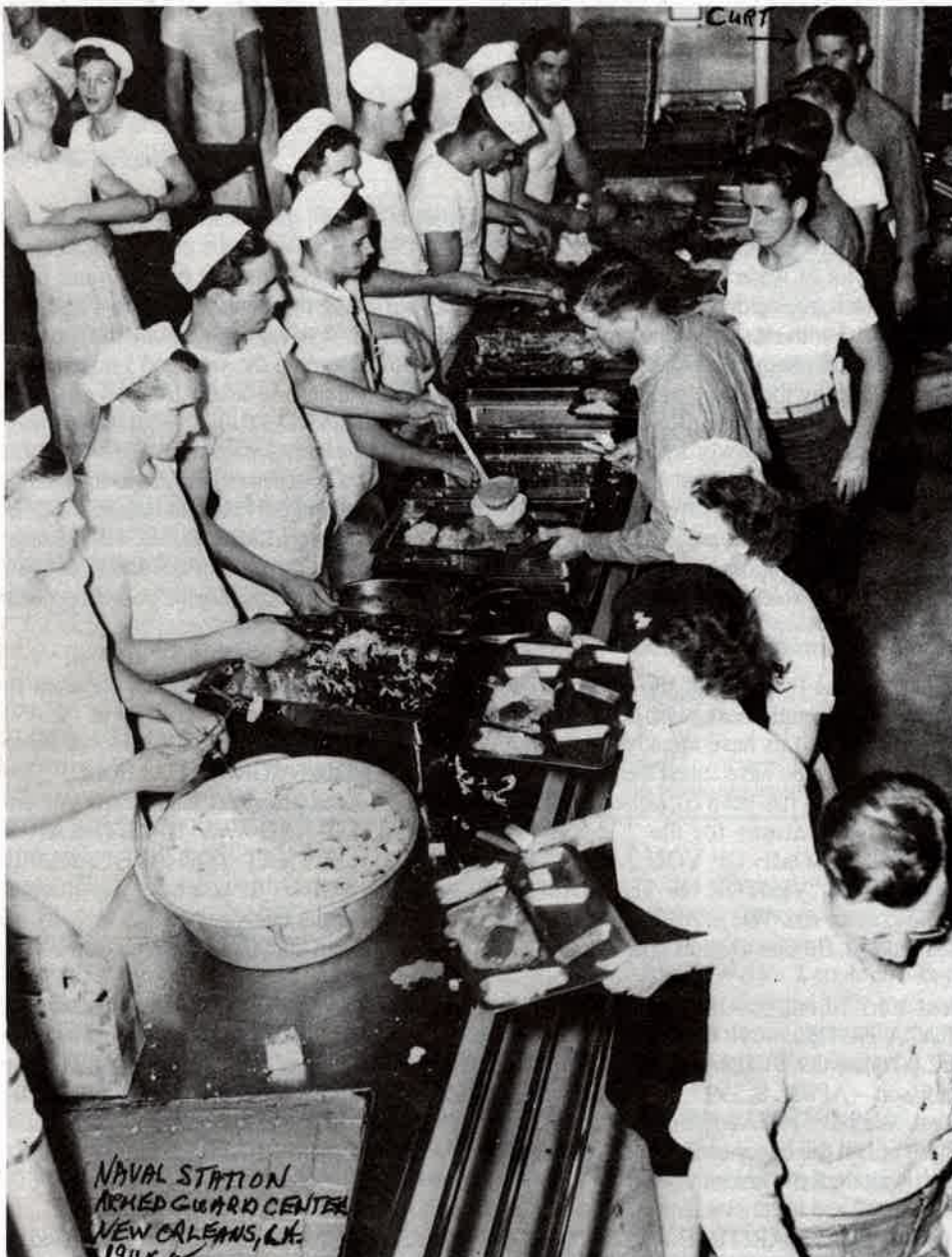


NOV. / DEC., 1996

THE P INTER



Happy Holidays



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"THE STORY OF THE U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD IS A DRAMATIC ONE OF WHICH I WAS NOT AWARE TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU HAVE SO EFFECTIVELY AND SYMPATHETICALLY TOLD IT."

VINCE GORDON
VICE ADMIRAL
U.S. NAVY RETIRED
Albany, OR

"I DON'T THINK THE WORD 'SUPERB' IS OVERDOING IT."
CHARLES F. JACKSON
CARY, NC

"SHOWED IT AT THE SO. CALIFORNIA A.G. MEETING. IT TOUCHED EVERYONE PRESENT."

D. LORRAE ANDERSON
VISTA, CA

"PRODUCTION, DIRECTION AND STORY REALLY GREAT. I WILL BE LOOKING AT IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN."

FRANK RIZZO
WEST BAYLON, NY

"ABOUT TIME THE ARMED GUARD WAS RECOGNIZED FOR WHAT IT DID."
ROBERT BOWERS
BRISGL, NH



DURING WORLD WAR II
THEY HAD 710 SHIPS SUNK
BENEATH THEM.

YET FEW EVER HEARD OF
THEM.

THEY WERE THE
U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD.

FORGOTTEN VALOR

TOLD BY THOSE
WHO SURVIVED

This is their story.
The long overdue account of
their heroism and sacrifices
while protecting the delivery
of essential war supplies
to allied troops.

AT LAST! AN ACTION-PACKED VIDEO
ABOUT THE WWII ARMED GUARD

ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!

\$24.95

PLUS \$3.00
Shipping & Handling

The only historic video account of this forgotten and unrecognized fighting branch of the U.S. Navy. Help preserve their gallant war record by ordering extra copies to pass on to your children and grand children.

Send check or money order to:
ZED MERRILL & ASSOCIATES
P.O. Box 19608
Portland, Oregon 97219
Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

Produced by a Navy Armed Guard Veteran.
PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS
WILL GO TO NAVY ARMED GUARD
WWII VETERANS ASSOCIATION.

Remember Pearl Harbor!

Officers for 1996

Charles A. Lloyd, Chairman & Secretary
5712 Partridge Lane
Raleigh, N.C. 27609
1-919-876-5537*

Neal and Dot Vermillion, 1997 Hosts
8286 Mary Lee Lane
Laurel, MD 20723-1171
1-301-776-6734

Lonnie D. Lloyd, Treasurer

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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

THE POINTER



Our Motto: "We aim- To Deliver" and "We-Did"

USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans

"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"

Dear Shipmates, their Ladies and Friends:

The Fall of 1996

It has been a very hectic time here in our beautiful part of the Universe since the printing of the last "POINTER" in July/August. Hurricane "BERTHA" came up the coast of North Carolina, dumping a lot of water in our section. Then along came "FRAN" and lots of water and high winds and tall trees didn't have a very good chance of surviving the small tornadoes. I lost 3 in the backyard with one large one landing on the back roof for 6 days, taking away the 2 decks and 140 feet of chainlink fence. Getting the stumps removed tore up the yard and I hope to get back in shape by the time you get this. Thanks for the many calls and letters from all of you. I answered most of them plus all the other "ARMED GUARD DUTY" such as adding approximately 200 newly located ones to the list. I have entered number 14,065 into the computer and still have about 11600 on the mailing list. I have added many names to the "SHIP LIST" also and sent out many printouts to a lot of you. I regret that the hurricane came at a time when I was to send out name and ship lists to the crews holding MINI-REUNIONS. I know many of you go to look over these lists to find a shipmate. Check page 2 of the Jan/Feb. 1996 Pointer for who to send self-addressed-stamped envelopes to in order to receive your shipmates printout.

I failed to give the price of the Radisson Hotel for our May 1-6, 1997 National Reunion in Alexandria, Virginia next year. It is \$82.00 per day plus 9 percent tax. Nearly 100 of the 450 rooms allotted to us have already been taken. It is on a "FIRST RESERVED" gets the room basis. Some of you have called the 800 number and have been told "SORRY, IT'S FULL." This was in error and has been corrected so please call them back but please let them know you are making reservations for the "U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD WW II VETERAN'S REUNION." SOME OF YOU ARE NOT TELLING THEM THAT YOU ARE "ARMED GUARD," or "VISITOR OF THE ARMED GUARD GROUP"!! If you have any trouble, please contact me. WE WANT YOU THERE!! If you can find a cheaper place to stay, by all means do so. Be sure to let us know that you'll be there so we can get you on the attendance list.

Neal Vermillion, our 1997 Host, informs me that the "OVERFLOW" hotel, RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL, 4641 Kenmore Ave., Alexandria, Va. 22311, 703-751-4510 room rates are \$82.00 plus tax PLUS UNDERGROUND PARKING!! Cut off date is the same as the Radisson - APRIL 8, 1997. It is within walking distance but you do have to cross a high traffic street. We have reserved 16 buses, for a total of 752 seats, on a first come, first served basis. These are all the buses available at this time in the Washington area. Reserve your place now - don't wait until the last minute!

I called "THE MARITIME ASBESTOSIS LEGAL CLINIC" 1-800-492-3849 and talked to Mark Picklo and he encourages the U.S. Navy Armed Guard of WWII and the U.S. Merchant

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! ca/**

Marine to call the 800 number for forms to fill out to file a claim. The phone call is "FREE" and you have nothing to lose. Have your Social Security Number, Service Number and list of ships sailed on and dates, if possible, in case they ask you. When you of the Armed Guard get the form, STRIKE THROUGH MARITIME and write ARMED GUARD above it so they will know. If you have any problem, call them back. No need to call me!! I don't have the answer. If you don't have any need for the money you may receive, you can always file the claim and send what you get to ONE OF THE 3 SHIPS RESTORED in your memory!!

The "ST. LOUIS - 1996 YEARBOOK" was also delayed at no fault of Larry French, our photographer; nor Rudy and Ellie Kozak who put the book together. Blame it on ME and "FRAN!!" I do hope you can get it before Christmas. You'll get it but I can tell everyone who gets the "POINTER", easier.

All the fall mini-reunions were a great success! All the drawings for prizes have been held, and the winners have been notified.

The Treasure Island Museum in San Francisco (410 Palm Ave., Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA 94130-0413) has asked us to participate in their exhibits. I will be looking into this. Anyone in the area who would like to assist please advise me!

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- In Memory -

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Arnold	Howard C.	Hollywood	Fl	Gertrude	4/25/96
Blakeley	David	Satellite Beach	Fl	Lillian	6/3/96
Bonaparte	Roy N	Stamford	Ct	Joann	7/18/96
Burns	Thomas W.	Shullsberg	Wi	Eileen	7/9/96
Cortese	Anthony R.	Pittsburgh	Pa	Virginia	6/18/96
Cronin	N. Paul	Aberdeen	Md	-	7/6/96
Dalton	Carroll D.	Asheville	NC	Helen	6/5/96
De Jong	Sidney	Bokeelia	Fl	Marjorie	9/21/96
Forde	Peter J.	Amityville	NY	Cathy	8/22/94
Forino	Walter	New Port Richey	Fl	-	8/1/96
Frazier	Frank G.	Albuquerque	NM	Alice	12/23/95
Gaona	Ralph R.	St.Louis	Mo	Mary	6/4/96
Gardenier	Edward D.	Amsterdam	NY	Jean	7/20/96
Gasperson	Lester F.	Asheville	NC	Crystal	7/29/96
Gerwick	Eugene	E.Liverpool	Oh	Ina Mae	2/12/96
Guiliani	Dominic	Pittsburgh	Pa	*Mary	5/7/96
Hackett	Dennis S.	Oregon City	Or	-	11/17/95
Helmick	Edgar N.	Sneedville	Tn	-	9/11/96
Henry	Carl	Greencastle	Pa	Betty	6/15/96
Kalisz +	T.J.	Lake George	NY	Jean	8/5/96
Kerby	Leonard M.	Lothian	Md	Myrtle	7/13/96
Kudla	Stanley	Chicopee	Ma	Cecelia	8/18/96
Loeschorn	Donald	New Hyde Park	NY	Doris	9/23/96
Luitje	William W.	St.Joseph	Mo	Margaret	4/11/96
Maclean	William	Dunedin	Fl	Flora	11/96
Manning	Parker G.	Toledo	Oh	Dottie	5/20/96
Merritt	Lucian	Abingdon	Va	Lillie	8/6/96
Munro	Barton	Natik	Ma	Maureen	4/7/96
Morris	Joseph F.	Florence	NY	-	5/2/96
Nash	Shepard K.	Serra Mesa	Ca	Audrey	10/96
Prettyman	Robert A.	Vero Beach	Fl	Dorothy	8/2/96
Raucher	Carl	Clinton Township	Oh	Betty	4/2/96
Salat	Victor	Donora	Pa	-	7/96
Simpkins	Curtis	Dublin	Va	-	9/18/96
Stickley	Calvin S.	Philadelphia	Pa	Marie	8/10/96
Sullivan	Thomas U.	Vancouver	Wa	Maxine	7/11/96
Swope	Nevin V.	Modesto	Ca	Mary E.	10/14/96
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★ ★ ★ ★ REUNIONS ★ ★ ★ ★

"REGIONAL, MINI-REUNIONS AND GET-TOGETHERS"

Support these local meetings while you're able.

