely to be much reduced.

World War I

- 4.10.3. World War I was one of the major world events of the 20th century and had a profound effect upon those countries involved and many that were not. Despite the

lapse of time, the psychological impact of this war continues to resonate in Britain. Most recently there has been sufficient public interest in the last few surviving servicemen to support a number of popular history books and television programs.

- 4.10.4. However the story of how this war was supplied and supported by Britain's colonies and dominions has not had the same resonance for the British public, largely because public attention tends to be fixed upon the terrible waste of life in the trenches of the Western Front, and because the scale of the effort involved in supporting the fighting forces is generally unappreciated.
- 4.10.5. The effectiveness of fighting troops during World War I depended to a large extent upon the troops and labourers who built and maintained the fortifications and other infrastructure and who operated the supply routes that the fighting troops needed. The wreck of the *Mendi*, with its link to the British labour corps system that provided this logistical support, therefore presents an avenue for promoting a wider public interest in and appreciation of this topic. The continuing interest in other aspects of the war suggests that interest in this theme is likely to be strong once attention is drawn to it.
- 4.10.6. Linked to this the story of the role of Britain's former colonies and dominions in World War I and the contribution of their labour corps may be of particular interest to minority communities in the UK. The story of the *Mendi* therefore offers the opportunity to raise issues that may be of particular interest to them in a new way and through an unusual medium.

The Invisibility of the Labour Corps System

- 4.10.7. Although huge numbers of Britons and citizens of the Empire served in the labour system during World War I, there is virtually nothing written about it and the entire system is largely invisible in the vast literature of the war.
- 4.10.8. The majority of secondary sources related to the BLC and ASC located during this assessment were the web-based sources used above. These are limited in the scope of the information they present and are not detailed enough to allow a full understanding of the disparate strands of the vast and complex labour system that evolved through the course of the war. According to these sources the Labour Corps system receives just four mentions in the Official History of the war and is rarely mentioned in regimental histories (<http://www.1914-1918.net>; http://www.geosites.com/labour_corps). Chapters on the Labour Corps are included in Swinton (1938) and Hammerton (1935-1939), although it has not proved possible to locate copies of these publications. *With a Labour Company in France*, by Captain T.C. Thomas (1919) is the story of 58 Company Labour Corps of the Royal Pioneer Corps. This book is also unobtainable, although an electronic copy will be posted on <http://www.royalpioneercorps.co.uk> in the near future.
- 4.10.9. As far as the foreign labour contingents are concerned, although they made a massive contribution to the British and Allied war effort, as a group they remain largely invisible in the official histories and the bulk of First World War secondary literature.
- 4.10.10. Some sources suggest that the lack of published information on the labour corps system – both foreign and British - is partly because many of the records of this

period were destroyed during the Second World War (www.geocities.com/labour_corps). It seems more likely though that the Labour Corps is simply a neglected area of World War I scholarship. Killingray (1989:483) suggests that this lack of literature is not just a feature of World War I, and that with the exception of a study by van Crefeld (1977), the recruitment, organisation and deployment of the ‘non-combatant labour required to service and supply the fighting line’ during the numerous major conflicts of the last two centuries is generally ignored in military literature.

- 4.10.11. It would certainly appear from this assessment that a substantial body of primary documents relating to the South African, Chinese and Egyptian and other labour contingents does exist, although an assessment of these was beyond the scope of the current study.
- 4.10.12. There is also an almost total absence of information about the native labour contingents used in the African theatres of war in the literature of World War I. This phenomenon is not limited to the South African labour corps. Despite the fact that the largest mass mobilisation of labour ever seen in Africa took place during World War I (Killingray 1989) there are only a handful of articles and books that have examined the use of black labour, particularly in East Africa, during the war. These include Savage and Forbes Munro (1966), Hodges (1978; 1986) and Killingray (1989). Had it not been for the work of Brian Willan (1978), Norman Clothier (1987) and Albert Grundlingh (1987), this part of the chapter of South Africa’s role in World War I would probably still remain largely untold.

World War I Troopship Losses

- 4.10.13. For an event that only lasted four years, World War I played a disproportionately large role in forming the archaeological landscape of UK territorial waters, and in particular that of the English Channel. According to Maw, the Admiralty’s Weekly Reports from Coastal Stations for the period 1914-1918 record more than 750 ships sunk in the Channel (Maw 1999). A National Monuments Record search for the same period and area of the Channel returned 872 objects, of which 390 are known wrecks on the seabed. The remainder are casualties, either wreck events for vessels not positively identified or those which have never been located and therefore are only known from documentary evidence.
- 4.10.14. These World War I maritime casualties included a number of troop transports and hospital ships, which were by no means invulnerable to attack. Because of the large number of people typically carried in each, such losses were usually notable disasters. A non-exhaustive list of troop- and hospital ship casualties encountered during the assessment is presented in **Appendix XVI**. These losses include both British ships and vessels of other nationalities, and cover a geographical area wider than UK territorial waters.
- 4.10.15. The *Mendi* was also not the only labour corps transport ship to be lost. Only ten days earlier, on the 11th February 1917, the French transport *Athos* was sunk by a submarine in the Mediterranean (<http://www.es-conseil.fr/pramona/athos.htm>; <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/mm.htm>). The *Athos*, a 12,692 ton ship of the French Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes, built only two years before in 1915 was carrying a large contingent of Chinese labourers from China to France. Of the 754 lives lost 543 were labourers.

4.10.16. Tragedy continued to strike South Africans on their way to and from the Western Front. On 12th September 1918 the Union-Castle Line's *Galway Castle*, which had been requisitioned as a troopship in 1914, was torpedoed two days out from Plymouth by U-82. The vessel was carrying 749 passengers back to South Africa, including about 400 wounded soldiers and members of the SANLC. A total of 143 people died as a result (Williams 2006; <http://www.red-duster.co.uk>).

Black Post-War Expectations and Realities in South Africa

4.10.17. Following the disbanding of the SANLC, its members were returned to South Africa where they and other black South Africans were to be bitterly disappointed in their expectations of what their wartime service would bring.

4.10.18. It will be remembered that for many blacks in South Africa the decision to support the war was based on the hope that such a policy would increase their political bargaining power and also render the government more sympathetic to black aspirations. During the course of the war black expectations were also heightened, perhaps naively, by statements by international statesmen and other dignitaries.

4.10.19. On 10th July 1917, for example, King George V inspected and addressed members of the SANLC at Abbeville in France (**Plate 12**). For many of the members of the corps it was an unforgettable experience to see the king in person – ‘the supreme symbol of imperial power and British “justice”’. But what made this event even more memorable was that the king in his address not only praised them for their labour, but also assured them: ‘You are also part of my great armies fighting for the liberty and freedom of my subjects of all races and creeds throughout the empire’. The implications seemed clear (Willan 1978:83). The King was reminded of this apparent promise and the contribution of black South Africans to the war effort in a petition presented to him by a South African Native National Congress delegation which went to England in 1919 to argue for black political representation. For the full text of the petition see: <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/early/petition181216.html>

4.10.20. In addition, David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, and Woodrow Wilson, the American President, propagated the idea from 1918 onwards that sufficient allowance should be made in the post-war dispensation for the self-determination of smaller and oppressed nations. However, it was to become clear that these statements applied to Europe and not to those striving for self-determination within Britain's Empire and Dominions.

4.10.21. Of greater South African significance were the words of the Governor-General of South Africa, Lord Buxton, when he addressed a mass meeting of black South Africans during the peace celebrations in December 1918 and declared that ‘the war has proved to you that your loyalty was well placed; and I can assure that it will not be forgotten’ (Grundlingh 1987: 134).

4.10.22. However, the South African Government had no intention of altering the political *status quo* and ‘considered it politically imprudent to acknowledge publicly that whites had required the services of blacks during war-time’ (Grundlingh 1987:128). They chose instead to neutralise the contribution of black South Africans by offering no acknowledgment of it.

- 4.10.23. In 1919 the King instituted the British War Medal to commemorate service by subjects of the Empire (and beyond) during the war, of which approximately 6,500,000 were struck. Roughly 110,000 were issued to veterans of the foreign labour corps, with the exception of the SANLC.
- 4.10.24. In a bitterly resented decision the South African Government decided that it would not award a war service medal to any of the black ex-SANLC members, nor would it allow them to receive the British War Medal from the King, to which they were entitled (Willan 1978; Mohlamme 1995). To compound the slight, South African members of the SANLC witnessed men from their own battalions - but from Swaziland, Lesotho and Botswana - receiving their medals.
- 4.10.25. In addition, veterans of the SANLC were denied any gratuities, which together with the medal issue engendered deep and abiding resentment. It is not surprising that veterans felt misled, misused and discarded (Mohlamme 1995).
- 4.10.26. The experiences of SANLC members in Europe were also a source of grievance. The often callous treatment meted out to them by South African officers in France, and their confinement in the closed compounds highlighted the manifest inequalities of their treatment and position.
- 4.10.27. To a large extent these iniquities have never been addressed, and the shameful treatment of SANLC veterans is still deeply felt by their descendants and communities. The wreck of the *Mendi* lends itself as a focus for addressing these issues in the name of reconciliation, in South Africa, and between South Africa and the UK.

The Political Effects of the Loss of the *Mendi*

- 4.10.28. Within the broader political context of black South African involvement in the war, the loss of the *Mendi* had the effect of stirring the consciousness of numerous Africans outside the formal structures of black politics, and the memory of the event soon became an enduring element in African political thinking (Grundlingh 1987).
- 4.10.29. Through the *Mendi* Memorial Club, initiated by S.M. Bennet Ncwana in the years immediately after World War I and the annual commemoration of *Mendi* Day in the larger urban centres, the symbolic significance of the tragedy was kept alive. In addition, the *Mendi* Memorial Bursary Fund was founded in 1936 to sponsor promising black pupils, and continues to do so today (Marieta Venter, SA Legion, pers. comm.). The message of the *Mendi* also became woven into the fabric of South African black political consciousness through evocative war poetry by poets such as S.E.K. Mqhayi, glorifying the 'fallen heroes' who died for 'freedom' (Jeff Opland, pers. comm.).
- 4.10.30. As an event, the loss of the *Mendi* became embedded in South African oral tradition, and nowhere has the spirit of the *Mendi* been better captured for many South Africans during the last 90 years than in the story of the Reverend Isaac Dyobha (**Plate 13**) and the Death Dance. According to the oral tradition, as the *Mendi* sank, Dyobha, who was the SANLC chaplain on board, rallied the men on the decks to stand together and 'die like brothers' with these words:

Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die...but that is what you came to do....Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers. Swazis, Pondos, Basutos, we die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries, brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies.

- 4.10.31. The story recounts that the men on the deck then performed a Death Dance as the ship went down.
- 4.10.32. There is no evidence from survivors' accounts that either Dyobha's speech or the Death Dance actually took place. The conditions on deck would have made it difficult to dance, but it is conceivable that Dyobha rallied and encouraged groups of terrified and doomed men on the slanting deck that morning. Furthermore, the story of the speech and Death Dance only surfaced in the written record for the first time in 1931, although this is not to say it was not circulating within the communities involved prior to this.
- 4.10.33. Whatever the origins of Dyobha's speech, and whether it was real or apocryphal, it soon became the iconic event associated with the *Mendi*, and the words became a rallying point for raising black political consciousness. According to Grundlingh (1987) speakers at the commemorations used the opportunity to contrast the sacrifices made by Africans in both World Wars to the government's persistence in following a policy of racial domination.
- 4.10.34. Uneasiness by successive white minority governments at the *Mendi* Day commemorations led to increasing pressure for them to stop, and although never banned outright, by the end of the Apartheid era the *Mendi* had lost virtually all of its symbolic significance. Writing during the violent political turmoil towards the end of the 1980s, Grundlingh's (1987: 139) bleak assessment was that in an increasingly polarised South Africa it was 'extremely doubtful whether black political groupings would like to be reminded of, much less care to commemorate, the episode'.
- 4.10.35. Since the first democratic elections in 1994 however, the story of the *Mendi* and Isaac Dyobha's stirring words have come to feature strongly in public life as a reflection of the sacrifices made by black South African's in their long fight for justice and political freedom, and as a national symbol of unity, solidarity and bravery.
- 4.10.36. In South Africa there are annual commemorations of the event with wreath-laying ceremonies at the various memorials, involving descendants and family of the *Mendi* victims and veterans. The event has also been commemorated in the last few years with the naming of two South African Navy vessels SAS *Mendi* and SAS *Isaac Dyobha*.
- 4.10.37. In addition, the national civilian award for bravery has been renamed the Order of *Mendi*, in clear acknowledgement of the esteem in which the nation holds those who died so bravely aboard the *Mendi* (Republic of South Africa Government Gazette 2004).

Burial, Memorialization and Remembrance

- 4.10.38. After the sinking of the *Mendi* the bodies of very few of the casualties were ever recovered. Those that were, together with those who died after being rescued, are buried in the cemeteries on the south coast of England referred to earlier. Known locations are listed in **Appendix VII**.
- 4.10.39. In addition to these graves, the loss of the *Mendi* has been commemorated through the erection of a number of memorials to the event, in the UK, Flanders and southern Africa.
- 4.10.40. The Hollybrook Memorial, in Southampton's Hollybrook Cemetery, commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces who have no known grave. Many of them were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters. The memorial also bears the names of non-servicemen and women who were lost or buried at sea, or whose bodies could not be recovered for burial (<http://www.cwgc.org>). Almost one third of the names on the memorial are those of SANLC casualties from the *Mendi* (**Plates 14 & 15**).
- 4.10.41. Other vessels sunk with significant loss of life that are commemorated at Hollybrook include:
- 4.10.42. HS *Anglia*, a hospital ship sunk by mine off Dover on 17 November 1915;
- 4.10.43. ss *Citta Di Palermo*, an Italian transport carrying Commonwealth troops, sunk by mine off Brindisi on 8 January 1916;
- 4.10.44. HMTs *Donegal* and *Warilda*, ambulance transports torpedoed and sunk between Le Havre and Southampton on 17 April 1917 and 3 August 1918;
- 4.10.45. HS *Glenart Castle*, a hospital ship torpedoed and sunk off Lundy on 26 February 1918;
- 4.10.46. RMS *Leinster*, an Irish mail boat, torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on 10 October 1918; and
- 4.10.47. *Galway Castle*, referred to above.
- 4.10.48. Elsewhere in the UK there is a memorial tablet to Chief Henry Bokleni Ndamse and the other victims of the *Mendi* in the churchyard at the St John the Evangelist Church in Newtimber, West Sussex.
- 4.10.49. A bronze plaque commemorating the loss of the *Mendi* and those on board was unveiled at the Delville Wood memorial in Flanders in 1986, and there is a memorial to members of the SANLC who died in France at Arque-la-Bataille, near Dieppe.
- 4.10.50. The memorials this study has been able to identify in South and southern Africa are listed in **Appendix VII**. Of these, the most nationally significant is probably the *Mendi* Memorial and Garden of Remembrance at the Avalon Cemetery in Soweto. Unveiled by President Nelson Mandela and her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II in 1995, this memorial stands in the national Heroes Acre, a clear indication of the national importance of the loss of the *Mendi*.

4.10.51. In 2002 the Memorial Gates monument to the five million men and women from the Indian subcontinent, Africa and the Caribbean who volunteered for the Armed Services during both World Wars was unveiled on Constitution Hill in London by Her Majesty the Queen (<http://www.mgtrust.org>). As far as this study has been able to ascertain, there is no similar monument in the UK for those volunteers who served in a non-combatant capacity, particularly during World War I. This is probably a feature of the invisibility of the World War I labour corps system.

Commemoration and Reconciliation

4.10.52. Despite the existence of these graves and memorials, in comparison to post-Apartheid South Africa, the disaster is little known in the UK. In a post-World War I Britain inured to loss it is perhaps unsurprising that it slipped from public consciousness. Nevertheless in recent years there has been increased commemorative activity, often linked with interest from South Africa.

4.10.53. Martin Woodward was actively involved in inviting or facilitating visits by delegations from South Africa in 1989 and 1991. A representative of the South African Legion, Frank Sexwale, attended a commemorative event at Hollybrook with members of the Royal British Legion in 1989 (Southern Evening Echo 25 October 1989) and in 1991 a second delegation was organised by the South African Defence Force. A number of South Africans, including Norman Clothier, attended a wreath-laying ceremony over the site on that occasion. In addition, delegations from the South African High Commission have attended annual Remembrance Day commemorations organised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) at Hollybrook (Forrester 1995).

4.10.54. The story of the disaster and the subsequent commemorations have occasionally featured in the media. These have included articles in the Isle of Wight newspaper *The News* on 23 March 1995 and an article in *Royal Mail News* in June 1995. In addition there has been at least one article authored by Martin Woodward in the diving press and, most recently, Caroline Coxon described the disaster in the February 2007 issue of the popular history magazine *History Today*. BBC South Today has also featured a news article on the *Mendi*.

4.10.55. A CD-ROM, entitled 'Let us die like Brothers', was launched by the CWGC and the History Channel in October 2006. It tells the story of the disaster and is intended as an educational resource for schools. It was released in the UK to coincide with Black History Month 2006 and the Remembrance period, and in South Africa in February 2007 to mark the 90th anniversary of the *Mendi* tragedy.

4.10.56. The City Gate Church in Brighton has also been heavily involved in the recent commemoration of the event. Andrea Mason of the Church has told WA the following about the Church's involvement since 2002 (e-mail, February 2007):

We organised the June 2002 reconciliation events held in Sussex, Isle of Wight and Southampton. We were also involved with the reciprocal events in Nyandeni, the Eastern Cape in September 2002. There will be further commemorations during the weekend of August 12th 2007. The South Africans are planning to take dignitaries out to the site of the sinking, also to follow the schedule of the 2002 celebrations with a small service at Newtimber Church and a large

procession at the military cemetery in Southampton. These will be organised by South Africa's Ministry of Defence. We do have contacts in the mThatha (Umtata) area of the Eastern Cape who could trace some of the descendants of the ss Mendi men. Chief Malizole Ndamase is either the grandson or great grandson of Chief Henry Bokleni / Bokweni, one of those who drowned. I will be going to the Eastern Cape in April and hope to see Chief Malizole then.

In 2002 we involved Martin Woodward. He has a maritime museum on the Isle of Wight, where a couple of artefacts from the Mendi are on display, though he wishes these to be returned to South Africa.

- 4.10.57. The emphasis of the church's involvement has been on reconciliation, based upon the view that the relatives of the dead were not treated properly at the time and insufficient respect and thanks have been given for the sacrifices made by the SANLC labourers on board the *Mendi*.
- 4.10.58. This issue has clearly been emotive. According to Michael Donovan (web message board, 2005) and the National Ex-Services Association website (<http://www.nesa.org.uk/>), a Brighton MP, Des Turner, raised the issue of the treatment of the relatives of the SANLC casualties on the floor of the UK House of Commons and a dossier was sent to the UK Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon.
- 4.10.59. The commemoration and memorialisation of the loss of the *Mendi* serves an important function in acknowledging a painful and shameful shared past, and can do much to build bridges between communities. These commemorative activities have taken various forms.
- 4.10.60. As noted above, recent public and media interest in the last survivors of World War I has demonstrated that it is still a significant issue for many people in the UK. This suggests that there is considerable scope for further exploration and promotion of issues concerning the commemoration of the *Mendi* and the remembrance of the victims. The potentially controversial issue of reconciliation may also be of considerable interest to a range of audiences.

Descendants

- 4.10.61. WA enquiries have established that there is scope for tracing descendants of the crew. These are likely to include descendants of both the white officers and the West African seamen on board. For example, it is known that a relative of one of the white officers is currently a member of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society.
- 4.10.62. In South Africa there are the families and descendants of the SANLC members, many of whom retain a keen interest in the *Mendi*, and some of whom have been identified during the course of this assessment. Because the story of the *Mendi* was largely kept alive through the oral tradition in South Africa, these groups and individuals - as keepers of this oral tradition - are a vital part of the story of the *Mendi*, and further work on the story would benefit immensely from interaction with them.

- 4.10.63. Genealogy is currently in vogue in both the UK and abroad. It has proved to be a highly personal and very effective entry point into history for a wide range of audiences who might not otherwise be attracted. Television, radio and the print media have demonstrated that when genealogy is associated with a noteworthy historical event, then the study of the ancestry of individuals can have great interest to those who have no personal connection and can very effectively link past with present. The DNA link established between the resident of a Somerset village and a Bronze Age person buried in the vicinity during research for an episode of the “Meet the Ancestors” series has demonstrated just how far back the link between the modern public and events in the past can be pushed.
- 4.10.64. This interest in genealogy could be used to illuminate the *Mendi* as an archaeological site and to further social history studies associated with it and the labour corps. Such an approach is likely to be popular and is likely to create a useful bridge between diverse audience interests. It is possible that this theme could form the central core of a television investigation into the site.

Diving on the *Mendi*

- 4.10.65. The site has been used by recreational divers since 1974. It is not known how many diver visits the site currently receives per year, but it seems likely that they are fairly infrequent. This may be because of its depth and distance from the shore.
- 4.10.66. It may be the case that these visits have been more frequent in the past and that a greater proportion of those divers involved were interested in salvage. However there does seem to be a growing awareness of ‘war grave’ issues amongst the recreational diving community. Although one diver contacted by WA did refer to a lack of valuable ‘smidge’, mention has also been made by correspondents on this project of adopting a ‘look but don’t touch’ approach to their visits. It may therefore be that salvage is no longer a primary motive for the majority of divers visiting the site, although this may simply be down to the previous removal of the more obviously valuable artefacts.
- 4.10.67. The wreck of the *Mendi* already has a value to the recreational diving community in the UK as a dive site. Active promotion of the site by demonstrating what it signifies and how its archaeological study can illuminate a wide range of issues may increase its value to the diving community and promote responsible and non-intrusive access.
- 4.10.68. In this regard the *Mendi* offers the opportunity for the development of site information packages for both the diving community and the wider public. This sort of material can provide practical and historical information about the site (and possibly some of the wider issues related to the wreck) useful to divers and anyone interested in the wreck, but at the same time can carry a strong conservation message, highlighting the nature and status of the site. There is also the option of creating a diver trail on the wreck itself. Such wreck trails are in wide use around the world and serve not only to enhance the experience of divers visiting the site, but are also an important aspect of site management strategies.
- 4.10.69. The wreck offers an opportunity to enter into a constructive debate between the wide range of stakeholders about balancing the promotion of diver access with concerns about intrusion on so-called maritime ‘war graves’. It also offers the opportunity to

assess and monitor the impact of recreational diving upon a World War I shipwreck site.

Local Perspectives

- 4.10.70. The wreck of the *Mendi* is part of the very rich submerged historic landscape surrounding the Isle of Wight. Its relatively recent date, the unusually tragic circumstances of its loss and its international interest mean that it has the potential to be regarded locally as an important part of this landscape.
- 4.10.71. Over 50 large ships were sunk by torpedoes, mines and guns, or lost as a result of collisions within 30 miles of the Isle of Wight during World War I (Maw 1999, Wendes 2006). During the early years of the war losses were fairly light, but after 1917 German submarines began to inflict a very heavy toll.
- 4.10.72. The loss of the *Mendi* involved the single greatest loss of life of all these vessels. However, the first troopship to be lost was the paddle steamer *Empress Queen*, lost near Bembridge. Everyone on board (including the cat and the dog) were saved by the Bembridge lifeboat but lifesaving proved to be difficult during the war, with so many coastguards and lifeboatmen having been drafted or volunteered. When the *Theodora* came ashore near Bembridge in 1915, for example, the lifeboat could not be launched because there were not enough lifeboatmen to crew it.
- 4.10.73. The most famous loss locally was probably that of the ss *War Knight*, whose cargo of bacon, oil, rubber, lard and flour came ashore in 1918. Thirty eight people from Freshwater were subsequently arrested for making off with wreck.
- 4.10.74. Nonetheless, the *Mendi* and the tragic events of its loss currently do not appear to be very well known on the Isle of Wight or on the adjacent mainland. Some outreach work will be required if the site is to achieve local or regional significance. WA understands that the Isle of Wight Archive Service undertook a small exhibition on the *Mendi* in 2006 for 'Black History Month'.
- 4.10.75. The *Mendi* may also have some tourism potential. Although most diving visits seem to be from divers based locally, divers may be drawn from further away if the site is promoted. Such increased access will clearly need to be balanced against the conservation and other needs of the site.

