

NOVEMBER, 1991

THE P INTER



Reprinted from the "POINTER," December 24, 1943.

THE POINTER

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THE PLANE SHOOTER

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

USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans

"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"

TEXAS BREAKFAST CLUB - Pearl Harbor Meeting -
Dec. 6 & 7, San Antonio, Texas. See "Reunion" Section.



Dear Shipmates, their Ladies,
Distinguished Guests and Families,

November 26, 1991

Here's hoping that "ALL Y'ALL" will have Thanksgiving Day with your family and friends and have a plenty of good things to eat. We also wish you a "MERRY CHRISTMAS" and a "HAPPY NEW YEAR". It is a time to be Thankful for all the Joys of life over the years.

On December 7, 1991, I think all of us should stop somewhere along the way on that day that President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed as "A DAY THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY" 50 years ago when on, December 7, 1941, while the Japanese Envoys were talking Peace at the White House in our own Capital City of Washington, D.C., their own Armed Forces attacked our Fleet at PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII, killing 2665 and wounding 1800 more. The U.S. Navy lost was 2251 of the men KIA.

In this issue of the "POINTER" are six pages taken from the 50TH Anniversary booklet especially printed for the occasion. Four of them tells a little history of our "ARMED GUARD UNIT". Two of them are pictures of the LITTLE CREEK BASE. I hope that more history of the NEW ORLEANS CENTER will be forthcoming prior to our 11TH U.S.N. NATIONAL REUNION to be placed in the "POINTER." I am sure this will be accomplished for I received a package from Roger and Adele Jolly, 738 Central Dr., Port Neches, Texas 77651 409-722-5584 containing 7 magazines, of "THE PELICAN", Volume 3 No.18; Vols.4 Nos.5, 6, 13, 14, 17 and Vol.5 No. 4. We're in search for more.

(see page 18)

They also sent 2^v priceless photos, one showing the Waves stationed there as they were marching to take part in the FLAG RAISING (pic 2) that took place every Saturday morning. Adele is the 4th from the rear on the outside column showing. She met Roger there after he'd returned from the MURMANSK RUN and was placed in the Records Section. Adele was not aware that another Armed Guard Wave, Mary Bauer, 1220 Johnson Dr. Sp. 152, Ventura, Ca. 93003 805-644-2483 was head of the WAVES NATIONAL and was interested. Mary is the wife of Cyril Bauer who was also an Armed Guard and they met at the Brooklyn A.G.Center. Duplicates of "THE PELICANS" and photo will be made and placed among the archives in the museums on the three Historical ships and other museums upon request and funds are available.

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

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

Back to the 50TH ANNIVERSARY at Little Creek, Va. It was GREAT! We had approximately 395 people to take part. I wish all of you could have attended. Our hats are off to Hosts Robert and Margaret Burrill and Co-Hosts Ralph and Norma Womeldorf for an outstanding Ceremony. Our thanks also go out to the Holiday Inn Hotel staff, to our tour guide Marge Phillips and her staff. Marge, you have succeeded in being one of the best tour guide persons in the land, 3 times for us. BRIG. Gen. Robert D. Floyd, (Ret.) South Carolina State Guard and Burrill's shipmate performed so well at the mike that Elmer Vincent has called on him to hold that Honor again at New Orleans. He's South Carolina's Andy Griffith. (Or is he Barney?) Y'all be there to see for yo'self!! We hope to have video tapes for sale of the Ceremony at a later date.

One of the original Armed Guard, Bernard Wilkerson of Virginia Beach, who helped set up the Center during 1941 and was one of the original "DIRTY THIRTIES" as they were called, had a chest pain on his way over to the Hotel on the 14th of October and pulled off to side of the road and passed on to Eternity to be with his Lord. Our sympathy is extended to his family. He and Marvin Fentress, who also attended, joined the Navy together and had been friends all these years.

My deepest apology is to those who attended the Bullhead City, Az. 50TH ANNIVERSARY of the Armed Guard held there on the same day, October 15th, 1991 because I failed to send an updated name and ship list. I thought I had until I called John Noyes, the Host and learned that he had not received it. I think I sent it by 4th class postal but I failed to get it registered if I did. I know how much you guys look forward in looking for your shipmates and I failed you and I'm sorry. If I sent it UPS, I can not find a ticket so I guess you'll have to send Ralph Lucas or Phil Bradley a self addressed envelope for them. (see past POINTERS for their address) I still think I sent them but where they went, I don't know.

I would like to thank all of you who donated to the drawing at Baltimore and the one at Norfolk. The winners were Roy Becker, Sylvania, Ohio; Henry Burtchell, Dallas, Texas; J.A. Vanbogaert, Louisville, KY, and Aris Azmann-Humster, Indiana--grandson of Gus Rizes. Ralph Womeldorf was the winner of the 50/50. Congratulations!! Y'ALL. It has been a great help and for once, I have enough money to do this and one more mailout with the regular donations. The monies leftover from the Baltimore 1991 National Reunion and from the 50TH ANNIVERSARY Ceremony at Norfolk, Va. has been forwarded and deposited into the National Account #301-183839. Also, I have Approx. \$4,000. invested in caps, books, etc., and paid for and receipts for the same. Postage to the NEW OL'SALTS is growing as I try to send them a packet that they would be proud to receive. He gets 2 past "POINTERS" (until they run out) plus approx. 14 pages of other material of what I think is interesting to them.

Don Gleason, 227 North Knox, Topeka, Kansas. 66606 has informed me that the crew from NEBRASKA, MISSOURI and KANSAS will be joining together for a TRI-STATE MINI-REUNION in the fall of each year starting as listed in 1992, with Maurice "Moe" Carlton, 6601 Benton St., Lincoln, Nebr., 68507 402-466-1058 as the host. Contact Moe for more info. Don is still the representative for the Kansas crew. Don and Henrietta are to be commended for their outstanding work in organizing that area for you.

Gerry Greaves, 143 Killingly Rd., Foster, Rhode Island 02825 and their "Dinner Meeting Crew" have installed a Memorial to the Armed Guard and will dedicate it on April 15, 1992, as this is the date of unofficially starting of the Armed Guard service in WW II. (see Stan Defoe's list) More on this in the next "POINTER". I hope the weather warms up by then! They meet monthly at "HOWARD JOHNSON'S" in Warwick, R.I. at 1 P.M.

Herb North, 74 Sutton Pl., El Paso informed me that those of you who were exposed and effected by "MUSTARD GAS" in WW II, to contact your Local Veterans Administration. They're listed in your telephone book. Those of you at Bari, Italy on December 2, 1943 when a supprise aerial attack occurred, sinking 17 ships, one being the S.S. John Bascom in Convoy UOS 22 which was loaded with mustard gas, may need some help.

Harold and Peggy Cook, Rt.3 Box 255 Prosperity, S.C. 29127 803-364-3258 will be in charge of the next S.C. meeting in Newbury, S.C. in March.

Billie and Dick Kohse 2304 Lister Rd. N.E., Olympia Washington 98506 206-456-1946, (NORTH-WEST ORGANIZERS) informs me that 153 attended the Yakima Mini hosted by the Vangstads and had 14 new Armed Guard to walk in after reading a story in their local paper. Billie sent three more additional ones and I received eight others "NEW OL'SALTS" today, also. Billie also informs me that Ray and Jessie Schreiner, 1907 75th St., Tacoma, Wa. 98404 206-336-9716 will be hosts for their Mar.31-Apr. 2, 1992 Spring Mini-Reunion at the Best Western Exec. Inn in Tacoma. WISHING ALL A "MERRY CHRISTMAS" and "HAPPY NEW YEAR" from all of us. cal

Richmond, Va. Crew meets at 1 P.M. for a Luncheon at Morrison's Cafe, 7035 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va. on the 2nd Sat. HOSTS: Clarence and Helen Durham 4813 Lovells Rd., Richmond, Va. 23224 804-233-8023. Go: I-64 AT BROAD AND GLENSIDE EXIT-TURN LEFT ON BROAD-2 BLKS ON LEFT.

Norfolk, Va. Crew meets at Morrison's at Virginia Beach on each 4th Saturday at 1 P.M. Contact Robert Burrill, 5320 Brockie St., Virginia Beach, Va. 23464 1-804-479-4606. All are invited to attend.

DESA Association National Reunion. Contact: Don Glaser, P.O. Box 680085, Orlando, Fl. 32868-0085 407-877-7671. Many Armed Guard were on DESA.

LST ASSOC.: Contact Mike and Linda Gynjak, P.O. Box 167438, OREGON, Oh. 43616-7438 1-800-228-5670. They have a great LST Newspaper.

The Texas Breakfast Club holds quarterly meeting at 8:15 A.M. Wyatt's Cafeteria, Loop 410 N.E. and Tesoro Dr. For those who would like to spend the night, arrangements have been made with "TOWNHOUSE WESTERN HOTEL" 942 Loop 410 N.E. S.A., Tx. 1-800-289-0165. Tell them A.G. The Hosts: George and Francis Hastings 2611 Woodbury, San Antonio, Texas 78217 512-824-3636 and Lloyd and Marilyn Tholen 6007 Archwood Dr., San Antonio, Texas 78239 512-657-2706.

