

AMERICAN

MERCHANT MARINE

VETERANS



# NEWS MAGAZINE



SS Caribou — page 14



## NS SAVANNAH

The world's first  
nuclear-powered  
merchant ship



The Concrete Fleet — page 32



VJ Day Celebrations — page 40



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## AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS

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#### Region ONE – FL, PR

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**Vacant**

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### Appointed Officers

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**Editorial** ..... **John Pitts** *Member-at-Large*  
**Sindy Raymond** *North Bay Mariners Chapter*  
**Lynn Kelly** *Member-at-Large*

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**Sheila Sova** *Member-at-Large*  
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**Constitution & By-laws** ..... **vacant**

**Special Projects & Veterans Outreach** ..... **Sheila M. Sova** *Member-at-Large*

**Membership** ..... **Sindy Raymond** *North Bay Mariners Chapter*  
**Lynn Kelly** *Member-at-Large*

**Internet & Social Media** ..... **Capt. Chris Edyvean** *Midwest Chapter*

**International Affairs** ..... **Jens Inge Egeland** *Member-at-Large*  
(458) 239-3196 – jensingeegeland@gmail.com

### 2020/2021 National Convention Committee

**Convention Chairman ... John Pitts** *Member-at-Large*  
**Vice Chairman** ..... **Capt. Dru DiMattia** *Member-at-Large*  
**Registration Head** ..... **Dennis Kelly** *Member-at-Large*  
**Committee Member** ..... **Sindy Raymond** *North Bay Mariners Chapter*  
**Committee Member** ..... **Sheila Sova** *Member-at-Large*  
**Committee Member** ..... **Steve Snyder** *Member-at-Large*  
**Committee Member** ..... **Dennis Ng** *Dennis A. Roland Chapter*  
**Finance Chair** ..... **Lynn Kelly** *Member-at-Large*





# National President John Pitts



The American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc. have not had a shortage of issues to deal with this year. Some are straight forward but took time and perseverance to see them through to a successful end, while others deal with scheduling and coordination of events which, with all of the uncertainties brought

about by the pandemic, is like trying to hit a bulls-eye blindfolded. Even so, we are progressing and things for the future of the AMMV are positive. Some highlights of issues since the last edition are as follows:

## **TAX STATUS CHANGE FOR THE AMMV**

As you will see as you read further into this magazine, there is a letter containing information about a proposed amendment to the AMMV Constitution and a proposed Resolution to amend the Articles of Incorporation. You will receive, in the mail, soon, further information about these changes and 2 ballots. These amendments are necessary to change our current IRS tax status from 501(c)(19), which is exclusive to Veterans organizations and very restrictive with regard to membership requirements. After researching alternatives, the best application for the AMMV is to become a 501(c)(3) organization which provides the same benefits as before while being far less restrictive.

Your AMMV officers sought assistance from the legal firm of Connolly-Gallagher, specializing in tax law, to see these changes through in as professional manner as possible. The AMMV was advised that to be eligible for the 501(c)(3) tax status, amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the Constitution & By-laws would need to be revised. Further details will be enclosed with the mail-out ballots. Due to the space limitations, the proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the Constitution & By-laws may be found at the AMMV website: [ammv.us](http://ammv.us).

Once the ballots have been counted and the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the Constitution & By-laws have been ratified, application for 501(c)(3) status will be made with the IRS. We hope you agree with amending the AMMV documents to bring them up to date, and that you participate by filling out **BOTH** ballots and

returning them in the self-addressed envelope enclosed.

## **HAPPY 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY TO CHARLES MONTENARO**

Last edition, we recognized Charles Mills for passing his 100<sup>th</sup> year on this earth. This past September, Charles Montenaro caught up with him! Some people complain about life at sea. It seems to have appealed to Charles. Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday with best wishes for many more!

## **AMMV CONVENTION**

The AMMV convention date has been re-scheduled several times due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The original date was scheduled for March 2020, then re-scheduled to November 2020 due to unavailability of the Maritime Conference Center located in Linthicum Heights, MD. We are currently scheduled, and planning, to hold the convention sometime during the week of May 21, 2021.

I have been in contact with the Maritime Conference Center and was informed that the Sales Manager with whom we had been dealing has been furloughed, and our event has been assigned to another Sales Manager. A revised contract has been presented and is being reviewed. The room rates are the same as the previous contract at \$157 single, \$215 double occupancy, which includes meals. Those rates will be honored just prior and just following the convention dates for those who which to arrive early or linger in the area after the convention.

The updated contract includes a Covid-19 mitigation policy. This is a standard waiver that needs to be signed by all attendees to the convention at the Maritime Conference Center. No one can predict the status of the pandemic into May 2021, but I feel waivers like this will remain with us for many business dealings well into the future.

Our good friends and fellow members Sally and Roy Langwah announced that they are retiring and will not be able to perform at any future conventions. In addition to providing entertainment and camaraderie, Roy acted as our audio-visual expert handling speakers, microphones, screen projections, etc. His expertise will surely be missed. Please join me in wishing them a well-deserved, happy retirement!

The AMMV Convention Committee met recently to review the updated contract and discuss how to proceed. It was decided to continue planning to have the AMMV 34<sup>th</sup> convention at the Maritime Conference Center outside Baltimore, MD but for a shorter period than in the past. It was

agreed that combining the convention with the National Maritime Day celebration sponsored by the Maritime Administration and Department of Transportation, Friday, May 21, 2021 would be the best plan of action. Especially if the Congressional Gold Medals are ready for presentation at that celebration. While the convention is still scheduled for the week of May 21, 2021, we are not providing registration info at this time. As things progress and plans are firmed up, there will be enough time to provide registration info in the Winter edition of the AMMV magazine.

### **CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL**

The AMMV Design committee – composed of Chair, Capt. Dru DiMattia, AMMV Vice President; Co-Chair, Capt. Scott Nowak, Three Rivers Chapter, AMMV; Dave Yoho, WWII Merchant Mariner, AMMV; Capt. Hugu Stephens, WWII Merchant Mariner, SUNY Maritime, Murmansk Run; Sheila Sova, Government Affairs, Social Media, AMMV; and Dennis Kelly, Treasurer, AMMV – has conducted 3 virtual sessions since May 2020 when the committee was formed. The following is the latest report from Committee Co-Chair Dru DiMattia:

“We have reviewed the vast history along with discussion of our National memorials. Two WWII Merchant Mariners assisted with this project: Capt. Hugh Stephens, and Dave Yoho.

“Great strides have been made capturing the essence and most iconic symbols, quotes, and theaters. Understanding the Medal will not be everything to everyone, the design committee hashed out what our Greatest Generation of Mariners endured to gain Victory in WWII.

“Of our AMMV group, three of our members were included in the official collaboration with MARAD. This included Capt. Hugh Stephens, who is a hawse piper, Sheila Sova, and myself.

“Just this week, MARAD has presented the design brief to the U.S. Mint by conference call. So we are finally off and running!

“The artists have inquired of a few details that weren’t included but will be addressed: role of women in the Merchant Marine; what types of ships were in the convoys; and how to portray the crew.

“Even though our collaborative efforts to educate the artists and provide resources of the Merchant Marine of WWII, they will be creating their designs to best target what the CGM should represent. Even then the final say falls with the Secretary of the Treasury.

“The current timeline to completion is pushing into June 2021. We have urgently requested this to be completed by Maritime Day!

“As you know, this extraordinary time has placed strains on all.

“Virtual meetings will continue with both our internal AMMV committee and the official Design Committee hosted by MARAD.”

### **CHINESE AMERICAN VETERANS CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL**

Chinese American Veterans have been honored with a Congressional Gold Medal recognizing their service and sacrifice to make America what it is today. The Congressional Gold Medal has not been presented, nor are replicas available at this time, but the design has been completed and is pictured here:



On September 26<sup>th</sup>, the Chinese Historical Society of America commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of WWII and honored the Chinese American Veterans. I had the honor of being invited to speak at this virtual ceremony on behalf of the American Merchant Marine Veterans along with Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, Rep. Ted Lieu, Rep. Judy Chu, California Governor Gavin Newsom, American Legion Cathay Post, Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Congressional Gold Medal project, and numerous active and retired Veterans. The program also premiered the short film by Montgomery Hom “We Served with Pride”, which chronicles the road to the Congressional Gold Medal. You can watch the ceremony on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHTZI0mFeFc>

### **NEW AMMV COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TO BE HEADED BY JENS INGE EGELAND**

Due to the attention and alliance of International maritime organizations, representing WWII era Merchant Seamen, it seemed appropriate to form a committee to vet and coordinate efforts between these groups and the AMMV. We have had contact, with awards being presented, in some cases, from groups associated with Australia, Canada, England, Norway, and Russia.

The newly formed committee is the AMMV International Affairs committee and will be headed by AMMV member Jens Inge Egeland. Jens was born and raised in

Norway and currently lives in Oregon. He has a seagoing lineage through his great Uncle, Ernest Svendesen, Merchant Marine Veteran of WWII, who sailed under both the Norwegian and US Flag.

Jens initiated several operations to locate and establish contact with Norwegian Merchant Marine Veterans who settled in the US, Canada, and England for nomination of the Norwegian commemorative Medal for their service in the Allied Convoys of WWII. This brought Jens into contact with the Norwegian Embassy in the US and the Defense Attaché.

In addition, Jens began to locate and nominate US Merchant Marine Veterans for the Convoy Cup Medal which is presented by the Convoy Cup Foundation. An article on the Convoy Cup Medal is contained in this edition of the AMMV magazine.

Jens has demonstrated his initiative and motivation in line with the core values and goals of the American Merchant Marine Veterans organization. Please join me in congratulating and welcoming him in his appointment to the AMMV International Affairs committee.

### **THIS TIME OF YEAR CALLS FOR REMEMBRANCE**

A shipmate of mine was fond of stating that Maritime Safety was fueled by blood. No matter how many accidents have been investigated, safety awareness heightened, and increased safety measures and technology instituted, ships, and their crews, continue to lose the battle with Mother Nature. Any vessel, and her crew, are susceptible at any time. There is no season for maritime disasters, but this time of year, Fall headed into Winter, always brings my thoughts to my Sisters and Brothers who perished at sea during this time of year. I know these are not the only maritime disasters that occurred during these months and I mean no disrespect to those not mentioned, and honor them as well, but these are the incidents that stand out in my mind during this time of year. I hope there are no additions to this list in the future. Please take a moment to remember them. Fair Winds, Following Seas!

- SS Badger State ----- December 26/27, 1969---26 lost
- SS Edmund Fitzgerald -- November 10, 1975 -----29 lost
- SS Poet ----- October 25, 1980-----33 lost
- SS Marine Electric----- February 12, 1983-----31 lost
- SS El Faro ----- October 1, 2015-----33 lost

### **ADIOS 2020!**

The year 2020 continues to fly by, and I don't hear anyone wishing it would linger. This year will definitely be remembered as unusual and I hope a change is headed our way soon. As we head into November, Veterans Day will be upon us. Thanksgiving follows, with Christmas and the New Year of 2021 close behind. These are all times of remembrance that stay with us our entire lives. Our memories are made from the Veterans Day parades and the

honor paid to those who provided us with the freedoms and lifestyle we enjoy. The Thanksgiving Day Parade, four-day holiday weekend, smells from the kitchen or galley, Black Friday shopping, family and togetherness. The joy of Christmas and the holiday season wrapping up another year and preparing for the promise of a New Year. Even at sea, although it may be just another day at work, there is something special that makes life just a little bit better and enjoyable. I wish you all the best for this season and hope that you make enjoyable memories despite the disruptions that will represent 2020 for years to come. Remember to be safe, but don't forget to celebrate and make some memories!

Faternally,



John Pitts  
National President, AMMV

## Welcome Aboard to these New Members of the AMMV

AMERICAN LEGION #91.....	CAMBRIDGE.....	MD
JOANNE CAMPANA .....	KENNER .....	LA
MICHELLE DENISE CAMPBELL .....	TACOMA.....	WA
JOHN CERASUOLO.....	PEARLAND.....	TX
GARY COTTER.....	THE DALLES .....	OR
JACOB COUVILLON .....	LEAGUE CITY.....	TX
KIM ESTES .....	CYPRESS.....	CA
JAMES R. GRAF .....	FRANKLIN SQUARE .....	NY
JAMES R. HAYS .....	READING .....	PA
JOHN L. HILLMAN.....	BATON ROUGE.....	LA
LAWRENCE KORWATCH.....	ALAMO.....	CA
JOHN KRAMER.....	BETHEL PARK.....	PA
CAPT PETRO KURKIMILIS .....	FT MYERS .....	FL
JACK LAUB.....	DELRAY BEACH .....	FL
WARREN LAURELL .....	HOUSTON .....	TX
ANDREA LEE .....	NORTH PLATTE.....	NE
GAYLE LIVECCIA.....	MOUNT ARLINGTON.....	NJ
ROSE MARY LYNCH .....	WHITING .....	NJ
J. DAVID MORGAN.....	THE WOODLANDS .....	TX
MARK M. ONCALE.....	RIVER RIDGE .....	LA
WILLIAM ROSCHER.....	SCOTTSDALE .....	AZ
CONRAD ROSEMERE.....	VIENNA.....	MD
RITA SCHMIDT .....	PHILLIPSBURG.....	NJ
COL. JEFFREY STOLROW .....	NEWPORT BEACH.....	CA
VFW POST #115.....	CAMBRIDGE.....	MD
RICHARD WENNET .....	PALM BEACH GARDENS.....	FL





# National Vice President Capt. Anthony "Dru" DiMattia



## UPDATE FOR THE U.S. NAVY ARMED GUARD/ MERCHANT MARINE MUSEUM, VERO BEACH, FL

Capt. Richard Martucci forwarded this updated information to the AMMV NEWS Magazine about a re-opening of the newly "revised" U.S. Navy Armed Guard, which they recently moved from Fellsmere, FL to Vero Beach. The Governor of Florida has recently lifted

restrictions mandated by the Covid-19 Pandemic, which allowed the museum to re-open.

U.S. Navy Armed Guard/Merchant Marine Museum is open 3 days at present, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 11:30am until 4:00pm. We are currently looking for

more volunteers so that we can expand our hours of operation.

We have moved to the Indian River Mall from Fellsmere. Our new address is: 6200 20th St., #840, Vero Beach, FL 32966. Our mailing address is: P.O. Box 6910292, Vero Beach, FL 32969-0161.

We welcome donations to keep us afloat, as we do not charge for admission.

Progress is coming along. We are looking for grants but nothing will be available until January 2021. We are working on getting our monthly meetings restarted with social distancing and are working on our website. We hope to have it up and running soon.

You can contact Korky at 772-571-0230 or Richard Martucci at rtucch@gmail.com for any additional information.

If you're in the neighborhood, stop by and say hello.

