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San Delfino

San Delfino 12,000 tons Captain S.Perry, while anchored in the Humber waiting berthing instructions to discharge a cargo of kerosene and vaporising oil. At two am a violent explosion occurred that shattered two after tanks and holed the engine room, there were no casualties, oil began pouring from the tanks and flooding the engine room. Captain Perry had the lifeboats swung out. Early efforts at salvage were unsuccessful. The ship's back was broken, and the ship showed signs of breaking in two. The only course of action available now was to beach the ship. Most of the crew were put ashore for safety. Multiple problems were overcome before it became possible to shift ship. The cargo was transferred to smaller tankers and although almost broken in two, she was floated off and berthed safely on the 5th January in King George's Dock at Hull. **San Delfino** was taken into dry dock for permanent repair later. The company's Staff demonstrated that the compressed air device to aid torpedoed and damaged ships at sea was successful, and by middle of the following year it was standard on all tankers and was claimed as a leading invention of the war. The San Delfino episode deserves mention in the annals of ship salvage, and the possibility of using compressed air as an aid to saving torpedoed ships. A tanker is equipped with air-compressors connected to an air-pipe running the length of the ship. Along this line are connections to which air hoses are fitted, suppose the hull is holed by an underwater explosion, and the sea begins to pour in, an air hose is connected, the tank lid screwed down, The compressed air within the damaged compartment holds the water in check, and as the pressure increases, the water is slowly forced out again and tank becomes buoyant with compressed air. The device can be used to pump sea water for fire fighting, to steer the ship, transfer cargo from one tank to another, in a complete power failure by the separate power unit. The San Cirilo and Ohio of Malta convoy fame were both fitted, and numerous other tankers and salvaged with this device. Germany was achieving success by the use of surface craft, U-boats, mines, and aircraft bombs in the effort to sever Britain's ocean lifelines, Merchant shipping bore the brunt of the attacks. The Shell fleets suffered in common with other tanker owning Companies and the Merchant navy in general