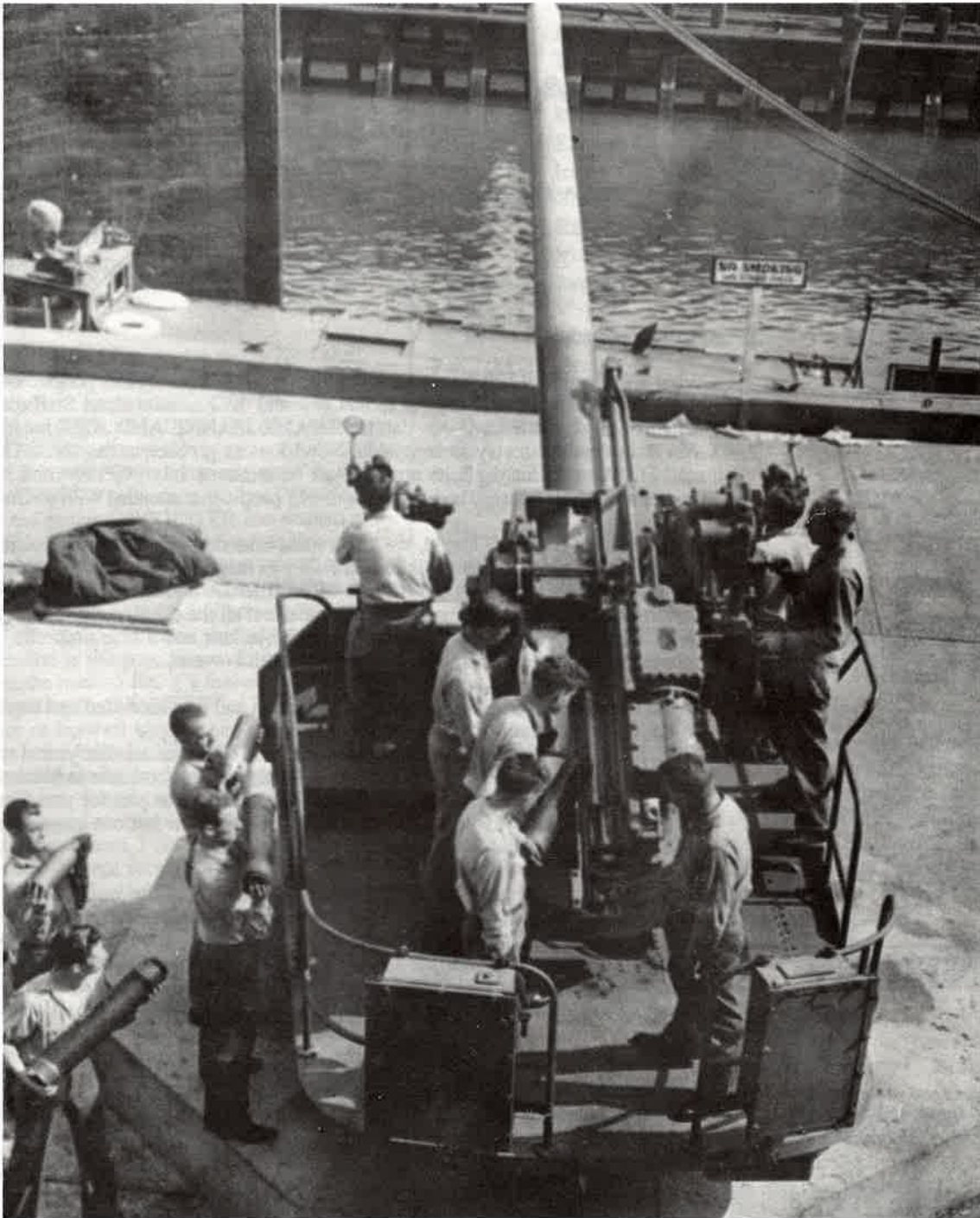


JULY/AUG/SEPT. 1998

THE INTER



TRAINING ON THE 5" 30

A gun crew trains on the 5" 30 gun on the drill dock at the Armed Guard Center in Brooklyn, NY. The gun crew consists of a Trainer, a Pointer, a Sightsetter, 3 Shellmen, 3 Powdermen, a Hot Case Man and a Gun Captain

Officers for 1998-99

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

Al and Wanda Colella, 1999 Hosts
1106 Garden Valley Dr. #D
St. Peters, MO 63376-6002
1-314-922-2173

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

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**

THE POINTER

THE PLANE SHOOTER

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

USN Armed Guard World War II Veterans

"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"

Dear Everybody!!

What a great thrill it was to get back together with such wonderful people. Our hosts, Joseph and Jeanne Benedict and the Minnesota Crew and the Radisson Hotel Staff did it up right. On behalf of all who attended, we wish to "THANK JEANNE AND JOE" for all the hard work they did to make our stay so enjoyable. Now! Joe can go back to the "NORTHWOODS" and rest! His Armed Guard phone number will be removed July 30, 1998 and it will be a little quieter around his house. There were about 675 people that attended with 46 States represented.

For those who could not attend, we had a great boat ride up the Mississippi River with pretty weather. Our tour of Minneapolis and St. Paul was fascinating and the bus and tour guides were great. And, then there was the MALL of AMERICA and the Chanhassen Dinner Theater performance. A good selection, Joe and Jeanne, and all the events were fabulous. The food was A-1!! Joe asked me to notify you of two white jackets and a nice umbrella which were left behind and to contact him and he will send to rightful owners.

At the business meeting, Bob Ober made a motion and was seconded and carried that I would be the Chairman again for another year. Since no one stepped forward to relieve me of my "TOUR OF DUTY" I guess I'll have to stand "WATCH" for another year. I want to THANK YOU for your trust and with "ALL Y'ALLS" help, we can continue to locate others and give them an opportunity to find a shipmate, too, as we have in the past for you. There are so many things that pass this way that I am not able to let you know but one request just came in that would bother me if I did not follow through. I'll print it:

Dear Sir: I am writing on behalf of Beth Yahn, daughter of the late Milton C. Yahn, Sr. who died February 5, 1945 in the New York harbor on board the S.S. Spring Hill when it collided with another tanker. Beth was 5 months old at the time and she would like to know if you have any of the crew listed in your file so she could write to and get more information on her father and of the accident in which her father died. He was a Seaman 1/C-U.S.N. Armed Guard. Thanking you in advance, Wm.C. Wenzel, 2185 Beaumont Ave NW, Massillon Oh. 44647.

I did not have anyone listed at the time but have followed up in sending a copy from Art Moore's book, "A CARELESS WORD" and a packet of Armed Guard Material of past POINTERS, etc. along with a FORM-180 to send in to St. Louis for his records. It's a shame that people like that, or even you, did not know how to obtain these records. I didn't know of it until about 1983.

The winners of the raffle are as follows: (address furnished upon request)

Ralph Hitchens, Ralph Scudder, Lawrence Beck, Andrew Roche, Dale Mason, Johnny F. Clair, Richard L. Anderson. The Liberty Ship Portrait by Olive Mickens, wife of Armed Guardsman

Edward F. Mickens, of Clifton N.J. went to George L. Falk and the books went to Stanley Muskala. Thanks to all who took part in this project. The money was used for the Armed Guard extra expenses and the balance will be deposited into the Armed Guard Account for future POINTERS and expenses. You were just great to support a great bunch of OL'SALTS.

Some of the above will be used in the 1998 Annual Yearbook. I didn't understand this years photographers contract and it was too late to change. They took good pictures of those who had their pictures taken and you paid for them there. We generally had that cost and book included together but this was not the case this year so I am asking all of you that had pictures taken, to send one to Rudy Kozak and he will get a book together at no cost to you. For those of you who did not attend but would like to be included in book, send Rudy a small wallet size photo and a check for \$12.00 and he will include you. He will have to have the photos no later than "September 15, 1998" to be included. With the year book you can keep up with ones you were with there or at the past reunions you attended. You may even recognize a shipmate. YOU HEAH!!

I have over 1100 on "HOLD" now due to returned mail. DON'T BE ONE TO BE PLACED ON "HOLD" IN THE FUTURE!! For you who received ZIP CODE lists at the reunion, look on last pages and if you see any in your State, see if they are still around. Be sure to notify me before you move! This includes you who migrate. I've had eight that I had on "HOLD" write since the last POINTER saying they were not getting the POINTER and wanted to know WHY!! I immediately sent them the ones they had missed and they are happy, and I feel better. I don't want to eliminate anyone but I have no choice to put you on "HOLD" if mail is returned. O.K.?? And you who do not have a number behind your last name showing you have volunteered a donation in the past, please drop me a card saying keep me on the mailing list. It's that simple. I want to know if you're getting the "POINTER."

I had 30 copies of SHIP LIST and NAME LIST (alphabetically and Zip Code) books made up and when the reunion was over, I had certain ones who hold luncheons, etc. designated to carry them back with them whereby many could see them. I did get a few of them to these guys but many did not receive them. They are of little use for one individual to have and very costly as we have to pay for them to be copied and put together. I have to wait until the last minute to do these so as to get as many covered as possible. They are outdated already as they were printed June 4, 1998. I have made about 800 changes since that time. (AREA CODES, ZIP CODES, CHANGE OF ADDRESS, NEW OL'SALTS, NEW SHIP NAMES, ETC)

Many of you who had filed Asbestosis claims probably received a letter from the Leonard Jaques's Law Firm that he passed away June 10, 1998. We are sorry to learn of this and our sympathy is extended to all who knew him. They will still honor your requests that have been filed and ones in the future, I am told. If you DO NOT FILE, you will get no money that you are due. If you don't need the money, file anyway and donate what you get to the S.S. JOHN W.BROWN fuel expense in the year 2000 when it goes to Detroit. Martin Vallee presented slides at our business meeting and everything is set on go. I will keep you updated.

— In Memory —

CROSSED THE WAVES SINCE APR/JUNE/JULY, 1998 POINTER

Arthurs	Stanley K.	Solvang	Ca	Mary	5/4/98
Avery	Norman D.	Garner	NC	Jean	7/27/98
Campbell	Charles	Prescott	Az		3/25/98
Carter	Melvin	Hartford	Ct	*	12/97
Cepican	James J.	Orland Park	IL	Evelyn	8/29/98
Fialla	Tony	Houston	Tx	Ann	5/23/98
Geib +	Donald H.	Tamarac	Fl	Caroline	7/14/98
Harper	Russell	Mesa	Az		4/22/98
Herman	Kenneth L.	Spring Lake Park	Mn	Marlys	8/5/88
Hill	Irving	Los Angeles	Ca	Maydee	3/18/98
Kupfer	Grove A.	Lawrence	In.	Adelaine	1/98
Lucas	Ralph	Hanahan	SC	Myrtle	5/5/98
Lyons	Vincent R.	Selkirk	NY	Jean	7/16/98
McKaig	James B.	Texas City	Tx	Kathryn	10/5/97
Meeks	Virgil G.	Milwaukee	Wi	Isabel	7/22/98
Miller	Dee M.	Centerville	Oh	Marilyn	5/30/98
Parks (MM)	Gerald S.	Chandler	Az		11/17/97
Ranson	Kenneth J.	Coal Creek	Co		
Self	Gay	Durant	Ok		7/3/98
Selig	Ralph	Topeka	KS	Dorothy	8/3/98
Stewart	Hugh C.	Racine	Wi	Mary	7/22/98
Tarchini	Johnnie		NM		2/10/98
Titus	Lowell M.	Marion	Oh	Jo Ann	5/12/98
Wagner	Donald H.	Harrisburg	Pa	Jeannetta	7/4/98
Werre	James	Ocala	Fl	Florence	5/26/98

+ Don Geib and "Chickie" were hosts for the first New Jersey Reunion at the "BRASSBUCKET" in Woodbridge, N.J. which turned into the Northeast Reunion, as known today.

I had about 20 more of the crew in the computer that had gone ahead of us since the last POINTER and somehow, I deleted their names by mistake. If the wife would resend with their names and info as shown above, I will put the notice in the next POINTER. On each deceased shipmate, I have to go into the computer's ship list file and place an asterisk (*) behind the last name. Then, I change the personnel file to: MRS_____ so that you will know the person has died when you get a ship printout. I understand what I do, and I hope you can too.

NEW BOOK

"They Aimed to Deliver"

A WWII Historial novel about the U.S. Navy Armed Guard by **Charles F. Jackson**, this book is the story of the five Houston brothers - a merchant marine, a marine, and three Armed Guard Sailors, whose lives spanned the years of WWII. Their experiences are a chronicle of the high and low points of America's battle with the forces of Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany.

