

# NEWS MAGAZINE















# American Merchant Marine Veterans Official Publication NEWS MAGAZINE

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## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS American Merchant Marine Veterans Lynn Kelly

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Membership ......Sindy Raymond North Bay Mariners Chapter

**Lynn Kelly** *Member-at-Large* 

Internet &

Social Media ......Capt. Chris Edyvean Midwest Chapter



## National President John Pitts



AMMV Members,

It is an honor and a privilege to address you as President of the American Merchant Marine Veterans. The first order of business is for me to recognize the outstanding contributions of past President, Captain Chris Edyvean and thank him for keeping the AMMV on course and true to its goals. I will do my best to carry on and move

the AMMV forward on the course Chris has charted.

In addition, congratulations go to the newly elected officers of the AMMV: Vice-President Captain Dru DiMattia; Treasurer Dennis Kelly; Secretary Stanley Blumenthal. I thank them for volunteering for these positions and look forward to working with them for your continued benefit. So far, it has been a pleasure serving on the Board with them.

Although not elected, many other members volunteer above and beyond what is normally required of any organizations members. Some are USMM Veterans, some are USMM Veterans children or family members, and some are friends of USMM Veterans. Whether campaigning for legislation, attending and contributing to conventions, or ensuring day to day activities and obligation are met, these members are the backbone of the AMMV and deserve our recognition and thanks! They are: Morris Harvey, Charles Mills, Eugene Barner, Robert Weagant, Gerard Driscoll, Bob Ross, Dave Yoho, Bob Lewis, Michael Helbig, Sheila Sova, Laura Riddle, Shirley Cauble, Lynn Kelly, Sindy Raymond, Crawford and Shirley Knight and so many more who give of themselves to make this organization work.

Those named above are the pistons that drive the AMMV engine, but every member who actively contributes to the AMMV are the fuel that enable that engine to run. So, thanks to all of you members who have served, and to those of you who have given your support through your membership and who continue to make this a worthwhile organization with worthwhile goals.

Of the many issues involving the US Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII, as well as those US Merchant Marine Veterans who have not been recognized as such by Congress at this time, the most noteworthy is H. R. 550, the

Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act.

American Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII have progressed further than with any of the several previous attempts to garner recognition for American Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII. This legislation (H. R. 550) was introduced by Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) and secured the minimum 290 cosponsors necessary to receive a mandatory vote in the House of Representatives. If voted into law, H. R. 550 would provide for the award of a Congressional Gold medal, COLLECTIVELY, to the United States Merchant Mariners of WWII, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during WWII.

When passed in the House of Representatives, the bill would be forwarded for passage in the Senate as S.133. The Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act was introduced in the Senate simultaneously by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). Reps. Don Young (R-AK) and Susan Brooks (R-IN) are the original cosponsors in the House of Representatives.

In addition to H. R. 550, another Bill, Honoring Our WWII Merchant Mariners Act of 2019, H.R. 154 was introduced into this 116th Congress. January 3, 2019 by Representative Al Green (D TX) which is designed to provide 1 payment of \$25,000 to eligible American Merchant Mariners who provide a DD-214 for service in the USMM between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946, and who have not received benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944.

While the progress of H.R. 550 is welcome and impressive, the fight is not over. S. 133 needs to have the required number of Senators before it can be voted on in the Senate. Please contact your Senators and call for them to cosponsor S. 133. Also, please thank your Congressperson if they cosponsored H. R. 550.

We will continue to fight for recognition of the US Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII and to bring their Sisters & Brothers who served the United States during subsequent conflicts their deserved recognition US Merchant Marine Veterans.

Thank you for your service, time and interest in the American Merchant Marine Veterans.

Fair Winds and Following Seas!

Fraternally,

John Pitts

President, AMMV, Inc.



# National Vice President Capt. Anthony "Dru" DiMattia



July 1, 2019 assumes the watch of National Vice President of the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV). It is an honor to come aboard! Look forward to serving our WWII Veterans in the coming years.

#### A Milestone Accomplished:

With known history of the founding of AMMV here in Southwest Florida, comes a long-sought conclusion of a project:

May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 was a milestone shared by many past members along with a few remaining of the SWFLA AMMV Chapter.

Memorial Day weekend, as some of us gathered for barbecues or a day out on the water, at a special ceremony, at Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve in Cape Coral, Florida, a long-term project of mine came to fruition. We were invited to join the Annual Iraqi War Memorial Services located in same park.

A monument dedicated to the U. S. Merchant Mariners of WWII and the U. S. Navy Armed Guard was unveiled.

#### The display:

A four-foot-diameter bronze propeller from a Coast Guard vessel mounted on a stainless steel stand, a flagpole equal in height to the other services and flying the Merchant Marine flag and a black granite stone piece with information and visuals on both sides are part of the display.

The memorial informs that a combined 8,649 of these members died in the sinking of 731 cargo ships during operations that supplied our forces and allies overseas from 1941 through 1945. References of these statistics vary, but the magnitude and severity of these sacrifices are crystal clear!

Nearly a year and a half in its planning and making, the memorial was spearheaded by myself, a Cape Coral resident, licensed master mariner, and the then National Vice President-elect of the nonprofit AMMV which again, has its roots in this area from the early 1980s.

#### The ceremony:

The crowd that gathered for the dedication ceremony, approx. 300 in attendance, included keynote speaker, WWII Merchant Marine Veteran Dave Yoho; Cape Coral Mayor Joe Coviello, who has 2 sons that are U.S. Merchant Marine Academy – Kings Point graduates. In attendance were our very own WWII Merchant Mariners, Jim Sciple (94yrs) from N. Ft Myers; WWII Merchant Mariner, Cap-

tain John Ariens (93yrs) from Port Charlotte; and WWII Merchant Mariner Morris Buxton (95yrs) of Cape Coral. Merchant Mariner Peter Gannon, Vietnam Era of Port Charlotte, Merchant Mariner, Operation Desert Storm, Dessert Shield, Captain Richard Martucci of Vero Beach, FL supporter of the U. S. Navy Armed Guard, which were special units stationed aboard Merchant Marine ships during WWII as protection; Merchant Mariner Roger Mercaldi, of the Vietnam era from New Hampshire and graduate from Maine Maritime Academy; along with many other interested parties.

During the ceremony, I commented to the crowd: "I've loved every second of bringing this project together. I'm humbled by the passion of those

that helped us, including donations by Dr. Carol Rae Culliton-Metzger and Richard L. Metzger of the Gunterberg Charitable Foundation, the Cape Coral Rotary Club and others,







Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL); WWII Merchant Marine Veteran James Sciple; Dru DiMattia

plus advice from the Southwest Florida Military Museum & Library, in Cape Coral. JHS Builders, provided permitting, project management and construction of the concrete footers; Padgett Swann Machinery, represented by fellow shipmate, Chief Engineer Brian Orme and his crew donated the Wheel, and fabrication of the stand; Blot Engineering, Edward Blot provided the structural drawings, Houchin Construction, Josh Valle, provided the Site Plans,



Coastal Building, Peter Garcia, provided raw materials, Bastos Pavers, Andrea and Ray Bastos provided Paver Installation, Tri-Circle Pavers, Patrick Connolly provided the Pavers; along with other service providers providing labor and materials free of charge!

My remarks during the ceremony included: "U.S. Merchant Marine were not recognized as veterans until 1988, almost 45 years after being a vital asset during World War II. They were responsible for transporting supplies to foreign nations during times of peace and war.

"The merchant marine has been involved in every military conflict, anywhere in the world, serving the United States of America."

Speaker Dave Yoho, a WWII Merchant Marine Veteran who flew down to the ceremony from Virginia, stated:

"They were not granted veteran status until years later, because they are often referred to as the lost servants", He noted that 250,000 were recruited into the Merchant Marine during WWII but less than 2,000 are here today,

Merchant Mariner, Roger Mercaldi, told the crowd that: "The average person does not know what a marine merchant is or what they went through in World War II, and it's really a shame. Freedom is not free; it's paid for in blood,"

A good and proud day was had by all and the Southwest Florida Military Museum hosted the inaugural Cape Coral Memorial Day Parade in downtown on Monday, which was very memorable too.



(L to R) Carol Rae Cullition-Metzger of the Gunterberg Foundation; Richard Metzger; Cape Coral Mayor Joe Coviello; Dru DiMattia

### Forgotten Heroes

To those who fought and bled and died, That God's gift of freedom might always abide! With weapons, flags and spirit bold, Did wars on foreign shores unfold.

The tanks and guns with soldiers brave
Were carried over the restless wave.
The seas above and the subs below,
With the Merchant Marine they had to go.

It's strange some folks will ask today,
What part in the war did the Merchant Marine play?
Can it be as history counts the cost,
The page with the answer seems to be lost.

With the battles over and victory won, The troops came home where they started from. They marched in parades with much adulation, Along with the thanks from a grateful nation.

I see a man watching the parade passing by.
It seems that I see a tear in his eye.
Did he not serve for the land that he loved,
In the Merchant Marine below decks or above?

He remembers the heat and the sweat down below, The fear of torpedoes; what a way to go. The men on the bridge in the wild North Atlantic, In danger of ice or a submarine's antics.

So he stands there atone as the band plays a tune, Reflecting how his part was forgotten too soon. Take heart my brave shipmate if no glory you share, In the logbook of Heaven you'll find it all there.

Your watch here on earth is not really over,
As long as you tread the topside of clover,
So lift your head high as old Glory you see.
Thank God that you served for the land of the free.

Written by the late Milton E. Kneibes of Ft. Myers, FL. Presented by Dru Di Mattia at the new monument ceremony for the Merchant Marine and U.S. Navy Armed Guard on May 26, 2019.

## Outgoing National Vice President Christian Yuhas

# We Shall Never Forget

Significant progress has been made to recognize and thank America's WWII Merchant Marine Veterans in this 116th Congress. H.R. 550, the Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019, has 295 cosponsors. The bill's sponsor, Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA-3), has filed a motion to place it on the Consensus Calendar by which the bill is expected to pass the House. Next up is Senate Bill S.133, the companion bill to H.R. 550. S. 133 is sponsored by Senator Lisa Murkowski and currently has 18 cosponsors, significantly short of the 51 cosponsors needed for a simple majority to pass this bill in the Senate. I urge everyone to continue to advocate for S. 133's passage by contacting their Senators, then request they cosign this important bill ASAP!

H.R. 154 has been introduced in this 116th Congress by Representative Al Green (D-TX-9) and will Honor our WWII Merchant Mariners by establishing a Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund which will result in one lump sum payment of \$25,000 to eligible WWII Merchant Marine Veterans. As many of our WWII Merchant Marine Veterans struggle financially toward the end of their lives, this Bill is very important as a well deserved thank you from the American People. These WWII Merchant Marine Veterans volunteered to be in harms way and support our troops, resulting in the highest casualty rate of any branch of the military in WWII. They fought for US, now it is time that WE FIGHT FOR THEM. Let's all work together to this very important bill, H.R. 154!

Recently I have concluded my time as National V.P. for this organization, the American Merchant Marine Veterans. I pass the torch to Mr. Dru DiMattia. Dru has shown a deep passion, and a burning desire to advocate for all Merchant Marine Veterans, including and specifically our WWII Merchant Marine Veterans. This is evident by his outstanding achievement of spearheading the new Merchant Marine memorial at Cape Coral's Veterans Memorial Park in Florida. I wish Dru a successful

and fulfilling term as the new National Vice President of the AMMV! Congratulations Dru!

Recently, three important resolutions were passed at our National AMMV Convention. All three are very important. First is the resolution to create a national registry of qualified WWII Merchant Marine Veterans. We all can assist Congress in identifying the remaining WWII Merchant Marine Veterans that are still with us today. Everyone can help with this process (see new data info sheet in this issue) by finding and identifying our remaining WWII Merchant Marine Veterans with their location, contact information and qualifying documents. Second is the resolution to create student AMMV chapters in our nations maritime academies. This is a grass-roots way to encourage our young merchant mariners to be active in our industry and to support all Merchant Marine Veterans. Student chapters will be supported by our national AMMV organization in a variety of ways, including possible grants, loans, locating great guest speakers and other fun and rewarding activities. Students and staff at our maritime academies are encouraged to reach out to the AMMV for more information on how they can start a student maritime academy chapter at their school. Finally is our resolution in support of archiving priceless merchant marine documents to safeguards that document the history of the U.S. Merchant Marine and it's men and women. The California State University Maritime Academy has created such an archive and is now seeking historical documents for it's merchant marine archive. If you know of, or have access to historical documents from the U.S. Merchant Marine, please reach out to the AMMV or CMA for more information on this unique and exciting new program to safeguard to history of our nations merchant marine.

Long Live the U.S. Merchant Marine and their men and women who have so valiantly fought for and supported our country in it's time of need.



# National Secretary **Stanley Blumenthal**



Great to be back in the National Secretary saddle.

Had a great time at the 33rd Convention in Tampa, Florida, my home state. Met a very important person, who was also a speaker, Mark H. Buzby, Transportation Administrator, who started out as a U.S. Merchant Marine

graduate with a Third Mate's license but went into the Navy and retired as a Rear Admiral.

I got him interested into building Mega Cruise Ships for our own market like China is doing for their market.

Later Mr. Buzby informed me that he had discussed the matter with our ship builders who told him that they would have to first build a dry dock or graving dock large enough to handle such ships and of course they can do it if they had a firm contract and all the tax breaks the foreign ship builders get. He said he would bring it up with his boss, Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

I heard nothing further so after a few weeks I sent another email and got no response. I think this is a case of no response is a good response? If there is a go ahead on this major project it would normally be kept quiet until all the extensive planning is done, design of the dock and ship, estimated cost to private enterprise and necessary subsidies on startup, (after which we would get our investment back in spades) ready to presented to our "Make America Great Again" President and Congress and offered to our shipyards to bid on in line with our capitalist system.

I recommend that a separate corporation be created offering shares on the stock market where profits and patriotism would go hand in hand! Buy American, Cruise American. Imagine riding a ship you invested in. The more shares sold the less tax paying subsidies needed. Mega ship cruising in our own market is a profit making, forever, industry we should be in considering jobs, economy, tax income, pride and judging how many ships there are and how many are on order and how bigger and more occupancy they are getting.

Can you see any Americans against it except those invested in foreign shipyards, some of whom may switch sides knowing patriotism can help sell cruises? I would invest if I had the option, wouldn't you? This is one trade war we can't lose.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL AMMV National Secretary

### Welcome Aboard to these New Members of the AMMV

TIMOTHY ALVAR	DULUTH	MN	CAPT SEAN MC NIFF	MILLIS	MA
STEVEN BLUST	LAYTONSVILLE	MD	ROGER E. MERCALDI, JR.	GEORGETOWN	MA
GEORGE CAPLEY	BROOKWOOD	AL	AARON NOLAN FAMILY	WASILLA	AK
OSCAR CARREON	ONTARIO	CA	ILETA PRATER	WASILLA	AK
RAY CONRADY	SAN FRANCISCO	CA	CAPT DANIEL RENTSCHLER	DULUTH	MN
RICHARD GALLEAR	WASILLA	AK	COLLEEN RHEINFRANK	WESTERVILLE	OH
JEN GALLEAR	WILLAMINA	OR	MICHAEL ROBBINS	CARMEL	CA
MIKE GALLEAR	KENT	WA	RAFAEL (RALPH) ROHENA, JR	MARCO ISLAND	FL
TARA GALLEAR	ANCHORAGE	AK	TERRY ROSS	EL DORADO	AR
ROBERT VINCENT HADEN	TAYLORS	SC	GEORGE STUPSKI	SEDONA	AZ
ALAN CURTIS HILL	BLUE BELL	PA	DAVID THOMPSON	SEATTLE	WA
DARIN HUGGINS	BEAUMONT	TX	IAN WATTS	CHAPEL HILL	NC
GERARD KAPPEL	LITTLE FALLS	NY	ERIC M. WHITE	DENVER	CO
JIM LANDERS	COCONUT CREEK	FL	CLETIS (BUCK) WILFONG	SPRINGFIELD	MO
LEE MARKWELL	CASEY	IL			



## National Office Administrator **Lynn Kelly**

#### **DUES COLLECTION:**

Thank you to all the members who have sent in their dues for the July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 membership year. We still have a long way to go. If you are a Member-at-Large please send a \$32 check to:

#### AMMV P.O. Box 2024 Darien, CT 06820-2024

(If you are unsure if you have paid call Lynn at 475-470-9200.)

