

# THE POINTER

THE USN ARMED GUARD HONORS  
THESE MEN AND THEIR FAMILY  
WHO HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN IN HISTORY.



*the five Sullivan brothers  
"missing in action" off the Solomons*

## ***THEY DID THEIR PART***

The Sullivan brothers were five siblings who were all killed in action on 13 November 1942 in World War II with the sinking of the light cruiser USS Juneau (CL-52), the vessel on which they all served.

THE SULLIVANS, NATIVES OF WATERLOO, IOWA, WERE THE  
SONS OF TOM AND ALLETA SULLIVAN.

THE BROTHERS ON BOARD JUNEAU; FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:  
JOSEPH, FRANCIS, ALBERT, MADISON AND GEORGE SULLIVAN

MAY/JULY 2009 EDITION



**WE SAILED TOGETHER, WE FOUGHT TOGETHER, WE PRAYED TOGETHER,  
WE DIED TOGETHER, WE SUFFERED TOGETHER.**

**OUR CREWS CAME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE AND WE DID A JOB  
THAT HAD TO BE DONE AND WE DID IT FOR OUR FREEDOM.**

**OF THE 144,970 USN ARMED GUARD WHO SERVED,  
1810 GAVE THEIR ALL WITH MANY INJURIES.**

**OF THE OVER 300,000 MERCHANT MARINERS WHO SERVED,  
APPROXIMATELY 8762 GAVE THEIR ALL WITH THOUSANDS OF INJURIES.**

**WE HONOR THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR ALL  
AND TO ALL THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE WITH US.**

*God Bless America - The Land That We Love!*



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



### **DEDICATION**

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



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Dear Armed Guard Crew, Families and Friends,

Summer of 2009

I guess the best place to start this POINTER is tell you that about 12 of the Armed Guard showed for the Merchant Seamen's Tampa, Fl. Reunion and several more took the great cruise on the S.S. AMERICAN Victory. About 75 Merchant Seamen and their ladies were there along with 3 of the crew of the Hi-Jacked ship, the S.S. ALABAMA who told of their ordeal. I met a lot of the MM crew that had been on the POINTER mailing list for years and I got to meet them which was great and personally rewarding and I do want to thank them for their precious remarks.

To those of you who were on ships by the way of the Barents Sea (MURMANSK RUN"), the Persian Gulf, the Black Sea or the Sea of Okhotsk can obtain the "60th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War" (World War II) to the U.S.A. Veterans of WW II who participated in bringing war supplies to the Soviet Union including the pilots and submariners. I hope to have a letter to us in this POINTER from them.

The Certificate of Appreciation placed in the last two POINTERS for our crew to be awarded by Congress to Armed Guard has been confusing to them and the Armed Guard. I didn't at the time nor do I now have time to answer all the calls. If your Congressperson calls you about the certificate, have them call Lyle Kell 360-652-1884 or 425-327-0392.

On November 8, 1940, a year before the USA entered the war, the MSCity of RAYVILLE, carrying a cargo of lead, wool and copper from Australia to New York, hit a German mine and was sunk. It was the first American Ship sunk during WW II and the ship has been located off the Australian Southern Coast by Ocean Researchers. Mack B. Bryan, 3rd Engineer was killed by drowning and was the first American casualty of WW II.

Wally Heckenliab 301 E.3rd St. Freeman, S.D. 57029 has had a book "MY LIFE STORY" published by Pink Hill Press which tells a beautiful story on his life and that of his life in the Armed Guard service. The cost is \$30. even includes S & H.. Buy directly from Wally.

On July 17, 1944, the Liberty Ship S.S. E.A. BRYAN had been in port for four days and had taken on almost 4,600 tons cluster bombs, 1,000 lb bombs, depth charges and incendiary bombs and the S.S. QUINAULT VICTORY was docked across the pier after arriving on her maiden voyage from the Kaiser Ship Yards in Richmond, California. Sixteen box cars of over 400 tons of munitions was nearby, ready to be loaded. An explosion occurred and the E.A. BRYAN disintegrated and parts of the QUINAULT (V) was thrown over 500 yards away and the pier, nearby buildings and damaged others into the town of Port Chicago a mile away. All 320 men working nearby were killed instantly. Over 350 Navy and civilians were injured. The USN Armed Guard placed a Memorial there in 1958. The Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial has taken over the site and have up-dated the site which is on an active military base. The National Park Service has permission to escort visitors to the Memorial at certain times with advance reservations of 2 weeks prior. For more info, call 925-838-0249 or visit them at [www.nps.gov/poch](http://www.nps.gov/poch), or [www.portchicagomemorial.org](http://www.portchicagomemorial.org)

I am going to ask all of you on my E-Mail list to not send any more JOKES, POLITICS, or anything unless it is about the Armed Guard or Merchant Seamen of WW II. I have over 1000 on the E-Mail list and I have a lot of deleting to do each day besides the advertising. Thanks.(cal)

#### Officers for 2009

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& Sec.Treas. 1985-2009  
115 Wall Creek Drive  
Rolesville, N.C. 27571  
1-919-570-0909  
[clloyd@nc.rr.com](mailto:clloyd@nc.rr.com)

Ron Carlson  
616 Putnam Place  
Alexander, VA 22302-4018  
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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  
twenties! When you call, let the  
phone ring so I can get to it! -CAL*

# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

Charlie,  
They have re-designed the entrance to the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery and our U.S.N. Armed Guard Monument had to be moved along with our time capsule we had placed there as it was too close to the road. Dominick Vendresca had been keeping an eye on the project and a good thing we did for the day they were to move it, we had to tell them what to expect and how it would have to be lifted out of the hole without damaging it. It worked perfect and it is now back in place along with all the other monuments just as they were in at the old location. The new location is just a few feet from where it was before. I am happy and satisfied with all that was done.

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

(Extra from Gerry Monday May 25, 2009 Memorial Day) Charlie, Jim Sheridan from Warwick, R.I., Melvin Kahn from Cranston, R.I. and I were the only Armed Guard at the R.I. Veteran's Ceremony on Memorial Day but they called out my name and asked me to stand and then called out for Jim and Mel to stand as well. I thought it an honor to be so honored before about 300 people who attended. It was a real nice ceremony without politicians.  
Gerry

\*\*\*\*\*

*Thank you Gerry for representing our fading Armed Guard Crew there. Thank you and others there for placing the Memorial at the cemetery in the past so others might know that our crew existed. If you can get it done, would you have the following inscribed on the Monument—www.armed-guard.com so people in the future will know of our Web Site. (cal) P.S. "Gerry had it done immediately. I ask others of you to have it placed on Monuments you have erected so all will know. (cal)*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,  
Best greetings on Victory Day! Good health, and a cheerful smile for every WW II veteran. It is your holiday, your victory and our future. Without your effort and sacrifice the existence of many nations would be doubtful today. Thank you again and sorry for not writing, my e-mail server was down for about 2 days.

Looking back, I had a great time in the US. I've been to New York, Boston, Washington, West Virginia, Indiana and Ohio. I've visited museums, galleries, halls of honor and air force bases. I had a good time with my friends and my host family, but it's time to go back home now. I am leaving on the April 13. When I start thinking about my year in the US, it seems so surreal, like a dream which happened to turn true. Everybody was really nice to me, even when I had rough times here. That one year will stay in my life forever.  
Yours, Alex  
sane19@mail.ru

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,  
Here is some news from Murmansk. On July, 25 a big group of British, Canadian, Australian and other Allied veterans came to our city on board the liner DISCOVERY. They visited the Memorial to the Defenders of Soviet North and Monument to those who died in Arctic Convoys to Murmansk. I went there and made some pictures (you'll find the links after the letter) They are not really good, I'm an amateur photographer, but some of them seem to be OK.

Also, a monument to the seamen who died on the KURSK submarine in Barents Sea in 2000 was opened the next day. It is a part of her conning tower and a tablet with the names of those who never returned home.  
Yours, Alex

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd April 23, 2009  
Thank you very much for the copy of the "POINTER". It was a real pleasure to see out postcard in the magazine. We got the letter from Mr. Fogel from California. We have received crucial information due to your help. We appreciate it immensely.

On May 8th, our guides are going to the war cemetery to put some flowers on the convoy Participant's graves. Then we are planning to the "VALLEY of GLORY." This place is situated about 70 kms West of Murmansk in the valley of the Western Litsa River. The German troops were stopped there in September of 1941. The battles were so hard fought that the water in the river was red with blood. There was a front line from 1941 to 1944. At first, the place was called the "VALLEY of DEATH." People of Murmansk visit it every year when we celebrate "VICTORY DAY." Our guides took part in the city festival of foreign languages. Their presentations were successful. Now, they are doing the research devoted to the traditions of the Russians, American and British navies.

We are sending our kindest regards to you and all the American Veterans. Take care.

God Bless You. With best wishes,  
Yermolina Yekaterina and the pupils,  
15 Ivechenko St.  
Murmansk 183034 Russia

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Cal Lloyd May 21, 2009  
Sending a little aid to continue the POINTER. My wife has had lung cancer for over one and a half years now and, thankfully, it is in remission and our life is getting back to normal again. We want to thank you for all the years of keeping the Armed Guard alive to the world. A tear still comes to

# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

## ANOTHER GROUP FROM WHICH WW II WAS WON

Charles "Chuck" Davidson • 1122 Holmes Pl. • Dekalb, Il. 60115 • 815-756-2618

As the years go by, wars come and go and most veterans feel that their Unit did the most to win the war; or, at least they often brag to each other that they did. One such case is below:

In referring to Capt. Rollin H. Baker, MSC USNR (Ret) and being under his command during WW II, the American Armed Forces, although victorious in the early action in the South West Pacific, they were besieged by an array of crippling medical problems in that tropical hot, humid environment. Servicemen, responding poorly to the climate contracted numerous ailments for which there were little natural resistance. Especially troublesome were skin rash, malaria, scrub typhus, dengue and many other foreign diseases. The Japanese apparently had similar problems.

As a result, U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit No. 2 (NAMRU-2) came into being in 1944 as a major effort to help prevent and alleviate such medical hazards and keep our forces fit for carrying out their missions in the Pacific War theater.

Before mid-1944, NAMRU-2 Commanding Officer Capt. Thomas M. Rivers, MC-USNR, got an array of biomedical expertise to include every conceivable aspect of laboratory and field epidemiology. Specialist, either already on active duty or in civilian life, were engaged in research-oriented work in pathology, bacteriology, chemistry viral and rickettsial diseases, malariology, entomology (vector such as mosquitoes and flies) and many other groups that dealt in ticks, mites, lice and fleas. The NAMRU-2 headquarters was first established at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, now part of Rockefeller University. Many famous doctors and scientists were assigned early duties with NAMRU-2. Some were sent with Pharmacist Mates from the enlisted ranks to different places in the Pacific. Meanwhile, the main Pacific headquarters

for NAMRU-2 was gaining momentum. This was being taken place in the middle of dense jungle and the enemy still nearby at times.

Upon arriving on Guam, NAMRU-2 personnel, including 39 officers with designations as scientists, 9 as administrators, and more than 250 rated men were first housed in jungle-shrouded tents. By mid-February, they were moved to newly built facility and began to work in earnest at their research laboratories. NAMRU-2 as stated earlier, went to work on ways to keep our troops from contacting and spreading crippling diseases to which they had little or no natural resistance. If, for example, a large sector of an invasion force acquired vector-borne diarrhea on D-Day, the enemy may well have been the cause.

The lab immediately began a systematic survey of introduced rodents, native fruit bats, migratory birds as reservoirs of medical importance diseases and parasites on Guam and other strategic islands in the Pacific. After voucher specimens of birds other things were collected, identified and examined biomedically, they were preserved as museum specimens and later deposited in the Smithsonian Institute. The atomic bombs were dropped ending much of the work in research. Capt. Baker and Chuck later visited Guam and found many of the endemic birds were now gone.

Stories could go on forever how these men helped win the war. Every person did their part in winning the war regardless of their branch of service, rating or job they had to perform. Every serviceman played their part and we must remember he or she as such. Just a note that every group should enjoy, as NAMRU-2 enjoys every year, reminiscing and enjoying the close companionship and fellowship they had in doing their part and working together to win the War in the South Pacific.

my eyes when I reflect on where we went, what we went through and what we did and had to do.

I was aboard two T-2 Swan Island tankers, the S.S. TONTO and the S.S. SAGUARO. We covered about every island in the Pacific and twice through the Panama Canal. The TONTO hauled 120 octane to New Guinea, Hollandia, Finchaven and the island of Biak where we launched our attack at the Philippines. We then came back to the States for more fuel. We were in a convoy of twelve from Eniwetok to Saipan.

We hauled 120 octane to Saipan four or five times and I watched as the nightly as the B-29's from Guam, Tinian and Saipan would come together and head for Japan. And their secondary target was Okinawa and an Island we had never heard of—Iwo Jima.

Every full moon, the Jap planes came down to bomb the runways, trying to stop our planes from flying.

On Christmas Day of 1944, we were having a party of sorts on the fantail. On the full moon was their time to drop their bombs on the runways but that

night, they dropped their bombs off of our fantail. Had they hit us, Lord only knows what would have happened to us and all the ammo ships around us anchored nearby. We supplied the fuel for the B-29s to help win the war. I would sit out each night and watch them return.

I had been in the service for one year on December 43 and I had just turned 16 on Nov. 16, 1944. I had attended as signal school striker at University of Illinois for 16 weeks and I was a Signalman Striker. I was sent to Treasure Island and then to Portland, Oregon to go aboard the S.S. TONTO.



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

I still have a picture of all the crew and remember them fondly.

Thanks again for all you do and have done to keep us united.

Lewis (Jack) Hagerman  
1603 Gladys Dr.  
Las Cruces, NM. 88001

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

To all the Armed Guard and Merchant Crews by: Carolyn Cochran

Ernie and I have been helping C. A. Lloyd-Chairman USN Armed Guard WW II Veterans for quite a few years. We were able to go to about 15 A. G. Reunions and always enjoyed meeting and talking to "shipmates" from all parts of the country. When we were in one of the meetings, C.A. Lloyd asked for volunteers who had a computer to help send out letters matching up shipmates that had scattered all over the country. Ernie went up to C. A. and "volunteered" my services. Over the years we have sent out many letters to shipmates and heard from many A. G. who were in contact with shipmates they hadn't seen or heard from for 50 years or more.

Three years ago Ernie health gave way and he had to go into a nursing home, but he wanted me to continue sending out letters and I promised him I would and I will do so as long as I am able. Ernie & I spent many hours running, folding, stuffing, and mailing letters. This is one of my "good" memories of our time together. C. A. always reimburses us for our expenses such as boxes of paper, envelopes and stamps from the Armed Guard bank account that is from donations by you. We furnished the labor gratefully and for the enjoyment of helping other A. G. find their shipmates. Many have sent in checks and money to me and I have always forwarded it on the C.A. to put into the AG checking account which he has done. Ernie served on 4 different ships,



including going to Murmansk Russia. He served in both the European and Asiatic Pacific theaters, and was on a convoy to Murmansk, Russia. He was able to meet about 10 of his shipmates and usually at least 5, with their wives, went to the Reunions. These are the memories we will never forget. I will be happy to help Lloyd with sending out letters as long as I am able and he is able.

Ernie & Carolyn Cochran 43821  
740-754-1589 [eccochran@y-city.net](mailto:eccochran@y-city.net)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CAL: Thank you for the e-mail which reminds me that I owe you some money for the hat, bumper sticker, some past issues of the Pointer, which I will put in the mail today. No I have not received that info as yet, but will advise when I receive it. Thanks for the great job you are doing to keep the Armed Guard memory alive. Not many of us old timers around.

I am interested in a circular U.S. Navy Armed Guard patch which shows a sailor loading what looks like a 4"50 shell is there a patch made up like the one on the bumper sticker with the eagle? If there is, I would like one also. I am making up a display case with my medals, ribbons, pictures and other memorabilia, which my family has asked me to do a long time ago and am

now in the process of doing it. My wife Kathleen of 57 years passed away on January 27, 2009 after a five year illness with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis.

I have enjoyed reading the Pointer and it has jogged my memory of the past. Reading about some of the exploits, which I also experienced and have realized it was just part of my life that I took for granted, that it was part of Navy life at war. Such as GQ twice a day, submarine attacks, depth charges by the Destroyers and Corvettes, aerial bombings in South Hampton, the Buzz bomb attacks in Antwerp, standing watches in all kinds of weather, storms at sea, etc. We were young then and could take it in stride or we did not know any better and thought it was an adventure.

I enlisted in the Navy on April 21, 1944 and was placed on in-active duty until I graduated from high school. I reported for active duty on June 8, 1944 to NTS Great Lakes, IL. On August 10, 1944 I was transferred to the Armed Guard School NAVTRCEN Gulfport, MS. On September 7 1944, I was transferred to Anti-Aircraft Training Center, Shell Beach, LA. I served on three merchant ships as Armed Guard: SS John Howland September 22, 1944 till May 10, 1945; SS William Maclay from June 21, 1945 till September 5, 1945; SS Joseph H Martin from



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

## ADAMS APPLIES THE BARKING OF AN OLD SEA DOG

Charles J. Adams Jr. • 100 W. 46 ST. • Reading, PA 19606

### DRAFT BAIT: Drafting Guys over 65

New direction for any war: Send Service Vets over 65! We wouldn't be rookies, or raw recruits.

I am 'way 'over 65 and the Armed Forces thinks I'm too old to track down terrorists. I'm not whacked out yet. You can't be older than 42 to join the military. They've got the whole thing backwards. Instead of sending 18-year olds off to fight, they ought to take us old guys. You shouldn't be able to join a military unit until you're at least 35. Many of us 'old guys' were conscripted for military service by the Selective Service Act of 1940. We've already had our basic training.

Researchers say 18-year-olds think about sex every 10 seconds. Many are exceedingly 'wooden' in performance. Old guys only think about sex a couple of times a day, (been-there-done-that!) leaving us more than 28,000 additional seconds per day to concentrate on the enemy.

Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a sailor boy is a dangerous gob. 'My back hurts! I can't sleep, I'm tired and hungry'. We are impatient and maybe letting us kill some jerk that desperately deserves it will make us feel better and shut us up for a while.

An 18-year-old doesn't even like to get up before 10 a.m. Old guys always get up early to (censored) so what the hell. Besides, like I said, 'I'm tired and can't sleep and since I'm already up, I may as well be up killing some fanatical SOB. We'd give them a good working over. A lot of 'lead medicine.' If captured we couldn't spill the beans because we'd forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser. Another boot camp would be easier for us old guys. We're used to getting screamed and yelled at and we're used to soft food. Oh that good old S.O.S. No need for a G.I. haircut, we are already "skin heads." We've also developed an appreciation for weapons. We've been using them for years as an excuse to get out of the house, away from the screaming and yelling.

They could lighten up on the obstacle course however. I've been in combat and didn't see a single 20-foot wall with rope hanging over the side, nor did I ever do any pushups after completing boot training. I can hear the CPO In the 'New Navy' now, 'Get

down and give me ... er .. One.' Actually, the running part is kind of a waste of energy too. I've never seen anyone outrun a bullet.

