

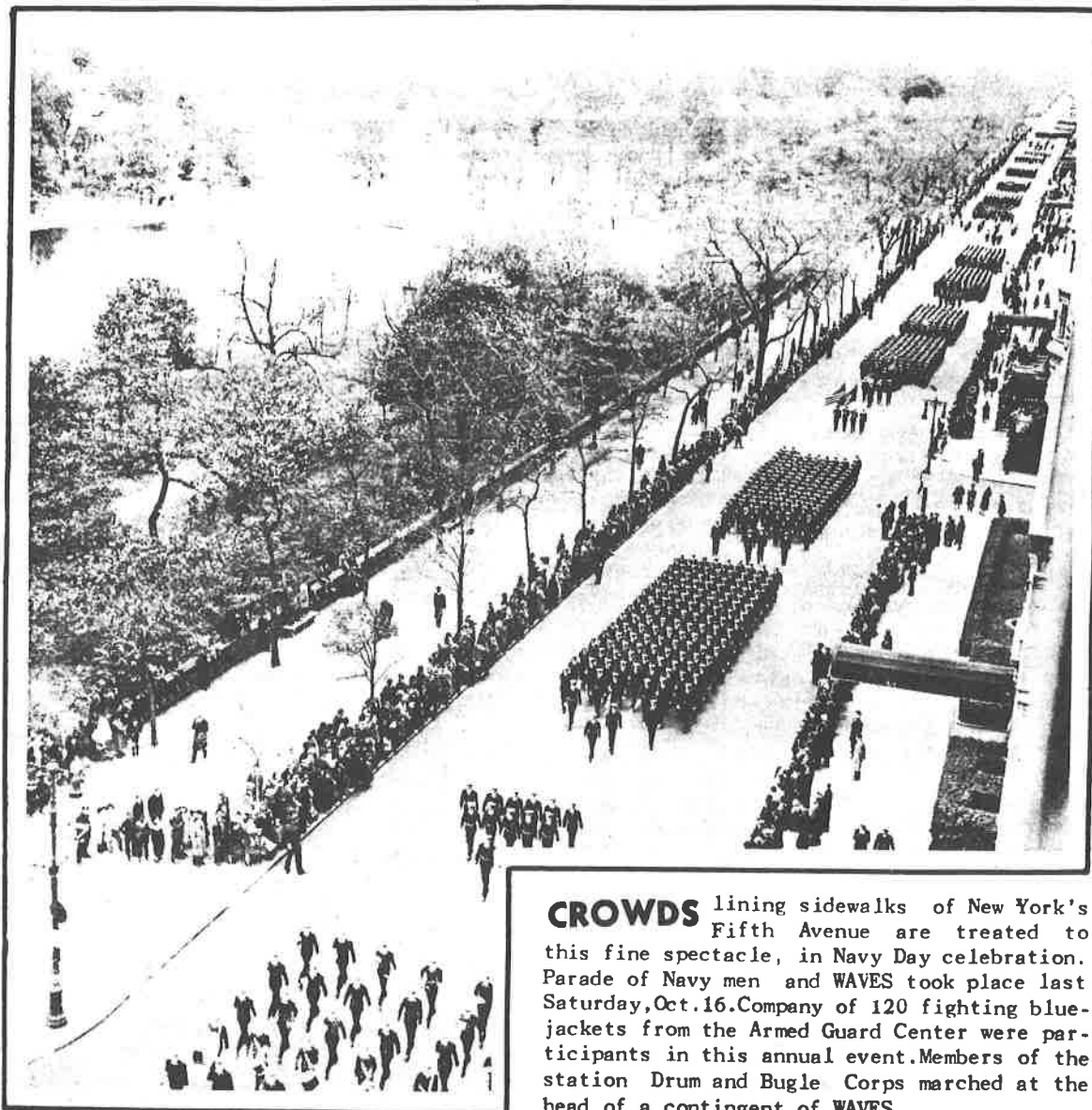
SEPTEMBER 17, 1991

THE INTER

U.S. Navy Armed Guard WWII Veterans - 50th Anniversary
October 15, 1991 — Holiday Inn Waterside — Norfolk, Virginia

AGC HAILS NAVY DAY

See pages 3 and 5



CROWDS lining sidewalks of New York's Fifth Avenue are treated to this fine spectacle, in Navy Day celebration. Parade of Navy men and WAVES took place last Saturday, Oct. 16. Company of 120 fighting blue-jackets from the Armed Guard Center were participants in this annual event. Members of the station Drum and Bugle Corps marched at the head of a contingent of WAVES.



(Reprinted from "The Pointer," October 27, 1943.)

THE POINTER

Officers for 1990

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

Elmer and Doris Vincent
1992 Reunion Hosts
20181 Chandeler Street
Covington, LA 70433
1-504-892-7537

Lonnie D. Lloyd, Treasurer

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Lyle Kell	WA
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ATTENTION

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

Non-Profit Organization
Tax Exempt No. 74-2316668

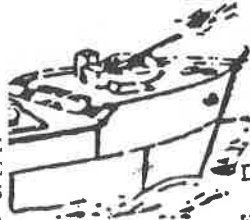
AND

THE PLANE SHOOTER

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

USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans

"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"



Dear "ALL Y"ALL",

September 22, 1991

With most of a hot summer behind us, we look forward to the colors of the leaves to paint the woodlands and we can start complaining about raking those beautiful leaves to the street for pickup service. Seems as if I had just stopped! Now, we can start looking to higher heating bills! It is one cycle after another but isn't it great to be here to complain!! At least, we don't have a war going on.

Hilda and I just returned from the Pittsburgh, Pa. NE Regional Reunion and it was great! Except "NO GRITS"!!! Wish we could attend all those planned but it's impossible. The Armed Guard, ladies and guests took a cruise by Three Rivers Stadium and the scenery was fantastic. Nighttime was really beautiful from the mountain across the rivers at night. The highlight, besides being with the crew, was our tour to the " SOLDIERS MEMORIAL BUILDING" and plans are now being made to establish a section on the ARMED GUARD and the MERCHANT SEAMEN in the Museum.

Joseph Lafferty, our WW I Armed Guard suffered a stroke two days after he returned from the Baltimore National Reunion. My last reports was that he was improving and can now talk and has begun to walk some. We wish him a speedy recovery so he can join us in New Orleans. A "Get Well" card can be sent to: 374 San Jose Ave, San Francisco, Ca. 94110.

"CORRECTIONS FROM LAST POINTER": R.C. Bowman's telephone number should have been-"(804)-227-3257"-Page 4 -2nd line. Also, on Page 7- the last word should have been "MAY" instead of "MAINE". I regret the error and inconvenience. Notify me if a correction should be made. I also failed to place the Obituary Notice in the June 20, 1991 POINTER so we have a lot of our shipmates listed this time. Our sympathy is extended to all the families and friends.

I will promise you fine people out WEST that I will cover the "PACIFIC THEATRE of WAR" as soon as we get through with NEW ORLEANS REUNION. We covered the West Coast prior WEST COAST Reunions. I do the best I know how. If the POINTER doesn't carry what turns you on, write a long story and I will try to enter it. It may takes some time. I have 30 pages of a story I could put in this copy but there is not enough room. It is about the Gulf Coast, through the Panama Canal, the Western Coast of South America and back to NOLA. If I could get enough stories like it, I may just look into getting a printer to put it together.

I am in hopes that I can get this "POINTER" out to you in time to encourage more to attend the "50TH ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY" in NORFOLK, Va. Oct. 13-16, 1991. You will never get this opportunity again. I regret to tell you that as of today, it does not look as if the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN will be in Norfolk for the dedication. I will do all I can to

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

get her there. The cost is approximately \$18,000. expenses for fuel, etc. plus getting free labor from the Merchant Seamen. Labor? I do not think that is a problem. The Merchant Seamen want to show all their appreciation for the Armed Guard's help in getting them recognition that they also did their duty, in WW II as an American. You may think this is a great amount to pay but it is NOW!! Or NEVER!! I will not abandon the ship, YET! I want to remind you that this IS NOT a National Reunion and that Virginia was the site for the 1985 Reunion and we don't go to Virginia again until year of 2035 with a NATIONAL.

Please use 1-804-627-5555 (Holiday Inn) in making your reservations. They will honor this rate even after the cut-off date, for as long as rooms are available.

All of you have received the June 20, 1991 "POINTER" giving the data on this 50TH CEREMONY. Refer to it and make your plans accordingly. Those of you who have never been to this area before, may want to give yourselves a couple days and visit the Mountains and Coastal Plains area of the Eastern Seaboard States. For the late Ol'Salts, we welcome you to be with us. You will never regret it. This is your CEREMONY! YOU EARNED IT! Do not wait for the 100TH one. We may not be here. We know you will like Williamsburg and the "McARTHUR" Museum.

STAN De FOE, 4303 OSAGE, INDEPENDENCE, Mo. 64055 1-816-373-5890 asks that if you were injured in action on a ship during WW II and did not get your Purple Heart, send him a "SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE" giving: your full name, address, "WW II SERVICE NUMBER", ship's name onboard and the date of the injury and he'll send you the ship's part of the "LOG" taken from the micro-film I sent him showing who who was injured, KIA, service number; be it you, or one of your shipmates. It is just great that he has devoted so much time by taking time from his schedule to search from this film. This is History for all of us. We know where it is, so be patient. HE CANNOT ISSUE THE PURPLE HEART! You would have to go through your local Senator's Office. I ask of you to write down De Foe's name and address for future use if needed.

Ceremony to those killed at Port Chicago, California explosion, which involved the S.S. E. A. Bryan and the S.S. Quinault Victory was held as schedule. For those joining us recently and did not know of this incident, these two ships disintegrated while being loaded with ammo on July 17, 1944. All the Armed Guard and Merchant Seamen onboard were killed. Eleven men ashore on leave survived and we are in touch with four Armed Guard and others.

Texas held a Mini-Reunion recently also and a great time was had by all. Mel and Laura Vangstad were the hosts of the NORTHWEST PASSAGE Mini- held in Yakima, Wash. and nearly 200 attended. An article was placed in the local paper and Billie Kohse informed me that 15 more saw it and those names are on the way. Some walked in off the street. Maurice Carlton reports their meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska went well and was enjoyed by all and others are beginning to meet also. This gives each of you something to do between the Nationals. Keep it up and enjoy every minute of them. Turn to the REUNION COLUMN for your area. I hope to get all the meetings in the next POINTER. The winter months are on us and Florida Crews will start back up.

I sure hope those of you who "MIGRATE" SOUTH; EAST; NORTH or WEST will inform me ahead of time if you want the "POINTER". From now on, those returned will stay here until you call for them. It costs \$.35 for each one returned and \$.52 to send it back. From this mailout, I will delete the Widows of all known deceased shipmates unless I have been notified in the past or I am notified before the next mailing of the "POINTER". You may also be incapacitated as far as I know. Please understand. One exception to the rule is if the shipmate had donated in the last 3 years and that can be distinguished by a marking behind the last name on the mailing label. A dot (.) signifies donated in '89; a backslash (/) in '90 and numeral (1) in '91. I hope to have it updated to include the raffle ticket contributors.

I would like to express my appreciation for your continued donations to keep the "ARMED GUARD SHIP AFLOAT". Many have found out about our organization since the last "POINTER" and we're happy to have them onboard. The list is over 8750 now with a solid 8152 still on the mailing list. Your donations are entered and accounted for. I send out the last two "POINTERS", 1 Bumper Sticker, 2 Decals, Membership Card, 18 pages of info, copied on both sides, so they can enjoy something on the ARMED GUARD-NOW!!! I think all of you appreciate this and if you do not care to be on the mailing list, just drop me a line and let me know. Many of you have received the "POINTER" from "WORD GO", and have not donated anything. Many can not and that's where those of you who have been fortunate financially, helps pick up the slack. THANKS.

Doris and Elmer Vincent need all the early support they can get and I will advise you to make your reservations EARLY as possible. We have 680 rooms at the "CLARION HOTEL" set aside for us. With 8100 on the mailing list and we will pick up over 1000 more names by Reunion time, I would advise you to be sure you have a room. You can always cancel if you notify the Hotel 72 hours prior to your arrival time if something turns up to keep you from attending. You have to do some things YOURSELF. We do not want anyone to miss this if it's within our power to prevent. The Hotel was easy to find and you should have no problem. Some of the rooms may be just a little small but they serve the purpose. It's beautiful inside and I am sure you will fall in love with the City of New Orleans. We have another 250 room Hotel in case it's needed.

