

CONFIDENTIAL

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

CONFIDENTIAL

Serial 93-42

I.O.F. Enograph Index Guide No. 802-1200

From Fifteenth Naval District, Balboa, C.Z. Date March 23, 1942.

In reply refer to Initials and No.

NAVY DEPARTMENT PM 12 48

Source Official

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

Classification RATING "A"

Subject Op 37-1:mc (30)L11-1/QS1 Serial 010737

WASHINGTON

The following is a message received by Radio, Port Sherman, the SS CATAWBA which went aground approximately 9 1/2 miles northeast of Cristobal breakwater in the morning of March 23, 1942.

"Ship's cargo consists of Navy oil. Ship lifted about 4' by beaching in apparently hard sand. Bilges dry. 64 tons. Subject: SS CATAWBA grounding. will have to be lightened to retract ship. Suggest speed with tug, Dear Sir: for salvaged oil, and retracting anchors."

The following Vice Chief of Naval Operations forwards. TAWES, copy of above mentioned report for information to the ground and appropriate action as deemed advisable, especially in connection with the second mate Fredrick L. Munk.

The SS CATAWBA, a single screw vessel of 2200 gross tons, owned by the Standard Oil Company of New York, was operated by U.S. Navy, one H. Ed. HEINRICI who is Master, grounded at or about 6:50 A.M. at a point 10 miles northeast of Colon breakwater. The master, after being questioned by board M. K. METCALF directed by Lt. Comdr. G. V. Tawes, As Rear Admiral U.S. Navy (Ret) Cristobal, C. Z., claims that by direction clear, that he had set a course for the entrance of the Cristobal breakwater, that he went below to clean himself up off and make ready for port, that he turned the vessel over to the Second Officer to continue the course.

War Shipping Administration Second Officer was careless Commerce Building him in time to prevent the ship from Washington, D.C. of the opinion he may have been in the chart room or some other place of the ship not Enclosure (1) his care. That I, the Port Director, learned from the Port Captain's Office that the ship c/e proceeding about 16 knots. That in order to U.S. Coast Guard (2) put her on her course again, it became necessary to jettison about 2600 tons of the vessel's cargo. That the USS FAVORITE, a Panama Canal vessel, and the Panama Canal Tug EMPIRE was sent by the Port Captain to give whatever assistance possible. The vessel arrived in Cristobal at 0650 today, March 24. The CATAWBA had on board before ground 5,452 tons of oil for the Navy, of which 2,852 tons was jettisoned. As a result of the grounding, a survey should be made before vessel puts back to sea.

The following is a report submitted by an officer of the District Intelligence Office after an interview with Captain HEINRICI upon the arrival of CATAWBA at Balboa, C.Z. March 24, 1942:

Serial 93-42

Monograph Index Guide No.
602-1200

From Fifteenth Naval District, Balboa, C.Z. Date March 28, 1942.

Position: Approximately 9 1/2 miles Northeast of
Source Official, 1 mile Southwest of village Evaluation RATING "A"
9° 27' N. - 79° 48' W.

Subject U. S. Geography - Cities & Towns - Shipping - Commerce

"Persons on bridge at time of grounding: Quartermaster at the wheel, one AB seaman as lookout on port wing of bridge. The following is a message received by Radio, Fort Sherman, C. Z., from the SS CATAWBA which went aground approximately 9 1/2 miles northeast of Cristobal breakwater in the morning of March 23, 1942.

"General impression of events: At about 0620, the ship's cargo consists of Navy oil. Ship lifted about 4' by beaching in apparently hard sand. Bilges dry. 64 tons per inch immersion. Think cargo will have to be lightened to retract ship. Suggest speed with tug, on tanker for salvaged oil, and retracting anchors." as watch for submarines; also that the 2nd Mate had just taken the following is a report from Lieut. Comdr. G. V. TAWES, Assistant Port Director, Cristobal, C. Z. relative to the grounding:

