

THE INTER

AUGUST, 1989



"That Ragged Old Flag"

*I walked through a county court house square
And on a park bench, an old man was sittin' there.
I said, "Your old court house has kind of run down."
He said, "No, it will do for our little town."
I said, "Your flag pole has leaned a little bit,
And that's a ragged old flag you've got hanging on it."
He said, "Have a seat," and I sat down.
"Is this the first time you've come to our little town?"
I said, "I think it is." He said, "I don't like to brag,
But we are kind of proud of that ragged old flag.
You see, we got a little hole in that flag there
When Washington took it across the Delaware,
And it got powder burn when Francis Scott Key
Sat up watchin' it, writing, "Oh Say Can You See."
And it got a little rip in New Orleans
With Packinham and Jackson tuggin' at its seams,
And it almost fell at the Alamo run,
Beside the Texas flag, but she waved on.
It got cut with a sword at Chancellorsville,
Got cut again at Shiloh Hill.
There was Robert E. Lee, Beauregard and Bragg,
And the South wind blew hard on that ragged old flag.
On Flander's Field in World War One,
She got a bad hole from a Bertha gun,
She turned blood red in World War Two,
She hung limp and low by the time that one was through.
She was in Korea and Vietnam,
She went where she was sent by her Uncle Sam.
She waved from our ships upon the briny foam,
And now we've about quit waving it back here at home.
And in her own good land here, she's been abused.
She's been burned, dishonored, denied and refused,
And now the very government for which she stands
Is scandalized throughout the land.
And she's getting threadbare and she's wearing kind of thin,
But she's in good shape for the shape she's in.
Because she's been through the fire before,
And she can take a whole lot more.
So we raise her up every morning, and we bring her down slow every night.
We don't let her touch the ground and we fold her up right.
On second thought, I do like to brag,
Because I'm might proud of that ragged old flag."
"So am I."*

FROM A SONG BY JOHNNY CASH

THE POINTER

Officers for 1989

Charles A. Lloyd, Chairman & Secretary
5712 Partridge Lane
Raleigh, N.C. 27609
1 (919) 876-5537

Bob and Pedgy Grossman
1990 Reunion Host
10533 S. Campbell Ave.
Chicago, IL 60655
1 (312) 779-6289

Lonnie D. Lloyd, Treasurer
4832 North Hills Drive
Raleigh, N.C. 27612

Board of Directors

C. A. Lloyd	.....	NC
L. D. Lloyd	.....	NC
Don Gleason	.....	KS
Carl Winder	.....	CA
Andy Knapp	.....	MD
Pete DeLa Cruz	.....	IN
Ralph McNally	.....	OK
Len Carlson	.....	MN
Ray Didur	.....	MI
Ralph Jacobs	.....	IN
Robert Grossman	.....	IL
Linwood Taylor	.....	VA
William Sache	.....	MA
Jack Cross	.....	PA
Francis Brummer	.....	IA
Bob Ober	.....	OH
J. F. Carter	.....	LA
Robert Floyd	.....	SC
Ken Niebuhr	.....	WI

Trustees

C. A. Lloyd	.....	NC
L. D. Lloyd	.....	NC
Bob Rigg	.....	TX
Alex Lombardi	.....	NJ
Carl Shade	.....	OH
James Sterling	.....	MD
Wm. C. Kidd	.....	VA
Ed Kurlinkus	.....	IL
Richard Kohse	.....	WA
Jerry Goucher	.....	NV

ATTENTION

You know where you are.
You know where we are.
We know where we are.
But we don't always know where you are.
Please notify us when you move.

Non-Profit Organization
Tax Exempt No. 74-2316668

AND

THE

PLANE SHOOTER

Our Motto: "We aim- To Deliver" and "We-Did"

USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans

"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"

DEAR EVERYONE:

August 1, 1989

WONDERFUL! WONDERFUL! WONDERFUL!!! That is the best way to describe the 1989 SEATTLE, WA. U.S.N. ARMED GUARD Reunion. To the Host, Madelen Rigg, Co-Hosts- Richard and Billie Kohse and all the others who helped you in making it a great success, we "THANK YOU" for a job well done. To those who could not make it for various reasons, you were remembered and it is our hopes that you can be at the June 6-10, 1990 National Reunion to be held at the CONGRESS HOTEL, 520 S. MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO, IL. 60605. Tel- 312-427-3800. The 1990 HOSTS will be Robert (Bob) and "Pedgy" Grossman, 10333 So. Campbell Ave., Chicago, IL. 1-312-779-6289 and the Illinois Armed Guard Committee. We'll go to Great Lakes Navy Base.

Let me tell you a little of the happenings of the SEATTLE REUNION. The only thing I was dissappointed in was that we did not get to use our RAIN COATS AND UMBRELLAS we lugged there. From Monday through Sunday, the weather was perfect. Mount Rainier is as beautiful as they say it is. Our Cruise to Canada was just gorgeous and the "BOAT RIDE" to Tillicum Village and salmon bake was enjoyed by all. I think Madelen had asked them not do a RAIN DANCE during the week of the Reunion. And the HORSE RACE? "IF" you could call what I bet on a Horse, was enjoyable plus she got the "ARMED GUARD" name recognition on the BILLBOARD. Then, Madelen and I were escorted to the "WINNERS STAND", and had our picture taken with the horse. Our THANKS go out to the "GRAY LINES TOURS" Bus Company for being prompt and as always, courteous. And the "SEA-TAC" Hotel staff did all they could to make us welcomed. It was a well chosen Hotel near the Airport.

To all those attending, we hope you can join in next year and bring one more with you and we'll have twice as many. To the "FIRST TIMERS", it was great to have you. We were fortunate to locate ten NEW Armed Guard Ol'Salts with bumper stickers, caps, hotel marquee, Etc., while there. Those who could not make it this year, make plans now to be there the next time. Set that date aside and work around it. You'll be glad you did! In behalf of all attending, I'd like to thank Doug Dugger for entertaining the crew at our banquet. He has played and sung with the best in "COUNTRY MUSIC" at the Nashville, Tenn. "GRAND OL' OPRY" and cut records such as "Bumming Around", "DECK OF CARDS" and others. Doug has already made a promise to be with us next year in Chicago. Madelen and all the Washington crew asks that I thank you for attending and to those who could not attend, they understood your desire to be with us. "MAYBE, NEXT TIME!!".

While there, I met so many of you wonderful people that I had corresponded with over the years. It was great! I do apologize for my voice giving way after two days helping find shipmates. I am sure you would have liked more answers to questions. One person comes to my mind in one conversation was James L. Milton of 304 Second St., Huntingburg, Indiana 47542 1- 812-683-3645 who informed me

continued to Page 2

Officers - Gunners - Signalmen - Radiomen - Medics - Waves - Boatswains - Coxswains - Ship's Company - Radarmen

that he was a writer for his hometown paper. I asked him to do a story on the Armed Guard and the Reunion at Seattle. I soon received "THE HUNTINGBURG PRESS" issue of July 5, 1989 and I thought it "SAID IT ALL!!". He told me of a writeup on the Flag he had written and I asked him to send that along, too, and he did. Since I was asked to write to the SUPREME COURT of their ruling of "Burning" or "Desecration" of the Flag, (I have failed to do so at this time, but will do so soon) I only thought it appropriate to send them a copy of the "POINTER" with Milton's writeup on the FLAG when printed since he covered all bases. I hope to have a reply in the next issue. "OUR FLAG" by our own Armed Guard James Milton speaks from all of our crew. Thank you Jim for being so prompt and your wording on "OUR FLAG". I was given a poem by Kenneth Burhite titled "MY FLAG" which I hope to get into this "POINTER". Would you like to try your skill—in poetry? Or your vein on the burning of "OUR FLAG".

Many shipmates from the same gun crews were joined together again, some for the first time in 43 or more years and were they happy!! This is where the fun begins and renewed friendship is rekindled. Many more of you have a shipmate on the "ROSTER" now and "IT IS UP TO YOU" to take time and write to: RALPH LUCAS, 1220 Hawthorne Rd., Hanahan, S.C. 29406, or myself for them. I will send as many as possible as time allows. Ralph is compiling a list of all who were at ANZIO if you'd like to write him of your time at the Anzio Beachhead. Be sure to send a "SELF-ADDRESSED-STAMPED-ENVELOPE" to him when asking for shipmates.

I would like to elaborate a little on the Volume III ARMED GUARD HISTORY BOOK and let you know that at the Seattle Reunion, it was announced that the cutoff date would be September 15th, but due to the late publishing of this "POINTER" and with Mini-Reunions in Cincinnati and Baltimore where Volume I can be seen to compare and give more a chance to participate. I have postponed the "CUTOFF" date till "October 15, 1989". I know that \$49.95 is a lot of money on a "fixed" income but that is the price to all. I hope you will want to be a part of this book and will send a picture of yourself "THEN" AND "NOW", along with your 350 words of your choosing plus your \$49.95 to Taylor Publishing Company, C/O Susan McDonald, 104 Bolton Place, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514 (919) 929-1694. If you call her and you get the recording machine, leave a message for her and she will return your call. Many of you met Susan in Seattle and I hope that she was clear in her explanation to you. She is devoted in making this the best book yet. It will take approx. 8 Months from October 15th to get the Volume III to you. I do appreciate your patience and apologize for the "LONG DELAY". If you ordered the Vol. I, or Vol. II and did not receive it, please advise for we make mistakes, too. Those of you who were in Vol. I and would like to revise your wording, or just want to get in again as I have done should do so for this will be the last book that we will publish. L.D. just received the latest Edition of the "LST" BOOK just published by Taylor Publishing and says it is great.

If any of you ordered caps, lapel pins, decals, Bumper Stickers, Etc. and did not receive them, please notify me. I have on hand an ample supply now of caps with the "EAGLE INSIGNIA", the Lettered caps with: 1. U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WW II, 2. U.S.N. ARMED GUARD MURKOVSKY RUN 3. U.S.N. ARMED GUARD-SOUTH PACIFIC. Also, I have more LAPEL PINS and DECALS with EAGLE and BUMPER STICKERS. If I sell them, I have to keep N.C. tax records so I don't sell them. If you want any of these items, send a small donation to: "U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS". DONATIONS KEEPS THE "POINTER" COMING. We have just scratched the surface in letting other people know about the "ARMED GUARD" of WW II. The Army, Navy, Marines and our Allies knew they had food, clothing, weapons, ammo, fuel PLUS transportation overseas and a return trip home. It is time they and the world should know that the Merchant Seaman sailed the ships and the Armed Guard did all they could to protect the Ship, Cargo and Personnel including themselves.

ONCE MORE!! I would like to encourage you to call your local Veteran Administration and have them send you a "FORM-180" to send for your personal service records. Complete it and send to the St. LOUIS address. There is no cost to you for this service. To get a photo of your ship, WRITE TO: THE MARINER'S MUSEUM, NEWPORT NEWS, VA. 23606. Send them \$10.00, CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, CORRECT NAME OF SHIP. I place this in again so the "NEW OL'SALTS" will know since the past "POINTER"s copies have been used up and I will start sending only this one and future ones, plus other sheets of stories, etc. till the 1991 Reunion.

I hope that all of you have enjoyed this info as much as I have in getting it to you. If I left out your story, I hope it will be in the next time. I noticed that I left out the Wreath Ceremony in PIQUET SOUND. One by Madelen to her late husband, Leland Rigg and one to our fallen comrades. Attend reunions while you can. You'll be glad you did!! One of our fallen crew's widow from Florida sent me a notice recently of his passing in 1986 and I know I failed to post it. If "you" would kindly notify me again, I would place his name on the "IN MEMORY" column. Please advise if you wish to remain on the mailing list and this also applies to others. And to the widows, we do hope you will continue to be part of the ARMED GUARD. We face each day as it comes now and many friends are made at each reunion. The children and grandchildren would love the "LIBERTY SHIPS".

