

THE POINTER

MAY/SEP 2008 EDITION

The Navy Log

The U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation
Washington, D.C.

THOMAS ROY BOWERMAN



MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY - 1943

Rate / Rank

GM2

Service Branch

USNR

Service Dates

2/1942 - 2/1946

Born

4/6/1922

PENSACOLA, FL

SIGNIFICANT DUTY STATIONS

SS CHARLES M. HALL
SS ESSO NASHVILLE
SS CHARLES SUMNER
SS LEWIS LUCKENBACH
SS ESSO PROVIDENCE

SIGNIFICANT AWARDS

PURPLE HEART
AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL
ASIATIC PACIFIC CAMPAIGN MEDAL
EUROPEAN AFRICAN MIDDLE EASTERN CAMPAIGN MEDAL
WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL

3941 – Robert Abbott, H.E Ian Whitting
 Britain's Ambassador to Iceland, and
 Yekaterina Yermolina, Murmansk
 Gymnasium #9



Dear Lloyd,
 Enclosed is a photo showing Neil Klopfenstein, Deputy Chief Of Mission and Commander Patrick Geraghty of the American Embassy and U.S. Navy Armed Guard WW II Veteran Robert "Bob" Abbott of Oregon laying a wreath at the Fossvogur Cemetery In Reykavick, Iceland on Saturday July 12, 2008 as part of the memorial of the conference "The Arctic Convoys: A lifeline Across The Atlantic." In the background (l-r) are Anatoly Lifshits, Russian Veteran; Gudbjorn Gudjonsson and Petur Olafsson, Icelandic Veterans and Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, President of Iceland.

Eliza

THE POINTER

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 Crew and the Rest of you!

May/Sept. 2008 Edition

I finally got around to getting another Pointer printed! Thank you for your letters, calls and concern of the delay. I will try to do better. All's well here besides a few pains which I am told, comes with the aging process. Guess you may have a few yourself. Not only are we the "GREATEST GENERATION", we are the "OLDEST" NOW!

This editon's cover of the POINTER of the late Tom Bowerman is to Honor him for his years of Service to his country and for his devotion in saving the History of the U.S.N.Armed Guard in WW II. Without him, all he saved would never have been known. He started his AG Web Site some 16 years ago and it was all "GRATIS". All people with computers has to do is to type in at GOOGLE www.armed-guard.com. Ron Carlson, a docent on the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN is the KEEPER of it now and I hope he can continue a long time and pass it along to someone else in the future, be it 50 years or 500 years or more. Hope the ship is sailing then, also. Do not email or call Ron with questions, contact me.

Robert "Bob" Abbott and George Kost were the only ones on our mailing list from the USA to sign on to attend the Iceland Ceremony to the NORTH ATLANTIC RUN. Abbott was the only one to attend. Kost had some health problems a few days before but doing well now.

I had been trying for years to get an Armed Guard/Merchant Seaman reunion together and since the MM reunion in Oregon was a success and when Morris Ed Harvey (MM) 8055 Dacca Terr., Dunellon, Fl. 34433 352-564-0267 morrisharvey27@yahoo.com called and asked, "Would we be interested in holding one together" and after a few calls to Al Sniff and others, they all said, "GO FOR IT". Ed will be looking after it with our help. It will be held in Tampa, Fl. May 14 thru 17, 2009 and sail the S.S. AMERICAN VICTORY together on the 16th, if we can get a hotel. Harvey has met with several hotels and at this time, neither has been selected. More on this in the next POINTER. I hope your health and money holds out so we can get together for the "LAST FINALE." The countries we saved from their enemy in WW II has forgotten who their friends were and out to ruin our economy. (Plus-Politicians) Here's to your health. Vote your concience.

calloyd



*** Cover photo - In memory Tom Bowerman who spent over 15 years putting together the Armed-Guard Website www.armed-guard.com

Officers for 2007

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& Sec.Treas. 1985-2009
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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

*Remember, I "STILL" can't move
as fast as I did when I was in my
reventies! When you call, let the
phone ring so I can get to it! -CAL*

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

E-MAILS to look at, by calloyd
USN ARMED GUARD WW II
www.armed-guard.com
By the late Tom Bowerman of
Anniston, Ala.

www.thefrenchwillneverforget.com
From
THE AMERICAN LEGION MAG
6/2008
www.navalorder.org

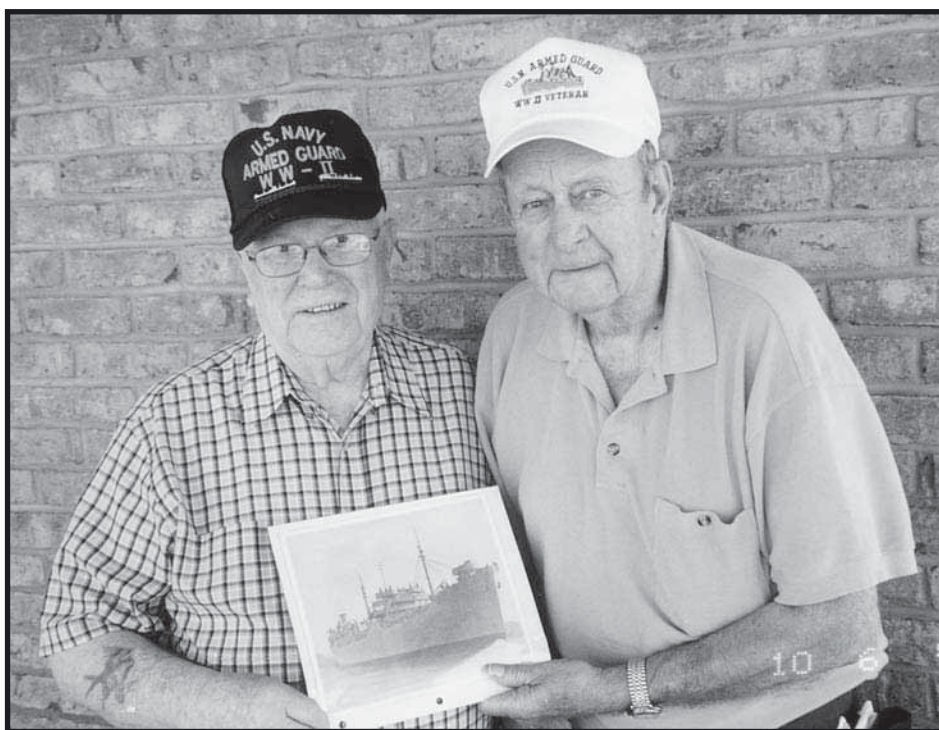
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hello Charles,

You asked, "What are your sailing dates for the rest of 2008 and 2009." Thank you for your interest in the S.S. AMERICAN VICTORY. All of our tours, cruises and volunteer information is located at our web address americanvictory.org and our next cruise is November 8, 2008 and the ticket price is \$125..Hope you and others can be with us. Have a great day. Noelle Vohs, Purser, S.S. AMERICAN VICTORY 705 Channelside Dr. Tampa, Fl. 33602

Noelle, not all of our crew has computers so I will put this up front for "SNOW-BIRDS"!! PLUS!! MM Morris Ed Harvey 8055 Dacca Ter., Dunnellon, Fl. 34433 352-564-0267 morrisbarvey27@yahoo.com and I have in the "WORKS" to hold an "AG/MM WW II FINAL REUNION" together in Tampa on May 14-17th, 2009 if all goes well and we can get a decent priced hotel there and we hope to sail the S.S. AMERICAN VICTORY on the 16th if she can pass the Coast Guard inspection and any problems corrected by then. Those of you who think they can make it, please let me know as soon as possible by writing, calling or E-Mail me stating: COUNT ME IN FOR (#) PEOPLE. This will give me a number to go by, by October, so we can make plans with the hotel. Results will be in the next POINTER. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Bob (Whitey) Simmons and Bob Severson in Cleveland, OH.

C.A.,

Here is a picture of an old Armed Guard buddy and myself that I had not seen since 8/21/1945 when we left the T-2 tanker S.S. WAHOO SWAMP after being on board since 8/30/44. He stopped over in Cleveland, Ohio on 6/10/2008 to see me and we had breakfast together and a very nice, few hours together talking of old times and our Navy life together. You told me once that this is what the Armed Guard Association was all about and you were right and I want to THANK YOU for keeping it alive. Our meeting was priceless. In the photo, I am on the left and Bob Stevenson 2598 SW National Cir., Port St Lucie, Fl. 34953 920-360-7270 is on the right.

Robert B. Simmons 6434 Ledgebrook Dr., Brook Park, Oh. 44142

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

C.A. Lloyd,

Thanks for your phone call this evening. Attached is a better copy of

the article on the S.S. HENRY BACON I had sent. Hang in there guy. You do good work. We appreciate it.

Richard C. Haberer 12064 Maxim Way, Cincinnati, Oh. 45249
SEE PAGE 18

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

C.A.,

Here is Camera-Ready graphic of BETRAYAL in the NORTH ATLANTIC. I am trying to get all the History of the Armed Guard/ Merchant Marine and what they did while I am able. Thank you for your help.

Zed Merrill, Armed Guard.
SEE PAGE 24

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Book "UNSUNG SAILORS"
By Justin Gleichauf is available see below

Hello Mr. Lloyd,
We do have Unsung Sailors in paper back available list price \$21.95 1,748 available ISBN: 155750-4202. Heroes

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

in Dungarees also available in paper back 1,246 available list price \$19.95 ISBN: 159114-0094. Please contact me if you have any further questions or if I can be of assistance. Have a great day! Debra Smith, Member Services

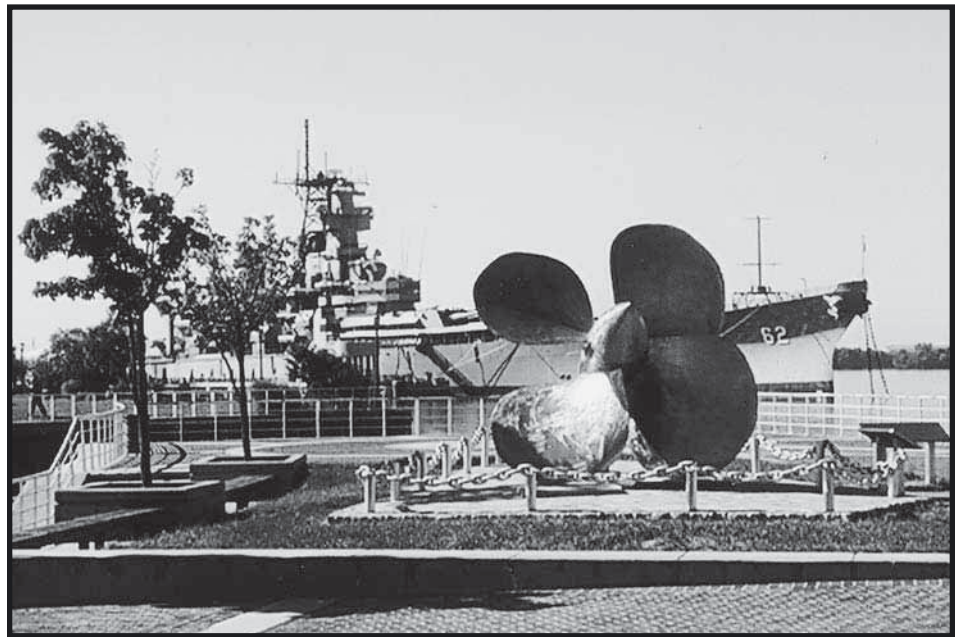
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles,
Enclosed is the photo of the U.S. MERCHANT MARINE/U.S. NAVY ARMED MEMORIAL near the USS NEW JERSEY in Camden, N.J. which was dedicated June 11, 2005. Joseph CiCiollo, 32 Gray Birch Rd., Titusville, N.J. 08012

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Aboard the Liberty Ship S.S. LIL-
LIAN NORDICA World War II
excerpts kept from 12/17/44-4/31/45.
Lt(jg) Howard was our Gunnery
Officer and there were 27 enlisted men
who took care of the 10 guns aboard
the ship. On 12/17/44, I reported on
deck as the Gunners Mate in charge of
the 5"38 and the Hydraulic Specialist.
It was my responsibility to inspect,
check and order supplies, replenish the
hydraulic system, etc..

We left New York on 1/1/45 for desti-
nation unknown. On 1/3/45, we
received word there was a sub in the
area and that a tanker was sunk off of
Boston and we had been at sea only 24
hours. On 1/16/45, at 0200, depth
charges were dropping all around us
and a hospital ship broke through the
convoy as we entered the English
Channel and we learned we were going
to Antwerp, Belgium. We anchored at
Downs, England and on the 18th, we
formed a convoy to Antwerp. We could
see the coast of Calais, France and ack-
ack guns firing at some German planes.
We were a 11 ship convoy and we had to
go in single file in order to enter the
Schelde River to Antwerp. We are at
GQ with everyone at their guns and the
D.E.'s are trying to locate the subs



U.S. Merchant Marine U.S. Navy Armed Guard Memorial

attacking us. Two of our ships have
been hit and were told to pull out of the
line to sink, to keep from sinking and
blocking the entrance to the river.

On 1/23/45, we are nine ships traveling
up the river. When darkness
approached, we had to drop anchor as
traveling at night was too dangerous for
mines for we did not have radar.

During the night, a German bomber
flew over looking for us but were
instructed to not open fire as it would
give our position away and the shrapnel
would come down on the troops. The
plane was not shot down and flew away.

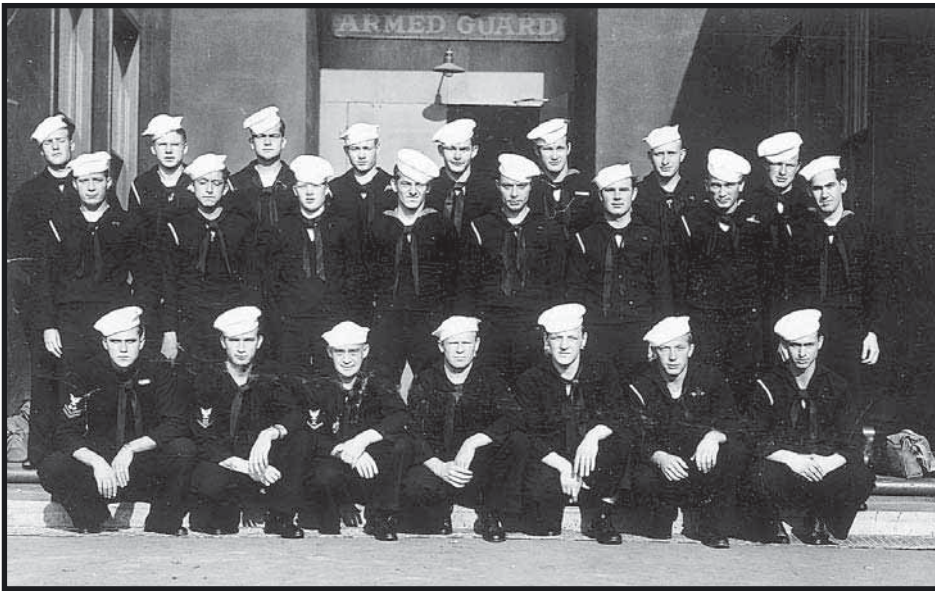
On 1/23/45, we lifted anchor and sailed
for Antwerp. We were standing watch
with 30-06 Springfield rifles for
underwater swimmers so they couldn't
attach explosives to the ships. The ship
arrived and we went through the locks
and docked at 0300. We were advised
that a German 109-F fighter plane
straffed the docks the day before look-
ing for us but we were a day late. At
0700, the BUZZ BOMBS started and
flew continuously over our ship and
some were being shot down by the land
Ack-Ack guns. Others flew into the
city of Antwerp hitting hotels and busi-

ness buildings.

On the 26th, 27th and 28th, our ship
was being unloaded and had Liberty
and some went to Brussels but it was
off limit. I had to pick up the mail, then
return to the ship, then have Liberty, so
I remained in Antwerp during these
days and saw the movie theatre get hit
by a buzz bomb. I did some shopping
and bought my mother some needle
point hankies, my sister Claire some
wooden shoes made in Holland, a
German Arm Band and I traded the
shoes for army combat boots. I bought
some perfume called "PRINTEMP"
for my girlfriend. I visited the
Cathedral which was beautiful. All the
pictures and costly items were protect-
ed from the bombing. The railroad sta-
tion was almost demolished.

We left Antwerp on 2/1/45 for Cardiff,
South Wales. I tried to locate my Army
brother Armand who was stationed
somewhere in England. The R.T.O.
ashore gave me a phone number to call
and with no luck until I met Shelia
O'Leary who showed me how to use the
phone. I located my brother in Ipswich,
North of London I spoke with him on
the phone and told him that I was able
to get a 3 day pass to visit him.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



S.S. Elizabeth Blackwell Crew

I took a train out of Cardiff on 2/11/45 and arrived in London and stayed at the Columbia Hotel overnight and took the train the next morning to his base. He showed me around the base and barracks and the airfield which was full of P-51 fighter planes. Next morning, we left for London and there, took a taxi tour of London. Visited Marcell and his wife and had dinner with them. Then, Armand and I went to Au Bijou night club. Next morning, we visited the changing of the guards at Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London.

I returned to the ship on the 17th and on the 22nd, we lifted anchor for Antwerp and the escorts dropped depth charges so they must have spotted a sub. We anchored at the Island of White and left on the 25th and on the 26th we went to GQ at 0700. Two ships damaged, one sunk. We arrived in Antwerp on the 27th. We went on Liberty and 3 of us were going into a bar but did not due to no activity so we went into another bar called the Café Francaise a block away. While we were there, a V-2 hit the building we almost went into. The building was demolished!! We were lucky!!

On 3/1/45, I went ashore to pick up the mail and V-1 bombs were flying over all day. We left Antwerp on 3/4/45 and on

the 5TH, we anchored off shore at Southern, England. On the 6th, 7th and 8th, a German plane flew over the ship, the 4th ship reported hit and sinking. Escorts opened fire on something and depth charges dropping all around us. German subs reported. One reported captured we joined a 80 ship convoy to New York. Ran into bad weather with heavy wind and rain for several days. Then good weather but cold and snow. Had to shovel snow off the deck. Cleaned the guns and prepared for the States. Arrived in New York 3/25/45. Received mail, called home and went on Liberty.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Lloyd,

9/4/2007

I was in the U.S. Merchant Marine from June 1944 through Nov. 1952. During the war I shipped out on a T-2 Tanker, S.S. SMOKY HILLS and spent 14 months under the protection of the greatest bunch of men, the Navy Armed Guard. We had two engagements with the enemy in the Pacific and our Armed Guard gave them hell. I was the hotshellsman on the 3"50 on the bow gun tub. As a fifteen and one half year old, I thought it would be great fun, but later, I understood the sacri-

fice that these men made to protect our ship, our sailors and our vital cargo.

Please accept my donation with respect and love for all of those great guys. I would like to become active in this organization. Enclosed is a picture of the HILLS. Please let me know who I can contact in Southern California. Respectfully,
Arthur Webster,
7032 Partridge Pl., Carlsbad, Ca. 92011
760-804-7365 toroweb@aol.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

I came across this picture and several others. I am sorry but I have no names to go with it but in Memory of our fine men and that of my late husband, Robert B. Iwema, I would like to share it. If you can or can not use it, please return it. You have his ship's records he was on. The photo was of the S.S. ELIZABETH BLACKWELL Nov. 11, 1943 at San Francisco, Ca. Bob is 1st row, left end of row. Keep up the good work.

Mrs. Robert B. Iwema, 1607 Sunset Ln., Fullerton, Ca. 92833.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

From the AMMV Emerald Sea Chapter comes this story which has been told before.

Aug. 20, 1944, the S.S. RICHARD MONTGOMERY ran aground in the Thames Estuary with a load of bombs and during the night, she swung around at her mooring and ran aground on the sand. Her plates began to crack and buckle. Shortly afterwards, work began to remove the cargo. The ship's own booms and winches were used. Salvage work was used for several days until a storm struck. She drug anchor and broke her back and split into two parts and she

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

remains there today. Should it ever explode, they say it would be the the largest non-nuclear explosion ever had. Salvage experts says it is safer to leave as is than try to remove it. The booms are still visible. She carried a MM crew of 42, and 25 Armed Guard. There were no casualties.

As I was reading about the S.S. RICHARD MONTGOMERY and had typed this much. I stopped and read the rest and saw another interested article which appeared to be written by a British lady but had no name or address as to the writer so I called Ed Lingenfield to get a name and come to find out, his British wife of 14 years wrote story and after talking with them, I asked her to E-Mail me the story which they have and I will let her story tell it as she saw it. Thank you Beryl. (cal) -SEE pg. 14-

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A TRIBUTE TO ALL THE "MESSBOYS"

Bill Schneider, P.O. Box 4751 Ventura, Ca. 805-647-3749 sent me his certificate of discharge from the Department Of Commerce as a "MESSBOY" and I wanted to HONOR all of the "MESSBOYS" for a job well done. They did their job and to my knowledge, they have never been honored. As my brother, Louis E. (Jack) Lloyd was a messboy in the MM on the S.S. WILLIAM D. HOARD, also, I would like to say, SALUTE to you. Jack said he peeled more potatoes than he ever thought were ever grown. (calloyd)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

From David Raymond of PSC Box 8R APO AP 96554 who lives DOWNUNDER, Australia, Saying he received the Jan/Apr 2008 POINTER and states he was taking a flight around the world on the Singapore Airways for he can go around the world cheaper than flying to and from Germany providing you make 3 stopovers so he was off to Singapore, for 4 days, Germany for 2 weeks, Phoenix, Az. for 3 weeks,

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE BUREAU OF MARINE INSPECTION AND NAVIGATION Certificate of Discharge <i>William F. Schneider</i> (Signature of Seaman) I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above entries were made by me and are correct and true to the best of my knowledge and belief. Dated this <u>10</u> day of <u>Sept</u> , 19 <u>42</u> United States Shipping Commissioner. (or Master of Vessel)		Name of Seaman <u>William F. Schneider</u> (In full) Citizenship <u>U.S.</u> Certificate of Identification No. <u>296007</u> Rating <u>Mess Boy</u> (Capacity in which employed) Date of Shipment <u>7-14-42</u> Place of Shipment <u>San Pedro Cal.</u> Date of Discharge <u>9-10-42</u> Place of Discharge <u>Boston Mass</u> Name of Ship <u>Tudalgas</u> Official No. <u>90126</u> Class of Vessel <u>Steam</u> (Steam, Motor, Sail or Barge) Nature of Voyage <u>Intercoastal</u> (Foreign, Intercoastal or Coastwise)
--	--	---

Certificate of Discharge, Bill Schneider 805-647-3749

Hawaii for 1 week to rest up and and home. On their International flights, the drinks and meals are free. (Modern Travel) cal

(APO address, in case those of you who don't know is an American address for some gov. people overseas.) (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SEE PAGE 36

Dear Mr. Lloyd

I was on the S.S. HIRAM S. MAXIM that was bombed during the night 10/4/43, 10 miles off Cape Tenes, Algeria. There were no AG casualties. We were all told to abandon ship as the engine room is where to bomb hit. It was a good thing it hit where it did as our 4 holds were full of bombs so none of us would have survived. I have a copy of my Survivor Card (No. 8104) showing I was interviewed and there were Forms NNI-142 and 142-X executed and forwarded on 10/26/43 at Port Said with R.S. Rauch, Jr Lt(jg)'s signature. Enclosed is my service number and I was a SM1/c at the time. I made GM2/c in 1944 until discharged. Clarence D Haugen
6307 83rd Ave. SE,
Snohomish, Wa. 98290
360-568-3316

Haugen, You can't get much closer than that can you? Art Moore's book indicate's no casualties and the ship was towed to Algiers and it's precious cargo was saved. Your ship crew

were abandoned in 5 lifeboats and the S.S. LESLIE M. SHAW picked up 29 men and the S.S. HARRY LANE picked up the other 40. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear C.A.

6/8/08

I read the Jan/Apr Pointer with great interest. Particularly the part about the PURPLE HEART MUSEUM located in Vails Gate, New York. This is an area that I am very familiar with. I was born and raised in nearby Cornwall. My grandfather and his family lived most of their lives in Vails Gate. I, myself, lived there when I was first married. I was a Vails Gate volunteer fireman for many years. The museum is located next to the new Windsor Cantonment, also known as Temple Hill. This is where the troops were hunkered down from October 1792 to October 1793. There is a lookout tower on the property where sentries were stationed to watch for signals if the British were coming up the Hudson River.

A chain was strung across the river near West Point in effort to stop enemy ships.

There is a lot of history in the surrounding area located near Stewart International Airport with George Washington's headquarters on the banks

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



of the Hudson River which is about 6 miles away from the city of Newburgh. This is where Washington spent his time directing his troops. This is also the place where he refused the crown. The Merit Badge of Courage was designed here. The PURPLE HEART was originated from that design.

We visited our family in the Cornwall-New Windsor area in May and visted these sites. Thought you may be interested in these pictures taken there. The museum wants any Purple Heart recipient to contact them so they can add their names to the roll. Hope all is well with you and Hilda.