CHECK YOUR JULY/AUG. 1996 POINTER FOR LOCAL MEETING TO SAVE SPACE

NAVY VETERANS GOING TO LONDON, ENGLAND?

You may want to stay at the "UNION JACK CLUB" Sandell St., Waterloo, London, SE1 8UJ England 0171-928-6401, Fax 0171-902 6060. Advance Reservations Tel. 0171-928 4814, Fax 0171-620 0565 and be listed as "TEMPORARY HONORARY MEMBERS."

MILITARY WOMEN VETERANS MEMORIAL

Service women, their relatives and friends can call 1(800)472-5883 OR WRITE: "WOMEN'S MEMORIAL" DEPT. 560, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20042-0560. Att: Wilma L. Vaught. Brdg. Gen., USAF (Ret), President. The Memorial will be at the Arlington National Cemetery and dedicated Oct. 18, 1997. To you ladies who served with the Armed Guard in WW II and attend the National Reunion May 1-6, 1997, you can visit the site and see its progress. (cal)

NAVAL MINEWARFARE ASSOC.: 9/28-Oct. 2, 1997, 16TH Natl. Reunion will be held in Reno, Nevada. Contact: Jim Minor, 224 Angelus Dr., Salinas, Ca. 93906, Tel. 408-449-5352

NOTICE NEW MEETING PLACE for OHIO SOUTHWEST. OHIO HOSTS Bob and Dot Ober, 7115 Dunn Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio 45230, 513-231-3181 HOST an 11:30 Luncheon on THE "2ND MONDAY EVERY OTHER MONTH" starting on DEC. 9TH, 1996, at "TOMMY'S BUFFET," 10784 READING RD., EAVENDALE, Oh. 513-733-3663.

WESTERN RESERVE CHAPTER OF A.M.M VETERANS OF EASTERN OHIO meets the 3rd Thurs. of each mo. at "THE OLD COUNTRY BUFFET" at "THE SHOPS at BOARDMAN's PARK" 387 Boardman-Poland Rd., Boardman, Oh at 11:30 AM. Contact Howard Brown, 2023 Thalia Ave., Youngstown, Oh, 330-783-0996. They hope to get an Armed Guard/Merchant Crew in that area to meet together so both groups are invited. ATTEND!!

NORTHWEST REGIONAL MINI-REUNION will be held 4/15-17/97 at the BEST WESTERN ICICLE INN, 505 Hwy 2, Leavenworth, Wa 98826, 1-800-558-2438. Contact Milford and Laura Vangstad, 313 2nd Ave., P.O. Box 1326, Zillah, Wa. 98953, 509-829-5579. Vic and Martha Roberts will Co-Host.

WYOMING ARMED GUARD Skipper Charles Gray, P.O. Box 126 Fort Duchesne, Utah 84078 reports that their next Mini will be in Torrington, Wy. on 6/14/97. They are also erecting a ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARMED GUARD MEMORIAL.

NOTICE CHANGE OF MEETING PLACE!! OKLAHOMA CREW contact RALPH McNALLY, P.O. Box 423, Skiatook, Okla. (918) 396-2693, or Jim Carlton, 519 E. 6th St., Bristow, Ok. 74010, 918-367-6764 on their meetings at SHONEY'S 21ST ST. and SHERIDAN RD., TULSA, OK.

THE WICHITA, KANSAS AREA MERCHANT MARINES WW II VETERANS CONTACT: Glen Trimble, 1725 Woodrow Ct., Wichita, Ks. 67203. Glen has also notified me that they will hold their 7th Mini-Reunion in Wichita, Ks. 4/25-26/1997. Wilfred Bergkamp, 530 Homestead, Colwich, Ks 67030 is the Armed Guard Coordinator. You'll have time to get to ALEXANDRIA, VA!!

SPECIAL NOTICE SNOWBIRDS!! EVERYONE WELCOMED!!! Many of YOU ASKED FOR IT - NOW!! YOU'VE GOT IT!! **MID-FLORIDA CHAPTER** - CONTACT: Jack and Corinne Renaud, 839 So. Success Ave., Lakeland, Fl. 33801, 941-688-1312 and assisted by: SAM AND DOLLY MORRIS, 2055 S. FLORAL AVE., LOT 221,

BARTOW, FL. 33830, 941-533-4891. They, along with Rudy and Ellie Kozak, 4950 Dory Dr., New Port Richey, Fl. 34652, 813-847-4038 and Harold Ceaser, 8621 Vixen Ln., Port Richey, Fl. 34668, 813-863-1367 will be hosting a "MID-WINTER MINI-REUNION" January 3-5, 1997 at the same Clarion Plaza Hotel on International Dr. in Orlando, Fl. that we held our 1994 National Reunion. Contact Kozak for itinerary. Hope to see you there!!!!

Rudy also notifies me that the **FLORIDA NATURE COAST ARMED GUARD** will meet on Wednesday 11/20/96 for LUNCH at "KALLEY K's" Restaurant located on Highway 19 In New Port Richey. Contact Rudy. Everyone is WELCOMED!!

SPECIAL NOTICE CHANGE OF MEETING PLACE! FOR RALEIGH, N.C. "TARP CITY-HOME OF HURRICANE FRAN"

"GRIFFIN'S RESTAURANT" BEHIND RED LOBSTER WHERE WE USED TO MEET. (IN THE QUILT ROOM) Under new management!! THE RALEIGH, N.C. Armed Guard still meets on the FIRST (1st) Saturday of the month at 8:00-10:30 A.M. Take I-440 around to the NORTH SIDE and take EXIT 10 NORTH to 4500 Wake Forest Rd.; onto 1604 N. Market Dr. See sign on right. If you're coming into Raleigh on a Friday to spend the night, call us and we'll get together. (CAL)

MISS ANY MORE? LET ME KNOW NOW! Please send me any correction as to time or date changes too!! IT IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN CORRECT MY ERRORS. (CALLOYD)

THERE WAS A KAMIKAZE SURVIVOR!

Kaoru Hasegawa, a Japanese kamikaze pilot shot down and rescued from the sea by a U.S. destroyer in WWII, presented a \$10,000 check to the U.S. Naval Institute in Annapolis to be used in publishing Naval History magazine. Last summer Hasegawa participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC, honoring the crew of the USS Callaghan.

Hasegawa, who now heads an international

packaging company, was a Lieutenant in the Japanese Special Naval Attack Corps on 25 May 1945, when he bore down on U.S. naval forces near Okinawa. His bomber took a hit and crashed into the sea near the Callaghan, which in turn rescued him. The plane's other two crew members died.

"Several of my teeth were broken, I had a broken leg, and contusions covered the left side of my body, from my hip to my ear," he recalled. "In general, the crews of the Callaghan and later the U.S.S. New Mexico were polite and treated me very decently.

SERMON NOTES... LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Dear C.A.:

Hope all's well. I was wondering if this was an "ARMED GUARD FIRST." Two Armed Guard "Widowed" people getting married. (*Here's the announcement folks. cal*)

Gloria and Bill Tubbs

We are happy to announce the bonds of our friendship now include the vows of marriage which took place October 26, 1996 at Union Congregational Church, Waupun, Wisconsin. We are residing at W3022 Tubbs Road, Seymour, Wisconsin 54165

Bill's wife, Zona, passed away two weeks after Nick passed away. They were at Nick's funeral and I attended Zona's. We crossed paths several times after then and in January, Bill came to take me out to lunch – and it went from there. We had a nice group of Armed Guard friends at the wedding. You can cancel my copy of the "POINTER," we'll just need one!!

The two of us attended the Nebraska Mini-Reunion in September and saw their Memorial Park which was most impressive. We also attended the Mini-Reunion of the Illinois/Wisconsin Crew this month. Next year, Bill and I are hosting the II/Wi Mini in Appleton. Keep this in mind. We will inform you of dates, etc. Bye for now. Gloria (Kuzulka) Tubbs.

What a wonderful relationship between friends. They used the ANCHOR and LIFE RING on their cards and napkins. We all wish you happiness. (From all the crew)

Ernie Hughes here and I am not an Armed Guard nor Merchant Seaman but am an HONORARY MEMBER in WW II of both. My brother-in-law, Russell Joe Yount is a member and served on the S.S. BOZMAN and later on the USS LOWE (DD-763). He had loaned me a few of the "POINTERS" which I found to be most interesting and I'd like to THANK YOU for the stories and work that you do and so does Russell.

In 1943, as a young 17 year old, I became an "OL'SALT" in the Navy by being a member of the USS HOLTON (DE-703) and on one of these, you became "SALTY" fast. Anyhow, in October of 1944, while on our convoy duty to North Africa, we were about 400 miles from our destination, on a dark night, we "TURNED TO" on General

Quarters. I was a Fireman at that time and a member of Damage Control Repair Party. We found two of our merchant ships in flame and at this point, we did not know if they had been torpedoed or what. We soon learned however that during a zig-zag course one of the ships had gone off its assigned course, crossing the bow of the other and a great collision had occurred.

The ships involved were the British tanker, the S.S. GEORGE W. MCKNIGHT and the American Liberty Ship, the S.S. HOWARD L. GIBSON, our "Host Ship." The collision caused the tanker, MCKNIGHT to spray Hi-Octane Aviation fuel from the bow to midship on both ships and she was burning as we pulled up along the starboard side of the GIBSON and played our fire hose across its decks. The large ground swells brought our ship up as the GIBSON slid down, the waves causing us to be thrown up against her, fouling our anchor, snapping the chain and dropping the anchor into the Sea.

About an hour and a half later, both the GIBSON and the MCKNIGHT crews had to abandon the ships. We picked up survivors from three lifeboats and one raft, 41 Merchant Seamen and 25 Armed Guard. Many were badly burned. Our Captain again brought us alongside of the GIBSON and we were able to play water from our fire hoses on her and helped stop the fire from spreading past midship and the ammunition locker. Later with one of her crew we boarded her by timing our leaping from our port bow to the GIBSON just aft of the starboard midships. It wasn't easy as the waters did not cooperate. We would be just a few feet away and be going up on a swell and the GIBSON would be dropping back into the swell. What a mess! The Captain brought the bow around together and I, along with other volunteers, finally boarded her and started her. After the merchant crew got the power up, we started using the GIBSON's fire hose, too.

Just before subduing the flames, I spotted a body on the port deck, aft of the forward gun mount. Maybe, just maybe, a few more feet and he would have made it to safety. IF! MAYBE! The body was one of two Armed Guard killed. The other was never found and probably was blown over board or just jumped over the side. Our repair party and those of the GIBSON were able to return to their ships. We paid tribute to these young heroes who gave their all, that

night. We gave them a "Christian Burial" at sea. Although we had only one body, we did have a wire stretcher for each. Two three inch shells were placed in them to weigh them down and as best we could, we stood at attention as words of prayer were read and they slid down over the side to rest in the deep.

Afterwards, our repair party was returned back to the HOLTON in a boatswain's chair. Our linesmen handled their lines well but I did get my feet wet when the lines slackened a little. It felt good - and I realized later that my shoes had had most of their soles burned off from the red hot decks.

We returned most of the GIBSON'S crew who were able, to their ship. The others, who were more seriously burned, were not transferred until we were about 150 miles out of Casablanca, North Africa, when at that time, a French Escort, the L'EVEILLE (PC-471) took over the escorting of the Gibson and supplied them with a Pharmacist Mate and surgical supplies to care for them.

The British tanker, the S.S. GEORGE W. MCKNIGHT, also was abandoned after the crash and her crew was saved by the another DE. They, too, were returned to their ship and likewise, salvaged their remaining Hi-Octane fuel and their crated aircraft on the aft decks. During the incident, the HOLTON picked up two enemy subs about 40 miles out but did not attack.

After leaving the GIBSON, we were at flank speed investigating a flare in the sky when we burned out a bearing on our port shaft. Another escort investigated and we limped into port on one screw. I have not seen or heard of any of the GIBSON'S crew since that time but at leaving our ship, they said, "THANKS FOR SAVING OUR SHIP." I hope they all survived the rest of the war and were able to return home to to their loved ones. One of our repair party lost his life later out in the Pacific at Manila, Philippines.

I do not know the names of the Armed Guard who lost their lives on the GIBSON but I do know that our crew and that of the GIBSON felt very, very deeply for the two, and only wish they could have come home as we did. Now you know why I am only an Honorary Member. Your Motto, "WE AIM TO DELIVER" and "WE DID"

speaks well for the Armed Guard and the Merchant Marines of WW II. As for the MCKNIGHT and the GIBSON, they sure did, for they were able to "DELIVER" about half of their cargo where it was really needed.

Cal, your S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN paid Portland, Oregon a visit 1st month and I had the pleasure of meeting Captain Patrick E. Buttner, his 2nd Mate and a couple of his fine crew. I told them about our episode of the MCKNIGHT and the GIBSON and showed them some pictures and gave the the photos to them and he asked that I write my story to place in the ship's archives. Then I thought - maybe Lloyd may want the same so I have enclosed the photos and this long winded note plus a donation to help with the mailing and other expenses for the "POINTER". Sincerely, **Betty and Ernest L. Hughes-M/M3/C, P.O. Box 531, Forest Grove, Oregon 97116**

Cal, as I promised you on the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN, while in Wilmington, N.C. last spring I'm sending you something on the "MURMANSK, RUSSIA RUN." I am sorry it has taken me so long a time but I have been in the hospital 3 times since then but am doing fine now. We went down to the docks the evening before we sailed the BROWN in Wilmington and that was the first time I had seen a Liberty Ship since WW II and I got so excited that I didn't sleep all night.

