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# The Evacuation of American Citizens from the United Kingdom in August and September 1939

Charles Albert Converse, London, England

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No. 4126

London, December 13, 1939.

SUBJECT: The evacuation of American citizens from the United Kingdom in August and September 1939.

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith an account of the activities of the Embassy and of the American Relief Committee in connection with the evacuation of American citizens from the United Kingdom in August and September 1939.

INTRODUCTION.

The purpose of this despatch is not only to record what was done for American citizens by the Embassy and the American Relief Committee in London during the periods immediately preceding and following the outbreak of war between the United Kingdom and Germany; but also to recall the atmosphere and circumstances in which that assistance was rendered, in view of the then general expectation of a "Blitzkrieg" on this country in the near or immediate future, involving intense air raids on London and other seaports and industrial cities.

The fact that the "Blitzkrieg" did not materialize should not be permitted to obscure the recollection, common to all who were here at that time, of impending grave danger which made imperative the swift and efficient handling of evacuation and assistance problems.

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That danger and the general basis on which those problems should be handled had long been foreseen by the Department and the Embassy (as shown by the Department's Information Series No. 113, August .... 1936, and its instructions of September 19, 1938 and March 21, 1939, and the steps taken by the Embassy and the Consulates upon the basis thereof); and the course of events in London in August 1939 emphasized the reality of the danger. British Government offices not absolutely required to be in London were moving as rapidly as possible to smaller cities away from military objectives. The City of London was rapidly becoming a "deserted village", as banks, insurance companies and many other firms moved lock, stock and barrel to such cities or into country houses in the London region. Millions of children were being evacuated at Government expense from vulnerable areas in London and other cities to be billeted on families in safer regions. The London underground railways were put out of service so that the stations could be protected against bombing and consequent flooding from burst mains. Air raid shelters in the public parks were being made ready for use, and new ones were dug. Arrangements were even being made to move the Foreign Office and the office of the Prime Minister to Windsor, although it was said that they would not move until they were "practically bombed out".

It was in this atmosphere that the Embassy set about the task of organizing itself to take care of the thousands of American tourists in this country,

and the other thousands who were already beginning to leave the Continent for England as it became more and more clear that war was coming. Prosperous conditions in the United States had brought many people to Europe, in spite of the existing state of tension. Although it was not a peak tourist year, about 22,000 came over, 20,000 of them to the United Kingdom. There having been several crisis in the previous two years, all of them peacefully resolved in one way or another, these tourists had not believed that this one would really lead to war.

THE TASKS TO BE FACED.

The recollections of August 1914 were still fresh in the minds of the older American residents of London, and those who did not recall that time were familiar with what was done then through reading contemporary records. Everyone saw the parallel, and knew that on this occasion also there would be ship cancellations, and thousands of hurried requests for steamship passages at once, both resulting in great congestion on ships, people sleeping in lounges, etc.; also that many people would be short of money and would need assistance and advice of various kinds.

It was also clearly realized, however, that the easily foreseeable dangers threatening everyone in London were much greater in 1939 than in 1914, because of the developments in air warfare equipment in recent years and open German threats to employ such means in mass air attacks on Great Britain.

It was therefore necessary not only to have an

organization equipped to furnish advice and assistance of various kinds in connection with obtaining steamship accommodations and extending temporary financial assistance to stranded Americans - - as in 1914; but also to make provision for their safety in areas less vulnerable than London, while they were awaiting the departure of their ships.

The main seaports would, it was expected, be closed to civil traffic as soon as war began; and this would necessitate the selection of special embarkation points, and the making of transportation arrangements to convey prospective evacuees thereto.

#### SETTING UP THE ORGANIZATION.

Fortunately, the task of organization did not have to be faced as an entirely new problem in August 1939.

In the first place, there was the precedent of the Hoover Committee, which had assisted the Embassy in somewhat similar circumstances in 1914. Many Americans still living in London remembered what had been done then; among them Mr. Clarence Graff, who had been the Treasurer of that Committee, and was again available for service. When the Committee was revived in the September 1938 crisis, he was made its Chairman, and he returned to that office when it met again on April 24, 1939. While the part that the Committee could play in 1939 was limited both by the nature of the new problems faced, and by the fact that it had practically no private funds at its disposal (it had £40,000 in 1914), it nevertheless proved to

be a very helpful auxiliary to the emergency organization set up in the Embassy.

