

## AMERICAN CONSULATE

Melbourne, Australia, October 23, 1943.

SUBJECT:

1-1055

Discharge and Return to the United States  
of Stephen H. Baker, 2nd Assistant Engineer  
of the s.s. BILLY SUNDAY.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to report that Stephen H. BAKER, 2nd Assistant Engineer of the s.s. BILLY SUNDAY was discharged from the vessel at Hobart, Tasmania on August 31, 1943, upon instructions of the United States Naval Liaison Officer at Hobart. Mr. Baker was then sent to Melbourne with instructions to report at this Consulate for further orders. The Naval Liaison Officer advised that Mr. Baker was to return to the United States by the first available transportation in the custody of the Armed Guard Commander for delivery to the United States Coast Guard Authorities. While awaiting sailing, Mr. Baker was permitted his liberty and was maintained in a Melbourne boarding house at the expense of the vessel.

There being a lack of vessels departing directly for the United States, Mr. Baker remained in Melbourne until a few days ago when he joined a returning Navy Transport.

The facts of the case are:

Upon the arrival of the BILLY SUNDAY at Hobart on August 31, 1943, the Master and the Chief Engineer requested the United States Naval Liaison Officer to remove Mr. Baker from the vessel because on several occasions he had become insubordinate and had used abusive language to the Chief Engineer. The Naval Liaison Officer requested the Port Representative of the United States War Shipping Administration to inquire into the matter and, if possible, to reach an amicable settlement.

The case is reported to have been thoroughly investigated by the WSA representative and that his decision concurred with the Master's opinion that Mr. Baker should be removed. The Naval Liaison Officer then proceeded to exercise the authority conferred in the Secretary of the Navy's Confidential Serial 054613(Sc) A17-3 of July 20,

1943

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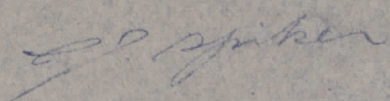
1943 by taking testimony of those concerned and deciding whether the engineer should be removed. The Naval Liaison Officer's ultimate decision to remove Mr. Baker was "because the continued operation of the ship with both (Chief Engineer and 2nd Assistant Engineer) on board was questionable" and because the action was "warranted on the basis that his (Baker's) continuance on board tended to impede the prosecution of the War".

When Mr. Baker arrived at the Consulate he was asked whether he wished to make a statement or whether he desired any advice. He replied that he was quite satisfied with the treatment given him by the officials who investigated the case in Hobart and that he was given ample opportunity to state his case. He added that while he regretted that the trouble had occurred he believed that it was inevitable that disagreements would arise with an executive who apparently did not have confidence in him as an engineer.

A copy of each of the documents relating to the inquiry is attached hereto. They consist of -

- (a) A letter from the U.S. Naval Liaison Officer
- (b) A detailed summary report from U.S. Naval Liaison Officer
- (c) Sworn statement of principal witnesses
- (d) Statement of accused
- (e) Certified copy of extract from official log.

Respectfully yours,



C. J. Spiker  
American Consul General

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RHH/jwp

Enclosures:

As listed above. *RP*

Original to Department.  
Copy to Consulate General, Sydney.



ENCLOSURE NO. 1 to despatch dated October 23, 1943 from the American Consulate at Melbourne, Australia, entitled "DISCHARGE AND RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES OF STEPHEN H. BAKER, SECOND ASSISTANT ENGINEER OF THE S.S. 'BILLY SUNDAY'".

Office of U.S. Naval Liaison Officer  
Hobart, Tasmania

CONFIDENTIAL

September 1, 1943

From: The U.S. Naval Liaison Officer.  
To: The American Consul, Melbourne, Australia.  
Subject: Return to the United States of Mr. S.H. Baker,  
Second Assistant Engineer of the s.s. BILLY  
SUNDAY.

ENCLOSURE: (A) Detailed Summary Report.  
(B) Sworn Statements of principal witnesses.  
(C) Statement of accused.  
(D) Certified copy of extract from official  
log.

1. The subject named man is ordered to report to you for return to the United States via first available transportation in custody of Armed Guard Commander for delivery to Coast Guard Authorities.

2. The Armed Guard Commander should be furnished a complete copy of all enclosures for delivery to Coast Guard Authorities.

M. COLLINS  
Captain, U.S.N., Ret.,  
Senior Officer Present.

This action was taken in compliance with Sec. Nav. confidential Serial 054613 (Sc) A17-3 of July 20, 1943.

M. Collins



CLOSURE NO. 2 to despatch dated October 23, 1943, from the American Consulate at Melbourne, Australia, entitled "DISCHARGE AND RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES OF STEPHEN H. BAKER, SECOND ASSISTANT ENGINEER OF THE S.S. 'BILLY SUNDAY'".

Office of U.S. Naval Liaison Officer  
Hobart, Tasmania

CONFIDENTIAL

September 1, 1943

From: The U.S. Naval Liaison Officer.

Subject: Detailed Summary Report re Mr. S. H. Baker,  
2nd Assistant Engineer, s.s. BILLY SUNDAY.

1. On 31 August, 1943, the Master, s.s. BILLY SUNDAY handed me a report from M. Van Horn, his Chief Engineer, and requested that the 2nd Assistant Engineer be removed from the ship. Action was deferred pending investigation by Mr. William C. Canty, representative of United States War Shipping Administration. Mr. Canty stated to me that he had hoped to effect an amicable arrangement but without success and concurred in the request of the Master for removal of Mr. S. H. Baker, 2nd Assistant Engineer. There is no U. S. Consul in this locality. There are, as usual, two sides to the controversy between the Chief Engineer and his 2nd Assistant. The outstanding fact is that the continued operation of the ship with both on board is questionable. Action taken by me appears warranted on the basis that his continuance on board tended to impede the prosecution of the war.

M. COLLINS  
Captain, U.S.N., Ret.