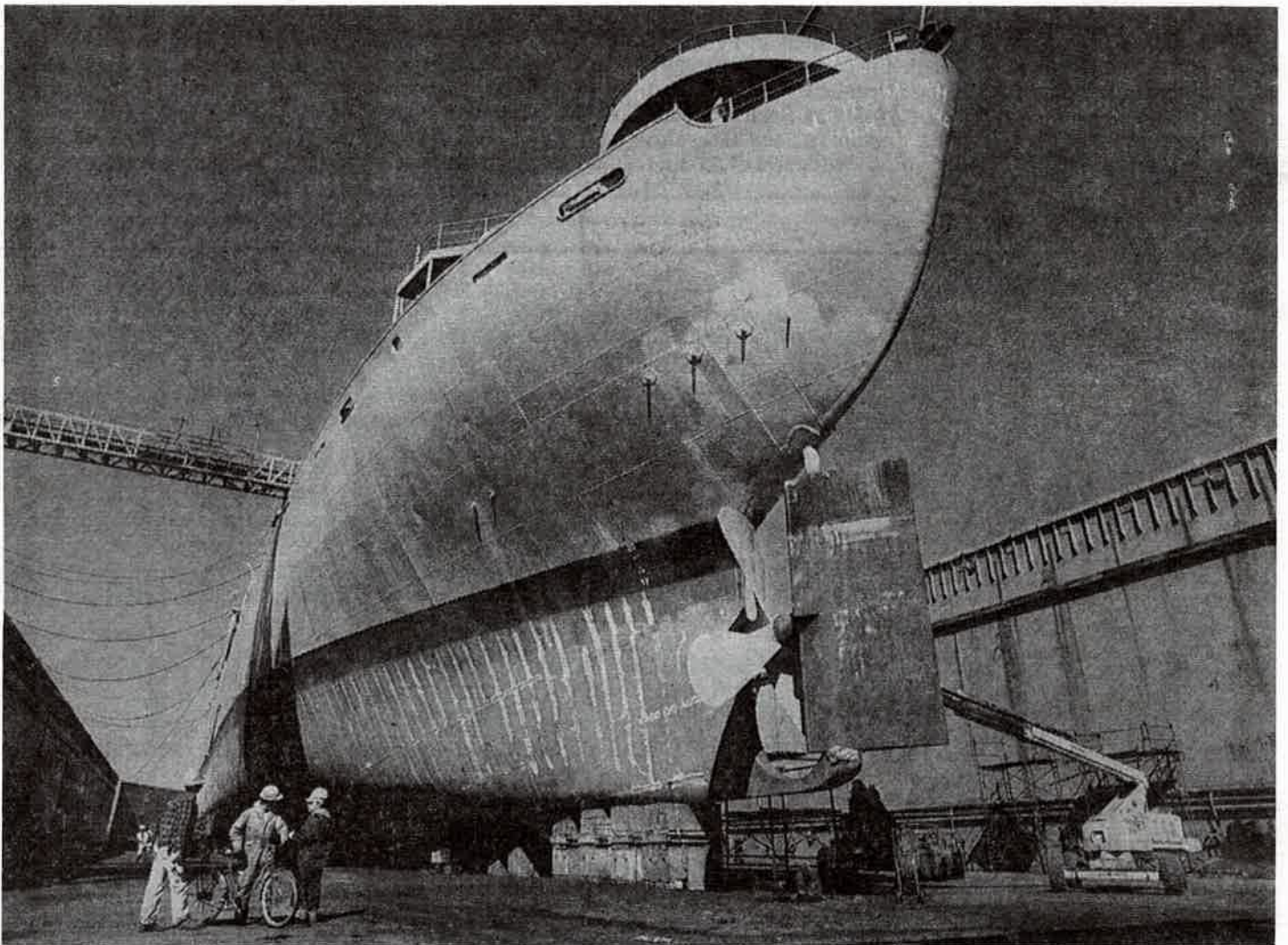


MAY 8, 1994

# THE INTER

## **The Last Convoy Sails for Normandy**

***The S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien and S.S. Lane Victory***



The Jeremiah O'Brien is being made ready at a San Francisco Dry dock for its voyage to France. (photo: Brant Ward/The Chronicle)

**Call 415-441-3101 to hear a taped message about the progress of the  
S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien and to leave a message to the crew.**

# THE POINTER

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## ATTENTION

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

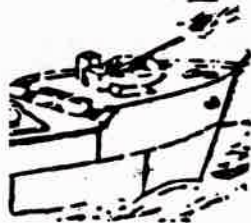
Non-Profit Organization  
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Our Motto: "We aim- To Deliver" and "We-Did"

USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans

"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"



Those of you who send in a change of address on a Post Office Card, please write your Telephone Number, too.

Everyone!!

MAY 5, 1994

GREAT!!! WONDERFUL!! ANOTHER ENJOYABLE REUNION!! Our THANKS and APPRECIATION goes out to Rudy and Ellie Kozak and the Florida Crew for hosting the '94 Reunion at the Clarion Hotel in Orlando, Fl. A GREAT HOTEL and STAFF from the time you walked in, until you checked out. Our hats go off to Vickie Hiatt, Sales Rep. and Don Luteran, Hotel Management for being so cooperative. THANKS!!! And special thanks to Al Sniff, John Welch and Norman King for their expertise behind the bar. Also to Marie Sniff, Mary Hinkle and Hilda for selling the Armed Guard caps, Pins, Etc. Also, to Charles Hinkle for the ticket sales.

Many of our crew saw the Spacecraft liftoff from the site, while others saw it out the windows of the Clarion. Our bus tour to Cape Canaveral was "A-1 SUCCESS"! The movie on the large screen was very impressive and it was great to see approximately 400 of our group go in together with the Armed Guard Caps on and sit down and watch as if you are inside the Spacecraft and with its crew on a mission. It is a "MUST" to see if you visit the Cape. The Grayline Bus Line and Crews were great!

For the 110 who cruised on the S.S. ATLANTIC to Nassau and Port Lacaya, I do not think you could have asked for a better—ship, crew and service. And Sylvia Ponti knows how to get things done. I highly recommend her as a person to contact when you think of cruising around. She may be our Rep for the San Diego May 10-14, 1995 Reunion should we decide to cruise again after the '95 Reunion.

Winners of the 1994 drawings were as follows:  
Bowley, Robert 14923 Seward Pl., Omaha, Ne. 68154  
Plum, Jos. 1187 Windsor, Sierra Vista, Az. 85635  
John F. Mu, 97 River Street, Hornell, N.Y. 14843  
Al Bragalone 2310 Glenwood Av. Ft. Wayne, In 46805  
Lee R. Bell, 2201 Pine Road. Newville, Pa. 17241

Matthew and Leona Sucik 5240 5th St. NE Minneapolis, Mn 55421 were the winners of the gift certificate for portraits taken and donated by: Eva and Larry French, our Annual Reunion Photographers who has been taking our pictures since the 1983 Reunion in Wilmington, N.C. They are our "TAB" on the "AGING" process!!

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

\* Remember, I 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

Those of you who did not attend the 1994 Reunion can still get your picture, name and address in the yearbook by sending in a wallet size photo, name and a check for \$12.00 to: REUNION MEMORIES, P.O. BOX 161939, ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FL. 32716. I ask that you send them back to Larryas soon as you can so the books can be printed and delivered before the Thanksgiving Holidays as you may want addresses to send Christmas cards to ones you met at the reunion.

Tried to get another POINTER out before the Reunion but did not have time, so I will follow up after this one. I will try to cover as much as possible on the three ships in this printing and catch up with the other stories promised. It is a shame that all three ships are not going to be at Normandy for the "50TH ANNIVERSARY". That was one of the reasons for a delay in this POINTER. I wanted to be accurate as to IF they sailed and which ones.

As most of you may know by now, the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN left San Francisco, California on April 14, 1994 for Normandy. Only one Armed Guard was selected to represent us. He is Carl X. Kreidler, 15852 Via Eduardo St., San Lorenzo, Ca. 94580. I know Carl will be a great Armed Guard Ambassador to represent our crew. A note he wrote me:

Charles! I will fly the Armed Guard Flag "HIGH" over Normandy and will represent "ALL" the Armed Guard who served. I'd like to be in Orlando but the ship sails at that time. I'll see you in San Diego next year. Your friend and shipmate, C.K.

Carl's wife, Betty, will join him at Normandy. I received a phone call from Betty, after the ship sailed and Betty and others took pictures from a boat as the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN left the pier and she vanished into the fog. They should be in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean by the time you get this.

The LANE VICTORY got off to a late start and she left San Pedro, Ca. April 28, 1994 for Normandy after a gentleman from a company brought a check for \$250,000. on the 23rd to help get her underway. Everybody there began at once preparing to "shove off" on the 28th. There was food, drinks, grease, oil, fuel, toilet paper; you name it, to be located, brought onboard and stashed away for the trip to last at least 3 months! What a happy bunch of OL'SALTS!!!! All the three ship's crews had worked so hard to be there.

Armed Guard on her are: Loring L. Bigelow 386 "G" Avenida Castilla, Laguna Hills, Ca. 92653; Walter Lee Chamberlain 8061 San Hacienda Circle, Buena Park, Ca. 90620 and Clarence "Red" Halpny from Apache Junction, Arizona.

Both ships will hold a wreath laying ceremony to all who lost their lives, to protect "FREEDOM". We wish them a wonderful voyage over and a safe return home. Now!! If a crew would "Hi-JACK" the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN, and take her over, we would not have any feelings hurt!

I had to release the 61 rooms I had reserved at the UNION JACK CLUB Sandell St., Waterloo, London, England SE 1 8UJ O71 928 4814 as of April 24th, 1994. If you decide at the last minute to go over, or; at a later date, you might want to give them a call!! They may have a cancellation and can make room for you. They really wanted us there and they were so nice.

Many of you wanted to know what are the symbols on the name labels. It is explained in the 1/94 POINTER on page 2, paragraph 3 in 1st column. If you did not get that Pointer, please advise. I tried to make it clear enough for all of you to understand. Read it again if not clear. Some may have donated and were not accounted for by the "NUMBERS". EXAMPLE:

LAST NAME: BART  
BART (1 2 3 4-SHIPS) WOULD INDICATE THAT HE HAD CONTRIBUTED IN: '91; '92; '93 AND 1994 BUT HAD NOT SENT IN HIS SHIP'S NAMES AND DATES ON & OFF. IF YOU HAVE LISTED "SDATES" BEHIND YOUR NAME, IT INDICATES WE HAVE YOUR SHIPS, BUT NOT THE DATES. THIS SHOWS ON THE POINTER "MAILING LABEL". Fill out the FORM-180 and send to St. Louis.

Thanks for those who have given donations to go to press again. I have enough money to do two. I would like to let it be known once more, WE WILL NOT CHARGE DUES and I WILL NOT PUT AN ASSESSMENT AMOUNT TO GIVE, IN THE POINTER. All donations are to be sent to the RETURN ADDRESS on the outside of the POINTER and made out to the first line of the address: "USN ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS"

A letter of 11/30/92 from the HIGH-ROLLERS CHAPTER. of the AMMV (which I had misplaced) stated that they had placed a Memorial, along with the "PEARL HARBOR SURVIVORS" and the "SUB VETERANS" at the Southern Nevada Veteran's Memorial Cemetery with an etching of the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN on it which reads:

DEDICATED TO THE AMERICAN MERCHANT SEAMEN WHO, IN TIMES OF NATIONAL CRISIS, HAVING RALLIED TO BATTLE ENEMY MINES, SUBMARINES AND PLANES WHILE BUILDING A "STEEL BRIDGE" OF SUPPLIES ACROSS THE SEAS TO OUR TROOPS AND THEIR ALLIES. IN WORLD WAR II THERE WERE 731 MERCHANT SHIPS SUNK BY ENEMY ACTION WITH 6,839 MERCHANT MARINERS AND OVER 1800 ARMED GUARD KILLED OR MISSING FROM RELATIVELY SMALL FORCES. MAY THEIR SUPREME BEING BLESS, CARE FOR AND COMFORT THEM!

#### HIGH-ROLLERS CHAPTER AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS

Thanks shipmates for remembering the Armed Guard. Our next NATIONAL REUNION WILL BE at the TOWN and COUNTRY HOTEL in San Diego. For visitors information by the San Diego Visitors Bureau, call 619-236-1212. GO EARLY-STAY LATE!! Average temperature for May is 69.4 high and 57.2 low.

INFORM ME when YOU MOVE OR IF YOU NO LONGER WANT THE "POINTER". STAY HEALTHY AND IN TOUCH. CAL

### SPECIAL NOTICE

The U.S. Navy Armed Guard/U.S. Merchant Marine World War II Veterans bronze sculpture official dedication ceremony will be held Thursday, May 26, 1994 at 10:00 a.m. at the Navy Memorial, 701 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. All Armed Guard, Merchant Marine and spouses are invited. The unveiling will be at 11:00 a.m.

### S.S. JOHN W. BROWN

The John W. Brown will carry passengers on June 4 from Little Creek, VA for a re-enactment of the invasion. The price will be \$30 per person. Board at 11:30 a.m., sail at 12:30 p.m. and return at 4:00 p.m.

### YOUR STORIES NEEDED

I have 2 Armed Guard who want to write books on the Armed Guard. If you would like to share a story, contact them:

Wm. L. McGee, 1187 Coast Village Road, #1401, (805) 969-5970

Harold Skinner, S. 2003 Lincoln, Spokane, WA 99203, (509) 624-7679

# ★★★★★★★★ REUNIONS ★★★★★★★★

## "REGIONAL, MINI-REUNIONS AND GET-TOGETHERS, ETC."

If I did not get your area in, please notify me. PLEASE LET ME KNOW OF ANY ERRORS, so they CAN BE CORRECTED IN NEXT "POINTER". HERE'S A COUPLE!!