Andy Knapp informs me that James Capley has repaired 2 tables and 12 chairs which completes the ARMED GUARD "MESSHALL" onboard the S.S. JOHN M. BROWN. He reports that the passageways on deck level are now painted and looks good. Bill

and Gladys Fiederli, 1921 Gilbert, Wichita Falls, Tx. 76303 donated ten NAVY Blue Dress caps to place onboard on the lockers and I will deliver them soon. The 5" 38 gun is now onboard but problems of obtaining 2-3"50s and 8-20MMs has cropped up and if you know of where these might be obtained, "PLEASE CONTACT": Brian Hope, Chairman, Project "LIBERTY SHIP", S.S. JOHN M. BROWN, 9002 Wetbanks Court, Columbia, Md. 21045 1-301-730-0425. There are so many technicalities involved that the process is slow. Congresswoman Helen Bentley from Maryland has introduced a bill HR-668 that would establish a "Mechanism" to provide funding for "NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS MERCHANT SHIP MEMORIALS" in honor to the Merchant Seamen who sailed them, the Armed Guard who protected them and to all those who built them, from monies derived in the scrapping, or selling of "SURPLUS-NAVY SHIPS". I hope that you will be in support of such a bill. At this time, it would involve the S.S. John M. Brown in Baltimore, the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien in San Francisco and the S.S. Lane Victory in Los Angeles to my knowledge. A letter or phone call in support of this bill to your congressman is recommended.

I had warned all of you in the past to "BEWARE OF THOSE WHO TRY TO SELL THEIR WARES TO YOU!". Many of you are getting this "material", one even states that I stole his "EAGLE". I care not to waste more space on him. "JUST BEWARE". I have proven my honesty to all of you I hope I can assure you that any and all monies sent to and received by me are accounted for. Thanks for your trust for if you had not contributed as you have so far, we would not have found over "6800" of the crew and refreshed their memories of 45 years ago when the chips were down. I hope to see many of you in Cincinnati and Baltimore for their Mini-Reunions. I will have the costs, etc. for the Chicago, Illinois National Reunion in the next "POINTER". For you "EARLY SEAGULLS", contact Bob Grossman and go ahead and pay him for he will need "UP-FRONT" money to charter the boats, etc.

To "Bob" and "PEGGY" Grossman and the entire 1990 9TH National Reunion Crew, we wish you a successful reunion and we will support you and we look forward in being with the shipmates again. I am sure it will be "WONDERFUL!!!!" calloyd

REUNIONS:

Sampson, New York Boot Camp WW II Reunion, Sept. 8-10, 1989. Contact: William A. Russell, 3916 Idumea Rd., Corrytown, Tx. 37721 1-615-933-0031.

Arizona and adjoining States: Ray Barba and Carlo Traficano Hosts at the "RIVER QUEEN RESORT MOTEL", BULLHEAD CITY, ARIZONA 1-800-227-3849. Contact Barba, 1461 W. Kilburn St., Tucson, Ar. 85705-9231 for more information.

Destroyer Escort Association 14th NATIONAL REUNION will be held at Charleston, S.C. Sept. 11-15, 1989. Contact: Don Glaser Tel. 1-407-290-5294

Kansas State Mini-Reunion will be at the Topeka American Legion Post #1. Hosts are Don and Henrietta Gleason 227 North Knox, Topeka, Ks. 66606 913-234-6087

New Jersey-Northeast yearly Mini-Reunion Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 1989 with Alex and Edith Lombardi 14 Brookfield Av., Montclair, N.J. 07043 1-201-746-6361.

The American Merchant Marine Veterans Nat'l, Inc. Headquarters address is 905 Cape Coral Pkwy. #7, Cape Coral, Fl. 33904 and they can inform you of Chapters in your immediate locality and Reunion dates. They have a great NEWSLETTER. A Reunion will be held at the King's Point Museum, N.Y. 11024-1699 Oct. 27-28, 1989

Washington State-Northwest Mini-Reunion will be held at the Ferryman's Hotel in Vancouver, Wa. on Sept. 15-17, 1989 hosted by Don and Pearl Werner, 18605 N.E. 219th St., Battleground, Wa. 98604 206-687-3630.

Pittsburgh, Pa. Continues to have their "Noon" meeting on the 3rd Saturday of each month throughout the year, excluding July and August. Contact Hilary and Dot Makowski 416 Arabella St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 412-481-6608.

The Illinois-Wisc. Mini-Reunion will be held Oct. 13-15, 1989 in Racine, Wisc. at the Downtown Holiday Inn with Jay Wildfong 13211 Durand Rd., Sturtevant, Wisc. 414-886-2966 and William Kiser, 1933 Woodland Dr. Caledonia, Wisc. 53108 Hosts.

If you served on an LST and would like to join that Association also, contact: Mike and Linda Bunjak 64 Ponderosa P.O. Box 8769, Oregon, Oh. 43616-2221. The Tel. Number is 1-800-228-5870.

I regret that I did not get the "Pointer" printed in time to announce Reunion held by Ray Didur P.O. Box 282, Coelett City, Md. 49233-0282 517-592-6941 at the Schuler's Restaurant in Jackson, Mich. Contact him for future "Glt-To-Gethers". It is impossible to put individual ship reunions in the "POINTER". We have over 5400 ships listed and if I do it for one, I would have to do the same for all. To enjoy individual ship reunions, combine them with others to suit your needs.

We also continue to hold our N.C. Breakfast the "FIRST" (1st) Saturday of each month at the BARRACUE LODGE 4600 N. Blvd. Raleigh, N.C. 27604. You don't have to make reservation. They serve "GRITS". If you get to town early, give me a call and we'll talk ARMED GUARD!! and suggest HOTEL. Time: 8 A.M. till 11 A.M.

From Lee and Betty Doble, 12804 Joleane Ave., Yuma, Ar. 85365 1-602-342-3166

(Quote) Lee and I enjoyed our first reunion at Seattle, Wa. and met a lot of SUPER people. Lee met two of his shipmates that he hadn't seen for 44-45 years. Thanks for everything. We will be attending many more reunions if at all possible. Bye for now. Lee and Betty Jane Doble.

Betty Jane is the wife of Armed Guard Veteran Lee and was asked to tell about "WAVES National". (mostly ex-Navy women, other women welcomed, she says) She is an ex-wave from WW II and was stationed at NOS Terminal Island, San Pedro, California and Hilo, HI. from Oct. 1943 til Feb. 1946. She wanted to inform us that if any of the wives of the Navy Armed Guard (ex, or present) Navy, Marine, Coast Guard, etc.; or any they know of, to please contact her. The National Waves are chartered and have over 5000 members with Units in most States. After her short talk, several approached her there and I know there are others but I don't remember who so "Y'ALL" contact her for more info. Please. Thanks

As I was typing the above for the "POINTER", I received a call from Vada Haun of 1154 Roberson La., Fallon, Nv. 89406 1-702-867-3534 that our shipmate and her husband Paul had just took the Voyage to be with his Maker. Our sympathy and prayers go out to them and the family and friends. Paul had been listed on the Board of Directors and had been mistakenly dropped in the last "POINTER" and I had talked to both of them at the Seattle Reunion and he understood and I was to place him back on the Board. Vada, he will always be there in our heart. He had served on the S.S. Jerome K. Jones in '44 and S.S. Daniel Drake in '45. She told me how much they both enjoyed the reunion and the people there. I think they had attended them all. I invited Vada back to be with us. (call)

IN MEMORY OF PAUL HAUN

Reunions

LST Association Convention will be held August 9-13, 1989 in Pittsburgh, Penna. with the Hilton at the Gateway Center as Headquarters. Contact Mike Gunjak, P.O. Box 167438, Oregon, Oh. 43616-7438 1-800-228-5870. I talked to Linda Gunjak and she says that their hotel rooms are filled at this point but come on anyway if you make your own room accommodations and they will absorb you with meals, etc. They have over 1800 people signed up so it will be a wonderful Reunion and want you LST'ers to come. They have a wonderful LST Newspaper and it's great!! Next year on September 26-30, 1990, will be the date for their next National Reunion and will be in St. Louis, Mo. at the Clarion Hotel Downtown by the Arch. Let them know that you are LST she says. We have about 140 A.S.s listed who served.

The Patrol Crafts Assc. will hold their National at the Riverfront Holiday Inn, St. Louis Mo. on May 3-6, 1990. Contact Joe Kelliher, PCSA P.O. Box 232 Cambridge N.Y. 12816-0232 for more details. They also have a great News Letter.

IN MEMORY OF OUR SHIPMATES

LAST NAME	FIRST (M)	CITY	STATE	WIFE	DATE
Alibini	Albert F.	Sacramento	Ca	Elva	89
Banaka	Walter E.	Hoquiam	Wa	Norma S.	6/19/89
Becker	Leo	Paul	Id	?	?
Carpenter	Stanley C.	San Antonio	Tx	Ema Lee	5/11/89
Corbelli	John	SI/C Bakersfield	Ca	MIA-P.I.s Area	11/3/44
Diawattina (MM)	Joseph	Arlington	Va	?	1988
Deford	Drew	Richmond	Va	?	1988
Everson	Edor J.	Stoughton	Wv	?	89
Felton	R.	Breezewood	Pa	?	??
Flyzik	John, Sr.	Coaldale	Pa	?	1986
Fox	John, Jr.	Lincoln	Ne	Ester	3/23/82
Goodner	Kibler	Cleveland	Tn	Virginia	5/89
Grieser	Gene	Genesee	Id	?	88
Haun	Paul	Fallon	Nv	Vada	7/8/89
Kanthack	Arthur R.	Fullerton	Ca	Joy	89
Kubel	Carl E.	Lincoln	Ne	KIA-Leyte Gulf	11/12/44
Lollar	Robert W. SI/c	Lincoln	Ne	MIA-P.I.s Area	11/3/44
Lutton	Charles R. S/2C	San Francisco	Ca	MIA-No. Atlantic	9/22/42
Lynch	Kenneth J.	Bethesda	Md	Virginia	89
McFarland	Pete	Russell Spngs	KY	?	6/8/89
Nelson	Robert	Eau Claire	Wl	?	9/20/77
Newbern	Henry A.	Cocoa	Fl	KIA-Mindanao	12/5/44
Noga	John	Mindor	Ct	Mary	6/11/84
Norful	William Raymond (SS M.LIVERMORE)	Vt	?	?	82
Olson	Evert A.	Gibraltar	Mi	Stephanie	1/30/87
Palmer	Cecil Lucian	Carolina	Nv	???????	89
Plante	Russell	C.	Ct	Patricia	10/6/88
Robinson	Hubert J.	Bakersfield	Ca	-	4/7/88
Smith	C.E.	Red Lion	Pa	?	12/23/88
Todd	George	Harrisonville	Mo	?	4/88
Walden	Richard J.	Butte	Mt.	Alba	11/24/88
Waller	Russell Bliss	Crosslake	Mn	Mid	3/13/87
Zeidler	Carl Frederick	Milwaukee	Wl	KIA-off Capetown	11/7/42

* -From the records sent in by C.J. O'Sullivan, S. Rosa Beach, Fl. in HONOR OF His shipmates KIA.

Deceased list compiled from May 8, 1989 til August 1, 1989 by Charles A. Lloyd.

OUR CONDOLENCES ARE EXTENDED TO THEIR FAMILIES AND LOVED ONES.

I regret the error of listing in the Oct. 1988 "POINTER" of Robert L. Otovic from Boca Raton, Fl. as deceased. We are both HAPPY to say that he is still with us and lives in Danvers, Ma. I will try to keep a "separate folder" in the future as the source supplied to verify information and check out.

Chance meeting reunites veterans after 42 years

By Jim Orr
News staff writer

PORT ST. LUCIE — Popeye can have his spinach. Broccoli is the wonder vegetable for George Baillie and John Francis.

It was broccoli, after all, that brought them together after 42 years.

"It's amazing, I'll tell you. It's the strangest thing that ever happened to me in my life," Baillie said.

As the story goes, it was about noon on Monday when Baillie visited the Winn Dixie supermarket in Port Salerno to buy some food.

Then he popped the question: "Where's the broccoli?"

A talkative sort, Baillie, 70, next asked the store's produce manager where he got his accent.

Pittsburgh was the reply.

Baillie said the only person he knew from Pittsburgh was John Joseph Francis, an old Navy buddy during World War II.

That, said the produce manager, is his father's name.

It also is his father. An old war photo proved it.

"I told this gentleman (Baillie) to bring the picture in, and I'll see if it's my father or not," said Bob Francis, 26. "As soon as I saw it, I knew it was

my father's face."

"You sure were in the right place," John Francis, 63, told his son. "I was on cloud nine all day."