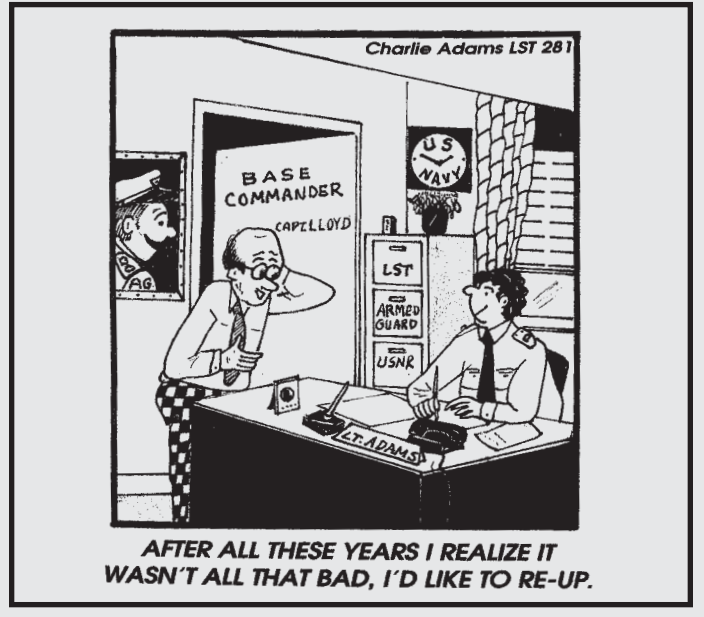
An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him. He's still learning to shave, to start up a conversation with a pretty girl. He still hasn't figured out that a baseball cap has a brim to shade his eyes, not the back of his head. These are all great reasons to keep our kids at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off into the television war. The war on every channel.

Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten coward terrorists. The last thing an enemy would want to see right now is a couple of million teed off old (censored) with attitudes and automatic weapons who know that their best years are already behind them. We won't need any new "Veteran's Benefits." At our age, we've already had our share. If young guys were smart, they'd miss half the fun. Know that by the time you learn to behave yourself, there is nothing else to do.

We find the trouble with 'getting-up-there' and knowing what life is all about, we don't want to.

So where do I go to, to "Re-up" Tell me.

Charlie Adams Jr. E-mail: LST281@AOL.COM



September 18 1945 till January 3, 1946. I was then transferred to Shoemaker California on January 10, 1946 for reassignment to the regular Navy. I was then assigned to the USS Fanshaw Bay (CVE-70) to prepare her for the moth ball fleet. On March 1, 1946 I was eligible for discharge but I opted to re-enlist for another two years so I could

receive my four years of advanced schooling. I also served on the USS Sitkoh Bay (CVE-86) to prepare her for the moth ball fleet. I was tired of shore duty and put in for sea duty and was assigned to the USS Hawkins (DDR-873) out of San Diego, CA where I remained until my discharge on March 30, 1948 from the US Naval

Hospital in San Diego, CA. While on the Destroyer we traveled to Hawaii, China, Korea, Manchuria, Okinawa, Guadalcanal and numerous islands that I cannot remember. So ended my naval career as a GM 3/c. I had passed all my tests for GM 2/c and was waiting for an opening when I was discharged.

# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

William Goodness  
841 11th Street North  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494  
715-423-7897  
\*\*\*\*\*

*Sorry, don't have any more patches other than New Orleans, too old to order: (cal)*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

John L. Haynes  
10942 Pine Valley Path  
Indianapolis, IN 46234  
Tel: 1-317 852-3622 2/7/09

Mr. William P. Short  
102 Thistle Street  
Dunfermline, Fife KY 12 OJA,  
Great Britain

Dear Mr. Short  
I read your story in the February – May 2005 issue of the POINTER telling of the harrowing experience of your surviving the sinking of the INDUNA during the voyage of Convoy PQ-13 in the North Atlantic to Murmansk in March 1942. What a heart wrenching story. I pray you are well at this writing.

I, too, was in that same Convoy PQ-13 aboard the SS ELDENA as a US Navy Armed Guard gunner. The ELDENA did not suffer any substantial damage either going into Murmansk or returning to Iceland after off loading our cargo. We did encounter many near-misses from enemy surface vessels, U-boats and aircraft. I saw a number of ships hit and sunk. While in port in Murmansk we were under constant attack by enemy bombers and had to man our guns sometimes as often as 5 times a day. Our gun crew was credited by the Russian Government with shooting down 3 German bombers and the entire crew was given an extra months pay.

At the same time you were suffering the traumatic conditions in that poor excuse for a hospital, we were manning

our guns and trying to stay alive and protect our ship. I am so glad you had a good experience aboard the USS TUSCALOOSA. I wish to express my deepest gratitude for your service and happy to hear that you survived and were fitted with artificial limbs. In July 1996 my wife and I visited Scotland to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. We loved Scotland. We both have a Scottish heritage. My mother was a MacDonald and her parents were Hamilton and Hunter. I was 86 years old this past May and am still in excellent health

God bless you is our prayer. I hope to hear from you.  
Sincerely, John

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Subject: Nebraska Armed Guard Unit Disbands

After almost 30 years of continuous operation and fellowship, the Nebraska Armed Guard Unit has voted to disband. The Unit has met faithfully, on a monthly basis, for all these years. As a group we have performed at every Patriotic Ceremony at the Veteran's Garden, Lincoln, Nebraska and for years we were custodians of over 35 American Flags that were displayed at the Garden on Holidays, and other Patriotic Events.

Our last official meeting was held in Lincoln On June 1st and was attended by 35 Armed Guard, Merchant Marine and spouses. And while we will not meet on a monthly basis we overwhelmingly agreed to meet once or twice a year.

The group wishes to officially extend our love and gratitude to the tireless and faithful service rendered by Moe and Jeanne Carlton. Without their devotion to our Nebraska Armed Guards we would have never enjoyed all these years of patriotic fellowship.

John F. Higgins in behalf of the Nebraska Armed Guard Unit.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Dear Y'all,  
So sad to hear of shutting down the Nebraska Armed Guard monthly meeting but I understand. One day I will have to come to the conclusion to shut down here --- but I won't be around to tell you. Should I shut down before I go or get my printer to send the obit? If you decide on certain dates to meet, send time place and hosts. Thanks to Moe and all for serving and getting together. I have been Blessed of knowing so many good "YANKES"!!(cal)*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. LLoyd,  
I'm Roger Bourgea from South Burlington, VT and this morning on our Burlington Free Press I saw an article about another Armed Guard veteran - Fred Greeno, 138 Grand Avenue, Swanton, VT 05488. He never knew anything about The Pointer or the meetings in Concord. I told him I would ask you to send him the Pointer and maybe some old editions. I'm wondering if you could do that for me. I would appreciate your letting me know. It would be greatly appreciated as I enjoy this so much. I'm sure he would also. He lost his first ship West Madaket on May 5, 1943. They were torpedoed by a German U-boat. They were rescued by a British corvette. The commander was Sir Robert Atkinson. His daughter found him through the internet and they are now in touch with each other and he always wanted to thank him for saving his life and was finally able to do it. Thanking you for anything you can do.  
Roger Bourgea

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CA  
I talked this morning with an Anne Marsh. She is the Chief Archivist, Institute on World War II and Human



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

## NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL BEDFORD, VA.

On the eve of the 65th anniversary of D-Day, the foundation that runs the National D-DAY Memorial here is on the brink of financial ruins due to donations in the poor economy. The Primary support base of support, the WW II Veterans, are dying off. The



prospect of being taken over by the National Park Service or a college or university has found no takers. The Bedford Memorial opened 8 years ago attended by the then President George W. Bush. It's location is about 115 miles West of Richmond in a town who lost 19 boys on D-DAY in a town of about 7000 in 1945, the highest casualties per capita. The cost was \$7 million and was paid in full from donations in 2006. It is not only a Memorial to those from Bedford killed but to all Veterans who served. If you read this in the future and can contribute, please do so. SEE PAGE 16.



Experience, Florida State University. This is an integral part of the History Department of Florida State University. If you visit their website, it tells more: [Http://www.fsu.edu/fiww2](http://www.fsu.edu/fiww2) They are most interested in getting anything they can get their hands on relating to World War II. When I described your activities and the Armed Guard, I thought she would faint on the phone. This is the other side of the merchant marine story in the war and she did not know what you were doing. Would you do several things? She would love to talk with you. She is the one who makes decisions and will take all you have. Her address is:

Institute on World War II and Human Experience Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-22  
Attn: Anne Marsh  
Her phone is 850-644-9545  
Her Email is [amarsh@fsu.edu](mailto:amarsh@fsu.edu).

They are anxious to expand their collections and research possibilities on World War II. The head of this area wrote to AJ Witcha about a year ago outlining their interests, but never got a response. You can send her some of your publications, but perhaps if you called her first and outlined all you have at your place, that might expand her understanding of the trove of

information at your place. They are quite concerned that time is taking away the men to talk to, and who has other information. I believe having your records and publications at a university for review and study is critical. People are starting to write a thesis on us, and where better to get the information than at one university. Having paper in an airconditioned location will save the publications and records you have maintained. She will wait to hear from you. She is very delightful over the phone.

I am not sure whether you plan to go to Tampa, but she will be there.

This is all good.

Mark Gleeson

\*\*\*\*\*

*Thank you Thank you Thank You for sending this as I have lost everything since Jan 1 2009 in my computer. I will save it immediately and follow up as soon as I can get things leveled out. WHEWW!!*

(cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charlie; I had just received SCUTTLEBUTT, and right after that I got your e-mail. Thanks for the accolades, and the suggestion. Each issue of SB generally brings a comment or two from across the U.S. Your idea is just

great. (Makes my retirement writing 'career' worth the time.) Editor Busch did OK by me this issue. (Pages 9 10 28 33 37)

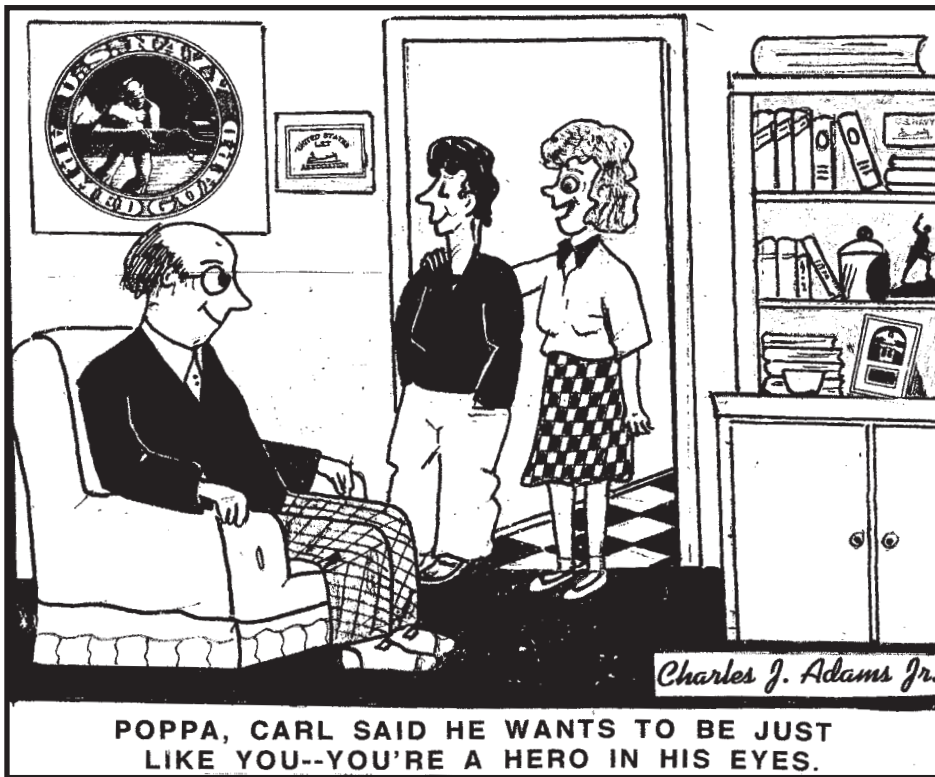
The SCUTTLEBUTT newspaper, carries quite a bit of my writings in every issue. Forty two pages this issue. Like everything else: I remember a high of 64 pages. I continue to write a weekly column for six PA. newspapers. Most of my Scuttlebutt columns/articles have been published in my weeklies. The "MY DIARY OF D-DAY PLUS 65 YEARS," (Page 28 in SB) has brought a large response. It was published locally the week of June six. I am sending the 'Sea Dog' column with this e-mail, and I am putting together a few cartoons that I will send 'snail-mail.' As long as I'm able, I write and draw every day. Hundreds of cartoons on any subject. Columns and articles galore.

Thank goodness my six papers use my output weekly. "We have to face the inevitable." Most of us old (censored) are not getting old. WE ARE OLD! Again thanks, Charlie Adams.

(No apostrophe in ADAMS APPLES See page 7 of The Pointer)

Charlie; the following has absolutely nothing to do with any of the above: have you seen the German U-boat film

# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



"das boot?" (the boat). I played it last night for the third time. I thought of you guys on the merchant ships. The U-boats were out to sink your ship, that's for sure. But as the story line went along in the film, you had to build up a certain empathy and fellow feeling for the nazi sub crew. They were all "nice guys" with families performing the third reich fuhrer's commands. We saw them as an abomination back then. Maybe a bit of acceptance now? I read that 40,000 german sailor boys went to sea in the u-boats, and that 30,000 never came back. Cja

\*\*\*\*\*

*Thanks, "ADAMS APPLE" for sharing your story, Yes, the Nazi were off the Coast of North Carolina within the 200 Mile Zone killing boys from the East and West--- North and South for their "FATHERLAND." I had studied history and I never knew the Rhine River ran into Wilmington, N.C. or Myrtle Beach, S.C.. So, why were they over here killing boys from the North in our territory. That was our job, as we never finished our first battle!! Forgive and forget. We have a great nation and worth fighting for. God Bless all Freedom loving people. (cal)*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Sailors' Resting Place  
In unmarked graves  
~And graves they are~  
Rest in the deep  
On the shore and bar.

Those oceans and seas  
Where crosses should lay  
Are but a glimmer in sunlight  
Where restless graves shimmer  
and stray.  
Chaplain Lyle N. Kell

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## BEST POEM IN THE WORLD

I was shocked, confused, bewildered  
As I entered Heaven's door,  
Not by the beauty of it all,  
Nor the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven  
Who made me sputter and gasp--  
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,  
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade

Who swiped my lunch money twice.  
Next to him was my old neighbor  
Who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought  
Was rotting away in hell,  
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,  
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal?  
I would love to hear Your take.  
How'd all these sinners get up here?  
God must've made a mistake.

'And why's everyone so quiet,  
So somber - give me a clue.'  
'Hush, child,' He said,  
'they're all in shock.  
No one thought they'd be seeing you.'

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Charles,  
Enclosed, I am sending you an interesting clipping regarding the Armed Guard written by Tim Blagg in the local paper, THE RECORDER. Also, another written by Tim of my Armed Guard life. I have also been interviewed by Elise Tripp, Historian of Sunderland, Ma. Who is writing a book on WW II. I am amazed as to how many people in my area who did not know of our outfit, even those in the navy. I had a call from a friend of mine who tells me that he lost his ship (MINOTAUR) in the Dutch Guiana area on his first trip with a loss of 10 merchantmen. -SEE NEXT ISSUE.

Walter T.Kostanski,  
8 Davis St. Turners Falls, Ma. 01376  
413-863-4042

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

NOW HEAR THIS OLD SALTS!  
Have your Congressman/lady print  
you a Certificate like this one.  
Chaplain Lyle Kell

2821-180th St. NE  
Marysville, WA 98271 (360)652-1884



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

"SPECIAL LETTER TO LYLE KELL"

Dear Lyle,

You may not remember me but I had written you about how to obtain a "CERTIFICATE of APPRECIATION" from Congress and you told me how to go about it. I am a HAPPY person for as of today,

5/20/09, I have received the said certificate. To say THANKS is not enough to tell you how I feel. Many THANKS for your help.

Raymond Boettcher  
4735 Wrem Ct.,  
Lebanon, Oh. 45036

Veterans serving in the Caribbean 1937-1948 and would like to contribute your history for schools and colleges and books, contact Rebecca Goldstone, Sweet Patootee Ltd, 28c Loraine Rd., London, Eng. N7 6EZ UK Tel. 01144 207 686 5101 [www.sweetpatootee.co.uk](http://www.sweetpatootee.co.uk)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



## CERTIFICATE OF SPECIAL CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION PRESENTED TO

### LYLE N. KELL

THIS CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION IS AWARDED TO YOU IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR LOYAL SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II WITH THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES AS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY ARMED GUARD. YOUR COURAGE, DEDICATION, AND SACRIFICE CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO OUR NATION'S VICTORY IN WORLD WAR II.

JUNE 5, 2008

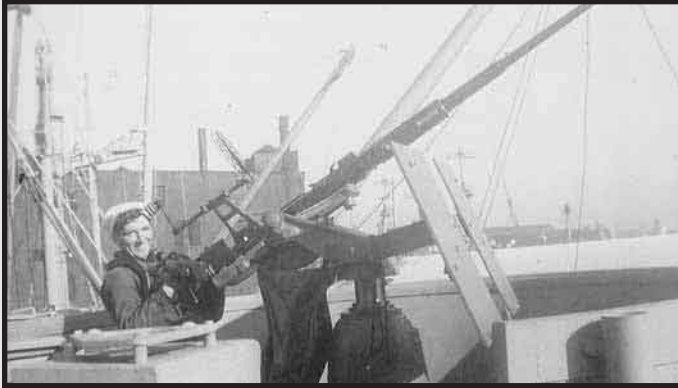
DATE

RICK LARSEN  
UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE

- Section 534 of Public Law 105-261

# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

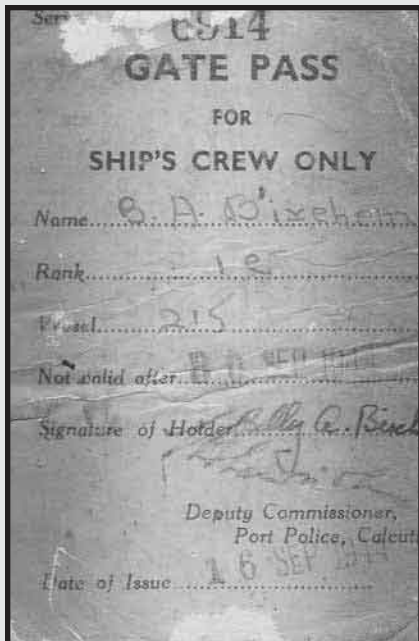
## ABOARD THE S.S. JOSHUA A. LEACH



Mr. Lloyd,

Thank you for making the POINTER available to us old salts. It brings back many memories. Also, thank you for getting me in touch with an old shipmate from New Jersey by the name of Frank Lebrato. I have enclosed a photo showing me pointing at the ensigna printed on our ship's stack of the S.S. JOSHUA A. LEACH signifying the downing of an enemy plane off of Crete. I would have to call 911 to get me down from that perch nowadays. We had survived an air attack, 2 days into the Med Sea. It was getting dark when this German plane flying low to the water came down our starboard side when our 20mm opened fire on this plane. It caught fire and crashed about 500 yards in front of the convoy. We proceeded on to Calcutta, India without incident.

On our return trip from Calcutta, we brought back approximately 200 live monkeys for polio research. Dr. Jonas Salk found a cure for polio, so you might say the Armed Guard and Merchant Marine helped stamp out Polio. I do appreciate the work you have done in getting shipmates together and other things you have done. May God Bless you and your family and give you a long life and health.



Charles, I also have included a photo of my son. He fought in a different war than we did. Our son was killed in the line of duty in 1967 at age 22. This was very hard on my wife and I.

William "Bill"  
Birchem,  
8594 Cheshire Rd.  
Sunbury, Oh. 43074





# REUNIONS

**PLEASE NOTICE!! MANY ADDRESSES, TEL.#, E-MAILS, Etc.  
may change anytime so it's up to you to find out!  
REGIONAL---MINI-REUNIONS ---GET-TOGETHERS-- MEMORIALS, ETC  
SUPPORT THESE LOCAL MEETINGS  
NOTICE: ANY CHANGES or additions will be in the next POINTER IF NOTIFIED.  
If still holding meeting,  
Write down , Or E-mail WHERE-WHEN-HOSTS as I deleted my list in error.  
Include address-Tel-E-Mail if available**

† NOTICE: Moe Carlton and the Lincoln, Ne. crew has folded after many years.

Lou Tew,s NE REUNION ONLY Crew has folded . Their regular meetings will go on.