### (\* OOPS!! COLUMN \*)

#0. WITH OUR REGRETS, LT. NORMAN MEANS WILKINSON'S NAME WAS INCORRECT IN THE BLOCK WITH ADDRESS.

Another shipmate, Samuel M. Bass, 706 Rodie Ave., Fayetteville, N.C. 28304 has informed me that he had called Lt. Wilkinson and Mrs. Wilkinson told him that he had passed away, 11/11/91. We express our belated sympathy to the family.

#1. In the Poem, "OLD SHIPMATES", please take your pen and change "CROWED" to "CROWD". THANKS!!

#2. Failed to put time of Wilmington, N.C. Meeting.

#3. DESA 19th National Reunion will be held in KANSAS CITY, "MISSOURI" 9/4-9/1994. NOT "Ks"! And will be held at THE CROWN CENTER HOTEL.

#4. MISSOURI CREW should have been "Mo-Ks" crew in the reunions.

#5. Alvin and Thelma Kemble, 8150 Chamber Hill Rd., Harrisburg, Pa. 17111 717-566-8728 announced that they hold their "FIRST THURSDAY" of each month meeting for their area at the "HOSS'S STEAK HOUSE" in Hummelstown, Pa. at 1:30 P.M. This opens up another site for the Penn. crews to meet. All are welcomed!!

In May 1994, at Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, a large Norwegian Granite Marker will be place to express Norway's gratitude for the help and friendship received from an Allied Nation during WW II. They've already placed monuments at Hyde Park, London, England, September 1978; Battery Park, New York City, New York, October 1982 and Villons-les-Buissons, Normandie June 1984 and at "Camp Little Norway" in Toronto, Canada in 1988. Contact Andrew R. Thurson, 118 Elm St., Scituate, Ma. 02066 617-545-0189.

III-Wisc. 1994 Skipper, Jay Wildfong 13211 Durand Ave. Sturtevant, Wi. 53117, 414-886-2966 has informed me that the Oct. 21-23. 1994 Mini-Reunion will be held in Rock Island, Il with Joe and Polly Klimson, 625 S. Genesee, Morrison, Il. 61270 815-772-7156, as hosts for the event. Wildfong also wanted me to remind all of you of the Memorial Plaque to be unveiled at the Museum of Science Industry Building in Chicago by the Merchant Seamen which reads:

*Dedicated in Memory of the 5662 brave Merchant Seamen who unselfishly gave their lives aboard merchant ships that were sunk by the enemy during World War II. Also the 1810 U.S.N. Armed Guard who lost their lives in defending the merchant ships against the enemy during WW II.*

See Pg.5 - Jan.1994 "POINTER" for contacts on above.

\*\*\*\*\*

Wilmington, N.C. Armed Guard holds a 1ST WEDNESDAY monthly meeting 9:30 A.M. WHITEY'S Restaurant 4501, Market St. Wilmington. Host is George W. Cameron, 611 Middle Sound Rd. Lot 16 Wilmington, N.C. 28405, 919-686-4193. Merchant Seamen are also invited.

Penndel, PA. Area Armed Guard has started holding a 2ND WEDNESDAY BI-MONTHLY meeting at the AIRPLANE RESTAURANT Penndel, Pa. 19047, Rt 1 and 413. Host will be ALLEN J., FARRARA, 45 UPPER HILL TOP RD., YARDLEY, PA. 19067 215-493-9134. I hope that you will attend these meetings and this encourages them to carry on. You'll find plenty to talk about and get to know each other. Contact Al for info.

SOUTHWEST OHIO HOSTS Bob and Dot Ober, 7115 Dunn Rd. Cincinnati, Ohio 45230 513-231-3181 and Clyde and Marion Gutzwiller, 9799 Mt. Nebo Road., North Bend, Oh. 45052, 513-941-3072 will hold a 11:30 Luncheon Buffet on the "2nd SATURDAY of EVERY OTHER MONTH" starting Feb. 1994 at the "OLD COUNTRY BUFFET" at COBBLEWOOD PLAZA 1097 Smiley Ave Cincinnati, Oh., Exit 39 off I-275.

IOWA Crew has elected Arnold O. Latare, 601-34th St., W. Des Moines, Ia 50265-3131 515-225-1084 as their host and will meet on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of each Month at 10:00 A.M. at the "Valley West Inn" 3535, Westown Parkway, W.Des Moines, Ia., off I-235.

THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL ASSOCIATION AND "D.E.M.S" WILL HOLD THEIR "JUNE 3-6, 1994" NATIONAL REUNION AT THE HAMPTON INN, 5591 VICTORIA AVENUE, NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO, CANADA L2G 3L4, 1-800-263-2552. FOR INFO, CONTACT: DOUG SEPHTON, RCNA-DEMS, 203 ANNE ST. NORTH; BARRIE, ONTARIO CN, L4N 4T4. ARMED GUARD AND MERCHANT CREWS ARE WELCOMED. THEY PUT ON QUITE A BEAUTIFUL PARADE. I DO APPRECIATE THE "HONORARY" MEMBERSHIP THEY HAVE BESTOWED TO ME.

The PORTLAND-MILWAUKIE, OREGON ARMED GUARD (CHANGE!) will hold a meeting with the Merchant Marines Chapter on the last Thursday of each month at the Elks Club.

Wyoming Armed Guard Host CHANGE!! Contact now is: Chairman Bob Muhm, 2001 East "C" St., Torrington, Wy. 82240 307-532-7212. They will meet Saturday, June 18, 1994 at the Log Inn, Rock Springs, WY.

Lansing, Mich. Area holds a FIRST WEDNESDAY—EVERY 2 MOS. at THE GOLDEN GATE RESTAURANT at 6435 South CEDAR, Lansing, Mi. (Exit onto 104 from I-96) Hosts: Carl Mescher 508 Wayland, E. Lansing, Mich. 48823, 517-332-1027; or, Martin Vallee, 1412 Brookwood, Flint, Mi. 48503 313-238-3392 AND AL WILBUR, 520 WOOD ST. EATON RAPIDS, MI. 48827, 517-663-5301.

KENTUCKY Hosts for the OH-MI-KY-IN 94 Mini-Reunion will be Joe and Earlene Foreman P.O. Box 99303, Jeffersontown, Ky. 40269-0303, 502-267-4576, along with Co-Hosts James and Norma Close, 4036 Preston Hiway, Louisville, Ky 40223 502-366-8966 to be at the Executive West Hotel, Freedom Way at the Fairgrounds, Louisville, Ky 40209, 1-800-636-2708 on October 3-6, 1994. Please make note.

The "Rhode Island Chapter" of ARMED GUARD VETERANS have a "LUNCHEON MEETING" on the 1st Wed. of every month at NOON at BICKFORDS in Warwick. R.I. GERRY and Lena Greaves 143 E. Killingly Road, Foster, RI 02825, 401-647-2212 are your hosts!!

"OPERATION TALON" Tex-Ark-La-Ok-NM Mini-Reunion HOSTS WILL BE: ED AND EMILIE QUIN, 8119 MORLEY DR, HOUSTON, TX. 77061-3116, 713-643-3620 to be held on October 5-8, 1994 at the Howard Johnson Lodge 7171 Airport Blvd., Houston, Tx. 77061-3116. Co-Hosts are: DAN MOCK, 8810 Silent Oaks, San Antonio, Tx., 78258 210-681-2120 or John Shirley 7200 Twin Crest Dr., Austin, Tx. 78752-2540, 512-928-0777. They do things BIG in TEXAS sez Wilson Leggett of HOUSTON!

Oklahoma should contact RALPH McNALLY P.O. Box 423, Skiatook, Okla. (918) 396-2693 on their meetings at Perry's Cafe HWY 169-76th St. N. Owasso, Ok. They have a great time getting together.

KS-MO-OK-NE 1994 Annual Mini-Reunion will be held on September 9-10, 1994 in TOPEKA, KS. according to Host Paul Martley, 935 S.W. Lindenwood, Topeka, Ks. 66606-1620, 913-233-7995. EVERYONE INVITED!!!

MISSOURI CREW will meet on the 3RD TUESDAY of each month and the location is: D.A.V. Chapter #2, 8787, Old Santa

Fe Rd., Kansas City, Mo. 64138, near the intersection of 87th St. and Blue Ridge Blvd. at 11:00 A.M. with Stan DeFoe, 4308 South Osage Ave., Independence, Mo. 64055-4645, 816-795-8915 and Ed Hollenbeck, 8704 Bannister Terr., Kansas City, Mo. 64134, 816-761-7448 as hosts.

**UPPER PA. CREW** meets at "PLATT'S RESTAURANT", 101 Harrit Rd. Lehighton Pa. 18235, 215-377-1819. Host Clint Barr, 2340 Third St., Easton, Pa. 18042 215-258-3056 welcomes you to a great time.

**EASTERN PA. CREW HOST** is Harlan P. Ross, Box 116, Timber Lane., Exton, Pa. 19341, 215-363-6275. This is a great location for the Philadelphia Crew.

**LITTLE FERRY, N.J. AREA** meets on the 1ST TUESDAY of each MONTH 11:30 AM luncheon at TRACEY'S RESTAURANT #4 Bergen Pike Little Ferry NJ 07643. Host for this area will be William and Irene Yansick, 80 Charlton Ave., Lodi, N.J. 07644, 201-473-6640.

**PITTSBURGH, PA CREW** meets on the "3rd Sat." for a NOON LUNCHEON at the GREENTREE MARRIOTT. CONTACT: Hilary Makowski, 202 Wedgewood Crt., Carnegie, PA 15106 (412)429-8510.

**CHICOPEE-LUDLOW, Ma. HOSTS** Tom and Priscilla Dufresne, 289 Munsing St. Ludlow, Ma. 01056 413-583-8580 hosts a "2ND SUNDAY" 9 A.M. BREAKFAST at the MOOSE LODGE #1849 244 FULLER RD., CHICOPEE, MA. and are assisted by Roger Fournier, Springfield, Ma. 413-543-3766; Sam Pitittieri, 413-592-1854 and Louis Carr 413-783-5904. This hard working crew will be having a Plaque and Memorial Dedication 5/22/94 at 1 P.M. IN VETERANS'S PARK CEMETERY. Contact them for MORE INFORMATION.

**ALBANY, N.Y. AREA HOSTS**, Henry and Joyce Carrangi, 11 BULLARD AV. QUEENSBURY, N.Y. 12804, 518-793-0326 and crew meets at 12 NOON, "4TH" THURSDAY of each month at the "WATERVLIET ARSENAL OFFICER'S CLUB", WATERVLIET, N.Y. NOTICE: NEW MEETING PLACE - DATE!

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Jeff and Mabel Haselden, 120 Richardson Blvd. Lugoff, S.C. 29078 (803) 438-1491 can advise when and where S.C. meetings are to be held.

**RICHMOND, VA CREW** meets at 12:30 PM for LUNCHEON at MORRISON'S Cafe 7035 W. Broad St. Richmond, Va. on the "2ND SAT. Hosts Clarence and Helen Durham, 4813 Lowells Rd. Richmond, Va. 23224, 804-233-6023.

In **NORFOLK, Va.** Contact: Ralph Womeldorf 1400 Garwood Ave., Virginia Beach, Va. 23455 , 804-464-1130 for a new meeting place, THE RED LOBSTER on Independence Blvd., (GIANT SQUARE) at 12:00 each SAT.

**FLORIDA:** George Milk 449 St. James St. Port Charlotte 33952, 813 627-6759 area meets at the Golden Corral-PUNTA GORDA, FL. on the 3rd Tues. at 1:30 P.M. When vacationing, join in with these Florida Crews.

**Rudy and Ellie Kozak** 4950 Dory Dr. New Port Richey, FL. 34652 (813)-842-2274 will start back holding meetings after reunion. They are looking for you to be in ORLANDO APRIL 10-14 for the NATIONAL!!!

**Springhill, Florida area** will hold a breakfast at 10:00 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Evergreen Woods Retirement Community.

**PORT ST. LUCIE, FL. area** meets on a "LAST FRIDAY" IN THE MONTH" at JOHNNY'S CORNER FAMILY RESTAURANT, 7180 U.S. #1 PORT ST. LUCIE 34952, 407-878-2686 by HOST DICK JARMAN, 1461 MERION CT. SE PORT ST. LUCIE, FL. 34952, 407-335-3716. THEY WELCOME "REBELS"!

**SANFORD, FL. AREA:** FRED AND MARGARET FONTAINE, 2537, MOHAWK DR., SANFORD, FL. 32773, 407-323-7410 HOLD A MEETING ON THE 2ND AT THE AMERICAN LEGION HALL ON SANFORD AVE., SANFORD, FL.

**Lodi, California Area Host** for July 10, 1994 at Mickey's Grove County Park-Pixley will be Calvin C. Fisher, 8047 Westboro Way, Sacramento, Calif. 95823, 916-682-8009 from 10 AM til 4 PM. SHOULD BE GREAT!

**The Cocanut Grove Santa Cruz Area** will meet 6/5/94 with hosts John and Rhoda Collins, 602 Hill St., Capitola, Ca. and at Naval Weapons Station-7/17/94.

**The Arizona Hosts** Carlo and Adele Traficano, 108 N. Greenfield Road Apt-2117, Mesa, Az. 85205, 602-396-6233 still hold a BREAKFAST meeting on the FIRST SATURDAY, 10 A.M. at the "SANTA FE CAFE" Southern and Gilbert, Mesa, Az. Carlo and Adele, along with Joan Noyes will be Hosts for their "SIXTH" ARIZONA MINI-REUNION—Oct.10/4-6/94 in Bullhead City, Az.

**The Tucson, Az. Area** hosts are Selvin and Marcella Lien 2011 Tucson, Az. for the 4TH SAT. of each Mo. meeting at 11 AM at the Mountain View Restuarant, 1220 E. Prince Rd. TUCSON, Az. (CACTUS JUICE-GRITS)

**LST CREW CONTACT:** LST ASSOCIATION, Mike and Linda Gunjak, P.O.Box 167438, Oregon, Ohio. 43616-7438, 1-800-228-5870 for their 1994 LST REUNION. I highly recommend all LST to subscribe to their paper.