Baillie and Francis quickly agreed that four decades was long enough apart. They met six hours later, just after dark.

"Hey, Joseph, how are you?" Baillie shouted.

"This," John Francis gushed, "is a happy day for me, man."

"Where is that blond hair, that lovely blond hair?" asked Baillie.

"Forty years," Francis answered, "took their toll."

The reunion came in Port St. Lucie at The Village Green shopping center, which the veterans figured was about halfway between Francis' home in Port Pierce and Baillie's in Hobe Sound. A couple of dozen friends and relatives joined them.

And like 44 years ago in Montevideo, Uruguay, Baillie and Francis were posing for pictures.

For old time's sake, they brought along copies of an old, yellowed snapshot of four first class seamen.

Francis and Baillie — with more hair, less weight and the same smiles — are the two in the middle.

"We were standing at this statue, and one of the natives came walking by," Baillie said. "We asked him to

take the picture. ... We did a lot of roaming around. You develop a lot of friends" in the military.

Both men were civilians two years later, in 1946, after a Navy career that brought them to ports around the world.

Baillie went on to a career working with aircraft engines, was married twice, fathered two children, and lived in California and Kansas before his cousin Marjorie Deal persuaded him to join her in Hobe Sound early this year.

These days, Baillie shares a home and his love with Kay Harrison.

"My life is complete," Baillie said. "I enjoy my life. Kay is a tremendous woman. Pretty soon, who knows, we may be walking down the aisle."

Francis, a regional supervisor for Southern Eagle and Anheuser-Busch, and his family moved from western Pennsylvania to the Treasure Coast 10 years ago. He and his wife, Barbara, have six children and five grandchildren.

All the while, Francis and Baillie were unable to track each other down.

"God, I never thought this day would come," Francis said.

"I'll never let him get out of my sight. This guy's a fantastic person."



Photographer: JERARD THORNTON

John Francis, left, and George Baillie hadn't seen each other since they were in the Navy together 42 years ago. But Baillie's chance encounter with Francis' son in a local grocery store ended in a happy reunion.

"FLAT BUSTED"

by

U.S.N. Armed Guard Signalman

Most Armed Guard "WIVES" led a unique life, and their task was a long endless one. The hardships endured were worry and strife, because luxuries, they surely had none.

Our Armed Guard "WIVES" can remember when, being broke wasn't defined as abused. They never called it POVERTY back then, "FLAT-BUSTED" was the term that they used.

They remained "FLAT-BUSTED" most of the time, while across the seas we did roam. How tightly they squeezed each nickel and dime, in maintaining a husbandless home.

Their allotment checks, Oh! So small, never sufficient to make ends meet! But, they somehow scraped and survived it all, and so few ever admitted defeat!

Appreciation we felt, but our thanks never paid, for the diapers, the clothes, or their food. No change in their status, "FLAT-BUSTED" they stayed, they certainly couldn't spend gratitude!

Today, let's pay Tribute, to our Armed Guard "WIVES", they are due one, and a grand one, indeed!! Ladies, we thank you, for sharing our lives-- We LOVE YOU! You're a true-special breed!!

P.S.

We men wish to share, on this day of your life, a thought that we know to be true-- If "DOLLY PARTON" had been an ARMED GUARD "WIFE", She would have been "FLAT-BUSTED" TOO!!

Author:

C.W. Davidson, Chief Petty Officer Ret.
United States Navy
4706 Alice Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78411 (USA)
512-851-2657
Served on the S.S. Howell Lykes 1945

Photo of the past

Wilmington Morning Star / Monday, March 13, 1989

Liberty ship plied dangerous waters



Photo courtesy of Doctor F. Williams

By D.M. Shore
Staff Writer

ST. HELENA — Whistling bombs and torpedoes streaming through the icy waters of the Barents Sea became a familiar sight to a young Navy gunner on one of his first assignments in World War II.

Looking through his mementos of the war, Doctor F. Williams recalled the days when he served as one of the armed guards who helped protect merchant ships supplying the United States and her allies with ammunition.

The War Shipping Administration and the secretary of the Navy cited Williams for his bravery while on board the merchant ship *Virginia Dare* helping defend the ship against frequent enemy attacks while it journeyed in 1942 from the United States to Murmansk, a port in the northern portion of the Soviet Union.

The liberty ship — a large, mass-produced cargo vessel — was launched from Wilmington that year. It was one of 126 built at the N.C. Shipbuilding Co., according to an article printed in *The State* magazine in 1985.

The *Virginia Dare* and two others built in Wilmington, the *William Moultrie* and the *Nathaniel Greene*, received the coveted Gallant Ship citation, in part, for the danger-filled voyages they made to Murmansk.

The War Shipping Administration gave the citation to only nine of about 8,000 merchant ships that sailed during World War II under the United States flag.

In June 1942, Williams — "tired of Navy regulations" — volunteered to join the crew of the *Virginia Dare* when it shipped out for Iceland, he said. It docked in Loch Ewe, Scot-

On Sept. 2, 1942, the ship, laden with explosives, headed for North Russia as part of a convoy. A little more than a week later, crew members sighted an enemy reconnaissance plane.

land, and in Iceland to await its orders.

On Sept. 2, 1942, the ship, laden with explosives, headed for North Russia as part of a convoy. A little more than a week later, crew members sighted an enemy reconnaissance plane.

Williams and the other men of the naval Armed Guard, as well as the merchant seamen, manned their battle stations, but the German plane flew out of sight without attacking.

The next day, however, the Nazi air force returned, unleashing an attack that lasted for several days, destroying about half of the ships in the convoy.

One of the most stunning experiences for Williams came on the day that the *Mary Luckenbach*, another ship laden with explosives, was bombed by two enemy planes. Both planes vanished, and the force of the explosion blew many of the *Virginia Dare's* crewmen to the deck.

Later, the *Virginia Dare* itself came close to that fate. A shell penetrated the ship but came to rest just

a few feet from about 400 tons of TNT.

To Williams' relief, the assault ended on Sept. 20, and the *Virginia Dare* was able to deliver its cargo to Murmansk.

Later, after the ship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean Sea, the War Shipping Administration issued citations to the crew members. In a press release, the agency praised the Armed Guardsmen and the merchant seamen who manned the ship.

"For 17 days, the SS *Virginia Dare*, loaded with high explosives, was en route to a North Russian port where her vital cargo was discharged. Through this period she repelled countless enemy bomb and torpedo attacks by accurate fire from her guns and skillful maneuvering," it reads. "The stark courage of her heroic crew under violent enemy attacks caused her name to be perpetuated as a Gallant Ship."

This occasional feature provides a glimpse into the past through photographs from the New Hanover County Museum's collections, the Morning Star's files, and from our readers' scrapbooks and attics.

The Morning Star cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage, but all photographs will be treated with care while in our possession.



Williams

The "Virginia Dare" was launched from Wilmington in 1942, one of scores of liberty ships built during World War II to transport supplies and weapons to troops fighting overseas. The "Dare" was one of nine liberty ships out of some 8,000 to be honored as a Gallant Ship because of the valor of her crew during the war. Two other ships built and launched from Wilmington received the honor

Heroes gather

Veteran sailors reunite for salty tales of WWII

By Ed Ivey
El Paso Herald Post

Herb Norch's most vivid memory isn't pleasant.

It's the memory of a kamikaze's aircraft that smashed into the side of the ship on which he was a gunner. It was May 20, 1945.

Norch, who sustained permanent hearing damage in the resulting explosion, says he was so close he could see the Japanese pilot's face as the plane rammed the midsection of the ship, but did not sink it.

"You could almost touch the plane and you just wanted to point the gun at him, but it was too heavy and wouldn't tilt far enough," he said.

Norch, 64, said that one shipmate threw a typewriter at the plane as it came in.

"He was chief yeoman, and his battle station was on the bridge. I guess he was frustrated at not being able to stop the plane, so he just used whatever he could find," he said.

Norch and about 150 fellow veterans will be sharing those and other stories at this weekend's U.S. Navy Armed Guard Veterans Reunion. The reunion will be today through Sunday at the Rodeway Inn on Gateway West at Geromino Drive.

The reunion has gotten response from all over the country, Norch said. Veterans from Arkansas, California, New Mexico, Montana and Mississippi will be attending the reunion, as well as many from Texas, he said.

A special item on the agenda — which includes trips to Fort Bliss to see the air defense museum and Fort Bliss Replica — will be a presentation on the history of the Armed Guard by El Paso writer Justin Gleichauf, a World War II Army veteran who has been researching the Guard.

His book on the service, "Unsung Heroes: The Naval Armed Guard," will be published soon by the U.S. Naval Institute Press.

Gleichauf says the Armed Guards were the little-known and seldom-sung heroes of the Merchant Marine service, the convoys of ships that supplied Allied troops all over the world during both world wars. Their mission was to man the guns on merchant ships and defend against submarine and aircraft attacks.

The Armed Guard crews consisted of gunners, signalmen, radio operators and medics. There was a total of 144,910 men in the service by the end of World War II.

"Armed Guard sailors went to places the regular fleet never did," Norch said. "No insult to the fleet, though; they were fighting the war."

Norch remembers a convoy he sailed in headed for Murmansk, in the Soviet Union.

"We had heavy casualties. One out of every three ships was lost in that



IAN WINTERSTELLEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Al Gonzales, above, holds medals he received in World War II. The inset portrait of Gonzales was taken when he first entered the Naval Armed Guard.

'How would you like to be sitting next to ammo, bombs, barrels of aircraft fuel and dynamite? That's why I didn't like sailing too close to the tankers."

— Al Gonzales

one," he said.

Gleichauf confirms the deadly odds. "Yes. There was one convoy of ships, called PQ-17, and they lost 23 out of 35 ships by the time they made to their port," he said.

Another El Pasoan who served with the Guard, Al Gonzales, says he can remember the places he went to, but not the name of the ship he was on each time.

"I went to most of the islands: Australia, Hawaii, Okinawa and Gua-



dacanal. That's where I got my first gray hairs," the 68-year-old retired electrician said.

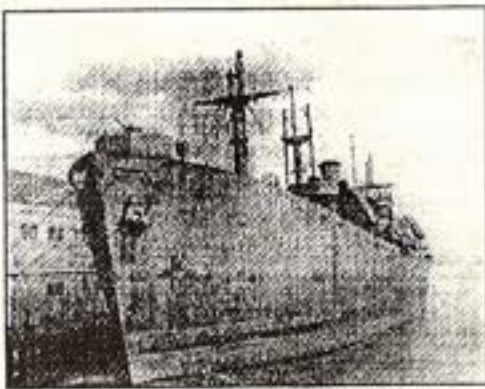
Sometimes the cargo was as dangerous as the enemy.

"How would you like to be sitting next to ammo, bombs, barrels of aircraft fuel and dynamite? That's why I didn't like sailing too close to the tankers," he said.

In the last five years, Gleichauf has crisscrossed the country attending Guard reunions and collecting their

histories. He has interviewed about 100 sailors, including Reinhardt Reshe, the commander of U-255, a German submarine that sank a number of Allied ships in the North Atlantic.

The commander, who now serves in NATO, was known for his kindness to the survivors of his torpedoes, Gleichauf said. "After an attack, he would surface, approach the life-boats, and give assistance, blankets and medicine."



The William N. Pendleton, used in World War II, left, sits at a dock. Both Al Gonzales and Herb Norch were on similar ships during the war.

'We had heavy casualties. One out of every three ships was lost in that one."
— Herb Norch, about a convoy he sailed in headed for Murmansk, in the Soviet Union



Herb Norch, above, still fits into his "pea" coat and sailor hat, which he wore in World War II. Inset portrait of Norch shows how he looked when he first entered the Guard.



Military personnel, civilians among victims of blast

The 320 persons lost and 390 injured in the Port Chicago explosion included not only Navy personnel, but men of the Coast Guard, U.S. Merchant Marine, and Marine Corps, as well as civil service employees and civilians.

Most of the naval officers and Navy enlisted were assigned either to the Naval Magazine or the Naval Barracks commands. Thirty were members of Armed Guard crews assigned to the two ships.

The Coast Guard men manned a fire barge, and the civil service employees were a three-man Navy railroad crew.

The lone Marine killed was on pier guard duty.

