

CONFIDENTIAL

DISTRICT COAST GUARD OFFICE
FIFTH NAVAL DISTRICT
(INTELLIGENCE OFFICE)

SUMMARY REPORT

Subject SS BERWINGLEN: investigation of alleged firing upon

File No. _____ Date: 27 May 1943

Report Made By: C. L. ADAMS, Elec, USCG

Status of Case: Investigation in 5ND completed

Origin of Case:
Memorandum DIO-5ND to C.G. Intelligence Officer, 5ND,
12 February, 1943.

Investigation reports included in this summary:

- C.G. Intelligence report - 27 May, 1943
- Investigation report - DCGO-4ND to DCGO-5ND - 15 March, 1943
- Investigation report - DCGO-4ND to DCGO-5ND - 18 May, 1943

Enclosures:	Copy to:	Headquarters <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
C.G. Intelligence report		File
Reports DCGO-4ND to DCGO-5ND		
Letters DCGO-5ND to DCGO-4ND-2/23/43-5/1/43		
Memo DIO-5ND to C.G. Intelligence Office, 5ND- 2/12/43		

SUMMARY:

Statements of crew-members SS BERWINDGLEN do not coincide
with statements of crew-members of CG-42026.

(See reports attached)

Approved:

C. C. Paden
C. C. PADEN, Comdr. USCG.
Intelligence Officer

Acting

*File
noted
6.3.43*

DISTRICT COAST GUARD OFFICE
FIFTH NAVAL DISTRICT
(INTELLIGENCE OFFICE)

Norfolk, Virginia,
27 May, 1943.

CONFIDENTIAL

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION:

Subject: SS BERWINDGLEN; alleged firing upon - 10
February, 1943, investigation of.

ORIGIN

This investigation is predicated upon a memorandum from Lt. Comdr. D. E. Lithgow, U.S.N.R. - DIO-5ND to Intelligence Officer, U.S. Coast Guard, Norfolk, Virginia.

VERIFICATION OF ALLEGATIONS

On 29 April, 1943 the following members of the crew of the SS BERWINDGLEN were interviewed: Master Carl Thomas, crew-member R. O. Shipley, and crew-member Roy Gravely.

Mr. Carl Thomas, Master of the BERWINDGLEN, stated that he remembered the episode of 10 February, 1943 at which time he was 1st officer, the Master being Mr. C. H. Rowding (Mr. Rowding had been relieved of the command of the BERWINDGLEN and given another assignment and was not available for questioning). Mr. Thomas further stated that at about sunset on 10 February, 1943, he was on the bridge of the BERWINDGLEN and at this time he heard two or three bursts of gun-firing; that he was looking dead ahead and saw tracer bullets passing across the bow of the BERWINDGLEN from Port to Starboard; that at this time he saw a patrol boat about 3/4 of a mile to the eastward; that the BERWINDGLEN was stopped and swung in a circle; that the patrol boat approached to about 50 yards of the BERWINDGLEN and called to the BERWINDGLEN something in regards to putting on the lights (Mr. Thomas not sure of just what was said); that the BERWINDGLEN was still making slight headway and the patrol boat having drifted astern, then attempted to turn and come alongside the BERWINDGLEN again, but got under-way and departed toward Mc Crie Shoal Buoy; that the patrol boat was a cabin-cruiser, about 50 feet long, having a machine gun mounted forward; that the log of the BERWINDGLEN showed the exact time of the incident as 1830 o'clock, weather clear, smooth sea; that during the excitement he (Mr. Thomas) did not note the designation number of the patrol boat; that the position of the BERWINDGLEN could be fixed by the following true-bearings from the ship - McCries Shoal Buoy 268°, Hereford Inlet Light

DCGO-5ND

Norfolk, Virginia,
27 May, 1943.

355° , and Cape May Light 303°.

