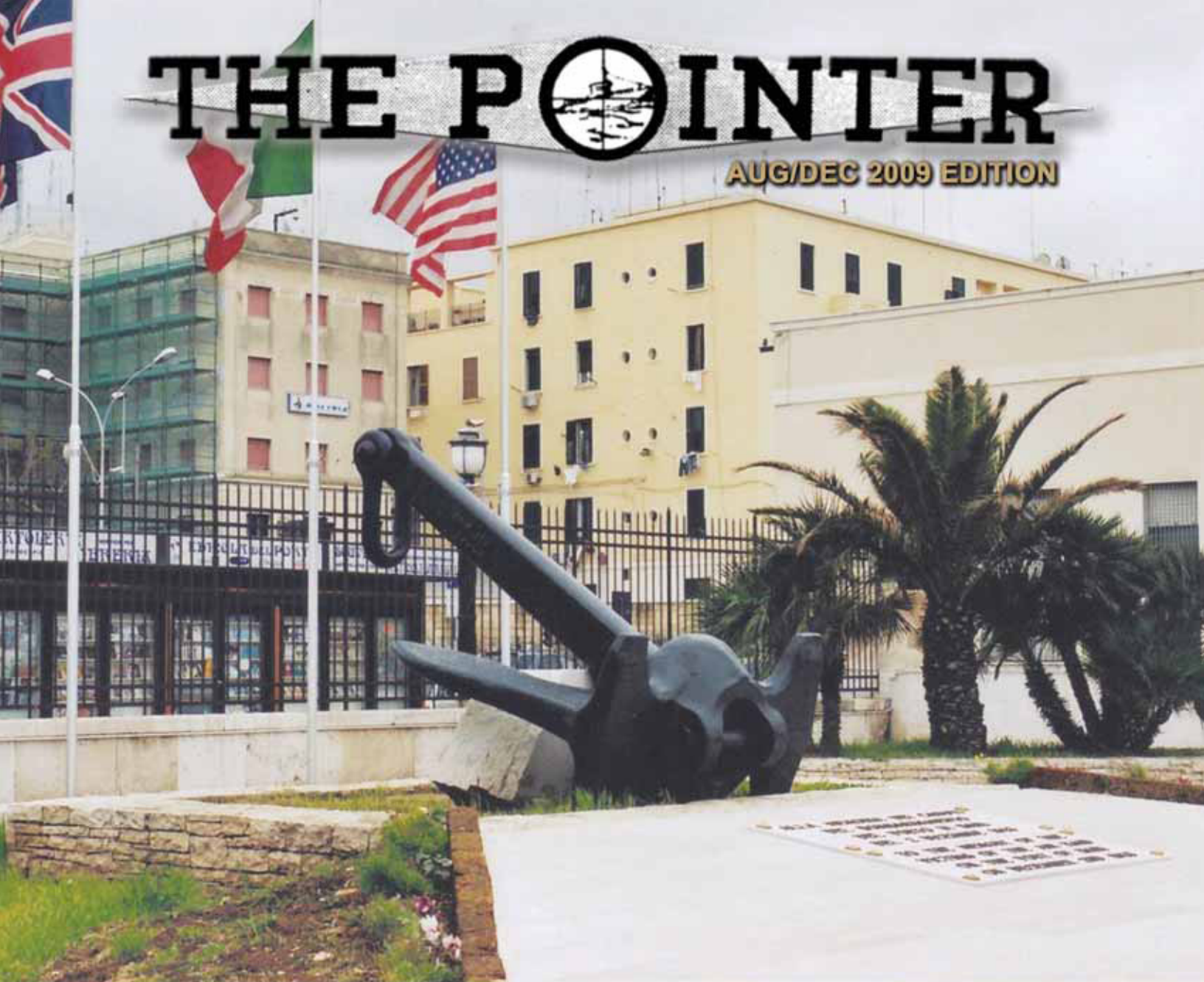


THE P INTER

AUG/DEC 2009 EDITION



ALLA MEMORIA DEI CADUTI
DEL BOMBARDAMENTO
DEL PORTO DI BARI
DEL 2 DICEMBRE 1943

TO THE MEMORY OF THE
VICTIMS OF THE AIR RAID
ON THE PORT OF BARI
ON DECEMBER 2ND. 1943

NYS CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER OF THE US NAVY ARMED GUARD & AMM WWII VETS



Enjoying a Wine & Cheese Party at The Georgian Resort in Lake George, NY on Sept. 22 while attending an overnite Dinner Show & Luncheon Cruise on the Lae du Saint Sacrement on the 23rd.

1st row L-R: Tom Webber, Marion & Art Fazzzone, George Krehel, Diana Spenard, Marion Covey, Bob Edwards & George Spenard – 2nd row L-R: Dorothy Webber, Theresa & Gil Sickles, DeLos & Minnie Abrams & Linda Edwards – Standing: Luara Roth(Entertainer) & Peter Falasco.



Cal,

Enclosed are pictures of Ken Sharkey & Fred Gagnon and the W.A. Carter Gun Crew. Also pictures of Ken and Fred(me) on board the John Brown when it visited New London, CT a few years ago.

Hopefully other crew members will check in with you. "Check" enclosed.

Thanks,

Fred Gagnon

P.O. Box 15

Moodus, CT 06469

THE POINTER



Dear Crew, Nov. 15, 2009

Boy!! I sure left myself wide open with the Cap Order Form in the May/July POINTER. My intent was to say: Orders are to be made by Jan. 1, 2010, unless you came aboard after Nov. 1, 2009, as that would be the cut-off date so I will let you know "NOW". I should have put—"YOU DON'T NEED TO CUT THE FORM OUT OF THE POINTER. JUST TELL WHAT YOU WANT". It is taking too much time but I am happy so many wanted them and are on their heads across the USA. I had to re-order and it took time. If you didn't get your cap, advise, as the packet may have been destroyed in the mail, or; I may over looked sending. I will not re-order anything after the Jan 1st date. When I run out of caps, I will just put the checks in the bank unless you put a note to return. Now back to the POINTER.

Arthur Fosso, 757 VIA Acapulco, Palm Springs, Ca. 92262 called that he had one of the Original "RCA VICTOR" record titled, " THE ARMED GUARD FIGHTING SONG". The words and music by Lieut. Lionel E. Hencken, USNR and played by Bandmaster Leonard Hickson and the Aameda Coast Guard Band. Vocal by Ju'ius Skute, SI/c USCG. Arranged by Alex Reisman, Mus I/c USCG. By ORTHACOUSTIC Radio Recording Division, National Broadcasting Division, National Broadcasting Company, Inc. Sunset and Devine, Hollywood, Ca. Art sent it to me and it will be placed in a Museum to be decided where it is safe and guarded. I have the recording voice singing in my computer and will E-Mail it to those who would like to have it when time available.

I want to THANK all of you for showing your appreciation of the Cover of the May/July POINTER with the 5 Sullivan Brothers. If anyone knows the where abouts of any of the family, advise and I will send them a copy. On pages 22/23 of the same POINTER, the ship name should have been S.S. HARWOOD instead of HAYWOOD. (I didn't catch it)

As of 11/15, 2009, I have entered No. 22,298 names into the Computer since we first bought our first AG Computer. About 1,000 are Merchant Seamen, Historians, Museums, etc. We started out with about 1,300 names in 1985 that we had located from June 1982 until then.

Today, the ship's list slots in the computer numbers 11226 but many ships are duplicated as the slots are limited to 12 names. When a person sends me his ships, I enter his name under the ship's name and when I am notified by the family of his death, I place an (*) asterisk behind his name. Example: Ship: S.S. MIAOULIS-Camp* L. 1945 Camp*C.1945, so if your husband or dad passes, notify me so I can place the * behind his name. If you want to remain on the mailing list, please advise at that time. Please note, when I go, all of this stops as it stands now. It would be posted on the 4 historical ship and Armed Guard Web Site: www.armed-guard.com. I hope the latter does not happen anytime soon.

I have sent the Navy Memorial a check for \$3,000.00 from our Armed Guard Banking account to have a plaque placed inside on the wall there beside others crews, to let the generations of visitors who visits there in years to come know that we served in the Armed Guard. The money pays for the plaque expenses and helps support the Memorial and a Memorial we can be proud of. Leo Gullage, of Florida (A snowbird—from Ma.-) and I had the privilege to carry our signs showing U.S.N. Armed Guard WW II October 13, 1987, the day they held the dedication MEMORIAL CEREMONY there, a day I was proud to be there to represent you and the crew. We had the pleasure of meeting so many Navy Units and we sat in the middle of 701 Pennsylvania Ave. before the beautiful Memorial was built. See centerfold.

If you would like to donate to the Plaque to replenish the \$3,000. back to the bank account, please mark at FOR or MEMO on the check.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING, MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR !

Thanks for your donations and support.

Stay healthy. calloyd

Officers for 2009

Charles A. Lloyd, Chairman
& Sec. Treas. 1985-2009
115 Wall Creek Drive
Rolesville, N.C. 27571
1-919-570-0909
clloyd@nc.rr.com

Ron Carlson
616 Putnam Place
Alexander, VA 22302-4018
703-549-5908

Board of Directors

C.A. Lloyd NC
John Stokes CA
Don Gleason KS
Clarence Korker FL
Joe Colgan MD
Gerald Greaves RI
Al Sniff FL
Kenneth Sneed IN
Ralph McNally OK
Joseph Benedict MN
Richard Hudnall AZ
Zed Merrill OR
Joe Esposito IL
Bernard Stansbury ... VA
Forrest Flanagan WV
Hilary Makowski PA
Arnold Latare IA
Bob Ober OH
J.F. Carter LA
Howard Long SC
Mike Molinari NY
Tom Dufrense MA
William F. Isabell AL

Trustees

C.A. Lloyd NC
Theo Schorr PA
John Shirley TX
Arthur Fazzone NY
Louis Tew CT
Johnny Stanley GA
Al Colella MO
Jay Wildfong WI
Henry Harrison WA
Mervil Yarbrough ... NV
Neal Vermillion MD
Wm. A. Carter DE

Chaplains

Lyle Kell WA
Buck Donaldson TN

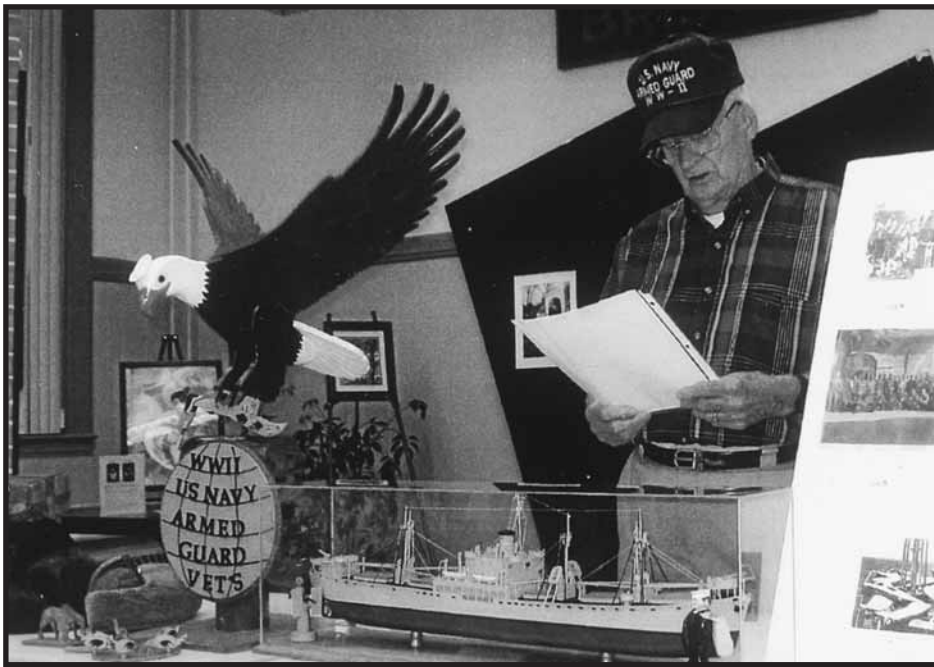
ATTENTION

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...



Dear Cal,

A month ago, I called and gave you some very good info about the Armed Guard. It was about my first talk about the Armed Guard and I was proud to talk about my old unit. And Cal, the big old Eagle and my Liberty Ship with the 20 MM cannon and my old swab with his seabag seemed to get a lot of attention. We had about 65 old Veterans and their wives. When we get together, the "STUFF" really flies. I just wanted to let you know that my 3 years in the Armed Guard is time I will never forget and I was glad to tell them.

A school teacher asked me if I would talk at her school and another asked me to speak at a military museum and I did, so I spread the word. Enclosed is the Eagle again with my Liberty Ship, me and my Armed Guard cap you sent and some photos in the background of my WW II days.

Yours truly,
Robert E. Fitz
34 Sunnydale Ave.
Bristol, Ct. 06010
860-582-0851

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal,

On September 14, 1942, my dad and I got on the subway to Manhattan for the recruiting station. I had been bothering my father since June to sign for me to join up because I was finally 17 year old. He kept refusing but he finally gave up and decided to let me enlist. The Marines wanted me but I said "NO" as the navy was where I wanted to go. It was a decision that I never regretted. After my dad signed the papers, the Chief Petty Officer handed us all a nickel for a ride on the subway out to Brooklyn AGC. I had plans for the GREAT LAKES; NEWPORT, R.I. or even California. But Brooklyn was our destination. It wasn't much of a ride for me because I was from the Bronx at the time.

My dad went with me to the AGC Brooklyn at 1 st Ave. and 52 nd St. from the subway and we marched together to the gate, then he said his "Goodbyes" to me with tears in his eyes. When he left, I said to myself, he doesn't have far to go to the Bronx and I started to laugh to myself. The Center inside was a "mad house", British sailors; men whose ship

had been torpedoed outside the 3 mile limit, walking around, getting more gear from the commissary to catch another ship out again. Then, they had us new recruits to contend with. There must have 5,000 guys walking all around that Hall. It was also scary seeing those guys that had already been torpedoed just outside of New York come in. It certainly was a fine way to start a navy career. I grew up real fast that same day. I took my "BOOTS" right there in Brooklyn. I was one of the youngest guys in the company. After "BOOTS", the guys took me up to Murphy's Bar on 4 th Ave. to have a beer. I had never drank in my life. Well, a "Donny Brook" broke out in the bar and I ran for my life out of the bar. I escaped but a lot of the men were brought in to the Brig by the Shore Patrol. Cal, it was an experience that I'll never forget so you can see I was learning life real fast. Coming from the Bronx, I loved New York but I got to love Brooklyn as well. The people from Brooklyn treated the Armed Guard well and they did their best to make us feel at home. Cal. I could go on with more story but I'd better end it before I get into a "SEA STORY". I just wanted people to know how it was to enter service from almost the same town and what went on.

Jim Montesarchio
800 Bronx River Rd.
Bronxville, N.Y. 10708-7060

Jim, I imagine many of the men from the BIG CITY cried as much as their dads did the first week. It looked as if there were 5000 or more when I got there but I was with some OLD SALTS who knew the "ropes" and we shipped out the next day. Cal

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

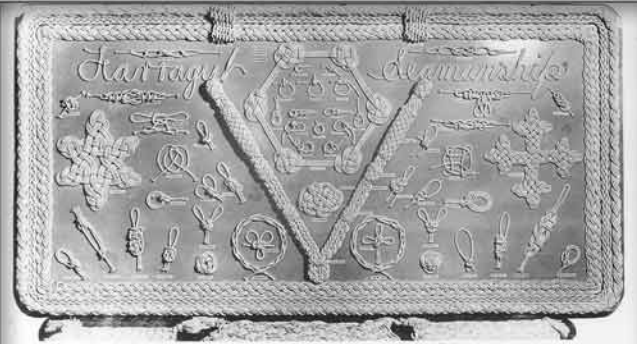
Dear Cal,

Thank you for the Feb/Apr POINT-ER. It brought back many memories since I was attached to the Brooklyn, N.Y. Armed Guard Center from 1942-

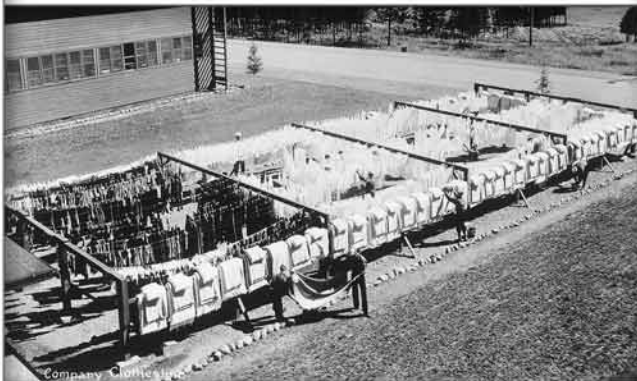
LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



F-6 Mess Hall



FANCY SEAMSHIP BOARD
MADE BY
SEAMSHIP DIVISION- USN.T.S-FARRAGUT, IDAHO



Company Picnic



F-13 Ship's Service Store



F-2 Swimming Instruction



F-1 Chase Line



F-11 "Making Colors"



F-3 Regimental Drill Field

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

SS Esso Rochester



1945 as Ship's Company in the Supply Department. There were many names I knew in the listing of the 1st Anniversary Banquet at the Capital Hotel in New York City 9/12/43. I probably was on duty that night is why I didn't attend the banquet and my picture not in it. Also, the roster of officers in the Christmas list in 1942 are familiar as well. Again, THANKS for all you and others have done to keep the Armed Guard and the POINTER alive. BRAVO!! Sincerely, Shipmate Fred Viskovich, 53 Hooyman Dr., Clifton, N.J. 07013 973-471-4388

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hello C.A. and Hilda,

Well, as I was going through my "JUNK" and finding these cards from my grammar school buddy, I thought you might be interested. Johnnie sent them to my folks as he didn't know where in the heck I was and he sent something on the Farragut BOOTS. I graduated from BOOTS in San Diego

on Saturday Dec. 6, 1941. I hope you can use them for the POINTER and they are great information in the archives. Sincerely,
Robert "Bob" Abbott,
628 NE 56th St. Newport, Or. 97365

Bob served on the S.S. GREYLOCK Sk. 2/3/43; S.S. ARACAÏUA 4-6/43; S.S. SANTA MONICA 6-8/43; S.S. ALBERT GALLATIN Sk. 1/2/44; M/V LAPLAYA 4-9/44 and the S.S. ROBERT NEIGHBORS 10-44-8/45.

Thanks Bob for this info and also for attending the Battle of The North Atlantic Ceremony in Reykavich, Iceland last year representing the Armed Guard. cal

See page 5.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles,

Enclosed are the pictures requested to go with my story. I have purchased the book, "SHIPS of the ESSO FLEET",

Copyright 1946 by STANDARD OIL CO. (NEW JERSEY) which includes my ship, the ESSO ROCHESTER. I had purchased it about 20 years ago through your information in the POINTER which includes 135 Esso Fleet Ships. Best wishes. Sincerely,
Walter T. Kustanski,
8 Davis St.,
Turner's Falls, Ma. 01376-1706

**See Story Page.....

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear C.A., 12/5/09

A NEW YEAR is here and I will soon be 87. I sailed with the Armed Guard through 1945 and then on to the USS ENTERPRISE. WHAT A CHANGE!!

I left the Navy for the Army in September 1948. I retired with 33 years service. I joined in 1937, two months before my 15th birthday. I was burned in Oran while diving for sunken ships.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

They had loaded the pier on which we bunked with 5 gallon cans of gasoline and set afire and he was burned severely. Sabotage was suspected. When the AFRICANER was sunk, and we were all in the life rafts, the Gunnery Officer stood up and clapped when she went under. Our feet and ankles froze and large sores followed. We saw several men hanging on to the ice flows.