The Liverpool-West Africa Trade and the end of the Atlantic Slave Trade

- 4.10.76. At the beginning of the 20th century, Liverpool was one of the great ports of the world. Britain's trade with its West African colonies depended largely upon ships sailing from Liverpool. Some of the great shipping companies of Liverpool, such as Elder Dempster, John Holt and Co. and the Bromport Steamship Co. were central to this trade.
- 4.10.77. Liverpool's importance in the West Africa trade had developed from its role in the Atlantic slave trade, a subject that is still deeply controversial today. This trade had its origins in the sixteenth century, when Elizabeth I granted a company of London merchants the right to trade with West Africa. Although slaves were always an important part of this trade, it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that the infamous triangular Atlantic slave trade between Liverpool, West Africa and the West Indies began, also known as the 'African Holocaust' to scholars mindful of

the vast forced migration and the appalling suffering and death that it caused. By the end of the eighteenth century, 60% of slave ships were Liverpool-owned (Frost 1999).

- 4.10.78. After the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807, 200 years ago this month, Liverpool merchants used their contacts to maintain trade with Africa and the Americas. By degrees Liverpool came to dominate all British trade with West Africa, maintaining this position until after the Second World War.
- 4.10.79. Arguably this trade had a significant influence in promoting British colonial involvement in West Africa and in shaping colonial society and economy. In place of slaves, Africa exported primary products such as palm oil, timber, ground nuts and cocoa, on vessels such as the *Mendi*. Palm oil became the most lucrative commodity, used in various processes including the manufacture of margarine, candles and soap, and for the lubrication of machine parts.
- 4.10.80. This focus on the export of primary products discouraged anything but the development of unskilled labour in West African ports. This can be seen in the crew of the *Mendi*, with West Africans occupying the very lowest ranks of the ship's company. Thus the *Mendi* can be seen as part of the commercial and colonial legacy of the Atlantic slave trade.
- 4.10.81. The trade carried out by vessels such as the *Mendi* were also instrumental in facilitating migration. The West African trade resulted in the migration of African labour from the African interior to the coast. To a lesser degree it also resulted in African migration to the UK, as small informal communities of seamen and their dependants gradually established themselves in British ports such as Liverpool.
- 4.10.82. The experience of the Kru (or Kroo) people is a good example. Originally from Liberia, they became involved in seafaring by crewing British and German merchant ships and migrated to many of the West African ports. From there they spread further afield, most notably to Liverpool where a permanent community was formed (Frost 1999). The onset of mass unemployment in the post-World War I years created social tensions that meant that the Kru, as well as other foreign communities, suffered from institutional and non-institutional racism (Frost 1999). Nevertheless the Kru presence remains in UK cities such as Liverpool even today.
- 4.10.83. One unusual feature of West African trade was the carrying of what were effectively 'shore gangs' (dockers) on board the ships. The Kru were highly regarded in this role. As temporary members of the crew they would handle the cargo on and off the ship, assisted at the main ports by further gangs. In between ports they helped maintain the ships. 'Chipping and painting' were particularly important activities in the hot and humid tropics. Carrying gangs had many advantages. They ensured an adequate supply of labour to load or unload the ships. They could make ready the cargo for unloading before a port was reached and allowed the ship to leave early before a loaded cargo was fully stowed (Cowden and Duffy 1986).
- 4.10.84. The history of Liverpool as a port and the ships and people involved is a subject of growing importance for the city and its region as it seeks to promote its tourist industry. Liverpool museums have undergone a renaissance in the last few years,

with a dedicated and nationally important maritime museum growing on the back of this increased public awareness and interest.

- 4.10.85. The year 2007 marks not only the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade but also the 800th anniversary of the granting of a charter to Liverpool by King John. In addition, in 2008 Liverpool will host the European City of Culture. Liverpool is still very much a maritime city with a diverse ethnic mix and the potential local interest in the *Mendi* and its story can be expected to be high throughout this period.
- 4.10.86. The *Mendi* is an example of the type of British merchant ship that was designed for and involved in colonial trade. This type of ship no longer exists in any significant numbers. As such it offers archaeologists the opportunity to link the study of the site with the wider issues of trade with West Africa, British colonial history and the commercial and social legacies of the slave trade. This is likely to be of interest not only to the people of Liverpool but also to a much wider and international audience, assisting them to understand the significance of shipwreck sites in a much broader way.

Shipbuilding on the Clyde

- 4.10.87. In 1905, when the *Mendi* was built there, Glasgow and the River Clyde was one of the great shipbuilding centres of the world. Although not quite the dominant force that it had been in the mid-19th century, by the start of World War I shipyards on the Clyde were still building one-third of the British output of ships. The industry is relatively insignificant today, but the growth of maritime themed heritage attractions in Scotland (and particularly Glasgow) and the plethora of modern books on Clyde ships and shipbuilding demonstrates that the subject has an abiding and growing public value. As with Liverpool, the city's museums are undergoing a continuing renaissance as the city seeks to develop itself into a tourist and cultural destination.
- 4.10.88. As an example of the Clyde's early 20th century output of merchant ships, the *Mendi* has the potential to contribute to the study and/or presentation of the Clyde ship building industry. Its unusual and tragic story also imbues it with a wide range of other significances that may enable the history of Clyde shipbuilding to be introduced in an interesting way to sections of the public for whom the history of shipbuilding currently holds no great attraction.

Ecological Significance

- 4.10.89. The study of shipwreck ecology has tended to focus largely upon near-shore and relatively shallow sites because of their ease of access. Any future fieldwork on the *Mendi* is likely to allow the ecological assessment of a relatively deep and offshore site to be undertaken. This is likely to be of some significance to the overall study of the ecology of the English Channel, particularly in the context of climate change. It is therefore likely to be of interest to a number of institutions and agencies, as well as the general public, and will contribute to the type of mapping work being promoted by organisations like Seasearch.

Life Saving at Sea

- 4.10.90. It is clear from contemporary correspondence that there was some debate in the aftermath of the tragedy about whether the *Mendi* was provided with adequate life saving equipment. This debate was largely conducted out of the public gaze, although the uninvited involvement of the Anti-Slavery Society demonstrates that

there was some degree of wider concern. At the time there was concern that the provision of life saving equipment was influenced by racial attitudes.

- 4.10.91. Although it is uncertain whether a different provision of life saving equipment would have resulted in a very significant reduction in the number of casualties, or whether this provision was effected by racial considerations, the wreck of the *Mendi* offers the opportunity to examine the issue of life saving at sea, particularly in the context of vessels such as troop- or hospital ships which carried unusually large numbers of passengers. It also offers the opportunity to enter into a further debate as to whether this was affected by the issue of race and colonial prejudices.

A Tale of Two Sea Captains

- 4.10.92. Captain Henry Winchester Stump (master's certificate 017169) of the *Darro* was born in 1866 in London. Serving as a mate from 1896 to 1905 on various voyages to the Americas (particularly the West Indies), he obtained his master's ticket in 1896 and his first command in 1906, when he captained the ss *Conway*. The *Darro* was his eighth command in 1916 (Lloyd's Captains' Registers, various).
- 4.10.93. Following the loss of the *Mendi*, Stump's master's certificate was suspended for 12 months. There was considerable outrage at his conduct and following the hearing into the loss Captain A.H. Young of the Board of Trade stated that Stump:

*...should for ever be precluded from the command of a Brit[ish] Ship.
Such a man is a standing menace to seafarers.*

Despite this he returned to command in 1919 and appears to have captained a further fourteen vessels before retiring in 1931.

- 4.10.94. Stump was no stranger to accident. Whilst master of the *Drina*, a sister ship to the *Darro*, he collided with an unknown topsail schooner on 22 August 1916 near the Carnarvon light vessel whilst outbound from Liverpool for Lisbon with a cargo of coal and general goods. There was heavy fog at the time. On 20 February 1917, the day before the collision with the *Mendi*, the *Darro*, commanded by Stump, hit the quay at Le Havre.
- 4.10.95. Following the reinstatement of his master's certificate, Stump hit and sank a trawler whilst in command of the ss *Cisneros* of Barcelona on 3 November 1921. It is not known whether there were any fatalities.
- 4.10.96. Despite this Stump appears to have gone on to make a reasonably successful career for himself following the loss of the *Mendi*. This suggests that he was not regarded as being incompetent and it may be that the sinking of the trawler was not his fault. This makes his actions, or rather lack of action, on 21 February 1917 difficult to understand. It has been suggested that his failure to render assistance to the *Mendi* was based upon racist attitudes but there is a lack of evidence for this. Perhaps more likely is that Stump simply 'froze' and failed to cope with the calamity that faced him, particularly after having been involved in another collision only the previous day. As Captain Young subsequently said:

*Either the master was utterly callous to all sentiments of humanity or,
as a result of the collision, his nerve deserted him to such an extent as*

to render him incapable of rational thought and action at a time when every instinct of the trained seaman should have been brought into play.

- 4.10.97. By contrast Captain Henry Arthur Yardley (master's certificate 014726) of the *Mendi* turned out to be something of a hero. Born in Birmingham in 1862, he qualified as a master in 1889, and as extra master (a higher navigational qualification) in 1889 (Author unknown, 1928). He spent his early career serving on sailing ships and he was aboard the Liverpool-owned barque *Astracana* when it hit a coral reef in the South Pacific. He subsequently spent seven and a half days in an open boat before reaching the safety of Tahiti. He joined the Elder Dempster group in 1892, he commanded at least 11 vessels, including the *Mendi* and its sister ship *Karina*, between 1904 and 1911. He assumed command of the *Mendi* again in June 1916 and continued to command it until its loss.
- 4.10.98. After the loss of the *Mendi* he was appointed to the armed steamer ss *Burutu*. In 1918 that vessel, under Yardley's command, attacked a heavily armed German submarine that had been shelling the town of Monrovia in Liberia. Yardley was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross as a result of this action.
- 4.10.99. Following the war Yardley continued to work for Elder Dempster on the West Africa routes. He seems to have earned a considerable reputation for treating his black crew members and shore gangs considerately. He was presented with a solid silver African bowl by the Lagos shore gangs on his last voyage before retirement in 1927 (Cowden, pers. comm.), when he commanded the first diesel engine passenger ship of the Elder Dempster Line (Clothier 1987). He was also awarded the Lloyd's Silver Medal for life saving at sea as a result of his rescue of four West Africans from a capsized canoe in a tornado and he was appointed Knight Official of the Liberian Humane Order of African Redemption. In addition he received the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society's Medal and Diploma and a silver cigarette case presented by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in recognition of services rendered during the Great War in conveying confidential mails overseas, together with a fine mahogany grandmother chiming clock presented by his brother shipmasters at Elder Dempster (Cowden & Duffy 1986).
- 4.10.100. The lives of these two sea captains and the work of Norman Clothier in tracing the stories of SANLC labourers demonstrates that rich human stories can still be drawn out of the *Mendi*. These stories are potentially of diverse and cross-cultural appeal. They are also still capable of raising issues of contemporary resonance, such as the relationship between people of different ethnic groups and how and why people react in different ways in times of great crisis.

The *Amistad*

- 4.10.101. The *Mendi* appears to have been named after a tribe from Sierra Leone in West Africa, which today forms about 30% of the population of Sierra Leone and numbers about 1.5 million people.
- 4.10.102. In 1839, 53 young *Mendi* men and women were sold to Spanish slave traders aboard a ship called the *Amistad*, bound for Cuba. Under the leadership of one of their fellow captives, Joseph Cinque, the *Mendis* attacked the ship's crew and tried to

sail back to Africa. However they landed in Long Island Sound, USA, and were arrested.

4.10.103. They were eventually tried but famously won their case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Abolitionist groups in New Haven and around the country rallied on their behalf, raising money for their defense, and gathered funds to help them return to Africa. Most of them were able to sail back home, but a few stayed behind to live in the United States.

4.10.104. John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States (1825-9), had helped the Mendis argue their case in the Supreme Court and, in tribute, they presented him with the Mendi (*Amistad*) Bible. In January 2007 this famous bible was used to swear the first African-American governor of Massachusetts into office.

4.10.105. This is undoubtedly a fairly tenuous connection. Nevertheless it and the other themes discussed in this section demonstrate just how wide the range of themes is that can be explored through the study of what might otherwise be regarded as just another shipwreck.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CHARACTERISATION OF THE SITE

5.1.1. With reference to the Recording Levels developed by Wessex Archaeology (**Appendix XIV**) the archaeological recording of this site has reached Level 1b, that of indirect desk-based assessment. However this exercise has produced only a moderate quantity of data about the physical character of the site itself. Furthermore it is data is from diverse sources that are likely to be of varying reliability. Fieldwork to a minimum of Level 2a (non-intrusive evaluation) is therefore required to bring the archaeological recording of the site up to level at which the archaeology can be reliably described and characterised.

5.1.2. In the meantime, the overall character of the site can be summarised on an interim basis. Two categorisation schemes have been used. The first modified after Watson & Gale (1990), and the second a ‘Statement of Importance’ as developed by the EH ‘On the Importance of Shipwrecks’ project (WA 2006). Given the lack of fieldwork, the conclusions reached should be regarded with a degree of caution.

Modified after Watson and Gale

Area and distribution of surviving ship structure:	The site measures approximately 121m by 31m, with two small areas of possible debris to the north. The full length of the hull survives to a length of over 100 metres, orientated north-east to south-west. The ship lies upright but with a list to starboard. The port side survives to a height of several metres, but little of the starboard side survives. The bow and stern are in a relatively good state of preservation, although decking does not appear to have survived. Up to four boilers survive, as does the engine, although it appears to be on its side. The superstructure appears to have collapsed.
Description of seabed environment	Not known. Seabed sediments are thought likely to be gravel, perhaps with a thin veneer of sand.

Character of ship structure:	Riveted clinker steel shell plate and framed construction, typical of the early 20 th century. Registered as a two deck design.
Depth and character of stratigraphy:	Not known.
Volume and quality of artefactual and environmental evidence, including cargo, ordnance, domestic assemblage, etc.:	Not known. It is believed that a considerable quantity of artefacts may still survive, including domestic assemblage, cargo, ship fittings and ordnance. The presence of human remains is possible.
Site formation and transformation processes	It appears that the ship settled on the seabed without breaking up, although debris possibly associated with the site has been observed by geophysical survey to the north. Since deposition the wreck has suffered gradual deterioration and collapse, probably due to normal processes of erosion and corrosion. There is no evidence for significant human impact until the site was identified in 1974. Since then a low level of human led disturbance has occurred. Whilst this has resulted in the uncontrolled and largely unrecorded removal of artefacts, it has probably not had a very significant impact upon the rate of deterioration of the site as a whole.
Apparent date of ship's construction and/or loss:	1905/1917
Apparent function:	Merchant steam ship (single screw steel cargo liner)
Apparent origin:	Built Glasgow; registered Liverpool; traded Liverpool-West Africa; lost whilst requisitioned as a troopship off the Isle of Wight.

‘Statement of Importance’ framework

5.1.3.

Category	Description	Importance
Build	Merchant steam ship (single screw steel cargo liner) built in 1905. Typical foreign-going British merchant ship of the time. The vessel was modified for use as a troopship by the fitting of extra decks.	High. As a typical vessel of a significant type, the <i>Mendi</i> has the potential to provide detailed information concerning the build of such vessels and how they were converted into troopships. Iron and steel wrecks of the 20 th century have previously received very little archaeological attention in the UK.
Use	The vessel was built to serve the West Africa-Liverpool trade as part of the Elder Dempster group. It was subsequently chartered by the British government during WWI. It sank in 1917 whilst in use as a troopship, carrying South African Native Labourers to the Western Front.	High. The West Africa-Liverpool trade was an important legacy of the slave trade and of considerable significance to the UK and West African economies in the 19 th and early 20 th centuries. During WWI the use of troopships allowed the British to mobilise the resources of the British Empire and Commonwealth, a crucial factor in ultimate victory. A wide range of themes can be explored by considering how the ship was used.
Loss	The <i>Mendi</i> was lost in February 1917 off the Isle of Wight as a result of a collision. Huge loss of life resulted, amongst both the crew and labourers. The collision may have been avoidable and the scale of human losses could have been reduced had the other vessel	Very high. The loss of the <i>Mendi</i> caused and continues to cause controversy. It remains an iconic event in South Africa. The event is capable of having a higher profile in the UK. A wide range of themes can be explored by considering how the ship was lost. Some of these issues may be controversial.

Category	Description	Importance
	involved come to the aid of the <i>Mendi</i> .	
Survival	Diver investigation since 1974 appears to have demonstrated that the entire length of the hull survived the sinking intact. The superstructure and upper decks have collapsed but much artefactual evidence appears to survive. The deterioration of the wreck can be expected to continue	High. Reasonably coherent wreck with many elements of the ship and its contents still present. The condition of wrecks of this period is believed to be deteriorating rapidly and study of this site offers the opportunity to study this process.
Investigation	The site was identified in the 1970s and has been subject to some avocational investigations. The site is not surveyed, although its general layout is known. A large number of artefacts have been recovered from the site by sports divers but these have only been poorly recorded.	Currently low. The site is not well studied and the limited work that has been undertaken has not been published, other than in a very limited way. The site therefore has high potential in this respect.
Overall		Very high. The site has international importance. It combines a reasonably preserved example of a significant type of vessel with a significant and potentially controversial story. It offers an unusual opportunity to explore a wide range of themes which have modern resonance using an archaeological site as a starting point. It also has the potential to interest and inform an unusually wide range of potential audiences, some of whom are traditionally regarded by heritage curators as hard to reach.

5.2. MANAGEMENT CHARACTERISATION OF THE SITE

General

- 5.2.1. Archaeological and ecological investigation of the site has not yet progressed to the stage that it can be reliably characterised from a management perspective. It therefore follows that the need for long term active or passive management cannot be quantified until further work is carried out.
- 5.2.2. Furthermore, the various stakeholders and interested parties identified in this report have not yet been consulted. Given the known and potential significance of the site to various individuals and groups, both here and in South Africa, a thorough consultation exercise as regards the future management of the site is desirable once sufficient archaeological and other data is available.
- 5.2.3. On the basis that further investigation is required, an interim management strategy would be desirable to co-ordinate further work and to deal with any short term

management issues that may arise before a long term strategy can be devised. This interim strategy should be informed by the following assessment.

Ownership

- 5.2.4. WA has been unable to establish who owns the wreck of the *Mendi*. Neither the *Mendi* nor the *Darro* were Royal Navy ships, although the *Mendi* was on UK government War Service at the time of its loss. But, as it sank as a result of a collision, it was a marine rather than a war loss. As such the War Risk Office would not have been involved in the subsequent insurance claim and the Department for Transport is not therefore the owner of the wreck (Richard Davies, DFT, e-mail).
- 5.2.5. As a marine loss, the *Mendi* would almost certainly have been the subject of an insurance claim and the insurers would normally have become the owners of the wreck. However enquiries of the relevant Elder Dempster records indicate that they have not survived and enquiries of Lloyds have failed to identify the insurers concerned. WA is also aware that the Salvage Association has been unable to locate the current owners (Richard Davies, DFT, e-mail).
- 5.2.6. WA understands that some years ago Martin Woodward approached Ocean Transport and Trading, the successors to Elder Dempster, with regard to acquiring ownership. Whilst they had no objection in principle to assigning ownership to Mr Woodward, they were unable to confirm that they were the owners (Martin Woodward, pers. comm.).
- 5.2.7. WA is unaware of any other party that has sought to establish any form of ownership or right claim over the wreck of the *Mendi* in recent years. Whilst it seems highly unlikely that any such claim could exist, it is not inconceivable, and could impact upon the management of the site.

Vulnerability

- 5.2.8. Although the activities of recreational divers appear to have had a significant negative impact upon the site in previous years, there is little evidence to suggest that the site is currently vulnerable to any significant degree. It is possible though that the publicity surrounding this project and the 90th anniversary commemorations may increase visitor numbers. The increased risk of low level disturbance that this could cause may however be mitigated by the increasing awareness of war graves issues evident in the recreational diver community.
- 5.2.9. No evidence appears to exist at the present time for any significant impact due to other human activities, such as trawling or pollution.

War Grave Issues

- 5.2.10. The potential sensitivity of some stakeholders, for example the descendants of the dead in South Africa, to evidence for disturbance of the site by divers should not be underestimated or undervalued. If sufficient concern is raised in response to this report, then there may be an arguable case for bringing forward any decision on formally protecting the site. However, careful and sensitive briefing and advocacy on the part of EH may be sufficient to deal with this possibility.

Practicalities

- 5.2.11. The *Mendi* is an offshore site that is visited by groups of divers over whose activities EH and other bodies exercise little control or guidance. It should therefore be remembered that the policing of any restrictions placed upon access will be difficult. Education and information, rather than enforcement may therefore be the preferred option.

5.3. FIELDWORK

- 5.3.1. The management characterisation exercise conducted above has concluded that insufficient information is available concerning the condition of the site to enable a properly considered long term management strategy to be devised or implemented at this stage. The information required relates to the physical character and condition of the site and can therefore only be acquired by means of archaeological fieldwork and survey.
- 5.3.2. The South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) has indicated an interest in becoming involved in the future investigation of the site. Given the strong interest that there is in South Africa in the loss of the *Mendi* and the sensitivities that will undoubtedly be involved due to the probable presence of human remains, this interest should be encouraged.
- 5.3.3. In the long term, a more substantial South African involvement in the management and investigation of the site would be desirable. This may have the advantage of opening additional income streams for both fieldwork and outreach, and of developing international partnerships.

5.4. FURTHER DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 5.4.1. This report has been prepared on the basis of data available to WA at the agreed deadline date. However, for various reasons not all of the parties consulted have responded by and an addendum to the report may need to be prepared at some stage in the future if substantive new information is received.
- 5.4.2. The possible requirement for additional desk-based assessment should be considered when the results of fieldwork are available.
- 5.4.3. To ensure a wide dissemination of the formal results of this assessment, a downloadable version of this report will be made available on the project web pages, and all identified stakeholders notified of its availability online.

5.5. OUTREACH

- 5.5.1. The *Mendi* provides an excellent and unusual opportunity to use an underwater archaeological site to explore a wide range of themes with an unusually wide range of potential audiences. It combines a reasonably well preserved wreck with a fascinating story that has contemporary resonance, both here and in South Africa.
- 5.5.2. The *Mendi* offers huge potential for outreach to a range of UK and South African audiences. The story of the ship and the men who were lost with her has resonance for many people who do not normally see their histories reflected in the culture of this country. This is an opportunity to remember and acknowledge the lives of the

members of the SANLC, the crew and the shipbuilders: men who came from places as far flung as Liverpool, Glasgow and South Africa itself.

- 5.5.3. The potential for education is equally great. Almost any ship offers great scope for cross-curricular activities in terms of history, science, literacy, design technology, geography and mathematics. But the *Mendi* offers even more in the aspects of citizenship that can be covered through her story. As well as the important questions raised by colonial issues and the SANLC, there is the potential for links to be made between schools in Cape Town and Britain – particularly Glasgow, Liverpool and Southampton.
- 5.5.4. The *Mendi* also offers potentially rich opportunities for arts based outreach. This is unusual for a wreck site and it may offer opportunities for new funding streams to be exploited.

