

AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS

# AMMV NEWS

## MAGAZINE



# Honoring all who served

Veterans Day - November 11, 2013

IN PEACE AND WAR



1775

### FALL 2013

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\$4.00



# *The Lone Sailor* *San Francisco Bay*

*This is a memorial to everyone who ever sailed out the Golden Gate in the service of their Country – in the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine.*

*Located at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, CA, this Lone Sailor sculpture is a replica of the one in Washington, D.C. It is surrounded by four bas-relief plaques, one for each of the seagoing services.*

**United States Marines**  
*Semper Fidelis - Always Faithful*



**Amphibious assault at Inchon  
in the Korean War.**  
Sculptor: Fred Press

**United States Navy**  
*Non sibi sed patriae*  
*Not self but country*



**U.S. Naval aircraft taking off  
from an aircraft carrier.**  
Sculptor: Keith Christie



**U.S. Merchant Marine**  
**U.S. Navy Armed Guard**  
*"We Deliver"*



**Merchant Marine ships under  
attack in World War II.**  
Sculptor: Robert Lamb.

**United States Coast Guard**  
*Semper Paratus - Always Ready*



**Rescue of an overboard couple  
and sailboat in very rough seas.**  
Sculptor: Robert Summers

*A ship heading for sea passes directly by this spot at the northern end of the Golden Gate.  
Here the Sailor feels the first long roll of the sea, the beginning of the endless horizon that leads to the far Pacific.  
There is one last chance to look back at the city of San Francisco, shining on its hills,  
one last chance to look back at the coastline of the United States, one last chance to look back at home.  
Thousands and thousands of American seafarers have sailed past this place, in peace and war,  
to defend this Country and its sea frontiers. Many of them never returned.  
This monument is dedicated to the ordinary Sailors and Marines who sailed from this place and did their duty.*





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# National President **Morris Harvey**

## **AMMV BUSINESS**

This month I would like to again offer a brief discussion of the business side of our organization. The American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc. most important tasks include (in no particular order of importance) Membership; Finances; Recognition; and Organization. I and the BOD must pay particular attention to these tasks in order to continue to be effective as a Veteran's and a Maritime organization.

1) Membership: We must first and foremost retain our existing member base as long as possible. We will maintain the 501(c)19 as long as it is financially possible. We must continue Project Survival – working with the Unions, Kings Point Alumni groups, and other Maritime organizations to recruit younger members. We have reorganized the regions from 14 to 8, offering a more efficient organization and giving representation to Members at Large who now are represented by the Regional VP's.

2) Finances: We must always maintain a vigilant control of our finances. Two years ago, dues increases were authorized and implemented – giving us needed additional monies to maintain our two most costly activities – the News Magazine and our National Business office. We must promote more donations and bequeaths to support our core purposes. Dues income is not enough to make us an effective and successful organization.

3) Recognition: Of course, HR-1936 is still a banner project and, as I have stated before, we must play the cards that we have been dealt. Currently, our general strategy is for members to continue contacting Congresspersons to co-sponsor HR-1936. Write letters, fax, and make phone calls again and again. We are also making a concentrated effort by all AMMV members who live in the twenty-five House VA Committee member's districts. We need for them to gain access and personally lobby their congressperson. These AMMV members are constituents who will have more influence than those from outside the district. AMMV members should contact their R-VP to find out if they are in one of these critical districts. The other important recognition venture that is being actively worked on is to gain Veterans status for Korean and Vietnam Merchant Mariners. By the time you read this the second submittal will have been submitted. Read more about this in a separate report in this issue. HR-1288 has been referred to the Armed Services Committee and has been piggy-backed with another bill HR 2086.

4) Organization: As I indicated above, the 501(c)19 Veterans status should be maintained as long as it is finan-

cially feasible. It is possible to charter another parallel non-profit 501(c)3 organization to include members who do not have a DD-214, permitting us to satisfy the IRS rule of having at least 60% veterans in the 501(c)19. I have a suggestion to keep the AMMV synonym for the 501(c)3 organization – call it American Merchant Marine Volunteers, Inc. Think about it. Please remember - returning the survey, which you recently received, will help us account for the number of members with DD-214's.

5) Closing the WWII ERA: regardless of the final results of our efforts to gain Veterans status for Korea and Vietnam and other post WWII conflicts, we need to have a plan (a ceremony with news media coverage) to close out the WWII era. It should be part of our Annual National Business meeting and Convention. Yes, we should be planning our exit strategy. At this time I do not have a committee to make the 2014 National convention happen – the folks in Los Vegas have decided that they cannot handle it. Contact me with your thoughts and ideas.

## **CAPTAIN PHILLIPS MOVIE**

Many of our AMMV members took time out to attend the Captain Phillips movie while handing out material to educate the public on the contributions of the Merchant Marine in WWII and beyond. I know of members in CA, NV, NJ and FL who took the time to present the Merchant Marine story. They included the U.S. Merchant Marine at War booklet along with a proclamation supporting HR-1936 and an AMMV brochure promoting membership. See the Movie report in this News Magazine.

## **WHAT IS THE MERCHANT MARINE OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

As you know, over the past several years, I have attended visits to the "Hill" and have been involved with the Unions and other Maritime organizations. During these visits I have become more aware of how difficult it is to understand what makes up our American Flag fleet and, in fact, the American Merchant Marine. I keep hearing from members that the public does not know what the MM is. I was made aware that in the Captain Phillips movie the





Merchant Marine was not specifically mentioned. It was not the Merchant Marine ship SS Maersk Alabama or Captain Phillips of the U.S. Merchant Marine. Thanks go to Captain Lee Kincaid, President, American Maritime Congress, for supplying many aspects of this information.

Some of the general information that I have noted and I think is good to know when supporting and protecting the U.S. Flag fleet: 1) According to a recent study by the Maritime Unions there are only 11,400 U.S. deep Sea merchant seamen with valid and current certified licenses and papers – including both union and non-union and licensed and unlicensed. 2) I have not confirmed this figure but I am told that U.S. flag ships carry about 1% of all goods and materials transported in and out of the U.S. – if Congress passed a law requiring that 2% of this traffic would be on U.S. Flag ships, the existing Merchant Marine could not handle the additional 1%. 3) On page 9 of the US MM at War report it is stated that the average rate of cargo delivery over the four years of WWII was 8,500 tons during every hour of every day (24 hours).

Ninety-three years ago this summer, the United States enacted the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, known more commonly as the Jones Act. Though revised many times over the years, the heart of the Jones Act remains the same today as it was in 1920: cargo transported between American ports, whether in the continental United States, or the non-contiguous states of Hawaii and Alaska, and also territories such as Puerto Rico, must be conveyed with American-built, owned and flagged vessels and using American crews.

The Jones Act-related industries account for \$45.4 billion in annual economic output; 70,000 U.S. shipbuilding and waterborne transport industry jobs; and, over 41,000 vessels of all sizes in the U.S. fleet representing an investment of more than \$30 billion. The Jones Act fleet (with just under 100 deep draft ocean going ships with another 12 currently under construction) is beginning to expand due to the energy production boom within the U.S.

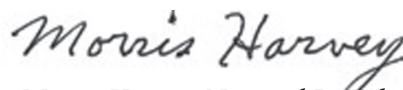
The U.S. flag fleet also includes 89 commercial ships operating in international trade. This international fleet includes 60 ships participating in the MSP (Maritime Security Program). MSP vessels have been determined to be “militarily useful” by the Department of Defense in order to meet DOD’s current and projected sealift requirements and are provided with an annual retainer payment of \$3.1 million per year to maintain their U.S. flag status. MSP is authorized by DOD but is funded by the Department of Transportation through MARAD. This program directly supports the employment of approximately 2,700 U.S. mariners and an additional 5,000 shore-side jobs while ensuring the availability of militarily-useful commercial vessels and their associated intermodal networks to the Federal government when required. Since there is no U.S. build requirement for ships operating outside of the Jones Act, the U.S. flag international fleet is usually foreign built.

The Military Sealift Command (MSC) has 49 ships operated by commercial U.S. flag shipping companies which are crewed by U.S. maritime union crews and funded by DOD. It is estimated that sequestration could force lay up of approximately 14 of these 49 ships. The MSC also maintains and operates a fleet of specialty ships used for direct support of the military.

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) has 47 ships in the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) fleet which are funded by DOD. Most of these ships are parked dockside with a partial crew ready to sail if needed. Sequestration may force the removal of reserve status crews from a number of these MARAD RRF ships.

In summary: 1) the Jones Act fleet: includes less than 100 deep draft ocean going ships - paid for by shippers and their customers. 2) the U.S. flag international fleet is 89 ships including the 60 ships in MSP (Maritime Security Program). The U.S. international fleet depends upon U.S. cargo preference shipments consisting of DOD funded military cargo and other U.S. government agency cargo, U.S. food aid cargo funded by the Department of Agriculture through USAID, and cargo financed through the U.S. Import/Export Bank. Current administration proposed changes to the U.S. Food Aid Program (converting from U.S. grown agriculture products shipped on U.S. flag ships to one of cash and voucher payments and foreign purchased commodities) could result in the loss of 8 to 10 U.S. flag international ships. 3) Military Sealift Command (MSC) has 49 ships operated by U.S. commercial ship managers plus specialty ships used for direct support of the military and funded by the DoD. 4) Maritime Administration (MARAD) has 47 ships in the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) fleet funded by DOD. 5) it is estimated that approximately 15,000 deep sea mariners will be needed to fully activate the U.S. reserve fleet, maintain the current U.S. flag commercial deep sea fleet operations (Jones Act and International), and sustain a war-fighting supply line. With only about 11,400 qualified mariners currently available, a shortage of 3,600 U.S. deep sea mariners now exists.

I realize many of our members already have more knowledge on this subject than I have presented here. However, I hope this summary will make many members more confident when lobbying their lawmakers about maintaining our U.S. Flag Merchant Marine. Based on a read of the U.S. MM at War booklet, I surmise that the War Shipping Administration (WSA) was more effective and efficient than the conglomeration that makes up the Merchant Marine of the 21st century. Also study the special article on the MSP and civil service mariner or CIV-MAR in this News Magazine.



Morris Harvey, National President, AMMV





## National Vice President **Elizabeth Clark**



It is my sad duty to tell you all of the untimely passing of our Gulfstream chapter president "Mac" MacDonald on September 25th, and how much of a loss to us it will be. I attended his funeral service on Sunday the 29th, along with several of our chapter. His daughter's husband gave a very moving account of his life and numerous accomplishments. Our own Capt. Fred Calicchio also gave a very fine account of all his friend "Mac" meant to him and to our chapter. There were numerous members of his family and friends there and a reception was held after the service at his home.

Now, as president of the Gulfstream Chapter, I hope that I can continue in his footsteps in striving to both increase the membership of our chapter and to get more members for the national as well. I also hope that we all can continue his work on the Merchant Marine memorial at War Memorial Park in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

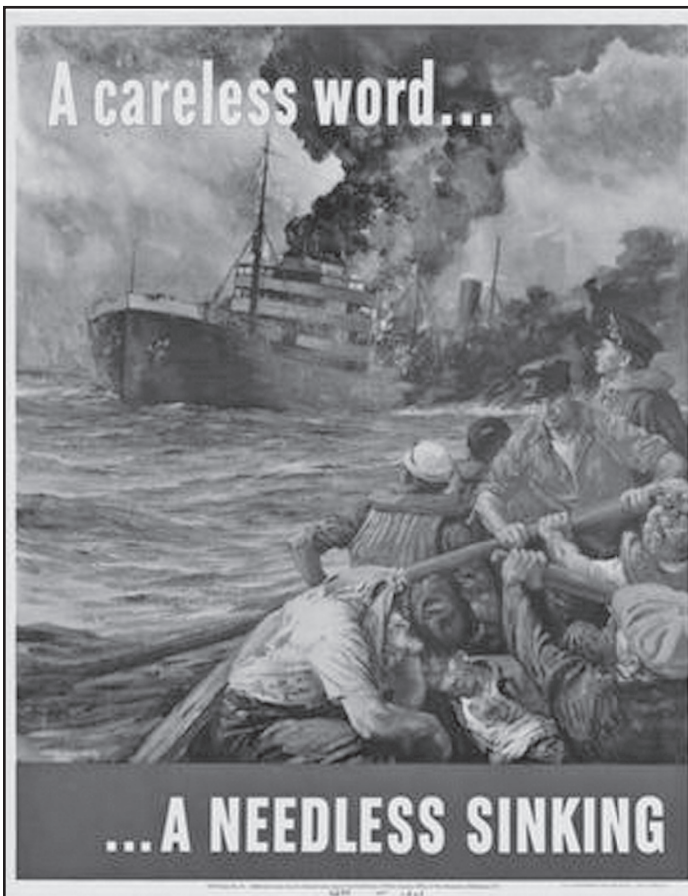
I have been kind of busy myself the last couple of months and weeks as I have just recently moved from my house of over 40 years to a condo apartment, and it has been kind of hectic at times.

I presume until the government shutdown is over there will be no more movement on House bill HR.1936 - the Merchant Marine Veteran's bill. However, when it is over we will resume our efforts to get some form of compensation for all of our WWII Merchant Marine Vets.

I hope all went as planned at the recent convention; with my moving I was unable to attend.

*LIZ CLARK*

*National Vice President*



## **Special Exclusive Offering** *to all AMMV members*

**"A CARELESS WORD ... A NEEDLESS SINKING"**  
by captain Arthur R. Moore is now available  
for the special members price of only \$29.95,  
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# National Secretary **Stanley Blumenthal**



There is a nation-wide program to honor all WW II veterans, plus any veteran that is terminally ill, by flying them to Washington, D.C. to visit all our memorials and changing of the guard at the tomb of the unknown soldier. Free round trip fares, deluxe bus service, meals, commemorative Tee shirts and other amenities needed to travel comfortably are all provided. Top priority is given to the terminally ill with advanced arrangements for doctors and nurses, wheelchairs, oxygen, etc. available. Every trip is escorted by a team of well-trained volunteers and guardians for individual attention. Attendants, I believe, will have to pay their own way but check it out individually with your state.

Conceived by Earl Morse, a physician assistant and retired Air Force Captain, the inaugural flight took place in May 2005, with six small planes flying out of Springfield, Ohio taking only 12 WWII Veterans. Since then Honor Flights have flown more than 100,000 Veterans to Washington, D.C. One of our GULF-STREAM CHAPTER members took the flight and raved about it.

APPLICATIONS: On the Internet punch in HONOR FLIGHT WORLD WAR 2, scroll down to Veteran Applications - Then scroll down to a map of the USA and left click on your State and follow instructions.

While on the subject I was fortunate enough to visit THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM in New Orleans and the NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC which includes the ADMIRAL NIMITZ MUSEUM and JAPANESE PEACE GARDEN in Fredericksburg, Texas. In both cases I recommend you try to arrange to take 2 days to see the huge variety of tanks, guns, planes, ambulances, of ours and the other sides' including the famous 88 MM German gun and a 2-man Japanese submarine in the Pacific museum. Theaters, live-guided and hold to your ear self-guided tours are available and a host of video exhibits display along the way. There are multiple buildings making up both museums. In the New Orleans Museum, they asked if I was a WWII Vet and I said yes and, without showing any proof, they wouldn't take my senior citizen discount entrance fee and hung a WWII VETERAN sign on my neck which resulted in more than one person coming over and saying we appreciate your service.

I was driving cross country on route 10, when by accident I arrived the day before Memorial Day at Fredericksburg, Texas which is the home of Admiral Chester William Nimitz and I stayed overnight to attend memorial services the next day which was very impressive honoring all the services EXCEPT the Merchant Marine. I, of course, complained verbally to one of their attendants plus submitted a written complaint as well. Got a promise that error won't be repeated plus I was interviewed on tape about my experiences during WW2 which included on how I and everyone on board got a Combat Bar thanks to the Navy Armed Guard shooting down an attacking bomber which is considered Direct Enemy Action.

Fredericksburg, Texas and New Orleans are both historical, interesting places even without the museums with lots to see and do.

*STANLEY BLUMENTHAL*  
*National Secretary*





## Editor / AMMV Office Administrator **Sindy Raymond**

### ***THE PASSING OF A BIG INFLUENCE IN MY LIFE***

Seafarer, inventor, entrepreneur, world hunger foe, Ernest Hemingway look-alike contestant, grower of monster pumpkins, avid deep-sea fisherman — Ian Allison did so much until his death at 93 at his Santa Rosa, California home that it might save words to describe what relative little he didn't do. At various times in his life he was an accountant, a sawmill operator, a land investor, a creator and wholesaler of Halloween merchandise, a lender to logging and milling operations, a winery owner, an African big game hunter, a champion trap shooter, a pilot — who owned 3 planes, crashing two of them — and partner with the late actor Eddie Albert, in a global charity that gave away enormous quantities of vegetable seeds to undernourished people internationally.

Ian Allison, whom I was in the habit of calling Mr. A, was a big influence in my personal life. I knew him for 50+ years, worked for him for 16 years in his home — the front room was my office — and my 93-year old Mother was his “lady-friend” for the last 26 years of his life. In fact, when I was 52, I had to get permission from her to go to work for Mr. A. in the Halloween product manufacturing business.

Although I did not necessarily agree with some of his ideas, especially about materialism, Ian provided me with some experiences that I probably wouldn't have had normally. Most of these came about after he, and a few others, decided to stubbornly pursue a mission to right what he perceived as an injustice to a group of men who served America at great peril and loss of life in World War II — members of the Merchant Marine — and created the Just Compensation Committee to provide the legislative wing of the American Merchant Marine Veterans.

There is not enough room to record here the many stories about these experiences but do ask me about them sometime and I'll be glad to tell you a few. Needless to say, although I haven't been in daily contact with him for several years, living here in Ferndale, he was still intertwined with my life until the end.

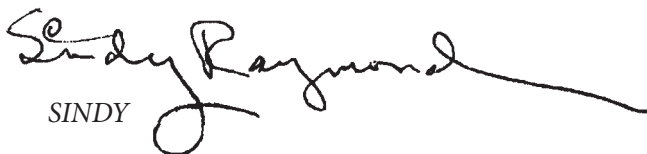
He fought for the Just Compensation cause until the very last day of his life and, now that the AMMV is continuing the Just Compensation efforts, Ian would have liked donations in his memory to be contributed to the AMMV to help with the “cause”. They can be sent to the AMMV National office, here in Ferndale, CA.

### ***A COUPLE OF OTHER MATTERS***

As you know, we're working on creating a DVD presentation of the memorials and tributes to Merchant Mariners around the country. This project is based on a collection of information that previous National historian Richard Mallett and his wife, Helene, garnered from contributed information. The deadline for requested additional photographs and information has been extended. Please see the listing further on in the NEWS of missing photographs and drag out those cameras and go to work.

Also, and I know that I'm repeating myself (or nagging, as the case may be), but it is important that our members who have not done so, return their AMMV Membership Information Upgrade Survey as promptly as possible. The information needs to be entered into the records of the AMMV in case, as a non-profit Veterans organization, we get audited by the IRS, and, well, after this magazine gets put to bed, guess what's going to keep me busy at your National Office?

