

DECEMBER, 1989

THE POINTER

Happy Holidays

1989-A-D (3-40)

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S/S OSCAR CHAPPELL
DECEMBER 25, 1943.

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

ALL THE THINGS FOR WHICH WE FIGHT ARE SYMBOLIZED IN THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON STOP TO ALL THOSE AT SEA ON FOREIGN SHORES AND IN CONTINENTAL SHORE BASES I SEND SINCERE GREETINGS STOP MY PRIDE IN YOUR VICTORIES AND THE COURAGE YOU SHOW IN BATTLE PLUS YOUR DEVOTION TO DUTY IS SHARED BY THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY MILLION AMERICANS WHOSE THOUGHTS ARE WITH YOU AND WHOSE WORK BACKS YOU IN BATTLE STOP THE COMING YEAR IS CRUCIAL STOP THE BATTLES OF NINETEEN FORTY FOUR WILL HELP DECIDE HOW LONG WE MUST STRUGGLE BEFORE THERE IS ONCE AGAIN PEACE ON EARTH STOP THE BEST HOLIDAY WISH FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES IS THE HOPE THAT CHRISTMAS DAY OF NINETEEN FORTY THREE WILL BE THE LAST YOU SPEND FAR FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS STOP MAY THE NEW YEAR LEAD US TO VICTORY

1812GMT



Historical Liberty Ship-S.S. JOHN W. BROWN-docked at Inner Harbor, Downtown Baltimore, Maryland during U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS REGIONAL REUNION September 27-October 1, 1997. She is docked at Pier 1 and is in the process of being restored to WW II condition. It is to be SEAMORTHY in mid 1990. She is dedicated to the men and women who built her, to the Merchant Seamen who worked and guided her beyond the call of duty and to the HEROIC

ARMED GUARD CREWS who manned the guns, radios and signal lights in efforts to get the men, ship and it's cargo to it's destination and back safely to the place from whence they came. To all men and women of all Nations, this is your ship!! Be proud of her and keep her aloft. Without this ship and men and others like them, your life would be different today. C.A. LLOYD

THE POINTER

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE

DEAR EVERYONE,

DECEMBER 1989

To most of us, this will be our 63rd or more Christmas Holiday Seasons. The most joyous ones, I guess, was our own when we were 3-6 years old. Next, was to help Ol'Santa when he came to see our own children and then came Grandchildren. Coming from a fairly large family, Christmas day was always extra special as we would meet at Mom and Pop's before sunrise to enjoy ourselves, eating breakfast and shooting fireworks before opening the presents, a family tradition. Most of us would probably agree that the loneliest Christmas Holidays came during WW II when most could not be home with our loved ones. Remember how quiet it got when Bing Crosby would sing "WHITE CHRISTMAS" or "I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS"?!! You know, no one has ever thought to "PAY US" for that. But then, I guess we can be thankful that it was finally over for the most of us and as we went about our daily lives, living in the best country in the World, even though not perfect.

As the Berlin Wall comes down, our prayers are that steps will be taken by ones in charge to assure a bond of brotherly love and friendship and not only unite East and West Germany together, but all countries to fair trade, prosperity and let all mankind enjoy the GOOD LIFE that we in America, have taken for granted. May all people have plenty to eat and a warm, comfortable home from the cold in the near future. Each human being deserves it, for it is so short a lifespan.

It has been suggested by several, that I place a form to fill out for those who would like to donate to help with the expenses incurred for: postage, printing, replacing of copier, paper, telephone and the many others things necessary to do what has to be done. If you have a dot behind your last name, it shows that I have received help from you in 1989 to carry on. Since the "POINTER" goes all over the U.S.A., into Canada, England and Australia, plus the Archives, I will not elaborate further on "financial" matters. The ones who can give, can give what they may. Those who can not, are not expected to give. I don't think we in the U.S.A. are in bad enough shape to go begging. I do not have time to send a receipt to those who give. Your checks are your receipts "MARKED-THANKS Y'ALL."

For those of you who faced the Italian ONE MAN SUBS and FROGMEN in the Med Sea area, you may want the book, "Frogmen's First Battles" by Wm. G. Scofield. It's Library of Congress number is ISBN 0-8283-1998-7. Another book, "THE UNITED STATES in WORLD WAR II" by S.E. Smith, Library of Congress No. 66-22113. The 1st has just been printed and the last one was printed in 1966. "Another book, "THE WEST LOCH STORY" by William L.C. Johnson, Library Card # 86-050525 tells of the

continued to Page 2

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

explosion at Pearl Harbor, according to William T. Bourlay, 6102-79th Ave. E., Palmetto, Florida 34221 who sent in the info and also had a story in the book. I will enclose a letter from him and his letter from the book. The cost of the is \$10.95 and can be ordered from Westlock Publications, 2440 N.W. 57th St., #2, Seattle, Wa. 98107 (206) 783-5671. (It should be interesting for the LST Crews.) William read the letter by Harry L. McMahon on page 3 of the October POINTER. It is my pleasure to inform Harry that we have the story that he lived with all these years and it finally came to light through the "POINTER". THANKS Y'ALL!!

Just talked to Bob Grossman and told him that many of you seek info on RV PARKS as to nearest ones. He informs me that approx. 30 miles from the Congress Hotel is the nearest one located so far. If anyone knows of one closer, please advise Grossman as to name, address, Tele., etc. Some have asked if you do not stay at the Hotel, can you attend. BY ALL MEANS COME!! If you attend the functions, you will have to pay for them but if you just want to come and seek shipmates, you are welcomed to do so. For you that are handicapped, Bob is doing all he can to see that you are cared for so let him know ahead of time. Maybe some of you in the Chicago Area who has not contacted Bob will know of special vans to help in seeing these men in wheelchairs are taken care of. If they have the "WILLPOWER" to come and be with us, we should see that they are cared for.

Many of you fail to send to me a change of address in time to keep from getting a \$.30 returned mail charged by the Post Office. The cost to "RE-SEND" another is \$.45 and the cost to print the two "POINTER"s used is \$.80 and Bob Grossman asked how I kept from going bankrupt!! Because most of them wants the "Pointer" and sends enough to cover expenses. It has worked this way since 1982 and I've "survived", so far, by those who does appreciate the "POINTER". I will have to remove some of the Widows from the mailing list until I hear from you because I have know way of knowing if you, or someone else gets it and the list grows!! I only ask for you to drop a line and say that you'd like to remain on the LIST!! It's just that plain and simple. Some of you send in a name once in a while and that is one of the reasons I hate to drop "ANY ONE PERSON'S NAME"!!

Our breakfast crew had the pleasure of 3 shipmates being together from the S.S. Robert Watchorn. (1945) They were Thomas Joy and Oker Thomas of Lillington, N.C. and John Buntain from Forked River, N.J. Richard and Helen Shute, Forked River also came down. We all had "grits" together and a wonderful time. "Youse guys" COME BACK ANYTIME!! Remember-1st Saturday of the month at GRIFFIN'S.

Regional Reunions:

Topeka, Ks.!! Don Gleason advises me that the next Kansas Reunion will be held at the American Legion Post No.1, Mar. 31, 1990. He will be out of town and you should contact Carl Ossmann, 1260 Randolph, Topeka, Ks. 66604 (913) 233-6406 or Erle W. Francis, 1608 High, Topeka, Ks. 66604 (913) 357-6311. ALL ARE WELCOMED!!

Florida Flotilla is headed up by Leo Bullage, 5709 Crafton Dr., Lakeland, Fl. 33809 (813) 858-1126 and they have meeting at different times so it's up to you to get counted in by contacting him. Since, Fla. covers a lot of area, George C. Milk, 449 St. James St., Port Charlotte 33952 (813) 627-6759 would like to those in his area meeting regular and you should contact him.

The Washington crew, hosted by Billie and Dick Kohse, 2304 Lister Rd. NE Olympia 98506 (206) 456-1946 will meet on April 6-8, 1989 at the Tyree Motel, TUMWATER. They will plan for attending the Chicago Reunion. Their Co-Hosts are Larry and Phyllis LaFontaine. Madelen Rigg will also help and her Tel.# is 206-431-9553. She no longer uses the 1989 Seattle Reunion number. They will also hold a fall Mini-Reunion in Sand Point, Idaho on September 11-13, 1990, and the Hosts will be Milan and Dottie LaMarche 2170 Lake Shore Dr., Sagle, Id. 83860 208-263-4271.

California and Carl Winder's Crew has been stalled due to the "October 17, 1989" Earthquake and travel conditions. Many were shaken up in the ordeal. I'll soon know if any of their homes were destroyed when the "change of address request" start coming in from the October "POINTER". Hope we don't have any! Contact Carl 1734 Mountain View, Ca. 94040 415-967-6493 for "COMING EVENTS".

The Destroyer Escort Association will hold their 1990 Reunion in Baltimore, Md. I hope they get the S.S. John W. Brown to dock at the INNER HARBOR and take it for a cruise. Those of you interested in DESA, contact Don Glaser, DESA P.O. Box 680085, Orlando, Fla., 32868-0085. They have almost reached their \$50,000 goal to have their Bronze Relief Marker placed at the LONE SAILOR STATUE Memorial in Washington, D.C. on 9/1/90. You may want to donate to this worthy cause.

