

22 October, 1940.

CONFIDENTIAL - No. 237

Memorandum for Assistant Secretary Herbert E. Gaston:

Subject: French MV BELAIN D'ESNAMBUC.

The following report has been received from the Commander, New York District, U. S. Coast Guard: received from the Captain of the Port of New York with regard to the above vessel:

"Further information on subject matter indicates that there were five men brought from New Orleans to New York under guard, instead of four as previously reported. The five men were sent in the custody of two guards from a private detective agency believed to be located in New Orleans, and temporarily placed on board the NORMANDIE. The New York office of the French Line claimed that they did not know the agency, but such information could be obtained from the New Orleans office of the French Line.

"It is rumored that these four men were 'free France' or De Gaulle. It was reported by French Line officials that the five men involved were in difficulty with the Immigration authorities at New Orleans, and it was desired to send them back to French territory. It was also said that these men were 'bad actors', and it was necessary to remove them from the MICHIGAN.

"One of these four men, named Roger Wisniewski, jumped overboard. These men were transported from the NORMANDIE to the BELAIN D'ESNAMBUC on October 3, 1940, by the Oceanic Service Corporation, a private detective agency specializing in waterfront watching and policing matters, at the request of the French Line.

"The local office of the Immigration Bureau had no direct information in the matter.

"The BELAIN D'ESNAMBUC took these seamen to Martinique, French West Indies."

Honorable Herbert E. Gaston,  
Assistant Secretary  
of the Treasury.

F. P. ROACH,  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard,  
L. C. COVELL, Lt.  
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard,  
Assistant Commandant.