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*Dru DiMattia and Navy Armed Guard Merchant Marine Museum President, Clarence "Korky" Korker*



# National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly

Please send in your dues if you have not already done so. Each of our memberships expired on June 30, so if you have not sent in your \$32 dues for the annual renewal please do that now. Mail your check to:

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

If you are not sure if you are paid up feel free to call me at 475-470-9200 and I can let you know. As of Oct 1st we have 214 unpaid MAL members. It is costly and time consuming to send out "Second Notices for Dues". We can better use our funds and energies to advance our mission. Thank you.  
---Lynn

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU:

I wish to offer my gratitude to a friend who has become an integral part of AMMV. Susan Cameron is our new "business advisor" and all-around expert. Susan has been a friend for twenty years and is so knowledgeable in many diverse areas. She has a background in accounting, non-profits, tax structure, wills and estates and various computer programs. When I first came onboard at AMMV I asked Susan if we could hire her to create a database specific to our needs. She took AMMV on as a client pro-bono and created a database in Access which is geared toward our accounting and record keeping requirements. She has gone on to advise us regarding tax laws and non-profit requirements and has helped us with our government forms including preparing our tax forms. She produces our quarterly Profit and Loss Statements and, with John Pitt's help, developed a budget for the new fiscal year. Susan's Dad, George Ratcliffe, is a retired Merchant Mariner and she has chosen to donate her time and talents to AMMV as a dedication to him.



*Susan Cameron*

## A YOUTHFUL CONTACT:

I was contacted by a young man named Michael Naya from Kenilworth, NJ.



*Michael Naya*

Michael has recently enrolled in Kean University in NJ as a history major with the hopes of becoming a teacher and with a long-term dream of writing a book. He has been interviewing older folks (some over 100) for four years to document their experiences during WW II, the Great Depression and the Korean

War. When he contacted me he said that although he had interviewed many Navy and Army Veterans he had never spoken to a Merchant Mariner. I began contacting some of the AMMV members I know and was immediately rewarded with positive and enthusiastic responses. As of this writing Michael has interviewed about seven of our members in an effort to record their WW II stories. Our AMMV members are so generous with their time and story-telling talents and of course their valuable memories. I agree with Michael that we need to do all we can to document these experiences. I am appealing to you. If you are willing to do a short telephone interview with Michael Naya, at your convenience, please call me 475-470-9200 or email [ammermarvets@gmail.com](mailto:ammermarvets@gmail.com)

Michael continues to impress me with his genuine interest and enthusiasm for the past and the need to document this important MM history. Due to his research each WW II Veteran living in Kenilworth, NJ has been recognized individually, and was awarded a Mayoral Proclamation on the anniversary of VJ Day. He has been at Borough Hall working with the president of the historical society to review Borough Council meeting minutes from 1918 through 1920 gathering stories to write the history of the Spanish Flu. He is currently putting together a timeline on the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic for the historical society. He has written an article on VJ Day for a local news website. Michael is a delight to talk to and he would be happy to record your WW II MM oral history.

Calm Seas,  
Lynn C. Kelly



# NEWS Magazine Editor Sindy Raymond



The article later on in this issue about the celebration of the 75th anniversary of V-J Day brought back to me some familial memories.

Although I was too young, at 2-years old, to remember the joy and elation that came with the declaration of the end of World War II, I was reminded of the after-effects locally. I was born and

raised in the San Francisco Bay area and since my Grandmother and Father both worked in the shipyards during the War, the transition to peace-time affected us greatly.

My Grandmother later wrote that although she was a “burner” in the shipyards, when production there shut down, she found a job in a coffee shop, where every day they just added more soup bones and water to the soup pot and by the end of the week, it made her gag to serve the brew but the owner insisted. She needed the job to support her 5 daughters and couldn’t quit. She did, however, get fired for refusing to serve the goop to customers.

In the nearby town of Richmond, the Kaiser shipyards caused the city’s population to swell, during the War, from 19,000 to 200,000 and you can imagine what problems that caused when the War ended and the shipyards ceased production. When the Veterans returned, they were extended “first re-hiring” benefits, except, of course, the Merchant Mariners, and were entitled to unemployment of 52 weeks at \$20 per week. The shipyard workers sometimes made as much as \$100 a week so you can imagine their dire circumstances.

However, as the old adage goes, this, too, shall pass. It did and the worry about loved ones getting maimed or killed during war-time circumstances was greatly diminished.

So, in these limited Covid-19 pandemic times, we need to remember how lucky we are and how fortunate Americans are in the long run.

## **A MOVIE STAR HONORED:**

In July, the American Maritime Partnership (AMP), which greatly assisted AMMV in helping get our Congressional Gold Medal legislation passed in Congress, awarded actor Tom Hanks for his historical support of Merchant Mariners. Hanks’ latest movie, “Greyhound” tells the story

of Navy Cmdr. Ernest Krause. Hanks portrays Cmdr. Krause on his first Naval command mission, leading a convoy of 37 merchant marine ships across the chaotic North Atlantic while under pursuit by a squadron of German U-Boats.

“Tom Hanks’ work throughout his career reflects a deep respect for those who serve,” said Mike Roberts, president of the American Maritime Partnership. “This includes American mariners responding to the 9/11 attacks in New York, dealing with piracy off the coast of Somalia, and keeping our allies supplied during World War II. We are grateful for his work and passion in telling the stories of these unsung maritime heroes.”

Admiration and appreciation is forwarded to both the AMP and Tom Hanks for their efforts to keep our Merchant Mariners historically acknowledged.

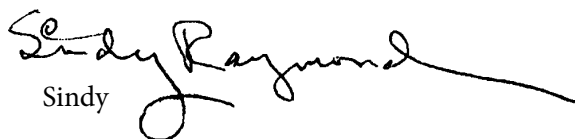
## **GRATITUDE FOR A JOB WELL DONE:**

During his Presidency, AMMV National President John Pitts, has been extremely helpful in the production of these AMMV NEWS Magazines. He forwards “words of wisdom” and articles of interest to your Editor often and they are much appreciated. One of my favorites was an old maritime definition:

### ***Tarpaulin Muster***

On cargo ships, & those with dry cargo hatches like the T-2, wooden hatch covers were placed on the top of the hatches. These were then covered with canvas tarpaulins to protect the cargo inside the hatches from the elements & sea water. To keep them securely in place wooden wedges or battens were hammered along the sides of the tarpaulin covered hatches, thus “batten down the hatches” became a term used to describe dealing with a particularly rough situation. In decent weather, Mariners would congregate in their slack hours to tell sea stories, enjoy games of chance, play music & even dance. If one of the crew fell on hard times like the death of a close relative, getting fired off the ship, or getting rolled ashore, the crew would call for a tarpaulin muster where cash contributions would be anonymously be tossed onto the tarpaulin to be given to the crew member in need

Fair Winds and Smooth Sailing,

  
Sindy



**American Merchant Marine Veterans**  
**Profit & Loss**  
 July through September 2020

<b>Income</b>					
402 · Contributions	10,666.15	520 · Mission Advance			
403 · Interest Income & Bank Bonuses	301.77	526 · Internet Initiative	141.00		
405 · Mission Support Fund	141.00	<b>Total 520 · Mission Advance</b>		141.00	
410 · Chapter and MAL Dues		530 · AMMV News Magazine			
DAR · Dennis Roland	736.00	533 · Postage	904.85		
GLD · Golden Gate	639.00	536 · Printing	3,204.20		
HIR · High Rollers	200.00	538 · Layout	1,300.00		
JTS · John T. Schmidt/Palmetto	560.00	539 · Editorial Fee	300.00		
LON · Lone Star	175.00	<b>Total 530 · AMMV News Magazine</b>		5,709.05	
MAL · Members at Large	10,143.22	550 · Personnel			
NBM · North Bay Mariners	325.00	551 · Administration	4,650.00		
NOA · North Atlantic	64.00	<b>Total 550 · Personnel</b>		4,650.00	
OHV · Ohio Valley	300.00	560 · Operating Expense			
ORV · Oswego River Valley	75.00	564 · Office Supplies	235.22		
THR · Three Rivers	625.00	565 · Postage - Office	4.20		
410 · Chapter and MAL Dues - Other	96.00	566 · Printing - Office	449.78		
<b>Total 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues</b>	<b>13,938.22</b>	<b>Total 560 · Operating Expense</b>		689.20	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>25,047.14</b>	<b>Total Expense</b>		11,108.21	
<b>Expense</b>		<b>Net Income</b>		<b>13,938.93</b>	
500 · Fixed Expense					
507 · Telephone	97.83				
511 · Service Charges - Paypal	21.13				
<b>Total 500 · Fixed Expense</b>	<b>118.96</b>				
514 · Convention Expenses					
515 · Convention Events	-200.00				
<b>Total 514 · Convention Expenses</b>	<b>-200.00</b>				

***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, 2020 through June 30, 2021  
 were due July 1st.*

# Possibly the Longest Ship in the World (in 1942)

The SS. *E. H. Blum* was a 19,000-ton oil tanker built and owned by Atlantic Refining Co. at Sun Shipyard in Chester, PA. She was put into service just nine months prior to WWII. On the night of February 16, 1942 while off the Virginia capes, en route in ballast to Atreco, Texas

to load a cargo of crude oil, the *Blum* struck a mine. The entire crew was able to abandon ship and there was no loss of life. The explosion of the mine broke the *Blum's* back with the after section, from just after the midship house to the stern, settling on a sand bar in 32 feet of water while the section of the midship house to the bow was almost severed but undamaged.

The bow section was cut from the rest of the ship and towed to Newport News Shipyard in Virginia. The U.S. Navy recommended complete abandonment of the after end of the vessel including all machinery. Lester Goldsmith, Chief Engineer of Atlantic Richfield, Co. had other ideas. With assistance from U.S. Navy, he had divers survey the damage to the after end of the ship still resting off Cape Henry. He then took the divers into the engine room of another vessel of the same class and had them memorize the layout, blindfolded them until they could go through the necessary operations without sight and tackle the job of raising the stern of the *Blum* so it could be towed and salvaged.

Fifty-five Atlantic Refining employees of the Marine Division were assembled to assist in the task of repairing and refloating the after section for repair. Weather prevented work for more than one or two days a week and many times, heavy seas had reversed any progress that had been made pre-



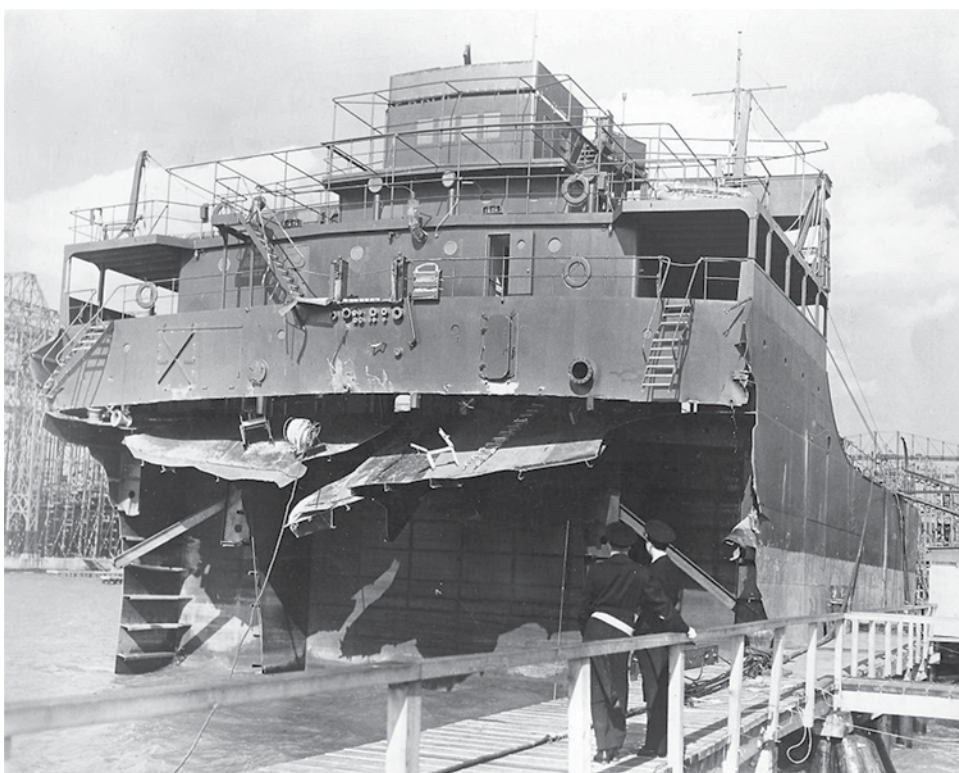
viously.

Weeks passed before positive results were accomplished. Holes were plugged and water was pumped from the hull and on May 7, 1942, the after section of the SS *E. H. Blum* was afloat and towed to Newport News shipyard where temporary repairs

were begun. Scuttlebutt has it that the two sections of the ship were moored to the same dock, but with the bow of the vessel facing the stern, giving it the title of the longest ship in the world.

On June 7, 1942, the SS *E. H. Blum* was towed to Sun Shipyard in Chester, PA, where it had been built, for final repairs. She was recommissioned and put back in service on December 1, 1942.

Later, another Atlantic Refining Company oil tanker and sister ship to the SS *E. H. Blum* struck a mine near the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay. The ship's back was

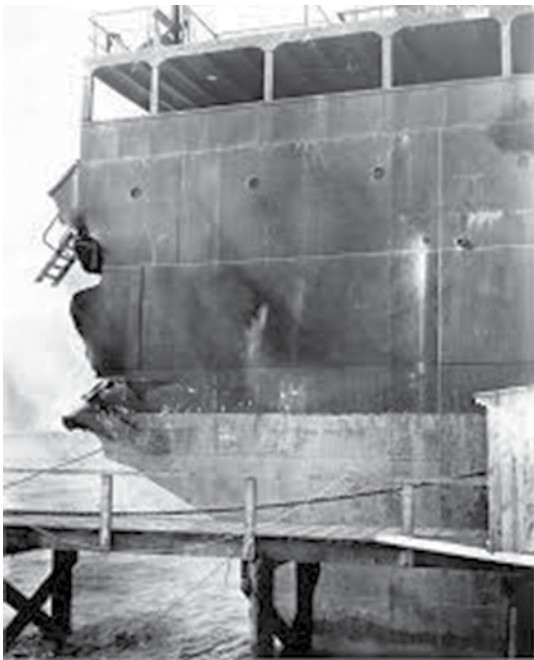




broken just aft of the midship house, like the *Blum* Salvage tugs began the process of applying what had been learned in resurrecting the *Blum* to the broken SS *Robert C. Tuttle*. On May 10, 1943, the SS *Robert C. Tuttle* was re-commissioned and re-entered war service, not quite 10 months after striking the mine.

As incredible as this tale sounds, it is just one among many impossible accomplishments that were performed almost daily during WWII by all services and the U.S. Merchant Marine was far from the exception. For ships and guns and planes and tanks and trucks are no better than the people who man them. In the maelstrom of a global war raw courage, guts, and ingenuity are common commodities but even in a glut of heroics, some stand out above the rest.

