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ADDRESS REPLY TO
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1945 MAY 12 PM 3
MERCHANT MARINE
INSPECTION DIVISION
1945 MAY 26 PM 3 18

5 May, 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

To: The Commandant (INT)
Subj: SS BERING; main circulation pump, alleged sabotage of
Ref: Headquarters Central Pacific Base Command, CONFIDENTIAL letter dated 28 April, 1945

The inclosed copy of above Reference is forwarded herewith for the information of Headquarters.

F. K. Johnson
F. K. JOHNSON
Asst. DCGO

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HEADQUARTERS CENTRAL PACIFIC BASE COMMAND

Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence
JHR/spsCounter Intelligence Division
Box 3 APO 456

In reply refer to:

SUBJECT: "SS BERING"
Alaska Packers Association

To : Distribution

1. Investigation was initiated upon receipt of information that sabotage was indicated by mechanical difficulty aboard the "SS BERING", an Alaska Packers Association bottom which had arrived in Honolulu on 7 April 1945 under a War Shipping Administration contract. The "BERING", carrying United States Army cargo, left Seattle, Washington, on 26 March 1945. After four days at sea, the main circulation pump failed to operate satisfactorily, necessitating substitution of the auxiliary pump and delaying the ship for one and a half days.

2. Upon inspection at Honolulu, the main circulation pump was found to have been damaged by a six-inch bolt which was lodged between the impeller and the casing of the pump. A three and one-half inch bolt and a thirteen-inch shackle were found at the bottom of the casing. Evidence indicates that at least one bolt and the shackle were dropped into the condenser head while the ship was undergoing repair at the Todd Shipbuilding Corporation, Seattle, Washington, prior to this voyage.

3. Investigation has revealed no evidence to indicate sabotage by any crew member. It appears that the articles were dropped into the condenser head through negligence or with subversive intent by some person at the Todd Shipbuilding yards, Seattle, Washington.

4. No further action is contemplated by this office, and the case is referred to the Director, Intelligence and Security Division, Headquarters, Ninth Service Command, for any action deemed advisable.

BYRON M. MEURLOTT
Lt. Col., M. I.
Asst. A.C. of S., G-2 (CID)

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HEADQUARTERS CENTRAL PACIFIC BASE COMMAND

Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence
LEM/sps

Counter Intelligence Division

Box 3 APO 456

In reply refer to:

"SS BERING" - MAIN CIRCULATION PUMP
Honolulu, T.H.
16 April 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE:

1. On 11 April, 1945, this office was advised by the Provost Marshal Investigation Section, Headquarters Army Port and Service Command, APO 455, that the "SS BERING" had arrived in Honolulu with evidence of sabotage. Subsequent investigation revealed that the "BERING" is owned by the Alaska Packers Association and is now under contract to the War Shipping Administration. It arrived in Honolulu, T.H., from Seattle, Washington, on 7 April 1945, bearing Army cargo.

2. In an interview with Olaf T. THORSON, Chief Engineer aboard the vessel on 11 April 1945, it was ascertained that the "BERING" had left Seattle on 26 March 1945 and, after four days at sea, had had difficulty with the circulation pump on the main condenser. They were therefore forced to use the auxiliary pump and consequently the ship was one and a half days late in reaching Honolulu. Upon arrival at Pier 39, an examination of the pump system was made. On 10 April, a bolt, 3/4 inch wide by 6 inches long, was found lodged between the impeller and the casing. Upon further examination, on 12 April, another bolt, 3/4 inch wide by 3 1/2 inches long with 3/4 inch hex nut, and also a standard 1 inch wide by 13 inches long shackle were found on the bottom of the casing. (SEE EXHIBIT I) Evidence of fresh graphite and grease on the screw threads of the shackle indicated that the shackle had been used recently. The nut and bolts, rusty and disfigured, may have been dropped into the pump at the same time as the shackle, or may have been lying a long time on the casing floor as the ship is about twenty-five years old.

It was learned from Mr. THORSON that the "BERING" had previously been at the Todd Shipbuilding Corp. for repairs. An inspection of the Engineer's log showed that the vessel had gone into drydock on February 9th with a Chief Engineer, a 1st, 2nd and 3rd Asst. Engineer still aboard, all of whom left the ship in Seattle except George HABERMAN, 2nd Asst. Engineer, who is with the present crew.

Lewis E. Menechino, Special Agent, CIC, CPBC.

Lewis E. Menechino, Special Agent, CIC, CPBC.

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Honolulu, T. H.

3. George HABERMAN indicated, on 13 April, 1945, that he had been hired with the crew that came on at San Francisco, California, and that this crew had been paid off at Seattle, Washington, when the ship went into drydock at Todd Shipyards. The repairs done in the Engine Room and throughout the boat had been done by Todd ship-workers. HABERMAN stated that the "BERING" moved to Pier 2, West Seattle, around 9 March, and to Pier 37 on 17 March. He indicated that repairs in the Engine Room were done by plumbers, welders, machinists, burners, cleaners, pipefitters and riggers.

4. Examination of Todd work orders reveal the following repairs done around the main circulation pump in the Engine Room:

"12 February - Work Order No. X-7493 - Entry No. 14 - Main Condenser: Remove heads, clean and blow tubes, remove marine growth, paint heads and water box with Apexior #3, test and close up"

"14 February - Work Order No. X-7491 - Main Circulator: On Engine part adjusted main bearings, cross heads, crank pins, bearing to proper clearance."

"16 February - Work Order No. X-7491 - Entry No. 45 - Main Condenser: Renew plugged tubes from spares aboard vessel. Dress off corroded bosses on heads for distance pieces and renew deteriorated distance pieces."

The work orders indicate that the main condenser head was completely taken apart. THORSON and HABERMAN are of the opinion that the shackle found on the pump bottom was used to lift the condenser head and that the 6 inch bolt was used in putting the copper tubes into place, while the three inch bolt was the type used to fit into the condenser head. It is also the opinion of the engineers that one of the workers dropped the shackle and bolts into the condenser head by accident. It is believed that the shackle stayed at the bottom because it was heavy, while the bolt, being lighter, was drawn up toward the impeller region by the action of the water which passes into the discharge pipes. (SEE EXHIBIT I) HABERMAN suggested that the worker responsible was either of the belief that the tool would stay at the bottom and not cause any damage, or else did not "have enough guts" to report the accident, since it would have taken an extra two days' job to remove the shackle and bolts from the bottom of the pump.

Lewis E. Menechino, Special Agent, CIC, CPBC.

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When the present crew boarded the "BERING" the engines were already going, and it is impossible for anyone to have dropped the shackle and bolts into the inspection plates while the engine was going, as they can not be opened without letting sea water into the room. Actual damage to the pump, besides delay in the ship's travel to Honolulu, amounts to approximately \$1.500 for repair of the impeller and casing.

AGENT'S NOTE: Any further investigation which is believed necessary should be conducted at Seattle, Washington.

Forwarded:

Reviewed and Approved:

BYRON M. MEURLOTT
Lt. Col., M. I.
Asst. A.C. of S.,G-2 (CID)

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