I was on the S.S. THOMAS SCOTT in Convoy JW 55B, a very famous Convoy because this was the first time RADAR was used to help sink a ship. The SCHARNHOLST was her name and she was sunk by the HMS DUKE of YORK. I am sending the Lt(jg)'s report but he did not report anything till after we left Lock Ewe.

The best I can remember of the trip was that a few days out of New York, we had GQ and that a sub came up in the middle of the Convoy and sank 2 or 3 ships. No further incidents from there to England. I do remember one Merchant Seaman who got off when he saw the crates marked USSR and stated he would die before he returned to that place. I don't know if he was kidding or whether he was assigned to another duty and told that but I do realize now how much danger we were in but did not seem to know it then (or did not care). It was really cold and miserable all the way over and back and while there.

There was no Ship's Log in the National Archives so I suppose they went down with the ship when it was struck by a torpedo on February 17, 1945 in Kola Inlet Russia, enroute from Murmansk to Gourock, Scotland with 40 Norwegian Refugees, 42 Merchant Seamen and 27 Navy Armed Guard. There were no casualties as all 4 lifeboats plus a raft were operable and they were picked up by HMS FENCER (D-64). Two hours later, we were placed on a Russian Destroyer and taken to Russia. The refugees remained on the British ship.

I would like to get together here in West Virginia with the crew before we are all gone and maybe if you put something in the "POINTER," they would host it somewhere. I would travel anywhere in the State. If there is anyone who will do this, I would do what I could to help. Enclosed is a check to help with the expenses there with the POINTER. **Forrest Flanagan, P.O. Box 119, Craigsville, Wv. 26205, 304-742-3160.**

I was happy to see your notice in the CBI (China-Burma-India) Magazine. I was in the 758th Railway Shop Battalion in Dibrugarh, Assam, India during WW II and I will ask you the same question as I have asked others: Do you have ROUTE SHEETS on the USAT MARIPOSA as to where she went to and from? We left Wilmington, California December 10, 1943 and arrived 1/11/44 in Bombay, India after making a refueling stop at Hobart, Tasmania. When I look at all the possibilities that we could have taken, I don't see how we could have sailed all that distance and not see any Islands.

The MARIPOSA was a very good ship as far as sailing goes. When it came to food, we almost starved to death. I boarded this ship weighing 152 pounds and stumbled off at Bombay at 126 pounds, too weak to carry my duffel bag. I had to drag it wherever I went. We came as close to MUTINY as any group ever did. Some of the enlisted men told the 1st Sargent to talk to the Officers about getting us some food or there would be some guys swimming the Pacific. It did wake up our Officers to how bad things were. After questioning some of us about what and how much we were eating, things improved a little but was not what it should have been. We did hear in 1945 that other Units that were on the MARIPOSA also had food problems and that the Captain of that voyage did get caught selling the troop supplies to the BLACK MARKET PEOPLE but we never

did have any "HARD CORE" evidence. I know it made many trips as there were over 5,000 of us RAILROADERS and a few replacements for other units already in the CBI area.

Railway Battalions served in 18 different countries during WW II. During the latter part of 1942, the War Department realized it would be necessary to take over and operate the Railway System in many countries, those that were our Allies in WW II. To start as fast as possible, it was essential to draft as many men possible from the various rail lines in America, the men who had the experience in all phases of operating and maintaining railroad systems. Along with the experienced men were a number of men for the many utility jobs, paramount to the success of the operations. The kitchen and medical people, just to name a few.

The men who made up one of the Railroad Battalions for the "CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER" was the 758th Railroad Shop Battalion, who were assembled at Camp Harahan near New Orleans, Louisiana. The men were from all but one of the (then) 48 States. On April 6, 1943, at 12:01 P.M., that body of men was to be known as the H & S Company of the 758th Railroad Shop Battalion. The Battalion consisted of four Companies: H & S, A, B, and C. Some of the draftees had never been on a train before, so the training process was to become extensive in order to meet the specialized need for the operation of our unit.

After "Basic Training" in survival skills at Camp Harahan, we went by rail to Bucyrus, Ohio for training in the Railroad Shop that was located in that city. On December 9th, 1943, we joined the five operating Battalions in Wilmington, California and sailed for India on the 10th of December. The units that formed "705 GRAND DIVISION" under the command of the Transportation Corps were: 721, 725, 725, 726, 745, 748 and the 758th Shop Battalion.

I will never regret going to the CBI, as India, especially is no doubt the most diverse Nation in the world, but interesting in every respect. I have some pictures of the MARIPOSA and its dimensions, but I thought that you might by chance have some ROUTE info. If you don't, do you know of anyone who does? I would be happy to hear from your unit and your experiences. Enclosed is some info on our Unit. Til I hear from you, Sincerely, **Ted Gumm, 8965 E. Indian Canyon, Az.**

85749-8120 520-749-0063. (P.S.Thank you for any help you can give.)

I read every issue of "THE POINTER" and think you do a great job. I read TOO MUCH about the "O'BRIEN." It is great that it was restored. I will visit her in Astoria, Oregon in the next few days, but let's hear more about some of the ships that made it through WW II and their crew members. I would love to know if any of my ol'shipmates are still around. I was on the S.S. T.E. MITCHELL 44/45 and the S.S. JAMES J. O'KELLY from 45/46. While on the MITCHELL, crossing the Atlantic Ocean, we were involved in and the cause of a loss of an Escort Ship. I believe it to be a Canadian Corvette type destroyer with loss of all personnel. I was only 17 at the time and now 70 and almost slowed down to reverse!! In case someone knows of this, I would appreciate more information. Thanks!! Howard Keene, P.O. Box 1142, Ocean Park, Wa 98640, 360-642-6997

I hope someone can enlighten Keene on this incident. cal

We are making progress here in the Youngstown, Ohio area as we organized our 2nd Ohio Chapter of American Merchant Veterans on June 26, 1996 for our first meeting for both Merchant Marine and Armed Guard Veterans. While reading the "POINTER," I noticed that you listed a few other "MM GET-TOGETHERS." It would help us a lot if you could insert our meeting at least once. I haven't attended Hilary Makowski's AG meeting in Pittsburgh but intend to do so in the future.

The new WESTERN RESERVE CHAPTER of the AMMV of EASTERN OHIO meet the 3rd Thursday of each month at

"THE OLD COUNTRY BUFFET" at "THE SHOPS at BOARDMAN PARK." 387 Boardman-Poland Rd., Boardman, Ohio at 11:30 A.M. Contact: Howard Brown, 2023 Thalia Ave, Youngstown, Ohio 44514-1144, 330-783-0996. All Armed Guard and other interested people are welcomed to attend. (My best wishes to you and all the Armed Guard Crew. Regards, Howard Brown.)

(More than happy to help get both crews together in that area. Good Luck! cal)

Marci Hooper the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN's Business Manager, has been let go. Those of us who volunteered to help her in the office miss her very much. She has done wonderful things to keep this ship afloat. As you know, she was instrumental in getting the ship to England and Normandy for the 50th Anniversary there and also its return to Portland, Maine where the O'BRIEN was built. I will keep you posted on what happens to the ship.

The voyage of the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN to the NORTHWEST was somewhat successful. The people were great and the U.S. Navy Armed Guard Crew greeted us in several ports. They acted as guides and we enjoyed their com-

pany. I am enclosing some photos of some of the crew displaying the Armed Guard Flag. I felt as if I had gone back 53 years in time - sleeping in like quarters and eating in the gun crew's chowhall.

Carl Nolte, Columnist for the Chronicle who sailed to Europe on the O'BRIEN, is in one of the pictures enclosed and he wrote about the ship's travel and also on its trip to the Northwest. (Notice dates on the photos) Sincerely, **Carl Kreidler, 15852 Via Eduardo, San Lorenzo, Ca. 94580. 510-351-1954.**

So sad to learn that someone like Marci Hooper, who has worked so hard over the past years to bring from darkness to light, a ship and the crews that manned her and those like her during WW II and mastered a plan to take her and a crew to Europe for the Celebration of the Historic 50 Anniversary of D-DAY and have the President of the United States William Jefferson Clinton and the First Lady, Hillary, on board for the occasion, to be cast aside after another Historic cruise to the Northwest Territory is hard to believe. I do hope those on the West Coast give credit where credit is due and recognize Marci for what she has accomplished. Please keep me posted. calloyd



TOP 4th (l-r)
Bill Shanks
Carl Kreidler

LEFT 5th (l-r)
Carl Kreidler
Bill Shanks
Carl Nolte

RIGHT 8th (l-r)
Bill Shanks
Harry Savalois
Carl Kreidler



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

This is a letter of thanks and gratitude. The position of Business Manager of the S.S. Jeremiah O'Brien no longer exists, and with it goes my professional connection with the ship. I am looking for new fields.

I wish all of you to know that the last 16½ years have been wonderful. They have been perhaps frustrating at times, perhaps exhausting at times; but they have been enlightening, fun, and above all else A CHALLENGE. (I thrive on challenge.)

My most precious acquisition from these years have been my associations with all of you. I have been very fortunate to work with colleagues in England, Canada, France, and all over the United States. I

have learned much from you. When I started volunteering at Bethlehem Shipyards in March of 1980 I had no clue of the future 16½ years.

From the early years when we got excited about sales totaling \$150.00 a day in the ship's store, to the overwhelming high of the Normandy '94 events, the ship's volunteers and other supporters have been just as important as the ship. For those of you who were involved in the early years this seems like a long time ago, as it was. The newer colleagues and associates experienced different challenges with me.

Special thanks go to the various international museum personnel, members of the Fourth Estate, government liaison personnel, and to the authors, suppliers, Liberty Ship aficionados, military vehicle collec-

tors, and lovely people I have met. My success in the last 16 years is largely due to the network of support you made available.

This network was a vital link. I owe each and every one of you thanks for questions answered, connections made, referrals to further sources, and above all for your positive attitudes. The years would have been far more difficult without you.

If logistics allowed, I would love to have all of you around a dinner table, for your company and to give you a toast. You have brightened and broadened my life, and you have taught me much. With continuing good wishes and warmest regards,
Marci Hooper, 171 Prague St., San Francisco, CA 94112, (415) 334-3709.

Suzy Doodle's A Hero; She Has Proof

"... Suzy Doodle has been on a raft for fourteen days after having lost her ship due to enemy action..." So reads, in part, an official document from the Office of the American Consulate in Beira, Portuguese South Africa. Suzy Doodle fired no guns during the enemy action. Her sole participation was a lusty outburst of barking at the unseen German sub that sent three torpedoes into the merchantman she was aboard off the East African Coast.

For Suzy Doodle is (today) an eight-month-old 'cross between a chow and a spitz, I guess,' in the words of her master, William T. Tschantz, S1c of Canton, Ohio, with whom she sojourned for the two-week period afloat. The pooch has been with Tschantz since she was three weeks old. A kindly couple in Dell Chase, La., presented her to the sailor last March and off to sea she went in his company.

Member of an Armed Guard crew, Tschantz and his mates were in the initial stages of the return run to this country last July when their ship was sunk. Upon orders to abandon, Suzy Doodle was carefully wrapped in blankets, dropped over the side and eventually handed into the raft occupied by her master and six others, including Tschantz' buddy, Robert B. Timm, S1c of Two Rivers, Wis.

Everyone was on emergency rations of hardtack and five ounces of water and that included Suzy Doodle. As a matter of fact, the last few days she was outdoing the others. Hardtack grew less and less desirable to the men and Suzy, by simple mathematics, had more and more.

During the first few days afloat, Suzy took to lapping salt water but a few firm slaps on

her black, furry face discouraged such practices. Otherwise, report Tschantz and Timm, who returned to the Armed Guard Center last week, she was a model of good behavior.

A British tanker rescued the survivors and deposited them in Beira from where they shipped home. Henry C. Allen, Shipping Advisor at the Consulate, met the AGs there and it was he who drew up the certification for Suzy Doodle. Bearing Mr. Allen's signature and the seal of the Consulate, the docu-



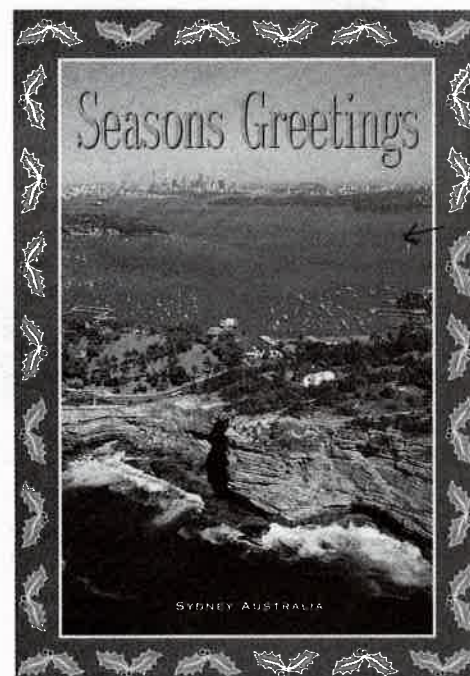
Seaman Timm, Seaman Suzy Doodle and Seaman Tschantz.

ment is impressively countersigned in Suzy's best style by means of an imprint of her right forepaw.