In the second place, there was the experience of the Embassy itself in the September 1938 crisis. That crisis had developed so quickly that evacuation and assistance arrangements had had to be hastily improvised; and, before they could be perfected, the passing of the emergency had made them unnecessary for the time being.

That experience was nevertheless useful when the time came to set up the Embassy Emergency Organization in August 1939, because it had shown, in the first place, that the Embassy itself would have to take full responsibility for all evacuation and relief activities, even though some of the work might be done by the American Relief Committee; and, in the second place, that such an organization would have to have at its disposal a much more complete and systematized body of information as to American citizens in the London district than had been available in September 1938.

The lack just mentioned had been largely remedied before August 1939 by the creation of a central card index of American citizens, which will be described in detail in the next section of this despatch.

The Emergency Organization itself, the structure and personnel of which are shown in the attached chart (Enclosure No. 1), grew up piece-meal in August 1939,

beginning/

beginning with the Card Index Section, under Mr. Converse, and the section under Captain Kirk which was responsible for the selection of special ports of embarkation and the supply of ships for evacuation - - the first of the tasks to be handled, in point of time; and going on to the local transportation arrangements section, under Messrs. Achilles and Steyne; the emergency correspondence section, under Messrs. Chapin and Gowen, the shipping accommodations section, under Mr. Klemmer, and the disbursements section, under Mr. Borum, both these sections working closely in cooperation with the American Relief Committee. All sections worked also with the fifteen American Consuls in the United Kingdom, who were directly responsible for the Americans living in their respective districts, but who needed the assistance of the London organization in connection with shipping accommodation and relief matters.

In the remainder of this despatch, the work of the several sections of the Emergency Organization will be described in detail.

#### THE CENTRAL CARD INDEX OF AMERICAN CITIZENS.

In September 1938, the Embassy's only information as to the number and identity of American citizens in the London consular district was to be found in the citizenship registration files -- far from being a complete record, because many Americans in the United Kingdom see in normal times no imperative reason for having themselves registered; and in certain unofficial sources, chiefly The Anglo-American Yearbook, published by the American Chamber of Commerce in London. It was roughly

estimated from these sources that there were at that time about 11,000 Americans in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of whom approximately 7,500 were in the London district. This estimate was very unsatisfactory, however, because the Embassy had names and addresses of only a small fraction of this number. Only 1723 were actually registered.

Steps were therefore taken, early in 1939, to obtain so far as possible a complete registration of Americans in the London district, so that another crisis would find the Embassy far better prepared in this important respect, to assist Americans than it had been in the 1938 crisis. Mr. Converse was put in charge of this work.

On February 16, 1939, 619 letters were sent to persons listed in The Anglo-American Yearbook as Americans resident in London, but not registered at the Embassy. As a result of these invitations, 149 new registrations were obtained.

109 more Americans registered as the result of a circular letter sent out on June 10, 1939 to 483 American firms or firms with American affiliations, requesting that their American personnel register, if they had not already done so.

The press was also used for the same purpose, invitations to register being published in London morning and afternoon newspapers on several occasions.

It was therefore felt, at the end of June, that everything practicable had been done to effect a complete registration of local American residents,



including those who would not ordinarily bother to come to the office unless some special service was required; and, accordingly, steps were taken to set up the card index system specified by the Department in its instruction of March 21, 1939.

Two complete sets of cards were made, and they were filed in separate four-drawer cabinets which would be easily transportable in the event of an emergency evacuation. In addition, envelopes were addressed to every American listed, so that they would be ready for instant use should it become necessary to send out urgent communications.

When, therefore, it was decided, on August 23, 1939, to set up formally a Central Card Index Section pursuant to the instruction of March 21, 1939, the index itself was already in existence and ready for expansion in order to handle the new emergency registrations that were received daily in ever increasing numbers as the crisis developed. And when, on September 13th, the Ambassador wished to warn all Americans still here that they should continue making plans to leave in the near future, the existence of the prepared set of envelopes made it possible to send out messages 6300 in all to that effect on the same day. (His first warning, of August 24th, was issued through the press and posted in the Embassy. The third, of September 27th, was mailed in a new set of envelopes, 3150 in number, prepared immediately the first set had been used. Copies of the three messages are attached as Enclosures Nos. 2, 3, and 4.)

