

AMERICAN
MERCHANT MARINE
VETERANS
NEWS MAGAZINE



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Simulator**



Baltimore Inner Harbor skyline



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March 25-29, 2020*



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AMERICAN
MERCHANT MARINE
VETERANS

National President John Pitts



The last edition of the AMMV magazine for the Fall of 2019 had articles of congratulation for HR 550 – WWII Merchant Marine Gold Medal Act receiving the required number of co-sponsors to move the legislation to the Senate as S. 133. Congratulations are now in order for receiving the required number of co-sponsors in the Senate.

It is my fervent hope that in the next edition of the AMMV magazine in Spring of 2020, we run another article of congratulations for the passage and signing into law of the “Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019”. A hearty congratulations to all who have contacted their legislators to make this happen!

Since the last magazine three months ago, we have remembered and celebrated Veterans Day on November 11th, and, hopefully, enjoyed another Thanksgiving and Christmas being with and remembering family and friends. This winter we are attending Wreaths Across America ceremonies being celebrated at the same time (noon East Coast time) from Coast to Coast on December 14, 2019. Christmas and New Year 2020 will soon be upon us with Spring and the AMMV convention March 25 through 29, 2020 not far behind. We go through life with these milestones or markers which identify our lives like a calendar of events important to us. Those of us fortunate enough to continue celebrating these milestones or markers of our lives should remember those who have gone before us and are no longer here to celebrate but have held these times dear in the past. As long as they are

remembered, they are still among us.

In urging AMMV members to contact their legislators to pass HR 550 or S. 133, some responded to me that they would rather we concentrated on HR 154 which would provide for \$25,000 to each qualified WWII Merchant Marine Veteran. Not being qualified for either myself, I tried to explain that the money would certainly be nice, but when it was spent to pay off credit cards, a mortgage or buy a new car, that money would be gone never to return or thought of again. We will continue to pursue HR 154, but a collective gold medal struck specifically to honor those few US Merchant Mariners who served in WWII would remain as a lasting tribute long after all of us, and the money, have gone.

In my mind, the purpose of HR 550 and S. 133 is to pay tribute to the deeds, service and sacrifice of the US Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII, but also to have a physical memento to remind all in the future of this great generation of seamen and sailors who were called upon to perform extraordinary feats and outperformed all expectations. As long there is a gold medal commemorating the

actions and contributions of the US Merchant Mariners to ultimate victory in WWII, they will remain among us, not in flesh, but in memory, never forgotten!

The main reason I answered the call of my US Merchant Marine Veteran friends and shipmates to involve myself in the American Merchant Marine Veterans organization, even though my maritime experience has never been in a war zone or harms way, is to preserve their actions and deeds as far into the future as possible. Lest we forget!

Best wishes to all for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

Fraternally,

John Pitts

President, AMMV, Inc.



AMMV National President John Pitts at the Wreaths Across America ceremony in San Pedro, CA December 14, 2019.



National Vice President Capt. Anthony "Dru" DiMattia

THE LOSS OF CAPTAIN WARREN G. LEBACK



There's much to be thankful for knowing the AMMV continues to push for the long overdue recognition of our WWII Merchant Marine Veterans. And at the same time, there are multiple battles that lie on the horizon.

I'd like to dedicate a "call out" of recognizing the lifelong support towards

our Maritime community to the late Captain Warren Leback.

Please note that while Administrator of MARAD, he facilitated, along with the Russian Embassy back in 1991, honoring our WWII Merchant Mariners, and Armed Guard, who made the Arctic Runs. The Russian Embassy has again reached out wanting to honor these Mariners. The 75th anniversary of the end of WWII with Nazi Germany is fast approaching; 07 May 2020. AMMV is currently working on this project and has received a positive response from MARAD about involvement.

IN MEMORY OF CAPT. WARREN G. LEBACK:

Captain Warren G. Leback had a 65-year career in the maritime industry starting at the age of 18 during World War II as a cadet midshipman on the *Joseph McKenna*, a liberty ship operated by Grace Line. A native of Astoria, Oregon, he graduated from Astoria High School in January, 1942, and entered the Cadet Basic Training School on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay in April, 1942. After completing his training in June of that year, he reported for duty on the *McKenna* where he spent seven months at sea.

During his first voyage, his ship brought back from Pearl Harbor the stern section of the destroyer *USS Cassin*, which had been bombed on December 7, 1941. The section was fitted onto the forebody for a new destroyer, which was also named *USS Cassin*. On his second voyage, the *McKenna* sailed for Guadalcanal with a load of military cargo. Although the *McKenna* arrived at Guadalcanal six weeks after the American landings, Japanese bombers were still harassing the anchored merchant ships. During the attacks, Warren saw action as a member of the *McKenna's* anti-aircraft gun crew. The ship's crew received Merchant Marine Combat medals for their service at Guadalcanal.

After being discharged from the *McKenna*, Warren reported to the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY, to complete his studies and graduated in January, 1944. He then returned to sail on Grace Line ships in the South Pacific Theater. In 1947, Warren received his Master's License, which he maintained until his death.

Warren worked for Grace Line until 1960 serving as third, second, and chief mate on several vessels and Master of the passenger cargo ship *Santa Monica*. He also held managerial positions in Barranquilla and Cartagena, Colombia, and in New York City. In New York, his responsibilities included personnel, labor relations, and vessel maintenance and repair. He oversaw the design of cargo systems and crew quarters for the new passenger liners *Santa Rosa* and *Santa Paula*, coordinated the design and conversion of the *Santa Eliana* and *Santa Leonor* to containerhips, and was responsible for preliminary economic studies and development designs for the *Santa Magdalena* class combination passenger/cargo/containerhips.



Capt. Warren G. Leback

From 1961 to 1964, Warren was the General Manager of Marine Operations for Central Gulf Steamship Corporation in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was in charge of vessel operations, maintenance and repair, vessel conversion and construction, labor relations, and chartering.

From 1965 to 1972, Warren served as a vice president for Sea-Land Service, Inc. in Port Elizabeth, New Jersey. He was responsible for vessel operations, ship construction, crane maintenance, purchasing, labor relations, chartering, and terminal marine operations. During his tenure, he directed the expansion of the fleet from fourteen to fifty-five ships. This included the conversion of twenty-eight WWII era ships to containerships at U.S. shipyards and construction of ten new ships at European shipyards. All of the vessels were for American Flag operation. Eight of the new ships were high speed vessels. One, the Sea-Land Exchange, holds the westbound Trans-Atlantic cargo ship speed record of 34.92 knots from Bishop's Rock, England, to Ambrose Light, New York. A second, the Sea-Land Trade, holds the eastbound Trans-Pacific cargo ship speed record of 32.75 knots from Kobe, Japan, to Race Rock, British Columbia.

In 1973, Warren joined the Interstate Oil Transport Company of Philadelphia. As Assistant to the President, he supervised the construction of three 265,000 DWT tankers and participated in the design and contracting for two 390,000 DWT tankers. In 1975, Warren was hired by the El Paso LNG Company in Houston. As Vice President for Marine Operations, he was responsible for a fleet of LNG tankers delivering liquefied natural gas from Algeria to terminals in Maryland, Georgia and Texas. In 1981, he was appointed Deputy Maritime Administrator in the U.S. Department of Transportation by President Ronald Reagan. In 1985, Warren joined Puerto Rico Marine Management, Inc. as Senior Vice President; he was responsible for vessel operations, construction, and chartering.

From 1989 to 1993, Warren served President George H. W. Bush as Maritime Administrator in the U.S. Department of Transportation. He was the first graduate of Kings Point to hold this distinguished position. His responsibilities included overseeing 105 Ready Reserve Fleet vessels and 225 National Defense Fleet vessels, supervising the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and six state maritime academies, providing marketing assistance to U.S. Flag lines, and port promotion. He negotiated maritime agreements with Russia, Ukraine, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of South Korea, and Brazil. In 1993, Warren returned to the private sector retiring in 2006 as President of First American Bulk Carrier Corporation.

Warren was an active member of numerous maritime organizations including servicing as National President of the United States Merchant

Marine Academy Alumni Association and National President of the Council of American Master Mariners. He also served as a chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Merchant Marine Museum.

Warren received the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's Outstanding Professional Achievement Award in 1964, the Alumnus of the Year Award in 1978, the Distinguished Service Award in 1984, and the Meritorious Alumni Service Award in 1989. In 1997, he was elected to the Academy's Hall of Distinguished Graduates. A classroom in Bowditch Hall at the Academy is named in his honor. In 1991, he was honored with the Admiral of the Ocean Sea Award by the United Seamen's Service. He received Honorary Doctorates from the Maine Maritime Academy and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

Warren came from a family with a strong maritime tradition. His grandfather was a shipwright and fisherman. His father was a fisherman, captain, and Columbia River pilot. His twin brother, Calvin, went to sea and finished his career as a captain with Sea-Land Service. When reflecting on his career, Warren would say, without hesitation, that the time he enjoyed the most was sailing for Grace Line. Every day at sea was different; the ships were well maintained; and the officers were like family.

Have a good watch,

Captain Dru DiMattia

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Maritime Administration

PRESS BOOK

February 1, 1991
Page 1 of 1

B91-011

Fifty-four American civilian seafarers who survived relentless German attacks while carrying military supplies to the beleaguered Soviet Union during World War II belatedly were awarded commemorative medals at the Russian Embassy in Washington on January 31. During the war, more than 730 U.S.-flag merchant vessels were lost and the death toll of U.S. seafarers proportionately exceeded all branches of the U.S. armed services except the U.S. Marine Corps.

While the largest losses were inflicted on allied convoys in the North Atlantic, the most perilous voyages were those destined for Murmansk. Ships in those convoys were subjected to constant submarine and air attacks. One ill-fated convoy, PQ-17, set out with 34 merchant ships, but all but 11 were sunk while enroute.

Charge d-Affairs Sergi Chetverikov presented the medals and certificates of appreciation signed by President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The United States Government was represented by Maritime Administrator Captain Warren G. Leback, himself a World War II merchant marine veteran. He heads the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration, successor to the War Shipping Administration, which operated more than 5,000 merchant ships during World War II.

As a current note on military supply operations, the Maritime Administration has turned over 68 Ready Reserve Force cargo ships to the U.S. Navy to support U.S. and Allied forces in the Middle East. More than 2,300 American civilian seafarers serve aboard these vessels.

Note To Editors: We expect to have photographs of the ceremony available shortly. Please call Walter Oates, Public Affairs Officer, Maritime Administration 202-366-5807 for further information or to request photos.



National Secretary Stanley Blumenthal



At the time submitted, S 133 has 66 co-sponsors including Rick Scott of Florida. This, with the sponsoring Senator Lisa Murkowski is enough to move the "Gold Medal for WWII Merchant Mariners" legislation (S.133) to a vote in the U. S. Senate.

AMERICAN LEGION FOR GOD AND COUNTRY SINCE 1919.

The oldest and biggest Service Veteran organization of all. Sindy informed me that in the past the AL backed us strongly legislative wise but my experience has been the opposite, with not a word about us in their monthly magazine which they claim has a circulation of over 2 million loaded with paid ads.

They have a very active legislative department supporting all veterans' bills except ours. I have forwarded everything about S 133 and other items many times to a group of their officials without getting a reply until finally, under their newest National Commander (they change every year), I was told to introduce a Resolution in support of our MM to Post 365 to which I belong. I did but it ended up that it won't be voted on till June by higher ups. The local Commander of my Post couldn't see why the magazine wouldn't print items about us, especially S 133.

BUILDING MEGA CRUISE SHIPS IN AMERICA.

Had a friendly discussion with Mark H. Buzby, Maritime Administrator, whose boss is Elaine L. Chao, Secretary Dept. of Transportation and who has a direct ear of the President. Both Mark and Elaine are good friends of our Merchant Marine. For now the matter is Dead In the Water as being too expensive but keep up the fight, especially since China is right now building two and the necessary dry dock, under a joint venture with Carnival Corp., with an option to build 4 more. Keep your eye on Buzby, I predict he will be the next Secretary Of Transportation.

MICHAEL RUBENS BLOOMBERG 77.

On record as the BIGGEST ENEMY OF THE

JONES ACT EVEN THOUGH OUR MILITARY IS FOR IT, Bloomberg accepts our necessary Peace and War shrunk MM as is, not worthy of supporting in spite of our history as a first-rate Maritime nation. No plans to increase or improve it. He feels that the Jones Act is outdated protectionism; adds to shipping costs; and we should compete directly with cheaper foreign flaggers, who, I believe, get help from their government; and there's no mention of Home Land Security.

He's currently advertising heavily and expensively with his own money to buy the Democratic candidacy for President. Per Wikipedia, Bloomberg was once a Republican; three times Mayor of NYC after campaigning to remove 2 term limit; 9th richest in USA; 14th in the world; co-founder, CEO, majority owner of Bloomberg L.P. (limited Partnership), a global financial service computer software system and mass media company known as Bloomberg Terminal estimated worth \$65 billion; yearly income north of \$9 billion. Refuses donations and therefore like a king is beholden to no one. Famous philanthropist including \$5 billion for gun control legislation. Has signed the pledge whereby Billionaires promise to give away at least half their wealth. I guess he means after they cross the bar.

To me it is a mystery on how he got so rich so fast and stays so rich? How much USA taxes does he pay? Who are the customers paying the \$9 billion+ yearly for his services? What mass media does he own? What thousands of USA jobs he boasts did he create? And especially does he have investments in foreign shipyards? On TV I never hear these questions asked or answered?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL



Original Jones Act announcement



National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly

**If you are not sure if your dues are paid to
June 30, 2020 Please call me and check:
(475) 470-9200 – Lynn**

In celebration of the 100th Year Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment (August 18, 1920) securing a woman's right to vote, I offer my humble recognition of the women of the past and present U.S. Merchant Marine serving in war and peace.

Dr. Shashi Kumar, the National Coordinator of Maritime Education and Training at the U.S. Maritime Administration, reports that seven percent of the industry's positions are currently held by women. I would like to highlight a heroic figure in the history of women in the Merchant Marine.

Clara Gordon Main (born in Scotland in 1886) joined the U. S. Merchant Marine in 1927 and was a 55 year old stewardess from Middleton, NY aboard the SS President Harrison, a Liberty Ship, off the coast of China on December 8, 1941 (December 7th in U.S.). The ship, under charter to the U.S. Navy, was ordered to proceed to Chingwangtao, China, to "bring out" the 4th Marine Regiment and transport 300 Marines of the Peking and Tientsin Legation Guard along with 1400 tons of equipment to Manila.

The SS President Harrison encountered the Japanese ship Nagasaki Maru which was a 22 knot mail boat on the Japan-China run. The mail boat was ordered by the Japanese Navy to keep the Harrison under surveillance and report to Naval Authorities in Shanghai. Planes above dropped leaflets ordering the ship to surrender. A Japanese plane with gun racks full circled overhead firing off a round of machine gun fire in an effort to halt the Liberty Ship. With enemy planes overhead and a Japanese destroyer approaching at full speed it seemed as though there was no way out. At the time the crew noted that the planes did not make any effort to destroy the Harrison and was therefore convinced that the Japanese were hoping to take control of the vessel intact. Capt. Oriel Pierson, not a man to "go quietly", ordered the crew "full ahead" and beached the ship on the island of Shawsheishan in order to render the vessel

inoperable and, therefore, of no value to the Japanese. At that point the crew of 156, including one woman, Clara Gordon Main, were taken prisoners in what is believed to be one of the first examples of Americans taken as POWs by the Japanese. Thus, it is believed Mrs. Main was the first woman prisoner of WW II.