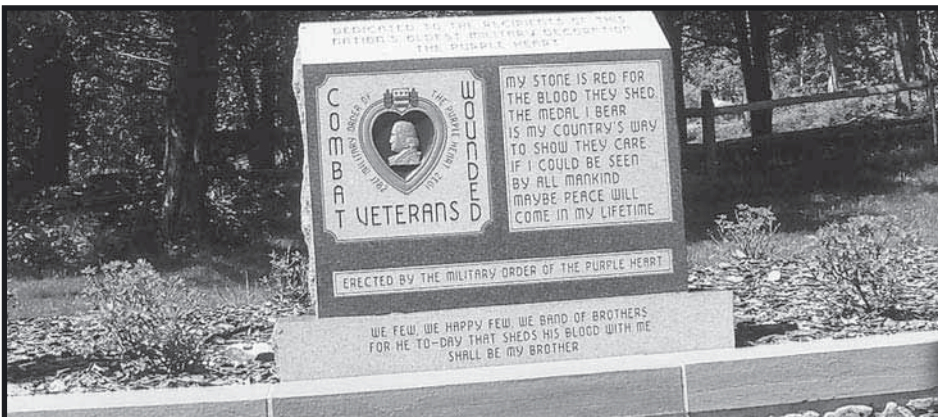
Wm.W. Ball,
300 Wisteria Ct., Deltona, Fl. 32738

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Charles, 3/27/08

It was nice hearing from you. I was so surprised to receive all the items sent to me. I am so delighted to have them. I read the POINTERS nightly at bed-side and find them very interesting as they stir up many memories of my life in service. They also bring much sadness for those who did not return. I love the cap and and wear it proudly. As I was looking through some of my "buried" treasures, though not forgotten, I came upon a picture from Brooklyn Personel Office that I have enclosed of a small group of us at work. I had a copy made for you. On the back are names and addresses of that time that you may be interested in. That's me with the arrow in the left rear. I hope you will have better luck than I did in reading some of their handwriting. (I didn't-cal)

Also, in my search, I located one of the original issues of the POINTER which I have included for you. I guess they were issured periodically and probaly the reason that I clung to it, it has a picture of me as a weight lifting champion in the 148 pound class taken about 3 years before



LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



Armed Guard Office –1944

enlistment. I met with Art Fazzzone at the meeting and lunch on Feb. 27th and then today. It's nice to get together. Art and his wife are very nice and they do a wonderful job. As I mentioned on the phone to you how Art and I worked together for about three years and neither of us mentioned we were in the Armed Guard. Is that not incredible!!! It happens that the Lake George NE Reunion was mentioned and we are going to try and make it. It was great talking with you on the phone and again THANKS so much for what you sent me.

Dominic Colello Y2c 10 Garling Dr.,
Latham, NY 12110 518-785-9555

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ed Neville of 26 Crane St. Avon, Ma 02322 sent me a photo of Aug. 16, 1943 with the names of Ali; Marty; Roy; George; John and Ed. I get many pictures that I don't have room to put in but there was something about this photo showing comradery, happiness and joy of a crew on Liberty. I hope another sees his smile or you may have known one of them in the past. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

To locate a book: If you know the name of the book, go to GOOGLE and type in the name and search. TRY YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE.

Books:

"UNSUNG SAILORS" by Justin Gleichauf ISBN 1557504202
NAVAL INSTITUTE

"MARITIME" as told by men who lived them by Al D'Agostino & Willard Byrd

ISBN 978-1-4251-2348-2

Tel: 1-888-232-4444

WWW.TRAFFORD.COM/10510

"BATTLE of the ARCTIC SEAS" by Theodore Taylor ISBN 10:1-4027-5123-3 800-805-5489
specialsales@sterlingpub.com

"TWO YEARS BEHIND THE MAST" Harold J. McCormick (Out of print) ISBN 0-89745-138-4

"HELL-BENT FOR ADVENTURE" by Jack Mahaney ISBN 1-

4184-4079-5

"GOOD SHIPMATES" by Ernest F. Imhoff 800-711-8985 ISBN 978-1-889901-39-8

"THE ATLANTIC CAMPAIGN" by Dan Van Der Vat ISBN 0-6-O15967-7

"THE TANKERS" A to Z by Walter W. Jappee Glencannon Press 800-711-8985

"BLUE JACKET ODYSSEY" by Wm. L. McGee ISBN 1-889901-05-9 800-7118985

"A CARELESS WRD" by Capt Art Moore Library of Congress Card No. 82-73552

"SHIPS of the ESSO FLEET in World War II. Standard Oil Co (NEW JERSEY)

"OCEANS of LOVE" (WW I letters) by B.J Bryan ISBN 1-4120-6875-4

"THE PLANE SHOOTER" (AGS-CAMP SHELTON, VA) Out of Print



Ali, Marty, Roy, George, John and Ed.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

"PACIFIC LEGACY" Rex Smith-
Gerald Meehl ISBN 0-7892-0761-3

"NAVIES OF WORLD WAR II" by
Anthony Preston ISBN 0 86124-071-5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Snelling Story

Charles,

Thank you for the Jan/Apr 2008 "POINTER". I have read it from cover to cover and it reminded me of my time in the Armed Guard. 1944-46. I volunteered for the Navy when I was 17 so they allowed me to graduate from high school after I was 18. Three days after graduation, I was off to BOOT CAMP at Farragut, Idaho.

America was not doing too well in the Pacific at that time and I was sent to San Diego, California for gunnery school. When that was complete, I went Treasure Island Ca. which became my home base. In about three weeks, I was assigned to a freighter, the S.S. CAPE CUMBERLAND, in a 11-man gun crew with a Lieutenant in charge. My position was Sight Setter on the 3"50 antiaircraft gun. We stood watch for subs but our planes had almost eliminated the sub danger along the Pacific Coast of the USA. The Moore McCormick Line ship was headed for the Panama Canal and on to New Orleans, La. to get a new bottom welded on after damage on a reef in the South Pacific. The three months in dry dock netted us the pay while we were free to go home -- at our own expense---"IF" we could afford it. None of us, except the Texas sailors, could do that so we explored New Orleans. Power was shut off to our ship but some of us stayed aboard, finding our own meals in the greasy spoon joints around the shipyards. With repairs complete, we set sail for Houston, Texas and loaded with sacked wheat. Also, the fresh water tanks were filled with water that had a strong sulfur taste and it made me itch after each shower. A four ship convoy was made up and we headed for Norfolk, Va. with two

destroyers and one cruiser as escorts. The German subs were concentrating on the East entrance of the Panama Canal, so our escorts were kept busy dropping depth charges all around us. We were called out for General Quarters several times but did not see any subs.

At Norfolk, Va., we were placed in a big convoy with a lot of escorts to cross the Atlantic. The first eight days, we did not make much headway during an 80 mile an hour gale. The only place we could stand watch was on the bridge as the decks were always under water, washing from side to side. The main fear was the possibility of colliding with another ship ahead of us or from the side. Total black-out was enforced and we had some near misses. Some life rafts were torn off from the ships ahead of us and came floating by. After the sea calmed down, we could stay in our bunks without trying to sleep and hanging on at the same time. The Armed Guard had our own mess hall with a steward assigned to us. He was an old hand in the Merchant Marine and offer gave us a choice of what we wanted to eat. Somewhere in mid-Atlantic, we received news that Germany had surrendered and in a few days, we met a convoy headed for America. One of the ships had German POWs and they turned around and joined our convoy to return them back to Germany.

When we got to the Mediterranean, the convoy broke up with ships going to different ports and we continued on to Sicily. For several days, we anchored just off the island and were greeted by "BUM BOATS" begging for American cigarettes. Orders finally came to proceed to a small city on the Eastern side of Italy called Bari. It had suffered a lot of bomb damage and were starving. The stevedores were eating handfuls of the wheat whenever a sack would break open. Orders after unloading were at first to load un-used bombs there and take them to the Pacific. That was changed and we were sent back empty to New York. While the ship was being loaded with

farm machinery for India under the Marshall Plan, the Armed Guard were taken off and granted leave to go home. I made good my 30 day leave by getting engaged to my high school sweetheart in Yakima, Washington.

August 7, 1945, I reported to my home base on Treasure Island and was sent to the Navy Transportation and Distribution Center, Camp Shoemaker, Ca.. This hot, dry desert, somewhere east of San Francisco, certainly didn't seem like the Navy to me. When the war ended with Japan, we wanted to go to San Francisco to celebrate, but our request was denied. The war was over and we thought we ought to be discharged, but we were to fill in for those who had been in service longer than we had. Orders came out for 600 of us to board the USS LIVINGTON (AKA-222) for the South Pacific. No one seemed to be in charge and we did not know where we were going. After two weeks, we pulled into Subic Bay in the Phillipine Island. Our sea bags were dumped onto the beach and we were told to find them and carry them to some Quonset huts. For two or three weeks, we drank purified swamp water and checked the bulletin board for further orders.

My name came up to report to an LST loaded with Caterpillar tractors and earth movers; again not knowing where we were going. That was some awesome experience as we passed Okinawa one night in a cyclone and no assurance we were going to make it. Water was washing back and forth on the deck of the side compartment where I was trying to sleep on an Army cot. I could see and hear the steel plates bending as we went over the swells or waves. The Cat drivers went down below and sat on the tractor seats with life jackets on and holding each other's arm. After we were anchored in the bay off Tokyo and found a place on the beach where we could open the bow doors on the LST, it did not take long to unload. The Cat drivers were so relieved to be on dry land, they put their tractors

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

in high gear and roared out with few inches to spare on each side. Their job was to clear the air fields of bomb damage so our planes could land.

After a few more days at anchor in the harbor, I was transferred to the deck crew of a Liberty ship bound for Guam. When we got to the dock space there, we worked six hours unloading 55 gallon barrels of high octane airplane gasoline. Those barrels had been aboard so long that some had rusted through and were empty. The heat was terrible and there was a fear that there could be a fire down in the hold. Our ship was sent through the Marshall Islands, picking up small detachments of troops headed for Seattle for discharge. These men were so glad to be back in America that they left their packs, blankets and other gear in the holds and we had to clean them out. The weather seemed very cold in December of 1945 at Seattle after the heat in the South Pacific.

Just when I thought that I would be discharged, they assigned me to the crew of the USS PC-614 at Pier 54. We were to decommission it and two other patrol craft tied alongside. At least I got to take the bus to Yakima some weekends and we began to make plans for our wedding. What a low blow it was we were transferred to a troopship being loaded with three hundred tons of food and supplies for overseas. As we went down the coast to San Francisco, orders came to throw all the ammo stored in the below decks in the bow. It was a hand-to-hand detail and one slip with a dropped round could bring on a tragedy. In San Francisco, the orders were changed to another decommission job. Fresh food was dumped on a garbage barge as well as a lot of new supplies. Barrel after barrel of expensive machinery went over the side into the bay. Anything sent back to the Navy Depot in Oakland had to be invoiced with six copies and the yeoman just did not have time to do it all. What a waste!! But, our government had signed agreements that these supplies would not

flood the civilian market after the war. Now!! Finally, a bus ride back to Seattle and a ferry to the Separation Center at Bremerton where I received my discharge in June of 1946. I went home to Yakima to be married on June 22, 1946.

Charlie, I want to THANK YOU for the Jan/Apr 2008 "POINTER" and the closing article., "THE SCARS OF HIROSHIMA." While reading about the bombing, I suddenly realized that I was issued "olive drab gear" in Camp Shoemaker and was scheduled to run the landing craft at the invasion of Japan. If the bombs had not been used to bring about the surrender of the Japanese, I would have been in the final battle on their home islands, but God spared me for a purpose. I have been blessed by being a pastor for 56 years. After seeing the needs of the people around the world, I felt called to do what I could to help them. My family is not wealthy, but I could give my life in Thy service and I did. My high school sweetheart and I lived on the "GI Bill" while going to college and seminary and reared five children over the years. Thank you again for the "POINTER."

Rev. Ronald B. Snelling 16217 - 131st Ave
E Puyallup, Wa. 98374

Thank you Reverend for such a sweet letter. We, of the WW II service, are all thankful for Harry Truman's decision. Harry was in WW One and he knew this was the way to end the war. I am sure he knew the feeling to get home as fast as possible. (cal)

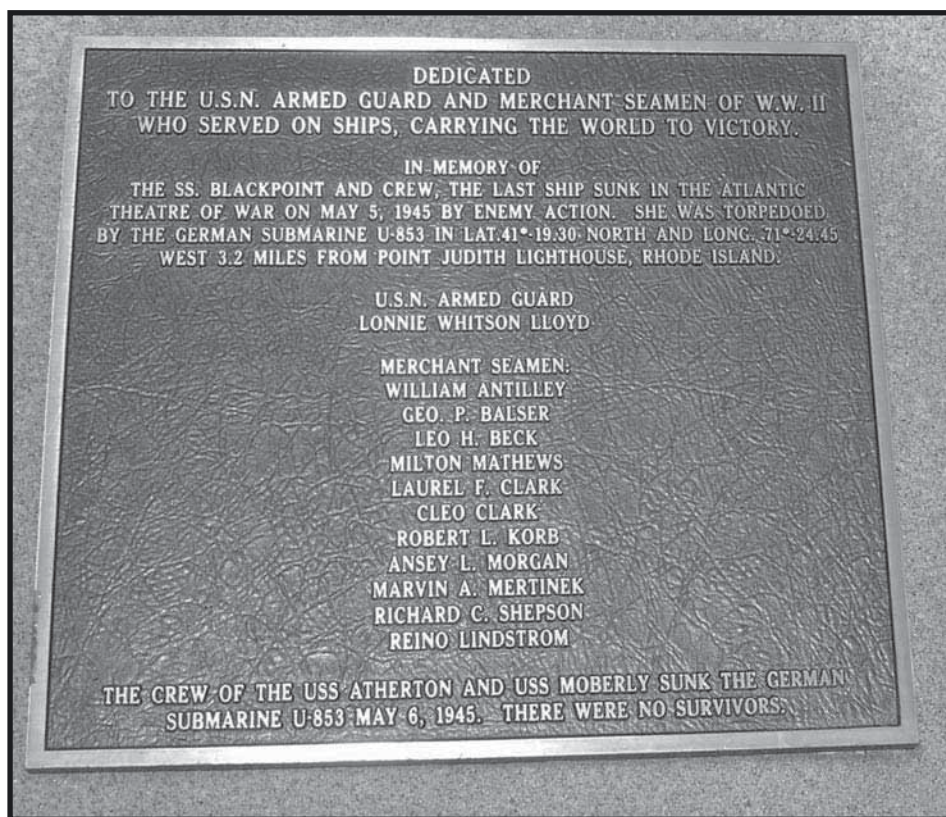
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charlie, I was at Bourne Academy and the S.S. BLACKPOINT CREW monument is still there. and looking good. Enclosed is a picture.

Gerry Greaves
1287 S Broadway,
E. Providence, RI 02914
401-431-0011

(Gerry served the S.S. AQUARIUS, S.S. GEORGE A. POPE and the S.S. CLAYMONT (V) and has been the head of the Rhode Island AG Chapter over 25 years.) (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

Subject: SS Carlton - March 13, 1942 to July 5, 1942

My name is Robert E. Thompson, Gunners Mate 3/C. I was in the U.S. Navy Armed Guard, WW II from February 1942 to November 1945. In March 1942, I was assigned aboard the merchant ship S.S. CARLTON, a Hog Islander, which was docked in Philadelphia loading war materials. The CARLTON sailed Friday, 13 March 1942, bound for Murmansk, Russia. We finally arrived at Hvalfiord, Iceland, after a grueling voyage on the North Atlantic, to await a convoy to Russia. We were one of the ships that comprised Convoy PQ-16. When the convoy was within range of the German airfields in Norway we were attacked by many aircraft. The CARLTON was damaged by four bombs from a dive bomber that hit within five feet of the ship causing serious damage that left us dead in the water with no power. We were taken to tow by a British trawler, (HMS) NORTHERN SPRAY, to return to Iceland for repairs.

We next sailed in Convoy PQ-17 with 36 ships. On 4 July 1942, the Convoy was dispersed (scattered) by order of

the British to make our way singly to Russia. At 0810 on 5 July, the CARLTON was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine. Three men were lost and the crew was away in one lifeboat and four 10-man rafts. Several hours later a flight of German torpedo aircraft (twin pontoon) flew over looking for the stray ships. We were very concerned as rumors abounded that survivors were being machine gunned in lifeboats. On the return flight, one aircraft let the formation and landed. It picked up one Merchant Seaman. Later a German flying boat landed and took on 10 Merchant Seamen. Several hours later the plane returned and nine Armed Guard were picked up. We only agreed to be taken as one member was badly burned and needed medical attention. We were flown into Kirkines, Norway to a Russian Prisoner of War Camp. We were subsequently transported to Germany where we spent two years, nine months in various POW Camps. The merchant men were considered civilian internees and were in a separate camp from the Navy. The Carlton crew was the first American Prisoners of War in Germany. Only eleven ships survived Convoy PQ-17. Twenty-five were sunk. Seventeen men who were not

picked up spent 19 days in the open lifeboat, one man died. They were captured after landing in Norway.

Robert E. Thompson, Gunners Mate 3/C, U.S. Navy Armed Guard, WW II
7049 Regner Road,
San Diego, CA 92119-1941
Tele: 619-465-63

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,
I've read the magazine - it's amazing. How do you find that incredible story of Giorgio Perlasca? To tell you the truth, I didn't know Roosevelt was trying to establish relations between Russia and the USA in such a way. And of course I didn't know anything about a treasure ship! A fantastic story indeed!
Yours, Alex.

Alex is a Russian friend that I have been corresponding with for some time who is interested in the History of WW II and I do appreciate the photos he has sent of the Memorial there commemorating appreciation for the Convoys that brought them much needed supplies. As I look at his personal photo, I see a human being like myself and of my own family and think what could have been if our ancestors would also have been killed during the war. There would not be a



Monument to Allied Forces



Alex in front of the Monument

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

boy like Alex nor my own children, grand children, great grand children and children to come. War is so cruel. He looks like any American Boy and so many of his countrymen have migrated to the United States in the past and made this country what it is today. So many young men like him have died useless. Why? It is just not right. Russia loss over 27 million people in WW II. What a heartbreak for so many mothers and fathers and loved ones. WHY?(calloyd)
P.S. Alex will be attending Westfield High in Westfield, IN this semester. I'm in touch with the folks he'll be staying with.

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

Thanks for the magazine you've send me. I found it today in my post box. Well, it's hard to imagine really that it travelled through all the countries between Russia and USA only with a sticker with my address! The photo on the front page with US cadets carrying Armed Guards and Merchant Marines banners is amazing. Started reading it right now.

I'm going to visit my Granny this summer; so I cannot keep in touch for about a month as she lives in a village where there is no Internet connection. On June 22 I'll go to St.Petersburg for a pre-departure orientation program and to take the US visa. After that I'll take a train to Ukraine where my Granny lives.

She was 9 years old when German forces occupied the area. She told me a lot bout the War. Her two brothers were at war - one in infantry (died in 1942) and one in tank platoon (participated in battle for Stalingrad and was wounded). That's why the Second World War is not only history but also a part of her life.
Yours, Alex

P.S. I enclose a photo of mine(in front of the monument to Allied Forces, May 9)

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Paul G. Mueller Story and another on pg.36
At Noumea on November 1, a terrific explosion occurred at the base of one of the Finger Piers at 1305. The S.S. Turner was at anchor about 800 yards distant. Steel fragments fell into the bay around the Turner. One piece formed a collar around the forward mast. I was blown out of a chair into the bulkhead by the concussion coming through an open port hole at my back in my cabin. I ran out onto the deck adjacent to my cabin and the mate on the bridge ordered me back inside. I obeyed after glancing into the sky and seeing small black objects falling. Later, when I looked at the deck, it was pock marked from the falling debris. Obviously the mate had saved my life. A supply of explosives on the dock was the source of the explosion. One of the ships at the dock had to break her lines to get free of the dock.

On November 2 1943, the Turner departed from Noumea escorted by a sub chaser. We arrived at Suva in the Fiji's on November 5 and moored at Kings Wharf. She commenced taking on cargo immediately. We loaded ammunition and aerial bombs. On November 16, we took departure with a cargo of 5371 short tons of ammunition, bombs, and trucks and proceeded to Lautoka, Fiji where we arrived the same day. There, we loaded an additional cargo of bombs, trucks and boats making a total cargo of 6272 short tons. On November 22, 8 officers and 126 enlisted men, Army of the 13th air-drome squadron and one Pharmacist Mate came aboard for passage to Guadalcanal via Espiritu Santo.

November 23, we departed Lautoka escorted by the USS Radiant (YMS99) and by the PBY-5 which scouted around the ship until after darkness came. At 1830 on November 24, our stern lookout reported sighting an object out of the corner of his eye at relative bearing 170 degrees and 200 yards range. He wasn't sure whether it

was a fish or a periscope. The area was watched and at 1840 the escort look out reported sighting some thing suspicious in the same direction. The escort dropped astern to investigate. At 1915 the escort made a definite under water contact 200 yards a stern of us and dropped a number of depth charges in two different runs. After the second run, the escorts Captain stated a large oil patch came to the surface. This attack took place in the Latitude 16 degrees 14'south, Longitude 170 degrees 33'East. At 0200 a US plane arrived to assist the escort and to scout the area of the attack. At day break other planes arrived for escort.

At 1605 November 25, we arrived at Espiritu Santo New Hebrides and anchored in Pallakula Bay to await the formation of a convoy for Guadalcanal. December 4 at 0812, we took departure from Pallakula Bay and joined a convoy consisting of the S.S. Ashley, (A liberty EC2 vessel) and the S.S. Thunderer escorted by the USS Eaton (DD510) and the USS Osterhaus (DE164). At 1609 the same day we were joined by USS Serpens(AK97EC2), USS Alchiba (AKEC2) S.S. Cape Blanco and the S.S. Thomas J. Walsh escorted by USS Acre(DE167, USS Velocity(AM128) and SC 1046. The convoy reached Guadalcanal 0800 December 7, 1943. The vessel was then ordered to Purvis Bay to await orders. On December 11, we proceeded to Tenaru Beach escorted by the SC 518. The passengers were disembarked and some cargo was discharged. At 1930 we proceeded to Kukum Bay where all the cargo was discharged at the dock. On December 20 we left Kukum Dock and proceeded to Purvis Bay to await orders. On the way there was an air alert due to a number of Japanese planes approaching Tulagi from the North. The planes turned back before reaching Tulagi.

On December 22 we left Purvis Bay, Florida Island and joined a convoy con-

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

sisting of USS Pawnee (Ocean Going Tug No.74), USS Octans (Navy Transport), S.S. Rose (Cargo Ship) S.S. Thunderer, S.S. Curtis, escorted by USS Sheldrake (MS-62), USS Swallow (MS65) and one other mine sweeper .We arrived at Espiritu Santo on December 25 .and sailed from there for San Francisco on December 26 in company with S.S. Skinner and S.S. Thunderer escorted by the EC669. We passed through the gate in the submarine nets guarding San Francisco Bay at 1015 January 17 1944. The mileage on this voyage was 17,200. Average speed was 10.2 knots. It is peculiar to note that my next sea duty was on the USS Eider (YNG20). The vessel that was anchored to the bottom of the San Francisco Bay, between The Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz that had the winch that opened and closed the sub marine nets that guarded San Francisco Bay + A lot of the material above was garnered from a report to the Chief of Naval Operations from The Assistant Port Director of San Francisco on January 29, 1944.

Paul G. Mueller
9200 Stone Spring Ln.,
Pasadena, Ca. 21122
410-916-1274 PGM6251@CS.com

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From Beryl's Story pg. 7

The day I met a Liberty ship. The story about the Richard Montgomery has special meaning for me as I lived in Southend on Sea, for the first 22 years of my life and many times would see her masts when we would go on trips up the Thames, fully aware of the fact of how she could blow at any time.

The one thing I did not know was that she was a Liberty ship. The first time I ever saw a Liberty ship was in June 1994, at Chatham where my daughter and I were living. We had been hearing of all the ships that had come from America to take part in the commemoration of D Day and how they had

come into Southampton and were presented to the Queen. I remember hearing on the news about a ship that was crewed by veterans. So there was this exhibition in the dock of military and historic vehicles where I lived, so Maria and I decided to go. We had gone through this tent that was set up as an English kitchen in the 40,s but I was shocked to see how many of the things I remembered having in ours. As we went through we came out the other side and there looming up in front of us was this American ship, the Liberty Ship, SS Jeremiah O'Brien. It was a magnificent sight. We both had never seen anything so beautiful. Up the gangway we went and it was as if we had stepped back in history. She was so well preserved and the music that we heard was of the big bands of the 40s. We had to come back the next day to see the engine room, as it was so crowded. Now on that day, I met Ed and he was the first American I had ever met. He told us everything about the engines and when we first got to see them, words cannot describe the way I felt. Ed told us the ship was leaving for London in the morning and we promised we would be there to wave her goodbye.

Next morning we were there and she was ready to go. Ed had asked if we could go aboard and make the trip up to London with him. The answer he gave was that if we were on board when the gang way was taken up, then we couldn,t get off. So there we were, on the Liberty Ship and no way to get off. I felt I should keep pinching myself to make sure this was not a dream. Here I was on a ship the same age as me, and talking with my first American. Then we went to the engine room and that sight took my breath away. The powerful "triple expansion engines," as they had been many years before. The very heart of the ship brought back to life and beating. I just wanted to stay there and take it all in. Now this is the part of my story that has a very special mean-

ing to me. Quite a few hours had gone by and I was still in the engine room. We heard the horn blow and the reason was to pay tribute to the sunken S.S. Richard Montgomery, the sister Liberty Ship. This was such an emotional moment I had a lump in my throat. I will never ever forget that day. It was something that will never happen again and I have so much gratitude to Ed for letting me be a part of it. I shall leave my little story with the words of one of the crew on board the SS Richard Montgomery all those years ago. He said, "If that if this ship was hit by a torpedo, they wouldn,t need a life jacket but a parachute." How often I have wondered if any of the crew is out there, as I would love to meet them.

Beryl Lingenfield 55410 Delta Dr.,
Blue River, Or. 97413 541-822-3760
beryllingenfield@q.com (wife of
Edgar (MM) who sailed on S.S. Sea
Sturgeon, Fort Henry, Crater Lake,
Alcoa Pilgrim and the Frank G.
Drum.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

See Photo and Caption on Page 2

Abbott said it was worth the trip to be there to represent all the Armed Guard who made the North Atlantic Convoys during WW II. Bob made the Murmansk Run on the Liberty Ship S.S. GREYLOCK and the ship was sunk in the Barents Sea on it's return to New York with a complement of 36 Merchant Crew, 25 Naval Armed Guard and 9 passengers survivors from the S.S. BALLOTT. There were no casualties. Abbott survived the sinking of the S.S. ALBERT GALLATIN on July 2, 1944. Luck was with the crew again as there were no casualties. Abbott's luck continues as he completed his round of Chemo several days before his trip to Iceland. He wore his cap to hide his scars. (cal)

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LETTERS FROM THE CREW

AUDIE MURPHY OF TEXAS

By Roy Yeater, 3616 Decatur Ave N, New Hope Mn. 55427 763-546-9331

We may not all be able to be heroes but this is a time for courage and that is the stuff of heroes. ((I wrote this after the Houston/Galveston/Beaumont/Orange, TX. USS VESOLE Reunion. The USS Vesole was built at Orange – a great event for any number of reasons. Audie Murphy ranks alongside Kopl Vesole and my brother Vaughn Yeater - who was at Anzio when Audie was there as the top three in my list of Heroes.

