

THE P O I N T E R

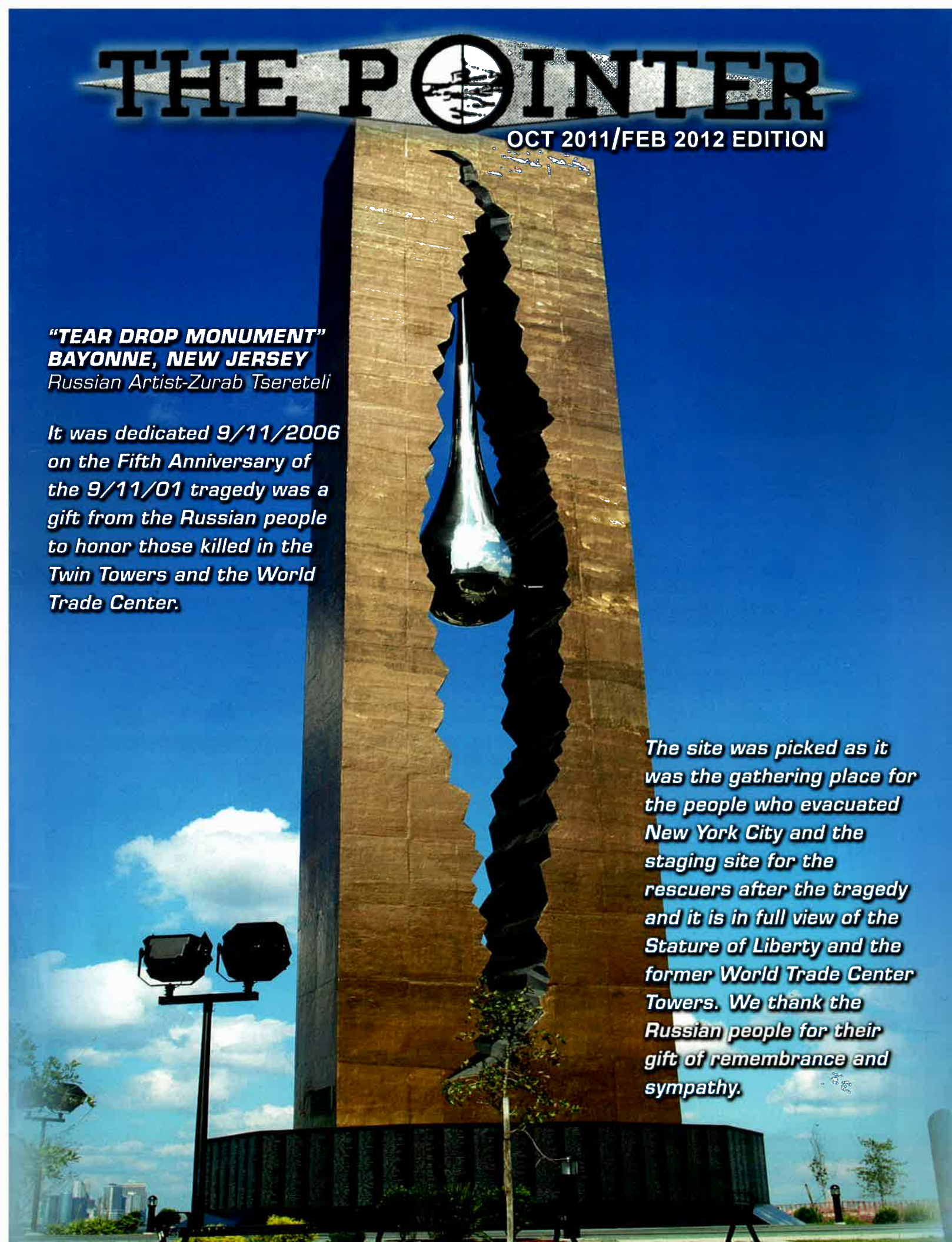
OCT 2011/FEB 2012 EDITION

"TEAR DROP MONUMENT" BAYONNE, NEW JERSEY

Russian Artist-Zurab Tsereteli

It was dedicated 9/11/2006 on the Fifth Anniversary of the 9/11/01 tragedy was a gift from the Russian people to honor those killed in the Twin Towers and the World Trade Center.

The site was picked as it was the gathering place for the people who evacuated New York City and the staging site for the rescuers after the tragedy and it is in full view of the Statue of Liberty and the former World Trade Center Towers. We thank the Russian people for their gift of remembrance and sympathy.



GRAVESTONES / BACK ON THE SHIP



SEE PAGE 14 • S.S. INDUNA

Photos taken at Murmansk International Cemetery on July 8, 1987. Courtesy of Capt. Richard G. Connelly.

Thanks to the National Archives-Northeast Region, an Alien Manifest for the SS BALLOT is available. It was presented to U.S. Customs by the Master upon arrival in New York on May 30, 1942.

This manifest shows that 17 seamen were shipped on the BALLOT overseas to replace the 16 men who abandoned ship in the lifeboat. Four of them were Americans who signed on April 10th in Murmansk. Nine were Aliens who signed on in Murmansk April 16th, and four Icelandic seamen signed on in Reykjavik May 8, 1942.

The four Americans who signed on in Murmansk were: James WHITENTON, A.B., Frank LOCKE, A.B., James BURNS, A.B. The 4th man's name is unreadable.

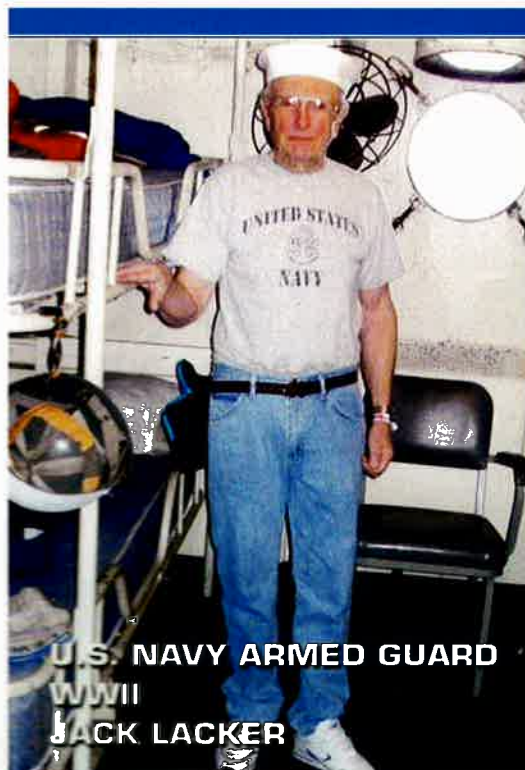
Four other Americans made the round trip safely. They were:

Ernest John CONE (20)	Radio Operator	Signed on N.Y. 1/8/42
Carl Daniel MILLER (?)	Cook	Signed on N.Y. 1/3/42
William MILLEN (20)	Wiper	Signed on N.Y. 1/3/42
William FLYNN (22)	Messman	Signed on N.Y. 1/3/42

THE GRAVESTONE FOR RUSSELL BENNETT SHOWS HE DIED ON APRIL 2, 1942.

This has to be the seaman Austin Byrne tells about. O'Brien did not die until April 12, 1942 according to his gravestone.

Signed,
Arthur R. Moore, Author



I talked with you a year or so ago after I visited the American Victory in 2008 which was quite an experience for an old guy. I recall that you visited the ship recently and had a good time as I did.

My son Peter and wife Micki flew me to Tampa from Gaylord Michigan for my first flight and to visit a ship like I was on in 1945 on trips to France, Italy and Russia on the Towanda and Laconia Victory ships.

Here are some pictures of me at a signal light and I found my old bunk and borrowed a crew member's cap for the picture.

Thanks again for all the work you do for the Pointer. I hope you have lots of help because it looks like a big job keeping track of everybody and dealing with all the mail you get. Keep up the good work, here is a check to help pay for the rent.

Jim Lacker • Gaylord MI 49735 • Marjim44@charter.net



THE POINTER



Dear Armed Guard Crew and everyone,

Jan. 2012

With our Thanksgiving, Christmas of 2011 and New Years Day 2012 behind us by the time you get this, I send belated good wishes for the Holidays and to say we survived another wonderful year. Hopefully, we will be around for more of the same even though the GOLDEN years seems to be a little tarnished but we keep the doctors busy and help them pay off their bills for their education and sport cars. I don't complain—they keep me going.

On the cover of this POINTER is a picture of the Russian Memorial honoring those who were killed by terrorists at the Twin Towers and the World Trade Center that was placed in New Jersey where people in the past had watched them being built and watched them go down. I wanted to be sure that you were aware of this beautiful memorial from the people of Russia. It can be pulled up on the Web at Google by typing in "RUSSIAN MEMORIAL in NEW JERSEY."

The donations for the Armed Guard and the POINTERS came from approximately 885 of you. That is within 10 either way and I want to thank each of you who gave. I know it has been tough on many of you with limited income, health problems, family financial problems, etc.. This issue of the POINTER will go out to some 4,000 on the mailing list. Year 2010 had a T behind the last name. 2011 had T1 and 2012 will have T2. I have about 500 extra copies printed each time for new ones I find and have to give to interested people to get the word out of what the Armed Guard did in WW II. If you lost a copy and want another back copy, let me know.

I have big lettered AG caps, winter and summer (same adjustable size) for a \$15. donation; made out to the first line of address on the POINTER and send to the return address. I do have left overs of the Eagle and Ship Caps. A few Navy Jackets and a few white ones. When they are gone, I will not re-order. If you have ordered and didn't get it, advise. Please advise of change of address, too. We will not send out shipmates found if sent in the last 2 years. The new "RECRUITS" should contact you. Stay healthy. (cal)

CAPS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE AFTER JUNE 1ST.

The Tear Drop Monument was a gift from artist Tsereteli and the Russian people and is made of steel sheathed in bronze and stands 100' high and it's center contains a jagged tear. Inside it hangs a 40' stainless steel teardrop, representing sadness and grief over the loss of life, but also in hope for the future of free from terror. Etched in granite on an 11 sided base are the names of the nearly 3,000 killed in the 1993 WTC bombing and the 9/11/01 terrorist attack. The walkway is made of stones.

The work Tsereteli was inspired as he walked the streets of Moscow and was struck by the out pouring of grief he observed and a image of a tear was formed in his mind. He visited "GROUND ZERO" and looked to New Jersey's site for a place to erect such a memorial. Bayonne was picked as it was the place the New Yorker evacuees congregated and rescue operations began. It is there for our fading generations and ones to follow to see and tell the future generations of our tears and that of all nations. (cal)

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

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& Sec. Treas. 1985-2011

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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

Remember, I "STILL" 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

LETTERS FROM THE CREW

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

How are you? We are well on this end! I was wondering if you got any kind of feedback on the Walt at Sea article you put in the last Pointer? My Uncle Max (Walt's older brother) died this past July at 93 years old and was so happy to see Walt at Sea published in the Pointer. Thank you for getting it in so quick. My whole family is proud of it! We have 5 days of no power when the hurricane hit up here which delayed the start of school by 3 days!!! My mother is moving in with us too! Life has been pretty crazy over the last month!!!

Hope things are well with you. Thank you so much again for EVERYTHING you did to get WALT AT SEA published in the Pointer.

God Bless, Ann Phillips

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Ship That Never Was If this isn't a wonderful message, I don't know what would be. Pleased me so very much.

Hi Bonnie, I went to Waverly, TN last week and attended the Historical Society Meeting on the 1st. I was their guest speaker. I told them a little about myself and my family. All this lead up to how I came to donate the painting, military photo, burial flag and your books to the library and war museum. A number of them were interested in purchasing the book. So I hope that they will do that. Everyone was pleased with what I had to tell them and I even connected with some more relatives that I had not known. So I now feel that my Uncle has been returned to his home town of Waverly, TN. And thanks again for your part in his return.

Jerry Lowe • 540-586-3313

jlowe92007@verizon.net

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Hamilton • Read with interest the loss of the Paul Hamilton. Sorry to say

Mr. Miller did not get the correct information. I was a singalman aboard the John N. Maffitt a Liberty Ship carrying ammunition in the same convoy. Our station was 61--first ship in the sixth column. The Paul Hamilton was 52--second ship in the fifth column on our port side. We left Hampton Roads, Va on our way to Italy. Quiet crossing unlike the North Atlantic. On entering the Med we picked up an air escort--2 P51 Mustangs. I was on watch about noon April 20, 1944--Hitler's birthday when I got a light from 71. The commodore of the convoy was on 71. The first two words were 'get recorder'. I knew what that meant. There was a gunners mate working on a 20 millimeter. Nice day we were on the flying bridge. He wrote down the message. It started, be on the alert "air attack. They may drop flares on one side of the convoy. Don't turn your guns that way because they will come in from the other side". In the meantime the other signalman John Gottschalk was on the bridge. He sent the message to 51 on the port side--I sent it to the ship behind us 62. We waited until we got a roger from 51 and 62. I called the commodore informing him that all ships on our side of the convoy got the message. We were on general quarters when the bow lookout said '2 planes dead ahead'. Standing on the bridge I watched as 2 planes--one behind the other--flying 20 feet off the water--coming at an angle crossed our bow. The first one dropped a torpedo. Seconds later there was a god-awful explosion. The flames roared up about 1000 feet. I was on the ship-to-ship telephone. The commodore calld and asked which ship was hit. I told him I believe it was 52. Whoever put 500 soldiers on an ammunition ship should have been a passenger.

One more thing about that convoy. I never saw an escort. They were out in the horizon. I had been sailing the North Atlantic with the British corvettes. They were veterans and very good. Of course in the Med you really didn't have to worry about subs. Keep up the good work.

John Flatherty

2708 Salem Church Rd. Apt 420
Fredericksburg, Va 22407

★ ★ ★

John, I am glad we have found another "eye-witness" to the tragedy. We had at least 38 Liberty ship to suffer the same fate but not with that many to go in an instant with that many people on it. Write more on this subject of what happened next, where you went, what you delivered. Plus, permission to print. Hopefully, we can get it all told before we sail into Eternity. I am sure there were many ships going to the front, loaded with ammo during WW II, with troops on board. Today, the younger generation would go down to the piers and lay down and protest until we got our tails whipped for good. We had a job to do and we did it regardless the outcome. Our government has it's hands full now and God forbid it if we end up controlled by the terrorists. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Merry Christmas - Dear Charles,
My warmest regards to you and to all US Navy Armed Guardsmen for coming Merry Christmas and New Year.

Your enthusiasm in preserving the history of the US Navy of WW II, your dedication to the best traditions of the USNAG set an example for me and my friends in Russia.

In our turn in the next year we would like devote our self to realize a project to establish a monument to Polar Convoy participants in St Petersburg. Its concept was discussed and confirmed by a special commission. So we have a dream that must to be realized. I would like to thank you for sending me THE POINTER, it makes me understand better your experience and American history generally. Big hugs to you!!! As a editor-in-chief of the new born magazine Maritime Heritage I'll publish with pleasure recollections about Russo-American maritime relations during WWII.

Cordially yours,
Igor (of Russia)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LETTERS FROM THE CREW

Tribute to an Armed Guard Congratulations!!

Dear Korky,

Dick Robertson forwarded me the news about the auditorium being named in your honor. Congratulations!! It couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

My best wishes to you and Gerry for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Sincerely, Harv Goldstein

HarvHGA@aol.com SEE PAGE 13

★ ★ ★

Another Armed Guard WW II Veteran is still serving his country. Korker was the Chief Photographer at the AGC in Brooklyn, N.Y. and has shared many photos for the POINTER and still gets the "SNOW-BIRDS" together. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi Charles, Again, Greetings from colorful Colorado. Just a note to THANK YOU and all the helpers for all you are doing and being the driving forces in keeping the U.S.N. Armed Guard WW II organization alive and well. Enclosed, please find a little help with the expenses. I always look forward to the POINTERS arriving. I am also enclosing an article that I wrote some time ago. I have never submitted it to THE POINTER. I thought you might be interesting in including it in some future issue as it is about our time and the invasion of the Philippines for the return of General Douglas McArthur. Also, a picture of a DUD bomb that fell on our ship showing R to L, Lt. Hugh Bish (Navy), Cecil Ray (Radioman pointing to the bomb), Joe Pearson, Signalman (with periscope) and Sidney Livine, Radioman. (leaning on the rail)

Cecil Ray, 2580 Patiot Heights, Colorado Springs, Co. 80904

★ ★ ★

After getting most of this POINTER ready, I find Cecil's letter that I had looked for and as I read it, I remembered the others writing about the DUD bomb. What a coinci-



(Official Photograph, U. S. Navy)
A sea smacks over tanker's bow as she prepares to fuel an aircraft carrier in the Pacific

dent. Y'all had been wanting something on the Pacific so this POINTER is fill with this area of the war. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Charlie and Armed Guard Crew, Ever since the end of WWII when Congress started the G.I. Bill of benefits for its Veterans, the one group of Veterans that did more to ensure that every item of war material made in our factories for our troops in Europe and the Pacific for our troops to fight the enemy, WAS SADLY DENIED TO THE MEN OF THE MERCHANT MARINES UNTIL 43 LONG YEARS AFTER WWII ENDED.

That meant in those years we WWII merchant marine seamen were denied VA medical care, college tuition, job retraining, employment opportunities & a host of others even though we suffered a higher casualty rate than the U.S. Marines while delivering the millions of tons of war material. For decades, we have been asking our Congressmen & women to compensate those of us still living, compensation for missing out on all of the benefits of that WWII G.I. Bill that would have benefited us had we gotten it. Yet sadly, even though other groups of veterans were officially recognized for their service with Gold Medals, and \$158

Million dollars in compensation to the WWII Philippino Army Scouts, some how, AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE SEAMEN ARE ALWAYS IGNORED ! My question is WHY ???

In the upcoming months, our House Bill HR-23 has a number of cosponsors. But it seems it is stalled in some House Committee where it might die & never reach the floor to be voted on again. Our Indiana Senator, Richard Lugar, has been pleaded by those of us WWII Merchant Marine veterans for YEARS to be a co-sponsor of our Senate Bill, AND ALL WE GET IN RESPONSE ARE EVALUATIONS !!

He definitely will not get our vote for re-election coming up. You of the Armed Guard know what we went through with. Can you help?

To the newspaper editors & the TV heads, would you please read the forwarded E-Mail from one of our AMMV officers and publish some article about our struggle as a great many people are TOTALLY UNAWARE OF WHO & WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT WE DID FOR OUR COUNTRY IN WWII.

Don Ellwood, 8770 Carriage Lane, Pendleton, IN 46064, (765) 778-8735, an 83 year old Merchant Marine Veteran

LETTERS FROM THE CREW

that was 16 years old when they took me aboard to fight in WW II War in the U.S. Maritime Service. SEE PAGES 41/44-45

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

Thank you very much for your letter and most interesting message about US help to Russia during the WWII. Of course, many people here know that we were allies at that time but, unfortunately, the details of such cooperation are little known to both the Russians and Americans, and especially the young people in both countries.

However, if you or someone you know who is familiar with these events and is willing to write a story about them we will be happy to publicize it through the media.

Needless to say that we are all grateful to US government and American people for their generous help to Russia during these difficult times and please be assured that we are trying our best to revive this noble alliance.

Edward Lozansky

President, American University in Moscow and World Russia Forum in Washington, D.C.

1800 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009

Tel: 202-364-0200;

Fax: 240-554-1650

Moscow office: Tel. +7(495)509-7346

www.russiahouse.org

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Charles,

It has been some time since I wrote you. After reading the war stories and the Waves in the Armed Guard, I would like to comment in their behalf. At the Armed Guard Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., I was a storekeeper in the Supply Dept., in charge of the clothing and small stores issue room. At first, we had all male storekeepers, but in late 1944/45, a group of Waves were sent to The AGC

in Brooklyn for duty. Some of them were assigned to Administrative, disbursing, Medical, Supply and other departments that I am not sure of.

Five Waves were assigned to Clothing and Small Stores Issue Room. Within a few months, I, and many more Storekeepers were transferred to the West Coast and into the regular FLEET Navy. We were to relieve the navy personnel who were on the ships since the beginning of the war and been at sea a long time and needed R&R and also to see their families. I was transferred to a light aircraft carrier; the USS CABOT which was undergoing repair and overhaul at the Navy Yard at Hunter's Point, Oakland, California.

After the overhaul period, the ship was ordered back to the Pacific area of operations. After our visit to Hawaii, we sailed to the China Coast in the Yellow Sea. Unknown to us at the time, we were in line for the invasion of Japan, which never developed. After the war, the ship was ordered back to the States to our home port in Philadelphia, Pa. where I was transferred to Lido Beach, N.Y. for discharge.

I am sending you a picture of the Supply and Commissary Dept. of the US-NAGC, Brooklyn, N.Y. (See Center Spread) I am also sending a donation to help defray the expenses. That's me with the arrow pointing down on the picture. I hope you like the photo and can use in the POINTER. (See Centerfold)

Sincerely,

Fred Viskovich • 53 Hooyman Dr.

Clifton, N.J. 07013

★ ★ ★

Thanks, Fred. I hope to frame this and place on the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN in Baltimore. I hope some will recognize themselves, or; maybe a friend or shipmate. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal, Here's a donation to help keep THE POINTER in service. I wish to

THANK YOU and ALL the others for the efforts made to keep our Armed Guard and Merchant Seamen's past in WW II recognized as a fighting unit in WW II. You and the late Mr. Tom Bowerman of Anniston, Al. were a tremendous help in helping me get my Navy records and medals together. I, like many others in the U.S. Navy Armed Guard were discharged without many of these records or knew where to obtain them. And, were never sent of many of the ones awarded later after the war. I have to admit, if it wasn't for my granddaughter finding all of this on my son's computer, I would still be in the dark.

Thanks again for the POINTERS.

Albert E. Burnham • 14670 Hanks Dr.
Red Bluff, Ca. 96080 • alb@saber.net

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Thank you very much for your service and great contribution to the USN Armed Guard. The issues of "The Pointer" are a very special publication with very exciting information.

Special thanks for the Liberty Ship document and related Victory ship. I had to stop and look through the material you sent to me. I have given little thought and effort to follow up on my 23 months sea duty and Jan 1943 to Dec 1945 in the USN.

I had 8 months for boot camp, radioman school and signalman school.

Sept, 1943 I was assigned to the Frank J. Irwin Liberty Ship until Aug, 1944.

Sept, 1944 I was assigned to the Azalea City troop transport until Sep, 1945.

Oct, Nov & Dec I was assigned to the Port Director's Office in Portland Oregon until I was Discharged in Dec, 1945.

On the Liberty ship we made trips to Hawaii, Australia, and later to Moro Bay & Finchafen in New Guinea and New Hebrides.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW

On troop ship we picked up a load of Army personnel that had been abandoned in the Philippines for some years. They were very disturbed and distressed about our failure to get to them sooner. The Japanese left Manila in shambles. Two of the Japanese warships were resting on the bottom of the harbor.

This story of my service are the highlights as I think I remember them. I have applied myself to the here and now since WWII -- not much look back. I have cancers and other maladies that keep me close to doctors etc.

I am mailing you \$\$ to cover some of your investment in me. Thanks again for your service and SHARING with us survivors. I made print larger and messed up the end of lines.

Thanks again. George LaForge
Raveltx@aol.com • phone 940 692-0920

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi C.A.,

Thank you for my June/Sept POINTER. Enclosed is a donation to help keep you afloat. I have also enclosed a book, CRIMSON IMJIM Korea 1951 authored by my Brother-in Law, Robert W. Ryan who was a Merchant Marine for two years in WW II and drafted into the Army and his outfit served in the Korean War during the Chinese Spring Offensive of April 1951. I thought you would enjoy the book of his experiences as much as I did. Sadly, Bob passed away 9/12/11.

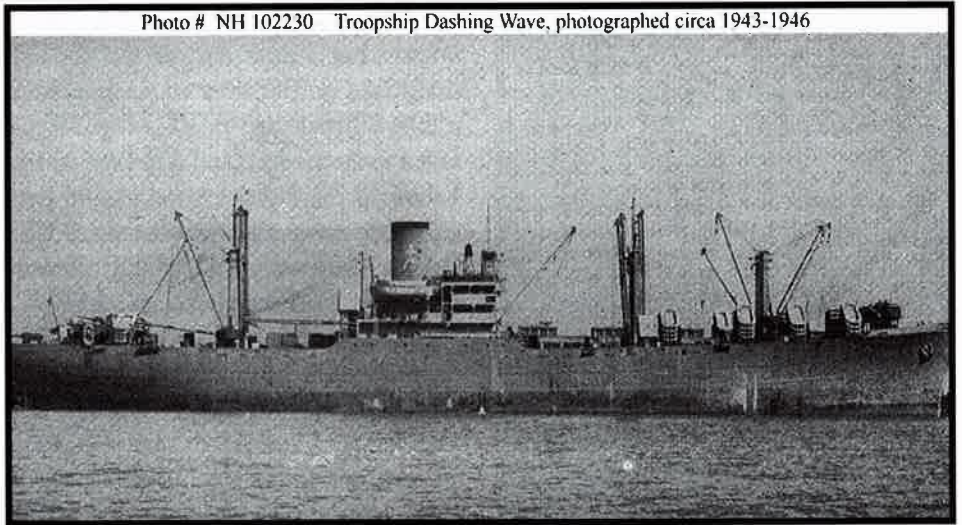
Our Cleveland group is getting smaller but thanks to Al Borgman and Joyce Joyce, we are still at our same meeting place on the 1st Sat. of each month at Denny's 4431 W. 150th St. (I-71) here in Cleveland, Oh.. Thanks again and keep up the good work. Headed to Fla. For the winter.

Ed Crissinger • 53022 Del Rio Bay
533 S.Wing • Boynton Beach, Fl. 33436
561-734-3261

★ ★ ★

Thanks Ed for the book. I will publicize this book in hopes it may be read by many Ko-

Photo # NH 102230 Troopship Dashing Wave, photographed circa 1943-1946



rean Vets and others that know nothing of the treatment and suffering the Merchant Crews had to go through with, after serving their country in WW II. The book can be purchased at:

RoseDog Books, 701 Smithfield St
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222 • 1-800-834-1803
www.rosedogbookstore.com
ISBN 978-1-4349-9416-5 (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Cal, Thank you for your E-Mail. We just got home from Washington, D.C.. I had the honor of placing the wreath on the UNKNOWN SOLDIER as they picked 4 of the oldest Veterans to do the honor and I was one of them. Sincerely, Alex Urbino • 79 Haley Lane Apt-1
Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14277
716-668-3789

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi, remember me Jan late of the Lane Victory? Enjoy the pointer and pass them on March/May issue, inside back page reference to SS Dashing Wave, that's a C-2 not a liberty, as noted there, maybe you could pass that on Dayla Newton, she did not include email. Bet you got a lot of corrections on that already. Our best to AG everywhere. Guess you heard, the USS Iowa is coming to San Pedro. WOW! The Lane will surely disappear in her shadow. Sold out 2 of our 3 cruises, so that's good. Iowa cannot brag that EVER...BEST JAN

Dashing Wave (American Freighter and Troop Transport, 1943-1970).

Later renamed Choctaw.

Dashing Wave, a 6221 gross ton C2-S-B1 type cargo ship, was built at Oakland, California, in 1943 for the U.S. Maritime Commission. Completed in February 1943 and converted to a troop transport soon afterwards, she was operated during World War II by the Mississippi Shipping Company, transporting service personnel between the U.S. West Coast and bases in Hawaii and the central Pacific. Later in the War she voyaged further west, reaching Okinawa and the Philippines. She continued her trans-Pacific service on behalf of the U.S. Army during the early post-War era, from late August 1945 until February 1946.

Placed in the Maritime Commission's Olympia, Washington, Reserve Fleet in July 1946, Dashing Wave was transferred to the American Mail Line, Ltd., in August of that year but was again laid up in October, this time at Suisun Bay, California. In August 1948 she was taken over by the Waterman Steamship Company, which purchased her three months later and changed her name to Choctaw. Waterman owned the ship from then until May 1969, and again briefly in August 1970. In that month she was sold to a Taiwanese firm for scrapping.

This page features the only view we have of the freighter/troop transport Dashing Wave, which was later renamed Choctaw.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW

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Dear Charles, Just a few lines to tell you that my daughter, Leesa and I will be sailing on the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN that is docked in Baltimore, Md. on June 16, 2012. I will be happy to see the Armed Guard quarters and bunk, the guns and the chow hall. I can't wait to see and go aboard a Liberty Ship again. Little is known or remembered about the Armed Guard and Merchant Marine of WW II. Charlie, I want to say Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you, your wife and family. A check is enclosed to help keep the POINTERS coming.

Thanks. Sincerely, Lester E. Kidd • 5713 Castlebridge Rd. A-336 • Fredricksburg, Va. 22407 • 540-785-1787

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi C.A., I made 2 trips from Long Beach, Ca. to Calcutta, India on the S.S. CAPE LAMBERT loaded with ammunition. On deck was torpedo warheads and two P-38 planes and two big boxes marked batteries and acid which turned out to be whiskey. Our first stop was Freemantle, Australia where we unloaded the warheads. Our second stop was Colombo, Ceylon and then on to Calcutta. We sailed up the Ganges River.