Lee and Betty Logan 4526 Sycamore St., Wichita, Ks. 316-524-6166 hosts several "Sit-to-Gethers". Contact them if interested.

George Milk 449 St. James St., Port Charlotte, Fl. 33952 813-627-6759 and Crew meets 7 PM, 2nd Friday of the month at 1st Federal Bank Bldg., Virginia and Taylor Rd. Punta Gorda, FL. They should be getting ready for the crew to return for the winter.

Rudy Kozak 4950 Dory Dr. Gulf Harbor, New Port Richey, Fl. 34652 Tel- 813-847-4038 gets that area of crew together.

John and Joan Noyes 4651 East 17th St. Tucson, Az. 85711 602-284-1082 hosts the Arizona Crew. Contact him for future meeting.

Gerald and Lena Greaves 143 East Killingly Rd., Foster, R.I. will be the Hosts for the NORTHEAST ARMED GUARD MINI-REUNION to be held at the Sheraton-Plymouth, Ma. Oct.18-21, 1992. All are invited to attend.

Illinois-Wisc Hosts for Mini-Reunion in 1992 Jim and Evelyn Cepican 9341 Montgomery Dr., Orland Park, Il. 60462.708-409-5220 to be held at the Holiday-Inn in Oak Lawn, Il. All Armed Guard are welcomed!!

Joseph and Mildred LeDuc 4233 E. Villa Theresa, Phoenix, Az. 85032 Tel- 602-992-5771 will be holding meeting in his area and all are invited.

American Merchant Marine Veterans Contact: Carl Krileitch, 70 Foss Dr. Redwood City, Ca. 94062 for Reunions. "Armed Guard are Welcomed!"

PATROL CRAFTS REUNION will be held April 29-May 2,1992 in Charleston, S.C. Contact: Joe F. Kelliher RR#2 Box 140, Cambridge, NY 12816-9304.

SAMPSON BOOTS: Contact William Russell, 3916 Idumea Rd. Corryton, Tn. 37721

Western NY American MM Veterans meet 1st Thursday 1:30 P.M. at the Polish Falcons, 445 Columbia, DePew, NY 14043. All ARMED GUARD ARE WELCOMED!!!! Contact Jay Ralph, 54 Eastwood, DePew, NY 14043 Tel-716-668-1485.

Ex-crew members of all AOG ships should contact Jim Truetken, 4960 Kennebec Dr. Black Jack, Mo. 63033 1-800-862-7288.

USS LCI NATIONAL ASSOCIATION: Robert Kirsch, Rd#4 Box 117, Evans City, Pa. 16033 (412) 536-8151. In search for all LCI's. L, M, R, FF, G and D Hulls Nos. 1 through 1098. They will hold their 2ND National Reunion in Nashville, Tennessee May 28-31, 1992.

For all Fleet Ships Reunions, check with your local American Legion, DAV, VFW, Etc. listed in your local Telephone Directory.

Any Armed Guard who would like to get his local area together, send me: PLACE, TIME, DATE and HOW OFTEN.

We still hold our 1st Sat. of each month breakfast at Griffin's, 1604 N. Market Dr., Raleigh, N.C. Tel-876-0125, off 4500 Bik- Old Wake Forest Rd. Behind RED LOBSTER. We welcome you to come and be with us.

INTERNATIONAL REUNION

The NORTH RUSSIA CLUB will sponsor an INTERNATIONAL REUNION in ENGLAND from JULY 2, 1992 till JULY 12, 1992. You can attend the days of your choice. To cut overseas mailing cost, send me a self-addressed-stamped-envelope and I will send to you a copy of the agenda or you can write directly to:

Mr. P.A. Skinner, The Anchorage, Burscott, High Clovelly, Bideford, DEVON EX39 5PR ENGLAND

IN MEMORY OF ARMED GUARD SHIPMATES WHO HAS SAILED BEFORE US

Last Name	First	Middle	City	State	Wife	Date
Amey	Hagen	"Bud"	Deckersville	Mi	Betty	6/23/90
Bisocca	Ray	B.	Kansas City	Mo.	Loretta	10/5/91
Cobaugh	Ray		Etters	Pa	Martha	9/13/91
Collins	Leon		Pennsauken	NJ	Margie	10/10/91
Delyea	David	M.	Menasha	Wi	Betty	7/91
Duff	Johnnie		Compton	Ky	Ruth	9/29/91
Earls	Lester	F.	Francisco	In	Elsie	12/3/90
Ferguson	William		Belle Mead	NJ	Sarah	7/7/91
Fishel	Malcom	E.	Clearfield	Pa	Alta	8/27/91
Gregory	Norman		Charlotte	NC	Martha	7/28/91
Hodder	Allen		Pittsburg	Pa	?	9/25/91
House	Dale	C.	South Hampton	Pa	Virginia	8/29/91
Lester*	Bill		Covington	La		9/11/91
Maruschak	Joseph	Steve	Painsville	Oh	*	11/10/91
Nelson	Curt		Minneapolis	Mn	?	9/25/91
Ostrander	Donald		Flint	Mi	Anna	10/12/91
Perkins	Fred		St. Paul	Mn	Sue	9/26/91
Soudan	Hoyt		Pittsfield	Pa	Alice	2/24/90
Tabler	D.	W.	Shepardstown	WV	?	1/15/91
Teays	Henry		Capeer	Mi	Shirley	?
Wilkinson *	Bernard		Norfolk	Va	Loretta	10/14/91
Williams	Ames		Alexandria	Va	Mary	11/8/91

* Was sent to Little Creek, Virginia 9/8/41 to help set up the Base.

HONORING OUR ARMED GUARD SPOUSE WHO HAS CROSSED THE BAR

LAST NAME	FIRST	M.	CITY	STATE	HUSBAND	DATE
BOWMAN	RUBY		STURGIS	KY	ED	4/9/91

Armed Guard Mugs with the 50th Reunion and the Eagle on the side and the Mug with the NOLA Pelican Insignia can be purchased by sending \$15.00 each which includes \$3.50 for SHIPPING to:

Alvin Sniff
3895 Durango Street
Pensacola, FL 32504
904-476-5491

To those who don't know him, he was ARMED GUARD and retired a few years ago as Chief with so many "HASH MARKS" on his sleeve, he had to "stack" them!! Add another buck if you want your name on it. (Many had asked about these.)

c a lloyd

Captain Art Moore, Author of "A CARELESS" WORD - A NEEDLESS SINKING, whose article appeared in the Jan. 17, 1991 Boston Globe on the S.S. Sumner I. Kimball and reprinted in the "POINTER," has informed me that he has contacted several of the families of those who were killed. One such person is 87 year old Mrs. Anna Johnson, Rt.1, Quaint Rd., Box 453, Falconer, New York 14733. Art sends the list of the A.G. KIA.

S.S. SUMNER I. KIMBALL CREW KIA. SUNK: 1/18/44

Wright, Lt.(jg) Clement Adams-USNR (Officer)

Brown, Sam Wright	S1/c	845	59	99
Budwick, Peter	OM3/c	722	56	68
Cashman, Robert James	S1/c	653	27	88
Champion, Robert Lloyd	S1/c	837	68	78
Demboski, Michael Joseph	RM3/c	245	11	74
Durbin, Joseph	S1/c	653-03	32	
Edgerly, Arnold George *	S1/c	800	93	81
Eichinger, Joseph	S1/c	642	81	83
Farber, Francis James	S1/c	820	68	57
Fowler, Roscoe Junior	S2/c	552	40	65
Helms, A.G.	S1/c	829	69	02
Hertweck, Harold Edward	Cox	287	82	03
Hubbard, Leonard Walter	SM3/c	644	75	89
Jennings, Harold Norman	SM3/c	664	39	36
Johnson, Jr. Durward Belmont	S1/c	609	78	59
Legat, Kenneth Irving	S1/c	762	09	85
Lovett, George Bruno	S1/c	600	98	91
Lucia, Nicholas Joseph	S1/c	812	46	71
Marshall, Wilson Herman	S1/c	608	62	20
McDonald, Charles Raymond	S1/c	875	55	67
Metcalf, Buford Rex	OM3/c	272	83	01
Misovic, Joseph Anthony	S1/c	868	93	91
Moran, Porter Ford	BM2/c	404	12	94
Murphy, Edward Paul	S1/c	606	75	52
Nagle, Finburr Alphonsus	S1/c	311	96	95
Nealings, James Raymond	S1/c	856	82	55
Rakos, Jr., Stephen Gus	Cox	225	12	25
Shumstrom, Richard Somerville	S2/c	800	47	87
Tersowski, Walter Louis	S1/c	808	90	58

DECLASSIFIED

3 January 1945

STATEMENT CONCERNING FINDING OF DEATH

One officer and 29 enlisted men, named in the attached list, members of the Armed Guard attached to the SS SUMNER I. KIMBALL, a United States cargo ship, have been carried on the official records in the status "missing in action" as of 27 January 1944.