"The SS CATAWBA, a single screw vessel of 9930 gross tons, owned by the Standard Oil Company of New York, is operated by U.S. Navy, one H. Ed. HEINRICI who is the Master, grounded at or about 6:50 A.M. at a point 10 miles northeast of Colon breakwater. The master, after being questioned by boarding officer, directed by Lt. Comdr. G. V. Tawes, Asst. Port Director at Cristobal, C. Z., claims that weather was clear, that he had set a course for the entrance of the Cristobal breakwater, that he went below to clean himself up and make ready for port, that he turned the vessel over to the Second Officer to continue the course. The master states that the Second Officer was careless and did not call him in time to prevent the ship from grounding, and is of the opinion he may have been in the chart room or some other place of the ship not looking after his care. That I, the Port Director, learned from the Port Captain's Office that the ship was proceeding about 16 knots. That in order to float the vessel and put her on her course again, it became necessary to jettison about 2800 tons of the vessel's cargo. That the USS FAVORITE, a Panama Canal vessel, and the Panama Canal Tug EMPIRE was sent by the Port Captain to give whatever assistance possible. The vessel arrived in Cristobal at 0650 today, March 24. The CATAWBA had on board before grounding 15,452 tons of oil for the Navy, of which 2800 tons was jettisoned. As a result of the grounding, a survey should be made before vessel puts back to sea."

CATAWBA departed Balboa, C.Z. March 26, 1942.

The following is a report submitted by an officer of the District Intelligence Office after an interview with Captain HEINRICI upon the arrival of CATAWBA at Balboa, C.Z. March 24, 1942:

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Monograph Index Guide No.

100-1200

"Time: 0650, 75th MT

Position: Approximately 9½ miles Northeast of
Cristobal, 1 mile Southwest of village of Maria Chiquita,
9°27' N. - 79°46' W.

Speed at time of running aground: approximately 15 K.

"Persons on bridge at time of grounding: Quartermaster
at the wheel, one AB seaman as lookout on port wing of
bridge, one member of Navy gun crew, as lookout on star-
board wing; 2nd Mate was in chart house; Master was below
just leaving his cabin to return to bridge.

"General impression of events: At about 0620, the
Master went below to dress and shave, leaving the bridge
in charge of 2nd Mate, Frederick L. MUNK, U.S. born
citizen. The Master stated that they were about a half
mile offshore at the time and that he cautioned those
on the bridge to keep an eye on the shoreline as well as
watch for submarines; also that the 2nd Mate had just
taken a morning sight. At 0650, the Master was just
starting up his private companionway to the bridge when
he felt the vessel check suddenly and stop. He con-
tinued at one to the bridge and found the 2nd Mate
coming out of the chart room where the latter (as he
subsequently stated) had been figuring the position of
his morning sight and had evidently taken longer than he
expected. The vessel's bow was well up and into a
smooth sandy beach. Soundings were immediately taken
and it was found that the stern was well clear of the
bottom and that the bow was fast in pure sand - no
rocks, no gravel, so that the Master was confident
that no damage had been incurred. Water tanks were at
once emptied and efforts were made to wark the vessel
off under her own power. These efforts did not produce
encouraging results, so a coded message was sent
Cristobal, requesting assistance of two tugs. After
two hours, no reply was received so the Master sent a
similar request in plain language. Shortly thereafter,
Panama Canal Tug EMPIRE arrived but its help was not
enough and upon further request, the large Panama
Canal Tug FAVORITE arrived. Even with the assistance
of the two tugs, the vessel could not be pulled off,
so, after consultation between the Master, the Cristobal
Assistant Port Captain, and the Panama Canal Salvage
Foreman, it was agreed to jettison cargo until vessel
could be floated. After 18,400 barrels, or roughly
2800 tons, of high grade (Navy specification) fuel oil
had been pumped overboard, the CATAWBA came off the beach
and proceeded to Cristobal."

A survey of the CATAWBA made in Balboa reported no damage.

CATAWBA departed Balboa, C.Z. March 26, 1942.

No evidence of sabotage was indicated.

by an officer of the
District Intelligence Office after an interview with
Captain HEINRICH upon the arrival of CATAWBA at Balboa, C.Z.
March 24, 1942: