

Q. Could you guess about height the draft were dropped from into the water?

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. I would say twelve feet.

Q. Tell us where the rafts were stored?

STEEL SEAFARER (September 5, 1941)

A. Up in the rigging that ran up to the mast; there was a trigger there to release the raft.

The Master suggests that more emergency lights be installed in the following places:

- "In Crews quarters aft. (3)
- 1 or 2 in each alleyway in midship house.
- 1 in each alleyway in forward midship house.
- 1 in Master's office.
- 1 on each side of boat deck.
- 1 in wheel house.
- "And, of course, the ones in the engine room and fire room."

He also suggests that all officers should have flashlights, kept in boxes instead of being hung up. Also, that all ships bound to the Red Sea should be painted a neutral color and that all cases stowed on deck should be painted a neutral color and not white. The Master suggests that the hull be painted a dark grey, masts, funnel, deck housing, and ventilators lighter grey. Also suggests that 6 life preservers should be placed in the wheelhouse for the convenience of men on watch, who probably would not have time to go to their cabins for their own.

LIHUE (February 23, 1942)

Fireman C. Willard West testified:

Q. Briefly, did you notice any defective material with regards to equipment?

A. Yes, life-rafts.

Q. Any fault on part of the personnel?

A. No, none.

Q. How many rafts did the vessel have?

A. Four.

Q. Do you know if they got four overboard?

A. They did but one, when it hit the water, broke into pieces.

A. All the top boards came off.

Q. As far as you know, how many rafts broke?

A. Two that broke, both on port side.

"Q. Could you guess about height the draft were dropped from into the water?

"A. I would say twelve feet.

"Q. Tell us where the rafts were stored?

"A. Up in the rigging that ran up to the mast; there was a trigger there to release the raft.

"Q. Is that a 'Pelican'?

"A. Yes.

"Q. Would that have to be released for each raft individually?

"A. Yes, kapok.

"A. Yes.

"Q. What color?

"A. Dark blue.

"Q. You could not drop them? Is that a good idea?

"A. With deck cargo they put on ship, I don't see how they could release each one separately.

"Q. Were they in skids?

"A. Yes.

"Q. Were you lowered from the vessel in a boat?

"A. No, went down over a line.

"Q. What kind of line?

"A. A line that swung from up in the davits down to the boat.

"Q. Were these davits equipped with a span, with life-lines?

"A. Yes.

"Q. That is what you slid down?

"A. Yes.

"Q. Did you carry your lifeboats in?

"A. No, they were out.

"Q. Any covers on them?

"A. No.

"Q. They were left open but secured?

"A. Yes.

"A. The size of the boat I was on was supposed to hold 37 but

even with the 24 men, made it impossible to row the boat. We had a fellow with a broken leg and that made it bad for a man to row so six were transferred to the life raft. This raft on port side of the boat, but the men that were in it were continually hammering down the boards with the heels of their shoes and some of the naval men were using their pistol butts to keep the boards down so the kapok barrels would not float out. In my opinion, if they bolted these boards instead of using straight nails, the rafts would not drop to pieces; even with a drop of 12 feet, raft should not drop to pieces and the life preservers, I think it would be better if they were of kapok instead of cork - the kapok won't knock you out if they hit you under the chin.

Q. Did the Naval fellows have a different kind of life preserver?
A. Yes, kapok.

Q. How long were you on the raft?
A. Thirteen hours. We were picked up between twelve and one noon next day.

Q. What color?

A. Dark blue.

Q. Special naval life preservers?

A. Yes. Perfectly solid.

Q. You think they are better?
A. Yes, I do. They were.

Q. Did someone shut main engines down?
A. Yes, Second assistant did.

Q. Did someone shut main engines down?
A. Yes, Second assistant did.

Q. In my opinion they should keep life boats swung up on the side.

Q. Anything else you want to say, in the record? Did you have any water on the raft?

A. Yes, a keg.

Q. Did you have occasion to use any?
A. No.

A. No.

Q. Any food on the raft?
A. Yes, sir.

A. Yes, but we did not need food. We never broke the packages open but they were supposed to be chocolate.

A. No. I am quite sure they were not.

OLGA (March 12, 1942)

Q. Do you have any comments to make or any suggestions to make as regards to the life saving equipment which you got and from your experience?
A. The only thing I can say is that the rafts are the best possible.

First Assistant Engineer Ernest P. Campbell testified: