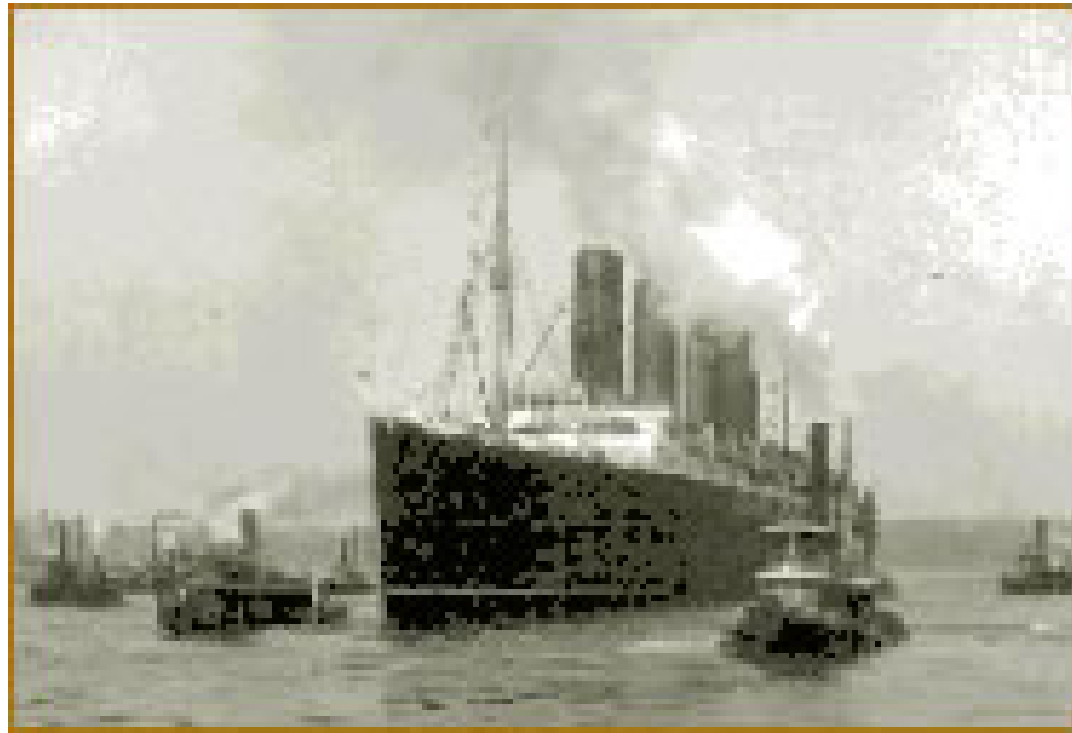


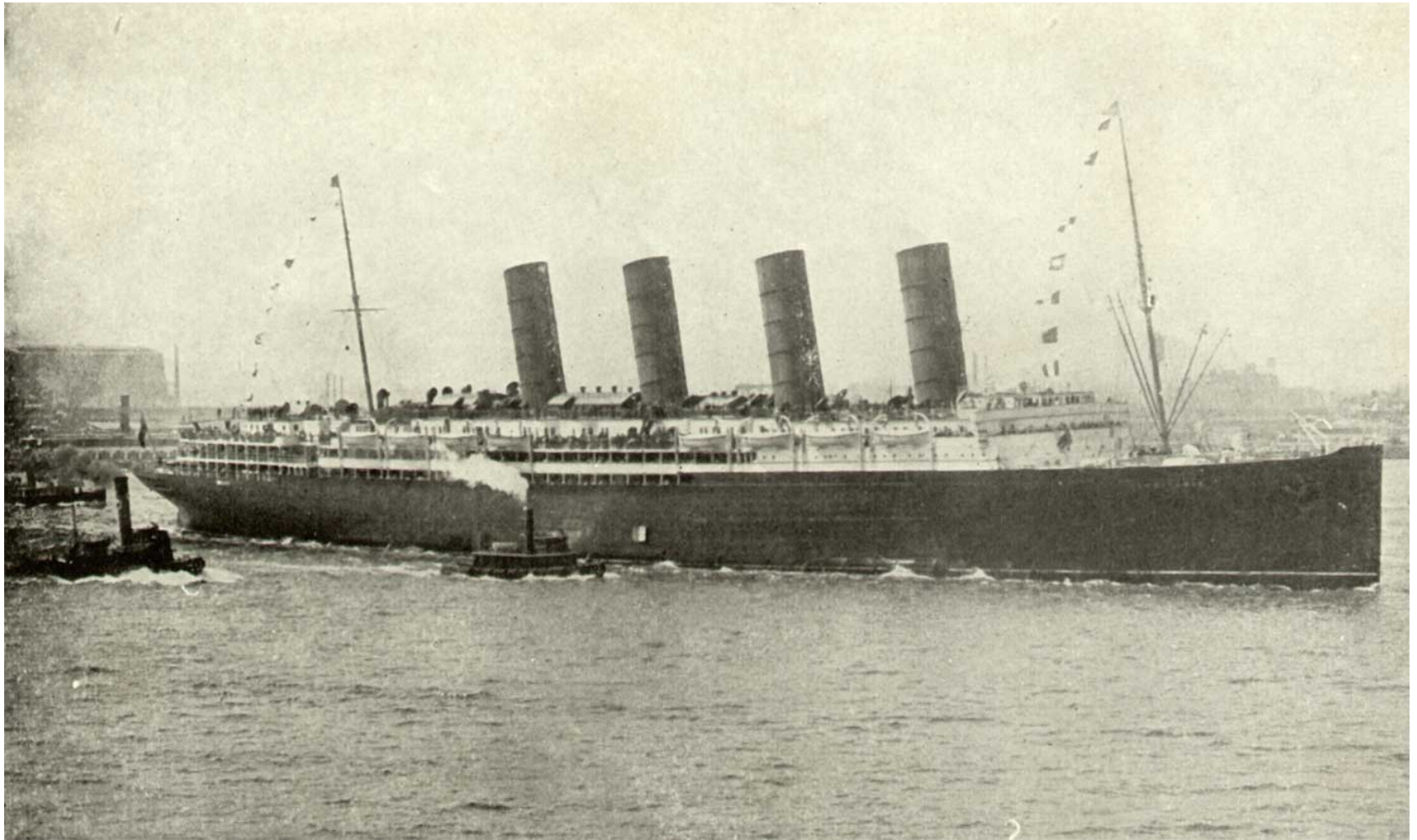
TOP SECRET

Lusitania

Construction of the *Lusitania* had begun in 1903 with the goal of building the fastest liner afloat. Dubbed the "Greyhound of the Seas" she soon captured the Blue Ribbon for the fastest Atlantic crossing.

