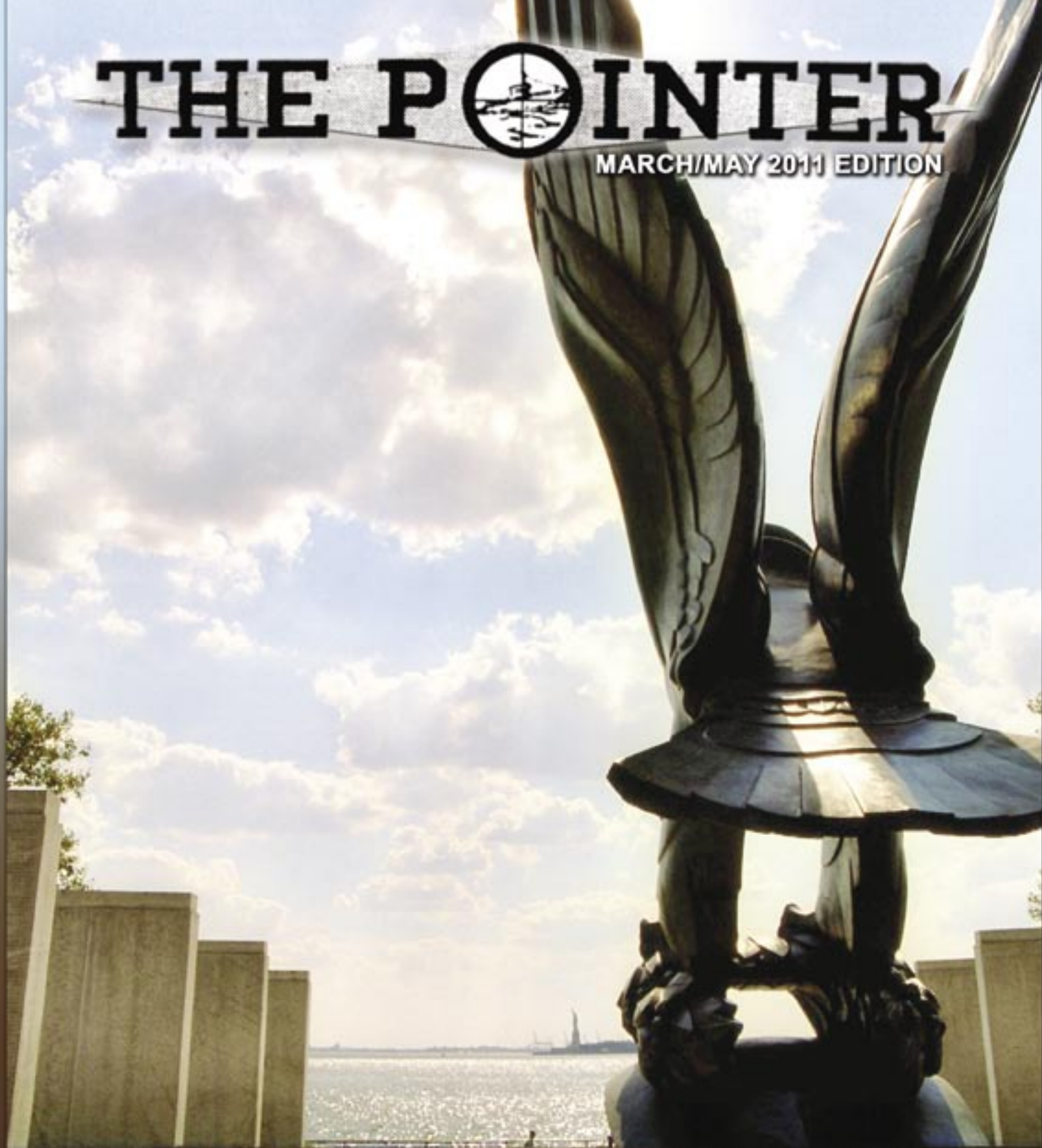


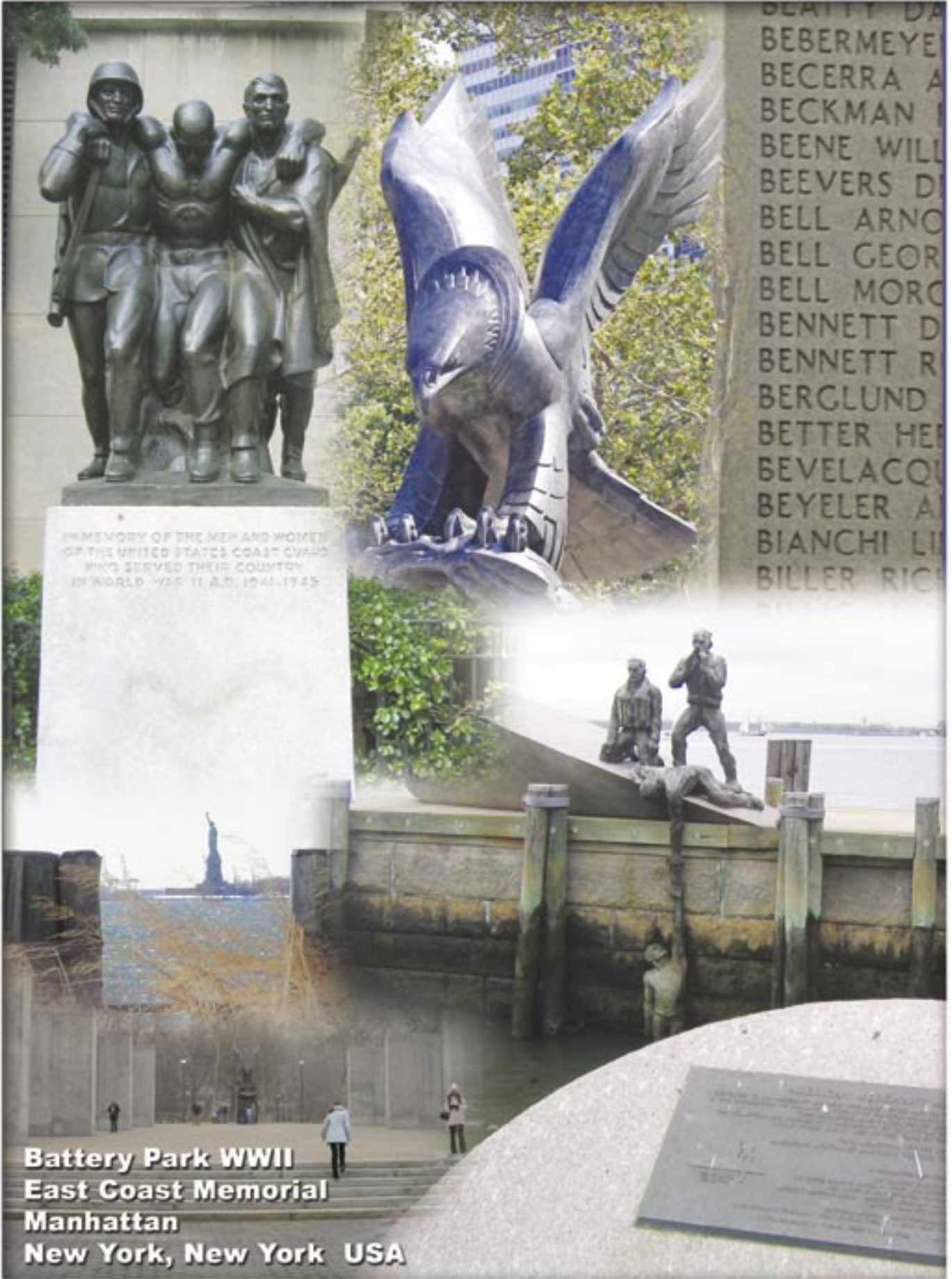
THE POINTER

MARCH/MAY 2011 EDITION



The World War II East Coast Memorial is located in Battery Park in New York City at the southern end of Manhattan Island. It is about 150 yards from the South Ferry subway station on the IRT Lines and overlooks the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. It stands just south of historic Fort Clinton on a site furnished by the Department of Parks of the City of New York.

This memorial commemorates those soldiers, sailors, marines, coast guardsmen, merchant marines and airmen who met their deaths in the service of their country in the western waters of the Atlantic Ocean during World War II. Its axis is oriented on the Statue of Liberty. On each side of the axis are four gray granite pylons upon which are inscribed the name, rank, organization and state of each of the 4,609 missing in the waters of the Atlantic.



THE POINTER



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Dear Armed Guard and all the readers.

4/1/11

You may notice the 4/1/11 date I use this time is to remind you that on April Fool's Day, I was born. That been said, I wish all of you to have had at least 85 good years of FREEDOM as I have by being an American and I hope to have many more along with you. And FREEDOM has not been FREE as 1810 Armed Guard and approximately 8700 Merchant Marine gave their all. As we all age out, and one day, there will be a LAST POINTER as on Page 25 shown of the LAST POINTER at the Armed Guard Center in Brooklyn, N.Y.. The three men were honored on that WW II POINTER and we will do the same to them in this POINTER. In this POINTER, you will find how the Eagle came about that we adopted as our insigna which my late AG brother, L.D. and I lifted from the Camp Shelton Armed Guard School book and used at the Brooklyn AGC before I learned they used a Pelican in New Orleans AGC (NOLA) and the man loading the gun at at the Treasure Island AGC. Some of the crew drew it on the gun tubs and the late AG Homer Perry had it tatoood on his shoulder.

As I told all of you in the last POINTER on donations, I have put many on HOLD and IF you don't have a number behind your last name, you too will be put on hold and also those I haven't heard from in the last 7 years. It still costs money to pay the bills. I am not paid a salary nor anyone else. It has been a pleasure to know you care. Thanks to you who donate to keep the POINTER printed. We are down to approx. 5500 on the mailing list.

You may notice I have deleted Ron Carlson's phone number as his responsibility is for the website and he doesn't have access to the Veteran's Assoc. information. If you call him, you will just have to call me on the AG phone. Funny, some still call my Raleigh number and send mail also, and we moved over 11 years ago. Good to know they kept them that long.

I know I did not get many articles that was sent me in this POINTER, so remind me and send it again so I will set it up for the next one. If you would like to start a meeting in your area, let me know and I will send names in your area that are AG.. For those who send me E-Mail messages, please list your name at the bottom as there are a lot of DONs, JOE's, BILLs, Etc.. Approx. 275 have donated this year and approx 2500 last year.

Did you? (cal)



Cover photo of WWII East Coast Memorial (See previous page for more photos)



You want the history to the AG here you go...

Administrative History: Arming of Merchant Ships and Naval Armed Guard Service
in World War II OPNAV-P421-514

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Admin-Hist/172-ArmedGuards/172-AG-2.html>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Admin-Hist/173-ArmedGuards/173-AG-1.html>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ref/NAG/NAG-5.html>, pg 78

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/Admin-Hist/110.2-3rdND/3rdND-2.html>

Best wishes. Ron Carlson, Webmaster Armed Guard / Merchant Marine website

www.armed-guard.com

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:

I finally got through proofreading WALT AT SEA. I decided to send you the whole thing again. I appreciate anything you can do printing this in my father's memory. He was a fine man and I miss him terribly. At least I have this to reread to try to put myself in his shoes while experiencing life around the world on a merchant ship at a tender age of 19! What he saw and went through!

Merry Christmas to you and your family. You are doing a great service to the many families who had people involved with the war effort back then! Thank you.

Ann Phillips (See Pages 29-45)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi Cal,

I received my copy of the Pointer the other day and had expected to find the article penned by Lee Higgins and myself to have made the December publication, but of course it was not to be. I surmise that there must be some thing basically wrong with the article that prevents you from publishing it. What do we have to do to make it worthy of print? We thought the Crews of the Copley would enjoy reading about our war time experience, and might establish some some contact with some shipmates,[if there are any still alive].

I ask that you edit the article where you deem necessary to make the it suitable for publication.Regards,Jack Singleton • 2333Southern Pine Pl., Deland, FL 32724 • 386-734-9216
bjsingleton@wildbird.net
SEE PAGE 19

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal,

I still enjoy the POINTER and I appreciate your efforts. Enclosed is my donation to help. I had an experience

that may be of interest to you. Sometimes ago, I was contacted by some students from Franklin Middle School in Champaign, Il. who were doing a project on WW II Veterans. As the Illinois Veteran's Project had funds left over and they offered it to local schools to interview veterans and this class set up a plan to follow through. My niece who taught school there, suggested my name as no one had ever heard of the USN ARMED GUARD. The teacher, Tina Wetchel and 2 students drove 30 miles out to see me after school. The dedicated students were Logan Stalks and Kenneth Sanchez. One did the video work and the other did the interview.

They were greatly interested in Liberty ships, the convoys, cargos and where the cargo was taken, the loss of lives, the sinkings; especially the sinking of the S.S. CLARK MILLS that I was on when struck by torpedo dropped by a German plane on March 9, 1944 off of Bizerte, Tunisia. Luckily, there was no casualties and we were all taken to Bizerte by a British tug. I loaned them some pictures and gave them some copies of the POINTERS. They are to put it on a DVD and send to the State of Illinois Military Archives. Sincerely,
Thomas Tipswood
Box 74
Broadlands, Il. 61816

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hello Charles, As my name has appeared in several POINTERS in the past, I hope you will put my new address in the POINTER listed below. The new address is the location of a large State of N.H., County of Rockingham complex consisting of a Nursing Home, Fire Fighting School, House of Correction and an Assisted Living Division wherein I am residing. As you know, Bob Norling recently loaned me the various USNAG directories you have published over the

years, and in two of them, I found the name of Joseph H. Perigny and lo and behold, he is a resident here with me and we have become good friends and I gave him my autographed copy of Justin Gleichauf's book "UNsung SAILORS" on the Armed Guard which he had never seen. He is very anxious to get back on the mailing list. He had made at least one Murmansk Run on the Liberty Ship S.S. JOSHUA W. ALEXANDER. Steady as she goes,
Capt.Geo.W.Duffy
117 North Rd.,
Brentwood, N.H. 03833
603-734-2275 geowduffy@comcast.net

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Two District Men Cited for Bravery

Five Western Pennsylvania members of a merchant ship armed guard unit, two of them from the Pittsburgh district, have been commended by the chief of naval personnel for conspicuous bravery in action near Murmansk, Russia, last March and April.

Those commended were P/O Hillary Clemens Makowski, 2715 Cobden St.; Seaman Joseph James Harwood, 311 Tenth St., Sharpsburg; P/O John Hrebmar, Monessen; P/O John James Mitchell, Jeannette, and Seaman Joseph Marchak, Beaver Falls.

The citations stated that throughout a period of nearly two months their ship was subjected to countless attacks by enemy planes. The crew stayed almost constantly on duty, and shot down at least two and a possible third enemy aircraft, preventing many others from coming within bombing distance.

P/O Makowski is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew A. Makowski of 2715 Cobden St.; Seaman Herwood's wife, Mrs. Joseph James Herwood, lives in Sharpsburg.

Dear Cal,

As you know, I am a member of the "FORGOTTEN CONVOY" in Russia. We were in Murmansk about 2 months and since we were bombed day and night, someone decided to get an icebreaker and plow a path through the ice in the White Sea to Molotov, where we stayed for 6 more months. A lot of our FORGOTTEN CONVOY mem-

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

bers who I talked to at many of our National Armed Guard Reunions didn't remember the shortage of food we had lived by. We lived on survivors's rations that was brought to our ship by trucks from a warehouse someplace in Russia which was powdered eggs and spam, which to me, was better than nothing. The Captain of our ship, the S.S. THOMAS HARTLEY, stopped all night lunches to the crews. However, the officers were permitted to eat them.

Aboard our ship, we had a cook that was a native of France. He was one who took a job on a ship rather than go back to France since the Nazi were in control of France. So "Frenchie" and I became buddies and he would sneak a loaf of bread and spam into my bunk and hide it under the bed covers and I would share with others in my focsle. I have the names of all the crew that served on the S.S. THOMAS HARTLEY but Ward Hines has been the only shipmate that I have ever contacted. I was just wondering how many are still living ___?? I am 88 years old now. Hope more than 2 of us of the 25 are still living.

I am enclosing an article that was published in the "PITTSBURGH PRESS" which has since gone out of business. I don't know who came up with the story but as far as I know, we had 10 guns on board and the 5"51 could not be elevated for aircraft and the others ships had the same number and every body that shot at the enemy aircraft and brought it down, got credit. I don't know how we got credit for shooting them all down. Thanks, C.A.. Check enclosed.

Hilary C. Makowski
202 Wedgewood Ct.,
Carnegie, Pa. 15106.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Thanks for going, Hilary and all the others who made the MURMANSK RUN and

other RUNS. I know the Russians, who know of what you did, are THANKFUL. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi Charlie,
Just a note to say Hi and THANK YOU and many of our shipmates. Without your hardwork and vision, the Armed Guard would never have had a name in our Maritime History. I was pleased to have spoken with you a few weeks ago, informing you that I had received the 65th Anniversary Medal from the Russian Government referring to the "Murmansk Run" when my ship, the S.S. TOWNSEND HARRIS and our convoy made the trip there from 12/19/44 to 3/23/45 when the temperature dipped to 40 degrees below zero. An ice breaker had to assist us out of the Kola River. With much gratitude, I am sending a donation for your continuing work, God Bless you and Hilda.

Jos. P. Giordano 44 Mail St. #306
Stoneham, Ma. 02180 781-279-7884

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Thanks, Joe, I never thought of it exactly that way. Just glad it happened. Joe also sailed on the S.S. DAVID CALDWELL 10/43-8/44 (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal, Another year has gone by and a year older, only in a number. According to 4 doctors, I have been living on borrowed time for a few years. I am looking forward to several more years to enjoy the POINTER!! Hoping you and Hilda a happy, safe and a healthy NEW YEAR. I gave a presentation about what a veteran is to my granddaughter's 7th graders. I made sure they understood what the Navy Armed Guard were and also, the Merchant Marines. I got back 30 letters from them asking me all sorts of questions and I answered each one. More and more schools are teaching

their students why we fought WW II and also about the holocaust. I was so proud to give my presentation with my Armed Guard WW II cap on and also my HONOR FLIGHT SHIRT. Forest Lane of the New York AG Chapter. Address on Reunion Notices.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal, Please accept my donation to help defray the cost of printing and mailing of the POINTER. which I read and appreciate very much. I am the only one of 4 brothers and father remaining who served in the Merchant Marines during WW II. THANKS!

George E. Engelbrecht
1245 Fuae Ave.,
Northfield, N.J. 08225 609-646-0390

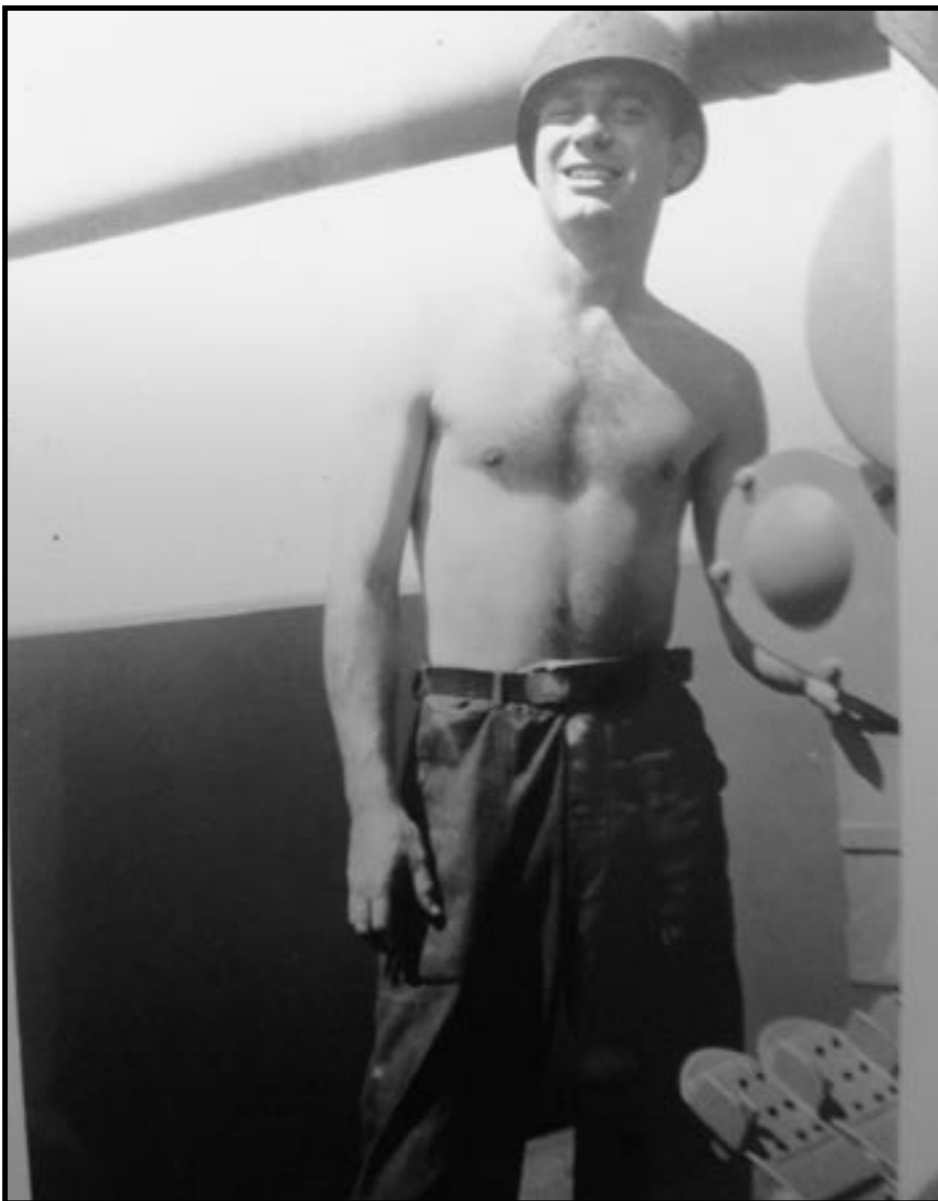
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

George, I would like to personally say THANKS to all in your family who served their country as Mariners during WW II. I see where your dad, Emil H. was killed in the sinking of the S.S. NAECO which was not armed on 3/23/1942 65 miles SE of Cape Lookout, N.C. with the loss of 4 men and 3 wounded of 38 man crew. The cargo was 97,000 barrels of #2 fuel and Kerosene. I see also where you served on 8 ships from 2/44 until 9/19/46. (cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In what country is Singapore in? Malaysia? They changed so much. I pulled it up on the computer but it never give whether Viet Nam, French Indo China, Etc. You may have contacted me in the past but whoever contacted me first was way before Ralph Lucas passed away. It was before they decided to start the search because whoever it was, when I told him what Ralph had told me, they called him and away they went. They may have first started by reading Capt. Art Moore's book, "A CARELESS WORD- A NEEDLESS SINKING" published in 1983 and I understand he had gathered records from the archives for 15 years in getting the book together. Got to go cal byd

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



★★★★★★

Hello CA,

Not only do the borders change but the names of these small Asian countries change every time they have a change in Government - or so it seems!

Singapore is a tiny (25m x 15m) diamond-shaped country at the bottom end of the Malay peninsula. I can drive clear from one side of the county to the other in 40 minutes. I was told that Ralph Lucas was a big strong chap and the boys liked to go out drinking with him because if they got into a fight Ralph could protect them. I never got to speak to Ralph and so never heard his story. As an Armed Guard he is unlikely to know much about the workings of the ship or the cargo she carried. I have the lists of the JOHN BARRY survivors and two photos of Ralph, one taken on the ship and one at Khorramshahr. I sent a copy of the survivor lists to Walt this morning. Are you interested in swapping information on the ship? I knew about the Moore's book but have never read it. I will try and get a copy in the library tomorrow. Warmest Wishes, Dorian

★★★★★★

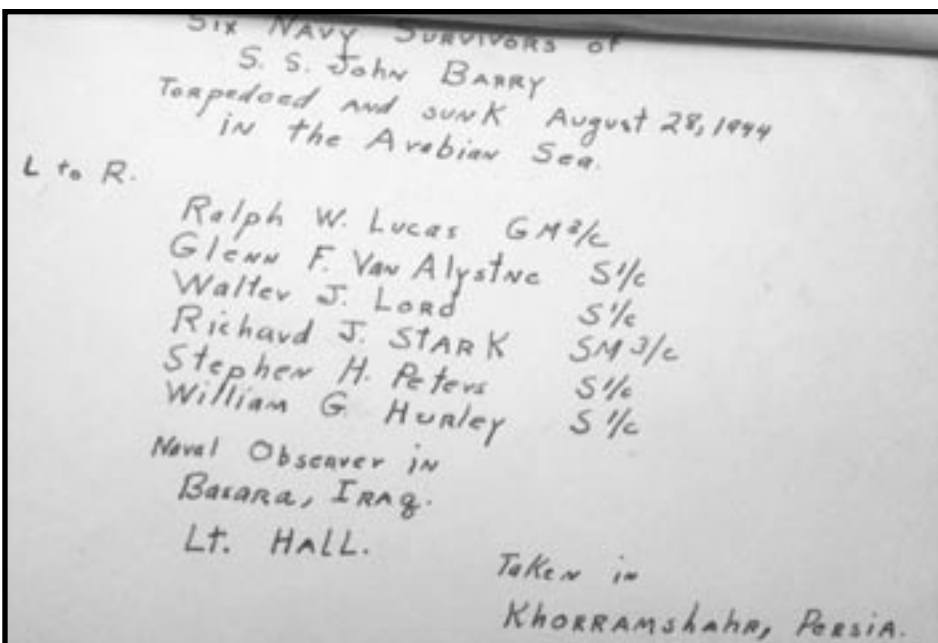
Dorian,

I don't know much more on the ship or it's crew or cargo than what has been brought to light. I would like photos of Ralph and anything you can share. I will save our correspondence in the computer for history. It may be of interest to someone 100 years from now. Have a great weekend. CAL

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Charles,

My Chapter of the AMMWWII donated two flag poles to the Ohio Veterans Memorial Park at Clinton, Ohio and you featured us on the inside cover of the POINTER. Thanks for the extra copies of the POINTERS. I lived in New Philadelphia, Ohio all my life except my time spent in the service of



LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

the Merchant Marine which I joined while still in high school. All of us thought we were in the Military. At the end of the war, we found out that we were just "contract workers" for the government. While in the MM, I made 3 trips across the Atlantic. I sailed on the S.S. BENJAMIN R. MILAM, a converted Liberty to transport troops. I love the POINTER and can't wait to read "Letters to the Crew". I took my basics at Sheepshead Bay and served from May 1945-June 1946. The stevedores were on strike at that time so I joined the Army and ended up in Germany in the Constabulary. Thanks for the POINTERS and keeping me aboard.