I would like to thank all of you Hosts of MINI-REUNIONS in different areas for you reach those who can not travel great distances. If you care to get a Luncheon, Breakfast or Mini-Reunions in your area together, please contact me. If by chance you did, and I failed to act, I apologize for overlooking you. All I ask of you is to NOT hold Mini-Reunions after the "2ND WEEK" in April through June. It is not right to take a-

way from the National Reunions. If you need labels, just call, or drop me a line a week or two prior to your time needed. You have Ralph Lucas and Phil Bradley's address to send for your shipmates that we have located so far. Send them a SELF-ADDRESSED-STAMPED-ENVELOPE for these. You do not have to list your ships, if you have already sent them and know they're in the computer. If you are unsure, list them and give the dates on and off of them as near as possible.

While I was at Pittsburgh, Andrew Luketick gave me a box containing 2 white and 2 Blue Uniforms; 1 night glasses; 1 ship's bell; 1 flashlight; pair of short leggings; 1 Peacoat and the FAMOUS TURTLE NECK SWEATER. I will have these in one of the Museums where needed. Also, Leo Heaney of Baltimore gave me 7 "ALL HANDS" magazines from WW II and I will send off to Stan De Foe, to be recorded for future references. I also have many "POINTERS" from the "Brooklyn Armed Guard Center", donated by Vincent Alones of Floral Park, N.Y. to record. It is just great to have someone who knows what to do and willing to do it for the crew. It's also great that these men have shared these priceless treasures of yesteryear. I hope he will be able to make books of many Volumes to tell the History of our Armed Guard Unit. I will also send to him a copy of the book of "Treasure Island; Ca. Armed Guard Center". Copies will be placed on all three of our Historical Ships for visitors. We have to leave as much as possible for the next generation and we can, starting now!!

I have been in contact with the "National Geographics Society" to carry a story on the Armed Guard. If you are a member, it may help to contact them, encouraging them to do so. I will not comment further on this as the TV from London has not contacted me since before the last "POINTER" and I will not build up my hopes, unless I know something, definitely next time, knowingly. Some have tried to reach out through ANN LANDER's Column without success. One writer wanted to know if any of our crew were a CELEBRITY, and it might help. I told him that everyone onboard was a CELEBRITY. I could have given him a few names but but I told him most have never been interested. TOO GOOD??? Beats ME???

Before I close out this letter, I would like to let all the "NEW SALTS" who have signed on who are not aware of the BY-LAWS by which we go by, you can obtain a PRINT-OUT copy by sending me a SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE. I can assure you, the BY-LAWS were drawn up only to obtain a "NON-PROFIT STATUS" for cheaper mailing postage only. I have picked the names at random in the past and I remove them at their request, or when they become deceased. I thought you should know how we operate.

Take care "Y'ALL" and stay healthy. Wish I could correspond on a "ONE-ON-ONE" basis and do try to when time permits. If I did not answer you, I hope that I cover it in the "POINTER". If you have ordered anything and have not received them, just send the date your check was sent, so I can verify and DELIVER. It is as simple as that. Had a slow delivery on the Belt Buckles and I hope all of you received them that placed an order. Use the Order Form and just write out what you want. Make Checks out to: U.S.N.ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS. The "Yearly" National Reunion books will be delivered around Thanksgiving. Any of you "NEW OL'SALTS" may want one at \$12. each. Order from: Reunion Memories, P.O.Box #161939 Altamonte Springs, FL 32716-1939 (407) 862-2311, Larry French, Photogr. If I left anything out, I'll catch it the next time. calloyd

Dear Charles:

I just received the June 20 edition of the "POINTER". As usually, it was well received. July 16th will mark my 49th year that I entered the Navy. On October 16th of that year, I boarded my first ship. Oct. 16th, I saw my first two ships torpedoed. Funny thing, I do not feel any older. However, when I shave, the bubble does something.

I just received a copy of the "LOG" for the S.S. Alcoa Pioneer, 4/43 til 8/43. One notation states that on July 4, 1943 at 1810 hrs. that the ship stopped and lowered a boat to rescue a man overboard from the S.S. Selander. At 1910: "Boat back onboard and ship doing full ahead. Rejoined Convoy at 2145 hrs." Unquote.

However, Charles, what it doesn't say is that we were carrying a full load of ammunition. The Captain took a vote from the crew as whether we should go to pick up the man or continue on with the Convoy. We all voted to pick up the man. But from this "LOG", you would never know. Thing like that, go unnoticed.

Yours, Donald J. Kelly, 3130 Buhre Ave. Apt 6J Bronx, N.Y. 10461.

Let's not let these things go unnoticed!! Write your HISTORY and send it in. I may not get it in the "POINTER" but it's History!! cal

Dear Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Lloyd, Armed Guard and the "POINTER": 6/1/91

Thank you for the "SUPER" 10TH National Reunion in Baltimore, Maryland. Being an Armed Guard Widow, I felt welcomed and like part of a family. Everyone was so nice and I really enjoyed myself. Hope to see all of you at the reunions in the future. I plan to attend the Regional one in Yakima, Wa. Sept. 1991. Bye for now!! ARMED GUARD PEOPLE ARE GREAT! Betty Jane Doble (Ex-Wave) Widow of Lejeune Doble, Armed Guard who served on the: S.S. Aquaris 43/44; and S.S. Horace Greely 12/44 2/46

Betty Jane, was great to see you and see you've signed on in Norfolk.cal

SPECIAL!! "REMEMBRANCE OF PEARL HARBOR DAY OF DECEMBER 7, 1941" SPECIAL!!

A "SPECIAL 50TH MEMORIAL SERVICE", December 7, 1991, will be held onboard the "S.S. LANE VICTORY" which has been declared an HISTORICAL SHIP and she is now docked at San Pedro, California and is in the process being restored to her World War II condition. The "HEADQUARTERS" will be at the: SHERATON-SAN PEDRO HOTEL, WORLD POINT 213-519-8200 LOS ANGELES. Now is the time for those in the area to take part and get the "FEELING" of BEING AN ARMED GUARD VETERAN!!

CONTACT:

Robert and Beth Hartzell 5441 W. 140th St., Hawthorne, Ca. 90540 213-643-7098 who will be the hosts for the gathering and will handle all monies.

CO-HOSTS are:

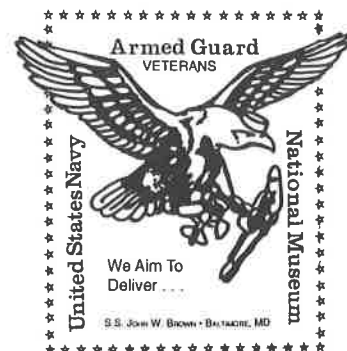
John and Marge Smith 287 No. Margaret St., Queen Valley, Az. 602-463-2235

Herb and Gloria Reusch 10614 El Este, Fountain Valley, Ca. 92708 714-963-7345.

While I am on the "LANE "V", in behalf of all the ARMED GUARD everywhere, I wish to express "THANKS" to: Joe Piccolini, 9724 Paseo De Oro, Cypress, Ca. 90630 213-598-8326 and his "ARMED GUARD DETACHMENT" for their continued work on the guns, ARMED GUARD MUSEUM on board, CHOW HALL and the sleeping quarters and they would appreciate any help possible, such as, LABOR, DONATIONS, ETC..! We hope to make MUSEUM artifacts in "TRIPLETTs" where possible for the ships S.S. JOHN W. BROWN, S.S. LANE VICTORY and S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN. THIS IS A JOINT EFFORT as we were ALL ARMED GUARD! NOT EAST COAST, NOT WEST COAST, NOT NORTH, SOUTH or CENTRAL "BUT" ARMED GUARD!! We have to coordinate team effort to accomplish and establish these 3 museums "NOW"! "TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE" They need your help, donations and paraphernalia now. CALLOYD

**IT'S YOUR
U.S.N. ARMED
GUARD MUSEUM,
MATES ...
SUPPORT IT!

THINK ...**



What will you, as part of an unsung hero group as our Armed Guard is, leave behind for your children? Yes, the Armed Guard's legacy has been written into the records; now it needs to be displayed.

Your mates from all over have been good enough to donate their prized mementos: relics, souvenirs, medals, artifacts, hats, uniforms, manuals, WW-II headlines and other exciting paraphernalia - to create, knowingly, the world's first and only Armed Guard Museum. This museum will compliment the S.S. John W. Brown's array of restored guns and gun crew quarters.

This was accomplished without (until very recently) one cent of money expended from the A.G. treasuries. Everything from wood to display cases to mannequins and paint, and more, was donated by local tradesmen, and JWB's crew. The rest, dollared to death your six museum founders.

In spite of the work that has gone into bringing this project to fruition, it is not yet complete. More sophistication is needed. Track lights, backlighted photo displays, better display cases and other equipment. We want your museum to rate with the greatest! We want all of us to be the proudest!

So PLEASE, throw a check for five or ten or twenty or more, into an envelope. The committee needs cash now to finish the job and then to maintain the facility. Again, remember, it's your posterity that's on the line!

**Kindly mail donation to: USN Armed Guard National Museum
c/o Jim Capley • 402 Webster Street • Bel Air, MD 21014**

(Approved by C.A. Lloyd)

IN MEMORY DECEASED SHIPMATES SINCE APRIL 1, 1991 "POINTER"					
Last Names	First	Middle	City	State	Wife
Balestrino	Joe	?	Altoona	Pa	?
Becker	Leo		Paul	Id	
Blaricom	Verlyn	Van	Amery	Wi	Erna
Bodetha	Edward		Stamford	Ct	Dorothy
Brady	George	F.	Alliance	Oh	?
Brevig	Rodney	?	Bend	Or	?
Bridwell	Raymond	B.	Taylor R-3	SC	?
Brown	Arthur		Red Lodge	Mt	?
Burris	William	H.	Phoenix	Az	?
Chalmers	Ronald		Seaford	NY	Muriel
Contardo	Peter		Trenton	Nj	
Conway	Paul		Creston	Ia	Gertrude
Cumiskey	Ed	C.	Spring Lake	NJ	Mae
Devane**	Earl		Katyville	NY	
Di Concilio	James	H.	Monmouth Jct.	NJ	Lorraine
Donaldson	Edward	N.	Portland	Or	Francis
Drew *	Claude	Allen	Andover	NY	608-74-56 (KIA)
Drew	Norman	C.	New Haven	In	Dorothy
Fleischman	William		E. Chicago	IL	Irene
Flint	Ralph	E.	Helrose	Me	Dorothy
Flynn	Dan	(Capt)	Corpus Christi	Tx	
Garner	Carl		Victoria	Tx	?
Garrison	Daniel	Boyd	Chester	SC	Eloise
Gorham	Eugene		Inverness	FL	Arlene
Grandy	Ernest	E	McMinnville	Tn	?
Haas	Elmer	?	North Bay	On	Helen
Heckendorn	Joseph		Arapahoe	NC	?
Hillman	Ernest	F.	Orr's Island	Me	Barbara E.
Janson	Paul	A.	Saco	Me	Pauline G.
Keim	Walter	P.	Wyomissing	Pa	Mary Jane
Kilburn	Robert	G.	Indianapolis	In	Treva
Knighten	James	H.	Hertford	NC	Olephia
Lanham +	Roy	Willis	Chester	Va	KIA on West Ivis
Long	John	R.	Tucson	Az	?
Marquez	Joel	R.	Pico Rivera	Ca	Margreta
Mauro	Joseph	Lawrence	Charleston	SC	?
Melsoopp	Thomas		Stamford	Ct	?
Morris	Cecil		Nashville	Ar	Edna
Nolting	Fred	E.	Charlottesville	Va	??
Pavkovich***	Chester	Frank	Flint	Mi	?
Pence	John		Salisbury	NC	?
Phillips	William	B.	Charlotte	NC	?
Placer	Robert	H.	Portsmouth	Va	?
Penn	Stanley		Baltimore	Md	?
Peterson	William	G.	Gouldsboro	Pa	?