**Destroyer Escort Assoc. (DESA)** has a wonderful paper called THE DESA NEWS and is published bi-monthly. CONTACT: DON GLASER, DESA NEWS, P.O.Box 680085 Orlando, FL. 32868 407-877-7671. DESA 19th NATIONAL will be held at the HYATT-REGENCY CROWN CENTER in Kansas City, Ks. 9/3-9/1994. (3rd EARLY BIRDS).

**PUGET SOUND CHAPTER OF M.M. VETERANS** should contact James Colamarino 2904 168th SE, Bellevue Wa., 98008 (206) 746-6984. Armed Guard are welcomed!!

**Ralph Taylor**, 426 Littlefield Dr. Lone Oak, Texas 75453 903-447-3180 is tryng to locate all Merchant Marine crews in the area. Armed Guard are welcomed to join them. They have a wonderful crew and want you to be a part of their meetings.

**Patrol Crafts Sailors Assoc.**, 11610 Paso Robles Av., Granada Hills, Ca. 91344 will hold their National Reunion in Bay City, Mi. June 9-11, 1994.

**U.S.N. CRUISER SAILORS ASSOCIATION** 21 Colonial Way, Rehoboth, Ma. 02769 are in search for CRUISER CREW of "WW II" and "KOREAN WAR". R.J. MACLEJOWSKI, 55 Donna Ter., Taunton, Ma. 02780 is the Sec. They will hold their reunion Sept.29-Oct.1, 1994 in San Diego, Ca. The Host is Brad Carr, 2153 Scenic Park, Thousand Oaks Ca. 91362, 805-493-1465.

**S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN'S NORMANDY DAILY REPORTS** are on a tape and can be followed as to position and progress by calling ship's telephone number and at the end of report, you can leave a message to the crew. "MARCI HOOPER" Sales Rep. did her homework well prior to sailing and donations are needed for many expenses on this Historical Voyage. Send to: S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN, Fort Mason Center, Bldg-A., San Francisco, Ca. 94123 CALL 1-415-441-3101 Thanks Marci for a job well done from all the crew of U.S.N. ARMED GUARD and MERCHANT SEAMEN who can not be onboard but back you 100 per cent.

**The "DUKW"s Host** Art Wells, 1629 Sunset Ave. Chico, Ca. 95926, 916-342-1452 will announce their 1994 Reunion soon. He'd like your comments on the DUKW, book if you purchased it. REALLY A GREAT TRIBUTE!!

**RALEIGH, NC:** WE still hold our 1ST SAT. OF THE MONTH BREAKFAST at "GRIFFIN'S RESTAURANT", 1604 North Market Dr., Raleigh, N.C. off 4500 Blk of OLD WAKE FOREST RD. behind RED LOBSTER in the NORTH MARKET WAY PLAZA". Take 440 BY-PASS NORTH and get off at #10 Exit and head North. If you come into Raleigh to stay overnight, get a room on the "North Side" and you will be close by, and then give me a call 876-5537 (AG) or (872-7115-Res-IF IN TOWN "ONLY") Y'ALL COME ON!

Contact: Joe Piccolini 9724 Paseo De ORO, Cypress, Ca. 90630 213-598-8326; Charles Savonna 8777 Coral Springs, Crt G-9 Huntington Beach, Ca. 92646, 714-960-6925; or, Thom Hendrickson, 1531 S. Pomona-Apt-A-30 Fullerton, Ca. 92632 about the LANE VICTORY. They can use your help. All the guns need is live ammo.

Contact: Jack Rhodes 3143 Cotter Rd., Millers, Md., 301-343-0369 about the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN. I'd like to congratulate Walt Magalis for being elected as Vice Chairman of the S.S. John W. BROWN again and Jack Rhodes and Joe Colgan as Directors.

Carl Kreidler, 15852 Via Eduardo St. San Lorenzo, Ca. 94580 510-351-1954 welcomes you to be a part of the "U.S.N. ARMED GUARD GUN CREW" on the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN. Go and help him if you can. Just maybe a few bucks would be put to a good use.

The "AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS" will hold their 8th National Reunion May 15-17, 1994 at the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas Nevada. Contact Chairman Bill Irin, 1442 Rawhide Rd., Boulder City, Nevada, 89005, 702-293-7438. U.S.N ARMED GUARD ARE WELCOMED.

U.S.N. SUBMARINERS "40th" National Convention will be in Norfolk, Va., 10/5-9/94, hosted by Tidewater and Bull Run Chapters of the U.S.N. Sub Veterans. Send a S.A.S.E to: M.M. Turner, Convention Chairman, 8041 Tarpon Pl. Norfolk, Va. 23518, 1-804-587-3907. Ralph Womeldorf from Virginia Beach is also working hard in this SUB-VETS Reunion.

FLEET TUG SAILORS National Assoc. (ATF, ATR, ATO, ATS, ARS, ASR and YT-CLASS ships) should Contact: George Kingston, 1611 Woodbridge Cir. E., Foley, Al. 36535, 205-943-4023. Many Armed Guard served with them.

U.S.N. SAMPSON WW 2 TRAINING STATION VETERANS will hold their "7TH ANNUAL REUNION" 9/9-11/94. Contact William R. Russell, Pres., 3916 Idumea.

PBY CATALINA INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION REUNION to BE 9/28-10/2, 1994 IN ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA. CONTACT JAMES THOMPSON, 1510 KABEL DR., NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70131, 504-392-1227. Some of you may remember when a PBY arrived in time to save your ship and crew. Why not write Thompson your story and GIVE THANKS!

BATAAN and CORREGIDOR SURVIVOR 31ST ANNUAL REUNION will be held in FONTANA VILLAGE, N.C. 9/10-15/94. Contact: Wayne Carringer, Chairman P.O. Box 46, Robbinsville, N.C. 1-704-479-6205.

Check with your DAV; AMERICAN LEGION; VFW; AMVETS, etc. for other reunions

GUNBOATS PGM 1 THROUGH PGM 8 CREWS OF WW II SHOULD CONTACT: GEORGE PUENTE, 73 ALEXANDER AVE., YONKERS, N.Y. 10704-4229. PLEASE PASS THE WORD!!!

The U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS 14TH NATIONAL REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE TOWN AND COUNTRY HOTEL 500 CIRCLE NORTH, SAN DIEGO, CA. 92108, 1-800-445-2324. THE HOSTS ARE JOE AND MARY ZAPOTOCKY, 1846 WARMSLAND, VISTA, CA. 92084, 619-724-0680. MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY AND LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE ARMED GUARD. DON'T HAVE TOO MANY MORE TO GO!!

I ASK YOU TO SAVE THIS "POINTER" AS REFERENCE TO UPCOMING MINI-REUNIONS, ETC. I WILL ONLY INSERT IN THE NEXT POINTER THOSE I HAVE MISSED. calloyd

## — In Memory —

### DECEASED SHIPMATES SINCE JAN. 1994 POINTERS

Acker	Joseph	L.	Dallas	Tx	*	4/10/94
Albrecht	Calvin		Elgin	Il		5/9/91
Allison	William	H.	Jacksonville	Or		1/24/94
Aning	Benard		George	Ia		1/25/94
Avantzato	Joseph	V.	Pembroke Pine	Fl	Elizabeth	6/7/93
Babb	Claude		Fairport Harbor	Oh		10/19/93
Baker	Ray		Greensboro	Nc	June	8/7/93
Barthany	Douglas	M.	St. Paul	Mn		1/1/94
Becze	Adler		Dolton	Il	Jean	2/11/94
Bedwell	Kenneth	R.	Dover	De	Fay	1/15/94
Boock	Milton		Lake City	Mn		1/ / 94
Brake	James	E.	Melford Ctr.	Oh	Maxine	93
Breckel	Ed		Cincinnati	Oh	?	94
Brockman	Jack	T.	Portersville	Ca	Louise	10/15/93
Brown	John	A.	Las Vegas	Nv	Helen	9/3/93
Carboni	Rudy		W. Somerville	Ma		2/6/94
Cathcart	James	H.	Saint Marys	Oh	Wilma	3/18/94
Cleveland	Arnold		West Chester	Pa		4/9/93
Coltrane	James	M.	Middle River	Md	*	2/1/94
Conley	Bartley		S. Portland	Me	Helen	12/2/93
Cook	Donald	F.	Marblehead	Ma	Joanne	12/12/93
Cosanelia	Salvadore		McKeesport	Pa		1/94
Crippen	R.	H.	Portsmouth	Oh	Mary	10/20/93
Cropper	Ray	W.	Topeka	Ks	Evelyn	3/10/93
Daisey	Sherman		Chincoteague	Va	Louise	3/20/93
Decliose	Joseph	I.	Colonie	Ny		94
de Merlier	Edward		Woodcliff Lk	Nj		93
Dodson	Tom	H.	Bainbridge	Ga	Eunice	2/17/94
Dryi	Robert	J.	Holland	Mi		9/93
Ellis	Lloyd		Yakima	Wa	Maxine	11/12/93
Erdmann	Edward	A.	Chicago	Il	Irene	10/30/93
Fisher	Paul		Springfield	Mo	Mary	10/11/93
Fleming	John	P.	Lawrence	Ma	Stephany	11/8/93
Freisza	James	R.	Harper's Woods	Mi	Lucille	8/25/93
Fulcher	Lee		Roanoke	Va		12/2/93
Gasdia	Frank	R.	Chatham	Nj	*	2/15/94
George	Raymond	A.	Willow Hill	Pa	Pauline	?
Gilmore	John	W.	Newton	Pa	Jeanne	2/9/94
Glover	Ross	B.	Jackson	Mi		12/92
Golombsky	Harold		Brandt	Mi		9/23/93
Gose	George		Danville	Il		7/30/92
Hahn +	Herbert	P.	Corona	Ca		1/31/94
Hall	A. Perry		Rockville	Md	Doris	2/3/94
Hans	Ted		Lombard	Il	Eileen	1/11/94
Hayes	James	B.	Bluefield	Wv		1/22/94
Heacock	Kenneth	R.	Glendale	Az	Mildred	8/17/93
Helm	Dale		Minot	Nd	Mrs. Dale	11/23/80
Hinck	Kenneth		Burlingame	Ks	Louise	9/13/93
Hizer	Herket		Frankfort	In		11/91
Hogatt	George		Wenatchee	Wa	*	1/24/94
Houts	Cecil		Ketchikan	Al		10/17/93
Hreha	John		McKeesport	Pa		2/94
Hrezo	Joe		St. Clair	Pa		2/94
Krienke	Erwin		Rice Lake	Wi	Harriet	94
Kandrac	Andy		Lawrenceville	Nj	Mildred	3/19/94
Lafley	Richard		Springfield	Ma		2/20/94
Lamey	William	J.	Toccoa	Ga	?	7793
Lemon	Lee		Salisbury	Md	*	9/11/93

MacPherson	Harold	A.	St. James	Ny		9/29/93
Mallette	Everal	A.	Oroville	Ca	Hazel	3/1/94
Martinez	Gillis		Westwego	La	Dorothy	12/14/93
McArthur	John		Lewiston	Ny	Clarice	3/24/94
McDonald	James	H.	Augusta	Ga	Gail	12/2/93
Mertz	Robert		Defiance	Oh	Betty	11/93
Michaels	James	E.	Seattle	Wa	Mary Ann	9/23/93
Miller	Donald		Lawrence	Ks		93
Mills	Richard	M.	Mechanicville	Va		93
Moore	Medaris	P.	Bullhead City	Az		6/5/92
Neff	John	R.	Columbus	Oh		11/21/93
Nicoll	John	G.	New Orleans	La	Shirley	??
Pollock	Harry		Richmond	Oh	Layla	9/25/90
Porter	James	M.	Rineyville	Ky		94
Power	Thurman	W.	Mauldin	Sc		2/4/92
Proffitt	Nathan	T.	Knoxville	Tn	Anna	12/13/93
Racine	Harvey	A.	Jones	Ok	Dorothy	1/13/93
Ramskill	George	E.	Burlingame	Ks	*	1/24/94
Robinson	Ivan		Myrtle Point	Or		2/16/93
Rowe	Robert		Bessemer	Pa		2/7/94
Selbert	Michael	J.	Bryan	Oh		2/93
Seward	Theodore	A.	Dundalk	Md	*	1/22/94
Schmitt	Durbin	L.	Lamar	In	Wilhelma	2/22/94
Schusteff	Marvin		Skokie	Il	Janice	12/11/93
Shambo	Rodney	W.	Windsor	Vt	Virginia	10/23/92
Soffield	Carroll	D.	St. Petersburg	Fl		8/8/93
Stewart	George		Philadelphia	Pa	Ann	10/93
Striker	Robert	G.	Florence	Az	?	2/7/94
Tart	Major	L.	Kinston	Nc	Alice	93
Tufnell	Percy		Manistique	Mi	*	3/19/94
Van Vlerah	John	H.	Defiance	Oh		12/93
Wakwak	Wally		Weston	Or	Delmar	4/16/93
Walker	Lindsay	E.	Mineral	Va	Estelle	5/21/80
Weber	William	C.	Little Creek	Nj	Gladys	2/15/94
White	John		Woonsocket	Sd	Jo	9/93
Wilkins	John	P.	Schenectady	Ny	Dorothy	11/9/93
Wilkinson	Norman	M.	Greenwood	Ar		91
Williamson	M.	G.	Sunnyvale	Ca	Lucille	12/23/93
Wood (WV I)	Erwin		Schenectady	Ny	*	4/23/94
Wright	Philip	S.	Denton	Tx	Joy	?
Yentes	Paul	D.	Urbana	In	?	2/5/94