(Reprinted from "THE POINTER," Oct. 27, 1943)

Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year

Aerial view across the cliffs of the Gap to Watsons Bay, Sydney Harbour and the city, Australia.



Dear C.A.:

June 1, 1996

Enclosed are 3 shots of our Memorial that were made on the dedication day. We had over 250 attend from 12 states. We had the local Armed Guard coordinator attending and the USN Color Guard presented colors. The local Vietnam group provided support and made a very colorful display. We, as a group, are proud of this Memorial and pleased to include our tribute to the USNAG. We want you to know we are also grateful for the support you have displayed in the POINTER for the work of Katusa, Searle and Heins on S1139. Sincerely, Steve Trimble, 1725 Woodrow Ct., Wichita, KS 67203-2957.

"UNSUNG SAILORS"

As National President of the American Merchant Veterans Association, I would like to thank the East Brunswick Veteran Committee for their efforts in building our East Brunswick Memorial. I realize the theme of this Monument is to honor all the different services and I am sorry we couldn't pay tribute to a special group of men who are called the United States Navy Armed Guard. Their job was to man the guns and other duties aboard our Merchant Ships. My good friend, author Justin Gleichauf, wrote a book about this "Other Navy" and named them the Unsung Sailors of WWII. These volunteer gunners got little recognition for their part as our merchant marine shipmates in delivering the troops, guns and goods with us. They put their lives on the line for their country and lost 1,810 men in WWII and now that half a century has passed, we tend to forget their sacrifices. They are all now old Sailors and have few years left and we want you shipmates to know as long as we live the Merchant Mariners of WWII honor and salute you.

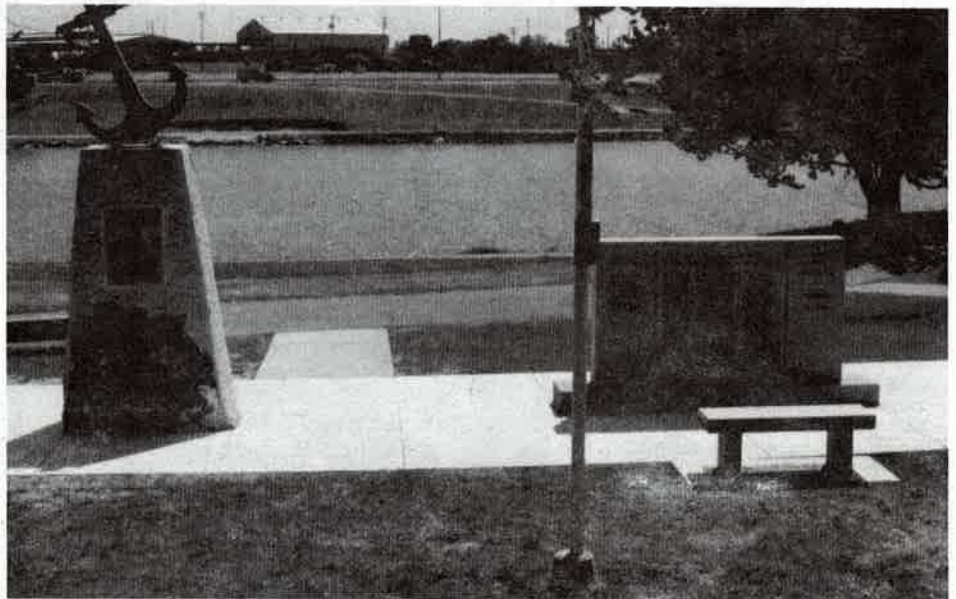
Half a Century has passed and Merchant Mariners finally have been recognized as Veterans. The U.S. Navy Armed Guard and the American Merchant Mariner Veterans have accepted each other as members to each of their organizations. We realize now what Alex Lombardi means when he says "Our Navy is not the Battleships and Cruisers, but is the Merchant Ships we Sailed on." Another Armed Guardsman, Mike Molinari, said, "When a Ship is Sunk, there is no difference between the Armed Guard and Merchant Mariners, they fought and died together and became brothers and shipmates and nobody can take that away from them."

I want to thank C.A. Lloyd, the National Commander of the U.S. Armed Guard, for including the Merchant Marine on the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC.

To all Armed Guards, it is my privilege to know you and "God Bless You All."

Again, "Thanks to the Veterans Committee for recognition of the WWII Merchant Marine Veterans on your monument. I am proud of my hometown."

George Searle, National President, American Merchant Marine Vets, East Brunswick, NJ



Armed Guard Center a Pool of Unsung Heroes

Navy Crews Who Man Guns on Cargo Ships Drift In, Stormy Petrels of War

By Morton Glatzer

A tanned young sailor, with four service ribbons on his chest to signify that he had been in all theaters of war, walked into the United States Naval Armed Guard Center, at the foot of Fifty-second Street, in Brooklyn, yesterday and heaved his sea bag from his shoulder.

"I'm back again," he announced to Lieutenant William J. Pitt in a matter-of-fact tone that almost belied the reality that he had been away for five months as a member of a Navy gun crew on a merchant ship. "When do I get leave and when do I go back to sea duty again?"

To Lieutenant Pitt, officer in charge of morale, welfare and recreation at the center, the sailor's terseness was nothing unusual. Since Pearl Harbor, tens of thousands of Navy gunners who bear the responsibility of protecting the invaluable cargoes of human lives and freight in the war zones, have arrived in the same manner at the center after hazardous voyages that put the stories of Sinbad to shame.

These men, who comprise the Navy gun crews on cargo vessels, oil tankers and troop transports, were returning to their shore home, their school and their recreation post—the Armed Guard Center, which is one of the largest permanent military units in the world.

Three Centers in U. S.

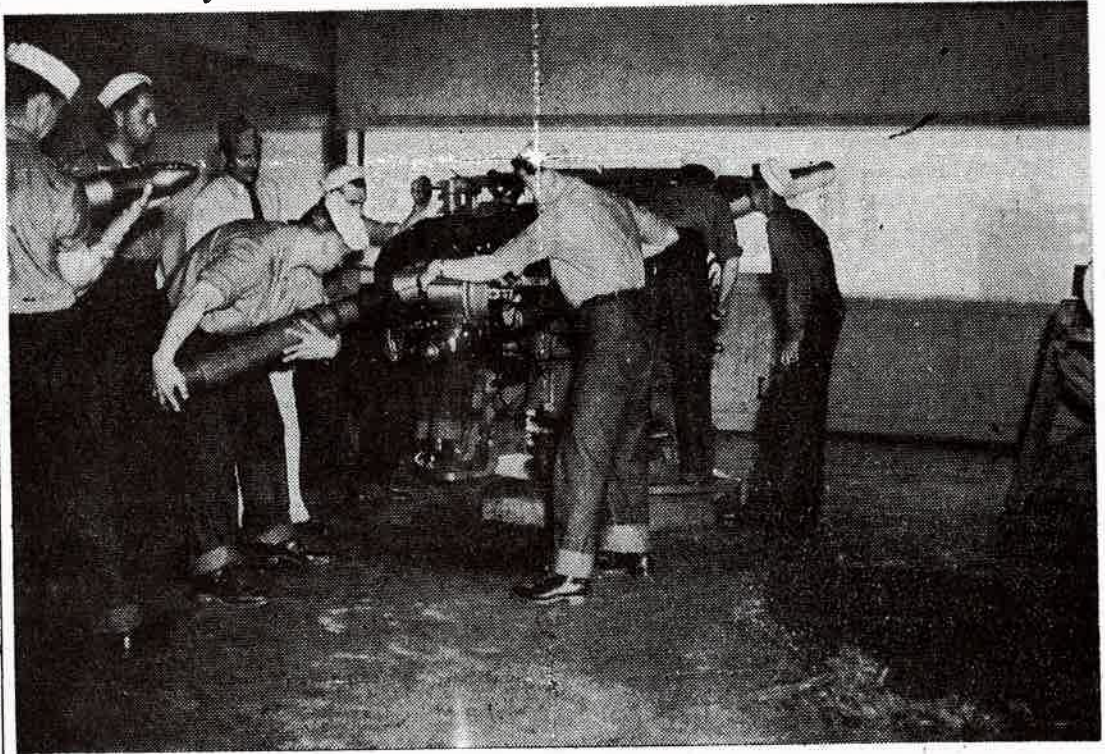
There are three Armed Guard Centers in the United States—one at Brooklyn, which is a pool supplying Navy gunners and communications men for convoys leaving from Atlantic seaboard ports; another at New Orleans, covering vessels departing from Gulf ports and the third on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay, which supplies men for merchant ships in Pacific ports.

The Armed Guard Center at Brooklyn was established by the Navy in November, 1941, in the huge building which served as the armory of the 2d Battalion Naval Militia Reserve since 1904.

The purpose of the center is five-fold:

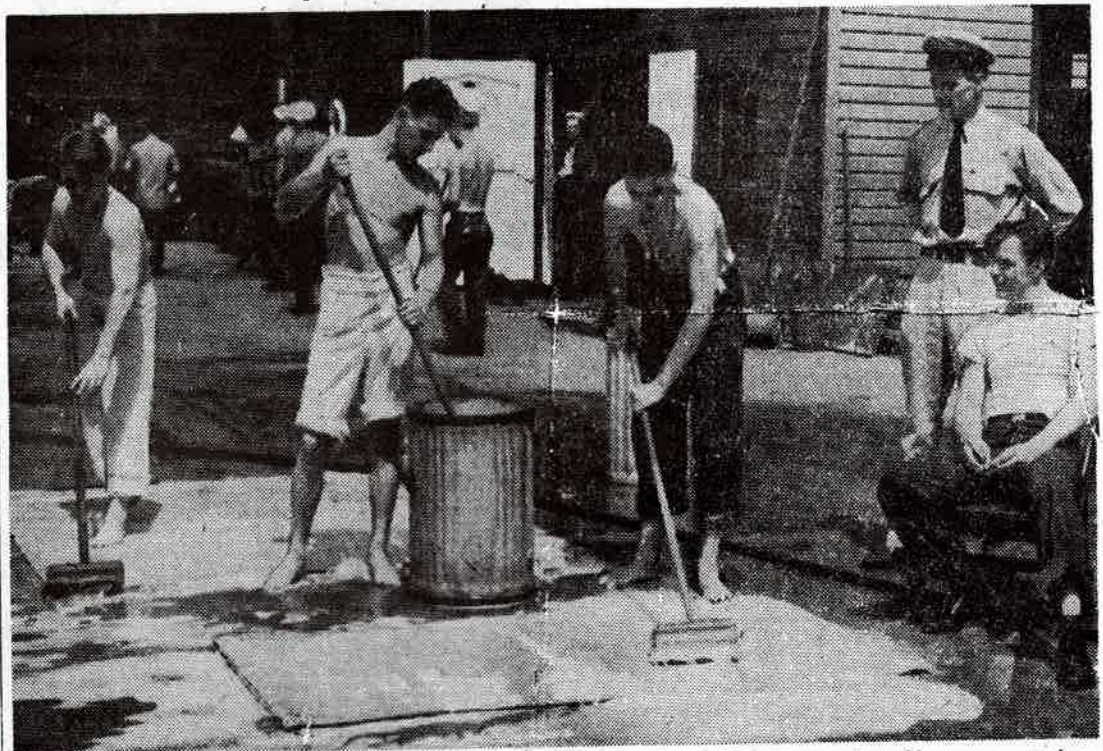
To be the base for men assigned as gunners and communications

Where Navy Gun Crews Study and Play Between Convoys



Herald Tribune—Rice

A corner in the Brooklyn Armed Guard Center, at the foot of Fifty-second Street, where Navy gun crews get additional training in the use of a 4-inch gun



Scrubbing hammocks on the dock is one of the frequent tasks at the center, where Navy gunners for convoys are obtained from the men living in or using the center for recreational purposes

men on non-combatant vessels in a convoy;

To serve as living and recreation quarters for members of the Armed Guard when they are not at sea;

To teach seamen the fundamentals in abandoning ship if it has been fatally struck by torpedoes or bombs;

To train men in methods of gunnery adopted since they received

their basic training months before, and

To give assistance in the welfare of the men's families while they are at sea.

No Man Power Shortage Here

The Armed Guard Center could be described as the naval counterpart of civilian agencies that supply men and women for work in war plants. But there can be no man-power shortage in the Armed Guard. Every merchant ship that departs from an American port must have a Navy gun crew consisting of officers and up to forty men, depending on the armament of the vessel. That crew is drawn from the pool at the Armed Guard Centers.

Many of the Armed Guard are unknown heroes of the war. They are the men who go down with ships and if they survive they go back for more. And once the gun crew is under enemy fire, each member has a responsibility which hitherto was reserved only for ship's masters or captains—in action against submarines, aircraft or surface raiders, the gun crews must remain at their post until the last moment when it is certain that the ship no longer can be defended.