Powers	Marvin	Damascus	Va	Neva		5/26/91
Prior, Capt.	Charles	Cape Elizabeth	Me	*	****	8/18/91
Roberts	Howard	Tumwater	Wa	Loretta		7/23/91
Roth	Joe	Winterhaven	FL	?		89
Shaw	Charles	Mattoon	IL	Rae		5/16/91
Sienkiewicz	Joe	Woodbridge	NJ	-		2/91
Sims	Clyde	Broken Arrow	Ok	Rebecca		11/19/90
Sprague	Milton	North Adams	Ma	Evelyn		7/91
Stewart	Homer	Nashville	Tn	Nelle		7/16/91
Sundin	Carlton	Hampton	Va	Dorothy		6/21/91
Suwinski	Felix	Toledo	Oh	Alice		9/29/90
Taylor	Roger	Houston	Tx	?		5/17/91
Thibo	James	Oberlin	Oh	?		1986
Wegner	Carroll	La Marque	Tx	Betty		4/27/91
Welsh	William	Lyons	NJ	?		2/91
Wentzel	C.E.	"Bud" Clearwater	FL	Nellie		2/14/91
Whitfield	Lee (RED)	A. Portsmouth	Va	Kathryn		5/15/91
Wright	Harry	R. Suitland	Md	June		5/91
Young	Hunter	D. Elyria	Oh	?		7/15/91

Deceased Wives of the shipmates.

DECEASED		HUSBAND	
Adams	Mary	Bellevue	Wa
Perry	Lois	Richmond Hill	Ga
Shufeldt	Arlene	Brunswick	Me
Williams	Esta	Bethany	Mo.
Forsythe	Ruth	Broken Arrow	Ok

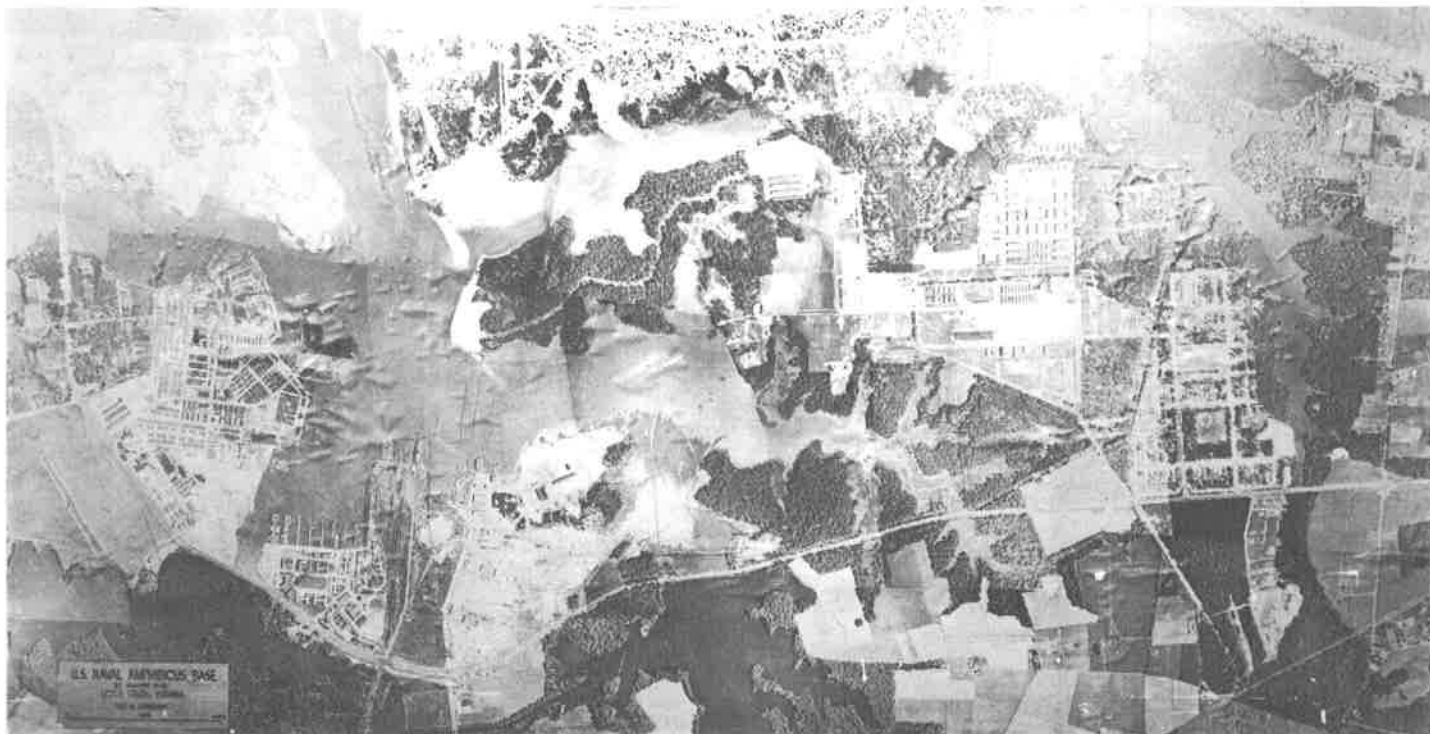
* Claude was a member of the Armed Guard Crew on the SS ROBERT GRAY which was in Convoy HX-234 and straggled from the Convoy on the night of 4/13/43 and was sunk 4/23/43 by German Sub U-306 according to Captain Art Moore's book, "A CARELESS WORD". There were no survivors. The U-306 was sunk 10/31/43 and there were NO SURVIVORS. He was the younger brother of Armed Guard Norman C Drew 608-74-57 3715 Scarborough Dr., New Haven, Ind. 46774. Norm informed me that he and Claude had enlisted together in Buffalo, N.Y. and they had trained together. The family never received any information on the ship or crew. Norm served aboard the S.S. PAN DELAWARE 4/43-1/44 and the LST 721, 10/44-10/45. Maybe someone may be able to enlighten the family.

**Earl Devane was a shipmate of Jim Sheridan of Clinton Corners, N.Y. and Jim went to Katyville but was notified of Earl's "Final Voyage" 2 years prior.

***Brother-in-Law to Herb Norch, El Paso, Tx.

+ Nephew, C.E. Hoffert in search for anyone at Little Creek Gunnery 41/42.

****Captain Charles Prior-Master of the S.S. Black Point which was sunk 5/5/45 three miles east of "Point Judith, Rhode Island". He is featured in a TV Documentary "WAR ON OUR SHORES" on Educational TV showing pictures of the S.S. Black Point, and the U-853, the submarine which sank her.



Camp Shelton, furthest right on photo. Moving left, Camp Bradford. Continue left, next facility (located on inlet edge) is power and heat generating station for base. Next the Pennsylvania Railroad and Eastern Shore Ferry Slips. Next is original Armed Guard Training Center, and last, the Amphibious Training Base, (Annex I). Annex I was to provide additional facilities for amphibious training. July, 1942.

Our thanks go to Ralph Womeldorf, 1400 Garwood Avenue, Virginia Beach, VA 23455, for providing this photo.

The Liberty Ship, S.S. John W. Couch left San Francisco August 29, 1943 and we were in Noumea, New Caledonia around September 18, 1943. We spent about 3 weeks there as most of us went ashore for Liberty and gunnery school as they unloaded and reloaded with a mixed load of beer, clothing, jeeps, aviation gas with a load of piling on deck. We left Noumea, New Caledonia on October 5th and we arrived and anchored off Koli Point, Guadalcanal. While unloading at night, we were sunk by a Jap plane at 0150 local time on October 11, 1943. The torpedo struck the Port Side at #2 hold, setting fire to the gasoline in the holds and the fire spreaded to #1 and #3 holds. The fire went out of control in about 2 hours and she burned as she was towed away.

Here is what else I remember. I had the deck watch from midnight to 0200 and my watch was ending and about 0145, I awoke, Robert Henshaw, my relief man. I gave him the "side piece" and I was going towards the outer deck when the G.Q. (General Quarters) was sounded. My station was Gunner on No. 5 on the starboard side of the ship and I started there. The ship took the torpedo at #2 hatch, under gun tub #2 whose guns were being manned by Henshaw, my relief man and Gus Mathis. Henshaw was the only Armed Guard killed and Mathis was badly burned. There was an explosion and lot of fire as the gas cans exploded like firecrackers. Everything forward of the bridge was on fire. The bridge was hot with drums bursting all over. So much for that. As all of this was happening, one plane came across our starboard side, flying very low. Orders were, it was our plane and we did not get off a shot. It was a decoy, I guess.

Back to the fire and abandoning ship. Orders never came over my phone but I didn't need an invitation. I went aft across piling and was a fast trip as things were hot up forward. There were others who got burned too. They were Carl Massarelli and Mese. A Merchant Seaman, Robert E. Copley, the baker was killed also. We recovered the body of our shipmate, Robert Henshaw a few days later. We stayed at Guadalcanal about 18 days and went onboard the S.S. LUNDY'S LANE, a tanker that brought us back to Long Beach, California and a 15 days leave. I would like to contact anyone from either ship or anyone who were there at the time. I hope this article will get others together also and to write their stories.

Charles, this is what I remember of our unfortunate episode of our ship and crew so long ago, so far away. I want to say THANKS for your efforts. You are a Voice crying out in the Wilderness and our Wilderness of Armed Guard personnel is about to run out. I have talked to many from the war years and did see and visit with a dear shipmate, C.C. Forsythe of Broken

Arrow, Oklahoma from the M/S PENNANT 3/43-1/44, if not for your efforts, this would have not have ever happened. Thanks again, Charles. Print the picture, too if you see fit to print the story, if at all possible.

Robert J. Sykes, 27144 Irwin Rd., Redding, Ca. 96002 1-916-222-6629

Robert, thank you for sharing this part of Armed Guard History that would never have been told as you did not do it. You made my day. The picture may not be perfect but here it is. Stay healthy and keep in touch. cal



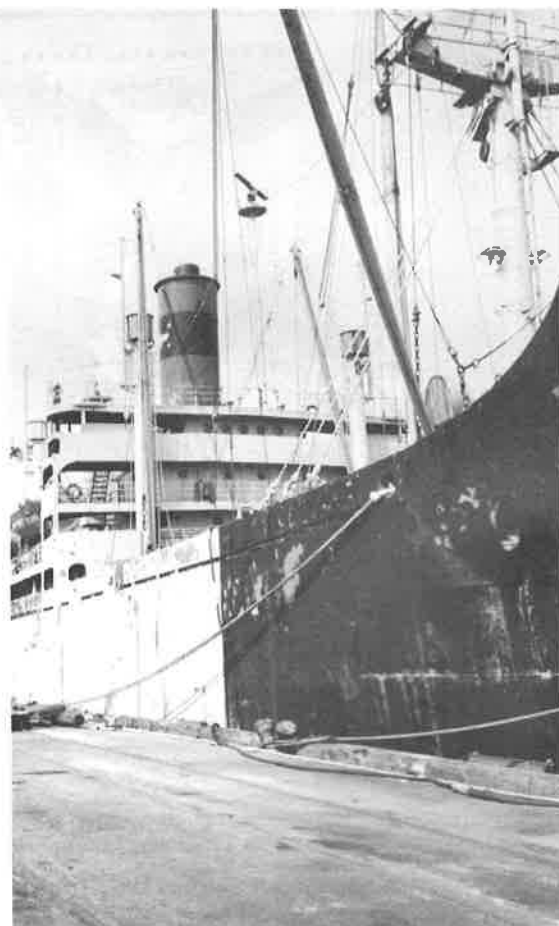
S.S. John H. Couch Armed Guard Gun Crew - 4/9/43

TOP ROW (L-R): Lee, Evatt, Reynolds, Paterson, Sykes, Massarelli, Ward, Mauzy, Row.

BOTTOM ROW (L-R): Taylor, Henshaw, Skeen, Henshaw*, Meyer, Mastis, Attirus

Pictures of the S.S. LANE VICTORY, San Pedro, California, taken in March of 1991. Notice the bow painted black for movie shots.

Taken by: R.C. Hudnall, 6142 del Cerro Boulevard, San Diego, California 92120



Sinking of the S.S. Dorchester

After the S.S. Dorchester went under, the worse part of the Saga of the "living" began. Our Gunnery Officer and I, plus two more of the gun crew were in a doughnut raft after we had walked down the keel of the ship. I saw nothing but black, cold water. I do not want to believe a dead man brought that raft to us, but the facts are there and I have lived with it for over 44 years.