Clara Gordon Main is credited with keeping the crew calm and professional during the arrest. Before boarding the last lifeboat she took the ship's medical supplies and first aid equipment to be prepared in case of an emergency. As it turns out there was an immediate medical emergency. Clara's boss, Chief Steward J.L. McKay of San Francisco was severely injured, breaking several ribs when his lifeboat, due to rough seas and winds, slammed into the still functioning ship's propeller which was operating due to remaining steam in the engine. Three men were killed and several badly injured when the lifeboat broke in half. Clara devoted the next six weeks diligently caring for McKay. The American crew stayed on the island for forty days while the Japanese tried to repair the Harrison sufficiently to make her seaworthy.

Clara Gordon Main was awarded the Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medal for her, "Calm and courageous attitude and skillful nursing". It was declared that had it not been for her McKay would not have survived.

Mrs. Main was interned in Chapei Camp near Shanghai as a Japanese POW for nearly two years. She was released in 1943 but remained in service to the Merchant Marine until her retirement in 1953. Captain Oriel Pierson remained a prisoner until the war's end.

Calm Seas,


Lynn C. Kelly



Clara Gordon Main



NEWS Magazine Editor Sindy Raymond



Well, it is that time of year, again, for this quarterly issue of the *AMMV NEWS Magazine*. This one is a little early; however, there's been a great deal of activity in the last few months.

LEGISLATION:

As detailed later in this *NEWS*, there has been major activity regarding our Senate bill S.133, the "Merchant

Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019." At press time, we had 68 co-sponsors signed on in support. A very special THANK YOU to everyone – our members, maritime unions, politicians and all who worked so hard gleaning support for us.

Support of both Senators from the states of: Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington helped fill in the numbers and their involvement is much appreciated. They have honored the Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII with their endorsements. Now the successful passage in the Senate is promised; after a joint House and Senate committee process, U.S. President Trump will hopefully sign it into place, perhaps in the Oval Office with AMMV members in attendance. We'll hear more about that when known.

However, our battle is not over yet. We must now

concentrate our efforts towards getting the Just Recognition legislation passed in Congress. We have been advised that the Gold Medal bill could be used as a stepping stone to improve the chances of our "bonus" legislative coming to fruition after all these years. Let's all concentrate on that project now. **Time is of the essence.**

Further news will be received from us later about moving forward the Just Recognition legislation - House bill HR.154; Senate bill yet to be introduced - but with a year left in this 116th Congressional session, success is attainable. Let's all continue to do our share.

NATIONAL AMMV CONVENTION:

Our 34th National AMMV Convention will be held at MITAGS convention center in Linthicum (Baltimore), Maryland next March – the 25th through the 29th. Included in this *NEWS*, are a registration form; a Commemorative book application form – submittal deadline February 20th; the hotel reservation information (please remember to reserve a room before March 3rd for special rates) and a tentative convention schedule.

Although there are some loose ends to tie up, this convention is gearing up to be a lively one. Why don't you plan to attend to see old friends, meet new ones, do some business, hear great speakers, attend some events and generally enjoy the hospitality that is so much a part of MM&P's MITAGS' Center? **I look forward to seeing you there.**

FULL SPEED AHEAD,

Sindy Raymond
SINDY RAYMOND

Welcome Aboard to these New Members of the AMMV

BONNIE BROMLEY	OWATONNA	MN
JOHN CLARE	RUTHERFORD	NJ
LONDON CRUTCHER	MC KINLEYVILLE	CA
RANDY CRUTCHER	SANTA FE	NM
DEAN HALE	KELSEYVILLE	CA
WILLIAM E. HARRIS	CAPE CORAL	FL
RYAN LEO	OXFORD	MD
ERIC MARTINEAU	AUBURN	MA
ALAN J. McCLENAGHAN	REDDING	CA
JEFFREY D. McQUISTION	CHARDON	OH

TIMOTHY MURRAY	MALVERNE	NY
PETER NEWTON	RICHLAND	WA
RICHARD OHLSEN	SHIRLEY	NY
ETHAN PEAKE	HUNTINGTON	WV
WILLIAM LYDELL PERKINS	SIBLEY	LA
GEORGIA ANN QUILICI	BUTTE	MT
DANIEL E. SCHWALL	HINGHAM	MA
FREDERICK A. SERGIO	LANSLOWNE	VA
JAMES T. SHIRLEY, JR	NEWTOWN	PA
MATTHEW SINGLETON	ISLIP	NY

BI-ANNUAL RVP ELECTIONS

As mandated by the AMMV by-laws, there will be an election or re-election of REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS at the National convention, March 25-29, 2020 at Baltimore, MD.

Incumbent volunteer RVPs for Region Two – George Bruno; Region Three – Howard Pfeifer; Region Four – Michael Fiorenza; and Region Six – Bob Ross will all be seeking re-election at the Board of Directors meeting.

Region One, which covers Florida and Puerto Rico, Stephen Snyder, member-at-large, has volunteered to become RVP. Stephen writes: "I started my Merchant Mariner 38 year career on oil tankers with ARCO Marine out of Philadelphia on November 4th,



Stephen Snyder

delphia on November 4th, 1980, the day Ronald Reagan was elected President. In the 80's I sailed as Cook/Baker, Ordinary Seaman, Able Seaman, and Bosun, cruising the Caribbean and thru the Panama Cannel.

"Then came what I consider my big break, as no Engineman wanted to come out of the engine room, to sail up as Pumpman in the 90's. This was a time

of great changes in the maritime oil industry. After the Exxon

Valdez spill came OPA '90, which regulated working hours, ship construction, and behavior.

"When the new double hull, computer operated, [not maintenance free] ships were starting to be delivered in 2000, the company, now Polar Tankers did away with the Pumpman job. This gave me the chance to go into the engine room as a full QMED All Ratings, including Junior Engineer. I held this position until my retirement at age 65 on June 1st, 2018.

"I cannot overstate how thankful I am to those who gave me the opportunity to have sailed and have the good life I'm enjoying in Florida today. In some small way if my involvement helps to keep the memory of American Merchant Mariners who came before me alive, it will be rewarding. I'm thanking them, and paying it forward to those who are sailing now."

Former AMMV National President Capt. Chris Edyvean has decided to run as RVP in **Region Five**. Former AMMV National Vice President Christian Yuhas has volunteered as RVP for **Region Eight**, which covers California and Hawaii.

Region Seven, which covers Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, RVP position is currently vacant and a volunteer there would be appreciated.

Many thanks go out to former RVPs Larry Starn, Region 8; and "Speed" Hinds, Region 5; for their numerous years of service to the AMMV.



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JUST RECOGNITION

Merchant Mariners of WWII Congressional Gold Medal Act: *Reflecting on the efforts leading to success, and thanking our volunteers who contributed large and small.*

As the AMMV winter News magazine goes to press, we have breaking news informing us that passage of the Merchant Mariners of WWII Congressional Gold Medal Act is a reality. Before thanking our members and volunteers, let's take a moment to consider the timeline of events leading up to the imminent passage of this legislation.

May 2015 AMMV President Morris Harvey led the first "Storm the Hill" campaign, in which five WWII Merchant Mariners spent a week meeting with members of Congress in regards to then H.R. 563 (compensation bill). The activity was centered around National Maritime Day.

9 Jul 2015 Rep. Susan Brooks of Indiana introduced H.R. 2992, the very first version of the "Merchant Mariners of WWII Congressional Gold Medal Act". Rep. Brooks took an interest in WWII MM recognition after meeting with members of a local AMMV Chapter.

30 Mar 2016 AMMV Alaska Greatlands Chapter President Eldon Gallear (sole survivor of the *S/S Tille Lykes*) attended a maritime roundtable conference with Alaskan Senator Dan Sullivan.

26 May 2016 Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska introduced the first Senate companion bill for the Gold Medal legislation, S. 2989. This was a direct result of Eldon Gallear's meeting with Sullivan, who also became an original sponsor.

30 Nov 2016 H.R. 2992 (with 312 cosponsors) passed the House in a special session of Congress dealing with "legislation considered under suspension of the rules". However,

companion Senate bill S. 2989 died a short time afterwards at the end of the 114th Congress with only 34 cosponsors.

May 2017 AMMV regrouped with another Storm the Hill attempt, led once again by Morris Harvey. At that time, no Gold Medal legislation had been introduced in the 115th Congress, making "compensation" legislation H.R. 154 the key focus.



*The original 2015 Storm the Hill gang with
Rep. Susan Brooks*

15 Nov 2017 Senator Murkowski, along with Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin as an original cosponsor, reintroduced the Gold Medal legislation in the form of S. 2127.

23 May 2018 AMMV, working with the staffers of pro-maritime Congressman John Garamendi of California, saw the successful reintroduction of the House version of the Merchant Mariners of WWII Congressional Gold Medal Act, H.R. 5879. The announcement was made in conjunction with National Maritime Day and AMMV's third Storm the Hill efforts. (The 2018 Storm the Hill team was led by Charles Mills.)

December 2018 Both versions of the Gold Medal legislation died at the conclusion of the 115th Congress. S. 2127 had only 30 cosponsors; H.R. 5879 had accumulated 222 cosponsors.

15 Jan 2019 To open the new 116th Congress, Rep. Garamendi reintroduced the Congressional Gold Medal legislation in the form of H.R. 550. Simultaneously, Sen. Murkowski reintroduced the companion bill, now S. 133.

May 2019 For the fourth time in five years, AMMV sent a Storm the Hill team to D.C. on the week of National Maritime Day. AMMV Government Affairs Co-Chair Charles



JUST RECOGNITION



Sen. Murkowski meets with the STH Vets (2018)

Mills led the team once again. Also, a letter was signed by over 100 maritime groups and affiliates – representing millions of registered voters – and sent to all members of Congress asking for support of H.R. 550 & S. 133. **25 Jun 2019** Having acquired the prerequisite number of co-sponsors, Garamendi motioned to add H.R. 550 to the Consensus

Calendar.

19 Sep 2019 H.R. 550 passed the U.S. House of Representatives! (Final count: 302 cosponsors.)

13 Dec 2019 S. 133 has accumulated 68 cosponsors, which exceeds the required number for the bill to be pushed to the Floor. Passage is imminent.

The future:

So, what's next? First, S. 133 must be scheduled to be heard, then passed by the Senate. Next, it will be sent to the President of the United States for ultimate signature and approval. A special Oval Office signing ceremony with the President may be requested, but is not guaranteed. (You can bet that AMMV will be doing our best to see that this happens!)

AMMV has been told that we will have a hand in designing the actual Merchant Mariners of WWII Congressional Gold Medal. Once created, the Gold Medal may "travel" to various functions for display (such as AMMV Conventions or Maritime Day ceremonies). Individual replica medals will be available for eligible recipients at a cost of around \$40-\$50. AMMV plans to solicit groups for donations to pay for these replica medals for our veterans.

Passage of the Congressional Gold Medal Act could also serve as a springboard to reigniting efforts to see WWII MM compensation legislation passed. It will un-

doubtedly serve to educate the public in the importance of maintaining a strong modern-day U.S. Merchant Marine.

Gratitudes:

As the Immediate Past President of AMMV, I would like to thank all of the people who have been involved since the inception of WWII MM Cong. Gold Medal legislation. (Sadly, many who assisted with these efforts are no longer with us.) From that Indiana AMMV Chapter that met with Rep. Susan Brooks, to the skilled lobbyists and legislative directors of our maritime unions who are largely responsible for the recent push, THANK YOU ALL for your efforts to recognize our WWII Merchant Mariners. A huge thanks is due to MITAGS and MMP for supporting our Storm the Hill group four times; not to mention the STH participants themselves. Thank you Sheila Sova, Cindy Raymond, Dave Yoho, Dru DiMattia, John Pitts, Charles Mills, Lynn & Dennis Kelly, Debbie Rogow, Laura Riddle, Gene Barner, Bob Weagant, Gerard Driscoll, Mark Gleason, Patti Scafidi – the list is very long and so many have contributed in so many ways.

To our WWII MM Veterans: Thank you for your service, which has allowed the rest of us to enjoy a life of freedom. With passage of the Congressional Gold Medal Act, your bravery and sacrifice will be permanently etched into U.S. history. Heave Ho!

Captain Christopher J. Edyvean
AMMV Past National President



Rep. Garamendi with the STH Vets (2018)

THE SOO LOCKS

This story is about the protection of the navigational locks located at Sault St. Marie, Michigan (aka "the Soo"), as excerpted from "WORLD WAR II & THE GREAT LAKES: Submarines, Bombers and Ore Boats". The Soo Locks separate Lake Superior and its iron ore loading facilities from the lower four Great Lakes. This and other books by Wes Oleszewski can be found at amazon.com or avery-colorstudios.com/Books/Wes-Oleszewski

Rather than expanding their empire south through the Pacific and making a star-crossed attack on the island of Midway, or continuing to exercise the battle of the Atlantic with wolf packs of U-boats, the Japanese or the Germans could actually have won the war by bombing one single target on the Great Lakes: the Soo Locks.

United States manufacturing was the heart of the Arsenal of Democracy and the blood was iron ore. As the prospect of world war began to grow and the gears of Lend-Lease began to turn, there were plenty of oreboats available. Nearly the entire Great Lakes fleet had been idled during the Great Depression as had their crews. Of the half dozen iron ore ports only one, Escanaba, did not require that vessels transit through the locks at Sault Saint Marie, "the Soo." The fly in the red ore ointment was that Lake Superior had a total of 15 individual ore docks, while below the Soo locks there was only Escanaba and its five docks. The easiest way to anesthetize the monster of the arsenal of democracy would have been to clog up its coronary artery—the Soo locks.

In mid-1939 Canada entered the war and began stationing guns and soldiers around their nation's locks at the Soo. Likewise, the American Army used troops stationed at Fort Brady near the locks to stand guard... a total of 20 soldiers. Soon the idea began to sink in to the military leaders in the United States that the Soo a tasty target for German saboteurs... or worse.

It was speculated that the real threat may come from someone sneaking aboard an oreboat and stowing away. Then, under arms, the saboteurs would commandeer the vessel and ram it into the lock gates or, worse yet, use an

explosive to sink the boat in one of the narrow channels below the locks.

On February, 15th, 1941 the United States Department of the Interior assigned the 702nd Military Police Battalion to the task of securing the American canal at Sault Saint Marie. A unit consisting of 545 MPs made their way to the

great white north. Their job involved ground security operations and keeping a sharp lookout for saboteurs.