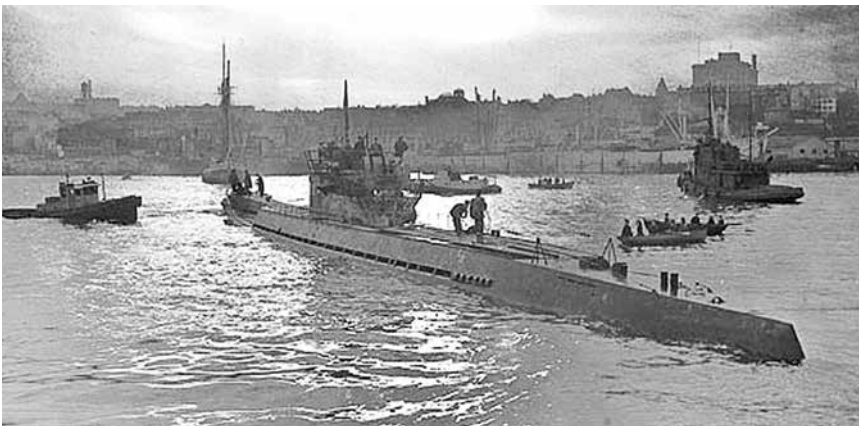
*Credit to Atlantic Marine News 1966*





# SS *Caribou*; a Canadian honor ceremony 78 years later

The year 1942 was a bad year for shipping off the east coast of North America. With the German declaration of war on the United States shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the gloves came off. Admiral Karl Dönitz, the head of the U-boat arm, had long planned for an assault on North America, but had been held back by Hitler's insistence that American ships were not to be attacked. With the entry of the United States into the war, this restriction was lifted. Dönitz unleashed Operation *Paukenschlag* on January 12, 1942, when Reinhard Hardegan's U-123 sank the British steamer *Cyclops* approximately 100 miles southeast of Cape Sable, Nova Scotia.



Over the next few months U-boats sank a total of 44 ships in Canadian waters with the loss of only two U-boats. The Gulf of St. Lawrence was found to be the richest hunting ground and during what became known as the Battle of the St. Lawrence, U-boats attacked seven convoys, sank 20 merchantmen, a loaded troopship, and two Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) warships. The *pièce de résistance*, so far as domestic impact was concerned, was the sinking of the Sydney to Port aux Basques passenger ferry SS *Caribou* by U-69 on the night of October 13/14, with the loss of 136 people including 10 children.

## U-69 and the Sinking of the SS *Caribou* - 1942

U-69, under the command of Kapitän-Leutnant Ulrich Gräf, entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence through the Cabot Strait on September 30, 1942. Finding no targets, he cruised up the St. Lawrence River and on the night of 8/9 October sighted the seven-ship, Labrador to Quebec convoy, NL-9. Despite the presence of three escorting corvettes, Gräf sank the 2245-ton steamship SS *Carolus* with the loss of 12 of her crew. This sinking, a mere 275 kilometres from Quebec City, caused an uproar in both Quebec and Ottawa. However, it would be nothing

compared to the distress caused by the sinking of the *Caribou* a few nights later.

## October 13, 1942

The Sydney to Port aux Basques ferry SS *Caribou* left Sydney at approximately 9:30 p.m., on October 13, 1942. On board were 73 civilians, including 11 children, and 118 military personnel, plus a crew of 46. Just before departure, the *Caribou*'s master, Captain Benjamin Tavenor, ordered all passengers on deck to familiarize themselves with the lifeboat stations. Both he and his crew knew of the danger of U-boat attack – on the previous trip, the *Caribou*'s escort had attacked a contact, but without success. This might have been U-106, which had attacked a Sydney to Corner Brook convoy nine hours later.

Escorting the *Caribou* on this trip was the RCN minesweeper, HMCS *Grandmere*. According to her log, the night was very dark with no moon. *Grandmere*'s skipper, Lt. James Cuthbert, was unhappy about both the amount of smoke the *Caribou* was making and his screening position off the *Caribou*'s stern, which was in accordance with British naval procedures for a single escort. Cuthbert believed the best place for *Grandmere* to be was in front of the *Caribou*, not behind, as Western Approaches Convoy Instructions advised. He felt he would be better

able to detect the sound of a lurking U-boat if he had a clear field in front to probe. He was correct, for in *Caribou*'s path lay the U-69.

## The Attack

Gräf had actually been searching for a three-ship grain convoy heading for Montreal when at 3:21 a.m. he spotted the *Caribou* “belching heavy smoke” about 60 kilometres off the coast of Newfoundland. He misidentified the 2222-ton Rotterdam-built *Caribou* and the 670-ton *Grandmere* as a 6500-ton passenger freighter and a “two-stack destroyer.” At 3:40 a.m., according to *Grandmere*'s log, a lone torpedo hit the *Caribou* on her starboard side. Pandemonium ensued as passengers, thrown from their bunks by the explosion rushed topside to the lifeboat stations. For some reason, several families had been accommodated in separate cabins and now sought each other in the confusion. In addition, several lifeboats and rafts had either been destroyed in the explosion or could not be launched. As a result, many passengers were forced to jump overboard into the cold water.

## Assistance from HMCS *Grandmere*

Meanwhile, *Grandmere* had spotted U-69 in the



dark and turned to ram. Gräf, still under the impression he was facing a “destroyer” rather than a minesweeper, crash dived. As *Grandmere* passed over the swirl left by the submerged submarine, Lt. Cuthbert fired a diamond pattern of six depth charges. Gräf, meanwhile, headed for the sounds of the sinking *Caribou*, knowing that the survivors left floating on the surface would inhibit *Grandmere* from launching another attack. However, U-69's maneuver went unnoticed by *Grandmere* and Cuthbert dropped another pattern of three charges set for 500 feet. Gräf fired a Bold, an asdic decoy, and slowly left the area.

### Survivors

At 6:30 a.m. *Grandmere* gave up the hunt and started to pick up survivors. They were too few. Of the 237 people aboard the *Caribou* when she left North Sydney, 136 had perished. Fifty-seven were military personnel and 49 were civilians. Fifteen-month-old Leonard Shiers of Halifax was the only one of 11 children to survive the sinking. Of the 46-man crew, mostly Newfoundlanders, only 15 remained.



### Public recognition – 78 years later: annual recognition:

RAdm Brian Santarpia, Commander Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic, and Captain (Ret'd) Earle Wagner, Merchant Navy, lay a wreath at the Merchant Navy Memorial inside the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic to mark the loss of life during the sinking of SS *Caribou* as well as to honour the memory of the thousands of Canadians who volunteered their service to Canada during WWII.

Cmdre Richard Feltham, Comd Canadian Fleet Atlantic was in attendance representing the fleet and his family, as his great uncle, Able Seaman Richard Feltham, sailed onboard SS *Caribou* and survived one torpedo attack earlier in the war, but perished during the torpedo attack on October 14, 1942.

Commander Michele Tessier, Commanding Officer of future HMCS Margaret Brooke, was also in attendance representing her ship's company and her ship that was named after Canadian war hero, SLt Margaret Brooke, a nurse in the Royal Canadian Navy during WWII. SLt Brooke was named a Member of the Order of the British Empire for her heroic acts during the torpedo and sinking of the SS *Caribou* by a German U-Boat, on Oct. 14, 1942.



# CONGRESSMAN JOHN GARAMENDI EXTENDS JONES ACT; Clean Energy Jobs and Innovation Act



Congressman John Garamendi, sponsor of the “Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020,” continues his fight for U.S. Maritime labor protection with his inclusion of the Jones Act in the “Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act” (H.R. 4447)

On September 25, 2020, Congressman John Garamendi’s office submitted the following press release:

**Washington, DC**—Today, Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA03) applauded passage of his amendment to the “Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act” (H.R. 4447) by the U.S. House of Representatives.

Garamendi’s amendment clarifies that the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, a 1953 law governing offshore mineral and energy development applies to lease sales for non-fossil fuel energy sources such as wind power, hydrokinetic, or ocean thermal energy conversion. The Garamendi amendment will enforce Jones Act requirements for all offshore renewable energy production and strengthen our domestic maritime industry.

“Offshore wind development will play a critical role in our nation’s transition to a clean energy economy,” Garamendi said. “Demand for offshore wind development in federal waters is strong, and Congress must act to ensure this burgeoning industry abides by federal laws and regulations including the Jones Act so we have the strongest possible labor and environmental protections.

“My commonsense amendment simply clarifies that all existing requirements that govern offshore oil and natural gas extraction also apply to renewables. This will enable our domestic maritime industry to support the renewable energy industry and provide a critical economic stimulus for our nation.

“I have been a vocal proponent of the Jones Act during my time on the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation. The Jones Act is the lifeblood for a U.S. maritime trade that supports 650,000 jobs and almost \$100 billion in annual economic impact. Ensuring our nation’s offshore renewable energy investments are governed by the strongest labor protections, environmental requirements, and safety standards is commonsense.

“I commend Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), chairman of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, for his support as the amendment’s cosponsor and Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone’s (D-NJ) leadership in crafting the “Clean Economy Jobs and Innovation Act” (H.R. 4447). I’m pleased that the House has adopted my amendment to provide critical support for our maritime industry and renewable energy production,” Garamendi concluded.

Congressman Garamendi served as Deputy Secretary of the Interior during the Clinton Administration and was the top Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation from 2013-2018. The amendment is cosponsored by Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D-CA47), chairman of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources.

The text of Congressman Garamendi’s amendment can be viewed on line. In December 2011, the House of Representatives passed a bill during the 112th Congress nearly identical to the Garamendi amendment.



# ***Jones Act Generates Thousands of Jobs, Does Not Impact Hawaii's Cost of Living***

*The following is a portion of an article released by the American Maritime Partnership. The complete report and more information about this study are available online.*

The Jones Act is critical to American security and prosperity, delivering over 650,000 U.S. jobs, a reliable supply chain, and protection to our nation's borders and national security interests. These benefits do not stop within the contiguous United States - and are realized even more in states like Hawaii, 2,500 miles from the U.S. mainland and home to 13,000 jobs related to the Jones Act shipping industry.

However, a number of recent studies and articles have questioned the value of the Jones Act to Hawaii. Their claims of negative impact are not supported by the facts and ignore the examples of the positive role of the Jones Act.

In response, Reeve & Associates and TZ Economics produced a fact-based analysis of recent developments in the U.S. mainland/Hawaii liner shipping market in order to determine how and to what extent shipping services provided in that market impact the people and economy of Hawaii, and, in particular, the cost of living in Hawaii.

The findings demonstrate a negligible impact of Jones Act carriers' ocean shipping services on the price of goods shipped to Hawaii from the U.S. mainland, and instead illustrate positive economic contributions, including job creation, new infrastructure investments, and a reliable pipeline for critical consumer and industrial goods moving

to and from the Islands.

The study provides facts to support the following:

- The Jones Act does not impact the cost of living in Hawaii.
- Over a ten-year period, Jones Act carriers' rates have declined in real terms for essential ocean shipping.
- The large majority of the expenses of moving cargo between the U.S. mainland and Hawaii are completely unaffected by the Jones Act. If foreign-flag carriers were allowed to operate in the domestic trades, the costs of any foreign-flag vessel would rise substantially due to compliance with other laws, including tax and labor laws.
- American shipping companies are invested in Hawaii, providing over \$2 billion in transportation technology customized for the Hawaii market, such as new ships, terminals, and equipment.
- Jones Act carriers are dedicated to Hawaii's specific needs for high frequency and fast transit to deliver consumer goods to Hawaii and neighboring islands. Eliminating the Jones Act could undermine priority, frequency, and speed.
- Jones Act carriers play a critical role in support of U.S. national security, while meeting the needs of military personnel and their families who comprise nearly 10 percent of Hawaii's population.
- The Jones Act ensures 13,000 jobs for Hawaii families.

*Submitted by AMMV National President John Pitts.*



# FORMER CONGRESSPERSON AWARDED MEDAL

## **SPECIAL AWARDS FROM “DOWN UNDER”:**

While serving in Congress, Janice Hahn took up the cause of the U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans, pushing to get surviving World War II Merchant Marine veterans a \$25,000 benefit for the years they went without Veterans’ benefits or the GI bill. She based her support on the knowledge that her father was in the United States Navy but her Uncle was in the U. S. Merchant Marine during World War II; both facing equal life-threatening dangers. When they came home from serving their country, her father received Veterans’ benefits but her uncle did not as the U. S. Merchant Mariners were not considered Veterans. Unfortunately, that bill did not pass.

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, John Pitts, the national president of American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc., presented Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, and her Uncle Gordon Hahn, posthumously, with a medal commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II, which had been forwarded by the U. S. Army Small Ships Association Inc. of Victoria, Australia. It was presented in recognition of the years she spent fighting for recognition of the Merchant Marine’s WWII veterans when she served in the United States Congress. In attendance to accept the award were Ms.

Hahn’s Uncle’s children, Debi and David Hahn.

An accompanying letter from David Lloyd, Vice President of the U. S. Army Small Ships Association states that the award, named the “Fahnestock Award” is only issued to citizens of the United States of America and the commemorative medallion honors U. S. Army Small Ships Section, WWII Army Transportation Corps..and Merchant Marine Veterans.

The Small Ships Association also forwarded the “Fahnestock Award” Medals similar to the one presented to Supervisor Hahn from Australia to be awarded to: President Trump; Rep. John Garamendi; Rep. Susan Brooks; Senator Lisa Murkowski; AMMV’s Storm the Hill Gang members Charles Mills, Leonard Blake, Eugene Barner, Gerard Driscoll, all USMM Veterans from WWII. The medallion with “Descendants Bar” was awarded to Sheila Sova, Laura Johnson-

Riddle, Cindy Driscoll-Komlos and Dennis Ng, descendants of USMM WWII Veterans, who participated in the Storm the Hill Gang.

## **A LETTER ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE U.S. ARMY SMALL SHIPS SECTION IN WWII:**

*Submitted by David Lloyd, Vice President, U. S. Army Small Ships Association, Victoria, Australia*

The U.S. Army Small Ships Section 1942-1947 was a unique organization formed in response to advancing Japanese Forces in the South Pacific during WWII. During 1942 the Small Ships Section commenced landings in New Guinea.

This ‘attack fleet’ consisted of a wide variety of vessels acquired or built in Australia and New Zealand. The fleet included fishing trawlers, schooners, ketches, luggers, tug-boats, yachts and ferries. Small Ships Section employed over 3,000 Australian civilians including one woman who served alongside 1,372 U.S. Army Personnel along with New Zealanders, Canadians, Chinese, Danes, British, Filipino, Dutch, Austrian, Torres Strait Islanders, French, even an Eskimo. The Small Ships were manned by Merchant Seaman from all over the world.

The Australians who served with Small Ships Section were released for employment by the Commonwealth Manpower Authority. Men and boys from a wide variety of backgrounds served Small Ships Section on civilian contract. The ages of the Australian crews ranged from 15 to 80 years, hundreds of members were physically disabled while many were Veterans of previous conflicts. Several Small Ships Veterans had served in The Boer War while many were retired Veterans of WWI. Similarly, crews were employed in New Zealand who were either ineligible for Service with Commonwealth Forces or specialists in their field.