We are going to be in Washington, DC before too long. My brother won't be at Arlington National Cemetery. Kopl Vesole won't be at Arlington Cemetery. But Audie Murphy will be. He can stand in for the others. Audie Murphy's gravesite is the second most visited gravesite at Arlington next to that of John F. Kennedy. Add Audie Murphy's gravesite to your list to visit.

Audie Murphy was one of those naturals that show up in battlefield conditions occasionally. He performed as the occasion warranted probably just knowing what needed to be done and then operating in a zone to get it done. He physically wasn't a big man and his medals pretty well covered his frame. He did something few CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR winners get a chance to do. He wrote about his experiences and he acted in the movie based on his book of experiences; "TO HELL AND BACK" was that movie. The title was appropriate for the book and for the movie. I doubt if he thought of it that way. He fought in the Anzio Beachhead in Italy and then on into France. He was some twenty years old and he was from Texas. His picture is included along with other heroes on display at the Capitol Building in Austin, Texas.

Rudy Kasprzyk ET2 '54-'57 and I went on a road trip prior to the USS VESOLE DD/DDR-878 Reunion in Houston on October 6, 2004. Our first stop was Austin and the Capitol Building which was impressive. There was a display area of heroes/medal winners and though I knew Audie Murphy was from Texas, which was not on my mind when I was looking and found his picture and information. Later I decided to do some research since I thought there would be others of us who would appreciate the credentials of this American hero.

Audie Murphy was the most decorated soldier in World War II having received some twenty-eight United States medals with the Congressional Medal of Honor being one of those for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty". He received five awards from Great Britain and from France. In his three years of active duty from '42 to '45 Audie Murphy went from Army Private to Staff Sergeant and then received a battlefield commission as a 2nd Lieutenant. He was wounded three times, fought in nine major campaigns in the European Theater of battle. He was a

legend within the 3rd Army Division and was credited with killing over 240 of the enemy, capturing and wounding many more of the enemy. In a hard war he did what he was there to do to the best of his ability. His mix of attributes and capabilities put him in a unique and lasting place in the history of battle in this country. For all kinds of reasons it is unlikely that there will be another soldier with his accomplishments. He starred in twenty-seven films out of 44 feature films and in 1955 played himself in his previously mentioned autobiographical "To Hell and Back" from his best-seller book and that became the highest grossing picture until 1975's "Jaws". He played a Union soldier in "Red Badge of Courage" considered one of his best movie roles. (Note: rjy. After returning from the reunion in Houston, I was browsing on the TV and found "Red Badge of Courage" on TCM. One particularly poignant scene was of Audie Murphy in his character's role picking up the Union battle-flag from a fallen flag-bearer and charging the enemy.

Then he came upon a wounded and dying Confederate soldier carrying their battle-flag so he had both the Union and the Confederate battle-flags while still charging the enemy/Confederate troops in the midst of the battle. In the Civil War many soldiers received the Medal of Honor for picking up the colors and rallying the troops to fight by charging the enemy or maintaining rank, the battle-flags being used to signal the center of battle in those days. Many of them lost their lives that way. And of course, as I indicated Audie Murphy was the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. In his case it was art mimicking his life experience to a certain extent.). He played Jesse James in his last film, "A Time For Dying". He had other business interests including writing songs, which were sung by top performers, as a rancher and as a horse breeder. He played poker and gambled winning and losing fortunes. He was very public regarding his personal difficulty with the aftermath of "Battle Fatigue" which we now know as PTS (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) being plagued by depression and difficulty in sleeping. He was a major advocate for extending health care in that area for returning Korean and Vietnam War veterans. Audie Murphy owned and flew his own plane. But not this time. A private plane in which he was a passenger pursuing a business venture crashed in the rain and fog into the side of a mountain near Roanoke, Virginia killing five other passengers including the pilot. It was Memorial Day in 1971. He was 46 years of age. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He was buried with full military honors. His is the second most visited gravesite after President Kennedy's.

We may not all be able to be heroes but this is a time for courage and that is the stuff of heroes.

REUNIONS

PLEASE NOTICE!! MANY ADDRESSES, TEL.#, E-MAILS, Etc.
may change anytime so it's up to you to find out! 3/2008
REGIONAL---MINI-REUNIONS ---GET-TOGETHERS-- MEMORIALS, ETC
SUPPORT THESE LOCAL MEETINGS
WHEN CONTACTING HOTELS FOR NATIONAL OR MINI-REUNIONS,
LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE USN ARMED GUARD WWII, OR;
THAT YOU'RE ATTENDING OUR REUNION.

Many of these are older meetings and addresses and may not be up to date.
Not responsible for errors. (calloyd)
NOTICE: ANY CHANGES will be in the next POINTER IF NOTIFIED.

The TEXAS USN ARMED GUARD ANNUAL Reunion will be held again in Fredericksburg, Tx. March 5-7, 2009 at the SUNDAY HOUSE 501 E. Main St. 1-800-274-3762. Host-John Shirley, 4128 N. Summerset Loop, Round Rock, Tx. 78681 512-671-3464.

The NORTHEAST MINI-REUNION will be held Sept. 22-25, 2008 back at the GEORGIAN HOTEL Lake George NY. All registration, and Itinerary Forms for your 3 night package deal MUST be handled by: Jody Woodin, Dir. Of Sales, 384 Canada St., Lake George, N.Y. 12845 1-518-668-5401 info@georgianresort.com The hosts are Art and Marion Fazzone, 3936 Albany St., Schenectady, N.Y. 12304-4371. 518-374-5377 Mamoon3@aol.com IF all goes well, Hilda and I will be at this one! (Cal)

The USS VESOLE DD/DDR-878 was named after Armed Guard Ensign Kay K. Vesole killed in action at Bari, Italy tragedy, 8/28/44. Contact: Ray Gorenflo, 32 Charlotte, Rd., Fishkill, N.Y. 12524 845-896-2074 www.USSVesole.org This is the only FLEET SHIP named after an Armed Guard that I am aware of that hold reunions. Reunion is Sept 25-29, 2008 in D.C..

SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY MARINERS /ARMED GUARD MEET 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 12 NOON at HOSS'S Restaurant at 501 and Airport Rd., Lititz, Pa.. Contact: Clarence W.Newcomer (AG) 238 Colebrook St., Manheim, Pa 17545 717-665-3085 or

Wm. Balabanow, 717-569-0391 b.balanow@verizon.net All ARE WEL-COMED!!

THE BUCKLEY , WA. Contact: Hank and Sandy Harrison 27014 Lower Burnett Rd., E. Buckley, 98321 360-897-9381. Henry058@hughes.net or Bng75@aol.com They still meet 2nd Wed. of each mo. at 12 noon at ELMER'S 7427 Hosmer, Tocomo, Wa. 98408-1220 253-473-0855.

LST CREW 23rd ANNUAL REUNION will be held Aug 29-Sept 2, 2008 at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Va in the Washington, D.C. area. (\$77.00 plus tax.) CONTACT: Mike and Linda Gunjak, 6641 Spring Beauty Ct. Curtice, Oh. 43412 1-800-228-5870 E-Mail: uslst@uslst.org Web Site. www.uslst.org

Los Angeles/San Fernando Valley Armed Guard/Merchant Marine WW II Veterans invites you to break bread together on the 3rd Saturday of each month, 11 AM-1 PM for Food, Stories and Laughter at COCO's 10841 Sepulveda Blvd. Mission Hills, Ca. 91345. Contact: Pete C. Sorensen, 13852 Tucker Ave., Sylmar, Ca. 91342 818-367-7763 armedguardpete@yahoo.com No dues.

NOTICE THE MEETING PLACE CHANGE AGAIN.

ROCHESTER, N.Y. AREA ARMED GUARD and MERCHANT SEAMEN of WW II contact John Shevlin 37 Winfield Rd., Rochester, N.Y. 14622-2212 585-467-2057 Joan Lucci or Frank

Hutter 585-473-8103 for a LUNCH MEETING held at 11 AM on the "2ND" TUESDAY at the "JAYS DINER" 2612 W HENRIETTA RD. ROCHESTER, NY, or; Forest Lane, 14 Hanna Ln Webster, NY 14580 585-671-5687 COOLFOREST@webtv.net

PHILADELPHIA-DELAWARE VALLEY PA. AREA Armed Guard AND Merchant Marine Veterans and their ladies MEETING HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO THE 2ND Tuesday of the month at 11:30 A.M. at the "OLD COUNTRY BUFFET" in the Oxford Valley Center, 650 Commerce Blvd., Fairless, Pa 19030 215-295-9858 Peter J. Cugasi, 55 Indian Red Rd., Levittown, Pa 19057 215-547-2450 as Hosts. So sad to hear of the passing of Allen Farrara who started this chapter.

CORRECTION 2008 SUMMER

Greater Portland, OR. Armed Guard meets with the Oregon Chapter AMMV every 3rd Monday, 11:30 AM at "HOMETOWN BUFFET", 13500 SW PACIFIC HWY (99W) TIGARD MARKET PL., TIGARD, OR. Contact Bill Marker, 8995 SE Otty Rd, Portland, Or. 97086 503-998-0840

The "Rhode Island Chapter" of ARMED GUARD VETERANS NEXT "LUNCHEON MEETING" on OCTOBER 2, 2008 at NOON at BICKFORDS Jefferson Blvd., Warwick. R.I. Contact: GERRY Greaves 1287 S. Broadway, E. Providence, RI, 02914 401-431-0011. USNAGV@AOL.COM

REUNIONS

Roanoke, Va. South East Chapter has changed meeting place to 12 NOON 2ND Friday of each mo. at the FAMOUS ANTHONY'S 6499 Williamson Rd. Roanoke, Va.. Contact: Bill Miller (AG) and Helen, 157 Houston Ave., Roanoke, Va. 24012 540-362-0576, or; Rocky Rhodes, 5390 Merriman Rd. SW Roanoke, Va. 24018 540-772-7212

The Merchant Marine Western Region will meet 9/28-30/08 at the Sands Regency Hotel, Reno Nev.. Contact Hank Cap 289 W 22nd St, Deer Park, NY 667-3466

The Patrol Craft Sailors Assoc. are schedule to hold their 22 Annual Reunion in San Antonio, Tx. May 26-30, 2009. Contact Andy Coubrough, 4459 Birch Run Dr., Troy, Mi. 48098 248-952-5656

DEMS 52nd National Reunion will be June 5-6-7, 2009 at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Contact: June Craig 780-777-3428 junecraig@shaw.ca or Gerald Sigrist 902-543-6763 adna.sigrist@ns.sympatice.ca

DESTROYER ESCORT ASSOCIATION, INC. (DESA) 33rd Annual Convention will be held Sept. 7-11/2008 at the Drawbridge Inn in Ft. Mitchell, Ky., right outside Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact: Dori Glaser, P.O.Box 3448, Deland, Fl. 32721-3448 1-800-603-3332 - Desadori@cfl.rr.com. www.desausa.org What a wonderful paper they have. If you were Armed Guard and transferred, join them, TOO!! Thank you DESA for putting our address in your DESA NEWS AND PROTECTING US.

FARRAGUT STATE PARK-ATHOL, IDAHO ANNUAL REUNION-Sept. 6, 2008 One day and night affair. Those camping or others, stay as long as you like. Camping Reservations-Call the Park 208-683-

2425 Ext 21. Reunion Coordinator-Janice Lauer P.O. Box 2135 Hayden, Id. 83835 208-660-0660 janilauer@aol.com; or Bob Moore 208-683-5707

CHANGED MEETING PLACE AGAIN FLORIDA SUN COAST Armed Guard and MM Crew meet on the 2nd Sat. of the month at 11:30 A.M. for LUNCH at KALLY K's 3383 US-19 Spring Hill, Fl., 352-683-1364 one lot south of Springhill Bowling Alley. Contact: Bob Bouschor 73 Hickory Branch Ln., Safety Harbor, Fl., 727 224-9616 or Hal Conn 6625 W. SEVEN River Dr. Crystal River, Fl. 34429 352-795-6257. They meet Sept. 13, 2008.

S.S.JOHN W. BROWN PO Box 25846, Highlandtown Sta., Baltimore, Md. 21224-0846 410-558-0646. Sailing dates: Sept. 6 & Oct 4, 2008. All Chesapeake Living History Cruises.

S.S.JEREMIAH O'BRIEN, PIER 23, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94111 Call 415-544-0100. www.ssjeremiahobrien.org

For more info. Sailing date Oct 11 and 12, 2008 FLEET WEEK (\$150.)

S.S.LANE VICTORY address is BERTH 94, P O BOX 629 SAN PEDRO, CA. 90733-0629 Tel. 310-519-9545 www.lanevictory.org. They support the ship with summer cruises off Catalina Island in memory of Merchant Marine and Naval Armed Guard lost at sea during time at war. Donations are Tax Deductible with Fed. I.D. No. 33-0083915. Volunteers are needed now and in the future to those whoever reads this. Sailing: Sept. 27-28, 2008. Photo ID required. Carry on bags inspected. No wheel chairs or baby strollers.

The Tucson Az. Armed Guard meets at: THE OLD TIME KAFE 1425 W. Prince Rd., Tucson 520-293-2324 at 10:30-12 noon 2nd Thurs. of each month, Sept. thru May. Contact: Haskel

& Ruth Hargis 1625 W Ft. Lowell #25, Tucson 85705 520-293-2422, or, Fred & Pat Gustin 1221 E Clearwind Pl., Tucson, Az. 520-825-7531 fgustin@comcast.net

S.S.AMERICAN VICTORY 705 Channelside Dr., Tampa, Fl. 33609 813-228-8769 NEXT SAILING DATE IS 11/8/08.

The Merchant Marine and Armed Guard may hold their FINAL FINALE next May 14-17, 2009 and sail her on the 16th. More in the Sept/Nov 2008 POINTER.

For all of you who hosts meetings of the crew, please inform me if you still meet and send me up-date on meeting to place in a future POINTER. If you don't update the meetings. it will not be in--PERIOD!! THEIR E-MAILS CHANGES OFTEN!! Search older POINTERS for hosts, meetings, time and places. I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ERRORS, if any be listed. REMEMBER DO NOT USE MY RALEIGH ADDRESS from the old POINTERS or material or TELEPHONE NUMBER. Use the RETURN ADDRESS ON THE OUTSIDE THIS POINTER. LET ME KNOW IF YOUR CREW INFO NEEDS CHANGING NOW!

Also, If you want to start a Chapter in your area, please advise as I can furnish you names by zip code of those in your area. Also, if you need labels. If you find out that I have an Armed Guard on HOLD and he is still around and interested, PLEASE CONTACT ME.

Remember: The USN ARMED GUARD WEB SITE www.armed-guard.com by the late Tom Bowerman from Anniston, Al.

I want to thank all of you for your donations, it keeps the POINTER's coming. -Charles A. Lloyd- Chairman

S.S. HENRY A. BACON

The Voyage of the S.S. Henry A. Bacon

(Reprinted from the New York Times, Sunday, April 1, 1945)

15 U.S. SEAMEN DIE SAVING 19 REFUGEES

**Skipper and All Senior Officers
Lost as Germans Torpedo
Liberty Ship Off Norway**

HEROISM-PRaised BY OLAF

**Corvette and a Third Allied
Vessel Sunk as Convoy to
Russia is Attacked**

WASHINGTON, March 31, (AP)—Fifteen American merchant seamen died while helping save nineteen Norwegian refugee patriots when German planes sank a Liberty ship off Norway a few weeks ago.

All eight senior officers, including the master, Capt. Alfred Carini of 44-15 Thirty-fourth Avenue, Long Island City, Queens, NY, and seven seamen, were lost after the Navy guard aboard battled more than a score of attacking planes, bringing down five. The refugees were put into a lifeboat.

The story is that of the freighter Henry Bacon, told by the War Shipping Administration today in announcing the names of American victims and survivors. Crown Prince Olaf, commander in chief of the Norwegian forces, praised American heroism in a letter to Vice Admiral Emory S. Land, War Shipping Administrator.

The Henry Bacon was starting home in convoy after carrying freight to Russia and carried as passengers the Norwegians, who were among several hundred being evacuated from the German-held island of Soroe to England. She encountered heavy weather, lost touch with the convoy and was singled out by the Germans. An aerial torpedo plunged into the hold. The vessel went down with her guns firing.

Captain Last Seen on Bridge

Two lifeboats were launched successfully; one with the refugees and a few crewmen, and the other with fifteen crewmen and seven gunners. The official report was made by Joseph L. Scott, Acting Third Officer, of

Norway, Ma., who said Captain Carini was last seen on the bridge and went down with his ship.

Mr. Scott also reported these heroic incidents:

Robert J. Hunt, purser, might have saved his own life had he not stopped to give first aid to a wounded gunner. Mr. Hunt's mother, Mrs. Mary Scott, lives in Greensboro, N.C.

Donald F. Haviland, chief engineer, was safe in a lifeboat but chose to give his seat to a younger man and return to the sinking ship. He was not seen again. His next of kin is a sister, Mrs. F. McGrath of Waymouth, Mass.

Holcomb Lammon, boatswain, of Mobile, Alabama, saved the lives of many before losing his own.

Survivors include these seamen: Joseph Marback of Brooklyn, NY; John Bartin of Buffalo, NY; Robert Tatosky of NY, NY; and Joseph S. Pazybyas, Long Island.

Allied Ships are Sunk

LONDON, March 31 — Back from a voyage to north Russian ports during which it was under repeated attack by enemy aircraft and U-boats, a British convoy brought confirmation of reports that Germany was making greater efforts to renew submarine warfare on a big scale.

Despite bad weather and persistent attacks, the convoy won through to the Soviet ports without losing a single escort or cargo ship. On the homeward journey, however, a corvette and a merchant ship were sunk, two naval vessels damaged and two naval fighter aircraft were shot down. (The United Press said a third Allied vessel of undisclosed type also was sunk.)

The enemy lost one U-boat and twelve aircraft, with seven additional planes so badly damaged that it is doubtful if they were able to return to the bases in Norway.

According to a communique from the Admiralty today, the merchant ships, including many American vessels, were protected by two escort carriers and a large complement of destroyers, corvettes and other naval units from the British Home Fleet, all under the command of Rear Admiral Rhoderick R. McGrigor.

"Most Persistent Attacks"

Shortly after its departure the convoy fell under "the most persistent and sustained

attacks mounted by the enemy in northern waters for some time."

During the double passage, weather of exceptional severity was encountered, with winds often reaching hurricane force. At times waves sixty feet high swept the laboring vessels, and twice the convoy was scattered during pounding gales, but each time managed to reassemble.

It was on the homeward run that JU-88s and torpedo-carrying planes swept in upon the convoy time and again despite heavy weather. Fighter aircraft took off from the carriers to meet them, while escort vessels and the merchant ships sent anti-aircraft fire into the enemy flights.

During one of these attacks the corvette Bluebell was hit by a torpedo and, according to witnesses, "seemed to disintegrate."

Convoy R.A. 64 Ships

**These ships left Murmansk Russia on
17 February, 1945**

S.S. ALANSON B. HOUGHTON
S.S. GEORGE H. PENDLETON
S.S. JOSHUA W. ALEXANDER
S.S. JOHN LA FARGE

S.S. SILAS WEIR MITCHELL
S.S. J. D. YEAGER

S.S. BERNARD N. BAKER
S.S. THOMAS SCOTT (SUNK 2/17/45)

~~S.S. R. NEY McNEEL~~ ~~WILLIAM HARRIS~~
S.S. JAMES KERNEY ~~BARVIE FID RT~~

S.S. BENJAMIN H. HILL
S.S. CHARLES M. SCHWAB
S.S. FRANCIS C. HARRINGTON

S.S. CHARLES SCRIBNER
S.S. JOHN IRELAND

S.S. CEASER RODNEY
S.S. WARREN DELANO

S.S. PHILIP F. THOMAS
S.S. JOSE MARTI

S.S. HENRY BACON (SUNK 2/23/45)

~~S.S. JOHN A. QUITMAN~~ ~~JOHN DUNK~~

S.S. CROSBY S. NOYES

S.S. HENRY VILLARD

S.S. EDMUND FANNING

S.S. LE BARON RUSSELL BRIGGS

S.S. HENRY WYNKOOP

S.S. PAUL H. HARWOOD

THE FLIGHT OF OUR LIVES

"The Flight of Our Lives"

April 10, 1945-U.S. Navy-
WWII-VPB 104 Squadron-
Second Tour-Crew 20

One of more than 67 - 2000
mile missions

Our day began at 0300 hours when the duty person with his flashlight came into our tent on Clark Field, Luzon in the Philippines. He woke J.R. Opie who was our Plane Captain, Aircraft Mechanic and Gunner along with me, William D. Richards Aircraft Mechanic and top Turret Gunner. We were both Aviation Machinist Mates second class, having gone through mechanics' flight training at Jacksonville Florida and Hutchinson, Kansas together. We were practically inseparable. After jumping into my flight Suit and splashing water on my face to clear out the cobwebs, we proceeded to make sure that the rest of our crew was up and ready for a fast breakfast in the mess hall. I don't remember what we had for breakfast, (probably scrambled powdered eggs and something with toast), but we ate whatever it was to sustain our bodies. After breakfast and a quick duty stop we returned to our tent. We then loaded our carry-all bags with our Mae West life jackets, 38 revolvers, helmet, gloves, goggles, wrist compasses. We made sure that we also had our mechanics tool chests and what ever else, perhaps a candy bar or two. We grabbed our flight jackets and went outside to an U.S. Army one-ton truck for the trip out to the airstrip and our PB4Y1 B24 Liberator (BuNo-38761 parked on the airstrip.

Besides Opie and me, our crew consisted of first radioman Bill Buckland, radioman and starboard waist gunner Henry Ketusky, first ordnance man John Burton Jr., port waist gunner, Michael Apalategui, bow turret gun-

ner, John W. French and the tail turret gunner was Verner E. Elston Jr.

We all had our job to do in preflighting the plane to make sure everything was in order for our flight. Opie and I were up on the wings, checking fuel and making sure the fuel caps were locked. Everything was checked to our satisfaction prior to flight. The auxiliary power unit was started so that controls, switches, operation of bomb bay doors, clean windshields and anything mechanical could be checked. We pulled the props through on each engine prior to the Pilots coming aboard to start them. While we were busy doing these inspections and checks, John Burton Jr. was busy checking our bombs in the bomb bays. The amount of ammunition for each gun, the bomb sights or anything that had to do with ordnance was checked. The radio and radar men were checking the operation of their gear. The turret gunners checked the turrets for operation (no guns were fired). We made sure our food and drink rations were on board.

Our Pilot Plane Commander (PPC) was Lieut. William E. Fulwider and Co-Pilot this day was Lt. (jg), Harry E. Nagle and our Navigator, Ensign Lawrence E. Cook, (who traded between Co-Pilot and Navigator) had been at pilots briefing for the details of our flight. They were brought out to the plane and our checklists were gone over item for item to make sure everything had been checked. Our pilot started the engines one at a time as Opie and I stood by with fire extinguishers. All of the controls were checked again, the bomb bays were closed, and then we were ready to taxi out to the strip for take-off. Brakes were set and the engines were revved high as the instruments were given their last check before take-off... Thumbs-up as the brakes were released and we headed down the runway and lifted off into a new day with new experiences ahead.

We had taken off in the dark at about 0500 hours with nearly a full load, about 3450 gallons of fuel and seven bombs stacked in our bomb bay. We had to gain altitude before heading over the mountainous terrain below us. The crew was being briefed as this altitude was gained. Our mission was single plane offensive search and reconnaissance. Our assignment was Sector 5B (Patrol of the China Coast North to Shanghai). We saw the sun break over the horizon behind us as we headed northwest over the Lingayen Gulf headed toward China in our PB4Y-1 B-24 Liberator Bomber. We dropped down to approximately 400 feet and flew to within 25 miles of the China Coast near Swatow where we then headed north. The K rations were opened and We snacked on crackers and cheese for the time being. We had no enemy contact as we traveled up the coast. Things seemed very quiet. We were just about to end our sector southeast of Shanghai before heading back to base when an Enemy ship was spotted. On closer examination it was seen to be a Fox Tare Charlie, an enemy ship in the 2,000-ton range which was moving at a slow speed. Our Plane Commander made the decision to attack the Ship. We swung our plane around and prepared for the run. The rear bomb bay doors were opened. John Burton Jr. had gone forward below the flight deck to arm our bombs where he would manually control the dropping of the bombs. We dropped down to about 200 feet and started our run. The enemy ship was like a Sitting duck waiting for us as we came in on our bomb run. I was in the top turret and strafed all the way in toward the enemy ship when all of a sudden it appeared as though the whole side of the ship lit up as their guns were shooting toward us, all at the same time. We realized that we were in real trouble when both our pilot and Co-pilot yelled over the intercom that they had been hit by enemy fire.

THE FLIGHT OF OUR LIVES

They then turned the plane violently starboard to escape being more of a target causing further injury and possibly being shot down, abandoning the bomb run. John French in the nose turret let us know he had also been wounded. We had run into a gunboat waiting for us. Opie and I both hit the flight deck almost at the same time to survey the pilot's wounds. They seemed to be superficial, not life threatening. Lt. Nagle had grabbed a fire extinguisher and was applying it to an electrical fire behind the Auto Pilot and the IFF which had been blown apart. I made sure that the fuses were pulled on the Auto Pilot and IFF.

Opie went to check on John French who had said he was wounded. John was trapped in the nose turret. Opie had to manually crank and align the turret from the outside before the door of the turret would open.

When this was done, John got out and he was sure glad to be free. His wounds were superficial. The shell had gone through the nose turret narrowly missing John's cheek, spraying pieces of plexiglass into his cheek and arm. It then went through our hydraulic system cutting our brake lines and spewing hydraulic fluid all over the place, giving John Burton a shower. The shell then skirted in between the protective armor plating in front of the Pilots, then through four bunches of electrical cables and expelled itself by tearing up our IFF and Automatic Pilot system. Opie then announced over the intercom that no electrical switches should be turned on as we were sitting on a time bomb.

