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Abel Parker Upshur

UNITED STATES NAVY
Armed Guard Detachment
s.s. Abel Parker Upshur

7177
BT

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723741

25, September, 1943

FROM: Lt.(jg), Edward R. GOLOB, Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Armed Guard Detachment, (c/o Armed Guard Center, South Brooklyn, N. Y.), s. s. Abel Parker Upshur, Gross Tons 7177.

TO: The Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

VIA: The Port Director, Boston, Mass.

SUBJECT: Report of Voyage Inward, s. s. Abel Parker Upshur (7177). from LONDON, ENGLAND; to BOSTON, MASS.

REFERENCE: (a) Paragraph 4301, pages 44-45; General Instructions for Commanding Officers of Naval Armed Guards on Merchant Ships, 1943, 3rd ed.

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following information is submitted for the inward passage. A report of the outward passage was made to the U. S. Naval Liaison Office, in London, England, on 17, August, 1943.

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- (a) Name and Class: s.s. Abel Parker Upshur.
- Type: - - - - Liberty.
- Tonnage: - - - - Gross 7177; Net 4375.
- Cargo: - - - - Ballast.
- Owner: - - - - International Freighting Corp., Inc.
- Charter: - - - - United States Lines.

(b) Port of Departure: London, England, 4, September, 1943, sailing in convoy of approximately twenty (20) ships, plus two (2) escort vessels. Arrived Methil, Scotland, 7, September, 1943. Average speed was seven and one-half (7½) knots.

Departed from Methil, Scotland, 7, September, 1943, sailing in same convoy with no apparent changes. Arrived Loch Ewe, Scotland, 9, September, 1943. Average speed was eight and six tenths (8.6) knots.

Departed from Loch Ewe, Scotland, 9, September, 1943, sailing in same convoy to which several ships had been added. Another ship joined the convoy outside the "nets". No additional escort vessels joined the convoy. This convoy sailed south to join the main convoy, which was sighted at approximately 1600 on 10, September, 1943, and joined at 1730. The total convoy now numbered sixty-two (62) ships plus five (5) escort vessels. Arrived Boston, 23, September, 1943; average speed was 8.7 knots.

(c) There were no contacts with the enemy.

(d) The inward passage was uneventful except for the following incidents. On 5, September, 1943, at 1810 a signal was received from the Commodore "Keep a good look-out for aircraft reported approaching."

*see par e page 2
par 1 page 2-3
and
par. g. + 6*

[Signature]
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probably hostile". Two low flying planes passed to the Starboard, of our North bound convoy, flying South. We were proceeding northward on the East coast of England, approximately twelve (12) hours out from Gravesend, England, or about seventy-five to ninety (75-90) miles up the coast. Sea was quiet, visibility poor because of haze. Planes were not actually seen until they were almost abeam of the Convoy.

All the AA guns had been promptly manned. All hands were at their AA battle stations and ready when the planes came into view but out of range, except for 3"50 gun. In accordance with instructions received at the Convoy Conference, we did not open "fire" waiting for the escort vessels to do so first if planes were hostile.

All hands continued at their battle stations until the above signal was cancelled by the Commodore at 1835.

Forty-five (45⁰) degree emergency turns to Port and Starboard were practiced today (11, September, 1943), on signal of the Commodore.

On 14, September, 1943, about 1900, while the s.s. Jacob Luckenback was passing us on our Port side, to regain her Convoy position (65) after having dropped out early in the morning, one of her 20 MM Gunners opened "fire", at an unauthorized time, at a floating metal drum. The General Alarm was sounded aboard our ship and battle stations manned until it was determined that it was nothing more serious that was the cause of this action on the part of the Luckenback's gunner. She also sent a "blinker" signal but no one read it or could tell me what it was about. I was busy watching the sea in the vicinity of their target.

BAMS message received at 1644 GMT on 16, September, 1943, to the effect that a periscope had been sighted twice at 3942N 5129W.

The s.s. Jacob Luckenback gave us much trouble in convoy station keeping until the Master of our vessel finally took his position in the Convoy after he had dropped out for the second or third time in as many days.

The vessel's average speed was 8.7 and kept its convoy station well. No lights were shown except as ordered by the Commodore for navigational purposes.

(e) Turn-around of vessel was delayed for several days because of the slowness of unloading. Almost seemed deliberate. Stevedores were late in starting their daily task and quick to stop working on any

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pretext. One particular incident should be mentioned, namely, about one hour's or less work remained to be done in completing the unloading in #5 hole which would have completed the whole unloading job. The foreman attempted to keep the men on the job but they created quite a fuss and came out of the hole without completing the job. As a result, it took half the next day to do an hour's work.

As gathered from the conversation of the Master and Officers of the ship, it could be assumed that at least three of four days unnecessary delay were involved.

(f) Radio operator appears to carry out wartime radio instructions.

(g) It is to be noted that the projectile and powder ready boxes for the 5" 51 Gun are incorrectly placed for following the normal navy doctrine for loading this type of gun. Standing and looking at the gun from the breech to the muzzle, the projectile ready box should be on the left side of the gun, from which side the projectile is loaded into the gun, and the powder ready box should be located on the right of the gun, from which side the powder is loaded into the gun. They should be just opposite of what they now are.

To say the least, it slows down the volume of firing power for the gun and makes for a great deal of confusion for the third shellman and powderman who must continually cross one another's paths to perform their duty at the gun. These men must also unlearn what they have been taught in this operation. It is imperative that this situation be corrected at once for the efficient operation of the gun.

Racks for securing 20 MM magazines while loading and/or applying or taking off tension have not been provided at the guns or magazines. Obviously, this considerably reduces the speed of operation and resulting volume of AA fire when needed. This situation has been remedied in part aboard this ship as discussed under (i) below.

(h) Yes, Wartime Instructions were carried out in most instances to the best of knowledge.

(i) Aboard this vessel, we have found a satisfactory solution to the problem of securing the 20 MM magazines at the gun while applying tension or taking off tension on the magazine in the absence of racks. Our 20 MM gun tubs are of the "step platform" type. On the top step in front of the Magazine Ready Box, we cut three slots to snugly receive the lower handle of the magazine. In this position, all magazines can be quickly prepared for use, whereas before it was a slow operation in the ready box or in the platform with the magazine sliding around.

(j) None.

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NAVY (NO. 10)
ON 15 FEB 1945

52 FEBRUARY 1945
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