Our host, Bob Grossman had heart surgery on November 28, 1989 and is doing well at this time, according to his wife, Peggy. Our prayers are for his continued recovery and will be "BETTER THAN NORMAL" in a few days. He has a great team of interested workers helping to arrange for a grand time come June 6-10, 1990. I get a quarterly financial report from Robert Wolf of Oaklawn, Ill., Grossman's CPA, and everything is looking good. We always go a few days early to enjoy it more and the hotel rates are the same, so take advantage of it, Y'ALL!!

A letter from Alex Lombardi, the New Jersey-North East Host, informs me that he and several other Armed Guard from that area attended the Memorial Day Service

at Sheepshead Bay with, and I quote-"Our Merchant Marine Buddies and everything was GREAT!!"-Unquote. This is two years in a row they've attended and are given a ROYAL WELCOME each time and they invite all that will, to be with them again. In the "DENNIS ROLAND CHAPTER" of the AMV(NJ) paper, Alex states-"His organizational support of the AMV of NJ and especially to the deceased members of both groups who share the same common un-marked graves beneath the Sea." Dennis Roland was a Merchant Marine taken prisoner in the sinking of the M/S Sawkla on Nov. 29, 1942 by the German Raider, HSCHEL. They all lived through "HELL" as slave laborers at the infamous BUNA-WITTLAND "DEATH RAILWAY" was his report in Art Moore's Book "A Careless Word-A Needless Sinking" and as we heard his story at the first Congressional Hearing aboard the S.S. John W. Brown in 1983 which was held in a plea to save the Brown as an "HISTORICAL SHIP". Along with Dennis in the POW Camp were 30 Merchant Seamen and 9 Armed Guard men. I have not been in touch with any of the others. Dennis is no longer with us. Alex also wanted me to tell all of "YOUSSE GUYS" that it was GREAT to see you in Baltimore and he appreciates those of you who came and made it a success. Those of you who could not attend for various reasons, missed an Historical event. It is not every day that a "NM II HISTORICAL LIBERTY SHIP" PAYS DOWNTOWN! And the site and sights were great. Like all large towns with "SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS", the cost of rooms are too much but we will have live with it 4 days in 1991!!

We work together with the Merchant Seamen, Fleet Reserve, LST, LCI, Destroyer Escort Assoc., etc. to find our crews and theirs. I can not put all reunions in the "POINTER", such as; Rob L. Ross, Pres. of the Belleau Wood (CM 24) Assoc. who will hold a reunion in Williamsburg, Va. May 9-13, 1990. I had two of our A.G.s listed and I notified him. His tel. is (517) 739-2182! There may be more of you on this ship or others like it who have reunions and you may want to go to them. I highly encourage you to do so. I regret that I can not put all DES, ETC. in the "POINTER". A self-addressed-stamped-envelope to our "RETURN ADDRESS" will get you the info if possible. I do hope you understand.

One NEW group just organized is the "NATIONAL CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION" C/O Bill Molte, Rt 6 Box 08251, Edgerton, Ohio 43517 who is a Chief, who survived the USS ARIZONA DISASTER and Founder of the PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR'S ASSOC. and the USS ARIZONA ASSOC. I was asked to place this announcement in by Anne M. Anderson YNCS USN (Ret), Natl. Sec. of the Assoc. who is a good friend of Mary and Cyril Bauer of Ventura, Ca. (BOTH ARMED GUARD) They have run Reunion Notices for the A.G. in the NWES NATIONAL WHITE CAPS Publication. (THE WORD IS PASSED!!)

In the December Issue of MILITARY (a great Publication) is an article by Armed Guard, James J. Bennett of Onard, Ca. on the A.G. and it will reach many other subscribers. It was well documented. In the same issue was an article on the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien by R.S. Anderson who states that his father was an M.P. on a LIBERTY SHIP in the Mediterranean Sea and his ship had picked up German POWs and was rammed by one of his own ships in 1943. Maybe you were there on either one of the ships?? To inquire to the magazine, contact: MHR Publishing Corp., 2122 28th St., Sacramento, Ca. 95818 (916) 457-8990.

The letter on Page 3 (October) from Harry L. McMahon concerning "The Other Pearl Harbor Tragedy" brought results. One from Hal Grant, who sent in the article by that name which was in the "Naval History Magazine" and in the mailbox, "On THE SAME DAY" the "POINTER" arrived. (See article and letters). Paul Kincaid also sent me a copy. It also reached Mr. T. Bourlay of Florida who gave an eyewitness account of the incident. These are the stories that should be told and you are the ones to bring them from darkness to light. I am looking into obtaining the RUSSIAN MEDAL for you ARMED GUARD through my District Congressman David Price's Office and will update you when I hear of the results. It may be that a form of some kind will have to be filled out, so get your 1. DATES 2. SHIP NAMES 3. Your Service Number, etc. ready just in case. Better than that, SEND THEM ON!!

I could not believe my eyes when I opened a large envelope today from Ray Baker 1207 W. Cambridge Ave., Visalia, Ca. 93277 who sent me an October, 1986 edition of the magazine "PEARL HARBOR-GROW". I immediately dropped a story out of the "POINTER" to get this in. I thought it fitting to tie in with the other things that has been brought to light and I think you will agree for the paragraph on front, to the right of the Memorial picture, says it all!! Harry McMahon will be sent a copy of "ANOTHER SUNDAY IN PEARL HARBOR."

A plaque was dedicated this past July at the site of the Port Chicago, California tragedy explosion in July of 1944. Carl Winder who looked after and had the Memorial installed, called me on October 17, 1989 and wanted me to come out to be at the taping of a TV Documentary of the incident and I called George Cox of Fayetteville, N.C., who was one of the 11 survivors from the S.S. E.A. Bryan to see about going out. We had just decided to go after he had talked to his other shipmate, George Giller of N.Y. and Floyce Walts who lives in Concord, Ca. The earthquake hit in a couple of hours and plans were cancelled for that date set and we will be there on December 6, 1989 for the taping and on December 7th, we will attend a ceremony aboard the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien to commemorate the date of the attack on Pearl Harbor which brought on a global war. We will honor the ones who died that awful day and to all those who gave their lives in World War II to keep the world free from all aggression. A silent prayer will be to those 1810 who were killed of the Armed Guard and the more that 8700 Merchant Seamen

who died doing their duty of delivering the men, food, guns, ammunition and all other goods to the FRONT LINES. They were in the "SAME BOAT", the "SAME SHIP".

I have enclosed a copy of a letter from Brian Hope along with a "CERTIFICATE" to sail the S.S. John W. Brown at a date to be set. I hope you can be aboard for the sailing too. For you "NEW OL'SALTS" who have not had information on it, call or write their staff office for info. They have the answers. I can't wait to have coffee in the crew's messhall again. As of today, they have approx. 200 more spaces to fill in the first sailing. It would be nice to have 3 sailings!!

FROM ALL OF US TO ALL OF YOU--MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR IN 1990. CAL

DAVID PRICE
10th DISTRICT
NORTH CAROLINA

CONGRESS
ARMED GUARD VETERANS
OFFICE, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY
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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

November 7, 1989

Mr. C.A. Lloyd
5712 Partridge Lane
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

This is a follow-up to Congressman Price's 11 October letter to you regarding the issuance of Soviet medals to U.S. Armed Guard veterans of World War II.

Information which we have received from the Congressional Research Service confirms that in January and March the Soviets issued medals to Canadian and Australian veterans respectively for their efforts during World War II. CRS found no indication that similar medals were to be awarded to American servicemen. Congressman Price has written to His Excellency Yuriy V. Dubinin, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, about this matter. We will be sure to forward Ambassador Dubinin's response to you should we receive one.

I hope this information will be useful to you. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
John Norton
John Norton
Staff Assistant

/js

FRANK NORTON
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE
10th DISTRICT
NORTH CAROLINA

CONGRESS
ARMED GUARD VETERANS
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

SEPTEMBER 11, 1989

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 11, 1989

Mr. John W. Shevlin, Sr.
37 Winfield Rd.
Rochester, New York 14622

Dear Mr. Shevlin:

Thank you for writing me to express your concern for H.R. 666, the Merchant Marine Memorial Act of 1989. I appreciate your interest in this important matter.

As a veteran of World War II, projects such as "Project Liberty Ship" are very important to me. As you may know, H.R. 666 would authorize the Secretary of Transportation to convey the right of a specified weight of vessels from the National Defense Reserve Fleet to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of funding merchant marine memorials like the restoration of the "S.S. John W. Brown." As you have mentioned, the funds would come from the sale of the vessels as scrap.

H.R. 666 has been the subject of hearings in the Subcommittee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. It will please you to learn that I am a strong supporter and was an early cosponsor of this legislation.

I was unable to determine the progress in the search for the 28 M.M. anti-aircraft guns that are needed by "Project Liberty Ship." I contacted Henry Vednais, Department of Navy, on your behalf. He informed me that there are no M.M. guns on hand. Please be assured that I will continue my efforts to locate these guns. I would encourage you to keep in contact.

