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8025. CONFIDENTIAL USSR

TB 2587 No. 4764
SS Flying Trader, American Vessel (at Vladivostok)
T/I, G-2, GHQ, FEC
F-3 2 Nov 1949 9 Dec 1949
none 441st CIC Det, APO 503 see below

This report summarizes observations made by one of the crew members of the SS Flying Trader (Isbrantsen Steamship Co.) while the ship was docked at Vladivostok, 22-24 October 1949. The information concerns ships seen in the harbor, inspection of the SS Flying Trader by Soviet officials, and the granting of shore leave to crew members.

SOURCE

Information was obtained on 2 November 1949 from Bostick, Charles, Chief Engineer, Z116574 SS Flying Trader, at Yokohama, Japan.

For the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2:

J. H. POLK
Lt Col, GSC
Asst Exec, G-2

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SS FLYING TRADER, AMERICAN VESSEL (AT VLADIVOSTOK)

The SS Flying Trader arrived at Vladivostok on 22 October 1949 and was boarded by Russian officials who inspected the vessel. The inspection crew seemed interested primarily in the possibility of stowaways aboard the vessel. The inspection of the vessel continued for approximately seven hours, two of which the crew had to remain on deck. As the Flying Trader entered the harbor, all navigational aids of the harbor were functioning properly. The radio and store room of the vessel were sealed upon docking at Vladivostok. The Flying Trader was brought into the harbor by a Russian pilot. While the SS Flying Trader was making way to dock, a conventional-type naval target was being towed seaward by a Russian vessel. When the vessel docked, a Russian, name unknown, met the ship and made all the arrangements for the ship during its stay in port. (F-3)

The following naval ships were observed in the harbor at Vladivostok:

Two cruisers (former Japanese two stackers) approximately ten thousand tons.

Three large destroyers (Italian built)

Two destroyer escorts (American built) 323' class

Two submarine chasers (American made) 180' class

Submarines (Number unknown but a few submarines were noted. Submarines are believed of Italian origin, built for coastal defense)

Three vessels, nationality unknown, class 2000 ton, undetermined number, flying a white flag with a red star in the center.

PT boats (undetermined number, American) (F-3)

Two transports, 14000 ton and 18000 ton class, painted white, were being loaded with troops. These transports are believed to be of German origin. These troops were not carrying any equipment but a number of trucks were parked by the transports loaded with equipment. Two Russian vessels, 7000 to 8000 ton class, were anchored near the SS Flying Trader. These vessels were loaded with Japanese soldiers and were believed to be the troops awaiting repatriation. The troops aboard these vessels were singing the Internationale. (F-3)

A metal type net was observed in one area near the harbor. This net is believed to be a submarine net.

The stevedoring at the port was done by Russian men and women. The men worked in the holds of the ship and the women were employed as cargo checkers and were not allowed in the hold of the ship. These workers would not accept gifts of candy or cigarettes from the crew members of the SS Flying Trader; the workers appeared to be afraid of each other. The SS Flying Trader discharged seven thousand barrels of wood and Tung oil and took on a cargo of silk and tea.

While the SS Flying Trader was docked at Vladivostok, the crew members were permitted shore leave. The crew was subject to a strict search upon departing the vessel and upon return. The crew received 530 (probably 5.30) rubles for an American dollar. Some of the crew stated they were under constant surveillance while in Vladivostok. A curfew was in existence, hour unknown, but was not enforced while the crew was on shore leave.

On 24 October 1949, the vessel completed loading and prepared to depart. Officials inspected the vessel before it was allowed to depart. This inspection took approximately five hours. Also at this time, the crew had to remain on deck for two hours. (F-3)

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While the SS Flying Trader was docked at Vladivostok, the crew members were permitted shore leave. The crew was subject to a strict search upon departing the vessel and upon return. The crew received $30 (probably $.30) rubles for an American dollar. Some of the crew stated they were under constant surveillance while in Vladivostok. A curfew was in existence, hour unknown, but was not enforced while the crew was on shore leave.

On 24 October 1949, the vessel completed loading and prepared to depart. Officials inspected the vessel before it was allowed to depart. This inspection took approximately five hours. Also at this time, the crew had to remain on deck for two hours. (X-3)

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8005. CONFIDENTIAL China

TB 2586 No. 4763
SS Flying Trader, American Vessel (Intercepted by Chinese Nationalists)
T/I, G-2, GHQ, FEC
F-3 2 Nov 1949 9 Dec 1949
none 441st CIC Det, APO 503 see below

This report pertains to the interception of the American vessel, SS Flying Trader of the Isbrantsen Steamship Company by a Chinese Nationalist destroyer escort on 15 October 1949 as the Flying Trader departed Shanghai.

SOURCE

Information was obtained on 2 November 1949 from Hager, A.C. (American) Master of the SS Flying Trader while the ship was docked in Yokohama.