My brother in law, Bud, sent me this book by Enright about Calcutta and what he says about the City of Calcutta is so true. Every morning, the British would pick up the people that died that night. I guess they were sent to be cremated. Calcutta was something to see. I saw it twice and that was enough. I often think how lucky I was to make two trips to India on an ammunition ship. Enclosed is the book and hope you enjoy it. Keep up the good work.

Robert Gill • 9920 Foster St.
Overland Park, Ks. 66212
913-381-9239

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mr. Lloyd, No, I do not get the Pointer, but I have read all the copies I could find on the Internet. In July 2012, it'll be 70 years ago that Convoy PQ-17 sailed to Archangel (and Murmansk) and I thought maybe it's a good idea to have an article about the two destroyers USS Rowan (DD-405; CO LCDR Beverly Randolph Harrison, Jr., USN) and USS Wainwright (DD-419; CO LCDR Robert Henry Gibbs, USN; Wainwright being the flagship of ComDesRon 8, CAPT Don Pardee Moon, USN).

On July 1, a long-range maritime patrol Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor and then two German submarines detected the convoy, and on July 2 German planes attacked for the first time. Rowan refueling from the RFA Aldersdale (X 34; CO Archibald Hobson) put up a fight and downed one aircraft. The crew was saved by another German plane (a Blohm und Voss) that simply landed, scooped up the ditched crew and took off again before any of the Allied ships was able (or willing) to intervene.

On July 4 it was the Wainwright that put up a heck of a fight and impressed the British (with one notable exception: LCDR Roger Percival Hill, RN, in the escort destroyer HMS Ledbury (L 90)) with her firepower (the American 5 inch 38 cal being the best dual purpose gun in WWII anyway). Wainwright made that Fourth of July very noteworthy. She completely frustrated part of the German attack. The Commander of the Close Escort (Convoy Screen) CDR John Egerton "Jack" Broome, RN, in HMS Keppel (D 84) on Saturday July 4 signalled to Moon, "Was the original Fourth of July as noisy as this?" Moon responded, "Afraid I was not there but I guess negative."

On July 5 Broome signaled, "Thank you for your great support and congratulations on your AA fire which impresses us all, and definitely left parking room for one in a German hangar."

The late Bill Carter (Navy Armed Guard on the S.S. Ironclad) saw it all happen.

He tells about it in his nice book "WHY ME, LORD". Bill says in his book that it was the Rowan on the Fourth of July, but when I spoke to him on the phone he admitted it was a mistake and that he should have written the Wainwright.

Yours sincerely, Peiter Graf
2273 KC Voorburg • The Netherlands

★ ★ ★

(Note: Bill has since passed to calmer waters.) cal

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I am looking for information on SS Charles Henderson. My uncle Joseph Zuzik was on board when the ship exploded in Bari, Italy. 4-9-1945. Would appreciate any information.

Thank you, Pat Zuzik Powell
cayman542003@yahoo.com

★ ★ ★

The following info below comes from Capt Art Moore book, "A CARELESS WORD--A NEEDLES SINKING".

You may be able to get the crew's list from below and there is a cost and they can tell you.

MODERN MILITARY RECORDS

8601 Adelphi Rd. Room 2400 (NWCTM)

College Park, Md. 20740-6001

E-Mail: inquire@nara.gov

Owned by: Mississippi Shipping Co., New Orleans, La Built May 1943 @ New Orleans, La.

The Liberty Ship, S.S. CHARLES HENDERSON, exploded and sank while discharging high explosives at Bari, Italy on April 9, 1945. Her complements was 42 crew members and 13 Naval Armed Guard. The chief Engineer, who was ashore at the time of the explosion, was the only survivor. The ship was completely destroyed. 267 Italians were killed and over 1600 wounded. An undetermined number of Allied Service personnel were killed also. The port installations near the ship were destroyed plus two berths. In addition, 5 ships in the harbor was damaged. The ship sailed from Norfolk, Va. on March 9, in convoy USG-80 arriving in Bari on April 5th.

If I can be of any more help, advise. (cal)

LETTERS FROM THE CREW

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hello! Greetings from Hazleton.

By all means, feel free to use my story for the Pointer. The only thing we ask is that the newspaper be credited with the story.

I wasn't at the ceremony. An article about it was submitted to us by Mr. Brindock's daughter, who lives in New Jersey. I pasted it below. If you would like me to get in touch with Mr. Brindock's daughter for you, please let me know. She would be able to tell you more about the ceremony.

From what I gathered, they've been holding these ceremonies for decades now in Cape May. I would've like to have talked to the man in charge, but he wasn't around the day I called. I do know that there is a Web site for his place, Sunset Beach Gift Shops. I found it by googling it. Maybe that could help?

Once I send this off, I'm going to check into the Pointer and The Lloyd Boys of WWII. I would've done it before I sent you this email, but the way my mind is, I figured this was the safest way.

Thanks for your email!!!

Jill jwhalen@standardspeaker.com

Here is my story from the Standard-Speaker newspaper (Hazleton, Pa.):
Ebervale native honored for World War II service (SEE PAGE 55)

★ ★ ★

Jill Whalen,

I received this recently from our Ron Carlson who holds our "USN ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS" website on the Historical Liberty Ship, the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN in Baltimore, Md.. If you have it in the computer still, I would like for you to E-Mail it to me so I can place it in our next POINTER Magazine that I get together and send out to our crew. You can click on www.armed-guard.com and then click on POINTER and see copies of the POINTER. It is NON-PROFIT. I had heard of the ceremony there and if you can ad lib it in as to what, why and when, I would appreciate it. I have been getting our crew together since

1982. That's a long time and it's all "GRATIS" on my part. A long story. For a fast catch up on me, go to GOOGLE and type in THE LLOYD BOYS OF WW II and see if you can open it up. calloyd

★ ★ ★

I came across this newspaper article that speaks of honoring the memory of Paul Brindock, an AG veteran who died in 2005. I find his name among the list of AG Veterans Association members on the website. Perhaps you learned of his death well before now and have removed his name from your active mailing list. But if not, this article confirms his death. Best wishes. Ron

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CA

How is the ole salt doing. Got my picture in the paper. Thought you may wish to see it. We are still working on HR 1288. Got 63 cosponsors, but can't get started in the Senate. How you been? Me, I have stayed in the Doc's office for one thing or the other. They get more money out of me than the US Gov't.

We got smoke from the Dismal Swamp fire here. Bad on the breathing. See Page 51. No autographs, please.
Best, Don

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Cal, this was my letter to Paducah, Ky Sunday daily paper in Sept. 05

Hello Again Cal;

Regardless of what is happenings now or next, "I still say New Orleans and The Navy Armed Guard was very instrumental in winning WWII"

Sincerely, GCC gcc123@bellsouth.net

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Mrs. Alexander:

It's my loss that I didn't know your father. I'm actually Viet-Nam-era NEWPORT NEWS person - but I can tell you that we always looked up to those who, like

New Orleans played key role in winning World War II

EDITOR:

After high school at Heath, Ky., I was drafted into the U.S. Navy. After six weeks of boot camp, I was put on a troop train in Chicago. No one would tell us where we were going; two days later the old coal-fired steam-powered train had chugged to our destination. It was night and, yes, raining. They told us we were in the New Orleans train station.

We were loaded on Army trucks which had canvas tops that leaked. They took us across the Mississippi River to the Algiers Navy base barracks. The Navy then told us New Orleans would be our home port. The base had two sections, ICU - incoming unit and OGU - outgoing unit.

My company stayed in the ICU section 14 days to prepare for sea duty. Each morning we were loaded on landing craft and went across the Mississippi River to the Shell Beach, La., firing range. There we trained 10 hours each day to learn about Navy guns and war in the Navy. At night they loaded us back in boats and took us back to Algiers Navy ICU base. After 14 days of raining and training we were transferred to the OGU.

Then came the real thing, which was an eye-opening experience for a teenage boy from Heath who had hardly been out of McCracken County. I served on five ships in the thick of it all, both Atlantic and Pacific theaters of war, went all over the world but always wiggled my way back to my home port - good ol' New Orleans.

I said that to say this: Some 63 years later I still have a warm place in my heart for my home port New Orleans and its unique waterways and railways which defiantly played a very major role in winning World War II - the war that saved the world from some very evil atheistic dictators

It is my hope and prayer we can take the Hurricane Katrina (negative) experience and make a positive of it. Thanks, Big Easy, God Bless.

GC CARNEAL
Paducah

your dad, fledged up on the NEWS, and what he did is altogether admirable. I moved up quickly there, too - that tended to happen during wartime, and they treated me well, and I went from a junior ensign to a senior lieutenant in around 2 years. As it happens, I wound up as the so-called First Lieutenant, and the division your father was in was thus one of the divisions for which I was responsible - but my time there was 1968-70! I am sure that he - like all the other NEWPORT NEWS sailors I have ever known - held that incredible ship in a very special place, close to the heart. But I write with another purpose.

Since I left the Navy I have lived in Raleigh, NC, where the US Navy Armed Guard Association was established, The gentleman who set it up & runs it is CA Lloyd, and because he keeps up with all the WWII merchant & armed guard

LETTERS FROM THE CREW

folks, I took the liberty of sending your note to him. He called me immediately to ask me to write to you. His computer is out of order, he can receive incoming but not send outgoing. He asked me to ask you please to email him and to send him your phone number so he can call you. He said he'd love to call your dad if he would be up to a talk. He also particularly requests that you send him the names of the ships and the dates (if possible) that your father served as a member of the Armed Guard. He will also send a package of Armed Guard info - he publishes a regular magazine called THE POINT-ER, and I am sure he will supply your dad with plenty reading material.

The fact that your dad survived the Murmansk runs is likewise remarkable. CA is particularly interested in that period of the history of the war - there are several Murmansk survivors in our monthly breakfast club here, And as it happens back when I was starting out in the Naval

Reserve, I had the pleasure of spending several periods of active-duty-for-training (the 2-week training periods) at the Naval Historical Center, where - because I had read history in college & was an officer - they had me on a project to read and declassify (yes!) lots of the Murmansk message traffic - there were thousands of messages that had never been declassified (as of the early-to-mid '70s). So we - CA and I - are both pleased to learn about your father, and I hope you will send CA a note as requested above. With my thanks to you and my great appreciation to your father for his service to our nation - and on the ship that I loved above all the others I sailed, too!

John Lambert
Raleigh, NC

★ ★ ★

John Lambert-USN (Ret) joins us for our AG breakfast at PAM'S Restaurant in Raleigh and saw the name of John SOBOLOSKY on his USS NEWPORT NEWS (CA-148) Web Site who was in the AG in 1945. He E-

Mails his daughter Lillie Alexander for info to help get her dad's record and forwarded info below so we have another one of the crew aboard. So, we find another of the crew and we welcome him back onboard. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Peter Michael Falk, Merchant Mariner, Born 1927 in New York City and raised in Ossining, N.Y. dies at the age of 83. He had lost one eye at the age of 3 and was turned down by the armed forces due to the 1 eye. He served as a cook and messboy in the Merchant Marines during his year and one half as a Merchant Mariner and he was quoted as saying, "They didn't care if you were blind or not. The only one on the ship who had to see was the captain. And in the case of the Titanic, he couldn't see very well either." Falk was the detective in "Columbo" and entertained many a person. Smooth sailing, Peter Falk. Thanks for serving!

American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial Wall of Honor. USN Armed Guard WW II

The U.S. Navy Armed Guard was a service branch of the United States Navy that was responsible for defending U.S. and Allied merchant ships from attack by enemy aircraft, submarines and surface ships during World War II. The men of the Armed Guard served primarily as gunners, signal men and radio operators on cargo ships, tankers, troop ships and other merchant vessels. Disbanded following the end of the war, the Armed Guard is today little known or remembered by the general public, or even within the Navy. But without the courage and sacrifice of the men of the Armed Guard, victory in World War II would have been much more difficult and taken much longer.

The merchant marine is collectively those non-naval ships that carry cargo or passengers or provide maritime services, and the civilian crewmen and officers who sail those ships. During World War II the ships and men of the United States merchant marine transported across the oceans of the world the vast quantities of war materiel, supplies, equipment, and troops needed to fight and win that war. The men of the U.S. merchant marine were civilian volunteers who nonetheless died proportionally in numbers that rivaled or exceeded any branch of the uniformed military. Like the Armed Guard with whom they sailed, the men of the merchant marine made possible the Allied victory in World War II.

The Armed Guard and the merchant marine were uniquely dependent upon one another; they were literally in the same boat. One cannot tell the story of one without telling the story of the other.

Books of WW II

+(Contact: USMM Academy, King's Point-Contains all Tankers and Cargo ships sunk)

NEW! "LITTLE SHIPS" - Tug Boats at Normandy By Gerald Reminick 1-800-711-8985

WW II IN THE GULF OF MEXICO by C.J. CHRIST

"THE TANKERS" by Capt. Walt Jaffee ISBN 978-1-889901-43-5 1-800-711-8985

SWING SHIFT by Tony Cope ISBN 978-1-59114-123-5 Naval Institute Press

"THE ATLANTIC CAMPAIGN by Dan van der Vat ISBN 0-06-015967-7 Harper & Row NY

TURNING THE TIDE by Ed Offley ISBN 978-0-465-01397-5

"TWO YEARS BEHIND THE MAST by Harold J. McCormick ISBN 0-89745-138-4

Hell-bent for Adventure by Jack Mahaney 1-888-280-7715 www.authorhouse.com

REUNIONS

USN ARMED GUARD MEETINGS AND REUNION 2012

NOTICE: Hosts Names, Address, Zip Code, Tel., E-Mail and meeting places may change anytime so it's up to you and the hosts to keep each other notified. Any changes hopefully will be in the next POINTER. If your group or area is not included or needs corrected, advise NOW for the next POINTER.

Good Evening C. A.

Well Christmas is next Sunday. Where has this year gone. Are you all ready for that important day for when Santa seeks down your chimney. Don't forget to sent out your milk and cookies for him. Here is our Luncheon notice. If you would be so kind to put it back into the Pointer.

THE BUCKLEY Wa. hosts Hank and Sandy Harrison, 27014 Lower Burnett Road E., Buckley, Washington, 98321 360-897-9381 or bng75@aol.com meets on the 2nd. Wednesday of each month at ELMER'S, 7427 Hosmer, Tacoma, Washington, 98408-1229 Ph.253-473-0855 We usually have about 15 to 20 or more sometimes for our luncheons at Elmer's last year for our Christmas Brunch we had 42 and this year we only had 35. You all take care--you hear and to all, Have Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Our House To Your House. Say HI to Hilda, Hank and Sandy

★ ★ ★

I put this in as it came to me as I had left them out most of last year so this year, they get a SPECIAL NOTICE. MERRY CHRISTMAS, too (cal)

The Michigan Chapter of Armed Guard/Merchant Marine hosts, Carl and Ruth Mescher, 508 Wayland, East Lansing, Mi. 48823 517-332-1027 crum83@sb-cglobal.net who took over with the passing of Martin Vallee of Flint, Mi. in April is looking for a replacement to carry on due to his health problems. They would like to see it carried on at least twice a year. You do not have to meet in Lansing. Have it near your area. Carl can turn the format of the magazine over to you to carry on and I will assist from headquarters in running labels, list of names both by Zip code and Alphabet. Maybe a son, daughter or friend would volunteer. Let's

keep her running. Just contact the Meschers or me. (calloyd-address and phone # same as the POINTER.)

Richmond, Va. Chapter of the Armed Guard was disbanded as of Dec.10, 2011 due to health problems and proper attendance. Our best to all AG Crew. Al Ligon 3900 Lyndale Pl., Richmond, Va. 23235

ARIZONA: Pat and Fred Gustin, 1221 E. Clearwind Pl., Oro Valley, Az. 85755 520-825-7531 continue to meet at 10:30 AM to 12:00 in their area at the OLD TIME KAFE 1425 W. Prince Rd., Tucson, Az. 85742 293-2324 on the 2nd Thurs. of each month, Sept. through May and welcome more to attend. Contact them for further info.

The Long Island AG Chapter meet at the Farmingdale, N.Y. Library, 4th Wed. at 11 AM. Contact: Dot and James Pellegrino, 527 Livingston St., Westbury, N.Y. 11590 516-997-5585

Buckley, Wa AREA contact is still Hank and Sandy Harrison, 27014 Lower Burnett Rd. E., Buckley, Wa 98321-360-897-9381 bng75@aol.com and they still meet at Elmer's 7427 Hosmer, Tacoma, Wa. 98408 253-473-0855.

Cleveland, Oh. Ag/MM Crew meet 1st. Sat of each Mo. at Denny's, 4431 W.150th St., Cleveland. (I-71) Contact: A.H. Borgman 25534 Chatworth Dr., Euclid, Oh. 44117 216-481-1142

Delaware Valley AG/MM meet at 11:30 AM at the "OLD COUNTRY RESTAURANT" Oxford Center, Fairless Hills, Pa. John Harman, Host, 9 Tree Ave, Levittown, Pa., 19054 215-295-3114. The SOUTH New Jersey Pinelands Armed Guard Unit meets the 4th Thurs.

of the mo. at 12:30 PM at THE CAPTAINS INN. 304 E Lacey Rd., Forked River, NJ 609-693-3351. The hosts are: Mike Chengeri 908-486-6577, Al Messina 732-350-1304 and William Wilkie 609-597-2946. They ask all NJ Armed Guard members to come join in with them. Wives & Widows of the members are welcomed to attend a great "sit down" luncheon and view the Forked River. Come on down and join us. Those outside of NJ are welcomed, too. (Mike Chengeri)

NORTHERN N.J. CREW is now meeting at STASHES RESTAURANT, Wood Ave. (Off Rt.1 North) Linden. N.J. on the 1st Tuesday (Monthly) at 12 noon. Hosts: Ernest Stoukas, 65 Webb Dr., Fords, N.J. 08863 732-225-2054.

Iowa/Mn/Daks still meet the 2nd Wednesday monthly at 10 A.M. for coffee and gab monthly at the Machine Shed on the West Side of Des Moines, Ia. off Exit 125 on I-80/I-35, the Hickman Rd. Contact Arnie Latare, 4400 E.P. True Pkwy #59, W.Des Moines, Ia. 50265 515-225-1084 malata@q.com . All the AG/MM and family are welcomed.

The TEXAS 2012 USN Armed Guard Reunion will be held at the Hampton Inn & Suites, Buda, Tx. March 1-3, 2012. Host contact: Connie Whisenant, 206 Gatlin Creek Road., Dripping Springs, Tx. 78620-4949 512-965-6153 (cell) 512-858-7024 (home) visinand@txwinet.net <mailto:visinand@txwinet.net>

The Texas AG Crew meet on the 1st Monday at 9 AM at Ramsey's Restaurant 1401 N. Navarro, Victoria, Tx. with Hosts Norm Neureuther, 361-578-7900 neureuther@suddenlink.net Destroyer Escort Association address has been changed to DESA P.O. Box 488,

REUNIONS

Henderson Harbor, N.Y. 13651. 315-938-7000 Please contact Dori Glaser (800) 603-3332 for their Reunions and meetings. Their 37th Annual Convention will be held Sept. 23-27, 2012 in Norfolk, Va.

Pa. NEW MEETING NOTICE: Their old meeting place was demolished in the Sept. 2011 Flood. The Harrisburg. Pa. Area new hosts Charles Hastings, 300 Old Orchard Ln., York, Pa. 19403 717-843-6231 and Eugene Alexander 1147 Galway Ct., Hummelstown, Pa. 17036 717-220-1090 meet at 11 A.M. 1st Thurs of mo. except Jan., Feb., Mar. at: THE OLD COUNTRY BUFFET 5083 Jonestown Rd. (Rt-22), Harrisburg, Pa..

The Suncoast Ag/MM WW II Veterans meet at Kally's K.s. Feb. 11; Mar. 10; Apr. 14; May 12; Sept. 8; Oct. 13; Nov. 10 & Dec 8th, 2012 @11:30 A.M. Contact Hal Conn, 6625 W. Seven Rivers Dr., Crystal River, Fl. 34429 352-795-6257 halconn@embarqmail.com

THE SARASOTA MANATEE CHAPTER of the AMMV along with the Armed Guard in the area have moved their meetings to DUFF'S, 6010 14th St., Bradenton, Fl. and meet the last Wed. of the mo. (excluding-July/Aug) at 12:30 P.M. but most go at 11:30 to enjoy the buffet lunch and hold their SEA STORY Session. Ed Cleary (AG) attends and wants more AG to join in. Host: James Waters, 137 Osprey Circle, Ellenton, Fl. 34222 941-729-1346. Visitors welcomed.

The Rudy Kozak Chapter of the AG/MM still meet at 1 P.M. on the 2nd Wed. of each month except July and August at the American Legion Post 53 Sanford, Fl.. Contact: Richard McCamy 26002 Zinna La., Astatula, Fl., 34705, 352-742-1394 marymccamy@embarqmail.com They enjoy swapping sea stories and invite you and <mailto:marymccamy@embarqmail.com> They enjoy swapping sea stories and invite you and everyone to come join in while you are able.

The SOUTHERN Calif. Region of Armed Guard meet every 2 mos. alternating starting with the WEST BUFFET in Carlsbad, Ca.. at 11:30 AM and San Diego FAMILY Restaurant, Chula Vista. Contact Howard Wooten, 2438 E. Vista Way, Spc-23, Vista, Ca. 92084 760-724-4724 ankerclanker0135@gmail.com

The Rhode Island/Eastern Ma. Chapter will meet on the 1st Thursday in April and again in October @ Noon at RHODES PLACE, Cranston, RI. . Host Gerry Greaves 1287 S. Broadway, E. Providence, RI., 02914 401-431-0011 USNAGV@aol.com

Wisc/Illinois meet at the Sturtevant Driftwood Restaurant at Noon. Hosts are Jay and Jane Wildfong, 13211 Durand Ave., Sturtevant, Wi. 53117 262-886-2966 WILDFONGJ@cs.com Everyone welcomed.

US Navy Armed Guard & Merchant Marine Veterans of WW II. Meet every third (3rd) Sat. of the month, except June, July and August at Marsh Landing Restaurant at 44 North Broadway, Fellsmere, FL. For info contact C.F. "Korky" Korker 772 571-0230 E-Mail korkykorker@aol.com

The LOGANSPOUT, IN. AREA meets at the VFW POST 1024 Erie Ave. on the last Friday of each month at 11:30 except December. Hosts are William and Betty Zwyers, 9239 N State Rd 29, Frankfort, In. 46041 765-258-3353

The Rochester, N.Y. Area AG/MM meet on the 2nd Tuesday 11 A.M. at the JAY'S DINER 2612 W. Henrietta Rd., Rochester, N.Y 585-424-3710. Hosts John Shevlin 585-467-2057; Walter Mace 585-394-7165, Frank Hutter 585-473-8103, Forest Lane 14 Hanna Ln., Webster, N.Y. 14580 585-217-9897 coolforrest@frontiernet.net

Albany, NY Area Armed Guard/Merchant Marine WW II meet the 4th Thurs. of month at Schuyler Inn, 545

Broadway, Menands NY at 11:30 AM. Host are Art and Marion Fazzzone 3936 Albany St., Schenectady, NY 12304-4371 (518)374-5377 mamoon3@aol.com and Peter Falasco, 49 Monroe Ave., Latham, NY 12110 (518) 785-7890 (CHANGES UNDERLINED)

Patrol Craft Sailors Assn. Reunion May 10-13, 2012 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kansas City, Mo. CONTACT: Duane "Bucky" Walters, 103 Cross Rd., Camillus, N.Y. 13031 315-487- 2623 buckypcsa@twcnr.com

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND members of the USN Armed Guard Veterans of WW II will hold their SPRING 2012 meeting May, 9th at 1 PM at the RED BLAZER 1 PM Restaurant in Concord, NH. RSVP by May 5th to: Bob Norling, 6 Tow Path Lane., Concord, N.H. 03301 Ph. 603-224-4927 E-Mail uppa1924@aol.com

Bainbridge, Md. USNTC meeting, contact Walter Alexander, 2311 Idavere Rd. SW, Roanoke, Va. 24015-3903 540-353-5826 DE585@cox.net

Destroyer Leader Association, DL1, DL2, DL3, DL4, DL5, DDG35, & DDG36 will hold their 16th Annual Reunion September 9-13, 2012, in Galveston, Texas. There will be a Memorial Service alongside destroyer escort USS Stewart DE 238. Everyone is welcome. Contact Walter Alexander, 2311 Idavere Rd, Roanoke, VA 24015-3903; 540-353-5826; DE585@cox.net

WVA Armed Guard Merchant Marine WW II Veterans meet at the "Ranch House" Restaurant in the Conference Room Rt. 55 Craigsville, WV. 304-742-6117. Hosts are Forrest Flanagan PO Box 119, Craigsville, WV 26205 304-742-3160 or Robert Wheeler, 203 Hunt Ave. Beckley, WV. 25108 304-255-0897.

The American Merchant Marine Silicon Valley Veterans Chapter meet CARROWS RESTAURANT at 3180 El

REUNIONS

Camino Real, Santa Clara, Ca. on the 4th Friday of each month (except Nov/Dec) at 11:30 A.M.. They take in the Santa Clara Veterans Day Memorial Services at the Memorial Park and would like to have many Armed Guard to come join in the Comradary and show their AG Colors. Contact: Perry Adams, 5100 EL CAMINO REAL Apt 303, Los Altos, Ca 94022 650-967-3696.

MM/AG Susquehanna Valley Mariners hold their meetings at the Brethren Village at 3001 Lititz Pike, Rt. 501, Lancaster, Pa. Contact Wm. Balabanow, PO Box 5093, Lancaster, Pa. 17606 717-569-0391 b.balabanow@comcast.net The Merchant Marine "NEW" National President is Morris Harvey call Jack Grothe, 314-631-7492 jackgrothe@att.net. Armed Guard are welcome.

The S.S. JEREMIAH O'Brien the sailing dates for 2012, Contact: Eliz Anderson-Office Mangr. 415-544-0100 1275 Columbus Ave. Suite 300, San Francisco,

Ca. 94133 liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org The O'Brien has just come out of expensive drydock costs and needs donation. She will accept donations.

Oregon MM/AG Chapter host Ruthann Heineken, 7055 SW 184th Ave., Portland, Or. 97007 503-848-7031 asks all in the area to come and be with them. They meet at the Home Town Buffet, 13500 Pacific Hiway.

For the yearly July meeting Memorial Service at the PORT CHICAGO TRAGEDY, Contact: National Park Service, 4202 Albhambra Ave., Martinez, Ca. 94553 925-228-8860 The following ID is required: Name/Gender, Date of Birth, Address, Phone Number, E-Mail if you have one, Govt. ID or Driver's license. Mail two days ahead.


Ohio Memorial Park is located at 8005 Cleveland/Massillon Rd, P.O.Box 3, Clinton, Oh. 330-773-2385 www.ovmp.org Lincoln, Ne. Memorial Gardens,

2740 A St., Lincoln, Ne. 68502 402-441-7847 parks@lincoln.ne.gov

Please contact Doris Glaser (800) 603-3332 (Same Addr) for their Reunions and meeting. Their 37th Annual Convention will be held Sept.23-27, 2012 Norfolk, Va..

USN Cruiser Sailor Assc. 20th Annual National Reunion: May 15-20, 2012 El Tropicano River Walk Hotel San Antonio, Tx..

Contact: David Blomstrom, 7324 SW Frway, #208, Houston, Tx. 77074 713-541-9191 davidblomstrom@aol.com

LST 27th Annual Reunion will be held Sept 26-Oct, 1, 2012 at Branson, Mo. at The Stone Castle Hotel and Conference Center. Contact: Linda Gunjak- LST, P.O.Box 167438, Oregon, Oh. 43616 1-800-228-5870 usl@uslst.org 

Old Fellsmere School Auditorium Named for City Historian



FELLSMERE

In honor of his hard work and determination in saving the Old Fellsmere School, the Fellsmere City Council has named the auditorium "The Clarence F. Korker Center for the Performing Arts" and made the announcement a surprise to "Korky" Korker, who was at a loss for words.

"I'm speechless," Korker said, whose face got red and eyes teary. "I am. I'm speechless."

City Councilwoman Sara Savage noted that Korker is never without words - hasn't been in the 15 years they've known each other.

"I don't deserve that honor," Korker continued after he had composed himself. "I did what I thought was right, to save that building. A thank you would've been fine with me."

Korker has been a resident of Fellsmere since 1948, traveling back and forth from the city to the north and called Fellsmere his permanent home in 1992.

He was "motivating force" behind the Save Our Old School project, according to Vice Mayor Joel Tyson, who asked Korker to attend the meeting.