*Full speed ahead,*

  
SINDY





# Communications Director & Webmaster Carole Gutierrez



Armistice Day – the 11th hour of the 11th Day of the 11th month – Signing of the *Armistice of the Great War to End All Wars*. But here we are a handful of wars later and the holiday has a new name – Veterans Day. World War II and then Korea generated so many more veterans that President Eisenhower signed a law changing the name to Veterans Day – ***a day to honor ALL who serve***.

Fast forward nearly 60 years and here we are still trying to get the overdue Thank You and Just Compensation for Merchant Mariners who risked everything to see that our troops got to wherever they were going with all the supplies they needed. It is beyond my

understanding how two men, one Merchant Mariner and the other Navy Armed Guard, working side by side on the same ship did not merit the same veterans benefits when the war ended. Frankly, I am embarrassed by our legislators lack of respect for this group of World War II combat veterans.

There was such an uproar when the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. was closed during the recent government shutdown. When Honor Flight Veterans arrived, many in wheelchairs, it was obscene that these combat veterans were to be denied access to THEIR memorial. With the help of a couple of congressmen who distracted police, the veterans and their escorts pushed the barricades aside, pulled down the police line tape and, to the dismay of park police, entered the memorial. What do you do with a huge group of 85 to 95+ year old veterans – heroes of World War II – when they will not be stopped? I guess the Germans and Japanese asked the same question about these same people all those many years ago. They got their answer. Recently TV host of the Tonight Show, Jay Leno, commented that maybe it was time to send these guys to Congress to kick some #!@ ... maybe that is not such a bad idea!

As was just announced, Las Vegas, NV, is the sight of our next National Convention. Roy Mahan, president of the High Rollers Chapter, has volunteered to lead this huge task. The High Rollers hosted the convention a few years ago. But, as we have learned, it takes member participation to make the meeting a success. Of course for some, making the trip to Las Vegas will just be physically impossible. But that doesn't rule out participation. It's not too early to start planning for the Memory Book. Start planning your page now. Special spots in the book are first come, first serve and should be reserved now. Call (503) 252-8250 or email (photos@clear.net) me. I will be glad to help. Remember, individual biographies are also welcome. Let's make the 2014 Convention a roaring success.

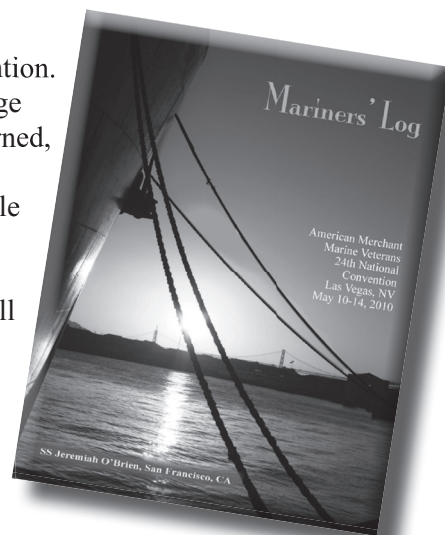
*Carole Gutierrez*  
Carole Gutierrez



*Soldiers of the 353rd Infantry near a church at Stenay, Meuse in France, wait for the end of hostilities. Photo was taken at 10:58 a.m., November 11, 1918, two minutes before the armistice went into effect.*



*Armistice Day, November 11, 1918  
Wall Street, NY*





# AMMV

## Profit & Loss

### July through September 2013

#### Ordinary Income/Expense

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Income                                |           |
| 402 · CONTRIBUTIONS                   | 233.00    |
| 410 · CHAPTER DUES                    |           |
| AKG · ALASKA GREATLANDS               | 25.00     |
| BEE · BEEHIVE MARINERS                | 200.00    |
| BMC · BUCKEYE MARINERS                | 225.00    |
| CAC · CACTUS MARINERS                 | 225.00    |
| CEC · CENTRAL CALIFORNIA              | 825.00    |
| CHC · CHINA COASTERS                  | 450.00    |
| CIC · CENTRAL INDIANA                 | 675.00    |
| CWM · CARL W. MINOR - CENT. CA. COAST | 425.00    |
| DAR · DENNIS ROLAND                   | 3,510.00  |
| DES · DESERT MARINERS                 | 1,200.00  |
| EMS · EMERALD SEAS                    | 275.00    |
| EOM · EASTERN OKLAHOMA MARINERS       | 300.00    |
| GLD · GOLDEN GATE                     | 1,275.00  |
| GUL · GULFSTREAM                      | 1,450.00  |
| HIR · HIGH ROLLERS                    | 525.00    |
| HUD · HUDSON VALLEY                   | 1,025.00  |
| HUM · HUMBOLDT BAY                    | 350.00    |
| JOB · JEREMIAH O'BRIEN                | 325.00    |
| JTS · JOHN T. SCHMIDT/PALMETTO        | 425.00    |
| KEY · KEYSTONE MARINERS               | 325.00    |
| KPC · KINGS POINT                     | 425.00    |
| LON · LONE STAR                       | 575.00    |
| MAC · ROBERT J. MAC ALVANAH           | 550.00    |
| MAL · MEMBERS AT LARGE                | 9,598.00  |
| MAM · MID AMER. ANCIENT MARINERS      | 625.00    |
| MCO · MID-COLUMBIA                    | 1,150.00  |
| MGC · MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST          | 50.00     |
| MON · MON VALLEY                      | 500.00    |
| MOV · MISSOURI VALLEY                 | 750.00    |
| MPA · MARINERS OF PENNSYLVANIA        | 575.00    |
| NBM · NORTH BAY MARINERS              | 250.00    |
| NOA · NORTH ATLANTIC                  | 925.00    |
| OCA · OCALA CHAPTER                   | 675.00    |
| OJE · OTTO J. ERNST                   | 175.00    |
| OKM · OKLAHOMA MARINERS               | 450.00    |
| ORE · OREGON                          | 900.00    |
| ORS · OREGON SOUTHERN                 | 550.00    |
| ORV · OSWEGO RIVER VALLEY             | 150.00    |
| PEC · PECONIC BAY                     | 525.00    |
| ROG · ROGUE VALLEY                    | 350.00    |
| ROR · ROAD RUNNER                     | 240.00    |
| SAR · SARASOTA-MANATEE                | 925.00    |
| SJR · ST. JOHNS RIVER                 | 600.00    |
| SSP · SS SAMUEL PARKER                | 725.00    |
| STH · SS STEPHEN HOPKINS              | 900.00    |
| SUQ · SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY              | 360.00    |
| SVM · SILICON VALLEY MARINERS         | 525.00    |
| SWF · SOUTHWEST FLORIDA               | 475.00    |
| SWP · SOUTHWESTERN PA                 | 75.00     |
| THR · THREE RIVERS                    | 950.00    |
| VUL · VULCAN CHAPTER                  | 390.00    |
| Total 410 · CHAPTER DUES              | 39,948.00 |
| Total Income                          | 40,181.00 |
| Expense                               |           |
| 500 · FIXED EXPENSE                   |           |
| 503 · EQUIP RENTAL                    | 150.00    |
| 507 · TELEPHONE                       | 832.10    |
| 508 · RENT/OCCUPANCY                  | 900.00    |
| 509 · UTILITIES                       | 300.00    |
| Total 500 · FIXED EXPENSE             | 2,182.10  |

#### Jul - Sep 13

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 527 · SURVEY MAILING           | 2,126.68  |
| 530 · NEWS LETTER              |           |
| 533 · POSTAGE                  | 1,776.21  |
| 536 · PRINTING                 | 5,660.00  |
| 539 · EDITORIAL FEE            | 300.00    |
| Total 530 · NEWS LETTER        | 7,736.21  |
| 550 · PERSONNEL                |           |
| 551 · ADMINISTRATOR            | 4,350.00  |
| Total 550 · PERSONNEL          | 4,350.00  |
| 560 · OPERATING EXPENSES       |           |
| 564 · OFFICE SUPPLIES          | 280.97    |
| 565 · POSTAGE                  | 222.55    |
| Total 560 · OPERATING EXPENSES | 503.52    |
| Total Expense                  | 16,898.51 |
| Net Ordinary Income            | 23,282.49 |
| Net Income                     | 23,282.49 |

#### Fellow Mariners:

Would the Treasurer of each Chapter please carefully check the amounts that we show as having been received from you in the first quarter and verify if they are correct. This is the only check we have to make sure monies are properly credited. If there is a difference, please contact Cindy at (707) 786-4554 or [saaren@frontiernet.net](mailto:saaren@frontiernet.net).

*George Salovich, National Treasurer*

# WESTERN REGIONS CONVENTION

RENO, NEVADA • SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 1, 2013

The General Session was opened at 9:00 AM on September 30, 2013 with the presentation of flags. Richard Hill led the Pledge of Allegiance and Nelson Cauble gave an invocation. MC Bill Fairfield introduced Reno's Mayor Bob Cashell, who welcomed all to his fair city with humor.

National President Morris Harvey spoke about efforts to increase membership in the AMMV and urged chapter members to actively pursue members in other ages than WWII; perhaps through contact with unions and other service organizations. He reported that additional efforts regarding an Internet website and social media such as Facebook are being worked on. This will be helpful in better communication at a chapter level as well as with the Members-at-Large.

Attending chapters were intro-

duced and although convention attendance was relatively small compared to previous years – with about 60 attendees – 15 AMMV chapters were represented here.

National Treasurer George Salovich said a few words. Geoff Millar of the Brayton\*Purcell law firm spoke briefly about the late Ian T. Allison and asbestosis claims. Then Fairfield called for any proposals or motions from the floor regarding changes to the AMMV Constitution or By-laws or other resolutions. Frank Mendez, Golden Gate Chapter, proposed the the National convention be held bi-annually due to age restrictions of attendees but after discussion, this motion was withdrawn.



*Speakers Bonnie D. Potter and Dennis Naumann*

good, also.

Monday's first afternoon speakers were Dennis Naumann, a retired Merchant Marine Chief Engineer, and his wife. Dennis volunteered for a Save the Whales mission on a ship named Sea Shepherd Antarctica. During a very dramatic Power Point slide show presentation, Dennis told about the efforts of their voyage to "prevent" the Japanese whaling vessels and their fish processing ships from decimating whales in their migratory breeding grounds in the Antarctica. When asked afterwards when he was going back, he replied that "once was enough". But he continues his efforts with this project in other areas.

Golden Gate member, Richard Hill related his trip back to Normandy and the 69th anniversary of the D-Day landing ceremony that took place there. He emotionally told us of the honor he felt when he was asked to represent the United States in raising our flag and laying a wreath in honor of the American servicemen who lost their lives at Omaha Beach. He described how cordially he was treated by the French, including staying with the Mayor of Arromanches, the closest village to Omaha Beach, and being presented with a medallion making him an honorary citizen of that town. He noted that afterwards, he and his son visited Paris where they took in the Folies Berger extravaganza and Richard shared a very descriptive program with us.

Morris Harvey announced that plans were progressing regarding the National Convention in 2014. He said he is working with the High Rollers



*Sally Raanes, Golden Gate Chapter, measuring knot-board tickets on George Salovich, National Treasurer, who bought them for \$10 per arm's length.*



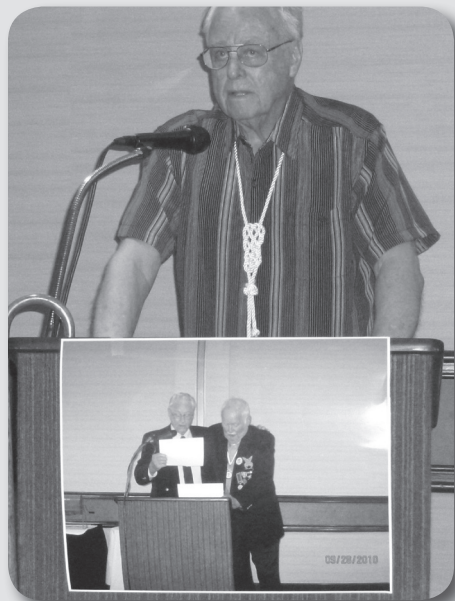
*Irene Harvey and Morris Harvey, National President*

The morning meeting was adjourned. The ladies luncheon, chaired by Mona Schmeidel of the Sacramento Valley Chapter included a guest speaker from the Greater Reno area Chamber of Commerce who had a wide variety of information available about local sightseeing and "shopping" suggestions. And lunch was



Chapter in Las Vegas, Nevada on it. No date is set as yet. He also reminded attendees that there is currently not a Regional Vice President for AMMV Region 8 which includes California, Hawaii and Australia. Harvey stressed the need for one and asked for volunteers.

The Monday evening dinner was an emotional event, with a tribute to Ian Allison. MC Bill Fairfield and the late Ian T. Allison have always sung, at least once during past Reno conventions, the song "Road to Mandalay". Bill emotionally honored Ian by playing a recording of the song by Frank Sinatra. The original song of the "Road" was banned in England for a supposed slight and the song was later sung by Sinatra with different words. Bill noted that Ian knew all 52 verses but somehow, they never



*Bill Fairfield paying tribute to the late Ian T. Allison*



*Group gathering at General Session*

sang it in entirety at these conventions. A raffle prize drawing followed with prizes including a Memorial Day, 2014 cruise on the SS Jeremiah O'Brien being distributed.

Tuesday morning's session included Dr. Bonnie Potter, RADM, MC, USN (retired). Over her long career, one of her favorite duty stations was aboard the USNS Comfort, a Navy hospital ship, manned by civilian mariners from MSC. The Comfort and her sister ship, the USNS Mercy, provide acute medical and surgical care in world-wide disaster relief and humanitarian efforts. They also function as full-service hospitals at sea.

Bonnie described, with an impressive slide show production, the functioning of the USNS Comfort, providing details such as when in berth, the Comfort has a stationary Merchant Marine crew of 18 and a USN medical crew of 55 but when fully operational on a mission, she carries a civilian crew of 65 but Navy medical support of 1,215 persons. Bonnie stated the logistics of even feeding that many, while at sea, much less all of the problems related to medical – equipment access and other things vital to the operation of that magnitude.

Part of the slide show presentation was a diagram of how the USNS Comfort was converted from a San Clemente-class supertanker to her current configuration, in 1987, which included moving the wheelhouse from aft to fore. Bonnie described the logistics of

setting up the equipment of a full surgical and medical hospital aboard.

Following her long presentation, Sacramento Valley



*Discussing details*

Chapter member presented Bud Schmeidel presented her with a seamen's knot pendant with a brass anchor attached.

Discussion was held about whether to plan another Western Regional convention next year and after a special noon-time meeting, it was announced that IF some physical help can be found to aid in the operation of the convention, that there might be another one next year. Arrangements were made by Ken Blue with the Sands Regency hotel but definite verification will be announced within 6 months.

MC Bill Fairfield then called for "open mike" and quite a few people stepped up, including Nelson Cauble, Sindy Raymond, who stressed the importance of returning the AMMV Veterans' status surveys to National Office, Burt Young, who described a meeting with Senator Mike Johanns' aide about our Just Compensation legislation, and others. National President Harvey announced that Las Vegas would be the definite location for the 2014 AMMV National Convention – date to be announced later.

That evening's banquet also had some special raffle prizes. A separate item which was raffled off was a display of seamen's knots on a board donated by Ray Ross, Golden Gate Chapter and won by Robert and Janell Cauble of the Mid-Columbia chapter. Ray has been contributing these knot boards for many years and hopefully will continue to do so for many more.

*This is a synopsis of the convention; an official recording of the proceedings can be obtained from Ken Blue, Sacramento Valley Chapter.*

# MOVIE “CAPTAIN PHILLIPS” IS IN THEATERS NOW

## ***Long awaited movie premiered October 11, 2013***

Based on the high-profile 2009 hijacking of the MV Maersk Alabama by Somali pirates, “Captain Phillips” stars Tom Hanks as the film’s title character, Capt. Richard Phillips, a family man from Vermont helming the freighter, a Maritime Security Program ship loaded with food as part of the Food Aid to Africa program, around the horn of Africa to Kenya. With the escalating number of piracy cases, Phillips is fully aware of the risks that come with navigating an unarmed merchant ship around the Somali coast, yet he and his crew cautiously continued on their route.

Their most feared scenario became reality, however, as Phillips and his crew spotted two skiffs quickly approaching their vessel. Phillips’ noted: “They’re not here to fish.” Though the pirates’ efforts to board the ship were thwarted on their first attempt, one of the boats returned the next day, with four armed pirates vehemently pursuing the merchant ship, and ultimately boarding it.

With the crew safely below decks, Captain Phillips went out in a lifeboat with the pirates, who told him they thought they might get a \$2 million ransom if they could get him to land. Phillips spent five days as a hostage of the pirates, where he was beaten, tied up, blindfolded and threatened before he was rescued by U. S. Navy SEALs, who shot three of the pirates from the fantail of the USS Bainbridge without harming Phillips. Phillips, who didn’t know what was going on, said he then heard a male American voice asking “Are you OK?”

## ***AMMV member from Kansas City attends a sneak preview of the movie with the Captain in Williston, VT.***

Eugene Barner, a member of the Mid-America Ancient Mariners Chapter, visited with Captain Richard Phillips and his family in Vermont in 2012. He wrote, in October, 2013: “I became very close to the Captain, his family and in-law family on my first visit. When I visited them they made me feel as though I was one of their own. I was also well aware of the prospects of a movie of his ordeal and was pleased to learn Tom Hanks would portray Captain Phillips in this movie.

“I have kept in touch with the Captain and his wife and mother-in-law since my 2012 visit and on September 20th of this year, Captain

Phillips’ wife Andrea invited me to attend a benefit sneak preview for the movie on October 1st in Williston, VT. After accepting the kind offer, on September 29th, I flew to Manchester, New Hampshire and from there drove to Burlington, Vermont. On Monday,

I met with the family and was invited to stay with Catherine Coggio, Captain Phillips’ mother-in-law and her son, Tommy.

“On Tuesday night I attended the gala event with the whole family and very much enjoyed this awesome event. Afterwards, we gathered at Richard’s and Andrea’s home in Underhill, VT for food and drinks.

“The next day I spent with Catherine and Tommy, learning that Captain Phillips isn’t the only Merchant Mariner in the family; Captain Phillips’ sister-in-law, Lea Coggio, is a ferry boat Captain on Lake Champlain, brother-in-law David is a Chief Steward, brother-in-law Michael is a 2nd Engineer and brother-in-law Tommy has his papers and is awaiting assignment.

“When I came home from VT., I saw the movie again. This was a very special once-in-a-lifetime experience for me and I so very appreciate all who made it possible.”

## ***AMMV’s “Merchant Marine Awareness program” at movie theaters.***

Some months ago, the Just Compensation Committee, spearheaded by Ian Allison, promoted an awareness campaign to alert the public about what Merchant Mariners did



*Tom Hanks as Captain Phillips*



*Morris Harvey manned an information table in front of the Rgal Theater at the Crystal River Mall in Crystal River Fla. for the premier of “Captain Phillips”.*



in WWII and what they do today and to promote membership in the AMMV. All AMMV members were asked to set up a card table in front of the theater or in the lobby and dispense literature and information to attendees of the “Captain Phillips” movie that premiered October 11, 2013 around the Country. A POP display and Merchant Marine at War booklets were distributed by National President Morris Harvey and the Just Compensation Committee.

