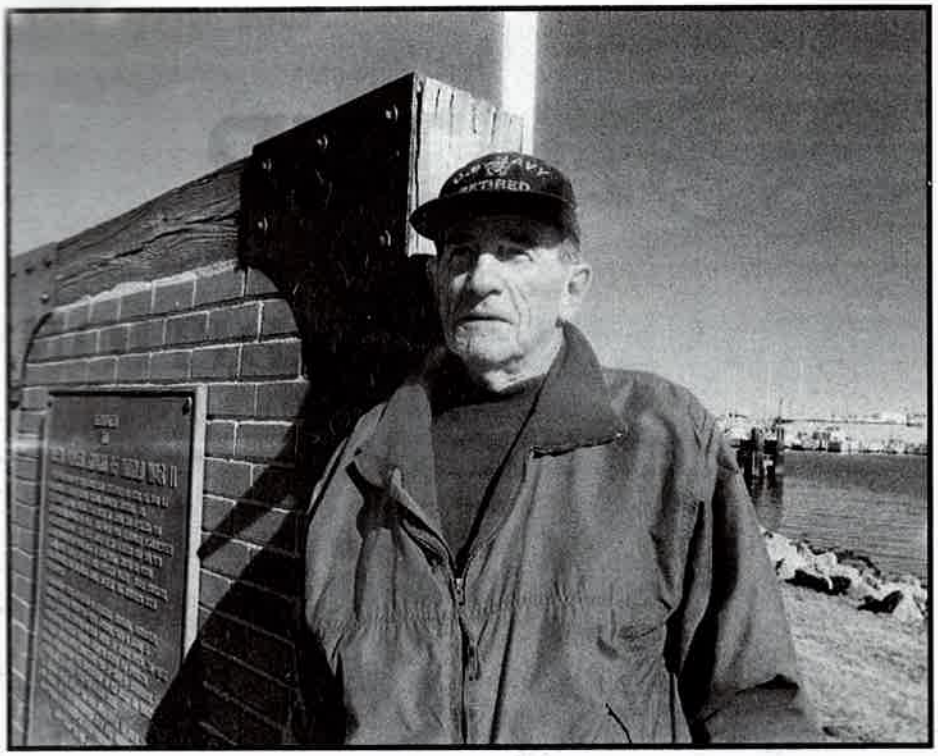
JAN/2002

THE POINTER

SPECIAL 60th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Members of the Naval Historical Detachment Baltimore recently portrayed a World War II Naval Armed Guard gun crew aboard the restored Liberty ship S.S. JOHN W. BROWN. The group of "living historians" educates ship visitors about the Navy crew's life aboard the civilian-manned ships.

Photo courtesy of Naval Historical Detachment Baltimore.



Naval Armed Guard veteran Jim Kearns pauses to reflect by a memorial at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek. The memorial honors the Naval Armed Guard School, which no longer exists.
Soundings photos by Harry Gerwien, staff photographer

Armed and in danger of disappearing

For five years during World War II, the Naval Armed Guard helped protect cargo headed for American and Allied troops aboard civilian ships. Now, Naval Armed Guard Service veterans are hoping to preserve their heritage.

By Tonya Thurlby
Soundings Staff

"A near-sighted priest" is not involved in the punchline of Navy veteran Jim Kearns' favorite joke. However, Kearns, a retired lieutenant commander, does credit a cleric does for helping him to see World War II action as a member of the Naval Armed Guard Service before he turned 17. "My aunt took me to the parish, and the priest was near- or far-sighted and read 1925 instead of 1926 on my baptismal record," he said, adding that the mistake convinced his recruiter to wave him through the admission lines in March 1943. "I just went in because I was 16 years old. There was a war and all my friends were looking for excuses to get out of school and the war was the best one. We were gung-ho young kids."

Soon, though, the boys would be looking for more than excuses. As the next wave of the Navy's Armed Guard, many of them, including Kearns, would defend merchant ships and their cargo during trans-Atlantic crossings - all the while sweeping the horizon for German U-boats and later, Japanese kamikaze pilots.

After six weeks of boot camp in New York, Kearns, who now lives in Norfolk, was selected to join the then-unknown Naval Armed Guard Service. The service put Navy gun crews on civilian-run and government-owned merchant vessels. He traveled south to Little Creek, one of three U.S. Naval Armed Guard training facilities established during the program's six-year history. Little Creek officially opened Oct. 15, 1941. Other Naval Armed Guard Service schools were located in San Diego and Gulf Port, Miss. After training, the Guards were assigned to one of three Armed Guard Centers: Brooklyn, N.Y., New Orleans, La., and Treasure Island, Calif. The centers handled records, mail and pay. Sixty years after going through training at Little Creek, Kearns came back. He gathered with several other Armed Guard vets and members of the WWII Navy Armed Guard Veterans Association to mark the 60th anniversary of the official opening of the Little Creek school in Oct. 15, 1941. Today, a flagpole and bricked plaque mark the site of what was once a vital part of the merchant marine defense system.

A HURRIED HISTORY

In September 1941, two years before Kearns arrived in Virginia, the first wave of Armed Guardsmen to-be arrived for training at Little Creek, which was part of the Naval Operating Base at the time. According to the organization's Web site, www.armed-guard.com, the facilities consisted of a barracks, a mess hall and an administration building. The men were training for a mission that had not been approved yet; under the post-World War Neutrality Act, the U.S. could not place any armament aboard U.S. merchant vessels except for small arms. Congress amended the act in November 1941 and the trainees took their defensive places on the merchant ships' decks. "It was dictated by enemy action," Kearns said. "The Germans were just picking them (merchant ships and cargo) off like flies. They'd just pop up and take the ships and cargo." After several merchant ships were captured or sunk in 1939 and 1940, then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt allocated $350,000,000 to build emergency cargo ships to supplement the existing merchant fleet, which carried supplies to Allied forces. Originally called the "Ugly Ducklings" because of their utilitarian appearances, which were based on an 1879 British design, the ships became known as "Liberty Ships." During the Dec. 30, 1941, launch of the first ship, SS PATRICK HENRY, Roosevelt referred to Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" Revolutionary War entreaty. The moniker stuck, according to records maintained by Project Liberty Ship, a Baltimore-based non-profit preservation group. The SS PATRICK HENRY was the first of 2,700 Liberty ships. Factories across the nation mass-produced the design's 250,000 parts,

Armed Guard Accolades

- According to Naval Historical Center records, Armed Guards aboard merchant ships helped to destroy 477 planes with another 66 probably destroyed and assisted in destroying 315 additional aircraft.

- Members of the Naval Armed Guard Service received 8,035 decorations, including six Navy crosses, 75 Silver Stars, 54 Bronze Stars, 24 Navy and Marine Corps medals, 563 commendations by the Secretary of the Navy and 2,778 commendations by the Bureau of Naval Personnel.

THIS POINTER PRINTED BY: MEL DAVIS PRINTING CO. - PO BOX 1900, WENDELL, NC 27591

some of which were welded together into vessels in less than five days. After the Pearl Harbor attack in early December 1941, the military scurried for guns for both existing military ships and merchant vessels. Six months later, in June 1942, more than 1,000 merchant ships were armed. During the first two years of his 31-year naval career, Kearns served aboard four Liberty ships from June 1943 through April 1945: the SS CONESTOGA, SS PARK BENJAMIN, SS MARIBOU B. LAMAR and SS RINGLER.

TRAINING TO FIGHT

The then-16-year-old became a gunner during his three weeks at Little Creek and Camp Shelton, which included ammo training near Dam Neck. "We learned to load ammo without getting sand on it," he said, joking. He trained with gun crews of two to six men who manned guns on the merchant ships. According to an article by Ed Schnepf in the November 2001 edition of SEA CLASICS, the men were ordered to man the guns "so long as there remains a chance to save the ship."

Kearns said he boarded a training ship for two days, rode the ship up into the Chesapeake Bay and fired at a derelict battleship. "That was our baptismal by fire," he said. On the ships, Armed Guard crews numbered from two dozen to more than 40. Crews included gunners, radiomen, boatswains, coxswains and usually a couple of petty officers and an officer, who was most likely a "green" ensign. "Our primary job was to man the guns," Kearns said. "We learned how to use your eyeballs at night and during the day." Kearns shipped out in June 1943, making $21 a month. He stood four-hour watches, "just sweeping the horizon," he said. "The next thing you know, you're seeing Betty Boop out there dancing on the waves."

ARMED FOR ACTION

Once the crews were trained, the ships, which traveled in convoys of a dozen to more than 60 vessels, headed overseas to England, Africa and the Mediterranean. Most Liberty ships were armed with one 4-inch gun, two 37-mm bow guns, four .50 caliber machine guns and two .30 caliber machine guns. Other merchant ships had a variety of other armament aboard, depending on the type of vessel. "There was nothing fancy about the guns," he said. It was in the Med that 16-year-old Kearns saw his first action against Germans. His ship, the tanker SS CONESTOGA, was refueling Army boats and transferring fuel from port to port during the Salerno, Italy, invasion in September 1943. "The Germans dropped a couple of bombs pretty close and our ship was told to get out of the area," he said. But before that could happen, the German planes made strafing runs against the decks of the CONESTOGA. "They shot up our ship with machine guns," he said, adding that the Armed Guardsmen on the 560-foot ship fought back but didn't down any planes. Kearns said he was not scared, even though the bombs were whizzing down. "You're so young, you have no fear," he said. "You know they're there. You know you have to fire at them. It's the macho bravery of the young." With no substantial damage to their ship, the crewmen regrouped. "I don't recall any kind of (debriefing) meetings, and as soon as the raid was over, you were down there reloading ammo and your gun," he said. Aboard the Park Benjamin, Kearns and his fellow Armed Guards supported the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. With a shrug of his shoulders, Kearns added that while they supplied crews and ships, the Armed Guards "fought off a few raids" in the waters of the English Channel and off the coast of France. "As long as you didn't get sunk, you had a pretty good day," he said. "It was the whole program: Nobody takes your ship."

