

Provincial Archives

The 5,878 ton *Princess Kathleen*, built by John Brown & Co. of Glasgow, Scotland, launched in 1924.

1924

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1925

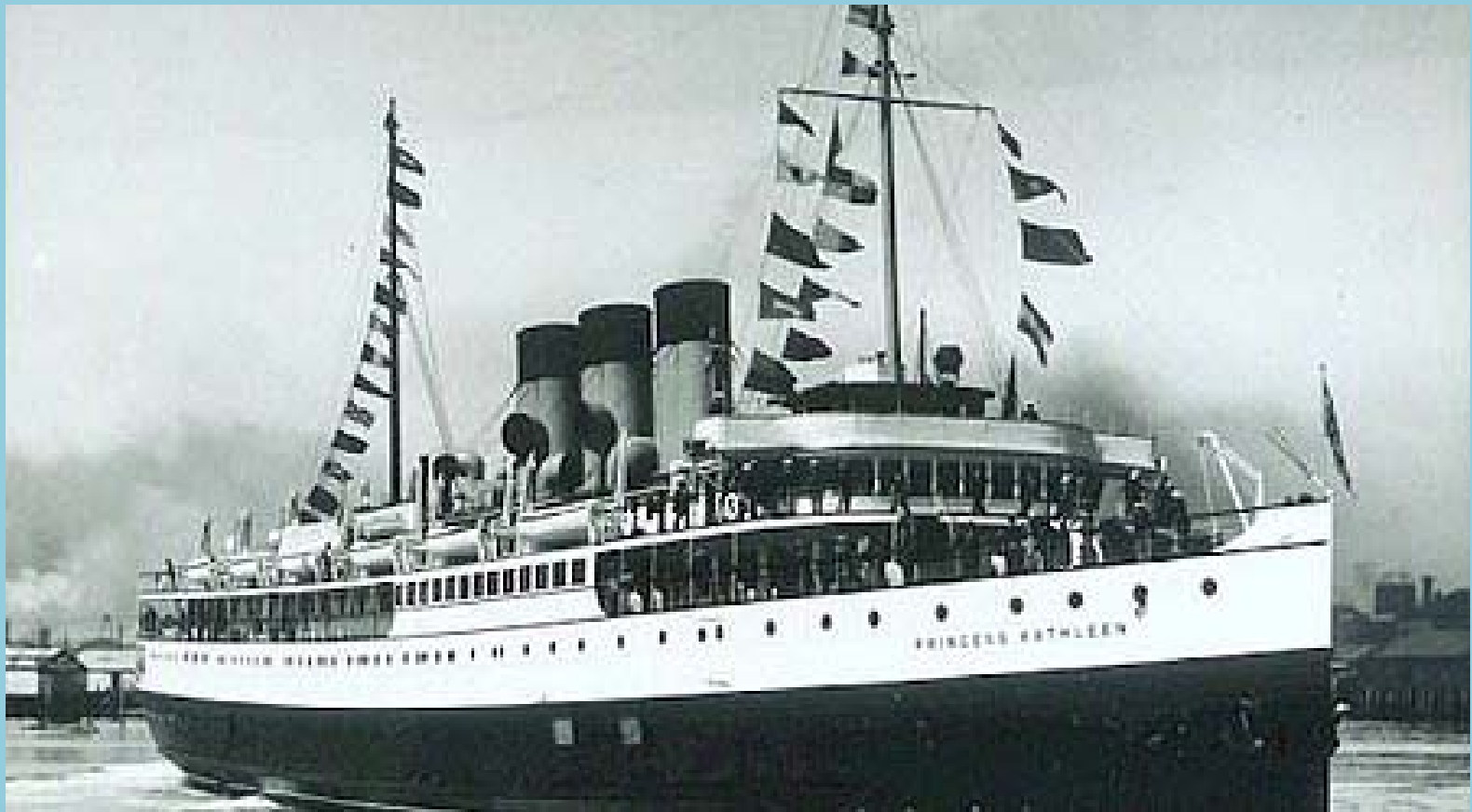
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The maiden voyage was from Glasgow, Scotland to Vancouver, Canada via the Panama Canal.

1924

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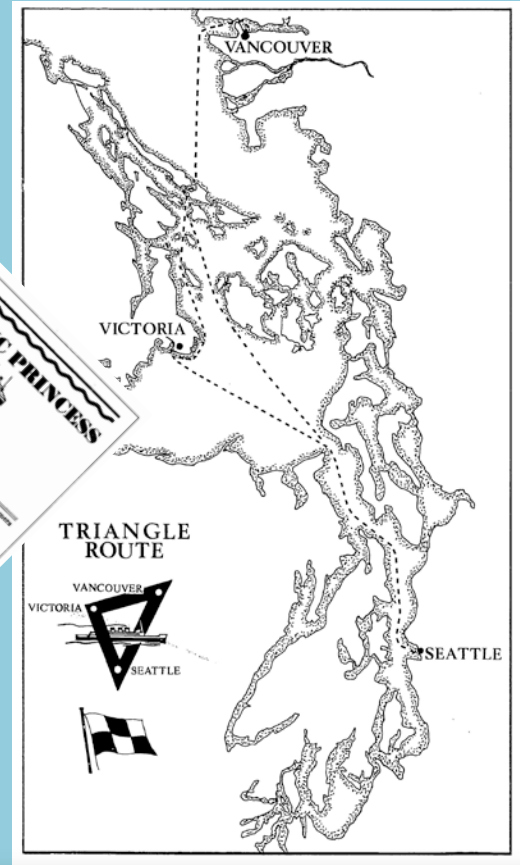
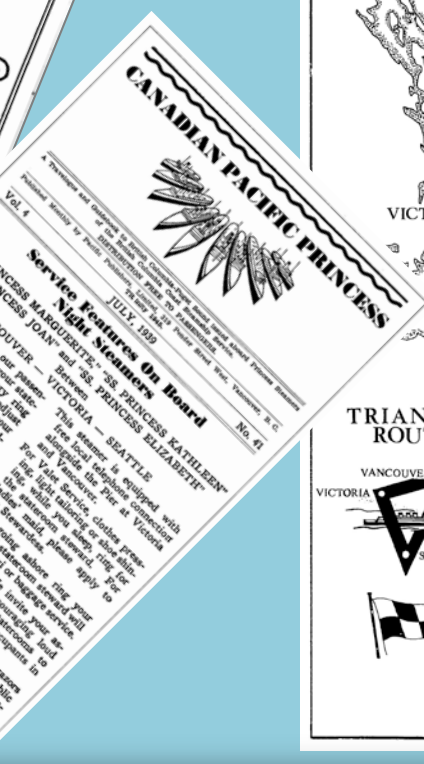
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The *Princess Kathleen* was built to operate along the company's busy Vancouver-Victoria-Seattle Triangle Route.