On 9 January 1944, the SUMNER I. KIMBALL, with the officer and enlisted men named in the attached list aboard, departed from the United Kingdom in convoy OM-219 for New York, where she was scheduled to arrive on 27 January 1944.

On 20 January 1944, the SUMNER I. KIMBALL straggled from the convoy during heavy weather, and was not reported seen or heard from thereafter.

Information in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations indicates that while the SUMNER I. KIMBALL straggled from the convoy because of bad weather, subsequently she "may have been torpedoed." However, available information does not establish whether or not the SUMNER I. KIMBALL was torpedoed.

To date no further information has been received by the Navy Department concerning the fate of the officer and 29 enlisted men named in the attached list.

In view of the fact that the SUMNER I. KIMBALL was lost in mid-Atlantic during heavy weather in the month of January 1944, because to date no person known to have been aboard that vessel when she straggled from the convoy on 20 January 1944, has been reported to be interned in a neutral country or to be a prisoner of war, and experience has shown (without known exception) that American Naval personnel who have been prisoners of war in German prison camps have been so reported well within 12 months from the time they were captured, and because of the length of time that has elapsed since the officer and 29 enlisted men named in the attached list have been lost, it is recommended that they be found to be dead as set forth in the attached findings of death.

Approved:

Chief of Naval Personnel.

A. C. Jacobs,
Captain, U.S.N.R.
Director of the Dependents
Welfare Division

1-30-45

Secretary of the Navy.



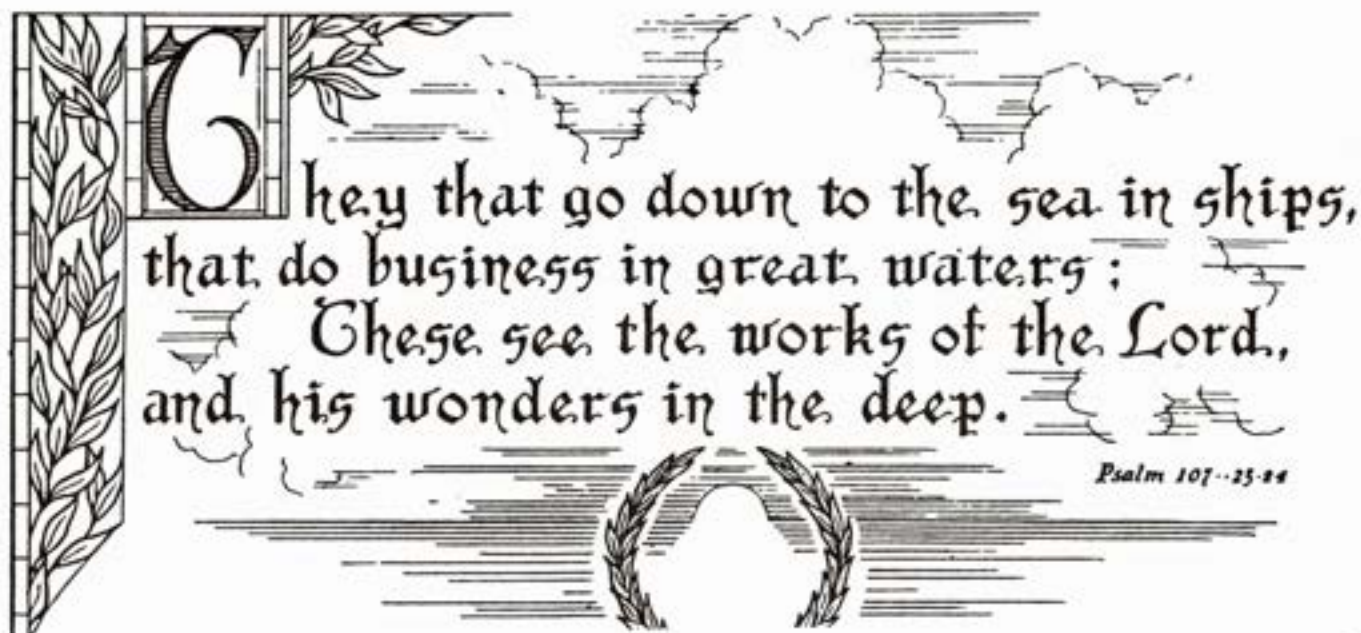
Armed Guard Monument to be dedicated April 15, 1992 at the Rhode Island Cemetery in Exeter by the Rhode Island Armed Guard Crew headed up by Gerry Greaves. Go by to see it if in the area.



Dinner meeting at Sturbridge, MA



Gerald Greaves (at exit door) with committee for Plymouth, MA Mini-Reunion next October 15, 1992.



U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD — WORLD WAR II

On 15 October 1941, the Bureau of the Navy established an Armed Guard School at the Section Base Little Creek, Virginia under the command of the "Inshore Patrol" commander. Not until 15 November 1942 did the officer in charge of the school, Captain Louis Richardson Vail become a Commanding Officer, even though he arrived on 14 October 1941. The school had a very modest beginning. The original staff consisted of four retired chief gunner's mates but its staff expanded rapidly. The first class, consisting of 23 officers and 184 men, reported to the "Armed Guard Center Atlantic," South Brooklyn, N.Y. just as the Neutrality Act was being repealed on 17 November 1941, allowing guns to be placed on merchant ships to protect them from attack by an enemy. This base was dedicated on 15 October 1941. The site was at the 2001 Building.

Training was constantly improved and the Little Creek School played a major part in producing a fine curriculum which finally emerged by the latter part of 1943 and was a great help to the other Armed Guard schools. In the early days of the Armed Guard, emphasis was placed on "onboard" ship training. The trainees spent one week out of their 4 week training onboard a training ship. This time was finally reduced to a 36 hour period. The original training ships were the U.S.S. **DUBUQUE**, the U.S.S. **PADUCAH**, and for a time, the U.S.S. **EAGLE 19**. The U.S.C.G. **MONOMOY**, U.S.C.G. **MENEMSHA**, and the U.S.C.G. **MARITA** were later assigned. The ships were fitted with the same type guns being installed on the merchant ships and students were given actual experience in firing these guns that they would later use onboard the ships assigned to them. For a brief period, the operating area was outside the Virginia capes, but a firing area was soon established inside the Chesapeake Bay near Tangier Island. For a long time, the old **SAN MARCOS** wreck was used as a target. Eventually, target practice of towed sleeves and towed surface vessels was provided.

The history of the Little Creek School was one of constant expansion. By the end of 1942, the physical limitations of the base had been reached and school began to overflow to the Naval Operating Base (NOB), Norfolk. By the end of 1942, a quest for a suitable site on which to build a new school to take care of 4,000 men in one given period was underway, and it was not until 10 March 1943 that the Camp Shelton site was approved. The new school was located southeast of Lake Bradford with Camp Bradford to the westward. Actual construction of the new plant did not begin until May 1943 and opened 1 September 1943. Construction continued after that date on many buildings. By the end of World War II, the school consisted of 90 buildings, occupying 120 acres. The concrete drill field alone covered almost 7 acres. The visual training hall had a capacity of 1,800, while the "messhalls" could feed 4,000 men at one time. In a short time, the Navy had built a small modern city out of a forest and filled it with Armed Guard Personnel. This was a long way from one building at the Section Base at Little Creek with a gun shed out back.

The Armed Guard School at Little Creek, later Camp Shelton, where facilities were moved in September of 1943, trained 538 classes of officers and men for a total of 72,278 personnel. These figures include 164 classes of enlisted men in basic training for a total of 52,331; 154 classes in 5"/38 maintenance for a total of 2,945 gunner's mates; and 187 classes of officers for a total of 4,198. When training ended on 11 August 1945 and the school was converted into a Separation Center, 2,046 enlisted men and 186 officers were in the training process.

Officers were eventually sent to Little Creek for 1 month training and then sent to sea. Men who had made 2 or more trips were brought in for refresher courses. It was important to give these men additional training and a period of rest before sending them to the Pacific. These experienced Armed Guard veterans of the Atlantic were counted upon very heavily in the tough fighting which was anticipated in the invasion of Japan. They were given an additional week of plane recognition in late 1944 and early 1945 to familiarize themselves with the different type of planes than they had previously learned to identify. They were also given 27 hours of synthetic training. Everyone was sent to Dam Neck, Virginia for actual firing of the 2mm, 3"/50 and 5"/38 guns. Other classes consisted of gun loading, servicing of the guns, attack films, small stores, range estimator, sighting and many more. Instructors from New Orleans (NOLA) and Treasure Island came to observe the training courses.

After the Armed Guard were moved from their Little Creek Base over to Camp Shelton, one important contribution to the war effort was the housing and feeding of some 2,000 Amphibious Forces which had taken over Little Creek. A lot of British, Netherland, Norwegian and French crews and over 1,000 Army men received gunnery training from the Armed Guard schools during the war.

