

JUNE/JULY, 1997

# THE P INTER



## ARMED GUARD CENTER, WWII

1st Avenue & 52nd Street, Brooklyn, New York

Building has since been removed, and is now the site of the Sanitation Department.

Photo by Clarence Korker.

## 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

AND

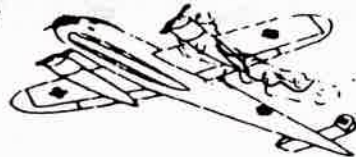
THE

# PLANE SHOOTER

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

USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans

"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"



Hello Everyone:

June 15, 1997

Finally got the 16th Reunion BEHIND US!! Another wonderful one and I am sure Neal and Dorothy Vermillion can now rest and join those other 15 who made it possible to give you a chance to be with the crew again. WHAT BEAUTIFUL WEATHER THEY HAVE IN VIRGINIA!! You couldn't ask for a prettier day to go to the Navy Memorial for a brief ceremony and a wreath laying at the Lone Sailor on Sunday, May 4, 1997. Later, we caught the buses over to the Korean, Vietnam and other Memorial Sites and then back to the hotel for our dinner and dancing to the music of a wonderful band.

Clem Sheridan of Alexandria is to be commended for his help to Vermillion in getting Vice-Admiral James Perkins III, Commander of the United States Navy Sealift Command as our speaker at the Navy Memorial. VADM Perkins has under his command 110 ships at sea on any given day, and another 100 ships that can be called up in the event of an emergency. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy - Surface Warfare Officer who has served at sea on the aircraft carrier USS SARATOGA as well as several frigates and destroyers. We were fortunate to have someone of his standing to address those attending. Thanks Vice-Admiral! Master Chief Hood of the Navy Memorial did his job well in having the Honor Guard, seats, speakers stand, and the Wreath Ceremony well planned and the Ceremony was very inspiring. Thanks Master Chief Hood!

Sheridan was also instrumental in seeing that our Hospitality Room was well stocked, and he was very helpful in giving advice on sight seeing tours, etc. Norm King from Texas, Al Sniff (Chief-Retired) from Pensacola and Bill Menna, Ex-Mayor of Ansonia, Ct. kept the Hospitality Room in order. THANKS, Y'ALL!!

Eloise Moran's Ladies Tea Party was a success again and I would like to say "THANKS" to the Moran's for having a SPECIAL event for the Ladies. Everything appeared to be in order and it gives the ladies a little something extra. We have one problem with the Tea, and that is the price for the function has gotten rather expensive and we hope to have this problem resolved by reunion time.

Then, on Monday, May 5th, we took the buses down to the Dundalk Terminal in Baltimore, Maryland and sailed the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN out into the Chesapeake Bay. We were strafed by enemy planes, which were shot down by the Armed Guard Gunners with the help of an American fighter plane!! What a wonderful show the ship's crew put on for us! We arrived on time and were served hot coffee and pastries, and later, lunch was served. I wish all of you could have been on board. I was given the honor of casting the wreath for our 1810 who were killed in action and for those who served in the Armed Guard. I was assisted by Merchant Seamen. Charles F. Blockston, who was a POW in the German POW Camp Milag Nord near Bremen, after his ship, the S.S. CARLTON, was sunk July 5, 1942 in the Barents

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

**\*Remember, I can't move as fast as I did when I was in my twenties!  
When you call, let the phone ring so I can get to it! cal**



Sea while enroute to Archangel, Russia in PQ-17. Blockston and 27 members of the Carlton were repatriated and returned to New York on February 21, 1945. Four other members were released after the Germans surrendered. A SPECIAL mention to those killed on the S.S. BLACK POINT, which was sunk 52 years ago on that date, May 5, 1945. Ralph Swillinger (MM), the Roanoke, Va. AG/MM Host, also cast a wreath from their chapter.

A SPECIAL THANKS go out to the ship's Captain Ebberson, Captain Brian Hope and the Merchant Crew, the band, the storekeepers, the Pilots of the "FLYBY'ERS" Walt Magalis, Joseph Colgan, Jack Rhodes, Bud Schmidt and others who I cannot remember. You did a fantastic job and we all appreciate your past and present good deeds in restoring the Armed Guard guns, Focle and Museum. WE SALUTE YOU!! SALUTE!!

The business meeting was short as usual and would have been shorter if someone would have volunteered to take the Chairmanship over. Bob Ober placed my name in nomination and I was seconded and passed to remain the Chairman for 1998. I have accepted the honor and hope we continue to find more of the crew so we can send them information on what we all have accomplished. WE have located approximately 14,000 Armed Guard and have approximately 500 Merchant Seamen and other interested parties on the mailing list of the "POINTER." We have \$22,215.83 in the U.S.N. Armed Guard bank account as of June 15, 1997. This is enough to do two (2) "POINTERS" and enough to keep the ship afloat til more donations come in. As soon as I get this "POINTER" to the printers, I intend to do a strict search for items I have here somewhere and return them to you. I hope I can have them to you by July 1, 1997. If I don't, you will know I tried. I do apologize for my lack of correct filing. A few of you have called and asked who to make the donation check out to and where to send it. Make it out to "U.S.N. ARMED GUARD WWII VETERANS" and send it to the return address on the "POINTER" cover, left of the flag.

I ask of you who can afford a donation to keep these hard working men's dream alive and the ship afloat, to donate what you can. Together, "WE WILL DELIVER" the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN to Charleston, S.C. in September, and also to Galveston, Tx. for the ADMIRAL NIMITZ MUSEUM'S reenactment of the INVASION OF TARAWA which is set for Oct. 18, 1997. The S.S. JOHN W. BROWN has been invited to participate in this historic reenactment and we need your help, LARGE or SMALL! We don't have too many years left to be recognized and get our OARS FEATHERED. The S.S. JOHN W. BROWN SHRIMP FEAST will be held on a SUNDAY in early November. The tickets are \$30.00 each and space is limited to only 500 guests so, order your tickets early. If you get on their mailing list, you can get a lot of great information, first hand. Contact them for dates as plans can change fast.

WHO WON THE RAFFLE? I didn't!! But these did and checks were sent:

Frank Galbraith.....	Gibraltar, Michigan
A.B. Bedford.....	Hawthorne, New Jersey
John Routt.....	Peru, Indiana
Robert Klinkhart.....	Webster Grove, Missouri
Theo J. Dingle.....	Carlisle, Pennsylvania
Ralph Commesser.....	Ontario, Oregon

Thanks for all who supported the 16th National Reunion in this way. The balance of all monies donated will be sent here to keep the Armed Guard "AFLOAT." It sure helps in the "UP-FRONT MONEY" required to charter buses, pay telephone bills, postage, the band, videos and the many other expenses incurred. Through your help, we had a wonderful reunion and wish all could have attended. WE MISSED Y'ALL!!

Many have asked "WHERE DID YOU GET THAT NAME

TAG?" Send a check or money order in the amount of \$3.50 to Robert Staubs, Custom Graphics, 948 Cumberland Dr., North Naples, FL 33963, and he will send you one. It's the best deal around, and be sure to wear it to your next local meeting, and especially to the NATIONAL REUNION, wherever it may be. Write Staubs' address down and put it in your pocketbook. It will save you time to write me for it.

Many of you migrate north and south according to the seasons. Many of you have never given me your other address to put into your computer file. If your mail is returned to me, I cannot send you anything until you contact me, even though you may go back to that first address, as I will put you on "HOLD." You will stay that way until you contact me. I will SPECIAL MARK these names after this "POINTER" and will keep you on "HOLD" for 6 months before I will delete the name from the files. If you don't have time to notify me, I sure don't see how you expect me to contact you. Hope this is plain enough.

NOW HEAR THIS!! Joe Cook has started a weekly series about the Merchant Marines and the U.S. Naval Armed Guard in the Ashtabula, OH STAR-BEACON on May 9, 1997. Each week's segment can be seen for a week on the STAR-BEACON INTERNET WEB SITE at <http://www.ashtabula.net/StarBeacon>. If you have a story to tell, write: Joe Cook, P.O. Box 3065, Ashtabula, Oh 44005-3065, (216) 964-9313.