We picked up one who was frozen stiff. We had seen the S.S. MARY LUCK-ENBACH hit by a torpedo and disintegrated.

Commendation C-22-347-258 to James Erastus King, Jr. 636 25 21 GM3/C in sinking of the S.S.AFRICANDER 9/13/42

4/9/43: *The Chief of Naval Personnel commends you on your meritorious conduct as a member of the Armed Guard Crew of the S.S. AFRICANDER which was sunk by enemy forces on September 13, 1942. A report of the occurrence indicates that on that date mentioned, the convoy to which the AFRICANER was attached had been heavily attacked by enemy submarines and aircraft. When an attack by fifty or sixty torpedo planes occurred at approximately 1550 in the afternoon of the same day, the Armed Guard Crew by their skillful anti-aircraft fire was successful in shooting down two of the raiders. During this attack, the AFRICANDER suffered two torpedo hits and within the space of a few minutes, began to settle at the stern. Despite the heavy machine gun fire from the planes, the abandonment of the ship was effected successfully and there were no casualties either during the attack or in the evacuation. Your courage, coolness and outstanding performance of duty throughout the above action were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service.*

(The AFRICANDER, ex-Italian S.S. AUSSA, was taken over by the U.S. Government under an Executive order, Public Law 101, at the Port of New York on September 11, 1941. She was attacked

by German aircraft about 60 miles south of Spitzbergen, while enroute from Loch Ewe, Scotland to Archangel, Russia with a cargo of machinery plus 6 tanks and 5 planes on deck. All the names of the Merchant Crew and USN Armed Guard survivors are listed in Capt. Art Moore's book, "A CARELESS WORD-----A NEEDLESS SINKING" which list all cargo type ships sunk in WW II.)

Records show that James King was detached at Rosneath, Scotland for further assignment. There he was trained by the British Commandos with survivors of American sailors who ships had been sunk and ended up in the invasion of North Africa and was detached from the commando unit after being severely burned while diving for sunken ships and boarded the USS LYON on 2/23/43 arriving in New York 2/23/43 and back to the AGC Brooklyn, N.Y. 3/12/43 as GM1/c. He had participated in the assault on and seizure of Oran, Mers-el-Kebir and Arzew. He was eligible for the European-African area campaign medal with one bronze star, in accordance of Alnav 287-1942 as stated by F.T. Spelman, Captain, U.S. Navy Commanding. James E. King states he never received his Campaign or bronze star to this date, August 1, 2009. He states, "For a boy of 15 years old, I had one helluva ride."

James E. King
565 Summit Ridge Dr.
Haines City, Fl. 33844

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles,

I have made copies of the 1943 Easter cover with the sailor kneeling and the June/Oct. 2005 cover showing the ammunition ship exploding that I made copies and gave them out to the crew to give to friends they know. I also gave them to my friends and family members and close friends at our church. It is a prize winning picture. Thanks for other stories of the past and

I have friends who ask when the next story will come out as they have friends and family in WW II and it brings back memories.

Thank you, the family and the POINTER Crew for the service you all provide.

Peter Cugasi,
55 Indian Red Rd.,
Levittown, Pa. 19057

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Lloyd,

Enjoy the POINTER very much. As far as I know, only 3 of us are left from the S.S. BLADENBURG tanker crew; Schrippa, Acy Lee and myself. When we got back to Panama, we caught the S.S. JOHN THOMAS and I was at the helms to the port of Mobile, Alabama. I served on the LST 1020. Four years later, I was in the Active Reserve and was sent to Korea on the LST 1141.

I didn't realize that at age of 76, I would bring an LST back into the same seaport of Mobile--YES!! the LST 325 from Greece after locating it in 1996. After six trips to Greece, we finally got her home on Jan. 10, 2001. This was the 3rd LST I had served on. Both LSTs were built in my hometown of Seneca, Illinois. I got out of service July 1952. I have photos of my favorite gun crew on the 4"50 of which I was the Gun Captain.

Thanks,
Edward Strobel
324 Shoreline Place
Decatur, Il. 62521

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr Lloyd:

I have a book contract with a major New York publisher to write a narrative non-fiction history on the key convoy battles in the North Atlantic in the spring of



September 16, 2009

NEWS

Myrtle Van Dyke wins DAR national award

At the recent Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Continental Congress in Washington, D.C., Myrtle Van Dyke of Johnston, a World War II veteran, received the National Outstanding DAR Volunteer for Veterans Award.

This honor is presented to a DAR member in recognition of outstanding care given to veterans in any of the following areas: Federal Veterans Administration facilities; state veterans' facilities; nursing homes; veteran shelters; and outpatient clinics.

As an outstanding volunteer, Myrtle has made meaningful contributions to veterans through creative and resourceful outreach.

Myrtle is a member of local veterans' support organizations including Johnston Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Post 9662; Johnston American Legion Post 728; and Iowa WAVES Veterans #84.



Myrtle Van Dyke

1943. The book is intended for both devotees of maritime history as well as a new generation of readers who have not been exposed to previous historical accounts. My goal is to locate a cross-section of survivors and veterans from all pertinent places in that sea fight – Merchant Crewmen, Naval Armed Guard personnel, officers and escort sailors, airmen on land-based patrol aircraft and U-boat crewmen – and tell their stories. My research to date has led me to focus on a handful of convoys that took place on the New York/Halifax – Liverpool route during March-May 1943. May 26). I am specifically looking for surviving crewmen who can tell their personal experiences during that critical turning point in the "Battle of the Atlantic." If you know anyone, please forward this to them and send me their contact information.

Any help you could provide to inform your fellow Armed Guard or Merchant Marine veterans of this project would be deeply appreciated.

Ed Offley Military Reporter
21200 S. Lakeview Dr.
Panama City Beach FL 32413-3419
Email: ed_offley@yahoo.com
850-774-6585 cell phone

I hope you were on ships sunk, saw ships sunk, will tell you story and get it into this book. You may have told it for other books and film but you can send it in again. cal

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles,

Here is an article I thought you'd like to see. Myrtle, as you may recall is a member of our crew and served in the Post Office at the Armed Guard Center during the war. She is a great volunteer, mainly at the VA hospital here in Des Moines, Iowa and is, in my opinion, most worthy of the award. She holds the rank of Chief Petty Officer. Our best to you and Hilda.
Sincerely,
Arnold Latare,

4400 E.P. True Pkwy #59
W.Des Moines, Ia. 50265-5616
515-225-1084

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

We have sent you a letter with our news. Our local TV crew would like to know if you can help them. They are planning to make a documentary devoted the Arctic Convoys and people who travelled in them. Could you find out if there is a TV company in the USA that will be able to take part in organizing a video-bridge between our countries?

With best wishes,
Yekaterina Yermolina
15 Ivchenko Str.
Murmansk, Russia 183034

(Maybe some of you can help her. cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Lloyd,

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

I thank you for publishing my article in the POINTER. I received some phone calls and a letter from Lt. Francis D. Modlin who was our gunnery officer on the S.S. EDWARD BELLAMY. I was surprised he was still living as he is 99 years of age. It was a great surprise!! He was a good officer and a real trooper. I, also want to thank you for the POINTERS and material. Enclosed is a donation to help keep up the great work. It keeps old memories alive.

Sincerely,

Okey H. Ford
5735 State Hwy 152
Richmond, Oh. 43944 740-765-5327

Ford, Nothing wrong with living to be over 100. I hope to make it, too!! (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

I treasure each issue of "THE POINTER". My husband, Richard J. was in the Armed Guard as a signalman on the S.S. JOHN BARRY which was sunk August 28, 1944 in the Arabian Sea off the Coast of Saudi Arabia while enroute from Philadelphia, Pa. to Ras Tanura with general cargo and 26 million dollars in silver bullion. Two Merchant Seamen were killed. The survivors were picked up by the Dutch tanker, S.S. SUNETTA who carried their survivors to Aden and the S.S. BENJAMIN BOURN who carried theirs to Khorramshar, Iran. The German sub was sunk in the Straits of Malacca by the British submarine HMS TRENCHANT on 9/23/44. The BARRY is listed as a "TREASURE SHIP of the TWENTIETH CENTURY" by author Michael Pickford.

I understand that some of the crew were contacted and given a coin. My husband who wrote the report for the Navy Captain was not interviewed. It is a long

story. I have not been able to locate any of his shipmates. The SALVAGE STORY is fascinating. Thank you sincerely for what you have done to perpetuate the memory and history of the USN Armed Guard in WW II. Donation enclosed.

Mary E. Stark
435 Toad Valley Rd.
POB 123, Dalamatia, Pa. 17017

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

Everything is going fine. The story about the poor Russian from a POW camp is pretty sad. You know, during the last conference between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin in Yalta they agreed that all of the Russian captives as well as refugees from Soviet Russia would be returned to the Soviet Union. It may sound awful, but Stalin called everybody who was captured a deserter. Well, and another thing - here in Murmansk some of the refugees and POW's (especially those who fought against the communists and escaped after the Soviets won) were shot right after they disembarked. It still remains one of the darkest pages in Murmansk's history. They don't like to talk about it in Russia, you know, and they would rather let the story pass away.

Have a good week, Yours....

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi Charles and American Friends,

Ken Wright (Ausie) has been in touch with me, my book has been published by my Granddaughter and her boy friend Paul, my wife and I gave the manuscript to our granddaughter to further her musical career. My purpose in writing this book is to erase the stigma once and for all about the Australian Merchant Navy; it's a story that has to be told. Most books regarding the war years hardly men-

tion the Australian Merchant Navy and its leading role in the Pacific in WWII I know that if the American people got to read this book, they would gladly fly the Australian Red Ensign, along side the Stars and Stripes, on the third day of September each year we had so much in common in WWII. In the defining moment of the battle for our very existence, those brave and gallant men and boys from America, Australia, New-Zealand and Holland of the small ships section, with the support of the larger ships of the Merchant Navies, the Allied Navies all one Brotherhood of the sea, who became glorious victors in war, and triumphant heroes, immortalized in perpetuity. Hope you like the write up from the Herald/Sun Newspapers, 3rd September Merchant Navy day 2009 here in Australia. For more information you can contact the Publishers admin@masterperformers.com.au could you please pass on this message to all our American friends and Comrades in WWII, throughout America.

I remain yours truly,
Wm. F Andrews Veteran WWII
8 Raven Close
Carrum Downs, 3201
Victoria Australia.
wfandrews@optusnet.com.au

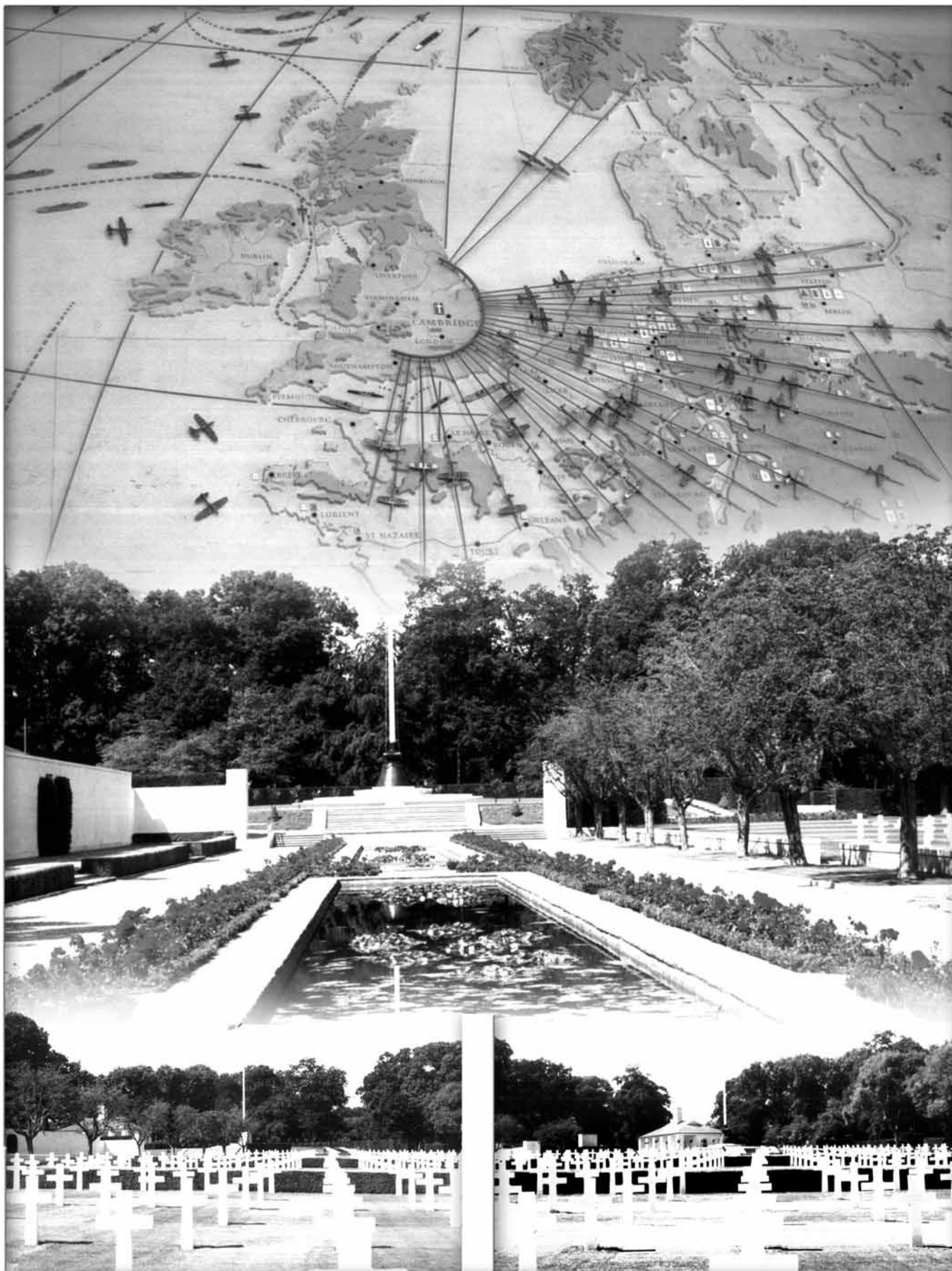
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hello Cal,

Many thanks for the "Pointer" May/July 2009 and your message. I always find it interesting. I also received the Sept/Dec 2006 edition which I read with deep interest the article "Running the Gauntlet" (Russian convoys).

In my researches last year in the National Archives in UK I came across a Panamanian ship NORTON, which was sunk by U-516 on 20th March

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

1943. This ship had mainly a Norwegian crew but also had 14 U.S. Naval Armed Guard on board. 2 of whom were killed, unfortunately no names were given of these two men. Ensign Shotwell was in charge of the Naval Armed Guard. The ship was on passage Basra and Table Bay for Bahia, Trinidad and Philadelphia, and was torpedoed about 300 miles south of Walvis Bay (South West Africa) the position being 27.35S 14.22E. The cargo was chrome ore, asbestos, lead, and copper concentrates. Crew 33, 1 USA 1 Belgian, 1 Danish, 4 British and 26 Norwegian. 7 casualties including the Master and 2 Gunners. The ship broke in half and went down in three minutes. One of the lifeboats was broken by the first torpedo which struck starboard side amidships followed by a second torpedo about half a minute later just forward of the bridge. Three lifeboat got into the water, but one capsized. Most of the crew jumped into the water and were picked up by the two remaining boats. The boats set sail for the coast 50 miles away and landed on a small island the next day, from there they went to another island. From here they went to Luderitz Bay in South West Africa. According to the Admiralty War Diary 38 survivors arrived at Luderitz Bay.

Pleased to know you keep steaming on, and long may you do so. Do you happen to know if Arthur Moore is still steaming along, I sincerely hope so, but I do not know for sure. Here we have our Merchant Navy Remembrance day on 3rd September, and go out to sea on a small pleasure cruiser and lay a wreath on the sea before returning to harbour and having a social evening. 3rd September 1939 was the first day of WWII and also the first casualties in the Merchant Navy. We also have a service on Remembrance Sunday in November when we attend an all service for those lost in WWII from the Chapel we march down to the harbour and then



have another short service at the lifeboat house on the edge of the sea, and at 1100 hours prompt a maroon is fired to mark the start of the 2 minute silence, followed then by another maroon to mark the end of the silence. Then we proceed to the rowing club opposite the lifeboat house where we and the Royal Navy get together for a social get together for two or three hours. Best wishes.

David Sibley, (Historian)
Moorcroft, Castel Ln East,
Ayton, Scarborough, GB YO13 9EN
david.sibley2007@tesco.net

Thanks Sibley for this info. It shows many Armed Guard on foreign ships were killed and injured. cal

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi Charles,

Thanks for your kind email, and also for the magazines I received last week. I can send you a whole series of pictures for your use in updating your readers on the progress of "Hellas Liberty" Ex. Arthur M. Huddell. I was in Greece a couple of weeks ago,

and the progress is very impressive.

The Greek Merchant seamen are visiting the vessel on a daily basis admiring the efforts for the restoration and are excited with the results. We must remember that after WW2, the Greeks acquired over 600 of the 950 Liberty Ships that were used as merchant vessels, and sailed on them for over 30 years. When the Arthur M. Huddell arrived in Piraeus on January 11, 2009, many of the Greek Liberty ship seamen greeted the vessel with tears in their eyes, recalling their sailing days. Find below a few pictures, and advise how I can assist you in updating your viewers?

Best Regards,
Jim Tampakis

*Jim Tampakis,
On page 9 of THE LIBERTY LOG - Summer 2009 were photos of the S.S. ARTHUR M. HUDDALL and the article on her and that you furnished the photos. I was wondering if you had good copies that are shown that you can send by E-Mail or regular mail. I would like to reprint the story and if you care to add to it, please do as I would like to include it in our NON-*

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

PROFIT Magazine, THE POINTER. And if you have the address whereby I can reach them by E-Mail or their mailing address. I, too, sailed on a Lend-Lease Greek Liberty Ship, the S.S. MIAOULIS to England; Ghent and Antwerp Belgium and home in 1945. The Merchant Seamen were Greek with the USN Armed Guard as gun crews. What a wonderful, appreciative merchant crew they were. One was a barber and he cut everyone's hair on the ship "FREE". He would not take one cent. Thanks,

Charles A. Lloyd

USN Armed Guard WWII Veterans

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal,

Enjoyed the copy of the POINTER. I had not read many pages when I ran across the article about the S.S. TONTO at Saipan. I was Messman at 17 years old on the Ethiopian Victory and we had just unloaded the majority of our load at Anguar in the Palau Group consisting of bombs for the B-24 group to bomb the Phillipines. We still had a large tonnage of incendiaries which we took to Saipan. We arrived just before Christmas 1944. We were allowed ashore and I went up to the air-base where we saw B-29s which we did not know even existed. We met some of the Air Force personnel and we told them what we had brought them. They assured us that they would deliver them to Japan for us.

We left Saipan and returned to the States and I caught another ship, the S.S. BUCKNELL VICTORY and loaded at Port Chicago, Ca. and headed back to the Pacific war zone. We joined a Convoy to Ulithi and took ammo to Okinawa where I celebrated my 18th birthday. We were unloading when the battleship USS NEW MEXICO was hit by a Kamakazi on May 13th in the number one hold killing a reported, at the time, eight gunners. While unloading, I met some of the

Marines and in talking to them, I found out that there was a Marine from my hometown. The next day, he visited me. I did not see another buddy as he was doing picket duty and they were hit. He was seriously wounded but lived to be 77 years of age. We returned to Frisco in June and I caught the S.S. CAPE FLORIDA to the South Pacific and the Phillipines with medical supplies. I returned to the States, joined the Army, winding up in Japan in the 11th Airborne.