Once the United States was actually involved in the shooting war, the powers that be in the War Department began to take the possibility of threats to the Soo under more intense consideration. German paratroopers could do a great deal of damage. Some sort of air assault could be done. The German HE-139 seaplane could be catapult launched from a small ship in Hudson Bay. It easily had the range to make the round trip to



Sault Saint Marie and the famous Soo locks that allow vessels to transit between Lake Superior and the lower lakes. Had the Axis powers bombed this site they could have crippled the American steel industry.

Library of Congress photo.

the Soo.

On March 28, 1942 the Army deployed the 131st Infantry Regiment to the Soo to replace the MPs. Earlier that month the 100th Coastal Artillery Unit had been deployed along with their anti-aircraft weapons. Interestingly, the 100th consisted of all African-American soldiers transported up north from Camp Davis, North Carolina.



Through the war years armed sentries became a common sight as the oreboats passed the Soo.

Michigan Historical Archives

April of 1942 saw the protective strength of the locks being increased as members of the Army's 399th Barrage Balloon Battalion arrived at the Soo. Barrage balloons, however, did have some draw-backs. Storms in August and October of 1942 caused some of the balloons to snap their cables and fly away. In the October adventure the balloon drifted away dragging its long steel cable. That cable came in contact with power lines and knocked out power to wide areas. Thereafter the balloons were reeled in and stored when nasty weather threatened.

Soon the number of troops stationed at fortress Soo would add up to between 7,000 and 12,000 soldiers. Bristling with anti-aircraft guns, search lights, machine-gun nests, barrage balloons and guards with rifles at the ready, the Soo was likely the most heavily defended location in North America.

Each vessel that wanted to pass through fortress Soo needed to comply with a special set of Lake Carriers Association security procedures to ensure that no stow-away saboteurs were aboard. Of course there was far too much traffic and far too few Coast Guard officers to do such searching and not interrupt the flow of cargo, so the vessels policed themselves. One of the boat's officers was required, before entering the canal, to check every inch of the vessel. When that "inspection" was complete the vessel needed to raise a yellow flag with a black ball in the center. That was the international signal flag for the letter "I" which was short for "Inspected."

Over all it is very hard to find any real sabotage, or enemy agent activity that took place on the waters of the Great Lakes during the World War II era. The enemy completely ignored the flow of iron ore and other bulk materials along the inland seas that turned out to be the life blood of the war effort. The Soo Locks were safe from the enemy, even though at the time no one in the War Department realized it.

One hard fact that the War Department swiftly addressed in the beginning involved the locks themselves. When war broke out there were four locks on the American side and one on the Canadian side. On the American side the Sabin measured 1,350 feet long and 80 feet wide. The Davis lock was a twin to the Sabin while the Poe measured 800 feet long and 100 feet wide. By the time of World War II the Poe's 16-foot depth restricted it from passing most of the ore laden fleet. The Weitzel, was also useless so far as the oreboats were concerned. Opened in 1881 it was 515 feet long, 80 feet wide and 11 feet deep narrowing to 60 feet at the gates.



St. Marys Falls Canal. View looking upstream from control tower showing construction of concrete wall sections for MacArthur Lock.

Photo credit is: Thomas Manse Collection.

Another problem for the War Department was the history of lock building at the Soo. It took 11 years to build the Weitzel lock, 15 to construct the Poe and 10 to build the Davis and Sabin each. The War Department decided that a new, modern lock was needed and quickly. The solution was manpower and the sleeping giant of American industry.

August of 1942 found the residents of the Soo shaken by huge explosions as one of the locks was systematically destroyed by dynamite. Of course it was not saboteurs that had set the charges. Instead it was construction workers who were demolishing the antiquated Weitzel lock. Soon more than 9,000 construction workers were busy around the clock ripping out the old Weitzel lock, deepening the channel and constructing a new lock measuring 859 feet long, 80 feet wide and 32 feet deep.

In the winter months a huge temporary wooden shelter was constructed over the work space and heaters equipped with fans were used to allow the crews to continue to do important things such as pouring cement. On July 11, 1943, just a little over 15 months after construction had started and seven months ahead of schedule the McArthur lock was activated. The self-unloader CARL D. BRADLEY was the first vessel to pass through the brand new McArthur lock.

By the end of the war all of the troops had been removed from fortress Soo and it reverted back just being a passageway to the lower lakes and a tourist attraction. Oddly, neither the Nazis or the Imperial Japanese ever considered attacking the locks. The McArthur lock still raises and lowers hundreds of vessels upbound and downbound every season.

AMMV

Profit & Loss

July through November 2019

Income	
402 · Contributions	6,357.24
403 · Interest Income	14.57
405 · Mission Support Fund	4,194.25
409 · Miscellaneous Income	16.00
410 · Chapter and MAL Dues	
HUM · Humboldt Bay	125.00
AKG · Alaska Greatlands	224.00
BEE · Beehive Mariners	75.00
BSM · Big Sky Mariners	140.00
DAR · Dennis Roland	1,248.00
EOH · Edwin O'Hara	150.00
GLD · Golden Gate	900.00
JTS · John T. Schmidt/Palmetto	407.00
LON · Lone Star	250.00
MAL · Members at Large	17,066.00
MALW · Members at Large Paypal	1,846.29
NBM · North Bay Mariners	400.00
NOA · North Atlantic	325.00
OHV · Ohio Valley	400.00
ORV · Oswego River Valley	75.00
PUG · Puget Sound	32.00
THR · Three Rivers	550.00
Total 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues	24,213.29
411 · Convention Income	
412 · Convention Registrations	530.00
413 · Comm. Book Ads	850.00
414 · Convention Donations	45.00
Total 411 · Convention Income	1,425.00
Total Income	36,220.35
Expense	
500 · Fixed Expense	
501 · Bank Charge	45.00
507 · Telephone	162.45
510 · Membership Promotion	527.56
511 · Service Charges - Paypal	0.21
Total 500 · Fixed Expense	735.22
512 · Memorial Expense	140.39
513 · Advertising	100.00
514 · Convention Expenses	
515 · Convention Events	750.00
Total 514 · Convention Expenses	750.00
520 · Mission Advance	
525 · Mission Support Exp	4,196.89
526 · Internet Initiative	294.50
528 · JCC Storage Expense	628.00
Total 520 · Mission Advance	5,119.39
530 · Newsletter	
533 · Postage	1,627.57
536 · Printing	6,614.08
538 · Layout	2,600.00
539 · Editorial Fee	600.00
Total 530 · Newsletter	11,441.65
550 · Personnel	
551 · Administration	7,750.00
Total 550 · Personnel	7,750.00

560 · Operating Expense	
564 · Office Supplies	78.24
565 · Postage - Office	293.59
566 · Printing - Office	376.51
567 · Licenses & Fees	70.00
Total 560 · Operating Expense	818.34
Total Expense	26,854.99
Net Income	9,365.36

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
American Merchant Marine Veterans
Serving America in Peace and War

05 December 2019

The American Merchant Marine Veterans 34th Annual Convention, 2020

Proposal # 01-20 Amend the Preamble to the By-laws

Whereas, the American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc Constitution and Bylaws,

Preamble states in its first sentence:

“The American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) is a not for profit pro-American organization established to gain recognition for what the men of the American Merchant Marine have accomplished for our country in war and peace.”

Whereas, history reflects that indeed women have served and continue to serve our Merchant Marine in all capacities.

Whereas, history reflects that one woman, Clara Gordon Main (b. Scotland 1886), served USMM from 1927 to 1953 serving during WWII and was taken prisoner of war.

Whereas, women have been included in combat roles serving our Armed Services.

Therefore, be it resolved that the AMMV Preamble to our Bylaws will recognize “Women” of the Merchant Marine.

Signed,

Capt. Dru DiMattia
National V.P., AMMV
drudimattia@gmail.com

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
P.O. BOX 2024 · DARIEN, CT 06820-2024
(475) 470-9200 · ammermarvets@gmail.com

The Prison Ships Martyrs' Monument

The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument that stands today in the center of Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn, NY, is a 1908 memorial to the 11,000 men and boys who died in horrid conditions on the British Prison Ships during the Revolutionary War. The Monument, which is sometimes referred to as the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, stands in the center of what was once called Fort Putnam, an actual Revolutionary War fort, named after General Putnam. The Monument you see today is actually the third incarnation of this sacred shrine. The story of the horrid Prison Ships – and the ghastly conditions suffered by the men and boys imprisoned on them during the Revolutionary War – is one of the most disturbing chapters in American history.

When most Americans think of the Revolutionary War, names like Bunker Hill, Camden, Valley Forge and Brandywine come readily to mind. New York City is an afterthought—if it's part of the conversation at all. The vast arc running from Boston to Lexington, Saratoga, Philadelphia, Yorktown and south to Savannah was defined by heroics and drawn with blood. Loyalist New York caved early, and sacrificed nothing.

Or so the story goes. In reality, New York played a pivotal role in the Revolution. The war's biggest battle—with more than 30,000 combatants, at a time when New York's population was just 25,000—was fought not in New England or the Chesapeake but in Brooklyn. The Battle of Brooklyn was a crushing loss for the Americans, with more than 1,500 killed, wounded or captured.

George Washington's chancy nighttime retreat from Brooklyn to Manhattan was a kind of Colonial-era Dunkirk. Like the epic 1940 evacuation of German-encircled British troops from Dunkirk and other beaches in western France, Americans fled an early rout and, battle-hardened, fought on.

During the American Revolutionary War, which began in 1775, the British arrested scores of soldiers, sailors, and private citizens on both land and sea. Many were apprehended simply because they would not swear allegiance to the Crown of England. Besides American civilians, privateers and resistance fighters, the British captured the



Today's Prison Ship Martyrs Monument

crews of foreign ships on the high seas, especially Spanish vessels. The soldiers, sailors and civilians they arrested were deemed by the British to be prisoners of war and were incarcerated. When the British ran out of jail space to house their POWs they began using decommissioned or damaged war ships that were anchored in Wallabout Bay (today the site of the Brooklyn Navy Yard) as floating prisons.

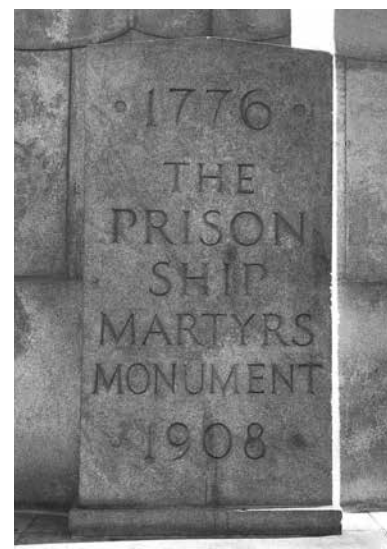
But for sheer, grinding horror, nothing approaches the suffering and sacrifice witnessed during the war aboard these British prison ships. In these wet, wooden bastilles in New York waters, more Americans died than in all the battles of the Revolutionary War combined. More than 8,000 Americans died in combat between 1776 and 1783. Meanwhile, more than 11,000 prisoners died on ships anchored or, more often, aground in the East River. In those stripped-down “hulks,” captured soldiers and sailors were crammed below decks in conditions

that could be called bestial if the characterization wasn't an insult to wild animals.

Most of the sailors who ended up in the hulks were from privateers rather than naval vessels. America didn't have a navy until October 1775. During the war, most of America's fighting at sea was done by private ships granted a Letter of Marque—a license, in effect, from the government authorizing American ships to attack British vessels. The private ships' owners, captains and crews stood to profit when captured enemy ships were condemned by American authorities and re-sold.

THE “OLD JERSEY”

Life was unbearable on the prison ships, the most notorious of them



Current plaque at base



Eagle from top of first monument placed in 2008 on new monument perch

being the Old Jersey – which was called “Hell” by the inhabitants. Disease was rampant, food and water were scarce or non-existent, and the living conditions were horrendously overcrowded and wretched. If one had money they could purchase food from the many entrepreneurs who rowed up to the boat to sell their wares.

Otherwise, the meager rations would consist of sawdust laden bread or watery soup.

A great number of the captives died from disease and malnutrition. Their emaciated bodies were either thrown overboard or buried in shallow graves in the sandy marshes of Wallabout Bay. Even though the British surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia in 1782, the surviving prisoners were not freed until 1783, when the British abandoned New York City. (A footnote: after the war, the British Commander in charge of the Prison Ships was brought up on war crimes charges and was subsequently hanged.)

In the years following the war the bones of the patriots would regularly wash up along the shores of Brooklyn and Long Island. These remains were collected by Brooklynites with the hopes of creating a permanent resting place for the remains of the brave Prison Ship Martyrs.

THE FIRST VAULT AND MONUMENT:

In the early 1800’s the first Martyrs Monument was erected. It was a small square building which stood above the vault storing the remains. It had an eagle mounted at



Interior of new monument

the point of the roof and was located on a triangular plot of land near the Brooklyn Navy Yard waterfront in what is now called Vinegar Hill. By the 1840s, the original monument was in a state of disrepair and neglect.

THE SECOND ONE:

By 1873 a large stone crypt was constructed in the heart of what is now Fort Greene Park (then called Washington Park), and the bones were re-interred in the crypt. A small monument was erected on the hill above the crypt. On the front was the following inscription: “*Sacred to the memory, of our sailors, soldiers and citizens, who suffered and died on board British prison ships in the Wallabout during the American Revolution*”.

TODAY’S MONUMENT:

By the close of the 19th century, funds were finally raised for a grander, more fitting monument for the Prison Ship Martyrs and more bones had been found during



Interior of new monument

additional excavations in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. An architectural firm was commissioned to design the large 148 ft. tower which stands today in the park. It was unveiled in 1908 with a grand ribbon-cutting ceremony presided over by President-Elect Taft.

Sadly, over the ensuing decades this monument, also, was severely neglected. Due to shortage of public funds, urban blight and lack of community interest both the park and the memorial fell into disrepair. The monument originally housed a staircase and elevator to the top observation deck, which featured a lighted urn with a beacon of light which could be seen for miles. The elevator was operational until the 1930s but was unfortunately removed by the city in the early 1970s.

In November 2008 a grand weekend event celebrated the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the 1908 Prison Ships Martyrs Memorial. The highlights of the restoration are the return of the bronze eagles to their original perches in Monument Plaza, and the re-lighting of the urn with a new beacon of freedom. The urn and the monument had been dark for over 71 years.

ARCTIC DISASTER – CONVOY PQ-17

With just the few words, “Convoy is to scatter.” issued by British Admiralty to commanders of Convoy PQ-17, July 4, 1942, the fate of the Soviet Union bound Convoy PQ-17 was sealed and the story of men involved began.

The Murmansk Run:

Germany’s ill-fated invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 gave England an unlikely and problematic ally. Unlikely because Great Britain’s government was ardently anti-Communist, and problematic because of the vast distances involved in supplying aid under the protection of an already hard-pressed Royal Navy.

Political differences aside, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill felt that any nation warring with Germany was already an ally and deserved aid from Britain as well as the United States. England’s commitments elsewhere around the globe precluded providing manpower or seizing the initiative. For now, the only aid readily available was a constant flow of supplies.

Originally, an informal agreement provided for the delivery of all goods to Soviet ships at British and American ports. The responsibility for ferrying supplies back to the Soviet Union would then rest entirely with the Soviets. But there were, also, not enough ships in the Soviet navy to handle such a monumental task, and eventually the convoys to the Soviet Union came to consist mainly of British and American ships.