Postage and printing are expensive. We all know AMMV can make better use of our funds than to pay to print and mail second notices of dues required. Last year in mid- September we still had 600 members who were not paid. That meant "reminder notices" needed to be sent. In order to reduce costs we used a postcard as a reminder. The mailing costs were \$220.80 for printing services and \$246.00 for postage. At this year's convention it was strongly suggested that we do a mailing in April to bill members prior to the due date of June 30 and enclose a postage paid envelope. That mailing would have cost approximately \$2000. If we have 600 members who are not paid this September, that type of mailing, with a postage paid envelope, will cost \$904. Please pay your dues and help us to remain "fiscally responsible".

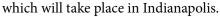
#### **MEMORIAL DONATIONS:**

In the past year we received several donations made to honor the memory of a departed Merchant Mariner. Some of the honorees were current AMMV members but some were not. We appreciate and welcome these gestures. I have put a procedure in place which will be used for all of these types of donations. Upon receiving such a contribution, I send a thank you letter immediately to the donor and at the same time a letter of acknowledgement, provided a name and address is included, to the family of the deceased. You can be certain that none of the donations are spent frivolously. We use these funds to obtain recognition for our veterans, for outreach and education of the public as to the role the Merchant Marine played in war and peace and continues to play today, and to preserve the rich history of brave men performing an often forgotten and unrecognized service to our country. Donations "in honor of" (for a special occasion) or "in memory of"

for a deceased seaman may be sent to AMMV, P.O. Box 2024, Darien CT 06820-2024. For questions please call Lynn Kelly at 475-470-9200.

### AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION:

Representatives from the American Legion have reached out to AMMV. Founded in 1919, the Legion will celebrate 100 years at their convention in August



Our new Veterans Affairs Committee chair, Bob Lewis, has personally funded a booth at the convention where he will promote the American Merchant Marine on our behalf. A couple of our members will join Bob for the weekend to assure that the booth is manned and well managed.

I know there are folks in our organization who feel that perhaps the American Legion has not been supportive of the efforts by the Merchant Marine in the past. We are hoping to approach this endeavor with an open mind and "make a connection". AMMV's By-laws and Constitution states, "Our key purpose is to educate the American public as to the importance of having a strong American-flagged Merchant Marine at all times and to promote, to the best of our ability, the cause of American Sea Power and the American Seaman." Our delegation will educate and promote awareness at the convention to what may be a "new audience" for AMMV. If any of our members are planning to attend the convention, please contact Lynn.

Calm Seas,

// Lynn Kell



## **NEWS Magazine Editor Sindy Raymond**



Historically, by this time in AMMV NEWS Magazine production, I have found that some details need a little additional information. Such is the case for this issue.

Featured later in this issue is a query form that all of our WWII Merchant Marine Veterans need to complete and return, hopefully with their dues of \$32.00 for the fiscal year 7/1/19 - 6/30/20 - if they

have not already been paid as a Member-at-Large. This query form will help ascertain which members qualify as holders of Honorable Discharge - form DD-214 or DD-256 - which makes them eligible for the benefits of the Just Recognition legislation now in Congress. Please return the form to our National Administrator's office so it can be recorded.

Recently, the AMMV official website www.ammv. us address has not be included in the AMMV NEWS Magazine and I must apologize for this. The website, for those of you with computers, is updated often with the latest information about our legislative efforts and other items of interest to U.S. Merchant Mariners and/or our members. Past AMMV President Captain Chris Edyvean still very actively monitors the website which is a wonderful source of information. Thank you, Capt. Chris.

#### Our legislative efforts this quarter:

My personal thanks to our many members and supporters for the efforts put forth this last quarter towards our pending legislations in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. The "rush" of accomplishment has made me feel like I did when I worked on nothing but Just Compensation legislation for Ian Allison and the Just Compensation Committee quite a number of years ago. Progress is certainly exhilarating; but further work is needed. Please help wherever or however vou can.

#### A personal note:

Bob Lewis, our new AMMV Veterans Affairs officer, is going to host an informational booth for the U.S. Merchant Mariners at the 100th American Legion Convention in Indianapolis, IN in August. The American Legion connection touched me personally and brought back memories of my childhood.

In 1946, my father was a commercial but "street savvy" photographer. He attended the 28th National American Legion convention in San Francisco and took quite a series of candid photos of attendees. This was soon after WWII was over and it was still foremost on the minds of those attending.

To this day, I still have some of those photographs and they do serve to remind me of those days and the honor and pride that those attendees felt about the outcome of WWII and America's participation in it.

Full speed ahead,

#### **VETERANS' AFFAIRS INFORMATION**

Submitted by Bob Lewis, AMMV Veterans Affairs Chairman:

First off I would like to remind all WWII veterans that if you have a 10% V.A. disability rating that you can pick up a **free lifetime pass** which provides you and your family entrance to more than 2,000 national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, and other federal recreational areas.

It looks like Congress is at it again. One of the most recent VFW publications stated that Congress could reduce the federal deficit by taxing the V.A. benefits and Tricare benefits that you and I receive. As of now it's just a proposal, and if it goes any further I'm pretty sure all the veterans groups the Legion, VFW, AV, Amvets etc. would put up a good fight on our behalf.

The Senate just recently passed the Blue Water Navy Bill extending disability benefits to those sailors and marines who served in ships 12 nautical miles of the coast of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975. With that being said, I'm sure that there were plenty of merchant marine ships in those areas that were affected. We just have to "do due diligence" on who was there and what ships were there.

One final note, I will be attending the 100th Anniversary American Legion Convention from August 23-29 in Indianapolis, Indiana. If any of our AMMV members attend, who are also Legion members, please come by our Merchant Marine /AMMV booth and introduce yourselves. We will be there to educate the rest of the veterans about our mission!

"Fair Winds and Following Seas"

**Bob Lewis** Robertlewis865@yahoo.com Cell 617 820 8968

# Presidential Proclamation on Maritime Day, 2019

On National Maritime Day, we honor the men and women who, throughout our history, have served with professionalism, dedication, and patriotism in the United States Merchant Marine. We recognize these seafaring merchant mariners for helping to fuel our economy, maintain our sea power, and support our national security.

Merchant mariners extend goodwill into all parts of the world, serving as a peaceful United States presence on international waterways. Today, American mariners facilitate the import and export of billions of dollars of goods, including fuel, agricultural products, and raw materials through the Marine Transportation System. They are also among the first to respond to help their fellow citizens in the wake of national disasters.

During times of war, merchant mariners courageously sail into combat zones to provide sealift for the Department of Defense, carrying weapons and supplies to America's fighting forces. In every conflict, United States citizen mariners have answered the call to duty and risked their lives. Some have sadly made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Because the United States Merchant Marine plays a central role in bringing American goods to market and in bolstering our military readiness abroad, we must encourage more people to pursue career opportunities on America's waterways and the oceans of the world. For this reason, I recently signed an Executive Order to help veterans of the Armed Forces transition seamlessly into civilian careers in the United States Merchant Marine by allowing them to apply relevant military training and experience toward becoming credentialed merchant mariners. This will help support a robust, well-equipped, and safe merchant fleet crewed by well-trained mariners.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 20, 1933, has designated May 22 of each year as "National Maritime Day" to commemorate the first transoceanic voyage by a steamship in 1819 by the S.S. Savannah. By this resolution, the Congress has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation calling for its appropriate observance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2019, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark this observance and to display the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand nineteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-third.

DONALD J. TRUMP

### SEEKING LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR SSH MARINERS' CEMETERY

Editor's note: This request from Bruce Weir, a descendant of a Mariner buried at Sailors' Snug Harbor Cemetery in Staten Island, New York. He is asking for public support to help his efforts

Dear Lynn Kelly and Sindy Raymond:

I am sending you this message to make you aware of the forgotten Mariners of Sailors' Snug Harbor and their descendants' efforts to honor them. I hope by sharing this information to gain the American Merchant Marine Veterans support to help overcome a major obstacle in the descendant's efforts to honor their ancestors.

The Descendants of Sailors' Snug Harbor Mari-

ners are reaching out to the Greater New York City Metropolitan Area Heritage (Historical and Genealogical) Societies, Museums, Military Veterans Groups, and Concerned Citizens, to invite them to join a Letters of Support Campaign to support our efforts to gain access to the Sailors' Snug Harbor Cemetery on Staten Island

SSH and is interred in the Sailors' Snug Harbor Cemetery. Perhaps some of the American Merchant Marine Veterans members also have ancestors whom were Mariners and might have resided at SSH.

#### THE PROJECT

During the past two years, I have been leading a group of descendants and researchers working on two projects (Mariners Records Research and Cemetery Monument) to

> honor the 16,500 Mariners whom resided at Sailors' Snug Harbor Retirement Home during its years of operation (1833-1976). SSH kept records containing interesting details about the SSH Mariners. The SSH descendants are using these records, located at **SUNY Maritime** College Library to create FindAGrave.com memorials with biographies for each

to honor their ancestors, and all of the 6,500 Sailors' Snug Harbor Mariners interred there, by installing a Memorial Monument (obelisk) and holding an annual Memorial Service.

The SSH Mariners were from New York and many different areas of the United States, Canada, and other foreign countries. Some of the SSH Mariners were famous Sea Captains and some sailed on famous Merchant and Naval ships dating back to the American Revolution. Many were just average seamen whom sailed and endured for many years on the sea under arduous conditions. I am a Native New Yorker and a descendant of a Danish Mariner who came to New York City in the 1830s, and during his later years was injured, and entered the old Sailors' Snug Harbor Retirement Home on Staten Island in the 1860s. He died at

SSH Mariner. Sadly, the Sailors' Snug Harbor Cemetery is devoid of gravestones or markers, except for 15 remaining gravestones. There is also no cemetery signage on the outside of the brick wall that surrounds the cemetery (see SSH Cemetery photos on FindAGrave.com website link above). The Cemetery is closed and not open to the public. It is owned by the Trustees of Sailors' Snug Harbor. The New York Post published a story about the Descendants of SSH Mariners unsuccessful effort to obtain permission, from the Trustees of Sailors' Snug Harbor, to access the SSH Cemetery to honor their ancestors and all the Mariners. Late last year, the Board of Trustees of Sailors' Snug Harbor rejected both of the descendants' requests for a memorial monument and memorial service. (https://nypost.com/2018/12/29/ caretakers-shoot-down-plans-for-monument-for-fallensailors/) The descendants have been collecting **Letters of Support** and will deliver them to the Trustees of Sailors'

Snug Harbor to persuade them to change their decisions.

#### SAILORS' SNUG HARBOR HISTORY

Sailors' Snug Harbor has a very interesting history. It was one of the first large scale retirement facilities in the United States and the first established for Merchant Mariners. It was founded by the Randall family whom were wealthy New York City Merchant Sea Captains and Privateers during the French Indian War and Patriots during the Revolutionary War. Alexander Hamilton was a friend of the Randall family and their Attorney. He helped draft the Robert Richard Randall Will in 1801 to create the Sailors' Snug Harbor Trust which funded the

SSH Retirement Home. SSH did not discriminate and all mariners were referred to, by the staff, as "Captain". Captain Thomas Melville, brother of author Herman

Melville, was the SSH Governor in the 1860-1880s. Many of the original buildings and campus still exist and are now used by New York City as the Snug Harbor Cultural Center (Staten Island History & Children's Museums, Noble Maritime Collection, etc.) and Botanical Gardens. The Trustees of Sailors' Snug Harbor sold the SSH retirement home and campus to the NYC in 1976. However, they did not sell the Sailors'

Snug Harbor Cemetery and still own it today.

Some notable Mariners are interred at the SSH Cemetery. Captain Robert Sheffield (1753-1838) was a Revolutionary War Veteran. In 1778, he was captured by the British and imprisoned on the Prison Ship "HMS Whitby" docked off of the Brooklyn coast in Wallabout Bay (near current day Brooklyn Navy Yard). He was one of the few fortunate to have escaped a prison ship and told his story to the Connecticut Gazette (July 10, 1778). After the War, he

came a Merchant Captain for many years. Sheffield Island off the coast of Connecticut is named in his honor. John

Strain (1802-1876) was a War of 1812 Veteran and a crew member on the USS Saratoga during the famous Battle of Plattsburgh on Lake Champlain. Captain John J.N. Webber (1829-1909) was a Civil War Navy Veteran and an officer onboard the famous Union Ironclad USS Monitor that fought against the Merrimack (CSS Virginia) during the Battle of Hampton Roads. Captain George Nelson Armstrong (1831-1906) was a Civil War Navy Veteran and the Sea Captain of the famous Merchant Ship Templar during its harrowing voyage from New York to San Francisco (Sept 1878-July 1879).

Through their many years of dangerous work on the seas, the

SSH Mariners were instrumental in the economic development and defense of the United States, during the late 1700s thru mid-1900s. Sadly, they have been forgotten to time. It is the Descendants of SSH Mariners mission to honor the

forgotten SSH Mariners by researching their lives, telling their stories, and adding a Memorial Monument at the SSH Cemetery.

The Descendants of SSH Mariners
Facebook page contains more information about the SSH Mariners projects and the Letters of Support Campaign with a link to a Letter Writing Instructions Guide:

https://www.facebook.com/SSHMarinersGenealogy/

https://www.facebook.com/notes/mariners-of-sailors-snug-harbor-history-and-genealogy/letters-of-support-campaign-for-the-descendants-of-sailors-snug-harbor-mariners/2009474166013347/

Regards,

Bruce Weir

Descendant of SSH Mariner Christian Robinson Email: jbweir1@gmail.com



## Special Activities From Our Members

As you know, many of our AMMV members participate, during the year, in public events that allow the American Merchant Mariners to be additionally recognized for their service "In Peace and War". These events include such things as Maritime Day ceremonies – on May 22nd – Memorial Day celebrations, Wreaths Across America at Christmas-time and other occasions.

This new section of the AMMV NEWS Magazine will honor any of these activities. Please submit your entries to: Sindy Raymond, Editor, email: saaren@sonic.net or by mail to: 2722 Maynes Ct., Santa Rosa CA 95405. Thank you.

#### Maritime Day - San Pedro, CA - May 22, 2019

Submitted by Capt. Manny Aschemeyer, Council of American MasterMariners (CAMM)

On May 22nd, CAMM was once again well represented at the annual National Maritime Day celebrations and observances held at the American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial in San Pedro, CA – in the heart of the Port of Los Angeles. The attendance was down this year, unfortunately – probably due to the forecast of rain that had been made by local weathermen. But as it turned out, the occasion was blessed with sunny and clear skies for all to enjoy.



