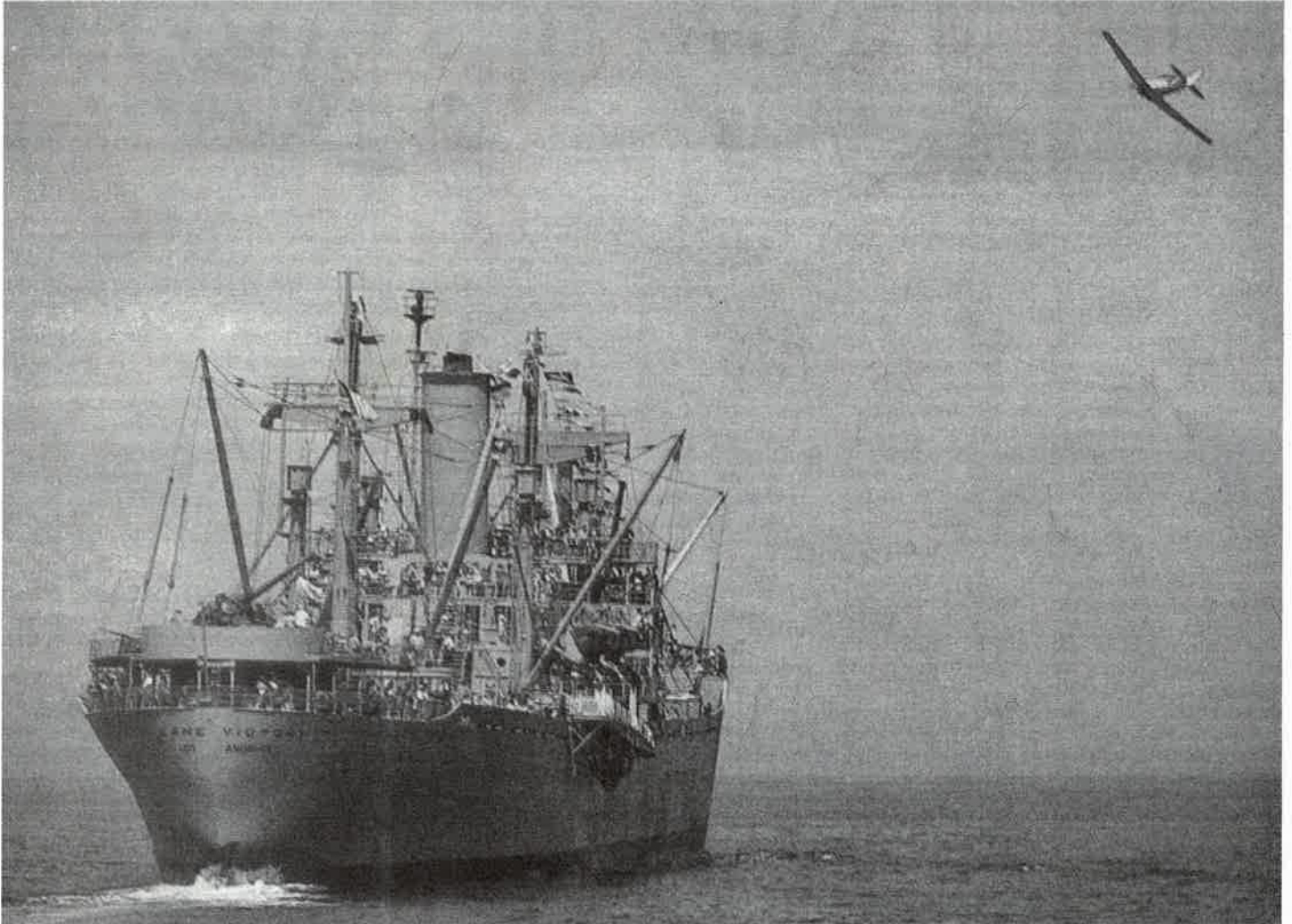


OCTOBER, 1994

# THE POINTER



## UNDER ATTACK!

The S.S. Lane Victory does simulated battle  
with a restored Luftwaffe plane off the coast  
of Santa Catalina Island.

(see story, page 9-10)

(Reprinted from The Orange County Register, Tues., Sept. 6, 1994. Photo by Tony Rivetti)

# THE POINTER

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5712 Partridge Lane  
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1-919-876-5537\*

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1846 Warmlands Ave.  
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## ATTENTION

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

Non-Profit Organization  
Tax Exempt No. 74-2316668



Our Motto: "We aim- To Deliver" and "We-Did"  
USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans  
"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"

DEAR EVERYONE:

October, 1994

Time sure passes fast when you're having fun!! It is Fall again and the leaves are starting to show their beautiful colors. Most will be on the ground by the time you receive this. Hope you had a wonderful summer. Sure had some hot days but I guess we'll be glad when it warms up again next spring. For all of you BASEBALL FANS, I guess you now wonder what you fought for. GREED!! What went with HONOR? "NUFF SED!!

Joseph Zapotocky and their crew send their thanks for your donations to next National Reunion in San Diego. Joe would like to know who are interested in the cruise to Ensenada, Mexico by the end of the year. Why not drop him a short note saying. "Count \_\_\_ of us on the CRUISE.

WE WILL NOT USE "CRUISE WORLD" this year as planned. I have notified Sylvia Ponti, the Sales Person we used last year. We would have had to be bussed to Los Angeles after the Reunion to catch the ship for a 4-Day Cruise. If you, or a group of you would like to use that Cruise Line, it is listed in the 1/94 POINTER on the inside back page. She looked after us in Florida.

In San Diego, they are in the process of building a "NAVY-MARITIME MUSEUM" and if it happens, we plan to install a Plaque of some kind there and also have a place set aside for the ARMED GUARD. Some of you were there when the Japanese bombed PEARL HARBOR on December 7, 1941 and many of you were trained there. It is only fitting to observe where history was made so generations may know who the ARMED GUARD were and what they did. If this materializes soon, we would have to set up a day for the ceremony. Many of you have already made your room reservation at the TOWN AND COUNTRY HOTEL. THAT'S GREAT!!

I personally would like to say "THANKS" to you who have donated here. It keeps the POINTERS coming to your house. If you have a 4 behind your name on your mailing label, it indicates that I have received a donation from you, or that Zapotocky has or the Kozaks received them before the Orlando Reunion. If you donate after I run the labels, it will show on your name label next time. If you can't, you can't!! BUT!! PLEASE SEND IN YOUR SHIPS!! For you in Canada, Great Britain, Norway, Australia, Etc., donate to a Naval ship in your own country. If you can't, you can't. It's as simple as that.

Our Armed Guard, Carl Kreidler sailed to England and France on the JEREMIAH O'BRIEN and flew back to the STATES. Carl reports that the laying of the wreathes to the U.S.N. Armed Guard and Merchant Seaman was indeed a touching ceremony. After all, there are no memorials out on the waters to those brave men who gave their all. The ship and crew were well received by all the people overseas. Over 125,000 visitors went aboard and many were turned away. Kreidler was our Armed Guard Representative and Gun Captain and had them in

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



great shape. He and the other Armed Guard are proud of the guns. If it wasn't for guns and gun crews like these, we would have had less merchant ships by 1944 than they have now. NUFF SED!!

The JEREMIAH O'BRIEN was on its way to Portland, Maine when I got the message that they were definitely going there. Ed Langalois of the Portland Shipyard Society stuck his neck out to raise \$100,000 to pay the extra expenses and he called me for help and asked me to come to represent the Armed Guard. I could not go but I called Gerald Geaves in Foster, Rhode Island; John Shevlin in Rochester, NY; Mains in Ma.; Tom Dufresne in Ludlow, Ma.; Mike Molinari in NY and others for their help and they went and represented us. I sent Langalois labels for the Northeast crew and donated money from the Armed Guard account to cover expenses and give those in that area the opportunity to walk the deck of a Liberty Ship again as it would be the last chance for many of them. I did the same when I learned she would dock for a few days in Jacksonville, Fla. on her way south. Needless to say, it brought a lot of happiness to many of our crew and we picked up approximately 75 more happy ol'salts!! When I learned that the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN was on her way to Halifax, Nova Scotia and was to come back by Boston, Ma., I did the same and we picked up some 75 more. These 150 will someday locate twice as many and they will then find more. The money spent was well worth it for over half of it had been donated just by these ol'salts alone, already. It's just GREAT!! Read some of the letters enclosed.

I will leave you with this thought, don't put off attending the Armed Guard Reunions until year after year; 80 per cent won't be physical able to attend any of them by the year 2000. I hope my percentage is wrong!! Whatever you do and wherever you go, have a good time, y'all. No better time can be spent than at an ARMED GUARD REUNION. If you've ever been to one and didn't like it, write me and tell me what it was; or, write Zapotocky so he can improve on it. If you are handicapped, we will try our best to look after you.

Lloyd:

Enclosed is a check for (censored). I served on the USS PADUCAH from November 1940 until I left it in later part of November 1941. I was assigned to the Armed Guard Center, 1st Ave-52nd St. in Brooklyn, N.Y. and waited for my next assignment. The 49th and 50th Division of the U.S. Naval Reserves stationed in Duluth, Minnesota was activated on November 3, 1940 and commissioned to sail the USS Paducah (PG-18) from the Great Lakes to the Brooklyn Naval Yards where it was refitted and then stationed at Staten Island, N.Y. until the fall of 1941 when it was sent to Little Creek, (Norfolk) Virginia for training of Armed Guard gun crews. I took my basic training aboard the Paducah plus being in one of the first trainer groups for serving in the Armed Guard.

I served on the S.S. NARBO (Lykes Bros) from December 1941 until December 1942. I was then transferred to the S.S. BATON ROUGE, a Standard Oil Tanker. We were torpedoed after coming out of England on February 23, 1943, just North of the Azores and we lost one crew member and I was severely burned and was medically discharged in May 1945.

Sincerely, J.E. Jeanette  
BM 2/C 2946 Gulf Bay 2 Bay Blvd.,  
Clearwater, Fl. 34619

I had a phone call from Jim Guess and a follow up letter on James Blears and I thought there was no better time than now to let him tell his story in full which was similar in nature to the story, "JAPANESE ATROCITIES" by Captain Art Moore in our January 1994 POINTER. It also points out life in the British Navy in WW II. Blears is now President of the Pacific Wrestling Federation.

As I said before, if you have ordered anything and didn't receive it, make a copy of the check or give the date, amount and check number and I'll check it out. Many of you have sent in pictures and letters to put into POINTER. I try to catch a few at random. It is impossible to place them all. I have many that will someday be entered. If the pictures are dark, keep them as they will not make a good print.

If you were on any of the following ships in the Pacific from approx. 9/44 til 12/44, write in any information you can think of to help Martin Vallee (AG), P.O.Box 1189, Flint, Mi. 48501, 313-235-3530 put together his book on the AG in the SOUTH PACIFIC which has never been told to my knowledge. The ships are: ADONIRAN JUDSON; AUGUSTUS THOMAS; CAPE ROMANO; MORRISON WAITE; THOMAS NELSON; ALEXANDER MAJORS; JEREMIAH M.DAILY; LEONIDAS MERRITT; GILBERT STUART; ALCOA PIONEER; GUS W.DARNELL; MARCUS DALY; WILLIAM LADD; JOHN M.CLAYTON; JAMES H. BREAST; JOHN BURKE; WILLIAM SHARON; HOBART BAKER or any other ship in that area at that time.

There were so many things that I wanted to tell you so as they come to mind, I will write them down and probably loose it as I did this time. Do you have the same problem, too? REMEMBER!! IF I owe you a cap; coat, ETC. Please advise! I have THAT problem, too!! The LADIES are welcomed to come to the Armed Guard Reunions. Members of the families and guests, too!! Stay healthy!! calloyd

Dear Charles,

August 14, 1994

I read your letter in the 40/8 Magazine of July 1994 and I had to read it to my husband, Frank, for he can not read due to his eyesight is gone. He is on oxygen as his lungs are gone, too. Frank was in the USN Armed Guard who manned the guns during WW II on the Merchant Cargo Ships and I did not know what he did until now, and he sits and tells me. He was in the Atlantic and Pacific. Thank God he came back to me.

Frank listens to all the baseball games when they are on and now it will be football and basketball. Just wish he could see them because I have to read the numbers and messages to him.

So sorry you lost your brother, Whitson, along with the 11 Merchant Seamen. Frank does not ask for anything as he is being taken care of by his doctor. When Frank was in good health, he was Post Commander 2 times for the American Legion Post 14 of Union City, New Jersey. He helped the senior citizens with their lunch, too. I just had to let you know about Frank Salvatore DeLapia.