Little Ferry, NJ Crew that Ray Quina was host has folded as far as I know.

NOTICE: If you host a meeting and it does not show here, please write what needs to be placed as to: Time-Date Place.

PLEASE NOTICE: Morris Harvey of the Florida MM Crew E-Mailed me and wanted to know if anyone was sponsoring HOSPICE for the CHAPTERS Of Armed Guard or Merchant Seamen's dying Chapters. He said there seemed to be a need and I E-Mailed him back and told him we had 3 Chapters where it was too late to call in Hospice. (Pittsburgh, Pa.; Lincoln, Ne. and I FORGOT the other one. (Do you ever have that problem?) They will be holding a Mini-Convention and business meeting for the SE-Region Oct. 29-31, '09 in the Kissimmee area. Contact: 352-564-0267 morris@xtalwind.net

The Rhode Island Armed Guard are meeting only twice a year now. Once at Noon on the First Thursday in October and again in 2010 on the first Thursday on April 1 which is April Fool's Day and my birthday. (cal) Each time they will meet at BUGABOO CREEK on Jefferson Blvd at Noon. Contact: Gerry Greaves 1287 S. Broadway, E.Providence, Ri. 02914 Tel. 401-431-0011 USNAG@aol.com Since Lou

Tew's crew will not be meeting anymore, Gerry invites all the NE crew to join in with him and his crew in October The Il/Wi Luncheon will be held at noon at the Sturdevant/ Driftwood Restr. Aug. 11 and Nov. 11, 2009. Contact: Jane and Jay Wildfong, 13211 Durand Ave., Sturtevant, Wi. 53117 262-886-2966 WILDFONG@cs.com

Illinois/ Wisconsin Chapter of the USN ARMED GUARD Veterans will hold their Mini-Reunion on Friday Oct. 2 & 3, 2009 At the Holiday Inn Express, 3031 Finley Rd., Downers Grove, Il. Room Rates \$69.00 include Cont. Buffet Breakfast. 1-800-Holiday or 630-810-9500. Be sure to mention NAVY REUNION. Reservation Deadline Sept 28th. For more info, call Joe Esposito 630-638-3837.

The Richmond, Va. AG/MM Chapter meets on the 2nd Sat. at 12 NOON at the Piccadilly Cafeteria 8004 W. Broad St.. Hosts Albert Ligon, (AG) 3900 Lyndale Pl., Richmond, Va. 23235 804-276-4762 and Wayte Huffer (MM) 3102 Aqua Ct., Richmond, Va. 23230 804-262-6710.

LSM-LSMR Association will hold their National Reunion Aug. 27-31, 2009 at the SHERATON WESTPORT Hotel, 191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, Mo. 63146 1-800-822-3535. Contact: Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., 322 Madison Mews, Norfolk, Va. 23510.

Iowa/Minn/Dakotas Crew meets 2nd Wed. of the Month at the MACHINE SHED RESTAURANT 11151 Hickman Rd. Des Moines, Ia., located at Exit #125 of I-80 on the West Side of the City.. Meeting starts at 10 AM and stay for lunch according to Host Arnie Latare

4400 E.P. True Prky Unit 59, W.Des Moines, Ia. 50265 515-225-1084 mala-ta@q.com ARNIE also has informed me that they will be having their Annual Reunion Sept. 18-19, 2009 at the Holiday Inn, Merle Hay Rd., Des Moines, Ia. just South of I-80 on the North Side. Anyone else who would like to join in are WELCOMED.

GULFSTREAM CHAPTER of Merchant Marine Veterans 1221 S. Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, Fl 33316 954-759-9985 welcomes all USN Armed Guard and Merchant Mariners to their 3rd Sat. of the month,(Excluding July and August) to attend their meetings at the S.I.U. Hall, 1221 S. Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, Fl.. Contact Joe Colon 954-370-8161 or Mercedes Frassetti 954-720-1613. Colon says we talk the same language-let's talk together of what we did.

The American Merchant Marine Veterans has re-located their National Headquarters from Florida to the home of Sindy Raymond, P.O.Box 186, Ferndale, Ca. 95536-0186 800-545-4173 Ext 1 saaren@frontiernet.net

The Armed Guard Cleveland, Ohio Chapter holds their meetings at DENNY'S W 150th Exit off I-71 4331 West 150th St. Cleveland. Contact Bill Joyce. 440-937-6487 See their story in this POINTER. Located 4 more AG. bjjj@eriecoast.com

W.VA AG/MM Mini-Reunion will be held again Saturday Sept. 26, 2009 at the Ranch House Restaurant Conference Room RT 55 Craigsville, WV.. 304-742-6117 Contact: Forrest Flanagan, P.O.Box 119, Craigsville, WV. 26205 304-742-3160 or Robert

# REUNIONS

Wheeler, 203 Hunt Ave., Beckley, WV. 25801 304-255-0879 They had their largest crew in 2008. Lodging will be at the Comfort Inn, Summerville 1-800-228-5150.

The NJ Pinelands Armed Guard Crew are still active and still meet at THE CAPTAINS INN Forked River, NJ. They still get about 30 at their meeting and they extend an open invitation to all AG and their ladies to have dinner at the NJ seashore where they say the food is good and reasonable. Host is Bill Wilkie, PO BOX 548, Manahawkin, NJ 08050 609-597-2946 Wilfrosty@aol.com

Florida's SUNCOAST AG/MM WW II Veterans still meet at Kally K's 3383 US 19 Springhill Fl at 11:30 A.M. 2ND Sat of Month..Host: Bob Bouschor 73 Hichory Branch Ln. Safety Harbor Fl. 34695 727-725-1930 or Hal Conn, 6625 W Seven Rivers Dr., Crystal River, Fl. 34429 352-795-6257 halconn@xtalwind.net

IL/WI LUNCHEON for 2009 will be at NOON in the Sturtevant/Driftwood Restaurant on: August 11 and Nov. 17. Hosts are Jane and Jay Wildfong 13211 Durand Ave., Sturtevant, Wi., 53117 262-886-2966 WILDFONGJ@cs.com

Southwest Virginia Chapter of AG/MM plan to continue meeting in 2009 at the famous ANTHONY'S on the 2nd Friday of each month. Contact Rocky (MM) Rhodes 5390 Merriman Rd SW, Roanoke, Va. 24018 540-772-7212 rockyr2@cox.net

NOW HEAR THIS: The Michigan Area is having a POTLUCK/PICNIC NOON Wed. 9/16/09 at the Don and Cathy Flegel Farm, 1 mile West of Brant, Mi. and all Armed Guard/Merchant Seamen are invited. They will furnish the meats, drinks, tableware, etc. for \$5.00 each. Don has a

barn 60X100 ft. so weather is not a factor. You can make it a fall vacation and visit Frankenmuth, 30 miles East and visit the Military Museum, Bonner's Christmas Winter Wonderland and the lovely downtown shopping area. The Henry Ford Museum is located in Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Mi.. QUESTIONS? Contact: Carl Mescher, 508 Wayland Ave., E. Lansing, Mi. 48823 517-332-1027 carum83@sbcbglobal.net

The 2010 Texas Reunion of Armed Guard will be held at the Holiday Inn on Highway 290 in Brenham, Texas. The host will be Hilmer Schmidt 800 Indian Hill Ln., Brenham, Tx. 77833-2386 Tel. 979-836-7672. More to follow in the next POINTER. Hilmer and his wife Faye volunteered at the Texas Mini-Reunion in Fredericksburg this year to host next year's Reunion but Faye departed this life on July 1, 2009 and condolences has been extended to Hilmer by me for all of the Armed Guard Crew. Hilmer has some friends who will carry on in her honor. If you are in the area and can assist, please do.

The San Antonio, Tx. Chapter of the Navy Armed Guard WW II Veterans ended their meetings Feb. 21, 2009 as it now stands unless someone steps forward to be the Host. If so, it will be announced in a future POINTER. I would like to THANK Dan and Liz Mock for their dedicated service over the years in keeping them together. Age, aches and pains is taking it's toll as traveling begins to take it's toll, also.

The Victoria, Texas hold their monthly meeting at RAMSEY'S IN VICTORIA hosted by Norman Neureuther, 4507 N. John Stockbauer #13, Victoria, Tx. 77904 361-578-7900 n-jneureuther@global.net All welcomed!!

The Rochester, NY area Armed Guard/Merchant Marine meet at JAY'S DINER. 2612 W. Henrietta Rd.

Rochester, NY 424-3710. Host John Shevlin 37 Winfield Rd., Rochester, NY 14622 585-467-2057 who says he is assisted by AG Walter Mace 585-394-7165; MM Frank Hutter, 585-473-8103 and Joan Lucci 585-388-0576. They are a lot of help since John's wife Mary, of 61 years, passed on to a better place, 10/29/08.

DESA (Destroyer Escort Assoc.) will hold their 2009 Convention at the Crown Plaza Hotel, Old Town, Alexandria, Va. @ \$99 Sept. 10 -14, 2009. Contact: Dori Glaser, P.O. Box 3448, Deland, Fl. 32721 386-738-6900 with a Memorial Service at the Navy Memorial on Pennsylvania Ave.. All Armed Guard and Merchant Seamen have been invited to attend and share the comradry together. Many have never been able to see the Sites such as the Navy Memorial, World War II Memorial and many other sites there. Contact Tom Kidd 3636 Chipshot Ct., N. Ft. Myers, Fl. 33917 tlk3636@juno.com if you can't get Dori.

USN CRUISER ASSOC. Contact: Robt. Polanowski 5996 Country Rd. 16, Belfast, N.Y. 14711 585-365-2316 Albany, NY Area Armed Guard and Merchant Marine meet the 4th Thursday of Month at the SCHUYLER INN, 545 Broadway, Menands, NY at 11:30 AM. Hosts are Art and Marion Fazzzone, 3936 Albany St., Schenectady, N.Y. 12304-4371. 518-374-5377 Mamoon3@aol.com and Peter Falasco, 49 Monroe Ave. Latham, NY 1-512-785-7890.

THE BUCKLEY, WA. Contact: Hank and Sandy Harrison 27014 Lower Burnett Rd., E. Buckley, 98321 360-897-9381. 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 CONTACT: Linda Gunjak, 6641 Spring Beauty Ct. Curtice, Oh. 43412 1-800-228-5870



# REUNIONS

E-Mail: [uslst@uslst.org](mailto:uslst@uslst.org) Web Site. [www.uslst.org](http://www.uslst.org)

The MO/KS Crew holds their monthly meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at the DAV Chapt 2 8787 Old Santa Fe Rd. Contact: Bill Sears 8505 NE 56th St #167, Kansas City, KS. 64119 816-453-2179

Topeka, Ks. Area ARMED GUARD AND MERCHANT MARINE meet on the "FIRST THURSDAY" of EACH MONTH at 8:30 A.M. at the AMERICAN GRILL on Gage St. with DON Gleason, 2405 NW CROSS ST, Topeka, Ks. 66606-2401 785-234-6087 as Host [Hmgleason@aol.com](mailto:Hmgleason@aol.com)

Delaware Valley Armed Guard meets the 2nd Tues. at Noon starting in Sept. 2009. Contact: Pete and Mary Cugasi, 55 Indian Red Rd., Levittown, Pa 19057 215-547-2450.

Wilkes Barre, Pa area host Delbert Lennon. PO Box 772, Wilkes Barre,

Pa. 18703 570-287-1101 and crew meet on the 4th Sat. of each mo. at the Mark II Restaurant 1020 Wilkes Barre Township Blvd., Wilkes Barre. Harrisburg, Pa. Hosts Alvin and Thelma Kemble 8150 Chamber Hill Rd., Harrisburg, Pa. 17111-5412 717-566-8728 [armedguard@earthlink.net](mailto:armedguard@earthlink.net) holds a 12 Noon First Thurs. monthly meeting at the "HOSS'S Steak House in Hummelstown.

The FARRAGUT NAVAL TRAINING STATION will hold another Reunion at the Farragut State Park, at Athol, Id. 9/12/09. Contact: Janice Lauer 208-660-0660 or Bob Moore 208-683-5707 for info.

Contact the following Historical Ships for sailing dates. S.S.JEREMIAH O'BRIEN, PIER 45, Fisherman's Wharf, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 415-544-0100. [www.ssjeremiahobrien.org](http://www.ssjeremiahobrien.org) Mngr. Elizabeth Anderson list NEW Administrative Office address: 1275 Columbus Ave. Suite 300, San

Francisco, Ca. 94133

Cruises May 23; July 18; Aug 22, 2009 \$100. ppd. Traditional Fleet Week/Blue Angels Aerial Show with all day Cruises Oct. 10 & 11, 2009 @ \$150. ppd.

S.S. JOHN W. Brown Box 25846 Highland Station Baltimore, Md. 21224 410-558-0646 [john.w.brown@usa.net](mailto:john.w.brown@usa.net)

S.S.LANE VICTORY BERTH 94, P O BOX 629 SAN PEDRO, CA. 90733-0629 Tel. 310-519-9545 [www.lanevictory.org](http://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.

Contact S.S.AMERICAN VICTORY 705 Channelside Dr., Tampa, Fl. 33609 813-228-8769 for sailing dates.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## US WWII wreck found off coast

THE wreck of the first American ship sunk during World War II has been located off Australia's southern coast, ocean researchers said today.

The freighter MS City of Rayville, carrying a cargo of lead, wool and copper from South Australia to New York, hit a German mine and was lost on November 8, 1940, a year before the US entered the war.

One sailor died in the sinking off Cape Otway, southeast Victoria, while 38 other crew were rescued in lifeboats.

The US entered the war on December 8, 1941, the day after a surprise Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbour naval base.

Researchers mapping the seabed for Australia's Deakin University said they located the wreck almost 69 years after its sinking, lying upright on its keel and forming an artificial reef covered in marine life.

"A hatch cover near the stern is missing, consistent with reports that covers were blown off the hatches through the force of the explosion," Heritage Victoria maritime archaeologist Cassandra Philippou told local media.

Start of sidebar. Skip to end of sidebar.

End of sidebar. Return to start of sidebar.

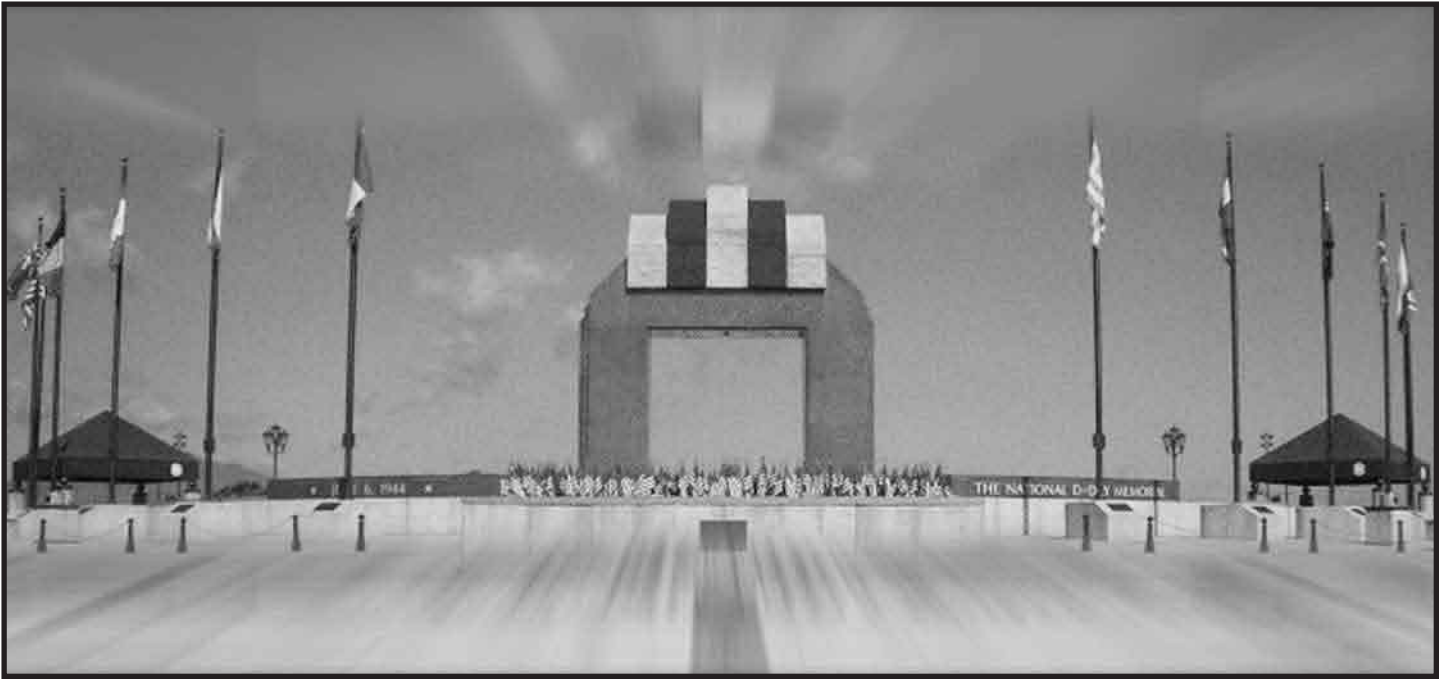
The 6000 tonne Rayville hit a minefield laid by the German commerce raider Passat, formerly a Norwegian tanker captured in the Indian Ocean and converted to an auxiliary minelayer.

The wreck's general location had been known since 2002, but it was finally pinpointed using advanced sonar equipment.

The wreck lay around 14km south of Cape Otway in 70m deep water.

The Rayville was the second ship to be sunk by mines laid by the Passat, with the British steamer SS Cambridge destroyed off Wilsons Promontory a day earlier.

# A DAY AT THE D-DAY MEMORIAL



## A Day at the D-Day Memorial

He walked with his cane to the guard rail and looked over the water and bronze figures. The water spouted in random across the black marbled shallow pool like bullets skipping on the water. The ball cap that covered his gray hair read "D-Day Veteran."

He gazed across the memorial, the newly dedicated one, the one dedicated this past Wednesday by President Bush on June 6th for the men who stormed onto Normandy Beach in France the same day in 1944. His eyes focused on the statue of the bronze soldier coming out of the water, then to the soldier already on the beach helping his fallen comrade, and then there was the bronze soldier laying face down on the beach...clutching a Holy Bible. He seemed to relive the entire war in that short moment. A nice looking older lady touched his sleeve and he seemed to come out of a trance. He looked at her lovingly and simply said, "Momma, I'm not ready to go yet...I need look a little more." She smiled and stepped aside.

A young 10 year old boy stood beside the man looking at the same statues, but surely seeing something very different. The older man looked at the young boy and hesitantly asked, "Do you know how much that pack weighed?" pointing to the backpack on the soldier helping his fallen comrade. The boy shook his head, no. "Well, they were mighty heavy...and the water was mighty deep...and well you see that thing around the middle on the belt....it was a flotation and when it filled up would turn a man so that all you saw was his feet in the air. A man would drown because he was carrying too much weight." The boy's eyes began to get large and his focus was on the soldiers. Then the man said, "See that man there on the ground, the one with the Bible....that man's belt is already deflated...that's what's hanging down." The boy fiddling with the disposable camera in his hands, looked again at the soldiers and asked, "Were you there? Did you know them?" "Yes," the man said quietly, "and I came home...many of us didn't." Both young boy and old man gazed over the memorial together never

saying a word. Maybe the boy was seeing a different picture in his head now. Maybe the man was seeing something different too.

"Well, it's time for me to leave," the old man said "...I'm taking up space for others to look....it's time for me to go now."

As the man began to walk away, the young boy bashfully asked, "Can I take your picture?" The old man, a little humbled and quite proud, said, "Why, yes, I would be honored for you to take my picture....thank you..."

The boy held the camera to his eye steadied his image and took the picture of a Real American Hero. My nephew, Hunter, extended his small hand into the large hand of the D-Day Veteran and said, "Thank you. Thank you, sir."