Marvin Beans
401 Church St., SW
New Phila., Ohio 44663

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal,
Have enjoyed the POINTERS since first receiving them in 1998. At the time, I was a docent with the S.S. JEREMIAH O'BRIEN in San Francisco. I often told visitors that the MM and AG were the forgotten service in WW II. Sadly, many of the people had never heard of us.

Today, Americans, because of the POINTER, are learning that the MM and AG pulled off the greatest sealift of men and material in World History. Real stories of pride, loss of ships and men that went down with them, can be found in the POINTER. THANKS Cal and to your team for keeping history alive of crews in the POINTER.. Sincerely,
Robert Glissman (MM)
225 Mount Hermon Rd.,
#221, Scotts Valley, Ca. 95066

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Hi Cal, I think I am correct in surmising that it was you who recently sent me a copy of the "POINTER" and requested info on Austin Byrne. As for Austin,



I have not been in touch with him recently as he lives in the suburb of Bradford in West Yorkshire. He was a member of the DEMS Gunner's Assoc., Southern Branch. There were only 3 branches of DEMS in all of UK and sadly, all have disbanded. A few of us still meet with the RNA in Liverpool to keep old friendship's alive and talk of our service life. It's called-"SWINGING THE LAMP"!! I am in touch with one of your AG radioman Don Kloenne in Hicksville, N.Y.. He sends me interesting news of Long Island as I visited N.Y. many times during the war.

As to my RN service, I had always been interested in LIFE AT SEA and when the war broke out, I got the chance I wanted. I volunteered to join the local defense after the government asked for Men of 16 and over to sign on. We did not have a uniform; just an arm band with the letters LDV. We were a motley crowd but willing to patrol the moors and reservoirs keeping a sharp eye out for enemy parachutists. We were the forerunners of the HOME GUARD! I soon became of age and joined up and on to HMS COLLINGWOOD, a training center close to Portsmouth.

My first ship was an old steam yacht VESTAL. Then, the MV CLIFTON HALL.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

See Next Two Pages As Well...
Ed, Ted and Ray met in Naples, Italy Dec. 1943. Ray and Ed were Army; Ted was a signalman on board the S.S. DARIEN, a United Fruit banana boat as part of the US Navy Armed Guard Crew. Our ship was in a "Bombing Raid" in Augusta, Sicily on Dec. 31, 1943 (New Year's Eve) on our way back to the States. I will never forget that nite in Augusta. The German Air Force ushered in the NEW YEAR with an instant fireworks display. It was larger and brighter than I had ever seen before, since and in this day and time.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dear Cal,
My father shared with me the Jan/May 2010 edition of The Pointer. In the edition there was information on how to get the 65th year medal from the Russian Run. My dad was aboard the SS John Stephenson from January 1944 (when it left New York) arriving in Russia in late February 1944 and returning to New York in April of 1944. My father is a quiet and reserved man. I applied for a copy of is DD-214 (which he thinks he already has but it is not clearly documented that it is a DD-214 but states the required information) and am looking forward to get-

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...



REUNION IN ITALY—SOUTH DEERFIELD, March 7—Word has been received of the recent meeting in Italy of Pvt. Edwin Nartowicz, Theodore Szutowicz, seaman first class, and Pvt. Raymond Boron, shown above, left to right. The three were friends ^{CLASSMATES} in South Deerfield.

(Nov. 1943)

ED, TED & RAY MET IN NAPLES, ITALY DEC, 1943 RAY & ED WERE IN THE ARMY, TED WAS SIGNALMAN ON BOARD SS. DARIEN A UNITED FRUIT BANANA BOAT, AS PART OF US NAVY ARMED GUARD CREW. OUR SHIP WAS IN A BOMBING RAID IN AUGUSTA SICILY ON DEC 31, 1943, (NEW YEARS EVE) ON OUR WAY BACK TO THE STATES... I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT NITE IN AUGUSTA, THE GERMAN AIR FORCE USHERED IN THE NEW YEAR WITH A INSTANT FIREWORKS DISPLAY, IT WAS LARGER & BRIGHTER THAN I HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE, SINCE & IN THIS DAY & TIME
TED SZUTOWICZ (ACT 24 200)

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

This is the part of my WW II Armed Guard service from Nov 1942 thru June 1946.

I am dedicating this memoir to the honor of my good friend and mentor Ray Boron who passed this June 11,2010. As I continue my recollections, I will send them to the Pointer.Thank you for inspiring me to "write it down".

Dear Mr. Lloyd,

I appreciated your call many months ago and I am now keeping my promise to share some adventures of this first generation Polish-American boy with my fellow Armed Guardsmen.

My first adventure was convincing my mother that she should sign my enlistment papers ! I was only 16 when I graduated in June of 1942 and was chomping at the bit to get into any service. Come November 1942 when I hit 17, I visited the Marine Recruiting Station and they were closed ! Next to them was the Army and Navy. As I came out of the Marine office, the Navy recruiter showed up and he convinced me that the Navy was the way to go.

My mother finally signed my enlistment papers and off I went to become a regular Navy person for the next six years. Newport, RI was next for bootcamp and then Signalman School. This school was interesting but boring so the Chief put me in charge of the class most of the time and I learned more that way than I would have sitting there bored. After graduating from Signalman School, the Chief called me into his office and said we should discuss my assignment. After carriers, destroyers, and submarines his suggestion was the Armed Guard. I didn't know what he was talking about, so I took his word. A few days later I was at the U.S. Naval Station in Groton, Conn. This was a Graduate School for training signalmen to do it all. Codes, radio, lights, flags,etc. A very concentrated course of four weeks. I thought I was headed for the underground, not the Armed Guard !

However, in May 1943 I ended up at the Armed Guard Center, Brooklyn,NY and was assigned to a banana boat, SS Darien. We made our first trip to Casablanca and Ageria. The second trip was to Tunis,Sicily and finally in November 1943 we ended up in the war torn harbor of Naples,Italy. The enemy was sitting in the hills above the city as our troops were pushing out of the city.

Because all of the docks were gone,we anchored in the harbor and they unloaded our cargo which consisted of turkeys, beef and assorted fruits.We were one of the few refrigerated ships.This cargo was intended for Thanksgiving and Christmas for the troops.Unloading the ships were Army ducks and each one had 2 or 3 soldiers with rifles for protection. We did not realize it but other folks had their eyes on our cargo and we found out later that at least 1 out of every 3 ducks were hi-jacked !

Several of us AG had the brilliant idea of going ashore by sneaking aboard the ducks unloading the ships. It was on this occasion that I ran into a couple of my Deerfield Highschool classmates from South Deerfield, Mass., Ed Nartowicz and Ray Boron. I don't remember who took our picture and sent it to Springfield Union (which is enclosed along with a recent picture of the 3 of us at our highschool reunion - 2008)

I was glad to see Ray Boron who I grew up with from 1st grade on. He took care of me during my school years along with my older brother. We took Ray back to the ship with us and he spent the night after cleaning up and eating with tableware for the first time since leaving the States ! Ray said that night onboard was better than a room at the Waldorf Astoria !

After unloading the ship, we parted ways , me back stateside with Ray and Ed heading up the beach to the Anzio invasion.On our way back to the states, we passed Augusta, Sicily on Dec.31,1943 and were fortunate to escape the harbor as the Germans bombarded an entering convoy from the states.As we silently left the harbor, we were at our gun stations but told not to fire. All this time we were subject to seeing an unbelievable display of planes and ships being totally destroyed. Every time I see a 4th of July fireworks display it reminds me of Augusta,Sicily that night.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

USN ARMED GUARDS

January 24, 2011

Greetings to all USN Armed Guards

Most of you don't know us as individuals. We are area hosts, and dedicated USN Armed Guards, very concerned about the future of our National group. Charles Lloyd, our National Chairman, has done an unbelievable job in keeping this group together, and through The Pointer, giving each of us a voice, and giving us information about Veterans and a chance to hear stories of different experiences.

It is our belief that we are a very special group of people who served in a difficult and very hazardous service for our great country, the United States of America, with little recognition and doing it willingly to help bring about victory in WW II. We need to keep our group in touch with each other even though we are spread all across the USA., and we feel our National Chairman Charles Lloyd, and his special efforts with the Pointer is the way to do it.

Charles knows we are doing this, but it is of our doing, not at Charles direction. We are a disappearing group, with our members sailing into uncharted waters at an ever increasing rate.

All of this means that while the group has always depended on voluntary donations for operating funds, primarily to give Charles funds to keep printing the Pointer, the funds are drying up. We are writing this letter with the hopes that each of us will give to the best of your ability an extra donation to enable the Pointer to keep coming out to keep us together. Each and every dollar that is donated added to the total will be appreciated and make the difference needed. **ALSO, CHARLES IS PUTTING EVERYONE WHO HAS NEVER DONATED, AND THOSE WHO HAVEN'T DONATED SINCE 2000 ON HOLD.**

Thanks for listening, and our wishes that the year 2011 will be a great one for each of you and you family.

Arnie Latore, IA-MN-DAKS Host

Jay Wildfong, WI-IL Host

ting his 65th year medal. I have a question for you. Is it too late to get his medal from the 50th year? I want to surprise him with both. He would be so thrilled and your editions of The Pointer have really forced him to reminisce with all of his children. I was wondering if I should include the need for both medals in my letter to Sergey I. Kislyak. Any advice or help you can give on this situation will be greatly appreciated. Thank you so kindly for what you do.

Sincerely,

Diane Mittner-D'Addio

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I already give talks to local school classes any time a get a chance. I have also done several to different adult organizations.

I enjoy doing them and have always had a favorable response. One thing that has been most surprising is the attention the children have while I am talking, and the great questions they have after the talks. I address the fifth graders annually at one school with somewhere around 200 to 250 kids at a time. They all sit

attentively during the talk, which was a surprise to me when you here about the problems with behavior in schools. At one school in particular, I received a note from each member in the class with very nice notes and colorful drawings. One student had drawn an ocean like scene with the bow of a ship coming into the scene and a bottle floating in the water with "SOS" written on it. Another said she was happy to hear me cause now she knew more about WW II than her brother. And so on. We need to do anything we can to educate the children about what we did. I always mention

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

how proud I was to give a few years of my life for our great country, serving under the American flag. Tks for listening, Cal.

Arnie Latare

4400 E.P. True Pkwy 59
W. Des Moines, Ia., 50265
515-225-1084 malata@q.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We still hold meetings at the MACHINE SHED. (See Reunions-cal)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charlie, Just a little note to let you know I appreciate and enjoy the POINTER and it's material.

At age 90, reliving my experience through the POINTER gives me a sense of being 20 years old again and enjoying the good times and the bad. I am a member of the local Armed Guard. We are down to just 12 members but we carry on. Donation enclosed to carry on. Sincerely,

Anthony Zanni

BM2/c 6206 N Radcliffe
St., Bristol, Pa. 19007.

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SEE PAGE 28...

Aaron Thomas Terrell (5/2/24-12/31/O3) Raleigh, North Carolina A.T. attended school in Burlington, N.C. until December 16, 1941 at which time he was sworn into the U.S.Navy and served until May 23, 1947 and obtained the Rank of Gunner's Mate 2/C. He went through Boot Camp at the Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, Virginia and took gunnery training with Gun Crew 104 at Little Creek, Virginia, the first U.S.Naval Armed Guard Training Center that was authorized by Congress on October 15, 1941. Also, trained on the old USS PADUCAH, a Gunnery Training ship stationed in Chesapeake Bay. After training, was sent to Brooklyn Armed Guard Center, 1st Ave-52nd

Street, Brooklyn, New York which had been set up as a Shipping and Receiving Station of Armed Guard Personnel on the East Coast.

He was assigned to the S.S. MOBILOIL Gun Crew and traveled by train to Beaumont, Texas where she was being loaded with ammunition and sailed on February 13, 1942 back to New York and on to Boston to join a Convoy to destination unknown. The Armament was an old 4" 50 and two 50 Caliber Browning watercooled machine guns.

On April 29, 1942 at approximately 2:30 A.M., a torpedo ripped a hole in No.1 tank, starboard side. A short time later, the sub opened fire with a rapid fire deck gun. This was answered with 13 rounds from the 4" 50 and machine gun fire. The second torpedo hit about daybreak in No.4 tank, starboard and destroyed one lifeboat. About 9 A.M., another torpedo hit No.9 tank and the order was given to abandon ship. With one lifeboat destroyed, it was crowded with 52 Armed Guard and Merchant Seamen and one dog in one lifeboat but there was no loss of life to either crew, just minor injuries, which they were thankful.

After four (4) days at sea in a crowded lifeboat, the USS PC 490 came out of the night with a light brighter than day and rescued the crew. The crew was ready to jump out of the boat when they identified themselves. Fright turned into joy very fast for the S.S. MOBILOIL crew!! The other boats were picked up within two hours and were taken to San Juan and then sent to Brooklyn for reassignment. The next assignment, June 1942 was on the S.S. GREYLOCK, an old West Coast Freighter, docked in Boston. You could tell from the cargo that she was headed to the war zone. After loading, she sailed to Halifax, Nova Scotia and finally in October, she sailed in Convoy to Scotland.

For awhile, everything was smooth sailing and then all hell broke loose, several ships were sunk and the Convoy was caught in some of the roughest waters in the world. Some way, somehow, the S.S. GREYLOCK stayed in one piece and she arrived in Loch Long, Scotland about the last of October and into drydock for four days for repairs from storm damage. Finally, on December 15, 1942, the Convoy JW-51-A departed from Loch Ewe, Scotland for Murmansk, Russia, a very uneventful trip North with good weather and no enemy action and arrived around Noon December 25, 1942, Christmas Day. The enemy "WELCOMING COMMITTEE" soon arrived and paid several visits for the rest of their stay. Seemed as every meal was interrupted by another air raid, plus some in between. During these days, it was great to have a Merchant Marine Crew that cared. They took their place with the gun crews by passing ammunition and anything else they could assist the gun crew, a cup of coffee which didn't stay hot long, food as, they could not leave their guns for many hours at a time and encouraging words which helped a lot. After all, it was all of us; or, none of us. The Armed Guard and Merchant Seamen were in the same boat, on the same ship.

The last few days the S.S. GREYLOCK was in Murmansk, the sun peeped over the Southern Horizon for a short time. Only those who have seen it know the feeling. The S.S. GREYLOCK and her crew departed Murmansk on January 31, 1943, bound for Loch Ewe, Scotland. On February 3, 1943, she went under an aerial attack and a torpedo hit No.5 hold. on the port side and after she could not make any headway, the crew was ordered to abandon ship. All hands were picked up by rescue ships within an hour or two. They all stood on the deck of the rescue ships and watched the S.S. GREYLOCK stand on her end and

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

slide beneath the waves about 3:00 P.M..

Back to New York and another assignment, after all, this was all out war and the war material and troops had to get through. Next came the S.S.CONTRERAS; U.S.Army Transport FREDERICK LYKES; S.S.PAINE WINGATE and the S.S.CHAD'S FORD but no more narrow escapes like on the first two ships and by the time the war was over, A.T.Terrell had served in all three theaters of operations and had made friends that has lasted for a lifetime. A job well done!! A.T. Terrell has joined those who did not return from the war. calloyd

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This was told to me by A.T. who for years attended our Armed Guard breakfast in Raleigh and I place him among the best who was willing to give of themselves for our great nation. Memories of men such as A.T. and so many more whose paths we have crossed is a blessing I thought this was worth publishing for those now, and future generations to know. (cal)

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HI YA Lloyd!

Did I get the proper number in front of my name so you can tell who I am? Hope so! Great news ... the check is in the mail! After all this time of receiving The Pointer, and saying each time that I was going to get whatever I could to you to help in some small way, I finally did it! Senility is so much fun!!! OK - here's what I've been able to piece together on Dad (LtCdr Eugene O. Kuntz) so far from the military records I requested (and received) and from Mom.-- his WWII duty was 7 Dec 1941 to 10 Dec 1945 with 13 months of sea duty. His 1st ship was the SS Montosa and I know he was in the Caribbean and made a stop at Cuba. His 2nd ship was the SS Lawton B Evans and I know he hit Algiers some-



where along the way. His 3rd ship was the SS Henry Villard and I know he took ammunition in to Normandy 12 days after the invasion. That would put him there 18 June 1944. His 4th, and last, ship was the SS Alden Besse. This was his Murmansk run. He was there Christmas 1944, iced in for a while, was treated to a banquet by the locals and received the needlepoint "collar" I have attached a picture of. I sure wish someone could tell me the story behind the collar, what they were used for, etc. Of the 26 ships that pulled out of Murmansk, only 8 returned safely and he was one of those.

Dad actually started his military time in 1930 when he enlisted in the Cavalry Brigade at Houston, Texas. If memory serves me correctly he lied about his age to get in! He was honorably discharged in 1938 and enlisted in the USNR 5 February 1941, going on active duty 11 August 1941. He retired from the USNR 4 September 1973 as LtCdr. He should have gone out Commander but, unfortunately, his paperwork got separated from the others and could not be processed properly. Poop! Losing Veterans at the pace we are, I don't hold much hope of finding anyone who ever served with/under Dad who could fill me in on a lot of the

missing pieces. So I'll keep digging, I think I've found a link where I can get information on all ships and crews, and see what I can find. Again, thank you so very much for keeping this daughter of an Armed Guard officer on your mailing list. I really, really appreciate it!!!

Karen Kuntz Maloy
1205 Lee Street
Norman, OK 73069-4418
dennis.maloy@sbcglobal.net

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles, Our AMM Veterans of the Dennis Roland Chapter wishes to notify both crews that have a supply of the The book "A Careless Word ... A Needless Sinking" by Captain Arthur R. Moore, eighth and final printing, is available for \$85.00 + \$5.00 S&H total \$95.00. This price has held since 1998. Special pricing by inquiry is available for orders of 5 or more. Orders and inquiries should be sent to: AMMV, Dennis A Roland Chapter (NJ) P. O. Box 351 Midland Park, NJ 07432. Checks should be made out to AMMV BOOKS and they don't accept Credit Cards Thanks for your help Cal. Hank Kaminski, President Dennis A. Roland Chapter of N.J. 908-638-8384

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Hank, I will print in honor of Capt. Art Moore for saving history for all to refer to It is priceless calloyd

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Subject: The Auschwitz Album
This is the story of a Hungarian Jewish woman who survived Auschwitz and found a coat belonging to a guard which she took to shield her from the cold immediately after her liberation. In the pocket of this coat she found a photo album. It contained pictures of what went on in this extermination camp. Imagine her reaction when she saw a picture of herself coming off of the train as well pictures of her family who were already murdered.

LETTERS FROM THE CREW...

This album at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem was donated by this woman in 1980 and will forever be displayed there.

When you have 5 minutes of peace and quiet in front of your computer, watch it and consider passing it around to people that you know so they can share it and know about it. It is truly moving and important.

http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/album_Auschwitz/multimedia/in dex.HTML

General Eisenhower, when he liberated some of the death camps in Germany, ordered all of the photographers in his command to take as many pictures of the survivors as possible. He made the statement, at that time, that the world should know what the Germans did and he wanted all the evidence that he could get because he said, then, that at some later date some people would deny that the Germans persecuted and killed so many Jews. That time has come. Iran, for one, is saying that the Holocaust never happened....av

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Inna,
This E-Mail was sent to me sometimes ago and I couldn't pull it up for some reason and tonight, Boom!! There it was! I could not understand the language but my interpretation is that the gentleman is restoring one of the Lend Lease trucks for I am sure we sent thousands of trucks, jeeps, planes and ships loads of ammunition. Many were sunk but most made it through and as my brother said when he came home, where's the paper and it showed where the Germans were turned back at Stalingrad and he smiled and said, our supplies and ammo did it. Can you translate whatsome of what he is saying and why are they restoring the truck and where will it go and put it into a few paragraphs and E-Mail it back Monday or Tuesday. I may get it into the up-coming POINTER. (cal)



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Charles,
Here is synopsis of video uploaded to YouTube by the U.S. Consular Affairs Office in St. Petersburg, Russia: <http://www.youtube.com/user/usconsulatespb> Say "Studebek-ker" and it elicits gratitude. Around two hundred thousand of them carried the weight of WWII including soldiers and ammunition. They were delivered to the USSR as part of the Lendlease program. The last of Studebekkers served at a plant in Kharkov, Ukraine till 1989. Enthusiasts in St. Petersburg, Russia restored several Studebekkers. Maruf Kasymov, Petr Demidovskiy, and Alim Kasymov made them run again. It takes three weeks to make a lemon Studebekker all new again. They decided to do that because of economic crisis, said Sergei Tchekalev-Demidovskiy who manages their business. "If it were not for Studebekkers, our car industry development would have taken other direction based on Ford and Packard of 1920s. They were outdated by late thirties.... Studebekker won the competition and was ideal for Russia," said Tchekalev-Demidovskiy. It became an ancestor for the Soviet truck ZIS 151. Even Soviet trucks produced in late 1990s and early 2000 had engines similar to Studebkker's.

Inna Dubinsky Senior Correspondent
Russian Service Voice of America
330 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20237
Phone: +1-202-203-4704
E-Mail: idubinsk@voanews.com

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CAL, The website was originally created years ago by AG Veteran Tom Bowerman of Anniston, Alabama, who labored faithfully to capture the stories and pictures of his fellow veterans so that the memory of the U.S. Navy Armed Guard will live on. Tom sailed over that far horizon in 2007 but, as his successor, I try to carry out the vision he had. I regularly add new material to the website as I receive it or find it. If you have material that you would like added to the website, please contact me at rcarl616@yahoo.com.

Ron Carlson, Webmaster Armed Guard/Merchant Marine WW II Veterans. www.armed-guard.com



REUNIONS

USN ARMED GUARD MEETINGS AND REUNION 2011

PLEASE NOTICE!! MANY CHANGES OF ADDRESSES, TEL.#, E-MAILS, Etc.
MANY MAY MAKE CHANGES ON DATE AND PLACES SO IT'S UP TO YOU TO FIN OUT.
REGIONAL---MINI-REUNIONS ---GET-TOGETHERS-- MEMORIALS, ETC
SUPPORT THESE LOCAL MEETINGS

NOTICE: Hosts Names, Addresses, Zip Codes, Telephone;., E-Mails may change anytime so it's up to you and them to keep each notified. Any changes will be in the next POINTER. If your group is not included or need corrections, advise NOW for the next POINTER. If your meeting was in the POINTER, it will not be in this one unless it has changed.

The Long Island Chapter of Armed Guard meet at the Farmingdale, N.Y. Public Library on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 11 AM. Contact Dot and James Pellegrino 527 Livingston St., Westbury, N.Y. 11590 516-997-5585 James has taken over from Joseph McKenna who has kept the chapter going for years and they have a great number at their meeting. Our thanks to McKenna for his leadership.

Delaware Valley Armed Guard/Merchant Marine will meet on the 2nd Tuesday in April 2011 at 11:30 AM at the "OLD COUNTRY RESTAURANT" Oxford Center, Fairless Hills, Pa.. Contact Host John Harman, 9 Tree Ave., Levittown, Pa. 19054 215-295-3114. Harman replaces Peter Cugasi who sailed on to be with his Maker 1/11/11. Cugasi had held the crew together for many years and our thought and prayers are with the family as they are with all the crew that ships out forever.

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 meet 2nd Wednesday 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 Latore, 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.

Victoria Texas Armed Guard Crew meets on the 1st Monday of the month at 9:00 A.M. at Ramsey's Restaurant 1401 N. Navarro, Victoria, Tx.. Contact: Norm Neureuther 361-578-7900 neureuther@suddenlink.net

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 at HOSS'S at Hummelstown at 11 A.M. 1st Thurs of month.

The SUNCOAST Armed Guard/Merchant Marine Veterans of WW II will meet at Kally K's at 11:30 hours. 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 BULL/HEIFER 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 U.S. Merchant Marine and Armed Guard Veterans still meet at 1 P.M. on the 2nd Wednesday of each month except July and August at the American Legion Post No. 53 in Sanford, Fla.. Contact: Richard McCamy, 26002 Zinna Lane, Astatula, Fl. 34705 352-742-1394 marymccamy@embarqmail.com. of MM/AG who enjoy swapping our sea stories. We invite you and everyone to come join in while we are able.