### SPECIAL NOTICES:

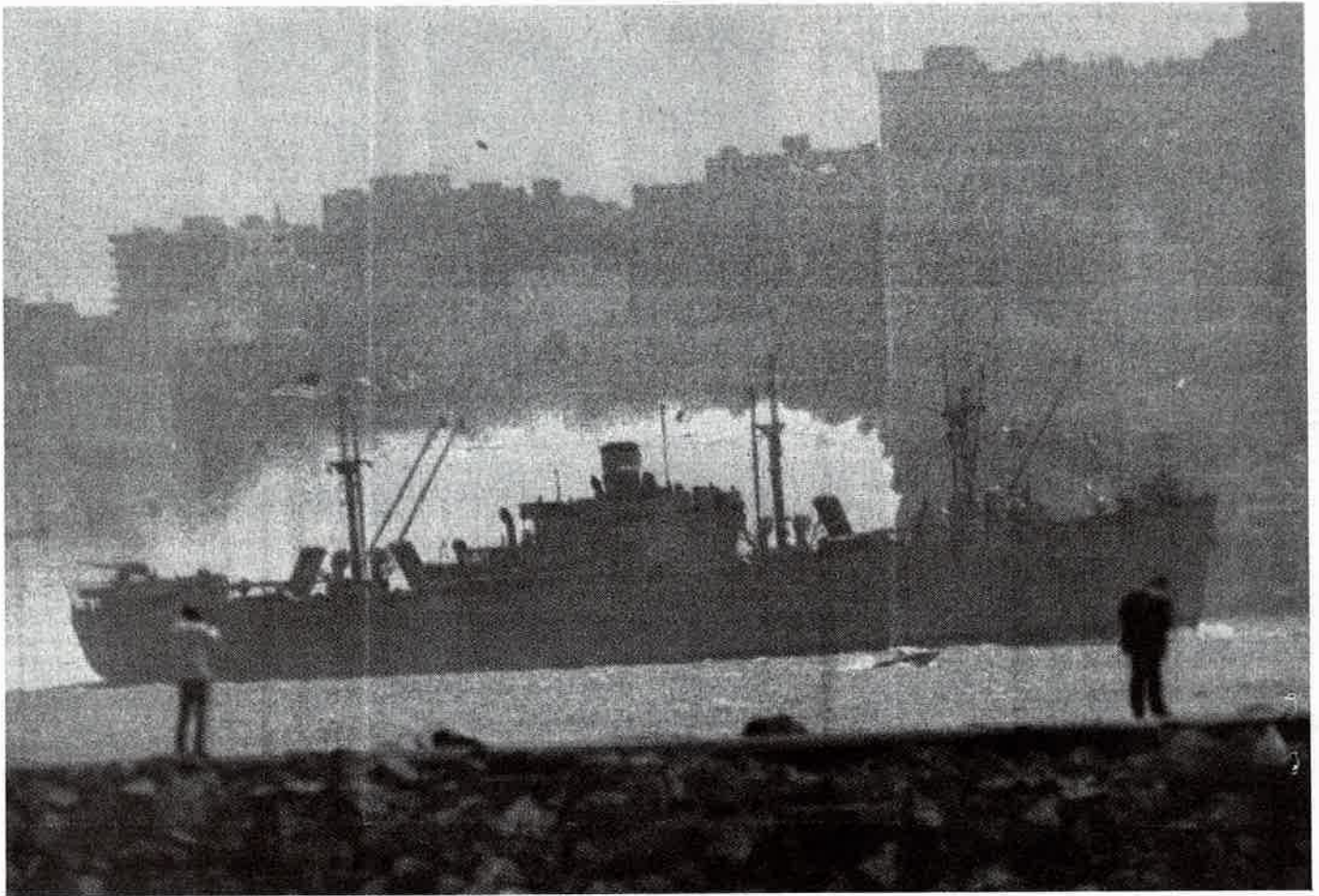
PLEASE REMOVE ORVAL M. DILL'S NAME FROM THE JAN. 1994 POINTER DECEASED LIST. I DON'T REMEMBER WHO SENT IT IN. ORVAL'S WIFE'S NAME IS "TINY" INSTEAD OF EDITH. ORVAL SERVED ON THE S.S. CORNELIUS HARTNETT 4/43-1/44

PLEASE REMOVE EDWARD J. WISNIESKI'S NAME ALSO FROM THE JAN. 1994 POINTER DECEASED LIST. HE IS STILL WITH US. TOO. WISNIESKI SERVED ON THE S.S. LEWIS MORRIS 9/43-3/44 AND THE S.S. GULF OF VENEZUELA 5/44-11/44.

### Our departed shipmates's Mates

Fellows	Jean	Stratford	Ct	William R.	2/20/94
LeBeau	Doris	Hadley	Ma	Paul	2/19/94
Kincaid	Freida	Reno	Nv	Paul B.	4/4/94

# GHOSTLY DEPARTURE



PETER DaSILVA — Staff

The Liberty Ship S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien steams past the Marina District of San Francisco and a few well-wishers along a breakwater at Fort Baker in Marin. The O'Brien is on its way to celebrations marking the anniversary of D-Day.

## Liberty Ship heads for Normandy

By **Diana M. Williams**  
STAFF WRITER

SAN FRANCISCO — The S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien hauled in its gangplank at noon Monday and set sail into a foggy Pacific, commanded by a 78-year-old World War II veteran who is piloting the historic steamship back to the beaches of Normandy.

"I never thought this would happen, having the Liberty Ship going again," Capt. George Jahn, a San Francisco resident and retired Navy officer, said just before the O'Brien left Pier 70.

The long-awaited voyage will span 20,000 miles and culminate in Normandy for a 50th-anniversary celebration of D-Day, the pivotal battle in which Allied troops stormed the French beachhead to challenge Nazi soldiers.

Built in Maine during a wartime push to put more ships to sea, the O'Brien sailed for 2½ years, participating in the June 6, 1944, invasion at Normandy. It

later sailed to Australia to pick up wartime brides, and then to the Philippines.

In 1946 the ship entered the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet, where it languished until 1979. That's when a group of volunteers set out to overhaul the last and only operational steam ship that landed at Normandy. When built in 1943, the O'Brien was one of 2,751 "liberty ships."

It took 14 years and some 400,000 hours, but the work seemed well worth it Monday to volunteers who watched the stone-gray ship sail under the Golden Gate and disappear into a belt of fog.

"It was a very tender moment," retired Capt. Carl Otterberg said just after the O'Brien pulled out. Otterberg, 71, said he felt a pang of regret that he too couldn't be on the boat and at the Normandy festivities, which will include a re-enactment of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's crossing the English Channel from Portsmouth to Omaha Beach in Normandy.

"But the honor belongs to George,"

Otterberg said, referring to Capt. Jahn, who took part in the Normandy invasion.

The O'Brien's departure was four days later than scheduled because of last-minute work to communications and radar equipment, Otterberg said. The ship used its new radar equipment to navigate the fog as it set sail south.

The first stop will be Panama. Next it's the Caribbean, where the O'Brien will rendezvous with the State of Maine, a training vessel for Naval cadets. The two ships will travel in convoy across the Atlantic and should land in Portsmouth May 27 or 28, Otterberg said.

Fund-raising for refurbishing the O'Brien has not covered expenses for the volunteer crew of 56, most of whom are veterans.

*For details, contact the National Liberty Ship Memorial, c/o S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien, Fort Mason Center, Building A, San Francisco 94123.*

# Adventure at Sea for World War II Veterans

By Carl Nolte  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Liberty Ship Jeremiah O'Brien, one of the oldest operating merchant ships in the world, is getting ready to sail from San Francisco on an epic voyage to yesterday.

If all goes well, the trip will make history, because the O'Brien will be commemorating the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the Allied invasion of France. It will also be an adventure, because most of the volunteer crew are veterans of World War II, steaming the old ship back to their own youth.

The O'Brien was there on June 6, 1944, carrying troops, then tanks and supplies. It is the only ship that was in the invasion armada — the largest in history — that is capable of making the trip back to Normandy.

The crew has already gotten a taste of the old wartime cliché that told people to hurry up as fast as they could so they could wait around as long as necessary. So far the sailing date has been postponed twice because the Coast Guard wants more work done to be sure the old ship is absolutely seaworthy. With any luck, the O'Brien will sail during the weekend.

"This is the last big adventure in a guy's life," said Ralph Ahlgren, who is 72 and served in the South Pacific. He is a retired printer, has not been to sea for more than 40 years and is shipping on the O'Brien as an oiler in the engine room.

For more than six weeks the old sailors have been working on the ship, getting it ready, loading fuel, meat, potatoes, beans, butter, paint, tools, brooms, toilet paper, soap, and the thousands of things that will be needed for a 20,000-mile voyage down the Pacific Coast to Panama, through the canal, across the Caribbean and the Atlantic to Portsmouth, England and France and then back to San Francisco.

Last Sunday, the crew took the ship out for a trial run on the bay, and, as Coast Guard officers watched carefully, put it through steaming and steering tests.

On its return to the San Fran-

cisco Drydock Co. berth at the foot of Potrero Hill, the O'Brien had a broom lashed to its foremast — the traditional sign of a clean sweep of the tests.

That was a bit premature, it turned out. For one thing, work connecting the new electronic navigational equipment now required was not finished. For another, somehow fuel oil got into a water ballast tank and has to be removed. In the old days, the contaminated water would have been pumped over the side at sea, but that was then, this is now, and that is illegal as hell.

"We will proceed to sea as soon as we are ready," said Captain George Jahn, the 78-year-old master of the ship. When is that? "As soon as we get certified," he said.

The crew has been put on six-hour notice.

On board, there is a kind of optimism and enthusiasm that only comes when volunteers overcome those who said it couldn't be done. They have waited a lifetime for this; a few extra days do not matter so much.

Once at sea, Captain Jahn says the trip will be "no problem. The ship is fine and the engine is perfect." The crew, he says, is old, "but they are all good and anxious to go."

Still, there have to be doubts. The O'Brien, one of 2,761 identical cargo ships built to last one wartime voyage, is 50 years old; it spent 33 years laid up in the mothball fleet in a backwater on Suisun Bay in a sort of suspended animation.

In 1970, the ship's long sleep was broken; the National Liberty Ship Memorial took the vessel over. The preserving grease was cleaned from the engine, the boilers were fired up and the ship was steamed by volunteers to San Francisco for a refit and restoration that has been a true labor of love — 400,000 hours of volunteer work.

The result, said Captain Jahn, is a nearly new 1943 ship, unaltered from its original condition, a true time capsule.

He notes that the O'Brien served at sea for only 2½ years and made a total of seven wartime sea



BY VINCE MAGGIORA/THE CHRONICLE

The crew of the Jeremiah O'Brien worked on an emergency drill as they prepared for the trip to France

voyages. On the other hand, it is prudent to remember that the last ocean voyage was in 1946.

One must also consider that the Liberty ships were built quickly — the O'Brien was delivered in 56 days, an incredible time when you consider that these days it would take that long to even fill out the papers.

The Liberty ships were built to a simple — and obsolete — design. The O'Brien is 441 feet six inches long, half the size of a modern freighter. It will carry no cargo, which often means a nasty ride in any kind of sea.

The O'Brien is powered by a triple expansion steam engine, a maritime relic by any standard. The engine's top speed is 78 revolutions a minute, which will give a cruising speed of nine knots. One can fly to England in about 10 hours; the O'Brien will take 40 days to get there.

It is not air-conditioned; the temperatures in the tropics are in the high 90s. In the steamship's engine room, they expect temperatures of 120 degrees.

For this reason, the watches have been cut from the normal four hours to three. "Four hours in that engine room will be enough to give you heat prostration," said Ahlgren, who will join the ship in Le Havre and bring it back home.

Every member of the crew has had to take a physical exam and all were certified fit. However, they all have been told in writing that "a significant risk to life and limb exist, and the usually expected measures may not be available, with potentially dire consequences, especially in the age group expected."

A doctor will be aboard, and so will the Rev. Jim Wade, an Anglican priest, who is doubling as the purser.

Just to be on the safe side, the veterans have been augmented by some younger hands. Some of the less senior engineering officers are younger men. The kid in the engine room will be Dirk Warren, 20, a cadet from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, N.Y.

"This," he said, "is a great historical opportunity. I'm just gonna love it."

There will also be two 19-year-old deck cadets from Kings Point.

Money is still a problem. Nobody is getting paid, but the voyage is costing \$2.4 million, and all but \$300,000 has been raised. The National Liberty Ship Memorial borrowed the rest. "We have good credit and have always paid our bills," said retired Rear Admiral Thomas Patterson, who is heading the effort and sailing with the ship.

"But with credit, you have to pay it back."

The debt aside, Patterson has high praise for the help the O'Brien got from the San Francisco maritime community. "You couldn't do a job like this anywhere but on the San Francisco waterfront," he said. "When you need them, they are there."

It will be a triumph if the ship makes it. Even sailing day will be a small triumph.

A nearly identical ship, the John Brown, was also planning to go from Baltimore to France for D-Day but the voyage was canceled Thursday, almost the last minute. An inspection of the hull showed that the rivets on about half the length of the ship had to be renewed; the ship was not seaworthy. The cost of repairs, said Captain Brian Hope, who headed the project, "was beyond belief."

He called it "a terrible disappointment. We were done in by rivets."

One other old ship, the 1945 vintage Lane Victory, based in Los Angeles, is also expected to sail, perhaps in company with the O'Brien.

## Reporter Ships Out On the O'Brien

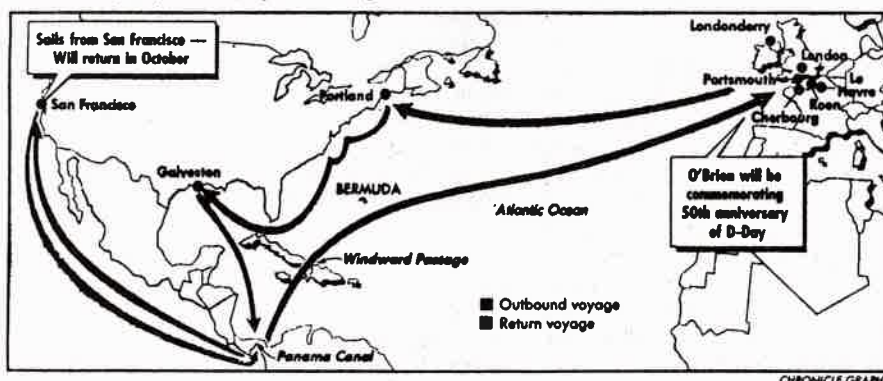
Chronicle reporter Carl Nolte is sailing with the Liberty Ship Jeremiah O'Brien on its trip to the 50th anniversary of D-Day and will be filing regular reports from the ship.

