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# TWELFTH NAVAL DISTRICT

FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING

SAN FRANCISCO · CALIFORNIA

OFFICE OF PORT DIRECTOR, N. T. S.

CONFIDENTIAL

1st. Endorsement

**CONFIDENTIAL**

to CO Armed Guard Unit  
SS ABEL STEARNS ltr of  
March 16, 1943.

April 29, 1943

7176  
CW

From: Port Director (NTS), Twelfth Naval District.  
To: The Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

Subject: Armed Guard Unit SS ABEL STEARNS - Voyage  
Report of.

1. Forwarded.

2. Regarding deficiencies listed in paragraph (5) of subject report, this vessel has never been in San Francisco and as a result has not been inspected by this office. When the ABEL STEARNS arrives at this port, investigation will be made of these deficiencies.

*W. F. Lafrenz*

W. F. LAFRENZ,  
Captain, U.S.N. (Ret.)  
Assistant Port Director(NTS)

(see para 5) LWC

UWR  
CRR

1010  
A-16

5 files

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT  
MAY 6 1943

RECEIVED SC  
MAY 4 1943

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44.3/Stearns  
SC No 1-1  
SER NO 992832

**CONFIDENTIAL**

7405

ARMED GUARD UNIT  
S. S. ABEL STEARNS  
ARMED GUARD CENTER ( PACIFIC )  
Treasure Island  
San Francisco, California

CONFIDENTIAL

16 March 1943

From: The Commander of Armed Guard Unit, S. S. ABEL STEARNS.  
To : The Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department,  
Washington, D. C.  
Via : The U. S. Naval Liaison Officer, Calcutta, India.  
Subject: Report of Voyage of S. S. ABEL STEARNS.  
Reference: (a) General Instructions for Commanding Officers of Naval  
Armed Guards Aboard Merchant Vessels, paragraph 436.  
Enclosure: (A) Copy of radio rerouting instructions.

1. The S. S. ABEL STEARNS is a EC2 Liberty type vessel of 7176 gross tons, carrying a general cargo, owned by WarAdministration Maritime Commission, chartered by President Lines, operators A. H. Bull and Co., Incorporated.

2. The S. S. ABEL STEARNS departed Los Angeles Harbor at 1156 27 December 1942, and sailed singly to Sidney, Australia, arriving at 0839 23 January 1943. Departed Sidney at 1030 24 January 1943, sailing singly, and arrived Karachi, India, 1430 19 February 1943. Unloaded deck cargo of planes, took on oil and water, and proceeded to Bombay, India on 21 February 1943, and arrived at 1700 February 23, 1943. Departed Bombay in convoy of three ships under escort of one corvette at 1000 5 March 1943 and arrived Colombo, Ceylon (outside breakwater) for instructions at 1100 9 March 1943; departed Colombo at 1700 9 March 1943, same escort, one tanker into Madras, one Liberty ship into Vizagpatam. Proceeded on to Calcutta, India singly, arriving at mouth of river at 1600 14 March 1943, and docked at King George Docks 1100 15 March 1943.

3. No contacts or action with the enemy occurred.

4. General resume of the voyage: Good; weather most excellent. On 28 December 1942 at about 1800 the Master and myself heard gunfire off the port quarter a considerable distance away. No flashes were visible and no enemy or action seen. From the sound and speed of the firing it was concluded that it was probably a man of war. Some ships through route passed too close in midocean to our route so as to make themselves suspicious vessels and subject to fire. It is suggested that masters be instructed to adhere to their routing instructions more closely or that routes be separated further apart.

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Subject: Report of Voyage of S. S. ABEL STEARNS.

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Arrival in Sidney was without incident; proceeded from Sidney south around Australia in good weather. Lights were shown only through Straits. Zigzag diagrams were followed according to rules. Proceeded across the Indian Ocean in accordance with route given and up the coast of West India where ship was rerouted to Karachi for unloading of planes. Proceeded without incident to Bombay. Lights from Bombay to Colombo. Colombo to the channel of Madras. On the afternoon of March 13th a British merchantman passed to our port at about 14,000 yards, put smokepots over the side, fired two shots and then three more in rapid succession. The escort proceeded in his direction to ascertain the trouble and found that he was only doing target practice which the commander thinks is very poor taste in such close proximity to a convoy. Proceeded on to Calcutta without incident.

X 5. A 4-inch gun mount on a 5-inch gun tub produces a bad flash-back from the muzzle at low angle firing because of the shield. It is suggested that these shields be set inside muzzle distance of 4".50 cal. when mounted on this type of tub. Also the control box for the 3" magazine sprinkler forward defeats its purpose in that it cannot be locked and still provide adequate safety in flooding in case of fire.

6. Commercial radio operators appeared to carry out wartime radio instructions for merchant vessels.

7. The master and officers of the ship carried out "Instructions for naval transportation and U. S. merchant vessels in time of war."

*John A. Amos*

S. A. AMOS  
Ensign, USNR