

30 July, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR DCGIO

Subj: SS HENRY L. ELLSWORTH, Oil Pollution

1. At 1325, 27 July, 1945, this office was notified by telephone from Chief Homan, Fire Inspector, ACOTP, Seattle, Washington, that a sizable oil slick had been reported at the Sunset Oil Dock. This investigator departed at once for the scene in company of Chief Homan.
2. The Sunset Oil Dock projects northerly from the north end of Harbor Island. The subject ship was moored along the west side with her bow toward the beach and her port side next the dock. Heavy, black fuel oil covered an area extending in length from 25 feet aft of the vessel's bow to 25 or 30 feet beyond the sea end of the dock, a distance of about 330 feet, and in width from the port side of the ship under the entire width of the dock, a distance of about 60 or 65 feet.
3. Inquiry of the Chief Engineer, Mr. Bottera, the 1st Assistant, Mr. Thomas, and the 2nd Assistant revealed the following information: That the 2nd Assistant Engineer, John S. Hawkins, 231 N. Val Verde Street, El Paso, Texas, had the watch from noon until 4:00 P.M.; that he was pumping up the port settlers from the double bottoms; that he intended to pump to the 15-foot mark; that shortly after 1:00 P.M. the oil was found by sounding to have reached the 14-foot-6-inch mark; that at that time he left the pump to assist a "green" fireman in keeping the fires going; that the Chief observed oil going out the port vent and immediately ordered the pump stopped; that it is not known how long the oil flowed overboard; that the amount was variously estimated at from 5 to 20 barrels.
4. The MMHU held a hearing on the ship at once and charged the 2nd Assistant Engineer with negligence. He pleaded guilty and his license was suspended for two months on nine months' probation. This man is regarded as "strictly no good" by his superior officers and stated he thought he had better quit.
5. The investigator obtained a sample of the spilled oil and had photographs made which show oil on the water beneath the dock and against the vessel's side.
6. The subject vessel is owned by the War Shipping Administration and is operated by Spencer-Kellogg and Sons, New York City.

Comdr. Kiefers
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RECEIVED

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7. Forwarded for information.

MEMORANDUM FOR DCGIO

1945 AUG 7 AM 9 02

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PORT SECURITY SECTION
JOSEPH H. MORGAN
Investigator

1. On 1125, 27 Aug, 1945, the subject vessel was reported to have discharged a considerable amount of oil which had been reported to the Investigator. The Investigator departed at once for the scene to conduct an investigation.

Incl
2 photographs

CC: HQs

Incl
DCGIO, 13ND
CG-6613
31 July, 1945

To: DCGO, 13ND

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1. Forwarded. It would appear that this pollution resulted more from ignorance or lack of judgment on the part of the 2nd Assistant Engineer than from other causes.
2. After being charged and granted a hearing, the 2nd Assistant Engineer was found guilty by the Hearing Unit, MMHU. His license was suspended for two months.
3. While the quantity of oil discharged in the coastal navigable waters may be considered a fire hazard, prompt action was taken by the ACOTF to disperse the oil and no further damage reported. The vessel is owned by the War Shipping Administration.
4. Recommendation is made that the case be closed by the Intelligence Officer.
5. The subject vessel is owned by the War Shipping Administration and is operated by Spencer-Kello JOSEPH L. GREEN, New York City.