At press time – mid-October – it has been reported from around the Country, that there has been interest by movie attendees in theaters where the program was presented. Some reports were enthusiastic; some lukewarm. Opinions of the actual movie “Captain Phillips” range from: “we were sorely disappointed that the words Merchant Marine were not said during the entire movie” to “I did get seasick and had to close my eyes for a minute, but I still urge everyone to see the movie and read the book ‘A Captain’s Duty; Somali Pirates, Navy SEALs and Dangerous Days at Sea’ “.

### ***Meeting the crew***

Nelson Cauble, Southern Oregon Chapter, reminds us: “In April 2009, the ship MV Maersk Alabama was captured by Somalia pirates. The event was national news for several days and Americans saw the successful to the situation. On May 14 of that year our National American Merchant Marine Veterans convention convened in Tampa, Fla.

“We were honored there to meet three of the Alabama’s crew in person, Chief Engineer Michael Perry, Second Mate, Ken Quinn and Third Mate Colin Wright. Each of them told us about their part of the experience.

“Perry told the audience that “no one should have to protect your ship, your crew, and your cargo with nothing more than a fire hose and a pocket knife, but that’s what we did. When one of the pirates blew the lock off of our door, I took him down with my pocket knife.”

“We shook their hands and told them how proud we were of them. In return, they said they were proud of the Merchant marine veterans and our being a vital part



*Mike Perry, Chief Engineer and Colin Wright, Third Mate, at the Tampa AMMV National Convention in 2009*

of winning World War II. That war could not have been won without the essential supplies we carried to the war fronts.”

At that convention, Sindy recalls that, when speaking with one of the



*Captain Richard Phillips and Eugene Barner of Kansas*

crew members in attendance, she heard dissatisfaction about how Captain Phillips handled the “episode”.

### ***There are two sides to every story***

Depending on whom you ask, Captain Richard Phillips may not be quite as heroic as the new film makes him out to be.

A group – consisting of 11 crew members – is suing Maersk Line and the Waterman Steamship Corp. for nearly \$50 million claiming “willful, wanton and conscious disregard for their safety” on the part of the captain. They argue that he ignored orders to stay 1250 miles off the coast and sailed too close to the shores of Somalia, making his ship a clear target for pirates (as depicted in the movie).

The sailors said Richard Phillips was a sullen, self-righteous man; their suit claims the captain’s willful disregard for his crew’s safety contributed to the attack. “Phillips wasn’t the big leader like he is in the movie,” said one crew member who worked closely with the captain, speaking anonymously for legal reasons. “No one wants to sail with him,”

The crew member said Phillips, who went on to meet Barack Obama and write a memoir, refused to cut power and lock himself with the crew below deck in line with anti-pirate protocol. “He didn’t want anything to do with it, because it wasn’t his plan,” said the crew member. “He was real arrogant.”

With all this said, however, the promotion of the U.S. Merchant Marine and the education of the American public about their accomplishments must continue. All AMMV members and their families and friends are urged to continue with the “Merchant Marine Awareness program” in theaters throughout the country. For more information or supplies, please contact National President Morris Harvey at (352) 564-0267, email morris27@centurylink.net or Sindy Raymond at the AMMV National office: phone (707) 786-4554 or email saaren@frontiernet.net.



# EXPLOSION AT PORT CHICAGO, 1944

America was swept into World War II on 7 December 1941. As war in the Pacific expanded, the Naval Ammunition Depot at Mare Island, California, was unable to keep up with the demand for ammunition. Port Chicago, California, located 35 miles north of San Francisco, proved an ideal place for the Navy to expand its munitions facilities.

Construction at Port Chicago began in 1942. By 1944, expansion and improvements to the pier could support the loading of two ships simultaneously. African-American Navy personnel units were assigned to the dangerous work at Port Chicago. Reflecting the racial segregation of the day, the officers of these units were white. The officers and men had received some training in cargo handling, but not in loading munitions. The bulk of their experience came from hands-on experience. Loading went on around the clock. The Navy ordered that proper regulations for working with munitions be followed. But due to tight schedules at the new facility, deviations from these safety standards occurred. A sense of competition developed for the most tonnage loaded in an eight hour shift. As it helped to speed loading, competition was often encouraged.

On the evening of 17 July 1944, two ships were docked across the platform from each other. The empty merchant ship SS Quinault Victory, for her maiden voyage, was being loaded by about 100 black men. On board were 36 Merchant Marine crew and 17 Armed Guard. Loading went on 24 hours per day. The men moved the ammunition hand-to-hand, on hand trucks, or carts, or rolled larger bombs down a ramp from the boxcars which were right on the pier, then placed them onto cargo netting which they spread out on the pier.

The Liberty ship SS E.A. Bryan,



another merchant ship, had just returned from her first voyage and was loading across the platform from Quinault Victory. Her holds were packed with high explosive and incendiary bombs, depth charges, and ammunition - 4,606 tons of ammunition in all. Her crew on board consisted of 31 Merchant Mariners and 13 Naval Armed Guard.

There were sixteen rail cars on the pier with another 429 tons of ammunition which had come from Hawthorne, Nevada and had been "parked" between protective concrete barriers, until needed and then moved onto the pier. Working in the area were 320 cargo handlers, crewmen and sailors.

At 10:18 p.m., a hollow ring and the sound of splintering wood erupted from the pier, followed by an explosion that ripped apart the night sky. Witnesses said that a brilliant white flash shot into the air, accompanied by a loud, sharp report. A column of smoke billowed from the pier, and fire glowed orange and yellow. Flashing like fireworks, smaller explosions went off in the cloud as it rose.

Within six seconds, a deeper explosion erupted as the contents of the E.A. Bryan detonated in one massive explosion. The seismic shock wave was felt as far away as Boulder City, Nevada. No identifiable pieces of the E.A. Bryan were ever found. The largest remaining pieces of the 7,200-ton ship were the size of a suitcase. A plane flying at 9,000 feet reported seeing





chunks of white hot metal “as big as a house” flying past. The shattered Quinault Victory was spun into the air. Witnesses reported seeing a 200-foot plume of water on which rode the bow of the ship, its mast still attached. Its remains crashed back into the bay 500 feet away. Structures around the pier were completely disintegrated. A pillar of fire and smoke stretched over two miles into the sky above Port Chicago.

All 320 men on duty that night were killed instantly. The blast smashed buildings and rail cars near the pier and damaged every building in Port Chicago. People on the base and in town were sent flying or were sprayed with splinters of glass and other debris. The air filled with the sharp cracks and dull thuds of smoldering metal and unexploded shells as they showered back to earth as far as two miles away. The blast caused damage 48 miles across the Bay in San Francisco.

Navy personnel quickly responded to the disaster. Men risked their lives to put out fires that threatened nearby munitions cars. Local emergency crews and civilians rushed to help. In addition to those killed, there were 390 wounded. These people were evacuated and treated, and those who remained were left with the gruesome task of cleaning up. Less than a month after the worst home-front disaster of World War II, Port Chicago was again moving munitions to the troops in the

Pacific.

The tremendous danger and importance of the work, while not always recognized by the public, was always present in the minds of the men of Port Chicago. The Marines, Coast Guard and civilian employees knew of the danger, but none as vividly as the Merchant Marine crew and the Naval Armed Guard of the ships and the men serving on the loading docks.

In 1944, the Navy did not have a clear definition of how munitions should best be loaded. The dangerous work on the piers at Port Chicago and other Navy facilities was done by the men of the ordnance battalions. These men, like their officers, had received very little training in cargo handling, let alone working with high explosives.

Coast Guard instructions, published in 1943, were often violated as it was felt that they were not safe or fast enough for Port Chicago’s specific circumstances. The men on the pier were experimenting with and developing procedures which they felt were safer and faster.

After the explosion, the Navy would institute a number of changes in munitions handling procedure. Formalized training would be an important element, and certification would be required before a loader was allowed on the docks. The munitions themselves would be redesigned for safety while loading.



The explosion had shaken all of the men, but especially those surviving men who worked on the pier. Of the 320 men killed, almost 2/3 were African-American from the ordnance battalion. What had been minor grievances and problems before the explosion began to boil as apprehension of returning to the piers grew. On 9 August, less than one month after the explosion, the surviving men, who had experienced the horror, were to begin loading munitions, this time at Mare Island. They told their officers that they would obey any other order, but not the return to work one.

Of the 328 men of the ordnance battalion, 258 African-American sailors refused to load ammunition. In the end, 208 faced summary court-martials and were sentenced to bad conduct discharges and the forfeit of three month’s pay for disobeying orders. The remaining 50 were singled out for general court-martials on the grounds of mutiny.

No cause for the explosion was ever determined.

*Editor’s note: The late Ian T. Allison was working as a civilian, loading ammunition, at Port Chicago at the time of this explosion but was off shift. He spoke, later, of hearing the blast from San Francisco.)*



# A Final Message – Ian T. Allison

by Sidnee Cox

As you all know, Ian passed from this world on August 29, 2013 at the tender age of 93.

During the last year of Ian's life, his health was declining due to complications from asbestosis, diabetes, heart disease and his decade long battle with too many blood platelets. His hearing was declining as well,

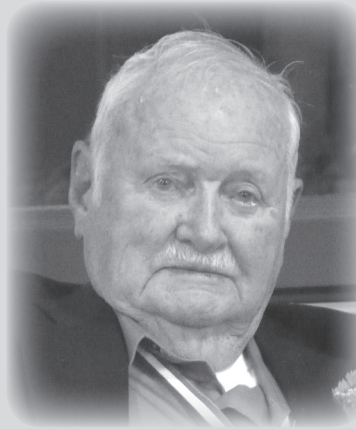
which made it hard for him to carry on phone conversations with his friends at a distance. Even though his condition and his medications left him tired much of the time, he still had portions of every day where he would take care of business with the usual sharp focus. Ian was a man of many interests, but towards the end of his life, his passions narrowed down to two main goals—how to catch that 1,000 pound Marlin on his next fishing trip to Mexico, and how to get the Merchant Mariners of WWII their Just Compensation.

Ian would sit on his deck looking out over his beloved garden, watching the birds come and go from his numerous bird feeders. He'd occasionally spot a red tailed hawk or some other bird of prey flying overhead - his eyesight was remarkable! On those days we would joke "Oh, no, he's thinking up some new projects for us to do..." and invariably he was! Sindy Raymond understood; she worked for him for many years, first as his bookkeeper and right hand person for his Halloween import-export business, and later as his office manager for the Just Compensation Committee. (Ian never did learn how to use the computer.) Jeannie, Joyce and I carried on after Sindy moved to Ferndale.

Often Ian would call for me to sit with him on the deck and he'd say, "We need to write a letter!" He'd tell me the gist of what he wanted to convey, and I'd be furiously scribbling notes so I could capture just how he wanted to express something. Once the letter was typed, he'd usually OK it with a few minor changes. After awhile I got pretty used to his expressive style and once he explained the purpose of his correspondence, I could more or less write the letter for him, although he always read every word carefully to make sure it said just what he wanted it to, and there were no grammatical errors! With that in mind, I'll make my best



*Ian in 1944*



*Ian at his 90th birthday party*

attempt to write a letter as I imagine Ian would dictate, if only he could, as a final message to all his AMMV friends.

**Dear Members of the American Merchant Marine Veterans:**

*I'm sorry my time ran out before I was able to complete my mission for all of us. There were times when I felt dismayed by our lack*

*of progress, but I never gave up on our cause.*

*I am deeply grateful for all the support you gave the JCC through the years with your kind donations and your heartfelt letters that encouraged me to keep going. Those letters meant a great deal to me! In the end, it wasn't about the financial compensation, although that certainly would have eased the day to day struggles we all faced, but about the lifelong bonds we forged and our relationships with each other. . . it was less about the recognition from capricious political representatives, and more about the support and love we experienced from our family and friends.*

*Spending Christmas Day in the engine room during WWII separated from family, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean far away from home, puts a different perspective on life and that perspective stays with us. We were literally all in the same boat and although we came from different places and different backgrounds our shared experiences created lifelong bonds that could never be broken.*

*Our monthly AMMV meetings meant so much to me, and I want to especially thank Charlie Schelter, my dear friend, who drove me to so many meetings and conventions when I had to hang up my keys.*

*At this stage, words seem less important, but in parting, I wish to say to all my AMMV friends: "We shall not be forgotten!"*

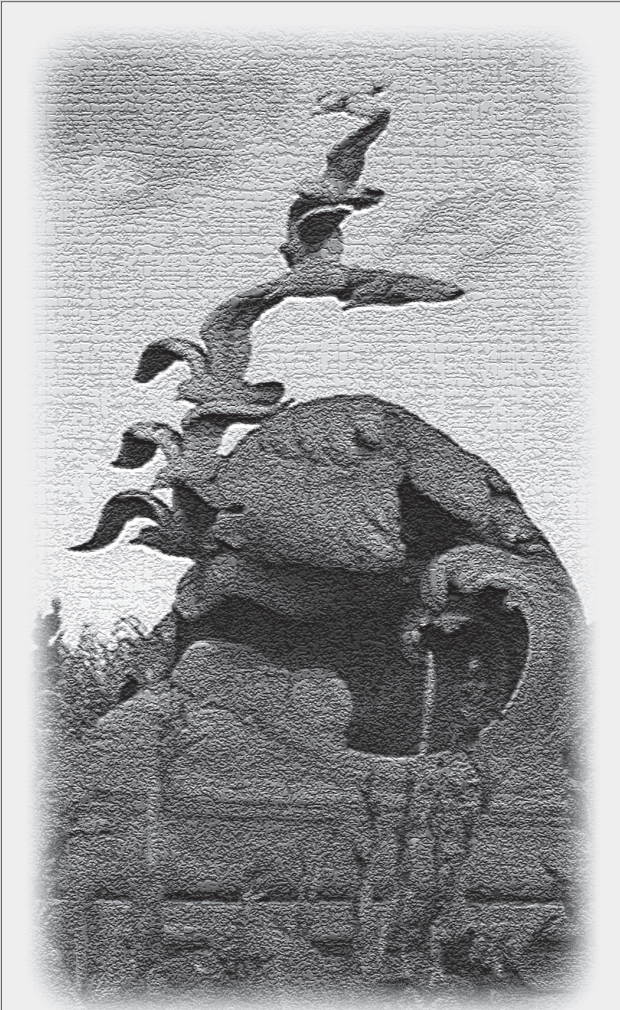
*See you on the other side!*

**GOD BLESS AMERICA,  
IAN T. ALLISON**

*Editor's note: Donations in Ian's memory can be sent to the AMMV National office at P. O. Box 186, Ferndale, CA 95536 to help further the Just Recognition cause.*



# *In memory of those who have Crossed the Final Bar*



*There are no roses on a sailor's grave,  
No lilies on an ocean wave;  
The only tribute is the seagull's sweeps  
And the teardrops that a sweetheart weeps.*

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| IAN T. ALLISON          | WILLIAM J. KOVACH      |
| WILLIAM T. AMMERMANN    | RALPH KURTZ            |
| RAYMOND H. ANDERSON     | ALFRED LORENTE         |
| EARL B. ANNECSTON       | EDWARD L. LUDWIG       |
| RALPH B. BEARDSLEY      | PERCY "MAC" MAC DONALD |
| JOHN F. BEGLEY          | CHESTER A. MADDEN, SR. |
| ERIC H. BJORK           | LESTER R. MASCHKE      |
| JESSE D. BOEHRET        | J. ROBERT McNABB       |
| JOSEPH W. BRITTON       | HARRY S. NEAL          |
| HARRY E. BROWN, JR.     | GLORIA FLORA NICOLICH  |
| DICK BUSEY              | JOE ORLANDO            |
| JAMES D'ANDREA          | JAMES PAFUMI           |
| WALLACE H. DEVINE       | PETER PAWELKO          |
| DONALD A. DUANE         | DANIEL PIEDIMONTE      |
| EDWARD M. DZALAK        | WALTER M. QUEEN        |
| JAMES F. EGGER          | RICHARD W. QUINN, SR.  |
| GEORGE ELDRIDGE         | GERALD REDDING         |
| KARE FORNES             | PAUL REFFSTRUP         |
| JAMES B. FOSTER         | JOHN W. SANDERS        |
| JAMES L. FRASER         | JOSEPH T. SCHMIDT      |
| IRA "FLARE" FREDRICKSEN | SAMUEL SCHNEIDER       |
| HERBERT FRY             | JACK SCIOR             |
| NORMAN J. GUCCION       | A. D. "DAVE" SEALEY    |
| RONALD G. HARBINSON     | WARREN H. SEVIER       |
| WINTHROP A. HASKELL     | JAMES R. SMITH         |
| C.E. "BERT" HINDS       | WILLIAM V. STANSKY     |
| ROBERT C. HUETER        | GEORGE STEPHAN         |
| ERNIE HURON             | OLIN S. THOMSON        |
| WILLIAM HUTEN, JR.      | RICHARD TOWNLEY        |
| JOHN A. JEWETT, JR.     | FRANK TRUBISZ          |
| JOHN F. KEARNEY         | ROGER J. WEAVER        |

To honor a loved one, memorial donations may be made to the American Merchant Marine Veterans organization on the loved one's behalf. This is a tribute to their memory and the dedicated service they gave to their country and to mankind. Thank you for your thoughtful gesture. Donations may be sent to: AMMV, P.O. Box 186, Ferndale, CA 95536-0186.

# ***HELP! HELP! HELP!***

## ***ADDITIONAL MEMORIAL PICTURES STILL NEEDED***

As you probably are aware, a DVD production showing all the tributes to the U. S. Merchant Mariners around the country is being worked on. The graphic information will be taken from the archives of the vast memorial project that National Historian Richard Mallett and his wife, Helene, gathered from AMMV members a few years ago. The collection did survive the fire that destroyed the home of John Forsberg, current National Historian and was returned to National office for further efforts on the DVD production.

This DVD will, hopefully, be a wonderful way to boost public recognition of what Merchant Mariners did during World War II and why they should be honored and remembered in public places.

You have all been most generous in supplying additional needed photographs BUT more are still required to complete the task. PLEASE take some time to photograph the memorials closest to you from the list below and submit them to Sindy at the National office for use in this project. Your children or grandchildren will most often be helpful; photography seems to appeal to the “younger crowd”.

The photographs and any additional information can be sent to Sindy at AMMV National Headquarters, P. O. Box 186, Ferndale, CA 95536 or emailed to her at [saaren@frontiernet.net](mailto:saaren@frontiernet.net). We will be trying to complete the gathering of photographs by DECEMBER 31st, so please act now.





## UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE MEMORIAL PROJECT - PICTURES STILL NEEDED AS OF 10-15-13

| CITY            | ST | CHAPTER/                 | MEMORIAL           | FLG | LOCATION                    |                             |
|-----------------|----|--------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| MOBILE          | AL | OTHER                    | MONUMENT           | NO  | CATHEDRAL SQUARE            | JACKSON, DAUPHIN, FRANKLIN  |
| MONTEVALLO      | AL | VULCAN MARINERS          | PLAQUE             | YES | ALABAMA NATL CEMETERY       | 3133 ALABAMA 119            |
| TUCSON          | AZ | CACTUS MARINERS          | PLAQUE/SEAL/FLAG   | YES | VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK      | 2805 E. AJO WAY             |
| ALAMEDA         | CA | OTHER                    | MONUMENT           | NO  | USMS OFFICER TRNG.          | NEPTUNE DR/CRAB COVE        |
| CUPERTINO       | CA | SILICON VALLEY MARINERS  | PLAQUE             | NO  | CUPERTINO MEM PARK          | 10100 MARY AVE.             |
| MOORPARK        | CA | OTHER                    | MM SEAL            | NO  | VETERANS MEM. PARK          | 799 MOORPARK AVE.           |
| BEVERLY HILLS   | FL | OCALA                    | PLAQUE             | NO  | FARO MEMORIAL GARDENS       | 5891 N. LECANTO HWY         |
| PLANTATION      | FL | GULFSTREAM               | PLAQUES            | NO  | PLANTATION VETS MEM PARK    | 1776 LAUDERDALE WEST DR.    |
| PORT EVERGLADES | FL | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | NO  | HVIDE MARINE EXEC. OFFICE   | 2200 ELLER DR               |
| PORT EVERGLADES | FL | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | NO  | ADMIN. BLDG. LOBBY          | 1850 ELLER DR               |
| PORT OF MIAMI   | FL | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | NO  | PASSENGER TERMINAL          | 1015 N. AMERICA WAY/MIAMI   |
| PORT ST. LUCIE  | FL | TREASURE COAST           | MONUMENT           | NO  | VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK      | 2100 SE VET. MEMORIAL PKY   |
| CHICAGO         | IL | MIDWEST                  | PLAQUE             | NO  | NAVY PIER                   | 600 E. GRAND AVE.           |
| CHICAGO         | IL | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | NO  | CHIC. MUS OF SCIENCE & IND. | 5700 S. LAKE SHORE DR.      |
| BUZZARDS BAY    | MA | OTHER                    | STATUE OF SEAMAN   | NO  | MASS. MARITIME ACADEMY      | 101 ACADEMY DR.             |
| QUINCEY         | MA | NEW ENGLAND              | MONUMENT/MM RADIO  | NO  | 59 TERNE RD. (WAS BOSTON)   |                             |
| SOUTH BOSTON    | MA | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | NO  | FITGERALD CIRCLE - WWII MEM | COLUMBIA RD & PLEASURE BAY  |
| BALTIMORE       | MD | OTHER                    | ANCHOR/PLAQUE      | NO  | INNER HARBOR                | NEAR MD. SCIENCE CENTER     |
| CHARLEVOIX      | MI | OTHER                    | MONUMENT           | NO  | CHARLEVOIX VETERANS MEM     | HARBORSIDE/US 31            |
| BEMIDJI         | MN | OTHER                    | STONE-WWII MM      | NO  | BEMIDJI VETERANS MEM PRK    | BIRCHMOND & 14TH NW.        |
| COINJOCK        | NC | GEORGE BARK (GULFSTREAM) | MONUMENT           | YES | VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK      | 132 COINJOCK CANAL RD.      |
| HOBOKEN         | NJ | DENNIS A. ROLAND         | PLAQUE             | NO  | VETERAN'S PLAZA             | RIVER STREET                |
| BROOKLYN        | NY | OTHER                    | MONUMENT           | NO  | FORT GREENE PARK            | MYRTLE & DE KALB AVE.       |
| BROOKLYN        | NY | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | YES | BROOKLYN SANITATION DEPT.   |                             |
| BUFFALO         | NY | OTHER                    | MONUMENTW/RELIEF   | NO  | BUFFALO RIVER VET. MEM. PK  | 1 NAVAL PARK COVE           |
| GOSHEN          | NY | GENE DELONG-HUDSON VLY   | MONUMENT           | YES | ORANGE CTY VET MEM. CEM.    | 111 CRAIGVILLE RD.          |
| HUNTINGTON      | NY | OTHER                    | MONUMENT/SEAL      | NO  | VETERANS PLAZA/TOWN HALL    | MAIN ST.                    |
| NEW YORK CITY   | NY | AMMV CHAPTERS            | PLAQUE             | NO  | ABOARD USS INTREPID         | 12TH AV.E & 46TH ST.        |
| SHEEPSHEAD BAY  | NY | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | NO  | KINGSBOROUGH COMM. COLL.    | 2001 ORIENTAL BL., BROOKLYN |
| CLINTON         | OH | CANTON HALL/FAME USMM    | POLE               | NO  |                             |                             |
| NORWALK         | OH |                          | MONUMENT/FLAG      | YES | SHADY LANE                  |                             |
| ANAKARTO        | OK | OTHER                    | MEMORIALWALL       |     | CADDO CTY WAR MEMORIAL      | 201 SW OKLAHOMA AVE.        |
| PORTLAND        | OR | OREGON                   | PLAQUE             | NO  | RIVER PLACE                 |                             |
| PORTLAND        | OR | OREGON                   | MONUMENT           | NO  | TOM MC CALL WATERFRONT PK   | 750 SW NAITO PKWY           |
| PORTLAND        | OR | OREGON                   | GRANITE WALL       | NO  | VETERANS MEMORIAL COL.      | 1401 N. WHEELER AVE.        |
| ANNVILLE        | PA | OTHER                    | PLAQUE             | YES | INDIANTOWN GAP NATL CEM     | RR Z                        |
| HARRISBURG      | PA | THREE RIVERS             | PLAQUE             | NO  | AMERICAN LEGION HQTRS.      |                             |
| LAMPETER        | PA | OTHER                    | MONUMENT-ALL SERV. | NO  | VET. MEM AT VILLAGE PARK    | 800 VILLAGE RD.             |
| NEW CASTLE      | PA | MARINERS OF PA           | COLUMN             | NO  | LAWRENCE COURTHOUSE         | 430 COURT ST.               |
| UPPER ST. CLAIR | PA | OTHERS                   | PILLAR             | NO  | UPPER ST. CLAIR VET MEM.    | WALKER'S MILL RD.           |
| YORK            | PA | OTHER                    | PLAQUE W/SEAL      | NO  | CONTINENTAL SQ. WWII MEM    |                             |
| BARRINGTON      | RI | OTHER                    | MONUMENT           | NO  | BRISTOL CTY VETS MEM PARK   | SURROUNDING BRICKYARD POND  |
| HOT SPRINGS     | SD | OTHER                    | FLAG               | YES | SOUTH DAKOTA VETS HOME      | 2500 MINNEKAHTA AVE.        |
| OCEANPARK       | WA | LOWER COLUMBIA           | TOMBSTONE          |     | OCEANPARK CEMETERY          |                             |
| ELMWOOD         | WI |                          | FLAG               |     | VETERANS PARK               |                             |

# Application of Veteran's Status for Post WWII Mariners



In our last News Magazine it was reported that the Air Force C-MSRB had required us to rewrite and resubmit our report, to include more detailed information relating to: Uniqueness of Service; Organizational Authority over the Group; Integration into the Military Organization; Subjection to Military discipline; and Prohibition against Members of the Group - Joining the Armed Forces. We indicated the re-submittal would be in October, 2013. We can report to you that Dr. Kerkow, in spite of serious medical problems, took the challenge and has now resubmitted our "final" request.

The document introduction reads as follows:

**"I am proud to submit this application for active duty determination under the cited directive for members of the American Merchant Marine who actively served in the Korean and Vietnam Conflicts and who certainly deserve this recognition. The service of those brave men in Korea and Vietnam mirrors in almost all circumstances the American Merchant Marine service approved for WWII service. That WWII service was earlier recognized as equivalent active military service. I had previously written about that lack of recognition issue, so now**

**I am also asking that the Department of Defense give proper recognition to the members of the American Merchant Marine who so valiantly served their country in Korea and Vietnam as well?**

**"I am preparing this application not only as a veteran of American Merchant Marine WWII service but also as a member of the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) Organization. This application has no effect on benefits accrued to myself as a USAF Retiree. I am submitting it at the request of AMMV President Morris Harvey and the 5000 seamen exposed to Agent Orange who need specialized VA medical treatment. We strongly believe that it is an issue of fundamental fairness since there is no clear distinction, other than exposure to Agent Orange, between American Merchant Mariners service in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange or other herbicides during service in these combat zones deserve veteran status for professional medical treatment. Agent Orange is a blend of tactical herbicide the US military sprayed in the jungles of Vietnam and around the Korean militarized zone to remove trees and dense tropical foliage that provided the enemy coverage.**

**"Also, it has become apparent in preparing this application that all of the enumerated items of evidence required make compliance with the directive practically impossible. Consultation with some who have legal experience with such matters leads to the inescapable conclusion that the directive itself, and it's impossible requirements are "arbitrary and capricious." While we do not fault you personally for this situation, it is apparent that should this application be rejected, as one must conclude it will be, the next step must be litigation to have the directive "thrown out." It must be our argument that impossibility of compliance by an applicant is at least as onerous as having no standards at all."**

Note: Let's hope that the Air force C-MSRB and the Secretary of the Air Force will issue a favorable decision, soon. If not be prepared to support our legal challenge. We will need your prayers and your monetary donations in order to win this next phase of this long delayed fight for just recognition.

*Morris Harvey, National President*

*American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc.*

## Welcome Aboard to these New Members of the AMMV

|                      |              |    |                    |             |    |                     |             |    |
|----------------------|--------------|----|--------------------|-------------|----|---------------------|-------------|----|
| C. DANIEL BAUGHMAN   | CHAMBERSBURG | PA | EDWARD GALSTON     | CHOCOWINITY | NC | LYLE M. MCKINSTRY   | PORTLAND    | OR |
| JOSEPH A. BOUFFARD   | KISSIMMEE    | FL | JOHN GLOVER        | OLATHE      | KS | LISA V. NANCOLLAS   | LEWISTOWN   | PA |
| DONNA BRANTNER       | PLANO        | TX | FRANCISCO T. GRACA | NEW BEDFORD | MA | JUAN OLIVENCIA      | NEW YORK    | NY |
| PRESTON L. BRYANT    | BAMBERG      | SC | TRACY GUINN        | WINNEMUCCA  | NV | MARTIN S. PASKO     | BRICK       | NJ |
| WILLIAM R.V. CAPPA   | PONCE        | PR | SUE HURON          | HENDERSON   | NV | RICHARD A. PERKINS  | SANTA MARIA | CA |
| WILLIAM COLUCCI      | SEA BRIGHT   | NJ | JANICE KAUFMANN    | HUNTINGTON  | NY | SAM A. PILATO       | BIRMINGHAM  | AL |
| EDWARD W. DESTERDICK | STROUDSBURG  | PA | JOSEPH KOZAK       | TROY        | PA | JUDITH PITKOFISKY   | ALBUQUERQUE | NM |
| DOUGLAS EDWARDS      | NEWBURGH     | NY | CALVIN LEVIS       | LANCASTER   | PA | CORENE POPE         | EL DORADO   | AR |
| JOSEPH R. FARMER     | GONZALES     | LA | PAT LOVE           | RENO        | NV | ROBERT T. THEISMANN | SAINT LOUIS | MO |
| KENNETH FRANKIEWICZ  | PHILADELPHIA | PA | MARY ANN MANFREDI  | MC MURRAY   | PA | GINGER VAN GEMERT   | PALMETTO    | FL |
| CAPT. JAN M. FRASER  | TAVARES      | FL | MARY MARTONE       | RONKONKOMA  | NY | SHAILA VAN SICKLE   | DURANGO     | CO |
| MELISSA FURMAN       | JACKSONVILLE | FL | NEIL MATTHEY       | NEW CANEY   | TX |                     |             |    |



# Occupied Europe was closed too! Veterans 'storm' barricades at World War II Memorial in defiance of shutdown

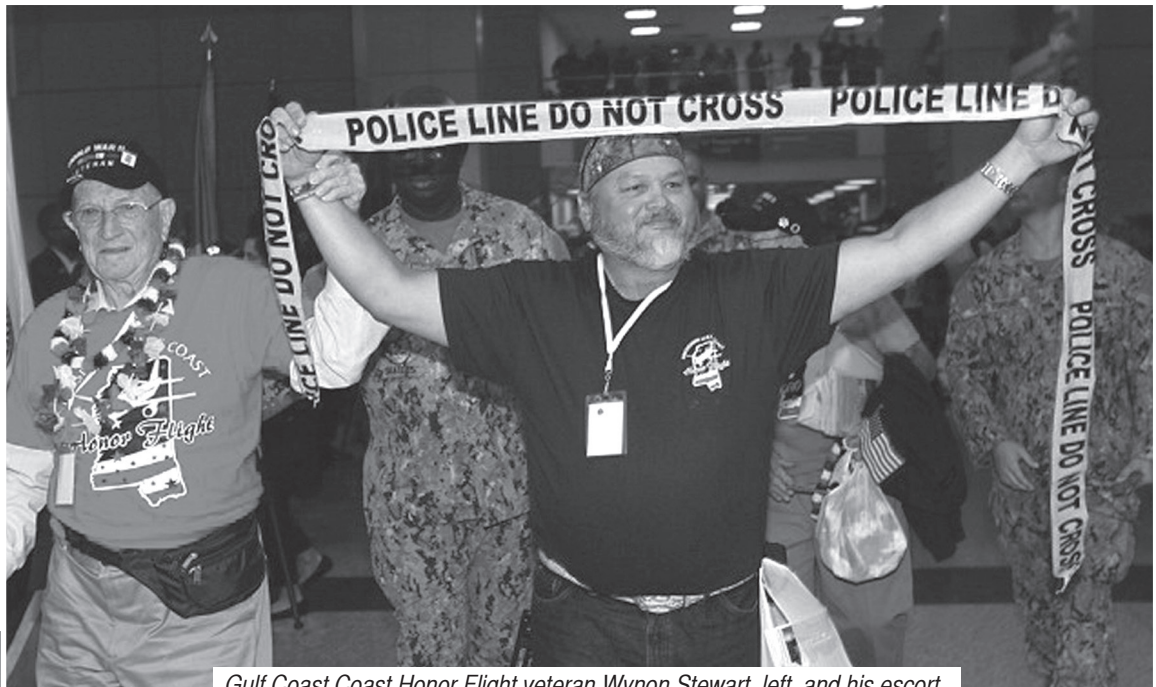
The Federal Government shutdown frustrated many, but Honor Flight Veterans and their escorts knew how to handle closure of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. ... they just took down the police tape and pushed aside the barriers to get inside. They risked arrest by National Park Service police but nothing was going to stop them from seeing "THEIR" memorial.

The action quickly got attention of lawmakers and media. Several Congressmen joined the growing crowd, many of whom assisted in opening the barricades.

The National Park Service released a statement saying "Honor Flights are being granted access to the WWII memorial to conduct First Amendment activities in accordance with National Park Service regulations."



*Honor Flight Veterans at World War II Memorial barricades.*



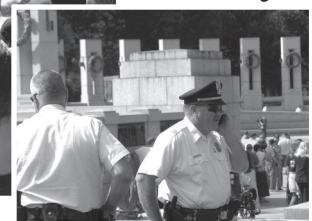
*Gulf Coast Coast Honor Flight veteran Wynon Stewart, left, and his escort, Cat Aguda display a piece of police tape removed from the WWII Memorial*



*Honor Flight Veterans, with escorts, enter the "closed" World War II memorial.*



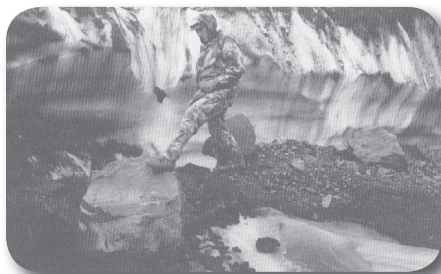
*National Park Service Spokeswoman, Carol Johnson, briefs media about World War II Memorial "first amendment rights."*



*National Park Service Police "keep the peace."*

The 24 Merchant Mariners from the SS Sunset were on their way home, after already completing their 3 month cruise from Philadelphia to Shanghai, as they watched the unusually bright lights of the Alaska's aurora borealis on the night of March 12, 1948 from the plane window. The men were passengers on Northwest Airlines Flight 4422, a chartered DC-4 airplane taking the men back to New York after boarding the plane in Shanghai one day earlier.

Just after 9:00 p.m. that evening, approximately one hour after refueling in Anchorage, Alaska, the ill-fated plane slammed into Mount Sanford, a 16,237-foot mountain in Alaska's Wrangell Mountains. The 24 mariners and the air crew of six died in the crash. The plane hit at 11,000 feet then fell onto a glacier, coming to rest at 8,500 ft. altitude. Members of the search and rescue operation spotted the wreckage the next morning, but realized that if anyone had survived the crash, they would not have lived through the cold night (-35 F). The site was inaccessible due to weather, the bodies were never recovered and in the storms following, the debris disappeared underneath the ice of a glacier.



*Marc Millican crosses a glacier stream on an ice overhang. If he had fallen into this stream, with nothing to hold on to, he could have been swept downstream where approximately 300 feet west the stream completely disappeared underneath the glacier.*

At the time, the crash was the worst in Alaska's history. Immediately, rumors spread that some kind of treasure was on board the plane. Among the stories were that DC-4 was carrying Chiang Kai-shek's gold out of China or the gold was aboard from the sale of the SS Sunset to the Chinese government or secret documents were on board or a payroll was in the cargo compartment. Over time, the plane became known as the "Gold Wreck" or the payroll wreck. The plane and its story became a legend.

Fifty years later, after four

## DISCOVERY OF A MERCHANT MARINER

**The story of a  
legendary plane crash  
as told in the book  
"Flight of Gold"**

years of on-site searching through treacherous conditions, two air force reserve and commercial airline pilots – Maj. Kevin A. McGregor, USAFR (Ret), and Lt. Col. Marc Millican USAFR (Ret) – discovered the wreckage. They'd actually found, in 1997, a few propellers, pieces of the floor, part of the nose gear, an engine, and many small pieces of rubber hose and aluminum—thousands of pieces indicating a plane had hit Mount Sanford very hard in 1948, but not identifiable as flight 4422. Then, in 1999, when recovering specific pieces to



*Francis Joseph VanZandt*

identify the plane, they located a frozen human forearm with the hand attached. The question was: which of the people aboard did it belong to? The identification of the limb became a major forensic goal for the two men.

What had begun as a set of expeditions to locate the plane and find answers, turned into a modern day state-of-the-art forensic investigation that rivals any CSI-ish television program where forensic investigations are crammed into a 30 minute segment. After working with the Alaska State Troopers in 1999-2001, The Alaska Medical Examiner deemed it impossible to identify the mummified left arm and hand by fingerprints or DNA. In fact, at the time, that was true. Science had to catch up.