6. REFERENCES

- Albion, R.G., 1959, *Seaports South of Sahara*, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc.
- Alexander, R., 1939, *The Cruise of the Raider "Wolf"*, Jonathan Cape
- Anstey, R. & Hair, P.E.H. (eds.), 1976, *Liverpool, the African slave trade and abolition*, Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
- Author unknown, 1928, 'Retirement of a Liverpool Captain' in *The Journal of Commerce and Shipping Telegraph*, Saturday, January 14th
- Barriskill, D.T., 1994, *A Guide to the Lloyd's Marine Collection of the Guildhall Library*, London
- Buchan, J., 1920, *The History of the South African Labour Forces*, London
- Bauer, P.T., 1954, *West African Trade*, Cambridge University Press
- Behrens, C.B.A., 1955, *Merchant Shipping and the Demands of War*, H.M.S.O.
- Brasseys, 1919, *Brasseys Naval Annual 1919*, William Clowes & Sons Ltd.
- British Geological Survey, 1989, Wight (50°N 02°W) 1:250,000 series, Sea Bed Sediments
- British Geological Survey, 1995, Wight (50°N 02°W) 1:250,000 series, Solid Geology
- Bushell, T.A., 1939, *Royal Mail, 1839-1939*, Trade and Travel Publications Ltd.
- Caddy, P., 1982, *British Policy and Egyptian Unrest 1914-1920*, Unpublished PhD, London University
- Cameron, G. and Crook, S., 1992, *Liverpool, capital of the slave trade*, Picton Press
- Chandler, G., 1960, *Liverpool Shipping*, Phoenix House

- Clothier, N., 1987, *Black Valour: The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918, and the sinking of the Mendi*, University of Natal Press
- Cock, R. and Rodger, N.A.M., 2006, *A guide to the naval records in the national archives of the UK*, University of London and the National Archives of the UK
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission, *The Chinese Labour at the Western Front* (undated pamphlet)
- Cope, J. & Krige, U. (eds.), 1968, *Penguin Book of South African Verse*, Penguin Books
- Costello, R., 2001, *Black Liverpool; the history of Britain's oldest black community*, Picton Press
- Course, A.G., 1963, *The Merchant Navy: A Social History*, Frederick Muller
- Cowden, J.E., & Duffy, J.O.C., 1986, *The Elder Dempster Fleet History, 1852-1985*, Mallett & Bell Publications
- Coxon, C., 2007, 'The Sinking of the SS *Mendi*', *History Today*, February 2007
- Craig, R. & Jarvis, R., 1967, *Liverpool Registry of Merchant Ships*, Manchester University Press
- Davies, K.G., 1957, *The Royal African Company*, Longmans
- Davies, P.N., 1969, The African Steam Ship Company in Harris, J.R. (ed.), *Liverpool and Merseyside*, Frank Cass & Co.
- Davies, P.N., 1973, *The Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa 1852-1972*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Davies, P.N., 2000, *Research in Maritime History – The Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa, 1852-1972, 1973-1989*, International Maritime History Association
- Davies, P.N. & Bourn, A.M., 1972, Lord Kysant and the Royal Mail, *Business History*, Vol. XIV, No.2
- Deutsche Afrika-Linien, 1967, *A Short History of the German Africa Lines*, privately published by the company
- Elder Dempster & Co. Ltd., 1921, *The Elder Dempster Fleet in the War, 1914-1918*, privately published by the company
- Elgood, P.G., 1924, *Egypt and the Army*, Oxford
- Fage, J.D., 1955, *An Introduction to the History of West Africa*, Cambridge University Press

- Farwall, B., 1987, *The Great War in Africa (1914-1918)*, Penguin Books UK
- Fawcett, B.C., 2000, The Chinese Labour Corps in France 1917-1921, in *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol 40, pp 33-111
- Fay, L.C., 1948, 'Elder Dempster Lines, Limited', *Sea Breezes*, September
- Fayle, C.E., 1920, *Seaborne Trade, Volume 1*, John Murray
- Fayle, C.E., 1927, *The War and the Shipping Industry*, Oxford University Press
- Fayle, C.E., 1933, *A Short History of the World's Shipping Industry*, George Allen & Unwin
- Fenton, R., 2005, 'Elder, Dempster Datafile', *Ships Monthly*, October
- Fenton, R., 2007, 'West African Rivals', *Ships Monthly*, February
- Forrester, B., 1995, 'The Sinking of the Mendi', *Royal Mail News*, June
- Frost, D., 1999, *Work and Community Among West African Migrant Workers Since the Nineteenth Century*, Liverpool University Press
- Fryer, P., 1984, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*, Pluto Press
- Gleeson, I., 1994, *The Unknown Force: Black, Indian and Coloured soldiers through two world wars*, Ashanti Publications
- Grundlingh, A., 1987, *Fighting their own war: South African Blacks and the first World War*, Ravan Press
- Hammerton, J., (1935-1939), *The Great War, I Was There!*, Amalgamated Press, London
- Hamblin, R.J.O. et al., 1992, *United Kingdom offshore regional report: the geology of the English Channel*, HMSO for BGS
- Haws, Duncan, 1990, *Merchant Fleets: Elder Dempster Line*, TCL Publications
- Hilling, D., 1969, 'The Evolution of the Major Ports of West Africa', *Geographic Journal*, Vol. 135, Part 3
- Hodges, G.W.T., 1978, African Manpower Statistics for the British Forces in East Africa, 1914-18, in *Journal of African History*, Vol 19, No 1
- Hodges, G.W.T., 1986, *The Carrier Corps. Military Labour in the East African Campaign of 1914-18*, Westport
- Hollett, D., 1995, *The Conquest of the Niger by Land and Sea – From the Early Explorers and Pioneer Steamships to Elder Dempster and Company*, P.M. Heaton Publishing

Hyde, F.E., 1971, *Liverpool and the Mersey: an economic history of a port, 1700-1970*, David and Charles

Holt, C.R. (ed.), 1948, *The Diary of John Holt*, Henry Young & Sons

Howe, G.D., *A White Man's War? World War One and the West Indies*, article contributed to <http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>

Hoyle, B.S. and Hilling, D. (eds.), 1970, *Seaports and Development in Tropical Africa*, MacMillan

HMSO, 1919, *Mercantile War Losses*, HMSO

HMSO, 1921, *Return of shipping casualties and loss of life for the period ended 31st December 1918*, HMSO

<http://www.1914-1918.net/labour.htm>

<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/early/petition181216.html>

<http://www.cwgc.org>

<http://www.esconseil.fr/pramona/athos.htm>

http://www.geosites.com/labour_corps

<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20020705>

<http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

<http://www.mgtrust.org>

<http://www.nesa.org.uk/>

<http://www.royalpioneercorps.co.uk>

<http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/mm.htm>

<http://www.ttnt.co.uk/diving/>

<http://www.toonopedia.com/sloper.htm>

<http://www.wakefieldfhs.org.uk>

<http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>

Hurd, A., 1921, *History of the Great War: The Merchant Navy* (3 volumes), John Murray

Hyde, F.E., 1957, *Blue Funnel (A History of Alfred Holt & Co., Liverpool, 1865-1914)*, Liverpool University Press

- Hyde, F.E., 1967, *Shipping Enterprise and Management (Harrisons of Liverpool, 1830-1939)*, Liverpool University Press
- Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*
- Jane, F.T., 1918, *Janes Fighting Ships*, Janes
- Kemp, P. (ed.), 1976, *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, Oxford University Press
- Killingray, D., 1989, Labour Exploitation for Military Campaigns in British Colonial Africa 1870-1945, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 24, No 3 pp 483-501
- Kirkaldy, A.W., 1914, *British Shipping (Its History, Organisation and Importance)*, Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.
- Klein, H.S., 1999, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, Cambridge University Press
- Laird, D., 1961, *Paddy Henderson (The Story of P.Henderson & Co.)*, George Outram
- Leibuscher, C., 1963, *The West African Shipping Trade, 1909-1959*, A.W. Sythoff
- Liddell Hart, B.H., 1972, *A History of the First World War*, London
- Littler, D., 1999, *Guide to the Records of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Vol. II*, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- MacMillan, A., 1920, *The Red Book of West Africa*, Collingridge
- McDonald, K., unknown date, 'The 20-Minute Tragedy', *Diver* magazine
- McPhee, A., 1926, *The Economic Revolution in British West Africa*, George Routledge
- Maritime Archives & Library, 2007, Information Sheet 3: *Liverpool and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, National Museums Liverpool
- Maritime Archives & Library, 2007, Information Sheet 15: *Elder Dempster & Company*, National Museums Liverpool
- Maritime Archives & Library, 2007, Information Sheet 52: *Lloyd's Marine Insurance Records*, National Museums Liverpool
- Marriner, S., 1982, *The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside*, Croom Hall
- Martin, S.I., 1999, *Britain's Slave Trade*, Channel 4 Books

- Maw, N., 1999, *World War One Channel Wrecks: Vessels Lost in the English Channel 1914-1918*, Underwater World Publications Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool and the Atlantic Slave Trade, MMM
- Mohlamme, J.S., 1995, Soldiers Without Reward: Africans in South Africa's Wars, in *The Journal of the South African Military History Society*, Vol 10, No. 1 June 1995
- Mountfield, A.S., 1965, *Western Gateway: A History of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board*, Liverpool University Press
- Murray, M., 1933, *Ships and South Africa*, Oxford University Press
- Parkinson, C.N., 1952, *The Rise of the Port of Liverpool*, University Press, Liverpool
- Paul, R.B., 1920, *Colonial West Africa To-day: Elder Dempster Service*, African World
- Payne, D., *Forgotten Hands with Picks and Shovels*, article contributed to <http://web.westernfrontassociation.com>
- Peregrino, F.Z.S., 1917, *His Majesty's Black Labourers: a treatise on the Camp Life of the SANLC*, Cape Town
- Plaatje, S.T., 1916, *Native Life in South Africa*, London
- Phillips, R., 2002, 'Exploring an imperial region: North West England' in *North West Geography*, Volume 2, Number 1
- Pollard, S. & Robertson, P., 1979, *The British Shipbuilding Industry 1870-1914*, Harvard University Press
- Pritchard, M. and McDonald, K., 2001, *Dive Wight and Hampshire*, Underwater World Publications
- Putkowski, J., 1998, *British Army mutineers 1914-1922*, Francis Boutle, London
- Read, G. & Stammers, M.K., 1995, *Guide to the Records of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Vol. I*, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 25 October 2004, No. 26929
- Reynolds, E., 1985, *Stand the Storm: a History of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Allison & Busby
- Ritchie, L.A., 1992, *The Shipbuilding Industry. A Guide to Historical Records*, Manchester University Press
- Robinson, H., 1964, *Carrying British Mails Overseas*, George Allen & Unwin

- Russell Smith, J., 1919, *Influence of the Great War upon Shipping*, Oxford University Press
Salter, J.A., 1921, *Allied Shipping Control*, Oxford University Press
- Savage, D.C., and Forbes Munro, J., 1966, Carrier Recruitment in the British East African Protectorate, 1914-18, in *Journal of African History*, Vol 7, No 2
- Sherwood, M., 1997, 'Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891-1940: the genesis of underdevelopment', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 30/3
- Slaven, A., and Checkland, S., 1986-1990, *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography 1860-1960* (2 vols.), Aberdeen University Press
- Smith, K et al., 1998, *Records of Merchant Shipping and Seamen*, unpublished PRO Readers Guide number 20
- Smye, M.H., 1970, *Elder Dempster Fleet List 1852-1962*, publisher unknown
- Swinney, G, 1995, The Sinking of the ss *Mendi*, 21 February 1917, in *The South African Military History Society Military History Journal*, Vol 10, No. 1, June 1995
- Swinton, E., (ed), 1938, *Twenty Years After*
- Tennant, A.J., 1990, *British Merchant Ships Sunk by U-Boats in the 1914-1918 War*, Starling Press
- The Cape Times*, 10 March 1917, p 10
- Thomas, H., 1997, *The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440-1870*, Picador
- Thomas, P.N., 1992, *British Ocean Tramps, Vol. 1*, Waine Research Publications
- Thomas, T.C., 1919, *With a Labour Company in France*, Birmingham
- Turrell, R., 1984, Kimberley's Model Compounds, in *Journal of African History*, Vol 25, No 1
- Uys, I., 1993, *Survivors of Africa's Oceans*, Fortress Publishers, Germiston
- Van Crefeld, M., 1977, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*, Cambridge
- Van Onselen, C., (1977) Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933, in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3
- Walker, F.M., 2001, *Song of the Clyde: A History of Clyde Shipbuilding*, John Donald
- Walvin, J., 1992, *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery*, Harper Collins

Walvin, J., 1999, *The Slave Trade*, Sutton Publishing

Ward-McQuaid, website download January 2007,
www.clydesite.co.uk/clydebuilt/warships/vessel.asp?id=3423

Wendes, D., 2006, *South Coast Shipwrecks off East Dorset and Wight 1870-1979*, privately published

Wessex Archaeology, 2006, *On the importance of shipwrecks: Applying the Framework*, unpublished ALSF report for EH

Willan, B.P., 1978, The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918, in *Journal of African History*, Vol XIX, No. 1, pp 61-86

Williams, K., 2006, 'U-boat victim', *The Great War*, Issue 26

7. ARCHIVE

7.1.1. The project archive is currently stored at WA under project code 64441.

APPENDIX I: UK ARCHIVE MATERIAL

The following is a selective list of UK archive sources consulted for the purposes of this report. A full archive search was beyond the scope of this assessment and it is therefore possible that relevant archive sources exist that have not been located.

National Museums Liverpool

Most of the surviving archive material of the Elder Dempster group is held by the Maritime Archives and Library of National Museums Liverpool. Unfortunately, changes in the company structure following the Royal Mail Group collapse in 1932 and the damage sustained during the Liverpool Blitz in 1941 means that little material survives from before this date. Nothing that directly concerns the loss of the *Mendi* has been located during the course of this assessment.

Public Record Office

The principal records concerning the loss of the *Mendi* are contained in piece MT 9/1115, which deals with the subsequent Board of Trade enquiry and related correspondence. Otherwise there is little of direct relevance to the ship, other than the Inward Passenger Lists in the BT 26 series. The Board of Trade Mercantile Navy Lists contain similar information to Lloyd's Register.

Records concerning the foreign labour corps are located in a number of documents series. The bulk seem to be part of the War Office (WO 95, 106, 107, 329) series, and include medal roles, war diaries and other documents directly related to the activities of the labour corps. The Colonial Office (CO) records contain further material relating to the recruiting of native labour corps, and arrangements for their transportation to Europe. The Ministry of Transport (MT) series contains material related to the logistics of war transport for the foreign labour corps.

Lloyd's Records

Various Lloyd's lists and registers have been consulted for this assessment. These include:

- Lloyd's Register of Shipping
- Lloyd's Captains' Register
- Lloyd's List

Imperial War Museum

The IWM (London) holds a number of photographs of troops aboard or boarding the *Mendi* (Q15435, Q15592, Q15662).

National Maritime Museum

The NMM Greenwich holds the design plans of the *Karina* and *Mendi* (reference not given).

Private Archives

Relevant material has been examined from the private research archive of James Cowden. Martin Woodward also holds an archive for his investigations of the site and subsequent commemorative activities.

APPENDIX II: LIST OF POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

The following table should not be regarded as comprehensive. It is intended to demonstrate the range of potential consultees. It therefore does not represent the full range of people or organisations contacted during this assessment or the full range of potential stakeholders or other interested parties. Organisations or people not on this list are invited to make an expression of interest to EH or WA.

The list does not include potential stakeholders or interested parties in respect of outreach issues.

Potential Stakeholder or Interested Party	Reason for inclusion	Contact
Advisory Committee for Historic Wreck Sites (UK)	Advisors to UK government on matters pertaining to the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973)	Presentation on project made to Committee on 6 December 2006
Black and Asian Studies Network	Research and lobby group	Contacted through Marika Sherwood. Has provided information. Expression of interest (generally) received
Black Environment Network	Research and lobby group	WA a member. Contacted but did not respond
British Legion	Organisation for ex-service personnel, have been involved in previous <i>Mendi</i> commemorations	Not contacted
British Sub-Aqua Club	National representative body for recreational divers	Not contacted
City Gate Church, Brighton (contact Andrea Mason)	Have arranged commemorative delegations from South Africa. Some lobbying activity on behalf of relatives	Contacted and has provided information. Expressed interest in future involvement (generally)
Commonwealth War Graves Commission	Pays tribute to the Commonwealth losses in the two world wars. Holds records of the last resting places of many of the <i>Mendi</i> dead. Has been actively involved in commemorative activities	Contacted and has provided information. Expressed interest in future involvement (commemorative activities and linked research).
Ray Costello and Marika Sherwood	Researchers in related black studies issues	Contacted. Information and expressions of interest received.
Dick Midhage, Honorary Secretary www.ChadburnTelegraphs.com	Expert advice on ship telegraphs	Contacted and has provided information.
English Heritage	Potential curator and project commissioning body	n/a
Hants & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology	Regional archaeological contractor which is reported to have long-term listed the <i>Mendi</i> for possible investigation	Contacted. Not yet responded to a general request for information and expression of interest.
Gardline Marine Sciences	Gardline surveyed the site in 2002. Geophysical survey division may still hold survey data	Contacted. Not yet responded to a request concerning the availability of survey data for the site.
Glasgow University Archive Services	Curator of archive material for Alexander Stephen, shipbuilders	Contacted. They do not hold directly relevant data.
Hampshire Record Office	Curator of archive material for Hampshire	Contacted. They do not hold directly relevant data.

Potential Stakeholder or Interested Party	Reason for inclusion	Contact
Isle of Wight Archive Service	Curator of archive material relating to the IoW. Have undertaken some outreach work in 2006	Contacted. They do not hold directly relevant data. Expressed interest in future involvement (generally).
Isle of Wight Archaeology and Historic Environment Service	Local archaeological curator. Holds the relevant sites and monuments record	Contacted. Holds no information for the site.
Iziko Maritime Museum, Cape Town	Possible information in the Marsh Collection Potential exhibition display venue	Not new information found in the Marsh Collection Real interest in hosting display
Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee (JNAPC)	Non-statutory government advisory body on maritime heritage	Not contacted
Martin Woodward	Discovered and identified the site in 1974; has researched the site and attempted to purchase it; long standing involvement in commemorative activities; given a number of important artefacts from the site in lieu of salvage (now in his private maritime museum/visitor centre on IoW) Maintains an interest in the site	Contacted and has provided information and access to artefacts. Expressed interest in future involvement (generally)
Merchant Navy Association	Prominent UK Merchant Navy lobby group. Objectives include helping to extend interest and learning in maritime and coastal heritage. Were involved in lobbying for the protection of ss <i>Stora</i> . Contact is the National Secretary (Tim Brant) at mna.national@virgin.net	Contacted. Expressed interest in future involvement (site management and commemorative activities)
Merseyside Maritime Museum	Curator of archive material for Elder Dempster	Contacted. They do not hold directly relevant data
Ministry of Defence	Potential curator	Contacted. Have responded with information and have confirmed that they do not own the wreck. Expressed interest in future involvement (site management)
National Ex-Services Association (NESA)	Ex-service lobby group	Contacted via email - Arthur Lane and Chris Hilliard. No reply
National Maritime Museum	National curator of ship plans and photographs	Contacted. Have provided available ship plans
Nautical Archaeology Society	UK based society for maritime archaeology and avocational training provider	Contacted. Expressed interest in future involvement (Adopt-a-Wreck scheme)
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum of Art, Port Elizabeth	Art museum which owns Hilary Graham's paintings of the wreck of the <i>Mendi</i>	Contacted and supplied us with images and permissions to use them. Expressed interest in future involvement
NMR	Potential curator of site archive	Contacted. Holds no records for this site
Receiver of Wreck	Holds partial details of artefacts removed from the wreck. Any further artefacts recovered from the site may be reported to the Receiver	Contacted. Has provided available information

Potential Stakeholder or Interested Party	Reason for inclusion	Contact
South African Heritage Resources Agency	National heritage body with responsibility for underwater heritage, graves of victims of conflict and living heritage / oral tradition	Close contact throughout assessment, with visit by maritime archaeologist to meet with WA and EH
South African High Commission	Contact for commemorations in UK	Have had discussions with Head of Defence Section
South African Navy	Holds information, and has named two of its vessels to commemorate the <i>Mendi</i>	Contacted various people, including Navy New and Public Relations section
South African Military History Society	Source of possible information amongst members	Contacted, and have received feedback from members
South African National Museum of Military History	Holds photos of the SANLC and some documentary information	Have obtained photos
South African National Defence Force Documentation Centre	Holds primary documents relating to the SANLC	Contacted and have a breakdown of holdings
South African Legion	Links to the descendants of SANLC veterans. Administers Mendi Memorial Fund, and had hand in Avalon Cemetery memorial	Have contacted
Southampton Archives Service and Southampton Library Service (Special Collections)	Curator of archive material; specialist maritime library	Contacted. Has provided information
Southampton Museums Service	A curator of maritime material for the region	Contacted. Holds no material related to this site
UKHO	Holds charting and survey information for the site	Contacted. Has provided information
Government of the Republic of South Africa	National government of many of the casualties and their descendants	Contacted through the relevant agency, SARA. Has provided information. Strong expression of interest received (generally)
Avocational dive clubs and commercial organisations providing related services, such as dive boat charterers	Recreational users of the site and their service providers	A wide range of regional clubs and commercial concerns contacted. Many have provided information and/or expressed interest

APPENDIX III: ARTEFACTS RECOVERED FROM THE WRECK OF THE *MENDI*

Pre-1993

The following artefacts are currently displayed at the Arreton Shipwreck Centre, formerly the Bembridge Maritime Museum, and are either owned by Martin Woodward or on loan. None of the artefacts have been fully recorded, although they are listed on the centre's database, which will shortly be updated (Martin Woodward, pers. comm.). WA has not examined the existing database and do not know whether it complies with the relevant MDA guidance and standards. As with post-1993, these probably represent only a small proportion of the material salvaged from the site during this period. WA understands that all of the artefacts recovered from the site by Martin Woodward have been reported to the Receiver of Wreck (Martin Woodward, pers. comm.):

Artefact description	Quantity
Ship's bridge telegraph, composite with brass case, manufactured by Chadburns Liverpool Ltd. (arm in stop position)*	1
Cooking pot, cuprous	1
Small cylindrical water heater, cuprous, marked Henry Wilson & Co. Ltd.	1
Engine room telegraph, composite with brass case, manufactured by Chadburns Liverpool Ltd.	1
Scuttle, brass, top hinged, two dogs, no deadlight, glass intact but cracked and abraded. Probably from the passenger cabins on the upper or poop decks.	1
Rectangular window or scuttle, brass, top hinged, two dogs, possible window stay, glass missing	1
Sliding metal windows, brass, winding gear ('sash' opens downwards partially) glass intact. Probably from the First Class dining saloon (poop deck), the First Class Music room or the First Class Smoke Room (both bridge deck)	3
Ship's wheel, brass deck mount/stand, centre of wheel composite with brass spindle and cover and eroded stubs of wooden spokes, marked 'Harrison Engine Co. Ocean Works Salford Manchester'	1
Silver salver (believed to be the salvor referred to in Droit 246/00)	1
Small ceramic bowl, white glazed, blue transfer printing, central crest with B&ASNC flag and text 'B&ASN Co. Ltd.' and 'Elder Dempster & Co. Ltd.' above and below respectively.	1

*Chadburns were a Liverpool firm that gained fame through their invention and development of the bridge telegraph and other control equipment. After being granted a patent in 1870 William Chadburn developed the business to such an extent that by 1900 the company had a virtual monopoly and claimed that 6000 commercial and 850 naval vessels had been fitted with its equipment. Many famous vessels such as the *Lusitania* and *Mauretania* used Chadburn instruments. Although it is no longer the dominant force that it was, the company is still in existence producing telegraph systems and electronic instruments from a new base in Leeds (information from the Chadburn Ships' Telegraph Society website at <http://www.chadburntelegraphs.com/history.html>). The *Mendi* telegraph is an unusually early surviving example of a Chadburn telegraph (Dick Midhage, pers.com.).

Post-1993

The following artefacts have been reported to the Receiver of Wreck since 1993 as having been salvaged from the site. It is likely that the following list represents only a small proportion of the artefacts recovered from the site by avocational divers, either for profit or personal interest. It is unlikely that any accessible large brass artefacts such as saloon windows remain *in situ*.

WA understands that the *Mendi's* bell is rumoured to have been salvaged by recreational divers. However WA has been unable to confirm this.

