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REFER TO 6614

NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT
U.S. COAST GUARD
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

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CAPTAIN OF THE PORT (1)
GALVESTON, TEXAS

19 June, 1945

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c-8

To: The Commandant (OPS)

Via: DCGO, 8ND

Subj: Oil Pollution Act of 1924, 33 USC, 431-437; violation by
SS GEORGE W. ALTHERS, on 31 May, 1945.

Refs: (a) HQ ltr to all DCGO's 18 August, 1943 (CG-100.18 Min.).
(b) DCGO, 8ND ltr to COTP, Galveston, 18 September, 1943,
(6614) Enforcement of the Oil Pollution Act.
(c) HQ Dispatch to all DCGO's 231920 (October).

In accordance with references (a), (b) and (c), inclosure is forwarded.

L. A. Welsh

L. A. WELSH

Incl. *✓*
Copy of file in subject case.

Ind-1
DCGO, 8ND (ops)
21 June, 1945

To: The Commandant (OPS)

Forwarded.

J. J. Gidiere

J. J. GIDIERE
By direction



Sheet 2
District Engineer, U. S. Army,
Galveston, Texas
File 6614
19 June, 1945

R. E. Kahla, Ensign, Robert L. Womelsdoff, seaman first class, and W. W. Alexander, seaman first class, all of the Volunteer Port Security Force. Copies of these statements, together with the copy of the investigator's report, are attached for your information. Samples of oil were taken from the water alongside the vessel and from the deck of the vessel by R. E. Kahla, Ensign, and W. W. Alexander, seaman first class. These samples, together with the original of the statements taken, will be retained by this office for use by the U. S. Attorney.

L. A. WELSH

Incl.

- 1 - Copy of investigator's report
 - 2 - Copy of statement by Frank L. Nantz
 - 3 - Copy of joint statement by Dale O. Peckham and F. W. Anderson
 - 4 - Copy of statement by Robert L. Womelsdoff
 - 5 - Copy of joint statement by R. E. Kahla and W. W. Alexander
- CC - The Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard, Washington, D. C. ✓
DCGO, SND, New Orleans, La.
U. S. District Attorney
CinC, Marine Inspection, Galveston, Texas
War Shipping Administration, Galveston, Texas

Statements were taken from Dale O. Peckham, Chief Engineer, F. E. Anderson, Flight Engineer, Fred L. Hault, Night Mate, Coastguardian

Captain of the Port, Galveston, Texas

6614

2 June, 1945

EXHIBIT II.

CAPTAIN OF THE PORT (1)
GALVESTON, TEXAS

19 June, 1945

District Engineer, U. S. Army,
Galveston, Texas

Sir:

The following is a report of the violation of the Oil Pollution Act of 1924, 33 USC, 431-437, by the SS GEORGE W. ALTHERS, at Pier 5, Galveston, Texas, on 31 May, 1945.

The SS GEORGE W. ALTHERS is owned by the Mississippi Shipping Company, Hibernia Bank Building, New Orleans, Louisiana, and is operated by the War Shipping Administration. The local agent is the Lykes Brothers Steamship Company, U. S. National Bank Building, Galveston, Texas. At about 10:00 p.m., on the date above mentioned, it was discovered that fuel oil had spilled from the SS GEORGE W. ALTHERS, while taking on bunker fuel at Pier 5, Galveston, Texas, the oil spilling on to the deck of the vessel and through the scupper holes into the waters of the Galveston Harbor. The oil was being pumped into the No. 3 deep tank at a rate of approximately 2,000 barrels an hour and from there it was being transferred through a pipe line into the No. 2 tank by gravitation. The cause of this spill was due to the vessel having a ten foot trim to the stern and the oil having come to a level with the top of the aft end of the tank, cut off the vent on that end of the tank and forcing the oil out the forward vent by the air pressure. Had all of the scuppers been properly plugged, none of the oil would have flowed overboard, but due to some of the scupper holes not being properly plugged it is estimated that approximately three barrels of oil escaped through the vent and spilled on the deck of the vessel, and from there approximately two barrels spilled overboard through one of the open scuppers on the starboard side of the vessel, into the waters of the Galveston Harbor. This case was reported to the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, U. S. Coast Guard, for his information and action.

Statements were taken from Dale O. Peckman, Chief Engineer, F. W. Anderson, Night Engineer, Fred L. Nantz, Night Mate, Coastguardsmen

Captain of the Port, Galveston, Texas

6614

2 June, 1945

SHEET II.

out the forward starboard vent leading from No. 2 tank and most of the oil splattered into the water without hitting the deck. He said the scuppers were closed, however the oil ran through one on the starboard side. He estimated that less than 10 gallons of oil ran into the water. Mr. Reckham thought the reason for the oil spill was due to a ten-foot trim to the stern whereby the after end of the tank was full, cutting off the after vent and forcing the entire vented air out the forward vent.

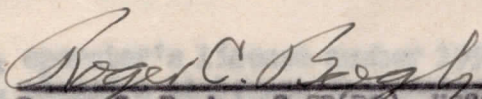
The night engineer, Fredolf W. Anderson, 808 Broadway, Galveston, Texas, was on duty at the time of the oil spill. He read the statement made by Dale O. Reckham and agreed to the contents of the statement and signed the same statement. His operator's license is A-15186.