PART TWO

Fighting off a few German planes was not a big deal, said Jim Kearns, who was a teen-age "gung-ho" sailor during World War II. Kearns served aboard several Liberty ships as part of the Navy's now-defunct Armed Guard Service. The program placed Navy gun crews aboard civilian vessels to defend the troop- and supply-carrying ships against German subs and aircraft, and later against Japanese kamikaze pilots. Kearns, who retired in the late 1970s as a lieutenant commander, said his bravado as a gunner aboard a civilian vessel was the result of his young age. "You're so young, you have no fear," he said. "You know they're there. You know you have to fire at them. It's the macho bravery of the young." Aboard the SS PARK BENJAMIN, Kearns and his fellow Armed Guards supported the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. With a shrug of his shoulders, Kearns added that while they supplied crews and ships, the Armed Guards "fought off a few raids" in the waters of the English Channel. "As long as you didn't get sunk, you had a pretty good day," he said. "It was the whole program: Nobody takes your ship."

WHEN THEY DID GO DOWN

Unfortunately 710 of the 6,236 merchant ships guarded by Navy gunners were sunk during World War II. But other ships in the convoys were not allowed to aid survivors, Kearns said. "That was somebody else's mission," Kearns said. "Ours was to get the ship out of there." In all, 144,970 personnel served in during the war as Naval Armed Guardsmen; 1,810 died. One of those sailors, Whitson Lloyd, died 3 1/2 miles off the coast of Point Judith, R.I., when a German torpedo downed his ship, SS BLACK POINT, in May 1945. The incident also killed 11 merchant marines. Today, Lloyd's brother and an Armed Guard vet himself, Charles Lloyd, of Rolesville, N.C., works to preserve his brother's name and help connect the estimated 40,000 Armed Guardsmen still living. He is the chairman of the WWII Navy Armed Guard Veterans Association, which has compiled the names of more than 19,000 Armed Guard veterans. "About 100 percent of this I do for my brother," he said. Three other Lloyd brothers served in the war effort as well: one Marine, one merchant marine and another Navy Armed Guardsmen. Charles and L.D. Lloyd went through boot camp together at Bainbridge, Md. The two then volunteered for Armed Guard duty on the advice of their older brother, Whitson.The two served on SS MIAOULIS, a Greek Liberty ship, and were in Belgium when the war ended in Europe. Yet, it was a month before they learned of their brother's death. Charles got out of the Navy the following spring - serving 18 months, 15 days and 35 seconds, he said, without seeing action. "I enjoyed it," he said. "To do what had to be done, but I'm glad I didn't get killed."

MAN WITH A MISSION

After being released from the Navy, he spent 23 years with the Raleigh, N.C., Fire Department. After a back injury forced him to retire in 1979, he was "looking for something to do." A Navy Times reunion announcement in 1982 provided his mission: help other Armed Guardsmen reunite and connect. At the reunion, "One guy kept saying, 'I sure wish I know where my buddy was,' " he said. Lloyd said he realized no one was keeping track of the Armed Guard vets and their stories. He said he decided that was his calling. He left the reunion with a list of 52 names and other information from the vets. Since those original 52, the non-profit, no-dues organization has located thousands more living Armed Guardsmen. "We find them every day," he said. "Some days, we find eight or 10."

The organization will host its 21st reunion in Las Vegas next year. "I wish I knew how to explain it," he said. "It just got into my system." Lloyd estimated that some weeks he spends 12 to 14 hours daily working with the organization. His work includes mailing out information packets, updating databases and working on the group's publication, The Pointer, which is distributed about six times a year. One mailing costs $8,000 "It's a hobby," he said. "(But) it's something I've got to do. If I don't, no one else will. We've done right good in preserving history," he said. "I got into this and I'll keep it going ... for as long as I live." Besides preserving his brothers' memory, the 75-year-old volunteer said rewards come in other forms. "The letters I get from them and the thanks I get, that's my pay," he said. "You just can't explain it, how they say 'thank you.' " And then there are the vets' stories. For example, one gun crew reunited through the organization still stays in touch, Lloyd said. "Their lieutenant is in his 90s and they still send Christmas and birthday cards."

Today, the organization includes 300 members in Britain, and several in Canada, Taiwan, Australia, Germany and New Zealand. Fifteen of the original 52 sailors whose names Lloyd gathered at that first reunion still attend the yearly gatherings. Lloyd also still maintains contact with a few

shipmates from his Greek ship. But the members are aging, he said. He predicted the last reunion will be in 2003. "We're just like one big family," he said. "It's just good."

PRESERVING THE PAST

Kearns, Lloyd and a few other former Armed Guardsmen gathered Oct. 15 at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek at a monument honoring the Armed Guard. Lloyd's organization placed the plaque on the monument on the guard's 50th anniversary a decade ago. At that ceremony, a crowd of 350 marked the moment. Today, the memories are fading. But one civilian group, the Naval Historical Detachment Baltimore, is hoping to change that. Doug Cochran is the commanding officer of the all-volunteer group of "living historians." The 20 or so men in the historical group portray Armed Guardsmen on the Liberty Ship JOHN W. BROWN in Baltimore. The restored ship, which was used in World War II, takes several day cruises into the Chesapeake Bay annually. "We berth in the old guard area (of the ship)," Cochran said, adding that during the cruises, and sometimes during in-port tours, people are able to ask the historians about life as a naval Armed Guardsmen. "One of our guys has a sea bag with all the gear," he said. "People will say, 'My God, that guy's whole life and existence fits in that little canvas bag.' "

The group mostly demonstrates the manning of the guns and describes life aboard a merchant ship. "It's just educating about what sailors of the day had to deal with," he said, adding that some of the conditions - such as cramped berthing - are not much different than in today's Navy. "We don't go out and re-create any big battle or casualties," he said. "We're not out there to be a face and a body," he said. "It's more about the uniform." Still, despite the fact that group members read the same manuals that original Armed Guardsmen would have read before beginning gun duty, it is the veterans themselves who are the greatest resource, Cochran said. "Talking to the veterans is where we draw most of our knowledge," he said. "They all have different stories. You'll find that most of these guys will talk about the good times, not really about the action they saw." Half of his group is military veterans, although they are vastly younger than the vets they portray. Cochran himself separated from the Coast Guard in 1989 as a Lt.(jg). Today, the Arlington, Va., native is a Navy contractor and works with quality assurance on Aegis destroyers. He said the Armed Guard's history fascinates him. "It was basically being thrown to the wolves at the beginning of the war," he said. "The ships used antiquated World War I armament, at first. It was out of the frying pan and into the fire." Kearns said he thrived on such excitement. Still so much a sailor that he lives on a yacht, he added that he wouldn't trade his Armed Guard memories and the risks he took for anything. "I like that sea duty," he said. "It's the greatest life in the world. I was good at it. Nobody ever thought much about sea pay or combat pay," he said. "We had USN on our hat, and we got on a ship." The end.

Our THANKS go out to: Tonya Thurlby, News Editor of "THE SOUNDINGS" published by Military Newspapers of Virginia 2509 Walmer Ave., P.O.Box 10304 Norfolk, Va. 23513757-857-1212 soundings@militarynews.com and:Ed Schnepf- Publisher-Editor, "SEA CLASSICS MAGAZINE" 9509 Vasser Ave., Unit A, Chatsworth, Ca. 91311-0883-818-7OO-6868 mail@challengeweb.com for giving us permission to use their articles as a tribute to the SPECIAL UNIT called the U.S.N. ARMED GUARD during WW II. (cal)

THE LIBERTY SHIPS OF WORLD WAR II

US NAVY ARMED GUARD SERVED ON IN WWII

Taken from the book "THE LIBERTY SHIPS" by authors
L.A. Sawyer and W.H. Mitchell
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 70-124469
International Standard Book # 0-87033-152-3

This book can be purchased at ships stores aboard the following ships:

S.S. JOHN W. BROWN - BALTIMORE, MD
S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN - SAN FRANCISCO, CA
S.S. LANE VICTORY - SAN PEDRO, CA
S.S. RED OAK VICTORY - RICHMOND, CA
S.S. AMERICAN VICTORY - TAMPA, FL

