

INTELLIGENCE DIVISION MEMORANDUM # 459
COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS

Date 25 October, 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMIRAL WAESCHE (1) DR. MICHEL (7) *Sh...*
ADMIRAL CHALKER (2) *etc* COMDR JEWELL (8) *UJ*
~~ADMIRAL PARK (3) *cut* COMDR POLLIC (9)~~
ADMIRAL GORMAN (4)
ADMIRAL JOHNSON (5) *179*
~~ADMIRAL DONOHUE (6) *Edin*~~

Subj: Ltr No. 765 dated Calcutta, India, October 1, 1943 from
the American Consulate General to the Sec'y of State,
re Case of Gonorrhoea aboard the S.S. EDWARD CANBY

1. The attachment contains items of general interest to commissioned officers. Circulation to such officers within the various offices and divisions of Headquarters is left to the discretion of the addressees.
2. ~~Attention is invited to the confidential character of the attachment and the necessity for safeguarding its contents.~~
3. ~~No copying or dissemination of any of the information contained therein is authorized. If deemed necessary, dissemination shall be made by the Intelligence Division, after the latter has obtained authority therefor.~~
4. To be of the greatest value to all concerned the attachment should move rapidly. Therefore, please do not hold it beyond the close of business of the day following that on which received.
5. The ultimate return of the attachment to the Intelligence Division ~~for safekeeping~~ is requested.

L. T. CHALKER
Assistant Commandant

FILE
I. P. B.
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Attachment - Subject ltr

Colonel Loedham stated that with the new treatment by sulfa-drugs, the contagion stage of gonorrhoea was terminated after five days in 95 percent of the cases. He added that it was the Army's practice to consider a man fit for duty even while his gonorrhoea was still infectious. This rule applied also to Army cooks, it being considered that there

was little danger of contagion if the cook took certain elementary measures of precaution. Colonel Leedham stated, however, that of course it was impossible to say that there was absolutely no danger of contagion.

On September 30 Mr. Seledce returned to the office accompanied by Mr. Callahan. Mr. Seledce was informed of Colonel Leedham's statement. He then stated that, in spite of this fact he did not feel that he could contravene Public Health Service regulations and that he had therefore decided to relieve Mr. Callahan of duty and had in fact done so on September 27. The Consulate General did not feel that it could advise Mr. Seledce to take action contrary to Public Health Service regulations.

Unfortunately, since the vessel was sailing on October 1st, before Mr. Callahan's cure was completed, it would be impossible to tell whether he was actually free of gonorrhoea until another port was reached, which might be a considerable length of time during which Mr. Callahan would be earning no wages. The Consulate General suggested that other employment not connected with food might be found for Mr. Callahan, but the Master stated that there was no such position vacant.

Mr. Callahan then stated that under the circumstances he preferred to sign off in Calcutta, complete his cure here and then sign on another vessel. The Master had no objection and the Consulate General also agreed, since another man could be signed on in Mr. Callahan's place and thus the number of seamen stranded in Calcutta would not be increased. Mr. Callahan was then duly signed off as of September 27.

An appointment was made later in the day for the Master to return to the Consulate General in order to sign on another seaman. When the Master returned, he stated that he had now changed his mind. After leaving the office he had felt some doubts as to the justice of his action and had gone to see Captain Fuller, the medical officer who gave Mr. Callahan his original certificate. Captain Fuller had succeeded in convincing that there was not the slightest danger of contagion as long as Mr. Callahan could be trusted to take certain elementary precautions. Mr. Seledce felt that Mr. Callahan could be trusted, in view of his early confession of his illness. He was therefore prepared to contravene the Public Health Service regulations on his own responsibility and to reinstate Mr. Callahan as second cook from September 27.

The Consulate General could not object to this as long as the Master was willing to assume the responsibility. Mr. Callahan therefore signed the Articles again and an appropriate entry was made cancelling his discharge.

It is the opinion of the Consulate General that these difficulties arose not so much from the conditions brought about by the new medicines used for gonorrhoea as from the new psychological approach to gonorrhoea. The theory behind local Army practice in these matters seems to be that, if no penalties are attached to the acquisition of gonorrhoea, patients will be encouraged to declare their symptoms and all the necessary measures for cure and the prevention of further contagion can be taken. On the other hand, if severe penalties are imposed on sufferers from gonorrhoea, they will hide their disease and thus the danger of spreading it in the community will be increased.

Mr. Seledce has asked that a copy of this despatch be transmitted to the U.S. Public Health Service so that his good faith may be established and he also requested that a copy be sent to the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company, 215 Market Street, San Francisco, California, the operators of the vessel, if this is possible.

Respectfully yours,

K. S. Patton
American Consul General

886
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