

4 June, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR CAPTAIN MERRILL, CHIEF, MERCHANT MARINE PERSONNEL:

Subject: Merchant Marine Matters.

1. The following compilation from various reports is furnished you for information and any action believed necessary. Additional information is available, if desired:

2. A report received in this office concerning the voyage of the SS FAIRFAX, American Transport, which arrived at Recife, Brazil, on March 8, enroute from New York to Africa, reflects the lack of discipline noticeable among the crew and passengers. The crew invited passengers to meetings where they expounded their union views and tried to enlist the sympathy of the passengers. The report states that before the FAIRFAX docked at Recife, no information was on hand as to whether she was a Merchant Ship or a Transport. The Master did not have the papers required for a Merchant Ship, he had no funds, and did not discover, until sometime after his arrival, a note to the effect that Standard Oil of Brazil were agents. The local Standard Oil had no information of this, but appointed a local firm as agent. However, under instructions from their headquarters, no bills were paid, or money advanced as requested by the Master for payment of the crew. The Master carried a letter from the Operators, addressed to American Consuls and others, requesting bills be paid, that refund would be made in New York on presentation of documents signed by the Master. The American Consulate had no authority to comply with such a request.

3. The Master of the American SS LIBERTY GLO, reported to the U. S. Naval Liaison Office at Suez, Egypt, regarding the broaching of the ship's cargo by crew members while enroute from the U. S. Upon completion of discharge of the cargo, it was ascertained that 720 cases of beer had been pilfered. The Naval Liaison Officer stated, however, that a considerable amount was undoubtedly taken by longshoremen and British soldiers employed aboard both the ship and pier, and, apparently, little effort is made by British Army Officers charged with the discharge of ships to control this matter.

The aforementioned report states that from reports and observations made in Suez, it is apparent that the entry of the U. S. into the was has caused little, if any, improvement in disciplinary and morale conditions aboard Merchant vessels. Crews are still governed by union laws and regulations. It appears that the extent to which these rules are applied is governed largely by the type of individual who is the Union delegate aboard the ship. The ability of the Master and officers is reported as a highly contributing factor in dealing with these matters.

cc: *Cil*
Assistant Commandant

LM
F. E. POLLIO

LMR