After freeing John French, Opie came back into the bomb bay where I was checking the source of where the 100-octane fuel was coming from. We determined that the fuel was running down the wing from our #1 and #2 main port wing tanks that had been damaged by the shells fired at us. We both then

went to work on our fuel transfer system with the tools from our mechanics' tool chest and working together we were able to change the fuel lines and start the reversal of fuel flow in the fuel transfer system. We started transferring from #2 main port wing tank because this seemed to have the most damage. We began moving the fuel to the cells of the #3 and #4 main starboard wing tanks. After these tanks were full, we would then switch to the empty starboard bomb bay auxiliary tank, which was still intact, if there were enough fuel left in the damaged tanks. While this was being done, the aviation fuel was running down on us and into the bomb bay from the port wing. The fuel fumes were so strong in the cockpit that our PPC (Fulwider) had to open his side window to let enough fresh air in to clear his lungs and allow the pilots to breathe. He left the window open for the time being until the fumes dissipated. Thank the good Lord the rear bomb bay doors had remained open since the start of our bomb run otherwise the build up of fumes would have been disastrous. We were watching the fuel gauges, checking them every few minutes to make sure we were transferring from this damaged tank into the #3 and #4 main wing tanks.

Our PPC gave permission for John Burton Jr. to jettison our bombs. This made our load close to fifteen hundred pounds lighter. Opie and I had to manually crank the front bomb bay doors open, as the hydraulic system was no longer working. Our port bomb bay auxiliary tank had sustained a shell coming through the fuselage, then through the tank making it useless and we had to jettison the tank. We made sure the valves were shut off then the fuel lines were disconnected. The braces and metal straps were disconnected and the tank should have dropped, but when the shell went through the fuselage the metal had been pressed into the tank like a large

rivet holding the tank from dropping. We tried to push and shove but the tank would not budge. I pried down on the top of the tank with a bar while I stood in the catwalk and it still would not budge. We then had the pilot nose the plane up as I pried down on the tank. The tank dropped, I let go of the bar and grabbed for the safety rope stretched across the bomb bay while Opie assisted by Bill Buckland, held onto my belt keeping me safe from falling into the China Sea. We then cranked the front bomb bay doors closed and cranked the rear doors half way closed as the fuel was still running from the wing into the Bomb Bay but not as fast, this would still allow most of the fumes to be drawn out of the plane.

It seemed like it took forever since we first started moving the fuel from the #2 main inboard tank before all three cells were empty. The flow of fuel into the bomb bay from the port wing was reduced considerably. We then transferred fuel from our still leaking #1 main tank on the port side into our empty starboard bomb bay auxiliary tank. The fuel stopped leaking into the wing after a short time of transferring. Perhaps the self-sealing tank had sealed itself with fuel left in the tank. Opie and I had been monitoring the fuel gauges constantly throughout this whole process. At this point we changed the fuel transfer system back to normal operation.

Opie and I had already stripped the nose turret of its guns and ammunition while the fuel was being transferred. A meeting with the pilots at this point concurred that we would have to jettison every item not having to do with our emergency flight back to base, if we were to make it back at all. Our guns were silenced when fuel fumes filled the plane. They were no longer useful on this flight as firing just one round would have caused an explosion as the fumes were still prevalent. The remain-

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ing guns went overboard first with their ammunition and storage boxes. The top turret and two waist hatches became lookout stations for any danger.

We were not a good target for anyone as we were flying very low to the water, as ground effect would help us to preserve fuel. We asked the crew to bring anything not useable to the after station so we could evaluate and dispose of unusable items before throwing them out. The radar had been shot also so it went overboard as well as spare radar and radio parts. Opie and I went through the plane and removed all oxygen bottles and equipment and disposed of them. He even removed the armor plating from the after station and dumped it out. We stripped everything that we could logically go without, for weight reduction. The starboard auxiliary bomb bay tank would be jettisoned after the fuel was transferred later into the main tanks #3 and #4.

Ditching had been an option on this flight since we were hit by the shells and were losing so much fuel. As long as the plane was still flying, we had to get as far away from the enemy as possible. The longer we stayed in the air the probability of ditching became less at this point. Opie and I had gone over ditching procedures many times with our crew back at our base. All our flights were over water and in case of an emergency we had to be prepared for ditching at any time. We discussed what had to be done and by whom, where the life rafts were located and how they were released. Also, where the emergency equipment was stored between the life raft compartments. Part of ditching is removing anything loose that could fly around the plane as it was hitting the water. This was done as we were getting rid of everything for weight reduction. We had no idea if we could make it back to base with the fuel we had left. Ditching was still a possibility.

We had another job to tackle between the two of us, Opie and myself. The job for us was to repair the hydraulic brake system if possible. We first checked the tail turret hydraulic supply lines to see if it were feasible. After deciding this was possible, we then removed the damaged hydraulic sections from the brake system at their connection points. These sections had been torn apart when the shell went through. We went back to the tail turret and drained what hydraulic fluid we could save into a container. Then we removed sections of this dead soft annealed hydraulic tubing that was long enough to repair the brake system. To prevent any more hydraulic fluid loss, we sealed the remaining turret supply lines by folding and squeezing them shut. We then went forward and fashioned these soft annealed sections of hydraulic tubing to fit into place. These were installed and the connectors were tightened repairing the damaged sections. Opie then filled the brake fluid in the reservoir to a safe level with the fluid from the tail turret also using grape juice and other fluid. We had high hopes that the brakes could work on landing.

We had flown due south and low to the water after being hit with the shells from the gunboat. We continued to fly this way until the fuel loss was halted and all emergency transferring of fuel was complete. We then gradually gained altitude until we reached above the clouds to about fifteen hundred feet. As we neared Chilung at the northern tip of Formosa, (now Taiwan), we headed southeast to get clear of land to be less of a target to the enemy. After a short time our heading was changed to due south again, the most direct heading toward Luzon in the Philippines. There was still a good four hours of flying ahead with the possibility of ditching if we were too short of fuel.

It was about this time when I removed my fuel soaked coveralls and climbed into the top turret just to relax. The

enormity of the situation we had been through came into my mind and every nerve in my body shook for a few minutes. Just the thought that we all could have crashed into the water as the pilots said they were hit, or at any second it would have taken only one spark for Opie and I to become fireballs. The plane could have exploded during the transfer of fuel, killing all eleven of our crew. If it weren't for Opie holding onto my belt, I would have dropped into the ocean. Somehow or other we had been saved from all of this for the time being but we were not home yet and the possibilities of ditching still existed. One looks back at these happenings and wonders why we were still alive, flying over the Pacific Ocean.

Later Opie and I manually cranked the forward bomb bay doors open again to jettison our remaining bomb bay tank after transferring the contents of fuel into the cells of #3 main tank. The pilots had used the fuel left in #1 main, leaving all tanks empty but #3 and #4 main and they were not full. These bomb bay doors were then cranked closed. Our situation was still critical as we had quite a distance to travel before reaching Luzon. We had lost at least three hundred gallons of fuel or more. We made good use of this time going over our crash positions with the crew in case we had to ditch due to an insufficient amount of fuel to reach our base. We were all connected by the interphone system as long as we wore our headsets and were plugged into one of the jack boxes. There were jack boxes located at strategic locations in the plane that we could plug into as we moved about. We wore our headset and throat microphone on all flights

Our Pilots and Navigator were doing a fantastic job of rationing fuel. They were leaning out the engines and flying the plane without the Automatic Pilot, not an easy task. As we got closer to Luzon we broke our radio silence and notified them of our situation. Our IFF

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had been shot out and we didn't want to be attacked by our own planes that would be the last straw after coming this far. The northern end of Luzon was now one hundred miles as the Pilots started to slowly gain altitude again. We would have to reach at least forty five hundred feet altitude if we were going to fly directly to our base at Clark Field, Luzon. All members of our crew had been under a great strain since our troubles began. You could just feel the pressures mount, not knowing what to expect next.

We approached the northern end of Luzon at forty five hundred feet altitude, now was the time for a critical decision. The factors were weighed very carefully, the distance to Clark field, the amount of fuel left, also fuel consumption and the crew's safety. The consensus was, we probably had enough fuel for the trip home and we would not have to ditch in the water. So we began the last leg of this flight. We still had about two hundred miles left to go. For the crew, pilots and all, we would switch from ditching in the water to breaking out the parachutes. We headed south over Luzon, just west of the Sierra Madre Mountains on our starboard side and the Cordillera Central Mountains on our port side. This would be a sweat job, as a person never knows what could happen at the end of the flight. The trip toward home seemed like an eternity. We all put on

our parachutes in case we had to abandon the aircraft in flight. If the Pilot gave the signal or the engines started cutting out from lack of fuel, we would have to bail out.

Time passed and distance faded away and the probability of landing seemed more sure. Opie and I, the two flight mechanics, went forward to change the valve on our hydraulic fluid reservoir. We switched the valve to the emergency hydraulic fluid supply side. This gave us an extra supply of hydraulic fluid. We asked the Pilots to pump the brakes to bleed the brake lines of air, hoping this would help the brakes work. There were no leaks in the repaired lines that we could see. Time was getting closer to a landing as we started to gradually let down. We were in contact with Clark Tower, knowing our condition they would give us a straight in landing with a clear strip as we came in. As the plane got closer to home we began preparing for the landing. I checked the nose wheel as it was let down making sure it was locked. Opie checked both main gears locked down from the after station as we came over the last hill heading toward our landing. The flaps were let down on our approach. Opie and I had parachutes ready at our after stations to act as brakes in case the brakes failed. We glided in on fumes and landed tail down on the runway. After the nose wheel was on the runway the brakes were applied gradually, we

could feel them grab hold from the after station. The brakes were working as we slowed down to a halt our engines quit. We had landed on fumes with no fuel left. All hydraulics worked! We were met on landing by the Medics who checked the wounded and gave each of us a drink of spirits to calm our nerves. Twelve long hours had passed since take-off. We were later informed that we had been hit by 40mm, 20mm, 12.7mm and 7.7mm shells.

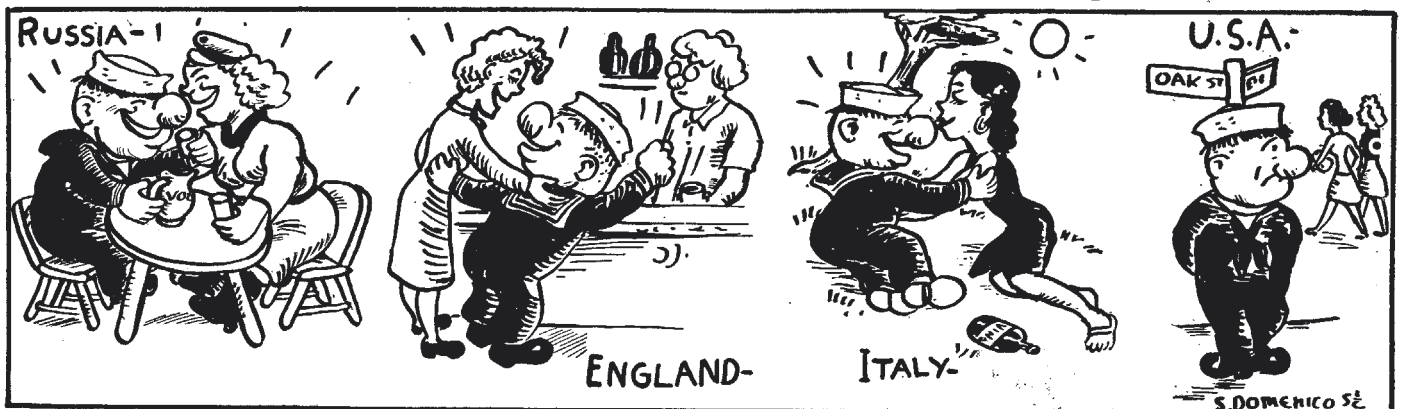
This is the story of two men, both aircraft mechanics, who knew their plane, the hydraulic and brake systems, and the electrical and emergency systems, who always carried their toolbox on every flight. The tools surely came in handy on this flight. We are J.R. Opie from Eldon, Missouri and Me William D. Richards, both Aviation Machinist Mates second class and both were gunners as well. Our Pilot Plane Commander, Lieut. William E. Fulwider, our Co-Pilot Lt.(jg), Harry E. Nagle and our nose gunner John W. French all received the Purple Heart for their wounds. You can be sure that Opie and I knew that through our efforts we had made it possible to bring the plane back with everyone alive.

41045104. win--© February 1997---
Experienced by William D. Richards
of Troy, Michigan
wilm5jn9@aol.com



ARMED GUARD JIMMIE

By S. Domenico



GALE OOLEY'S STORY

Gale Ooley's Story (6/6/08)

I arrived in Kansas City with some other recruits from the Garden City area and was met by Navy people at the depot. We were taken immediately to the naval headquarters to be sworn in. It was Friday, July 13, 1942. The officer who was to swear us in said that if any of us were superstitious about this date and wanted to back out, now would be the time! Nobody backed out and we were in the Navy in about five minutes time. We boarded a train for Chicago and ended up at Great Lakes Naval Base, Camp Moffat. We were issued Navy shoes and clothes and then sent to the barber shop. I don't know what they did with all that hair – they scalped us! Then we went to our assigned barracks and settled in, but not for long. We had to fall out to be instructed to what we could expect from now on.

We learned to sleep in hammocks as there were not enough bunks and that was tricky business! You could not have sticks or anything in the ends of the hammocks. Some nights (most nights, in fact!), someone would turn a little in his sleep and naturally grab for the fellow next to him – it was like a domino effect! Several would flip out and everybody would be awake and laughing by then. We read the Navy manual about boats and ships and marched every day, and every night I cried myself to sleep thinking about Jean and Sharon Jean.

After about two months of boot camp training, we all reported outside our barracks and it was told what and where we each would go. Some to radio school, some to flag signal school, some to mechanical school and some to gunnery school. Most of us went to gunnery school, as that was what was needed most. I was sent to the Chicago Great Lakes Naval Base for gunnery

school. We learned to tear down and repair all kinds of guns, from rifles to larger machine guns and cannons. We had to do some of this blindfolded. Meanwhile, Jean had gone to work at the telephone company in Liberal as an operator.

After a month of intensive gunnery training, about thirty of us were sent to Brown Shipyard in Houston, Texas. From there I departed on a new ship, the S.S. SAMUEL LIVERMORE. Our skipper met us as it was also his first assignment: he had just completed officers' training. In those days they were called "90 day wonders." He was Ensign Woodhead and a pretty nice guy. We had brought all our gear in our sea bags and assigned to our focsle (or room to civilians!). Bunks were three high, seems as I remember – I had a lower bunk. Next, we were assigned to a particular gun. I was trigger man on the port forward side 20 mm. machine gun or cannon. Also, we were all assigned four-hour watch periods: on four hours and off eight hours.

I did get liberty there and went to see a football game, LSU and Tulane. I went to a nice USO and ran into Loren Decamp from Liberal. We had a nice visit. After a few days (maybe four or five), we pulled away from the docks and headed for the Gulf of Mexico, nicknamed "Torpedo Junction" because of so many German submarines in the Caribbean. They were all along the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico. And Japanese subs were all along the West Coast from Washington state to the Panama Canal Zone. The sea was rough that night and another fellow and myself got so seasick that we thought we were going to die but couldn't. We were on watch on the fantail. After the second day out, we got over the seasickness. It was something us landlubbers were not used to! I never got seasick after that, even later

in the Pacific in a cyclone. We went to Aruba just off the coast of Venezuela. We dropped anchor and spent several days there. It was 125 F. every day and we spent most of our time in the water (got a good sun tan!).

Then we weighed anchor and headed for Cuba. We had no sightings of submarines on the trip, but could see evidence of trash in the sea and along the coast where ships had been torpedoed and sunk. We dropped anchor in Guantanamo Bay, where we had a large naval base. We got shore leave in Cuba and the Cuban people were glad to see us. Everywhere we went the Cubans wanted to buy us a drink, but I had to refuse. One night we got to see a boxing match with the champions of Cuba and another country which I do not remember.

We spent only a few days in Cuba and headed for the States. We ran on the reefs just out of Key West, Florida, and were stuck there for two days. We could have been a sitting duck for German subs but the coast was patrolled by Coast Guard cutters and planes, so we weren't too concerned about them. We did a lot of fishing, which was good there. We kept the hours busy. Two sea-going tugs pulled for two days before we came off the reef. We then went on to Key West and docked to see if there was any major damage. The ship was not damaged so in a few days we proceeded on to New York City. After several days at sea we arrived at Brooklyn Naval Yard and docked. We were going to be there several days, so the skipper said that all those who lived within a radius of 300 miles of New York City could have a four day leave. The rest of us would stand our regular watches and get shore leave while off watch.

I had called Jean and she was on her way to New York and I had to meet her at the station. You can imagine how

Continued on Page 30

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

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** C.R. Krist*

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

KOPL VESOLE AND THE CASE FOR HIS UPGRADE TO THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR (MOH) By Roy J. Yeater ET2 54-57, USS VESOLE DD/DDR-878 May 3, 2008

By the time I finished reading "NIGHTMARE IN BARI" by Gerald Reminick, I was convinced that Ensign Kopl Vesole as Commander of the Armed Guard contingent aboard the US Bascom had performed in a manner that placed him in the Congressional Medal of Honor (MOH) category. Further research on the subject on the internet and in other books solidified my conclusion. The USS Vesole's Bill Pinkerton came to that same conclusion. A previous "definitive" book "DISASTER AT BARI" by Glenn B. Infield graphically tells the Bari story as well. More recently the middle book of a Trilogy, "THE DAY OF THE BATTLE: THE WAR IN SICILY AND ITALY 1943" by Rick Atkinson puts the Bari story in a bigger perspective in terms of the pending buildup that the Bari event prefaced. Kopl Vesole and the Mustard Gas was written up in that book as well.

Kopl Vesole arrived in the United States from Poland at the age of seven with his parents and his sister Rose. Though originally a resident of Davenport Rose is now living in the Denver area near her son. Kopl lived and went to school in Davenport, Iowa on the Mississippi a half hour upriver from my hometown of Muscatine, Iowa. He attended the University of Iowa at Iowa City in the area and was an attorney when he became part of the Navy and of WWII and of history.

There is much to the story not just at Bari but before and after. Leroy Heinse, a Merchant Mariner aboard the Vesole, recently passed. He had struggled with the effects of the Bari Mustard Gas all of his life. Leroy maintained during his lifetime that Kopl Vesole saved his life by getting him out of the oil and Mustard Gas slurry that was Bari harbor after the German Airforce attack destroyed so many ships and caused so much damage on the evening of December 2, 1943. Leroy said that he knew he was not going to make it had not a badly wounded Kopl Vesole acted and

saved his life. Those kind of stories as related by the survivors around Kopl Vesole make up the history of the event and are the heart of the Kopl Vesole story of heroism.

Brandy Brandenstein is the remaining member of the US Navy's Armed Guard contingent aboard the US BASCOM. Ensign Kopl Vesole was their commander. Brandy told me about meeting with "Kay" or "K" Vesole just prior to the attack at Bari. Brandy related how Kopl Vesole brought an envelope out of his desk that contained a sheet of paper with the foot imprint of his new son, Fred, who was about three months old at the time and who he had not yet seen. It was a very personal moment as described by Brandy. Brandy would relate that story again when he and Fred talked for the first time recently.

Kopl's son Fred Nameth is now an attorney in the Los Angeles area. He attended the 1997 Vesole Reunion in St Paul, Minnesota and was part of the Vesole Memorial Event at Fort Snelling National Cemetery along with many others of the Vesole family members where his father Kopl Vesole and our other Vesole ship sailors were commemorated. Fred was presented the US Flag that had flown over the capital in Washington, DC to honor the occasion.

Now we have moved ahead to a present where a Petition to Upgrade the Navy Cross that Kopl Vesole received posthumously after his death at Bari. You will read about all of it in this newsletter and you will be offered an opportunity to be a part of this historic effort. I believe that the sailors and members of the USS VESOLE DD/DDR-878 Association will come together to support the award of the Medal of Honor to Ensign Kopl Vesole because it is the right thing to do. He deserves to be recognized as being in this unique category of heroes.

To: All Navy AG Members and Supporters- July 2008

I have had the privilege to be a part of your history by writing and compiling the following books published by the Glencannon Press: 1-800-711-8905

Patriots and Heroes: True Stories of the U.S. Merchant Marine in World War II, Vols. 1&2

Nightmare in Bari: The World War II Liberty Ship Poison Gas Disaster and Cover-up

Death's Railway: A Merchant Mariner POW on the River Kwai

No Surrender: True Stories of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard in World War II

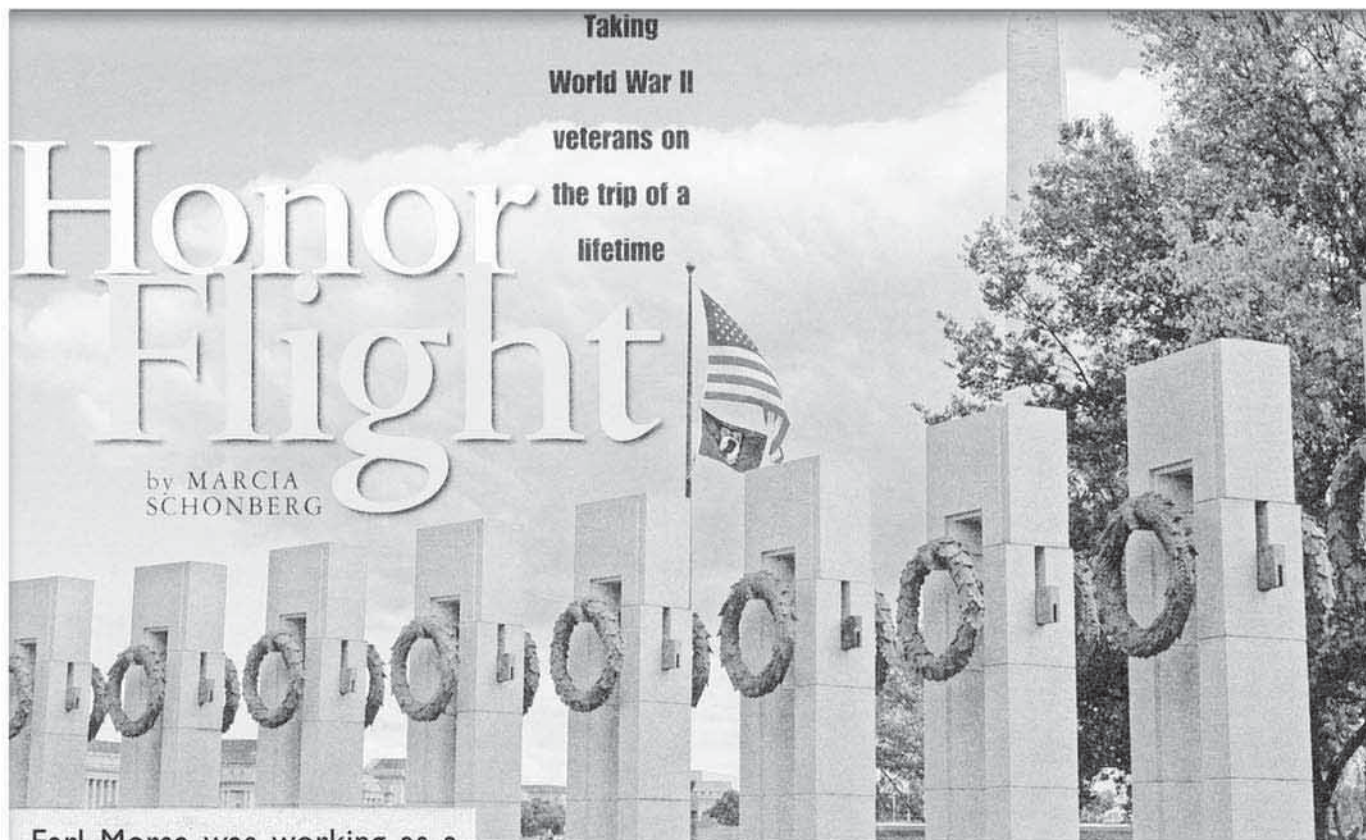
Action in the South Atlantic: The Sinking of the German Raider Stier by the Liberty Ship Stephen Hopkins
Seizure and Rescue of the SS Mayaguez (Currently under review for publication by Glencannon)

Lester Ellison is a very good friend of mine. His WW II Tugboat experience aboard an Army Transport Tug was briefly told in my Patriots and Heroes series. Les' maritime career led to his desire to inform the American public about the role of the American Merchant Marine in WW II.

In reviewing his life and work, I have decided to write a book concerning the American Merchant Marine and the USNAG and their involvement with tugboats in WW II. Therefore, I am looking for stories from mariners and NAGs who served aboard any WW II related tugboats. These stories may involve all the theaters, training, first/last voyage, D-day, humor, battle, death, galley, life at sea and in port, etc.

I look forward to compiling and writing this volume on our WW II tugboats. Thank you. Sincerely,

Gerald Reminick • 83 Bayberry Dr, Huntington, NY 11743 • (H) 631-421-3242 • (O) 631-851-6557 • reminig@sunysuffolk.edu



Earl Morse was working as a physician assistant in 2004 at a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical clinic in Springfield, Ohio, when he asked a simple question that changed his life. Morse asked one of his patients, 78-year-old World War II veteran Leonard Loy, whether he'd thought about visiting the National World War II Memorial, which recently had opened in Washington, D.C.

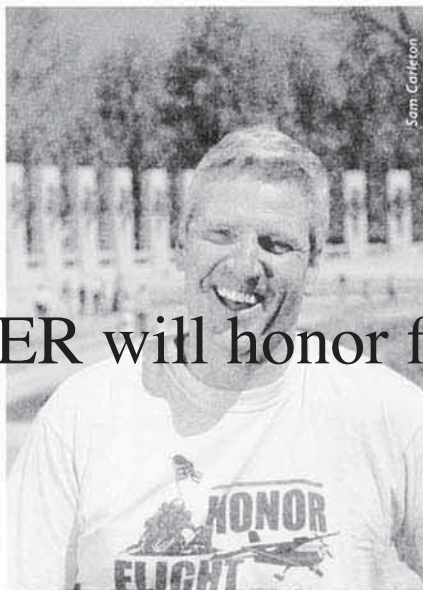
Loy shook his head sadly. "Mama's been sick and we don't have the money," he said. "And we don't have any way to get out there."

Morse, himself a licensed pilot and former U.S. Air Force captain, had just rented a private Cessna 441 and was going to fly his father, a Vietnam War veteran, to the nation's capital to see the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. He had an idea, a casual invitation that didn't seem like such a big deal at the time. "My dad and I are renting a plane," he told Loy. "If you'd like to go, it won't cost you a penny."

Loy didn't say anything, but the tears in his eyes spoke volumes.

"That's when it hit me, 'This means more than I thought,'" says Morse, 48.

