

(ONI)
CG-MIN-CHARLES W.
ELIOT

14 August, 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

To: DCGO, 3rd Naval District (oni)

Subj: War action casualty involving the CHARLES W. ELIOT on 28 June, 1944.

1. Your attention is referred to HQ instructions of 15 March and 2 August, 1943 (CG-MIN-C-100). Paragraph 11 of the instructions of 2 August, 1943 provides as follows:

The examiner should * * * confine and concentrate his questions to elicit detailed information developing all of the facts and circumstances with regard to suspected malfunctioning or inadequacy of equipment or non-compliance with other requirements for the better security of life at sea under wartime conditions.

2. The CHARLES W. ELIOT was mined and sunk on 28 June, 1944, when about four miles off "Juno Beach," Normandy, France. The master of the subject vessel, during the investigation of this case at New York, stated that "All four life rafts were thrown from their racks and sank immediately." Despite this direct statement of serious malfunctioning of better security of life at sea equipment, the master was not further questioned with respect thereto.

3. The failure of examining officers to elicit pertinent detailed information as required by the above cited instructions as illustrated by the failure in this case to elicit the reasons and causes for the self-release and sinking of the rafts on board the subject vessel, renders the evaluation of war action casualties for the determination of the necessity for the institution of precise regulatory corrective measures for the safety of merchant type vessels most difficult. Closer adherence to the above cited instructions is therefore most desirable in the investigation of war action casualties.

CHAS. A. PARK
By direction