Lone Sailor

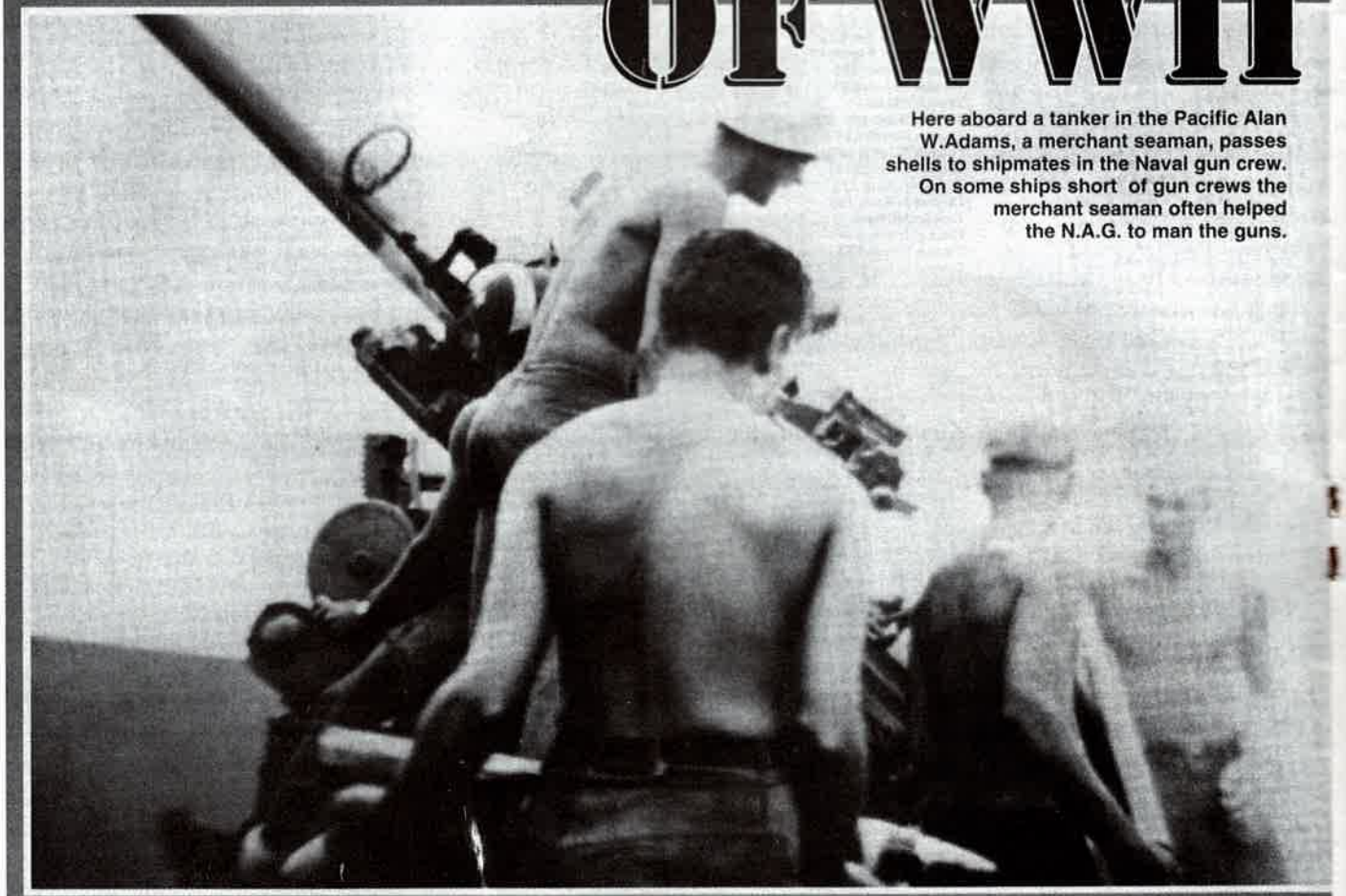
U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL
Washington, D.C.

THE NAG'S IMPERATIVE: "THERE SHALL BE NO SUR

They were the most unappreciated sailors ever to man a gun until they proved their valor and tenacity to the hard- bitten seamen of the merchant ships they were sworn to protect.

60TH ANNIVERSARY SALUTE TO THE U.S. NAVAL ARMED GUARD OF WWII

BY ED SCHNEPF



Here aboard a tanker in the Pacific Alan W.Adams, a merchant seaman, passes shells to shipmates in the Naval gun crew. On some ships short of gun crews the merchant seaman often helped the N.A.G. to man the guns.

RENDER SO LONG AS THE GUNS CAN BE FOUGHT"

"Admiral Stark, the President is on the phone." The young aide urgently announced. It was 14 November 1941 — three weeks before Pearl Harbor. The Chief Of Naval Operations quickly took the call.

"Harold, this is FDR. I've got good news. Congress has just revised the Neutrality Acts. We can arm the merchant ships at last!!"

Navy gun crews like this one came aboard the merchant ships but in spite of their courage and proven gallantry, the lack of Navy escorts resulted in their names being added to the casualty lists. (Ian A. Millar)

The admiral breathed a welcomed sigh of relief. America wasn't in the shooting war yet, but at last American merchant ships would be able to defend themselves against Hitler's demonic treaty ignoring U-boats. Perhaps the tragic sinking of the SS *ROBIN MOOR* in May by Ulrich Graef's *U-69* would prove to be a blessing in disguise. Apparently it had opened Congress' eyes to what was taking place on the high seas.

Stark pressed the buzzer on his desk. "Get me Commander Ed Cleave at once and an inventory of every gun not already aboard a warship."

A telephone call from Franklin Delano Roosevelt put into motion a manpower force that in a matter of weeks would become the U.S. Naval Armed Guard. It was a bold move for a country not at war, but one not taken a moment too soon. Each morning newspaper headlines blared the awful truth that Britain — America's sole unvanquished Ally in Europe — was being slowly strangled by Hitler's far-ranging U-boats. Unless the undersea killers' chokehold on the shipment of food, weapons and supplies was broken, it was a certainty the English and Russians would be defeated.

Shipping losses had reached staggering proportions thanks to the German mine blockade of English ports and the stealthy destructive power of the U-boat. Technically neutral, American flag ships should have been free to carry on commerce unmolested. Hitler disagreed and sank the *ROBIN MOOR,* arousing the ire of even the most doveish neutralists. A week later President Roosevelt, moved by the unconscionable sinking of an American ship and the overall plight of our hard-pressed Allies, proclaimed a national emergency and warned Hitler we would fight to stop any further German moves to west. Slow to take action Congress finally passed Public Law 294, amending the restriction which kept defensive armament off of merchant ships.

Finding the necessary number of guns proved to be an extraordinary task since the fleet buildup begun in 1940 took priority over everything available. But, if finding guns posed a problem, training gunners to operate them proved even more difficult.

Luckily, early in 1941 the Navy had devised a plan to train large numbers of naval gunners. Several weapons training centers had been hastily built on the East Coast to teach the growing number of bluejacket inductees the basics of gun laying, loading and maintenance. But experienced gunnery officers and mates were in critically short supply like everything else. Those who had the skills were scheduled to man the big guns of the new destroyers, cruisers, and battleships then being commissioned. If freighters, tankers and troop ships were to be armed then the men who would man the guns would have to be fledgling "Boots" fresh from recruit training. The concept — calloused as it may have appeared in lieu of the battle-tested enemy they would encounter — was rationalized by the hope that the increasing numbers of convoy escorts then in construction would soon take the pressure off of armed merchantmen. After all, when naval planners were questioned hard about how effective they really expected the program to be, they quietly admitted putting guns aboard merchantmen was more in paying lip service to merchant seamen's unions than a tactical measure of any true merit. The British had already armed many merchant ships with special Maritime Regiments of the Royal Artillery and though these men performed sterling service on the most dangerous routes, British shipping losses were still reaching unacceptable proportions.

Much of the pros and cons about arming non-naval ships, stemmed from fact that at best they were strictly a defensive measure. Lacking the sub-hunting ability of even a lightly armed trawler, a cargo ship has no means of locating its attacker except visually. Without radar, sonar or even Asdic Huff-Duff (high-frequency range detectors) the guns were next to totally useless unless the attacking submarine saw fit to surface and show itself. Fortunately, though capable of firing torpedoes fully submerged with only its periscope above the surface, most U-boat captains preferred to surface after a torpedo attack, take pictures of their sinking prey, and if necessary, finish off a slow-to-sink merchantman with its deck gun. Often as not, submarine commanders would meet the ill-fated ship's lifeboats and question the survivors about their cargo, destination and nationality. In some cases prisoners were taken and medical aid offered, but these were rarities for the U-boats themselves

had little space for passengers and most carried only corpsmen.

So it was planned, in light of extensive escort warship protection impossible to offer in 1941, that merchantmen would proceed to be defensively armed. If not the ideal solution to a pressing problem, it at least offered some hope for survival for merchant sailors who were seeing themselves being massacred en masse along the bitterly contested sealanes of the North Atlantic. A heavy-caliber deck gun in the hands of even lightly trained gunners could hopefully keep a marauding U-boat from striking a second fatal blow. In regards to air attack, the same philosophy applied. If neophyte gunners couldn't accurately down enemy aircraft they would at least be able to throw up a return fire that would test the will of the pilots behind the gunsights. The divine wisdom of both concepts was soon to be severely challenged in the icy Atlantic.