5. A signed statement was secured from Frank L. Nantz, night mate, Box 832, Galveston, Texas. He did not have his license with him. He said he saw the oil run out the forward vent on the starboard side, and run back on the deck to almost midship. He said the oil ran through two open scuppers on the starboard side and less than 15 gallons of oil ran in the water. Mr. Nantz assured the writer that the 1st. Asst. Engineer and the night engineer were on the job, taking sounding every few minutes.

6. Oil samples were taken at 0400 on 1 June, 1945, from the deck and from the water alongside the George W. Althers, docked at Pier 5, by R. E. Kahla, and W. W. Alexander, Ensign and Sealc, both of the VPSF, Galveston, Texas. Signed statements were also taken.

7. Chief H. W. Wilson, C.Sp(PS), USCGR, CG Lifeboat Station, Galveston, Texas, notified Lieut. Comdr. Van Benthuyzen of the Merchant Marine Hearing Unit, Galveston, Texas, at 8:25 on 1 June, 1945.

8. Signed statements have been secured from Dale O. Reckham, Chief Engineer, F.W. Anderson, night engineer, Frank L. Nantz, night mate, Robert L. Womelsdoff, R. E. Kahla, and W. W. Alexander, the latter three belonging to the VPSF, Galveston, Texas.


Roger C. Bagby, C.SP(P4), USCGR.

Galveston, Texas

PORT SECURITY DETAIL

2 June, 1945

My 661A is Frank L. Kahle, Box 432, Galveston, Texas. I do not have my license number with me, but it was issued July 1943, as Chief Mate. I was on duty as Chief Mate on May 31, 1945, about 10:00 p.m., when the oil spill occurred. When the oil spill occurred, I was fixing a light on the

2 June, 1945

gangway. The chief engineer told me that there was an oil spill forward. I went up to look to see how it was, and saw that oil had run out the forward

To: Captain of the Port, Galveston, Texas

The oil ran through two open scuppers on the starboard side and splattered over

the deck. I do not know how long the oil ran out the tank. I do not know how much

1. This case involves the George W. Althors, an American cargo ship. This ship is owned by the Mississippi Shipping Company, Hibernia Bank Bldg. New Orleans, Louisiana, and the local agent is the Lykes Bros. S.S. Co. Inc., U.S. National Bank Bldg., Galveston, Texas. The operator is the War Shipping Administration, Washington, D.C. The George W. Althors is under the command of Capt. Wilson Whittelsberger, 105 Broadman, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, whose Master's license number is 164281, issued in July, 1941 at New Orleans, Louisiana.

2. The George W. Althors arrived in Galveston on 28 May, 1945, and docked at Pier 11. On 31 May, this ship shifted to Pier 5. The oil spill was discovered by Ronald E. Kahle, Ensign, VPSF, at 2123 45th Street, Galveston, Texas, at 3:30 a.m., 1 June, 1945, and samples of oil were taken from the water and on the dock by Ensign Kahle and W.W. Alexander, Sec.1c, VPSF, 3715 Ave. F, Galveston, Texas. These samples were labeled and taken to the Fog Signal Station by Ensign Kahle and W.W. Alexander.

3. A signed statement was secured by Robert I. Womelsdorff, Sec.1c, VPSF, 52-E, Cleander Addition, Galveston, Texas, who was standing watch on the George W. Althors, at the time of the oil spill. According to his statement, the oil spill occurred about 10:00 p.m., 31 May, 1945. He informed the writer that the oil ran out the forward starboard vent for three or four minutes, and about three barrels (126 gallons) of oil splattered on the deck, while about two barrels of oil ran through two open scuppers on the starboard side.

4. Dale C. Beckham, Chief Engineer, operator's license number 195082, 114 77 Street, North Bergen, New Jersey, signed a statement concerning the oil spill. According to his statement, they started taking on bunker oil at Pier 5 at 7:50 p.m., 31 May, 1945. He said the oil spill occurred about 10:00 p.m., 31 May, 1945. He informed me that oil was being pumped at a normal pressure (2,000 barrels an hour), into No. 3 deep tank and according to the sounding, this tank had approximately 1700 barrels, lacking five feet of being full. This oil was gravitating from No. 3 tank through a pipe line to No. 2 tank. By the sounding No. 2 forward, at the time of the spill, lacked five or six inches or approximately 200 barrels being full. Mr. Beckham stated that the oil had splattered

Statement by Frank L. Nantz

2 June, 1945

My name is Frank L. Nantz, Box 832, Galveston, Texas. I do not have my license number with me, but it was issued July 1943, as Chief Mate. I was on duty as night mate on May 31, 1945, about 10:00 p.m. when the oil spill occurred at Pier 5. When the oil spill occurred, I was fixing a light on the gangway. The night engineer told me that there was an oil spill forward. I went up to look to see how it was, and saw that oil had run out the forward vent on the starboard side. The oil ran back on deck almost to midship. The oil ran through two open scuppers on the starboard side and splashed over the deck on the plates near the forward starboard vent, and some ran into the water. I do not know how long the oil ran out the vent. I do not know how much oil spilled on deck but less than 15 gallons of oil went into the water. The first Asst. Engineer and the night engineer were on the job taking sounding every few minutes. I think air pockets caused the oil to flow out the vent.