Axis domination of the Mediterranean left only two Allied supply routes to the Soviet Union open. One, through Iran, required a sea journey of more than 13,000 miles. The second was a more practical northern route of less than 2,500 miles,

but it crossed the cruelest sea of all, the Arctic Ocean. This Arctic route became known as “the Murmansk Run.”

Merchant ships leaving the United States bound for Europe sailed across the Atlantic in what was known as the convoy system. Groups of ships were gathered from ports across the country and brought together under protection from Allied naval vessels to make the treacherous journey across U-boat-infested waters to the United Kingdom. These convoys had specific code names to track where they were going and coming from. For example, convoys sailing for the Soviet Union were titled PQ and those leaving the Soviet Union QP.

Sailing around the northern tip of Norway, the convoys would be exposed to one of the largest concentrations of German U-boats, surface raiders and aircraft anywhere in the world. Attacks by more than a dozen subs and literally hundreds of planes at one time would not be uncommon. Strict orders forbade the halting of any ship for even a moment for fear of being attacked by prowling German U-boats, and individuals who fell overboard or survivors seen adrift on the waters had to be ruthlessly ignored. In the first two years of the run, more than one-fifth of the supplies sent to Murmansk would be lost.

Convoys supplying the Soviet Union began in August 1941 with PQ-1 and initially saw little German opposition to these Arctic shipments.

However, by PQ-16 in May 1942, German resistance had dramatically increased. Realizing the strategic importance of the supplies flowing to the Soviets, Germany planned to make the trip so costly in lives and ships that the Allies would be forced to



abandon any further attempts. They assembled a force of more than 260 aircraft and about 30 U-boats to greet any convoys that attempted the voyage. Out of a total of 30 ships in convoy PQ-16, the Germans sank or damaged nine, the largest PQ convoy losses to date.

PQ-17 disaster:

When Convoy PQ-17, sailed from Iceland on June 27, 1942, headed for the Soviet port of Archangel, they faced stiffening German air and naval defenses, brutal Arctic temperatures, and around-the-clock daylight which meant no protection from the cover of darkness. The Arctic route was about to turn deadly for the men and ships of PQ-17.

Initially, PQ-17 had a strong escort and covering force, including the battleship *USS Washington* to protect the 35-ship convoy from attack. Two ships were forced to turn back en route, leaving 33 merchantmen to face the gauntlet of German attacks beginning on July 2, 1942.

Attacks against the convoy steadily increased until July 4 when the British Admiralty got word the sister ship to the German battleship *Bismarck*, the *Tirpitz*, was sailing to intercept the convoy. Not wanting to risk the destruction of the merchant ships, the Admiralty sent the following messages to the convoy commanders:

2111 Hours: Most Immediate. Cruiser force withdraw westward at high speed.

2123 Hours: Immediate. Owing to the threat of surface warships, convoy is to disperse and proceed to Russian ports.

2136 Hours: Most Immediate. My 2123 of the 4th. Convoy is to scatter.

"Convoy is to scatter." These words sent chills down the spines of the men sailing in these merchant ships. While the thought was that scattering the convoy would make it harder for the Germans to sink the ships, what followed was the exact opposite and meant disaster for PQ-17. Without support from warships and left to fend for themselves, the merchant ships were sitting ducks for the Germans.

On July 5th, 12 merchant ships were sunk by German attacks. For the Merchant Seamen and Naval Armed Guard's aboard the *SS Pan Atlantic*'s luck ran out on July 6. The ship was valiantly trying to fight off German aerial at-

tacks, but was hit by two bombs dropped by a Ju-88 bomber at 6:10 pm. The bombs set off the supply of cordite the ship was carrying, blowing apart the forward section of the vessel. The damage was so severe the ship sank in three minutes,

preventing any distress signal from being sent.

A Naval Armed Guard was manning a machine gun when the bombs hit and was thrown into the frigid sea. He clung to pieces of floating ice until he found a raft with a dead body on it. He was forced to push the body into the water for his own survival. After floating alone for a day, the NAG was picked up by a lifeboat of his fellow survivors. The men spent three more days floating in the lifeboat until being rescued by the *HMS Lotus*. Out of a Merchant Marine crew of 37, 18 were killed. Seven of the 11 US Naval Armed Guard were lost as well. The survivors were taken to the Soviet Union for

recuperation. One NAG had to have his shoes and socks cut off because his hands and feet were so swollen.

While that Naval Armed Guardsman would return to service and fight in the Pacific, many men and ships involved with PQ-17 would not. Out of a total of 35 ships in the convoy, only 11 reached Archangel. Material losses in the convoy were staggering as well: 3,350 vehicles, 210 aircraft, 430 tanks, and 99,316 tons of other cargo such as food and ammunition were lost. Adding insult to injury, the reports of the *Tirpitz* coming out to intercept the convoy were false. Winston Churchill called PQ-17 "one of the most melancholy naval episodes in the whole of the war." The heavy losses of PQ-17 and the follow-up PQ-18 in September caused convoys to the Soviet Union to be suspended until December 1942.

The men of the US Merchant Marine and US Naval Armed Guard fought against long odds during the Battle of the Atlantic. Most of the large convoy battles fought during the war have been overshadowed by other important events such as D-Day or the Battle of the Bulge. But without the courage and sacrifice of men like that Seaman fighting to make sure the goods got through, the whole course of the war could have been very different and stretched on for many more years.



AVAILABLE MERCHANT MARINE MEDALS

AMMV member Roger E. Mercaldi Jr. submitted the suggestion for this piece. He contacted the Department of Defense and received his medal for service in Vietnam in two days. This information can also be found at the DOT website. www.maritime.dot.gov/outreach/mariner-medals.

Mariner Medals

As part of our Outreach activities, the Maritime Administration awards medals and war zone ribbon bars to civilian mariners who support the nation's armed forces in conflict, as well as during peacetime when contributions are significant. Over 350,000 medals and war zone ribbons have been distributed to eligible merchant mariners for approved conflicts.

Original Awards include a variety of World War II-era conflicts and geographies. In 1992, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced several new award options for civilian merchant seamen in recognition of service in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, and Operations Restore Hope and United Shield and related operations in Somalia from December 5, 1992 to March 31, 1995.

Original Awards

Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal.

Awarded to any seaman in the U.S. Merchant Marine who, on or after September 3, 1939, distinguished him or herself during the war by outstanding conduct or service in the line of duty. Not more than one medal shall be issued to any one seaman. For each subsequent instance sufficient to justify the award, additional insignia will be awarded and worn with the medal.

Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medal. Awarded to seamen of any ship operated by or for the War Shipping Administration who is commended by the Administrator for conduct or service of a meritorious nature, but not sufficient to warrant the Distinguished Service Medal.

Gallant Ship Citation Ribbon. Awarded to officers and seamen who served on a ship which, at the time of service, was cited for gallantry by the Maritime Administration. The bronze plaque is awarded to the ship.

Mariner's Medal. Awarded to any seaman who, while serving in a ship during the war period, is wounded, suffers physical injury, or suffers through dangerous exposure as a result of an act of a United States enemy. In the event any such seaman dies from the wounds or injuries before the award can be given, the medal may be presented to the person named in the War Risk Policy as his or her beneficiary.

Atlantic War Zone Medal. Awarded for merchant marine service in the Atlantic War Zone, including the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Barents Sea and Greenland Sea, between December 7, 1941, and November 8, 1945.

Pacific War Zone Medal. Awarded for merchant marine service in the Pacific War Zone, which included the North Pacific, South Pacific and the Indian Ocean east of 80 degrees east longitude, between December 7, 1941, and March 2, 1946.

Mediterranean-Middle East War Zone Medal.

Awarded to seafarers who served in the zone including the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean west of 80 degrees east longitude, between December 7, 1941, and November 8, 1945.

Merchant Marine Defense Medal. Awarded for service in the U.S. Merchant Marine prior to Pearl Harbor. It may be worn by all merchant seamen who served as members of the crews of U.S. merchant ships from September 8, 1939 and December 7, 1941.

New Award Options

Korean Service Medal. Awarded for service in the American merchant marine during the Korean Conflict in waters adjacent to Korea between June 30, 1950 and September 30, 1953.

Vietnam Service Medal. Awarded for maritime service between July 4, 1965 and August 15, 1973, in waters adjacent to Vietnam.

Merchant Marine Expeditionary Medal (MME).

Awarded to American merchant seamen who serve on U.S.-flag ships in support of operations involving American and Allied military forces. It was first authorized for service in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. This medal is also awarded to mariners who served in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and most recently in 2016 for Operations Restore Hope and United Shield and related operations in Somalia.

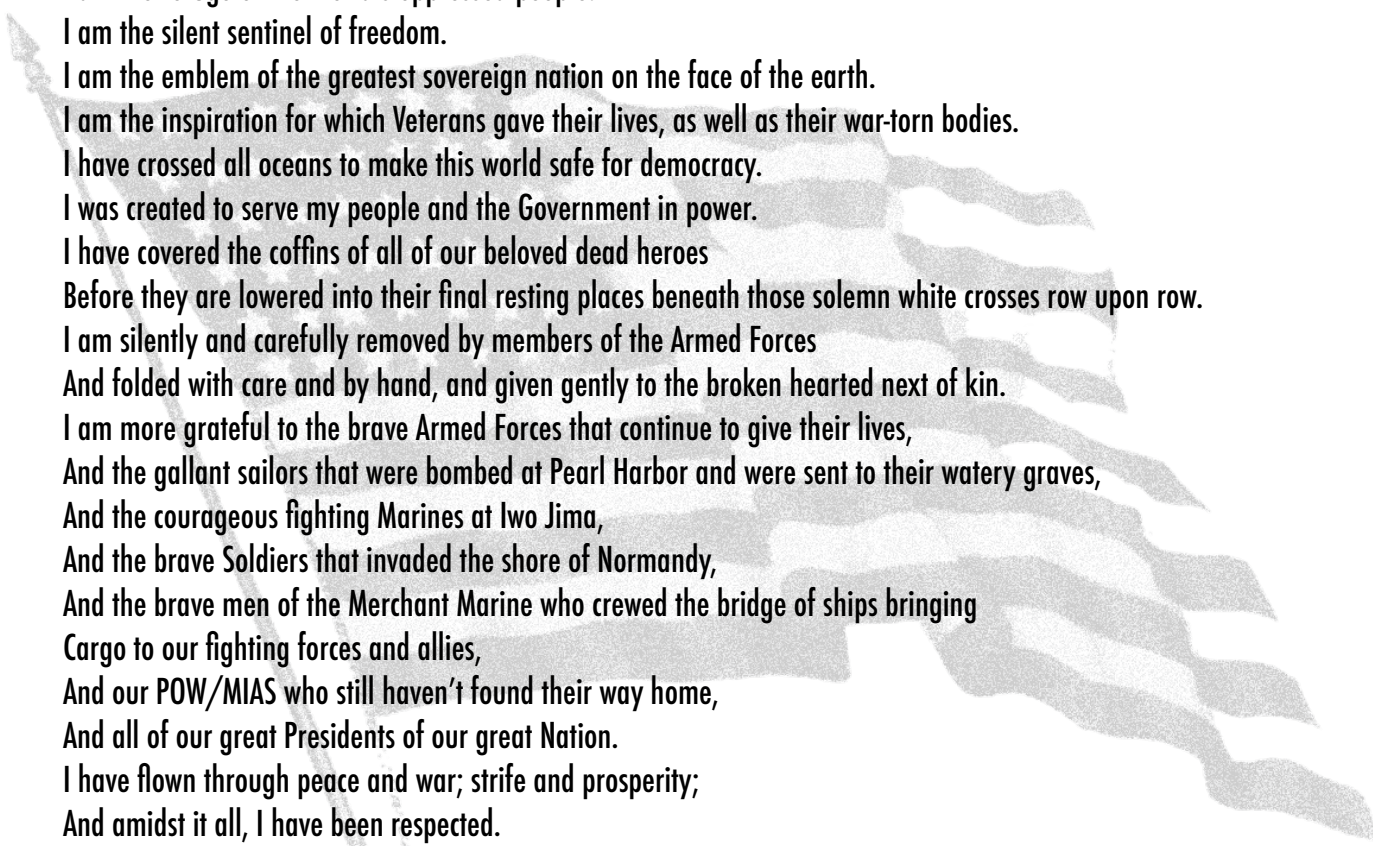
Merchant Marine Medal for Outstanding

Achievement. Awarded to merchant mariners who have participated in an act or operation of humanitarian nature on behalf of an individual or groups of individuals. This medal can also be awarded to those in the maritime industry who have dedicated years of service or achievement and/or given extraordinary contributions to the maritime industry. This medal requires the Maritime Administrator's approval.

Contact - Awards, Flags, Medals

Deveda Midgette, Maritime Awards Officer
Office of Sealift Support
1200 NEW JERSEY AVE., SE
WASHINGTON, DC 20590
email: Deveda.Midgette@dot.gov
Phone: 202-366-2354 - Fax: 202-366-5904

I Am Your Flag



I am your flag of the United States of America.
I have led your sons into battle from Valley Forge to all Wars.
I was born June 14, 1777.
I am more than just cloth shaped into a design.
I am the refuge of the World's oppressed people.
I am the silent sentinel of freedom.
I am the emblem of the greatest sovereign nation on the face of the earth.
I am the inspiration for which Veterans gave their lives, as well as their war-torn bodies.
I have crossed all oceans to make this world safe for democracy.
I was created to serve my people and the Government in power.
I have covered the coffins of all of our beloved dead heroes
Before they are lowered into their final resting places beneath those solemn white crosses row upon row.
I am silently and carefully removed by members of the Armed Forces
And folded with care and by hand, and given gently to the broken hearted next of kin.
I am more grateful to the brave Armed Forces that continue to give their lives,
And the gallant sailors that were bombed at Pearl Harbor and were sent to their watery graves,
And the courageous fighting Marines at Iwo Jima,
And the brave Soldiers that invaded the shore of Normandy,
And the brave men of the Merchant Marine who crewed the bridge of ships bringing
Cargo to our fighting forces and allies,
And our POW/MIAs who still haven't found their way home,
And all of our great Presidents of our great Nation.
I have flown through peace and war; strife and prosperity;
And amidst it all, I have been respected.
My colors are red, white and blue.
My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of this glorious nation.
My white stripes signify the yearning tears shed by Americans who lost their sons and daughters.
My blue field is indicative of God's heaven, under which I fly.
My stars cluster together unifying fifty states as one,
For God and Country.
"Old Glory" is my nickname, and I proudly wave on high.
Honor me, respect me, defend me with your lives and fortunes.
Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty position, lest I never return.
Keep alight the fires of patriotism.
Strive earnestly for the spirit of Democracy.
I shall remain the bulwark of peace and freedom for all mankind.
And if by chance you see me flying high in the breeze, just stop and pause for a moment
to say a little prayer; "Thank God I am an American."