To order copies of this book, send \$15 and your mailing address to:

TATD
P.O. Box 4194
Cary, NC 27519-4194

Your book(s) will be shipped to you within 5 days, postpaid.

Site for the 1999 National Reunion is the PLAZA HOTEL/CASINO-DOWNTOWN #1 MAIN STREET, PO BOX 760, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—MAY 16-20, 1999 with Chet and Wanda Colella as our Hosts again. They turned our hosts in Las Vegas and also in St. Louis and they have volunteered their services again. To many of you who we have located since they were hosts, Al was one of the 5 Armed Guard Survivors of the S.S. BLACK POINT sinking of May 5, 1945. We had our largest turnout in Las Vegas before and I hope we can top the 1300 attending. "PLEASE DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE" to make your reservations. The Itinerary will be in a future POINTER in time to get counted in.

The 1999 Biloxi, Ms. National Reunion fell through due to things beyond my control and I regret it. Maybe in the future. Many asked me "HOW WILL WE KEEP HAVING REUNIONS??" I don't know! Do you? We will go as far as we can, as long as we can and get hosts as we have in the past, I think the Armed Guard will be here a few more years, don't you?? We're starting number 18 now!!

I just put together a booklet of about 20 pages on the Liberty Ship, the S.S. ROBERT E. PEARY. I hope you think it worthwhile as it is dedicated to those who built them, sailed them, protected them and the farmers who raised the food we ate. I will refrain from honoring those who sank many of them. After you read it and would like to donate it to your local library system, please do so in order for the children in the future to study and know a little of how things were of that era.

To those of you who had your pictures taken

at the Minnesota Reunion. Please send one of the photos to: RUDY and ELLIE KOZAK, 721 N. Leavitt Ave., ORANGE CITY, FL 32763, 904-774-2774 along with your name and address plus the computer number from your mailing label in case there is doubt in spelling. Rudy can check his computer, as I send him a backup regularly from this computer. You can also use Rudy's address change to order caps, etc.

I would like to thank Bob and Dorothy Ober of Cincinnati for bringing their computer to the reunion. Many got an "on the spot printout" of their shipmates located. Ober was assisted by Ernest and Carolyn Cochran of Dresden, Oh and Vasil Ognenoff of Cincinnati, Oh. Hopefully, we can have them at Las Vegas.

There are 11 Victory Ships, including the S.S. RED OAK (V) still in Suisan Bay Reserve Fleet at Benicia, California of a total of 78 ships on June 30, 1997. They are: TIOGA COUNTY, RED OAK, HANNIBAL, BARNARD, PAN AMERICAN, QUEENS, OCCIDENTAL, WINTHROP, RIDER, EARLHAM and the SIOUX FALLS Victory. The address is: RED OAK VICTORY, RICHMOND, CA. MUSEUM of HISTORY, PO BOX 94802, Richmond, Ca 94802. Help restore this ship if within your cables tow.

Lawrence A. Murphy, Author of "A NORTHERN SAGA", 30 Mercedes Rd., Brockton, Ma. 02301 508-588-0885 wants to hear from readers and libraries in their opinions of the viciousness and tragic losses of the Convoy War. The book is available by writing- THORNDIKE PRESS, PO BOX 159, THORNDIKE, ME 04986. (1-800-257-5157) Cost is: \$21.95 plus shipping and handling. (NOW YOU

"NEW OL'SALTS" KNOW!!

Paul L. Fleming, 2927 Duncan Rd., Wilmington, De. 19808-2379 is attempting to compile a comprehensive history of the former U.S. Naval Training Station at Bainbridge, Maryland during and after WW II. Anything would be helpful, such as: day you arrived, your thoughts, watches you stood, drills, friends you made, the drill halls, fire fighting, Port Deposit Boat drills, Etc..

This notice was placed in the NATIONAL VFW MAGAZINE May issue and I thought it may help some of you. It is up to you to look into this matter. It follows: "World War II WAGE-CREDIT-SEEKING any Veteran of any branch of the Armed Service who has been turned down for, or was not aware of, the use of WW II wage credits in calculation of their initial monthly benefit under The "SOCIAL SECURITY" (generally Veterans born before 1930)." Respond to: Calvin G. Brown, Brown Consulting Engineers, 226 Clinton St., Cowlesville, N.Y. 14037, 716-937-9348.

Received a call from one of our 2 Armed Guard Chaplains, Robert Aldrich, 2775 Fremont St, Las Vegas, Nv. 89104, 702-369-6127 who was a "NO SHOW" at the Bloomington Reunion. He got as far as Fargo, North Dakota, had heart problems and they did a 3-way by-pass while we were enjoying ourselves. Aldrich is doing just fine now and said he would see the crew in Las Vegas. It is amazing what doctors can do now and I hope they still improve. I might need one!!

Y'all stay healthy and in touch. Hope you enjoy this "delayed" POINTER. calloyd

Dear Charles: We have a new WWII Monument here in our State of Iowa's capital city. The monument is especially for WWII and is for all who contributed to the war effort, civilians as well as veterans. I have enclosed pictures of this beautiful monument and those who attended our May 1997 meeting. Thanks!!! Arnold O. Latare, 601 34th St., West Des Moines, IA 50265, 515-225-1084.

My apology for delay in placing such a beautiful memorial in the POINTER. I finally found the photos while in search for something else. P.S. - The crew doesn't look too bad either! cal



The Freedom Flame - "A Monument to all Iowans who contributed to the World War II effort - To those men and women who fought in battles around the world as well as those who labored here at home."



(L-R) Mary Latare, Ivan Edwards Leonard Lundberg, Don and Alice Walther, Grant Peterson, Lynn and John Rudisill, Verna Edwards, Grant and Margaret Peterson, Genevieve and Ralph Turner, Dorothy and Paul Swanson, George Falk, Paul Stone, Ira and Mary Ann Cory, Delwyn and Mary Foust, Ray Satterlee, Garry Wells, Katie and Rudy Simon, and Arnold Latare.

★ ★ ★ ★ REUNIONS ★ ★ ★ ★

"REGIONAL, MINI-REUNIONS AND GET-TOGETHERS"

Support these local meetings while you're able.

OOOPS!! COLUMN!! BEFORE I FORGET IT AGAIN!!

UNDER REUNIONS, BE SURE TO PAY ATTENTION TO:
"AND IF MAKING RESERVATIONS, BE SURE TO SAY "ARMED GUARD."

OOOPS!! COLUMN!!

Entered Computer # 15625 in as of 8/14/98. Thought you'd like to know. We still have 12576 on the mailing. Over 1,000 are "ON HOLD" due to returned mail. If you move or migrate, you'd better let me know.

Page 6, Apr/May/June Pointer. Gunnery Instructors-April 1, PUT: "1944"

CHECK YOUR APR/MAY/JUNE POINTER FOR AREA MEETINGS IF NOT BELOW:

"PRINTING ONCE MORE, Y'ALL TO HELP THE KOZAKS SELL THE ARMED GUARD ITEMS!!!"

"SPECIAL NOTICE" !! NOW HEAR THIS!!! Y'ALL!! Rudy and Ellie Kozak, our "SHIP'S STORE" personnel in charge of orders for caps, jackets, etc. "NEW ADDRESS" is 721 N. Leavitt Ave., Orange City, FL 32763, 904-774-2774. The OLD ADDRESS ORDER BLANKS will be forwarded to his new address til 1/1/99. Put the new address on your envelope when ordering. It would speed up the process. Write the KOZAKS for order forms or just tell them what you want and send your check with order.

SOUTH NEW JERSEY PINE BARRENS CHAPTER of ARMED GUARD and their LADIES meet "1 P.M. EVERY 4TH THURSDAY-MONTHLY" AT: PAUL'S OCEANSIDE RESTAURANT AND DINER, 562 RT. 9, WARETOWN, NJ 08758 609-693-3296. (opposite the Clayton Block Co.) Contact: Austin R. Corrado, 117 Captain Rd., Manahawkin, NJ 08050, 609-660-9221; or, Richard and Kelly Shute, 609-693-4909; or, Ted Heumann, 732-286-0643. They had 54 Armed Guard plus their ladies at the last luncheon.

Contact: **Midwest Chapter of AMMMV**, P.O. Box 32234, Chicago 60629, 773-436-8231, or Armed Guard John Neven, 3514 N. Oak Park Ave., Chicago, IL 60634, 773-725-2186 for meeting in that area. This crew will work hard to get the "S.S. JOHN W. BROWN" to CHICAGO in year 2000. SUPPORT THEM!!

The **ILLINOIS/WISCONSIN MINI-REUNION** will be at the **FOUR SEASON INN**, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, 1-800-528-1234 or 630-459-8500, Oct. 1-4, 1998. CONTACT: Gerard Cheffer, 700 S. Fairfield, Lombard, IL, 60148-3504, 630-495-3382. This has always been a great Mini-Reunion.

The **IL/WI "ON THE BORDER CREW"** contact: Jay and Jane Wildfong, 13211 Durand Ave., Sturtevant, WI. 53177, 414-886-2966 for meetings in that area. Great Crew!!

LST ASSOCIATION will hold their Sept. 2-8, 1998 National Reunion at the **HYATT REGENCY** on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. CONTACT: Mike and Linda Gunjak, 64 Ponderosa Dr., Oregon, OH. 43616, 800-728-5870. They publish a VERY INTERESTING, GREAT PAPER!!

MEETING PLACE CHANGE!!
CONNECTICUT CREW WILL BE MEETING AT "BICKFORDS RESTAURANT Exit 74, I-95, Niantic, Ct at 11:30 3rd Wednesday of each month. Contact: Lew Tew, 4 Glenwood Ct., Gales Ferry, Ct. 06335, 860-464-6272; or Ed and Barbara Sullivan, 203-536-7276.

The "HALL of FAME CHAPTER" of the WW II Merchant Seamen in the Canton and Rootstown, **OHIO AREA** meets at **BACHELLI'S ITALIAN VILLA and STEAK HOUSE**, 2016 Whipple Ave, Canton, Oh. on the "LAST TUESDAY" of the month at 10 A.M. and they would like to get more Armed Guard to meet with them. Contact: Robert Hahn, 3771 Tallmadge Rd., Rootstown, Oh. 44272, 216-325-9657

WEST VIRGINIA CREW will hold a Mini-Reunion at the **WILDERNESS PLANTATION MOTEL**, 1-800-716-6835, Sept. 26, 1998. Contact: Paul Bennett, Rt. 2 Box 29, Jane Lew, Wv. 26378, 304-884-7536; Forrest Flanagan, P.O. Box 119, Craigsville, WV 26205, 304-742-3160; and Murrey Shuff (MM), 106 Kinzer St., Beckley, WV. 25801, 304-252-6995. If in the area, they'll be happy to have "Y'ALL" stop in.

CHINO, CA. AREA OL'SALTS: Contact Tom Carter, 4405 Roosevelt St., Chino, Ca., 91710, 909-628-4544 and help him get the crew together for "SEA STORIES AND COFFEE!!" THIS WILL BE ANOTHER ACTIVE CREW IN CALIFORNIA.

GEORGIA CHAPTER Skipper Bill Burton, 251 Cardigan Cir., Lilburn, Ga. 30247, 770-381-5395 and the Ga. Crew meet EACH QUARTER at **SHONEY'S**, Exit 38, Lilburn 11 AM "FIRST MONDAY." They have a great crew and welcome you to attend. Burton is working hard on the Asbestosis Claims with Congressmen and he got the Associated Press

to carry his story.

PBY CATALINA INTERNATIONAL ASSOC. 10TH REUNION. CONTACT: Jas. Thompson, 1510 Kabel Dr., New Orleans, La. 70131, 504-392-1227. Howard Johnson Hotel, 15 Motel Circle, NE, ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. 87123, 1-800-877-4852, Sept 30-Oct. 4, 1998. (BALLOON FESTIVAL on Oct. 3rd- Approx-1000 AIR BALLOONS take to the air)

ROCHESTER, N.Y. AREA ARMED GUARD and MERCHANT SEAMEN of WW II contact John and Mary Shevlin, 37 Winfield Rd., Rochester, N.Y. 14622-2212, 716-467-2057. A LUNCH MEETING is held at 11:00 A.M. on the 2ND TUESDAY at the "OLD COUNTRY BUFFET," Culver-Ridge Plaza, East Ridge Rd., IRONDEQUOIT, NY. Neil Keyes, 10 Tarrytown Dr., Rochester, NY 14624, 716-247-3021 will assist Shevlin.