After the war the Australians who served Small Ships Section were officially unrecognized and there was no publicly available information about their Service. Lack of recognition led to shame and resentment in many cases. Many crew



*l to r: Debi and David Hahn and former Congresswoman Janice Hahn accepting Fahnestock Awards presented by the U. S. Army Small Ships Association.*

members never spoke about their service and the vast majority 'crossed the bar' long before official recognition was achieved. The U.S. Government granted Veteran Status to WWII Merchant Mariners during 1988. Soon after, several persistent surviving Veterans were granted U.S. Merchant Marine Award Entitlements.

Due to the success of various publications and also the will of surviving Veterans to finally achieve recognition from the Australian Government; U.S. Army Small Ships Association was formed in 2003. Leading the fight for recognition was founding President Ernest Alfred Flint O.B.E., O.A.M., E.D. The U.S. Army Transportation Corps and the Pentagon held very little information about the Small Ships activities; initially the only information provided was brief mentions of Small Craft activities in The Transportation Corps Operations Overseas, published by the Center of Military History; and also in Our Jungle Road to Tokyo, by Lt. General Robert Eichelberger who mentioned the Small Ships as follows; "Supplies for the Buna campaign came either by air or by small coastal luggers (and many of them were sunk by enemy action), which travelled at night. Supplies often were transferred, once they arrived off Allied-held beaches, to native canoes manned by what our troops called 'Fuzzy Wuzzys.'" The only other information available was held in the memories of the Veterans and few surviving documents.

One document uncovered was a manuscript, written by Ladislav Reday from a diary that he kept whilst serving in New Guinea. Laddie was a founding Officer in the Small Ships Section and his manuscript was printed by the Association during 2004. Unfortunately Laddie passed away long before his book was ever published. See our webpage 'The Raggle Taggle Fleet' for details.

Through tenacious campaigning over many years recognition was finally achieved during 2009 when an Honors and Awards Tribunal recommended Australian Imperial Campaign Awards be granted to Small Ships Veterans, qualifying on the same basis as members of the Merchant Navy. During 2010 U.S. Army Chief of Transportation BG Brian Layer Inducted Small Ships Section into the U.S. Army Transportation Corps HALL OF FAME in recognition of Exceptionally Distinctive Service. In many cases, receiving these particular Honours or associated benefits changed the lives of surviving Veterans.

The Honors and Awards Tribunal decision righted many years of injustice and misinformation; however it did not conclusively resolve the issue of Australian recognition for Small Ships Section. Hundreds of Australians served with Small Ships Repair & Maintenance Section or as Shore Laborers in New Guinea. These men were typically subjected to regular attack from Japanese aircraft whilst serving periods of over 12 months in the combat areas; however their Service is yet to be officially recognized by the Australian Government.

The unique nature of the Small Ships Operations can be partially attributed to its adventurous brainchild, John Sheridan Fahnestock (Sher). The idea of using small vessels to sup-



*AMMV National President John Pitts and former Congresswoman and current Los Angeles Supervisor Janice Hahn.*

port MacArthur's troops was conceived by two U.S. civilians, brothers Sheridan and Bruce Fahnestock. Previously at the age of 21 Sheridan arranged one of the longest and most fruitful scientific expeditions ever to sail the South Seas. The brothers sailed with five other crew members for three years on the schooner Director.

For most of the voyage Sheridan and Bruce's mother was also aboard enduring malaria, storms and encounters with islands practicing cannibalism. Before the expedition ended they travelled to Peking, arriving at the time of the Japanese Invasion. They reported on the war before returning to America on a Dollar liner.

The expedition returned a wide variety of artefacts, flora and fauna to the American Museum of Natural History. After this success Sheridan arranged another South Seas expedition in 1940. Their objective was ostensibly to document the music and sounds of the South Pacific, but actually on a mission for President Roosevelt to measure the attitude of the Indonesians toward possible invasion by the Japanese. The Director II expedition was sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History and carried state of the art recording devices along with 2 miles of insulated microphone cable.

During October 1940 Director II was shipwrecked near Gladstone; another vessel was chartered and the crew spent ten months recording the music of Bali, Java, Madura and the Kangean Islands. Under directions from President Roosevelt they were also evaluating Dutch military preparations on Java, assessing the usefulness of small watercraft for Pacific Islands combat and ensuring that U.S. defense funds allocated to Southeast Asia were being properly spent. The now famous Fahnestock recordings were completed in September 1941 and they arrived home within a week of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Sheridan went to Washington and appealed for approval to use yachts and schooners to support U.S. troops in the Phil-



ippines. Sheridan's long-time friend Charles Nordhoff placed a call to a Captain in OSS, which resulted in Sheridan receiving a call to attend a meeting at the Old Auditorium. Waiting in the star's dressing room was an Army Major General who after a brief conversation took a serious tone. "My name is Arthur R Wilson and I have been directed to take over a continent. Will you command my small boats? Before you answer, let me say that you must find the boats and the crews. Such armament as can be provided is totally inadequate and unsuitable. You can however, call upon certain specialists who will be given priority for the project. The name of the project is Mission X."

Mission X was a secret organization consisting of military personnel and civilian specialists whose objective was to defeat advancing Japanese Forces in the Pacific. The crew of the Director II was reunited and commissioned as U.S. Army Officers; they island hopped to Brisbane from Hawaii in B-26's, losing three members on the way when their plane dropped into the sea. Army Transport Service for the SWPA commenced operations in Melbourne prior to establishing headquarters in Sydney during May 1942.

Australia was in a very desperate position, illustrated by the fact that the High Command had previously revealed a defense strategy based on the 'Brisbane Line', which gave half of the country to the enemy by default. Australia's population of approximately seven million people raised approximately one million Service men and women during WWII. The U.S. contributed approximately one million armed personnel and five million tons of equipment through the Port of Sydney alone.

Contemporary propaganda suggests that the Japanese were not intent on invading Australia, however bombings in Broome, Townsville Harbor, Darwin, the shelling of Newcastle and the submarine attack in Sydney suggested otherwise. The Japanese Government had printed Occupation Money for Australia and appointed Kenneyto Sato as Viceroy of Australia in anticipation of Invasion and Occupation. Early in 1942 while Prime Minister Curtin was making his assertion that Australia "looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom", an Anglo-American Alliance had determined to conquer German Forces in Europe before facing Japan. Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that the U.S. would defend the Pacific. Curtin agreed to withdraw his demand to Churchill for the return of Australian troops in exchange for this support, which was limited pending the outcome in Europe. General MacArthur was appointed as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the SWPA, however U.S. troops did not out number Australians in the SWPA until 1943.

Both Australian and U.S. strategists realized early in 1942 that shallow drafted vessels were required to navigate the dangerous coastline of New Guinea, and that there was an absolute shortage of such vessels. An unorthodox acquisition of vessels occurred along the Australian coastline and in New Zealand. In several cases ships crews were retained after acquisition of their vessels.

Later during 1943 a Seamanship Apprentice School oper-

ated at Walsh Bay Sydney where many 15 and 16 year old boys were trained for up to six weeks before deployment to New Guinea. One 15 year old Sea Scout destined to become an Apprentice was approached at his family home by U.S. & Australian Officers who asked, "Would you like to do something for your country?" Followed by, "Ask your Mum to sign this and go to Walsh Bay". Sixty years later during 2003 Pat Curtis M.B.E. became Founding Treasurer for U.S. Army Small Ships Association and eventually achieved Official Recognition from the Australian Government for his youthful Service during 2011.

During 1944 employment was also granted to members of the Australian Merchant Navy as qualified seamen were required and Australian vessels were unavailable after heavy losses.

Allied progress from the Battle of Buna through to the Liberation of the Philippines was dependent on Small Ships Section. During the New Guinea campaign Small Ships would land troops, evacuate wounded and carry supplies required for the allied advance. Much of this work was performed at night, in most cases without radio or Charts. There are many accounts of members achieving the most incredible nautical feats and performing acts of bravery. Officially 36 Australian Members were killed in action. At one time Small Ships crews sang their own song, aptly named 'The Suicide Squadron'. During 1942 the situation in New Guinea was so desperate that thirty-five members of 2/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the A.I.F's Sixth Division volunteered to join Small Ships Section.

The purpose of the U.S. Army Small Ships Association is to promote the Service of Small Ships Section; Assist & support the Veterans of the Small Ships Section and their families; and to foster the legacy of Small Ships Section and the U.S. Army Transportation Corps. It is unusual for a WWII Unit Association to be discovering new Veteran members more than 71 years after the war ended, however we are still assisting members to achieve recognition and actively commemorate their Service.

The fact that Australians are learning about the Service of the Small Ships means a great deal to our Members. The opportunity to actively commemorate their Service and foster the legacy of Small Ships Section has been the primary focus of our Members since recognition was granted. Active participation in commemorative activity has proved to benefit the health of both Veterans and family members alike.

The U.S. Army Small Ships Association Inc. is a non-profit organization which relies upon membership fees, donations and fundraising activities for all operational expenses. All Committee Members work on a volunteer basis. Membership fees and donations directly support the Veterans and their families to commemorate the Honor, Courage and Sacrifice of Small Ships Section.

This story is a largely untold chapter of our national and wartime histories. We hope you enjoy learning about the Service of Small Ships Section.

# FINAL FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR AMMV FISCAL YEAR 7/1/2019 – 6/30/2020

## American Merchant Marine Veterans Profit & Loss July 2019 through June 2020

## American Merchant Marine Veterans Balance Sheet As of June 30, 2020

	Jul '19 - Jun 20
<b>Income</b>	
402 · Contributions	40,741.72
403 · Interest Income & Bank Bonuses	926.45
405 · Mission Support Fund	7,537.51
410 · Chapter and MAL Dues	
AKG · Alaska Greatlands	224.00
BEE · Beehive Mariners	75.00
BSM · Big Sky Mariners	140.00
DAR · Dennis Roland	1,280.00
EOH · Edwin O'Hara	150.00
GLD · Golden Gate	1,039.00
HIR · High Rollers	1,425.00
HUM · Humboldt Bay	125.00
JTS · John T. Schmidt/Palmetto	407.00
LON · Lone Star	250.00
MAL · Members at Large	22,365.91
MALW · Members at Large Paypal	2,017.44
MWE · Mid West	693.23
NBM · North Bay Mariners	400.00
NOA · North Atlantic	325.00
OHV · Ohio Valley	400.00
ORV · Oswego River Valley	75.00
PUG · Puget Sound	32.00
ROR · Road Runner	256.00
THR · Three Rivers	625.00
<b>Total 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues</b>	<b>32,304.58</b>
411 · Convention Income	
412 · Convention Registrations	630.00
413 · Comm. Book Ads	7,000.00
414 · Convention Donations	7,295.00
<b>Total 411 · Convention Income</b>	<b>14,925.00</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>96,435.26</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
500 · Fixed Expense	
501 · Bank Charge	45.00
507 · Telephone	390.00
511 · Service Charges - Paypal	151.26
<b>Total 500 · Fixed Expense</b>	<b>586.26</b>
512 · Memorial Expense	140.39
513 · Advertising	100.00
514 · Convention Expenses	
515 · Convention Events	950.00
516 · Comm. Book Exp	1,145.00
517 · Convention Misc. Exp	6,393.18
<b>Total 514 · Convention Expenses</b>	<b>8,488.18</b>
520 · Mission Advance	
525 · Mission Support Exp	5,492.50
526 · Internet Initiative	876.50
528 · JCC Storage Expense	886.40
<b>Total 520 · Mission Advance</b>	<b>7,255.40</b>
530 · AMMV News Magazine	
533 · Postage	3,632.53
536 · Printing	13,198.93
538 · Layout	5,200.00
539 · Editorial Fee	1,200.00
<b>Total 530 · AMMV News Magazine</b>	<b>23,231.46</b>
550 · Personnel	
551 · Administration	18,600.00
<b>Total 550 · Personnel</b>	<b>18,600.00</b>

	Jun 30, 20
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Checking/Savings	
103 · Paypal	95.91
105 · Chase Bank	84,785.07
106 · Chase CD 9785	20,061.92
108 · Chase CD 9787	20,000.00
109 · Chase CD 9789	20,000.00
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	<b>144,942.90</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>144,942.90</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>144,942.90</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	
20000 · Accounts Payable	4,974.76
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	<b>4,974.76</b>
Credit Cards	
200 · Chase Credit Card	637.83
<b>Total Credit Cards</b>	<b>637.83</b>
Other Current Liabilities	
311 · Dues Receivable	5,065.46
312 · Member Recruitment	893.00
314 · Mission Support Donations	65,507.49
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<b>71,465.95</b>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>77,078.54</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>77,078.54</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
32001 · Retained Earnings	33,409.67
Net Income	34,454.69
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>67,864.36</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>144,942.90</b>



## **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

### **American Merchant Marine Veterans**

*Serving America in Peace and War*

Fellow members of the American Merchant Marine Veterans,

The AMMV, Inc. has found itself in a difficulty that must be addressed promptly. Currently, AMMV qualifies as tax-exempt under a provision of the Internal Revenue Code which applies exclusively to U.S. veterans organizations with (1) at least 90 percent of its members being war veterans and (2) substantially all the other members are either veterans (but not war veterans), or are cadets, or are spouses, widows, or widowers of war veterans, veterans, or cadets. Section 501(c)(19). Because AMMV's demographic makeup is changing due to deaths and other factors, AMMV is in jeopardy of losing its tax exempt status and tax-deductibility for contributions.

In light of that development, AMMV has received legal advice that the only way for AMMV to preserve its tax-exempt status, and to maintain tax-deductibility for contributions, will be to qualify as a tax-exempt organization under the general provision of the Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(3). To do so, we have been advised, AMMV must amend its Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and Bylaws. The proposed amendments will not change the fundamental character, principles, or operations of AMMV as we know it.

As is required by AMMV's Articles of Incorporation, the Board of Directors has adopted a Resolution to Amend the Articles of Incorporation, and are now presenting said Resolution to the Members. Likewise, the Board of Directors has adopted a Motion to Amend the Constitution and Bylaws, and are now presenting said Motion to the Members.

The changes which are being proposed seek to accomplish the following:

- Modify the purpose for which AMMV is organized so as to comply with requirements set forth in Section 501(c)(3)
- Modify the qualifications for membership in AMMV so as to allow any and all persons who have the desire and interest to support AMMV to do so
- Modify the requirements for amending the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and Bylaws
- Modify the requirements for dissolving AMMV
- Make such other changes to the Articles of Incorporation so as to comply with requirements set forth in Section 501(c)(3)

Complete versions of the following documents are published and available for review on the AMMV website at: [ammv.us](http://ammv.us)

- Resolution to Amend Articles of Incorporation
- Articles of Amendment to Amend Articles of Incorporation
- Proposed Amended and Restated Articles of Incorporation
- Motion to Amend the Constitution and Bylaws
- Proposed Amended and Restated Constitution and Bylaws

AMMV members, please watch your mailbox for a ballot to vote on the proposed amendments, and return it as soon as possible.