Artefact description	Quantity	Receiver comment
Porthole	1	Offered in lieu of salvage but finder asked to donate find to Bembridge (now Arreton Shipwreck Centre) or South African Museum (Droit 137/01).
Silver plated salvers, marked 'B&A SCo Ld on top of rim and 'Walker & Hall, Sheffield, England'*	2	Items donated to Bembridge Maritime Museum (now Arreton Shipwreck Centre) & 'Bayworld' SA – title passed directly to them (Droit 246/00).
Porthole, brass with two dogs, door, no glass, approximately 22 inches diameter (0.56m)	1	Item donated to 'Bayworld' SA – title passed directly to them (Droit 273/00).
Brass cover (?)	1	Request no further items removed due to loss of life. Offered in lieu of salvage but finder asked to consider donation to Bembridge or South African Museum (Droit 338/01).
Saloon sash windows, brass, marked 'J. Stone London Patent' (believed to be two of the sliding metal windows referred to above)	2	Emailed Martin Woodward 13.01.03 asking whether the windows had arrived. Mr Moorecroft plans to take them in February 03. Mr Moorcroft telephoned 19/9/03 to confirm windows have been deposited in person at Bembridge (Droit A/0017).
Porthole	1	Item offered in lieu of salvage (Droit A/1386)
Part bowl	1	Item offered in lieu of salvage (Droit A/2401)
Fuse	1	Item offered in lieu of salvage (Droit A/2401)
'Brass items'	2	Item offered in lieu of salvage (Droit A/2401)
Porthole	1	Item offered in lieu of salvage (Droit A/2828)
Porthole	1	Item offered in lieu of salvage (Droit A/3769)
Large ship's window and frame with winding gear	1	At Shipwreck and Heritage Centre, Charlestown (Droit A/4509)
15mm machine gun ammunition rounds	Unknown	At Shipwreck and Heritage Centre, Charlestown (Droit A/4509)
Indian nickel coins	Unknown	At Shipwreck and Heritage Centre, Charlestown (Droit A/4509)

*Walker & Hall were one of the largest manufacturers of silver and plate from the late 19th until the mid 20th century. The original partnership, founded in the mid-1800s by George Walker, traded as Walker & Co. Henry Hall joined in 1848 and the firm became first Walker, Coulson and Hall and then Walker & Hall. By 1890 they employed 700, producing both electroplate and high quality silverware. They became top quality machine-made producers of all major flatwares and canteens. Their products are found with London, Chester and Sheffield hallmarks and with their distinctive 'W&H' mark within a flag ('JEB' and 'JEB/FEB' marks were also used). They were taken over in the 1960s by Mappin & Webb.

APPENDIX IV: DESCRIPTION OF THE *MENDI*

General Specifications

The *Mendi* was a single screw steel steamship, described as a 'steel screw steamer' by its builders, Alexander Stephen & Sons Ltd. The *Mendi* was built at their yard at Linthouse in the Govan area of Glasgow and was launched on 19 June 1905.

The vessel was built for British and African Steam Navigation Company Ltd. Lloyd's Register for 1916-17 recorded them as owners, with Elder Dempster & Co. Ltd. as managers. British flagged, the vessel's port of registry was Liverpool.

Gross tonnage was 4230 tons (Lloyd's Register, 1916-17) or 4,229.53 tons (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1) and net registered tonnage 2639 tons (Lloyd's Register 1916-17) or 2,638.72 tons (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1).

The vessel is recorded as having been 370.2 feet (112.84m) long, 46.2 feet (14.08m) in breadth and with a depth of hold of 26.96 feet (8.22m) (Lloyd's Register 1916-17 and Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1). 'Depth' is described in Lloyd's Register as 23.3 feet (7.10m).

The *Mendi* appears to have had a fairly typical design for a combined passenger/cargo carrier, commonly known as a cargo liner. Clincher (clinker) built in steel, it would have been of riveted construction. Although officially registered as a two deck vessel, examination of the builder's plans indicates it had in fact eight decks. In accordance with criteria published by Lloyds at the turn of the century, the *Mendi* would have been classified as a vessel having forecastle with a long poop and bridge combined (a well deck vessel) (Thomas 1992). The ship had a normal vertical design bow and a counter stern.

The *Mendi* is given the abbreviated ship prefix 'RMS' in the tribute to its fleet published by Elder Dempster in the aftermath of the war (Elder Dempster 1921). This prefix, whose longer form is 'Royal Mail Ship' (sometimes Steam-ship or Steamer) was used for seagoing vessels that carried mail under contract to the British Royal Mail. The prefix would be used only when the vessel was actually contracted to carry mail, at other times it would revert to the normal prefix for the vessel type, in the *Mendi*'s case 'ss'. The Elder Dempster use of this term suggests that at the time of its loss, the *Mendi* was contracted to carry mail.

Livery

B&ASNC ships had black funnels from 1868-1920. Hulls were black with a red waterline. Masts were brown. Contemporary photographs of the *Mendi* appear to confirm that it had a black hull and funnel whilst it was chartered as a troopship.

General arrangement

The following description is taken from the shipbuilders plans for *Karina* and *Mendi* held by the Plans and Photographs Section of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich except where indicated. It is not known whether the *Mendi* as built was identical to the plans, although examination of available photographs does not suggest any obvious and significant differences.

The *Mendi* was powered by three triple-expansion direct-acting, vertical, inverted-cylinder engines capable of 424 horse power nominal (the Board of Trade enquiry gives the figure as 654, but Lloyd's Register consistently gives the lower figure). These were supplied with steam by four steel boilers, working at a pressure of 180 pounds. Cylinder diameter was 29 inches, 46 inches and 77 inches respectively (0.74, 1.17 and 1.96m) and the length of stroke was 51 inches (1.30m) (all Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1). Register speed was 13 knots although full speed in 1917 appears to have been about 12 knots (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 2).

The hull was constructed of steel frames at 24 inch spacing at bow and stern and 26 inch spacing elsewhere. Framing is described as 'deep' in Lloyd's Register. The vessel had a double bottom. Hull skin was of riveted steel clinker plates. Decks were of steel plate, mostly sheathed in five inch by three inch (12.7x7.62cm) pitch pine planks. Deck beams appear to have been slightly bulb shaped.

The *Mendi* had six water-tight transverse bulkheads, arranged as follows: forward of the chain locker; between Hold Nos. 1 and 2; between Hold No. 2 and the coal bunker forward of the boiler space; aft of the engine space; between Hold Nos. 3 and 4; and aft of the powder magazine at the stern.

The *Mendi* had four holds. Hold Nos. 1 and 2 were forward of the 'midships engine and boiler room spaces and Hold Nos. 3 and 4 aft. Maximum hold dimensions were roughly:

Hold 1 – 31 x 42 feet (9.45 x 12.80m)
Hold 2 – 36 x 44 feet (10.97 x 13.41m)
Hold 3 – 13 x 42.5 feet (3.96 x 12.80m)
Hold 4 - 12 x 39 feet (3.66 x 11.89m)

Each hold had a combing that was two feet (0.61m) high and a single hatchway. The hatchways for Hold Nos. 3 and 4 were trunked through the upper deck. Hatchways were covered with portable wooden gratings which would normally be covered with tarpaulins and battened down during rough weather (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1). Crew access to each hold was by an iron ladder on the fore part. Hatch dimensions were:

Hold 1 - 17.4 x 14 feet (5.30m x 4.27m)
Hold 2 – 23 x 14 feet (7.01 x 4.27m)
Hold 3 – 15.2 x 14 feet (4.63 x 4.27m)
Hold 4 - 15.2 x 14 feet (4.63 x 4.27m)

The main deck ran the full length of the vessel, splitting the holds into two parts, upper and lower. The two parts were connected by hatches.

Above the main deck there was an upper deck comprising second and some first class accommodation which extended from aft of the forward cargo hatches to the stern, an open well deck section around the forward cargo hatches, and another enclosed section forward of the cargo hatches. The latter section contained the crew quarters and was immediately below the forecastle deck. This 'midships and aft enclosed parts of this deck were pierced by the boiler and engine spaces and by the trunked cargo hatches of the two aft holds.

Above this was the poop deck. This extended from aft of the forward cargo hatches to the stern. Aft an enclosed part of the deck contained the steering gear house and further second class accommodation. An enclosed 'midships section comprised the first class saloon forward of the funnel and the second class saloon aft of the engine casing. The galley and additional first class accommodation were on this part of the deck. Between the enclosed sections was an open well deck around the aft cargo hatches.

At the same level and forward of the forward cargo hatches, there was an open forecastle deck. A flying for and aft bridge connected the forecastle deck with the enclosed 'midships section of the poop deck. The forecastle deck was fitted with a windlass for handling the anchors.

Above the enclosed 'midships section of the poop deck was the upper bridge deck (described as bridge deck in **Figure 1**). This comprised an open deck with two enclosed sections. The forward enclosed section comprised the captain's cabin, an additional crew cabin and the chart room, together with the first class music room, whilst the section aft of the engine casing contained the first class smoke room and the cabins of the chief and second officers. The open deck was intended as a promenade area for passengers.

Aft of the unenclosed area of the poop deck was the unenclosed after boat deck. This was joined to the aft end of the upper bridge deck by another flying for and aft bridge. Two surf boats and the gig were stowed on this deck, the former on davits. Surf boats were used for landing passengers and cargo on beaches, a role that was particularly important if the ship had to call at places lacking a deep water port. The gig was the general purpose boat for the ship and would have been light, narrow and oar-driven.

Above the upper bridge deck was the boat deck. This comprised two separate unenclosed sections, one forward and one aft of the funnel. The forward section comprised the open bridge, where the ship's wheel, compass and bridge telegraph were fixed. . The outer edges of both the boat and bridge decks were supported by stanchions.

Two lifeboats were stowed on each section of the bridge deck, one either side on davits. This arrangement, described as over-deck lifeboats, was a feature of the modified Zungeru class and was new to the Elder Dempster fleet. It gave more deck space and all subsequent vessels in the fleet were fitted with this over-deck arrangement (Haws 1990).

The *Mendi* was schooner rigged with two masts, one between the forward hatches and the other between the aft hatches. The forward mast was fitted with six derricks for cargo handling and the aft with four. The forward derricks were served by four cargo winches and the aft derricks by two. It is assumed that these were steam powered.

The vessel was powered by a triple expansion steam engine driving a single screw and capable of 13 knots in 1917 (Lloyds Register)

General arrangements as a troopship

The arrangement of the additional 'tween decks fitted in Lagos is currently unknown. Plans of the modified accommodation arrangements do not appear to survive, although it is possible that further archive searches may produce information on how exactly the new decks were laid out. Additionally research into the provision of temporary decks in other merchant ships modified to carry troops may provide further clues.

It is reasonable to assume that the decks were intended to be temporary as they would not have been required or suitable for normal cargo carrying. It is also reasonable to assume that they were specifically designed rather than being fabricated ad-hoc as it is known that fittings for these decks were brought out from Liverpool (they were not fitted there because the ship was required to carry cargo on the outbound voyage). This suggests that the temporary decks would have been fairly substantial structures. It also reinforces the view that a fairly standard design may have been used to add temporary decks to converted troopships.

The ‘fittings’ brought out from Liverpool were probably prefabricated iron or steel beams and supports. These would probably have been riveted or clamped on and then planked over with locally sourced wood, although it is conceivable (but much less likely) that the fittings also included deck plates.

It is known that Holds 1-2 and 3 were divided by the fitting of at least one temporary deck in each. Troops were then billeted on these decks. It is not known whether troops were also billeted on the bottom of the holds, although this seems unlikely. It is possible that the ‘tween decks were created by boarding over the holds at the level of the main deck, whose gangways would presumably have provided good support.

The *Mendi* appears to have carried six lifeboats, Nos. 1-6, when she went down. The designs show only four, but it is not known when the additional two were fitted. They appear to have replaced the surf boats on the after boat deck. They may have gone aboard either during civilian service or when the vessel was chartered as a troop ship. A comment in Board of Trade Maritime Department internal correspondence confirms that the *Mendi* was believed to have aboard the same number of lifeboats when it went down that it left Liverpool (PRO/MT 9/115, M32925). The boats were all of wood and clincher (clinker) built. The capacity of the lifeboats at the time of the loss was as follows (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1):

- No. 1 – 49 persons (boat deck, starboard side)
- No. 2 – 48 persons (boat deck, port side)
- No. 3 – 48 persons (boat deck, starboard side)
- No. 4 – 49 persons (boat deck, port side)
- No. 5 – 41 persons (after boat deck, starboard side)
- No. 6 – 39 persons (after boat deck, port side)

The capacity of the gig is not known but is likely to be limited. The Board of Trade inquiry reported that all of the boats, with the exception of the gig, were kept carried under davits, swung out and ready to lower. This appears to be confirmed by a photograph of the *Mendi* taken at Calabar in 1916 (Elder Dempster 1921). Interestingly other photographs show the lifeboats stowed on the boat deck rather than being swung out and this may have been the normal civilian arrangement.

The *Mendi* also carried 46 life rafts of the buoyant air tank type and fitted with lifelines. Each of these had a capacity of 20 persons. Twenty of these were stowed on the hatches (principally Hatch No. 3) on the after well deck and 26 on and around the structures of the forward well deck (Board of Trade 1914-20: 7732, 1).

APPENDIX V: SERVICE HISTORY OF THE *MENDI*

The following service history of the *Mendi* has been compiled from Inward Passenger Lists of the Board of Trade. They are for the period 1906-1916, when the *Mendi* was chartered. The dates are therefore for the end of each voyage in Liverpool and it is assumed that the voyages are round trips. It is assumed that the first named port of embarkation was the starting point of the return leg. It is not known whether the same ports were visited on the outbound leg. The time gaps between arrivals at Liverpool do suggest that the vessel was employed on a variety of regular scheduled sailings, although the itineraries do not appear to precisely conform to the regular Elder Dempster and B&ASNC itineraries traced by WA.

The maiden cargo carrying voyage of the *Mendi* commenced on Saturday 30 September 1905 when the ship left Liverpool bound for West Africa (James Cowden, pers. comm.).

The dates suggest that it is unlikely that any commercial voyages were undertaken between the last voyage listed and the first charter voyage in October 1916. It is not known whether any voyages were undertaken before the first listed, other than a delivery voyage, although this seems unlikely as the vessel was launched in June of the previous year and fitting out, trials and a delivery voyage would have been required.

Pre-charter to the UK Government

Route	Embarking at	Date of arrival at Liverpool	For
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Conakry, Grand Canary, Plymouth	25/01/1906	Elder Dempster Company Ltd
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Cape Castle, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Lahou, Bathurst, Grand Canary, Plymouth	05/04/1906	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Tenerife, Plymouth	06/1906	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Axim, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	24/08/1906	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Idah, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Tarkwa, Axim, Grand Canary, Las Palmas, Plymouth	01/11/1906	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Cape Coast, Monrovia, Sierra Leone, Plymouth	10/01/07	African Steamship Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Burutu, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Koko, Cape Coast, Axim, Sierra Leone, Ossea, Madeira, Grand Canary, Las Palmas, Plymouth	25/03/07	African Steamship Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Oka, Burutu, Abeokoto, Onitsha, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast Castle, Axim, Sierra Leone, Conakry, Grand Canary, Las Palmas (& Plymouth?)	29/05/07	African Steamship Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Lokoja, Forcados, Lagos, Sekondi, Cape Coast, Axim, Monrovia, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	10/08/07	African Steamship Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Lokoja, Warri, Forcados, Abuasi Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Cape Coast, Axim, Sierra Leone, Grand Canary, Las Palmas, Plymouth	20/10/07	African Steamship Company Ltd.

Route	Embarking at	Date of arrival at Liverpool	For
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Grand Canary, Las Palmas, Axim, Burutu, Las Palmas, Accra, Northern Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sekondi, Plymouth	28/12/07	African Steamship Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Madeira, Axim, Sierra Leone, Grand Canary, Sekondi, Plymouth	07/03/1908	Elder Dempster & Company
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sierra Leone, Grand Canary, Sekondi, Axim, (Plymouth)	16/05/1908	Elder Dempster & Company
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Unknown port/s in West Africa, Tenerife, (Plymouth?)	04/08/1908	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Sekondi, Accra, Axim, Las Palmas, Sierra Leone, Plymouth	02/10/1908	Elder Dempster & Company
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Plymouth	11/12/1908	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	04/02/1909	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	21/04/1909	Elder Dempster & Company
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Focados, Lagos, Sekondi, Axim, Seirra Leone, Las Palmas Cape Coast, Plymouth	08/07/1909	African Steamship Company
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Sekondi, Axim, Plymouth	22/09/1909	Elder Dempster & Company
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Plymouth	11/12/1909	Elder Dempster & Company
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	26/02/1910	Elder Dempster Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Bathurst, Grand Canary, Plymouth	16/05/1910	Elder Dempster Company Ltd.
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcades, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	23/07/1910	Elder Dempster Lines Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Burutu, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	01/10/1910	Elder Dempster Company Ltd.
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcades, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	12/12/1910	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	21/02/1911	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Cape Coast, Monrovia, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	02/05/1911	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Addah, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	15/07/1911	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Cape Coast, Sierra Leone, Plymouth	02/10/1911	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Quittah, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Grand Canary, Las Palmas, Plymouth	17/12/1911	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Monrovia, Sierra Leone, Grand Bassam	24/02/1912	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Monrovia, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	27/05/1912	B&ASNC

Route	Embarking at	Date of arrival at Liverpool	For
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	11/08/1912	B&ASNC
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	28/10/1912	B&ASNC
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	12/01/1913	B&ASNC
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Grand Canary, Plymouth	07/04/1913	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Grand Canary, Las Palmas, Plymouth	23/06/1913	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi, Grand Bassam, Sierra Leone, Tenerife, Plymouth	07/09/1913	African Steamship Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Grand Bassam, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Tenerife	16/11/1913	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Fernando Po, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Bathurst, Las Palmas, Tenerife, Plymouth	09/02/1914	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Cape Coast, Sierra Leone, Monrovia, Bathurst, Las Palmas, Plymouth	(26/04/1914?)	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Cotonou, Koko, Cape Palmas, Sierra Leone, Monrovia, Las Palmas, Tenerife, (Plymouth?)	(27/04/1914?)	B&ASNC
WestAfrica (Lagos)-Liverpool	Lagos, Accra, Sekondi and Freetown, Sierra Leone, Plymouth	19/06/1914	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Forcados, Bonny, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Grand Bassam, Monrovia, Sierra Leone, Plymouth	15/08/1914	African Steamship Company Ltd.
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Cotonou, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	17/11/1914	Elder Dempster Company Ltd.
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Lomé, Accra, Sekondi, Grand Bassam, Sierra Leone, Tenerife, Plymouth	01/02/1915	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Douala, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Las Palmas, Plymouth	01/05/1915	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Douala, Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Lomé, Accra, Sekondi, Axim, Sierra Leone, Dakar, Tenerife, Plymouth	26/08/1915	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Douala, Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Lomé, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Dakar, Plymouth	14/12/1915	B&ASNC
WestAfrica-Liverpool	Douala, Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Dakar, Plymouth	02/04/1916	B&ASNC
WestAfrica (Calabar)-Liverpool	Calabar, Bonny, Forcados, Lagos, Lomé, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, Plymouth	01/07/1916	B&ASNC

WestAfrica (Calabar)- Liverpool	Douala, Calabar, Bonny, Victoria, Forcados, Lagos, Lomé, Accra, Sekondi, Sierra Leone, (Plymouth?)	16/09/1916	B&ASNC
---------------------------------------	--	------------	--------

Post-Charter to the UK Government

A normal commercial cargo may have been carried on the outbound journey from Liverpool to Lagos. Vessels requisitioned for war service were often allowed to return to commercial trade when not needed.

Route	Calling/embarking at	Dates	For
Liverpool-West Africa (Lagos)	?	10/1916-?/1916	?
Lagos-Dar-es-Salaam	Calabar, Cape Town, Dar-es-Salaam	?/1916-?/1916	UK Government
Dar-es-Salaam-Cape Town	Durban, Cape Town	?/1916-?/1916	UK Government
Cape Town-Le Havre (did not reach)	Lagos, Sierra Leone, Plymouth	25/01/1917- 21/01/1917	UK Government

The following masters are known to have commanded the *Mendi*:

- G.N. Hampson, 1905-09;
- Johnstone Hughs, 1905-12
- J.J. Toft, 1912-13;
- Jons Anderson, 1913-1914;
- W.E. Potter, 1915;
- H.A. Yardley, 1916-1917.

The following cargoes were typically carried outbound from Liverpool to West Africa (from the research archive of J.E. Cowden):

- Motor cars;
- Railway sleepers;
- Alcohol;
- Confectionary and soft drinks;
- Manufactured cotton goods;
- Nails and screws;
- Glass;
- Manufactured goods generally.

The following cargoes were typically carried inbound to Liverpool from West Africa (also from the research archive of J.E. Cowden):

- Palm kernels and palm oil;
- Groundnuts and groundnut oil;
- Rubber;
- Timber;

- Latex and rubber;
- Gold;
- Manganese and other ores;
- Other raw materials.

APPENDIX VI: LIST OF CASUALTIES**Crew (from Elder Dempster and Co. Ltd., 1921)**

Name	Rank
Raine, H.	2nd Officer
Swall, W.W.	3rd Officer
Steele, A.R.	Surgeon
Bowen, R.	Deck Boy
Nicol, J.	Fireman
Johnson, J.	Foreman
James, T.	Trimmer
Brown, J.	Trimmer
Harris, F.	Steward
Hennesey, W.	Steward
Holmes, A.	Steward
Fargher, A.	Steward
Bogie, W.	Steward
Adams, L.J.	Steward
Cross, R.	Steward
Evans, J.	Steward
Bailey, J.A.	Steward
Okill, H.	2nd Cook
Oborn, W.	3rd Cook
Cooper, W.	Baker
Morris, W.B.	Scullion
Mole, H.	Marconi Operator
James, T.	Assistant Baker
Framley, R.	A.B. (Able Seaman)
Carroll, W.H.	Gunner
Johnson, D.	Fireman
Johnson, C.	Fireman
Thompson, S.	Trimmer
James, J.	Trimmer
Friday, S.D.	Deck Hand
Foster, W.	Deck Boy

Passengers (from Clothier, 1987)

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Emslie, S.	Lieutenant	Moeng, Sampson	9945
Richardson, E.H.	Lieutenant	Mofokeng, Koos	10953
Turner, T.K.	Regimental Sergeant Major	Mogalobutha, Klaas	9183
Botes, A.D.	Staff Sergeant	Mogorosi, Benjamin	10433
Cockrell, A.	Staff Sergeant	Mohale, Jacob	9177
Botha, C.H.	Colour Sergeant	Mohase, Vellum	9660
Ford, T.A.	Colour Sergeant	Mohowe, William	9128
Knaggs, R.	Colour Sergeant	Mokatakisa, Hendrick	10963
MacTavish, R.A.	Colour Sergeant	Mokgeleli, Aaron Jili	9333
Abraham, Andries	11164	Mokgosi, Aaron	9370

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Abrahams, Fred	11163	Mokgwere, Samuel	9743
Aliveni, Jim	8911	Mokhali, Simon	10958
Bade, George	9707	Mokhapo, Mac	9129
Badlana, Joel	10016	Molabi, Amos	9156
Baleni, Langeni	11098	Molelekoa, Titus	9819
Banana, Nkeni	9665	Molide, Sitebe	9267
Bangani, Mxonywa	9379	Molife, Andries	11194
Basilie, Isaac	9170	Molife, Linesa	9269
Bay, James	9294	Molife, Mosmiti	9268
Beko, Heny	9374	Molisanyane, Andries	9951
Beta, Jack	9164	Moloi, Kleinbooi	9797
Beyulea, Windvogel	11070	Moloi, Philip	11189
Bhay, Jim	9260	Moloyi, Mreki	9557
Bikleni, Dodoka	9377	Moloyi, Ntikimana	9275
Bokleni, Henry	7587	Molthlakane, Letsie	9838
Booi, John	9690	Monahela, Edward	10959
Bovi, Mkokeli	10017	Monamatuga, Thomas	9191
Bungane, Freddy	11169	Mongologa, Joseph	9700
Butitje	9802	Monoke, Johannes	9825
Chesa, Elijah	11170	Montso, Michael	11152
Collis, Vimba	9650	Monyako, Philip	9835
Dabani, Jim	9241	Monyele, Elias	9368
Dampi, Piet	9203	Morashe, Jim	9401
Danki, Thomas	9215	More, Pinefas	10434
Dano, William	9265	Morolong, Walter	11178
Dealtaha, Annaniya	9754	Moshe, Moses	9132
Dengese, Aldum	9567	Moshimane, Jack	10377
Dinoka, Geelbooi	9780	Mositsi, Amos	9739
Ditsepo, William	9436	Motaung, Jacob	9950
Dyushani, John	10018	Motebang, Eliah	10962
Eland, Piet	11138	Motela, Jack	9187
Etea, Piet	11188	Mothei, Jan	9741
Fidyoli, John	11172	Motobi, Peter	7210
Franci, Rueben	9956	Motsoahai, Mpalakela	10957
Fule, Steven	9261	Mpafulane, Udmund	9366
Gabaza, William	564	Mpatu, Simon	9437
Gabutloeloe, Lucas	9708	Mpee, Johannes	9901
Geina, Manie	9689	Mpete, Jan	9687
Gigima, John	8010	Mpoa, John	9721
Gilweni, Jim Tom	9915	Msesenyane, Jan	9632
Gobizitwana, Willie	11206	Mshote, John	563
Gqweta, Henry	9928	Msimango, Lubaro	9270
Gumede, John	11216	Msiya, Lemu Galimini	9647
Gumeni, Charlie	9685	Mtembu, Mswela	11109
Gwabu, Jack	9321	Mtirara, John	9385
Gwatyuza, Jacob	9954	Mtolo, Sikaniso	9999
Hasbane, Jan	9147	Mtombeni, Abraham	9560
Hendricks, James	9943	Mtshotshisa, Gabayi	9939