My reason for joining the Merchant Marines was that I had an older brother, Robert E. Shackelford who was torpedoed near Bermuda on June 28, 1942 and survived 21 days on a liferaft. He had attended King's Point from the CCCs in 1941. We didn't know what the MM was or did. His ship sailed from New York on Dec. 1, 1941 and we didn't know he had sailed and we had no idea the name of the ship. They sailed to India and returned toward the States and the ship was torpedoed somewhere near Bermuda June 28, 1942 and we didn't know until he got home. Thanks. Sincerely,

James L. Shackelford (MM)
7011 Woods Dr.
Newburg, In. 47630
812-853-8875

Thank you James for serving and writing your story. As you know, I searched Capt. Art Moore's book, "A CARELESS WORD-A NEEDLES SINKING" and the date you gave of his ship's sinking and there was the listing of the S.S. RAPHAEL SEMMES sinking 875 miles East of Cape Canaveral, Fl. enroute from Bombay, India. She carried a crew of 37 Merchant Seamen and 19 went down with the ship. Ten of the survivors were taken aboard the sub and given medical supplies before being released back to the life rafts. The sub was bombed and sunk near Spain on May 2, 1943. There were no survivors. Cal

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CA,

It took me awhile, but I found the calendar order form. It is attached. So far as permission to reprint the story from Mr. Gauss, it is all right with me.

Joan

Thanks Joan. I will call tonight. I have the same problems. Thanks.
cal

Dear CA,

This particular item I had saved for some time. I could not find Mr. Gauss in any of our membership lists existing from the time he sent this in 2003, so I did a search today as well. Found a man by the same name, same town, different PO box. He may still be alive.

Search results from Internet:

John Gauss
Box 1725
Portola, CA 96122
Phone 530-832-4602

He used PO Box 1539 in 2003. Otherwise, address was same.

Good luck,

Joan

Joan.

I would like the address of John Gauss whose write-up was on page 7 in the Liberty Log. I may still have a few Armed Guard still alive who would like to talk to him. His Telephone number also if you have it. I pulled up all the John Gauss's names in COMPUTER SEARCH but too many by that name. I would like to have permission to put the story in the POINTER.

Also, if you have the TANKERS OF WWII ORDER FORM whereby you can send it by E-Mail, send it to me and I will send out to our NEW OL' SALTS as we find them.

Good night from North Carolina.
calloyd

Tankers of World War II

Project Liberty Ship's Calendar for 2010



For years buyers of our calendars have been asking, "When will you do a calendar featuring tankers?" Well, this is it! Twelve months worth of tanker photos, three dozen of them ~ both navy and merchant marine tankers of the WW II era. If you want one or more calendars, just fill out the order form below and mail it to Project Liberty Ship.

Yes! I wish to purchase Project Liberty Ship's 2010 calendar, "Tankers of World War II"
____ Send me one calendar. Price \$18. or: Send me ____ calendars at \$16 ea.
Maryland residents please add 6% sales tax.

name _____ address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____ phone _____

Payment enclosed in the amount of \$ _____ for _____ calendar(s)

Charge to my: Visa _____ Master Card _____. Card number _____

Expiration date _____ Signature _____ V code (on back of card: last

three digits printed on signature block). _____ .

Please make checks payable to: PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP. Mail to: Project
Liberty Ship Calendar. P.O. Box 25846, Highlandtown Station, Baltimore, MD.
21224.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal, 10/10/09

It's been many moons since I wrote to you. I want to THANK YOU for the Feb/April 2009 POINTER Edition I received, and all the other Editions in the past. It brought back many memories since I was attached to the Brooklyn, N.Y. Armed Guard Center 1ST Ave-52ND Street from 1942-1945 as Ship's Company in the Supply Department. There are many names I recognized in the listing of the First Anniversary Banquet. At the Capital Hotel in NYC on 9/17/43. All the roster of officers on Christmas 1942 are familiar as well.

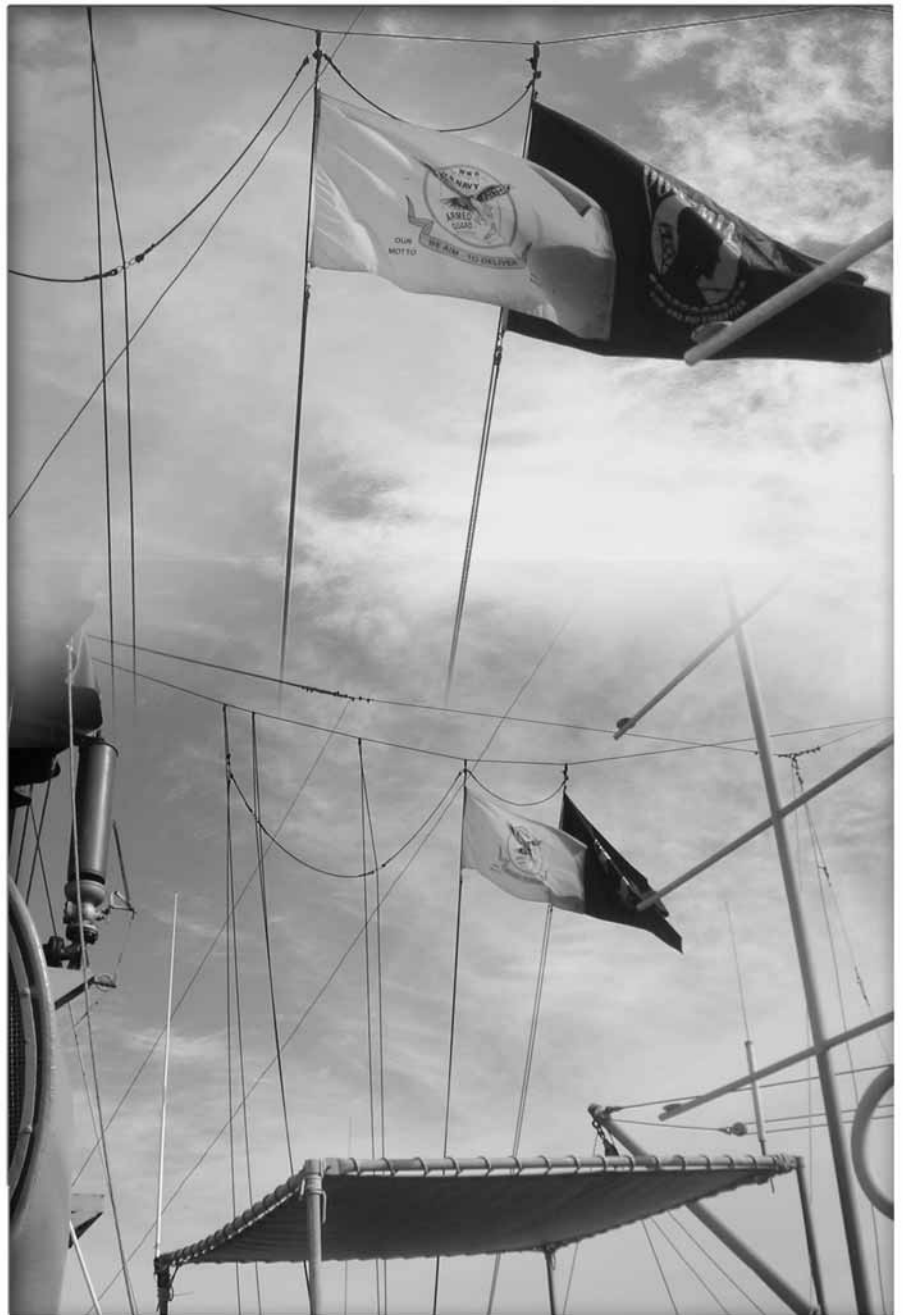
My memory brings me back to the days when the Armed Guard crews reported back to the Center for rest and transfer back to another ship. Also, the survivors of sunken ships who came back all covered with thick, black oil all over, nothing on but their skivvies and glad to be alive from being torpedoed by a German U-Boat.

They had to be cleaned up, fed, issued new clothing, bedded down and ready to be shipped out again. After a few days of rest. This is where the Ship's Company, including Supply and Disbursing Departments helped to square them away. I learned a lot from the letters that I read from the Armed Guard survivors. Some of the stories they told were unbelievable of what they had to endure. Thanks Cal for your inspiration and contribution to the Armed Guard through the POINTER. BRAVO ZULU. Sincerely,

Fred Viskovich,
53 Hooyman Dr., Clifton, N.J.
973-471-4388 (Born 3/13/17)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi Cal,



Yesterday I went over to the ship. It being Veterans Day they were flying our Armed Guard Flag along with the MIA Flag. I took some pictures and I thought I would forward them to you and to our Armed Guard buddies.
John Stokes, California

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles,

I am sorry it has taken me so long

to come back to you. Yes, thanks, I recieved Pointer Magazine.

Since I returned from Bari I have been under much pressure from the publisher to finish the book, so I havent done much else. It will be published in about two weeks.

I am sending you some photos from Bari. One from the harbor shows thje exact place at "vecchio

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

molo Faranco", where SS Grace Abbott were situated during the bombing. There is the memorial anchor and the text. Also a few photos from the british wargrave at Bari with

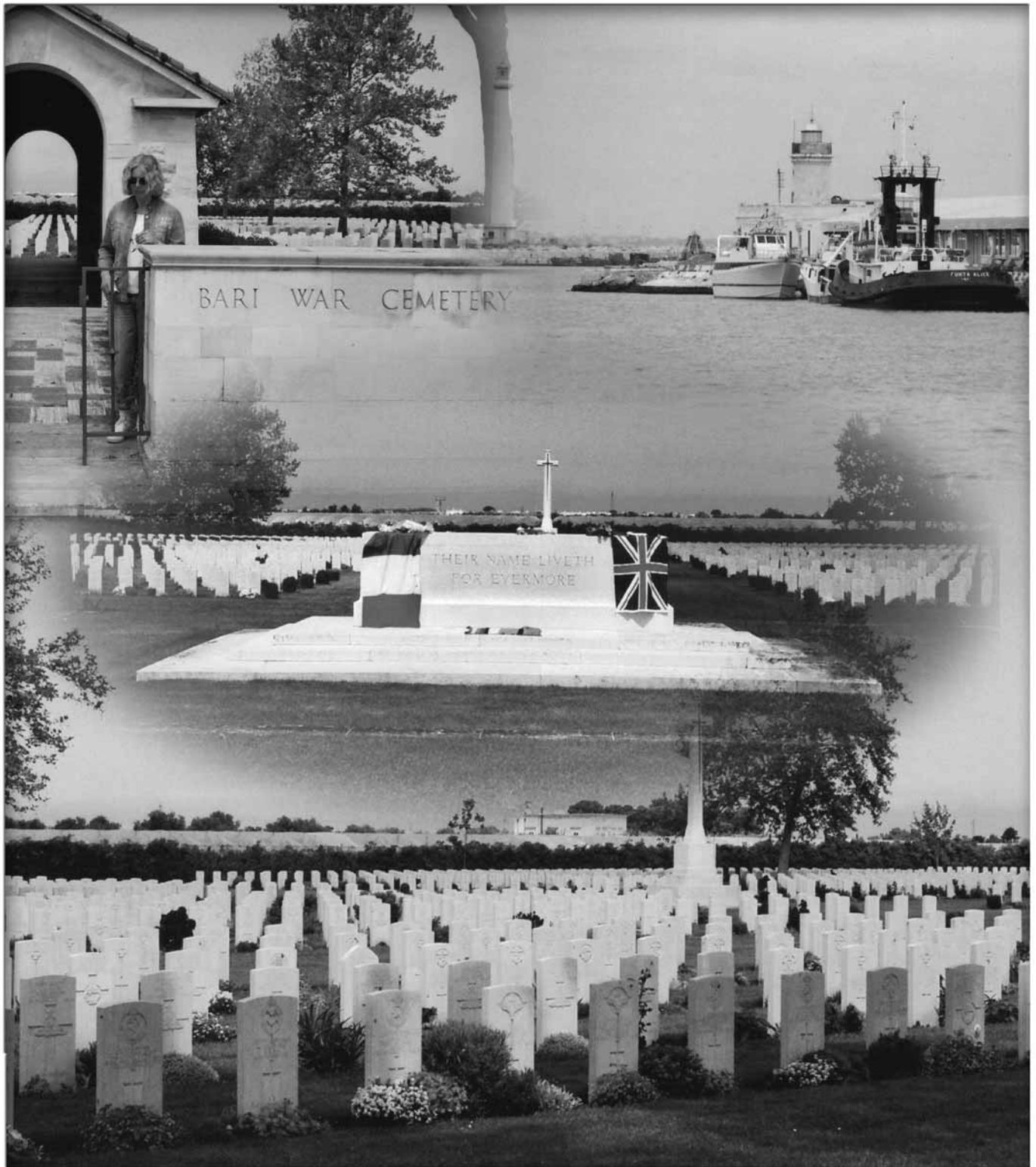
2.200 graves - most of them victims of the december 2nd. 1943 bombing.

Best Henrik

Front cover and images below sent

in by Henrik.

See story page 22.



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

Texas 2010 Annual Mini-Reunion will be held on March 11-14, 2010 at the Holiday Inn on HIWY 290 in Brenham, Tx. with Hilmer Schmidt, 800 Indian Hill Rd., Brenham, Tx. 77833 979-836-7672 as host. hsc1@hughes.net . Hilmer has a friend, Debbie Wade, 8810 Cadawac, Houston, Tx. 77074 713-703-5702 dwade@sbcglobal.net who will assist him.

U.S.NAVY ARMED GUARD VETERANS Rhode Island and Eastern Massachusetts Chapter 1287 SOUTH BROADWAY, EAST PROVIDENCE, RI 02914 Phone: 401-431-0011 or cell- 401-474-2732 E-Mail: USNAGV@AOL.COM We meet twice a year on the First Thursday of April and the first Thursday of October on the corner of Broad Street and Rhodes Place in The Imperial Room at # 1 Rhodes Place, Cranston, RI 02905 Anyone interested may Call or E-Mail Gerry Greaves at the info above.

Il/Wi meetings for 2010 will be: Feb. 9; April 13; June 15; Aug. 17 and Nov. 16. at Sturtevant Driftwood Restaurant. Hosts are Jay and Jane Wildfong 13211 Durand Ave. Sturtevant, Wi. 53117 262-886-2966 WILDFONGJ@cs.com

US Navy Armed Guard & Merchant Marine Veterans of WW II. Meet every third (3rd) Saturday of the month, except June, July and August at Marsh Landing Restaurant at 44 North Broadway, Fellsmere, FL. For information contact C.F. "Korky" Korker 772 571-0230 E-Mail korkykorker@aol.com

The LOGANSPORT, IN. AREA meets at the VFW POST 1024 Erie Ave. on the last Friday of each month at 11:30 except December. Hosts are William and Betty Zwyers, 9239 N State Rd 29, Frankfort,

In. 46041 765-258-3353 They welcome all to attend.

The Rochester, N.Y. Area AG/MM meet on the 2nd Tuesday 11 A.M. at the JAY'S DINER 2612 W.Henrietta Rd., Rochester, N.Y 585-424-3710. Hosts John Shevlin 585-467-2057; Walter Mace 585-394-7165, Frank Hutter 585-473-8103 & Joan Lucci 585-388-0576 says to come on and join them.

Albany, NY Area Armed Guard/Merchant Marine WW II meet the 4th Thurs. of month at Schyler Inn, 545 Broadway, Menands NY at 11:30 AM. Host are Art and Marion Fazzone 3936 Albany St., Schenectady, NY 12304-4371 (518)374-5377 mamoon3@aol.com and Peter Falasco, 49 Monroe Ave., Latham, NY 12118 (518) 785-7890

Patrol Craft Sailors Assn. Reunion will be held April 28-May 1, 2010 at the Long Beach Hilton Hotel, Long Beach, Ca. Host: Duane Walters, 103 Cross Rd., Camillus, N.Y. 13031 315-487-2623 buckypcsa@twcny.rr.com

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND Armed Guard Veterans of WW II will hold their 2010 Spring Meeting Wednesday May 12 at noon at the RED BLAZER Restaurant in Concord N.H.. RSVP by MAY 8, 2010 to Bob Norling 603-224-4927 E-Mail Uppa1924@aol.com

The American Merchant Marine Veterans Chapter called the SILICON VALLEY MARINE CHAPTER would like for any of you of the Armed Guard WW II in California to join them for lunch in the back room of CARROW'S RESTAURANT at 3180 El

Camino Real, Santa Clara, Ca. on the 4th Friday of each month (except Nov/Dec) at 11:30 A.M.. They take in the Santa Clara Veterans Day Memorial Services at the Memorial Park and would like to have many Armed Guard to come join in the comradary and show their AG Colors. Contact: Perry Adams, 5100 EL CAMINO REAL Apt 303, Los Altos, Ca 94022 650-967-3696. Or any MM/AG groups who would like to join in to talk ol' salt talk.

WVA Armed Guard/MM Mini-Reunion will be Sept. 25, 2010 at the "RANCH HOUSE Restaurant in Conference Room Rt 55, Craigsville, Wv. 304-742-6117. Hosts Forrest Flanagan, PO BOX 119, Craigsville, Wv. 26205 304-742-3160 or Robert Wheeler 203 Hunt Ave. Beckley, Wv. 304-255-0897

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - SAN FERNANDO VALLEY Coco's California Room. Armed Guard and MM WWII, meet the 3rd Sat. of month at 11am for breakfast, laughs, and conversation. We have never missed a month and going on 7 years. Join in! AG/MM WWII and their ladies welcomed. Pete C Sorensen, Host 13852 Tucker Ave., Sylmar, Ca. 91342 818-367-7763



BOOKS

**NAMES OF BOOKS ON ARMED
GUARD AND MERCHANT
SEAMEN ARE PLACED HERE
FOR YOU AND FUTURE
GENERATION WHO SHOULD
READ THESE "POINTERS."**

ON THE SWING SHIFT

by Tony Cope. Building Liberty Ships
in Savannah.Ga. And a lot of history.

ISBN 978-1-59114-123-5

U.S. Naval Institute

291 Wood Rd.

Annapolis, MD 21402

(800) 233-8764

Great new book (cal)

(The USNI also has UNSUNG
SAILORS by Justin Gleichauf)

DIARY OF A MURMANSK SURVIVOR

by R. Montegue Anderson

ISBN 0-9638884-0-4

\$29.95

USN ARMED GUARD WW II by

Philip I. Crumb (AG)

453 Grove Island Circle,

Vero Beach, Fl. 32962

E-mail verophilc@bellsouth.net

\$20 check or M.O. includes S&H

In print as of 10/1/09 as far as I
know. (calloyd)

WAVES ASTERN

by E. Spurgeon Campbell

ISBN: 1-4184-9892-0 and

1-4184-9893-9

WORLD WAR II IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

by C.J. Christ

www.cjchrist.com \$29.95

HELL-BENT FOR ADVENTURE

by Jack Mahanney

Amazon.com \$13.50

Authorhouse.com \$13.50. Also see
book stores.

