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MSFF/P13
Serial 076

1944 JAN 15 PM 3 08

December 29, 1943.

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From: Commander Moroccan Sea Frontier Forces.
 To: Chief of Naval Operations
 (Director of Naval Intelligence).
 Subject: S/S EUGENE HALE - Misconduct of Master and Crew of.
 Enclosure: (A) Extract of testimony taken by Assistant Inspector
 General, December 21, 1943.

1. In the course of an investigation by the Inspector General, U.S. Army, Atlantic Base Section, information set forth in enclosure (A) was developed, and in the absence of a Merchant Marine Hearing Unit, this information was forwarded to the Intelligence Office of this Command for disposition. It is felt that U.S. Coast Guard might wish to take appropriate action upon the return of the ship to the United States.
2. Captain George T. LeVeck frankly admitted that he had taken a drink or so on three occasions during the voyage, but denied that he became intoxicated during the voyage. On all but one occasion the drinks consisted of alcohol and fruit juice. The Captain denied having any liquor in his possession, and stated that the alcohol had been found on board by an engineer officer. The Armed Guard Commander confirmed that there had been too much drinking aboard, and that on at least one occasion he felt that the Captain had imbibed too much. He added that the Captain was most co-operative with him at all times. Captain LeVeck was admonished and stated that in the future he would be more careful of his conduct.
3. The Steward, James Williams, Z 59177-D-1, is also mentioned in Enclosure (A). The Captain confirmed that he had done considerable drinking, but that he was exceptionally competent and that his drinking had not interfered with his work. Williams admitted that he had brought one bottle of whiskey aboard, but it is felt that he is not telling the truth. He denied that he was involved in the selling of whiskey to military passengers aboard. Williams was warned to be careful of his conduct.
4. Shortly before the arrival of the ship at this port, the Master and Chief Officer learned of a "bootleg" ring operating aboard, engaged in selling whiskey to Army passengers. Immediate and effective steps were taken to remedy this situation. Some difficulty was experienced in determining who were involved in the sale of whiskey. However, with the assistance of an Army Sergeant the Captain was able to determine that Pedro Orpiano, Chief Cook, Z 238367-D-1,

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ENCLOSURE (2)

(National Day)

(Statement prepared by Major Leonard M. Lee, 1st Lt. 1943. Time: 0730)

Alexander Dombrowski, Z 149369, Pete S. Guntang, Third Cook, Z 237900, and Alexander Bartush, Utilityman, Z 416572 had been engaged in selling whiskey, the latter acting as an intermediary. Prices varied from \$10 to \$20 per bottle. The sum of \$126.00, representing profits from sale of approximately seventeen bottles of whiskey, was recovered from the three persons concerned, \$98 of which was distributed to enlisted man purchasers, and \$28 returned to Army Officer purchasers. Shortly after arrival Orpiano, Dombrowski and Guntang were sent to a Disciplinary Training Center by the Provost Marshal when they were caught by Military Police trying to smuggle goods ashore for unauthorized sale. All are returning to the United States aboard S/S EUGENE HALE.

Q. Well, only that there he went aboard ship on Saturday night or the 10th or 11th, I believe, and he seemed to be under the influence of alcohol and later on Sunday the report he made the appearance of being under the influence of intoxication.

Q. On what do you base this conclusion?

C. L. NICHOLS,
Chief of Staff.

A. His attitude - his conduct - his disposition in all his work - his general appearance.

Q. Could he walk straight?

A. I would say, no, but of course it might be on account of the rolling of the ship.

Q. Do you know whether this condition on several occasions affected the performance of his duties?

A. Don't say, not knowing his duties.

Q. Were his eyes bloodshot?

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A. You mean at that time? I don't say yes or no.

Q. How many times approximately, did you see him under the influence of liquor during the voyage?

A. Well, Saturday night, -2- First I didn't know he was the steward. I recognized him later. Twice after that.

Q. Did you ever notice the Captain under the influence of liquor?

A. Yes.

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ENCLOSURE (A)

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(Extract Copy)

(Questions propounded by Major Larmore, 21 Dec. 1943. Time: 0950)

JAMES H. RITTS, Captain, ASN. 0-267151, Company D, 350th Infantry, having been first duly sworn by Major A. M. Larmore, Assistant Inspector General, the 24th Article of War having been explained, testified as follows:

- q. What is your name, grade, serial number, and organization?
- a. Captain James H. Ritts, ASN. 0-267151, Company D, 350th Infantry.
- q. Have you any comments to make about the steward?
- a. Well, only that when he came aboard ship on Saturday night prior to sailing, December 4th, he seemed to be under the influence of alcohol and later on during the voyage he made the appearance of being under the influence of intoxicants.
- q. On what do you base this conclusion?
- a. Oh, his actions - incoherent talk. He was very repetitious in all his speech - and general appearance.
- q. Could he walk straight?
- a. I would say, no, but of course it might be on account of the rolling of the ship.
- q. Do you know whether this condition on several occasions affected the performance of his duties?
- a. Can't say, not knowing his duties.
- q. Were his eyes bloodshot?
- a. You mean at times? I can't say yes or no.
- q. How many times approximately, did you see him under the influence of liquor during the voyage?
- a. Well, Saturday night. First I didn't know he was the steward. I recognized him later. Twice after that.
- q. Did you ever notice the Captain under the influence of liquor?
- a. Yes.