At the center yesterday there was considerable action presenting a scene which Lieutenant Pitt, former member of the staff at Teachers' College, Columbia University, compared with "the Hollywood version of a huge newspaper office."

Chow Line Popular

On the main floor of the old armory, thousands of gunners were either in the chow line, in the canteen or on the "upper deck" playing games. Topside, Commander William J. Coakley, commanding officer, and Commander Joseph M. Young, executive officer, were busy with administrative duties of the center.

A group of men listened to Chief Specialist Frank Shirvis instruct them in a swimming pool in abandon-ship tricks—how to jump into the water to avoid oil and debris, how to convert a pair of sailor's trousers into a life-preserver by tying overhead knots at each end of the legs and buttoning up the waist, after which it can be inflated to hold up three men for a half-hour.

In a pitch-black room, Chief Petty Officer Max Miller, former instructor of naval science at Yale University, was teaching officers and enlisted men how to develop "night eyes" to detect ships in dark seas. On the dock, a group of men fresh from Camp Sampson learned how to handle anti-aircraft guns and make quick identification of planes with hundreds of models serving as a guide.

While all this activity was at high pitch, Lieutenant Pitt was wrestling with the vagaries of men seeking assistance in morale. Lieutenant Pitt is the controller of the center's welfare fund, consist-

ing of profits from the ship's stores and a Navy allotment. The fund is used to lend small sums to seamen who need "a dollar or two until pay-day," and to assist in solving emergency problems of families of men who are on sea duty. Twenty thousand dollars of the center's welfare fund is in constant circulation.

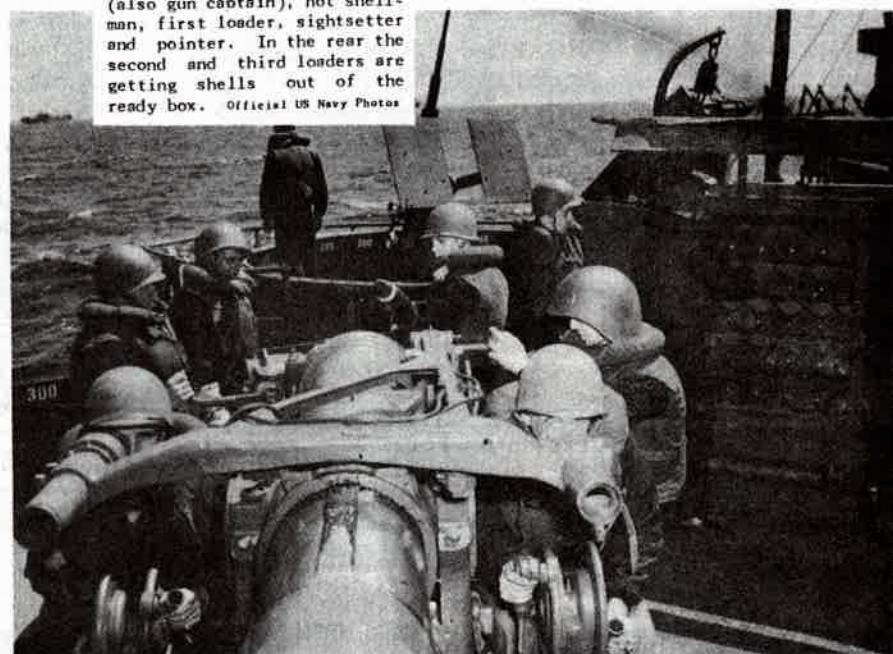
In another part of the building, men who were survivors of a ship that was sunk, presented their cases before the survivor board which was to study the capabilities of the men for continued armed guard duty and to decide whether they needed a brief va-

cation in a Navy rest home, a shore assignment or the most popular—a visit to the folks at home. For each month of sea duty, the men receive two days of leave. Men who have made hazardous voyages receive special compensation.

Throughout the entire area, men were carrying sea bags—they were either coming home to the center or going out for a few months of sea breeze. And in the front and the rear of the armory, barracks were under construction to fill the needs of the rapidly expanding Armed Guard.



BLUEJACKETS of the Armed Guard 'knock down' a 20mm. gun. This is a daily routine aboard ship, as salt air would rust and foul the gun. A model crew on a 4" 50 gun is depicted below. Left to right, trainer, plugman (also gun captain), hot shellman, first loader, sightsetter and pointer. In the rear the second and third loaders are getting shells out of the ready box. Official US Navy Photos



HAVE SHIP, NEED INFORMATION:

How to research the history of a World War II era ship

Reprinted from American Merchant Marine Veterans News, Autumn 1996, written by Theron P. Snell

If you have ever tried to put together a history of a specific ship, you have probably discovered the same problem I faced. Trying to track down the operational history of the S.S. SANTA MARGARITA, a World War II era freighter, I quickly found that little published material actually mentions specific ships unless those ships took part in a famous convoy, were sunk early in the war or were part of the battle for the North Atlantic before 1943. And few larger histories get specific enough to include details of any ship's routine voyages or daily routine at sea. So, I turned to archives and the records the SANTA MARGARITA herself left or the records generated by the crews who sailed her. Despite some major gaps in available material, I managed to find quite a bit, and I am writing now to pass on what I found, how I found it, and where you can go to duplicate the material for YOUR ship. The addresses will be listed at the end of this article.

I began my search looking only for information about the SANTA MARGARITA's voyages. I found the most complete source to be the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Although vessel deck logs no longer exist, the Archives does hold voyage reports written by the C.O. of the Naval Armed Guard on board. The usefulness of the reports depends upon how detailed the writer wanted to be. Some of the reports on the SANTA MARGARITA are quite good and provide a detailed narrative of the voyage; other reports are very sketchy. Still the reports list sailing dates, ports of call, ownership/charterer of the ship, type of cargo and some account of each voyage itself. These reports are filed by ship name and are only part of the file. Each complete ship's file usually contains these voyage reports, Armed Guard crew lists, data relating to armaments and supplies provided by the U.S. Navy, correspondence relating to recommendations for medals for Armed Guard crewmen, orders and miscellaneous correspondence. These files can be found in Records Group #38, "Office of the Chief of Naval Operations."

A second source of information about each voyage, also at NARA, can be found in Records Group #24, "Bureau of Naval Personnel." These records include the so-called "Smooth Log" produced by the

Armed Guard unit on board the ship, filed by ship name. The "Smooth Log" seemed to be a recopied (cleaned up?) version of the daily log kept by the Armed Guard Commander. Sketchy, these logs focus on the day-to-day routine of the Armed Guard, not the merchant crew. And, at least in the case of the SANTA MARGARITA, only a few months worth of the logs still exist. I also managed to find additional records in NARA that cover the cargos carried on each trip, though not the trips themselves. Records Group #178, "Maritime Commission Records," contain "Cargo Report and Vessel Performance Summary" reports. These reports list cargos carried, tonnages and the ports where the cargo was either loaded or discharged and the respective tonnages. They can also note reasons for delays or problems encountered during the voyage if it affected cargo performance. These reports also vary in the amount of information provided. On some of them, the cargo is detailed; I found, for example, that on one voyage to Iran, the SANTA MARGARITA was carrying 513 tons of beer! Other reports, though, only note cargo as "secret" or "unknown." These notations always corresponded to those trips on which the SANTA MARGARITA was carrying troops.

I also went to the U.S. Navy Historical Center in my search for information on the SANTA MARGARITA. Knowing only that the SANTA MARGARITA had been in a convoy attacked by a submarine and the dates, I wrote to them looking for any details. They were able to identify the convoy (CU-36), the name of the tanker sunk (the S.S. JACKSONVILLE) and even the submarine that attacked (U-482). The Historical Center and its Operational Archives Division provided me two sets of records, both of which are excellent sources of information. First, they send me the "Ship Movement Card," a document that has proven to be crucial in my search for further information. It lists all sailings of the ship (arrival and departure dates and ports of call) AND the convoys to which it was attached for that sailing, if any.

With the convoy designations from the "Ship Movement Card," I was then able to take advantage of the other source of information: the 10th Fleet file of each detailed

report, messages to and from the convoy, various correspondence and even the merchant marine commodore's report. These reports often provide detailed, day by day narratives of the voyage, including ship movements of both the escorts and any merchant ship that may have dropped back as well as actions taken by the escorts.

The biggest drawback to these records has been their very size; the Operational Archives Division is not set up to photocopy such records and asked that I visit them at the Washington Naval Yard. Currently, though, the Naval Historical Center is in process of transferring some files to the National Archives, and the Archives does indeed provide a mail-order photocopying service. Incidentally, NARA also holds the deck logs of all Navy vessels. Once you identify convoy escorts from the Convoy File, you can then obtain the deck logs of those escorts. Though they mainly record the activities on board the escort hour by hour, they ALSO provide details of the convoy, down to interaction with specific merchant ships. These logs are filed by ship name, though I no longer can recall the specific Records Group. And, the Archives also holds copies of the German submarine deck logs on microfilm, available for purchase. I was able to buy the log of U-482, the submarine that attacked the SANTA MARGARITA's convoy.

Parenthetically and as many of you already know, with the home port of a ship and the pay-off dates of each voyage from the "Ship Movement Card," you can obtain copies of the "Merchant Vessel Logbook" or "Captain's Log" through the U.S. Coast Guard and the regional National Archives near the ship's home port. This log lists the merchant crew and ports of call for that particular voyage. The report is censored, so the character remarks and disciplinary issues recorded in the log are blocked out, and only the crew list itself is readable. This record provides the proof needed to claim veteran's status as a merchant seaman. Because the directions are so complex and depend upon the home port, write to the Coast Guard for a copy of their "Reference Information Paper #7" at the address given below.

Finally, my own interest took me from the

details of the voyages taken by the SANTA MARGARITA to the ship itself. Because the SANTA MARGARITA was a standard designed C2-C-B1 and not a "Liberty" or a "Victory" ship, I had to look hard to find details of her construction and history. I don't have the space to list the various sources I have tried. Let me suggest the Maritime Administration as a good starting point. They can provide basic statistical data about the ship, including its description and the dates of its service. Most importantly, they can provide the Maritime Commission hull number, the builder's hull number and the ship's official number, identifications needed to pursue research on the ship. Another good single source of covering the standard design ships of the Maritime Commission can be found in L.A. Sawyer and W.H. Mitchell, FROM AMERICA TO UNITED STATES: THE HISTORY OF THE LONG-RANGE MERCHANT SHIP-BUILDING PROGRAMME OF THE MARITIME COMMISSION. PARTS I-IV, World Ship society, 1981. This book provides the hull numbers for these ships as well. Back issues of MARINE NEWS or the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NAVAL ENGINEERS can provide background data and design specifics, too.

Finally, many archives throughout the United States hold maritime photographs. I have used only three. The National

Archives Still Picture Branch (301-713-6625, X221 or 224) holds the largest files, and I found a 1944 photograph of the SANTA MARGARITA there. I located a 1942 photograph of the SANTA MARGARITA at The Mariner's Museum (100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606), and the San Francisco Maritime NHP Archives (Building E, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94123) holds a 1961 photograph of the SANTA MARGARITA as the SANTA ADELA. Each archive has different ordering information, so they should be contacted separately.

I am continuing my search for material covering the SANTA MARGARITA, both during World War II and post war as well. Her name was changed first to ALBONI and then to the SANTA ADELA in 1946. As the SANTA ADELA, she sailed with Grace Line until 1970, when she was scrapped. If anyone knows of her or sailed aboard her, I would very much like to hear from you. And I would always like to hear from anyone who may have other sources of information/records that I haven't considered yet. In the meantime, I hope this has helped.

ADDRESSES:

Note that both the National Archives and the Navy Historical Center are currently shifting records to the Archive's new facility in College Park, MD. If you plan to go

in person, either write or call the Archives in MD to determine if the records you want are available. Many ship records have been transferred. Use the general telephone number listed for the Still Picture Branch. The Archives Records Group #178 may still be in Washington, DC, but the other records groups I mentioned are now at College Park.

