

ND5/(14c)/BS1

16 December 1944

End-1 on report COAG, SS ABBOT L. MILLS of 15 December 1944.

CONFIDENTIAL AG304/44a.

From: PD, ND5.
To: CNO.

7176
ST

Subj: SS ABBOT L. MILLS - REPORT OF VOYAGE OF.

1. Forwarded.

2. Contents of para "G" have been brought to the attention of proper authority.

[Handwritten Signature]
C. S. NIMS,
By direction.

280

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
FLEET MAINTENANCE
18 DEC 1944
RECEIVED
NAVY DEPARTMENT

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S.P.

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ARMED GUARD UNIT
S. S. ABBOTT L. MILLS
ARMED GUARD CENTER (ATLANTIC)
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

*H. Condit
Lamer*

CONFIDENTIAL

15 December 1944

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

To: The Vice Chief of Naval Operations.
Via: The Port Director, Norfolk.

Subject: Report of Voyage, S. S. ABBOTT L. MILLS
From Norfolk, Va. to Norfolk Va.

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

Enclosure: (A)

1. Inaccordance with reference (a), the following information
is submitted.

(a) Type of vessel: Steam screw Type of cargo: Ammunition,
Grenades, Smoke flares,
Trucks, Mail.

Owner of vessel: U.S.A. War Shipping Administration.
Chartered to: Coastwise Pacific Far East Lines.

(b) Port of departure: Lynnhaven Roads Chesapeake Bay
Date 11 December 1944.

Convoyed or independent: Convoyed 11 December 1944
Independent 12 to 15 December 1944

Speed (Aver.): 8.5 in convoy

No. of ships in convoy: Leaving 98

No. of escort vessels or aircraft:

Task Force 63

U.S.S. Sampson
U.S.S. FRANCIS M. ROBINSON
U.S.S. FOWLER
U.S.S. KNOXVILLE
U.S.S. BRUNSWICK
U.S.S. CARTER
US.S. NEAL A. SCOTT
U.S.S. MUIR

Received air coverage leaving Lynnhaven Roads by two planes
and one blimp.

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(c) Contacts and action with the enemy: At 1203 on 14 December 1944 received Radio Message "Sub Sighted 39-26N 70.20W".

(d) General resume of the voyage:
11 December 1944 Departed from anchor at 0828 and joined convoy.

12 December 1944 Left convoy at 0345 being unable to maintain station, due to heavy weather (Received Radio Storm Warning 0804 11 December 1944) Three hours later was clear of all vessels and had room to maneuver and at reduced speed ran before the sea on easterly heading. At 0615 #1 lifeboat, accommodation ladder, boat skids, some cargo, debarkation ladders, thirteen smoke floats carried away on both sides, also fresh water hose on starboard side. At 1030 vessel's gear again secured as good as possible and put wind and sea two points on starboard bow, Bow under water most of the time at 1200 sea coming over 3"50 aft so Sea watch secured. At ~~XX~~ 1415 #3 liferaft carried away. Seas continuing to come aboard boat deck raising the lifeboats which had extra lashing, damaging the boat cradles, carrying away the boat fall reels. There was no Navy General Quarters that evening nor the next morning because of the intensity of the storm with the sea coming over the 3"50 gun platform aft. Men were ordered to remain in their quarters. Burned Blue Stern light at night with running lights lighted.

13 December 1944 Daylight on the 13th discovered vessel down by the head, an inspection showed bosun's locker and magazine flooded, ventilators stump covers and cement on chain pipe having carried away. 0900 Sea watch again set. At 1400 Gunnery Officer, three gunners mates, ships bos'n and chips went up to the bow to try to get water out of fore peek and magazine, but found it impossible because the sea was still coming over the bow. At night burned blue stern light and had running lights lighted.

14 December 1944 Made check of Ordnance material as sea quieted down some. Found most all gun covers torn to threads, splinter shield on bow gun heavily bashed in 3"50 on bow needs new sights and a great deal of repair, ready boxes and magazines flooded, gear locker flooded, recreation gear locker washed over the side, and thirteen washed over the side. (Insert Smoke Floats) Burned blue stern light and running lights lighted. The vessel could not zigzag according to instruction because of the storm. At 1230 had target practice with 3"50 aft at passing buoy which was set loose by the storm bearing 36-00 N 72-10 W Fired four rounds and raised object out of water at a range of 2500, At 1300 plane flew over ship did not challenge us.

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(e) The vessel did not arrive at any port therefore, no delay due to lack of port facilities.

(f) The commercial radio operator appeared to carry out wartime instructions for merchant vessels and kept all intercepted messages confidential. Radio ^{silence} was broken to send messages while traveling independently. All encoding and decoding of messages was done by the master and the gunnery officer.

Radio silence was broken as follows: Ships time.
12 December 1944 - 2023 We called Commodore, plain language.
13 December 1944 - 1111 We called Commodore, plain language.
13 December 1944 - 1203 Commodore called us, plain language.
13 December 1944 - 1207 We ans. Commodore, plain language.
13 December 1944 - 1248 NKC for bearing.
13 December 1944 - 1622 Called NAM shore station for bearing and speed, plain language.
13 December 1944 - 1120 Called Shore station WSL, coded.
13 December 1944 - 1154 Called Shore station WSL War Call, Plain language.
14 December 1944 - 0925 Called Shore station WSL, coded.

(g) The following defects and deficiencies have been brought to the attention of the Port Director, Norfolk, Va.

Pfain Damaged splinter shield on bow 3"50 gun
Sights on bow 3"50 damaged
All ready boxes, magazines, gear lockers flooded
New gun covers did not stand up against the heavy seas as they were torn to threads.

(h) The Master and officers of the ship carried out "Wartime Instructions for United States Merchant Vessels". The master did a wonderful job to save the ship and its cargo. Routing instructions were followed as much as the storm would permit, codes and signals were kept as classified, etc.

(i) Recommendations: A pump be supplied all ships so it will permit draining of parts of the ship such as fore peek, magazines, and store rooms once they are flooded, maneuverability was practically impossible with so much in the head of the ship and it was impossible to get water out. ^{water}
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(j) There was no improper procedure on the part of friendly aircraft approaching this vessel either when sailing independently or in convoy.

Carl E. Erickson
CARL E. ERICKSON
Ensign, D-L USNR

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