Mike and Lena Molinari, of Brooklyn, NY, along with Sy Herman, went over to 1st Ave. and 52nd Street, the site of the WWII Armed Guard Center, and placed a wreath at the flagpole and had a prayer to all who served, and then went inside the Sanitation Office and placed a spray over the Armed Guard Plaque placed there several years ago. Mike and crew have done this every Memorial Day since the Plaque was put there. On behalf of all the Armed Guard, I would like to say "THANKS" for remembering. I am sending a 8 x 10 photo of the Armed Guard Center in WWII, which was taken by Clarence Korker, and Mike will frame it and place it beside the Plaque.

We will be using REUNIONS, INC. for our annual yearbook again this year. Those of you who couldn't attend, but would like to be included in the yearbook, send a wallet-size photo, and a check or money order for \$15.00 to Reunions, Inc., 2098 Sprint Blvd., Apopka, FL 32703, 1-800-327-8010.

I made it to the Reunion on time!! Thanks to Hilda, I had plenty to wear. I really don't know what men would do without them. Until next time around, Y'all stay healthy and in touch. To all who could afford to donate, THANKS!! To those of you who cannot donate, don't worry, "WE WILL DELIVER" the "POINTER." Y'all come for grits - you hear? calloyd

## ACTION!!

The following info was sent in by several of our Armed Guard Shipmates:

"The Liberty Ship JEREMIAH O'BRIEN, having survived the rigors of World War II, a 50th anniversary return to Normandy, and most recently, being used as a set in the forthcoming movie *Sphere*, will face the cameras again.

The makers of the disaster movie *Titanic* have hired the ship to film scenes in the engine room. Two of the three engines on the oceanliner *Titanic* were similar to engines on the O'BRIEN.

## — In Memory —

### Deceased shipmates since Feb./Mar. 1997 POINTER

Andrzejewski	Martin J.	Glen Burnie	Md	Mabel	9/13/95
Barrett++	Evelyn L.	Rapid City	la	Verne	4/28/97
Blaylock	James H.	George West	Tx	Louise	5/4/97
Bowman	Robert	Aberdeen	Md	Peg	10/13/96
Capritti	Silvio	Florence	NJ	Helen	4/2/97
Clum	Eddie L.	La Pine	Or	Mary Lee	3/10/97
Copenhaver	Jack	Helena	Mt	*	1/30/97
Davis (MM)	Raymond W.	Dallas	Tx	Madge	5/27/96
Doubek	Charles A.	Minneapolis	Mn	Dorothy	4/22/97
Dugan	Francis L.	Earlville	NY	Reba	4/5/97
Fugitt+++	William R.	Catlettsburg	Ky	Dorothy	5/11/97
Hoover	Norman	Moscow	Pa	?	1997
Hubbard	Thomas J.	Reno	Nv	Jean	3/4/97
Jackson	Reginald G.	Southport	NC	Hortense	4/9/97
Jones	Harry L.	Edmond	Ok	Betty	1995
Jones	Thomas W.	Wayne	Pa	Dorothy	9/96
Kachner	Edward O.	Warren	Oh	Adele	2/21/97
King	Francis J.	Apple Valley	Ca	Barbara	9/2/96
Knight	Walter F.	Hialeah	Fl	Sue	2/8/97
Krol	Frank T.	Pasadena	Md	Virginia	5/16/97
Lamson	Roy	Wiscasset	Pa	*	5/17/97
Leggett	J.Wilson	Houston	Tx	Margaret	5/11/97
Loisel	Clifford J.	New Orleans	La	Phyllis	2/11/97
Loudenbourg	Del D.	Mitchell	SD	Lucille	1/3/97
Matthew	David C.	Edmond	Ok		6/96
McCarthy	John	Lewiston	NY	Clarice	3/24/94
McMillan	Thomas O.	Tonawanda	NY	Gloria	1997
Miner	Thomas W.	Bolton	Ct	Elsie	9/2/96
Mullican	Gordon R.	Mira Loma	Ca	Lucille	5/14/97
O'Grady	William B.	Bennington	Vt	Vera	3/12/97
Outlaw	William N.	Warsaw	NC	Annie	11/23/96
Parler	Alfred E.	Charleston	SC	*	1997
Paranto	Arthur	Swedesboro	NJ		10/16/96
Reeves	James E.	Lancaster	Pa	Annie	5/4/97
Reis	Donald R.	Pinehurst	NC	Joan	11/17/96
Richesson	James E.	Warsaw	Oh	Ada	4/29/97
Robbins	Clarence G.	Huntsville	Al	Doris	3/22/97
Rost	Howard L.	Lincoln	Ne	Bessie	2/7/97
Rumley	Alfred L.	Fitchburg	MA	Beverly	5/5/97
Sala	Aurelio A.	San Francisco	Ca	Adora	5/96
Sellmer	Edward H.	Laguna Hills	Ca	Elaine	4/4/97
Smith	R C	Dallas	Tx	Jane	4/27/97
Smith	Kenneth J.	Topeka	Ks	Inez	12/27/97
(Steele)+Stark	Virginia M.	Concord	Ca	Ken	7/12/95
Stolarski	Frank	Kenosha	Wi	Pat	6/6/96
Tait(MM)	Neal	Polo	Mo	Florence	2/5/97
Terwilliger	Wesley C.	Richford	NY	Charlotte	3/30/97
Wilson	Kermit A.	Walport	Or	*	3/26/97
Wolfe	Otho C.	Havre de Grace	Md		1/17/97

+ A.G.Wave

++ Evelyn was one of our ladies who attended many reunions. I will insert the shipmates wives only if active attendees in the past due to space.

+++ Fugitt was President of the Kentucky Purple Heart Assn.

You unfortunate Ladies whose Mates have gone to prepare a Place for us, please, when you write me, state as to whether you elect to stay on the "POINTER" mailing list, or be removed. We welcome you to attend the local meetings and the National Reunion. We had several widows at the Reunion in Alexandria and they enjoyed every minute of it.

Jack Rhodes reminded me that anyone who would like to be buried at sea from the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN should notify the ship prior to, and make the arrangements and when that day arrives, the family should notify the ship and where and when to send the ashes. I am sure the other ships will do the same on the West Coast. This is your decision to make and contact the ships, NOT ME!! *calloyd*

## BOOKS

The book, "WE DELIVERED" by Armed Guard Lyle Dupra, 31 Cedarview, Fairport, N.Y. 14450-8971, 716-425-2432 and published by Sunflower University Press as shown on Page 13 of the Nov/Dec. 1996 "POINTER" is now available and the price has been lowered to \$23.95 which includes shipping and handling, in anticipation of high sales volume. New York residents add 8 percent tax. Dupra has informed me that you can order directly from him and if you mention that you are Armed Guard or Merchant Marine, \$1.00 will be donated to the Armed Guard Association.

Tom Bowerman, 814 Springdale Ave., Anniston, Al. 36201, 205-237-8754 has a book, "FIRECLAY," mentioned in the same issue and has a lot of copies he would like to put into circulation. It's a great book and worth the \$14.95 cost. Bowerman can be reached on the Internet at BOWERMAN@QUICK-LINK.NET and by VOICE at #205-237-8754. Tom has located approximately 200 "NEW OL'SALTS" through the Internet in the last month

"TO HASTEN THE HOMECOMING" BY Jordan Braverman, the story of how the Americans fought the war through the media, is available from bookstores, or Rowman and Littlefield Publishers through National Book Network. It is hardcover, 6"x9" with 286 pages and retails for \$24.95; ISBN 1-56883-047-2. It should be very interesting.

Harry Williams of Reisterstown, Md. gave me the name of a book he says is great and I have the name only. "TO DIE GALLANTLY - THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC."

June Wandrey wanted me to let you know she has more of the "BEDPAN COMMANDO" books left at \$16.00. (Mi. residents add 6% sales tax.) This is a great book about the life of our women heroes. Order from: Wandrey Books, 5240 Mapleridge Dr., Portage, Mi. 49024-5740, 1-616-344-8371. You may want to buy an extra one for your local library.

