

U. S. S. BRUTUS  
Pacific Station.

19 November, 1918.

My dear Sir:-

Your letter under date of 10 November, 1918 received upon my arrival here which I greatly appreciated. I thoroughly understand the position the BRUTUS occupied with no other available ship at that time, in your DIVISION, which could be sent on the duty outlined, and while it will be of course rather a strenuous trip this time of the year, I have everybody well keyed up to the situation in hand and I think that we will come off with flying colors.

DIVERSION OF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS. There is, however, a spice of inconsistency in the situation which I thought just as well to bring to your attention unofficially and confidentially, now that I can write you in that manner. It appears that there were 18 nurses (fe male) and eleven doctors assigned to go as a unit on the vessel, and when I asked at sea for a little more definite information, it was obtained through the Public Health Officials, that there were that number in the personnel assigned to duty: I at once made preparations for their accommodations and decided to transfer all the officers that I had in training and quite a number of the crew which would create the necessary accommodations, having informed my officers that they would have to leave the after end of the ship, and turn it over to the women, as they must have a private toilet, etc.

THE SPOKANE TAKES PASS-ENGERS. The Medical Officers, I had prepared to occupy the state rooms left vacant by the officers which I had transferred. This was done and now I am informed by the Public Health Officials, that we will have no women at all, at least from here to Alaska, and no medical officers, in fact, none of the unit. The few boxes of emergency supplies and stores, we are taking up on the BRUTUS, and the Personnel leave, so I am informed, to-night, on the S.S.SPOKANE, and I also have information that she makes about 13 or 14 knots, as she will get up to the first objective point quite some time ahead of the BRUTUS, the unit would be compelled to wait for the supplies which we have on board.

PRACTICABILITY OF THE SPOKANE TAKING EXPEDITION. As I note in the second paragraph of your letter, there were perhaps some hopes in your mind that the Department might charter some other vessel for this duty, I have been thinking that it would have been a splendid piece of work from a point of efficiency and quick dispatch to have extended, if possible, the trip of the SPOKANE, taking in such ports as are in the itinerary of the BRUTUS.

THIS LETTER NOT A CRITICISM. I hope you will not consider this letter at all in any way a letter of criticism, as I mean it only for information, which I consider my duty in a confidential way to impart to you.

U. S. S. BRUTUS,  
Pacific Station.

EXPEDITION CON- TROLLED FROM WASHINGTON END AND PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS. From what I can gather, the expedition has been more or less entirely controlled from the Washington End, and through the Department of Public Health Service. The Admiral here has done everything he could to help in every way possible, and we are getting out on record time. I am sure, that if it was left to the Admiral to take any such action as above, that he would probably do so.

POSSIBLE INFLUENZA IN NAVY RADIO STATIONS. From a Navy standpoint, it may be possible, though, that on account of the radio stations along the route, there may be some influenza there. If so, in that case, perhaps a Naval Vessel fits in to better advantage. This, however, is a matter merely of conjecture on my part.

BAD WEATHER ON TRIP TO SEATTLE. We had extremely bad weather coming up the Coast, and passed through two gales of wind, and another was brewing just as we got in through Flattery. My compasses, although compensated in San Francisco, was 9° out on arrival in the Sound. The ship rolled very heavily almost the entire trip up the Coast, and the decks were completely awash the whole time, with the exception of the last day. Through the working of the vessel, especially the new wooden decks, several leaks developed and some of our food supplies were wet through action of the salt water. This, I have attended to and what amount were necessary to be replenished, I have had supplied here and as the ship now stands, we are well supplied with everything.

TWISTED INTERMEDIATE VALVE STEM ON MAIN ENGINE. We also developed a twisted intermediate valve stem on the main engine on the trip coming up, but were able to run full speed with it without any inconvenience through ~~the~~ slacking up a little, and that matter did not hold us up, due to careful management by the Engineering Department. The repair was immediately undertaken here by contract and was performed in record time. They worked all night and repairs were completely finished by early this morning.

PREPARATION FOR SEA. I am about now ready for sea, but do not intend to go up through that stormy and foggy country without my compasses are thoroughly compensated and the ship swung for deviations. As we may be unable to obtain the sun, I have secured the services of a highly recommended man, having local knowledge of ranges, etc. and between them and reciprocal bearings ashore, we will probably go to sea this afternoon or very early to-morrow.

ALASKAN PILOTS OBTAINED. I had previously requested, and have now on board, two (2) highly recommended Alaskan Pilots which I think will be of valuable assistance to me, having a local knowledge of all Alaskan inland waters, tides, and currents. "SAFETY FIRST", being my motto, especially in those stormy waters this time of the year.

JAS. R. DRIGGS