According to records at the Navy Archives, the Naval Reserve Armory at 52nd Street and 1st Avenue, South Brooklyn, N.Y. was commissioned on 20 May 1941 as a Navy Recruiting Station. It was used to accommodate the crews of the British vessels undergoing repairs in local shipyards. On 18 November 1941, the first Armed Guard officers and men arrived from Little Creek, Virginia — for, on 10 November 1941, the Receiving Station had been designated by Bureau of the Navy as the **Armed Guard Center for the Atlantic Coast**. The Center was placed under the direct command of the officer assigned to command the Receiving Station and was operated under the Command of Com 3. The Commanding Officer was William J. Coakley. The Center was operated around the clock all through the war and had reached its peak on 1 November 1944 with 59,062 men attached there. It could house 6,000 men.

Armed Guard School at San Diego, California, under the command of F.P. Brewer was established prior to the outbreak of hostilities and even before the repeal of the Neutrality Act. It was part of the Destroyer Base and was somewhat limited in space and facilities. It trained 1,273 officers and 16,931 men and was disestablished on 27 January 1945. Most of the men trained were assigned to merchant ships through the Armed Guard Center at Treasure Island. Training ships were the destroyers available briefly for such duty, but eventually the U.S.S. **SACRAMENTO** was assigned as a training ship. Late in 1944, the U.S.S. **DOVER** was assigned to San Diego but was shifted to Treasure Island when the School was closed soon thereafter.

Bureau of Navy established an Armed Guard School at Chicago, Illinois on 3 March 1942. The school was located in the Naval Reserve Armory. It provided facilities for 100 officers and 800 enlisted men. The first assignment of 200 men and 25 officers arrived late in March. The four week's training was the same as that followed at Little Creek and San Diego. The U.S.S. **WILMETTE** and the U.S.S. **DOVER** were assigned as firing ships. The school continued to function and to receive the above mentioned quotas until Gulfport, Mississippi was completed and the Chicago School was closed October, 1942. The winter weather was not best suited for firing practice aboard ships.

Nevertheless, the Chicago School played an important part in filling the personnel needs of the Armed Guard during the period when men were so desperately needed and all facilities for training were not yet available elsewhere.

Plans to establish a base at Gulfport, Mississippi were being developed as early as March 1942. The school was completed about 1 September 1942. The U.S.S. **DOVER** and the U.S.S. **LASH** were originally assigned as firing ships and the U.S.C.G. **MONOMOY** and the U.S.C.G. **MARITA** also served. The school functioned effectively and its curriculum was standardized with that of Camp Shelton, Virginia. Between the opening of the base in October 1942 until its closing on 14 December 1944, Gulfport trained 2,005 officers and 32,401 men.

New Orleans Gunnery School (Algiers) was not established by BuPers until 12 December 1944 even though gunnery training had begun as early as June 1942. At NOLA, a diverse program of instruction was offered for Armed Guard who had been trained at the basic schools elsewhere, since these men had been hurriedly trained in gunnery, watch standing and aircraft recognition. Additional instruction was given to the men who were waiting to be assigned to ships, not only in guns and maintenance, but courses in maintenance and operating of gasoline and diesel generators. Every effort was given the personnel in correct loading procedures, sight-setting, pointing, and other training of all kinds as it was considered that each Armed Guard should know the duties of every member on a gun crew. Men were sent to Shell Beach for actual firing of the guns as others had at Dam Neck. The school was widely attended by men from the Fleet, the Army, the Marines, and the Coast Guard, as well as Naval Units from Great Britain, Russia, Canada, Australia, Brazil, France, Norway and Greece. A few Merchant Marines also attended. The school was finally disestablished on 4 December 1945. Lt. Comdr. E.D. Hoffman, USNR was the Commanding Officer of the Armed Guard Center (GULF).

The Seattle, Washington Armed Guard training was started very early in the war under the direction of the Port Director but was not established as a Naval Training School until 12 June 1944 and was decommissioned on 20 August 1945. Records reveal that from 1 July 1943 to the end of training, 284 officers and 9,219 men received anti-aircraft training in Seattle. The U.S.S. **TEAPA** was being used as a firing ship in the fall of 1943. Another training center was at Harbor Island Receiving Station. Some Armed Guard were sent to Manchester, Washington for fire-fighting school. Another training center was at Portland, Oregon Receiving Barracks. Pacific Beach was used as an anti-aircraft firing range.

The Armed Guard Center (PACIFIC) at Treasure Island was established by the COM 12 on 19 December 1941 in compliance with the Bureau of Navy (BuNav) directive of 15 November 1941. It was the intention of the Navy that the Center would perform the same functions as other centers, no more, no less. After a lot of bickering, in January 1942, the quarters for the Center were set up in Building N and on 30 May 1942, it was moved to its permanent location at Barracks D. On 2 June 1942, the Center was designated as a command with a commanding officers. Like other Centers, no ship was ever delayed for lack of gun crews, even though many crews were quickly trained by the Center. The peak of the Center was reached on 29 June 1945 when 46,817 officers, men and Waves were attached. Many Waves were used as gun instructors. The Commanding Officer at Treasure Island was Commander E.D. Flaherty, USNR.

The main interest of the Arming Merchant Ship Section in Operations during the early part of World War II was the Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea Theatre, for it was here the Armed Guard was engaged in a life and death struggle with the enemy. Little action was experienced in the Pacific prior to the

invasion of the Marianas and not until the invasion of the Philippine Islands did the men of the Armed Guard receive their full baptism of fire in the Pacific, as those who served in the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Mediterranean, English Channel and the convoys to Russia had faced. During the 46 month period from 1 January 1942 until 1 November 1945 when it was decommissioned as an Armed Guard Center, the Center had paid \$69,468,800 to personnel and as of 30 August 1945 the Personnel Center had men aboard 2,106 vessels for duty as gunnery, communication and transport administration.

At Treasure Island, COM 12 on 11 January 1942 had directed the establishment of an Armed Guard School and a Signal School at the center. The Armed Guard School was to include gunnery drills, small arms, gun loading, pointing, sight setting, spotting and machine gun for all the Armed Guard Crews. They started out with .30 caliber machine guns loaned by the Section Base and two 4"/50 loading machines had arrived before the Base was established. By March 1942, a training program was underway in earnest. Men were sent to Point Montara for firing practice, beginning in April 1942. The U.S.S. **DOVER** was ordered sent to Treasure Island near the end of 1944.

Many aspects of Armed Guard duties were carried out throughout the world. An Armed Guard Pool had to be established at many ports of call. The first one established was at Londonderry. The two most important pools were at Port Said and Balboa. The pools maintained three main purposes. One, they allowed rotation of men on a shuttle run. Two, they made it easy to add ships who were operating with maintenance, or reduced crews. Thirdly, they could furnish replacements to crew members removed for need of hospitalization, disciplinary action and sometimes, men killed in action.

One of the first acts of the newly created Arming Merchant Ship Section in Operation was to institute the inspection of armament on merchant ships on 31 January 1942. The Port Directors were to make the inspections and minor repairs. To carry out these directives, some officers were eventually assigned to this duty at various Port Directors Offices in ports of call. These men were helpful in correcting mistakes and keeping Arming Merchant Ships Section informed if proper work and correction had been completed.

Nothing is to be taken away or added to one Armed Guard facility over another. It was in the best interest of all to see that these ships were protected with the best armament of its day and had plenty of ammunition aboard for the men who were to use them. War material and men were transported to their Port of Calls as safely as possible against an enemy who had the weapons of destruction and the know-how to use them with no respect for human life, in a war that we were forced into by an attack on the Hawaiian port of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Air Force on 7 December 1941. The World should always remember that day and those who gave their lives.

The U.S. Armed Guard and the Merchant Marine Service did the job set before them to get the ship, men and material through enemy infested waters safely, for our fighting forces and those of our Allies. This was accomplished under the most adverse conditions of weather, strong enemy forces, and lack of adequate modern weapons in the beginning. However, with better guns, escort protection and lots of courage from freedom loving people, they did succeed in living up to their motto, which stated: **"WE AIM TO DELIVER"** — and they did.

"REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR"

PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO ARMED GUARD FROM 7 DECEMBER 1941 30 SEPTEMBER 1945:

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED	GRAND TOTAL
	-----	-----	-----
Officers, Gunnery	8,587		
Officers, Communications	803		
Petty Officers and seamen		119,811	
Radiomen and Signalmen		15,769	
	-----	-----	-----
Total	9,390	135,580	144,970
	=====	=====	=====

PERSONNEL TRANSFERRED OUT OF ARMED GUARD TO OTHER DUTY AND WAR LOSSES:

Officers, Gunnery	5,517		
Officers, Communications	379		
Petty Officers and Seamen		71,811	
Radiomen and Signalmen		8,491	
	-----	-----	
Total	5,896	80,302	86,198
	=====	=====	=====

NET ARMED GUARD PERSONNEL AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 1945:

Officers, Gunnery	3,070		
Officers, Communications	424		
Petty officers and Seamen		46,000	
Signalmen and signalmen strikers		5,854	
Radiomen and radiomen strikers		1,414	
	-----	-----	
Total	3,494	55,278	58,772

The Naval Armed Guard reached a peak of 106,661 enlisted men and 5,447 officers for a total of 112,106 on November 1944

U.S. NAVAL ARMED GUARD PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS DEAD, MISSING OR PRISONERS OF WAR FROM 7 DECEMBER 1941 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 1945.