TIME CHANGE!!!! HOSTS Alvin and Thelma Kemble, 8150 Chamber Hill Rd., **HARRISBURG, PA.** 17111, 717-566-8728 announce they hold their "FIRST THURSDAY" of each month meeting for their area at the "HOSS'S STEAK HOUSE" in Hummelstown, Pa. at 12:00 NOON.

The "NORTH-WEST PASSAGE", "OR-WA-ID-MT-AK" holds a LUNCHEON at 1400 Hours on the 3rd WED. at **BELL'S RESTAURANT**, 8501 Fifth Ave NE, North Seattle, Wa., 1 mile South of Northgate Mall. Contact: Bob Heitzinger, 9227 169th Pl. NE, Redmond, Wa. 98052, 425-861-9706; or James Davies, 4231 134th St., Bellevue, Wa. 98006, 425-641-9293.

PLEASE NOTICE DATE CHANGE AND HOSTS!! The **NORTH-WEST PASSAGE MINI-REUNION** hosts are Laurence and Phyllis La Fountaine, 7402 Fairview Rd. SW, Olympia, Wa. 98512, 360-357-3476 AT **TYEE WEST COAST MOTEL IN TUMWATER WA.** (OFF EXIT 102) SEPT.23-25, 1998. The Kohse's and Heitzingers will assist them. They always have a great reunion. Join them if in area. You'll be glad you did.

SPECIAL NOTICE!! OLYMPIA, WA. AREA: Billie Kohse, 2304 Lister Rd., NE, Olympia, Wa. 98506-3616 who helped Madelyn Rigg host the Seattle Reunion and who got the Washington State group together back in the '80s is undergoing chemo treatment and our thoughts and prayers are with her, as they are for all our sick. Don and Pearl Werner, 18605 N.E. 219th St., Battleground, Wa. 98604, 360-687-3630 will help keep things going in that area and "Y'ALL" assist them, if possible.

UTAH CREW no longer hold meetings to my knowledge.



Armed Guard meeting at the Grayling Holiday Inn on May 16, 1998 (Left to right)
Top row: Joe Karbowski, Jim Kolka, Louis Lecures, Arthur Carlson, Martin Vallee
Bottom Row: Ed Illig, Gerald Stoughton, Elmer Allen, Jim Lacker
A GREAT TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

THE MADISON, WI AREA is trying to get a Second Tuesday Breakfast meeting started. Contact: Robert W. Blake, 5318 Brookshire Lane, Madison, WI 53714-2104, 608-244-7394; or Kendall E. Niebuhr, 820 Brandie Rd., Madison, WI 53714, 608-241-2250 for information.

LANSING, MICH. AREA holds a "3RD" 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, P.O. Box 809, Flint, Mi. 48501, 810-235-3530. Vallee needs your attendance and encouragement to get the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN on the LAKES in year 2000.

KENTUCKY CREW: Contact Joe and Earlene Foreman, P.O. Box 99303, Jeffersontown, Ky. 40269, 502-267-4576; or James and Norma Close, 4036 Preston Hwy., Louisville, Ky 40223, 502-366-8966 as they are the Hosts for a "3RD THURSDAY 9:30 BREAKFAST at SHONEY'S RESTAURANT at Shelby and Eastern Parkway. They will also be the hosts for the "1998 Mi/Oh/In/Ky Mini-Reunion 10/11-14/98. At THE EXECUTIVE INN, 978 PHILLIPS LN, LOUISVILLE, KY 40209, 502-367-6161.

TOPEKA, KS. AREA ARMED GUARD AND MERCHANT MARINE meet on the "FIRST THURSDAY" of EACH MONTH at 8:30 A.M. AT "TEVIS RESTAURANT," 821 SW 6TH WITH DON GLEASON, 2405 NW CROSS ST, Topeka, Ks. 66606-2401, 785-234-6087; and Dean Vining, 1026 SW Cambridge ST., Topeka, Ks. 66604-1716, 785-273-1247 as hosts. The Gleasons will host the "MID-WEST REGIONAL REUNION" at the "HOLIDAY INN WEST" in TOPEKA, KS. on Sept. 18-20, 1998. *We're looking forward to being with you Ol'Salts and young ladies. (C.A. and Hilda)*

TIME CHANGE NOTICE: PITTS-

BURGH, PA. crew meets on the "3rd Sat." for an 11 A.M. BUFFET BREAKFAST at the PITTSBURGH GREENTREE MARRIOTT. CONTACT: Hilary and Dorothy Makowski, 202 Wedgewood Crt., Carnegie, Pa. 15106, (412)-429-8510.

ALBANY, N.Y. AREA HOSTS, Henry and Joyce Carrangi, 11 BULLARD AVE, QUEENSBURY, N.Y. 12804, 518-793-0326 and crew meet at 12 NOON, "4TH" THURSDAY of each month at the "WATERVLIET ARSENAL OFFICER'S CLUB" WATERVLIET, N.Y. Henry is overcoming his bout with the BIG C.

S.C. HOST, Jeff Haselden, 120 Richardson Blvd. Lugoff, S.C. 29078, (803) 438-1491 lost his wife, Mabel, and we extend our sympathy to Jeff and the family. Mabel was one of the Armed Guard family, attending many reunions and Mini-Reunions, plus being Jeff's HELPER in Armed Guard S.C. Mini-Reunions. Jeff can be contacted for future S.C. meeting. Robert Floyd can also be reached at 3710 Devereaux Rd., Columbia, S.C. 29205, UNTIL ANOTHER S.C. HOST CAN BE FOUND. WANT TO VOLUNTEER?.

George Milk, 3136 ST. JAMES ST. NE, 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. Many do!!

EXTRA!! EXTRA!! NOTICE!!!

George Milk and Crew will host the FLORIDA ANNUAL MINI-REUNION Nov. 18-20, 1998 at the Best Western Hotel, Route 41, Punta Gorda, on the river. All Armed Guard are welcomed!!

MID-FLORIDA CHAPTER-CONTACT: SAM AND DOLLY MORRIS, 2055 S. FLORAL AVE. LOT 221, BARTOW, FL. 33830, 941-533-4891. Jack Renaud has moved and no longer heads up this chapter.

NOTICE: TELEPHONE AREA CODE CHANGED Springhill, Florida Area-Contact: William T. Young, 4206 Parkhurst Ln., Springhill, Fl. 34608, 352-683-9333 for breakfast on the "SECOND" Saturday, 10 AM AT the EVERGREEN WOODS RETIREMENT COMMUNITY.

TELEPHONE AREA CODE CORRECTION BELOW!! PLEASE TAKE NOTE!! PORT ST. LUCIE, FL. area meets on a "LAST FRIDAY" IN THE MONTH" at JOHNNY'S CORNER FAMILY RESTAURANT, 7180 U.S. #1 PORT ST. LUCIE, FL 34952, 561-878-2686 with HOST DICK JARMAN, 1461 MERION CT. SE, PORT ST., LUCIE, FL. 34952, 561-335-3716.

DAY OF WEEK CHANGED FROM SUNDAY TO THURSDAY BELOW: SANFORD, FL. AREA: FRED AND MARGARET FONTAINE, 2537 MOHAWK DR., SANFORD, FL. 32773, 407-323-7410 HOLD A MEETING ON THE 2ND THURSDAY AT 1 P.M. AT THE AMERICAN LEGION HALL ON SANFORD AVE., SANFORD, FLA..

MESA, ARIZONA HOSTS ARE Clarence and Marilyn Halpny, 1180 S. Starr St., Apache Junction, Az. 85219, 602-983-5212. THEY MEET AT THE "RED MOUNTAIN STEAKHOUSE," 7000 E. Main St., Mesa on the "FIRST THURSDAY" of the month at 11 A.M. Arizona Mini-Reunion will be held in LAUGHLIN, AZ in 1998.

TEXAS MERCHANT MARINE meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month at LUBY's Cafeteria, 2233 W. North Loop, Austin Tx., 11 A.M. Contact Chas. Smith, 404 North Water St., Burnett, Tx 78611-2451, 512-756-9853. All Armed Guard and Merchant Seamen are welcomed at the Ol'Corral!! Contact: Bob Thornton, 3003 Castlewood, Houston, Tx. 77025-3215, 713-665-1276 for that area.

CORRECTION: LAST NAME is "THORNTON" INSTEAD OF "THOMPSON" AS IN PAST POINTERS. THE TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE USMMV WWII, in conjunction with the members of the "LONE STAR STATE" and the U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD WWII VETERANS will sponsor a FALL REUNION at the HOLIDAY INN SELECT, 2712 SW FREEWAY, HOUSTON, TX on 11/20-21/1998 CONTACT: Robert E. Thornton, 3003 Castlewood, HOUSTON, TX 77025, 713-665-1276; or, Armed Guard Ed and Emelie Quin, 8119 Morley Dr., Houston, Tx. 77061-3116, 713-643-3620

DID YOU SEND IN CORRECTIONS? Please send me any correction as to time or date changes too!! IT IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN CORRECT ERRORS. I hope that I didn't overlook anyone. If your area crew is not listed here, Please check past POINTERS. SEE Y'ALL IN LAS VEGAS AND SOME MINI-REUNIONS (CALLOYD)

SERMON NOTES... LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Dear Charlie:

7/27/98

It is with regret that I must tell you that Don Geib passed away July 14, 1998. He was the one who started the NE Mini-Reunions at THE BRASS BUCKET back in 1983. We of the Northeast will always be indebted to he and his wife, "Chickie."

Would you please ask the New Jersey members that have not received their N.J. "CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION" from me that was listed in the Jan/Feb/Mar issue of the POINTER on Page 16, to please contact me immediately and I will send it to them. I have them on hand and would like to get them out now! All is going well with the Northeast Reunion to be held again at the Pocono Manor Inn. **Alex Lombardi, 14 Brookfield Rd., Montclair, N.J. 07043, 973-746-6361.**

Dear Charles:

7/31/98

Enclosed is a brochure on the Fort Custer National Cemetery, 15501 Dickman Rd., Augusta, Mi. 49012. Please inform the Merchant Seamen that they are entitled to be buried in any National Cemetery if honorably discharged. They can tell you the other members of the family who have these rights. I hope this will help someone who was in doubt. You may not remember me but I am the Navy guy who lost a leg and I volunteered and went back to sea as a Merchant Marine. Thanks, **Marshall Wilson, 885 N.7 Mile Rd, Lake City, Mi. 49651. (Thanks, Wilson-calloyd)**

Dear Ol' Salt Cal:

6/15/98

Thanks again for the last issue of the "POINTER". It was very informative as it included photos of the Liberty Ship, S.S. ROBERT E. PEARY. I made a cold North Atlantic voyage on her to the United Kingdom in February of 1943. Our Convoy was attacked several days out of Halifax, Nova Scotia. We experienced an explosion under the vessel but were told to not worry as we maintained headway.

Later that day, at dusk, the PEARY started losing headway as the engine started to vibrate and we slowed to a stop while the convoy continued on. This was not a good situation but we did have a PBY flying around us, sending messages by signal light. It soon became "Bible Cover Black" and the seas started to get rough with water breaking over the vessel. The "BLACK GANG" was below in the engine room dismantling the oil burners out of the boilers with parts laying all over the deck plates. Everybody was working up a sweat when I went below to see for myself what was happening. Since I was in the deck department, there was nothing I could do so I told them to keep up the good

work and I returned to topside.

At dawn of the next day, a PBY patrol craft returned to continue in its search for submarines but there were none. The PEARY continued to wallow in heavy seas and all men above deck had on their lifejackets and it was difficult to pass in passage ways. Everyone was a LOOKOUT. It was one of the longest day of our lives as darkness set in and the "Black Gang" still sweated it out below.

Without notice, the engines start to vibrate and looks of relief came over the men's faces but the engine died down in about 15 minutes. This was not a good situation to be in but the engine starts to vibrate again in about two hours and the ship starts to bite into the sea with the familiar noises.

Word soon was out that sea water had gotten into the deep bunker tanks and had clogged the burner jets in the boilers, therefore, no steam was available to make the triple expansion engines. No one knew how the water got there but it did. We sailed on through the night and all the next day with aircraft flying overhead. Then we saw a convoy. It was the same one we had been in a couple of days before. The ROBERT E. PEARY was set on a straight line course to the convoy while they were in a zigzag pattern. The PBY escort was our lifesaver.

