

U.S. NAVAL PORT OFFICE
HAVELOCK CHAMBERS
SOUTHAMPTON, ENGLAND.

CONFIDENTIAL

7 0645

End--1
S.S. ABIEL FOSTER

21 June 1944.

71765

From: The U.S. Naval Port Officer, Southampton, England.
To : The Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department,
Washington, D.C.
Via : The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

1. Forwarded.

2. Re para (c). Investigation by Signal Officer attached to N.C.S.O. Southampton, had indicated that the Control Ship's radio was not functioning on 3400 K.C. This situation has since been corrected through Admiralty channels. This ship's Radio operator had been briefed by the above Signal Officer prior to departure and will be given latest instructions prior to each departure from this port. Armed Guard Officers are instructed to insure prompt transmission of pertinent information from radio operators.

D. J. Harvins
D. J. HARVINS

End--2

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

Serial 03836

CONFIDENTIAL

JUN 26 1944

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

1. Forwarded.

RECEIVED S-C FILES

23 Room 2055

DATE TO: 30 JUN 1944

File No. (SC) 04-3/Abiel Foster

Gen. No. _____

Spec. No. _____

File No. 13942

L. W. Cantrell
L. W. CANTRELL,
By direction.

LC
LW

ACD
ink

FROM: Officer-in-Charge, Armed Guard unit aboard SS Abiel Foster.

TO: Chief of Naval Operations

Via: (1.) U.S. Naval Port Office, Southampton.

(2.) The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe.

Subject: (A) Report of Turco Voyage of SS Abiel Foster (GB-Omaha and return)

Reference: (A) General instructions for Commanding Officers of Naval Armed Guards on Merchant Ships. L943 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: Army equipment and personell--Owner: W.S.A.--Operated by: Matson Navigation Lines.

(B) Port of DEparture: Southampton, England.

Time: 6-12-44 at 0230 Double British Summer Time.

Convoy: yes--No. of ships: 12 and numerous landing and small craft.

Escorts: 3 to 5 observed at all times--Speed of Convoy: course and speed frequently altered by commodore, average 8.5 knots.

Port of Arrival: Omaha Beach, France--Time: 6-14-44 at 1930 Double British Summer Time.

(C) Contacts and Action with enemy: action observed and experienced:

In convoy, June 14-44--Cond. 1. from 1330 to 1500. Two patterns of 5 and 3 depth charges, respectively, were tossed by destroyer escorting on Starboard beam at 1200 yards.

June 15, at Omaha, Cond. 1. from 0115 to 0325--Enemy Air Raid. (own ship's position: inside breakwater, 1500 yards offshore.) Enemy planes were over ship occasionally, but out of range. Did not open fire--awaited signal on RT--from naval control which did not come. (Wavelengths were being used by shore batteries and Naval Craft--did not include any warning or instructions for merchant ships--resulting in indiscriminate firing from majority of merchant ships assembled, as well as small craft) No Casualties.

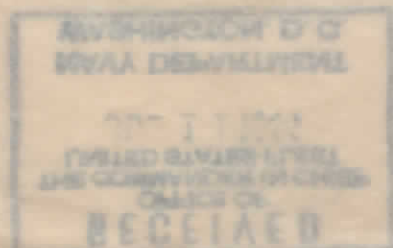
June 16, at Omaha, Cond. 1. from 0045 to 0200, Enemy Air Raid. (own ship's position: 5 miles offshore in outer anchorage awaiting outgoing convoy. RT reports intercepted which stated that at 3 different times 3 enemy planes were shot down. (No message for merchant ships.) This ship withheld gun-fire--out of range. Flares, tracer and heavy gun fire observed on all quarters at distances varying from 3 to 7 miles. Light flak fell on deck of this ship on all quarters. No Casualties. The return voyage was uneventful.

COMMENTS

(1.) 30 and 50 cal. slugs fell on deck while in convoy, morning of June 14 at 1030. Opinion: firing emanated either from unseen plane clearing guns or from small arms fire among troops on ships in convoy.

(2.) RT service was nil for this ship before or during air raids for opening and ceasing fire, contrary to advices from Lt. Lewis, RN, who installed set and U.S. Naval Port Director, Southampton.

Lt. (j.g.) Louis T. Griffith, USNR.
Armed Guard Officer, SS Abiel Foster.



7 0645

Reference: (S) General Information (S) General Information (S) General Information
Subject: (V) Report of Intelligence of SS Abel Foster (SS-4444 and 1st Lt.)
(S) The Commander, U.S. Navy Forces in Europe.
At: (T) U.S. Navy Force Office, Southampton.
To: Chief of Navy Operations
From: Officer-in-Charge, Armed Guard Unit aboard SS Abel Foster.

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Comments continued:

(3.) On the occasions of the air raids at Omaha on June 15 and 16-44-ships on all quarters fired at targets apparently unseen. (No planes of any nature were downed.) Bombing on shore was evident, but no bombs were observed to fall in water. There is evidently not an adequate system of warning yet in force to ships at anchor and useless gunfire will continue until such a system is so arranged.

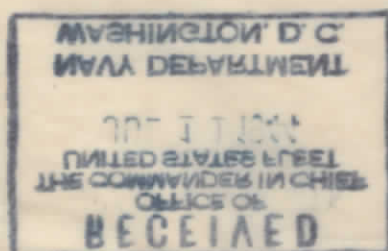
Opinion: If this practice continues, falling flak or unexploded large calibre shells will cause injury to friendly ships and personell. A definite policy should be established indicating desire of Naval Control as to whether ships at anchor shall put up a protective barrage at unseen targets or shall hold fire--pending adequate warnings of impending enemy attack.

(4.) In two trips to the French beachheads, radio reception has been nil as regards to convoy or ship operation in any phase. The stated wavelengths have contained not one word of information helpful to merchant ships.

(5.) Convoy procedure is poorly observed; conning a ship is rendered difficult and dangerous.

Respectfully submitted,

Louis T. Griffith
Lt.(j.g.) Louis T. Griffith, USNR.
Armed Guard Officer, SS Abel Foster.



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