

Op-23L-JH  
(SC) S76-3  
Serial 097923

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

March 30, 1942

CONFIDENTIAL

From: The Secretary of the Navy.

To: Master M.S. ABIGAIL GIBBONS Gross Tons.  
S.S. \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: Instructions for Scuttling Merchant Ships.

1. It is the policy of the United States Government that no U. S. Flag merchant ship be permitted to fall into the hands of the enemy.

2. The ship shall be defended by her armament, by maneuvers, and by every available means as long as possible. When, in the judgment of the Master, capture is inevitable, he shall scuttle the ship. Provision should be made to open sea valves, and to flood holds and compartments adjacent to machinery spaces, start numerous fires and employ any additional measures available to insure certain scuttling of the vessel.

3. In case the Master is relieved of command of his ship, he shall transfer this letter to his successor, and obtain a receipt for it.

/s/ FRANK KNOX

*H. R. Keller*  
H. R. KELLER  
Port Director  
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Savannah, Georgia  
Port

Received 25 October 1944  
Date  
*W. B. [Signature]*  
S/S ABIGAIL GIBBONS  
Master

Copy to: VCNO

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations  
FLEET MAINTENANCE  
27 OCT 1944  
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*V.C.C.*