In the months that followed, Morse's casual invitation to help a fellow military veteran turned into a nationwide quest. For more than two years now, he's been flying World War II veterans to see the memorial erected in their honor on the National Mall. Since founding his nonprofit Honor Flight Network in



Earl Morse brings World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., to see the memorial created in their honor.

2005, he has taken more than 1,000 veterans from around the country to the memorial—and it hasn't cost any of them one red cent.

"I've had a lot of veterans tell me this trip was the greatest day of their life," Morse says.



U.S. Sen. Bob Doyle greets an Honor Flight participant.

A grassroots effort

After that first trip in the Cessna with his father and Loy, Morse enlisted the help of some pilot friends in Dayton, Ohio, and organized more day trips. The grassroots effort grew as word spread and donations increased, and Morse soon was purchasing blocks of tickets on commercial flights for larger groups, and coordinating flights from across the country.

"So far, we're in 11 states," says Honor Flight's director of operations, Al Bailey, 60. "Setting up Honor Flight hubs will help us reach our goal."

That goal is to ensure that all living World War II veterans get a chance to see the memorial that was erected to honor their service and sacrifice.

Morse remembers a call going out in the late 1990s for World War I veterans in the central Ohio area to give them special-recognition medals. Only two were located, and the thought of "too little, too late" stays

As dawn breaks, airplanes and beg



with Morse to the War II vets to n thank-you to the

Honor Flight donation-funded Veterans Affairs job a medical clinic in least four days a the program's or Clarice, as well a sister and sister volunteers who network, based

Honor Flight flights each year Georgia, Michi Dakota (which Dakota and M Ohio and Utah cants per day fr Alaska," Bailey

An unforgettable

On an Honor Flight, every veteran is covered, including transportation, and wheelchair for Veterans pay each flight has a Natalie Kinsteered on a flight she'll never forget another veteran she says.

Morse steered from veterans pay their way, al hundred dol already," he says

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VETERANS ON THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME!



Veterans eagerly board the plane for their exciting day (below).



is day. "I didn't want World War II to be able to see America's service," he says.

It is volunteer-staffed and free. Morse gave up his Veterans Affairs job and now works part-time at a store in Eron, Ohio. He devotes at least one day a week to Honor Flight and is a paid employee. His wife, Mary, is his mother, father, brother, and sister-in-law, are among the 15 volunteers who help operate the national trip in Dayton.

Morse coordinates dozens of flights from Alabama, Florida, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, and Minnesota. He also represents South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. "We have 30 to 50 applications from veterans as far away as Alaska," he says.

able experience

For Flight trip, every expense is covered, including meals, ground transportation, oxygen tanks and motorized wheelchairs for veterans who need them. Veterans pay for their own tickets, and a medical attendant.

Ed, 34, of Atlanta, volunteered and it was an experience he'll never forget. "Now I'll never pass up without saying thank you,"

he says. "I've refused all offers of money who ask if they can help me. It typically costs several thousands of dollars. They've done enough for me."

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CENTER will honor flight

Gushing jets of water at the center of the memorial are like a "fountain of youth" for the vets, Morse says.

"When we arrived at the airport, we didn't even have to buy our breakfast," says Dayton resident Jim Eby, 85, a World War II pilot who took a flight with his brother Harold, 92, also a veteran, this spring. "They gave us a sack of food."

Before each flight from Dayton, Morse meets departing veterans at the airport, greeting each one personally. When the airplane lands in Baltimore, Md., typically meeting up with Honor Flights from other cities, he assembles the group into waiting chartered buses and heads into nearby Washington, D.C.

At the memorial, located between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, veterans gravitate into the large circular pavilion ringed with elegant columns representing each state. Many are moved to tears. Dozens of other visitors are anxious to meet the veterans, shake their hands and express their thanks.

"A young female sailor came up to me and asked

what branch of the military I was in," says Fern Metcalf, 84, a U.S. Navy WAVES veteran from Troy, Ohio. "When I told her the Navy, she grabbed my arm and asked another sailor to take a picture of us. Then she stayed with me as I walked all around the memorial."



Expressions of thanks await veterans.

"Here I am, 84 years old, with a smile I can't wipe off," Metcalf adds. "It gives me goose bumps when I think about how special we were made to feel."

George Cordrey, 85, who fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima, traveled from Cincinnati to Columbus to connect with his Honor Flight trip. "A couple approached me from out of the blue," he says. "They hugged me and thanked me. I don't know who they were or where they were from, but we all sobbed. It was so touching."

"They'll have a whole day of people coming up



WWII pilot Jim Eby

A rejuvenating effect

At the center of the memorial is a pair of gushing, towering fountains —symbols, according to the memorial's official statement of purpose, "of the moral strength and awesome power that can flow when a free people are united and bonded together in a just cause." Morse says the torrents of water have a rejuvenating effect on the visiting veterans.

"I call it the fountain of youth," he says. "There's a transformation that takes place. They get on the plane in the morning, they're in their 80s. They get on that evening to come back home, it's like they're in their 60s."

Some 1,500 World War II veterans are on a waiting list of upcoming Honor Flights and Morse vows to keep working until they all get to see the memorial that honors them. And even then, he has no plans to stop.

"Once we get all the World War II vets, we'll get the Korean vets," he says. "And then we'll help the Vietnam vets . . . and the vets of Iraq and Afghanistan, if there's a memorial for that. This is going to continue."

"This is the most honorable, noble thing I've ever done in my life," he adds. "It's so much further-reaching and meaningful than I ever thought it was going to be."

Marcia Schomberg is a writer in Lexington, Ohio.

Click on this story at americanprofile.com to find out more or to post a comment. To contact Honor Flight directly, call (937) 521-2400.

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Some of you have taken this trip already and told me how much you enjoyed it.
Others who haven't been and want to, contact them and not me. (cal)

MAC HISTORY: *SS MacMurray Victory*

The College's honorable presence in the Pacific Theater during World War II

BY CHRISTOPHER J. YOUNG, PHD - HISTORY DEPARTMENT, MACMURRAY COLLEGE

On October 17, 1998, a bill passed by both houses of Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton (known as Public Law 105-261) was meant to honor the Naval Armed Guard whose efforts in both world wars had been "largely overlooked due to the rapid disbanding of the service" following the Second World War and because of the "lack of adequate records." Thus, the law announced, "Recognition is highly warranted and long overdue."

Many of these underappreciated sailors served on Victory ships. Victory ships were the larger, stronger, and faster successors to the Liberty Ships. The first Victory ship was named *SS United Victory*, while the thirty-four that followed were named for allied countries. The appellations of the next 218 ships carried a name of an American city within it. The 150 that followed these were named after colleges and universities in the United States. The remaining Victory ships that were built were given an assortment of names.

MacMurray College was honored as one of those 150 Victory ships named after colleges and universities. College President **C. P. McClelland** received a letter from Norris Nash, the public relations director of the ship's maker, Permanente Metals Corporation, stating that the ship will no doubt "bring credit to the name she bears." Before the ship was launched, the yard manager, M.G. Vanderwende, told those present, "In naming this ship, the United States Maritime Commission pays tribute to one of America's outstanding institutions of higher learning, MacMurray College for Women"

The *SS MacMurray Victory* set out from Richmond, Calif., on April 28, 1945, at 2:30 pm, for its inaugural voyage. When the *MacMurray Victory* launched into the Pacific Ocean, the reality of the war no doubt weighed heavily on the mind of its crew. The same month the new ship embarked, three of its fellow Victory ships were sunk by Japanese kamikazes. In fact, the *MacMurray Victory* left port on the second day of a three day kamikaze onslaught being endured by other Victory ships and their crews around Okinawa.

Earlier in the month, once the initial thrust of the battle for Okinawa was under way, a harbinger of the destruction that would follow came in the form of an organized, disciplined, and severely damaging kamikaze attack on American ships. The first wave took out the *SS Bush* and the *SS Calhoun*, costing the Japanese three planes and three pilots. In the Kerama area of Okinawa, waves of Japanese kamikaze pilots sent the first two Victory ships – the *SS Logan Victory* and the *SS Hobbs Victory* – to the sea's abyss.

The loss of the Victory ships had serious consequences for the American Army then engaged in an intense fight on Okinawa. Most of the 81mm mortar ammunition that was available to the American forces was being carried by these Victory ships. (When more of this type of ammunition was available, the Army and Navy used transport planes to carry 117 tons of 81 mm mortar ammunition to Okinawa.)

In an attempt to hamper the intrepid American ground forces who continued to move forward in the face of Japanese resistance, kamikazes launched another fierce attack over three days at the end of April with the hope of cutting off the

Americans from their supply lines. In the course of these three days at the end of April 1945, while the *MacMurray Victory* prepared to set sail from California, over 150 Japanese aircraft engaged in suicide attacks on American ships near Okinawa. As a result of these attacks, another Victory ship – *SS Canada Victory* – was sunk, and with it the ammunition that it was carrying. The other casualties from these dark days included hospital ships, warships, and transports.

While the Americans forged ahead, the ammunition available to them was severely limited due to the sinking of the three Victory ships. Destroyed along with the Victory ships was close to 24,000 tons of munitions. When the intense combat on Okinawa demanded more ammo (supplies were geared initially towards forty days of combat), the US forces had to face the reality that they would have to make due without the tons of munitions that went down with the three Victory ships destroyed by Japanese pilots.

* * *

On the new *SS MacMurray Victory* was a sailor named **Noel Moody**, a member of the United States Navy serving in the Naval Armed Guard. Born on May 24,



Mrs. Kathryn MacMurray made the christening speech at the *SS MacMurray Victory's* inaugural launch.

1925, in Pineville, Ky., Moody entered active service in May 1944. He served on the *SS American Trader* hauling gasoline to the North African theater before serving on the *MacMurray Victory*. Like others, when the war in Europe began to wind down, Moody was shifted to the west coast of the United States in order to help focus American resources on defeating the Japanese and thus ending the war.

On that late April day in 1945 in Richmond, Calif., after some formalities, which included a speech by **Mrs. Kathryn MacMurray (Senator James MacMurray's widow)**, the newly-minted *MacMurray Victory* set sail into the Pacific Ocean. Even though they were not present for the launching of the ship that bore their *alma mater's* name, the generosity of MacMurray's students was known to the ship's crew. MacMurray students raised



(At near right) **U.S. Navy sailor Noel Moody;**
(at far right) **the guncrew of the**
***SS MacMurray Victory*.**



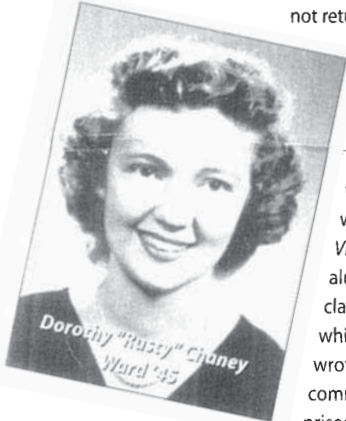
MACMURRAY COLLEGE / PORT DIRECTOR

a fund of \$150 for the ship's library. In addition to funds for the library, students made sure that MacMurray's sailors were abreast of the latest news on campus by donating a subscription to the student newspaper, *The MacMurray College Greetings*.

After returning to San Francisco Bay from Okinawa, Captain Edward Martinez and his sixteen officers put the question of who will be the "ship's sweetheart" to a vote. Earlier six finalists had emerged from a campus-wide election sponsored by the school newspaper. The finalists were **Joan Boyd '48, Virginia Bliss '46, Natacha Pehlman '45, Joan Stewart '47, Dorothy Chaney '45, and Mildred Moss '46.** (Since Boyd and Stewart did

not return for the spring semester they were ultimately excluded from the contest.)

The captain was given the names of the contenders and invited his fellow officers into his quarters to vote. After the vote, the officers re-emerged with the name of a "charming young lady" who would serve as the *MacMurray Victory's* pin-up girl. The winner was alumna **Dorothy "Rusty" Chaney Ward**, class of 1945. Upon hearing the news while living with her husband in Texas, she wrote to the *Greetings* to tell the campus community that she was "certainly surprised" by the "big news."



Moody's and the ship's maiden voyage first took them to a Pacific island that Moody characterized in a recent interview as a "pile of sand." The next stop for man and ship was one of the Marshall Islands called Eniwetok, which he described as being "shot up" and without inhabitants. By the time the *MacMurray Victory* arrived at Okinawa with its cargo of ammunition the war was nearly over. (Incidentally, among the cargo was furniture for officers at Okinawa – one of whom was **Lt. Commander George W. Adams**, chair of the history department at MacMurray College from 1933 to 1937.)

While the long awaited V-J Day had finally arrived, the sailors of the *MacMurray Victory* didn't have time to celebrate. Japanese pilots, who had apparently not heard – or believed – that their country had surrendered, continued to attack. Moody, along with the rest of the gun crew, was responsible for manning the ship's guns. A number of men were assigned to the different guns on board the ship. He was part of a crew who was in charge of the *MacMurray Victory's* sole 5-inch 38 gun. He and the rest of the crew spent their first days of peace defending the ship from kamikaze attacks.

Just when the sailors of the *MacMurray Victory* thought their fighting was over, they faced another enemy: Mother Nature in the form of a "terrific typhoon." The typhoon banged up the ship badly enough that it became necessary to pull into Iroquois Point, Hawaii, for repairs.

Eventually the sailors of the *MacMurray Victory* would go their separate ways to rejoin loved ones in the different places they called home. While they enjoyed reunions and adjusted to postwar life, the ship was later sold to a private company. During the course of its life, the ship went through a number of name changes: *Polyphemus* in 1946, *Tantalus* in 1960, and finally *Pelops* in 1969. In that same year, the ship made its final voyage to the Far East. This time, however, instead of facing off with Japanese kamikazes, the ship faced the shipbreakers at Kaohsiung, Taiwan, where it was scrapped in 1970.

The service of the ship and its crew reminds us that the College was represented in a theater of war by America's Naval Armed Guard. Like our own alumni, the crew of the *MacMurray Victory* deserves to claim the name MacMurray College as their own. To recognize this is one way that we as an academic community can do our own part to make sure that these brave sailors and their service are not overlooked when we celebrate and commemorate the courage of those who served in the great conflagration that was World War II.

SUMMER 2006

S. S. Cornelius Harnett
December 1, 1943

The Port Director
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

I wish to express my appreciation for the fine exhibition of courage and cooperation displayed by Ensign Dill and his Navy gun crew during the attacks experienced enroute to Naples. During the enemy attacks the Navy men manned their guns in a manner that was a credit to their officer and the service they represent.

During an enemy attack at sea by high and low level bombers, our 5"/38 gun diverted two torpedo planes by well directed fire, causing them to steeply bank and release their torpedoes hastily, missing our ship by narrow margin.

All during three enemy bomber attacks at Naples, which was severe, Ensign Dill and his gun crew conducted themselves efficiently in ably defending their ship. I would welcome the opportunity to sail with them again.

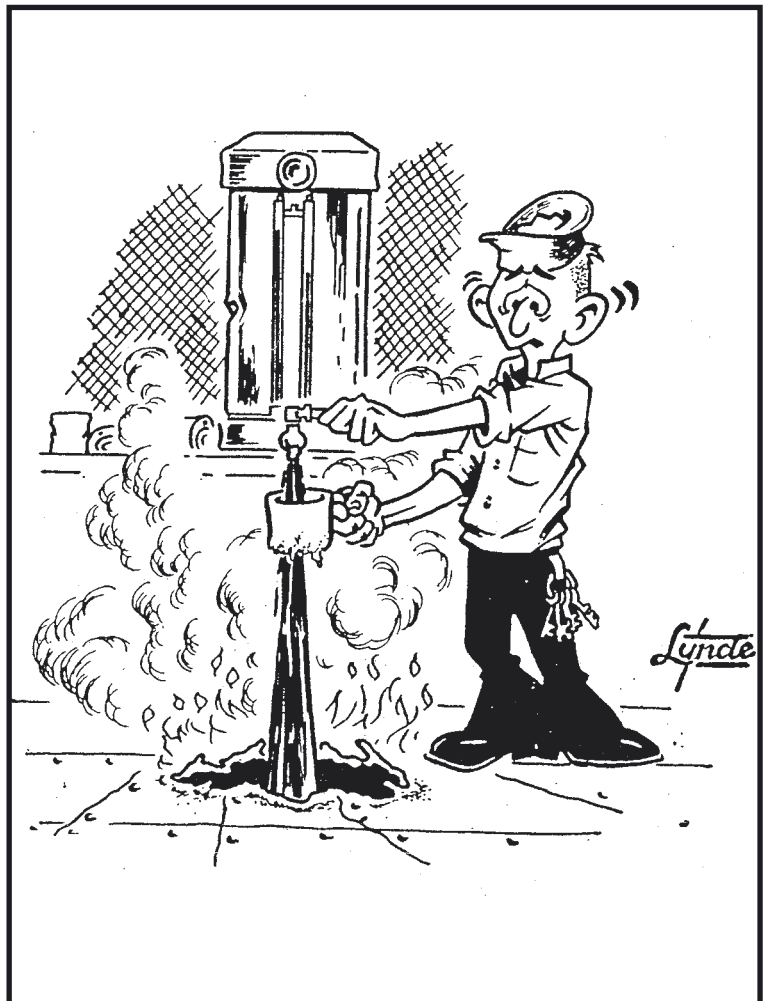
Certified to be a true copy:

/s/ A. Frank Gotch
A. Frank Gotch
Master

C. W. Young
C. W. YOUNG, Lieut., U.S.N.R.

BROWN, Charles William, 608 91 14 was a member of the crew mentioned in the above letter.

C. W. Young
C. W. YOUNG, Lieut., U.S.N.R.



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each of us felt at the time. We were just country kids and New York City was a large city. But we had no problem finding each other – what a happy reunion! Jean had come over a thousand miles to be with me and I was going to be with her every minute! I paid a buddy to stand watch for me all four days (although the skipper did not know about this!). Jean and I had a wonderful time: we went to Central Park and to Rockefeller Center and saw the Rockettes and went up the Empire State Building and viewed the city and all the harbors with the ships coming and going. It was quite something for a couple of green kids from Kansas!

We had a great time together, but time soon ran out and I had to put Jean on the train, not knowing when I would see her again. It was another sad parting with tears running down our cheeks. In grief I hailed a cab and headed back to the Brooklyn Naval Yard to get on my ship. When I got to the dock where I left my ship four days before, lo and behold – it was not there! I began thinking of all kinds of things that might happen to me. I just knew I was going to end up in the brig for jumping ship. I was really down, when I saw a Navy guy in a jeep and I asked him if he knew where the ship had gone. He said it had gone across town to the Army docks. I thanked him and hailed another cab to get me there in a hurry! It was a large area with ships everywhere, being loaded to go overseas to the war front. I came up to the gate which was guarded by Marines (they were mean) and showed my ID card and asked to be admitted. The guard looked me over and asked where that ship was located. I said to him, "This place is so big, I'm not sure where it is – I would have to look around." Anyway, he let me in and from there, I did not know which direction to go. There were ships everywhere! God must have been looking after me as I know He did many times, for I saw another sailor close by in a

jeep and asked him if he knew where the SAMUEL LIVERMORE was docked, and he said, "Sure, jump in and I will take you to it." I couldn't believe my good luck. That ship looked like the Taj Mahal to me at that moment. I almost kneeled down and kissed the steel plates, I was so happy to see it! I didn't mind starting my watch at all!

We were loading supplies for several days and the winches were very noisy dropping supplies down into the holds. I was on watch one day when this was going on and I had just gone to the galley to get a cup of coffee. At that time a Navy Lieutenant came aboard and was looking for the person who was supposed to be on watch. I rushed over to where the winches were going up and down and making a lot of noise, pretending I had been there all the time. He dressed me down anyway and I always felt guilty about claiming I had been watching them load the ship.

A few days passed, and after the ships were loaded, we lay low in the water from our load of cargo. They then brought five P 38 airplanes and put them on the deck. What a prize this would have been for some German submarine captain! It finally came time to set sail for wherever we were going, which we did not know until all the ships were coming together in a convoy of maybe thirty or forty ships being escorted by destroyers and airplanes part of the way. It was late February of 1943 and we headed for North Africa. The invasion of North Africa had taken place about two months before and there was heavy fighting in and around Oran and Algiers in the Mediterranean. We were to land in Casablanca, which we did and saw the destruction our battleships and destroyers and airplanes had done to the port there, sunken ships and the smell human flesh was bad. We docked not too far from where the French battleship JEAN BART was docked. The JEAN BART was

manned by the Vichy French and they resisted our invasion, with the Germans. Our battleship put it out of commission in short order. We unloaded the five P 38 planes in Casablanca, as there was a big air base set up for our planes to fly to the front lines. I saw many planes that were shot up pretty bad but still were able to make it back to the air base. However, many didn't make it back. After unloading the planes, we went on to the Rock of Gibraltar and dropped anchor there to wait for more ships to come in.

I woke up one morning to go on watch and you could see ships way past the horizon. There must have been at least a hundred or more. We had general quarters sounding frequently for air raid alarms and had to man our guns. We were constantly on alert and slept in our clothes most of the time while we were in the Mediterranean Sea. I had a close buddy named Reece who was always talking about his girlfriend back home in Minnesota, and while we were anchored in Gibraltar, I was to go on watch at midnight. Reece was not in his bunk. The one I was to relieve came down and said I had better go to the big gun on the stern, because he said Reece was going to test fire the big gun on the stern and sure enough, Reece was there. We were on complete blackout at night and if Reece had fired the gun we would have been blown out of the water by the big guns on Mt. Gibraltar, besides the other ships in the harbor. I convinced Reece to go down to our focsle and go to bed, which he did. But then he started switching his bunk light on and off and nobody was going to get any sleep. I asked him to quit and he just reached up and grabbed the light and pulled it completely out of the wall and handed it to me and laughed! I knew then he was off his rocker and immediately went to the skipper and told him he was going to have to get Reece off the ship before something bad happened. The next morning the skipper and Reece left

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the ship and as Reece left, he turned around and saluted us and grinned. That was the last time I saw my friend, he had gone over the edge. The first time I noticed he had a problem was when he used shaving lotion to brush his teeth and toothpaste to shave with. I often wondered whatever happened to him (maybe he was not as crazy as we thought!).

One day, a white reconnaissance plane came over and it was very high. A British aircraft carrier that was anchored at Gibraltar let go with everything it had. Shells were exploding all around that plane and it just kept going. Our little guns would not reach that distance so we didn't waste any ammunition.

Finally the convoy of supply ships were organized and ready to enter the Mediterranean with our escort destroyers. Before we got to Oran, we were riding a rough sea and it was misty and cold. We were all at our gun positions on complete alert, while in the Mediterranean Sea. All of a sudden general quarters was sounded, as someone on watch saw a group of planes coming in from the rear, very low over the sea.

Those crazy Germans were flying in that kind of weather! That was probably the idea, though, to surprise us. I don't know, but we were ready for them, because everybody was on their guns. We had eight 20 mm guns and a 3"50 antiaircraft on the bow and a 4"50 cannon on the stern, a World War I relic.

When the 4"50 gun let go plus all the other ships, the planes spread out their formation and came in, not a hundred feet off the water. Everything broke loose!! Tracer bullets from the ships and planes looked like the fourth of July! One plane came by my port side and I was on the bow port side 20 mm gun and I could see the pilot and copilot and they were looking straight

ahead like they were out on a Sunday drive, but their gunners were busy as I was, also. I had a buddy who was busy putting the ammunition magazine on my gun and another who would change the barrel when it got too hot. This was my gun crew in my turret. The battle lasted maybe twenty or thirty minutes, I don't remember for sure. You could see tracer bullets flying all around the planes like spraying water on a dog. You could see where the bullets were going and only every third bullet was a tracer bullet so you couldn't see many of the bullets. I don't know if I shot a plane down or not, for as soon as that plane was past me, I was not concerned about him – I was waiting for the next one coming in! One guy got so scared he left his gun and went below. I don't know what happened to him but I'm sure he received some disciplinary action when we got back home. The guys on the 3.50 were hollering and whooping it up because one of us got a plane.

One night while on watch, we were all on ear phones so we could communicate with one another. I heard a shot and heard one of the guys say, "I wasn't asleep." He reported it at least three times because he was scared. The coxswain in charge was checking to see if everyone was on watch. He was probably asleep. A few weeks later the coxswain went off his bonkers and they had to take him off in a strait jacket.

One of our youngest gunmen was not over seventeen, I'm sure. He lied about his age to get into the Navy. He was on a starboard side gun and a plane came up on port side, on my side of the ship, and he got on it and continued firing as it went by and didn't stop firing as it went by and shot up the smoke stack and the guys on the bridge ducked for cover. He got chewed out but no disciplinary action.

We arrived in Oran without losing a ship but the Germans weren't so fortu-

nate. Our ship was credited for shooting down three planes and damaging two others. British and American PT boats went out after the battle and picked up maybe thirty or forty German airmen and women. They were brought ashore right next to our ship and they were the "cream of the crop" or "super-race"(they thought). They all had crew cut blond hair and steel blue eyes and I was only about fifty feet from them. They glared at me with hatred in their eyes as they marched by. You could tell they were disciplined.

We unloaded the rest of our cargo in Oran. While their tanks were still being unloaded close to our ship and I was on the dock watching them unload from some LST's. Each one had a name or something painted on the side like our airmen painted on the side of their planes. Suddenly one of them came out of the LST and on it was the name "Sharon Jean." It hit me like a ton of bricks, it was so unexpected! I went back to my focsle and cried.

We were in Oran probably a week or ten days. One day a British Guard, similar to our Marines, came by our ship and I happened to be on the dock and we struck up a conversation. He had just come from the front lines for a little R & R. I invited him to come aboard for noon chow and he readily accepted. It was probably the first decent meal he had enjoyed since leaving Great Britain. He told me how the Germans had killed several of his relatives and he had no love for them. I doubt if he ever took very many prisoners. He gave me some souvenirs from the front. I wish I had written down his name.

While in Oran, we heard "Axis-Sally" broadcasting from Berlin. She would play American "big-band" music like Guy Lombardo and Tommy Dorsey to try to make us homesick. She would say, "Your wife or girlfriend is playing around back home" and then she would tell exactly where our troops were and

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she was usually right! My British friend was departing for the front lines with a convoy of trucks with supplies and soldiers and he invited us to go with them (we had to decline).