"PQ-17-CONVOY TO HELL" by Paul Lund and Harry Ludlam may be in your Library. "The Destruction of Convoy PQ-17" by David Irving printed by Simon and Schuster may also be in your Library system.



# ★ ★ ★ ★ REUNIONS ★ ★ ★ ★

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

Support these local meetings while you're able.

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### AOG CLASS GASOLINE TANKER

**CREWS:** Contact Ed Markins, (Shipmate/Author), 1606 E. Mills Ave., Indianapolis, In. 46227-3739, 317-780-1870. Ed is seeking historical data and documents for AOG ships for book. Also May '98 reunion in Branson, Mo.

### CHINA-BURMA-INDIA WW II VET-

**ERANS 50TH NATIONAL REUNION** will be held in Milwaukee, Wi. 8/27-31/97. Contact: Homer C. Cooper, 145 Pendleton Dr., Athens, Ga. 30606. Cooper still wants his units' members to contact him whether they go to the reunion or not. L.D. and I were almost members as the USAT J.W. McANDREWS newspaper was temporarily named the "CBI EXPRESS" but they dropped the bomb and our orders were changed to Newport News, Va.

Martin Vallee was unsuccessful in getting the **BROWN** up the St. Lawrence River in 1997 but will try in 1999. I will keep you posted in future "POINTERS." cal

**INDIANA CREW** meets each month on the last Saturday, 11:00 A.M. at Al's Restaurant. Logansport, In. hosts are: Forrest and Annabelle Spencer, 219-753-7066.

**NOTICE!! MOE HAS MOVED!! ADDRESS AND TELLY CHANGED!! NEBRASKA** Host, Moe Carlton, 2425 FOLKWAY BLVD., #321, Lincoln, Ne. 68521, 402-438-9321 holds an 11:00 Luncheon on the First Monday of each month at FARABEES RESTAURANT, 58TH and OLD CHANEY ROAD.

**ILL-WISC. CREW MINI-REUNION** will be held Sept. 18-21, 1997 at the RAMADA INN in Appleton, Wisc., in the heart of beautiful FOX RIVER VALLEY. The Hosts will be Gloria and William (Bill) Tubbs, W. 3022 Tubbs Rd., Seymour, Wi. 54165, 414-833-6673. EVERYONE WELCOMED!! Bill informs me that Appleton has an airport served by 5 MAJOR AIRLINES.

**DEMS-CONTACT:** DOUG SEPHTON, RCNA-DEMS, 203 ANNE ST. NORTH, BARRIE, ONTARIO, CN L4N 4T4 FOR INFORMATION ON THE "ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL ASSOCIATION."

**GREATER PORTLAND, OREGON ARMED GUARD MEETS WITH THE**

**OREGON CHAPTER AMMV THIRD MONDAY, 11:30 A.M.** at "OLD COUNTRY BUFFET," 13500 SW PACIFIC (99W) TIGSRD MARKET PL., TIGARD, OR. Contact: George Goode, 4017 S.E. Aldercrest Rd., Milwaukie, Oregon 97222-6161, 503-659-1925.

**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.

**LANSING, MICH. AREA** holds a "2nd" WEDNESDAY of the ODD MONTHS at the "CORAL GABLES RESTAURANT" 2838 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing, Mi., 517-337-1311. Hosts are Carl Mescher, 508 Wayland, East Lansing, Mi. 48823, 517-332-1027; or, Martin Vallee, 1412 Brookwood, Flint, Mi. 48503, 810-235-3530. Vallee is trying to get financial help from cities along the lakes to sponsor the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN up the St. Lawrence River as far over as Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago in 1999 if he can get ship's O.K. OK?

**MICHIGAN-OHIO-INDIANA-KENTUCKY** will hold their REGIONAL REUNION October 5-8, 1997 at the beautiful ZENDER'S BAVARIAN INN in Frankenmuth, Mi., the same place they held their 1993 Mini. Contact Mescher or Martin Vallee at the address above.

### MEETING PLACE CHANGE!!

**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 BETTY ANN'S RESTAURANT, 4401 SO. MEMORIAL DR., TULSA, OK.

**ROANOKE, VA. AREA** meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at the ROANOKER Restaurant, 2522 Colonial Ave. Roanoke, Va. at 11:30 A.M. hosted by Ralph (MM) and Myra Swillinger, 734 Estates Rd. SE, Roanoke, Va. 24014, 540-427-1927.

**DESTROYER ESCORT ASSOCIATION, INC. ADDRESS CHANGED!!** TO: PO BOX 469, ALLENHURST, NJ 07711, 908-531-5899. FAX 908-531-7724. James R. Mitchell (Acting Exec. Administrator)

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

**USS LCS(L) 1 THRU 130 NATIONAL ASSOC. REUNION** WILL BE HELD AT THE CLARION HOTEL, ORLANDO, FL. 8/13-17/1997. CONTACT "JEFF" JEFFERS, PO BOX 9087, WAUKEGAN, IL 60079, 847-360-0560.

**LSM ASSOCIATION 9TH ANNUAL REUNION** 9/3-7/97 at the TOWN AND COUNTRY HOTEL, San Diego, Ca. Contact: Richard Schatz, 66 Summer St., Greenfield, Ma. 01301, 413-774-2397. (FOR YOU BOOKLOVERS:) They have published a book called: "WHEN CIVILIANS MANNED THE SHIPS" by James A. Kehl, \$13.95 plus \$5.00 S & H. Brandylane Publishers, POB 261, White Stone, Va. 22578, 800-553-6922, FAX 804-435-9812. All net proceeds go to expenses to bring the LSM 45 from Greece to New Orleans.

**WICHITA FALLS, TX** crew meets at "GRANDY'S," FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH AT 8 A.M. CONTACT: Jack Sims, 5111 Bahama Dr, Wichita Falls, Tx., 76310-3101, 817-691-7393.

**GULFPORT, MS AREA** will hold their MINI-REUNION at the Holiday Inn, Gulfport East Beach, October 6-8, 1997. Hosts are John and Dean Foretich, 310-44th St., Gulfport, Ms. 39507, 601-868-2551. They also are hosts for a 2nd Sat. meeting at the American Legion, GULFPORT.

**LOGANSPORT, IN. CREW** meets at Al's the last Saturday of each month. Contact Pete and Mary Delacruz, 5503 McFarland Rd. Indianapolis, In 46227, 317-783-6567 for more input.

**OREGON, WASHINGTON, MONTANA, ALASKA, IDAHO** (and all the others would like to be there) will hold their next mini-reunion at the Perryman Inn, 7901 NE 6th Ave., Vancouver, WA, Sept 4-6, 1997. Host will be Carl Lingenfelter, 615 E. 31st St., Vancouver, WA 98663, (360) 693-4420, assisted by Don and Pearl Werner, 18605 NC 219th St., Battleground, WA 98604, (360) 687-3670. A "Sausage Convention will follow!"

**FARRAGUT NTS** will hold a reunion on Sept. 5-8, 1997 at Farragut. Contact Bud & Rudy Warren, 1420 Madison Astoria, Oregon, WA 97103, (503) 325-9620 from 9:00am - 4:00pm PST only. For camping reservations, call Farragut State Park, (208) 683-2425.

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**MISS ANYMORE? SOME 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)



# OUR 1997 ANNUAL REUNION

Just a few lines to let you know how much we enjoyed the National Reunion in Alexandria, Virginia. We are looking forward already to next year, wherever it will be. We hope to be able to make it and will know in the near future. Please insert the name Carmelita in the ladies spot in the computer as I would not like to miss anything in the future.