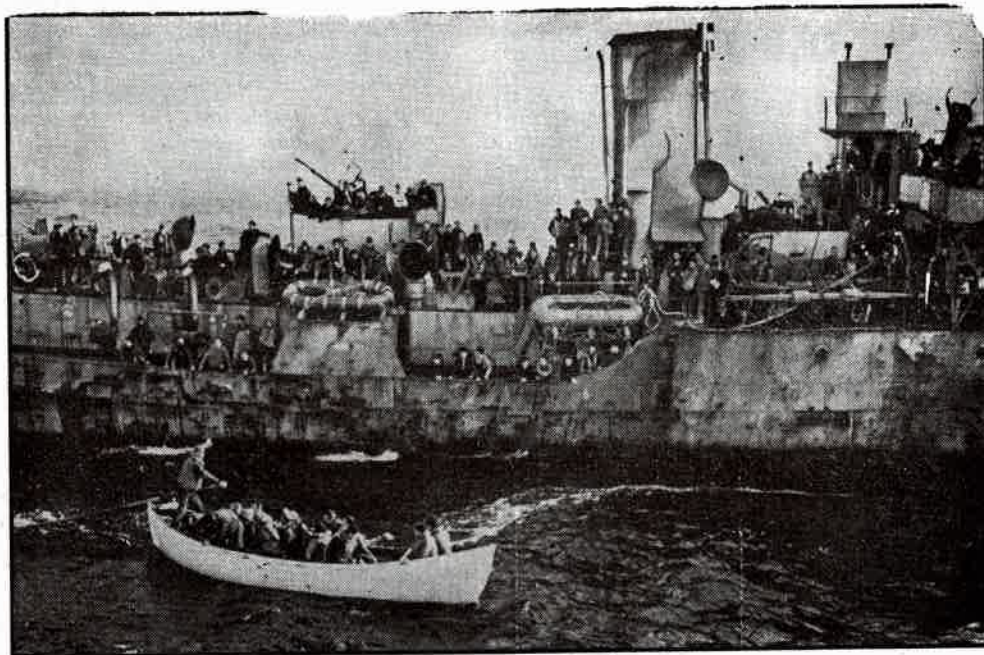
National Archives and Records Service

1. Military Reference Branch
Washington, DC 20408
(Ref: 202-501-5390)
- or 2. 8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740
(Ref. 301-713-7250)

Department of the Navy
Naval Historical Center,
Operational Archives Branch
Washington Navy Yard
Washington, DC 20374

Commandant (G-MVP:1/12)
United States Coast Guard
2100 2nd Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001

U.S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration
Records Management (Room 8317)
400 Seventh Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20590



(U. S. Coast Guard Photo via International Soundphoto)

Life Saving Corvette

A Canadian corvette prepares to take on survivors from torpedoed allied merchantman somewhere in the Atlantic. Warship, which shared U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Campbell's fight with U-boats, saved 160 men and a cat on trip.

Dear Cal, I was so happy to read in the POINTER the article on Convoy ON-166 and the sinking of the S.S. Chattanooga City. Here's a newspaper clipping of the survivors of our ship and two others. The Corvette was the HMS Trillim, which transferred our gun crew over to the Coast Guard Cutter SPENCER. Thanks, Ole Salt, Billy C. Heafner, 2450 Devon Dr., Dallas, NC 28034, (704) 922-7997.

NOTICE!

If you haven't been able to get ahold of me, it's because I'm either painting, running a rototiller, putting up a new deck, or putting a roof on. Please call back! I have not abandoned ship!

New Books That Are Just Great!!

01. "NO TIME FOR FEAR" by DIANE BURKE FESSLER is the story of over 100 nurses of WW II and their experiences of capture by the enemy and POW camps; the sights of wards filled with legless, armless, burned young men straight from the battlefields in Europe and the Pacific. Their stories are a reminder of what they faced and never told of the tales of illness and hardships, blinding blizzards, and near starvation and their courage. It lets the next generations know more of their suffering so they can live in Peace. Michigan State University Press, 1405 S. Harrison Rd., Suite 25, Manly Miles Bldg., East Lansing, Mi. 48823-5202 ISBN 0-87113-416-7 Hardbound - \$34.95 *(A book everyone should read. They saved many lives. cal)*

02. "WE DELIVERED" by LYLE E. DUPRA (ARMED GUARD) is of the U.S.N. ARMED GUARD and MERCHANT MARINES of WW II. It's 350 pages and will be published by the TARGET DATE 3/15/97. ISBN -212-7 \$26.95, Publisher-Sunflower University Press, 1531 Yuma P.O. Box 1009, Manhattan, Ks., 66505-1009, 1-800-258-1232. *A wonderful KEEPSAKE for the next generation to know of what you did. (cal)*

03. "FIRECLAY" (ISBN 1-57745-009-4) \$14.95 PPD is an autobiography by our Armed Guard Tom Bowerman of his experiences in the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), U.S. NAVY Armed Guard WW II and how it was to be reared in the South before, during and after the great depression of the '20's and early '30's. Tom is the Ol'Salt who sent out over 8,000 printouts of your shipmates we have located. He helped "Y'ALL - Now "Y'ALL help Tom! Send check or M.O. to: Tom Bowerman, 814 Springdale Ave.,

Anniston, Al. 36201.

04. "DIARY OF A MURMANSK SURVIVOR" (ISBN 0-9638884-0-4) \$29.95 - by Armed Guard R. Montague Anderson, 970 Helix Ave., Chula Vista, Ca. 91911, 619-420-2210. To be reported "MISSING IN ACTION" twice by the Navy must have been very upsetting to his family and friends and he tells it like it was. *(cal)*

05. "WITH THE SOMMELSDIJK IN THE FAR PACIFIC" by Dean L. Mawdsley, edited from Experiences of the late Paul M. Ellwood - MD (A Naval Medical Officer) on the SOMMELSDIJK during World War II. (\$17.50 plus \$2.00 shipping. Can be obtained from: Associates of the NMM Library Bldg E., Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, Ca. 94123. *(A tribute to the ship and crew. cal)*

06. "TORPEDOES IN THE GULF" (ISBN 0-89096-627-3) by Melanie Wiggins, published by Texas A&M University Press, College Station, Texas 77843-4354. *(Very well documented and gives some insight, looking through the eyes of the German U-Boat commanders.)*

07. "THEY AIMED TO DELIVER" (ISBN 0-9651797-0-2) A novel on the Armed Guard by Charles Jackson. Send \$15.00 to: TATD, P.O. BOX 4194, Cary N.C. 27519.

OLDER BOOKS

"UNSUNG SAILORS" (ISBN 0-87)21-770-4) by Justin Gleichauf is a tribute to the U.S.N. ARMED GUARD in World War II. Published by the Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland 21402. 480 pages. Price: \$32.95 plus \$2.00 S & H.

This book can be purchased from either of the 3 ships. PRICELESS! Worth every cent!! cal

"TWO YEARS BEHIND THE MAST" (ISBN 0-89745-138-4) by the late Harold J. McCormick published and sold by: SUNFLOWER PRESS, 1531 Yuma (Box 1009), Manhattan, Kansas 66502-4228 (913) 539-1888. *READ IT-APPRECIATE IT-REMEMBER IT! IT'S GREAT-(cal)*

"THE MEN-THE SHIPS" (Library of Congress # 76-11392) by the late Chester J. Szymczak. Published by Great Lakes Publishing Company, P.O. Box 1490, Milwaukee, Wi. 53201 (address in 1976) tells of the sinking of the S.S. DORCHESTER taking the lives of 673 lives; 14 of them were of the Armed Guard gun crew and of the Four Chaplains; George L. Fox (Methodist); Alexander D. Goode (Jewish); Clarke V. Poling (Reformed Church in America) and John P. Washington (Catholic) who gave their own lifejackets so four others may survive. A quote from President Harry Truman at the FOUR CHAPLAINS CHAPEL, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. Dedication Ceremony on Feb. 3, 1951 is as follows:

"We must never forget that this country was founded by men who came to these shores to worship God as they pleased. Catholics, Jews and Protestants, all came here for this great purpose. They did not come here to do as they pleased - but to worship God as they pleased, and that is an important distinction. The unity of our country is a unity under God. It is a unity in freedom, for the service of God is the perfect freedom. If we remember our faith in God, if we live by it as our forefathers did, we have no fear for the future."

JOHN W. BROWN "ADOPT-A-RIVET" PROGRAM

In order to raise funds for our 1997 dry-docking we are seeking support from corporations, foundations and the state government. But of course the real core of our support has always been our members. You, more than anyone else, are dedicated to the preservation of the JOHN. W. BROWN and you have always come through for us!

Our plan is to replace all of the rivets under the engine room which have not already been done during our last two drydockings. This amounts to a total of 2,600 rivets. At an average cost of \$56 per rivet, this would amount to a bit less than \$150,000 - just for rivet work. Other routine drydock work and

some steel work and other needed repairs may more than double this figure. Should we raise more money than the required minimum, we may be able to do more rivets, but our agreement with the Coast Guard requires that we drydock the ship next year if we are to keep steaming.

Adopt-a-Rivet and receive:

- A full color 11x17 poster of "Brownie the Riveter."
- An illustrated booklet about riveting and the use of rivets in Liberty Ships.
- A certificate describing the location of your rivet.
- Your name posted aboard the JOHN W. BROWN on our Adopt-A-Rivet "Role

of Honor."

- For a donation of \$560 or more (ten rivets) you will receive an original 1942 "Presentation Rivet" from the hull of the JOHN W. BROWN mounted on an attractive hardwood plaque with a personalized brass nameplate.

Your help is urgently needed so that we can meet our goal, replace the rivets and keep the JOHN W. BROWN steaming! You will find that the items we are offering in return for your support are most interesting and unique. Sincerely, **Brian Hope, Chairman, Project Liberty Ship, P.O. Box 25846, Highlandtown Station, Baltimore, MD 21224-0846.**

MEMORIES HARD TO FORGET

Thanks again for all the information you have sent to me. I dashed off this story as it came to me. It's right from the heart as I came so close to losing my life in 1983 that I have a recollection of what the men on the "LAKE OSWEYA" went through. It's something for all of us to think about and never forget and remind others so they, too, may not forget. All the best, Bob Cusick

Those of us who sailed during World War II on ships delivering the cargo and the troops under trying conditions, consisting of Merchant Seamen and U.S.N. Armed Guard Gun Crews are fortunate to be here so many years later. We are fortunate indeed as many of our shipmates lost their lives during this tragic time under adverse situations - inadequate protection against a prepared nation of trained killers.

I am sure that many of us today remember friends who we were in training with or met along the way who were assigned to other ships and wondered where they went and if they survived, by "LUCK OF THE DRAW," the voyage into the unknown. Many, we found out later, had survived their ships sinking and suffered from the injuries and agony of the cold water or memories of the fate upon the open waters in lifeboats and liferafts for many days. Many who died were of a young age when their whole lives should have been before them. Such a tragedy.

I would like to reflect on some of them. One, in particular, was a good friend and shipmate of mine by the name of Herman J. Mathison. When I got out of school at the age of 18, I started going to sea and in September of 1941, I got an "ORDINARY SEAMEN'S BERTH" on an oil tanker, S.S. AXTELL J. BYLES. We carried crude oil from Texas to a refinery in Bayonne, New Jersey taking about two weeks, roundtrip. We were loading in Port Arthur, Texas when Pearl Harbor was bombed. We had been traveling without lifeboats during "PEACETIME."

When the sinking started along the East Coast, we were promised liferafts to be put on board but they never did. Finally, we said that the next trip back, we would all quit if we didn't get them. We got back February 2, 1942 and still no rafts so a bunch of them said let's quit and I went along with them. An Able Seaman on my

4 to 8 watch and I became great friends. He taught me a lot about tankers and seamanship. His name - Herman J. Mathison, 21 years old. He said that he was going to a shipyard in Brooklyn, New York to get an AB's job on a Ford Motor Company ship, the S.S. LAKE OSWEYA of which his father was the Boatswain.

I went home to Boston and he called me up and said that his father asked the Mate, and the Mate said I could have an ORDINARY SEAMAN'S JOB" but to not come down in two weeks and sign on just before sailing time. A little over a week later, he phoned me again to say that I couldn't have the job as the Mate was giving the job to his nephew, so I left for New York to get another ship. Just before the ship sailed, he called again saying that I could have the job after all, but I was gone and didn't hear of the message until too late.

I went to the Esso Shipping Office late one afternoon and they told me to get over to Bayonne, New Jersey to sign on the S.S. ESSO BOSTON. It was dark, cold and snowing when I finally lugged my seabag up to the gangway. When I arrived, the Mate said there had been a mistake for an Ordinary Seaman had been shipped earlier and I was to go back to the Esso Office the next day. Instead, I went over to the Tidewater Oil Shipping Company and I shipped out on the tanker, the S.S. EDWARD L. SHEA and we made a trip to Corpus Christi, Texas and back to Bayonne, arriving on April 2, 1942. So many ships had been sunk around us that another guy and myself said let's go over to the Brooklyn Army Base and join up and we did but when they found out that we were seamen, they assigned us to to S.S. Merrimack, a ship they had just taken over. After a couple of weeks on her, we found out she was going to be in longer than we thought so I got off and shipped over on the U.S. Army Transport S.S. JOHN L. CLEM, a troopship. We made a trip to the Caribbean and came back to New Orleans, Louisiana on June 20, 1942.

While there, and walking up Canal Street, I bumped into one of the seamen who had stayed on the MERRIMACK. We went into a cafe and he told me the whole story of how she was torpedoed and sunk and how only a few had lived through it. That was bad enough, but I had worse in store for me. Herman Matisen lived in New

Orleans and I had his address so I went there to see if he was at home, or to find out where he was. I knocked on the door and a young girl of about sixteen opened the door. I said, "My name is Bob Cusick and I once sailed with with your brother on the S.S. AXTELL BYLES. Is he home or can you tell me where he is?"

She stared at me, then grabbed me by my arm and led me into the kitchen where her mother was sitting at a table and she told her who I was. Everybody started crying, including me, because I knew that something was terribly wrong and I had an idea of what it might be. They had been notified that the S.S. LAKE OSWEYA had been sunk and their relatives were dead. The mother had lost her husband and only son, and the girl had lost her father and only brother. That day was not a "RED LETTER" one for me. I think of it often and about my shipmate, Herman Mathisen to this day and for many years, I have held a terrible bitterness towards the German Submariners.