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Hendricks, Willem	11132	Mudungazi, July	9638
Hlangweni, Mtati	11161	Muhlababa, Joel	9252
Hlatshwayo, Fishi	11126	Mukopo, Andries	9171
Hlope, Zanempi	11120	Mukotle, Fred	9168
Holoane, Francis	11171	Mulabe, Change	9440
Homelane, Willie	9289	Mulamu, David	9163
Jackson, Abrams	9803	Munani, Mukale	9419
Jacobo, Isaac	9695	Murape, Jim	9430
Jamangile, Jim	8892	Murda, Jack	11149
Jantole, Joseph	8900	Mutinjwa, Daniel	9236
Johnson, Willie	8913	Mvele, Jerele Mazalemvula	9646
Jonas, Jim	9710	Mvula, Joniseni	11108
Jonas, Saluseni	9244	Myamana, Verandah	9622
Jongilanga, Pansi	9390	Mzamani, Jim	9279
Jubile, Lawrence	11045	Mzayifana, Alfred	11207
Kabi, Simeon	10964	Mzimane, Johannes	9677
Kakana, Jan	9441	Mzono, Jotama	11072
Kakele, Mac	9154	Nafufa, David	9644
Kale, Karl	9818	Napane, Charlie	9421
Kali, Hamilton	10021	Natedi, Jack	9141
Kaloto, Simon	9418	Nawane, George	9698
Kana, Mali	11176	Ncotele, Litye	9862
Karishi, Change	9146	Ndaba, Pikiti	11128
Kashane, Jan	9176	Ndamase, Richard	9389
Kataza, John	9686	Ndanise, Baleni	9641
Kazamula, Moskein	9626	Ndeya, James	9795
Kazamula, Simon	10931	Ndhluli, Jim	11060
Kazimula, Natal	9623	Ndiki, Samuel	9859
Kepisa, Jack	10374	Ndingi, Olifas	8893
Kepsizze, Johnson	9848	Ndlankuhle, Nzulu	802
Ketsbai, Helon	9905	Ndlovu, Isaac	9529
Kgadile, Kleinbooi	9820	Nduna, William	11058
Kgana, Johannes	3703	Nephthale, Tsusa	11145
Kgatjane, Lucas	11144	Ngade, Ben Elias	11061
Kgobosemang, Kleinbooi	9740	Ngake, Enos	9749
Kgosi, Isaac	9211	Ngate, Canteen	9148
Kgupa, Longone	9425	Ngate, Picannin	11054
Khaile, Robinson	11173	Ngcenge, Durward	9771
Khoanamutsi, Mapipe	9429	Ngcobo, Pindela	9272
Kholopane, Dovey	10960	Ngcobo, Vincent Pansi	9319
Kladi, John	9578	Ngesi, Walter	9910
Kleinbooi, Jack	9263	Ngqotoza, Zilandana	9653
Koalane, Josaih Walter	10896	Ngwahewa, Jan	9637
Kokoto, Jonas	9398	Ngwane, Jamse	9654
Kolong, Kimon	9822	Nini, George	11053
Koluba, Sam	9406	Nkakuleni, Sly	9407
Koopman, Jan	9293	Nkhereanye, Lukase	5743

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Kopane, Jan	11048	Nkoane, Peter	7277
Kopane, Snele	9666	Nkomandi, Konisars	9639
Kozamula, Captain	9447	Nkunwana, Jack	9212
Kula, Hlongwana	11088	Nkwambene, Charles	9634
Kumalo, Magwala	11112	Nkwenkwe, John	9889
Kuse, John	9785	Nodolo, Squire	9772
Kutshwayo, James Henry	5969	Nokwelo, Makali	7067
Kwikanye, Jack	9290	Nomvaba, Charlie	9207
Lebeko, Charlie	9415	Nongwe, Johannes	10024
Leboche, Abram	11056	Nquza, Jabez	9202
Lefi, Ishmael	11141	Nsulansula, Zondo	11097
Legoabe, Stephen	9763	Ntabani, Picannin	9716
Legwale, Stephen Lucas	3274	Ntelte, Frans	9139
Lekau, Alfred	9188	Ntindili, Charlie	8891
Lekau, John	1256	Ntopi, Piet	11187
Lekgoli, Soloman	9728	Ntoro, Kleinbooi	3711
Lekhoto, John	1791	Ntozake, Honono	8912
Lepero, Geelbooi	9829	Ntshangase, Dick Mqitsha	9914
Lephethe, David Job	11196	Ntshetsha, Mbalela	9383
Lesele, Corporal	9654	Ntsieng, Bullar Martinus	9575
Lesetja, Jan	11063	Ntsutswana, Thomas	9938
Leshage, William	10947	Nukula, Ben Sydney	11051
Lesiba, Daniel	10369	Nxazonke, Mlungu	9934
Lesiba, Jan	10384	Nyambana, Konish	9636
Lesiba, Joseph	9186	Nyati, Samuel	9283
Lesiba, Simon	10371	Nyonane, Ebenezer	11205
Lesibana, Jim	10364	Nziba, John Clout	11177
Lesitja, Charlie	10373	Olibeng, Fanwell	9216
Lesitja, Martinus	9908	Olijn, Pieter	11131
Lesoale, Johannes	11192	Oliphant, Piet	11166
Letau, Karel	9286	Pala, Alexander	9851
Letebele, Namatshan	9748	Pambili, James	11052
Letebele, Pond	9155	Papetje, Johannes	10378
Letwatwa, Lucas	9659	Pasile, Radoma	9175
Lifa, John	11247	Pasoane, Amandus Aupa	11146
Likgoli, David	9946	Pasoane, William	9850
Likgoli, Sebolai	9947	Paulus, Dolf	11133
Linganiso, Simon	10020	Payipeli, Charlie	9249
Lithaba, Michele	9761	Payo, Jacob	9667
Liwela, Frans	10951	Perike, Ephraim	9599
Louw, Piet	11137	Petela, Kleinbooi	9923
Luhlongwana, Koni	9580	Petrus, Paul	9296
Luputini, Jacobus	9255	Petula, Stephen	10908
Maake, Joseph	9140	Phaladi, Bob	11046
Maake, Saucepan	9142	Phiti, Tom	9179
Mabagwana, Titi	9271	Phohophedi, Thomas	8329

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Mabane, Mpini	9393	Pieters, Isaac	11162
Mabaso, Zula	11122	Pietersen, Paulus	10900
Mabila, Charlie	9126	Pikahila, Stephen	9793
Mabururu, Abraham	9125	Pinyana, Nodyiwana	8020
Macambi, Mareyama	9794	Pisani, Matthews	9151
Madikizela, Tatani	9388	Pitso, Andries	9911
Madimetja, Jacob	10383	Pitso, Jan	9717
Madosi, Robert	8910	Pkula, Simon	9953
Madubanya, Jack	10365	Plaatje, Thomas	9657
Madume, Botha	9124	Plaatjes, Malgas	9711
Madume, Frans	9189	Poko, Philip	9824
Madume, Jack No. 1	9174	Pokwane, Frans	9399
Madume, Jack	9408	Ponyose, Koos	11059
Madume, Jim	10949	Pugiso, David	9251
Madume, Kleinbooi	9185	Pulana, Philemon	11047
Madume, Mackson	9420	Pule, Lazarus	9834
Madzibana, Frans	9631	Pupuma, Madela	8907
Mafadi, Ephraim	9576	Qaba, Edward	9648
Mafika, Daniel	9371	Qakala, Jan	10013
Mafiliba, Mtigedwa	9243	Quvalele, Parafin	10022
Magadi, Daniel	562	Quzula, Charlie	10928
Magagamela, Alison	8356	Qwebe, Cawood	9909
Magaju, Hlongwana	11092	Rabatji, Jan	11064
Maggisi, Sitini	11079	Radelbe, James	9376
Magoba, Isaac	9195	Radzaka, Jucas	9781
Magudulwana, Hlongwana	11093	Rakau, Frans	11179
Magwegwana, Hlongwana	11105	Rakgokong, Johannes	11062
Mahaladi, Windvogel	11067	Ramakalane, Titus	11193
Maharo, Stephen	9544	Ramakhutle, Gerson	8992
Mahlaba, Whisky	9629	Ramakoko, Modise	8990
Mahlentle, Richard	9773	Ramasi, Rabintoe	9746
Mahloapitseng, Klaas	10965	Ramasita, Job	9902
Mahludi, Isaac	11154	Ramatea, Joseph	11143
Mahohoda, Klass	9643	Ramathodi, George	9896
Mahutu, Canteen	9149	Ramedekoane, Thijs	9001
Makalima, Robert	9288	Ramkosi, George	9833
Makamba, Bloro	9198	Ramoho, Charlie	9130
		Ramoshiela, Nicodimus	8994
Makasha, Jim	3021	Ramosole, Abel	9000
Makatini, Nongqayi	9558	Rampomane, Aaron	11184
Makatu, Kleinbooi	11181	Rampopo, Lukas	8996
Makaye, Ndabana	11215	Rampunve, Jan	9733
Makeleni, Kimberley	9688	Ramurumo, Frederick	9668
Makhohe, Jan	8967	Raskane, Jan	9160
Makilitshi, Paraffin	9117	Ratilulu, Samuel	11147
Makoba, Majuta	10002	Ratskogo, Gilmore	10897
Makoe, Jack Jantji	11185	Resinali, Picanin	9625
Makole, Benjamin	9839		

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Makopans, Frank	9897	Roadway, Smith	9656
Makosana, Charles	9143	Rwairwai, Jerry	9694
Makudu Johannes	9898	Samela, Wolobile	9197
Makwane, Jacob	9857	Seathlane, Selepe	10954
Makwatedi, Mack	9193	Sebadi, Samuel	994
Makwena, Josias	9857	Sefako, Geelbooi	8999
Malebogo, Jack	9427	Sefako, Jim	9671
Malemutle, Chairlie	9119	Segule, Smith	9122
Malesela, Jan	10363	Sekakaile, Rice	9412
Malgas, Hlanga	9932	Sekonyela, George	9816
Mali, Mac	11069	Sekoro, Josiah	11142
Maluse, Charlie	10391	Sekote, Stephanus	11191
Maluse, Frans	10382	Sekwidi, Jan	9779
Maluse, Lucas	10366	Selami, Jim	9192
Mambolo, Johannes	11065	Sello, Seth	9907
Mandcas, Sam	9248	Seodi, Green	9397
Mandubule, Dick	10027	Sepalela, April	9417
Mandwane, Hlatshwayo	11101	Serewe, Jackson	9724
Maneka, Jack	10375	Setani, Style	9920
Mangaliso, Hlongwana	11090	Setloko, Philemon	11180
Mangapela, Piet	11150	Shebeshebe, Jack	10379
Mange, William	9709	Shikamba, Jack	9445
Mangise, John	9669	Shiletane, Bossboy	9137
Mangoloane, Jacob	8997	Sibalabula, Timotheus	9210
Mangqe, Timothy	8876	Sibalela, Jim	9240
Mangwana, Jan	9162	Sibisi, Jacobus	9817
Mantupsi, Jack	9426	Sibizo, Edmund	11240
Manunyane, Bernard	9285	Sibolayi, Sampson	8993
Manzane, Ben	9635	Sifaku, Kleinbooi	10948
Mapalala, Keve	11121	Sigededhla, Zachariah	9556
Maparana, Charlie	9136	Sigidi, Hlongwana	11085
Maphessa, William	9563	Sikawuleb, William	9755
Mapheto, Hosiah	11066	Sikota, Theodore George	11202
Maphoto, Harry	9826	Sikwayo, Ben	11157
Mapulane, Sampson	9433	Silika, Molefi	9266
March, Martinus	11135	Silwane, Frans	9121
Marofula, Jacob	11057	Sinqana, July	11203
Marole, Willem	9138	Siposa, Willie	9392
Martinus, Johannes	9295	Sitebe, Mqobo	11107
Masade, Albert	9757	Sitlaro, Koos	8995
Masaleni, Jeremiah	9927	Sitole, Charlie	10912
Maseko, Windvogel Captain	11071	Sitole, Mgqiki	11116
Mashali, Jameson	9411	Skhabi, Hermanus	11182
Masia, Dick	9432	Skip, Jim	9428
Masiaane, Jim	9562	Soka, Anderson	9892

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Masikela, William	9173	Solani, Meji	9655
Masilo, Transvaal	9782	Somatshungu, Tom	9805
Masina, Taweni	9238	Somgede, William	9800
Masinde, Jonas	9518	Songca, Lukakuva	8879
Masindi, George	9237	Stephens, George	9413
Masoling, Julius	11167	Stunga, James	9280
Matebula, Piet	9358	Suping, Abraham	9744
Mathlana, Aaron	9287	Suping, Johannes	11049
Matjala, Richard	9798	Swarts, Jan	11130
Matjola, Jan	9565	Swarts, Sma	11129
Matkala, Picennin	11186	Tabudi, Jacob	9854
Matlala, Johannes	11190	Takisi, Frank	9181
Matonsi, Jaftha	9806	Tamasinya, Johannes	9590
Matsang, Abel	9751	Tambu, Peter	11168
Matshana, Hezekiah	9924	Tankobong, Zachariah	9742
Mathse, Marcus	9853	Tanoni, Phineas	11153
Matshelane, Andries	9661	Tentata, July	11165
Matsubane, Jim	10368	Thebeagae, Charlie	9753
Matume, Frans	10370	Timpone, Billem	9745
Matume, Moses	9760	Tiya, Percy	9706
Matupu, Thousand	9133	Tlabure, Elias	11183
Mazaku, Gwavuma	9381	Tladivamutsi, Michael	11076
Mbata, Albert			
Nkomempunga	9913	Tokhae, Jan	9134
Mbedla, Isaac	9931	Totwana, Hlongwana	11094
Mbikwa, Sam	11140	Tsamaya, Jacob	9246
Mbiyazwe, Jim	9199	Tsase, John	10950
Mbombiya, Jim	9373	Tsehlana, Jack	10372
Mbuzi, Mzingele	9382	Tshabalala, Kaysi	11102
Mcanyana, Russel Palmer	9792	Tshabana, Willie	9555
Mcitshwa, John	9768	Tshange, Ngqakamatshe	11091
Mdata, Soloman	11075	Tshekosi, Klaas	9780
Mduna, Edward	9770	Tshenene, Charlie	9860
Mdunyelwa, July	9922	Tshikari, Paul	11174
Mdyogolo, Mnyeliso	9651	Tshite, Joseph	10431
Mehlomane, Silwanyana	9242	Tshomolokse, Paul	9702
Mekgoe, Herman	9253	Tshotsha, Hlongwana	11110
Menza, John	9658	Tshulo, Abram	9758
Mgidi, Billy	11204	Tsule, Soloman	9434
Mgingana, Koza	11099	Tube, Jackson	9259
Mgoyoye, Petrus	9670	Tumberi, Jim	9630
Mgwena, Soloman	9784	Tyilo, John	11198
Mhlanga, Ndukwana	11118	Tywalana, Jeremiah	9649
Mijana, Willie	9831	Utuni, Frans	9776
Mkezo, Mpotyana	9394	Uzingo, Jantshi	9926
Mkohla, Joseph	10012	Voss, Philip	7229

Name	Rank/Service Number	Name	Rank/Service Number
Mkomazi, Frans	9152	Vovela, Joe	10929
Mkomazi, Jim	9627	Vutula, Charles	9801
Mkoni, John	9256	Wauchope, Isaac	3276
Mkonvama, Daniel	9118	Williams, Freddy	9714
Mkumguri, Jim	9736	Williams, Henry	9292
Mlahleki, Jail	11155	Zambezi, Hlongwana	11096
Mlando, Hlongwana	11086	Zatu, John	9937
Mlonyeni, Robert	9386	Zenzile, Arosi	9375
Mncedana, Melville	7601	Zimuke, Mashaya	11068
Mnyeliso, Gama	9652	Zingwana, Johannes	9640
Mnyikinwa, Longone	11055	Zinyusile, Edward	11158
Moatse, Josiah	8991	Zitonga, Mongameli	8021
Mobitsela, William	9775	Zondi, Solomon Vili	9299
Modeba, Theophilus	9194	Zondo, Magida	11103
Modikeng, Goodman	11151	Zondo, Mufakabi	11114
Modisane, Jan	10899	Zondo, Pukwana	11115
Modise, David	9204	Zulu, April	9247
Modisoatsile, George	9718	Zwane, Sikonyana	11087
Moeata, Petrus	9783	Zwane, Sukwana	11089

APPENDIX VII: *MENDI* GRAVES AND MEMORIALS**Graves in the United Kingdom and Europe**

The following information is derived from the research archive held by James Cowden:

Name	Rank	Service No.	Unit	Date of death	Age	Relatives listed on grave	Location	Plot No.
Fule, S.	Private	9261	SANLC	21/02/1917	20		Milton Cemetery	I.6.71
Jonah		10593	SANLC	22/02/1917			Milton Cemetery	I.6.73
Kozumala, C.	Private	9447	SANLC	21/02/1917			Milton Cemetery	I.6.73
Letau, K.K.	Private	9286	SANLC	21/02/1917	18	(Son of) Philip & Martha Letau of Doorn Kop, Lammerkop, Transvaal	Milton Cemetery	I.6.73
Mkoni, J.	Private	9256	SANLC	21/02/1917	41	(Son of) Agos and Kaatje Mkoni, of Somerset East, Cape Province	Milton Cemetery	I.6.71
Monyele, E.	Private	9368	SANLC	21/02/1917			Milton Cemetery	I.6.71
Plaatje, T.	Private	9657	SANLC	21/02/1917	30	(Son of) Hendrick Plaatje of Oatlands, Grahamstown, Cape Town	Milton Cemetery	I.6.71
Tlhomelang, W.P.	Private	9289	SANLC	21/02/1917	26	(Son of) Pampiri Tlhomelang of Montle, Taungs, Bechuanaland	Milton Cemetery	I.6.73
MacTavish, R.A.	Colour Sgt.	-	SANLC	21/02/1917			Milton Cemetery	I.6.- (?)

The following further graves are known to exist but have not been traced by WA:

Location	Number
Hastings (UK)	1
Littlehampton (UK)	1
Wimereux (France)	1
Wassenaar (Holland)	1
Bergen-op-Zoom (Holland)	1

***Mendi* Memorials**

The following memorials to the *Mendi* and those lost aboard it are known to exist:

Name	Location
Hollybrook Memorial	Hollybrook Cemetery, Southampton
Bokleni Memorial	Newtimber, West Sussex
Delville Wood Memorial	Delville Wood, Belgium
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial and Garden of Remembrance	Avalon Cemetery, Soweto
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial	Atteridgeville, Pretoria
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial	New Brighton, Port Elizabeth
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial	Umtata, Transkei
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial	Maseru, Lesotho
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial	Gaberone, Botswana
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial	University of Cape Town
<i>Mendi</i> Memorial (possible)	Nyandeni, near Port St Johns, Transkei

APPENDIX VIII: THE *DARRO*

The *Darro* (Official Number 132026) was a Royal Mail Steam Packet (RMSP) 'D' class steel twin screw steamer. It was built by Harland & Wolff in Belfast to the order of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSPC) for Imperial Direct West India Line Ltd (IDWI), a sister company to the B&ASNC.

Launched on the 15 May 1912 RMSP *Darro* was 500 feet long and had a breadth of 62 feet and a depth of 40 feet (Cowden and Duffy, 1986, 449) with a vertical bow (also known as a straight stem) (see **Plate 1**). Registered tonnage was 7291 and gross 11,484. Powered by two four cylinder quadruple expansion engines generating 680 nhp and turning twin screws, the vessel could make about 14.5 knots. This speed and mass meant that the *Darro* was capable of acting as a formidable ram. The vessel had a meat carrying capacity which ensured its continued usefulness after 1914 (Haws, 1990, 102). At the time of the collision with the *Mendi*, the *Darro* was issued with a temporary passenger certificate for 111 first, 42 second and 829 third class passengers (Board of Trade, 1914-20, 7732, 2).

Although the vessel was managed by Elder Dempster, it traded on the traditional routes of neither Elder Dempster nor IDWI (Haws, 1990, 102). The route it served between 1913 and 1916 was principally that between the River Plate and Liverpool. In 1916 it was sold to the RMSPC. From 1916 to 1919 the *Darro* sailed between the Americas (both North and South) and also undertook some continental trade. From 1919 until it was sold for scrapping at Osaka, Japan in 1933 the ship traded between Liverpool and Southern Brazil and the River Plate.

The *Darro* appears to have been an accident-prone vessel. In 1915 and then in 1916 it was involved in two minor collisions. Following the loss of the *Mendi* the ship was also involved in relatively minor collisions in 1918 and 1920.

Prior to the collision with the *Mendi*, the *Darro* had left Buenos Aires on the River Plate on 16th December with passengers and a cargo of frozen meat. Arriving in England to discharge the passengers, it sailed for France, arriving there on 31 January. At that point it was noticed that it had sustained damage and flooding, probably from striking a submerged obstacle. After dry docking for inspection and temporary repairs, it left for England, unescorted and drawing about 19 feet at the bow, on the evening of the 20th February.

APPENDIX IX: POSSIBLE MARINE LIFE ON THE SITE

The following species may be present on the site. The list is not intended to be exhaustive.

All species listed are known to occur on wreck sites or natural seabed environments at depths of 30 metres or more. Species only found in bedrock or boulder habitats are not included as there WA has come across no evidence for this form of habitat in the vicinity of the site. However, given the limited environmental information available species common to both high and low energy environments have been listed.