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Provincial Archives

The elegant dining room onboard the *Princess Kathleen* sat 168 people.

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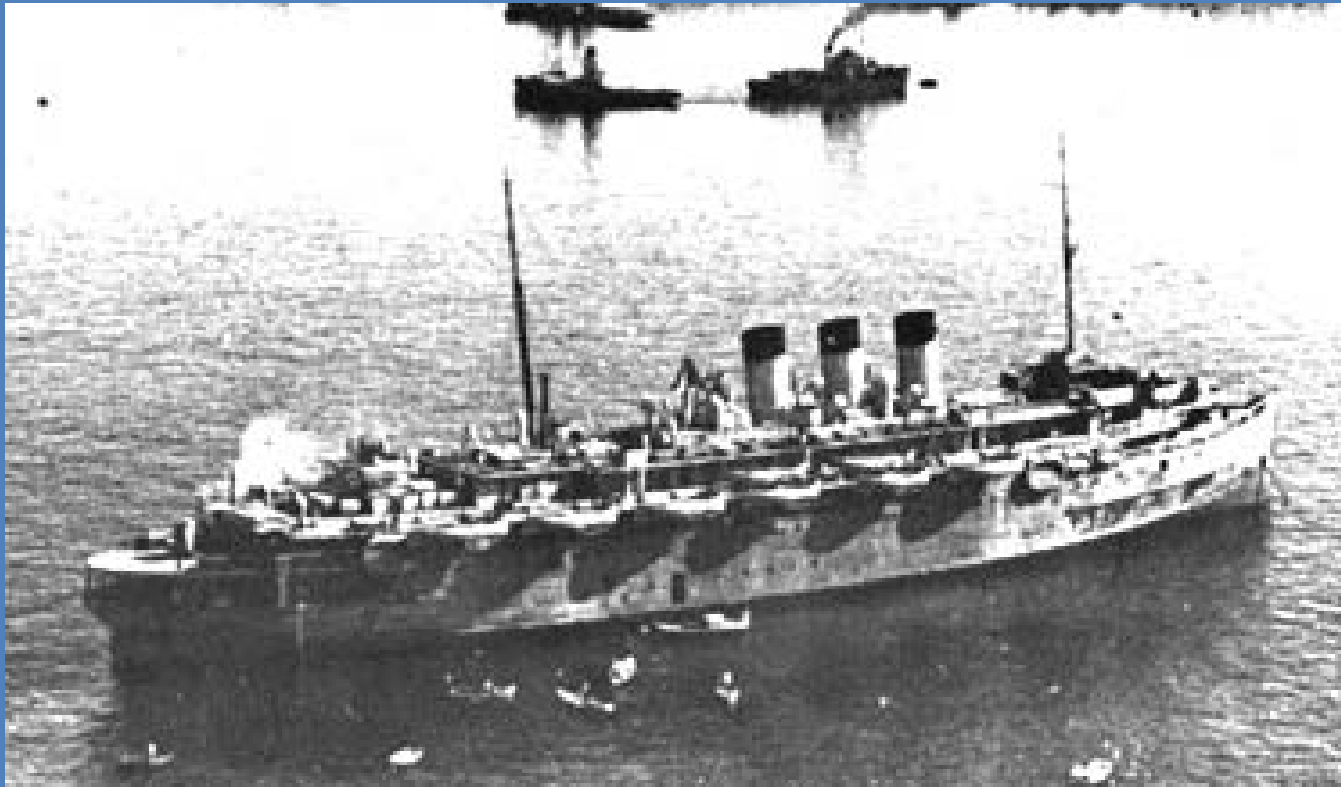
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The Pacific Princesses: An Illustrated History of Canadian Pacific Railway's Princess Fleet

Princess Kathleen was taken over by the Royal Navy on September 1, 1941 for use as troop transport in the Mediterranean.

1941

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1925

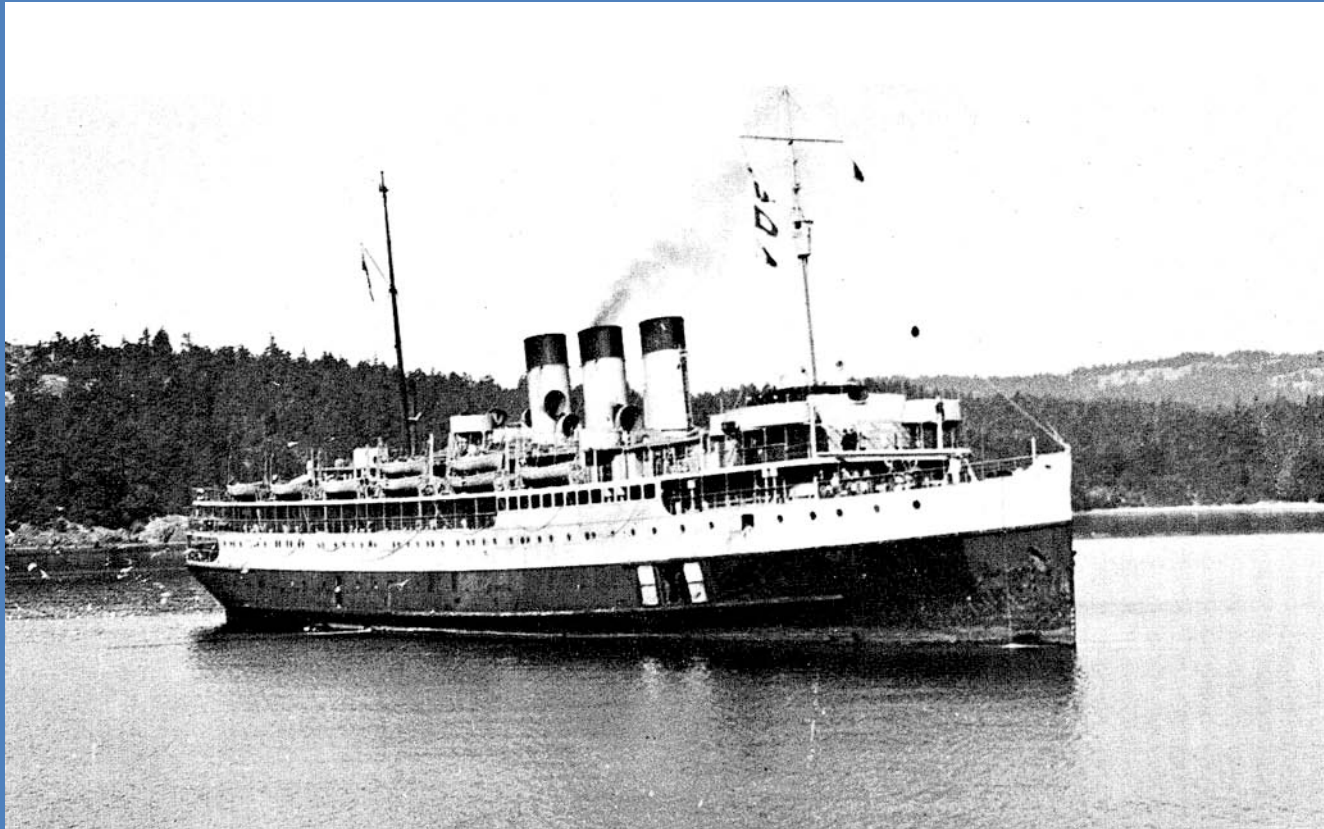
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Canadian Pacific Railroad