Note: by: Mary Loose DeViney,  
US Coast Guard Auxiliary



# WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU...

## WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU.

With rising concern about the threat of Japanese militarism in the Asia-Pacific region, the Australian Chiefs of Staff sent the 2/22 Battalion AIF to Rabaul, the capital of Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea on 25 April, 1941. Codenamed, 'Lark Force' the bulk of the troops tasked to defend Rabaul comprised 900 men and officers and this was later increased to about 1400. The additions included approximately 150 men and officers from the 1st Independent Company based on nearby New Ireland, a detachment from 2/10 Field Ambulance, six Army nurses, an anti-tank and anti-aircraft battery and a coastal artillery battery plus a number of militia from the New Guinea Rifles. Ten Wirraway and four Hudson aircraft from 24 RAAF Squadron arrived just as Japan attacked the American naval base in Pearl Harbor and Malaya on 7 December 1941. The war in the Pacific had begun. The Chiefs of Staff had sent this token force in the full knowledge that it stood no chance of holding any Japanese attack.

The Japanese bombing of Rabaul began on 4 January and continued on a daily basis until their invasion force stormed ashore at Rabauls Blanche Bay just after midnight on 23 January 1942. Despite a fierce but brief fight, the outnumbered defenders were overwhelmed and had no choice but to surrender. The Air Force managed to get away but the army had to remain.

Approximately 400 soldiers and a number of civilians attempted to escape southward to New Guinea. Most of the remaining troops and several hundred civilians including the six Army nurses were captured. At the Tol Plantation on the narrow neck of the islands Gazelle Peninsula, Japanese forces rounded up 158 Australian soldiers and massacred them. Only a few

survived to inform the authorities of the atrocity. The loss of Rabaul had robbed the Allies of an excellent naval and air base for launching attacks against the Japanese fleet at Truk, 2800 kilometres north of the Caroline Islands. Truk was the base of the Japanese Navy's Fourth Fleet from November 1939 until July 1942 when it became the forward Headquarters of the Japanese Combined Fleet until February 1944.

On June 22, approximately 845 service personnel, 208 civilians were herded aboard the 7,266 ton *Montevideo Maru* at Rabaul where they had been interned since the Japanese invasion. Amongst the civilians were 32 Norwegian seamen from the merchant ship, *Herstein* sunk in Rabaul harbour and 31 missionaries. To run the ship and control the prisoners, 71 Japanese crew and 62 naval guards also went aboard. The ship was bound for Hainan Island located at the south end of China with the possibility of an onward voyage to Japan. Not included amongst those loaded aboard were the Lark Force officers and the six Army nurses. They were to be the lucky ones as they were successfully transported to Japan aboard the *Naruto Maru* two weeks later.

Eight days into the voyage, the *Montevideo Maru* was spotted off the coast of Luzon in the Philippines in the early hours of 1 July 1942 by the patrolling American submarine USS *Sturgeon* commanded by Lt Commander William L [Bull] Wright.

Extract from USS *Sturgeon* Commanders log book-30 June 1942. *Patrolling northwest of Bojeador as before. Dove at dawn, surfaced at dusk. At 2216 sighted a darkened ship to southward at first, due to bearing on which sighted, believed him to be on northerly course, but after a few minutes observation it was evident he was on a westerly course, and going at high speed. Put on all engines and worked up to full*

*power, proceeding to westward in attempt to get ahead of him. For an hour and a half we couldn't make a nickel. This fellow was really going, making at least 17 knots and probably a bit more, as he appeared to be zig-zagging. At this time it looked a bit hopeless, but determined to hang on in the hope he would slow down or change course towards us. His range at this time was estimated at around 13,000 yards. Sure enough, about midnight he slowed to about 12 knots. After that it was easy.*

1 July 1942.

*Proceeding to intercept target as before. Altered course to gain position ahead of him, dove at 0146. When he got in periscope range, it could be seen that he was larger than first believed, also that his course was a little to the left of west, leaving us some 5,000 yards off the track. Was able to close some 1,000 yards of this, and then turned to fire stern tubes as; [1] Only 3 tubes available forward and at this range and with large target 4 fish spread desirable.[2] After tubes had '700' heads while heads forward were small ones. At 0225 fired four-torpedo spread, range 4,000 yards from after tubes. At 0229 heard and observed explosion about 75-100 feet abaft stack. [One of the torpedoes with a 700 pound warhead exploded against the starboard hull ripping open holds 4 and five.] At 0240 observed ship sink stern first. 0250 surfaced, proceeded to eastward, completing battery charge. Ship believed to be Rio de Janeiro Maru, or very similar type, although it is possible it was a larger ship; he was a big one. A few lights were observed on deck just after the explosion, but there was apparently no power available, and his bow was well up in the air in 6 minutes. Dove at dawn. No further contact.*

Historian Bruce Gamble recreates as accurately as possible the horrors experienced by the prisoners during the eleven minutes it took for the ship to sink; 'Aboard the *Montevideo Maru*, the crew and naval guards scrambled for their lives. Those not on duties had been jolted awake in the morning darkness by explosions and alarms; now they groped along passage-

# WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU...

*ways in absolute darkness, searching for exits. The lights came on for only a minute or two after the torpedo struck, and then oil from the ruptured tank spilled into the engine room forcing the engineers to deliberately shut down all power. Some of the crewmen made it to the lifeboat stations as there were three on each side of the superstructure and two more along each side of the aft deckhouse. But because the ship was listing rapidly and going down by the stern, only three lifeboats on the starboard side of the superstructure had a prayer of being launched. The sailors weren't quick enough. Within six minutes, the ship's bow had risen high out of the water and all three lifeboats capsized from their davits with one sustaining damage..*

*'There is no evidence that any of the hatch covers were unfastened during the eleven minutes that the Montevideo Maru remained afloat. The Japanese were only concerned in saving their own lives and callously left the trapped POWs to die... Dozens got safely into the water, but twenty crewmen or guards were killed by the explosions or drowned. The surviving Japanese righted the capsized lifeboats and climbed aboard. One boat headed west, the other two remained more or less stationary until daylight, and then headed east towards Luzon. For the prisoners down in the pitch-black holds, those last eleven minutes were measured quite differently. If any men were confined in the aft two holds, they didn't suffer long. Those not killed outright by the exploding torpedo would have been knocked senseless by its concussion effects and then quickly drowned as tons of seawater rushed in..*

*'The truly unfortunate victims were those in the forward holds. Before the end came, they endured eleven minutes of mind-bending terror. No one could see what was happening; they could only feel the ship canting steeply and their ears were assaulted by the screech of collapsing bulkheads and painful pressure changes as air was forced from flooded places. Some probably attempted to reach the hatches but as they groped upwards, they*

*found no escape. The effects of adrenalin gave them strength only for a short time then as their black world tilted even more, they slid aft and piled up against the lowest bulkhead. Under the crush of filthy bodies, those at the bottom quickly lost consciousness. The panic that surely accompanied those final few minutes can only be imagined. Sentimentalists would like to believe that some of the prisoners calmly face their impending death but the circumstances strongly suggest that a contagious, mass hysteria swept through the black holds. And who could blame the victims. They were plunged into an unfathomable nightmare with each second filled with the sounds of water rushing in and the ship breaking apart. As the minutes wore on, the men who were still conscious would have instinctively tried to claw their way upward, their shouts and screams only adding to the freakish pandemonium. The terror and their ordeal mercifully ended at 0240 with a final hiss of foul smelling air as the bow of the Montevideo Maru slid beneath the waves.'*

A few of the Japanese who so callously abandoned the helpless prisoners to a certain death managed to survive. In a 2003 interview for Australian television, the last known survivor Yoshiaki Yamaji, a Japanese sailor described people jumping into oil covered water from the ship which was leaning to starboard and the screams of the doomed trapped in the holds. An estimated 71 Japanese died. Of the 1,050 POW's and civilian internees, there were no known survivors. Japanese accounts record the captain of the Montevideo Maru and approximately ten crew in one lifeboat who managed to make it to shore somewhere on the Philippine coast but some were killed, including the captain, by Flippino guerrillas. Five survived and set out towards Manila, two died enroute but three made it safely and reported the sinking. A rescue mission was dispatched but found nothing. Too much time had elapsed.

The *Montevideo Maru* was the first of 15 vessels sunk by the Allies that had POW's onboard. Lt -Commander Wright commanding *Sturgeon* was unaware of the ship's human cargo when he ordered the firing of the four torpedoes which was to result in Australia's worst maritime disaster. Historical figures vary but at least 20,000 prisoners lost their lives being transported to various destinations by Japanese ships unmarked as carrying prisoners of war during the war in the Pacific. The most tragic was the sinking of the *Junyo Maru* on 18 September 1944 by the British submarine HMS *Tradewind*, with a loss of 5,620 allied lives possibly more as historical figures vary. As Japan was not a signatory to the Geneva Convention, they did whatever they liked with their captives and marking their ships as carrying POW's was not an option. Had they marked their ships accordingly, not only the ships but the POW's would have, in most cases, arrived at their destinations safely. Japanese arrogance and the fact that the Allies were able to decipher major Japanese naval codes contributed significantly to victory in the Pacific. Nowhere was this more evident than in the submarine campaign in which submarines could be directed to intercept Japanese ships almost anywhere in the vast reaches of the Pacific.

After the American submarine had sunk the *Montevideo Maru* the Japanese deliberately maintained a silence about the sinking. It was not until after the war when documents were uncovered revealing the loss of the ship in the records of Japan's Prisoner of War Information Bureau. This information arrived in Canberra late October 1945 and finally the Commonwealth was aware of the terrible tragedy that had taken place and what had happened to those missing from 'Lark Force.' The combined elements of Lark Force were the first Australians to face the



## WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU...

Japanese on Australian territory and sadly, their final resting places are the sea or the jungle at the Tol Plantation. Telegrams were immediately sent to relatives of the 1,050 military and civilian POWs who perished with the ship. Before the telegrams arrived, the family members and friends of the soldiers and civilians who perished had to endure just over three agonising years of not knowing the fate of their loved ones.

The military version of the telegram reads; *'It is with deep regret that I have to inform you that [number and name] became missing on 1st July 1942 and is for official purposes presumed to be dead and desire to convey to you the profound sympathy of the Minister for the Army.'*

The civilian version. *It is with deep regret that I have to inform you that the transmission of the nominal roll of the Japanese ves-*

*sel Montevideo Maru which was lost with all personnel after leaving Rabaul in June 1942 shows that [name] was aboard the vessel and I desire to convey to you the profound sympathy of the Commonwealth Government.-Minister for External Affairs.*

Because the *Montevideo Maru* sank without any Allied survivors, conspiracy theories abound about cover ups, government neglect, massacres and so forth. The tragic sinking of HMAS *Sydney* also without survivors is still the subject of debate by theorists even now after the ship has been found and an accurate assessment of her demise has been presented. Finding the *Montevideo Maru* and exploring her holds may give final closure to friends and loved ones of those who perished and may silence some or all of the doubters. Because of the publicity surrounding the expedition that set out to

find and discovered the *Sydney* and her adversary, *Kormoran*, Australians are more aware of their WW2 maritime history. Hopefully the same awareness will manifest itself if and when the *Montevideo Maru* becomes more of a subject of interest than it is now and understand the heartache of those 'We regret to inform you' telegrams. Reference.

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[C] Ken Wright. 2009.

## MERCHANT MARINE MEMORIAL



Merchange Marine Reunion  
Memorial at Ohio River  
New Richmond, Ohio

Photos sent in by Bob Ober  
7115 Dunn Road  
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# HONOR AMONG WARRIORS



## A WONDERFUL STORY OF LIFE & "CAMARADERIE" AMONG PILOTS...

(ALL GERMANS WERE NOT 'NAZI'S')  
HONOR AMONG WARRIORS

Subject:

A true story of HONOR

Look carefully at the B-17 and note how shot up it is - one engine dead, tail, horizontal stabilizer and nose shot up. It was ready to fall out of the sky. Then realize that there is a German ME-109 fighter flying next to it. Now read the story below. I think you'll be surprised.....

Charlie Brown was a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot with the 379th Bomber Group at Kimbolton, England. His B-17 was called 'Ye Old Pub' and was in a terrible state, having been hit by flak and fighters. The compass was damaged and they were flying deeper over enemy territory instead of heading home to Kimbolton. After flying over an enemy airfield, a German pilot named Franz Steigler was ordered to take off and shoot down the B-17. When he got near the B-17, he could not believe his eyes. In his words, he

'had never seen a plane in such a bad state'. The tail and rear section was severely damaged, and the tail gunner wounded. The top gunner was all over the top of the fuselage. The nose was smashed and there were holes everywhere. Despite having ammunition, Franz flew to the side of the B-17 and looked at Charlie Brown, the pilot. Brown was scared and struggling to control his damaged and blood-stained plane. Aware that they had no idea where they were going, Franz waved at Charlie to turn 180 degrees. Franz escorted and guided the stricken plane to, and slightly over, the North Sea towards England. He then saluted Charlie Brown and turned away, back to Europe. When Franz landed he told the CO that the plane had been shot down over the sea, and never told the truth to anybody. Charlie Brown and the remains of his crew told all at their briefing, but were ordered never to talk about it.

More than 40 years later, Charlie Brown wanted to find the Luftwaffe pilot who saved the crew. After years of research, Franz was found. He had never talked about the incident, not

even at post-war reunions. They met in the USA at a 379th Bomber Group reunion, together with 25 people who are alive now - all because Franz never fired his guns that day. Research shows that Charlie Brown lived in Seattle and Franz Steigler had moved to Vancouver, BC after the war. When they finally met, they discovered they had lived less than 200 miles apart for the past 50 years!

<http://www.snopes.com/military/charliebrown.asp>

THIS WAS BACK IN THE DAYS WHEN THERE WAS HONOR IN BEING A WARRIOR...THEY PROUDLY WORE UNIFORMS! THEY DID NOT HIDE IN AMBUSH INSIDE A MOSQUE, OR BEHIND WOMEN AND CHILDREN, NOR DID THEY USE MENTALLY RETARDED WOMEN ASSUICIDE BOMBERS TO TARGET AND KILL INNOCENT CIVILIANS...

...HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED FIGHTING A GODLESS CULT OF COWARDS!

# S.S. PAUL H. HAYWOOD

S.S. PAUL H. HAYWOOD  
Molotovsk, Russia to Gourrock,  
Scotland, via Murmansk,  
Russia

2/17/45-3/1/45

Lt(jg) Charles E. Poe  
Commanding Officer

On Feb 1945, a convoy of 8 ships was just completing the process of forming into one column to enter Kola Inlet, Murmansk harbor, an enemy submarine attack was launched. The first evidence of the attack was noticed when a Norwegian tanker, the third ship ahead of us—we being the last ship in the column, was struck in the stern by a torpedo and began to settle by the stern. This occurred at 1505 when the convoy was at about 68-22 N. and 38-42 E.. The general alarm was sounded at once and all Armed Guard and Merchant Marine personnel manned their battle stations. At 1509, the S.S. HORACE GRAY, an American Liberty Ship was struck near the stern by a torpedo and began to settle by the stern. At the time of the attack, the escorts were mostly astern of the convoy because the leading ships were already entering Kola Inlet. They had been dropping depth charges occasionally but there was no evidence that they had any definite contacts. As soon as the attacks started, our ship and the ship ahead, turned hard starboard to keep from ramming the torpedoed ships ahead and to present a smaller target to the enemy which was supposed to be on our starboard side. Soon afterwards, orders were received from the escorts to proceed into Kola Inlet at our utmost speed. At 1604, a pilot was picked up and at 1754, we anchored in the harbor at Murmansk. When the torpedoed ships were last seen, they were still afloat and did not seem to be sinking anymore. The enemy was not sighted so none of the ships in the convoy, opened fire. There were no casualties

sustained aboard our ship. At the time of the attack, the sun was out and visibility was good and the sea was calm. The escorts searched the area of the attack and dropped numerous depth charges but there was no indications that they contacted the submarines.

On 17 February 1945, as the convoy was coming out of Kola Inlet and forming up, an American ship on the port side of the convoy was struck by a torpedo supposedly from an enemy submarine. The details of this action cannot be given very accurately because the action occurred on the port side of the convoy and we were on the starboard side. This attack occurred at about 1152 at the location of about 69-26 N. and 34-29 E.. The general alarm was sounded at once and all men manned their battle stations and were not secured until 1310 when the convoy was well formed up. When last seen, the torpedoed ship was on fire but still on an even keel and not sinking. Since the enemy was not sighted, no firing was done by any ships in the convoy and no casualties were suffered aboard this ship.

On the same date as above attack, a destroyer escort appeared to be struck by a torpedo and was blown to bits. All that could be seen from our position was a terrific explosion and when the smoke and spray cleared away, the escort at that location could not be seen. This attack occurred at 1525 at about 69-36 N. and 34-29 E.. At this time, the Armed Guard was already standing dusk watch at their gun stations so the general alarm was sounded to call the Merchant Crew to their battle stations. Again, the enemy was not sighted and no firing was done. No casualties were suffered by our personnel aboard this ship. At the time of both attacks on this day, the sea was calm and the visibility was only fair because of the mist in the air. The escorts were searching for the enemy before and after the attacks but it is not

known if they ever made any actual contacts.

On the morning of 20 February 1945, the convoy was all scattered out due to high wind and rough seas the night before. The convoy was just about reformed at 1015 when an air alert was called over the convoy radio-telephone. The sea was still rough and the visibility was poor because of the heavy mist. At 1018, two enemy planes (JU-88) came in low over the convoy from the starboard bow. The escorts and the ships on the front of the convoy opened fire. The planes turned back to starboard, out of range and out of sight. No hits on the planes were noticed at this time. At 1023, three more planes of the same type were seen approaching the convoy from the starboard beam, flying low. They appeared to be making torpedo runs on this ship which was the last ship in the starboard column of the convoy. They appeared to be dropping torpedoes about 2000 yards on the starboard side of the convoy but this can not be ascertained because of poor visibility. The ships on the starboard side of the convoy, aft, opened fire with both broadside and 20 MM guns. This ship opened fire with the 4"50 gun aft and the 4 starboard 20 MM guns. Direct hits were noted on one of the planes from the 20 MM guns and this plane started to smoke a little and altered its course sharply to starboard and left the convoy on the starboard quarter. When it passed our range of vision, the plane was still flying in a straight course but still smoking. The other two planes approached to about 800 yards and then turned slightly to starboard and passed aft of the convoy. Another plane flying in near an escort on the starboard beam of the convoy and it appeared to be shot down because there was an explosion where the plane was flying and it could not be seen anymore. The plane was flying so near the water and the visibility was so poor that an accurate picture of what happened could not be had.

# S.S. PAUL H. HAYWOOD

There were at least 5 or 6 planes in this attack and possibly more because only a small portion of the convoy could be seen due to visibility. The air alert was lifted at 1300. This action occurred at about 72-46 N. and 19-12 E.. No damage to the convoy was observed and no casualties were suffered by the personnel of this ship.

On 23 February 1945, there were several stragglers from the convoy because some ships were forced to hove to the night because of the rough sea and high winds. One of the stragglers was the HENRY BACON, an American liberty ship. At 1421, a radio message was picked up from this ship, stating she was being attacked by planes. On orders from the commodore, the convoy was alerted and all men were called to their battle stations. At 1426, another message was picked up from the BACON saying she had been torpedoed. On 3/1/45 Arrived at Gourock, Scotland


\*\*\*\*\*

S.S. JOHN A QUITMAN March 12, 1945 Departed Kola Bay, Russia 17 February 1945 in convoy of thirty five ships. 15 Escort vessels, two aircraft carriers and one cruiser.