Strange things happened that awful morning. The U-Boat had followed us for two days that we knew of trying to bait our escort away from the 3 ship Convoy. On the afternoon of February 2nd, the fear that was all over the S.S. Dorchester hung like a blanket. Fear that you could cut with a knife. After all, had not the ship's intercom that blasted out that everyone was to sleep with our lifejackets on, and pray we would make it through the night. We were in between 2 other ships, yet the ship was torpedoed, in the side, pitch black, in very rough seas.

I never felt right about it. I always felt that there was some kind of a device affixed to the hull of the ship in St. John's where all of the people talked with a German accent. I do not know who was to blame and there are 716 of the other lucky survivors, wondering the same thing. I never thought it right that we were not allowed to dock at the Army pier, which was not in use at the time and we had to use a public pier.

I don't know how long we had been in the water by this time but the sea looked like a field of little red flowers. These were lights attached to each life jacket and they were everywhere. The other boy

in the raft had not complained or said anything the whole time we had been together. Surely, he was dead for his face would be in the water everytime we could see him. We couldn't help him. We couldn't even help ourselves plus the fact that it was so dark. A cutter came by for the second time and they holed down that they'd come back for us. When they did return, they informed us that they would not take aboard any dead. How could we leave the other boy??? We had to do one of the hardest thing I have ever had to do in my life.

A line was thrown down to us from the Cutter as it reduced speed. We went along with it. The three of us looked down into the water, the lines were let loose and the raft went floating off. We were taken below on the Cutter, our clothes removed and our vitals were checked. The dead were stacked like cordwood. Someone covered them up. We were not allowed to sleep. Back then, they called it "FREEZING DEATH." They have another name for it now. We were taken to Greenland, given clothes and things we needed. The next day, the stories came out about those four wonderful men of God. I have always felt that I am a better man for being there that awful morning. I am proud to have been there as the whole episode has had a bearing on my whole life.

After two weeks, we were shown our PASS to the States, the SANDPIPER, a Seaplane Tender. She had a crew of nine men. There were 9 of our Armed Guard left out of a Gun Crew of 24. We had to sleep in shifts once we left Greenland. All things considered, we were lucky to have been schooled that we could not live in that chilly waters for 2 hours but a lot of us made a fool of the one who figured that one out. That awful morning is long over, yet, I am in that water every night of my life.

Winfield McCoy, 1007 6th Ave. Dayton, Ohio 41074

24 AUG. 1991

Dear C.H.

It just occurred to me that if we locate one more shipmate from the Lengdon Cheves we will have equaled the total of 14 gunners on my 1st ship the USAT Acadia. Unfortunately 9 mates from the Cheves have passed away but the other 7 are out there somewhere & we're all looking for them. Bill Struve found Carl Harkowski up in Virginia, Minn. on info supplied by John O'Malley at Baltimore. I hope we can add to our numbers by No. 11 at New Orleans. Len Hornack called & said he & Esther will be there. Len relieved Starrey Smith as gunnery ofc in June & stayed on board with the gunners mates. Cuskey Spinazzola & I were when the rest of the crew was detached 9-28-44. So Len, Star Tony & I have another crew to locate (from the Cheves) On the positive side we have a good start with the 4 of us.

I had another bonus at Baltimore being with Al Shufflebotham & Charles M'Namara from Ship #2 the Nathan Hale

Al & I also sailed on the Acadia & he was my Best Man when Mannette & I married. It was a 1st reunion for both also there Larry Webb. We enlisted together & went thru boots & Little Creek.

Thanks Charles for making these things happen. Keep up the good work & I'll see you at Norfolk.

Sincerely
Bill Snee



SHIPMATES ATTEND THE NATIONAL REUNION

1st Row: Bob Aldrich, Bill Struve
2nd Row: Tony Spinazzola, Warren Smith, Bill Snee, John O'Malley

Remember These Matchbooks?

Sent in by William A. Morin, P.O. Box 486, Branchville, NJ 07826.



U-BOAT HUNTERS

Only CVE Lost in Atlantic
Led Hard-Fighting Team

ALL her action-packed life the escort carrier *USS Block Island* lived precariously in the midst of battle. And in battle she died, her freighter hull holed by three torpedoes from an enemy U-boat. Her grave was the Atlantic where, for 14 months, she led a diminutive task force in scourging the sea of German underwater raiders.

The *Block Island* was the only American carrier lost in the Battle of the Atlantic. In announcing her loss on 29 May—a year to the day after she was sunk—the Navy also disclosed the dramatic story of her career.

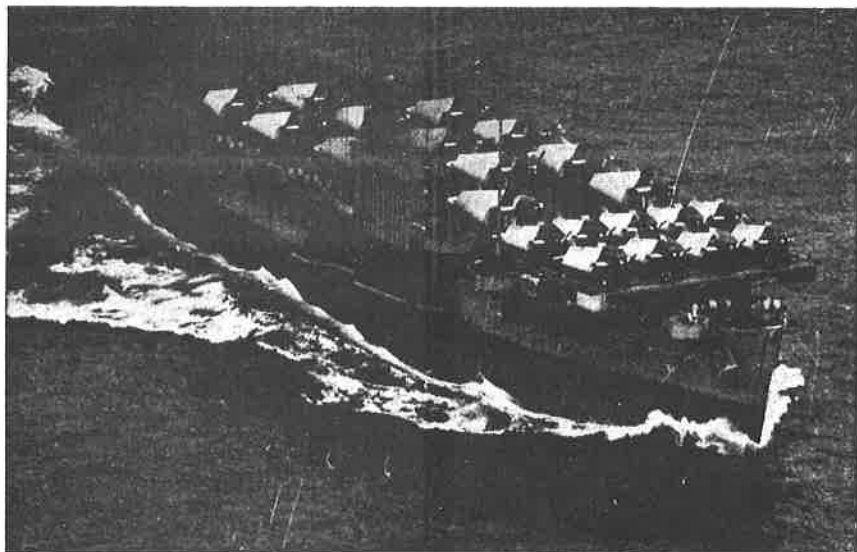
The *Block Island* first went to sea in March 1943, under command of Capt. Logan C. Ramsey, USN. Except for about 50 survivors of the old *USS Lexington*, most of her crew had never seen a carrier before they were assigned to her. A few days after she started out on her first sub hunt, the baby flat-top flushed several U-boats during the night. Crewmen lined her flight deck to watch star shells and gunfire and an escort rushing in for the kill.

War was almost always like that on the *Block Island*—close, personal, thrilling. With her DEs she slugged it out in close surface actions and depth-charge attacks by sea and air, even witnessing a hand-to-hand scrap between crews of a damaged U-boat and the DE *USS Buckley*.

A plane from the carrier spotted that German submarine at 0300 on a bright moonlit night. The *Buckley*, directed to the spot, opened fire with three-inch guns and scored a direct hit on the sub's forecastle. The enemy, electing to fight it out on the surface, returned fire with her deck gun and semi-automatic weapons while swerving sharply to get out of the moon track. Torpedoes from the U-boat's tubes swished through the water but missed. Tracers flashed across the *Buckley's* superstructure but only one hit—in the stack. Lt. Comdr. Brent M. Abel, USNR, the DE's skipper, decided to ram. A hard right rudder drove the *Buckley* up on the sub's forecastle.

The submarine's crew swarmed out of the conning tower and up on the DE's forecastle. The *Buckley's* crew used anything handy for weapons. Two Germans were felled by heavy coffee mugs, others by empty shell cases and by small-arms fire.

Finally, to avoid too many boarders, the *Buckley* backed off and resumed fire. As the DE closed in again the submarine swerved suddenly against her side and remained pinned beneath the *Buckley's* hull. Rolling to 60 degrees, the submarine gave men on the *Buckley* a full view of the flaming



Official U. S. Navy photographs

USS BLOCK ISLAND pictured as she put to sea to hunt U-boats in Atlantic.

shambles that was the interior of the conning tower. Torpedomen on the DE tossed grenades into the open hatch. Slowly the sub drew away again; but one three-inch gun on the *Buckley* scored three direct hits, and the U-boat plunged beneath the surface with her diesels still running at full speed. Both the con hatch, spouting flames, and the forward deck hatch were open as the submarine dived. Heavy underwater explosions followed.

The *Buckley* captured five German boarders and picked up 31 other submarine crewmen from the water. The entire action lasted only 16 minutes.

In March 1944 Capt. F. Massie Hughes, USN, took over command of the *Block Island* and with it the luck of the task force in tracking down and destroying the enemy. Four days later the *Block Island* was at it again.

Patrolling planes detected another U-boat and tracked it along with the escorts. Two of the DEs closed in as the sub surfaced and began pounding it with their guns. The sub's crew abandoned ship without a fight.

Two days later one of the carrier's Grumman torpedo planes found a submarine lying dead in the water, with her crew enjoying a swim. The pilot,

Lt. (jg) Mark E. Fitzgerald, USNR, cut loose with a determined depth-charge and strafing attack before the Jerries could scramble aboard. One of the depth charges cracked the sub in two.

His plane damaged by AA fire from the U-boat, Lt. Fitzgerald was forced to land in the water nearby. As he drifted in his rubber boat he saw a man swimming toward him. Hauled aboard and treated by the flyer for severe head injuries, the swimmer turned out to be the 23-year-old captain of the submarine. Later Lt. Fitzgerald rescued and captured eight other Germans before being picked up by a destroyer.

The final battle of the fighting carrier was yet to come. Six planes were out on patrol when the *Block Island* shuddered as two violent explosions rocked her beneath the waterline. Capt. Hughes, realizing that his ship was hopelessly damaged, gave the order, "Prepare to abandon ship."

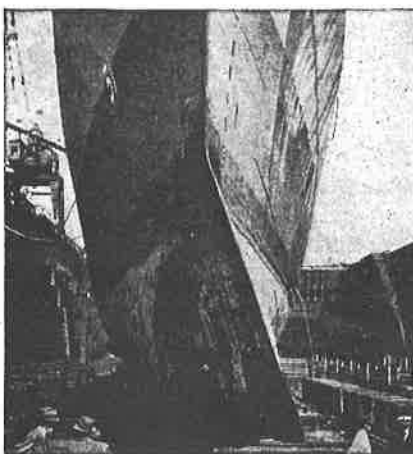
All hands mustered on the flight deck. Shortly thereafter a third explosion shook the ship. "Abandon ship," ordered the captain. Most of the officers and men, including 18 wounded, went over the side and climbed aboard rafts.

Last off the stricken carrier, Capt. Hughes had been picked up by a whaleboat and was only a few hundred yards from her when she suddenly went down by the stern.

As the *Ahrens* proceeded to the rescue of survivors she positively located the enemy submarine which, after torpedoing the carrier, had sent another tin fish at the *USS Barr*, another escort, hitting near the stern and crippling her.

Exactly one hour after the first attack the *Eugene E. Elmore* delivered her assault on the submarine. A tremendous explosion indicated that the U-boat had been destroyed.

Casualties for the entire action totaled six killed on the *Block Island*, five killed, 12 missing and 16 injured on the *Barr* and four aviators from the *Block Island* missing. The other two pilots who were in the air at the time of the attack were rescued.



DENTED NOSE was price destroyer Buckley paid to ram and sink sub.

WHEN OVER 100 LIBERTY SHIPS WERE SCRAPPED FOLLOWING THE SECOND WORLD WAR THE CONCRETE ENCASED STEEL BOWS COULD NOT BE REUSED. THE BOWS WERE BURIED ON THIS SITE

THE SHIPS WERE BUILT BY THE NATIONALLY RENOWNED "OREGONSHIP" OREGON SHIP BUILDING COMPANY. ITS SHIPYARDS, BASED IN THE WILLAMETTE MARSH AND MUD FLATS ACROSS THE RIVER FROM THIS PARK ESTABLISHED A NEW MODEL FOR EMERGENCY CONSTRUCTION OF HIGH QUALITY SHIPS.

THE LIBERTY SHIP JOHN N. TEAL PICTURED ON THIS PLAQUE WAS COMPLETED JUST TEN DAYS AFTER ITS KEEL WAS LAID.