I have read the above statement and it is true.

Frank L. Nantz

- Fridolf W. Anderson

Statement by Dale O. Peckham

1 June, 1945

My name is Dale O. Peckham, Chief Engineer aboard the George W. Althens. My home address is 114- 77th Street North Bergen, New Jersey, and I hold an operator's license number 195082, issued December 17, 1941. We docked at Pier 11 on April 28, 1945. We shifted to Pier 5 yesterday at 5:00 o'clock, to take on bunker oil. We started pumping at 7:50 p.m., on the same date (May 31, 1945).

I was at the end of the pier, making a telephone call, when the oil spill occurred, a little after 10:00 p.m. o'clock, on May 31, 1945. The night engineer was taking soundings all the time previous to the oil spill. The oil was being pumped into No. 3 deep tank on the starboard side, using the normal pumping pressure (2,000 barrels an hour). No. 3 deep tank by sounding, had approximately 1,700 barrels, lacking five feet being full. Oil was gravitating from No. 3 tank through pipe line to No. 2 tank's part and starboard. By sounding No. 2 tank forward, at the time of the oil spill, lacked 5 or 6 inches or approximately 200 barrels being full. Upon examining the condition of the oil spill, I observed that no full stream of oil had come through forward vent on starboard side No. 2 tank. But apparently it had been carried out through vent with escaping air. Most of the oil that went into the water splattered from the vent, over the side without going on the deck. This oil ran down the plates on the starboard side forward. The scuppers were closed in so far as possible on this type of ship, however, oil did run down one, slightly on the starboard side. The other oil marks from the scuppers are old marks. I estimate that about or less than 10 gallons of oil ran into the water. This is the first oil spill I have had.

I think the reason for the oil spill is due to the fact that the ship, having about ten foot trim to the stern and the oil having come to a level whereby the after end of the tank was full, cutting off the after vent on the tank, forced the entire vented air out the forward vent. I have read the above statement and it is true.

Dale O. Peckham

Fridolf W. Anderson

Statement by Robert L. Womelsdoff

1 June, 1945, Galveston, Texas
2 June, 1945

My name is Robert L. Womelsdoff, Sea.Ic, of the VPSF. My address is 52 E Cleander Addition, Galveston, Texas. I was on duty at Pier 5 on the George W. Althaus on May 31, 1945, from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. when the oil spill occurred. At about 10:00 p.m. on May 31, 1945, I was about 40 feet from the forward vent on the starboard side of the ship, when I heard a sound from the vent and knew that oil was coming out. I then went back past midship and told the night engineer that oil was coming out the forward vent. When the night engineer and I came back to the vent, oil was pouring out, and running back toward midship for about 50 feet. The oil ran out the vent about 3 to 4 minutes and about 3 barrels splattered off the deck and 2 barrels of oil ran through two scupper holes on the starboard side forward into the water. These two scupper holes were not closed. Someone then shut off the valves and I put dirt down on the deck to stop the oil from running into the water.

I have read the above statement and it is true.

Robert L. Womelsdoff

H. S. KILLA, Ensign,
Platoon Leader, Therapy Platoon.

H. R. Alexander, S I/C, USCG (V)

Statement by R. E. Kahla and W. W. Alexander

1 June, 1945, Galveston, Texas

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that I, R.E. Kahla, Ensign, Platoon Leader of the Thursday Platoon, living in Galveston, Texas, at 2123 - 45th. Street, came on duty at 0600, 31 May, 1945, and continued by until 0600 1 June, 1945.

While on pier check at about 0330 this date, I went to check on the ship George W. Althers, docked at Pier 5. I immediately noticed that there had been an oil spill. I immediately contacted S 1/C W.W. Alexander, 3715 Avenue P₂, phone 2-2280, Galveston, Texas, V.P.S.F. guard, who was standing watch on the above vessel at this time (from 0015 to 0600) and we immediately contacted the engineer on duty at this time and he stated that the oil spill occurred at approximately 2200, and that it was caused by the aft end of the tank being lower than the forward end, which caused an air pocket to form in tank and forced the oil out of the vent. He claims that there was six feet of room in the tank at the time. Upon further investigation Seaman Alexander and myself took samples from the deck and another sample from the water alongside the ship and put them in bottles and labelled them properly and took them to the Customs House. Immediately upon my return I contacted Chief Wilson of the Coast Guard and advised him in regard to the matter.

The respective oil samples were securely sealed and taken to the Fog Station of the U.S. Coast Guard Lifeboat Station by myself and Seaman Alexander.

Due to the elapsed time from when oil spill occurred at 2200 and when samples were taken at 0400 date had moved out with the tide but at the latter time there was still approximately two barrels of oil on the water around the ship.

R. E. KAHLA, Ensign,
Platoon Leader, Thursday Platoon.

W. W. Alexander, S 1/C, USCGR (T)