NO SURRENDER

by Gerald Reminick

ISBN 1-889901-34-2

NOTICE: BMC PUBLICATIONS

New address is:

Bill and Sandra McGee

P.O. Box 1012

Tiburon, Ca. 94920

415-435-1883

bmcpublications@aol.com Mail to
his old address will not be forwarded

BLOOD AND BUSHIDO

by Bernard Edwards 97-72347

IT DIDN'T HAPPEN ON MY WATCH

by George Murphy 95-68646

THIRTEEN DESPERATE HOURS

by M. Johnson

ISBN 0-89745-258-5

WITH THE SOMMELSDIJK

Paul Ellwood – Glencannon Press

United States Navy Memorial

ISBN 0-9619812-0-2

THE VOYAGE OF S.S. JEREMIAH

O'BRIEN 1994 94-92400

THE LAST LIBERTY

(S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN)

ISBN 0-9637586-0-8

WREN'S EYE VIEW

Parapress Ltd., Kent, England

ISBN-1-898594-70-8

SCUTTLEBUTT

by George E. Murphy

ISBN 0-8059-5998-X

A MIDSHIPMAN'S WAR

by Frank Wade

ISBN 1-895590-06-X

THE ARMING OF CANADIAN MERCHANT SHIPS IN SECOND

WORLD WAR by RCNA/DEMS

ISBN 0-9693580-9-1

BLUEJACKET ODESSEY

by William L. McGee

ISBN-13: 978-0970167804

BEST LITTLE STORIES FROM WORLD WAR II

by C. Brian Kelly

WITH THE SOMMELSDIJK IN THE FAR PACIFIC

by Dean L. Mawdsley

THE VICTORY SHIPS from

Aberdeen (V) to Zanesville (V)

ISBN-978-1-889901-37-4

by CAPT. Walter W. Jaffee

Glencannon Press 800-711-8985

\$120.00

AMBUSHED UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

by CAPT. George C. Duffy

2 Sterling Hill Lane Unit 236

Exeter, NH. 03833

Tel. 603-772-5191

Library of Congress No. 2008902920

1-888-795-4274

Orders @ Xlibris.com

HELL-BENT TO ADVENTURE

by Richard Gilbert

829-255-0453

rrgilley@bellsouth.net

Paperback, 220 pg., \$10.75

+ Designates books out of print as of
10/10/09 as far as I know. Try to get
them from the library. (cal)

See <http://www.abebooks.com> for
prices and availability.

(These books may be also purchased
from the HISTORICAL SHIPS until
all sold.)

+ A CARELESS WORD- A NEEDLESS SINKING

by CAPT. Arthur R. Moore.

Library of Congress No. 82-73552

BOOKS

+HISTORY OF THE ARMED
GUARD VOLS.1,2 AND 3
87-61281

+SHIPS OF THE ESSO FLEET in
WW II – STANDARD OIL OF CO.

+MERCHANTMAN? OR SHIP
OF WAR
by CHAS.GIBSON 86-80113

+GUNNERS GET GLORY
by LLOYD WENDT
1ST EDITION 1943

+THE DISTRUCTION OF PQ-17
by DAVID IRVING -
L. of C. 87-062155

+A WINNING TEAM
BY THE LATE BOB GALATI (AG),
ALSO,
+GUNNER'S MATE
INNOVATIA PRESS

+THE MEN -THE SHIP - THE
SINKING OF THE DORCH-
ESTER 76-11392

+U-505
BY DANIEL V.GALLERY
+FAMOUS SEA STORIES
by KARL BAARSLAG--
COPYRIGHT 1933

THE MERCHANT MARINE-
PEACE & WAR
by DOMINIC BARBER

GOOD SHIPMATES- VOL.1

"THE RESTORATION OF THE
S.S.JOHN W.BROWN"
BY ERNEST F. IMHOFF .
Published by:
THE GLENCANNON PRESS,
P.O. BOX 341
PALO ALTO, CA. 94302

1-800-711-8985
(SUPERB BOOK)

THE PLANE SHOOTER -
ARMED GUARD SCHOOL -
Shelton, Va 1945 Out of print
"NOTICE"

If anyone has any photos taken on the
"Murmansk Russia Run", Please send
to me so I can have good copies made
of it. Would be better if you did and
send. If you know of any place we can
get FILM FOOTAGE, we need to
know as the ARCTIC CONVOY
GROUP are in need for it. They also
want your stories of the MURMAN-
SK RUN and life as you saw it while
there.

Write you history and send to:
Christine Whittaker
BBC White City • 301 Wood Lane
London, Eng. W12 7TS

12/16/1944

ABOARD THE S.S. CHRISTOPHER GADSDEN – SHIP'S LOB

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 direc-
tions from Port Naval Office, 1800-2400.

1545 Report of bomb exploding in center of buildings down-
town containing two theaters and other amusement places. After
investigating, found that three Armed Guard crew members
were missing: Connors, George Joseph, S1/c, 814-70-97, USNR
Hagerty, William Freeman, Jr., Cox 821-48-74, USNR Long,
Charles William, S1/c, 821-48-70, USNR Merchant Marine
crew member, W. Breece, escaped with minor injuries from
bomb explosion, Companion of Connors, George Joseph, S1/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 for-
ward 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 Shelde 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

JAPANESE POW

Japanese POW
Commander H.A. Erickson
USNR Medical Corps

When the Jap planes wrought havoc on the Cavite Naval Base on December 10, 1941 Commander Erickson had just been reassigned from Mare Island and was the Senior Medical Officer at the Cavite Navy Yard dispensary. Facilities were so severely damaged that 600 patients, 250 hospital corpsmen and 50 medical officers along with Erickson, were moved into Manila to the large Santa Scholastica girls school. As the enemy approached the city, all Army and Navy personnel were evacuated, leaving only two medical men at the make-shift hospital to meet the Japs when they entered Manila January 2nd. The Japs posted guards, systematically confiscated all medical supplies and equipment, and, declaring Santa Scholastica was "too" good for the Americans and ordered that they be moved to a small, run-down elementary school in the Pasay district of the city.

This was gradually done during the next two months. There, they remained until the end of May, and then were again moved, to the famous old Bilibid prison, built by the early Spaniards, used by our forces during the Spanish-American War and later by the Philippine government. Here the Americans stayed for sixteen months, the doctors working heroically under the callous regime of the gloating, impatient enemy. Dysentery,

malaria and the diseases of malnutrition took a heavy toll. The doctors were in a constant struggle with their captors to get even the starvation rations and the trickle of medical supplies they were allowed and to keep ill men hospitalized as long as possible against the insistence of the Japs that men who could barely walk be put to work building airstrips. At length, the Japanese decided the doctors were "resisting the will of the Imperial Army" and the doctors and patients were broken up into two groups to be sent to prison camps. One group, including Commander Erickson was taken to the terrible Cabantuan prison camp ninety miles, northwest of Manila. In the fourteen months, the doctor existed in this hell, 6,000 men died from illness, exhaustion and Jap murder. They were fed a diet of small quantities of rice and grass, with tiny bits of steer heads and hooves once a week. Crawling with filth and disease, the internees were forced to work grueling hours on the prison farm and building defenses. For the slightest infraction of the minutely, elaborate rules, hundreds of prisoners were beaten to death with two-by-fours, shot, beheaded and tortured.

Eating an onion on the farm meant execution. The captors managed to augment their food by trapping and eating snakes, rats, cats and iguanas that came into the camp. The doctor, weak and ill with beri-beri and dysentery, was spared the manual labor. Being allowed to do that, it allowed him to do

what he could for his fellow-prisoners as a doctor. And then, on the morning of January 7th, 1945, the remnants of the internees were suddenly told they were no longer prisoners of war. That afternoon, the guards departed, leaving a month's supply of rice. The next morning, there were no Japs around and the Americans immediately raided the Jap side of the camp, seizing large supplies of flour, rice and many steers. From then on, they were left largely to themselves. The Japanese turned the place into a sort of rest camp for exhausted troops from the front, and the former prisoners were not molested.

On the 9th of January, the Americans heard the shelling at Lingayen Gulf, sixty miles away, and jubilantly knew something was happening. On January 30th, at seven-thirty in the evening, the American troops of the 6th Rangers and Filipino guerrillas swooped down on the camp, killed every guard, and in twenty minutes were conveying 511 rescued men through the twenty-five miles of enemy territory on an all-night to the American lines. Only two of the doctors who were at the Cavite hospital when the Japs came had survived. Commander Erickson is the only survivor from the Cavite Navy Yard Dispensary. Finally, he was free to go home to his wife and two children in Los Angeles, California from whom he had received only eleven letters in three years and the latest one was two years old. On March 17, 1945, Commander H.A. Erickson was on a ship, headed home from three nightmarish years of starvation, and barbaric acts of the troops of war at the hands of the Jap Imperial Army -calloyd

YOUR CALL

A man of influence wanted to give a politician a new car. "You know I can't accept a car, the politico protested, that's bribery". The wheeler and dealer pointed out that he could sell the car to the politician for \$20.00. "In that case" replied the elected official, "I'll take two."

A Congressman once said, "You can't fool all the people all the time, but a simple majority every two years is sufficient."

MY LAST DAYS AS A PRISONER OF WAR

"My Last Days as a Prisoner of War:"

by Dennis A. Roland, 2nd Mate MS SAWOKLA

After we had completed our spur of the Burma-Thailand railroad and the River Kwai bridges, the Japs had us slated to go to Japan but we were in such horrible physical condition they decided to stop off at Katchanburi (Thailand). We were transported in small, metal freight cars blistering hot in the daytime. We stayed at Katchanburi until the Japs thought we were able to travel and continue the trip. We were taken to Singapore in the same metal freight cars. Upon our arrival at Singapore we were taken to a camp at Sime Road, the same place where the British had surrendered to the Japanese.

This was a lovely place compared to the other places I had been kept. Some months later, the Japanese authorities decided we would be sent to Changi jail and the civilians interred there would replace us at Sime Road. I spent about two weeks in a jail cell which was supposed to hold one prisoner. They put fourteen of us in that one cell. I got a bad case of claustrophobia.

It was many days after V-J day before any action was taken to get us back home. The first I knew of it was when a Jap soldier told me, "pretty soon all men shake hands and go home."

On September 9, 1945 I was one of a small group of Americans sent to Kalang Airport in Singapore. American prisoners were picked to go first because the planes were American DC-5's. We were taken in trucks to the airport which was about five miles from the jail. When we got to the airport there were three huge four-engine planes on the runway. Their size stunned me. I went aboard one of them and into the forward compartment where the pilot and co-pilot sat. There I saw a discarded peanut butter sandwich in a waste basket. I picked it up and wanted to eat it right there but decided to take it back to show the others.

The British, who were in charge of the airport, said the runways were too short for so large a plane to take off, so we were returned to the Changi jail with the understanding that a smaller plane would be sent the next day to pick up the Americans.

The following morning, we were like a bunch of kids waiting for Santa Claus. I was so excited I could not eat breakfast. Every minute seemed like an hour but the camp routine went on as usual. Later in the afternoon we Americans were told we were moving out. The time had come to part from our many friends we had made under the most horrible of circumstances. It was a sad parting. Our group was made up of U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force personnel, and a few merchant seamen.

Once again we were taken out to the airport. Waiting on the runways were the same three C-5's, the ones the British said could not take off with a load. They had bucket seats and were those metal seats cold as we were still dressed in rags. There was absolutely no provision made for us in the way of blankets, food, or water. The Army doctor, who had been sent on board to care for us, wept unashamedly when he saw the condition we were in. Among us were some very sick men.

After we became airborne, our pilot made three passes over the Changi jail grounds at about 500' altitude. We had our faces pressed to the port and looking down we could see our former comrades-in suffering jumping up and down waving their arms. Then the plane climbed and they disappeared. I left part of me there with them.

Some time later we landed at Dum-Dum Airport in Calcutta, India. This was in the early hours of the morning. Ambulances took us to the 142nd Army Hospital. We were questioned and processed. Then we were turned loose in the mess hall. Like the others, I passed along the line where we were served huge portions of food. I staggered to a table and tried to eat. After one or two bites, I could not eat any more. I looked at the huge tray of food and wondered what my friends back in Changi jail were doing for food. To throw this food away was something beyond my wildest imagination.

As a prisoner, I had nightmares of fresh food and water. As a kid living in Greenwich Village in New York, I played with match sticks sailing them down the gutter into the sewer. I often thought of all that fresh water just going down the sewer to be lost forever. Now I was faced with a tray full of delicious food and I couldn't eat it. My stomach simply would not take any more. It all ended up in the garbage can and was taken away by the local Indian help who used it for their meals.

After our arrival at the 142nd, the various Armed Forces men in our group were taken in tow by their respective services but the merchant seamen had absolutely no one to guide them. We were given cast-off khakis to put on. The others were given brand new uniforms and accessories. What was wrong with us? We were Americans too! Our ships had been sunk in action, we had been taken prisoner, and imprisoned with military men. Now we were suddenly outsiders, like a fifth wheel!

The first night, we were taken to our beds. They were so clean and white. I did not have the heart to disturb them. So I did what I had done for three years. I slept on the bare concrete floor until a day later when I got the courage to get into the bed.

During our stay at the 142nd, the merchant seamen in our group were taken to a nightclub by some American Export Line people who knew us from visits to Calcutta on Export Line ships prior to the war. One evening, some representatives of the United States Seamen's Service came to the hospital and gave us a dinner party of sorts and also gave us ten American dollars each. I will never forget this kindness shown by the United Seamen's Service.

Merchant Seamen were being shipped out on the first available planes with a second class priority. One day, four of us were cleared for departure. We finally got aboard a plane bound for the U.S.A. This time it wasn't the bucket type seat but it was an upholstered one. We weren't served any meals. We had to purchase box-type lunches at 25 cents per box. We paid for these with the money given us by the United Seamen's Service and money advanced on our salaries by American Export Line representatives.

After leaving Calcutta, the plane stopped at Casablanca, Santa Maria in the Azores, Gander, Newfoundland, and finally LaGuardia Airport in New York City. We landed early in the morning of September 15, 1945.

We were met at the plane and taken to St. Alban's Hospital in an ambulance and bedded down on cots. Two days later an ambulance from the Marine Hospital in Stapleton, Staten Island came to St. Albans and picked us up. I remained at that hospital overnight. Then I went home.

After three years in the hands of the enemy, both German and Japanese, I was home!

Author's note: Dennis A. Roland passed away at the age of 76 in December 1984 at his home in Astoria, NY. He had fought for years to get recognition from the U.S. Government for the U.S. Merchant Seamen who served in World War II. He was 2nd Officer of the MS SAWOKLA when she was sunk by the German Raider MICHEL and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner. He was one of the few survivors of the infamous Burma-Thai Railway. (See pages 255, 332, and 333). This account was written and sent to me by Dennis Roland a few weeks before he died.

From the book, "A CARELESS WORD" by Capt. Art Moore

HONOR AMONG WARRIORS

FOR THE POINTER MAGAZINE

Anne Marsh • Archivist & Computer Support Institute on WWII and the Human Experience
Florida State University • Tallahassee, FL 32306-2200 • (850) 644-9545 • <http://www.fsu.edu/fiww2>

In last issue of the Pointer Magazine (May/July 2009) on the bottom of page 8, someone wrote about Anne Marsh and the Institute on WWII and Human Experience. I received several phone calls from Armed Guard veterans who served their country during WWII. Thank you very much for phoning. I would like to take a moment to tell you a little bit about me, as well the Institute on WWII and Human Experience.

In 2005, my dream job of working full time for the Institute on WWII came true. I am an Archivist and in charge of the Institute's webpage and all its computer support. I also run the Research room assisting students and researchers in finding collections pertaining to their topics of interest. I supervise scanning of collections as well as other preservation tasks. Also, I occasionally travel, giving presentations to groups such as FSU Emeritus groups, church groups, school classes, WW II veteran's reunions, etc. My dad served in the Marines in the Pacific so working for the Institute is my way of honoring him and all World War II veterans.

In 1997, the Institute on WWII and the Human Experience was established. Two people contacted Dr. Oldson, Director of the Institute within about six months wanting to have their WWII memorabilia preserved for future generations. They did not want their memorabilia thrown out. One of Dr. Oldson's areas is the Holocaust, so he immediately said yes, realizing the need for a depository for WWII memorabilia. Since 1997, we have received over 7,000 collections from individuals. They range from letters, diaries, photographs, newsletters, artifacts, artwork, books, memoirs, maps. We collect anything relating to WWII (except we're overstocked on uniforms).

Being that we are part of Florida State University and in the History department we have many students coming in to do

research, reading about the everyday men and women who served their country during WWII, whether it was on the Home Front or overseas. The students are reading and learning about it in a way that they will never get from a textbook. The memorabilia makes it come alive for them. It is not just college students coming for research; we have had sixth graders doing History Fair projects. The film producers for the History Channel used our collections extensively for the documentary series The Color of War, and other outside researchers, have used our collections.

If you have your WWII memorabilia, or have written your experiences down, don't let them be thrown away. I know that we do not have much on the men who served in the Armed Guard. Help us to expand our collections on the service and experiences of the Armed Guard during WWII. If you participated in the Murmansk Run, I have a student doing a Honor thesis about that, this semester.

Email amarsh@ww2.fsu.edu or call (850) 644-9545 if you would like an information packet sent to you.

Thank you for serving your country. You indeed are the "Greatest Generation" that should never be forgotten.

Thanks Ann for what you and FSU do to preserve the memories and memorabilia of World War II. A little late for many but at least you have many things saved that would otherwise be untold History of our era. Keep up the great work to let the generations to come know some of the things so many suffering to turn back the enemy who were, and still are, hellbent to take away our Freedom. Wake up America before it is too late. calloyd

**Those of you who made the Murmansk, Russia Run, or;
those of the United Kingdom living in the U.S.A.,
contact Phil at: phil.saltonstall@fco.gov.uk
Phil is serving RN Officer, working for the British Foreign
and Commonwealth Office at the UN in New York.
The Russians are presenting
65 year Medal of Honor of their service.**

TRAGEDY AT BARI, ITALY

Naval Armed Guard Service
during WWII: Tragedy at Bari,
Italy, 2 December 1943.

One of the most disastrous bombing attack against allied ships during the entire war took place at Bari, Italy, on December 2, 1943. This port was in the British theater of operations, but several American [merchant] ships with [U.S. Navy] Armed Guard aboard were at Bari on that fateful day [when a German air raid occurred]. When the last bomb had fallen, and the last ship exploded, and the large fires had run their course, 17 ships had been sunk and six damaged. There were five United States ships sunk and one damaged. One other United States ship came through unscathed.

The Joseph Wheeler had her starboard side blown out and was on her port side when her Armed Guard officer, who had been ashore arranging for the pay of his men, last saw her. The only Armed Guard survivors were the officer and twelve men who were taking a well-earned liberty in the town. There were 15 Armed Guard dead or missing and 26 of the merchant crew missing.

The Samuel J. Tilden was bombed and then sunk by two British torpedoes to prevent danger to other ships. A bomb crashed through to the engine room at about 1920 and an incendiary bomb hit forward of the bridge. The German pilot, of the attacking aircraft, strafed the deck with machine gun fire. Anti-aircraft fire from ashore also hit the ship. A searchlight was [shined] on the ship for seven minutes after the attack began, apparently because somebody ashore forgot to turn it off. All of the Armed Guard survived but the dead and missing among the merchant crew numbered 10 and there were also casualties to Army personnel [who were on board]. All of the Armed Guard were lost with the John Harvey [which was carrying mustard gas]. Most of the merchant crewmen were also missing.

Apparently the only people who survived were those who were ashore.

The John L. Motley had grim luck on her trip to the Mediterranean. On August 8, calcium carbide had caused an explosion and fire [on board]. Then came her end at Bari. There were only five survivors from her Armed Guard, and 30 of the merchant crew were missing or dead. Four of her survivors were ashore. It was reported that three bombs hit the ship. The Lyman Abbott was more fortunate, for she escaped with only moderate damage. Her report indicates that the harbor was crowded with some 30 ships plus one ship outside and that the harbor soon became an inferno of flames and smoke accompanied by violent explosions of the burning ships. The master ordered "abandon ship" at 2015 when several burning ships drifted close, but she was re-boarded [when the danger passed]. Her only damage from bombs was to her rudder, but the explosions added to her damage. One Armed Guard was killed and the Army Cargo Security Officer also died. Nearly all of the Armed Guards suffered burns and some of them were hit by fragments. All in all, it was a grim night for the Abbott, but she was able to leave on January 10 [1944].

