

# THE P INTER

JUNE/AUG 2010 EDITION



## U.S. Navy Armed Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine

Little recognized in popular histories of the Second World War, the U.S. Navy Armed Guard (USNAG) and U.S. Merchant Marine (USMM) played a central role in transporting the personnel and matériel the Allies needed to achieve victory. In the process of doing that, those merchant seamen sustained the severest losses, per capita, of any U.S. military or naval service during the Second World War. Attacked en route to Honolulu, SS Cynthia Olson became the first U.S. flag vessel sunk by a Japanese submarine. The 250 x 44 x 20-foot steam schooner sank with her 33-man crew, two U.S. Army passengers, and cargo a thousand miles east of Diamond Head on 7 December 1941, Pearl Harbor Day.

Though separate entities with different responsibilities, the USNAG and USMM sailed, labored, and fought as one. A service branch of the United States Navy, the USNAG helped defend U.S. and Allied cargo ships, tankers, troop ships and other merchant vessels from aerial, submarine, and surface attack by serving aboard them as gunners, signal men, and radio operators. The USMM comprised the civilian crew and officers who sailed the various non-naval vessels that carried cargo, transported passengers, and provided maritime services worldwide.

Throughout the early 1940s, the Allies' merchant services endured years of peril and suffering on the treacherous Murmansk Run above Norway to northwestern Russia. Among the supplies and equipment transported from the United States by the USMM were 15,000 aircraft, 7,000 tanks, 350,000 tons of explosives, and 15 million pairs of boots. That infusion cost the United States some fifty vessels sunk with their cargo and thousands of combat and cold-weather casualties, but the sustained effort, complemented by British and Canadian merchant navies transporting similar cargo at comparable costs in vessels and lives, provided the matériel Stalin needed to resist then counterattack Hitler on the eastern front while the planning, preparation, and launching of D-Day proceeded in the west.

Beneath a 10 June 1944 New York Times story headlined "Merchant Seamen Are D-Day Heroes," this noteworthy summary appears: "The American merchant marine has reached a new peak of glory, and into this latest venture it has brought all the hard-earned experience of such historic episodes as the African landings and the bitterly fought Arctic runs to Russia. . . ." For D-Day, the USMM fleet included refitted luxury liners as well as tugs, barges, concrete ships, freighters, and scores of Liberty ships. Forty-six merchant vessels were sunk or damaged in Operation Neptune, among them sixteen deliberate sinkings on 8 June to create breakwaters for an artificial harbor off Omaha Beach.

Emplaced in grateful tribute to the men and women of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine. Valor, fidelity, and sacrifice are the hallmarks of their wartime service at sea and at home. Given by the veterans and friends of the USNAG and USMM.

Dedicated on the 66th anniversary of D-Day, 6 June 2010.





The SS JOHN W. BROWN made 13 voyages during World War II. Her maiden voyage was to the Persian Gulf, carrying military equipment for Russia, which could only be supplied from the Persian Gulf or via convoys to Murmansk, the infamous "Murmansk run."



Launched on November 9, 1944 as the SS RED OAK VICTORY, and commissioned as the USS Red Oak Victory (AK235) in December, 1944, the Red Oak Victory is the only vessel built by the Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond, California that is being restored. The ship saw service in World War II, Korea and Vietnam and has the distinction of being the only ship operated by both military and civilian personnel during her career.



**SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN** This vessel is one of two fully-restored operating survivors of 2,710 World War II Liberty Ships. It is the only ship that participated in the Normandy invasions that returned fifty years later to take part in the 50th anniversary of D-Day.



**W.V.A AG CREW - SEP '09**

Standing L-R: Robert Wheeler, Robert Winter, Forrest Flanagan, Charles Cherry, Keith Harsh & Roman Chruby  
Sitting L-R: Earl McCune, Hobert Adkins & Laymon Claw

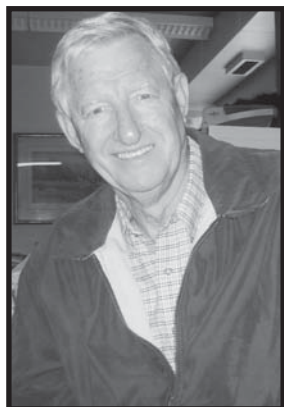


Built in 1945, in Los Angeles, CA, the SS LANE VICTORY served with distinction during World War II, The Korean War, and the Vietnam War as well as in times of peace as part of the merchant fleet.



**SS AMERICAN VICTORY** - From June 1946 until November 1947 she was chartered by American Export Lines, carrying foodstuffs and machinery exported from the United States to Europe under the Marshall Plan. She was then laid up in the Hudson River Reserve Fleet until she was again chartered by commercial shipping lines from 1951 until January 1954 when she entered the Sabine River Reserve Fleet in Texas.

# THE POINTER



Dear Crew and others who reads this: D-DAY June 6, 2010

Time moves on and we take one day at a time and before I "FORGET IT, on page 51 of the Jan/May 2010 POINTER was an article sent in by Jack Campbell of Stephanie Batstone and I failed to contact Jack as it was printed in June 2001. Stephanie had passed away in 2008. See her sister, Brenda Walker's letter in this POINTER.

Again, THANKS for the donations sent to keep the POINTER going. Our numbers have started to dwindle but we aren't promised to go on forever. A sad note is that last year,

Faye and Hilmer Schmidt volunteered to host the Texas Reunion. Faye passed away before it was held and since the reunion, Hilmer joined her. Their friend, Debbie Wade will carry on in their honor and help in future Texas reunion in Wichita Falls. I hope to have more on this in the next POINTER.

A few months ago, I received a call from Jeffery Fulgham of the of the Bedford, Va. Memorial Park Foundation that the Armed Guard/Merchant Marine WW II men from Virginia were trying to place a Plaque there by this June 6, 2010 66th Ceremony and did not have sufficient funds and if we could assist them. I called a few AG/MM in the area who he had been corresponding with Jeff and was told they were short some \$1750.00 so I called Jeff and told him a check for that amount was on the way to take care of it as time was short to get it done this year in time for the event. (Since then, a lot of the money has been sent in from the Va. Crew.) Hilda and I attended the ceremony and Jeff got us VIP parking and seating near the men who survived that day who had come from all over the USA to be there. The plaque was there next to the USS RICH (DE-625) which was sunk that day. I felt honored to represent you on this historical occasion and to sit with these heroes who lost so many of their units that day. It is very strange that our local newspaper did not mention anything prior to or afterwards of D-DAY. You figure it out. The Plaque is shown on the cover in this POINTER.

Our next Edition of the POINTER will have photos of the D-DAY Memorial at Bedford, Va. and the Merchant Marine/Armed Guard plaque and your story of D-DAY if you will write about it. A story of the USS Rich DD-sinking Normandy and a story from one of Her survivors. If you were an AG/MM attending the ceremony, please advise ASAP and I'll place it in the next POINTER.

cal

★★★★★★

Cover photo From: Jeffrey Fulgham - jrfulgham@dday.org

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## ATTENTION

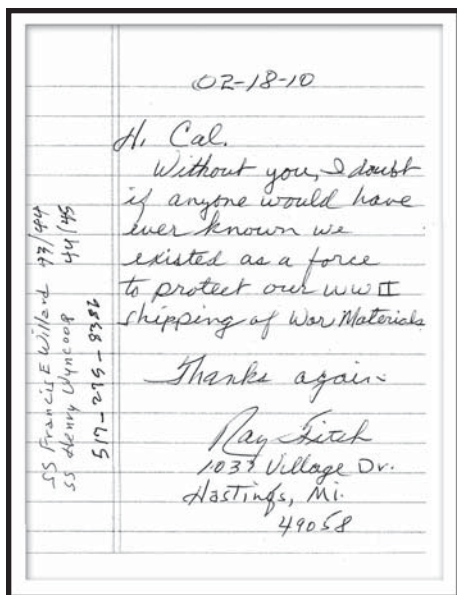
You know where you are.  
You know where we are.  
We know where we are.  
But we don't always know  
where you are.  
**Please notify us when you move.**

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*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 Modern Military Personnel persons.*

*This is a letter that I re-typed for the next POINTER. I would like to know the cost of the ship's log and Lt(jg) Robert Beach's report and the list of the Armed Guard and Merchant crew on the S.S. JACK LONDON's crew so I can possibly locate some family members of the deceased. I have 3 living members so far but they have no first and last names of the crew. E-Mail me the cost and I will send check. Time is of essence. Thanks.*

*Charles A. Lloyd*

★★★★★★★★

Charles Lloyd;  
PERMISSION TO COME  
ABOARD!!!

At this point in life, I truly and honestly never knew any Armed Guard was around! You were the first one I heard from or knew the organization existed so let's get going and get the muster started! My first report to you is that it all began in 1943 at the U.S. Naval Training Station Co. 299 Newport, R.I. I spent six weeks Boots and then to Advanced Gunnery training at Little Creek, Va. on Highway 60 out in the country and then to the Brooklyn, N.Y. Armed Guard AG Shipping and Receiving Center at 1st Ave and 52nd St.

My first home away from home was on the

USAT JOHN ERICSSON which was a troop transport that had been built in 1926 for a Danish Cruise Ship Line and christened the M/S KUMSHOLM. The Captain was John Anderson (MM), a real seagoing Old Salt. Aged, but lot of knowledge of the sea. We sailed the Atlantic and the ocean was rough and most of the 1300 GI's are seasick and some never left their bunks. We did finally get to Liverpool, England and embarked. We had endured submarine attacks and air attacks. The sad part was some ships; Liberty and tankers, could not keep up with the convoy and were left behind and met their fate at the hands of the Germans. Many human lives were lost not to mention all the valuable tonnage of war material going to the bottom of the ocean that was needed to to fight a war.

I was full of knowledge by now from Brooklyn to England as I got my sea legs. After getting a little breather from the sea duty, our Lt. gave us Liberty and we were off to see the City of Liverpool. My own crew got our first battle under way. We set our sight on an English Pub—and not long, we were encountered in a MOB SCENE-A ROYAL BATTLE!! Some U.S. Merchant Marines and a few English Bobbies got into a scrap and it spilled out into the street. A Bobbie was struck and thrown to the sidewalk; just a few scenes there and the MPs came and started making a report. Now, I knew what it was, growing up at a tender age. The Port authorities put our ship on: Confined to quarters; No shore leave; No Liberty and even to those who did not go ashore, they had to suffer the same for our actions. We made a few other travel trips across the ocean transporting the Army GI's. It was a great experience and many sea tales to tell.

Uncle Sam's Poster, "I WANT YOU"!! That finger was pointing directly at me. So, I ran to join up. That's how the Navy got me! The Victory in the European theater was about to come to an end and it was "GET THE JOB DONE IN THE PACIFIC" and it was the Pacific by the

way of the AGC Brooklyn again. I was put on a troop train and 5 days later, I was in California. My next home would be the S.S. GLOUCHESTER (CVE-109), a baby flat-top. It was a Navy Air Force fighter planes carrier to the Pacific Fleet. Took care of the action, delivered the "goodies" and came back to Ford Island after only one trip. My orders were "SHIP'S COMPANY", a small office job and I began to build up POINTS after the Japs surrendered.

Another troop train to the East Coast and God's Country, NEW YORK CITY, over to Lido Beach for discharge and home to my family and buddies. Thanks for the packet of POINTERS and items of interest.

I will end this on a sad note for my first home away from home was the USAT JOHN ERICSSON and years later, while moored and tied at the same pier in the Hudson River, a workman's torch accidentally set the vessel on fire from forward to stern, she sank and was not salvagable, into her watery grave. Again, Thanks for listening. Regards,

Philip J. Dalia  
5455 Kings HWY Apt 5E  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11203

★★★★★★★★

Dear Lloyd,

I am sending a picture(SEE PAGE 41) and names of the gun crew of the S.S. JACK LONDON which sailed from San Francisco, California around August 1, 1943. This was a new Liberty Ship and we headed for the Aleutian Islands in Alaska. We were in Alaska three or four days and we sailed for Attu where we ran into a severe Arctic storm called the "WILLIWAWS". It was so severe that we lost some of our heavy cargo chained down to our main deck. The welded seams on the bottom of the ship started cracking and leaking seawater. We finally got to Attu and unloaded the remaining cargo. We, then, sailed back to San Francisco to dry dock to have repairs made. After re-welding the seams, they



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



installed heavy plates in the bottom of the ship to help stabilize it for rough seas. When this was completed, we started loading supplies for the South Pacific. We arrived in New Caledonia in late September 1943 to take on more supplies.

Then, we sailed north to the beaches of Guadalcanal and Bouganville. While there, our gunnery officer, Lt. Robert E. Beach sent 10 of us gunners to the other side of the island to a firing range for 3 or 4 days gunnery practice. On the second day, a typhoon hit and blew away all of our tents and all of our belongings. We asked the people in charge if they would take us back to the ship. They could only take us part of the way, to a flooded river coming down from the side of the mountains. After waiting awhile, we decided to try crossing on a flooded bridge on foot. While on the bridge, the water was so swift, it washed us off. Five of our ten men drowned and was washed out to sea. Their bodies were washed back on the beach some 5 or 6 days later and found by the natives. Three naval officers came aboard the ship to pick two gunners to identify the bodies of the five shipmates. Unfortunately, I was the first one picked. This was something that I will never forget having to do. The condition of the shipmate's bodies was beyond any recognition. Since we had lived together for

more than a year or more, I could look at a comb, pocket knife, shoes, or even a pencil and know to whom it belonged.

We, then sailed north to the beachheads of the Solomon Islands. We spent several months shuttling from island to island before heading back to Long Beach, California. I made several more interesting trips while in the Armed Guard, including a trip around the world. But, the purpose of this letter is in the remembrance of my 5 deceased shipmates and also, in case someone may read the POINTER and know of a family member or a friend who would be interested in talking to someone about their loved ones in their last days. The picture I am sending has an asterisk by the names of the 5 who lost their lives.

01 Eilutsen-NY	02. Gibson-Oh.
03. Elliott-Oh.	04. Basa-Mi.
05. Debluria-oh.	06. Ciappino-NJ
07. Dolence*Il	08. Doctor-Oh.
09. Levy-Co.	10. Hachstidler-Mo.
11. Williams-Tx.	12. Hammer-Oh.
13. Kaufman*NY	14. Curella-Ky.
15. Amatuli+NY	16. Cuipe-In.
17. Curtis-Mi.	18. DePardo-Ma.
19. Crown-Il.	20. Harnatausky*Oh
21. Eads-NY	22. Dunn*NY
23. Duffus*NY	24. Culver-Mo.
25. Hacker-In.	26. Hager-Mo.

Sincerely,  
John R. Hager  
4573 HWY 169 • King City, Mo 64463

★★★★★★

Dear Cal,

I am not one at writing letters but decided to let you know that I appreciate the POINTERS and for the Armed Guard crew of WW II. My experience was a cakewalk compared to that of most "Ol'Salts". Took BOOTS at Farragut, Idaho NTC in 1943. On to San Diego, Ca. Destroyer Base for gunnery training. Then, over to Treasure Island for more training while awaiting to be assigned to a ship. Took a train to Seattle, Wa. to board the S.S. LINDLEY M. GARRISON, a Troopship and sailed about midnight for Alaska into Dutch Harbor. Unloaded these troops and loaded other troops and returned to Seattle.

I was transferred to the Seattle Armed Guard Center and caught a tanker, the S.S. FRANK G. DRUM, built in 1913 with a speed of 12 knots, but the most we got out of her was 8 knots. We left Seattle for Dutch Harbor; Adak; Attu and Amchita. Outside of Adak, there was a possible sighting of a Jap sub and our patrol boat came to investigate and while we waited for about 10 days to form a convoy, our radioman and I played cards and listened to the radio. There were several ships sunk in the Unimik Pass where we would travel when we left Dutch Harbor. We left with a troop ship and 2 destroyers and as we went through the pass, one of the destroyers signaled that they would drop back to try to pick up a sub. We continued on to Kodiak as the other destroyer escorted the troopship on to the States. While in Kodiak, our signalman signaled our Destroyer about about the sub and was answered, "GOT HIM".

Leaving Kodiak, we sailed to San Francisco and was directed to the Navy Fuel Depot on the Sacramento River when we got to the Golden Gate Bridge. While the ship was being loaded with



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

AVgas, there was an explosion. Everyone ran outside to see what had happened. As I went out, I helped a shipmate up from the deck where he had been knocked down by the blast. The only thing I could see was big ball of red that looked liked the 4th of July fireworks. Of course, you know of the two ammunition ships that blew up at Port Chicago. After loading, we picked up six aircraft at the NAS Alameda and dropped them off at Hawaii. We sailed on to Majuro to unload the fuel. After unloading, we were ready to return to San Francisco but bad weather set in and the only time we saw our escorts, was when we were on top of a wave.

Back in San Francisco, I took leave and returning to T.I., I was sent to the S.S. ARCADIA VICTORY in September of 1944. Being partial loaded, we stopped at Port Hueneme which is just North of Los Angeles to pick up construction equipment and we sailed to Melbourne, Australia and we were there about 18 hours. We sailed to Calcutta, India. After off loading the ship, they found damage to the ship from a bad storm in the Indian Ocean. The ammunition in the forward magazine had to be removed before all the ship's main supports could be welded. We sailed to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) where the ship was loaded with copras, the dried coconut. It was a slow process because they had no docks or cranes, just native manpower and boats. This gave the crew a chance to get acquainted with the natives. I met an Australian who took me to tea with the Governor of Ceylon. We returned to San Francisco and sailed to Port Hueneme to pick up construction equipment for the CBs and took it to Manus in the Admiralty Islands, via Eniwetok Atoll. From there to Guian, Samar, Philippines and to Okinawa where we were sitting. In Buckner Bay when the war ended so we returned to the States. That is my story and I saw a lot of water and different places. There must be many stories not told which should be. I hope you and others enjoy mine. God Bless and keep up the good work.

Paul W. Terwilliger

2635 Ave. A-327 • San Diego, Ca. 92103

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles,

In April of 1943, I sailed on the S.S. GULF QUEEN, a tanker built in 1918. All "Non-Officers" slept in a large area back aft below the deck. Above us was a large gun manned by the U.S. Navy Armed Guard gun crew. They worked out every morning at 6 a.m. to keep in shape and they made a lot of noise and my watch was the 12 to 4, so you know how I felt. Also, back aft, was installed huge towing equipment as we towed a concrete barge full of fuel to a small French controlled island Bora Bora.

On board this tanker barge was a small group of Navy sailors to monitor their end of the line. We often could see smoke coming from the barge as the sailors cooked their own food. At the small French Island, we dropped off the barge for fueling passing war ships. We unloaded our tanker's fuel there also but the French would not let us go ashore. That was the only tanker that I was on. I sailed on the S.S. William Mulholland and the S.S. A.B. Hammond. Jerry Bleeker (MM) 447 E. Yale Loop, Irvine, Ca. 92614 949-786-4619.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Aloha C.A.,

From the land of pleasant living, steamed crabs, oysters and beer, I would like to comment on: 01. The cover of the POINTER in color is great. Somehow, to me, color adds something that Black and white doesn't convey. 02. The article on Page 51 of the Jan/May 2010 POINTER regarding Jack Campbell and the British WREN really hit home. I sailed on the S.S. MATT W. RANSOM with Jack when the events in the article took place. Needless to say, we were envious of Jack and his "flirtation" by signal light. Too bad, as we were gunners instead of signalmen.

I continue to get in touch with Jack and we were together at previous National Reunions. Your never ending deed for the Armed Guard is greatly appreciated

by one and all. YAHOO!! P.S. I have applied for the 65th Anniversary Russian Medal.

Milton Dieiker 226 Deep Dale Dr.  
Timonium, Md. 21093

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*(To all the crew-I had received the article on Marshall and Stephanie Batstone in 2001 and located it and printed it without consulting Jack and after printing, I found out she had passed away in 2006. So sad. At least the true story was told and now in the archives.) cal*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Good afternoon Gentlemen

I have scanned the reference Otto Schwenk wrote for William Massey-Reed. Unfortunately it does not give a huge amount of information to work on. William's daughter is the holder of this original document and other valuable family documents which will be able to help me with my genealogical research into the various branches my husband's family. William is from what I call a "direct lineage". Kindest regards  
Judi

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*"Here is an example of people who served in WW II on our ships and without them, things would have been different. It shows that you didn't have to man a gun to be a veteran of the USA in WW II. The BBs, DEs, etc. had Stewards on their ships too.", cal*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A Beautiful Tree

One might not imagine that a deck swab could be made into a Christmas Tree. So here is the story of Pete Burke on the Murmansk Run during WW II. His ship was not headed home for Christmas so the USN Armed Guard decided to make a Christmas Tree out of a deck swab as cutting a tree in Russia was not allowed. So the carpenter drilled holes in the handle of the deck swab and clothes hangers were made into branches. The



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

USAT "JOSEPH ASPDIN."  
UNITED STATES ARMY TRANSPORTATION CORPS  
BASE "B", APO503

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF STEWARD.