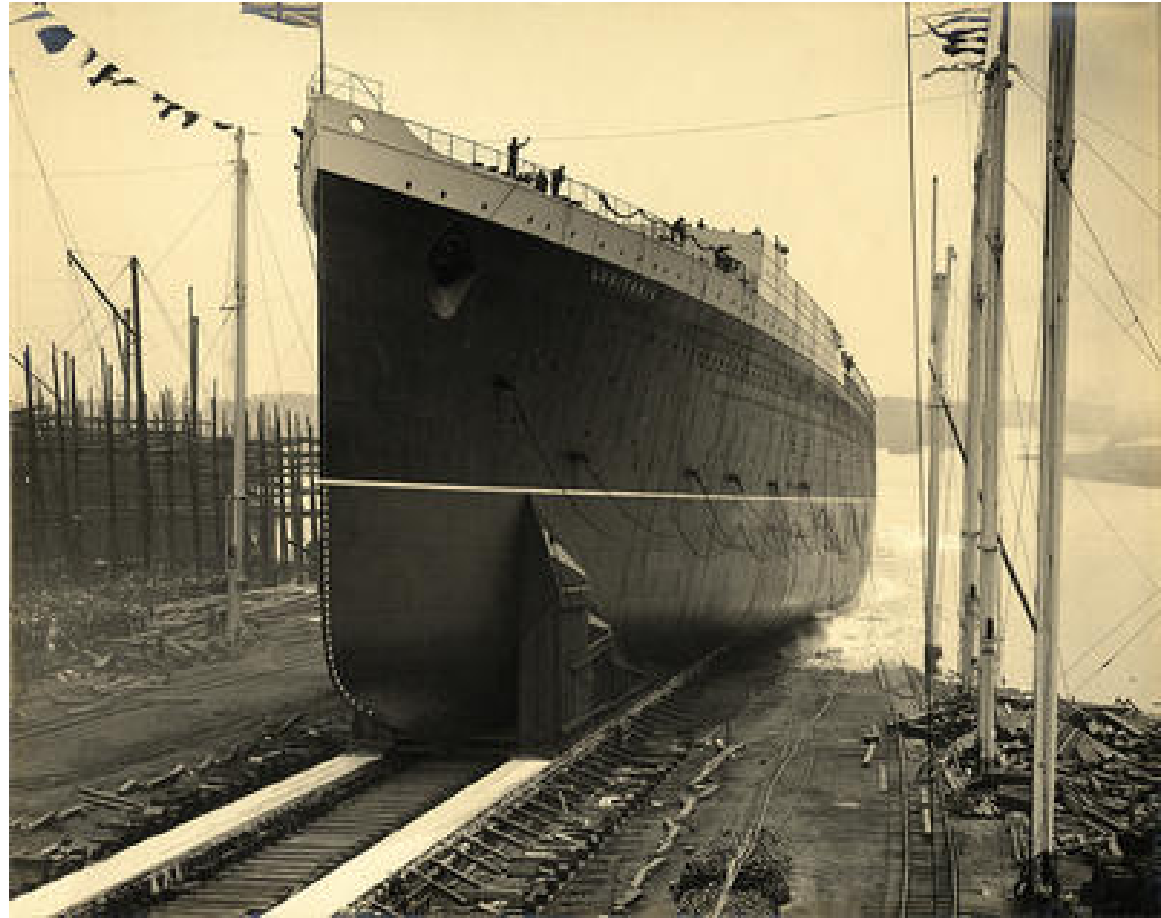


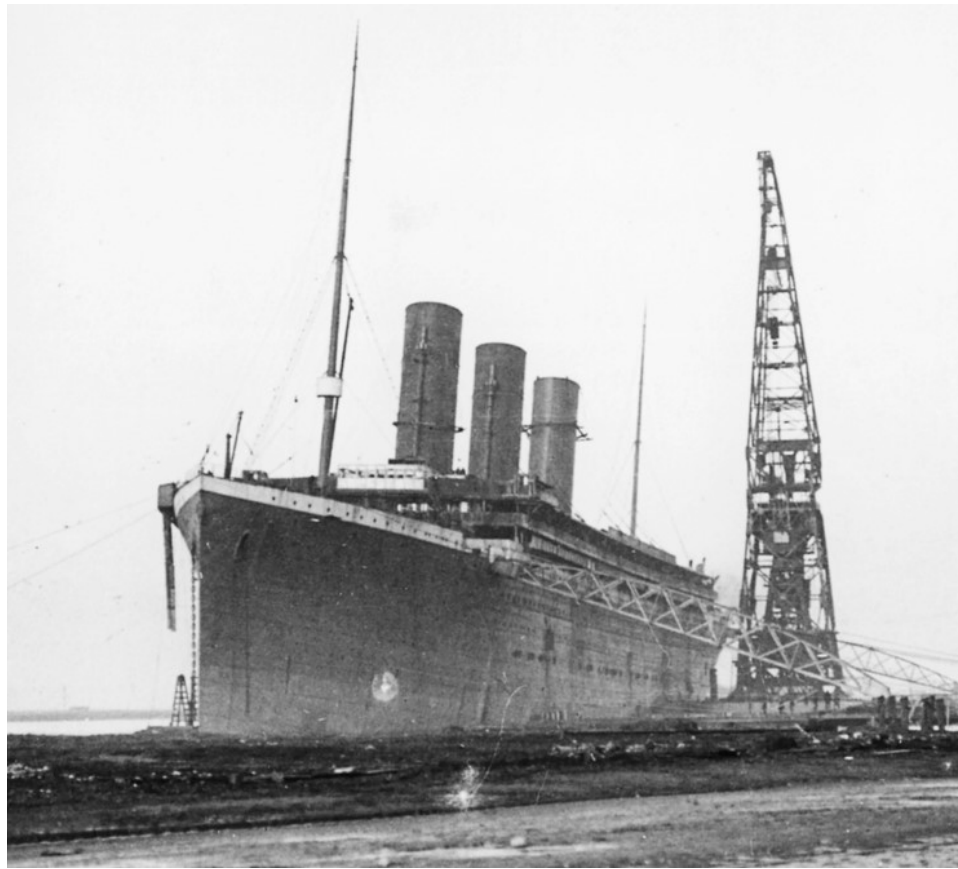
The *Lusitania* made her maiden voyage from Liverpool to New York in September 1907.