Regardless of branch of service or assigned duty, Rear Admiral Carleton H. Wright, Commandant of the 12th Naval District at the time, expressed a view embodied in the Port Chicago Memorial.

At a press conference, he said they "gave their lives in the service of their country. Their sacrifice could not have been greater had this loss occurred on a battleship or a beach-head of the war fronts."



These three Armed Guard crewmen were on liberty and survived. If you know of others, let us know.

George Diller
948 Shaffer Rd.
New Field, NY 14867
607-564-7462

Floyce W. Waits
1266 Linden Ave.
Concord, CA 94520
415-685-1209

Bruce Cox
3101 Minnesota Rd.
Charlotte, NC 28208
704-392-4719

In Memoriam

U.S. NAVAL MAGAZINE AND NAVAL BARRACKS (211)

SM3c James C. Akina
GM3c Clarence Allen, Jr.
Lt. (jg) Maxie L. Anderson
SM2c Leslie K. Axane
SM2c Isiah Aah, Jr.
SM2c David Bacon, Sr.
SM2c Henry W. Bailey
GM3c Leonard Baker
SM2c David Barnes, Jr.
SM2c Joseph Battle
SM2c Raphael O. Beason
SM2c Siles Bell
Lt. Thomas L. Blackman
SM2c David E. Blackwell
SM2c Thimon Blaylock
SM2c Johnnie C. Borders
CM1c James H. Born
SM2c L. T. Bowen
SM2c Charles L. Boyce
SM2c Alvin Brewer, Jr.
SM2c James Bridges
SM2c Walter L. Brooks, Jr.
SM2c Johnnie L. Broome
SM2c Ernest L. Burnett
SM2c Wilbert Calvin
SM2c Lawrence L. Carlin
SM2c Robert A. Carter
Lt. (jg) John B. Christenbury
SM2c Eddie L. Clark
SM2c Eugene Coffee, Jr.
SM2c Bill Coleman
SM2c Enos Coley
SM2c Arthur A. Connor
SM2c Frank Cooley
SM2c Norman H. Craig
SM2c Eddie L. Cress
SM2c Jessie V. Crump
SM2c Herman L. Curtis
SM2c Horace Daniel, Sr.
SM2c Ruby Danahy
SM2c Floyd M. Davis
SM2c Henry J. Davis
SM2c Willie Davis
SM2c James L. Devaughn
SM2c Nathaniel Dixon
SM2c Rayfield D. Doyle
SM2c Herman Dunbar

SM2c Arthur L. Ebenezer
SM2c Dunton L. Edwards
SM2c Herbert L. Edwards
SM2c Junius C. Ervin
SM2c Luther Euseby
SM2c Ananias Evans, Sr.
SM2c Horace Evans
SM2c John H. Evans
SM2c William L. Evans
SM2c John B. Fellabret
SM2c Robert L. Ferguson
GM3c Clarence S. Fields
SM2c Jessie Finney
SM2c Matthew Forkner, Jr.
SM2c Joseph R. Francis
SM2c Ford S. Franklin, Jr.
SM2c Artie J. Frazier
CM1c Elmer B. Froid
SM2c Genard Gabriel
SM2c Rennie L. Gaines
SM2c Elger Gent
SM2c (CM) John S. Gibson
SM2c Jethro Gilbert
SM2c Samuel Glenn, Jr.
SM2c Lewis D. Goudelock
SM2c Harry L. Graham
SM2c William H. Green
SM2c Ross B. Grimage
SM2c A.D. Hamilton
SM2c Ernest E. Hamilton
SM2c Emel Hamon
SM2c George R. Hammon
SM2c John W. Hannah, Jr.
SM2c Joe H. Hardaway
SM2c John L. Harding
SM2c B.C. Harris
SM2c Roscoe A. Harris
SM2c Phillip H. Harrison
SM2c Clifford Harvey, Jr.

SM2c George W. Hayes
SM2c D.C. Hayward
SM2c Douglas L. Hector
SM2c David L. Higginbotham
SM2c Bobbie R. Higga
SM2c Cluster Hill
SM2c Joseph Hills
SM2c Charles W. Hite
SM2c (SC) Roderick Y. Holden
SM2c Stanford Holley
MM3c (T) Eldred L. Holmes
SM2c Ernest M. Howard
SM2c Frank J. Howard
SM2c Earl K. Hudson
SM2c Glen Hughes
SM2c Leroy Hughes
SM2c Theodore L. Hughes
SM2c William Humphrey, Jr.
SM2c Ross D. Hunt
SM2c Wave Hunt
SM2c Rudolph W. Hunter
CM3c (T) Larry Ingram
SM2c D.C. Jackson
SM2c James Jackson
GM3c James E.M. Jackson
SM2c Lavi R. Jackson
SM2c Paul E. Jackson
SM2c Robert A. Jackson, Jr.
GM3c Samuel Jackson, Jr.
SM2c Daniel L. Jenkins
SM2c Willie Jenkins
SM2c Henry L. Johnson
LT. (jg) James B. Johnson
SM2c Clarence Johnson
SM2c Earl T. Johnson
SM2c Gabe Johnson
SM2c Harold Johnson
SM2c Milton F. Johnson
SM2c Daniel L. Jones

SM2c Ivery L. Jones, Jr.
SM2c Henry Joseph, Jr.
SM2c Samuel Kearney
SM2c (SC) Calvin King
SM2c Clifton King
SM2c Versa Land
SM2c Sidney J. LaPorte, Jr.
SM2c Willie Law, Jr.
SM2c Cleo Lawson
SM2c Calistus W. Leslie
SM2c (SC) Aaron A. Lewis
SM2c T.C. Lewis
SM2c Samuel M. Long
SM2c Robert Lyons
SM2c Beattie J. Makins
SM2c (GM) Russell E. Martin
SM2c (GM) Alonzo Martin
SM2c Daniel Massie
SM2c Lawrence Matthews, Jr.
SM2c Charles A. Mayfield
SM2c Mitchell McClam
CM3c (T) Clarence K. McFarland
SM2c Calvin Malton
SM2c Ernest C. Miller
MM3c (T) Isiah Miller, Jr.
SM2c Otis K. Miller
SM2c Marshall Moore, Sr.
CM3c Thomas Moore
SM2c William P. Moore
Ens. Gilbert Mondon
SM2c Eddie L. Neal
SM2c Willie Nettles
SM2c James H. Nixon
SM2c William H. Oley, Sr.
SM2c Augustus Packard
SM2c (SC) William F. Paschal
SM2c Robert F. Peete
SM2c Lester L. Perry
SM2c Joe H. Person

SM2c Alfred Phillips
GM3c Charles Pickett
SM2c Houston Porter
SM2c McCoy Porter
SM2c David W. Potts
SM3c (T) Samuel H. Powell
GM2c Joe C. Pruitt
SM2c Arthur Reid, Jr.
GM3c James E. Rhodes
SM2c Clyde F. Richardson
SM2c James A. Roberts
SM2c Mingo Roberts
MM3c Alphonse Robinson
SM2c Fred Robinson, Jr.
SM2c Eugene J. Rogers
SM2c Robert Sanders
SM2c Wesley Saunders
Lt. Roland Schindler
GM3c Carl C. Scott
Lt. Vernon C. Shaner
SM2c Joseph J. Shackles
SM2c Willie Sims
SM2c Isaac Smith
SM2c Joseph M. Smith
SM2c Ella Taylor
SM2c Joseph M. Tolson
HA2c Maule D. Towles
SM2c (GM) Norvin L. Van Dusk
SM2c Isiah Wade
SM2c Charles Walker, Jr.
SM2c Walter L. Walker, Jr.
SM2c Woodrow L. Walker
GM3c (T) William C. Warren
SM2c James L. Washington
SM2c Woodrow Washington, Jr.
GM3c Daniel West
Lt. (jg) Raymond R. White
SM2c Joseph B. White
SM2c Arthur Whitmore
SM2c Mitchell A. Williams
SM2c Maryland S. Wilson
GM3c Oliver Wilson
SM2c Samuel D. Wilson
Lt. Harold A. Wood
SM2c James E. Woods
SM2c Walter E. Wright
SM2c Charles E. Wyatt

NAVY AND CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES (6)

Lawrence C. Bustrack, Meco Co.
Gunder Halverson, Meco Co.
Raymond V. Hunnicutt, Navy Employee

Thomas G. Hunt, Meco Co.
Harry A. Middleton, Navy Employee
Fred Zanarini, Navy Employee

OTHER MILITARY (6)

Pvt. Elwin A. Blanks, Marine Corps
BM3c Peter G. Broda, Coast Guard
MM3c William G. Degryse, Coast Guard

MM3c Edward J. Fortz, Coast Guard
SM2c Charles H. Riley, Coast Guard
SM2c James C. Sullivan, Coast Guard

MARITIME SERVICE ON SS E.A. BRYAN (31)

SS BRYAN ARMED GUARD (13)

SM2c Wayland E. Ceusey
SM2c Rudy J. Cabellie
SM2c Robert E. Chase
SM2c Claude L. Chastain
SM3c John J. Gee
Lt. (jg) Ralph B. Hartman
SM2c Clarence R. Hollandsworth

SM2c Kenneth H. Multhead
SM2c Jesse W. Mulligan
SM2c Lloyd J. Quick
SM2c Martin J. Setzer
SM2c George H. Singer
SM2c Lillian L. Small

Elmer A. Andraschko, Cook
Albert A. Arsenian, Seaman
William C. Benhart, Oiler
Martin M. Cacic, Seaman
Ray E. Davis, Wiper
Donald L. Dennis, Wiper
Thomas E. Dorsey, Seaman
George H. Falk, Bos'n
Manus J. Franklin, Engr.
Alfred D. Gilbert, Engr.
James R. Gitting, Seaman

Joseph D. Grange, Jr., Engr.
Fred Hayes, Seaman
Delbert R. Hutchinson, Fireman
Peter C. Jepsen, Ch. Engr.
Charles A. Johnson, Utilityman
Clifford R. Johnson, Utilityman
Ralph A. Lantz, Seaman
John A. Loula, Engr.
Frank C. Mallia, Carpenter
Edward Maneco, Messman

Harry E. Nathan, Seaman
Jesse Porter, Sr., Ch. Cook
Richard D. Robinson, Seaman
Aaron C. Sangster, Jr., Seaman
Edward M. Shaw, Oiler
Howard A. Smith, 1st Mate
Andrew Suchan, Fireman
Robert F. Townsend, 2nd Mate
Harding E. White, Messman
George R. Witt, Utilityman

SS QUINAULT VICTORY ARMED GUARD (17)

GM3c Jack L. Albin
SM2c Delbert P. Bergstrom
SM2c (SM) Jack P. Bowman
GM3c John G. Hall
SM2c George D. Howland
SM2c Andy Monroe
SM3c William H. Mulryan
SM2c Henry J. Myers
SM2c Woodrow A. Ritt

SM2c Jacob D. Rienehoover
SM2c William R. Robinson
SM2c Charles H. Roadell
SM2c Jay Rose, Jr.
SM2c Otis K. Rose
SM2c Woodrow W. Saint
SM2c Arnold T. Sanders
SM2c Harold S. Sang

Robert D. Bailey, Utilityman
Robert E. Bertlett, Messman
John D. Bell, Asst. Purser
Frederick E. Bentley, Seaman
Donald H. Cheney, Elect.
Hugh E. Crawford, Malt. Men
Floyd F. Crist, Seaman
Albert C. Diada, Messman
Walter M. Durland, Seaman
Kenneth J. Eulrick, Seaman
Burke E. Falco, Utilityman
Eugene W. Garrett, Fireman

Robert K. Hendrickson, Seaman
Ella Hendrickson, Engr.
Johannes N. Justesen, Steward
Walter F. Kannberg, Engr.
Robert E. Kalm, 2nd Mate
Joseph B. Koeninger, Seaman
Earl L. Mallory, Engr.
Lloyd K. McDaniel, Seaman
Kenneth M. Moon, 2nd Mate
Robert S. Morell, Oiler
Isadore E. Narinsky, Seaman
Roy L. Nelson, Carpenter

David R. Parsons, 3rd Mate
Mike Pearson, Oiler
Ella B. Pinaon, Engr.
Richard V. Potter, Fireman
Virgil R. Sandberg, Engr.
Albert R. Scott, Ch. Mate
Leander S. Skance, Seaman
Howard W. Sullivan, Seaman
Robert J. Sullivan, Master
Glen E. Thompson, Engr.
Louis J. Widner, Messman
John A. Williams, Ch. Engr.