“In the some 250,000 miles of wartime service, she was untouched by the Axis forces.” –Robert D. Turner

1946

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1925

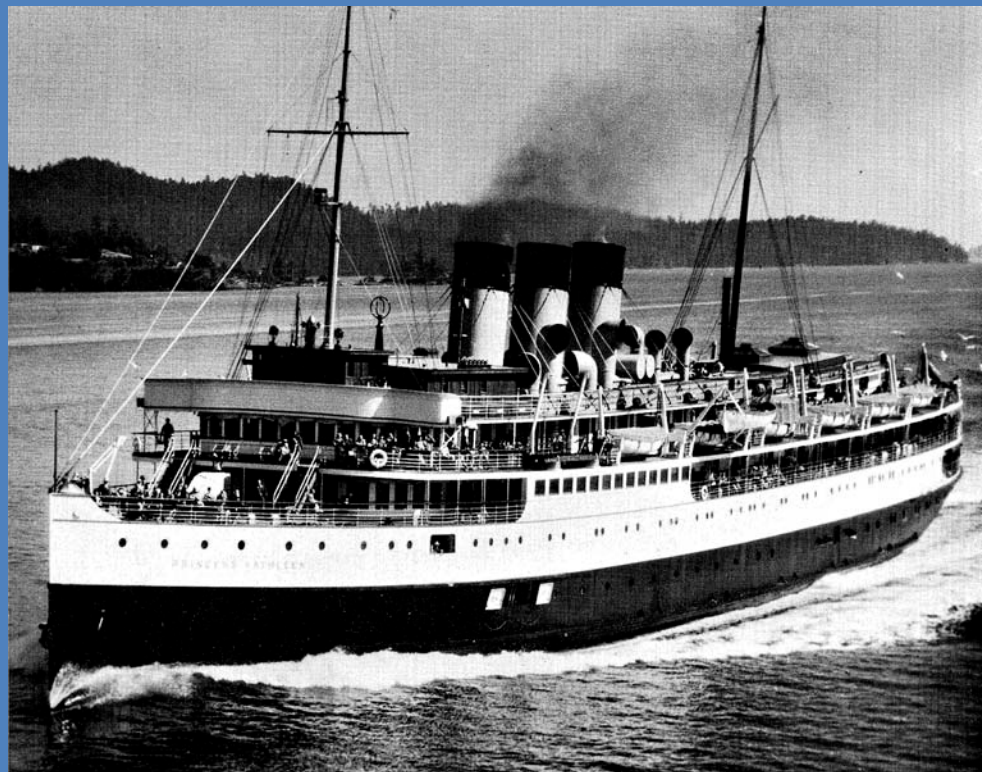
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Joe D. Williamson

Returned by the Navy to the Canadian Pacific Railroad, *Princess Kathleen* was refitted and put back in service on the Vancouver-Victoria-Seattle Triangle Route beginning June 22, 1947.

1947

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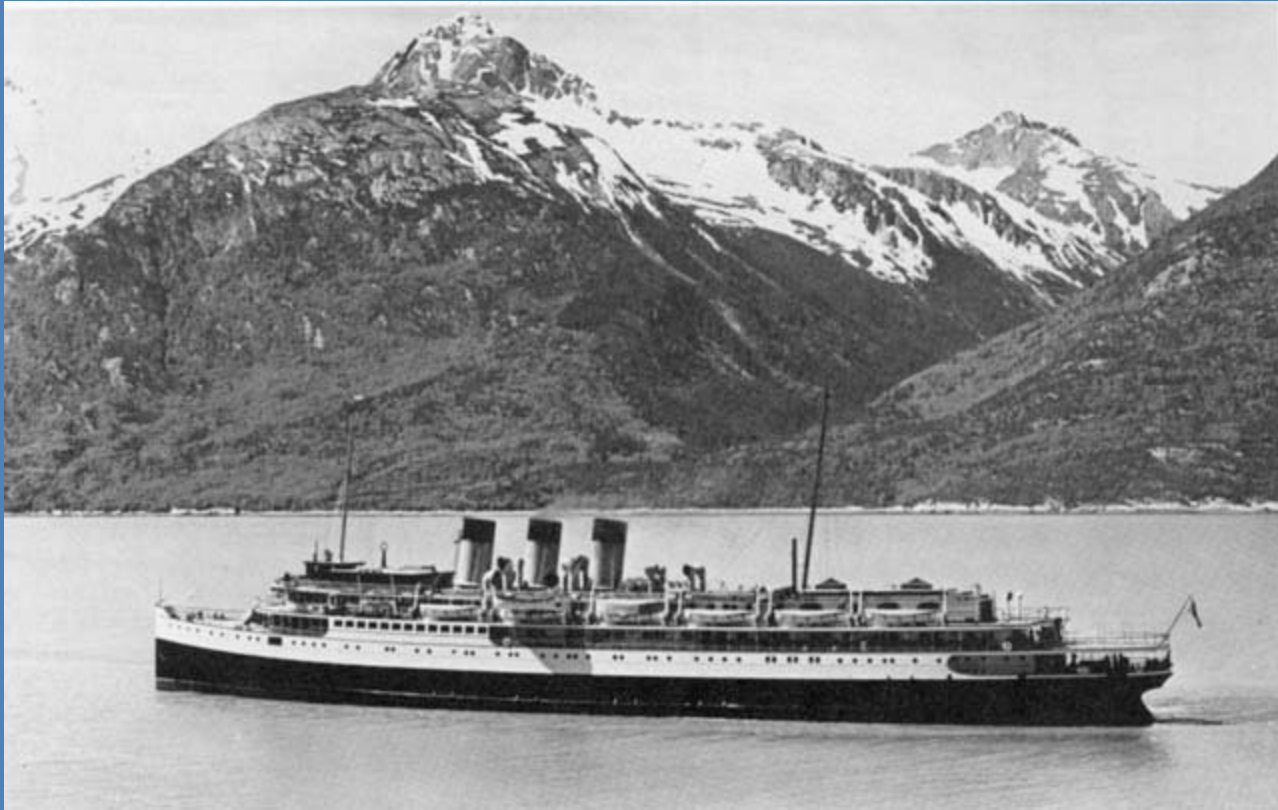
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Two years after returning to service, *Princess Kathleen* was transferred to Canadian Pacific Railroad's Vancouver-Alaska route.