For the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2:

J. H. POLK
Lt Col, GSC
Asst Exec, G-2

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SS FLYING TRADER, AMERICAN VESSEL (INTERCEPTED BY CHINESE NATIONALISTS)

On 2 October 1949, the SS Flying Trader, owned and operated by the Insbrandtsen Line of New York, was proceeding to Shanghai. When the ship approached the mouth of the Yangtze River, it noted the SS Flying Clipper and the SS Flying Independent being escorted by a Chinese Nationalist destroyer. Meanwhile, the SS Flying Trader slipped into Shanghai. (F-3)

The SS Flying Trader was docked at Shanghai from 3 October 1949 to 15 October 1949 where she was taking cargo. On 15 October 1949, the SS Flying Trader departed Shanghai and was intercepted by a Chinese Nationalist destroyer escort (American made) and was ordered to 'lay anchor'. The order was not acknowledged by the master of the SS Flying Trader and the destroyer escort fired a shot across the bow of the SS Flying Trader. The SS Flying Trader dropped anchor and the master of the SS Flying Trader demanded the destroyer escort explain its actions. The destroyer escort also dropped anchor and replied that both ships were to await orders from the Nationalist Government. On 16 October 1949, the destroyer escort signalled to the SS Flying Trader and requested the destination of the ship. The SS Flying Trader replied she was going to Korea believing she would be detained if she gave her true destination. At this time, the SS Flying Trader was permitted to depart. The SS Flying Trader was not carrying any passengers as reported by newspapers. (F-3)

While the SS Flying Trader was anchored at Shanghai, cargo was loaded aboard ship only during the hours of darkness because of air raids by the Chinese Nationalist Air Force. These raids took place only during day-light hours. The ship was under constant guard by Chinese Communist soldiers while in Shanghai. Crew members were allowed shore leave while at Shanghai but were to abide by a 1700 hour curfew. This curfew was not strictly adhered to by the crew members and was not enforced by the Chinese Communists. There appears to be no curfew on the residents of Shanghai. The residents of Shanghai do not want the Chinese People's Government, and the people fear the Chinese Red Army. (F-3)

(18)

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(81)

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8005. CONFIDENTIAL China

TB 2585 No. 4762
SS Flying Cloud (Shelling by Chinese Nationalist Gunboat)
T/I, G-2, GHQ, FEC
B-2 25 Nov 1949 9 Dec 1949
none 441st CIC Det, APO 503 see below

This report concerns the shelling of the SS Flying Cloud of Isbrantsen Steamship Company by two Chinese Nationalist gunboats. The shelling took place on 15 Nov 1949 as the Flying Cloud attempted to run the Nationalist blocade outside Shanghai.

SOURCE

Information was obtained on 25 November 1949 from Rylander, Fred H., Master, SS Flying Cloud, at Yokohama, Japan.

For the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2:

J. H. POLK
Lt Col, GSC
Asst Exec, G-2

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SS FLYING CLOUD (SHELLING OF BY CHINESE NATIONALIST GUNBOAT)

The SS Flying Cloud of Isbrantsen Steamship Company entered Shanghai, China on 29 October 1949 and was not challenged while entering the Port. The vessel remained at Shanghai for approximately two weeks. On 13 November 1949, the vessel left Shanghai and came down the river where she anchored at Wusung because of bad weather. On 14 November 1949, the vessel moved down to within six miles of the Chinese Nationalist Blockade at the old Chartered Position at the Kiutoon Light Vessel. It was the Master's intention to get as close to the blockade as possible and await good weather because the channel is hazardous at this point due to wreckages. On 15 November 1949, as the vessel approached the blockade, a shot was fired from a Chinese Nationalist Destroyer escort. There was no damage, however, as the shot crossed the bow. The master pulled over and dropped anchor and two Lieutenants from the gunboat came aboard and asked the Captain if he had Chinese cargo or passengers aboard. The Master replied that he had Chinese cargo but no passengers and the Lieutenant ordered the Master to return to Shanghai and unload the cargo and told him that he would not be allowed to pass the blockade as long as he had Chinese cargo. The master told the Chinese that he was taking stores to the SS Promise, a Norwegian vessel, who was in distress approximately five miles down the river. The Promise had been without stores for four days. The master then requested the Chinese to signal him by light so that the two British naval vessels who were anchored just outside the blockade could read the message and give him clearance to proceed to the stricken vessel to give aid. The Master's purpose in this was to bluff the Chinese in giving him clearance with incident and to let the Chinese save face by having a reason for clearing the Flying Cloud. The Chinese returned to their vessel and signalled back that the Flying Cloud must not pass the blockade. The Master knew that he would be sitting at anchorage for a matter of days and would eventually be cleared so he took the chance and hoisted his anchor. The Master passed the two Chinese vessels broadside and both opened fire. The Flying Cloud took several fifty caliber rounds in the bow and one three inch shell on the port side just aft of midships. The shell entered the hold but no damage resulted other than a hole in the hull. The Chinese vessels did not give pursuit but continued firing until the Flying Cloud was about one half mile away. It is the Master's opinion that the Chinese did not wish to cause severe damage but fired to scare the Master into stopping. (B-2)

One of the Chinese gunboats was an American made destroyer escort and the other was a converted Japanese fishing vessel. The Japanese vessel was armed with anti-aircraft and machine gun weapons. The DE had the normal armament. (B-2)

On the outside of the blockade was a British frigate, the F-60 and an unidentified British Destroyer.

Within the harbor of Shanghai was the British vessels WoSang and Tsinan and the Panamanian vesses Wooster Victory. Numerous American made LST's were noticed but there were no other large vessels about the harbor. (B-2)

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