

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
MILITARY SEA TRANSPORTATION SERVICE, PACIFIC AREA
FORT MASON
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94129

Ser: P21/4902
21 Dec 1965

From: Commander Military Sea Transportation Service, Pacific Area
To: Master, USNS BLATCHFORD (T-AP 153)
Master, USNS ELTINGE (T-AP 154)
Master, USNS GORDON (T-AP 117)
Master, USNS POPE (T-AP 110)
Master, USNS WEIGEL (T-AP 119)

Subj: Master-at-arms billets

Ref: (a) COMSTSPAC ltr ser P21/1908 of 7 May 1965 to USNS ELTINGE
(b) COMSTSPAC ltr ser P21/2035 of 14 May 1965 to USNS GORDON
(c) COMSTSPAC ltr ser P21/2036 of 17 May 1965 to USNS BLATCHFORD
(d) COMSTSPAC ltr ser P21/3372 of 24 Aug 1965 to USNS POPE and
USNS WEIGEL

1. References (a) through (d) administratively vacated two of the three subject billets in each ship and requested masters' comments concerning results obtained by having only one master-at-arms assigned. Masters of all ships with operating experience have submitted comments which have been reviewed and considered.

2. Replies to references (a) through (c) indicate that some masters desire to reinstate the two vacated billets on a permanent or voyage-to-voyage basis. The incumbents would be used primarily in patrolling the ship to insure that all is well above and below decks. Other comments from ships' officers indicate that only one master-at-arms is required since (1) a deck officer and an able seaman are used to make adequate security rounds at sea; (2) watchmen (fire) make scheduled rounds; and (3) other watch officers, quartermasters and nonofficer watchstanders adequately control the ship.

3. The subject billets were originally established for the primary purpose of preventing unauthorized fraternization between crew members and female passengers and to provide maximum security and safety for female passengers. A secondary duty was to prevent gambling or other unlawful acts. The commercial shipping industry has no rating comparable to the subject billets.

4. One master-at-arms is presently assigned in each ship to maintain liaison with military personnel for security purposes and to maintain the ship's safety equipment in a satisfactory condition. Justification

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for this billet continues to exist. Since female passengers are not carried in addressee ships, supervisory personnel are expected to prevent unlawful acts, and presently assigned watchstanders adequately perform security rounds, it is considered that justification for the additional billets cannot be supported. Accordingly, two of the subject billets will continue to be administratively vacated.

M. W. DILLEY
By direction