

U.S. NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE

BRISTOL CHANNEL PORT LIAISON OFFICE  
IMPERIAL BUILDINGS  
CARDIFF

95654

FILE No. A9-10  
Serial C-0023

13 January 1943

**U.S. CONFIDENTIAL—BRITISH SECRET**

FIRST ENDORSEMENT

From: The U.S. Naval Liaison Officer,  
Bristol Channel Area, Cardiff, Wales.  
To : The Vice Chief of Naval Operations.  
Via : The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.  
Subject: Voyage Report (Outward) - S.S. ABANGAREZ.

1. Forwarded.

2. Because of the amount of time and labor involved, it was impossible, without delaying the sailing of the vessel, to effect a repositioning of the forward guns and removal of firing steps in the 20 M.M. positions as recommended by the Armed Guard Officer. It is suggested that if the proper authorities deem such alterations necessary, or advisable, they be carried out on the return of the ABANGAREZ to the United States.

3. New gun covers will be obtained to replace those damaged enroute here.

*Everett B Morris*  
EVERETT B. MORRIS.

SECOND ENDORSEMENT:

A9

UNITED STATES FLEET  
U.S. NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE  
20 GROSVENOR SQUARE  
LONDON, W.1.

Serial 0148

JAN 22 1943

**CONFIDENTIAL**

From: The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.  
To : The Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

1. Forwarded.

2. Attention is invited to paragraph 1 of basic report.

RECEIVED SC FILES  
HMM: JEB

FEB 8 1943

ROUTE TO- 23  
TO FILE NO. (SU) A4-3/Abangarez

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations  
FEB 8 - 1943  
NAVY DEPARTMENT

*K. M. McManes*

K. M. MCMANES  
By direction.

U.S. NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE

BRISTOL CHANNEL PORT LIAISON OFFICE  
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FILE No.

S.S. ABANGAREZ,  
12 January 1943.

U.S. CONFIDENTIAL—BRITISH SECRET

From: The Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Armed Guard,  
on S.S. ABANGAREZ.  
To : The Vice Chief of Naval Operations.  
Via : (1) The U.S. Naval Liaison Officer,  
Bristol Channel Area, Cardiff, Wales.  
(2) The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.  
Subject: Report of Voyage (Outward)  
Reference: (a) General Instructions for Commanding Officers  
of Naval Armed Guards on Merchant Ships,  
July 1, 1942, Paragraph 436.

- (a) Name of Vessel: S.S. ABANGAREZ  
Type: Cargo Ship.  
Gross Tonnage: 4538  
Type of Cargo: Explosives and General.  
Owner: United Fruit Company.  
Chartered to: War Shipping Administration.
- (b) Departed from New York at 0830, December 21, in convey,  
with 30 other ships, including an aircraft carrier  
(converted); escorted by 3 destroyers and 4 corvettes:  
Speed of Convoy supposed to be 9.5 knots. Arrived Barry  
Docks January 11 at 1230.
- (c) None.
- (d) No incidents out of ordinary; Vessel capable of 12.5 knots  
but maintained convoy speed which varied from 5 to 9  
knots; lights shown - blue stern light in fog, snow, heavy  
rain, or extremely dark nights until conditions warranted  
turning them off. Fog signals - lead ship sounded column  
numbers, repeating ships (3) sounded their convoy numbers.  
No instructions to zig-zag were given, but vessel changed  
course when ordered to do so by Commodore.
- (e) None.
- (f) Yes.
- (g) Yes.

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Subject: Report of Voyage (Outward)  
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1. Just before ship left New York four new 20 mm guns were installed, two on forecastle deck and the other two amidships, also, firing steps were installed on all height 20 MM guns. A full length cover was installed on each new gun. Defects noted as follows:

- (i) The forecastle guns are a very serious handicap to the ship's officers in the navigation of the ship. The tops of the splinter shields are on the same level as the bridge. Thus vision is cut off from dead ahead to two (2) points on either side of the bow. In thick weather especially, this is a very dangerous limitation to visibility.
- (ii) The forecastle guns are badly placed for action in rough weather. They are often continuously drenched with spray and are difficult to keep in readiness.  
For the reason above I recommend that the forecastle guns be relocated on, for example, the boat deck abaft  
(iii) the present bridge wing guns.
- (iii) The firing steps on all guns are defective and should be removed, either partially or altogether. Any merits they may have are easily outweighed by their disadvantages. They are extremely hazardous to personnel operating the gun, except the gunner, they make it almost impossible to stand a watch on the gun platform, and they leave no place to place the gun for stripping.
- (iv) The new type cover is unweidly to handle with any wind blowing. The substance used as a coating for the canvas cover has apparently weakened the canvass. On this one trip some of the covers had 8 or 10 holes ripped in them by the wind.

One general defect in the layout of the armament should be noted. No attempt was ever made to provide on-the-spot stowage space for necessary equipment, such as spare barrels, tools, spare part kit, oil cans, etc.

If speed in opening fire and maintaining it in the face of casualty to the guns is to be the criterion of efficiency, some thought should be given to making full use of the fine guns installed by improving stowage space.

(h) Yes.

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Subject: Report of Voyage (Outward)  
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(i) Many of the Armed Guard crew want to get into the fleet. They should be told what and when their chances of doing so are.

*Edward G. Magennis*  
EDWARD G. MAGEENNIS.