Editor's note: Author unknown – reprinted from an Edwin O'Hara Chapter newsletter 2010

FIRE CLOSES CALIFORNIA MARITIME ACADEMY, VALLEJO, CA

In October, fires burned in great areas of Northern California. The Santa Rosa area was involved although not as much as two years ago. However, 45 miles away, a fire erupted north of the Carquinez Bridge, which connects Contra Costa County to Vallejo in Northern California, and quickly spread into Crockett south of the Carquinez Strait, which connects California's two largest rivers to San Francisco Bay. The Bridge was closed for hours.

At one point the fire north of the Bridge, called the Glencove Fire, threatened the California State University Maritime Academy (CMA). CMA serves about 1,000 students and offers undergraduate degrees in engineering,

transportation, international relations, business and global logistics. California State University Maritime Academy is the only degree-granting maritime academy on the West Coast. The academy, with its scenic 92-acre waterside campus at Vallejo, features six majors. As a part of the program, all undergraduates experience international travel either on the 500-foot training ship Golden Bear or through one of the academy's annual travel opportunities. It is one of only seven maritime academies in the nation.

The campus, which is about 1.9 miles to the West of the Bridge, was safely evacuated during last October's fires. Most of the students attending the Academy either



returned home, or were put up by host families in the area. The exception, 200 volunteers who stayed behind to stand watch aboard the Academy's famed training ship *Golden Bear*, anchored in the shadow of the Carquinez Bridge.

In a statement issued at the time by CMA spokesman Bobby King, he says: "We have students standing watch on the ship, keeping an eye on the engines. Obviously you have to have power running to the ship, so somebody has to monitor all the sensors and things like that,"

The remains of blackened palm and Eucalyptus trees lay on the ground, just a few yards away from the ship. As crews were busy clearing trees from the charred hillsides around the campus, fearing the dry Eucalyptus trees would flare up again, Chief Danny Gordon, California Maritime

Police Department, said "You can see up there they're still smoldering and may reignite."

The perimeter of the campus was dotted with reminders of how close this fire came to inflicting significant damage or worse. The burned out vehicles in one parking lot belonged to students who were evacuated before the fire became an imminent threat.

Thanks to the quick response of the Vallejo Fire Department and CAL Fire, damage to the campus was contained to an area around Lot E, a parking lot on a hill at the east edge of campus near the Carquinez Bridge. A maintenance building, storage containers, vehicles, equipment, and trees were among the losses identified in the hours after the incident.



Training ship Golden Bear



Sailors' Snug Harbor Is Looking For WWII Mariners That Could Use Help



The Trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor in the City of New York (SSH), one of the oldest secular charities in the United States, continues to help career mariners in financial need. They no longer operate a retirement home for mariners, but instead help mariners across the country in their home communities. SSH helps mariners live more comfortably by assisting them with their living expenses as well as helping them find other assistance and local services.

SSH was incorporated in 1806 as the result of a bequest made by Captain Robert Richard Randall. Not much is known about Captain Randall. He spent much of his life managing the family shipping company. By far his most famous deed—and the one by which he is remembered today—occurred on June 1, 1801, when he signed his Will. It is rumored that Alexander Hamilton helped Capt. Randall create his Will days before his death. Captain Randall dictated that The Sailors' Snug Harbor be created and maintained in perpetuity to support aged sailors.

In 1833, SSH opened their first retirement home in Staten Island, NY. At its peak in the beginning of the twentieth century, more than 1,000 sailors were in residence together at the facility. The decades following, enrollment declined while costs to maintain the historic buildings to current codes rose. The facility was closed in 1976 and 105 mariners residing at the facility moved to SSH's newly built facility in Sea Level, NC.

SSH realized the majority of retired mariners in need of assistance did not want to move to Staten Island or Sea Level, but would rather stay in their home communities with their spouses, families and friends. In the early 1990's, SSH started to assist mariners in their home communities and gradually moved away from operating a retirement home. In 2005, the Sea Level home was sold.

Today SSH helps mariners across the country. In 2019, SSH has helped more than 350 mariners. This was the most mariners assisted by SSH since the early 1950's.

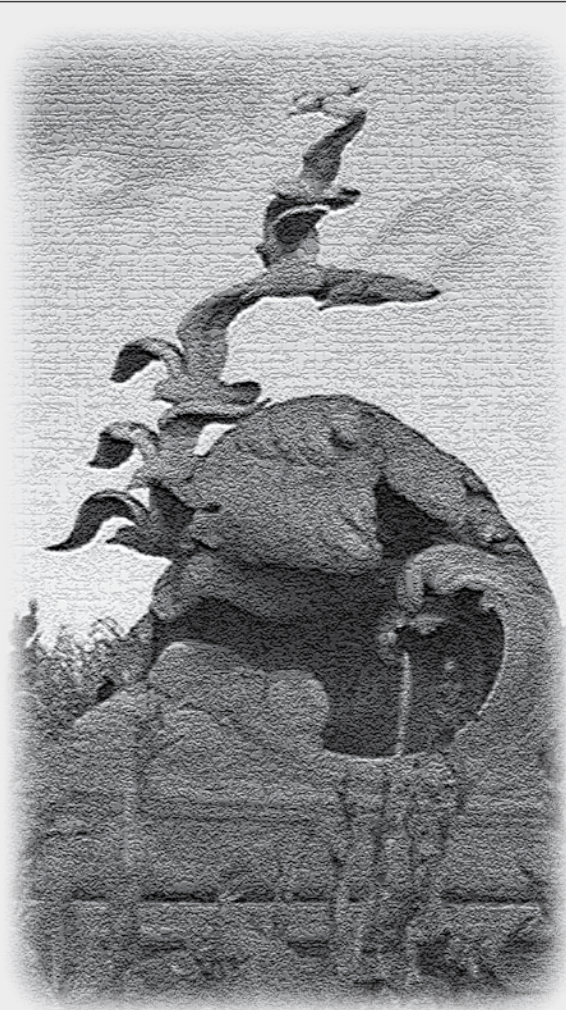
In 2015, SSH lowered its seetime requirement from 3,650 days at sea, to 2,555 days at sea and will now accept inland seetime to help meet this lowered requirement. The other requirements of the program are that the mariner must be 65 years of age or older. Younger mariners may apply if they are disabled. The last requirement is that an applicant must be able to show a need for financial assistance. Applicants with over \$50,000 in savings will not be eligible.

The SSH website, www.thesailorssnugharbor.org, has a link to the program's application.

If you are interested in learning more about SSH, please contact:

The Trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor in the City of New York
Toll Free: 1-888-257-5456 or 646-465-8585
Fax: 212-513-0243
info@thesailorssnugharbor.org

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.*

KARL BAUMWELL

DOUGLAS J. BORGES

ALFRED L. BUSH

GRADY WILSON COOPER

KENNETH DUNCAN

GURDEN M. JOHNSON

CAPT. WARREN G. LEBACK

LOWELL H. LOWE

FREDERICK J. MILLER

NORRIS S. NAHMAN, PhD

CAPT CHARLES M. RENNICK

DOMINICO "DJ" VIGNA

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 2024, Darien, CT 06820-2024.

PILOTS JOIN THE COAST GUARD

This story by retired pilot Capt. Brian Hope is about how the Maryland Pilots became integrated with the USCG during WWII, as excerpted from his book entitled "BAY PILOT Vol. 1: A History of the Association of Maryland Pilots". In addition to being an accomplished writer and maritime artist, Capt. Hope is also a founding member of Project Liberty Ship SS John W. Brown. He will be joining us at the 2020 Baltimore convention! Capt. Hope's book can be purchased from the Glencannon Press at: www.glencannon.com.



Three young Maryland Pilots relaxing at a bar in Norfolk. Left to right: Paul Herzog, Will Rice and Tom Leizear. Herzog and Rice are Junior Pilots, hence they are wearing Coast Guard uniforms with the rank of Lt (j.g.) Leizear was an apprentice pilot at the time and is wearing the uniform of a Coast Guard enlisted man.

Captain John S. Delano joined the Association of Maryland Pilots as an apprentice in 1906. Six years later he earned his "Full Branch," his license as a Senior Maryland Pilot. Captain Delano, known to just about everyone as "Bud" was a flamboyant individual, a good pilot and an even better politician. When Captain W. D. Sanner retired from the presidency of the Maryland Pilots in 1930, after 31 years in that office, Captain Delano ran for the job and was elected. He served three terms, a total of six years in that office and, while retaining the Maryland presidency, ran for the position of President of the American Pilots Association in 1934. The Maryland Pilots took exception to his holding both offices, so his tenure as Maryland President ended in 1936.

Delano soon ingratiated himself into the Washington political scene. Mindful of the state pilots' success in moving great tonnage of World War I shipping, he entered into discussions with government officials in the early months of 1941 with the purpose of availing the nation of the ser-

vices of the state pilotage system and its some six hundred licensed pilots. These meetings culminated in a communication from Captain Delano to the United States Maritime Commissioners on July 8, 1941, a portion of which is copied below:

"Gentlemen:

On behalf of the American Pilots' Association, which encompasses all the State pilots serving ships engaged in foreign commerce in and out of the Thirty-three ports of the twenty seaboard States of the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coasts, I respectfully wish to submit this brief for your matured consideration in the National Welfare and for the furtherance of public safety during the existing emergency, as a supplement to the hearing given us by the Commissioners on this subject."

Delano went on to describe the enviable record of the pilots in moving more than 100,000 ships in the previous year as an example of the skill and efficiencies of the various pilot services around the country. In essence he offered the services of the State pilots in any manner which the government might consider to be the most

effective in the service of the nation.

His offer was taken under advisement and finally, with the United States firmly engaged in the Second World War, the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, directed the Commandant of the Coast Guard to take action on the pilotage issue. On August 18, 1942 the Coast Guard was directed to devise a comprehensive plan



Captain John S. Delano, Seventh President of the Association of Maryland Pilots. He was President of the Association from 1930 to 1936 and President of the American Pilots Association from 1936 to 1956. He died of a heart attack in 1956 at the age of 66.

for the wartime control of State Pilotage.

The Coast Guard's decision was to commission state pilots all over the country into the Coast Guard Reserve. Pertinent portions of the Commandant's decision were:

"All eligible members of the state pilot associations of the A.P.A. were to be enrolled as temporary members of the Coast Guard Reserve for limited duty in connection with pilotage for the duration of the emergency, without government pay, and with commissioned rank commensurate with their age, duties and responsibilities."

"All pilot vessels of the state pilot associations which can be used to advantage by the Coast Guard and which have not been enrolled in the Coast Guard Reserve, be so enrolled with their crews."

The essential nature of the Associations, therefore, remained unchanged. Pilots would still collect their regular fees and receive no pay from Uncle Sam, but would wear Coast Guard uniforms and be subject to military discipline. One aspect of the plan was not so readily accepted by the Maryland Pilots. A rate reduction of fifty percent was to be given to all vessels which entered the Chesapeake Bay strictly for shelter. This was defined as:

"A vessel which enters or passes through a port or place solely as the result of military orders or routing instructions designed to protect the vessel from enemy action, and which does not enter for the purpose of trade or commerce with the port or place."

The Coast Guard understood the burden placed on the Maryland pilots, who would be handling a great many more ships through the C & D Canal for much lower fees, but they



Captain Howard C. Johnson poses in his Coast Guard blue uniform. Johnson was in his late 20's at the time and thus was given the rank of Lieutenant, USCGR.



President Truman aboard the Pilot Boat Maryland shortly after WW II. Captain Delano is next to him in the Navy Blue uniform and Captain Presley Carter, President of the Maryland Pilots at the time, is at right. Captain Delano volunteered the Pilot Boat to transport the President from Annapolis to Jefferson Island, about ten miles to the south, where the National Democratic Party owned a hunting and fishing lodge. Truman spent a couple of days there partying with a group of his politician friends.

countered that the Association would be relieved of considerable expenses for their pilot boat operation by the enrolling of the boat in the Coast Guard. The result, the government said, was pretty much a wash. As usual, the government had an answer for everything.

The Boston Pilots were the first group to be sworn in, on December 11, 1942. The Maryland and Virginia Pilots followed just before Christmas. Their commissioning was published in the Notice to Mariners for the 5th Naval District on December 26th.

The Association of Maryland Pilots and the Virginia Pilots Association are now members of the Coast Guard Reserve without pay from the United States. This step is in the interest of port security, the safe-guarding of vital war information and the coordination of the existing state pilot system in accordance with wartime requirements.

Pilotage will continue as before.

While actually piloting the vessel the pilot is still acting as a state pilot, rather than as a Coast Guard Officer. The state pilot's relationship to the master or commanding officer, the vessel and the owner remain as established in maritime law. There is no substitution of command by reason of membership of the pilot in the Coast Guard Reserve. Masters and Commanding Officers are still responsible for the navigation of their vessels and may relieve or supersede the pilot whenever in their judgement it is

necessary, as heretofore. The United States is still not responsible for any negligence of the pilot. The pilot is still entitled to his fees as prescribed by the state and these fees will be collected in the usual manner."

So the pilots went out and got fitted for their splendid new uniforms. All Full Branch Pilots age thirty-five and over were given the rank of Lieutenant Commander. All those under thirty-five were to be Lieutenants and Junior Pilots (with limited licenses) were Lieutenants j.g. Apprentice pilots were given enlisted rates and paid by the Coast Guard. This latter situation gave rise to an interesting predicament for the Maryland Pilots. Junior Pilots came under the Association's pay scale and were paid only \$30 per month, but the unlicensed apprentices were paid by the Coast Guard and made about \$65 per month.

It was agreed that the Presidents of the various pilot associations would serve

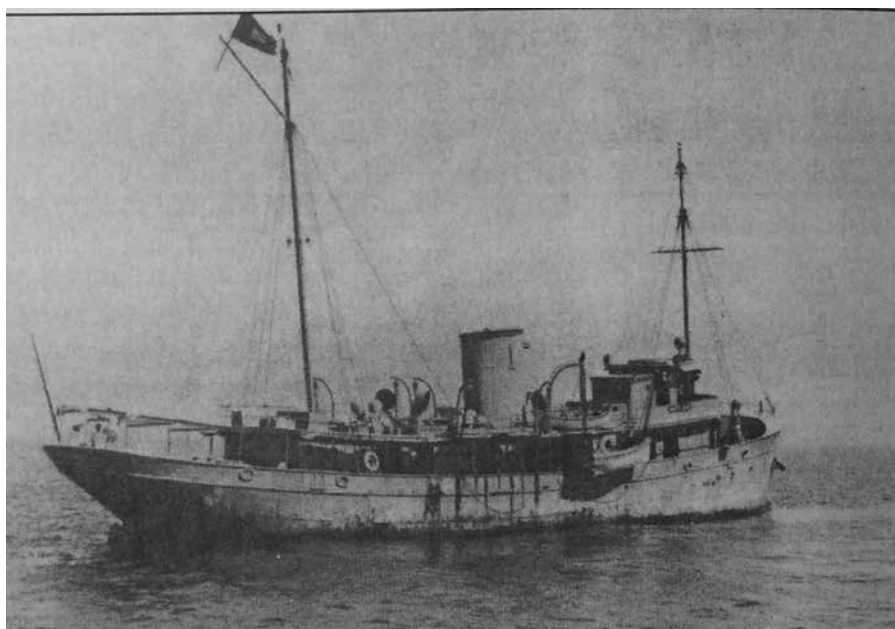


Captain J. E. Thursby photographed in his Coast Guard summer uniform. Thursby was a member of the Association's Board of Supervisors and was thus given the rank of a full Commander (three wide stripes). He was an active pilot from 1908 to 1952.

as commanding officers of their respective groups and, to avoid confusion, would serve in that capacity for the duration of the War. Presidents and officers of the various associations were commissioned as Commanders and Captain Delano, President of the APA, was commissioned as a Captain, USCGR.

