

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

TO : Mr. Cunningham, 1st Officer, USNS POPE

DATE: 1 January 1967

FROM : H. C. Sanders, Relief Officer

SUBJECT: James V. Stephens, Able Seaman, relief from duty of

At 1135 hours this date I walked into the wheelhouse and observed Stephens sitting on a stool with his head and chest resting on the log table on the starboard side of the wheelhouse, apparently asleep. Alongside of him a still smoldering cigarette had burned almost its entire length into the table top.

I called to Stephens to wake up, but he did not arouse. After calling two or three times in a loud voice without success, I shook his shoulder and called to him. He slowly sat up, but seemed totally unaware of his surroundings. He smelled strongly of liquor. The burning cigarette was mentioned to him, but he denied smoking it.

I told Stephens to go below and get some food and lunch. He did not answer or move. I again instructed him to go below and get his lunch. He said he was not hungry. I told him to get up and walk around and to get some coffee. He wanted to know if that was an order, and I replied in the affirmative. At that time he left the bridge.

Stephens returned to the wheelhouse at 1200, and I went to lunch. I had previously requested the Master at Arms to check about the vessel for qualified Deck Department personnel to assume Stephens' watch. The Master at Arms advised that the Deck Yeoman was willing to stand the remainder of Stephens' watch.

At 1220 hours I returned to the bridge and found Arentz, Deck Yeoman, waiting there. At that time I told Stephens that he was relieved from duty, and the reasons for doing so. Stephens then told Arentz that he was going to fight this and that he, Arentz, would be his witness. Stephens said he was not going to leave the bridge. When it became apparent that he intended to remain on the bridge, I ordered him to leave and he did.

Throughout this contact with Stephens it was noted that he smelled strongly of liquor, his eyes were bloodshot, his speech was thick and slurred, and he had difficulty in comprehending what was said to him. When standing he was unsteady on his feet. When he walked he staggered slightly and followed somewhat of a zig zag pattern.

In my opinion Stephens was intoxicated and was not only incapable of standing his watch, but was a threat to the safety of the ship as demonstrated by the burned table top.

A log entry has been made covering this action.

*H. C. Sanders*  
H. C. SANDERS