We arrived in Liverpool, England with our cargo of bombs, military vehicles and other deck cargo. It was soon off loaded and we were sent to drydock for sixty days where they found a 3 inch crack from the water line down the port side of the vessel to the keel. A crack along the bottom of the ship allowed seawater to enter the bunker tanks. New hull plates replaced the cracked ones and some sort of "belly band" was put around the PEARY to hold her together. The explanation for the cracked hulls was that the Germans had a torpedo that exploded if it penetrated the ship's wake called "GNATS." It almost got us.

We had a lot of liberty for those sixty days with pretty English girls and plenty of stout and beer. I went to Glasgow, Scotland to visit relatives and was treated as a hero "FOR WE HAD DELIVERED OUR CARGO" and were thankful.

Scuttlebutt was that they were going to load us up for a voyage to the USSR but orders were changed and we headed for the USA and arrived in New York harbor where I bid farewell to the S.S. ROBERT E. PEARY which had taken me on a great, exciting adventure and returned me safely. **WHAT A VOYAGE!! Geo. Bathie, CEO Keystone Chapter AMMMV, 580 Melissa Ln, State College, Pa. 16803, 814-237-0329,**

Batusmc@aol.com

Thanks George for the running account of the voyage. I am sure many were also caught in similar situations and had to sweat out the unknown. cal

Charles Lloyd,

After leaving the S.S. Wildwood in November of 1942, I did not see Alvin R. Rahn until a month ago. I found Alvin's name in a list of ships that was sent to me by the POINTER. After 55 years, I went to Rincon, Georgia and spent a coupla days with Alvin and his wife, Mary. What a wonderful "REUNION!"

Our next ships made the trip to Murmansk, Russia in January of 1943 but we were on different ships and I learned that Alvin's was sunk coming back. Enclosed is a photo of two happy Ol' Salts!! Al is the tall one on the right. Thanks for everything!! **Oscar M. Heider, 3351 Livingston, Ave., Lorain, Ohio 44052, 440-244-2816.**



Oscar "Dutch" M. Heider and Alvin R. Rahn

Seeing the smile on you two I could not resist letting others know the pleasure it was for you two to find each other after all those years. I put this one in to let others know that they, too, should visit a located shipmate if possible.

FROM: ThomMyakel@aol.com (7/13/98)

Hello C.A. and Hilda - We had two great sailings on the S.S. LANE VICTORY over the weekend. We had about 500-600 that sailed with us. Everything went well: the air raids, the acrobatic stunt planes and the ship's guns. Naturally, we shot them all down, including the American planes. Robert Abbott says that Joe Piccolini's gunners couldn't hit the broad side of a barn at ten feet. YUK!

The Minnesota National Reunion was great!!

I hope to have two articles published here about it. I'm sure you have heard that the Armed Guard has been recognized by the U.S. Congress. We owe our thanks to Congressman Greenwood of Pennsylvania and our own Armed Guard, James Biscardi also of Pa. We hope we individually may get some citation or letter of recommendation for our children and grandchildren to see. Hope all is well with you. Abbott adds: C.A., think about Halifax, Nova Scotia D.E.M.S. Reunion. Says he'll be there September 1st and hope many of our Armed Guard will be there also. (See the Apr/June/July Pointer-page 3-first column - I am considering going, if possible.cal) We are looking towards our Mini-reunion in Laughlin, Nv in October. Take care y'all. **Thom Hendrickson, 13541 Wentworth, Apt. E-108, Seal Beach, Ca. 90740, 562-598-5266.**

Thanks Thom for LANE (V) information. I thought your article in June, 1998 edition of "THE ANCHOR LIGHT" was great and worthwhile to put in this POINTER for others to reprint. calloyd

Dear C.A.: 6/30/98

Thought I'd pass this picture on to you for the POINTER. On June 24-25/98, two "Ol' Salts" from years ago met to discover many old memories. I had not seen Clifford "Casey" Jones, PO Box 116, Wofford Heights., Ca. 93285, with whom I spent 12 months aboard the S.S.ETHAN A. HITCHCOCK, since we docked in New York 54 years ago. (10/43-10/44) Perhaps some of the crew will see this and get in touch. Jones is on the left. **Marvin Kanter, 3001 Whiteway Dr., Austin, Tx. 78757.**



Clifford "Casey" Jones and Marvin Kanter

Hi C.A.: 7/9/98

Many thanks for the packet of Armed Guard and ship information. I have already found addresses of two shipmates that I hadn't heard from in 55 years. I sent both of them a letter today. The picture of the Armed Guard Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. really brought back many memories. When I entered the building

in early 1942, there were a lot of survivors whose ship had been torpedoed and sunk and it really tore me up. Keep up the good work. Here's a donation to help out. **Regards, R.L. Gillespie, 401 Oak St., Edgewood, Md. 21040, 410-676-1648.**

Dear Bob Ober:

I have a new member for you: Edwin Shock, 222 Voyager Blvd., Dayton, Oh. 45427. He stopped in to see me 5/12/98. We sailed together on the S.S. EZRA CORNELL. Ed is on my right in the photo. Thanks! **Jim Kolka, PO Box 263, Grayling, Mi. 49738.**



Edwin Shock and Jim Kolka

As you may notice, Kolka sent the name to Ober. I would like to remind you again to send all NEW OL'SALTS names to the POINTER ADDRESS!! You see, Ober had to send the name to me to get it into the computer here and I send them back leftover POINTERS, bumper stickers, Form-180, Ship Form and copies of other information that I think they would enjoy. (CAL)

Dear C.A.,

On behalf of the Delaware Chapter of the Armed Guard, please find a check for (censored) for the A.G. Fund. The Honorable James C. Greenwood, the Congressman from our Pa. 8th district attended today's meeting regarding his Bill HR-99 in the House remembering the Naval Armed Guard and Merchant Marine from World War One and Two. James Biscardi, our shipmate that worked so hard to get their attention, also attended. It was well attended with 60 shipmates and their ladies. Hope all is well with "Y'ALL". Maybe we'll see you at the POCONO MANOR INN where we were at last year. **Al Farrara, 45 Hilltop Rd., Yardley, Pa. 19067.**

Dear Charles: 7/3/98

I am writing to inform you of a zip code change in my area. I "VALUE" the "POINTER" since I am a writer and have included much material about the U.S. Naval

Armed Guard in my roll on the Russian Run, "A NORTHERN SAGA," and the novel about D-DAY and the Normandy Campaign I am writing. You could help me on the Normandy Novel as I was a 3rd Mate aboard the S.S. JOHN MASON. We had an especially capable gun crew. I sailed with a Gunnery Officer, who, along with the gunners, helped me as I had just graduated from Massachusetts Maritime. I would like the names on board at the time. Do you have such a list in your computer and their addresses? I am writing my next book telling of my duty in the regular U.S. Navy aboard the USS ROBERT I. PAINE (DE-578) and I intend to refer back to my Merchant Marine days and the Gun crews on board, telling of the time I spent in the Navy from 1946-1956. Thanks for any help you can give me. **L.A. Murphy, 30 Mercedes Rd., Brockton, Ma. 02301-6716.**

Dear Charlie: 7/15/98

Just a note to let you know how much I appreciate the efforts of Robert Ober in sending out the printouts of shipmates. I just received a copy and saw the name of James E. Dow, a close friend and buddy in the crew of the S.S. LAKE GEORGE. I phoned him last night and he was "SHOCKED" to receive a call after "53 YEARS"!! It sure was great talking about "OLD TIMES"!! We plan to get together in the near future. Sorry that we couldn't make the reunion this year due to surgery. Hopefully, next year.

The Richmond, Va. chapter is doing great!! We are getting 30-40 members and their wives at each meeting. Wayte Huffer is doing a super job. Best regards, **Ken Yeomans, 1912 Sweetwater Ln., Richmond, Va. 23229.**

Thanks for the letter of appreciation towards Bob Ober. He, and others are a lot of help and do a great job. I will assign the following computer number which will change due to the passing of shipmate and helper, Ralph Lucas. If you would like to get a printout and you fall into that category, send them a "SELF-ADDRESSED-STAMPED-ENVELOPE" and they will get them right out to you and maybe you can find a shipmate as Ken Yeomans did. Here are the names and numbers:

From 1 to 2000

Phil Bradley,
2207 Fox Hunt Dr., Monroe, N.C. 28110

From 2000 to 4000

Gerald Greaves, 143 E. Killingsly Rd.,
Foster, RI 02825-1314

From 4000 to 6000

Vasil Oggenoff, 3085 Picwood Dr.,
Cincinnati, Oh. 45248-5043

From 6000 to 8000

Ernest Cochran, 12775 Titus Rd.,
Dresden, Oh. 43821-9709

From 8000-12000
Tom Bowerman

From 12000 UPWARDS
Bob Ober, 7115 Dunn Rd.,
Cincinnati, Oh. 45230-4112

Please take note of this and remember who
you are to contact.

Dear Cal: May 4, 1998

I wrote you before describing an incident involving the S.S. ROBIN SHERWOOD as she almost turned over in the North Atlantic in February of 1944. As a result, I received letters and phone calls from all over. Some, from gun crew members prior to and afterwards and each filled in bits and pieces for the story. It's amazing!! It's great to belong to the Armed Guard Association. I joined, hoping to find shipmates and was sent names by you and I wrote them but I didn't get any response. Recently, I wrote to Tom Bowerman and he sent an update from your backups and one name that I knew right away-Royce Mitchell!! I wrote right away and a few days later, the phone rang and it was Royce and he said, "Hi! James and how are you?" I answered, "FINE! Your voice sounds the same as it did 54 years ago"!! We talked over a lot of incidents involving the tanker we were on by the name of S.S. CROSSKEYS. Royce was our signalman and had been aboard a year ahead of me. I was on her about six months and remembered three separate U-Boat attacks on the way to the British Isles. Roy must have seen more as I was transferred to the S.S. MECHANICS-VILLE and we took oil to Curaco to the Majuro Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

As a "ROOKIE" Ol'Salt, I got seasick on my first trip and could not stand watch and the next morning, Royce handed me a box of Salteen crackers and said, "Sit up on the bridge and eat all of the crackers and between the fresh air and the crackers, you'll be O.K. and I was. That is, until I walked past the galley and the cook was frying pork chops. Needless to say, I lost the crackers. I never forgot his decency or his gentle ribbing of me when I thought I knew something and really didn't!! P.S. I'll never forget what the Armed Guard Association has done for all the membership. Roy has retired from the Catholic Priesthood after the war and is now in semi-retirement in New Orleans. He is recovering from surgery and I would like the membership to remember him in their prayers. Sincerely, James Brennan, 52 Texas Blvd., Whiting, N.J. 08795.

Brennan: Was great to learn you were contacted by so many shipmates. I was aware of Royce Mitchell's operation and I followed through with a phone call and he is "mending" and we hope he returns to good health soon. The same goes for all of you who are under a doctors care. So many that I can not name them all. CAL

Dear Cal: Quite a bit has happened since I last wrote you. You were so kind to publish my request for info regarding the ship's name for my model Liberty Ship that I had built in honor to those gunners killed in action while firing at the kamakazi plane that hit the Liberty Ship in Leyte Bay during the invasion.

I received numerous phone calls and letters from all over the United States but the one that struck home and came as a real shock, was a letter from Mrs. Audrey Camp Broersme of Bellflower, California. She is the sister of Vernon Dean Camp, the Armed Guard Gunner who I described as the valiant, courageous sailor who stayed at his post, firing away at a Japanese plane and met his death when it crashed.

Vernon Camp was just seventeen at the time and was buried at Dulag, Leyte, not far from my base at Tacloban. The ship was the S.S. LEONIDAS MERRITT, one of first ships struck by the Japanese kamakazi planes in World War II.

Audrey also sent me a transcript of a book written by the late Ray Thompson as he described in exact detail of all the events, times and places that occurred while I was there. Imagine!! Fifty four years later, across a continent, a message it seems from Vernon, through his sister, in her kindness, who brought it all back. Truth surely is stranger than fiction! We have been communicating, exchanging photos, the newspaper article of his obituary. Oh! YES!! The name of the S.S. VERNON DEAN CAMP with his newspaper obituary clipping is posted by his ship. Cordially, John Meyers, 506 E. Culthbert Blvd., Westmont, N.J. 08108

THIS MADE MY DAY! NIGHT! WEEK! MONTH and YEAR! What a wonderful story. cal

Dear Cal: 6/19/98

I received the two caps and lapel pins just the other day, for which I wish to "THANK YOU". They came 3 days after I placed an order with the Kozaks at their new address but that was O.K. as now at long last, I have something that I can show about our outfit, the U.S. Naval Armed Guard; a long time coming.