Sincerely, Hazel DeLapia,  
1013 Palisade Ave., Union City, N.J. 07087-4167

Ohio Valley Chapter of Merchant Marine will erect a Memorial to their crew and have invited all the Armed Guard that will to attend. The site is Susanna Park overlooking the Ohio River in New Richmond, Ohio outside of Cincinnati and will take place November 11th, 1994. Bob Ober, our Ohio Armed Guard Chairman will represent all the Armed Guard and will be one of the guest speakers. It may be that the Ohio Armed Guard will erect something nearby in the future. Contact C.E. Bert Hinds, Ohio Valley Chapter, AMMV, P.O.Box 62563, Cincinnati, Oh. 45262, 513-874-5606. Bert apologizes for not finding out about the Armed Guard Association in time to have something of the Armed Guard added. calloyd

# *- In Memorium -*

## DECEASED SHIPMATES SINCE AUGUST SEPT. POINTER

Alfano	Daniel E.	Rahway	NJ		7/13/94
Allen	Frank A.	Shelby	Oh	Ruth	4/20/94
Bazemore	Seth R.	Norfolk	Va	Jean	3/7/94
Bledsoe	Melvin G.	Guilford	Mo		4/28/94
Bock (MM)	Paul N.	Massapequa	NY	Louise	8/12/94
Boroff	Robert D.	Van Wert	Oh	Pauline	7/7/94
Carney	John W.		NY	Shirley	7/28/94
Clement	Raymond	Morris	NY	Margaret	1/30/94
Conger	E. J.	Bloomington	In	?	8/3/93
Decker	Melvin F.	St. Ann	Mo		1/10/94
Denkhaus	Charles W.	Brooklyn	Mi	Dorothy	5/2/94
Dolen	Raymond A.	Port St Lucie	Fl	Elizabeth	11/6/91
Embrey	Richard	Panora	Ia	*	8/30/94
Eshenbaugh	Russell	Freeport	Pa	?	??
Floyd	Tracy D.	Castle Hayne	NC	Evelyn	4/18/94
Gooding	Floyd D.	Potomac	Md	Mary Ann	6/30/94
Hanson	Dale	Anoka	Mn	Muriel	3/8/94
Harvey	Orwin	Lynnwood	Ca	?	6/6/94
Hatt	Everret A.	Forestdale	Ma	Eva C.	4/4/94
Johnson	Walter E.	Minot	ND	Verna Irene	6/14/94
Jordon	Wilfred E.	W. Swanzy	NH	Joyce	9/3/93
Land	Paul G.	Cheyenne	WY	Edith	9/94
Lyons	Thomas H.	Wenonah	NJ	Dee	7/11/94
Packard	Loren L.	Amarillo	Tx	Donna	11/28/93
Payne	Leonard P.	Olney	Md		9/2/94
Pinkerton	Dean	Moro	Or	Margaret	10/1/93
Pinkine	Thomas J.	Glen Burnie	Md	-	1979
Sparks	Carl K.	San Rafael	Ca	*	7/17/94
Spitzer	William F.	New Port Richey	Fl	?	?
Stacy	William H.	Payette	Id	Mary	8/20/94
Wallis	Jim E.	Big Spring	Tx	?	5/16/93
Welch	John W.	Bayonne	NJ	Gertrude	9/10/94
Wilson	Charles L.	San Diego	Ca	Virginia	5/5/94

### SHIPMATE'S MATES:

Browder	Nancy Moss	Charlotte	NC	Edward P.	4/26/94
Stansbury	Pearl B.	Heathville	Va	Bernard	6/3/94

### Dear C.A. and Crew:

While in Ontario, Canada a few weeks ago visiting the Niagara Falls, I had a most memorable experience!! While standing at a railing overlooking the Falls, a young Canadian Metro Police Officer approached me. I was wearing my Armed Guard cap you had sent to me with "MURMANSK RUN" on it. The young man asked "DID YOU MAKE THAT RUN"? I replied - "YES SIR, I DID!" He shook my hand and said "CONGRATULATIONS, THERE AREN'T MANY OF YOU LEFT, ARE THERE?"

To say the least, at that moment, I was very proud and must admit, I choked up a little just to know that people remember us and what we did. For someone so young to pay tribute to an "OL'SALT" like me, did my heart good. I felt ten foot tall and was so proud and pleased. I was so moved by this experience that I had to write one of my ol'shipmates, Harold Ceaser of Port Richey, Florida.

It's nice to know we are not forgotten. The Armed Guard moves on thanks to you and your crew that are doing a great job. I just thought I'd pass this on to you and the rest of the Ol'Salts. Enclosed is a check to help with the cost of what you guy's are doing. Every little bit helps.

Regards, Richard A. Bertrand,  
4 Fernwood Ave., Enfield, Ct. 06082  
203-745-0054 GM3/C

Hi Charles,

8/14/94

For some time I have seen in the "POINTER" and in other places that mentioned the restoring of the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN. I'd say, "ISN'T THAT NICE" and just forgot it. I am a crew member of the S.S. CITY OF OMAHA, one of the eight ships of the "FORGOTTEN CONVOY" of North Russia in 1943. We spent a year at Murmansk and Molotov, Russia and endured the hardship. I am a 100 percent disabled combat veteran. Well, the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN came to Portland, Maine for this past week where she was built and some of our friends worked on it when being built. It was a major effort for me to drive 120 miles round trip to see her but I did. I wore my Armed Guard "MURMANSK RUN" cap you had sent me. There were over 1000 visitors each day that went on board. It was a beautiful, warm day when we drove down on August 9, 1994 and had a great time. I talked to a lot of people and a lot came up to me, mentioning my "MURMANSK RUN" cap.

I had such a grand time that we went back down again on August 12th. I was so impressed as the whole thing is awesome that words can not describe it, nor my feelings. The S.S. CITY OF OMAHA was a World War One bucket of bolts but the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN is out of this world and all who were involved in restoring her deserve so much credit. I am on a very tight budget but I did give a donation and bought the book, "THE LAST LIBERTY SHIP" from shipstores, which is a fantastic book and highly recommend it to all.

Of the many veterans I talked with, only one, a Charles Wilson, Armed Guard of Massachusetts had been to Murmansk, but many came up and noticed my cap and spoke to me and spoke your name and words of praise for what you have done for the Armed Guard Veterans. I personally appreciate all you have done for us. My wife, Avis, enjoyed both visits almost as much as I did.

I know it is not much but here is (censored) donation to the Armed Guard, for this is one A.G. Veteran that finally and fully appreciates the tremendous and awesome restoration of the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN. Charles, I hope you realize how much you have done for the Armed Guard Crew and this is expressed by the thousands of Armed Guard. Your name will live on forever, just like the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN. I thank you.

Warm regards,

Robert F. Layman, 2 Country Club Rd.,  
Manchester, Maine 04351  
Tel. 207-623-4983

\*\*\*\*\*

I want to thank Robert for his letter of appreciation to the crew who has saved and restored the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien and all that donated extra to the costs of this Historic voyage from San Francisco through the Panama Canal; across the Gulf; across the Atlantic Ocean to England; France, Ireland and back across the Atlantic to Portland, Maine; Baltimore, Maryland, Jacksonville, Florida; back through the Panama Canal and on to San Francisco, California.

Now, to all the Armed Guard and Merchant crews, I do realize your appreciation for the labor of love that I put in to keeping the hopes alive for memories of those who suffered so much and gave so much to bring an end to the horrible era of World War II. I have received many letters of thanks before, but this one touched me as to the way it was worded. That is why I printed it in full text. Letters, such as Hazel DeLapia's one is why I spend so much time because Frank would love to read what you and I have written. I am thankful that I have the eyesight and health to enlighten them so I will humbly say thanks for all the kind words all of you have put in writings to me. *Thanks, calloyd*



# ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ REUNIONS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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 \* )

ARMY ARMED GUARD LODIRECT McDONALD, 641 SHADY GLEN RD., ANNISTON, AL 36201 WANTS to MAKE CONTACT WITH ANY VETERAN OF THE 84TH CHEMICAL MORTAR WHO FOUGHT IN ITALY WW II. ASK YOUR VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS.

Stan DeFoe's Telephone has been incorrect for last two POINTERS. It is: 816-373-5890. Take Notice!!

I mistakenly gave Tom And Priscilla Dufresne and crew credit for the meeting at BATTLESHIP COVE. Credit should have gone to Hosts Gerald and Lena Greaves. Gerald is the Chairman of the NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER. Tom and Priscilla were there and they do a great job on getting the CHICOPPEE-LUDLOW, Ma. CREW together. (Giving credit where credit is due.) They had 119 there for the Lunch meeting and they also voted to place a granite monument with a bronze plaque there telling what the Armed Guard were and what they did.

**A FAVOR NEEDED!!!** Jack Hipple, 11008 Tillson, So. Lyon, Mi. 48178, 810-437-8328 wants to know of any Armed Guard or Merchant Marine who competes, or would like to compete in "SENIOR OLYMPICS SPORTS" in Swimming, Horseshoes, Tennis, Track and Field, Golf, Shuffleboard, Softball, Cycling, Bowling, etc. to contact him. You have to be over 55 years of age. (Jack, I think you could raise the age limit to 66 upwards for the Armed Guard. cal)

**"ROCHESTER, N.Y. AREA"** ARMED GUARD AND MERCHANTMEN of WW II contact John and Mary Shevlin, 37 Winfield Rd., Rochester, N.Y. 14622-2212, 716-467-2057. A LUNCH MEETING is held at 11:00 A.M. on the "2ND" TUESDAY at the EASTMAN KODAK CO., Kodak Park, Bldg 28, THE THEATRE ON THE RIDGE, Ridge Rd., Rochester.

**IOWA CREW** meet the 2nd Wednesday at 10:00 A.M. at the "VALLEY WEST INN", 3535 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, Iowa, off I-235. Arnie and Mary Latore, 601 34th St. W, Des Moines, Ia. 50265, 515-225-1084 are the hosts. Support them. Be there!!

**NATIONAL CHIEF PETTY OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION** will be held at the GRAND HOTEL in Milwaukee, Wi. CONTACT: Wm.A. Williams, Rt-7 Box 2408, Boerne, Tx. 78006.

HOSTS Alvin and Thelma Kemble 8150, Chamber Hill Rd, **Harrisburg, Pa.** 17111, 717-566-8728 announce they hold their "FIRST THURSDAY" of each month meeting for their locality at the "HOSS'S STEAK HOUSE" in Hummelstown, Pa. at 1:30 P.M. That is a pretty part of the U.S.A. in the Fall. Enjoy both!!

**WESTERN N.C. AREA** has changed their meeting place to MILLS RIVER RESTUARANT, MILL'S RIVER, N.C. on, THE 3RD Saturday OF EACH MONTH. Breakfast starts at 8:30 A.M.; meeting at 9:30. Contact: Crayton Hall, P.O.Box 39, 88 Wilkie Way, Fletcher, N.C. 28732, 704-684-4588. For the "OUT OF the AREA" who visit with them, you should make it a "MUST" to visit the "BILTMORE HOME". IT IS BEAUTIFUL all THE YEAR ROUND. The Merchant Seamen and their ladies are also invited, AND THEY ATTEND.

**Ill-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 So. Genesee, Morrison, Il. 61270, 815-772-7156 as hosts for the event. THIS WILL BE GREAT, TOO.

**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, 910-686-4193. Merchant Seamen are also invited. If you're thinking about going to Wrightsville Beach, take time out for a fine meeting with a great crew from all over. See the Battleship NORTH CAROLINA!!

**DELAWARE VALLEY PA. Area** Armed Guard HAS STARTED HOLDING A 11:30 AM 2ND WEDNESDAY MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THE AMERICAN LEGION, FALLS TWP POST #834, FALLINGTON, PA. 07039, 201-994-350 AT 11:30 A.M. HOSTS: AL AND NORMA FARRARA, 45 UPPER HILL TOP RD., YARDLEY, PA. 19067, 215-493-9134. A BIG SUCCESSFUL MEETING!!

**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" dates for rest of 1994- OCTOBER 8TH AND DECEMBER 10, 1994 AT "THE OLD COUNTRY BUFFET" at COBBLEWOOD PLAZA, 1097 Smiley Ave, Cincinnati, Oh. Exit 39 off I-275. They always have wonderful meeting!!

**IOWA Crew** has elected Arnold O. Latore, 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.

**DEMS**—CONTACT: DOUG SEPHTON, RCNA-DEMS, 203 ANNE ST. NORTH, BARRIE, ONTARIO CN L4N 4T4. ARMED GUARD AND MERCHANT CREWS ARE WELCOMED to their National Reunions. They had their largest attendance ever!!

The **PORTLAND-MILWAUKIE, OREGON** ARMED GUARD will be MEETING WITH THE M.M. CHAPTER on the last Thursday of each month at the ELKS CLUB. Contact: George Goode, 4017 S.E. Aldercrest Rd., Milwaukie, Oregon 97222, 503-659-1925.

**Wyoming** Armed Guard Host is Bob Muhm, 2001 East "C" St., Torrington, Wy. 82240, 307-532-7212.

**Michigan meeting changed:** Lansing, Mich. Area holds a FIRST WEDNESDAY of the "ODD MONTHS" the "CORAL GABLES RESTAURANT", 2838 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing, Mi. 517-337-1311. Hosts are Carl Mescher, 508 Wayland, East Lansing, Mi. 48823, 517-332-1027; or, Martin Vallee, 1412 Brookwood, Flint, Mi. 48503, 810-235-3530.

**KENTUCKY** Crew contact Joe and Earlene Foreman, P.O. Box 99303, Jeffersontown, Ky. 40269, 502-267- 4576 or James and Norma Close, 4036 Preston Hwy, Louisville, Ky 40223, 502-366-8966.

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!!

**Oklahoma** should contact RALPH McNALLY, P.O. Box 423, Skiatook, Okla. (918) 396-2693 on their meetings at "LUBY'S CAFETERIA", 31ST St and Garnett Rd., Tulsa, Ok. starting at 9:A.M.. This is a LUNCHEON ONLY! It is also a **change of site.** SEZ-"Y'ALL COME ON"!!

For those of you who would like to subscribe to **"SEA CLASSICS"** magazine write to: Sea Classics, P.O. Box 16149, N. Hollywood, CA 91606, phone (818) 760-8983. They carry many stories involving the Armed Guard, Merchant Seamen, small crafts, LST's, LCI's, sea-going tugs, DE's and so forth. The price for a one year subscription is \$35.50. Highly recommended!

Paul Markley, 935 SW Lindenwood, Topeka, Ks. 66606, 913-233-7995; OR: DON GLEASOM, 227 N.W. Knox, Topeka, Ks. 66606-1339, 913-234-6087 can give you the place they will meet in **Topeka**.

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, 816-373-5890 and Bill Sears, 8505 NE 56th St., Kansas City, Mo. 64119, 816-453-2179 as hosts. **NOTICE DeFoe Tel. corrected.**

The **UPPER PA.** WILL HOLD THEIR LAST MEETING OF THE YEAR OCT. 25, 1994 at PLATZ'S RESTAURANT, 101 Harrit Rd., Lehighton Pa. 18235, 610-377-1819. CONTACT: Clint Barr, 2340 Third St., Easton, Pa. 18042, 610-258-3056. EVERYONE'S WELCOMED TO BE WITH CREW FOR A GREAT TIME! (ALL CERTIFIED "YANKES"!!)

**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. They have a good time, too!!

**Pittsburgh, Pa.** crew meets on the "3rd Sat." for a Noon Luncheon at the Greentree Mattiott. CONTACT: Hilary Makowski, 202 Wedgewood Crt., Carnegie, Pa. 15106, (412) 429-8510. They will hold a "Christmas Party" at the Clover Leaf Estates West in Carnegie 12/17/94. Please notice the **DATE CHANGE** from the August/1994 Pointer. Don't say I didn't tell you!!

**CHICOPEE-LUDLOW, Ma.** HOSTS Tom and Priscilla Dufresne, 289 Munsing St., Ludlow, Ma. 01056, 413-583-8580 host 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.

**COLORADO CREW:** Contact Cecil Ray, 2580 Patriot Hgts., Colorado Springs, Co. 80904, 719-635-5177 for meetings there.

**Texas Merchant Marine 4th Reunion** will be held in Dallas, Tx. at the Harvey Hotel, Oct. 14-15, 1994. Contact: Ralph Taylor, 426 Littlefield Rd., Lone Oak, Tx. 75453, 903-447-3180. ARMED GUARD WELCOMED!