Our Joe Colgan, AG on the S.S. JOHN W. BROWN asked me to remind all of you of the ship's cruises and get your tickets now to be sure of the 2011 cruises. He is stepping down as a BOARD MEMBER but will still help the crew as much he can. Thanks Joe for your past help in keeping the ship afloat.

The SOUTHERN Calif. Region of Armed Guard meet every 2 mos. alternating starting with the WEST BUFFET in Carlsbad, Ca.. at 11:30 AM Jan 11th 2011 and San Diego FAMILY Restuarant, Chula Vista on March 9th. Contact Howard Wooten, 2438 E. Vista Way, Spc-23, Vista, Ca. 92084 760-724-4724 ankerclanker0135@gmail.com

Rhode Island and Eastern Ma. Chapter Host, Gerry Greaves, 1287 S. Broadway, E. Providence, 02914 401-431-0011 USNAGVan@aol.com informs me that they will meet the first Thursday in April and October 2011 at the Imperial Room, #1 Rhodes Place, Cranston, R.I. at 12 Noon.

REUNIONS

Wisc/Illinois meetings for 2011 are: May 17; July 12; Oct. 11 and Dec. 13. at Sturtevant Driftwood Restaurant at 12 Noon. Hosts are Jay and Jane Wildfong 13211 Durand Ave. Sturtevant, WI. 53117 262-886-2966 WILDFONGJ@cs.com Jay says there are plans for a Mini-Runion planned for sometimes in Sept. and the time and place to be worked out. 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 LOGANSPORT, 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, Michael Lucci 585-388-0576 and Forest and Marie Lane 14 Hanna Ln., Webster, N.Y. 14580 585-217-9897 coolforest@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 Fazzone 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. 24TH National Reunion will be held 4/13-17/2011 at the Crowne Plaza Riverfront Hotel, Jacksonville, Fl. 877-270-1393.

Host: Duane Walters, 103 Cross Rd., Camillus, N.Y. 13031 315-487-2623 buckypcsa@twcny.rr.com

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND members of the USN Armed Guard Veterans of WW II will hold their Spring 2011 meeting at the RED BLAZER Restaurant in Concord, NH. Meet May 11th 2011 at 1 P.M., Eat at 2 PM. RSVP by May 6 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

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 on the 24th of Sept. 2011. 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 CARROW'S RESTAURANT at 3180 El 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 Mariners Contact Wm. Balabanow, 74 Delp Rd., Lancaster, Pa. 17601 717-569-0391 b.balabanow@verizon.net for their next meeting.

The Merchant Marine WW II will hold their 2011 26th National Reunion at the

Legacy Hotel in Reno, Nv. May 15-18, 2011. The host are the AMMV GOLDEN GATE & the SACRAMENTO VALLEY CHAPTERS. Contact: Sindy Raymond saaren@frontiernet.net

Cleveland, Ohio Chapter still hold their meetings at Denny's W 150th Exit off I-71 4331 West 150th St. Cleveland. It is with regrets to inform everyone that Wm. Bill Joyce took the voyage to be with his Maker 10/13/10. Bill's wife, Joyce Joyce informs me that the new host will be: Al Borgman, 25534 Chatwood Dr., Euclid, Oh. 44117 216-481-1142. ahbseadog@gmail.com Hoping the group the best. (cal)

The S.S. JEREMIAH O'Brien tentative sailing dates for 2011 are: May 21 OR 22; July 16th OR 23rd; and FLEET WEEK will be Oct. 8th & 9th. Contact: Eliz Anderson-Office Mangr. 415-544-0100 1275 Columbus Ave. Suite 300, San Francisco, Ca. 94133 liberty@ssjeremiahobrien.org

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.

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Lone Sailor

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

NAVY LIFE DIARY 1943

Navy Life Diary 1943
By Lonnie Whitson Lloyd
KIA May 5, 1945
Sinking of the
S.S. BLACK POINT

Beginning of another trip in 1943 which I hope is around the World. We have a nice gun crew of 25 gunners and one officer. It's the 27th day of April and the sad story has begun. So here we are off to Baltimore, Maryland to catch our ship. Tonight we are staying with the Coast Guard here. It's the 28th and we are on the ship which is a beauty. It is a new Liberty Ship just built this month-April. Well, we've been here two days now so it's about time for something to happen. Oh! Yes. We are pulling out for Philadelphia in a few hours. We are on our way now. Already in the Canal. Will be there by tomorrow which is the first of May. Don't like Philadelphia very much. The Girls are somewhat funny; they do not like staying out very late. Anyway, it's about halfway in the U.S., that means a lot. We have played around, out every night until they have almost loaded the ship, that sounds bad to me with U.S.S.R. marked on the cargo. Last night was our last liberty here & I feel bad this morning at the head.

Today we are over at Hog Island, an ammunition dump, loading black powder and high test gas. I believe they put me on the wrong ship-if we get hit- You can tell papa to take care of my car and I hope you enjoy my insurance. It's the 9th of May which is a sad day for we are leaving the old U.S.A for a while-I hope. We spent last night out near the ocean, but today, May 10th, we are waiting for a convoy headed for Norfolk, Va.. This is the beginning of places unknown. May 11th and we are off to war again. With my experiences, I think so anyway. The Atlantic is hell, I know. Few of the boys are seasick already, their first trip. It's dirty out here today anyway. They will get used to it before this trip is over. Guess we are going to Norfolk,; at least we are headed south. Well, I woke up

this morning, anchored off Virginia Beach. It's a beautiful day and shore really look good over there about four miles but it's nothing to me. Next time I am ashore will be in a foreign country. My duty for the next eight months is to fight submarines.

I don't know how long we are going to stay here. I want to hurry and leave. Get this thing over with. Hope we will be in the next invasion. It's the 14th and nothing has happened yet except we got another signalman and played cards all day. Still raining, too. Might leave now anytime. I am homesick already from looking at the beach. It's a beautiful day and the Captain has just come from the conference with good news~ we are leaving tonight. Aircraft carriers & invasion ships have been leaving all day. Have a big bunch of ships out here now. I cut a few heads of hair today and didn't know I was so good.

Today is the 17th and we are well on our way. In fact, I've been looking at the Old North Carolina Coast all day. Seems as if we are going to have nice weather, the sea is calm. I am working hard-on watch four hours & off twelve. Everybody seems to be happy, playing cards, talking about different countries, not saying anything about home-trying to forget everything. We are almost to South Carolina. It's beginning to rain a little this morning-19th of May. I've been up since 4 A.M.. First, I cannot sleep from thinking about my last trip. Am sleeping out on deck tonight. We are having a swell time out here by our lonesome-expect to have company anytime. (sub)

The convoy is increasing everyday. The corvette dropped a few depth charges late last night. You know what that means--I don't sleep any tonight. We must be getting close to Florida. It's really getting hot. We had gun practice today. We have a few blimps and a lot of airplanes with us. Friday 21st, The sun is coming up over here on the starboard side and this is really spring. Sometimes

I catch myself sitting on the stern looking back towards home, but nothing do I see but water and ships. It wouldn't be so bad out here, if the girls would come along. We left the convoy this afternoon, off West Palm Beach, Florida. We are on our way for Panama. By the way, a raft came floating by today. It's Sunday 23rd and we can see Havana, Cuba. We are really zig-zagging. We are having a lot of fun running around in our bathing suits-nothing else to do. Had gun practice again this afternoon off the southern tip of Cuba. We have our torpedo nets out. Also, had a little excitement last night. Three flares went up close to our ship. Nobody know where they came from. Anyway, we were called to our battle stations for about three hours, hoping to have a little action. It's the 26th of May and another flare went up tonight. If they are after us, why don't they start firing so we can have a little fun, too. We should be near Panama. Here it is the 27th already and no land in sight. Seems as if we are near hell, from the temperature.

Here we are in Panama this morning-28th of May and I am going ashore tonight. We are going to leave here tomorrow. Just as I said, we are going through the Canal now-29th. This is really a pretty place. We will be in the Pacific early tonight. I woke up this morning and no land in sight. Today ends May with no trouble at all-so far. Hope every month is the same. Let,s see what happens in June. June 1st, and crossing the Equator for my 5th time since I joined the Navy. Sure had a lot of fun today initiating about thirty five sailors that had never crossed the Equator. There are no ships in sight or anything. The Pacific is really beautiful, the water is so blue. This is going to be a long trip, I can see that already. We are 1,000 miles from Panama, now. Just out here with the Japs by our lonesome, but we will give them hell. It's Sat.-5th -- if I was at home, I would--It's no use on talking about that now. I will never join anything else. It's a good thing I have

NAVY LIFE DIARY 1943

already joined the church. Just sit around and look out to where the water and the sky meets the horizon. Never know what's on the other side some times, I don't care. At night, we lie around on deck and count stars. And think about our girls, talk about the good times we used to have. Not thinking about how high we will be blown if we should get hit for black powder is our bed. It's no use to think in this outfit though.

Captain's inspections every Wednesday so everyone is at work this morning. We have had wonderful weather since we left Norfolk. I sleep nearly all the time and that's a good way to pass away the time. It is raining again. You should know why. It's Saturday. I might be thousands of miles at sea but I don't think my mind came with me. A fellow can do awful thinking in a place like this. Cannot even go to church. Day after day we travel & travel. All time going-but where? That is the question. It's blue Monday and those sharks trailing us, really looks hungry. Maybe they following just in case!! The weather is changing again. Getting cold. We have already starting to wear our winter gear. I am looking for the flag! It's been snowing, hailing and raining today. In fact, we are in a bad storm. Awful hard to lay in my bunk.

Saw a ship late last night (3 A.M.) for the first time in twenty four days and we almost took a shot at him. Everybody were on their battle stations in a hurry, after the alarm went off. We are off New Zealand and still in a storm. Only have 2800 more miles to go for our first stop. We fired our guns today. Just a practice. It's July 1st and nothing much going on. Every day is about the same, just water and sky to look at. But, we are always thinking about home. As you know, washing your own clothes doesn't go too well. I think the storm is about over so everyone have started preparing for port, pressing clothes, etc. It's the 4th of July and what a place to celebrate a holiday, (at sea) as usual. I got up early this

morning and we worked on the guns for a change, cleaned compartments, etc.. Beautiful weather now. The general alarm went off at 2 A.M.. It was fun to see how the boys run to their guns, half asleep. It was two American ships. Inspection again this morning. We have also taken a few pictures this morning. Don't know if I'll get any of them or not. July 9th.

July 9th and in sight of land. (Australia) Have reports of submarines. That means, be on the lookout. Well, we are in port now so why worry. I am going ashore tonight (10th), I hope. It seems to be a nice place-Freemantle. Three days has passed and we are leaving. Everyone had a swell time. I think we are headed to Persia now. We are out of sight of land and won't see anything for a long time, I hope. My job is to look for something I don't want to see. Had fire and boat drill this morning. It is really lonesome out here. Now that several days have passed, we are just off the coast of the Cocos Islands. I think the Japs control them---not sure. Anyway, we expect most anything to happen. They have already captured seven of our ships lately.

January 17th and the gun crew is putting on a program tonight called, "THE HAPPY HOUR". Sunday-Everybody had a swell time last night including the Merchant Marines. We have to exercise 45 minutes every morning. We are painting the guns, that's a job. The Japs sunk a few more ships ahead of us last night. We have a slim chance of getting through. I expect trouble most any time because these are dangerous waters. The Indian Ocean is the place. I stay out on the deck in my bathing suit most of the time ready for a swim. Well, we are getting close to the Equator again. It's real hot, too. (with subs) Worked hard today on the guns, washed clothes, etc. Some of the sailors have fevers. What kind, I don't know. Anyway, we all have started taking quinine pills, once a day. Crossed the Equator today. I am 12,000 miles from home. We saw another ship today,

every body was called to their stations. Won't be very long before we will reach our destination---that will be a happy day. Loaded with black powder---what a trip. Have already worn my old letters out reading them over and over. I just sleep the whole thing off. Have already started writing letters home and will mail them as soon as I get in port. The ship is really rolling, sometimes I get so mad I could butt my brains out what little I have left. This ends another month with a total of 17,000 miles so far. The first thing that happened this month is we enter the Persian Gulf this morning. I can see land on both sides. August 2nd. This is the hottest day I have ever seen in my life. You wouldn't believe it's 168 degrees in the shade and there is no shade. Nothing but desert. Men are falling out like flies from heat. Here we are at Abandan today. Won't go ashore. This is the greatest oil fields in the world. Had an awful sand storm last night. We are in the Tigers River. We sweat with a fan in our face. If someone else would have told me this, he would be called a liar.

While we are here in port, in which I think will be a long time, I will make the story short.

We are anchored off another port now, close by where we were. The temperature was 138 degrees and was up to 172 degrees. I am under two fans and sweating like (censored). We are in Bandar Sharpur, an American Army Base. Labor day was a big holiday here. The soldiers had a parade and we were in it. It will be in the News Reel. Jack Benney was here, also. The Major General named the Army Camp today "CAMP GIFFORD" after the first soldier that lost his life here. The parade was really nice; my first in one. You should have heard the band.

We are leaving Thursday for home. It's no use telling you about the people, because I don't want to be called a liar.

NAVY LIFE DIARY 1943

Italy unconditionally surrendered today, Sept. 8th, 1943 but that is not Victory and Victory is what we want. These were the most happiest service men here tonight, you have ever seen. I hate to leave these soldiers behind because they are going through hell. We are in another port today to get fuel and water. Can hardly wait to get out of this place. Underway again and hope it is home-ward bound. For the pass two or three days we have been anchored inside the Persian Gulf waiting for a convoy.

Now, we are well underway for home- I mean South America. We are in the Gulf of Oman. Two days out and we have broke convoy. We are going alone to South America. If I ever get over this trip, I won't have to worry about the rest. By running into this storm, saved us from the sub. What luck. They sunk some ships just ahead of us. Today, crossing the Equator again. Yesterday, we got reports of a raider about two hundred miles on our course dead ahead. A sub sunk a ship near the Red Sea this morning. We are seven hundred miles off East Africa. We stay at our guns most of the time; there is no sleep for the weary anymore. Working all day now, painting guns, and standing watches all night, getting ready for the States.

October is here. Last October I was in England with part of my ship missing. We are going to load in South America and from there, to the States I hope. We are near Capetown, Africa now. Everybody seems to like their trip. This is something unusual, a supply ship to make a trip around the world on her maiden voyage. Very seldom it happens in peacetime. Our food is nearly out. The eggs are rotten. When I order my eggs for breakfast, this is what I say: "Give me my eggs over hard, leave the scent in the galley and my chicken well done, with no feathers, that,s plain eggs". I look like a hotdog sticking on two toothpicks. If the eggs were any worse, I would have to wear my gas mask. We have salt water showers. Columbus was much better off ^ he had fresh water for ten days. To heck with this kind of life. For some reason, I still like the Navy.

It's October 5th and a bad storm out here today. Lost about four hundred miles for the past two days. We are in the Atlantic Ocean once more and the storm is over and everybody is at work. North Carolina would look good now, to me. It's the 13th October and still beautiful weather and the ship will soon be painted. The water is so calm, looks as if you could walk on it. We have enough food to last ten more days so we had better make port soon. Saw a ship today for the first time in forty days. It's the 22nd and we will be in port tomorrow. Had an American plane with us today.

Well, we are in port and it is really a nice place. I am going ashore tonight from the looks of the girls on the beach. I went ashore last night and it is the most beautiful place I was ever in. More girls-just begging for dates- and I cannot refuse them after not seeing one in about three months. We will be here about two days.

It's November 22nd and on our way to another port. Some of the boys stayed ashore a week. I don't blame them. We crossed the Equator again today for the last time on this trip. We have good protection-large convoy-blimps & airplanes with us day and night. It's real summer down here. It's Nov. 12th and another port ~Dutch Guiana. We are going to load here. Anchored now in the river though. Got mail from home today. Tonight we are on our way up the river Suriname to load. 19th -- Maybe we will leave tomorrow for some other country. Left Panama tonight about 8 P.M. and are on our way down the river now. We will finish loading ore in Trinidad. It is Saturday night but it doesn't mean anything with us anymore-just another day. Been running along the Coast of Trinidad all morning but are almost in port now. This island is in the British West Indies and our next port will be the USA, WE HOPE! Just found out the name of this city-Port Of Spain, Trinidad. We are anchored out in the harbor today waiting for a convoy for the States. Would have left yesterday but we ran aground and missed the convoy. It's Nov. 26 and still

here. My birthday also and have been swimming all day. It's real hot down here. We left Trinidad yesterday ^ Nov. 30th for Cuba, I think. It's a small convoy, but well protected. We are having wonderful weather.

HOMeward BOUND AT LAST

This is the beginning of another month, which will end this trip, I hope. Dec. 1st 1943. Well, today, the 3rd, we have been seeing islands most of the time since we left the last port. Can see Curacao over on the starboard side now. Everybody,s getting ready for the States. I have everything ready-blues, whites, sea bag, hammock, etc.----CLEAN! We pulled into Cuba this morning-Sunday Dec. 5th. Going to leave tomorrow and the States will be the next stop. We are anchored in Guantanamo Bay. Just as I said, we are underway again.

Well, I spotted the good old U.S.A. this morning at 2:15 December 9th.-Key West, Florida. I can hardly wait to get into port. We will be in Saturday and this is Thursday. We are in the Gulf of Mexico. It may be December but it is still hot down here. Still using the fans. I think we are going to New Orleans, La. It's the 11th of December and we are entering the Mississippi River. Have 90 miles to go up the river. Well, here we are in New Orleans and best of all, this trip is over. It was a swell trip, but, boring at times. Anyway, we made a trip around the world and double up a few thousands; 36,000 miles in all. I'll never forget the S.S. JOSEPH P. BRADLEY. We spent 5 months & 3 days at sea out of seven and one half months; that,s H-- --!! Now that it is over, I can't get home too quick. This is the end of my story. Hope you like it. December 12, 1943 U.S.A.

Typed from his written letter by brother C.A. Lloyd and in his procession.

SAVING THE SS JOHN S. COPLEY

SAVING THE
SS JOHN S. COPLEY
A Tribute to my Father
and His Shipmates
By Peter R. Bendel

My Father, William R. Bendel enlisted in the Navy in April of 1943 at the age of seventeen (17) and after boot camp and gunnery training was assigned to the Liberty Ship SS John S. Copley. In Early 1944, an attempt was made to get the crew of the Copley commendations for their actions on December 16, 1943 off the coast of North Africa. Unfortunately, the Board of Decorations and Medals denied any commendations. The writer of this article believed that commendations were denied because of how the application was submitted. With the help of Senator Barbara Mikulski, we tried to get the board to revisit this matter back in 2002, but failed. My father died a year later and the matter died with him. I felt compelled to write this story to honor my Father, the crew of the Copley and the thousands of Navy Armed Guard and Merchant Marines during World War II that were not formally recognized for heroism. The following story was taken from my Dad's first hand accounts and extensive research conducted at the National Archives in Washington DC.

The Liberty Ship SS John S. Copley had a crew of 70 men (42 Merchant Marines, 28 Navy Armed Guard). On four occasions, while at various ports along the coast of Italy the Copley was attacked by German aircraft. Several bombs from these planes narrowly missed the ship. According to my Father, two of these occasions were somewhat comical. As the general quarters alarm sounded, a single bomb from a German aircraft exploded within 100 feet of the Copley causing it to list so severely that one of his shipmates still in his underwear was able to run up the side of the ship directly into his gun tub. On another occasion an



exploding bomb caused the bottom of the harbor consisting of mud, shells, rocks, and sludge to rain down all over my Dad and his friend in the adjacent gun tub. Afterwards, they looked at one another and just laughed at how ridiculous they looked and the humor that sometimes happens during serious situations.

On December 16th 1943 a run in with a German U – Boat was not a laughing matter. After the Copley discharged cargo at the port of Arzew, it proceeded to a point sixteen miles off Oran, North Africa awaiting formation of a convoy for a return trip to the United States. At approximately 15:15 and 15 miles northwest of Oran, the vessel was struck without warning by a torpedo on the starboard side just forward of the engine room in the empty number 2 hold. The USS-PC-546 in route to convoy with GUS-24 reported sighting the Copley burst into flames. The explosion was so great that the entire ship was covered in a shower of oil, water and flames, followed by clouds of brownish-yellow smoke. Four (4) twenty (20) ton LCMs were blown into the air and fell back on the deck. The blast put a hole in the starboard side of the ship approximately 20 feet x 20 feet. The hull was badly buckled above the hole and the deck split from aft starboard corner of number 2 hold to

starboard rail. A large hole ten (10) feet in diameter was blown through the top of the deck aft of the number 2 hold and a fifteen (15) foot crack on the port side appeared from the rails to the waterline. The steering engine on the bridge was knocked out of commission as well as the forward 3 inch 50 gun. The vessel immediately began to flood causing the ship to list 8 degrees to port and settle by the head. The destroyers USS Woolsey, USS Edison and USS Trippe were dispatched from Mers-el-kebir at 16:00 to assist the SS John S. Copley and hunt for the submarine that fired the torpedo.

The Master of the Copley gave the order to abandon ship and lower the lifeboats. At this time, He also asked for volunteers to stay onboard in an attempt to save the ship. Eight (8) Merchant Marines and sixteen (16) Navy Armed Guard volunteered. The remaining crew of forty-six (46) entered the lifeboats, including two (2)-injured sailors and the sailors dispatched to care for the injured. Raymond Barlow broke his back after being blown from the bridge and Thomas Mack injured his head in the crow's nest. The USS-PC-546 picked up thirty-eight (38) survivors of the Copley. The USS-SC-977 picked up three (3) survivors. Five others remained in a motor launch close to the

SAVING THE SS JOHN S. COPLEY



ship in case the skeleton crew was forced to abandon ship.

The following men volunteered to stay onboard ship while under attack.

Merchant Crew	Dowell, Arther
Master	Lillequist, D. H.
Chief engineer	Hamilton, E. J.
Purser	Kuschak, Edward
Radio Operator	Bilde, Henry
Bos'n	Olund, Henry
Able Seaman	Westcott, Albert
Oiler	Zabowski, F
Fireman	Navy Armed Guard Scholz, Jr., Charles May
Ensign	Fisher, Leroy
GM3/c	Tillinghast, Ernest Bailey
SM2/c	Dierksen, Robert Fredrick
GM3/c	Murphy, John Albert
GM3/c	
SI/c	Baynard, Joseph Henry
SI/c	Bazydlo, Henry Walter
SI/c	Bendel, William Robert
SI/c	Kimball, Charles Chandler
SI/c	Mangum, Billy Raymond
SI/c	Singleton, Jack Sprow
SI/c	Smith, Vernon Henry

SI/c	Stutts, Darrel Sherill
SI/c	Varnis, Edward Joseph
SI/c	Warren, Arther Lewis
SI/c	Zenovieff, George

The Merchant Crew quickly went to the engine room and on the bridge in attempts to keep the engines running. Armed Guard Crewman William Bendel and Billy Mangum manually operated the auxiliary steering gear enabling the ship to remain upright. Robert Dierksen was in charge of this operation along with instructing the outlooks and operating the aft 3 in. 50 gun. Ernest Tillinghast stayed on the bridge and remained in contact with convoy ships and shore stations by blinker and semaphore. Leroy Fisher relayed orders from Charles Scholz. Joseph Baynard along with the remaining Armed Guard manned gun tubs and secured the ship from taking on more water.

At 17:30 the Edison, Woolsey and Trippe separated by a distance of 2400 yards began searching for the submarine. At 18:15 the Woolsey obtained sound contact and dropped a full pattern of depth charges. The U – Boat was forced to the surface because of cracked seams at 19:27. At approximately 19:28 the submarine, being illuminated by the Woolsey, immediately

began to open fire on the Woolsey and wounded 3 sailors. At 19:30 the USS Trippe and USS Woolsey opened fire on the submarine. The sub was sunk by the destroyers at 19:35 a few miles northeast of its original attack on the Copley. The destroyers captured thirty-four (34) U-boat survivors including Captain Horst Deckert. Sixteen (16) German submariners perished in the battle.

The Copley was eventually saved and Navy rescue tug ATR-47 took the Copley in tow and assisted the damaged vessel into port. Final docking occurred at approximately 21:00. The survivors from the life boats and motor launch were placed aboard at this time. The ship was not active again until wars end. The Copley later had its bow section become a permanent part of Liberty Ship Memorial Park in Portland, Oregon along with the bow remains of 148 other Liberty Ships. My Father was eventually reassigned to the SS David Thompson for duty in the Pacific and was involved with the Liberation of the Philippines.

The submarine was identified as U – 73, one of Germany's most notorious U – Boats during WWII. From 1940 to its demise in December of 1943 she sank 12 and damaged 4 allied ships including four warships totaling about 90,000 tons. This was impressive considering that of the 1154 commissioned U – Boats during the World War II; only 20 sank or damaged more than 135,000 tons. Among U – 73's many conquests were the British Aircraft Carrier HMS Eagle where 160 sailors perished and the Liberty Ship, SS Arthur Middleton where only three (3) Armed Guard survived the attack.