Again, we would like to thank everyone for all of their efforts to make each year successful. Without the dedication displayed by all the WW II Veterans and their spouses, it would not be the success it is today. I have never been a part of any organization so patriotic and full of love and concern for one another's well being. This is an overdue correspondence in as much as my intentions were good when I left St. Louis, Missouri in '96. Best wishes for a great year and we will be excited to find out "WHERE" in 1998. Sincerely, **Carmelita and Buck Stansbury, RR-3, Box 253-D, Heathville, Va. 22473-9360.**

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*Thanks to all of you for your encouraging letters. My thanks to the Stanburys for correcting my mistake. If you see an error any time, please bring it to my attention. Many of you have address changes due to 911 changes. Telephone and telephone area codes, zip codes, if changed, need correcting. You are the only one that can see these corrections are made. If I have mail returned because of this, you will not get any more "POINTERS" until "Y O U" let me know. If we lose you, it's your fault, not mine!! If your "POINTER" gets torn up on its way to you and you don't get one in 3 months from this one, I'd advise you to write or call me. CAL*

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Just a note to thank you for a wonderful and pleasant experience in visiting your home and for the fine reunion we enjoyed in Alexandria. The problems and difficulties of arranging meetings are formidable and we wish you would extend our Thanks to the Vermillions and the others who helped put it together. We are looking forward to next year's meeting.

We especially enjoyed sailing the JOHN W. BROWN and found it as thrilling as those we experienced on both the LANE VICTORY and the JEREMIAH O'BRIEN. We hope that the three ship's crews will work together in the common effort – not only the Armed Guard but also the Merchant Marine and we would like to see a joint meeting of both groups and members of the DEMS, too. Adversarial differences, long past, must be put behind us. Equally, the role of the women, the WAVES who served with us in WWII,

must be recognized and addressed. We are making recommendations to our crew as a result of ideas taken from the BROWN and the reunion in general. The Armed Guard will be represented at two Memorial Day programs here with our banner displayed prominently. Respectfully, **Bob Abbot and Thom Hendrickson.**

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My wife and I just returned from the 16th National Reunion that we enjoyed very much. Neal Vermillion and his committee did a splendid job for us "oldtimers." We had nice weather, met many more nice people and I was especially impressed with the memorial service held at the U.S. Navy Memorial. We all know the part we played in the Armed Guard; however, it was quite awesome to have a Naval Academy Admiral (Simpson) admit that he was not aware of our existence. It was more remarkable that he went out of his way to research and acquaint himself with the function that the Armed Guard played during the war. It was very touching of him to bestow his honors on us after reviewing and learning about the adventures of the "Unsung Heroes of WWII." Charles, if you can obtain a copy of the admiral's speech, it would be worthy to reprint in the "POINTER." Keep up the good work. Regards, **Edward F. Mickens, 264 Chittenden Rd., Clifton, NC 07013.**

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Mother's day is fast approaching, and I have not yet received an invitation to bump Hilda from her place at the family table. However, I forgive you for I couldn't make it anyhow. Nor, I'm afraid, I can't make the 16th Annual Reunion. I would have enjoyed seeing "YOU ALL" and the cruise on the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN but, if I got down in the hold, I couldn't get out.

It seems like a long time since Herb Norch asked me why I did not write something about the Naval Armed Guard; the upshot was "UNsung HEROES" in the American Legion magazine. I could not believe the response it elicited. (Nor could Al.) It resulted in my criss-crossing the country attending Armed Guard Reunions for personal interviews and unbelievable correspondence from men eager to tell their stories, plus, great research for documentation of organization and events. It was sufficient to persuade Naval Institute Press to recognize that there was a gap in Naval History that needed to be told and they finally published my book paying tribute to the long ignored Naval Armed Guard, the "STEPCHILD of the NAVY."

Nothing I ever did has given me more pleasure than meeting such a great group of

men; once kids, who served aboard everything from rust-buckets to brand new Libertys, Tankers, Victory Ships and everything else that could float, in perilous waters around the globe. I have made many friends who are with me today, although they may have already reached "SAFE HARBOR."

And – I would like to pay tribute to you, who has proved so dedicated to the men of the U.S.N. Armed Guard over the many years. The 16th Annual Reunion and the Mini-Reunions give proof of the success of your devoted and continuing efforts to achieve Armed Guard recognition. My best wishes and affection to all attending the reunion, and particularly to you and your long suffering family, who have had to put up with many unexpected visitors and umteen-million phone calls. Warmest regards and smooth sailing to all. **Justin Gleichauf, 8728 Hayshed Ln #101, Columbia, Md. 21045.**

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*Thanks Justin for your kind words. You are the one to be commended for your good deed in printing the book, "UNsung HEROES." I am only doing what had to be done and it has worked, so far. I received my rewards from your letter and at the Navy Memorial May 4, 1997 and aboard the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN on May 5th which was the 52nd Anniversary of the sinking of the S.S. BLACK POINT, the day our family lost a Hero, my brother Whitson Lloyd. It was a fulfillment of thoughts and dreams I had at the first reunion at Winchester, Ky. when the late Ensign Bob Rigg first said, "I wonder where old "so and so" is. I sure would like to find him." We have come a long way since the first 52 names and our job is still not complete.*

*You see, Justin, On October 13, 1987, I walked out of the Archives Building across from the Navy Memorial with an Armed Guard Placard along with Armed Guard Leo Gullage carrying a placard representing the Florida Crew. We were seated in the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue. There were 90 more men from other branches of the service with placards. Our picture and the placards appear in the Navy Memorial book, "A LIVING TRADITION" and the name, "ARMED GUARD" goes down in history forever. May 4th, I stood and introduced Vice-Admiral James Perkins and they gave me the Honor to place a wreath at the Lone Sailor to all those who served and especially those 1810 Armed Guard and 8765 Merchant Seamen who did not make it home. It was an honor to represent these heroes and "WE DELIVERED." Just wish more of the crew could have been with us. calloyd*

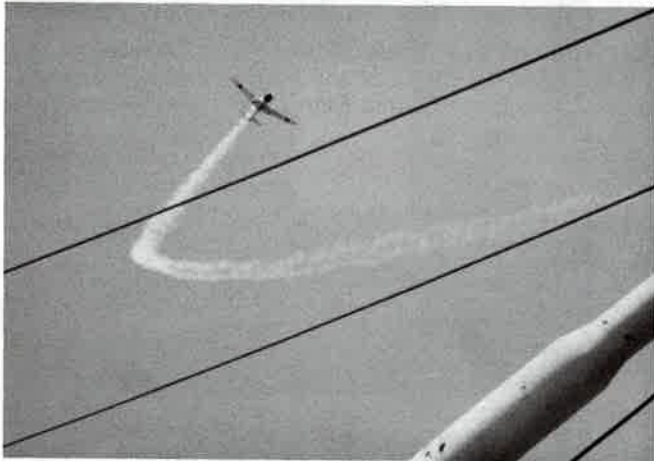




(L-R) Elmer Vincent, Albert and Vera Sobal and Doris Vincent. The Vincents are from Covington, La and were the New Orleans Hosts. The Sobals are from Rutland, Vt. They've made friends and they attend all the reunions. .



(L-R) Alex Lombardi, Northeast Chairman visits Walt Magalis in the Armed Guard Focfle. A letter to Walt thanking him and the crew for such a wonderful job they have done to keep the public informed at this time is appropriate. He is taking his Chemo treatments. Alex had his already. Our best to you both.



It would only be fitting to honor all those Armed Guard who shot down enemy planes during WW II as the plane leaves a trail of smoke over the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN.



(L-R) Chairman C.A. Lloyd, Swillinger, Walter Magalis, Charles F. Blackston (POW from the S.S. CARLTON) just before casting the wreath to those who served. Lloyd and Blockston were given the Honors.



Armed Guard/Merchant Marine Bas at the Navy Memorial.





Chairman C.A.Lloyd was given the honor of laying the wreath at the Lone Sailor on Sunday May 4, 1997 at the Navy Memorial.



(L-R) George Searle, MM WW II President, C.A. Lloyd, AG Chairman and VADM James Perkins III, Commander United States Navy Military Sealift Command.



CHOWDOWN-CHOWHOUNDS



21 Gun Salute by the Navy



(L-R) Clyde Tiffany and Host Neal Vermillion meet again 53 years after they sailed together.





Rhode Island and Eastern Mass. dedicate a "FIRST" (to my knowledge) directly in honor of Signalmen and Radiomen alongside of their previous Armed Guard Memorial. The four pictures by Art Freitas, 147 Clarendon St., North Dartmouth, MA 02747-3269, (508) 993-8577, tell the story. What a wonderful marker for historians in the future to see!!