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

Jeff and Mabel Haselden, 120 Richardson Blvd. Lugoff, S.C. 29078, (803) 438-1491 can advise when and where **South Carolina** 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. Clarence has been "UNDER THE WEATHER" lately and I hope he is feeling better.

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. Ralph can bring you up-to-date in the Sub Vets too.

**Destroyer Escort Assoc. 20th National Reunion** will be held in Louisville, Ky. 10/9-13/95. Contact: DESA, 352 W. Story Rd., Ocoee, Fl. 34761

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)-847-4038, OUR 1994 HOSTS, next Luncheon will be held December 7th 1994. **NOTICE: TELEPHONE NO. CHANGED BACK TO HIS RESIDENCE!** They invite all the "snowbirds" back to Florida for the winter!! Thanks to Rudy and Ellie for keeping the crew together. ALL "Y'ALL" CAN STOP BY TO SEE US ON YOUR TRAVEL DOWN. Take I-95 So. to I-85 and take I-85 to #1 South to **RALEIGH**. Turn right on Millbrook Road, cross R. R. tracks - left at first stoplight onto Old Wake Forest Rd., left on New Market Way, right at Griffin Plaza sign. "GRITS" WILL BE HOT!! Rudy has been nominated as the State of Florida Armed Guard Chairman by their crew.

**Springhill, Florida** area (and others) can contact William T. Young, 4206 Parkhurst La., Springhill, Fl. 34608, 904-683-9333. They will hold a breakfast on the 2ND Saturday of each month 10 AM at: 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 Sunday at 1 pm at the American Legion Hall on Sanford Ave., Sanford, FL to start up again in September.

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.

The **Tucson, Az.** Area hosts are Selvin and Marcella Lien, 2011 Tucson, Az. 85719 and William and Marion Howard, 4056 N. Tuttle St., Tucson, Az. 85705, 602-887-8703 for the 4th SAT. of each Month meeting at 11 AM at the Mountain View Restaurant, 1220 E. Prince Rd., Tucson, Az. Join them for fun!

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

Ralph Taylor, 426 Littlefield Dr, **Lone Oak, Texas** 75453, 903-447-3180 is trying 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. Dates unknown.

**LCI NATIONAL ASSOC. CREW** will hold their 4th Reunion at the Holiday Inn by the Bay, San Diego, CA, April 26-28, 1995. Contact: Robert Kirsch, 643 Gallery Rd., Evans City, PA 16033, 412-538-8151.

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 on the guns and if you're not able to help them, you can come by and encourage them. They have done an outstanding job.

Contact: Jack Rhodes 3143 Cotter Rd., Millers, Md., 301-343-0369 about the **S.S. JOHN W. BROWN**.

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**.

Verne and Evelyn Barrett, 208 E. Centennial Drive, **Rapid City, S.D.** 57701, 605-343-4171 will get you in touch with whose in charge in that area for "95

Check with your **DAV; AMERICAN LEGION; VFW; AMVETS**, etc., for other reunions. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE DAV, ETC. LOOK IN THE "YELLOW PAGES" FOR THEIR LOCAL NUMBER AND THEY WILL GLADLY ASSIST YOU. I ASK YOU TO SAVE THIS "POINTER" AS REFERENCE TO UPCOMING MINI-REUNIONS, ETC. calloyd



Dear Charles:

8/10/94

Great talking to you on the phone. You asked me to give you a little background on my past to go with the story in "COMMAND" magazine of Nov.-Dec. 1993. First, I would like to thank you for the U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD WW II Veteran material.

In 1939-40, German troops had occupied all of Europe with the exception of the British Isles, "OUR BACKS TO THE WALL". Everyone from 18-50, male and female in Great Britain were drafted into some sort of government service. I was 17 at the time. Everyone wanted to help our country. I altered my birth certificate in 2 places by changing 1922 to 1923. We all wanted to help our country. I volunteered for the ROYAL NAVY, passed my physical and received orders to report to "R.N." Headquarters in Manchester, England.

Twenty of us assembled and a Marine Sargeant called my name and ordered me into a room. I saw my birth certificate in a "lantern machine" and I knew I had been caught!! I was sent home and told to wait until I was 18. As I walked out of the room, I saw a roster which read there were openings for Radio Officers in the MERCHANT NAVY; a six months crash course. I had learned the Morse Code in the Boy Scouts when I was 15 and you never forget it so I signed up; 8 hours a day—5 days a week. I took the test in 4 months and passed. I was ordered to Liverpool 2 months before my 18th birthday and signed on the S.S. BARON DOUGLAS and off to CANADA; joining the "BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC"!! We had NO big guns!! Only a .303 WW I Army rifle and a box of ammunition. There was a poster in our dining room showing a British Officer shooting down a plane with a rifle!! HA!

There were about 50 ships in our convoy escorted by 2 Corvettes and an ARMED TRAWLER!! We lost at least 12 ships in 2 nights to the U-BOATS. The "SENIOR ESCORT OFFICER" signalled for us to "RUN FOR IT", on our own. Seven more SOS messages were heard over the next two nights but nothing happened to us as we headed for Santiago De Cuba for a load of sugar where we spent several nights dancing to the record—"RUM AND COCA-COLA" and knocked back a few "CUBALEBRAS" and had a great time. We sailed alone again up to Halifax, Nova Scotia and joined a slow, 6 knot convoy to Great Britain; 26 days of zig-zagging up among the ice-flows and lost several ships as we dipped down towards Iceland. Luckily for us, the worse storm in 30 years hit us and the convoy was scattered by the rough water. No more ships were lost to the Germans but two ran aground on the rocks off Northern Ireland and were lost. We arrived safely in Scotland.

In Scotland, a British Army Officer came on board and commandeered our .303 and ammunition. The British had lost all their weapons at Dunkirk and needed any weapons they could get. The S.S. BARON DOUGLAS was a "coal burner" and one of the stokers asked the Officer, "What do we do if we sight the enemy?" The Officer replied, "Throw some lumps of coal at the buggers!!", laughed and away he went.

Our next trip, after unloading the sugar, was to Freetown, West Africa for iron ore, loosing ships on the way. Back to Scotland via Northern Scotland to South Shields on the East side of Great Britain and for a two week leave. Boarded the tanker, BRITISH STATESMAN to Aruba; Nova Scotia and back to the United Kingdom. By this time, ships were being fitted with a 4" gun on the stern and 4 20MM machine guns on the bridge. All the officers, deck and radio operators took gunnery training where ever the ship anchored or was docked. Around this time, Royal Navy and British Army Gunners were being assigned to the ships to man the guns.

The United States was now in the war and we were amazed at the many guns they had aboard their ships; a 4" gun aft, 1-3"50s, and 8-20MMs. Some were armed extra with "PILLAR-BOXES" which fired 20 rockets at a crack at aircraft. Things were looking up!! "THE YANKS ARE COMING"!! AND THEY DID!!

None of the British, Dutch or Norwegian, etc. ships had guns forward of the bridge. The reason was, when we visited many neutral countries, any ship with gun forward of the bridge was classed a "WARSHIP" and therefore could only stay in the neutral port 48 hours; International Law!! Back to Liverpool and leave and on the S.S. BAHARISTAN and a world cruise in a convoy with a cargo of tanks, ammunition, locomotives and supplies to be off loaded at Abadan, Iran on to trains bound for Russia. Sailed up to Basra and loaded barley for Calcutta as there was a shortage of food and needed for the campaign against the Japanese.

We stopped at Columbus, Ceylon for fuel and headed for Calcutta and was attacked by Japanese aircraft about 36 hours out of Calcutta. I fired a "HAND-HELD" Lewis-Savage machine gun in that action; no casualties! We got British aircover the next day. We off-loaded and loaded "JUTE" for Argentina into the port of Montevideo. Then on to Buenas Aires and fired a few rounds at the sunken "GRAF SPREE" and 3 WEEKS IN HEAVEN!! Three of us lads dancing with hundreds of most beautiful girls with lots of "curves" while the German Sailors from the Graf Spree sang "DEUTCHLAND UBER ALLIES" and toasts to their FUHRER so we started singing "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN" and British Navy songs. (no fights!)

Loaded ship with beef and leather in convoy to Canada, dropped the Pilot and headed North for a few hours but received a coded message to return to Buenas Aires, pick up a Pilot to go South around the Horn and at Valparasco, drop off the Pilot and go to Canada by way of the Panama Canal. The reason was a picket line of U-BOATS was operating off the coast of Brazil so I got the "COOKS TOUR" around the world and back to Great Britain. Pulled in to New York harbor for 48 hours but could not go ashore. Bing Crosby was singing "WHITE CHRISTMAS" as we sailed down the Hudson River. We lost 3 ships back over.

I heard that they needed volunteers for foreign flag ships with a 25 per cent increase in pay and word—"BETTER FOOD". I signed on the Norwegian freighter, "IDEFIJORD". Made 1 trip to Canada and back with war supplies. The ship was fitted with a ramp and a R.A.F. Hurricane Fighter Plane plus pilot and mechanic and these ships became known as C.A.M. ships and when we were attacked by German bombers off Northern Ireland, the plane was fired off the ramp with rockets and he shot down one bomber and our pilot ran out of fuel. We got the word that a destroyer picked him up safely. This made us very happy as we had dined with him for 16 days prior to the attack. I had a lot of leave built up so was paid off. (Several years ago, I was told that in a Norwegian history book of WW II Merchant Navy, that there was a story where she was attacked in a convoy to Russia on its next voyage and 5 men were lost and after abandoning the ship into lifeboats, the ship remained afloat and 4 lifeboat survivors rowed back to her and slowly took her in to Murmansk in two weeks.)

My next ship was the Dutch freighter "TJISALAK" bound for Calcutta via the Mediterranean which had been cleared of the enemy. We had a small carrier in our convoy which were launched at dawn and dusk in search for subs and keep them under water. Just 1 day before we passed through the Med, we were attacked by 2 high-flying enemy aircraft. They looked like dots in the sky. They had launched the new German weapon - a radio controlled flying bomb. The planes were too high for our carrier scout planes to intercept and too high for our guns. They dropped a glider bomb on the stern of a destroyer and killed a lot of men but the ship made it to port.

We sailed through the Suez Canal and on to Ceylon for fuel and on to Melbourne, Australia, a 21 day run, for flour and food supplies to bring back to Calcutta for the Burma war campaign still going on. Nineteen days out of Melbourne at approximately 3 degrees South-78 degree East, the Saga of the sinking and the survivors of the "TJISALAK" unfolds in "I REMEMBER WHEN" from "COMMAND" Mag.

# A Warcrime at Sea 1944

by James Blears, as told to John Berger

(Reprinted from "Command" Magazine, Issue 25, Nov-Dec 1993)

**Introduction:** James Blears was born in 1923 near Manchester, England, the son of a professional rugby player. A championship swimmer in school, he was invited to try out for the English swimming team in anticipation of the 1940 Olympics. Of course, as events turned out there were no 1940 Olympics, and that year instead found him volunteering for training as a ship-board radio operator. While in training for his operator's certificate, he also began a career as a professional wrestler; earning five pounds per match at a time when skilled labor was paid about three pounds per week. Blears passed the six-month radio-operator's course in only four months. Though he could have waited until his 18th birthday, he decided to put to sea immediately, and soon shipped out on his first convoy to Canada as Second Radio Officer aboard the *Baron Douglas*.

In 1943, lured by promises of better food and working conditions, and 25 percent higher wages, he shipped aboard a Free Norwegian troopship, and later signed on the Free Dutch freighter *Tjisalak*. On 26 March 1944, en route from Melbourne to Colombo with a cargo of flour and 27 passengers, *Tjisalak* was torpedoed by the Japanese J3-type submarine I-8, commanded by LCDR Ariizumi Tatsunosuke. It was about 0545 hours, local time. Blears had just gotten off watch at 0400 and was in his bunk when the ship was hit.

The torpedo hit right below my cabin on the port side. The ship rolled to starboard and I was thrown out on the floor. The door to get out was suddenly the ceiling, and we stayed that way for a while. After I got out of my cabin, I ran to the radio cabin to see if the first radioman was injured. I found him sending a message, but we had fragile "goal post" antennas, and when the ship was hit they'd broken, so though he was sending, it wasn't getting out.

My job, if we were attacked while I was off duty, was to go to the after gun. There was a small lifeboat there, and a big metal case with a rifle and some ammunition and a big waterproof radio transmitter, about as big as a giant suitcase and weighing 60 or 70 lbs.

The ship had begun to right itself, but as I was going to the after gun I had to swim across the well deck to get there. From the time I got my stuff, got out of my cabin and went to the radio shack and then to the after gun, the ship was back on an even keel. It sank in another 5-6 or minutes. But I got to the gun, threw my little waterproof bag into the boat, and got the radio transmitter out of the case and put it in the boat too.

We were firing; the gun crew had spotted a periscope and was firing. Every gun position had been taken except for loading the shells, so I starting passing those, but the ship had begun to list again, and soon we couldn't elevate the gun high enough to shoot at anything. There was a kid on the bridge, though, who kept firing a 20mm machine-gun at where he thought he could see a periscope.

As the ship went down, another guy and I swung the boat away and got in it. While we were doing this, there was another guy — an English regular sailor, a gunner, a red-headed guy I used to play cards with — who dived into the water, and as he did he hit his head and knocked himself out. So I jumped off the boat and got him. It wasn't a big rescue or anything; I only had to swim a total of about 20 feet. And then the ship was gone.

There were four lifeboats drifting. Capt. Hen had an engine on his boat, along with the chief engineer, the chief radioman, most of the officers, and the Red Cross nurse. Right away all the boats started leaking because they were wood and hadn't been in water in over a year and the seams were split. So we all started bailing.

All of a sudden a periscope came up and circled us, and then finally the submarine surfaced a

couple hundred yards away. It was a big bugger with a small airplane hanger on deck. We could see the crew rushing to man their guns — they had some kind of twin-gun mount — and then one of them started yelling, "Captain?! Captain?!" Finally Capt. Hen identified himself and they waved him to come over toward the submarine. We watched everybody on the Captain's boat climb aboard the submarine and disappear below decks. Then the Japanese shouted for everybody else to come, and we started rowing over.

As we climbed up, I noticed all the Japanese were short, some of them so short their scabbarded swords were dragging on deck as they walked. It hit me they looked exactly the way they were depicted in *The Saturday Evening Post* — it was the first time I'd ever seen any Japanese. They grabbed us and ripped off all our rings and watches, and batted us with the flats of their swords. Some of them carried submachineguns on slings around their necks, or had pistols on lanyards.

