



Ship Fact Sheet



MOOLTAN (1905)

Base data at 8 October 1905. Last amended November 2008

* indicates entries changed during P&O Group service.

Type	Passenger liner
P&O Group service	1905-1917
P&O Group status	Owned by parent company
Registered owners, managers and operators	The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company
Builders	Caird & Co Ltd
Yard	Greenock
Country	UK
Yard number	306
Registry	Greenock, UK
Official number	117397
Signal letters	HDNQ
Call sign	
Classification society	Lloyd's Register
Gross tonnage	9,621 grt
Net tonnage	4,828 nrt
Deadweight*	6,058 tons
Length	158.56m (520.4ft)
Breadth	17.76m (58.3ft)
Depth	7.53m (24.7ft)
Draught*	8.341m (27ft 4½in)
Engines	Quadruple-expansion steam engines
Engine builders	Caird & Co Ltd
Works	Greenock
Country	UK
Power	13,000 ihp
Propulsion	Twin screw
Speed	18 knots
Passenger capacity	348 first class, 166 second class
Cargo capacity	5,459 cubic metres (192,800 cubic feet) including 1,967 cubic metres (68,478 cubic feet) refrigerated
Crew [1914]	328 (134 European, 194 Asian). Deck 24 European, 51 Asian; engine room 16 European, 101 Asians; purser's department 107 European, 42 Asian
Employment	UK/Australia or UK/India mail services

Career

- 03.08.1905: Launched.
- 04.10.1905: Registered.
- 08.10.1905: Left her builders as *Mooltan* for The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company at a cost of £314,982. The name is a variation of Multan, a town now in Pakistan, previously used by P&O in 1861.
- 28.10.1905: Exhibited for charity at Tilbury for two days - proceeds to the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich.
- 03.11.1905: Maiden voyage London/Bombay.
- 19.01.1906: Replaced the 18-year-old *Oceana* on the Australian service.
- 10.01.1908: Carried the Empress Eugenie from Marseilles to Colombo for a proposed visit to India, but she fell ill and returned home in *Mooltan* on her next homeward sailing.
- 03.1910: Deadweight 7,380 tons. Draught 8.963m (29ft 5in).
- 24.06.1911: Carried P&O's guests to the Coronation Review at Spithead.
- 07.08.1914: Continued in passenger service after the outbreak of War, on this voyage carrying Lord Kitchener and his staff to Port Said.
- 25.07.1917: Left Malta en route for Marseilles with the Messageries Maritimes steamer *Lotus* and two escorting Japanese destroyers, *Kusunoki* and *Ume*.
- 26.07.1917: Torpedoed forward on the starboard side at 1915hrs by the German submarine UC27, endangering *Lotus* (which had in fact been UC27's first target). All but two of the 554 aboard had been taken off by 2015hrs, when *Mooltan* was abandoned about 160km (100 miles) south of Sardinia to be sunk two hours later by a second torpedo.
- 28.07.1917: Passengers and crew landed at Marseilles.

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Notes produced in response to an enquiry in December 1935.

The *Mooltan* was built in 1905, by Caird & Co Ltd, of Greenock. Her gross tonnage was 9,723, and at the time of her destruction she was homeward bound with mails from Australia, the Far East and India. The vessel left Malta at 5pm on the 25th July 1917, with the Messageries Maritimes steamer *Lotus*, escorted by two Japanese destroyers, the *Umo* and the *Kusinoki*.

At 7.15pm on the 26th July, when 100 miles south of Sardinia, a torpedo was sighted 700 or 800 yards away on the starboard beam, proceeding towards the *Mooltan* at a high speed. The submarine was not visible. The alarm was sounded on the steam-whistle, and the ship swung rapidly to her helm, which had been at once put hard a-starboard. The torpedo overtook the ship, and struck a glancing blow about 35 feet abaft the stem on the starboard side, and 15 feet below the water line. The explosion threw up a large column of green flame, which sheared the rivet heads of the outside plates of the bow, a huge hole was made in the hold, and decks in the vicinity were burst upwards.

Wireless signals were sent out, the engines reversed, and the vessel brought to a standstill. Boats were then lowered, containing all passengers, and part of the crew. Certain officers, engineers and hands remaining, as usual, on board with the Commander. The only casualty was one of the Goanese seamen who was killed by the explosion. One of the destroyers circled round the *Mooltan*, throwing off volumes of smoke, and the other endeavoured to attack the submarine. On inspection, it was found that the forward part of the ship was full of water, and she appeared to be settling by the head.

There was no hope of the *Mooltan* keeping long afloat, and the Commander of the convoy hoisted signals to abandon ship as soon as possible. The *Mooltan's* Commander and his officers and engineers left the ship, and the last two boats reached the destroyers at 8.15pm, in which were the whole of the people removed from the *Mooltan*. The *Lotus* had proceeded at full speed, and the destroyers hurried to join her.

As soon as the moon had set the escorts were brought alongside each other, and, in the darkness, 70 of the *Mooltan's* crew transferred, to equalise the numbers in each vessel.

The next day the ships were passing through a dangerous area, and the bright moonlight night following did not much abate the anxiety.

The convoy reached Marseilles on the 28th July at 1am, and the P&O Agents took charge of the passengers and crew when they landed at 3am. Passengers were cared for at the various hotels at the Company's expense. They left the port 12 hours after arrival, and arrived in London the following day.

The warmest praise was expressed for the attention and kindness shown by the officers

and crews of the destroyers, who did everything possible for the comfort of all from their scanty stores and appliances.

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