The new Section consisted at first only of Mr. Converse and four clerks, but the work increased so rapidly that it became necessary on August 28th to expand it to fifteen officers and twelve clerks. Nearly all ordinary work except urgent matters in the Chancery was stopped in order to make this expansion possible; and the Card Index Section included not only all subordinate consular officers, but also diplomatic secretaries and members of the staffs of the Commercial and Treasury Attaches.

The Section was moved on about August 28th into the former quarters of the Consular Commercial Office, a large room (40' x 30') just to the left of the Embassy's main entrance; but the flood of work was so great -- there were over 3,500 callers between then and September 1st -- that even that large space proved to be inadequate, and three other large rooms were thrown open, and a complement of officers and clerks assigned to each. Crowds of people came for advice and assistance from early morning until late in the evening each day, and many others telephoned from places in all parts of the country. From two to six officers stood at the long counter in the main office every day from nine in the morning until ten or later in the evening -- Saturdays, Sundays and Labor Day included -- listening to requests for information, hard luck stories about ship cancellations, lost luggage, shortage of funds, etc., etc., and having each caller fill out a registration form (copy attached as Enclosure No. 5), which was then passed back to the

A day-by-day check was kept of Americans who had expressed their intention of remaining in this country and those who planned to return to the United States, this information being taken from the emergency registration forms, and being then brought up to date for all Americans listed by means of the circular letter of September 13th. (Most of the replies thereto had come in when, on September 30th, the Section tabulated 5,310 Americans still here, of whom 2568 planned to remain indefinitely, the rest stating their intention of returning before January 1, 1940. Other replies, and revised information has continued to come in, before and since the Emergency Organization was dissolved on October 15th; and the card index is kept current. It showed that 2,649 Americans were in the London district on January 1, 1940. Few of them plan to return to the United States unless the situation becomes far more dangerous than it is at present, the large majority being either long-time residents or persons kept here for the time being under contract.)

On August 31, 1939, the Card Index Section estimated the number of American citizens in Great Britain and Northern Ireland as 14,000. This estimate was based on the Embassy's own information, compiled as above indicated, and showing 5,800 registrants in the London district, and on quickly assembled statistics then requested from other consular offices in this country. This estimate was subsequently shown to be essentially correct, when the Secretary of State for Home Affairs said in the House of Commons that there were 13,665

Americans in this country as of September 3rd.

ASSISTANCE TO AMERICANS IN CONNECTION WITH EXIT PERMIT  
REGULATIONS.

The British Government announced on September 4, 1939, that as from September 9th all Americans leaving England should secure exit permits from the British Passport and Permit Office in London or one of its branches at Cardiff, Liverpool or Glasgow. This date was subsequently changed to September the 16th. The regulations stipulated that ordinarily ten days would be required between the filing of the application and the issuance of the exit permit and that personal attendance was essential. Given on such short notice, the Central Index Bureau realized that this new requirement promised to be a real stumbling block to passengers booked for early sailings on vessels of the United States Lines and other vessels because of the time element involved and because personal attendance was essential since numbers of American citizens had flown the urban centres and were scattered throughout the South of England expecting to embark at Southampton where unfortunately there was no permit office. The British Passport Office advised us informally that they would not apply the ten days regulation for Americans returning home but requested that when possible two or three days should be allowed for the issuance of the exit permit. At the same time, it was arranged that it would not be necessary for Americans to attend in person. This arrangement, which later proved to be a very satisfactory one, did not meet the situation which  
existed/

existed during the week following September 16th the date the regulations went into force. However, upon the request of the Consulate General the British Passport Office waived the exit permit requirements for all American citizens embarking on the various American flag ships sailing before September 25th. This requirement was also waived in a number of individual cases of persons sailing on vessels other than American vessels. As a matter of record, it should be noted that the British Passport and Permit Office cooperated in every way possible to expedite the departure of American citizens for the United States.

In addition to keeping the central card index current, tabulating daily statistics, registering American citizens the staff of the Central Index Section was called upon to furnish current information regarding transportation facilities, advise and assist American citizens in securing exit permits and furnish information relative to the regulation of the British Treasury which required that every person departing from the United Kingdom should secure through his bank a permit to remove his personal funds from the country. Its records of fundamental importance to all other branches of the work of the Emergency Organization and its auxiliary, the American Relief Committee, which will be discussed below. Its statistics were used daily in estimating the amount of shipping space required; they formed the basis for the arrangements made for accommodating American evacuees at emergency embarkation points and transporting/

transporting them thereto; and the Index records were in constant use by the correspondence section in handling letters concerning exit permits, temporary financial assistance and other matters.