**Lone Sailor**

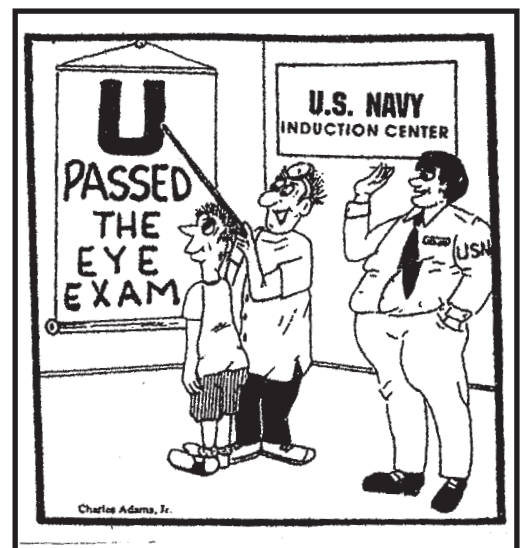
**U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL  
Washington, D.C.**



## 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

LCDR Bob Prinselaar





# ATLANTIC DE CAMARET



## MUSEUM MEMORIAL OF THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC DE CAMARET (29)

This museum located in Camaret near Brest, is stelled in Berbornn Battery (Penhir Area) bunkers.

Those formers bunkers from the Atlantik wall are put on ruins of a fort from the 1800's, it self build on former Fort network (the Vauban ones)

Considering their sight on Ocean they were on spot of such aimed battery.



The place is wonderfull, faced to the faced if on cliff .... (etc from geographical details) ... on the main place there is a momument dedicated to the 1st sailors who join the French navy forces.

This museum is the only one to deal with the Atlantic battle of the seas. If it would have been won by the Germans, Great Britain would not have been the departure for the liberation of Europe. Trough this, it gives a real tribute to all sailors, whit an average age of 20 years old, lost in seas.

Maps help to follow where and when where the losses of the merchant navy and German Uboats.

In the small museum, you can have a complet sight thanks to pics, maps and models of what could be the Atlantic battle. Although this museum is made by collectors, each side is considered (as i have visited it, they tried to explain why they have some U boots memorabilia with nazi cross, it's always looks at being the devil for the French people).

This museum honorate the Free French Naval forces (they have among all others stuff a former fleet flag). Most of the Free French Naval forces where coming form Brittany (the place where is located and where France is the most closer to the US). Some memorabilia also from the



small Ile de Sein where all fishings sailors joined the Free French Naval forces.

A special attention is given to the merchant navy crews. Those mens are the unsung heros for victory. In case of torpedo attack, they had 1 chance on 2 of surviving. This opportunity was close for none for gasoline ship, ammo ships, and artics convoys crews.

# 65 YEARS IN THE MAKING...

The two men have since exchanged letters. Vogel and Atkinson talk periodically.

"Sir Robert said to my Dad, 'That day was a turning point in history,'" Vogel said. Indeed, the defense of convoy ONS-5 was one of a series in May 1943 in which escorts sank or drove off many of the German submarines. The wolf packs never again commanded the North Atlantic sea lanes.

In Swanton, Greeno still pushes aside questions from visitors about the last voyage of the West Madaket, but talks more with his family about the scars the torpedoing left.

"It is so good he has been able to open up," Vogel said.

"I never dreamt I'd be talking to him. Never, never, never," her father said of his

conversation with Atkinson. "That meant a lot."

Contact Candace Page at 660-1865 or [cpage@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com](mailto:cpage@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com)

GLENN RUSSELL, Free Press

When a German U-boat sank Fred Greeno's ship in 1943, he was plucked from the icy north Atlantic by a British captain who risked his ship to pick up survivors. In a recent telephone call, the 86-year-old survivor from Swanton finally was able to thank his 92-year-old rescuer.

## TO LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Battle of the Atlantic in 1943: THE STORY: For one full account of the battle in

which Fred Greeno's ship was sunk, go to <http://ahoy.tk-jk.net/>. Click on "Battle of the Atlantic" in the right-hand column, then scroll down to "The Battle for Convoy ONS-5"

THE MERCHANTMAN: For details about the West Madaket: [www.uboot.net/allies/merchants/2910.html](http://www.uboot.net/allies/merchants/2910.html).

THE U-BOAT CAPTAIN: For details about the German captain who sank the West Madaket, Kapitanleutnant Capt. Joachim Deecke, go to [www.uboot.net/men/commanders/194.html](http://www.uboot.net/men/commanders/194.html).

THE RESCUER: HMS Pink, [www.oldships.org.uk/SHIPS/SHIP\\_HTML/Pink.htm](http://www.oldships.org.uk/SHIPS/SHIP_HTML/Pink.htm).

Dear ones,

Today I received a phone call from a: William C. Breece (wife-Patricia) 1622 Lienemann Dr., St. Peters, Mo. 63303 636-936-1707 [breececp@yahoo.com](mailto:breececp@yahoo.com) Service Number Z-224665 (Merchant Seaman) who was assigned to the S.S. Christopher Gadsden on 10/29/44 while in Antwerp, Belgium.

He, being 17 years of age at the time, had made friends with 3 of the Armed Guard Crew and they decided to see what they could of the town together so they went on Liberty and not much to see there, they decided to go to the movie. While there, a V-2 rocket hit the opera house killing approx. 596 people. The Armed Guard sitting beside of him was killed and so were the other 2. He wants to know if the ship's records show anything on the tragedy. \*\*SEE PAGE 47\*\*

At this late in life, he has turned to me for help and he would like to know the names of those killed and the crew list, AG and MM, so it maybe just a chance that we can locate some of the family. I know this is a tough one but it would make my 27 years of getting shipmates together if I could one and it would be a very rewarding dqy. I could do a computer search. Keep up with the cost and E-Mail it to me and I will send a check. William Thomas 500 W. Rosedale Ave Kings-A-2, West Chester, Pa. 19382

\*\*\*\*\*

*This has worried Mr. Breece all these years and if I can help him find just one of the families of the AG lost, it would be a blessing to both he and I.*

*Our days are getting shorter and I guess it won't be so long a time, us*

*WW II Veterans won't be around to worry you. I was on a ship with Lawrence and Clyde Camp of Shelby, N.C. in March 1945, who was there at the time and news got out for volunteers were needed and they did not knowing what they were volunteering for and when the got uptown, they were assigned to retrieve and human pieces that were scattered everywhere; window ledges, in the street. It worried the Camps alot I know while we were together as they would talk of it. They, both are gone now.*

*Go to GOOGLE and type in: Antwerp Belgium V2 Bomb WW II to let you know this did happen. (cal)*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Skipper,

I want to THANK YOU for putting that picture of the eagle of mine in the POINTER. You see, I received a phone call from Arnold Latare in West Des Moines, Iowa who was a shipmate of mine on the S.S. ALEXANDER MITCHELL in Charleston S.C. going to Naples, Italy. When we got to Naples, our Lt(jg) Potter asked us to go up to Rome for a few days and we did. What a GREAT time we had. LeRoy Diehl also went with us. Well, we got back to Naples, we left for Saipan and after 60 days we arrived. I had made GM3/c and they took me off the S.S. Mitchell to instruct 20mm ashore so I was there when the war was over. I have phoned Latare a few times and it's just wonderful for he and I to talk about the good old days. Thank you MANY MANY Times! Yours truly,

R.E. Fitz,

34 Sunnysdale Ave., Bristol, Ct. 06010



# HERO OF TWO NATIONS



POLISH HISTORY ARTICLES  
HERO OF TWO NATIONS -  
CAPTAIN STEFAN P.  
WESOLOWSKI  
(1909-1987)

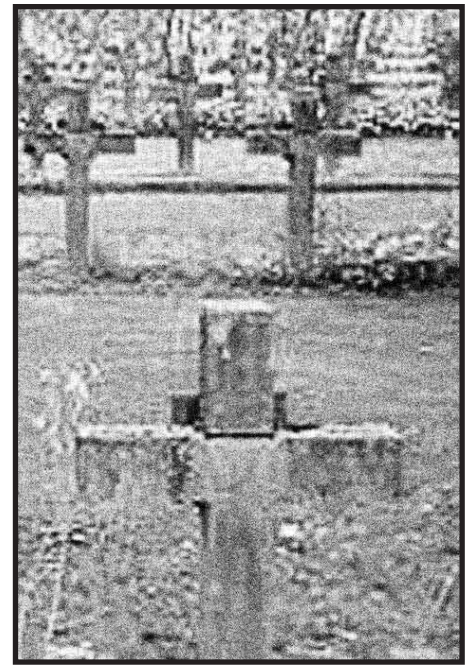
AUTHOR: PROF. DR. ZDZISLAW  
P. WESOLOWSKI

There are few times in our lives when human beings appear who incorporate all of the flamboyance, courage, and virtue that we all aspire to within ourselves, particularly as during the chaotic and dangerous years of World War II. The combination of these traits are nonexistent in the development of our modern society today which is based more on cynicism than faith, more on personal gratification than an exaltation of the spirit for the common good; a loss of moral fiber in the face of adversity. Tom Brokaw in his book, **THE GREATEST GENERATION** eludes to this unselfish love of country and sacrifice. In his second book, **THE GREATEST GENERATIONS SPEAKS** he mentions Captain Stefan P. Wesolowski. It seems today that the magnificent accomplishments and aspirations of the world during the 19th and early 20th centuries have been replaced now by an engulfing sense of self-indulgence and weakening moral responsibility and self-discipline. Yet,

we cannot despair for the human race when we are fortunate enough to come across the story of human beings that fulfill all of the loftiest of humanity's aspirations. We all live by examples, good or bad, of human endeavor. Here is an example of one story that soars to its highest form of human behavior and achievement.

Ian A. Millar, an American Naval Historian noted in an article on Captain Stefan P. Wesolowski, the following; "Heroes sometimes attain this exalted status not as the result of a single act, but rather through a career of outstanding accomplishment that earn them this honor. Heroes may come and go, but very often we read about an individual whose values and fortitude reflect that which we as freedom loving people admire. Such is the story of Captain Stefan P. Wesolowski who fought for freedom from the age of nine. One must admire the convictions of a man like this, and too his heroic service. Beyond this I find great admiration for him and his perseverance in service while his family remained in the German occupied land of his birth, Poland".

## SOLDIER OF POLAND AT 9, CORPORAL AT 12



Captain Stefan Ogonczyk Wesolowski was born on January 31, 1909 in Warsaw during the occupation of Poland by Czarist Russia. His family background dates back to old Polish nobility and is one that is steeped in patriotism. The Wesolowski family took an active part in the service of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom, at the very height of Polish historical strength in Central Europe. His father, Lucjan participated in the Revolution of 1905 and his grandfather, Seweryn took part in the January Uprising of 1863 against Russia. The great-grandfather, Jozef, participated in the November Uprising of 1830. Since 1792, twenty-two members of the Wesolowski family received Poland's highest decoration for military valor, the Order of the Virtuti Militari.

Stefan Wesolowski followed in this family tradition of patriotism at the early age of 9 when he ran away from home to join Pilsudski's Legions. In 1918 at the age when most children are concerned with toys and not national issues, Stefan participated as a soldier in the Polish War of Independence. For his services, primarily as a scout, during this turbulent period of Polish military history, Stefan Wesolowski received Poland's highest honor for



# HERO OF TWO NATIONS

valor and gallantry under fire. He was awarded the Order of Virtuti Militari for the defense of Lwow where he was instrumental in taking and holding a strategic position. He received the second highest decoration, the Cross of Valor for his military contributions during the 3rd Silesian Uprising. There he conducted nightly reconnaissance operations across enemy lines camouflaged as a girl pulling a cow to pasture. No one suspected a little girl of military activity.

In addition to these decorations, Stefan Wesolowski was promoted to the rank of corporal at the tender age of 12, becoming the youngest noncommissioned officer in the history of Polish military services. He was later awarded decorations for Silesia, Wolyn and Lwow as an additional point of recognition for his military service in these campaigns.



In spite of this valorous service in the land forces of the newly nascent Poland, Stefan Wesolowski's future became intrinsically involved in his country's naval forces. Having listened to intriguing stories of the sea, recounted by his comrades in arms, he left the ranks of the army after the Silesian campaign. Young Wesolowski

traveled directly to Wejherowo where he joined the crew of the "Abdank". He later served on the "Gazolina" the first ship of the fledgling Polish Merchant Marine. He was the only Pole on the crew. The Captain asked Stefan to saw a Polish flag and in a short flag raising ceremony, Stefan raised the Polish flag on the first Polish Merchant Marine ship in over 350 years. In the spring of 1922 at the age of 13, Wesolowski decided to join the Polish Navy and was inducted with the rank of Petty Officer. His first assignment was as a commander of a ten-man observation and communication post between Gdynia and Oksywie. By sheer weight of personality and experience he was able to overcome his age barrier with his men and they readily accepted his leadership. After a period of shore duty he served on various Polish naval ships as well as naval vessels of the French Navy. He served aboard "the Bourrasque", "Fortune" and "Condercet" of the French Navy. This provided him with specialist training in range finding and communication in naval operations.

After eight years of active duty with the Polish Navy, Wesolowski transferred to the naval reserve and returned to Merchant Marine duty. In 1930 upon receiving his captain's diploma, Wesolowski became the skipper of the seagoing tug "Pollox" and became intimately involved in the construction of the Polish port of Gdynia, assisting in the enormous dredging operations that involved the waterways in the port city of Wladyslawowo. In 1933 he joined the Gdynia Port Authority and served as a pilot at that facility. In 1934 he married Antonina and two sons, Zdzislaw and Jeremii resulted from this happy union. By 1936, Captain Wesolowski had become established in his naval career and life seemed to have taken a serene pattern of hard, but interesting work and the additional personal satisfaction of a happy married life. In 1938 Stefan and Antonina



were looking for a retirement home having by then completed 20 years of government service. Little did they know that in Germany, a dictator had different plans for them and Poland.

## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Suddenly with the consolidation of power in Germany in the hands of Adolph Hitler, and the weakening response of the Western powers to his territorial demands, Poland found herself in a state of complete mobilization on August 24, 1939. The independence and tranquillity of his country, that he had fought so valiantly for in the 1918-1921 period, was now, only 21 years later, to be challenged once again by her ancient enemy, Germany.

Mobilized with the rest of the Polish forces, Captain Wesolowski received his assignment on board the Polish submarine ORP Orzel. However, neither this assignment nor the subsequent one on the destroyer ORP Wicher were successful since during the early, confusing aspects of the general mobilization both craft were by then fully crewed before his arrival. Interestingly and ironically, both of these vessels were sunk during the war. Finally, after the initial confusion of

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mobilization, Captain Wesolowski was assigned to the destroyer ORP Blyskawica as a signalist.



Realizing the enormous odds against survival of the small Polish fleet against the overwhelming naval forces of Nazi Germany, the ORP Blyskawica, ORP Burza and ORP Grom with Wesolowski and others were ordered to leave the port of Oksywie and head on a straight course for England. On the bridge of the Blyskawica with its captain Włodzimierz Kodrebski was Petty Officer Stefan Wesolowski. Captain Kodrebski directed Wesolowski to send the following message bidding Poland and their countrymen goodbye at 1415 on 30 August 1939, SZCZESC BOZE KU CHWALE OJCZYZNY. None realized the agonizing years of separation from family and country that awaited them. For those who survived the agonies and frustrations of the Second World War, it would mean six years of separation from families and their beloved homeland.

## BATTLES IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL AND NARVIK

On September 9th, 1939 the small Polish flotilla of destroyers entered Plymouth harbor after passing through the Baltic Sea, the Swedish Sound and the North Sea - always under pressure as primary targets of the German fleet. Assigned to North Sea patrols, now Petty Officer Stefan Wesolowski, remained with his ship for over a year. The winter of 1939 was particularly terrible and exerted its toll on the health and lives of the men assigned this dangerous duty. On November 7th, 1939 the ORP

Blyskawica was attacked by German aircraft, but fortunately survived the torpedo attack. In the spring of 1940 Hitler launched his attack against Norway and the Polish ships and an Army Brigade of Polish Highlanders were dispatched to Narvik to help in the defense of Norway. During the course of this disastrous battle the sister ship to the ORP Blyskawica, the ORP Grom, was bombed and sunk by the German Luftwaffe. However, both ships inflicted heavy damage to the German forces at Narvik by their intense bombarding of the shore. During the furious battle the ships were able to shoot down one of the German bomber that harassed the fleet and the army. The ORP Blyskawica was damaged badly and among the many wounded in the battle for Narvik was Wesolowski who was ejected from his position at the anti-aircraft gun turret by a bomb explosion. Wesolowski spotted the German aircraft and was first to fire upon it as it attacked the Blyskawica. His instantaneous firing at the plane a long distance away made the pilot drop the torpedo prematurely thereby the torpedo missed the ship by several feet. Upon returning to the home base in Plymouth he was hospitalized and never able to return to his ship. For the Battle of Narvik, he earned his second Cross of Valor. Interestingly, on a visit to Poland after the war he was able to walk the decks of this valiant ship that survived the war. The ORP Blyskawica became a part of the Polish Naval Museum in Gdynia.

## DUTY ON FRENCH NAVAL SHIPS

After a prolonged stay in the hospital, Wesolowski was returned to active duty and assigned to a French sub-chaser, The Chaser XV on July 26, 1940 as chief petty officer and assistant commander. He also served on the Chaser XI on several occasions when the other vessel was out of service. With the fall of France in 1941 the Polish Navy took

over complete operation of these sub-chasers. Polish sailors flooded to Plymouth from all parts of Europe and the unavailability of ships forced them to serve with various other national naval forces fighting the war against the Hitler armies. Wesolowski volunteered for duty with the French sub-chasers and his valor in this most dangerous of naval operations earned him the Croix de Guerre. The responsibilities of these small vessels was to seek out German merchant shipping and submarines in the English Channel and La Manche areas. Coupled with the ever-dangerous military missions was the added problem of abominable weather conditions consisting of constant fog, rain, raw cold and snow.

The elements caused Wesolowski's health to deteriorate rapidly and as a result he was declared unsuitable for further military activity. On August 8, 1941 Wesolowski was honorably discharged from active duty from the Polish Navy and reverted back to the Merchant Marine. After a short period of rest and rehabilitation Wesolowski chafed at the bit for active duty. Spurred by the fact that his wife and two sons were languishing under brutal conditions of Nazi occupied Poland, Wesolowski reported for duty





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at the headquarters of the Polish Merchant Marine in London. He was assigned to the crew of M/S Lechistan on February 10, 1942 as a radio operator. This assignment satisfied his desire to participate actively in the raging war against the Axis. He sailed on a number of ships during this period including the Swedish vessel S/S Hilmeren and the American tanker S/S Fairfax. His reputation as an officer grew continuously and he was commended for his seamanship and command ability under fire on several occasions.

## THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

In November of 1943, finding himself temporarily in the Brooklyn Naval Shipyard, NY, Wesolowski was summoned to the Commanding General of the US Army Transportation Corps for a personal interview. Knowing the background of Wesolowski's naval career and his capability as a commander, the general offered Wesolowski a position as second in command of an auxiliary aircraft carrier. This was the only time in US history that a foreign national was to hold a command position in the armed forces of the USA. After expediting the formalities and procedures necessary to effect his appointment, Wesolowski was assigned to the auxiliary aircraft carrier, the USAT Ganandoc as second in command. This ship was built in 1940 as an iron ore carrier but was converted at the Brooklyn Naval Yard into an auxiliary aircraft carrier. The lower deck held 65 fighter aircraft and 30 were in constant readiness on the flight decks. The mission of the USAT Ganandoc was to carry aircraft and supplies to United States forces through Halifax in Nova Scotia, across the Atlantic to Liverpool, England serving as part of the protective convoy against enemy aircraft and submarines. During the course of the third voyage the commander fell ill with a

heart attack and Wesolowski replaced him as commander. After extremely lucky years on the Atlantic and Murmansk patrols the Ganandoc was assigned to duty with the invading flotilla assembled for the invasion of Normandy. There, after delivering its cargo of tanks, planes and ammunition, the ship was hit by shore batteries and was so severely damaged that the high command issued orders for its scuttling. However, Wesolowski and his crew managed to bring her limping back to port in England, where after extensive repairs she was made fit once more.