AMMVMC BOD member Dave Boatner and AMMVMC
President John Pitts

John Pitts, President of the American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial Committee, did his usual outstanding job as "M.C." at the event. There were excellent keynote speeches offered by Capt. Monica L. Rochester, USCG (Sector Commander for LA/LB Harbor); and by Dianne Middleton (Chair of the Port of Los Angeles Harbor Commission). Several local elected officials presented awards



and citations to honor the event and the AMMVM Committee. Prayers were lifted up by Rev. David Jones (Chaplain, SS LANE VICTORY & AMMV-WW II). The President's Proclamation for National Maritime Day was read by Capt. Bent Christiansen. And finally, homage and respect was paid to all those mariners who had lost their lives during times of conflict in service to their country— as well as honoring all those mariners who had died this past year -- with the playing of "TAPS" and the traditional 21-gun salute presented by the Rifle Squad from VFW Post # 2967.

Numerous colorful flower wreathes were offered up by the various maritime labor unions, maritime trade clubs, several individuals, and other entities -- all in memory of lost loved ones. The wreaths were blessed by Chaplain Jones, and were subsequently carried out to sea on one of the port's tugs, to be cast upon the waters in tribute to all who have died.

After the memorial observances were completed, the participants retired to the Double Tree Hotel in San Pedro, where a Maritime Day Luncheon was held. It was a grand and festive affair with good food, warm fellowship, and several outstanding remarks made by various leaders from within the local waterfront business and labor communities.

### Maritime Day – Blessing of the Fleet – May 22, 2019

Submitted by Karyn Holm, AMMV Midwest chapter. The Blessing of the Fleet was held on May 22, 2019 at Navy Pier. Joe O' Connor, President of the Midwest Chapter and of the Shipmasters chaired the event.

#### Memorial Day - Wreath Laying Ceremony - Chicago

Submitted by Karyn Holm, AMMV Midwest chapter.

The Memorial Day Wreath Laying Ceremony was held at Daley Plaza on Saturday May 25, 2019. Not only did the honor guard carry the Merchant Marine Flag and the band play Heave Ho, the Song of the Merchant Marine but the Grand Marshall of the Parade and honored speaker Major



AMMV member Bob Weagant, front row, far right



Karyn Holm and Paula Pappamarcos

General Marion Garcia General Military Police Command United States Army Reserve cited the Merchant Marine in her remarks. Paula Pappamarcos, Steve Weagant, Bob Weagant represented the Midwest Chapter on stage, and Karyn Holm were in attendance.

### Memorial Day – Veterans' Appreciation Parade – Myrtle Beach, SC

Submitted by Clarence Newcomer, AMMV John T. Schmidt chapter



Clarence Newcomer, Betty Alexakos

On Saturday, May 25, we rode in the Military Appreciation Days Parade which began at 10:30 a.m. and ran along Howard Avenue and Farrow Parkway at The Market Common. The 2019 parade Grand Marshal was former US Army Ranger-turned-country-musician Keni Thomas, and Horry County resident and World War II US Army Nurse Treva Greene served as the Honorary Grand Marshal.

### Christening Matson Container Ship – March 9, 2019

Submitted by Walter Paas – AMMV Midwest chapter member



U. S. Congressperson from Hawai'i Tulsi Gabbard was in Philadelphia at the Philly Shipyard on Saturday, March 9, 2019 where she served as the sponsor for the christening of Matson, Inc.'s newest container ship, SS Kaimana Hila. She and her sister ship the Daniel K. Inouye are the two largest container ships ever built in the US.

Kaimana Hila will deliver goods between Hawai'i and the US West Coast. The ship is named for Lē'ahi – one of Hawai'i's most iconic geological features, popularly known as Kaimana Hila or Diamond Head. Kaimana Hila was also known to be a favorite song of Senator Inouye.

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard said: "Guided by the stars, the swells, the winds, and the creatures of the sea, our Polynesian ancestors set sail from ancestral homelands, voyaging from island to island in the Pacific long before European explorers took to the sea. Our ancestors' mastery of navigation and voyaging shaped a view of the ocean not as a separation, but as a bridge connecting our islands. Matson continues this tradition today. As an island state, we rely on these ships to deliver many of the goods needed for our daily lives. Thank you to the many hands who built this ship, and those who will safely man her decks, carrying her and her cargo to and from our state."

#### AMMV Profit & Loss

July 2018 through June 2019

Ordinary Income/Expense Income	
402 · CONTRIBUTIONS	7,174.09
403 · INTEREST INCOME	62.21
405 · MISSION SUPPORT FUND	6,501.00
407 · RECRUITMENT MAIL INCOME	747.00
409 · MISCELLANOUS INCOME	20.00
410 · CHAPTER DUES	
BSM - BIG SKY MARINERS	140.00
AKG · ALASKA GREATLANDS	64.00
BEE · BEEHIVE MARINERS	100.00
CEC · CENTRAL CALIFORNIA DAR · DENNIS ROLAND	150.00
EOH · EDWIN O'HARA	1,464.00 421.00
GLD · GOLDEN GATE	1,275.00
GUL · GULFSTREAM	425.00
HIR · HIGH ROLLERS	575.00
JTS · JOHN T. SCHMIDT/PALMETTO	450.00
LON · LONE STAR	275.00
MAL · MEMBERS AT LARGE	20,511.00
MALW · MEMBER-AT-LARGE - PAYPAL	1,766.23
MWE · MID WEST	750.00
NBM · NORTH BAY MARINERS	525.00
NOA · NORTH ATLANTIC	425.00
OCA · OCALA CHAPTER	32.00
OHV · OHIO VALLEY	350.00
ORV · OSWEGO RIVER VALLEY	146.00
PUG · PUGET SOUND ROR · ROAD RUNNER	175.00
SAR · SARASOTA-MANATEE	275.00 425.00
THR · THREE RIVERS	575.00
Total 410 · CHAPTER DUES	31,294.23
411 · CONVENTION INCOME	
412 · CONVENTION - REGISTRATIONS	22,307.00
413 · COMM. BOOK ADS	6,450.00
414 · CONVENTION DONATIONS	32,691.00
Total 411 · CONVENTION INCOME	61,448.00
Total Income	107,246.53
Expense	
500 · FIXED EXPENSE	
501 · BANK CHARGE	381.40
507 · TELEPHONE	389.77
510 · MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION	954.29
511 · SERVICE CHARGES - PAYPAL	110.00
Total 500 · FIXED EXPENSE	1,835.46
512 · MEMORIAL EXPENSE	149.88
513 · ADVERTISING 514 · CONVENTION EXPENSES	650.00
515 · CONVENTION EXPENSES	21,596.24
516 · COMM. BOOK EXPENSES	1,501.63
517 · CON, MISC EXPENSES	13,299.74
518 · CON - CRUISE EXP.	6,802.73
519 · CON - HOSPITALITY ROOM EXP.	3,355.89
Total 514 · CONVENTION EXPENSES	46,556.23
520 · MISSION ADVANCE	
521 · AWARDS	2,132.50
525 · MISSION SUPPORT EXPENSE	6,551.06
Total 520 · MISSION ADVANCE	8,683.56
522 · RECRUITMENT & SPECIAL MAILING	1,215.48
526 · INTERNET INITIATIVE 528 · JCC STORAGE EXPENSE	836.36 1 206.00
020 - JUU STURAGE EXPENSE	1,206.00

530 · NEWS LETTER 533 · POSTAGE 536 · PRINTING 538 · LAYOUT 539 · EDITORIAL FEE	3,776.79 13,547.49 5,200.00 1,200.00
Total 530 · NEWS LETTER	23,724.28
550 · PERSONNEL 551 · ADMINISTRATOR 552 · NATIONAL PRESIDENT 554 · NATIONAL TREASURER 555 · NATIONAL V.P. 556 · REG. V.P.	18,600.00 1,530.01 500.00 1,036.20 600.00
Total 550 · PERSONNEL	22,266.21
560 · OPERATING EXPENSES 564 · OFFICE SUPPLIES 565 · POSTAGE - OFFICE 566 · PRINTING - OFFICE 567 · LICENSES & FEES 568 · TRAVEL EXPENSE	512.01 2,309.47 90.64 70.00 475.59
Total 560 · OPERATING EXPENSES	3,457.71
570 · SCAM EXPENSE	5,210.00
Total Expense	115,791.17
Net Ordinary Income	-8,544.64
Net Income	-8,544.64

## NOTICE TO ALL CHAPTERS AND MEMBERS-AT-LARGE:

Chapter dues should be sent to your chapter and Member-at-Large dues in the amount of \$32.00 should be sent to National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly.

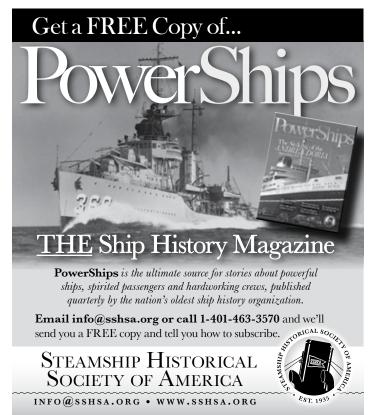
American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) P.O. Box 2024 Darien, CT 06820-2024

Dues for the fiscal year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 were due July 1st.

#### AMMV Balance Sheet

As of June 30, 2019

	Jun 30, 19
ASSETS Current Assets Checking/Savings	
103 · PAYPAL ACCOUNT 104 · WELLS FARGO BANK #4904	99.69 112,237.12
Total Checking/Savings	112,336.81
Total Current Assets	112,336.81
TOTAL ASSETS	112,336.81
LIABILITIES & EQUITY Liabilities Current Liabilities Other Current Liabilities 311 · DUES RECEIVABLE 2020	4,989.14
312 · MEMBER RECRUITMENT 314 · MISSION SUPPORT DONATIONS	893.00 73,045.00
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	78,927.14
Total Current Liabilities	78,927.14
Total Liabilities	78,927.14
Equity 32000 · Unrestricted Net Assets 390 · EARNINGS Net Income	-16,881.80 58,836.11 -8,544.64
Total Equity	33,409.67
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	112,336.81



## APPROVED BUDGET: FISCAL YEAR July 1st, 2019 - June 30th, 2020

Approved by the BOD and General Assembly March 21, 2019 at Tampa

	March 21, 2019 at 1a	три	
INCOME			
	DUES: 240 Chptr. Mbr. @ 25.00	\$6,000	
	DUES: 625 MAL Mbr. @ 32.00	\$20,000	
110	TOTAL ESTIMATED RENEWAL DU		\$26,000
			,
	INTEREST	\$60	
	CONTRIBUTIONS	\$4,940	
405	MISSION SUPPORT FUND	\$10,000	Ć1 F 000
	400 TOTAL MISC INCOME		\$15,000
T01	TAL PROJECTED INCOME		\$41,000
FIXED Ex	rpenses		
	Bank charges	\$300	
	Insurance	\$500	
507	Telephone	\$600	
	P.O. Box rental	\$200	
513	Advertising	\$5,000	
	500 TOTAL FIXED		\$6,600
MISSION	I ADVANCE Expense		
521	Awards & recognition	\$1,000	
522	Recruit-Mail	\$1,000	
	Mision Support Expense	\$3,000	
526	Internet Initiative (Parts A, B. & C)		
	(A) Website maintenance	\$1,000	
	(B) SEO services	\$0	
	(C) Social Media Advetising	\$175	
528	JCC Freight-Closing	\$1,225	
	520 TOTAL MISSION ADV.		\$7,400
	AGAZINE Expense		
	Mailing (Postage + Fee)	\$4,000	
	Printing	\$13,800	
	Layout	\$5,000	
539	News Mag. Editing	\$1,200	
	530 TOTAL NEWS MAGAZINE		\$24,000
	NEL Expense		
	Administrator	\$18,600	
	National President	\$2,000	
	National Vice President	\$1,500	
	National Secretary	\$0	
	National Treasurer	\$500	
556	Regional Vice Presidents	\$1,000	ć22.600
	550 TOTAL PERSONNEL		\$23,600
	ING EXPENSES		
	Office Supplies	\$600	
	Office - Postage	\$1,530	
	Office - printing	\$200	
	License & Fees	\$70	
569	Administrator Travel	\$1,000	42.466

**560 TOTAL OPERATING** 

**TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES** 

\$3,400

\$65,000

### Daring Voyage of SS Seatrain Texas, Code Name: Treasure Ship

During World War II, the Mediterranean coast of northern Africa was the scene of several years of see-saw battles between Italian and German armored divisions on one side, and British, Australian, South African, Free French, and Polish forces on the other. The armies continually fought over a narrow strip of coastline 40 miles wide by 1,200 miles long, which included Tobruk, Benghazi and Tripoli.

The fighting consisted of wild dashes from one supply

port to another, trying to attack the enemy when he was low on the essentials of desert warfare: water, fuel, ammunition, food, equipment and troops. In June 1942, British forces were soundly defeated



outside Gazala, Libya (east of Tobruk) by Field Marshall Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps. The British left a garrison at Tobruk to guard their rear while they withdrew to El Alamein to lick their wounds. Tobruk surrendered to the Germans within one week. The Allies had only 70 of their original 300 tanks remaining to counter the next move of Rommel, the "Desert Fox."

After the encounter, Rommel rested his troops and awaited supplies and reinforcements. Next on his agenda was an attack on El Alamein, Egypt, beyond which were Cairo, the Suez Canal, and the Middle East oil fields.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt were meeting in Washington, DC, when news of the fall of Tobruk reached the President. The message read: "Tobruk has surrendered, with 25,000 men taken prisoner". Churchill later wrote: "I did not attempt to hide from the President the shock I received,"

#### **SUPPLIES ON THE WAY:**

Roosevelt immediately offered to supply America's newest tanks and anti-tank artillery for newly-appointed General Bernard Montgomery's Eighth Army.

That same day, June 30, emergency orders went out to factories across America. Workers in tank and arms factories worked 14 to 20 hours a day for the next 9 days, to complete the order. Tanks, howitzers, tank destroyers, and ammunition were loaded on railroad trains and "high-

balled" to New York, where 6 ships chartered by the Army Transportation Corps waited.

The freighters Fairport, Zaandam, Exhibitor, Tarn, Empire Oriole, and Hawaiian Shipper were loaded as quickly as humanly possible in those days before containerization. The ships were loaded as the cargo arrived, without taking the time to spread the cargo equally among the six ships. The tanks, last to arrive, were all loaded aboard the SS Fairport.

Convoy AS-4, laden with nearly 85 million pounds of

war material, sailed on July 13 from New York for the Persian Gulf with 3 destroyers as escort. On July 16, just south of Bermuda, a lone German submarine, *U-161*, fired 4 torpedoes at the zig-zagging

convoy. Two torpedoes struck the *Fairport*, a C-2 on her first transatlantic voyage, causing her to sink within 10 minutes. The 43 crew, 14 Naval Armed Guard, and 66 Army passengers were rescued by *USS Kearny* (DD-432). However, loaded aboard the *Fairport* were all the tanks, destined for the Persian Gulf, which landed on the bottom of the Atlantic.

The remaining ships in the convoy proceeded safely towards their destination.

#### <u>A SHIP ALONE - THE SS SEATRAIN TEXAS:</u>

Fortunately, there were additional newly-designed Sherman tanks available on the East coast.

On July 29, 1942, *SS Seatrain Texas* carrying a full load of cargo, including more than 250 tanks left New York under the command of 44 year-old Captain Kenneth G. Towne on a solo journey towards Egypt. At his Navy briefing, an Admiral whispered to Towne, "Roosevelt is issuing the orders on this one himself."