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- g. What was the result of the investigation?
 - a. On how many occasions?
 - a. A couple of times.
 - g. When were those occasions?
 - a. Well, the first time was our first couple of days out at sea. Another time was during the voyage; about a week later.
 - g. What was his condition on those occasions?
 - a. Well, he acted - the same general appearance as under the influence of intoxicants.
 - g. Was his speech coherent?
 - a. Incoherent inasmuch as he continually changed the subject during a conversation. Just couldn't carry a conversation with him.
 - g. Was there any other indication that he was drunk or under the influence of liquor?
 - a. I would say his coordination wasn't so hot.
 - g. By that you mean his coordination was poor?
 - a. Yes, that's right.
 - g. Do you know whether this condition affected his proficiency?
 - a. I can't say not knowing what he was supposed to do.
- * * * * *
- g. Was there any incidents of members of the crew selling anything to passengers?
 - a. Yes, there was.
 - g. What was sold by the crew members to the passengers?
 - a. Know one time some meals were sold to the passengers and another time some alcoholic beverage.
 - g. Was an investigation made?
 - a. Yes, sir.

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Q. What was the result of the investigation?

A. On the former matter, just put guards on.

Q. What was the result in regards to the selling of beverages?

A. The Mate after holding a court of some sort said he would take action under the Maritime Law rules or regulations.

Q. What Mate was this?

A. The First Mate.

Q. Of the Eugene Hale?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know his name?

A. No.

Q. Do you know the names of the crew members involved?

A. No, sir.

Q. Does he know their names?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know the names of the men who bought the alcoholic beverages?

A. No, sir.

Yes, he was. He did use considerable repetition but he did it at times when he was not under the influence of liquor. He was, I would say, a hysterical individual and did a lot of talking when he was not under the influence of alcohol.

On the occasion when you seen him under the influence of liquor so did he change rapidly from one subject to another without any particular pattern?

Yes, sir.

How was his coordination?

When he was under the influence of liquor?

Yes.

It was impaired to a moderate degree.

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(Questions propounded by Major Larmore, 21 Dec. 1943. Time: 1335)

MAURICE M. KANE, Lieutenant Colonel, Medical Corps, ASN. O-308192, Headquarters 313th Medical Battalion, having been first duly sworn by Major Ashby M. Larmore, Assistant Inspector General, the 24th Article of War having been explained, testified as follows:

- q. What is your name, grade, serial number, and organization?
- a. Lt. Colonel Maurice M. Kane, Medical Corps, ASN. O-308192, Headquarters 313th Medical Battalion.
- q. Did you ever see the Master of the ship under the influence of liquor?
- a. I would state definitely that the Captain of this ship was observed by me on one occasion when he was definitely under the influence of liquor. I did not see him under the influence of liquor on any other occasion.
- q. From what did you draw this conclusion?
- a. From observing his actions and talking with him and detecting the odor of liquor on his breath.
- q. How was his speech?
- a. His speech was fairly intelligible and it was not thick or too incoherent.
- q. Was he repetitious in his talk?
- a. Yes, he was. He did use considerable repetition but he did th at at times when he was not under the influence of liquor. He was, I would say, a loquacious individual and did a lot of talking when he was not under the influence of alcohol.
- q. On the occasion when you seen him under the influence of liquor wo uld he change rapidly from one subject to another without any particular reason?
- a. Yes. He did.
- q. How was his coordination?
- a. When he was under the influence of liquor?
- q. Yes?
- a. It was impaired to a moderate degree.

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- q. What time of day was it when you saw him under this condition, and the date?
- a. As I recollect, it was about 6 o'clock the morning of December 5th.
- q. That was the first morning at 6?
- a. Yes, and then later that day.
- q. On both occasions he was under the influence of liquor?
- a. Yes, the same spree.
- q. And whereabouts did you see him?
- a. I saw him in the hold of the ship in the morning and then later that day, at approximately midday, he was in the level of the ship where his quarters and the chart room are.
- q. He was in the passage-way?
- a. He was in his room, quarters.
- q. When he was in the hold on that morning was he as far as you know in the performance of his duties, possibly making an inspection?
- a. I don't know. I don't know.
- q. How long have you been in the Army? On active duty?
- a. I have been on active duty since January 5, 1941.
- q. Have you been in the Medical Corps during that period?
- a. That whole length of time.
- q. How long were you a practising physician in private life?
- a. I graduated from the College of Medicine, Ohio State University, June, 1933. Spent a year as an intern in Toledo, Ohio. I was then Medical Examiner for the Industrial Commission of Ohio from August, 1934, to November, 1936. At that time I started private practice until the latter part of December, 1940.
- q. Then during your medical experience you had occasions frequently to examine people under the influence of liquor?
- a. Yes. I have.