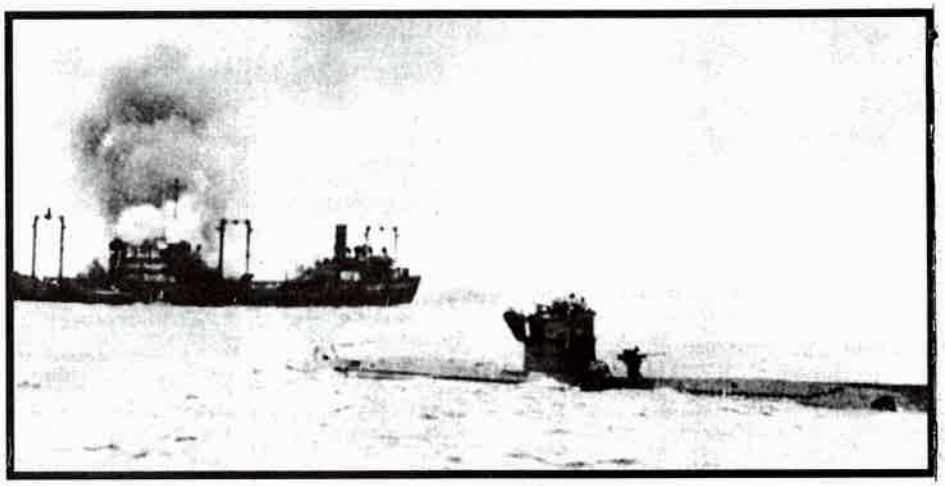
Following the President's directive, Adm. Stark placed Cmdr. Edward C. Cleave, USNR, in charge of the arming program, a task this resourceful reservist assumed with zeal and conviction. By the end of November 1941, Cleave had supervised, under the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, the arming of fifty-five American-owned ships. By the end of January 1942 — one month later — the number totaled one-hundred-twelve. By June 1942, it was in high gear with 1,064 merchant ships boasting some kind of defensive armament.

The tempo in American shipyards after Pearl Harbor was frenzied. Everything was urgently needed at once, especially guns and, unfortunately, merchant ships received what was unfit for installation aboard new warships also being built at a hectic pace. In every deep water port ringing the United States cutters, fitters and welders by the thousands hurriedly fabricated protective steel gun tubs on merchant ships' bows and sterns, placed antiaircraft mounts on bridge wings, fit ready ammo boxes, installed battle phones and signal halyards, added stays for the lifesaving Carley rafts and otherwise made plodding cargo vessels ready for war. By the end of 1942 1,813 ships had been armed, with more on the way. The guns themselves were anything that could be found and made to shoot. Most were of World War One-vintage — four- or five-inch weapons without antiaircraft capability. Some were the newer 3"/50-cal. and 5"/38-cal. dual-purpose types that eventually would be fitted to the Victory and Liberty ships then in construction. But many sailed with only a pair of light machine guns or an aged single cannon that weeks earlier had been a rusting memorial tribute residing in front of a VFW hall or armory.

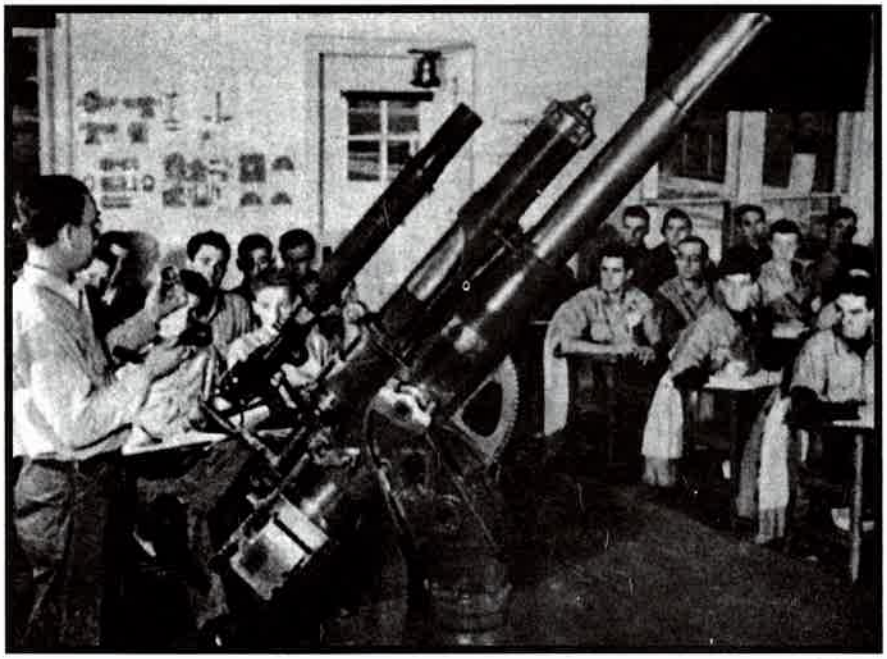
In naval gunnery training centers like Dam Neck, Virginia — weeks earlier only a desolate sandbar near Virginia Beach — bus loads of newly assigned "Boots" began arriving for three days of intensive training in firing everything from antiquated Lewis guns of dubious value to the latest five-inch mounts. Antiaircraft gunnery was stressed, the Navy being paranoid about aerial attack after Pearl Harbor. In two-, four- and six-man teams each quickly learned every position in a gun crew from loader to fuse cutter. Their orders were explicit and almost Samurai-like definition. "There shall be no surrender nor abandoning the ship so long as the guns can be fought." The Navy further ordained, "In case of casualty to members of the gun crew the remaining men shall continue to serve the gun...that so long as there remains a chance to save the ship, the Armed Guard should remain thereon and take every opportunity that may present itself to destroy the submarine." These edicts were to instill in youthful bluejackets a sense of purpose that would soon see their small detachments heroically conduct themselves against everything Hitler's U-boats, Luftwaffe and the stormy Atlantic could throw at them.

Trained and equipped, ready for sea, the Naval Armed Guards (NAGs) began arriving at harbors in Boston, Charleston, Norfolk, Miami, New York, and Tampa. In four- to twenty-man contingents, commanded by a newly commissioned ensign usually equally lacking sea experience, they met the first apathetic stares of wizened merchant seamen.

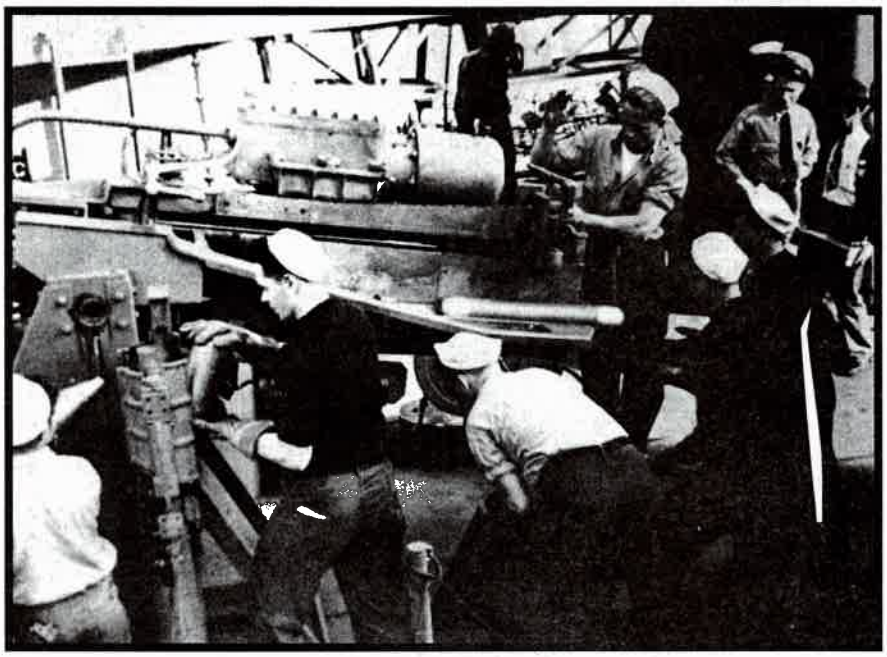
To many of the NAG crews it seemed that their first encounter with the enemy was not the deadly U-boat but the scowling seaman they were sworn to protect. Scoffed at as sea-going bellboys, ridiculed because they were dumb enough to be drafted, chided for working for $21 a month while union merchant sailors could make ten times that amount in a single voyage, the naive Armed Guards had their first taste of the rugged, undisciplined way of life aboard a civilian-manned merchantmen. It was a crude awakening for duty-oriented servicemen — many only teenagers — who had been indoctrinated in the high ideals of winning a war which would make the world a better place in which to live. Considering that they all shared the same risk of living or dying in the hostile North Atlantic, it was a demeaning first confrontation that was to plague the early NAG units until they proved



***U-442* surfaces in front of a burning tanker from convoy TM in January 1943. This photo taken from *U-578* epitomizes the boldness which U-boat commanders demonstrated in surfacing near their victims, a practice cut short once the merchant ships were armed. (U.S. Navy photo)**



Seaman recruits learn the basics of naval weaponry at Hoffman Island near New York City early in 1942. Note the aged weapon on which they studied, a throwback to World War I subchaser armament which even then was hardly effective. (U.S. Navy photo)



Naval Armed Guard gunners practice with their new five-inch mount aboard a merchant ship while a hectic refit goes on around them. (National Archives)

their worth in the first test of combat. Shipmates all, they didn't have long to wait.

Seen in the light of wartime urgency it is hard to understand the attitudes of the veteran merchant seaman, but their disdain for authority and seeming lack of patriotism was not entirely unfounded. For decades theirs had been an unrewarding profession. Individualists all, they knew the risks they took after seeing thousands of their kind never return.

Those who remembered life at sea during the Depression regarded ship owners and deck officers as greedy, profit-hungry slave drivers whose sole enjoyment lay in seeing how miserable they could make the life of an ordinary seaman. Many ships were almost uninhabitable derelicts kept afloat only by the grueling sweat of their hard working crews. Wages were poor, conditions at sea often untolerable and life ashore little better thanks to the collusion between ship's officers and loan sharks who saw to it a seaman was seldom out of debt. In this dehumanizing environment it was not surprising to see unions take hold as the sole hope of salvation from virtual bondage. The Merchant Marine Act of 1934 literally emancipated seamen by giving them hitherto unheard of rights. Ships had to be made safe, shipboard life made reasonably humane, food eatable and not filled with insect excrement, lice and flies. Conditions slowly changed, but most sailors remembered the hard times and still chose to look upon any landlubber — in uniform or out — as a natural, distrusted enemy. If they had to die in a war not of their making they would at least be paid well for it.