Once again, thank you for writing. Please feel free to contact me in the future on matters of mutual concern.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,
Frank Norton
Frank Norton

Dear Lloyd: You will find enclosed a donation for the "POINTER". Keep up the good word and work!! I was a "MOTOR MAC Diesel" stationed at the ABC, Treasure Island close to 3 years from Feb. 1942 Dec. 1944. I was always wondering what I doing in the ARMED GUARD! They thought they would make gunners out of the BLACK GANG sailors. After a few days of gunnery school, I soon found out what it was all about! The USS District Patrol Craft YP 112 was assigned to the Armed Guard Center. She had crews of 14 men. Three men was assigned to the Engine Room, one was the Cook and the rest was "DECK FORCE". I was put in charge of the Engine Room. We had the job of putting many Armed Guard Gun Crews aboard the ships as they came to Frisco Bay area. They were Libertys, Army Transports, French and Dutch Ships, etc. And the things they did to the ARMED GUARD!! We made trips to PORT CHICAGO, before and after the explosion of the two Ammunition ships there. I could tell you much more about "Treasure Island" and Armed Guard duties for I was there a long time, if you so desire.

In Jan. of 1945, I was reassigned to duty with the U.S. Joint Purchasing Bureau and sent to Auckland, New Zealand. The U.S. Navy was having 4 "YF"s built down there. They were used for cargo ships and were sent to the Gilbert and Marshall Islands to haul supplies for people on other different Islands. I was assigned to the YF 1041. We commissioned her and with a crew of 16 men and took her to the MARSHALL ISLAND. I remember well the typhoon of 1945. We came very close of losing this ship. It was rolling badly to the point of no return.

I was discharged at the Navy Air Station, Twin City, Minn. and later, put into the Fleet Reserves for 18 years. Hope to make the Chicago reunion. Anything you would like to know about the TREASURE ISLAND, let me know. Sincerely,
Richard E. Arndt, 815 S. Elm, Oatonna, Mn. 55060

BABY BORN AS U-BOAT

February 19, 1944

PLANE'S ATTACK SHIP LeBaron Russell Briggs

The Trans-Atlantic additional "The London Daily News tells the story of a baby born on a United States Liberty Ship in the midst of U-Boat attack, dive bomber's raids, and one of the worst storms that ever battered a convoy around the North Cape. The child's mother was one of 500 Norwegian women, men and children of the little Island of Sorovoy who were snatched from the German's and the child brought into the world by the Pharmacist Mate with the assistance of two Norwegian women; was christened LeBaron Russell Briggs Olson. Now six weeks old the child with its mother is safe in a hotel in Scotland.

The above was sent in by my Ol'Shipmate from the USS J.W. McDrews in '45, Jas. E. Cockay, 609 Cylburn Road, Baltimore, Md 21208 1-301-484-7464. He sends a message to the baby - "I was aboard this ship when you were born and it was 'HELL!!' (Just maybe I can get William Phillips of Northwich, England to search for her as he gained lots of experience in search for Sofia Pederson.



An ARMED GUARD CREWMEMBER from the S.S. Bladensburg prepares his hammock and gear to go home. Sent by John Schaidt, 1290 Schaidt La. N.Brunswick, N.J. 08901.

The Telegram from the S.S. Oscar Chappell was sent in by Steve Mancini, 430 Kings Hwy Apt. 201, Dover, De. 19907 and others who received it on other ships.

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 1965. (See SEAMEN, Page B-2)



Bill Mortimer



Ernest Price

WWII pictures



BOB RINGQUIST/The Press-Enterprise

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

(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 Riverside home to swap stories. Then, they gradually became fairly incensed at the Defense Department's rebuff over their request 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, 73, 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 6,226 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 1,810 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. Spelght. 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 Spelght 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 Allied war records as a Capt. Clausen 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.

Lil Gullage's
Armed Guard
Breakfast
turned out
well with
over 100
people
attending!

October 19, 1989

Mr. Charles A. Lloyd
USN Armed Guard Wd 11 Veterans
5712 Partridge Lane
Raleigh, N.C. 27609-4126

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

Here are some questions to accompany my 'sign-in' form. Since I became aware of the organization only a few weeks ago I don't know who to ask but you.

How do I find out about the Russian medal for the Murmansk run referred to in R. K. Watson's letter? There are no USSR officials in this area as far as I can determine. I'd at least like to see what it looks like.

How can I find out why the S.S. Edward H. Hurley wasn't awarded a battle star for action sometime in the middle of the period August 13, 1943 to December 1943?

Let me explain. We were attacked in Naples by German bombers, strafed, bombed (the ship next to us was hit in the #2 hold, burned and sunk - with us taking survivors aboard). We fought back with everything we had. Later, leaving Oran, North Africa, we came under submarine attack.

Having already made the Russian run, I don't understand the battle star in one case and not in the other.

I'm glad to know about 'us Folks'. I missed the Seattle meeting and I live right here in Bellevue, next door:

Thank you much,

Jim H. Adams

James H. Adams
10854 NE 19th Place
Bellevue, WA 98004
(206) 454-2346

Oh! It appears I'm too late for printing of some book I read about - but I'm going to pull some material together and send it anyway. JHA

Nov 21, 1989

Dear Charles,

I am sending a \$200.00 check for a donation to the Armed Guard, Co. 2, Littleton, CO. as specified on the Postcard.

Thanks a million for all the love and support in being the Armed Guard's together. The Payroll has very much told of the duties and phases of Armed Guard to my wife and two sons. They like so many people never knew the Armed Guard was so active in WWII, and I am proud I was one of them.

To you and your family
Happy Holidays!

Clifford L. Young
515 Valley Dr. SE
Vancouver, Va. 22180

Dear Charles:

September 11, 1989

I enjoyed talking to you by phone and it is always good therapy to talk to one of the ARMED GUARD CREW to "TALK ARMED GUARD OF WORLD WAR II". Here's my story.

"A PERSONAL RESUME--BROOKLYN ARMED GUARD CENTER--ARMED GUARD DANCE BAND--1944"

By Walter C. Johnson

I had just returned to the Brooklyn Armed Guard Center from a survival leave at the DELAND, FLORIDA NAVY REST CAMP as a result of my last ship, the S.S. F.A.C. MULEBERG, having been severely bombed in the harbor at Naples, Italy in late January of 1944, when the loud speaker at the Center was calling for anyone who qualified and interested in playing in the newly organized "DANCE BAND", should report to Lt. (jg) James Peace for audition. Since I had had previous experience in playing trombone in various bands before I entered the Navy, I immediately responded to the call to audition.

I remember talking with the officer and him giving me a trombone to use for the audition and suggested tunes I should play. They were: "NAIRZY DOATS", "MARIE" and "I'M GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU". In addition to the Lt., was Chief Wisor who was the band's director and lead trumpeter and accompanist. Following a short audition and deliberation by them, I was offered a chair with the band. I was quiet happy about the turn of events because it meant "Ship's Company" and the duty I really enjoyed. Lt. Peace authorized me a 3 day pass to go home for my personal instrument, as any one who plays music will appreciate. Having your own instrument in such a situation is most desirable.

The band consisted of approximately fifteen male musicians and a "WAVE SINGER". In addition, we had a few great stage acts that would perform during the band's intermission to provide extra entertainment for the guests. Our job was to provide music at all Navy functions throughout the "GREATER" New York City and the surrounding New Jersey Area. This meant that we would often leave the Brooklyn Base by bus late each evening, play somewhere that night and return to our base just about time everyone else was getting out of the sack to go "CHUNKY". The crew stationed there may have listened to us and remember.

We played the "BETTER HOTELS, THEATRES AND PARKS" in the area. We also played twice-monthly at the Wave Recruit Base at King's College and the rest camp at Haverstraw, New York. Membership in the band was temporary. We were "SEAGOING" Armed Guardsmen and not ranked Musicians and, as such, were subject to sea duty at any time. (The Lt. tried to get our M.O. changed to Musicians, but was not a success) My tenure with the band was from March till September, 1944 when I was assigned to the S.S. AFRICAN DAWN, a new C-2 and "SEA DUTY" again. After all, it was a terrific experience with a great bunch of Musicians. I will remember it forever and the wonderful people we met. I thought I would share a little of another thing that made up the ARMED GUARD and their duties in entertainment.

Charles, I am enclosing two pictures of the Official Armed Guard Band. One shot is taken at the U.S.N. ARMED GUARD CENTER, 1st Ave-52nd St., Brooklyn, N.Y. and the other is at the main ballroom at the "Waldorf-Astoria" Hotel in 1944. Keep up the great deed you are doing-"GETTING THE CREW TOGETHER"! I appreciate your efforts and reading the "POINTER" brings back "MEMORIES".