Crew-member R. O. Shipley stated that he was on the bridge and standing alongside Mr. Thomas (then first officer) at about sunset on 10 February, 1943, at which time he heard the two or three bursts of firing; that he was looking dead ahead and saw tracer bullets passing across the bow of the BERWINDGLEN from Port to Starboard; that he then ran aft to the deck gun and ordered the gun crew to un-limber the gun and prepare to load and fire if necessary; that the visibility was good, but dusk was approaching; that he saw the patrol boat off the port bow about one-half mile; that the BERWINDGLEN made a 180° turn and the patrol boat approached to within hailing distance, at which time Captain Rowding hailed the patrol boat and asked what was wanted; that the patrol boat called back something that was not understood, then drifted astern, got underway shortly afterward, and departed.

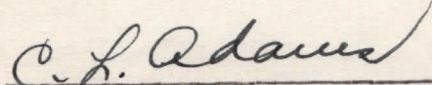
Crew-member Roy Graveley stated that he was on look-out duty early in the evening of 10 February, 1943 and heard shooting at a distance and noticed some little red things flying past and slightly above the bow of the ship; that he saw a small patrol boat approaching from the east; that the ship swung about and the patrol boat came alongside; that the patrol boat called something to the BERWINDGLEN but he (Graveley) could not understand what was said; that he saw a number on the patrol boat but could not remember what the number was; that he saw only one gun on the patrol boat, a machine gun mounted forward

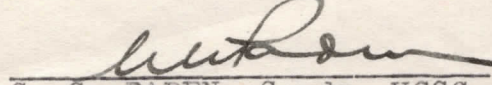
EVALUATION

Statements by the interviewed crew-members of the BERWINDGLEN appear to agree that tracer-bullets from a patrol boat did pass across the bow of the ship at the time and date mentioned. No damage was suffered by the BERWINDGLEN, the bullets apparently not passing very close. It appears that no one of the crew of the BERWINDGLEN gave much attention to the designation number of the patrol boat at the time it was alongside the BERWINDGLEN.

REPORT MADE BY:

APPROVED AND REVIEWED:


C. L. ADAMS, Elec. USCG.


C. C. PADEN, Comdr. USCG.

2
c.p.

IOF-123-CONFIDENTIAL

Norfolk, Va.

1 May, 1943

C O N F I D E N T I A L

From: DCGO 5th ND.
To: DCGO 4th ND.

Subject: Investigation of alleged firing on SS BERWINDGLEN, 10 Feb 1943

Reference: (a) DCGO 5ND letter to DCGO 4ND 23 Feb. 1943 (IOF-123) CONFIDENTIAL.
(b) DCGO-4ND letter to DCGO 5ND, 15 March, 1943 (IOF-123) Confidential.

1. In accordance with reference (b), paragraph two, the following additional information has been obtained from the crew members of the SS BERWINDGLEN: The patrol boat which fired on the BERWINDGLEN was a cabin cruiser approximately 50 feet in length, armed with one machine gun mounted in forward deck. Due to the excitement, none of the crew of the BERWINDGLEN is positive of the correct number of the patrol boat, but the number 47 was noticed and may be only a portion of the designated patrol boat number. The position of the BERWINDGLEN at the time of Subject incident may be fixed by the following true bearings; McCries Shoal Whistle Buoy bearing 268° from ship, Hereford Inlet Light bearing 355° from ship, and Cape May Light bearing 302° from ship.

2. It is requested that further investigation be made to determine the identity of the patrol boat present in the area mentioned, and the reasons for its alleged firing upon the BERWINDGLEN, and that a complete report be forwarded to this office.

/s/ G. T. FINLAY.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Philadelphia, Pa.,
15 March, 1943.

11 March, 1943.

From: District Coast Guard Officer, 4th Naval District.

To: District Coast Guard Officer, 5th Naval District.

Subject: Investigation of alleged firing on S. S. BERWINDGLEN, 10 February, 1943.

Reference: (a) Conf. letter, DCGO 5ND to DCGO 4ND, 23 February, 1943 (IOF-123).
(b) Conf. letter, DCGO 4ND to CO, CG Repair Base, Cape May, N. J., 25 February, 1943 (IOF-123).
(c) Conf. letter, CO, CG Repair Base, Cape May, N. J., to DCGO 4ND, 11 March, 1943 (601-IOF-123).

Enclosure: (A) Copy of Reference (b).
(B) Copy of Reference (c).