The Louis Hennepin was the only ship carrying Armed Guard which escaped without material damage. But two bombs landed about 100 yards from the ship and two Armed Guard were wounded. Her Armed Guard officer reported that lights along the dock stayed on for 13 minutes after the first bomb dropped, and he declared that port facilities were inadequate and that there was a lack of coordination. This ship fired some 6,000 rounds of 20mm ammunition during the attack. She also fired on December 11.

The John Bascom was hit by three bombs at 1945. This fine ship was apparently the first in the harbor to

open fire on the attacking German aircraft. An explosion on the John L. Motley caused the whole port side of the Bascom to cave in. The ship did not have a chance to survive. From this awful carnage emerged one of the finest heroes of the Armed Guard Service. Ensign Kay K. Vesole won the Navy Cross and later had a Navy ship named for him. But he lost his life in heroic service to his crew. Wounded in the shoulder and over the heart, he still went from gun to gun directing action and rendering aid to the wounded and dying. Weak from the loss of blood, he conducted a party of his men below decks and supervised the carrying of wounded to the boat deck. When the ship was in a burning and sinking condition he supervised the loading of the only lifeboat not destroyed. His crew had to force him into the lifeboat. He wanted to swim to make room for men with worse wounds than his. He insisted on rowing with his uninjured arm as he helped disembark the wounded. He helped carry wounded to the bomb shelter and had to be restrained from going back into the flames to rescue other wounded when an ammunition ship blew up. He dispatched a signalman to the end of the jetty to signal for help. He refused to embark in the first boat sent to rescue the Bascom survivors but was forced into the second. He appears to have sacrificed every chance to recover in his efforts to save others. He was in every sense one of the finest heroes of World War II and typified the finest in the traditions of the Navy and the Armed Guard Service. From this destruction of his ship nine of his Armed Guard perished with him. Nine men from that crew were awarded Bronze Star Medals.

Bari was one of those sudden blows which did great damage but did not long delay the victorious march of the allies in Italy. The blow was too sudden for Armed Guard to do much to defend their ships. It well illustrates the danger which was always just around the

TRAGEDY AT BARI, ITALY

corner for all Armed Guard crews. Men who go through such actions have to be highly disciplined and trained, and to have superb courage.

Among the ships sunk when German JU-88 bombers attacked the port of Bari on the night of 2 December 1943 was John Harvey, which was carrying mustard gas intended for use in retaliation by the Allies if German forces initiated gas warfare. Most of the released gas was carried out to sea by an offshore breeze, but many military and civilian personnel were temporarily incapacitated or killed by undetermined amounts of the gas which were held in solution in oil that was floating on the water. Of the more

than 800 casualties hospitalized after the raid, 628 suffered from mustard gas exposure. Sixty-nine deaths were attributed in whole or in part to this cause.

Medical officers and aidmen treating the casualties were unaware of the presence of the gas, which was diluted sufficiently to be detected by odor. In the belief that casualties covered with oil but showing no physical damage were suffering from exposure and immersion, they were wrapped in blankets, still in their oil-soaked clothing, given hot tea, and left as they were for twelve to twenty-four hours while the more urgent blast injuries and surgical cases were treated.

Those with the energy and will to clean the oil from their own bodies suffered no serious damage, but the remainder suffered varying degrees of mustard burns. Eyes began to burn about 6 hours after exposure, and were so badly swollen in 24 hours that many of the patients thought themselves blind. The first deaths occurred without warning 18 hours after exposure. About 90 percent of the gas casualties were American, the bulk of them merchant seamen. Since no U.S. hospital facilities were yet available in Bari - equipment for all but one of the U.S. hospitals scheduled for the area were destroyed in the bombing - casualties were hospitalized in British installations.

Continued on Page 30



(Photo By Captain Adolf Larson)

"Esso Raleigh" smashing through to aid of disabled freighter



United States Navy Memorial Foundation

701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. • Suite 123 • Washington, D.C. 20004-2608
(202) 737-2300 • ahoy@navymemorial.org • www.navymemorial.org • FAX (202) 737-2308

October 14, 2009

Mr. Charles A. Lloyd, Chairman
USN Armed Guard WWII Veterans
115 Wall Creek Drive
Rolesville, NC 27571

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

On behalf of RADM Ted Walker and the United States Navy Memorial, I would like to thank you for the donation of a USN Armed Guard WWII Veterans organizational flag.

We've added the flag to our "flag bag" and will have it available whenever there is an event related to the Armed Guard. We also plan on flying the flag over the Navy Memorial this Veterans Day. We will take a photo of the flag and get it to you so that you can publish it in the next issue of "The Pointer."

Again, thank you for your support of the Navy Memorial.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark T. Weber".

Mark T. Weber
Curator
202-380-0723
mweber@navymemorial.org

THE UNITED STATES NAVY MEMORIAL





CENTER will honor flight

MEMORIAL CELEBRATION



THE UNITED STATES NAVY MEMORIAL



MURMANSK RUN

RECOLLECTIONS OF RICHARD LOWE ON THE MURMANSK RUN

I volunteered for the navy in December, 1941. This was a short time after the United States was forced into World War II. I was placed on inactive duty until after Christmas of that year. I was called into active duty on March 3, 1942. At that time, I was sent to San Diego, California for my boot camp training. In boot camp my company number was 42-145 and my company commander was L. A. McGlothlin. At the time of my boot camp training, the need for men in active service was a premium; therefore I spent only a few weeks in training. Most of the time spent there was to get my hair cut, run through all the medical test, get a supply of clothes and shoes, and get in for all the shots they could think of. They issued me a blue jacket manual and sent me on my way.

I was put into the Armed Guard right out of boot camp. I was shipped to the navy base in New Orleans, Louisiana. New Orleans was to become my home port to ship out of and report back to for a new assignment. I arrived at the New Orleans navy base early in 1942. I was assigned to a new supply ship as one of its gunners. The name of this new ship was the S. S. William Moultrie. It was on this ship that I made the first trip to Murmansk, Russia in 1942. The voyage was also known as the Murmansk Run or the Russian Run.

I boarded the S. S. William Moultrie in Wilmington, North Carolina on June 8, 1942. After sailing to New York for our cargo of tanks, locomotives, dynamite, etc., we set sail for Halifax, Nova Scotia. We left Nova Scotia the following day after arriving. Our next stop was to be Scotland for the final formation of supply convoy PQ-18.

The first Russian bound convoy, PQ-

17, was already on its way and it was the largest one to date to try and run the German blockade. PQ-18 had no official count of the losses PQ-17 had suffered, but word got back to us that of the 44 ships in PQ-17, only 4 remained afloat. The great loss of ships and men in that convoy caused Winston Churchill to stop the departure of convoy PQ-18. Both of these two convoys were under the command of the British fleet.

Joseph Stalin put great pressure on Churchill for more help. The Russian army was being pushed back up to the North Sea and Stalin was about to lose the northern part of his country. Stalin's northern army was cut off from its supplies. Churchill reissued orders for PQ-18 to "move on its planned mission". PQ-18 and the S. S. William Moultrie began its trip to Russia on August 28, 1942.

Our escort, like PQ-17 was to be British ships. They had several heavy cruisers, destroyers, destroyer escorts and mine sweepers within the convoy. The British Navy's plan was to use this large supply convoy to bring the German battleship "Terpits" out to sea. Their plans were to cut the battleship off from its base in Norway and force it into a naval sea battle. They had tried this maneuver with PQ-17. When the "Terpits" came

after PQ-17, The British war ships left the convoy and tried to cut her off from her base. It was then that the Germans hit PQ-17 with air power and in two days the convoy was lost. On the second day of air strikes, with no protection, the convoy split and they became sitting ducks for the Germans. A total of 40 supply ships and men, lost!

PQ-18 expected the British to do the same when the "Terpits" came out after them. However, the ships of PQ-18 were better armed than PQ-17 and were under strict orders to not split and run,

but to hold there position under all cost.

On September 2, 1942, a lone German reconnaissance plane was spotted on the horizon. It remained out of reach and stayed there for quite some time. We judged he was plotting the number of ships, their speed and direction. He never came closer. The next day, September 3, 1942, proved to be the first day of attacks by the Germans on convoy PQ-18. This was the first of eight days of continuous fighting.

The early morning attack was with waves of high altitude Heinkel IIIK bombers, one after another and this lasted several hours. Later in the day, the attacks were switched to several flights of low flying torpedo planes. They made their attacks from the starboard side of the convoy. They flew low and just above the water, dropped their torpedoes and then flew low between the ships in hopes of not drawing fire because of the crossfire among the ships. This proved them wrong because we all fired at anything that moved, regardless of its location. I am sure we did hit some of our own ships, but anti-aircraft guns will not sink a ship. During these attacks, we were constantly strafed by fighter planes who made there passes with quick cannon fire. At near dusk, we began to draw fire from their battleship. We could see the flash from their large guns over the horizon. We had evidence of their marksmanship within our convoy. Several ships were hit before it turned its guns on the British war ships that were coming after it. The return of the high altitude bombers and raiding squadrons of torpedo planes just before dark brought an end to the daylight attacks.

You must understand that at this time of the year there is only three hours of darkness. It would get dark at midnight and last till 3 a.m. in the morning. However, we were attacked at night by

MURMANSK RUN

submarines. Over a period of 8 days we never left our gun stations. Our food was brought to us.

The S. S. William Moultrie's location in the convoy was the last ship of the third row from the starboard side. The starboard side was always the side the attacks were made on. The first full day of attacks by the Germans wiped out the two rows of ships on the starboard side and all the ships of the third line down to the S. S. William Moultrie's position.

The S. S. William Moultrie was the only ship left in that line. There were open spots inside the convoy of lost ships also. The captain had requested permission to move within the convoy, but he was ordered to hold his position. We were left out there alone. As it turned out, we had seven more days of fighting. Our position was such that we would be the first ship they would meet when attacking from that side.

We were subjected to almost constant bombing, submarine, and aerial torpedo attacks from an extraordinary number of enemy units. On September 13, 1942, the S. S. William Moultrie gun crews met nine torpedo planes with a tremendous barrage of withering fire. Three planes were completely destroyed and direct hits were scored upon six other planes. The gunners not only revealed the exact location of a periscope, but with accurate and skillful volleys of gun fire, forced the periscope to submerge. The crew also opened fire on a torpedo charging through the water, exploding it some distance from the ship. There were several other incidents that happened during the eight day battle that I haven't covered at this time.

The S. S. William Moultrie and its sister ships, a total we counted of 13, made it through the blockade. That worked out to be 13 of 38 ships that left Scotland. We arrived at Murmansk in North Russia on the morning of September 20, 1942. This was Russia's

last stand. PQ-18 was the largest convoy to get through the blockade and reach Murmansk. The port could not handle all the ships. A select group of ships with vital supplies of tanks, locomotives, etc., that were badly needed at the front, were pulled out and ordered to proceed to the port of Archangle. The William Moultrie was one of the ships selected to proceed to Archangle. The port of Archangle was at the southern end of the White Sea and at the mouth of the Dunia River. In addition to the aerial attack, the Germans now were able to come at us with torpedo boats. As you may recall, the hulls of the torpedo boats that the Germans had were built with plywood. To help protect us from the German torpedo boats, the Russians cut and floated large trees in the river. They also had large timbers floating in the White Sea. We arrived at the mouth of the Dunia River on the night of September 22, 1942.

At the docks in Archangle we were under constant aerial attacks, both day and night. One ship was hit and sunk in the mouth of the river. The water was not deep enough to allow it to go completely under the water. The Russians later unloaded the equipment where it went down.

We were under orders while in port not to fire our guns during the air raids. They wanted the shore batteries to be used for our protection. What they didn't know was we had used up all of our anti-aircraft ammunition. If we were to fire at any aircraft it would have to be with armor piercing projectiles.

The German radio broadcast, their equivalent to Japan's "Tokyo Rose", complemented the ships of PQ-18 for reaching their destination, but wanted to remind the convoy that they had to come back through the blockade on their return to the United States. After unloading our supplies for the Russian front, the ships remained in Archangel, awaiting orders.

The plan, as directed by the Russian port commander, was for all the ships to await the winter snow storms. The plan was to

ride with these storms back through the blockade, using them as protection against German air attacks. The Russians had ice breakers ready to lead us out of the White Sea.

The weather at times would reach 58 degrees below zero, but would be clear with almost no wind at all. The gun crews played softball for entertainment on days like this. The Russians thought that we were crazy.

On November 17, 1942, a tremendous snow storm moved in on us. The Russians gave us the word that this was the storm that covered all of the north and would be there for some time. If we were going to get out before the next spring, it would have to be now, or we would be snowed in. The ships were ordered to leave port. With the help of the Russian ice breakers we left the mouth of the river and into the White Sea that day. The snow was so thick and the clouds were so low, that we could not see the other ships that left with us. We were ordered not to use our radio for communication for fear the Germans would pick it up and know we were out there. As it turned out, the storm was so big that it covered the North Atlantic and Barents Sea. We had no knowledge where our sister ships were after we left Archangle. We traveled the North Atlantic blindly for eight days. During this time our guns had become frozen and unable to be used. When the weather began to rise and we could see parts of the blue sky, we took blow torches and heated the guns so they could be used if needed.

As the weather cleared and we could see the horizon, we also spotted a war ship off our stern. Through the use of blinkers, and the proper code, we found out that it was British. They instructed us to hold what we had because we were in the middle of a mine field off the coast of Iceland. They said they would come in and bring us out. They could see we were shot up pretty bad and offered to escort us into Iceland.

MURMANSK RUN

After sailing for nine days in a snow storm we arrived in Iceland, at the port of Reykjavik. The arrival date was November 26, 1942. At this port we did not see any of the ships we left Russia with nor to this day do we know if they made it back or not. We left Iceland on November 28, 1942 for Scotland to pick up supplies to get us back to New York. We arrived in Scotland on November 30, 1942. We stayed in Scotland till December 15, 1942. Then we left for New York and arrived in New York on December 24, 1942. There was so much that happened during this eight day battle that I haven't mentioned.

The S. S. William Moultrie received the Gallant Ship award during the war for the Russian run that I was involved in. The Moultrie also received congratulations from the Port Commander and the Prime Minister of Great Britain. Each member of the crew received a months pay as a bonus from the Russian Government. Also each member received a Letter of Commendation from the U. S. Chief of

Naval Personal which stated, "For conspicuous courage, tenacity and fighting spirit during a running battle against enemy German forces". The Silver Star was awarded to the Gunnery Officer for his leadership during this conflict. Each gun crew member was awarded a Citation Ribbon Bar from the U. S. Navy Director of Medals. On December 8, 1992 at the Russian Embassy in Washington D. C. each member of the gun crew received a Commemorative medal and ribbon from the Russian Government along with a letter from President Boris Yeltsin and the entire Russian people for our courage and personal contribution to the Allied support of his country during WWII.

I wrote this poem while in a hospital in Scotland about a shipmate who wondered if any one really cared if he lost his life. It reads like this;

WHO CARES ?

*In this gun tub I sit waste deep in snow,
Which once was white ^ but now is red,*

*With a shipmate's body that I now hold,
Once filled with life ^ but now is dead.
While he lay in this snowy bed, I felt he realized he soon would be dead, Because he motioned me closer to his head, So I might hear the last two words he said - WHO CARES?*

*Later when they laid him at my feet,
And I covered his body with a sheet,
And when we slipped him off into the deep,
His burning words in my ears seemed to repeat - WHO CARES?*

*As I stood and watched his body disappear,
This shipmate that I held in my arms so dear,
The sacrifice he made will remain forever clear,
He had given his life, yet he wanted to bear - WHO CARES?*

*Now after all these years, I look back to that day,
And since that occasion, now when I pray,
I thank God, who allowed him those few seconds to stay,
In my arms, so he could bear me say - WHO CARES?*

by Richard Lowe

WITH GERMANY DEFEATED---MANPOWER WAS NEEDED ON THE WEST COAST (Researched by: calloyd)

With the war over in Europe, the need for men and women to continue to do the jobs in ship building and ship repair was growing by leaps and bounds and wages were good. Many had lost their jobs in Detroit and elsewhere due to supply and demand for more bombers were not needed yet the the unemployed refuse to leave to go to the West Coast to work where the demand for their labor was great. The Pacific had become an amphibious war to some extent.

The magnitude of fighting an amphibious war such as "Squadron 10" was one of the WW II most guarded secrets and successful "secret weapons." "Squadron 10" was a floating supply base composed of hundreds of vessels including oil tankers, floating dry docks, repair ships, tenders, freighters, barges, barracks, canteens and everything needed to maintain a huge fighting force thousands of miles from home. To "Squadron 10" and other bases in the Pacific, a constant stream of Merchant Ships carried the vast resources of supplies needed in warfare. The need for a large amount of supplies and fuel used by Squadron 10 in just strikes against Iwo Jima and Tokyo alone showed the 5th alone consumed enough fuel to fill a train of tank cars 238 miles long-an approximately 200 millions gallons. All of this had to be moved over 8,000 to where needed. Enough food was

stored aboard the ships to feed the city of Columbus, Ohio at the time for a month; 52 million pounds of food. Four hundred eighty-eight freight cars loads of ammunition was supplied. Enough gasoline was burned by the fleet and planes to run 30,700 American cars for a full year. Into the operation, 9 million gallons of drinking water, 270,000 pounds of soap, 5 million packages of cigarettes, 300 tons of candy and other canteen supplies.

It took two years to build up 20,000,000 tons of supplies in England just for the Normandy invasion. What it cost for all of WW II is unknown exactly but there is one thing for sure, the Liberty Ships, Tankers and other cargo type ships and crews did their job and did it well. The people of the world owes a lot to the Merchant Seamen of WW II and the USN Armed Guard Gun Crews then and to the merchant crews that sailed the seas since WW II and are still doing what their country ask.

The above is just a drop in the bucket for what the ship and crew delivered around the world then and are still delivering. They keep the food chain open and everything we sell overseas and things we purchase from them in exchange. This is the CHAIN REACTION there keeps world trade among nations working. Say a prayer that it continues.

WILLIAM S. LADD

Aboard the
WILLIAM S. LADD

By John Gauss

One of the last of the Pacific Northwest ships to fall victim to enemy action was the Portland-built Liberty ship William S. Ladd, operated for the War Shipping Administration by the Weyerhaeuser Steamship Co. Bombs from a Japanese plane set the freighter on fire in Leyte Gulf, where she later foundered.

There was no loss of life, although six merchant seamen of her crew were hospitalized. Although most of her cargo had already been unloaded, a quantity of gasoline and ammunition remained in her holds at the time of the attack. The Ladd was commanded by Capt. Nels F. Anderson of Silverdale, Washington, who was a former mate on the C. S. Holmes under Capt. Backland and later master of the barkentines Forest Friend and Forest Pride. (Gordon Newell, Maritime Events of 1945, H.W.McCurdy, Marine History of the Pacific Northwest.,p. 528).

I was a soldier on the Ladd, working with the unloading detail at the time it was sunk. I always wondered for whom the ship was named. The above account is mostly accurate, but the ship was anchored off Leyte when a Japanese Zero dove into the number four hold with a bomb attached and set 55-gallon drums of aviation gasoline afire. The stern of the ship sank to the shallow sea floor while the bow remained at anchor above water.

