

EXCERPT FROM BOARDING REPORT WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO COAST GUARD:

"Approximately a week before the sailing date from Aberdeen, finding himself short an able seaman, the Master requested the Recruitment and Manning Division of the War Shipping Administration to send a man. About four days, after this request, Ernie Miles WETTLAND, #2-256915, E-339377, Seaman's passport #57935, reported on board to fill the vacancy and after working two days was asked to sign the Articles. Before signing WETTLAND asked where the vessel was bound and was told that this information was not available, but that the prospect was that she would, after stopping in San Pedro, sail to the South Pacific area. WETTLAND then refused to sign the Articles saying that he only sailed coastwise or on the Alaska run, and by his other statements indicated a preference for working on board vessels in port. The Master stated that it was evident that WETTLAND knew the prospective destination of the ship when he came on board as this information was well known to the crew. A hurried request was made to the War Shipping Administration for a replacement, and a man by the name of Kenneth HODGE was sent aboard and he readily signed the Articles. Just prior to sailing, Mr. Ralph OLSON, a Seattle representative of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, came on board and stated that the members of the Sailors' Union in the crew could not sail because they received only one draw on their pay while in port instead of two in violation of the union contract, further because HODGE, the new man, had not been cleared by the union. A check with the Shipping Commissioner revealed that the men were entitled to but one draw, but OLSON persuaded the sailors to quit on the ground that HODGE was not cleared by the union in spite of the contention that HODGE had been sent only because the Sailors' Union of the Pacific hiring hall could not furnish a man. OLSON contended that a man became available after HODGE signed on, and that the latter would have to be replaced by a union man. To prevent friction HODGE quit, and OLSON agreed to let the other men sail, promising to furnish a replacement. The replacement never arrived and the sailing was delayed one hour and seventeen minutes. When the JAMES OLIVER, which had a mean draft of about twenty-six feet, reached Gray's Harbor Bar the tide was running with large swells and a mean depth of only thirty feet whereas if the ship had departed on schedule there would have been no ebb or swells, and the bar could have been crossed without danger. In spite of the safe clearance of the bar in this case, the Master felt that the delay caused by OLSON was a danger to the vessel and that the crew was unjustified in delaying the vessel's departure."

SOURCE: 12ND Boarding Report, SS JAMES OLIVER (US), dated 6/11/43.

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