We finally got our cargo unloaded and pulled out with some other ships to head back to the states. I think it was the first or second day out that the sea was calm as glass – not a good sign. I was standing on the bridge talking to the skipper and looking at a British ship next to us. We were on the coffin corner of the convoy – on the very outside, first in line. The British ship was on the inside of us. All of a sudden we heard an explosion and saw the ship give a lurch. I hollered at the skipper "that ship has been torpedoed!" It took another torpedo and broke in half and I saw the bow and the stern disappear into the deep. This all happened in about ten minutes. I saw only about six or eight sailors in the water and maybe two life rafts. There must have been several subs in the area: this was called a "wolf-pack" by our sailors.

They sank several ships: one I saw that was behind us and one to the side of us took a torpedo in the bow right underneath the big gun where the ammunition was stored and it blew the whole bow off, gun crew and all. We could not stop and pick up survivors as we would have been sitting ducks for the subs. Our destroyer escorts began dropping depth charges or "tin cans" on the subs and tried to pick up survivors, also. The depth charges sounded like giant hammers hitting on the hull of the ship. I can imagine what it sounded like to those German submariners. After the attack we returned to Oran and I was admitted to the hospital for surgery for a wound on my neck that I received from a shell which had exploded on deck – one of our shells. I had manned my gun although injured and bleeding.

I was taken to a hospital where other Americans were who had come from the

front lines. It was a French hospital but a US Navy doctor worked on me as a French nurse held my hand. The doctor said, "Son, that was getting close to where you live." I was in the hospital for five or six days when some of my shipmates came to see me and said they were leaving for the States the next day. I bailed out of my bed and was starting to put my clothes on when the nurse came over and wanted to know what I was doing. I told her my ship was leaving for the States and I was going to be on it and that was it. I walked out with my shipmates. We were back out to sea before my skipper knew I was aboard. In the meantime, some of my shipmates had spoken to the skipper about me receiving the Purple Heart medal but he said he couldn't do that. I didn't know anything about this and wouldn't have felt right about it either. But I had manned my gun even though injured!

After passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, we entered the North Atlantic, still stalked by the German subs. We knew it because the destroyers were dropping depth charges frequently. We ran into a terrible storm in the Atlantic and finally were able to elude the subs, but the storm was so bad that some of the ships were damaged and became separated from the convoy.

Finally, we arrived in New York City and passed the Statue of Liberty, a beautiful lady and a sight to see. As we came in, the Queen Mary was going out. She was so huge, she made our ship look like a rowboat! We docked in Brooklyn and reported to the Naval base for new assignments. I got a fifteen day leave and a transfer to New Orleans, Algiers Naval Base. I got to spend most of the time with my beautiful wife and also some time with my parents and her parents. Jean's parents were very special to me. They did not know about my injury until I got home.

I soon had to report to Algiers Naval

Base, across the Mississippi River from New Orleans. At that time, you had to take a ferry across the river. I soon was promoted to 3rd Class Petty Officer and assigned to the Naval Brig as a guard and the mail orderly.

Jean had been working at the telephone company as a phone operator, but she quit her job to come to New Orleans to be with me. We lived on St. Charles Street and shared an apartment with another young military couple, sharing the bath and kitchen areas. Housing was hard to find during the war. We rode the trolley when we went to town or church or just as something to do. We didn't have any money but we were together. The people in New Orleans were very friendly, and the chow at the Algiers Naval Base was the best! The nights were very hot in August and September. There was no such thing as air conditioning, but at least we did have fans.

One day I was on guard duty and I had six or eight prisoners cleaning up a certain perimeter on the base, and most of the guys were decent people. They had either missed their ship or come late from their leave or got drunk and thrown in jail for fighting a Marine or Army guy. Others were there for more serious crimes and some were waiting for a "general court martial" which could land them in prison for a long time and a dishonorable discharge from the Navy.

I ended up having one of these creeps in my work detail but I didn't know what he was in for. We guards would usually let the guys have a short smoke break and rest period – maybe fifteen or twenty minutes. This character asked me what I would do if he tried to escape. I put my hand on my revolver and said, "Would you like to find out?" I had no more problems with him but I kept my eye in him all the time. It was a good thing that I did, because a few days later, one of the guards was a nice guy who had

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been in the Navy for several years and was up for discharge with full pension as soon as the war ended. He had a detail out with this creep and he let his guard down. This creep picked up a brick or a large rock and hit the guard in the head and killed him.

He escaped for a short time but was still on the base when they caught him. He was brought back to the brig compound and turned loose in there. The other prisoners almost beat the character to death and the guards didn't care, because the guard he had killed was well thought of by the other guards and prisoners. It was a sad time for all of us as he had earned his retirement and he left only his wife to mourn for him – they had no children

A few months later, I was approached by somebody from headquarters on the base, saying I was to receive a decoration for action in the Mediterranean. This was a complete surprise to me. A few days later a detachment of sailors was brought to the parade ground and Jean was there to see it. A sailor on another ship and I were presented with "The Letter of Commendation" from the Navy. I soon was promoted to

2nd Class Petty Officer (with promotion comes more responsibility!). A month or so later I received orders to go to Beaumont, Texas, to be the Navy officer in charge of about ten men to man a three-inch gun on the bow and two 20 mm. cannons. I also had a radio man and a flagman to send signals to other ships. The seagoing tug was the "Jupiter Inlet." This meant Jean and I were going to be separated again. She went back home to work for the telephone company, but soon she and her folks moved to upstate New York, where her brother was stationed in a conscientious objectors' camp, as he was a preacher. They, Daddy Chapin and Doyle did evangelistic work around Hubbardville, New York. The country is beautiful up there: rolling hills and lots of trees, and Jean said the

most beautiful snow flakes.

Taking charge of a crew of Navy guys was a new experience for me. I was only a kid: 22 or 23 years old, but those under me were only 18-20 years old. We soon got acquainted and I assigned each man to a gun and wrote up the watch schedule. I soon found out who I could really depend on! We departed from Beaumont and entered the channel of the Gulf of Mexico. We operated around the coast for two or three months, towing barges from Galveston, Port Arthur, Beaumont and Corpus Christi to the Florida coast, Tampa Bay, Key West and Savannah, Georgia. During this time I got an infection in my foot from a blister. Before we got back to Port Arthur, my foot was swollen and blood poisoning had set in and it was up past my ankle. My foot was so painful I couldn't walk on it. When we got to port, I went to the Naval hospital – with the help of two of my buddies. When I was admitted and the doctor looked at it, he said there was only a fifty-fifty chance of saving my foot. That was not the kind of news I wanted to hear! They immediately started to soak my foot in some kind of a solution and giving me some pills. I soaked my foot all that night and all the next day and just a few days later it started to clear up. I left the hospital with my foot intact and got back on the tug in time to pull out for a new assignment.

We then received orders to go to Panama. We had been operating around Cuba and Puerto Rico and were back in Galveston when I received word from Jean that we had a beautiful new baby daughter! I immediately went to the port officer's office to see about getting a leave to go to New York to see my wife and new daughter. I saw a lieutenant and he said all he could give me was a four-day leave. There was no way I could go to New York and back in four days! I left the office feeling pretty down, and as I was going down the hall I happened to pass a room. Looking in, I saw a Navy officer's cap with scrambled eggs all over it. I didn't know if he

was a Commander or an Admiral, but I went in and told him what I wanted to do (I didn't mention that I had just talked to a lieutenant!). He asked me if fifteen days would be enough, and I said, "Yes, Sir!" He had his yeoman make up the papers and I thanked him and was on my way. I couldn't believe my good luck! While on the train, a conductor came up to me and wanted me to talk to a Spanish lady who he could not understand. I had been in the Gulf and in the Caribbean and had a dark tan and a mustache and he thought I was a Mexican!

I finally got to Hubbardville and Jean was in the hospital in Oneida. I saw Mary Gayle and told her she was a beautiful baby. Jean was dismissed and we went back to Hubbardville. It was a wonderful time being with Jean and our new daughter and her folks whom I loved very much. Soon it was time to leave again. I kissed my wife and daughter and bade them farewell, not knowing when I would see them again.

We shipped out, heading for the Panama Canal Zone. Our duty in Panama was to go out and tow in any ship that had been torpedoed. We towed in Panama City, Balboa and Cristobale. We might be on the Atlantic side and get a call to go through the Canal and pick up a ship on the Pacific side that had been torpedoed by the Japs. We would stay on the Pacific side of the land and then get a call to go to the Atlantic side to pick up a ship and bring it into dry dock for repairs.

The Germans were lurking on the Atlantic side and the Japanese on the Pacific side. We went through the Canal at least five or six times. Ships that had been torpedoed but not sunk had holes as large as a small home but were still floating! We were in Panama about two or three months when we received orders to tow a floating dry dock and a Navy minesweeper to the Philippines. It had been good duty in Panama: they had a nice USO, we had good food and quite a lot of free time.

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We finally left Panama and headed for the Philippines. We were going the southern route to the Marshall Islands, just off the coast of Australia. We were only about a week out of Panama when we ran into a terrible hurricane. The winds were blowing 125 miles per hour and the waves would come crashing over our little, old tug. You didn't dare to be outside, for you would be washed overboard! We thought we might lose the dry dock and the minesweeper. We were like a cork on the sea. The cable to the dry dock was stretched out probably a quarter of a mile. We didn't know where it might break and wrap around us (it was a four-inch steel cable). The water in our sleeping quarters was about a foot deep, and our baggage and anything on the floor was swishing back and forth, soaking wet! Some things came loose on the upper deck, but there was nothing we could do about it.

The storm lasted about twenty-four hours: nobody could sleep and we ate only sandwiches. If you tried to eat out of a plate, you had to hold on to it or it would be down at the other end of the table and somebody else would be eating out of it! The only lull was when we passed through the eye of the storm, then it was right back into the storm again.

After the storm finally passed and we surveyed the damage done to our vessel and the other two vessels, it was determined we would have to pull into Acapulco, Mexico, for repairs before we could proceed on. We were in Acapulco for almost a month while the three vessels were being repaired. While there we had liberty to go ashore, also we went diving off the ship and swimming and ate three good meals a day!

One of the Merchant Marine boys from Venezuela and myself decided to go over to the dry dock and dive off it. That dry dock must have been fifty or sixty feet high. None of the other guys would dive off it, but stayed on the launch below.

The fellow from Venezuela had learned to swim before he could walk. That was the case with most of the babies in Mexico and South America. Anyway, he dived first and I noticed that he dived too steep, so I dived off a little further and my legs did not flop over like his did. Once was enough of that for me, but the next adventure was to dive off the rails of the gun turret on the bridge. In order to do that, you had to push off hard enough to clear the deck below. I was the only one dumb enough to try this. I held onto one of the guys hand to stand on the rails and cleared the deck below. Once was enough for this stupid stunt, also! Next, the fellow from Venezuela and I decided we would dive in and go underneath the ship and come up on the other side. He went first and he did it, so I took a deep breath and dived in. But when I got down close to the keel of the ship I chickened out and didn't make it! He had more lung capacity than I did!

We watched the Mexicans dive off the high cliffs in Acapulco. They had to dive at just the right time or they would hit the rocks below when the waves would go back out. All those who dived off this cliff had a scorpion tattoo on his arm – showing he was special!

Acapulco was not a large city back in 1944 but was a popular place for the rich and the famous, like movie stars and executives. Errol Flynn had a yacht there and there were probably others.

After being in Acapulco for about a month for repairs, we finally started out again for the Philippines. We could only make about three knots per hour and were at sea for about forty days without seeing land. We ate, slept, played cards and wore out three punching bags. Some of us got pretty good on the punching bags. One of the guys was better than I was and he wanted to put the gloves on. He was mad at me, because while we were in Acapulco, he met a gal of ill-repute and thought he was in love and

wanted to marry her. He didn't come back to the ship to stand his watch he was assigned to, so I cancelled the rest of his liberty. He wanted to get back at me, so I took his challenge and we got after it. He was a good boxer because he had come from a big city and was street-wise. He let me have on and I saw stars – he won that round (the first one, I think). That was about the only excitement during those forty days. We were running low on water, so when a shower came up we would strip and bathe ourselves. This happened frequently. Two of my shipmates I ran around with on liberty had the same sleeping quarters with three other guys. We had good food when we started out but supplies were running low.

Ross, one of my close friends, would sneak out after midnight and pick the lock on the large freezer and bring ice cream back to our sleeping quarters. The galley cooks probably couldn't figure out what was happening to the ice cream!

We finally reached Eniwetok & Kwajalein and dropped anchor. I went ashore to pick up the mail and a friend of mine from Liberal who also was picking up mail for a ship he was on heard I was there. His name was Dude Hickey. He found out what ship I was on and came over to see me. We had a nice, long visit – small world! While we were there, maybe ten days, another soldier on another ship was swimming and got caught in a current and drowned. He didn't surface for about three days. I was on the beach when they brought him in – he was bloated and looked awful! We didn't do any more swimming there. It's hard telling how many of our soldiers and Marines with their packs on died taking Eniwetok & Kwajalein. The islands did have palm trees on them but all that was left was stumps of trees.

We heard Tokyo Rose there, coming over the air waves from Tokyo, playing the same American music and spreading

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propaganda, like Axis Sally from Germany. We had some kind of engine problem, so we couldn't go on to the Philippines. That broke my heart (Ha!). We were getting ready to invade Japan from the Philippines and I was not looking forward to that! Fortunately, the atomic bomb and Harry Truman took care of that. It saved a lot of American lives as well as Japanese if we would have invaded Japan. We came back by way of Hawaii and had a few days liberty there. I picked up the mail there and was always amazed how the mail would be at a port we called on! The postal service and government knew how important it was for us to get our mail when we came into a port.

After a few days in Hawaii, we headed for Panama and went through the locks and headed for New Orleans, Algiers Naval Base. It was 107 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi to New Orleans and I got to steer the ship all the way, with a pilot, of course, who knew the Mississippi. He would say, "Hard right!" or "Hard left!" or "easy this way!" or that so I would not run on a sand bar. A German sub tried to make its way up the Mississippi, thinking he could blow up the docks at New Orleans. The skipper of that sub used to be a pilot on the Mississippi before the war. He got stuck on a sand bar, however, and he and his crew were captured, along with the sub.

I was not in New Orleans very long when I was instructed to take two hundred recruits to San Francisco, Treasure Island Naval Base. We were on a troop train which was more like cattle cars. I don't remember how many cars for sure, maybe eight or ten. I made one man on each car responsible to see that they didn't lose a man along the way. It was like a milk route in a nightmare: it took us four days as we stopped at every little town along the way. Every time we stopped, some of the guys would run to a close beer joint or food place and race back to the train. We finally made it to San Francisco and I turned the whole bunch

over to Navy people who took us to Treasure Island. I did not lose one man on the way, whereas another group of four lost two guys along the way. I was assigned to be a Master at Arms and had the duty to welcome the Commander of the base every morning by hollering "Attention." Everything came to a screeching halt to be passed through to his office. He always arrived right on the hour, then I would say, "At ease." I was soon promoted to 1st Class Petty Officer "BMIC."

As soon as I found out I was going to be there for some time, I called Jean. She and our daughter Mary Gayle came and we found an apartment just out of Oakland at El Cerrito, which was the closest thing we could find to my base. We were stationed there about six months when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese surrendered. I had enough points to get out but the Commander sent his yeoman to see me. I

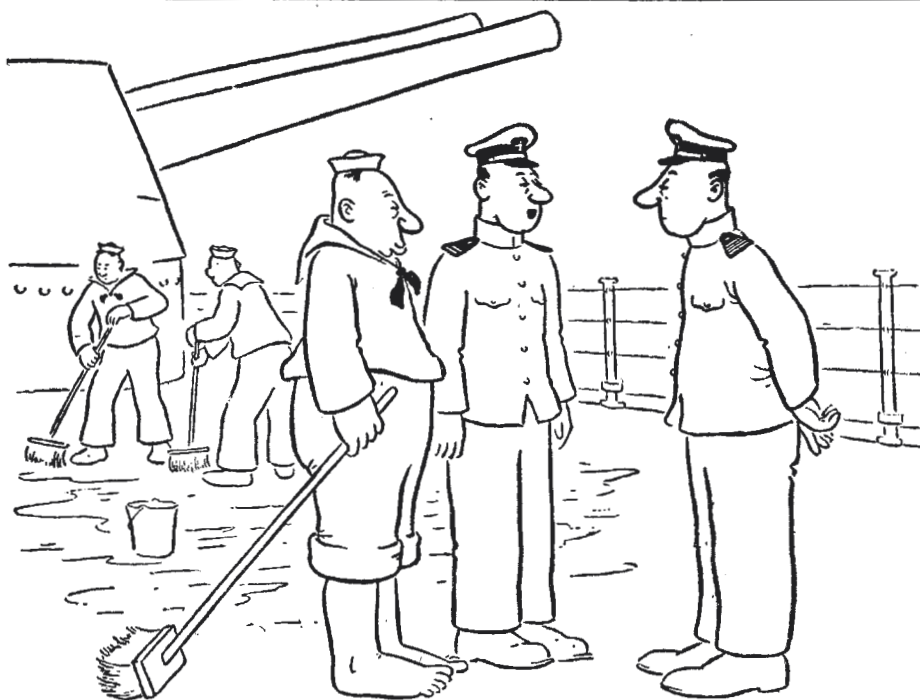
had no idea what he wanted, but I didn't think I was in any trouble. Anyway, I went to his headquarters and saluted him and he asked me to reenlist and he would see that I made chief right away. That is one of the best jobs in the Navy – you are the boss! I told him we were ready to go home, but thanks anyway. I might have missed the boat there, because I would have been his man. I sent Jean and Mary Gayle back to Liberal to be with my parents until I was discharged. I was sent to Camp Shoemaker in California and received my discharge on October 4, 1945, and returned to Liberal to resume civilian life again.

Gale Ooley, 1411 Park Ave., Canon City, Co., 81212 719-276-2044



ALFRED

By Foster Humfreville



"Alfred feels that instead of doing any more work, it would be best for him to conserve all his strength to fight the Japs"

PAUL MUELLER

Armed Guard-Paul Mueller

My first two trips across the Pacific were as a Pharmacist Mate, part of the Armed Guard, on the Dutch ship MS Sommelsdijk, a ship owned by the Netherlands that was marooned in the Dutch East Indies when the Nazis invaded the low lands. It was leased by the United States to carry troops and supplies to the armed forces in the Pacific. The first trip was a round trip to Noumea New Caledonia. The second was to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. On this trip, we experienced a couple of air raids and a submarine attack. On the first trip we also were in a terrible Hurricane and a epidemic of Spinal Meningitis which caused the death of several CB's. The CB's were the 33rd Yankee Battalion which later distinguished itself on Guadalcanal. I was intimately exposed to the disease, and that scared the Hell out of me. More than any other experience I had during the whole war. On this occasion we had to bury some men at sea, a very lugubrious experience! A Moonless night, still in the water, waiting for a torpedo! By the way our Dutch skipper told us the wind during the Hurricane was 136 miles per hour. The waves looked like 7 story buildings floating by! The disruption of usual Dutch cleanliness and the troops vomiting on each other in the holds were the main cause of the dissemination of the disease, which in those days was almost 100% fatal and was endemic in the Military. After the second trip I was transferred to shore duty. On the ships next trip she took a torpedo on the port side of the second hold where the sick bay was. It was in the Leyte Gulf. The ship survived and sailed again after repairs.

My third and last trip as an Armed Guard Pharmacist Mate was on the S.S. Frederick Jackson Turner, a Liberty EC2 cargo vessel of 7181 gross tons, owned by the United States Government, and operated by the Isthmian Steamship company under a Navy charter. The Master was John N. Boughman. We left San Francisco August 15, 1943. We proceeded to Port Hueneme California where to took on CB's Troops 1010 and 1016, PT unit No. 15 and a lot of construction material. The forward decks were loaded with landing craft, trucks, steel, lumber and heavy construction machinery. We left Port Hueneme August 22. At sea, on September 11, a British PBV-5 circled the ship several times then scouted the area from 0600 until mid-afternoon. On September 13 the USS Terry made rendezvous with us and escorted us to Noumea New Caledonia, where we arrived on September 15. Two US sea planes escorted us the last few miles. We took departure from New Caledonia on September 21 in convoy with S.S. Aridid, S.S. Oliver Wendell Holmes, S.S. J.B. Francis and four escort vessels. (3 DE's and a sub chaser) At 1650 an escort vessel on the port beam dropped a depth charge 500 yards from the convoy which then executed a number of emergency turns then resumed the base course.

We arrived at Guadalcanal on September 26 and anchored off Lunga Point where we discharge CB Unit 1016. We then proceeded to Tulagi where we unloaded the rest of the troops and some cargo. We loaded defective ammunition and PT Motors for delivery to Espirito Sato. We also took on 31 enlisted men

bound for the USA. We left Tulagi and sailed to Tenaru Point where we continued to discharge cargo. All the time we were in the area there were numerous air alerts. No enemy planes appeared until 0200 October 11. At this time the S.S. Turner was lying off Tenaru point with the USS Serpes. Both illuminated brightly by cargo lights. About three miles down the beach at Koli Point, Th S.S. Himes and the S.S. Couch, (Liberty EC2 Vessels) were also unloading from anchorage, and illuminated by cargo lights. They were deep loaded in contrast to the Turner and Serpes. Two planes attacked the Himes and the Couch. They took hits at the water line from either Torpedos or skip bombs. Both started burning immediately. We stopped loading and turned off the lights. The flames of the Himes were put out quickly but the Couch continued to burn violently with frequent small explosions. At this time, I was in the aft, port side, 20mm gun tub where I was assigned as a loader. I was looking for Torpedo trails that our Bosn' mate had told us to look for and shoot at if we saw one. The flames from the two hit ships lit up the sky. The next morning the Himes was run aground to facilitate salvage. The Couch continued to burn throughout the day and was later towed around the point where she capsized in shallow water. We then went to Tulagi and loaded the U.S. Marine Corps' 14th Defense Battalion for passage to Noumea. We then anchored in Purvis Bay to await orders. On October 14 we left Purvis Bay and joined convoy with the damaged USS Patterson (Bow missing from a collision with another Destroyer) USS Crouter and the USS O'Bannon, also partially crippled. The Patterson and the O'Bannon left the convoy the next day. We arrived at Noumea October 21 and discharged all cargo and personnel.

NNI-142SC

THIS IS NOT A TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION OR ENTRY PERMIT

SURVIVOR CARD N° 8104

This certifies that

Print Name in Full HAUGEN Clarence Donald
(Last) (First) (Middle)

was interviewed and Forms NNI-142 and 142-X were executed and forwarded

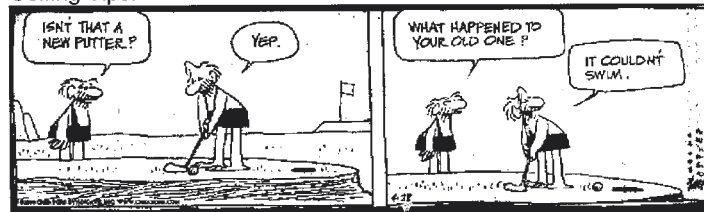
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Interviewing officer's signature and rank

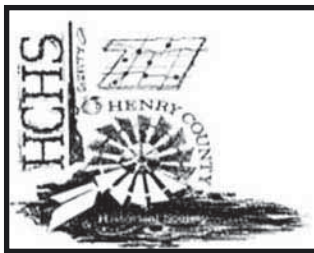
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Blue
(Color Eyes)
Brown
(Color Hair)
None
(Scars, etc.)

Clarence D Haugen from page 7.

Golfing Tips:



S.S. ALCOA PIONEER MEMORIES



Supplement to Lenhart Lange
Oral History To: Mr. Henrik
Normann Zacho Re: S.S.
ALCOA PIONEER Memories
From: Lenhart R. Lange,
460 Briarcliff Dr
Napoleon, OH 43545-2308
(419) 592-6716

I entered the United States Navy on 9 September 1943. After attending Great Lake Training school, I was put into the USN Armed Guard Division. My service on the S.S. ALCOA PIONEER began around August of 1944.

I was looking forward to sailing on the S. S. ALCOA PIONEER. I was very young, maybe the youngest on the ship. I was very proud to be in the Navy, because my father served in WWI and my older brother was an officer in WWII, and I was proud to say I was following their examples. I had little experience, was seasick on my first ship, but after overcoming that I loved being aboard ship. Being prone to sea sickness probably saved my life as you will soon learn. I served as a sight setter for a 3" 50 cal. gun on the bow. I was somewhat scared because I knew that we would be sailing into the Pacific and at the time I didn't know what our cargo was or where we were going. As a young man, it was exciting not to know what was going to be just around the corner.

We had watch every day with time off. We were responsible for keeping our guns cleaned and oiled. We did required daily exercises. We had our meals-breakfast, lunch and dinner at the same time each day. Everyone ate

together and the food was good. The Merchant Marine cooks often tried to make things we requested. The only chores we had were to keep our bunks tidy and our own laundry done. There were no religious services on the ship, but I carried and read the bible each day. For recreation we played cards. We would also like to watch what other people were doing on ships near us and even during free time we kept our eyes on the horizon to see where we were headed, and what might be coming our way.

The S.S. ALCOA PIONEER was pretty new and the quarters were very good for our Navy personnel. There were four bunks in a room. I spent 90% of my time sleeping under the bow gun tub while at sea, because of the fresh air (which helped fend off seasickness) and solitude.

The S.S. ALCOA PIONEER was a ship that hauled all types of cargo for United States Force use. The ship was leased to the government and owned by the Alcoa Steamship Company. The ship's serial PD was 30070021. Aboard the ship we had (1) 4" 50 cal., (1) 3" 50 cal., (8) 20 mil., and we had (4) 45 cal. pistols, (1) 38 cal. revolver, and (2) 30 cal. rifles and ammunition. It wasn't a brand new ship, but I think it was built in 1941.

The crew was made up of Navy men and Merchant Marines. The Navy crew's job was to arm the ship and protect the ship and cargo. The Merchant Marines saw to it that the ship was maintained.

Our crew was a very alert crew. Most

of the men were young. Some had families. We talked a lot about our families. We all had our special friends on board, but we were all friendly to each other. We were from all different states and backgrounds. I would say that after serving with them, I found out that they were all very brave people. My feeling is that we all felt that we were on the ship to protect the United States and I think every man was proud to serve. All men did their duties, as they were told, because we had good commanders.