Above is a photo of the Delaware Valley Armed Guard Crew at their 3rd year Christmas party, and a photo of their cake. They still meet every second Wednesday at the American Legion, 300 Yardley Ave., Fallsington, PA. The host is Allen J. Farrara, 45 Upper Hilltop Rd., Yardley, PA 19067-2724. Everyone is welcome!

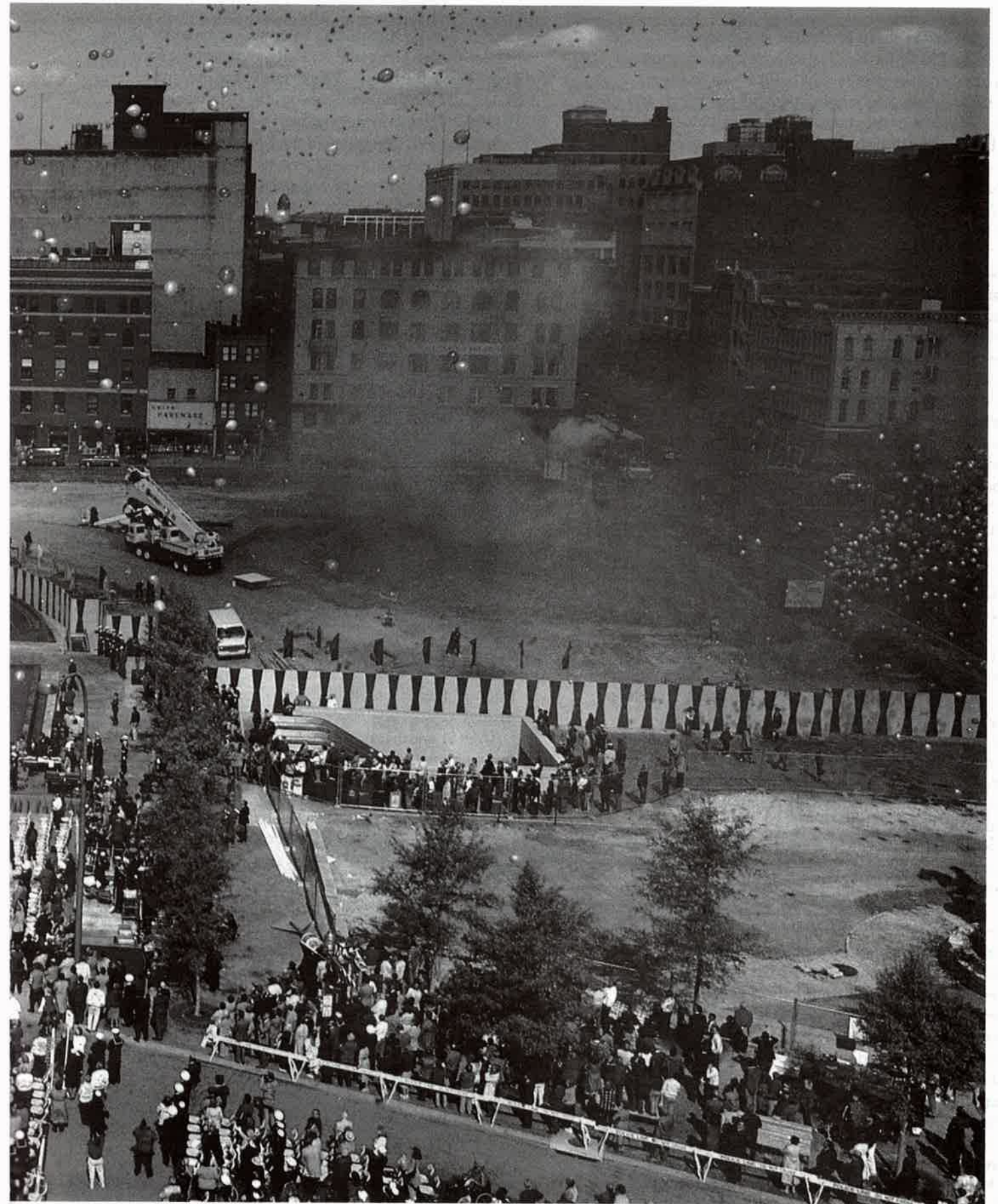


# THE UNITED STATES NAVY MEN





# MORIAL IN WASHINGTON, DC





# *A Dedication Fit for the Navy*

The day was as sharp and bright as a diamond chandelier, the air fresh as full sails on a square-rigger. The pageantry, the grandeur of it all! It was trumpet fanfares and fireworks, choirs speaking our hearts and speakers singing praise, flags unfurling and blue and gold balloons lofting above the requisite pomp and considerable circumstance of a great Navy day.

This was the long awaited official dedication of the U.S. Navy Memorial, October 13, 1987, square in the middle of the 212th birthday of the United States Navy. The Navy brought out the big guns on the balcony of the National Archives across the street from the Memorial: the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. Nearly all of their living predecessors gathered in the audience. A far larger throng were Navy veterans from all over America—a pride of yesteryear's seagoing lions, bemedaled and hashmarked from here to liberty call, bringing their broad smiles and bright, sometimes glistening eyes to some special moments over the Tuesday noon hour when "their" Memorial came to life.

Shortly after 11:00 a.m., a crowd of 8,000 filtered into a rectangle of folding chairs set up on Pennsylvania Avenue—closed here for the day—between the National Archives on the south and the Memorial on the north. Four Navy bands, the U.S. Navy Concert Band and the Sea Chanters, the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Band, the U.S. Naval Academy Band and the combined U.S. Atlantic Fleet and Armed Forces School of Music Band took positions at each corner of the rectangle and played for 40 minutes while guests arrived and officials assembled.

As the overture neared an end, 92 veterans marched in carrying placards with the names of their ship and squadron reunion groups and Navy related associations. The march-on was simple and touching: these are the Memorial's people. Before the actual ceremony began, there was a preamble, with Rear Admiral William Thompson, President of the Navy Memorial Foundation, introducing dignitaries in the audience and acknowledging all who "made it happen". Washington communications consultant and dedication committee chairman John Cosgrove set the tone for the ceremony; Henry A. Berliner, Jr., chairman of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, noted with pride his corporation's partnership in the Memorial project.

Precisely at noon, the ceremony began, with former senior Senator from Texas and Naval Reserve Master Chief Bostwain's Mate, the Honorable John G. Tower, chairman of the board of the Navy Memorial Foundation, serving as master of ceremonies. The ceremony proceeded with the presentation of the Colors, National Anthem, invocation and Navy Hymn. There followed performances by the bands, a pageant of flags from all the states and U.S. territories, a precision drill by the Navy Ceremonial Guard Drill Team and brief addresses by Admiral William J. Crowe, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Admiral Carlisle A. H. Trost,

Chief of Naval Operations; former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General P. X. Kelly, representing former LTJG George Bush, now Vice President of the United States; and the principal speaker, the Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Defense.

Secretary Weinberger said the Memorial immortalizes the spirit, character and personality of the 212-year-old Navy and the millions of dedicated men and women who have served in it. The Memorial "enshrines in stone and metal the gratitude of a nation," he said. Then he commanded, "let this great Navy Memorial come alive!"

The assembled bands blared their fanfares and spine-tingling strains from "Victory at Sea" while Navy Ceremonial Guardsmen "charged" the Memorial's quiet pools with vials of water from the Seven Seas, taken on a recent round-the-world voyage of a Navy submarine. As if driven by the oceans' tumult, the still waters energized in an eruption of fountains. Two hundred flag bearers encircled the 100-foot diameter granite map of the world which forms the central plaza of the Memorial. More sailors hauled up the National Ensign and the Navy flag on the two masts at the front of the Memorial while signal flags flew on the halyards. Twenty thousand helium balloons launched into the crackling blue sky, and the whole evolution culminated in an authoritative, eye-wincing salute of 21 bursts of aerial pyrotechnics.


When the smoke cleared and the balloons headed for the suburbs, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy William H. Plackett addressed the throng and formally introduced to America the Memorial's key sculpture, the Lone Sailor, the seven-foot tall symbol of everyone in the Navy—past, present and future.