1. Your letter, Reference (a), requesting an inquiry into the subject matter was transmitted to the Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Repair Base, Cape May, New Jersey, for action, Reference (b), Enclosure (A). That Officer's reply, Reference (c), Enclosure (B), is forwarded for your information.

2. Should a more positive identification of the vessel involved be obtained, it is requested that this office be notified of the facts.

/s/ F. B. HARKER,
By direction.

COPY

C O P Y

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
COAST GUARD REPAIR BASE
CAPE MAY, N. J.

OFFICE
DISTRICT COAST GUARD OFFICER
FOURTH NAVAL DISTRICT

Philadelphia, Pa.
25
11 March, 1943.

From: Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Repair Base,
To: District Coast Guard Officer, Fourth Naval
District, N. J.

Subject: Investigation of alleged firing on S. S.
BERWINDGLEN, 10 February, 1943.

Reference: (a) Conf. letter, DCGO, 5ND to DCGO, 4ND, 23
February, 1943.
(b) DCGO letter 25 February, 1943, IOF-123-

Enclosure: (A) CONFIDENTIAL.

1. As requested in Reference (b) we have ascertained the location of all patrol vessels operating from Cape May, N. J. which were out at the time of the S. S. BERWINDGLEN reported having been ordered to heave to. We have established that none of the vessels were in the vicinity at the time.

2. It is noted in Reference (a) that the S. S. BERWINDGLEN reported the patrol vessel to have been the CG-47. There is no such vessel operating from Cape May Coast Guard Repair Base. We gave special attention to vessels whose numbers might have been confused with CG-47, but in each case these vessels were in no respect nearby the area in which the S. S. BERWINDGLEN was stopped.

3. An investigation was also made to determine the proximity of Navy vessels on stated date. None were in the neighborhood at the time. ✓

/s/ R. J. WALSH.

C O P Y

C O P Y

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

OFFICE
DISTRICT COAST GUARD OFFICE
FOURTH NAVAL DISTRICT

Philadelphia, Pa.,
25 February, 1943.

23 February, 1943.

From: District Coast Guard Officer, 4th Naval District.
To: Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Repair Base, Cape May, N. J.

Subject: Investigation of alleged firing on S. S. BERWINDGLEN, 10 February, 1943.

Reference: (a) Conf. letter, DCGO, 5ND to DCGO, 4ND, 23 February, 1943.

Enclosure: (A) Copy of Reference (a).

1. It has been reported to this office that on 10 February, 1943, a vessel was sighted in the vicinity of the 4th Naval District. It is requested that the Subject matter, as set forth in Reference (a), Inclosure (A), be investigated to the extent of determining the identity of the vessel concerned. In the event Coast Guard responsibility is developed, secure statements covering the incident, but if a Navy boat is concerned, simply report that fact.

2. If any assistance is required in investigating this matter, you may contact this office and the Intelligence Officer will cooperate.

2. The reported facts indicate that the firing took place within the 4th Naval District. /s/ F. B. HARKER,
By direction.

3. It is requested that an investigation be made to determine whether any patrol boat attached to your district or any other district was present in the area mentioned at the above named time, and the reasons for its alleged firing upon the BERWINDGLEN.

4. It is further requested that the investigation be expedited, and that two copies of the report be forwarded to this office.

C O P Y

/s/ G. T. FINLAY

C O P Y

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
UNITED STATES COAST GUARDPost Office Box 540
Norfolk, Va.

23 February, 1943.

Office of District Coast Guard Officer, Fourth Naval District.
The District Coast Guard Officer at Guard Officer, Fifth Naval District.
Fifth Naval District.Investigation of alleged firing on SS BERWINDGLEN,
10 February, 1943.

From: District Coast Guard Officer, 5th Naval District. (Confidential).

To: District Coast Guard Officer, 4th Naval District. (Confidential).

Subject: Patrol Boat CG-47; investigation of alleged firing on
S/S BERWINDGLEN, 10 February, 1943.

Inclosures: (A) References (a) (b) and (c).