Sincerely,

Walter C. Johnson
Box 1209 RD 83
Clearfield, Pa. 16830
1-814-765-3904

IN MEMORY OF OUR LOVED ONES

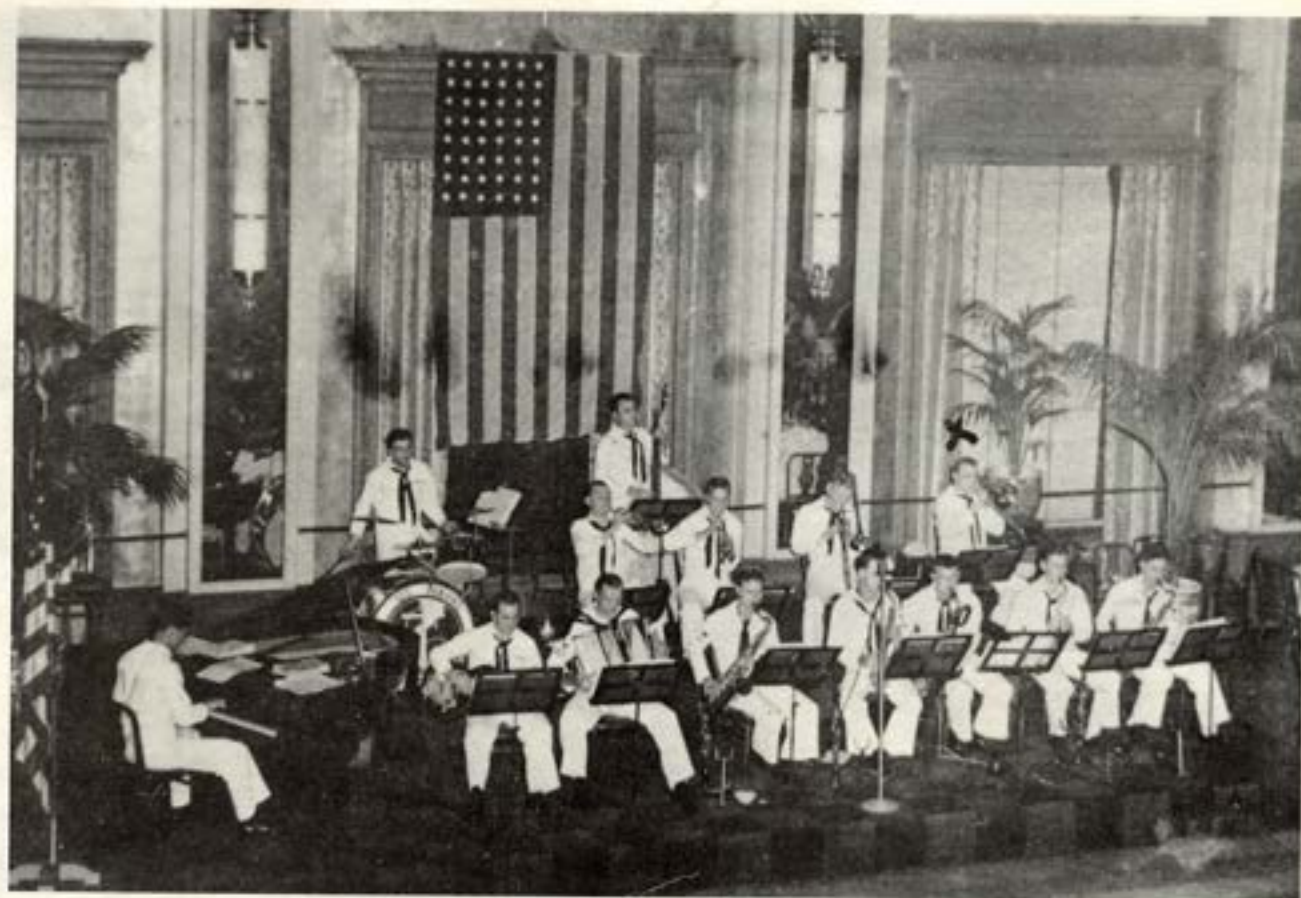
Alston	Norman	El Paso	Tx	Lois	10/3/89
Bryant	Ward	T. Murphysburg	Il	?	??-89
Condry	Robert	E. Dorchester	Ma	?	11/89???
Essary	Levie	W. Dora	Mo	Dora	8/25/88
Bridley	Emmett	Walden	NY	Elsie	10/9/89
Lochiatto	Joseph	A. E. Fallsouth	Ma	Dollie	9/29/89
Mains	E.	L. Winthrop	Ma	?	?? 11/89
Powers	S.	L. Baker	Or	??	11/18/89
Pruitt	Ronald	L. Hurricane	WV	Pauline	9/10/89
Scott	Charles	Conrad	Oklahoma City	Ok	Virginia
Shurley	Willie	T. North Wales	Pa	Ruth	7/30/89

IN MEMORY OF OUR DEPARTED LADIES

Carlson	Sallie	Shoreview	Mn	Leonard	10/7/89
---------	--------	-----------	----	---------	---------

Our sympathy and prayers are extended to the families and friends of shipmates and mates listed above. May they rest in everlasting PEACE. These are the names of the departed ones since the October "POINTER". cal 11/29/89

(Note) Leonard and Sallie were the ones who located so many of you in the Minn. Area and he resides at 5894 N. St. Albans, Shoreview, Mn. 55126.



U.S.N. ARMED GUARD DANCE BAND ON STAGE IN THE MAIN BALLROOM OF THE WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL IN 1944



U.S.N. ARMED GUARD DANCE BAND COMBO ON STAGE AT THE BROOKLYN, N.Y. ARMED GUARD CENTER, 1ST AVE.-52ND STREET IN 1944 LEFT TO RIGHT: MITCHELL, DEWEY, RYAN, JOHNSTON AND COMPO



5*38 BACK AFT OF THE S.S. JOHN W. BROWN
HISTORICAL LIBERTY SHIP
(PICTURES 1-4 TAKEN BY ERNEST PYE
12 ROCKLAND AVE., S. DARTSMOUTH, MA.)



3-3*50s ARRIVED IN TIME TO REUNION
FROM CRANE, INDIANA.



MIDSHIP OF THE S.S. JOHN W. BROWN WITH GANGPLANK DOWN
(NOTICE ARMED GUARD BANNER SIDE OF SHIP.)



PRAYER SERVICE ABOARD THE S.S. JOHN W. BROWN



Picture by:

Herbert P. Hahn
1672 Sumac Place
Corona, CA 91720

S.S. LANE VICTORY



Group of Armed Guard 'Ol' Salts' at the Bullhead City, Arizona Mini-Reunion on Sept. 19-21, 1989. Photo sent in by Mike Sadowski 3542 M. Belmont Ave. Phoenix Az. 85051. Front row: L/R Hank Ayres, Ray Barba, Mike Sadowski,

and John Wright. 2nd Row: John Noyes, Hadden Segler, Lee Koole and Carlo Traficano. 3rd Row: Adolph Mikac, Selvin Lein, Warren Drouheller, and Claud McIntyre. 4th Row: Louis Pepin and John Smith

From 92 year old Joseph Lafferty comes the first Christmas card this year. He called to say it was to all of us and he would be SANTA CLAUS at the LETTERMANS HOSPITAL on December 5 and 6th and other charitable organizations til the 25th.

Hi,
Every thing fine and getting ready
to play Santa for the 2nd time at
L.A.M.C., thought you might like
to read the enclosed.

Have a happy holiday
to all

Love
P.S. do you happy to have John H. Matley's
address in Cloud Spring, Orinda N.W.2 M.A.G.
I got a card from him and just can't
find his address.

May Christmas and the New Year

BRING YOU JOYFUL HOURS,
PLEASANT MEMORIES, THOUGHTS OF FRIENDS
and Much Happiness

Joseph Lafferty



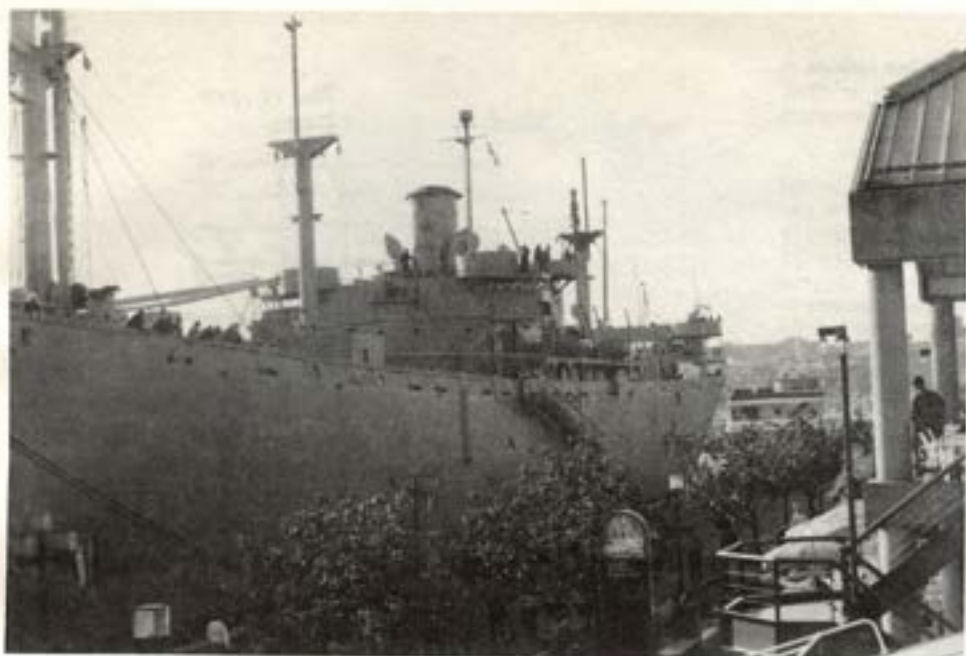
Proud Armed Guard showing off the 5"38 back aft. Shown
L to R is a "HARD WORKER", Walt Magalis of Baltimore,
Md., Ted Heuman of Toes River, N.J., Alex Lombardi, (THE
HOST) and I can not think of the other two!! I SHOULD!!
Pictures (1), (2) and (3) were taken by Jack Rhodes 3143
Cotter Rd., Millers, Md. 21107 at Inner Harbor 9/30/1989.