20th July, 1945.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

This is to certify that the bearer, Mr. William Massey-Reed, has served in the Stewards Department of the USAT "Joseph Aspdin," under my direct observation from the first day United States Shipping Articles were signed by the crew of this ship.

During his period of service under my supervision he has given the utmost satisfaction both in the performance of duty and in his behavior. I have pleasure in testifying to his character and in recommending his services to any organisation requiring the services of a thoroughly competent and trustworthy employee.

All told Mr. Massey-Reed has a total period of service with United States Army Transports of twenty-five months. During the whole of this time he held the position of Chief Cook or Senior Cook.

I wish Mr. Massey-Reed every success in his new avocation.

OTTO SCHWENK,  
CHIEF STEWARD,  
USAT. "JOSEPH ASPDIN."



tree was mounted and placed in the center of the messhall table; strange ornaments were mounted for tree trimmings. Yellow wrapped around oranges became Christmas balls; tin foil from the galley served as tinsel; and a ship machinist cut out a brass star for the top of the tree. Other improvised ornaments were made rapidly and we finally put it together. It lacked the aroma of a real Christmas tree, but to the crew the tree was really beautiful.

The captain gave us a bottle of bourbon and one blended whiskey, which went into a large punch bowl (galley pot) along with cans of grape juice, orange juice and pineapple juice --- not to mention a gallon of local moonshine. Finally, the tree was finished and trimmed. In

port, the ship had little duty so all the crew and officers wished each other a MERRY CHRISTMAS and had a wonderful party away from home. Pete Burke passed away a few years ago but his story remains with me at Christmas time.

Peter Gusasi, Jr.  
55 Indian Red Rd. Levittown, Pa. 19057  
(Taken from Dec. 19, 2008 Bucks Co. Courier Times)

★★★★★★★★

My dear friends & shipmates! I congratulate you with the Great Event - the 65th Anniversary of the Victory over nazy Germany. I wish you to celebrate the 70th Victory Day in Good Health and

Wellbeing.

With Love and Respect

Yours very sincerely'

Anatoly

\*\*\*\*See Story Page 12\*\*\*\*\*

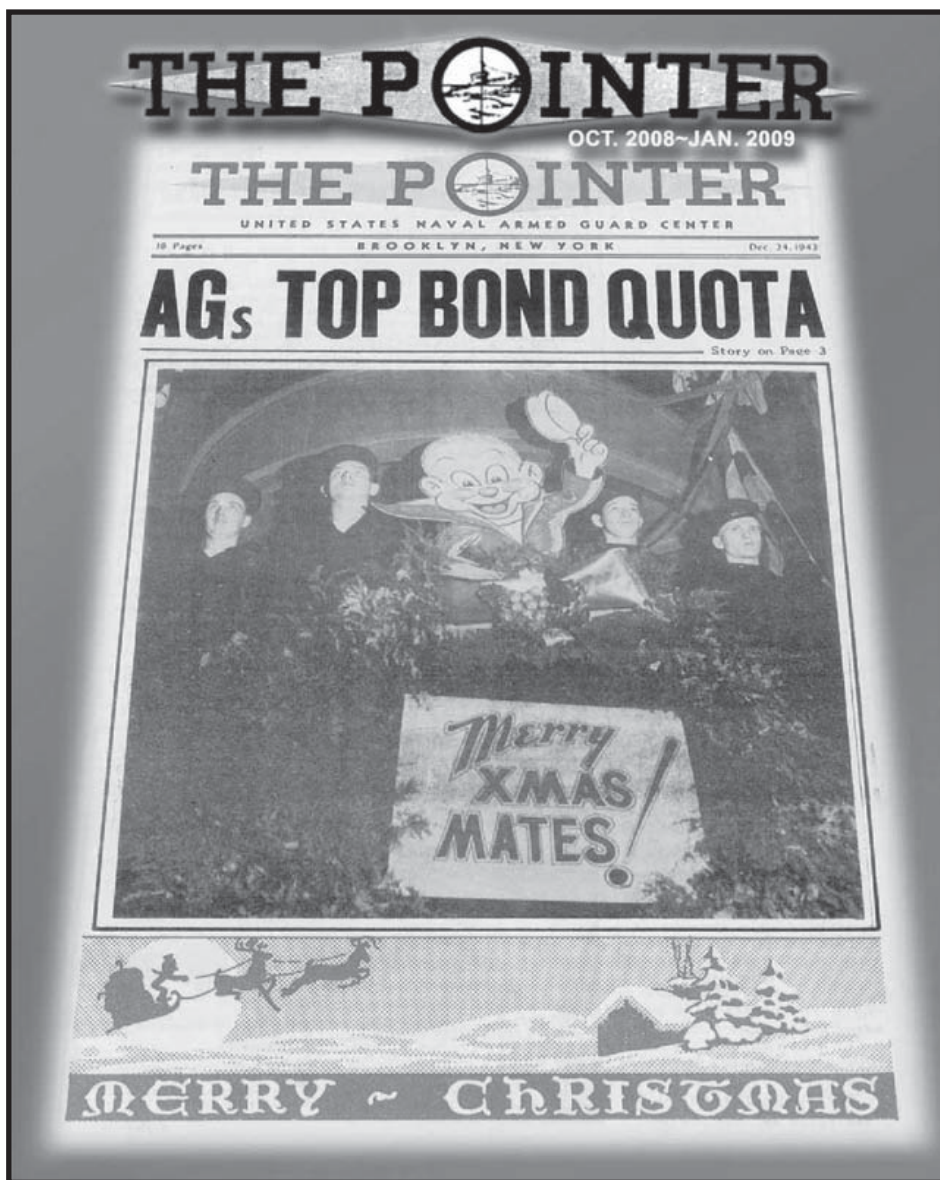
★★★★★★★★

Subject: INCORRECT EMAIL  
ADDRESS IN POINTER  
ARTICLE 28TH APRIL 2010 PAGE  
45 LAST COLUMN-BOTTOM.

Cal, I had forgotten to inform you earlier, that following the ESSO WILLIAMS-BURG article you had given my address and OLD email address and no longer used. So if anyone had sent me an email response to the article it will have been



# LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



sent back as undeliverable. The correct E-MAIL address is as per this email is: david@sibley.myzen.co.uk

★★★★★★★★

Subject: SS Larranaga

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

I found an article in the Pointer that referenced the torpedoing of the SS Larranaga (page 29) in December, 1941. It noted what was described in the Navy's OP-414 (<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Admin-Hist/173-ArmedGuards/173-AG-2.html>).

This reference is not complete. The Merchant Captain of the SS Larranaga

was my uncle, Captain Cameron Dudley Simmons. Yes, the Armed Guard fired upon, and possibly seriously damaging or sinking an enemy submarine, but the family said that Capt. Simmons refused to sail from Boston without the Armed Guard aboard because he aware of the dangers involved in the crossing. In December 41, the Larranaga had been caught in a wolfpack and was damaged. After the attack, the Larranaga diverted to Reykjavik, Iceland because it required repairs to continue to Russia. I made copies of the declassified secret logs and Armed Guard logs from the Larranaga. These logs are located at the National Archives in NY. From the logs, I have the names of the Armed Guard aboard, and actions taken by the Armed Guard and

merchant crew. While I do not have the logs in front of me, I recall the CO of the Armed Guard and some (if not all) of the crew was recommended or received a medal or letter of commendation from this action.

The merchant marines fought beside the Guard during this battle at sea but received no recognition. My Uncle later became the Master of several liberty ships including the SS William Wirt where the Armed Guard also downed up to 7 enemy aircraft. If you are interested in any of this information, please feel free to contact me or my father (Edward Jordan pioneersea52@yahoo.com)

Thank you,

Ashley Cordi US Coast Guard Academy  
15 Mohegan Ave (ee)  
New London, CT 06320  
860-444-8233

★★★★★★★★



**Lone Sailor**

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



# REUNIONS

USN ARMED GUARD MEETINGS AND REUNION 2009-2010

PLEASE NOTICE!! MANY CHANGES OF ADDRESSES, TEL.#, E-MAILS, Etc.  
MANY MAY MAKE CHANGES ON DATE AND PLACES SO IT'S UP TO YOU TO FIN OUT.  
REGIONAL---MINI-REUNIONS ---GET-TOGETHERS-- MEMORIALS, ETC  
SUPPORT THESE LOCAL MEETINGS

NOTICE: Hosts Names, Addresses, Zip Codes, Telephone;., E-Mails may change anytime so it's up to you and them to keep each notified. Any changes will be in the next POINTER. If your group is not included or need corrections, advise NOW for the next POINTER. If your meeting was in the May/Aug. POINTER, it will not be in this one unless it has changed.

The SUNCOAST Armed Guard/  
Merchant Marine Veterans of WW II  
will meet in Sept. 11, 2010 at Kally K's at  
11:30 hours. Contact: Hal Conn, 6625  
W. Seven Rivers Dr., Crystal River, Fl.  
34429 352-795-6257  
halconn@xtalwind.net

The Rudy Kozak Chapter of the  
U.S. Merchant Marine and Armed  
Guard Veterans still meet at 1 P.M. on the  
2nd Wednesday of each month except  
July and August at the American Legion  
Post No. 53 in Sanford, Fla.. Contact:  
Richard McCamy, 26002 Zinna Lane,  
Astatula, Fl. 34705 352-742-1394  
marymccamy@embarqmail.com. Sure is  
good to get back into the POINTER.  
We have a great crew of MM/AG who  
enjoy swapping our sea stories. We invite  
you and everyone to come join in while  
we are able.

Our Joe Colgan, AG on the S.S. JOHN  
W. BROWN asked me to remind all of  
you of the ship's cruises and especially to  
Providence, RI. Sat. Sept. 25th. 2010. Get  
your tickets now to be sure of the cruise.  
This may be the last time many of you  
can get to see another Liberty Ship in  
your area.

Southern California - San Fernando  
Valley COCO's California Room.  
Armed Guard and MM WW II, meet  
the 3rd Sat. of the month at 11 A.M. for  
breakfast for laughs and conversation.  
We have never missed a month in the last  
7 years. JOIN IN. AG---MM WW II  
and ladies WELCOMED.

Rhode Island and Eastern Ma. Chapter  
Host, Gerry Greaves, 1287 S. Broadway,  
E. Providence, 02914 401-431-0011

USNAG@aol.com asks his crew to keep  
in contact him as he has changed their  
meeting place to the first Thursday in Oct.  
2020. It will be held at the Corner of  
Broad St. and Rhodes Pl. in the Imperial  
Room at #1 Rhodes Pl. Cranston, RI.  
02905. Also, keep in mind that the S.S.  
JOHN W. BROWN will visit  
Providence next Sept. 25, 2010. See Flyer  
in this POINTER.

Il/Wi meetings for 2010 will be: Aug. 17  
and Nov. 16. at Sturtevant Driftwood  
Restaurant. Hosts are Jay and Jane  
Wildfong 13211 Durand Ave. Sturtevant,  
Wi. 53117 262-886-2966 WILD-  
FONGJ@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 You're wel-  
comed 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 at the Long Beach Hilton Hotel,  
Long Beach, Ca. Host: Duane Walters,  
103 Cross Rd., Camillus, N.Y. 13031 315-  
487-2623 buckypcsa@twcnr.rr.com

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
Armed Guard Veterans of WW II will  
hold their 2010 FALL Meeting  
Wednesday Oct. 13th at noon at the  
RED BLAZER Restaurant in Concord  
N.H.. RSVP by Oct. 9th to Bob Norling  
603-224-4927 E-Mail  
uppa1924@aol.com

WVA Armed Guard Merchant Marine  
WW II Veterans will be Sept. 25, 2010 at  
the "Ranch House" Restaurant in the  
Conference Room Rt. 55 Craigsville,  
WV. 304-742-6117. Hosts are Forrest  
Flanagan PO Box 119, Craigsville, WV  
26205 304-742-3160 OR Robert  
Wheeler, 203 Hunt Ave. Beckley, WV.  
25108 304-255-0897

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 CAR-  
ROW'S RESTAURANT at 3180 El  
Camino Real, Santa Clara, Ca. on the 4th  
Friday of each month (except Nov/Dec)

## REUNIONS

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.

MM/AG Susquehanna Mariners Contact Wm. Balabanow, 74 Delp Rd., Lancaster, Pa. 17601 717-569-0391 b.balabanow@verizon.net for their next meeting.

The Merchant Marine WWII will hold their 26th National Reunion in Renor, Nv. Cleveland, Ohio Chapter still hold their meetings at Denny's W 150th Exit off I-71 4331 West 150th St. Cleveland. Contact Bill Joyce 440-937-6487. bjjj@eriecoast.com

## NAZI SUB SUNK OFF BLOCK ISLAND

Nazi sub sunk off Block Island; it happened on May 6, 1945  
By Thomas J. Morgan  
Journal Staff Writer

Sixty-five years ago this month, Navy pilot John G. Bradley Jr. was flying an Avenger torpedo bomber out over Long Island Sound, acting as a "target" for rookie lookouts aboard submarines based in New London, Conn.

"The weather was extremely bad," he recalls. "We were in and out of the clouds."

There was fog around, too.

It was around 10:15 a.m. on May 5, 1945, and Bradley's radioman, Clifford Grinson, spotted a sub on the surface. But this one wasn't based in New London. The German submarine U-853 was on the prowl, only two days before World War II ended in Europe.

The German navy had radioed all its submarines to cease fire that day. But no one knows whether the U-853 received the message.

Bradley, then 21, noted that the submarine stood just east of Montauk Point on Long Island, and on a course that would take it toward Block Island at around 10 knots.

But there wasn't much Bradley and Grinson could do. "All we had was gas in the tank — no armament," Bradley, who now lives in Narragansett, said last week.



Bradley couldn't even radio a warning to the huge naval air base at Quonset Point, because he was flying under strict radio silence.

"The Germans were pretty sharp," he said. "They were monitoring our frequencies. When we operated with our own subs, we used blinker lights, and we were only a few hundred feet off the water."

All he could do was high-tail it at low level through the fog back to Quonset, to report in person. On landing, he briefed his commanding officer, who reported the information to the admiral in charge. Then the commanding officer dismissed Bradley.

The pilot heard nothing more about the matter. A day or so later, he attended a dance at the Knights of Columbus

Hall in Hartford. When he emerged, he found newsboys running down the front steps of the nearby Hartford Times building, yelling, "Extra! Extra! German sub sinks coal vessel off Rhode Island!"

The U-853, captained by Helmut Fromsdorf, was a long-range submarine equipped with a snorkel that let the boat run on its powerful diesel engines just under the surface. It had set out from occupied Norway more than two months before with a crew of 55.

In an interview 40 years later, Capt. Charles Prior of the Black Point, the U-853's victim, said there had been 41 sailors aboard, plus 4 gunners and a signalman from the Navy. Twelve died in the attack.

At a memorial ceremony in 2000, Luke "Rod" Pelletier, of Orlando, Maine, the Black Point's purser, said he had just finished dinner and was headed aft to where the naval Armed Guard manned a 40-pounder gun that dated from the Spanish American War.

He never made it. A torpedo smashed into the engine room and knocked him down.

"I ran out to a catwalk aft, and there was no ship left there," he said. "If the damned thing had hit a few minutes later, I wouldn't be here. Five minutes — that's all it took to make the difference."



# NAZI SUB SUNK OFF BLOCK ISLAND

Fromsdorf's had been a brazen attack. The U-boat had penetrated to a point only a few miles from the headquarters of the cruiser and destroyer squadrons of the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Fleet.

Over the years, there would be speculation as to his motive, but the truth may never be known. What is known is that the price for sinking 7,000 tons of coal would be his life and the lives of his crew.

The Coast Guard frigate Moberly and Navy destroyer escorts Amick and Atherton picked up an SOS broadcast by a nearby merchant ship. They were well placed to block the escape of the U-853, which had come into astonishingly shallow water to attack the Black Point. ("Of all the places he could have picked!" Prior remarked.)

The Atherton's sonar picked up the submarine first, and the ship started dropping depth charges about 8:30 p.m. The size of big trash cans, depth charges hold hundreds of pounds of high explosive, and if they detonate within the "kill radius" — usually 30 to 40 feet from the submarine — they will buckle or crack the pressure hull.

Other warships and even Navy blimps joined in, several of them stationing themselves between the U-boat and the open ocean.

The Atherton switched to hedgehogs, smaller explosive devices flung ahead in a circular pattern. They explode on contact.

Cork insulation, oil and air bubbles erupted, but the Moberly's sonar showed the U-853 still crawling slowly along, and the hail of high explosives continued. The submarine was doomed. By the next day, enough debris and oil, including the captain's cap, had surfaced to confirm the kill.

A diver then found the submarine

upright on the sea bottom, four miles off Point Judith, its pressure hull gashed open, bodies strewn around. It sits there still, its hull encrusted with sea anemones.

In a paper in the files of the Naval War College, retired Air Force Lt. Col. James L. Rose declared that the Black Point was "the last American ship torpedoed by the Germans in the war and the only American ship sunk that close to the mainland since the War of 1812."

Bill Campbell, a diver who placed a plaque on the wreck of the Black Point at the ceremony in 2000, said then that the distance from the top of the submarine's conning tower to the surface is 90 feet.

"The sub has two real fatal wounds," he said, "one just forward of the conning tower, right about where the radio room and the captain's quarters are. A man can slip through. It's a jagged shape. I've done it."

An outdoor display at the Point Judith lighthouse tells the story of the battle, but public access has been barred since 9/11.

Over the years, divers have removed pieces of the submarine. In 1960, one even removed a body, which was then buried in Newport with full military honors. The headstone reads: "Ein Unbekannter Deutscher Seemann von U-853" (An unknown German sailor from the U-853).

The submarine's bronze propellers wound up on display for years on the lawn of the Inn at Castle Hill. Five years ago, the O'Connell family, which owned the inn, offered them to the Navy, asking that they be displayed at the Naval War College in Newport.

The German government, however, stepped in and asserted ownership, according to Prof. John Hattendorf,

the Ernest J. King professor of maritime history at the college. In Hattendorf's file on the U-boat there is a 2004 letter from a German official to the secretary of the U.S. Navy declaring that, "Because U-853 was never captured and did not surrender, the German government has clear title to these propellers in accordance with international law."

But, the point having been made, the Germans then donated the propellers to the Naval War College anyway.

Today they are stored in a warehouse, but Hattendorf said there are plans to create an outdoor exhibit with an appropriate historical marker adjacent to the War College Museum.

Bradley, the pilot whose aircraft was first to sight the submarine, said he asked the Quonset Air Museum recently to do some research into the reaction to his sighting report.

John Shepard, a former researcher at the museum, found the record blank, with no record that Bradley's report had ever been transmitted to the anti-submarine command just across the Bay.

Bradley said the records don't mention that he had even flown that day.

"I would like to have seen something in writing," he said. "It's just my word as to exactly what happened."

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*Other story's on this will be in the next Pointer.  
(Cal)*



# RUSSIAN NORTH FLEET SQUADRON

## The Operations of the Russian North Fleet Squadron Ships in the Allied Polar Convoys during the World War 2

This short article describes the operations of the Russian North Fleet Squadron ships in the Allied Polar Convoys as it was seen by the authors who was the participants of the described events.

The convoy routs passed through a comparatively narrow zone between the coasts of the Norway and the border of Arctic ices.

The German aerial reconnaissance can easily found the convoys and aim on them the enemy forces. The flight of enemy aircraft to the convoy took about half an hour, the manoeuvre of the enemy ships were also lightened.

So the War geography, seat of War favoured our enemy. Actions were cruel and the allied forces had heavy losses. But our response was appropriate and the enemy losses were also heavy.

By the beginning of the War the Squadron of the Russian North Fleet possessed eight destroyers (one was under repair). Five destroyers were class "Gremiastshy"

Destroyer "Gremiastshy"

Three destroyers were class "Novik"

Destroyer class "Novik"

On the 14th of November 1942 another extra three destroyers arrived to the Kola Bay from the Russian Far East Fleet.

Destroyer "Rasumny from the Russian Far East Fleet."

The usual, movement- follow the ice-breaker but in the heavy ice the situations were dangerous characteristics of the Russian ships. The arms and technical equipment were good (strong and up to

date). The cruising range was insufficient. Essential weakness was the lack of the radars and sonars (asdic). But the last defects were eliminated due to the help of the allies. At least on the 24th of August 1944 eight Richmond class destroyers arrived from England.

Richmond class destroyer

So in fact the number of active ships changed between 8 and 18 units. Three of them were lost.