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On September 7, 1952, the final Alaska cruise of the season, *Princess Kathleen* encountered heavy squalls and poor visibility while traveling between Juneau and Skagway.

1952

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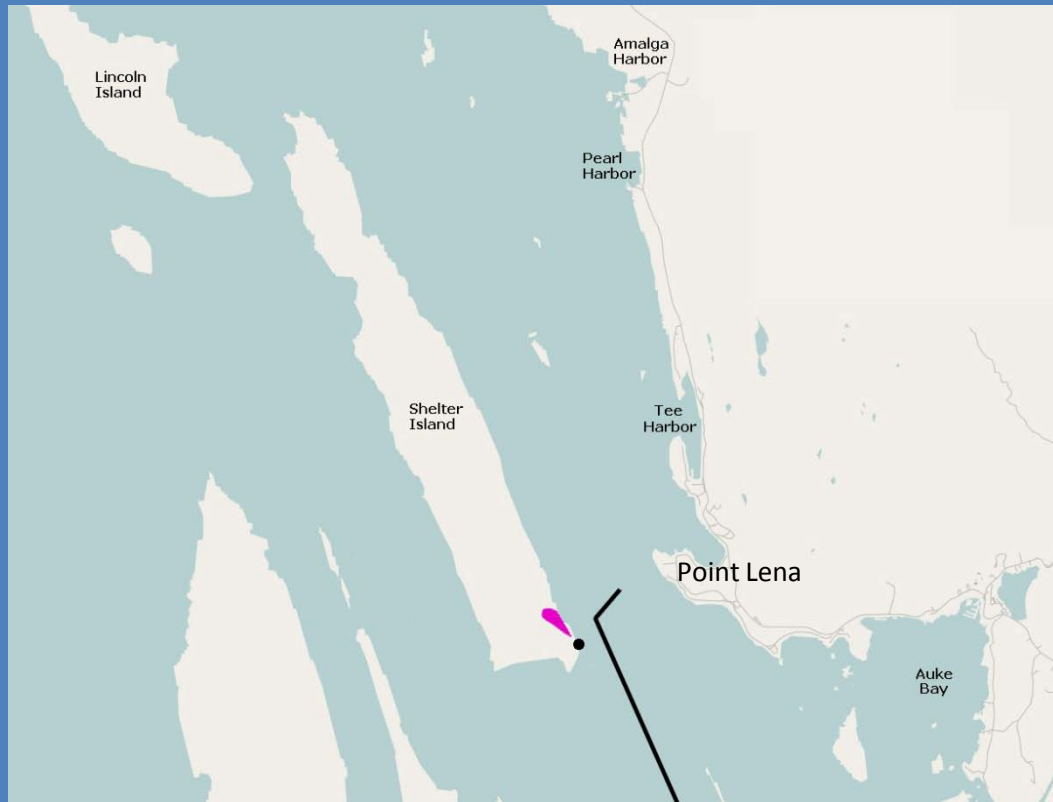
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The Chief Officer ordered a simple course change to move the vessel to the middle of the channel after seeing the Shelter Island light.

1952

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1925

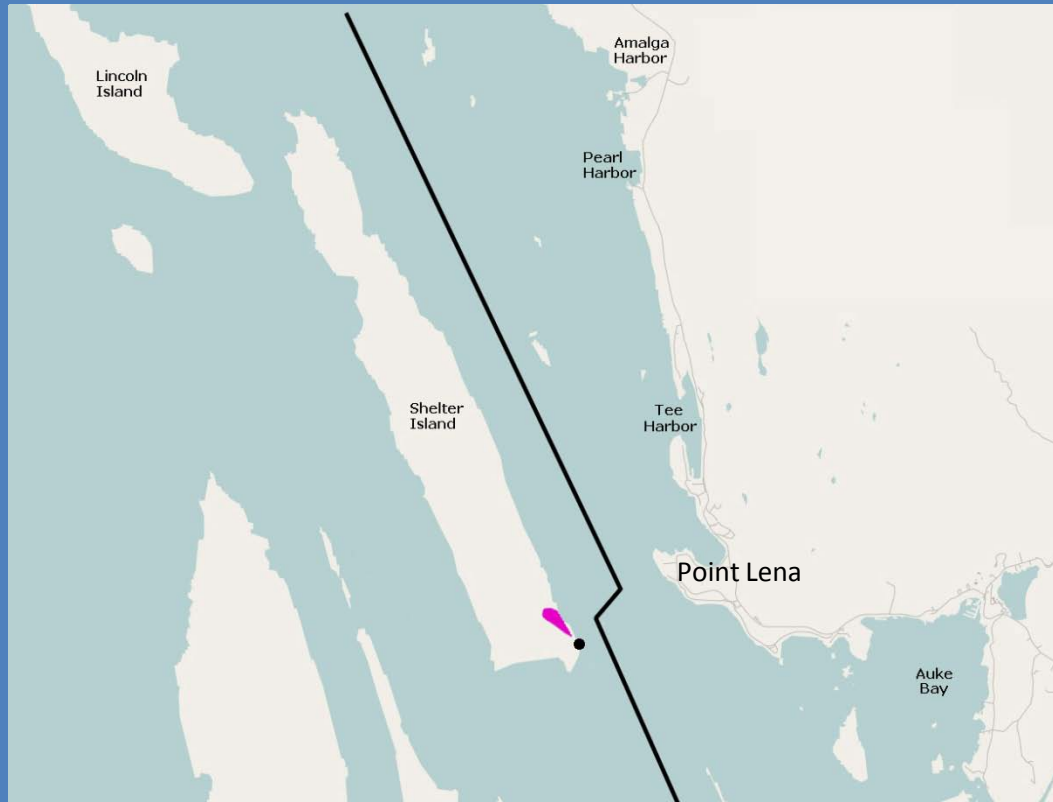
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Princess Kathleen should have moved to mid channel then returned to course.

