

OFFICE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1943 SEP 11 AM 9 35

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AMERICAN CONSULATE

Pará, Brazil, August 30, 1943.

SUBJECT: Change of Masters of American S. S. Lake Frugality.

*Hubert
H. Turnbull*

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to Part II, Section 208(b) of the Foreign Service Regulations and to enclose herewith copies of a statement from the United States Army doctor in charge of the Base Hospital here as well as statements from the Chief Mate of the S. S. Lake Frugality and certificates of the Master and the Lieutenant (jg) in charge of the Navy gun crew aboard that vessel regarding the nervous breakdown and attempted suicide of the Master.

On the basis of these declarations to the effect that the Master had suffered a nervous breakdown and that competent authority considered him unfit for sea duty, the Consulate officially removed the Master, Mr. John Yordt, from command and appointed Mr. John Wilkin, Chief Mate, as temporary Master in order that the vessel would be able to sail. Arrangements were made for Mr. Yordt to be repatriated to the United States by Army Transport plane under care of an attendant and upon recommendation of the doctor. These arrangements were made with the full knowledge and approval of both the Master, Mr. Yordt, and Booth and Company (London) Ltd., the local agents.

It was the understanding of the Consulate that the vessel was only to remain in port for three to four days hence immediate action was deemed necessary in order to avoid delay in sailing and as will be seen from the declarations of the Army Doctor and Lt. Anderson, the Master was obviously unable to remain in command and was dangerous to the safety of the vessel, its cargo and crew.

CONFIDENTIAL

Originally

To safeguard the security of the information contained herein, please initial and return to Intelligence for filing when it has served its purpose

File

SEP 11 1943

CHB

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the Captain of the s.s. LAKE BRUGALITY came to me last Tuesday, 17th of August, about 8:15 in the morning and asked me to lock him up. He said his nerves were gone and he could not stay on the bridge any longer. He said that last night he had almost jumped overboard. He asked me to lock him in my room where he could not harm himself or anyone else. I informed the chief mate of what had happened and he asked me to take care of things as he had no one available to handle the situation at the time. I gave him some medicine to quiet his nerves and organized a 24-hour watch over him to prevent self destruction. Lt. Stealey, USA, Lt. McCall, USA, and I stood a, 4 hours on and 8 hours off, watch over the captain until Friday morning when I went to the chief mate and told him the strain was too much for us and as it was a merchant marine problem that he should find some way of having his ship's officers help us stand watch. He readily agreed and did assign six men to help us.

Wednesday morning about eight o'clock the Captain walked into his bath room, stuck a razor into his neck and attempted to slash his throat. I was right there and grabbed his arms before he could pull the razor across his throat. Later, he kept saying that he wanted to jump overboard. Lt. Stealey, Security Officer for Cargo, and I put him in bed and contacted the Commodore by blinker signal. We told him what had happened and asked him to remove the Captain from the ship for safe-keeping. They evidently did not have proper facilities and instead gave us instructions on how to administer some Phenobarbital that would quiet him down. They brought the Phenobarbital alongside our ship and threw it to us. We had taken all articles, which the Captain might use for self destruction, from his room. However, he managed to find a pocket knife which I was fortunate enough to find in his hands and take away from him before he had done any more damage to himself. He began to think that the F.B.I. would be waiting for him at the dock. There would be periods of an hour or two when he would seem perfectly normal, then there would be periods when his head would hurt him and he would be in a dangerous condition looking for every chance to commit suicide.

We administered the Phenobarbital for two days, Wednesday and Thursday. Friday he seemed better and would ask to go up on the bridge to see how things were. He had to be watched constantly to keep him from jumping overboard. Each time he went to the bridge his nervous condition would become noticeably worse. He would shake and sweat profusely. Yesterday he jabbed a pencil in his eye during a spell. He has no desire to remain on board ship, or ever go to sea again. In his sane moments he tries to reason what is the matter with him. He says he should be in jail or that someone should shoot him. He has wished that he were dead. We had the Army and Navy remove him from the ship last night. An ambulance was awaiting at the dock. He was taken to an Army hospital. I understand that after a period of observation and treatment it is planned to send him back to the United States in an Army transport plane.

Don E. Anderson, Lt. (jg), USNR
 Don E. Anderson, Lt. (jg), USNR

United States of Brazil)
 State of Para, City of Belem)
 Consulate of the United) ss:
 States of America)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 23rd day of August, 1943.

Willard R. Ray

Willard R. Ray
 Vice Consul of the United
 States of America

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Originally, however, the agents notified the operators in the United States, Lykes Brothers Steamship Company, Inc., in New Orleans, through the United States Naval Observer here and had removed the Master from the ship to the Army Hospital without previously notifying the Consulate. The next day the Consulate was advised by letter from the local agents, as per copy enclosed, but by that time the Consulate was already advised of what had happened by the Chief Mate and the Purser who reported to the Consulate for instructions the following morning.