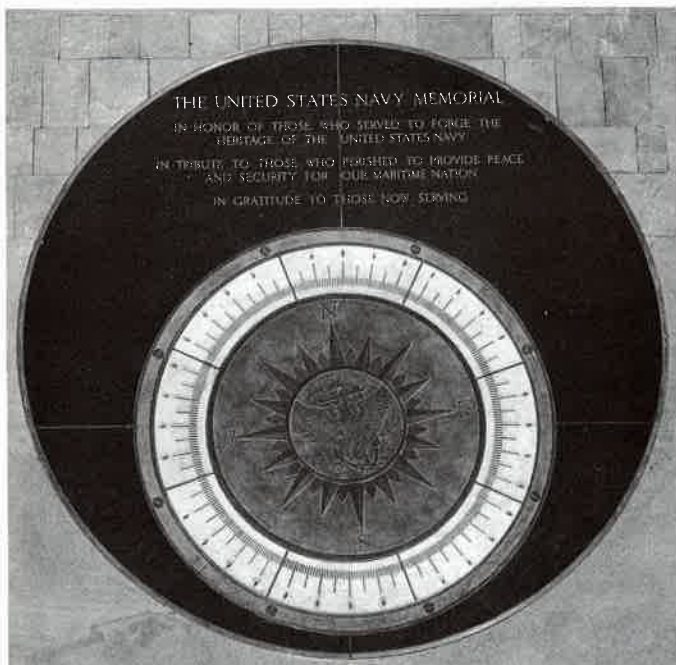
Then at another position on the Memorial site, the compass rose imbedded in stone near the entrance, three women stepped forward to place a floral wreath—in memory of great sacrifices of Navy people and their loved ones. Rear Admiral Thompson introduced them to the crowd: Mrs. Jean Arthurs, whose late husband was a highly decorated naval aviator in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, is president of the National Association of Military Widows; Mrs. Ann Mills Griffiths, executive director of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia; her brother, a naval aviator, was listed as missing in action in 1966 over North Vietnam; Mrs. Evelyn Stocki, a Gold Star Mother whose Navy son was killed in Vietnam.

As the dedication ceremony neared an end, the Honorable James H. Webb, Jr., Secretary of the Navy, stressed the importance of people in the Navy. "We don't send a naval force into a crisis. We don't send ships. We send people." Keying on the people theme, the Secretary reenlisted 22 petty officers and enlisted a "Navy Memorial Special Recruit Company"—90 young men recruited by Navy Recruiting District Washington. And as Mr. Webb spoke of people, four two-man crews of people flew over the scene in an impressively tight



Senator Tower closed the proceedings and kicked off the grand finale, a massive musical and daytime fireworks extravaganza and parade of flags, all the while the Memorial's fountains gurgled a joy of life and adventure of the sea. And the veterans stood proud, pulses racing with memories of service and shipmates, the comradeship of the Navy.

At the feet of the Lone Sailor lay a single rose. The day was done. 



Dear God, whose Spirit was moving over the face of the waters in the beginning; we thank you for this day, and for those who have served you, their fellow man, and their nation in our Navy.

We ask you to be present in all we do and say here today.

May what we dedicate here today help inspire and perpetuate the finest of Navy ideals: pride in an honorable profession, care and concern for others, perseverance in adversity, courage in danger, preservation of sacred honor, and trust in you our God.

Help us also remember the families who wait at home for those who go down to the sea in ships.

Dear God and Father of us all, bless our Navy and all who love and serve her—this day and forevermore. Amen.

Invocation given at the United States  
Navy Memorial Dedication, October 13, 1987.



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# SERMON NOTES... LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

We, of the Springhill, Florida Chapter of Armed Guardsmen, would like to donate the following checks in memory of Frank (Stretch) Mede who passed away 2/3/97. We came to know him very well and he will be missed by us for all the things he did and for the donations he has given since we started our group organization down here in Florida. We would appreciate it if you could write a little about our dedicated and beloved Armed Guard shipmate of WW II. Our crew are going to set aside February 3rd of each year to collect donations in Stretch's name to honor him. The donations will be forwarded to the National Armed Guard Headquarters. Maybe we can get others who hold meetings to do the same for some of their shipmates who cross the bar in the future and who have worked as diligently as Stretch.

His service was held at the U.S.N. Club in

Port Richey, Florida and was very impressive. In my own way, I asked Stretch to set up a "Watch List" and "General Quarters" on his mount for all of us as we too, one day, will be there ourselves in the not too distance future. May God Bless you and stay in good health. As always, "OI' Bill from Springhill". **Bill Young, 4206 Parkhurst Ln., Springhill, Fl. 34606, 352-683-9333.**

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In the Nov/Dec 1996 issue of the "POINTER" was an article on the S.S. EL LAGO by Captain Art Moore. My brother, John E. Gregory lost his life when the El Lago was torpedoed, with a loss all but two who were taken prisoners. For 8 years I have researched about all there is to be known on the ship and if anyone has any kin of those on board, I will send them copies, FREE of CHARGE, of all the articles I have accumulated which includes pictures

of the S.S. EL LAGO. THANKS! **Patrick Gregory, 1114 5th St. #11, Rising Sun, In. 47040, 812-438-4904.**

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I enjoy the "POINTER" very much - you all do a great job! Was happy to receive my Russian Medal a while back. Thanks for the info on it. Hope to sail with you again some day on the JOHN W. BROWN. My wife and I have really enjoyed our cruise, and also our visits. Sincerely, **Clarence L. Rutherford, 1853 Dixie Lane, Altoona, PA 16602-7615.**

*In order to get your 50th year Russian medal, send ship's name, dates, port of call, and cargo to:*

*Honorable Yuri Menshikov  
Embassy of the Russian Federation  
1125 16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, NC 20036*

## From the U.S. Navy Memorial:

The U.S. Navy Memorial is seeking local volunteers to help us advance our programs and visitor services. We are particularly interested in enlisting more veterans to interact with the public, swap sea stories, and lend their unique insights to naval history. Although we have a number of veterans already on staff, none served in the Armed Guard. As the national Navy Memorial, we seek to have as wide a representation as possible from the Navy's many ship types and functional areas of specialty.

Volunteers may choose to work in one of three primary areas: visitor services (tours, public information); heritage programs (oral histories, archival management, display production); and administration (filing and mailing). Volunteer hours are flexible; our offices, located at 701 Pennsylvania Avenue, are open Monday through Friday, 9:30-5:00.

On a separate topic, we are in the process of creating a visitors' reference library as an adjunct to our Naval Heritage Center. If your association has any books or photographs relevant to Armed Guard history, we'd like to incorporate them into our holdings.

**Edward F. Prados, Interim Volunteer Coordinator (202) 737-2300**

## "OLD GLORY"

By Fred Wood - USS BULL (DE-693/APD-78)

*I was once a sailor, and I fought for the flag  
To me it was a symbol, not just a colored rag.*

*It stood for rights and freedom, my country's joy and pride  
So many thousands fought for it, and many thousands died.*

*Those folks who want to burn it should go visit a grave  
Of some departed service man who died so young and brave.*

*He gave his life so you'd be free, a privilege most don't earn  
He died for just the very thing that you so freely burn.*

*So, please don't desecrate the flag or we fought and died in vain  
Remember how we suffered and how many died in pain.*



## YOU BET I'M GOING BACK TO SEA!"

Register at your nearest U.S. Employment Service Office

### U. S. MERCHANT MARINE

War Shipping Administration

### MAN THE VICTORY FLEET 1942

U.S. MERCHANT MARINE WORLD WAR II CASUALTIES 1941-45

U.S. MERCHANT MARINERS SERVED: 215,000

MARINERS LOST: 8,836 OR 3.18% = 1 IN 31

SHIPS LOST: 966 - 6 BEFORE AND 12 AFTER THE WAR





Liberty Ship, showing gun placement.