The whole ship was cited and decorated for this heroic achievement by Major General Frank Ross, Chief of the Army Transportation Corps, ETO. The General wanted to name a ship after Captain Wesolowski, but Wesolowski declined the honor. His former Commander Colonel Robert L. Taylor wrote: "Captain Wesolowski served with distinction during the invasion of Europe between the period 6 June to 25 October 1944 and was cited for service to the United States above and beyond the call of duty. During his service Captain Wesolowski's operational record, efficiency and devotion to duty and the American cause during the Second World War was exemplary and above

reproach." Later in 1985, Captain Wesolowski was decorated with the Bronze Star for Valor. Poland decorated Captain Wesolowski after the war with the Commanders Cross of the Order of Merit. During the time that USAT Ganandoc was under repair, Wesolowski changed command to a large ocean going tug, the USALT 533, and became involved in salvage operations and convoy duty.

On December 23, 1944 Captain Wesolowski discovered a minefield in the English Channel and successfully judged its location and movement enabling the convoy to clear the field with no loss of ships or lives. For this heroic achievement he was decorated and cited by Colonel Samuel A. Decker who wrote: "In recognition of conspicuously meritorious and outstanding performance of military duty did promptly and intelligently report the presence of enemy minefield in the English Channel, thereby unquestionably avoiding loss of life and shipping." Major General Frank Ross recommended the naming of a ship in Captain Wesolowski honor but he declined this gesture. In March of 1945, Wesolowski resumed command of the USAT Ganandoc and served aboard that ship until the end of the war in Europe.





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By 1944 the news spread in the Polish Navy that a Polish officer commanded an American aircraft carrier. On one occasion the ORP Blyskawica and the USAT Ganandoc were docked in the Port of Southampton. Curiosity motivated Polish sailors to pay a courtesy call on the Captain of the USAT Ganandoc. After being escorted to the captain's cabin by a marine guard, the Polish sailors from the ORP Blyskawica were shocked to discover that their former petty officer was the captain of the Ganandoc. One said. "Stefan what the hell are you doing here"? They could not believe that Wesolowski held such an important command with the American forces, but was a former noncommissioned officer in the Polish Navy. The chief of the Polish Navy became aware of Wesolowski's command and extended an invitation to visit the headquarters of the Polish Navy in London next time Captain Wesolowski was in town. Stefan finally accepted the admiral's invitation. Upon arrival to the headquarters, the whole admiralty staff received him. During the interview, the admiral wanted to know how and why Wesolowski became a commander of an American aircraft carrier when in the Polish Navy he was only a petty officer. Captain Wesolowski replied that the Americans must have valued his expertise more than the Poles.

## JOURNEY HOME TO POLAND

As the war drew to a close the thoughts of Captain Wesolowski became more and more concerned with the whereabouts and well being of the family left behind in Poland. The oppressive rule of the Hitler forces was only too familiar to him and he was constantly beleaguered by the fear that the Gestapo would wreak vengeance on his family. With the war's end the destiny of a free Poland was still very much in question and the difficulties of Poland's armed forces in returning to their homeland

were manifold. However, on February 28th, 1946 Captain Stefan Wesolowski was granted a compassionate leave of absence from headquarters, US Forces ETO, and ordered to proceed to Paris, Berlin and then to Warsaw for the purpose of locating and visiting his family. This unprecedented order was authorized by General Eisenhower and signed by General McNary. Armed with this unusual, but invaluable, document, Wesolowski proceeded on his journey of reunion. On March 19, 1946 he landed in Warsaw aboard an American Air Force plane in the uniform of an American captain in the naval service.

The timing of this visit was dangerous because the communist forces were taking over the government of Poland. Even in the uniform of an American officer, Wesolowski as a Polish citizen was in danger of being arrested. The Warsaw that he left in August of 1939 was now a pile of dusty and still smoldering ruins. Searching frantically through the rubble of the once magnificent city he was able to locate his family alive and in relatively good health. Stefan had difficulty in obtaining exit visas for his family. He decided to personally petition the President of Poland, Boleslaw Bierut. During the interview the Polish President encouraged Captain Wesolowski to stay in Poland.

He enticed Captain Wesolowski by offering him the command of the



Polish Navy with the rank of admiral. Wesolowski declined the invitation and after obtaining official documents necessary for expatriation he was able to move the family to Berlin and finally Paris. Wesolowski's dream of returning to Poland had finally come true but he never imagined that he would return to his native land dressed in the uniform of an American officer and to find his country under the control of a communist government backed by the Soviet Union.

The long years of suffering, anxiety and unbearable tension were finally ended and the family spent a few weeks of happiness in Paris, that even in the post war year of 1946, seemed like paradise in comparison to Warsaw. Arrangements were made for their final journey to the United States and on July 20, 1946 Captain Wesolowski's wife Antonina, and his sons Zdzislaw 11 and Jeremil 9, arrived in New York aboard the S/S Washington. Passing the Statue of Liberty had a deep significance to them after the 6 years of war and deprivation. On the dock, anxiously waiting the final moment of reunion stood Captain Wesolowski with the New York press corps. Needless to say the joy of final and definitive reunion was an unforgettable and overwhelming experience for the entire family. Shortly thereafter Captain Wesolowski was discharged from the US Army Transportation Service; he joined the American Merchant Marine where he sailed for another twenty years. After the war, Captain Wesolowski was invited by President Harry Truman to the White House. President Truman congratulated and thanked Captain Wesolowski for his services to the United States. After settling down with his family in Staten Island, Stefan became involved in various veteran organizations and assisted Polish refugees in the United States.

The citizenship of the United States was granted Captain Wesolowski and

# HERO OF TWO NATIONS

his family shortly after the war. During the passing years the Captain and his family settled in Staten Island, New York, and they were able to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of their adopted land. His sons grow up in the United States, the oldest son, Zdzislaw, joined the Air Force during the Korean War and later obtained a doctoral degree. At the present time he is a professor of aviation, management and economics at Florida Memorial College in Miami. The youngest, Jeremii, also received his doctorate and assumed several positions of responsibility in management of the pharmaceutical industry. He is currently living with his family in Yorba Linda, California.

Captain Wesolowski selected retirement in Miami Beach, Florida where he quietly reminisced on former battles won and lost and of ships of another time. His memories are vivid of his many nationals comrades-in-arms from the United States, Poland, France, Great Britain, Norway and Lithuania, who fought so gallantly for the preservation of our freedom. In a book "Under Foreign Flags" written by the famous Polish naval historian, Jerzy Pertek, Captain Stefan Ogonczyk Wesolowski was added to the annals of Polish naval history for his service to Poland and the United States. His decorations were bestowed by the United States, France, England, Norway, Lithuania and Formosa. Amongst the most cherished mementos of his career is a letter of commendation from President Harry S. Truman dated February 24, 1948. Adding to the list of recognition of his magnificent service to the cause of liberty was the Bronze Star for Valor presented on the 35th anniversary of D-Day. His years of retirement have been fruitful and full as all sailors the nostalgia for the sea, and its challenges, will remain forever.

Captain Wesolowski wrote his memoirs "Od Gazoliny do Ganandoca" and

they were published in Poland in 1983. This story of courage, faith and intensity of love for freedom is one that was greeted with great anticipation throughout Poland and the United States. One month after publication, the book was sold out.

World War II was a time of extraordinary hardships for many families in the United States. Separations caused by sons, brothers, fathers and husbands in service with the Armed Forces, and the subsequent dangers of loss of life or serious injury, caused torment in thousands of families, in thousands of ways. In spite of these horrors of war, the torments were minute in comparison to those faced by the families who were in direct subjugation to enemy forces on the soil of Poland. Antonina Wesolowski, the wife of Captain Wesolowski, just as Captain Wesolowski was a hero in every aspect of the word, so too was Mrs. Wesolowski a heroine. Hers is a story that typifies the courage shown over and over again by so very many Polish women and children who existed through the war years on the strength of their faith and courage.

Mrs. Antonina Wesolowski, the wife of Captain Wesolowski was born in Bielcach on May 13, 1913 to a merchant family from Poznan. Her family was also involved in the fight for Polish Independence. Her father moved his family to Gdynia in 1932 where he established a flourishing business. It was in Gdynia that Antonina and Stefan met, and on September 25, 1933, the two were married. At that time, Captain Wesolowski was on the staff of the Gdynia Port Authority as a pilot. Several years later the family had grown to four with the additions of their firstborn, Zdzislaw, and their youngest son, Jeremii. The young family settled down to a quiet life in the recently built city of Gdynia. All was quite serene and for a few happy years Antonina enjoyed the life of a typical

wife of a naval officer and Polish hero. In 1938 the family was already planning Captain Wesolowski's retirement from government service and had even started to look for a retirement country estate. Captain Wesolowski planned to retire in 1940, after over twenty years in the service of his country, at the age of 31. He was looking forward to a life of quiet leisure as a country gentleman, engaging in his various hobbies and veteran's group activities. Little did the Wesolowski family realize that a year later, Hitler had other plans for them and the rest of the Polish people.

## IN NAZI OCCUPIED POLAND

Early in August of 1939 Stefan, a naval reservist, set out on his annual training cruise. Antonina and the two boys bade him goodbye and left Gdynia for a vacation near Osiek Sandomierski to wait for his return. Plans called for him to rejoin his family after the training cruise for a summer holiday. The family had no idea that this was to be a parting that would last seven long years. Several weeks later, at the home of her parents, Antonina learned that the political situation with Germany was very dangerous and a strong possibility existed that there would be a war. Rumors grew all the stronger and soon became a terrible reality. Antonina realized that Stefan would be reinstated to active duty and would be fighting for Poland. Antonina all too frighteningly anticipated the fear of war and the terrors it would bring. She now had to assume the role of mother in the worst of times as she indeed was left to care for her sons alone during the invasion of Hitler's army. At the time, Zdzislaw was only 4 and Jeremii 2 old.

During the battle for Osiek, their house was destroyed and burned down. All the family possessions were lost and Antonina and the children were left with nothing except the clothes they were wearing. Zdzislaw still

# HERO OF TWO NATIONS

remembers vividly how they escaped the battle zone by running between the line of fire between the Polish and German armies. For a while Antonina and her children stayed in HeIm-Lubelski and were later able to join her family in where they spent most of the war. Captain Wesolowski was back on active duty assigned to the Polish destroyer, the ORP Blyskawica. His ship and a small flotilla left for England, joining the British fleet in its fight with the German Navy. By the end of September 1939, Gdynia lay in ruins and Poland's armed forces surrendered to the Germans. Life in Poland during the occupation was a life of utter terror and a constant fight for survival. Survival during the war cannot be described with mere words; however, the hardships and responsibility for her two sons and elderly parents were a heavy burden on Antonina's shoulders. She and other Poles were pressed into forced labor and she was able to feed her sons and parents by sharing the rations that she received as a hospital worker.

## ARRESTED BY THE GESTAPO

It was not until years had passed that Antonina received a letter from Stefan postmarked London. She and the boys were overjoyed to learn that Stefan was still alive and fighting in England for Poland. This was the first time she learned that he was well but very worried about them and waiting for the day that the war would end so they could be together again. From time to time Antonina would receive other letters from Stefan via Switzerland where a friend would forward his letters to her. The Gestapo, in the meantime, was censoring her mail and became suspicious and ordered her arrest. One day in the Fall of 1944, an armed personnel vehicle stopped in front of the house and armed German soldiers surrounded it while the Gestapo burst in and arrested Antonina. Her sons and par-

ents, as well as all the other inhabitants of the village were alarmed and terrified about the final outcome of this arrest. All too frequently an arrest by the Gestapo resulted in the disappearance or death of the person arrested. During the interrogation Antonina was questioned about the letters from London and Zurich. The Gestapo insisted upon knowing the identity of Stefan. Antonina was sure that they knew very well who he was but wanted to see what her reaction would be. She told them that Stefan was her husband. After a hearing and additional questioning the Gestapo released Antonina. No words can describe the terror felt by the whole family during this ordeal because in the war year's people were executed for less reason than that. Antonina and the boys thank God for saving their lives and those of the whole family for she and the boys could have been executed. For the rest of the war they lived in constant fear of being arrested again - and having witnessed executions at the hands of the Germans, they feared the worst.

Antonina and her son, Zdzislaw, still carry vivid memories of one battle in Osiek. This was the day that, after the battle, they buried a young Polish soldier who was no more than 17 years of age and carried no identification other than a wooden cross worn around his neck; evidently the parting gift from a loving mother. With their bare hands Antonina and Zdzislaw dug the shallow grave and buried the young soldier in the soft earth of Poland. To this day Zdzislaw wonders who he was and has pledged to make an attempt to find the grave on his next visit to Poland. They do remember that it was in the garden of the Staszewski family on Ulica Koscielna in Osiek-Sandomierski. Zdzislaw has vowed to himself that he will find the grave of this Polish Unknown Soldier. Antonina worried about her children's safety, their education and their very lives. Since schools were closed, she

started to teach them herself and on several occasions there were periods of time when they were able to attend small underground schools before they were discovered and closed by the Germans. Antonina did her utmost to provide loving care for her children as well as her parents, but by the end of the terrible war, both of her parents had died.

## END OF WWII

When the war was finally over, Antonina and her sons journeyed via open rail flatbed and horse drawn wagon from Ostrowiec to Gdynia. In the spring of 1945 they reached Gdynia after a horrifying journey which had taken many weeks. On that trip they viewed the ravaged Polish cities and villages and saw the dead and unburied bodies strewn about everywhere. Half-starved, ragged people were a common sight on the Polish landscape. Returning people searched for missing friends and relatives, looking for former streets and buildings which no longer existed; only rubble was evident everywhere. The refugees numbered millions and all were seeking information about those who were dead or alive. Only God knew the answers to the questions of many. Several weeks passed and word was spread that the Polish Navy was returning from England and on the 24th of October 1945 the small flotilla of the Polish Navy returned to Gdynia. Zdzislaw and Jeremii were hoping that their father would be among those returning; however, standing some distance near the docks, the boys did not see their father getting off any of the ships.

They were disappointed and wondered whether he was still alive and whether he would ever return to them. Time passed slowly until Antonina finally received a telegram from Stefan telling her that he was returning to Poland to take them to the United States.



# HERO OF TWO NATIONS

## FAMILY REUNITED

On March 18, 1946 Captain Wesolowski was in Frankfurt, West Germany arranging a flight to Warsaw on the first available US. Army Air Force aircraft. He was able to secure a seat on the airplane, however a young mother with a little girl pleaded with him to give up his seat because she had to get to Warsaw on that day because of a death in the family. Touched by their plea, Captain Wesolowski agreed and gave up his seat. Moments after the aircraft took off, it crashed and all persons on the plane were killed. His generosity had saved his life. Destiny and God watched over him, as it had through all the war years. The next day Stefan was able to get another seat and arrived safely at the Warsaw airport. The base commander at that time commented that Stefan lived a charmed life and indeed was lucky to be alive. After Antonina received the telegram that Stefan was arriving, she left Gdynia with the boys and set off to Warsaw to meet him. The joy and anticipation of the reunion after all the years of separation and suffering was almost unbearable. Zdzislaw and Jeremii wondered aloud whether they would recognize their father but Zdzislaw was sure that he would. When Stefan's originally scheduled flight failed to arrive when expected, Antonina and the boys returned to their relative's home to await further word on the new arrival time from Frankfurt. Shortly thereafter, Stefan arrived, unannounced, and went directly to the relative's home in the Warsaw-Praga district. On the way he was spotted by his son Zdzislaw, who was playing outside, and who immediately recognized his father in the uniform of an American naval officer. No words can describe the reunion of the whole family. The long, heartbreaking separation was finally over!

Several days later, Stefan made arrangements to have his family leave

with him for the United States. Upon their arrival in France via Berlin, Stefan received orders to return to his ship, the USAT Ganandoc, an auxiliary aircraft carrier that he commanded, for its last voyage home. Antonina and the boys had to wait their turn to board the Army transport ship, the SS Washington, for the trip to the United States. By that time Stefan was already in New York, making arrangements for their new home in Staten Island. On the early morning of July 20, 1946 the SS Washington with Antonina and the boys aboard, made its way past the Statue of Liberty and the New York skyline. The family will never forget the joy of arriving in the United States where on the dock awaiting them was Captain Wesolowski, surrounded by many newspaper reporters. The following day the New York and national papers published stories and photos about the Wesolowski's and especially about Captain Stefan - the first foreigner, who was not a citizen of the United States, to command an American warship during war time. The Wesolowski family who treasure their American citizenship and are very happy to live in a democratic society will always remember July 20, 1946. They are also proud of their Polish heritage, a nation that has for a thousand years fought for its right to exist against one tyranny or another.

Antonina was a rare woman, mother and wife, dedicated to her family in the finest tradition of Polish womanhood. She was responsible for keeping the family together in the bleakest of times, providing love and care for both husband and children. The results of her dedication and hard labor through history's darkest days are two sons, both holding doctoral degrees and positions of responsibility in American society; grandchildren, and a loving husband -all whom shall forever cherish her contribution. Captain Stefan P. Wesolowski and his wife Antonina retired to Miami Beach. After many

years of retired bliss, Captain Wesolowski passed away in 1987 and Antonina in 1992. They are buried together at the family gravesite in the Miami Catholic Cemetery. Their contributions to both nations will be remembered always.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prof. Dr. Zdzislaw P. Wesolowski has taught at Florida Memorial College in Miami for the last twenty-five years. He is a retired US Air Force Captain and a Colonel in the Reserve of the South Carolina State Guard. Col. Wesolowski would be pleased to communicate with former members of the USAT Ganandoc who served with his father during WWII as well as Polish veterans who served with him aboard the ORP Blyskawica or other Polish ships. Professor Wesolowski can be contacted at PO Box 291465 Davie, FL 33329 USA. FAX 954-472-0063 Email: [zwesolowsk@aol.com](mailto:zwesolowsk@aol.com)