The ship crews were well prepared. The sailors and petty officers had continuous service of about 7-8 years. The officers had the appropriate qualifications. The captains of destroyers were experienced and brave.

Murmansk after air bombing in June 1942. The ways of interaction with the allied forces were as follows: -The strengthening of the convoy escorts by Russian destroyers, (74 events, 547 vessels under the screen); • Organisation and realization of the White Sea part of convoys, (25 operations, 112 events, 245 vessels under the screen); • Organisation and realization of convoys during the coastal sailing between Kola Bay and Archangelsk, (64 operations, 179 events, 266 vessels under the screen); • Joint search and destruction of enemy ships across the Norwegian coasts, (2 events, 2 English cruisers, 4 English destroyers, 4 Russian destroyers); • Welcome and leading the allied ships to the Russian harbours, (9 events, 13 destroyers, including the first arrival of cruiser "London" and the first convoy "Dervish").

Systematic preliminary actions of the Russian forces is shown on the picture: All battle actions of our Squadron were usually supported by different ensuring actions of Russian North Fleet. There were as a rule: • Aerial reconnaissance; • Our U-boat screens in front of the entrance of the enemy harbors; • The special anti-submarine actions near our harbors before the

departures and arrivals of the convoys; • Bombing of enemy aerodromes and other.

The Loss of "Edinburgh". On the 28th of April 1942 our destroyer "Gremyashchy" ("Fulminatory") where I was on duty as a junior navigator, and destroyer "Sokrushitelny" ("Destructive") left the Kola Bay as the escort ships of convoy PQ-II.

In the convoy escort there were 6 English destroyers, 4 corvettes and 4 mine sweepers besides us.

On the 30th of April the cruiser "Edinburgh" joined the convoy. A short time later the convoy was found from the enemy reconnaissance plane who began aiming the German U-boats and destroyers on the convoy.

Two U-boats attacked the cruiser with torpedoes and reached two direct hits. One of these torpedoes hit in the central part of the ship, the other – in the stern, damaged the rudder and two starboard screw propellers (from the 4 of them).

After that the cruiser could move only on the slow circulation. The stern deck turned up and the stern guns stuck up through them. We have got the order to protect the cruiser against the enemy attacks together with "Sokrushitelny" and two English destroyers, "Foresight" and "Forester". Therefore we had lost the convoy. Some time after three German destroyers have forced through the hard snow and have rushed to the wounded cruiser. "Gremyashchy" and "Sokrushitelny" immediately have opened the gun fire against them, one enemy ship blazed up and they disappeared in heavy snow.

After that we have continued to go round the heavy damaged cruiser and guarded him. At the daybreak being nearly out of fuel we were recalled to the Kola Bay for the refueling.



# RUSSIAN NORTH FLEET SQUADRON



By the moment the patrol ship "Rubin" (Ruby), four British mine sweepers and the ocean towboat \_22 arrived for our replacement.

We took the full speed to Kola Bay, have refueled and on the full speed picked our way towards place of the events to help the damaged cruiser "Edinburgh

But in a short time we were ordered backwards because the English Naval authority ordered to sink "Edinburgh" after the repeated attacks of the enemy. The crew of the cruiser was taken on the patrol boat "Rubin" and the other escort ships. The crews losses consisted of about 40 people. The picture of the cruiser "Edinburgh" being lopsided on the one board with the stern deck turned up and the stern guns stick up through them is right in front of my eyes till now.

Faithful consequences of the PQ-17 The main disaster with convoy PQ-17 happened out of our operational zone.

Therefore the ships of Russian Squadron could take part only on the final stage of this operation. About 40 outlets of Russian destroyers were done in the West part of Barents Sea for the search of the convoy vessels being dispersed at the sea. The results were unfavorable. There survived only one vessel and several lifeboats with rescued sailors.

Our destroyer "Gromky" (Loud) found it and escorted to Kola bay. Some better were the circumstances in the East part of the Barents Sea. Destroyers "Kuybishev" and "Uritsky" rescued 8 vessels and escorted them to Archangelsk.

Many sailors were saved.

The rescue of the crew of "Bolton Castle".

On the 13th of July 1942 being at sea our ship has got an order from Commander in Chief of the Russian North Fleet to find the lifeboat with the sailors which was

spot by Russian U-Boat in 100 miles to the North from the Kola Bay. Our ship went to the North and 3 hours later we found this lifeboat.

There were about 50 seamen in very bad conditions after being several days and nights in Arctic waters all but without food, water and some of them without warm clothes.

It turned out that the seamen were from the crew of the transport "Bolton Castle" from the Convoy "PQ-17".

Their ship was sunk on the 5th of July 1942 by German Air forces. We took them on our board and had helped them as possible: gave them warm clothes, food and vodka and accommodated in our cabins. After that we went to Kola Bay and put them to the hospital in harbor Poljarnoe. On the board of lifeboat there were also 5 or 6 wounded Russian sailors returning home after treatment in Reykjavik.

# RUSSIAN NORTH FLEET SQUADRON

It was only one event from many.

The repulsing of enemy aircraft During the convoy operations there were repulsed a great many (in all about 250) attacks of enemy aircrafts (bombers and torpedo planes) and more then 25 planes were destroyed.

The battle in the region of cape Kanin Nos. This occasion took place in September 1942 with the convoy PQ-18. To the moment of joining of 4 Russian destroyers to the convoy PQ-18 the last has lost several vessels and have deviated to the north from the usual routs being afraid of enemy U- boats. After that the convoy being on the course south in the region of cape Kanin Nos was attacked by enemy aircrafts.

There were several waves of bombers and torpedo-bombers about 60 units together with several submarines attacking. But the powerful escort mainly from the destroyers has repulsed these attacks with success. About 15 enemy aircrafts were destroyed, 5 of them by Russian destroyers. The main artillery caliber was successfully used at that time.

Antisubmarine actions Antisubmarine defence was the constant duty. More then 25 attacks of enemy submarines against merchant vessels of convoys were repulsed. Two or three submarines were sunk, 7 submarines were hardly damaged.

Here are several examples.

The lost of the U-585

On the 29th of March 1942 the convoy PQ-13 have finished its rout to Russia. There was an early morning when the last vessels were entering the Kola Bay. The destroyer "Gremyashtchy" ("Fulminatory") guarded them from the sea side.

Suddenly, owing to a heavy wave, a conning tower of the enemy U-boat was seen on the sea surface. The destroyer immediately turned to the U-boat and wanted to

ram it. But the U-boat has time to submerge. At that time the destroyer have bombed the enemy with the anti-submarine bombs and has finished with it. The German U-585 (lieutenant commander Berwalder) was destroyed.

The lost of the U-344

On the 22nd of August 1944 Russian destroyer "Dersky" ("Daring") sailed as the escort ship in the allied convoy JW-59 from Iceland to Russian harbors. At 10:20 a.m. a patrol plane from the convoy aircraft carrier spot the enemy submarine not far from the convoy and marked its place with the smoke signal.

The destroyer "Dersky" who was near this place has immediately turned to this signal and fired a salvo from antisubmarine device "Hedgehog" with 24 anti-submarine bombs.

The German U-344 (lieutenant commander Ulrich Pitch) was destroyed by common actions of English aircraft and Russian destroyer.

Special search of enemy submarines The activity of enemy U-boats was growing during the winter 1944-1945 because they remained the only enemy forces that could be used against the allied convoys after the banishment of the enemy forces from the North part of Norway.

In this connection the Russian Naval Authority decided to launch the special operation against the enemy U-boats. It was launched on the 8th of December 1944. At the late evening of the 7th of December 1944 the part of Russian Squadron consisting of 6 destroyers under commanding of Rear-Admiral V. Fockin ended the escort of the last part of the convoy JW-62 to the Arkhangelsk.

The transports were delivered to Icebreakers and Patrol boats in the narrow entrance to the White Sea. After that 6 destroyers re-formed in wide front order on the radar visibility and took the course

to the Kola Bay. On this rout several enemy U-boats were found, all primary in the surface position, but after the contact submerged.

One of them was heavy damaged by destroyer "Rasumny" ("Rational") and was out of action for ever. The second was attacked by destroyer "Dersky" ("Daring") but could avoid from destroying.

But the third one was shelled and ramm ed by destroyer "Zhivuchy" ("Hardy") and was lost.

It was the U-387 (lieutenant commander Rudolf Buhler).

Resume

The allied forces had accepted the heavy battle with very powerful enemy.

- During this battles the main enemy naval forces were destroyed.
- These battles promoted the losses or retirement of chief enemy naval commanders.
- These battle promoted not only the strengthening the Russian forces but they motivated to destroy the mentality, the moral of German Fuhrer.

And in these battles, what is the most important, there strengthens the battle friendship between allied sailors. The joint efforts of Allied Fleets prohibited the enemy attempts, defeated their plans to interrupt the supply of Russian army, Russian industry and Russian nation by all of necessary. This cooperation guarantied the victory of the United Nations in many respects. And the Iceland contribution to our joint victory was very important. We have been doing the common cause and we have won the victory.

Anatoly Lifshits

Captain 1st Rank, retired,

Prof. Dr. of sc., the convoy veteran

Vladimir Shtchedrolosev

Colonel, retired, the convoy veteran

Tel./Fax :+7 812 234 5633

Mobile: +7 911 905 0345

E-mail: Anat.Lifs@gmail.com



# PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE BRANCH

**\*\*Pamphlets were in English and Japanese and dropped over enemy\*\***

**R E S T R I C T E D**

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE BRANCH  
GHQ, APO 500

23 December 1944

LEAFLET: Ormoc Surrender Appeal (Printed on Standard Surrender Leaflet)

LANGUAGE: Japanese

DESIGNATION: 25 J 6

TARGET: Remnants of Jap troops on Western Leyte.

REMARKS: Special request from XXIV Corps. Text was prepared by XXIV Corps.

**TEXT:**

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE JAPANESE ARMY:

The American forces, after landing, and up to the present date, have secured the land, air and naval superiority. The eastern, western and southern parts of this island are occupied by our forces, and your troops are completely surrounded. Your troops occupy but a small part of the island. Directly north of your forces are American troops who have cut you off completely and captured ORMOG, so your reinforcements can never reach you. There is no room for further resistance, and only starvation and bombardment await you in this island. Realize the situation men, and stop further loss of human life.

Don't you think that the utmost service for your Emperor is to work for the reconstruction of Japan after the war? This is your utmost patriotism to your country as a Japanese citizen. Do not die, Japanese soldier. After the war, not only the United States, but all the Allied nations will require that you, and the 20,000 men interned in the United States, be treated as respectable Japanese citizens.

You soldiers must have suffered innumerable hardships for some weeks in the mountains. Over two-hundred Japanese soldiers who preceded you in capitulation have said that they had fought under cold, rain, lack of food and weapons. You too should come out. We will offer you hot steaming food and clothing. If you have the wounded with you, bring them out too, so that we may treat them.

Soldiers, when surrendering, throw your helmets and weapons away and come out waving this paper.

Officers and Unit Commanders, you should realize the critical condition of your men who have wives, parents and children, and forgive them for surrendering. You officers should come out too at the head of the unit. When coming out, throw your helmets and weapons away, except your saber, which you will carry before you by the scabbard as a token. Come out in single file if possible to the road in daylight.

The above is written in complete sincerity. This is not a trap, but if you use it as such, the consequences would be inevitable.

# *Liberty Log!*

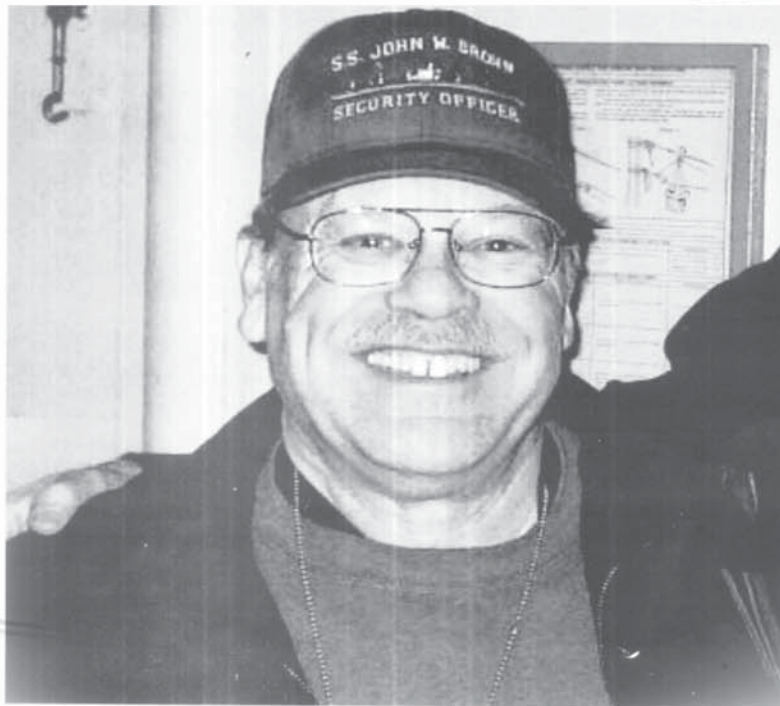
*A Newsletter of Project Liberty Ship*



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No. 1

Winter 2010



**Louis John Jerbi**

1949 - 2010

*Photo courtesy Steve Swanson*



*Chow hall, some of you may remember. This photo of the galley sent in by the late James Capley.*

A tribute to a dedicated family and to all those who have refurbished all the historical ships on page 2.



## Louis John Jerbi, Young Man for All Seasons, Dies While Serving Aboard the Old Ship He Loved

By Ernest F. Imhoff

Louis John Jerbi, a versatile and popular shipmate on the SS *John W. Brown*—the ship's Security Chief, a linchpin among deckhands, former chief steward and young patriarch of what some call "the first family of the *Brown*"—collapsed suddenly on the ship he loved and died January 23, 2010. He was 60.

It was a normal Saturday work day. Lou and Diane Jerbi boarded the ship at 9 a.m. Lou and his son John joked at the rail with some Cub Scouts aboard the ship. Lou went into the saloon, talked and walked back out the saloon door about 9:30 a.m.

Without speaking and without warning, he fell to the deck in the passageway at the chief steward's door. Shipmates quickly administered chest compression to the unconscious shipmate. The vessel's paramedics came fast from elsewhere. Jerbi was ordered taken by ambulance to Bayview Hospital. He was pronounced dead at 9:55 a.m. at Bayview.

Mass was celebrated January 28 at St. John the Evangelist at 13311 Long Green Pike, Hydes, MD 21082. Lou and Diane were married in the chapel there on June 27, 1970.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested that donations be made to Project Liberty Ship (PLS Inc.) or the Abingdon Fire Company, 3306 Abingdon Road, Abingdon, MD (where a son, Michael, is an emergency medic).

A resident of Phoenix, MD, and earlier, White Marsh, MD, Lou Jerbi is survived by his wife, Diane C. (Vanwright) Jerbi, the ship's cruise committee chairman, and their sons, John L. Jerbi, an all-round deck department worker now adding carpentry to his work, and treasurer Stacia Miller, and Michael C. Jerbi, also a member of PLS and his wife Terri. Diane and John are board members.

Diane and John were working elsewhere on the ship Saturday and came fast when they heard a shipmate aboard had collapsed.

"I was the fourth person there," said Diane. "I saw his boots. They were Lou's boots. They worked on him immediately. He was breathing. They tried to shush me away. I went away and came right back. He didn't respond. He went where he loved. I think he was gone on the ship."

Lou is also survived by his mother, Adelaide J. (Grimaldi) Jerbi, 88, who lives nearby in Phoenix and by his brother, Thomas Jerbi, his wife Judi and their children, Christina and Frank Anthony (Tony), of Lutherville.

Lou was the son of the late Dr. Frank C. Jerbi and Adelaide Jerbi. Dr. Jerbi died of cancer at 84 in 2000. He was discharged as a colonel in the U.S. Army Dental Corps in 1965 and later became chairman of the Department of Removable Prosthodontics at the University of Maryland Dental School.

*Brown* shipmates who remember the deaths off the ship of more than 75 colleagues in their 70s and 80s since 1988, were in shock and disbelief. Some were in tears. This was different. The relatively young man, a leader, was seemingly healthy, vigorous and did not complain of ill health except normal aches and pains like a bum shoulder. The collapse was on their ship on just a routine day.

Diane Jerbi, a registered nurse, said Lou had type 2 diabetes and had an EKG and full exam last year that showed no serious problem. "A friend told him to take care of himself for Diane," she said. "He took care of himself. He watched his weight, tried to reduce. He was concerned that controlling diabetes is not a science."

On this old ship, he was a young man with a youthful spirit. Michael J. Schneider, Project Liberty Ship chairman, summed up a charming aspect of Jerbi: "I remember him as always having a slight smile on his face as if he had just accomplished something good or was about to."

Lou Jerbi was an ordinary seaman who did extraordinary things.

The balding, mustachioed Jerbi was admired by the crew as a kind, soft-spoken, helpful man who fit the *John W. Brown* mold of getting along with others and pitching in with skill and determination when help was needed.

Like most *Brown* hands, he could quip with joking sarcasm befitting volunteers who wonder how they could work so hard for no money and have to pay travel and eating expenses to do it—all on an old vessel that some say should have died half a century ago. They come from miles and states around and just love doing what they do.

When the chief steward left the job open one winter, Lou saw a hole to fill. "Sure, I'll do it," he said of the often thankless job. He made juicy roasts, multitudinous veggies and starches and mouth-watering desserts. But he was glad to return to his first love, gritty deck work, when a good replacement, Keith Hall, took over as steward.

Schneider further said of the fallen comrade:

"Lou Jerbi was a key figure among JWB volunteers—he knew well both the ship and the individual crew members. When he saw something needing attention, he was quick to offer help and to get involved. He was never a bystander. Over the years his enthusiastic involvement in shipboard activities would see him serve as the Vessel Security Officer, do a highly acclaimed stint as Chief Steward when that billet suddenly went vacant, work as an instructor with Youth Program training—all that in addition to his regular work with the deck department."



# LOUIS JOHN JERBI 1949-2010



***Louis Jerbi wore many hats during his service on the JOHN W. BROWN. During his stint as Chief Steward, our crew made the happy discovery that Lou was also an excellent cook.***

*Photo courtesy Diane Jerbi*

Lou was an "Army brat" whose father was in the U.S. Army Dental Corps. He was born on Feb. 23, 1949 in New York City. He went to schools in New York, Texas, Germany, Georgia and Maryland. He was graduated in 1966 from Northwood High School in Silver Spring, MD. He attended the University of Maryland and was graduated from Towson State College in 1970.

Jerbi worked at the Social Security Administration, Woodlawn, MD from July 1970 to February 2005 when he retired as a technical adviser.

Lou Jerbi summarized the unique *Brown* experience by writing a sensitive essay printed in "Good Shipmates, Volume Two" and appearing below: "We Happy Few: The Crew of the John W. Brown."

He opened by suggesting:

*"Lay your hand against her side on a warm day and feel the fiery hell of the blast furnaces that gave her life; feel the searing heat of the rivets that bound her together; feel the warmth of the desert zephyr that followed her to the Persian Gulf...It now falls to we few, we happy privileged few to preserve her fabric, her soul and her legacy."*

Jerbi laughed easily with shipmates but could be a no-nonsense mariner when appropriate. In meetings, as Security Chief, he firmly instructed shipmates on ship security rules of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security.

"We must follow the rules," he warned, noting this is a real ship in a real world of dangers, he said. "Security on the *Brown* is a serious business, not a game," he warned at a general meeting on May 5, 2007.

Before the faddish word "multi-tasking" was invented, the Jerbi's---and of course other shipmates---were juggling different balls on any given work day. The Jerbi's collectively or one or the other have done dozens of things above the engine room on the *Brown*:

Handling cruise ticket requests from all over the country, cleaning, chipping paint, painting, keeping inventory and mailing lists, cooking, managing food supplies, slicing a hunk of beef for 60 crew members, operating winches to lift a generator on deck or a lifeboat to the pier, telling Cub Scouts how the five-inch gun worked in World War II, taking pictures and doing research for security badges, looking for trouble spots and starting corrective safety measures. There were moments, not many for the Jerbi's, to drink coffee in the mess or the saloon.

"Lou wanted to come to the *Brown* when she returned to Baltimore under tow in 1988" said Diane a few years ago. "I talked to Brian Hope and he sent us information. But the kids were too small. We waited until the ship *Achilles* had an open house about 1993 and then we came to the other side of Pier One to visit the *Brown*. We've been here since."



***Working in the galley, handling lines, chipping paint, creating a vessel security plan, or guiding the ship he loved, many of Lou's happiest hours were those he lived on the BROWN.***

*Photo courtesy Steve Swanson*



Like some other shipmates, Jerbi never went to sea for money or in military service but was fascinated with ships and the sea. In one corner at home, he collected memorabilia from the fastest passenger ship that ever sailed, the SS *United States*. Lou's father brought the family home from Europe on the liner after an Army tour of duty in Germany.