Back aft Armed Guard living quarters on the S.S. John
W. Brown. It brings back the Memories. It's a little
different from the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien but this one
was made to do two jobs, carry the Army Invasion Forces
along with the material to fight with. It also was to
bring back enemy POWs to the States, AND DID!!



The other corner of the focsle showing the portholes
open which was locked shut most of the time. Also, are
lockers and donated pictures.



S.S. John W. Brown docked
DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Armed Guard Messhall on the
S.S. John W. Brown, thanks to the
Labor Of James Capley of Del Air,
Md., Andy and Madelyn Knapp
and others. Y'all did a
good job, "REBELS"!!



Photo of the Galley onboard
the S.S. John W. Brown.

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

Madelyn Rigg, of Seattle called me this morning and expressed your interest in the book I had written about the tragedy that occurred in WEST LOCH at PEARL HARBOR on May 21, 1944. I was a survivor of that incident, having been serving onboard the LST 69 as a Pharmacist which was one of the ships lost there.

After waiting for so many years for the story to be told by someone, I decided to wait no longer. I researched available Navy records and obtained some eyewitness accounts of many of the other survivors and put it all into a paperback book. This was not a money making scheme and I did it only to let the survivors and their families, plus the families and friends of the 163 men who had given their all there on the dreadful day and any other interested people who were in the area, or who can read of this in their future studies of WW II and know the true facts from those who were there. The "Hawaii Library System" has purchased 34 books and there is a copy in each branch library. Nearly 1200 of these books have been sold and some survivors whose stories I have retold, have bought more than one book. I individually autograph each book and pay the postage which is included in the price of \$7.15 per copy, except Washingtonians who will have to add \$.58 State tax.

Last night, a friend of mine Joe Norby of Seattle who served in the U.S.N ARMED GUARD on the S.S. James Hoban, S.S. Silver Peak and also on LST 127 at WEST LOCH called to read a letter from Harry L. McMahon which appeared in the "POINTIER" in October about the incident and seeking info. I have written to Harry telling him of the book. Norby is the former State Commander of the Washington State American Legion. If you have any questions, please contact me. If any of your ARMED GUARD CREW wants to order the book, send their money to: Mr. L. Johnson, 2240 N.W. 57th St. #2, Seattle, Wa. 98107 1-206-783-5671. I would like to wish all of you a "MERRY CHRISTMAS". Sincerely, William L. Johnson-LST 69.

Needless to say, as soon as I received the letter from Mr. Johnson, I called and asked his permission to type his above letter so you may know! CAL 11/24/89

AND FROM A.M. "MAC" HOLROYD!!

Dear "C.A.",

Many thanks for the material sent to me relating to the ARMED GUARD WW II. I am returning the registration form as requested. Needless to say I am delighted to rekindle my "World War II" memories, thanks to you and John Shevlin. John and I met quite by accident at a gas pump in Dansville, NY. He was "sporting" a nice "ARMED GUARD" bumper sticker and I said to John, a perfect stranger, "GUN CREWS ON MERCHANT SHIPS IN WW II?" and with that a lengthy discussion evolved!!

I received my training at Princeton, the Fargo Building in Boston and at Little Creek, Va. I was then assigned to the S.S. Thomas Cresap, a "BRAND NEW" Liberty Ship at Newport News, Va. We were scheduled to go to the Persian Gulf but were delayed with main shaft problems. We later sailed to Casablanca. Later trips on the Cresap (4/43-12/43) and the S.S. Felix Grundy (1/44-10/44) were to Algiers, Oran, Salerno, Naples and on to the invasion of Southern France. I appreciate the magnitude of the deed you are doing and enclosed is a check to help. I also served on the USS Shipley Bay (CVE-65) from 4/45 to 9/45. Thanks, "Mac" Holroyd

Dear C.A.

10/9/89

It was nice to see you and the crew in Baltimore and we enjoyed the reunion as always. It must have been great for you to get back to Raleigh, and get a nice bowl of "GRITS". (censored) "Yankees" can't do anything right, can they?! Alex did a wonderful job. The S.S. John W. Brown looked great at dockside, downtown.

C.A., it finally happened!! On my way home, I stopped for gas in Dansville, New York for gas, which is 35 miles from Rochester, and as I was filling my tank, one of the locals there asked me if that bumper sticker was for the "REAL ARMED GUARD FROM WW II"!! I was happy to say it was about as real as it could get. He then informed me that he was ARMED GUARD WW II but had never heard one word of us since he left the Navy. I told him that if he would give me his name and his address that he would hear plenty from the ARMED GUARD!! We exchanged names and I told him that I would send his name to you. I gave him over two years history in about 10 minutes!! I told him to write you after you get in touch with him and give you his ship's names. I told him about "OUR HISTORY BOOK" and told him to send his two pictures, then and now, along with his 350 words and money. He seemed real interested and happy that I gave him so much information. His name is: A.M. Mac Holroyd, P.O. Box 376, Dansville, NY 14437

Please send him all the info you can on the "U.S.N ARMED GUARD VETERANS", the "PROJECT-LIBERTY SHIPS", S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien, S.S. John W. Brown and the Lane Victory Plus the History Book-Vol. III. He's waiting to hear from you. The ARMED GUARD BUMPER STICKER finally paid off!! This is the first A.G. Veteran that I have touched with it and I'll never regret it!!

John W. Brown, Jr., 37 Winfield Rd, Rochester, N.Y. 14622 1-(716)-467-2057

Nov 16, 1989

Charles;

Enclosed is my donation to the mail fund. You continue to honor me with your mailings, even though I am not one of your Navy Vets. Still, after sailing with you and your group on the John Brown, when she was returning to Baltimore from Norfolk, I feel almost like one of you. Your group was very enjoyable and made the voyage more of a pleasure.

Best of luck in your search for Armed Guards.

Censored

Sincerely,

Don Kuhl (CN)

Carl P. McCrillis, 750 Del ray Place, Punta Gorda, FL 33950, PH: (813)575-0372, seeks information on Joe Macura, SMIC, Armed Guard Pacific, who arrived with a USN crew of four in Manila aboard the SS President Grant in December 1941 just before hostilities. Joe Macura was last known to be at Cavite Navy Yard at the time of the Japanese bombing on December 10 and may have been killed, wounded or transferred to a ship of the Asiatic fleet.

Harold Graves, 11155 County Rd. 4 N, Brainerd, MN 56401, would like to hear from any ex-POW who shared and remembers the following incident. After having crossed the Rhine on the Ludendorf Bridge at Reamagan, Germany, with 1 Co., 60th Infantry, 9th Div., he was taken prisoner by the Germans. He remembers being loaded on an unmarked train with about 1,500 other GIs. They spent the night in a tunnel and the following day were moved out into the open. A sortie of five American P-51s came over and dropped their bombs on an ammunition dump close by. They also strafed the train. The POWs tore the doors off the boxcar and formed 3 large POW signs by grouping themselves into human letters that could be seen from the air. Ten or twelve more planes flew in over the group and one came in low and "wiggled" his wings in recognition.

EX-POW BULLETIN, NOVEMBER 1989

Carl McCrillis was taken Prisoner of War after being injured in an air raid by the Japanese at the CAVITE NAVY YARD. He was made POW on Jan. 1, 1941 and he was repatriated in September of 1945. Search your phone books and help find Macura or a member of his family for him. He's not in Raleigh, N.C. I LOOKED ALREADY!! This was sent in by Tommy Thompson who was made POW, after the S.S. Carlton was sunk on July 5, 1942. Tommy was repatriated in 1945. (SEE CARLTON MENU)



Brian Hope welcomes the crew onboard the JWB. Ralph Scudder from Elmhurst, Illinois in background tying on the Armed Guard banner.



Over 6500 came aboard for a tour in 4 days during the Armed Guard Regional Reunion in Sept. 1989. Host was Alex Lombardi 14 Brookfield Road, Montclair, N.J. Photos A & B by Norm Leonardson, Wolcott, N.Y.