In 1984, I got a copy of Captain Art Moore's book, "A CARELESS WORD, A NEEDLESS SINKING" and was able to find out some information on these ships and what some of these men went through, 42 years later. I found out that of the U-Boats which attacked these four ships that I had had connections with, three were sunk with no survivors. Except for a few bad apples, most of them were young men, serving their country and before it was all over with, there were a lot of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and loved ones grieving for them, too. So many needless heartaches!!!!

As I read the stories in Captain Moore's book, I saw that on the MERRIMACK, her compliment was 44 crew members and 9 Naval Armed Guard with a loss of 35 crew members and 8 Armed Guard. Then, I turned to the story on the LAKE OSWEYA and it showed there was a crew of 30 and there were no survivors. I turned to the page where he listed the names of the Merchant Crew lost and it was listed alphabetically and there it was...Matisen, Herman, Bosun and just under it was—Matisen, Herman J., AB.

I then relisted it on paper by ratings and although the ships always carried three Ordinarys, only two were listed; the third spot was not filled. Needless to say, I am

glad that I was not at home to get Herman's last minute call for me to take the job and fill the slot of the 3rd Ordinary. But as I read about the sinking, I thought of some possible "good" was connected for there were no guns on board and no Armed Guard young lives were lost. I was surprised though, for Herman had called to say the ship was being fitted with guns so I thought that it being so early in the war and England needed the cargo badly that they didn't have time to install guns and get a Navy gun crew on board.

Four more years went by and Captain Moore came out with his updated edition with more information and an addendum of 33 pages. I turned to page 570 and there at the top was a terse notation – LAKE OSWEYA. This ship was due into Halifax on February 20, 1942. Add to the ship's compliment a Navy Gun Crew of 9 men (1 officer, 8 Armed Guard). This hit me as quite a shock, bad enough for my friend and his father, but to find out 9 more young men lost their lives.

I got to thinking about it and it bothered me. I could look at the back of the book and read the names of the merchant crew lost but Lloyd, has anyone ever made up a list of the Naval Armed Guard casualties to go along with this list of ships that were

lost? I can well imagine who they were. They were like the men of the Merchant Marine manning the merchant ships as the war went on. They were young men from the cities and farms across the country and probably all on their first trip to sea and like the Matisens, they had a lot of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and loved ones just devastated by their deaths. Today, those surviving family and friends, look at the faded photographs on the mantle and think of how much they have missed them through all the years gone by. Maybe the Poet has said it best in a few words-

AND THE STATELY SHIPS SAIL ON
TO THEIR HAVEN UNDER THE HILL
BUT OH FOR THE TOUCH OF A
VANISHED HAND
AND THE SOUND OF A VOICE THAT
IS STILL. (By Alfred Lord Tennyson)

The LAKE OSWEYA was torpedoed and sunk, enroute from New York on the evening before she was due into Halifax and every man perished. I have a SPECIAL feeling in my thoughts about these men who lost their lives, and the way in which they lost them because of an event which happened to me. You see, I kept on sailing the seas after WW II and LADY LUCK finally caught up with me in 1983.

I was on a ship, the S.S. MARINE ELECTRIC which capsized and sank 2/12/83 thirty miles off the Eastern shore of Maryland. Like the men of the S.S. LAKE OSWEYA, I was pitched into the cold ocean and it was 2 hours and 45 minutes before I was rescued. The difference being that I had hopes to keep me going, knowing that the brave men of the U.S. Coast Guard were on the way in helicopters and cutters to try and save me. The LAKE OSWEYA had no such hope and it must have been very terrible for them as they met their Maker knowing there were no rescue ships to aid them as they were not sailing in convoy.

Telling this story brings me great comfort. I realize that it is just one ship and one crew out of so many but it brings these men alive to me as I had some connection with it. They made the supreme sacrifice for their country when it needed them most, combating the forces of darkness threatening the world. Just as long as America has men such as these to stand by her side, our country will always be, in the name of the song, "THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE."

Robert M. Cusick (WW II M.M.) , 31
Deer Lane, Hillsboro, N.H. 03244, 603-
464-4196.

There Are No Salts in the Armed Guard

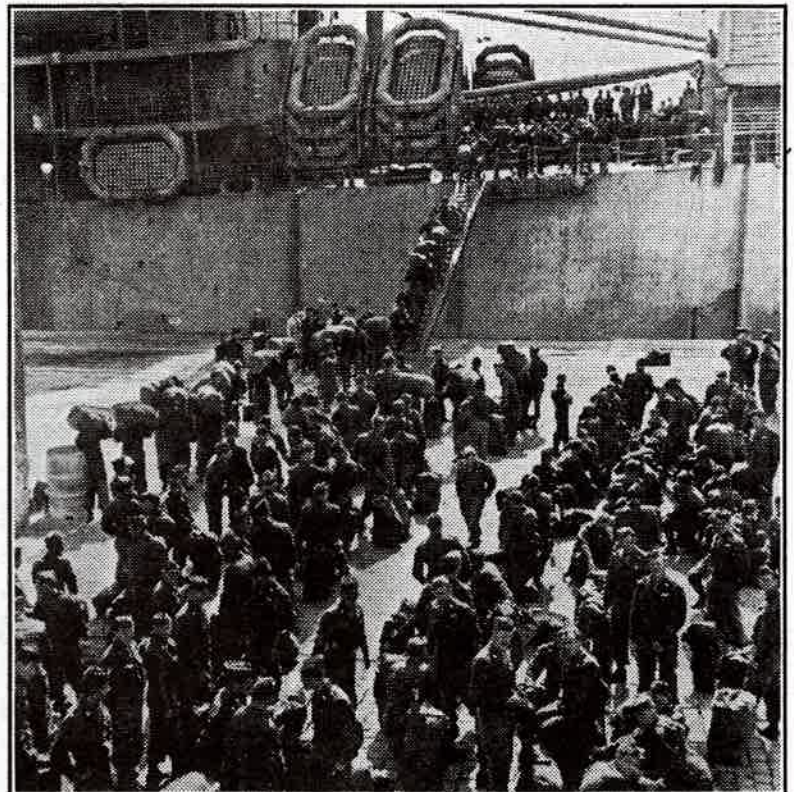
There are seven men in the Navy named "Salts" and 14 who spell it "Salt," but none of these is from the Armed Guard.

A study of the personnel files maintained in the Field Branch of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts as well as a check of AGC rolls reveal these illuminating facts.

Exactly 21,476 Navy men will answer when someone yells, "Hey, Smith!" This is by far the greatest reception any single name-group in the Navy can offer. Second most common handle belongs to the Johnsons with 15,045 and the Joneses follow with 11,035. At AGC, the relative order remains the same. Smith paces the pack with 558 and Johnson and Jones trail with 278 and 241, respectively.

The Navy has, too, 202 "Seamen," 12 "Sailors," and three "Bluejackets." The Armed Guard has its famed team of Port and Starboard" and an "Ensign" as well. Four men in the Navy were born "Captain."

(Reprinted from "THE POINTER," Oct. 27, 1943)



OFF TO SLAP THE JAP: Doughs from the 12th Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, board a liberty ship at Le Havre, France, for redeployment through the U.S. to the Pacific.

THE LOSS OF THE S.S. EL LAGO

Enclosed is a writeup I did on the tragic loss of the S.S. EL LAGO where all 14 of the U.S.N. ARMED GUARD were lost with all but 2 of the MERCHANT CREW who were taken PRISONER OF WAR. I had been researching the ships flying the Panamanian Flag and came across this one which was very sad. I doubt if you had heard of this one and thought you'd like it for the "POINTER," I hope you find the article interesting. With warmest regards, Art Moore.

(Art, this was called to my attention due to the fact a person had lost one of her family in the sinking but I will print your story for others, too.) calloyd

LOSS OF THE S.S. EL LAGO by Captain Art Moore

The freighter, S.S. EL LAGO, an American flag ship owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad was purchased by the War Shipping Administration on June 26, 1941 at Baltimore, Maryland. The ship was put under the Panamanian flag at that time and she was under a GAA agreement to be operated by the U.S. Lines of New York on that same date. Her Master was Finn Abrahamson, a Norwegian, and she was in the 4219 gross ton class and was built at Arlington, N.Y. in 1921.

The S.S. EL LAGO was torpedoed by the German U-Boats U-615 and the U-607 at 1512 local time on October 11, 1942 while enroute from Reykjavik to New York in ballast at 44-00 N./40-00 W. She carried a Merchant Crew of 39 men, 14 U.S. Navy Armed Guard and 6 seamen as passengers. The Master and the 1st Engineer were the only survivors, only because they were taken prisoner by the U-615.

After discharging all of her cargo at Reykjavik, the EL LAGO departed on October 5, 1942 in Convoy 136-A. The Convoy was made up of 12 ships in two columns. She was the #3 ship in the port column and was headed South to join a larger convoy from the United Kingdom headed for the United States.

On October 5, when about 250 miles South of Iceland, the Convoy encountered a storm with hurricane force winds, tremendous heavy seas, rain and poor visibility. She was forced to slow down because of the weather and thereby lost the Convoy. At noon on October 11, observations fixed the

position of the ship at 442 miles ENE of Cape Race, Newfoundland at a speed of 13 knots. At 1512 local time, the S.S. EL LAGO was struck by two torpedoes amidships, one on the port side and the other on the starboard side, breaking the ship in two immediately. The stern section sunk within seconds and the forward section in less than a minute.

The ship was equipped with 4 lifeboats, 4 square rafts and 2 donut type rafts. Both after boats were destroyed by the explosions and the two forward boats went down with the ship. The Master was on the bridge at the time and the ship sank under him. Without his lifejacket, he managed to stay afloat for about a half an hour and at that time, climbed aboard one of the square rafts. When he got aboard, he found the 2nd Mate, 1st Engineer, Bosun, Carpenter, an O.S., the 2nd Cook and a Messman. All of them had been in the water for some time and were covered with oil. The Master also saw 2 men clinging to a potato crate plus 3 more were on one of the square rafts and 2 men in another. The 2 donut rafts were empty. As there were too many on the Master's raft, 3 men shifted over to one of the empty rafts.

At this time, two subs surfaced. They were the U-615 and the U-607. The U-615 approached the rafts and asked for the name of the ship and for the Master. The Master identified himself and he was ordered aboard the sub. They then asked for the Chief Engineer. When told he was not among them, they asked for the Engineer Officer and the 1st Engineer identified himself and was ordered aboard the sub. The Master asked the C.O. of the sub what he intended to do with the others on the rafts and his answer was, "THIS IS WAR" and they were ordered below. The Master judged the time to be about 1715 at this time. As no survivors were ever found, it can be assumed that all those on the rafts died of exposure or drowning.

The U-615 arrived at La Pallice, France on October 30th. The Master was taken to the prison at La Rochelle and the 1st Engineer was taken to a hospital at Bordeaux, suffering from severe burns. The Master was then sent to the P.O.W. Camp in Bremen for Merchant Seamen. He was repatriated to the United States from Oslo on the Liberty Ship S.S. M.E. COMERFORD on July 30, 1945, arriving in New York on August 16th where he reported to the U.S. Steamship Lines.

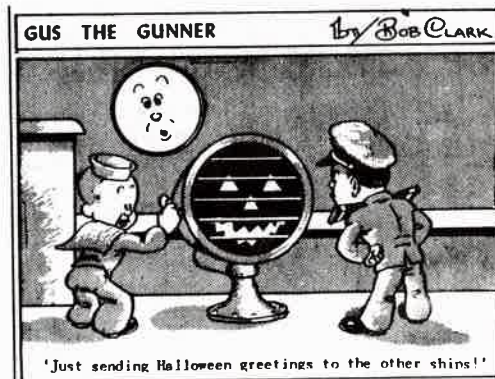
The 1st Engineer, being hospitalized for 14 days, was then transferred to Bordeaux and remained there until December 20, 1942. He then returned to La Rochelle, was placed in prison for 2 days and taken to Camp Marlag at Bremen where he was reunited with the Master, Captain Abrahamson. He was repatriated to the United States aboard the S.S. MORGANTOWN VICTORY, arriving in New York City on September 7th.

Captain Abrahamson was a Norwegian citizen from Krisiansand, Norway where his wife was living. Mr. Baas, the 1st Engineer, was a Dutch citizen but lived with his wife in New York City.

The U-615 was sunk south of Curacao on August 7, 1943 by U.S. Navy aircraft and Army Squadron 10. Five Germans were killed and 43 taken prisoner. The U-607 was sunk NW of Cape Ortegal, Spain on July 13, 1943 by British Squadron #228. There were 45 crew members lost and 5 taken prisoner. The U-615 was responsible for the sinking of the American tanker, S.S. ATLANTIC SUN from which there was only one survivor. The U-615 also took this man prisoner, thereby saving his life. The U-607 was responsible for the sinking of the S.S. EDWARD P. DUDLEY, an American Liberty Ship with a loss of all personnel.