"Lou had pictures, plates, glasses, maps napkins, letter heads, ash trays and other collectibles from the SS *United States*," Diane said. It was a nice feeling for him that many of the *Brown's* life jackets come from that deserted vessel languishing in Philadelphia.

But only one ship really counted to Louis Jerbi and that ship still sailed.

## We Happy Few The Crew of John W. Brown

By Lou Jerbi  
Ordinary Seaman

Lay your hand against her side on a warm day and feel the fiery hell of the blast furnaces that gave her life, feel the searing heat of the rivets that bound her together, feel the warmth of the desert zephyr that followed her to the Persian Gulf.

Lay your hand against her side on a cold winter day and feel the icy Atlantic on the Murmansk run, feel the bone-chilling grip of fear at the sound of a torpedo run or an air raid; feel the coolness of an evening breeze that ends the day and portends a long and lasting rest.

In the solitary quiet of a night watch, hear her life sounds with each creak and groan, the hum of a fan of the insistent hiss of live steam. Listen even closer and hear footsteps where a glance reveals no one at hand. Her watch bill is always filled by those who have gone from us, yet remain to safeguard her trust.

Stand on deck and watch as those who filled her youth return now to share her maturity with slow and sometimes labored steps. Feel her soul warm with pride at each eye that regains a spark and each mind that recaptures youth and memories, if only for a fleeting moment. Then feel her heart break with each tear that falls to her deck for lives and memories that are no more. Feel her stir against her silken bonds with pride in those who return and remember, and those whose farewells, this time may be their last.

It now falls to we few, we happy privileged few, to preserve her fabric, her soul and her legacy. We do today what so many did before us. Those many are now many fewer and in us they have placed their trust that we will continue what they began six decades ago. We have shouldered the burden and realize the imperative that the legacy must endure.

We not only guard that flame, we are charged to pass it to our successors that their relentless youth may carry our Liberty into the future.

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*Liberty Log—Winter 2010*



## D-DAY

Captured: The 65th Anniversary of D-Day  
on the Normandy Beaches

Saturday, June 6th, 2009, marks the 65th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Allied troops departed England on planes and ships, made the trip across the English Channel and attacked the beaches of Normandy in an attempt to break through Hitler's "Atlantic Wall" and break his grip on Europe. Some 215,000 Allied soldiers, and roughly as many Germans, were killed or wounded during D-Day and the ensuing nearly three months it took to secure the Allied capture of Normandy. Commemoration events, from re-enactments to school concerts, were being held in seaside towns and along the five landing beaches that stretch across 50 miles (80 kilometers) of Normandy coastline. The big event is Saturday, when Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the Canadian and British prime ministers and Prince Charles gather for a ceremony amid the rows of white crosses and Stars of David at the American cemetery, which is U.S. territory.  
(AP) denverpost.com

*The following pages on the 65th Anniversary of D-Day was pulled from the above mentioned website.*



# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09

American Soldiers equipped with full pack and extra allotments of ammunition, march down an English street to their invasion craft for embarkation on June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)



Airborne troops prepare for the descent on Europe of D-Day invasion June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)

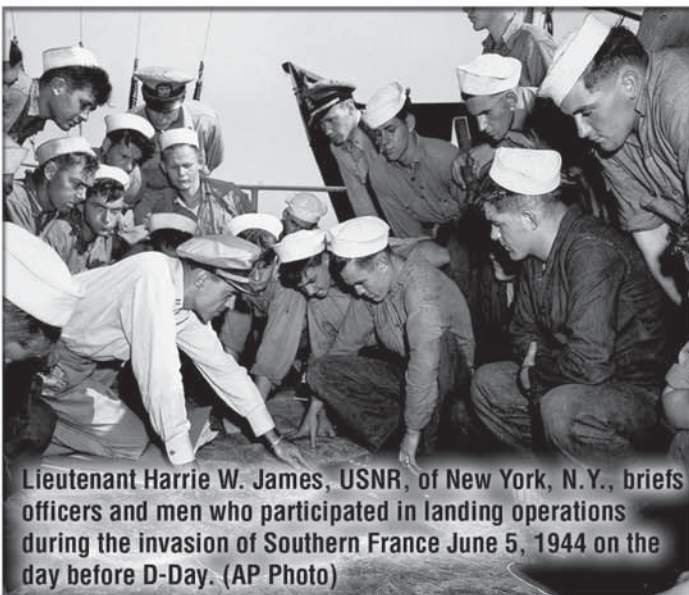


Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower gives the order of the day "Full victory - Nothing else" to paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division at the Royal Air Force base in Greenham Common, England, three hours before the men board their planes to participate in the first assault wave of the invasion of the continent of Europe, June 5, 1944. (AP Photo)

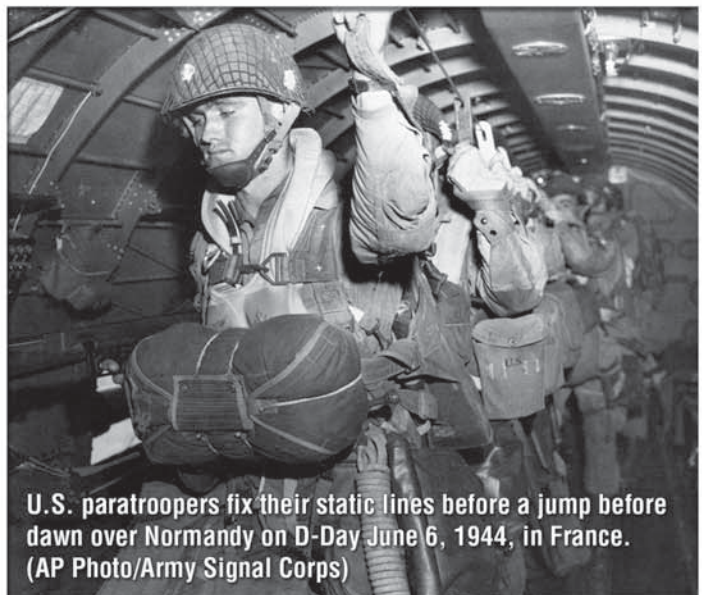


The late Terry Sanford, Governor and Senator from North Carolina, jumped behind the lines (Cal)

American paratroopers, heavily armed, sit inside a military plane as they soar over the English Channel en route to the Normandy French coast for the Allied D-Day invasion of the German stronghold during World War II, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)



Lieutenant Harrie W. James, USNR, of New York, N.Y., briefs officers and men who participated in landing operations during the invasion of Southern France June 5, 1944 on the day before D-Day. (AP Photo)



U.S. paratroopers fix their static lines before a jump before dawn over Normandy on D-Day June 6, 1944, in France. (AP Photo/Army Signal Corps)



# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09



U.S. servicemen attend a Protestant service aboard a landing craft before the D-Day invasion on the coast of France, June 5, 1944. (AP Photo/Pete Carroll)



After landing at the shore, these British troops wait for the signal to move forward, during the initial Allied landing operations in Normandy, France, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)

U.S. reinforcements waded through the surf from a landing craft in the days following D-Day and the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied France at Normandy in June 1944 during World War II. (AP Photo/Bert Brandt)



(AP Photo)

Sight of a low-flying Allied plane sends Nazi soldiers rushing for shelter on a beach in France, before D-Day June 1944. (AP Photo)

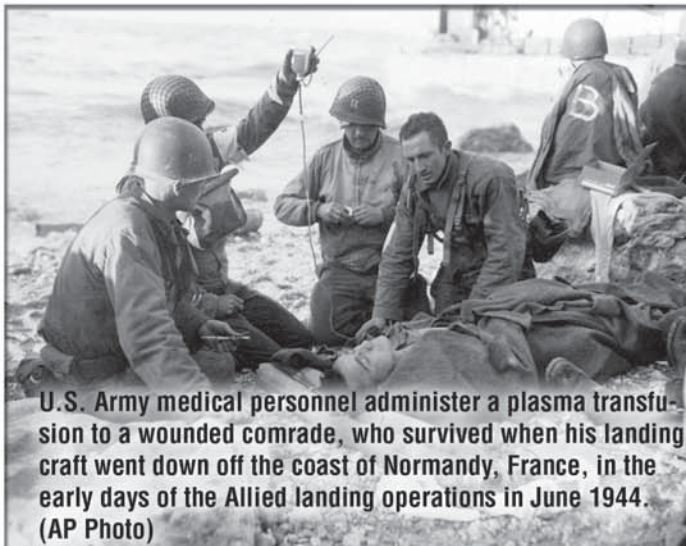


This June 6, 1944 photo released by Nathan Kline, shows a B-26 Marauder flying toward France during the D-Day invasion. (AP Photo/ Courtesy of Nathan Kline)

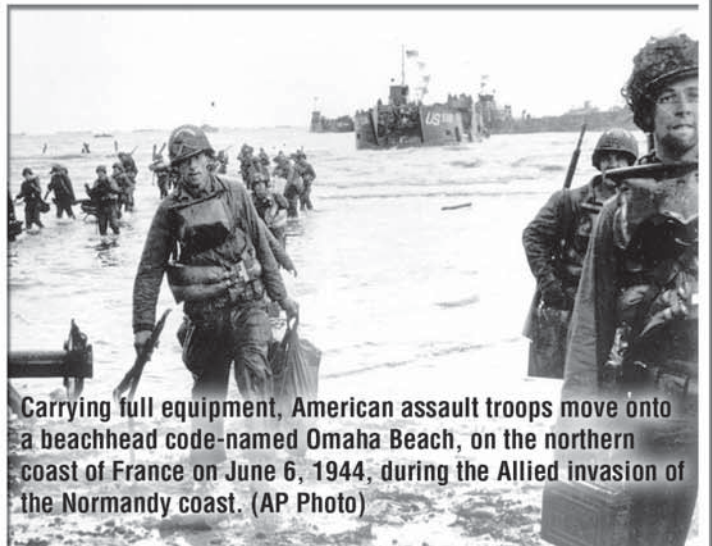




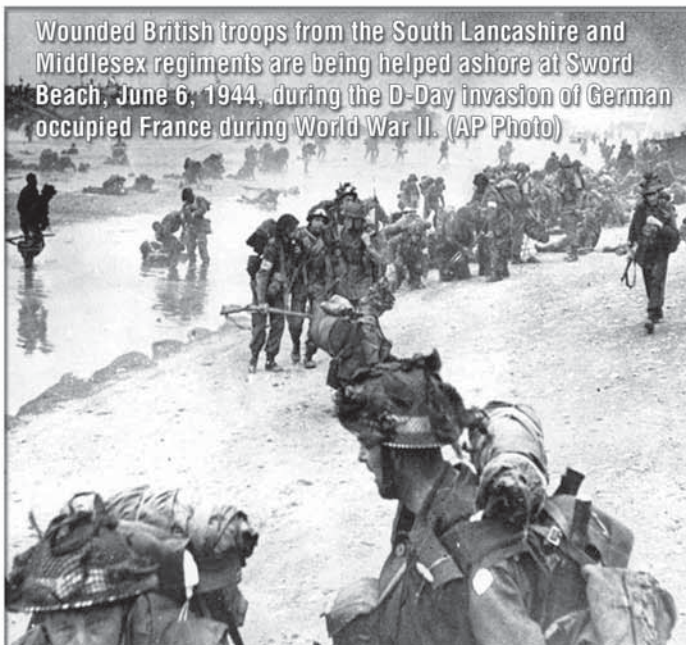
# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09



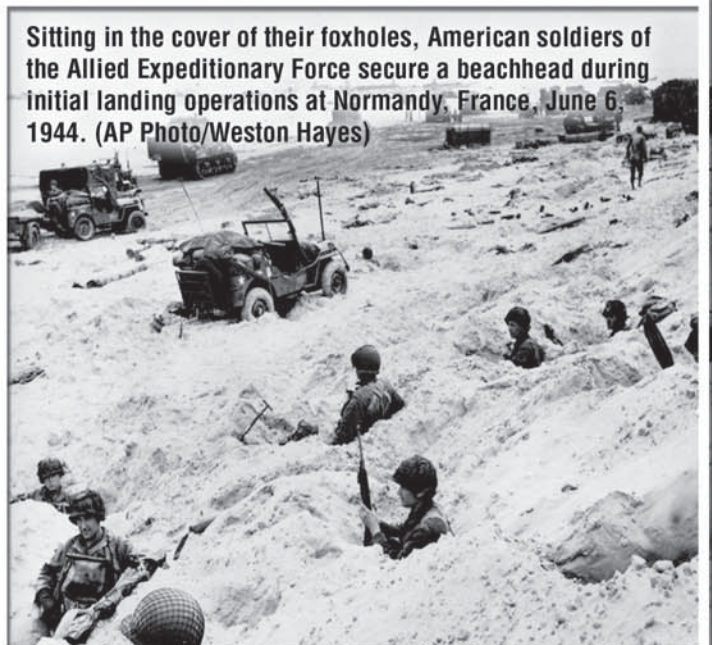
U.S. Army medical personnel administer a plasma transfusion to a wounded comrade, who survived when his landing craft went down off the coast of Normandy, France, in the early days of the Allied landing operations in June 1944. (AP Photo)



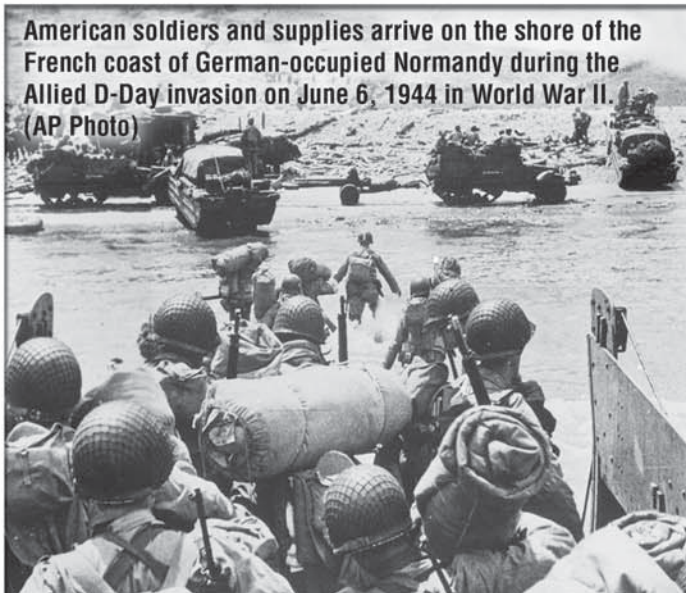
Carrying full equipment, American assault troops move onto a beachhead code-named Omaha Beach, on the northern coast of France on June 6, 1944, during the Allied invasion of the Normandy coast. (AP Photo)



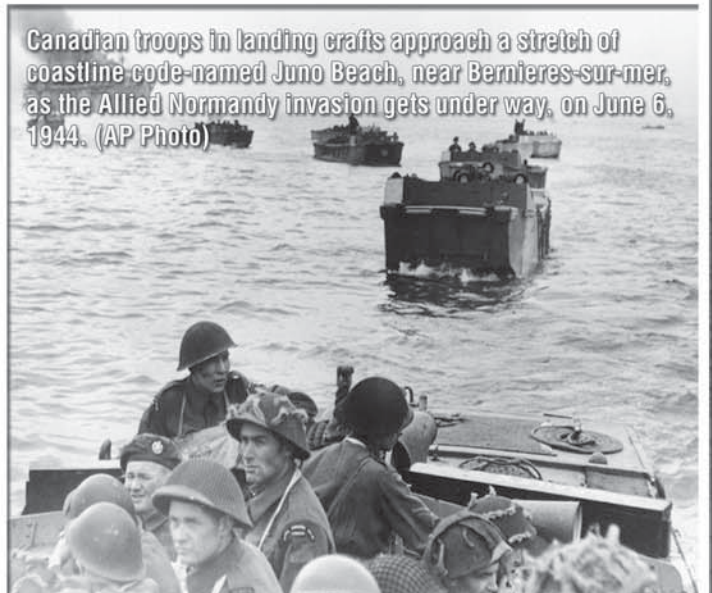
Wounded British troops from the South Lancashire and Middlesex regiments are being helped ashore at Sword Beach, June 6, 1944, during the D-Day invasion of German occupied France during World War II. (AP Photo)



Sitting in the cover of their foxholes, American soldiers of the Allied Expeditionary Force secure a beachhead during initial landing operations at Normandy, France, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo/Weston Hayes)



American soldiers and supplies arrive on the shore of the French coast of German-occupied Normandy during the Allied D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944 in World War II. (AP Photo)



Canadian troops in landing crafts approach a stretch of coastline code-named Juno Beach, near Bernieres-sur-mer, as the Allied Normandy invasion gets under way, on June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)



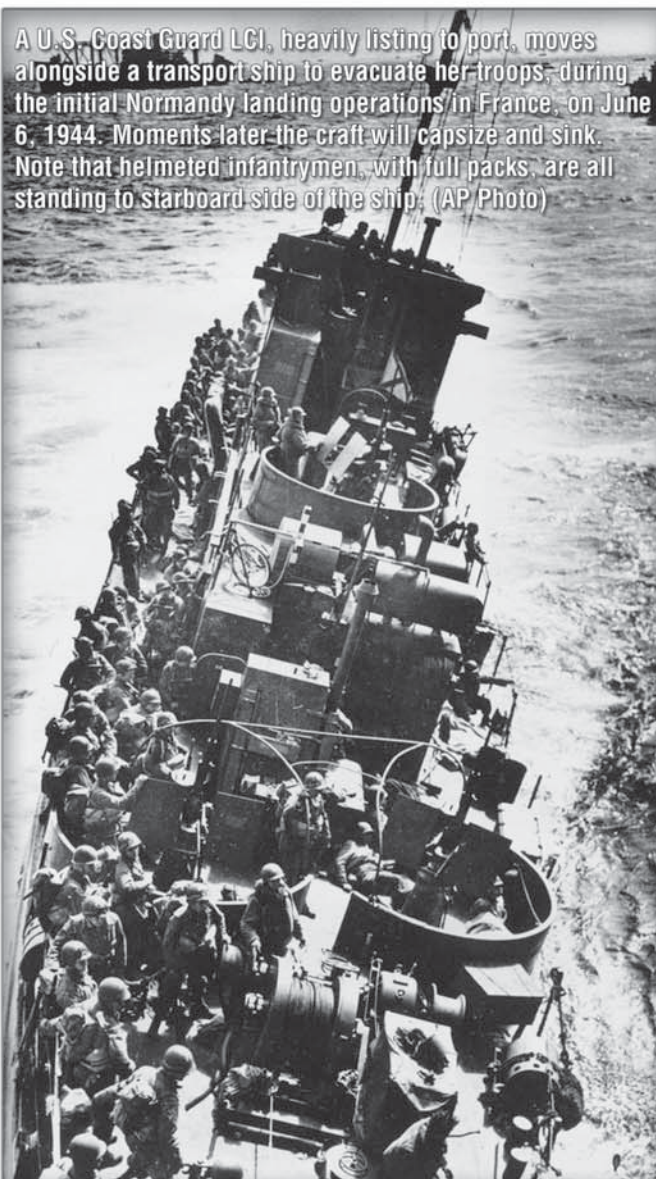
# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09



Members of an American landing unit help their exhausted comrades ashore during the Normandy invasion, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)



Men and assault vehicles storm the Normandy Beach of France, as allied landing craft arrive at their destination on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Note men coming ashore in surf and vehicles starting inland. (AP Photo)



A U.S. Coast Guard LCI, heavily listing to port, moves alongside a transport ship to evacuate her troops, during the initial Normandy landing operations in France, on June 6, 1944. Moments later the craft will capsize and sink. Note that helmeted infantrymen, with full packs, are all standing to starboard side of the ship. (AP Photo)



Out of the open bow doors of a Landing Craft, American troops and jeeps go ashore on the beach of the Normandy coast of France, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)



(AP Photo)



# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09

Under the cover of naval shell fire, American infantrymen wade ashore from their landing craft during the initial Normandy landing operations in France, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo/Peter Carroll)



A tribute to an unknown American soldier, who lost his life fighting in the landing operations of the Allied Forces, marks the sand of Normandy's shore, in June 1944. (AP Photo)



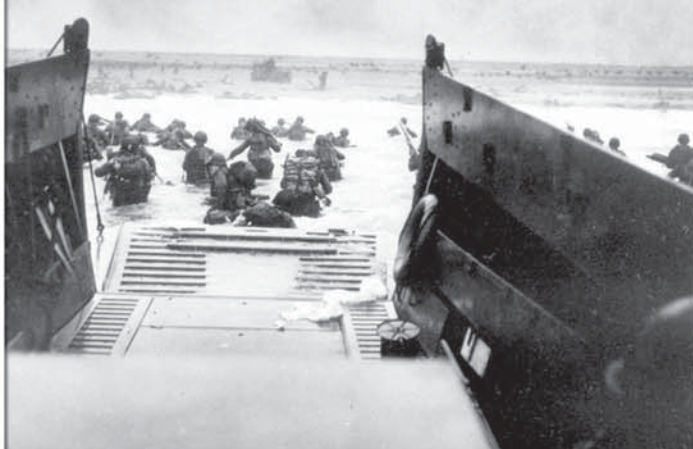
A U.S. Coast Guard landing barge, tightly packed with helmeted soldiers, approaches the shore at Normandy, France, during initial Allied landing operations, June 6, 1944. (AP Photo)



US assault troops approach Utah Beach in a barge, 06 June 1944 as Allied forces storm the Normand beaches on D-Day. D-Day, is still one of the world's most gut-wrenching and consequential battles, as the Allied landing in Normandy led to the liberation of France which marked the turning point in the Western theater of World War II. (STF/AFP/Getty Images)



Under heavy German machine gun fire, American infantrymen wade ashore off the ramp of a Coast Guard landing craft on June 8, 1944, during the invasion of the French coast of Normandy in World War II. (AP Photo)



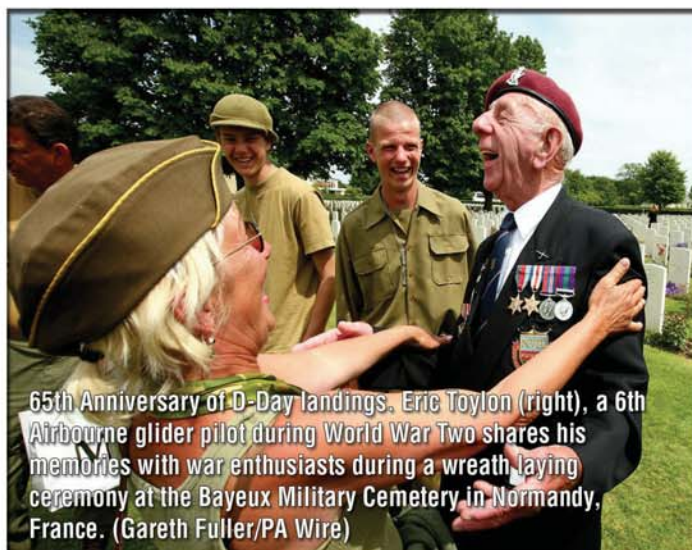
Although this photograph was in an Associated Collection on D-Day, it is most likely a photo from Iwo Jima. We've left it in the collection because so many have commented on it.





# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09

Pebbles with poppies painted on are seen on the beach of Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer on June 5, 2009 during a ceremony in memory of Canadian troops which landed in 1944 at the Nan Red point on Saint-Aubin beach. Each poppy painted by students represents a soldier killed here during World War II. (DANIAU/AFP/Getty Images)



65th Anniversary of D-Day landings. Eric Toyton (right), a 6th Airborne glider pilot during World War Two shares his memories with war enthusiasts during a wreath laying ceremony at the Bayeux Military Cemetery in Normandy, France. (Gareth Fuller/PA Wire)

A remembrance cross left by British Royal Navy veteran, Harry Buckley, 84, is pictured on the beach of Colleville-Montgomery on June 5, 2009 where he landed during the 1944 allied operations in France. (MYCHELE DANIAU/AFP/Getty Images)



British veteran John Lang, 90, visits the American cemetery on June 5, 2009 in Colleville-sur-Mer. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (MARCEL MOCHET/AFP/Getty Images)



ASNELLES, FRANCE - JUNE 05: British school children help to place 4000 Union Jack flags bearing messages on Gold Beach on June 5, 2009 in Asnelles, France. (Photo by Peter Macdiarmid/Getty Images)



A US jeep drives by Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer beach, Normandy, western France on June 4, 2009 during preparations for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images)





The broad sands of Utah Beach lead to a country side scarred by remains of German fortification. On June 6th, 1944, five Normandy beaches were stormed by British, Canadian and American troops to free Europe from the German occupation. Ever since, each year on June 6th, Normandy coast lures veterans and pilgrims. (Ph: Alexandra BOULAT)

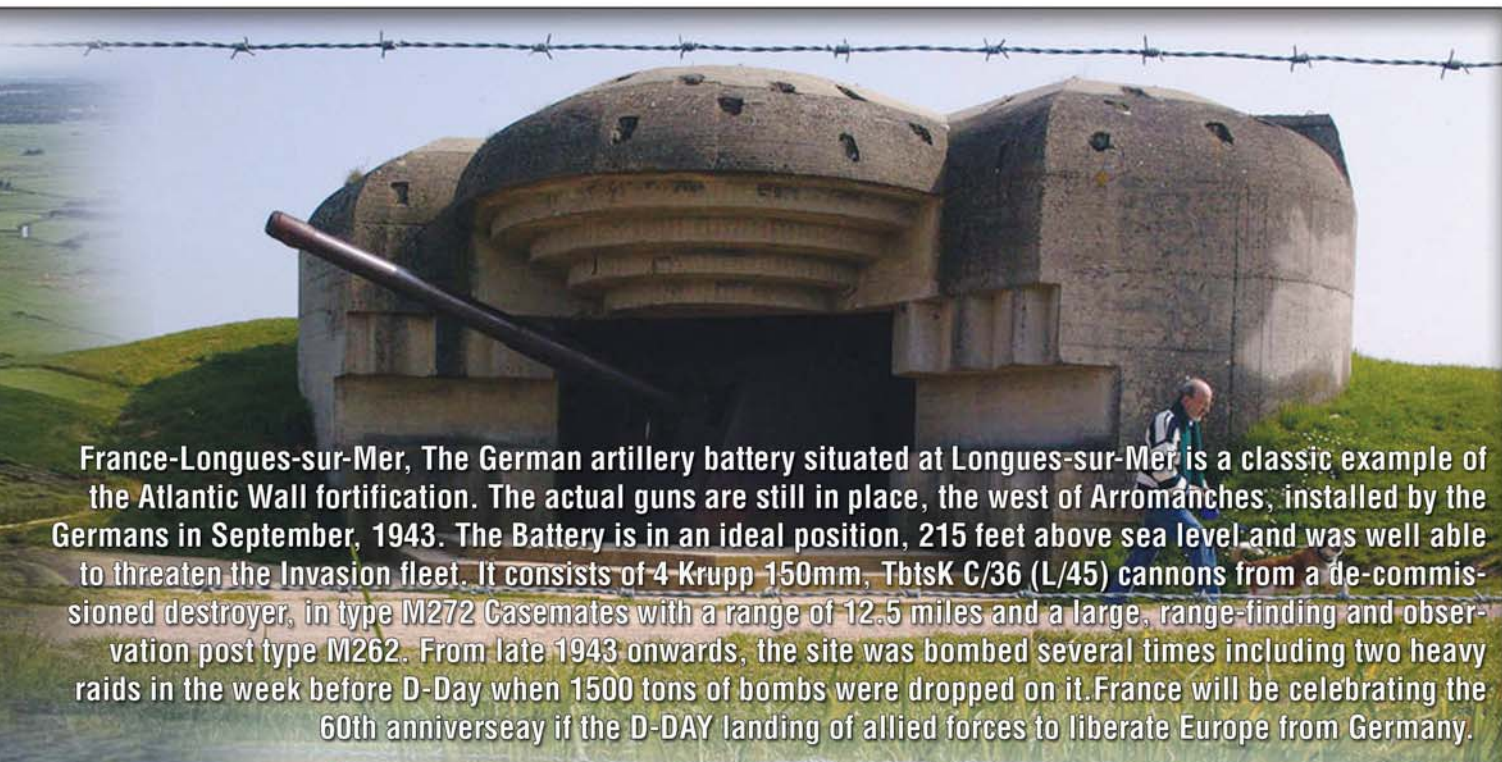


Pointe du Hoc. Omaha Beach, pocked by D-Day bombardment. On June 6th, 1944, five Normandy beaches were stormed by British, Canadian and American troops to free Europe from the German occupation. Ever since, each year on June 6th, Normandy coast lures veterans and pilgrims. (Ph: Alexandra BOULAT)

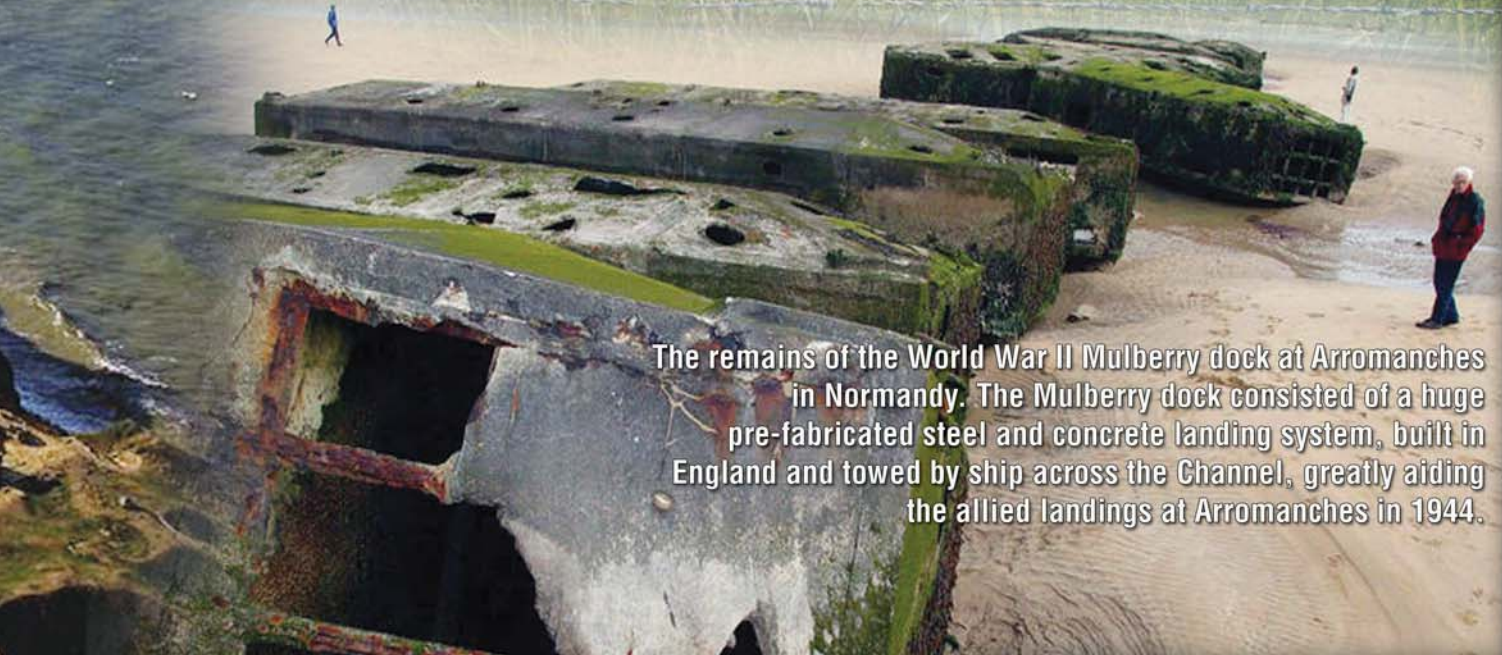


British Royal Navy veteran, Harry Buckley, 84, wipes his tears on the beach of Colleville-Montgomery on June 5, 2009 where he landed during the 1944 allied operations in France. Preparations are underway for the upcoming D-Day celebrations to mark the 65th anniversary of the June 6, 1944 allied landings in France, then occupied by Nazi Germany. (MYCHELE DANIAU/AFP/Getty Images)






France-Longues-sur-Mer, The German artillery battery situated at Longues-sur-Mer is a classic example of the Atlantic Wall fortification. The actual guns are still in place, the west of Arromanches, installed by the Germans in September, 1943. The Battery is in an ideal position, 215 feet above sea level and was well able to threaten the Invasion fleet. It consists of 4 Krupp 150mm, TbtSK C/36 (L/45) cannons from a de-commissioned destroyer, in type M272 Casemates with a range of 12.5 miles and a large, range-finding and observation post type M262. From late 1943 onwards, the site was bombed several times including two heavy raids in the week before D-Day when 1500 tons of bombs were dropped on it. France will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the D-DAY landing of allied forces to liberate Europe from Germany.



The remains of the World War II Mulberry dock at Arromanches in Normandy. The Mulberry dock consisted of a huge pre-fabricated steel and concrete landing system, built in England and towed by ship across the Channel, greatly aiding the allied landings at Arromanches in 1944.



Normandy veterans Frank Allen (R), 85, and Cyril Askew, 92, both from Liverpool, England, look at the French coastline on a cross channel ferry on June 4, 2009 from Portsmouth, England to Caen, France. Several hundred of the remaining veterans of the Normandy campaign are travelling to France to take part in commemorations to mark the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings in 1944. (Photo by Matt Cardy/Getty Images)



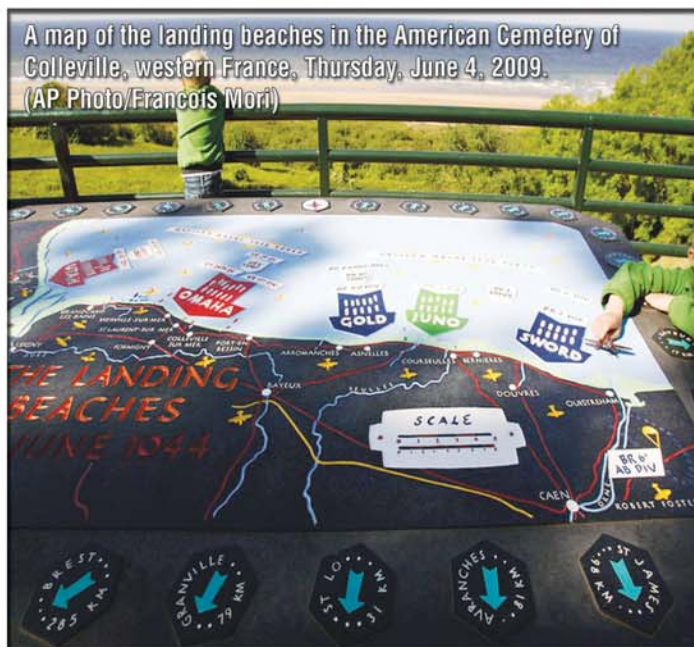
# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09



**BAYEUX, FRANCE - JUNE 05:** The sun shines on headstones in the British Cemetery on June 5 2009 in Bayeux, France. (Photo by Matt Cardy/Getty Images)



**A US veteran wears his medals during a commemoration ceremony on June 5, 2009 at the German Military Cemetery of La Cambe, Normandy.** (JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images)



**A map of the landing beaches in the American Cemetery of Colleville, western France, Thursday, June 4, 2009.** (AP Photo/Francois Mori)



**A US veteran takes pictures of German soldiers tombs during a commemoration ceremony on June 5, 2009 at the German Military Cemetery of La Cambe, Normandy.** (JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images)



**British paratroopers from the 3rd Parachute Battalion, England, land in a wheat field outside the village of Ranville, near Caen, Western France, Friday, June 5, 2009, as troops re-enact part of the bloody allied landings of D-Day, the Allied armada which fought its way inland in the unfolding World War II Battle of Normandy, France.** (AP Photo/Francois Mori)

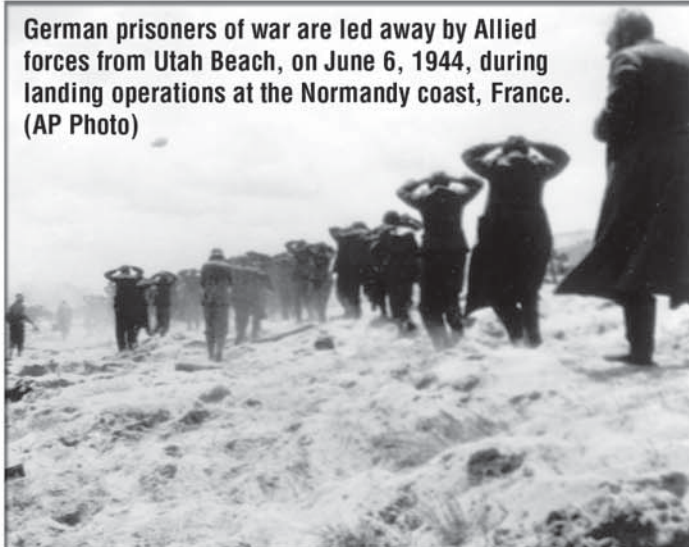


**65th Anniversary of D-Day landings. D-Day veteran George Taylor (left), 86, a Sapper in the Royal Engineers during World War Two, with Percy Lewis of the 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion, walk along the beach in Arromanches, France, ahead of the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings on Saturday.** (Gareth Fuller)



# 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY '09

German prisoners of war are led away by Allied forces from Utah Beach, on June 6, 1944, during landing operations at the Normandy coast, France. (AP Photo)



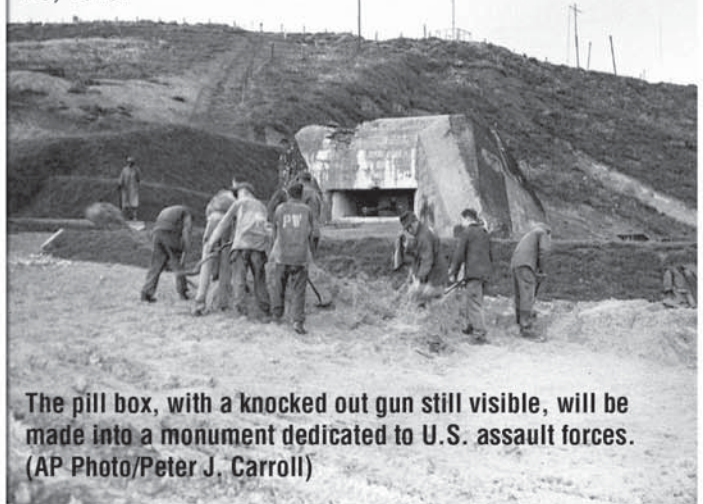
One year after the D-Day landings in Normandy, a lone U.S. soldier guards a knocked out German gun position on "Utah" Beach, France, May 28, 1945. (AP Photo/Peter J. Carroll)



U.S. doughboys are brought ashore on the Northern Coast of France following the D-Day invasion of Normandy in World War II on June 13, 1944. The exhausted soldiers on the rubber life raft are being pulled by a group of comrades. (AP Photo/U.S. Army Signal Corps)

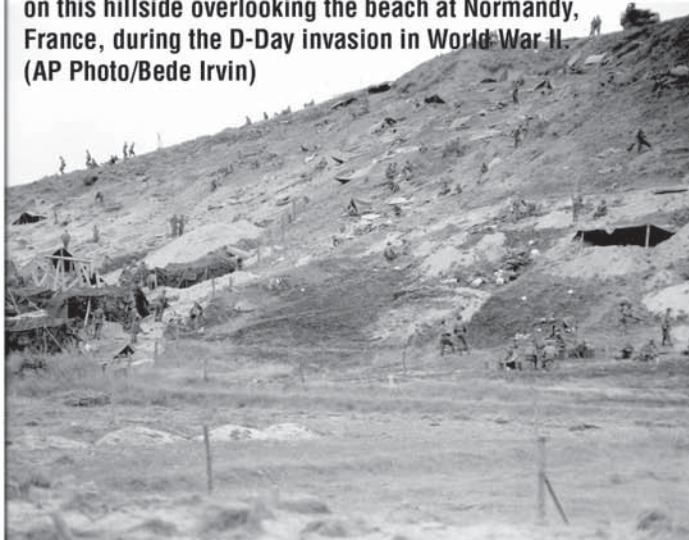


One year after the D-Day landings in Normandy, German prisoners landscape the area around a former German pill box at Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, France, near "Omaha" Beach, May 28, 1945.



The pill box, with a knocked out gun still visible, will be made into a monument dedicated to U.S. assault forces. (AP Photo/Peter J. Carroll)

Allied forces camp out in fox holes, caves and tents on this hillside overlooking the beach at Normandy, France, during the D-Day invasion in World War II. (AP Photo/Bede Irvin)



One year after the D-Day landings in Normandy, German prisoners landscape the first U.S. cemetery at Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, France, near "Omaha" Beach, May 28, 1945. (AP Photo/Peter J. Carroll)





# D-DAY INVASION REMEMBERED



Thank you Charles for the post  
and not much that could help  
you as time gets better you will hear  
from me

Mike Guio Sr.

This is me on the boat going to  
D DAY INVASION with all the actors  
I was in under the 350 Canon.