Identification of suitable species is based upon the classification system adopted by The Marine Conservation Society (Erwin & Picton 1987). Species that are unlikely to be found within the wreck itself but which may occur on open seabed around have been italicised. *Trisopterus luscus* (Pouting) has been observed in photographs of the site taken in 2005.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Group
<i>Conger conger</i>	Conger eel	Fish
<i>Trisopterus luscus</i>	Pouting or Bib	Fish
<i>Pollachius virens</i>	Saithe or Colley	Fish
<i>Molva molva</i>	Ling	Fish
<i>Callionymus lyra</i>	Dragonet	Fish
<i>Chirolophis ascanii</i>	Yarrell's blenny	Fish
<i>Lophius piscatorius</i>	Angler fish	Fish
<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	Plaice	Fish
<i>Scyliorhinus canicula</i>	Lesser spotted dogfish	Fish
<i>Raja clavata</i>	Thornback ray	Fish
<i>Astropecten irregularis</i>	Sand star	Echinodermata
<i>Luidia ciliaris</i>	Seven-armed starfish	Echinodermata
<i>Anseropoda placenta</i>	Goosefoot starfish	Echinodermata
<i>Crossaster papposus</i>	Common sunstar	Echinodermata
<i>Henricia oculata</i>	Bloody henry	Echinodermata
<i>Asterias rubens</i>	Common starfish	Echinodermata
<i>Marthasterias glacialis</i>	Spiny starfish	Echinodermata
<i>Ophiothrix fragilis</i>	Common brittlestar	Echinodermata
<i>Ophiocomina nigra</i>	Black serpent-star	Echinodermata
<i>Ophiura texturata</i>	Large sand brittlestar	Echinodermata
<i>Echinus esculentus</i>	Common sea urchin	Echinodermata
<i>Spatangus purpureus</i>	Purple heart-urchin	Echinodermata
<i>Thyone roscovita</i>	Sea cucumber	Echinodermata
<i>Neopentadactyla mixta</i>	Gravel sea cucumber	Echinodermata
<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>	Dublin Bay prawn or Scampi	Crustacean
<i>Homarus gammarus</i>	Lobster	Crustacean
<i>Munida rugosa</i>	Long-clawed squat lobster	Crustacean
<i>Pagurus bernhardus</i>	Common hermit crab	Crustacean
<i>Atelecyclus rotundas</i>	Circular crab	Crustacean
<i>Goneplax rhomboids</i>	Mud runner or square crab	Crustacean
<i>Liocarcinus depurator</i>	Swimming crab	Crustacean
<i>Cancer pagurus</i>	Edible crab	Crustacean
<i>Inachus dorsettenis</i>	Scorpion spider-crab	Crustacean
<i>Macropodia rostrata</i>	Long-legged spider crab	Crustacean
<i>Alcyonium digitatum</i>	Dead man's fingers	Cnidaria
<i>Alcyonium glomeratum</i>	Red fingers	Cnidaria
<i>Eunificia verrucosa</i>	Sea fan	Cnidaria
<i>Virgularia mirabilis</i>	Sea rush or Slender sea-pen	Cnidaria

Scientific Name	Common Name	Group
<i>Penmatula phosphorea</i>	Sea-pen	Cnidaria
<i>Cerianthus lloydii</i>	-	Cnidaria
<i>Caryophyllia smithii</i>	Devonshire cup-coral	Cnidaria
<i>Bolocera tuediae</i>	-	Cnidaria
<i>Metridium senile</i>	Plumose anemone	Cnidaria
<i>Sagartiogeton lacertus</i>	-	Cnidaria
<i>Adamsia maculata</i>	Cloak anemone	Cnidaria
<i>Tubularia indivisa</i>	-	Cnidaria
<i>Sertularia argentea</i>	Sea fir	Cnidaria
<i>Nemertesia antennina</i>	-	Cnidaria
<i>Halecium halecinum</i>	-	Cnidaria
<i>Calliostoma zizyphinum</i>	Painted topshell	Mollusca
<i>Turritella communis</i>	Auger shell	Mollusca
<i>Aporrhais pespelecani</i>	Pelican's foot shell	Mollusca
<i>Buccinum undatum</i>	Common whelk	Mollusca
<i>Pleurobranchus membranaceus</i>	-	Mollusca
<i>Dendronotus frondosus</i>	-	Mollusca
<i>Doto fragilis</i>	-	Mollusca
<i>Coryphella lineate</i>	-	Mollusca
<i>Eubbranchus tricolour</i>	-	Mollusca
<i>Modiolus modiolus</i>	Horse mussel	Mollusca
<i>Pecten maximus</i>	Great Scallop or Clam	Mollusca
<i>Aequipecten opercularis</i>	Queen scallop	Mollusca
<i>Circomphalus casina</i>	-	Mollusca
<i>Eledone cirrhosa</i>	Curled octopus	Mollusca
<i>Suberites carnosus</i>	-	Porifera
<i>Polymastia boletiforme</i>	-	Porifera
<i>Halichondria bowerbanki</i>	-	Porifera
<i>Tubulanus annulatus</i>	Football jersey worm	Worm
<i>Aphrodite aculeate</i>	Sea mouse	Worm
<i>Sabella penicillus</i>	Peacock worm	Worm
<i>Salmacina dysteri</i>	Coral worm	Worm
<i>Chaetopterus variopedatus</i>	Parchment worm	Worm
<i>Alcyonidium diaphanum</i>	-	Bryozoan
<i>Flustra foliacea</i>	Hornwrack	Bryozoan
<i>Cellaria fistulosa</i>	-	Bryozoan
<i>Corella parallelogramma</i>	-	Tunicate
<i>Ascidella aspersa</i>	-	Tunicate
<i>Ascidia mentula</i>	-	Tunicate
<i>Dendrodoa grossularia</i>	Gooseberry sea squirt	Tunicate
Crustose corallines	-	Algae

APPENDIX X: OUTLINE HISTORIES OF ELDER DEMPSTER AND THE BRITISH AND AFRICAN STEAMSHIP NAVIGATION COMPANY

The *Mendi* was built for the British and African Steamship Navigation Company, part of the Elder Dempster Group, one of the great shipping lines of the world.

From the mid-19th century for over one hundred years Elder Dempster were synonymous with the growth and then decline of colonial West Africa. The company lived through the era of the ‘White Man’s Grave’ and built a prosperous and pervasive trade network based upon the Empire port of Liverpool. The ships of the company and the trade and passengers they carried were of great importance to the survival of Britain in both World Wars. The decline and eventual disappearance of this Liverpool icon was very much symbolic of the general decline of that great port city in the late 20th century and of the changes wrought in Africa with the passing of the colonial era.

1832-68

The originator of Elder Dempster was the Scotsman MacGregor Laird, the brother of the founder of the great Merseyside shipbuilding firm of Cammell Lairds. Laird was an idealist who wished to develop peaceful trade with West Africa in order to stop slave trading there. After an early experience leading an exploratory expedition up the Niger with Richard Lander, he was involved in a company set up to operate steamers between Liverpool and New York and which despatched the *Sirius* on the first transatlantic crossing by a steamer in 1838.

In 1851 Laird obtained a contract from the British Government to maintain a regular monthly service to ports on the West African coast, carrying mail from London via Plymouth. To fulfil this contract he formed the African Steam Ship Company Ltd, incorporating it by Royal Charter in 1852. By the mid-1850s management of the concern was centred on Liverpool, although the city did not become the company’s permanent home port until 1875.

Although trade with West Africa was thrown into recession during the Crimean War, the company survived and some of its steamers were chartered to the Admiralty for troop transport work. Trade with West Africa was at this time dominated by the import of palm oil and timber, with manufactured goods being the chief export.

1868-1914

In 1868 the Edinburgh registered British & African Steam Navigation Company was set up in competition to the African Steam Ship Company. This new company was formed to sail from Glasgow via Liverpool to West Africa. Liverpool was seen as the key to the success of the venture and Alexander Elder and John Dempster, who had previously worked for the agents of the African Steam Ship Company, were appointed as Liverpool agents for the new company. They became Elder, Dempster & Company.

Although rivals, there was considerable co-operation between these shipping lines and their agents, at least partly as a result of the close personal and professional ties of their owners and managers. Furthermore although a rapid growth in British colonial power in the region promoted the business interests of British West African lines, competition from German companies was growing. This eventually resulted in the formation of the West African Shipping Conference in 1895, comprising the African Steam Ship Company, the British African Steam Navigation Company and Germany’s Woermann. Schedules, number of

sailings and rates were all agreed and the alliance also entered aggressively into the Transatlantic market. This successfully stifled competition and helped the alliance to dominate the West African trade up until the outbreak of war in 1914.

There was strong demand for ships that could carry both cargo and passengers. It was against this background that the *Mendi* and her sister ship *Karina* were built in 1905.

Under the dynamic leadership of Alfred Jones, Elder, Dempster & Co prospered. By his death in 1909, Jones had effectively taken control of both the African Steam Ship Company and the British African Steam Navigation Company and had developed the original Elder Dempster & Co and the 1899 incorporated Elder Dempster Shipping Ltd into significant shipowners themselves. He also greatly expanded Elder Dempster's involvement in Transatlantic and West Indian trade. Part of Elder Dempster's success was based upon the development of a network of local agencies in West Africa. This also resulted in a diversification into private banking, minerals and other African trade commodities. He was also a significant share holder in other maritime businesses, including the famous shipbuilders Harland & Wolff.

Elder, Dempster & Co Ltd was formed in 1910. This company merged the shipping interests of Alfred Jones, including the British African Steam Navigation Company. The new company owned or operated a total of 109 ships including the *Mendi*, a combined total of 300,000grt. Liverpool continued to be the hub of the business.

In the immediate pre-war period, trade between Britain and British West Africa boomed. Elder Dempster steamers, sailing principally from Liverpool but also from London, the Continent (principally Hamburg) and New York called at most of the major West African ports and feeder services were provided to others.

Manufactured goods continued to dominate exports. Imports were still dominated by palm oil but had diversified considerably, with nuts for oil, cocoa, tin ore and timber all prominent. Passenger traffic also continued in significant numbers.

1914-18

The outbreak of war on August 4 1914 led to a brief initial lull in British trade with West Africa as owners and merchants took stock. This initial caution did not last long and trade was soon resumed. However German commerce with the region ended abruptly and for the duration. Prior to the war, 51 German ships totalling 133,000 tons had traded with West Africa as opposed to 92 British ships totalling 274,000 tons. The removal of the German vessels from this trade therefore led to a serious shortage of cargo space.

As the dominant force in British West African trade, the burden of managing the supply of goods between West Africa and Britain and for coping with the shortage of cargo space fell principally on Elder Dempster. Despite the difficulties imposed by a state of war, the company appears to have coped fairly well, even though more than 600 of its administrative staff were enlisted. Freight rates rose steadily, but they do not appear to have risen spectacularly, even though there was a decline in the overall tonnage of cargo vessels available.

Although there were some losses to enemy action and maritime hazards between 1914 and 1916, this decline in tonnage was largely caused by the demands of the Admiralty Transport Department. In order to provide sufficient ships to carry troops and labourers, the government

purchased three vessels and requisitioned many, including the *Mendi*. This shortage was partially alleviated by the release of these ships when not needed and by the use of German vessels captured in the Cameroons in 1914. During this period the port of Liverpool experienced congestion, so other ports were used. For example palm-kernels were imported via Hull.

At the beginning of 1917 all previously non-requisitioned ships were taken over by the Ministry of Shipping. It proved to be a very difficult year for Elder Dempster. During the worst year of the war for British shipping, the company lost 24 vessels. Although most were lost to enemy action, principally by U-boats, several were listed as 'missing' and met unknown fates. Others listed as the victims of 'normal maritime hazards' arguably would have not have been lost but for the restrictions imposed by war. The *Mendi* falls into this category.

The situation improved in 1918 and only three ships were lost by act of war. It is probably no coincidence that this was the year that the West Africa trade was finally integrated into the convoy system, with a fleet to Sierra Leone leaving every eight days. Although the adoption of the convoy system had earlier led to an average increase in the length of round voyages of 25% as a result of increased turn around time, by 1918 these delays were down to pre-war levels.

In total Elder Dempster lost 487 employees during the war. 67 were killed on active service, whilst 420 were killed when ships were damaged or sunk. Elder Dempster employees received 47 awards or mentions in despatches. 13 ships were lost to normal maritime hazards and 29 to enemy action, the first being the *Nyanga*, sunk in August 1914 off NW Africa by the commerce raider *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse* and the last the *Burutu* which sank in the Irish Sea after a collision. Despite these losses Elder Dempster maintained the supply of men and materials to and from West Africa without interruption. The company managed a total of over 400 ships at various times despite labour shortages and Elder Dempster vessels served in many theatres of war, including North Russia, the Middle East and India. Aside from the *Mendi*, perhaps the most famous of these was the hospital ship *Ebani* which, over the course of five years, steamed 200,000 miles and carried 50,000 sick and wounded.

The *Mendi's* sister ship *Karina* did not survive the war. Inbound for Liverpool from Sierra Leone with 124 passengers and 2000 tons of palm products on 1 August 1917, she was attacked and sunk by UC-75 off Waterford with the loss of 11 lives.

1918-85

Requisitioning ceased in 1919 and the company was reorganised. Losses were made up for by the purchase of surplus 'standard' ships built during the war.

During the 1920s Elder Dempster experienced the effects of the return of German and Dutch competition and the low freight rates caused by world wide post war surplus tonnage. The company found itself over-tonnaged. Despite attempts to revive trade alliances competition and the onset of the Great Depression, which reduced trade with West Africa by one third, resulted in a poor trading situation.

Despite a tonnage of 328,000grt, Elder Dempster collapsed in 1931 as a result of difficulties experienced by the majority shareholders, Kyslant Royal Mail Group. Despite this the firm survived, coming under the management control of Alfred Holt.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Elder Dempster fleet comprised five passenger liners, 36 cargo ships and four West African coasters, a total of 229,000grt. The company suffered heavy losses in the war but survived and the fleet was rebuilt from 1949-50.

During the 1950s and 1960s the fleet expanded, reaching peak tonnage in 1965. However the West African trade did not prove immune to the sweeping changes that affected worldwide shipping in the 1970s and 1980s. By the end of 1988 the company was operating only one ship. Elder Dempster Lines was acquired by the French Delmas-Vieljeux group in 1989 and thereby passed into history and on 8 May 2000 Elder Dempster itself was formally wound up. The last Elder Dempster vessel, the *Aureol*, was sent to the breakers in June 2001.

APPENDIX XI: HISTORY OF ALEXANDER STEPHEN & SONS LTD

In about 1750 the first Alexander Stephen began building ships at Burghead on the Moray Firth in Scotland. The firm grew and in 1828 became Alexander Stephen & Sons. In 1900 the Stephen family took the firm into limited liability form as Alexander Stephen and Son Ltd.

The early history of the firm was marked by frequent changes of ship yard. Having moved production to Aberdeen and Arbroath, the third generation Alexander Stephen moved it to Dundee in 1842. In 1850 half the production was moved to Kelvinhaugh, Glasgow on the Clyde. In 1870 it moved to its final home at Linthouse in Govan, the famous shipbuilding area of Glasgow.

Having specialised in sailing vessels, from 1871 the firm began to specialise in cargo carrying passenger steam ships. From 1900 the firm concentrated on building higher class cargo and passenger vessels. It was during this period that the *Mendi* and its sister ship the *Karina* were built. However, like most other shipbuilders Stephens became involved in war production between 1914 and 1918. As well as building torpedo boat destroyers and undertaking repairs, the firm used the opportunity to diversify, constructing fuselages and wing sections for aircraft and even artificial feet and ankles for amputees.

During this period the Linthouse yard was greatly expanded, particularly the engine and boilerwork sections and the repair yard. The yard was amongst the first to employ women as a result of the labour shortages caused by voluntary and then compulsory enlistment. The Stephens appear to have been conscientious employers, providing extensive welfare and recreational facilities for their workers.

Up until 1919 the Stephens family had retained both a controlling interest in the company and a direct involvement in its management. However in that year the family, confident of a continuing boom in the shipbuilding industry, sold a controlling 51.2% share to P&O. With this same spirit of confidence the company joined a consortium of shipbuilders to buy the Steel Company of Scotland.

The confidence of Glasgow shipbuilders unfortunately proved to be unjustified and the economic slump of the 1920s saw the firm suffer greatly. By 1932 when the sixth generation Alexander Murray Stephen took over as chairman, there was no work in the yard and difficulties were being experienced in obtaining payment for the work that had been undertaken. Murray Stephen modernised both the engineering and management practices of the firm and it survived, becoming a public limited company after the Second World War in 1946. Murray Stephen was knighted for his services to the shipbuilding in that year.

In the post-war years, the firm developed a long term strategy of building efficiently and to a high quality, resisting the movement towards nationalisation and general co-operation between shipbuilders. However by 1965 when Murray Stephen retired, the firm, like many other British shipbuilders, was experiencing renewed financial trouble. In 1968 its shipbuilding assets and activities were transferred to Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, although the firm retained control of its engineering and ship repair businesses. Nevertheless in 1976 the firm finally disposed of these businesses and in doing so ended more than two centuries of involvement in the shipping industry.

Glasgow University Archive Service (GUAS) holds a considerable archive of primary documents for the firm dating from 1824-1976 donated by the Stephen family in 1992, including day books, family papers, photographs, contracts, plans and accounts (**Appendix II**). GUAS is not aware of holding any material directly related to the construction of the *Mendi* or its sister the *Karina*, although it is possible that a detailed search of the archive may still produce relevant data. The Plans and Photographs section of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich hold detailed layout plans for the *Mendi/Karina* produced by the firm (**Appendix II**). It is not known whether and to what extent the vessels as built differed from these plans.

APPENDIX XII: ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE NON-STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION UNDER THE PROTECTION OF WRECKS ACT (1973)

PROTECTION OF WRECKS ACT (1973)

The Protection of Wrecks Act is in two sections. Section One provides protection for designated wrecks which are deemed to be important by virtue of their historical, archaeological or artistic value. There are currently 62 sites designated under Section One.

Each designated wreck has an exclusion zone around it and it is an offence to tamper with, damage or remove any objects or part of the vessel or to carry out any diving or salvage operation within this exclusion zone. Any activities within this exclusion zone can only be carried out under a licence granted by the Secretary of State, who receives advice from the Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites (ACHWS). There are four levels of licences: a visitor licence, a survey licence, a surface recovery licence and an excavation licence.

Administration of this Act and associated licenses is the responsibility of English Heritage in England, Historic Scotland in Scotland, Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments in Wales and the Environment and Heritage Service in Northern Ireland.

Section Two of the Protection of Wrecks Act provides protection for wrecks that are designated as dangerous by virtue of their contents. Diving on these wrecks is strictly prohibited. This section of the Act is administered by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency through the Receiver of Wreck.

NON-STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

The non-statutory criteria are used for assessing the importance of wrecks or the sites of wrecks, and for considering whether designation as a restricted area under the terms of the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) is appropriate. Wreck sites may comprise the remains of vessels, their accoutrements, armaments, cargo, and other associated objects or deposits, and restricted areas may include that area of the seabed around the wreck site considered appropriate by the Secretary of State to secure its protection.

Wrecks or wreck sites may be considered to merit designation if they contribute or appear likely to contribute significantly to the understanding of the past on account of their historical, archaeological, or artistic importance. Such significance may be assessed on the basis of the following criteria (which are not presented in any order of ranking). The criteria should not be regarded as definitive, and wrecks or wreck sites need not satisfy all the criteria in order to qualify for designation. Rather the criteria are indicators which contribute to a wider judgement based on the individual circumstances of each case.

ASSESSMENT SCALE

For each criterion, one of the following grades has been selected. This grading system has no official status but is currently used by WA when undertaking undesignated site assessments as the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) archaeological contractor:

- Uncertain - Insufficient evidence to comment;

- Not valuable - This category does not give the site any special importance;
- Moderately valuable - This category makes the site more important than the average wreck site, but not exceptional;
- Highly valuable - This category gives the site a high degree of importance. A site that is designated is likely to have at least two criteria graded as highly valuable;
- Extremely valuable - This category makes the site exceptionally important. The site could be designated on the grounds of this category alone.

ASSESSMENT

The site is a wreck site and can therefore be designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act (1973). The non-statutory criteria have therefore been assessed as follows. The published explanation of each criterion is given first in italics:

Period

The historic interest of all types of wreck which characterise a category or period should be considered, and the selection of sites for protection should include wrecks which illustrate important aspects of our social, political economic, cultural, military, maritime and technological history. In identifying sites to be protected, regard will be had to the currency of any particular wreck type (the length of time over which any particular vessel type was constructed and used or any cargo type transported) and its representiveness (whether the vessel or cargo type was one of few or many types representative of that period).

Highly valuable. Great War wrecks are not currently represented amongst the sites designated under the PWA. Given the importance of this event in the 20th century history of the UK, there is a very strong case for the inclusion of at least one example within the range of sites designated.

Given their importance to the history of both world wars and the rich and usually tragic stories that tend to accompany their losses, there is a good case for including an example of a 20th century troopship within the sites designated.

The *Mendi* is a good example of an early 20th century merchant steamship. It is also one of the very few West African trade cargo liner wrecks in UK territorial waters. As with merchant steamships and troopships, there is a compelling case for including an example of this type of wreck amongst the designated sites.

Rarity

There are some wreck categories which, in certain periods, are so scarce that all surviving examples which still retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. The age of a vessel is often closely linked to its rarity. The older a vessel is, for example, the fewer comparable vessels are likely to survive either in use or as wrecks, and the more likely it is to have historic interest. The loss of one example of a rare type of site is more significant than the loss of one example of a very numerous class of site. In general, however, a selection for protection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace, as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the situation and distribution of a particular type of vessel or cargo, in a regional, national, or international context.

Highly valuable. A very large number of merchant steamships were lost in UK territorial waters during the Great War. Ships such as the *Mendi* are therefore arguably commonplace in the archaeological record. However such ships are not currently represented amongst the sites protected under the PWA. There is therefore a strong case for the inclusion of an example.

The modifications to the vessel to enable it to carry troops are not so extensive that it can be regarded as an unusual vessel. However no troopship is currently designated.

Many of the Great War wrecks around the UK coast are in an advanced state of deterioration and collapse. Moderately preserved examples of this class of wreck are therefore likely to become considerably rarer.

Documentation

The significance of a wreck may be enhanced by close historic association with documented important historical events or people, or by the supporting evidence of contemporary records or representations. Historical records are generally only relevant to monuments of recent date, although it is important to recognize that some types of recent vessel may not be served by any historical records. The range of contemporary records that might be expected for a particular type of vessel needs to be considered so that the value of any known records which relate to it can be assessed. The importance of a wreck may also be enhanced by the existence of records of previous archaeological recording or survey work.

Highly valuable. Although much of the Elder Dempster archive is now lost, the *Mendi* is unusually rich in documentation. Furthermore much of this documentation relates to the loss of the *Mendi*, an event that still has contemporary and international significance. This archive is unusually diverse, ranging from the shipbuilder's plans to photographs to the report of the Court of Enquiry and associated correspondence and affidavits, and through to modern research archives on both the ship and the troops it was carrying.

A large number of themes can be explored through the story of the *Mendi*, giving it considerable appeal to a wide range of audiences, both in the UK and in South Africa. The physical survival and accessibility of the wreck adds to its value in this respect and it is probably the case that a number of important unresolved issues, such as the number of men who were trapped or killed in the ship when it sank, can be answered by archaeological investigation.

Group value

The value of a single vessel or of its cargo may be greatly enhanced by its co-location with other similar vessels (for example at the site of a battle) or by its association with other contemporary features such as port facilities or defensive sites. Association with vessels of other periods (for example on long-standing navigation hazards) may also enhance the value of a site. In some cases it is preferable to protect the complete group of archaeological remains, rather than protect isolated features within the group.

Moderately valuable. The *Mendi* is one of a group of 39 vessels lost in the English Channel south of the Isle of Wight and one of at least 764 vessels lost in the English Channel as a whole during the Great War (Maw, 1999). This group is an important part of the archaeological record of the war. Within the group the *Mendi* is unusual in that it was a troop ship.

The *Mendi* was not the only merchant ship involved in the Liverpool-West Africa trade to be lost off the Isle of Wight in 1917. The *Redesmere* of 1911, one of the eight ship fleet of the Bromport Steamship Company Ltd. (formerly Herbert Watson) was torpedoed on 28 October with the loss of 19 lives.

Survival/condition

The degree of survival of a wreck is a particularly important consideration. In general, early wrecks are less likely to survive well than later examples, and in assessing the survival of any site, it is important to consider the likely normal degree of survival of vessels of that date or type. Assessments of survival should consider the degree of intactness of a wreck, the likelihood of the preservation of constructional and technological detail, and the current condition of the remains.

Moderately valuable. The *Mendi* is not an exceptionally well preserved World War I wreck. Nevertheless it is sufficiently well preserved to be attractive to recreational divers. The hull of the *Mendi* is partially intact and evidence exists for the survival of at least part of the (collapsed) superstructure and for much of the machinery. It would appear that a large number of artefacts remain in and around the site. The degree of survival is probably sufficient to enable unresolved issues concerning the sinking to be investigated archaeologically.

Fragility/vulnerability

Highly important archaeological evidence from some sites can be destroyed by the selective or uncontrolled removal of material, by unsympathetic treatment, by works or development, or by natural processes. Some vessel types are likely to be more fragile than others, and the presence of commercially valuable objects within a wreck may make it particularly vulnerable. Vulnerable sites of this type would particularly benefit from protective designation.

Moderately valuable. All steel wrecks of this age have a degree of fragility due to the impact of corrosion. The wreck probably suffers from periodic collapse of sections of its structure. Insufficient data is available to assess the speed of this collapse or of the general deterioration that may be expected.