The events of December 16, 1943 off the coast of North Africa were not as profound as Pearl Harbor, Iwo Jima or the D-Day Invasion but were significant contributions to overall victory. Regardless of the setting, these men

THE SS JOHN S. COPLEY/DAD'S STORY

displayed valor by jumping into a perilous situations and taking action. Armed Guard and Merchant Crew of the SS John S. Copley voluntarily risked their lives to stay onboard a ship that for all practical purposes was sinking. They also did not know if other torpedoes from enemy subs were going to strike again. Under that kind of pressure they all performed admirably and most of these young men were only teenagers at the time. These brave men fought against evil to protect our country and the world from tyranny. Thank you for protecting our freedoms.

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DAD'S STORY

A continuation of
"SS John S. Copley"

Two old shipmates got together for an evening of dining and reminiscing recently in Burlington, Massachusetts and to celebrate an enduring friendship of 61 years. Jack S. Singleton of DeLand Florida and Dr. Louis Higgins of Reading Massachusetts



can trace their friendship back to Boot Camp in New Port, Rhode Island in April and May of 1943 in Company 970. From "Boots" to Gun Crew #16097 at Little Creek, Virginia and then to the AGC in Brooklyn. Little did they know when they were assigned to the SS John S. Copley in Philadelphia that their first cruise would be filled with such a variety of experiences or last as long as it did. We, along with 26 enlisted men and one officer (Lt. Shultz) reported for duty aboard the Copley at the Philadelphia Navy Depot.

After loading with 500 lb bombs and drums of A V gas, not the cargo of choice, the Copley set sail to join a convoy forming off the coast of Virginia. The Copley was assigned an inboard position within the convoy, offering some protection from German Subs for our deadly cargo. The second day out, the Copley had engine trouble and had to drop out of the convoy. The gun crew was on high alert for what seemed to be an eternity, but was only a few hours. The Engine crew fixed the problem and we scrambled back into convoy without incident. Our port of call was Oran, Algeria North Africa on the Mediterranean coast. Following the discharge of cargo in Oran, the ship proceeded to the port of Algiers, where it was crudely retro fitted to carry

troops. An Oklahoma National Guard Tank Co. fresh from the African campaign was moving on to the new battle front in Italy. But instead of tanks, they were issued Half-Tracks. These troops were not happy campers to say the least.

Our destination was Naples, Italy with overnight stays at Malta and Syracuse, Sicily in order to be in the first convoy into Naples when it would be liberated from the Germans. Naples harbor was a mess with no usable docks. The harbor had 92 keys for ship docking and the Germans had sunk ships in all but two of the keys. So the half tracks and Army personnel were unloaded onto L.C.I.s. Numerous air raids during this period kept the gun crews busy at their stations. Despite all this activity, half the crew was able to take an excursion on alternate days to the ruins of Pompeii. On their return to Oran, Algeria, the Copley took on a deck cargo of L.C.I.s destined for the USA. The crew was elated, hoping that they might make it home for the Holidays but fate intervened. About ten miles out of Oran at 15:16 hours, December 16, a U-boat lying in wait believing that the Copley was transporting troops plus their LCI Landing Craft, fired one torpedo. The torpedo struck in Number 3 hold about 12 feet forward of the engine room bulkhead.

THE SS JOHN S. COPLEY/DAD'S STORY

The ship slowed to a halt but fortunately did not sink, despite a large crack that encircled the ship down to the keel. The fact that the ship was empty and the sea very calm must have saved her from breaking in half. Retribution was swift and certain. Escorts from the convoy which the Copley was about to join; the USS Woolsey DD437 and the USS Trippe DD403, subjected the sub to such severe depth charge attacks that serious leaks forced the sub to surface. After trying to fight it out with the escorts and losing 17 of its crew, Capt/Lt Horst Deckert scuttled the boat and abandoned ship to be taken prisoner by the escorts. Tugs from Oran and Mers el Kabir soon took the Copley in tow and returned her to be tied up at dock. The only casualty aboard the Copley was Armed Guard Seaman Raymond Barlow who suffered a broken back when he was blown off the bridge hitting the boat davit below.

Several weeks after being tied up at dock alongside the SS Daniel Webster which suffered a similar fate at the hands of German Torpedo planes, all but nine of the Armed Guard crew were removed and sent home. Both Singleton and Higgins, with the remaining crew, stayed to care for the

weapons. On April 21, 1944 orders came through detaching the crew and flying them via Algiers and Bari to take over the SS Pierre Soule, which was awaiting a new propeller in dry dock at the Italian Naval Base in Taranto, Italy. Our Taranto stay was not without incident, after dry dock we anchored alongside an Italian cruiser. By this time the Italians had surrendered and had joined the Allied cause. The ship was loaded with armament, their 40 mm Quads were the envy of our gun crew. However, the Italian crew's operational knowledge/training was questionable. We experienced a single German air raid. The Italians were quick to their stations, loaded the Quad 40 and without elevating the barrel, squeezed off several rounds and damaged one of our foreword 20 mm gun tubs. Fortunately, our gun crew had not yet reached their station. Lt. Shultz, our commanding officer, boarded the Italian ship and placed their commanding officer under arrest. That's as much as we know about that incident. We assume he's out of the brig by now.

With repairs finally completed, the Soule set off for the States by way of Glasgow, Scotland with Singleton as acting GM3/c and Higgins as acting

SM3/c. Fate was not finished with the crew yet, as they had yet to face the fury of the Great Atlantic Hurricane of 1944 in an empty Liberty Ship. The storm took out five ships including two US Coast Guard Cutters, a navy destroyer and minesweeper and another lighter vessel along the Atlantic seaboard. Finally, after 14 months with their first voyage at an end, the crew that left on the SS Copley returned on Pierre Soule. Following their survivors leave, the crew was given a two week R&R at the College Arms in DeLand, Florida.

After separation from the Navy, Singleton attended Fairleigh Dickinson University, earning a BS in engineering and later earned an Advanced Management degree from Harvard Business School. Singleton concluded his professional career as CEO and Chairman of the Board of Technetics Corp. Higgins attended Northeastern University and then graduated from Tufts Dental School, set up and practiced his profession for 38 years in Everett, Massachusetts. They have kept in touch via yearly Christmas greetings.

DID YOU EVER GO TO NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA? WW II?

In 1941, a troop train with, supposedly, Nebraska National Guard Boys was scheduled to come through North Platte, Nebraska and the ladies decided they would treat them with cookies to show their appreciation. Once the train arrived, it wasn't their boys at all so the ladies did not want to carry them home so they gave them to the troops that were on the train. It was such a hit that they organized over 55,000 women to do their part to entertain the troop trains as they came through for their 10 minute stop. During WW II, they entertained over 6 million troops as many as 32 trains a day passed through North Platte, going, East and

West on their 3 days trip from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast and Vice Versa. The Nebraskan people were there to meet the troop trains each day and the locals were there to meet them with a smile and a meal.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Pull it up North Platte, Nebraska WW II
on GOOGLE (calbyd-POINTER)
TELL EVERYONE ABOUT
NORTH PLATTE, NE.

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT CHESAPEAKE

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT CHESAPEAKE

By Bill Sizemore

When Floyd Credle, a 20-year-old farm boy from North Carolina, showed up for Navy boot camp in the summer of 1944, he was asked what job he'd like to train for.

"I'd like to go to cooks and bakers school," he said.

What's your second choice? he was asked.

He didn't have a ready answer. What popped into his head was the Armed Guard, which he'd heard about from some of his buddies. Ready or not, that's where he ended up.

"None of us knew what it was," Credle recalled recently in an interview at his home in Chesapeake.

They found out soon enough. It turned out that Credle had signed up for one of the most hazardous assignments of World War II.

Disbanded after the war, the Navy Armed Guard is a little-remembered facet of the gargantuan Allied war effort, but one that was critical to victory over the Axis powers.

Nearly 150,000 sailors served in the guard over the course of the war. They were assigned to protect merchant ships carrying vital cargo from enemy attack.

In the eyes of many sailors, Armed Guard duty seemed like a death sentence.

Of 6,236 merchant vessels pressed into service, 733 ^ about one in nine ^ were sunk, according to Navy records. More than 1,800 Navy guards were killed or listed as missing in action.

Of all the routes plied by the armed cargo ships, the most dreaded was the Murmansk Run. Sailors dubbed it the "suicide run."

The Soviet Union was a critical U.S. ally in desperate need of supplies. With most supply routes blocked by German forces, one of the few lifelines left was the northern route past Greenland and Iceland to Murmansk and Archangel, Russian ports near the Arctic Circle.

To get there, convoys had to survive a gantlet of German submarines, mines, bombers and surface raiders operating out of occupied Norway. They also had to cope with deadly ice floes, zero-visibility fog and bitter cold that could crack a ship's hull.

In the early stages of the war, about one in three ships making the Murmansk Run was lost.

This was young Floyd Credle's world.

"Sighted sub, glub, glub."

That was the sardonic slogan that sailors applied to the Murmansk missions.

Credle is 86 now and has had a couple of strokes, but the memories of his 1944-46 Navy hitch remain vivid.

A draftee, he went through boot camp at Camp Peary, now a CIA training base near Williamsburg. From there it was on to Camp Shelton, now part of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek in Virginia Beach, for four weeks of gunnery school.

The Little Creek camp was the largest of three Armed Guard training centers. During the war, nearly 75,000 sailors passed through it, right next door to a prison camp holding German POWs.

Credle's next stop was Brooklyn, N.Y.

He and his fellow sailors were ordered not to divulge where they were headed from there. Brooklyn was the starting point of the Murmansk Run.

In one sense, Credle benefited from joining the war as late as he did. Many of the merchant ships used in the early years were decrepit rustbuckets armed with antique weapons. By 1944 the Allies were using a fleet of more than 2,700 "liberty ships" mass-produced specifically for wartime use.

Credle was assigned to one of those, the W.R. Grace, as a 20 mm gunner, part of a 25-man Navy guard crew. The ship was loaded with food, iron and railroad locomotives.

As they set out, Credle learned a bit of disconcerting news from one of the merchant seamen aboard: On its previous cruise, the ship had lost a propeller to ice.

The convoy stopped at Gourock, Scotland, to pick up more ships and pulled out on Thanksgiving Day, bound for Russia.

"On the way we had a terrible storm, like a hurricane," Credle said. He remembers the frigid waters of the North Atlantic lapping over the ship's stern, where his gun was mounted.

Credle hung on for dear life. "There's no way we could have survived in that water if we'd had to abandon ship," he said.

With subzero temperatures and only about four hours of sun in a day, the ships became coated with tons of ice that had to be chipped away.

"It would snow for days and days ^ real fine snow," Credle said. "It was so cold, the grease on the guns would freeze."

The convoy split up in the Barents Sea, with some ships heading for

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT CHESAPEAKE

Murmansk and others ^ including Credle's ^ continuing on to Archangel.

Once again, Credle's luck held. His ship never came under enemy attack. Three of the Murmansk-bound ships were sunk.

Getting into Archangel required ice-breakers to clear the way. As the ship's cargo was offloaded, the crew went ashore, walking across the iced-in harbor.

The food was especially welcome, Credle said: "Those people were just about starved."

The Russians presented the crew with Christmas gifts: phonograph records featuring Russian music.

On the return trip, the convoy encountered another heavy storm, which sent

the ships scattering. One of them nearly rammed the stern of Credle's ship in the heaving seas.

By the time the convoy made it back to Scotland, Credle was seriously seasick. "I was the last to get sick and the last to shake it off," he said.

He ended up in the hospital in Edinburgh. "My nerves were about shot," he said. "And I tell you the truth, I didn't want to go back up to Russia."

The W.R. Grace did, in fact, make a return trip to Murmansk, but without Credle. After his release from the hospital, he joined the crew of another liberty ship, the James B. Hickok, in Bristol, England, on April 12, 1945, the day President Franklin Roosevelt died.

Credle never made the Murmansk Run again. By the time the Hickok made

port in Antwerp, Belgium, Germany had surrendered. The ship sailed home to New Orleans by way of Newfoundland as the war ended.

Credle served out the rest of his hitch on shore duty in the Philippines after Japan's surrender.

He settled in Chesapeake after the war, making a career in lumber and insurance. He and his wife of 60 years, Dorothy, have three children and two grandchildren.

His wartime experiences didn't dampen his appetite for travel. "I've always enjoyed sightseeing," he said.

But he's never been back to Russia. One visit was enough.

Bill Sizemore, (757) 446-2276, bill.sizemore@pilotonline.com

PCE 847

This is the ship my father Harold Lee Howard Jr. was stationed on. He was in the Naval Armed Guard and then the Navy from Jan. 1942-Nov. 2 1945. -Patricia H. Miers • 1910 40th Street • Phenix city, Alabama 36867-2102 • patmiers@ctvea.net Hm. 334-408-9026 Cell 706-761-4130



THE POINTER

U. S. NAVAL RECEIVING STATION AND ARMED GUARD CENTER

Vol. III No. 57

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

October 5, 1945

'THE POINTER' GOES TO PRESS FOR LAST TIME



Comdr. Wm. J. Coakley



Comdr. R. C. Moureau



Comdr. J. M. Young

WITH the complete disbandment of the Armed Guard all but an accomplished fact, we witness the final edition of the Armed Guard's periodical, **THE POINTER**. The discontinuance of the publication is not due to its having outlived its usefulness but rather to the elimination of the motivation for its existence—the Armed Guard afloat.

Unique in the field of Navy magazines, **THE POINTER** was published by a shore base but was intended for and distributed to all Armed Guards at sea. Few, if any, ports in this old world do not have a reading acquaintance with the paper edited at this Center.

THE POINTER was no mere pamphlet. It was a power—a driving force—in the Armed Guard. Would the War Bond Drives at the Center have been so successful without the publicity given them by **THE POINTER**? Did not the exhortation and encouragement of our magazine swell the containers of our own blood bank? **THE POINTER** was a super-salesman!

So many and so varied were the features in our paper, it was a practical impossibility for any reader to scan the headlines without having his interest arrested by sundry articles. The staff showed as much ingenuity in presenting stories of human interest and bits of pathos or humor as it did in covering social, athletic or ordinary news events.

It is with pride and appreciation that I congratulate and thank every person who contributed to making **THE POINTER** a publication to be remembered.

R. C. MOUREAU
Commander, U.S.N.
Commanding Officer

The Armed Guard WWII Veterans Honor these 3 men and all others at the Armed Guard Center, 1st Ave 52 St. Brooklyn, New York, who ran the AGC during WWII and published The Pointer which our Pointer is so named. CA

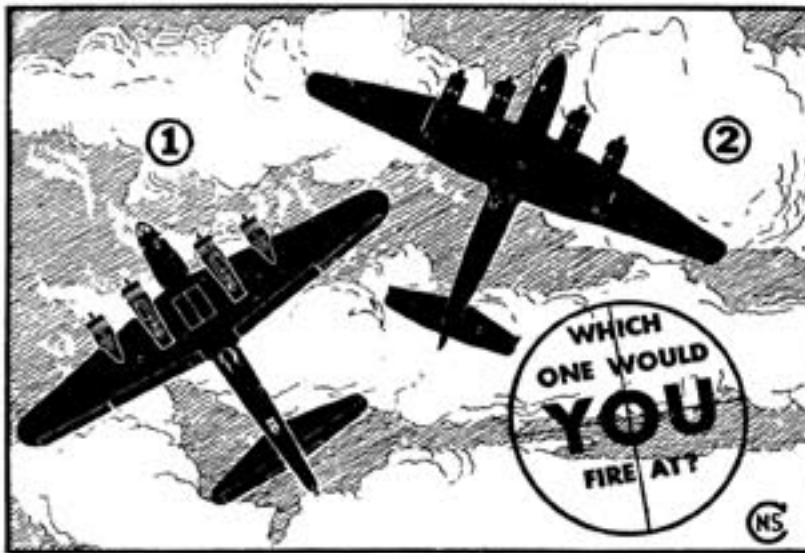


A view of the main deck in the early days of the Armed Guard Center shows its combined use as a barracks, chow hall, and recreational area.



A crew and its gear gets final check before shoving off to go aboard ship.

Remember These....



Fire at No. 2! It's the German bomber and mine layer, the FW 200 "Kurier," its wide spanned wings taper to small rounded tips. The pointed nosed fuselage is long and tapering with an offset bomb compartment on the underside. Both edges of the tailplane taper to rounded tips and it has a high single fin and rudder. Good target!

Not at No. 1! It's the AAF's famous B-17 Flying Fortress, a low-wing heavy bomber powered with four radial engines. The nose of the long, streamlined fuselage projects well forward of the engine nacelles and the tail extends beyond the tailplane. Both edges of the wings taper evenly to rounded tips. The tailplane has tapered edges, rounded tips and a single fin and rudder.



TOP: A merchant ship, fully loaded with food and supplies, is at anchor.



BRONZE STAR Medal is bestowed upon Marvin Puckett, Armed Guard gunner, by Lt. Comdr. Stuart D. Paine, London Port Officer, in overseas ceremony. Admiral Harold R. Stark, Commander U. S. Naval Forces in Europe, authorized the award for Puckett's skill in shooting down plane off Normandy with 20mm gun. Newton Munden gained similar award.

ck before



nd war materials for the fronts, gets ready to weigh

TWO AGs EARN BRONZE STARS FOR SHOOTING DOWN PLANE OFF NORMANDY BEACHHEAD

LONDON—Two Virginians, Marvin B. Puckett, GM3c, of Coulwood, and Newton C. Munden, S1c, of Amelia, both members of an Armed Guard gun crew from the Brooklyn AGC, each received a Bronze Star Medal recently from Admiral Harold R. Stark, Commander U. S. Naval Forces in Europe, for shooting down a German plane off the Normandy beachhead on D-Day-plus-nine.

Lt. Comdr. Stuart D. Paine, U. S. Naval Port Officer of this city, made the presentation in behalf of Admiral Stark.

Operating 20mm guns, the Armed Guards accounted for the enemy aircraft when approximately fifteen yards from the stern of their ship. Joseph N. Dimura, S1c, of Middlesex, N. J., and Marian M. Crisco, SM3c, of Princeton, N. J., contributed to the success of the engagement by acting as loaders on the respective guns.

The citations received by Puckett and Munden read:

"For meritorious achievement in performance of duty as a member of Armed Guard Crew aboard an American ship which was attacked by a German plane while anchored off the coast of France June 15, 1944.

"So skillfully and accurately firing as gunner that he accounted

Awarded Purple Heart

Wilbur Sweet, GM3c, Fairview, Kan., was awarded the Purple Heart medal last week by Comdr. J. M. Young, executive officer, and given a medical discharge from the Navy for combat fatigue.

A veteran of 27 months in the Navy who participated in the invasion of Sicily, Sweet received the medal for injuries to his legs.

Cited By BuPers

Lt. (jg) Marshall L. Marquardt of Brooklyn, N. Y., last week received a commendation from the Chief of Naval Personnel for outstanding performance of duty with the Armed Guard against enemy forces at Bizerte last September.

for one German plane which exploded approximately fifteen yards from the stern of the ship.

"The skill and devotion to duty displayed by Munden (Puckett) were in keeping with the best traditions of the United States Service."



"We all won't TOUCH an allotment until you all staht usin' General Lee's pictuch on the War Bonds!"

Close Hav'rstraw Rest Camp

The Armed Guard Recreation Center at New City, N. Y., has been ordered closed and will cease activity tomorrow, Sept. 2. De-commissioning of the Center was made known last Friday by Comdr. William J. Coakley, commanding officer, upon the direction of Rear Admiral William R. Munroe, commandant of the 3rd Naval District.

Familiarly known to AGs as "Haverstraw," the Recreation Center had been plagued for several months by engineering problems that finally became insurmountable, necessitating the decision to discontinue operation.

Located on the 500-acre Huntington Estate, in Rockland County, the Center was donated to AGC by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission last September and commissioned by Comdr. Coakley on Nov. 27 in ceremonies attended by Commodore Frederick G. Reinicke, district port director, and Capt. David C. Patterson, district personnel officer.

Designed to provide relaxation for Armed Guard men away from the rigors of sea duty, the Recreation Center housed 75 to 100 men, who remained for periods of seven to ten days. Lieut. John B. Hardy was officer-in-charge under Lt. Comdr. Edward T. King, welfare and recreation officer.



THE PLANE SHOOTER
OF THE ARMED GUARD SCHOOL
"PLAIN SHOOTING FOR PLANE SHOOTERS"

Vol. 2, No. 2 ARMED GUARD SCHOOL Station Virginia September 8, 1944

COMMANDANT PRESENTS ARMED GUARD SCHOOL WITH FLAG ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY (Story on page 2)



AG PRESENTATION

(Picture on page 2)

Two Gunners Mates Receive Citations For Meritorious Performance of Duty.

"It gives me great pleasure to present in flag to the Armed Guard School"—with these words the Armed Guard School received its own flag as an anniversary gift presented Admiral D. McD. LeBreton, Commandant of the Fifth Naval District.

The occasion was the graduation exercises Class #6-45 on 1 September, which was rather enhanced by the awarding of certificates of meritorious service by Adm. LeBreton to Gunners Mates A. T. Terrell and F. L. Warner. Lieut. G. K. Vickers of the Training Department accepted the flag on behalf of the school.

Captain Vail took this opportunity to explain how the Armed Guard School flag came into being. The insignia, an eagle clutching a Nazi submarine in one claw and a Japanese "Zero" in the other, with wings encircling the globe, was designed by Stanton, a Gunners mate. Stephen Harnick, Sac, of Gun Crew 2102B, was awarded a \$25 War Bond for originating the motto, "WE AIM TO DELIVER". The insignia and motto, and the name of the school, are in gold on a background of blue, making this flag a thing of beauty in its deep richness.

After the ceremony the Commandant, Captain Vail and party made an inspection tour of the station. The Admiral's comments were most complimentary, and so to Captain Vail and his crew we say "Congratulations on a job well done".

The Armed Guard School Band furnished the music for the graduation exercises held on this first anniversary of the School.

COMING MOVIE ATTRACTIONS

- Sept. 11...Stage Coach
John Wayne, Claire Trevor
- 12...Falcon in Mexico
Tom Conway, Mona Maris
- 13...Abroad With Two Yanks
William Bendix, Dennis O'Keefe
- 14...Allergic to Love
Martha O'Driscoll, Noah Berry, Jr.
- 15...Janie
Joyce Reynolds, Robert Hutton
- 16...Mr. Deeds Goes to Town
Gary Cooper, Jean Arthur
- 17...Music in Manhattan
Anne Shirley, Dennis Day

WALT AT SEA

WALT AT SEA

As Told By the late:

Walter J. Pudelkiewicz (MM)

A summary of my life at sea as a Radio Operator during World War II (8/7/42 to 10/16/46) by Walter J. Pudelkiewicz.

I graduated from Oil City High School in June, 1940. Sometime in late 1940 or early 1941, I entered a Federal program with the National Youth Administration (N.Y.A.). It was a free program where the Government was, I assume, planning for the coming war. I was shipped to Williamsport Vocational Technical School to study Radio Communications. We were given free room, board and clothing and \$10 a month. On completion of this program, I would be issued a Radio Telegraph License, 2nd Class, upon passing an exam given by the F.C.C. (Federal Communications Commission). This license would qualify me to be a radio operator on ships or the airlines. At this NYA Center, there were about 100 guys in various disciplines. In Radio Communications, there were about a dozen of us. We learned primarily Morse Code and radio theory. At this Center, I roomed with George Hilla who was also one of our group of 12. In May 1942, Bill Bebb and I hitchhiked to Philadelphia and passed our exams with the FCC. The next step was to go to New York and get a job. I went to New York with George Hilla. He wanted to get on a ship and I was only interested in the airlines. There were too many ships being sunk off the coast with a great loss of life. George got his ship and I was turned down by Pan American Airlines. As I recall, they asked a lot of questions about my relatives in Poland, which was occupied by Germany, especially if my father's parents were still living, which they were. I found out later I was turned down because I had close relatives in Poland. What a sinking feeling to realize that I had to go to sea. I couldn't go home and do what?

I signed on the MV Blenheim on August 7, 1942 at New York with Waterman SS Co. – Lindgren – Master. This was a German ship confiscated at Charleston, S.C. as the war began. The German name was the "Oldenwald".