Soon, except for the officers and woman they'd taken below, they had us all — about 80 people — sitting on the foredeck ahead of the guns. I was taken forward, and the guy escorting me whacked me real hard on the back of the head, and I just did what everybody else was doing and squatted with my head down. There was a cameraman taking movies of the whole thing. The sub got underway and was doing six or seven knots, and away we went, leaving the wreckage and our boats behind, and they started having their fun.

We had a lot of Hindus among the passengers, and our crew was Indonesian with Dutch officers, plus three British officers and 10 British gunners. All I could see at the time was a big mass of squatting men around me. I was mentally numb and didn't know what to do, but I was looking at the water and started trying to get myself to think. Then they grabbed one of the Indonesian guys and pushed him down all the way, and they were laughing and yelling, and two Japanese crewmen held his arms up and a guy with a sword swung it and it went "zhunk!" I was watching, and they cut off the top half of this Indonesian's head, and it fell down and then they let him fall. He started flopping around and they kicked him overboard.

Then they started really having their fun. They'd just go up to a guy and hit him on the back with a sword and then take him all the way up front. One swing with those swords and off lopped the head.

So I was thinking I had to get off that submarine. By this point we were miles away from the wreckage, but I figured my only hope was to get back there and find an empty lifeboat. But I couldn't work up the nerve to jump overboard because the Japanese with the submachineguns were all around us, keeping us covered. But every minute you'd hear their laughing from up front, and then "zhunk!" Then individual pistol shots started, "bang! bang!" Then came the "rat-a-tat-a-tat" of a machinegun from behind us on the conning tower.

As I was trying to make up my mind what to do, the guy two people in front of me — a Hindu — jumped up, let out a scream, and dived overboard. They were on him with the machineguns as soon as he hit the water, and I saw him go straight down. That changed my mind about that idea.

Then a Japanese officer hit me on my back with the flat of his sword and said something, I don't know what, and I stood up. As I turned I saw our British gunners all tied together, along with a couple of our Dutch officers, standing over by the conning tower. The Japanese behind me gave another shove and they tied my hands behind my back and then tied me to Peter Bronger, our fifth

officer. He was my best friend on board and they'd tied me right to him.

The rope was really thick, and as they tied me I tried to keep my wrists as wide as I could. They tied the one wrist in a way I knew I couldn't get out of, but I could also feel that I could get the other free.

Then the guy started shoving all of us with his sword, wanting us to move around the conning tower. On the other side of the conning tower there were two more Japanese officers, one holding a sword, the other with a sledgehammer. I was in the lead, and I knew the way those guys were looking at us this was it. So when they started coming at us, I kicked with my foot and pulled my loosely tied hand out of the rope and dived, dragging Peter with me. I didn't know it at the time, but a lot more people than I'd been able to see had already been killed, and I turned out to be the fourth of only five who got away.

I hit the water and swam to get as deep as possible. The sub kept going by, and I could even see her twin screws passing in the clear water. I stayed under as long as I could, and then came up with my head just breaking the surface, and right away I could hear bullets splashing all around. I went back under and noticed that bullets don't keep going straight once they hit the water; they go off in all directions.

When I came up for another breath, the sub was quite a ways off and all I could see was her stern. There were two officers sitting there in old fashioned deck chairs, and they were firing rifles at whoever they spotted. So I kept diving under until I saw and heard no more firing.

Peter was kind of half under water, floating with his head down. They'd either hit him with a sword or machinegunned him as we were going over, because his back was torn wide open right down to the spine and he was all covered with blood. I was in some kind of shock myself and I stayed with him for a while, but he looked dead, so I finally untied my other hand — that took another five or 10 minutes — and I said, "Peter, if I can find anything to come back for you I will." But as far as I know he was already dead.

I guessed I was aboard the sub for about 45 minutes to an hour. I didn't know how far away from our wreckage I was — if I'd known how far it was I probably would've given up — but I knew getting back there was my only shot. It turned out to be about four or five miles. There were big swells and the water was warm, so I just started swimming in the direction opposite to where I thought the sub had been going.

I swam all day. From about 8:30 in the morning, I swam until the sun was going down. I was in great shape, so I just kept going, figuring I wouldn't give up, but when it started to get dark and I still hadn't found anything, I got scared that I was going to die.

But then I let the big swells lift me up and I started looking around, and the second time I did that I happened to look behind me and I saw little black dots floating far off, and I knew I'd found something. I'd gone past the wreckage, just missing it.

I swam toward the dots, and the first thing I found was a big, heavy, round table that we used to play cards on when we were off duty. I grabbed that — it was the first solid thing I'd touched in six or seven hours. I hung on and then I felt strength coming back into me as my hope returned. Then I saw garbage floating, and sharks thrashing away at that. Our ship's food — the stuff that we ate, not the cargo — had all blown out and there were things all over the place.



Then I saw a life raft — we had four on the ship — actually made of two big oil drums surrounded with wood and shaped into a big square. There was a hole in the center, and Red Cross emergency stuff was stowed in there. Then from the raft I saw an arm waving and heard a voice calling, and I let go of my table and swam over there. I'm sure I broke a world record doing that — I didn't even think to worry about the sharks. I got over to the raft and it turned out to be Chief Officer Frits de Jong.

He was 6'6" and about 300 lbs. What had saved him was the Japanese who'd tried to kill him was so short that when he put the gun up to blow de Jong's brains out the angle had been so steep the bullet only whacked the back of his head. He'd rolled into the water, and that brought him back to consciousness. They'd started with the biggest guys first, so they'd shot him early on and he'd only had to swim maybe a mile. He had a hole in the back of his head, so I opened the first aid kit



James Blears as a radio officer in 1945.

and got the sulfa powder and put it on around the wound and bandaged it and wrapped his head all around.

There was a canvas cover, so we lay down on it in the center of the raft. But I was scared to death over the idea the Japanese might be circling back to get us, so I kept looking for periscopes. Then I heard another voice, and it was Third Engineer Spuybroek. We traded stories, and it turned out he'd escaped similar to me, and he was fine, so that made three of us.

Then I said to Spuybroek, "Let's get to the boats." Everything was still drifting, and it was really getting dark, but there were little lights all around because all the life-saving equipment on the ship — lifebelts and lifejackets — that they'd ripped off us and thrown overboard, had chemical lights, and they were all around. We didn't have any oars, so it took the two of us maybe half an hour to finally get to my boat. I looked inside and saw the transmitter was still there. So was my little waterproof bag with my I.D. book that showed the ships I'd served on — and I still have that.

We got de Jong moved into the boat — which by then was nearly full of water, but didn't sink because it had air tanks under the seats. One of us bailed while the other got the oars out. Once we got her bailed we each took an oar. By this point we'd been going steadily since about six o'clock that morning. We rowed over to another boat and got all the food and water from it. Even though everything was floating around inside, it was all in water-tight containers. We figured we had enough for about 40 days.

It was completely dark when we heard another voice. We rowed toward it, and it turned out to be Second Officer Jan Dekker, and the same thing had happened to him as to me and Spuybroek. There was another guy with him, a Hindu named Dhange, and they were floating on a hatch cover. Dhange was able-bodied; he'd swam farther than I, and he was the last survivor.

Dhange and the rest of us eventually gave evidence about this atrocity personally to Lord Louis Mountbatten and his staff after we made it back to

Colombo. Dhange was from Bombay, had survived the sinking of his own ship earlier, and was going home on a free ride when we were sunk. He testified that after the Japanese had gotten rid of the officers, they took the last 20 or 25 guys and tied them all together using one long rope, made that rope fast to the deck of the submarine, and dived. Dhange was the last guy on the rope at the tail end, and as they were being towed down under the water he managed to get loose and he swam for it.

Anyway, after we'd gotten the mast up and started sailing, Dekker got out a little compass and figured the prevailing winds were taking us toward Java [Japanese held]. We didn't want to go there, so we started trying to tack, but it was very difficult in that little boat.

We had to bail all night, so we took turns. Finally, as it started to come light, I just collapsed. I was out of it, and just lay there for five or six hours. Then I came to, and we opened up some pemmican and ate that along with a dipper of water, and boy that revived me fine.

We kept trying to tack north, away from Java, but by the third day the Chief Officer started getting delirious. Dekker said to me, "Sparks, I think we have to risk transmitting a message tonight." So I got out the radio and climbed the mast and put the antenna up. I hooked up and keyed it once and everything worked O.K.

It was around 4:00 p.m., and we're waiting 'til dark to send, and we decided to have a can of peaches. Every March 29th since then I've always eaten a can of peaches. Anyway, we opened a can and each had a big peach and drank the juice, and it tasted so good. I'd memorized the coded message I'd send — "SSS," for "attacked by submarine" — when all of a sudden — Boom! — there was a big explosion right in front of us. Then, Bang! Another shell landed a bit farther away, then one closer, and that's when I figured we'd finally had it.

We couldn't spot anything, but I thought it was the submarine and they'd come back to find us and kill us. We tried to decide if we should jump back in the water, when we finally spotted a merchant ship. I said it was probably a Japanese supply ship for replenishing their submarines. They kept firing as they got nearer, but then they turned and I could see it was a Liberty Ship — you could tell by the silhouette — and they stopped firing and came thundering up right along side and threw a cargo net over.

I yelled up, "We got a wounded man weighs 300 lbs!" So they put a crane out and hauled him up. As we were climbing the net they were already under way again. Turns out they'd spotted us just as it was getting dark, and their lookout thought our sail was the conning tower of a submarine, so they'd started firing at us. Luckily, they were bad shots.

Two guys pulled me aboard and gave me a glass of hot water mixed with whiskey. They were all standing around with machineguns, and when they heard the Dutchmen talking among themselves, they thought maybe they were Germans and started getting nervous with those guns. I noticed this and spoke up: "Wait! I'm English, and we're on your side!"

The ship was the SS *James A. Wilder*, named for a member of the Wilder family in Hawaii, built in 15 days flat and on her maiden voyage to Calcutta. They were taking 14th Army Air Force pilots to fly against the Japanese in Burma. One of those pilots gave me a toothbrush and some clothes, and three days later we landed in Colombo. After we gave our evidence, they sent a flying boat out and found the wreckage, but no more survivors.

One night some time after the war had ended, I woke up screaming. Rain was spattering on the skylight above me, and I guess it reminded me somehow. But since then I've never had any kind of flashbacks or any worries about it. ☼

*Epilogue: After his discharge as a merchant seaman in 1945, Blears wrestled professionally full-time in Europe and England. Eventually he moved to New York and extended his successful wrestling career in the States as*

*"Lord Tally Ho Blears." A resident of Hawaii for 30 years, he is still an avid surfer and rough-water swimmer who lives with his wife and his dog on what he calls "the poor side" of Makaha Beach. He has remained in touch with Frits de Jong and the USAAF pilot from the James A. Wilder.*



James Blears today

*(James Blears' letter continued)*

After being put onshore in Colombo by the American Liberty Ship, the S.S. JAMES A. WILDER and her crew, I made my way by train up through India for 5 days and headed for Bombay to catch a ship back to the United Kingdom. We were halted 12 miles outside of Bombay and witnessed WW II's ship-port disaster—"THE GREAT BOMBAY EXPLOSION". Many ships and property damaged with a loss of life, over 5000 killed and thousands of injuries.

Caught passage on a troopship, "STRATHAIRD" taking thousands of Italian P.O.W.s to the U.K. I was hospitalized with bursted eardrums and survivors leave and then ordered to serve on the 3RD largest ship in the world, the "NIEUW AMSTERDAM". We took hundreds of badly wounded G.I.s from the fighting in Normandy to New Jersey. All the hospitals were full in Britain and a 5 day run to the States was the easiest way. Most of the soldiers my age had lost a leg, arm; or both. Very sad! Very VERY Sad!!

I finally got to go ashore in the USA!! HOBOKEN to TIMES SQUARE! As I walked up into the lights and a land of plenty, I WAS IN HEAVEN, AGAIN!! Back to U/K with a load of fresh troops and landed them in Liverpool. The Germans surrendered and finally the Atomic Bomb was dropped and Japanese surrendered. I went home and hung up my uniform. IT WAS OVER AT LAST!!

While in service, I wrestled in various seaports; Canada, Australia, Argentina, South Africa, France and wrestled 6 times in Hoboken. I got a contract to return to the States after the war when the war ended. I did exactly that and the rest is HISTORY!! I will be 71 the day I mail this, August 13th, 1994.

GOD BLESS AMERICA,  
by Lord James Blears

84-102 Makau St., Makaha, Hawaii 96792

*I would like to thank Blear and Command Magazine for sharing this story. CAL*



# BACK IN TIME WITH THOSE WHO WERE THERE

**TOURISM:** S.S. Lane Victory cruise takes visitors back to World War II, complete with an air battle.

By JEFF ROWE

The Orange County Register

As the spires of Santa Catalina Island's mountains passed to the port side, gunners aboard the S.S. Lane Victory began preparing their weapons for an attack they thought certain to come.

The 650 tourists on board went right on munching their catered lunches.

In one of the more unusual one-day cruises in the world, the restored World War II transport ship carries tourists from its San Pedro port along Catalina and back home. En route, World War II-era Luftwaffe fighters swoop in for a simulated attack on the vessel, but are driven off by two American fighters and a spirited defense by the ship's gunners.

Normally, such ambitious re-creations are limited to movies, but this is no ordinary cruise.

The Lane Victory's crew is composed almost entirely of veterans of the transport ships, men who went to sea when they were as young as 17

to help win the war and years later assembled again to help restore the vessel, one of the last of its kind.

"It's amazing what they did with this ship," said Larry Jones of Yorba Linda, on



**AIR RAID:** German fighter in mock battle with Lane Victory.

board for a recent cruise.

Bound by the unique comradeship of war, about 150 Victory ship veterans from Southern California began restoring the Lane Victory six years ago and now keep it running on the six or so one-day cruises each year. On noncruise days, they keep the ship open for tours at its berth near where it was built in San Pedro half a century ago.

Now though, these former crewmen turned historians are graying. With proper care, they say the ship they sailed and meticulously restored can last for another 50 years, although they will be gone.

That will end an opportunity to explore history in a way that only those who experienced it can relate.

"There was always apprehension during the war," said Orval Miller of Cypress, an engineer. Sometimes the Victory ships sailed in large convoys protected by Navy vessels, but often the ships sailed alone and unprotected. "You didn't know when or where an attack would come."