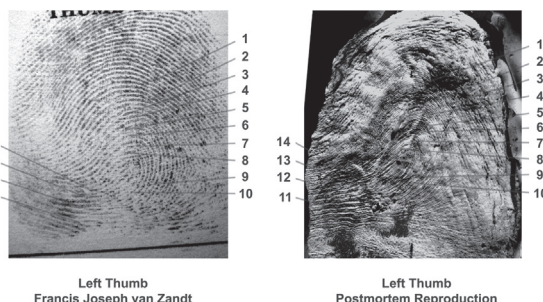
Nevertheless, another team of world-renowned DNA analysts, fingerprint experts and forensic genealogists spent another five years sleuthing. An unusual twist involving 867 US Korean War soldiers who had never been identified made it possible for the Armed Forces DNA Lab to get involved. This connection made the DNA work possible and they were able to identify the remains – with help from the U.S. Coast Guard – as belonging to Francis Joseph Van Zandt, a 36-year-old Merchant Mariner from Roanoke, VA. Using Van Zandt's archived personnel records at the National Maritime Center (NMC), a positive fingerprint match was made in



August 2007. With help from his extended family, VanZandt was also identified by DNA matches with a distant cousin in Ireland. It was the oldest post-mortem identification ever accomplished using fingerprints.

But, there was more. McGregor and Millican had heard plenty of rumors surrounding flight 4422. Back in 1997, when the two had discovered what they believed to be wreckage at the crash site, they disregarded the treasure rumors. But after the 1999 discovery of arm and hand, they found that the families of the missing passengers and crew thought maybe the plane had never crashed at all. They had no idea what had happened. During McGregor and Millican's quest to get to the bottom of the treasure rumors, they also discovered there were others who had tried, unsuccessfully, to find the plane.

The two men had begun gathering information on the crash in the late-1980s. McGregor traveled the world interviewing hundreds of people who might have known anything about the crash of NW-



Left Thumb  
Francis Joseph van Zandt

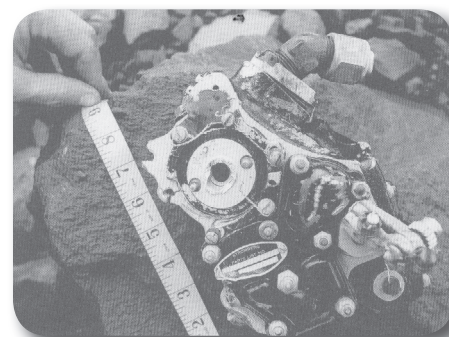
Left Thumb  
Postmortem Reproduction

4422. He asked whether they witnessed it, were related to one of the mariners or aircrew, or had simply searched in the immediate area. The information came from many countries. But, the most difficult part of the research project was learning about the SS Sunset and the mariners who sailed on it—proud men who had risked their lives during WWII.

McGregor's new book, "Flight of Gold" tells the stories of the Mariners and the airplane crew. After interviewing family survivors from New Zealand, to Britain and Ireland, to the mainland USA, to Shanghai, and of course, Alaska, the authors discovered the truth—or at least most of it. After a 20-year project and 10 years of writing, the entire intriguing story is now available. The book,

"Flight of Gold", gets down to the truth of many rumors, the facts about the SS Sunset, the Merchant Mariners, the crash, and the impact on the relatives of those lost. It is the true story of two pilots discovering Alaska's legendary "Gold Wreck".

"Flight of Gold" is available through the publisher: [www.in-deptheditions.com](http://www.in-deptheditions.com), at all major book stores and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). For further information about the book, contact the author directly through the AMMV national office.



*The serial and model numbers on this piece of a Stromberg engine component provided another way to identify the plane.*

*Editor's note: National office responds to many interesting questions but when author Kevin McGregor contacted us about the "Merchant Marine protocol" of transporting the frozen forearm and hand from the DNA testing lab in Maryland to the National cemetery in Syracuse, NY for burial by the family, Sindy at National was taken aback. No protocol was found but this book is very informative and fascinating reading.*



*Kevin McGregor and Mark Millican video taping the nose strut cylinder*



*Kevin McGregor at the crash site*



# HOW DOES ONE SINK A U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIER?

## *Merchant Marine Activity in Vietnam*

As the French, who had previously governed Vietnam found themselves involved in a war that they associated with the spread of communism, the United States expanded its support. Eventually the U. S. provided a fleet of freighters to support France in the First Indo-China War. Even with the massive aid and support, the French met their end in the valley of Dien Bie Phu in 1954. In compliance with the Geneva Accords and with the French withdrawal, Vietnam was divided into two countries, with the communists in the north, and the pro-American Republic of Vietnam government of Ngo Dinh Diem in the south.

To assist in the relocation of Vietnamese forces, equipment, and civilians, the US Navy orchestrated Operation Passage to Freedom. A flotilla of 39 merchant and sea-lift vessels participated in the relocation of nearly 70,000 tons of equipment, more than 8,000 vehicles and 310,848 personnel. With the establishment of rival governments, the U.S. continued to support the Republic of Vietnam for a decade. Beginning with the bombing of the USNS Card, US efforts escalated.

A US aircraft carrier, the Card had been removed from front-line duty and was playing a secondary role as an aircraft transport. Her original naval crew of 900 sailors had been replaced by seventy-four civilian merchant mariners.

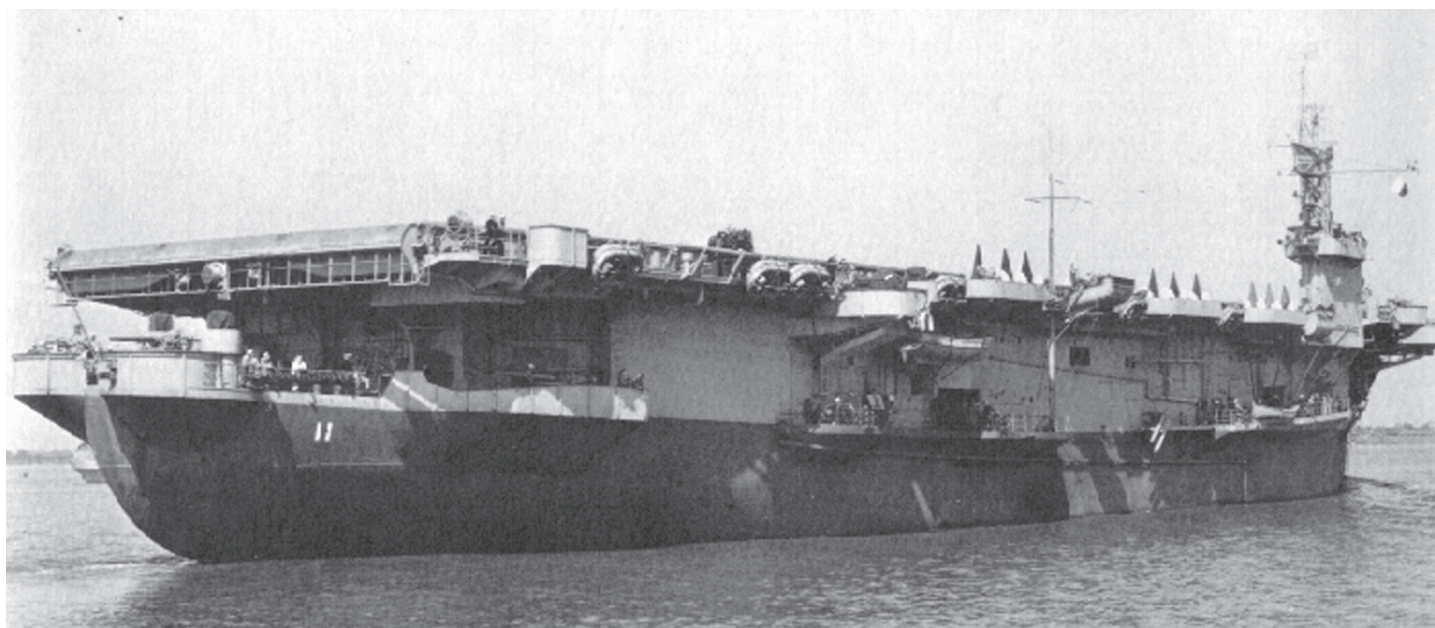
Sitting in the port of Saigon, Republic of Vietnam, in May of 1964, the sinking of the USNS Card, one of the

most revered vessels of the U. S. Navy, was deemed by the northern Vietcong as vital to their efforts in undermining support of the Republic of Vietnam government and perhaps it would curtail shipments of arms and materials to a U.S. ally. But how does one go about sinking such a vessel?

The terrorists constructed an improvised explosive device, a composite of TNT and C4 which could be affixed to the hull of the ship. They felt the non-compressibility attributes of water would focus the force of the explosion (much like a shaped-charge) into the carrier's engine room while the crew and vessel were in a relaxed condition with the watertight doors and vents open throughout the craft.

Very early on the morning of May 2, 1964, two men entered a warehouse area in the commercial sector of the port of Saigon. As the terrorists moved towards a small boat, common along the waterfront and specifically chosen for its innocent appearance, a maritime patrol espied the men and stopped them to ascertain their intent. Fortunately for the terrorists, the local police were underpaid and not of the most sterling virtue. The men explained that they were heading toward the city to buy new clothes at the market. Their story – delivered along with a bribe and a promise of more upon their return – motivated the constables to turn their backs on the insurgents and let them pass.

Clear of the police, the two men quickly loaded their implements of destruction, crossed the river and tied up





a few berths away from the USNS Card. While guards patrolled the dock and the massive carrier, the spot the two terrorists landed was not covered. A large discharge for the city's sewer system dumped its noxious waste into the river next to the pier, and its fumes made this an ideal site as it ensured that no one would challenge their landing. It also served as a concealed avenue of approach. The men entered the pipe, nearly blinded and choked by the fumes, and maneuvered on a memorized layout of the labyrinth. They eventually appeared at a secondary discharge, where, before them, loomed the gray hull of their intended target.

The men quickly attached the devices and hooked up the detonator, batteries and timer, allowing them enough time to escape. After another trip through the maze of tunnels and waste, they embarked on their boat and headed back to the warehouse area.

As they neared the end of their passage, the local police boat reemerged and headed towards them, intent on gathering the second half of their bribe.

On the quarterdeck of the carrier, Raymond Arbon had just come aboard after inspecting the mooring lines, while in the engine room John McDonald monitored the boiler control panel. Neither was prepared for the explosion that rocked the ship at 5:15 that morning. Out on the river, as the police cutter hailed the terrorists, a bright flash, followed by a pair of dull explosions, resonated across the river. On board the Card, Arbon was dowsed by a geyser of water that flooded the starboard side of the carrier, while McDonald was hurled upwards against a vent blower and then thrown into darkness as the ship lost power and the sound of motors and engines was replaced by a torrent of water entering the splintered hull. The police cutter reversed its engines and headed straight towards the stricken American ship. By the time they arrived, the carrier had taken a pronounced list to starboard and begun to settle. As water flooded the boiler, engine, machinery and generator rooms, along with shaft alley, nothing could prevent its sinking.

The sinking of the USNS Card became the first merchant marine casualty in the Vietnam War.

### ***The largest single loss by the merchant marine due to enemy action in the Vietnam War:***

Building on the success achieved against the Card, the VC aimed to harass, disrupt and, of possible, stop the flow of goods. Yet, in the entire history of the Vietnam conflict, there was only one instance of Viet Cong success against merchant vessels.

On August 23, 1966, the SS Baton Rouge of States Lines, a VC-2 freighter activated from the reserve fleet, struck a Soviet-built mine in the Long Tau River. The explosion tore a 35-45-foot hole in the port side of the ship, flooding the engine room and hold #3. The mine ruptured

one of the boilers, scalding to death seven engineers.

Captain Konrad "Snooze" Carlson conned the ship out of the channel and beached her to prevent his vessel from blocking access to Saigon. The U.S. and South Vietnamese intensified their efforts in the region bordering the Long Tau, known as the Rung Sat (Forest of Assassins), by adding additional minesweepers and inserting ground forces to clear the banks. While the VC succeeded in stopping the Baton Rouge Victory, a total of 6,798 other successful deliveries followed. During the entire Vietnam conflict, the enemy managed to sink a total of twelve ships, including the Card and the Baton Rouge, with the use of mines or improvised explosives.

### ***The last battle of the Vietnam War:***

From the beginning of the Vietnam War, MSTs/MSCs and the merchant marine were there. They were the object for the last battle of the Vietnam War. On May 12, 1975, just two weeks after the fall of Saigon, the Sea-Land container ship SS Mayaguez sailed from Hong Kong en route to Thailand, but she was seized by Cambodian forces. They removed her crew and the American military mounted a hasty rescue operation. The Cambodians decided to release the mariners after a show of force, but not before Marines stormed Koh Tang Island and a total forty-one US servicemen lost their lives.

### ***Forgotten, again, for honors:***

The names of the men who died on Koh Tang Island are the last on the war's timeline engraved on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC. Nowhere on that memorial wall of 58,272 names will one find the name of Raymond Barrett, the first assistant engineer aboard the SS Baton Rouge Victory or James Almony, mate on the tug Michael; ordinary seaman Ruben Bailon, who went missing off the SS Express Baltimore on Christmas Day 1965 while in the port of Qui Nhon; or Ernie Goo, killed on board the SS Transglobe on the last day of August, 1968; or the twenty-six crewmen of the SS Badger State that perished when the ship foundered on December 26, 1969 after a cargo of bombs broke loose and detonated on board. At least forty-four Americans and three foreign nationals died on board merchant ships during the Vietnam War; the records are not complete. While serving in a merchantman did not equate to a combat tour in a rifle platoon in this conflict, risks were ever-present for the mariners who supported them. The American merchant marine and MSTs/MSCs played a vital role in the Vietnam conflict, from its first shots to its last.

*Adapted from an article written by Salvatore R. Mercogliano and published in Sea History Magazine, Autumn, 2012.*

# TORPEDOED!

## *How Ocracoke learned that one of its own went down with his ship off North Carolina's coast during World War II*

On March 14, 1942, Chris Gaskill was walking the beach on the south end of Ocracoke Island when he spotted a rectangular object washing up with the surf. He decided to investigate and discovered it was a large frame that held an official looking certificate. To Gaskill, it looked like other documents may have once been inside the frame, but now there was only one. He examined it more closely. The document was a license issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce to certify the qualifications of a third mate aboard an ocean or coastwise steam vessel.

When Gaskill read the name of the person to whom the license was issued, he was at first puzzled then gravely worried. "How did this end up here," he might have wondered. The license belonged to his cousin, Ocracoke native son Jim Baughm Gaskill, third mate on the SS *Caribsea*, a 250-foot-long steam freighter, which was operated by a New York shipping company. Chris Gaskill hadn't known of his cousin's whereabouts since the war began, but finding the license washed-up on the beach was an ominous sign. Gaskill promptly returned to the village, notified the family and then the Coast Guard.

Jim's father, the late William D. "Cap'n Bill" Gaskill, had for many years owned and managed the Pamlico Inn, a popular hotel located on the edge of the Pamlico Sound and Teaches Hole Channel south of Silver Lake. Cap'n Bill was lost at sea while fishing in 1935 but the family continued to operate the inn. It was there, the day after Chris Gaskill found Jim's mate certificate, that someone at the inn noticed a floating piece of wreckage that appeared to be a spar or an oar banging against the pilings of the inn's pier. The timber was retrieved, and a ship's name was discovered etched on

one side—"SS *Caribsea*." By then, Jim Baughm Gaskill's family and friends knew of his tragic fate.

Four days earlier, the SS *Caribsea* had been steaming past Cape Lookout on her way to Norfolk from Santiago, Cuba, with 3,600 tons of highly combustible manganese ore in her cargo holds. Believing that the greatest threat from German U-boats lay 60 miles ahead, the Navy asked the *Caribsea*'s master to reduce speed to four knots so that the freighter would not approach Cape Hatteras until after daylight. Third mate Jim Baughm Gaskill's watch had ended, and he was asked by the officer relieving him if he was going to remain in the wheelhouse until they raised the Ocracoke lighthouse off the freighter's port bow. Gaskill replied that he had seen the lighthouse often enough — his father's hotel was practically next door — and that he needed some sleep. Gaskill retired to his berth. A short time later, two torpedoes struck the ship — the first hitting #2 hold; the second exploding the ship's boilers. Only the seven men on deck or in the wheelhouse survived. Twenty-one men were killed instantly, including Gaskill, as the ship went down bow first in less than three minutes. Had Gaskill waited to see his beloved Ocracoke lighthouse one more time, he might have lived. His body was never found.



*Seaman Jim Baughm Gaskill was third mate aboard the SS Caribsea.*



*An oar off the SS Caribsea over three days made its way on heavy seas into Ocracoke Inlet to bump up against the pilings of the Pamlico Inn, Jim Baughm Gaskill's birthplace.*

Among the pieces of wreckage floating in the sea after the ship violently blew apart were Gaskill's third mate license and the oar marked "Caribsea." It took three days, but these two artifacts somehow floated to Ocracoke Island more than 43 miles away against great odds, heavy seas, and a contrary current. The license and the oar were the only artifacts of the *Caribsea* to be found. The oar's travels were particularly remarkable, having miraculously navigated the serpentine channel through Ocracoke Inlet and against the daily tidal outflow of Teaches Hole Channel, avoiding sandbars and shallow bays to land at Jim Baughm Gaskill's birthplace, his father's Pamlico Inn.

"It was unusual for a thing like that to happen," said 82-year-old Owen Gaskill,



Jim's cousin, in a 1997 interview. "The many people who comb the beach, it happened to be his first cousin that found his license. My brother found the big frame and all the licenses were gone but Jim Baughm's. His was the only license left in the big frame, and that wasn't storm damaged at all from the water."

Ten hours after drifting on pieces of the ship's wreckage, two officers and five crewmen were rescued by a passing ship and were taken to Norfolk. Gaskill's sisters — Mary, Lillian and Nellie — traveled to Norfolk to visit the Caribbea's survivors in order to learn more about their brother's final hours. "They went up and talked to the captain, and he told them that Jim Baughm had just been relieved from his watch, and he had just about had time to get to bed and get to sleep when the torpedo struck about directly through his berth," Owen Gaskill said solemnly. His cousin was thought to have been killed instantly.

Ocracoke resident Homer Howard was given the oar so that a cross could be fashioned out of it. Ever since, the

cross has stood upon the altar of Ocracoke's Methodist Church. For the typical visitor, and from a distance, the plain wooden cross appears unremarkable. Not until one looks closely at the base can he see two small plates with the inscriptions: "In memory of Captain James B. Gaskill, July 2, 1919 - March 11, 1942. This cross constructed from salvage of the ship upon which Capt. Gaskill lost his life."

*Editor's note: Excerpted from chapter 14 of "War Zone – World War II Off the North Carolina Coast" by Kevin P. Duffus. The book recounts experiences off the North Carolina coast in 1942, many told from the perspective of merchant mariners, Coast Guard and Navy sailors, and coastal residents. The book is 304 pages, richly illustrated and can be ordered by sending a check or money order payable to Looking Glass Productions, Inc. for \$30.65 (price includes shipping) to: "War Zone" P.O. Box 98985, Raleigh, NC, 27624-8985. iPad and Kindle versions of the book are available at Apple's iTunes Bookstore and Amazon.com For more information (800) 647-3536 or visit [www.thelostlight.com](http://www.thelostlight.com).*

## Korean War Armistice – 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

SS Stephen Hopkins' Chapter members Al D'Agostino and his wife attended the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the armistice ending the Korean War in Washington, DC on July 27, 2013. President Obama and other senior government and South Korean officials spoke at an event marking the 60th anniversary of the signing of the armistice ending the Korean War July 27, 1953. Combat ended with the signing of the armistice, however communist North Korea never signed a formal peace treaty. At this event, President

Obama declared victory in what had often been called the "forgotten war." The ceremony, called "Heroes Remembered," included the laying of wreaths at the Korean War Memorial, prayers, a video montage, and music by the U.S. Army Chorus and "The President's Own" Marine Band.