1. It has been reported to this office that on 10 February, 1943 at or about 1830 the Am. S/S BERWINDGLEN was proceeding from McCries Shoal Buoy to Buoy No. 6 in compliance with naval routing instructions. Upon nearing swept channel Buoy No. 4, a small patrol boat, reported to have been CG-47, was sighted. The Master of the BERWINDGLEN hoisted signals of identification, and when about a half mile away, the CG-47 opened up with machine gun fire coming close to the bow of the ship. After stopping the ship, the Master waited for a signal from the patrol boat. Receiving none, the BERWINDGLEN moved alongside the patrol boat. Someone from the patrol boat said something which was not clearly understood. The patrol boat then proceeded in another direction. The BERWINDGLEN proceeded to Hampton Roads. Captain, U. S. Coast Guard.

2. The reported facts indicate that the firing took place within the 4th Naval District.

3. It is requested that an investigation be made to determine whether any patrol boat attached to your district or any other district was present in the area mentioned at the above named time, and the reasons for its alleged firing upon the BERWINDGLEN.

4. It is further requested that the investigation be expedited, and that two copies of the report be forwarded to this office.

/s/ G. T. FINLAY

COAST GUARD REPAIR BASE

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

18 May, 1943.

14 May, 1943

From: Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Repair Base
 To: District Coast Guard Officer, Fourth Naval District.
 District Coast Guard Officer, Fifth Naval District.
 Subject: Investigation of alleged firing on SS BERWINDGLEN,
 10 February, 1943.

Reference: (a) DCGO 5th ND letter 23 February, 1943 (Confidential).
 (b) DCGO 5th ND letter 1 May, 1943 (Confidential).
 Reference: (c) CO Coast Guard Repair Base, Cape May, N. J., 14 May,
 1943 with inclosures (Confidential).
 Inclosures: (A) References (a) (b) and (c).

1. Inclosures are submitted for your information. It is apparent that the CG-42026 was conducting target practice at the time and place stated but was firing away from the ship. The master of the vessel was under the impression that the firing was in their direction which is understandable, as present conditions tend to place all seagoing personnel on edge and under nervous tension.

THOMPSON, Leonard J. (110-273) B.M.lc. (pro) USCG
 SILVER, David L. (564-926) Cox. USCGR
 FRALEY, Jeremiah J. (251-307) Cox. (pro) USCGR

/s/ E. A. COFFIN,
 Captain, U. S. Coast Guard.

Fraley had been assigned to sea duty only a short time and the crew was engaged in machine-gun practice to familiarize him with the gun. The firing took place after the SS BERWINDGLEN had been sighted astern and inshore of the CG-42026. The firing was directed to seaward and particular attention was given to not bring the merchant vessel within the range of fire.

2. Statements have been obtained from Thompson, enclosure (A) and Silver, enclosure (B). The other member of the crew, Fraley, was transferred from this base to Atlantic City and it has been learned that he has subsequently been transferred to the Camden Coast Guard Barracks, Camden, N.J.

3. Enclosure (C) represents charts which show the locations of Coast Guard vessels on 10 February, 1943.

/s/ R. J. WALSH

601-IOF-CONFIDENTIAL

COAST GUARD REPAIR BASE
 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
 U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION
 COAST GUARD BARRACKS
 CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY

12 May, 1943 14 May, 1943

From: Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Repair Base.
 To: District Coast Guard Officer, Fourth Naval District.
 From: THOMPSON, Leonard J. (110-273) B.M.lc.
 Subject: Investigation of alleged firing on SS BERWINDGLEN,
 10 February, 1943.
 Reference: (a) Your letter 3 May, 1943, #123 CONFIDENTIAL
 (b) Our letter 11 March, 1943 #601-IOF-#123 CONFIDENTIAL.

Reference: (A) Statement by THOMPSON, Leonard J. (110-273) B.M.lc.(pro)
 (B) Statement by SILVER, David L. (564-926) Cox. USCGR.
 (C) Three (3) charts showing locations of Coast Guard vessels
 on 10 February, 1943.