Loaded ammunition and other material. Went to Boston beginning of September to catch a Europe-bound convoy. Stern grounded at low tide and we missed the convoy. Diver found bottom OK so we went back to NY because European convoys were to form there. No radios were permitted on board due to a signal the radios emit which German equipment can home in on. So we had records and record players, the kind that you wind up by hand. We had a lot of the current bands like the Dorsey brothers (Jimmy and Tommy), Harry James, Glen Miller, Kay Kaiser etc. My favorites were "Yours" and "Tangerine" by Helen O'Connell (I think). We also would get a large batch of magazines, which were indispensable. I recall *Colliers*, *Life*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Reader's Digest*, and many many more. Some scholars, even among the crew, would bring a sea bag with mostly books. I had some algebra and trigonometry texts because math was a weakness of mine in high school. September 19 AM left with about 37 ships and 5 escorts. Usually three of the escorts patrolled in front of the convoy and two followed us. The escorts were called "Corvettes" and were much smaller than a destroyer. In fact, in heavy seas, you couldn't see them half of the time because they were in the trough of a wave. They did carry a lot of depth charges which made them useful. Was terribly seasick first 2 days but never got sick again. When you're seasick, there is no sympathy. Those that are not sick think it is funny to see all these guys throwing up. While I was lying in my bunk, they brought me a piece of hot fried fat on a piece of string and told me to suck on it and that would relieve the discomfort. The sec-

ond you see this and smell it you throw up immediately – and everyone laughs. No trouble that trip across, but off Newfoundland, one sub contact was made. When a sub contact was made, the Corvettes either signaled by means of hoisting certain flags on their mast which spelled out that they had made a contact or we could tell by the fact that they left their normal position, would be circling a certain area and would drop an appropriate number of depth charges. I recall one time, when we were the last ship in our column, a Corvette dropped a number of charges simultaneously, when they went off, the stern seemed to jump up a number of feet. Anyway, a number of sinks in the crew's bath fell off the wall as well as several toilets. Quite a mess. I don't believe they got anything, but we had no way of knowing. They look for debris or oil slicks, but sometimes the Germans dump some oil and debris just to get the escorts off their backs. Arrived Liverpool, England October 6, 1942. We lost no ships but heard stories of convoys before and after us that got badly battered. Here I saw for the first time the realities of war. Bomb craters, blocks of bombed out buildings – blackouts – air raid alerts – balloon barrages etc. Last of October we were taking on sand ballast to go home when orders were suddenly changed. We were to load a full cargo and take 6 months' stores – destination unknown – proceeded to load at Barry, Wales. On the way to Barry, while still in the Irish Sea, I recall we, as most ships, carried a hydrogen-filled balloon on a long cable to keep German planes from dive-bombing the ship. The planes couldn't see the wire. I don't know how effective this was because later I didn't see anymore of these balloons, at least not on ships. When the invasion of North Africa took place, we then figured that was where we were bound. At the 3rd week of November, we shipped north to Loch Long in Scotland where the convoy for North Africa was forming. The most scenic place yet on this

WALT AT SEA

trip. Beautiful country, with many lakes or lochs as the Scotch call them. Broke down as we were entering this place and lay at anchor until December 22, 1942. While at anchor, a launch would pick us up and deposit us at Gourock where we caught the train for Glasgow. From here we left for Milford Haven, Wales - a navy base where convoys now formed and got there on Christmas Eve. I noticed that occasionally I'd see a ship carrying what were called "Torpedo Nets". These nets were held up by the ships booms, one net on each side to catch a torpedo before it hits the ship. They slow up a ship considerably and even though I heard stories of torpedoes being caught in some of the nets, the fact was that there were so few meant that it probably was too much trouble putting them up and taking them down. Where do you put them in port - on deck where they're in the way? I don't recall seeing any convoys but there may have been an occasional one or two. Saw them mostly around the British Isles. Had a whale of a party on board and had first drink of hard liquor (Scotch). Horrible, almost choked. The Captain and the others in the Officer's Mess got a big charge out of this incident. Anyway, I didn't want seconds. Members of the crew put on a show for us that evening. What a talented number of people you have at any one time, anywhere. I especially remember the Puerto Rican mess boy who used two tablespoons banging against one another and he was slapping them on his thighs in accompaniment with singing and using other home-made musical instruments. Spent Christmas and New Year's Day there - got ashore for Radio Operator's conference at Milford Haven and left for North Africa on January 3, 1943. Arrived at Gibraltar on January 12 and had only encountered possible subs - no ships lost. Arrived Gibraltar late in the evening and anchored about 1 mile from La Linea, Spain. Had guards posted all around the ship to keep

German saboteurs in La Linea from coming to ship's side and sticking mines to hull which would blow the ship up. I'm told that many ships were sunk this way. The guards were supplied with a quarter pound canister of explosive with about an 8 inch wick. When the end of this wick was struck on the gunwale, it would set the fuse and it was thrown down to a small beggar or peddler to keep him away from the side. They kept their distance, usually.

I recall trying to fish at Gibraltar. I placed a ball of dough on a hook and kept jiggling it. After a long time I caught this fish, about 10 inches long but it had reddish splotches on both sides - I assume due to these charges being tossed overboard. When the Captain heard that I caught a fish and threw it back, he was quite put out. Told me if I caught another fish to let him make the judgment as to keeping it or throwing it overboard. I should relate another incident that occurred at Gibraltar. The primary interest of most sailors is women and booze. We had sailors on board who spoke Spanish. They contracted one of the boats that continue to hang around the ship (but not too close) and tried to make a deal with them to bring a couple of women in exchange for cartons of cigarettes. They said that they would try and were told to make their approach off the fantail (stern) at some given time in the early morning hours. They showed up the following night and said the girls were afraid to come but they had bottles of cognac they would barter for cigarettes. After a lot of haggling, they finally came to some agreement - so many bottles of cognac for so many cartons of cigarettes. The impass came when neither side trusted the other to send off the first shipment even when it was decided to do one at a time. One bottle of cognac for so many cigarettes. Our guys said they'll take off as soon as they get their hands on the gigs and other people said they

would take our cognac and throw the charges at them. I wasn't a participant but heard all about it the next day. I can't recall if the impass was broken. Anyway, interesting things can happen at night at anchor and the ship's officers know nothing about it. Also, while we were in Gibraltar, one afternoon a small launch pulls up to the gangway and a Catholic Priest comes aboard. I guess they sent him to me because I suppose some in the crew knew that I was Catholic. This British Priest told me that he was here to hear confessions and if I would inform the crew about this. He used my quarters as a confessional. I did spread the word around and was quite shocked to see the large number of men lined up in the passageway outside my quarters. No Communion though. He had a small satchel. Don't know what he had in there besides a stole. When he left our ship I noticed that he went to all the ships at anchor. This was the only time this happened.

About January 21, I got ashore at Gibraltar to attend a conference prior to departure. Nothing much to see there, the entire place was barricaded and set up for defense. The Captain took me to some bar that he was familiar with and I had my second drink of Scotch. I really didn't want it but I didn't dare not to take it. I sputtered again, I think not as bad as before, the Captain got a big laugh out of it again. I think that was the last drink of Scotch I ever had. We left in the evening for Oran, Algeria. On about the 23rd AM as we were approaching Oran breakwater, a British destroyer told us we have to go to Mostaganem - about 40 miles further east and he's to escort us. Arrived Mostaganem that afternoon. We were the only U.S. ship there. Was room for only 3 large ships. That night, about midnight, German planes bombed Oran. We could see tracers etc., in fact the whole sky was lit up over Oran. Some apparent spy was flashing a searchlight at planes as they were coming back - but planes didn't bother us.

WALT AT SEA

We were told that the Army picked up the signal flasher. During the unloading process, somehow a fire got started in one of the holds, I think it was Nr. 4. The Arabs who were unloading the cargo took off for the hills. It was only after the fire was extinguished that we noticed the charred paint on the bombs. After the Arab stevedores returned, they refused to go back into the hold. They were then ordered to go down into the holds at gun point to continue unloading. Next day we were sent back to Oran, for Mostaganem didn't have proper equipment to unload us. Oran was just teaming with GI's. We had our first cold beer since we left the States. On this ship, we had a lot of older sailors - I was 19 and the next age was 35 and up to some white haired sailors. This didn't include the navy gun crew. They had a number of young guys. I remember that these old time sailors would not allow the navy crew to buy drinks in any port we were in, they said the navy was protecting them. I don't know how common this practice was on other ships but I know later when the crew was composed of young guys in their teens and 20's, this no longer occurred. Also, in Oran I recall the news that we were short of bed sheets and probably would not have enough to get back to the States. Well, I found out that the steward's crew were selling sheets to the Arabs for 20 bucks a piece. These sheets were used as an article of clothing, especially seen on women. Entrepreneurs are present everywhere. The Army issued "Invasion money" which was nothing more than regular American paper money but the seal on the right side was yellow instead of green. Interesting but none of the Natives would touch the regular U.S. dollar - they always checked to see the seal. If the seal was green, it was considered to be counterfeit and would not be accepted to pay for a beer.

On February 3 (my 20th birthday) - left Oran and proceeded to Beni Saf, Algeria to load iron ore for England.

While being escorted that day, had a close call with a submarine, but when escort engaged him, we got away and went rest of the way unescorted. Got docked there late evening. When we tied up at the dock, one could see mostly mothers rushing madly about herding their children into their houses as fast as they could. By the time we got ashore, the place looked deserted. But, as we walked down the street, faces were seen in all the windows. People felt safe there. There was a place to get a drink which was open so we went in. Slowly, people, mostly kids started coming out. The bartender told that we were the first U.S. ship there in 23 years. One of our sailors, who brought a whole bag of books on board and was said to be quite an intelligent man, drowned here. Whenever he drank, he wanted to jump overboard. Usually, 3 or 4 of his friends would bring him back to the ship and watch him until he sobered up. I recall, either here in Beni Saf or another port the guys were holding on to him after they got on board, he broke away but they caught him before he went over the side. The Captain heard the commotion and inquired about the problem. The guys told him that when he gets drunk he wants to jump overboard. The Captain watched for a few seconds and said "Let him jump if that's what he wants to do." Well, here in Beni Saf the guys were leading him back to the ship when he broke away. It was dark with minimum light and he dove into the water. They guys said he was an excellent swimmer. He swam to a buoy that we were tied to, got up on it, yelled something and dove in again. That was the last anyone saw of him.

What a time we had that night and the next day. Each one of us was followed by a string of kids a mile long and you couldn't get rid of them. Also, about 6 of us made an excursion about 3 miles inland over primitively farmed land to an Algerian village. A boy about 6 years of age said by hand motions and a

few words he picked up from the Army that he had a nice sister for sex purposes. So we all followed him. Saw a farmer plowing with an ox? And the plow was a branch of a tree where a fork was present. As we approached the village and saw the walls all topped with cemented broken glass, the "leader" of our group asked everyone to get a good sized stone for protection, if we needed it. What a nightmare in that village. They gave us a glass of tea which was good but the glasses looked like they were never washed. Mine had a chunk out of the top quarter of the glass. The people were extremely poor. The streets were like a maze with raw sewage running down the gutters. Boy a lot of sullen-looking young men were standing around watching us drink the tea. They brought about 3 or 4 girls and 4 of the six of us were partakers. I and a married guy did not indulge. I would not have been able to find my way out of there if our native Nr. 1 boy didn't lead us out.

I forgot to mention that when we were in Oran, we were told that a small French ship was sunk right below where we were docked and the deck was loaded with barrels of wine. Well, the crew began trying to snag one of these barrels with grappling hooks during the wee hours of the morning. On the 2nd and 3rd night they finally got one. They woke me up and asked me to come down to see what they got. Every container you could think of was filled with wine. It was a dry red wine which I didn't care for.

We joined an outbound convoy on the 6th headed for Cardiff, Wales. We were not harassed by planes although we got alerts daily. Captain never did figure out why so many members of the crew were drunk 10 days after leaving port. He told me that, at most, they'll store enough booze to last 2 or 3 days. Said that in all his days at sea he has never experienced it. Arrived in Cardiff on February 15. Discharged

WALT AT SEA

iron ore and loaded coal slack for ballast. Had a nice time in port those 2 weeks. Had one alert where a large number of German planes flew over on their way to bomb Swansea, Wales. Saw the effectiveness of smudge pots for the first time – smoke covered the city like a thick fog – we could hardly see the bow of our ship. Heard stories in Cardiff of the last convoy that crossed – a dozen ships sunk and rest told to scatter. From Cardiff, the Naval Gunnery Officer and I went to London. When we arrived, I was freezing and could hardly wait to get to a hotel room to warm up. I didn't know that there is no central heat in their buildings. When the chambermaid showed us our room, the first thing she did was to open the window wide and "let a little fresh air into the room." The only way to get warm was to go down to an underground pub, full of military men and women, smoke and warmth. We saw the sights – The Tower of London, Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Piccadilly Circus, St. Paul's Cathedral (which was partially damaged) etc., and of course all the damage, entire blocks that looked like parking lots.

From Cardiff we went to Milford Haven (a resort area or a naval base on the South coast of England) near the end of February. On March 3 a convoy formed and we finally sailed for the U.S.A. About 4 days out of Ireland, we lost the convoy in a violent North Atlantic storm. We were empty with only very little ballast, riding high out of the water, that's why we couldn't keep up. The wind just blew us around. In these situations, when the bow plunges down, the propeller is near or above the surface and the engineer on watch has one hand on the throttle and slows down the revolutions when the propeller is out of the water, and when the propeller cuts into the water he turns the revolutions way up. Imagine doing a 4 hour watch this way. If they didn't do this, I guess the

vibrations would cause serious harm to the vessel. One day we were blown back about 48 miles. Gives you an idea of the severity of the storm. In a situation where you lose the convoy, the Captain opens sealed orders which gives us a "straggler's route." This new emergency route took us North of the usual shipping lanes. Saw Cape Farewell on the southern tip of Greenland and ran across every kind and type of ice there is. We had more fear of the icebergs than of subs at that time. Icebergs extended as far as the horizon. Fortunately, the greatest concentration of them occurred one day from before breakfast until dusk when it finally eased up. One can just guess what would have happened if we encountered those things at night. To get out of the pack, we would head in all directions of the compass one time or another. The Captain got up on top of the bridge for better visibility and stayed there all day. Ate sandwiches and always looking for the clear spots. It was a day filled with apprehension for at times we would look overboard and see how close the underwater part of the iceberg extended. Then we ran into solid sheet ice for as far as one could see – if the ship ever broke down or got torpedoed, all we had to do would be to get off and walk. As we cut through, the ice would close right behind us – we were only doing 4 knots. We then passed into a field of thickly scattered ice flows which weren't large enough to cause any particular harm to the ship, but we heard loud grinding noises as the ship cut through them and what it couldn't push away, ground up into fine ice. These flows did put many bad dents in our hull and bent the bow below the water line where she was shipping some water but the pumps kept ahead of the in-flow. We learned all this when the ship got into dry dock in New York. When we passed into the ice-free water of Davis Strait (between Greenland and Newfoundland), the salt spray was freezing all over the ship, decks, masts,

rigging to the point that I overheard the Captain tell the mate that if this situation continued the crew would have to start chipping ice. You could tell that we were getting top heavy because whenever the ship rolled, the recovery time was getting longer. The weather finally moderated and no chipping was required.

On the 20th in the evening when we were off Halifax, I got a sub sighted report which placed the sub only a few hours on our course, so the Captain figured he's played on luck long enough and pulled into Halifax that evening. What a wonderful feeling you get once you can relax, take a hot shower and go to bed without your clothes on, first time in 20 days. At sea in sub country, you don't shower and sleep with your clothes on because emergencies come about quickly. The next day we had fresh rich milk, all you could drink – no wonder many got sick, that was the first milk in 6 months. One British lad we picked up in England who hadn't had milk for 3 years was the sickest. Our own convoy pulled in 2 days later after losing several ships – never did find out how many. Got ashore in Halifax and partook of luxuries like ice cream, magazines, candy, gum, etc. – how one appreciates these "taken for granted articles" when denied them for a short period. Left Halifax for New York City and the first U.S. land I saw was the tip of Cape Cod. We were due to pass through the Cape Cod Canal. No words can describe the thrill. Ten minutes after we passed through the canal, a beautiful stretch of countryside, the ship broke down for several hours. We didn't care for we were inside Long Island Sound. These were safe waters. The Chief Engineer even went down below to help, so this was added proof that the waters were safe. We anchored outside Hell Gate (West end of Long Island Sound) early in the morning – a Sunday – and there in the distance about 20 to 30 miles could be seen the Empire State

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Building – another grand thrill. We came down the East River that beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon and people all along the East end of Manhattan waved to us and even had their tiny children waving. They probably waved at every ship they saw but it made us feel great anyway for everyone even the Captain was waving back. Wrote letters to everyone and awaited answers for this would be the first contact I had with my family for over 6 months. What a relief when I found out that all was well with everyone. While in N.Y. I met George Hilla. We were paid off on March 31, 1943 and I was due for a month of “taking it easy.” I spent most of this time in travelling to see Max (my brother) in Baltimore (Essex), went home, then to Williamsport to see Ceal (my sister) and back to New York.

Didn't think I'd every go back to sea but found that after a few weeks ashore, I started to get restless. The ship sinkings announced periodically over the radio and in the papers puts a scare into one's trousers but you try not to spend much time thinking about it. Got to New York about the last of April, I believe, and after puttering around there and Baltimore for a while, I got assigned to the SS John Davenport on May 7, 1943. What a surprise as I came to board her. All the cargo she was taking was marked – Colombo, Calcutta and Chungking. The thought of making another long trip didn't appeal too much and I had a sudden urge not to take this particular ship but the prospects of an interesting trip to India overruled this impulse and I stayed. We also loaded 5000 tons of high explosives and sailed on May 21, 1943. The explosives were loaded at a special pier off Jersey City. The pier projected out into the Bay quite a long way. In case of an accident, the damage to the rest of the facilities would be minimized. I recall many barrels of black powder, many 50 and 1000 pound bombs, fuses for the bombs, can't recall what else. Of the five holds on a

Liberty ship, the two forward and two aft were loaded with explosives, Nr. 3 hold, immediately in front of the bridge had none.

The convoy broke up off Georgia and we sailed alone for the next 7 months. Arrived at Colon in the Canal Zone on May 31 and tied up at the dock after dark. We had a chance to walk around the dock area in the morning, while the ship was refueling and taking on fresh water. Someone got ahold of some coconuts and bananas. These were miniature bananas about 4 to 5 inches long, very tasty and quite moist. On June 2, our compasses were adjusted and by noon we started to leave for the Canal. Marines were all around the ship, in the engine room, radio room, on the bridge – everywhere. They were all armed. After passing through the first set of locks, we anchored in Gatun Lake, awaiting our turn to go through. Since this was fresh water, those on the ship who knew how to swim, did so. Two hours later, we started through the rest of the Canal. Finally got through about 10 PM. All I can say is that this was some engineering feat. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to see it. Everyone was ticked off because we got no shore leave, especially since we have such a long trip ahead of us. We were told to continue into the Pacific but the Captain wouldn't leave without some kind of papers, so we anchored right outside of Panama. One sailor swam ashore, I assume thinking he could get back before we sailed but he was caught and put in jail. The following day we finally left for Fremantle, Australia for fuel and water. After supper that first day, we passed a whole school of tuna. It was a wonderful sight. Some leaped out of the water about 10 feet? And they were so thick that one could see probably a thousand at a time. We crossed the equator of June 6 right off the Galapagos Islands. On June 10, about 1/4th of the way across, the Chief Engineer tells the Captain that half of our fresh water is

gone. Too much is being wasted. We will have to wash in sea water. They are going to start making potable water out of sea water by using precious fuel.

The gunners fired 3 rounds with the 3" gun and later 3 rounds on the 5". They tossed a box overboard and the Captain fired 6 rounds with his 38 revolver – missed by 10 yards. He got a lot of razzing on that one. In the hot weather he walks around in his slippers and shorts, and at any time you can hear him sing at the top of his voice “As Time Goes By” – one of his favorite songs. He told me that he was getting pretty damn scared of being lost in this big ocean. Said that if he doesn't find land pretty soon he's going back to New York. This is typical of his kidding. About June 14 we were north of Easter Island and 4 days later we were 200 miles South of Pitcairn Island. From about Easter Island we were supposed to follow what is called a Zig-Zag course. Of course, we didn't see any land because we didn't want to be observed from land by who knows who. Since we were sailing alone, we were told to use these evasive tactics in case a sub was following. A clock would ring at varying times (5, 18, 12, 20 minute intervals) and each time the clock rang, a different course was followed but, of course, always slowly forward. We lost about 25 – 30 miles a day by Zig-Zagging. From Pitcairn on, the storms gradually got worse, colder every day because this was the winter season south of the Equator. Somewhere here the Captain got tired of Zig-Zagging and because of the loss of mileage and diminishing fuel stores, he set a straight course for our destination. Had to turn the steam on because of the cold. At regular intervals, in calm seas, we would have boat drills. Also, every so often we would experience a breakdown, anywhere from 5 minutes to over an hour. Those were scary times. During heavy seas, you had no control. Also, during breakdown, everyone was at battle stations. I

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recall, about this time, reading books we had on survival on the tropical island and survival in a lifeboat. Don't know what good it would do here because we were nowhere near an island and who would find a lifeboat a thousand miles from civilization and if a sub did hit us, there would only be small pieces and no one would ever know what happened. One day, the Captain pointed out to me what he called a 'water-spout' off the port bow, quite a way off. They are like a tubular tornado going right down to sea where it sucks up a lot of water. Captain said if it passes over you, you can get tons of water dumped on you. Could be a bit dangerous.

One of the pleasures I had all across the Pacific was the music I picked up for an hour or less from stations in Miami, WSN in Nashville, Tennessee, Los Angeles, Honolulu and then New Zealand stations started coming in, playing mostly American bands. All the good ones like, Russ Morgan, Kay Kaiser, Jimmy Dorsey, Sammy Kaye, and many others playing all the songs we all knew. Most of this music could be picked up during the early evening or later at 4 to 5 AM. I should mention here that while we were crossing the Pacific, I experienced some of the most beautiful sunrises and sunsets imaginable. Pictures or words cannot describe what one sees. Everything plays a role; the ship, the water, the swells and especially the clouds. For me, at times, it was like a religious experience. I would go out on deck and quietly observe and even at my early age would often contemplate the greatness of God and his works. One would experience a passing touch of Him at these times. Here is an attempt to describe one of them which I'm copying from an abbreviated diary I kept on part of this trip. June 14. "A very beautiful sunset. Hard to describe in words. Starting at the opposite end of the sunset, the sky is deep purple, changing to blue, then

light fluffy clouds have a very delicate pink clouds nearer yet have a very prominent pink changing to a pretty orange and red. The different shapes and puffs of clouds stretched out is what makes everything so pretty. There were also streaks of black clouds that increased the beauty of it all. I had to go on watch and was a couple of minutes late because I just couldn't break away from it." Of course, another greatness of the whole thing is that it changes every minute and continues for quite some time – like a movie. Picked up our first sub report for this general area. Also, on June 20 at about 7 PM, the lookouts reported a big red flash on the horizon off the stern. Wasn't lightning either.

I want to quote from my diary for June 26 – "When I got up this morning, we were rolling and pitching like all hell. A moderate gale blowing off port bow, 30 to 40 ft waves breaking all around. Sometimes, one would break all over the forward part of the ship. One time, the bow shot up and when she came crashing down, we heard a loud sharp snap from the ship. Someone below started yelling that we were torpedoed. Boy, in 5 seconds the entire stewards department was in the lifeboats with life jackets on. We wouldn't get help from them in time of need. Some of these waves are like a mountain coming at you. We're only doing about 3 to 4 knots." I should mention here that while at sea, in dangerous waters, the lifeboats are swung out over the side so that all you had to do in an emergency was to lower away. When we lost a lifeboat during a storm, that ended sleeping in lifeboats. The next day, when the storm abated it was discovered that several deck plates cracked in several places. Water was getting into the hold (Nr. 3) and a powerful smell of ammonia was present. I guess some chemicals that were in that hold. First time that I saw the Skipper worried because this wouldn't be the first ship that cracked in two.

We were always overloaded. Every ship has a line on the hull called the Plimsoll Line, which in peacetime, the law states that you are not to load the ship beyond that line. I'm guessing on this, but I would say that on all the ships on which I sailed, that Plimsoll Line was 2 to 3 feet below the water line. We had deck cargo piled on each of the 5 hatches and breaking in two was a consideration. The Captain decided to break radio silence even though I had recently heard an SOS call from a ship saying that they were being shelled. We were aware of the fact that there were Japanese and even some German ships disguised as innocent merchant ships, which on approaching you, would drop panels exposing 6 and 8 inch guns. When one breaks radio silence, one keeps the message as brief as possible so that anyone listening can't get a bearing on you. The message consists of groups of 5 numerals. The receiver must have the correct code book and each group gives a word or a phrase. Since this was my first transmission, and never having had any practice in operating the transmitter or even in calling anyone, I was a bit apprehensive. I had fresh water to wash the salt off the insulator on the download from the main antenna. I even toyed with the thought of asking the crew to lower the antenna so I could wash off the insulators. I didn't want to lose any power. Then I told the folks on the bridge to keep their hands off the download because they would get shocked. I don't know how much energy there was to even give a shock, but probably would. After about a half dozen trips up to the bridge, the Captain, who always kidded with me, said something like "Will you go down there and get that Gft.m message off." I'm not sure, but I believe I called the Wellington station, got the message off without a hitch. I was pretty proud. The answer that came back, in code, said "proceed to ffft.uncodeable." The Captain said, "I don't care what they say, I'm going to Wellington." It was

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the closest port and still about a thousand miles away. The next day the corrected message came in and it stated to proceed to Wellington. Two days before we arrived in Wellington, another full gale hit us all night. The barometer was down to 28.25 in. We were exposed to some of the roughest weather of the trip. Everything was falling and smashing inside because we were rolling so hard. Chairs, bottles, glasses, everything was strewn over the deck. A pickled herring barrel fell and smashed on the lower deck and the entire ship was impregnated with the smell of fish. It was a miracle or protection of my Guardian Angel that we didn't break in half. Arrived in Wellington on July 5 after crossing the International Date Line on July 1 (losing one day). Wellington was jammed with Marines on R&R leave from Guadalcanal. When we arrived at the dock in Wellington, the deck cargo on No. 3 hatch was removed and steel plates were welded across the cracks which extended almost across the width of the ship. There was also 2 feet of water in hold Nr. 2. On July 7, the fire alarm went off at 5:30 AM. Smoke was pouring out of Nr. 3 hold ventilators. The steward crew took off, we heard, for parts unknown. They returned later in the day. We were speculating how the fire started. Just under the steel deck where they were welding, were bales of rags which maintenance people needed. That is apparently how the fire started, and only 2 days after we got there. Incidentally, Nr. 3 hold was the only one without explosives. No fire just a lot of smoke coming out of the ventilators. Our engines were dismantled so the port authority got tugs to haul us out of the harbor as fast as they could. Most of the crew took off but the Captain told me to stay in case I was needed to operate the radio. When the cover was removed from #3 hatch and air got in, the flames shot up as high as the bridge. Fire tugs just kept pouring water into the hold until the fire was

quenched. As they were towing us out, we could see a lot of people coming down to the docks to watch the fire not knowing that if that 5000 tons of high explosives went off, it would have destroyed that entire port – that's why we were towed so far out to sea. Due to this fire, all the cargo in #3 hold was ruined so they filled that hold with cases of hand grenades. The Captain said what difference do a few more explosives make.