Our Lieutenant, Howard Jerslid, was very Navy. Everything had to go by the book. His personality was good, he was excellent with his men, he worked hard and dressed well. I had the pleasure of going out to dinner with him in San Francisco several times before our voyage. He spoke often of his family and he was interested in sports. He was knowledgeable about many things and empathetic about our lives and emotions during the time of service. I never saw him get upset or use foul language with the crew. We liked him and we did what he asked. The Captain of the ship, A. W. Gavin, was Merchant Marine. He was usually in his cabin or on the bridge. We didn't see him often. He was good with the Merchant Marine crew. The Navy men and Merchant Marines got along well and we often tried to help each other.

My Voyage on the S.S. ALCOA PIONEER began in August of 1944. We left the port of San Francisco, Ca. not knowing what cargo was aboard. At the last minute the Longshoreman put a jeep aboard for us, we paid them a few dollars and we also got a monkey

S.S. ALCOA PIONEER MEMORIES

aboard. The captain had a dog, named Skipper. Once out to sea two weeks, we were told that we carried high explosive gasoline for Navy, Army and aircraft use in the hold. On the main deck we also carried airplanes that were KD.(to be assembled on shore) The ship had a gross ton capacity of 6759 ton. We were listed in the water about 22 feet (depth). Sailing was good. We made several stops and then we into Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea. This is where we first heard Tokyo Rose use the name of our ship in the broadcast. While waiting for the convoy there, we were hit by a ship in our bow. They put an 8X10 plate of steel into the ship so we would be safe to sail. While we were in the Bay, we got messages that the Japanese Navy was going to come in and attack. We had our equipment ready to go to shore, because we knew if anything would hit us, with gasoline in our hatches, that would be the end of everyone. The Japanese sailed by and they didn't attack. One night while in the Bay under repair, our officer let us visit one of the Navy destroyers so that we could see a movie. When we got ready to get into the big life boat (carried about 25) to go back to our ship it was very foggy and we didn't get back to the ship until early morning. Our captain was upset, so that ruined our chances of ever going back to watch a movie on any other ship!

As we waited for the repairs on the ship, the convoy left. After a matter of several days we left on our own and zig zagged through the ocean until we met with our convoy. From there our destination was the Leyte Gulf, Philippines Islands. On the way we had a number of submarine attacks. We dropped depth charges, luckily none of the ships were hit.

When we got to the Leyte Gulf it is reported that our vessel had 103 alerts and 50 were direct attacks. On the 12th a ship got hit with a suicide plane and hit one of the hatches, I think it was the

BURKE, and 164 Army were killed. The ROMANO was also in the Bay with us at the time. The action was heavy every day. I remember that the Japanese fighters and bombers came into the bay about every two hours. We had a hard time telling our planes (P-51) and the Japanese Zeros apart. They looked so much alike. The US Government later replaced the P-51 with P-38s and this made them easier to identify.

All of the time we were in there, the Navy destroyers and battleships were protective. They fought off enemy aircraft that were trying to blow us up. While in the Bay we had a total of 5 planes we shot down. We had 5 marks painted on our stacks. The smell was terrible from the inland from all of the deaths. They were digging holes and burying the bodies, the wind would catch the stench, it was bad.

After we were in the Bay a week or so we had a typhoon that brought waves way above our ship. With both anchors down and the engines full speed ahead, the ship was still pulled back. There was no way to go out on the decks.

When the storm subsided, the Japanese planes started to attack again. I remember that there were three merchant ships in the bay at the time to be unloaded. At 0710 (7:10) November 18, 1944, three enemy planes of the suicide squad dove out of a cloud for the S.S. ALCOA PIONEER. Two of the planes sheered off toward two other vessels anchored near by. The third plane continued its dive onto our vessel. I was in my hammock, asleep, under the bow when I heard the sirens go off, I went into position and we saw the plane come in from the stern and we knew right then we were going to have some problems. It happened so fast. I saw that we were going to be hit by the planes, but due to the fast action of our 20 mm guns and our 4"50 crew in the stern, I think they knocked two of the planes out. One

went down before our ship, another went down on fire over our ship and the third plane hit us midship, which did all of the damage. Midship was where most of all of the men were asleep or in the Galley. Our officer and others were killed and many were hurt.

Being the sight setter on the bow, we could see everything that was going to happen. The fire was so bad and everything went so quickly. Considerable damage was done to the midship section. The stack was almost demolished and the decks were torn up. I can still remember seeing one of our men hanging from a ladder of his gun tub by his shoe. I also remember seeing one of our men badly burned and one arm almost severed and still pointing his gun. The dog, Skipper, was blown through a screen door and had a piece of shrapnel in his back and yet he crawled over to his officer and licked his face.

The fire on the bow was put out by the fast action of a Navy ship that was nearby. They worked under extreme danger to get the fire out. They seemed to be everywhere. They quickly had the fire under control. They extracted men who were seriously injured and pinned under twisted steel plates and beams in the rooms where the plane exploded directly overhead. They took a number of our people off to a number of different ships. I had no knowledge of how many people were hurt or killed at the time because we had to stay at our guns. I was very saddened and depressed after seeing my best friends being killed and hurt and not knowing if others were hurt or killed.

I think there were only five of the Navy men left on board, and it was our job to man the guns. A number of the Merchant Marines volunteered to help us man the guns until replacements could board the ship. In less than an hour after the attack all guns were fully manned. Within two hours the ship was under attack again.

S.S. ALCOA PIONEER MEMORIES

The following day the Merchant Marines and Longshoremen began to unload our gasoline and cargo, many working 18-24 hours straight. At the same time we were under attack day and night (with an average 7-8 attacks daily), the Merchant Marines continued to help us man the guns.

Some days later, since the engines were not destroyed, we began our trip back to San Francisco on our own power, but only went a short way and had to be towed back to the United States. It took us about 54 days, which was a long time at sea with no letters or messages. After we arrived in San Francisco, they kept us in separate quarters so that we would not tell anyone on the base about the suicide planes and we had to promise that on our leave we would never mention to anyone about the suicide attacks. All of my pictures and sea bag contents were confiscated and they issued us all new clothes.

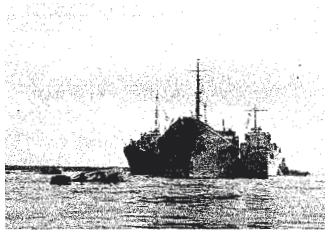
After my survivors' leave of three weeks, the Twelfth Naval District released to a local paper the following report:"

Eagle-eyed Navy gunners aboard a merchant ship had only a few seconds in which to train their sights on three Japanese planes that swooped down through a cloud band off the coast of Leyte last Nov. 19, but they bagged all three."This story of traditional Yankee marksmanship and high heroism was revealed here recently in an official report filed with the Armed Guard Center. The commanding officer, Lieutenant Howard Frederick Jersild was killed in the attack. The report revealed that a member of the heroic Navy gun crew was Lenhart R. Lange, SI/C."Many times I remember the Navy and Merchant crew who were with me on this mission and know that they were heroes. I have prayed often for those who lost their life and for their

families. Many times I look back and it seems like this just happened yesterday.

Many thanks to Howard Jersild's grandson who got me in touch with other survivors and sent me treasured information. I have been able to share this event more clearly with my family because of his efforts. We continue to remember those who lost their lives that day.

I never served on the S.S. ALCOA PIONEER again. When I went back after my survivor's leave, I wasn't sure what would become of me, but before long I was sent back into action. I just took this in stride. I knew I had to go and there was no turning back. I hoped the good Lord would keep me safe again. My next ship was the S.S. CAPE CANSON, which we sailed to San Francisco to more action in the Pacific. I was discharged on 4 April 1946. Lenhart R. Lange



Tanker that saved Malta inducted in US Maritime Hall of Fame

The USS Ohio, the tanker which turned the tide for Malta in the Second World War has been inducted into the National Maritime Hall of Fame of the American Merchant Marine Museum in New York.

The American-built tanker was made available to the British Merchant Navy in 1942 because of its speed and modern design. New York.

It formed the heart of Operation Pedestal, the biggest ever convoy in the Mediterranean which included 14 merchant ships. Only five managed to make it to Grand Harbour including the Ohio, which arrived on August 15, 1942 battered, without power and lashed between two destroyers to keep her afloat, but with her precious cargo of oil intact.

Upon her arrival, Malta's Governor, Lord Gort said: "If *Ohio* not got through, Malta would have been forced to surrender in 16 days."

The *Ohio* was scuttled by the Royal Navy off Malta on Sept. 19, 1946. It was an inglorious end for a vessel that helped Malta survive and that meant so much to Allied victory in World War II.

The National Maritime Hall of Fame was established in 1982 to honour the memory of the great people and great ships of maritime history.

Coincidentally the recognition given to the *Ohio* was announced on the day that Malta welcomed into its Grand Harbour the successor of another great ship forever tied to Malta's wartime history - the aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious*.

CONVOY TO MURMANSK

Convoy to Murmansk
by Edwin Muller

Thousands of young naval officers are getting their first taste of battle as members of the Armed Guard on the freighters that make up the convoys going to ports all over the world. The stirring story of one such officer is told in "Convoy to Murmansk," originally published in the Nautical Gazette, and because of its high quality, republished in the Reader's Digest.

"None of us realized what we were getting into." Ensign Norman Adams, Jr., speaking, lately commander of the Armed Guard on a U. S. freighter. A naive and likable boy from Virginia. He got his commission this year after a four months' Naval Reserve training course. No previous experience with the rough and seamy side of things. Two young lads of his gun crew, Crabtree and Castleberry, were with him as he told me the story.

The boxes that went into No. 1 hold were marked TNT. Our Chief Engineer - I guess he's about seventy-was there, watching. "Boys," he said, "every one of those boxes takes a year off my life." We joked a lot about that.

"The first part of the voyage seemed like a pleasure cruise. One of the boys, Chronister, he's only seventeen, kept saying, "Gee, I hope we get some excitement."

Reprinted from the Reader's Digest condensation of article from The Nautical Gazette.

The first time I got a real idea of what we'd be up against was when we reached Iceland. Our captain, Hiss, and I went to the conference at Reykjavik, the one they have before every convoy sails. The commodore of the convoy was a solemn Englishman. He told us that he didn't want any of us to sail under a misapprehension, as this was going to be tough.

The worst of it came at the end of the conference, when they assigned the ships' positions. We'd thought that because of the TNT we might be somewhere in the middle. But we got the rear corner on the starboard side. They call that the coffin corner.

At the start we had some cruisers, in addition to several destroyers. Despite this heavy guard, our ship felt kind of chilly and exposed back there in the corner. In those waters and at that time of year it is light twenty-four hours a day. At midnight the sun would just touch the horizon and there'd be a little twilight. It's a funny feeling never to have it dark.

"Four days out of Iceland things started." Castleberry grinned. "That was Crabtree's birthday," he interrupted to say. "We told him, 'Boy, you better make it good. It may be your last one.'"

"Just as the alarm sounded," Adams went on, "we saw the enemy plane, a big one coming low and fast from the starboard quarter. We got on the guns but he kept just out of range and circled the convoy. Finally he disappeared over the horizon the same direction he'd come."

Next day the plane came back. From then on he never left us except when his relief would take his place. We called him 'Nosey.'

When the first attack alarm sounded I dashed up from my cabin. There were three of them, coming in at 10,000 feet in "V" formation. They flew right overhead and everything in the convoy cut loose at them. The noise was terrific. But they didn't drop anything. They had been sent over to draw our fire, to see how strong we were.

Half an hour later ten of them came over. This time they did the business. The heavy thud of the bombs mixed in with the noise of the A-A guns was deafening. You could see waterspouts leaping up all over the ocean.

One plane flew right down our column.

I was up in the star board aft pillbox with Castleberry, working the .50-caliber. We must have hit that plane because a puff of white smoke came out of it and it veered off out of the fight, losing altitude. Then we had a little while when we could catch our breath and look around. One of the ships was dropping back, so she must have been hit.

In the next attack three planes came straight for our ship. One scored a near miss not more than 25 feet off our stern. "What's a near miss like?" I asked.

I'll tell you what that one was like. I saw the bomb coming down, a speck like a black raindrop that got bigger very fast. There's a whistling, screeching sound which gets louder and louder. Then a moment of complete silence. With the explosion a wall of water comes over the side on you. The ship jumps up in the water and there's a tremendous jarring as if somebody shook you by the collar. You feel sick."

Castleberry put in: "Seems as if you have to reach way down for your stomach and pull it up again."

"It throws you", said Crabtree. "One of the crew was standing by me. It slammed him down on a mug of hot coffee that was on the deck. He jumped up yelling, 'My God, I'm hit!'" "After that," Adams resumed, "nothing much happened for two or three hours. In those intervals you walk around nervously, talking it over with this person and that; you can't settle down. At mealtime nobody sits down at the table. You just grab a cup of coffee and a piece of bread and meat and take it out on deck."

All this time there were enemy submarines around, our destroyers setting off depth charges. The next alarm sounded a little past midnight. The weather had got thick, and with the sun down on the horizon there was a sort of weird half light. Peering through the

CONVOY TO MURMANSK

haze, I suddenly saw the long flashes of tracer bullets from the ship next to us. I knew what that meant. When we saw a periscope we fired tracer bullets to indicate its position.

Right away we heard the explosion. We saw the whole ship split open lengthwise, like a watermelon, as her cargo, of TNT went off. She disappeared in a tremendous burst of flame. Nothing remained but floating debris.

We were all very quiet. I felt I had to say something to the boys, so I said, "Well, anyway, nobody on that ship ever knew what hit them." We went around the rest of the day trying to smile but not doing it very well.

"Did you think you weren't going to come through alive?" I asked.

"Yes!? - and I guess the others did too. But nobody said so. It was funny, we were all very polite to each other, even the tough ones.

The next air raid was a torpedo attack. We saw six planes astern, practically hopping the waves. When torpedoes hit the water they bounce once or twice, like when you skip a flat stone on a pond. Then they drive toward you, very fast.

Nobody got hit in that attack. We did a lot of shooting and those planes didn't stay long.

Nothing happened for an hour or two except that we fired our big gun at the wake of a submarine. The destroyers moved in and we heard and felt their depth charges pounding our sides like giant hammers. We didn't see anything more of that sub, and I went down to my cabin to lie down for a while.

"Captain sent him there," Castleberry interrupted. "He'd caught cold in Iceland. Throat was so sore he couldn't speak. His temperature was 102."

"Well, I didn't get to stay there long," Adams went on. "Five more torpedo planes came over. They picked on a Russian ship next to us. We kept edging away from her because she too carried TNT. In dodging a torpedo the Russian cut sharp across our bow. It looked as if we couldn't avoid the collision.

We forgot all about planes and torpedoes. When the two ships finally cleared each other there wasn't 20 feet between them. Everybody went crazy. We and the Russians both were dancing around on the decks, yelling across at each other.

"The next attack was by dive bombers. The sun was bright by then, and there were a few big fleecy clouds. We could hear the planes humming but they'd keep right in the sun so we could hardly see them.

"They got the Russian ship with a direct hit. Flames and smoke began to come out of her bows. And she was edging over toward us, so close that we were afraid that if she went up we'd go too. In avoiding her, we fell a long way behind the convoy. That's the worst thing that can happen to you. The planes always go after a straggler.

"Three dive bombers came for us. They straddled the ship with bombs that couldn't have been nearer. We were stunned and thrown all over the deck, half drowned with the water that came over the side. I thought it was all over then, but nothing hit us. We went back to the guns. "By the time we regained our place in the convoy there was another raid on.

"You remember that boy, Chronister, I told you about? The seventeen-year-old one? He was up on the bridge working the starboard .30. He must have looked sort of green in the face, because the Captain said, 'What's the matter, boy?' And he said, 'Nothing. I guess something I ate gave me a stomach ache.' And he went on working the gun.

"All through the worst of it Captain Hiss was as calm as if he was in church. After the stick of bombs straddled us, he called through the tube to McCarthy in the engine room, 'You still there, Mac?' He grinned at whatever Mac called back. I heard afterward that when a bomb hit close all the lights in the engine room went out and a lot of metal trimmings were shaken loose and went barging around. They had it a lot worse down there than we did.

All this time things were happening to the rest of the convoy. Clouds of oily, black smoke were rolling up from the forward deck of the Russian ship and bright flames were breaking through it. You could see the crew with their heads down, hauling the hose into the smoke. Those Russians had nerve. All that TNT under their feet. And they could have taken to the boats and been picked up. Two other crews had already abandoned ship. Some of the boats came drifting back past us. According to orders we let them go for the rescue ship to pick up."

"A comical thing happened about that time," said Castleberry. "I knew a boy in one of the crews that took to the water. A crazy kid. Well, I saw him sitting all by himself astride a capsized lifeboat. The waves were bouncing him up and down like he was riding a bronco. When he went past we could hear him, between the bursts of gunfire, yelling at us. What he was yelling was, --Hi-ho, Silver!"

Ensign Adams resumed: It made you mad all through to see ships sunk and men in the water. You kept on the guns and shot at every plane in sight, whether it was in range or not, like a kid shooting at a duck that he knows is too far away. But we got one plane. Saw its wing fall off.

We realized about then that the planes were machine-gunning us. The tracers, crisscrossing every which way, were like fireworks on the Fourth of July. One plane headed toward us, flying low, with

CONVOY TO MURMANSK

six guns going at once. Why it didn't hit any of us I can't figure out. Another time we were shooting at a plane, it was shooting at us, and two other ships were firing at it across our decks.

By now the Russian ship had got her fire under control. She hadn't even lost her place in the convoy. But two more ships had been sunk.

The next day was quiet. It had been four days since Nosey first picked us up. There'd been lulls between the air raids--except for submarines being around. But we were on edge. I don't think anybody slept at all. However, we began to think we were past the worst of it. We weren't.

The following day was cold, below freezing, and a strong wind was blowing. When the raid came, I had a little trouble climbing up the ladder to the pillbox. My temperature was up to 104. Seven torpedo planes were followed by dive bombers. I realized how the strain was piling up on us when I watched one of the crew on deck. He was making motions with his hands, as if he was warding off the bombs. Probably I'd been doing the same thing myself.

We weren't shooting so much now because we were running low on ammunition. It had got to be a sort of endurance race--how much more we could take? It seemed as if we could stand it if only it would get dark, just for an hour or two. But in half an hour another wave of bombers came for us.

Two bombs straddled our ship and again there was that shaking and jarring and the sick feeling. I was about past caring.

When the next flight of planes came over the horizon, several hours later, I was wondering whether that wasn't more than I could take. Then suddenly I saw the lead plane begin to do stunt loop and barrel rolls. They were Russians. That's the way they signal that they are friends. We cheered them.

At 9 A.M. we made our landfall. For the first time in a week we sat down to a meal together. I couldn't eat but I was happy anyway. Through that whole week of raids not a man on the ship had been seriously hurt, just a few scratches from shrapnel. We planned a celebration ashore but it was too soon.

Somebody outside shouted that planes were coming over. We ran out on deck and there they were fifteen of them. Being so near the land we were sure they were Russians, though they didn't signal. Not even the escort vessels fired on them. They came directly overhead.

And then, one after the other, they dived on us, concentrating on our ship.

An officer on one of the destroyers told me later that he counted thirteen bombs, then we were hidden by smoke and explosions and floods of water. I can't tell you about it myself. It's a sort of nightmare that I don't remember very well. But at last I realized that the attack was over. We hadn't received one direct hit. That ship had a charmed life.

A few hours later we were anchored in the Kola River, just below Murmansk.

I went to bed and slept through twenty-four hours."



WW II Monument Salutes D-Day Sailors

by Blair S. Walker

The following article appeared in the June 2008, Vol. 49 No. 5, issue of the AARP Bulletin.

During the opening four days of the Normandy invasion, which began June 6, 1944, one of every five GIs killed at Omaha Beach was a Navy sailor. On September 27, the first Normandy monument to honor the U.S. Navy's service, and the

more than 1,000 sailors who died there, will be dedicated in France.

"Casualties were so high because Omaha was the most heavily defended of the Normandy beaches," says Dan Felger, 68, a retired Navy commander and member of the Naval Order of the United States.

For information about the dedication, go to www.navalorder.org

U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WWII VETERANS

U.S.N. Armed Guard WWII
Veterans
Charles April Lloyd, Chairman

July 14, 2008

Where do you start to tell about the cold North Atlantic waters after 62 years of North Carolina USA Weather. Your memory may be slipping but not the memory of the time when your breath freezes on your wool face mask and you have all the best foul weather gear on that you are able to wear to your gun station. You look out into the darkness on the 12 to 4 watch in search for any sign of the enemy who did not mind taking your life and all the others on your ship regardless if you carried some of his and your ancestors blood or not. They had been taught to kill and we had been taught the same. To kill or be killed. That was the name of the game.

Let me start over again where I became interested in being a sailor. Being born into a family in rural Wake County, North Carolina, whose livelihood for survival was tobacco farming, I knew what work was and respect to my parents who taught us that if we wanted cars and the good things of life, we had to work for it for nobody in those days gave hand-outs whether rich or poor in our part of the world. There was no law at that time if your dad slapped you butt for not doing your part. You worked together as a team, large and small.

When World War II started, one brother, L. Whitson Lloyd tried to volunteer on December 8, 1941 but so many had beat him to volunteer by 8 A.M. that he went home and was there earlier the next morning but the line was longer and was told to sign their name on a form and wait to be called when they could process them and to go home and enjoy their Christmas with their family and friends for it may be their last, as we were at war. This gentleman was in WW I and knew what the score was. Whitson was inducted into the Navy on

December 28th and with a little training, he was on his way to the cities of Murmansk and Archangel, Russia. He made two trips there and he told of how cold it was in the North Atlantic and the 40 or more degrees below in Russia. I took all this in and I kept up with the war in Europe. I had kept up with the war before we were attacked at Pearl Harbor which included the Russians invading Poland and the battles there. I had all the history I could absorb with the Germans taking over France, Belgium, and the battles in North Africa. I had kept up with the slaughter of the Chinese by the Japanese army and wondered why there was no one in that part of the country who would help.

I became educated in all the battlefronts and when Germany turned against Russia and needed our help, I saw the fright in my brother's face when he returned and told us a little after we swore not to tell anyone of the sinking of ships and shooting down enemy planes. He came home with a blue hip and he finally broke down and told us his ship, the S.S. EXPOSITOR had been sunk off of Greenland on Feb. 22, 1943 and someone saved his life by dragging him into the lifeboat. After 2 hours in the lifeboat, the British ship, HMS TRILLIUM rescued them.

I asked him when he came home, what was the best branch of service to get in if I was called up and he said the U.S. Navy and that the branch of the Armed Guard was as safe as anything else as the subs were not sinking as many ships and you had a warm place to sleep and good food and you were as safe there as any place so in September 14, 1944 I entered the service in the Navy and asked for the USN Armed Guard after BOOT CAMP training. After "BOOTS", I took some very good gunnery training at Camp Shelton Virginia and was sent to the Armed Guard Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. and shipped out on the S.S. MIAOULIS, a Greek lendlease ship. Here I was, a country boy who had never

seen a big ship until I was aboard a small gunship at Camp Shelton, Virginia for one day and now I am on the docks at Greenpoint, New York and I am looking up at an empty Liberty Ship riding high in the water. I would have bet my mule back home it would sink if it wasn't tied to the pier. It took about 2 weeks to load her down and each day we got back to her after Liberty in New York, she was not as high out of the water as she was the day before. One day, my brother, L.D. and I, as we came back aboard from Liberty visiting our sister in Brooklyn, we could step off of the pier, on to the ship's rail and jump down on the deck. Once aboard, our Gunnery Officer, Lt(jg) Honick gave us the sad news that Liberty was over and we were to stay aboard at all times as we would sail soon. That we did and out of the harbor we went and there we saw more ships than I thought in the world. As far as the eye could see were ships in all directions. destination unknown. As I was on my first cruise, the "Old Salts" who had been going to sea for several years said for sure we were not going to Russia as the cartons were not stamped- MADE IN RUSSIA. This was done so the Russian people themselves did not know anyone else were helping them.

Our trip ended up in Liverpool, England after a successful voyage through sub infested waters but thank God for our escorts and the baby flat tops and those brave pilots who flew those planes off of them in choppy seas, we made it safely even though we almost were rammed several times in days of foggy weather and sort of rough seas. I think back now how cold we got in the North Atlantic going over. We were relieved every 20 minutes in the coldest weather.

When the stevedores started bringing the cargo out of the holds, I could not believe how many tires of all sorts that came out of one hold of the ship. Then came the pallets of 1 gallon cans of boneless chicken and turkey out of another hold. You see, I stayed on Liberty in New

U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WWII VETERANS

York and I had no idea they put so much in a hold of a ship. Here, I had the daylight watch and could see it all. I almost forgot to say anything about the 6 fighter planes on the top of aft holds and the train engines and cranes on the forward holds. Now I think of the 810 Liberty ships sunk and many with full cargo. We did not know of this at the time. Thirty eight just disintegrated when hit by a torpedo or aerial bomb.

We picked up a load of camouflage netting and metal landing strips and took it to Ghent, Belgium and as we were sailing through the English Channel to the Schelde River, the sky was dark with airplanes going to and from across the channel to deliver bombs on the enemy and return for more bombs. When we docked at Ghent, I really saw total destruction that was unbelievable that this could have happened. Liverpool was terrible but most all of the dock area here was flattened for miles.

We were rammed awaiting our turn to go down the canal to Ghent, flattening the causeway along outside the chowhall where most were eating breakfast. Luckily, it hit a glancing blow and if it was probably 1/2 degree more, we would have all been killed. When we unloaded at Ghent and sailed back out to the Schelde, we had to sail on up to Antwerp for repairs which took over two weeks for repairs. While there, the Germans finally surrendered and it was a joyous night for all. The planes would fly down the harbor with their running lights on and pull up and fire all their guns with all tracers and it was a beautiful sight. If I had a camcorder then, I would have had some wonderful photos to show. With all the fog horns going into the night, I didn't think it would ever end. I was thinking what I would be doing if I was in New York. All of us were so happy and our thoughts were, how long would the Japanese go on fighting with Germany and Italy out of the war.

