

Op-23-L-2

ARMED GUARD UNIT

Pl6-5

S.S. ABIGAIL ADAMS

ARMED GUARD CENTER (PACIFIC)

Treasure Island

San Francisco, California

CONFIDENTIAL

July 1, 1943

From: Lieut. (jg) John H. Todd, D-V(S), U.S.N.R.
Commanding Officer, Naval Armed Guard
c/o Armed Guard Center (Pacific)
S.S. Abigail Adams. Gross Tons: 7,176.

To: The Vice Chief of Naval Operations

Via: U. S. Naval Liason Officer, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Subject: Report of Voyage, S.S. Abigail Adams,
from San Francisco, Calif. to Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Reference: (a) General Instructions for Commanding Officers of Naval
Armed Guards on Merchant Ships, Paragraph 4301.

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following information is submitted:

- (a) Type of vessel: Cargo (EC 2 "Liberty")
Owner of vessel: U.S.A., represented by War Shipping Administration.
Chartered to: De La Rama Steamship Company, Inc.
- (b) Port of departure: San Francisco, California. Date: June 5, 1943.
Convoyed or independent: Independent.
Speed (Aver.): 10.7 Knots.
Number of escort vessels or aircraft: None.
Port of arrival: Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. Date: July 1, 1943.
- (c) Contacts and action with the enemy: None.
- (d) General resume of voyage:

Average speed of vessel: 10.7 knots. Lights shown: None.
Vessel zig-zagged in accordance with instructions.

Sailed, 1300, June 5, 1943. Sea watch set, including ten
naval enlisted personnel passengers.
0430, June 6, 1943, sighted unidentified Liberty ship on parallel course, 6 miles distant, three points on port quarter.
1630, June 6, 1943, sighted unidentified Liberty ship on opposite course, 8 miles distant, to port.
June 7, 1943, issued gas masks and helmets to ship's company and passengers, obtaining receipts.
June 10, 1943, read to crew Articles for the Government of the Navy.

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1215, June 14, 1943, sighted unidentified steamship 10 miles distant on port beam, on opposite course

1500, June 17, 1943, sighted unidentified steamship, large tanker, 5-1/2 miles distant, to southeast, on opposite course.

0910 (and throughout the day), June 21, 1943, sighted numerous oil slicks, apparently old, of various shapes and sizes, - some two miles long.

0530 (and throughout the day), June 23, 1943, sighted numerous oil slicks, similar to those sighted June 21st.

0340, June 24, 1943, sighted unidentified warship (appeared to be a large destroyer or a small cruiser). Appeared out of rain 1000 yards distant, broad on port quarter. Challenged us with flashing light. We responded with secret identification signal and received proper response (after repeatedly asking for it). Warship asked, and we gave, international call sign, name of ship, port of departure, port of destination, course, and speed. We then received message "proceed". Meanwhile, general alarm was sounded, and battle stations were manned upon sighting of the warship until twenty minutes after warship steamed out of sight after advising us to proceed.

1620, June 27, 1943, sighted unidentified Liberty ship, 9 miles distant, broad on port bow, on opposite course.

0935, June 30, 1943, sighted destroyer and aircraft carrier, 9 miles distant, broad on ~~port~~ quarter (starboard). Destroyer and aircraft carrier zig-zagged in and out of sight throughout most of the day. At 1140 the destroyer challenged us. We sent secret identification signal. Destroyer continued challenge. We sent international call sign. This procedure was repeated with the destroyer and with the aircraft carrier. Although we twice received the proper response to our secret identification signal, both ships repeatedly challenged AA AA AA, although we had previously given our international call sign, and although each time we signaled that we were ready to receive any message they might have for us. This ceased only when both ships disappeared over the horizon for the last time, about 1500.

0835 ~~1040~~, July 1, 1943, sighted large unidentified flying boat approaching from two points off port bow. General alarm sounded. All hands manned battle stations. Plane passed, 2000 feet up, close aboard, without altering course.

1040, July 1, 1943, sighted large, unidentified, 4-masted steamship (camouflaged), 10 miles distant, broad on port bow, on opposite course.

1122 (and several times later in day), July 1, 1943, patrol craft sighted, first 7 miles distant, broad on starboard bow, and later on various bearings and at various distances, all over 4 miles.

(e) There was no delay in port due to lack of port facilities.

(f) Commercial radio operator appeared to carry out wartime radio instructions for merchant vessels, - with respect to keeping intercepted messages confidential, and otherwise.

(g) Defects or deficiencies: (1) In location or arrangements of battery, None; (2) In equipment as regards materiel, Should have ~~bore~~ gage and lapping out head for 3 inch 50 Cal. gun. Should have additional general alarm bells in fire room, and forward and aft on main deck; (3) In equipment as

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regards personnel, Naval personnel is insufficient to maintain fully efficient lookout watches on 24-hour basis, or effectively to man armament now installed on board (1 officer, 2 signalmen, 1 GM 3/c, 12 S 1/c; 1 3-inch 50 Cal. gun and 9 20 MM machine guns).

(h) Master and officers of the ship did appear to carry out "Wartime Instructions for United States Merchant Vessels", with the one exception that at 1400 on June 30, 1943, at sea, the tubes were blown in bright daylight, causing dense black smoke.

(i) Recommendations tending to the improvement or greater efficiency of this service: 1. Increased naval personnel for gun crews. 2. More thorough Naval indoctrination of enlisted Naval personnel.

(j) Improper procedure on the part of friendly aircraft approaching the vessel: None, except for the unidentified flying boat, sighted at 0835, July 1, 1943 (see above), which is assumed to have been friendly. Due to clouds and glare, its identification marks, if any, could not be seen.

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