THE BASIC EVACUATION PLAN.

In accordance with the Department's instruction of March 21, 1939, a basic evacuation plan was tentatively drawn up by the Embassy and described in its despatch No. 2590 of May 2, 1939. When August came, however, and it became evident that war was an imminent probability, it became necessary to go into the matter in considerably more practical details than had been done in drafting that despatch; and the result was the plan put into effect on August 23rd, a copy of which is attached as Enclosure No. 7. The United Kingdom was divided, for the purpose of the plan, into four sectors, as follows:

Northern; responsible officer, Consul General Davis, Glasgow; port of embarkation, Glasgow or Greenock;

Central; responsible officer, Consul General Holland, Liverpool; port of embarkation, Holyhead;

Southern; responsible officer, Consul General Erhardt, London; port of embarkation, Weston-super-Mare;

Irish; responsible officer, Vice Consul Beverstock, Belfast; port of embarkation, Londonderry.

Embarkation officers were assigned to the first three Sectors.

The details were drawn up in accordance with the instruction above referred to, but they were also based upon an investigation made by Captain Kirk, the Naval

Attache, of the ports in the Bristol area, and upon his general survey of the evacuation situation in the country as a whole. While the task of preparing the plan itself was not given him until August 18th, the Bristol Channel investigation was made by him over a week before in conjunction with Mr. Baker, Consul at Bristol, and made clear the main lines that should be followed.

THE EMERGENCY EMBARCATION CENTER AT WESTON-SUPER-MARE,  
AND SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS MADE IN  
CONNECTION THEREWITH.

Captain Kirk's report of August 11th, made following the Bristol trip, contained a recommendation for the selection of Weston-super-Mare as the special embarkation port in the Southern Sector, and also indications as to the practical arrangements that would have to be made in order to put that recommendation into effect. A copy of the report is attached as Enclosure No. 8.

Besides describing in detail the anchorage at Weston and stating the reasons for selecting that port, the report listed the following matters that would have to be taken care of. (What was subsequently done in each case is also briefly indicated below.)

(a) Assurances would have to be obtained from the British Government that at least one, and preferably two, of the small steamers operated by P. and A. Campbell Co., Ltd., would be available to take passengers from the port to the ocean going steamers, which would have to anchor in the channel.

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Such assurances were at first sought from the Admiralty, but it later appeared that the Mercantile Department of the Board of Trade had jurisdiction of the matter. A letter was written to that Department on August 21st, and a favorable reply received two days later.

(b) Weston-super-Mare would have to be put on the list of Approved Ports for the use of aliens (so that British Immigration officers would be on duty at embarkation).

This matter was first taken up with the Admiralty Member of the Government Committee for the Evacuation of Aliens, who referred Captain Kirk to the Chief Inspector, Immigration Branch, Home Office. The necessary action was taken on . . . . .

(c) Housing facilities would have to be provided for the accommodation of the approximately 3000 Americans who might have to be evacuated through Weston-super-Mare.

On August 27th, Mr. Achilles and Mr. Claffey (then Vice Consul at Bristol) went to Weston-super-Mare and surveyed the housing situation with Commander Bailey, the American Naval Officer in charge at the port. As a result the Grand Atlantic and Royal Pier Hotels, accommodating about 200 persons apiece, were allocated for the use of American evacuees. The Nordrach Sanatorium, fifteen miles inland and having accommodations for 150 persons, was also allocated; and it was ascertained that Americans could also be accommodated in cots (which the Embassy would have to obtain) in the New Pier, and also in boarding



(d) Transportation arrangements would have to be made to take Americans from the London region to Weston.

Mr. Achilles was at first put in charge of these arrangements, which would have to include both rail and road transport, but the latter was later assigned to Mr. Steyne.