The pilots with whom the author talked regarding their joining the Coast Guard were, for the most part, accepting of the idea. They were proud of their service, enjoyed having formal photos taken in their uniforms and accepted military discipline fairly well.

The President of the Maryland Pilots at the time was Captain B. R. Wysong. Shortly after the Coast Guard took over, he and Captain Milton Edmunds, President of the Virginia Pilots Association, were called to Washington by Captain Delano to meet the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral R. R. Waesche. Delano, the great politician, knew the Admiral well and escorted Wysong and Edmunds into Waesche's office. Delano told the Admiral, "These men are the Presidents of their respective pilot associations, which means they're the best pilots in their groups. The Admiral said, "Well, I don't know about that, Captain Delano. I would say it means that they're the best politicians!"



The Pilot Boat Maryland in wartime Coast Guard livery - all gray. The officers of the boat were Association employees and the unlicensed crew were Coast Guard personnel, with a few apprentice pilots as well. The Maryland had a long career as a pilot cutter. She took station in 1921 and was finally retired in 1950.

The Day WWII Came To Broome

In February 1942, Broome in Western Australia was used as the Australian end of an air shuttle service from Java. Hundreds of evacuees were ferried to Broome in Dutch, American and Australian military and civil aircraft after the Allied and Dutch commands had ordered the emergency evacuation of military aircraft, personnel and families from the East Indies as Japan advanced. Broome, a sleepy outpost 560 miles from Java, seemed a safe and logical choice for a fuel stop and a steady stream of planes loaded with refugees was using it.

By the end of that month, the town was overflowing with military personnel and refugees. People slept wherever they could while waiting for a flight to continue their journey south. During the last weeks of February 1942 over 7000 people passed through Broome. On one single day, 57 aircraft landed there.

As a bright, sunny dawn broke over Broome, Western Australia's Roebuck Bay on March 3, 1942, the tiny pearling harbor held fifteen Dutch, Australian and US flying boats, loaded with refugees and servicemen, which bobbed in the calm waters, awaiting their turn to refuel and take off again.

But at 9:30am, all hell broke loose. In the bloodiest wartime event in WA history, nine Japanese Zero fighters swooped, without warning, repeatedly over the bay and local airstrip, killing more than 80 people and destroying all the Dutch and Allied aircraft.

As the Japanese unleashed 20 minutes of rapid gunfire on the flying boats, the turquoise waters became awash with blood and blazed with spilt oil as the planes and the passengers trapped inside - mostly women and children - were incinerated. As bullets tore into the aircraft, fuel tanks in the wings exploded and the planes ignited and sank as thick black smoke obliterated the bay.

Capt. Lester Brain, of Qantas, saw the horrific events unfold. "Shouts and screams can be heard coming across the water from the burning boats . . . It appears when the

Japanese have finished there will be nothing left afloat to rescue the survivors," he wrote in his diary. As he and other witnesses scrambled to help the wounded, the Japanese

headed for the town's airstrip, where eight bombers were stranded on the tarmac. A US Liberator bomber took off but was shot down, crashing off Cable Beach and killing all but two of the 33 servicemen aboard.

Aviation historian Merv Prime, author of *WA's Pearl Harbor: the Japanese raid on Broome*, said: "the Japanese achieved results they

could scarcely have dreamt of. In exchange for two single-engine aircraft and a pilot, they destroyed 22 big military aircraft and claimed many servicemen's lives. Locals had no fighter aircraft to protect them - the equivalent of today's

reservists, the Broome Volunteer Defense Corps, basically had 303 rifles to fire at the Japanese Zeros."

Those on the ground raced to save as many lives as they could and tales of heroism abounded as people in dinghies plucked survivors from the water.

Charles D'Antoine, an Aboriginal from One

Arm Point, was commended by the Royal Netherlands Air Force for his rescue of a woman and her child even though he was terrified of sharks.

Survivor Catharina Komen, then nine, wrote of how her father was shot dead in front of her before she was thrown into the burning water. Hardly able to swim, a wounded man helped her before he died and slipped under the waves. Just 30 bodies were recovered or were washed up. Those trapped in the wrecks were never seen again.

Immediately after the attack, about 90 per cent of Broome's remaining population fled south but floods forced them to return. After the Japanese raids, evacuation efforts were moved to Port Hedland and Broome was left to recover. It would be attacked three more times by the Japanese but just one more man died. With no refugee manifests, it is impossible to know how many people died that day but their legacy includes the wrecked Catalinas that still poke from the seabed about 1km offshore at low tides.



Wreckage seen even today at lowest tide



ABOARD A LIFEBOAT AT SEA

Submitted by Three Rivers Chapter, AMMV and Capt. Scott Nowak. This is an excerpted but actual account of survival at sea from the late Second Mate Henry W. Harrison when the Liberty Ship SS James W. Denver was sunk by a U-boat on April 11, 1943 about 475 miles west of Las Palmas, Canary Islands. The ship was straggling on her maiden voyage with Convoy UGS-7 which left from New York and Baltimore headed for Casablanca.

After 23 days at sea in lifeboat #3, seven crew members and four Armed Guards were rescued and landed in Lisbon on May 10th.

LOG OF LIFEBOAT #3

Sunday, April 11, 1943:

5 p.m. Torpedo struck starboard bow; ship took heavy starboard list immediately and started going down by the head. General alarm sounded.

5:01 p.m. (about) Abandon ship sounded. Launched port boats. No. 6 boat fell when worn gear on davit broke while lowering. Boat abandoned and crew picked up by other boats.

5:04 p.m. (about) Port boats away; ship back on even keel; commenced lowering starboard boats.

5:07 p.m. Starboard boats away; No. 3 boat last to leave shipside. Believe all hands off except Captain, who would not come in boat, but ordered boat away. Dropped astern about two hundred feet and standing by.

5:15 p.m. (about) Captain signaled boat to come alongside. Motorboat No. 5 had motor started, went alongside and took him off. Weather clear; wind Estly. Force 4-5, sea choppy.

5:20 p.m. Took containers of food and three containers of blankets from abandoned life raft. Water breaker had apparently been taken by another boat.

5:25 p.m. Captain's boat alongside, ordered all boats to hoist sails and if possible stay at present position

until morning. All boats hoisted sails but began sailing in different directions. Before dark took in sail and put out sea anchor as wind and sea increased to Estly. 5, moderate sea to heavy. Vessel observed just before dark, down by the head (about ten feet of bow out of water). Saw no boats or lights during the night. Flashed our lights at frequent intervals during the night.

9:40 p.m. Heard an explosion believed to be another torpedo.

Monday, April 12:

A very rough night, wind up to force 6, Estly. Heavy sea running. Everybody cold and wet. 12 men, including myself aboard.

11 a.m. Lost sea anchor; had chafing gear where line came in on contact with gunwale. Had Chief Mate look at it in morning and reported it O.K. Don't know what he did to it but line parted shortly after. Rigged another sea anchor out of boat cover, riding O.K. All men seem dazed except Davis, Getchell and Gangler; none have had any small boat experience except myself.

4 to 7 p.m. Mountainous seas; several short lulls during the night.

Tuesday, April 13:

Tried sailing short while in morning, too rough, sea anchor out again. Dead reckoning drift W.S.W. 2 miles per hour. Another rough night; weather about the same. All hands wet and cold. Pumped bilges about every two hours. Sighted quite a bit of



wreckage while sailing in morning. Large cases, hatch covers, etc.

Wednesday, April 14:

5:30 a.m. Wind Estly. Force 5, hoisted sails, made about 20 miles SXE.

10:30 Mountainous seas again, put out sea anchor again

3 p.m. Lost sea anchor again, made another.

7:45 to 9:45 Slight lull in weather. Hoisted sails again; made about five miles SXE

Thursday, April 15:

Another rough night, about the same as usual, weather o'cst. Cloudy, wind Estly. Force 5-7; heavy to mountainous seas.

3 a.m. Boat threatening to broach. Crossed oars to make another sea anchor. Riding O.K. afterward.

6:30 Clear. Breakfast and prayer. Hoisted sails and got under way.

7:00 Moderate Estly. Breeze decreasing. First good weather. Slept about an hour; first sleep since leaving ship.

Noon Distance 20 miles. Course SXE

11:30 p.m. Dead calm; started rowing one hour on and one hour off; one relief man each crew. Two ounces water after each turn at oars.

Friday, April 16:

3 a.m. Stopped rowing. N.W. squall, started sailing East.

5 a.m. Calm, still raining

12 Noon Calm to light Wstly airs. Rowed.

8:10-11 a.m. Clear weather. Picked up two watches and set same six hours on and six off. Del Proposto in charge of one, Gangles in charge of other, myself in command.

Saturday, April 17:

10 p.m. Started rowing East

11 p.m. Light N.E. breeze. Stopped rowing; resumed sailing. Two oz. water before and after rowing.

Sunday, April 18:

Fine weather, clear N.E. breeze force 2-3, course about East 5 miles per hour. Celebrated Palm Sunday and good sailing weather with 4 oz. water for breakfast. Pemmican as usual (2 cans). Everybody in good spirits. Will be out one week today.

5 p.m. Have used 22 qts. water, 40 cans Pemmican, 10 bxs cracker. Have on board 175 qts water, 250 cans Pemmican and enough crackers and malted milk tablets.

Monday, April 19:

8 a.m. Squalls, wind and sea increased N. W. Force 4, Moderate to heavy sea.

7 p.m. Very heavy seas, took in mainsail. Have been at tiller without relief since 8 a.m. Riding well under job alone. Drift SXE. 2 miles per hour.

Tuesday, April 20:

6 a.m. Increased water ration to 24 oz per day at 6-12.

6 & 12 Hoisted mainsail and underway. Clear. Wind N.E. force 4. Course S.E.

Increased ration to three cans per day for boat. N. E. trades, good weather. Nights still cold.

Friday, April 23:

Have smoked all cigarettes, had 11 cartons aboard.

Saturday, April 24:

Cold wet night. Course SXE. Distance 40 miles.

7 p.m. Took in mainsail. Rain, spray and cold.

Easter Sunday, April 25:

Breakfast, prayer and got underway.

6 a.m. Estly wind force 4, moderate to heavy seas.

12 Easter dinner, half can Pemmican each, 8 oz. water, then cut water ration 16 oz. four oz. four times a day. Inventory 43 c/s malted milk, 65 pkgs crackers, 102 cans Pemmican. Ration 16 oz. water, 12 crackers and 9 cans Pemmican (Pemmican divided).

Monday, April 26:

Another rough night. Took in mainsail.

8 a.m. to Noon Still rough. Clear wind Estly force 4.

Thursday, April 30:

Still plugging along. Course S. E. Dist - 40 miles. Clear nights, still cold. Reckon about 80 miles from coast. 175 miles from Port Etain. 9 S.E. Cut rations a little more, one can Pemmican, 1 bx crackers, 10 oz. water in stew. Divided among 111 men. Water ration 6 a.m. 4 oz. 12 Noon, 2 oz. 6 p.m. 2 oz. 12 midnight 4 oz. Everybody in good shape except Davis, 2nd Asst. Engr. who refused to eat first week. Has been allowed extra water ration since first week. Has been steadily growing weaker. Delirious since 25th. Have fed him a little crackers soaked in water whenever possible but nearly always spits it out. Just about everybody can steer now and takes turns at tiller.

Saturday, May 1:

5:15 a.m. I was called and found that Malcolm Davis was dead. No pulse or respi-

ration, body cold. Exact time of death not determined (sometime between midnight and 5:15 a.m.) as he passed away without making sound. Cause of death, exposure, shock and lack of appetite.

Ate breakfast. Body sewed in blanket and weighted. Funeral service by watcher and myself. Body committed to the deep at 7 a.m.

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Everybody took dip overboard., felt refreshed. Warm sun nice breeze sprung up.

Sunday, May 2:

Three weeks today. Good breeze thru the night.

11 a.m. Heard and sighted plane only about 3,000 feet up and not far away bound S.S.W. Flare of smoke sent up but apparently not seen. First thing sighted since torpedoed.

12 Noon Not much speed today during daylight. Inventory 43 cans Pemmican, 20 c/s malted milk tablets, 46 bxs crackers, 80 qts. Water.

Monday, May 3:

11 a.m. School of whales near boat, maneuvered away from them.

11:30 a.m. Picked up liferaft, plain, no openings. Turned it over to make sure. Large bunch of mussels clinging to sides which we ate after testing for poison. Look and taste a little like soft shell clams; water in snout very good.

Deck Cadet Getchell has had cramps in

stomach several days.

Tuesday, May 4.

8 a.m. Sighted smoke low on horizon, apparently vessel south-bound, no masts or superstructure visible.

8:35 p.m. Sighted light on starboard beam.

8:40 p.m. Sent up Very Flare and two more later.

8:50 p.m. Vessel drawing closer. Called all hands. Water cups filled. Pemmican cans opened.

9:30 p.m. Furled sails and started rowing.

10 p.m. Alongside Portuguese Steam Trawler "ALBUFEIRA". All hands aboard. Lifeboat scuttled and set adrift.

All hands wobbly but happy. Had a big banquet of cheese, fish, bread, brandy and coffee and did that coffee taste good! These men sure treating us good, bound for Lisbon.

Position when picked up Latitude 21 deg. 55 min. N., Longitude 17 deg. 10 min. W. My latitude correct. Dead reckon Longitude not far out.

Provisions when picked up, 70 qts water, 16 bxs malted milk tablets, 32 can Pemmican, 34 bxs type "C" ration (crackers). Could have lasted two more weeks or more if necessary, but would have sighted land next day.

Sailed, rowed and drifted 1,035 miles in 23 days.



Special Activities From Our Members

Veterans' Day Observations

Veteran's Day was celebrated by Merchant Mariners in several parts of the Country.

Fresno, CA: CEO Russell Adams of the Central California chapter wrote:



Russell Adams and Andy Weare

My car, with myself and member Andy Weare, was entered in the Fresno Veterans' Day parade. We were right behind all the past Grand Marshals in the very front of the parade. I had prepared a short comment about the Merchant Marine, as they had requested.

What I was going to say was that we supplied the necessary troops and supplies needed to defeat Germany and Japan in World War II. Our losses were great but we delivered. (This is a shortened but basic version).

Just as we approached the viewing stand the announcer starting talking to the person next to her and did not read what I had prepared. All she said was "there goes another car".

This was the 100th Annual parade in Fresno; one of the largest parades in the state.

