



Ship Fact Sheet



NARKUNDA (1920)

Base data at 30 March 1930. Last amended March 2009

* indicates entries changed during P&O Group service.

Type	Passenger liner
P&O Group service	1920-1942
P&O Group status	Owned by parent company
Former name(s)	
Registered owners, managers and operators	The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company
Builders	Harland & Wolff Ltd
Yard	Belfast
Country	UK
Yard number	471
Registry	Belfast, UK
Official number	142496
Signal letters	KFDN
Call sign	GCVB
Classification society	Lloyd's Register
Gross tonnage	16,227 grt
Net tonnage	9,705 nrt
Deadweight	8,650 tons
Length	177.15m (581.4ft)
Breadth	21.15m (69.4ft)
Depth	14.90m (48.9ft)
Draught	8.921m (29ft 3 ³ / ₈ in)
Engines	Quadruple-expansion steam engines
Engine builders	Harland & Wolff Ltd
Works	Belfast
Country	UK
Power	15,300 ihp
Propulsion	Twin screw
Speed	17 knots
Passenger capacity	426 first class and 247 second class
Cargo capacity	8,829 cubic metres (311,841 cubic feet) including 2,916 cubic metres (103,000 cubic feet) insulated
Crew	9 officers, 60 seamen, 18 engineers, 140 firemen plus saloon crew
Employment*	UK/Australia service

Career

- 1914: Ordered. Work on her, and her earlier half-sister *Naldera*, P&O's first 3-funnelled ships, was suspended at the outbreak of War and delayed by Government indecision on how to employ them; by 1917 *Narkunda* was expected to be completed as a cargo liner, in 1918 as an armed merchant cruiser.
- 25.04.1918: Launched.
- 30.03.1920: Ran trials and delivered as *Narkunda* for The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company at a cost of £1,550,110. As completed for P&O her passenger facilities were somewhat different from *Naldera*'s; a range of cabins was added on either side of the promenade deck forward of the bridge and were very popular, despite having 'thwartship bunks'. She had a celebrated painted frieze by Professor Gerald Moira in her first class dining saloon. Named after a small hill station in India.
- 24.04.1920: Maiden voyage to Bombay.
- 1927: Converted to oil burning.
- 1931: Transferred to Far East run.
- 1935: Second class cabins converted to Tourist class.
- 16.07.1939: Fire reported in No.6 hatch on her arrival at Colombo en route for Australia. A gas explosion resulting from fermentation in the cargo killed 2 quartermasters, the yeoman of mails and a lascar seaman, injured 23 crew, and damaged 350 tons of cargo; the fire was put out after 4¼ hours with the help of the local tugs *Hercules* and *Goliath*.
- 31.05.1940: Arrived at Southampton having been unable to land passengers at Marseilles and been fired at by an unidentified vessel off Gibraltar.
- 04.1941: Requisitioned as a troopship.
- 01.1942: Employed in the evacuation of Singapore.
- 08.1942: Involved in exchange of Japanese diplomats for British civilians in the neutral port of Lourenco Marques, Mozambique.
- 14.11.1942: Bombed and sunk by German aircraft off Bougie, Algeria, passing Cape Carbon (36°52'N-05°01'E). She had just landed troops for the North African campaign and was about to return to the UK when the attack came out of cloud cover and she was hit heavily on the port side and astern. 31 crew were killed. The survivors were picked up by the minesweeper HMS *Cadmus* and returned to Britain by P&O's *Stratheden* and Orient Line's *Ormonde*.

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