SS Seatrain Texas was one of two unusual ships built in 1940 by Sun Shipbuilding & Drydock Company of Chester, Pennsylvania for Seatrain Lines of New Orleans. The Seatrain Texas, similar to two older ships in the company's service, was designed so that railroad cars or locomotives could be rolled directly onto the concrete decks and then secured in place alongside regular cargo. In essence they were the precursor to today's container ships. However,

their open decks made them extremely dangerous due to the lack of watertight integrity above the waterline. The Maritime Commission planned to build 50 ships similar to them, known as the C4s, but instead opted for a more traditional cargo ship arrangement.

The SS Seatrain Texas, at 483 feet length, with a 64 foot beam, could carry over 8,000 tons at 16.5 knots. As a sixteen knot ship, she would have been allowed to sail unescorted under the rules prevailing in 1942, The thinking was that the top speed of a U-boat on the surface was 17.5 knots and submerged it was 8-9 knots but for only an hour or so. Thus if the Seatrain Texas were being stalked by a surfaced U-boat she could deal with it using her deck guns, especially the one mounted on the fantail, and if the Uboat submerged she could outrun it. The only dangerous circumstance was if the U-boat used her 1.5 knot advantage in speed and knowing the ship's base course to run ahead, particularly at night, and got into a position to make a surfaced or submerged attack just before dawn. That happened enough times that the practice of 15 - 16 knot ships sailing independently was stopped in early 1943 but not before the Seatrain Texas beat the odds on General Marshall's calculated risk.

#### A POSSIBLY HAZARDOUS VOYAGE:

Captain Towne did not get much sleep during the 18 days and nights it took to reach Capetown, South Africa. The radio crackled with reports of U-boat attacks along his route, and he knew the lives of thousands of Allied

men rested in his hands.

At Capetown, while Seatrain Texas took on provisions, Captain Towne saw the remaining 5 ships of Convoy AS-4 in the harbor. Control over the Seatrain Texas' movement was turned over to the British who code-named her "Treasure Ship." On August 21, in Durban,

Benghazi

Spiluch

Bir
Hakeim

Agedabia

El Agheila

L I B Y A

(ITALY)

Dema

Barrani

Barrani

Marsa

Matruk

Alexandria

El Alamein

Cairo

Cairo

Cairo

L I B Y A

(UNITED KINGDOM)

they picked up a Free French corvette as escort through the submarine-infested Mozambique Channel. Alone again, they headed around Somalia for the Gulf of Aden.

As they approached Socotra Island [now Suqutra, Yemen] the radio operator heard a Morse-coded message, but was unable to decipher it because of severe static. Captain Towne decided to maintain radio silence, and chose not to have the message repeated.

In Aden he learned the text of the message: an Italian submarine was spotted lurking between Somalia and Socotra Island; *Seatrain Texas* was to change its course. It was fortunate Captain Towne did not hear the message, because the submarine did. She sank two Allied ships on the far side of the island that night.

On September 2, Seatrain Texas reached Port Taufiq at the southern end of the Suez Canal. British stevedores were on board to start the unloading process even before the ship was docked. The ship's 70 ton booms swung the tanks out of the holds onto the docks where British drivers waited.

These Sherman tanks, the first Allied tanks which matched the German Mark IV Panzer in firepower, were a decisive factor at the battle of El Alamein which began on October 23, 1942, and resulted in an Allied victory.

#### **LATER SERVICE:**

Interesting to note that *Seatrain Texas* began its military career as a tank ferry, and ended it after delivering its last load of supplies to Vietnam. Yes, the *Seatrain Texas* that was mined in 1968 was the same ship that delivered over 250 Sherman tanks to Egypt in time for the battle of El Alamein. Reported to the press: Saigon, December 21, 1967

An explosive device apparently set by Viet Cong blasted a seven-foot hole in the side of an American cargo ship bound up the Saigon shipping channel with supplies for the allied war effort.

The channel, vital to the movement of thousands of tons of war material from the United States, was reported

clear. Communist guerrillas have made a number of attempts to close the channel by sinking an allied ship in it.

A U.S. Navy spokesman said the explosion ripped through the 8,108-ton Seatrain Texas as it lay at anchor in the Nha Be River, nine miles

southeast of Saigon. The resulting hole extended five feet above the waterline and two feet below it.

The Navy spokesman said the ship's crew controlled flooding in the vessel and two Army tugs stood by.

When Seatrain shifted from carrying railroad cars to intermodal service, the classic *Seatrains, including SS Seatrain Texas*, were withdrawn from service. They were scrapped in the early '70s.



#### **AMMV WWII MERCHANT MARINER - MEMBER QUERY**

At the AMMV National convention in Tampa, Florida in March, 2019, a RESOLUTION was proposed by NVP Christian Yuhas on behalf of the AMMV Golden Gate chapter and passed by general attendance. It read:

Resolution to support the creation of a National Registry of the remaining WWII Merchant Marine Veterans.

WHEREAS, there is no accurate estimate of the number of remaining Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII, and existing estimates vary widely; and

WHEREAS, it is expected that the Merchant Marine Gold Medal Bill (HR.550), its companion bill in the Senate (S.133) and the Just Compensation bill (HR.154) will be passed in the 116th Congress; and

WHEREAS, the contact information, location and documents proving their veteran status would assist Congress in dispersing Gold Medal recognition and a modest financial thank you of \$25,000 to qualified Merchant Marine Veterans who served in WWII;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AMMV support and encourage the creation of a National Registry of the remaining WWII Merchant Marine Veterans.

Therefore, we are requesting that ALL of our WWII MERCHANT MARINER members, who hold U. S. Merchant Marine Honorable Discharges (Form #DD-214) from the U. S. Coast Guard as issued in 1988 or later, to please complete this form and return it to our National Office for recording.

#### Part I: Member Information/Identification

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

	Primary Phone	Cell or Secondary Phone					
	Email						
Part II: Service as a U.S. Merchant Mariner							
	Are you a U.S. Merchant Marine Ve	eteran of WWII?					
	Do you have a DD-214 from the U	.S. Coast Guard?					
	If you need a copy, please let us to apply for one.	know and we will send you the information on how					

#### Please return this form as soon as possible to:

Email to: Lynn Kelly ammermarvets@gmail.com

Or by mail to: AMMV National Headquarters

Attn: Membership Survey

P.O. Box 2024

Darien, CT 06820-2024



## RAISE YOUR HAND RAISE YOUR VOICE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

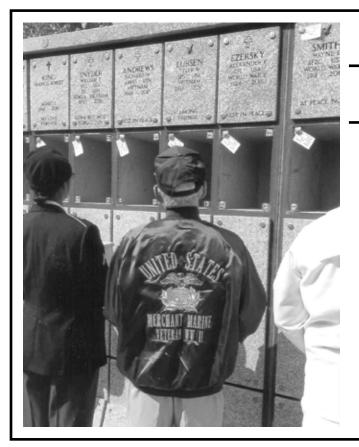


### AMMV Membership Dues were due July 1, 2019

Members-at-Large: Mail your check for \$32 to National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly

American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV)
P.O. Box 2024
Darien, CT 06820-2024

Chapter Members, pay your dues to your CEO or Treasurer



### **WEAR WITH PRIDE**

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Email: leidingedge@dejazzd.com

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# REMEMBERING D-DAY ON ITS 75TH ANNIUERSARY

D-Day was the largest air and sea invasion in history, involving around 160,000 troops on June 6, 1944 and many more in the ensuing Battle of Normandy. Of those, 73,000 were from the U.S., while 83,000 were from Britain and



Canada. Troops started landing overnight, despite challenging weather and fierce German defenses, from the air, then were joined by a massive force by sea on the beaches code-named Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold, carried by 7,000 boats.

At Normandy, starting on D-day the Allies established a foothold in France and within 11 months Nazi Germany was defeated and World War II in Europe was over.

#### COMMERMORATION IN PORTSMOUTH, ENGLAND – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019

An event, which kicked off two days of D-Day anniversary observances, was intended as a tribute to the troops who shaped history during the dangerous mission to reach beachheads and fight in German-occupied France.

The event opened with a band and chorus performance, and a video of interviews with D-Day veterans recalling the invasion laid over images of the operation. The Royal British Legion brought about 300 veterans, aged 91 to 101, to the ceremonies in Portsmouth, where many of the troops embarked for Normandy on June 5, 1944. After a flyover by the Royal Air Force and a salute from the Royal Navy, the veterans will return to the landing beaches

overnight, just as they did 75 years ago.

About a dozen veterans then took the stage to applause. "It's right that the courage and sacrifice of so many is being honored 75 years on. We must never forget," said John Jenkins, a veteran who

was 23 when he landed on one of the beaches.

Hundreds of people — including military officials and World War II veterans — gathered at an amphitheater just across the English Channel from where the Allied invasion took place on June 6, 1944.

In opening remarks, British Prime Minister Theresa May said. "The Normandy landings 75 years ago were a moment of historic international cooperation. And it is



Military vehicles line the beach at Arromanches in Normandy



right that at the heart of today's commemorations are the veterans who fought to secure the liberty and the peace that we now enjoy."

U. S. President Trump on Wednesday joined other world leaders and the British royal family at a ceremony

in Portsmouth, England, to commemorate the upcoming 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. Also among those who were in attendance Wednesday are presidents, prime ministers and other representatives of the countries that fought alongside the U.S. and Britain in Normandy: Canada, Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Slovakia,

Luxembourg, Denmark, France, Greece, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Poland.

British Queen Elizabeth II, in her opening said: remarks, said: "When I attend-

ed the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings, some thought it might be the last such event," She lauded the soldiers who participated in D-Day as "resilient." And said "The fate of the world depended on their success. Many of them would never return and the heroism, courage and sacrifice of those who lost their lives will never be forgotten."

Trump took the stage to read an excerpt from a prayer that then-President Franklin Roosevelt delivered to the nation on the radio on the eve of the invasion in 1944..

"This day, we set upon a mighty endeavor, A struggle to preserve our republic, our religion and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity. They will need thy blessings for the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces but we shall return again and again.

"Give us faith. Give us faith in thee, faith in our sons, faith in each other and faith in our united crusade. Thy will be done, almighty God,"

The president was on stage for roughly a minute. He was seated for the rest of the ceremony in the gallery between Queen Elizabeth II and first lady Melania Trump.

Other world leaders also took the stage to recount stories and letters from the invasion, including British Prime Minister Theresa May, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and French President Emmanuel Macron. German Chancellor Angela Merkel was also in attendance.

### STARTING THE EVENT IN FRANCE – JUNE 5, 2019



Some events were already being held in France early Wednesday morning, with U.S. Army Rangers climbing the jagged cliffs of Normandy's Pointe du Hoc to honor the men who scaled them under fire 75 years ago.

Elderly veterans looked on as members of the 75th Ranger Regiment started mounting the limestone promontory at dawn, pulling themselves up on ropes one by one, seagulls swooping above. They were recreating a journey





U.S veteran Leonard Ladislas Jintra, from New York, 29 Infantry Division, 115th regiment, attends a ceremony in La Cambe, Normandy, on Wednesday.

taken by the U.S. Army's 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions to destroy Nazi guns atop the cliffs. The operation helped prepare the way for Allied troops landing on beaches up a few miles up the coast. Of the 235 men who took on the cliffs in 1944, only 90 were fit for battle two days later.

Elsewhere in Normandy, parachutists were jumping from C-47 transporters in World War II colors and other

aircraft, aiming for fields of wild flowers on the outskirts of Carentan, one of the early objectives for Allied troops. Among the jumpers was American D-Day veteran Tom Rice, 97. He jumped into Normandy with thousands of other parachutists in 1944, and recalled it as "the worst jump I ever had."

#### THE BEACHES OF NOR-MANDY, FRANCE – JUNE 6, 2019

World leaders gathered in Normandy on Thursday to honor the Allied troops who fought and died on France's beaches 75 years ago in the momentous assault that marked the beginning of the end of Adolf Hitler's Nazi reign.

President Trump and

French President Emmanuel Macron delivered solemn speeches praising the tens of thousands of soldiers, airmen and sailors who braved the Nazis and took part in the surprise D-Day invasion on June 6, 1944.

"You are the pride of our nation, you are the glory of our republic, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts," Trump said, speaking at the Normandy American

Cemetery.

A small group of U.S. veterans who played part in the D-Day invasion were present for the cemetery ceremony.

WWII Merchant Mariner Dave Yoho and his wife, Carole, attended the ceremonies at Normandy and he was honored at them. He wrote about the event: "The 75th Anniversary D-Day Memorial Programs were "ongoing". There were five beaches. We visited every one over a period of 2 or 3 days. We also visited the major cemeteries including one in Luxemburg where General Patton is buried. At almost every major cemetery, they had me positioned as someone to lay the wreath or to "stand for the flag" once it was lowered. I esti-



A bagpiper plays on a vestige of the Atlantic Wall on Arromanches beach.

mate that we had close to 30 actual interviews and probably over 1000 photos were taken of me.

"I am ever mindful that my presence was as a representative of my fellow Merchant Mariners as well as other WWII Vets who could not be there in person. It will continue to be memorable."

At one of the ceremonies,
French President Macron awarded
the Legion of Honor — France's
highest award — to five of the
WWWII Veterans. "We know what
we owe to you, veterans, our freedom," Macron said in English. "On
behalf of my nation, I just want to
say 'thank you."

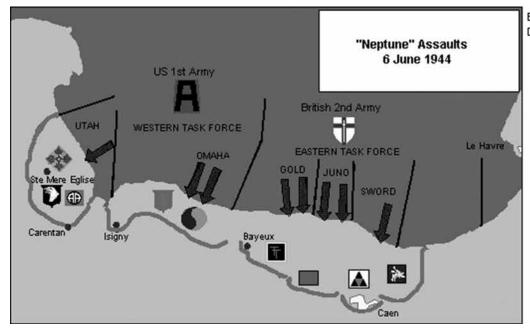
British Prime Minister Theresa May, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other allied leaders also attended remembrance ceremonies in Normandy, as did some members of Congress, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). "The courage of our American vets and allied forces changed the course of history forever," Pelosi tweeted along with a photo of her participating in a wreath laying on Juno Beach, one of five targeted in the D-Day assault.



The American cemetery in Normandy



From left, British Prime Minister Theresa May, Prince Charles, Queen Elizabeth II, President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings at an event Wednesday, June 5, in Portsmouth, England.







## 2019 "Storm the Hill" Report

The 2019 "Storm the Hill" was led by WWII Merchant Marine Veteran & AMMV Government Affairs Co-Chair Charles A. Mills, with Eugene Barner and Gerard Driscoll being the other Vets on the team. Sheila M. Sova returned to serve as the Team Coordinator. The group was rounded off with Laura Johnson Riddle, Cindy Driscoll-Komlos, and AMMV D.A.R. Chapter President Dennis Ng; all are children of WWII U.S. Merchant Mariners. This 2019 Storm the Hill was once again sponsored by the Maritime Institute of Technology & Graduate Studies (MITAGS) and the International Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots (IOMPP), who graciously provided room & board and travel to/from D.C.

In previous years, the team concentrated on meeting with the Congresspersons and Senators in person. What was learned is that the real decision makes are the staffers, behind the scenes. The politicians were usually short on time, opting for photos rather than meaningful discussion.

This year the STH team was armed with a letter from the American maritime industry in support of the WWII Merchant Mariner Congressional Gold Medal legislation H.R. 550 & S.133. The letter has been signed by over 100 maritime and affiliate groups from all over the country.