The project raised nearly \$600,000 that was used to preserve and restore the old school. Korker also worked on the Fellsmere Frog Leg Festival Committee, a

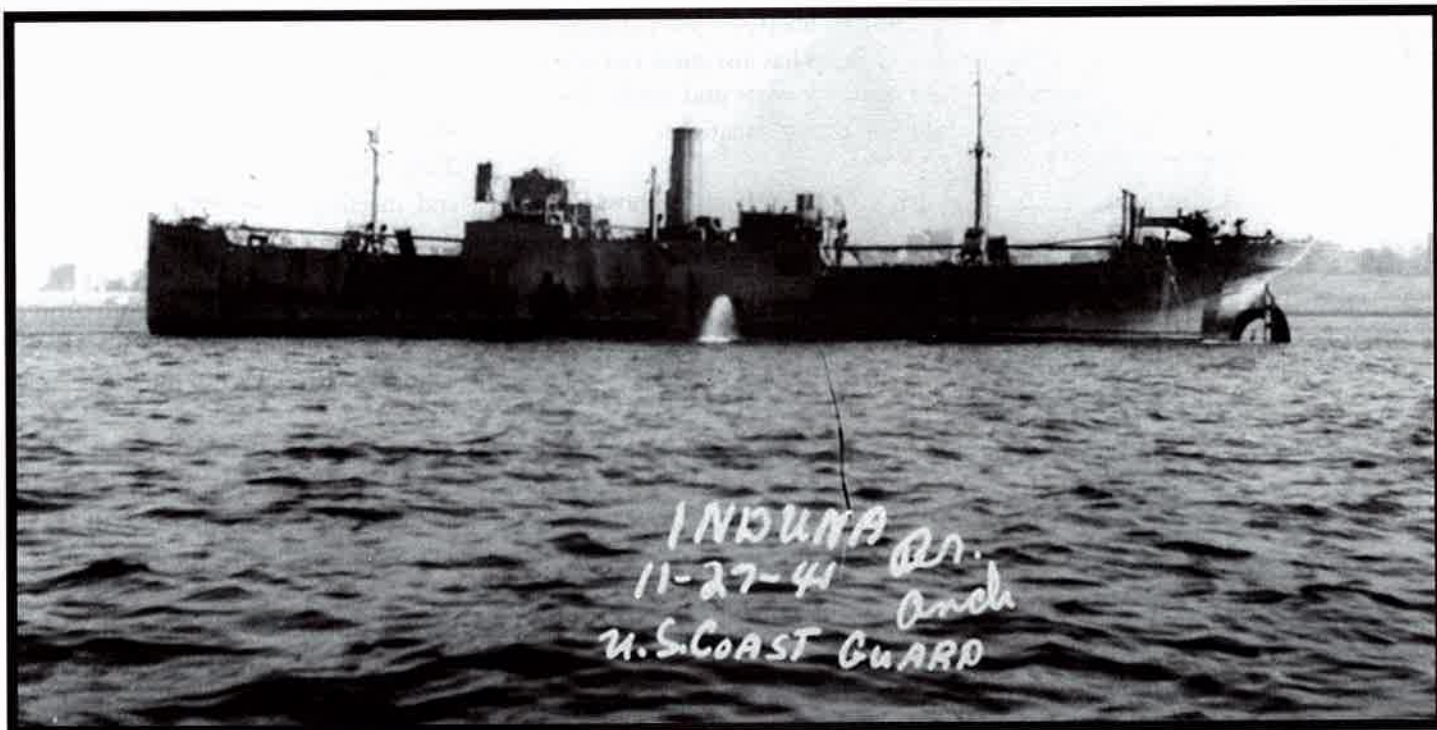
committee that directed \$200,000 toward the school through proceeds from the annual festival.

When he wasn't out campaigning for the school, Korker did what he could to protect it from storms, vandals and other destruction up until the City of Fellsmere took over and completed the restoration.

The Old Fellsmere School reopened as the new Fellsmere City Hall earlier this year. The schoolhouse, built in 1915 at a cost of approximately \$40,000 (in that year's money), cost about \$3 million to restore.



S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT



S.S. INDUNA THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

All of the authors who write about Convoy P Q 13, March 1942 when they come to the sinking of the S, S, INDUNA, sunk March 30 they tell the story of the 2nd Mate's life boat, and its terrible trip to land, and as a foot note, they then say that another life boat with two gunners in it, also got to land, but sadly none tell that story.

I was on the bridge in the port gun pit, it was a very bright, very cold morning, the wind was rising, as was the sea, one of the other gunners, Bell was in the starboard gun pit, (Bell lost both of his legs) we were changing watches at all sorts of times, the cook shouted what time do you come down, I replied 8 o'clock, he said I will cook your breakfast then, I thought I am ready for it now, never mind another half and hour. When we were in hospital in Murmansk, the cook said to me, that the Captain had told the Chief Steward, to tell the cook, that the gunners would require their meals at odd times, and would he do his best.

Then there was a flash, a bang, and a shudder, all at once, and you felt the ship

slow down, no one needed to tell you what had happened, you knew that she had been hit, the stern exploded into a mass of fire, I came down out of the gun pit as did Bell, and stood on the bridge waiting to be told what to do. The 1st Mate went aft to look, what it was like, he came back up the side of the bridge where I was, he saluted the Captain, and said Sir she has been hit in No 5 hold, she is on fire and sinking, fast, (This was the only time that I ever saw a Merchant Navy officer salute).

The Captain said very good Mr Mate, abandon ship, the Mate then had me help him to throw some bags, with what I took to be the confidential books over the side, these were weighted and had brass eyelets in them, so that they would sink. The Captain came out of the wheelhouse, I think he had been to the radio room, the Radio Officer did get a distress call off, the Mate then told him, All the books are over the side Sir, the Captain replied very good Mr Mate, he turned to me, and said, go to your boat station boy, and good luck to you, and at that I left the bridge, That was what happened on the bridge, both men were very tense, but cool, calm, and in complete control of them selves.

I was the first to get to the boat deck, then I remembered, that my exposor suit was still on the bridge, This was a kind of a pink material that was supposed to cover you all up, but we could not get into them with our duffle coats on, this was the only time that I ever saw them, so I ran back for it, I grabbed it off of the table in the wing of the bridge. This was the table that the Captain and the Mate rested their cups on when they had a drink, as I did so a plate fell onto the deck, I turned and picked it up, the Captain then came out of the wheel house, and asked what I was doing. That was the last time that I saw him.

When the Captain and the Mate had a tea and biscuits, they would give us some of the biscuits, saying here boy, have a snack that was the type of people they were. When I got back to the boat deck, I could see the firemen bringing some one up from the stoke hold, who was badly burnt, all that he had left on him were his trousers legs, the rest of him was burnt, blue red and black, someone tried to hold him and rub some grease onto him, but he was running round and screaming, then he fell dead on the deck and they left him.

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

The ship had been steaming all out, so now the steam was escaping, with a piercing whistle, the engineers would have had to opened the valves, or the boilers might have blown up.

By now a lot more had gathered at the lifeboat, they had begun to clear away the falls. And such things, the Mate took control, as I said, he was cool, calm and collected, the stern was now burning fiercely, petrol drums were exploding, the barbed wire from the hold had been blown onto the top of the drums, the sea around the stern was all burning, the gunners who were aft, had come up onto the deck, the wind was blowing the flames onto them, I saw at least 3 men, one a maritime gunner jump over board, into the sea, to escape the flames and the heat, some of the men from the Ballot were also sleeping aft in our bunks,. A few men came through the flames, over the barbed wire, one of the first to get through was the other gunner, who was in the life boat with me, then the other two English Maritime Gunners from the Ballot, came through, and they still had their gun, with them, I remember one saying to me, we have been told not to loose our weapon. This was at lifeboat stations, with the ship s sinking. And they were still trying to save their gun. The Mate told every one to stand still, while he got the Boson, then he said, we will lower her Boson, and with that he turned to me, said into the boat boy, those few words saved my life, and he told a few more to get in, one of these was the other army gunner, Robinson, we were both fully dressed, then some one put a couple of bottles, and a sextant into the boat, I looked and saw the gun layer Kelly, standing shivering in the cold, all that he had on was his jersey and trousers, and that was the man who had drilled me not to undress, sleep with every thing on, time, and time, again he had said that to me, and now he was there, no coat, no nothing, he took his hand out of his trousers, smiled and waved to me, and that was the last time that I saw the man .sadly he went down with her, I think that he was going to get married when he got home from this trip.

It was the first time that I had seem a life boat lowered, and as I said the seas were very high, afterwards for the rest of my time at sea, I never saw a boat lowered, with less fuss and smoothness, not even in practice in harbour, as these two men did it that day, on a listing, sinking ship, with an ice covered deck, a bighting wind that cut you, they had frozen ice covered ropes to grip, and let out, evenly so that the boat went down smooth and level, a real text book launching. As only men who were real first class seamen could do it, in such conditions, sadly they both went down with the ship.

The Mate said enough, are in the boat, there were eight in it, start to lower her, this was when the last man got through the fire he was one of the men from the **BALLOT**, he had a pair of trousers on, a jacket, no shoes, he had run through the fire, over the barbed wire, his feet were very badly cut, and they were bleeding onto the ice, his trousers and coat were both burning, his hair was burnt off, his face was badly burnt, his ears were gone, his hands were a mess, his fingers were drawn and bent like claws, the Mate said roll him into the boat, we grabbed him and pulled him in, his clothes were still on fire, So we beat them out, as the boat was being lowered, that was the only time that I heard the man groan, all of the time we were in the lifeboat.

Lowering the boat was a very difficult, and skilful task, the falls had to be let out by hand, and the boat had not to go down to fast, or it would run away with them, also it had to be kept level, or the falls would jam, the men in it would then fall into the sea, and it had to enter the water level or it would be swamped. This had to be done as I have said, with the deck covered in ice, the falls frozen stiff with ice, the ship listing, a bighting wind, and into a very rough sea. All of this the Mate and the Boson, did with perfection, or us in the boat would have been dead, I thought if they do not get this right, it is all over for us, but thank god for their skill, they did it correctly, and we lived....

Before they started to lower the boat some moved, as if to rush the boat, but the Mate told the 3rd Mate to stop them, he picked up an iron bar, and just held it, spoke, and they then stopped.

The ship was sinking steadily, I remember the boat banging and scraping against the plates as she was being lowered, the ship was listing to starboard, we were the port boat, then she was in the water, by this time the ship was well down, by the stern, and the sea was taking us a way out and smashing us back against the ships side, the side of the boat was bending badly with the force, I did think that it might smash, we tried to hold her off with oars, but they snapped like matches, It was very frightening, if the side of boat had smashed we would all have been in the sea and lost. The Mate then shouted, cast off. And take us off from the other side, the 3rd Mate from the Ballot shouted to me, unhook the forward falls, these are very big hooks, and big blocks that the ropes run through. I went to do this, but it was very difficult, with the rise and fall of the boat, I took of my gloves, and I did remember that I must put them into my pocket, then after a few attempts I got the hook off, the block was then swinging about, just missing my head, if it had hit me, I would have gone over board it was very hairy, the boat was going up and down. This big thing was swinging about. The 3rd Mate then took the tiller, and shouted get an oar, and pull hard, the other gunner and I did so, and some one else I do not know who it was, could be it was Anderson the cabin boy, the others were not interested, It was very hard to pull into the wind, against the sea, we were doing well, we had got round the flames The man steering went very close to the fire just get round, then the seas helped us, we were now going straight for the other side of her, I looked over my shoulder, and I could see what I took to be the Mate putting a ladder over the side to get to us, we were now in the lea of the ship and going very well. When bang she had been hit again, right under the funnel, with a second torpedo, she then went

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

down by the stern, the bows came up, and she went under very quickly.

This was an awful sight we did not have far to go, to get the others off, then bang, and she was gone. With all those men still on board her, you felt numb. Where she had gone under, the sea was now very smooth, and huge bubbles came up with great big glugs, and plonks, some pieces of wreckage came shooting up, and that was all. Then the sea took over, and it was as if she had never been there at all. I remember thinking, if we had been over one of the bubbles, it would have turned the boat over.

Now we could stop rowing, and look to see if any one came up, but sadly no one did, when I had turned my head for a look and saw the Mate getting the ladder down.

I caught a glimpse. Of the other lifeboat, and that was the only time that we saw them.

We then saw the Submarine, some one was putting a gun in place, with that we got down into the bottom of the boat, but they would be putting up the anti aircraft gun, at that time I did not think of that, they were about for a short while, then we could see them go down out of the tower, and down she went, we were on our own.

The wind and the seas were rising, the Belgium 3rd mate said we will not be here very long, They will soon have us out of this, the boat got broad side on to the seas, and I thought she is going over, the 3rd. then found the sea anchor and put it out, I did not know any thing about them, but it worked and saved us from going over, with out that I do think that we would have gone over, and drowned. He opened one of the bottles, I think it was brandy and passed it round, it was very warming, then after a short while he passed the other bottle round, and he stood it on the air tanks, with the roll it fell over and was lost. After a while I felt sick, and I brought every thing up, so the drinks that had warmed me going down, did the same again as they came up.

The boat was now filling up, with water, and the 3rd. said the plug, I thought that he was going to pull it out, so I took up the axe, but he was checking to see it was in, you do get people saying I am going to end it for us all, and if he had of pulled the plug, I would have hit him with the axe. By now the sea was very rough, it was snowing, and a bighting wind, if we had been hit about an hour later the seas would have been to bad, for even such seamen as the Mate and Boson to launch the boats

The boat now needed bailing, so the other gunner and I did it, we then got down out of the bighting wind, after a while, it was filling up again, the others said you do it again gunners, and we will do it the next time, one of the firemen from the INDUNA said that he could not help, as he had a bad hand, this man never did any thing, he did not try to row, and he never did bailed. (When we were in hospital in Murmansk, he was full of what he had done in the boat) So we baled it out again. The wind still blew and the seas were rough, the young lad Anderson was sat up in the boat, we told him to get down out of the wind, all that he had on was a thin zip jacket, then he lost his money, it was floating around, there was ,3 / 10 shillings a lot of money then, he said leave it we are finished. Then the poor soul said, I am frightened, he was not on his own, we all were, so I said pray, he asked how, I said say the Our Father, say it over and over, and say it slowly, he then told me that he did not know it, so I said, talk to god in your mind, he will

listen to you. The fireman who would not help, spoke up, his words, I have never forgotten. AWe will have no praying in this boat, I am an atheist,@ I told him straight out, that I would pray, and there was nothing that he could do about it. So the boy could pray.

Later on the boat needed bailing again, it was gunners bail, I told them that it was their turn, they were not wearing us out, so that they would last, but it was to

late, the cold had got ~~into~~ them, and they could not move ~~much~~, consequently we had to do it. For the rest of the trip.

Some one had also put a small case with cigarettes into the boat, so I put a box into my pocket, and I told the others to see to them selves, but they did not, by now none of the others could move much, then the man who was burnt spoke to me, and said gunner can I have a cig, he was still sat up on the seat, we had thrown a blanket and a spare coat over him, and these were now covered with ice, so I lit a cig and was going to give him it when I saw his hands, I put it into his mouth, he nodded when he wanted it taking out, and we did it that way for the rest of the four days. The others never got one of the cigs, I told them they were for the man who was burnt. But after a short while their hands would have been too frozen to hold a cigarette It was now late into the day, and the idea that we would soon be picked was gone, the others were passed helping us, I felt confident, that we would make it to land, and I had read of putting a mark on the gunwale to count the days, so I did a chop mark, for day 1. We both had the idea that we were about 120 miles from land. I said to Robinson we will be in the tale of the gulf stream it will takes us at about 1 mile an hour, we then put a bit of wood over the side to see which way it drifted, it went south east by our compass. So then I got the idea that we should try to go south-east as we did not know how much land, was held by the Germans, we drifted and. bailed when the water rose, by now the others were well past being any help. The man who was burnt asked for the odd cig, gunner when you have time, can I have a cig, the others said, can we have one, NO, they are for him.

So that was day one, and I was very hungry, I never did get my breakfast, we found Horlicks tablets and some thing called Pemmican, it was like tins of dried meat, and a few hard biscuits, and some very dark chocolate, that made you want a drink, but the water was frozen solid, we

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

broke the barrel open and sucked the ice, but it cut your mouth and broke me two teeth, so that was that. In the dark we got the boat bailed, and got down out of the wind, we soon learned to keep our backs to it, when bailing, and to tie the bucket to your wrist, without that we would be in a bad way. When the seas broke over you it froze on your back, and then when you moved it cracked and dropped off. when I had a chance I pulled my fingers down into my gloves and touched each one in turn on my thumb, that way it would keep them from going numb, it worked, and it is a habit I still have, also I wiggled my toes, I thought that would help and it did.. I did not loose any limbs.

I had read some where, that in the real cold weather such as we were in when you got very tired, and went to sleep, you just froze to death, this was always on our minds, so in the night, we that is Robinson and me, when we were down in the boat, he would speak to me, and I to him, also we kept nudging each other so that neither of us went into a deep sleep. We crouched down on the low side of the boat, with our heels propped as best we could, this kept us clear of the water, for when it rose, one thing that we wanted to do, was keep the water from coming to the top of our sea boots, then our stockings would not get wet, if the tops got wet, it could have run down to our feet, well that was our idea. When we were down in the boat out of the wind, it was not to bad. That was the first day the weather was bad, the seas were high, and the wind strong and very cold, but for the sea anchor that the Belgium 3rd Mate had the knowledge to put out, I think without that we would have gone over, and every one in the boat would have been lost.

Day two the weather was not as bad, a good sea running and still that wind, and driving snow, it was bale and pray, Our Father, then an Hail Mary, and the Dep Re Fundis, seemed to fit the situation, Out of the depths I cry to thee O Lord, wiggle your toes and work your fingers, we then found that we could take in the

sea anchor, and we had the idea that the boat moved a bit faster, we took turns at steering and bailing. I preferred bailing I thought that it kept me warmer.

One of the others who were now in a poor way, I do not know which one it was, said I want to Pee, I am peeing myself, it is warm it is lovely, and with that the others all did the same, but later on when the cold had got at the burnt parts, they screamed with pain, it had frozen on them, and they had big nasty scabs, all over the top of their legs, and testicles, these then broke open with the cold, they then broke and froze again, what a mess they were in when we got to the hospital, they all had massif sores, that had broken open each time they had moved. One time I wanted the toilet, but how, no way was I putting my rump over the side, of the boat, so I got some water in the bucket, and said to the other gunner when I say right jam it under me, so down trousers, under bucket, and that was it over the side, and all before I got cold, a short while later I did the same for him, still the same routine the wind blew the spray broke over us bail and pray, I could say the Hail Mary three times to a bucket. So went day 2. We were tired, and very hungry, but I still said, it will take six days and we have done 2, we can last it out.

Day three cut another notch in the gunwale, and keep on bailing, and wiggling your toes, the lad who was burnt still did not moan, only ask for a cig, when you have time gunner, in the night he asked for one, and some one commented on the light, if any one had seen it I would have been very happy.

He was now more like a block of ice, his hands were thick his fingers drawn up and his knuckles broken open, the others moaned, but the cabin boy was now very quite, he never seemed to have any hope, you could not get him to talk. The weather was not as bad, but still cold, the fireman who three days before had said that he was an atheist, now said, I THINK WE SHOULD PRAY, ONLY GOD

CAN SAVE US NOW, to that I replied, I have three days lead on you.

I now wanted to pee, so I thought Austin, it is water, I got a small enamelled cup, put some ice into it, and used that, the idea was that my wee would melt the ice, and give me more to drink, but it did not work it looked like whisky, but it did not taste like it, but it was wet.

In the afternoon of the third day we saw a ship, this was it, we were saved, it was all over, we shouted, and waved, she was coming straight for us, then it turned broad side on to us, we thought this is it, they have seen us, it is all over, but it steamed on and turned away, we shouted they must be blind, what sort of a look out are they, and away it went, they had not seen us, that was hard, you got an empty feeling you just felt gutted, we were on our own again. We were a small grey boat, in a vast grey sea, and we were up and down, we could not see them all the time, so it would be the same for them. That is how I look at it now, but I did not on that day at that time.

I now got the idea, that we could put up the mast and try to sail, but it was no good we could not get it up, so it was back to bail pray, wriggle your fingers, and toes, keep the stern to the sea, and hope that we were going the right way, I always had it in my mind that we might hit land that was occupied by the Germans. We were now very tired, our legs ached our eyes stung, but you had to go on.

Day four was the same, wind and snow, I was now very hungry, and dry, our lips were cracked with the salt. If you pulled you balaclava over your mouth it froze with your breath, but for a short while it felt good the morning of the 4th day, I remember looking at the others, who were by now in a poor state, and the terrible thought came to me, one or more could die, and we would have to put them over the side, I remember telling this to Robinson, who had not thought of it, he was shocked by my thoughts, I said we put them over the side, and say a prayer

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

for them, what I had not thought of was, we would not be able to weight them and they would float after us, it did happen in the other boat, but luckily we did not have to do that they all lived until we arrived in Russia, the bucket was getting heavier as we bailed, but we had to keep at it.

Then late in the afternoon, Robinson said, I can see land, and yes in the distance there it was land, a long way off, we had made it so far, the lad who was frozen, said gunners, will you turn the boat so that I can see it, this we did, then he said, we can row to it, will you put an oar in my hands and I can rock my body, what a man, the state he was in and he still wanted to help, and the others, who had not been any good, at any time, and still were not interested, Then the thought was, but what land, is it, will we be prisoners of war.

We both then said, the boat is not going through the water as well as it did, there was also a lot of water in her, so we bailed and got the water right down, we were on a high and still she was low in the water, we then found the reason. The ropes that are looped round to grab on to, were in the water, and had got ice on them, these were shaped like big hams, I tied the axe to my wrist, and Robinson sat on my legs, and I chipped away at them, I was on about the third loop, when I saw this bird in the water, it was brown, its wings were wet, and it was fluttering to get to us, I said birdie, birdie, come to me, each time I reached out it went away. So I tried to lasso it, Robinson said what are you doing, I told him that I wanted to chop its head off and drink its blood, I said it will be warm. I was going to chop its head off, pull out some of the feathers and I expected to drink its blood. I thought a warm drink; I do not know how much blood I expected to get out of it, or what it would taste like. At that time I was willing to try it.

Then Robinson said Tich I can see a ship, I looked, but I could not see it, then he said I can see another one, then he said I

can see three, I thought he has gone, let me get up if he gets off of my legs I will go in the water, all that I could think of, was, he has gone, I am on my own, when I stood up, I saw that he was right, there were three masts, and they were coming straight for us, this time we will be picked up, but who are they, that was now the question, Robinson was stood on the stern, I was on the next thwart, waving, I said we all shout English, the English fireman said, we will shout Comrade, I said shout English, the Americans said we are American, and that they would shout American, I thought if they are Germans and you shout Comrade, they will think that we are Russians, and they might not want us, then if the are Russians, and we shout Comrade, they might think that we are Germans shouting Camarad, so it had to be English. I then said YOU WILL ALL SHOUT ENGLISH, and get your Fxxxxxx Hands UP, All of you, and any one who does not, I will kick his (censored) head in, I HAVE NOT COME FOUR DAYS TO DIE NOW, I moved very quickly back, it was a silly thing to do, in a rolling boat, step onto ice covered thwarts, then from one to the other, so that I was stood in between to them. There is Patron Saint in heaven who looks after sailors, and fools, I was now stood on the thwart between them, the look in their eyes, told me that they knew that I meant it, and I did so they all did as they were told, YES all of them, including the Americans, they shouted English, and yes I would have kicked any ones head in at that time, and not thought twice of it, I now shudder to think what a mess my big leather sea boots would have made of any one. But I would have done it.

By this time, we were all waving and shouting, the boats were small patrol craft.

They came at us from three points, with their guns pointing, I thought if they fire, will I see it first or what, one boats then came along side us, while the other two went round, it was wonderful to see the

Russian Naval Ensign, and the broad smiles of the Russian sailors, and know that we were at last safe.

Some one pointed to me, to come aboard, I reached up took hold of the wire rail to pull my self up, but there was not enough pull left in me, I was hoisted up and my arms held tight down, until they saw that we were English, and then, they very quickly got every one aboard, the boat was taken in tow, I remember looking at the boat, and thinking you served us well, you saved us, and I have often wondered what did happen to her, who knows the Russians might have kept her, or she might have been put aboard another merchant ship, that had lost a life boat, who knows, she might have been put on some ship that was later sunk, and she might have saved some one else, if some other ship did get her, I often wondered, if they knew her history, and did they see the four chop marks in the gunwale to mark the four days we were adrift in her.

The Russians were looking through the boat and I saw them taking the thick dark chocolate, that made us so dry, they would be very glad to get that, and any thing else that would be of use to them. We were very lucky, it was late in the day, about another hour, and they might have passed us in the dark. The others were very quickly taken below, I was then asked by the Captain how long we had been in the boat, and what had sunk us, As I do not speak Russian and he did not speak English, it must have looked very funny Telling him in finger talk. I then went down below into the warm cabin, it was wonderful, the cabin boy was in a bunk, as was the American, Robinson and I were the only two who could stand, we were given water to drink, one cup between the two of us, so it was you drink, and I drink, it seemed as if you could not drink enough. It did not seem to have any effect on your thirst at all.

I was then called to the bunk with the American in it, I think the crew member was a lady, I am not certain, but who

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

ever it was they were very kind, the lady had him half sat up, I do not know if he could straighten him self out, or not, but he wanted me, he put his hand out to me, it was a mess all swollen, his fingers were like claws his knuckles were broken open, it was black as far up as I could see, above his wrist, I took his hand and then he said words to me, that I will never ever forget, WE MADE IT KID, WE MADE IT KID.. We had a hug of each other, and then the lady said to go away, and laid him down .the cabin boy was groaning, so I went over to his bunk, they were trying to get some of his clothes off so I cut his jacket up the back, the lady saw how badly frozen he was, and said no, I think that the lad was more of less frozen bent, his back was black up above his waist.

Some one, I do not know who, came with a big smile, and a bottle of vodka, I think that it was the Captain, I remember him shaking it and a spiral formed in the centre, he then gave us Robinson and my self a good drink, from the same cup that we had drank the water from. They filled me one and signalled to drink, and then he had one, and back to me, I do know that we had at least, three each, and they were very big ones, like a vending machine cup, three quarters full, and on an empty stomach, I can say that it went right down, it was as if it went to your feet, I said afterwards, it was good for ingrown toe nails, I then sang for them, and I can not sing, they then gave us some thing like raw fat ham to chew on; it tasted good after four days with nothing.

I must have dozed off, and I do not remember sitting down, the next that I knew was, the boat had stopped, and we were told that we were going up top. We put our coats over our shoulders, and we found out how groggy we were on our legs, we then saw that we were tied up along side of another ship, I said to Robby when we leave this ship we will salute their flag, he said no, we can not do that, we are to tired, I said yes, we will, they have saved us, so then I took the Russians hands off of me, and I stood and saluted

the red flag, that was it, they went wild, every one of them hugged me, and when I walked onto the other ship I did the same again, I think that Robinson also did as I told him we went aboard the other ship, to more smiles and hugs, then we found out, that they had picked up the men from the other boat, we saw what a state they were all in, I was high on the vodka, I remember seeing Walter Baxter, and saying how are you, only to be met with his moans, it has been a terrible journey; you do not know what it has been like, I told him that I did, and that I had done the same trip, I was put into a bunk, then they were looking for somewhere to put Morris, he was one of the Americans, so I said Put him in here, and I got on a stool and lent on a table, the next thing that I knew we were in Murmansk. We had now arrived in Russia, the date was April 3, just a month since we had sailed from Scotland, and our longest time off of watch had been six hours, that gave you at most five and a half hours in your bunk, I was very tired. Or you could say shattered. But I was alive and that is what counted.

In the Second Mates official report, he says that there was an air attack on the ship while it was taking us to Murmansk, but I must have slept through it, as I do not remember any thing about it..

There were about 66 aboard the INDUNA when she was sunk, about 18 lived, out of the 2nd Mates boat, and 7 out of our boat, making 25, that number can be wrong on the top side, of the people who survived, only 4, or possibly 5 did not loose any limbs there were as I said before, nine in our lifeboat, and every one got to land, but sadly two died the next day, they are buried in Murmansk, also most of the others lost limbs, The nine in the boat are as listed below.

AUSTIN BYRNE, ENGLAND,
Gunner, came out O K went back to sea May 1942 went back to Russia in 1944

***M ROBINSON, ENGLAND,**
Gunner, Lost no limbs, but would not go

back to sea, Discharged from the forces 1943 or early 44

C ALBERGE, AMERICA,
Ex S S BALLOT Lost his right Foot

W MORRIS, AMERICA
Ex S S BALLOT Lost both of his feet and all of his fingers from both hands.

J DYARDIN, BELGIUM
Ex S S BALLOT 3rd Mate Lost a foot or more limbs

S SMITH, ENGLAND
S S INDUNA Lost both of his legs below the knee

J B ANDERSON, SCOTLAND
S S INDUNA Died in Murmansk and is buried there, age 16 years

#A G OLIVAREZ, CHILE,
S S INDUNA, I do not know what happened to this man, but he sat four days in the water I think that he Would at least have bad feet and hands

R A Bennett,
Ex S S BALLOT This, is the man who was badly burnt. (he his buried in Murmansk)

The list above shows the limbs, that I know these men lost, they also might have had other, injuries that I do not know about. C Alberge, sailed of for England on H M S EDINBURGH, and had his foot amputated just after she sailed, shortly after the operation, H M S EDINBURGH was sunk, he was transferred to another ship and returned to Murmansk. .

*Robinson, we were a team, neither of us could have managed the boat with out the other, I saw the man a few times after we arrived home, but there was no lasting friendship between us, I had gone back to sea, he would not, It was, me, he also was decorated with a, Mention in Dispatches, from the Maritime Regiment, I did the same as he did, but I did not receive any thing from the Royal Navy.

