

# UNITED STATES FLEET

A9-10

Serial C-01145

UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE

PORT OFFICE, BRISTOL CHANNEL AREA

**U.S. CONFIDENTIAL—BRITISH CONFIDENTIAL**

17 October 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.  
Subj: Report of voyage, S.S. ABIEL FOSTER.  
1. Forwarded.

7176  
G

*V. J. Goldsmith*

S.L. GOLDSMITH  
By direction.

End--2

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

Serial 07638

21 OCT 1944

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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

1. Forwarded.

128

**RECEIVED S-C FILES**

23 Room 2055

ROUTE TO 25 OCT 1944

File No. (26) A4-3/Abiel Foster

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23 043

*H. L. Ashenfelter*

H.L. ASHENFELTER,  
By direction.

26 OCT 1944

RECEIVED  
NAVY DEPARTMENT

On May 26, 1944, rations, blankets, and life jackets came aboard for troops.  
On May 30, 1944, personal baggage and gear of army officers was stowed in No. 5 hold.  
On June 3, 1944, at 2100 all troops and vehicles were aboard., and vessel departed Newport docks at 0330, June 4, 1944 to lay at anchor in Barry Rds. until 0700, June 6, 1944, when she sailed in convoy for Utah Beach, France.  
On June 5, 1944, at 1500, Master and Armed Guard Officer attended secret convoy conference at Bristol Channel Port Office, Cardiff, Wales; transit to and from conference was by special bus under guard of Royal Marines and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority WND 750161

CONFIDENTIAL:

15 October 1944

From: Officer-in-Charge, Armed Guard Unit aboard SS Abiel Foster.  
To: Chief of Naval Operations.  
Via: (1) U.S. Naval Port Office BRISTOL CHANNEL AREA.  
(2) The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

Subject: Report of voyages, activities, and whereabouts of SS Abiel Foster-during period April 12, 1944, date of arrival from U.S. at Barry Rds., Wales, until June 6, 1944, date of departure from Newport, England, for Utah Beach in France. (ALL OTHER REPORTS COVERING PERIODS BEFORE AND AFTER ABOVE STATED PERIOD HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED)

Reference: (A) General Instructions for Commanding Officers of Naval Armed Guards on Merchant Ships, 1943 Par. 4301.

(1) In accordance with reference (A), the following report is respectfully submitted.

(A) Name: SS Abiel Foster--Type: Liberty--Gross Tonnage; 7176 --Type of Cargo: None---Owner: WSA--- Operated by Matson Navigation Lines.

(B) Port of Departure: Barry Rds., Wales, at 1500, May 3, 1944 (all times DB Sum.) ; proceeded independently to Gourick, Scotland, arriving at 2058, May 4, 1944; lay at anchor in Firth of Clyde until 1625, May 13, 1944, when we proceeded independently to Milford Haven, Wales,; lay at anchor after arriving at 1631, May 14, 1944 until 2140, May 23, 1944, when we proceeded independently to Newport, England, PORT OF ARRIVAL, arriving at 0700, May 24, 1944, where we lay at dock and on buoy within locks until 0330, June 4, 1944, when we proceeded to Barry Rds. to lay at anchor until 0700, June 6, 1944, when this ship sailed in convoy for Utah Beachhead, France.

NARRATIVE RESUME: During period from April 12, 1944 until June 4, 1944, an intensive pre-invasion program was carried out consisting of : daily muster and physical exercise coupled with gun drills, fire and boat drills ( On May 6, 1944, competition between Navy and Merchant Crew personnel resulted in Navy's winning a boat race in which boat handling and speed was required), attendance at DEMS gunnery school by gun crew, and frequent inspections of personnel, quarters and equipment.

The program also included: attendance at conference for Armed Guard Officers at Bristol Channel Port Office, while daily conferences were held in the dock area at Newport from May 24, to June 4, 1944, both inclusive.

Special gas equipment was issued and lectures on proper use of same were given by Gunnery officer and Second officer of ship . Special classes were held in communications for likely gun crew members; regular ammunition handling and loading drills were conducted, and Navy men held independent boat drills in lowering and manning boats. Fire fighting instruction for all hands was conducted; all radio equipment was checked on board and an over the side test was carried on in a life boat with life boat transmitter.

Gun crew was provided with combat shoes acquired at U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Penarth, Wales; first aid classes were held and all first aid boxes and gun bags were checked and refilled to capacity; all missing dog tags were replaced.

Seven soft ball games were played with other ships of which our gun crew won four, lost two, and tied one. Gun crew morale was high and attitude wholesome throughout preparation period. Frequent lectures were given by Gunnery Officer on: individual initiative, crew spirit, care of equipment such as battle phones, binoculars, etc, and duties of lookouts. Church services were held on board on Sundays by gunnery officer throughout period and, when possible, naval personnel were authorized to attend services ashore.

Necessary additional ammunition and gunnery supplies were taken on board and properly stowed; magazine flood valves and magazines temperatures were checked periodically.

On April 25, 1944, work was completed on No. 5 hold, fitted with 240 suspended bunks and store room for rations, life belts, and blankets for troops.

On May 25, 1944, two Royal Navy Aircraft Recognition experts were assigned to ship and quartered and messed with gun crew.

On May 26, 1944, rations, blankets, and life jackets came aboard for troops.

On May 30, 1944, personal baggage and gear of army officers was stowed in No. 5 hold.

On June 3, 1944, at 2100 all troops and vehicles were aboard., and vessel departed Newport docks at 0330, June 4, 1944 to lay at anchor in Barry Rds. until 0700, June 6, 1944, when she sailed in convoy for Utah Beach, France.

On June 5, 1944, at 1500, Master and Armed Guard Officer attended secret convoy conference at Bristol Channel Port Office, Cardiff, Wales; transit to and from conference was by special bus under guard of Royal Marines and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority: WND 750161



(C) Action and contact with enemy: None.

(D) General Resume of Voyage( See (B) this report.

(E) There were no written or verbal radio orders from foreign governments, except verbal and written advices from British Admiralty concerning channel crossing frequencies.

(F) Commercial Radio operators' procedure was in accordance with Wartime Instructions

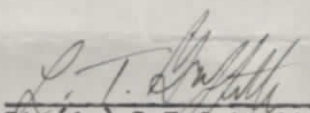
(G) Armament and equipment: No repairs or replacements needed.

(H) Master and officers complied with Wartime instructions for Naval Transportation in time of War.

(I) Recommendations: None.

(J) There was no improper procedure on the part of any friendly aircraft approaching the ship.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lt. (jg) L.T. Griffith, USNR.  
Armed Guard Commander,  
SS Abiel Foster.