Jacksonville, FL: Long dissolved but not forgotten, the St. John's River chapter may be history but their lifeboat sailed



in the Veterans' Day parade, manned by Stephen Snyder and other participants. As an active chapter, the members always participated in the Vets Day parade. It's nice to see that they are carrying on the tradition.

St. Augustine, FL: Ed Trester, AMMV member, manned an information table where he gave out "Merchant Marine at War" books



along with other information on the history of the Merchant Marine. The program was very well attended with all of the military services represented. All the service songs were sung by a chorus of 70 young students from the local high school, including *Heave Ho My Lads Heave Ho*. The program was sponsored by the St. Johns County Veterans Association.

Christmas Fun



Golden Gate members and guests enjoy a Christmas lunch.

In San Francisco, Golden Gate chapter of the AMMV celebrated Christmas with a luncheon and other festivities.

And across the Bay in Oakland at M.E.B.A. Union headquarters, holiday festivities were enjoyed, too.



Christian Yuhas (left) and Frank Mendez enjoy the M.E.B.A. lunch festivities.

A Well Remembered Shore Excursion

In a Letter to the Editor, Bob Barbee, AMMV member wrote: "Several issues ago in the NEWS, you published an account of a member's side trip to the Gaza Strip. It brought back memories. This picture was taken in August, 1943 of myself (on right) and three Naval Armed Guard, outside of Cairo, Egypt.

"As an AB – every time we left port, I was the only AB sober, so I had to be the one to steer with the Pilot. As a result, I got to steer the entire Suez Canal. I will never forget that."



Member at Large Bob Barbee, far right, at the Sphinx in 1943.

No Greater Glory:

The Four Chaplains and the Sinking of the USAT *Dorchester*

In the early morning hours of 3 February 1943, the *USAT Dorchester* was near safe waters when a German torpedo slammed into the engine room. Soon, the *Dorchester* began to slip under the waves. Most of the almost 900 aboard her abandoned ship either in lifeboats or jumping. Those men in the water nearly gave up hope as they floated helplessly in freezing Atlantic waters.

Resigned to losing consciousness and freezing to death shortly thereafter, thoughts turned to the courageous and selfless acts of the four Army chaplains that were witnessed just before abandoning ship. These four chaplains remained calm during the panic following the attack, first distributing life preservers and assisting others to abandon ship, then giving up their own life preservers and coming together in prayer as the ship disappeared beneath the surface.

The Chaplains:

The story of these four chaplains, a Catholic, a Jew, and two Protestants, stands out among the countless stories of commitment and bravery that make up the pantheon of the U.S. Army, as one of the finest examples of courage to God, man, and country. Each, John P. Washington, Alexander D. Goode, George L. Fox, and Clarke V. Poling, was drawn by the tragedy at Pearl Harbor to the armed forces. Each wanted more than anything else to serve God by ministering to men on the battlefield. Each felt great disappointment at being relegated to service in a rear area, in this case the airfields and installations of Greenland. Yet, each, when the moment came, did not hesitate to put others before self, courageously offering a tenuous chance of survival

with the full knowledge of the consequences.

Though the chaplains had vastly different backgrounds, their similar experiences brought them together on the deck of the *Dorchester*. Each was tested at a young age and came to the realization that his would be a life of service to God and man.

John P. Washington was ordained on 15 June 1935 in the Catholic church. He was initially turned down by the Navy after Pearl Harbor because of his poor eyesight. Disappointed but not defeated, Washington went to the Army. This time, when it came to the eye test, he covered up his bad eye both times when reading the eye chart, correctly assuming that the doctors would be too busy to pay much attention. He hoped that God would forgive his subterfuge. In November 1942, he was transferred to Camp Myles Standish in Taunton, Massachusetts, to await overseas deployment. There he met fellow chaplains Fox, Goode, and Poling.

Alexander D. Goode was born on 10 May 1911, the son of a rabbi. His first assignment as a rabbi was in Marion, Indiana. Later, he moved to the Beth Israel synagogue of York, Pennsylvania, where he excelled in ecumenicalism, crossing the divide between religions. In January 1941, the Navy turned down his application to become a Chaplain but the Army Air Forces accepted him after Pearl Harbor.

George L. Fox's rough childhood under the tyranny of an abusive father shaped him. Determined to escape, he enlisted to serve in World War I before finishing high school. He also abandoned Catholicism due to his inability to reconcile the church's teachings with the abuse he received at home. His gallant service in WWI as a medic earned him



John P. Washington



Alexander D. Goode



George L. Fox



Clark V. Poling

the Silver Star, several Purple Hearts, and French *Croix de Guerre*.

At the end of World War I, Fox held several jobs before entering Moody Bible Institute in Illinois. Before graduation, he became an itinerant Methodist minister. As with the other chaplains, Pearl Harbor drew him back to the military. In July 1942, he was appointed as an Army chaplain, returning to active duty.

Clark V. Poling was born into a prominent family that had produced six generations of ministers. There was never any doubt that he would become the seventh generation of his family to enter the ministry. He was ordained a minister in the Reformed Church of America.

The ship:

The *Dorchester* was as austere and dank as any of the tubs ferrying troops to and from the war zone across the North Atlantic. Originally commissioned the SS *Dorchester* on 20 March 1926, as a cruise ship, she plied a regular coastal route between Miami and Boston with its crew of ninety and up to 314 passengers. With war looming, the U.S. government requisitioned the *Dorchester* and she was converted into a troop transport. Stripped of its original cruise ship luxuries, the USAT *Dorchester* was outfitted to carry 750 troops, with a complement of 130 crew and twenty-three Navy armed guards.

On 29 January 1943, the *Dorchester* departed St. John's, Newfoundland, in convoy SG 19, for its fifth north Atlantic voyage, hitting bad weather almost as soon as it entered open water. Her passengers included 597 soldiers and 171 civilians bound for airbases in Greenland. In her holds were one thousand tons of equipment, food, and cargo. Merchant Marine Captain Hans Danielsen skippered the ship while Army Captain Preston S. Kreckler, Jr., commanded the troops.

The event:

Despite heavy security, there were few secrets in St. John's. German authorities had become aware that convoy SG-19 was bound for Greenland, so four U-Boats took up stations along its route. One of those was U-233, on her maiden voyage. In the fog and darkness of 3 February, U-233 floated on the surface as the Lieutenant Commander studied the dark silhouettes of SG-19 passing in the distance.

All the ships of SG-19 knew that a U-boat was in the area. The evening before Captain Danielsen of the *Dorchester* announced over the ship's public address system, "Now hear this: This concerns every soldier. Now hear this: Every soldier is ordered to sleep in his clothes and life jacket. Repeat, this is an order! We have a submarine follow-

ing us...If we make it through the night, in the morning we will have air protection from Blue West One, (which was the code name for the air base in Greenland), and of course, we will have protection until we reach port."

Between the known presence of a submarine and the rough weather, there would be little sleeping on the *Dorchester* that night. The weather abated enough within a few hours. Captain Danielsen and the chaplains warned the men about wearing all their clothes, including boots and gloves, along with life jackets to bed. Meanwhile, Father Washington said mass in the mess area that was attended by men of many faiths. Earlier that night, Captain Kreckler had called his men together in the hold. He repeated Captain Danielsen's earlier warning. "This will be the most dangerous part of our mission," he said. "We're coming through the storm and now we're in calm waters. And they can really spot us out here."

As the clock ticked past midnight, many began to breathe easier with the knowledge that they were near safe waters and would soon be under an umbrella of protection from Greenland-based planes. However, aboard U-233, a torpedo man prepared to fire three torpedoes. Within minutes, the three deadly fish were in the water heading toward the shadow creeping past at a distance of 1,000 yards. At approximately 0055 hours, one of the torpedoes ripped into the *Dorchester's* starboard side. The ensuing explosion rent a hole near the engine room from below the waterline to the top deck. The lights went out, steam pipes split, and bunks collapsed like cards one on top of another. The sounds of screaming and the smell of gunpowder and ammonia filled the air. The initial explosion killed dozens outright, and a wave of cold water entering the ship quickly drowned dozens more. Nearly one-third those aboard died in the first moments of the disaster.

Within a minute, the ship listed thirty degrees to starboard. Panicked men rushed topside, but many never made it through blocked passageways. Others were overcome by ammonia fumes. Those who did emerge into the freezing night faced tough choices. Several life boats could not be deployed due to the *Dorchester's* dramatic list. Many others were so fouled by ice that they could not be freed before the ship went under.

The chaplains were handing out life vests and assisting soldiers as they slid down ropes to the sea below. One hysterical soldier grabbed a chaplain as if to choke him. A crew member wrestled the soldier away from the chaplain and watched the soldier run down the deck toward the rising water and probably to his death.

Elsewhere on the top deck, Father Washington gave absolution to soldiers as they went over the side. Over the din, was heard a terror-filled plaintive voice repeating,

"I can't find my life jacket." Clearly heard was Chaplain Fox say, "Here's one, soldier." Then Fox removed his life jacket and put it on the soldier.

The Chaplains seemed to be everywhere on the deck until the very end. Many survivors reported that they locked arms and prayed in unison as the ship sank. These four Army chaplains sacrificed themselves for the soldiers and the God that they served.

After some confusion, the Coast Guard began rescue operations, saving 230 of the nearly 900 aboard and losing one Coast Guardsman in the process.

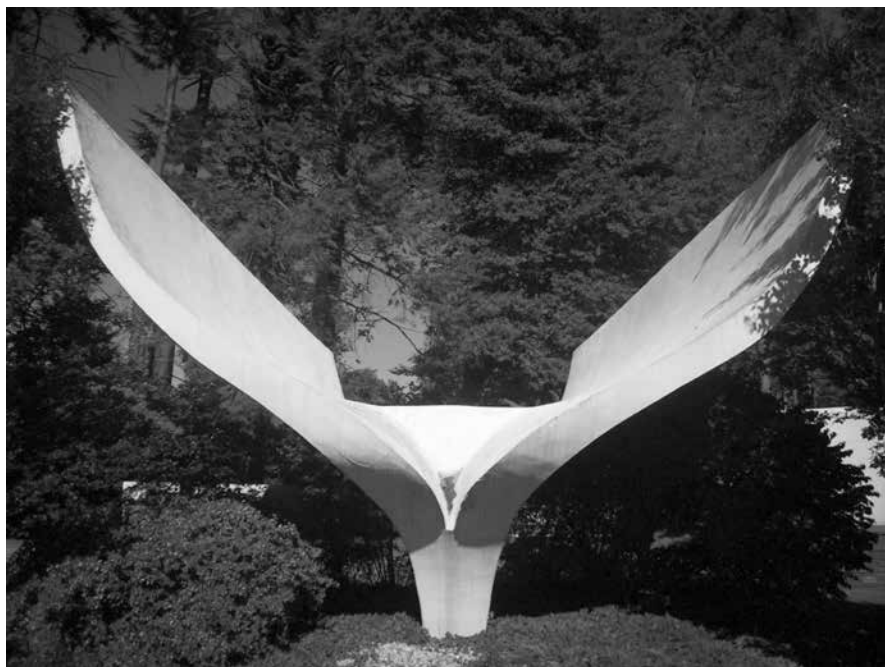
Honors earned by the Chaplains:

In the aftermath of the disaster, the story of the Four Chaplains garnered popular notice. Many thought that they should be awarded the Medal of Honor. Instead, on 19 December 1944, they were each awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross. In 1948, the U.S. Post Service issued a commemorative stamp in their honor, and Congress designated 3 February as "Four Chaplains Day." 12 years later, Congress created the Four Chaplain's Medal, which was presented to their survivors by Secretary of the Army Wilber M. Brucker on January 18, 1961 at Fort Myers, Virginia.

Today, one can find memorials to the Four Chaplains all across the nation. Several organizations exist to further their memory, including the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in Philadelphia and the Immortal Chaplains Foundation in Minnesota. Chapels, bridges, memorials, and plaques honoring the Four Chaplains are found in so many locations, including a stained glass window in the Pentagon.



The Four Chaplains Medal



National Memorial Park in Falls Church, VA



AMMV 34th National Convention

Linthicum Heights, MD – March 25th – March 29th, 2020

Maritime Conference Center

****** times/events subject to change ******

Wednesday, March 25th

06:30 – 09:00	Breakfast (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
09:00 – 21:00	Early Registration & Hospitality Room open! (<i>8 South</i>)
09:00 – 15:30	Bus trip to Washington, D.C. (boxed lunch provided)
11:30 – 14:00	Lunch (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
17:00 – 19:30	Dinner (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)

Thursday, March 26th

06:30 – 08:15	Breakfast (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
08:30 – 11:30	Opening Ceremonies; President's Report (<i>8 North</i>); Registration continues (<i>8 South</i>)
11:30 – 13:30	Lunch (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>) & Hospitality Room open! (<i>8 South</i>)
13:45 – 16:30	Organizational business (<i>8 North</i>)
13:45 – 16:30	Sally's Glamour Shots (ladies' activity) (<i>location TBD</i>)
17:00 – 22:00	Hospitality Room & Registration (<i>8 South</i>)
17:00 – 19:30	Dinner (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
19:00 – ???	WWII veteran 'Open Mic' and/or entertainment by Sally Langwah (<i>8 South</i>)

Friday, March 27th

06:30 – 08:15	Breakfast (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
08:30 – 09:30	Guest speaker: William Geroux, author of <i>The Ghost Ships of Archangel</i> (<i>8 North</i>)
09:45 – 10:45	Guest speaker: Dave Yoho, WWII Veteran & motivational speaker (<i>8 North</i>)
10:45 – 11:15	Various guests with brief presentations (<i>8 North</i>)
11:30 – 13:30	Lunch (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>) & Hospitality Room open! (<i>8 South</i>)
13:45 – 15:00	Guest speaker: Dr. Salvatore Mercogliano, maritime historian (<i>8 North</i>)
15:15 – 16:30	Guest speaker: RDML Tim Gallaudet, Asst. Sec of Commerce NOAA (<i>8 North</i>)
17:30 – ???	CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL BANQUET Guest Speaker: Rep. John Garamendi (to be introduced by Rita Cosby); AMMV Awards Ceremony (<i>MITAGS cafeteria – private section</i>)

Saturday, March 28th

06:30 – 09:00	Breakfast (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
11:30 – 14:00	Lunch (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
17:00 – 19:30	Dinner (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>)
TBD	Off-site tour; also: MITAGS Shiphandling simulator tour

Sunday, March 29th

06:30 – 09:00	Breakfast (<i>MITAGS cafeteria</i>); Safe travels & see you next year!
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Bringing 'Em Home After WWII

OPERATION MAGIC CARPET

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States mobilized as it never had before or since. Beating plowshares into swords, America began the Herculean process of shifting from a peacetime footing to one of total war. Industry was retooled from civilian pursuits such as manufacturing lipstick casings and converted to pumping out bullet cartridges; from producing typewriters to turning out tanks; and from assembly lines rolling out family sedans to rolling out heavy bombers by the thousand. More importantly, America mobilized her most precious asset: her manpower.

As late as 1939, the US had an Army of only 170,000 men, even as war raged in Asia and clouds of conflict gathered over Europe. By 1945, America had put 16 million men in uniform.