In the official program handout was a special tribute to Captain LaRue and the crew of the SS Meredith Victory and their heroic efforts in evacuating Korean refugees in December, 1950.



### THE SS MEREDITH VICTORY – SHIP OF MIRACLES

One of the least known yet most awe-inspiring humanitarian acts of the Korean War was the evacuation of more than 100,000 North Korean civilians from the port of Hungnam who were fleeing from advancing Chinese and North Korean forces. Of these 100,000 men, women and children, 14,000 were evacuated by one ship, the SS Meredith Victory, a small merchant ship that was never intended to carry more than 12 passengers.

In December 1950 the SS Meredith Victory was requested to assist in the evacuation of Korean civilians trapped and threatened with death by the advancing enemy armies. Most of the military personnel had been pulled out of Hungnam; the city was ablaze from enemy artillery and targeted for demolition by United Nations forces. Despite imminent danger from enemy gunfire and air attack, and while her escape route became more precarious by the hour, the Meredith Victory, her tanks full of jet fuel, held her position in the shell-torn harbor until 14,000 men, women and children had crowded onto the ship.

Standing shoulder to shoulder and without food or water, the refugees stoically endured a three-day journey, many of them exposed to the harsh conditions of the Korean winter on the ship's open decks along the way. All passengers, as well as five newborn infants delivered during the voyage, disembarked safely on Christmas Day at the tiny island of Koje-Do. Against all odds, the Meredith Victory had transported its precious cargo with no loss of life...a miracle truly worthy of the season.

Sixty three years later, historians consider this the largest evacuation from land by a single ship in the history of mankind.

The voyage had a profound effect on Captain Leonard LaRue. In 1954 he became a Benedictine Monk, taking the name Brother Mariner. He lived in St. Paul's Abbey in Newton, NJ until his death in 2001.

The SS Meredith Victory was conferred the Gallant Ship award and presented a Unit Citation by the US Department of Commerce on Aug. 24, 1960.

The three years of the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration have presented Americans with the opportunity to learn more about the Korean War and to pay tribute to the patriotism and selfless sacrifice of Korean War Veterans for what they accomplished on behalf of democracy and freedom. During this commemorative period we also honor the many acts of heroism and kindness that were evidenced during the War: None more inspiring than the personal courage demonstrated by Captain LaRue and the crew of the SS Meredith Victory.

# THE MAIN ISSUES FACING THE DEEP SEA INDUSTRY TODAY

AMMV has adopted several “Maritime Resolutions of Support” which were approved by the Board of Directors and adopted by the general assembly at the 27th National convention in Branson, MO on May 1, 2013 and described in the AMMV NEWS – Summer, 2013 edition.

To better understand these resolutions, we asked Lee Kincaid of the American Maritime Congress to provide us with more specific information on which are most important items, from his point of view, and should be supported mostly by our members. He replied:

The main issues facing the deep sea industry today are Maritime Security Program (MSP) and Cargo Preference (Food Aid).

## **MARITIME SECURITY PROGRAM (MSP)**

Currently, the U.S. deep sea international trading fleet is down to 89 ships. 60 of these ships are the MSP ships - ships that are deemed to be militarily useful by DOD’s U.S. Transportation Command and are under the age of 25 years old.

Although the authorization for MSP is a Department of Defense (DOD) initiative (and MSP is currently authorized through 2025), the actual annual appropriations for MSP comes from the Department of Transportation.

Full appropriation for MSP is \$186 million per year (\$3.1 million per ship per year) for the 60 ship fleet. Unlike Jones Act ships which are required to be U.S. built, MSP ships are all foreign built.

## **REPORTED AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2013**

In fiscal year 2013, only \$174 million was appropriated for MSP due to the fact that MARAD had a reserve of \$12 million that the White House Office of Management and Budget required them to use thus making the total for \$186 million for full funding. However, sequestration took effect this spring and resulted in the MSP program running short of funds. Only a partial payment was made to the MSP operators in August and no payment was made for the month of September.

If Congress only passes a Continuing Resolution (CR), MSP will be stuck at \$174 million or \$12 million short for FY 14. This will result in at least 4 U.S. flag MSP ships being dropped from the program. Once dropped from the program, it is very likely these ships will flag out and never return to U.S. flag. Sequestration on top of the funding shortfall will most likely result in even more ships being dropped from the program. MARAD has suggested, depending upon how the sequestration numbers are applied, that up to 20 ships could be removed from the MSP program. (remember, we only have 89 U.S. flag ships in the international trade to begin with.)

It’s been an all-out hands on deck movement here in DC to first, secure the \$12 million for full funding and then to attempt to get MSP excluded from the sequestration cuts.

## **CARGO PREFERENCE (FOOD AID)**

The MSP payments of \$3.1 million per year is approximately 45% of the differential cost between operating a ship with a U.S. flag and U.S. crew verses operating with a foreign flag and foreign crew. The other 55% of the differential is offset with the shipment of U.S. cargo preference cargoes (DOD cargoes, Food Aid, and Export/Import Bank financed cargoes)

If you consider the entire U.S. cargo preference pie, defense cargoes make up about 85%, Food Aid makes up about 11%, and Ex/Im Bank cargoes make up about 4%. Since the war efforts are drawing down, less DOD cargoes are now available and thus more pressure is being placed on Food Aid and Ex/Im Bank cargoes in attempt to make up the revenue stream on the U.S. MSP ships.

## **GOOD NEWS ON OCTOBER, 17, 2013**

Finally some good news – full funding at the \$186 million level was included in the budget package that was passed late last night thanks to our maritime friends in the Senate who got the ball rolling and made sure they took care of the U.S. flag MSP fleet. The Continuing Resolution contains the requested MSP \$186 million funding level for fiscal year 2014.

Hope this helps towards better understanding the Maritime Security Program and the Cargo Preference (Food Aid) initiative.

LEE KINCAID

American Maritime Congress

Washington, DC

*Editors note: Thank you, Lee for this information. Your efforts to educate us are greatly appreciated by me and, hopefully, all of our members. Sindy.*



*“I trust Congress will soon provide similar opportunities to members of the merchant marine who have risked their lives time and time again during war for the welfare of their country.”*

*President Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
during signing of GI Bill on June 22, 1944*





# CHAPTER NEWS

## Carl W. Minor Chapter



Our chapter, located on the sparsely populated coast of Central California, is attempting to do our part in getting Merchant Marine recognition out to the public. The closest, large “city”, with a population of 46,000, does have a WWII Veterans’ museum. But guess what? Until recently there was not a Merchant Mariner display there. Our chapter members have banded together to correct this and are proud of the results. Even the display case was donated by one of our members, who refinished it and now, the Merchant Marine is finally recognized. Stop by, when you’re in the neighborhood of San Luis Obispo, CA, and check it out.

## Central California Chapter

This year the Merchant Mariners of Central California will be the Grand Marshal in the Fresno, CA Veterans Day parade on November 11<sup>th</sup>. This parade is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in the country and is viewed internationally by the Armed Forces TV Network and locally. The parade poster features master John L. Larson of Merced, CA. He is a graduate of California Maritime Academy in Vallejo, CA and has an impressive resume. More information in the next issue of Chapter news.

## John T. Schmidt/ Palmetto Mariners Chapter

### CHAPTER HONORED

During the June 2013 Chapter meeting President John “Jack” T. Schmidt Sr. was presented with Letters of Recognition from South Carolina’s US Senator Lindsey Graham and US House of Representatives Congressman Tom Rice, recognizing Jack’s efforts in establishing the Myrtle Beach, SC, Chapter, the only AMMV Chapter in the state. The letters were presented by John T. Schmidt, Jr. who explained that Jack’s Daughter, Linda Womer, prepared the necessary paperwork to request consideration for these recognitions. Meeting attendees offered a resounding applause at the conclusion of the presentation.

The Chapter began with informal meetings beginning in March 2009. As the group expanded Jack felt that they should apply for Chapter status from the AMMV. With help from Clarence Newcomer, a Susquehanna Valley, PA, Chapter member who winters in Myrtle Beach, the John T. Schmidt SC Palmetto Mariners Chapter status was granted in early 2010.

The Chapter has 17 members and meets monthly at a local restaurant. Lunch and fellowship precede a guest speaker and business meeting. Despite our small membership the camaraderie expressed at the meetings is filled with fond memories shared by the former seamen. Although most members live in the Myrtle Beach area we all look forward to the arrival of the “Three Musketeers”, three members who make the 90 mile drive from Charleston, SC, each month to participate.

## Saint John’s River Chapter

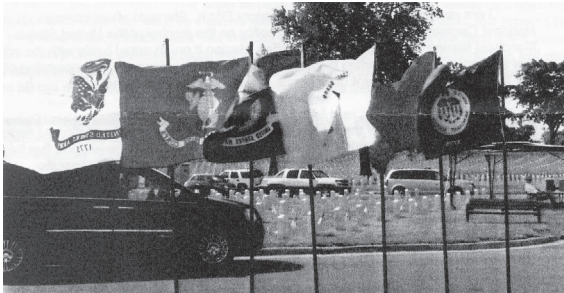


At our July meeting, King’s Point’s history was recorded as our member Laydon “Hayes” Tate, KP ’42, longtime Jacksonville maritime lead, Jim Barnes, KP ’64 and M/N Ashley Phillips, KP ’14 (part of Jim’s Legacy Class graduating next year) were united. These three pretty much span (or will span) the Academy’s long history.



# CHAPTER NEWS

## SS Samuel Parker Chapter



### FIRST TIME FLOWN – FLAG AT JEFFERSON BARRACKS

The Merchant Marine flag flew with the other service flags for the first time at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery on Memorial Day, 2013. This was due to action taken by the Inter-vets organization for Veterans Day ceremonies at Jefferson Barracks Cemetery. They asked me to obtain a Merchant Marine flag which they paid for. The cemetery provided the pole and placed it with the other five service flags. We are still not allowed to place our flag in the chapel with the other service flags, or display the Merchant Marine emblem with the other service emblems. We need to stop dealing with the Department of Veterans Affairs about our problems with the government but deal with the Department of Transportation, Maritime Affairs.

## SS Stephen Hopkins Chapter

### WORKING TOWARDS A PLAQUE

Our chapter is currently working toward our \$2,500 goal to sponsor a 20"x20" plaque for the Pacific War Museum in Fredericksburg to be included in the "NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN" memorial. We have a long way to go and need your help.

When you go to the museum's website it says: "Honor a loved one, a ship, a military unit or a hero of the homefront. Sponsor a memorial that will be seen by thousands of visitors every year. More than 1,000 wall plaques are mounted on the 100-year old limestone walls of the Memorial Courtyard, an impressive and poignant tribute.... Your organization may honor an individual, ship or unit from any United States and Allied branch of service that served in the Pacific during WWII."

## Susquehanna Valley Mariners Chapter

### Pennsylvania Vehicle License Plates

Our member, Ed Moe, has approached the PA Representative in his district to consider license plates honoring those Merchant Mariners who served in the Afghani and Kuwaiti actions. At last report, Ed indicated the Representative seemed receptive in that he requested further information. I put out feelers in the 97th district but observed reluctance. Korea and Vietnam should be handled first. That seems reasonable. You Penna Mariners, please give Ed some support by approaching your district Representative to request they co-sponsor this bill.

## Viking Chapter

### SHE OR IT?

Lloyd's of London recently announced that in future Lloyd's Lists it will stop referring to ships as "she" and instead use "it". Many object.

Captain Channing M. Zucker of the Historic Naval Ships Association chimes in:

"A ship is called she because there is always a great deal of bustle around her; there is usually a gang of men about; she has a waist and stays; and it takes a lot of paint to keep her looking good. It's not the initial expense that breaks you, it is the upkeep. She can be all decked out; it takes an experienced man to handle her correctly; and with a man at the helm, she is absolutely uncontrollable. She shows her topsides, hides her bottom, and when coming into port always heads for the buoys." (from a handout picked up at the Oyster Bar Restaurant in Punta Gorda, FL.)

Captain Gordon Peterson at Navy League headquarters received some comments after circulating Lloyd's news by email:

Although women were considered to bring bad luck at sea, mariners always use the pronoun "she" when referring to their ships.

Whether its proper name is masculine, or whether it is a man o'war, a battleship or a nuclear submarine, a ship is always referred to as a "she".

One explanation is that a ship is nearer and dearer to the sailor than anyone except his mother. Vessels are





# CHAPTER NEWS

also known to have “sister” ships.

The U.S. Naval Historical Center website says it is customary to classify things as feminine “especially those things which are dear to us.”

Author Dr. Ronald Hope (80) says the tradition of referring to sailing vessels as “she” dates back to the days of ancient Greece. He told CNN: “Even as recently as the 19th century most of the sea shanties referred to them as “she” and I recall in my youth ships owners always telling stories about why a ship was like a woman. It’s a shame that it is being changed. Ships are mostly very individual and “it” seems a bit impersonal.”

Peter Goodwin, curator of HMS Victory at Portsmouth, on England’s south coast, said: “It’s a terrible idea. No ship is exactly the same and all of them have their own characteristics. You ask any sailor and they will tell you that you care for a ship, you tend to their needs and sometimes they play you up. But they are never an ‘it’.”

**MEMBERSHIP DUES WERE DUE  
ON JULY 1, 2013  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 7/1/13 – 6/30/14.**

IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YET,  
PLEASE DO SO NOW.

**YOUR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO US**

- CHAPTER MEMBERS – DUES ARE PAYABLE TO YOUR CHAPTER
- MEMBERS-AT-LARGE – THIS YEAR’S INCREASED ANNUAL DUES OF \$32.00 CAN BE SENT TO THE AMMV NATIONAL OFFICE, P. O. BOX 186, FERNDALE, CA 95536-0186.



*Take a virtual tour of the original family-owned Victorian home of A. Berding in Ferndale, California, which now houses the National Office of the American Merchant Marines Veterans.*

*Read “BEYOND THE GUMDROP TREES” by Cindy*



*This would be a lovely holiday gift for someone special!  
Over 140 photos. Send a check for \$17.00 ppd to Cindy at:  
Saaren Page Enterprises  
P. O. Box 186, Ferndale, CA 95536-0186  
phone: (707) 786-4554 email: saaren@frontiernet.net*



# JUST RECOGNITION

## THE “WW II MERCHANT MARINE SERVICE ACT” FOR COASTWISE MARINERS US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL- HR.1288

HR 1288 will honor the coastwise U.S. merchant mariners who served on tug and barges moving the raw materials and war supporting cargoes along the U.S. coasts during World War II. Like their deep sea counterparts, these coastwise merchant mariners were often attacked by German U-boats operating off the U.S. coast. This bill was originally sponsored by Congressman Butterfield of North Carolina and had 94 cosponsors.

On 17 Jul, 2023, HR 1288, the “World War II Merchant Mariner Service Act” was incorporated into a veterans bill (HR 2086) sponsored by Congresswoman Titus of Nevada. It was amended into HR 2086 verbatim.

Updated information received on 24 Jul, 2013 indicated that House Veterans Committee intentions were to further incorporate HR 2086 into even another veterans bill (HR 2189) sponsored by Chairman Jeff Miller of Florida. This bill was marked up on 02 Aug and then sent to the floor for a full vote. It is awaiting full floor action. Let us hope this gets through the House and the Senate and then to the White House to be signed into law. It has been long overdue.

Any support letters must now be sent directly to Leadership of the floor. I have not been too successful in having the cosponsors from HR 1288 come aboard HR 2189. I only have about 6 out of 94. A very poor showing but with limited resources, I am doing my best and will continue to do so.

## COMPANION TO HR. 1288 SENATE BILL INTRODUCED - S.1361

Also on 24 Jul, 2013, a Senate bill S-1361 “WW II Merchant Mariners Service Act” was introduced by Senators Chris Murphy, (D-CT), Richard Blumenthal, (D-CT) and Susan Collins, (R-ME). The bill is in the Senate Veterans Committee and is languishing there. It only has 3 cosponsors in spite of my sending faxes (2) to every Senator, followed up with emails to every Senator’s Staff and repeated phone calls. I have received very few responses and no promises to date.

I have also reached out to about 60 Veterans’ Service Organizations (VSOs) but received very limited response with only two support letters returned. I could use some help in reaching our Senators to step up and help S.1361 make it through the wickets. I need your help and I am calling on my fellow mariners at AMMV to help me. Will You? The coastwise U. S. merchant mariners stood up for America in WWII when they were needed; now let’s help them to be remembered!

Thank you,  
J. Don Horton  
Email: [jdonhorton@embarqmail.com](mailto:jdonhorton@embarqmail.com)  
Telephone: (252) 336-5553

## CURRENT EFFORTS ON A SENATE BILL FOR JUST COMPENSATION

On Monday, September 23rd, Burt Young and I had a half-hour meeting with General Roger Lempke, aide to Nebraska’s Senator Mike Johanns, who had previously promised to introduce our Just Compensation legislation into the Senate, amending the terms to a \$25,000 lump sum payment. A discussion ensued requesting the Senator to sponsor a bill in the U. S. Senate for which commitment had been made. General Lempke, regarding our request, indicated Senator Johanns would take further action IF we can get twelve (12) Representatives in the House to endorse HR.1936 AND in the Senate, get Senator Patty Murray, as well as another Senator serving on the Veterans Affairs Committee, to acknowledge their support. The accomplishment would lend encouragement and hopefully lead to Senator Johannes’ sponsorship of a bill in the Senate.

Respectfully submitted,  
C. M. “Beech” Dale  
Missouri Valley Mariners Chapter





# JUST RECOGNITION

Since Senator Johanns is on the Senate Veterans Affairs committee, please contact the following Senators who are also on that committee. In the past, Senators Mark Begich, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders (Chairman) and Jon Tester have supported our Senate legislation.