Group at dinner with Capt. Richard Phillips



Dept. of Transportation Chief Mark Buzby and WWII Veteran Gerard Driscoll

Copies were provided to all the offices visited by the team.

Note: Each of the Veterans were wearing a faux Gold

Medal as a symbol to Congress that WWII Merchant Mariners deserve the recognition that would be bestowed upon them with passage of the legislation.

#### MONDAY, MAY 20, 2019

On Monday, May 20th, the Senate Hart Building was the destination. The goal was to target Senators who cosponsored WWII MM Congressional Gold Medal legislation in the 115th Congress (previously S. 2127), and those Senators with seats on the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. Additional Senate offices were also visited as time permitted. In total, the following offices were visited and/or had materials dropped off: Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK) (S. 133 Sponsor); Senator Tim Scott (SC); Senator Chris Van Hollen (MD); Senator Elizabeth Warren (CA); Senator Jon Tester (MT); Senator Mike Rounds (SD); Senator Kyrsten Sinema (AZ); Senator Doug Jones (AL); Senator Diane Feinstein (CA); Senator Jeanne Shaheen (NH); Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (NV); Senator Robert Menendez (NJ); Senator Tammy Duckworth (IL); Senator Mark Warner (VA); Senator Richard



Blumenthal (CT); Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI); Senator Tina Smith (MN); Senator Brian Schatz (HI); Senator Gary Peters (MI); Senator Jack Reed (RI); Senator Dick Durbin (IL); Senator Tom Udall (MN); Senator Jeff Merkley (OR); Senator Steve Daines (MT).

#### TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2019

Two meetings were scheduled on Tuesday, May 21st. The first was with Congressman Steve Scalise (LA) in his office at the U.S. Capitol. (AMMV member Captain Ron Campana arranged this meeting.) A short meeting with

Congressman Scalise and photo opportunity took place while our Veterans explained the discrimination that the USMM had to endure in WWII. Secondly, a meeting was held in the Russell Senate Building at the office of Senator Lindsey Graham (SC), in which the group met with the Senator's Deputy Military Legislative Assistant, Aaron M. Strickland.



The STH group with the crew of the Nuclear Ship Savannah

While at this

location, the team took advantage of visiting the offices of Senators who are members of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, which is holding S.133. Stops included the offices of Senator Shelley Moore Capito (WV); Senator Richard Burr (NC); Senator Christopher Coons (DE); and Senator Deb Fisher (NE).

That evening, the three WWII Veterans were invited by Retired Rear Admiral Wendi Carpenter, Executive Director of Captain Richard Phillips - Lane Kirkland Maritime Trust, to a special fundraising dinner at The Kimpton George Hotel in D.C. Present were special guests Captain Richard Philips and Congressman Bradley Byrne (AL).

#### MARITIME DAY, MAY 22, 2019

On National Maritime Day (Wednesday, May 22nd) the

STH gang attended the annual ceremony held at the U.S. Department of Transportation building. Following the ceremony, they were guests at a luncheon hosted by the Kings Point Alumni Group of D.C. Dave Gardy of Maritime TV interviewed all members of the team. These interviews can be found online at: www.maritimetv.com.

An event jointly sponsored by the American Maritime Congress and the Navy League of the United States was held in the Rayburn Building. Author William Geroux was featured, who had just released his second book about the

> WWII Merchant Marine, titled "The Ghost Ships of Archangel". In attendance were H.R. 550 sponsors Rep. John Garamendi (CA) and Rep. Don Young (AK). This particular function proved to be very important to our cause as several other Congresspersons attended, and the U.S. Navy League presented each with a USMM plaque intended for display in their offices. For more info

on *The Ghost Ships of Archangel*, visit: www.williamgeroux.com.

While still at Rayburn, the group visited other Congresspersons. This included a meeting with Rep. Lee Zeldin (NY), which was arranged by Rita Cosby; they also met with the staffer of H.R. 154 sponsor Rep. Al Green (TX) to discuss why the compensation bill is not moving forward. The reasoning and purpose of the H.R. 154 were explained in greater detail by members of our group.

#### THURSDAY MAY 23, 2019

The Rayburn Building was visited again on Thursday, May  $23^{\rm rd}$ . The following offices were strategically targeted with the goal of educating about how the USMM of WWII were never segregated and included many women mariners.



Offices visited included: Rep. Maxine Waters (CA), Chairperson of the House Financial Services Committee which holds H.R. 550; Rep. Joaquin Castro (TX), Chairman of the Hispanic Caucus; Rep. Karen Bass (CA), Chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus; Rep. Michael McCaul (TX); Rep. Rob Wittman (VA); Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ); Rep. Jim Jordan (OH); Rep. Mo Brooks (AL); Rep. Yvette Clarke (NY); Rep. Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr. (GA); Rep. David McKinley (WV); and Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX).

Note: Points of discussion during these visits included the stories of Clara Gordon Main (first American female POW) and Carmen Quinonez, torpedoed from the *SS Jacinto*. Both women were from New York; Quinonez was a Hispanic.

#### FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2019

On Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, the group received a private tour of the nuclear ship *Savannah*. The ship is docked near the *SS John W. Brown* in Baltimore and is now being maintained by MARAD. However, if a new owner is not found in the distant future, the ship could be scrapped. The *Savannah* features a 1960's themed interior.

Photographs for this piece were contributed by Laura Johnson Riddle.



Sponsor HR.550 Con. John Garamendi with WWII MM Veteran Gerard Driscoll



Office meeting with Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (HI)



#### YOUR HELP IS DEFINITELY NEEDED

As a non-profit Veterans organization, American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc. (AMMV) cannot legally lobby Congress about legislative issues. It would be wonderfully helpful if you, as an individual, would appeal to the Senators listed below and ask them to Co-sponsor Senate bill \$.133 Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019.

As of today, July 13<sup>th</sup>, we have 22 Co-sponsors; but the "magic" number needed before a bill can be forwarded to the Senate floor for a full vote is 64. Therefore, your efforts are strongly encouraged.

Shortly after you receive this *AMMV NEWS Magazine*, the U. S. Senate will be going on "District office furlough" – August 5<sup>th</sup> through September 6<sup>th</sup>. This is a very opportunistic time to contact the Senator's district offices as it's likely the Senators will be at their home offices during their break.

#### Please appeal to the non-signed Senators today.

We have been advised that those Senators who cosigned for this bill in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congressional session, should be most likely to sign on again this 116<sup>th</sup> session; they are in **bold** on the following list.

As you are probably aware, the U. S. Senate is composed of various Committees which must approve all legislation before it can be sent to the Floor for a full Senate vote. Our Bill, S-133 is currently being considered in the **Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.** However, it has been suggested that the members of several other specific Committees are most likely be interested in our quest, also. Those Committees are: Veterans' Affairs (VA); Senate Committee of Armed Services (SASC); and the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation (CJS). If you would like a listing of which non-signed Senators sit on these specific committees, please contact Sindy at (707)

on these specific committees, please contact Sindy at (707) 235-6598 or email her at saaren@sonic.net and she'll be glad to supply one for you.

So, PLEASE, contact your Senators. The Gold Medal bill is considered a "stepping stone" to the fulfillment of our ultimate legislative goal: MM WWII Just Recognition. Write their district offices, telephone the district or Washington, DC offices, contact them through email on their websites, use Twitter or other social media for contact but please do it TODAY.

U.S. SENATE CONTACT - NOT SIGNED S.133 MM GOLD MEDAL BILL AS OF 7-13-19							
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	DISTRICT ADDRESS				DIS PHONE	DC-202
RICHARD C.	SHELBY	1800 5TH AVE. N., STE. 321	BIRMINGHAM	AL	35203	205 731 1384	224 5641
DOUG	JONES	1 CHURCH ST. STE 500-B	MONTGOMERY	AL	36014	334 230 0698	224 4124
TOM	COTTON	1108 S. OLD MISSOURI RD. #B	SPRINGDALE	AR	72764	479 751 0879	224 2353
MARTHA	McSALLY	2201 E. CAMELBACK RD. #115	PHOENIX	AZ	85016	602 952 2410	224-2235
KYRSTEN	SINEMA	2200 E. CAMELBACK RD. #120	PHOENIX	ΑZ	85016	602 595 7327	224-4521
KAMALA D.	HARRIS	501 I ST. #7-800	SACRAMENTO	CA	95814	916 448 2787	224 3553
DIANNE	FEINSTEIN	ONE POST ST. #2450	SAN FRANCISCO	CA	94104	415 393 0707	224 3841
MICHAEL F.	BENNETT	1244 SPEER AVE.	DENVER	CO	80204	303 455 7600	224 5852
CORY	GARDNER	721 19TH ST. #150	DENVER	CO	80202	303 391 5777	224 5941
RICHARD	BLUMENTHAL	90 STATE HOUSE SQ. 10TH FLR	HARTFORD	CT	6103	860 258 6940	224 2823
CHRISTOPHER	MURPHY	120 HUYSHOPE AVE. #401	HARTFORD	CT	6106	860 549 8463	224 4041
THOMAS R.	CARPER	301 N. WALNUT ST. #102L-1	WILMINGTON	DE	19801	302 573 6291	224 2441
CHRISTOPHER A.	COONS	1105 N. MARKET ST. #100	WILMINGTON	DE	19801	302 573 6345	224 5042
RICK	SCOTT	801 N. FLORIDA AVE. #421	TAMPA	FL	33602	813 225 7040	224-5274
JOHNNY	ISAKSON	3625 CUMBERLAND BL. #970	ATLANTA	GA	30339	770 661 0999	224 3643
DAVID	PERDUE	3280 PEACHTREE RD. NE #2640	ATLANTA	GA	30305	404 865 0087	224 3521
BRIAN	SCHATZ	300 ALA MOANA BLVD., #7-212	HONOLULU	HI	96850	808 533 2061	224 3934
JONI	ERNST	210 WALNUT ST. #733	DES MOINES	IA	50309	515 284 4574	224 3254
CHUCK	GRASSLEY	210 WALNUT ST. #721	DES MOINES	IA	50309	515 288 1145	224 3744
MICHAEL	CRAPO	251 EAST FRONT ST. STE 205	BOISE	ID	83702	208 334 1776	224 6142
JAMES E.	RISCH	350 N. 9TH ST., #302	BOISE	ID	83702	208 342 7985	224 2752
RICHARD J.	DURBIN	230 S. DEARBORN ST. #3892	CHICAGO	IL	60604	312 353 4952	224 2152
MIKE	BRAUN	115 N. PENNSYLVANIA ST.	INDIANAPOLIS	IN	46204	317 822 8240	224-4814
						<del></del>	



TODD	YOUNG	251 N. ILLINOIS ST. #120	INDIANAPOLIS	IN	46204	317 226 6700	224 5623
JERRY	MORAN	1200 MAIN ST., #402		KS		785 628 6401	224 6521
PAT	ROBERTS	444 SE QUINCEY #392	TOPEKA	KS		785 295 2745	
RAND	PAUL	1029 STATE ST,		KY		270 782 8303	224 4343
MITCH	MC CONNELL	601 W. BROADWAY #630	LOUISVILLE	KY		502 582 6304	
BILL	CASSIDY	5555 HILTON AVE. #100	BATON ROUGE	LA		225 929 7711	224 5824
JOHN	KENNEDY	500 POYDRAS ST. #364	NEW ORLEANS	LA		504 581 6190	224 4623
EDWARD J.	MARKEY	15 N. SUDBURY ST. #975	BOSTON	MA		617 565 8519	224 2742
ELIZABETH	WARREN	15 NEW SUDBURY ST. STE 2400	BOSTON	MA		617 565 3170	
BENJAMIN	CARDIN	100 S. CHARLES ST. #1-1710	BALTIMORE	MD			224 4524
GARY C.	PETERS	477 MICHIGAN AVE. #1837	DETROIT	MI			224 6221
DEBBIE	STABENOW	719 GRISWOLD ST. #700		MI		313 961 4330	224 4822
AMY	KLOBUCHAR	1200 WASHINGTON AVE S.#250	MINNEAPOLIS	MN		612 727 5220	224 3244
TINA	SMITH	60 PLATO BLVD E. #2200	ST. PAUL	MN		651 221 1016	224 5641
JOSH	HAWLEY	NOT LISTED		МО		00.121.10.0	224-6154
CINDY	HYDE-SMITH	190 E. CAPITOL ST. #550		MS	39201	601 965 4459	224 5054
STEVE	DAINES	222 N. 32ND ST. #100		MT		406 245 6822	224 2651
JON	TESTER	2900 4TH AVE. N., STE 201		MT			224 2644
RICHARD	BURR	2000 W. FIRST ST. #508	WINSTON-SALEM	NC			224 3154
JOHN	HOEVEN	220 E. ROSSAR AVE., #312	BISMARCK	ND		701 250 4618	
KEVIN	CRAMER	657 SECOND AVE.N. #306	FARGO	ND	58102	701 232 5094	224-2043
BEN	SASSE	304 N. 168TH CIRCLE, STE 213	OMAHA	NE	68118	402 550 8040	224 4224
CORY A.	BOOKER	ONE GATEWAY CTR. 23RD FLR	NEWARK	NJ	7102	973 639 8700	224 3224
MARTIN	HEINRICH	400 GOLD AVE SW #1080	ALBUQUERQUE	NM	87602	505 346 6601	224 5521
TOM	UDALL	400 GOLD AVE. SW #300	ALBUQUERQUE	NM	87102		224 5521
CATHERINE	CORTEZ MASTO	333 LAS VEGAS BLVD, S. #8016	LAS VEGAS	NV			224 3542
JACKY	ROSEN	8930 W. SUNSET RD. #230	LAS VEGAS	NV	89148	702 388 0205	224-6244
KIRSTEN E.	GILLIBRAND	780 THIRD AVE. #2601	NEW YORK	NY	10017	212 688 6262	224 4451
CHARLES E.	SCHUMER	780 THIRD AVE. #2301	NEW YORK	NY	10067	212 486 4439	224 6542
ROB	PORTMAN	312 WALNUT ST. #3425	CINCINNATI	ОН	45202	513 684 3265	224 3353
SHERROD	BROWN	801 W. SUPERIOR AVE #1400	CLEVELAND	ОН	44113	216 522 9272	224 2315
JAMES	LANKFORD	1015 N. BROADWAY AVE #310	OKLAHOMA CITY	OK	73102	405 231 4941	224 5724
JEFF	MERKLEY	121 SW SALMON ST. #1407	PORTLAND	OR	97204	503 326 3386	224 3753
RON	WYDEN	911 NE 11TH AVE., #630	PORTLAND	OR	97232	503 326 7525	224 5233
PATRICK J.	TOOMEY	200 CHESTNUT ST. STE. 600	PHILADELPHIA	PA	19106	215 241 1090	224 4254
JACK	REED	ONE EXCHANGE TERR. STE. 408	PROVIDENCE	RI	2903	401 528 5200	224 4642
LINDSEY	GRAHAM	508 HAMPTON ST. #202	COLUMBIA	SC	29201	803 933 0112	224 5972
TIM	SCOTT	2500 CITY HALL LN., 3RD FLR	NORTH CHARLESTON	SC	29406	843 727 4525	224 6121
JOHN	THUNE	320 S. 1ST. ST. #101	ABERDEEN	SD	57401	605 225 8823	224 2321
LAMAR	ALEXANDER	167 N. MAIN ST. #1068	MEMPHIS	TN	38103	901 544-4224	224-4944
MARSHA	BLACKBURN	100 PEABODY PL. #1125	MEMPHIS	TN	38103	901 527-9159	224-3344
JOHN	CORNYN	5001 SPRING VALLEY RD. #1125E	DALLAS	TX	75244	972 239 1310	224 2934
TED	CRUZ	1919 SMITH ST #9047	HOUSTON	TX	77002	713 718 3057	224 5922
MIKE	LEE	125 S. STATE ST. #4225	SALT LAKE CITY	UT	84138	801 524 5933	224 5444
MITT	ROMNEY	825 S. STATE ST. #8402	SALT LAKE CITY	UT	84138	801 524 4380	224 5251
TIM	KAINE	919 E. MAIN ST. #970	RICHMOND	VA	23219	804 771 2221	224 4024
MARK R.	WARNER	919 E. MAIN ST., STE 630	RICHMOND	VA	23219	804 775 2314	224 2023
PATRICK J.	LEAHY	199 MAIN ST., 4TH FLR.	BURLINGTON	VT	5401	802 863 2525	224 4242
BERNIE	SANDERS	1 CHURCH ST., 3RD FLR.	BURLINGTON	VT		802 862 0697	224 5141
PATTY	MURRAY	915 2ND AVE. #2988	SEATTLE	WA			224 2621
RON	JOHNSON	517 E. WISCONSI AVE. #408	MILWAUKEE	WI		414 276 7282	224 5323
JOE JOHN	MANCHIN, III BARRASSO	900 PENNSYLVANIA AVE #629	CHEVENNE	WV		304 343 5855	
MICHAEL B.	ENZI	2120 CAPITOL AVE #2013 2120 CAPITOL AVE #2007	CHEYENNE CHEYENNE	WY WY		307 772 2451 307 772 2477	
INTO IALL D.	L1441	12 120 OM 11 OLAVE #2001	OTTE ! CININE	V V 1	0200 I	1001 112 2411	LLT UTLT



#### **CONGRESSMAN JOHN GARAMENDI – PRESS RELEASE ON HR.550**



Congressman Garamendi meets with WWII Merchant Marine Veterans and family members of deceased veterans in Washington, DC

WASHINGTON, DC- Today, Congressman John Garamendi (D-Fairfield, Davis, Yuba City), announced that his bipartisan *Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019* has secured the 290 cosponsors necessary to receive a mandatory vote in the House of Representatives. The bill will move to the Consensus Calendar, which hosts legislation that's typically passed unanimously by the House.

