

CONFIDENTIAL

1st Endorsement

Port Director, Third Naval District.  
17 Battery Place, New York, N. Y.  
January 6, 1943.

CONFIDENTIAL  
SERIAL PDNYF 05595

From: The Port Director, Third Naval District  
To: The Vice Chief of Naval Operations

Subject: Report of Voyage S.S. ABEL PARKER UPSHUR  
From Bombay, India to New York.

- 1. Forwarded.
- 2. Recommendation for the relocation of 5" ready service lockers will be acted upon by the Ordnance Department. (Par. (3) page 4).

F. G. REINICKE,

By *F. Reinicke*

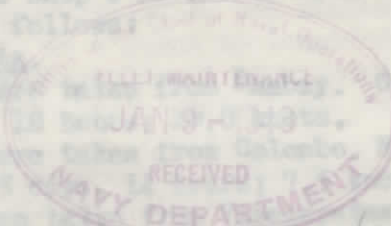
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ROUTE 10- 73

IN FILE NO. (10) A4-3/Abel Parker Upshur

FILE NO. 101  
SERIAL NO. 3296645

CT-777



1-20mm pattern ✓

PAC ✓

✓ CCC  
✓ 1 WPK  
✓ 2 JHJ  
✓ B RR

ALD ✓ TW

CONFIDENTIAL

January 5, 1943

From; Commanding Officer, Armed Guard Unit,  
S/S Abel Parker Upshur.

To: Chief Of Naval Operations, Via Port Director,

Subject: Report of Return Passage.

Reference: A. General Instructions for Commanding Officers  
of Naval Armed Guards, (Par. 380).  
B. Report of Outward Passage, Submitted Oct. 10, 1942  
Via U.S. Naval Attache, Bombay, India.

Enclosure: Copy of Reference (B).

1. General Resume Of Voyage. The discharge of the above vessel's cargo in Bombay was completed on October 23, 1942. On October 23, 1942 she sailed for Calcutta, the loading port for the return voyage. The passage from Bombay to Calcutta was made via Colombo, Ceylon, and Vizagapatam, east coast of British India. The ship arrived at Calcutta on November 5, 1942 and began at once to work cargo (cargo taken aboard for westward trip mainly consisted of jute and gunney). Loading was completed on Nov. 10. On Nov. 11, 1942 the vessel departed from Calcutta bound for New York, via Colombo, Capetown, and Hampton Roads, arriving in New York on January 31, 1943.

The passage from Bombay to Calcutta, and from Calcutta to Hampton Roads, was completed alone and without escort. The ship then proceeded from Hampton Roads to New York without escort.

A brief record of the ship's movements from Bombay to Calcutta, and from Calcutta to New York follows:

(A). Bombay to Calcutta.

Oct. 23, 1942 departure taken from Bombay. Oct. 27, arrived in Colombo. 914 miles; 3 days, 18 hours; 10.0 knots.

Oct. 27, 1942 departure taken from Colombo. Nov. 2, arrived at Vizagapatam. 1014 miles; 5 days, 14 hours; 7.5 knots.

Nov. 2, 1942 departure taken from Vizagapatam. Nov. 4 arrived at channel to Hooghly River and Calcutta pilot station. 346 miles; 1 day 19 hours; 7.9 knots.

Voyage up Hooghly River to Calcutta completed on Nov. 5, 1942.

(B). Calcutta to New York.

Nov. 11, 1942 sailed from Calcutta. Nov. 13, took departure from Calcutta Pilot Station. Nov. 18, arrived Colombo. 4 days, 13 hours; 1325 miles; 12.1 knots.

Nov. 18, 1942 sailed from Colombo. Dec. 5, arrived in Capetown. 17 days, 13 hours; 4765 miles; 11.6 knots.

The lack of British navy or patrol activity along the Indian coast is the subject of widespread and bitter criticism on the part of American Merchant Marine skippers. This criticism would seem most justifiable in regard to the west coast of India, where allied shipping must pass in dangerous proximity to enemy bases.

