

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

21 April, 1944

OFFICE
DISTRICT COAST GUARD OFFICER
FOURTH NAVAL DISTRICT

6614

21 April, 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Subj: Suspected sabotage aboard Ship No. 74, (ARTIGAS),
Pan-American, docked at Pier 100 South; investi-
gation of

SUMMARY

A report of suspected sabotage aboard Ship No. 74 docked at Pier 100 south was reported to F. L. WHITE, Sea.lc., VPSF, at 1030 on 17 April, 1944 by F. MEYERS, foreman for A. Moe and Company. Meyers' suspicions were aroused due to the fact that at 1800 on 16 April, 1944 he departed the ship after making repairs to the port and starboard winches at No. 2 hatch; that when he returned at 0830 on 17 April, 1944 he discovered the piston rod on the starboard winch disconnected; that the port winch was completely loosened. However, subsequent investigation established the fact that the winches had been altered by crew members of the ship. There was no indication of sabotage.

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

1. F. L. WHITE, Sea.lc., VPSF, was interviewed and stated that while on duty aboard subject ship on 17 April, 1944, a Francis MEYERS, foreman for A. Moe and Company (ship's repair company) came to him at 1030 and reported sabotage of ship's winches at No. 2 hatch. This information was transmitted to W. CHERRY, B.M.lc., VPSF, at 1050. At approximately 1400, it was reported to Boatswain VENZIE, VPSF, who telephoned same to Lieutenant (jg) W. C. BIELUCH, USCGR, Duty Officer.

2. Francis MEYERS, 434 West Norris Street, Philadelphia, Pa., foreman for A. Moe and Company, 122 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, Pa., was interviewed and stated that his company has been making repairs to the port and starboard winches at the No. 2 hatch on subject ship; that on 16 April, 1944, they had completed repairs on the port winch. However, before finally tightening all parts of this winch so that it could be placed in satisfactory operation, it is customary to obtain the approval of the Chief Engineer. MEYERS' crew departed the ship at 1800

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1880 - 20 FEBRUARY 1944. Location HARBOR

on 16 April, 1944 without obtaining this approval due to the Chief Engineer being ashore. When MEYERS and his crew returned to the ship at 0830 on 17 April, 1944 they discovered that the piston rod on the starboard winch had been disconnected and that the port winch has been completely loosened. He further stated that if the discovery had not been made on the starboard winch and if the steam was turned on it would completely wreck the winch and possibly severely injure the operator; that these discoveries were reported to one of the volunteer port security men on duty aboard the ship at 0900.

3. Charles DEVRIENDT, oiler aboard subject ship, was interviewed and stated that Ernest PISTON, 4th Engineer, who was the engineering officer from 1600 on 16 April, to 1800 on 17 April, 1944, called on him at midnight on 16 April, 1944 to assist in repairing the port winch at the No. 2 hatch; that steam was escaping freely from this winch; that to make the necessary repairs it was necessary for him to disconnect the piston rod on the starboard winch in order to obtain the packing gland from it; that this packing gland was used on the port winch to halt the escaping steam. DEVRIENDT readily admitted disconnecting the piston rod and failing to connect same after he had obtained the packing gland; that the stevedore had been operating the port winch during the evening of 16 April, 1944, and continued to do so until he went off duty on 0800 on 17 April, 1944.

4. It was ascertained that the Union Stevedoring Company, who are working the subject ship, started to operate the port winch at No. 2 hatch when the night gang started working at 1900 on 17 April, 1944. Due to the winch not being completely secured the vibration caused various parts to become loosened thereby permitting an excessive escape of steam. The deck engineer attempted to rectify the condition. The required parts were not available in the ship's store room with the result that DEVRIENDT substituted the required parts from the starboard winch.

Seals used

Transmitters:

TYPE

HIGH FREQUENCY

T. E. Flatley
T. E. FLATLEY
Investigator

200 WATTS

Manufacturer

F. T. C.

166 A

Freq. Calibration

18, 24, 30, 48, 64 WATTS

Condition

X

Sealed

Not sealed

Not sealed

Seals used