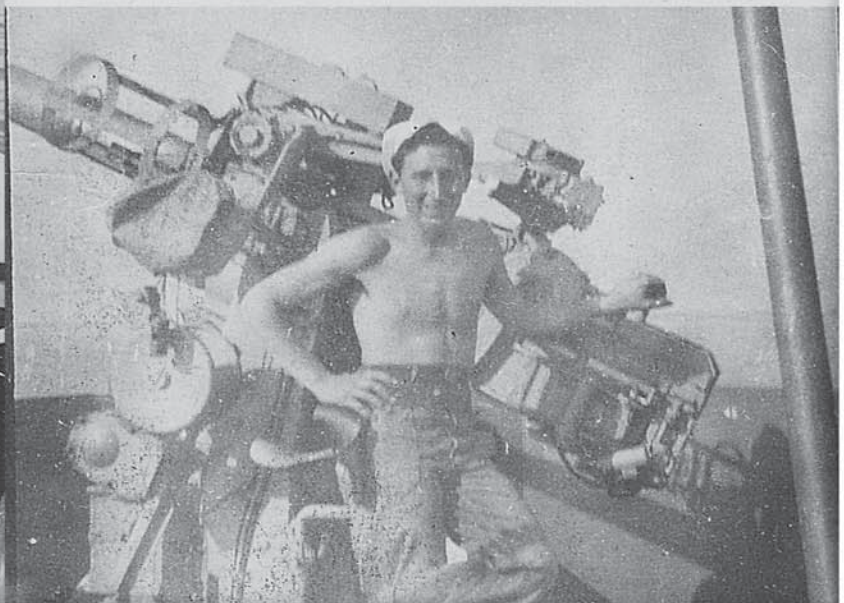
When we got there all the I Is  
that were killed just floating by  
I was crying like a baby. baby  
I felt so bad for days on end  
If you want to have pictures of  
Pearl Harbor you must see it  
I'm still crying something like

Sorry most close  
crying

Michael Guio Sr.



Michael Guio Sr.  
184 Holly Brook Ct  
Punta Gorda Fla 33955





# **MURDER<sup>ON THE</sup> HIGH SEAS**

**Who killed Capt. Coumelis?  
The question haunts  
a Richmond crewman**

**'Wake up. Something has happened to the old man. I think he's dead,' First Mate Rudolph Kloeppel shouts to the sleeping radio operator, Angelo "Andrew" Scrudato.**

**Scrudato hurries to the captain's cabin on the deck below. The captain is in his usual curled sleeping position, but the wall paneling, sheets and his head are stained by blood.**

**BY HARRY KOLLATZ JR.  
ILLUSTRATION BY ARNEL REYNON**



When the news filters through the oil tanker, the crew goes into shock.

Later in the day, crewmen construct a coffin for Capt. Coumelis, packed with ice and sawdust, and place it on the top deck. A constant guard deters the murderer from pitching the body overboard. Scrudato periodically reaches into the coffin to feel that the corpse is still inside.

Scrudato knows something that most of his other shipmates do not: Missing from the ship's safe is \$250. He also knows the ship's codes. Frightened for his life, Scrudato sleeps in the pillbox of the .50-caliber machine gun, then in the saloon. The crewmen throughout the ship hold hands in the space between their bunks, thinking that if a killer approaches, one or the other would awaken.

A temporary captain, Harold Holmberg, comes aboard the Kellogg after the tanker arrives in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for quarantine.

Holmberg tells Federal Bureau of Investigation agent Henry Clifford that he wants to leave this ship at the earliest possible opportunity and wishes he'd never seen it.

## NO EXPLANATION

"There was a war on, you know," Andrew Scrudato says, sipping from his glass of Coke at a Parham Road restaurant in January. "Plenty of stuff happened that never made it into the history books, or the papers, either."

He is recalling from across a half-century's distance how his commander during World War II was murdered on Dec. 29, 1942.

"Somebody killed him and that guy got off scot-free."

Scrudato, now a Richmond resident and a retired apparel factory president, wants to bring the case to light, for justice and closure.

Who killed Capt. Anthony J. Coumelis as his ship, the Frederick R. Kellogg, followed in convoy through the Caribbean Sea's "Torpedo Alley"?

"He was a good man," Scrudato says of Capt. Coumelis. "He didn't deserve what he got."

The captain's son, Anthony J. "Jerry" Coumelis, is a retired engineer from Texas Instruments and resides in the Lone Star state. What he owns of his father's life, besides some stories from the family, is a cigarette lighter and some papers.

"We knew, or I'd been told, that he'd been killed, by someone of German extraction, at sea. But there are some things families don't discuss. I never knew

the details," he says. "It's completely unexpected and a bit overwhelming."

During World War II, civilian merchant ships were pressed into service to fulfill secret military objectives. The men and women who sailed in these voyages acted in what was generally considered an auxiliary role. During World War II, 600 vessels operating through the United States Merchant Marine were sunk, 5,099 mariners were killed or wounded, and 604 were made prisoners of the Germans or Japanese.

## JOINING UP

One of those whose early life is shaped by the U.S. Merchant Marine experience is Angelo "Andrew" Scrudato, one of eight children of a New Jersey Italian family. Orphaned at age 2, Scrudato lives with his elder siblings who keep the family together.

The large but parentless family struggles as the Great Depression worsens. Scrudato joins the Civilian Conservation Corps, a federal project designed to provide work for unemployed laborers by creating and maintaining parks and other public projects.

Scrudato lies about his age to enter the CCC when just 13. His first assignment sends him to a working camp in Dillon, Mont., where he is fed, sheltered and clothed. He is paid \$30 a month. He helps

clean and clear parks and build small dams. The experience matures a ripe teen-ager who's never been outside New Jersey.

In 1940, the Merchant Marine numbers about 55,000. A massive recruiting effort reaches into the CCC. The offer is to attend seamanship school for a year with free tuition. Scrudato trains on the sailing ship Joseph Conrad.

Scrudato attends radio school for an additional year. His education mints him as a lieutenant junior grade in the Merchant Service. It is a United States Navy ranking, between full lieutenant and ensign. Scrudato earns \$100 a month, plus meals and benefits. He has a career path, if he so chooses.

He signs on as a radio officer with the Standard Oil Corporation of New Jersey (today's Exxon), on sea-going tankers and trawlers. Radiomen are nicknamed "Sparks." They occupy a special niche during wartime, entrusted with codes with which the ship sends information and receives instructions.

Scrudato is just past his 20th birthday on Dec. 7,

**"He was a  
good man...He  
didn't deserve  
what he got."**

**—Angelo "Andrew" Scrudato**



# MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS

1941, when the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor is bombed by the Japanese and war is declared. The Merchant Marine's peacetime duties change to carrying equipment and material for U.S. and Allied forces.

Maritime shipping at the height of what becomes known as the Battle of the Atlantic is anxiety-ridden, hazardous work. German U-Boats prowl and, in the early years of the war, sink Allied merchant ships almost with impunity.

## ABOARD THE KELLOGG

When 45-year-old Anthony J. Coumelis, originally of Andros, Greece, takes command of the Frederick R. Kellogg in New York Harbor during September 1942, he is an experienced mariner. He's sailed with Standard Oil since 1927. He's also survived at least one sinking.

The F.W. Abrams was the ship, bound for New York from Aruba loaded with fuel oil. An erratically piloted patrol boat apparently led the ship to an unsafe anchoring off North Carolina and in the morning of June 11, 1942, three torpedoes successively slammed into the Abrams and sank her. Capt. Coumelis stated in his report, "I sent for the engine crew to come up to their boat stations and prepared to abandon ship." Capt. Coumelis stayed aboard to the last, despite having sighted a submarine and fully expecting it to open fire with its deck gun.

Scrudato likes Capt. Coumelis. He has a temper, but

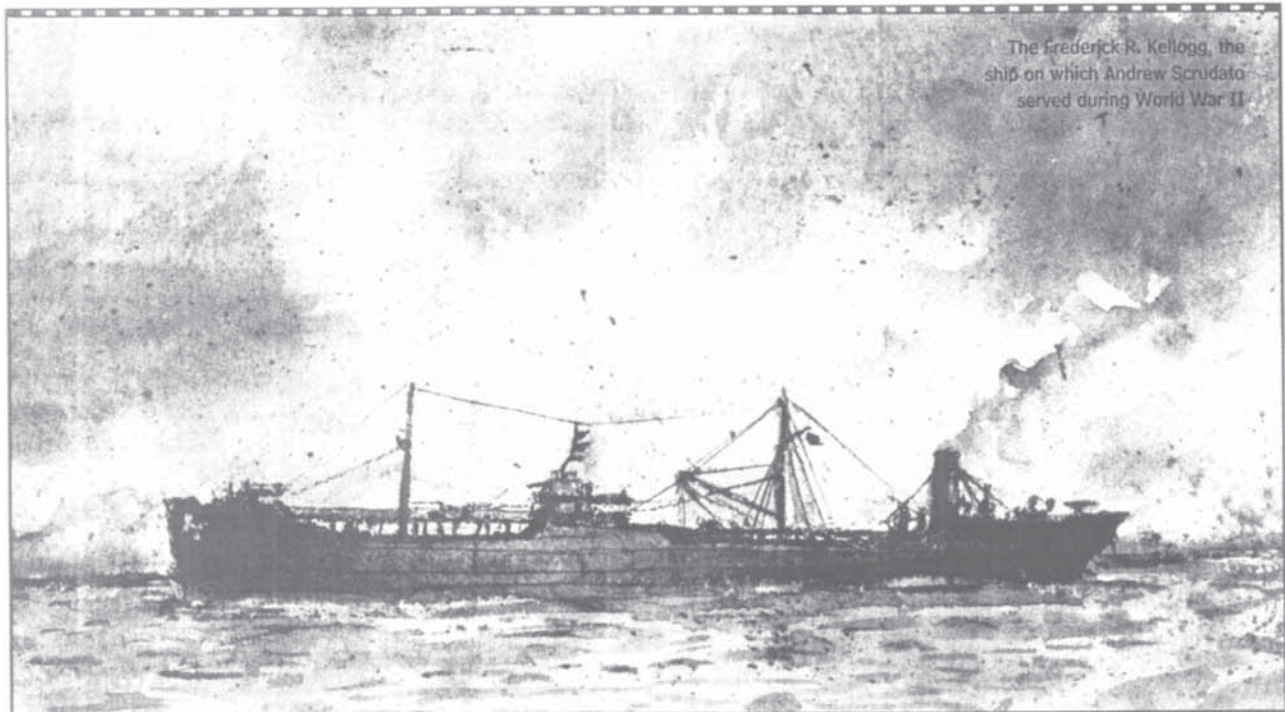
when he blows up, he quickly deflates. He doesn't hold grudges. He is the kind of commander who is needed when hauling oil across seas full of enemy submarines.

Scrudato, as radio operator, keeps the ship's security codes. When the staff goes ashore for meetings, Scrudato is accompanied by armed guards. The briefcase with the codes in it is handcuffed to his wrists. These codes are kept in the safe.

Only the captain and "Sparks" possess the safe's combination. On a few occasions, Scrudato discovers the safe unlocked. He learns the combination was written down and the paper stashed in the top unsecured drawer of the captain's desk. Scrudato says he speaks to the captain on at least two or three occasions about this detail.

## A CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Kellogg's crew numbers 38, plus the Naval Armed Guard, the U.S. Navy contingent of 12 men responsible for ship's security and weaponry. The naval personnel are led by Ensign Elmer Carlyle Brewton, Lt. jg., 29 years old. The former school teacher, according to Scrudato, carries a knife and hatchet dangling from his belt. He usually wears his holstered service .45 automatic, although neither Capt. Coumelis nor the other officers choose to do so. When not wearing his handgun, Brewton hangs it from a hook in his clothes closet, fastened with only a simple peg.



The Frederick R. Kellogg, the ship on which Andrew Scrudato served during World War II



The first mate is Rudolph Walter Kloeppel, 38 years old, an American-born son of German immigrants. Kloeppel gets along well with crewmates. He speaks of graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and holding a commission in the reserves as a lieutenant commander. He wears the naval uniform when on shore. Kloeppel tells stories about being present at the Japanese siege of Singapore and surviving three sinkings by torpedo.

Kloeppel often asks to borrow money from shipmates, including officers, a taboo practice aboard merchant ships.

When the ship docks in New York, Kloeppel is visited by a woman said to be his wife. Scrudato sees her. The borrowed money is probably for her, he figures.

Kloeppel is a smooth talker and everybody likes him. Everybody, that is, except for 50-year-old Chief Engineer Bernhard Olsson, a German-born American citizen who lives in Brooklyn. He asks that Kloeppel prove his stories, or stay quiet about them. Olsson catches Kloeppel contradicting himself with dates and places, and the "Annapolis graduate" can't answer simple mechanical questions. He resents Kloeppel's wearing a Navy officer's uniform. Ensign Brewton, in charge of ship's security, is apparently untroubled by Kloeppel's behavior.

Second Mate John J. Dalain and Capt. Coumelis don't get along. Dalain isn't a sailor, and little is known about him, but, in the transient U.S. Merchant Marine, crews aren't often composed of long-term comrades. Few even know their captain.

"Some would not have known the

captain if they bumped into him in the passageway," Scrudato says.

## FIFTY MISSING FIVES

On Dec. 4, 1942, crew members receive advance pay to go ashore in Balboa, Panama. Capt. Coumelis invites Olsson to join him in town. It's more than a small gesture. Olsson, born in Germany, is scrutinized as a potential spy, as is almost anybody of German extraction in this time of war. Coumelis, himself an immigrant and a seaman, knows that not taking liberty when it is available erodes a man's morale. Olsson doesn't accept the captain's invitation.

Standing nearby are Kloeppel, Dalain, Ensign Brewton and the quiet Third Mate Anthony Stafford. Capt. Coumelis jokes about spending the money Olsson entrusted him to place in the safe.

Capt. Coumelis had stashed Olsson's \$250 in the Kellogg's safe. It's in five-dollar bills—50 total—rolled and wrapped, tightly bound and secured with a straight pin.

A few days later, in port at Aruba, Scrudato is in the captain's cabin when Coumelis tells a customs agent that \$250 is missing from the ship's safe. Scrudato accompanies Coumelis to the Aruba Esso Club where the radio officer is told by his captain that the stolen money belongs to Olsson.

Just after departing Aruba, Kloeppel tells Scrudato that the captain told him to look for \$250 and adds, "What is this about?"

Scrudato replies, "Fifty five-dollar bills are missing from the captain's safe."

The captain sees Scrudato two or three



days later and demands, "What's the idea of telling the mate about the money?"

"You told him about it," Scrudato says.

"All I said was it was a bunch of fives."

"Oh," Capt. Coumelis says, then walks away.

Meanwhile, Kloepfel, in his way of borrowing and paying back, gave Boatswain Charles Abrahamson \$175 in five-dollar bills. There are 35 total. They are all neatly wrapped and bound with a common bank wrapper, held tightly in a roll with a straight pin. Kloepfel instructs Abrahamson not to tell anybody that Kloepfel had repaid him, according to sworn statements given by Third Mate Stafford.

## THE NIGHT WATCH

Ensign Brewton claims to sink a German submarine on Dec. 5, 1942, with the Kellogg's 4-inch gun. A periscope emerges from the water and 16 rounds are fired in that direction. Brewton's men watch as a chunk of the periscope flies off and see a surface disturbance which was likely the submarine submerging on its own. Brewton nonetheless proudly claims a kill.

The crew of the Kellogg is in New York for Christmas 1942, then put out to sea, bound for Barranquilla, Colombia, to load the tanker with petroleum.

Tension mounts when on Dec. 28, 1942, Second Mate Dalain is on watch and allows the Kellogg to steer off the prescribed convoy course. Coumelis plans to ask Standard Oil for Dalain's removal, Scrudato says.

By Dec. 29, the convoy is some 250 miles south of Cape Hatteras and 325 miles east of Charleston, S.C. Around 1 a.m., Capt. Coumelis turns in for the night, leaving his ship once again in the charge of Second Mate Dalain.

## SHOTS HEARD

During the change of watch at around 4 a.m., Navy gunners Seaman Alfred Hayes and a Seaman Sullivan are leaving their cabin near the captain's quarters and the officer's restroom. They hear what may be rapid gunshots. Sullivan hustles up to the bridge.

A short time later, First Mate Kloepfel strides near, coming from the direction of the bathroom. Dressed in his service khakis,

he asks Hayes, "Did you hear that?"

On deck, Sullivan reports what he thinks are shots to Dalain. The seaman returns to the passageway where he sees Hayes with First Mate Kloepfel.

Kloepfel tells Hayes that he was in the head, hooking back a door with one hand and buttoning his pants with the other when the shots were fired.

Shortly before 7 a.m., Kloepfel goes to Third Mate Stafford's cabin, now wearing a pea coat, and asks him to look in on the captain. In a sworn statement, Stafford remembers that pea coat since some days later, Kloepfel will remind Stafford that he wore his regular navy and white Merchant Marine uniform. At about 7:30 a.m., Kloepfel rousts Andrew Scrudato from his bunk and urges him to check on Capt. Coumelis. At the time, the chief mate wore his khakis.

The convoy commodore is notified. Investigators and a medical examiner are dispatched from the destroyer Dickerson and the Coast Guard cutter Triton. A naval yeoman comes aboard to record the results of the autopsy and any other information. The coroner's verdict is succinct: death from two .45-caliber bullets lodged in the victim's brain. Instantaneous death.



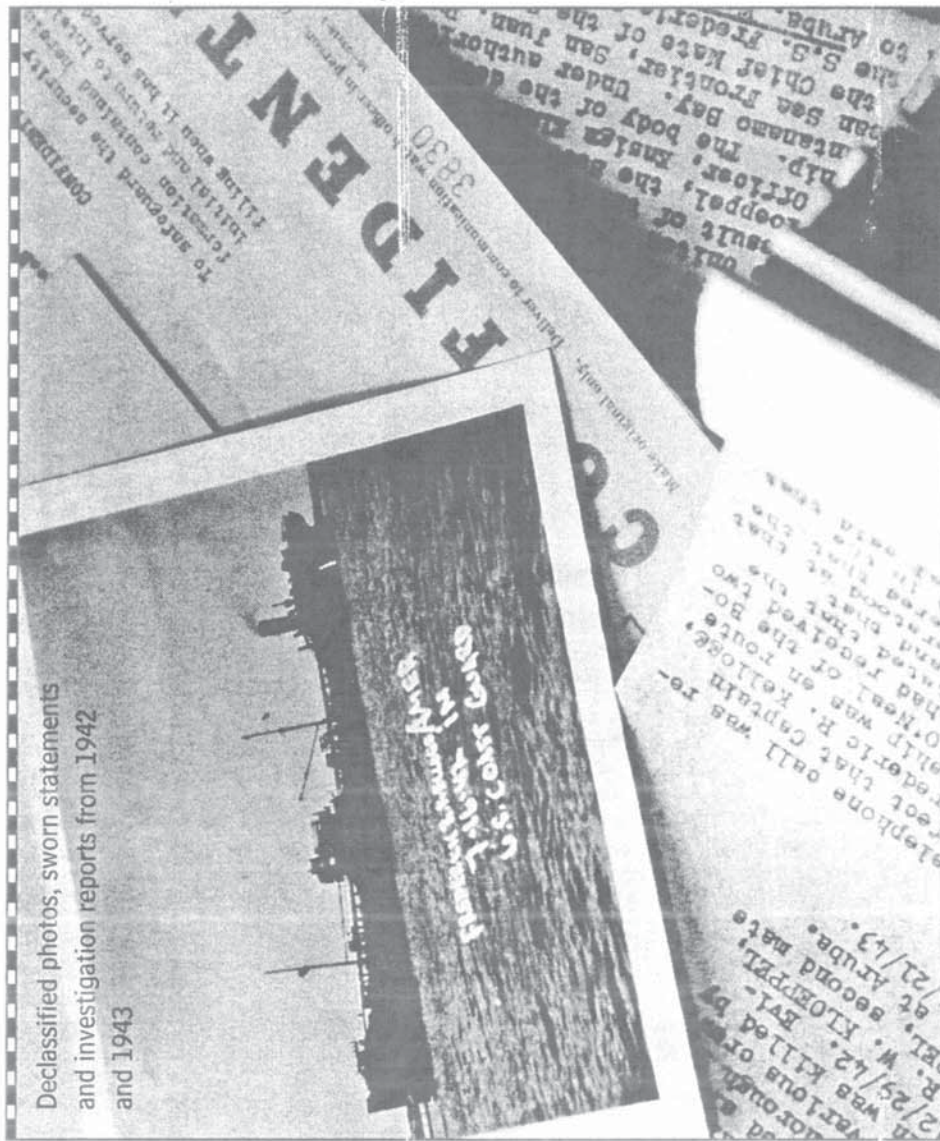
## THE INVESTIGATIONS

A preliminary investigation is undertaken during the more than 48 hours the slow tanker requires to travel to the U.S. Navy complex at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The crew remains quarantined aboard the Kellogg for 10 harrowing days. The mariners, with not much else to do, come up with their own theories about how and why the captain was killed.