The rail transport problem was complicated by the fact that general civilian evacuation from London and other vulnerable points was contemplated; and that this would result in greatly cutting down the number of trains for ordinary use and the use of American evacuees. Arrangements were made with the Great Western Railway for three special trains on thirty-six hours notice, or perhaps less; but these trains would only be available before the general evacuation started. Americans in London were therefore advised to proceed to Weston as soon as possible, and the train schedule was distributed to them in mimeographed copies. Since that schedule would, however, become obsolete as soon as general evacuation occurred -- as it did beginning on ..... -- it was necessary to rely mainly on road transport to convey to Weston any Americans who had not succeeded in obtaining railway accommodation, and also sick or infirm Americans requiring special comforts, and female members of the Embassy staff who might have to be evacuated.

Arrangements were, accordingly, made with the Ministry of Transport to exempt from official requisition

on a 24-hour basis for a period five days from the outbreak of war. In addition, the use of a hearse was obtained (it could carry 15 persons), 65 private cars owned by American volunteers were available, and it was arranged with public gargges that 20 more cars could be hired. Thus, at the beginning of the war, the Embassy had guaranteed emergency transportation for about 400 persons, and further volunteer transport facilities for another 300.

It was also necessary to arrange for a fuel supply in connection with road transport; and 2,000 gallons were accordingly earmarked for the Embassy's use and kept in a garage near the Embassy, while 5,000 gallons were purchased and stored at Headley Park (the private residence of ~~an~~ an American, 23 miles from London, which had been donated for the Embassy's use during the war).

The transportation section was assisted by a small group of volunteer Americans living in London, who were to meet trains, and help Americans to get to trains and with their baggage arrangements, etc.

(e) It would be necessary to detail an official from the Embassy as "Officer-in-Charge" at the port of embarkation.

Commander Vaughn Bailey, U.S.N.(Retired) was detailed by the Naval Attache for this duty, and he was assisted by Lt. (jf) C.G. Campbell, U.S.N.R.

(f) It would also be necessary to make it possible for Americans to obtain assistance at Weston in connection with passport services.

4th, and remained until October 9th, assisting Commander Bailey in connection with any consular matters that arose. He had with him an impression seal and some Consular Emergency Certificates, for use in case American freighters should be diverted to Weston, and also in case passenger liners were called upon to carry extra passengers. He also gave general assistance and advice to Americans who actually went to Weston (about 300), and made a daily report to the Embassy as to the number still there, and the number that had obtained steamship passages and departed.

The three officers -- Messrs. Bailey, Campbell and Callahan -- had offices in the Grand Atlantic Hotel, which had assigned them the large ballroom for that purpose. At the side entrance of the hotel, the American flag was flown at a flagstaff, and a large sign pointed the way to the "United States Office."

From among the many homeward bound Americans who volunteered their services, the staff was increased until at one time there were thirty people actively employed at the evacuation office. In addition to American citizens, there were also a number of active British volunteer workers who proved to be very useful.

In his report of August 11th, Captain Kirk also made recommendations concerning emergency food supplies, dispensary service, special "Military Police" (consisting of able-bodied Americans from the Bristol area), and other matters which the event proved were not required, although they would have been, had the Weston office

been called upon to handle the thousands of Americans who would have gone there if the war had brought intensive air raids in the first few days.

THE AMERICAN RELIEF COMMITTEE AND ITS WORK.

When, on August 24th, the American Relief Committee met again in order to offer its assistance to the Embassy in connection with the war crisis, the Embassy had already done a good deal of preliminary work on the task of organizing itself to meet crisis tasks. It had, as has been shown, set up a Central Card Index of American citizens, adopted a basic evacuation plan for the entire country, and gone far with the practical arrangements for the evacuation of Americans from this area to Weston-super-Mare and embarking them at that port should that become necessary.

It was determined, in these circumstances, that the best service the Committee could render would be in the two aspects of evacuation work in which it had had experience in 1914, and for which it had been revived in September 1938, i. e., assisting Americans to obtain steamship passages, and extending temporary financial relief to those standing in need of it. The Committee was, for these two purposes, made an integral part of the Embassy's Emergency Organization, its Transportation Section cooperating closely with the corresponding section in the Embassy, under Captain Kirk and Mr. Klemmer, and its Relief Section cooperating with the Disbursements Section in the Embassy, under Mr. Borum, (which allotted to the Committee the Government funds which it used.)