1952

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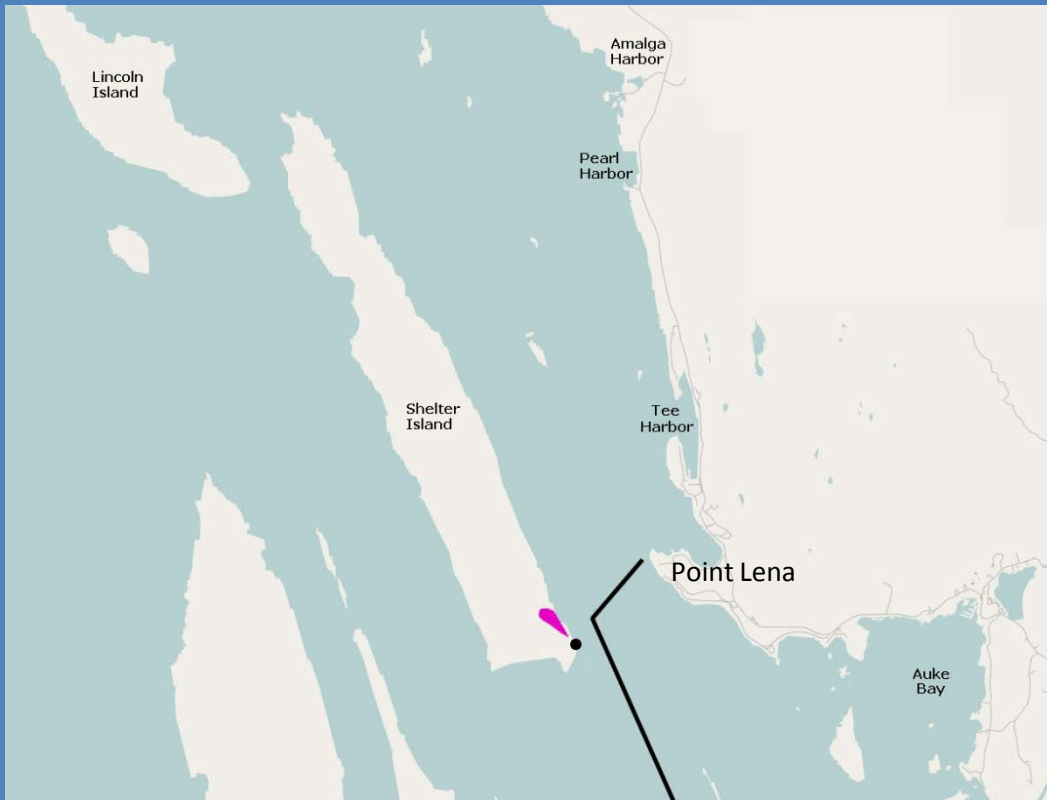
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However, instead of giving the correct order to steer starboard then return to course, the Chief Officer mistakenly gave a command to just steer starboard.

1952

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1925

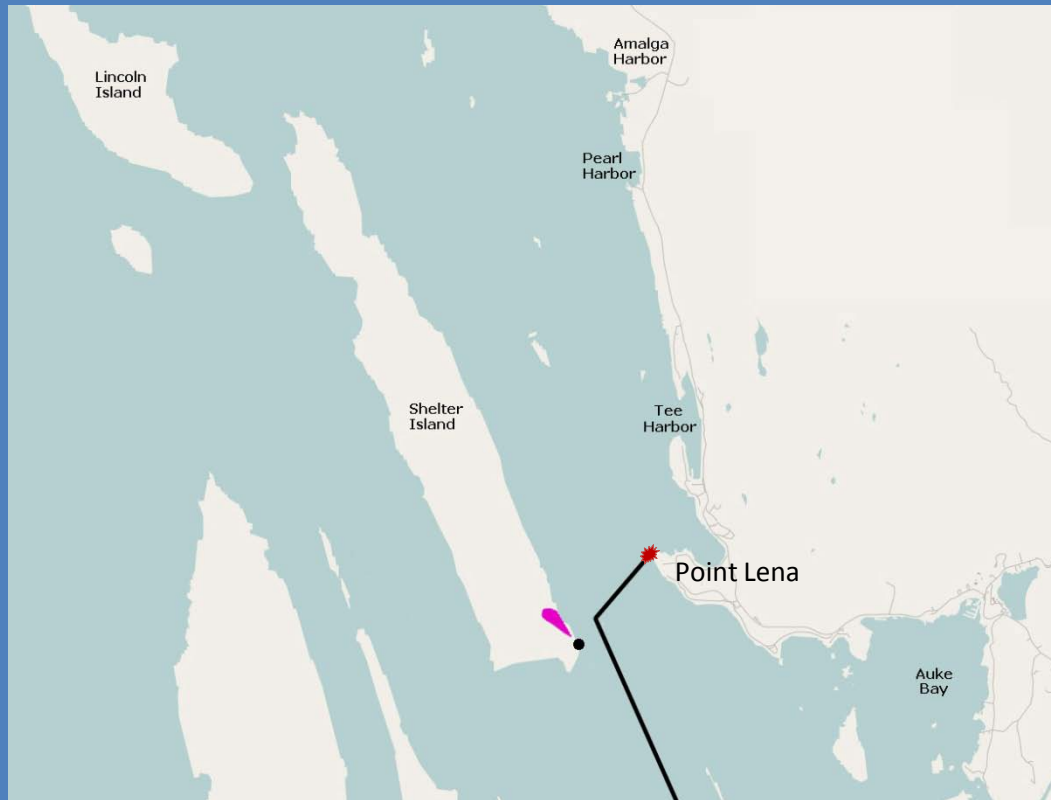
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Eventually, the error was discovered. The Chief Officer saw land ahead he ordered the vessel hard-a-starboard, but it was too late.