Sailor tells of being lost at sea

Navy has weekend reunion in El Paso

By Jim Conley
El Paso Times

Wilson Leggett and his buddies considered shooting themselves with a .45-caliber pistol rather than face a slow death in the cold Atlantic Ocean.

Thoughts of passing the gun around came as their lifeboat filled with water during a bitter Atlantic storm. A few days earlier, a German submarine had blown their ship out from under them. It was World War II, early 1943.

"But I just thank the man upstairs that it all turned out like it did," said Leggett, a trim, weathered, 68-year-old machine shop owner from Houston who was in El Paso for a Navy reunion this weekend.

"The gun wouldn't fire anyway, we found out after we were saved. And we found out the lifeboat was unsinkable because of special air tanks under the seats," Leggett said.

He and about 65 other members of a special group called the U.S. Navy Armed Guard reminisced about their wartime experiences at a reunion last week in El Paso.

The guard consisted of 144,000 men assigned to gunnery and communication duties aboard 6,236 merchant ships — 710 of which were sunk, said Herb Norch, El Paso spokesman for the group.

More than 1,800 of the 144,000 men were killed, Norch said.

Leggett said he was lucky: "I survived because of where I was sitting in the first lifeboat I was in."

He was one of five men ordered into a smaller lifeboat — the one with the air tanks — the day after his ship was sunk.



Grace Saenz / El Paso Times

Navy veteran Wilson Leggett shows the 2-ounce water cup that he and others in his World War II lifeboat each could fill just once a day for a drink while adrift in the Atlantic. Their ship had been sunk by a German submarine.

The first boat he was in sunk later in a storm.

Of 73 men from the ship, the SS Charles C. Pinckney, only Leggett and the other 12 men with him in the smaller boat survived.

"We were sunk at about 13 minutes til 8 at night on the 27th of January, 1943," Leggett said from a memory honed to details he can't forget.

"As we were pulling away from our burning ship (a so-called Liberty Ship loaded with ammunition and other

supplies headed for North Africa), the submarine surfaced.

"Because of the fire's light from our burning ship, we could see it as clear as day. Then our gun crew, which had stayed aboard ship, fired three shells at the sub's conning tower.

"We were not over 25 yards from the sub when the shells hit," Leggett said. "We're sure they sank the sub, because it would have finished us off if they hadn't."

Leggett said a second Ger-

man submarine surfaced the next morning and gave the survivors time to row far enough away not to get hurt when the sub finished off the sinking ship with cannon fire.

After 13 days at sea, including two days of 40- to 50-foot storm waves, the boat was found by a Swiss ship about 200 miles east of the Azores.

Leggett went on to serve about 2½ more years — on the aircraft carrier USS Wasp, which got him through 27 battle engagements in the Pacific without a scratch.



Site of the U.S.N. Armed Guard Center World War II
1st. Ave-52nd Street. Brooklyn. New York. It now
used by the Sanitation Department.



Clifton Perkins, P.O.Box 6, Massillon, Ohio 44648
poses with the earphones and navy dress of the day
while at sea during WW II.

I have recently located 2 Armed Guard, Joe Chamberlain and David Younce who are still working at the Panama Canal as Canal Pilots. We are now represented in the British Isles, Canada, Australia and Jed Jedell stays in Mexico most of the time. Younce saw my writeup in the "SEA CLASSICS" which is published by the Challenge Publications, Inc., 7950 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Ca. 91304. I guess the ol'saving, it pays to advertise is true

FORE AND AFT LIBERTY PASS -DITTY BAG- T.S. CARD -NOT REQUIRED CHOW DOWN

AHOY!! " NEW JERSEY (JOISEY)-NORTHEAST MINI-REUNION " AHOY!!
Y'ALL INCLUDES ALL THE OTHER STATES YOUSE GUYS
CANADA and GUESTS

The days went faster this year and here it is again, time for us to get all we can together for our SEPT.28--OCT. 1, 1989 ANNUAL MINI-REUNION of N.J. and the NORTH EAST CREW. Our WELCOME extends to "ALL ARMED GUARD" and their Ladies plus SPECIAL FRIENDS. Now is the time to take LEAVE for another- 4 DAY - GREATEST of ALL BULLSESSIONS IN BALTIMORE MARYLAND, (USA), the HOME of the "LIBERTY SHIP", S.S. JOHN W.BROWN!! This year, we are going to be able to "VISIT HER" while we still are able to go aboard to see the wonderful job that the ARMED GUARD, THE CIVILIANS and THE MERCHANT SEAMEN have done on restoring her. The "BROWN" will be towed into the INNER HARBOR especially for our pleasure. We will "SACK-OUT" at the HYATT-REGENCY, just across the street. The Room rates are higher than we have been paying but it is all convenient to the "BROWN" and you don't have to pay extra for a bus tour on this occasion. PARKING AREA IS EXTRA NEARBY!!

It's hard to catch up 46 years in 4 days so prepare to come early and stay late if you care to. Arrangements for rooms MUST BE MADE THROUGH THE HYATT-REGENCY, 300 LIGHT STREET, BALTIMORE, MD. 21207 1-(301)-528-1234. The price is \$89.00 per day. (DBL OR SINGLE). Also, DAY'S INN-INNER HARBOR-100 Hopkins Pl. BALTIMORE Md. 21201 1-301-576-1000 a few blocks away-\$59.00-dbl***\$49.00 for single. ONE NIGHTS DEPOSIT REQUIRED IN ADVANCE or CREDIT CARD GUARANTEE. Make 'em EARLY!!

FOR YOUR MEALS, MAKE YOUR CHECKS OUT TO HOST: ALEX LOMBARDI, 14 Brookfield Ave. MONTCLAIR, N.J. 07043. Tel. 1-(201)-746-6361 for more information. Reservation should be in by September 12, 1989 unless located after that date, PLEASE.

DINNER-FRIDAY---EVENING SEPTEMBER 29, 1989	\$25.00 EACH	_____
DINNER-SATURDAY EVENING SEPTEMBER 30, 1989	\$33.00 EACH	_____
BREAKFAST-SUNDAY A.M. OCTOBER, 1, 1989	\$17.00 EACH	_____

CHECK or M.O. NO. _____

BE SURE TO STATE THAT YOU ARE "U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WW II VETERAN!!"

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER OUT TO: "ALEX LOMBARDI". BRING YOUR CANCELLED CHECK TO THE REUNION IF POSSIBLE!! It is a great receipt. THANKS
Send to: Alex Lombardi, 14 Brookfield Ave., Montclair, N.J.07043 (201)-746-6361

CUT OFF HERE AND RETAIN ABOVE FOR YOUR RECORD! FILL OUT AND RETURN FORM BELOW
1.===== CUT HERE--OR MAKE A COPY=====

Alex, Please reserve me () for Friday Dinner at \$25.00 EACH PERSON \$ _____.
Please reserve me () for Sat. DINNER at \$33.00 EACH PERSON \$ _____.
Please reserve me () BREAKFAST SUN.A.M.at \$17.00 Each PERSON \$ _____.
NOTICE:

**ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE IN BY (9/1/89) TOTAL \$ _____.
**Exceptions only for those located after 8/25/89

Last Name	First	Ladies	Telephone Number
(_____)	(_____)	(_____)	(_____)

Street and Box Number	City	State	Zip
(_____)	(_____)	(_____)	(_____)

My check or M.O. No. is:(_____) .I will arrive(_____)Leave(_____)

I am a < >SMOKER -- < > NON-SMOKER. < > I am disabled < > I need assistance

A MEMORIAL SERVICE WILL BE HELD ABOARD THE S.S.JOHN W. BROWN 9/30/89 AT 11 A.M.
*****DANCING SATURDAY NIGHT WITH WONDERFUL MUSIC BY THE PHIL LOMBARDI BAND*****

MICHIGAN - INDIANA - OHIO
(1989 Tri-State Mini Reunion)

All U.S. Navy WWII Armed Guard Vets, ladies and friends are cordially invited to the State of Ohio for our Annual Mini Reunion -

September 15-17, 1989

Place: The Westin Hotel at Fountain Square (5th & Vine Sts.)
Cincinnati, Ohio - (513) 621-7700

Rooms: \$55.00 single or double occupancy. Check in between 3 PM/6 PM
When making reservations, please mention its for U.S. Navy WWII Armed Guard Veterans. All reservations must be made by August 24, 1989. After this date, on a space available basis only.

Delta Airlines has discount rates available. Call 1-800-221-1212 daily between 8 AM to 11 PM Eastern Time. Refer to reference File #D 23020 special meetings network.

In addition to the Armed Guard Reunion activities, you're invited to experience the world's 2nd largest Oktoberfest (next to Munich, Germany) being held in Cincinnati, Saturday & Sunday, September 16 & 17.

RESERVATION BLANK

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Friday, September 15, 1989

Paddle Wheel Dinner Cruise \$28.00 per person _____
(Includes: 3 hr. cruise, steamboat
round of beef dinner, round trip
bus fare)

Saturday, September 16, 1989

Banquet, Chicken Cordon Bleu \$25.00 per person _____
plus all the trimmings

Sunday, September 17, 1989

Brunch \$10.00 per person _____

Total _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Check number _____

Your canceled check will be your receipt. (Bring it with you.)

Tear off and mail to: Bob Ober
7115 Dunn Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45230
513-231-3181

Veterans upset over flag decision

by Jim Milton

They came to Seattle from the far reaches of the United States—the eastern seaboard, the south-east, the midwest, the southwest and the Pacific coast. Their mission, a simple one, was to rekindle old friendships, meet new friends and to enjoy the wonders and the mystique of the great northwest.

The 8th annual reunion of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard veterans of World War II was held June 21 through June 25 at Seattle's opulent SEA-TAC Red Lion Inn, convention headquarters for more than 700 veterans and their guests. Some attended with the help of canes, a few came in wheel chairs. There was also an abundance of hearing aids scattered throughout this venerable group.

One veteran from San Antonio remarked "I left my hearing aid at home on my dresser — boy!! can my dresser hear good." The important point to make is that these dedicated men, none of whom are kids anymore, were here together. They are bound by a common thread of comradeship and pride in the service they have rendered for their country. They were welcomed by proclamations from Booth Gardner, governor of the state of Washington, and Seattle mayor, Charles Royer.

The United States Navy Armed Guard was first organized during World War I when Allied and American shipping was being attacked by enemy surface ships and a new craft to warfare, the submarine. It was necessary for guns to be placed on merchant ships and for gun crews to man them for protection. The U.S. Navy was called on to supply the crew, and they were called "Armed Guard."

Armed Guard crews consisted of officers, gunners, signalmen, radiomen, medics, waves and ship's company, with a total of 144,970 personnel serving on 6,236 ships. Of these ships, 710 were sunk and many damaged, with 1,810 killed in action and unknown injuries. The requirement to serve in the Armed Guard was to be in good health in every respect for there were no doctors aboard. Good night vision was essential along with 20-20 vision. It was hoped that the men on watch could spot the enemy before the enemy spotted them, and that quick action could be taken to avoid contact.

As was the case at the end of World War I, the Armed Guard

branch of the service was again de-activated at the conclusion of World War II. All guns were removed from merchant ships and many of the crews shipped over to the regular Navy, making a career of the service, the Armed Guard has maintained a rather low visibility compared to other branches which remain active. Veterans of this type of service will often be stopped by someone asking "what is the Armed Guard?" Its existence is unknown to many people.

Recognition of service on merchant ships should not be limited to Navy personnel only. Merchant seamen served side by side with Armed Guard veterans to make sure that the ship's crew and its precious cargo arrived at its destination safe from enemy destruction. Membership in the U.S.N. Armed Guard Association is open also to these dedicated men who served in the maritime commission by placing their lives on the line. Recent legislation enacted provides for some services and benefits for merchant seamen who served their country in time of war.

Veterans attending these Armed Guard reunions nurture a never-ending quest for some morsel of information concerning ship-mates with whom they served. This eternal hope remains from one year to another and often times these buddies are reunited. Several of such instances were recorded at the meeting in Seattle, with ship-mates who had not seen each other for 45 or more years. Picture if you will, two veterans who had served aboard ship together and then spent days together in a fight for survival while in life boats.