And the attacks did come. Early in the war, the supply ships suffered a fearsome toll as German and Japanese submarines, cruisers and airplanes sent scores of them to

Please see **CRUISE** Page 2



**SILENT TRIBUTE:** Christopher Symons, 9, of Irvine, drops a flower overboard during a ceremony honoring those who died during World War II.



**DECK DANCING:** Crew member Bill McWaid and volunteer Mildred Dudley move to the sounds of a jazz band during a party aboard the Lane Victory.

## World War II aircraft repeats moments in history

**TOURISM:** Condor Squadron provides aerial excitement on S.S. Lane Victory Cruises.

By JEFF ROWE

The Orange County Register

Taking history to the skies, the Condor Squadron is almost as busy these days as its pilots were in World War II.

Flying WWII vintage aircraft, members of the nonprofit group fly in air shows, perform search-and-rescue missions and stage mock raids on the S.S. Lane Vic-

tory during its cruises.

In all, the Condor Squadron can call on 16 AT-6 aircraft, the basic pilot trainer of World War II. These days, half are anointed in U.S. markings and half are painted in German livery.

For Lane Victory cruises, six AT-6s take to the air, four simulating Luftwaffe attackers who swoop in at deck level. Two others replicate the role of American fighters who arrive minutes later to drive them off. Trailing smoke, one or more of the German-marked fighters appears to be blasted from the skies by the American fliers.

For the Condor fliers, it's a chance to relive some of the action they faced in WWII.

"It's kind of fun for the pilots," says Dick Sykes, squadron commander, a veteran WWII fighter pilot and a Van Nuys lawyer.

It's also a realistic portrayal of what it was like to be attacked at sea during WWII.

First built in 1939, the two-seat AT-6 has a 550 hp engine that gives it a top speed of 205 mph.

Of the 15,117 that were built during World War II, only about 500 remain in flying condition.

Some days, the Condor Squadron has all the history it can handle.

"On Memorial Day, we went over eight different parades," Sykes said.

Like the S.S. Lane Victory, the sturdy AT-6s probably will be flying long after the original crew members are gone.

Operating from their base at Van Nuys Airport, the squadron has about 45 members, about a third of whom are World War II flying veterans.

"We're bringing in some younger guys who are only in their 50s," says Sykes.



# CRUISE: Historic ship provides peek at past

FROM 1

the bottom and, in all, 6,790 crewmen to early graves.

These days, tourists pay \$100 each for the one-day tours; the money goes to the nonprofit, all-volunteer U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans of World War II, operators of the ship. After the Vietnam War, the Lane Victory was docked in storage at Suisin Bay, near San Francisco, where it began gathering rust and dust.

That broke the hearts of the hundreds of surviving crewmen who served aboard the ships. They persuaded President Ronald Reagan to give the ship to their veterans group.

Much restoration later, paid for with funds they raised, the ship earned a designation as a National Historic Landmark. It was ready to go to sea again, this time taking tourists.

In the rolling seas off Catalina, it's easy to imagine the Lane Victory half a century ago, picking its way to port laden with cargo for troops at the front. Visitors seemed enthralled by the experience.

The air attack "gave you a tremendous rush of feelings," said Debbie Anderson of Torrance.

"Very well done," said Garrett Sweeney of Los Alamitos.

While the ship looks just as it did during the war and the attack is realistic enough to make some tourists nervous, it's the crewmen who make the Lane Victory cruise as close to returning to World War II as is possible without a time machine.

Victory ships and their earlier cousins, the Liberty Ships, were the workhorses of World War II, toting food, medicines, clothing

and supplies of every kind to Europe and the Pacific. In addition to 10,000 tons in its hold, a Victory ship could carry train locomotives, landing barges and other heavy equipment on the deck.

Besides serving in World War II, the Lane Victory also served in Korea and Vietnam, once rescuing 7,010 people from North Korea and bringing them to the South. The ship arrived with one more passenger — a baby born during the voyage.

John Smith, 83, of Seal Beach, sailed Victory ships in World War II to Europe, North Africa, the Persian Gulf and the Pacific. Like all of the other crewmen, Smith has an attachment to the ship akin to what might be expected for family members.

"It's a very emotional thing, to be able to relive history," he said.

For Smith and other veterans, the cruises erase some of the pain of missing the 50th anniversary D-Day observances in France in June. Stymied by mechanical problems, the Lane Victory was forced to turn back.

Those problems have been fixed, and the ship is spiffy enough now for the cruises and to serve frequently as a filming site. "Murder, She Wrote," "Unsolved Mysteries," "Hunter," "McGyver" and other movie and television projects have been filmed aboard the ship, with filming fees helping to pay maintenance costs.

Typical working crew for the daylong trips is 50, plus tour guides and a band, most of whom also are former crewmen.

During World War II, the Lane Victory and other Victory-class

ships typically had a crew of 47 seamen and 20 Navy gunners.

For the merchant crew, the duty was constant, noisy and dirty.

It still is, and yet to these old men of the sea, the sounds, sights and smells are as familiar as home.

"It gets in your blood," said Clint Johnson of Seal Beach, 69, an engineer aboard the ships then and now. "To hear the engines running..." He trails off wistfully as memories take over.

Lane Victory visitors can do more than hear the power plant running — they can go below during the cruise and see it. Hear it. Feel the vibrations and heat.

Deep in the hull, it's as hot as 130 degrees in parts of the engine room, and conversation has to be at shout levels. To the engineers, average age 68, the sweat seems a lubricant to their old bones and muscles.

Claude Gammel, 70, of Newport Beach, is one of the volunteer engineers who keeps the Lane Victory's giant power plant humming. As he and others tend to the elephant-size boilers, evaporators and other parts, visitors peer at the gauges, inspect the 166-foot-long propeller shaft and nod intently while sweating profusely as the crew explains the engine workings.

For the Navy gunners, Victory ship duty was "90 percent boredom and 10 percent super excitement," said veteran George Halting of Huntington Beach.

Joe Piccolini of Cypress, 69, was 17 when he went to sea as a Navy gunner on Victory ships. Over one three-day period alone,

his ship fought off 17 air raids, dodged eight torpedoes and sank a German sub.

These days, gunners use propane and oxygen charges to simulate the firing of the Lane Victory's big guns. Piccolini and other gunners swing into action when the ship comes under attack from the restored WWII-era fighters from the Condor Squadron flying out of Van Nuys Airport, another volunteer organization.

"I love it," he says. "It takes me back and it's good for my health."

In a classic example of American assembly-line prowess, the ships were built from 30,000 parts in a matter of weeks, with one ship taking just 41 days. In all 2,708 Liberty ships and about 700 Victory ships were built. The 15 remaining ships have been in storage and are scheduled to be scrapped.

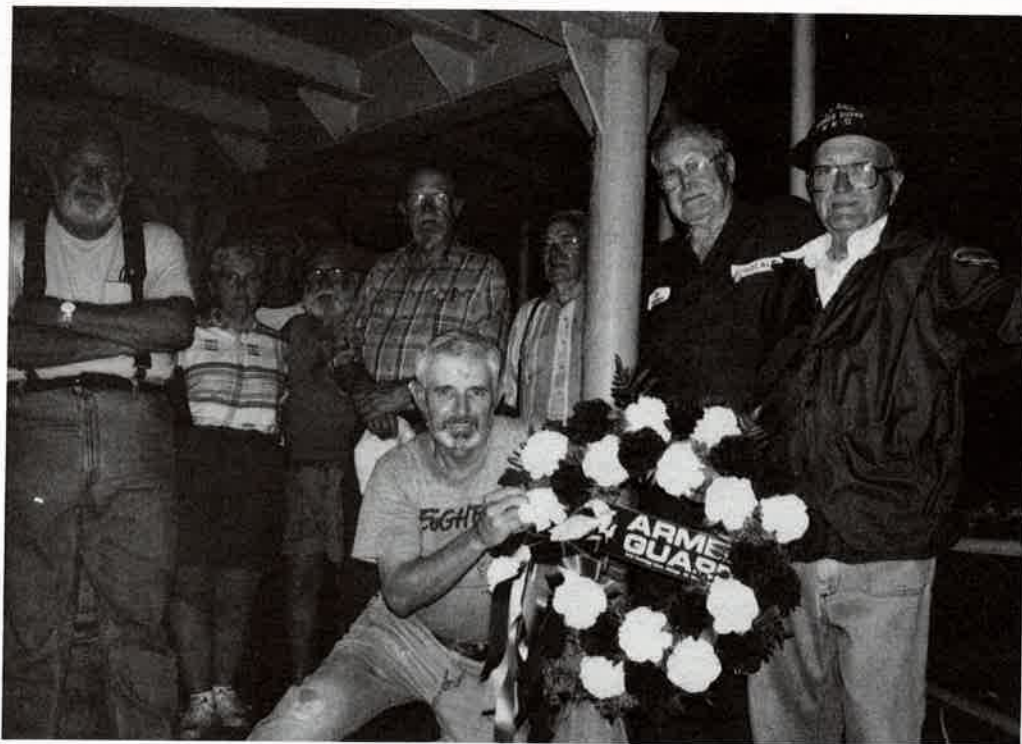
While the Lane Victory's survival seems assured, Piccolini and other crewmen wonder who will take their places in 10 or 20 years.

One might be Aaron Burks of Westminster, a junior at Westminster High School and a member of the U.S. Navy Sea Cadet Corps, a program that introduces teens to Navy life. Burks handles clerical chores aboard the Lane Victory, and perched on the bow as the ship approaches San Pedro, he says he has no doubt he's going to be a Navy sailor. "I love going to sea," he said.

## SHIP BY THE NUMBERS

Facts and figures on the S.S. Lane Victory:

- **Home:** Berth 53, San Pedro
- **Namesake:** Lane College in Tennessee, which was founded by Isaac Lane, a former slave
- **Hours for tours:** 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily.
- **Admission:** \$2 adults; \$5 family
- **Cruises:** About six all-day cruises a year
- **Cruise fare:** \$100 for adults; \$60 younger than 15 years old; includes lunch
- **Capacity for cruises:** 900, including crew
- **Telephone:** (310) 519-9545
- **Built:** San Pedro
- **Length:** 450 feet
- **Power plant:** Steam turbines
- **Fuel:** Bunker oil, about the consistency of molasses; burns about a barrel a nautical mile as propeller makes 347 revolutions
- **Propeller:** Four blades, 18 feet in diameter, 31,000 pounds
- **Propeller shaft:** 166 feet long, 16 inches thick, 97,000 pounds
- **Top speed:** 16 knots
- **Guns:** one 5-inch; one 3-inch; eight 20mm anti-aircraft, two .50-caliber machine guns (manned by Armed Guard crew)
- **Total number of Liberty/Victory ships built:** About 3,400
- **Total number sunk:** About 600 in WWII
- **Total merchant seamen lost WWII —** 6,795
- **Total Armed Guard lost WWII —** 1810



Some of the S.S. LANE VICTORY crew members at wreath ceremony on their way to the Panama Canal: (from left to right) Jim Watson, Harry Gillis, Marylyn Halpny, Bob Bolanger, "Red" Halpny, Bob Simpson, Captain Nolan, Max Jones, Captain Tilghman, Loring Bigelow



# DAILY LOG-S.S.LANE VICTORY

APRIL 29, 1994-MAY 15, 1994

TO NORMANDY'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY APRIL 29, 1994-MAY 15, 1994

BY LORING BIGELOW, U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WW II VETERAN

**Friday, April 29** — As the only Representative of our U.S. Navy Armed Guard WW II Veterans, I will try to keep a "DAILY LOG". Two other Armed Guardsmen are on board, Lee Chamberlain (deck crew) and Red Halny (galley), but are serving with the Merchant Crew so I am not alone. I also have a excellent back-up man, Captain Jim Nolan, USN who has big plans for the aft gun crew quarters.

We got under way with much ceremony at 1330 hours and very emotional for every one to know we "FINALLY" made it!!! I had a lot of flags flying; met lots of interesting people, but was very, very busy. I want to thank you all for the good wishes, cards, and "refreshments". Charlie Savonna, Joe Piccolini, Thom Hendrickson, Bill Privett, Charlie Baca, "The Leslie Family" and others who all wished me "BON VOYAGE". It seems good to be at sea again. "PANAMA, HERE WE COME"!!! An old superstition of the sea: "NEVER SAIL ON A FRIDAY". BAD LUCK!! "NEVER HAVE WOMEN ON BOARD". MORE BAD LUCK!!! However, only time will tell!!! Hopefully this is only superstition!!

**Sat. April 30** — Moderate seas are pushing us along. No other ships in sight all day. I work in the "Stewards Department"; in my spare time, mostly in the linen closet and dry stores. My Coast Guard papers state: Steward's Department; oiler and deck crew. I chose the Steward and am satisfied. We are all getting down to good routine now. I watered the "PALM TREES" on the aft deck today. Captain Nolan is working as a ship's plumber. They are changing over the fresh water flushing in the toilets (heads) to salt water. I offered him the use of one of my 3 lockers today. It had Charlie Savonna stenciled on it. I hooked up a light so I can read in bed. I will be alone in the quarters for most of the trip. I am getting use to the noise back here. Captain Nolan is working along with the plumbers. I guess, if you he has to sail as an "Engineering Helper", I can go with the "Steward's Department".

**Sunday May 1** — First warm day we have had since we left San Pedro, California. It seems we are getting southerly! One half day "off duty" from Steward's duty so I ripped up the carpet in the Armed Guard berthing quarters, half of it at least. This morning, we had a lot of water on the deck in our aft head; about an inch! It is backing up from a drain. I swabbed it all out and Captain Nolan notified the other plumbers. Our water is cut off for a time until they really find out where it is coming from.

**Monday May 2** — I had a wreath ceremony tonight. Three wreaths were given from all the U.S. Navy Armed Guard Crew by Charles Lloyd, National ASSC. Armed Guard Chairman. One is to be dropped in the Pacific Ocean—in memory of Armed Guard who perished in the PACIFIC, another for those who perished in the ATLANTIC. Also, one is to be placed in the English Channel waters. The Pacific Ceremony was held at 1900 (sunset) 2 May 1994 at Lat. 18-45-24N and Long. 107-26-5W. Some of the crew members that attended are shown in the photo with this log. It is difficult to get a group together due to the different watches that have to be stood. I found "SUNSET" the most convenient time of all.

The Captain turned our ship around heading North after we developed mechanical problems. Our new evaporator was not working and fresh water supply could not be replenished. Ten minutes later, the problem was apparently taken care of. We continued our voyage and turned the course, heading south towards "Panama". They are installing all new commodes in the 16 heads. They will also flush out with salt water. Our head is still out of commission in the "Gunners" shower. Boy! Are we bouncing around—I can hardly write. Clear and warm today.