"Throughout the Second World War, our armed forces relied on the Merchant Marine to ferry supplies, cargo and personnel into both theaters of operation, and they paid a heavy price in service to their country," **said Garamendi**. "The Merchant Marine suffered the highest per capita casualty rate in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II. An estimated 8,300 mariners lost their lives, and another 12,000 were wounded, to make sure our service members could keep fighting. Yet, these Mariners who put their lives on the line were not even given veteran status until 1988."

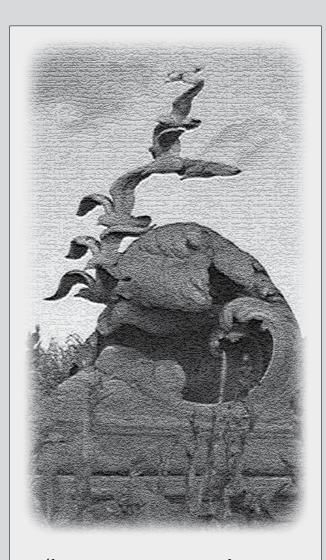
"Last year, I got the chance to meet with three World War II Merchant Mariners: Charles Mills of Texas, age 97; Eugene Barner from Kansas, age 92; and Robert Weagant from Illinois, age 92," Garamendi continued. "These mariners put their lives on the line for this country, braving German and Japanese submarines in their Liberty Ships as they delivered critical supplies to our service members in the European and Pacific theaters. Unfortunately, their sacrifice is commonly overlooked. A Congressional

Gold Medal would give them the recognition they deserve, and that's why I've introduced this bill: to give these veterans and their families the honor and respect they are owed. I'm pleased that this bill will receive a vote in the full House of Representatives and is in an excellent position to become law," Garamendi concluded. Reps. Don Young (R-AK) and Susan Brooks (R-IN) are the original cosponsors in the House of Representatives.

"The time has come for our nation to provide a well-deserved thank you and honor the remaining Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII with a Congressional Gold Medal. This group of unsung heroes nobly served our country by operating the ships that transported critical supplies to front lines of the war, and in doing so suffered a casualty rate higher than any other branch of the military. In fact, one out of every 26 casualties during WWII was a volunteer Merchant Mariner. America would not be the great nation it is today without their valiant service of yesterday. I urge Congress to support this important bill and recognize this dwindling group of Merchant Marine Veterans from WWII that have served our nation so admirably," said Christian Yuhas, Vice President of American Merchant Marine Veterans and a Chief Engineer Merchant Marine.

The Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act was introduced in the Senate simultaneously by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) as Senate bill S.133.

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



There are no roses on a sailor's grave,

No lílies on an ocean wave;

The only tribute is the seagull's sweeps

And the teardrops that a sweetheart weeps.

HAROLD BEHMLANDER

**JAMES COLEY** 

WALTER M. CRONIN, SR

A.J. "DAN" DANNA

IRVING R. DIETSCHER

DONALD FLEMING

WILEY BENJAMIN JONES

MAURICE L. "MAC" MC CARTY

RICHARD C. ODEN, SR

CARL M. REED

DALE SHELTON

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.

## Using Naval History as a Tool of Diplomacy

In the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the nation recognized the heroism of 15 of its Sailors with the presentation of the Medal of Honor. Of the 15, 10 were to be awarded posthumously to the next of kin. Unfortunately, in the case of Chief Watertender Peter Tomich, whose family resided in Nazi-occupied Croatia, no presentation was possible, and the country's incorporation into Communist Yugoslavia after the war further deterred searches for immediate family. Tomich had earned his medal in recogni-

tion of his efforts on the *USS Utah* to go below and secure boilers and ensure all fireroom personnel had evacuated their spaces after two Japanese torpedoes had pierced the hull of the former battleship that had been converted to be the Pacific Fleet's target ship. When flooding capsized the ship, Tomich was trapped inside.

With Croatia having reestablished its independence in the 1990s, Retired Navy Captain (and NHF member) J. Robert "Bob" Lunney took on the cause of locating Tomich's kin in Croatia and then urging the Navy to make the formal presentation. Lunney's appreciation of naval history came not only from reading books but from having lived it during a

43-year career with the Naval Reserve and the New York Naval Militia where he attained the rank of Rear Admiral. Having a father who enlisted in the Navy and served in submarines in World War I, the junior Lunney came of age and joined the Navy during the closing months of World War II. When he arrived at Pearl Harbor en route to the Western Pacific, the devastation wrought by the Japanese attack had been pretty much cleared away except for the pulverized *Arizona* and capsized *Utah*. He recalled: "It was quite an emotional moment for me knowing that my fellow Navy men were entombed in the sunken ships below where I was standing."

Arriving in Saipan as the Japanese surrendered in Tokyo Bay, Lunney found himself assigned to crew landing craft that landed American forces on the remaining Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to accept their surrender. Leaving active duty, Lunney remained in the Naval Reserve while using his GI Bill and income from serving in the Merchant Marine to attain a B.A. from Alfred University in 1950. With a degree in hand, he signed on to steam on the SS Meredith Victory under Navy charter to support the war effort in Korea. While he was embarked, Meredith Victory evacuated 14,000 refugees from Hungnam, North Korea, who were fleeing the Chinese Army assault in December

1950 – an effort that would be recorded as the largest humanitarian evacuation in history by a single ship.

Lunney went on to attain a law degree from Cornell and had success as an assistant U.S. Attorney before joining a private law firm and finally opening his own practice. All along he remained active in the U.S. Naval Reserve and New York Naval Militia and became active in organizations that promoted naval heritage such as the Navy League, the Naval Institute, the Naval Order of the United States,

and the Naval Historical Foundation. Conversing with his colleagues in 1997, he thought it strange that the medal for Tomich had never been presented to the family. How hard could it possibly be to locate a next of kin? Given 20th-century Turkish, Nazi, and Communist control over the former part of the Hapsburg Austrian Empire, it turns out civil records had been difficult to maintain. Lunney's salvation proved to be records maintained by the Order of the Friars Minor of Franciscans.

After a nine-year effort to locate relatives and lobby the Navy to make the award, a presentation was made in 2006 during the port call of *USS Enterprise* at Split, Croatia. Lunney, on hand for the

presentation, served as one of the principal speakers. A year later, in recognition of his efforts, President Stjepan Mesic of Croatia presented Lunney with "The Order of the Croatian Trefoil," one of that nation's highest honors, during Mesic's visit to New York to attend the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Both presentations captured the attention of producers at Croatian Radiotelevision, who decided to produce a documentary about their native hero and his eventual recognition. Heroes Are Never Forgotten – A Peter Tomich Story premiered in Zagreb this past December 7 before an audience that included senior Croatian government and military leaders, cadets from the Croatian Military Academy, and the U.S. ambassador and defense attaché. Once again, Lunney had an opportunity to give remarks, during which he recognized the "shared values and traditions of the USA and Croatia."

Captain Lunney's efforts provide a great case study on how naval history can forge ties between nations. Well done!

Editor's note: Written by Dave Winkler and first published in the "Pull Together Newsletter" of the Naval Historical Foundation.



J. Robert Lunney

### THE LACK OF RECORDS FOR A U.S. MERCHANT MARINER

Submitted by Michael Helbig, Co-chairman, Government Affairs Committee

Winthrop A. Haskell, age 17, went to the U. S. Maritime Service Enrolling Office in Boston on 13 May 1941. This was before Pearl Harbor during the period when U. S.

Coast Guard personnel conducted the enrollment, administration and training of these apprentice seamen intended for future entry-level service in the merchant marine. He was assigned a 7-digit service number (411-0726) which is reflected in the documents in his folder while he was in preliminary training at the U.S. Maritime Service Training Station, St. Petersburg, FL. in 1941. As the terms of enrollment were entirely voluntary Haskell was dis-enrolled ("voluntarily" as opposed to "for cause") while absent without leave from the training ship American Seaman effective 7 October while the ship lay at Baltimore. He overstayed his authorized shore leave granted 1 October and later wrote that he had tried to join

the Navy but was denied enlistment for medical reasons (apparently flat feet).

Having turned 18 he was now subject to "selective training and service" registration although at the time 18-year-olds were not being inducted into the army. He obtained his entry-level rating of ordinary seaman from the Coast Guard and began sailing coastwise as a merchant mariner. He sailed on merchant ships in ocean service during the most dangerous period of the war for the merchant marine until 10 November 1943 when at Boston he succeeded in enlisting on active duty in the Naval Reserve (rating of apprentice seaman). After more tough service on Navy ships he was honorably discharged on 19 October 1945.

He completed and submitted an "Application for

Enrollment in the U. S. Maritime Service" on 1 December 1947. It reveals that he had obtained his license (no. 38720) as merchant marine officer, i.e., Third Mate, at Boston on

15 April 1946. While the identity of the "nautical school" he attended is not stated his licensed seagoing service is recorded which includes the names of four ships he served on and respective voyage dates, totaling just over 12 months (see form MS-100). On that basis he was "qualified for promotion" in the Maritime **Service** from his former rating of ordinary seaman to ensign in the deck department (inactive). He was appointed as such effective 1 December in conjunction with his reenrollment application. Having accepted the

Having accepted the appointment at New York under oath on 9 June 1948 he was recalled to active "annual training duty" as a commissioned officer the next day, reporting at the U. S. Maritime Service Training Station, Sheepshead Bay, Long Island, N.Y. This

was an assignment to the Advanced Navigation Course which lasted one month. It is probable that Haskell, by then in possession of authorized merchant marine service ribbons, sat for his portrait in blue service uniform with white cap bearing the insignia of the U. S., Maritime Service (see copy taken from the dust jacket flap of his book *Shatten am Horizont*). He graduated from the course on 9 July 1948 and was, accordingly, returned to inactive duty. By virtue of this training and one year's service as a licensed officer, he was then well prepared for a Coast Guard upgrade to Second Mate but it appears that his main focus at the time was completion of his secondary education and pursuit of a degree.

During this re-enrollment period for some unknown reason the documents in his folder reflect a nine-digit



Winthrop A. Haskell Licensed Merchant Marine Officer and Ensign, U.S. Maritime Service, ca. 1948

service number (41<u>0</u>1-<u>0</u>0726) which was obviously reworked from the previous one. This could possibly be explained by a greatly expanded intake of trainees after Pearl Harbor necessitating an expanded service number field. Otherwise, all that can be said about this is that the functions formerly assigned to the Coast Guard in conducting the U. S. Maritime Service program had been transferred

by executive order in 1942 to the War Shipping Administration's "Training Organization." After the W.S.A. was abolished at the end of 1946 the Maritime Commission became the overseer of this greatly "downsized" program until it was assumed by the Maritime Administration by the start of the Korean Conflict.

Haskell's records include a letter he wrote as a college student on 29 January 1951, seven months into the Korea Conflict. He expressed his interest in returning to an active duty status with the Maritime Service. His answer was a form letter of 8 February informing him that the Maritime Service was unable to expand training activities or otherwise employ additional operational personnel to administer them. Rather, he was referred to the steamship companies and the Military Sea Transportation Service for shipboard employment. In four years this once great federal training program was allowed to shrink to a level that offered no entry-

level training, some upgrade training at a couple facilities and a correspondence course program (U. S. Maritime Service Institute).

Haskell did return to the sea on 17 January 1952 and his name is found on several crew lists as Third Mate on the MV *Anchor Hitch*. This was a Maritime Administration-owned public vessel bareboat chartered to Grace Line, Inc., as augmentation in its federally-subsidized Pacific coastwise service to Central and South America. As with three other such ships of its type, however, Haskell's run

was between San Francisco and Seattle, calling en route at Vancouver, British Columbia. He did receive the Maritime Administration's Korean Service Medal but that ship has, as yet, not been identified. By 23 November 1953, as he would say, "I was made redundant."

Note: The National Archives at St. Louis is said to use an "Enrollee Finding Aid" that, if the name isn't listed they

Winthrop A. Haskell, Apprentice Seaman, U.S. Maritime Service Training Station, St. Petersburg, FL, 1941. Training ships Joseph Conrad and Tusitala in background.

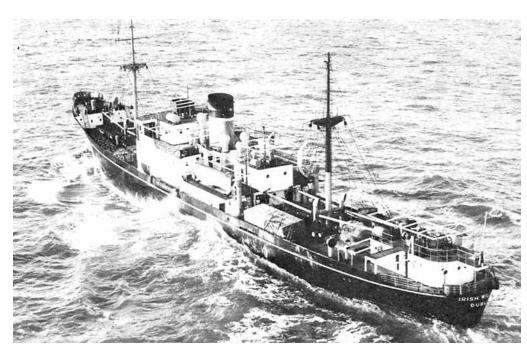
must have the 9-digit U.S. Maritime Service "service number" from the requestor *in order to locate the folder. Initially Winthrop A.* Haskell's record could not be identified because he is not in the finding aid and the number was unknown. However, because he had also been a Naval Reservist and in later life a civil service employee, the National Personnel Records Center's holdings there included both his "Official Military Personnel File" and his "Official Personnel Folder" reflecting that service. Correspondence was located wherein he gave his 7-digit *Maritime Service number.* It was found through interpolation that two zeros had later been added to yield his 9-digit number which then allowed location of his enrollment/training folder. The National Archives can't seem to tell us what record series, if any, these folders compose. They're not in the online catalog so who would know?