These incidents are what reunions are all about and what keep these brave men coming back and keeping in touch. A national computer is being maintained which keeps on file the names of all Armed Guard members and the ships on which they served. This computer has been an excellent vehicle in helping to bring together those who once served together.

The program of events for this reunion was very capably arranged by chairman Madelen Rigg and her committee from the state of Washington. Ms Rigg is the widow of the late Leland Rigg, a former member of the Armed Guard. Veterans returning to their villages and hamlets will remember the day-long cruise

through Puget Sound from Seattle to beautiful Victoria, British Columbia.

They will recall the picturesque shore line and the delectable food served aboard the cruise ship, Princess Marguerite. Another memorable experience that will linger is the narrated tour of Seattle's State Park.

Upon arrival here at Tillicum Village, visitors are welcomed with an appetizer of steamed clams and nectar, followed by baked salmon prepared around alderwood fires. It was generally agreed by these veterans that Seattle is most deserving of its name—"The Emerald City." The general landscape of the city is one of lush, green vegetation adorned with blooming flowers of every variety.

During the business meeting of the reunion, the recent Supreme Court ruling on desecration of our flag became the central issue. These loyal and patriotic Americans raised their collective voices in protest to this decision which would allow burning of our flag.

Their opinions were emphatic and were stated in tones loud and clear. Those assembled in this gathering authorized their chairman, C.A. Lloyd, to draft a letter of protest on this issue to be mailed to the Supreme Court of the United States. In commenting on this controversial matter, William F. Buckley, Jr., states "Justice Stevens is making the point that without offending the

Bill of Rights, the states should be authorized to protect from desecration their special monuments.

These vary within the states. The Alamo quite reasonably means more for Texans than for New Yorkers, who have their own monuments. The flag is the monument the states have in common. Surely a society that has the power to conscript, and in many cases to send to their deaths in defense of that flag its citizens, has also the right to guard against desecrating the flag that symbolizes their ideals. It is correct for a society as a matter of prudence to guard its banner against desecration, and to do so is also an act of dignity. And the maintenance of the national dignity is essential to the maintenance of the national morale."

The general chairman of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard Veterans of World War II is Mr. Charles A. Lloyd, 5712 Partridge Lane, Raleigh, NC, 27609, phone 919-876-5537. Mr. Lloyd welcomes any inquiries or request for membership from those veterans who served in the Armed Guard.

The reunion for 1990 will be held in Chicago, June 6 through 10, with Mr. Bob Grossman as reunion chairman. One of the highlights of that convention will be a trip to Great Lakes Naval Training Station for a Graduation Exercise. The Congress Hotel in downtown Chicago will serve as convention headquarters.

Our Flag

by Jim Milton

Our Flag!! Long may it wave over the land of the free and the home of the brave!!

When we stand watching Old Glory flow majestically overhead, we acutely feel that our flag is really alive. It speaks to us of the fear and the hurt of battle. It speaks to us of the pride and the joy of victory.

It speaks to us of patriotism, loyalty and freedom. But what if our flag could actually speak? What would it say to us? It would say love me. Respect me. Honor me. Display me. It would say please don't tread on me. Please don't burn me in a fit of rage. Please don't spit upon me. If our flag could speak, it would tell us of these very indignities that it has endured by those who have forgotten what made our nation great.

The red of our country's flag was made redder still by the heroism of our fallen comrades. The white in our country's flag was made more stainlessly pure by the motives which impelled those brave men. The blue in our country's flag has been glorified by the service they have rendered for American ideals.

We acknowledge with gratitude the lasting contribution made by Betsy Ross in designing our original flag. Our thanks also go out to Mr. Robert Heft, who as an 18-year-old high school student in Lancaster, Ohio, submitted his design of our present 50-star flag which was ultimately chosen by our nation.

We love our flag and we pray that it will always wave proudly as a beacon of freedom for those generations who will follow us.



THE BURMA STAR ASSOCIATION

(Patron: H.R.H., The Duke of Edinburgh K.G.,K.T.)

FIRST ALBERTA BRANCH, CALGARY

TEL: (403)289-4495

July 9 1989

Mr Charles A Lloyd,
Chairman & Secretary,
5712 Partridge Lane,
Raleigh, NC 27609 USA.

BRANCH PRESIDENT
R.K. (Bob) Watson,
627 18th Avenue N.W.,
Calgary, Alberta T2M 0T9
Canada

Dear Charles,

Thank you for sending "The Pointer", which I circulate among our members.

I moved to Calgary just 18 months ago from Toronto, Ontario and started a branch of The Burma Star Association - I had no idea whether there were any potential members here in the west, but it turns out that there are a few, and to date I have 64 members. Only two Canadian formations served in Burma, 435 & 436 Squadrons, RCAF. In our membership we have 7 Royal Navy types, one Royal Marine and one Merchant Marine. I myself, was British army and served in North Burma under "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell and his Chinese command. The only American troops were "Merrill's Marauders", and a few OSS officers, there was "Wingate's Chindits", our 36 British Division and a lot of American officered Chinese. In all a mixed bag that really achieved not much in the end. Still, that is war. Like politics, it makes some strange bedfellows.

As a landlubber, I am fascinated by the articles in The Pointer and am glad to see that you have such a thriving organisation. Starting this Burma Star branch at this stage of our lives, with the average age around 70, I decided not to expect too much. Those in the rest of the Commonwealth and in the UK are very active, with parades, uniform dress and standards. I felt that trying to get to that level would be impossible, so we really are largely a social group. Most of the lads had never heard of the Association, so it was a great thrill for them to find it existed and to meet others who were war time buddies. Despite the great communications of today, there are still gaps that cause people not to know about matters that affect them. The Burma campaign, was called the "Forgotten Army" because we never made the headlines even in England, during the war. There was too much happening right close to home, in Europe and the Middle East. Burma those days was the other side of the world.

I am in constant touch with Dr Bill Houpt, who runs the Washington DC branch and of course we have a fraternal relationship with the C.B.I. (China-Burma-India) Veterans Assoc of America. Just recently, we had a presentation at our Legion by the Ambassador of the USSR to Navy and Merchant Navy types who were on the Murmansk run, when we were supplying the Russians on the Eastern front. The Murmansk Medal is being offered by the Soviet Union to all who were on that supply run. Maybe you have heard of it - I am sure many of your members would be eligible. On behalf of our members, I salute all your fellows who did such a great job in the days when we were all in it "up to our necks". Good wishes to you all,

Sincerely,



Joseph Lafferty WW I, 374 Jose Ave., San Francisco, Ca. 94110 is shown: Then and Now, also, a detail assigned to "Guard Duty" after WW I at Bay Ridge Barracks in Brooklyn, N.Y. He also sent some O! Salt's photo at the barracks on May 20, 1918 he was in charge of.

This 'N That

JOSEPH LAFFERTY, H.M.W.I.C.

374 SAN JOSE AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94110
(415) 282-6168



After 44 Years

Medals and U.S.S. Iowa Tragedy Cause Ravenswood Man To Relive Dangerous World War II Navy Duty

By Michele Carter

Memories from 44 years ago have been surfacing a lot recently for Navy veteran Malcolm "Mack" Arnold of Ravenswood.

First, earlier this month—and after more than four decades—he received his medals from World War II.

That brought back some pleasant thoughts about the four years he spent as a Navy Armed Guard, manning naval guns on transport vessels.

Then, this week darker memories surged up as Arnold watched the memorial services for other sailors who manned other guns—the crewmen who died in the gun turret explosion on the *U. S. S. Iowa*.

He remembered a wartime scene, watching the superstructure of "a whole ship full of ammunition" rise slowly into the air as the vessel detonated.

"The biggest piece that came down was the gun turret, I think," Arnold said.

His World War II tour of sea duty placed Arnold on lightly armed transports, where the Armed Guard regular-Navy personnel manned some of the guns and also taught non-Navy transport crews to fire them.

His duty ranged through both theaters of the war—Atlantic and Pacific

—and resulted in his getting medals from several campaigns.

They included a Navy Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign, World War II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal and a China Service Medal.

Arnold, who would never call himself a hero, said he wasn't sure about any occasions which would have resulted in his getting the medals.

"I guess the good conduct medal is because I was good," he said, "that's what I'm proud of."

Arnold was surprised when he received the package in the mail. The envelope contained six medals that he had earned during his four-year tour in the guard.

In 1942 he enlisted in the Navy and trained in Norfolk, VA. He was assigned to the gun crew of the *SS Barkdull*, which he described as an old Panamanian tanker of the 1919 vintage.

The *Barkdull* sailed in a convoy to Houston, TX, then to Halifax, and then on to England in a North American convoy. This ship had a small crew of approximately 20 with six Armed Guard and one officer.

They made two successful convoys

across the Atlantic and back. The *Barkdull* survived but many ships in this convoy were lost.

"When you start out on a convoy with 50 ships and end up with only 35 or so, you see a lot of ships blow up."

Submarines picked off ships in the convoys with dreadful regularity during the early years of the war, but sometimes even the lightly armed transports were able to save themselves, as Arnold explained.

"My buddy and I... he was an Indiana boy... were sitting on the aft (rear) of the ship, just spittin' and spattin' into the foam."

"I looked over at him and his eyes were round and he was pointing and I looked back and saw the periscope of a submarine cutting through the water behind us."

"I reached over and hit the bell for General Quarters (emergency)," Arnold said.

He had trained on a five-inch gun (with shells of that diameter) called the "551, an old gun with a lanyard you pulled to fire."

"We came awful close to him with that five-inch gun. At least he didn't stick that periscope back up again."

In September of 1942, Arnold was assigned to the US Merchant Ship, the *SS Thomas Pickney*, with 14 other Armed Guard under the supervision of Ensign J. Vincent Burke, Jr. On this trip Arnold went to England several times including two trips to North Africa, one to Bone and one to Oran.

After this stint in the Armed Guard Arnold was transferred to Ordnance School in Pontiac, MI, then to anti-aircraft crews on the *William Ward Burrows* and to the *USS Holland* on duty in the Pacific area.

After the war ended, Arnold was unaware that he was eligible for any medals.

He was reading a classified ad in



Mack Arnold in WW II

THE NEWS about an Armed Guard reunion. He wrote in answer and then received a letter from Charles Lloyd who is the chairman of the US Armed Guard, WWII Veterans, who had got a copy of Arnold's records. He sent a letter and six medals from the Armed Guard. A book is being published with pictures and biographies of veterans of the Armed Guard. Arnold is going to be included in the book and is in hopes of getting in touch with some of his fellow crew.

According to Arnold, a search is going on for veterans of the Armed Guard. Anyone who is a veteran of the guard is urged to write to C.A. Lloyd, Chairman, US Armed Guard WWII Veterans, 5712 Partridge Lane, Raleigh, NC 27609.

Arnold, who remembers standing on the bridge of a ship during a North Atlantic storm with a veteran captain as the waves crashed over the sides of the boat and tore the lifeboats off, said the huge battleships like the *U. S. S. Iowa* were magnificent sights on the high seas.

"They were big, that's about all you can say. They were big," he remembered. "I saw the (*U. S. S.*) *Pennsylvania* in Okinawa after she had a big hole in her side. I saw the (*U. S. S.*) *West Virginia* after they (the Japanese) had sunk her at Pearl Harbor and I saw the (*U. S. S.*) *Missouri* (which hosted the Japanese surrender mission), but I never got to see the (*U. S. S.*) *Iowa*."

Arnold said he thinks the disastrous explosion aboard the *U. S. S. Iowa* was caused by a mechanical failure that caused a spark to ignite the gunpowder in the turret, but agreed that the answer may never be found.

Explosions of that ferocity leave little to examine.

"I'll bet I've seen 50 or 75 ships blow up," he said.



Mack Arnold sits proudly as his wife, Margaret pins on the medals he received 44 years after he was discharged from the Navy Armed Guard.



Pictures of Bari, Italy Disaster Sept. 1944 taken by Russ Krenciprock, 1852 James B. Drive, McDonald, Ohio 44437 216-530-3257. Maybe you remember, if there.