**Tuesday May 3** — By 0545, I had made my rounds of all the guns and the signal bridge. I stopped by the chartroom to see where we were. Due west of Acapulco, Mexico. At 1515, we turned back to San Pedro, California!!! The announcement came over the address system that oil had gotten into the boiler tubes—VERY SERIOUS!! Everyone is "down"!! Like Zombies!! Maybe San Pedro in a week or ten days?? Jesus!! Some near tears!! Others cussing a blue streak!! I know 3 guys that have been praying back here on the fantail that God — Please let us make this trip. We are barely under-way and rolling very badly.

**Wednesday May 4** — We rolled all night, more or less at the mercy of the seas. Our speed was 4.85 knots. Much more optimism today. We are headed for Acapulco and should make it, at; or around, 2000. Radio contact seems to confirm we can have repairs made, We will see. If so, we can probably continue. At 0500, they asked me if I had a Mexican Flag to fly. Answer—negative. I checked my inventory list to be sure; no flag. The Captain ordered me to fly the ensign daily from 0800 to sunset. We are going so slow, there is no air currents the ship would create moving normally. The women are really suffering. Men are sleeping on cots on the fantail. Lucky for a thin cloud cover. No direct sun. After my "janitorial duties", which will end Sunday, I will work on the reefer with the steward.

**Thursday May 5** — I had just come out of the head at 0530 AM and was called to the bridge to hoist "Request for Pilot" and the "Quarantine Flag". The latter was an error by the Captain. He later ordered it down. I hoisted "colors" and when the pilot came aboard, I hoisted his flag. We now have a "Mexican Flag" flying. After my duties with the steward, including working in the freezer, I went ashore. Just across the street from where we are docked is a "telephone office" and I made a call to Thom Hendrickson with the operators help. I only got an answering machine, so she wouldn't allow the call to go through. I did get my wife, Louise; a collect call. I paid the operator \$3.00—American. The Post Office was next door, so I was able to send out mail. A big oil spill on deck this P.M.. Oil came out of the "standpipes" and all over the deck on both sides. Jacobelly has left the ship. Three "MESSES"; evaporator, boiler trouble and now the oil spill. Chief Engineer, Bud Hien took over.

**Friday May 6** — Up at 0500 and I made my rounds. Crew is sleeping all over aft deck on Army cots—too hot in the quarters. Everything pertaining to the Armed Guard, guns etc., okay. The oil spill is still a mess, but contained for the last 14 hours to ship's deck. The crew is swabbing. I chat with the Captain as I raised the Mexican Flag. He states we will be here until Monday as repairs continues. Then it is a 50/50 chance which way we go.

Fresh water for the urinals and sinks haven't been turned on yet. Lot of celebration of Cinco de Mayo in harbor last night, loud music everywhere—hard to sleep!! A doctor came aboard to sail with us. After he settled in, I cleaned up "SICK BAY" for him using plenty of "Lysol". He is a Doctor Wood, M.D. from Denver, Colorado. I watered the palm trees today. They look a bit better now. Captain Nolan and I spent several hours working in the Armed Guard quarter's head, cleaning deck tile and making preparations to paint it. We hope to clean the copper piping tomorrow. Eventually we may restore at least 1 shower stall.

**Saturday May 7** — Colors each day—at 0630 A.M. and—0630 P.M.. Still sitting here at the dockside at Acapulco but optimism still abounds that we can get to sailing soon. Engine room's crew are cautiously optimistic. We do have a grand view of the harbor, boats, yachts, etc. The bad oil spill



has been cleaned up. Earlier, I stated there were "two stand-pipes" that overflowed. Two others up forward at the end of the deckhouse were also involved. Work continues in the aft head. While I was busy with the steward's chores this morning, Capt. Nolan and the ship's plumber took out the plugged section of drain pipe about 4" in length and 2" in diameter, plugged solid with rust, soap, and dirt—you name it. The other pipe section will be unplugged with additional cleaners. Painting continues along the baseboard by the urinal. Access to this plugged pipe was in Hold #5 aft—just above the storage area of surplus radio parts. I had to wash part of the ensign today as a bird (censored) all over it!!

**Sunday May 8** — I polished the "brass markers" over the doors of the gun crew quarters. Next, I hand scrubbed the tile decking in the aft head. The tile is so bad that I think it will have to have a liberal scrubbing with paint removers. Hand scrubbing did very little.

A petition was circulated today among the crew stating that we all wanted to continue on and not return back to San Pedro, California.

CA:

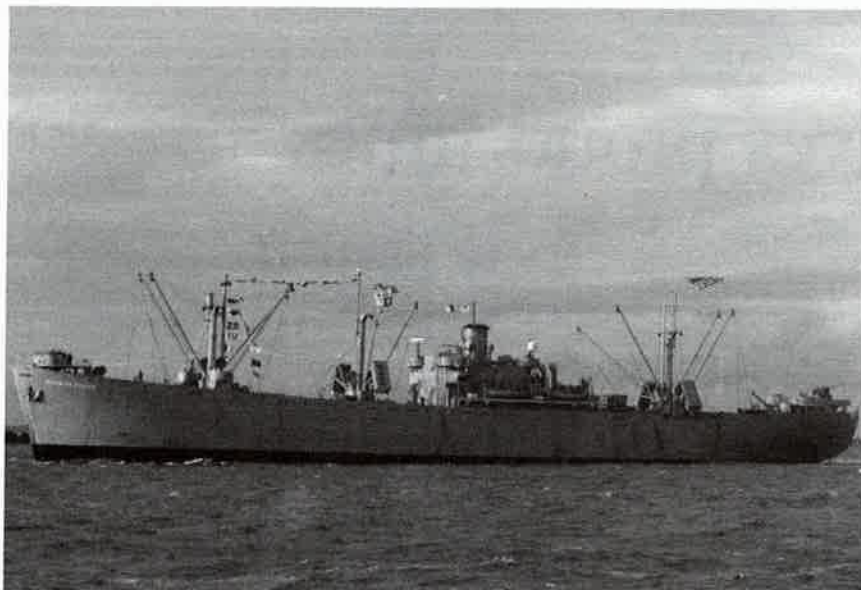
Although I was not an Armed Guard, my family and I got to know a lot of the American Armed Guards that made the Old Kilpatrick/Clydebank, Scotland run.

My family had returned to Scotland for a vacation in 1938, and since my parents had only taken out their first papers in the US, they were considered citizens of Britain, and we were stuck there throughout the war, even though my sister and I had been born in America.

Practically every American Armed Guard that came in, came to our house to visit with my father and mother, James and Isabel Paul, and my sister, June and myself, Jeannette.

If you could, through your contacts with Armed Guards, I would appreciate being placed in contact with any Armed Guards who were on the Old Kilpatrick/Clyde-bank, Scotland run.

Sincerely,  
Jeanette M. Reeks  
1721 N. Woodhouse Road  
Virginia Beach, VA 23454-1633  
804-481-5814



Dear Cal

Many thanks for the recent edition of the POINTER. I find it very interesting and you sure do a fine job. Over here in June, during the 50th Anniversary of D-Day, I managed to attend many of the functions - they really did use proud. I met Bill Ryan in the Veterans Marquee and had quite a long talk with him.

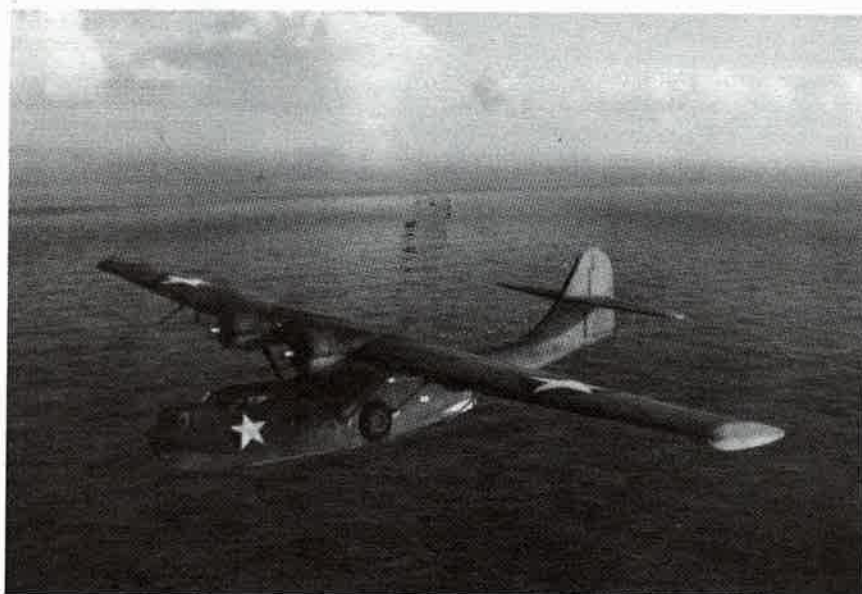
I took a boat trip out to Spithead, off the Isle of White where the ships were assembling. The U.S.S. GEORGE WASHINGTON was very impressive, but when the one I wanted to see came streaming in, the guys were closed up on the forward gun. I managed to take a picture of the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN and have had a copy taken of it for you as a keepsake.

All the best,  
Len Phillips  
8 Redgate, The Pippins  
Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4TQ  
England

Dear Charles

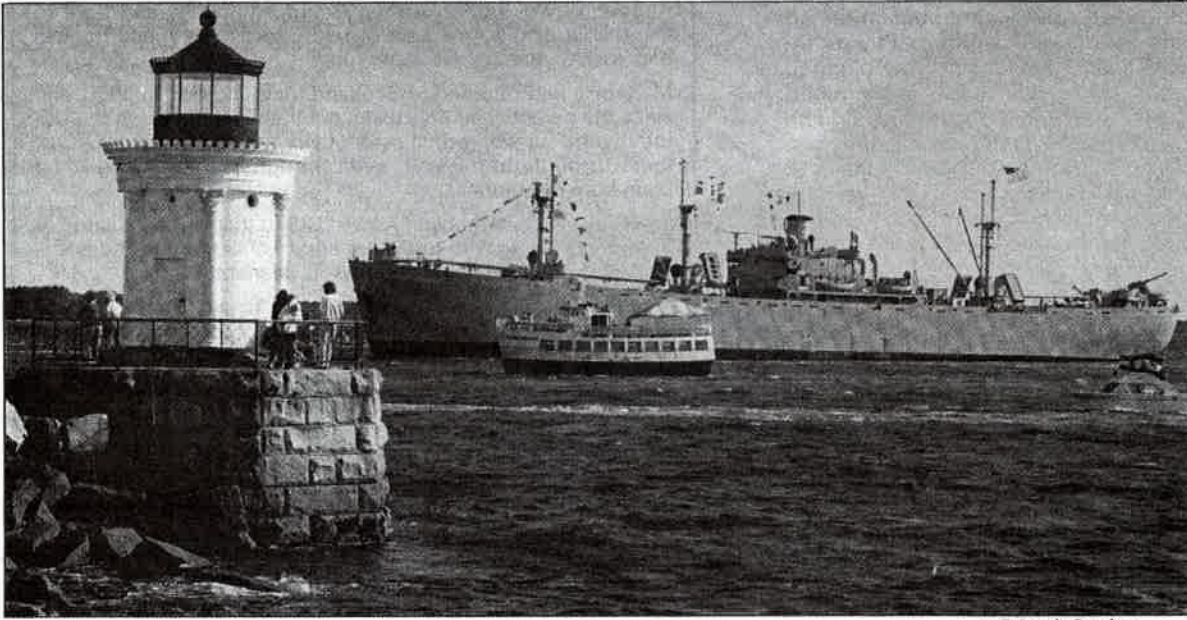
A special thanks to accompany my letter. By the way, if it's your pleasure, the "Catalina" community would appreciate any accounts/stories, etc., concerning "PBY/Catalina" flying boats & Armed Guard or Merchant crews. Also! provide me with USNAG reunion notices to include in PBY CIA newsletter etc. The principal basic training site for "Catalinas" was at the Naval Aviation Museum (Mainside) N.A.S. Pensacola.

Thanks again,  
Jim Morrison  
84 Branch Tpk, #37  
Concord, NH 03301-5715





## 'She's coming home'



Staff photos by Doug Jones  
The S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien is greeted by a ferry, private boats and spectators at Bug Light as it sails into Portland Harbor on Saturday for the first time in 51 years. The O'Brien is the last of 236 Liberty ships built in South Portland during World War II.

# Ship's return revives proud times

● The Jeremiah O'Brien stirs memories of accomplishment among those who built the Liberty ships.

By ABBY ZIMET  
Staff Writer

SOUTH PORTLAND — Marion Senecal peered out to sea just steps from where she had cut steel for the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien, one of hundreds of Liberty ships built here during World War II.

As the O'Brien loomed into view, she clapped her hand to her mouth.

"There she be! There she be!" she exclaimed. "Oh my gosh — she's coming home."

Flags flapped, men wept and women relived their days of glory as the O'Brien, the last surviving Liberty ship built here and one of only two left in the world, arrived Saturday for the first time in 51 years.

The United States built almost 3,000 Liberty ships during the war to carry troops and supplies to Europe and the South Pacific. As part of that effort, 30,000 men and women worked seven days a week in South Portland shipyards; in three years, they built 236 Liberty ships.

Some of those workers were among the large crowds greeting the O'Brien on what one happily called "a good sea day." It heaved into view surrounded by a flotilla of small boats bobbing on choppy seas, its colored flags whipping in the wind.

Many in the crowds were forever changed by the O'Brien or other look-alike Liberty ships — men who sailed to Normandy on them, women who built them using skills they would never have otherwise learned, couples whose lives

together began in welding shacks in the yard.

Senecal, one of 3,700 women workers in South Portland, met her husband, Bob, while both were "burners" on the O'Brien. The war was on, the need was great; in the yard, she recalled, there was a "singleness of purpose" and great pride.

"There was a job that had to be done," she said, "and we did it."

The O'Brien is based in San Francisco, and came to Maine from D-Day celebrations in Europe. It will be here until Aug. 15.

### Round-the-clock work

The O'Brien was launched in the West Yard of the New England Shipbuilding Corp. on June 19, 1943. By then, its workers had gotten good at their jobs. Their first ships had taken up to 258 days to build. The O'Brien, the yard's 85th ship, took just 57 days.

According to Ed Langlois, who organized the return of the O'Brien, shipyard workers around the country built 2,850 Liberty Ships from 1941 to 1945 — a feat he calls "a miracle."