The ship is expected to call at Panama in late April, cross the Atlantic in May and reach Portsmouth, England, on May 22. After a naval review by Queen Elizabeth II, President Clinton and French President Francois Mitterrand, the ship will go to France in time for the D-Day anniversary on June 6.

Nolte's last overseas assignment was covering the Gulf War for The Chronicle.

## THE VOYAGE OF THE LIBERTY SHIP JEREMIAH O'BRIEN

The voyage of the Jeremiah O'Brien will take the ship through the Panama Canal, up the Caribbean and through the Windward Passage between Cuba and Santo Domingo, to a rendezvous with other ships off Bermuda, then to Portsmouth, England. Following that trip, a short voyage across the English Channel to the D-Day beaches, a call at several French ports and London. On the way back, the ship will call at Portland, Me., where it was built, at New York and Galveston, Tex., where the ship called during World War II.



CHRONICLE GRAPHIC

# World War II Veteran in Dry Dock

## Liberty ship to sail to France to mark D-Day's 50th anniversary

By Carl Nolte  
Chronicle Staff Writer

An old ship and an even older crew are getting ready in a San Francisco dry dock this week for the historical voyage of a lifetime — a 20,000-mile trip to France and back to commemorate the 50th anniversary of D-Day.

The ship is the Jeremiah O'Brien, the last unaltered veteran of a fleet of 2,700 mass-produced Liberty ships built to carry cargo and troops during World War II. The crew are all volunteers, many of them veterans of World War II. The ship is 50 years old; the average age of the crew on this last voyage is 72.

The O'Brien is in dry dock getting many of its seams rewelded and other maintenance work to prepare it for a trip from San Francisco to England and Omaha Beach, on the Normandy coast of France, on June 6. The O'Brien is the only operating ship left of the huge invasion fleet that landed troops on the German-held French coast in 1944.

The O'Brien will be gone nearly six months, and getting

the ship ready has not been easy. The O'Brien has not been to sea since 1946, the year President Clinton was born. It spent 33 years in the mothball fleet at Suisun Bay and since 1980 has been a memorial to merchant seamen at Fort Mason in San Francisco.

Although the O'Brien was reconditioned when it came out of mothballs and sails around San Francisco Bay a couple of times a year, a trip around the bay and a trans-Atlantic voyage are a bit different.

"We decided on this project two years ago," said retired Rear Admiral Thomas Patterson, "Now it has gotten down to a seven-day-a-week job."

Patterson, chairman of the operation, once was superintendent of the Suisun Bay mothball fleet and saved the ship from the scrap heap. Now, he gives credit to an army of volunteers who have worked for 14 years and put in 425,000 hours of free work to get the ship in its present condition. "All these guys deserve a world of credit for what they have done," he said.

"It shows that the United States can build a ship that is still seaworthy after 50 years," he said, "It trained people who are still able to use their skills to go to sea after all these years."

His oldest volunteer is Clarence Rocha, who just turned 90. Rocha, who runs the deck winches, cannot make the long voyage but turns up to help every day.

The O'Brien's skipper is Captain George Jahn, 78, and he would not miss the trip for the world.

There is only so much volunteers can do; shipyard crews have to do the rest, including about 3,500 linear feet of welding to tighten seals and 2,000 new rivets need to be driven.

Andre Lopez, the riveting subcontractor, is looking for a few good riveters. This sort of work is not done much any more, he said.

All this is not cheap; the shipyard bill alone is expected to be about \$600,000. The National Liberty Ship Foundation figures that it has received \$2 million in cash and in-kind contributions so far. The

biggest chunk was \$588,000 the government provided from the sale of two old ships that were sold for scrap.

Still, the O'Brien is short about \$500,000, and the sponsors are asking for help from the public through the Liberty Ship Foundation, Pier 1, Fort Mason, San Francisco, 94123. However, cash in hand or not, the work is going on. The ship will leave the yard March 21 and go to Alameda to load a ton of lead ballast, provided by the Navy. Then back to Fort Mason to fit out.

The O'Brien sails April 14, takes two weeks to get to the Panama Canal and a little over a month to get to England. It's a long voyage in a ship designed to be slow but reliable.

"We're going," said Robert Blake, a veteran of World War II merchant ships and now chairman of the National Liberty Ship Foundation. "We're going," said Norm Burke, a retired banker who will work in the engine room.

"Even if we have to go out on Market Street with a tin cup, we're going."

Reno Gazette-Journal

Tuesday, April 19, 1994—3B

## Crowd cheers Liberty ship as it sails for D-Day ceremonies

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The last operational ship from the vast D-Day armada finally steamed out the Golden Gate Monday on a 40-day voyage to Omaha Beach and the 50th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy.

The Liberty ship SS Jeremiah O'Brien, with a 78-year-old skipper in charge of a crew not much younger, pulled away from the dock as a crowd of about 200 people waved bon voyage.

The crowd included a hard-hatted Marci Hooper, the business agent for the ship that has been restored by volunteers.

"Lord, am I relieved. That's all I

can say," said Hooper, who fielded hundreds of calls from the public and media since the vessel failed to sail last Thursday as originally planned. The Coast Guard ordered a series of last minute repairs for the aging cargo ship.

One of the main concerns was over the lack of a generator that could handle modern radio equipment, said Coast Guard spokesman Gary Openshaw.

"We worked hard on this too," he said.

Hooper said a company donated a huge generator late last week that helped meet the Coast Guard standards.

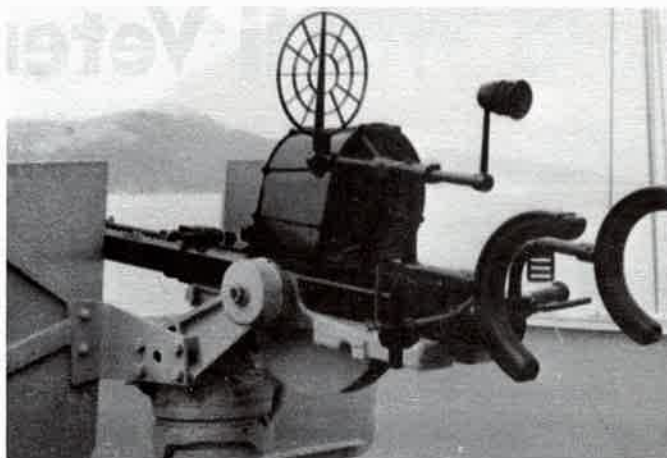
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1917

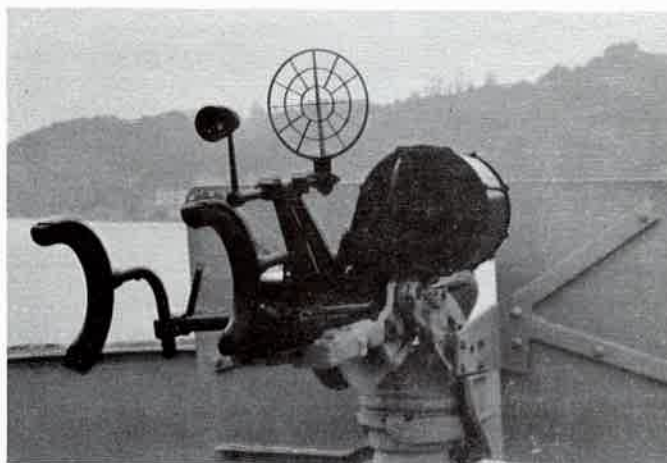
- Apr 1 ► **First U.S. Serviceman to Die in WWI.** Navy Armed Guard Chief Boatswain's Mate John Eopolucci perishes in a lifeboat after the steamer *Aztec* is torpedoed off France.
- Apr 6 U.S. declares war on Germany.
- Apr 7 **First U.S. Shot of WWI.** A Marine aboard the USS *Supply* fires across the bow of a German motorboat from the *Cormoran* in Apia Harbor, Guam.
- Apr 28 ► **First U.S. Navy KIA's.** 5 sailors of the Armed Guard are KIA when the oil carrier *Vacuum* is sunk by a German sub off Scotland.
- May 4 First U.S. warships — Destroyer Squadron 8 — reach Queenstown, Ireland, to aid in the blockade of Germany.
- May 19 **Draft.** Selective Service Act is passed.
- Jun 5-6 Navy's 1st Aeronautical Detachment arrives in Pauillac, France, for training in Caudron aircraft. Naval aviation eventually sends 18,000 men to 27 overseas air naval stations.
- Jun 13 First echelon — 177 staff members — of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) lands on French soil.
- Jun 26 Naval convoy bringing the first U.S. troops to France successfully withstands submarine attacks.
- Jun 26 **First U.S. Ground Combat Troops Land at St. Nazaire, France.** 13,000 members of the 1st ID and 2,759 men of the 5th Marine Regt. arrive. H Co., 28th Inf. lands first. Doughboys must be a "distinct and separate component of the combined force, the identity of which must be preserved."
- Jul 9 In the Pacific, the German commerce raider *Wolff* captures and sinks the American bark *Beluya*. 14 people, including two women, are taken prisoner.
- Jul 31 ► **Armed American oil tanker *Montano* is torpedoed and sunk off the coast of Ireland.** 16 crew members and 8 Navy gunners drown.

## S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN TENTATIVE SCHEDULE - NORMANDY 1994

April 14, 1994	Depart San Francisco for Portsmouth via Panama
May 20-24	Arrive in Portsmouth, unload cargo, berth in Portsmouth Navy Yard. <b>Welcome visitors dockside during daytime.</b>
June 4	Proceed to anchorage for review of ships.
June 5	World War II Allied nations' ships depart for Normandy Beachhead.
June 6	Commemorations at Pointe du Hoc and Omaha Beach.
June 7	Demonstrate ship to shore transfer of vintage cargo - DUKW's, landing craft, at Arromanche.
June 8-15	Port Call Chatham Naval Dockyards on the Medway. <b>Visitors welcomed aboard.</b>
June 15-20	Port call in London, berth alongside HMS Belfast, above the Tower Bridge. <b>Visitors welcomed aboard.</b>
June 22-July 1	Port call at Fowey, Cornwall. <b>Visitors welcomed aboard.</b>
July 2-9	Port call at Cherbourg, France. <b>Visitors welcomed aboard.</b>
July 10-17	Port call at Rouen, taking part in the "Armada de la Liberte", an international celebration of ships and Liberty.
July 17-20	Port call in Le Havre. <b>Visitors welcomed aboard.</b>
July 21-25	Port call in Londonderry, No. Ireland. <b>Visitors welcomed aboard.</b>
July 25	Depart for South Portland, Maine, the site of the O'Brien's launching 6/19/43.
August through mid-September	Visit ports on East and Gulf coasts. Last Gulf port Galveston, and home to San Francisco from there.
October 8, 1994	<b>Enter San Francisco Bay at 0900</b> Leading the Fleet Week Parade of Ships.



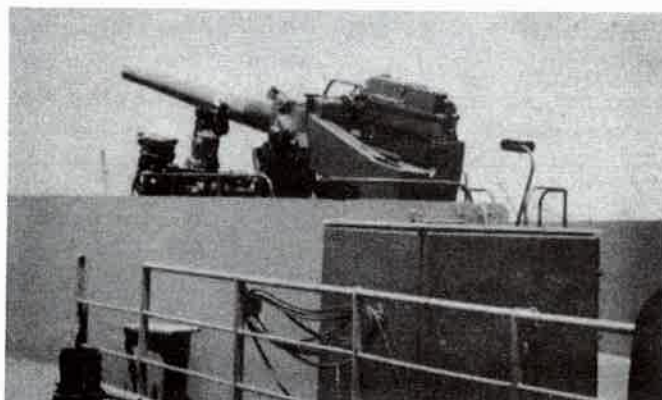
*The 20mm guns on the S. S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN as restored by Carl Kreidler and Bill Kramer.*



## Tentative Normandy 1994 Itinerary - SS Lane Victory

Port	Arrive	Days	Depart	Knots
San Pedro			Apr. 12	14/15
Balboa, CZ	Apr. 21	1	Apr 22	
Cristobal	Apr. 22		Apr. 22	
Galveston, TX	To Be Scheduled			
Portsmouth, VA	To Be Scheduled			
New York	May 1	5	May 5	8.5
Bermuda	May 7	Rendezvous with O'Brien		
Portsmouth	May 22	5	May 27	14/15
Bangor County Down, NI	May 28	3	June 1	
Southampton	June 2	3	June 5	
Normandy / La Harve	June 6	8	June 15	
London	June 16	6	June 22	
Rotterdam	June 26	4	June 30	
St. Petersburg	July 2	4	July 6	
Gdansk Poland	July 7	4	July 11	
Oslo Norway	July 12	4	July 16	
Glasgow / Endinburgh	July 17	7	July 24	
Landsend, End.	July 25			8.5
	Rendezvous with Jeremiah O'Brien			

Port	Arrive	Days	Depart	Knots
Charleston	Aug. 14	4	Aug.18	14 / 15
Cristobal	Aug. 22	1	Aug. 23	
Balboa, CZ	Aug. 23	0	Aug. 23	
San Pedro	Sept. 2			
Days At Sea: 76	Days In Port: 65	Total Days: 140		
Total Miles: 21,871 (+ or -)				



*The 5"38 on the Aft Gun Deck of the S.S. Lane Victory is ready for action.*

# PROJECT LIBERTY SHIP

HONORARY COMMODORE Governor William Donald Schaefer HONORARY CHAIRPERSON Congresswoman Helen Delich Bentley

Dear Friends of the JOHN W. BROWN:

April 12, 1994

The latest edition of the *Ugly Duckling*, our "Last Convoy Special", is in the mail and you should be receiving it either shortly before or after this letter. The *Duckling* describes the BROWN's itinerary in great detail, tells about our preparations for the trip and includes an appeal for financial support.