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that the Resolution and Motion pass, and that the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and Bylaw be amended. Qualification as 501(c)(3) organization is vital to the continued existence of AMMV.

Sincerely,



John Pitts, President

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

P.O. BOX 2024 • DARIEN, CT 06820-2024

(475) 470-9200 • [ammermarvets@gmail.com](mailto:ammermarvets@gmail.com)



# *The Seaman*

*Contributed by National Treasurer Dennis Kelly*

Of all American breadwinners, merchant seamen may easily be the contrariness.

At sea, he can't wait to get home. At home, he can't wait to get to sea.

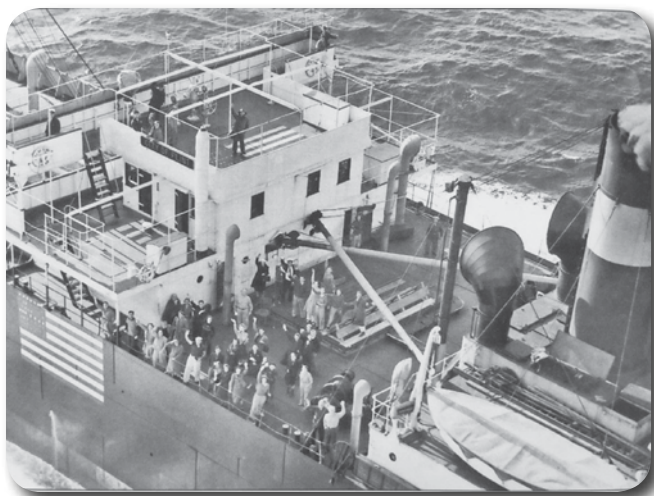
He always wants to be where he's not. He is an escapist, a cynic, and incurable romantic, carping critic, loyal, sentimental friend.

He brags about the vast improvements in his working conditions the last 20 years, but the ship he's now on almost invariably is a "lousy feeder". The last one was the best. The next one will be better still. But anyway, he's through with the sea; he's going to settle down and start a chicken farm.

His moments of reunion at home are intense. Every return is a honeymoon, almost. But then a week goes by. Two weeks. He looks out the front window. He looks out the back window. He looks out the side window. He tries talking to the neighbors but can't get interested in who is getting an office promotion, who is having a baby, who is expanding his expansion attic. He goes down to the waterfront for conversation he can understand. Pretty soon he signs on again.

*Author unknown*

# MERCHANT MARINERS, THE SECOND BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC, AND THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY



*SS CITY OF FLINT*

Contributed to AMMV in May, 2020 by Salvatore Mercogliano, Associate Professor of History at Campbell University in Bules Creek, NC and published courtesy of gCaptain. Complete transcript can be found on the Web at <https://gcaptain.com/merchant-mariners-the-second-battle-of-the-atlantic-and-the-75th-anniversary-of-ve-day/>

In his autobiography, *The Second World War*, Winston Churchill said of the Battle of the Atlantic, “The only thing that ever really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril.”

Beginning on September 3, 1939, with the sinking of the liner *SS Athenia* by *U-30* to the loss of the collier *SS Black Point* on May 5, 1945, off Rhode Island by *U-853* – and its destruction at the hands of an American hunter-killer group of four ships and two blimps the following day – the world’s Merchant Mariners found themselves on the front line of the Second World War. May marked the 75th Anniversary of the conclusion of the Battle of the Atlantic that involved many of the world’s navies and Merchant Mariners.

For the United States, much like in 1917, attacks upon its commercial and private shipping preceded its entrance to the war. SS

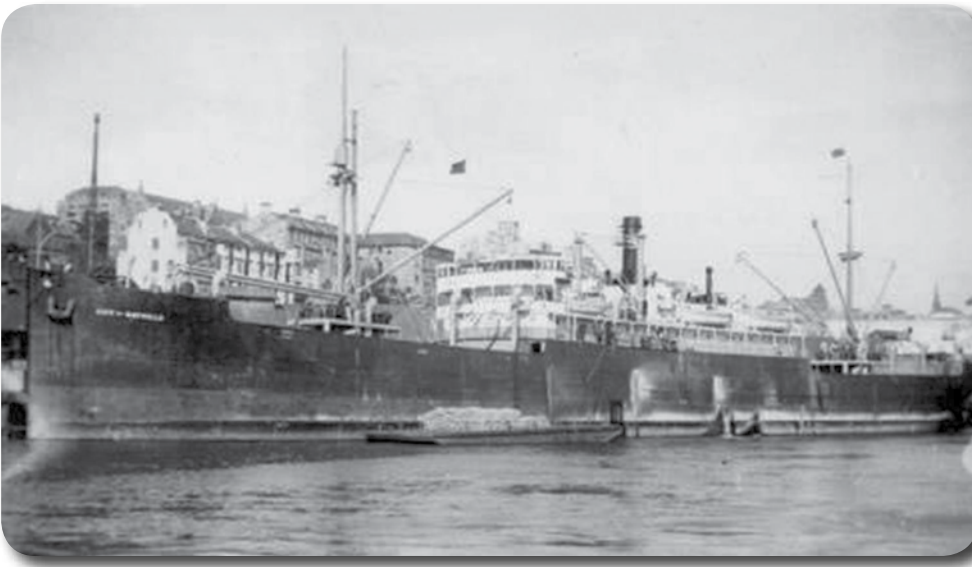
*City of Flint* was a product of the vast shipbuilding program established by the United States during the First World War, to meet the shortages in shipping brought upon by the conflict. Starting in 1914, the British merchant marine was focused on supporting their nation and its allies, and the German merchant marine, then the second largest in the world, sought refuge from the Royal Navy. The United States had to expand its shipping base to meet its trade requirements. As part of this, the U.S. Shipping Board established four government yards to construct prefabricated vessels. The largest was on the site of the current Philadelphia International Airport. Back then it was American International Shipping, or more commonly referred to as Hog Island.

At the start of World War Two, the United States Lines’ *City of Flint* was in Europe. On October 9, she was stopped by the German pocket battleship *Deutschland*. The Nazi raider and her sister-ship *Graf Spee* were attacking shipping in the northern and southern Atlantic, respectively. Even though *City of Flint* was a neutral vessel, the Germans declared her cargo contraband and sailed the ship to the neutral port of Murmansk in Russia. The prize crew attempted to sail her to Germany but ran afoul the Royal Norwegian Navy. Norway returned the ship to her American crew and



*SS CITY OF FLINT – EVACUATIONS*





*SS CITY OF RAYVILLE*

allowed her to sail to the US after unloading.

The first American loss of life and sinking of a ship in the Battle of the Atlantic occurred as far away from that ocean as possible. Over a year later, *MS City of Rayville*, another ship built under the World War One program in the United States, completed loading a cargo of lead ore in Southern Australia and was en route to New York, via Melbourne when she sailed into a German minefield. The Battle of the Atlantic was not a conflict for control of that specific body of water, but a campaign to interdict and disrupt oceanic trade that ended in Great Britain. The Germans used an array of weapons, including disguised commerce raiders. *Penguin*, one of these raiders had outfitted a captured steamer, *Passat* as an auxiliary minelayer, and it was the latter that laid the field of 60 mines off the northeast coast of Tasmania.

*MS City of Rayville* struck a mine at 7:47 PM on November 8, 1940, within sight of Cape Otway lighthouse. The explosion and SOS led local fishermen to the scene to assist the stricken vessel. The ship sank in 35 minutes. Third Engineer Mack B. Bryan of Randleman, North Carolina returned to his quarters for some belongings but did not reappear, the first of nearly 9,500 deaths in the U.S. Merchant Mzriners. The loss of *City of Rayville* was followed by 732 other American merchant ships in the Second World War, with most of them supporting the Battle of the Atlantic.

The following year, another Hog Islander, *SS Robin*

*Moor*, found herself stopped and challenged by the submarine *U-69* in the Atlantic, 750 miles west of Freetown, Sierra Leone. By this time, May 21, 1941, the Germans had already been through their First Happy Time. It started in July 1940 when U-boats could operate from new bases on the western coast of France and directly interdict the ships coming into the Western Approaches of the British Isles. The British responded with the establishment of permanent escort groups, new technologies – such as sonar, radar, and hedgehogs – and hurriedly constructed escort vessels including the 294 Flower-class corvettes.

As German losses mounted, they shifted their submarines into newer operating areas, far from Allied escorts, such as the gap between Brazil and West Africa. *SS Robin Moor* was en route to Cape Town, South Africa from New York City and marked with flags of the United States, then a neutral nation. This did not stop Kapitänleutnant Jost Metzler, on this third war patrol,



*SURVIVORS OF THE SS CITY OF RAYVILLE*

from ordering Captain Edward Myer to move his crew and passengers (including one child) into the ship's four lifeboats and abandon the vessel. Metzler provided some food before using his stern tube to torpedo the ship. He later surfaced and fired 39 rounds from his deck gun to finish off *Robin Moor*. All those in the lifeboats were rescued.



President Franklin Roosevelt accused the Germans of piracy, but he did not go as far as to announce this as an act of war. He stated, "We are not yielding and we do not propose to yield." In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson, who Roosevelt served under as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, used the German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare and the loss of ten American ships and death of 64 crew members as the basis for a declaration of war. It would only be after a German U-boat fired a torpedo



*SS EMIDIO – SUNK OFF THE COAST OF  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA*

at the destroyer *USS Greer* and German aircraft sank the freighter *SS Steel Seafarer* delivering cargo to British forces in Egypt via the Red Sea, did President Roosevelt accuse the German submarines of being rattlesnakes and their crew's pirates. The US Navy and Merchant Mariners found themselves in an undeclared naval war on the Atlantic, but that nebulous state only lasted a few months.

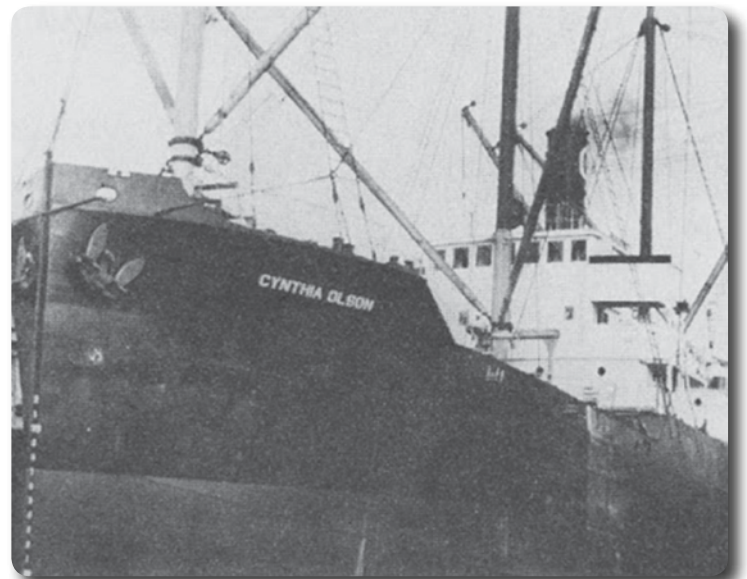
It would take the Japanese assault on America, with attacks on bases in the Philippines, Guam, Wake, Midway, and the Hawaiian Islands, along with an onslaught of Japanese submarines – I-Boats – off the west coast of the United States, for the nation to enter the war. Even then, it was Germany who declared war on the US a few days later. With the Hawaiian Islands and West Coast under attack by Japanese submarines, starting with the loss of *SS Cynthia Olsen* on December 7 and *SS Emidio* on December 20 off Cape Mendocino, the United States focus was in the Pacific and protecting trans-Atlantic convoys to Europe. American forces secured these areas, and troop convoys departed for forward areas guarded by phalanxes of destroyers.

In the First Battle of the Atlantic in 1917-1918, the United States similarly surged its destroyer force across the Atlantic to make the fight in the Western Approaches. The Germans, having to sail either around Great Britain

or through the English Channel focused on this area. It was not until mid-1918, nearly a year after American entry in the war, that the first German U-cruisers made their appearance off the East Coast of the United States. These attacks were meant to draw off American ships and harass shipping. In early 1942, the Americans expected the Germans to repeat their initial performance of the First World War, hence the dispatch of American destroyers overseas to Halifax, Iceland, and Europe.

Commerce warfare is by nature asymmetric and the Germans continually adopted their tactics and strategy to the defenses of their enemy. As the Allies mounted better defenses of the convoys, they refined their wolfpack tactics – the subject of the upcoming Tom Hanks' movie *Greyhound*. The Germans also sought vulnerabilities in the Allied shipping and the one that materialized in early 1942 was on the east coast of North America.

Known as Operation Drumbeat, German Admiral Karl Dönitz dispatched all his available long-range submarines, five Type IXs to initiate *Paukensschlag*. Referred to as the Second Happy Time, the Germans, later reinforced by other boats, executed a second Pearl Harbor off the American coast. With American destroyers occupied, US Navy Vice Admiral Adolphus Andrews, the commander



*SS CYNTHIA OLSEN SUNK OFF THE  
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS*

of the Eastern Sea Frontier, failed to develop a coherent defense. With no interlocking convoy system, the Germans were able to sink over 2 million tons of shipping, 397 ves-

sels. As the Americans responded, the U-boats, thanks to resupply submarines – Milch Cows – moved into the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

Once those areas were under convoy and air protection after mid-1942, the Germans shifted into the air gap in the middle of the Atlantic. It was during this period in late 1942 to May 1943 that the large convoy battles were waged. While the Germans were able to assemble massive wolf-packs to deal with them, the Allies were able to surround each of them with escorts, along with Hunter-Killer groups and provide air cover from escort “Jeep” carriers and long-range Liberator bombers. These, along with new technologies, breakthroughs in tracking and intelligence due to the Enigma codebreaking effort, allowed the Second Battle of the Atlantic to swing to the Allies favor in May 1943, with the destruction of 34 U-boats in the Atlantic that month.

This Victory in Europe Day, it is important to remember that it would have been impossible for the western Allies to storm ashore in Normandy on June 6, 1944, as Tom Hanks depicted in *Saving Private Ryan*. Or for the Soviets to mount their summer offensive supplied with Lend-Lease trucks and fuel. With the Allied landings, the German U-boat naval bases in France were isolated and they returned to bases in Germany. Once the U-boats were suppressed, the never-ending flow of personnel, equipment, and supplies could move across the world's oceans to Europe.

This victory came with great cost. A scene in the 1943 Humphrey Bogart movie, *Action in the North Atlantic*,

features a multi-national convoy formed up in Halifax for the dreaded Murmansk run to Russia. Similarly assembled from all over the world, the nation's Merchant Marine challenged German U-boats and the Luftwaffe. Over 3,500 merchant ships were lost along with 36,000 merchant seamen, 175 warships, and 36,200 sailors. They represented most of the Allies in the Second World War – the United States, Great Britain, Canada, India, Norway, Soviet Union, the Netherlands, Denmark, and China. At the end of the war, the United States, which possessed the largest Merchant Marine in the world and transported over half of the world's cargo, released over a thousand vessels to restock the commercial fleets of its allies.