At war's end, more than 8 million US servicemen, were stationed overseas, scattered all over the globe. The fighting was over, and it was time to bring our heroes home – heroes whose eagerness to return to civilian life was matched by the eagerness of their loved ones to see, touch, and embrace them once again. To that end, *Operation Magic Carpet* was conducted to repatriate America's troops to US soil. The massive logistical effort was entrusted to the War Shipping Administration (WSA), an agency created during the emergency of WWII to coordinate, oversee, and operate America's civilian shipping in support of the war effort.

As early as 1943, the Pentagon began contingency planning for returning millions of personnel from overseas whenever victory was won. It was an enormous task, sardonically cited by cartoonist Bill Mauldin who showed the everyman GIs Willie and Joe sulking at an embarkation port: "I don't remember no delays getting us over here." Priority was determined by the Advanced Service Rating Score – a pecking order based upon the principle that:



"those who had fought longest and hardest should be returned home for discharge first". Points were awarded for months of service, months of service overseas, combat awards, and for dependent children. The more points scored, the greater the priority for shipping home and discharge.

THE EUROPEAN EFFORTS:

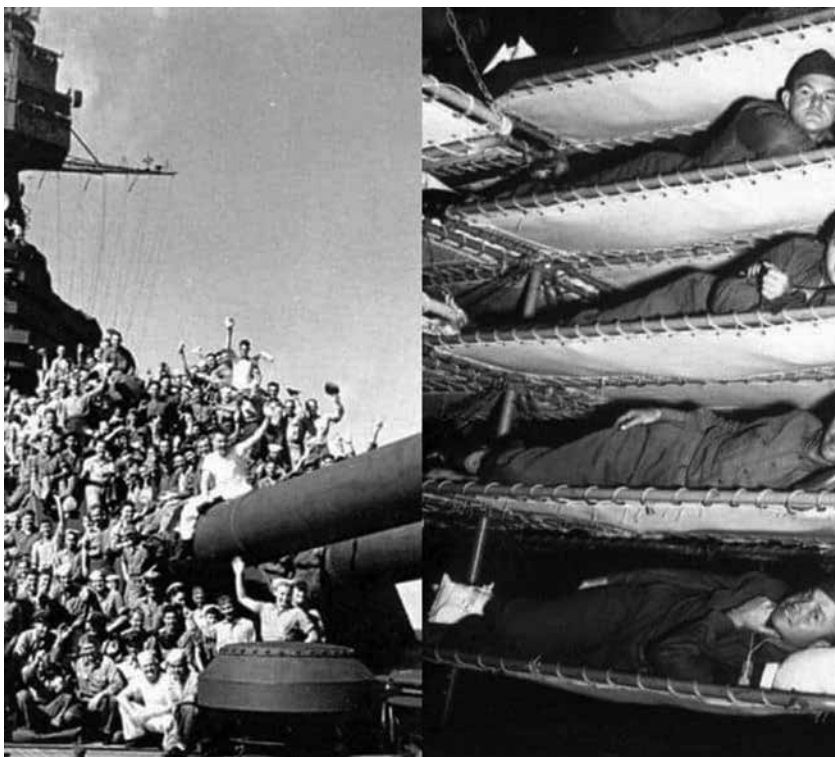
In preparation, the WSA converted over 300 Liberty and Victory ships into troop transports. Within a month of Germany's surrender, the WSA began shipping American servicemen from Europe to the US.

The first *Magic Carpet* ships left Europe in June 1945. With the Navy fully committed to the Pacific, most of the shipping came from the Merchant Marine or the U.S. Army, carrying some 430,000 men to the East Coast per month during a 14 month stretch after the war ended.

To maintain the pace, the number of ships employed steadily grew from the initial 300 requisitioned by the WSA at the start of the operation. The motley fleet ranged in size from small vessels with a carrying capacity of only 300 troops, to behemoths such as luxury liners converted during the war into troop transports capable of carrying up to 15,000 servicemen.

Passage times varied, depending on the servicemen's location, as well as the luck of the draw in the ships to which they were assigned. Conditions varied too. Bunks were welded three, four, and even five high, with round the clock meal schedules. Water—always at a premium aboard ship—was strictly rationed. Said more than one serviceman, "When we walked off that boat we were pretty rank—but nobody cared!"

Daunting and complex as it was, *Magic Carpet* was completed relatively quickly. By September, 1945, 1.4 million servicemen, nearly all of them from the European



destroyers.

Some combat ships were hurriedly retrofitted to serve as transports, as was the case with aircraft carriers, in whose hangars were bolted or welded massive bunk beds. Other Navy vessels, particularly smaller ones such as destroyers, were frequently impressed to serve as transports as they were, with returning servicemen invited to shift for themselves, deploying hammocks wherever possible, and making do by squeezing into whatever nooks and crannies and free space were available aboard ship.

The Pacific portion of *Magic Carpet* entailed extra layers of complexity, and, especially at the beginning, required greater dispatch than had been necessary in Europe. Aside from the Pacific's vast distances compared to the European theater, there was the urgent need to rescue American POWs from the scattered Japanese camps in which they had languished for years, often starved, brutalized, and otherwise barbarically mistreated by their captors.

In a subset operation called *Operation Santa Claus*, a peak was reached in December of 1945, when over 700,000 personnel were repatriated from the Pacific Theater alone.

Magic Carpet in the Pacific Theater of Operation was concluded by September of 1946, when the War Shipping Administration, created as an emergency measure during the crucible of war, was finally stood down, and its functions were returned to the civilian Maritime Commission.

It had taken nearly four years for America to deploy 8 million servicemen overseas. It took only 14 months to reverse the torrent and return most of them home. In short, *Operation Magic Carpet* was an enormous, and enormously successful, feat of logistics, planning, and execution.

Theater, had been repatriated. By December 1st, 1945, the WSA had successfully repatriated over 3.5 million personnel. By February of 1946, repatriation from the ETO had, by and large, been completed.

The transatlantic movement went both ways. With *Magic Carpet* ships being empty eastbound, more than 400,000 German and Italian prisoners were repatriated, however rubble-strewn their nations may have been. The task was completed by early 1946. All of this went relatively smoothly.

THE PACIFIC OPERATION:

The sudden capitulation of Japan in August of 1945 threw a monkey's wrench into the smoothly run works. The war in the Pacific had been expected to last well into 1946. As such, repatriation of American forces from the Pacific had been unanticipated in 1945. Thus, when that war ended only three months after hostilities had concluded in Europe, just as the WSA was in the midst of what by then was an already massive repatriation effort from the ETO back to America, the authorities were caught flat footed: there was not enough readily available sealift capacity to simultaneously repatriate millions of servicemen from both the European *and* Pacific theaters.

When the WSA's supply of readily convertible cargo ships could not keep up with the demand, the US Navy chipped in. Improvising, naval combat ships were designated as troop transports. Thus, by administrative order, the Navy diverted for use in *Magic Carpet* battleships and aircraft carriers. Aircraft carriers, with their massive and open hangar decks, proved well suited for the task. Such naval giants were joined by sundry smaller vessels, ranging from cruisers to Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs) to





Heave Ho!

AMMV 34th National Convention
March 26th – 29th, 2020
Maritime Conference Center, Baltimore, MD

COMMEMORATIVE MAGAZINE SPACE - ORDER FORM

This is an invitation to offer recognition of the U.S. Merchant Marine and Navy Armed Guard Veterans of WWII. We offer this publication as a means for individuals, chapters, and outside organizations to express recognition and help support our annual reunion. You need not be a member of AMMV to advertise; all are welcome to participate!

Black & White interior full page x \$150 = _____

Premium position (covers) color page x \$400 = _____

*** Email first for color premium positions – sold on first come/first serve basis ***

Patriotic contribution to support AMMV convention business = _____

TOTAL DUE (thank you!) = _____

Please make check or money order payable to: AMMV

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All convention attendees and paid advertisers will receive a copy. This publication will also be posted to our website: ammv.us. Your copy will be mailed to the address provided below:

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

★ Artwork/completed page must be emailed to cjedyvean@hotmail.com; do NOT mail your page ★

★ Full page submittals only (7.5" x 10"); files must be camera ready (no tweaking by us); PDF file preferred ★

★ Deadline to receive submittals is Feb 20th ★

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Capt. Chris Edyvean cjedyvean@hotmail.com

Old Armed Guard Sailors of WW II

Submitted by Charles A. Lloyd, USNAG

Old sailors sit and chew the fat
about things that used to be,
of the things they've seen,
the places they've been,
when they ventured out to sea.

They remembered friends from long ago
The times they had back then.
The money they spent,
the beer they drank,
in their days as sailing men.

Their lives are lived in days gone by,
with thoughts that forever last.
Of bell bottom blues,
winged white hats,
and good times in their past.

They recall long nights with a moon so bright
far out on a lonely sea.
The thoughts they had as youthful lads,
when their lives were wild and free.

They knew so well how their hearts would swell
when old glory fluttered proud and free.
The underway pennant
such a beautiful sight
as they plowed through an angry sea.

They talked of the chow ol' cookie would make
and the shrill of the bosun's pipe.
How salt spray would fall
like sparks from hell
when a storm struck in the night.

They remember old shipmates already gone
who forever hold a spot in their heart,
when sailors were bold,
and friendships would hold,
until death ripped them apart.

Their sailing days are gone away,
never again will they cross the brow.
They have no regrets,
they know they are blessed,
for honoring a sacred vow.

Their numbers grow less with each passing day
as the final muster begins,
there's nothing to lose,
all have paid dues,
and they'll sail with shipmates again.

I've heard them say before getting underway
that there's still some sailing to do,
they'll say with a grin
that their ship has come in
and the Lord is commanding the crew.

Author unknown

AMMV 34th National Convention – March 25-29th, 2020



STEP 1: Register with the Maritime Conference Center (aka MITAGS) for rooms & meals

**** Prices include three buffet style “all you can eat” meals per day ****

You must register directly with the Maritime Conference Center to reserve your desired room nights, which include meals. Please note AMMV Convention registration is separate; see Step # 2.

**TO REGISTER: Call (866) 900-3517 or book online at:
<https://book.b4checkin.com/chameleon/mccbwi/rlp/ammv>**



Per night: \$157 single occupancy; \$215 double occupancy, plus 13% taxes

NOTE: For those staying offsite, individual meals are available by purchasing tickets at the front desk.

Your paid hotel stay includes: 3 buffet style meals per day; use of fitness room & swimming pool; free parking; free shuttle service to/from BWI airport; onsite bar/lounge; access to maritime memorabilia room located in academic building. Check-in time is 3:00 p.m., check-out time is 11:00 a.m. (hotel will hold luggage if not departing immediately). No refunds for any unattended meals. AMMV group rate offered between 3/24 – 3/30.

You must register by March 3rd to receive the above discounted rate.



Convention Registration Form

AMMV 34th National Convention
March 25th – 29th, 2020
Maritime Conference Center
692 Maritime Blvd.
Linthicum Heights, MD 21090

STEP 2: Register with AMMV for attendance, activities, & banquet meal

Name: _____ Affiliation: _____

Spouse/partner; additional guest(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEE (required to attend business sessions & Hospitality Room activities)

☐ REGISTRATION FEE (single or first person in party) **\$50 = \$** _____

Additional \$25 per person(s) in your party **\$25 x** _____ **= \$** _____

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL DINNER BUFFET (Friday, March 27th: 6:00pm – 9:00 pm)

On-Site guests (registered w/ Maritime Conference Center hotel)

_____ @ **\$20 each = \$** _____

Off-Site guests (local or not staying at MCC facility)

_____ @ **\$50 each = \$** _____

******Offsite tours/entertainment will be offered; more information as details are solidified. We will accept payment “at the door” for these activities.******

TOTAL due for all selections **= \$** _____

Please make check payable to: **AMMV**
Mail check (no cash please) with completed form to:
AMMV, Attn: Convention, P.O. Box 2024, Darien, CT 06820-2024



Membership Application for:

AMMV MEMBER-AT-LARGE

(To join an organized Chapter, please contact AMMV HQ for further information.)

If you have served in the U.S. Merchant Marine at any time during Peace or War, or are a Veteran of any U.S. service branch, or are a family member/descendent/wife/widow of a WWII MM vet, then you are eligible to become a member of AMMV. Climb aboard and join us as we strive to educate the public about the role which the U.S. Merchant Marine has played throughout American history.

AMMV goals include: working to obtain overdue benefits & recognition for our WWII MM veterans, obtaining Veteran status for post-WWII U.S. merchant seamen, participating in memorial events, and supporting laws/program which promote our modern U.S.-flagged fleet. Membership includes an informative quarterly AMMV News magazine and an annual membership card. *AMMV is an incorporated not for profit group.*



Join online at ammv.us or complete the following information and send to National Headquarters:

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

D.O.B: _____ DATE OF APPLICATION: _____

Do you have a DD214? _____ If so, from what service(s)? _____

Member-At-Large Dues are \$32 annually (July 1st through June 30th). Send check or money order for \$32 to:

***American Merchant Marine Veterans
P.O. Box 2024, Darien, CT 06820-2024***

Questions? Please call AMMV HQ: (475) 470-9200; email ammervets@gmail.com

"BATTLIN' PETE"

WALT DISNEY MERCHANT MARINE EMBLEM

IS 75 YEARS OLD!



The military service patch of the United States Merchant Marine for World War II was created 75 years ago by the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California in July 1944. The Walt Disney Studios had become renowned for their designs for military units of the United States Armed Forces.

On July 5, 1944, the United Seamen's Service, Inc. of Los Angeles, California, requested the Walt Disney Studios to produce a patch for the Merchant Marine. An exhibition of wartime art of merchant seamen of the United Nations was scheduled at the Los Angeles County Museum from July 16 to August 13, 1944. In connection with this exhibition, The United Seamen's Service, Inc. wanted to display this new Merchant Marine patch art at a public ceremony on Sunday, July 23, 1944. The United Seamen's Service is a nonprofit agency founded in 1942 to provide for the welfare of American seafarers and their dependents, and the seafarers of all nations.

True to his commitment to the Armed Services, Mr. Walt Disney directed his artists to create a patch for the United States Merchant Marine, recognizing their efforts in the conduct of World War II. Using one of their colorful characters, Battlin' Pete, the patch was created showing Pete knocking out a humanized torpedo. The finished artwork was mailed on July 14, 1944. The actual artist is unknown as 5-6 artists did the bulk of the insignias for the Walt Disney Studios.

The patch was produced in a 5" diameter size, different from the many shoulder patches created for the other armed forces units that were usually 2½" in diameter. The Merchant Marine patch was usually worn on the front of jackets or blouses. The United States Merchant Marine now had the distinction of its own Walt Disney Service Patch.

American Merchant Marine Veterans
2722 MAYNES CT.
SANTA ROSA, CA 95405-8408

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The 27th annual Wreaths Across America ceremonies honoring fallen heroes of the Armed Services were held nationally on December 14, 2019.



Jerry Aspland, V.P. of AMMV Memorial Committee, presents a wreath at the San Pedro, California American Merchant Marine memorial.



AMMV National Treasurer Dennis Kelly at the WAA ceremony in Darien, Connecticut.