I very much regret to inform you that lack of sufficient funds to repair the BROWN's hull has caused us to cancel the voyage.

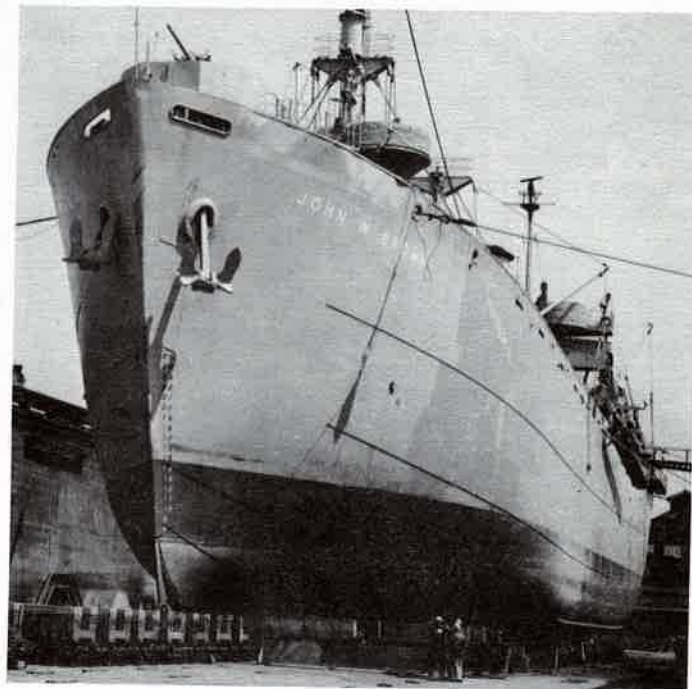
Despite all of the effort that has gone into the preparations for the trip, all of the tens of thousands of hours of work by our volunteers and the \$588,000 we received from the scrap ship sale, the shipyard has estimated that an additional \$600,000 will be needed to do the bottom repairs required by the Coast Guard and ABS to make the ship seaworthy to cross the Atlantic. This amount is far beyond anything we can raise in the immediate future.

This decision is a very painful one, since I know how excited our crew has been over the prospect of steaming the BROWN across the ocean, but, on the other hand, it is inconceivable that we should risk the lives of our crew and the safety of the ship on a less than satisfactory repair job.

There is, however, a bright side to this situation. Our ultimate aim in this whole Normandy enterprise has been to continue our ongoing efforts to improve the condition of the ship so that her life as a living memorial will be extended to the fullest. Our volunteers have accomplished a huge amount of work both before and during the current drydocking and, although hull repairs will not be completed to our satisfaction while the ship is on the drydock this time, we have made major strides toward Coast Guard certification to steam the ship along the coast.

We have completed some major items during this drydocking - items that were required by the Coast Guard. These include: drawing and inspection of the tailshaft; opening, inspection and cleaning of all the sea chests and sea valves; ranging, inspection, cleaning and marking of the anchor chain; steel repairs in the chain locker; cleaning and recoating of the underwater hull. We have also begun re-riveting the bottom under the engine room.

Unfortunately the shipyard is insisting that we vacate the drydock before the work under the engine room can be completed, even for the limited coastwise certification. This means another drydocking to complete all the underwater work.



The S.S. John W. Brown in dry dock for repairs.

We also hired another ship repair company, General Ship, last December to do a huge number of steel repair jobs and installations that did not require drydocking. These items include: installation of a new watertight door between #4 and #5 'tween decks; installing screens on all our ventilators; plugging the hundreds of holes in the various 'tween deck bulkheads cut when the BROWN was a schoolship; repairing wasted steel decks in the deckhouse toilets and 'tween decks areas and a multitude of other minor welding jobs.

Bethship's bill will be \$500,000 and General Ship's about \$90,000. This takes the entire amount we have received from the sale of the scrap ships.

In order to make the BROWN seaworthy for coastwise trips, at least \$200,000 more will be needed. Shipyard work is horribly expensive, and we knew that, but the scope of the work that must be done in order for the BROWN to safely steam in the open sea has proven to be much greater than the value of the scrap ships we received from the government.

Once again we must turn to our 2,000 members for help. If we can raise this money quickly, there will still be time to drydock the ship again this summer so that we can take her to Boston, the last planned stop of our now-cancelled European voyage. A cruise in Boston Harbor will be a great money-making venture, an important consideration in the Project's budget.

While the *Ugly Duckling* does contain an appeal for funds, that appeal is all the more urgent now. To raise the money we need, an average of \$100 per member must be received. The collective financial power of our 2,000 members is our best source of help in this most critical financial crunch we have ever faced.

**THIS IS AN EMERGENCY APPEAL.** I repeat that **in order to obtain the \$200,000 we need, we must receive an average of \$100 per member!** The *Ugly Duckling* describes a number of gifts that will be available for contributions of various levels and these still apply. Enclosed in the newsletter you will find an envelope in which to mail your contribution.

Several years ago we made an offer of advance dues payment, a very successful program, and we offer that now as well. Those of you who are \$25 members can pay your dues for four years. Patrons, whose membership is at the \$100 level, can pay for next year and we urge those of you who are Life Members to consider another contribution. If you wish your contribution to go toward advance dues, make a note in the envelope.

For those members who have the wherewithall, I would suggest that you perhaps consider a loan to the Project. With the capability of steaming to other ports we can raise a great deal of money through tourism and cruises. A number of our Board Members have already offered significant loans to us.

Well folks, these are the suggestions we have for you and we hope you can respond favorably. If you never give another penny, now is the time to support your ship to the fullest. Remember that by repairing the BROWN now and making her seaworthy, we can ensure that she has a long and successful career as a living, steaming Memorial to that generation of Americans who gave their all to deliver the goods when they were needed most.

Sincerely,

*Brian Hope*  
Captain Brian Hope  
Chairman

## S.S. JOHN W. BROWN

### Proposed Itinerary, April - September 1994

In order to salvage, as best we can, an opportunity for the ship and her crew to participate in some exciting activities this year, we are working on the following tentative schedule. The Norfolk drydocking and the subsequent trip to Boston are contingent on the success of our fundraising over the next few weeks!

Friday, April 15th	Depart shipyard, shift back to Pier One.
Friday, April 29th	0800 - Get underway for Sun Oil Company refinery, Marcus Hook, PA. Dock at 17-1800, slack for ebb. Commence bunkering. Sun Oil Company to donate \$35,000 worth of oil.
Saturday, April 30th	Ship open to the public. Thousands expected. Sun Oil company provides food. Ship's store open.
Saturday, April 30th,	1800. Depart Marcus Hook for Baltimore.*
Friday, June 3rd	Sail for Norfolk to participate in D-Day Commemoration.
Saturday, Sunday, June 4 & 5.	Ship docks at Little Creek, Va. Open to the public. Shift to anchorage off Fort Story to participate in D-Day reenactment.
Monday, June 6th	Shift to a shipyard in Norfolk to complete bottom repairs for coastwise certification.
Saturday, June 18th	Sail for Baltimore.
Wednesday, August 10th	Sail for Boston.
Friday, August 12th	Arrival Boston. Dock at Charlestown Navy Yard.
Saturday, August 20th	Day cruise, Boston Harbor.
Sunday, August 21st	Sail for Baltimore.
Wednesday, August 24th	Arrival Baltimore.
Saturday, September 24th	Annual Chesapeake Bay cruise.

\*Note: Coast Guard permission is being sought for a one-time waiver to permit the ship to steam to New York for May 2nd arrival, departing for Baltimore on May 5th.

# Aging Victory Ships Being Sold for Scrap

By Carl Nolte  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Two old ships are tied up temporarily at a rundown pier on San Francisco's waterfront like two gray ghosts from America's wars.

The ships are the Lindenwood Victory and the Council Bluffs Victory, both built 49 years ago as part of a class of 560 identical "Victory" ships constructed to carry soldiers and cargo during World War II. The two ships — one a veteran of three wars, the other a veteran of two — are being prepared for one final voyage to a scrap yard in Asia sometime next month.

It has been almost 25 years since these two ships last went to sea; they have been laid up at the Reserve Fleet in Suisun Bay off and on for most of their lives. Now their useful lives are long past.

Once there were hundreds of Victory ships in the mothballed fleet. Now there are 10 left, all to be sold for scrap.

"Technology has passed them up," said Joe Pecoraro, superintendent of the Reserve Fleet. The ships had been preserved like insects in amber in a state of suspended animation, and they could still steam if anyone wanted them. But nobody does.

The engines are "antiquated," said Pecoraro, and so is the de-

sign of the vessels. The ships are very slow and inefficient by today's standards.

"They are like dinosaur bones," said Captain Steve Robinson, a ship's master who is a maritime consultant and rode the Council Bluffs Victory down from the Reserve Fleet to San Francisco last week.

The two ships were lashed together and hauled — slowly and

He found some papers. The ship's last trip was in July, 1969, from Port Chicago to Thailand. A typical cargo for that era: bombs that B-52 planes dropped on Vietnam. The Council Bluffs Victory stopped in Manila on the way back, crossed the international date line on September 15 and arrived in Oakland for the last time at 2:36 a.m. on September 21.

The ship was laid up in Suisun

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***Once there were hundreds of Victory ships in the mothballed fleet; now there are 10 left, all to be sold for scrap***

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— CAPTAIN STEVE ROBINSON

carefully — by four tugs. Robinson roamed through the dead ship on the trip down the bay, a voyage he described as "really eerie."

► "I kept thinking of what this ship had done and where the crews were. The chart room had charts from every ocean in the world and on an engine room bulkhead was a 1969 calendar from "Old Joe's Place, Where All Seamen Meet, 220 Turk Street, San Francisco." ◀

It was as if the ship were haunted, he thought. Everything was in place except the people. "I could almost hear voices," he said.

Bay just as she was, waiting for a call that never came.

Ships on their way to the boneyard do not normally stop in San Francisco to get ready for a sea tow, but Chenco International, the company that bought them for scrap, could not find a suitable berth at other bay ports, and San Francisco's piers are not exactly busy these days.

So they will be at Pier 32, near the Bay Bridge, for some weeks, until a seagoing Russian tug arrives to take them to ship breakers in Thailand or Taiwan.

The Lindenwood Victory is the older of the two ships. Built

by Kaiser at the Permanente Metals Corp., Yard Number 2, just across the bay in Richmond, in July of 1945, it served in the last month of World War II, in the Korean War and in Vietnam. The Council Bluffs Victory was built in Los Angeles, two months after the end of World War II, but served in Korea and Vietnam.

The Richmond shipyard is long gone, but Pecoraro notes that it left a legacy: the shipyard hospital grew into the Kaiser Permanente health maintenance organization. The Victory ships — each 408 feet long, 56 feet in the beam — were designed to replace the better-known Liberty ships in World War II. There were 2,751 Liberties built, and the last unaltered Liberty ship is the San Francisco-based Jeremiah O'Brien, the last survivor of the D-Day invasion fleet.

The O'Brien will sail to England and France this summer to participate in the 50th anniversary of the invasion. The Lane Victory, the last operating Victory ship, will also make the trip from its home port in Los Angeles.

The ghostly ships on the Embarcadero will one day return, Robinson predicted. "They'll come back as Hyundai's," he said.

Reprinted from the San Francisco Chronicle, Sat., Feb. 26, 1994.

## Say thanks to WW II vets before it's too late

By JACK CRUICE  
Ridley Township

You see them every day, at the market, on a walk or in places of worship. Some you'll find in nursing homes. They are bald or white-haired, lean or pudgy. They are all senior citizens. But they are unique senior citizens — veterans of WW II.

During the war years (1941-45) they were young men and women, brave men and women. They were draftees or volunteers. They were on the USS Maryland, or at Schoefield Barracks or Hickham Field at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. They absorbed the first day of WW II for America with shock, anger and frustration.

They were the Marines and GIs who were bombed and shelled on Wake, Guam and Midway. They were the soldiers and nurses of Bataan and Corregidor who suffered terror, starvation, abuse and humiliation.

They bombed Tokyo in their B-52s. They were on board the ships in the decisive battles of the Coral Sea and Midway. They were shot out of the sky, they were torpedoed. They were the leathernecks who stormed ashore to fight in the steamy jungles of Guadalcanal. They were the GIs who endured the heat and sand of North Africa.

They were the Navy Armed Guard that manned the guns of merchant ships in the frigid North Atlantic, warding off attacks by German submarine "Wolf Packs," or the loneliness of convoy duties escorting tankers in the South Atlantic.

In the skies over Europe, they flew the B-17s, dodging flak and fighter planes to drop their bombs on the factories of Schweinfurt. They were the guys who hit the beaches of Anzio and Sicily. They were the Marines who took the islands of Makin and Tarawa. They flew the B-24s to destroy the Polesti oil fields of Romania.

They were the silent service, our submariner who patrolled the Pacific and raised havoc with supply ships of Japan. They were the Seabees building airstrips in remote islands of the Pacific. They were the Coast Guard at the helm of landing craft bringing precious cargo of men and material to the coastline of Normandy. They were the Paratroopers who dropped behind enemy lines.

They flew the "Hump" in the China, Burma India theater, bringing food, medicine and ammunition to our troops and allies. They were the "Battered Bastards of Bastogne," cut off by the Wehrmacht and the cruel December weather — but they prevailed. They crossed the Rhine. They endured the hardships of German P.O.W. camps.

In the Pacific, sailors faced the Kamikaze assaults on our fleet. They freed the survivors of the German concentration camps. They celebrated as Germany

capitulated May 5, 1945.