While moving along the west coast by warship or aircraft



Dec. 6, 1942 departed from Capetown. Jan. 1, 1943 arrived Hampton Roads. 26 days, 04 hours; 7311 miles; 11.6 knots.  
Jan. 2, 1943 departed Hampton Roads. Jan. 3, 1943 arrived at New York. 26 hours, 05 minutes; 245 miles; 12.2 knots.

Total distance covered, Calcutta to Hampton Roads, 13,401 miles.  
Elapsed sea steaming time, Calcutta to Hampton Roads, 48 days, 06 hours.  
Average speed (including zig-zag), Calcutta to Hampton Roads, 11.7 knots.

2. Incidents Out of the Routine. The return passage was completed without experiencing any unusual incidents, and without engagement with the enemy.

3. Synopsis of Route In Foreign Waters.

(A). Bombay to Calcutta.

Leaving Bombay the route followed passed close along the west coast of India to a point directly west of Colombo, thence east to the swept channel into the harbor of Colombo.

Upon leaving Colombo, rounded the southern coast of Ceylon and followed a course well to the eastward of southern India to a position off the port of Vizagapatam, thence west to the swept channel into Vizagapatam.

Proceeding north from Vizagapatam, the route followed closely the east coast of India to a point off Balasore, thence northeast to the Hooghly River Channel and Calcutta Pilot Station.

(B). Calcutta to Hampton Roads.

Upon departure from the Hooghly River channel the route followed was southeast to a point off Dhamra, thence close along the east coast of India and Ceylon, rounding the southern tip of Ceylon and entering the swept channel into the harbor of Colombo.

Leaving Colombo the route was to the southwest, passing Chagos Archipelago and Roderiquez Island on the starboard hand, and well to the east of Madagascar, to a point in longitude 30 E., south of the Cape of Good Hope. Thence northwest to a point off Cape Agulhas, following the coast to the swept channel into Table Bay Anchorage, Capetown.

On departure from Capetown the route was north, close along the west coast of Africa to a point in latitude 22 S., then continued westward, steering various mercator courses to a point off Natal and west of Rocas Island, thence to the eastward of Barbados and the Virgin Islands to a point east of the Virginia Capes, thence to the swept channel into Hampton Roads.

4. Orders Received From Foreign Governments. No written or verbal orders were received from foreign governments beyond routing instructions from Royal Naval Control at Bombay, Calcutta, Colombo and Capetown.

The ship received no radio orders.

5. Items of General or Special Interest. The lack of British convoy or patrol activity along the Indian coast is the subject of widespread and bitter criticism on the part of American Merchant Marine Officers. This criticism would seem most justifiable in regard to the east coast of India, where allied shipping must pass in dangerous proximity to enemy bases.

While moving along the west coast no warship or aircraft

patrol was sighted by this vessel. Proceeding up and down the east coast (involving a period of twelve days) no warship patrol was encountered, but three patrol planes were sighted, the aircraft remaining in the vicinity of the ship for about ten minutes on each occasion.

The amount of enemy activity in these waters, both actual and potential, coupled with the fact that routing along the east coast of India keeps allied shipping within easy range of patrol aircraft, makes criticism of the apparently slight patrol maintained in this area understandable. However, nothing has been noted to indicate that U.S. shipping is given any less protection than British vessels sighted at sea traveling the same routes.

6. Defects or Deficiencies in Battery and Equipment. Subsequent to submittal of the Report of Outward Passage, dated Oct. 16, 1942, the armament of this ship has been increased in these respects: (1) With the cognizance of the Office of the U.S. Naval Attache, Bombay, the following ordnance material was secured from the Royal Indian Navy under authority "The Senior Officer, D.E.M.S.'s Ref. No. DEMS/31/5788/42. Dated 17 Oct. 1942," and placed aboard on October 19, 1942:

- L-4  
note.
- One Oerlikon 20M/M Mark IV gun Reg. No. 41215
  - One Oerlikon 20M/M mounting with shield Reg. No. 70949
  - One Oerlikon 20M/M barrel Reg. No. 69102
  - Four Oerlikon 20M/M magazines.
  - One Oerlikon 20M/M set of spare parts (deficient one barrel)
  - One Oerlikon 20M/M tool set
  - 400 rounds 20M/M H.E. Mk. I (N.T.) ammunition
  - 200 rounds 20M/M H.E. Mk. II (T.) ammunition.