Today, mariners from nations around the world face many challenges. Threats range from storms that have seen entire crews perish, as in the case of SS *El Faro*, to pirate attacks and high jacking (illustrated in Captain Phillips, portrayed, again, by Tom Hanks). The greatest threat today is from another invisible enemy, COVID-19. Across the world, over a hundred thousand crewmembers are trapped on their vessels due to the shutdown in international travel. Yet, they continue to perform their jobs, maintaining the world's supply chain just as they did 75 years ago this week. On May 8th, V-E Day, we should remember those mariners and sailors who put their lives on the line to get the cargo through and realize that similar challenges remain in both times of war and peace.



*Richard Burbine, AMMV Member-at-Large*

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# SEAFARER STORIES:

## JOHN KEANE SR.; A NAVY LEAGUE INTERVIEW

FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2020 This is part of an ongoing series, where we look at the lives and legacies of U.S. sea service men and women.

Perhaps growing up without a father was the impetus for John Keane Sr.'s lifelong dedication to family. If so, then at least something good came of such a tough upbringing. Raised during the Great Depression and shipping off with the Merchant Marine at the age of 16, John's early life was full of challenges and peril, but these things only brought him closer to his mother and brothers. The difficulties they faced made them stronger as individuals and as a unit.

Everyone in the family worked, including young John who sold so many newspapers that he was rewarded with a trip to the 1939 World's Fair. Activity was buzzing all around them. The factories were churning out supplies and equipment for the war. John remembered a certain unity of purpose which could be felt all around him. From the men signing up to fight, to the women filing into the factories, everyone seemed focused and eager to do their part for their country. This would include John's older brother Joe, who joined up with the 82nd Airborne and would stay in the Army for 18 years.

John was ready to enlist but was turned away by the Navy for being too young. That's when he learned that the Merchant Marine would take you at 16 years old, off he went to train at Sheepshead Bay in New York. Things moved quickly from there. John was sent to Boston, but before he could unpack his bag he was taken out to a Liberty ship off the harbor. Climbing up a rope ladder onto the deck, he barely had time to set down his gear before an air siren sounded and an attack

drill commenced. John ran to the 20 mm gun to assist as a feeder for the ammunition.

The Liberty ship that John crewed was one in a 60-vessel convoy that spanned over 5 miles. There were Navy

destroyers escorting them, dropping depth charges to ward off German U-boats. They arrived in Cherbourg, France, to deliver vehicles and K-rations to the troops moving across Northern Europe. While here, John would see his first enemy prisoners of war. One of them was ordered to help John secure a rope on the dockside of the ship. He still remembers how the enemy soldier was just a young boy like himself. That experience would stay with him the rest of his life.

The world was changing around him. The Russians had pushed into Germany and taken most of Eastern

Europe. U.S. forces had dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, bringing the Japanese to surrender. John stayed in the shipping industry, and his journeys brought

him face-to-face with the post-WW II global community. He visited a newly formed nation called Israel. He saw Eastern Europe descend into authoritarianism. He saw North Korea fall to communism. He visited Africa as its nations were decoupling from European colonialism. His trade was simply to deliver goods, but through this endeavor John witnessed the birth of a world that would form the foundation of the Cold War era.

He stayed in the Merchant Marine until 1952, when he married his wife and started his own family. He has seven children, 13 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. He stays in touch with them regularly and clearly cares deep about them.





# In memory of those who have Crossed the Final Bar



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

DAGNER ALHOLM	YOUNTVILLE, CA
ROBERT E. CAUBLE	KENNEWICK, WA
WILLIAM G. DAVIES	MAPLEWOOD, NJ
KENNETH E. DEAL	LAFAYETTE, LA
ROBERT E. EVINGER	PECULIAR, MO
LEONARD R. FELTS	ABERDEEN, WA
LOYD R. HAMEL	LONG BEACH, CA
GUNNAR LARSEN	SAN MATEO, CA
WALTER LUIKART	BROWNSVILLE, TX
JOHN A. MANSER	VANCOUVER, WA
HOWARD R. MENDOZA	INDIO, CA
VINCENT MITTERANDO	LEBANON, NJ
LATEEF MUHAMMAD	SUMRALL, MS
ALFRED MURI	MILES CITY, MT
PETER J. PAPPAS	NORWICH, CT
JOHN PAUL PAYEUR	SPRINGVALE, ME
JACK W. RICHARDSON	KANSAS CITY, MO
JAMES A. SCHMIDT	DECATUR, IL
WILLIAM G. THOMAS	BOYNTON BEACH, FL
CHARLES C. TROMBLEY	BROKEN ARROW, OK
HARRY M. WAGNER	EMERALD ISLE, NC

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.

# Does The Name *Savannah* Make These Historical Vessels Marvels or Monsters?

## *The Steam Ship SS Savannah*



The SS *Savannah* was a hybrid sailing ship built in New York in 1818. During its construction, New London sea captain Moses Rogers persuaded the shipping firm Scarborough & Isaacs in Savannah, Georgia, to purchase the ship, convert it to steam power, and sail it across the Atlantic Ocean. Rogers oversaw the installation of the ship's engine while he recruited his brother-in-law, Stevens Rogers, to oversee the construction of the ship's hull and rigging and eventually become the ship's Sailing Master.

### ***First steamship to cross the Atlantic, SS Savannah***

Transatlantic passage was dangerous in the early 19th century, and the addition of the untested ability to accomplish the task by steamship only increased that danger. Consequently, Moses and Stevens Rogers were unable to find a crew in New York willing to undertake the risky

passage. The two men had to travel back to New London where Moses' reputation as competent sea captain helped the two men find the right crew for their journey.

With a full crew, the ship headed to Savannah to prepare for its voyage across the Atlantic. On May 11, 1819, President James Monroe visited the SS *Savannah*, just prior to its departure, to take a brief excursion on the vessel that was about to make history.

Unable to find passengers willing to risk traveling by steam power on the open seas, the ship and her crew left Georgia in May of 1819 on their experimental mission to Europe. While the fully-rigged ship proceeded under steam power for parts of most days, it ended up being traditional sail power that carried the *Savannah* through most of the journey. The ship arrived in England in June of 1819 before traveling on to Denmark, Sweden, and Russia.

In spite of the acclaim the ship received for its historic voyage, the SS *Savannah* saw little commercial success as a steamship once it returned to the US. After Scarborough & Isaacs suffered a financial setback from a fire that swept through the city of Savannah in 1820, the firm sold the ship's engine for \$1,600 and converted the ship to a sailing packet used for travel between Savannah and New York.

On November 5, 1821, the SS *Savannah* ran aground off Long Island, breaking up a short time later. It was another 20 years before steamships made regular crossings of the Atlantic.

### ***The Building of the N.S. Savannah***

In 1955 President Dwight Eisenhower proposed the idea of building a nuclear-powered luxury Passenger-Cargo liner to showcase his "Atoms for Peace" initiative. Then in 1956, Congress authorized the building of the now named project "NS. Savannah", which would be a joint project between the "Atomic Energy Commission", the "Maritime Administration" (MARAD), and the "Department of Commerce". The N.S. Savannah would be designed by George G. Sharp, Incorporated of New York.

Her keel was laid down on May 22, 1958, at the "New York Shipbuilding Corporation" at Camden, in Yard 529. Her nuclear reactor was manufactured by Babcock and Wilcox and her two steam turbines were by the De Laval. She was officially named at the launching by American First Lady, Mamie Eisenhower on July 21, 1959, and she was moved to her fit-out berth where she would remain until December 1961 where she was completed.

Upon completion she underwent extensive sea trials which lasted until April 1962 and she was finally officially delivered to State Maine Lines on May 1, 1962. However, she would not depart on her maiden voyage for almost





three months. Finally she was ready for her maiden voyage and she departed loaded with passengers and cargo on August 20.

### ***Nuclear Propulsion***

Some will say that the ship was a success and that she performed well at sea and that her safety record was quite impressive. Her fuel economy was unsurpassed and her gleaming white paint was never smudged by exhaust smoke. Even her cargo handling equipment was designed to look good. However, her life as a passenger ship was sadly a total disaster and a short lived one for she stopped transporting passengers ceased in 1965, this is just three years after her maiden voyage.

In 1965 the Maritime Administration leased the N.S. Savannah to the "First Atomic Ship Transport Inc", of the famed "American Export-Isbrandtsen Lines" and they decided that she would no longer carry passengers as she was unsalable and that she be just a cargo ship.

It is sad to say that in truth the beautifully sleek lines of the Savannah did nothing to aid her future wellbeing, as she was a failure and from the very beginning, for she was plagued with a variety of design problems. Obviously passengers were fearful to sail on her, for the very thought of sailing on a nuclear powered ship did not seem to be safest of things to do in the sixties as people did not trust this new technology!

No ship with all her disadvantages could possibly hope to be commercial success. Thus the solution became a simple one, already her once beautiful passenger space was totally wasted since 1965, and already her cargo capacity

was insufficient for a ship of her size operating with such a large crew. As a result with her many handicaps the Eisenhower's pride, the N.S. Savannah ended up costing over US\$2 million a year more in operating subsidies compared to a similar sized cargo ship, that was powered by a diesel/motor or turbine steam engine.

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) finally had to decommission the N.S. Savannah early in 1972, which was a wise decision because she was losing them massive amounts and she was no longer the ship that was originally intended, the "Pride of America", a luxury ship transporting 60 happy passengers in luxurious surroundings, for as we know that had turned out to be a total failure and tragically her passenger days ceased back in 1965 after just two and a half or so years a sad failure indeed! One that could have possibly been better far managed had they had the right media team!

N.S. Savannah's namesake, the SS Savannah in 1819 became the very first steam powered ship to cross the Atlantic and she was also a commercial failure even though she was innovative when it came to propulsion in her age, indeed she made history, and so it would be for her namesake the N.S. Savannah.

When decommissioned, the Savannah was open at several locations. When a MARAD inspection in 1993 indicated that the Savannah required dry docking, Patriot's Point and the Maritime Administration agreed to terminate the ship's charter in 1994. She was moved and dry docked in Baltimore, Maryland in 1994 where some maintenance and any repairs that were required was undertaken, she was then moved to the James River Merchant Marine Reserve Fleet near Newport News, Virginia. It had also been decided to remove her nuclear power plant upon retirement.

The Maritime Administration has funded decommissioning and removal of the ship's nuclear systems. The Savannah had undergone work at Colonna's Shipyard of Norfolk, Virginia, beginning 15 August, 2006. That US\$995,000 undertaking included exterior structural and lighting repairs, removing shipboard cranes and wiring, refurbishing water-damaged interior spaces, and removing mould, mildew and painting some of her interiors. Then on January 30, 2007, she was towed to Pier 23, which is owned by the City of Newport News. On May 8, 2008, the N.S. Savannah arrived in Baltimore under tow from Norfolk, for removal of the vessel's remaining radioactive material. The Savannah is expected to remain in Baltimore for up to 3 years under a \$588,380 U.S. Maritime Administration contract with the Vane Brothers' shipyard at the Canton Marine Terminal in the Canton section of Baltimore.

Since the N.S. Savannah is historically significant and has been designated a "National Historic Landmark", MARAD has expressed interest in offering the ship for preservation once Savannah's DDR (Decommissioning, Decontamination and Radiological) work is completed.



# THE CONCRETE FLEET OF TWO WORLD WARS

*An emergency measure defied the laws of physics.*

It is a fact that war has sparked some amazing innovations. It has at the same time spawned incredible desperation. The attempt by the U.S. Navy in both world wars to construct seagoing vessels made of concrete would seem to be a combination of the two at first glance.

A hulking gray stone facade lay for years in the surf off Sunset Beach at Cape May, New Jersey. It appeared to be the skeletal remains of some strange vessel with the bow protruding upright from the water. The waves lapped its ghostly shape as if it was always intended to be a forlorn breakwater. This was the remnant of the SS *Atlantus*, a relic from one of the strangest programs the U.S. Navy has ever undertaken.

Concrete ships were not unheard of prior the *Atlantus* and her World War I-era contemporaries. The oldest known concrete ship was a dinghy built by Joseph Louis Lambot in southern France in 1848. The boat was featured at the 1855 World's Fair. In the 1890s, an Italian engineer named Carlo Gabellini built barges and small ships out of concrete. Numerous small concrete boats were built in the England in the first decade of the 20th century, and one of these ships, the *Violette*, built in 1917, is now a boating clubhouse on the Medway River. This makes her the oldest concrete ship still afloat.

## ***A Shortage of Steel***

When the United States finally entered World War I in 1917, steel became scarce, and at the same time the demand for ships increased. The U.S. government invited a Norwegian named N.K. Fougner to head a study into the feasibility of building ships made of ferro-concrete, or concrete reinforced with steel bars. In August 1917, Fougner had successfully launched the first cement ship, the 84-foot *Namsenfjord*, and the United States wanted to see what he could do to expand its fleet using inexpensive alternative materials.

Based on the study, President Woodrow Wilson approved the Emergency Fleet program, which commissioned the construction of 24 concrete ships for the war effort. The ships would be used for transport purposes, mainly as steamers or oil tankers.

Meanwhile, a businessman named William Leslie Comyn took the initiative and formed the San Francisco Ship Building Company to begin constructing the newly authorized vessels. The first American concrete ship, a steamer named the SS *Faith*, was launched in March 1918 and cost \$750,000 to build. By the time the war ended eight months later, construction had begun on only half the fleet at a cost of \$50 million, and none of the concrete ships had actually been completed. Several companies had joined the effort



*Hulk of Sunset Beach at Cape May, New Jersey*

by this time, including the Liberty Ship Building Company based in Wilmington, North Carolina. Eventually, a dozen ships were completed and sold to private companies which used them for commerce, storage, and scrap.

