

52704

FIRST ENDORSEMENT

U.S. Naval Liaison Office,  
Antofagasta, Chile

September 12, 1942.

CONFIDENTIAL

From: The U.S. Naval Liaison Officer.  
To : The Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.

Subject: Report of Voyage of S/S ABIEL FOSTER from Sydney, Australia, to  
Antofagasta, Chile.

1. Forwarded.

LT 776

*[Signature]*  
L. E. GILBERT

RECEIVED S-C FILES

Room 2155

SEP 21 1942

ROUTE TO- 23

Op File No. (SC) A4-3/Abiel Foster

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SEP 21 1942  
NAVY DEPARTMENT

ARMED GUARD UNIT  
S.S. ABIEL FOSTER  
ARMED GUARD CENTER(PACIFIC)  
TREASURE ISLAND  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

CONFIDENTIAL

11 September 1942

From: Commanding Officer, Armed Guard Unit, S.S. ABIEL FOSTER.

To: The Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department,  
Washington, D.C.

Via: The Naval Attache, Antofagasta, Chile.

Subject: Report of Voyage of S.S. ABIEL FOSTER from Sydney,  
Australia, to Antofagasta, Chile.

Reference: General Instructions for Commanding Officers of Naval  
Armed Guard Units Aboard Merchant Vessels,  
Paragraph 38.

1. Departure Sydney, Australia, 19 July 1942 at 1725,  
sailing singly on an evasive southerly course to  
port of destination carrying a cargo of 1,000  
tons of lead. Arrival Point Lonsdale, Melbourne,  
Australia, 21 July 1942 at 2120. Time of passage  
2 days, 3 hours and 55 minutes. Average speed 11.36  
knots. Distance 590 miles.  
Departure Point Lonsdale, Melbourne, Australia, 25  
July 1942 at 2345, following an evasive northerly  
course in a convoy of fifteen merchantmen with an  
escort of three Corvettes of the Royal Australian  
Navy, carrying a cargo of 200 officers and men of  
the Royal Australian Air Force and their equipment.  
26 July 1942 the convoy was joined by one Destroyer  
of the R.A.N. At various irregular intervals an Allied  
Bomber would circle the convoy.  
28 July 1942 at 2330, eight merchantmen and one corvette  
left the convoy for Sydney, Australia. 29 July 1942 at 0700,  
three merchantmen and one corvette left convoy for New-  
castle, Australia.  
30 July 1942 at 2320, General Alarm was sounded as the  
escort vessel was firing depth charges. A total of  
seven were fired, but this officer was never able to  
get any information from the Australian Navy regarding  
the details or the results of the activity. Position  
was 26-21 South and 153-45 East. True course 345. Speed  
10.5 knots.  
31 July 1942 at 1100 one merchantman and one Destroyer  
left convoy for Gladstone, Australia. 31 July 1942 at 2145  
General Alarm sounded as white and greenish flares were  
seen. One white flare was seen on the port beam and one  
greenish-white flare was seen on the starboard beam. The  
escort vessel investigated the activity, but no report was

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2136: General Alarm sounded. Course changed to 239 degrees true. Speed increased to flank speed.

2215: Resumed original course and speed. Course 079 true and speed of 12.5 knots.

Arrival Antofagasta, Chile, 10 September 1942 at 0500. Time of passage 26 days and 1 hour. Distance 7806 miles. Average speed 12.51 knots.

2. The commercial radio operator carried out all war time radio instructions. No confidential messages were intercepted.
3. The master and officers as a whole co-operated very well and carried out "INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAVAL TRANSPORTATION AND U.S. MERCHANT VESSELS IN TIME OF WAR".
4. It is recommended that the flagstaff be moved from its present position at the stern post to a position forward of the gun deck. Its present position impedes the work of the pointer and trainer, and should a projectile hit the flagstaff, the result may be fatal to the entire gun crew.
5. THE S.S. ABIEL FOSTER is an EC-2 U.S. MARITIME COMMISSION "LIBERTY" SHIP of 7,176 gross tons, and is operated by MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY.
6. This officer was amazed by the lack of discipline, initiative and cleanliness on the part of the merchant crew. Their conduct had a bad effect upon the Naval gun crew as they are mostly all young men and this being their first voyage. Nothing more could be desired in regards to co-operation on the part of the merchant crew, as they were ever ready to give assistance to the Navy gun crew. If their moral conduct would only improve, the situation would be ideal.

*Frederic Lynn Bailey*  
Frederic Lynn BAILEY  
Ensign, D-V (G), USNR.