=====	Status	Officers	Enlisted	Total
	=====	=====	=====	=====
Deaths	Enemy action	76	1,250	
	Other causes	29	328	
		-----	-----	
Total		105	1,578	1,693
Missing	Enemy Action	5	118	
	Other causes	2	2	
		---	---	
	1	7	120	127
Grand Total.....				1,810
				=====

PRISONERS OF WAR (As of 26 June 1945)	2	25	27
PRISONERS OF WAR (Prior to September 30,	1	13	14

----- COMMENDATIONS -----

The records of the Arming Merchant Ship Section indicate that the following Commendations or Awards were conferred upon the Armed Guard up to 27 June 1946:

Navy Crosses	5	
Legion of Merit Awards	2	
Silver Stars	75	
Bronze Star	54	
Navy and Marine Corps Medals	24	
Commendatory Letters from SecNav	563	
Commendatory Letters from Chief of BuPers	2,778	
Suitable Entries in Service Records	4,532	
	=====	
Total	8,033	8,033
Operation and Engagement Stars (Approx.)		36,240
Philippine Liberation Ribbons (Approx.)		9,882
Engagement Stars on Philippine Liberation Ribbons (Approx.)		4,031
		=====
Total		58,186

THE FOLLOWING NAVY VESSELS WERE NAMED FOR ARMED GUARD PERSONNEL DURING WW II:

DESTROYER ESCORTS -----

Ship		Named for	Served on
USS BORUM	(DE 790)	LT(jg) John R. Borum	S.S. BRILLIANT
USS BRENNAN	(DE-13)	Ensign John J. Brennan	S.S. OTHO
USS HERZOG	(DE-178)	LT(jg) William R. Herzog	S.S. PAN NEW YORK
USS WILLETT	(DE-354)	Ensign Kenneth M. Willett	S.S. STEPHEN HOPKINS
USS MUIR	(DE-770)	LT(jg) Kenneth H. Muir	S.S. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

DESTROYER

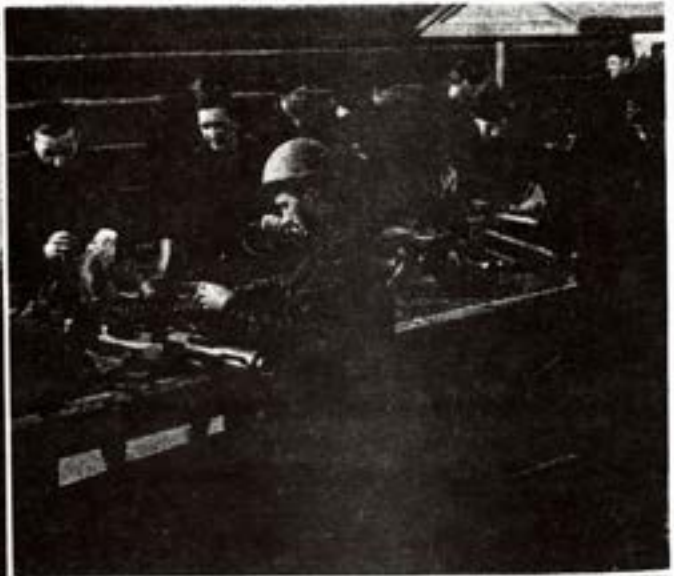
USS VESOLE (DD-878)	Ensign Kay K. Vesole	S.S. JOHN BASCOM
---------------------	----------------------	------------------

TRANSPORTS

USS WALSH	(APD-111)	Lt.(jg) Patrick J. Walsh	S.S. PATRICK J. HURLEY
USS HUNTER MARSHALL	(APD-112)	Ensign Hunter Marshall	S.S. MERRIMACK

All of the 144,970 Officers and enlisted men who served in the Armed Guard were authorized to wear one to three Area Service Ribbons. It's estimated that approximately 75 per cent of the Armed Guard earned two Service Ribbons and many were authorized to wear all three.

Training for Defense





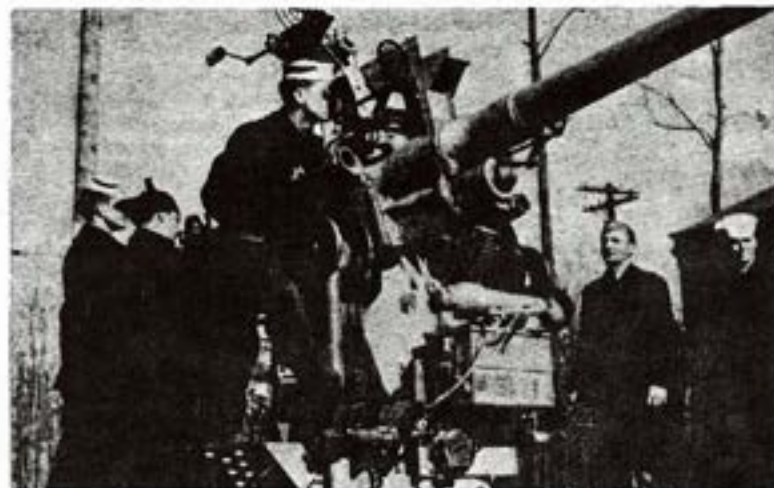
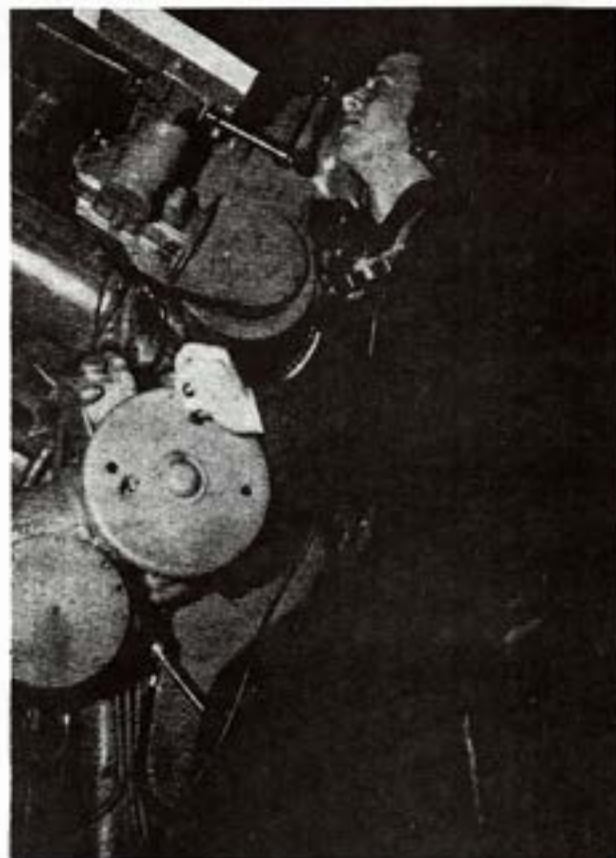
U.S.S. PADUCAH



U.S.S. DUBUQUE



U.S.C.G. MENEMSHA



Worth repeating

"We live in an age of nuclear giants and spiritual dwarfs."

Omar Bradley

The Gator

Volume 50, No. 22
November 1, 1991



Ralph & Helen Jacobs of Lafayette, Indiana remember war days during the ceremony. Ralph proudly displays his 50th Anniversary cap.



Retired Brigadier General Robert D. Floyd, South Carolina State Guard, shares some of his WWII experiences with guests.

Armed Guard vets relive days of old, honor fallen shipmates

Story and photos
by OS2(SW) Alan Kincer

October 15 marked the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard Training Center, which operated out of Camp Shelton, and what is now the west end of Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek. A memorial service to commemorate the event was held to pay homage to those who served and remember those who had fallen in both the line of duty and since then. About 300 veterans and their spouses attended the service, which was held in the courtyard in front of Amphibious Group Two headquarters. Captain James B. Cook, II, Commanding Officer NavPhiBase, opened the ceremony highlighting the role the guard played during its heyday.

"World War II could not have been fought and could not have been won without the merchant ships delivering troops and equipment. In the process of getting desperately needed supplies to their destinations, many lost their lives. We honor all who trained here and all

members of the Armed Guard, and recognize the sacrifices they made. Looking back at this branch of the Navy that contributed so greatly to the war effort, all I can say is, the Armed Guard delivered," Cook said.

Following recollections of experiences by various former members of the Armed Guard, Ralph Womel-

dorf, co-chairman of the event, and Charles Lloyd, presented Commander Paul Kessler, Jr., Commanding Officer of USS Saginaw (LST 1188), with a wreath honoring Armed Guard gunners who were lost when merchant ships were sunk for commitment to the sea. Fellow veteran Bernard Wilkinson, who was also scheduled to present the wreath, received a special tribute. He died of a heart attack the day before the event.