The British Admiralty had secretly assisted in paying for construction, and she was built to with the understanding that at the outbreak of war the ship would be consigned to government service.

As war clouds of World War I gathered in 1913, the *Lusitania* quietly entered dry dock in Liverpool and was fitted for war service.





This included the installation of ammunition magazines and gun mounts on her decks. The mounts, concealed under the teak deck, were ready for the addition of the guns when needed.

On May 1, 1915, the ship departed New York City bound for Liverpool.

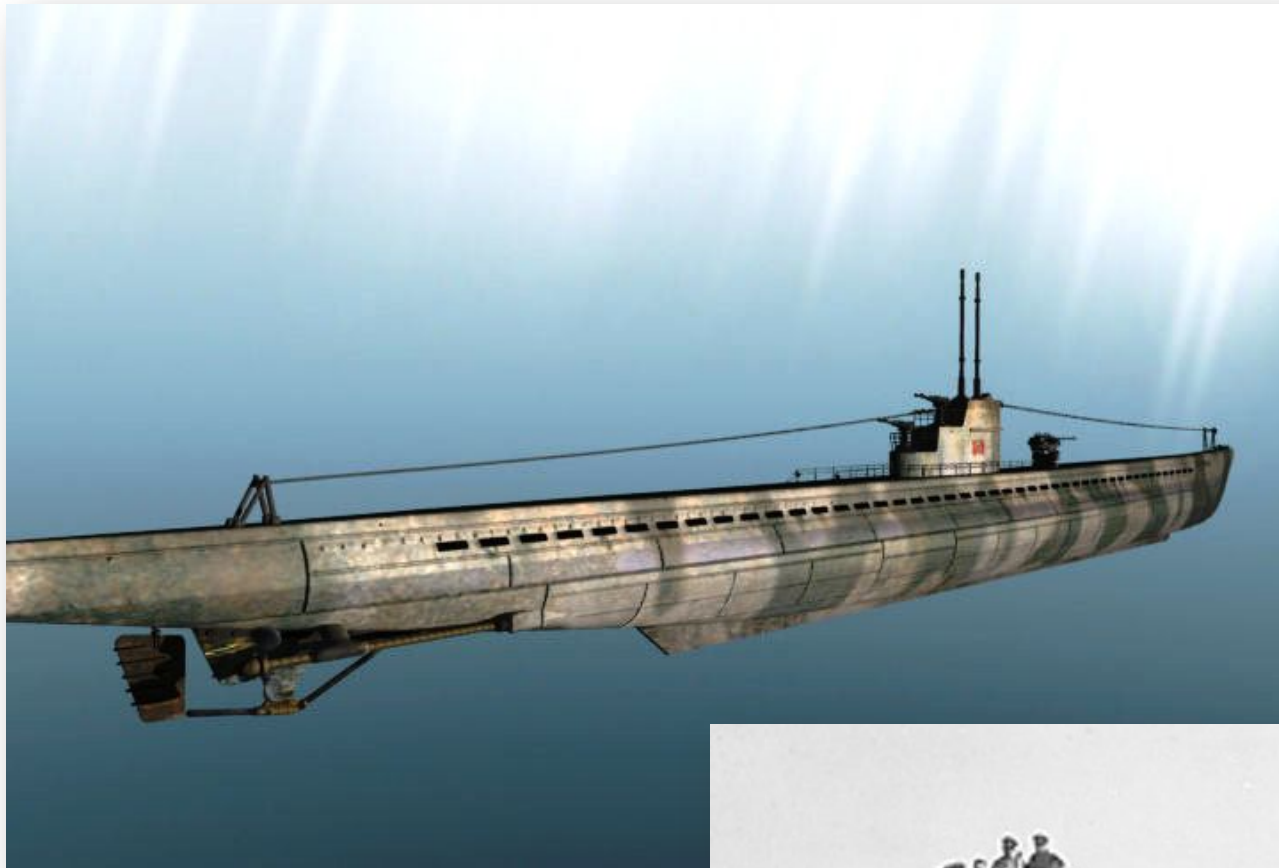




As the fastest ship afloat, the luxurious liner felt secure in the belief she could easily outdistance any submarine.

On May 7, the ship neared the coast of Ireland. At 2:10 in the afternoon a torpedo fired by the German submarine U 20 slammed into her side. Chaos reigned. A mysterious second explosion ripped the liner apart.

The ship listed, or leaned to one side, so badly and that lifeboats crashed into passengers crowded on deck, or dumped their loads into the water. Most passengers never had a chance. Within 18 minutes the giant ship slipped beneath the sea. One thousand one hundred nineteen of the 1,924 aboard died. The dead included 114 Americans.