"People simply worked 24 hours a day," he said. "There was a war effort that said, if we're going to get the equipment, and carry troops, and get food and medicine into the war zones, we've gotta have the ships to do it."

Langlois worked on Liberty ships as a teen-ager. Like most of his co-workers, he was untrained: "What did I know about building ships? Nothing, except I liked ships and I had worked on my bicycle."

He remembers the sense that "there were men fighting overseas, and you had to do your part. The men in the yard, and all these salty women — you just knew you had to do what you had to do."

"We had a mission. You never even thought about working seven days a week. At break you ate your

peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and went back to work."

### Lured to the yard

Marion Senecal, now 78, was 25 when she began building ships. She was working in Massachusetts making 1,400 taps and dies a day and 38 cents an hour when her brother urged her to join him at the South Portland yard.

"I started at 50 cents an hour and thought I was in heaven," she said. Later she got up to 85 cents, which enabled her to pay off her 1940 Chevy. She never caught up to her future husband, who was making \$1.20.

After two weeks of training, she began work as a burner. "I used an oxygen and acetylene torch to create a very hot flame that cut through the steel."

She could have worked on "the flats," in another part of the yard. "I said no way, if I couldn't be a sailor I'd at least make the ships that the other guys sailed on," she said.

There were women welders, chipperers (workers who trimmed welds), riveters, pipe fitters. The women were matter-of-fact about their work: "There was nobody else to do it, so here we were," Senecal said.

She still feels the pride of her work. "I was contributing to the war. I had a meaningful job — I could measure its meaning," she said.

It was a workplace where hot metal, rivets and sparks flew. She wore a leather jacket and steel-toed boots, and covered her hair from the sparks. She worked seven days a week, and often double eight-hour shifts. On the bus going home, she "invariably fell asleep."

There were fine times, like when she sneaked out to see a launching after her lead man forbade her. She climbed 60 feet of staging, jumped into the arms of fellow-workers and hid in an oven until security men stopped looking for her.

Mostly, the mood was somber.

"We read the papers, listened to the radio, watched and waited for news. When we heard of other ships being sunk, it felt like a personal insult," Senecal said. "It just made you more determined."

### Meeting in a shack

She met her future husband one winter day in a burners' shack, where she'd gone to eat lunch and get warm. "This redhead comes in, looks at me, we both grin, and he says, 'What're you doin' tonight?'" she recalled.

She said no that night. But later she went to Rickers Dance Hall on Forest Avenue with her friend Dottie Downs, "and all of a sudden Red comes along." After that, "We danced many times." They have been married 46 years.

After the war, Senecal said, "the pink slips started to flash into our hands, and that was it." She wanted to keep burning, "but nobody wanted to hire a woman burner in the ordinary workplace."

She went to college and became an art director in the public schools, but she kept a place in her heart for the Liberty ships.

On Saturday she left her home in Raymond early and stood at the Bug Light at 8 a.m. to watch for the O'Brien.

She laughed in delight as it appeared, surrounded by small boats "like little puppies." She pointed out a gun turret she had worked on.

"Ooh, she's beautiful," she declared. "This was her birthplace — her adopted parents did a good job."

Bob watched from Spring Point, and then joined her once it steamed by.

"Did you see our ship come in?" he asked her. "It looks mighty pretty."

The crowd at the Bug Light was modest. Larger crowds greeted the O'Brien at Fort Williams and the Maine State Pier, where it will be berthed.

### Personal significance

For many, Liberty ships remain rich with memories. Helen Goodine of South Portland, now 93 with 62 great-grandchildren, worked as a welder as a young widow with six children and remembers a time when "everybody worked together."

Others remembered landing at Normandy on a Liberty ship, or an uncle who went down on a Liberty ship, or a father who shipped out on a Liberty ship.

Clarence Adams, 85, was a welder and lead man on the O'Brien. He bought his West Falmouth house with his earnings; it cost \$3,500.

Adams excitedly pointed out the O'Brien's life rafts, air vents, machine guns. Asked how he felt seeing it again, he wept.

"He read about it in the paper a month ago, and has been talking about it ever since," explained his daughter, Anita Blackstone, who came down from Presque Isle to "make sure he got here."

"It's a sentimental thing," she said.

Joseph Katusa likewise wept when he first saw the O'Brien. He sailed on Liberty ships to Normandy and the South Pacific.

"It feels like I'm 17 again," he said, "when we were a bunch of high school kids and we learned how to make that thing work."

Ed Langlois, who started the Shipyard Society in 1980 to help bring the O'Brien back to Maine, echoed the day's cyclical theme.

"She's come home," he said of the O'Brien. "We have to remember Dorothy in 'The Wizard of Oz.' There's no place like home."

## HOT OFF THE PRESS!!

S.S. John W. Brown will be at Baltimore's Inner Harbor, Pier 5 from Nov. 7 - 14th, 1994 to honor Veterans Week. Ceremony will be held Nov. 11 aboard the ship.

Contact: Joe Colgan, 308 Felton Road, Lutherville, MD 21093, (410) 828-4698 for update. He is in search of a hotel for all to meet and tell "sea stories". I hope to see many of you there. calloyd



# 50 years later, warships gather in peace

By Judy Keen  
USA TODAY

**OFF THE COAST OF NORMANDY, France** — Warships gathered in the English Channel Sunday, as they did 50 years ago.

Then, the massing was secret, dangerous. Sunday, it was a festive, proud commemoration of the beginning of the D-Day invasion.

With heads of government and veterans from the 14 Allied nations that participated in the landing watching, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey presided over a re-enactment of a traditional battlefield religious ceremony in Portsmouth, England, before the ships sailed.

Before a backdrop of the Navy Memorial and a flotilla of 54 warships and 10 merchant vessels in the harbor, drums were again stacked to create a makeshift altar.

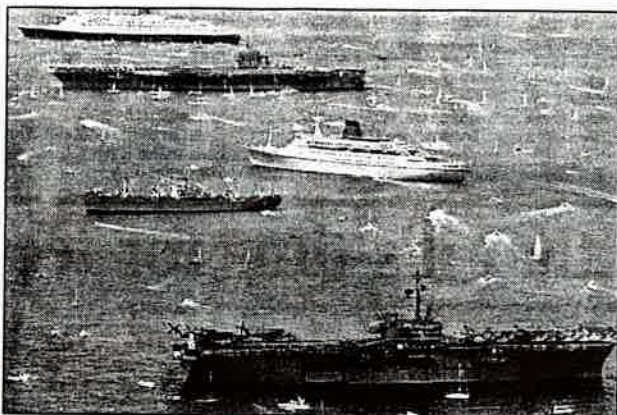
Troops draped their nations' flags over it, then prayers were offered, as they have been since the tradition began in the time of Napoleon.

No world leaders spoke. Instead, the focus was on the veterans. After prayers and national anthems, the world's most powerful men and women trudged through the mud to thank their D-Day veterans.

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks read from the Bible's Book of Psalms: "Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the mighty waters. ... Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love."

Saturday's weather was a recreation of D-Day, with downpours and gale-force winds. But Sunday, the skies cleared with a brisk breeze.

As many as 75,000 people gathered for the service, the flotilla's parade and the fly-over of vintage World War II aircraft like the P-51



By Greg English, AP

**IN PORTSMOUTH, ENGLAND:** From top, the Queen Elizabeth 2, the USS George Washington, the Vistafjord, the Jeremiah O'Brien, the USS Guam.

Mustang and Spitfire and modern jets. One group created a stunning precision formation reading "50."

President Clinton and other world leaders joined Britain's Queen Elizabeth aboard her yacht, the HMS Britannia, to review the flotilla. Thousands of boats crowded the harbor.

Said Clinton, "I was trying to imagine ... 50 years ago. ... I felt enormous pride. We're here with these sporting vessels because of what we did 50 years ago. Our system and our values prevailed."

As Britannia raced past the USS George Washington, the U.S. sailors honored the queen with a British salute, at attention with their white hats held in upraised right hands. Over loudspeakers came: "Hip, hip, hip." Shouted the sailors: "Hooray."

Clinton said, "The Queen ... talked about how important it was

not only rallying to the cause of war but continuing to do ordinary things. The Queen told that on D-Day, 'I was at the dentist.'"

In Portsmouth, reporters overheard Hillary Rodham Clinton saying she was cold. The president at one point put his arm around her to keep her warm.

Clinton also visited the SS Jeremiah O'Brien, a 51-year-old restored merchant marine ship now run by volunteers. It is the sole survivor of the 5,000-ship armada to Normandy. The O'Brien carried 10 Army officers, 563 troops, 135 armored vehicles and 167 tons of explosives to Normandy's Omaha Beach.

At sunset, a steady rain fell on Portsmouth and fighter jets roared overhead, red, white and blue plumes trailing behind them.

About 40 miles out to sea in mid-

**SCHEDULE**

Highlights (all times listed are ET) of today's D-Day events and planned TV coverage.

**TV:** NBC News' *Nightside* coverage of the U.S. Ranger assault ceremony at Pointe du Hoc, France, begins at **3:30 a.m.**; CNN begins at 5 a.m.; ABC, NBC, CBS begin five-hour coverage at 7 a.m.

**1 a.m.:** Wreath-laying ceremony at sea

**2:30 a.m.:** Clinton at ceremony honoring U.S. Rangers who scaled cliffs

**4 a.m.:** Clinton, French President Francois Mitterrand at Utah Beach.

**11 a.m.:** Clinton speaks at American cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France

Channel, veterans aboard the royal yacht cast wreaths into the water and a vintage Lancaster bomber dropped 2 million poppies — symbols of the war dead to the British.

Clinton spent Sunday night aboard the George Washington.

He spoke to sailors in the carrier's hangar bay and stood by as Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Boorda administered an oath to 62 re-enlisting sailors. Clinton saluted each.

Alphonso Gray, 24, an airman from Winston-Salem, N.C., sat up front, cheering Clinton. "I voted for him. He'd get my vote again. He is very much for the people."

Said Airman Eldridge Ketter, 48, from Madison, N.C.: "He's a great leader. ... I like his style handling his job because he is a man who came in with a lot of obstacles and he wasn't bothered by them."

Mr. Lloyd,

In our recent telephone conversation you requested information about the names and dates of the ships I sailed on:

- S.S. Shiloh - June 26, 1943-July 27, 1944
- S.S. Groveton - Aug. 31, 1944-Nov. 18, 1944
- S.S. John H. Abel - Jan. 1, 1945-May 7, 1945
- S.S. Laredo Taft - June 13, 1945-Dec., 1945

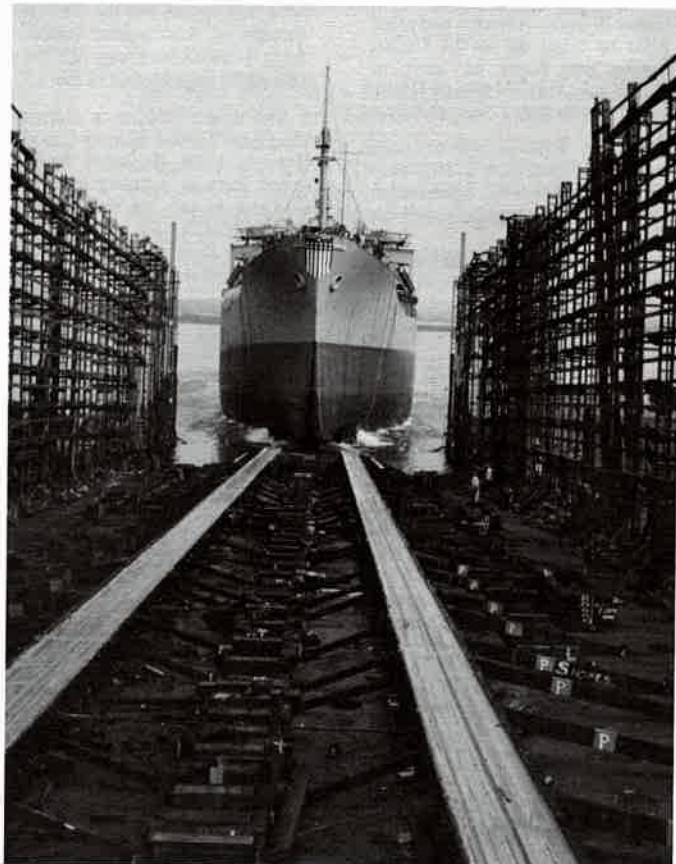
The S.S. Shiloh was built at the Sun Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., Chester, PA, one of the 222 tankers the company made during WWII.

I was assigned to the Shiloh out of gunnery school for 3 weeks to help install the 5"38. Being assigned to a ship we drew sea duty pay along with subsistence to eat ashore, but my home was only a couple of blocks from the yard. So with the use of a Navy station wagon, it was a very enjoyable few weeks at home before shipping out.

Enclosed is a picture of the June 7, 1943 launching.

Sincerely,  
Paul M. Burke  
1112 Mulberry Street, Brookhaven, PA 19015  
610-876-1849 Service # 2443703

*Thanks to those who built the tankers, and the men who served on them. cal*



Article sent in by : Richard C. Hudnall  
11088 Charnwood Ct., Sun City AZ 85351-1519



# There were ships as far as you could see

By Sarah Fischer  
Main Street Editor

As Bill Burton stands on the beaches of northern France on Monday, his Lilburn home will be very far away. But the memories of what took place 50 years ago along that coastline will be close at hand.

On June 6, 1944, the Allied forces invaded a 50-mile stretch of beach in the area of Normandy, France and then continued their drive inland, liberating towns occupied by the Nazis.

Like many other World War II veterans, Burton, 68, is revisiting the battlegrounds where history was made. It was on D-Day that the Allies took the first step toward wresting Europe from Hitler's grasp, and changing the course of the war.

Burton, who was 19 at the time, was a Navy gunner aboard the SS *Cyrus H. McCormick*, one of thousands of ships that participated in the invasion, code-named Operation Overlord.

"It was the greatest armada that ever sailed," he said. D-Day "freed Europe from Nazi bondage, really. A big sacrifice was made to bring the enslaved people of Europe to freedom."

The build-up for the Normandy invasion, begun in 1942, took on new momentum in early 1944.

Burton, who had earlier been involved in the famous Murmansk run aboard the USS *John Langdon*, then sailed on a Panamanian tanker to South America and other ports to bring oil to the United States, was home on leave in Columbus, Ga. in March 1944, when he was called back to duty.

In New York, he was assigned to the *McCormick*, a Liberty ship carrying Army trucks, ammunition and other war supplies bound for Wales.