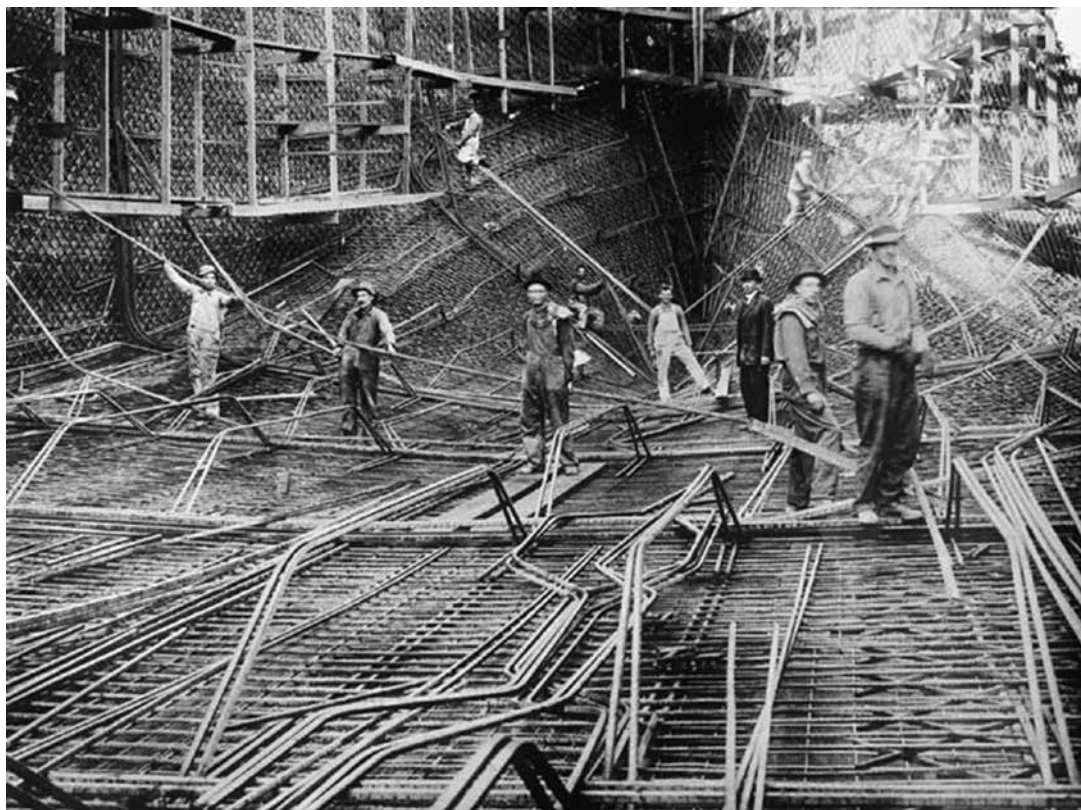
What became of the World War I fleet was almost as intriguing and bizarre as the concept of concrete ships itself. The SS *Atlantus* was a steamer eventually purchased for use as a ferry landing. During construction of the landing, the *Atlantus* broke free from its moorings in a storm and grounded on the beach in Cape May where it remained for decades. The SS *Cape Fear* was another steamer. It collided with a cargo ship in Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, shattered and sank, killing 19 crewmen. The SS *Palo Alto* was an oil tanker that was turned into a dance club and restaurant at Seacliff Beach, California, and is now a fishing pier.

Another tanker, the SS *San Pasqual*, was damaged in a storm in 1921 and eventually purchased by a Cuban company in 1924. It was run aground off Cuba in 1933 and used for a time as a prison. Later outfitted with machine guns and cannon in World War II, it was used as a lookout post for German submarines. Today, it is a 10-room hotel accessible by boat from mainland Cuba. The SS *Sapona* was a steamer sold for scrap but then converted into a floating liquor warehouse during Prohibition by a rum runner from the Bahamas. She was grounded off the shore of Bimini during a hurricane, and all the liquor inventory was lost.

A number of the ships were sunk as breakwaters or converted to floating oil barges in Texas and Louisiana. The SS *Peralta* was an oil tanker turned into a fish cannery and finally a floating breakwater in British Columbia, Canada. She is the last of the World War I fleet still afloat. The first concrete ship, the SS *Faith*, was used to carry cargo for trade until 1921, when she was sold and scrapped as a breakwater, also in Cuba.

### **Reviving the Concrete Fleet**

With the advent of World War II, steel was once again in short supply. In 1942, the U.S. government decided to



*18 Jun 1943, San Francisco, California, USA. Original caption: "Concrete, concrete everywhere—in fact it's all over and in this ship, the Belair No. 1, which will be the first concrete ship to be launched in the San Francisco Bay area since World I. This and many more like it are being built at the Belair Shipyards near here, The vessel, which has no propelling machinery will be towed by ocean going tugs and will be able to carry 25 percent more cargo than a steel ship of the same size."*

revisit the experiment with concrete ships, and the United States Maritime Commission contracted McCloskey & Company of Philadelphia to construct a new fleet, again to total two dozen ships. Thirty years of improvements in concrete would make this new fleet lighter and stronger. Construction started in July 1943, and the ships were built at an amazing rate with one being launched every month. They were appropriately enough named after pioneers in the science and development of concrete, including a Roman engineer named Vitruvius Pollio who lived in the First Century B.C.

Two of these ships did see combat service. In March 1944, the SS *David O. Saylor* and the SS *Vitruvius* set sail from Baltimore for Liverpool, England, to join the fleet preparing for the D-Day invasion. An American merchant mariner named Richard Powers was on the maiden voyage of the *Vitruvius*. He was offered a return voyage aboard the luxury liner *Queen Mary* in exchange for helping to sail *Vitruvius* to England.

Powers went to the docks in Baltimore where the *Vitruvius* was moored. He said the ship was unlike anything he had ever seen. Upon boarding the vessel, Powers noticed it was made of concrete and he became concerned as to whether it would get him and his shipmates across the Atlantic. He said he felt better once he realized the ship's hold was being filled with lumber.



*Three concrete ships used a breakwater for a logging mill on the Powell River in British Columbia, Canada.*

"We left Baltimore on March 5, and met our convoy just outside Charleston, South Carolina," Powers recalled. "It wasn't a pretty sight: 15 old 'rustpots.' There were World War I-era 'Hog Islanders' (named for the Hog Island shipyard in Philadelphia where these cargo and transport ships were built), damaged Liberty Ships."

A Panamanian ship built in 1901, and the other concrete ship, the *David O. Saylor*, were also part of the group. Powers said the motley fleet looked like a floating junkyard. The ragtag flotilla made the crossing to Liverpool in 33 days without incident. Powers reckoned, "The U-Boats were not stupid enough to waste their torpedoes on us."

Once the *Vitruvius* docked, it was the subject of great curiosity, with many of the locals coming to the port to see it. Powers recalled that one old gentleman tapped the hull with his cane to make sure it was actually made of concrete as he could not believe it. One day, Army engineers came aboard with several cases of dynamite and set up charges in the holds. *Vitruvius* rendezvoused at Portsmouth with other ships destined to be blockships sunk as part of the artificial Mulberry harbors to form a breakwater and landing piers off the coast of France in support of the D-Day landing.

On June 1, 1944, the ship again headed out to sea. About two days into the voyage, the captain called all hands on deck and read a letter from General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied commander in Europe, telling the crew they would be making history by participating in the invasion of Normandy.

One thousand American merchant mariners were among the crews of the blockships. There were nearly 100 American and British freighters, from ancient tramps to comparatively new Liberty ships, making their way into the choppy English Channel at a snail's pace of

five knots. A low-flying German reconnaissance plane, U-boat, or E-boat would have been quite curious about the mission of these ships as almost every one of them bore obvious defects. Some had gaping torpedo holes in their sides, while the structures of others were mangled from collisions or mine explosions. But they limped along with an even more puzzling heavy naval escort of planes and destroyers, their mission and

purpose surely a mystery to any observer. All the while they had their antiaircraft guns manned around the clock against attack. Perhaps their benign appearance served them well. Crossing the Channel on D-Day brought no harm to the *Vitruvius* and her companion vessels that were soon destined for a watery grave. The Army had stationed armed troops on board, but their services were not needed.

D-Day was cloudy, and the Luftwaffe had surrendered air supremacy over the Channel. Occasionally, a German plane would make a flyover and every ship would open fire with its antiaircraft armament.

Powers mused, "It was the 4th of July multiplied tenfold."

The panorama that presented itself to the crews of the blockships off the coast of France was awe inspiring to Powers and his shipmates — battleships with heavy guns blasting the shoreline, destroyers, destroyer escorts, and every kind of landing craft imaginable. Those aboard the blockships had a bird's-eye view of the landing craft head-



ing for shore, the fighting on the beach, and the bodies floating in the water. Powers was glad to be on a ship even if it was made of concrete.

On D-Day + 1, the crew tried to maneuver *Vitruvius* to its assigned position, but German artillery prevented them from doing so. They tried again on day three with the same result. Finally, on D-Day + 4 the ship got into position and the crew was offloaded to an LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry). After several attempts, engineers set off the dynamite that sank the *Vitruvius* in the shallow water off Normandy, leaving about half the ship still visible above the waterline.

By the end of D-Day + 1, a total of 89 ships of this fleet of merchant has-beens had carried out one of the most difficult and dangerous operations of the Normandy invasion. The remainder of the fleet, including *Vitruvius*, did follow shortly thereafter. The concrete ships had been sunk a mere 1,000 yards off the beaches that comprised the hottest combat zones of the invasion. Their upper decks formed a steel breakwater, calmed the waves and swells, and allowed the thousands of smaller landing craft to hit the beaches safely to deliver soldiers and war material.

### ***The End of the Concrete Ships in WWII:***

The crews were ferried to a troopship that took them back across the Channel to Bournemouth, England. By then the merchant mariners were hungry due to the extra time it had taken to sink the ships. They had actually run out of food aboard the *Vitruvius* and many of her sister blockships. The British fed the crews a meal of cabbage, boiled potatoes, and hard rolls, and Powers said they were grateful for it.

Thousands of Merchant Marine vessels supported the invasion by ferrying troops and supplies to the invasion beaches, but perhaps no other ships performed so unique and critical mission, intentionally designed end in their sinking. Military engineers saw no other way to form the critical breakwaters rapidly, and the lumbering hulks led by two of the concrete fleet filled the bill admirably.

True to the promise, all the blockship crews were put on the *Queen Mary* except for five who volunteered to stay in Liverpool as replacements for seamen killed or wounded. Richard Powers was among the volunteers, so after his

epic ordeal he missed his chance to sail on the *Queen Mary*.

The fate of the remaining World War II concrete fleet was not as unique or entertaining as their predecessors of World War I. Nine were sunk as breakwaters for a ferry landing in Virginia, two are now wharves in Oregon, and seven are still afloat as part of a breakwater on the Powell River in Canada. The World War II fleet ended America's experiment with concrete ships, one of the most unusual naval projects in history.

### ***After the war***

After the war there was little further development or building with ferrocement. Many of the ships were scrapped or used as breakwaters. However, thanks to the efforts of hobbyists and enthusiasts many examples have been restored and preserved and can still be seen today at various locations across the globe.

There is even an annual national concrete canoe building competition organized by the American Society of Civil Engineers. One of the largest collections can be seen at Powell River in British Columbia where ten ships form a breakwater for the lumber mill. The breakwater was constructed to protect the logging pond of the Powell River Company pulp and paper mill (later purchased by Pacifica Papers).

While nine of these ten ships were built during the Second World War, the tenth ship, the *S. S. Peralta*, is the last remaining WWI concrete ship afloat.

In December of 2000, the mill was downsized as the result of a corporate merger between Pacifica Papers and NorskeCanada. The mill no longer processes raw materials, so they were planning to remove a few ships from the breakwater. The company changed its mind and decided to keep all ten ships, but rearranged them. In July, 2018 the first of a proposed four ships from Powell River's famous breakwater at Catalyst Paper Corporation's mill, known as the Hulks, was sunk to become an artificial reef attracting wildlife and divers. The *SS Selma* which was launched on the very day that Germany signed the treaty of Versailles can be found at Seawolf Park in Galveston. In the UK several abandoned barges can also be seen in the east of London on the River Thames.







# JUST RECOGNITION

## INFORMATION ON PRODUCTION OF THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

### **MEDAL DESIGN PROGRESS:**

Word has been received that the Congressional Gold Medal for World War II Merchant Mariners, which was signed into law March 13, 2020, is currently in the design phase. Our AMMV CGM Committee is in contact with MARAD and have had input as to the design of the medal.

Once the various design options have been completed by the artists, we expect them to be posted on the website of the U.S. Mint. At that point one of the designs will be chosen by the Secretary of the Treasury and production will begin. AMMV is hoping that the Mint will make the medals available to us by the 2021 AMMV National Convention date, which is currently scheduled for May, 2021; however, there is no firm commitment to that effect at this time.

### **POSSIBLE ADJUSTMENT OF COST OF DUPLICATES FOR WWII MERCHANT MARINERS:**

AMMV, Inc. has also discovered that the U.S. Mint is proposing to increase the cost of the bronze replicas of the Congressional Gold Medal being awarded collectively as a result of the *Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020* beginning January 1, 2021. Our information indicates that the replica medals will increase to \$160.00 for the 3" bronze replica plus \$35 for the case.

The 3" replica is of the same thickness as the Gold Medal. The smaller version; 1.5" is much thinner, and much less expensively at \$50 for medal and case.

Under H.R. 5671 and S. 133, the proposed legisla-

tion which led to the passage of the *Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020*, contain the following language:

**4. Duplicate medals - Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.**

AMMV, Inc. feels this substantial threefold increase in price is NOT in line with the language of Section 4. of both pieces of legislation, and exceeds "...the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses."

AMMV, Inc. has been informed that Congressman Garamendi has met with the U.S. Mint in an attempt to intercede on behalf of U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans to secure the current price prior to the January 1, 2021 increase. No results of that meeting are forthcoming at this time.

Upon hearing the news of the passage of the *Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020*, Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn requested the names of U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans of WWII in the Los Angeles County area and offered to supply their replica medals.

These incidents and actions instigated the following letter appealing to Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Secretary, Department of Treasury for the provision of the replica medals to U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans free of charge.



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

October 12, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin  
Secretary Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

President Trump signed the Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020 on March 13, 2020. The American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc. represents the recipients of that Congressional Gold Medal.

The bravery and exploits of the U.S. Merchant Mariners during WWII are unparalleled resulting in the highest percentage of casualties of all armed services in WWII with 1 in 26 killed in action. Following WWII they were not entitled to the GI Bill or the title of Veteran until 1988. Honors, Awards and Medals have been bestowed on these Veterans by Allied Countries: Russia, Norway, Australia, to name a few, recognizing their contribution and service, all free of charge.

We have been informed that a charge will be levied to secure a bronze replica of the Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal, and that that charge will increase considerably on January 1, 2021.

As Secretary of the Treasury, we implore your intervention to make allowance for these living heroes to be awarded the deserved replica medals free of charge as a token of appreciation from a grateful nation. We are deeply concerned that a request for payment for these medals would lessen the honor they symbolize.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this particularly important matter.

Respectfully,

John Pitts  
National President  
American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc.

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

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

# AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS TO BE HONORED WITH THE CONVOY CUP MEDAL



Dear Merchant Marine Veterans

For over twelve years, the Convoy Cup Foundation has been promoting and preserving the history, stories, and memory of the sailors, airmen, and merchant marine that secured and preserved peace in our time.

As the memory of the Battle of the Atlantic and World War II sink further into the past, the Convoy Cup Foundation, working with our sister foundation in Risør, Norway, is dedicated to making this important part of our history accessible to a new generation.

We use the sport of sailing to tell the story of the convoys. The convoys from Halifax and New York provided a lifeline to an entire continent locked in a struggle against unimaginable tyranny. It is our mission to ensure the scope and scale of the sacrifice made to defend liberty and democracy is never forgotten.

Jens Inge Egeland is a Norwegian Veterans Advocate who has been working together with the Convoy Cup Foundation. They have now taken the initiative to locate and establish contact with US Merchant Marine Veterans, in order to nominate them to be honored with the Convoy Cup Medal.