(The following article I found online and have made a copy for the armed guard website in which it is currently listed)

We finally left Wellington for Colombo, Ceylon on July 25, 1943. A couple of days out a navy gunner had an attack of acute appendicitis. We broke radio silence again and informed Perth, Australia about our predicament. They told us to proceed to Fremantle and to keep ice packs on his appendix. Of the 14 days it took us to get to Fremantle, 4 were nice and the rest were horrible. Wind, sleet, rain, heavy seas, blowing a gale – we lost a lifeboat about 8 PM and the davits on two more were cracked. The catwalk was all smashed up. This was the type of weather you would expect off Cape Horn. At times I thought we'd roll over. This was about as bad as it gets. That poor sailor with the appendicitis. We arrived at Fremantle on the West coast of Australia on August 5, 1943 to discharge the ailing gunner who was kept under ice pack for 10 days. We left that same evening after being informed by blinker light from shore that all went well with the surgery.

In this section of the planet we saw many school of whales. Albatross also in large numbers in these southern waters. I noticed that you don't see them (albatross) until about 30 degrees South. The farthest South we went was about 45 degrees, off the southern part of Tasmania. I can't

recall with certainty but it seems to me that I saw ice flows at that latitude. The weather has been quite cold but now as we proceed North, it gets quite a bit warmer each day. Crossed the equator again about the 21st of August. On the 22nd, the Captain said that we would arrive at the nets across the harbor entrance of Colombo, Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka) during the night so we proceeded at half speed. Nets are placed across many harbor entrances to keep submarines from entering at night and sinking ships in the harbor. That night, during the early morning hours the general alarm went off. The lookout on the fore deck reported two torpedoes coming at us. He swears one missed our bow by 3 feet, the other passed harmlessly ahead of us by a couple hundred feet. We figured that the sub Captain miscalculated our speed. If we were going at our normal speed they would have gotten us. What a big explosion that would have been, but no one on board would know about it. Pulled into Colombo on the morning of August 23. I should mention here that when I got home from this trip, my mother asked me if we had any trouble about the middle of August. I just said I couldn't think of anything, but why? She had a dream about mid-August that two snakes were after me, and apparently after some tangling around I got away unharmed. She told my Father that I had some kind of altercation but that "he's OK, but got away unharmed." Only then I remembered the torpedoes that almost got us.

At first I was disappointed with Colombo, but after I got ashore a few times I got to enjoy it. This was my first Asian port. Different culture and quite exciting to observe. It was a relatively clean city, but the streets were crowded with the customary beggars, shoeshine boys, peddlers, rickshaws etc. Taxis were so expensive that we travelled by rickshaw. A rickshaw is a two-wheeled cart pulled by a man,

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usually the owner. I never saw so much jewelry in my life. This city would make a girl's head spin with all the different kinds of jewelry to pick from. We were told that the good stuff was removed because of the potential threat of Japanese invasion. What was left was poor quality. Visited several Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist temples. I found it very interesting but the people on board weren't interested in sightseeing and I don't like to go alone. All that most sailors are interested in is booze and women. I did spend some enjoyable times with my friends C.F. Dudley and John Shea. Dudley was the Purser and Shea was a Cadet from the Merchant Marine Academy. Somewhere about the beginning of September, we sailed to Calcutta to discharge the rest of our cargo but first we stopped off at Trincomalie, Ceylon (north shore) for a day to discharge the 1000 pound bombs. From here we enter the Bay of Bengal on our way to Calcutta, where about a year before, the Japanese Navy with carriers and battleships, sank 4 British warships including a small carrier and over a dozen merchant ships. Three of these carriers were later sunk in the Battle of Midway. This information was taken from a book by A. A. Hoehling entitled "The Fighting Liberty Ships." Japanese and even some German submarines were quite active in these waters and shipping routes in the Indian Ocean but were apparently mostly withdrawn by the time we got there because they were needed elsewhere due to American attacks on Japanese Islands in the Pacific.

I really enjoy going up rivers for you get a good feel and view of a country and culture outside the cities. To get to Calcutta, we sailed up the Hooghly river (a branch of the Ganges River) 7 miles before arriving at Calcutta. Could see some kind of ceremonies where people were being dunked in the river. This river is holy to most people in India. I could also see a well-

dressed man walking ahead of his family dressed in a white outfit – the wife is holding an umbrella over his head, shielding him from the hot sun. The wife or wives and children walked behind without an umbrella and carried the heavy loads. He carried nothing. Calcutta was so hot, that the days were about unbearable but I found Colombo comfortable for a continuous breeze comes in from the sea and keeps the average temperature down to 83 degrees. Arrived in Calcutta in the evening of September 24 (I think). We got first mail since we left. I didn't like the place right off. We arrived at the height of a famine. What a depressing sight to see dead and dying people lying around on the sidewalks and streets. Children with bloated bellies begging us for food or money (Baksheish). When we tied up at the dock, I can still see this woman with a baby holding a can with a wire handle. She would point to her mouth, the baby's mouth and put her hand out. Someone threw a roll he was eating down on the dock. She quickly picked it up, broke off a piece and put it into the baby's mouth, then put a small piece in her own mouth. The guys started throwing more food out and within 10 minutes, we must have had a hundred people soliciting food. The Captain heard the commotion and stopped it. He said there wasn't enough food on the ship to satisfy the need. Once ashore, people are begging continuously. I recall, I believe it was a British sailor, who stopped and put his hand into his pocket and within seconds he was surrounded by at least a hundred people. We never did see if he got out of it ok. Cholera and smallpox broke out frequently here in India and I could see why. Most of the poorer people lived in such filthy houses that I wouldn't dare to keep dogs or pigs in them. They were nothing more than low sheds – no resemblance to a house. We all had to get smallpox and cholera shots before we could get ashore. When we lined up for the shots, I was

shocked to see some of these big sailors with arms as large as my thighs literally shake out of fear.

The only place one could safely eat was Firpo's and for drinking and dancing and pleasant atmosphere was the Grand Hotel. Saw many U.S. fliers here. Rained several times a day and one could almost tell time by the showers, for they came so regularly and every day. Right in the heart of Calcutta you could see people lying on the sidewalk in various stages of starvation. The British would go about the city during the early morning hours picking up the dead and loading them into the trucks. If they nudged the body and it didn't move, the assumption was that the person was dead. The trucks then transported the bodies to the outskirts of the city for burning. Hindus burned their dead in pyres. I understand that thousands were collected daily.

I should mention something about loading coal in India. When we loaded coal at Newport News, Va., the entire railroad car of coal, 50 to 55 tons, was inverted over the hold of a ship and directed into the hold. Didn't take very long to load 5000 tons of coal. We were at a dock, in India, near a British ship which was loading coal. There was this huge pile of coal on the dock. Some of the natives were filling baskets made of jute, holding about a bushel, while others would pick up a basket, carry it on top of their head up to the ship and dump the coal into the hold. We were told that there were about 300 workers in each group. This operation went on day and night. It gave many people employment. The pay, from what one British official told us was 27 cents a day. I can't recall how long it took to load a ship this way.

It was interesting to watch the Indian stevedores unloading our ship. They are barefooted and can walk on those hot steel decks with no discomfort.

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We can feel the heat through our shoes and avoid standing or walking on deck for very long. Part of the secret came out one day when a stevedore got a bad cut on the sole of his foot and I watched as they treated it. The skin was at least 1/4" inch thick before you could see the bleeding part. They ate on board on the deck. A large pot of rice was boiled and each man got about a good sized cup of rice with a table-spoon or two of some kind of dark reddish-brown sauce. Probably vitamins and other nutrients. Rice was the staple in Asia and Africa. They ate the rice with the fingers of the right hand – the left hand they had was for nature's purposes. Some of the native boats that unloaded us (the guys called them scows or lighters) were made up of families. I think the same applied to the junks in China. We were told that people were born on these vessels, lived their entire life on them and died on them. I vividly recall one time when one was tied up to us, a man defecating near the bow and close to the stern a man, on the same side, was either brushing his teeth with his finger or flushing his mouth with this water which was filthy. The water, incidentally was flowing from bow to stern. Imagine what would happen if we took one sip of that water. I also recall while in India, one of these scows brought us a load of beef carcasses and all I can remember was the thousand flies on those carcasses. We were out of sugar so what was supplied was a brown unrefined sugar which later got infiltrated with bugs. Probably there when it came on board. Two last thoughts on India. One was seeing women washing clothes in the river and pounding them on stones, rinsing and drying them by throwing them over shrubbery rowing alongside the river, and when they needed to change their own sarong, they would go into the river up to their neck, remove the old cloth and replace it with one which was just washed. This was considered by the Hindus as a holy river so when we were tied up at

the dock, there were portable toilets on the dock for our use but I don't recall anyone using them. We just flushed our toilets as usual and there was no apparent enforcement of the ban. I should mention the sacred cows. They all looked like White Brahmas. They roamed freely throughout the city and had the right-of-way. They would eat produce right from a vendor's stand and he did nothing. We were told that the vendor would be honored that the cow ate his produce. One of our drunken sailors was toying with the idea of riding one of those cows like a cowboy. He was told that he'd probably get his throat slit if he attempted that. He sobered up to that. I believe the excrement from these animals was dried and used for fuel.

From Calcutta we went back to Colombo for orders. Sailed empty from Colombo on October 7 for Lobito, Angola but got a change of orders and arrived first of all at Cape Town, South Africa for fuel, water and fresh vegetables about October 29. Had some swell time at DelMonico's with Dudley and John Shea. On November 7, we left for Takoradi, Gold Coast to load manganese ore and mahogany logs. The day before we arrived at Takoradi, about the 20th, I got a report that 2 ships were sunk by submarines in our vicinity.

Nothing much to do in this pace but drink beer and shoot darts. Were warned about the large number of malaria cases here and were told to take precautionary action. We were all given 5 gr. of quinine to be taken daily and were to keep taking it for a month after leaving the last African port. Dudley, John and I went to a near-by village called Secundi – had our picture taken with a bunch of the kids, who never leave you – follow you wherever you go. There was a rickety bus that travelled between the two villages. We had a lot of innocent fun all evening. The U.S. Army was swell to

us for they came down to the ship in trucks and let us in on their movies and we were invited to attend a USO show – a nice way to spend an evening. It was here that I saw my first albino black human. He came down the river, alone in a long narrow dugout with outriggers, I think only on one side. He came right to the ship begging. Blond curly hair, thick lips and white skin. I didn't get to see his eyes but they told me that they were pink.

Sailed in convoy from Takoradi to Marshall, Liberia on December 3 and arrived in the morning of December 5. We came North with eight other ships, escorts and a plane most of the time. On the day before we arrived, the escorts did a lot of maneuvering around and kept dropping depth charges. Who knows, they may have been bored. Since there was no dock there, we anchored outside a treacherous breakwater where we loaded rubber. In fact, we no sooner anchored when barges, loaded with rubber blocks pulled up alongside and we began to load. These blocks of cream-colored crude rubber were about a yard square. Firestone seemed to be in charge of all the rubber transactions. A British escort patrolled the waters about us since there was nothing between us and the ocean. Time flew for me here because the Skipper got 10 cases of U.S. beer; I believe from the Firestone people and treated them on board. I was bartender and had access to whatever beer I wanted – which wasn't much. The Firestone people wanted to take me ashore and be bartender at their club but the Captain vetoed the idea. This Captain, H.C. Jessen was as great a guy as one could meet. He took a liking to me from day one. His humorous and gay ways really made life pleasant for me. As I mentioned, he took to me from the start of the trip, and kept up his kidding to the last. In an attempt to put weight on me he decided that a regular intake of beer would do it. I had a glass or a bottle of

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beer about every day at sea. We ate at 5 PM so at 4 PM I had to get a bucket of ice water and put the beer into it. At 4:30 I woke him up from his nap and we drank the beer. At end of the trip he admitted defeat and said that I didn't put on one g.dft pound and that I cost him a lot of money. Left Marshall, Liberia on December 9 and headed for Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. That run across the Atlantic was as bad food-wise as I've experienced so far. We were about out of food and what we had left was wormy or buggy. Some worms but mostly beetles. The sugar, meats, hot and cold cereal and bread, to mention a few, had these critters. A spoonful of brown sugar, which we got in India, (unrefined sugar) averaged about 5 or 6 brown beetles floating on the surface of your cup of coffee. Each piece of toast, when held to the light, produced at least a half dozen well-cooked beetles. At first we picked them out but you get used to anything, and we just ate and didn't examine too much. Ate dehydrated eggs and potatoes. No one grumbled very loud for we knew it was one of those things that happen on a long voyage.

The trip across was uneventful. We were alone, no storms but one incident which I recall with pleasure. Three of us palled around most of this trip, namely, C.F. Dudley, the Purser and John Shea, a Cadet. When we were in Cape Town, Gordon's gin was a dollar a bottle (pint, quart I don't remember), and we also took on fresh fruit including oranges. At a certain point, Dudley asked John and me to save our oranges. He wouldn't tell us why but kept reminding us almost daily to save our oranges. Well, on December 11 after I got off watch at 9PM we went into my quarters with them and there Dudley had a pitcher of orange blossom prepared (orange juice and gin). That's where our oranges came in. His birthday was on the 12th but he said he always celebrated it on the

evening before. Must have been there until midnight, talking about anything and everything. I just remember it as a most memorable evening.

Had lots of great music from U.S. stations especially Miami. Great bands. Arrived at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad on December 23, 1943 and there we got fresh stores. How one appreciates good clean food when denied it for several weeks. After a day of this clean food, bugs were forgotten and clean food was taken for granted once again. Human nature. Somewhere in this period, the Captain got the silly idea to notify the editor of our hometown paper that I made a trip around the world and to see to it that I get a big write up with parades etc. He thinks Oil City is a real hick town. He kept this up all day especially at supper time. Fortunately, he soon forgot about it. Dud, John and I decided to get away from the ship for a day, so we got a room at the Paris Hotel in Port-of-Spain on the 24th and there I had my first drink of Rum and Coca-Cola. Enjoyed the drink very much. Next day was Christmas, so we went to Mass and then just walked and walked for it was a beautiful day. Found out that there was mail on board so we rushed back that evening, for mail is the top priority. It seems like one lives from one port to the next just to see if any mail came. What a disappointment I was in for. I had two letters from the draft board in Oil City. One stating that I was to report for induction on October 12, 1943 at 7 AM and the other dated around the beginning of December stating that I failed to report and unless I notified them within 48 hours, at my own expense, why I didn't report, I'd be liable to 2 years in prison or \$10000 fine or both. Here it was December 25 - wonder what they thought when the threats didn't produce a live recruit. The Captain wrote a letter explaining all and I believe the shipping Company did as well for when

I got home, I stopped at the Draft Office. Seated there was this elderly bald-headed man who looked up at me and grunted something - I told him who I was, and in a sort of threatening voice he said that I was OK for now but to keep them informed as to my whereabouts. From then on, the day before the ship sailed, I sent them a postcard stating that my destination was unknown and return was indefinite. Left Trinidad in convoy on the 29th and arrived in Norfolk, Virginia on January 12, 1944. Did the same old things in port, spent lots of money, visited Max and then went home. Every trip you figure will be your last but this certain restlessness gets a hold of a sailor after a few weeks ashore and the first thing you know, you're on a ship again.

My next ship was the S.S. Arizona (mid-February). I stayed on for 2 days. She was an old tanker of the Texas Oil Company. She was running between some of the Caribbean Islands and New York. But there were so many roaches on her and she was so dirty, I couldn't stay on. I hung around New York getting more broke daily. Finally, on February 29th I was assigned a new Liberty ship down in Baltimore, the S.S. Warren Delano. This suited me fine for I could live with Max and save some money. Loaded coal and coke, part in Baltimore and the rest at Newport News, Virginia and sailed about the middle of March, in convoy, to Port-of-Spain for fuel and from there to Santos, Brazil. We crossed the equator on Easter Sunday and the navy boys really had a time initiating the fellows that never crossed before. Spent almost a month at Santos unloading our cargo and then loaded coffee beans in what appeared to be about 100 lb. bags. Had a swell time there, especially the Atlántico and Ilha de Porchat sector. Sailed to Rio de Janeiro where convoy was to form. Got ashore twice in Rio. A beautiful city with mosaic stones on all the sidewalks. Just gorgeous. Had a chance to go on top of Sugar Loaf

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Mountain and inside the Copacabana Palace Casino. We also had a chance to go up to the Corcovado a 75-foot high statue of Christ with arms spread out and set up high on the mountain. I was told that in peacetime the statue is lit up and can be seen for 60 miles out to sea. Came back to Port-of-Spain again to refuel and arrived in New York about June 14. No trouble that trip from subs. Were off Florida when news of the invasion of Europe was announced. The skipper this trip was A. Erikson. Not a bad sort of fellow. I got along real well with him. He liked me – said I was about the only person onboard who would talk to him. He would come into the Radio Shack, sit down on the emergency transmitter smoking a cigarette, say nothing, but I would talk. After 15 minutes or more, he would get up and go without saying a word. It was not until later that I realized how much it meant to him. After the war, he said he wanted to sail across the Atlantic and he wanted to take me with him. Said his wife would have to take a bath every day and he couldn't carry that much fresh water on board. I decided to make another trip on her and before I went home I learned that the ship was going to North Russia (the Murmansk run). Was a little worried but was told that this was to be the first convoy since the invasion of Europe and the Germans would probably move most of their aircraft and subs south. The previous convoy was about decimated in trying to make that run. My skipper for this trip was R. E. Merithew, a former minister. He didn't smoke, drink or use even the vaguest bit of profanity and couldn't stand anyone else on the ship using any of these terrible vices either. I got along well enough with him but he sure did get on one's nerves.

Left New York about middle of July and first of all anchored again in Loch Long, Scotland. Got to Glasgow again. From there to Loch Ewe in northern Scotland where convoys for Russia formed. Left for Russia on the 15th of

August 1944. About half of the ships in the convoy had a deck cargo of 6 or 8 huge locomotives. These are all special because the tracks in the U.S.S.R. are about 3 and one-half inches wider than most of the rest of the world. We counted about 100 locomotives in that convoy. At our Radio Officer's meeting, prior to departure we were told that the greatest concern was the German battleship Tirpitz which was in the Northern Norwegian port of Narvik and the last reconnaissance plan reported that she had steam up – which indicated she was ready to sail. We had a tense but quiet trip. Had about 35 ships in the convoy and about 40 escorts including a Russian battleship, British heavy cruiser Jamaica and two British light fleet carriers. Many destroyers and spread as far as the horizon. There were also a number of small Russian patrol boats. So small that we couldn't believe that they would put out to sea. I think they had depth charges. During bad weather, the seas would literally break over these small boats. We had one of them not too far away from us and we noticed that there was always a lookout standing right next to a mast. We watched one time as a wave swept right over that boat and we expected that lookout to be swept overboard also, but to our surprise, he was still there. We finally put some good binoculars on him and to our surprise the guy was actually tied to the mast, that's why he wouldn't wash overboard. Went North of Bear Island, approximately 76 degrees North latitude and lost one escort due to sub action. We saw no German planes although the carriers sent out fighters many times and appeared to be chasing something near the horizon. About a half of the ships broke off to proceed to Murmansk. No ships were lost and we pulled into a little place on the White Sea called Molotovsk on August 26. I noticed that there is no longer a place called Molotovsk at that spot on the map but another name. Molotov was apparently discredited.

On this run we had two days where the sun didn't set. Just went around the sky. At 2 AM the sun was low but still above the horizon. I always wanted to see this and finally did. While in Russia, we were treated with the greatest suspicion. We were followed everywhere we went. There must have been permafrost in Molotovsk because the roads were made up of log slashings. There was room for 2 ships in this little place and the guys from our ship played softball with the crew from the other ship. This attracted a lot of attention from the people unloading the ship or coming to work on the ship but mostly there were a lot of kids. Typical of Americans, the kids were held up on guys shoulders so they could see better, they were given candy, gum etc. I believe it was on the 2nd day that a guard was posted and no one was allowed to tarry and no more kids. The stevedores were – to the best of my knowledge – all women. The security guards were either men or women – and of course the men were all aged. One of our Romeo sailors liked this one girl working on the ship and apparently got invited to her place – actually, I don't know how he worked it out, but he said about midnight came the knock on the door – he went out the rear window but the girl was picked up and put into a road gang or work crew. I saw one such group of about a dozen women, with a guard, repairing the road. At some point in Russia, some of the crew, I heard were trying to make alcohol using potato peelings and other stuff. We had two Spaniards in the crew and I don't know if it was due to the fermented product but they both, especially one, went a bit berserk. Got a number of knives and wouldn't come out of his quarters. Said somebody was trying to kill him. Well, our Captain hears about this and goes down holding a .38 revolver and points it at him. The guy panics and slashes the Captain on the arm, requiring 7 stitches. None of us could understand why the gun didn't go off unless the

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Captain had no intention of shooting the man but only tried to frighten him – which he did.

We then sailed for Archangel. At least this was a larger city with street cars and many stores etc. As I said, we were followed continuously, so one day we decided to try to lose our guy. Well, we did for a while but eventually he found us again. We took on a full load of lumber and didn't think much of their system, their women, prices of cheap souvenirs, etc. We were glad to leave there on September 26. When we first arrived in Russia, the Russian Government gave each sailor 600 rubles as an appreciation gift. There was absolutely nothing to buy except a meal and booze. Each meal had about 3 varieties of caviar. I and most of us didn't care for it. I bought a lot of stamps. When we left, the unspent rubles had to be returned. Two other incidents are memorable. Our cargo contained a large amount of 50 lb. tubs of butter. Since we were almost out of butter we asked if we could take a tub and mark it up as damaged cargo. No way. The other incident occurred in the White Sea which I believe is fresh water. While at anchor the Chief Engineer just sucked up so many tons of water, told them how much he took and forgot about it until they billed us for that water. Boy, he was fit to be tied – said he never would have told that he took any water. On our last day in Archangel, we talked to some R.A.F. pilots who landed there that morning and claimed that they sunk the Tirpitz or they saw it turn over. On the way back to England, we sailed closer to North Cape (Norway). Submarines or possibly only one submarine hit two ships to our starboard. The two explosions were only a few seconds apart, that's why we figured that it might have been only one sub. The escorts finally had to sink those ships, probably because of all that lumber on board. Our orders were to unload the lumber at Barry, Wales. We assumed that we

would be used as a shuttle between England and the invasion sites of Europe but to our pleasant surprise we took on ballast and sailed for New York via convoy. Arrived on November 14. Stayed on until November 28 and then took off for Oil City. I wanted to spend Christmas at home for a change. The ship was going back to Russia and this time, temperatures of up to 70 below zero were expected. This time they will experience total darkness for a month.

I should mention an incident that is quite memorable. We were under sail somewhere in southern England, perhaps the English Channel when one day early or mid-morning we saw 4-engine bombers (B-17's, B-24s) in the air and the entire sky was filled with these planes, headed for Germany. The noise was so great that we couldn't even converse by yelling into each other's ear. They kept coming and coming must have been a thousand planes. Then late in the afternoon we saw the flights coming back, most formations had open spots indicating planes that were shot down. This reminded me of a convoy I was in where one could see ships covering the ocean, as far as the horizon. We had over 100 ships in that convoy. That was near the end of the war.

Got back to New York about the 3rd of January 1945 and got assigned on a rush job on a Cities Service oil tanker, the C/S Kansas. I signed on her at noon of the 9th and we sailed at 4 PM. At first we were bound for Los Pedas, Venezuela but got a change of orders and pulled into Aransas Pass, Texas on about the 20th. Took a full load of oil in about 10 hours and sailed for Baltimore, where we arrived on January 31. Things move fast on tankers. She was due to sail again the next day but when we docked, I find that I only relieved the previous operator for one trip. I was very fortunate that we pulled into Baltimore and not Norfolk or, in fact, any other port but Baltimore for here all I did was grab a

cab, throw my bags in and take off for Max's place. I remember that the temperature was close to 0 degrees that afternoon. Now that I think back, I realized how important it was for me to have Max in Baltimore. That place was a lifesaver to me more than once. Through the Baltimore union office, I was assigned to the S.S. William Few on February 6, 1945 (Merchants and Miners Trans. Co.). She was a Liberty built in 1942 in fact, one of the first. We carried 3 radio operators and since I had a first-class license, I was Chief. As I boarded her on the morning of the 6th, little did I realize what an enjoyable time I'd have on her for the rest of the year. I suppose this was due to the fine man I had as Skipper (W.W. Tweed). He was as fine and good-hearted a man one could ever hope to meet. I liked him the minute I met him and soon found out that he and Captain Jessen were old sailing buddies and were still the best of friends. It really means a lot to me to know two such fine men. I know where to look for them in New York and will always look forward to do so whenever I chance to be there. (Never did).