In due course the Naval Observer received a reply from the Company stating that it was sending Mr. William Lovgren to this port by plane to assume command. The Consulate was not advised of this reply until after the new Master had arrived and had actually reported to the Consulate on his own. Mr. Lovgren was at that time appointed as Master and the vessel was made ready for sea.

Respectfully yours,

Edward D. McLaughlin
American Consul

Enclosures:

Certificate of Master.
Certificate of Lt. (jg)
Anderson.
Copy of letter from Doctor.
Copy of letter from Agents.
Copy of Statement of Chief
Mate.

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WRR/mnh

Original and hectograph
to the Department.
Copy to the Embassy,
Rio de Janeiro.

COPY

UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES SOUTH ATLANTIC
HEADQUARTERS 193rd STATION HOSPITAL
APO 603, c/o POSTMASTER
MIAMI, FLORIDA

26 August 1943

SUBJECT: Yordt, John.

TO : The American Consul, Belem, Pará.

1. Mr. John Yordt was discharged from this hospital today following a medical check.

2. Our findings indicate that he is physically unfit for duty on ocean going ships. His immediate return to the United States for medical treatment is indicated.

(s) E.H. Wagenaar

E.H. WAGENAAR,
Major, M. C.,
Commanding.

COPY

BOOTH & CO. (LONDON) LTD.

PARÁ
Brasil

23rd August, 1943.

Edward McLaughlin, Esq.,
American Consul.
Pará.

Dear Sir,

s/s "LAKE FRUGALITY".

Present serves to inform you that this vessel arrived on the 22nd inst. p.m. with cargo for the American Army.

We were advised by telephone by the U.S.A. Naval Observer that her Captain was suffering from nervous breakdown and that he was making arrangements for the removal of the Captain to the American Hospital in Val-de-Caes.

This was done last night and the ship apparently is now without a master, a fact that we are communicating to the Mississippi Shipping Company, New Orleans today through the Naval Observer.

Yours faithfully,
p.pro. Booth & Co. (London) Ltd.,

(s) A. Purcell

COPY

AUGUST 24, 1943

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

ON AUGUST 17TH., 1943 CAPTAIN JOHN YORDT OF THE S. S. LAKE FRUGALITY SAID THAT HE WAS FEELING ILL AND ASKED GUNNERY OFFICER TO LOCK HIM UP BECAUSE HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HE MAY DO TO HIMSELF. GUNNERY OFFICER TOOK HIM IN CAPTAINS QUARTERS AND ASKED HIM TO LAY DOWN. WE SET CONTINUOUS WATCHES OVER CAPTAIN YORDT BECAUSE HE SAID THAT HE MIGHT JUMP OVERBOARD. HE TRIED ONCE TO CUT HIS THROAT WITH A SAFETY RAZOR, BUT THE GUNNERY OFFICER PREVENTED HIM FROM DOING THIS.

WE SIGNALLED TO CONVOY COMMODORE TO SEND A DOCTOR ON-BOARD, AND HE SENT SOME PILLS WITH INSTRUCTIONS. THIS MEDICINE HELPED THE CAPTAIN A CONSIDERABLE.

ON ARRIVAL IN BELEM, CAPTAIN YORDT WAS SENT TO THE HOSPITAL. HE COMPLAINED THAT THE TOP OF HIS HEAD HURT HIM AT TIMES, HE SEEMED TO BE VERY NERVOUS AT TIMES.

(s) J. Wilkin
CHIEF MATE

CERTIFICATE

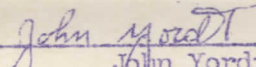
I, John Yordt, Master of the American SS "Lake Frugality", do hereby certify that, due to what is presumed to be a nervous breakdown suffered by me at approximately 8:30 p.m., August 17, 1943, I do not consider myself as able to carry on my duties as Master of this vessel and I therefore recommend that the American Consulate at the Port of Para, Brazil, remove me from command of my ship, appointing in my stead as Master, to serve in such capacity temporarily and until the vessel's return to the United States, Mr. John Wilkin, Chief Mate, and whom I consider perfectly qualified to carry out such duties.

I do further certify that my opinion regarding the state of my mental health is corroborated by Major Edward H. Wagnaur, USA, MC, Commanding Officer of the United States Army base hospital in which I am interned and undergoing treatment at the present time.

It is understood that I am to be furnished air transportation from this port to Miami, Florida, and that it will be necessary for an attendant to accompany me on such trip, possibly as far as New Orleans, Louisiana, where the head office of the vessel's operators is situated.

I further certify that I consider my removal and replacement as the proper action to be taken, particularly with regard to the safety of the vessel, its cargo, and crew.

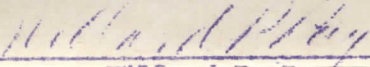
Being at this time sound of mind, I affix my signature and seal to the foregoing this 25th day of August, 1943.



 John Yordt
 Master, SS "Lake Frugality"

United States of Brazil)
 State of Para)
 City of Belen) SS:
 Consulate of the United)
 States of America)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 25th day of August, 1943.



 Willard R. Ray
 Vice Consul of the United
 States of America