On April 15, 1941, the first officer and enlisted personnel were ordered to the camp to train in gunnery exercises. The mission of the guard was very specific—to man the guns of merchant ships during World War II. The guard was comprised of officers, gunners, signalmen,

radiomen, medics, and Women Appointed for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES). A total of 144,970 personnel served on 6,236 ships, 710 of which were sunk during the war, resulting in the loss of 1,810 guardsmen who were killed in action. Twenty-seven Armed Guard prisoners of war were taken, 14 surviving the ordeal.



A veteran displays the Armed Guard patch and insignia on his jacket.

*The saddest words of tongue or pen
Are "Tonight you go on watch again."*

*My breakfast lies over the ocean —
My dinner lies over the sea —
My tummy lies in such commotion,
Don't mention my supper to me.*

"USING SAILORS-U.S.N. NAVAL ARMED GUARD" by Justin Gietcheuf can be purchased by sending CHECK or MONEY ORDER for \$20.00 to, and made out to: "USNAV WW II VETERANS" 5712 Partridge Lane, Raleigh, N.C. 27609. On the check or "FOR" please write in "DONATION: USING SAILOR". We have these books on consignment and any donation over our actual costs, will go towards postage. Books delivered is now over \$500. These books can also be purchased at the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN and local book stores. We'll send them out as fast as you order and we can get them, so allow a few days, please.

Books you may want to buy; or borrow from the library:

01. "SHIPS OF THE ESSO FLEET" by Standard Oil 1946
02. "THE RUSSIAN CONVOYS" (paper back) by B.S. Schofield 1947
03. "AMERICAN DEARIES OF WW II" by Donald Vining
04. "THE DESTRUCTION OF PG-17" by David Irving
05. "THE LIBERTY SHIPS" by L.A. Sawyer (from 3 ships)
06. "LARGE SLOW TARGET" (LST) by Melvin D Berger-Taylor Publishing Co.
07. "P.T. BOATS" KNIGHTS OF THE SEA by Taylor Publishing Co.
08. "DESTROYER ESCORT SAILORS ASSOCIATION" by Turner Publishing Co.
09. "D-SOS" by Daniel V. Gallery
10. "MERCHANTMAN OR SHIP AT WAR" by Charles Dana Gibson.
11. "THE ONLY DOCKLING" by John Corley Bunker
12. "GUNNERY'S GET GLORY" by LT. Bob Berry and Lloyd Wendt

13. "THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC" by John Costello
14. "A NORTHERN SAGA" by Steve Lawrence
15. "THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC" by Samuel E. Morison
16. "THE ATLANTIC WAR REMEMBERED" by JOHN T. MASON (\$20.00)
*Call 800-233-8764 for Price list in case you care to buy.
17. "THE ATLANTIC CAMPAIGN" by Dan van der Vat
18. "A CARELESS WORD-A NEEDLESS SINKING" by Capt. Art Moore RFD 1
Box 210, Hallowell, Maine 04347 (207)623-9165. \$59.75 plus
\$4.00 postage. It is highly recommended listing 757 sunken
and damaged ships; where & when.
19. "DIVE INTO HISTORY-U-BOATS" by Henry Keats and George Parr
20. "TROOPSHIPS OF WORLD WAR II" by Roland W. Charles.
21. "THE FIGHTING LIBERTY SHIP" by Armed Guard-A.A. HOEHLING. Order
from KENT STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, Kent, Oh. 44242 (\$24.00)
*I will up-date this list soon. Sorry if yours was left out.
NAVAL INSTITUTE PRESS 2082 Generals Highway, Annapolis, Md. 21401
800-233-8764 has many WW II books they may be of interest to
you or your friends. Peter Gookin, Sales Rep. says for you to
call for a listing. Tell them-Armed Guard.
"SEA CLASSICS" 7950 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Ca. 91304-9900
has a wonderful magazine. Story on RUSSIAN MEDAL Dec.1991 issue.
"MILITARY" magazine 2122 26th Street, Sacramento, Ca. 95818.

9-Foot Sampson Sailor to Reign At Park

When the old Sampson Salts return to the site of their boot camp on Seneca Lake this September, they'll be greeted by an heroic statue of one of their own . . . and thus unfolds the Saga of the Sampson Sailor.

It all began last September when Ray Taylor of Media, Pa., a member of the Sampson WW-2 Navy Veterans, Inc., observed that a statue of a sailor by a noted sculptor Felix DeWeldon was available at the DeWeldon estate in Newport, R.I., and suggested that it would make a nice addition to the former Sampson Naval Training Station.

Member Norman Humphreys of Rhode Island met with the sculptor, whose 1500 commissioned works read like a Who's Who of World Affairs — three British kings, five sitting presidents, and his most famous, the Marine Corps Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, the Iwo Jima Memorial, to name a few.

Humphreys inspected the statue and reported it in excellent condition to Sampson Vets' President Captain Leonard Zavada and Pennsylvania State Director Dominick Cerra. He explained that the statute had been commissioned and erected in the City of Newport for \$200,000 by the Navy League, but that the League had been successful in raising only half the money, so after four years, DeWeldon had reclaimed it and had placed on his grounds.

Humphreys said it could be had for \$25,000.

The project was put on hold lest it interfere with the Sampson Brig restoration project, but when funds were gathered sufficient to begin a limited brig restoration, New York State Director Stephen Bull of Seneca Falls, in charge of special

projects, suggested that President William R. Russell of Corryton, Tenn., check with Finger Lakes Parks Commissioner Andrew Mazzella on the status of asbestos removal at the brig.

When Mazzella reported that the project had been dropped from the budget this year because of the state's fiscal problems, Bull suggested that the membership should have some form of memorial at Sampson in time for this year's reunion, or at the very latest, at the fifth reunion, which will be Sampson's 50th anniversary.

Russell concurred and Bull set out to pursue the statue possibility. From Zavada he received all the files on the statue in February.

"After several conferences with the sculptor," Bull said, "I was able to get the price down to \$12,000 for our organization," and the executive board unanimously gave its go-ahead.

However, since Sampson is a state park, it was necessary to submit full information to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and on April 24, approval came down from the Finger Lakes Parks Commission "to put our Sailor in Sampson State Park." The Commission also agreed to install a concrete pad for the base of the statue, which will be a four-foot pedestal being funded to the tune of \$2,000 by the Geneva American Legion.

So on April 30 Bull rented a truck with the help of a \$200 donation by member Richard Trombley of Trombley Tire, Inc., and drove 400 miles to Rhode Island, where R.I. State Director Charles Abrams and his wife, Estelle, directed him "Through the maze of streets of Newport," and to the DeWeldon estate.

Zavada and Cerra met him there, and helped load the statue onto the truck, and

Bull turned around and drove back to Sampson, where the park staff helped him unload the statue and move it into an old Navy Storage building.

There it awaits installation in the general vicinity of the flagpole in time for its dedication at the September reunion, complete with an appearance of sculptor DeWeldon.

The statue, nine feet tall, towering 15 feet with pad, pedestal and upraised arm, so impressed state park officials that their



USN National Armed Guard Museum



5"38 brass powder casings, 4"50 brass shell casings, 3"50 brass shell casings, various dummy, practice ammunition.



Souvenir cabinet displaying: WW-II Armed Guard memorabilia. Recognition books, pillow case, 20mm samples, water pitcher, watchpone, etc.



Sailor "host." Background: 20mm, ship's radio, and American flags.



(L) Large blow-ups of the S.S. John W. Brown's WW-II gun crew. (R) Gun crew servicing on 5"51 gun. Foreground, detail of 20mm.



A. G. Jim Capley and A. G. Joe Colgan, two of the six founders of the USN National Armed Guard Museum in front of the Armed Guard eagle. Painting of eagle by George Strakes.



Ship's Radio

Long view of the National Armed Guard Museum, showing ship's binnacle. A ten-structure display will soon be added into the center area to accommodate the huge amount of memorabilia that continues to pour in.



Gun crew quarters, showing memorial table.

Souvenir cabinet displaying: Manuals, plane fragments, ship fragments, WW-II invasion money, Liberty ship's shipyard I.D. plate, flower and bullet clip from S.S. Blackpoint memorial, etc.



THE ARMED GUARD AFLOAT

HONORING THE ARMED GUARD

They called them the "VIGILANTES OF THE SEA LANES." They were the Sailors of the "ARMED GUARD", men of the United States of America's Navy who stood at virtually the lone defense against those deadly "U-BOAT" attacks against the merchant shipping in the early days of WW I and WW II.

Ranging, NORTH, SOUTH, EAST and WEST; to remote "whistle stops" that were unknown to even seasoned mariners, the men of the ARMED GUARD went to work at a time when no insurance men would have taken even a FOOL'S WAGER on their life's expectancy. They started as a small crew and they didn't have much training but they soon learned.....the hard way, to NEVER VOLUNTEER.

They put to sea in ancient ships, ships armed with ancient guns. They fought back against submarines so contemptuous of the men of our Navy that they surfaced for the attack in broad daylight. They sailed when they knew that long black shadows were waiting for them, waiting beneath the waters outside of New York, Baltimore, Wilmington, waiting along the East and West Coast of the States, to the mouth of the Mississippi River, to the Panama Canal, the Islands of the Caribbean and the waters off of North and South America,

Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and all the other country's seaports and all the way home through the same waters.