Bill Gourlay had arrived in Pearl Harbor on 9 May. He went aboard LST #273 on that date as a S.L.C. On 21 May, he was with his ship at West Loch moored at Tare 6 with four other LST's. He was just a rookie and still confused as to the routine of shipboard life and his duties. To the best of his recollection, he was assigned to the deck force, and in addition to his regular duties, his battle station was stern damage control. In any sort of emergency, and if General Quarters sounded, he was to report on the double to the officer or petty officer in charge of the area for further instructions.

He was below decks when he heard a terrible loud explosion, one that was deafening to the ears, and it actually caused his ship to "Shake, rattle, and roll." He didn't wait for General Quarters to be sounded, he just headed for the nearest open hatch, then up the ladder, out the hatch and onto the main deck amidships. He was totally confused and walked into a mass of confusion. All hell was breaking loose. They were moored in a lagoon which seemed to be a staging area for ships that were preparing for the invasion of Saipan.

The lagoon was to be known to him later as West Loch, Pearl Harbor. There were all sorts of ships in there, but mostly LST's.

The next nest of LST's was approximately 100-150 yards from them. That was the group in which the explosions were occurring, and where the fires were. All kinds of metal debris was falling over his ship, in fact all over the lagoon.

He found an upright air duct that he managed to squeeze between. After the chaos was over, he checked out that space he managed to get himself into, and he couldn't imagine how he could fit into such a small area.

He looked over at one of the LST's that was exploding and burning and saw a sailor on the fantail fighting a huge blaze that seemed to be getting the better of him. He still stayed at his station with hose in hand. Then the second explosion occurred,

the biggest of them all. Huge billows of smoke, flames, debris, rose in the air, along with the sailor's hose, flapping in the breeze. No longer was the sailor attached to the hose. This is one of the many sights of the war that Bill will take to his grave with him.

After dislodging himself from the protective area he was in, he finally managed to get to his battle station. He was immediately given orders to assist some of his shipmates in getting the lines off, holding them to another LST, so they could get out of there. It was hard for them to accomplish this. Then the Captain of the ship appeared on the bridge near the wheelhouse. He shouted "Get them damned lines off. Chop them if you have to." "Use a Goddam axe if you have to." This they did.

They got out of there fast. On the way out, he saw sailors and Marines jumping or being blown into the oil and gasoline covered water, with and without life jackets trying to swim to safety. Several, he noticed, were drawn into ships' screws. He said it was difficult for him to keep his food down. He said that several times he was gagging and stupidly hoping that none of the other fellows were watching.

They had many problems of their own due to the fact that two of their high octane gasoline drums were hit by falling debris. Only one of their engines was operating, and in fighting the fire that was on the bow, several of the crew were injured. In fact one of the men he was working with trying to loose the lines was hit, and his leg was injured.

Finally, things returned to normal for the crew. Even now, forty years he doesn't know what caused those explosions that terrible, terrible day. He would like to find out more the story pertaining to the so called prediction of "Tokyo see."

WILLIAM T. GOURLAY
[6102-79TH. AVE. EAST]
[PALMETTO FLORIDA 34221]

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

DEAR SIR:

READ THE PUBLISHED LETTER OF A HARRY L. McMAHON IN YOUR THANKSGIVING NEWS LETTER, INQUIRING ABOUT OUR GOVERNMENT COVERING UP HAWAII'S SECOND GREATEST DISASTER IN TERMS OF CASUALTIES. LOCATED IN WEST LOCH, ON THE ISLAND OF OAHU, DURING WW II. ON MAY 21ST, 1944, WHILE ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT WAS IN PREPARATION FOR THE UP-COMING INVASION OF SAIPAN.

ENCLOSED, PLEASE FIND MY STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED ON THAT TRAGIC DAY.

THE STORY, ALONG WITH OTHER SURVIVORS TALES WAS PUBLISHED IN A POCKET BOOK, WRITTEN BY WILLIAM L.C. JOHNSON.

HIS BUSINESS CARD IS ALSO ENCLOSED, IN THE EVENT, ANYONE WOULD CARE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIM, MAKING FURTHER INQUIRIES

BEING AN OLD LST MAN AND SERVING IN THE PACIFIC, DURING WW II, I TOO! WOULD APPRECIATE HEARING FROM ANYONE, WHO WOULD CARE TO WRITE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, AND YOUR WONDERFUL NEWS LETTER, YOU AND YOUR STAFF ARE TO BE COMMENDED.

I AM:

Just Plain Bill
WILLIAM T. GOURLAY
[6102-79TH. AVE. E.]
[PALMETTO FLA. 34221]

"The Other Pearl Harbor Disaster"

(See H. E. Shuman, pp. 32-36, Summer 1994; W. L. C. Johnson, p. 7, Fall 1988 *Naval History*)

Francis J. Clune, Associate Professor, State University of New York, College at Brockport—I became interested in "The Other Pearl Harbor Disaster" in about 1978 when I came across the 1946 publication of the reports of Admiral Ernest King on the Navy during World War II. An appendix in that book listed all of the ships that had been lost in the war and where they had been lost. I read that five (sic) LSTs had all been sunk in 1944 in Pearl Harbor. With that as an incentive, I began research on the subject of the 21 May 1944 disaster.

I think that two items should be mentioned to your readers. First, the total casualties: 163 killed + 396 injured = 559 casualties. In addition to the six LSTs (353, 480, 69, 43, 179, 39) that were sunk, the following LSTs were damaged: 242, 20, 205, 225, and 23. In addition, several tugs were damaged during the firefighting operations. Tug 306 had been right next to an LST when the

LST blew up, and it was calculated that at least three weeks work would be necessary before it was back in operation. One major problem was that both of the modern firefighting tugs available had been under repair at the time of the disaster. The combination of high-octane gasoline and large quantities of deck-loaded explosives was a fatal mix, since the gasoline both exploded and burned, thus spreading fire all around the deck area.

Second, I believe that there was sufficient evidence for the court to decide that smoking in the vicinity of the gasoline was the cause of the initial explosion, and testimony in the report indicates that the initial explosion was gasoline, not explosives. This, along with testimony of smoking on board, is the case for Admiral King's endorsement of the report.

There is one other element that I think might be of interest and pertinent to the case: the unit handling the ammunition was an Army unit, the ammunition was Army ammunition, and this might at that time have weighed on the board. The board had already recommended two naval officers for courts-martial (they were not tried). The board might have felt that enough was enough.



BAKER, RAY A.
1207 W. CAMBRIDGE AVE.
VISALIA CA 93277

Pearl Harbor - Gram



Official Publication Of
The
Pearl Harbor Survivors
Association, Inc.

National Administrative Office
3215 Albert St.
Orlando, FL 32806



OUR MOTTO: Remember Pearl Harbor—Keep America Alert

We are dedicated to the memory of
Pearl Harbor and to those gallant
Americans who gave their lives for
their country on December 7, 1941.

PHSA, Inc.
P.O. Box 6335
Syracuse, NY 13217

Published Quarterly

Our Eighty-Eighth Issue

October, 1986

Another Sunday in Pearl Harbor

By ARTHUR W. WELLS

Like birds coming in to roost, one after another, the LSTs (Landing Ship, Tanks) of the Saipan invasion fleet entered Pearl Harbor, May 20, 1944, and proceeded to berths in the shallow anchorage at West Loch. Adding to their numbers were other ships of the fleet, assembled in the harbor for the forthcoming onslaught on Japan's inner-defense ring. And more ships were in Pearl Harbor at that time than during any other period of WWII.

Berthed beam-to-beam, so close that crew and other personnel aboard could walk planks from one to the other, twenty-one were nested in rows almost directly across the channel from the West Loch Naval Ammunition Depot. Floating bombs, the ships were crammed with personnel, vehicles and other supplies of the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions, Navy Sea-Bees, and U.S. Army units—so packed that little if any room was available for the personnel aboard to even hold physical drill. And some of the ships were loaded only with extra ammunition, gasoline or other invasion needs.

The tankdecks of LSTs hauling amphibious tractors and trucks (DUKWs), and tanks, were layered with ammunition, with heavy wooden beams laid over it for the wheels and tracks

of vehicles. Topsides of those LSTs were jammed with land vehicles, drums of gasoline, and other supplies.

Just as the day had begun on another Sunday in Pearl Harbor, Sunday, May 21, 1944, was calm and the pace was leisurely. And some of the men in the

ships' crews were ashore on liberty while others were performing duties aboard. Though some of the land force personnel were on liberty, most were aboard or had taken vehicles and guns ashore, adjacent to the LSTs, for servicing after the saltwater dousing during inva-

sion rehearsals off Maui. And for protection from the hot sun as the day wore on, those still aboard were huddled in the shade of vehicles, stretched tarpaulins or blankets, or ship protrusions, while sleeping, reading, writing letters, in bull sessions or playing cards.

Shortly after 1500 hours, the peaceful Sunday afternoon was disrupted when LST-353 erupted in a huge explosion that hurled a boiling column of smoke, men, pieces of bodies, vehicles, and slabs of the ship's steel high into the air above the front row of the nested LSTs—she was berthed in the nest's eight-ship forward row and was the seventh in line from shore.