Chief Engineer Olsson, at a rather somber dinner the evening of Dec. 29, asks Kloeppe where he was at the time of the shooting. Kloeppe replies that he was in the bathroom.

Each man is an amateur sleuth and each a suspect. Perhaps, one line of thought goes, a German spy took revenge for the U-Boat allegedly sunk by the Naval Armed Guard a few weeks earlier.

Olsson suspects Kloeppe because Kloeppe didn't want to lose his job, Olsson will attest in a sworn statement. None of the deckhands, engine room men or seamen knew the ship or the captain that well, since many of them had come aboard in New York. They didn't know the captain's movements or



Declassified photos, sworn statements and investigation reports from 1942 and 1943

## Each man is an amateur sleuth and each a suspect.



habits, nor were they familiar with Ensign Brewton.

The FBI rigorously interrogates the crew. In the end, Kloeppel, Dalain and Ensign Brewton are taken off the ship as suspects. None of them are charged in the murder.

Brewton was heavily asleep at the time of the killing. Olsson states that only John Dalain knew where Brewton kept his weapon. His .45 is never found, despite an extensive search. It is presumed thrown overboard. The other three automatic handguns on board test negative for recent firing.

John Dalain is on the bridge at the time of the shooting.

Another thorough search fails to find the khaki shirt worn by Kloeppel.

Kloeppel and Dalain sit in the Guantanamo brig until Jan. 14, when they are transferred to a holding facility in New York City. Brewton, according to a Navy Department communique of Jan. 14, 1943, is suffering a mental disorder and will be shipped to a hospital in Washington, DC. The Kellogg receives a new captain, one Olaf Anderssen, who was immediately disliked, says Scrudato.

The notes taken by a yeoman in the initial shipboard investigation are reviewed and found to be indecipherable. That yeoman, apparently out of his depth as a recording secretary, suddenly cannot be found.

## KLOEPPEL'S LOOSE ENDS

The Frederick R. Kellogg departs Guantanamo Bay on Jan. 14, 1943, and arrives at Aruba, Netherlands West Indies, on Jan. 17. The FBI questions several other crewmen but agent Clifford concludes that with so much time to discuss the case and go over their impressions, it is "impossible" for the men aboard the ship to any longer distinguish between "what they saw and what they have heard in conversation."

Clifford agrees, however, that there's certainly a case against Kloeppel for impersonating an officer.

On Feb. 17, Kloeppel is charged with impersonating a lieutenant commander of the U.S. Navy. His bond is set at \$7,500. Kloeppel's boast of graduating from the naval academy and his claim of a step-brother killed in action in the South Pacific prove false.

On April 1, 1943, Kloeppel is convict-





## UNSOLVED MYSTERY

Scrudato serves throughout the war on various merchant ships. He survives, becomes the administrator of apparel factories, learns to fly light aircraft and lives now in a suburban Richmond retirement community.

Scrudato still ponders the murder. Since Dalain knew the location of Brew-ton's service revolver, could he have told Kloeppeel about it?

Kloeppeel could have feared he'd be accused of stealing the chief engineer's money, and Dalain could have faced imminent dismissal from the Merchant Service if report of his incompetence reached Standard Oil.

But those worries don't add up to taking a man's life, Scrudato says.

In the narrative of the incident, penned for his grandchildren, Scrudato says, "Would [a person] murder the captain for a paltry \$250? That question should be considered in the light...that sum...in 1942 would be equal to nearly \$4,000 in 1999 dollars, due to inflation, compounded over 57 years.

"Ask yourself, are people murdered for \$4,000 today? Folks, it happens every day." ©

ed of impersonating an officer and sentenced to one year and a day. The term in jail teaches him nothing, unless how to pull a better con.

The FBI comes across him again. On May 28, 1945, he pleads guilty to the U.S. District Court in New York City on 1944 charges of stealing 102 blank Western Union money orders in Savannah, Ga.

Savannahians know Kloeppeel. He arrived there in March 1944, as Allan L. Winslow, employed by the U.S. diplomatic corps in Cairo. According to FBI reports, Kloeppeel fled to Savannah after defrauding a Virginia hotel.

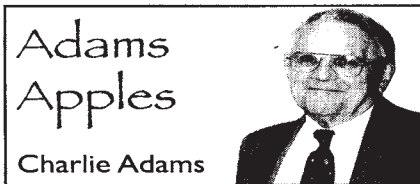
Kloeppeel is next heard from in Los Angeles, where he serves 180 days in jail for passing a bad check on the purchase of an automobile. He is followed by the FBI and returns to New York to face federal charges. When arraigned, the Savannah Evening News reports, "Kloeppeel endeavored to make the court believe he was crazy."

The terms of his May 1945 sentencing are not given in the newspaper account.

Social Security records list Rudolph Kloeppeel as having been born Nov. 23, 1904 (probably in Utica, NY) and having died Dec. 25, 1993, in San Bernardino, Calif.



## Yes, it was 'our war' too!



With the 68th anniversary of the beginning of OUR WAR, on Dec. 7, and the Christmas season already upon us in our stores, I invariably acquire a Christmas gift book or two dealing with the Second World War. Last Christmas was no different, except it had a twist.

Two books with the same title by two disparate authors. "My War" by Andy Rooney a one-time war correspondent and "My War" by a former Naval officer, Tracy Sugarman. Both men experienced the horrors of WW II first hand.

I have learned that it's perfectly legal for two authors to use the same book title. It must be, since Tom Brokaw (The Greatest Generation) did the forward in Mr. Rooney's book and Stephen Ambrose (He wrote "D-Day") did a glowing review of Mr. Sugarman's pages.

The memories of "Our War" cling to my mind with astonishing tenacity, and sometimes as I sit in my lounge chair in the quiet dimly lit den, the glow of the night-light becomes a distant fire on a beach that most Americans never heard of. Nothing seems to equal it's demand for my attention.

Why? Possibly because the memories raise so many questions about myself, particularly one unanswerable one. Why are we the ones to be able to remember? Perhaps that's my point - to remember. The ordeal of our not forgetting might well be the only valor of the survivors. Some days those memories seem to assert themselves so strongly that I decide to have it out. One way to do that is to go back.

This disquisition is not about my return to France, this is about then, the memories. Been there, done what? With the help of my wartime diary, the what is clear and easily understood. You would have had to be where we were. No one can fully depict in writing a vivid portrayal of the gore, the fear, and the deafening pandemonium. The smells and the moods that engulfed the allied offensive assault on the Normandy beaches that dismal morning of June 6, 1944, cannot be truly reproduced in words.

0300: Long before the dawn of our German Doom's Day assault, my ship (USS LST 281) proceeded to put its six small LCVP (Higgins) boats in the water, loading the troops of the U.S. 4th army for the attack on Utah Beach.

0600: All heck broke loose. The

seven battleships, 23 cruisers and the 104 destroyers fired their big guns over our heads. The mighty Allied warships were bombarding the beaches, destroying the German bunkers, and setting off hundreds of land mines.

Great numbers of Allied bombers filled the air, wing to wing like geese above us. Here and there one of the planes of Herman Goering's Luftwaffe broke through and was shot down by American P-51 Mustang fighters before our eyes. By June 1944, the Germans no longer possessed sufficient pilots or planes to mount more than a token resistance to the "Overlord" battle for Normandy.

The critical battle for air supremacy was won by the United States Air Force over Germany many weeks before the first Allied soldier landed in France.

Credited for the successful precision bombing campaign was the strategy of Boyertown, Pennsylvania's own General Carl "Tooe" Spaatz. He was given the power to prosecute the air war in accordance with his own ideas, and he wound up getting the maximum credit for it's performance. We in Berks County, were so proud of General Spaatz, we named our airport after him. Both our Navy and Air Force made a concentrated effort to destroy the dreaded obstacles Field Marshal Irwin Rommel lined the Atlantic Wall in the path of our landing craft.

Writing an article such as this, I cannot possibly capture the horror of combat, especially since I did not experience any personal engagement with the German Wehrmacht infantry.

We, on the LSTs (Landing Ship Tank) considered ourselves very fortunate that we were not in the first wave of the landing parties being ripped apart by the Fuehrer's mines, the booming artillery and murderous machine guns.

In short order, the LST 281 was ordered to move in to unload our cargo of tanks and trucks onto the shore. Waves of smaller landing craft continued to drift toward the beach. Many exploded before our eyes, hit by shells or hitting a mine. The casualties added up.

On the beach, new columns of men waded ashore from the endless torrent of landing craft. Many did not make it. It seemed that each man was awed by a blood curdling feeling that he was about to wage his own personal invasion, no matter how many had gone before. It was his baptism by fire. Ceaseless formations of vehicles bumped out of the LCTs and LSTs onto Utah Beach. Each gasoline-cowboy had to be well aware of the tank booby-traps. It was necessary to try to remain self-possessed and calm through it all.

Somehow much of the landing

stalled. Organization seemed to fall apart while bodies and boats jammed the narrow channel that the Army engineers and Navy minesweepers were able to clear.

Our LST 281 in the middle of the fracas suffered a deep gash in it's side having been hit by one of our own LCTs pulling back from the beach after discharging it's cargo.

Two kinds of people stayed on the beach that terrifying morning, the dead and those that were about to die. Our assigned task is over for now.

At this point it seemed that OPERATION NEPTUNE was a success- but oh, the cost. Too many brave men became gold stars in their Mother's windows.

Many explanations were given for the meaning of D-Day. Most common is that it is a repeating "as in" H-Hour. The D is simply repeated. Some insist it's poetic for "Day Of Decision."

No matter- you had to have been there, done that. WE WERE!

Addendum: My ship was the USS LST 281. LSTs (landing ship-tank) were the largest of the landing ships built during the Second World War. They were slightly longer than a football field and fifty feet wide.

Ours was just one of the 1,050 "unlovely" ships to be built on inland waterways. The 281 was built in Ambridge, Pa. north of Pittsburgh. We floated it down the Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans.

On our decks we carried 6 of the smallest landing craft, the (Higgins) LCVPs (vehicles and personnel) and an LCT (tanks). Hundreds of troops shared the comforts and amenities of our floating palace.

After we unloaded and get clear of the beach, it's a case of day-after-day-after-day return trips to the scene of the battle. Each time the great bow doors of the 281 would swing open and the tools of war would pour out to keep our men fed and armed. Sadly, each return trip to England we acted as a provisional hospital ship, bringing the ill-fated wounded out. I firmly believe that without the unpretentious "Large, Slow Target" the conquest of Hitler and Tojo's armies would not have been possible.

Whether it was in Europe or the Pacific, you had to be there to know what we did. As I said: D-Day was DOOMS DAY for the swastika and the rising sun. Now, 66 plus years later the "D" stands for deja vu. As an aside: Though our ship participated in three major assaults on both German and Japanese held territory, we managed to be at home on Christmas leave in 1943, 1944 and 1945.

Charles J. Adams Jr. E-mail: LST281@AOL.COM.



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

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BY

WALTER H. HESSE

CLASS OF 1940

C. 1998

Convoy to Murmansk PQ15

[1]

Walt Hesse

### I. Outbound

A driving early morning mist pressed on the ships as they glided from the harbor to the waiting sea. Tension was in the air. We were sailing into the unknown, into harm's way. The time was April 1942; the place Halifax, Nova Scotia.

[2]

The SS MORMACREY was one of many merchant ships scattered from horizon to horizon, seeking their station in the forming convoy. The sea was choppy, but not rough and the visibility was fair. Destroyers and destroyer-escorts scurried along the outer fringes of the fleet probing for lurking U-boats. Out of the confusion, order gradually emerged and the 48 ship convoy materialized.

In Baltimore, Maryland, I signed on the SS MORMACREY in late March as Third Assistant Engineer. The ship was being refitted to carry cargo to Murmansk, Russia. She was of World War I vintage and resembled hundreds of other freighters of that era.

Part of the refitting included the installation of two 30-caliber machine guns on the wings of the bridge and two 50-caliber machine guns on the stern. A four inch surface gun was mounted on the stern as anti-submarine protection.

The weapons were manned by a navy gun crew of seven enlisted men, led by an Ensign, a ninety-day-wonder, fresh out of school. With the exception of a second class gunners mate, the enlisted men came directly from boot camp.

[3]

While in Baltimore, a former maritime academy classmate, George Treffs, came aboard. He had signed on as Fourth Assistant Engineer. We hightailed it downtown for a few beers and to play the game, "What ever happened to old whatzis name?" I was delighted to have a friend aboard.

Following the refitting, a mixed cargo of foodstuffs was loaded, including butter, powdered milk, dried fruit, and beans. In addition to food, the cargo included jeeps, howitzers, cannon and small arms. Tanks were loaded on deck and securely lashed down to prevent shifting in rough seas. Finally the ship moved to the outer harbor, far from civilization. There, three hundred tons of explosives were loaded into the forward hold. Since it was assumed some of the ships would be lost en route, each ship carried some hazardous cargo.

One commodity not listed on the cargo manifest was present. Fear. We were unaware of its presence until later in the voyage. However, at this early stage an undercurrent of apprehension pervaded the crew. The prospect of U-boat attack, of being cast adrift in an open boat for an extended period, or being hurled into the frigid north Atlantic waters was a major concern.



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

Loading completed, the ship sailed for Halifax. Traveling without escort at a maximum speed of 10 knots, the ship arrived at its destination without incident. Despite calm seas and moonlit nights, ideal for U-boat activity, we eluded any contact. In Halifax we joined numerous other ships in the harbor and waited for further orders.

The following week, ships' captains were summoned to a conference. There they met with the Commodore assigned to guide the convoy to Reykjavik, Iceland. They received information on departure time, position in the convoy and other pertinent orders.

The following morning the ships moved from the anchorage in prearranged sequence. By noon the convoy was assembled, eight abreast and six in a column.

The convoy sailed approximately northeast toward Reykjavik at the speed of the slowest ship which was about seven knots. Three destroyers escorted the convoy, one zigzagged ahead, one to port and one to starboard. The seven knot speed was considered sufficient to outrun any U-boat of the era, so an escort vessel to the rear was considered unnecessary. Maximum speed for a submerged WW II U-boat was about 7.5 knots, but could maintain this speed for only a short distance. Cruising speed submerged was about four knots.

Maintaining station in the convoy during the daytime in clear weather was no problem. Each ship maintained a prescribed distance behind the ship ahead and abreast of the ship to port and starboard. Nighttime was another matter because a total blackout was enforced. No lights were permitted. Smoking on deck was strictly prohibited.

Radar was a new development in 1942 and only the Commodore's ship was so equipped. Keeping station at night without radar was difficult, but not impossible. Each ship trailed a small float or towing spar. The towing spar created a tiny wake visible at night to the ship astern. To detect vessels to port and starboard required a vigilant watch for the bow wave and for the dark silhouette against an inky dark sky. The Commodore used his radar to assist ships to maintain station.

Dear C A Lloyd 12-26-09  
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.  
Received My pointer and what a wonderful set up, and now I will wait to see if anyone who was there with us back in late 1945 and early 46. It would be fun to hear from someone. Cal I again think it is great in what you and your staff is doing through this pointer.

Louis Turner 35 Heselton St. Skowhegan, ME 04976

for as many who have written to you and explained the joy they receive from all the articles. Keep up the good work. Cal you said if I wanted more copies just let you know. If you don't mind could I have five more pointers. I am sending twenty dollars to help and wish it could be more. So thanks a lot,

Louis Turner

## LETTER TO DETERGENT COMPANY: SENT IN BY DAVE MCCAULEY, NY, NY

I am writing to say what an excellent product you have. I've used it all of my married life. And as my Mom always told me, it was the best. Now that I am in my fifties, I find it works even better! In fact, about a month ago, I spilled some red wine on my new white blouse. My inconsiderate and uncaring husband started to belittled me about how clumsy I was, and generally started becoming a pain in the neck. One thing led to another and somehow I ended up with his blood on my new white blouse. I grabbed my bottle of detergent with bleach alternative and to my

surprise and satisfaction, all of the stains came out! In fact, the stains came out so well the detectives who came by yesterday told me that the DNA tests on my blouse were negative!

Then my attorney called and said that I was no longer considered a suspect in the disappearance of my husband. What a relief! Going through menopause is bad enough without being a murder suspect! I thank you, once again, for having a great product. Well, gotta go, I have to write to the plastic bag people.



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

During periods at sea, our Captain never left the bridge, eating his meals there and catching short catnaps on a cot as conditions permitted. Average in height, middle aged, and with a trace of gray in his hair, he was usually seen with a stubble of beard and red-rimmed eyes from lack of sleep. He lived every minute with the burden of his responsibility and was dedicated to bringing his ship safely to port.

The risk of encountering a storm or fog was to be expected in any crossing of the North Atlantic. In wartime convoys, the hazard was increased due to the closeness of the ships in convoy. During a storm or foggy night, all points of reference were lost and the Commodore had difficulty keeping the convoy intact. During one storm several near collisions occurred. When the weather cleared the convoy was in shambles. Once, on a foggy night, the lead ship on the outer starboard column, gradually veered off, leading the entire column away from the convoy. It required the combined skill of the Commodore and the destroyer captains to return them to their proper positions. It was something of a miracle that the convoy arrived intact at Reykjavik.

One week's stay in Reykjavik provided us with respite from the stress of being at sea in wartime. The harbor was filled with ships waiting for new convoys to be formed and to depart. Some were bound for England, some for the Mediterranean area, some for return for North America, and some, like us, for Russia.

As far as sightseeing was concerned, we saw no more of Iceland than could be seen leaning against the rail of the ship. The Icelandic government did not permit seamen to go ashore and while we felt this to be unreasonable, we knew the Icelanders had sufficient reason for their action.

## II. In Harm's Way

A convoy's departure from port is as ritualistic as a minuet. Our Captain attended the Commodore's conference, the spare boiler fired, and the main engine and auxiliary equipment were inspected. The following day the convoy assembled.

The convoy leaving Iceland consisted of 36 ships in a six by six pattern. The SS MORMACREY was in the second column from the port side and the fourth ship in the column. Fourteen escort vessels, including two British cruisers, shepherded us to Murmansk. Initially we were assured by the number of escorts, but soon doubts began to haunt us. Were they trying to tell us something? Why so much fire power?

One odd feature of the convoy had us burning with curiosity – the four unarmed trawlers trailing the convoy. The Chief Mate soon enlightened us as to their function.

“Well boys, that's what we depend on to pick us up if we get knocked off.”

This news along with the inflated size of the escort, chilled us. We were sobered by the implications of the Chief Mate's comments.

The Chief Mate, an older Scandinavian man, handled ship's maintenance and cargo management. He was our principle source of information. In his view the better informed we were the easier we could cope with events.

The convoy steamed north along the west coast of Iceland, crossed the Arctic circle, then pressed on northeast toward Bear Island in the Norwegian Sea. The weather was favorable, but almost twenty four hours of daylight exposed us to greater risk from U-boat and Luftwaffe attack. Near Bear Island the convoy pushed southeast into the Barents Sea around North Cape of Norway, occupied by the Germans.



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

Off North Cape we suffered our first air attack. A few minutes to eight P.M., as my watch came to an end, the alarm bells clanged throughout the ship. Planes attacked with a suddenness that left us stunned. When George arrived to relieve me, I blurted out "What the hell is going on, George?"

"We're being attacked by planes."

"Ours or theirs?" A stupid question.

"Okay, George, you got the watch. We're turning 58 revs. I'll be down to let you know what's going on."

I scrambled up the ladder. On deck was chaos. Gun fire erupted from the ships. Germans darted in from every direction. Only four planes attacked us, but it seemed like many more. Most of the action concentrated on the vulnerable corners of the convoy. Our position was better protected. Despite this, one plane showed disdain for our defenses and flew low between our column and the adjacent column. This was the gun crew's first opportunity to fire in combat and it revealed how ineffective our fire power was. No planes were downed. Several bombs were dropped, but no hits were scored. As suddenly as the raid began, it ended. I did my duty with regard to George. I went down the engine room, told him what had happened, and got out of there.

The Second Mate succumbed to the stress brought on by this and subsequent actions. Normally of a dour disposition, he became withdrawn and shunned social contact with his fellow officers. He spoke to no one except in the performance of his duty on the bridge. His watch coincided with mine, but we seldom conversed other than his calls for a change in engine speed to maintain station in the convoy.

Conjecture in our conversations ran high on the possibility of future raids and the consensus was that German planes would return. The voyage from this point on proved anything but dull. We suffered over 150 air raids before we saw Iceland again.