Aside from mixing two crews of totally different calling, the NAG teams also had to make peace with the ship's master and officers since in essence they took over as the vessel's security force. They had to enforce wartime restrictions aboard ship, see that no lights showed at night, decode signals, regulate refuse disposal, assist convoy officers in seeing that the ship maneuvered as ordered and stayed in position. They also had to motivate intransigent seamen into helping them man the guns should trouble arise. This was no small task for a youthful ensign just graduated from NROTC or a quickie "90-Day Wonder" OCS course. In addition to never having been to sea nor made to lead men in combat the ensign had quickly learned wartime seamanship only to find himself soon forced to master the art of diplomacy as well as gunnery. Smooth sailing was not to be their good fortune, especially in the deadly U-boat strewn Atlantic in 1942 and 1943.

The most critical problem confronting the young ensigns of the Naval Armed Guard was that of being totally on their own with no higher authority to guide in decision making other than their own intellect and the proverbial Officers' Manual. Discipline of their own sailors was difficult for the "Boot" gun crews, with only a few weeks of close order drill to hone their military instincts, were still civilians at heart and not service-weaned crusty old salts like

the veteran seamen crewing the merchant ships. They envied the carefree, easy-going lifestyle of the free-spirited merchant seamen and criticized the often unfair rules that made them toe-the-mark or face court-martial while jeering civilians worked the same ship with total disregard for obedience or loyalty to anything but themselves and union work rules. But making the gun crew function as a close knit team was the ensign's job. At an age when he should have been a junior in college he found himself thrust into the role of leader, juror, father, task master, confessor and referee to men often his own age or older. In these trying circumstances leadership often became a matter of sheer personal grit calling on every ounce of imagination a young officer could muster. Despite the myriad conflicts that made every young ensign a minor khaki-clad Lord Nelson, they were soon to see that the stakes they were playing for could become a matter of sudden life or death.

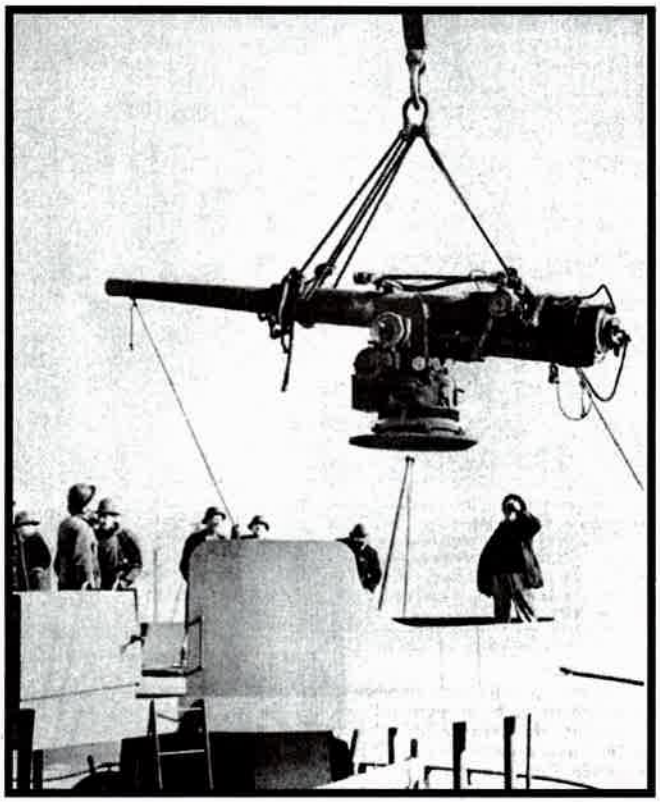
One of the first combat encounters involving the Naval Armed Guard occurred early in 1942 with convoy PQ-15 sailing on the deadly Murmansk run. Ensign Robert B. Ricks, USNR, commanded the five-man Armed Guard team aboard the 4,960-ton SS *EXPOSITOR* loaded to the plimsol with 5,000 cases of TNT. Ricks breathed easier when his twenty-three merchant ship convoy picked up an escort force of nine British destroyers, three armed trawlers and a flak cruiser for the *EXPOSITOR* was woefully ill-equipped with a single ancient 4"/50-cal. gun and four .30-cal. equally ineffective Lewis guns. Rumors of impending sub attack ran rampant throughout the long voyage from Halifax but luckily nothing happened before the ship reached the Clyde en route to Iceland where two new 20mm Oerlikon machine guns and a twin mount Hotchkiss were added to her armament.

The tranquility was soon to end when, a day later, German recon planes were seen out of gun range, shadowing the northbound convoy. With tensions mounting the Armed Guard crew spent the next forty-eight hours at continuous battle stations during which time several aerial attacks resulted in the downing of only one plane. On 3 May 1942, the attack began in earnest with five Ju-88 torpedo bombers looming low on the horizon to strike the starboard wing of the convoy. Gunfire bellowed from every ship as the German aircraft dodged the wall of flak and successfully unleashed their torpedoes. The British *CAPE CORSO* erupted in flames as she was hit by a flak crippled plane. She sank in two minutes when her cargo of high explosives torched in the raging fire. Two more ships succumbed to the aerial assault, but not before another plane exploded in mid-air.

As Ensign Ricks's fatigued gun crew watched the aircraft disintegrate, a lookout suddenly screamed that a U-boat had surfaced just a few yards off *EXPOSITOR*'s starboard quarter. The captain ordered the ship hard to port. Realizing his dangerous proximity to the *EXPOSITOR* the U-boat captain also turned to port crossing astern of the merchantman. It was an almost fatal and foolish mistake for Ricks's alert gun crew fired a broadside from the four-inch gun that struck squarely on the sub's conning tower. A second later another lookout spotted the torpedo the sub had hastily launched but the helmsman skillfully avoided it with a sharp swerving turn. Badly damaged, the U-boat dove for safety and sulked away to France for repairs. Ensign Ricks and his youthful crew had acquitted themselves well in their baptism of fire.

The intensity of airborne, surface and U-boat attack on the infamous Murmansk run soon made merchant crews change their attitudes about the undermanned Armed Guards. It was a battle for common survival and even union chief Joe Curran exhorted his seamen to aid the naval gunners — or die. Soon crewmen eagerly volunteered to become pointers and ammo passers. Distrust of the Navy men abated as returning seamen told story after story of unbridled heroism by Navy gunners. The saga of the intense and sustained attack on the *CITY OF JOLIET* became oft-repeated in the seamen's murky union halls:

One of the ships in convoy PQ-16, the *CITY OF JOLIET* found itself the hapless victim of an attack by no less than eight torpedo planes and eighteen dive bombers while six days out from Murmansk. The enemy attacked in line abreast formation on the starboard beam and quickly broke up as the *CITY OF JOLIET*'s well-teamed merchant and naval gunners opened up a withering return fire from every gun. The coordinated wall of flak drove off the deadly attack and the ship's damage was from near misses caused by three close-bursting 500-lb. bombs. Two days later and hundreds of miles closer to their destination, the convoy was subjected to no less than ten



In the frantic rush to arm merchantmen every possible weapon was used, as shown here with an aged four-incher being hoisted in position aboard the aft gun tub of a new freighter. A weapon like this was of little use against aircraft owing to its limited elevation capability. (U.S. Navy photo)

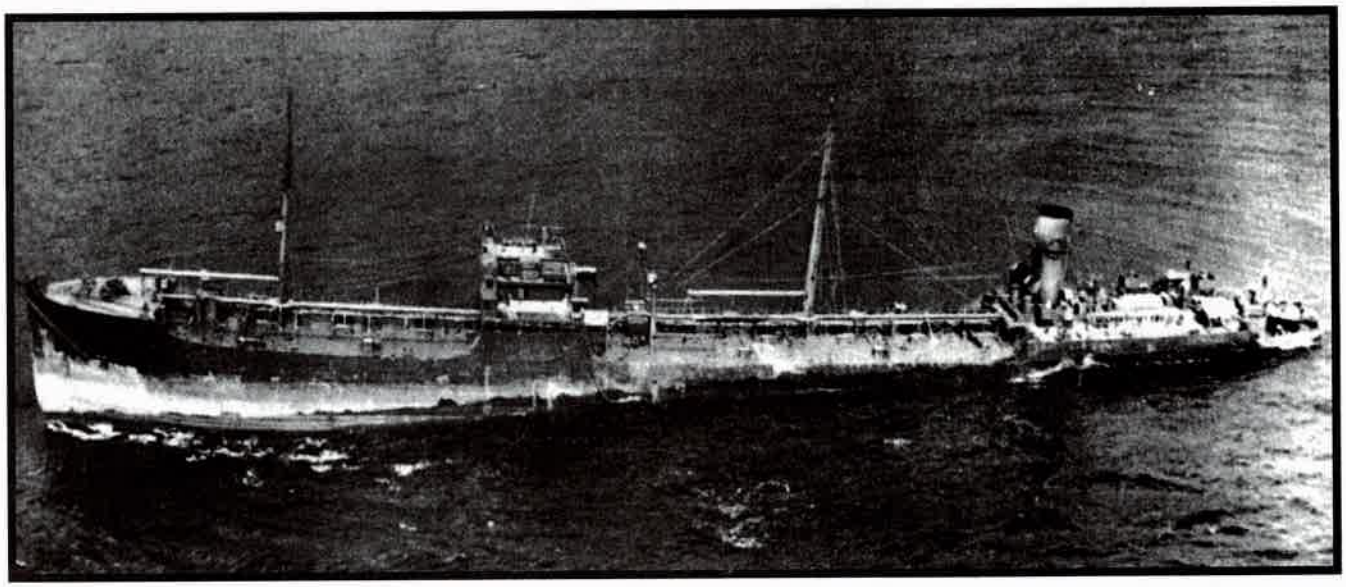
separate aerial attacks. Once again the *CITY OF JOLIET*'s determined gunners drove off the waves of attacking aircraft but not before the effects of several near misses had burst the ship's plating so badly that pumps could not keep her afloat. The ship was orderly abandoned as it sank with no loss of life. In writing up his action report Armed Guard commander Lt. (jg) J.C. Grotenrath stated, "green and untried personnel remained calm and cool throughout the repeated attacks. The merchant marine also stayed at their battle stations and greatly assisted the Armed Guard."