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR YEARS, "OREGONSHIP" YARDS CONSTRUCTED MORE LIBERTY FOR THE NATIONAL FLEET THAN ANY OTHER SHIPYARD IN THE COUNTRY, A TOTAL OF 330. THE STURDY UTILATRAIN LIBERTY SHIPS HAD A CRUISING SPEED OF 10.5 KNOTS AND A DEAD WEIGHT CAPACITY OF 10,800 TONS. IN 1943 OREGON SHIPBUILDING CO. SWITCHED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF VICTORY CLASS SHIPS, WHICH COULD CARRY THE SAME WEIGHT AT A FASTER 15 KNOTS

DURING A 20 YEAR SPAN AFTER THE WAR, ZIDELL EXPLOATION BROUGHT OVER 100 LIBERTY SHIPS HOME TO PORTLAND AS THEY ENDED THEIR MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL SERVICE. THIS MARKER, AT THE LAST RESTING PLACE OF THEIR BOWS, HONORS THE MANY GREAT SHIPS THAT OREGON WORKERS BUILT FOR THE NATION IN A TIME OF GREAT NEED.

Last of the Liberties

Baltimore's Project Liberty Ship recalls Portland area's shipbuilding frenzy that began a half-century ago

Fifty years ago this summer Portland was on the verge of one of the most momentous events of its history, the boom in shipbuilding that was the city's main industrial contribution to winning World War II.

That summer the first few Liberty ships were on the ways of Henry J. Kaiser's Oregon Shipbuilding Corp., on the St. Johns waterfront north of the St. Johns Bridge.

Before the war was over the St. Johns yard alone built 322 of the sturdy freighters. It also fitted out eight more of the 10 that were launched at another Kaiser yard at Vancouver, Wash.

That history adds local interest to the news that a volunteer group in Baltimore, Project Liberty Ship, is refurbishing one of the last two afloat, the John W. Brown. It will be on display in Baltimore, and is scheduled to make the first of a series of cruises on Chesapeake Bay Sept. 21 and 22.

Eighteen U.S. shipyards turned out a total of 2,741 ships of the Liberty design, but the only other one that has escaped scrapping or conversion is the Jeremiah O'Brien, which is on exhibit at Fort Mason on the San Francisco waterfront.

The Liberty was designed to be built quickly and cheaply, for a cost of a little more than \$1 million apiece. Its three-cylinder oil-fired steam engine could push it at a top speed of 11 knots, carrying 10,800 tons of cargo. About 200 Liberty ships were lost to enemy action.



Eventually 100,000 men and women working day and night poured ships out of three Kaiser yards and three others in Portland and Vancouver. They built not only Liberties, but also tankers, troop transports, landing craft and other small naval vessels, small aircraft carriers that used Liberty-ship hulls, and eventually the larger, 17-knot Victory cargo ships that replaced the Liberty design.

Workers at Oregon Ship learned to build a Liberty from start to delivery in as little as 25 days. Prefabrication and mass-production methods were the secret to their speed.

The farsighted developer William S. Naito has just established Liberty Ship Park, on the Willamette waterfront north of the Broadway Bridge. It has relics of those ships and is a monument to the industrial skill of Portland.

Neither of the surviving ships was Portland-built. The John W. Brown was launched at Baltimore and the Jeremiah O'Brien at South Portland, Maine. Their owners are cautious about risking them on the open ocean. But wouldn't it be good to see one here again some day?

The Oregonian, Wed., August 21, 1991

Sent in by Robert Abbott, Col. Prado Tepeyac, C.P. 45050, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.



Liberty Ship Memorial Park, Portland Oregon, August 1991, showing cement bow sections and smoke stacks from the U.S. Oregon.



Cement bow sections of Liberty Ships. Fremont Bridge in background. River Queen is a San Francisco Bay Ferry converted to a restaurant.

Reunion Memories



Pictures from the May 1991 National Reunion with the SS. JOHN W. BROWN (Clockwise from top left)

- 1 - Joseph Lafferty poses with Hilda Lloyd.
- 2 - The crew rehearses WWII days gone by. (And they didn't think how it would look.)
- 3 - The crew shows off the 5"38 on the "Brown."
- 4 - The "Brown" shows off her guns for crew.
- 5 - The crew and ladies board the "BROWN."



Photos taken by: C.A. Lloyd

WWII Liberty Ship Sails Again

By TONY SEIDEMAN
Journal of Commerce

The Liberty Ship John W. Brown is about to sail on its first mission in almost 50 years. On Sept. 21 and 22, the World War II cargo and troop carrier will make the first of a series of cruises that should eventually lead to the beaches of Normandy on June 7, 1994.

"I think she's in good enough shape to do it; we propose to leave it over there and then return the following summer," said John Boylston, president and chief operating officer of Argent Marine Operations Inc. in Solomons, Md. Boylston is also leader of the campaign to restore the John W. Brown.

Those plans mark an amazing comeback for a vessel that has had a long and checkered career.

Launched in 1942, the John W. Brown is one of two remaining examples of more than 2,700 such ships, built fast and cheap to ferry troops and cargo to war.

The Brown braved the infamous North Atlantic run, dodged shells during the invasion of the South of France, then returned to the United States to serve as a floating high school for more than three decades.

By 1986, however, the Brown seemed doomed. Rust-covered and listing, it sat in the James River Reserve Fleet, near Fort Eustis, Va., awaiting the wrecker's hammer. Then Boylston did a survey of the vessel, and later discovered it was built in Baltimore. He and Baltimore harbor pilot Brian Hope helped form Project Liberty Ship, a group dedicated to the Brown's survival.

"I was compelled by the condition of the ship," Boylston said. "I felt it was something that should be preserved if it possibly could — one because it was original, and the other because it was a preservable ship."

The response was immediate and passionate. "There is a lot of reverence and history and emotion tied up in the ship," said Ned Moran, president of Moran Towing of Maryland.

In August 1988, the Brown arrived in Baltimore. Since then, the respect and admiration for the ship has translated into 100,000 hours of volunteer time, close to \$1 million worth of donations from history buffs and others and another \$1 million worth of contributions from the maritime community.

"We're just trying to do whatever we can to help those people in their quest," Moran said.

Restoring the Brown has ranged from replacing rusted hull plates to cleaning out the ship's gunk-filled fuel tanks for the first time in five decades.

The Brown is not just a memorial for the merchant marine; it also houses the only museum in the United States devoted solely to the Armed Guard. The guard was a Navy contingent that manned the weapons aboard the ship. Eventually there will be a full museum of the merchant marine as well.

During World War II, the Brown carried as many as 350 troops at a time. In September, it will make two cruises carrying about 800 passengers from Baltimore to Annapolis, Md., and back. An Air Corps band and "Andrews Sisters" act will perform and World War II aircraft will do flybys.

DEAR CHARLES:

I JUST WAS READING THE SUNDAY PAPER AND CAME ACROSS THIS ARTICLE ABOUT THE SHIP BROWN (SCRANTON PA. TIMES) I MET YOU AT THE REUNION IN BALTIMORE, MY WIFE AND I HAD A WONDERFUL TIME THERE, I ALSO MET ONE OF MY SITIPMATES THERE, FIRST TIME WE SEEN EACH OTHER IN 46 YEARS HE IS C/M ED KELLY FROM ROME GEORGIA. OUR WIFES MET EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE ALL HAD A NICE TIME. I'M SENDING YOU THE CLIPPING FROM THE PAPER.

ED VARGO

111 TUTTLE ST.

SIMPSON, PA 18407

Scranton Times, 9/8/91

U.S. Navy Armed Guard

ILLINOIS / WISCONSIN VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

DEDICATED TO

CARL F. ZEIDLER AND THE ARMED GUARD OF

THE UNITED STATES NAVY

WHO SERVED ABOARD 5,236 MERCHANT SHIPS AND TANKERS

AND LOST 1,810 MEN KILLED IN ACTION

IN WORLD WAR II

WHEREAS, CARL F. ZEIDLER, MAYOR OF MILWAUKEE, TOOK LEAVE OF HIS DUTIES AS MAYOR TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES NAVY DURING WORLD WAR II; AND

WHEREAS, HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE S.S. LASALLE AS GUNNERY OFFICER IN COMMAND OF A U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD CREW OF GUNNERS AND COMMUNICATIONS PERSONNEL; AND

WHEREAS, ON NOVEMBER 7, 1942, WHILE SOUTHEAST OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, SOUTH AFRICA, THE S.S. LASALLE WAS TORPEDOED BY GERMAN SUBMARINE U-159 WHICH RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF 13 OF THE NAVY ARMED GUARD CREW, INCLUDING CARL F. ZEIDLER, AND 39 MERCHANT SEAMEN;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE ILLINOIS/WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD VETERANS OF WW II THAT CARL F. ZEIDLER, U.S. NAVAL OFFICER AND MAYOR OF MILWAUKEE BE MEMORIALIZED, AND THAT THIS PLAQUE BE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED AS A LASTING REMINDER TO ALL OF THE SUPREME SACRIFICE OF SO MANY DURING WORLD WAR II.

Gerard W. Cheffer
Skipper

Joseph D. Esposito
Secretary

Virgil Meeks, Sr., Robert H. Lizon, Robert C. Robinson
Reunion Committee, Milwaukee, WI 12 October, 1991



46 DAYS ADrift

This story was taken from the
"TRUE" Magazine, Vol. 14, No.
80, 1/44 and sent in by Survivor
of the SS City of Flint:

Albert Becker
Box 2836, Rte. 44/55
Gardiner, NY 12525
1-914-255-5681



By Albert Becker

Yeoman 3/c, United States Navy

as told to

Michael Stern

WE LEFT an East Coast port in January, 1943, and on the fifth night out were hit by a terrific storm. The wind howled with the fury of the damned and the rain swept down in solid sheets. The freighter on which I was a Navy gunner ploughed up and down sixty-foot swells like a rocking horse.

For fifty-five hours we alternated between storm and heavy fog and on the afternoon of the seventh day at sea, when the fog suddenly lifted, we found that we had lost the convoy and were alone on the empty ocean. We steamed to a pre-arranged emergency rendezvous point and stalled around there for four hours. But when the convoy didn't show, we set out to cross the Atlantic by ourselves.

I'm glad I didn't know then that we were destined to spend forty-six days in an open boat—more than six weeks of roasting by day, starving by night and continually battling the elements.

Three days after we lost the convoy I went up on the after gun deck to stand midnight watch with my pal, Steve Kubick, a 21-year-old farm boy from Flint, Mich. I slipped the intercom earphones over my head and picked myself a spot behind the steel plate that circled the gun platform where I would be sheltered from the biting wind.

I told Steve that this business of traveling alone on a ship whose holds were loaded with a cargo of high octane gas and explosive shells had me worried.

"It doesn't matter what you carry or how you travel," Steve said. "If you're going to get it, you will. That's all there is to it."

"We've got more chance of getting it this way," I insisted.

Steve shrugged his shoulders.

"I'd like to get one good shot at the lousy Krauts," I said.

Steve started to say something, but I didn't hear his answer because just then Lou Bozada, on watch on the forward twenty-millimeter cannon, yelled out: "Torpedo on port bow!"

The words hit me like a kick in the chest. I looked out into the dark sea and saw the silver streak of the torpedo's wake coming right at me. I didn't have the power to move. It wasn't fear. Just a terrible fascination that kept my eyes riveted on the tin fish. I could feel our ship make a last desperate, futile effort to get out of its path as the helmsman twisted hard to starboard.

The torpedo hit the number two hold. The explosion made an unearthly roar and there was a blinding flash of yellowish flame. The ship shook like a cold hound dog coming out of water. The blast knocked me flat on my back. It was as though someone had snapped a carpet out from under my feet. Debris shot sky-high. We were carrying a deck cargo of telegraph poles—they flew up like so many match sticks. There was a great gaping hole where the forward gun deck had stood a second before.

The four fellows on watch, Lou Bozada, a St. Louis, Mo., boy of 21, and his three pals, Slim, Shorty, and Lichty, were blown to bits. They were part of the debris flying in the air and showering down like giant hail on the rest of the doomed ship. A huge tongue of flame shot up and lighted the sky. When I got to my feet I could see that the bow and the bridge were blown clean off. The ship was already settled at the bow, raising the after deck and making the gun on it useless.

A series of loud blasts shook the vessel as shells in some of the holds began exploding. Hatch covers went up in the air. Fires broke out in other parts of the ship, and because we were headed

into the wind, a heavy, choking black smoke swept back and engulfed us.