It would seem that an email request to <u>stl.</u> <u>archives@nara.gov</u> for

copies of documents from a U. S. Maritime Service enroll-ment/training folder for a particular mariner who enrolled during the early Coast Guard period when 7-digit service numbers were issued and who had no further federal service thereafter might not meet with a positive "hit" in their "collection" (however disorganized it may be). If the name isn't in the finding aid and without the nine-digit service number provided, likely to be found only on a document in the folder created during the later W.S.A. period, one would be lucky to strike it rich. But go ahead and dig anyway.

# DANGER IN THE GULF

Not every day has been a day in paradise along the Gulf coast. Unknown to many, in the early days of U.S. involvement in World War II, German U-boats clouded Gulf waters with an ominous presence. With over 70 naval and merchant ships falling victim to Germany's



"Gulf fleet," there was cause for real concern for the safety of sailors and even residents of the Gulf coast

It's hard to imagine as you look out across the sparkling waters of the Gulf on a sunny morning that there has ever been much to fear on our peaceful coast and its surrounding blue waters -- other than an occasional shark encounter or a brush with unexpected weather. But it wasn't always so.

Not long after Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto launched his fateful surprise attack at Pearl Harbor in late 1941, the High German command ordered the 10th U-boat flotilla to begin war time operations in the Gulf of Mexico. The primary objective was to disrupt the vital flow of oil carried by tankers from ports in Texas and Louisiana and to impede the flow of military hardware and supplies to the European front.

The Germans were exceedingly successful in their Gulf campaign sending 56 vessels to the bottom; 39 of these are now believed to be in state or Federal waters off the Texas, Louisiana, and Florida coastline. In fact, naval historians tell us that Germany's concentrated war efforts in the Gulf of Mexico in 1942 and early 1943 represent one of the most celebrated sea campaigns of all time. At least two U-boat Captains earned Germany's Distinguished Iron Cross for their efforts, and the campaign is credited with effectively disrupting U.S. oil and gas supplies for the first half of the war.

#### **SCARY TIMES ON THE GULF:**

Ask many old timers about the "war days" on the Gulf and you'll get assorted stories and tales, enough to fill a book and far too many to recount here. But not unlike many parts of the country, the Gulf coast was a hot bed of conspir-

acy theories, real and present dangers, and a fear of direct war time threat. Apparently the concerns were not without foundation.

For one, the political climate in neighboring Mexico was extremely volatile. Agents of the German war machine were known to be active throughout Mexico. Nazi Germany was the

leading importer of Mexican oil, accounting for just over half the country's annual production. Italy, another member of the Axis coalition, imported another 25-percent of Mexico's crude.

However, in May of 1942, German U-boats sank two Mexican tankers: *Potrero del Llano* on May 14<sup>th</sup>, off the coast of Florida and *Faja de Oro* on May 21<sup>st</sup> off Key West, Florida. Sixteen men died in the two attacks. The attacks prompted Mexico to declare war on Germany on June 1, 1942.

To counter the Mexican situation, oil and gas production in Texas and Louisiana was elevated. Port Isabel, Texas for example, was the site of large oil refinery and a shipping point for oil and gas headed to the war, and as such was considered by many as a possible target for U-boat shelling or even a shore scurry.

While U-boat activity was largely limited to 1942-43, there was at one point no less than a fleet of 20 U-boats that patrolled Gulf waters regularly in search of allied supply ships. To prevent widespread panic, the U.S. War Department decided to keep the lid on the threat, but it wasn't long before merchant sailors and fishing vessel crews spread the word that not all ships in the Gulf were friendly. The U.S. Army, Navy and Coast Guard were assigned to beaches of Padre Island and the waters surrounding her, watching and listening posts for U-boat activity and possible ground landings on U.S. soil.

So great was the fear of U-boat activity in the Gulf that residents along the Gulf coast of the time would jokingly remark "there are so many German U-boats in the Gulf, it's a wonder they don't torpedo each other."

#### THOSE ASSORTED STORIES -**SOME MAY BE TRUE:**

The German U-boat *U-753* was on her way to the Gulf of Mexico, for her fourth patrol, when she, in March, 1942, sighted a lone ship, the Irish Willow, southwest of Rockall Bank, an undersea plateau about one third of the distance between Europe and North America. When the *U-753* saw her neutral markings, she surfaced and signaled "send master and ship's paper". Chief Officer Henry Cullen, with four crew as oarsmen, went instead of the Captain. In the conning tower, Cullen explained that his 39-year-old Captain was too elderly for the small boat. He reminded them that the next day would be Saint Patrick's Day. Tumblers of Schnapps were produced, along with a bottle of Cognac, for the *U-753* crew.

One of the ships sunk by a U-boat – *U-753* – in the Gulf during WWII was the Norwegian Motor Tanker Hamlet, chartered to the Norwegian Shipping and Trade Mission of New York City. It was torpedoed without warning in the early morning of May 27, 1942. The attack occurred while headed to United Kingdom ports from Beaumont, Texas, via Key West, Fla., carrying 64,139 barrels of crude

oil. She sank at 4:30 a.m. after receiving three torpedoes.

Plunging bow first, she sank in the same position in about 20 fathoms, approximately 60 feet, of water.

The Hamlet was on a course zigzagging on a pattern designed to lose 10 percent over the ground, wholly blacked out. The radio had not been used previously. Three official watchmen were on duty, one on either wing of the bridge

and one at the wheel. Three unofficial lookouts also were on deck. The weather was good; visibility, good; sea, calm; wind, southeast force at 4 miles per hour; no moonlight, no ships were in sight.

First torpedo struck starboard side forward, second amidships, starboard side, and third, stern port side. Damage was unknown as the ship began to sink. The motor was stopped after the first torpedo. No distress signal could be sent due to the main antenna being wrecked. No auxiliary was maintained. No counter offensive could be made due to rapid sinking. Two codes, British No. 18 and Mersigs were sunk in a weighted canvas bag.

The Hamlet's crew abandoned in orderly manner into four boats. Three men jumped in the water and were taken into boats. All hands were rescued, being picked up by three fishing boats at about 9 a.m. and brought into Morgan City, Louisiana.

The sub is described as being very small, about 250 tons, 90-150 feet in length. It had no deck guns visible. The conning tower was round with a pulpit bridge. It was described by all as a coastal-type ship of small size and shallow draft. It was last seen heading due east on the surface at about 16 knots.

All survivors mentioned small size of sub and lack of deck guns, which they thought might be hydraulically raised to firing position later. All noticed the difference between the three explosions. The first was very heavy; the second, incendiary, scattering burning material; the third, a much lighter explosion. Rockets were noticed to eastward while crews were in boats, being fired at about 20-minute intervals. It was in this direction that the sub was last seen heading at 16 knots on the surface.

Later, a copy of the actual deck log of *U-753* provided information about the deck guns. It seems that while off the coast of Florida, U-boat U-753 under Kapitan Alfred von Mannstein torpedoed a ship while it was in convoy and

> was actually run over by another ship. The damages to the deck gun were irreparable. The log states "the remains of the irreparable deck guns were placed in storage under the deck grating."

the area wondered: "Do vou think the U-boat saw us?" In the log was sketched several fische flotte or fishing flotilla. They had indeed seen the fishing boats, but that was not their mis-

The fishing boats in

sion, to sink fishing boats.

On her fourth patrol, U-753 sank two vessels and damaged two in the West Indies. On later patrols she sank another Norwegian vessel. U-753 set off on her seventh and final patrol on 5 May 1943. Nine days in, she was discovered 10 nautical miles away from convoy HX 237 by a Sunderland aircraft of the RCAF. After a twenty-minute exchange of fire with the aircraft, U-753 dove when the corvette HMCS Drumheller joined the engagement. The aircraft dropped two depth charges immediately after. An aircraft from the escort carrier Biter marked the location of the submarine with smoke flares. HMS Lagan caught up to the Drumheller and the two dropped depth charges, finally sinking *U-753*; all 47 crewmen were lost at sea.

## THE RHINE OF MAINE

Those lucky enough to live near the Penobscot River realize there is no other thoroughfare in the world quite like it. Dubbed "The Rhine of Maine" by our ancestors, the 350-mile long Penobscot might win bragging rights when it comes to its jawdropping beauty, centuries of history, and unbreakable tribal ties.



of

Dotted with islands, mills, cities, towns, and a whole lot of wilderness, the Penobscot has inspired poetry, paintings, songs, stories, and even a scene in Tom Clancy's submarine novel, "The Hunt for Red October." Henry David Thoreau published an account travelling up the Penobscot from Bangor in 1846 and author Stephen King placed his fictional town of Derry, Maine on the Penobscot. Like a family member, its mood is ever-changing - ranging from placid in summer to ice-encrusted in winter. No one could ever imagine life without it by our side.

#### **HISTORY IN THE MAKING:**

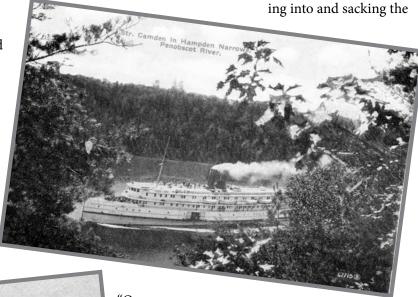
Portuguese explorer Estevan Gomez was the first European believed to have explored the river, in 1525. Frenchman Samuel de Champlain followed in 1604. A few years later, French priests converted Penobscot Indians living along the river to Catholicism. Pentagouet, now Castine, where the river becomes Penobscot Bay, was settled by the French, and the Penobscots settled Indian Island in Old Town.

Treat was the river's first permanent English settler, and eventually the Penobscot was settled all the way north to Medway, where it splits into its East and West Branches and beyond. The Penobscot tribe still claims the islands as sacred hunting grounds from Old Town northward.

The British navy drove colonists' ships up to Bangor in the disastrous 1779

Penobscot Expedition, where an entire American fleet was destroyed in a botched attempt to retake Maine from the British.

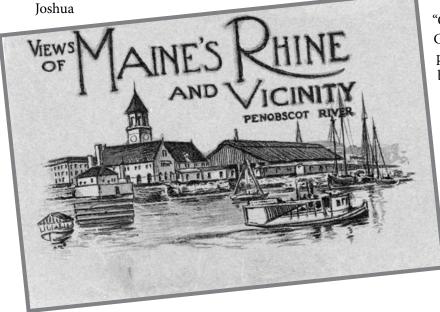
During the War of 1812, the British again invaded Maine, at the Battle of Hampden, march-



"Queen

City" of Bangor in the process. To prevent this from happening a third time, and because the nearby boundary between the United States and British Canada was still contested in the 1840s, the Federal government, in 1844, began constructing a huge granite for, Fort Knox, opposite the town of Bucksport, near the mouth of the Penobscot. The fort never fired a shot in anger, but remains one of the Penobscot's major man-made landmarks.

The Penobscot River is one of the reasons Bangor, Maine was first settled. The River was an early trade corridor to interior Maine from the Atlantic coast. Ocean ships could navigate upstream to Bangor and other towns on the riv-



er's estuary. The intersection of the Penobscot and the Kenduskeag Stream made Bangor an ideal location for large ships that allowed the timber coming from the north woods to be processed at the lumber mills and then loaded onto ships and sent around the world."

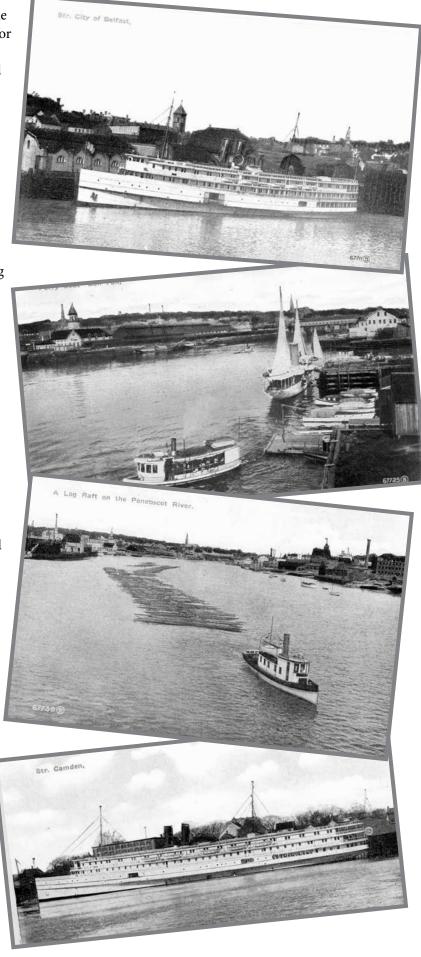
Rock-ribbed harbor masters settled many a squabble between boat captains who desired favorable berthings. Ships were packed so tightly that, at times, one could skip from Bangor to Brewer - .7 miles - across their decks. And where would Bangor's 19th century "Devil's Half Acre," an area noted for its offerings of vice, have been without the river to bring its hungry male customers down from the woods and up from the sea? With Bangor as its head of navigation, Boston steamers began providing service in 1835.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, lumbering was largely supplanted by papermaking, in the form of large wood pulp and paper mills located all along the river. The mills created dioxins as a byproduct of the chlorine bleaching process in making paper. Efforts continue today to clean-up the river. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the continuing decline of the Maine paper industry, and the divestiture of the woodlands, the Penobscot River, which was largely a commercial thoroughfare is now becoming the river of today, given more to pleasure craft and recreationalists.

Understanding today's river means sharing its past with people too young to recall its glory days as a shipping and pleasure craft center. If you witnessed the two lost white beluga whales near the salmon pool in 1954, tell your grandchildren about. If you rode the Bon Ton ferry for a nickel, from Brewer to Bangor, what was it like? And fewer and fewer people are living who rode the last of the Boston boats up to 1935, so share that experience, too.

Sending the year's first fresh-run salmon to the White House is also a lively story. So is the launching of the Horace E. Munroe from Brewer in 1919. Ice cutting and log driving were not for the faint of heart. Neither was dam keeping and sail making. All were trades directly related to life on the Penobscot. There were no safe jobs in the river's early days, and people died on the river making a living.

Editor's note: It seems like the Penobscot has continued over the centuries to supply a lively basis for employment of mariners. Personally, one of the enjoyable parts of this job is finding different areas of maritime history. When I discovered the old packet of postcard, pictures featured in this article, I was intrigued. I hope you enjoy them, too.



## S.S. JOHN D. GILL

The SS (Steam Ship) John D. Gill was built in 1942 at Sun Shipyard, Chester, Pennsylvania. She was launched November 1941 and delivered to her owners, Atlantic Refining Company January 31, 1942 as the seventh and last of the Van Dyke class of tankers. Her dimensions were 544' long

with a 70' beam and 40' draft at 11,641 gross tons, 19,000 Dead Weight Tons capable of carrying 152,000 barrels of crude oil.

The SS John D. Gill was a new ship having been delivered to the Atlantic Refining Fleet, on January 31, 1942. On March 12, 1942, the SS John D. Gill was making her second voyage outbound from Atreco, Texas with a cargo of crude oil and was proceeding up the Atlantic

Coast with orders to discharge her cargo in Philadelphia, PA. Her trip was altered when the ship had been ordered to Charleston, South Carolina by the Coast Guard due to concern of U-boats in the area and left there at 1245 Eastern War Time (EWT) on March 12, 1942.

The SS John D. Gill was about 25 miles east of Cape Fear, North Carolina when she was targeted by Captain Erwin Rostin aboard the German submarine U-158. Captain Rostin launched a torpedo from the U-158 which struck the starboard side around 2110 EWT. The torpedo struck almost amidships in #7 tank about the position of the main mast knocking out all light and power.