We were finally repaired and we sailed

back to England to get ballast for the ship and the British started charging \$30. per ton for dirt we were told and the Greeks refused to pay, so down the English Channel we sailed with the propeller half way out of the water and into the Atlantic, on our way home. When the convoy was about 10 days out, the weather struck with a vicious blow and the smooth seas turned into 80-100 foot waves and all of the propeller was out of the water most of the time and then below water the rest. We were very fortunate not to break up or ram another ship. Two or three days later, the storm subsided and we were in a thick, soupy fog bank for a day or so and then out of the fog into a beautiful sun shiny weather with the ocean as smooth as glass and the sail fish had their day. What a relief!! No fog horns and easy to get to the chow hall. Three days in the roughest weather, we would take the shaft ally to midship to get our sandwiches as it was too rough to cook in the galley big pots.

We had smooth sailing the rest of the way and most ships had left the convoy and high tailed it home after they took off during the storm. We cleaned the guns and painted the gun tubs and secured them and we all started talking about Liberty and what we were going to do. Brother, L.D. and I were on the ship all this time and we had asked for Liberty as soon as we got into the harbor to go and visit our sister who had married a guy from Brooklyn and he was in the Pacific on the USS WISCONSIN. We had spent a lot of our Liberty there before we left. Permission was granted and over to our sister's house we went to surprise her and it was great to see her again. After a few hugs, laughter and more hugs, she looked at us and said, "You must not have heard about Whitson!" We told her we hadn't and we asked her. "What about him?" She began crying and said he was killed May 5th in the sinking of his ship, the S.S. BLACK POINT off Rhode Island and several of his buddies had been to see her to give condolences and tell her what they knew.

I still talk to Al Colella, one of the survivors and we have been together at the reunions many times and we placed a memorial at Point Judith, Rhode Island where he and 11 Merchant Seamen were killed 3 miles out to sea on May 5, 1945.

Needless to say, we left and returned to the Armed Guard Center and asked for, and got a 12 day leave to go home and visit our parents and for them to have us a ship to go to Japan when we got back as we wanted to help settle the score there. When we returned, they had an Army Transport in Baltimore and away we went. It had been rammed by the French Aircraft Carrier Berne off the Azores with a loss of about 40 Army Men and one Armed Guard. When we were repaired, we sailed to Naples and loaded up with a load of combat troops for Japan.

One day out, they dropped the first bomb and then they dropped the second one, that has changed history and the Japs surrendered. They changed our orders and we brought the troops home to Newport News, Virginia. Two more fast trips to the Med to bring the troops home and they removed our crew and we all have always said:

THANK YOU PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN- YOU SAVED OUR LIVES.

In 1982, I attended a meeting of Armed Guard and I saw the need to organize and locate our shipmates. I have located over 22,045 of the original 144,970 over a 25 year period and the search goes on. For those who read this in the future to find out about the Armed Guard, go to a computer and type in at GOOGLE: <http://www.armed-guard.com> and tell everyone you see ---- and think of me.

Charles A. Lloyd, Chairman 1985-2009
God Bless America - Save the World



50TH ANNIVERSARY OF DERVISH

The 50th Anniversary of
"Dervish"

By Professor A. G. Uvarov, Captain
1st Rank, Russian Navy (Rtd.)

In August 1941 'Dervish' became the code name of the first Allied Convoy PQO, which sailed from an Icelandic fjord to Archangel. The convoy comprised six cargo ships and one tanker. Close escort was provided by anti-submarine vessels, destroyers and minesweepers, nine ships in all. The aircraft carrier 'Victorious', two cruisers and three destroyers gave additional cover. The convoy arrived in the White Sea without loss. To the West of Cape Kanin Nos it was met by the Northern Fleet destroyers, Groznyj, Oritskij and Kujbyshey, and on the following day, 3rd August, the convoy arrived safely in Archangel.

The convoy delivered 10,000 tons of rubber, 3,800 depth-charges and magnetic mines, 15 Hurricane fighters, 1,500 tons of army boots and a great deal of other essential equipment, 534 pilots and ground crew from Britain were carried on the convoy ships and escort vessels for service in Russia.

This first convoy marked the beginning of a five-year operation to deliver strategic military equipment, non-ferrous metals, industrial plant, fuel and lubricant supplies, machine tools, foodstuffs and other consignments, of which our country was in dire need. This enterprise was subsequently given the unofficial name of 'Arctic Convoys'.

Between 1941 and 1945 the Arctic Convoys delivered 4.2 million tons of supplies to Archangel, Molotovsk (now Sevrodvinsk) and Murmansk, this constituting 23.8% of the overall total given to the USSR by the wartime Allies on lend-lease. It should be noted that during the first year of the war, the Arctic was the only route for the delivery of supplies to the USSR. Overall of the 811 vessels of the 40 convoys which set off for Russia only 720 arrived in port.



Of the 35 convoys comprising 715 vessels sailed from Russia to Britain only 680 reached their destination. The total number of ships lost in convoy and associated enemy action amounted to 104 merchant ships and 23 warships.

In the year 1991, the 50th Anniversary of the arrival in Russia of the first convoy "Dervish", the country's leaders decided that with the dawn of 'Perestroika' they would lift the 'Iron Curtain'. They allowed the Russian people to openly express their gratitude to the seamen of the Allied convoys who had risked their lives to keep Russia supplied during those desperate war years.

Preparations to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Northern Convoys got under way early in the year 1991. To achieve the aims, a Joint Organising Committee was formed headed by the Deputy Minister of the Russian Merchant Fleet, U. A. Mikhailov.

Committee members included C in C of the Russian Navy, Vice-Admiral A. A. Kyzmin, Chief of the Northern Shipping Line; A. N. Gagarin, a representative of the international non-governmental fund- "In Eternal Memory of Our Soldiers"; and A. P. Korovin, Chairman of the Archangel Municipal Executive Committee. With the full support of the Naval High Command, the Northern Fleet Command, the City Authorities of



Murmansk, Archangel and Sevrodvinsk and other sponsors, the Committee accomplished the monumental task of preparing the celebrations, which had the title "Dervish '91".

Some 1,000 Soviet Convoy veterans and 200 veterans from Britain, U.S.A., Canada, Norway, France and Poland were invited to join in the festivities. The logistics in respect of the provision of free food and accommodation having been resolved, the Northern Fleet Command organised a general fleet exercise in the Barents Sea to be held during "Dervish 91", which was overseen by the Deputy Commander of the Northern Fleet, Vice-Admiral I. V. Kazatonov.

The Northern Shipping Company arranged a six-vessel convoy, and arrangements were made for the Royal Navy frigate "London" and the Tanker "Tidespring" to participate in a joint exercise with warships of the Northern Fleet. An exhibition of military equipment, the unveiling of monuments and commemorative plaques, receptions, banquets and press conferences were organized, and various books concerning the event were published. Concerts were held by the Northern Fleet Command's vocal and instrumental ensemble "Spirit of the Sea", and the Song and Dance group along with the Brass Band of the Headquarters Northern Fleet also participated, as did many other independent groups.

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The President of the U.S.S.R., M. S. Gorbachev; President of the Russian Federation, Boris N. Yeltsin; the Patriarch of all Russia, Alexsei II; President Bush of the U.S.A.; John Major, the British Prime Minister, and Brian Mulroony, the Prime Minister of Canada, were all invited as Honorary Commodores.

To promote this historic event in the mass media, Journalists and TV reporters were invited from all countries involved, including Japan. For radio and television transmissions, they were allowed the use of facilities aboard the scientific research ship "Cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov" and communication satellites.

In spite of these extensive preparations, the coup d'état that took place in Moscow on the 19th August could have meant the end of the project. Nevertheless, the Organizing Committee decided in good old naval tradition to press ahead regardless, with the organization of the 50th Anniversary of 'Dervish'.

The British Ministry of Defence reacted by requesting the Russian destroyer "Okrylyennij" enroute to participate in the Navy Day celebrations in Portsmouth be returned to Sevrodvinsk. Then on the 21st August, ordered the frigate "London", enroute to Murmansk, to divert to Rosyth.

On the 23d August, after the coup had ended, the "London" left Rosyth and headed in a northerly direction, but permission to participate in "Dervish 91" was not given until 17.45 hours. On the 26th August, Captain Mark Stanhope broadcast to his ship's company "Learn Russian, especially how to ask for a drink and how to repay the Russians for this. I hope that this will be an historic, interesting and joyful visit for all of you"

None of the convoy veterans were the least bit deterred by the coup, which

took place between 22nd and 24th August, some of them arrived in Murmansk, and a trip was organized for the veterans to visit the "Valley of Glory". This was the first allied reunion in forty-six years and, needless to say, was a most joyous occasion for all participants.

On the 26th August some 100 Soviet veterans of the Arctic Convoys, journalists, TV reporters and eleven veterans of the British Russian Convoy were welcomed on board the hospital ship "Svir". In charge of the Russian veterans was the Chairman of the Council of Veterans of the Northern Fleet (Admiral V. M. Mikhailin with his deputy, K. A. Lyubimov).

Commander of the Fleet, Admiral F. I. Gromov came to see the "Svir" off prior to its actual departure. At precisely 1700 hours, the "Svir", escorted by several other vessels departed Severomorsk. The ships left Kola Inlet on a northwesterly heading for the North Cape/Bear Island area to rendezvous with the convoy. The frigate "London" and the tanker "Tidespring" was to accompany them on the first joint voyage and convoy exercise since 1945.

During this exercise, two submarines, seven TU16 heavy bombers, six air-defence PYO SU7 fighters, two KA26 helicopters and two Mi12 seaplanes were to represent the 'enemy'. An hour after departure the minesweepers began a training sweep ahead of the ships, then a group of TUI6S attacked the "Svir" and escorts, dropping smoke versions of real bombs. The escort ships put up a smoke screen and repelled the attack with artillery fire. Later, towards the evening, they began firing at the floating mines.

Early on the 27th August, the hospital ship "Svir" and her escorting vessels reached the North Cape/Bear Island area to rendezvous with the convoy and form up in sailing order. The convoy

included the bulk-carriers "Shura Kolber", "Zarechenk", "Soviet Sailor", "Pioneer Murman", "Andrei Ivanov", the Recovery Vessel "Murmanryba", the "Svir" and the tanker "Tidespring", which had arrived earlier, all formed convoy then headed east. During the afternoon and evening, the escorts continued to hunt 'enemy' submarines and repel air attacks by TU16 bombers and SU7 fighters. The Convoy Commander Vice-Admiral I. V. Kazatonov assessed that "Action against the enemy air raids from three directions was carried out most efficiently by the extensive use of smoke screens and Electronic Counter Measures (ECM)."

At 2100 hours, a happy, exciting event took place. The British frigate "London" along with the Russian frigate "Gromkij" reached the convoy and, under full power, sailed past close to the starboard side of "Svir". The ship's company of the frigates and the veterans on the "Svir" greeted each other with such enthusiasm that many had tears in their eyes. The exercise resumed on the morning of the 28th August. At 0800 hours a submarine, submerged at periscope depth, carried out a torpedo attack on the "Svir" then surfaced to greet the ships of the convoy. At 1100 hours, the Commander of the British contingent, Flag Officer of the 1st Flotilla of the British Fleet, Rear-Admiral Bruce Richardson, transferred from the "London" to the "Gromkij" for a meeting with Vice-Admiral I. V. Kazatonov. He said when greeting the Russian Vice Admiral, "It is a great honour for me to represent the officers and men of the Royal Navy." Throughout the day SU27s circled the convoy, the ships fired on an air target drogue. Submarine attacks were countered by specially equipped bombs.

During the three days the "Svir" was at sea, there were warm, friendly reunions on the mess-decks, cabins and ward-room, and the British and Russian veterans chatted together exchanged sou-

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venirs. An excellent buffet with every drink imaginable helped to warm up everyone. On the second day, Admiral Mikhailin, in a solemn ceremony, presented all eleven members of the Russian Convoy Club and many Russian veterans with commemorative badges carrying the inscription "50th Anniversary of the Russian Convoys".

Finally at 1430 hours the convoy entered the Kola Inlet, and later at 1900 hours the "Svir" and the "London" tied up at the Murmansk Sea Wharf. Only an hour after docking, all the visitors and their guests were seated in the huge auditorium of the Kirov Palace of Culture at a festive gathering and gala concert held in honour of the arrival of "Dervish '91 in Russian waters. The cordial atmosphere of the auditorium spilled over into the hall on the 1st floor where a festive meal was served. This was rounded off by dancing and singing accompanied by the band of the Headquarters Northern Fleet and Royal Marine Band.

On the 29th August the Veterans and their hosts visited the Murmansk International Cemetery where a solemn ceremony was held. Wreaths were laid in honour of those who had perished in the Arctic Convoys. They made their way then to the grand monument "The Seamen of the Northern Seas Alyesha", where a ceremony was held in memory of those who died. At 1900 hours the hospital ship "Svir", the "London", the "Gromkij" and the tanker "Tidespring" sailed, entering the Barents Sea, and headed for Archangel. Then the main group of visitors flew there on the 30th August.

During the transit to Archangel on the 30th, at the spot where the frigate, 'Passat', a deeply moving ceremony was held on board the "Svir". The Patriarch's envoy, Father Nikodim, prayed for the souls of the seamen who had perished. To the strains of solemn music and a salute fired by the ship's guns, wreaths were cast on the water.

Then at last came the dawn of the 31st August, the morning of the 50th Anniversary of the arrival of Convoy "Dervish" in Archangel. All along the route through the channel of the Northern Dvina, from the Zirnnegorsk lighthouse to Archangel, people gathered along the banks to greet the ships of the convoy. Finally, we reached the quay at Archangel. It seemed that the whole population of the town, young and old, had gathered along the shores of the Dvina to welcome the arrival of "Dervish '91". As the ships were approaching the docking area, a 21-gun salute rang out and the "Svir", proud and unhurried, went through the ritual of tying-up at the "Red Pier".

With great delight and excitement, the townspeople, war veterans and those guests who had flown into Murmansk were there to meet the "Svir" and the veterans of the Arctic Convoys. This was a great occasion; the first time ships of the Royal Navy had come to Archangel since the end of the War, forty-six years before. On the shore to meet the guests were all the members of the Organising Committee, Air Force General V. P. Potapov, representatives of the local authorities, as well as the Naval Attaches of Great Britain and America, Captains Michael Caswell and Sergei A. Ionov.

During the three days the "Svir" was at sea, there were warm, friendly reunions on the mess-decks, cabins and wardroom, and the British and Russian veterans chatted together and After a meeting when Vice-Admiral Kazatonov reported the successful completion of "Dervish 91" to the Chairman of the Organising Committee, U. A. Mukailov, there was a massive rally. Columns of servicemen with banners, Guards of Honour, Soviet and British detachments of sailors, and veterans bearing the standards of the Russian Convoy Club, North Russia Club and Soviet Russian organisations made their way to the monument "Defenders of the

North", at the base of which burns the Eternal Flame in memory of fallen heroes.

In front of the monument, troops with their banners, British and Soviet Naval Guards of Honour and veterans who had come for the celebrations stood in square formation. An enormous crowd of veterans and townsfolk filled the whole square around the monument. Then, slowly approaching the square, came the armoured vehicle carrying the container holding the remains of the "Unknown Sailor of the Northern Seas", which had been taken from Boundary sign NI of the legendary Mushta Tontur Itils on the Srednij and brought to Archangel on board the "Gromkij". The container was carried slowly and majestically to the base of the monument, past the ranks of sailors who bowed in respect. It was then placed in an urn and laid beside the Eternal Flame.

The Archbishop of Archangel, Viadylka Panteleimon, conducted a moving service in memory of all those killed on the field of battle and those who perished at sea or died from their wounds. He prayed that all those who had laid down their lives for their country and their Christian faith had found peace and would remain blessed in memory. Tears welled up in the eyes of many of those present. As the service came to an end, the container with the ashes was lowered into a recess in front of the Eternal Flame to the sombre choral of the large church choir. Banners and standards were dipped slowly to the ground and guns were fired in salute. The recess was then sealed with an iron plate inscribed with the words "Here lies the remains of the Unknown Sailor of the Northern Seas, August 91" - Representatives of two British Clubs, a detachment of sailors, and children from Archangel laid wreaths and flowers at the place where the urn was buried. There followed a solemn procession of people with ban-

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ners, Guards of Honour, bands of the Fleet Headquarters and Royal Marines and the veterans of the Arctic Convoys from the Russian Convoy Club the North Russia Club and Soviet Convoy Associations.

At the close of the ceremony, hundreds of people surged forward to lay wreaths and floral tributes at the Eternal Flame in memory of those who died. After the unveiling of a memorial plaque by the wartime head of the Regional State Committee for Defence and Chief of the Northern Sea Lanes, twice Hero of the Soviet Union, I. D. Papanin, on the building of the Regional Executive as well as at the Memorial Stone on the embankment, all the veterans and other guests assembled for a festive reception in the Archangel Palace of Sport. Tables had been laid in the Guest Hall for 1,300 people, and a huge was provided in the centre for the dance ensembles and orchestra. The tables groaned under the profusion of seafood from the Barents Sea and the varied selection of strong drinks. In all probability, none of the visitors had ever attended a reception on such a grand scale.

After some short speeches, the concert began with the vocal ensemble "Spirit of the Sea" and the bands of the Northern Fleet Headquarters and the Royal Marines. Undoubtedly, the high point of the concert was reached when the former Boy Seaman of the Northern Fleet and Peoples Artist of the USSR, Boris Shtokolov, sang the famous song "Ave Maria" and, at the request of some of the veterans, sang old sea shanties that they used to sing long before in wartime. It was these songs which moved the old sailors to tears, and they smothered the singer with flowers and kisses. All present joined in with "Tipperary" and other favourites- they danced around in couples, and people in groups grabbed each other by the hand with no thought to age. When this wonderful gala evening was over everybody went outside and were delighted with the sight of the whole sky

lit up by the colourful display of the celebration salute.

On the 1st September, the veterans took a trip to the Malye Karely to see the striking examples of wooden architecture peculiar to Northern Russia. On board the "London" in the evening, there was a traditional Cocktail Party for V.I.Ps- the organisers of "Dervish 91", the Commanders of the Convoy Ships, Military Attachés and the highly honoured British and Soviet veterans of the Arctic Convoys. Finally on Tuesday 2d September, after the ships of "Dervish 91" had sailed, all the guests departed for home, taking with them everlasting, vivid memories and impressions of this historic occasion.

Ten years have passed since the "Dervish 91" celebrations, but this extraordinary event in the lives of our people and wartime allies will be remembered for a long time to come. A month after the event, I received a letter from a British veteran, Geoff Shelton, who befriended me aboard the hospital ship "Svir". One passage in the letter touched me very deeply.

"Hospitality and warm reception they extended to us. Although the war finished forty-six years ago, not even in my wildest dreams could I have believed that one day I would take part in such a wonderful event. On the Sunday morning in Archangel, I listened to the children singing and dancing. Tears ran down my cheeks as I reflected that if those brave Russian and British young men hadn't sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom, those children just would not be alive now. These seamen, soldiers and airmen did not die in vain. I et those singing and dancing children remind us of the need to strengthen the bonds of friendship in the name of peace, and let that peace be sacred. Once again, thank you for your kindness and hospitality. The memory will remain with me for ever."

Tears ran down my cheeks as I reflected

that if those brave Russian and British young men hadn't sacrificed their lives for the sake of freedom, those children just would not be alive now. These seamen, soldiers and airmen did not die in vain. Let those singing and dancing children remind us of the need to strengthen the bonds of friendship in the name of peace, and let that peace be sacred. Once again, thank you for your kindness and hospitality. The memory will remain with me for ever."

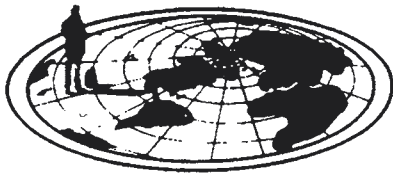
Statistical Information

From March 11th 1941 up to March 31st 1946, deliveries to the USSR from Britain and America (not counting Canada) were made along three routes; - by the Northern Convoys, through Iran, and by the Far East ports. Deliveries included-22,206 aircraft, 12,755 tanks, 471,257 vehicles (lorries, jeeps, tractors, and motorcycles), 13,150 anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, 131,633 torpedoes, 473 million shells, 4,005 rifles and automatic weapons, 345,735 tons of explosives, 1,981 railway engines, 11, 155 railway wagons and flat trucks, 54,000 tons of rails, 2,670,000 tons of fuel and oil, 842,000 tons of chemicals, more than 1,050,000 miles of telephone cable, 3,786,000 vehicle tyres, 49,000 tons of leather, 15 million pairs of army boots, 69 million square metres of woollen fabric, various ships including 1 battleship, 1 cruiser, 9 destroyers, 28 frigates, 43 Landing Ships, 78 patrol boats, 166 torpedo boats, 4 submarines, 89 minesweepers 96 cargo vessels and 3 ice-breakers.

Britain shipped to Russia war material to the value of \$308 million and raw material, foodstuffs, plant and medical supplies provisions worth \$120 million. The war material contributed to Russia by the U.S.A. is said to have been worth a total of 11,260 million dollars. The overall tonnage transported through the Arctic was 3,960,000 tons out of a global total of 16,366,000 tons.



US NAVY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



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June 11, 2008

U.S. Navy Armed Guard
115 Wall Creek Drive
Rolesville, NC 27571

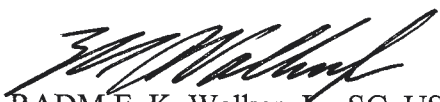
Dear Friends of the Navy Memorial,

Thank you on behalf of the officers and directors of the United States Navy Memorial for your generous gift of \$1000.00 received on February 1, 2008, in memory of **Tom Bowerman**.

Your support has helped us continue to execute the mission of educating the public about the rich global heritage the United States has as a great maritime nation. It is also to recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of the men and women of the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine and their families; and to perpetuate their values of dedication, leadership, service to country, and teamwork to future generations of Americans. We accomplish this mission, among others, through historical exhibits, naval history internships, and our Naval Heritage Library, which has greatly enhanced our ability to serve many veterans who call, E-mail, and visit us for historical information. The Memorial's Education Institute, for example, continually holds seminars commemorating critical moments in our nation's naval history. The Memorial is also reaching out to youth through a youth exchange program and noon-hour youth concerts in the summer. Your thoughtful gift has indeed helped the Memorial continue the effort to honor, preserve, and celebrate America's enduring naval heritage.

Thank you again for making use of the Navy Memorial in memory of a shipmate. I hope that before long you will be able to visit the Navy Memorial to witness firsthand what you have helped accomplish.

Sincerely,


RADM E. K. Walker, Jr., SC, USN (Ret.)
Treasurer

*Thank you all so very
much for remembering
and for your generosity.*

P.S. This letter also acknowledges that your donation was received at the U.S. Navy Memorial Foundation without any goods or services forwarded to you in return. For this reason, your donation qualifies as tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

IN MEMORY OF TOM BOWERMAN

*In memory of
GM2 Tom Bowerman, USNR*



Nan McComber
Navy Log Department

**U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION
AND NAVAL HERITAGE CENTER**

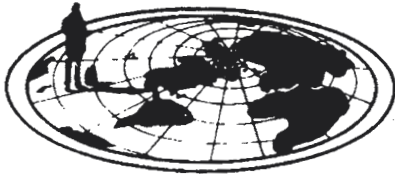
701 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., #123
Washington, D.C. 20004-2608
Tel: (202) 737-2300 ext. 730

Fax: (202) 737-2308

E-mail: Log_admin@navymemorial.org

Website: www.navymemorial.org

*Dear Mr Lloyd - Thanks very
much to your Armed Guard
Veterans for the generous &
most worthy donation. If I
can help in any way, please
ask. Kind regards,
Nan*



Washington, D.C.

The United States Navy
Memorial Foundation
wishes to inform you that

a thoughtful gift
has been made

in name of

GM2, USNR

Tom Bowerman

by

*the
U.S. Navy Armed Guard
World War II Veterans*

significant donation

The United States Navy Memorial on
Pennsylvania Avenue in our nation's capital
was conceived by Capital Architect Pierre
L'Enfant two hundred years ago. Designed as
a "living" tribute to all who have served in the
U. S. Navy, the Memorial is midway between
the Capitol and the White House.

It features a public amphitheater where
concerts are performed throughout the
summer by the U. S. Navy Band and other
armed services musical groups.

The deck of the amphitheater displays a
world map, 100 feet in diameter, in shades of
granite outlining the vastness of the ocean areas
where the symbolic Lone Sailor serves. The
memorial is surrounded by pools of cascading
water, fountains, bronze bas-reliefs and nautical
artifacts. It portrays a history of service by men
and women who gallantly and courageously
have worn the Navy Blue since 1775.

The Navy Memorial Heritage Center is
adjacent to the Navy Memorial in the Market
Square East building. The Heritage Center
houses the Navy Memorial Log Room,
Theater, Ships Store and Conference Site. The
Memorial Log is a special feature of the
Heritage Center and is a computerized "ship's
company" of men and women who have
served in and with the U. S. Navy and Naval
Reserve, and have contributed to the Navy
Memorial. The log continues to grow as Navy
veterans enter their own names, or are
sponsored into the log by relatives and friends.



Of Guns And Friends

I lie wrapped in absence of armor plate
 Within my home as gray as slate
 I'm far away from land and shore
 On a Liberty Ship in the midst of war
 Come light of day and morning sun
 I'll check the functions of my gun
 I'll check the point and then the train
 And then I'll check it all again
 For that's the gun that lets me sleep
 And keeps me from a grave so deep
 I'm now asleep, my mind at peace
 But will my battles never cease?
 The years have gone, the gun is rust
 So many friends are now just dust
 But they are never far from me
 Although some sleep beneath the sea
 For them no songs are ever sung
 But they will be forever young
 Friends and relations shed their tears
 Forgotten now these many years
 But some of us remember still
 Remember them, and always will
 I ask them now for my release
 Or will my battles never cease.

LTCDR Bob Prinselaar

Sent in to me by the late Tom Bowerman of
 Anniston, Al. who we honored on the cover. (cal)



Photo's sent in by John W. Shevlin Sr.
 37 Winfield Road • Rochester, NY 14622-2212
 (585) 467-2057

Top Photo: Rochester, NY Crew
 1st Row Sitting; Nelson Peck & Walter Mace • 2nd
 Row Sitting; Rober Smith, Richard Bennett, John
 Dutko & John Shevlin • 3rd Row Standing; Bob
 Smith, Rev. Richard Hass, Dick Smith, Richard
 Meinhard, Carl Gartz & Elmer Bigelow

Bottom Right Photo: Buffalo, NY Crew
 Ray Hahn, Ed Kuebler, Ed Namdyke,
 Jim Chamberlian & Hugh McTigue