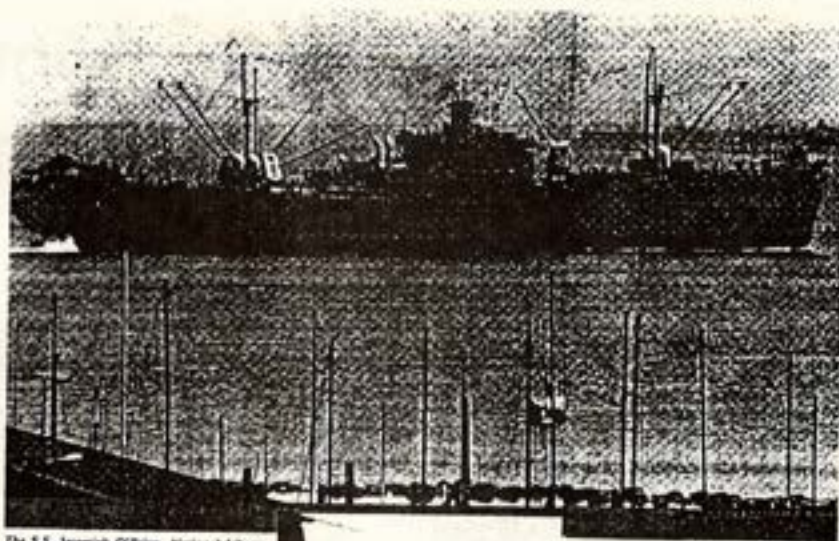
LONE YANKEE SURVIVOR

by George Bebout

It's two o'clock Saturday morning and the waters of San Francisco Bay shimmer under the moon. Aboard the ship docked at Pier 3, the partying has stopped for the night. A man descends four stories into the vessel's deserted engine room. Engineer Myron Alexander feels at home here and sees nothing unusual in the dimly lit slatted iron catwalks and heavy machinery that create a scene from a 1920's German silent movie. When he finishes checking the boiler pressure, he goes back up on deck, lights a cigarette, and talks to Gene Mattingly, another crewman. They watch a freighter sail through the Golden Gate.

Myron Alexander is a 63-year-old realtor and Gene Mattingly is a middle-aged high-school English teacher. Their ship is the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien, the last of America's World War II Liberty Ships, and the one they call the "Lucky Lady." Myron and Gene are aboard tonight to prepare for the Ninth Annual Seamen's Memorial Cruise the ship will make this weekend around San Francisco Bay.

The Jeremiah O'Brien is no ordinary nautical museum. She is a fully operational 45-year-old cargo vessel manned by a skilled, all-volunteer crew with an average age of 67. Her annual Memorial Cruise is an exciting flashback to a time when thousands of merchant seamen and Rosie the Riveters worked twenty-four hours a day to defeat Fascism.



The S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien, National Liberty Ship Memorial, cruises San Francisco Bay due to the ongoing efforts of volunteers. (Photo by Victor Brown.)

Chief Engineer Harry Morgan and his gang accomplished what many said couldn't be done. (Photo by Victor Brown.)

Joanie Redington, the ship's purser, is the last to turn in tonight. She is working late in her office on the boat deck—barely visible behind the stacks of programs, cruise passes, crew lists and other paperwork she has generated in her attempt to get 700 passengers and 130 crew members on board at the same time.

Barely nine years earlier, a wildly enthusiastic and noisy bunch of volunteers sailed the O'Brien out of the government's Reserve Fleet, which is located near San Francisco. Waking the sleepy lady from a thirty-three-year nap, they started her creaky old engine once again, and rode her down to drydock for repairs. She was an unkempt, greasy woman, but for the people who worked so hard to get her going, she was a beauty.

In her youth, she had been a participant in the D-Day landings. Robert Milby, First Radio Operator on the O'Brien on June 6, 1944, remembers: "The night before the invasion, we were sitting off the coast of Southampton and it seemed like thousands of planes were flying over us. And there were so many ships, I was sure



the water level had risen alarmingly. If there had been any enemy submarines around, they would have had a heyday, but there just wasn't any room for them. The invasion came at six o'clock in the morning and we got there about noon. We ended up making 11 roundtrips in all, shuttling back and forth between England and the Normandy beaches."

Built in 1943 in South Portland, Maine, by the New England Shipbuilding Corporation, the O'Brien was part of that World War II fleet of 2,750 identical "ugly ducklings" constructed at the unheard-of rate of one every six weeks. Crewed by merchant seamen and defended by a contingent of Navy Armed Guards, these cargo ships hauled food, ammunition, equipment, troops, animals, war

brides, prisoners of war and almost anything else that could walk, crawl, drive or be dragged aboard.

In 1946, after three years of wartime service, the Jeremiah O'Brien sailed into the National Defense Reserve Fleet to wait out the end of her life. Plans to convert her to a hospital ship never worked out, so she settled down among the long rows of other battleship-gray vessels to become a sanctuary for the birds. And the years passed.

While she waited, her sister Liberty ships were converted into high-school classrooms, tank to form artificial fisheries, or sold off to foreign countries. More frequently, they were scrapped. Almost 3,000 of her kind were built, but by the late 1960's, the Liberty was on her way to extinction.

It was Commander Tom Patterson who saved the Jeremiah O'Brien from the junk pile. A distinguished white-haired man who looks more like a symphony conductor than the maritime administrator he is, Tom recalls first seeing the ship on one of his official surveys of the Reserve Fleet. "I remember going aboard her in 1966 like it was yesterday, because there was a special feeling about her—as if her crew had taken extra care. She still had all her wartime charts, and even her night order book from the Normandy landings. I saw several

ships that were in fair condition, but none were as perfect as she was," Patterson said.

Tom kept the ship safe until 1976, when it seemed the lucky lady's luck had finally run out. The Maritime Administration issued an ultimatum: find her a berth somewhere away from the Fleet, or scrap her.

When the word went out that Tom Patterson was looking for a home for his elderly orphan, the ladies of the Jeremiah O'Brien Society in Maine responded at once. As representatives of a group honoring the ship's namesake, they announced they would be happy to take the ship back to New England with them. They went home dazed and empty-headed, however, after learning the prohibitive cost of towing the 441-foot vessel around the country with them. Other groups had some ideas, but no one was able to tackle a project of this magnitude.

The biggest problem was how to keep the ship from being destroyed. Tom found the perfect solution by having the O'Brien declared a national monument and getting her placed on the National Register of Historic Places. With this accomplished, the Liberty Ship became as valuable to America as the Liberty Bell. And, more importantly, as safe.

Tom next created a non-profit corporation to preserve, restore and display the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien. With a \$436,000 maritime grant in hand to cover the initial cost of exterior restoration, the newly formed National Liberty Ship Memorial was faced with the task of getting the ship out of the Fleet and into drydock in San Francisco for repairs.

The O'Brien needed someone who knew Liberty ships inside and out, loved to tinker with engines and boilers, had an expertise in scrounging materials, and possessed the strong leadership qualities necessary for recruiting and guiding volunteer hands for the project.

"No way," said Harry Morgan. Harry had spent 15 years sailing Liberty ships and was now a retired chief engineer with 40 years sea experience. He was appalled when excited volunteers told him they wanted to get the ship to drydock under her own power.

They needed Harry Morgan, but they almost didn't get him because Harry thought they were crazy. "Here we were, out in the middle of

the Bay with no water, no electricity, no sanitary facilities. And they said to me, 'We'll get you electricity, we'll get you water.' And these people had so much enthusiasm that I couldn't help but chuck in out."

"We were about three months getting her ready. When we fired up a boiler, opened the main throttle and the engine started to turn, it was the most surprised guy up there!" Harry and his gang had accomplished what everyone said could never be done.

The guys loved the romantic saga of the "Lucky Lady" and one of her results attracted a varied group of volunteer helpers. They were retired seamen, students, disaffected salarieds, apprentice carpenters and business moguls. Women shipped paint in the engine room and men scrubbed the galley.

Nobody said that finding authentic replacement parts for an old ship would be easy, but that hasn't deterred Harry Morgan. He's a wizard at obtaining downfalls from ship chandlers. Everyone on the San Francisco waterfront knows the Jeremiah O'Brien, and whenever they find something the ship can use they give Harry a call and tell him to come on down with his truck.

When the government gives the O'Brien's personnel permission to scrounge for spare parts among some of the junkies of the Reserve Fleet, Harry calls on "Morgan's Raiders" to help out. Myron Alexander, a charter member of the group, describes a typical trip to the cold ships where rusted decks feel like wet cardboard and blind shipwrecks are half a foot high. "You see, Harry always knows where everything is. And he'll say to me, 'Now, Myron, I want you to come with me and help carry this

distribution panel up on deck. Well, my God, I'm not that much younger than Harry! But you should see us old guys up there. Because we're talking rent, not pounds. I tell you, I'm absolutely dead after a trip and I can hardly climb into my car when it's time to go home. But you know what? We all fight for places whenever Harry's going up to the Fleet."

Many of the volunteers are retired seamen who will remember their own Liberty experiences. John Paul, the O'Brien's Chief Mate, says, "When we sailed Liberty ships during the war, we were young and they were our whole life. We grew to love them, and maybe to hate them a little, too. But you know, we're Americans and Americans have a fault—we go older, we only remember the good parts."

And Doug Dickie, a retired engineer who first went to sea in the 1920's, just wants to keep his hand in. "I'm a finkster. Look, I got a model train set at home that I could go down in the basement and set up. But this is a lot more fun. You get tired of playing with a model train, but you never get tired of tinkering with a ship."

Chief Engineer Morgan has been with the ship from the start, and his energy and enthusiasm are in large part responsible for making her the working showpiece she is today. Richard Brannon, a chief engineer himself, remembers, "When I retired, the first thing I did was to go to Harry and ask when I could start work on the O'Brien. Harry just looked at his watch and said, 'You're late. You should have been here at eight o'clock this morning.' And that's the way Harry is."

From her resting place in the Re-

serve Fleet, the lucky lady steamed down to drydock with pennants flying, bands playing and tug boistering and hoisting. The O'Brien spent the next seven months getting an old-fashioned bathtub scrubbed before settling into her new berth at Pier 3-East in Fort Mason, San Francisco. Sandblasting had done wonders for her exterior, but her insides still showed the effects of 33 years of neglect.

Gene Mattingly recalls, "The ship was always open to the public. In the beginning, people stood on the dock in various states of disbelief, surprised and pleased that we welcomed them aboard. They walked timorously down the alleyways, hoping not to brush up against anything and wondering at the madness of the people who were strapping away and raising such clouds of dust. Every bulkhead was reduced to bare steel and she was filled with the noises of needles and chipping hammers."

These days there are plenty of volunteers aboard, cleaning, painting, or monkeying around with the engine, and most of them will happily put down their tools a moment to swap sea yarns with you. They are proud of their hands-on museum and encourage all ages of children to bounce on the hanks, explore the propeller-shaft crawl space or blow the ship's drizzling whistle.

"The first time I went down the ladder to the engine room," Myron Alexander recalls, "I thought I was back on the first ship I ever sailed. All these Liberty ships look alike, you know, and I'd forgotten this was the Jeremiah O'Brien. I thought she was the S.S. John Howard Payne and I was 19 years old again."

Myron is one of the most enthu-

siastic volunteers, consuming over a hundred miles every Thursday for "engineers' day." He earned his Third Assistant Engineer's license during the war, but never had the chance to use it. After his Navy wartime service in submarines, he became a realtor. When he came aboard the O'Brien in 1980, he told his story to Harry Morgan. Harry contacted the Coast Guard to see what could be done about renewing Myron's license. The Coast Guard then took unprecedented action: When Myron passed the special exam they administered him, he was issued a license which reads, "Limited to Service on the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien."

There are about 30 "hard-core" volunteers working aboard ship at present. Per Dan, the host, can find tasks any day of the week for volunteers who come down to the O'Brien ready to work. Over the years, however, Wednesdays and Thursdays have become the most popular crew days. On Wednesdays, the Deck Department does their heavy work and on Thursdays the "black gang" fine-tunes the engine. Over time they have all learned to pull together and rely on one another. Boilers could blow, wires could short or winches could slip, but it will never happen with the experts on the Jeremiah O'Brien—not with the hundreds of years collective sea experience they bring with them!

As former Superintendent of the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet, John Pottinger was in on the restoration work from Day One. "I bet most of us colds are going to sea. That's why we go down and work on the ship. We're all friends and it gives us an opportunity to meet and work together."