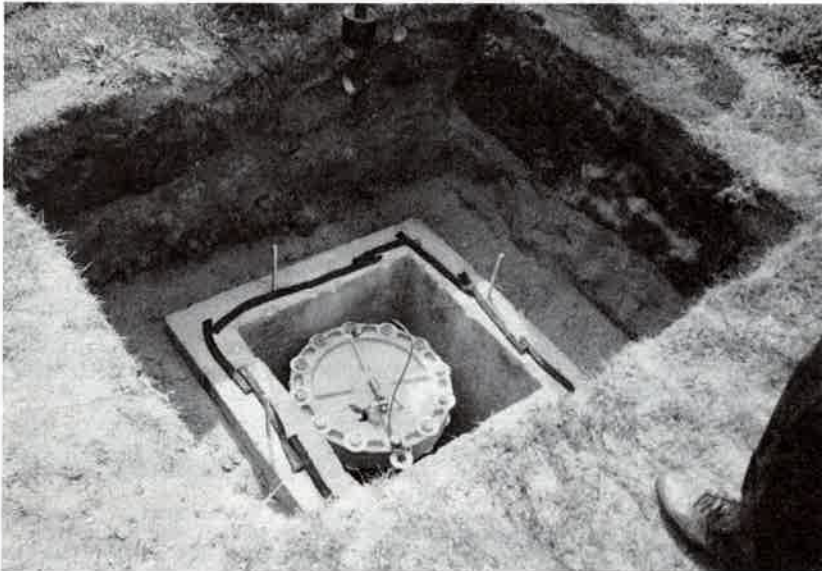
They were the troops and Marines who landed in the Philippines, on Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

They were just ordinary men and women who preformed extraordinary efforts. They saved the world.

They were all heroes and they will deny it. When they came home, they went back to being ordinary people, working at the post office or railroad or wherever.

They participated in the world's most violent, intense and deadly struggle. Winston Churchill said of them, "The New World came to the rescue of the Old."

You know these men and women. They are your moms, dads, your grandparents, neighbors and friends. Let's take a good look at these rapidly vanishing breed, and say thank you for their sacrifices of blood, sweat and tears while we still have the opportunity.



Rhode Island U.S.N. ARMED GUARD CREW is shown placing a TIME CAPSULE at the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery on August 14, 1993 in Exeter, R.I. Gerald Greaves (upper right photo, leaning over, in white shirt) 143 East Killingly Road, Foster, R.I. was in charge of the ceremony and it will preserve history of the Armed Guard.

#### US WW II VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR RUSSIAN MEDAL

The Embassy is pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications from qualified US veterans for the medal "The 40th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War (WW II)".

This Commemorative medal is being made available by the Russian government to the veterans of the US Merchant Marine, US Navy, the US Corps of Engineers and other US Armed Force Services who participated in operations bringing war supplies to the Soviet Union by way of the Barents Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Black Sea or the Sea of Okhotsk during World War II.

To apply for this medal, veterans must submit a typed or clearly printed request to:

Embassy of Russia  
Attn. Mr. Yuri MENSNIKOV  
1125 16th St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

The following information is required:

- 1) The veteran's full name, date of birth and current mailing address.
- 2) A full copy of the veteran's discharge papers - DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, Notice

of Separation from US Naval Service or another comparable document).

- 3) The dates and a brief description of the operation in which the veteran served and what he did.

The Embassy will also accept applications along with the appropriate information for this medal from the next of kin of deceased veterans.

The average time to process a request is 9 - 12 weeks.

Following this, the medal will be mailed to the veteran by certified mail. While the medals are being awarded at no cost to the recipient it would be appreciated if each applicant would enclose with their application a check or money order in the sum of three dollars payable to the Embassy of Russia to help defray the considerable cost of postage in mailing out hundreds of medals. Your help is greatly appreciated.

To speed up the procedure it may help if you mark the front left bottom of the envelope: "Medal".

Office of the Public Affairs  
Embassy of the Russian Federation  
February 1994

Contact: Ian Millar, 1806 Bantry Tr., Kernersville, NC 27284

# Forgotten sailors remembered in memorial

## Navy Armed Guard protected merchant ships on dangerous wartime journeys

BY DAVID SWARTZLANDER  
Lincoln Journal-Star

Moe Carlton calls his fellow sailors the black sheep of the World War II armed forces.

"We never got mentioned in the war," he said.

But the U.S. Navy Armed Guard was there. In fact, records show that 1,818 Armed Guardsmen were killed in World War II.

Carlton and 25 other Lincoln-area former Armed Guardsmen have made sure they will not be forgotten again, at least not here.

Using only private donations, the group has erected a memorial to its own, with the motto "We Aim to Deliver."

Fittingly, they finished the brick sculpture last week, in time for Veterans Day on Thursday.

The sculpture in Antelope Park, made from brick from Fairbury's Endicott Clay Products Co., is similar to the Iron Horse brick sculpture Lincoln artist Jay Tschetter created in the Haymarket area, but on a much smaller scale.

It depicts the Armed Guard's emblem, a bald eagle carrying a submarine in one talon and an airplane in the other.

The 145,000 sailors, all volunteers, who made up the Armed Guard mainly protected cargo ships carrying gasoline, oil and arms that were operated by the merchant marines.

It was not easy duty. Of the 6,236 merchant ships the sailors served on, 710 were sunk by enemy action.

The heaviest action probably was during the Murmansk Run, when convoys of cargo ships were dispatched to Murmansk, an Arctic seaport in the Barents Sea off northern Russia. In one convoy alone, 67 Navy Armed Guardsmen were killed. During the



Frank Henderson, an ex-Navy Armed Guardsman and a Fairbury bricklayer, cleans up after finishing work on the U.S. Navy Armed Guard Memorial in Antelope Park, the latest memorial to be installed there. Henderson donated his labor.

entire war, 829 officers and enlisted men were lost in north Russian convoys.

Many of the ships were ill-equipped and some crews used poles soaked in creosote to try to fool the enemy into thinking they were guns.

Carlton and the other ex-Armed Guardsmen wanted to remember their comrades.

"A lot of the guys didn't know what they were getting into," said Carlton, who made three trips to the South Pacific, two on oil tankers and one on a

ship carrying bombs. "For a plowboy from Nebraska, the biggest body of water I'd ever seen was the Platte River."

The Lincoln group started meeting for coffee about five years ago, said Carlton, an ex-gunner's mate first class.

"Most of the guys are retired and we get together; it's kind of fun," Carlton said. "You lived and bunked with these guys. It became a family affair."

Some of the group attended a Memorial Day ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Gardens in Antelope Park — honoring new memorials to the merchant marine and Airborne troops — and decided to pool their money for an Armed Guard memorial.

And now they're helping with other memorials still to be built there.

Efforts are under way to build two major memorials, to the Korean War and World War II, said Bob Wright, city Parks and Recreation Department assistant superintendent for planning and construction.

About 500 bricks soon are expected to be sold at \$50 each to help build the World War II memorial. Once a brick is bought, the name of a World War II veteran will be engraved and the brick then will become part of the memorial, Carlton said. The memorial is expected to include a world map, showing the different theaters of the war.

Plans also are under way for smaller memorials for the K-9 Corps, women veterans and Seabees (naval construction battalions), said Carlton and Wright.

Eventually, Carlton said, he hopes about 50 ornamental flowering trees will be planted throughout the gardens.

# Little-known naval troops fought, died in world wars

By CLIFTON DANIEL

Staff Writer

William Burevitch joined the Navy in December 1942 and spent two months training near the Great Lakes. From there, he was assigned to the Navy Armed Guard and promptly started grousing.

"I thought, 'Oh, my God.' I wanted to be on a destroyer or a battleship," he said.

A lot of men assigned to the Navy Armed Guard felt the same way. The last thing they wanted was to pound a beat on the deck of a cargo ship. But that was why the Guard was formed during World War I, to protect cargo ships, tankers and troop ships from raiders.

At the outbreak of World War II, the Armed Guard had no money for men and weapons. Early crews were made up of five men armed with .30-caliber machine guns and a creosoted wooden log to simulate a deck cannon, Mr. Burevitch said.

The Navy Armed Guard's "front line was from the sea ports of the United States to the destination and back," said Charles A. Lloyd, chairman of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard Veterans of World War II in Raleigh.

That front line could be rough. The North Sea routinely pitched waves "bigger than this house," Mr. Burevitch said. The hull slamming against the sea sounded like an earthquake and meals were eaten on a



Staff photo / CLIFTON DANIEL

While he was in the Naval Armed Guard, William Burevitch served on several ships, including the 'S.S. Amos G. Throop,' whose log he displays.

tablecloth soaked with water to keep dishes from sliding.

At the end of his first run aboard the liberty ship *Joseph A. Brown*, at port in Tunis, Tunisia, Mr. Burevitch spent an hour fending off a midnight fighter plane attack.

In port in England just before D-Day, Mr. Burevitch spent almost every night hoping they wouldn't be hit by One O'Clock Joe, a German pilot who routinely bombed the ships.

Before the invasion of Normandy, members of the Armed Guard were stationed on ships sunk offshore as a breakwater for the coming landing crafts. At high tide, the sailors were up to their knees in water, ducking German shore fire meant to destroy the breakwater, Mr. Burevitch said.

Members of the Navy Armed Guard took part in every major offensive of World War II, including Sicily, North Africa and Normandy. Of the 144,970 men who served, 1,820 were killed.

Yet Mr. Burevitch has heard hardly a peep about the Navy Armed Guard since the end of the war. It seemed as if the men had been forgotten, he said. Until he hooked up with Mr. Lloyd's group, he contented himself with swapping stories with Merchant Marine veterans.

He's trying to form a Navy Armed Guard veterans' group in Wilmington and has found a few former members, one of whom survived an attack by One O'Clock Joe.

For information on the Navy Armed Guard, call William Burevitch at 762-8152. Or write to Charles A. Lloyd at U.S. Navy Armed Guard Veterans of World War II, 5712 Partridge Lane, Raleigh, N.C. 27609-4126, or call (919) 876-5537.

Yes, that *is* a 21-year-old **Judy Garland**, performing at the USNAGC in June or July, 1943.

All photos on this page were taken by Clarence F. Korker.



Photo on the left is a fire drill (Aug. 2, 1943) on the USS Newton - used as a brig/infirmiry at USNAGC Brooklyn.

One day, she sprung a leak and had to be evacuated. The next day, one of the evacuees tried to apply for "Survivor's Leave!"

Nothing like a good night's sleep . . .

This photo was taken in Brooklyn at the USNAGC in July of 1943.



Dear CA,

Received Nov. Pointer and certainly was happy to receive the copy. I always look forward to receiving my copy.

I too have sent you some info about the Murmansk run. We were docked on Christmas Day 1943. I can never forget that day. We made the best of it, keeping each other happy, some talking of home and family. I'm proud to have had a part in this important mission. Thanks to what Old Salts are still around.

Keep up the "Good" work and have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We saw Christmas lights every night from the sky. (Not on a tree.) A lot of swell guys on our ship. But these hills of West Virginia sure did look good when all was over.

Old Salt Forrest Flanagan  
P.O. Box 119  
Craigsville, West Virginia 26205

Dear CA,

I received your literature on the U.S. Navy Armed Guards. This was a great surprise to me, and a very great joy to be a part of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard once again.

No, I have never been on your mailing list, but I'm delighted to be now.

I had no idea that this organization existed, but, boy am I happy to learn of its existence.

God bless you and thanks for all your effort and hard work in the past 13 years in bringing from 52 men in 1982 to over 12,000 in 1993. Amazing!

If I can be of any service in the future please contact me.

Al Mason  
Computer No. 11188

Dear Shipmate,

I would like to first take the time to thank you & all others involved in bringing attention to the world just who the U.S. Navy Armed Guard of WWII were, their unsung battle exploits, and hardships endured in the execution of their assigned duties.

I enlisted in U.S. Navy September 22, 1941 in the fair city of Baltimore, MD. My first sea duty was an overnight cruise to Norfolk, VA on a paddle wheel. I took my boot training at N.O.B. Norfolk, and upon completion I was assigned to Little Creek Section Base for gunnery training. I was one of the first gunners to be trained at Little Creek Section Base. My crew number was 52-E. I trained at the time with Crew 50-E and 51-E. Being only 17 and away from home for the first time, like most all others, I was somewhat scared.

At the time we were selected for Armed Guard training as per President Roosevelt's directive calling for 2000 men. Little did we know that in all reality as it happened, we were secretly labeled "EXPENDABLE." Why, because at first Merchant ships received orders to sail various routes alone. Now, why the sailing alone? Very simple. We were sent out to again in all reality to draw the German submarine wolf pack out of hiding, knowing they would sink us. In essence, we were sent out as "HUMAN EXPENDABLE LIVE SUBMARINE BAIT" so intelligence could pinpoint their location & follow their movements. The German wolf packs were in the Atlantic long before we declared war on Germany. We were also trained before the war. (I rest my case.)

Ray Mullican  
3601 Eve Circle (H)  
Mira Loma, CA 91752  
Tel: (909) 685-8627

## U.S. ARMY TUG - LT 130

*Sent in by Harlan P. Ross, Box 116, Timber Lane, Exton, PA 19341, (215) 363-6275.*

The LT 130 was built in Tampa, Florida in 1943. Upon launching, was commissioned in the U.S. Army Transportation Corps. A seagoing tug, she had a length of 120 feet and a beam of 30 feet. She was outfitted with two twin fifty calibre machine guns and a louvered signal light to accomodate the Armed Guardsmen (two gunners and a signalman) who joined her 19 man Merchant Marine crew in Charleston, South Carolina. An additional crew member was an Army T-4 Radio Operator.

Set sail from Charleston in February 1944 as part of a convoy of sister tugs and small tankers (180 feet). Because of the relatively small size of the individual ships, the convoy was routed the southern route to the European Theatre of War. Bermuda and the Azore Islands were stops enroute. Arrived in late March, 1944 in Newport, Wales. She then plied the English and Bristol channels on numerous towing assignments from port to port.