The thought that I would be killed never once occurred to me. Not because I was brave; it was just that in the sudden emergency every nerve in my body was keyed up to the present. My movements were mechanical. With my right hand I ripped off the earphones and with my left I made sure that my life belt was on securely.

There was a fire burning between us and our life boat so Steve and I ran to the after rail. The whole ship was no less than one big firecracker and all we could think of was to get off it as soon as possible.

The only one at the rail besides us was Buster, the galley boy for the gun crew. He was a short, stocky kid who hadn't yet turned 20. Grinning at me he said:

"I'll try it out first." He climbed up on the rail, teetered there for a moment and went over.

I saw him go down and watched for him to come up. Just as his head broke the surface a swell smacked a heavy life raft against the steel side of the ship. Buster was crushed between them. His body was never found.

Gasoline and oil poured out of the sinking ship and the sea was a mass of flame. Steve jumped right into the flames. The minute he went overboard I climbed up on the rail, pulled down with both hands on the collar of my life jacket and kicked out into space. I hit the water feet first and let myself go down for what I thought was a full minute before I began to kick my feet and move my arms. Even though I wore a life jacket, my shoes and heavy coat were enough of a drag to limit the speed of my ascent. My lungs were bursting beyond the point of endurance. I was about to inhale when my head broke water.

I FOUND myself in the center of a large pool of flame. All I could see was the fire and the stern of the ship, which was lifted so high out of the water that both screws, still revolving slowly were in the air. I splashed the flames away with my hands, but they kept running right at me again. While I pushed the flames away from my face, they ate into that part of my back and neck above water. I looked around for Steve, but couldn't see him anywhere. I yelled for help, but the roar of the burning vessel, the wind, and the exploding shells drowned out my voice. I didn't see a single life raft or life boat around.

"This is a hell of a spot to be in," I said to myself. I swam back to the freighter, grabbed one of the ropes trailing in the water and climbed up hand over hand.

My mind was a little clearer when I got back on deck. I knew that my only chance to escape lay in finding a boat or a raft. Fires were blazing fiercely and the wind kept sweeping the flames over the afterdeck. Amidship, on the port side, I saw a life raft still in place. There was a roaring fire through which I had to run in order to reach it. I looked around and found a heavy sea jacket someone had discarded. Scooping it up, I started toward the raft, when I saw the bodies of two seamen lying sprawled on the deck. Flame was beginning to eat into their clothing. I beat out the fire with the jacket—I don't know why, because they were both dead—and ran on.

I saw a deckhand leaning against the rail and yelled for him to follow me, but he just kept looking into space with an empty expression.

"Come on," I shouted. Then I saw that he was horribly wounded in the stomach.

"My God, look!"

Survivor of a Torpedoed Tanker, this Navy Gunner Tells of the Horror of the Open Sea

This snapshot was made by a crew member of a torpedoed American vessel as the life boat drifted in the Atlantic, their skipper sighting for a rescue ship. The co-author spent 46 hungry, wet days in such a craft.

THE LIBERTY SHIP

Laden deep from lands afar,
The Liberty stands at the Bar.
A rusty tramp that has alluded fate,
Heaves in the swell off the Golden Gate.

Yes, she's a Liberty built in twenty days,
One of the hundreds that slipped the ways.
A champagne bottle, an unknown name,
And no design for future fame.

She was laden deep with goods of war,
Below her marks both aft and fore.
And as if to tempt the hand of fate,
Her decks were piled high with plane and crate.

Each time she dives, she shudders free,
And pounds her way through angry sea.
There are those, who would sneer at these,
But they have never sailed the seven seas.

The Liberty tramp, the butt of jests,
"Can-opener" ship and all the rest.
An "Ugly Duckling," a "Rusty Pot,"
Waiting for the wrecker's lot.

So now, dear lass, don't mind the name,
Your endless miles have won you fame.
From the tropic heat to Artic Flow,
There's not a sealane you don't know.

The Murmansk Run, and Attu's shore,
Salerno beachhead and many more.
After the naval gunfire shook,
You were the first to drop your hook.

Why there's not a cargo, great or small,
But a Liberty tramp carried them all.
High-test gas, troops and TNT,
From Guadalcanal to Tripoli.

You are the prey of the U-boat pack,
That lurks on the ocean's merchant track.
Your hulls lay blasted on the ocean's bed,
While your sister ships sail, overhead.

We've trod your decks, we're proud to tell,
You've sailed us, in and out of Hell.
We've cursed you and praised you, too,
As sailor men so often do.

We'll drink a glass at the Mariner's bar,
To you, good ship, so there you are.
A Merchant Ship, a Liberty,
Another TRAMP upon the sea.

But Hark! that's the stand-bell,
The Pilot's boarded, all is well.
Another trip comes to an end,
We say farewell, to you, my friend.

— Author unknown

From the "Liberty Herald Paper" - S.S. GEORGE DAVIS - July 20, 1945

Dear C.A.:

I recently came across an eight page newspaper from my last ship, S.S. GEORGE DAVIS and thought you may be interested in the Poem. This paper was published by the Army and had one article by the ARMED GUARD. This article was to thank the Editor for letting us place an article in past issues. Most of the gunners left the ship and two gunners and I stayed on to make another trip until guns were removed.

The Liberty Ship S.S. George Davis had five NAZI planes painted on her stack. This happened before my time aboard. She must have had some great history.

A soldier friend of mine said (kiddingly) that he belongs to the ARMED GUARD for his group manned the guns on the QUEEN MARY going over in early 1942.

Sincerely, Leo Heany
10 Juliet Lane, Baltimore, MD 21236

His head moved slowly down, following my pointing finger. When he saw the wound his legs gave way and he toppled over on his face. I could see that he was a goner.

I jumped over a few puddles of flame, then wrapped the jacket around my head and raced through a heavy blaze to reach the life raft. I picked up a belaying pin and banged down on the pelican hook and backed out of the way as the raft plunged into the water. Then I held down on the neck of my life belt so that it wouldn't break my jaw when I hit the water, and jumped after the raft. I had to jump fast, before the tossing water would carry the raft out of my reach.

This time I didn't allow myself to go down so deep. When I came up again, I saw that I was only three feet away from the raft. I climbed aboard and started yelling for Steve. I saw him about forty yards aft, flailing away with his arms to keep the flames from his body. I grabbed a piece of wood from the water and paddled toward him. He spotted me at the same time, reached the raft and pulled himself onto it.

I didn't give him a chance to catch his breath. "Let's check," I said.

We got into the water again and felt under the raft and all around it to make sure there were no lines holding us to the sinking freighter. Steve found an oar in the water and used it after we climbed aboard again, to paddle like hell away from the ship.

We were about 100 yards off when a second torpedo fired by the German sub sizzled past us. The flames aboard ship and the fires in the water lit up the sea like daylight. I could still see some sailors running about on the deck when the second fish hit. Steve and I didn't wait to see the damage this shell did. We jumped off the raft again and ducked down behind the back of it. There was a blast so great that we felt the concussion in the water. The big freighter literally disintegrated. Debris rained down on the raft and on the sea all around us.

We climbed on the raft once again and used our feet to sweep off the twisted bits of hot metal that had fallen on it.

"That's kicking a guy when he's down," I said, motioning my head toward the empty sea where the freighter had once been.

"The bastards," Steve said. "I suppose they'll be coming up to let us have it next."

I shook my head in disagreement. "They've got some humanity."

We could see pin points of red light bobbing on the water. Each one represented a survivor. These lights are created by small, single cell flashlights that are part of every life jacket. We were heading toward them when a life boat pulled alongside. There were ten men in it. I recognized four members of the gun crew. They were gunner's mates Bill Maynard, Arthur Voorhis, Tom Blanton and Elmer Brandall. The others were merchant seamen.

"Come on in," Bill Maynard said.

He tossed us a rope. I grabbed one end and made it fast to the raft. It took Maynard some time to maneuver the life boat alongside because the water was rough. Before shifting over we broke open the emergency food compartment and transferred into the life boat a keg of water, a container of food and all the rope we could find. Maynard sang out, the men laid on the oars and we headed toward the few survivors who were still afloat.

For the first time I was conscious of pain in my right shoulder and right arm. I had a bad burn from my first jump into the flaming ocean. The salt water made it smart. As we moved toward the pin points of red, one of the crewmen suddenly yelled out:

"There's the sub!"

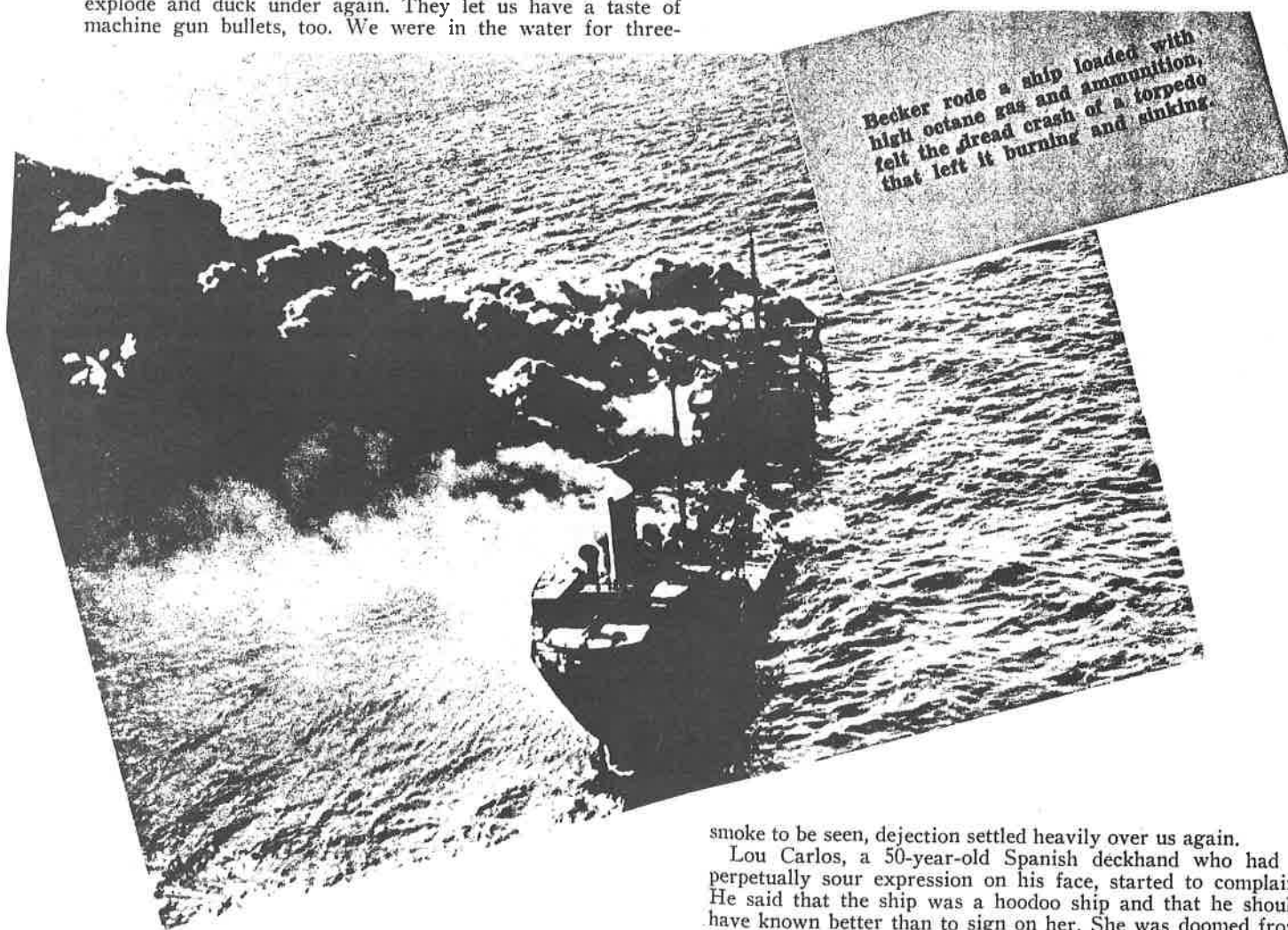
WE LOOKED in the direction of his pointing finger and saw the conning tower of the U-boat that had slipped us the pickle.