I should describe a little about convoy travel. The authorities try to keep the ships as tight as possible. If we were assigned the number 56 that would mean that we were in the 5th row and the 6th ship behind the lead ship in our row. You followed the ship in front of you. In a dense fog, where you cannot see the ship in front of you, it gets a bit hairy. We let out a buoy, called a "fog buoy" on a long cable. This particular buoy is constructed so that a scoop picks up water as it's dragged through the water and sends up a high geyser of water which can be seen by the helmsman behind. He just follows that spray of water. Sometimes the cable breaks and then you have other problems but really, you just put out another buoy, but the ship behind is in a panic until they make contact with the new buoy.

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Another fact of life on merchant ships is that there are no medical personnel on board. There is a medicine chest on board with a book of instructions. If you get sick, tuff. I did see one Captain sew up a bad cut on a sailor. He gave him a glass of whiskey as an anesthetic. When the sailor threw up the whiskey, he got hell from Old Man for wasting his good whiskey. I was in one convoy where the ship in front of us reported that their Captain died and they would have burial at sea at 2 PM. Every ship carries canvas and lead weights just for this purpose. Anyway I recall watching through binoculars the canvas covered body on a board and a tilt up of the board and the drop into the sea. Not much but I remember that episode 55 years later.

The William Few was converted to carry troops. The first was to Antwerp, Netherlands although we were first scheduled for Rouen, France. Before we got to Antwerp, however, we stopped at Weymouth in Southern England. Anchored at St. Helens' Road along the Isle of Wight, and also anchored at the Downs, just off the cliffs of Dover. I got ashore in Weymouth due to the conference. Our run from England to Antwerp was uneventful but everyone was tense due to mines, subs, V-bombs and E-boats. Let me explain, what little I know, about the German V-bombs. The V-1 was the first pilotless bomb that was sent over England. It was nothing more than a 2000 pound bomb with attached wings and a motor to propel it. It was referred to as a "flying bomb," a "doodlebug" or a "buzz bomb." Had a very characteristic sound one could identify it even in the fog, sight unseen. They flew about a thousand feet high and when the motor cut out, the blast was soon to follow. The next pilotless bomb the Germans developed was labeled the V-2 rocket. It flew from Holland mostly to England but also to Antwerp. It flew up out of sight and you only knew about it when you heard

the explosion followed by the whoosh of the sound as it came down. At least that was my interpretation of it. While in Antwerp, flying bombs dropped regularly but not quite so much on the docks. When we were in town, they were dropping more closely than at the docks. On clear days, the Germans used to V2s which, as I said previously, couldn't be seen or heard until the explosion as they hit. On foggy mornings the flying bombs (V-1s) came. The closest that a rocket came to me was one afternoon as I was on a trolley in town, a V2 blast rocked the trolley but the bomb dropped several blocks away. While running down the Scheldt River out of Antwerp the morning we left, I heard several flying bombs pass overhead but we couldn't see them because of the fog. The Germans knew where the ships anchored in the River and would send these V-1s over every morning. I heard that they hit only a very few ships that way. When the fog lifted that morning, we watched the V2s, trailing white smoke, soar into the sky on their way to England. On the run back to England, 5 ships, in the convoy ahead of us, hit mines and two in ours. Quite a blast when a mine goes off. That night, E-boats attacked, but were driven off. We all drew a breath of relief when we anchored at the Downs again, but early the next morning (5 AM) I was awakened by the sputter of flying bombs. In fact, one flew right over our ship and blew up about a half to a mile away. The gunners made an attempt to shoot it down but got to the guns too late. That was the last of any action I saw during the war. On our way back, we stopped at Le Havre to pick up German prisoners, but things got mixed up somehow and another Liberty came and took our prisoners. We were just as glad.

Got back to New York on April 14, 1945. Captain Tweed wasn't feeling well and got my former skipper Jessen to take over for one trip. Was like old times again. We were loaded, ready to

sail when VE day came (May 8). I was in a taxi with the Captain on VE day and we almost didn't get through Times Square because of the large crowds gathering very rapidly. With Captain Jessen, it was like old times again. I should mention here that both Jessen and Tweed, especially Tweed taught me how to get the ship's position using a sextant, noon position and at night, using the triangulation of 3 stars. The second Mate on a ship is the Navigation Officer. He takes sights and sets the position of the ship, under the watchful eyes of the Captain. For a while, the three of us used to get a position, based on the stars. When we set our plots on the chart, the Captain and I were almost on top of each other but that poor Mate's position was way out, sometimes 10 to 20 miles off. The Captain built up a confidence in me and I don't know how many times he would say, "Sparky how about getting a noon fix for me, I'm going to take a nap." He'd be up perhaps most of the night on deck due to various reasons. This trip was a repetition of the last one only this time we brought back American troops. Discharged troops at Newport News, Va. And left immediately for New York.

One of proudest moments at sea came as we approached New York harbor one day at the end of a trip. The fog was so thick that you could see nothing. Couldn't see any ships, could barely see the bow of the ship, so we were going quite slow with the fog horn sounding every 20 seconds. Lighthouses, with their flashing lights, are located at specific spots on shore so that ships can better determine their own position. In the daytime, you take a bearing on the lighthouse and at night you take a bearing on the light whose flashes are characteristic for that particular lighthouse. These are of no use in a fog but there are radio signals sent out also from known points on shore. We have an instrument on board which can pick up

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these signals, again which are characteristic for a particular station precisely spotted on shore. This instrument is called a Direction Finder (DF). It was just newly installed on our ship at some point. Well, New York has three of these stations emitting signals and when you draw the 3 bearings on your chart you get a nice point which is your location. You hope the three lines cross at a point and not to form a large triangle – where are you inside that triangle? The captain had instructions to anchor at a certain anchorage located on his map of New York Harbor. These old-time Captains have no confidence in this electronic stuff. I finally talked him into letting me use the DF. Well, after I got several beautiful points, taking readings every few minutes, he got caught up with the whole thing. He almost had no choice. His anchorage was off “I” buoy so he changed course heading for “I” buoy based upon the information that I gave him. The part that I’ll always remember was he kept telling me that if I run him into another ship or run aground he’d throw me overboard. This was Captain Jessen, always kidding but he was considerably apprehensive on this run into New York harbor. He had a lot of faith in me from previous experiences. Well when my points came almost opposite “I” buoy the Captain called to the lookout on the bow to keep watch for a buoy. Nothing happened for several minutes, he kept looking at me and kept reminding me what he’d do if I screwed up. The lookout finally yells, “buoy off starboard bow,” the Captain asks what letter is on the buoy, after a few minutes which seemed like hours, the call comes back “I.” Boy, the relief in the Captain’s eyes, he shook my hand, slapped me on the back and said something like “I knew you would do it but I didn’t want you to get too cocky too soon.” When the fog cleared later, we were right at anchor among a lot of other ships. I don’t know if they were there before the fog hit or how they did

it. Got there about June 21. On this trip across the Atlantic, we were allowed to have our running lights on. After being used to being blacked out at sunset for over three years, it took several nights before I had the courage to put all the lights on in my quarters and open the porthole. A thrill that is memorable. It seemed there were more lights on than usual for those first few nights. Convoys were now done away with in the Atlantic. Captain Tweed took over again on the next trip but I had a chance to get home for about a week, so I went home.

On the next run, we had a full cargo for discharge at Le Havre. Four of us, including the Skipper planned to go to Paris for a few days. The Skipper and the Purser left in the morning and the Captain said “We will meet at the American Red Cross in Paris, when you get there.” The second Radio Operator asked me to wait until he got his clothes from the laundry that afternoon. When we got to the railroad station, we were told that no merchant seamen were to be sold tickets to Paris because VJ day was expected tomorrow, and they figured the ships would be deserted. That was tuff luck. Loaded troops at Le Havre again and discharged them at Boston about August 26, 1945. Spent most of my time in Boston with Dudley and the Websters. Spent some pleasant times with them all. Left Boston early in September and discharged our cargo at Bremerhaven, Germany. That stretch across the North Sea was pretty dangerous as many ships were hitting mines. We would see floating mines on occasion. During the day they could be avoided but at night you just crossed your fingers. Wasn’t much left of Bremerhaven, looked like almost every building was destroyed and you could still smell the odor of death. The docks seemed to be untouched though. Went to Antwerp to pick up troops and discharged them in New York on October 26. Didn’t take any cargo this

time but sailed again on the 29th for Marseille, France. Picked up troops and discharged them in New York on about December 9. This trip back was about the roughest I ever had. The ship was light and the wind was blowing us towards the rocky shore of Nova Scotia. The Captain warned everyone that he’d have to turn the ship around and sail into the wind but it was a dangerous maneuver. The dangerous part was when the wind and waves hit us broadside as we were coming around. Well we took a roll of 52 degrees. It was recorded in the ship’s log. One would think that everything would have been secured prior to that because of the terrible seas but on that turn it sounded like everything in the ship smashed. There was no more chow that evening for everything in the galley was scattered all over the deck. What a mess. We had sandwiches that evening.

I wanted to get home so badly for Christmas that I finally got off the William Few. I hated to leave such a fine skipper. He practically begged me to stay on and told me I’d be sorry. I was, but only thought of Christmas at home. Went to Baltimore and Max and I got a plane to Pittsburgh and a bus the rest of the way. Applied for my discharge from the Merchant Marine as soon as I got home and had hopes of receiving it before I had to sail again, but no luck. Left for New York again right after the New Year. Got assigned to the S.S. Percy E. Foxworth of the Alcoa Steamship Lines. This Captain was the most unpleasant Captain I had in all my trips to sea. He was from the South, 37 years of age and really stuck on his importance. I signed on in New York on January 24, 1946. It was to be a short trip to Rio de Janiero, Santos, a European port and back to the U.S. Would take approximately 3 months – so we were told. I wanted a short trip for I expected to start college in the Fall. Left New York on January 26 and arrived in Newport News on January

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27 to load coal. Left Virginia on February 2 and headed south for Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. My difficulties with the Captain commenced with this run and didn't end until the trip was over. Arrived at Port-of-Spain on February 9 about breakfast time. Left a few hours later for San Fernando, Trinidad to load fuel oil. Arrived there late in the afternoon and proceeded to load fuel. We all had shore leave for the night. Went into town with some of the guys to look around – it was quite a dump. Some British club invited the officers on our ship to spend the evening with them. Had an enjoyable evening there – music, dancing and food and drinks. I got a bit piflicated (I think he meant intoxicated) on those fine rum drinks. The atmosphere there was perfect. I'll always remember that Club for the wonderful relaxation we had those hours. The club was set up high on a hill, spacious and all screened in. A cool breeze came in from the sea, one could look out into the night and gaze at the Southern stars – soft music- tropical setting with banana and coconut trees. We sat there taking it all while sipping on a nice cool rum and Coca-Cola. A beautiful evening. The only thorn in that setting was that the British women would not dance with our guys. There were, at least, 6 men to every female. Oh well, we left Trinidad the following morning, February 10 and were bound for Rio. Crossed the equator again on the 16th and arrived at Rio early on the 23rd of February. On the way down, as we sailed past the mouth of the Amazon – about 50 miles out – the water of the ocean was a dirty brown.

Rio is always a nice place to come to. We got there in time for the "Carnival" – like the Mardi-Gras in New Orleans, the weekend before Lent. Rio is a beautiful city and I can never get enough of that place. The first day there we were told that the European run for us has been replaced with a trip to Shanghai. Seems Brazil had a lot of

beans to be sent to Shanghai as U.N.R.R.A. (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency) (I think) cargo and didn't have the ships to transport it, so we were the tenth of 10 ships picked to go. Loaded part of our Shanghai cargo at Rio and departed for Santos on March 12. Arrived on the 13th. Loaded the rest of the cargo of beans and finally sailed on the 25th of March on that long hop. Spent an enjoyable "last evening" at Santos' night spot "Ilha Porchat." Drank a little too much for it took that first week at sea to completely recuperate from that night.

The quality of food we got in Brazil can't compare with the food we get in the States. I still vividly recall the eggs that came on board in Brazil. The cooks would shake every egg, and if it sounded watery, it was discarded. The ones that weren't watery were used for breakfast etc. Whether scrambled or fried they stunk to high heaven and it was difficult to eat them. No one got sick though. We arrived in Cape Town on the morning of April 10, 1946 to take on fuel, water and food which was primarily vegetables. We left late the same day.

Now in peacetime, I was expected to send our noon position to the Company Headquarters in New York daily. Several days after we left Cape Town, I could no longer reach the New York station. I didn't send in our noon position for a number of days but then decided to try (I believe station KOK) in San Francisco. What a thrill when I heard them answer me. Had no more problems the rest of the trip. On May 7, Java and Sumatra were in sight most of the day, and then we passed through Sunda Straits, between the two islands. Land was in sight the following day. I especially remember going by the island of Krakatau. The ship's mates told me about it. Was once a mountain but blew up in 1883 and the dust from it caused a disturbance in the weather

worldwide for a couple of years. We arrived at Singapore early on the 10th and departed on the 11th with 8 or 10 passengers, both men and women, mostly Chinese. We got no shore leave in Singapore. Finally anchored in the Yangtze River on May 20 (almost 3 months without getting off the ship) and didn't get to dock for a week or 10 days.

We finally sailed up the Whangpoo River and docked in Shanghai. An LST tied up to our starboard side – possibly to take off some of our cargo. Everything was fine until the tide started going out. I don't really know what happened but I heard that underneath our ship was a narrow ledge and when the tide started going out, the ship settled on that ledge and then slid off, breaking the mooring cables. I remember hearing those cables singing as they flew around, and no one got hurt. The Captain of the LST put his craft into full power and broke away from us and took off. Our ship began to drift down the river. The engines were already being dismantled because the Engineers could hardly wait to work on them after such a long trip. It was over 3 months since we left Brazil. One anchor was dropped but wouldn't hold. The second anchor slowed our drift a bit but wouldn't hold either. Right below us was a heavy cruiser, the USS Los Angeles anchored in the river. We banged into the cruiser, our mast or rigging took a plane off the cruiser – gasoline spilled over our deck – one of our men got his foot caught in a coil of rope and I believe he lost it when the coil tightened. Quite an exciting entry to Shanghai.

I can only recall 3 incidents in Shanghai. One that impressed me a lot was going to Sunday Mass. The Mass, exactly as I was familiar with everywhere I went was unchanged in this exotic land. The Priest starts off "In Nomine Patris, et Filii et Spiritus Sancti." That really impressed me.

WALT AT SEA

When we were in China, inflation was rampant – about 26000 yen to the dollar. Well I wanted a few yen to take home as a souvenir. In the bar we were in, almost all the money used was dollars and change was also in dollars – I think but not sure. I asked for some Chinese money. What confusion. They finally sent a courier out of the bar and he returned about a half hour later and I got my Chinese money. The third incident dealt with Mr. Alfred Kwok. He was a passenger who got on at Singapore. On our way to Shanghai, all the passengers wanted to send a radiogram to friends or relatives in Shanghai. All they had was Malaysian money. I didn't want it because I felt it was worthless but I felt sorry for them and sent the messages. The money was worthless and when we got to New York I had to dish out about 150 bucks (US) of my own money. Mr. Kwok told me to come to the Bank of China in Shanghai and he would pay me if the money was no good. When I walked into the bank lobby – it was a large hall with about 20 to 30 identical doors all around – like a circular room. Completely bare – not even a table or chair. A Chinese man dressed in an all black robe, or dress came out of one door and handed me a form and indicated I was to fill it out. It was all Chinese symbols. Complete Greek to me. In the midst of my confusion, a door opens and Mr. Kwok comes out, doesn't see me but is headed full speed for one of the doors. I yelled to him – he recognized me – took me into his office and paid me.

We were told that our ship was selected to be on the coal run between Shanghai and Tsingtao. We were relieving another ship that was on that assignment for 18 months. What a depressing bit of news that was, but just before we sailed for Tsingtao the Communists either captured the city or were too close so we were spared. One other incident I should mention. Across the river from us, at anchor or

at the dock, I don't remember, was the "Whangpoo River Police." Surprisingly the large sign was in English. When the tide was going out, we would see occasionally a body floating down the river. When the tide was coming in, the River Police would gather the bodies, tie them to a buoy until the tide turned – then released them and allowed them to go down the river to the ocean. I would often see a half dozen or more bodies tied up until the tide turned. Life is cheap in China. The Chinese, as shady people in any country, were great at deception. Some sailors came on board with a bottle of Four Roses whiskey. They paid 20 bucks for it and bought it because the seal on top was unbroken so they were certain it was the real stuff. Upon opening the bottle, which was observed by a large number of guys hoping to get a swig, it was found to be water. After a lot of cursing and after careful inspection, they found where a tiny hole was drilled in the bottom of the bottle and sealed.

When we left Shanghai on June 29 headed for Manila. Formosa was in sight all day on July 1 and part of July 2. Arrived Manila on July 4 at noon. It was their Independence Day also. We were at anchor but a lot of fireworks were going off that night. Don't know where they get all that stuff. I don't remember much about Manila but it was completely devastated. We survived a typhoon while at anchor. This time both anchors held but we almost were blown into rocks on one side of the bay. Departed Manila on July 24 and arrived at a small port called San Fernando North of Manila on the 25th about 8 AM. Meanwhile, Max sent me a radiogram stating that I was accepted at Penn State for the Fall Semester. We were to load scrap iron and bring it to the States. A long slow tedious process. We were driven out to sea one time because of a typhoon. We would rather ride out the storm at sea than to take chances being in port. It was a

beautiful clear day that morning when I got the typhoon report. The typhoon was headed across Luzon, not far from where we were docked. All of a sudden, the entire crew was turned to, batten down hatches etc. getting the ship ready for sea. By the time we pulled out of the harbor, clouds were already pouring in and it might have been raining, but I'm not certain. We had a long tedious stay at San Fernando. The only thing I can recall about it was that for a long period, someone would catch the returning shrimp fishermen early in the morning, get a bucket of shrimp, the cook would cook them for us and then we would peel and eat shrimp and drink beer – usually in the mornings. Anyway we left San Fernando finally on September 18. Too late for me to start at Penn State. The only incident I can remember on the trip to San Francisco was going through the eye of a typhoon. The howling, shrieking wind stopped completely, we could see the stars at night because this happened after dark, I guess and then hell broke loose again only from the opposite direction. The wind blowing through the rigging produced the most eerie screeching sound. You feel so helpless and frightened. The seas are a swirling mass of white foam and you're being tossed about like a matchstick. You don't know if you're going to roll over or what would it be like if the engines broke down. That was a frightening experience that I couldn't wish on anyone. Crossed the International Date Line on October 3 (we had two October 3rd's that year). I also recall, before we arrived that we were running out of food and for the last week or so we had what the cook called "Irish Stew." It was a mixture of what edible food we had – all in one pot. We had this 3 times a day. Arrived in San Francisco early on the 16th of October 1946. That night for supper we had steak, milk, mashed potatoes, ice cream. What a feast. Flew to New York with Tony Nurmi, a seaman who made sailing vessels inside bottles.

WALT AT SEA

Amazing, when you saw those large fingers and the delicacy with which he created. Don't know what the date was. There were other incidents which I don't think appropriate to put down in writing. Many others I just can't recall. Thus ends this documentary on one little part of my life. As I recalled certain incidents, I added them in the appropriate place throughout the document.

This revision was completed on February 5, 2000. (He wanted to keep this "clean" in case any of his grandchildren read it) He also didn't make it to Penn State until the Spring semester after getting off the Percy Foxworth. He actually got all his degrees from Penn State B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. (But the most memorable years of his life were his years at sea he told me)

Ships my father was on:

S.S. Cities Services Kansas from 1/9/45-1/31/45, S.S. William Few from 2/8/45-4/17/45, S.S. William Few from 4/17/45-6/29/45, S. S. William Few from 6/29/45-12/10/45, S.S. Percy E. Foxworth from 1/12/46-10/23/46, M.S. Bleinheim from 8/11/42 -3/31/43, S.S. John Davenport from 5/13/43-1/14/44, S.S. Warren Delano from 3/7/44-6/15/44, S. S. Warren Delano from 6/16/44-11/28/44

I'm not sure when the first picture on the cover sheet was taken of my Dad during WWII or what type of ship he was on. The second one is aboard the S.S. John Brown while docked in New London, CT on 5/25/2003 at his old "radio shack". When he got his bearings that day, he literally ran (for an 80 year old at that time) up to the radio room since 60 years seemed like just yesterday to him.

Sent in by Ann Phillips
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Ashford, CT 06278
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THE FRESH WATER ARMED GUARD

THE FRESH WATER ARMED GUARD

A four paragraph author
authorized excerpt from
IRON FLEET

The Great Lakes in WW II,
George J. Joachim, 1994.

(Coast Guard) Temporary Reserves also played a direct role in guarding ore freighters during the later war years. On 24 July 1942, Ninth Naval District officials ordered the Coast Guard in Cleveland and Chicago to assign two-to-four armed enlisted men to each American-flag vessel that regularly transited the Soo Locks, resulting in an additional drain on regular Coast Guard personnel. The initial purpose for the guards was only to prevent any sabotage efforts at the locks; however the decision was made to leave the guards on board for the entire trip, so as to avoid the necessity of stopping the ship to pick them up or drop them off. The number of men assigned to each ship depended upon the accommodations available; most of the older lake ships had been built in the days when the boats were manned only by two six-hour watches, so what little extra space was available had long since been used for extra sleeping room for the men of the newly added third watch.

The presence of these armed men aboard freighters was unlike anything seen before (or since) on the lakes and relationships between crew and guard were sometimes difficult. Most of the coast guardsmen were young, enlisted personnel fresh from basic training. ("They were just kids!" said one Lake captain); and they served aboard the ships without direct supervision, since it was not possible to place officers aboard each boat. During the early months of the program, there were occasional confrontations between the perhaps over zealous young guards and the civilian officers of the ship and it was clear that lines of authority had

to be clarified. In October, 1942, all of the officers aboard the Lake freighters were commissioned as Temporary Reserve officers in the Coast Guard, thus providing them with direct and clear authority over the enlisted guards aboard the ships. During the manpower crunch of the later war years, all of the regular Coast Guard personnel were removed from the boats, while the commissioning of the regular ships officers as Temporary Reservists allowed for continued military presence.

Loaded weapons and inexperienced personnel were a combination that may have well posed a greater danger to the crews of the Lake boats than anything seriously considered in Berlin. The DETROIT NEWS reported on 13 July 1942 that a newly arrived engineer was shot by a guard aboard the supply ship, FRONTIER, when the guard, "not recognizing the stranger aboard and failing to get satisfaction from him, fired." The captain of one ship in the Columbia fleet simply confiscated all of the ammunition aboard his boat and kept it under lock and key in his office, forcing the guardsmen to patrol the vessel with empty weapons. While providing "security", the enlisted personnel were also supposed to receive additional training in seamanship from the crew of the Laker; but it appears that for the most part, they went for an extended boat ride. One Laker remembered, "All they did was eat!"

While most Lake officers regarded the armed guard program as a nuisance, they did enjoy the "benefits" of being commissioned in the Coast Guard - most importantly, the uniforms issued to them when they were sworn in, which included everything from dress whites, to raincoats, overcoats, and even shoes, which were rationed in the civilian population. While uniforms had never been worn aboard Lake freighters in peacetime, many a sailor would don his new apparel at the slightest opportunity and strut about as "an

officer and a gentleman." The uniforms were particularly effective ashore, where officer arraignment could secure a seat on a crowded bus, or train or admit one to a movie theater free of charge. These pursuits were not, however, without some risk. With his ship unloading ore in Buffalo Harbor, Clarence McTevia donned his new ensign uniform for a trip to the downtown post office. As he strutted proudly through the door, he came face to face with a "real" Coast Guard officer "covered with brass" and carrying a "dignity whip." McTevia "snapped" to attention and delivered a feeble imitation of a salute that invoked only a glare, all the while "shivering in his boots." Upon his return to the ship, he ordered one of the enlisted guardsmen to his room for an extensive lesson in the military art of a correct salute.

Sent in by Murdock Moore.
moore_murdock@yahoo.com

Subject: Book Review - Fw200 CONDOR VS ATLANTIC CONVOY
Fw 200 CONDOR VS ATLANTIC CONVOY 1941-43, by Robert Forczyk, UK, Osprey Publishing, 2010, ISBN 978-1-84603-917-1, Photographs, Glossary, Index, Pp 80

Sir Winston Churchill called the Focke-Wulf Fw-200 Condor "The Scourge of the Atlantic". Not bad for a four engine air transport designed for long haul passenger work. Though in 1938 the Fw-200 prototype flew non-stop Berlin to New York, By late 1939, its order book had dried up. War had come to Europe. Enter the Luftwaffe. The German Air Force needed a long range ocean patroler for "cooperative" duties with the German Navy. Out went the seats. In came cabin, fuel tanks, external bomb racks, and a belly gun and bombardier's gondola.

Preying soon prevailed over patrolling. Initially Condors attacked un-escorted "fast" ships, graduating to under-

THE FRESH WATER ARMED GUARD

escorted convoys, then protected convoy outriders. The attack profile - a low level surprise bombing run. The semi-trained merchant marine gunners were lucky to get off one 5" shot before the bombs arrived.

The mariner's backup armament had little aircraft stopping power being rifle caliber, stoppage prone, WWI era Lewis machine guns. The introduction of the lowly 20mm Oerlikon changed the air tide. With its high volume of fire, explosive shell, and simple ring sight even a cook's helper, could get multiple hits.