# S.S. Jose Marti Memories

by Bob Williams, 3680 Marshall St., Wheat Ridge, Co. 80033

Do I remember? YOU BET I DO!! It was a sweltering day under a blazing sun, in mid-summer of 1943. We, the Armed Guard, were about to take a spanking new Liberty, the "S.S. JOSE MARTI" on her "MAIDEN VOYAGE." We looked like a stream of refugees fleeing an advancing army and we could hardly make it up the gangway. Why? Because we were laden down like donkeys; everything we owned was heaped on our aching backs, only to be told by our future and glorious leader, Ensign Henry H. Sayles, an unseasoned "ROOKIE" like ourselves — "YOU WON'T need that stuff; we'll send it back to Brooklyn." A squeaky voice piped up, "How about if we carry it back?" "NO! NO!! Mister Olesky, we'll send it back."

"Mister Morenz will be in charge of deck work, Mister Ward and Shiflet will set the gunnery and lookout watches, and you, Mister Allen, do you think you could find time to lead the calisthenics for all hands at eight bells — mornings and evening?" "I think so, Sir." "YOU THINK SO?" "I mean, Yes, Sir!"

It wasn't a joke then but now I am able to look back with great humor. Sparks Bob Williams said, "Oh why Lord, did you have to introduce us to the unconquerable Cape Hatteras on our first night out? I'm so glad you didn't heed my plea, instead, you let me live." That was the solitary time I surrendered to the indescribable Mal de Mer. It was far from the wildest and roughest night we battled through but it was the smelliest for I was not alone in my misery. We encountered heavy weather many times. Often the bow watch had to be secured when the angry sea came clawing and frothing at the bridge in search of an unwary seaman or unfettered gear. Like I stated before, it wasn't funny then but it sure makes fabulous memories now.

Convoy, "Ships, ships, ships, I never saw so many ships", Aycoth said to me. There were Tankers, Libertys, and Freighters of all sizes, each maneuvering for their allotted spaces, proudly flying the colors of their native land. There is the light blue stripes of Greece, I see Panama, United

Kingdom and a myriad of flags and blazing banners whipping about in the stiff breeze, flags from countries and exotic lands perhaps you had dreamed of visiting someday.

"Signal lights," Harbolovic informed Goldschmidt, "relay important coded convoy information, or, flick out some greetings or salutations between fellow captains or former shipmates. Radio silence is strictly enforced." Our flagman DeMar and Downing await tensely the go ahead signal from the convoy commodore and there it is - EXECUTE - and we are under way. Captain Jolsen receives the sealed envelope that will reveal orders of destination and zig zag courses. "What happens if we zig instead of zagging," Bussing asks. "KABOOM, that's what" quips Nate Day - "Ships don't have breaks you know."

We have a blimp overhead for spotting submarines. American destroyers and DEs are scanning the skies and sweeping the sea around us. Our minds are bogged. How could we know we would not be setting on dry land again for 53 days?

This is one day I'll never forget. I arrived topside and the forward deck was covered with polliwogs; some even had names like Hendrix, Cartier, Zimmerman and there seated upon a makeshift throne was a giant of a man with a long stringy beard, clad in nothing but a skimpy loin cloth. Atop his head was a gold-colored crown and held high aloft in his left hand, as in the myths of old, was a 3-pronged spear, entangled in mossy seaweed and dribbling salt water. "KING NEPTUNE" flashed in my mind. The ship, in a doldrum, was setting fast on zero latitude. This was a special day, a day when all hands, from the Master down to the mascot dog or cat, who had never crossed the equator before must, without exception, pass through the initiation of baptism, by being dunked into the sea and emerging as a loyal subject in the realm of Neptune, God and Sea.

Luckily, we had a swimming pool and most of us were wearing our shorts, at least to begin with. After new style

haircuts, and gooey crude oil being rubbed into all the hairy parts of our person, we scrambled through the hot flogging oven, were spun around blindfolded until our heads whirled, then prodded to walk the plank, Kerplunk!! Into the pool! Where at last we became full fledged Shellbacks - members of the King Neptune Society and free to roam the seven seas.

Oh sure, there were a few scary and even life-threatening times, like when we almost sank the entire convoy and our first air-raid while sitting like dead ducks right across from the Rock, which supposedly represented utmost safety. Let's save those events for another day. I like to remember the good times. Say, sleeping on the deck under a million brightly glowing stars in that unbelievable black expanse, then having to scramble for cover as an ambitious squall sweeps down upon us from nowhere, then vanishes as fast. Or reading a book on the fantail solely from the luminosity of the phosphorus in our mile long wake. How about a nerve racking sea as smooth as glass and you think, Gee, I wish something would happen, a gale, a torpedo wake, a "GQ" blast, or oh, anything, but you wish in vain.

One day the torpedo nets snagged a monstrous sea turtle and yep, the cook made turtle soup. Yuck!! Strategic Suez Canal, bum boats seeking Bak-Sheesh or trading liquor strong enough to blind a man for a few cigarettes. Rickshaws in Durbin, Sugar Loaf Mountain, Christmas in Rio, easing up the Amazon. Best of all, I fancied sitting on the hatch cover approaching a brand new port, thoughts miles away and I'm riding those wonderful ground swells!! Oh! Boy!! Pinch me, I think I'm dreaming.

I tried to name the whole damned crew — I've saved til last the best for you, — Brucato, Cannon, Endres, three — March, Hamrick, Norris, Glenn Dorsey — That's S.S. JOSE MARTI's crew — I sure would like to hear from you.



# Story of the S.S. Alexander Ramsey

Sent in by Charles R. Amidon, Jr., 522 Brandon St., Owosso, MI 48867-1833

This story is dedicated to all the men who sailed aboard the S.S. Alexander Ramsey Voyage #7, August 4, 1944. It was started by our signalman Vern Anderson and completed by Charles Amidon, also in remembrance of Eldor Goes GM2/c.

Yesterday we left Loch Ewe at 1945. Heavy fog set in at 0830. By 0845 we had our first close call, nearly hitting a tanker on our port side. Rudder hard right, engines stopped. Rudder kept on hard right til another ship loomed out of fog on starboard side. Rudder hard left. Everyone was on his toes, as forward holds contained bombs with detonators already attached, and remaining detonators for other six thousand tons of demolition bombs which completed our cargo. Rudder was put hard left until still another ship suddenly appeared off our port bow. About this time, the general idea in mind was to get out of fairway and drop the hook until the fog lifted. "'Chips,' the ship's carpenter, take a sounding" was the first order heard from the bridge. "Sixty fathoms," came the reply from the bow. Orders were given to report depth regularly. Second report fifty fathoms, third report forty fathoms. Fourth report *four fathoms*, but before report reaches bridge, ship was reported on port bow. "Engines full astern, rudder hard right." Mate sings out, "Captain can't clear beach." Altman and aft gunner ring general alarm.

Everything seems to happen all at once. Shoals are spotted, breakers are heard on beach, and extremely high cliff looms up on port side. Charles Amidon was on the bow and was thinking the wake in front of our ship was a fog buoy on a cable, but it was land, as our ship was climbing the rocks. Ship is vibrating violently as result of engines full astern with way on, and bottom scraping rock. At this time all hands have answered alarm, some having only dungarees and life jackets on. We have come to a halt on the rocks, engines are stopped. All hands are very badly shaken and shocked, but nothing compared to our captain who has been a complete nervous wreck since our cargo of demolition bombs were loaded.

Hardly taking time to look the situation over, engines were put full astern again, with helm still hard over. Ship again shook violently as she inched her way off the rocks. Finally cleared engines were changed to half ahead, with intentions of clearing

cliff. Gunnery officer suggests to captain to wait until fog lifts before proceeding. Being a headstrong master and believing his navigational ability not to be questioned, he decides to proceed against protest by mates and gunnery officer, who have safety of crew in mind. As ship begins to make headway, captain states, "Look, we are clear, we're making headway." At this moment a deep rumble was heard forward and we were almost shaken off the bridge as she swayed from side to side. Men on the bow were thrown to the decks as she finally jumped to a distinct halt. Engines were put to full astern for some time but to no avail.

