



MY SOS

By Miss Lena Michelsen



MISS LENA MICHELSEN

AFTER serving as Radio Operator on board the *SS Tamesi* for about seven months, we were bound from Tampico to Aransas Pass, Texas with a cargo of about 43,000 barrels of Mexican crude oil. The ship encountered a heavy fog on September 16, 1918 off the Texas Coast. According to the Captain the fog was the worst in his many years of experience at sea and navigation was a difficult matter. After groping about for many hours the ship finally went aground with a terrible lurching and grinding which made it seem as though the entire bottom was wrenched loose.

For several hours the cargo of oil was pumped over board in hopes that the ship might be floated again. As the situation appeared more hopeless the Captain ordered me to send out a distress call which was immediately answered by the radio station NBK at Galveston. Shortly after my sending the SOS, conditions became so serious that it looked as though we might have to abandon ship but fortunately sufficient oil was discharged and we eventually floated clear of the bar on which we had struck.

The ship proceeded to Aransas Pass where the remainder of the cargo was discharged and we then proceeded to New Orleans to dry-dock and extensive repairs.

I have been asked many times to relate this experience, perhaps due to the fact that I am a girl and not expected to handle such a situation as efficiently as the other sex. Although there were many thrills and gloomy despair while the *Tamesi* was aground I might truthfully confess that I was not at all panicky or afraid which goes to prove that radio is another profession in which woman is quite capable.