

ARMED GUARD UNIT  
S. S. ABBOT L. MILLS  
ARMED GUARD CENTER (ATLANTIC)  
C/O FLEET P.O. N.Y.

CONFIDENTIAL

28 March 1945

From: ERICKSON, Carl Edward, 317348, D-L USNR.  
Commanding Officer, Naval Armed Guard.  
(c/o Armed Guard Center Atlantic)  
Flag or Registry U.S.A.  
S. S. ABBOT L. MILLS Gross tons 7176

To: Chief of Naval Operations

Via: The Port Director, Bari, Italy

Subject: Report of Voyage S. S. Abbot L. Mills  
From: Norfolk, Virginia to Bari, Italy

Reference: (a) General Instructions for Commanding Officers  
of Naval Armed Guards on Merchant Vessels, Paragraph  
4301.

Enclosure: (A)

I. In accordance with reference (a), the following information  
is submitted.

(a) Type of Vessel: EC2 Liberty Type of Cargo: 500 and  
1,000 lb. Bombs and Fin  
Assemblies.

Owner of Vessel: U.S.A. War Shipping Administration.  
Chartered to: Coastwise Pacific Far East Lines.  
Ingvald Halvarsen Master.

(b) Port of Departure: Norfolk, Va. 4 March 1945  
Port of Arrival: Augusta, Sicily 23 March 1945  
From Norfolk, Va. to Europa Point, Gibraltar was  
convoys by Task Group 60.3 Captain William Longfellow  
USN escort commander in USS EARLE AND VANCE, LANSING  
PEORIA, FNS LE TRIOMPHANT. No. of ships 48  
Speed: (average) 9.5

From Europa Point Gibraltar to Augusta, Sicily traveled  
independently.  
Speed: (average) 10.4

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Port of Departure: Augusta, Sicily 24 March 1945  
Port of Arrival: Brindisi, Italy 25 March 1945  
Traveled independently.  
Speed (average) 11.3  
Port of Departure: Brindisi, Italy 28 March 1945  
Port of Arrival: Bari, Italy 28 March 1945  
Traveled independently.  
Speed (average) 11.5

(c) Contacts and action with the enemy:

3/19 0640 GMT

SSSS SSSS SSSS SSSS  
KC2WC           LAT. 34 43 NORTH LONG 21 31 WEST SUBMARINE  
190618

(d) General resume of the voyage: All Navy hands manned their Battle Stations at Dawn and Dusk during the entire voyage. Leaving Lynnhaven Rds. received air coverage. There appeared to be a great deal of blinking after sunset and before sunrise. On 9 March 1945 ship's crew ordered out to secure bombs which were rolling around in number one and number five holds, due to negligence of stowage at Charleston, South Carolina. Ship's burned side lights and stern light crossing the Atlantic on bad nights. On 17 March 1945 there was a collision of two ships changing station, both ships stayed with the convoy. Received aircraft entering Gibraltar. Traveling independently in the Mediterranean followed orders did not zig zag, did not fly balloons, and burned navigational lights at full brilliancy. Adequate General Drills were held aboard ship during the voyage.

(e) Delay, instead of going direct to Bari, Italy from Gibraltar we first went to Augusta, Sicily and anchored for one day then went to Brindisi, Italy and anchored for two days. As we received no escort at either port cannot see any need for the delay. We traveled independently from Gibraltar to Bari, Italy.

(f) The Commercial radio operators appeared to carry out wartime radio instructions for merchant vessels and kept all intercepted messages confidential.

(g) Defects and deficiencies:

Improper functioning of electrical firing mechanism on  
Bow 3"50 gun.

Blower in after magazine out of order, water in line.  
After 3"50 needs a complete new wiring job.

(h) The master and officers of the ship carried out "Wartime instructions for United States Merchant Vessels". Blackout regulations were strictly observed, bilges and waste materials were emptied at nightfall, routing instructions were obeyed, codes and signals were kept as classified, etc.

(i) Recommendations: That more care be given and better supervision when they are loading cargo ships. It was improper loading that caused the bombs to get loose and roll in number one and number five holds. Bombs were damaged on both ends and on the sides before ships crew was able to get them all secured.

(j) There was no improper procedure on the part of freindly aircraft approaching this vessel either when sailing independently or in convoy.

(k) Training at Sea: Lectures have been given on the following subjects: Orientation, Small Arms Instructions, Articles of the Government of the Navy, Abandon Ship, Liberty Instruction, Venereal (Health) Cargo Pilferage, Censorship, First Aid, Safety Precautions, Gas Mask Drill, Life Jackets, and Voting. This ship is operating with a reduced gun crew.

(1) This report is forwarded from abroad.

*Carl E. Erickson*

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Lt. (jg) D-L USNR