I remember back at the Brooklyn, N.Y. Navy Yard, we were known as "SHARK BAIT" and many of us were. I am proud of all my former shipmates and I say "God Bless them wherever they are. It was rough duty. I am enclosing a check for the items and a donation. Thanks again for a job "WELL DONE". Sincerely, Donald Wagner, 5805 Hidden Lake Dr., Apt-C, Harrisburg, Pa. 17111.

It is with a sad heart to report that our

shipmate, Donald Wagner went to meet his Maker on July 4, 1998 according to his wife, Jeannetta. I had typed this for the POINTER prior to receiving her letter so I thought his words would be greatly appreciated by all the crew. Jeanne, we hope each day is lighter. cal

Lloyd,

6/27/98

You said that you like stories about our lives as Armed Guardsmen. This is "ANOTHER SIDE OF THE STORY" of life that some others had. "THE OTHER BATTLE."

Armed Guardsmen relate stories of air raids, sinkings, survivals and most all of the things that happened to sailors in the Guard. These things were part of the risk of our job that had to be done. There was, in rare cases I hope, a battle some of us fought and that was our "Gunnery Officer THE MAN"!

I was the only signalman on my first ship and that made me on call, anytime, day or night so I put a lot of hours on the bridge where the "MAN" was. Our trip lasted 10 months and we never hit a "Liberty Port." We sailed up and down the coast of New Guinea and surrounding islands: Manus, Biak and others. Moral was always low. The rules and regulations set by "THE MAN" were very strict. What made it worse was that the Coxswain was related to him and the Gunners Mate was a friend. It turned out to be all of us were against the three.

The daily routine by "THE MAN" was 0600 reveille, (except at sea where GQ could be earlier), exercise, chow, school for four hours a day, gun drills, daily inspection, and watches to stand. School classes consisted of Gunnery Training, Signaling, Seamanship, First Aid and the Blue Jacket's Manual. No card games for money or any gambling of any sort was allowed and with his two "STOOGES" always snooping around and reporting to him, it became tough not to get into trouble for something.

We were only on the ship for "ONE WEEK" when he held his first Captain's Mast for two men. Their sentence was loss of Liberty for two or three days while the ship was being loaded. Four days later, two more Captain's Mast. Liberty days lost. Four more days later, two more Captain's Mast. In 12 days, 6 Captain's Mast for 5 different men. In 18 days, he held Mast for 16 men. A phone line had been cut and since no one "confessed" to this "TERRIBLE CRIME", the entire crew except his 2 "STOOGES" were restricted from going ashore for 3 days.

In Hollandia, four of us hitch-hiked to the airfield some 20 or more miles away on a 2 lane mud road. On the way back, we were unable to pass an accident that blocked the road. Knowing we would be late getting back

(continued on Page 11)

WWII sailors face asbestos health risks

Sunday, July 5, 1998 *****
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

By Ron Martz
STAFF WRITER

William Burton of Lilburn has read enough medical journals and heard from enough doctors to realize it probably is only a matter of time before the estimated 5 billion asbestos fibers he has unknowingly carried in his lungs for more than five decades will develop into cancer.

What bothers Burton more is that tens of thousands of others who served in the same elite branch of the U.S. Navy that he did during World War II might not know they run the same risk.

That's why Burton, now 72 and retired from Coca-Cola, has set out to educate fellow World War II sailors about possible exposure to asbestos fibers that still have the potential to kill them.

"A lot of these guys have asbestos in their lungs and don't even realize it," said Burton, a native of Columbus. "What I want to do is make them aware of it and do what I can to get legislation enacted so that they can get service-connected disability for the problem."

Burton is writing members of Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs in addition to contacting veterans groups about the asbestos risk. He also is working with veterans who may have been exposed to help guide them through the often confusing and complicated process of evaluation by doctors and claims for compensation from the VA.

Much of his effort is focused on the unit in which he served, the U.S. Navy Armed Guard, composed of sailors assigned to guard troop transports, tankers and supply ships from enemy submarines and aircraft. It was a relatively small unit, but one of the most vital to the Allied effort and most vulnerable to enemy attack because the ships were very lightly armed.

Charles Lloyd of Raleigh, chairman of the U.S. Naval Armed Guard Association, said of the 6,236 ships on which members served, 710 were sunk. And of the 145,000 sailors who served in this capacity, 1,810 died during the war, most of them lost at sea.

Virtually all those ships were constructed with large amounts of asbestos, which was used as a fire retardant and as insulation, according to Donald Krispin, an attorney with the Jacques Admiralty Law Firm of Detroit. The firm represents more than 25,000 merchant mariners and sailors in asbestos-related lawsuits dating from World War II to the present.

"Whether they were working with [asbestos] or sleeping in the vessel, they were susceptible," said Krispin, who estimates 600,000 merchant mariners were exposed to asbestos during the war, plus an untold number of sailors and shipyard workers.

VA officials say it is impossible to determine how many servicemen might have been exposed to asbestos without going back through all individual records of service to determine what type of jobs they had and where they served.

Although those who served on the ships were unaware of the potential risks from inhaling asbestos fibers, Krispin said the government and shipbuilders knew of it.

"Certain manufacturers conspired to cover up information about the hazards rather than taking a proactive role. Instead of issuing warnings they did just the opposite," he said.

Burton said he can remember seeing fibers flaking off asbestos that covered boilers and pipes during his 32 months of sea duty, much of it in the north Atlantic.

"We breathed the stuff every day. It was in the air and in our food but we had no idea at the time it could kill us," he said.

He believes now that the three cases of pneumonia he had during the war, and numerous other bouts with the illness since then, are a result of asbestos exposure.

"I knew something was wrong with me, but I couldn't figure out what," he said.

It was not until 1996, said Burton, that members of the Armed Guard learned of the extent asbestos was used on the ships they guarded and the potential for diseases caused by the toxic material.

"That's the first time I heard the word asbestosis," he said.

Asbestosis is an irreversible lung disease, brought on by prolonged exposure to asbestos, that has no treatment and gets progressively worse.

Asbestos exposure also can lead to other diseases, including a fatal cancer of the chest or abdominal cavities known as mesothelioma.

Burton has been diagnosed with asbestosis.

The VA has ruled his asbestosis is service-connected but with zero disability.

Burton also has a 10 percent service-connected disability for a duodenal ulcer. He could be re-evaluated if he develops a more serious disease.

VA officials say 50 percent of people with asbestosis eventually develop lung cancer, while about 17 percent develop mesothelioma. Another 10 percent develop gastrointestinal and urogenital cancers.

Krispin said medical research has shown that asbestos-related diseases sometimes do not show up for as long as 15 to 45 years after the initial exposure.

"Making these guys aware that there may be a problem is my goal," said Burton.

"But for a lot of them it's already too late."

Council to decide ship's fate

■ Opinions are mixed on bringing the World War II vessel home to Richmond

By Shawn Masten
TIMES STAFF WRITER

RICHMOND — The City Council is likely to decide today whether to bring the Red Oak Victory ship home.

City staff members had canceled plans to temporarily dock the 53-year-old vessel at the Port of Richmond until a permanent berth can be found, but at least two council members say bring it on.

"Instead of being enthusiastic and saying let's make this thing work, (city staff members) are sitting back not providing any answers," Councilman Nat Bates said.

"I don't know what the agenda is here, but I think this is a part of what we should be doing to market the city's shoreline and its history," Councilman Tom Butt said.

The Richmond Museum Association has been trying to bring the Red Oak to Richmond for two years. Used in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, it is the only vessel still afloat of the 741 ships built in Richmond during World War II.

In 1996, the federal Maritime Administration gave the 455-foot gray cargo ship to the museum with a September 1998 deadline to move it from its current berth in Suisun Bay. It has been mothballed there since it was taken out of service in the 1960s.

The association had planned to temporarily dock the ship at Terminal One at the Port of Richmond beginning Aug. 30, but city officials put a halt to that plan, saying they hadn't given the group permission to dock there.

The association has been looking at Point Molate as a possible permanent home and Terminal One as a temporary one, but city staff members haven't given the OK for either location.

Questions about the feasibility of the association's restoration plan and the city's liability for the ship remain.

But supporters say those questions are surmountable.

"Those are minor problems," Bates said. "If you don't want something to happen, then you can come up with all kinds of reasons why it shouldn't."

Both sites are the focus of major plans to develop the city's 32-mile shoreline.

Richmond just started negotiating with Shea Homes for the purchase, cleanup and development of Terminal One.

The city hopes to turn the 14-acre former tank farm into a upscale housing development.

Shea Homes has offered \$6.5 million for it and agreed to pay up to \$1 million for environmental testing and cleanup.

The city is anxiously awaiting approval by the federal government of its reuse plans for Point Molate.

A combination of housing, parks and businesses are planned for the 412-acre site, a former Navy depot.

CITY BEAT

Richmond

Committee to decide victory ship's future

Gala plans to bring the World War II-era Red Oak Victory ship to Richmond are afloat again.

The City Council last week unanimously agreed to allow the 53-year-old vessel to dock at Terminal One in the Port of Richmond for up to nine months.

The ship, which was launched from Richmond more than a half century ago, will be homeward bound Sept. 20, said Lois Boyle, president of the Richmond Museum Association.

The group has been trying to find a berth for the 455-foot vessel, which must be moved from its present location at Suisun Bay by Oct. 1. The ship, which was built at the Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond during WWII, is being restored for use as a floating museum.

The permanent fate of the ship will be determined by a committee consisting of Councilmen Nat Bates and Tom Butt, association members Boyle and Don Hardison, city staff members Ron Kennedy and Natalie Lawrence and two community members yet to be named.

The committee will consider whether to berth the ship in the port, which is near where it was built, or at Point Molate, which is the spot the association favors.

A port berth also would put the ship closer to the Rosie the Riveter monument and could be linked with that effort, Councilwoman Donna Powers said.

Sunken German U-Boat?

PORTLAND, Maine — A pair of underwater ocean explorers from here have discovered a 300-foot-long metal object in deep water off the Maine coast.

They think there is a good chance it is a World War II German submarine — called a U-boat. The discovery has brought excitement not only to the world of undersea explorers but also to the world of military historians.

That is because the submarine would be a part of World War II history that had been kept secret for many years. During the war, the American government did not want its citizens to know enemy submarines were this close to the United States.

"Back then, the government didn't want to frighten people by telling them there were German submarines right out there off our coast," said Greg Brooks, one of the partners in Sub Sea Recovery, who helped find what he thinks is a German submarine.

The object that may be a submarine is on the ocean bottom in 120 to 170 feet of murky water. It is northeast of Bath, Maine, and about 90 miles southwest of Mount Desert Island.

It was a reported battle between a Navy blimp — a giant balloon with a gondola that carried sailors, machine guns and depth charges — near Mount Desert Island that helped lead Brooks and his partner, Doug Piehl, to their discovery.

On July 2, 1944, two Maine fishermen, alone on the sea, spotted a German submarine on the surface. They reported their find to the Navy, and ships and blimps were sent to the scene.

A Navy report kept secret for more than 50 years, but now public, says that people on the shore of the mainland and on surrounding islands heard a battle out on the ocean. The blimp crashed into the sea. Seven of its 11 crew members were killed.

When the blimp was pulled from the ocean, shells from its machine gun littered the floor of the gondola, and some of its depth charges were gone.

The submarine had disappeared, but it left behind a giant oil slick. Dead fish floated on the ocean, probably killed by the underwater explosion of depth charges.

Over the years, stories were passed on about German sailors captured along the Maine coast and of bodies washing ashore. Later, as the war ended, three German submarines surfaced to surrender at Portsmouth, N.H. An Italian submarine was surrendered in Portland Harbor.

Roger Willock, a naval historian and retired Marine who now lives in Maine, said that while no one can be certain until divers go down to check the submarine, "It could be possible . . . maybe probable" that what Brooks and Piehl have found is the German submarine U-233, the one that was in the fight with the blimp.

Brooks is convinced that even if it is not that sub, it is another one.

"We definitely know there are U-Boats out there in Casco Bay," he said. "We think we've found one. We hope it's the U-233."

He hopes to do more sonar exploration of the wreck site in the next weeks before sending divers down for what he said could be a dangerous dive.