By mid-1942 the U-boat war was at its peak and Allied ship losses reached staggering proportions. America's shipbuilding industry worked around the clock frantically trying to build enough ships to offset those lost to the hissing sting of Hitler's U-boat torpedoes.

For several months the battle of the Atlantic hung in the balance with the Germans seemingly having the edge weighted to their eventual victory. It was the hardest time for the merchant seamen and the Naval Armed Guard. So the war zone frequently found the harbor naval authority commandeering their guns so they could quickly be transferred to an out-bound tanker or freighter.

Harrowing tales of survival at sea in open boats after a torpedoing, of instant death in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic, of oil drenched men desperately attempting to swim through walls of fire to escape sinking ships, filled the union halls. The call for ever more crews to sign articles for another dangerous voyage prompted unparalleled training of thousands of new merchant marine officers and seamen to fill the ranks of those lost at sea.

In the face of such adversity the surviving veteran captains and crewmen had little choice but to abandon their instinctive distaste for naval authority. And that included the Naval Armed Guards. Young though they were, the naval gunners learned fast and learned well. When the chips were down the NAGs could always be counted on to continue the fight — or die trying. The Liberty ship *DANIEL MORGAN* was typical.



Making some way despite being torpedoed and down by her stern, this tanker made it home in May 1942, thanks to the staunch defense put up by its Armed Guard gunners who can be seen still at their stations beside the aft four-inch gun. (National Archives 80-G-177161)

Fighting their way through murderous attacks en route to Russia the *MORGAN* became separated from the rest of convoy PQ-17 only to intercept a message that the *TIRPITZ* attack group was heading for her area. Making course alone at high speed for the safety of Admiralty Bay, on the Novaya Zemlya coast, the *MORGAN* sought the safety of a fog bank as her stern three-inch gun fired a steady barrage at shadowing German Ju-88 dive bombers.

By late afternoon the fog lifted and the *MORGAN* found herself near another lost sheep, the SS *FAIRFIELD CITY*. Minutes later the approaching drone of aircraft engines signaled a new attack.

The *FAIRFIELD CITY* quickly exploded in a mushroom of searing flame. All six aircraft then turned their wrath on the *MORGAN* whose bow three-inch AA gun was already firing at a rate of 30 rounds a minute. Every gun on the *MORGAN* hammered streams of tracers at the diving planes which dropped nine sticks of bombs on the weaving freighter without scoring a hit. Bombs expended, the planes droned off to re-arm.

MORGAN's Armed Guard officer, Lt. Morton E. Wolfson, USNR, reported, "...The men were beginning to show signs of eyestrain and physical exhaustion, having been at general quarters for over twenty-eight hours. We knew the Jerries would soon be back so we took the opportunity to quickly reload and ready ammo boxes. We weren't disappointed for in ten minutes another wave of five dive bombers hit us. The planes circled and climbed to be able to dive out of the sun, then started coming in one at a time for their bomb runs. The aft three-incher scored a hit in the port engine as the lead Ju-88 released two bombs. The bombs missed and the plane veered off, smoke pouring from its engine. Our 20mm fire scared off the next two bombers and the three-inch gun blew up the fourth with a well aimed hit. The fifth plane dropped two bombs that exploded close aboard

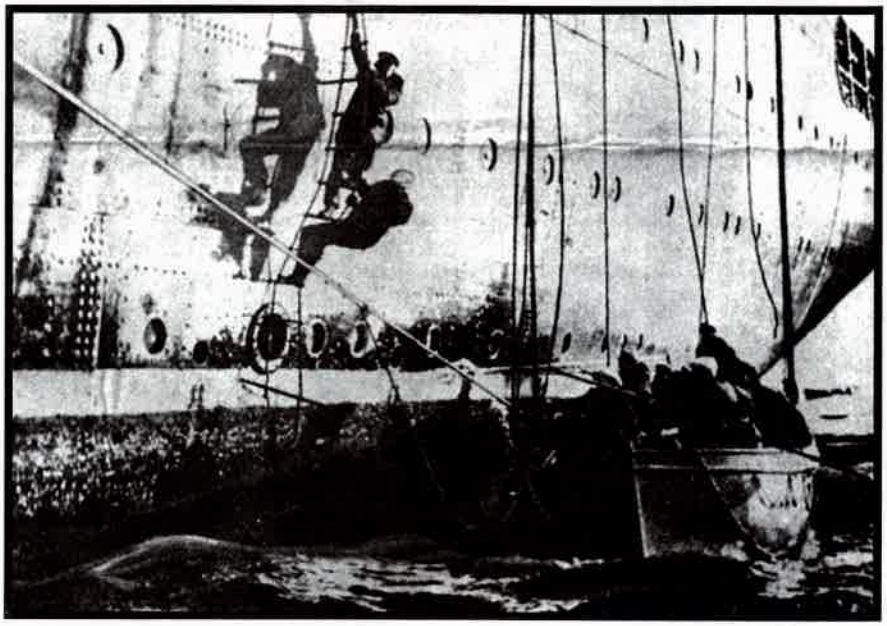
and ruptured plates between numbers 4 and 5 holds. The three-inch kept firing until it jammed due to overheating. Luckily the plane didn't press another attack. To our immense relief it flew off because by then I realized we were out of ammo and sinking..."

The *MORGAN*'s captain ordered abandon ship only to see a U-boat surface as they took to the lifeboats. The U-boat skipper waited until they were clear of the stricken *MORGAN* before firing a torpedo to seal her fate. The U-boat then drew close to the lifeboats, took pictures of the exhausted survivors and gave them a course for the nearest shore. Luckily it was July and the day spent in the open boats proved a brief respite before their next adventure. At dawn they spotted the Russian tanker *DONBASS,* who took them aboard. Their safety was short-lived for once on board the tanker Lt. Wolfson's gunners learned the shot-up Russian crew was so badly mauled by earlier combat that few were left to serve the guns. To a man the GIs, weary from three days of battle, volunteered to man the forward gun and repair the frozen stern mount. Their presence aboard the *DONBASS* was to prove providential for in hours the unrelenting dive bombers returned for the kill. Bleary-eyed and ragged from their seemingly endless ordeal, the gunners fed a stream of shells into the gun's smoking breech and miraculously scored a direct hit on the lead Ju-88, sending it crashing into the sea.

The next morning another wave of bombers dove from the sky and once again the Armed Guard's deadly aim threw up a wall of tracers which smoked two Ju-88s and took the steam out of the surviving planes' attack, saving the ship from a certain death blow. Upon reaching Molotovsk the Russians were so grateful for the persistence of the *MORGAN*'s Armed Guard that they sent a high ranking commissar to personally thank them for helping to save their critically needed tanker. Bottles of choice Vodka, a gift from the commissar, went unopened as the battle-weary GIs found their first sleep after four days of virtually uninterrupted combat.

