

65 - CONFIDENTIAL.



TREASURY DEPARTMENT

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

New Orleans, Louisiana,

23 January, 1940.

Office of Commander,
New Orleans District.From: Commander, New Orleans District.
To: Commandant.Subject: Assistance of distressed persons by American S.S. KOHALA;
report on.

1. Upon the arrival of the American S.S. KOHALA at New Orleans, Louisiana, a representative of this office boarded her for the purpose of ascertaining the facts in connection with the assistance rendered distressed persons on Serrana Bank Light.

2. In the absence of the Master and Chief Mate of the KOHALA, the Second Mate, Mr. Charles M. Devlin, was interviewed. Mr. Devlin's statements, supported by notations in the navigational log of the KOHALA, indicate that at 0800, 16 January, 1940, when that vessel was bound north from the Canal Zone and in a position about five (5) miles off Serrana Bank Light, the mate on watch observed a flag flying on Serrana Bank Light tower, evidently as a distress signal, although the nationality of the flag could not be made out because of the distance. At 0806, a small boat containing two men was sighted dead ahead and at 0812 the KOHALA was stopped and the small boat came alongside. The two men stated that they were part of a group of men tending the lights at Serrana Bank and Quita Sueno Bank, that there were eight men all told in the party, that the men at both lights had been out of food for two days, and that the supply vessel J.T. TAYLOR was not expected back from the Canal Zone for about three weeks. The men stated they were English subjects and residents of the Island of Cayman Brac. The Master of the KOHALA was aware that both Serrana Bank and Quita Sueno Bank lights were maintained by the United States but assumed the men had been hired to work on the lights and they being in distress, he gave the two men in the small boat the following list of provisions:

48 lbs. flour	4 tins tea	10 lbs. lima beans
12 cans evap. milk	1 sack wh. potatoes	6 lbs. cream of wheat
2 lbs. corn meal	10 lbs. macaroni	1 bottle catsup.
25 lbs. sugar	30 lbs. rice	35 lbs. beef.

The two men in the small boat, who were both colored, signed a receipt for the provisions using their last names only, which the receipt indicates were Ballinger and Christian. The KOHALA then proceeded on her voyage the Master later releasing the radio message concerning the incident which Headquarters is cognizant of.

SYH/REG.

R. L. JACK.