By Royal Ford

(continued from page 8)

from Liberty, a Lt. Col. was kind enough to give us a signed statement explaining our tardiness. We got back an hour late. Did the note help? Hell NO!! He gave us a Captain's Mast anyhow. In 10 months, he held 54 Captains Mast. A few cases were warranted but most were petty and minor things. There were 5 men to be bounded over to the Treasure Island Armed Guard Center Commanding Officer for disciplinary action when we returned.

He locked two men in solitary confinement on bread and water. One for 3 days and 1 for five. They were caught sleeping on watch in a port that was as safe as sleeping at home. With all his reveille, daily inspections, painting, gun maintenance, etc., when else could they catch a little shuteye? Every member, except his 2 "STOOGES" had at least one Captain's Mast. We thought he was related to CAPTAIN BLIGH of the bounty.

The day we got back to San Francisco, I was on the bridge when the Captain and the Mate on duty told him what a sorry, rotten (CENSORED) he was and if he got on another ship with him, he felt sorry for him. I have the Log from this ship and all these Masts are recorded in it. **George Sweitzer, 1944 SE 37th Ct. Circle, Ocala, FL 34471.**

George, I thought your story was worth printing even though a great majority of the Gunnery Officers did what they had to do to keep a crew together. I'm glad that I was not caught on a ship for that long a period with those restrictions. I'm afraid that someone would not have survived the trip on the same

ship. I don't think he was properly trained to handle "ARMED GUARD". I am sure that many a poor seaman went to the brig, or even prison due to no fault of his own. cal

Dear Lloyd, June 6, 1998

I received your Armed Guard package today and really enjoyed reading the "REST OF THE STORY." I did not see any names from the printout that I could remember but I have high hopes that in the future, I will find someone with whom I shared all those months of boredom and sheer terror.

I have made good use of the FORM-180 to get my records from St. Louis and it'll be in the mail to them tomorrow. I am also sending the SHIP LIST FORM on back to you along with a little something for the "SLOPCHEST" to help with expenses.

I am having a sign made up for our ARMED GUARD CENTER here in Chino with Arnold Bollinger as MAA, only, he doesn't know it yet. Our buddy that owns the doughnut shop here where all the OI'Salts hang out for morning coffee is going along with it. Who knows - maybe we'll be inviting you out here for a little "GET-TOGETHER" one day when the word gets around. Again, THANKS for all you and others do to make this all happen. **Tom Carter, 4405 Roosevelt St., Chino, Ca. 91710, 909-628-4544**

Cal:

I enjoy the "POINTER" and look forward to receiving each issue. Enclosed is a donation to keep it "afloat". I listed the ships I sailed on through 12/31/46 in hopes MY GOVERN-

MENT will in the near future will extend the cut-off from 8/15/46 date for the Merchant Mariners. You see, Cal, although the shooting at each other had stopped, the mines laid by both sides were not all recovered and the Merchant Seamen were exposed to this danger way after the Armed Guard had been removed. According to the book, "LIBERTY SHIPS" by Sawyer and Mitchell, 9 Liberty ships were sunk, or totally lost with some loss of lives up until October 16, 1946. A 10th Liberty was sunk on 12/20/47. (Art Moore's book, "A CARELESS WORD" lists same). The merchant crews on these ships ordered or assigned to their jobs were all volunteers as I was at age 16 in August of 1944 with my mother's signed consent. At the time, I was being reared by a single parent (mother) along with 2 younger sisters.

We were told at the Maritime School that we were being trained to operate and sail these vast number of ships being built to carry war supplies to our fighting men all over the world. C.A., at the end of the war, it didn't bother me that we were not given credit or recognition for the Merchant Seaman's roll in the war effort but I became very upset when the "KOREAN POLICE ACTION" came upon us and my "LOVING UNCLE" tapped me for two more years. I was married by then but had not become a father, so, I was classified as A-1 and away I went. I have heard "SCUTTLEBUTT" that the Senate is in favor of extending the date until December 31, 1945 but so far, the House has not come through. I just turned "70" and hope they come through in my lifetime. Best to you Cal. **Joseph R. Legere, (MM) P.O. Box 18323, West Palm Beach, FL 33416, 561-683-1043.**

SOME OF MY NAVY EXPERIENCES

A couple of years ago, my wife said, "Why don't you write a story about your Navy days to leave for the children and grandchildren? So, I decided to put this story into a poem.

As a young man, I wanted to see
What the Navy had to offer me.
I caught a train in Savannah G.A.
And went for training far away.
To Great Lakes, Illinois is where I went.
I did not know just what it meant.
I soon learned to march and salute,
To clean rifles and eat the soup.
Everyone did a weeks K.P.,
But this didn't seem to bother me.
After seven weeks, we learned to obey.
Then to Gulfport, Mississippi on the bay.
Gunnery training was the next step,
The 3 inch, 5 inch, and others yet.
Target practice at Shell Beach;
The flying target was in our reach.
We learned a lot about the guns,
Because we were "Uncle Sam's Sons."
Once to Scotland and to England twice.
The German subs weren't so nice.
One trip to Newfoundland wasn't so bad.
We had to wear all the coats we had.
Breaking the ice all over the sea,
Through the fog and icebergs we had to see.
After running aground, we worked all night,
Unloading part of the load to make the bow light.
After twenty-four hours the Big Tug came,

Then it was a waiting game.
With big steel cables and lots of power,
We did slide off in four to five hours.
The ocean was rough, but away we rode,
To Texas we went to deliver the load.
To Venezuela we made two calls,
Stopping by Trinidad to check for oil.
Three different times, through the canal,
Crossing once on the train was something swell.
Three different times to Hawaii was neat,
To pick up fresh water, food and meat.
With our load of oil to New Guinea we stopped,
We couldn't get unloaded, the fighting was too hot.
We were sent fifty miles north, right on track
To the Admiralty Islands, which was still under attack.
We got unloaded - "More Oil" was the cry,
The Captain said we sure would try.
Off we went on a long run,
Stopping by Melbourne, Australia to have a little fun.
Around through the Indian Ocean we ran
In a great hurry to get to Iran.
The weather was so hot, we slept on the deck.
We had no air conditioning, but what the heck.
The ammunition boxes we kept watered down,
To keep the shells from exploding, and scaring the town.
Two days later, the Captain said,
"Sail South, full speed ahead!"
A week later, the sea was calm.
We picked up an S.O.S. alarm.
Another tanker not far away,
Met a Japanese sub on that day.
Some of the survivors we met in port,
When we stopped in Sidney to file a report.
After one day, we couldn't wait.
The Captain said we were running late.

Heading North and standing tall,
Back to the Admiralty Islands, we called.
After pumping off our load, we were turning mellow.
We proceeded to Panama to install a new propeller.
With two blades broken off, it was a hop and a skip.
It took twenty-nine days to make the trip.
With the ship in dry dock, we had nothing to do.
We were sent back to New Orleans to form a new crew.
The war ended and we felt alone.
We were sent over seas to let the older Vets come home.
Some were sent to Hawaii and Saipan.
I ended up in Sasebo, Japan.
On a submarine tender, I was much alive,
Where I spent Christmas of 1945.
A few months later, we returned to the States,
To California, under the big Golden Gate.
The old Sub Tender who had fought so hard
Was put in mothballs at Mare Island Shipyard.
I went to the hospital to have some work done.
Believe me, it wasn't much fun.
As soon as I could move around,
I went back dancing at Bob Wills stomping ground.
Then to Charleston Navy Yard, I went on my way,
To receive my discharge and mustering out pay.
As I walked out that Navy door,
I turned around and cried some more.
I think of the traveling and the fun I had.
Three years in service wasn't so bad.
I wanted to sign up one more time,
But my mother and father had on their mind
For me to come back to my small town
And be with them while they were around.

By Norris H. Sheffield,
P.O. Box 2410, Ridgeland, SC 29936

State of New York Legislative Resolution

Senate No. 3727

Assembly No. 2292

BY: Senator Connor



BY: M. of A. Tocci

HONORING the Plaque Dedication and Remembrance Ceremony of the United States Naval Armed Guard on June 9, 1998 at the Vietnam Memorial, Albany, New York and solemnly remembering the 1810 Armed Guards who gave their lives in the performance of their duties

WHEREAS, Upon the occasion of this dedication we pay tribute to the United States Naval Armed Guard which was established during World War II to provide protection against German submarines and who served this nation above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, The Naval Armed Guard, assigned as gunners, signalmen, radiomen and boatswain's mates, defended merchant ships from air and submarine attack to assure safe delivery of materials and resources critical to the war effort; and

WHEREAS, Although the Naval Armed Guard was one of the lesser known Navy operations during World War II, the guardsmen knowingly faced perilous situations and history has shown this group to have suffered casualties far out of proportion to its size and the size of the Navy as a whole throughout all the seas of the world; and

WHEREAS, The Armed Guard of World War II came into existence on April 15, 1941 as USN Naval Reserves began special gunnery training; on September 25, 1941, orders were given to train 200 officers and 1000 men by January 16, 1942; the base was officially established on October 15, 1941; the first class of 23 officers and 184 men began training 300 yards east of this point, know as Naval Section Base, with a staff of four gunner's mates; U.S.S. Puducan, U.S.S. Dubuque and the U.S.S. Eagle 19 were the gunships used for training; and

WHEREAS, Armed guard crews consisted of officers, gunners, signalmen, radiomen, medics, Waves and ship's company, with a total of 144,970 personnel serving on 6236 ships; of these ships, 710 were sunk and many damaged, with 1810 killed in action and unknown injuries; Armed Guard P.O.W. total was 27 with 14 survivors, 86,198 armed guards were transferred to the fleet as needed on LST, LCI, PT Boats, subs and larger ships; and

WHEREAS, To the 1810 armed guards who gave their lives, to their families and friends, the army and merchant crew that assisted us so well, this memorial is dedicated by their surviving shipmates; and

WHEREAS, Having exhibited their patriotism during World War II, these men demonstrated their love for their country and now merit the highest praise of the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the Plaque Dedication and Remembrance Ceremony of the United States Naval Armed Guard on June 9, 1998 at the Vietnam Memorial, Albany, New York and solemnly remembering the 1810 Armed Guards who gave their lives in the performance of their duties; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Charles Lloyd, Henry Carrington, Lyle E. Dupra and Alex Lombardi.

ADOPTED IN SENATE ON
June 2, 1998

By order of the Senate,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Steven M. Boggess".

Steven M. Boggess, Secretary

By order of the Assembly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Francine M. Misasi".

Francine M. Misasi, Clerk

ADOPTED IN ASSEMBLY ON
June 2, 1998

ATTENTION CREW!

I had been referring to Search Form Records as "Runtime." The Archives requests that you call it "Deck Logs." OK? *cal*

Requesting Reproduction of Records By Mail

The National Archives at College Park, Maryland, has custody of a wide range of textual records relating to U.S. Navy ships and other units dating from the WWII period through 1971. We can provide limited reference services for ship/unit records by mail. Please observe the following guidelines when making requests for reproductions:

Include in your letter the full name, address, and telephone number of the individual making the request. Letters should be addressed to: **Modern Military Records, Room 2400, National Archives at College Park, 8601 Adelphi Rd., College Park, MD 20740-6001.** Please note: When making a request, do not send payment until our office responds to your letter and provides a price estimate/order form. Upon receiving the price estimate/order form, please send it with your payment to the appropriate address noted on the ordering materials. **Do not** send payment directly to the office of Modern Military Records, which cannot process payments - doing so may cause delays in the processing of your order.

DECK LOGS

1941-1967. A deck log is a brief record of the daily administrative activities of a ship. It includes journal-style entries of the ship's administrative activities; location and course of travel; disciplinary procedures; and any unusual events. The logs sometimes include information related to operational activities, although the level of content and detail may vary widely. Deck logs are **not** detailed journals describing a ship's mission and all events transpiring in and around the ship. When a ship is in port, the log may include arrivals and departures of individuals and other administrative details. Also, deck logs generally include monthly rosters of officers for the period of 1941 to 1956.

ARMED GUARD LOGBOOKS

These records are the daily logbooks of U.S. Navy Armed Guard detachments aboard non-Navy ships during WWII. These logs were prepared under the direction of the Armed Guard commander aboard each ship, and comprise a brief daily account of events of the Armed Guard crew. These logbooks vary widely in quality. The collection - as transferred to the National Archives by the Navy - is not complete, including occasional gaps in coverage for some ships. It is possible that the logbooks of certain ships may not be available for a particular time period. **Information you must provide:** names of other ships/units/commands involved in the action; any specifics relating to dates, places, operative forces, etc.