But they sailed. And they died. Both ARMED GUARD and the MERCHANT MARINES died together like seamen, on an old rusty freighter, smashed and jarred apart by an exploding torpedo, or on a tanker, set aflame from bow to the stern. Some lived to tell of the horrors, of long ordeals of being in the lifeboats together, some with broken limbs, some with severe burns. Many starving to death, on the lonely sea, which contained plenty of food. They died of thirst, sailing on water which was too salty to drink. They froze to death. They also suffered agonizing pain. They prayed. They had hope of rescue that sometimes never came. But they had hope, and many survived and volunteered to face the enemy again for they had a job that had to be done. This was "ALLOUT WAR".

The ships were lost. Their vital war cargo were lost. Those were the things that troubled a Nation's mind back in those early war days. But men still died in obscurity and loneliness. Then something began to happen. The guns were improved. Gun crews were better trained and larger in numbers and they were in a position to talk back to their enemies in a language they understood and began to respect, to SHOOT BACK and TO KILL!! The life expectancy of an ARMED GUARD and the MERCHANT SEAMEN was now something more than wishful thinking. Now the subs could no longer surface for the attack.

maybe the ARMED GUARD was not the fanciest outfit in this world but you find another group of salesmen, farmers, teachers, newspapermen, and lawyers that knocked off as many enemy U-Boats and planes!! Heros and heroic acts were many. Take the story of the S.S. STEPHEN HOPKINS, a "LIBERTY SHIP". On September 27, 1942, she sank an armed German Raider and probably damaged another. This was all the more remarkable when one takes into consideration that her only armament was one 4-inch cannon and a 37-mm gun. The HOPKINS was quickly riddled by the superior gun firepower but her ARMED GUARD crew stuck to their guns until all the ammunition was exhausted and the magazine was finally hit. The ARMED GUARD officer, Ensign Kenneth H. Willet was last seen trying to launch the life rafts. Five of the crew survived. They survived after a 31 day voyage in an open lifeboat to Brazil.

Casualty rates varied throughout the war. For many weeks, the Survivor's Section at the Armed Guard Center at 1st Ave and 52nd St. in Brooklyn, New York would have no business at all. But after a long lull, survivors began to stream back through the Center. By June of 1942, 810 officers and men of the ARMED GUARD had been reported killed or missing. This number is better appreciated when it is taken into consideration that an average ARMED GUARD UNIT was 25 in number and more were surviving than being killed.

On the asset side, it wasn't long before the ARMED GUARD got into full swing and more and more merchant ships were returning with swastikas and Rising Suns on the gun tubs and ship funnels. And more and more of the crew members were being decorated for heroism. The ARMED GUARD saw many thousand of men safely overseas and wounded back to the States as the war progressed and they were the sailors who also manned the guns on Army and Navy Transports as they relieved the Army gunners who were placed onboard early in the war before the Navy gunners could be trained and the need was for anyone with any gunnery training at all was needed, immediately.

They saved numerous troop transports and the lives of untold number of soldiers, civilian personnel and the merchant crew who handled the ship and cargo by fighting off planes, subs and E-Boats. This was particularly true during the great invasion operations of the war as the ARMED GUARD and MERCHANT SEAMEN took part in every invasion that was carried out. And it was not only our "FLAG SHIPS" the ARMED GUARD protected. They manned the guns and sailed on all flags from most all foreign countries. Their menu was anything from "Bird's Nest Soup" to ravioli and world famous "S.O.S." for breakfast.

The ARMED GUARD gunners were trained to depend on local gun control at each gun station with a battlephone circuit to the bridge. Nevertheless, the good eyesight, which was one of the qualifications and stiff gun training more than made up for what was lacking in the scientific equipment. In the beginning, the ARMED GUARDSMEN from Little Creek, Virginia were rushed off to do battle against a well trained enemy with more modern equipment who were out to sink ships and stop the flow of war supplies overseas. But more Armed Guard Schools began springing up in Chicago, Seattle, San Diego, San Francisco, New Orleans, Gulfport, Brooklyn and other places too numerous to mention.

The instructors soon became battle tested men who had seen action and could instruct the new recruits what to expect and how to overcome the enemy. They gave instruction on plane recognition, both ENEMY and ALLIES. They also gave instruction on survival, what to do and what to expect. Many men owe these instructors a great debt of credit for their survival of many days at sea with little or no food or water on hand. Instructors were introduced to their class as, "Meet Smith, -he came back."

The ARMED GUARD, as a selfcontained and independent Navy Unit, was a natural for fostering of esprit de corps. The ARMED GUARDER became very proud of his duty and Unit as those of another "SILENT SERVICE", the U.S. Navy Submarine Crew. Even when the ARMED GUARD had the upper hand in the war against U-Boats and enemy planes, their duty was still one of great danger due to the fact the ships carried hazardous material, such as: ammunition, flammable gas, poisonous gases, and the atom bomb.

The ever-present danger of accidents or collisions was as much a threat as getting hit by enemy action in the later part of the war. Many men were lost in these shipwrecks and fires. One merchant ship ran aground within yards to the coast and was pounded to pieces before help could arrive. Only two gunners

survived that disaster. A Liberty Ship broke into during a bad storm in the North Atlantic. The entire crew huddled in the stern section for more than 36 hours before a Corvette could get a rescue line to them. The story had a happy ending, all were saved. Many ships and crew would not be so lucky.

Just because your ship made it safe into port was no sign you were safe and out of danger from the enemy. Ask those who was at Anzio, Oran, Bari, Naples, Suez, Murmansk, Archangel, London, Liverpool, South Hampton, Antwerp, Ghent, Okinawa, Guam, the Phillipines with the "ONEWAY" planes of the Kamakazi, or any place they had to unload, or load their deadly cargo. Another worth mentioning is Port Chicago, California as the S.S. E.A. BRYAN and the S.S. QUINCY VICTORY loaded ammunition on July 17, 1944, both ship disintegrated and vaporized when they blew up, killing crews from both ships, except those few who had gone on Liberty. Many civilians were killed and injured and the town was demolished.

It was not always combat that kept you on edge. It was the constant watching, waiting, searching at the lookouts for the unexpected enemy to send a torpedo through the hull of the ship, into those explosives or flammable gasoline onboard. Place yourself in the shoes of a MERCHANT SEAMAN in the engine room of a ship as he walked along the shaft, greasing the fittings that keeps the ship going and a depth charge, or an aerial bomb hits and explodes nearby as you pray to see daylight just once more. These are the men who gained a VETERAN'S STATUS, 45 years after the war. The men of the UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE SERVICE, the shipmates of the U.S. NAVAL ARMED GUARD.

out the tension and fear soon disappeared as if by magic when the word of Japan's surrender was flashed to the hundreds of men of American and Allied Seamen who were still at sea. These men were not at home to take part in the celebration of the Victory over those who had tried to kill them just hours before. Most of the celebration was done by those who never knew what war was about. But their hearts were home with their loved ones and they celebrated in their own way by thanking their Maker for letting them survive such an ordeal to see daylight again.

It wasn't long before the guns were removed from these ships which had served their purpose. The ARMED GUARD officers, gunners, signalmen, radiomen were also taken off and many sent home to be discharged. Many ARMED GUARD without enough points for discharge were sent to the Pacific Theatre to relieve the Fleet Navy Men so they could go home. A lot of the ARMED GUARD who were transferred to Fleet duty had just had his baptism of enemy fire from the Kamakazi and saw his shipmates killed and wanted to go home but was transferred to stay for a duty he had not volunteered to do. The Armed Guard had lost 1810 of the 144,970 men who had volunteered to serve to protect the war material and troops to their ports of call. They had deserved to go home THEN, even if they were in the ARMED GUARD only one day. Some officers who had been transferred into the Fleet after serving in the ARMED GUARD, sent those ARMED GUARD who had been assigned to his ship back home as soon as possible. He knew what the ARMED GUARD UNIT had endured from day one.

Many of the Merchant Seamen received a raw deal for many had volunteered for the Merchant Marines under age and was accepted and had served two or more years when the war ended and became of draft age near the war's end. They wanted to go home when the war was over but was threatened to be drafted if they went back into civilian life and many were. They were fussed at and ridiculed for wanting to go home, as the merchant and troopships had to be manned with their skill. We were now at PEACE and they thought they were treated unfair. Time told the story.

The ARMED GUARD left their all important job, content with the knowledge they had made it possible for democracy's weapons to reach the points on the globe where they were needed most and they had protected the lives around them to the best of their ability. Their survival can be credited to their instructors, their fellow shipmates, THE MERCHANT SEAMEN, the escorts; including the submarine service and the pilots from the "BABY FLATTOPS", the farmers who supplied all the food, the factory worker, all the mothers and fathers, families of American and ALLIES working together for the cause of FREEDOM. They returned to place whence they came; the farm, factories, law practices, teaching, sales and profession of their choice. The ARMED GUARD was again disbanded as it was after World War One. Their duty had been performed.