It appears that the wreck has suffered damage since its discovery due to uncontrolled and largely unrecorded salvage of its fittings and contents by recreational divers. However there is some indication that this activity may have slowed or stopped in recent years. The site remains vulnerable to interference because of the large number of loose artefacts that can still apparently be seen, but this may be restrained by a growing awareness and respect amongst the recreational diving community of the value of shipwrecks and of war grave issues.

There is no evidence that the structure of the vessel has been damaged by divers (other than by the removal of scuttles and windows). Continued diver access is unlikely to alter this, although dive boat shots and anchors could cause significant damage if used frequently or indiscriminately.

No evidence has been seen by WA that confirms that the site has or is suffering damage from human agency. Gardline appear to have wire swept the site in 2003, although this appears to have been for the purposes of survey and not clearance (UKHO, H090/962/01).

Unexploded munitions may still be present. However the site's vulnerability to these cannot be assessed without fieldwork.

Diversity

The importance of wrecked vessels can reflect the interest in their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship, or their technological innovation or virtuosity, as well as their representivity. Consideration should be given both to the diversity of forms in which a particular vessel type may survive and to the diversity of surviving features. Some vessels types may be represented in the surviving record by a wide variety of building types and techniques which may be chronologically, regionally, or culturally conditioned. The sample of protected sites should reflect this wide variety of forms. In addition, some vessels may be identified as being of importance because they possess a combination of high quality surviving features or, occasionally, because they preserve a single important attribute.

Highly valuable. The existing portfolio of sites protected under the PWA (1973) contains no early 20th century merchant ships. This is not because suitable candidate sites do not survive or are not in need of protection, it is rather because curators and their advisors have tended in the past to be heavily biased towards older, pre-modern sites. Designation of the *Mendi*, an example of a cargo liner, would therefore fill an important gap in this portfolio.

Potential

On occasion, the nature of remains cannot be specified precisely but it still may be possible to document reasons anticipating their existence and importance and so to demonstrate the justification for identifying a site for protection. For example, each type of site may provide a slightly different range of contexts for the preservation of archaeological and palaeo-environmental evidence, and the environment of a site may provide strong indications of its likely level of survival. Sites may also be significant in terms of their potential to provide information on site formation and decay processes and the examination of physical, chemical and biological processes on cultural remains or through its potential for public education.

Highly valuable. The site has great potential for educational purposes as it has a strong story attached to it. It is capable of supporting a large number of themes, including genealogical and race relations studies, and of attracting a diverse and international audience. The site could be also act as a test bed for the development of effective techniques for the survey and condition monitoring of iron and steel wrecks of the late 19th and 20th centuries. It is also capable of acting as a focus for a range of commemorative activities and of providing an opportunity to resolve diver access and war grave issues.

APPENDIX XIII: SUITABILITY FOR DESIGNATION UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MILITARY REMAINS ACT 1986

PROTECTION OF MILITARY REMAINS ACT 1986

The Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 (PMRA) makes it an offence to interfere with the wreckage of any crashed, sunken or stranded military aircraft or designated vessel without a licence. This is irrespective of loss of life or whether the loss occurred during peacetime or wartime. All crashed military aircraft receive automatic protection, but vessels must be individually designated.

There are two levels of protection: Protected Places and Controlled Sites. Protected Places include the remains of any aircraft which crashed while in military service or any vessel designated (by name, not location) which sank or stranded in military service after 4th August 1914. Crashed military aircraft receive automatic status as a Protected Place, but vessels need to be specifically designated by name. The location of the vessel does not need to be known for it to be designated as a Protected Place.

Diving is not prohibited on an aircraft or vessel designated as a Protected Place and no licence is required to visit. However, it is an offence to conduct unlicensed diving or salvage operations to tamper with, damage, remove or unearth any remains or enter any hatch or other opening. Essentially, diving is permitted on a ‘look but don’t touch’ basis only.

Controlled Sites are specifically designated areas which encompass the remains of a military aircraft or a vessel sunk or stranded in military service within the last two hundred years. Within the controlled site it is an offence to tamper with, damage, move or unearth any remains, enter any hatch or opening or conduct diving, salvage or excavation operations for the purposes of investigating or recording the remains, unless authorised by licence. This effectively makes diving operations prohibited on these sites without a specific licence.

To date there have been 48 protected or controlled place designations under this Act.

ASSESSMENT

The site is the wreckage of a vessel that sank after 4th August 1914 and therefore within the last two hundred years. Although it was not a naval vessel, at the time of its loss it was chartered by the UK government, was armed and was carrying labour corps members. Prior to this it had carried other troops during its voyage to Plymouth and prior to that had carried troops from Nigeria to East Africa. Although WA are not in a position to provide legal advice on this issue, it seems very likely that the *Mendi* would satisfy the requirements of the PMRA with regard to having been on military service.

Therefore the *Mendi* is likely to be eligible for designation under the PMRA as either a ‘protected place’ or ‘controlled site’, provided that it meets the criteria for designation. These have been assessed as follows:

Whether or not human remains are known or likely to be present

Very probably. Although the total number of casualties is known, it is not known how many men actually went down with the ship. Nevertheless the disposition of troop quarters within

the ship, the point of impact and the rapidity of the flooding, all suggest that a significant number of men were either trapped or dead below decks when the ship sank. There is therefore very high potential for the presence of human remains on the vessel in the immediate aftermath of the sinking.

The presence of human remains in the immediate aftermath of the sinking does not of course make it inevitable that these human remains have survived. A number of factors, including burial environment and subsequent disturbance can have a significant impact upon preservation and insufficient data is currently available to assess the preservation potential. Furthermore WA is unaware of any human remains being observed on the site. Nevertheless the scale of the losses aboard the *Mendi* suggests that it would be appropriate to provisionally conclude that the potential for the survival of human remains exists.

Whether or not there is evidence of sustained disturbance and looting (and the strength of such evidence)

Yes. There is good evidence for the removal of brass and other artefacts by recreational divers. WA is not aware of any human remains having been removed or disturbed. WA is not aware of any large scale commercial salvage.

Whether or not designation is likely to curb or put a stop to such disturbance or looting

Probably. Insufficient data is available to reliably quantify the impact of designation under the PMRA. Anecdotal evidence suggests that legal protection of archaeological sites and the attendant publicity has a negative impact upon disturbance and looting, regardless of the practicalities of policing. In the case of designation under the PWA, experience suggests that it has generally prevented disturbance, except on a handful of sites.

There is some indication that there is already an informal ‘look don’t touch’ policy in operation by at least one charter boat operator. Designation is likely to reinforce this without restricting activity.

Whether or not diving on the vessel or site attracts sustained and significant public criticism or approval

Uncertain. It is not clear at the present time whether or not continued diving on this site will attract significant opposition or approval and it is suggested that the response to this report and attendant publicity is carefully monitored.

APPENDIX XIV: WA RECORDING LEVELS

Level	Type	Objective	Sub-level	Character	Scope	Notes
1	Assessment	A record sufficient to establish the presence, position and type of site.	1a	Indirect (desk-based)	A basic record based on documentary, cartographic or graphic sources, including photographic (incl. AP), geotechnical and geophysical surveys.	Preferably compiled at the start of work on a site, and updated as work progresses.
			1b	Direct (field)	A basic record based on field observation, walkover survey, diving inspection etc., including surveys.	Typically a one-dive visit to the site to assess a geophysical anomaly or report by the public.
2	Evaluation	A record that provides sufficient data to establish the extent, character, date and importance of the site.	2a	Non-intrusive	A limited record based on investigations that might include light cleaning, probing and spot sampling, but without bulk removal of plant growth, soil, debris etc.	A two to four-dive visit to assess the sites archaeological potential, backed up by an outline plan of the site.
			2b	Intrusive	A limited record based on investigations including vigorous cleaning, test pits and/or trenches. May also include recovery (following recording) of elements at immediate risk, or disturbed by investigation.	Either an assessment of the buried remains present on a site; the recovery of surface artefacts; or cleaning to inform for example a 2a investigation.
3	In situ	A record that enables an archaeologist who has not seen the site to comprehend its components, layout and sequences.	3a	Selective	A detailed record of selected elements of the site.	To include a full outline plan of the site and a database (or equivalent) entry for all surface artefacts.
			3b	Un-excavated	A detailed record of all elements of the site visible without excavation.	Full site plan (i.e. planning frame or equivalent accuracy) with individual object drawings, and full photo record (possibly including a mosaic)
			3c	Excavated	A detailed record of all elements of the site exposed by open excavation of part or whole of the site.	Full or partial excavation of a site, documented by plans, sections and recording.

APPENDIX XV: DEFINITIONS

The following general abbreviations and definitions have been used in this report:

Chain cable

A cable is the rope or wire that connects a ship with its anchor (as opposed to a hawser that is used to moor a ship to a quayside). A chain cable is a cable made of chain links.

Gross tonnage

Capacity of a ship's hull below the upperdeck in cubic feet, expressed in tons (with 100 cubic feet notionally equal to one ton).

Navel pipe

Pipe through which the cable was fed from the foredeck into the chain or cable lockers below.

RMS

The prefix, meaning 'Royal Mail Ship' (sometimes 'Steam-ship' or 'Steamer'), used for seagoing vessels that carried mail under contract to the British Royal Mail. Use of the prefix was considered prestigious.

Registered tonnage

As gross tonnage but without including the spaces within the hull set aside for machinery, fuel, stores, crew quarters, etc. This expression of tonnage is often called net tonnage and more closely represented the cargo carrying capacity.

SS (or ss)

The prefix used before the name of a ship to indicate that she is a merchant steamship.

Scuttle

Fittings for a circular port cut in the side of a ship to admit light and air. A circular metal frame with an inward opening hinged glass port secured by butterfly nuts or similar 'dogs'. A hinged deadlight is often fitted to prevent light shining out at night and to provide reinforcement. Scuttles are commonly called portholes.

Windlass

Lifting device consisting of a horizontal cylinder turned by a crank on which a cable or rope winds. A windlass could be used to handle a ship's anchors and cable.

APPENDIX XVI: TROOP AND HOSPITAL SHIPS LOST DURING WORLD WAR I

This list of troop- (T) and hospital (H) ship losses is not exhaustive:

Name	Date lost	Place	Cause	Casualties
<i>Athos</i> (French) (T)	11/2/1917	Mediterranean	Sunk by u-boat	754
<i>Anglia</i> (H)	17/11/1915	Off Dover	Mined	105
<i>Citta Di Palermo</i> (T)	8/1/1916	Off Brindisi	Mined	Unknown
<i>Donegal</i> (H)	17/4/1917	English Channel	Torpedoed	95
<i>Empress Queen</i> (T)	February 1916	Bembridge Ledge, Isle of Wight	Ran aground	0
<i>Gallia</i> (French) (T)	October 1916	Mediterranean	Sunk by U-35	1338
<i>Galway Castle</i> (T/H)	12/9/1918	Off Plymouth	Sunk by U-82	143
<i>Glenart Castle</i> (H)	26/2/1918	Off Lundy	Torpedoed	155
<i>Llandoverly Castle</i> (H)	27/6/1918	114 miles south west of Fastnet	Sunk by U-86	146
<i>Mendi</i> (T)	21/2/1917	Off Isle of Wight	Collision	649
<i>Omrah</i> (T)	1917	Unknown	-	Unknown
<i>Otranto</i> (T)	1917	Unknown	Collision	431
<i>Royal Edward</i> (T)	July 1915	Off Greece	Sunk by UB-14	935
<i>Warilda</i> (H)	3/8/1918	English Channel	Torpedoed	117

APPENDIX XVII: MEDIA COVERAGE GENERATED DURING DBA

'You are going to die, but that is what you came to do'

BY SHAUN SMILLIE

Ninety years ago a chaplain stood on the deck of a listing ship and told the troops in his charge to die like African warriors.

His words have been immortalised in history but until now it has been the forgotten part of this sea war that has mostly been forgotten... until now.

Today 90 years ago, over 600 South Africans died when the troopship SS Mendi sank after a collision with another vessel in the English Channel.

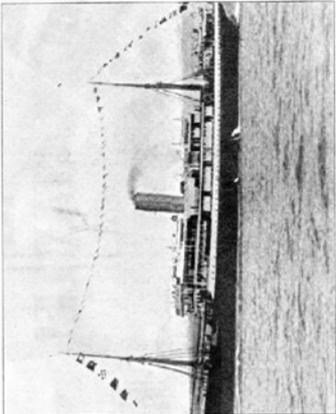
Since then, the story of the Mendi has come to symbolise the racial injustices of the age and the bravery of those on board.

But while every year those who died on the Mendi are remembered in ceremonies and memorials, not all have been remembered and many still lie in 40m of murky water, about 170m off the Isle of Wight.

However, all this is about to change with a survey being led by a South African marine-archaeologist living in Salisbury, England, for the University of Wessex, always wanted to learn more about the troopship, which has become an icon in his homeland.

And when he recently moved to the United Kingdom, he finally got his chance.

"I was very disappointed in 1974 and according to those who have visited the wreck, she sits upright on the sea bed and is broken in two."



BLACK AND WHITE: The SS Mendi carried 823 men of the 5th Battalion of the SA Native Labour Corps - black soldiers led by white officers.

"Others have picked up parts of porpoises, plates and the ship's telegraph," says Gribble. "I was disappointed in 1974 and according to those who have visited the wreck, she sits upright on the sea bed and is broken in two."

It was the crest of the British and the Union Jack on the hull of the ship that drew the attention of some of the divers who recovered from the wreck, that allowed divers to identify the Mendi.

So far he has been amazed at the information that is available. Already he has found relics from the wreck, some in South Africa.

"The guy who discovered the Mendi has a few bits and pieces of the wreck in a museum.

We want to look at the issue of the Native Labour Corps

Just before 5am on that Wednesday morning, the SS Mendi was rammed by the mail ship Darro.

The ship took just 15 minutes to sink, with only 150 survivors, 620 men with her.

Few of the men could swim, and most had never seen the sea before they headed out on the Mendi to the front.

"She is beyond the safety limits of most weekend divers," says Gribble, "in 40 metres of water. Vis-

ibility is poor and there are strong currents."

On the night of February 21 1917 the SS Mendi was heading to the French port of Le Havre.

On board were 823 men of the 5th Battalion of the South African Native Labour Corps, black soldiers led by white officers.

Like all native labour corps, the men were forbidden to carry arms; instead their duties included unloading supplies from ships, digging trenches and other manual tasks that freed up white colonial soldiers to fight at the front.

Just before 5am on that Wednesday morning, the SS Mendi was rammed by the mail ship Darro.

The ship took just 15 minutes to sink, with only 150 survivors, 620 men with her.

Few of the men could swim, and most had never seen the sea before they headed out on the Mendi to the front. Many of those who could swim died from the cold.

"The tragedy was the courage of the men in their final moments."

Foremost was that of the Gribble.

chaplains, the Rev Isaac Dvobha, who led his men in a Death Dance. He got the troops to form up in ranks on the deck where, he addressed them.

"Be quite and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die. Brothers, we are killing the death drill." The chaplain himself drowned that morning.

The 200-old survivors were picked up by an escort ship and taken to England.

Later they were sent to France where they worked with four other African Labour Corps battalions.

After the war, none of the South African black servicemen who were on the Mendi received a British War Medal or ribbon. Their white officers did.

It was only in 1997, South Africa's second single-worst loss of life during World War 1. The worst was during the battle of Delville Wood.

The ship's sinking, however, was largely ignored by the official histories of the period, and many of the stories of that day have been passed down in oral tradition.

In recent years, the sinking has been remembered and commemorated. On Sunday a memorial service was held at Avonlea cemetery in Soweto, where a monument to the Mendi now stands.

The service has been commemorated. Gribble hopes his next phase of the study will be the wreck site. One of Gribble's concerns is the preservation of the wreck.

"We would like to find out at a later stage how the wreck is degraded and try to slow down the process of decay."

"The problem with steel ships is that they eventually end up as heaps of rust. By controlling the human element it would make a difference."

But it is not only in South Africa where there is an interest in the Mendi.

In October 2006, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission launched a CDROM for British schools, which contained information about the Mendi.

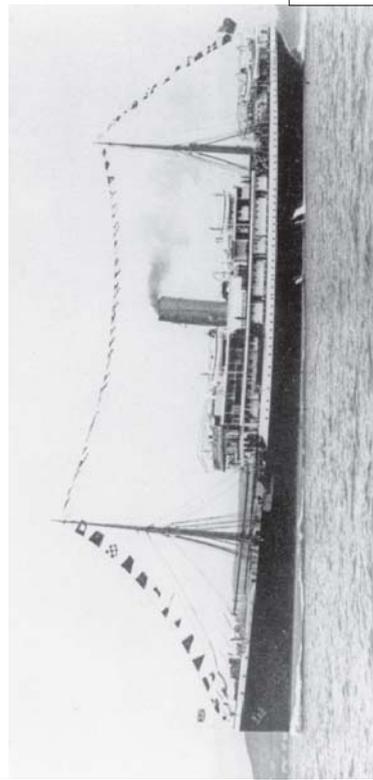
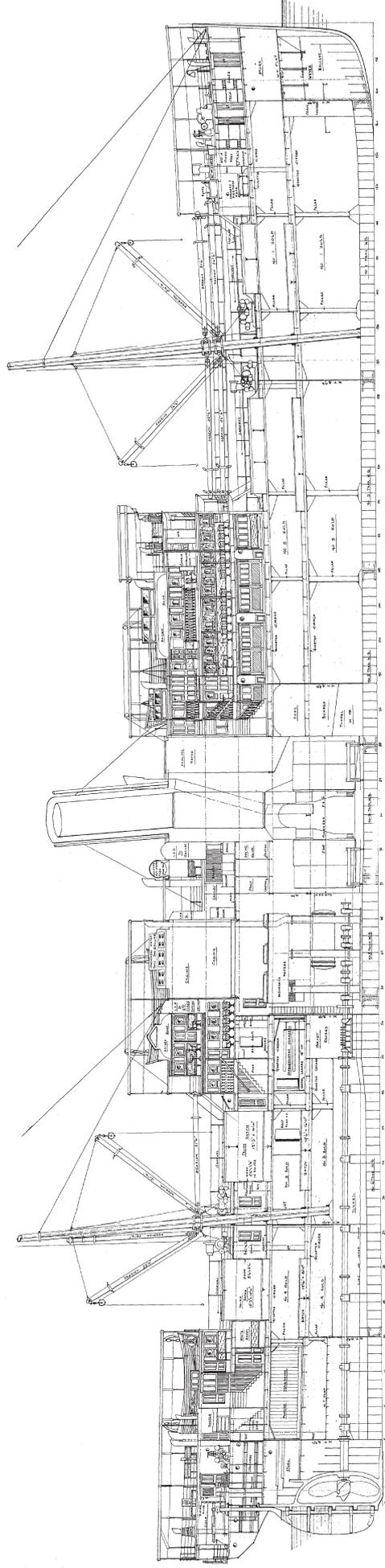
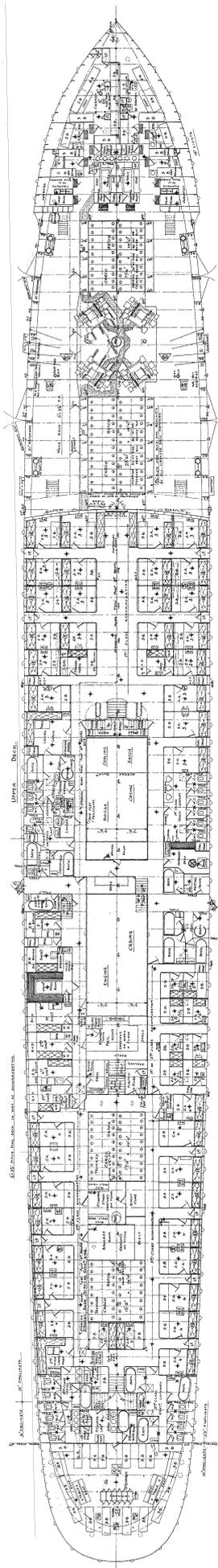
The hope, says Gribble, is that the CDROM will go into the hands of minority groups in the United Kingdom which have been "excluded from the mainstream of history" to take an interest in the story.

"Through the story of the Mendi, which is likely to be the focus of this, and encourage them to participate in the heritage," says Gribble.



NEVER FORGOTTEN: Retired Sergeant Major Lesetse Abel Setlolosha lays a wreath at the memorial service in Ateridgeville for those aboard the SS Mendi, which sank on February 21 1917 in the English Channel. **PICTURE: ETIENNE CREUX**

Date:	28/03/07	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	N/A	Illustrator:	KJB
Path:	W:\Projects\64441\Drawing Offices\Report Figures\Report07-03-15		



This material is for client report only © National Maritime Museum, South African Navy and Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.

Date: 21/03/07

Scale: N/A

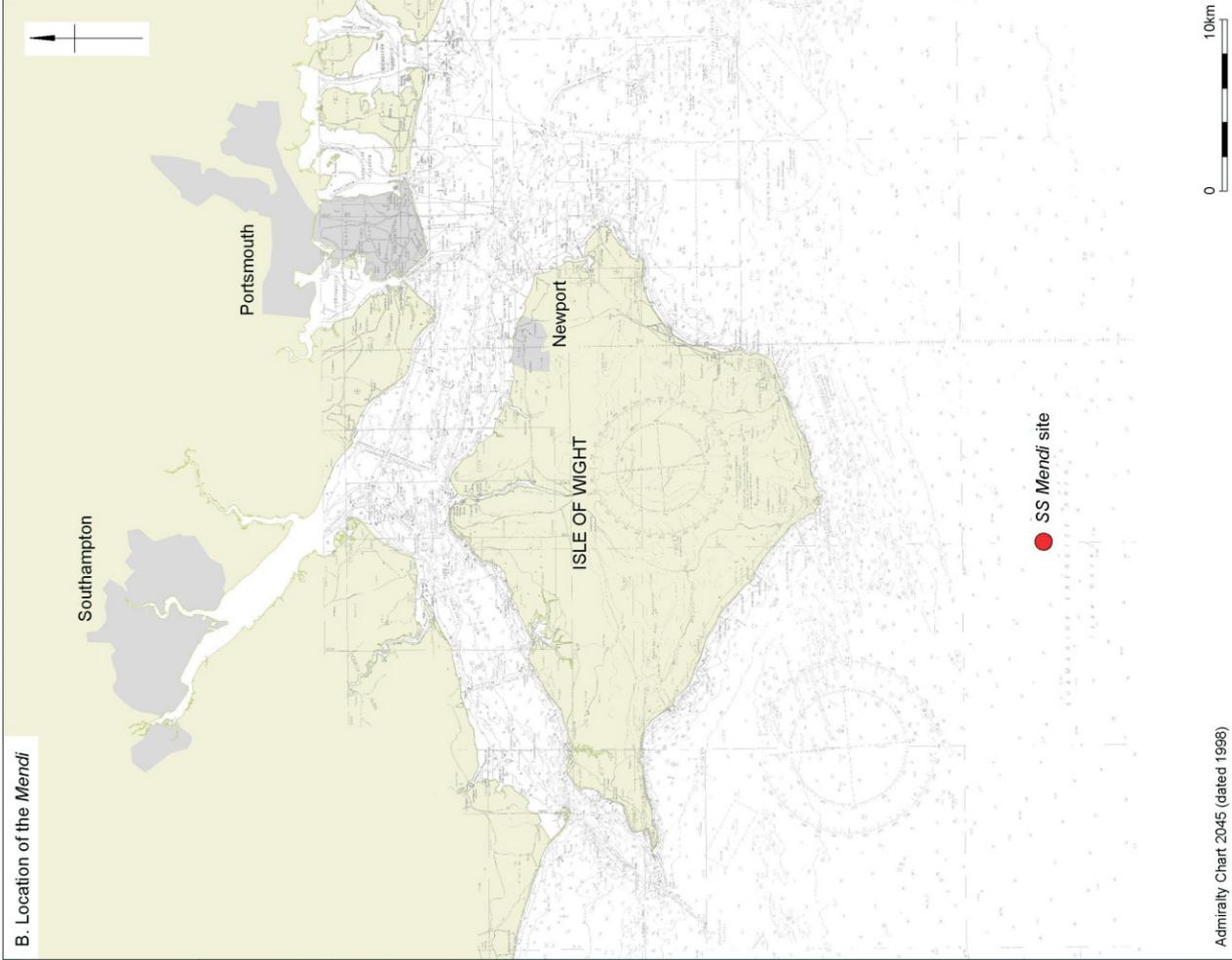
Path: W:\Projects\64441\Drawing Offices\Report\07-03-15\Figure 1.cdr

Revision Number: 0

Illustrator: KJB

Plans of the *Mendi* and *Karima* courtesy of the National Maritime Museum (with photo of the *Mendi*; inset courtesy of the South African Navy)

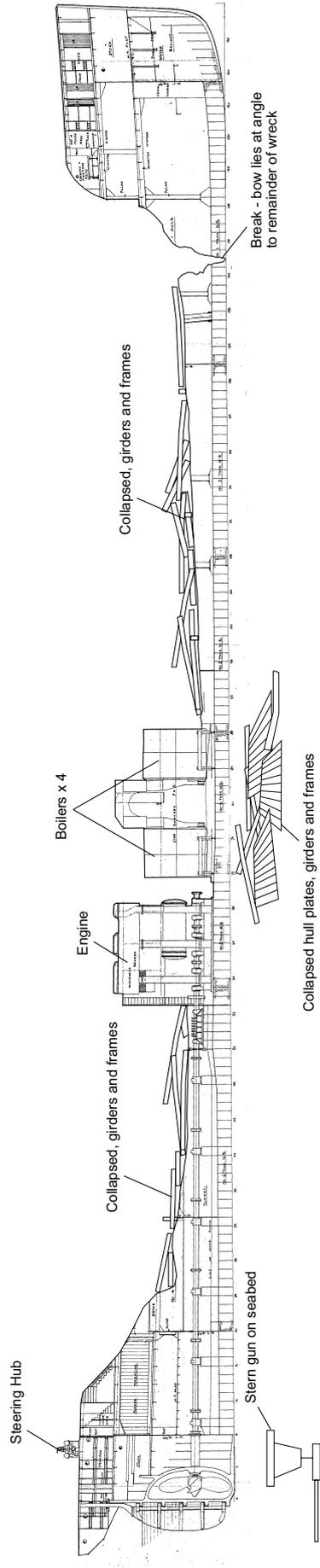
Figure 1



Admiralty Chart 2045 (dated 1998)

This product has been derived, in part, from Crown Copyright Material with the permission of the UK Hydrographic Office and the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (www.ukho.gov.uk). All rights reserved. (Wessex Archaeology Licence Number 620020220/11)
NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION
 WARNING: The UK Hydrographic Office has not verified the information within this product and does not accept liability for the accuracy of reproduction or any modifications made thereafter.
 Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2007. All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449.
 This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.