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

Olivarez, this man was then, 43 years old, he told me, that he had left his home in Chile, at the age of 17, and had never been back, his home was the ship that he was on.

Captain A Moore, the Historian, of the American Merchant Marine, thinks that it was Bennett, he has found out that Bennett was 41 years old, so me being younger than him, he would say to me, kid in 1944 I went to New York, and I met C Alberge again, but in later years we sadly lost touch with each other.

As I have said before, the men from the Ballot were in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Ballot, got up steam and sailed to Murmansk, unloaded and returned to America. The Silja was found by H M S HARRIER, and towed to Murmansk, both the Captain, (W L Collins, of Paisley) and the 1st Mate, (G H Brown, Dundee or Middlesborough) were lost, as were a lot of other good men on the INDUNA, these men were top class seamen, the Captain and the 1st Mate, were very tolerant to me, being it was my first trip to sea, and I did not meet the likes of them again. Had it not been for the skill of the Mate, and the Boson, (Cornelius Farley, of Kinsale) in lowering the life boat, in such terrible conditions, it would have undoubtedly been my last.

The night before we were sunk, I went aft at 6 o'clock for my tea, and I looked at the Silja, and then I looked at the staff and there was a brand new Red Ensign flying it looked proud and defiant. On a juddering old British ship steaming for her life my next watch was the 8 to 12, and it was about 10 o'clock I said to the Mate, that my feet were cold, he told me to hurry down aft and change my socks, he also said one foot at a time remember, which I did, I was at that time wearing one pair of short black socks, one long pair of black stockings pulled up over my knees, one pair of long John underpants very thick, made out of knitting wool, and two pairs of sea boot stockings, one of which had been knitted by a lady in South Africa,

they were made from unwashed wool, that means it had not been scoured, so it still had all of its natural oils and grease in it, I still think that they were a big help to my feet on my way back, I looked over the stern for the Silja, who we were towing, she had run out of fuel, but the tow was hanging slack, it had broke. Why the Maritime gunners had not noticed it I do not know, when I got back to the bridge, I said Mr Mate, the tow is broken, the Captain looked at the Mate, who shot off to see if I was correct, on his return, he said Captain, the boy is right it is broken she his adrift, the Captain then started to blow the whistle and go around looking for her he at times flashed a very small light, I it was just after I came back on watch a 4 am that he said I will have to run for Murmansk, good luck to them. The Captain had searched for them for about 6 hours, if he had not done that, would we have got through the submarine patrol line in the dark?, then at 7/30 we were hit, and that was the start of my boat trip.

HOSPITAL MURMANSK GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1942

I do not remember waking up on the ship, I do remember walking down the gangplank from the ship, with a Russian helping me, and getting into the front of an ambulance, my legs very felt weak, and my feet felt very sore, also I was very tired, I was glad for the helping hand, that I got from the Russian, I do not think that I could have made it on my own.

The ambulance looked new and I thought this must have been sent from England or America, We went through a level crossing, an old lady had a broom made of twigs to keep the snow out of the points, she looked very drab, her clothes were very dark. and she had sacking round her legs, tied with string and a shawl over her head, I was later to learn that all the Russians looked like that, and smelled the same. What also struck me was how bright the light was, how clear the air seemed, and how cold it was.

There was an air raid going on at the time, no one seemed to take any notice of it at all, I was very soon to find out that they were continuous, and then when we got used to them, we said that they came at least, every hour, on the hour, with a break for lunch, when there was a break, we thought of the pilots, having a nice lunch, with a cigar, and snaps, then as the waiter cleared up, they would say just time to get another couple of raids in on Murmansk before dinner.

We went up a hill to the hospital, out of the ambulance and into this room, I had my sea kit on my duffle coat over my shoulders and my leather sea boots, I felt as I said shattered. Some one, I do not know who said strip drop, all your clothes in a heap, all your things will be returned to you, I took my boots off, and my feet were only damp, the heavy leather sea boots had saved me, as I stood them up they bent, the water had softened them, but they had stood 4 days in cold water, and they had saved my feet.

My feet were cold and part numb, my fingers were numb, and then I found out how tired I really was, we were told to get into a bath, it did not have a lot of water in it, Then after the bath, I saw some of the others, and I got a real shock, they were on boards on top of what looked like baths, they were being washed down by ladies with a shower spray, when they moved their legs, which were frozen black, it broke the scabs, this made them all groan with pain.

This was the first time that I saw how bad they all were, a lady was spraying some one, and his leg was black way up above his knee, it was only then that I realized that most of the others who had survived were the same.

The pyjamas that they gave us to put on, were different to any thing that I had seen before, one button at the top and nothing else, one long slit, A blue dressing gown that stunk of smoke, We then walked up a wide stair case and into a large room. I

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

was then taken to a bed, the lady threw back the blanket straightened the sheets shook up the pillow straightened it, then she pointed to me to get into the bed. I do not know who had used them before me, or what had happened to him, but one thing, they were not fresh, some one had used them, could be the poor soul died,. Who knows.?

But first I knelt down, and said thanks to God for getting me there, the nurse looked dumb founded, She was a very big lady, and I suppose that being brought up in their, then way, she did not believe, in the almighty, I remember the strange look on her face, she smiled and ruffled my hair as I got into bed, it was wonderful to stretch out, and relax, she tucked me in and smiled again.

All this time we were being bombed, it was more or less continues, you could hear bombs and gun fire. What a relief it was to stretch out in bed, They were very narrow beds, they were made for children, 2 up to each other, and then a very small gap for the other 2, It would seem that when they had a lot of casualties from the front, it was about 15 miles away, they put 3 people into 2 beds a lady doctor came and looked at my feet, and hands, I remember her gun banging on the bed irons, she would be about 40 or 50 she seemed old to me, I was only just 20 years old then, she had a chat with one of the nurses, and she smiled, ruffed my hair, and passed on.

Some one came and smiled, they all smiled at you, and rubbed my feet with what I later found out to be goose grease, she then put some rough brown wadding over them, then some grease proof paper, and a loose very dark bandage, none of the bandages were new, nor were the beds as I said, changed before any one got into them. But it was all that they had.

My shoulders and my back felt cold as if the top layer of my flesh was numb, this would be from the wind and spray in the boat, when the seas broke over us

it formed ice on our backs, we had kept our backs to the wind and seas as much as we could.

I put my head down and I was out like a light. We had sailed on the 3rd of March, it was now April 3rd and the longest time we had been off, watch was 6 hours. I do not know how long I slept, but I turned over and the pillow was wet, so I turned back it was still wet, then it dawned on me I had wet the bed, not wet it but flooded it.

I got out of bed, the bombs were still dropping I remember that, as I said the pyjamas had only one button, so all hung out, I stood there legs apart, things dangling, and I said, I have wet the bed, I remember looking over to the other gunners bed to some one next to him, I can not remember who he was, he was smoking and it stunk, next to him had been the stewards boy, they were just straightening the bed, this chap said, Tich your cabin boy has just died, the poor lad he was only 17 years old. He had stuck it for four days in that terrible cold, with no arctic gear, he died so far from home, and lonely in Murmansk, they then made the bed, and did not change the sheets for the next one to go into it.

The nurse came to me, she was very quick, she took off the wet sheet and mattress, said you are not the first, threw it onto a pile, put another one on from another bed, gave me some more pyjamas, my feet were not to wet, so back into bed and out again, more sleep, I have no idea how long I slept, but when I woke again, they were just seeing to a chap in the next bed to where the cabin boy had been, the same chap had a cig in his hand again, and said Tich your yank has died. This was the man, who had been so badly burnt, before he got into the lifeboat, I did feel for this man, and I still do, he had stood so much, and he never moaned, looking back, I would have liked to have been with him when he went to meet his maker, I remember thinking, if I go to sleep again, who will die next, then I was O K and

sat up, I have no idea what time it would be now, I looked round the room. It was a large hall, no windows they were all boarded up, in place of the windows they had put big drawings of Russian, party members, and the things that they had said under each one, they were drawn in a way that the eyes always looked at you, you turned, away and some other guy, was looking at you, it was spooky, these guys were there all the time.

At this time it dawned on me, that we were all here, there were no more, those who were not here, were dead, they were not in another ward, or any thing like that, and I thought how horribly injured the others were, and how lucky I had been. I remember sitting up in bed and thinking, about those who were not there, and I would never see them again, some how it took a good while before it sunk in to my brain and it gave me a very cold numb feeling, I could see Kelly the gun layer waving to me, Saying Good luck Tich, I could see the Mate putting the ladder over the side for us to take them off, The Captain saying to me, go to you boat station boy, and good luck to you, also I could see the ones jumping overboard off of the stern into the sea, to escape the flames, from the petrol, the fire it was very vivid it still is.

I thought may be they got away onto a raft, Then I had a raft in my mind and when we were pulling to get round the stern I had a glimpse of one with two chaps kneeling on it, but that was all, I saw they looked freezing, the spray was breaking over them, and freezing. Then I knew, that no one could have lasted so long on a raft, in them seas, and that cold, and yes, this was all who were left, there were no more. The rest were dead. It was a very cold, numb, lonely feeling. I still think how lucky I was.

We were fed what the Russians had, I do think, that we did a bit better than their own people, when the food was put out a girl kept guard on it, the bread was a very course dark brown, it scratched your

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

mouth, and was very hard to swallow, we were given a very watery kind of soup, you could see through it, with small bits of some sort of vegetables in it, and a few course strands of some sort of meat, I was later told that it was Yak, we also got small portions, of some sort of a thing like a custard, it tasted very powdery, the servings were as I said very small, and to drink, we were given, what I was told was a drink made from hot water and tree bark, then some times it would be scalded Pine tree needles, that was what I was told it was, and a few times we were served about four or five, of some thing like Raisins scalded in a cup of hot water, I was always hungry all of the time that I was there.. It was all that the Russians had. Those who smoked were given some sort of Russian cigarettes, and these stunk, the Russians would take a bit of any old newspaper, twist it into a funnel, and put some of this tobacco into it and smoke it.

Those who were not fit to travel home were on this sort of food and worse, until they got passage home in September.

One day we were given, a small piece of paper, very poor quality, the width of an A4, and about 4 inches deep, we were told to write Murmansk Russia, Dear Mother I am in hospital in Murmansk, I am well AUSTIN, it eventually did arrive home, but that was after I had got home, but the words Murmansk and Russia had been cut out of it by the censor.

The Chief Steward was in the next bed right up to mine, now that I had, had my sleep out, I could look round and see how the others were, the chief was in a poor way, his legs, they were shiny black, and all sorts of colours up above his knees, they were on pillows, propped up. I did think that I could see his knee caps, I am not certain, but they did have all colours, blues greens bits of red shiny like patent shoes. Later the poor man lost both of his legs, that was after I came home, like the rest, they were just chopped off.

He moaned away about the food, he could not eat it, mind you being the Chief Steward, he would do well on the ship. But what he did not eat I did, I was hungry and did not intend to go under now, so each meal what he did not eat I did.

After a couple of days they came round and rubbed our chests with more goose grease, rubbed some into small glass jars like small jam jars, lit them with a taper, blew them out and put them on your chest, they put about 10 or 12 on then you had to lye down, until they then cooled off, and you had big parts of you going into the jar. After a while you had trouble breathing, then they took them off, I was very glad when that was over. They told us that it was to get the cold out of our chests.

Another day, they came and did some thing to the other gunner in the next bed to me, he had been in the same life boat as I had, they put the thing round his arm pumped it up, and injected some thing into him, He groaned and went out like a light. She then turned to do me, I said not on your life, I jumped over the chief steward, who poor soul screamed out, mind my legs, and I was off, with her, and the big nurse in chase, all the chaps were shouting go it boy, But a big raid developed and they called it off and I went back to bed.

How big was this girl, very big, one day in a very bad raid, the bombs were falling near, you could hear them scream, and then thud, and crunch into the ground, before they exploded, the building was rocking, I jumped up in bed. When there was a bad raid on the nurses stood one at each corner of the room, when I moved, this big girl was over to hold me down, she put her thumbs on my shoulders, and held me, all she said was fascist bastards. When the raid was over, she just ruffled my hair, and smiled, I would think by then, she was very much used to air raids, after that the interpreter, the head one came, a very nice lady, she had a bit of

make up on, she spoke to me, and said that the doctor said that I should have the injection, after all it was only vodka, at this time, he the other gunner was still out, I said how do I know it is vodka, she talked a long time. Then she said, you will have it, if you see it loaded, I said yes, so they brought the bottle put the syringe through the cork and I had the injection, I did not go out like he had, I was too scared.

In the corner of the room, there was a chap he was in a bad way, (W Short) they would not let you near him. When you went to look they waved their hands, and said no, then one day there was a lot of activity, of nurses running with big iron kettles, so I went to see what was happening. They had him propped up, on the edge of the bed,. I got to look, but was soon pushed away, the poor man looked shocking. his legs were black way up above his knees, he seemed to be in daze, they had put a rubber tube, into his mouth, it was red, like you used for gas in those days .on top of that was an enamel funnel with a chip in it, They were pouring the water down the funnel into him. They had a bucket for it to run out between his legs, you could hear it, also they had a stool for the girls to stand on, because the kettles were heavy and the girls were small, this went on for a long while, a good many kettles of water went through him but he did survive .

I found this man in 1986, from a bit in a newspaper, and when I related what had happened to him, he told me that he knew nothing about it happening to him, he was in such a bad way that he did not remember it, I have often wondered if they did that to any one else after I left for home.

Also one day they had a chap he was from the S S BALLOT, and he also was very poorly, like the other man, you were not allowed to go near him, but the Russians could not understand him, as he spoke Portuguese, so they got a fireman (stoker) he came from Chile in South America, he spoke some sort of Spanish, these two

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

could understand each other, then they got a Welsh man to tell the interpreter, who told the doctor, the result was he had to have only warm water. So maybe he had the same treatment later on, I think that he poor soul, lost both of his legs, and both of his hands, just think of it, for the rest of his life, this young man could do nothing for him self, nothing.

In the next bad to this man, there was one of the other naval gunners, a lad named Bell. I tried to get to have a chat with him, but he also was to ill, as soon as you went near him, the nurses shook their fingers, and heads, it was go away, this lad also lost both of his legs. I am told that he died a few years after he came home I think that he was about 24 years old then, he came from Glasgow, and was married with a young daughter. Poor chap, he would never be able to hold her hand and take her for a walk.

They did not have many bottles for having a wee in bed they were only for the worst cases. so they used jam jars, the old 2lb ones that were about then.

After a couple days, I began to get about, my feet were very sore, but it was nice to get out of bed, so I got the job for a few, of the not to shy ones, Kid give me a cig, they stunk to high heaven, I do not smoke, so I had no idea, these chaps had their hands bandaged, so it was put it in, light it, and take it out, when they had drawn, but if the chap in the next bed also asked you to do the same for him, and you were late coming back, the result was a lot of coughing and spluttering.

Also at these times, It was, while you are at it, give me a pee, so back came the bed clothes, put the jar between their legs, a howl as it was cold, insert thing in jam jar, then if he was peeing and smoking and the jar got full, he could not tell you, there was a lot of spluttering, then we all had a giggle at it, in a strange sort of a way, it was funny, but the poor souls could not help themselves, and they were glad of the chance to have a smoke.

One day I had done the deed for a French Canadian, when the chap in the next bed said can I have a pee, so the same for him, then he said light me a cig, I went to do it, and he then said, arn't you going to wash your hands, I said it's your thing that I have had hold of, no way the water was to cold for that.

The jars of pee had to stay under the beds until the next morning, so that the doctor could see them, they were all colours, this added to the smell of the place, some times they got mixed up that caused troubles for the doctors.

The second or third day we were there, they started with this can, and a long rubber tube, with a long white thing at the end, they stuck it up their rumps, the groans were something, they did a few, then it dawned on me they were going to do us all, I said to the nurse, us, she said with a smile yes, with that. I said to the other gunner lets go find the loo, we did, it was full of Russians, soldiers and girls, chatting and smoking, no doors on them, so we got down, he said kid we can not do it, we'll get piles, I replied, it is go, or that thing up your arse, so at long last we did it, it was hard work but we got there, It was then that I thought if they do not see it, they will not believe us, so after we had looked at each others effort, and said well done, to each other, we do not have to have that thing up our ars'es now. I said mind it, do not flush it away, while I get the nurse, these toilets were different to ours, it dropped onto a ledge, so you could see your effort, before you flushed it away, so back to the ward, I staggered. I got her by the hand and took her, it was funny, to say and point, me did that, him did that, she was happy and we were, that we did not have to have the thing up our rumps, not every one can say that they did it to some one else and they went to the loo.

Some days not every day, a nice girl came round with a small enamelled bowl, she put a inch of warm water into the bottom of it, and you could have a wash, if

you were the second to have a wash, and she had put some more into the bowl, you got a drop more water, and so as she went on, the water got deeper, as more people washed, one day I said that I would go to the wash room to wash, I turned the tap on put my hands under, the water was ice cold, so cold that my hands went numb, and my flesh went hard, I splashed my face, and that was it, I never did that again.

Some of the crew from the Ballot, came in to see their mates, and one brought a raisin pie it looked great, they cut big pieces passed it round their men, and one piece was left, the 3rd mate from the Ballot, said give him it, he was in our boat, so they turned to me, I said cut it in two and give my friend a bit, it took a lot of doing, to give him that, but I did, and the pie, as I said, it tasted great.

Another day about four of the crew of the Ballot came in to see their ship mates, one of the was from one of the Baltic states, and he spoke Russian, and understood it, one thing that you could notice, was, that he never, got far from the others, they all stayed in a small group, he said that he was not happy, and they did not stay very long.

Just before we left for home, a group of Russian staff, they would be the doctors, came slowly round to each bed, and examined every one they talked to each other as they looked at the rotten limbs, and examined them, they made notes, at that time I did not realize, that they would be looking to see what limbs each of them were going to loose, as I said they had not started the amputations when we left for home, and for that I am still very thankful.

Once when I had been trying to see the man in the corner, I got speaking to one of our deck crew, he asked me for a cigarette, I think that he thought that I had some America cigs, we chatted a while and he looked at my hands, then he looked at his own, and said you have been lucky, his

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

knuckles were burst with the cold, some of his fingers also were black, but one was grey and twice as thick as it should have been, he looked at it and said I will loose that one, I now wonder if he lost more than that one. His feet were also black so there is a good chance that he would loose them also.

That is some of what happened in Murmansk Hospital. The longer that we were there the smell was building up. I did not know at that time but most, were to loose limbs in the most horrific way, they were just chopped off, no put you to sleep, they did not have any anaesthetic, just a cover so you could not see what was going to happen, then a guillotine dropped, and bang your legs have gone, for a finger, they used pliers or secateurs, and off came your finger.

When your frozen parts started to thaw out the pain was terrible, but they did not give out any pain, killers, they did not have any, you just had to put up with it. With your feet, it was like walking on the bones, when you were in bed it was like a throbbing down to your feet, and the a bang as it came back up, then it did it again, you thought I will have a walk, but you did not know which was the worst..

A Naval officer came to see us asked a lot of questions, he could not believe that I had done the same boat trip as the others, when I convinced him he said it must be the pudding that you eat up there, in Yorkshire.

He then asked, how are you going to get home, I replied on a merchant ship I suppose, Man they are sinking them like mad out there. That did not do me a lot of good. He wanted to know that I was Royal Navy, and that I could walk, I said yes, to both questions.

A few days later, he said very casually, H M S LIVERPOOL is coming to replace the TRINIDAD, then still in a very casually matter of fact way, he said, the Commander of H M S LIVERPOOL,

is a friend of fathers, I will ask him to take you home, and that is how I got home. At this time we did not know that the Trinidad had been damaged.

This naval officer, well he was the real British officer, this after all was Murmansk, the enemy was only 15 miles away, his white shirt each time he came to see us he was immaculate, his tie just right, his white coat was turned back at the cuffs, so that his two gold rings showed, to make a note, he took out his gold pencil, when he was talking to you and the bombs were near, he just paused, and smiled, as to say how annoying, the real British Naval Officer but sad to say I never knew his name.

The Russians brought our personal things up to the ward for us to sort out, some one had, gone through our things, I had a money belt with 8 or 9 Pounds in the pocket, this came back O K, I still have one of the pound notes, Marian said frame it, it now hangs in the sun lounge, but my Rosary Beads did not come back, I was very upset about this, and for a lot of years I thought it was some Russian bigot, then an old priest said to me, think of it this way, did some one want them so badly, that they were prepared to steal to get them, that made me feel a lot better, could be some one in Russia used them for a long time, who knows,. I like to think that is what happened to them, as I said who knows.

One day after we had been told that we might be going home, the Russians started to give hair cuts, the first one that I saw was the American Morris, he had very nice brown wavy hair, I would think that it was his pride and joy, but the big nurse just started at the front with these big clippers and went over the top and right down to the back, as I said the clippers were big and you needed to have big hands to use them, when I first saw her doing it, she was half way across his head, and there were tears running down his face, but he could do nothing about it. not a thing.

Then they did, it to Jim Campbell, he was 15 year old then, and him being a young lad, they did not take it all off, they gave him some sort of a back and sides, to do this they started at the top of his head and went down to his neck.

She then pointed to me, as to say your next, I said no, and I ran, me with my sore feet, running up the ward, like Donald Duck, I did not know that I could move so fast the, big nurse running after me, the others were again shouting go it boy. There is no doubt that she would have caught me, and taken all of my hair off, but then suddenly she stopped, the doctors had arrived, and to my surprise the naval officer, the doctor said stop. The naval officer smiled, and then said, you are going home tomorrow, still smiling, he said that was a near thing, Yes it was as near as that, another five or ten minutes and she would have had all of my hair off, and there was not a thing that I could have done.

Next day we did leave for home in Russian Naval uniform., but before I left Walter Baxter asked me to write to his mother in Morcambe to tell her he was safe, which I did, he poor lad lost half of his foot and the other one was damaged with the cold, it was like me his first trip from what I know of him he got worse as he got older.

Also the American's gave us their addresses, and I remember Alberge saying to me, as only an American could, when you make port in New York look me up which I did in 1944.

One day I do not know which, there was a big tidy up, I was told back into bed, they straightened the beds, and the nurses stood at each corner of the ward, then three men came round, they smiled to every one, and one of them came to my bed, he shook my hand, the interpreter gave him my name, and he said Thank You for a gallant try. They were the top bras of the Communist Party in the Murmansk area.

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

To get up the inlet to H M S Liverpool, we were put on board one of the British mine sweepers that were stationed up there, H M S HARRIER, they asked where we had been, when we told them, and you have been on Russian food, we will give you some tined steak and kidney pie, They served it, and we enjoyed it, any one want seconds, it was out of this world, then when I saw that they had a bit left and it was to go into the gash tub, I said I will eat that, and I did three plates, it was wonderful..

A lot of years later when I found Bill Short, he told me it was a school that we had been in, Number 1 school I thought that it was a civic hall Bill has been back inside. I have seen it from the out side, also when we went back with Bill we saw the graves, of the lads who died, and are buried there, and but for the grace of god, I could have been one of them, it is strange to look at a row of graves, and think which spot would I have been in , had I died there.

H M S Liverpool, came home as part of the escort of convoy QP 10. This convoy had the winter weather to contend with, the ships were empty so the propellers were half way out of the water They were also very heavily attacked by aircraft and submarines, and lost I think that it was four ships, and some of the others were damaged.

It was a long slow haul to Iceland, then a fast run to Scapa Flow, where I was put into the hospital ship nice clean, crisp sheets, and you could sleep, with no noise of bombs, in Murmansk the air raids went on all night, you slept through them, you only woke when the bombs were very near, no wondering will the ship be hit while I am asleep. it was wonderful.

My feet were still numb, as were my fingers, the pain in my feet as they slowly came back to normal, was very bad, when you put your foot down it was as if you had no flesh under your feet, so walking was very painful, it was very late in the

year before they were right and for a long time after it, I would get spells when it felt as if I still had no flesh under my feet, it was as I said as if you were walking on the bones. But I still had my feet. I was very lucky.

The other lifeboat was much worse, it was full, they had about 16 die from the cold, and they had to put them over the side, not being able to weight them they just floated along with them.

The ones who were left in Murmansk and had amputations, when their legs were chopped, off, because that is what happened to them. They were just propped up on a bed, and everything yes everything was left to run out of them. Then when they started to have dressings put on to them it was like raw meat, they stuck, and had to be pulled off, this was standard treatment in Russia at that time.

Later to my surprise, I saw bit in the Sunday Post, it said that Jim Campbell was alive in New Zealand, so I wrote to the Post Master of the town, to ask him to find him for me, they did and it was wonderful to get in touch with him after all those years, then Marian and I went out to meet him and his family in 1996, that was another wonderful meeting.

Jim lost all of the fingers from his left hand, they were frozen to the boat, and came off when he was lifted out of the boat, half of his left foot, was amputated, his right leg was amputated just below the knee, and on his right hand his index finger was permanently stiff, his other fingers were permanently bent, and all of this at 15 years old, he arrived home in time for his 16th Birthday.

Had I not got passage home on H M S LIVERPOOL, I would most probably have been on H M S EDINBURGH, and she was sunk, and later I might have been on H M S TRINIDAD, and she also was sunk, one of the bombs that hit her, dropped into the mess deck where the merchant seamen who were taking

passage on her were, so you see I was very, very lucky.

One thing that I have since been thankful for, as I have said is, that I left before, the Russians started with the amputations, so I did not have to see all of that terrible suffering that my shipmates had to endure.

In the corner of the room there was this one, big Russian chap in a bed, he never spoke to any one, he did not speak to the nurses much, when I tried to speak to him, he just smiled and would not talk, then one day some one brought in a old Readers Digest, most could not hold it to read it, so it was eventually passed to him by one of the nurses.

We then saw that he was reading it, this did not add up, so when some one from a ship had given the French Canadian some American Cigs, he said hey Tich, ask that chap if he would like a cigarette, so I did as I was told, and he looked up and replied, in very nice English, Yes Please, and then said a very polite Thank You. And that was it he did not speak to any one again. A strange man after that every one thought that he was a O G P U .spy so they all played hell about communism.

As I said at the start of this epistle, when we arrived in Murmansk there was an air raid on, well all of the time that I was there, there was incessant bombing, one raid did not seem to stop, before the other one started, at night time it was one long blitz, we could hear the planes scream as they dived for the docks, we also could hear the bombs scream as they went past us, at times when the bombs were very near, you could hear and feel the crunch of the bombs, as they buried into the ground and then exploded, but one thing was strange, and the others say the same as I do, we got a break for lunch, no raids, for a while, we thought of the pilots, sitting in their mess, having a nice lunch, a cigar, and snaps, then saying, back to work bombing Murmansk. I said that at the start.

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

One thing that the Russian doctors got wrong, one day the head doctor came to my bed with the chief interpreter, she examined my private parts, and then spoke to the interpreter, who told me that I had to be brave, but that the doctor, wanted me to know that I would be sterile, she got that one wrong, as we have a wonderful son.

As Jim Campbell says, the Russians did not have much to give, but the bit that they did have, they gave us very willingly.

Jim and his wife Alice, were going to visit Scotland, and England, but he had a heart attack, and could not fly so far, he said why not come and see me, I was for it, then I was not, in the end Marian said we should go it will do you good, so we went and it did me a lot of good, he made me see things differently to what I had, in my mind.

It is a long way to go to see a man who you do not really know, it was strange to walk out of the airport, and not know the people who we were looking for, but Alice said Marian, Jim looked, and we gave each other a great hug, Marian and Alice started to talk and neither of them stopped until we left them 2 weeks later, a long journey, but well worth it, I think that a good way to sum up my talks with Jim, is to put it this way, he gave me the only counselling that I have ever had.

JOURNEY HOME

The five of us that were fit to travel home, left Murmansk on April 10, as passengers on H, M, S. LIVERPOOL, she was part of the escort of Convoy QP 10, we were taken up the Kola Inlet to join her, she was laying off Polyarnoe, by I think that it was H, M, S, HARRIER, we were asked who are you, as our clothes were in a poor way after the life boat trip, we had been kitted out with Russian uniforms, so they did not know at first who we were.

One of the Merchant Navy chaps had a very bad hand, his fingers were rotting,

they were black blue and green, down to the first joint, you could see the bone sticking out on them, also the smell from them was, well they stunk, at meal times he went away from the table, so that we could eat, when he tried to go to sleep he held his hand as far from himself as he could, we were on camp beds, and as I remember it, he tried to go off to sleep, with his hand held under the bed, we went to the sick bay with our sore feet, they tried him with heat treatment, they picked some of the rotting flesh off with tweezers, when the chap who was doing it got called away, this lad then did a bit for himself. He knew that he would lose part of each finger when he arrived home.

The Convoy was very heavily attacked, and I think that it lost four ships we arrived in Iceland on the 20th of April, then a fast run to Scapa Flow where we were put in to the hospital ship.

We arrived at the hospital ship in Russian Naval uniform, to say that we were greeted well, would be wrong, it was with a growl, who are these, and what do they want, we got an indication to follow this sick berth attendant, with another growl, he said come on, then he pointed to a bathroom, and indicated to each one of us to get into the bath, this we did, we had a bath, and then got dressed, he went mad, what he did not think of foreigners was no ones business, so it was back into the bath, this time he gave us some pyjamas to put on. When we had, had our second bath, some one said to me, you can tell that this is the navy, at this he knew that we were English, and that did him no good at all, so it was follow him and we were put into beds.