Revised by calloyd 11/9/91

Murmansk!



British Sailor off the HMS London and his Soviet counterpart at the Memorial Statue at Murmansk, Russia.



Bill Ryan says poster states that "No picture taking allowed." "No one said a word to him" he states, "and the cold war is over."



Memorial Plaque in both English and Russian language.



Bill Ryan making a speech on behalf of the American Veterans of World War II who delivered supplies. Seated: Richard D. Squires, Sec., North Russia Club; Admiral V. V. Mikhailin, Soviet War Veterans Chairman; Alexander Korovin, Deputy Chairman, Murmansk Reg. Soviet.



Memorial dedicated 29 August 1991, Murmansk, Russia.



Juri A. Guskov, Chairman of Arkhangelsk Regional Soviet of People's Deputies presents Bill Ryan of Florida with a Soviet Commemorative Medal on September 2, 1991.

Cruise on the Kola Inlet, Murmansk, with the Soviet Navy Yard.



Captain Victor and Marge Chamberlain, Sandusky, Ohio dances a polka in Murmansk, Russia. They state that the people were wonderful and made them welcome. Doug Septon, ARMED GUARD from Canada also attended the ceremony.

November 4, 1993

Enclosed find some papers that I thought you might want to put into the museum or in the Armed Guard quarters of the BROWN.

The crew pass was issued to us when we went ashore in New York. The SUMTER was my first ship, which I picked up in Philadelphia. We steamed to Little Creek to take on ammo for the guns, then to Charleston, where we took on a cargo of high explosives. From there, we went to New York to load hold and deck cargo. That was when I got the enclosed pass.

The other two items are my copy of the custody receipt for an Aldis Lamp and spare battery that I picked up at Gitzmo, where I was assigned to the MACABE. I kept the gear until I got back to New York, via several other ships, and turned it in there. We poor skivvie wasters always had to check out equipment, including Aldis Lamps, blinker tubes with rifle stocks attached, International signal flags and semaphore flags, and, when assigned to the Commodore's staff, TB5 sets. The enclosed are the only receipts that I still had lying around and figured you could make good use of them. If not, send 'em back and I'll turn them back into the footlocker where they've been the last 45-50 years.

In addition to these items, I also have my old flat hat that rode in the bottom of my seabag in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters and went with me on many a wintry liberty. I would offer these also, but have already committed to enshrine them in the Armed Guard quarters of the LANT VICTORY in San Pedro, California. But, I didn't include these papers, since they properly belong on the Atlantic side, since that's where they originated.

My warmest regards to you and yours and especially Lonnie

Sincerely,

P.S. Chuck wanted to help with mailing, etc.

Season's Greetings



Section Base, Little Creek, Va.

1941

P. B. 1124 2056 P-40

ISTHMIAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY

CREW PASS

CREW PASS
S.S. Thomas Smith Port New York
Pass Paul B. Kincade
Position 2/3/71

Carrying _____
Good only on 1-15 1942

Signed James W Deatlie
Master

THIS PAGE TO BE TAKEN UP BY WATCHMAN

November 2, 1942

This is to certify that The Armed Guard Materiel Office, Port Director, Third Naval District, has received the following equipment from the MACABI. Paul B. Kincaide SMS/c

1. One set multi-purpose signal kit and spare part kit
2. Extra battery for signal kit, one.

Returned by

Received by Mr. Parsons
W. E. Parsons,
ENS. USNR

B. and A. Form 1998

CUSTODY RECEIPT-TITLE "X"

W. E. B. Masabi
Oct. 6, 1943

Received from the Supply Officer of this vessel the following items of supplies for which I hold myself accountable. I will furnish the Supply Officer on the last day of each month a list showing the quantity of each item then on hand, the difference between the receipt and inventory to be charged to the allotment of this detachment. A receipt of this receipt has been returned for my files.

From F. R. Director Stock

Paul B. Kincaid ^{SMV}
U. S. N.

Glas. Buy. Cols			Head of Department	
STOCK NO.	QUANTITY	UNIT	ARTICLE	
One	1	pc	Signal-Turn-on Signal-Wire and S. Bra. Part Kit	
One	1	pc	Wire Battery for Signal Kit.	
			Date Posted:-	Approved By:- Port Director

Wishing You

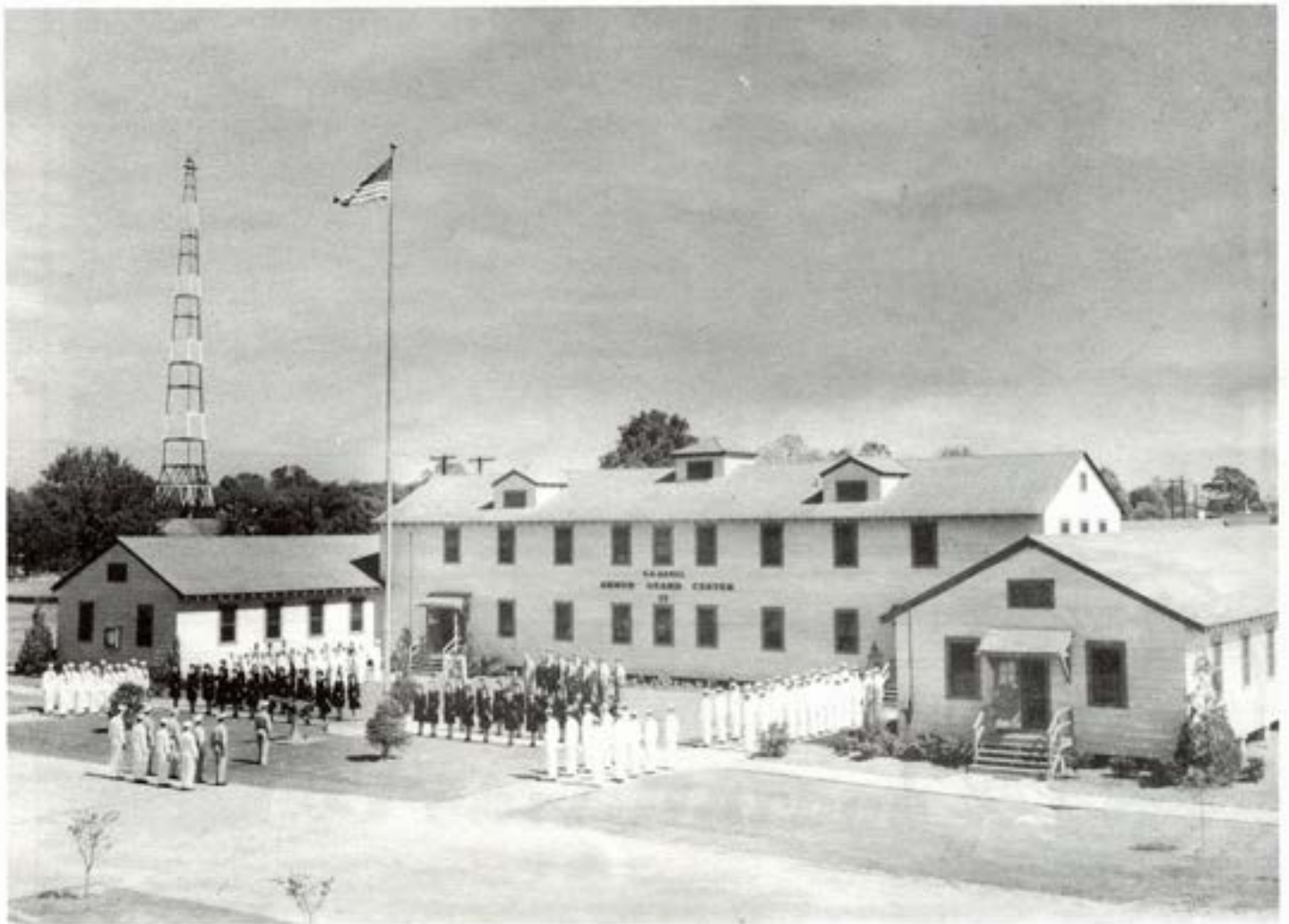
A Very Merry Christmas

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A Happy New Year



WAVES at NOLA marching from the barracks for inspection and flag raising.



Flag raising ceremony at NOLA.



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 WWII VETERANS "11th" NATIONAL REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE "CLARION HOTEL" 1500 CANAL ST., NEW ORLEANS, LA 70112 TELEPHONE 504-522-4500, FAX 525-2644, 1-800-824-3359 ON MAY 27-30, 1992. THE HOSTS WILL BE: ELMER H. AND DORIS VINCENT, 20181 CHANDELER ST., COVINGTON, LA 70433, 1-504-892-7537. MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY. PLEASE TELL THEM YOU ARE AN ARMED GUARD VETERAN TO AVOID CONFUSION. YOU EARNED THIS LIBERTY! TAKE IT!



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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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Remember Pearl Harbor!
December 7, 1941



Support The USN Armed Guard
WW II Veterans Reunions
NOVEMBER, 1991