And so began Hawaii's second worst disaster . . . second in casualties only to the Japanese attack on Dec. 7, 1941.

Only moments after the explosion, West Loch became a beehive of activity as ships' crews rushed to stations . . . some to cast off mooring lines and in some cases, severing them with axes. Others manned fire and damage control. And others manned at-sea stations as LST captains frantically gave orders to get their ships under way.

It became a holocaust as fires and explosions erupted on other LSTs. And men who had

jumped or been blown overboard, were sucked into the screws as they began turning to draw the 1600-ton vessels away from the maelstrom of concussions, searing and shredding metal, and the skin-toasting heat of fires. In one instance, a LST's captain passed the word that he'd shoot the next man abandoning his ship. And metal was crushed and paint scraped when ships bumped while desperately heading for open water, or to a cove or beaching away from the conflagration.

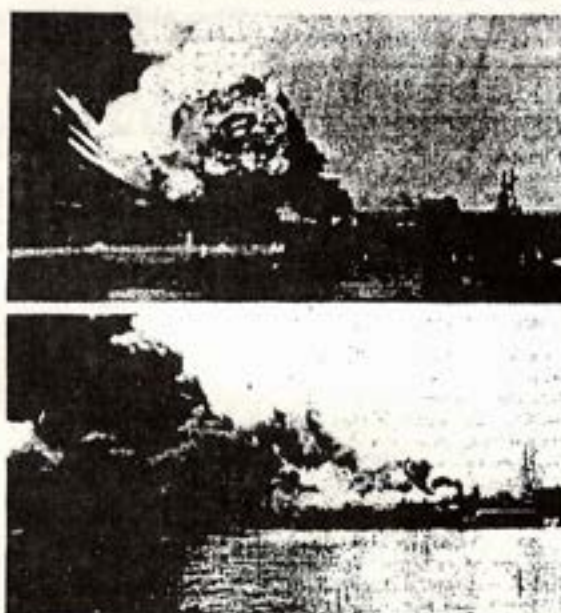
With the number of LSTs now on fire, the sky above the Loch was filled with black-oily smoke, so dense the brightness of the afternoon sun was dimmed.

Crews of small craft performed heroic feats as they brought their vessels close to burning ships to fish injured and waterlogged men from the oil-scummed water. Corpsmen and doctors worked frantically to stem the flowing blood. And by good fortune, Marine 105mm howitzers had been unloaded from DUKWs ashore and their crews added their vehicles to the parade of ambulances and other vehicles rushing casualties to area hospitals. And many uninjured or ambulatory injured swam ashore, then raced across the canefields to escape the disaster.

Some of the LSTs cleared West Loch and reached open waters outside Pearl Harbor, while others afloat from stem to stern floated free and into West Loch's channel, inexorably toward the ammunition depot piers until heroic tug crews corralled them and pushed them clear.

Only one LST remained afloat in the nest's front row. Smoke and flames were shooting above her top deck. A fire-fighting tug approached and nestled against the closed bow doors of the LST. Torrents of water poured onto the LST. But moments later, a huge explosion blew the LST's bow doors open and demolished the tug's superstructure. As the tug floated slowly and silently away from the LST, not a sign of her crew was visible. But it was the last large explosion and quietness began settling over West Loch.

Though the Japanese had caused more casualties and



West Loch—Pearl Harbor, May 21, 1944. Second Outw on LST's 340, 354, 23, 121. Enroute Saipan.

Page 40

GRAM

October, 1986

Another Sunday . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

damage in a shorter period of time on December 7, those five hours on another Sunday in Pearl Harbor had been costly too . . . for 163 men had been killed and 396 injured. And destroyed were LSTs 39, 43, 69, 179, 353 and 480. Also lost were three LCTs that had been lashed to the topdecks of destroyed LSTs.

A Naval Court of Inquiry never firmly established the cause of the first explosion on LST 353. But it concluded that the probable cause was either a defective fuse or carelessness in handling 4.2 mortar ammunition being off-loaded into a truck parked on the ship's elevator—specially equipped LCTs for which the ammo had been destined had been lost overboard in stormy weather off Maui. The court also found no evidence to

support any contention that the explosion was caused by sabotage or Japanese action.

Men on ships in the first and second rows of the nests felt that carelessness while welding could well have been responsible, for they adamantly contended that it was being done near the point of the first explosion, only moments before it erupted.

It could have been a major catastrophe for the invasion

forces. But a frantic search for replacement ships, men and equipment was successful. The LST flotilla sailed out of West Loch on May 25, only one day later than originally planned. The day was made up enroute to Saipan.

Now gun shy of Pearl Harbor, the sailors and marines who had been present during the Japanese attack, breathed a sigh of relief when the ships reached open seas. They had reached the

conclusion that, maybe, an invasion beach was a safer place to be!

Bumper
stickers
turn up
in the
strangest
places!



Tribune photograph by NEIL MCGAHEE

Rescue effort

Paramedics enter an overturned Cadillac from both sides Tuesday to pull out Harry Gorman, 72, of New Port Richey fol-

lowing a collision at Rowan and Plathe roads. Later, Gorman was listed in stable condition at Bayfront Medical Center.

DEAR CREW WITH BUMPER STICKERS and DECALS WHO USES THEM THEIR CARS and TRUCKS! Last month you located 15 ARMED GUARD with three and two Merchant Seamen who have asked to be placed on the mailing list because they too enjoy and are "HUNGRY" for any information about our two units in MM II. "ME" are not trying to merge into one unit as some has inclined to believe. They pay their way and I intend to inform them and assist in anyway possible. They still remember many of our crew and who knows, we may find one who divided with some of you their earning so you could enjoy shore leave, as many of you have written me. Let us help one another for we do not have "many more" Christmas Holidays to rekindle the SALT

Carson N. Taylor

808 Carmel Dr.
Modesto, CA 95354

June 20, 1989

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

I was in La Cener, Washington when I saw a car with three or four bumper stickers on it like the one you have sent me. I stopped the man driving to tell him that I, too, was in the Armed Guard and it was Jerry Goucher of Henderson, Nevada. He must have sent you my name and the name of my gunnery officer before I got back home and had a chance to send it myself.

He gave me a membership card which I have filled in and will carry in my wallet. He told me that you have some type of computerized link with the ship's companies of the various ships on which we were all stationed. If that is so and if the information also includes current addresses I would certainly like to get that information. It may be that I misunderstood him, but when you find time will you let me know?

Thank you so much for the Pointers and the other information you sent. I haven't been through it all yet, but I will read it with interest and nostalgia.

Yours very truly,

Carson Taylor

memories of the lonely nights at sea. I am sure that their desires were as ours were-"SURVIVAL!!" And their thoughts were the same as yours and mine-"WOULD THE NEXT TORPEDO HIT OUR SHIP?" Oliver Grant MM from Parksley, Va. wanted me to let you know that they had "MICROWAVE OVENS" on the ships now for midnight snacks!! Also, POPCORN and VCRs! He says he still sails for a living. If you don't have a bumpersticker and want one, send a self-addressed-stamped envelope to the return address. "If" you did not send in your ship listing, send them with the letter. The bumperstickers are no good in my garage. If we give out, we'll get more. We have over 9,000 so far in circulation. This is YOUR OUTFIT!! WE NEED YOU NOW!!

Nashville, Tenn.
November 17, 1989

USN Armed Guard WWII Veterans
5712 Partridge Lane
Raleigh, N.C. 27609-4126

Hello there:

Received the POINTER today and enjoyed it very much! Every time I get the POINTER, I make a mental note to send in a donation tomorrow. As something always comes up, I decided to sit right down and write you a note and enclose a check. At any rate, I am making a check out for \$50.00 and hope it will take care of some of the details that I know you are always swamped with.

I have two ARMED GUARD bumper stickers that I got when I was in Kansas City, and they look awful. I was wondering if maybe you could cough me up two more. Would appreciate it if you could. I plan on going to Chicago next June, and I will further stock up on some items.

Keep up the good work, and if necessary, let us know if the old bank account dries up and you need some more "greenies" as they used to say among the crew.

Calvin Lyons
Rt. 2, Box 864
Nashville, Ar. 37182

Know all ye here present
that
The Bearer of this Certificate,
having made a generous donation,
is entitled to join the
Honorable and Exclusive Ranks
of

Liberty Ship Sailors of the
'90's

and is invited
to

Voyage aboard the

S. S. John W. Brown

The Last East Coast Liberty Ship
at a place and time
designated by the
Master of the Vessel



Certificate number 334

Voyage number 1



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Aboard the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN
Pier One, Clinton Street,
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Friend of the JOHN W. BROWN:

Welcome to the exclusive circle of "Liberty Ship Sailors of the '90's"! Enclosed is the Commemorative Cruise Certificate entitling you to passage aboard the BROWN on our first Chesapeake Bay cruise. When the actual date of the cruise is announced we will send you a smaller ticket that will be easier to carry around!

In the meantime, we hope that you will display this certificate prominently. Tell your friends about the ship and our cruise plans. Sign them up!