The crewman who spotted it waved his fist and yelled profanely. The submarine was almost a mile off so it was impossible for them to have heard the words, yet the U-boat's reply was so prompt that for a minute I thought they had.

A flash of red showed from the sub's deck and a shell exploded 100 yards or so astern of us. Shells fell all around us as they tried to get our range. We dived overboard, held on the side of the boat with one hand and ducked under water. I knew they were firing ack-ack shells because of the patter of shrapnel falling on the life boat. I would come up for air, hear a shell explode and duck under again. They let us have a taste of machine gun bullets, too. We were in the water for three-

quarters of an hour before we were sure they were through with their target practice. Then we all climbed back into the boat and looked around for survivors. There wasn't one of them left in the water.

In the boat was a colored mess man named Walter—I never did learn his full name—who was sitting near the food. It was he who first spotted the leak in the water barrels. Shrapnel had punched holes in them. The sailors stopped as many of these as they could with their hands while Bill and I made wooden plugs. A great many of the food containers were also peppered with holes and sea water had seeped into



Becker rode a ship loaded with high octane gas and ammunition, felt the dread crash of a torpedo that left it burning and sinking.

them. The rest of the night we just sat around waiting for day-break. None of us felt much like talking. We were so wet, cold and miserable that it was impossible to sleep. Some of us tried to huddle our bodies together, but that didn't do much good.

Steve Kubick, at the other end of the boat, called out: "Are those the guys with the humanity?"

"All right," I snapped peevishly. "I can make a mistake, too."

Dawn was slow in coming. But it finally rolled over the horizon. We had drifted so far from the scene of the sinking that none of the wreckage could be seen. We knew a few of the other life boats had been launched all right, but we could see no sign of them. There was a noticeable brightening of spirits as we scanned the horizon, but when there wasn't even a trace of

smoke to be seen, dejection settled heavily over us again.

Lou Carlos, a 50-year-old Spanish deckhand who had a perpetually sour expression on his face, started to complain. He said that the ship was a hoodoo ship and that he should have known better than to sign on her. She was doomed from the start and we were doomed with her. Steve told him to pipe down. Nearly everyone had something to say now, and they were saying it in no uncertain terms to the Spaniard.

I said that Carlos's omen would be true if we all didn't shut up and get organized. The only one in the boat with any rank at all was Bill Maynard who, as a machinist's mate, had a petty officer's rating. By common consent we made him skipper. Bill, a red-headed southerner from Council, N. C., climbed up on the bilge locker in the center of the boat and said he was going to make a speech. Although only about 22 years old, he had a lot of natural leadership qualities. He looked around at us and asked whether anyone had any objection, because if we did he wanted us to talk up right now. There were no objections.

"All right, then, I'm the skipper and I say that we're going to be rescued. The probabilities are that we'll be picked up in a day or so."

"We ought to be," Tom Blanton cut in. "The fire on the ship was big enough to be seen in China."

"Pay attention," Bill said. "Even though we know we're going to be picked up in a couple of days we're not going to take any chances. We're going to get things organized and running on a smooth basis so that if anything goes wrong we'll still be all right. Now does anybody know where we are?"

Nobody knew. One of the seamen passed Bill a chart and on it we tried to plot our approximate position. Figuring the number of days we had been at sea and knowing our eventual destination, we guessed that we were in the South Atlantic Ocean somewhere near the Canary Islands. Since the prevailing winds were eastward and the current ran in the same direction we figured that with the use of a sail we would average forty mile a day and would hit the Canary Islands in about ten days. And even if we missed the islands we were sure to hit the coast of Africa.

CARLOS and a Norwegian deckhand were detailed by Bill to hoist the sail. Two Polish deckhands set to work making a rudder out of an oar. I was put in charge of the food and my first move was to take inventory. There were thirty cans of pemmican, a dozen boxes of sea biscuits, three dozen rolls of malted milk tablets and four gallons of water. We were so positive that we would either be picked up in ten days or hit land by then that I based my calculations on that figure. I divided the food and water in such proportions that they would run out on the eleventh day. The water was rationed at six ounces a day for each man.

The sail was rigged and a nice breeze kept us moving along. It was the only thing we had to be cheerful about. The boat shipped water and the spray kept us so wet that our clothing never really did dry out. There was [Continued on page 85]

a bright sun in the sky which kept us pretty warm during the day. The nights were bitter cold and we huddled against one another trying to keep ourselves warm. There wasn't enough room to lie down so what little sleeping we did was in a sitting position.

We faced each new day eagerly with every pair of eyes hopefully glued on the horizon. For the first week the feeling persisted that each day would be the one when we would be picked up. I kept count of the passing days by scratching marks on the side of the boat. I would draw four upright lines and a fifth line through them to represent five days.

By the eighth day, even the most optimistic man among us lost his eagerness. Our thoughts weren't on rescue ships any longer. Now we were on the lookout for land. Bill and I passed the time talking about what we would do after we were saved and we agreed that the day we got back to the States we would get a real southern fish fry.

Bill had run a little restaurant before he joined the Navy so he knew the precise manner in which the food should be prepared. Fried to a golden brown, he said, with plenty of melted butter, and a heap of savory potatoes on the side. This description was more than Carlos could stand. His dark face was a picture of fury as he screamed Spanish curses at us. It took me several minutes to figure out why he was angry—because he didn't like us to be talking about food at a time like this.

All of us were pretty testy and irritable and it didn't take much to make us fly off the handle. I told Carlos to keep his face shut or I'd shut it for him. An argument sprang up all over the boat with everybody taking sides. Since the food we were going to eat after being saved was rarely absent from the conversation of any of us, Carlos got the worst of the argument. He retreated sullenly into his

shell, convinced that the only reason we talked about these tasty dishes was to plague him.

BILL and I had just gone back to our dreams about food when I heard someone in the prow of the boat say in a low, tense voice: "Shut up!" Then half a minute later, "Shut up, you fool!"

We stopped our conversation and looked over. Walter, the colored mess man was reeling on his feet, a wild light in his eyes.

"There's the island!" he half groaned, half shouted. "There's the land I been telling you about. See it! See the palm trees waving."

Ever since the fourth day Walter had predicted that we would wash up on a tropical island. Bill and I, whose place in the boat was at the stern, made our way forward. "There's no land, Walter," I said.

He paid no attention to me. Getting down on his knees, he prayed: "Thank you, Lord, for our deliverance."

He was the only happy one in the boat and it was a pity to disillusion him. Bill told him to pull himself together and take another look at the empty ocean. Walter looked.

"You mean you can't see that island right over there?" he asked incredulously. It was only fifty yards off starboard, he said, so he couldn't understand why we too didn't see it. When we didn't put in to his "island" he became frantic. He screamed that it was a deliberate plot on our part to keep him from being saved. Before any of us could do anything about it, he dived overboard and began swimming. We hauled down the sail, broke out the oars and rowed after him. As we pulled alongside, five of us reached out and dragged him, struggling and protesting, into the life boat. We had to tie his arms and legs to keep him from going overboard again.

The next morning he was calm and we untied him. By late afternoon he began

having more visions. This time he thought he saw a fishing boat following us. He also saw a water taxi that visited all the boats on the sea, selling crabs. He dug into his money belt, pulled out a \$5 bill, pressed it into my hand and begged me to buy him a bucket of crabs.

I stuffed the bill back into his pocket and told him to take it easy. With my head I motioned to Bill to bring over the rope. Walter knew what that meant; he began to grin and tell us that the vision was gone and that he was all right. No sooner had I returned to my position in the boat than he went overboard again. It took us an hour to get him back.

Bill thought that maybe Walter was going out of his head because his clothes were wet all the time. We had one rubber suit in the boat and we put it on the colored mess man, hoping that if he stayed dry his sanity would return.

The days kept getting warmer so we knew we were making headway toward the African coast. We ran out of water on the tenth day. We still had a four-day supply of food. Our cigarettes had long since been exhausted. In the first ten days I lost about thirty pounds in weight. My stomach was in so far it felt like it was touching my spine.

On the fourteenth night a violent storm hit us. Some of the waves were sixty feet high. We rode them like a roller coaster. Everyone stayed awake that night. Ten men worked with Bill in an effort to keep the boat from capsizing, while Steve and I made a funnel from a piece of wire and sailcloth and held it over a five-gallon tin can whose top we had cut off. In that way we managed to catch a quart and a half of rain water. It was impossible to keep salt water spray from flying in, so from then on all the water we drank was salty.

The storm lifted shortly before dawn and some of us tried to get a few hours sleep. Just as I closed my eyes one of the merchant seamen yelled out that Walter was gone. During the storm he somehow managed to work his feet free. We knew it because that piece of rope was found in the bottom of the boat. The other piece of rope wasn't found so I guess when he went overboard his hands were still tied. It took us a couple of hours to figure that out, though. We lowered the sail, dropped out the sea anchor, waited until it was light and rowed back. We looked for him for two hours before starting on our way again.

THE death of the mess man had a depressing effect on all of us. Bill said he thought that someone should say a prayer, and asked if there was anyone in the boat who could do it. Steve Kubick said he thought he could. He took a damp, frayed copy of the New Testament from his sea jacket and read the Twenty-third Psalm. His throat was dry so his voice was cracked and strained as he read: "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Kubick stopped and closed the book. There was a deep silence. All heads stayed bowed and I don't think there was a dry eye in the boat. It was our first prayer in fourteen days. It did so much to knit our troubled spirits together that we decided to hold prayer meetings every day. We would read aloud two chapters of the text, one after the noon and one after the evening ration. The reading assignments were to be rotated in regular order.

While we were still looking for Walter I had happened to lean over the side of the boat and noted that some seaweed clung to the bottom. After Steve finished reading the Psalm, I reached over and grabbed a handful of the slimy stuff. There were some crabs about half the size of my little finger nail clinging to it.

I ate the seaweed and the live crabs. The other men watched to see what effect this would have on me. When nothing happened they all reached over and helped themselves.

The tiny crabs and seaweed kept us going for two days. It gave some of the men cramps and I got an attack of diarrhea but we ate it, anyway. After this was gone the food situation became really desperate.

I once read in a magazine article somewhere that a couple of sailors adrift in a life boat managed to keep themselves alive by grabbing sea gulls that landed on their craft. We had no such luck. There wasn't a bird in the sky, let alone on our boat. There were fish hooks in our emergency kit and although we put them out on a line on the very first day we didn't catch a thing. I saw literally hundreds of fish in the ocean, many so close to the boat that some of the men grabbed at them. It was maddening the way they ignored our hooks. Maybe they didn't like pemmican, which is a food concentrate made of dried apples, vegetable fats, kidney fats and shredded coconut, that we used to bait the hooks.

I knew from having seen many movies that natives fish with spears. Since it was the only constructive idea we had left in the food department I tried it. I ripped up a slat from the bilge locker and tied a sheath knife to one end of it. For the next four hours I stood in the prow of the boat and lunged away at every fish that came within reach. I didn't even come close. The guys in the boat perked up a little when I first started, but after awhile when it began to look like I would never catch anything, they lost interest. I put in six hours on the second day without catching anything. I went back to my place in the stern, seated myself, cupped my chin in my hands and stared moodily at the water.

Bill patted me on the shoulder. "Stop worrying," he said. "You did your best." "I'm not worrying," I said. "I'm just trying to dope out where I've been making a mistake."

"Find anything wrong?" Bill asked.

"I don't know. All I can figure out is that because I stand in the sun the fish can see me. Maybe if I get in the shadows and go at them that way—"

"Maybe," Bill said.

The following day I waited until five in the afternoon when the slanting rays of the sun threw long shadows in front of our bow. I was on my knees for an hour before I made my first try. Two pilot salmon wiggled alongside and I lunged down at one, missing by inches. Even though I missed I had a feeling of confidence because I came so close. My body quivered with excitement. At seven-thirty, just before dark, another pilot salmon came over to investigate the boat. I gripped the spear so tight my hand hurt. I waited until he came within range and then stabbed downward. I put every bit of strength I still had behind that thrust. The blade went right through the salmon's belly. I don't think I've ever done anything in my whole life that gave me such a thrill and pride in accomplishment.

"Bill, I got 'im, I got 'im!" I yelled. My voice cracked with excitement and

the words came out in a high soprano. I tilted the spear and flopped the fish into the boat's bottom. His tail flapped a few times and then he lay still. It was a big baby, weighing about twelve pounds.