1. Our letter of 11 March, 1943, reference (b) stated that none of our vessels were in the vicinity of the SS BERWINDGLEN at the time she was allegedly fired upon 10 February, 1943. However, subsequent investigation has disclosed that the CG-42026 was proceeding from Coastal Picket Station #4, in the vicinity of Five Fathom Bank Light, to Cape May, N.J. with a crew of three men:

THOMPSON, Leonard J. (110-273) B.M.lc. (pro) USCG
 SILVER, David L. (564-926) Cox. USCGR
 FRALEY, Jeremiah J. (251-307) Cox. (pro) USCGR

2. Our tracer bullets could be easily seen by SS BERWINDGLEN. Fraley had been assigned to sea duty only a short time and the crew was engaged in machine-gun practice to familiarize him with the gun. The firing took place after the SS BERWINDGLEN had been sighted astern and inshore of the CG-42026. The firing was directed to seaward and particular attention was given to not bring the merchant vessel within the range of fire.

3. Statements have been obtained from Thompson, enclosure (A) and Silver, enclosure (B). The other member of the crew, Fraley, was transferred from this base to Atlantic City and it has been learned that he has subsequently been transferred to the Camden Coast Guard Barrack, Camden, N.J.

4. Enclosure (C) represents charts which show the locations of Coast Guard vessels on 10 February, 1943.

/s/ R. J. WALSH

CONFIDENTIAL

COPY

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

STATEMENT

COAST GUARD BARRACKS

Brigantine, N.J. 23 February, 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

12 May, 1943

MADE BY: David L. Silver (564-926) Cox, USCGHV, 5th Naval

PLACE: Coast Guard Repair Base, Cape May, N.J. (Building #10)

From: THOMPSON, Leonard J. (110-273) B.M.lc.

To: 1 Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Repair Base,
Cape May, N.J.Subject: Investigation of alleged firing on
SS BERWINDGLEN, 10 February, 1943.

1. On 10 February, 1943, I was officer in charge of C.G. 42026, Ex-ALBADOR, returning from ~~returning from~~ regular patrol duty on Coastal Picket Station #4. While underway, and in the vicinity of Buoy #6, Swept Channel, About 1630, conducted target practice with 30 cal. machine gun from bow using floating can as target. The SS BERWINDGLEN was inbound about five miles astern of us when we started target practice. When SS BERWINDGLEN was approximately one mile off, she left her course, worked over to C.G. 42026 and asked what the trouble was. We answered with blinker gun, identified ourselves and informed SS BERWINDGLEN that we had been engaged in target practice. Received no answer to first blinker message and repeated same message three time, again receiving no answer. SS BERWINDGLEN continued on her course while we were still repeating blinker message and we continued on our course to Cape May.

/s/ JOSEPH S. L. FLYNN, Y.lc.
2. Our tracer bullets could be easily seen by SS BERWINDGLEN lookouts, but at no time did tracers cross his bow and that ship was never in our line of fire or closer to our line of fire than one mile.

/s/ LEONARD J. THOMPSON

/s/ G. T. FLEAY

C O P Y

STATEMENT

23 February, 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

MADE BY: David L. Silver (564-926) Cox. USCGR., 5th Naval

PLACE: Coast Guard Repair Base, Cape May, N.J. (Building #10)

DATE: 12 May, 1943, 1150

Subject: Patrol Boat CG-47; investigation of alleged

The CG-42026, to which I was attached, was returning from a patrol on 10 February, 1943 at dusk. We had a new man aboard who was going to practice with the machine gun. We sighted the SS BERWINDGLEN. Approximately 15 minutes later, we started practice. The merchant vessel headed toward us. We stopped machine gun practice. The merchant vessel had been inshore of us and we were firing off-shore. She came alongside and inquired as to the reason for the firing and they were told that we had been practicing and told them to proceed, which they did. The merchant vessel was roughly southwest of us. We expended about one dozen rounds. The CG-42026, was returning to the base because of engine trouble and was proceeding rather slowly to Cape May, N.J. at the time of the incident.

The BERWINDGLEN moved alongside the patrol boat. Someone from the patrol boat said something which was not clearly understood. The patrol boat then proceeded in another direction. The BERWINDGLEN proceeded to Hampton Roads.

/s/ DAVID L. SILVER

Witness

2. The reported facts indicate that the firing took place on 10 February, 1943, at Cape May, N.J. Naval District.

/s/ JOSEPH S. L. FLYNN, Y.lc.