The above gun was mounted in the gun nest on the bow of this ship under the supervision of the Ordnance Officer, R.I.N., Bombay; a ready service locker was placed aboard on Oct. 20, and was made fast to the deck within the gun nest, starboard side, by the Armed Guard Unit. At Bombay the Royal Indian Navy also effected minor repairs to the Pointer's telescope on the 5"51 cal. gun, and to two pair of Binoculars, bore-sighted the 5"51 cal. gun and supplied 475 rounds of .50 cal. ball ammunition, 125 rounds of tracer, and 600 links, together with a few miscellaneous supplies for maintenance of the guns aboard.

(2) At Calcutta the following equipment was secured from the Royal Indian Navy:

- 2 PAC Rocket Firing Tubes, Improved V, type B.
- 4 Parachute Head Rockets, No. 1
- 4 Containers, Twin Explosive Links, Main Type D.
- 5 Precussion Cartridges, Type B.

The above rocket tubes were mounted on the after end of the flying bridge deck by the armed guard unit. 100 rounds 20 M/M H.E. Mk. II tracer ammunition and some special lubricants were also supplied the Armed Guard Unit by the Royal Indian Navy in Calcutta.



With these additions the armament of this vessel now consists of a 5"51 cal. gun mounted on the stern, a 20 M/M on the bow, two Browning .50 cal. machine guns on the wings of the flying bridge, two Browning .50 cal. machine guns in the gun nests at each side of the after gun deck and two PAC rockets mounted on the after end of the flying bridge deck.

All of this armament is in excellent working order, but attention is called to the suggestion, contained in Report of Outward Passage (Sec.6), that a 3" gun be placed on the bow and four 20 M/Ms be mounted in place of the four .50 cal. machine guns now carried aboard. Such a change of armament, if feasible, would greatly increase the effective fire power of this vessel.

(3) The 5" ready service powder locker is mounted to the starboard, and the ready service projectile locker to port, on the after gun deck. As standard loading procedure requires the powder charge to be loaded from the right when facing the breech, and the projectiles from the left, a chance of delay and confusion would be eliminated if it were possible to interchange the position of these two ready service lockers.

7. Recommendations Tending to the Improvement or Greater Efficiency of the Service. In the training of personnel for this service more emphasis should be placed on the necessity of keeping a bright lookout, and instruction given on how to maintain a proper lookout. Unless this is done a few days of dangerous time at sea must be spent before a satisfactory lookout is maintained aboard.

8. Commercial Radio Operator. The commercial radio operator did appear to carry out all war time radio instructions for merchant vessels.

9. Speed in War Zone. The average speed of the ship in the war zone was 11.3 knots.

10. Lights in War Zone. A total blackout was maintained at all times while at sea.

11. Fog Signals in the War Zone. No signals were sounded in the war zone.

12. Zig-Zag in the War Zone. In accordance with instructions received with routing orders from Royal Naval Control in Colombo, the vessel did not zig-zag between Lat. 21 S., Long. 69 E. and Lat. 37 S., Long. 38 E. while enroute between Colombo and Cape town.

Otherwise the ship zig-zagged during all daylight and moonlight hours.

13. Instructions for Naval Transportation and United States Merchant Vessels. The Master and Officers of the ship did carry out "Instructions for Naval Transportation and United States Merchant Vessels".

*John M. Smyth Jr.*  
John M. Smyth, Jr.  
Ensign, U.S.N.R.