Carlos argued that we should eat the fish at once because we were all so weak and had no reason for starving ourselves now that I had the knack. Bill ruled that tonight we would split up one quarter of the fish. Because I was chief fisherman I was to get a special concession. Not only was my cut to be first one off the side, but the head was to be mine as an extra dividend. The salmon was greasy and not of pleasant odor, but then it tasted better than any T-bone steak I have ever eaten.

THE next afternoon I caught two more fish and we really had a feast. We squeezed the blood and juices from one of them and drank it. Then a whole fish was cut up and a big hunk dealt out to each man.

Late in the afternoon of the 19th day, Carlos, standing watch, spotted a ship on the horizon. His excitement was so great he became hysterical. The boat appeared to be heading toward us and we gave up thanks for the deliverance that was at hand. Carlos wanted me to pass out all the food we had on hand so that we would have sufficient strength to row out to the ship. Once again I over-ruled him. It was getting to be a habit. I told him I wouldn't hand out another mouthful of food until we were on board the rescue vessel. I got out the Very pistol and put a shell in it. I stood up in the prow of the boat and fired a shot into the sky. It went up like a rocket and burst into a shower of sparks. The ship on the horizon, however, grew no larger and an hour later it disappeared entirely from view.

It took the heart out of most of us and as the days slipped by in weary procession we just sat glumly waiting for the end. Even with our diet of fish we were growing steadily weaker. Our cheeks were hollow and our eyes glazed. Heavy beards covered our faces. The clothes rotted away from our bodies.

What kept me going was prayer, work and thoughts of home. More and more, Bill, Steve and I talked about our home life. I told them about my parents in Charles City, Iowa, and how they would be worrying about me. I was the youngest son. I didn't know that a month after the torpedoing they had received a telegram from the Navy Department reporting me missing in action and that they had already held a burial service for me. I told them about the days when I was a cub reporter for the Lawton Constitution in Lawton, Okla., and about May Lois Gray, my home-town sweetheart whom I was expecting to marry on my next leave.

On the thirty-seventh day we drifted past some floating garbage and late in the afternoon we caught our first sight of sea gulls. Bill said it was a sure sign that we were near land and for a time a few of us felt better. But we were so weak in body that the good feeling didn't last long. When I caught a fish, it took three of us to raise it into the boat.

The fortieth day found us deep in the dumps. With each succeeding day we got more and more evidence that land was near, but now we paid no attention to it. It was weeks since anyone had bothered to look at the chart. We were wrong in figuring our position so many times that we figured it was just a waste of energy,

then the scarcest commodity in the boat.

We just drifted, growing weaker and weaker. Sometimes there was a brisk breeze and sometimes we were completely becalmed. Some nights it rained and we would have water. Then there were stretches of dry weather and thirst would parch our throats. Days lost all meaning. They were only scratch marks to be made with a rusty nail on the side of the boat.

I stood watch on the afternoon of the forty-sixth day. There were so many birds in the air that the first time I saw the flying object far in the distance I marked it down as a gull and looked away. Almost immediately the thought hit me that it was pretty big for a gull and I looked again. It was a four-engine PBV plane! I yelled for the Very pistol. Voorhis handed it to me and with trembling fingers I loaded it, held it in the air and squeezed the trigger.

The hammer clicked dully. Nothing happened. I tried it again and again, but the shell wouldn't explode. With a deep groan of disappointment, I grabbed a piece of sailcloth and began waving it. Others in the boat picked up whatever they could find and also waved. At last the plane headed toward us, swooped over our heads, banked and flew back toward wherever it had come from.

IN AN hour, smoke appeared on the horizon. Then more smoke and still more. Pretty soon a whole convoy came into view. A British destroyer cut out of line and headed toward us. She was speaking to us with her signal blinker, but none of us could read it.

The destroyer came within a mile of us and then began circling, throwing depth charges as she did. The reason for this was that our life boat was a metal craft and the sub detector aboard the destroyer was registering it. They just weren't taking any chances about any subs being in the vicinity. We might have been part of a Nazi trick.

After circling us once, they signalled again with their blinker and, when they received no reply, maneuvered alongside. Two seamen came down on ropes. When they got into the boats they hooked the ropes under our armpits and we were hoisted, two at a time, up on deck. The minute we were on board, the destroyer blew up the life boat with a well-aimed shell and headed back for the convoy.

I asked only two questions. I wanted to know what month it was and where we were when we had been picked up.

A British sailor told me that it was March and that we were off the African Coast. The doctor aboard ship examined us and gave us each a piece of buttered French bread and a Limey cigarette. We took showers, put on dry clothes and were put to bed. We were told to stay in bed for a week, but after the first day I felt so good that I got out—and promptly fell flat on my face. I had forgotten how to walk. I had to crawl on my hands and knees back into bed.

I recovered at the naval base in Gibraltar and eventually was put aboard a convoy headed for the States. When I checked in at the Armed Guard Center in Brooklyn on April 13th, I learned that of our original crew of seventy-three, twenty-one had been killed. That night Bill and I had the fish fry we had been talking about for so long. I hardly tasted my food.

I weighed 171 pounds when I first set out. I was under 120 when we were picked up. I have gained back much of the weight now and I'm back at my post, waiting for a ship.

U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD WWI and WWII VETERANS
"11th NATIONAL REUNION — May 27-31, 1992

Clarion Hotel, 1500 Canal Street, New Orleans (NOLA) Louisiana 70112
Outside LA 1-800-824-3359 In LA 1-800-843-4833 Local 522-4500 Fax 504-525-2644

Dear Armed Guard, Ladies and Guests:

September 21, 1991

From the hosts of this wonderful Reunion, we would like to welcome you to the beautiful City of New Orleans, the home of many Armed Guard who were trained here and nearby Gulfport, Mississippi and shipped out of this Base during the hectic days of World War II. The Base was then known as Algiers. Many of the ships were sunk outside the harbor at the mouth of the Mississippi River. We will hold a Memorial Service at the Plaque placed on the Algiers Base.

The first crews came to New Orleans in February of 1942 and the people at the Base did not know who or what the Armed Guard were. In the next 30 days, 90 per cent of the base was a "SPECIAL UNIT" called the Armed Guard. They came in from Gunnery Schools elsewhere and many shipped out the next day, as ships had were loaded and waiting for their gun crews. Some left one day and came back the same day, a survivor of a sunken ship. This why Reunions are held!! They give us Ol'Salts a chance to reminisce those days of the past.

One night, we will have a MARDI GRAS DINNER and DANCE. We will do our best to keep you entertained. We will also have a Dinner Cruise on the Ol'Mississippi River and a CAJUN FEST, good Ol'Louisiana cookings!! If you are on a SPECIAL DIET, please let us know so we can prepare what is needed to the best of our ability. We have no tours booked as the Tour Company will be in the Lobby of the Hotel to handle them and you can pick those you like, if you so desire.

New Orleans is a pretty City. Many attractions of shops, music of all kinds with JAZZ and CAJUN at it's best. In behalf of the New Orleans Host Committee and the City of New Orleans, WE WELCOME YOU "OL'SALTS" BACK HOME. We hope you will enjoy your stay here with us.

Your Hosts,

Elmer and Doris Vincent
20181 Chandler St., Covington, LA 70433
1-504-892-7537



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PLEASE NOTE

All Reservations must be accompanied by FIRST NIGHT'S DEPOSIT (room plus 11% tax). Payment of Deposit can be made by personal check or accepted credit card number (American Express, Carte Blanche, Diners, Discover or Euro Card, Visa, Master Charge Card). Deposit is refundable only if hotel is notified 72 hours before arrival date.

SERVICES AVAILABLE...

- Complimentary shuttle to and from French Quarter and downtown shopping/entertainment complexes
- Two restaurants, two lounges and a 24-hour deli
- Pool, exercise room, and hot tub

* CHECK-IN TIME — 3:00 p.m.

* CHECK-OUT TIME — NOON

Number of persons per room _____ Number of beds per room _____

Reservations must be received by APRIL 27, 1992
in order to guarantee the convention rate.

SINGLE	\$67.00
DOUBLE	\$67.00

PLEASE CIRCLE TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION AND RATE:

If the rate/room you have requested is no longer available, the next available rate/room category will be assigned.

TOTAL ENCLOSED PLUS 11% TAX _____

ADD \$1.00 per room per night occupancy tax _____

or Accepted Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date: _____

Signature _____

(AHOY) U.S.Navy Armed Guard WW II "11TH" National Reunion (SAILORS)
Clarion Hotel, 1500 Canal St., New Orleans, La. 70112
1-800-824-3359 or; Local 504-522-4500
May 27-31, 1992

(Y'ALL COME) _____ (YOU HEAR)

Registration: Wednesday May 27, 1992 10:00 AM til 5:00 PM
Thursday May 28, 1992 10:00 AM til 5:00 PM
Friday May 29, 1992 10:00 AM til 5:00 PM
Saturday May 30, 1992 8:00 AM til 9:00 AM 11:00 AM til 5 PM
Sunday May 31, 1992 7:00 AM til 8:00 AM "Late Comers"

Our Itinerary for the Reunion is as Follows:

Wednesday May 27 Day Open Tours Available in the Lobby MENTION ARMED GUARD
FREE SHUTTLE BUS AVAILBLE TO AND FROM HOTEL.
Thursday May 28 9:00 AM Hospitality Room Open. Enjoy the City
6:00 PM Board Buses for the RIVER BOAT "NATCHEZ" for Cruise
and Cajun Food Festival.LIMIT. FIRST-700 ONLY BASIS
Friday May 29 9:00 AM Board Buses to NAVY BASE for Memorial Service at
the ARMED GUARD PLAQUE, ALGIERS, LA.
6:00 PM Cash Bar Open in GRAND BALLROOM
7:00 PM DINNER DANCE IN the BALLROOM til--?? DON'T MISS IT!
Saturday May 30 9:00 AM Business Meeting til 11 AM. Day open!! Hospitality.
Room open til 5 PM. PLEASE HAVE PICTURES TAKEN.
6:00 PM til 7:00 PM CASH BAR OPEN IN GRAND BALLROOM.
7:00 PM Banquet in the GRAND BALLROOM
Sunday May 31 8:00 AM BREAKFAST GRAND BALLROOM
10:30 "SO LONGS"--"ADIOS" til LAS VEGAS in 1993.

ITINERARY COSTS: (You do not have to cut out form, WRITE OUT what's desired)

Thursday	"RIVERBOAT NATCHEZ" Cruise	\$36. Per Person	Total \$ _____
Friday	Bus to Algiers Naval Base	\$ 6. Per Person	Total \$ _____
	Dinner Dance in BALLROOM	\$35. Per Person	Total \$ _____
Saturday	Banquet in GRAND BALLROOM	\$35. Per Person	Total \$ _____
Sunday	Breakfast in BALLROOM	\$15. Per Person	Total \$ _____

YOUR CHECK OR M.O. # _____ GRAND TOTAL PAID---\$ _____

LAST NAME: _____ FIRST _____ M _____ MATE _____

STREET _____ BOX _____ CITY _____ SATE _____ ZIP _____

TELE:() _____ HANDICAPPED? []-YES []-NO []-SPECIAL DIET

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER OUT TO: "U.S.N. ARMED GUARD REUNION".

MAIL TO:

ELMER VINCENT 20181 CHANDLER DR., COVINGTON, LA. 70433

"EVERYTHING" IS ON A "FIRST COME BASIS"

"OUR MOTTO WAS" WE AIM TO DELIVER-"WE DID"

You do NOT have to cut any forms out of your "Pointer!" Make a xerox copy or send in your own order.



Lone Sailor

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



DEDICATION

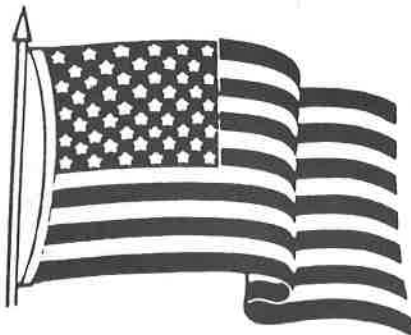
To the Officers and Men who sailed the ships of
World War II,
especially to those who lost their lives, and to
their families.

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

SEPTEMBER 17, 1991