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

The Princess Kathleen grounded at Point Lena at 2:58 AM on September 7, 1952.

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

After assessing damage to the bow, the Captain attempted to back the ship off the rocks, but was unable to move the *Princess Kathleen*.

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections



Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

Passengers and lifeboats were readied for the possible evacuation of the vessel.

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

As the tide fell, the vessel took on a list and the wind increased driving the stern against the rocks. By 5:30 AM the list was 19 degrees and the captain evacuated the passengers. By 9:00 AM all 307 passengers had safely disembarked.

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

The stern of the *Princess Kathleen* started to flood with the incoming tide. With the bow still on the rocks the vessel flooded further until, at 11:30 AM, the captain and crew abandoned ship.

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At 12:30 PM, almost 10 hours after the grounding, *Princess Kathleen* slid from Point Lena.

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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Alaska State Library – Historical Collections

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The stern now rests in approximately 140 feet of water, the bow in 40 feet. The depth of water, location of the wreck and age of *Princess Kathleen* made salvage too difficult and costly. Public perception at the time was fuel didn't represent a serious risk to the environment. No fuel recovery or cleanup operations were mounted.

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Attack

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SUNKEN TREASURE



Diver Magnus Hansen of Juneau, Alaska, displays some silverware he recovered from the sunken CPR Steamer Princess Kathleen off the Alaska coast. The Princess Kathleen foundered in 120 feet of water two years ago. Hansen and his partner have made 36 dives to the ship and he says he is confident the ship can be raised but the underwriters have threatened him with police action if he starts salvage operations.
—CP Photo

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The Lethbridge Herald

“Diver Magnus Hansen of Juneau, Alaska, displays some silverware he recovered from the sunken CPR Steamer Princess Kathleen...”

1954

1925

1942

1959

1976

1993

2010

Sunken Liner May Be Raised As Alaska Tourist Attraction

AUG 6 1966

The Canadian Pacific Lines flagship Princess Kathleen, which sank in the "ships' graveyard" near Juneau in 1952, may soon be brought to the surface and used as a tourist attraction in the Juneau area.

Norm Adam of the West Coast Rigging Co., and who recently conducted a deep-sea diving school in Anchorage, has the contract to bring the luxury liner from its grave in more than a hundred feet of water.

Sylvia DarVelle, president of DarVelle South Eastern Inc., has the salvage rights to the Kathleen, along with five other sunken ships in the area. She received the salvage rights from Lloyds of London in 1962.

Miss DarVelle said she hopes to pull the vessel up on the beach in the Auke Bay area.

The Kathleen was a mile and a half off course on a trip from Juneau to Skagway on Sept. 7, 1952. The vessel rammed the reef about 18 miles north of Juneau and went aground.

In spite of the early-morning darkness and driving rain, all of the 305 passengers aboard escaped the ship unharmed within about four hours. They built campfires on the beach and waited for help to come.

Early the next afternoon, the captain gave orders for his 118-man crew to abandon ship, and later that afternoon the ship tipped

and sank in more than a hundred feet of water.

The replacement value of the Kathleen has been set at nearly \$15,000,000.

Three other ships in the Canadian Pacific Line sank in the same area near Juneau. All passengers escaped injury in 1900 when the Cutch went under, but 23 drowned in 1901 when the Islander hit a Douglas Island rock and sank. Then in October, 1918, the Princess Sophia went down eight miles from the Kathleen's grave, and all 343 persons aboard perished.

Another ship also hit the rocks in 1911, but no one was injured and the ship was later salvaged.

"The Canadian Pacific Lines flagship Princess Kathleen ... may soon be brought to the surface and used as a tourist attraction..."

"Miss DarVelle said she hopes to pull the vessel up on the beach in the Auke Bay area..."

1966

1925

1942

1959

1976

1993

2010

Marble sized collections of bunker oil leak from a threaded pipe.



Lou Barr

Recreational divers note and document small quantities of oil leaking from *Princess Kathleen*. Oil discharge is limited to a single location.

1970s

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1925

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1942

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1959

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2010



ADEC- Moore

Reports to Department of Environmental Conservation and Coast Guard of non-recoverable oil discharges and rainbow sheens increase. There are occasional reports of small “tar balls” on beaches around Point Lena.

2007

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1925

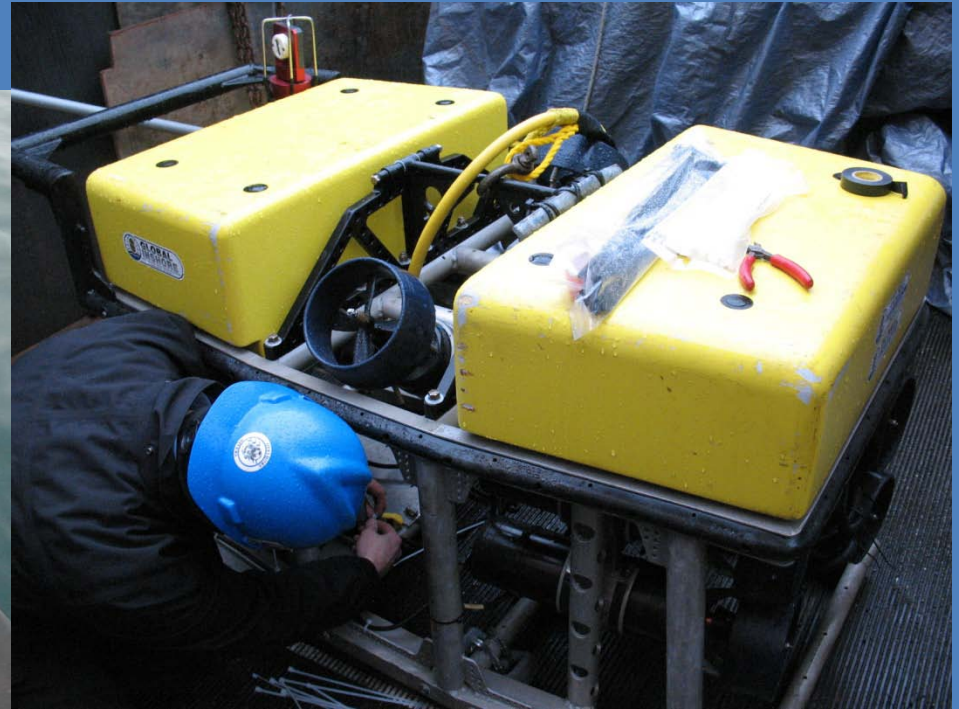
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Both photos taken by USCG – Sector Juneau

The Coast Guard contracted with Global Offshore Divers to conduct an assessment on *Princess Kathleen* using Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs).