Please contact these Senators TODAY to join Mike Johanns in sponsoring a Senate Just Compensation bill and also requesting their Cosponsorship of the coastwise Merchant Mariners legislation, Senate bill S.1361.

| U. S. SENATE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AS OF 10-15-13 |                        |                      |  |                     |                |
|--|------------------------|----------------------|--|---------------------|----------------|
| NAME   | DC PHONE<br>AREA (202) | DC FAX<br>AREA (202) | DISTRICT ADDRESS                                     | DIST. PHONE         | DIST. FAX      |
| Begich, Mark..... AK ..... D.....                      | 224-3004.....          | 224-2354.....        | 510 L. St. #750, Anchorage, 99501.....               | (907) 271-5915..... | (907) 258-9305 |
| Blumenthal, Richard ..CT..... D.....                   | 224-2823.....          | 224-9673.....        | 90 State St. - 10th Flr., Hartford, 06103.....       | (860) 258-6940..... | (860) 258-6958 |
| Boozman, John ..... AR ..... R.....                    | 224-4843.....          | 228-1371.....        | 1401 W. Capitol Ave Plaza F, Little Rock, 72201..... | (501) 372-7153..... | (501) 372-7163 |
| Brown, Sherrod..... OH ..... D.....                    | 224-2315.....          | 228-6321.....        | 1301 E. Ninth St. #1710, Cleveland, 44144.....       | (216) 522-7272..... | (216) 522-2239 |
| Burr, Richard ..... NC ..... R.....                    | 224-3154.....          | 228-2981.....        | 2000 W 1st St. #508, Winston-Salem, 27104.....       | (336) 631-5125..... | (336) 725-4493 |
| Heller, Dean ..... NV ..... R.....                     | 224-6244.....          | 228-6753.....        | 8930 W. Sunset Rd. #230, Las Vegas, 89148.....       | (702) 388-6605..... | (702) 388-6501 |
| Hirono, Maizie ..... HI..... D.....                    | 224-6361.....          | 224-2128.....        | 300 Ala Moana Blvd. #3-106, Honolulu, 96850.....     | (808) 522-8970..... | (808) 545-4683 |
| Isakson, Johnny..... GA ..... R.....                   | 224-3643.....          | 228-0724.....        | 3625 Cumberland Bl#970, Atlanta, 30339.....          | (770) 661-0999..... | (770) 661-0768 |
| Johanns, Mike ..... NE ..... R.....                    | 224-4224.....          | 228-0436.....        | 9900 Nicolas St #325, Omaha, 68114.....              | (402) 758-8981..... | (402) 758-9165 |
| Moran, Jerry.....KS..... R.....                        | 224-6521.....          | 228-6966.....        | 23600 College Blvd. #201, Olathe, 66061.....         | (913) 393-0711..... | (913) 768-1366 |
| Murray, Patty ..... WA..... D.....                     | 224-2621.....          | 224-0238.....        | 915 2nd Ave #2988, Seattle, 98174.....               | (206) 553-5545..... | (206) 553-0891 |
| Rockefeller, John..... WV ..... D.....                 | 224-6472.....          | 224-7665.....        | 405 Captiol St. #508, Charleston, 25301.....         | (304) 347-5372..... | (304) 347-5371 |
| Sanders, Bernard.....VT ..... I ..... D.....           | 224-5141.....          | 228-0776.....        | 1 Church St. 3rd Floor, Burlington, 5401.....        | (802) 862-0697..... | (802) 860-6370 |
| Tester, Jon ..... MT ..... D.....                      | 224-2644.....          | 224-8594.....        | 222 N. 32nd Street #102, Billings, 59101.....        | (406) 252-0550..... | (406) 252-7768 |

### CONDOLENCES FOR IAN T. ALLISON CONVEYED.

Mike Sacco, President of the Seafarer’s International Union sent this message upon hearing the news about Ian Allison, Just Compensation Committee Co-chairman.

“Like all of our brothers and sisters throughout the American Merchant Marine Veterans, I knew Ian to embody everything that’s great about the U.S. Merchant Marine. He was not only a wonderful advocate for our industry and in particular our World War II mariners, but also a friend.

“Ian’s dogged determination and boundless energy truly were inspirational. Although most of our dialogue centered on the efforts of the Just Compensation Committee, I also enjoyed getting to know him personally. He was an interesting, likeable person and I’m glad to have worked with him.

“While Ian will be missed, I’m confident that his spirited pursuit of recognition for the U.S. Merchant Mariners of World War II will remain a motivating example for all of us.

Respectfully,  
 MIKE SACCO



# GATEWAY TO HELL: Saga of the Murmansk Run

*Originally written on paper bags in 1943 by George X. Hurley, Naval Armed Guard*

Liberty ships are rusty and slow  
But where they sail, I must go  
Scarred old derelicts, sweet piles of junk  
I walked your deck, slept in your bunk

I felt like a bird in a steel nest  
To me you were a home, I loved you best  
Things I learned while still on shore  
Was Liberty Ships were winning the war

No finer ship ever sailed the blue  
Than a Liberty Ship with it's Armed Guard crew  
There is no glory delivering by the ton  
So just enjoy it, have your fun

England was tough, we all agree  
Tanks in a storm, they all broke free  
Then a collision, we all should be dead  
Ammunition stored safe in its bed.

I am a sailor, a Liberty Man  
I do my best, the best I can  
I will protect you from all in the air  
You're all we have, we really care

But now it's different, I don't feel well  
We're going to Russia "the Gateway to Hell"  
I know we can make it, I will return  
Minus the bow, probably the stern

First day out, I'm chilled to the bone  
Even in convoy you just feel alone  
Cooks are like witches making your brew  
Gallons of coffee just for the crew

Coffee, oh coffee, drink all you take  
Black and steaming to keep you awake  
Depth charges dropping most every night  
Keeping the submarines deep out of sight

Every few hours alarms seem to screech  
Run to your guns, close up the breach  
Twenty millimeters ready for hell  
"Come on you bastards" That is your yell

One ship explodes just down the line  
Up goes a tanker two ships behind  
Sea's all afire, kissing some ships  
I heard a scream, was it my lips?

German planes came making their run  
Earning their cross in the arctic sun  
God be my judge I'll never tell  
How often I softened on the "Gateway to Hell"

Powder and smoke, low flying planes  
This was a day just made for dying  
Heroes so many they can't be counted  
Here they come! Another attack mounted

Death you seem so friendly a hand  
Torturing the souls of this tired band  
No one can ever describe this story  
Of these fighting men, men without glory

Ice and the cold, you too are our foe  
Taking your toll, laying us low  
Someday with pride say to your son  
"Your father survived the Murmansk run"

A separate war fought by a few  
Merchant seamen, an Armed Guard Crew  
British Navy fighting with pride  
Out in the Arctic, no place to hide

Ducks in a pond, I know how you feel  
Waiting for death, this is for real  
No movie, no newsreel, no happy end  
Death sits and waits just down the bend

Look to our Captain, he never broke  
Giving his orders in all of the smoke  
Chain of sailors, some on the bridge  
Passing the shells in this cold fridge

Life or death is only a thread  
Speak to a shipmate, then he's dead  
Ocean's just a graveyard of sorrow  
The tonic is hope, a wish for tomorrow



Who were these men? Someone's son  
There is no glory on the Murmansk Run  
Men so brave slaughtered like cattle  
Don't ever mention this Russian battle

Bodies like chocolates dipped in black oil  
Your journey is over, free from toil  
Blinking red lights, not summer fireflies  
Everything's quiet now, no more cries

No life boat for me, I die where I stand  
Like an icicle, shiny and grand  
The Arctic is neutral, it takes no side  
All dressed in white, waiting for its bride

We are so cold but we will deliver  
Even polar bears are cold and they shiver  
Why God made this place I'll never know  
Keep all your ice, send it below

Temperatures so cold it cast a spell  
No one can live in the devil's well  
Slowly more bodies in clusters float by  
Eyes frozen in sockets turned to the sky

Twelve submarines circling the foe  
Where is the heaven sailors go?  
Another destroyer torpedoed twice  
Luck just ran out like the roll of the dice

Now comes the fog, can we hide?  
Keep your position on this suicide ride  
Coffee please, till the battle is done  
How will we tell who lost or who won?

They're forming a convoy, we're going back  
No one can sleep, not time for the sack  
Submarines lurk to kiss us good-bye  
Drop all your depth charges, let them fly

Alarms, alarms, you're always ringing  
Sounds like a devil chorus singing  
But I could care less, gone is all fear  
Stumbling to my gun with all this gear

Nothing more cruel was ever done to man  
Send you to hell on a rusty tin can  
God will forgive, that's a sure bet  
I may forgive, but I won't forget

Step out on deck, breathe that cold air  
Lift up your heart, who's left to care?  
Submarines below, planes up on high  
All I can say "It's a good day to die"

What would life be under Germany's heel?  
Concentration camps, bars of steel  
So no surrender, fire to the sky  
We'll leave as free men if we say good-bye

No one is talking, I hear no voices  
Am I spared? Has God made his choices?  
Why did he leave me, I'll never know  
But it looks to me like the end of the show

Sailors are dead, frozen and stiff  
Lifeboats with bodies floating adrift  
Smoke in your eyes, can't hardly see  
But I made my payment to keep us free

Oh we cursed you, old ship, you were so slow  
But you took us there, where no one would go  
Brought us back to the American shore  
No one could ask for anything more

Today I'm a man, I'll curse and I'll drink  
No longer afraid of torpedoes that sink  
I have survived, I'm a better man  
My gun is my arm, we made our stand

When men go to sea and the stories are told  
I'll only say that I was cold  
Nights in the summer, heart all aquiver  
Every so often I still will shiver

When there's a homer and people cheer  
One thing haunts me forever, I fear  
It sounds like the noise when people are dying  
I still remember, but I stopped crying

The gateway to hell will never fade  
There's not enough money could ever be paid  
So old Joe Stalin, when you rot in the ground  
Where was your help? Never around

No man in his right mind should make this trip  
For sure he'll come back, not with the ship  
Mother, oh Mother, don't raise your son  
To have to die on the Murmansk Run.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## HOW WELL WERE THE LIBERTY SHIPS BUILT?

Sindy:

Thought your readers might find this interesting.

The T-2 tankers and Liberty ships were wartime rush order jobs using the minimum amount of steel for maximum amount of cargo carrying capacity.

The Liberty ships were all the same design, but the hull plates were not all secured the same; they came out three ways. Some ships had all flush plates welded vertically and horizontally; there were ships with vertical welding and the horizontal plates overlapped with double lines of rivets and there were ships with flush plates welded horizontally with single lines of rivets down the ribbing.

In 1943, at the union shipping halls in New York, word circulated among the experienced sailors that the T-2 tankers and Liberty ships were not safe. Experienced sailors threw their shipping cards in for pre-war built ships.

December, 1943, I took a job on the tanker, SS Belgian Gulf, at Fletcher's Drydock in Hoboken, New Jersey. The ship was built in Rotterdam, Holland with twin-screw, twin diesel engines. A very sturdily built ship. Deck officers, radio operator and Navy Armed Guard lived amidships, rest of crew aft superstructure.

After leaving drydock and loading, we formed in convoy outside New York harbor; most of the ships being Liberty ships so heavily loaded with huge deck-cargo and sitting so low in the water that they looked more like rafts.

The movement of the convoy proceeded well until off the coast of Greenland where we encountered a storm. Our old-timer sea captain said he never saw such a storm in all the years he went to sea. The catwalk from superstructure to fore-peak was damaged and three of our six lifeboats were also.

The second night of the storm, four times we saw the red emergency lights go up on Liberty ship positions, and the severity of the storm was causing the convoy to scatter. Daylight, on the third day, we found ourselves alone – not another ship to be seen in the distance.

As the running seas kept going down, the Captain increased speed to all the engines could take. On a shallow zigzag course, we raced towards Liverpool. At Liverpool we discharged part of our cargo and then went up canal to Manchester to discharge the remainder.'

In convoy, we made an uneventful return trip to New York. The Spring of 1944 saw all the Liberty ships being strengthened at shipyards. On both sides of the cargo hatches, a strap one-inch thick by fourteen inches wide secured by four lines of rivets ran from number one hatch to the superstructure, the same from the superstructure to number five hatch. On the hull, just below the deck-line, the same strap ran from number one hatch to number five hatch.

I have often wondered if the severe storm of January, 1944, off the coast of Greenland had anything to do with the extra work done on the Liberty ships. Somewhere in the files of the War Shipping Administration could be information on the Liberty ships that run up red distress lights in that storm.

*Raymond M. Carreau*

*Member-at-Large*

*Tacoma, WA*

## RESPONSE TO "SOS FOR SEAMEN"

Dear Ms. Editor:

Thank you for including the article SOS for Seamen from "My Day" by Eleanor Roosevelt in the AMMV NEWS – Summer, 2013 edition. It was a nice gesture by a very nice lady. At that time, a Merchant Marine Bill of Rights was in Congress. It was similar to the "GI Bill" and was before Congress in both 1946 and 1947. Mrs. Roosevelt's brief column just about said it all. Why wasn't the matter settled back then?

Part of the problem was our own. We Merchant Mariners were not organized at all. Resistance set in right away. We were misunderstood – very misunderstood. The only veteran's organization that would accept us as members was the AMVETS. Some of the other organizations even joined in resisting us.

Simply stated, we had served as civilians. We carried our seamen's papers: Z-certificate, E-certificate, or license. We also carried a seamen's passport and those of us still draft age carried our draft cards – I know I did.

Question – What were we doing at war? Answer – Our government had decided to keep the Merchant Marine intact. That meant the ship owners (shipping companies) operated those ships on contract with the government. The companies in turn hired we civilian seamen. Where applicable, union contract remained



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

in force. We merchant seamen made and kept a no strike pledge during the entire war.

Incidentally, the seaman's union halls did a good job of providing crews for the ships during the war. They should have received the Army Navy E for efficiency. Union halls were a major part of the merchant marine process.

Even though we were civilians – civilians at risk – and all volunteers, we were misunderstood and criticized for not being in the service. We were also criticized for belonging to the unions. Oh yes! All of these things were said of us in those two years – '46 and '47.

The last and most bitter part of this era came in 1947. The seamen's unions did go out on strike. Remember the war was over. Three noted journalists jumped on the unions especially the National Maritime Union (NMU) led by Joe Curren. These journalists were: Walter Winchell and Fulton Lewis, Jr. (both radio broadcasters) and Westbrook Pegler, a newspaper columnist. They alleged our unions were communist led. Guess what? The cold war had started and people like Senator McCarthy were looking for "commies" under every rock. This led to the Little McCarthy era in the Merchant Marine. Oh yes! Our bill died in Congress.

In spite of FDR's suggestion to Congress, to add or include we merchant seamen in the GI Bill, we Merchant Mariner did not receive Veterans' status back in 1946/47. Instead, we were rejected or ignored. We were left in limbo. It would be another twenty years before we would get our recognition and Veterans' status. All of this adds up to some very angry years. They could have been better with the aid of Veterans' status and the GI Bill, as Mrs. Roosevelt appealed for.

*Ken Blue*

*Sacramento Valley Chapter*

### ONE MORE DEDICATED AMMV MEMBER

Sindy:

Many of our AMMV members have contributed and completed projects for the betterment of the AMMV, Merchant Mariners, and WWII veterans. This is a more recent story which I was made aware.

Michael Davis Gurney is a Member-at-Large residing in North Miami, Florida. He sailed in the U.S. Merchant Marine, which included service during the Vietnam conflict and Desert Storm, a total of nineteen

years and six months between 1967 and 1995 (twelve years in the steward department and six years and six months in the deck department).

Michael noted that there was no recognition of the Merchant Marine at the Miami VA Healthcare System, which serves Veterans in three South Florida counties with an estimated veteran population of 175,000. Thru Michael's efforts, on September 27, 2013, a Merchant Marine emblem is now installed at the facility. He was invited to participate in the dedication and offered the following remarks: "Good Morning Ladies and Gentleman, my name is Michael Davis Gurney – United States Merchant Marine and Combat Veteran during Vietnam (1967-1968) and Desert Storm (1991). To the director and staff of the Miami Veterans Health System, Distinguished guests - we are gathered here today to dedicate, honor and remember the officers and seaman of the United States Merchant Marine, the forgotten service whose motto is "Acto Nemo Verbo" - Deeds not Words. The first and oldest of the Federal Government Services, The U.S. Merchant Marine, has an outstanding tradition - in every war that the United States has fought over the past two hundred and thirty-seven years. From the Revolutionary War in 1775 to the present conflicts and the ongoing war in Afghanistan, the United States Merchant Marine, it's officers and seaman, under precarious conditions, have performed extraordinary acts of self-sacrifice and heroism in the direct support of the Armed Forces in time of War and delivering commerce and world trade in times of peace.

In closing, I say to you, in the words of John F. Kennedy – "It is not what your Country can do for you, it is what you can do for your Country", and in the words of General Douglas MacArthur – "Duty, Honor, and Country". We must continue to honor and remember those forgotten heroes that have given so much in their loyal and dedicated service to their country – so that you and I can continue to enjoy the freedoms that we enjoy as Americans today. May God bless the United States Merchant Marine, now and always, and the United States - the greatest Nation on earth. Thank you very much."

Michael has indicated to me that he is dedicated to fight for just recognition of all officers and men of the U.S. Merchant Marine, which includes educating the public and the Government that we must maintain and support a Merchant Marine.

*Morris Harvey, National President*

# SAVING LIVES DURING SHIPWRECKS

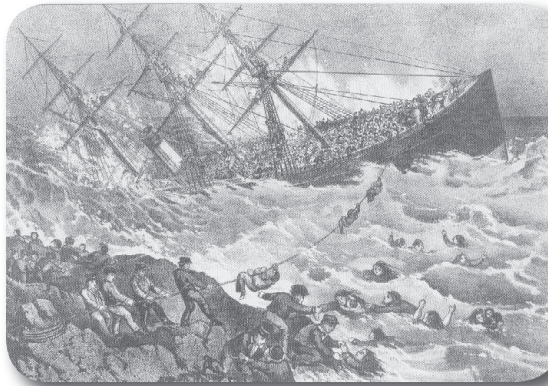
## The Old-fashioned Way

When one takes a sea voyage today – whether it's a short ferry crossing or an extended journey on one of the mammoth cruise vessels – the concept of personal safety seems far from one's mind. Instead, we feast on grand buffets, roll dice in floating casinos or simply snooze in easy chairs awaiting the journey's inevitable end. Aside from a brief safety statement over the ship's public address systems, or, on more extended voyages, the customary boat and fire muster, most passengers accept that their safety is guaranteed, the ship designed well and her crew trained to cope with any and all emergencies.

This was not the case in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries. Most seagoing travelers knew full well the risks they were facing. During the age of sail and the early days of mechanized propulsion, sea travel was fraught with obvious perils as ships and sailors were subjected to the vagaries of wind and water, to say nothing of the frailties of human nature.

The history of seafaring during those days are full with tragic scenes such as the loss of the side-wheel transatlantic steamer "Atlantic". The liner was bound from Queenstown to New York when she struck Mars Rock off Nova Scotia sinking in under fifteen minutes with the loss of 562 lives, due primarily to the lack of adequate means, either onboard or on shore, to save them. During the three-year period 1865-1867, more than 1,270 lives were lost off the eastern seaboard of the United States alone – a staggering toll arising from the loss of just seven vessels.

Something had to be done. The first attempts to produce life saving devices go back to the end of the



eighteenth century when forward-thinking and philanthropic individuals and organizations began to promote better means and mechanisms for saving life at sea. Ideas were based on practicality and economy. And they covered ideas from line-throwing mortar (ship to shore) to lifeboats to lifejackets and personal floatation devices.