I was a PFC in Antitank Company, 152nd Infantry Regiment, 38th (Cyclone) Infantry Division. We had been in New Guinea since June and left in October, 1944, for the Philippines. My account of the William S. Ladd's last voyage is as follows:

From somewhere near Buna in New

Guinea eleven hundred of us sailed aboard the William S. Ladd, a Liberty ship not designed to receive passengers. Temporary, wooden box-like contraptions fastened to the rail served as our latrines. My company slept on decking in number one hold near the anchor. We had cots but they remained stacked in one corner. If set up, not all of our bodies could be accommodated. Seeing soldiers packed together like sardines, I decided to sleep on the wide makeshift stairs leading into the hold. Minutes after midnight the ship dropped anchor in a northern New Guinea harbor to form up with a convoy. The sudden rattle of the chain startled us into thinking that a torpedo had hit the ship. The entire hold emptied by running over my prone body stretched out on the stairs. After that I slept topside on deck, rain or not.

Most of the voyage was uneventful, except for one day of extremely high waves that at times completely hid from view our accompanying destroyers.

Lined up for breakfast on deck a day off the Philippine Islands, the troops were startled by a lone Japanese airplane. It dove from clouds and dropped a bomb near the freighter located at coffin corner, the most dangerous spot in any convoy.

That near miss commenced a day of dive bombings and torpedo attacks by airplanes. From morning until dusk, enemy airplanes swept over the convoy like clockwork, three at a time. Never did gunners shoot down all three. Most times not even one airplane plunged into ocean waves. I don't know what was worse, the air attacks or the spent shell fragments dropping from the sky as multiple guns on the forty ships in the convoy and the Navy escort vessels opened fire.

Two torpedoes traveling side by side penetrated the entire convoy without

striking a single ship. Mesmerized and shaking in my boots, I watched the paired tubes approach just below the surface. War movies showing torpedoes zipping along are quite accurate in that respect. Both barely missed the bow of a ship to our left and passed behind the stern of our ship by less than six feet. They crossed bare yards in front of the Liberty ship to our right.

Airplanes badly damaged several ships that day. I saw one ship sink and I noticed several burning on the horizon as we pulled away from them. Another one carrying soldiers from our division limped to anchorage. A suicide, or kamikaze, airplane had plunged into an ammunition locker under its four-inch forward gun and concussion killed more than 300 men, wiping out an entire company of medics. I heard that they had been ordered into the hold to avoid the dropping shell fragments. The disabled vessel, lacking an anchor, tied alongside our ship when we anchored two or three miles off the coast of Leyte. Both ships kept their engines fired up for hasty departures in case of air raids.

I made the mistake of moseying over to check the damage. Never will I forget the sight of all those bloated bodies floating in a hold flooded to combat a flaming holocaust. On deck one burned corpse actually fused into and became part of a winch's cable drum. Hours after my platoon landed ashore I became part of a detail that returned to the Ladd to finish unloading operations. Near dusk a Japanese Zero suddenly turned and dove straight for what looked like the exact spot where I stood near the bow. An attached bomb showed clearly visible. I remained rooted to the deck as the Zero loomed larger and flew into number four hold at the rear.

Until we had removed most of the cargo we soldiers were unaware that

HERO OF TWO NATIONS

the bottom of the hold contained fifty-gallon drums of aviation gasoline. We also discovered that number five hold contained rounds of 155mm artillery ammunition. Flames shot hundreds of feet into air above the ship's superstructure. Ocean waters blazed as ignited gasoline floated outward from the Ladd.

A non-swimmer, I climbed into the only undamaged lifeboat with the ship's crew. At its bottom lay a piece of the Zero's airplane wing, part of a red circle visible. Other soldiers released

life rafts forward and jumped into waters not yet aflame. As we rowed away, the stern of the Ladd skyrocketed fiery balls into air in a Fourth-of-July display lasting into the night. Shells exploded and sped upward like Roman Candles. Last seen, the Ladd's bow rode high at anchor and the stern rested on the ocean's shallow bottom.

I believe that the merchant marine sailors received ship sunk bonuses in addition to the usual hazardous-zone bonus and signed aboard other vessels returning home. Navy gunners hurried

to the States for 30-day shore leaves and an extra clothing allowance granted navymen off sunken ships. A colonel bawled me out for being on the beach out of uniform and unarmed. I had no shoes, wore a borrowed blue navy shirt and had neglected to crawl down into the hold to rescue my rifle.

WILLIAM S. LADD (1826-1893)
Banker who came to Portland, Oregon in 1851, and established first bank north of San Francisco.

WAR ENDS

(Official Photograph, U. S. Navy)

The U-858, first German sub to give up to U. S. Navy in American waters, surrenders off Cape May, N. J., and brought to an anchorage May 14, 1945



U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WWII VETERANS

CHARLES A. LLOYD, CHAIRMAN

115 WALL CREEK DRIVE • ROLESVILLE, N.C. 27571-9475

OCTOBER 19, 2009

Dear Y'all:

I will start the wording of the USN ARMED GUARD Plaque to be erected there.

U.S. Navy Armed Guard WW II April 1941-1946

Gun Crews on cargo,
tankers, troopships, tugs, etc. where needed
SHIP or GUNS here.

144,970 served. 1810 KIAs. 58,186 commendations.

The reason I put the dates like this is the first Armed Guard Crew was taken from the Regular Navy and sent to Little Creek,

Va. to set up and train gun crews. Armed Guard crews were still assigned as ARMED GUARD until discharged. I was discharged in late March, 1946. Some were in into late summer due to being caught in the Pacific and someone had to stay with guns until removed. This is something to look over. Oh. Yeah!! I would like to have our Armed Guard WEB SITE placed on it as the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN will keep it for all to pull up after we have taken our final Voyage into Eternity.

Sincerely,
Charles A. Lloyd
Email: clloyd@nc.rr.com

MOMENTS OF EXCITEMENT AND FEAR

35 Heselton Street
Skowhegan, Maine 04976
January 3, 2003
EMAIL: NTURNER@SKOW.NET

Charles Lloyd
115 Wall Creek Drive
Rolesville, N.C. 27571

Dear Charles,

I have entered two reports about my navy duties to the "Pointer" and have been pleased with the write up. I am praying that someone will see that report and might have some information about the picture on the front page of the Oct/Nov/Dec 2002 issue. My little note may be found on page four, on the top of the second column. I was so surprised that you put this old salt on the front cover. Surely, many will see it.

As you folks at headquarters know, I served as gunner on 350 and 20MM's aboard two ships, One being the S.S. Samuel Adams and the other the S.S. Richard Rush. After the war in Europe was over I was sent back to Gunnery School in Va. The USA dropped the atomic bomb on Japan and our school was cancelled. Many of us were shipped to Treasure Island in Calif. And then shipped of to the Philippine Islands on a Navy PA22 Troop transport ship debarking in Manila. After getting settled there I volunteered to go to the "Divers Institute" known as the "Salvage and Fire Fighting" unit, Philippine Sea Frontier. Our diving officer was Lt (JG) R. J. Norman and Comdr. USN officer in charge H.M. Anderson. This duty was on a voluntary basis and we got extra pay, which is always great. Diving school was ahead of me and I looked forward to learning another job in the Navy. As with my duty in the Armed Guard there were moments of excitement and fear, but I knew at that moment in my young life I could face the grind and come out with flying colors. I would see later on that all the glory was not all so glorious.

But before we go to far with this adventure, I found that the Navy had some great work details for us Armed Guard boys. What they didn't know was that we were used to hard work and long hours. After a few weeks of handling cargo, food runs to other parts of the Islands and supplying the gang with needed stuff, I was ready to report to diving school. The first thing that was required was another physical. Passing that part we were later marched into a decompression tank to see if we could handle pressure at 200 feet depth. Down we went as the air was applied to the tank, the voices began to change, ears began to ring and seemed like they would burst. The reason for the tank was to see if our eardrums could take such pressures. As I remember none of us had a problem. Why am I telling this story about myself and other Armed Guard Sailors? We as Armed Guard guys never really got the credit that was due us. Many thought we were a waste, but here we are ready to earn our keep and again be some great help to the Navy.

The next day, after the tank, we mustered up with R. J. Norman Lt. (JG), great guy, and knew what he was all about. Standing there on the waterfront each morning getting instructions on what we would do that day. Our first day, as I remember after sixty years, was to get acquainted with the gear aboard our barge. The barge being about thirty or forty feet long was pushed around by a GM Diesel engine. We had large pumps and generator diving equipment of all sorts. This I thought would be very interesting. Lt. Norman showed each one of us just how things would be as we went through this diving school. First came the make shift face gear which was made of a gas mask which worked very well when air was applied to the unit it kept it from our face by a small valve attached to a small belt around our waist. They were used for small jobs as we worked around many sunken ships. These were leftovers from many port attacks. The Navy barracks were just to the rear of the Manila Hotel, which was very close to the waterfront.

Our experience the first day was to handle our being in the water with a gas mask converted into a diving system. Lt. Norman explained that we were getting used to wearing such gear. So we pushed off from our pier and headed out to a sunken Jap ship. As I remember It was a large cargo ship which was setting on the

MOMENTS OF EXCITEMENT AND FEAR

bottom, naturally, and leaving about four or five feet out of the water. Pulling along side we tied up and boarded this junk. There Lt. Norman explained what we would be doing that early morning, in the Bay of Manila. After serving two years or better aboard the fish bait ships, this would be very interesting. As it ran through my mind, I began to think what a great thing this would be, me, Louis B. Turner, a left over from World War II to be part of a naval diving team. WOW! So here we are most being in their early twenties, I was just twenty. OK boys, I hear the Lt. Norman say, each one of us will be using this small gear today. So as two guys got suited up, we were told what we would be doing. Lt. Norman said he wanted us to go down into the Jap junk and find out just what was the problem. Well, I thought probably it had some hole in it somewhere. Lets not get to smart here and make a fool of myself that will come later probably. Well, I am ready to descend into the water below looking for something to report on. The lighting was not that great. By feeling along the sides and elsewhere Lt. Norman said we could pick damage up with our hands. Our first day was not that bad but more problems would come later.

So as time went on and our ability to understand just what this diving was all about, it became apparent that it would be much different than the first day. At this point in time many days have passed with our training, now we will be put to the test. I can hear Lt Norman saying, Ok boys we are going to put your learning to work. Today we are going out into the bay to that ship that can not be seen but the crows nest and get it out of there. Hey, what was this officer saying anyway? All we could see was the crow's nest. Then Lt. Norman said, we will not be able to raise it by pumping water from inside the ship but what we will do, very determinedly said, we will raise it. We set sail to our destination and after getting out there, tying up to the metal that was showing above the water, We prepared to do what had to be done. We were waiting for Lt. Norman to give us a clue as to what will take place. He says, Ok guys dig that half-inch rope out of that box and bring it to me. It was quickly brought to him and he explained that this would be our first task, to be very careful as we have a lot of explosives here on this barge known as dynamite. Get the box and we will get on with the job at hand. So the Lt. tells us to string out the rope, which was done, now, he said, get the dynamite out of the box and about every other foot tape the dynamite to the rope. The amount was very large because this was to be placed down the both sides of the ship. As I remember, I believe it was about four boxes that we used (around two or three hundred pounds). It sounds like a lot but we were going to take the ship up in pieces. So the next thing that we did was to put on those small converted gas masks and into diving gear and lay this stuff out. All these pieces are connected together with a detonating line running back to the plunger. Getting all these lines laid out, we came back aboard our barge. This barge was a section of a floating bridge used by the Army or Navy to cross-rivers when needed. I don't want anyone to think we were working off some large tugboat. The next moment we were moving away from the job site to give us lots of space for when all of that dynamite went off we would be safe from flying metal. After moving off to a safe distance, the plunger wires were connected and the Lt. said, "Detonate it". Up came the plunger and down went the plunger and *no noise*. Lt. Norman said, lets wait and see if it is a delay so we waited but no action. Now this was a long day and NO RESULTS, just a big disappointment, but we turned about and headed back to our base waiting for tomorrow. Lt. Norman said No way will we endanger the crew by going back to that old ship that day, but tomorrow will be another day. So it was, we approached with care and got back to redoing the process of laying new lines with the same amount of dynamite, around seven hundred pounds with both days labor. This ought to be fun. While we laid the second charge Lt. Norman said that we needed to be careful about the first charge being there. Oh Great!! But it turned out to be ok. So repeating the second day we backed off and moved further away than the day before because with the new charge and the old charge there could be some real excitement. Here we set and attaching the wires to the plunger, ready we were but wondering if we would have a repeat of the day before. So up came the plunger and down goes the plunger. What do you know, when today's charge went off it blew that old junk all to pieces. Iron came flying past us, some dropping among us and one sailor almost got his head taken off, The good Lord was watching out for him and I don't know to this day if he knew that, at that moment. Lt. Norman said he believed that both charges exploded. Now we will bring out the cranes and load all these parts aboard flat barges and haul them away.

MOMENTS OF EXCITEMENT AND FEAR



MOMENTS OF EXCITEMENT AND FEAR

Well that was one way we learned to remove sunken ships. Now remember at this time we were being trained to be Navy divers and having fun doing it. There were many disabled ships in the bay. Do we cut them all up and haul them away? The answer is NO. There are many ways that things can be done when you have to remove such things. I'll give you an example how we did raise some of the ships. Some were in shallower water where a lot of the ship was out of water having been hit by bombs or torpedoes. Now we will use what we have learned while schooling. One ship we had to search out the inside to find out what really happened. Two or three guys suited up and went into every part of that ship to look for damage. When found, not to our amazement, there was a big hole in it's port side. How would we float this ship again? Well first of all we had to get something to plug this hole. Will we take sheet metal down and attach it to the hole, which could be done? But the Lt. chose to try another method, which would be a lot easier. The crew was sent back into the hull to measure the size of the hole. After returning topside, we informed the Lt. that it probably take a couple of mattresses to fill the hole. Lt. Norman called for some mattresses and we began to plug the damage. After we got that done, what were we to do now? How do we get the water out from inside the ship? Very simple, when we left dockside we took a very, very large bilge pump with us because we had plans to move that junk out of it's place and haul it further out to sea. We brought the pump aboard and laid out lines to the inside of the hull. As I remember, the lines from this pump were between five to six inches diameter inside, the pump being run by a Gimmy diesel engine. We were set to go, engine running and water flowing. The mattresses are holding and the ship is rising. After getting the ship up enough off from the bottom, a tug was tied by line to the bow and transported out of the bay to make a breakwater. When it got to the place where it was to be left, the pump was stopped and the ship sank nicely to the bottom where it was intended to be by request. The pump is back on the barge and all of us were quite pleased. Lt. Norman's comment was, Well done guys. All these ventures were not always so successful. A few words about another ship that we had to move. Damage was about the same as the one we had just removed, but the job was more difficult. The gang had no idea where the damage might be. This was a challenge for the young divers still in school, to ask them to descend into a ship that was mostly covered with dirt and bay water where it was black as night without stars. Sir that is black. Everything had to be done by feeling. For me personally, I had to start down in the boiler room. Feeling my way around large and small steam pipes. Lt. Norman said be careful around those pipes as you could get tangled up and loose your air by cutting your hose. That was some fun for a twenty-year-old green diver. I found no damage in the area where I was looking. A couple of us had to move on to other areas and wouldn't you know it no one could find damage. We did know that there had to be some damage. Lt. Norman wasn't too happy. But I didn't see him putting on a suit and descending below. If you're reading this Lt. Norman, I'm just fooling.

Lt. Norman called a diver that was well trained and experienced to come aboard. The first thing this guy said was How come you guys can't find what you're looking for. In just a few minutes he told us where it was. The problem was the guys in training didn't go deep enough along the sides of the ship. Come to find out the hull was deep in black mud. Again mattresses were used to plug the hole. The raising of this ship was not an easy task. With much patience we waited for the pump to do its work and I almost think we brought another pump aboard. We did get her to float but had some trouble on the way out to sea. All of us could see the water returning into the ship. The tug was doing its job but the water was in command of the situation. But full steam ahead, we thought surely we would make it to the desired place. Sorry to say it was not a pretty sight as the old junk started to lean portside and the pumps are still running, pumping water over the side, then we all heard Lt. Norman shout Abandon Ship. I didn't have to hear that more than once so over the side we went. But there was one sailor who jumped sliding down the starboard side and just about ripped his elbow off on the barnacles. This was some of the excitement that we faced, but there is more, hang in there and tie your ship secure and I shall return.

Between raising old ships and workdays, we were learning to advance to our larger diving outfits; there would be exciting times. I thought what is this large and heavy suit going to get me into. With its shoes weighing about twelve pounds apiece, a belt that had blocks of lead, who knows how much those weighed.

MOMENTS OF EXCITEMENT AND FEAR

Then there was the rubberized suit that took two men to get you into it, not forgetting the long underwear that was used to keep you comfortable. After the struggle getting into the large suit and getting seated on a wooden box, nothing but the best, Ha Ha. Two guys put your shoes on, laughing all the time, and wondering how you would respond to what was going to happen after you were fully dressed. The shoes were laced on your feet then came the breastplate, which was attached to the rubber suit by bolts and small turnbuckles. The breastplate was no lightweight. At this point your shoulders begin to feel some pressure, now you are beginning to wonder what will happen if I have some trouble and I can't get out of this outfit. So, I say, get that out of your thinking. Next comes a large bunch of straps thrown over your shoulders, now you feel like a horse being saddled for a battle. The straps come down the front and back between your legs to a buckle, now I have to bend over as far as I could and the strap pulled down as far as possible. Now being buckled you are told to stand straight up, this was done to pull all the equipment all together so it would not rise when you were in the water. I am feeling a real load on my neck and shoulders, saying what have I got myself into. Then I hear someone say, how 're you doing? Probably it was Lt. Norman, our training officer. At this point, it made little matter. I was on my way, after being secured now comes the last piece of this outfit, called the helmet. Someone lifts up the helmet and drops it over my head and I hear a big clunk. The a slight twist to the left, and looking out the front porthole, I felt someone turning down two turnbuckles, one on each side, and two in the back to keep the helmet secure. I am thinking, more weight, what next. The airline has been secured and now I am almost ready for my first experience with this couple of hundred pounds, give or take a few pounds. I hear over the phones in the helmet, are you ready? What am I to say but I guess so. Now I'm thinking how in the world am I going to stand with all this weight on me. Along came two sailor friends and helped me up and guided me to the side of the barge. Feet dragging to the ladder, hanging down the side of the barge, The men hanging onto me and turning me around got me onto the ladder. As I descended into the water I heard Lt. Norman speaking to me over the phone saying when you drop off the ladder give yourself a little air. This will balance you as you drop to the bottom. Now remember this is my first try at this. I hit the bottom and began to sink in the mud with all that weight on my body I didn't have enough air to keep me up out of the mud. I began to sink some more and I didn't know how far this was going. My first thought was, it is up to my knees and I panicked, I called topside to my officer and said I'm sinking. Ok no problem he said. It was me that was down there not him. His response was pull your chin button in with your teeth and give yourself a little air and you will come out of the mud. So I followed orders sure enough it worked. Why the mud anyway? We are only out in the bay a short distance and in only fifty feet of water.

After all the foolishness on my part down in such little depth of water, I called my diving officer and said I am coming up topside. I can hear Lt. Norman say, you what? I said I am coming up and I'm all done doing this. Now this is not a big deal for diving this day as all of us all get a chance to go down just to feel what it will be like to have this outfit on. But I was determined to get up topside and get out of the program. So up I came and was ushered over to the box and set down with the help of a couple of guys. They began to take off the helmet. The Lt. was standing by to greet me. The first thing he said to me was, you want to quit? My response was, yes sir. He said you take this suit off and your all done. I said, I don't care I'm all done. So off came the suit. What a miserable day it has been for me. Some of the others had their run at it and had finished well. I must say at this point that my diving experience was on a voluntary basis. The day was over and the evening was long. I could not erase from my mind what I had done that day out in the bay. What will I do now? I had quit after all that I had learned about diving. T. Norman had said that I could not come back but I was humbled with the fact that others had done their best and I didn't.

