

RECOMMENDATIONS

3 July, 1943

WILLIAM K. VANDERBILT 5-17-43

WM. F. GOLDSMITH, Master

Keys To Radio.- I believe the keys to the radio should be in the custody of the Master, because the manner in which they are now sealed in the box in the radio shack, it might be impossible to get at these keys in the event the bulkhead on which this sealed box is placed should be damaged.

Exits.- I suggest that in addition to the door on the starboard passageway, bridge deck, leading to the bridge, be supplemented by an additional door opening on the port side passageway so that we have two passageways to bridge.

Radio Operator and Warnings.- When I arrived in Suva an Officer, who I believe was in command of the area, told me they knew several hours prior to the time of the attack, that I was on a collision course with a submarine and that he had sent out three messages to me, trying to divert the ship. However, I later heard that there were three submarines in the vicinity and that I had passed between two, and the third one was the one that attacked me. I had only one operator (radio) who stands watches in accordance with ham schedules and also put in extra hours on his own accord. However, as he went off watch at 9 o'clock PM, May 16, 1943, we did not receive the messages. The auto alarm did not go off between 9 PM and the time of the attack. My radio operator informs me that in talking with radio operators in Suva, they were not acquainted with tripping the alarm on ships to call attention when we have a message to send. If this had been done in my case I could have diverted the ship and perhaps would have avoided the submarine.

Warning of Subs By Planes. If they had sent a plane out and that plane had dropped a flare ahead of me, I should have immediately gotten out of that vicinity, feeling that there was some danger ahead. However, no plane came out to warn me.

Bulkheads.-This liberty ship that I was on had a solid bulkhead in the after end of the engine room. There was a closed port hole in this bulkhead leading into the shaft alley. I believe this bulkhead should be entirely solid with no port hole whatever.