Date:	16/03/07	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	B. 1:300,000	Illustrator:	KJB
Path:	W:\Projects\64441\Drawing Office\Report Figures\Report07-03-15		



Date:	21/03/07	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	N/A	Illustrator:	KJB
Path:	W:\Projects\6444 1\Drawing Office\Report\07-03-15\Figure 3.dwg		

Schematic diagram of the wreck site based on diver reports

Figure 3

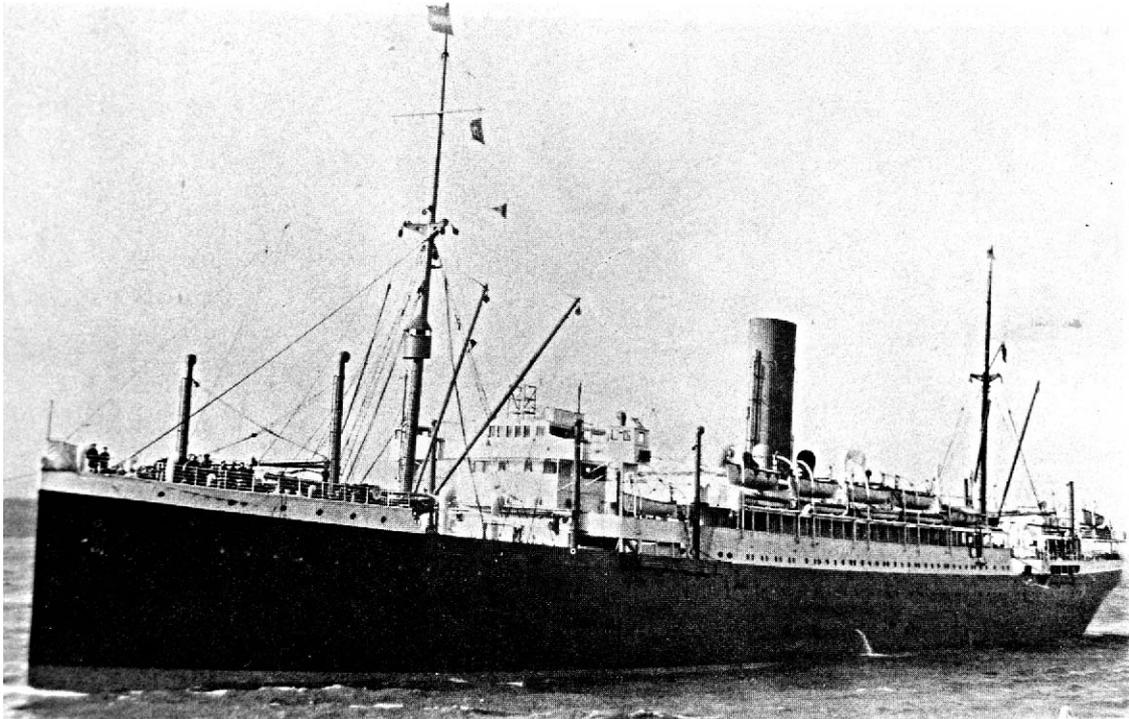


Plate 1. The *SS Darro* (Courtesy of the South African National Museum of Military History)



Plate 2a. Cape Corps in Palestine (Courtesy of the South African National Museum of Military History)



Plate 2b. Cape Corps in Palestine (Courtesy of the South African National Museum of Military History)



Plate 3. Ceramic dish recovered from the wreck site. Note the British and African Steam Navigation Company logo, which was used to identify the wreck as the *Mendi* (Courtesy Dave Wendes)



Plate 4. Bridge telegraph from the *Mendi* at the Arreton Shipwreck Museum



Plate 5. Bronze saloon window from the *Mendi* at the Arreton Shipwreck Museum



Plate 6. Possible propeller, although this identification is speculative (Courtesy of Keith Rimes)

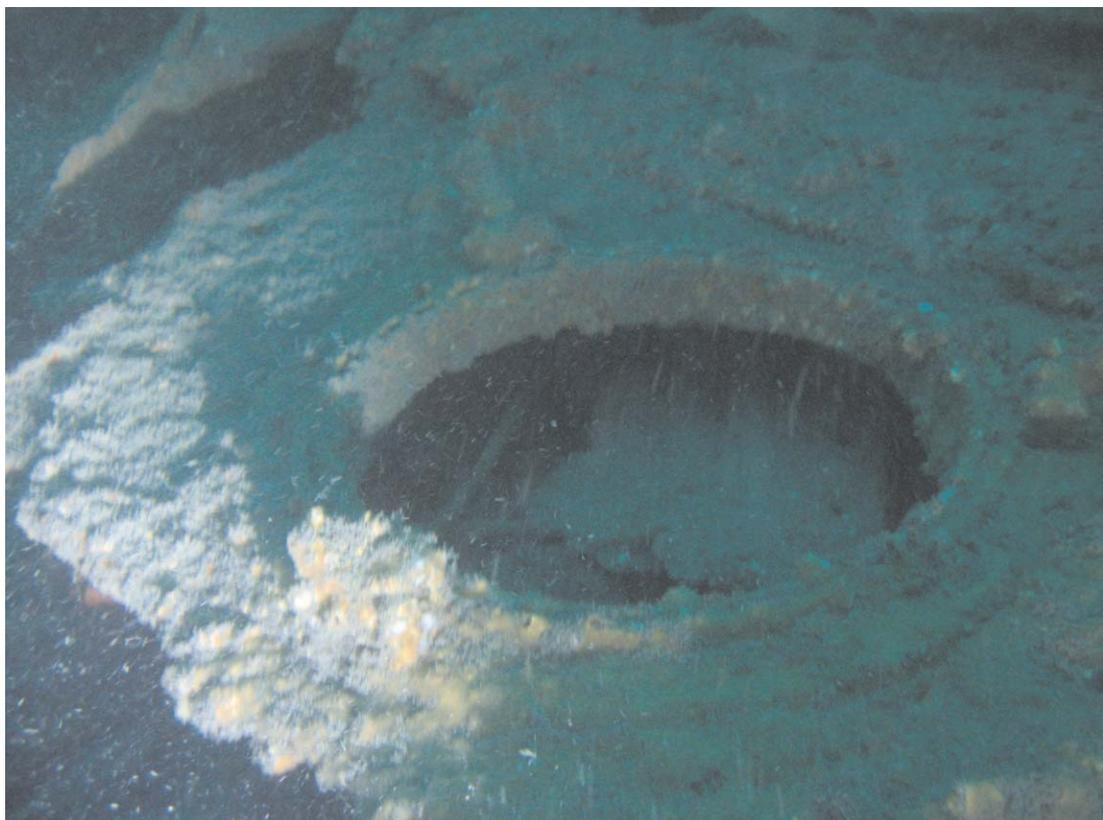


Plate 7. A scuttle and shell plating (Courtesy of Keith Rimes)

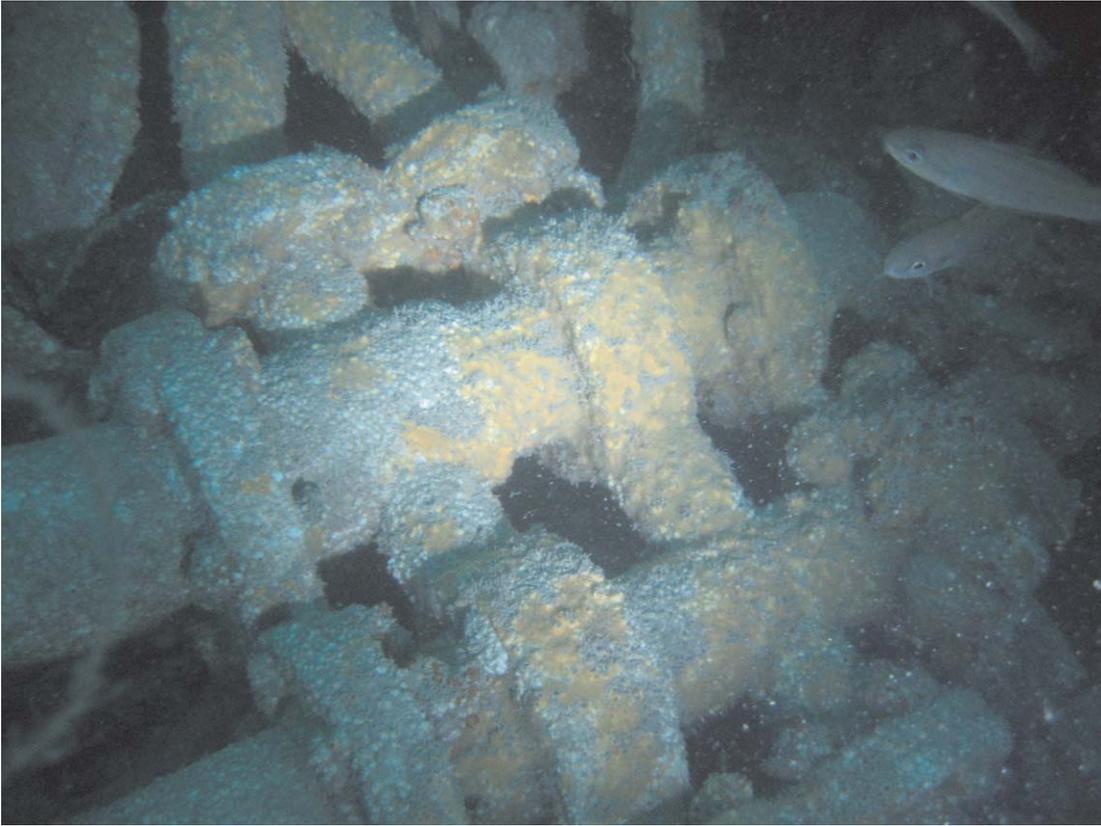


Plate 8. Flanged and bracketed pipes, possibly associated with the boilers or engine room (Courtesy of Keith Rimes)



Plate 9. A possible powered windlass (Courtesy of Keith Rimes)



Plate 10. Two bitts and possible deck plating (Courtesy of Keith Rimes)

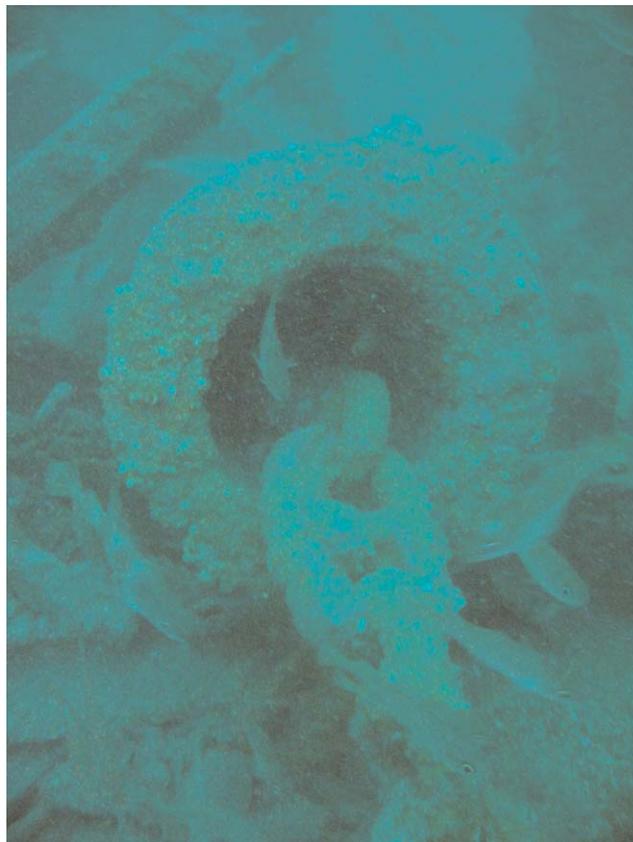


Plate 11. Pipe with chain, probably chain cable and navel pipe (Courtesy of Keith Rimes)

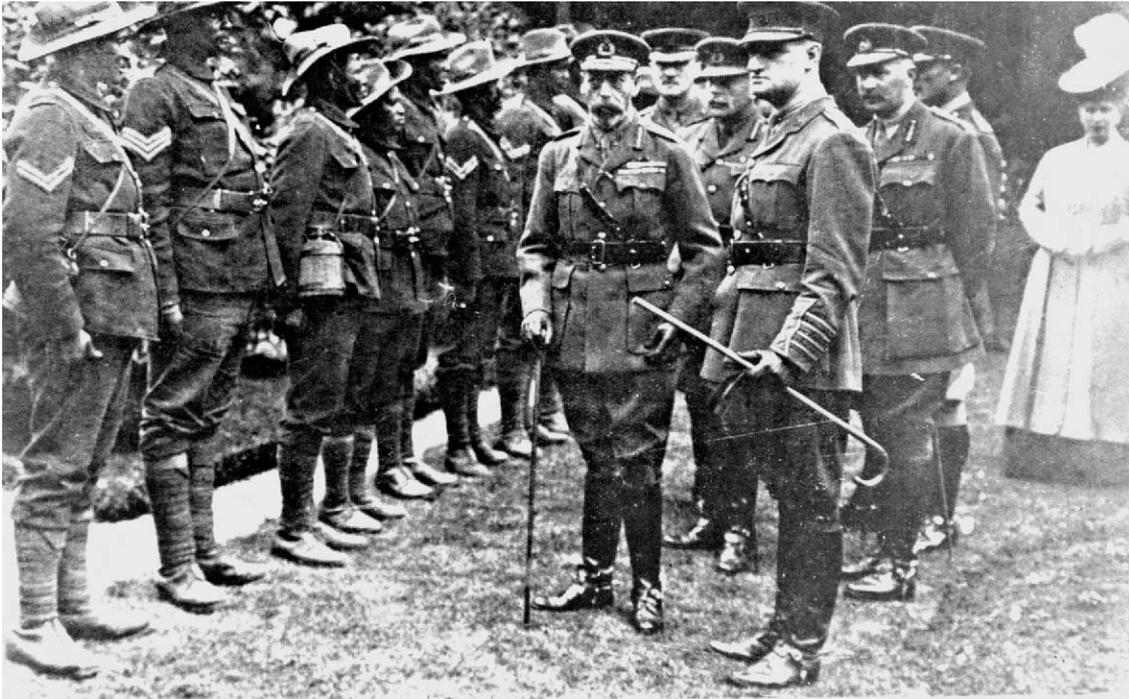


Plate 12. King George V inspecting members of the SANLC at Abbeville, France, July 1917
(Courtesy of the South African National Museum of Military History)



Plate 13. Rev Isaac Wauchope Dyobha
(courtesy of Jeff Opland)



Plate 14. Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton

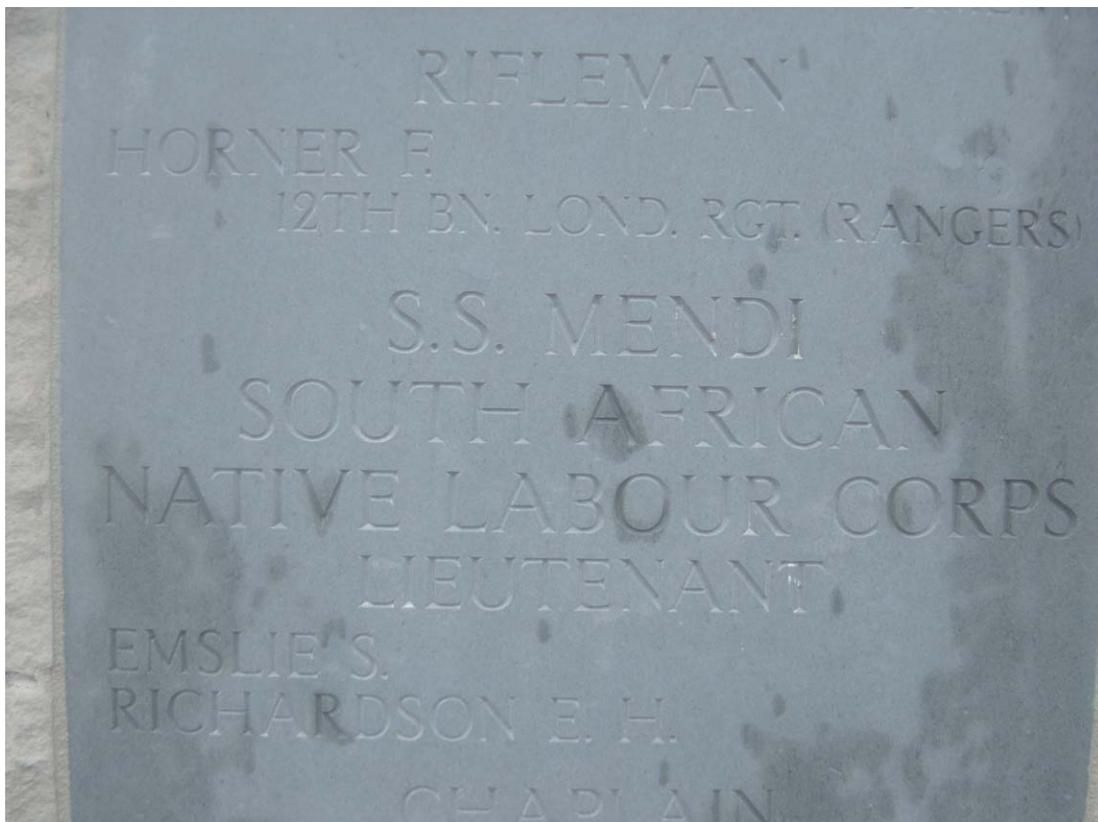


Plate 15a. One of the *Mendi* panels at Hollybrook

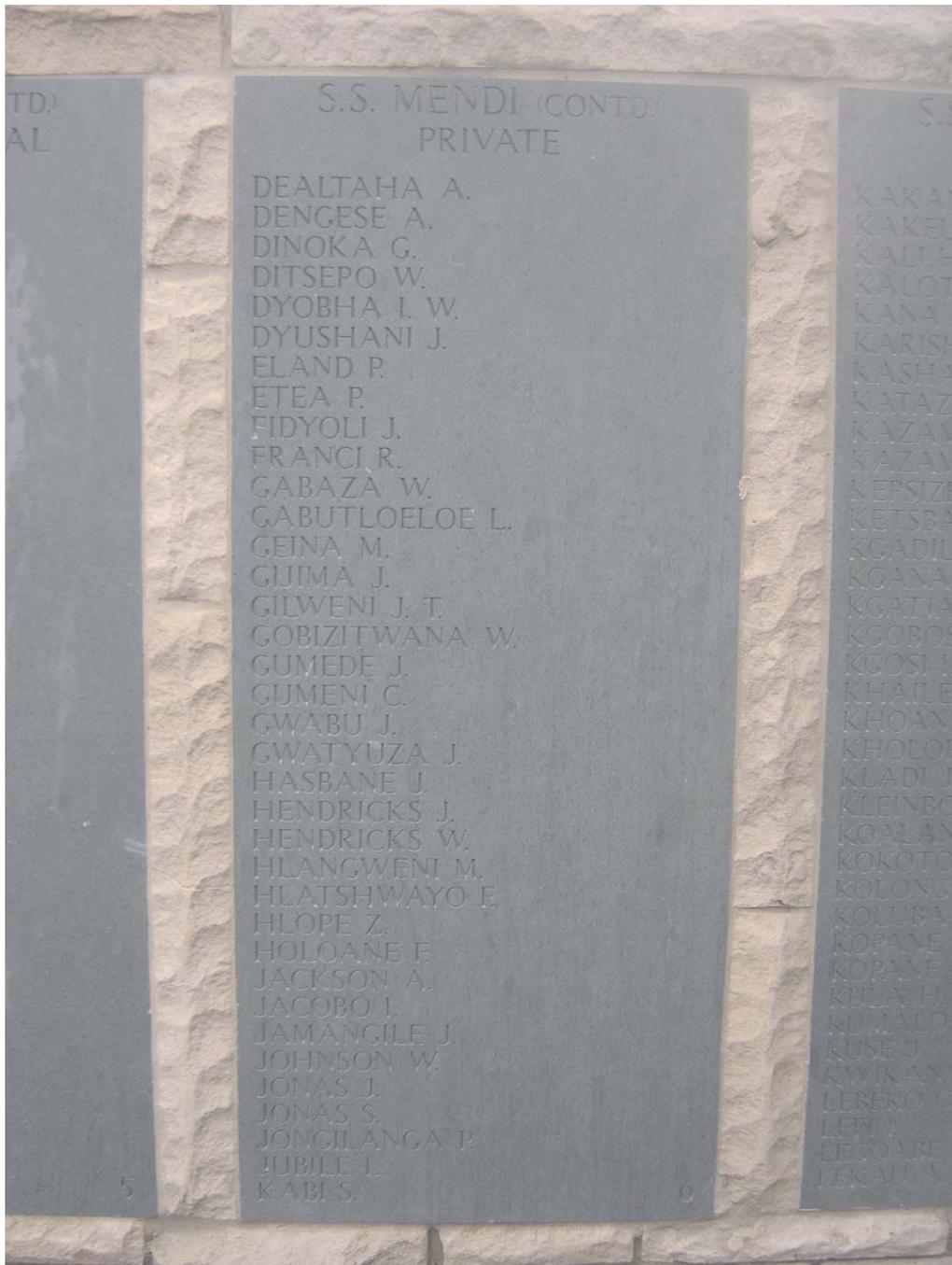


Plate 15b. One of the *Mendi* panels at Hollybrook, including the name of Isaac Wauchope Dyobha pictured in plate 13



WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.

Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

London Office: Unit 113, The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY.

Tel: 020 7953 7494 Fax: 020 7953 7499 london-info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