Would Lt. Norman take me back if I humbly go to him and ask to be reinstated? I would have to see what the next day would bring forth. So in the morning, with my courage built up, I found myself headed for the waterfront, where we mustered in each morning. I noticed that Lt. Norman saw me coming and as I approached him he said what could I do for you? My reply was sir I would like to return to my diving class if possible. His reply was I thought you wanted nothing to do with this coarse. Sir I have had second

MOMENTS OF EXCITEMENT AND FEAR

thoughts about what I said and would like to return. He said fall in young man and see how things work out. I made up my mind that I would finish this diving course and was determined to show everyone that I could finish.

After roll call we all headed back to our job site and went to work on the activities of the day. There would be more heavy gear training along with the smaller outfits also. We learned to cut and weld underwater and many other things we had to learn before we could graduate. But there were many mishaps along the way in the Manila Bay. I remember that a Navy submarine tender anchored up in the area, While getting to cast off and heading out to sea, They threw their lines into the water as they began to shove off, the line got caught and pulled into the twin screws and our school was called on to get this line off the screws. The lines or ropes known to non-Navy men were so entangles around the screws, the shafts and had gotten under the shaft plate covers. Just no way that this would be a five-minute job. To make a long day seem short we cut, sawed, and removed screws and plates. We had a great time using the skills that we had learned in school.

Count down was coming; we had learned much and were headed into our final days. Looking back to our first meeting on the waterfront with twenty-seven sailors that started out together in this school, I'm not sure if all the guys were Armed Guard men. I do know that I was and still am one of these. Now finishing up our class would be our last dive at the Bay of Corregidor looking for some silver pesos that were gathered up in crates by General Wainright and dumped off shore. That dive at two hundred feet being our last before graduation. There were many pesos gathered that day and I have pictures to verify that dive in 1945. Well there is much more to be said about this part of my Navy life. I did graduate with flying colors but many did not. Out of that twenty-seven just seven of us finished.

Just a footnote, I don't know whether there are any of these who graduated that day in 1946 but if there is I would like to hear from them and also would ask them if they remember the day that our out house that was attached to the after part of the barge had fallen into the bay with me in it. Someone had pulled the iron bar that went through a shackle that was welded on the deck across two, two by fours not knowing the bar was removed I backed into the out house and set down and found myself looking from out of the water in a dirty grease filled waterfront.

Seaman First Class Louis Turner

Armed Guard Gunnery

Fire fighting Unit, Philippine Sea Frontier

Manila, Philippine Island

Designated as Diver Second Class

January 1946



AWARD-WINNING SET OF VIDEOS

ZED MERRILL & ASSOCIATES



Producers of National Award-Winning WWII Documentaries

P.O. Box 19608 Portland, OR 97219 * Telephone: 503-860-2120 * zadoc5@msn.com

September 28, 2009

Cal,

I'm enclosing a full page ad I hope you'll be able to run.

In the meantime, I'll be sending you some money when my catalog checks arrive around the fifth of the month. I know you said for me to keep my money, but I know you have expenses and without you and The Pointer all us guys would be in the dark about the A.G.

I hope all is well with you and Hilda.

Best regards,

Zed A stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'Z' and a loop.

ENROLL FOR MERCHANT MARINE

Nearly 11,000 young men volunteered for service in the merchant marine in September, according to figures from the Shipping Board recruiting station. All are inexperienced in seagoing and eligible for training as apprentices before going into merchant crews. This enrollment was more than 2 and one-half times the capacity of the board's 12 training Ships, which can take on 4,000 men a month. Spanish influenza retarded training for the month, but the board announces that its training ships are now free of the disease and that the present waiting list of volunteers will be reduced materially in October. The merchant marine is the only national maritime service in which inexperienced men may now volunteer.

Taken from Page 18 -"GREAT LAKES RECRUIT" Vol. IV December 1918

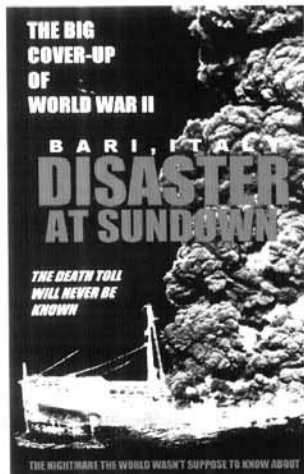
And the MM say there was never a MERCHANT MARINE. (cal)

AWARD-WINNING SET OF VIDEOS

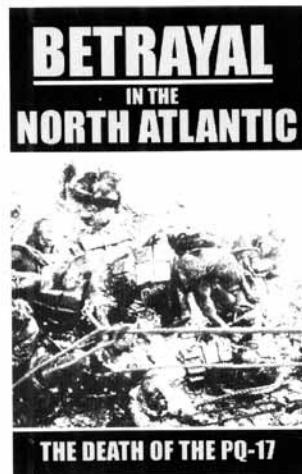
NOW YOU CAN OWN THIS NATIONAL AWARD-WINNING SET OF VIDEOS ABOUT THE LITTLE-KNOWN WWII HEROICS OF THE U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD & MERCHANT MARINE AT A SAVINGS OF NEARLY \$7.50 PER VIDEO. LIMITED TIME ONLY



FORGOTTEN VALOR
Only video made about the unsung Navy Armed Guard. Hardly anybody had ever heard of them until this revealing documentary helped to have their heroic war record finally entered into the Congressional Record which had eluded them for over half-a-century.



DISASTER AT SUNDOWN
Only a few know the true story about the Bari, Italy incident. The U.S. couldn't hide the fact the surprise enemy air raid took place, but for over 60 years they did try to cover up the disaster that was a result of the raid...and the final death toll may never be known.



BETRAYAL IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC
The mysterious decision concerning the PQ-17 convoy to Russia is still debated by WWII historians. Churchill called it the most melancholy naval episode of the war. Some called it one of the most treacherous acts of betrayal in naval history.



THE WINTER WINDS OF HELL
Thousands would perish on poorly armed merchant ships as they crossed the icy North Atlantic. Some survivors tell their gripping stories for the first time. Awarded most outstanding war documentary produced over the past 25 years. Also considered for an Oscar nomination.

Now you can own this complete collector's item set of four for only \$70.00, including shipping & handling. That's a savings of \$45.80, including postage, if you were to buy them separately.

You may already own one or all four of these unique and historic documentaries. If not, then here's your chance, for a limited time only, to own the complete set of four at a special discount. Also excellent as a gift for a relative, special friend or to donate to a local school or public library. **Please indicate DVD or VHS. Not sold in stores!** You may purchase them individually at \$24.95 each, plus \$ 4.00 shipping & handling.

Mail to: ZED MERRILL & ASSOCIATES **Circle DVD or VHS**
P.O. Box 19608 Dept. N4 * Set of 4 for only \$70.00. Shipping & Handling FREE!
Portland, OR 97219 * Sold individually @ \$24.95 ea. + \$4.00 S&H each
Order now & get the book "Invisible Are The Brave" FREE (a \$19.95 value) with your 4 set order. Offers good as long as current inventory of videos and books last.

U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD WW I AND WW II

The U.S. Navy **Armed Guard** first became organized during WW I when Allied and American shipping was being attacked and sunk by the enemy in wartime. It was necessary that guns be put on ships for protection, and the Navy was then called on to furnish the gun crew for these weapons. These men were known as the **U.S.N. Armed Guard**. Their main purpose was to maintain the guns and ammunition, protect the ship, ship's crew and cargo from the enemy with orders to stay aboard ship and fire the guns as long as the ship was afloat. This was to keep the enemy from crippling the ship, then boarding it for provisions they needed to stay on patrol longer. The enemy had also been known to kill the ship's crew before sinking the ship.

The **Armed Guard** served on 384 ships during World War I. This was a small number compared to the 6,236 ships they served on in World War II. The **Armed Guard** also consisted of officers in charge of the crew with radiomen and signalmen operating all transmission of codes and messages. The **Armed Guard** was deactivated following WW I.

With the war in Europe spreading over boundaries of neighboring countries, and the horizon of war eminent, measures were being taken to man the ships again since the Allies had lost many from 1939 until we were drawn into the war with the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The merchant ship, "M/S **City of Rayville**," was the first victim of who would, one year later, be our greatest enemy; it struck a German mine that had been laid some 12 months previous at the western entrance of Bass Strait, six miles off Cape Otway, Australia, claiming the life of one merchant seaman. He was the first of over 6,000 of the merchant crew to lose their lives during WW II.

Even though the Allies were having a lot of ships sunk during the 1940-41 era, Congress could not authorize placing guns aboard the cargo ships due to the 1939 Neutrality Act, Section 6. This act prohibited the arming of American merchant vessels during the existence of a Proclamation of a State of War between foreign states or countries. It was not until the Act of November 17, 1941 (55 STAT.764), Section 2 of the Neutrality Act that repealed Section 6 before steps were enacted to arm the vessels and even before then, five more merchant ships were sunk before December, 1941. They were the S.S. **Robin Moor** that was torpedoed and shelled by the Germans on May 21, 1941, 700 miles off the West Coast of Africa with no loss of life; the S.S. **Steel Seafarer** was sunk September 5, 1941 by German bombers in the Gulf of Suez with its lights on and a large American flag on the side. No crew were lost. The S.S. **Lehigh** was torpedoed October 19, 1941 by the Germans with four slightly injured. The S.S. **Astral** was sunk by a German sub December 2, 1941 with a crew of 37 and there were no survivors; and the S.S. **Sagadahoc** was sunk December 3, 1941 with the loss of one merchant seaman. The S.S. **Cynthia Olson** was the first American Flag merchant ship sunk during World War II by the enemy on December 7, 1941, 1,200 miles west of Cape Flattery, Washington, with 33 merchant crew and 2 U.S. Army

personnel. There were no survivors. The S.S. **Black Point** was the last merchant ship sunk in the Atlantic Theatre of War on May 5, 1945, with the loss of 11 merchant seamen and one U.S. Navy **Armed Guard**. The last merchant ship to fall prey to the enemy was the S.S. **Cassius Hudson** on October 16, 1946.

The first WW II **Armed Guard** crew were taken from the regular Navy in April, 1941 and sent to Little Creek, Virginia to set up and train gunners in the event of war breaking out. These were the first men to man the few guns that were available at that time. The casualty rates were high among the **Armed Guard** at the beginning of WW II due to the fact the enemy ruled the sea. Because they shipped out with no guns or escort protection, the ships were sitting ducks, for the enemy had very little resistance. Many **Armed Guard** and Merchant Seamen lost their lives in sight of the American shoreline. The skies were lit up at night off the coast of the Carolinas and it earned the name of "Torpedo Alley."

World War II brought on a different type of war than the first one. Even though the submarine had been used in WW I, they were greatly improved with longer range and more deadly firepower. They also could stay under water longer and stalk their prey until all was in their favor. Airplanes were used against Allied shipping vessels as they came within range of the enemy territory airfields. Had it not been for the firepower of the **Armed Guard** gunners, who they finally learned to respect, they could attack at close range. Enemy surface raiders attacked merchant ships also at the outset of WW II and the **Armed Guard** gun crew kept them at bay, causing considerable damage to some and credit for actually sinking one, both ships sinking in the the duel.

The Chairman of the Merchant Marine was quoted as having said, "If it was not for the Merchant Seaman, the war would have been lost by the Allies." It also has been said that "If it were not for the U.S. Navy **Armed Guard** gun crews and other **Armed Guard** personnel, the ships and men of the Maritime would have been lost and so would the war." It can not be assured that it took the cooperation of all peaceloving people of the world to bring peace and stability to a war-torn society and no one particular group should attempt to say — "**WE DID IT ALONE.**"

Particular attention has been given to the "**MURMANSK RUN**," the "**BATTLE OF LEYTE**," and others but the public is not aware of the real battle that took place in the lifeboats of the **Merchant Seamen** and the **Armed Guard** crew as they tried to hang on for another day in the unbearable cold wind, rough seas, hot sun and the darkest nights with little food or water. The **Armed Guard** saying was "**A LOOSE LIP SINKS A SHIP**" and they were the prey. They also remember the burns and injuries and to many, the strafing of the lifeboats so far away from home and land. They also remember the lights that lit up the shoreline from Brownsville, Texas to Maine, making their ship a sitting duck in the sights of the enemy outlined

USNAG WWI AND WWII

against the glow from the shore lights with the owners afraid they would lose their customers should they close shop.

The requirement to serve in the **Armed Guard** was to be of good health in every respect for there were no doctors aboard. Good night vision was very essential along with 20-20 vision since, while on watch, constant lookout was made to find the enemy before he saw you.

Since many of the **Armed Guard** crew had never seen the ocean before, they soon found themselves facing the same hardships their forefathers faced of the winds, rough seas, bitter cold or extreme heat. But their forefathers never faced the enemy of man, that was taught to kill him at any cost and destroy the ship and cargo that they were to protect. They were faced with constant submarine alert and attack, and planes and raiders with modern weapons of destruction. Early in the war some of the ships had only small weapons and a creosote pole as a gun. Improvement was made as the war went on as to guns but convoys of ships were formed with protection of the large battleships to the destroyers, escorts and aircraft carriers using the planes to search and drop depth charges on the subs.

The **Armed Guard** totalled 144, 970 men during WW II along with many other **Armed Guard** groups such as the Waves, gun trainers, postal clerks and ship's company at the shipping out centers that were as important to the war effort as the man on the sea. The **Armed Guard** served on 2,710 liberty ships and of these 216 were sunk by the enemy. Of the 6,236 merchant ships served on, 710 were sunk and many more greatly damaged. Over 80,000 **Armed Guard** served in the fleet as the war at sea slowed down and they manned the guns on LSTs, LCIs, or etc.

The **Armed Guard** crew were processed and assigned ships at three centers which were: **BROOKLYN ARMED GUARD CENTER, BROOKLYN, N.Y.**; **TREASURE ISLAND, CA**; and **NEW ORLEANS, LA**, better known to the crew as "NOLA." The **Armed Guard's** mail, pay, records, leave, clothing and shipping orders came from these three centers. These centers had the responsibility of seeing that the crew was fed three times a

day and had a place to sleep. They also issued liberty chits or passes to enjoy the little time they were ashore, for they deserved the best, as they often would be sent right back to another ship that was loaded, ready to take on a new gun crew and that wanted experienced men to protect them, their ship and cargo. These centers also administered sick, recreation, discipline and church services. They also issued emergency leave for personal family problems, such as deaths, sickness, etc. They issued proper foul weather gear for different climates. These items were in short supply at the beginning of WW II with a lot of deaths attributed to the lack of proper clothing due to freezing in the water and lifeboats.

Three basic training schools were set up at: **LITTLE CREEK, VIRGINIA**, (soon moved to **CAMP SHELTON, VIRGINIA**, next door); **SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**; and **GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI**. Prior to this training was given in **CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**, **NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND** and several other localities.

The U.S.N. **Armed Guard** were a dedicated crew of men with great love for their country and those of others that wished to be self-governed. They also gained respect from the enemy for their ability to perform the job they undertook, for their skills were shown in the battles they fought and the planes they shot down, even their own, if they did not give proper identification.

The U.S.N. **Armed Guard** organization was de-activated again after WW II with some of the crew shipping over to the regular Navy, making a career of the service to retirement. Most returned to the place whence they came, returning to the farms, factories, schools, service stations, small towns, large cities. They returned to be engulfed by a society that was almost as strange as the sound of the first big gun, the sight of the first ship, the sinking of the ship, the people of distant lands that spoke different tongues that he had been accustomed to. They returned from the past several years of combat readiness and the vigors of war to soon become the forgotten heroes of a conflict that took them to almost every port in the world, 1,810 to their resting place.

USN Armed Guard WW II Veterans

Charles A. Lloyd, Chairman

115 Wall Creek Drive

Rolesville, N.C. 27571

clloyd@nc.rr.com

1-(919)-570-0909

"REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR"

"REMEMBER ALSO THE WTC"



AND WE DID



**America is #1
Thanks to our
Veterans**

Guarding a floating target

For pitching hopeful Walter Kostanski, the big leagues meant World War II

Story by Tim Blagg

It was the spring of 1943 and Walter Kostanski Jr. was fresh out of Turners Falls High, his diploma tucked safely away, ready to face the world. Under normal circumstances, he would have been packing to travel to tryouts in big league baseball, oiling his mitt and spending as much time as possible keeping his pitching arm limber and powerful.

He'd been a standout on the school baseball team, a team that had garnered considerable press in the 1942 season, winning the state championship in a game played at Fenway Park against Arlington High.

Kostanski was also voted most valuable player in western Massachusetts as a football player, playing fullback on his team. So, he'd won a name for himself and thought he might have a good shot at playing in the majors.

But circumstances were hardly normal that spring and playing baseball was simply not in the cards.

Pearl Harbor was just 18 months in the past and salvage crews were still laboring to raise our rusting battleships from the ooze of the harbor, where they'd been sent by Japanese bombs and torpedoes.

America had gone to war, with a vengeance, and the signs were everywhere.

Scrap drives were being held by local Boy Scout troops, rationing was just being implemented on a variety of household staples, including sugar. New England's shipyards were running three shifts and young men were being drafted daily.

And Kostanski knew that would include him.



Walter Kostanski Jr., shown here at home in Turners Falls, was in the State Legislature for 14 years and was register of deeds in Franklin County for 24 years. Below are some pictures from his service in World War II.

Recorder/Paul Franz

GUARDING A FLOATING TARGET

"I decided to join the Navy," he recalls. "A few of us did ... we were going to be drafted anyway and there was an option to defer until graduation and then go into the Navy. My brother-in-law was a 20-year-old man and he convinced me it was the best."

So, shortly after graduation, he and some other local kids were on a train bound for Springfield, where they were given physical exams and sworn in, and then on to Sampson, N.Y., for a very abbreviated boot camp and down to Little Creek, Va., for gunnery school.

"I sorta enjoyed boot camp," says Kostanski. "It was very interesting. We had boat training on the lake there and then things like gas mask training and so forth."

"At Little Creek, we studied the guns and shot them, and learned aircraft identification and so forth."

He then graduated as a gunner into the Naval Armed Guard.

"The Happy Time"

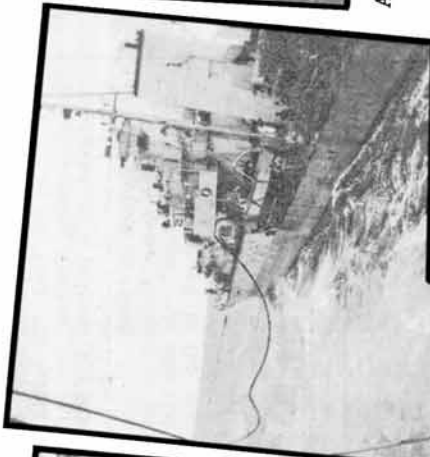
Things had not been going well for the U.S. merchant marine since war was declared. Despite plenty of evidence that German U-boats could wreak havoc on American shipping, the U.S. Navy had failed to prepare adequately for the outbreak of hostilities.

Once Congress had declared war on Germany, the U-boats immediately moved into position off the East Coast and began to sink merchant ships — often within sight of land.