Because of this close connection with the Embassy, and because the Americans to be helped would naturally go to the Embassy first and have to visit both organizations in many instances, it was imperative for the Committee's headquarters to be located close to the Embassy. This was made possible by the kind offer of the American Women's Club, which made available the ballroom suite in the Club Building just across the street from the Embassy. The large ballroom itself was used for the reception of Americans. Volunteer American ladies of London received them at the door, routed them first to other volunteers who made out cards for each, then to the transportation section -- American Express Company representatives and a liaison officer from the Embassy - where they were given the latest information on steamship sailings and accommodation, and all assistance possible in making their arrangements for departure. Between August 24th and October 15th, the Committee interviewed ..... Americans and arranged passages for .....

Any caller who requested financial assistance was received by the Committee's chairman, Mr. Graff, who first looked into the possibility of obtaining help by cable from a relative or friend in the United States. If this could be done -- and done in time for the caller's proposed sailing, a cable was sent by Western Union under a special arrangement whereby no charge was made for the cable unless it resulted in a remittance being sent. If there was not enough time to get money by cable, Mr. Graff had to decide whether passage money should be advanced from the £1000

Government fund which the Committee had for disbursement

in each case, by the Consul General or his authorized representative. The Committee on August 29, 1939, passed a resolution that should any of the amounts advanced not be repaid by the recipients and subsequently disallowed by the Department, the Committee agreed to indemnify the Consul General and to guarantee him against personal loss in these cases.

At the request of Mr. Erhardt this guarantee was withdrawn on September 28, 1939.

The Committee also had for emergency use a fund of £200 received through the Ambassador from a friend of the latter, Mr. Klotz of New York. This was used in cases that did not qualify for assistance from Government funds. In all, the Committee disbursed £508. 0. 8 for steamship passages and £195.14. 0 for advances to Americans for temporary maintenance. Its experience of the last war indicates that practically all of this will be repaid ..... has come back already, \$1,400 having been handed over at the dock in New York by the parents of a party of students whose passage on the ..... had been paid for by the Committee. (Had not this advance been made, one of the students would have been on the "Athenia", as the Embassy was later informed by the man in charge of the student group.) In addition, the Committee disbursed £58.14. 2 from the Klötz fund, and assisted a number of unfortunate people by this means.

When the American Women's Club closed its building on September 9th, the Committee headquarters were

moved/

moved into a large room in the Embassy previously (and since) used for visa work. Thereafter the Committee worked even more closely with the Embassy, and continued its functions until October 16th, when it disbanded with its task accomplished.

The Committee rendered invaluable service, and its members and volunteer assistants worked for long hours every day and in difficult circumstances. Without their help, particularly during the crucial two weeks between August 24th and September 7th, the Embassy's Emergency Organization could not have handled evacuation problems as speedily and smoothly as it did.

DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING STEAMSHIP ACCOMMODATION FOR AMERICANS, AND MEASURES TAKEN TO MEET THEM.

Obtaining steamship passages for Americans who had none, or had their sailings cancelled was, from the first, the most formidable part of the evacuation problem.

In the first place, the crisis resulted in the concentration within two or three weeks of a demand for passages that would ordinarily have been spread over a month or two. Secondly, the supply of space available went down precipitately during the last week of peace with the cancellation of German sailings, and also of important English and French ships. Finally, the torpedoing of the Athenia during the first day of the war impressed many Americans with the danger of sailing on belligerent ships, and this apprehension on their part was accentuated by the Ambassador's statement of ..... pointing out

that convoyed ships were liable to submarine attack without warning.

It was accordingly necessary to take several steps to increase the amount of space available on American ships. The carrying capacity of the Manhattan and other American liners scheduled to sail during that period was, accordingly, greatly increased by the granting of authority to the line (by means of Emergency Consular Certificates); and those ships put beds and cots in public lounges and extra ones in the larger cabins.

It was decided by the Ambassador in the very early days of the war that cargo vessels should be pressed into service to facilitate the evacuation of American citizens. The shipping section of the Consulate General under Vice Consul Coyle arranged a schedule of freighters and, on behalf of the various shipping agents, actually arranged accommodations in order to expedite the departure of passengers for the various ports of embarkation which ranged from Bristol in the Southwest of England to Dundee on the Northeast coast of Scotland. Twentyone American flag ships carrying a total of 365 passengers were utilized. The freighter scheme fitted in well with the general evacuation of American citizens. Apart from its practical value in providing transportation to the United States at a time when all available space was urgently required, the freighter service offered a novel experience to many.