2010

1925

1942

1959

1976

1993

2010

Starboard Side Keel →



Click image to
play video

Princess Kathleen Unified Command

The Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) assessed the starboard side of *Princess Kathleen*, the port side is laying against the seafloor prohibiting ROV access.

2010

1925

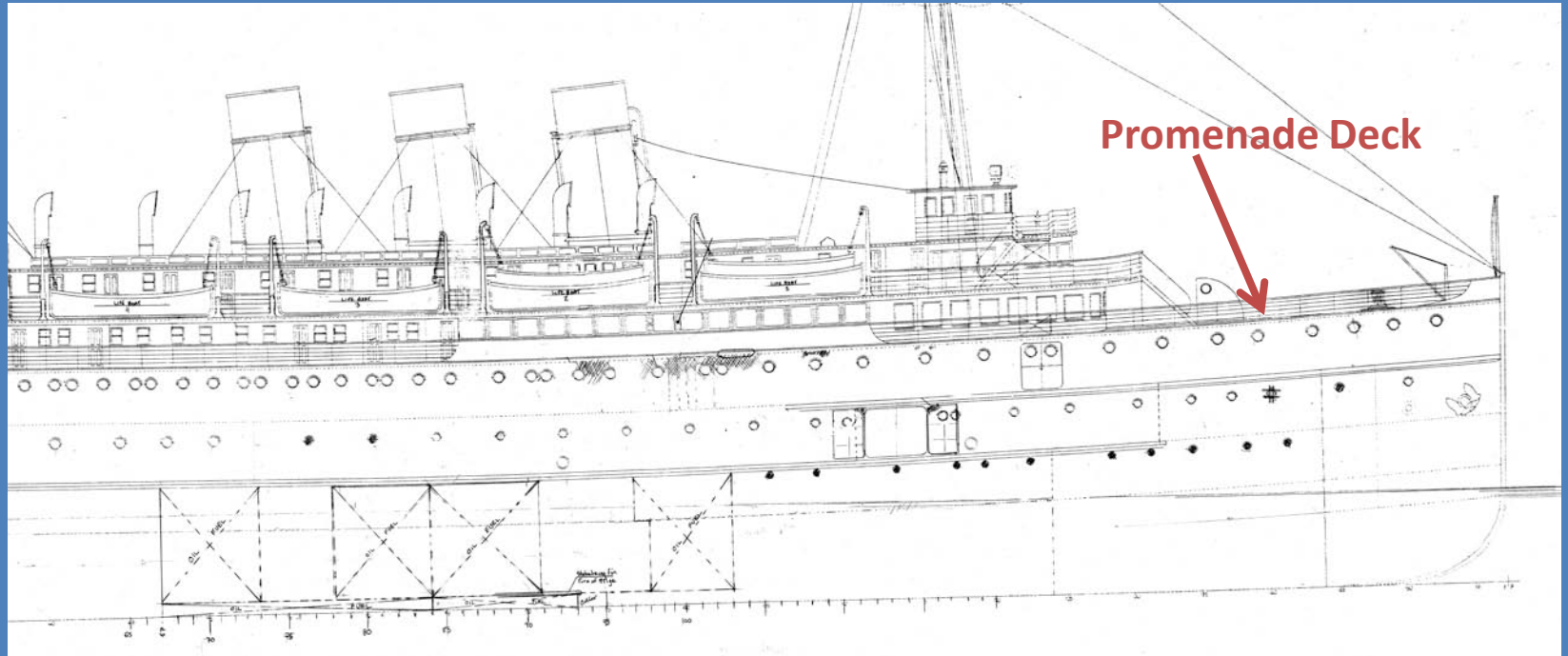
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The assessment documents a largely intact starboard hull though most portholes are now open. The wooden upper decks and structures are completely gone; the existing structure begins on the promenade deck.

2010

1925

1942

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2010



USCG- Sector Juneau

The Remote Operated Vehicles (ROVs) were unable to enter *Princess Kathleen*, but the mini-ROV was able to record video while looking inside the open portholes and open doorways.

2010

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1925

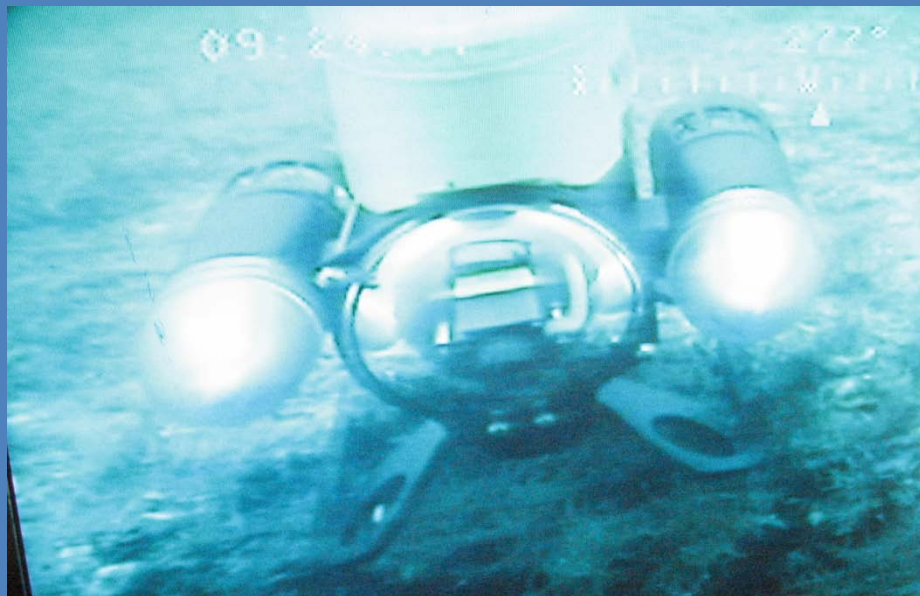
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USCG- Sector Juneau

The initial Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) assessment documented oil escaping from the interior of the vessel via broken port holes during certain tide cycles.