"They were pulling men off the tanker for the invasion. I was advised to stay on the tanker, but that went in one ear and out the other," he said.

"I got in the Navy to help in the war and to see some action. My main objective was to get involved in the invasion of Europe."

A total of 39 divisions consisting of American, British, Canadian, French and Polish soldiers prepared for the largest single amphibious operation of the war. Deception played an important role in the Allies' invasion plan, with fake installations built in England to deceive the enemy into thinking the attack would take place further north than what was actually planned. The deception worked well, as 19 enemy divisions sat idle during the actual invasion of Normandy.

"No one knew where it was going to be, but we knew the inva-

sion in Europe was coming," Burton said. "Then when we hit England, it was obvious everywhere you looked. There were troops, ships — it was unbelievable."

The *McCormick* was unloaded and outfitted with bunks for the troops. It then sailed to Scotland, one of the assembly points, where the vessel was joined by the *Nevada* and a group of Liberty and other Merchant ships. On June 4, some 1,000 soldiers were embarked at Southampton.

As dawn broke on June 6, some 5,000 Allied ships stood off the coast of Normandy.

A naval bombardment began at 5:50 a.m. Within hours, 152,000 men came ashore, the first of millions to follow.

The *McCormick*, part of a 20-ship convoy assembling in the English Channel, sailed for Normandy on June 6 but was delayed by the first wave as it swept into Omaha Beach. The next night, a mistake in steering by the ship's helmsman caused the *McCormick* to veer off course from the convoy into range of the German shore batteries down the coast at Cherbourg.

"I was on watch. I had the 12 midnight to 4 a.m. watch," said Burton, who manned a 20 mm gun aboard the *McCormick*. "Around 1 a.m., the Germans started firing the ship. The shells just started coming in. We didn't know where they were coming from. The troops had already landed at the Utah beachhead, but the Germans thought we were another invasion force to take Cherbourg. We fired two shells then got out of there."

The ship's skipper, a German Merchant Marine named Captain Kronke, knew the area, having sailed there as a young man. He was able to turn the ship around, and the *McCormick* arrived safely at Omaha Beach at 4:30 a.m. that same morning.

"We knew we were in danger, and we were delighted to see the beachhead and all the ships after that," Burton said. "We beat the convoy into Omaha Beach on June 9. We got there and anchored off emplacements along the beach," McDaniel said.

He remembered at one point a group of Army Rangers going ashore to scale a 100-foot cliff at Pointe de Hoc to help secure the beach. "There were ships as far as you could see, and they were firing. We were holding our breath and praying for the Army Rangers who were scaling that cliff," McDaniel said.

Of the 225 Rangers who went ashore, only 90 were able to bear arms by mid-morning. There were many casualties, and the wounded were taken aboard McDaniel's ship for medical treatment. "Everyone was scared to death,"

he said. "They were trying to get to the beach with people falling all shore to deliver trucks and soldiers."

At daybreak, there were air raids by German planes, with Burton's ship firing on the enemy aircraft, while German U-boats sunk Allied ships. During the fighting, Burton's gun loader, a Merchant Marine officer, was hit in the shoulder by a 20 mm projectile which ricocheted off the ship's deck.

"He said, 'Burton, I'm hit. I can't lift,'" recalled Burton, who was not injured in the skirmish. "He stayed with me until the firing had ceased, but it was like a real fireworks at the beachhead. Every ship was firing at the planes."

The *McCormick* unloaded its troops and sailed back to Southampton. By mid-July, the crew had made nine trips across the English Channel, landing some 12,000 soldiers, and equipment, at the Omaha and Utah beachheads.

Meanwhile, the battle on the beaches of Normandy raged on, with more than 9,000 Allied soldiers killed during the invasion. Buford resident Bill McDaniel was a Marine gunner aboard the battleship *Texas*. "Omaha Beach was our area of responsibility. Our job was to destroy the German gun around them."

The Allies began to push inland against fierce opposition and within 20 days had captured Cherbourg, while the push for St. Lo continued. By July 15, American forces had reached the outskirts of St. Lo but an enemy garrison refused to yield.

The Germans gave ground only gradually. It wasn't until July 24 that the Allies had reached the Perriers-St. Lo Road, bringing years of planning and hard work to an end. The final act of war could now begin — the great push through France and into Germany itself.

D-Day is a term used to describe the date of an invasion. "Of course, Normandy transcends all the others. It was the largest invasion in history, and hopefully there won't ever have to be another one," said McDaniel, 73, who went into the service in 1940 at the age of 19. "I couldn't live with myself with what the Japanese did to us, if I wasn't a part of it — and most people felt like that. I don't think there was so much unanimity in the history of the U.S. as then."

Recently, McDaniel and Burton met for the first time, and they swapped war stories. Although many soldiers served together at Normandy, it was difficult then to meet and share what they were experiencing.

"There, you were part of a little tiny segment. You knew what you were doing but not what the guy down the beach was doing," McDaniel said. "Now, we're scattered all over the country. And, we're not kids anymore, but it doesn't seem that long ago. I was there when history was being made."

Burton, who was awarded the Bronze star for his service at Normandy, is sailing with his wife, Dorothy, aboard a cruise ship to Europe. Monday, they will be at Normandy for the 50th anniversary celebration, as will others who fought, as well as presidents, prime ministers and dignitaries. It will be a time to reminisce — a last hurrah for the veterans of D-Day.

"Our lives were affected by (Normandy). It's something you never forget, and I guess the older you get the more vivid it becomes in your mind. You're thankful you didn't have to make the supreme sacrifice like others did," Burton said.

During battle, there is little time for thoughts of danger. Looking back now, there are moments of dignity. "The war was really fought by young men, and at a young age, you don't think about it. You just function the way you were trained. You don't think about how close you were to being injured," Burton said. "But in the twilight of your life, you start looking back at the things you did, and you're proud of being a part of it."



Bill Burton

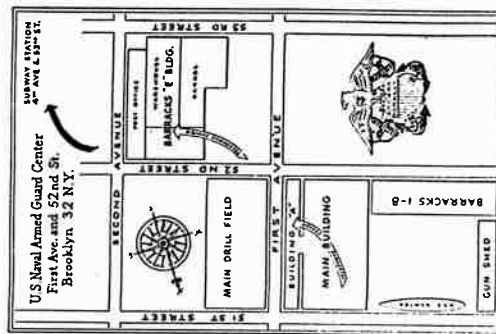


Bill McDaniel



*(Reprinted from "The Sea Breeze", the newsletter of the Royal Norwegian Navy War Veterans Association, Fall 1994, No. 57)*

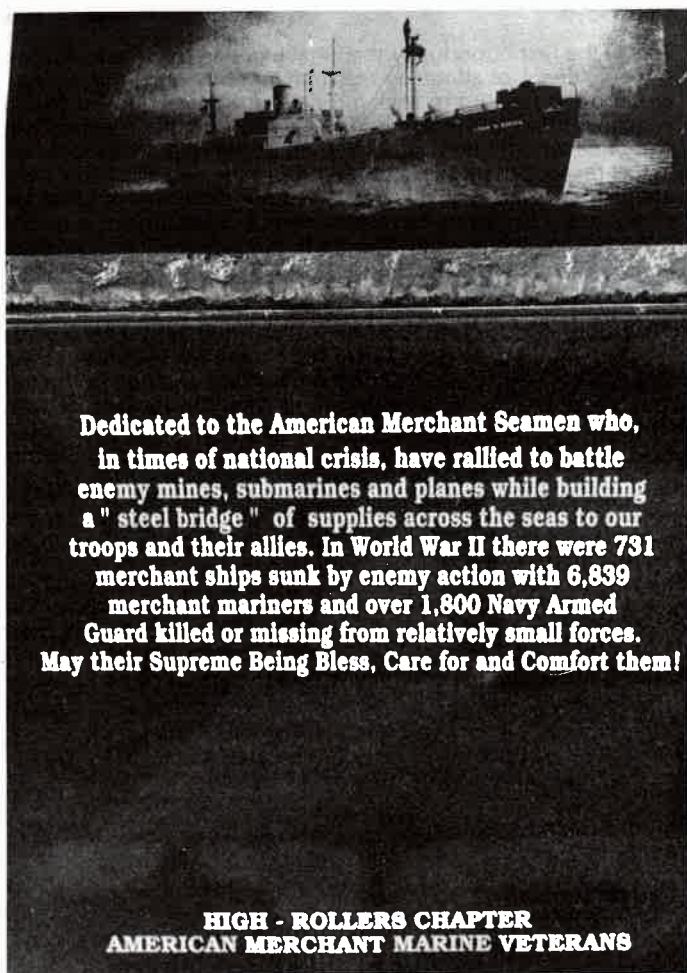
Royce J. Mitchell, Telephone: 891-4401  
4423 La Salle St., New Orleans, Louisiana 70115-5909



Left: "Red" Moser, Gunner's Mate  
Right: Hilton M. Floyd, Boatswain's Mate







(To Joe and Mary Zapotocky)

Hello Joe and Mary:

August 14th, 1994

Last week, I went aboard the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN at South Portland, Maine where it came back to where it was launched back in 1943. It stayed but a week on her return from France celebrating D-DAY plus 50 which she took part in. For the want of a better word, nostalgia comes to mind.

Next week, I expect to visit the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN while she visits the Boston Naval Shipyard. If my health stays fairly good, I am going to go to the Reunion in San Diego, Ca. as I have relatives near there, some of which I haven't seen in some time. Keep up the good work, stay healthy and perhaps we will meet in 1995.

Sincerely, John Maher, P.O. Box 441177,  
W. Somerville, Ma. 02144, 617-666-0538

Dear Charles,

In August, 1994 "POINTER", on Page 16, there was a note sent to you by Bill Perdue. I had a Gunner's Mate on the S.S. HAYM SOLOMON and also on the S.S. George G. Meade by the name of Bill Perdue. I wonder if you have his address as I would like to write to see if he is the same person.

I had a day to visit the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN at Portland, Maine a few weeks ago and boy did it bring back old memories. I had the snapshots with me that I had taken on board in 1944. The only thing that was different was the radar. I stood at the rail on the starboard side of the bridge, my battle station. I had my picture taken again, 50 years later by my wife, standing in the same place. IT WAS A WONDERFUL DAY!!

Sincerely and fraternally,  
Raymond J. McClean, 20 Patriot's Rd., Box 63  
E. Templeton, Ma. 01438

*Bill was the man he was looking for!! It made my day!!*  
— Cal Lloyd

Hi C.A.:

I have enjoyed reading the back issues of the "POINTER" and other material sent to me. I thank you and Forest Flanagan for it. I had no idea that there was an ARMED GUARD ORGANIZATION!! I have been busy for the past few years. I work producing BRAILLE for the blind, mostly school books. I hope the (censored) will help defray expenses some. I am sure your efforts are appreciated by others, as I appreciate it.

Frank Ramsey #11014



L-R-Leroy Mazyck (MM) Ralph Lucas (AG) E.J. Heins (MM) as they prepare to raise the newly struck Merchant Marine Flag at Patriot's Point, Mount Pleasant, S.C. on Independence Day July 4, 1994. The U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine and U.S.N. Armed Guard WW II Veterans took part.



Carl Kreidler holding Armed Guard wreath on D-Day +50 just before casting it overboard at ceremony on bridge of S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien 6/6/94.



**U.S.NAVY ARMED GUARD WW II 14TH NATIONAL REUNION**  
**TOWN AND COUNTRY HOTEL**  
**SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**  
**MAY 10-14, 1995**

**Ahoy, Mates!**

**Ahoy, Mates!**

**ITINERARY and RESERVATIONS**

**Wednesday-May 10, 1995**

Registration Check in Desk Opens 9:00 A.M.-5 P.M.  
Hospitality/Memorabilia Room Opens 9:00 til 1 A.M. Wed-thru Sat.  
On your own for rest of the day.

**Thursday-May 11, 1995**

Registration Desk Open 9:00 A.M.-5 P.M.  
Leave Hotel to Maritime Museum.....9 A.M.  
Bay Cruise (1 hour).....11:15 A.M.-12:15 P.M.  
Lunch at ANTHONY'S GROTTO.....12:30 P.M.—1:30 P.M.  
Seaport Village (Shopping).....1:30 P.M.—3:45 P.M.  
Leave for Hotel.....4:P.M.  
On your own.  
Cost for the Days Activity.....\$26.00 Per Person X \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Friday-May 12, 1995**

Registration Desk Opens 9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.(unless announced in packet)  
Pacific Starlight Cruise to Ensenada, Mexico. (Credentials needed)  
Days Activity \_\_\_\_\_ \$90:00 Per Person X \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Saturday Morning May 13, 1995**

Registration Desk Open 9:00 A.M. til ?? for Late Arrivals ???  
General Business Meeting \_\_\_\_\_ 9:00 A.M. til ???  
Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ On your own.  
Bus Tour of Surrounding Area \*\* \_\_\_\_\_ 1:00 P.M.  
\*\* "Old Town-Cabrillo Monument-Balboa Park"  
Check Choice: \_\_\_\_ Naval Base \_\_\_\_ Navy Ships No. \_\_\_\_  
Afternoon Activity.....\$12.00 Per Person X \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Saturday Evening- May 13, 1995**

Social Hour-No Host Bar.....6:00-7:00 P.M.  
Banquet/Dinner.....\$27.00 Per Person X \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Sunday-May 14, 1995 8:A.M.-10:00 A.M.**

Breakfast-(SIT DOWN) .....\$13.00 Per Person X \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
Followed by: TOASTS-SO LONGS and-SEE YOU IN ST. LOUIS!!  
Check No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Paid \_\_\_\_\_, 199 \_\_\_\_\_. **GRAND TOTAL PAID..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_.** \*

**\*\*\*\* BE SURE TO GET YOUR PICTURE TAKEN BY LARRY FRENCH FOR YEAR BOOK\*\*\*\***

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ M. \_\_\_\_\_ Ladies Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ Box No \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ 4+ \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Handicapped? \_\_\_\_\_ Lady? \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OUT TO: "U.S.N.ARMED GUARD WW II". **(MAKE COPY OF FORM)**  
Send Checks to: Joseph Zapotocky, 1846 Warmisland Ave., Vista, Ca. 92084-3330.

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Lone Sailor

U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL  
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## DEDICATION

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

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."



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**December 7, 1941**



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WW II Veterans Reunions  
OCTOBER, 1994

JOSEPH T. COLGAN  
308 FELTON ROAD  
LUTHERVILLE

5779

MD 21093