Veteran Arthur Coyle, of the Navy Armed Guard, listens as Rep. James C. Greenwood announces that Congress commended his unit.

Armed Guard veterans finally get their thanks

A grateful nation is commending members of the Navy unit, in which nearly 145,000 sailors served.

By Lacy McCrary
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

The first thing the white-haired veterans did was pledge allegiance to the flag. They have remembered the words and continued the ritual even while they believed their country had forgotten about them.

Yesterday, about 60 veterans of the little-known Navy Armed Guard, who fought World War II in obscurity, fought back tears as they learned their government, more than 50 years later, has officially honored them for their service, sacrifice and heroism.

The Armed Guard was a special U.S. Navy unit in which nearly 145,000 sailors served, manning deck guns on poorly armed, thin-skinned, fatally slow supply ships, struggling to deliver men and material to allied forces around the world.

Since 1982, they have battled for some recognition, as their numbers dwindled with increasing swiftness.

U.S. Rep. James C. Greenwood (R., Pa.), who took up their cause last fall, told the Armed Guard veterans at an American Legion Post in Bucks County that Congress, in the fiscal year 1999 defense authorization bill, commended the courage of the Armed Guard and Merchant Marines as "... deserving of the appreciation of a grateful nation."

In November, Greenwood introduced a resolution expressing the appreciation of Congress and the American people for the service of the Armed Guardsmen. The language of the resolution was folded into the defense bill, which passed the House on May 21.

The veterans said that was all they ever wanted — a belated salute from their country — especially before they were all gone.

"When you've waited over 50 years, it's an overwhelming feeling that our unit is getting the recogni-

tion it deserves," said James W. Biscardi, 85, of Quakertown.

"I was unhappy it took so long," said Ray Lorah, 74, of Mayfair.

"I'm very proud of it. It's been such a little-known part of the Navy," said Harlan Ross, 72, of Exton. "I never expected to get any recognition. It's just very good to get it finally."

Arthur Coyle, 73, of Pemberton, N.J., said he feared that no one understood what the Armed Guard did in the war and that it was forgotten because the unit was disbanded quickly at war's end.

"We will go down in history now. It was well worth the wait. I'm just glad I was around to get some recognition," Coyle said.

Louis Fantacone, 72, of Bensalem, said he was upset the Armed Guard was so unknown.

"It was a disgrace. There was not a day I was on the ocean that I thought I was not going to be killed. It's about time we got some notice, before we all die," Fantacone said.

Greenwood, who was born after World War II, said he had benefited from just knowing the veterans' stories.

"I didn't understand what you people did. It was a learning experience for me, too," Greenwood said.

The Armed Guard was created by the Navy during World War I. During World War II it was reactivated. Its members served on more than 6,000 merchant ships, and nearly 2,000 members were killed.

"Today we can face the future with pride, knowing we will now take our place in history alongside those other heroic units of our country's services," said Biscardi, who was given a plaque for his efforts to get government recognition.

"This will be a legacy we can leave our children and grandchildren," Biscardi said.

105TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

H.J. RES. 99

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 6, 1997

Mr. Greenwood (for himself, Mr. English of Pennsylvania, Ms. Woolsey, Mr. Bateman, Mr. Frost, Mr. Lipinski, Mr. Dooley of California, Mr. Manton, Ms. Sanchez, Mr. Waxman, and Mr. Lantos) introduced the following joint resolution; which was referred to the Committee on National Security.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Expressing the appreciation of Congress and the American people for the service performed during World War I and World War II by members of the navy who were assigned as gun crews on board merchant ships as part of the Naval Armed Guard Service.

Whereas the Navy established a special force during both World War I and World War II, known as the Naval Armed Guard Service, to protect merchant ships of the United States from enemy attack by stationing members of the Navy and weapons on board those ships;

Whereas members of the Naval Armed Guard Service served on 6,236 merchant ships during World War II, of which 710 were sunk by enemy action;

Whereas over 144,900 members of the Navy served in the Naval Armed Guard Service during World War II as officers, gun crewmen, signalmen, and radiomen, of whom 1,810 were killed in action;

Whereas the efforts of the members of the Naval Armed Guard Service played a significant role in the safe passage of United States merchant ships to their destinations in the Soviet Union and various locations in western Europe and the Pacific Theater;

Whereas the efforts of the members of the Navy who served in the Naval Armed Guard Service have been largely overlooked due to the rapid disbanding of the service after World War II and lack of adequate records; and

Whereas recognition of the service of the naval personnel who served in the Naval Armed Guard Service is highly warranted and long overdue: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress expresses its appreciation, and the appreciation of the American people, for the dedicated service performed during World War I and World War II by members of the Navy assigned as gun crews on board merchant ships as part of the Naval Armed Guard Service.

The Philadelphia Enquirer
July 8, 1998

World War II A Seafarer's Log

Grady W. Addison, Third Engineer
Midwest Chapter AMMV

Merchant ships lie on the ocean floor
With seamen who manned them, during the Second World War.
Many ships were torpedoed or bombed from above
As seamen gave their lives for the Country they loved.
Their funerals were held without bodies, you see!
Because they remain entombed in the sea.

U.S. Navy Armed Guard also lie
Entombed with the Merchant ships they fought for and died.
They manned the guns on ships that were loaded
With war materials and high explosives.
Those brave gunners and Merchant seamen
Continue to be shipmates together at the bottom of the sea.

Merchant Marine Academies recruited and trained
Young men to be, the crews of the liberty Ships
That carried war cargoes overseas.
Those young men performed tough jobs on deck and below
Never knowing where their ships would go.
And while at sea they knew quite well
That submarines were lurking to blow them to Hell.

Along the U.S. Coasts, German submarines did plunder
Sinking tankers and cargo ships that remain down under.
The war indeed was very, very close.
For those brave men who sailed along the U.S. Coasts

Merchant Marine officers were placed in command
Of troop ships that carried US Armed Forces to foreign lands.
Prisoners of war were brought back from the Middle East,
For internment in the USA until there was peace.

At Antwerp, Belgium, Merchant seamen stood by
As rockets and buzz bombs dropped from the sky.
Big guns, like thunder, were heard not far away
Where Allied forces were engaged in a fray.

Merchant Marine ships were prime targets
For submarines, torpedo planes and bombers as well,
As veterans of the Murmansk Run can tell.
Ships were torpedoed by planes flying low
Or by submarines waiting in the ocean below.
German bombers from up high
Rained duster bombs down from the sky.
Navy Armed Guards also joined in the fray
With anti-craft guns firing away.
Some died at their guns, while others drowned
On their ships as they went down.

To Russian ports, some ships got by
Where they continued to be bombed from the sky.
The sky was bright in the air raids at night
As Russian Ack Ack guns joined in the fight.
From the glowing sky you could hear the blasting sounds
As anti-aircraft guns were "yacking" on the ground.
Those who heard a shrill whistling sound
Knew, in an instant, a bomb would explode on the ground.

In the Pacific war zone Merchant ships plied
From island to island with essential supplies.
U.S. Marines were determined and tough.
Taking over each island no matter how rough.
They fought from the sea, and they fought on land.
Sometimes fighting hand to hand.
For their valor and courage, we can all take pride
In those brave Marines who died and those who survived.

Some men died on the battle lines;
Some were wounded and left behind;
Others got through mentally and physically O.K.
Able to serve in some other way.
Veterans of Foreign Wars include us all!
Who served overseas when our country called.

C.A.:

April 10, 1998

Thought it was time to bring you up to date. Things got so hectic in Washington that the problems there took up most of my time. As you know, from my last letter, the National Security Committee raised a concern that too many others would ask for the same thing. I was spending my time against them making it a rider on "The FY Appropriations Bill." I felt we should be rewarded on our own merits rather than it be "a poison pill" tacked on to the Appropriations Bill. I was called a few days ago by James C. Greenwood's secretary. This time, it looks like we will be accepted on the resolution "J. H Res. #99." She also said that with the state of things in Congress, it will be a couple of months before this comes up for a vote.

We now have 20 co-sponsors. With all 435 House members coming up for re-election, it is a prime time to let them know that if they want our support, they should become a co-sponsor. It would be nice if the members who have received a reply on their request to their representatives would send a copy of it to me. I will forward it to James Greenwood's secretary, and she will show the different committees how much support we have. The secretary called to see if I would give them permission to include the "Merchant Mariners" in our resolution. Of course, I said yes, so now we have them aboard. They were literally in the same boat (ship) as us.

August 1, 1998

This letter is an attempt to clarify a misunderstanding on my part. Congressman James Greenwood contacted the area newspapers, stating the "The U.S. Navy Armed Guard has been recognized for our contribution to our country." I, because of this public announcement, wrongly assumed that we had finally reached our goal. On questioning a member of his staff, I find that "The Fiscal FY 99 Defense Appropriations Act" must also be passed by the Senate and signed by the President.

This bill must be passed, as it would cause the Defense Dept. to come to a halt, which of course they would not let happen. It is only a matter of what each department gets and who gets it. Our rider would just follow it to the climax of its passing. I profoundly apologize for my blunder and hope you can see how I came to this conclusion. This may be the reason the White House has not answered my request for a certificate to be issued.
Sincerely, Jim Biscardi, 1 Clover Lane, Quakertown, PA 18951-3920.

Address to the U.S. House of Representative

Congressman James Greenwood, 5/21/98

MR. GREENWOOD. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the FY 1999 Defense Authorization Act and in appreciation of the inclusion of a provision, brought to my attention by my constituent, Mr. James Biscardi of Quakertown, Pennsylvania. Without his continued dedication, the men of the Navy Armed Guard, who served with honor, dignity, and courage, would still be awaiting their deserved congressional recognition.

In the beginning of the 104th Congress, Mr. Biscardi, a true American Patriot, contacted my office seeking recognition for those who served in the Navy Armed Guard. By working with him, I drafted legislation, now part of the FY 1999 Defense Authorization Act, that recognizes the outstanding service of the members of the Armed Guard during World Wars I and II and thanks the surviving crewmen of the Armed Guard for their service.

The Armed Guard was created as a branch of the U.S. Navy during World War I to protect the merchant ships of the United States by maintaining weapons on 384 merchant ships. During World War II, the Armed Guard was reactivated as a response to the German strategy of attacking and sinking merchant ships, even those of neutral countries, which appeared to be bringing goods to the Allied Nations in Europe. Over 144,900 men served in the Armed Guard on 6,236 merchant ships during World War II. Nearly 2000 of these men made the supreme sacrifice, and gave their lives in defense of their country.

The dedication of, and sacrifices made, by the men of the Armed Guard deserve the recognition and gratitude of the United States. Through the passage of the Defense Authorization bill, the United States Congress will be acknowledging the outstanding service of the 144,970 men who served in the Armed Guard during World War II, and the men who served in World War I. These men have earned a heartfelt thanks from the country that they so gallantly fought to protect.

Sailor recalls freighter's sinking

■ Former crewman Howard Locke, now 73, attends a memorial ceremony to remember the Black Point, sunk by a German U-boat off the Rhode Island coast 53 years ago.

By MARK ARSENAULT
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

NARRAGANSETT — On May 5, 1945, merchant seaman Howard Locke left the crew quarters in the stern of the freighter Black Point as it steamed past Point Judith.

Locke was 19, a tall, wiry kid from Georgia, who shoveled coal for four-hour shifts to feed Black Point's gluttonous boilers.

Forty minutes into Locke's evening duty shift, about 5:40 p.m., a German torpedo blew away the Black Point's crew quarters, killing the sailor Locke had just relieved.

The Black Point shuddered and the power cut

out. Glare from the furnace lit a wave of ocean water rushing up from the stern.

Locke scurried up to the main deck. The bow of the 369-foot transport was tilted up at about a 45-degree angle. The back third of the boat was gone.

After six years of fighting in Europe — and just days before Germany's surrender — World War II had come to Rhode Island, delivered by a 24-year-old at the helm of a German U-boat.

The Black Point had a pet chimpanzee on board — a ship's mascot. As Locke leaped feet-first from the bow, "the last thing I remember was that monkey

hollering" from inside the ship.

Minutes later, Locke and 16 other crewmen, "stacked like cord wood" on a crude life raft, watched their ship go under, less than three miles off Point Judith.

"It stood straight up and the last thing I saw was the belly of it," Locke said. The Black Point sank straight toward the bottom, sucking down floating oil drums, parts of a splintered lifeboat, and the howls of the chimpanzee.