As I have just said, this was real navy, on a night for rounds, you had to be in bed with the sheets straight, and your arms folded.

After five days in the hospital ship the other gunner and myself were sent back to our depots, I was sent to Portsmouth, and he to Southport, He was a Maritime Gunner.

We travelled together as far as Preston, then said goodbye to each other.

We were as I said in Russian uniform, and we had to be on deck of the hospital ship, at 9am to see the doctor, a Surgeon Captain, he looked at me and asked how old are you, I replied 20, he said tell me the truth, and you will not have to go back, I said I am 20, and he still did not believe me, but I was then 20 years old.

It was then a trip by lighter to the island, and another trip to the depot ship, and the ferry across the Pentland Firth to Thurso, for the train to London, which left at 8/30 pm, and arrived in London the next night at 8/30 pm, this was Tuesday night.

When the boat went along side in Thurso, all the others who were going on leave crowded the gangway, but the security man on the quay, pointed to us two, and said you two first, we had no pay book or any thing, he soon passed us through, then after a while he took us to a very clean barn, with tables in, and asked the lady to see to us, we had meal chits, but he said no, I will see to it for you, so we had a, two eggs, and every thing to go with it, one of the meals that you never forget.

The train left at 8/30 pm and arrived in London 24 hours later, as I said Robinson got out at Preston I think it was some where near Perth that we all got a nice breakfast in the dinning car in our turns.

We arrived in London the next night Tuesday, it was my first time in London, I was going to get the train to Portsmouth, that night, but some other lads said no we will take you to the Union Jack Club, for the night, it was about 1shilling and 6 pence for a bed for the night, we then caught the morning train to Portsmouth, I reported in and no one knew what to do with me, I was taken to the Master at Arms who looked at me in Russian uniform, asked me who I was, he then said sit down and tell me about it, while I was

FROM THE CREW

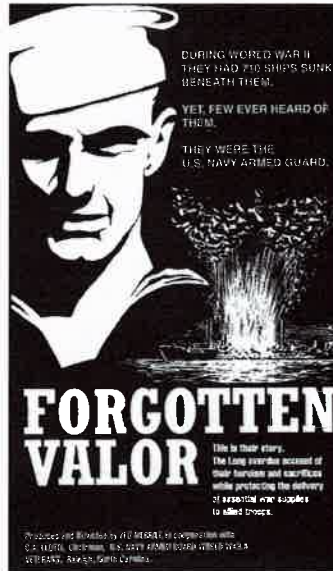
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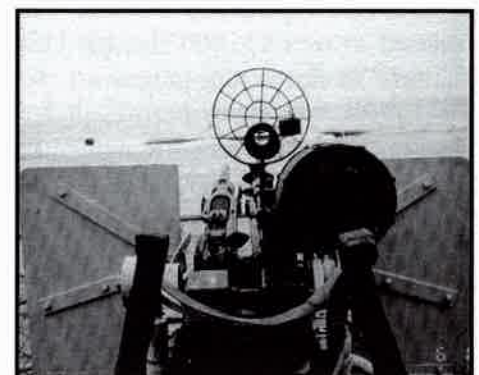
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"You and your look me up if you ever come to the states!"



U.S. MERCHANT MARINE • WWII

U.S. Merchant Marine in World War II

One way to understand the Second World War is to appreciate the critical role of merchant shipping... the availability or non-availability of merchant shipping determined what the Allies could or could not do militarily... when sinkings of Allied merchant vessels exceeded production, when slow turnarounds, convoy delays, roundabout routing, and long voyages taxed transport severely, or when the cross-Channel invasion planned for 1942 had to be postponed for many months for reasons which included insufficient shipping.

Had these ships not been produced, the war would have been in all likelihood prolonged many months, if not years. Some argue the Allies would have lost as there would not have existed the means to carry the personnel, supplies, and equipment needed by the combined Allies to defeat the Axis powers. [It took 7 to 15 tons of supplies to support one soldier for one year.] The U.S. wartime merchant fleet... constituted one of the most significant contributions made by any nation to the eventual winning of the Second World War.

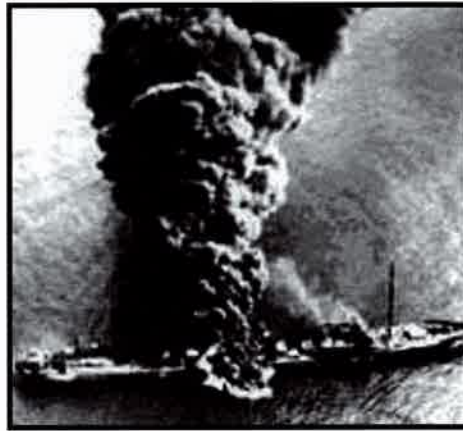
In the final assessment, the huge US merchant fleet... provided critical logistical support to the war effort... The Oxford Companion to WORLD WAR II

Casualties

The United States Merchant Marine provided the greatest sealift in history between the production army at home and the fighting forces scattered around the globe in World War II. The prewar total of 55,000 experienced mariners was increased to over 215,000 through U.S. Maritime Service training programs.

Merchant ships faced danger from submarines, mines, armed raiders and destroyers, aircraft, "kamikaze," and the elements. About 8,300 mariners were killed at sea, 12,000 wounded of whom at least 1,100 died from their wounds, and 663 men and women were taken prisoner. (Total killed

estimated 9,300.) Some were blown to death, some incinerated, some drowned, some froze, and some starved. 66 died in prison camps or aboard Japanese ships while being transported to other camps. 31 ships vanished without a trace to a watery grave.



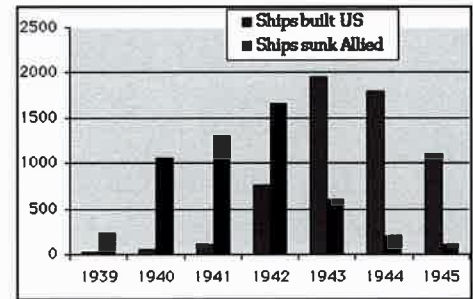
[Illustration above shows SS Byron D. Benson torpedoed on 4/4/42 off North Carolina: 10 members of the crew of 37 lost their lives.]

1 in 26 mariners serving aboard merchant ships in World WW II died in the line of duty, suffering a greater percentage of war-related deaths than all other U.S. services. Casualties were kept secret during the War to keep information about their success from the enemy and to attract and keep mariners at sea.

Newspapers carried essentially the same story each week: "Two medium-sized Allied ships sunk in the Atlantic." In reality, the average for 1942 was 33 Allied ships sunk each week.

Bari - the Second Pearl Harbor

One of the most costly disasters of the war occurred in the Italian port of Bari, Dec. 2, 1943, during the invasion of Italy. A German air attack sank 17 Allied merchant ships with a loss of more than 1,000 lives. One of the five American ships destroyed that day was the SS John Harvey which carried a secret cargo of 100 tons of mustard gas bombs. When these exploded, hundreds of mariners, navy sailors and civilians were affected. Many died from the effects of the mustard gas.



The Massacre of the SS Jean Nicolet

The Liberty ship SS Jean Nicolet was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine on July 2, 1944, off Ceylon (Sri Lanka). She had a 41-man crew, plus 28 Armed Guard, 30 passengers and an Army medic. All survived the explosion. They were taken aboard the sub and their lifeboats and rafts were sunk. With their hands tied behind their backs they were forced to sit on deck. Japanese sailors massacred many with bayonets and rifle butts. Thirty survivors were still on deck with their hands tied when a British plane appeared. The sub crash-dived, washing the survivors into the sea. Only 23 were rescued.

[Illustration below shows ships burning at Bari.]



For the rest of the story, go to the following <http://www.usmm.org/ww2.html>



RUSSIA CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Russia celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the first Convoy, the "Dervish", arriving Arkhangelsk 31 August, 1941.

By John L. Haynes,
Frozen Fury, The Murmansk Run of
Convoy PQ-13

Between 1941 and 1945, some 95 Arctic convoys transported more than 4 million tons of supplies to the Soviet Union. More than 100 ships were lost with 3,000 sailors losing their lives.

To get the goods to northern Russia, convoys of ships had to steer a treacherous course from the UK via Iceland through the icy waters of the Arctic Ocean. Winston Churchill once described it as "the worst journey in the world". Bad weather was the other enemy - thick fog, pack ice and raging storms. To mark the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the first convoy in Russia - codenamed Operation Dervish - a group of British veterans travelled to Arkhangelsk. At a ceremony by the River Dvina, British and Russian war veterans embrace and take photographs of themselves together. As a sign of their town's gratitude for Allied help in the war, local schoolchildren presented the UK visitors with red carnations. "We got such a wonderful welcome. We have so many friends here."

This same group of British Veterans, which included one American Merchant Marine, Donald Wampler, then traveled to St. Petersburg for additional celebration of the event. It was here that William "Bill" Ryan and I, John Haynes (accompanied by my daughter Renita Yahara) were invited to join the group.

The invitation came from the US Consulate General and The Arctic Allied Convoys. The principals involved were: Ms. Elena V. Smirnova, IRC Director who coordinated our travel, hotel accommodations, and itinerary. A delightful and efficient lady; Captain 1st Rank Igor



Huge Memorial overlooking Murmansk Harbor



Murmansk Harbor where we off loaded cargo
in April, 1942. It looks much different now.

Kozyr' (ret) and Chief Editor of Gangut Publishing House; and Captain Yuri E. Alexandrov, President of The Arctic Allied Convoys.

On Friday, September 2, the first event was a wreath-laying ceremony at the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery to honor the victims of the siege of Leningrad by the Germans during WWII. The siege lasted 900 days and according to the average estimates 800,000 people died from starvation, hunger, cold and bombard-

ment. At least, every third civilian died in the siege of Leningrad.

The ceremony was a very somber occasion yet beautifully done. There were five wreaths, two of which were British and American. The Russian military escorts and marching band were magnificent. From there we visited the Peter & Paul's Fortress which overlooks the Neva River and the city center. At noon every day there is the Ceremonial Midday Firing of

Continued on Page 29

SUPPLY AND COMMISSARY PERSONNEL



EL DINNER • USNAGC, BROOKLYN, NY

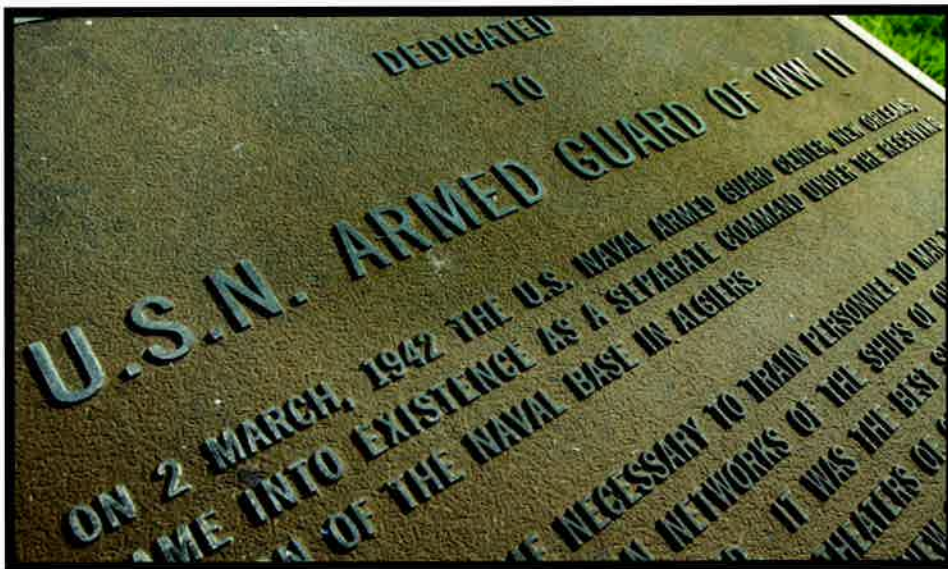


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WWII MUSEUM • INHERIT MEMORIAL



World War II Museum will inherit memorial from soon-to-close New Orleans base

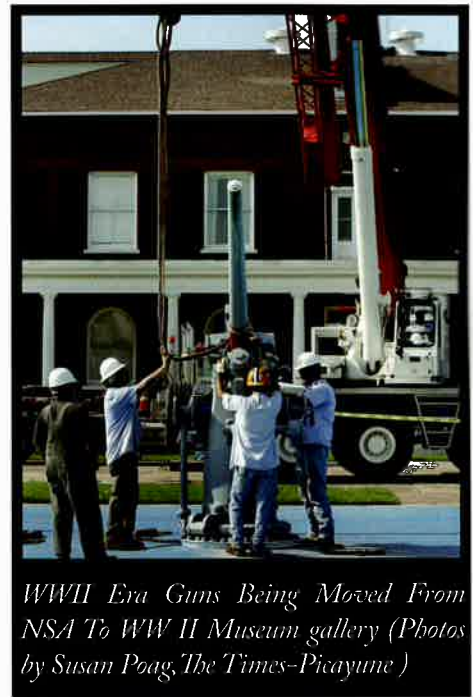
Although the Naval Support Activity will close in just over three weeks, a piece of the 110-year-old installation's heritage will live on at the National World War II Museum, which has salvaged a memorial recognizing the 1,810 sailors killed in action aboard U.S. Merchant Marine vessels during that conflict.

After more than two days of teeth-chattering jack-hammering, crews finished dislodging Saturday two 3"/50 caliber deck guns that have been centerpieces of a memorial along the Mississippi River levee at the Algiers base since 1989. The guns were used to train sailors from

March 1942 to December 1945, when the base was designated one of at least three U.S. Navy Armed Guard Centers nationwide.

According to the memorial plaque, 144,970 sailors assigned to the Navy's Armed Guard branch received gunnery and communications training before deploying aboard 6,236 U.S. Merchant Marine vessels in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. Of that, 1,810 sailors were killed, 27 were taken prisoners of war and 710 vessels were sunk.

The guns and plaque for decades have been known only to people who work and live at the base. The museum will display the guns to tell the often-overlooked role Merchant Marines played during the war, as well as the sailors



WWII Era Guns Being Moved From NSA To WW II Museum gallery (Photos by Susan Poag, The Times-Picayune)

aboard the civilian-manned vessels, said Tom Czekanski, the museum's director of collections and exhibits.

"It's our intention to make sure the Armed Guard is remembered," Czekanski said.

After the base closes Sept. 15, a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure round, private developers will convert it into the Federal City mixed-use development. Retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. David Mize, who is spearheading the project, said he was surveying Navy property that could be reused when he saw the guns and realized their place in history.

"So it appeared to me that the most appropriate final resting place for these naval guns and the best place to get the maximum exposure to these neat artifacts was at the National World War II Museum," Mize said.

He contacted museum president Nick Mueller and senior vice president for capital programs Bob Farnsworth, who sits with Mize on the New Orleans Federal Alliance board that oversees Federal City.



WWII MUSEUM • INHERIT MEMORIAL

Mueller and Farnsworth sent Czekanski to check them out. "I said, 'Hell, yes,'" Czekanski said upon seeing the guns.


That set in motion the museum's quest to get the guns, which were at the Algiers base but were not listed on the Navy's property inventory, said Lt. James Schoeberl, the base's operations officer. To facilitate the loan, the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington, D.C., listed the guns on the Navy's official inventory. The museum then requested the loan, which the Navy approved, Schoeberl said.

Czekanski said thousands of 3"/50 caliber guns were manufactured and deployed aboard Liberty ships, destroyer escorts and submarines. The guns, with their 3-inch bores, fired anti-aircraft and surface-to-surface shells. These days, the guns are found in memorials and parks.

The move, financed by the museum, began the morning of Aug. 18, when crews from American Machinery Movers tried to lift the 7,500-pound guns from their concrete mounts. They were finally moved Saturday to a facility the museum owns in the Warehouse District, where the guns likely will be stored about a year and completely restored.

While plans are not firm, the guns and the Navy's memorial plaque might be displayed on the museum's parade ground, the grassy area between the Victory Theater and Camp Street, Czekanski said.

"The more we can return it to its original appearance, the easier it is for people to understand how it functioned," he said.

And that way, Czekanski said, the museum can tell the story of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard. 

RUSSIA CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY



the Cannon and I believe Bill Ryan was given the honor of the firing.

We attended the opening exhibition on the history of the Arctic Convoys at the Central Naval Museum with speeches by field officials of the US and UK Consulates.

Following this was Round Table discussions on the history of the Arctic Convoys. Veterans were joined by survivors of the Siege of Leningrad. The moderator was Captain of 1st Rank, Igor Kozyr', who introduced me and asked me to speak about my experiences in Convoy PQ-13 and to introduce my book "Frozen Fury". It was

Captain Kozyr who translated my book into Russian and had it published in Russia. The Russian version called "Cold Fury" has been very well received and has already received wide distribution in schools, libraries and museums.

At a fabulous reception at the US Consul General's Residence that evening I was asked to speak again about the convoys and "Frozen Fury". Also introduced was a book by William A. Carter "Why Me, Lord?", the experience of a U.S. Navy Armed Guard Officer in World War II's Convoy PQ-17 on the Murmansk Run. "Why Me, Lord?" had also been trans-

lated and published in Russia. All guests were given a copy of both books in Russian as a remembrance of the occasion. Never in my wildest dream did I ever think my little book would generate so much interest.

It was also at this event that Captain Kozyr' presented me with the Russian Medal, "Naval Aviation for Valor In The Sky". I was overwhelmed to receive such an honor. It didn't stop there. I was interviewed three times on Russian Television.

Saturday September 3. The Veterans were split into groups of 2-3 to visit St. Petersburg Schools. My daughter, Renita, and I were to visit High School #207 and were met by one of the teachers and driven to the school. Upon entering a classroom all the students stood in respect for Veterans. They were beautiful youngsters and spoke flawless English. They sang a number of Russian songs, recited for us and asked lots of questions about America. Two young students preformed a very classic and interesting dance for us.

Renita, being a former teacher, was in her element with both the students and teachers. The teachers had a great lunch prepared for us. Again, Renita thoroughly enjoyed her time with the teachers discussing the cultural differences between

RUSSIA CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY



11th Grade Class at St Petersburg High School

Russian and American schools. They were surprisingly very much alike. emy College canteen.

The Veterans were treated to an afternoon at the Theater of Musical Comedy with a concert of popular extracts from opera and ballet performances. There was a special performance of the Canadian "Requiem of PQ17" We had VIP front row seats. It was truly a great performance.

A very fine reception at the British Consulate General was followed by the viewing of the Hurricanes fighters to Murmansk documentary, the story of the 151 RAF Wing. All the chaps had a good time singing of British folk songs.

Sunday September 4. All the Veterans boarded a Russian Mine Sweeper 561 and sailed out into the Neva Bay to lay a floating wreath on the sea in memory of the seamen who lost their lives in the Convoys to Russia.

In the afternoon there was a ceremony to lay the foundation stone at the location of the Memorial to Polar Convoys' Participants. It was a very impressive ceremony with the Guard of Honor by Cadets of the Makarov Maritime Academy College. Then lunch at the Maritime Acad-

That evening all the Veterans were invited to a most elegant reception on behalf of the Government of St. Petersburg at the Government Guest House. The cuisine was the most extensive and delicious one could imagine. There was live orchestra music with professional opera singers. The Guest House had marble halls, reception and dining rooms with statues and murals and the gardens were a thing of beauty.

This was a fitting climax to a fantastic celebration of the 70th anniversary of the "Dervish", the first convoy to Russia during World War II. The Russian Convoy Veterans, the US Consulate, the British Consulate, the Government of St. Petersburg, and especially the Russian people have gone way beyond all expectation to make our visit with them a most memorable occasion.

With the party over in St. Petersburg, the Russian Veterans, the British and two of the American Veterans head for home on Monday September 5th. For Renita and me, our mission was not yet accomplished. Not to be able to go to Murmansk, my point of destination of Convoy PQ-13 in March 1942 would leave a huge void for

me. I really wanted to revisit Murmansk to see what it was like now and I wanted to visit Yekaterina, "Kate", and the pupils with whom I had been corresponding for over a year.

Monday September 5. We checked out of the hotel very early in order to make our 6:30am flight to Murmansk, arriving at 8:30am. We were met by Kate and Natalia as soon as we cleared customs and they had transportation waiting to take us to the Meridian Hotel where we checked in early and got a two hour rest.

One of the teachers picked us up and drove us around Murmansk. There was nothing about the city that I either recognized or remembered from 1942. Only the harbor and the surrounding hills were familiar. We drove to the highest point of the city where stood the huge statue of a soldier overlooking the harbor with an eternal flame at its base representing the sacrifices made there.

This, now modern harbor, was once the scene of many allied ships trying to offload vital military supplies for the USSR to help defeat the German invasion. The Luftwaffe bombed this city and its harbor many times a day.

The devastation is hard to imagine now,



Mine Sweeper



Memorial to the fallen Seamen

RUSSIA CELEBRATES 70TH ANNIVERSARY

but then hardly a building escaped severe damage. None had glass in windows and many were burned. Ships were bombed and sunk at the quays. The offload equipment and the trains and trucks were in constant danger and were prime targets for the bombers.

Not far away is a lonely cemetery where a number of Allied seamen are buried, having lost their lives from injuries or the freezing cold in lifeboats after their ship was bombed or torpedoed. Many died in the makeshift hospital where Russian doctors tried their best to save the severely injured. Many of those that did survive returned to their homeland with no legs, arms or hands. They paid the ultimate price for the freedoms we now enjoy.

The rest of the afternoon was more sight-seeing and a bit of souvenir shopping. That evening we were dinner guests of one of the teachers who lived in one of the flats of old Communist apartment buildings. It was disheartening to see the run-down condition of the buildings. There was scrap lumber and boxes in the hallways and the elevator was so scary, I wasn't sure we would make the lift. However, when we got into the flat, it was quite nice. It was very clean, well decorated and comfortable. The dinner itself was very nice, well planned and delicious. It was a very enjoyable evening with really nice people.

Tuesday September 6. Kate meets us at the hotel and we walk a bit then take the trolley to the Murmansk Naval Museum. The building itself looked nothing like I would have expected of such an important facility. It was not in a prominent location and had little to identify it as an important museum.

Once inside, however, there was a fantastic display of art and memorable war and naval items beautifully displayed on three floors of the building. It would take days to see it all. The Director was a most knowledgeable and perky lady who spoke very little English, but managed to



Kate Natalia
Saying our Farewells at the Murmansk airport

convey her message quite well. I donated copies of my book "Frozen Fury" in both English and Russian to the museum.

We then visited the school called Gymnasium #9 where Kate is the English Teacher. After lunch in the school cafeteria we were invited to Kate's 6th grade English class and were impressed with quality of Kate's teaching as well as the response of the students. Their English was superior for their age level.


Next we visited the 11th grade class where also invited were three Russian Convoy Veterans. The class stood immediately in respect for the Veterans. You would be hard pressed to find a more beautiful group of kids. They asked a lot of questions, many of which were about life in America. They all spoke flawless English and seemed to really enjoy conversing with us. Two of the students had spent a year in America which was apparent in their speech. Again, Renita was in her element talking with both teachers and students. It was a most rewarding visit.

A second lunch was prepared for the Veterans and Teachers where we were able to get acquainted with the Russians. The Teachers interpreted for us and as the vodka flowed the Russians began to sing for us. We really enjoyed our time

with them.

Wednesday September 7. We had a wonderful time in Murmansk, but it was time to return to St. Petersburg in preparation for going back home. Again, Kate and Natalia drove us to the airport. Saying farewell to these two special friends was not easy. They had treated us royally.

We met again the next morning with Captain Igor Kozyr' and Elena Smirnova for a de-briefing on our trip to Murmansk. We had a great time together and I had the opportunity to thank them for all of their help and support during our visit. They were so gracious. They had several gifts for us, one of which is very special. It is a beautiful plate in honor of the "200th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Russia 1807 - 2007" showing Tsar Alexander I and Thomas Jefferson. It was a gift normally given only to diplomats or other VIP. What an honor to receive such a gift.

The Russian people were so very warm and friendly. They treat their Veterans with great respect. I had a number of them thank me almost in tears saying, "Without your help I may not be here today". It was a very humbling experience. It was a visit of a lifetime and I'd love to go back again. 

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

telling him what had happened, some one brought him and his wren secretary a cup of tea, the wren said another one please, so I had morning tea with the Master at Arms, he was very nice to me, and gave me a chit that got me rushed through the barracks, when I had got my kit, I did as he told me and I went back to him, he gave me my documents, and then said, try Liverpool this time, you might have better luck, I had two kit bags, a hammock and my small case, I picked up a kit bag and my hammock he picked up the other kit bag, and the wren took my small case, they then escorted me to the main gate. Outside there were three old men with carts, he said to the first one, take this lad to the station and no charge, when you come back you are the first in line, the other two nodded, when we got to the station, I did say to the man how much, his reply was no charge, if the M A found out, he would not let me stand outside of his barracks, that is true, I did have tea with the M A, and it was the first time that I knew how much power they did have.

I caught the 4/30 pm train to London, and the 10/30, night train to Bradford, I arrived into Bradford very early on the Thursday morning, having been on the move since Monday morning. I put my kit into the left luggage office, and went for the tram to go home. The conductor said to me, you cannot get on this one, it is only for staff, he was my size small so I said to him stop me.

I went up stairs and sat down, there were three staff men, going to work and they were moaning about how bad things were for them, one turned to me and said you will do alright for food you being on ships, I suppose that you have it good. Not like us people.

This was when I was near my stop, so I stood up and said, I have just been sunk, and I have done four days in a lifeboat. You do not know what you are talking about and I left them.

I then walked down to the house, my feet were very sore, and I was very tired, I had been on my way over night from Scotland, one night in London, and a night travelling up from Portsmouth, I got my key out, I still had it, and I still have it, I opened the door and walked in, this was very early, about 5/15 am, they were all in bed, I called up the stairs. It's me, I'm home, A my elder sister Kathleen shouted, it's our Austin, and she came down very quickly, looked at me, got hold of me and said, are you alright, They all think that you are dead, but I never did.

My mother came down, and my younger sister followed, my father was working nights. My mother was weeping and wailing, and telling me what a bad time she had, had, and how terrible it had been for her, She then said AWhere have you been you do not know what I have been through she seemed to forget that it was me who had been sunk, and nearly killed. My young sister was then coming down the stairs shouting it me Um Pet, I went to the steps and she jumped the last 5 into my arms, then I had to go up to the works where my dad worked, and tell him that I was home, and that I was, O K, I went to the time office, and spoke to a man, as I said can I see Harry Byrne. He said your Harry Byrne's lad, go through and he will come to you, I did as I was told, and my father came running to me, the man must have rang through,. We went to where he worked, and all of the men came to say hello, good to see you got back home. The man in charge then came, and said hello, to me and told my dad go home.

Then is was go and tell his mother, she lived three streets away, it was still dark, and I called under her window, Grandma, it's, me I am home, and the first time that I said it she said yes, I can hear you.

After a chat with her I went back home, until about 9 o'clock, and the it was go and see my mother's, mother, and tell her all about it, she gave me a big hug, and a love, I was always her grandson,

she had been the midwife who delivered me, so to her I was very special, also her sons wife, who was very well into the sprite world, had said when I went away, Amy will loose that boy, he will not come back, and later when she was told, that I was reported missing, she had said, he his not missing, he his dead.

I had taken Walter Baxter's address, .I wrote to his mother, and tell her that he was in Murmansk, but at that time, I did not know that, the poor man would loose part of his foot. I caught the early post with the letter, and it was the first thing that she knew that he was alive and in Murmansk.

It was unwind, I was home, my mother said that I had to go into the school that I had attended,. St Peter's Leeds Road, as they wanted to know if I got home. I went in, and went up the boys stairs, at the far end of the long corridor I saw the head teacher, a nun, Sister Mercedes, she shouted, Austin Byrne, you are alive, God has answered our prayers, you are safe, she came running to meet me, grabbed hold of me, and gave me a very big squeeze, and a long hug, and pressed her cheek to mine, she was very pleased to see me back home, and told me they had all said prayers for me, and that to day, they would say prayers in Thanksgiving, she then took me round the school. To tell every one that I was back, most of the teachers remembered me, and they were very happy to see me home safe and well.

People will say that nuns, have no feelings, be that as it may, that day Head Sister had, and she showed them in her face, and the way that she hugged me, very close, and she held me tight, I still think that there was a tear in her eye, it was the nearest that I ever got to a kiss from a nun, as she rubbed her cheek against mine She took me as I said to every class, and held my hand all of the time, with real happiness, she was really happy that one of her boys had come back home safe.