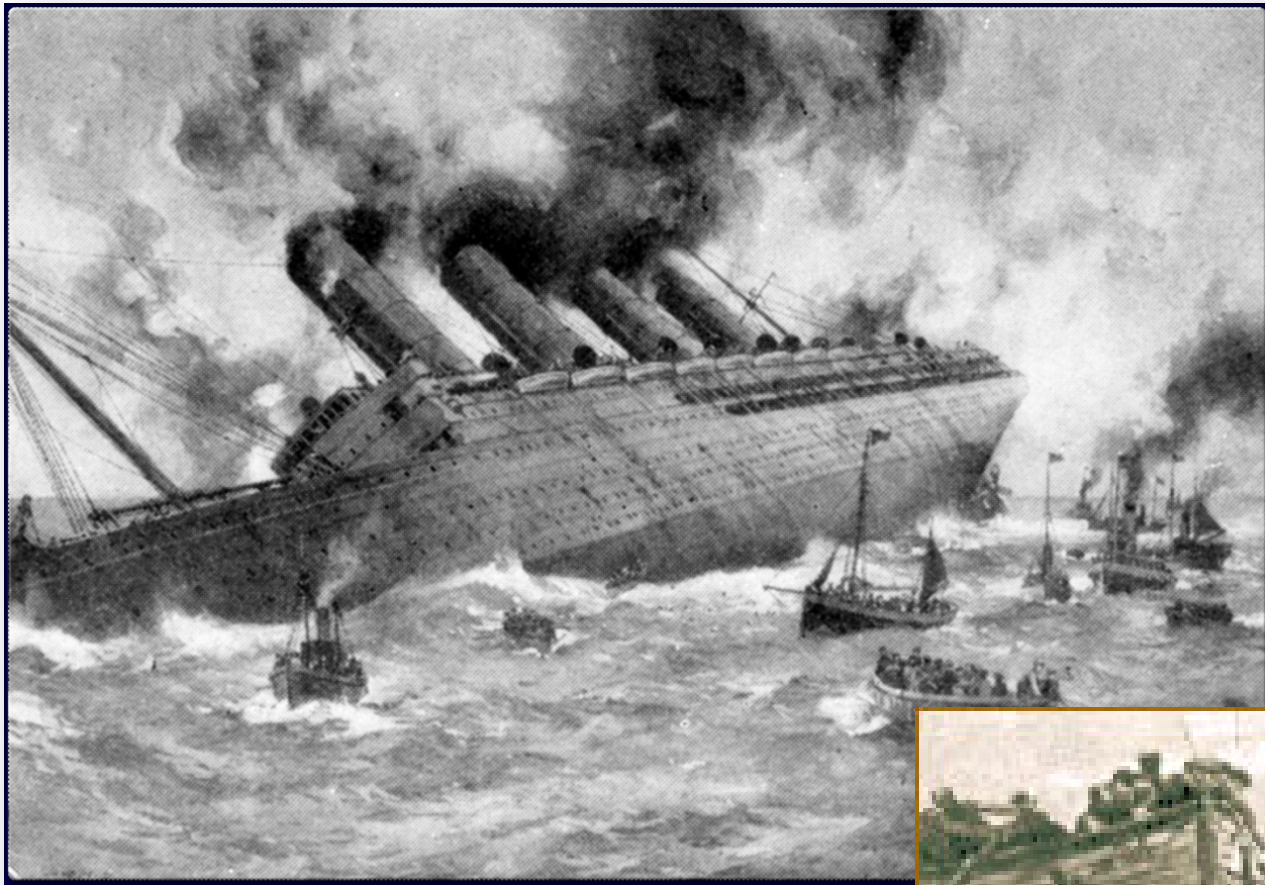


German U-boats





View from German U-boat



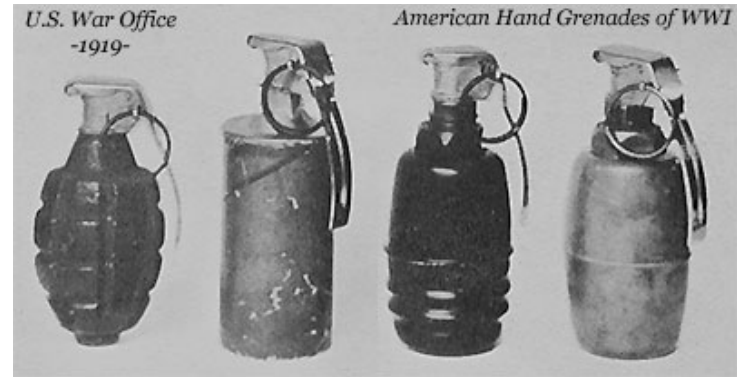
Eyewitness drawings



Eyewitness drawing

Before the attack, Captain William Thomas Turner was ignoring or at least bending every rule. He was told to avoid German U-boats by staying clear of the Irish coast. Also, he slowed the *Lusitania* down because of fog and traveled in a predictable line.





Unknown to her passengers but probably no secret to the Germans, almost all her hidden cargo consisted of munitions and contraband destined for the British war effort.

The Mystery

The captain of the German U-boat reported that he shot only one torpedo at the *Lusitania*, but it was reported that there was a mysterious second explosion.

The secondary explosion was so violent that it caused the *Lusitania* to sink rapidly.

What caused the second explosion?

The Facts

- The *Lusitania* quietly entered dry dock in Liverpool in 1913 and was fitted for war service.
- It was belief the *Lusitania* could easily outdistance any submarine.
- On May 7, the ship neared the coast of Ireland. At 2:10 in the afternoon a torpedo fired by the German submarine U 20 slammed into the *Lusitania* .
- A mysterious second explosion ripped the liner apart.
- Within 18 minutes the giant ship slipped beneath the sea. One thousand one hundred nineteen of the 1,924 aboard died. The dead included 114 Americans.
- Before the attack, Captain William Thomas Turner did not stay clear of the Irish coast. Also, he slowed the *Lusitania* down because of fog and traveled in a predictable line.
- The captain of the German U-boat reported that he shot only one torpedo at the *Lusitania*.
- The loss of the *Lusitania* provoked great outrage in the United States and helped create the climate of public opinion that would later allow America to join the war.**