The Condors flew higher to avoid the maelstrom, making for easier detection and tracking by escort, escort carriers and escort carrier fighters. By 1943, even high level, deep ocean recon became flight to oblivion.

The Fw-200 sank 94 ships against a combat loss of 45 aircraft. Another 88 Condors were lost in noncombat accidents/incidents (many airframes buckling under the weight of continuous up-gunning). The Fw-200 VS ATLANTIC CONVOY is not an "airplane book". It's superb, well illustrated chronology of the AIR Battle of the Atlantic.

Wednesday, October 27, 2010

In Our 113th Year

The News

Roger Underwood
publisher

Roger Cowles
editor

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Pieces of WWII puzzle fit

I recently discovered a conflict concerning details of the sinking of the S.S. Munger T. Ball by a German submarine in 1942. While this incident certainly does not qualify as breaking news, it has my attention for several reasons.

The conflict is significant. One source, the U.S. Maritime Commission reports the Ball was sunk and the crew machine-gunned. It reports the Ball's crew as the only one treated in that manner by a U - boat throughout the entire war. The report indicates no survivors.

The Germans report that Frogattenkapitan Harro Schacht, commander of U - 507 did sink the Ball but, it reports that there were four survivors who were picked up by a Norwegian tanker. Their report states the ship burst into flames and that the other crewmen were consumed by the fire.

My interest in the matter goes back to still another story. My father was the Master of the Fleet for the Sabine Towing Company when the Ball was first purchased. I am not sure of the year but, it must have been in the early or middle 1930's. The story I grew up with began on a routine trip to Mobile, Alabama. The Chief Engineer, who was a German National, came to my father's cabin after they docked and, demanded his pay. My father told him that mon-

ey in that amount was not kept on board but, that he would go ashore the next morning and wire the home office for the money and get it to him as soon as it arrived. The Chief became infuriated; called my father a liar, pulled a knife and attacked him. He inflicted more than a dozen slashes that required stitches. (I have vivid memories of the bandaged wounds he returned home with.) During the attack, my father retrieved a 38 caliber pistol from his desk drawer and used it to club the Chief over the head with and beat him into submission. He then picked the Chief up by the seat of his pants and the nap of his neck and threw him over the railing, outside his cabin door and down to the steel dock two flights below. Someone called an ambulance and both men were transported to a hospital. Dad was treated and released. The Chief was badly injured with broken bones and internal injuries and, therefore admitted as an in-patient. The next morning, the home office wired money to my dad. He took it to the hospital and gave it to the Chief. It was assumed that the Chief, when he was released, returned to Germany.

I am not sure how many other ships belonging to the Sabine Towing Company were lost during WW II. I do know that the Rawleigh Warner was also sunk by a U - 67 later. I can't vouch for the truth of the story but, it was told that when survivors of the Warner and others were in their life boats, the U - boat commanders would ask over the bull horn for the names of the ship's officers. This story ties to still another one. That being that the Chief Engineer of the Ball, returned to Germany and entered the U - boat service. Further, it was thought that because of his knowledge of the shipping lanes in the Gulf of Mexico, he was assigned to patrol that region. Conjecture is that the former chief was hunting for my dad. Interestingly, there is a gap in Harro Schacht's German Navy service record between the years 1932 and 1936. The pieces might fit.

The web site usmm.org confirms the sinking of the Ball and the machine gunning of the crew. No survivors were indicated. This, of course is in direct conflict with the German report found in uboat.net. If there are any living today who can give information about the sinkings they will be fine indeed. Also, if any living in the Port Arthur area have any knowledge about any of this...even second hand; it would be of great interest to me. I do intend to continue my investigation and would appreciate any help anyone can give. I hope your interest is piqued. My contact information follows.

Sincerely, Thomas V. Jenkins, Ph.D.
thomasjenkins3@me.com

GET YOUR NAME-RANK-PHOTO AND STORY INTO

THE NAVY MEMORIAL CONTACT:

MARK T. WEBER • CURATOR

US NAVY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

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THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL



THE NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Post Office Box 77
Bedford, Virginia 24523

21 March 2011

Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Lloyd
115 Wall Creek
Rolesville, NC 27571

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd:

I am very pleased to personally invite you and **all Pointer readers** to a special observance of Armed Forces Day and Maritime Day (the latter, one day early) on 21 May 2011 at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia. Among other things, we will celebrate the Naval Armed Guard/Merchant Marine narrative plaque that was dedicated at the Memorial last year. The ceremony will begin at 1100 hours. A "Dutch-treat" lunch will follow, along with a private VIP tour of the Memorial. (The tour and your admission fees are complimentary.)

The Memorial exists to honor the Valor, Fidelity, and Sacrifice of the Allied Forces on D-Day 6 June 1944 and was established in 2001 in Bedford ... the community that endured the highest per-capita casualties (19) during the invasion. If you just did a bit of math, you also realized this is our 10th anniversary and we intend to do much throughout the year in recognition.

One of our ongoing goals is to properly recognize each group that participated in, or supported, the invasion. Obviously, the Merchant Marines and Naval Armed Guard played a very critical role in our ability to achieve success that day and throughout the war, and sustained enormous casualties in the fulfillment of their duties.

I look forward to the prospect of visiting with you that day and sharing the progress at the Memorial. If you are able to join us, please let me know via e-mail at jfulgham@dday.org, or by phone or regular mail at the number or address below. At that time, we can recommend accommodations, travel routes, etc. With-kind regards, and much gratitude for your service, I remain

Sincerely yours,



Jeffrey R. Fulgham, CFRE
Director of Development

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WWII GUNNER REMEMBERS/LETTER

THE RHODE ISLAND LIFE

WWII GUNNER REMEMBERS

Melvin Kahn served on four Liberty Ships, just like the one he visited in Providence

By G. WAYNE MILLER
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — Melvin Kahn stepped out of his car and with the help of his cane, walked onto Conley's Wharf, where an enormous gray ship that seemed to have materialized from a distant past was newly moored. Four-hundred-and-forty-one feet long, 57 feet wide and of hulking, towering height, the ship owned the waterfront.

Kahn pointed to the stern of the John W. Brown, one of only two Liberty Ships of the nearly 3,000 built during World War II that survive in seaworthy shape. Most were cut up long ago as scrap or lie at the bottom of an ocean. German submarines found



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / FRIDA SQUIRES

87-year-old Melvin Kahn of Cranston points to a starboard side bunk, the kind he slept on when he served aboard huge cargo-type Liberty Ships in the early 1940s.

Liberty Ships, which moved at ponderous pace, rewarding and lucrative targets.

"I was a gunner," Kahn said. "My job was right there, as you see it: on the very stern of the ship. I was a gun

captain of the five-inch 38."

The weapon fit the image of a gun as remembered from a war movie: a formidable and menacing machine.

SEE GUNNER, A6

GUNNER Continued from A1

'It brings back memories'

its precision-bored gray-painted barrel aimed now in the direction of vehicles traveling Interstate 95, on the near horizon. Kahn and his kind operated it from an exposed seat, an ancient concept now in warfare. Today, servicemen in the quiet safety of Air Force bases on U.S. soil pilot drones that kill terrorists on the far side of the planet.

Kahn, a Cranston native and resident, served with the Navy on four Liberty Ships, though none of the 11 that were built here in Providence in a shipyard that has disappeared into time. For three years, he crossed the Atlantic, over and back, over and back, on ships in convoys that brought fresh equipment and troops to the Allied effort.

He saw depth charges explode, and torpedoes fire, and fighter planes strafe, and many ships go down. Some brought friends to graves that could never be marked.

"There was a lot of action that I've seen," he said. "Sometimes it gets to you."

It gets to him when he remembers, which he has tried not to for 65 years.

"I wanted to forget," he said.

He had not set foot on a Liberty Ship since 1945, when the war ended and he walked ashore with the urgent intent to marry his girlfriend, a young woman his age whom he had met in a Providence movie theater after boot camp in Newport. Kahn, who later made a living in the sheet-metal business, had enlisted one noontime on a break from his first job.

But there he was, about to ascend the gangplank of the John W. Brown, built in Baltimore in 1942 and operated now as a living museum by

Project Liberty Ship, a foundation based in Maryland. He would visit the ship this morning and return two days later with his two sons and four grandchildren for a six-hour cruise. He would likely not have the chance again. Kahn is 86.

"Before I go," he said, "I want to make sure they know what my experience was."

Age slowed his movement but familiarity guided him up the gangplank onto the main deck. He walked steadfastly to the stern, a trip he'd made on much younger legs so many times so long ago. Beneath the gun, he found the quarters where members of the Navy's Armed Guard (which crewed on merchant ships such as the Liberties) had slept, when they could.

George Macey, also 86, a Maryland resident who volunteers on the John W. Brown, welcomed him. They shook hands.

"Melvin Kahn,"

"George Macey."

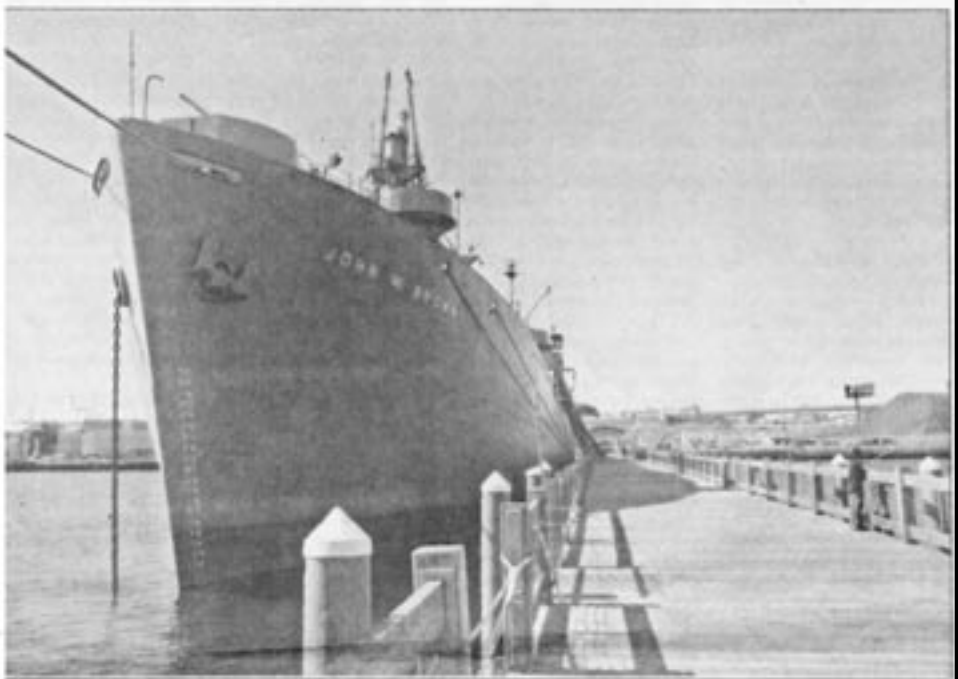
"How are you, George?"

"We're a dying breed,"

Macey said, matter-of-factly, correctly.

"Every ship I was on, this was my bunk," Kahn said. Bottom bed, starboard side. "Not a good idea," said East Providence's Gerry Greaves, 85, who also crewed on Liberty Ships, though not with Kahn. "Everybody steps on you on the way up."

Kahn nodded agreement and said: "One thing I liked about sailing on Liberty ships: We had a place to sleep with bunks, not hammocks. In the feet — the tin cans, the destroyers and all — they used hammocks. And we had very good food. We got served, which was wonderful." His



The WWII Liberty Ship John W. Brown, now a living museum, is docked Thursday at Conley's Wharf on Allen's Avenue, Providence

eyes widened. He remained grateful for these small amenities.

Succumbing to something more powerful and disturbing, his delight quickly passed.

"We were like the suicide squad," Kahn said. "Sitting ducks — that's exactly what we were. The only thing we had for protection was our guns and the destroyers that circled the convoys. If there were any submarines in the area, what they used to do is throw depth charges. Sometimes, it was in the middle of the convoy and the ship used to lift up 15, 20 feet when the charges went off."

"They rattled the ship, I'll tell you," said Macey.

Kahn left quarters and advanced up a stairway to the gun deck. Assisted by two men, he made a final ascension to the massive gun itself. He stood, contemplating it.

"Twenty-four hours a day, practically," was his relationship with this death-delivering metal, Kahn said. He and his fellow gunners worked shifts of four-hours on, four off, but their commitment seeped into their down time, such as it was, even when they were not under attack.

"After we got through firing the guns, we had to strip them down and clean them. And when we were not firing them, they still had to be stripped down because moisture gets in the muzzle."

Not for the first time, he had slipped into speaking present-tense.

He was asked about the last time he had beheld this gun: It was 1945, and the Germans had surrendered, the Japanese soon following.

"The war was declared over and I got down and I kissed the deck. I actually kissed the deck, I felt so good. I knew I was going to get married: I was engaged for over two years and I had promised my girlfriend I'd marry her after the war. And that's exactly what I did."

Kahn married Mae Wood, of Providence.

On Oct. 21, they will celebrate 65 years together.

The sun beat down and the Upper Bay smelled of modern industry; on Route 95, the traffic kept flowing.

A crew member held Kahn's cane as the old gunner took his old gunner's seat, in the open air to the left of the weapon. He looked through the site: metal crosshairs that seemed more yesterday than the ship itself.

"Here's your trigger," the crewman said.

"It brings back memories," Kahn said. "It brings back memories."

Any he would share? "No," Kahn said, falling silent.

Dear Llod,

For years we drove to Florida. Now we fly. Last November we flew out of New Hampshire. Just before we look off a male voice announced "We have an important personage aboard. A veteran of WWII, USN". Just before we set down in Chicago, that same voice intoned "Please allow the veteran to deplane first". Talk about 15 minutes of fame. I was wearing my Armed Guard white hat. If you have any more I would appreciate a new one, See If I get the same response going home. Thanks.

(This machine has a mind of its own)

Al Gosselin

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JOHN A. PROIETTI
16 PENNACOOK DRIVE
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MEMORY LANE

Bill Karr & John Proietti

*Members of the
U.S.N. Armed
Guard*

By MARK BODANZA

A rekindled memory can be a wonderful thing. Recently John Proietti of Leominster shared a recollection with me and I'm thankful for the opportunity to learn about his experience from so many years ago.

A connection between Antwerp, Belgium, football and Leominster may not be readily apparent, but that's exactly what John found reading the fourth chapter of my book, 1933, Football at the Depth of the Great Depression. There was a particular player on the Chicago Bears' roster that caught his attention.

In 1933, the Bears played the New York Giants in the very first NFL championship game. It was an exciting contest that featured six lead changes before the Bears notched a final touchdown and secured victory by a score of 23-21. The winning touchdown play resulted when a pass by the legendary fullback Bronko Nagurski to the helmet-less Bill Hewitt was lateralled to end Bill Karr who raced into the end zone and history.

Eleven years later, Bill Karr was serving with John Proietti on board the U.S.S. Robert E. Emery, a U.S. Army engineers' salvage ship. Karr was an imposing Lieutenant, junior grade, who took the safety of his fellow servicemen quite seriously. John, a seaman first class, recalls being responsible for enforcing the lights out order while underway one evening on the Atlantic. Seaman Proietti asked the ship's captain to shut the cover over his cabin's porthole but the captain delayed in securing the cover. Karr inquired of Proietti as to why the task remained undone. When Karr discovered the captain's indifference, he informed the superior officer that the cover would be secured one way or the other and in less than polite terms.

The U.S.S. Robert E. Emery arrived at the port of Antwerp, Belgium on Thanksgiving Day, 1944. The ship's crew were among the first allies to step foot on Belgium

soil since 1939. They were there to support one of World War II's pivotal actions, the Battle of the Bulge.

Christmas was just days away and the crew of the U.S.S. Robert E. Emery was lined up in a Belgian warehouse where the seamen were permitted to pick one package from tables that contained salvage from an American ship that sank when it hit a mine in the harbor. The packages, packed with affection by family members for their loved ones overseas, never made it to the intended recipients but instead became one jumbled mass of goodwill.

On Christmas Day, John attended mass. The servicemen were given "general absolution" enabling all of the assembled to take communion. During the service, the familiar sound of a

V-1 Rocket peeled through the air. Every soldier gave pause when the rocket engine cut out in their vicinity because that meant an impending explosion. The rocket that interrupted Christmas mass did not pass by or cut its engine. It buzzed back and forth, apparently out of control and errant of its intended target. The assembled breathed relief when the weapon finally crashed saving the church from any calamity.

As this special season of the year approaches, John Proietti's experiences remind us all of the countless contributions and sacrifices of generations of veterans. Bill Karr passed away on October 29, 1979, exactly one month short of his 68th birthday. History defines and connects us, sometimes in the most special ways.

Mark Bodanza is a local historian and writes the monthly "Memory Lane" column for the Champion. He is also the author of "A Game That Forged Rivals" and "1933, Football at the Depth of the Great Depression". If you have a story idea, or a historical question for Bodanza, please send it to editor@leominsterchamp.com.



NFL star Bill Karr of the 1933 Chicago Bears, standing center, poses with fellow crew members of the USS Robert E. Emery, including John Proietti of Leominster, kneeling for left, at Antwerp, Belgium, Christmas 1944.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF JOHN PROIETTI

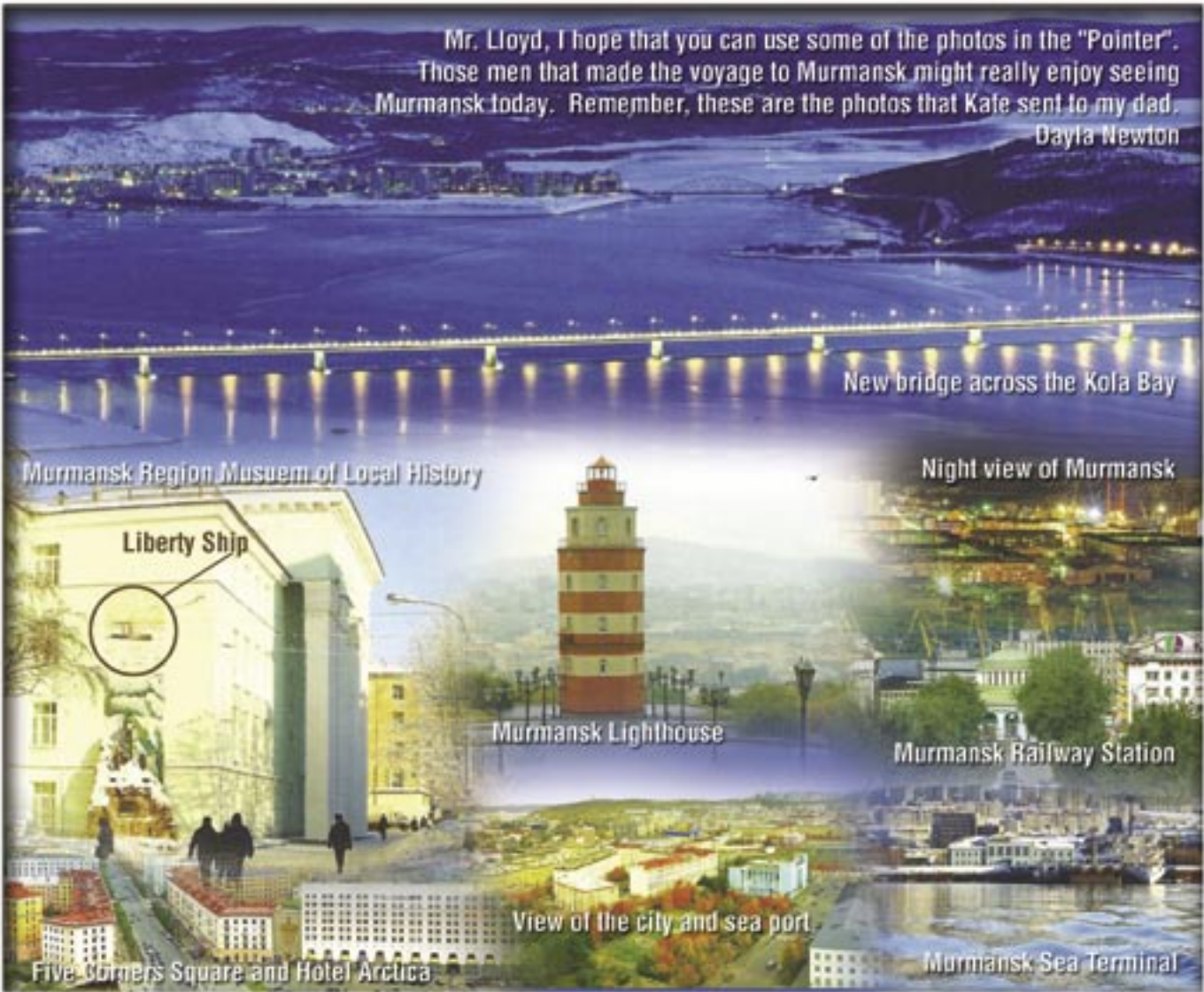
(VIA THE
SCHELDT
RIVER)

*Top left, Frank Totter, Sig. 7/8 Pennsylvania
Top right, Maurice Summer, S 1/2 Petersboro, N. H.
Bot. right, Walter Fuller S 1/2 Booth Bay Harbor, Maine*

SS DEATH WEB SITE

To find out whether someone you know is deceased, pull up the Web Site and follow instructions. I did not enter SS # and it still showed. If it don't work for you, PLEASE don't call me. (cal) Social Security Death Index (<http://ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com>).

Mr. Lloyd, I hope that you can use some of the photos in the "Pointer". Those men that made the voyage to Murmansk might really enjoy seeing Murmansk today. Remember, these are the photos that Kate sent to my dad.
Dayla Newton

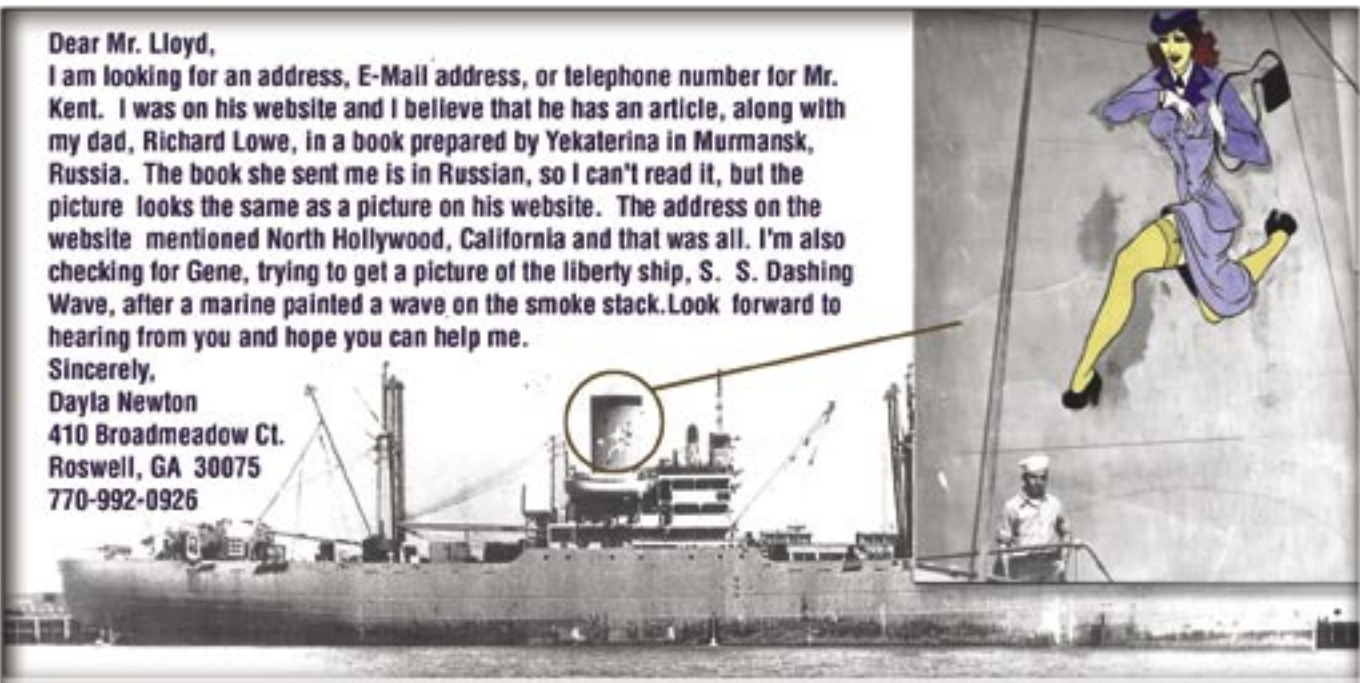


Dear Mr. Lloyd,

I am looking for an address, E-Mail address, or telephone number for Mr. Kent. I was on his website and I believe that he has an article, along with my dad, Richard Lowe, in a book prepared by Yekaterina in Murmansk, Russia. The book she sent me is in Russian, so I can't read it, but the picture looks the same as a picture on his website. The address on the website mentioned North Hollywood, California and that was all. I'm also checking for Gene, trying to get a picture of the liberty ship, S. S. Dashing Wave, after a marine painted a wave on the smoke stack. Look forward to hearing from you and hope you can help me.

Sincerely,

Dayla Newton
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*Our
 Motto
 was... and
 We Did!*

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March/May 2011 Edition



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.

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.