## DECORATIONS OF CAPTAIN STEFAN P. WESOLOWSKI POLAND

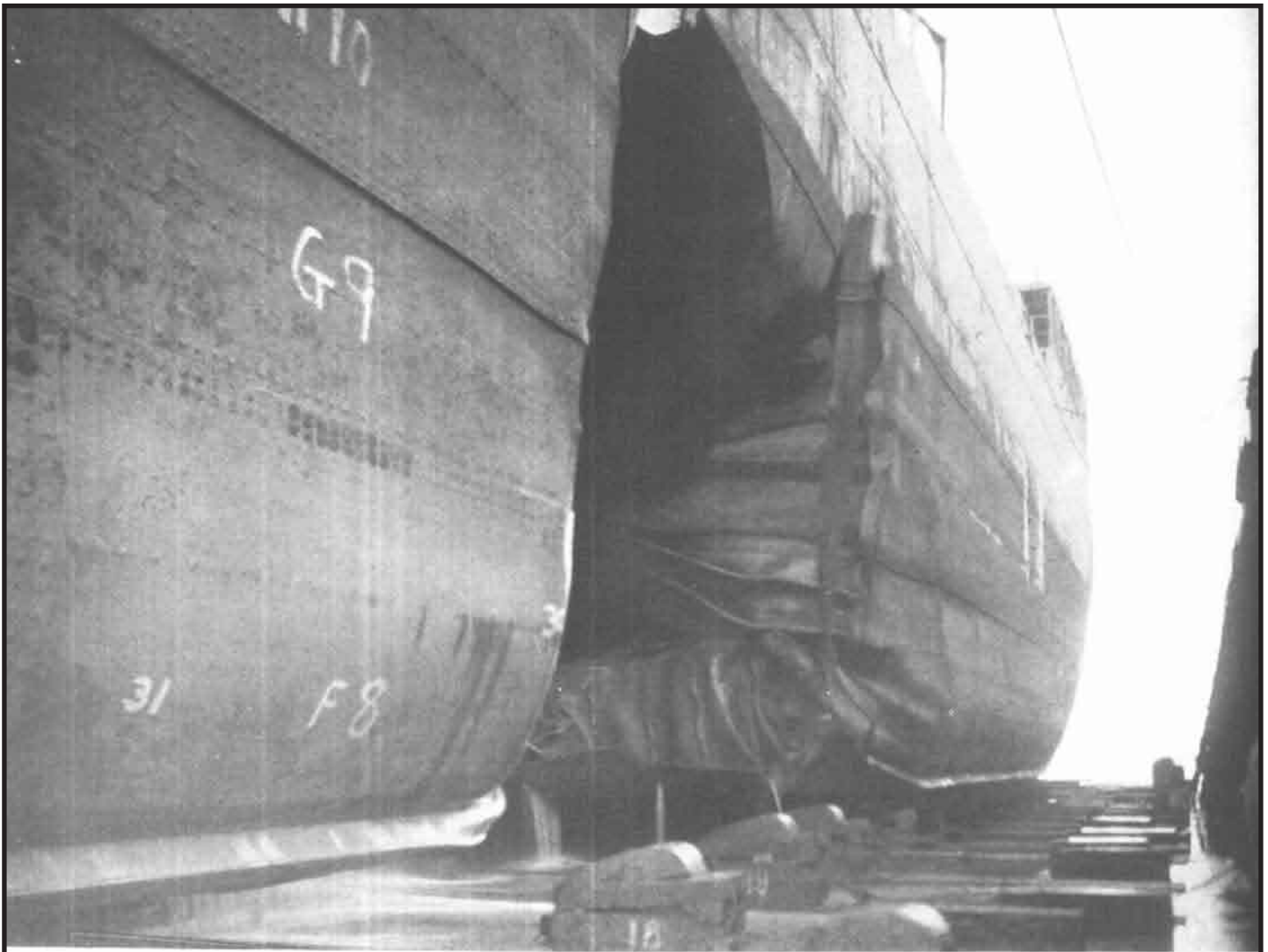
Wound Bar of Honor with three stars  
Order of the Virtuti Militari, 5th class  
Order of Merit, Commander  
Independence Cross Cross of Valor,  
1920 Cross of Valor, 1940 Cross of  
Merit with Swords, 2nd class, 1942

# HERO OF TWO NATIONS

Cross of Merit, 3rd class, 1935 Central Lithuanian Cross of Merit and Gallantry, 1921 Silesian Cross, 1921 September 1939 Cross Polish Forces in the West Cross with Sea Battles and Convoy Bar Silesian Uprising Cross, 1944 Medal for the War with the Soviet Union 1918-1921 Medal for the Restoration of Independence, 1935 Navy Medal, 1945 Merchant Marine Medal, 1945 Medal for the September 1939 War Medal Rodla 20 Year Military Service Medal for Long and Faithful Service 10 Year Military Medal for Long and Faithful Service Silesian Grand Cross Wolyn Grand Cross Wolyn Cross of Valor with

Swords Volunteer Army Cross of Valor Balachowicz Cross of Valor Cross of Freedom and Independence Veterans of Freedom and Independence Cross Regimental badges; 16th Infantry Regiment Hussars of Death Disarming Germans in Warsaw Lwow Orleta badge Lwow Defense Cross with Swords and Virtuti Militari Lithuanian-White Russian Front Silesian Star for the 3rd Silesian Uprising Army Volunteers UNITED STATES OF AMERICA The Bronze Star for Valor Certificate of Merit. US Army Meritorious Unit Citation, US Army Merchant Marine Combat Medal Merchant Marine Atlantic War

Medal Merchant Marine Pacific War Medal Merchant Marine Mediterranean-Middle East War Medal Merchant Marine World War II Victory Medal Conspicuous Service Cross, The State of New York Citations and Commendation awards ENGLAND The 1939-1935 Star The Atlantic Star The War Medal, 1939-1945. The Defense Medal WWII FRANCE Croix de Guerre with Palm CHINA War Memorial Medal for World War II NORWAY The 1940-1945 War Medal EUROPE European Combatants Cross, WW II SOVIET UNION Refused to accept two decorations.



The 20 x 30 foot hole ripped in the side of the "Paul H. Harwood" by torpedo

# **HISTORICAL MUSEUM**



## **DESTROYER - ESCORT HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

preserving and disseminating the heritage of the DE ship and sailor

Office of the Chairman • Samuel Saylor • 1810 Pine Avenue • Weatherford, OK 73096 • 580-774-2842 • Fax 580-774-0394 • USS Connolly (DE-306)

February 27, 2009

Dear Charles and Members of the USN Armed Guard WWII Veterans:

On behalf of the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum, I thank you and your members for your gift of \$100.00 our Winter Fund. Your gift will be used to support USS SLATER, DE 766 through the long and cold winter months. In addition, it will support our Destroyer Escort as a museum, educational venue and memorial to the men of the United States Navy and Coast Guard who served in these "Trim But Deadly" warships. Their time of service during World War II, The Korean War, the war in Vietnam and the many long and uncharted years of the Cold War was vital to the defense of our Nation. Your support today will be felt for generations to come.

The Destroyer Escort Historical Museum is a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our Federal ID Number is 14-1836568. No goods or services were obtained from us in return for this donation and you should keep this letter as proof of your gift.

Without the ongoing support of shipmates and friends like you, we would never have made it this far. Largely, because of this support SLATER is now recognized as one of the premier historic ship exhibits in our country. As the last floating Destroyer Escort in the United States, this is an important and worthy effort. Thank you again for your support, your trust in us and for your continued generosity. We will take good care of her for you.

As a way of thanking you, we have made the USN Armed Guard WWII Veterans a member of The Museum until April, 2010. As a member you will receive our quarterly publication "Trim But Deadly." Reading it will keep you abreast of the restoration work taking place aboard our memorial Destroyer Escort.

God Bless America and Her Armed Forces,

Sam Saylor



# THE INTER

UNITED STATES NAVAL ARMED GUARD CENTER

Feb. 4, 1944

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

8 Pages

## FIRST LADY VISITS STATION TOMORROW

***Mrs. Roosevelt To Honor AGs***

Story on Page 3



Feb. 4, 1944

**THE POINTER**

Page 3

# **Mrs. Roosevelt At AGC Tomorrow**

The First Lady of our Land will visit the Armed Guard Center Saturday afternoon, Feb. 5.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose interest in the service man has carried her on tours through Pacific war zones and into England, will come aboard the station at 1600 to meet the Navy men who man the guns on America's merchant vessels.

Inspection will be held at 1600 to coincide with Mrs. Roosevelt's arrival. It is expected that she will participate in the ceremonies, presenting medals and commendations to AGs, after which she will address the battalion.

The visit is in the nature of return hospitality, following upon the heels of an evening recently spent at the White House by four AGs. The men, Robert F. Layman, Cox, Stoneham, Mass.; James C. Nicholson, Slc, Brockton, Mass.; Gerald F. Goode, Slc, Cambridge, Mass.; and Joseph L. Bridges, GM3c, Dover, N.H., were received by Mrs. Roosevelt on Jan. 21, the night before they returned from leave.

Back at AGC, an invitation to return the visit was forwarded to Mrs. Roosevelt in behalf of the foursome and her acceptance was promptly forthcoming.

*The*  
**OFFICER'S and MEN**  
*of the*  
*U.S. Naval Armed Guard Center*  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK  
*Welcome*  
**MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT**





# MRS. ROOSEVELT TO HONOR AGs

## P R O G R A M

- 1600 Mrs. Roosevelt arrives at Armed Guard Center
- 1601 Greeted by four enlisted men who were her guests at White House
- 1603 Escorted by them to Commanding Officer's cabin
- 1604 Meeting of Mrs. Roosevelt with Admiral E.J. Marquart, Capt. D.C. Patterson, Comdr. William J. Conkley, and other officers in Commanding Officer's cabin.
- 1606 Assembly for all hands
- 1620 Commanding Officer presents Mrs. Roosevelt
- 1625 Awards: Captain Patterson reads Commendations, Mrs. Roosevelt presents awards:
- Navy and Marine Corps Medal - Anthony Corsi, Sic
- Purple Heart Medals - Leon C. Brokell, Jr., Sic
- Joseph A. Lightcap, GM3c
- Clyde S. Christner, Jr., Sic
- Michael A. Cornacchio, Sic
- Letters of Commendation - Lt. Willard L. Doyle, USNR
- Oscar M. Heider, BM2c
- Clarence L. Murray, GM3c
- Mason M. Houghton, GM3c
- Donald T. Brady, GM3c
- Paul M. Pickell, GM3c
- Joseph P. Baggetta, GM3c
- Greetings to Armed Guard - Mrs. Roosevelt
- 1645 Mess Call - Mrs. Roosevelt will be the guest of the SS CITY OF OMAHA Gun Crew and their AG shipmates at the enlisted men's mess.



## MRS. ROOSEVELT TO HONOR AGs

### OUR C.O. SPEAKS.....

It is not often that the Armed Guard Center is honored by the presence of distinguished persons to participate in our weekly ceremonies. Because I believe that the personnel of the Armed Guard certainly deserves it, I should like very much to have a more special occasion mark the presentation of these awards. However, the exigencies of war and the great pressure of time at this Center make it just not possible to have more than a few such presentations.

The Armed Guard merits all the special recognition it has received and more! Even before Pearl Harbor - never less than a thousand and some times two thousand men for gun crews and communication groups have gone out from this Center every week on their mission of insuring the delivery of troops, equipment and supplies to the places where they are to be of the most use. Our job is to deliver the goods. We have done and are doing just that!

Today is one of our special occasions - our most special occasion. Two weeks ago the Navy crew of the CITY OF OMAHA, one of the vessels of a 'Forgotten Convoy', was surprised while on leave after their return from Northern Russia, when they received invitations to the White House. Four of them, all New Englanders and fine examples of typical Armed Guard personnel, were able to accept, the others could not, living too far away. These invitations were arranged through a Merchant Marine Cadet, Midshipman Abba Schwartz, a close friend of Mrs. Roosevelt. Mr. Schwartz had served on the CITY OF OMAHA with the gun crew during the severe, eleven months voyage in which they were 'holed in' in Murmansk and Molotovsk for eight months without adequate or proper food or clothing, and with hardly the bare necessities of life.

These representatives of the Armed Guard were very graciously received by our First Lady and had a memorable and enjoyable visit. In their behalf and in behalf of the 45,000 men and officers of the Armed Guard from this Center, I want to thank Mrs. Roosevelt for this honor to the Armed Guard and for the further honor in her presence today.

As Mrs. Roosevelt seemed interested in the Armed Guard, and as she had invited some of our men to her house, we thought it proper to invite her to our house. The First Lady graciously and promptly accepted.

To the officers and men of the Armed Guard - Our First Lady - Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

## ARMED GUARD WW II – IA-MN

4400 E.P. True Pkwy #59, West Des Moines, IA 50265-5616 – Phone 515-225-1084

Cal,

April 3, 2009

Here, Cal, is a contribution for your operations. Wish we could add another 0 on but it is not to be.

All of our group really appreciate what you do, and the time you put in for us. You are an amazing guy.

In the last "THE POINTER" you had a picture of a carving of our Eagle Emblem by R.E. Fitz of Connecticut. Bob and I were in the crew of the last Liberty I was on, the SS Alexander Mitchell. We spent five days in Rome, Italy, together at a US Rest Camp, and then went on around to the Pacific. We had a great time taking in the sights in Rome. The last time I saw and talked to Bob was when he was detached from the crew while we were at anchor in the Saipan harbor in the Pacific. I called him and we had a great visit. Thanks, Cal, for running the picture.

All is well with our Iowa-Minnesota-Dakota's group, except for the number of us left. As all of the other WWII people we are a disappearing bunch. We still meet monthly and will continue to do so, and have our annual reunion.

Our very best to Hilda and you for good health and thanks again for all you do.

For all of our group,

  
Arnie Latare, Skipper

**Arnold O. Latare, Skipper**  
**John R. Rudisill, First Officer**  
**Grant Peterson, Officer of the Deck**

**Cliff Scholten, Master at Arms**

**Lee Nylén, Executive Officer**  
**Myrtle VanDyke, Second Officer**  
**Ivan K. Edwards, Service Officer**



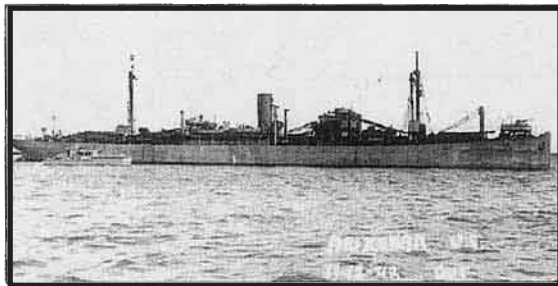
## THE JERSEYMAN

### Volunteer Lou Fantacone US Naval Armed Guards... as told to Tom Helvig

"I was raised in Philly during the depression and still remember kicking coal off of freight trains to bring home for heating. I was only 17 in 1943 and like most of us, we wanted to do our part and to 'kill Japs', and so I joined the navy. I went through boot at Great Lakes for about 8 weeks, and when we graduated they sent us to Algiers, Louisiana to wait for orders. I couldn't wait to get to sea, and was told that the fastest way to get a ship was to volunteer for the Naval Armed Guards, and so that's what I did.

They sent us for Armed Guard training at Gulfport, Mississippi and to Shell Beach, Louisiana - it was all geared toward teaching us about guns. We had training in 30 cal. and 50 cal. machine guns, 20mm, 5"/38, 5"/51, 3"/50's and more. We also had to learn all the gun positions; Pointer, Trainer, sight-setter, shellman, powderman - by the time we were finished, I think we could have qualified as Gunner's mates. I reported to my first ship, the **S.S. Benjamin D. Wilson** in Charleston, South Carolina on November 12, 1943, and was assigned as a 20mm gunner on the starboard side near the stern. We loaded the ship up, and left on November 17th for Norfolk to wait for a convoy. There were hundreds of ships in the convoy. Some of them headed for the North Atlantic, and we went on to the Med. I remember we also prepared for expected strafing by the Germans from the Island of Crete. They had an airfield located there and we put up helium filled barrage balloons over the ship.

When we loaded up with coal in East Africa, I can remember being told to "wear no insignias," there were enemy agents all over the place... and then we headed for Cape Town and to Brazil, and then back to New Orleans. We never had a chance to make many friends in the guards because we transferred every 6 months, and shipped out with new crews. From the **Benjamin Wilson** I was transferred to a tanker, the **S.S. Gulf Coast** in Philadelphia, and we loaded up at Girard Point... I really don't remember knowing about the hundreds of merchant ships being torpedoed, and about the men we were losing. But I do know that we were all in constant fear. Torpedoes were always on your mind, and you know, dolphins can also make a wake in the phosphor of the sea, so lots of false calls and General Quarters alarms were coming down from the bridge.. During my time, I was lucky and none of my ships were hit. We usually had about 25 armed guards aboard, depending on the number of guns on the ship. Usually we had an Ensign up to a Lieutenant in charge, and there was a Radioman, Signalman, Gunner's Mate, and maybe a Coxswain aboard. Most were Seaman 1/c, and we made \$66 a month, and \$13 more for sea duty.



The worst storm of my life is still fresh in my mind aboard **SS Gulf Coast**, and it was in the North Atlantic off of Plymouth, England. Everything was breaking loose from the rolling, and there was a certain point in each roll where the ship would shudder and you knew she would not be coming back... but she did. We went on like this for about 2 or 3 days, and we couldn't get to the food even if we wanted it. Then if the ship had a break down, you were on your own and had to make it to port alone, and made a good target, but again we were lucky.

Then in 1945, I was re-assigned again to **S.S. Arizonan**. By now we weren't worried about German submarines, but about the buzz bombs. We would hope they ran out of fuel when they were right over our heads, because then we knew they would miss us. In April 1945 we were sent to Lido Beach for three months of advanced infantry training, and we turned in all of our navy gear for army gear. We were being trained with ground combat weapons like BAR's and the like for the Invasion of Japan. But then they dropped the two bombs in August 1945, and that was it. I was then shipped to Japan for Occupation duty in October 1945 and stayed there until March of 1946".

Submitted by

**Lou Fantacone, Bensalem, Pennsylvania**

#### Editor's note:

More than 1,600 merchant ships were sunk or damaged between 1940-1945, and over 2,000 U.S. Naval Armed Guards were reported killed. News reports of these merchant losses were highly classified and not reported until after the war. (Source: American Merchant Marine Association, and the U.S. Maritime Service Veterans.)



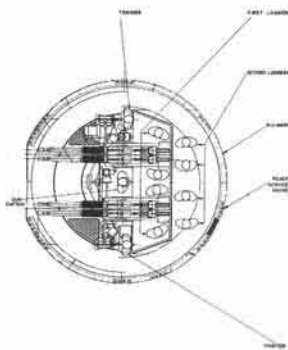
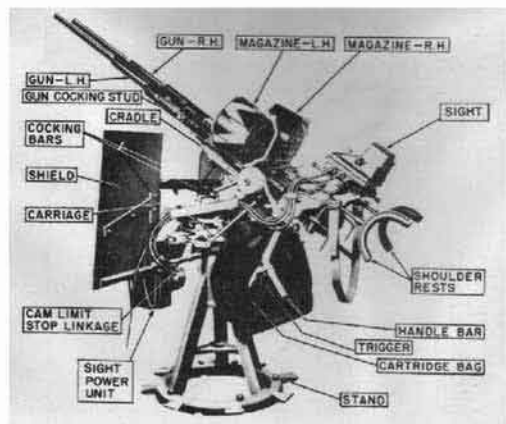


# POTENT WEAPONS OF THE TIME



## 40MM CALIBER MARK 1 AND MARK 2

One of the best Heavy MG AA weapons of WWII, the Bofors 40mm Model 1936 is still in service in some nations. This weapon was used on almost every US and UK warship of WWII and was a very potent AA gun. The Germans also used the Bofors design to develop the 40mm Flak 28 and the Japanese copied a British Army type Bofors captured at Singapore to produce the 40mm Type 5.



## 20MM/70 (0.79")

CALIBER AA MG MARK 2, 3 & 4  
Widely used by the Allied nations, the Swiss-designed 20mm Oerlikon AA MG was probably produced in higher numbers than any other AA weapon of WWII. The USA alone manufactured a total of 124,735 guns. The first USA built gun was test-fired on 8 June 1941 and 379 had been delivered by 7 December 1941. These guns were air-cooled and used a gas blow-back recoil system.

# S.S. CHRISTOPHER GADSDEN

12/16/1944 Aboard the S.S. CHRISTOPHER GADSDEN

0920 Inspection of all guns. Satisfactory condition.

1800 Two men, MasLaren, Robert G., BM2c, and Vogel, Oscar M., GM3c went on shore patrol duty, according to directions from Port Naval Office, 1800-2400.

1545 Report of bomb exploding in center of buildings containing two theaters and other amusement places. After investigating, found that three Armed Guard crew members were missing: Connors, George Joseph, SI/c, 814-70-97, USNR Hagerty, William Freeman, Jr., Cox 821-48-74, USNR Long, Charles William, SI/c, 821-48-70, USNR Merchant Marine crew member, W. Breece, escaped with minor injuries from bomb explosion, Companion of Connors, George Joseph, SI/c and last person to see him in the theater.

12/17 Search made for missing men at scene of destruction, at Hospitals, and all

temporary morgues. United States Port Naval Office notified concerning missing men, with their names, rates and serial numbers. Many bodies still in debris of building.

12/18 Truck transportation, large enough to hold thirty-eight ton crane body, necessary to finishing unloading. Number two hold still contains seven hundred tons of material, awaiting removal of the three cranes. --- Two cranes removed today.

Inventory made and belongings packed of all personal and Navy gear gear of the three missing men of the crew. Inventory made by Gregory, G.W., BM2/c, Thomas, W.E. Jr. SM2/c; King, J.C.

