

Empire Symbol, or a Man and his Mule

Excerpts and stills, video, 2015

BAMBITCHELL
/ SHARLENE BAMBOAT
& ALEXIS MITCHELL

EMPIRE SYMBOL, OR A MAN AND HIS MULE, IS A VIDEO THAT TRACES THE JOURNEY OF A CANADIAN VETERINARIAN WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSPORTING MULES FROM NEW YORK TO KARACHI, INDIA DURING WWII. EMPLOYING HIS DIARY ENTRIES, BAMBITCHELL UNEARTH BOTH THE PSYCHIC LIFE OF THE VET, AS WELL THE HISTORIES OF CANADIAN MILITARISM THAT ARE EMBEDDED WITHIN MUNDANE PROCESSES OF GLOBAL TRADE AND TRANSPORT.



DECEMBER 7, 1944,
NEW YORK:
S.S. EMPIRE SYMBOL
7200 TON JOB, 446 FEET
X 56 FEET, JUST BEING
CONVERTED FOR MULE
TRANSPORT.

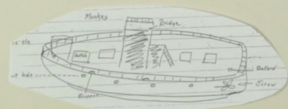
JANUARY 11, 1945,
SOUTHERN END OF RED SEA
STRAIT OF BAB-EL MANDEL

I AM CONSTANTLY WARNED ABOUT KEEPING A DIARY BY "THE OLD MAN", HOWEVER, I ASSURE HIM THAT ANYTHING I MAY RECORD HAS ONLY TO DO WITH THE ANIMALS AND MOST CERTAINLY NOT WITH THE WEATHER, PORTS, OR THE SHIP'S PROGRESS.



December 7, 1944, New York:

S.S. Empire Symbol 7200 ton job, 446 ft x 56 ft, just being converted for mule transport



CLASSIFICATION OF MULES

M.A. — MOUNTAIN ARTILLERY
HEAVY, SQUATTY, STURDY ANIMALS CAPABLE OF HANDLING HEAVY LOADS WITH HIGH CENTRES OF GRAVITY

E.I. — EQUIPMENT CLASS I
SMALLER AND LIGHTER THAN M.A. AND FREER MOVERS TO HANDLE WIRELESS, ETC.

E.II — EQUIPMENT CLASS II
SIMILAR BUT INFERIOR TO EI. THESE ARE FOR INFANTRY AND LIGHT MACHINE GUNS.

A.T. — ANIMAL TRANSPORT
HANDLE 120 – 160LB PACK. MAY WORK IN HARNESS. SORT OF GENERAL UTILITY ANIMAL.

"THE MOST BANAL BUT ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF WAR IN SUPPLYING THE MEANS OF LIFE (PROVISIONS) AND DEATH (MUNITIONS) WAS IMPORTED FROM THE WORLD OF STATE WAR INTO THE WORLD OF CORPORATE TRADE, REDEFINING BOTH IN THE PROCESS."

— DEBORAH COWEN, THE DEADLY LIFE OF LOGISTICS



Corn



Feathers



UPON ARRIVAL TO INDIA, THE MULES HAD THEIR VOCAL CHORDS SEVERED TO SILENCE THEM.