If you're not already a member of Project Liberty Ship you can keep track of our progress by signing on as a member. You'll receive the national publication, "Liberty Log" and our Baltimore newsletter, "The Ugly Duckling." If you live close enough, come aboard and lend a hand. There's plenty to do and your help will be most appreciated!

We're looking forward to the day when this fine old ship, one of the last survivors of a most dangerous and exciting period in American history, is steaming again. With the help and the generosity of people like you that day draws ever closer and, on behalf of the Project volunteers, I extend our most sincere thanks!

11/25/89

C.A. -

As you requested, I am
sending (7) certificates for
the \$700.00 paid toward
your \$1000.00 Reservation.
Thanks for all you do!

Charles Crabbin

Sincerely,

Brian Hope
Captain Brian H. Hope
Chairman,
Project Liberty Ship Baltimore

BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 8 • Long Green, Maryland 21092 • Staff office: (301) 661-1550 • Ship: (301) 558-0646



A group from the Illinois/Wisconsin Armed Guard WW II Veterans Chapter went to the "GREAT LAKES NAVAL STATION" to make preparations for the visit there which will take place on Friday June 8, 1990 during the June 8-10, 1990 Armed Guard WW II Veteran's NATIONAL REUNION. James Campbell, 951 Chandler Rd, Gurnee, Il. 60031, our GREAT LAKES CHAIRMAN, has done a great job in making the necessary arrangement for that day. The "BANNER" says it all and I know it'll be FUN!! L/R: Jay and Jane Wildfong, Jim and Evelyn Cepican, Ralph and Josephine Scudder, Jerry Cheffer, Pedgy and Bob Grossman, Jane Mangum, Patrick and Lucille Hughes and Jim Campbell. And as the "MOTTO" states, "LET'S GO TO CHICAGO IN 1990"! BOB

News-Sun Thursday, Nov. 9, 1989 Sec. 1 11

Remember When

A syndicated feature of The News-Sun

Set in by:

James D. Campbell

7005 Lewis #220
WAUKEGAN, IL 60048



News-Sun File Photo

First recruits

The first company of recruits to complete basic training at Great Lakes Naval Training Center posed for a graduation photograph

in 1911. Joseph Gregg, the station's first recruit, is sitting second from left. The Navy celebrated its 214th birthday Oct. 27.



MENU

Breakfast
Stewed Dry Beans
Boiled Potatoes
All Kind Dry cereal
Fried Bacon
Eggs To order
Boiled Salted Mackerel
Boiled Potatoes
Hot Cake & Toast
Coffee hot Tea

Date May 29/42

S/S Carlton

U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WORLD WAR II VETERAN'S 9TH NATIONAL REUNION
JUNE 6 - 10, 1990

"AHoy!! SHIPMATES!!"

THE CONGRESS HOTEL
520 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605

"LIBERTY ALL HANDS"

1-800/635-1666 Outside Illinois

Illinois 1-312/427-3800

"LET'S GO, CHICA-GO IN NINE-OH"

YOUR HOSTS: Bob & Peggy Grossman, 10333 S. Campbell Ave., Chicago, IL 60655
Telephone 1-312/779-NAVY

Welcome to the City that works, the City of broad shoulders, Chicago
Welcome to the First Navy home of many boots and armed guards
Welcome to you, your spouse, your shipmates, even your gunnery officer

Our Committee has almost everything set up for your arrival. We originally planned for 500 of your shipmates, and their spouses. Based on early reservations, we may have to reserve even more rooms. Here's the latest scuttlebutt:

HOTEL: The Congress Hotel, 520 S. Michigan Avenue, facing Grant Park and Lake Michigan, with a spectacular view of Buckingham Fountain, from our spacious 2nd floor Hospitality, Assembly and Registration area. Most of the rooms are being up-graded and redecorated, and will be finished when you arrive.

We've asked for the best rooms to go to the earliest reservations.

Prices are \$65.00 day, single or double, plus the inevitable taxes of about 12%.

If you want to come early or stay late beyond the June 6-10 Reunion dates, the hotel will hold these prices for 3 days before and/or 3 days after.



We have practically the whole 2nd floor for June 6-10 for our hospitality, registration, assembly, and banquet area, so you can look over the Ship, Zip Code, or Alphabetical Member Lists, enjoy a drink with old and new friends or buy the sweatshirts and other Armed Guard paraphernalia, in comfort, with a view.

Reservations: Call 1-800/635-1666 from outside Illinois, Illinoisans 1/312/427-3800.

AIRPLANE AND AMTRACK: We're trying something new. Call our travel agency 1-800/621-4153 (in Illinois 1-312/427-3100) for the Armed Guard Reservation desk, Sandy or Maribel.

We've got 5 airlines so far contracted to guarantee discounts of 40% to 45% from normal fares, or 5% off of the lowest quoted fare for that line. They are United, American Airlines, Delta, America West, Midwest, and 1 more pending. If rates drop, you'll get the lower rate. If they go up, you keep the lower rate. In addition, we are still working with Amtrack to get special prices by rail.

We suggest strongly you contact the air line or travel agent of your choice and get lowest possible prices for the dates you want, and then call 1-800/621-9153 to see if Modern Travel can help you.

BUS TRANSFER TO HOTEL: Present price from O'Hare to hotel is \$9.75 per person. We're trying to get better prices, and will keep you informed.

MOTOR-HOMES: Chicago is 30 miles or so from nearest campsites. Check your KOA or other directories for Chicago Areas. Mokena, Lockport, Elgin, Joliet seem to be closest, all an hour or more driving or train time from the Loop.

PARKING: There's practically no free parking in Chicago Loop area. Rates run \$8 to \$13 per day close to the hotel. We are negotiating with the adjoining garages, and will keep you informed.



U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WWII VETERANS, 9TH ANNUAL REUNION
CONGRESS HOTEL - 520 S. MICHIGAN AVE., CHICAGO, IL 60605
1-800/635-1666 Illinois 1-312/427-3800

ITINERY AND RESERVATIONS

Wednesday - June 6, 1990

American Sightseeing, 1-312/427-3100 right in The Congress Hotel, is handling our bus transportation and sightseeing tours. Call direct for city tours (also see Saturday) Museums, Art Institute, Planetarium, Aquarium, Zoos, Sears Tower, Hancock Building, Water Tower Place, Marshall Fields, Chicago Cubs or White Sox, Arlington Park Racetrack. Pick up information when you register. Most of above are in walking distance or local bus. Stroll North on Michigan Avenue, 2 blocks left to State Street "That Great Street".

Thursday - June 7, 1990

Daytime: Explore Chicago. Enjoy our City. Walk the Loop. Take American Sightseeing Tours. Watch the hustle. Join the crowds.
6:30-10:00 PM. Star of Chicago Dinner Cruise from Navy Pier. See our fabulous skyline. Special menu we selected, music, entertainment.
Cruise, dinner, bus (cash bar aboard ship). \$45.00 per person x ____ TOTAL \$____.00

Friday - June 8, 1990

Great Lakes Tour. Early departure in comfortable air conditioned coaches on 35 mile trip to where many of us took our "Boot" Training. Bus tour of the camp is scheduled, time permitting.
Lunch in Boot Camp or Training School Mess Hall. Lot of changes from the 40's. Plaque Dedication and impressive Recruit Graduation Ceremony.
Cocktails (Cash Bar) and Buffet Dinner at "Port of Call" Officers Club.
Tour, including lunch, dinner, bus @ \$36.00 per person x ____ TOTAL \$____.00
Hospitality Room closed during tour.

Saturday - June 9, 1990

8:30-10:30 AM. General Business Meeting. Great Hall - 2nd floor.
12:30 - 4:30 PM. Sightseeing tour of Chicago Loop, Soldier Field, including several hours at the Museum of Science and Industry, featuring captured German Submarine U-505 (\$2.00 per, extra).
Cost per person, including bus, tour, museum \$17.00 per person x ____ TOTAL \$____.00
6:00 - 7:00 PM. Cocktails (Cash Bar) before dinner.
7:00 PM Banquet - Grand Ball Room. \$25.00 per person x ____ TOTAL \$____.00

Sunday, June 10, 1990

8:30 - 10:30 AM. Sunday Brunch, Great Hall. \$15.00 per person x ____ TOTAL \$____.00

Total Amount Enclosed. Check or Money Order # _____ \$____.00

Tickets for above events will be distributed when you register.

NAME _____ FIRST _____ MATE _____
STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____
ZIP _____ TEL (____) _____ SMOKER Y ____ N ____ HANDICAPPED Y ____ N ____

CHECKS TO "U.S.N.A.G. REUNION 1990"

Mail to Bob Grossman, 10333 S. Campbell Ave.
Chicago, IL 60655

1991 ON TO BALTIMORE



Lone Sailor

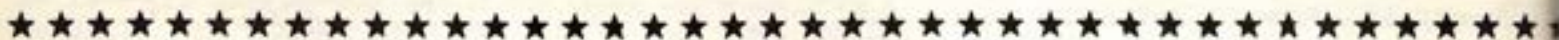
U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL
Washington, D.C.



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



December, 1989

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