After turning on the general alarm, the skipper – Captain Allan D. Tucker – started running aft to see the condition of the engine room, hoping to get back underway and either continue to some port or beach her where she could be salvaged. As he reached the #7 tank, it burst into flames, sending a column of smoke and fire hundreds of feet into the air and sweeping back over the aft end of the vessel. A self-igniting carbide light on a life ring, which was thrown overboard by a crew member, ignited the oil escaping from the hole in #7 and surrounding the *John D. Gill*.

The order was given to abandon ship. Some difficulty was experienced when the falls on #4 lifeboat jammed and men assigned to that lifeboat were dumped into the sea, some being drawn into the still turning propeller.

The lifeboats on the Starboard side of the ship were destroyed by the explosion of the torpedo and fire, leaving only the #2 & #4 lifeboats on the Port side of the vessel. The #2 lifeboat, with 15 men on board, including Captain Tucker, got away safely. After riding around the edge of the fire for about two and one-half hours looking for survivors, they headed for shore and were picked up by another Atlan-

tic Refining tanker, S.S. Robert H. Colley, and were taken to Charleston, S.C.

While the men in the #2 lifeboat were fleeing the stricken vessel, drama was taking place aft. Edwin F. Cheney, the Quartermaster who had been at the helm, saw there



was some confusion lowering the life boats and decided to lower a raft. He tripped one but it went down into heavy flames on that side of the ship. He crossed to the opposite side of the ship and tripped the raft there. It, too, went into the burning oil but not quite as bad, so he dove after it and came up alongside the raft. Pushing it ahead of him, he swam out of the flames and

then gathered ten other men aboard, all severely burned. For this heroic action, Cheney was awarded the very first Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal which was presented to him by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The citation read:

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Marchant Marine Distinguished service Medal to EDWIN F. CHENEY, Quartermaster Citation:

"For heroism above and beyond the call of duty during enemy attack when he released and launched a life-raft from a sinking and burning ship and maneuvered it through a pool of burning oil to clear water by swimming under water, coming up only to breathe although he had incurred severe burns about the face and arms in this action, he then guided four of this shipmates to the raft and swam to and rescued two others who were injured and unable to help themselves. His extraordinary courage and disregard of his own safety in thus rescuing his shipmates will be an enduring inspiration to seamen of the United States Merchant Marine everywhere."

For the President Emory Scott Land

The US Coast Guard Patrol Boat #4405 arrived at the sinking ship at 0600 EWT on March 13 and found a raft with 8 crew members and 3 Armed Guard aboard. Those survivors were put aboard the USCG #186 and taken to Southport, N.C. Of the 42 crew members and 7 Navy Armed Guard, nineteen crew members and four Navy Armed Guard were lost.

Those survivors of the SS John D. Gill sinking who were put ashore in the hamlet of Southport, N.C. were cared for by the local population. Of those who perished was a Mess-

man Catalino Tingzon whose family could not be located. Since his remains were not claimed by any family, the community buried him in the Northwood Cemetery. A Memorial sits in Waterfront park and is inscribed as follows:

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF CATALINO TINGZON INTERRED IN NORTHWOOD CEMETERY AND ALL MERCHANT MARINE SEAMEN AND U.S.

NAVY ARMED GUARD ON THE TANKER S.S. JOHN D. GILL TORPEDOED AND SUNK OFF CAPE FEAR BY THE GERMAN SUBMARINE U-158 MARCH 12, 1942

THE CITIZENS OF SOUTHPORT CARED FOR THE SURVIVORS AND MOURNED FOR THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES. ERECTED MARCH 12, 1994 BY THE SOUUTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The following is a list of those aboard the SS John D. Gill when she was torpedoed:

SS JOHN D. GILL US MERCHANT CREW
Allen Tucker Captain

Alan Eckman Chief Mate

Charles Kimball 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate

Joseph Hagerty 3<sup>rd</sup> Mate

Raymond Tardiff Radio Operator

Allen Defibaugh Radio Operator

Otto Bright Chief Engineer

David Rappaport 1<sup>st</sup> Asst. Engineer

Israel Sitnick 2<sup>nd</sup> Asst. Engineer

Harry Gaskins 3<sup>rd</sup> Asst. Engineer

Robert Gurtov Boatswain

Virgil Chandler Able Seaman - AB Able Seaman - AB William Pryal John Cochrane Able Seaman - AB Edwin Chenev Ouartermaster - AB Alfred Ritchie Quartermaster- AB Benjamin Wilmer Quartermaster- AB Anthony De Michael **Ordinary Seaman** Frank Dugan Ordinary Seaman Sterling Fetterman Ordinary Seaman Clayton Wegscheider Ordinary Seaman William Geier Deck Maintenance Paul Schasnev **Deck Maintenance** 

Vincent Lewis Pumpman
William Atherholt Oiler
Jacob Lefflar Oiler
William Robinson Oiler
Willard Short Oiler

Jay BradleyFireman/WatertenderHerman EskindFireman/WatertenderGeorge MihlosFireman/Watertender

Henry JiminezWiperJoe CoxWiperHerbert GardnerWiperJoseph ZaengleWiperSixto FloresStewardPeter BorjoCook

Felimon AvestruzCrew MessmanCatilino TingzonCrew MessmanBernard PeronaSaloon MessmanFederico CristobalGalleymanBenjamin CarreonPantryman

US NAVY ARMED GUARD

Robert Hutchins
David Lunn
Arthur Oakley
Floyd Ready
Asa Senter
Curtis Koch
Garfield Potts
USN Ensign
USN Coxswain
USN Seaman 2

References: "A Careless Word......A Needless Sinking" Captain Arthur Moore; Atlantic Marine News, December 1966, Vol. XIII, No.5; Additional information can be found at www.maritimequest.com

## A JOHN WAYNE MOVIE WITH A TWIST

Telling a story different from most WWII movies, "The Sea Chase" is a worthwhile watch for fans of any number of different genres. In a role different from many of his other roles, John Wayne is Capt. Karl Ehrlich, a German captain loyal to his country but completely against Nazism and all it stands for. Wayne is excellent as a man just trying to get the job done no matter the cost.



Captain Karl Ehrlich is the master of the elderly German steam freighter *Ergenstrasse*, docked at Sydney, Australia, on the eve of the Second World War. Ehrlich is a former career naval officer who lost his rank and position after refusing to support the current Nazi regime. As his ship prepares for sea (to avoid being interned if war is declared), he meets with an old friend, British Commander Jeff Napier, and Napier's German fiancée Elsa Keller, played by Lana Turner.

Ehrlich knows Elsa has a dubious past and tries to break them up. Germany has invaded Poland, and war is imminent. As his ship prepares to slip away, Ehrlich receives a visit from the German Consul-General, who asks him to take aboard a spy who is facing capture. It is only after the *Ergenstrasse* slips out of harbor in thick fog that Ehrlich discovers the spy is in fact Elsa, who seduced Napier for the information she could learn. She is cynically dismissive of Ehrlich's old-fashioned personal integrity. Ehrlich's chief officer, the pro-Nazi Kirchner, who is also with German intelligence, soon makes a pass at Elsa, but she tells him to be patient.

Old, slow and short on coal, the *Ergenstrasse* is seen as easy prey by the Australian Navy and by Napier in particular, who understandably holds a grudge. But Napier is the only man who does not underestimate Ehrlich. The wily captain leads his enemies on a chase across the Pacific Ocean, beginning with a run to the south to throw off pursuit, and pausing for supplies at an unmanned rescue station on Auckland Island. Three fishermen are already marooned there; Kirchner casually murders them, but tells no one. Napier later discovers the bodies and believes his old friend is responsible. He vows to bring the German to justice as a war criminal.

Ehrlich sets course for a remote, uninhabited mid-Pacific island, Pom Pom Galli in the Tuamotus. Running out of coal, he begins burning wood from the ship for fuel, upsetting the crew when he orders the lifeboats burned. A potential mutiny is averted when they reach the island. There, Ehrlich drives the crew to cut trees for fuel, but impresses Elsa on several occasions by showing a humane side. Discovering that Kirchner murdered the fishermen, Ehrlich forces him to sign a true account of his actions in the ship's log.

Meanwhile, Napier convinces the *Rockhampton's* captain that his old friend will make for Pom Pom Galli, which he spoke of visiting before. They arrive just too late to catch him, first at Pom Pom Galli and then en route to Valparaíso in neutral Chile, where Napier cannot attack. While in port, Napier confronts Ehrlich about the murders; Ehrlich says that if they catch the *Ergenstrasse* they can read

the truth in his log. Meanwhile Elsa learns the truth herself, dumps Kirchner, and declares her love for Ehrlich. Luck is with the *Ergenstrasse* when the *Rockhampton* is called away to support the cruisers facing the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* in Montevideo, Uruguay. Napier requests a transfer to the British Naval patrols in the North Sea, believing that Ehrlich must pass through the patrols in his attempt to reach Kiel, and flies to England as the *Ergenstrasse* departs for Germany.

For political reasons, German radio broadcasts a message through Lord Haw-Haw that discloses the position of the *Ergenstrasse* as it passes Norway, thus giving up the ship and crew to the Royal Navy and to the waiting Napier, now commanding a corvette. Napier tracks down Ehrlich's ship and sinks it in the North Sea; only Ehrlich, Elsa, and an unwilling Kirchner remain aboard for the short, one-sided battle. It is left unclear whether they die, but the other crewmen hand over the ship's log to Napier, proving that Kirchner committed the murders alone

Voice-over narration by the character "Napier," and delivered in the style of a personal reminiscence, is heard intermittently throughout the film. At the end of the film, the fate of characters «Karl» and «Elsa» are left uncertain, and Farrar concludes by asking: "Had the sea taken them or had they reached the nearby shore, where the fjords could hide a secret?...Knowing Karl as I did, I have my own opinion."

Recently re-released as a DVD, the movie not only offers a gorgeous widescreen presentation that shows off the filming locations in and around Hawaii;, visually graphic scenes of life aboard and a storm at sea; and it also features some very good supporting actors including James Arness who actually, earlier, had served in the Army, facing battle and seriously wounded in the assault by German machinegun fire at the infamous battle of Anzio in 1944. Later, mentored in his film career by John "the Duke" Wayne, Arness took the part of Marshall Matt Dillon in "Gunsmoke" at the recommendation of Wayne.

Editor's note: This film is available at www.amazon.com. However, remind me to tell you sometime about meeting John Wayne, albeit briefly, on the beach in Waikiki in the early 1960s.

# FOURTH OF JULY, 1942 AND PQ-17

On the Fourth of July, 1942, a large Allied convoy met disaster in the remote Arctic while hauling American war supplies to the Soviet Union, then America's and Britain's tenuous ally against Nazi Germany.

Convoy PQ-17 consisted of 35 cargo ships, mostly American and British, heavily loaded with tanks, trucks, planes, arms, ammunition, explosives, fuel, raw steel, industrial chemicals, and enormous amounts of food. The convoy departed from a lonely fjord in Iceland on the afternoon of June 27, 1942, and steamed east toward the North Russia port of Archangel, hugging the edge of the vast polar ice field extending 800 miles from the North Pole.

The voyage to Arctic Russia was widely regarded by mariners as miserable and dangerous even in peacetime. Arctic storms swept across the convoy routes with hurricane-force winds; huge, breaking seas; and temperatures that plunged as low as 30 and even 40 degrees below zero. The sea was so cold that a man could live in it for only minutes. A survival manual advised shipwrecked sailors how to kill and eat a polar bear before it killed and ate you.

In summer—the time of year when PQ-17 sailed—storms were less frequent. Often the sea lay as calm as a duck pond under bright sunshine and drifting fog. And yet Arctic summers were the most dangerous time for convoys. Due to the tilt of the earth on its axis, the Arctic sun never set in summer. It hung above the horizon 24 hours a day, a floodlight for the German bombers and U-boats, which could attack the ships nonstop from bases in occupied Norway.

Sending a convoy across the Arctic in perpetual daylight was so risky that British Royal Navy officers responsible for protecting the convoys had wanted to halt them until autumn, when sheltering darkness would return to the convoy routes. But the political pressure to keep the convoys sailing was far too strong.

The convoys were a gesture of good faith by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to maintain their fragile alliance with Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, at a tense time. In summer 1942, six months after Pearl Harbor, neither America nor Britain had troops on the battlefield in Europe. All that stood between Adolf Hitler and the complete conquest of Europe was the Soviet Red Army. The Soviets and Germans were fighting with medieval savagery on a vast

scale, with the death toll soaring into the millions. Stalin was furious that America and Britain were still watching from the sidelines, and demanded they immediately launch an amphibious invasion of France. In essence he wanted the D-Day invasion in 1942 rather than 1944. Roosevelt and Churchill refused. They did not think their armies were ready to face the Germans. Roosevelt hoped the convoys would not only sustain the alliance with Stalin but establish trust with him that would lead to a smoother transition in Europe after the war. He was adamant that the convoys had to keep sailing—no matter what.

The Germans were as just as determined to stop PQ-17. As the convoy left Iceland, they set in motion a plan to destroy it with a coordinated attack by bombers, U-boats, and surface ships, including the giant battle-ship *Tirpitz*, one of the most powerful warships on earth. The plan was so elaborate that it required the personal approval of Hitler, who insisted he be given a final say in whether to unleash the *Tirpitz* when the time came.

By the morning of July 4, convoy PQ-17 was seven days out of Iceland and eight days from Archangel. It had seen little of the enemy but was just entering the most dangerous leg of the voyage. Just after 8 a.m., all the American ships in PQ-17 lowered their ragged, oilsoaked U.S. flags in unison and raised crisp new American flags – a display of patriotic spirit on a bleak sea 4,000 miles from home.

Then came waves of German bombers. And then confusion. A high-ranking British admiral, thinking an attack by the *Tirpitz* might be imminent, ordered the Allied warships protecting the convoy to race away. He ordered the slow, lumbering cargo ships to "scatter," with each to find its own way across hundreds of miles of icy ocean to Archangel. Disaster quickly followed. Although the *Tirpitz* was still anchored in a Norwegian fjord, German bombers and U-boats took advantage of the 24-hour daylight to hunt down and sink the fleeing cargo ships one by one. A few ships took the extraordinary step of fleeing straight into the polar ice field, dodging bergs and breaking ice to create a path for themselves, in the hope the Germans would never think to look in the ice. *The Ghost Ships of Archangel* tells their story.

Written by author Bill Geroux; book is available at www.amazon.com.and other sources.



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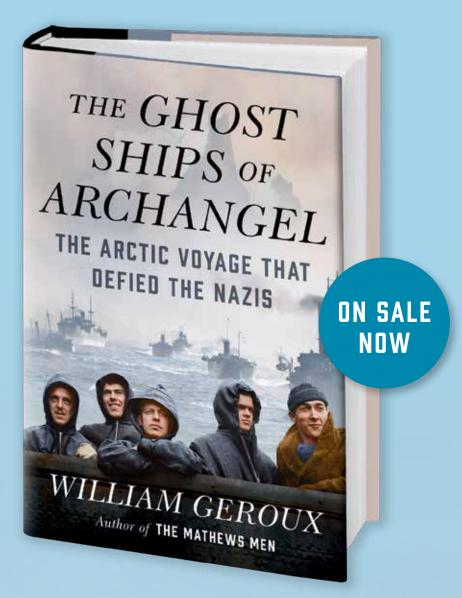
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American Maritime Congress and Navy League sponsored STH event. Attending Congresspersons were presented with USMM plaques for their offices.