

MARCH 15, 1944

FROM: ENSIGN EDWIN ANTHONY GEHRING, U.S.N.R.,
COMMANDING OFFICER, NAVAL ARMED GUARD,
(C/O ARMED GUARD CENTER, S.BROOKLYN, N.Y.)
S.S. ABEL STEARNS, GROSS TONS 7176

TO: THE VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

VIA: THE PORT DIRECTOR, NEW YORK, N.Y.

SUBJECT: REPORT OF VOYAGE OF S.S. ABEL STEARNS FROM
AVONMOUTH, ENGLAND TO NEW YORK, N.Y.

REFERENCE: (A) GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMANDING
OFFICERS OF NAVAL ARMED GUARDS ON MERCHANT
SHIPS, 1943 EDITION, PAR. 4301

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFERENCE (A) THE FOLLOWING
INFORMATION IS SUBMITTED:

(A) TYPE OF VESSEL: FREIGHTER (LIBERTY)
TYPE OF CARGO: BALLAST
OWNER OF VESSEL: U.S. WAR SHIPPING ADMINISTRATION
CHARTERED TO: A.H. BULL & CO., OPERATORS

(B) PORT OF DEPARTURE: AVONMOUTH, ENGLAND
DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 1944
CONVOYED
SPEED (AVERAGE): 8.64 KNOTS
NUMBER OF VESSELS IN ESCORT: MOST SEEN AT ANY ONE
TIME WAS 5. OCCASIONAL
PATROL AIRCRAFT SEEN.

NUMBER OF VESSELS IN CONVOY:
PORT OF ARRIVAL: NEW YORK, N.Y.
DATE OF ARRIVAL: MARCH 15, 1944

(C) THIS VESSEL HAD NO CONTACT NOR ACTION WITH THE
ENEMY.

(D) THE VOYAGE WAS ROUTINE THROUGHOUT.

(E) THIS VESSEL ANCHORED IN BRISTOL CHANNEL ABOUT
TEN MILES ABOVE BARRY ROADS, 2110, FEB. 25 TO 0730, FEB. 26.
AT 0900, FEB. 26, VESSEL ANCHORED AT BARRY ROADS AND PRO-
CEEDED TO SWING SHIP TO ADJUST COMPASSES UNTIL 1106, FEB. 26
AT 1730, FEB. 26, VESSEL ANCHORED AT MILFORD HAVEN IN ORDER
THAT CONVOY CONFERENCES COULD BE ATTENDED. VESSEL DEPARTED
FROM MILFORD HAVEN AT 1840, FEB. 28.

*See S. C. C.
L
JPM*

(F) THE MERCHANT RADIO OPERATOR APPEARED TO CARRY OUT WARTIME RADIO INSTRUCTIONS PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO KEEPING INTERCEPTED MESSAGES CONFIDENTIAL.

(G) THE ARMED GUARD COMMANDER'S CABIN IS ENTIRELY TOO SMALL FOR LIVING QUARTERS AS WELL AS THE CONDUCT OF THE BUSINESS WHICH A CREW OF 27 MEN ENTAILS. HIS CABIN IS AS SMALL AS THE SMALLEST CABIN OCCUPIED BY A LICENSED MERCHANT MARINE OFFICER ABOARD. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE LOCKER OPPOSITE HIS CABIN BE ASSIGNED TO HIS USE AND THAT A DESK BE INSTALLED IN HIS CABIN, IF LARGER QUARTERS ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

THE ARMED GUARD CREW'S QUARTERS AND LOCKERS ARE ESPECIALLY CROWDED AS APPEARS FROM THE COMPARISON WITH MERCHANT PERSONNEL FACILITIES BELOW:

SPACE IN LIVING QUARTERS PER MAN:

MERCHANT	- - - - -	225	CUBIC FEET
ARMED GUARD	- - - - -	133	" "

LOCKER SPACE PER MAN:

MERCHANT	- - - - -	13.6	CUBIC FEET
ARMED GUARD	- - - - -	6.4	" "

IN THE CREW'S QUARTERS WHICH ARE LOCATED AMIDSHIPS MOISTURE CONDENSES ON THE BULKHEADS AND FREEZES TO ICE. THESE COMPARTMENTS AS WELL AS THOSE ON THE AFTER SIDE OF THE PASSAGEWAY IN THE POOP (WHICH HAVE STEEL BULKHEADS AND OVERHEAD) ARE FRIGID AND UNCOMFORTABLE IN COLD WEATHER. INSULATION IS RECOMMENDED.

THE NEED IS FELT FOR ~~A OTHER~~ OF SHELVES IN THE LOCKER WHICH OPENS ON THE PORT SIDE OF THE POOP. ADDITIONAL SPACE COULD BE ACQUIRED IF THE DOOR OF THE LOCKER INSIDE THE POOP WERE REHUNG SO THAT IT WOULD SWING INTO THE PASSAGEWAY INSTEAD OF INWARD.

THE 4"50 READY BOXES IN THEIR PRESENT CONDITION WILL NOT WITHSTAND THE SEVERE VIBRATION CAUSED BY THE SCREW IN ROUGH WEATHER WHEN THE SHIP IS IN BALLAST ONLY. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THEY BE REPLACED.

THE NEED IS FELT FOR SHIFTING BOARDS IN THE STARBOARD MAGAZINE AFT, ARRANGED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE MAGAZINE WOULD BE DIVIDED INTO THREE BINS.

(H) THE MASTER AND OFFICERS OF THE SHIP WERE DILIGENT ABOUT CARRYING OUT "WARTIME INSTRUCTIONS FOR U.S. MERCHANT SHIPS".

(I) THERE ARE NO RECOMMENDATIONS.

(J) NO IMPROPER PROCEDURE ON THE PART OF FRIENDLY AIRCRAFT APPROACHING THIS VESSEL WAS NOTED.

(K) ON FEBRUARY 28, 1944 REPORT OF THIS CREW'S GUNNERY PRACTICE AT MILFORD HAVEN ON DECEMBER 30, 1943 WAS RECEIVED FROM D.E.M.S. STAFF OFFICER:
SURFACE FIRING - "PERCENTAGE 83.8 % (VERY GOOD)"
A/A FIRING - - "VERY GOOD"

RECEIVED S-C FILES

23 Room 2055 T.P.

ROUTE TO: 19 MAR 1944

Op File No. (SC) *Ad-Abel Stearns*

Doc. No. _____

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Fig. No. _____

Edwin A. Gehring
EDWIN A. GEHRING
ENSIGN, U.S.N.R.,
ARMED GUARD COMMANDER

1st Endorsement

CONFIDENTIAL
SERIAL PDNYF 018248

17 Battery Place, New York, N.Y.
16 March 1944

From: The Port Director, Third Naval District.
To: The Chief of Naval Operations.
Subj: Voyage Report of SS ABEL STEARNS.

1. Forwarded.
2. Inspection will be made to determine possible improvements as requested in Par. g.



For *Jm McNeely*
J. G. REINCKE