3. It is requested that an investigation be made to determine whether any patrol boat attached to your district or any other district was present in the area mentioned at the above named time, and the reasons for its alleged firing upon the BERWINDGLEN.

4. It is further requested that the investigation be expedited, and that two copies of the report thereon be forwarded to this office.

5. Witness return of this correspondence to this office is requested.

/s/ G. T. FINLAY

Lieut. Comdr., USNR,
Officer-in-Charge,
Commerce and Travel Section.

IOF-123-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FIFTH NAVAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE OFFICE
COMMERCE AND TRAVEL SECTION

23 February, 1943

MEMORANDUM TO: Intelligence Officer, U. S. Coast Guard,

From: District Coast Guard Officer, 5th Naval District.

To: District Coast Guard Officer, 4th Naval District.

Subject: Patrol Boat CG-47; investigation of alleged firing on S/S BERWINDGLEN, 10 February, 1943.

1. It has been reported to this office that on 10 February, 1943, at or about 1830 the Am. S/S BERWINDGLEN was proceeding from McCries Shoal Buoy to Buoy No. 6 in compliance with naval routing instructions. Upon nearing swept channel Buoy No. 4, a small patrol boat, reported to have been CG-47, was sighted. The Master of the BERWINDGLEN hoisted signals of identification, and when about a half mile away, the CG-47 opened up with machine gun fire coming close to the bow of the ship. After stopping the ship, the Master waited for a signal from the patrol boat. Receiving none, the BERWINDGLEN moved alongside the patrol boat. Someone from the patrol boat said something which was not clearly understood. The patrol boat then proceeded in another direction. The BERWINDGLEN proceeded to Hampton Roads.

2. The reported facts indicate that the firing took place within the 4th Naval District.

3. It is requested that an investigation be made to determine whether any patrol boat attached to your district or any other district was present in the area mentioned at the above named time, and the reasons for its alleged firing upon the BERWINDGLEN.

4. It is further requested that the investigation be expedited, and that two copies of the report thereon be forwarded to this office.

3. Ultimate return of this correspondence to this office is requested.

/s/ G. T. FINLAY
L. E. LITTON,
Lieut. Comdr., USNR,
Officer-in-Charge,
Commerce and Travel Section.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIALCONFIDENTIAL(3)/BERWINDGLEN
RBL/ND5 dhlFIFTH NAVAL DISTRICT
DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE OFFICE
COMMERCE AND TRAVEL SECTIONDate Feb. 12, 1943MEMORANDUM TO: Intelligence Officer, U. S. Coast Guard,
Federal Building, Norfolk, Va.

SUBJECT: Statement of C. H. Rowding, Master of S/S "BERWINDGLEN".

ENCLOSURE:

1. The following is forwarded for information.

On February 10, 1943, at or about 1830 the S/S "BERWINDGLEN" was proceeding from McCries Shoal Buoy to Buoy No. 6 in compliance with naval routing instructions.

When near the swept channel buoy No. 4, a small patrol boat was sighted, but it did not signal to the ship. Our signals of identification were hoisted, and when about a half mile away, the patrol boat opened up with machine gun fire, coming close to the bow of the ship. The ship was immediately stopped, and when no signal came from the patrol boat, the "BERWINDGLEN" started down alongside the patrol boat, but the patrol boat said something that could not be understood aboard the "BERWINDGLEN" and proceeded off in another direction. The "BERWINDGLEN" proceeded to Hampton Roads.

The number of the Coast Guard patrol boat was No.

47.

2. The information forwarded herewith is confidential in character and its security must be preserved, by carefully safeguarding its existence and source, as well as the names of any informants mentioned therein. In no case, if the report covers an investigation of an individual, shall the report be shown to the subject, nor shall copies be made of it, nor shall the office of Naval Intelligence or the District Intelligence be mentioned in connection with any action taken on the basis of such report.

3. Ultimate return of this correspondence to this office is requested.

/s/ D. E. LITHGOW,
Lieut. Comdr., USNR,
Officer-in-Charge,
Commerce and Travel Section.

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