HOWARD LOCKE, now 73, a retired Georgia farmer and former school-bus driver with creased, meaty hands, came back to Point Judith yesterday, on the 53rd anniversary of the Black Point's sinking.

It was the first time he's been back since his ship was torpedoed by the German submarine U-853 on May 5, 1945. Twelve men on the Black Point died in the attack; Locke was one of 34 who survived.

At the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Point Judith yesterday morning, Locke wore a windbreaker and Georgia Bulldogs cap. He stood by a plaque that honors the sailors of the Black Point, and looked out into a white fog.

"I had only been on the ship five days and I didn't know the guys," he said in a gentle Georgia accent. "But it's been on my mind for 53 years, and I just wanted to see if it looks the same around here."

He'll be in Rhode Island for a few days, he said. He wants to find other survivors of the Black Point.

"And I just want to walk around a while."

LOCKE HAD THE worst job on the Black Point in 1945 — feeding the furnaces that gorged on coal in the dark, oily bilge of the boat.

It was not what he expected.

Drafted into the Army, Locke was

allowed to switch to the merchant marine to help fill a sailor shortage. "I figured anything had to be better than the Army," he said.

He trained on oil-burning boats, which did not require back-breaking labor in the boiler room. But after his cousin was killed in fighting on Iwo Jima, Locke was devastated, and took the first assignment he could "just to get away."

He left his post in Virginia to join the crew of the Black Point, a transport ship carrying 7,000 tons of coal from Virginia to Boston. The old boat, built in 1918, burned coal to heat its boilers to 500 degrees. Locke shoveled the oily rocks into the furnace on a brutal schedule: four hours on, then eight hours off.

Off the coast of New Jersey, Locke got seasick during a storm. He was hollered at for resting on duty when the ship needed to maintain its power.

"I feel like I'm going to die," Locke yelled back. "Let the dang thing sink."

HELMUT FROEMSDORF was a young German captain with big shoes to fill in 1945. A year earlier, Froemsdorf had accepted command of the 252-foot U-853 submarine from Gunter Kunhnke, a winner of the prestigious "Knights' Cross," one of the rarest honors in the German military.

Froemsdorf was 18 when he entered the German navy, and 22 when he became watch officer on the U-853. After two months of commander training, he was given the helm of the deadly submarine on Sept. 1, 1944. He was then 23.

The U-853 left port in Nazi-occupied Norway with a crew of 55 on Feb. 23, 1945, for a patrol along the North American coastline.

A day before the attack on the Black Point, the German high command — realizing the war was lost

— ordered its U-boats to stop all hostile activities.

It's unknown if Froemsdorf ever received the message, but Locke believes he did. "He knew they done lost the war," Locke said. "He wanted to get one more."

ON THAT NIGHT, when Locke felt the ship shudder, "I thought right away maybe it was a torpedo, or maybe we hit a mine," he recalled.

The rush of water into the boiler room sent Locke and a crewmate up an escape ladder. "Neither one of us knew where it went to, but it was going up, so we took it," he said.

Two lifeboats had already been launched by the time Locke scaled 25 feet to the main deck, he said. Locke and another sailor used fire axes to free a stuck life raft. The raft, a 6-by-8-foot platform on pontoons, was tethered to the ship with a thick rope.

Locke jumped "40 or 50 feet" from the bow to the water, and pulled the raft next to the sinking ship, he said.

Others climbed down a net and piled onto the raft. One sailor cut the tether with a hunting knife and Locke pushed the raft away by leaning a long pole against the Black Point's sinking hull.

"It was a little choppy and the waves just carried us away," Locke said. "It was a miracle we survived."

They drifted about 45 minutes before a Yugoslav freighter picked them up. A rescuing sailor warned Locke with a tall glass of schnapps.

American war boats sank the U-853 a few hours later, killing all 55 men on board.

Sympathy for the German crew comes hard to Locke. Froemsdorf, the young German captain, "really done us bad," Locke said. "When we got him, I felt good about it. Yeah, I did."

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1998

DIARY OF RICHARD C. SCHMITTER

This story is taken from the diary I kept at sea and in port during WWII. All of it is true and I thought you would enjoy a little of the life of two HOMETOWN BOYS on the Murmansk Run aboard the S.S. LEWIS EMERY, JR.

Tom Repeta and I lived in the same New Jersey town and went to the same UNION HIGH SCHOOL. I knew him by sight because he was dating Vera, a very smart and very good looking girl in my class. Unbeknownst to each other, we both enlisted in the U.S. NAVY and the next time we saw each other was in the "OUTGOING UNIT" at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. Tom was writing a letter and had a picture of Vera propped up in front of him. This was in May of 1943.

Tom and I were just out of separate boot companies at Great Lakes and we were both being sent to the same signal school and were in the same division at the University of Illinois. We both earned our SM3/C rating and were assigned to MERSIG (Merchant Signals) School in Connecticut. "WE WERE ANXIOUS TO GET INTO THE NAVY'S WAR!!"

We were sent to the Armed Guard Center in Brooklyn, New York and we tried to ship out together. IT WORKED!! And we were assigned to the S.S. LEWIS EMERY, JR., a brand-new Liberty Ship docked in Baltimore, Maryland. Shortly after arriving, we were issued ARCTIC WEATHER GEAR and COLD WATER SURVIVORS SUITS!! The focsles were given extra insulated bulkheads. Things were adding up quickly-MURMANSK!! At midnight, November 18, 1943, we sailed from New York Harbor in position 61 of a convoy; the first ship in the sixth column, next to the Commodore's ship. We were two 19 year old greenhorns and were responsible for relaying messages from the Commodore to all the ships in column 1 through 6 which was upwards to 40 ships. Tom and I thought we had the best job in the world.

Beginning November 26th, messages from the Commodore indicated "THERE WERE 8 OR 9 U-BOATS AHEAD OF THE CONVOY" and on the 29th at 2030 hours, a flash and tracer bullets were seen on the convoy's port beam. GQ was sounded!! Depth charges could be heard on our Mark 29 gear's listening panel. The next morning, the Commodore signaled that the escorts' hunt had been successful. There were more GQs, dangerous fog and heavy rolling before we made it to Scotland.

At dusk (1530 hours) on December 12, we sailed from Loch Ewe to Murmansk, Russia. It was the first convoy of the dark season. Our convoy consisted of 21 ships, seven columns wide and 3 deep. No one was to take showers and everyone was to sleep with their clothes on so as to minimize the time to get to their battle stations. We were encouraged to wear life jackets at all times. Our Navy lookouts were doubled, making sleep a luxury for all of us. Tom and I stood continuous signal watch - 6 hours on and 6 hours off.

All of us were aware of the terrible reputation of the "Murmansk Run" and of the pocket battleships of the Germans that were in hiding in the Norwegian Fjords on the North Cape, near the route we had to take. We were concerned about the cargo in No. 1 and 5 holds-AMMUNITION!! Respect for that created a

tendency to fall dangerously behind the convoy from time to time.

Joe Millard, S1/C, our guitar picker from Techonchia, Michigan had the uncanny ability to see objects through thick fog, and while securing from an 0300 general alarm on December 13th, he spotted a ship ahead at right angle to our course, barely missing a collision. The weather continued to deteriorate and heavy seas swamped our quarters through the porthole's backout screens and high winds and snow squalls made it difficult to keep convoy stations which added to the already high tensions of the trip.

Off Norway's North Cape, some 375 miles north of the Arctic Circle, in the dark afternoon of December 18th, our ship had fallen behind the convoy when the general alarm sounded. The escorts off to our starboard beam and quarter were firing snow-flake rockets, turning our dark world into an eerie, silvery daylight. They began dropping the first of 35 depth charges that afternoon, some of which were so close that the repercussion on our hull sounded like monstrous bashes on the bass key of a piano. One was so loud that the mate, who had been torpedoed before, was so sure that we had been hit that he ran to the Christmas Tree signal board in the wheelhouse to turn on the appropriate red light to signal - "I HAVE BEEN TORPEDOED." He frantically tried to find the switch for one red light and got greens and whites until he realized that we had not been hit - YET!! The escort nearest us frantically signaled us to catch up to the convoy. The depth charges had taken their toll. We began taking on water through cracked plates in No. 3 hold and pumps were activated and we managed to regain the convoy and hold our own.

December 19th saw us in a howling Arctic storm with blinding snow which made the taking and relaying of flashing light signal with a reduced-light blinker gun almost impossible. Five course changes came through O.K. The storm continued all night and into the next day when we again lost contact with the convoy.

We regained station just in time to pick up a very nervous Kola River pilot to take us to Murmansk. He began screaming for our captain even before his boat reached our starboard gangway. He ran, shouting to the bridge and for the next several hours, was in a state of severe agitation, breaking the binoculars he had borrowed - from me!! He tried to explain later that he was not a real pilot, but a Navy Ensign assigned to take us through the river's mine fields. His comments, as he left the ship were interpreted as: "WE WERE LUCKY TO COME THROUGH IN ONE PIECE."

Our time in port covered 6 weeks while we discharged our cargo, took on chrome ore for ballast and had our slit plates repaired. There were day and night alerts and raids and Russian and German dogfights high in the cold, crisp air. Liberty meant walking to town, trading cigarettes with the kids; usually for Russian medals; walking to the Tourist Hotel for a shot of vodka and chocolate and perhaps a Laurel and Hardy movie.

Tom wrote Vera every day. He and I went ashore with buddies Bill Quinn from Boston, Ma., Art Bressette from New Bedford, Ma., Jim Heisler from Hackensack, NJ and Jim Falci from the Bronx.

Cargo handlers were made up of Russian soldiers on leave from the front lines, political prisoners and women, all of whom seemed terribly tired. Indeed, one was killed while sleeping one night in #3 hold being crushed to death between two large crates. One of our gunners narrowly missed death when a wooden ladder he was using to return aboard ship broke, throwing him into the water between the ship and dock. Just as the ship began closing, John Warsaw from Milwaukee, Wisc. and a former Chicago White Sox pitcher, pulled him up just in time.

Unbeknown to us, our convoy and the one after ours were bait for the German pocket battleships, SCHARNHORST and the TIRPITZ. The British had warships following our convoys. The trap was sprung on December 26th and the SCHARNHORST was sunk with a loss of nearly 1900 lives. The TIRPITZ was sunk in port later by aerial bombings.

On January 28, 1944, we were set for departure when a new convoy arrived with survivors. They had been mauled by U-Boats two days from Murmansk. The ship of the commodore was hit by three torpedoes and sank immediately with a loss of 30 men. Two Libertys were sunk with a loss of 15 men on one and 2 on the other. The British escorts lost one destroyer. We took on board 12 survivors from the S.S. PENELOPE BARKER, sunk 1/25/44 in convoy JW-56A with the loss of 5 Armed Guard, 10 merchantmen, and one doctor. The doctor had gone on board to treat one of the Armed Guard for appendicitis. When the BARKER was being abandoned, the Armed Guard Officer and the British doctor went below to assist trapped seamen and both were lost.

At this point, we fully expected to see action going back and on February 3rd, we sailed in convoy out of Murmansk. Tom, the gunners and I were on double watch again. Heavy weather set in almost immediately and half the crew got sick and this was not the best situation for firing the guns or going overboard. The temperature ran from 26 to 32 degrees with a sea temperature of 46 degrees and winds of 45 degrees. Eating and sleeping was almost impossible because of the rolls of 35 to 40 degrees with seas breaking over the stack. While it was so uncomfortable to us, it limited the submarine and air operations. There were GQs and hull clanging depth charges, flares, rockets, and reconnaissance planes.

On February 10, 1944 at 1500 hours and one day out of Loch Ewe, Scotland, the commodore flashed all ships a congratulatory message wishing all hands a "GOODBYE, GOOD LUCK AND A HAPPY HOME COMING." The survivors were landed in Belfast and on February 14th, we sailed for home in a convoy of 104 ships.

Tom and I shipped out on four more trips together on the S.S. LEWIS EMERY, JR. and the S.S. HENRY BARNARD, which took us to Iran, England and the Pacific. Tom and Vera, you ask???? Yes!! They were married before the war ended, they have 7 children, 16 grandchildren and live happily in New Hampshire - U.S.A.

Richard C. Schmitter, 25 Fairfax Terrace, Chatham, NJ 07928, 201-635-1435.

Thanks Richard for a story and tribute to the Signalmen. I hope others like it. cal



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