

UNITED STATES FLEET

A9-10 UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE  
Serial C-0127 PORT OFFICE, BRISTOL CHANNEL AREA

**U.S. CONFIDENTIAL - BRITISH CONFIDENTIAL** 16 February 1944

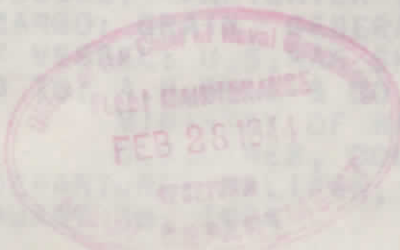
FIRST ENDORSEMENT

From: The U.S. Naval Port Officer,  
Bristol Channel Area, Cardiff, Wales.  
To : The Chief of Naval Operations.  
Via : The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.  
Subject: Report of voyage, S.S. ABEL STEARNS

1. Forwarded.
2. With reference to paragraph (G), the Armed Guard Officer has been directed to re-submit these recommendations in his homeward bound voyage report, in order that they will be brought to the attention of the Port Director upon the ship's arrival in the Continental United States.

*Enoch D. Chase*

ENOCH D. CHASE  
By direction.



End--2

UNITED STATES FLEET  
U.S. NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE  
20 GROSVENOR SQUARE  
LONDON, W.1.

Serial 0856

**CONFIDENTIAL**

FEB 19 1944

From: Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.  
To : Chief of Naval Operations.

1. Forwarded.

RECEIVED S-C FILES

23 Room 2055

ROUTE TO: 26 FEB 1944

Op File No. (86) 44-3/Abel Stearns  
Doc. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Copy No. 1 of 1  
Pkg. No. 4149

*L. W. Cantrell*

L. W. CANTRELL,  
By direction.

*LW*

*see 9*

U.S. CONFIDENTIAL - BRITISH CONFIDENTIAL

FEBRUARY 14, 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: 1) U.S.NAVAL PORT OFFICER,  
BRISTOL CHANNEL AREA, CARDIFF, WALES  
2) COMMANDER OF U.S.NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE

SUBJECT: REPORT OF VOYAGE OF S.S. ABEL STEARNS FROM  
HALIFAX, N.S. TO AVONMOUTH, ENGLAND.

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

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFERENCE (A) THE FOLLOW-  
ING INFORMATION IS SUBMITTED:

(A) TYPE OF VESSEL: FREIGHTER (LIBERTY)  
TYPE OF CARGO: GRAIN, GENERAL  
OWNERS OF VESSEL: U.S.WAR SHIPPING ADMINISTRATION  
CHARTERED TO: A.H.BULL & CO., OPERATORS  
MINISTRY OF WAR SHIPPING, ARMS CARGO  
U.S.LINES, COMMERCIAL CARGO

(B) PORT OF DEPARTURE: HALIFAX, N.S.

DATE: JANUARY 30, 1944

CONVOYED

SPEED (AVERAGE): 9 KNOTS

NUMBER OF SHIPS IN ESCORT: MOST SEEN AT ANY ONE  
TIME WAS 11. PATROL  
AIRCRAFT WERE SEEN  
PART OF VOYAGE

NUMBER OF SHIPS IN CONVOY: OUT OF HALIFAX..17  
OUT OF N.Y.....54  
TOTAL.....71

PORT OF ARRIVAL: AVONMOUTH, ENGLAND

DATE: FEBRUARY 13, 1944

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

(D) THE VOYAGE WAS ROUTINE THROUGHOUT.

(E) THIS VESSEL WAS NOT DELAYED IN PORTS FOR ANY  
REASON.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND 750161

(E) 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.

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 THAT COMPARTMENT WHICH IS LOCATED ON THE MAIN DECK IN THE FORWARD PART OF THE DECK HOUSE ON THE PORT SIDE AND WHICH IS OCCUPIED BY SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED GUARD, MOISTURE CONDENSES ON THE BULKHEADS AND FREEZES TO ICE. THE COMPARTMENT IS FRIGID AND UNCOMFORTABLE IN COLD WEATHER. THIS CONDITION WAS INCLUDED IN THE VOYAGE REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. NAVAL OBSERVER, HALIFAX, N.S. AND IN THE MASTER'S REQUISITION FOR REPAIRS IN THAT PORT, BUT IT WAS NOT CORRECTED.

(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.

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