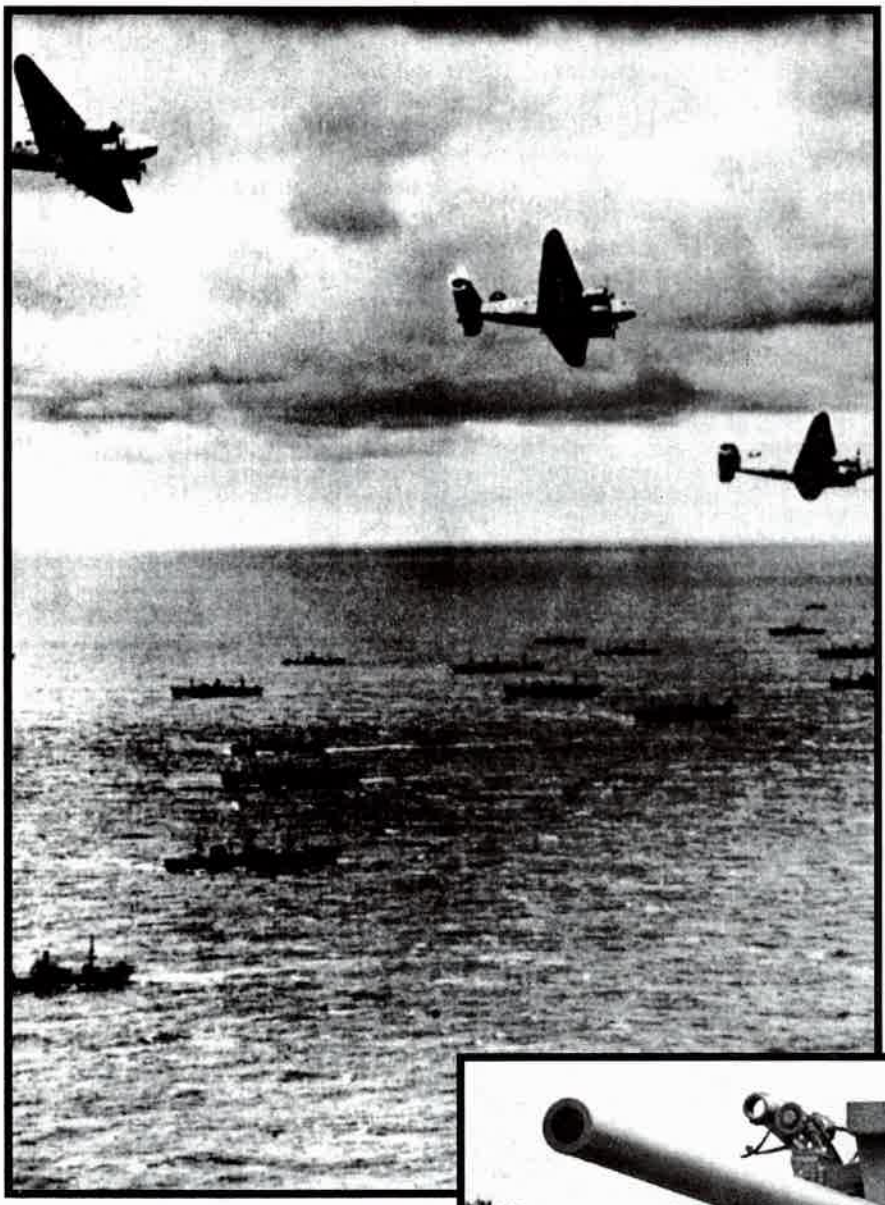
Not every Naval Armed Guard team was to taste the sweet flavor of victory over all manner of odds. Many went down with their stricken ship without being able to fire a shot in anger. For all it was largely a war of boredom punctuated by minutes of frenzied action when an enemy plane or sub was sighted. The Atlantic was every bit as determined an enemy as the Germans. Sleet, snow, rain, fog, ice a foot thick on the forward guns; four dreary hours on watch, two hours chipping ice, sleep and eat between, was the endless routine. It was war at sea at its worst for at any moment a torpedo could suddenly transform the plodding heavily laden ship into a roaring inferno of flame, twisted steel and screaming men.

Though merchant crew attitudes tempered toward their naval protectors the attitude differences in their call to duty remained an essential riff throughout the early years of the war. For the Navy men it was "save the ship" and for the merchant seamen it was "save themselves, the ship be damned." This attitude was to cause many unnecessary ship losses and fatalities for early abandonment of a torpedoed ship guaranteed its loss whereas "staying with the guns" often kept the attacking submarine at bay long enough for damage control parties to effect repairs. A report by the Office of Naval Intelligence pointed out the merits of stubbornly sticking to the guns versus abandoning ship as soon as the torpedo struck. The SS *WARRIOR,* a 7,500-ton freighter was torpedoed fifty-five miles out of Trinidad en route to Russia on 1 July 1942, and sank in five minutes. The NAG gun crew on the bow three-inch were in action seconds after the explosion. The captain ordered his crew over the sides but Ens. Alfred Anderson ran from the bridge and helped the gunners in the forward mount get off several rounds at the U-boat. Seeing the vessel was doomed, Anderson ordered his gunners to abandon ship. One enlisted striker, A.W. Abasta, refused to leave the gun. He and Anderson kept firing even as the *WARRIOR* upended and went down. Both were lost in the frothing sea.



Merchant crewmen hurriedly abandoned most torpedoed ships before the Naval Armed Guards offered them the solace of knowing they had some defense when attacked. Many ships were sacrificed that otherwise could have been saved for gunners often kept the U-boats at bay while damage was repaired. (Ed Schnepf collection)

Abandoning a torpedoed ship did not always imply cowardice or lack of determination by a merchant crew for they knew the lack of compartmentalization of freighters made them quick to flood and hard to save once hit. A good part of this "spooking" lay in the Navy's failure to train or indoctrinate civilian sailors in damage control measures that could be effected. A case in point was the tanker *GULF BELLE* en route from Belem to Aruba in July 1942. She was struck by a torpedo twenty-one miles north of Tobago. The captain's order to stand by was misinterpreted by the crew who

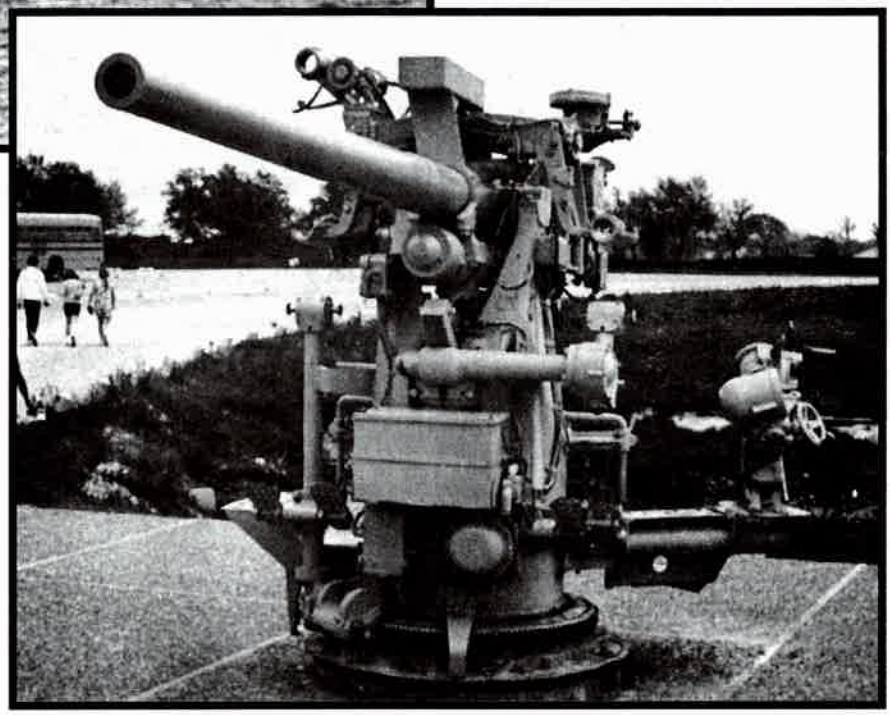


Escorts of Lockheed Hudson bombers were invaluable in protecting convoys near the shore but once well out to sea the armada of merchant ships had to fend for themselves in the early war years before sufficient numbers of naval escorts were available. 1942 saw the zenith of shipping losses with millions of tons of vital war supplies sent to the bottom owing to the largely defenseless merchant ships. (Imp. War Mus. C1+2859)

promptly took to the boats. The Naval Armed Guard stayed on board, manned their stern five-inch gun and began firing as the U-boat surfaced for the kill. A near miss close to the U-boat sent it diving for safety, never to be seen again. The NAG crewmen then took to manning pumps to save the stricken tanker and put out an SOS call for help. Seeing that the ship was not going under the merchant crew returned aboard, chagrined to find the torpedo damage well under control. The next day a British warship took the tanker in tow and a valuable ship and cargo was saved from destruction.

A similar event occurred with the 9,000-ton Socony motorship *BRILLIANT* torpedoed in November 1942, en route from New York to Belfast, Ireland. Hit just aft of the bridge an intense fire broke out and the ship's master, first, second and third mates, plus most of the crew including the cook and steward took to the lifeboats. The crew exited with such haste that the Armed Guard bluejackets broke out in laughter prompting the fourth officer, Mr. E.G. Cameron to stay aboard. With searing flames spreading across the decks the Armed Guard officer, Lt. (jg) J.R. Borum, asked ship's officer Cameron why he didn't try and put out the fire. Cameron knew the Lux fire-fighting system and went below to get the remaining crew to charge the firemains and start the steam-smothering system. Within an hour the fire was extinguished and Cameron and Borum — neither with any navigating experience between them — managed to get the ship headed for the Newfoundland coast. Making only three knots they happily reached Bonavista Harbor, where

(continued on page 47)



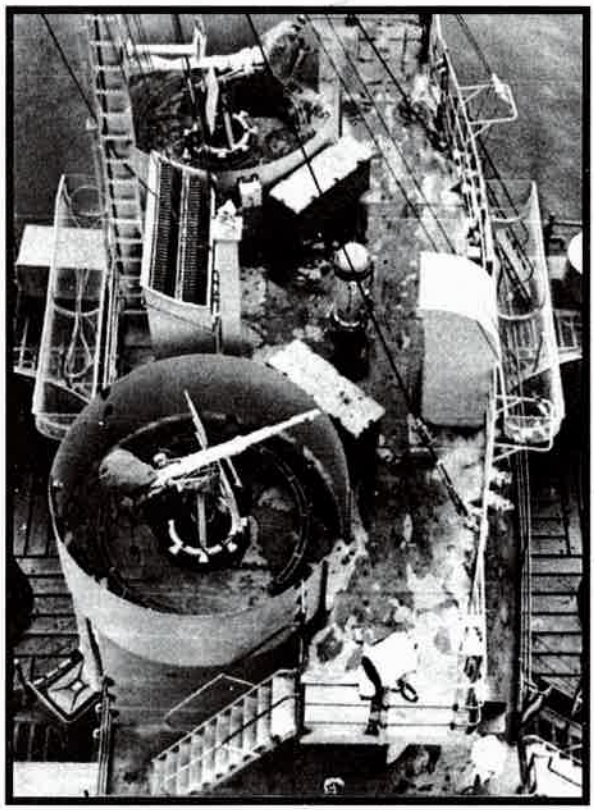
The classic 3"/50-cal. dual purpose gun became the standard wartime armament aboard merchant ships once the guns were built in sufficient numbers. It was highly effective against both aerial and surface targets. (Ed Schnepf photo)

(continued from page 21)

they anchored. Sadly, their exploit in saving the Brilliant was not to have a storybook ending for two months later both were to perish aboard her when she broke up and sank while under tow from St. Johns to Halifax for repairs. The nine crew members who abandoned ship eventually landed safely on the rocky shores of Newfoundland.