GM3/c; and Richer, J.R. SM3/c.

Gear stored in forward gear locker under lock.

12/20 Notified that body of Connors, George J. had been found.

12/21 Many buzz bombs coming over regular. Amount sent over has been stepped up lately. Mail received. Telegram for Hagerty, deceased.

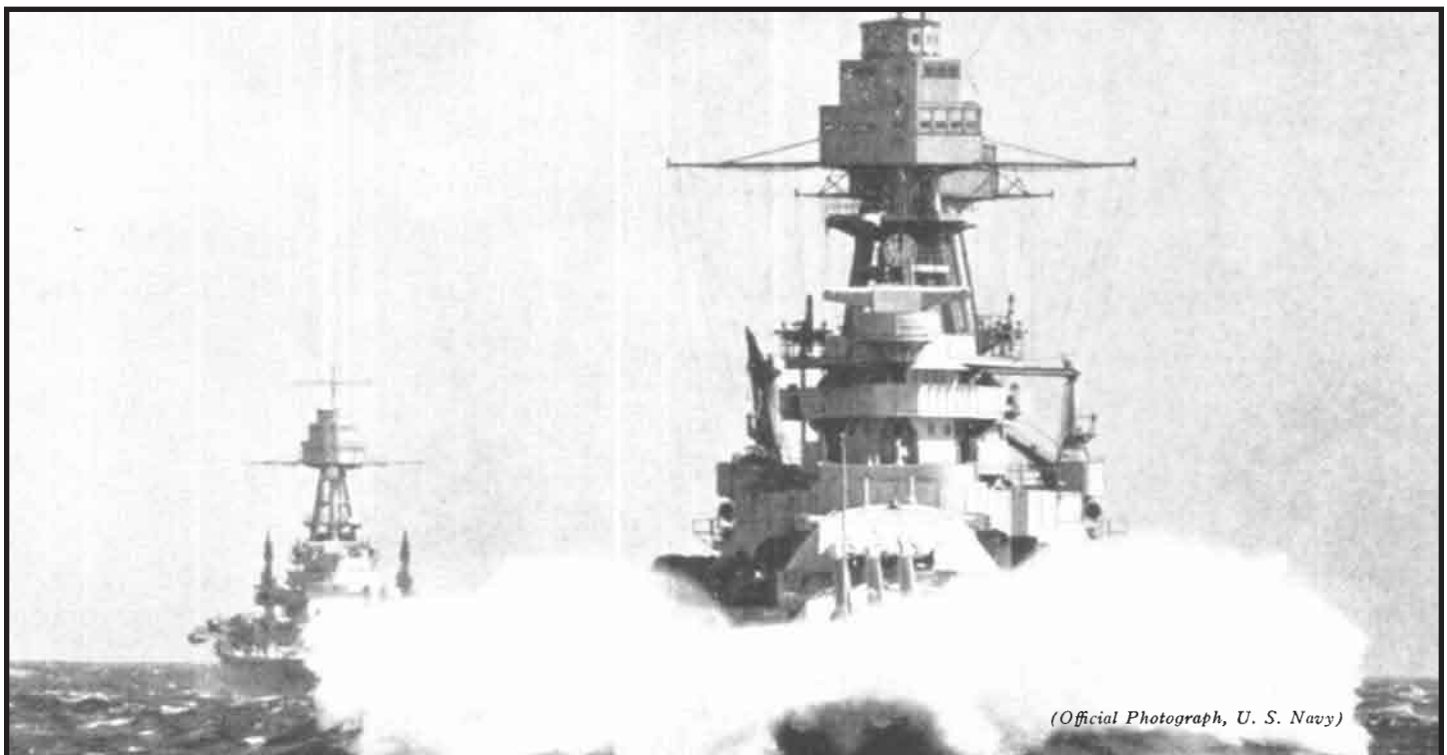
12/22 Notified that the bodies of the three missing men of the Armed Guard crew have been found. Burial of the following men will be in the American Cemetery at Fosse, Belgium (half way between Liege and Namur; (All USNR)

12/23 1045 Koegler, Walter A., Lt.(jg), from Port Director's Office, came aboard to give more details about missing men.

1100 Memorial ceremony, honoring the memory of the lost comrades, was held on the aft gun platform. Ensign was flown at half mast all day.

12/25 Anchor raised and voyage down the Sheldie River to the English started. Christmas celebrated by Armed Guard with 2nd Lt. Hervey present as guest. Gift boxes given out to the crew.

Excellent Christmas Dinner



(Official Photograph, U. S. Navy)

To haul fuel for the fighting ships before and after battle was part of the duties of ships of the Esso fleet. Chief Mate Hall, of the "Esso Norfolk," told it this way: "We fueled them quickly and they returned to the battle area" (Leyte Campaign)

# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

## MONUMENT IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN--- TRIBUTE TO FORGOTTEN HEROES

When Russia surrendered to Germany in 1917, it created tremendous apprehension among the Western Allies. First and perhaps foremost, scores of crack German Divisions would be transferred to the Western front. The Allies were run-ragged, and the green American troops were an unknown quantity, even enough of them should arrive in time. Second, there were millions of tons of war material along the route from Moscow to Archangel which must not fall into German hands. The Russians had not paid for it, and the Allies, particularly England were suspicious of the Bolsheviks. Had they not threatened to bring bloodshed to every Capitalist Nation? Something must be done---and at once.

England took the first step when it landed 600 "advisors" in Murmansk in June, 1918. They immediately brought pressure on the United States and France to send troops. On June 11, 1918, 150 American Marines were put ashore to guard the railway. The Allies had in mind 3 battalions of infantry, 2 batteries of field artillery and 3 companies of engineers. France sent a colonial regiment in July---their only contribution. The Allies were desperate.

In the meantime, 4500 American troops had landed in England, and at once, placed under English command. They comprised the 339th Regiment, 3109th Engineer's Battalion, and the 337th Field Hospital Company, plus several smaller service units. The boys from Michigan and Wisconsin were totally lacking in combat experience, and were as hapless---though willing---an outfit ever assembled. History has proven the forgotten American unit, to have been one of the best, although largely forgotten. They were issued uniforms by the

British and old Russian rifles, many of which were inoperable, and more of a hazard to the riflemen than the enemy. They were given training, which was rudimentary at best, and then loaded onto 3 boats and headed for North Russia.

The influenza epidemic became rampant and many of the doughboys were stricken, scores of them perishing. Their route was through frigid Arctic waters, and many suffered dreadfully from seasickness, those who didn't have flu. The emaciated troops arrived at Archangel on September 4, 1918, and the Yanks were quickly rushed to the front lines. The

Bolsheviks had formed a vast perimeter around the Allies and were increasing pressure daily. Their artillery barrages were furious. As the puzzled dog-faces got the news, many asked the same questions, "Why are we fighting the Bolos, weren't they our Allies, just a year ago? Hell, there's no war with the Russia." On November 11, 1918, the war ended---except in North Russia.

On February 1, 1919, there were 5000 American troops stationed in Archangel---all of whom cursed the fates that had sent them there. The people were positively hostile, but the fierce half-breed dogs were absolutely intractable, and they outnumbered the peasants. The temperature often dropped to 45 degrees below zero, or even worse. The standard uniform was a heavy sheepskin coat, fur cap and mittens, white cowls for camouflage, and the thick cumbersome boots known as mukluks. A special diet had been devised for the Yanks by Sir Ernest Shackleton. It consisted of fatty foods supplemented by flint-hard dried fruit. The battle-

field ranged over 400 miles in an arc. It was a brutal war. American, British and Canadian troops would move across frozen wastelands, careful not to blunder into swamps that could swallow a man instantly; always under intense artillery fire. With the bursting of flare shells, the aurora borealis, the whinnying of the

little Russian ponies, plus the howling of wolves, the Allies wondered if there were ever a war like. They hadn't.

When the rumor came that Bolos were going to use captured German gas shells, and a number of dead American soldier's bodies were recovered with the head and limbs beaten by blows from an axe, the defenders had almost had it. The "Chicago Tribune" pronounced the Russian campaign a failure, use some very strong words, and that brought America to an awareness of its forgotten soldiers. The war had been over 3 months and yet men were still dying and freezing to death. Americans would be relieved sometime in June, 1919. As the weather began to warm to a mere 30-below, America sent two more engineering companies to Murmansk to help with getting the railway in shape.

Bolshevik artillery and infantry attacks intensified, and the heroic Canadians out-duelled the massive Bolo barrage, permitting the Allies to withdraw. One hundred and ninety-one Americans were dead, 252 wounded, hundreds suffered minor frostbites and most of all Despondency. One weary doughboy wrote home:

"Two weeks ago this morning, a Bolshevik artillery of six 18-pounders shelled our village for two hours. The 500 infantry men advanced on an outpost. Eight of forty got away. It was



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

over an hour before we could get to the wounded. Some of them froze their arms to the elbows. We moved the wounded under heavy artillery fire---We marched 36 miles without a stop. Rested over night and was on the go again. We had marched 98 miles. We lost a lot of our equipment and casualties were heavy."

Beat back under superior numbers, the embattled Allies retreated toward Murmansk, while Russia proclaimed this as a great victory over the "capitalist imperialists." The uneven fight ended in late June when American troops were recalled, a full seven months after the war was supposedly had ended. The Americans did not even receive a campaign medal for their efforts, although White Russian officers cited all of them. There is a monument in Detroit, Michigan erected to their honor. The few survivors are in their 90s now, and American public recognition is long, long overdue. Every other American soldier who fought Communism has been remembered.

By Francis X. Sculley (Paper unknown)

This is dedicated to the 5500 men who fought, bled, froze to death in Russia in 1918-19.

Sent in by: James Everly, 5935 Clover Lane, Walbridge, Oh. 43465

## ARMED GUARD POEM

The ships were old – the men were young,  
A war came in between.

With guns and grit, they proved they were  
The bravest ever seen.

Their foes were tough, professionals,

But young men, just as well

A thousand U-boats sallied forth,

Three-quarters went to Hell.

As did too many Allied ships

Before the shooting ended,

Those gunners blunted Doenitz's lads,

And freedom's sake defended.

From Halifax and Liverpool –

To Murmansk or to Crete,

The Armed Guard was a shield of Hope,  
Defying grim defeat.

With passing years the circle fades,

Its radius grows smaller,

But at memories of sacrifice,

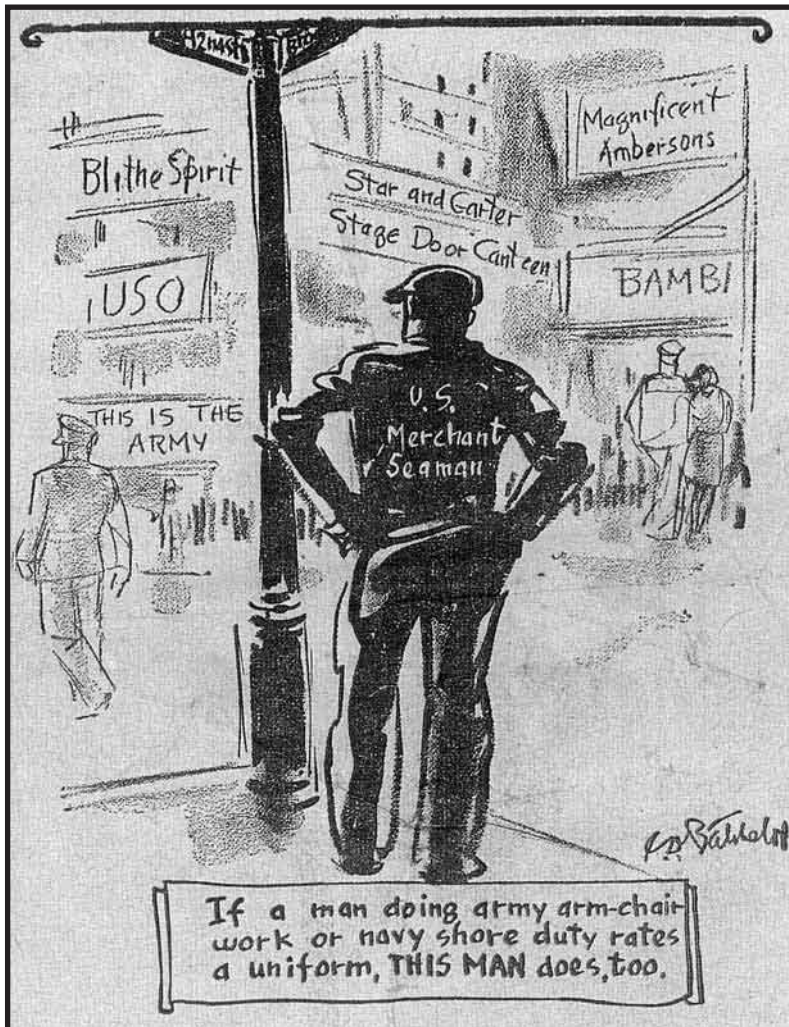
You may stand a little taller.

Armed Guardsmen played a signal role

To save Red, White and Blue -

I pen these words of grateful thanks -

My dad was one of you.





# A SAILOR'S GRISLY D-DAY VISIONS

At 84, a Navy veteran tells how the bloody invasion began 65 years ago

By MARTHA QUILLIN  
STAFF WRITER

**RALEIGH** — Lee Rosenstiel never wanted a medal for his years of service during World War II, never needed a ribbon to help him remember.

Some things he can't forget no matter how hard he tries.

Anniversaries like this one — 65 years after D-Day, the invasion of Normandy — are especially difficult. All it takes is the sound of Taps playing or news footage of the laying of a wreath on a soldier's grave and Rosenstiel is a 20-year-old sailor walking the beaches of Normandy looking for the living among the dead.

"You block it out your whole life," he said, "and once in a while it all comes back."

Rosenstiel was an 11th-grader in a one-room school in tiny McConnell, Ill., when

he volunteered for service. He was 17.

"Most of my buddies were already gone," he said. He wanted to go, too.

He landed in the Navy, which trained him to be a signalman, a human transmitter conveying information between ships that couldn't be sent by radio.

Rosenstiel would be assigned to a series of Liberty ships, the hastily built freighters designed to take the war across the oceans. His first mission at sea was aboard a Liberty ship that ran back and forth to England and from there to Murmansk, the Arctic seaport through which Allied forces supplied Russian troops as they fought to hold back the Germans. Ships were subject to enemy fire, raging storms and icing on their hulls and decks. Many sank.

By comparison, his assignment to the Hannibal Hamlin in 1944 seemed like light duty, at first.

By the spring of that year, all the world, it seemed, was expecting a major Allied invasion into Europe, regarded as the only way to turn the Germans back and hasten the end of the war. There was no question whether there would be an invasion, only when and where it would begin.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, debated with his commanders how best to carry out the assault, dubbed Operation Overlord, that would begin with the Normandy landings.

The logistics were staggering, the hazards innumerable. The first day of the assault would employ 6,939 vessels and 11,590 aircraft to get 156,000 troops on the beaches or behind enemy lines, according to the D-Day Museum in Portsmouth, En-

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## D-DAY

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gland. Ships coming in amid rough seas were subject to shelling, mortar fire and hundreds of thousands of underwater mines, as well as steel protrusions along the beach that could chew open a hull.

Eisenhower made only brief mention of the dangers in his letter delivered to D-Day forces hours before their launch. Rosenstiel got his copy via telegraph onboard the Hannibal Hamlin, and kept it for years, crumpled and taped together along its tattered folds. He can find only a photocopy of it now.

"You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months," the letter began. "The eyes of the world are upon you."

To encourage the troops, Eisenhower noted that Germany had suffered numerous defeats and had seen its war-fighting capacity diminished by bombing campaigns while the Allies had built up superior weaponry and troop reserves.

### Delivering the troops

It was Flagman 2nd Class Lee Rosenstiel's job to help get those troops to where they could do the most good.

After weather delayed the invasion, Eisenhower finally gave the OK for it to start on June 6. Paratroopers began dropping into Normandy just after midnight; in the pale gray light of early morning, the ships would move in. They would dispatch their hordes of troops onto smaller landing craft that would deliver them to a 50-mile stretch of shoreline divided by military planners into five named sectors. Waves of troops would pour onto the beaches throughout the day and for days to come.

The Hannibal Hamlin, named for Abraham Lincoln's first-term vice president, was assigned to ferry members of a Canadian division, and later American troops, from New Castle, England, across the English Channel. It took six or eight trips to get them all, Rosenstiel says. The first arrived on D-Day afternoon.

At that point, he didn't know what lay in store for them.

On some of the beaches, landing craft were entangled by obstacles and wrecked in water over the heads of soldiers who couldn't

'You had to look around until you could find one alive. You'd look for a pulse, and then go to pick them up, and there would just be this hole where your hand would go in.'

LEE ROSENSTIEL

U.S. NAVY VETERAN, WHO HELPED PICK UP WOUNDED SOLDIERS ON NORMANDY BEACHES ON JUNE 7, 1944



Lee Rosenstiel, 84, was a signalman on a ship that ferried troops to Normandy.

STAFF PHOTO BY COREY LOWENSTEIN

swim because of the weight of their equipment. Mines blew some of the craft apart before they ever hit the beach. Many soldiers made it to shore only to be picked off by Germans firing from cliffs or underground fortifications.

The next morning, Rosenstiel saw some of the carnage himself. The white-painted hospital ships had backed up to the beaches to collect the injured but needed help picking them up. When they asked for volunteers, Rosenstiel went.

They were working in the area of Omaha and Utah beaches, where some of the worst casualties occurred.

"You had to look around until you could find one alive," he said,



Rosenstiel, in 1943 after boot camp.



### EISENHOWER'S D-DAY LETTER

Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazism, and the oppression of Europe, and the security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!

Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Dwight Eisenhower

his eyes welling with tears. "You'd look for a pulse, and then go to pick them up, and there would just be this hole where your hand would go in."

His only injury from the invasion was a cut on his head from the shrapnel of German anti-aircraft fire that fell with enough force to split his helmet. He still has the scar and still remembers the sound of the German guns.

### A lifelong bonus

Rosenstiel got out of the Navy in 1946 at age 21, went back to Illinois and got a job in a grocery store butcher shop. At age 24, he started his own restaurant, the beginning of a 40-year career in food service. He thinks now that he liked the long hours because they helped him think about

something besides what he had seen during the war.

A few years ago, a fellow signalman sent Rosenstiel some snapshots from their time on the Hannibal Hamlin. In one, Rosenstiel is standing on deck forming an "R" from the semaphore alphabet. He can still signal from A to Z with his arms and mark Morse code by tugging on his ear.

Rosenstiel, now 84 and retired to North Carolina, credits his military service with giving him a sense of responsibility and confidence that have served him ever since.

If he lets himself dwell on D-Day at all today, that's what he prefers to remember.

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The bolts holding the Plaque rusted and Storm of July 2008 blew it off the brick. James Kearns asked CEO at Little Creek if they could replace it and they did with non corrosive bolts.

*To those who attended the Ceremony when the Plaque was erected, you will notice everything but the Plaque is gone and where the 3300 building was standing, where it all started has been channeled out and ships are docked there. (cal)*

Photos sent in by:  
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## DEDICATION

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

This POINTER is in Memory of all Branches of service in WW II; the Navy, Army, Marines, Airmen, Seabees, Merchant Seamen, Wacs, Waves, and especially to the Special Unit of the Navy known as the U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD which was first used as Gun Crews in WW I on board cargo, tankers and troopships and where needed to protect the ship, cargo and the merchant crews who bravely ran the ships to each port of call until deactivated after WW I. They were established again for the same purpose in September of 1941 and remained active until WW II was over and the need for gunners were not needed. This issue is also in honor to all the people all over the world who built ships, planes, tanks, trucks, jeeps, guns, ammo and all things needed to win a war against the ruthless killers. Thanks to the farmers who fed us all. Thank God for seeing us through.



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