Our reaction to the alarm bell became automatic. The gun crews scurried to their assigned posts, a routine repeated many times. Those not on watch congregated on deck to see the action. We wore steel helmets and heavy weather clothing and were ready to abandon ship at a moments notice. Our valuable papers, with us at all times, were wrapped and sealed in oilskin. It was amazing how few of our possessions had value in life threatening situations.

Early in the voyage one of the 50 caliber machine guns proved defective. The gun jammed after firing two shots and all attempts by the gun crew to repair it were futile. When air raids became common, the Second Engineer volunteered to man the gun despite its defect.

Following the first raid the two British cruisers left the convoy at full speed. Rumors ran rife. Scuttlebutt had it that the convoy was to be bait to try and lure the German pocket battleship, TIRPITZ, out of her lair where she was skulking in the Norwegian fjords. Supposedly tailing us was a British aircraft carrier and an American battleship which, along with cruisers and other naval craft in the vicinity, were determined to sink or seize the TIRPITZ. The TIRPITZ was a menace. She could appear on the horizon, and with her big guns, destroy a convoy with impunity. It was vital she be put out of commission. The rumor was never confirmed.

None of us were the same after the first raid. Even the Chief Mate, ever the optimist, had deep lines of stress in his face. The slightest sound, a dropped hammer, the sound of running feet, sent shivers of dread through each man. We slept with our clothes on, never undressed except to shower. Mealtime was no longer leisurely nor a time for conversation. We deserted the officer's mess as soon as food was bolted down. Four hours in the engine room was an eternity. We lingered no longer in the engine room than was necessary. Conversations were whispered. We became introspective as events forced us to consider our own mortality.



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

Two days out of Murmansk it snowed and the air raids ceased. Several units of the Soviet navy met us and on May 30, 1942, we arrived in Murmansk.

## III. Murmansk

At the entrance to the Kola River, Soviet pilots boarded the ships to guide us upstream to the anchorage at Murmansk. The river, about a mile wide at the anchorage, is bordered on both sides by low hills. Murmansk is on an inlet on the west bank of the river several miles south of the anchorage. Officials boarded us at the anchorage to check manifests and our papers.

Progress of the "valiant, glorious Red Army" against the evil forces of fascism was reported in vivid detail. Actually, the "glorious Red Army" was barely holding its own around Stalingrad. The front lines were only thirty miles west of our anchorage. We wished the "glorious Red Army" well and hoped they held the Germans at bay, at least until we got out of there.

The "glorious Red Air Force" and shore batteries were supposed to protect us from air raids, but we were soon disabused of that. Air raids began as soon as the weather cleared. However, now it was a contest between the German and Soviet planes in aerial combat. Most of the bombing was concentrated in the town and docks area. Only occasionally were ships at anchor attacked.

Shortly after anchoring a barge came along side to unload explosives. Ships with explosives were prohibited from docking until all hazardous materials were removed. At the same time we received information our ship would not be docking immediately. Due to bomb damage, docking facilities were limited and we were among the last of our convoy scheduled to unload cargo. As a consequence other ships in our convoy departed for home without us. We were forced to wait for another convoy to arrive and unload, a delay of several weeks. This was a bitter pill to swallow.

While at anchor, we received an invitation from a British corvette anchored near us. The invitation was for several officers to join British officers for an after dinner drink. The First and Second Engineer and I accepted.

The British were delighted to discover that the Second Engineer came from the West (Seattle) and that his grandparents had journeyed west in a covered wagon. His stories were entertaining and momentarily our problems disappeared especially after several rounds of drinks. The British view of our west was highly colored by Hollywood and they readily believed anything.

Another convoy arrived with news of additional sinkings. Shortly after their arrival we shifted to a dock to discharge our cargo. Extensive bomb damage was evident in the port area. Partially sunken ships were visible. Prospects for our stay at the dock was ominous. Fortunately, a dense cloud cover reduced the number of raids and those that did occur were directed at the town and other docks. It appeared we had "lucked out." Or had we?

While at the dock, number three boiler burst a tube. Water and steam filled the fire box rendering the boiler inoperative. Number two boiler, also on the line, provided ample steam to maintain operation of auxiliary equipment while in port. The impaired boiler was shut down and allowed to cool for a day, after which we entered it to survey the damage. One of the tubes was ruptured and seven more were found defective. Three days of hard labor repaired the damage and the boiler was back on line. Number one boiler, the cold boiler, was inspected and several defective tubes were found and replaced. Number two boiler, still on the line was not inspected, an omission we were to regret later.

While in port the First Assistant, George, and I took advantage of the opportunity to visit Murmansk about a mile from the docks. An air raid occurred on our first visit. Although not in imminent danger, a young soldier motioned us into the doorway of a nearby building with the barrel of his machine gun. We complied.



## CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

Murmansk was a medium sized town with multi-story buildings occupying several square blocks in the downtown area. These were four or five stories high and were government or apartment buildings. At the center of town broken glass and masonry from bomb damage littered the street. Surrounding downtown was an area of log houses on unpaved muddy streets. Water for domestic use was supplied from hydrants spaced along the streets. There apparently was no indoor plumbing.

No stores, no bars, no amenities of any kind were visible. The First Assistant was of Russian extraction and spoke fluent Russian. Through his linguistic ability we were able to locate a hotel where tea was served. I mailed a letter and sent a telegram to my wife to let her know I had arrived in Russia intact. The telegram arrived a month later and the letter got there five months after I arrived home.

That afternoon we were directed to a house where Russian movies were shown to American and British seamen. The entry led to a room where several women, apparently the residents, were seated near the stove that served as central heating. We were directed into the main room. Chairs were lined up facing a screen. No other furniture was visible. A projector sat on a table with film threaded and ready to go. Windows were covered.

The film was a wartime epic, crude and amateurish by American standards. Among the main characters was a Soviet general who resembled Stalin and a German general made up to look like Hitler. Spies were exposed by the hero who led the final charge that won the war. Some of the scenes were improbable. One scene had the hero on foot pursuing a wagon drawn by a team of horses in full gallop. He not only captured the wagon, but overcame the three occupants who waited in turn to be subdued. In another scene, the frustrated hero toppled a six inch diameter tree with a back-handed slash of his sword. Rambo could take lessons.

On another occasion we had the opportunity to attend a concert performed by Soviet army personnel. The music, played on Balalakis and other indigenous instruments, was excellent. Culturally, the concert was the high point of our stay in Russia. Tickets for the concert were given to us by a Navy Lieutenant, who occasionally visited us on board ship. We were uncertain as to the reason for his visits, but he appeared delighted to find an American (the First Assistant Engineer) who spoke Russian since he had only a minimal command of English. Like many people we met in foreign countries, he was eager to practice his English. He was also interested in how we lived in America and did we know any movie stars. On his visits we made ham sandwiches and hot tea which may have been an added inducement.

Army troops unloaded our cargo and women played a major role in the unloading. They fueled tanks and jeeps and drove them off the dock. In ten days the cargo was discharged and ballast put aboard. A barge loaded with rocks, about fifteen hundred tons, was loaded into the ship's holds overnight. This was sufficient to keep the propeller under water and to provide steerage way. The ship returned to the anchorage to wait for the homeward bound convoy.

By this time we had become inured to the constant threat of air raids. We followed a routine of eating, sleeping and performing necessary engine room maintenance. For relaxation in the evenings we played cards in the officers mess, usually Hearts or Hi-Lo Jack. The games became rowdy and this helped to ease the tension.

Another invitation to a British destroyer-escort for an evening of drinks and conversation was offered and accepted. On this occasion the Third Mate joined us. He had heard accounts of our previous soiree and didn't want to miss out on this one. He came from Arkansas and swore if he made it back he'd "hole up" in the Ozarks for the duration. As a Southerner he added spice to the party with his stories of moonshiners during prohibition.



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

Later in the evening as we were celebrating, a seaman poked his head in the officer's mess and quietly announced to the Captain, "Air raid, sir." The Captain thanked him. In a few minutes several officers excused themselves and went to their posts. We excused ourselves and returned to our ship in the Captain's gig while the raid was in progress. We were unconcerned as the alcohol we consumed put us beyond caring too strongly about anything.

Air raids continued unabated each day. During one raid three planes made a pass over the town and were unable to reach their primary target because of antiaircraft fire. They turned toward the anchorage and selected a ship as their secondary target. The ship, owned by the same company as ours, was anchored about a half mile from us. Two bombs struck her in the engine room and she slowly settled to the bottom. A fireman and an oiler were killed in the engine room, the remainder of the crew got off safely. Some came to our ship and, since I had sailed with the Second Mate before, I invited him to share my cabin. He had stepped into the lifeboat without so much as getting his feet wet. But, besides the clothes on his back, all he managed to save was his sextant and his papers.

A few days later, we became the target. As we watched three Stukas, dive bombers, headed toward the anchorage. We watched with interest, then with growing consternation, as we became aware they were heading for us. Our apprehension increased as we saw them come overhead then begin to dive. The rattle of gunfire, the whine of the diving planes and the scream of the falling bombs were nerve-racking. I ducked into the officer's mess for shelter. The only shelter this provided was to block out the sight of the diving planes. I pulled my helmet tight over my head and, to myself expressed the ridiculous thought, "I wonder what it's like to be dead?"

Three bombs exploded. The explosions reverberated through the empty holds of the ship, shaking it from bow to stern. The planes came out of their dive and disappeared over the hills. The gunfire ceased. The sudden quiet was deafening. The disturbance in the water told the story. We had been bracketed. One bomb landed a short distance forward of the bow and one on each side of the ship. No damage, but it scared the hell out of all of us.

The Second Engineer was jubilant. He had manned the defective gun, pulling the trigger, expecting to fire two shots. Instead the gun fired and continued to fire. He thought he may have hit one of the planes. We didn't share his exuberance. In the past few weeks we had become a little cocky and this attack sobered us to the realization that we were still vulnerable.

## IV. Homeward Bound

Shortly following our near miss and to our great relief, word was received that we were scheduled to leave. We were to run the gauntlet around North Cape again, but it was the only route out. The convoy assembled as before, 36 ships in a six by six pattern, with a large escort. We sailed northwest to round North Cape. Three days out, four days, five days. A great deal of tension, but no action. A German reconnaissance plane sat on the horizon pacing us. We encountered a low lying fog that hid all but the tops of the ship's masts. There was concern about being seen and not being able to see.

Late on the fifth day, we heard gunfire in the distance, a great deal of gunfire. The Germans had found the Murmansk-bound convoy, PQ-17 and were more intent on sinking laden ships than empties. Some of our escort was detached and sped to the assistance of the other convoy. From accounts we heard later, the Germans were making a desperate attempt to cut the supply route to Murmansk. Their ships and planes were sent out resulting in the sinking of 23 ships out of a 36 ship convoy. There was a loss of 153 men.

Our convoy continued on to Reykjavik. The evening prior to reaching port, we crossed the Arctic Circle and were sailing south along the west coast of Iceland. The wind was up and the sea was choppy. As I was cleaning up after coming off watch, I hear someone running along the deck shouting,



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

"They're sinking around us!" In less than a minute I was dressed and rush out on deck in time to see the ship behind us up-ended and going down. A wolf pack. The German reconnaissance plane had reported our position and direction and German U-boats were lying in wait for us. The roughness of the sea reduced the ability of the escort to detect U-boats. It also decreased the accuracy of the torpedoes.

The U-boats positioned themselves to send a spread of torpedoes into our convoy with the hope that some would strike. This time the U-boats were lucky. Four more ships went to the bottom. The ships at the head of the convoy sped up when they saw ships to the rear sinking. The convoy is in disarray. It's every man for himself. Each ship increases speed to the maximum as the convoy breaks up. By noon the next day the surviving 32 ships reassemble in Reykjavik harbor.

The leg from Reykjavik to New York seemed easy compared to the terror we experienced before. But we still had a few problems. For one, we were running out of food. Fresh fruit and vegetables had been gone for several months. Fresh meat is almost gone and staples were in short supply. However, the Chief Steward assured us he can get us home without starving. He tells us he can make a three-foot stack of pancakes with one egg, a cup of flour and a hell of a lot of beating.

Our other problem is more serious. We are running out of water, both for drinking and feed water for the boilers. It became necessary to eliminate showers, laundry and the use of water for anything other than drinking and cooking. To save boiler water, number three boiler is cut off the line and we sail along on two boilers which is sufficient to maintain the speed set by the convoy. The water from number three boiler is to be transferred to the extra feed tank as per the Chief Engineer's instructions. It was the second engineer's responsibility, but he was a cautious man. He merely lowered the level of the water in the boiler so the water was not visible in the water gauge.

Five days out of Reykjavik, number two boiler blew a tube. We cut it off the line and reduced speed to one or two knots, all that one boiler would sustain. The convoy steamed ahead and we watched the ships disappear over the horizon. One of the escort vessels drops back with us, circles us several times, checking for U-boats that may be following the convoy looking for stragglers. The escort vessel then wished us luck and rejoined the convoy. We were on our own.

When the tube blew, the Chief checked the water in the feed tank to see if there was enough to fill number three boiler. The Chief is a small man, about five feet six inches, partially bald and with a feisty nature. As the trip wore on he became more irritable and was almost never seen in the engine room. This suited us fine as it made for a more harmonious operation. When he discovers the water missing, he flies into a rage. Where was the water from the spare boiler? In a few minutes the second engineer reveals his secret, quickly fills number three boiler to the proper level and has the oil burners lit. The Chief Engineer storms out of the engine room sputtering and fuming.

Normally a boiler of this type takes twenty four hours of slow heating to go on the line. The Second Engineer took an enormous risk and had the boiler on the line in four hours and we were on our way. Heating a Scotch boiler too fast can cause it to explode and we would have been in real trouble. Our luck held out and we caught up to the convoy the next day. The remainder of the trip to New York was made without further incident.

How does it feel to return to the safe normal world? We had been accustomed to a high stress environment and each man reacted to the circumstances in his own way. As we entered the safety of Long Island Sound we felt the tension slowly ebb. Men who hadn't spoken to each other in months, laughed and joked together. Strangers became friends. By chance, I met the Second Mate on deck at 5:30 A.M. while at anchor in the Sound. He apologized for his behavior, explaining he thought he would never see his wife and two daughters again. That thought was more than he could handle.

The ship docked the next day. As soon as the relief crew arrived we quit the ship without a backward glance. Each man went his separate way.



# CONVOY TO MURMANSK - PQ15

[1]

**Walter H. Hesse** - Born, December 17, 1920. After graduation from high school in 1938 he entered the New York State Merchant Marine Academy (now SUNY Maritime College.) He graduated from NYSMMA in 1940 with an engineering license and sailed on merchant ships until 1942, when he went on active duty in the Navy as an Ensign. He sat for and passed the examination for his Chief Engineer's license in 1945. In 1946 he went on inactive duty from the Navy.

In 1948 he returned to school and earned a bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree, the latter two at Cornell University. He taught for one year at the University of Nevada in Reno and then moved to California State Polytechnic University in Pomona California where he taught until his retirement. Even though Dr. Hesse received his Ph.D in Agronomy at Cornell "for the last 20 years I taught astronomy which I volunteered for when the university was rapidly expanding and someone was needed. I had taken some course work earlier, and then to bring myself to up speed in astronomy, I took courses in astronomy, astrophysics, relativity and cosmology. I also wrote several books in the subject which were published."

## END NOTE

**Further reading in the Luce Library collection relating to the Murmansk Convoys** - *Convoys to Russia: Allied convoys and naval surface operations in Arctic waters 1941-1945*, by Bob Ruegg and Arnold Hague (World Ship Society, 1993; *The destruction of Convoy PQ 17*, by David Irving (Simon and Schuster, 1969); *The arctic convoys*, by Brian Schofield (MacDonald and Jane's, 1977); *The Russian convoys*, by Paul Kemp (Arms and Armour, 1987).

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\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Charles

Many thanks for sending me the Jan/May edition of The Pointer with the contribution regarding my late sister Stephanie Batstone.

I know she would have been proud to see herself in print in your magazine. Her wartime experiences and the publication of her book meant so much to her, and meeting Jack Campbell was a dream come true!

I was a schoolgirl during the war but remember D Day very well, all our roads were crammed with convoys of soldiers on their way to the beaches. In year 2005, I crossed to France and saw the anniversary celebrations as well as visiting the landing beaches. Something I will never forget.

Yours Sincerely and thank you again.  
Brenda Walker 23 Aspen Square  
Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 9ZA

*In the Jan/May Pointer, there was an article titled "Kindred Spirits From WWII Renew a Friendship", that was about her and Jack Campbell. I had received this a few years back, but was unable to get it in the Pointer till last issue. Unfortunately, Stephanie had passed away before the article could be printed in the Pointer.*





# AND THIS IS THE THANKS WE GET...



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OCT 26 2009

The Honorable Patrick F. Kennedy  
Under Secretary of State for Management  
Department of State  
HST Room 7207  
Washington, DC 20520-7207

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

This is in response to your letter dated June 23, 2009, to the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller). The Department of State has previously informed the Department of Defense that it will not continue to provide mail services for military retirees and employees of DoD contractors at postal facilities located at Embassies or Consulates. Please find enclosed notice for military retirees and employees of DoD contractors of termination of postal service at Department of State-operated postal facilities, as well as accompanying guidance to Military retirees from TRICARE.

The Department of Defense understands that the mail services will terminate to military retirees and employees of DoD contractors as of December 31, 2009. Request your assistance in distributing these notices to the affected military retirees and employees of DoD contractors.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan F. Estevez".

Alan F. Estevez  
Acting

Enclosures:  
As stated



# AND THIS IS THE THANKS WE GET...



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OCT 25 2009

Dear TRICARE Beneficiary:

TRICARE has learned that mail service through the APO/FPO Military Postal Service Activity (MPSA) provided by the Department of State, will no longer be available to retirees and their family members living or traveling overseas who are not serving in an official capacity. If you are impacted by this change and have been using the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP), we will not be able to continue to mail medications to you once your APO/FPO mail access is terminated. This change will not affect Mail Order Pharmacy services to Active Duty Service members and their family members or retirees and their family members serving overseas in an official status or those located near an Department of Defense Installation.

We understand mail services will end on December 31, 2009 by the Department of State. TMOP will continue to process your prescriptions through December 1, 2009, to allow delivery prior to December 31, 2009 as it may take up to 4 weeks to receive your medications through the APO/FPO service. (Please note that TRICARE cannot authorize more than a 90-day supply of medication.) This should give you time to make arrangements for filling future prescriptions at host nation pharmacies.

Fortunately, the TRICARE Overseas Program Standard provides reimbursement for many medical costs, including prescription medications from host nation pharmacies. When filling prescriptions locally, please be prepared to pay for the entire cost of your medications and file a manual claim with the TRICARE overseas claims processor for reimbursement after the deductible is met. The attached flyer provides basic cost information, as well as instructions on how to file a claim.

Please know that TRICARE is committed to providing beneficiaries the best possible health care. We appreciate your patience and apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Sincerely,

C.S. Hunter  
RADM, MC, USN  
Deputy Director

Attachment:  
As stated





Hi Charles,  
My name is Richard Shevlin. My Dad is John W. Shevlin Sr. and he asked me to send this picture to you of their 21st Anniversary lunch get together. The original pic was 4 meg, so I cut down the resolutions so as not to fill your inbox. He thought that you might like this for the Pointer. The people in the photo are:

Seated in front, left to right: Joan Luci, Barbara Garling, Marie Lane, Irene Mace • Stand back row, left to right: Al Garling, Kay Fredrickson, Ted Fredrickson, Forest Lane, John Shevlin, Mike Luci, Rev. Richard Hass, Walter Mace, Paul Graham-Raad, Elmer Bigelow, Frank Hutter.

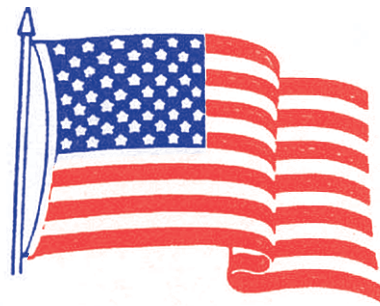
They had their 21st annv. Lunch on 03/09/2010 and Jay's Diner at 2612 West Henrietta Road, Rochester NY, 14623. Have a good day! Richard Shevlin



Dear shipmates,  
On behalf of my friends - Russian Veterans please accept our the most heartfelt wishes for the Victory Day. We have just say Goodbye to a group of British veterans, including one American old salt, who left us for fistivity in Murmansk and Archangel. During their visit to St Petersburg we had a memorial trip along the Neva river and may be the first time in her history the cruiser Aurora returns a salute to Arctic Convoys veterans. I pass it to you with a picture!!! Cordially yours, Igor Kozyr



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June/Aug 2010 Edition



**Lone Sailor**  
 U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL  
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## DEDICATION

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

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.