2010

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1925

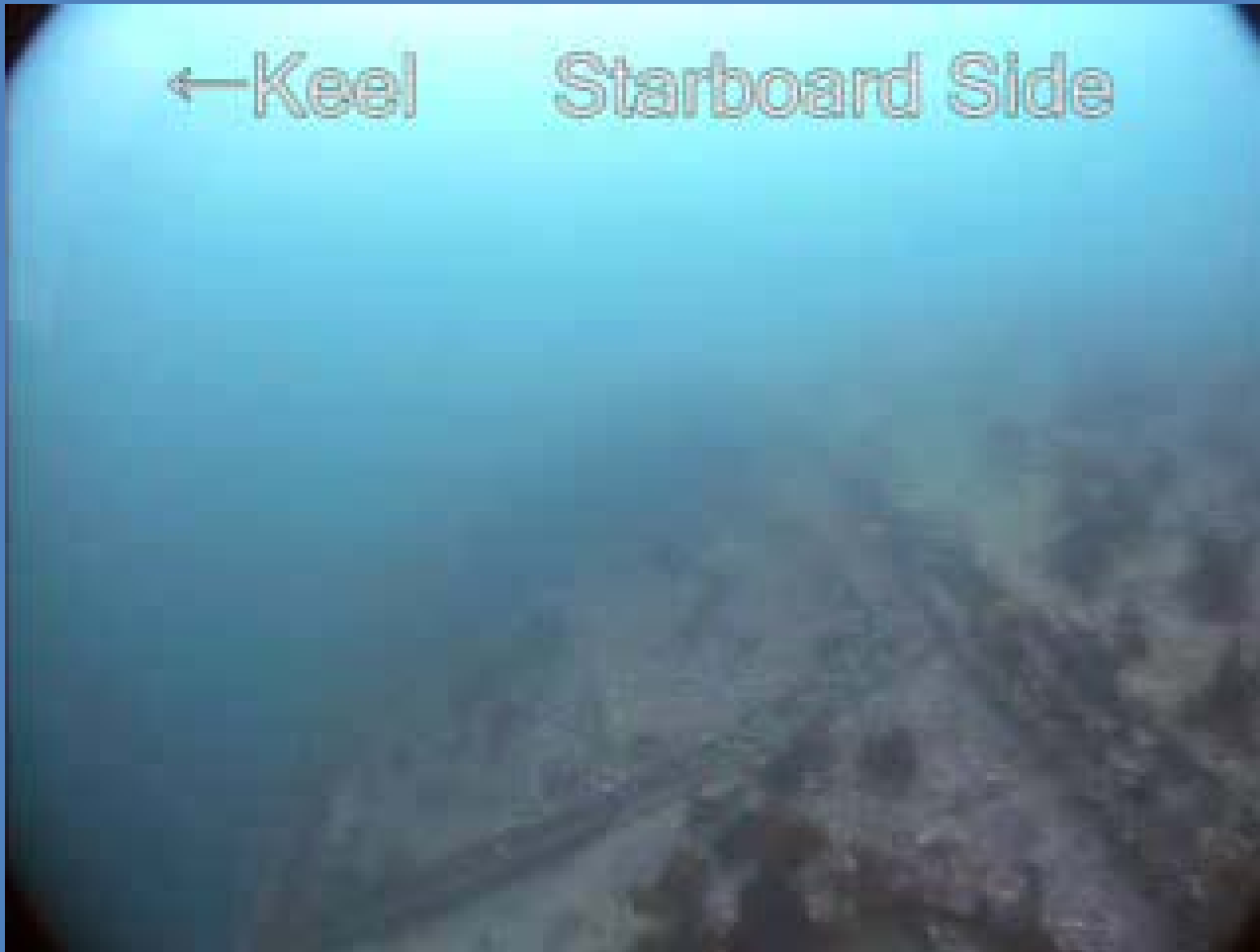
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Click image to
play video

Princess Kathleen Unified Command

2010

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1925

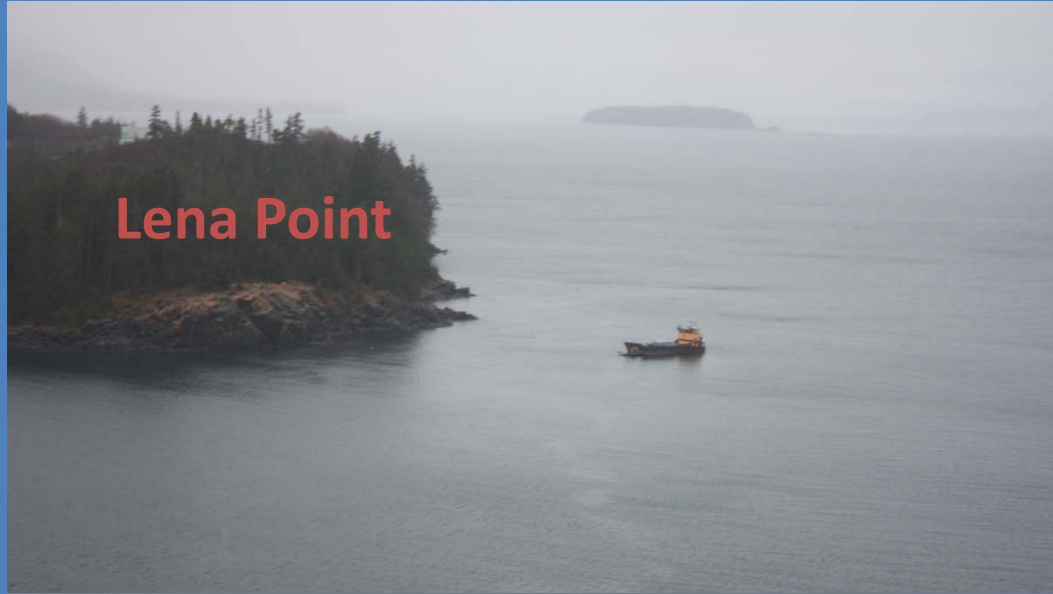
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Lena Point

USCG- Sector Juneau

The oil present within the structure of the vessel prompted ADEC and the USCG to form a Unified Command. The Unified Command is pursuing a Phase II assessment of the vessel, which will be completed with divers.

2010

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Kodiak dive operations.

Global Offshore Divers

Weather permitting, the dive assessment will begin Sunday, March 7. The assessment seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the structural integrity of the vessel and the fuel tanks?
- How much fuel remains in the tanks and within the superstructure of the vessel?

2010

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Princess Kathleen Unified Command - 2010