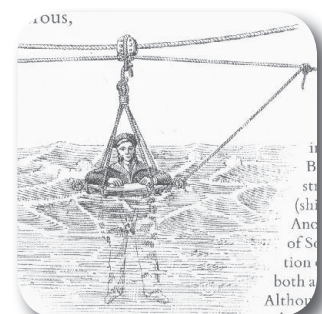
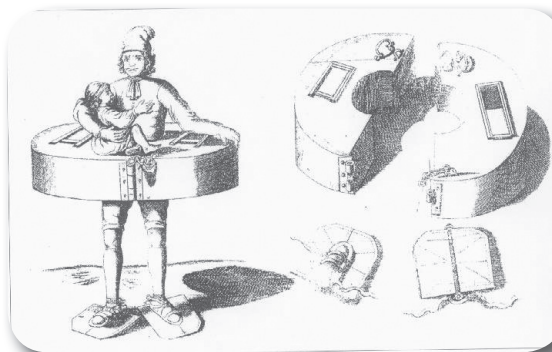
### *Lifejackets and personal floatation devices:*

Keeping one's body afloat in the event of a nautical calamity has always proved an interested challenge. Beyond simply grabbing a piece of flotsam, the concept of actually attaching a buoyant device to one's own body in order to stay afloat has been around for centuries. In the early 1600s a suggestion was made to

have a girdle-type contraption made of leather to which you fastened a "Pype like to a Bagpipe, wherewith to blow the same girdle as full of winde as you can possible; then under the nether end of the Pype, ty the leather very fast and sure, that joynes the pype and the girdle together...." In

concept, however, this does resemble the basic idea of a manually inflatable life vest, or 'Mae West', that has been used as a flotation device on aircraft for more than fifty years.

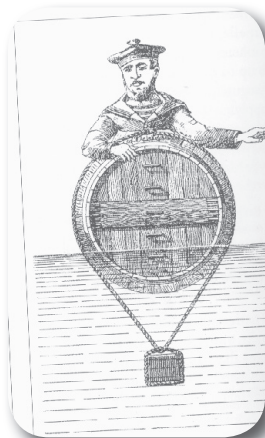
Cork is another thing that has been used for personal flotation devices. One suggestion from 1803 for this: "they could have a pantaloons and jacket with lining, where they would lodge the cork, cut in small pieces,





between the cork and the lining, so as to cover the whole body to the ankles, and make a kind of dress in which every motion of limbs would be perfectly easy.” This sound quite similar to the modern flotation overalls, more commonly known as the ‘floater suit’.

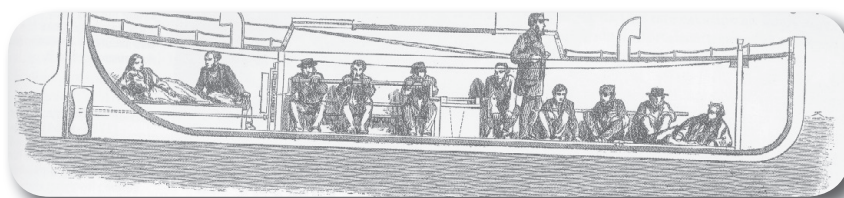
### ***Liferafts and personal lifebuoys:***



Not all floatation devices invented early on involved personal attire. Many early tinkerers took the view that ‘it was better to float upon an object that be the floating object one’s self’. Many cork-based mattresses and other buoy-like devices were thought up. Someone even came up with a ‘Life-saving Sofa’ described as: ‘A flat-bottomed boat, con-

structed of galvanized iron, forming at the same time the frame of a sofa, and when used as such is bottom-side up, the keel forming a very convenient means to which the cushions and entire furniture of the ordinary sofa can be attached. It is very light and portable, and can be easily carried from the saloon to the deck of a vessel, ready for immediate launching.’

A less practical and perhaps less comfortable idea



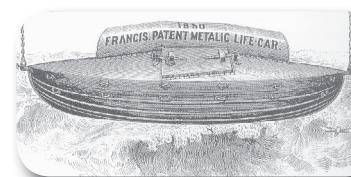
was the ‘Greene’s Patent Nautilus of Life-preserving Mattress’. This was a sleeping mattress stuffed with cork but had a large round hole in the center of the bed into which was stuffed a circular horse-hair pillow. In an emergency, one merely had to remove the pillow, jump into the hole in the center of the mattress, and heave oneself over the side. Images of dozens of panic-stricken passengers, their bodies surrounded by large rectangular mattresses, careening and colliding about the promenade deck presents an interesting picture.

### ***Lifeboats:***

Lifeboat ideas have been around for centuries. But one from the 1850s, was called ‘Holbrook’s Iron Bottomless life-boat. It is described as ‘made entirely of wrought and sheet iron, covered and lined with strong netting and carrying fresh water, provisions, warm clothing, compass, alarm apparatus, fuel, fireworks, rockets, and 1000 feet of line, and in the figurehead... a kettle that will boil in ten minutes.’ One has to wonder about the size of this contraption and just how the ship’s crew with primitive means was supposed to launch it?

For propulsion, several human-powered paddle-wheel designs were put forward, as well as a great many screw-driven boats that used both hand levers and foot pedals.

Lifeboat designs used many different materials: sheets of galvanized iron, inflated rubber tubes, tubes of both coopered wood and riveted iron or even in one case, dried rushes. The idea of inflated or air-tight tubes was not used for lifeboats exclusively; a large inflatable life-raft, known as the Perry or “Monitor Raft” was invented in the United



States around 1867 and consisted of two or more large inflated rubber cylinders protected by thick canvas. So confident were the makers in the seaworthiness of their invention that they actually sailed one across the Atlantic, leaving New York, Jun 12, 1867 and arriving in England less than two weeks later.

Anyone want to go on a cruise?

*Editor’s note: Adapted from an article in the magazine “Maritime Life and Traditions – Winter 2006”*



# THEN AND NOW IN A CIVMAR'S WORLD

A civil service mariner, or CIVMAR, is a federal government employee who pursues a civil service, non-Navy career while assigned aboard U.S. government-owned vessels, our ships that support Navy's war-fighters and war-fighting platforms around the world. CIVMARs account for 80% of Military Sealift Command's (MSC) workforce, their service is the backbone of our mission and they play a vital role in the Navy's ability to operate forward every day.

Because our ships are operated by civilians, crewing levels and crew organization aboard our vessels reflect the standards found aboard civilian commercial ships rather than combatant ships.

Additionally, the crews are divided between licensed and unlicensed personnel. Licensed personnel (i.e. the ship's master and chief engineer) hold a current, U.S. Coast Guard-issued license, which is obtained through a combination of sea time and successful completion of a licensing exam. Although the division between licensed and unlicensed personnel aboard our ships may be compared to the officer/enlisted relationship aboard combatant vessels, a more appropriate analogy is the management/labor relationship in the civilian industry.

Pat Mooney has been a civil service mariner with Military Sealift Command (MSC) for more than 24 years. Mooney served four years in our U.S. Navy as a Boatswain's Mate prior to beginning his career with MSC as an ordinary seaman. He currently serves as ship's boatswain aboard USNS Joshua Humphreys.

When asked: "What is one of the most significant changes you have seen in your career at sea with MSC?" He answered: One of the changes is the quality and capabilities of the ships. When I started out with MSC, we had World War II-era ships in service and others that had old and outdated



equipment. The ships of today, like the Humphreys, are floating palaces...they have wide open spaces, gymnasiums and a lot of other amenities.

"From a personnel standpoint, we also had a lot more retired Navy veterans who served on our crews when I started my career. We still have a lot of veterans but we also have a lot of crew members who have never served in the military and are either coming right out of high school or the maritime academies.

"From a capabilities standpoint, with all of the technology and experience we have with underway replenishments, we can do practically anything to serve the Navy's war-fighting fleet."

Civil service marine Bill Doran wrote while 1st officer: "I recently went over 35 years of federal service, 31 with Military Sealift Command and four in the Navy" He writes about the changes he has witnessed over the years.

"Now, I'm sailing as chief mate on USNS Big Horn with Capt. Steven Karavolos. The captain and I were able seaman and shipmates in 1984 on the oiler USNS Mississinewa, affectionately known as "The Missy." At the time, we were winch operators on the underway replenishment team delta. Captain Karavolos and I sailed together again in 1993 on board USNS Concord after coming through the "hawse pipe," as second mate and third mate respectively. This history makes my present assignment pleasant.

"Here's another one for the "then" column. Before the days of closed circuit television on ships, and long before satellite television service, our entertainment came in the form of 16mm movies. The film reels were transferred in coal bags between ships during replenishment operations. We were all quite excited about the new movie titles and what would be in store for that evening on the mess deck or lounge during movie hour. Redstone even had a theater on board. It was great camaraderie to gather with shipmates and enjoy popcorn, soda pop and good movies.

"Nowadays we are able to keep abreast of current events and can watch some of the same shows and events on satellite television that the folks back home are watching. Here on Big Horn, we are fortunate to have access to 32 Direct TV channels.

"I sailed on a few ships back in the 1980s that had amateur ham radio operators in the crew. On occasion, they would invite crewmembers to patch telephone calls through another ham operator back in the States. I remember calling my mom from somewhere in the Mediterranean Sea a couple of times. She would get very tense because she was supposed to say "over" each time she finished speaking – she could hardly concentrate on the conversation at hand. Phone calls from overseas were quite expensive back then.

"In years gone by, traditional mail service, snail mail, could take a month or more to find its way to you, whether your ship was stateside or deployed half way around the world. Now the modern technologies of e-mail, satellite telephone and internet allow today's mariners to reach out and touch their love ones and friends very easily. With e-mail, just hit the send button! When mariners were first allowed access to e-mail in the late 1990s, I felt a whole new dimension to my life at sea. I was not as isolated."



# The Admiral is a son-of-bitch

If you've been in the military, this is not an unusual term one might hear. Those who have been referenced as such may not appreciate the designation. An exception might be Admiral Ernest J. King. At the beginning of WWII, he was credited with saying "when they get into trouble they call on the 'sons-of-bitches.'" Admiral King was a man of strong opinions. President Roosevelt once suggested that King probably shaved with a blowtorch. One of his six daughters described King as "The most even tempered man in the United States Navy, always in a rage."



Admiral Ernest J. King

Admiral King reached the highest command a naval officer could hope for – the Joint Chief of Staffs. Anyone reaching that august position must have made some astute decisions in his career and with his crusty attitude could squash opposition as well as intimidate those not in agreement with him. He did not hold President Roosevelt in the highest regard and his opinion of Churchill was not flattering. He was Anglophobic about the British and detested all suggestions they offered, including the one to protect merchant ships being torpedoed along our east coast. They suggested having ships sail in convoy with destroyer escorts as protection. Churchill's feeling about Admiral Ernest King was "if someone would shoot the Admiral we could win this war a lot quicker."

Five weeks after Pearl Harbor on January 13, 1941, German Admiral Donitz had dispatched his u-boats to the American east coast and they began sinking our merchant ships at an unprecedented rate. In the first weeks they far exceeded the ships sunk at Pearl Harbor. This was a very serious interruption of needed supplies and food for England. On March 6, 1941 Churchill ordered a "Battle of the Atlantic Directive" to take immediate offensive action. British code breakers, using data captured from German

submarine U-110, deciphered German codes and had some success sinking German subs, mostly with aircraft.

Our British friends advised us of their findings. They also suggested we should turn off our coastal city lights as submarines could spot the silhouettes of ships at night which made them easy targets. Admiral King didn't think this was necessary. The number of torpedoed ships increased and King finally relented to a full blackout. The British found convoys to be most effective in protecting ships, using corvettes and destroyers as escorts, and so advised American counterparts. Advice by the British was not what Admiral King wanted to hear as he felt American destroyers should be preparing for the "real war" and should not be nursemaid to merchant ships.

Britain was in critical shape and complained bitterly to Washington about so many ships being sunk on the American east coast without convoy protection. Admiral King admonished his critics and let them know "we can build them faster than they can sink 'em." Envoys crisscrossed the North Atlantic trying to get the attention of President Roosevelt and anyone who would listen on the importance of convoys.

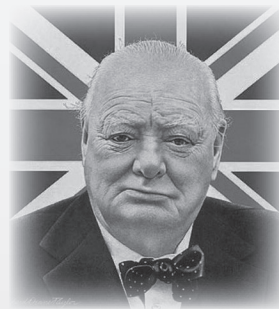
From January to August 1942, 609 ships with 3.1 million tons of cargo were lost to German Admiral Donitz' submarine fleet during his Operation Paukenschlag on our Eastern Seaboard.

Torpedo, cannon fire, exploding boilers, drowning and being cooked in fires from the oil they carried killed thousands of American merchant seamen. It was during this time Admiral King had an epiphany and began to employ convoys as a technique to reduce the sinking of merchant ships.

At the end of the war President awarded Admiral Ernest J. King the rank of Fleet Admiral with five stars. The Admiral died June 25, 1956. What do you suppose His Maker would award him? The Intelligence which keeps in balance millions of stars in the universe (some hot) and who's Son left us with this thought "Whatever you neglected to do unto one of the least of these, you neglected to do unto Me!"

*Mathew 25: 35-40*

**A.J. Wichita, LT USN (Vet)**  
**USCG Lic.Ch.Engr.**  
**National President Emeritus**  
**American Merchant Marine Veterans**



Sir Winston Churchill





# SS JACKSONVILLE – ONE TANKER’S STORY

Anticipating the need for adequate petroleum reserves and their timely transfer to Europe, the United States began an emergency ship-building program in 1942. More than 480 oil tankers would be built from standardized plans in four shipyards scattered across the country.

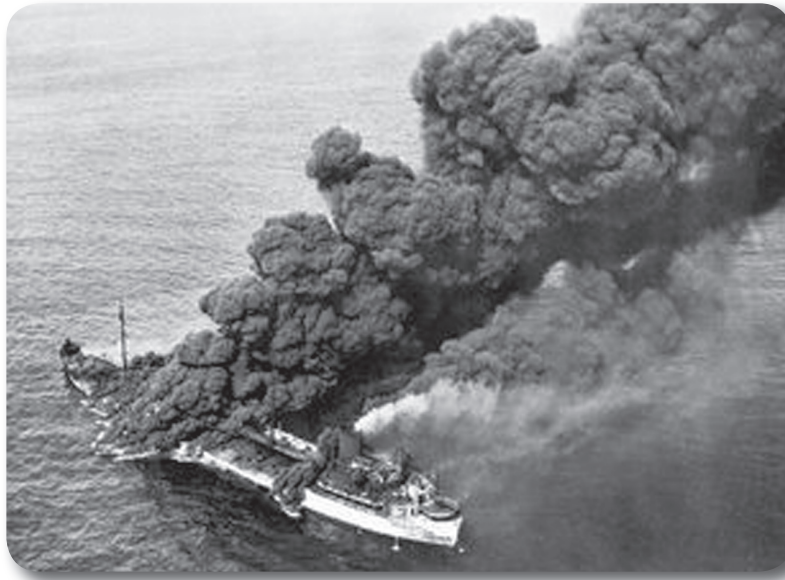
The SS Jacksonville was the 45th of 153 tankers built at the Kaiser Shipyard on Swan Island, Portland, Oregon. She slid down the launch ways on December 23, 1943 and set sail for the European theater of World War II.

Because the ship was named for the Jackson County town, Claire Hanley, secretary of the Jackson County Pioneer Society and daughter of one of the earliest settlers in the area, was selected to see the tanker off to battle.

Eight months later, on Aug. 30, 1944, the German submarine U-482 was submerged at the entrance to the Irish Sea, 50 miles north of Londonderry, Ireland. Her captain watched as the Jacksonville, last in line in a convoy, began to turn. They aimed two torpedoes at a group of 5 ships from the convoy CU-36. Both torpedoes hit the SS Jacksonville in the starboard side and she was done for.

Since the Jacksonville was carrying 135,000+ gallons of gasoline, the torpedoes caused a major explosion. The second torpedo struck amidships, exploding gasoline into a 300-foot fireball with flames from stem to stern. Floating in two pieces, the S.S. Jacksonville refused to die. With depth charges and guns, the convoy escorts finally managed to sink the rear section, but the forward section continued to float for another 15 hours.

Total personnel aboard – 78. No



lifeboats or life rafts were launched. There are only two survivors – Frank B. Hodges, who served in the Merchant Marine from 1942 to 1945 as a wiper and fireman. And Marcellus Raymond Wegs, who was a gunner for the Armed Guard. They both managed to jump overboard into the flaming water and swim away from the sinking ship. Hodges ended up with a broken leg, smashed ribs and was badly burned. He was in the water for about an hour and a half when a destroyer escort picked them up. He was in a British hospital for about seven and a half weeks and another month to convalesce.

When interviewed later, the men reported: “The fire was everywhere,” said Seaman Marcellus Wegs. “I ran through the flames, my buddy was right behind me. Racing to his quarters, Wegs grabbed a life jacket. “My buddy went inside,” Wegs said. “The fire got him. He never had a chance. I never saw him or any of the others since.”

Wegs ran to the rail and dove in, with only one arm through his life jacket. “If I had put it on I would have burned on top of the water,” he said. Wegs came to the surface in a sea of fire, barely able to breathe in the flames and smoke. “Preferring to drown rather than burn,” he said,

“I swam beneath the flames, underwater, until I could go no further.” When he came up, his body was burned, but he was free of the flames. In the bodies that floated everywhere on the surface, he saw a man trying to swim back to the flaming ship. It was Hodges.”

Civilian crew member Frank Hodges, coffee in hand, also was desperate to escape, but he couldn’t find a life jacket. “I ran out of the mess room,” Hodges said, “and found our vessel enveloped in flames and smoke. I tried to reach the boat deck to get my life jacket, but flames and smoke soon engulfed me. There was nothing to do but jump. I was in a dazed condition,” he said, “but when I sank beneath the flames I revived somewhat.”

“I saw many of the crew floating on the water,” Hodges said, “but I could not recognize their faces because they were all charred. ... I saw quite a few life jackets in their hands.” He took a life jacket and put it on. Delirious and with a broken leg, Hodges lost consciousness. Wegs held him as they waited 90 minutes in the cold water for rescue.

Marcellus Wegs died in Mount Sterling, Ill., in 1998 at age 81. Frank Hodges had served on two other ships that had been sunk. He died in Tampa, Fla., in 2009 at age 87. At the time, he was quite active in the AMMV Southwest Florida Chapter. His widow, Mary carries on his efforts in the fight for recognition to the U. S. Merchant Mariners of WWII as CEO of that chapter.

In December of 1944, depth charges from a British frigate sank U-482 west of the Shetland Islands in the North Atlantic.





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*We stand for a strong American Merchant Marine and will help launch and support legislation to strengthen this position. We work to help the cause of American seamen and American seapower.*

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*Please check the appropriate box(es):*

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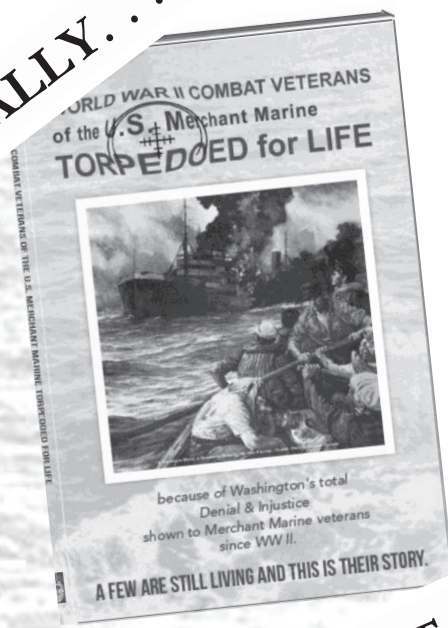
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