

REPORT OF SABOTAGE

on

SS JACQUES CARTIER

Agwilines, Inc., G.A., New York, N.Y.

Lamport & Holt, L.A.

Master: T. Moe

By: James H. Blake, United States War Shipping Administration

11/9/44 Capt. B.D. Hickney, representative for Lamport & Holt called me at 19.15 and informed me that the Master of the above-named vessel had requested him to call me, and ask me to come to the vessel as soon as possible.

I immediately went to the vessel at the West Float Dock where it had been discharging and found that they were shifting to the Alfred basin. However, I met Capt. Hickney on the dock, and he informed me that persons unknown had filled the oil cups on the steering engine with sand, which would have to be removed, and bearing cleaned before the vessel could proceed on the voyage which was set for 07.00 12/9/44.

While waiting for the vessel to arrive at the Alfred Dock I reported the matter to Constable Hoffman on duty at A-Bridge station; also called the U.S. Navy and requested Mr. Lyon on duty there to report the matter to the proper officials, also made special request that the Naval intelligence be informed.

As soon as the vessel docked, went aboard, and found that it had been the Chief Engineer Mr. R. E. Martinsen who had made the request for assistance. The matter of investigating was taken in hand by the Birkenhead Police who kept officers on the vessel all night and continued the investigation on 12/9/44, as the sailing of the vessel had been delayed. The U.S. Navy had officers aboard in the forenoon of 12/9/44. As no officials of our Government had been aboard when I left the vessel at midnight the matter was reported to the U.S. Army Intelligence.

When I went aboard the vessel after it had been made fast at the Alfred Dock and by the time I had interviewed the Master and the Chief Engineer, also in the meantime, Police officers had arrived and interviewed both the Master and Chief Engineer. However, the investigation was handicapped due to most of the crew being ashore. In the Engine Department the only ones that could be interviewed were the Chief and First Assistant Engineer, and one oiler, the rest being ashore.

Due to the condition of the crew, and to make every endeavor to clear the sand from the bearings, I endeavored to get shore help, but was unable to do so until regular work hours Tuesday, when two machinists came aboard to assist. The American Bureau was also notified as the safety of the vessel depended on the proper freeing of the bearings.

During the forenoon of the 12/9/44 Lt. J.M. Donahoe and Lt (JG) J.J. Dutton of the U.S. Coast Guard visited the vessel and also Lt. J.A. Blanchard of the U.S. Navy and Mr. John Harris of the U.S. Army Intelligence took up the investigation on behalf of their departments.

REPORT OF SURVEY by Mr. W.J. Bews, American Bureau of Shipping
Mr. A. Mitchell - Chas. Howson & Co., Ltd.
Mr. James H. Blake, U/S. War Shipping Administration

Found

That the boxes on the main Journals, cups on crank pins and eccentric straps had been filled with sand, and that loose sand had been poured into worm gear through the opening around vertical shaft, making it necessary to remove the shaft journal boxes and worm gear housing in order to free the bearings from sand.

Recommendation: Permanent repairs were made and surveyed by the American Bureau after completion. It is recommended, however, that a close check be kept on the behavior of the crew (including the Navy gun crew) for it is very apparent that the damage and loss of time in this case was due mainly to lack of discipline. And effort should be made to assist the Master in the handling of a crew that is evidently out of control. Both the Master and the Chief Engineer appear to be very competent and trustworthy. However, the present Master did not sign on the crew, and only took command after the vessel had discharged the outward cargo and had been placed in operations, and it is very evident that a majority of the crew are dissatisfied with the vessel being in operations, and are not cooperating with the Master. (signed) James H. Blake, Port Engineer, WSA

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