On the night of June 5th and 6th, 1944, towing in tandem, an ammunition barge and a second barge loaded with Army "Jerry" cans of gasoline, she headed for the French coast and thus became a part of the massive Normandy Invasion. Following the initial invasion action, the LT 130 was assigned to towing from Southampton, England huge concrete caissons which became the outside corners of the ingenious artificial harbors created at the Normandy beaches under the code name of "Mulberry". Numerous other towing assignments from England to French, Dutch and Belgian ports found her in Antwerp, Belgium during the "Battle of the Bulge" in late December, 1944. In February, 1945 Signalman Harlan Ross was relieved of duty. No further information is available on the LT 130

10/06/93

Lyle E. Dupra  
31 Cedarview  
Fairport, N.Y.  
14450

Mr. Charles Lloyd:

Dear Friend, & Ol' Salt,

Enclosed & with letter, is some copies that I spoke to you about a few days ago. They are yours. You need not return them. Hope you enjoyed my last letter as I have been meaning to write to you about some of what will appear in my book. Due to the nature of what is in the book, is why I can't write more on the subject. I've been advised not to "take the thunder out of the book".

At our September meeting last month, we had a fair sized meeting. Our memberships are comprised of both Armed Guard & Merchant Marines. We are fortunate to have both types, as members. What would we have been without each other? I, for one, have seen & recognized the strengths of that composite. Let no one tell me that comradery was not prevalent between us; for did we not share in "passing the ammunition"! Did we not sleep on the same ships? Eat the same foods? Endure the same climatic changes of weather? Did we not help each other into lifeboats? Did we not share the same scarce water & food while adrift? Who pulled the oars & rigged a sail? These are only a few questions I would propose to anyone who might slight one group over the other. I for one, have seen the Merchant Marines with blood running down their shoulders, & their hands bleeding from carrying ammunition boxes & cannisters from the store rooms to the gun tubs in very high temperatures & in the heat of one battle alone, that lasted for three straight days & nights. Every time I think about how we helped each other, protected the ship & cargo, & fought to save our lives, I still get melancholy.

Also at our last meeting we were alerted to the fact that to continue the very needed & much wanted Pointer publications, additional funds are sought for that very purpose. THE POINTER is one of our greatest needs. Without it we would have "nill" for contacts, worthy news, updates, happenings, & to say the least, we would be without the greatest we have left, & that is communications. We are where we are because of it, no one wants to see that cessation. Realizing the tremendous costs involved in bringing it to press & the mailings, we have all voted by a show of hands to start a fund for the purpose of continuing the publications of our number one need. Each month we are each, & in each's own ability, contributing whatever we can afford to a fund for that herein named purpose. At the beginning of 1994, our Secretary, Mr. John Shevlin will send in to THE POINTER, ( a non-profit Organization,) the contributed amount. We only wish we had started this fund earlier on.

Perhaps others at their meetings will recognize the importance of this goal. We aren't trying to establish a mandatory precedence. We are only alluding to the fact that The Pointer may not be able to continue as long as we would like. We must face the fact that the high cost of printings & mailings are getting even higher. In the past, we have been literally receiving The Pointer free of charge. How long can it be solvent when no one pays the monthly costs. It has been like getting the paper free! Are there any other papers out there that are free? If there is, how long can they hold out?

Our Secretary, Mr. John Shevlin has, on behalf of our members, relegated the task of comprising this letter of notification & it goes without saying, that all of us where ever we are, must truthfully look at the prospect of receiving & continuance of our pipeline, THE POINTER! WE NEED IT! Help us!

On behalf of the members of the Rochester, N.Y. Chapter, we thank you.

Sincerely,

*Lyle E. Dupra*



Dear Charles,

After reading your last issue of THE POINTER, and your salute to the Armed Guard Waves, I am enclosing two pictures of the ships company of the Brooklyn Armed Guard Center, showing many of our Armed Guard Waves. All of us who shipped out of the east coast had lots of contact with them, on our next orders, and most important, our leaves and getting the pay records caught up. I was assigned to pull duty in the Disbursing Office, while waiting to be discharged and as it looked as if it was going to be awhile before my numbers were called up, I took the 3rd class test for Disbursing Officer and

passed it. I thought as long as I was struck then I might as well make a few more bucks. Would you believe that shortly after I made the rate they froze all Disbursing Storekeepers, and I was there for a lot longer than I should have been. Might be there yet if my buddie in the Fleet Draft Office forgot to take my name off the discharge draft.

You can keep the pictures and do what you wish with them. They were taken I believe, in the early 40's and before I was assigned to the office.

Wes Terwilliger  
P.O. Box 137, Richford, NY 13835

# Southport hasn't forgotten U-boat attack

## Seamen who survived recall horrendous scenes that followed German sub's torpedo assault

When Everette G. Harrison of 3040 Statesville Boulevard got the notice, he wanted to attend the dedication in Southport, N.C., for the men who died in a World War II ship sinking.

Although in good health, the 74-year-old Harrison couldn't find his way clear to go. But he felt a deep kinship to the ones who would attend.

The dedication was in honor of the Navy Armed Guard and merchant seamen aboard the SS John D. Gill, a tanker which was torpedoed by a German submarine on March 12, 1942 about 25 miles off the coast from Southport.

Contrary to the general belief that the people back home never saw any of the tragedy of World War II, the people of Southport can tell a different story.

Many of them still have a vivid picture of the action that occurred that night, in which the people of Southport not only saw the flames

of the burning ship but helped with the wounded and dying.

This was during the early part of the war when German submarines infested the Atlantic and came within sight of America's shores.

Harrison was among the 144,970 members of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard placed aboard merchant ships as gun crews. Of this number 1,810 lost their lives.

Although Harrison could not attend the dedication, he can share the feelings of those who gathered to unveil the monument. He had several close calls himself while manning guns aboard merchantmen during the war.

Several of the men who survived the sinking, interviewed by newspaper reporters later, gave brief accounts of their flight to escape.

Hurbert Gardner, a 22-year-old wiper at the time, has a vivid memory of the sinking.

He was in the mess hall having a cup of coffee about 10 p.m. and was wondering just what he would do if the ship was torpedoed. About 10 minutes later he got his answer.

A torpedo tore the metal plates from the ship's hull and a geyser of Texas crude erupted from the gash, forced out by pressure from the million gallons behind it.

An instant later the oil erupted in an inferno and 58 men began a desperate scramble for their lives.

Gardner rushed to a lifeboat. As he and seven others tried to lower the boat, it shuddered and dropped away beneath them, spilling two

men into the water. Gardner and another crewman managed to grab a line and were left dangling.

Below them, the ship's massive screws were still churning. Gardner watched as the two men dumped from the lifeboat were pulled into the blades.

He and the other man desperately tried to get a better grip on the line and each other. But the other man was too weak to climb any farther and Gardner couldn't hold him.

Suddenly, he was alone, tethered to the hull of the burning ship. When the screws stopped, he dropped into the water and swam away from the vessel. Even wearing a life preserver, he managed to dive beneath the flames. There was no way to tell where the sea was on fire and where it wasn't, he said.

"Every time I'd come up, I'd come up on fire. My head and my hands would be on fire."

But he finally made it to a life raft, where another injured seaman was helping to pull survivors aboard.

Floyd Ready, an armed guardsman, recalls that someone threw a life preserver into the oil slick. The preserver was equipped with a self-igniting flare, which burst to life.

"When that happened we started burning," Ready said.

Ready and another armed guardsman, Gary Potts, were asleep when the torpedo hit. They

scrambled to the stern to get to their gun, a 5-S1 breech-loader. All members of the gun crew made it to their posts and stayed there 15 minutes after the rest of the crew abandoned the ship, says a newspaper report of the sinking.

At 7:05 a.m. the next day, the survivors were picked up by a Coast Guard cutter from the Southport station. Only 26 men made it from the ship. Eleven of them were brought into Southport to recuperate at Doshier Memorial Hospital.

"We didn't think even half of them would live," said 80-year-old Josephine Hickman, a Red Cross nurse. "They were burned almost to a crisp and covered with oil."

Each survivor had a different story to tell of his struggle to get free from the burning ship.

The monument was erected by the Southport Historical Society. A special marker was also placed for a Philippine seaman aboard the Gill, Catlino Tingzon, who was buried an unmarked grave in a local Southport cemetery when his family could not be found.

The German submarine that sunk the Gill, U-158, commanded by Kapitaneutnant Erich Roslin, was sunk west of Bermuda on June 30, 1942 with no survivors.

Franklin Scarborough, former editor of The South Rowan Times and a veteran of the U.S. Navy, now writes for The Post.



FRANKLIN SCARBOROUGH

Reprinted from the Salisbury Post, Wed., April 13, 1994. Sent in by Everette G. Harrison, 3040 Statesville Blvd., Salisbury, NC 28147

*HMS Eagle*

**MERCHANT NAVY A/A GUNNERY COURSE.**

**CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY**

**26 OCT 1942**

**LIVERPOOL**

**ADAMANT MAG. BRAC**

*Date Stamp of Training Centre.*

**Carrillo.**

Name **C H I N N I S. B. R.**

Rank or Rating **See 2/o.**

B. of T. or D.B. No. ....

has completed the Merchant Navy A/A Gunnery Course and is qualified in the firing and cleaning and oiling of # **Oerlikon**

*P.S. Kelley*

Rank **COMMANDER,**

**D.E.M.S. OFFICE-IN-CHARGE,**

**Training Centre D.E.M.S. TRAINING CENTRE,**

**LIVERPOOL**

\* Insert types of guns and/or A/A devices.

(792) WT. 11184/76007 30m 5/42 S.E.R. Ltd. Co. 671. [over]

**2 days course.**

## Town & Country Hotel

ATLAS HOTELS

Dear Charles,

As always it was a pleasure to speak with you the other day regarding your May 1995 Annual Reunion. Needless to say, the Town & Country Hotel looks forward to working with you towards your most successful Reunion ever, here in beautiful San Diego.

Per our conversation, I have enclosed our group sales contract for your review. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Brad Barnes  
National Sales Manager

The Town & Country Hotel would like to welcome the U.S. Navy Armed Guard to beautiful San Diego, May 10 - 14, 1995.

The Town & Country Hotel is centrally located in Mission Valley. Our location offers the following:

Golf (Stardust Country Club).....Adjacent/Walking Distance  
Shopping:

Fashion Valley Mall.....Walking Distance  
Mission Valley Mall.....1 Mile  
Old Town.....1 Mile  
Over thirty restaurants within.....1 Mile  
Presidio Park.....2 Miles  
San Diego Stadium  
(Home of the San Diego Padres  
and Chargers).....3 Miles  
San Diego Mission.....3 Miles  
Mission Bay & Mission Beach.....4 Miles  
San Diego Zoo.....5 Miles  
Sea World Marine Park.....5 Miles  
Balboa Park.....5 Miles  
Downtown.....6 Miles  
Airport.....7 Miles

The Town & Country Hotel has a courtesy shuttle service which will take guests to nearby shopping, restaurants and Old Town, San Diego.

See you next year!

## OCTOBER FILMS LTD

63 - 64 Camden Lock Place, Chalk Farm Road, London NW1 8AF  
Telephone: (071) 916 7198 Fax: (071) 916 7201

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

Many thanks for your letter of 10 October. Unfortunately, we've now finished researching the American side of the story: rest assured, though, our programme will be telling the story of everyone who sailed with the Merchant Marine.

In fact, you may be interested to know that we've just returned from a trip to the United States, which culminated in filming interviews with five former merchant seamen on board the liberty ship "John W. Brown", now berthed in Baltimore harbour.

The interviews went extremely well: we're confident of producing a powerful and moving documentary. It's about time merchant seamen received proper credit for their valiant role in the Second World War - we hope this film will go some way to achieving that.

Many thanks for your letter again.

Best wishes,

*Charlie Smith*

Charlie Smith  
Assistant Producer **FORGOTTEN HEROES**

Dear Sir:

Thank you for all the information regarding the U.S. Naval Armed Guard. I had no idea that your organization existed. I have wondered from time to time what ever happened to former shipmates of mine. Perhaps through your organization I'll be able to connect with some of them.

I have enclosed two items, a check for CENSORED, and a photo of the Naval Armed Guard survivors of the SS Henry B. Plant. The Henry B. Plant was sunk in the English Channel on February 4th, 1945, on her way to Antwerp, Belgium.

Of the total crew of seventy (including 26 Naval Armed Guard), 20 were lost, of which 6 were Navy personnel. If you would care too, please feel free to run the picture in your magazine.

Last evening I had the pleasure of joining with a committee formed to help on the May 1995 convention to be held in our area, San Diego, Ca. Led by Mr. Wooten, plans are being formulated and committees assigned to help bring about a great convention, to which I'll be happy to attend. I'm looking forward to being of some assistance to them.

I hope this finds you in good health, and may I extend my heartfelt thanks for all your many years of service to all of us.

Sincerely yours,  
R. C. Stirens  
28124 Mtn. Meadow Rd.  
Escondido, CA 92026





Lone Sailor

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



## DEDICATION

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

THE U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS 14TH ANNUAL REUNION WILL BE HELD MAY 10-14, 1995 AT THE TOWN AND COUNTRY HOTEL, 500 HOTEL CIRCLE NORTH, P.O. BOX 85098, SAN DIEGO, CA 92186-5098, 1-800-445-2324 OR 619-291-7131. THE HOSTS ARE JOE AND MARY ZAPOTOCKY, 1846 WARMLANDS AVE., VISTA, CA 92084, 619-724-0680. MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY. LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE A "U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD WORLD WAR II VETERAN."



USN Armed Guard WW II Veterans  
5712 Partridge Lane  
Raleigh, N.C. 27609-4126  
1-(919)-876-5537



Address Correction Requested

**Remember Pearl Harbor!**  
**December 7, 1941**



Support The USN Armed Guard  
WW II Veterans Reunions  
MAY 8, 1994