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

This was the lady who had taught me how to pray, and the meaning of prayer, and I had prayed very hard, there was no doubt about that, I have often wondered how many of the boys that she had taught in her life time, were killed in the two wars. We were not to know at this time, but a few months later, another of her old boys, a very good friend of mine, we sat next to each other in class, George Corbett, would be on a ship that was sunk, but sadly he would be lost at sea. On the 29 December 1942, I remember thinking of her in the life boat, it was day three, just after the ship that we sighted had turned away from us, that was a real blow, the stewards boy Anderson, said some thing like, we have no chance now, we are lost, I looked at the badly burnt American, and the others sat in the water in the bottom of the boat, the thought came to me, that if any of them died, we would have to bury them at sea, I said to Robinson, have you thought that if any of them die, we will have to put them over the stern, he looked shocked, that I had thought of it, I thought what prayers would we say, then I thought what would Head Sister say, I then thought of the, Dep Re Fundis, Out of the Depths I have Cried to thee O Lord, and the Hail Holy Queen, that would do, no matter what religion they were. I had said them lots of times up to then in the boat, and I said them a lot more..the Dep Re Fundis (Out of the Depths I have cried to thee O Lord) seemed so appropriate in our situation.

I saw her a number of years later, when she was a real old lady, at my grandmothers requiem, one of the other old nuns said, who his the young man on the alter, she replied that his her grandson, Austin, and she greeted me with, I can tell you any where, the way that you walk, the way that you hold your back, such an arrogant walk, the lady did once say to me, some thing that I have found to be very true, when she caught me laughing at a funeral. A she said I knew that you have were little respect for the living, but I thought that you might have some respect the dead, but now I know, that you respect

neither, the living or the dead@ this as I said was after she had caught me laughing, as an alter boy at a funeral, it was her who taught us the Latin so that we could serve mass, and in later years I found that she was correct on that. I do not have a lot of respect, for people in charge.

For the next few days when I went out, it was strange to see people look at you, and then look again, and speak to the other person, you knew, what they were saying, I thought that he was dead,. But some would come straight out with it, and say Hello, I thought that you were dead.

What had happened, was my mother and father had been sent a telegram, to say that I was in Glasgow, with frost bight, they went to Glasgow wondering what state I was in, only to be told that I was not there, they were shunted around a few hospitals, and no one knew what had happened to me, or any thing about me.

One of the wrens took my mother to the toilet, and they told my father that I was Missing, Presumed Dead, the man went on to say, that the ship had been sunk in very hostile waters, and that he should not, build up a lot of hope, of me being alive, so they had to come back to Bradford with that on their mind, I was lost at sea, presumed drowned, he asked my father did he want another communication to say that I was missing or would word of mouth be sufficient, my dad said that will do, so they both came home not knowing any thing.

How things happened in those times, there was a lady who lived over the road, her and her husband were very nice, quite, people, they kept them selves very much to them selves, that was a saying then.

When the telegram arrived, and my mother and father were getting ready to go to Glasgow, this lady came over the road, and said that they did not want to intrude, but had they sufficient money in the house, to see them through, she then had a ,5 note in her hand, that was a lot

of money at that time, not many people would have a ,5 note in the house. Later in the war, when I was running to Belfast, I came home near Christmas with 3 turkeys, one was for them, but by then the lady was terminally ill, it was one way of saying a thank you,. As you will know you could not get turkeys at that time, it was nice to be able to repay the kind offer.

My leave passed and it was time to go back, I always remember, a lady who lived down the street, next door but one to us, she was crossing the road as I came out of the house, to go down to the station, to get the train for Liverpool, she had a piece of paper in her hand, She looked at me and said, good luck Austin, and passed on, afterwards we were to find out that the bit of paper was the telegram, to say that her son had been killed, the poor woman, with all that fresh in her mind, she could still wish me good luck, .the poor lad, was not missing, he was dead. A few days after, she said to my mother, I wished Austin good luck, with lead in my heart.

A young lady who I had know from being a boy, we had grown up together, she worked in a mill, went to work and told a friend of hers, that I was missing, presumed dead, the lady had talked of me, as you do with work mates, she told Pat how sorry she was, that I was missing, and later when I arrived home, and she was told that I was O K.she was very pleased.

In 1944 after I had joined another ship, and found out that it was going to Russia, I got a short weekend leave, Friday and Saturday, go back Sunday, to sail on the Tuesday, I think that it was the Friday night, I was with a friend on a bus, in the black out I was sat near the window, when he spoke to a lady, I looked across and in the dark saw that it was Pat, she said hello, and asked as people did, how long are you home for, where was I going, I replied deep water, I hope that you are not going where you went before, I smiled, and she said, you are going back to Russia again, are`nt you, I smiled

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

again, I knew that the ship that I had just joined was going to Russia, she turned to the other lady and said, you remember me speaking of Austin, who was missing a couple of years ago, at this we stood up to leave the buss, Pat said good luck, and I still think that you are going to Russia again, look after your self, the other lady looked at me smiled, and then said good luck .Austin.

I did not know then, that I would meet this other young lady after the war, and that I would fall in love with her, and that she would become the best thing that has ever happened to me, yes, she became Mrs Byrne, strange how things happen.

As I was saying my leave was near its end, some one said go to the doctor, and he will extend your leave, so I did, he gave me a form to send to Liverpool and told me that I would get about three days, which I did, I got word to go and see an army doctor, who told me that he had to put me into hospital, or I had to go to Liverpool, he said that he would not pass me fit for duty, but that I was fit to travel, so it was off to Liverpool.

I was fit to travel, so I went to Liverpool, there I had to see a Royal Navy doctor, who said that I had not had frost bight, my fingers were still numb, and my feet were very sore, but this guy was out of this world. He examined me and said that I was O K, and was fit for sea, and but for a real navy sick berth attendant, he would have put me on a charge for malingering. I have always found this strange, a doctor in Bradford, said that I was not fit for service in the army in Bradford, but the next day a doctor in Liverpool passed me fit to go back to sea.

I told him that I had been sunk 120 miles north of Murmansk, and that I had been four days in a life boat, he then said that you only got frost bight above 60 degrees north.

The man did not know where Murmansk was, that is true, I went into barracks to

wait my turn for a ship, I joined another ship about the 25 May I was on that ship for 18 months running from Liverpool to Belfast and back, but after a while. When I felt better I wanted to go back deep water, but each time that I said I want to go back deep water, my mother would go on, and say it might happen again, and that it would be a worry for her, but then I did say, I have had enough of Liverpool Belfast I am going to ask for a deep water ship, When my mother found out that I was going back to Russia, she went mad, and said that I could not go as she could not stand me going there again, and that I had to tell them that she could not stand it, my father said that I should ask for a change for my mothers sake, but I said no, I will go, we did not part well at the station, on the Sunday night that I went back, to sail, a few days later, he said that I should consider my mother, I said again I am going, so I turned and walked to the train, I was going back to Russia, on the Fort Mc Murray, that was in 1944, as the lady had guessed.

It was a lot different to 1942, a very big convoy with a very big escort, we were to loose one ship, H M S MARRATTA, she dropped back in the dark to cheer us up, when we had fire bar trouble, and we were only able to steam dead slow, a submarine fired an acoustic torpedo, just as she increased revs to catch up with the convoy, there was a bang and a flash, she was hit, and sank, only about 16 men, out of the crew of about 200, were saved, we steamed on, and made it safely to Murmansk, and back home, strange we left Archangel for home on the 30th March 1944, just two years to the day since I had got sunk.

One sad thing about that trip was, that I could not get ashore in Murmansk, we went round to Archangel, so I did not get to find the hospital to say Thank You, I have been back to Murmansk, I went with Marian in 1987, after I had found Bill Short, I needed Marian with me very much, to hold my hand, when I stood by the graves of the lads who had been in the

same life boat as me, and had died alone in the hospital, I then had a very a strange thought, which place in the row of graves would have been mine, if I also had died in the hospital, or been killed by the bombing, in Murmansk. Four of us were sent to Salford to join the Fort Mc Murray, but we had been told that it was the Port Mc Murray, and with a name like that, we thought it was going to Australia, We were met on the station by a base sailor, who said in a loud voice, for all to hear, You three are as good as dead, your ship is going to Russia, so much for security, one of the lads grabbed hold of him, and said shut up, or I will throw you under that train, one was just coming in., he did shut up.

When we got aboard the ship, the Petty Officer in charge asked where have you been, so I told him, he then went to report that we had joined the ship, on his return, he called me to his cabin, and said, A I have told the officer ashore what happened to you on your trip to Russia, @ he then went on to say that the man had told him, if I did not want to go, he the Petty Officer, would say that he did not want me, and I would be changed with some one on another ship, going west, and only the three of us would know what had happened, he said to go home for the night. And tell him in the morning, but when my mother carried on like she did, that made up my mind for me. So I went back to Russia.

That is my story of the other lifeboat from the S S INDUNA AUSTIN BYRNE. D E M S Gunner PJX312974

103 Merchant ships were sunk going to Russia.

That was the price of Freedom

P.S.

You will remember, that I spoke of a chance meeting in 1944 with the young lady who had lived next door, and that she had her friend with her, it was as I said on a bus in the black out, just before my second trip to Russia. They had both wished me the best of luck.

S.S. INDUNA • THE OTHER LIFE BOAT

After the war I went for drinks with a old friend, he had also served in the Royal Navy, one night he asked me, if I would like to go to a dance that the firm that he worked for were having, I replied that is O K by me, so he got the tickets.

A while after when we were having a drink, he said that he had met the girl that we both knew on the tram, and he had asked her if she would like to go to this dance, she said yes, but what about her friend, so he gave her both of the tickets, and he got two more for us.

Her friend was the young lady, who I saw in the blackout in 1944, we got on well, and we all arranged to meet again, this went on for a few weeks, until the other lady got fed up of my friend, so that was it.

A couple of years later, the local archery club were holding a dance in our local hall, my mother and father had a fish and chip shop, they asked could they put a notice up in the shop, and with this came a free ticket


I went into town to meet with some other friends, and on my way home I went to the dance, and who did I see dancing with another girl, you are correct, it was the

young lady from the past, so I asked a lad who I knew, would he split them with me, which he did, Marian was surprised to see me, and I walked her home to her aunties where she was staying the weekend.

We arranged to meet the next week, and we continued to meet, after that, we had some wonderful holidays together, then we got married. The old priest who married us stopped half way through, the service, and said A I have married a lot of couples, but it is a long time since I married two so much alike he was correct, it was the best thing that I have ever done. A Blind date, and a Free ticket, some how I think that it must have been well you know.

AUSTIN BYRNE

P.S.S.

There were 2 of us, a Maritime Gunner, and my self, we did the work, and we got the boat to land, I could not have done it with out him, and he could not have done it with out me, and what I had learnt in the Sea Cadets, we met a few times after we got home, but he did not go back to sea, I did, I said that there is no draw in war you win or loose. He like the other Maritime Gunners got a Mention in Despatches, The Navy did not give us any thing, yes that hurt, and it still does. 

More Books of WW II

When Civilians Manned the ships (Amphib ships) James A. Kehl ISBN 1-883911-15-X

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BLUEJACKET ODYSSEY-ARMED GUARD IN PACIFIC BY WM.MCGEE-others

Unsung Sailors by Justin Glichauf - Naval Institute

+“A CARELESS WORD-A NEED-LESS SINKING” Library of Congress # 82-73552

Israel Felt Pain of 9/11 Terror Attacks With New Yorkers Jerusalem Monument Stands as ‘Testament to the Shared Pain’



On a hilltop at the entrance to Jerusalem, overlooking a timeless view, stands the Middle East's only memorial to the victims of 9/11. Forged in bronze and set in Jerusalem stone are the names of the 2,974 victims of the terrorist attack. A 30-foot sculpture of an American flag transforming into flames evokes the twin towers. Side by side, the Stars and Stripes and the Shield of David flutter. The monument, built with American contributions to the Jewish National Fund and incorporating granite segments of the World Trade Center, stands as a testament to the shared pain — and common hope — of the United States and Israel.

MORE FROM THE CREW...



At the December meeting of the US Navy Armed Guard/Merchant Marines, Clarence Korker presented Ernie Heaton with a gift of \$100. This gift goes towards the building of a Four Chaplains Monument in Sebastian, FL. Heaton is one of two remaining survivors of the USAT Dorchester, sunk on February 3, 1943. There were four Chaplains aboard, each of a different faith, who as the ship was sinking, gave their life vests to four soldiers to save their lives. This act was remembered on the face of a US Postage Stamp issued in 1948 titled, "The Four Immortal Chaplains, and Interfaith in Action". Heaton, the last person to see the Chaplains alive joined together with fellow veteran and project president, Larry Wapnick to build this Monument scheduled to be unveiled on February 14, 2012. This date is Ernie's 89th birthday. Both Heaton and Wapnick are directors of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains the national organization located in Phila. PA. The Monument is a separate Not for Profit 501C-3 organization and registered in the State of Florida. The sinking of the Dorchester was the third largest naval disaster at the time in US history. There were 902 soldiers aboard, 232 were rescued, of which 8 were US Navy Armed Guard as well as many Merchant Marines.



Fueling a destroyer at sea—a scene familiar to officers and men of the Esso fleet

SALTSHAKER



"I'm certainly going to miss those sailors!"

There I was sitting at the bar staring at my drink when a large, trouble-making biker steps up next to me, grabs my drink and gulps it down in one swig.

"Well, whatcha' gonna do about it?" he says, menacingly, as I burst into tears.

"Come on, man," the biker says, "I didn't think you'd CRY. I can't stand to see a man crying."

"This is the worst day of my life," I say. "I'm a complete failure. I was late to a meeting and my boss fired me. When I went to the parking lot, I found my car had been stolen and I don't have any insurance. I left my wallet in the cab I took home. I found my wife with another man and then my dog bit me."

"So I came to this bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all, I buy a drink, I drop a capsule in and sit here watching the poison dissolve; then you show up and drink the whole thing!"

"But enough about me, how's your day going?"

MERCHANT MARINES SURVEY



Name _____ Date _____

Address (street or PO Box) _____

City/ State/ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email (optional) _____

I am a United States Merchant Marine Veteran of WWII. I served our country from _____ to _____ (dates of service)

I also served our country as a member of the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Force, or Coast Guard ☐yes ☐no (If yes, circle one or write in here) _____

Dates of service: _____ to _____

Please check the following:

1) I currently use the Veterans Administration (VA) Health System. ☐yes ☐no

If you answered yes, about how often do you use it? ☐monthly ☐yearly ☐rarely

If you answered no, why don't you use the VA System? ☐VA clinic or hospital too far
☐Too much paperwork ☐Did not get good service ☐Other reason _____

I have successfully used the VA Health System in the past. ☐yes ☐no

Explanation (optional) _____

2) I currently receive service connected disability benefits. ☐yes ☐no

If you answered yes, what is your disability? _____

What year did you begin receiving disability benefits? _____

3) I have my DD-214, my official discharge from the U.S. Coast Guard for Merchant Marine duty during WWII. ☐yes ☐no

If you answered yes, do you know where it is located? ☐yes ☐no

4) Any comments or questions? (optional) _____

Please mail in envelope provided to: Just Compensation Committee, Ian T Allison, Co-chairman,
P.O. Box 1705, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

THE OILERS THAT SAVED THE FLEET



USS Atascosa (AO-66) The OILERS that saved the FLEET

USS Atascosa (AO-66) was an Atascosa-class fleet oiler acquired by the U.S. Navy for use in World War II. She had the dangerous task of supplying fuel and ammunition to ships in and near, combat areas in both the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

SS Esso Columbia II was built at Chester, Pennsylvania, by the Sun Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co. for the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey; launched on 7 September 1942; sponsored by Mrs. Harold G. McAvenia; renamed by the Navy Atascosa and designated AO-66 on 16 September 1942; purchased by the Navy on 12 October 1942; and commissioned on 9 November 1942, Lt. Comdr. Melvin H. Bassett in command.

World War II North Atlantic operations

Following her commissioning at Baltimore, Maryland, the oiler sailed to Hampton Roads, Virginia, where she arrived on 19 November. At the conclusion of a month of trials, she got underway on 19 December for Port Arthur, Texas, where she took on a cargo of fuel oil and gasoline and then returned to Norfolk, Virginia, on 3 January 1943.

After a two-day respite, Atascosa left the U.S. East Coast, bound for Bermuda. She spent one week there before sailing back into Norfolk on 16 January. Atascosa

made another run to Port Arthur for more oil and discharged that cargo at Norfolk before entering a drydock at the Norfolk Navy Yard for a brief period of repairs. When the oiler was refloated, she began preparations for a deployment to the Pacific.

Transfer to the Pacific Fleet

Atascosa left Norfolk on 19 March and, after stops at Galveston, Texas, and Baytown, Texas, transited the Panama Canal on 4 April. Her ultimate destination was Noumea, New Caledonia, which she reached on 28 April. The oiler discharged her cargo and then loaded more fuel oil and aviation gasoline to be taken to Samoa. She arrived at Pago Pago on 4 May, but left the next day, bound for the United States, and reached San Pedro, California, on 28 May. There, she took on a cargo of petroleum and aircraft for transportation to Suva, Fiji Islands, and Nouméa, New Caledonia. More shuttling between the U.S. West Coast and these ports and the west coast occupied June, July, and August. In early September, Atascosa left Noumea and set course for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides. She arrived there on 9 September and began her duties fueling various ships of the fleet. In October, the oiler added Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands to her fueling stops. She broke this routine somewhat by a trip to Nandi Bay in the Fiji Islands, where she arrived on Christmas Eve 1943. After delivering fuel and supplies, she again got

underway on 11 January 1944 to return to Espiritu Santo.

Searching for survivors in the water

Atascosa put to sea on 15 February to rendezvous with Rear Admiral Merrill's Task Force (TF) 39. She fueled three cruisers and four destroyers at sea before returning to Purvis Bay. A second fueling rendezvous with TF 39 took place on 6 March. The oiler stopped briefly at Purvis Bay, then went to Espiritu Santo on 15 March to begin preparations to rendezvous with a part of TF 58. The meeting occurred at sea on 26 March. Shortly after midnight on the morning of 28 March, Atascosa was informed that a Liberator bomber had gone down in the vicinity of the fueling group, and she began a search for its crew. Observers on the oiler spotted a life raft, but it proved to be unoccupied, and Atascosa soon terminated her rescue efforts.

Approached by a Japanese aircraft

On 29 March, she was servicing units of Destroyer Divisions 93 and 94 when a Japanese plane closed the group. After Atascosa fired two rounds at the intruder, the plane quickly departed. The rest of her mission passed without incident, and Atascosa retired to Espiritu Santo on 5 April.

Stateside overhaul

On 21 May, Atascosa left New Caledonia, bound for the west coast. She arrived at Terminal Island, California, on 7 June to undergo a routine overhaul and repairs. The yard work was completed on 22 July, and the ship got underway to return to her wartime duties. She touched briefly at Pearl Harbor before finally arriving at Eniwetok on 11 August. There, she unloaded her deck cargo and serviced a number of destroyers. Standing out to sea on the 17th, the ship fueled battleships Iowa (BB-61), Indiana (BB-58), and Alabama (BB-60). At a rendezvous with the fast carrier task force between Rota

THE OLIERS THAT SAVED THE FLEET

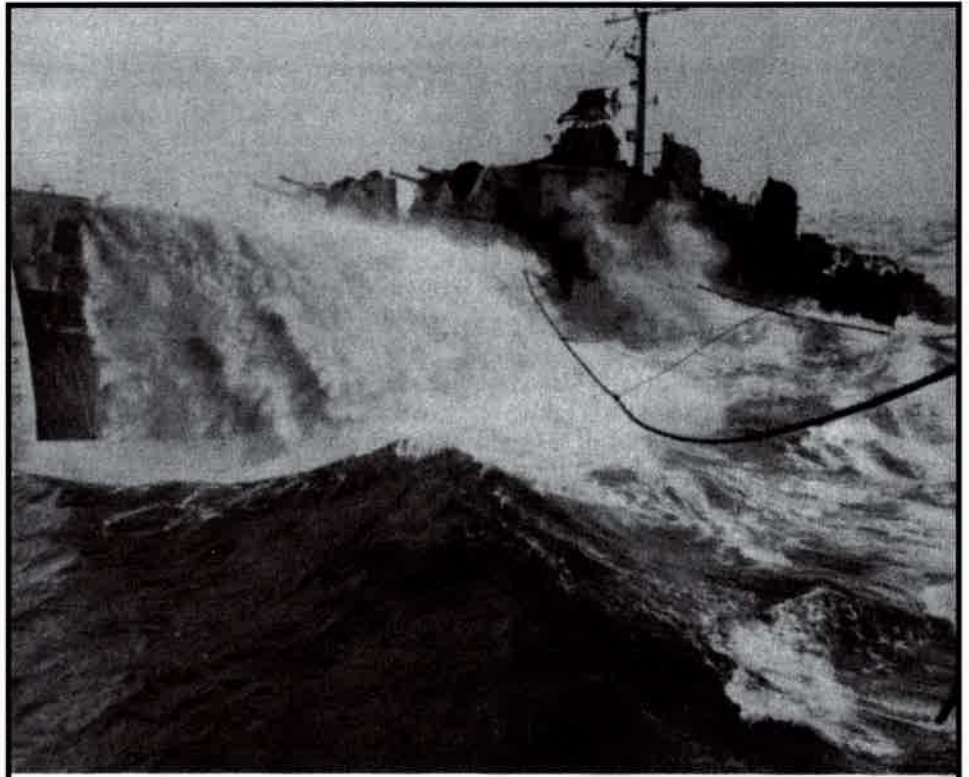
and Guam on 4 September, Atascosa serviced several destroyers and aircraft carrier Enterprise (CV-6).

Fueling during adverse weather

Air alerts interrupted the oiler's routine at Saipan between the 5th and the 9th, before she steamed to Guam. During September Atascosa fueled many units of task force TF 38. She made stops at Saipan and Eniwetok before arriving at Ulithi on 13 October. She got underway again on 21 October to rendezvous with TG 30.8 in an area east of Luzon. The oiler was fueling task force TF 38.3 in early November when she encountered high, seas and increasingly strong winds. During the operation, hose lines between ships were carried away several times. On 7 November, while fueling Langley (CVL-27), the steel manifold on the after port 6-inch connection was carried away, forcing the suspension of operations. Six members of Atascosa's crew were injured while making and tending gasoline connections. The weather abated on 9 November, allowing the oiler's crew to make temporary repairs so that fueling could be resumed. Atascosa put into port at Ulithi on 17 November. She sailed on 10 December to meet fast carrier forces off Cape Engaño and again encountered heavy seas. This soon developed into a typhoon; and, by 18 December, visibility was reduced to zero. The next day, the weather had improved enough to allow fueling to resume. Atascosa returned to Ulithi on 23 December for the Christmas holidays.

Fueling the fleet at Okinawa

During January and February 1945, Atascosa supported the operations of TG 30.8 and made several meetings with TF 58. She dropped anchor at Ulithi on 3 March for repair work. The ships of TF 58 left Ulithi several days before Atascosa departed on 19 March to support their attacks on the Japanese homeland. Her next assignment was to fuel the ships of TG 50.8, which were anchored off



"ROUGH GOING"

Fueling fighting ships on the march was developed to a fine art in World War II. Esso tankers participated in innumerable operations of this sort

The above official Navy photograph shows a destroyer shaking herself free of a huge wave she had taken over her bow while receiving an oil transfusion in the China Sea. One of the fuel lines is visible in the foreground

Okinawa. Atascosa returned to Ulithi on 1 May to undergo repairs and to replenish supplies. In mid-June, Atascosa set her course for Okinawa, where she remained for a month. After a brief supply stop at Ulithi, the oiler put to sea on 8 August to rendezvous with TF 38 off southern Honshū. While engaged in this mission, she received word of Japan's capitulation.


End-of-war activity

Atascosa returned to Ulithi on 31 August. However, her service in the Pacific had not yet ended, as she left on 8 September to steam to Tokyo Bay. She remained in Japan until 24 September, then sailed to San Pedro, California. The oiler arrived back in the United States on 8 October.

Post-war decommissioning

Atascosa was decommissioned on 21

January 1946 at Mare Island, California; her name was struck from the Navy list on 7 February; and she was transferred to the Maritime Commission on 1 July 1946.

Sold to the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey in 1947 and renamed SS Esso Syracuse, she transferred to Panamanian registry in 1950 but continued serving as SS Esso Syracuse until scrapped at Genoa 1960. 329-foot (100 m) forward part grafted to 274-foot (84 m) after part of SS Esso Buffalo which became bulk carrier SS Spitfire and was scrapped 1973. 

U.S. MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS

The Navy Log Entry

Each individual Navy Log record and photo are available for shipmates, friends or family at the U.S. Navy Memorial, www.navylog.org.

Just type in the name of the veteran and the entry (if there) will appear on-site at the Navy Memorial's Log Room kiosk or on-line at www.navylog.org.

You can even add their Service Memories and have them attached to their log entry. Many vets add this feature to their log records. These will be invaluable for future genealogy searches of military service.

As a recording volunteer, you can find living Sea Service veterans for the Navy Log Project at:

- VA Hospitals nationwide
- Nursing homes
- American Legion chapters
- VFW chapters
- Churches & Synagogues

Each log entry is permanently archived for years to come and there is no charge for the entry. In addition, if you have your veteran's DD-214 personnel file in family papers, it will give you the veteran's service history and earned awards. We can also assist you in finding the DD-214 form for a living or deceased veteran.

Photographs:

We prefer a service photo of the veteran in uniform, and if these are not available, you can easily take a close-up head shot of the veteran during the personal interview. Submit photos either digitally or with a color photo print. Original period family photos sent will be scanned and returned to the family (if requested). Your one-on-one contact with a veteran, to log his or her history, will be a rewarding experience for you both. Many veterans are eager and proud to share their service memories with you.

Recording a veteran's military history and personal service recollections always adds to the history of our great nation. All are important and special! Your volunteer efforts are surely needed in this nationwide project to forever archive these veteran's memories of their service to our country.

If they share their service memories, you can video tape them, take a laptop or note pad to write down their comments for their approval. Audio tape recorders are also useful. You will likely hear amazing stories of valor and bravery that are unimaginable.

ERNEST BORGNINE	
	 Rate / Rank GM1 Service Branch USN Service Dates 10/1935 -10/1941 01/1942 -09/1945 Born 01/24/1917 HAMDEN, CT 
LONE SAILOR AWARD RECIPIENT 1997	
SIGNIFICANT DUTY STATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• USS LAMBERTON DD-119• USS SYLPH PY-12	
SIGNIFICANT AWARDS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NAVY GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL (2)• AMERICAN DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL W/FLEET CLASP• AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL• WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL	

These are the living, personal histories of our nation. Each log entry is important for generations to come.

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U.S. MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS



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The U.S. Navy Memorial invites you to archive your personal U.S. Sea Service history on our U.S. Navy log for FREE! The Navy Log is the permanent register of all U.S. Sea Service men and women who have enrolled into the Log by themselves, by their friends, or honored by their families. Add your name and record your service history into the USNM Log Archive. Open to all Navy, Marine, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine veterans, regular or reserve, living or deceased.

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Name _____

Service Corp/Speciality _____

Address (leave blank if deceased) Deceased - date of death _____

City, State & Zip _____

Date of Birth _____ Birthplace _____

Rank/Rate _____

Branch of Service - if you served in one or more of these services, please number in the order you served.

___ Navy ___ Marine Corps ___ Coast Guard

___ Merchant Marine ___ USNR ___ USMCR ___ USCGR

Dates of Service (mm/yy)

Service Branch #1 From _____ To _____ mm/yy

Service Branch #2 From _____ To _____ mm/yy

Awards:

Provide up to 5 of your highest or most significant awards or a copy of your Discharge Form DD 214.

USE SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

☐ My photo is enclosed

Place taken _____

Date _____

GEORGE HERBERT WALKER BUSH	
	Rate / Rank LTJG
	Service Branch USNR
	Service Dates 8/1942 - 8/1945
	Born 8/12/1924 MILTON, MA
WORLD-CHAMBERLAIN FIELD MN 1943	
NAVY LOG	
SIGNIFICANT DUTY STATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">CARRIER AIRCRAFT SERVICE UNIT 21TORPEDO SQUADRON 51 (NAVAL AVIATOR)NAS NORFOLK, VA (U.S. ATLANTIC FLEET)TORPEDO SQUADRON 97TORPEDO SQUADRON 163 (NAVAL AVIATOR)	
SIGNIFICANT AWARDS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSSAIR MEDAL W/2 GOLD STARSPRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION AWARDED USS SAN JACINTO (CVL-38)ASIATIC PACIFIC CAMPAIGN MFDAL W/3 STARSWORLD WAR II VICTORY & AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDALS	

Duty Stations:

Provide up to 5 of your most recent or significant duty stations or a copy of your Discharge Form DD 214.

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Sponsor name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

THE FORGOTTEN CONVOY • JIM RISK

May, 2007

Tar Heel Chapter Log



Jim Risk

A story of great historical value.

Submitted to BBC

Many of us have known that Jim Risk is one of our most active chapter members with an extraordinarily interesting career in the Merchant Marine during the war years.

Since Jim has moved to Cornelius, we see him less often but he still keeps our Charlotte monthly luncheons coordinated.

Recently I learned that Jim has joined the Lake Norman YMCA, which publishes a monthly newsletter. One of the newsletter editors, Adrienne Pedersen was kind enough to take a long ago written document from Jim and edit it into the version below which she published in their quarterly newsletter and shared with me. As Jim reached the 86-year-old milestone on February 28th, a revisit into his past is interesting reading.