By late 1942 the large number of newly built convoy escorts made their presence felt and the tide of the Atlantic war slowly began to turn in favor of the Allies. Clearly, it was seen that there was a direct corollary between the numbers of warships escorting a convoy and reduced cargo ship losses. This was borne out by the chilling merchant ship sinkings of 8,333,000 gross tons in 1942 being reduced to less than half that sum by the end of 1943. The Battle of the Atlantic was not over, but for the beleaguered Naval Armed Guards and merchant seamen the days of endless peril were near an end.

The increase in convoy escorts — the huge number of corvettes and destroyer escorts, plus the appearance of the hunter-killer aircraft carrier groups — gradually diminished the effectiveness of the U-boat until their sole easy prey became the few unescorted merchant ships that plied the American coastal routes. But even then, with no escorts to ward off the U-boats with depth charges or gunfire, the Naval Armed Guards acquitted themselves well. By then the merchant crews, who at times had become mutinous because of the maritime massacre of their fellows on every ocean of the world, took solace that the guns had something more than symbolic value. If the Naval Armed Guards could not guarantee them absolute safety they at least offered a feeling of protection and reassurance. The saga of the old lake steamer Jack was typical. Sailing from Puerto Rico to New Orleans with a cargo of sugar, she was torpedoed shortly after moonset and rapidly began to go under. The Naval Armed Guard swept the dark seas with machine gun tracer fire hoping to illuminate the sinister U-boat for their four-inch gun. The gun crew, consisting of eight bluejackets and four soldiers manned the guns until the decks were awash. They were still firing when the Jack went down. Only two of the NAG crew survived with eight of the merchant crew. They drifted for thirty-two days on a raft before being rescued, itself an epic story of survival at sea.



20MM Oerlikon antiaircraft guns were typically fitted to the midships of merchant ships with surrounding splinter shields of 1/4" steel for crew protection. Ammo was kept in nearby lockers ready for immediate use. Note the lack of anything except visual rangefinders. (U.S. Navy photo)

Only one submarine is actually credited being sunk by an Armed Guard vessel and that "kill" was shared with two Army bombers off Diamond Shoals. The SS *UNICOI,* sailing in convoy from Key West to Hampton Roads in July 1942, spotted the *U-576* as it surfaced only a hundred yards astern in the middle of the convoy. Ensign M.K. Ames's (USNR) five-inch gun crew sprang into action and quickly scored a direct hit on the sub's conning tower. Escorting aircraft dove on the sub unleashing depth bombs that burst close aboard sending the U-boat on its last and final dive.

But despite the Naval Armed Guards' lack of substantial U-boat kills their value aboard merchant ships cannot be overestimated. There is no way to tabulate the number of ships that might have been attacked or lost had not they and their guns been aboard to effect retaliatory effort against the undersea marauders.

As the U-boat threat in the Atlantic diminished the Navy found other higher priority assignment for these now battle seasoned and well-trained gunners. Little by little they were broken up as crews and reassigned to destroyers and other warships where their gunnery skills could be put to good use in winning the Pacific War. The new breed of merchant seamen emerging en masse from maritime schools were well trained in gunnery and this factor alone allowed smaller Naval detachments aboard the merchant ships.

Captain Al Brown, a veteran merchant skipper, at war's end said, "These boys had to mold their own men into disciplined crews, and they had to do it entirely on their own without the guidance of any senior petty officers. They had to operate in the unbuttoned atmosphere of our merchant vessels, establish working relationships with us masters and our officers, and prove to the seamen that they were 'regular guys'."

By the end of the war the Naval Armed Guards were the toast of the Merchant Marine. Their singular dedication to duty and at times outright courage in facing a superior enemy had been inexorably established along the war's hard fought sealanes. From Aruba to Charleston, Casablanca to Halifax, Boston to Portsmouth, they served and fought and died with the sole principle of not giving up the ship. In a war with many unsung heroes they stood proud in doing a lonely, dangerous job without promise of profit or glory. They were the U.S. Naval Armed Guards. **SC**

U.S.NAVY ARMED GUARD WW II 21ST NATIONAL REUNION

MAY 5-9, 2002

ROOM RATE $45. PLUS TAX **CHECK IN TIME : 3 P.M.**

CHECK OUT TIME 12: NOON

"JACKIE GAUGHAN'S"

PLAZA HOTEL AND CASINO/DOWNTOWN

ONE MAIN STREET

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89125-07060

TEL. 702-386-2110 FAX 7O2—386-2378 *TOLL FREE TEL. 1-800-634-6575

TELL THE OPERATOR IT'S FOR THE "U.S.N.ARMED GUARD WW II REUNION"

ITINERARY

Sun. May 5 - Registration 9-A.M. - 5 P.M. (Get acquainted with Hotel, Rooms, Crew.

Mon. May 6 - Registration 9 A.M. - 5 P.M. (Hospitality room opened, too)
Buffet Dinner - 7-9 P.M. Per Person $20. (ITG) No.( ) $____.00

Tues. May 7 Registration 9 A.M.-5 P.M. (Hospitality Room open 9 A.M.-11 P.M.}
Business Meeting 9 A.M. - Noon

Wed. May 8 Registration 8 A.M. - 2 P.M. (Hospitality Room opened 9 A.M.-3 P.M.}
8 A.M.- Start Boarding Buses at the Union Plaza Hotel curbside (1 Main) to Southern Nevada Veteran's Memorial Cemetery for a V-E DAY Memorial Service to all who served and monument dedication. $10. ea. No.( )$____.00
5 P.M. - 6 P.M. - Social Hour (OUTSIDE THE BALLROOM)
7 P.M. - 9 P.M. Dinner Banquet (Coat and Tie) $24.each No.( ) $____.00
Floor Show to follow

Thurs. May 9 8 A.M. ALL ASHORE for SO LONG Breakfast. $11.00 ea. No.( ) $____.00

Grand Total: $_____ .

****

Check No._____ Date of Check _____/____/___. Handicapped? ( ) Lady ( )
Last Name_____ First_____ Inital ___ Lady's Name _____
Street _____ Box _____ Apt _____ City_____State ____
Zip Code _____ _____. Tel. (____) ___ ____ _____ Office Tel. (____) ____ ____ _____
Fax. (____)___ ____ ____ E-mail. _____ Other. _____

Fill out and make a copy of this and bring a copy and cancelled check with you and your comformation number from Hotel if received in time in case of a MIXUP!! You late comers, write down the comformation number in case Hotel can not get it to you in time. Make your OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS as early as possible to help the Hosts. For the events above Make checks payable to: USN ARMED GUARD WW II VETERANS and send to: Chet and Wanda Colella, 1206 Garden Valley Dr. Apt B, St. Peters, Mo. 63376. 1-636-922-5200. PLEASE LIMIT YOUR CALLING TIME!! When you call the HOTEL1-800-634-6575 number and they insist that all rooms are taken, call Colella; or, direct to the Hotel as our hotel cutoff date is April 5, 2OO2. If you go earlier on Friday and Saturday Nite, the room rates for those days are $65. but you may be able to save hundreds on your weekend flights. All our "ALLIED PERSONNEL" equal to the Armed Guard and Merchant Seaman and their ladies are also invited to be with us as we shared the same hardships together for the same goal— "FREEDOM".

calloyd

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

DEDICATION

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

The U.S.N. Armed Guard WW II Veterans 21st National Reunion will be held May 5-9, 2002 at Jackie Goughan's Plaza Hotel, 1 Main St., Las Vegas. Nevada 891O1 8OO-634-6575, or 7O2-386-211O downtown Las Vegas. The Hosts are Al and Wanda Colella, 12O6 Garden Valley Dr. Apt B. St. Peters, Mo., 63376-6OO6 Tel-636- 922-5200.

★★

USN Armed Guard WW II Veterans
115 Wall Creek Drive
Rolesville, N.C. 27571
1-(919)-570-0909
clloyd@nc.rr.com

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 2322
Raleigh, N.C.

Address Service Requested

Remember Pearl Harbor!
December 7, 1941

```
28*4*******************3-DIGIT 329
6987
CLARENCE F  KORKER, JR 9
7 N MULBERRY ST
FELLSMERE FL 32948-5320
```

Support The USN Armed Guard
WW II Veterans Reunions
Remember Also
The World Trade Center
September 11, 2001

SPECIAL EDITION JAN/2002