



At Sea September 25th 1962

Messrs

Suisse Atlantique

Société d'Armement Maritime S.A.

L a u s a n n e

046 - M/S " CELERINA "

Report concerning the rescue of 51 passengers from a superconstellation ditched in North Atlantic Ocean .

The evening of the 23th September about at 2050 the W.O. advised us about an SOS received from a Superconstellation passenger plane named Flying Tiger with 76 passengers on board that was planning to ditch in position 54 N 24W. After having given our position to Ocean Vessel 4YJ , at 2228 GMT we received orders from this vessel to proceed at maximum speed towards the ditching aircraft. After having altered our course we gave immediately orders to prepare the motor life boat, all ladders, livelines, manila ropes, lifebelts to be ready to whatever help needed. We ordered also hot water ready for making coffee, tea, milk.

The distance between the Celerina at 2105 ( 2235 GMT ) when the course was altered and the new position of the ditched plane was of about 64 miles with course 330. At 2300 the first searching plane was in sight over the ship and at 2335 two red flares were seen bearing 290 and we altered course for 290, putting on our searchlight. ( we were told from the rescued that this light was immediately seen and from this they understood that somebody was coming to help them)

At 0105 stand by with engines always proceeding towards the flares and the white parachute lights rockets dropped by the planes flying over the area where the liferaft with the survivors was floating. At 0230 between the floating flares the feeble light of the raft was at last seen at times emerging on top of the big waves. The wind was still strong and blowing from West forer 5/6. At this time we thought that lowering at sea our motor boat was almost impossible and very dangerous on account of the strong sea and wind. We then decided that the best solution was to approach the liferaft with our starboard side trying to pick up the survivors by this way. All the crew was already in stand by on deck ready to give their maximum help.

On approaching the liferaft we tried our best to estimate the distance between the ship and the raft in order to have the same alongside with the ship almost stopped, but this was very difficult on account of the



darkness. No help from our radar because there was so much sea return and the radarscope was full of spots.

The manoeuvring of the ship was also very difficult because fully loaded and for the action combined of the strong wind and the rough sea that were obstructing our efforts to keep the ship steady. Our first attempt to reach our goal was unsuccessful so we were obliged to try a second time manoeuvring in way to remain near the liferaft where 51 people were crying and asking for help. Little by little the ship responded to our efforts and we succeed at last and at 0316 the raft was alongside well secured and the rescuing of the passengers started. Two of the crew A.B. Spampinato and Carpenter Wunderlin went down in the raft that was going up and down dangerously, to give them more help and to fast everyone with the fireman-belt in order that the crew from deck were able to hoist them outside of the raft, because they were all out of strength. So helped by the crew on deck all survivors were brought inside the ship where they were dried, dressed and cared. The sick received the first medical care while warm coffee, milk and tea was served all around to everybody. At 0420 the raft is empty and abandoned.

Among the rescued two were already dead and another died after about 10 minutes while they were <sup>a</sup>trying artificial respiration. All three (two men and a woman) were put for the moment on the recreation room.

A doctor was between the rescued and notwithstanding his faculties were not so good he started as best as he could to give his help for the more sick and for the injured. Quite most of the survivors showed some kind of ustions in their legs, some had fractured bones, others just with small scatches in the skin. Later this doctor was of great help because some had infections.

We gave orders to start the count of the rescued and to prepare a list with all the names, but as sometimes happens there was some mistakes because survivors were scattered all over the ship's cabins and there was still some confusion.

At 0427 with the end of the rescuing we started again the search for more survivors or bodies but without results. In the mean time more ships were arriving in the area starting their search and combing the sea. At 0855 we asked the Canadian aircarrier that was steaming at full speed for reaching the ditching area to meet her in order to have as soon as possible a doctor on boat, medecines and for the transfer of those who needed immediate care. At 0900 receiving affermative reply from D.R. 53 55 N - 24 30 W with course 120 we were under way again. At 1340 one helicopter was in sight and we manoeuvred for the landing of the doctor. At 1345 doctor on board starting his work for the injured and sick people. Four rescued and the



three deads are transfered by helicopter on the flying bridge of the Bonaventura aircarrier and at 1636 after having on board medecines we resumed our course towards Antwerp.

At this point we must say a word of prise for all the crew who made successful this rescue giving the maximum of themselves with all their hearts for more than 20 hours, giving their beds, dresses, shirts, trousers blankets and everything for the confort and care of 48 people glad to be between friends and a safe place.

Between others we like to mention Carpenter Wunderlin and A.B. Spampinate that were those who descended in the liferaft, bosum Amato, A.B. Cononna, Zazà, Gadaletta, Mazzola, Deck-boy Carny and Raymond, and from engine crew : 2nd Eng. Van Koppenhagen, 4th Eng. Brattoli, donkeyman Campisi, Motormans Schupbach and Capelluti, wiper Salvemini, We like also to mention Third Off. Razzini, and those who were on duty as helsman Fasciano, 3rd Eng. Michel, Motorsmans Facchini and Mettler. Chief Off. Fossanova and 2nd Off. Schiano.

The following crew members put their cabins and berths at disposition of the rescued : Chief mate Fossanova, 3rd Mate Razzini, 2nd Eng. Koppenhagen , 3rd Eng. Michel 4rth Eng. Brattoli, Bosum Amato, Carpenter Wunderlin, Deck-boys Raymond and Garny, A.B. Spampinato, A.B. Cadaleta, Donkeyman Campisi, Motorman Facchini, Capelluti, Electrician Janka. Stewardeness Giuliana and Maria Laura Lugli gave all the care possible for the rescued women.

A special mention and prise for Wireless Operator Stockli who for more than 24 hours was always at watch before the radio sparatus receiving and sending hundreds and hundreds of messages with no rest not only before and during the rescue but also all during the voyage to Antwerp.

We think to have made our best in order to give to the 48 rescued all our care and a warm friendly confort after so many hours adrift on the ocean in small liferaft and never we will forget this people praying and asking for help when the first time we missed to get them alongside the Celerina,

Domenico Lugli - Master