Additionally, as many Murmansk sailors are no longer living to tell their story, the British Broadcasting Network (BBC) sent several reporters from the UK to visit Jim in July '06 to film recollections of his wartime experiences in Convoy JW53 – The Forgotten Convoy. We look forward to hearing this story when it may be televised by the BBC. **Happy Birthday Jim.** *Acta non Verba . . .* — Roger Tetrault

The Forgotten Convoy of North Russia . . .

Recollections of Cadet James L. Risk '42

I was born February 28, 1921 in Jacksonville, Florida, and entered the Cadet Corps of the

United States Maritime Commission, Algiers Navy Base, New Orleans, Louisiana, in January 1941.

As a Cadet, my first ship was a "Hog Islander", S.S. *Del Brazil*, Mississippi Shipping Company. I sailed on her from May 29, 1941 to September 5, 1941. Next, I sailed on the S.S. *Del Norte*, from September 16 to November 12, 1941, and then on the S.S. *Del Rio*, from January 14 to July 7, 1942. All of these voyages were between New Orleans and the East Coast of South America.

On the *Del Rio*, the war caught up to us. The first trip was with gun platforms, all of which were empty except for four 30-caliber machine guns

hip, my job was to escort the sick sailor, in handcuffs, through both cities to a native hospital on the outskirts. The American Ambassador was occupied with the riots and was no help to us. That was quite a journey.

A second incident occurred after clearing Recife/Pernambuco. We spotted a lifeboat with about twelve English survivors. Their tanker had been sunk in the Mid-South Atlantic and they had been adrift for twenty-one days and were in bad shape. We took them into Trinidad before we were diverted to New York City. On our journey north, we sneaked by Cape Hatteras, after sighting a German submarine supply ship near Bermuda. We were the first ship to get past Cape Hatteras in 34 days, arriving in New York City on July 7, 1942.

Upon arrival, I was assigned to the Kings Point Academy. We spent our first few nights in the Walter P. Chrysler Mansion before we were moved to the just-acquired Schenck House. Those few months at Kings Point were devoted to Naval Science, Abandon Ship, Communications, Navigation, etc. The weekends were wonderful, with the hospitality of Great Neck neighbors and great New York City escapades. In November, I was told to sit for my Third Mate's license and I got it.

With my license still wet, the War Shipping



amidships. The Captain was a bit of a nut. He had orchids festooned all around the blackout equipment and armor hardware on the bridge. He also had a very large and vicious ring-tailed monkey, chained to supports of the gun platform. It was very effective in keeping us from manning the guns at General Quarters. On our second trip on the *Del Rio*, we had a Navy Armed Guard, four 50-caliber guns, and one 4-inch, 50-caliber broadside aboard.

It was on that trip that we had a merchant seaman with severe DT's locked in the "lazaret". Because of his condition, the Captain decided to put him ashore in the north of Pernambuco, Brazil. Now, the port was a twin city. The lower part, on the bay level, contained all the banks, commerce, and docks and was all German, while the upper city, which was much poorer, was all native. When we arrived, there was chaos because Brazil had just declared war on Germany. The natives were in full riot, pouring over the cliffs into the lower city, destroying all in their path. There were cigars and German money ankle deep in the streets! With a 45-caliber pistol (courtesy of the Armed Guard) strapped to my



North Sea Convoy in WW II.

Administration and Masters, Mates, and Pilots placed me aboard the Lykes Brothers ship, S.S. *City of Omaha*. She was a converted Alaska Packer, built in World War I, with a 1918 reciprocating engine capable of nine knots at best. She was armed with a 4-inch broadside, a 3-inch 50-caliber antiaircraft gun, and eight 20-mm guns. We loaded war supplies, including ammunition, in the lower holds, P58 (Twin Mustang with two fuselages) aircraft in the 'tween-decks, and ready-to-fly P 58 Aircraft on deck. On January 19, 1943, we sailed and thus began the infamous saga of the "Forgotten Convoy of North Russia".

It was my first winter convoy sailing across

THE FORGOTTEN CONVOY • JIM RISK

Tar Heel Chapter Log

May, 2007

the North Atlantic toward a Scottish rendezvous. The trip was a "doozer" — with blizzards, Wolf Packs (clusters of German Submarines), a scattered convoy, blown boiler tubes, a period adrift while being repaired, and a broken rudder. We even had to rig a drag (hatch covers) to port and starboard winches on the stern to achieve partial steering. Eventually, we limped into the vivid green of Belfast, Ireland — what a lovely sight! Tugs then towed us over to

Glasgow where around-the-clock repairs were effected. Then we sailed for the North of Scotland, joining convoy JW53 just as it was forming. Our destination was secret, but we were told to "wear woolen underwear".

On the second day in the open sea, a German aircraft spotter found us. Despite the bad weather, there were bombers flying overhead every twenty minutes and we were kept at General Quarters for 24 hours. We organized the crew with shovels, tongs, and buckets of sand, to cope with the incendiary bombs. These we shoveled over the sides or smothered before they could burn through the deck. Later, the snow and ice

THE ARTIC AREA OF OPERATIONS



THE FORGOTTEN CONVOY OF NORTH RUSSIA

started creating problems, causing our decks to become slippery and making our ships very visible against a black sea. Eventually the crew was too tired and cold to keep the ice cleared from the ship. They were close to mutiny when we spread a black cloth on the mess table and put white plates on it to show them how visible and vulnerable the ice-covered convoy of ships was. There was no further problem with the crew. Blizzard conditions really helped keep the Wolf Pack and Luftwaffe kill down. We left Scotland with twenty-six Allied ships (approximately) and arrived with twenty-four. Remarkably, all eight American ships arrived still afloat, although some were damaged.

All of this happened very early in 1943, so the ships were not equipped with gyros (gyrocompasses). We only had magnetic compasses, so keeping convoy stations in blizzard conditions was very difficult. It was made even more difficult when we got near Bear Island, high up in the Barents Sea. Because this island is composed almost entirely of iron, our compasses spun wildly for several watches, causing near panic in the convoy.

Eventually, we arrived at Murmansk. Our cargo of fighter planes was off-loaded under the direction of "Olga", the stevedore boss, who roamed the ship at will. The city had been reduced to a shambles by repeated German bombings and many of its remaining residents were living in caves. Most of the workers on the docks were really political prisoners who lived in fenced compounds. German Messerschmitts would bounce over the Ural Mountains between

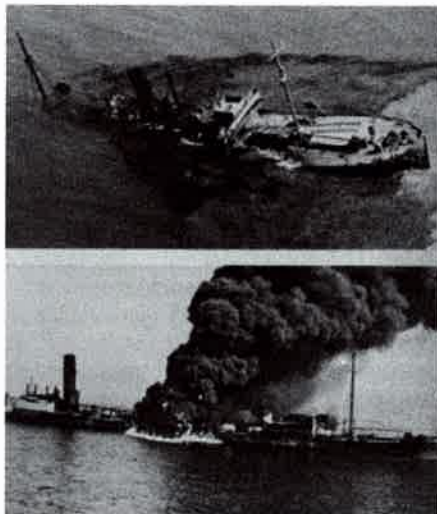
Russia and Finland and drop their two-winged bombs on the ships that were anchored in the river, or at the docks, and be on their way home before Russian aircraft could get at them. While we were there, numerous ships were hit and three or four were sunk. Our only defense was to shoot upwards with everything we had and hope that the German planes would fly through our curtain of lead. We did hit two German planes, plus one Russian, which was in pursuit and mistakenly flew into the curtain

of lead put up from several ships anchored in the Kola Inlet.

After unloading the aircraft, we were told to proceed north into the White Sea. Two Russian icebreakers were sent to lead our four American ships through the four-foot thick ice. These icebreakers had spoon-shaped bows that rode up on top of the ice and crushed it with the downward force of their weight. Naturally, our progress was very slow and we were easy targets for any Stuka dive-bombers in the area. Fortunately, none of them scored any direct hits. On the second day, as one of the Stuka pilots rolled over to start his dive, one of our 3-inch, 50-caliber rounds blew him apart. We examined the wreckage, which spread for nearly a mile over the ice, but there was little left of the plane of its pilot.

This being February/March, the annual seal birthing was taking place, right there on the White Sea ice. What a sight — blue-white glistening ice as far as one could see, but all of it covered in red with seal birthing and afterbirth. Did you know that baby seals cry like a human baby? There we were, stuck in the ice with thousands of crying babies all around.

Five days later, we reached our destination — Molotovsk (now called Severodvinsk). It was a wooden city, just built to handle Allied cargos, and populated by people from all over Russia. There were 127 different dialects spoken in Molotovsk. Apartment houses were three stories high, with five or six people, frequently strangers, crowded into one-room setups. Curtains separated the sleeping areas, there was a



Direct hits on less fortunate ships.

THE FORGOTTEN CONVOY • JIM RISK

May, 2007

Tar Heel Chapter Log

common cooking area, and there was a big common toilet on the first floor - about ten holes with a big excavation underneath. Each day the excavation was cleaned out and the refuse taken to the fields to be used as fertilizer. The "Honey Wagons", as we called them, were also used to pick up corpses each morning. The dead were left in the street gutters during the night and hauled away for burial. Many old people died there because the Russian Government issued chits for work. These chits could be exchanged for food, housing, and clothing. Those who did no work received no chits. Food was scarce even if you had chits, and a very big, active, black market existed. Each house was like a compound, run by an armed Commissar, who had the power of life and death over its inmates. Once we saw an old man shot for stealing, and another time we saw a political prisoner, who was being marched to work, shot for stepping out of line to retrieve an Allied cigarette.

At the beginning of our stay in Molotovsk, our ship had lots of food, candy, cigarettes, and things to trade and barter. In fact, the Allied forces lived pretty well for several months. There was a small Intourist place in the city, staffed by University of Moscow students. Here we could get vodka, although it was rationed (three quarters of an ounce per night, two nights a week) and they also had black bread. The girls there were very serious, discussing Karl Marx while dancing to a windup half-broken Victrola with ancient American records.

Since we were several hundred miles be-



yond bombing range, we stood watch, two days "on" and four days "off", so we had plenty of free time on our hands. We spent this time playing lots of poker and making visits to Archangel, a city about forty miles away. To travel there in winter, we made skis from dunnage, and in summer, we sometimes rode an old military train. Sometimes

we stayed over at the hotel Intourist. It had common toilets, too! We attended the ballet and the opera, and, after several visits, we started to make friends with the local people. Everyone there spoke several foreign languages and many were eager to improve their English. We visited their homes, apartments and civic activities, and, although they did not have much to share, they did what they could. It was interesting that all of them had been told by their government that our government supplied us with our tobacco, food, and clothing, purely as propaganda and that, as individuals, we didn't own anything. No amount of explaining could convince them that the uniform and watch I wore were mine, brought with earned money.

Archangel is on the Northern Dvina River and, as summer dragged on, the water became tolerable to the Russians and nude bathing was very common. Naturally, the Allied sailors left their ships and lined the banks of the river to watch, so the authorities posted signs saying that clothing must be worn "while bathing". Luckily, there were no bathhouses, so that watching the people change was almost as interesting as watching them bathe.

One day, while walking by myself on the outskirts of Archangel, I met a very attractive young girl about my own age. She told me that she was an American, and if seen with me, she would be sent to Siberia. Apparently, back in the 20's and 30's, there were quite a few disenfranchised intellectuals in America who went to Russia with their families. Her father, who was such a person, was now a professor in the local university. They were not allowed to leave Russia and were virtual prisoners, although they were allowed slightly better accommodations than some of the other locals. But compared with what they left behind in the USA, they were certainly very disenfranchised with the Russian brand of Communism. As a group, the expatriate Americans met in secret and compared notes. I, too, met with them in secret and gave them cigarettes, food, and clothing. On a subsequent trip, I found that several former friends had disappeared and it was believed that they had been sent to labor camps.

Although we spent a lot of time off ship in Archangel and elsewhere, there was also a lot to do with our shipmates. We made baseball bats from dunnage and Russian lumber, and baseball mitts from hot-shell man's gloves. A talented engineer made baseballs from small black engine-room rubber balls, wound, wound, and wound with string, with the outside cover cut from leather tops of Navy-issue boots, and sewn. Thus equipped, the Merchant and Navy crews organized the "White Sea Baseball League." Our league games drew much attention from the local Russians, who came in droves to see what the "crazy" Americans were doing now. With almost a full 24-hours of daylight this far north in

summer, we played games in the middle of the so-called night. Competition between the Navy Gun crews and Merchant crews was very intense. We had five teams each. I can't, at this late date, remember who won, but I think the Armed Guard crews may have come out on top.

Eight months in North Russia is a very, very



Jim Risk at machine gun.

long time. One of the kids in the Armed Guard on my ship had given up hope of ever going home. As I stepped outside my stateroom one evening, I saw him jump from the bridge. Without thinking, I dived after him, yelling for the crew to launch a lifeboat to pick us up. Even in the harbor, the water was so cold that both of us immediately vomited. I forgot all about the rescue and he forgot about the suicide! The lifeboat picked us both up. After the war, I was told that I had been authorized to receive the Meritorious Medal for this act.

In November 1943, we eventually made preparations to sail for home. Why were we there so long? Well, don't forget that the British controlled the convoys in the North Atlantic. When Churchill began his Mediterranean Sea-North Africa Campaign, he drew out all his capital ships from the Atlantic. This left North Russian convoys unprotected from the German Wolf Packs holed up in Norway and the Baltic. We just happened to be in Russia when the convoys were halted.

During our stay in Molotovsk, we had been issued with temporary Russian seaman passports. I wanted to take mine home as a souvenir, so I reported it lost a couple of days before sailing. Unfortunately, I subsequently needed to visit another ship so I flashed my passport to the Russian guard on dock and was immediately taken into custody and grilled by the KGB for several hours. They were not amused and did not let me keep it.

Eventually, we sailed for home. It was a quiet and safe trip to Scotland, and when we anchored in the Firth of Clyde, the Navy brought us fresh food. We were not in the best of shape by that time. Our ships had run out of food while we were

THE FORGOTTEN CONVOY • JIM RISK

Tar Heel Chapter Log

May, 2007

still in Russia and we had lived on Spam and dehydrated potatoes and carrots for weeks. The fresh meat and vegetables provided by the Navy immediately made all hands violently sick.

We arrived in Philadelphia on December 22, 1943. America never looked so good! After what we had seen, we had very few men aboard who had any Communist leanings. Although I had not been able to keep my Russian passport, I had acquired some 2,000 rubles and wartime paper scrip. Fearing a detailed search by U.S. Customs, I hid all the Russian money among the charts in the Chartroom upon reentering the U.S.A. Of course, in the excitement of coming home, I forgot all about the rubles. I have often wondered if the ship ever sailed again and what the new Second Mate thought when he was sorting through the charts and discovered the rubles.

After a home visit and an officer's upgrade in New York City, I was assigned a ship for India and the Burma Campaign. Again, we carried aircraft on deck — P47's this time. At Karachi, we unloaded the aircraft onto a very long peninsula and dock combination. Within an hour of off-loading, the British and American pilots checked the planes out, loaded them, and took off for Burma, right from the peninsula. They were desperately needed.

My new ship was a Liberty, the S.S. *Cardinal Gibbons*. I was acting Chief Mate and the Captain was a guy named Harry Kort, who was aged 82, and had returned to active service after fifteen years' retirement. Although he was half blind, crippled, and in general poor health, he had a license. Whenever we heard him stomping up the ladder to the bridge, we immediately shifted operations to the flying bridge because he couldn't get there. We had our reasons. One night, on the return trip, the Second Mate called me in panic. The Captain, who was on the bridge at the time, had ordered the ship to change course to head for an airplane landing field beacon that he had mistaken for Port Aden Lighthouse! When we returned to New York City, the Port Captain asked Captain Kort how he like sailing with such a young crew and officers — we were all under 23. He answered, "I have no idea how we got to India and back, because I could never find any of my officers on duty when I went up to the bridge, but they must have been aboard though, because the mess room was always full at mealtimes."

I got quite a reputation with this same Port Captain. When we were in Bombay, I decided to paint the ship. The bos'n reported that there wasn't enough paint for the job, but we did have barrels of fish oil, which we used to lift rust off the bare decks. So I decided to make up the shortfall of paint and mix it with the fish oil. A beautiful freshly painted ship resulted. But disaster struck! After a few days in the sun at 125 degrees F., that gray ship suddenly became purple.

Back in New York City, the S.S. *Cardinal Gibbons* became known as Risk's "Purple Passion." Although it was not quite what I had intended, the new paint job was effective. The Germans were sinking a lot of ships in the Indian Ocean at that time, and our purple ship blended in perfectly with the deep purple dawns and sunsets so characteristic of that ocean. We got through without a sighting, running independently without a convoy or escort.

On March 8, 1945, back in New York City, I



Clearing ice became a non-ending challenge on the Murmansk convoys.

got my Chief Mate's license after sailing as acting Chief Mate for a year. I sailed on March 30, 1945 for a second trip to North Russia on the S.S. *John Sergeant*, another Liberty. On this voyage, we had a deck load of 80-ton narrow-gauge locomotives. We endured yet another North Atlantic winter crossing and this time fought our way to Murmansk against the weather instead of the Germans. During the trip, I had to work myself and my crew practically to death to keep the ship and cargo intact. We even welded together a small crack that developed in the deck. But, when we arrived at Murmansk, we found that the docks could not handle the locomotives, so we sailed back into the frozen White Sea. There were no Stukas or seals this time, but we had been warned to watch out for the Russians' channel pilots, who had started to run Allied ships up onto the sand bars. Then, once the ships were abandoned, because of the lack of Allied tugs and salvage equipment, the Russians would miraculously produce tugs and thereby acquire the ships. Having been there before, I ended up throwing the pilot off the ship and doing my own piloting.

Now, during our trip I had had no time for

shaving, bathing, or fresh clothes, so, by the time we docked at Backarist, I was a mess. Backarist, now called Novodynsk, is up the Northern Dvina River, almost across from Archangel. I was not about to let the Russians touch my 80-ton locomotives that I had nursed all the way from the USA. So the ships' crew and I off-loaded our deck load, using jumbo and doubled cargo booms. It was snowing all the time, and I was sent word that my crew and I had to go to Immigration. I came in with the sailors wearing heavy weather gear and no officer's insignia and tossed my American passport in front of the NKVD Immigration. The Immigration Officer took one look, leaned back, glared up at me, and said, "Vell, Mister Riskie, welcome back to Russia. Ve hope this visit you vill not get into any more trouble with our laws." I was dumbfounded! They kept me under constant surveillance all the time I was there.

During my shipboard war years, I was in the South Atlantic Theatre, North Russia, India, Sicily, Italy, UK, Holland, and France. I came ashore for good in January 1947. It is with sorrow and very deep regret that I recognize that the USA is not a viable dominant factor on the world's oceans any more. We may live to regret it.

Provided by James L. Risk '42, Sept. 1992

Compiler's note: The images of the North Sea Convoy, Wolf Pack hits, and an ice-clad vessel, were obtained from national library archives. Other photographs were provided by Mr. Risk (NC USMMAAF).



Some of the awards earned by Jim Risk for actions serving his country during WW II in the Merchant Marine. The Merchant Marine had a higher casualty rate than any branch of the armed services and is the only U.S. Military Academy to send cadets to war. 142 made the ultimate sacrifice in WW II and USMMA cadets continued to serve in every war, including cadets currently engaged in the Middle East Gulf War.



AUSTRALIA'S WAR 1939-1945

Australia Attacked



Sydney Harbour

In May and June 1942 the war was brought home to Australians on the east coast when the Japanese attacked Sydney Harbour from the sea. In the late afternoon of 31 May 1942 three Japanese submarines, I-22, I-24 and I-27, sitting about seven nautical miles (13 kilometres) out from Sydney Harbour, each launched a Type A midget submarine for an attack on shipping in Sydney Harbour. The night before, I-24 had launched a small floatplane that flew over the harbour, its crew spotting a prize target – an American heavy cruiser, the USS Chicago. The Japanese hoped to sink this warship and perhaps others anchored in the harbour. After launching the three two-man midget submarines, the three mother submarines moved to a new position off Port Hacking to await the return of the six submariners sent into the harbour. They would wait there until 3 June.

All three midget submarines made it into the harbour. Electronic detection equipment picked up the signature of the first (from I-24) late that evening but it was thought to be either a ferry or another vessel on the surface passing by. Later, a Maritime Services Board watchman spotted an object caught in an anti-submarine net. After investigation, naval patrol boats reported it was a submarine and the general alarm was raised just before 10.30 pm. Soon afterwards, the midget submarine's crew, Lieutenant Kenshi Chuma and Petty Officer Takeshi Ohmori, realising they were trapped, blew up their craft and themselves. Before midnight, alert sailors on the deck of USS Chicago spotted another midget submarine. They turned

a searchlight on it and opened fire but it escaped. Later, gunners on the corvette HMAS Geelong also fired on a suspicious object believed to be the submarine.

'The sinking of the Kuttabul'

The response to the attack was marred by confusion. Vision was limited and ferries continued to run as the midget submarines were hunted. At about 12.30 am there was an explosion on the naval depot ship HMAS Kuttabul, a converted harbour ferry, which was moored at Garden Island as an accommodation vessel. The crew of the midget submarine from I-24 had fired at the USS Chicago but missed, the torpedo striking the Kuttabul instead. Nineteen Australian and two British sailors on the Kuttabul died, the only Allied deaths resulting from the attack, and survivors were pulled from the sinking vessel.

'Japanese raid...'

A second torpedo fired by the same midget submarine ran aground on rocks on the eastern side of Garden Island, failing to explode. Having fired both their torpedoes, the crew made for the harbour entrance but they disappeared, their midget submarine perhaps running out of fuel before reaching the submarines' rendezvous point. The third midget submarine from I-22 failed to make it far into the harbour. Spotted in Taylors Bay and attacked with depth charges by naval harbour patrol vessels, Lieutenant Keiu Matsuo and Petty Officer Masao Tsuzuku, shot themselves. The mother submarines departed the area after it became obvious that their midget submarines would not be returning. The submarine I-24 is believed to have been responsible for a number of attacks on merchant ships as well as shelling Sydney Harbour a week later.

'Eight men...'

The bodies of the four Japanese crewmen from the midget submarines launched by I-22 and I-27 were recovered when these two midget submarines were raised. They were cremated at Sydney's Eastern Suburbs Crematorium with full naval honours. Rear Admiral Muirhead-Gould,

in charge of Sydney Harbour defences, along with the Swiss Consul-General and members of the press, attended the service. The admiral's decision to accord the enemy a military funeral was criticised by many Australians but he defended his decision to honour the submariners' bravery. He also hoped that showing respect for the dead men might help to improve the conditions of the many Australians in Japanese prisoner of war camps.

Many Australians resented the naval honours accorded to the four Japanese submariners at their funeral in Sydney.

[Reproduced with permission of The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 and 11 June 1942]

After the recovery of the two midget submarines a composite was constructed using the bow section of one and the stern of the other. It was decided to use this composite midget submarine to raise money for the Royal Australian Navy Relief Fund and the King George Fund for Merchant Sailors. The composite submarine was first put on display at Bennelong Point, now the site of the Sydney Opera House, and people paid a small fee to see it. It was then transported by truck on a 4000-kilometre journey through south-eastern Australia raising further funds. Eleven months after the submarine raid, the composite submarine was installed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. In 1968, Lieutenant Matsuo's mother travelled to Australia to visit the spot where her son had died. During her visit she scattered cherry blossoms in the water where her son's midget submarine had been located and later she presented a number of gifts to the Australian War Memorial. In November 2006, part of the mystery of the midget submarine from I-24 was solved when divers discovered the wreck of the submarine off Sydney's northern beaches. We will probably never know if Lieutenant Ban and his navigator, Petty Officer Ashibe Mamoru intended to rejoin their 'mother' submarine or whether they had no intention of returning and simply scuttled their vessel.



U.S. MERCHANT MARINE

"WW II Merchant Marine Service Act"

Article in Local Newspaper. Daily Advance in Elizabeth City, NC 27909

A Camden County resident who served as a Merchant Mariner in World War II is continuing to press for his fellow seamen to receive veteran status from the federal government.

"We owe 'em," Don Horton said Tuesday. "Those people stood up for us. They served our country well.

"We recognize veterans throughout history, in most cases," Horton said. "These people were as much a veteran as anyone else. They did jobs that most people wouldn't do."

And Horton said women who served were "downright disregarded" and were told they would not be recognized for their service. "That was wrong. That was discrimination," he said.

Horton is particularly seeking action honoring some 30,000 Merchant Mariners whom he said served along American coastlines during World War II. Asked how many he believes are still alive, he said, "Very, very few."

Horton, 79, began his effort to honor the seamen after unsuccessfully trying to locate a photo in 2008 of a tugboat his late brother William Lee "Billy" Horton Jr. served on.

Billy Horton died when a German submarine sank the tugboat off the Virginia coast on March 31, 1942, after he had only been on the tugboat a few days. The brother, who was 17 at the time, had served with the Horton family on barges.

During Don Horton's search for a picture, he found out about a law President Reagan signed in 1988, making Merchant Mariners of World War II eligible for benefits.

Horton submitted applications to the Maritime Administration on behalf of himself, his parents, William Lee Horton and Sadie Horton, his two brothers and his late sister, Doris Jean Dickerson. He received denials because of the lack of required paperwork.

In an attempt to simplify the process and help make obtaining benefits easier, U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield, D-N.C., introduced House Resolution 1288.

Other backers include U.S. Reps. Walter Jones, R-N.C., Mike McIntyre, D-N.C., and Jeff Fortenberry, R-Neb.

The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on March 31. The matter was referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs on April 15 and is awaiting action.

U.S. Sen. Kay Hagan, D-N.C., in a statement expressed the appreciation of the service by and the sacrifices of the Merchant Mariners.

"And I will work with my colleagues in the Senate to determine the appropriate way to recognize their service," she said.

U.S. Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., also said in a statement that he is aware of the pending House legislation and that he is going to review the details once the text is sent to the Senate.

During World War II, many Merchant Mariners, using tugboats and barges, carried materials and supplies to the various defense plants, meaning they were assisting with wartime operations. Horton himself began working with his family on vessels when he was 10.

To qualify for veteran's status, the National Maritime Office requires copies of official logbooks from each of the vessels Horton's family served on, discharge papers from each port visited or company issued records and documentation on an official letterhead.

Horton has said such requirements are impossible to produce in some cases.

As an example, his mother and other women in the socially conservative 1940s did not receive federal government documentation as having even served in the Merchant Marines.

Additionally, deck and engine logbooks, which were considered the property of the ships' owners, were destroyed in the 1970s because they were so voluminous and burdensome to try to maintain.

Also, some World War II period logbooks do not name ports visited by vessels because of security reasons.

Horton has said he has produced the following information to the government:

- His father's Merchant Marine employment certificates, which are dated 1939.
- Letters to his mother from the Southern Transportation Co. apologizing for not issuing Billy Horton's wages of \$21.37 after his death.
- And discharge certificates from trips at sea for Horton's brother Jack, 82 of Elizabeth City.

Other documents included postcards, payroll documents and seaman identification papers with photos.

Billy Horton's casualty report was located and he is recognized as a veteran.

Don Horton also said he was later able to get the government to recognize his father as a veteran, based on shipping records he obtained from the National Archives and provided to officials.

House Resolution 1288, if approved, would say that:

- If an applicant lacks shipping or discharge forms, shipping logbooks or

U.S. MERCHANT MARINE

other official employment records, the Veterans Affairs secretary could still provide recognition. The secretary could do so based on Social Security records, along with testimony by the applicant or the primary next of kin showing the applicant served in World War II.

- If an applicant's shipping or discharge form, ship logbook or other official employment record has been destroyed, the secretary could still accept other official documentation showing the applicant served in the war.

Submitted by jdonhorton on June 19, 2011 - 3:20pm.

Don Horton can be contacted at jdonhorton@embarqmail.com or 252 336 5553.

Capt. Rick Taylor is quite right in his quote, "What's deplorable is the fact that this requested recognition as veterans has languished for scores of years. Maybe, just maybe, there'll be a handful of live Merchant Marine Veterans who may benefit by this status when / if it is passed." While Mr. Bill West provided a great article, it missed its intended mark.

The intent of the article was to draw attention the severity of non recognition as veterans for some merchant mariners that have been left to history and will not be recognized unless congressional action is taken. This action will not take place unless our members of the US Senate take action simultaneously with the House of Representatives to get a bill passed that will allow for alternative documentation to replace those that were destroyed/denied by government actions.

The article states the both of our Senators will wait until action is completed in the House and passed to them before they plan to take action. This is a political ploy to politely say they will do nothing. Their backs are turned. Statistics prove that the vast majority of bills introduced and passed to House

subcommittees never reach the floor thereby never reaching the Senate. The Senators knew this all too well. It's their game. This is particularly so for our two Senators when it involves the Merchant Marine.

There are currently about 40 cosponsors on the bill in the House and it will take about this many more before it reaches the House floor for a formal vote. It may take as much as 2 or 3 months to gain this many votes and if it reaches the floor and passed to the Senate, there will not be enough time in this congress to get it through the Senate, to the president and into a bill before congress dismisses for the term. This will cause the bill to start all over again and go through the same process. Both senators know this and have chosen to ignore taking action per their statements to Mr. West.