"Friendship" is the answer most of

the crew gives when asked why they return week after week.

Everyone works aboard the O'Brien without pay—for love of ships and the sea, and for the pleasure of being together. They are what makes a visit to the ship a life experience.

Gene Mattingly says, "If I go aboard an old New England whaling ship, all I see is a guy in a uniform who tells me something he learned from a book. But right now, people come aboard the O'Brien and they pass out Captain Wilson's officer and they don't just look in and see him sitting there. They are the Captain who lived in that room, or a room exactly like it, on any of nearly 1,000 other ships."

Tonight the crew is making preparations for the next day's trip. Some other night, perhaps, they may be readying her for an epic ocean-ocean voyage. But that part of her history is still up ahead. It's tomorrow that Captain Wilson, Chief Morgan and the entire crew of the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien will get the old girl dolled up and back out on the waves once again for her Bay Cruise.

For Furor Redington, magic time is the moment when the last of the passengers and crew are on board and the gateway is hoisted up. "I'm standing over on the starboard side, looking at the dock. Suddenly the lines go slack and drop. There's no steam coming up, and that dropping, deep-throated whistle that's our whistle starts to blow. And the tug awakes back. We begin to slip away, the gap widens and pretty soon it's grown to more than 15 feet. And that's when I jump up and down. Because we're on our own and we're moving. It's another year and we did it again!"



BOB RINGQUIST/The Press-Enterprise

Ernest Price and Bill Mortimer, POWs for an hour during World War II, look over some wartime photos.

WWII seamen have tales, miss medals

By MARLOWE CHURCHILL
The Press-Enterprise

For one hour on March 10, 1943, a lifeboat with 17 men from a sinking U.S. merchant ship in the Indian Ocean bounced against the hull of a German submarine as each seaman was interrogated at gunpoint.

"We all had our hands up," recalled Ernest Price, 63, "and the German captain apologized for sinking our ship. Then, he said he didn't have room for us and gave us a bearing where we would eventually be picked up."

Bill Mortimer, Price's shipmate who was in another lifeboat nearby at the time, said they knew the German's directions would send them into the hands of other Germans, and most assuredly, to a cold cot in some POW camp. They went the opposite direction, eventually landing in South Africa and returning to the United States.

The question Price and Mortimer have for the Defense Department is: How long do you have to be held to be officially declared a prisoner of war? The answer seems to be that time of captivity is not the issue. Bureaucratic paperwork is far more crucial.

Both retired military men think one hour is sufficient to qualify them for the Prisoner of War medal authorized by Congress in 1985. (See SEAMEN, Page B-2)



Bill Mortimer



Ernest Price
WWII pictures

Seamen . . .

(From Page B-1)

It's a point of pride to raise the issue. Each has at least 27 other military awards and decorations from long years of military service. Pinning on the POW medal would be an honor, they admitted.

But Price said he was told by the Defense Department's awards and decorations section that they do not qualify for the medal because of the brief time in captivity. Army Maj. David Super of the Defense Department in Washington, said he's heard all sorts of war stories regarding the POW medal applications, but admitted this one is unique.

"Time in captivity is not a determining factor," said Super. "I think this would be up to the Navy to determine whether or not they are POWs."

Maybe the reason Price was turned down, Super speculated, is that the sailors were held so briefly they could not be processed as prisoners under Geneva Convention rules. But Super said POW Medal criteria just do not specifically address Price's particular case.

Navy Lt. Janet Mescue, with the Navy Department in Washington, could not determine why Price was denied the medal. Without proper documentation and notations in a sailor's personnel file, the Navy cannot authorize the medal, she said. But Price and any other veteran can petition the Navy to correct any details or omissions, she added.

With the passage of time, the whole episode for Price and Mortimer takes on a humorous tone as the two men, who haven't seen each other since the war, got together recently in Price's River-

side home to swap stories. Then, they gradually became fairly incensed at the Defense Department's rebuff over their requests for the medal.

"Hey, you got your hands up, right? The Germans got guns on you, right? Now, I call that being a prisoner of war. We were not hostages or detainees. If that had been a Japanese officer, we'd have been machine-gunned. I take nothing from the poor guys who were interned by the Japanese and Germans and suffered for years," said Price.

Price talked faster and faster about the incident as Mortimer, 77, of Accokeek, Md., who joined the Navy in 1931, nodded solemnly in agreement.

The point over the medal may seem like splitting hairs, but their war stories offer a colorful glimpse of a group of Navy sailors who manned a battery of guns on merchant and Liberty ships that plied the oceans during the war, transporting ammunition and other war materiel.

During World War II, the Navy trained and deployed 144,970 sailors to man the guns on 6,236 merchant ships and another 2,710 Liberty ships. Those sailors were part of the Navy's Armed Guard. Of those ships they guarded, 216 were sunk and 1,816 Armed Guard sailors were killed.

Price joined the Navy at age 16 ("I lied about my age") in 1942 and was one of 22 sailors and 43 merchant crewmen assigned to the SS Richard P. Speight. Mortimer, rated a second-class petty officer, had served on a number of other ships before he joined Price and the others as they set off from Wilmington, N.C., in September 1943.

"I knew (Price) was awful young," recalled Mortimer, who

at 28 was viewed by the others as a seasoned salt who had seen everything. The merchant ship had made a trip around Cape Horn to the Suez Canal and was returning to Capetown, South Africa, when two torpedoes stopped the Speight dead in the water.

"We were at general quarters," said Price. "I was on the bow manning a gun." Mortimer remembers he was on the stern. Price, who suffered a slight head wound after the torpedo attack, was thrown into the water.

The ship was quickly sinking as Mortimer got what crewmen he could find to fill a lifeboat equipped with a motor. Then, the German submarine surfaced.

A yellowed newspaper clipping Mortimer has saved since the war quotes Navy Ensign Edwin B. Abbott, the ship's only Navy officer, as describing the incident: "In good English, with a distinct British accent, the German officer told us he was sorry he had to sink our ship."

So were the American sailors. They repeatedly lied to the German captain about the ship's cargo being only innocent stuff and their status as being mere civilians caught in the throes of war. The German apparently was too polite or in too much of a hurry to question the sailors in any detail. Pointing out the direction for the sailors to head, the German said goodbye and the sub departed.

The German sub skipper, identified later through Armed war records as a Capt. Claussen of U-182, went down with all hands when the sub was sunk by a British destroyer later in the war.

Price and Mortimer, along with 22 sailors and 43 merchant seamen, many of whom were plucked from the oily and shark-

infested waters suffering from various injuries, were put into four lifeboats — one equipped with a motor. Only one sailor was killed.

The lifeboats set off for South Africa 358 miles away, landing with the help of strong currents within three days.

Upon landing, gun-toting Dutch civilians immediately apprehended them as suspected German sailors. For six weeks, they were held in the stables at a horse racetrack, getting a ride back to Key West, Fla., in June 1943 aboard a British troop ship.

The men were listed as missing in action for five months until returning to Key West.

Price served out the rest of the war on similar guard duty aboard other merchant ships, while Mortimer served on destroyers. Mortimer retired in 1956 as a chief petty officer. Price got out of the Navy in 1948, then joined the Army and retired in 1963.

Price had not thought too much about Mortimer or any of the other crewmen until the Prisoner of War medals were being handed out late last year. Mortimer tracked down Price by calling information in Ohio, finally getting Price's brother.

Last week, Price and Mortimer agreed to get together in Riverside — the first time they had seen each other since parting company in Key West — before flying to Seattle for a reunion of about 700 Armed Guard veterans. "There are only about 6,000 of us left. We can't find anymore," said Price.

Charles A. Lloyd of Raleigh, N.C., is assembling a list of all Armed Guard veterans, while other veterans are piecing together a history of the unit.

Pers-68-AK
11/658 09 50

NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



A Memorial was dedicated June 1969 at the NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY, Algiers, La. Approximately 100 Armed Guard Veterans and guests attended the function. I hope to have clear pictures and story on this in the next "POINTER", if available.

From: Chief of Naval Personnel.
To: TAYLOR, Linwood Earl, Jr., Coxswain, V-3, United States Naval Reserve.
Via: Commanding Officer, Armed Guard Center, Receiving Station, South Brooklyn, New York.
Subj: Commendation.

1. The Chief of Naval Personnel takes pleasure in commending you for your outstanding service as a member of the Armed Guard Unit aboard the SS HUGH WILLIAMSON during action against enemy aircraft in the invasion at Salerno, Italy, September 11-17, 1943.
2. A report of the experience reveals that throughout the above period your ship and the areas about her were subjected to innumerable fierce attacks by hostile bombers. Despite the prolonged strain of battle and the constant danger from falling bombs, flying shrapnel, and machine-gun strafing, the Navy Gun Crew remained at battle stations day and night, striking back at the enemy with an accurate and sustained barrage of shellfire which shot down seven German planes and contributed to the destruction of several others. The Armed Guard's effective defense of their ship was a material contribution to the success of the landing operation as a whole.
3. Your courageous and brilliant performance on the above occasion was in keeping with the best traditions of the United States Naval Service.
4. A copy of this letter has been made a part of your official record in the Bureau.

Russell J. ...

WHILE ON BOARD THE S. S. HUGH WILLIAMSON

Sailed from New York on March 8, 1943
Arrived at Belfast Ireland on 22 March 1943
Sailed from Belfast Ireland on 22 March 1943
Arrived at Cardiff Wales on 23 March 1943
Sailed from Cardiff Wales on 4 April 1943
Arrived at Bedford Haven Wales on 4 April 1943
Sailed from Bedford Haven on 5 April 1943
Arrived at New York U.S.A. on 22 April 1943

WHILE ON BOARD THE S. S. HUGH WILLIAMSON

Sailed from New York on 14 May 1943
Arrived Algiers, Algeria on 4 June 1943
Sailed from Algiers on 10 July 1943
Arrived at Gela, Sicily on 14 July 1943
Sailed from Gela on 26 July 1943
Arrived at Algiers on 29 July 1943
Sailed from Algiers on 3 August 1943
Arrived at Oran, Algeria on 3 August 1943
Sailed from Oran on 5 August 1943
Arrived at Arzew on 5 August 1943
Sailed from Arzew on 6 August 1943
Arrived at Oran on 6 August 1943
Sailed from Oran on 3 September 1943
Arrived at Bizerta, Tunisia on 6 September 1943
Sailed from Bizerta on 9 September 1943
Arrived at Gulf of Salerno on 11 September 1943
Sailed from Salerno on 17 September 1943
Arrived at Bizerta on 19 September 1943



Official thanks

World War II Naval Armed Guard veterans take snapshots of the plaque dedicated to their unit Friday at the Naval Support Activity in Algiers. The dedication took place during the annual reunion at the base.

STAFF PHOTO BY JIM SIGMON

Sailed from Bizerta on 19 September 1943
Arrived at Gibraltar on 25 September 1943
Sailed from Gibraltar on 29 September 1943
Arrived at New York U.S.A. on 16 October 1943

Total Air Raids: - 31

Dates of Air Raids:

June 4, 1943
September 6, 1943
September 11, 1943
September 12, 1943
September 13, 1943
September 14, 1943
September 15, 1943
September 16, 1943
September 17, 1943





Lone Sailor

U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL
Washington, D.C.

DEDICATION

To the Officers and Men who sailed the ships of
World War II,
especially to those who lost their lives, and to
their families.

THE U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WWI AND II VETERANS 9TH NATIONAL REUNION WILL BE HELD AT "CONGRESS HOTEL", 520 S. MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605 1-312-427-3800 ON JUNE 6-10, 1990. HOSTS WILL BE ROBERT "BOB" AND "PEDGY" GROSSMAN, 10333 S. CAMPBELL AVE., CHICAGO, IL 60655 1-312-779-6289. BE SURE TO LET THE HOTEL KNOW THAT YOU ARE U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WHEN MAKING RESERVATIONS. MAKE RESERVATION EARLY.



USN Armed Guard WW II Veterans
5712 Partridge Lane
Raleigh, N.C. 27609-4126
1-(919)-876-5537

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Non Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 2322
Raleigh, N.C.



Support The USN Armed Guard
WW II Veterans Reunions

JOSEPH T. COLGAN
308 FELTON ROAD
LUTHERVILLE

5779

MD 21093