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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
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JUN 19 1945

P.O. C.M.  
P.O.R. mal

13 June, 1945

**CONFIDENTIAL**

To: The Commandant (INT)

Subj: SS JOHN SWETT; reported sabotage aboard the

Ref: (a) Lieut. C. J. Moran's report to DIO-14th NavDist, confidential,  
dated 4 June, 1945, same subject; copy of

Reference (a) is forwarded for HQ information.

*F. K. Johnson*  
F. K. JOHNSON  
Asst. DCGO

Incl  
Ref. (a)

*Index  
Siv. x 14th ND (5)  
Sabotage  
inv. 191*

DECLASSIFIED  
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By LW NARA Date 5/25/17

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C O P Y

CJM/af

CONFIDENTIAL

4 June 1945

MEMO FOR: The D.I.O.

Subj: S.S. JOHN SWETT, reported sabatage aboard the.

Encls: (A) Match stick and twine found in oil line of  
Subject ship  
(B) Drawing of fouled apparatus

1. On 31 May 1945, at about 1030, this office was contacted by Ensign Petersilge, Merchant Marine Hearing Unit, U.S.C.G., regarding possible sabotage aboard the S.S. JOHN SWETT, a Liberty Ship berthed at Pier 29-A, Honolulu harbor.

2. Chief Specialist Alexander, boarded Subject ship at about 1145 on 31 May 1945, and learned that a piece of a match stick (scratch anywhere type)  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches long and six pieces of heavy twine, each measuring  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, and two thin unravelled fragments of the same type of twine,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, had been found in an oil line which supplied lubricating oil to the steering mechanism. The match stick and the twine are attached as enclosure (A).

3. On 31 May 1945, at about 1300, James A. ROBINSON, Captain of Subject ship, was interviewed by Chief Specialist Alexander and the reporting officer. Robinson stated substantially as follows:

I came aboard this ship on 23 April 1945. From that date until 12 May the ship was in drydock in Wilmington, California. I have no record of the repairs that were made but Mr. Neergard of Burns Steamship Company, 125 W. Anaheim, Wilmington probably has a list of those repairs. We started on this voyage from San Pedro on 12 May and arrived at Point Hueneme on 13 May. We loaded Navy general cargo and departed on 19 May. We were scheduled to go directly to advance bases in the Philippines, but had to put into Honolulu on 27 May for further repairs. The Chief Engineer can tell you the details about the match stick and string that were found in the oil line.

4. On 31 May 1945, Robert Eric Wharton, Chief Engineer, was interviewed by Chief Specialist Alexander and the reporting officer. Wharton stated substantially as follows:



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I came aboard at Point Hueneme, and this is my first trip on this ship. On the second day out of Point Hueneme we noticed that the main bearing of the steering mechanism was hot. From then on we found it necessary to oil the bearing by hand. This ship is in terrible condition and we had to put into Honolulu for a number of repairs. During this time we discovered that the oil line from the sump to the pump which pumps lubricating oil to the steering mechanism was clogged by several pieces of heavy twine and a piece of match stick. The twine and the match stick were found in the line at a point where the line enters the pump. The twine was stuffed into the line just below a removable fitting, apparently by the use of the match stick. I have no doubt whatsoever that the twine and the match stick were put into the line intentionally. I am definitely of the opinion that it was done before the voyage started, probably while the ship was in drydock. I have three oilers; I have no reason to think that any one of them did it. Two of them are so green they wouldn't know how to do it, and I consider the other fellow a good, trustworthy man.

5. An inspection of the fouled apparatus was undertaken and a rough drawing (enclosure B) was made. It was observed that the twine and the match stick were discovered in the oil line at a point immediately below an easily removable fitting. At this point the line is connected at a right angle, to the intake section of the pump. The oil line is  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch inside diameter. A few inches above the fitting the line makes a bend at almost a 90 degree angle. Because of this bend in the line, it appears that the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch match stick could not have come through the line from the sump. The amount of the twine found, enough to fill about one-third of a pocket match box, indicates that it could have come through the line from the sump only with much difficulty.

6. Subject ship was scheduled to leave Honolulu harbor at 1700 on 31 May to continue its voyage, and the considerable activity preparatory to its departure made it unfeasible to question other members of the ship's personnel.

7. D.I.O.-LAND files contain no pertinent adverse information regarding any member of the ship's complement.

C. J. MORAN  
Lieutenant, USNR