Here we are high and dry with twelve feet forward instead of our usual twenty-four. Tide is maximum. Radio silence is broken, distress rockets are fired, colors are hoisted upside down, and ship's bell is being rung continuously. When sharks are reported swimming nearby, some wise guy reports vultures hovering overhead. Johnston, who just this morning offered Andy thirty dollars for his watch, now flashed a "fin" in his face in hopes of making a fast deal. Heavy oil slicks appear around the ship, giving evidence of punctured fuel tanks and bilges.

As fog begins to lift, we realize that our distress signals have not been in vain, as the image of a man is spotted on top of the cliff. Oral communication is difficult, but after some time, we manage to understand "Spearhead." The charts reveal that this position is four miles off our course. Our radio operator sent out a distress signal; later on, I did find out the radio distress signal was received by Joe Marrah of my home town of Owosso, Michigan. I met Joe on leave in an Owosso ice cream parlor. I was telling him about our going on the rocks and he advised me that he received the SOS as he was stationed in Ireland as a radio operator for the navy. Later we learned that four miles off course in these waters put us in about the most dangerous spot in this hemisphere.

At 1015 merchant ships spotted off starboard quarter. Pete fired distress signals and Andy tried to contact it with blinker, but ship continued on without answering either signal. Captain sends "Pat" down for coffee for mate and himself. Pat being a bit on the jumpy side hurriedly made his way below. In no time flat he was back with a pitcher and two cups. As luck would have it for Pat's sake, the mate tried the coffee first

and was astonished to find the coffee salted instead of sweetened. Pat was full of apologies and rushed below again to make a fresh batch.

(1100) The man on the cliff was spotted again and by this time visibility was clear enough to make out his uniform to be that of a British Naval officer. He brought news that help was on its way. Evidently we were near some lighthouse or lookout station. (1115) Ship sighted on starboard beam. Rockets are fired, whistles blown, bell rung, 20mm gun fired and blinker used to draw his attention. He turned out to be a HM Man of War. After revealing our plight to him, he said that he could be of no assistance but would stand by for our protection against enemy boats or submarines who evidently must have picked up our position from our radio message. (1130) Small boat with a British Naval Lt. Comdr. alongside followed by two salvage tugs. After a slight conference by the officers attempts were made to free us from the rocks. The boats, being too small were unable to move us. At this time word was received by man on cliff that Navy salvage trawlers were on the way to our rescue.

(1330) Salvage crew arrived, salvage officer (Robinson) boarded ship. Upon boarding, the salvage officer finds by checking out draft that we are aground aft as well as forward. By this time the tide is receding fast and ship is creaking, particularly midships, caused by the strain of the weight of the cargo. Realizing that low tide might cause friction enough to ignite our cargo, Lt. Harper suggested that we abandon ship during low tide. Ship was abandoned at 1530, including kittens. Draft is seven feet forward and 19 feet aft. Sure are sitting high. We all put to sea on the trawler "Melinda." No one got sea sick. We were taken to Scapo Flow, Scotland, a British Navy base. I remember staying in a hospital in Scapo Flow, where I met a British sailor. He never could pronounce Amidon right. He used to perform by eating razor blades. He said he did this in a circus in England. Reboarded the Ramsey at 1730 and the cooks got busy with chow, as we were all starved. The following three hours were spent waiting for high tide before salvage work could begin.

(2030) Tugs have begun work, as tide is nearly maximum. They are rocking us a lot



but so far we haven't moved so that anyone can notice it. The boys hope those potatoes (bombs) from Maine can stand the bumps. The gunners are all on deck enjoying the weather and scenery on top of the cliff, and I do mean scenery. "Whoops, where is Pete?" "Yep, that's right, in the sack as usual. Whatta man." We have quite a gallery on the cliff top. About a dozen gals are the center of attraction for the boys aboard ship. Amidon decided the girl in green was pretty nice. All in all, the gunners seem more interested in the gals than the rocks below.

(2045) The stern has finally moved out about a foot. The chief engineer just called the bridge saying he had the forward pumps going like hell. The oil slick is getting thick and the sides are taking an awful beating.. Looks like rocking around

isn't doing us much good. Hope she doesn't get a notion to blow up. Look-out very alert. He just spotted the girl in green sitting on some guy's lap. All the boys are hoping it gets better as time goes by. (2120) Stern is finally clear, bow still hanging. Captain tries to be funny at this point and calls the bow telling Bos'n to shove off with a boat hook. Bow must be hung up on starboard side as ship is listing to port. Things are beginning to look better, everybody seems happy. Even Pete is out of the sack. All we are hoping for now is that she doesn't sink when she does finally come clear. A small boat full of native sightseers are approaching our bow, showing off some dandy fish they caught on the way out. Seems like the boys on the bow talked them into giving them up. Somebody reported them to be six feet long and that they were going to haul them

on board with the winch, but I see they finally agreed to three feet and six are now hauling them aboard by hand. They really are some nice looking fish though. If these people only knew what we were loaded with, I don't imagine they would come alongside.

Our bow is finally starting to move and the gang is praying that it doesn't part with the rest of the ship. It's coming slow but sure. A few bumps and a lot of noise. That's all and we're clear. His Majesty has done it again and sure saved the taxpayers back home a lot of money this time. Whistle blowing like it is the Fourth of July or something. Sure feels good to be afloat again and we are actually floating. Show is over for the audience on the cliff. It is now 2144 and we are on our way again. Hope it is smooth sailing from here on in.

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## S.S. Schoharie — #217799 A HOG ISLAND ship

In recent letters to the Editor (Allen Thronson) there have been calls for articles on tankers and I agree but have you ever loved one ship more than others? Liberty ships, tankers, C-class ships, Victory ships— but my love has been reserved for an ugly-beautiful Hog Islander: The S.S. Schoharie.

Schoharie (Sko-harry) was launched in 1919 and sailed the seas as a deluxe small class of cargo and passenger carrying ocean liner for years before being assigned to war time cargo carrying duties. She, and I say that with reverence, took cargo to Murmansk and was wounded on her return (QP18); she carried war material to Marseille, France and then in late August 1944, she came home and I was assigned to her as Signalman.

The name Schoharie derives from Indians of upstate New York and today there is a beautiful valley near Albany in Schoharie County and within the county a lovely, tranquil village — Schoharieville. The people there are so proud of their ancestors' role in the Revolutionary War and again in the Civil War, in World War I and World War II; in short, they are very proud Americans

and the ship which carried their name was a source of immense pride during World War II.

Schoharie was built to serve in World War I but fortunately the war ended sooner than the launching and this beautiful ship sailed forth in peace. She wasn't very big— only 389 feet in length and 54 feet at the beam and weighed a mere 3,070 net tons. But, oh! she was lovely and she moved along with the grace of a greyhound at about 10 knots. Her port of registry was Savannah, Georgia. She was armed with the usual guns: 3"50 foreward, 8 20mms. and a 4"50 aft. There was a compliment of 46 seamen and 26 Armed Guardsmen. The Captain was a young fellow (I was 18!) named A. Hamann who piloted the Schoharie with the brilliance of a true maritime skipper. Our Chief Mate was Marshall Christy. The Armed Guard Gunnery Officer was Lt. (jg) Minor H. Watterson.

Captain Hamann took us to Ireland and Scotland and on down to Mumbles, near Liverpool and to the Isle of Wight. We took our cargo of ammunition and jerry cans of gasoline to Le Havre and then up to Rouen, when the battle of the

Bulge began and the Luftwaffe threatened Le Havre. We then shuttled back and forth across the channel to Plymouth and Cherbourg and finally on to Southampton and to Antwerp. V-1's exploded around us, within 25 yards, causing some percussion but no damages. March 1945 came in like the proverbial lion but we left Antwerp and headed home safely to New York.

Later, we took Schoharie to Guantanamo Bay— the European phase of the war ended while there (May 8th) and to Georgetown, British Guiana for Bauxite which was then delivered to Portland, Maine.

She was later sold to Argentine Company and was renamed "Mision" and was then scrapped in 1956. (The Hog Islanders #513)

Any of you "Hog Islanders" want to add to or comment on the pleasure of sailing these wonderfully gallant "little" ships, please write me c/o the "Anchor Light" or e-mail me: ThomMyakel  
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