This brings us back to Capt. Taylor's statement that "Maybe there'll be a handful of live MM veterans who may benefit if it is passed. WE can't afford to wait any longer. Else it will be all for history. No veteran will see this recognition.

When I called and asked Mr. West to assist me in getting the word out, my intent for the article was to bring attention to the citizens of North Carolina that concurrent action in both houses will be required if we are to see any benefits for these seamen while any are still with us. Estimates indicate that maybe there are about 300 to 500 seamen left from 30,000. Action must be now and the citizens of NC have told our Senators this through the many letters, resolutions & petitions from our NC Delegates, party leaders, county Commissioners and individual citizen. There have been at least two requests from a government or political leaders from each of the 100 counties in NC. Most have been unanswered. Either we must find a way to turn our Senators around and respond to our request or find a way to turn them out. North Carolina stands behind our veterans and we demand the same from our Senators.

Too Little, Too Late

Submitted by williwaw on June 18, 2011 - 12:39am.

I think it's admirable that some folks (not too many) have refused to "give up the ghost" (albeit most WWII Merchant Mariners are just that - ghosts)....to get the well deserved recognition for their efforts in helping us win the war.

What's deplorable is the fact that this requested recognition as veterans has languished for scores of years. Maybe, just maybe, there'll be a handful of live Merchant Marine Veterans who may benefit by this status when / if it is passed.

I'm a civilian and for about 3/4 of my career I hauled the mundane Oil, LNG, wheat etc. Yet during Desert Storm I hauled >13,000 tons of bombs which we transferred to Navy ships while underway in the Red Sea. I got a nice document and medel or that. During the Iraq soiree, I hauled over \$1Bn of rolling stock (m1 Abrams tanks, helicopters, Humvees, loaded tanker trailers) each trip to Kuwait and for that I also got a few more nice documents and a couple more medals.

Why this couldn't have come much sooner is a huge black eye for those who have not enthusiastically supported it.

**Service Number serving War Dead
Percent Ratio**

- *Merchant Marine* *243,000**
9,521 *3.90%**
1 in 26*
- Marines 669,108 19,733 2.94%
1 in 34
- Army 11,268,000 234,874 2.08%
1 in 48
- Navy 4,183,466 36,958 0.88%
1 in 114
- Coast Guard 242,093 574 0.24%
1 in 421

Respectfully,
Capt. Rick Taylor (Ret.)
Moyock, NC



WILLIE, JOE AND BILL



*Something that came in the mail today.
Something that I believe needs sharing.....*

Willie, Joe and Bill.....

This is a bit of nostalgia for a few who remember these cartoons from this man and WWII...And a good history lesson for all of you born after the 1940's....

Get out your history books and open them to the chapter on World War II. Today's lesson will cover a little known but very important hero of whom very little was ever really known. Here is another important piece of lost US history, which is a true example of our American Spirit.

Makes ya proud to put this stamp on your envelopes.....

Bill Mauldin stamp honors grunt's hero. The post office gets a lot of criticism. Always has, always will. And with the renewed push to get rid of Saturday mail delivery, expect complaints to intensify. But the United States Postal Service deserves a standing ovation for something that happened in 2010: Bill Mauldin got his own postage stamp.

Mauldin died at age 81 in the early days of 2003. The end of his life had been rugged. He had been scalded in a bathtub, which led to terrible injuries and infections; Alzheimer's disease was inflicting its cruelties. Unable to care for himself after the scalding, he became a resident of a California nursing home, his health and spirits in rapid decline.

He was not forgotten, though. Mauldin, and his work, meant so much to the millions of Americans who fought in World

War II, and to those who had waited for them to come home. He was a kid cartoonist for Stars and Stripes, the military newspaper; Mauldin's drawings of his muddy, exhausted, whisker-stubbed infantrymen, Willie and Joe, were the voice of truth about what it was like on the front lines.

Mauldin was an enlisted man just like the soldiers he drew for; his gripes were their gripes, his laughs their laughs, his heartaches their heartaches. He was one of them. They loved him.

He never held back. Sometimes, when his cartoons cut too close for comfort, superior officers tried to tone him down. In one memorable incident, he enraged Gen. George S. Patton, who informed Mauldin he wanted the pointed cartoons celebrating the fighting men, lampooning the high-ranking officers to stop. Now!

The news passed from soldier to soldier. How was Sgt. Bill Mauldin going to stand up to Gen. Patton? It seemed impossible.

Not quite. Mauldin, it turned out, had an ardent fan: Five-star

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied forces in Europe. Ike put out the word: Mauldin draws what Mauldin wants. Mauldin won. Patton lost.

If, in your line of work, you've ever considered yourself a young hotshot, or if you've ever known anyone who has felt that way about him or herself, the story of Mauldin's young manhood will humble you. Here is what, by the time he was 23 years old, Mauldin had accomplished:

He won the Pulitzer Prize, was featured on the cover of Time magazine. His book "Up Front" was the No. 1 best-seller in the United States.

All of that at 23. Yet, when he returned to civilian life and grew older, he never lost that boyish Mauldin grin, never outgrew his excitement about doing his job, never

big-shotted or high-hatted the people with whom he worked every day.

I was lucky enough to be one of them. Mauldin roamed the hallways of the Chicago Sun-Times in the late 1960s and early 1970s with no more officiousness or air of haughtiness than if he was a copyboy. That impish look on his face remained.

He had achieved so much. He won a second Pulitzer Prize, and he should have won a third for what may be the single greatest editorial cartoon in the history of the craft: his deadline rendering, on the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, of the statue at the Lincoln Memorial slumped in grief, its head cradled in its hands. But he never acted as if he was better than the people he met. He was still Mauldin, the enlisted man.

During the late summer of 2002, as Mauldin lay in that California nursing home, some of the old World War II infantry guys caught wind of it. They didn't want Mauldin to go out that way. They thought he should know he was still their hero.

Gordon Dillow, a columnist for the Orange County Register, put out the call in Southern California for people in the area to send their best wishes to Mauldin. I joined Dillow in the effort, helping to spread the appeal nationally, so Bill would not feel so alone. Soon, more than 10,000 cards and letters had arrived at Mauldin's



WILLIE, JOE AND BILL



bedside.

Better than that, old soldiers began to show up just to sit with Mauldin, to let him know that they were there for him, as he, so long ago, had been there for them. So many volunteered to visit Bill that there was a waiting list. Here is how Todd DePastino, in the first paragraph of his wonderful biography of Mauldin, described it:

"Almost every day in the summer and fall of 2002 they came to Park Superior nursing home in Newport Beach, California, to honor Army Sergeant, Technician Third Grade, Bill Mauldin. They came bearing relics of their youth: medals, insignia, photographs, and carefully folded newspaper clippings. Some wore old garrison caps. Others arrived resplendent in uniforms over a half century old. Almost all of them wept as they filed down the corridor like pilgrims fulfilling some long-neglected obligation."

One of the veterans explained to me why it was so important: "You would have to be part of a combat infantry unit to appreciate what moments of relief Bill gave us. You had to be reading a soaking wet Stars and Stripes in a water-filled foxhole and then see one of his cartoons."

Mauldin is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. In March 2010, the kid cartoonist made it onto a first-class postage stamp. It's an honor that most generals and admirals never receive.

What Mauldin would have loved most,

I believe, is the sight of the two guys who keep him company on that stamp. Take a look at it Willie. There's Joe. And there, to the side, drawing them and smiling that shy, quietly observant smile, is Mauldin himself... With his buddies, right where he belongs. Forever.

What a story, and a fitting tribute to a man and to a time that few of us can still remember. But I say to you youngsters, you must most seriously learn of and remember with respect the sufferings and sacrifices of your fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers in times you cannot ever imagine today with all you have. But the only reason you are free to have it all is because of



"Here's yer money back fer them souvenirs. Ya been scarin' hell outta our replacements."

I thought you would all enjoy reading and seeing this bit of American history!



BLUEJACKET ODYSSEY, 1942-1946: FROM GUADALCANAL TO BIKINI, NAVAL ARMED GUARD IN THE PACIFIC by William L. McGee, Foreword by C.A. Lloyd William L. McGee and Sandra McGee www.williammcgeebooks.com <<http://www.williammcgeebooks.com>> PO Box 1012, Tiburon, CA 94920 tel 415-435-1883 bmcpublications@aol.com

VETERAN PAUL BRINDOCK

Armed Guard Veteran Paul Brindock

Paul Brindock, who left Ebervale to serve his country during World War II, was remembered recently with a flag ceremony at Cape May Point, N.J.

"It was very solemn, yet very heartfelt," Karen Baldino said of the sunset service held for her late father outside Sunset Beach Gift Shops.

According to Baldino, the flag that draped her father's casket in 2005 was flown near the converging waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Delaware Bay. In the evening, hundreds watched as the flag was lowered.

"Veterans and servicemen saluted the flag alike while non-military civilians placed their right hands over their chests," recalled Baldino, of Lambertville, N.J.

Patriotic songs were also played at the service, which also honored the United States, its flag and other veterans, she said. Baldino learned about the Cape May ceremonies from a report on a New Jersey television station.

"My husband said, 'Wouldn't it be nice to do it for both of our dads?'" who were World War II veterans, she recalled. With a little luck, the couple arranged the ceremonies.

"They were really backlogged, but they had two cancellations," Baldino said.

Donna Holmes, an employee of Sunset Beach Gift Shops, said the flag ceremonies for deceased veterans are offered from the end of May to the end of September each year. "They've been held for over 40 years," she said. "They've become so big. Our parking lot fills and people have to park all the way up the street. It's really a beautiful ceremony. It looks like the sun sets right into the bay." Flags have been flown for veterans of all wars. Many, if not all, states have been represented, Holmes said.

According to Baldino, Brindock enlisted in the Navy in 1943 and served in the ranks of apprentice seaman, seaman and coxswain until his honorable discharge in 1946. He served with the Navy's Armed Guard aboard many Merchant Marine ships. He lived in East Windsor, N.J. before returning to Hazle Township.

Brindock, who died in 2005, was a life member and past commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars posts 5010 in Freeland and 5700 in Hightstown, N.J. His brothers, John, Michael, Peter and Nicholas Brindock, all formerly of Ebervale, also served in the military. John Brindock died in 1945 in Italy while serving in the Army, Baldino said. Following the ceremony, the flag was refolded and returned to Brindock's wife of 56 years, Eleanor (Gombeda) Brindock of Hazle Township.

Brindock is also survived by another daughter, Colleen Bognet, Hazle Township; a sister, Helen Feschuk, Hazleton; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren jwhalen@standardspeaker.com

Here is the story submitted to us by Mr. Brindock's daughter: Former Resident/Veteran Honored at Cape May, NJ Flag Lowering Ceremony - 7/23/2011


As the sun peeked from behind the clouds and beach goers waited in anticipation of sunset over the meeting of the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean, a voice over the loudspeaker announced the beginning of a ceremony to honor our flag, country and those who gave their lives and fought in wars for our country. This evening, our US Navy Veteran, Paul Brindock, will be honored. Paul Brindock, formerly of Ebervale, PA and East Windsor, NJ was known to his family and friends as a patriot and true WW2 Vet. He died on April 8, 2005 at the age of 80.

Paul served his country after enlisting in the US Navy on April 14, 1943. He served in the ranks of AS; S2c; Slc; and Coxswain until July 5, 1946 when he was

honorably discharged. He served with the Navy's Armed Guard aboard Merchant Marine ships on the NRS Newark NJ; SS Larranaga; NOB Halifax NS; SS Ralph Izard; SS Woodbridge Victory; ACC NoLa; SS Thomas Sully; NTS Newport RI; AGC Brooklyn NY; R/S NYd Philadelphia PA; R/S Brooklyn NY; NYD Annex Tompkinsville SI NY; PSC Lido Beach LINY. He served his country alongside his brothers John, Michael, Peter and Nicholas, all formerly of Ebervale. His brother John died in Italy while serving in the US Army on April 17, 1945.

Paul was a life-member and past Commander of the VFW Post 5010 in Freeland and VFW Post 5700 in Hightstown, NJ. He was saluted as a member of the 1989-1990 team of all-state post commanders and quartermasters in Allentown, PA.

Marvin Hume, a 90 year old WW2 veteran, asked that everyone stand to hear America The Beautiful, sung by Kate Smith and our national anthem, The Star Spangled Banner. Not a word was spoken nor a movement made by the 200 people surrounding the flag that had flown all day overlooking the waters surrounding Cape May Point, NJ. The same flag had draped the casket of Paul Brindock as he was laid to rest on April 12, 2005.

Veterans and servicemen saluted the flag alike while non-military civilians placed their right hands over their chests. At the conclusion of our national anthem, TAPS were played while Paul's daughter, Karen Baldino, assisted by Marvin Hume, lowered the flag. The flag was refolded in the traditional military fashion by Lonnie Baldino, husband of Karen, along with Mr. Hume, and returned to Paul's wife, Eleanor. Tears were shed; hands were shaken; the sun disappeared behind the horizon. And the memory of Paul Brindock was relived at this very heartfelt, solemn event. 

MERCHANT MARINE MEMORIAL



Merchant Marine Memorial Finally Gets a Head

The heavily wooded tip of Coyote Point Park in San Mateo County, seemed like an unlikely place for a war memorial. Aside from the airliners coasting over the bay on their way to SFO, it's as silent as you'd expect from such an isolated area.

But in 1942, it wasn't silent at all. With World War II underway, the U.S. hastily opened an academy in the woods to train the nation's civilian maritime forces, known as the Merchant Marines. Eleven buildings were erected on 10 acres.

Between 1942 and 1948, six thousand graduates went through the academy, studying everything from calculus to navigation to engineering.

"As part of our training we would spend 24 hours in a lifeboat out here in the bay overnight," said former Merchant Marine, Frank Vitale, who attended the academy.

Many people aren't aware of the memorial at Coyote Point Park in San Mateo County.

Today there isn't much sign of the training grounds – aside from the old captain's quarters, a rusty training tower and what had been a rundown memorial.

The memorial was erected in 1974 as a tribute to the Merchant Marines who delivered badly needed supplies to troops in World War II and beyond. Vandals had knocked the head off the eagle statue. The plaques were worn and tarnished. The sight of the decapitated eagle disturbed San Mateo County Park Ranger Steve Kraemer.

"Once I saw that I said we need to get in touch with some people and see if we can't get that fixed," said Kraemer. He contacted veterans groups, some who didn't even realize the memorial existed. Through donations and volunteer labor, the memorial got a generous supply of care.

The eagle was replaced. New stone walls were constructed and new plaques affixed. Managers of the Benicia Mothball Fleet donated an anchor and chain from a retired Victory ship, typical of the ones ridden by Merchant Marines.

"It's part of the history of San Mateo County which most people don't even know we have," said Kraemer.

The county unveiled the newly restored memorial during a ceremony Friday

morning. A line of Merchant Marine veterans and their families streamed through the woods to get a look at it.

"It's nice to see the thing back and going," said former Merchant Marine Dan Outsen, who was trained at Coyote Point. "It's nice to see so many guys coming out to see it, because we were all in the same boat."

Outsen and other Merchant Marines have long complained their contributions during World War II went unnoticed, even though they suffered heavy casualties.

"We lost thousands of men," said retired Merchant Marine captain Mark Shafer. "In fact, we never would've won World War II if it wasn't for the Merchant Marine."

But in these isolated woods, crowded against the bay and far from the urban din, those sacrifices were front and center. The polished granite eagle stared out toward the Bay, as a sign that others had remembered too.



BOB CARLSON

November 15, 2011
Bob Carlson, Invisible to Some, But Not To Liberty Ship Mates
By Ernest F. Imhoff

He was an old crippled man whom many people wouldn't notice on the street or if they did, they might look away and avoid. He could qualify as an invisible man.

PAGE 56

Bob Carlson walked with a slow back-and-forth shuffle on his painful bum legs; otherwise he was sitting down or leaning heavily against something for support. He hadn't fallen on the ship yet because there's always something to hang on to in the narrow passageways. He had a downturn cast to his mouth and his big blue eyes seemed etched in sadness underneath his full head of youthful-looking sandy hair. He was a man of few words

until he opened up in bursts of words that came out in profusion and not too distinctly. Some found it hard to talk with the mumbling Carlson but he was worth listening to if you tried. He had things to say.

His friends knew that long ago during World War II he had a seaman's background of hard work in the engine room on U.S. Navy and U.S. merchant ships

BOB CARLSON

and that his wife died some time ago. Until a recent year, he still had valid oiler's and fireman/watertender's papers. For years he drove alone from his Philadelphia home to Baltimore to wash his shipmates' dishes and make their coffee while balancing on his bad legs in the scullery of an old Liberty ship in Baltimore. Like the 70-year-old ship from World War II days, Carlson sailed on the high seas but they were not as high as those killer waves he had known in the Pacific.

He had gout, back aches, a goiter in his neck recently removed and "doctors said dead nerves in my legs." On this ship where everyone else had their own medical problems, he fit in. Only a few shipmates knew he once lived a drifter's life of hard drink between more than 20 ship and shore jobs of short duration. His father Rudolph whose mother came from Sweden told him to come ashore and shape up. His mother Alberta, her roots in England, approved. He was their only child. Young Carlson straightened out and learned to become a successful printer and pressman publishing National Geographic Magazines and Gideon Bibles. Whether he read the Bible was immaterial; for the rest of his life he led a new existence worthy of many who lived in its pages.

Carlson proved there was more to life than what you notice at first glance. His sad face could change quickly. His eyes and mouth would smile, showing deep kindness and surprises inside him. He would share a history book about the Civil War, or bring in some gadget he fixed in his basement workshop as a gift for a friend or offer advice on living better in simple ways: "Change the pictures and the furniture in your home once in a while. Explore local history. Help the other guys. Keep busy even if you feel lousy."

Carlson loved to hand out mementoes of his interesting life---merchant marine patches, sea books, history books, newspaper and magazine clippings, historic

postcards, a knife, baseball-style sea hats. When the Brown sailed to Halifax in 2000, he and a friend inspected the graves of the Titanic victims in the big cemetery there. The friend gave him a book about the great Halifax ship explosion that killed 2,000 and decimated parts of the city in 1917 when two ships collided in "The Narrows". He returned the favor with an illustrated history of the Maryland 115th Infantry Division in World War I.

The end came suddenly when Carlson died in a terrible, preventable accident near his home in Philadelphia. He was about to turn 84 but the surprising thing is that there was still much life in him and a few more years to sail and things to do. Baltimore didn't know him but in one small corner of Baltimore Harbor. He was deeply mourned by stunned shipmates aboard the old Liberty ship SS John W. Brown at Pier One, Clinton Street, Canton, East Baltimore.

Carlson was officially Mess Man Number One and the scullery man on the Brown. Over the years, he made hundreds of gallons of strong black coffee for his colleagues. When the old World War II ship sailed for three and a half month voyage to the Great Lakes in 2000 and for weeks to Atlantic ports on Destination Dixie in 2002, Carlson made the coffee and washed thousands of dishes and glasses by hand and by machine.

His peripatetic life appealed to the ship's characters many of whom classify themselves as misfits, oddballs or eccentrics or just crazy. After all, they volunteer in middle years and old age for hard work and no expense money on an operating historic museum ship after getting off these ships with a good riddance as youths a lifetime ago. For the privilege of sweating on a ship, they even have to pay for their own coffee. The crew members are a bit off-center but not exactly like the ship. These conservative war veterans tend to lean to the right while the ship leans to the port side.

Carlson began at sea on Lake Michigan as a school kid in Chicago. "I first learned the ropes about sailing there. I hung around small boats on Lake Michigan. I'd go down after school, clean 'em up, wash 'em up, paint 'em up, all that s..." The family moved to Washington for his father's new printer's job and Carlson headed for water even nearer than the Chesapeake Bay. "I worked on the Potomac, the river boat that went out on moonlight cruises."

The war was on. Teenager Carlson quit school to learn more ropes, now hawsers, at Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn, N.Y., the merchant marine training center that sent thousands to sea. "I was there 11 weeks, June to August, 1944. I learned many things on the American Mariner; they scuttled that in 1966 in the Chesapeake Bay as a target ship for Navy fliers."

Ships needed lots of seamen. "They asked for volunteers on the West Coast. There was a tramp steamer in Seattle. I jumped. First time out, I was wiper in the engine room. That's at the bottom of the ladder but was ok by me. We took parts and jeeps to the Aleutian Islands. It was a four-month trip. The Japs had left but not the heavy seas. We went to Dutch Harbor. We hit all the ports in the islands. Weather was lousy. Seas were rough. Back to Tacoma."

The romance of the Navy summoned him. "I went in the Navy in 1944 when I turned 17. I was a small boat engineer on a Landing Ship Tank, LST 72. We spent all our time in the Pacific. Saw no action, but you never knew what was ahead. We took ammunition everywhere. [He shows photographs] Here we are in Shanghai. Here is the General Randall in Subic Bay. Here we are end of the war. Our last stop is Leyte on V-J Day." The Navy was a good life.

It was to leave the Navy and rejoin the merchant marine and get jobs ashore between ships. Carlson learned coal. Long ago coal stopped firing up boilers on ships. Carlson was a rarity on the Brown.

BOB CARLSON

He shoveled coal on some ships and even brought an old coal shovel to the Brown for the museum. He sailed on the Atlantic and the Great Lakes from the Mesabi Range to Toledo shoveling tons of it: "You spread the coal around with a wide-mouth shovel called a banjo so the banjo would sing. Don't let the coal pile up, it won't burn. It wasn't bad. I've had worse jobs."

Carlson survived a ship collision in 1948. "I was on the Crete, ore carrier. We unloaded coal in this little town of Jackfish, Ontario, on Lake Superior. We were headed back to Toledo. I was on engine room watch. I was a coal passer on engine room watch. I happened to be in the mess. I heard this whistle as a big ship came closer and closer. We were going full speed in a heavy fog. We hit the J.P. Morgan Jr. I was thrown against the bulkhead. I ran and got everyone out of their bunks. It was our fault. We were going too fast. Two guys were killed on the other ship, no one hurt on ours. Both ships were repaired. They took our captain's license away." He showed pictures of the damaged ships in "Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes" by Dana Thomas Bowe.

Carlson drifted twixt and between from 1946 to 1951. "I'd get a job in an engine room, start drinking, ship out again, come ashore, get a job, start drinking, ship out, come ashore again, work, start drinking. I had at least 20 jobs on land and sea. Grain elevator in Toledo. Trucker for sewing machine company in Illinois. Food service runner in Rockford. Circular delivery man in Chicago. Third rail inspector in Washington. Pin setter in Toledo. Bike cleaner at Haines Point, Washington. And so on. All my ship time is in the engine room, oiling or fireman/watertender. I liked this life. But there were problems. People drank too much."

His telegrams to his mother Alberta in southwest Washington, D.C. told of a life at sea that sometimes meant money problems and homesickness. From New Orleans. "Mother. All right. Broke. Send

me some money. About \$10. Robert Carlson." Another telegram from New York: "Send me \$7 immediately because I have liberty 30 hours. Want to come home." Postcard to mother while sailing Great Lakes: "All right. Received letter. Was in Chicago the other day. Bob."

Carlson finally sailed a newly historic kind of ship he had wanted to board, a Liberty ship, 2710 copies of which were hammered out in World War II to carry cargo and some troops. "I finally sailed a 'Liberty ship, just like the Brown, the Lucille Bloomfield. She started out in the war as the Edward L. Grant, built in Baltimore. We took her to Brazil. On another ship we took Chinese troops out of French Indo China to North Korea."

Carlson finally left the sea and the roaming in 1951, and he learned his father's trade of printing. "I did it for 40 years in Washington and Philly. I was half printer and half pressman in Washington and Philly. Detweiler in Washington printed National Geographics. Then moved to Philly. Worked at National Publishing Company for 24 years...McGraw Hill. We printed Gideon Bibles."

When 19, Carlson had married a lady named Margaret who had a son and daughter from another marriage. They lived together for seven years and got married. The marriage lasted almost four decades until her death. Afterwards, he and his stepchildren remained fond of each other. Carlson had no children of his own.

He spent the last twenty-one years on the historic Liberty ship, SS John W. Brown. She makes about three "Living History" day cruises a year on the Chesapeake Bay and elsewhere with up to 700 passengers a trip. He joined eagerly in 1990 after getting a mailed flier and it was natural because he remembered his days on the other carbon copy Liberty. "Why join the Brown? You got to get up in the morning and do something," he said.

Carlson first worked in the engine room, with his oiler and fireman/watertender licenses. On the Brown, most volunteers do two or three jobs. When the chaplain left the scullery, Carlson decided it was time for his old legs and knees to learn something new: "I had never been a mess man. But I could help out there."

The old seaman liked being back again working on a team on an old ship: "I love the Brown and the people here." Most Brown volunteers like being together. They kid each other. Most take their work seriously. They joke about their multiple ailments. The dwindling Navy Armed Guard and merchant marine veterans from the long ago war forgot their wartime competitiveness. If not for the Brown, their retirements would be all TV numbness at home. Here they are still alive and kicking, although many had died in recent years since Brown restoration began in 1988.

On many of the Brown's 90 Living History voyages from 1991 to 2011, there was Carlson in the tiny room cleaning dishes or stepping two yards away to make strong coffee. He frowned on substitutes who made the stuff weak.

In late October 2011, Carlson was taken to dinner by his stepson Pat Doyle and his wife Kathleen. He was eagerly looking forward to the Brown's annual \$20 cruise November 5 getting up steam and sailing for two hours in Baltimore Harbor specifically for veterans and active duty service men and women.

Sailing day never came for Carlson. The Philadelphia police said Carlson was hunched over his walker on his troubled legs about 6 p.m. October 26, 2011. The old coffee maker had just shuffled out of his apartment in a daily routine to get some fresh air and walk across the street to the 7-11 Store for a big cup of coffee. He left the store to go home. He was an invisible man to the truck driver who didn't see him in the


BOB CARLSON

parking lot. The delivery truck accidentally backed up and drove over Carlson.

The old seaman suffered head trauma and other extensive injuries. Medics took him to Temple University Hospital where he was pronounced dead at 6:20 p.m. The 28-year-old delivery man stayed on the scene. It was a bad accident. Police said neither drugs nor alcohol was a factor.

The news spread quickly to the SS John W. Brown. The crew was shocked. They had experienced the natural deaths of almost 100 elderly shipmates from such varied diseases as cancer, heart trouble, Alzheimer's but mainly just very old age. But never such a violent death of such a good friend, a colleague who was helpful to others and almost always in good spirits. Some shipmates cried. Someone wrote an obituary. Someone else posted a note over the kitchen sink about his kind deeds.

Another posted his framed captioned picture in the scullery: "Robert Earl Carlson (1927 to 2011), World War II veteran at sea in the U.S. Merchant Marine and the U.S. Navy, Printer of Bibles and other books, Mess Man number one, S.S. John W. Brown." The talk over coffee in the mess was that Carlson, 84 in a few weeks, was getting weaker but he would have liked to have sailed on a bit more.

Eight days later, on November 5, 2011, near Veterans Day, the Brown made its last voyage of the year. The ship took 500 veterans and their friends and family down Baltimore Harbor. It was a cold, windy, glorious day. The chaplain dedicated the voyage to all departed veterans, mentioned the missing Carlson and the accident. The minister led the ship in a prayer. The high school chorus sang "Amazing Grace." The combined pipers and drummers from three corps played God Bless America. Guns were fired. Taps was blown. A wreath was laid in the water. The passenger/veterans did not know Carlson. But to the crew, Carlson was never the invisible man. 

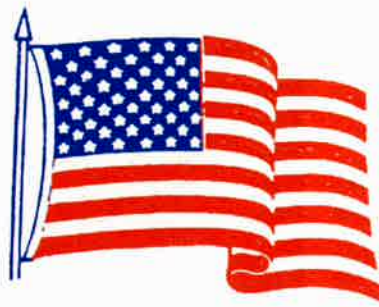
Robert E. Carlson comes from Philadelphia to work on unsteady legs as he leans over the scullery sink of the the Brown. He served in the engine room of Navy and merchant ships during World War II, printed Bibles and other books for decades after the war and served the all-volunteer Brown for 21 years before his death.



Three mess men of the authentic Liberty ship S.S. John W. Brown, of Baltimore, drink too much coffee and discuss the ultimate nature of reality of working in the mess of a 70-year-old ship: mostly fun. They are from left, John Irwin, Ernie Imhoff and Bob Carlson. Irwin and Carlson sailed during World War II.



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Lone Sailor

U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL
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DEDICATION

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

REMEMBER ALSO:
THE TWIN TOWERS
THE PENTAGON
AND FLIGHT 93
 God Bless Them

This POINTER is in Memory of all Branches of service in WW II; the Navy, Army, Marines, Airmen, Seabees, Merchant Seamen, Wacs, Waves, and especially to the Special Unit of the Navy known as the U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD which was first used as Gun Crews in WW I on board cargo, tankers and troopships and where needed to protect the ship, cargo and the merchant crews who bravely ran the ships to each port of call until deactivated after WW I. They were established again for the same purpose in September of 1941 and remained active until WW II was over and the need for gunners were not needed. This issue is also in honor to all the people all over the world who built ships, planes, tanks, trucks, jeeps, guns, ammo and all things needed to win a war against the ruthless killers. Thanks to the farmers who fed us all. Thank God for seeing us through.