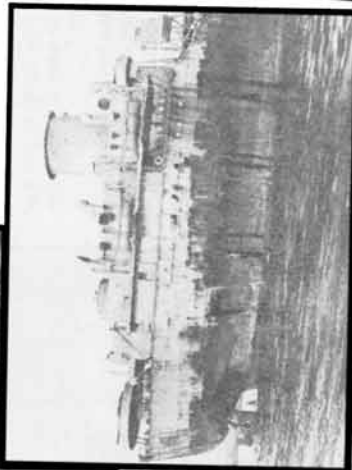
The German Navy later called it "Die Glückliche Zeit" — the "Happy Time." During the period, U-boats sank 609 ships for the loss of only 22 U-boats. Frantic to provide protection for our ships, the Navy had revived an idea from World War I, that of installing naval guns on board merchant ships and providing a small detail of trained sailors, usually with one officer in command, to man them.



Kostanski, who is third from left, on the U.S. Belle Isle, a troop transport.
Image courtesy of Walter Kostanski Jr.



Above, The S.S. Esso Rochester refuels the HMAS Norman at sea.
Image courtesy of Walter Kostanski Jr.



After months in the South Pacific, the Rochester is heavily coated in rust and ready for a cleanup job.
Image courtesy of Walter Kostanski Jr.



A 4-inch gun crew.
Image courtesy of Walter Kostanski Jr.



Kostanski at 19
Image courtesy of Walter Kostanski Jr.

by naval crews.

"After training, I was sent down to Brooklyn, N.Y., where we were headquartered, and then assigned to my first ship, the S.S. Esso Rochester." The Rochester was a tanker, one of the Esso fleet of wartime tankers. She was brand new in 1943, just out of the Sun Shipyard in Chester, Pa. She was 550 feet long and could steam at about 15 knots. The Navy added some 20mm anti-aircraft guns and two heavier guns: a 3-inch and a 4-inch, a lieutenant and 26 men.

"On our first trip out, we sailed with 145,000 barrels of high-octane gasoline, and a deck cargo of 10 P-38 fighters. We were bound

for Liverpool, to offload the fighters, then to Scotland, to discharge the gasoline.

Attacked by submarines

"But we had hardly gotten out of harbor when we were attacked by submarines! Here I was, 18 years old, right out of high school, and I was some scared."

Continued Page

Filipino guerrillas on small craft in Leyte Bay, Philippines.
Image courtesy of Walter Kostanski Jr.

The Naval Armed Guard, as it was known, was actually authorized a few weeks before Pearl Harbor, after a U.S. freighter, the S.S. Robin Moor, had been sunk by a German U-boat in violation of U.S. neutrality. By June of '43, when Kostanski joined the force, more than 1,000 ships had been armed and manned

Walter Kostanski: Tanker fights back

From Page D1

The Rochester survived that trip and many others afterward. With Kostanski and his crew keeping watch, the tanker carried bunker oil from Aruba to Dakar, picked up a load in Caracas, Venezuela, steamed through the Panama Canal and out to New Guinea, delivering the vital fuel for warships to Port Moresby and Milne Bay.

Back and forth across the Pacific, from the Persian Gulf to Australia, from Hollandia, New Guinea, to Sydney and Melbourne ... the Rochester was a floating fuel depot. Sometimes, Kostanski recalls, they would offload to shore facilities, other times they'd refuel ships at sea.

And always, there was the threat of attack by hostile aircraft or submarines.

The naval crew stood watch, cleaned their weapons, practiced loading and firing and helped maintain the ship.

Tokyo Rose's great music

"We trained the merchant crew on how to fire the guns, and they did a pretty good job," Kostanski says.

"We listened to Tokyo Rose, you know, the English-speaking woman on Japanese radio. We loved the music she played and just ignored the propaganda."

Then, in 1944, while at Hollandia, the Rochester was ordered to accompany a convoy of 40 LSTs and 12 Liberty ships, all carrying troops and equipment, enroute to Leyte Bay, where Gen. Douglas MacArthur was invading the Philippines, making good his promise to return and recapture the island chain from the Japanese, who'd defeated his forces there soon after Pearl Harbor.

Under the command of Capt. Frank Pharr, the Rochester sailed the 1,200 miles to the Philippines and was greeted by a dawn attack by Japanese aircraft, which bombed and strafed the convoy, setting fire to three of the Liberty ships. One of the Liberty ships, loaded with troops, was hit by a bomb and suffered heavy casualties.

Kostanski and the Rochester's gun crews added to the anti-aircraft fire, filling the sky with tracers. Several of the attackers were hit and one crashed in flames only a few hundred yards from the ship.

"We had some very tense moments," recalls Kostanski. "You have to remember that a tanker like ours really was a target. We were often refueling when the attacks started, usually with a ship on each side. Fuel oil was a precious commodity."

The Rochester scores a hit

For the next few days, the Rochester refueled ships and fought off aerial attackers — three or sometimes four times a day, the Japanese would come back and try to sink the ships supplying the invasion. These were often kamikazes — suicide planes — which were flown by pilots who had pledged to die for the Emperor.

In one such attack, at night, the Navy escort ships managed to shoot down an attacker in the nick of time and it crashed only about 100 yards from the Rochester.

The morning of Nov. 21, the Rochester was in a convoy being escorted by a carrier task force when it was attacked by a suicide pilot flying a two-engine bomber, a Mitsubishi Ki-21, code-named "Sally" by the Americans. After attacking the task force, the bomber suddenly turned and headed directly for the Rochester.



Photo courtesy of Walter Kostanski

Having shot down a Japanese plane, S.S. Esso Rochester was officially credited with the kill and the crew painted a silhouette of a bomber next to the rising sun flag of Japan on her funnel.

As it approached, apparently intent on crashing into the tanker, it was hit by a shell from the 3-inch gun on the bow, where Kostanski, the gun pointer, was working in conjunction with another man to aim the gun. The aircraft staggered, but continued on until a 20-mm shell fired by a gun on the bridge hit one engine, which burst into flames. The plane rapidly lost altitude, crashed into the sea and exploded, showering the Rochester with debris.

"It was a close call, but we stayed at our guns," said Kostanski.

"I was only 19, but you sort of got used to it."

"You know, you never figured you were going to die."

"We did the job."

The ship was officially credited with the kill and the crew painted a silhouette of a bomber next to the rising sun flag of Japan on her funnel.

After Leyte, Rochester returned to the states for a refit and Kostanski left, sitting for the gunners mate exam and then being assigned to the S.S. Gulf Crest, another tanker. Later, he served aboard the U.S. Belle Isle, a troop transport.

The Esso Rochester continued to ply the oceans, carrying fuel for the oil company until 1950, when her bow broke off during a storm.

"Those wartime ships, you know, were welded," says Kostanski. "A riveted ship would never do it, but sometimes those welds could split."

"In rough waters, say off the East Coast, near Cap Hatteras, sometimes we'd have to slow down to just 3 or 4 knots, to ease the strain on her plates."

The Rochester was salvaged, had a new bow welded on, and continued to steam until 1966, when she was broken up for scrap.

Kostanski was discharged in 1946 and came back to Turners Falls.

"I tried out for the Cubs and the Dodgers, but I had taken too much time off."

"I went to Franklin and Marshall and played football for a year, but then came back and went into the funeral business with my brother, Henry."

Kostanski got into politics then and was elected to the state legislature, serving there for 14 years, and then as Register of Deeds in Franklin County for 24 years.

He has been, and still is, active in the community.

And he is immensely proud of serving in the Armed Guard.

It's a record to be proud of. Nearly 1,600 men of the Armed Guard were killed defending their ships during the war, and as a group they earned five Navy Crosses, two Legions of Merit, 75 Silver Stars, 24 Navy and Marine Corps Medals and 54 Bronze Stars for heroism in combat, and seven U.S. Navy ships were named for Armed Guard officers killed in combat.

Tim Blagg is the editor of The Recorder, where he has worked since 1986. He can be reached at tblagg@recorder.com or (413) 772-0261 Ext. 250.

Staff photographer Paul Franz has worked for The Recorder since 1988. He can be reached at pfranz@recorder.com or (413) 772-0261 Ext. 266.

MERCHANT MARINES RECEIVE CREDIT

29 Navy Armed Guard,
Merchant Marines receive
credit after 63 years

FELLSMERE – Nearly 30 World War II veterans who served in the US Navy Armed Guard and Merchant Marines finally received the recognition they deserve 63 years after the war.

“I think it’s the most beautiful thing the government has done for me,” said veteran Thomas Vitale, of Vero Beach, who traveled to Marsh Landing Restaurant from Vero Beach with his wife to accept a certificate of recognition.

Members of the two groups traveled from all over to receive their certificates, including one from Cocoa and others from Port St. Lucie, Melbourne, West Melbourne, Barefoot Bay, Sebastian, Fellsmere, Vero Beach and numerous other towns out of the area.

“We wouldn’t have won the war without you guys,” U.S. Congressman Bill Posey

said Saturday morning, addressing a packed room of about 70. “We wouldn’t be free today” if not for your service.

Rep. Posey’s office has been working for the last year trying to get certificates made to honor the members of the US Navy Armed Guard and Merchant Marines in his district.

“We were sweating,” member Korky Korker said in introduction to the congressman, adding that they didn’t know until the last minute that Rep. Posey would be at the monthly breakfast.

The congressman, with assistance from his veterans affairs assistant, Chris Hill, called 29 veterans up to receive their recognition.

“They’re often overlooked,” Hill said after the breakfast of the members of the US Navy Armed Guard and those of the Merchant Marines.

He explained that their contributions during World War II were crucial to the war

effort, keeping the American military supplied with necessities. The Merchant Marines – a civilian group – was often the target of German U-boats.

“Who knows how the war would have turned out” if not for the members of the Armed Guard and Merchant Marines? Hill asked.

“It is truly humbling and an honor” to present the certificates, Rep. Posey said just as he started to announce the names of the veterans.

“Thank you from the bottom of our hearts,” he said.

U.S. Congressman Bill Posey presents all local US Navy Armed Guard and Merchant Marine veterans with the Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from service during World War II.

Staff photos by Keith Carson. See photo’s following two pages.



Lacy Meam



Edward Voorhis



Raymond Starke



Philip Crumb



Victor Virgens



Lone Sailor

MERCHANT MARINES RECEIVE CREDIT



Charles Heitzman



George Hill



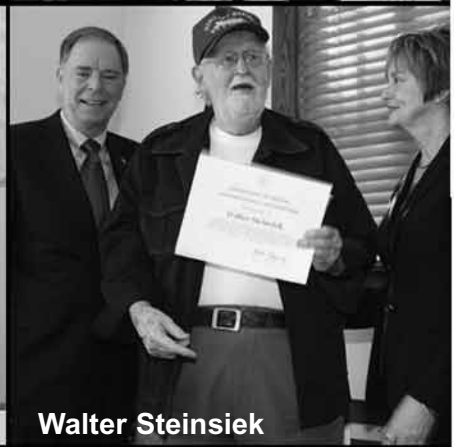
Louis Bergmann



Ralph Goldsmith



Richard Dennig



Walter Steinsiek



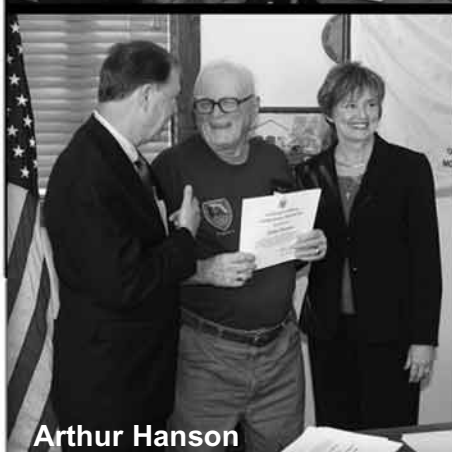
Robert Hainline



Americo Giorgio



Horton Van Etten



Arthur Hanson



John Goldring



Wayne Vaughn

MERCHANT MARINES RECEIVE CREDIT



Thomas Vitale



Robert Hollobaugh



Fred Jung



Charles Stevens



Labe Magdule



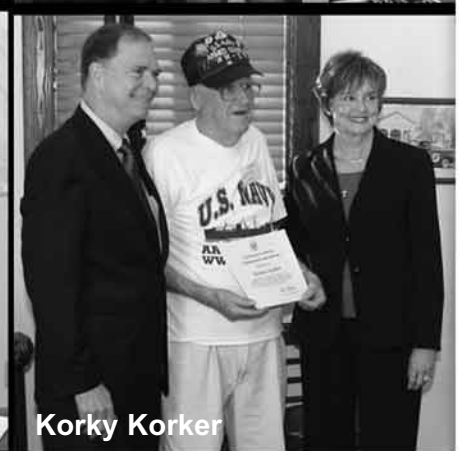
Elliott Keppler



Robert Stevenson



Bud Middleman



Korky Korker



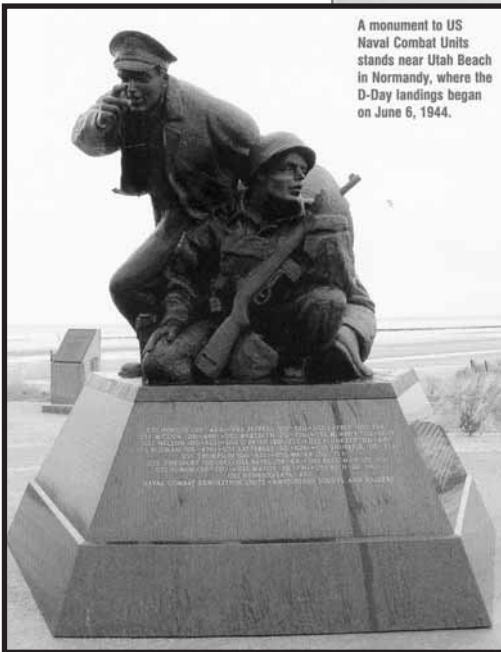
Leonard Tunis



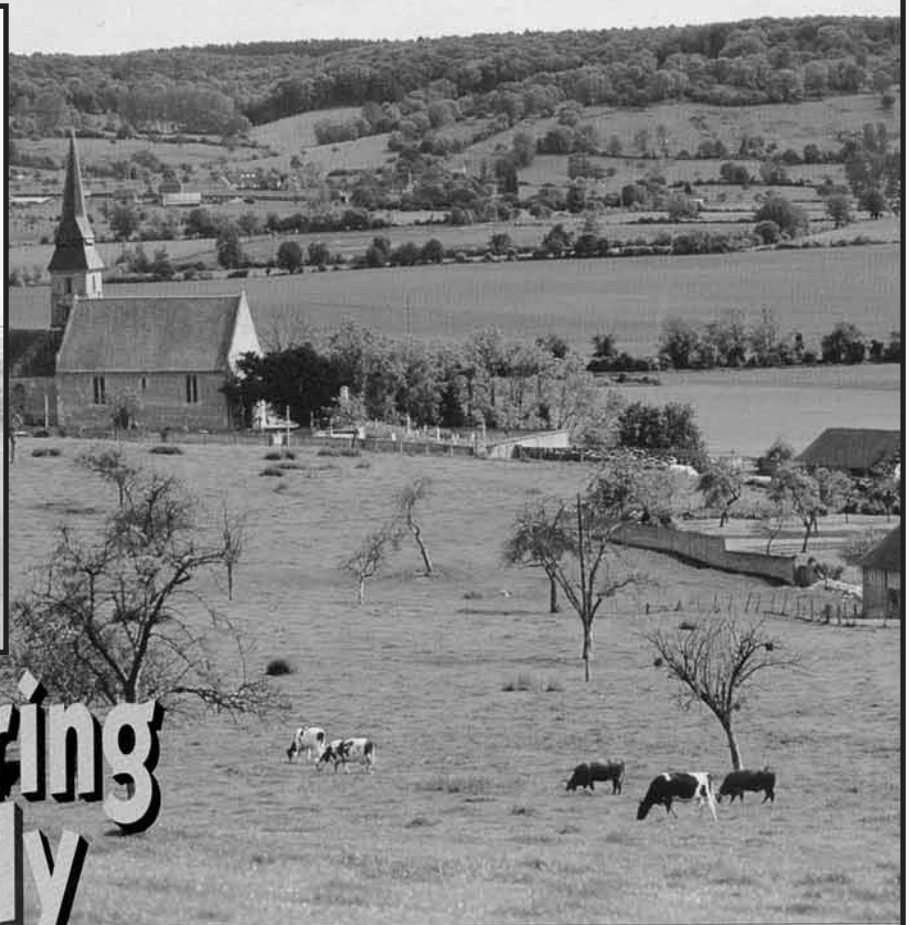
Richard Pearson



Joseph Laughead



A monument to US Naval Combat Units stands near Utah Beach in Normandy, where the D-Day landings began on June 6, 1944.



Remembering Normandy

The Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of the D-Day Landings

Philip Hartigan
and
Patricia Ann McNair

THE rolling, green Normandy countryside sweeps away from the waters of the English Channel, its fields crisscrossed by winding two-lane roads and dotted with small French villages that were originally settled centuries ago. There are cows and sheep in the fields and horses grazing behind long, low fences. The scene is pastoral, tranquil, idyllic. A warm breeze comes in through the open windows of your car, and the sky overhead is calm, vast, and blue.

Such was not the case sixty-five years ago when, in the early hours of June 6, 1944, the D-Day landings of World War II began.

A Morning to Remember

World War II seemed to some people a struggle that would not end, but the Allied forces of the United States, the British Commonwealth, and Canada were unwilling to see it that way. As the Germans spent months constructing a coastal defense system, the Allied Expeditionary Forces conceived and forged Operation Overlord, a plan to overtake the Nazi occupiers of France and to liberate the French citizens of Normandy. On June 5, 1944, after months of continuous consideration, deliberation, and plotting, General Dwight D. Eisenhower launched the operation with these words: "OK, we'll go."

Originally, the D-Day landings were to take place on three beaches between the city of Caen and the Cotentin Peninsula. These beaches were code named Omaha, Juno, and Sword. However, the scope of the landings began to appear too narrow, and the Allies recognized that they

See Next Pointer for more.



AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS

RUDY KOZAK CHAPTER • SANFORD, FLORIDA

WW II U.S. Navy Armed Guard Veteran's

Serving America in Peace and War



9-22-09

C.A.Lloyd
U.S. Navy Armed Guard Veterans
115 Wall Creek Dr.
Rollinsville, N.C. 27571

Dear C.A.

Enclosed is a picture of the 2009 officers of the Rudy Kozak Chapter A.M.M.V. and U.S. Navy Armed Guard W.W.II V. Sanford, FL. (L to R) John Boes Armed Guard assistant Chaplain David Eslick Director, Ann Parrish Chaplain, Mary McCamy Treasurer, Calvin LaMotte Secretary, Richard McCamy Vice C.E.O. Richard Parrish C.E.O. and Doyle Abbott Director.



Also a picture taken May 22, 2009 on National Maritime day of Richard McCamy and Morris Harvey as they prepare to lay a wreath in the Atlantic Ocean in remembrance of all who were lost at sea. Note the three flags (American, Navy Armed Guard, and Merchant Marine) on the stern of the boat.



Richard McCamy Vice C.E.O.
Rudy Kozak Chapter A.M.M.V.

Richard McCamy

USN Armed Guard WW II Veterans
 115 Wall Creek Drive
 Rolesville, N.C. 27571
 1 (919) 570-0909
 clloyd@nc.rr.com
 www.armed-guard.com



Non Profit
 Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Permit No. 2322
 Raleigh, N.C.

Remember Pearl Harbor!
December 7, 1941

"Donations keeps us afloat"



*Our
 Motto
 was...*

*and
 We Did!*

**Support The USN Armed Guard
 WW II Veterans Reunions**
 Remember Also
The Twin Towers
 September 11, 2001

AUG/DEC 2009 Edition



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.

REMEMBER ALSO:
 THE TWIN TOWERS
 THE PENTAGON
 AND FLIGHT 93
 God Bless Them

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.