Compiled by Captain Art Moore, RFD 1 Box 210, Hallowell, Maine 04347, 207-623-9165, Author of "A CARELESS WORD, A NEEDLESS SINKING" which is out of print but can be found in your local Library System with "LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NUMBER: 82-73552".
(A wonderful book-calloyd)

Reprinted from "THE POINTER",
Oct. 27, 1943



THE TYPHOON OF OKINAWA

I was really impressed with the "POINT-ER" of Jul./Aug and the article of the Liberty Ship S.S. Edwin Booth. Ed and I were school buddies and friends since we were 14 years old. I would like a copy of this ship's history as well as all the ships that I served on in WW II.

Included is my version of the "BIG WIND" at Okinawa, on which you may have published something prior to my entry into the Armed Guard group as it is today. Feel free to publish it as it may renew memories for the crew who were there. Due to security in WW II, the names of the ships could not be given in personal letters home so the enclosed writeup happened on the S.S. OVID V. BUTLER

Thank you Lloyd as I appreciate all you have brought together for me in a swift and professional manner. I received all material and paid bill to the "SHIP'S STORES." Best regards, Tom (originally from Salt Lake City) Thomas Robert Allen, 139 S. 100 W., Tooele, Utah 84074, 801-882-6289.

TYPHOON OF OKINAWA

China Point, Okinawa, 10 October 1945
by Tom Allen

Dear Mother and all,

It's much calmer today (10 Oct) and at this hour, as I sit writing this, which 24 hours ago was the most unforgettable and horrifying twenty four hours I've ever lived. Looking back at such a short episode as occurred last night, it doesn't seem as though it were bad at all. Perhaps it's because God spared us the terrible fate that so many sailors and ships couldn't endure. Perhaps it's also not so bad, because the worst has passed and we are now in comparative safety.

We are stuck alongside and broadside a bank of reefs, rocks and sand. We have been unsuccessful in getting off and outside assistance is at a premium. The wind has subsided from its high velocity and the sea and ground swells have also subsided from their mountainous height of from 20-30 feet. Nevertheless, with the wind still blowing strong and hitting on our starboard side, we are being smashed against this wall of rock and reefs. Even now, I am having a hard time writing, but I intend to have my nerves and collectiveness about me by the time I am ready to send you this.

Now that you have an idea as to how your shipwrecked sailor's situation is, I'll relate the proceeding happenings that occurred and eventually resulted in the loss of many

lives, ships, and equipment that now lay in shambles and are stacked in any which way on the shores of Okinawa. This isn't my first typhoon I've been in. This is the third. The first two were much milder and their centers weren't upon us. We rode those out at anchor. Normally, we could escape such typhoons from warnings radioed in hours in advance, by going to sea. However, our cargo isn't in proper trim and at sea, the cargo would shift and with such high waves, we would capsize. So thus, we must do our best and hang on, in the bay. There are other ships unable to go to sea, likewise, and also have to remain. Then, with perhaps twenty five large ships and numerous smaller crafts remaining, you can see what a menace it would be for other ships.

On the evening of 8 Oct., I went to bed knowing that we were in for another blow, but being optimistic, I presumed that the storm would pass over or miss us, and we would only have a few hours of hard blowing, such as we've endured before. At 0230, 9 Oct. Tues., Mr. Streamer, the 3rd mate, came into my quarters and said, "Allen, we'll need you around the wheelhouse and bridge to read the signals from those ships breaking loose and dragging their anchors straight into the bow of our ship." Realizing that should a ship hit our straining anchor chains, even with the engines going ahead to keep the strain off the chains, we would find ourselves in a fine mess. I got up, dressed and then hurried to the wheelhouse. Already heavy winds were blowing and from the latest reports, from the radio shack, winds were to exceed over 100 knots. The signal tower sent out three "all Ships" messages saying that we were to expect such winds. The winds were very strong by daybreak and the peaceful looking harbor was churning up madly. At 1130 9 Oct. and with mounting winds and seas, a large ship had broken her two anchor chains away and was drifting towards the beach. Narrowly she kept missing ship after ship, when finally we saw her hit the beach.

By 1200 the winds were coming in about 95 knots and the seas were choppy and high. The wind was coming in at such a force that it would take the caps of the waves, and lift them high into the air. With the wind blowing the water, it caused very poor visibility; we could only see about 50 yards beyond the bow. Things of all description came floating by: Logs, small boats, clothes, boxes, etc. We were doing fine and holding our own pretty good. We were doing fine, in fact, until about 1500, when the wind force had exceeded 130 knots and which was the expected maximum and time when the typhoon center was to pass over Okinawa. We had

endured, as I had said before, two previous typhoons and fifty nine days of monotonous life waiting to be unloaded, and in the same spot too.

At 1506, there came down upon us a Liberty Ship not under control and dragging her anchors. We moved our rudders in all angles, in an effort to keep from being rammed. If she would hit our anchor chains and cut them loose, then we would be adrift, too. As it happened, she swung back and forth, back and forth until her stern caught our port anchor chain and cut it as if it was a string. By this time, the seas were raging and the winds over 130 knots. It would have been suicide to have gone into that water, you would have been drowned by the first wave that hit you, and as consolation prize, by being smashed against the rocks and the reefs. All hands had their life-jackets on and many of us, for the first time, were about to witness the sensation of being rammed. Tight faces, grim and expressionless, wonderment and fear was the moral effect now being worn. THUD!! She had hit us!! We shook and vibrated and then waited for another attack!! It came shortly and with much the same sensation as the first. The second smash resulted in a rip, on the port bow, and a few buckled frames. Again she hit us! This time, broadside!! The visibility was very low and as a result, many of us couldn't actually see her hitting and scraping the bow. The wind was too terrific to face anyway. Luckily, we were spared our starboard anchor. We hoped that we would be able to keep it. We then began to drag anchor. Perhaps it was a good thing we did, because now we were safely astern of her. The Captain and mates had satisfied themselves that we could hold on with just one anchor by going "SLOW AHEAD", on the engines. "WHEW!" we all said, after finding that we weren't hurt as badly as we had expected to be.

I went down for chow. Things were quite normally the same except for the dishes that were being tossed around from our rolling. We still had our life-jackets on, even for chow. There was plenty of danger ahead and night was coming on, not that it made much difference as far as visibility was concerned. I was very sleepy and wet; my appetite wasn't too good. The salt water blowing in my face found access to my mouth; so I was suffering from the foul effects of the taste and after chow, which I ate little, I returned to my station in the wheelhouse.

I had just got top-side when I heard some of the fellows remark about being pretty close to the beach. I looked out and could hardly distinguish the black outline of the now surrounding fore-ground. It looked

like huge black clouds, to me. Something like what the climax to such destruction should look like. I had been to the opinion that we were holding our own pretty good, now, despite the hard luck we had had. Nevertheless, I convinced myself, that was land. What in the hell, NOW?!! Already, many ships had beaten us to land, as you might say. I associated the dim outline of land as that point furthest out to sea. BOY! That's a heck of a long ways from where we were originally anchored. We could see dim outlines and dim lights all around and close by us. Surely, we were going aground and broadside, too. BOY!! Am I now wondering how we kept from capsizing. Then there was a loud scrap and a THUD and much vibration and shaking. We were on the beach all right! That occurred at 1830 hours

There wasn't any apparent danger of sinking or holes being put in the bottom, so there we sat. By this time, plenty of ships were aground and sending out distress signals. It's too bad but there wasn't any assistance to be had. Large ships, still afloat, couldn't get there and small boats weren't able to take it at all. All sorts of thoughts entered my head, but I remained cool enough. I was scared, because my heart must have been most of the THUDS I heard!! We had done our best. We have about 60 feet of water to our starboard side and when the tide goes out, we are only waist deep on our port side. In other words, we are out on a limb, so to speak.

Seeing there was nothing we could do, I went back to bed at 2100 for the first time since 0230 that morning. I slept in my wet clothes and with my life-jacket still on. It's funny how a person can sleep under those conditions, but I did. Of course I was rocked to sleep, I guess. The winds, after we were aground, tried, as if in apology, to shake us loose. MAN! I mean shake!! This ship just quivered. I could almost imagine huge "HIGH WINDS" grabbing us and pulling, tugging and pushing us around in a determined effort to knock something into us as an older person would do a small child. I had a dull THUD-THUD effect going on in my head as I went to sleep. It's not a headache feeling, but more or less like a bunch of little steel balls going around and around and striking every inch of tangible skull. Sparks came in at 0000 and woke me. He said that the storm was breaking and that I should change my wet clothes. I did and went right back to sleep.

At 0630, Mr. Streamer called me to signal a tug boat. The winds had died down and it had quit raining. It's been since 0630 that I had not only called that tug boat for assistance, but three more. It's no use! Ships are sinking and men are still drowning; God only knows they need the tug's help much worse. That fact is strewn all around us now. At a close glance, there are at least five landing craft ships, one tanker and two

Libertys besides ourselves, not to mention the many broken lifeboats and rafts that are perched on the reefs. LIVES LOST!!? Two of the ships are high and dry. Crew safe! But the others are capsized, half submerged and one is even on end. This section is only a small amount of destruction. Men, shore based, had their tents blown away; so they were as wet as we might have been, had we had to abandon ship. Many natives, shore based men and corpsmen are scanning the beach for the lost men. They are wearing a Red-Cross arm band and does it ever look comforting, to me, to know that the Armed Forces Personnel are right there to assist, if possible, even as soon after it was the storm had slackened and they could assist in reasonable safety. So, now, with the storm passed and it's aftermath hanging around just to complete the job, we find ourselves alive, unharmed but well experienced in typhoons, fear and the courage to come through. Prayers were said. I said two myself. I know they were answered, too. War is hell, all right, but, what hurts is the fact that with the war over and the combat fear gone, we still find ourselves with another enemy, "TYPHOONS." They are very much worse than any sub submarine scare or an air alert.

We averaged about two air alerts a day from 12 August till 15 August and there were really Jap planes around. Yes, I'd rather go through an air alert or sub attack than a typhoon. At least we had a chance, but now it's a case of prayers and the desire to get out of this mess, get unloaded and plant two feet on that 'ole U.S. soil.

Some of the guys put on hip boots and waded ashore to go after the mail. Result was-NO POST OFFICE!! It was blown away as was all the mail. They say it's flying, floating and strewn around the place. So, this is one time I won't get any mail. It's been about two weeks since I've had any mail.

SUCCESS!! We spent all day Wednesday 10 October bumping, knocking and pounding against this wall of rocks and reefs. We also spent the night there, too. When the Flood tide came in at about 2200, and with the wind still blowing hard, we took some pretty hard jolts; so being unable to obtain assistance, the Captain decided to try and pull us off with our own power. At 0630, exactly 36 hours of incessant pounding against that rock, we made an attempt to move away. The wind wasn't blowing as hard, so we didn't have to worry much about being pushed back against it. By 0700, we were well clear of the bank but when we turned our propeller, it struck a submerged object and bent two blades so badly that one scraped against the other. The Captain cursed the luck but held her steady and proceeded to a safe anchorage.

We hadn't got very far away from the

reefs, when a jeep, coming down the road, seemed to automatically stop, as if so astonished that the ship, as the occupants of the jeep were no doubt coming to see, was already shoving off. We were looking through the long binoculars at the guys on the beach and they also stood around like human question marks, as we pulled away. They saw that we were making it and we could see them gesture, with their hands, as if straining to help push us away. BOY! We felt proud. We owe our Captain and the Mates all kinds of thanks and compliments for their coolness and shrewd navigation.

We were congratulated by a D.E., so that made us all the prouder. We are about the only ship, so far as we know, that was blown aground and that made it away without assistance. Now, it is calm and peaceful again. We have surveyed our damage and find ourselves still rather fortunate. Our screw is badly damaged, one anchor and chain lost, three holes, (above the water line) Numerous dents and all the paint that was in the exposed path of the typhoon was blown off. IMAGINE THAT!!!

Lights were broken out, canvas gun covers, wind breakers, etc. was all ripped and blown away. Rust is all over and so now the ship looks lonely and naked. I suppose we'll be getting unloaded soon or else proceed to a safer port. It's hard to say just what will happen to us. There are thousands of men ashore with no place to sleep or nothing to eat, so we are expecting to receive some men any time.

Well, I suppose that's the whole story as I saw it and feel about it. I hope I never have to see or go through another one. The news reporter says that the damage done here, was comparable to destruction of that of an atomic bomb. I hope I've brought out my views well enough to back them up.

No doubt you'll hear of this or may have heard about it by the time you get this. I'm lucky to be around today; so since I'll always remember this experience, I am writing you about it because it's the worse thing I've ever witnessed and maybe someday, I'll want to check on some of the details. Hope all is well. I am normal again and am waiting anxiously for our return. I've seen enough of this place.

(The below was written in longhand)

My purpose in using the typewriter is because I made a few copies. These are my words, just in case you didn't think I could write such a long letter, and since so many of you, Maxine, Marge, Dad, etc., would all like to know how we survived, I settled for writing separate letters and used carbon copies. However, I have had requests, from my ship mates, to let them copy this. Anyway, I hope you understand. Best of love to you all, (Lucky)-Tom



Lone Sailor

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



DEDICATION

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

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