We will never forget the brave Warsailors of the US Merchant Marine and we can never thank them enough for their service and sacrifice to restore freedom to our land.

The criteria to receive the Convoy Cup is four months service on a ship in the Allied Convoys during World War II.

For inquiries or to nominate a US Merchant Marine Veteran for the Convoy Cup Medal, please contact;

Jens Inge Egeland  
email [jensingeegeland@gmail.com](mailto:jensingeegeland@gmail.com) or  
call – Eugene, OR 458 239 3196

*Submitted by Sheila Sova, proud daughter of a WWII U. S. Merchant Marine Veteran*

# A Very Recent WWII Bomb Explosion

On Tuesday, October 13, 2020, a giant WWII-era "earthquake bomb", also known as a "Tallboy" detonated unexpectedly near the port of Swinoujscie, Poland as an explosives ordnance disposal team attempted to disable it. Swinoujscie was part of Germany and called Swinemünde at the time of the bombardment.

Last year, a Royal Air Force "Tallboy" bunker-busting bomb was found nose-up in the sediment at the bottom of Swinoujscie's Piastowski Canal (Piast Canal). The 12,000-pound bomb was believed to be a relic of a successful RAF raid on the German pocket battleship Lutzow in April 1945. It was the largest WWII-era unexploded device yet found in Poland.

After extensive planning and preparation, a Polish Navy dive team began work to neutralize the bomb on Monday. The five-day evolution entailed digging out around the aging munition, then gradually burning out the 5,200 pounds of explosive mixture inside it in a controlled manner (deflagration). At a press conference marking the start of the project, Polish Navy spokesman Lieutenant Commander Grzegorz Lewandowski warned that the task would be hazardous because the explosives may have become less stable over time, rendering them sensitive to vibration or impact.

The first phase of deflagration was scheduled to begin on Tuesday, before a change in the weather. A precautionary evacuation order for all civilian personnel within a 2,500 meter radius of the site was in effect. Around 750



*World War II Tallboy bomb exploding near the Polish port of Swinoujscie.*

where residents were given shelter during the operation. "I've lived here 50 years and there have been other bombs, but this is the first time there's an evacuation! Before, we just had to stay indoors," she said.

Maritime traffic on the navigation channel and surrounding waterways had also been suspended in an area of 16 kilometres around the bomb disposal operation.

At about 1430 hours, the bomb detonated unexpectedly, sending a geyser of water skyward. The Polish Navy dive team had already cleared away from the scene, and no injuries were reported.

"All the assumed safety measures took into account the possibility of the deflagration process going into detonation," Lewandowski said in a statement. "The [bomb] can be considered as neutralized, it will not pose any more threat to the Swinoujscie fairway."

The "Tallboy" bomb was a UK-designed munition built to penetrate deep underground and detonate after a delay, shattering fortifications from below. Its thick steel case made up more than half of its weight, and when dropped from a height of 12,000 feet, it could penetrate up to 16 feet of hardened concrete before detonation.





# A MONUMENTOUS DAY AND HOW THE U.S. CELEBRATED IT

## *TOKYO - the day – 75 years ago:*

On the night of Aug. 14, 1945, the bespectacled Emperor of Japan walked into the second-floor room of the Household Ministry in Tokyo, where the technicians from the national radio station, NHK, had set up recording equipment.

Emperor Hirohito was 44. And for 3½ years, he had presided over the titanic struggle Japan had been waging with the U.S. and its allies since the at-



*Signing of the actual peace treaty aboard the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945*

Hirohito approached the NHK microphone. “To our good and loyal subjects,” he began.

“We declared war on America and Britain out of our sincere desire to ensure Japan’s self-preservation ... it being far from our thought either to infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations or to embark

upon territorial aggrandizement ...

“Now the war has lasted for nearly four years ... [and] the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives ...

‘According to the dictates of time and fate ... After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in our empire today, we have decided ... [on] an extraordinary measure.’

“We have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendur-



*Celebrating in Los Angeles*

tack on Pearl Harbor.

But Japan’s once-mighty armed forces had been destroyed — its ships sunk, its soldiers killed, its planes shot down. Its cities had been bombed to rubble — most recently by two atomic weapons. And the emperor now had to tell his people the war was lost.

“How loudly should I speak?” he asked the technicians making the official recording for broadcasting. the technicians had told Hirohito to speak in a normal voice. But he had lowered it anyway, made several mistakes, and had to record it a second time.

How loudly did one say that World War II was over? That the global catastrophe, which began in Europe in 1939 and spread across oceans and continents, and killed and maimed millions, was at an end?

Nazi Germany had surrendered four months earlier, after its reign of genocide, murder and brutality had been brought down. Adolf Hitler was dead. The concentration camps were liberated.

But Japan had continued fighting, and the world waited now for the emperor to end the tragedy.



*The famous “kiss” photograph in Times Square, NY City*



*In the Zanzibar Club, New York City*

able and suffering what is unsufferable ...

The radio buzzed and crackled with static.

The announcement was broadcast to the Japanese at noon the next day, Aug. 15.

Schoolgirls wept in sorrow and shame in Tokyo's Imperial Plaza after they were informed of Japan's surrender on Aug. 15, 1945. "How can we lose the war!" someone shouted. The fight should go on. Was it not "better to die for one's country and crown life with perfection ... than live in shame and disgrace?" "The one word — surrender — had produced a greater shock than the bombing of our city,"

### ***THE UNITED STATES – August 15, 1945:***

On August 15 (the 14th in the Western Hemisphere), President Harry S. Truman announced that Emperor Hirohito had accepted the terms of unconditional surrender. (The agreement would not be formally signed until September 2, 1945, on the deck of the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.)

***Now it was over;***

### ***THE CELEBRATIONS ERUPTED.***

The America public reacted with enthusiasm; the relief they clearly felt is captured in black and white. Newspapers with headlines declaring "PEACE" rained from Manhattan's skies; conga lines formed on the White House lawn. Beeping cars overflowing with smiling sailors blazed past palm trees near Pearl Harbor. Women marched arm-in-arm wrapped in American flags, ready to welcome their families home. Countrywide relief abounded as Americans processed the news as the world learned it was over, and rejoiced.

Millions flooded into New York's Times Square. Spot-

lights swept over the crowds. Paper, confetti and streamers rained from office buildings. Fifteen effigies of Hirohito were hung from telephone poles along one avenue in Brooklyn, then pulled down and burned, the New York Times said.

Newspapers blared the one-word headline — "PEACE!" — and took note of the gold star banners in the homes of those who had lost a son, brother or father.

In Washington, D. C., people jammed Lafayette Square, across from the White House, and shouted "We want Truman! We want Truman!" The president emerged from the north portico of the White House at about 8 p.m. and walked onto the lawn to greet the throng. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said. "This is a great day. This is the day we have all been looking for since Dec. 7, 1941."

At the U.S. Naval Academy, the ancient Gokokuji bell, brought from Okinawa by Commodore Matthew Perry in the 1850s, was pounded with fists and shoes and reportedly rung so hard that it cracked.



*Celebrating in Aku, Alaska*

In Lincoln, Neb., Mayor Lloyd Marti led 15,000 people in the University of Nebraska stadium in a victory celebration. They sang the hymn "Old Hundredth" — Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow — along with the classic songs from World War I: "K-K-K-Katy" and "There's a Long, Long Trail." "All over the world today the lights so long darkened ... come on again," the Rev. Raymond A. McConnell, pastor of the First-Plymouth Congregational Church, told the crowd. "The guns are silent," he said. "The killing has stopped. Victory is ours and it is indeed a despairing heart that is not uplifted in gratitude and hope."

In Philadelphia that Tuesday evening, people leaped from trolley cars and dashed into the streets from restaurants, leaving meals behind, to join the delirious throng



*Celebrating V-J Day.*

around City Hall. The city's air raid sirens were sounded in a salute to victory.

Bars closed, but people got inebriated anyhow.

In San Francisco, five people died and 300 were hospitalized during the celebrations.

#### **ELSEWHERE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC:**

However, the celebrations at the closest battle zones near Tokyo, such as Okinawa and Tarawa, were not as exuberant but rather a sense of stunned prevailed. One Marine, Eugene B. Sledge, was 21 when word of the surrender reached him on Okinawa. He had just participated in the grim battle there where 12,000 Americans had been killed. He later wrote: "We received the news with quiet disbelief coupled with an indescribable sense of relief."

"We thought the Japanese would never surrender," he wrote. "Many refused to believe it. Sitting in stunned silence, we remembered our dead. So many dead. So many maimed." "Except for a few widely scattered shouts of joy," Sledge wrote, "the survivors of the abyss sat hollow-eyed and silent, trying to comprehend a world without war."

An estimated 400,000 Americans had been killed, 600,000 had been wounded and 30,000 were missing. Millions more had perished around the world

#### **THEN BEGAN THE LONG "CLOSING DOWN" PROCESS:**



*A happy soldier late in the celebrations*

The declaration of the end of World War II and the surrender, did not end on August 15th. The "clean-up" chores of bringing home the troops, the war brides and families, the equipment and other war-time goods continued until December 31, 1946 as the U.S. Merchant Mariners and others transported those goods over the seas. On the home-front, the U. S. relocation camps for the Japanese were shut down; factories, shipyards and other production facilities were retrofitted or closed down. However, a sense of peace pervaded throughout the world.



*Conga line on the White House lawn in Washington, DC*



# A Conversation Between Two Concerned Parties

On June 11, 2020, the American Maritime Partnership sponsored a podcast featuring information shared by two men who are heavily involved with the U. S. Merchant Mariners of World War II during which Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) engaged with World War II Merchant Marine Veteran and AMMV's own Dave Yoho in a timely and dynamic conversation on the role of American maritime during WWII and the significance of the Jones Act for American security.

As we continue to reflect on the Centennial of the U.S. Merchant Marine Act, and recognize the significance of the Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020, we hope you enjoy learning more about the valiant efforts of American mariners that have answered the call to duty throughout the nation's history.

The podcast may be heard in entirety on the website: <https://tinyurl.com/y6dp7qp2>

Congressman Garamendi was very instrumental in the passage of successful legislation in this Congressional session awarding recognition to the Merchant Mariners of WWII with a Congressional Gold Medal. A major Thank You to him for his efforts on the behalf of this effort is due and those efforts are much appreciated by many, WWII Merchant Mariners as well as current and post WW II mariners..

The Congressman also made a point of complimenting Dave Yoho and the U. S. Merchant Mariners for their participation and successful completion in the legislative process, which culminated in the passage of the Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020.

AMMV member Dave Yoho, over the years, has been very outspoken about the long withheld rights for Veterans' status and recognition for these WWII Merchant Marine men.

After the June 11<sup>th</sup> podcast by the American Maritime Partnership, Dave produced another informational podcast, which can be seen on the Web at: <https://vimeo.com/427124206>.



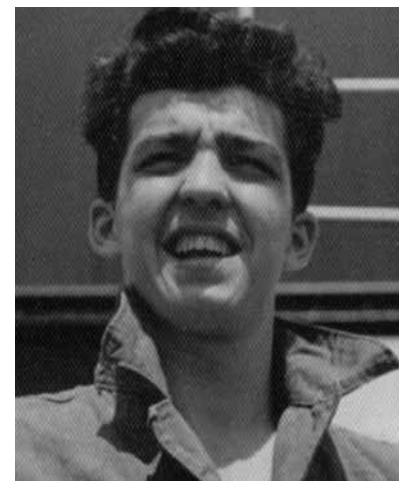
*Congressman John Garamendi*



*Dave Yoho*



*Congressman Garamendi with the Storm The Hill Gang*



*Dave Yoho*

# *Lest We Forget*

Sometimes when the bands are playing  
And the uniforms march by,  
You will find a Seaman watching  
With a wistful-looking eye.

And you know just what he's thinking  
As he hears the cheering crowd,  
As the soldiers and the sailors  
Swing along, erect and proud.

He is thinking that his country  
Shows its honor once again,  
For those in uniform while neglecting  
All the seas' forgotten men.

He is thinking of the armies  
And the food, and fighting tanks,  
That for every safe arrival  
To the Seaman owe their thanks.

He is thinking of his buddies  
Who have paid the final score,  
Not in khaki or in blues,  
But in the working clothes they wore.

And we'd like to tell him something  
That we think he may not know,  
A reminder he can stow away  
Wherever he may go.

All your countrymen are proud of you  
And though there's no brass band,  
Not a bugle nor a banner  
When a Merchant Seaman lands.

We know the job you're doing  
In your worn and tattered clothes,  
On the seas where death is lurking  
Where a fellow's courage shows.

So be sure to keep your chin up  
When the uniforms' parade,  
What a man wears doesn't matter  
'Tis the stuff of which he's made.

- Author Unknown

*Editor's note: In 1897, a Victorian poem called Recessional, by Rudyard Kipling, was published in The London Times in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.*

*Over the years, the last line of each stanza of the original poem – "Lest We Forget" – has been used by various poets. This "modern" version by an unknown poet, honoring merchant seamen, was submitted for publication by AMMV past-President Chris Edyvean.*

# New Merchant Marine Exhibit at the Veterans History Museum

After a six month hiatus, the Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas reopened its doors with an educational exhibit on Thursday, September 10, 2020.

Upon entering the museum, a beautiful glass-encased replica of the Merchant Marine Liberty ship SS Jeremiah O'Brien draws visitors into the Harold Wellington WWII Merchant Marine Exhibit. Wellington served in the Merchant Marine from 1942 to 1946, the U.S. Army in 1948, and the U.S. Navy from 1950 to 1954. He is a revered volunteer at the Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas, writes the museum's financial director, Michael Robertson.

Merchant Mariners suffered the highest rate of casualties of any service in World War II: 3.9% of their numbers or 1 in 26 mariners. In his personal account of his WWII experiences, featured in "We Shall Return Victorious" by author Janis Allen, Wellington describes the dangerous waters his ships traversed as they carried war supplies to the troops in Europe: "After boot camp, we sailed to Galveston, Texas, but I don't know how we made it past the North Carolina coast, because they were blowing up ships like crazy down there. My first trip in early '43 was to London while the Germans were bombing England. You could hear them coming."

What Harold and many of his comrades did not realize when they enlisted was that the Merchant Marine was not classified as a service but rather as a civilian job. He left the Merchant Marine in 1946, having survived the war on Liberty ships dodging German air strikes and submarines. Two years later, he was drafted into the Army with the explanation that he had

never been in the service. Wellington said: "We were getting blown all to pieces! And they say, 'You've never been in the service.'"

After some time in the Army, Wellington was able to join the Navy, serving his country once again during the Korean War. He retired from the service in 1954.

Reflecting on the significance of the collection and on what it means to him personally, Wellington recalled: "When we were in the Merchant Marine, we were called bums, drunkards, and draft-dodgers because almost anyone could join. It did not matter if you were old or had flat feet – they took you. For a long time after I got out, I was embarrassed to admit I had been in the Merchant Marine. But I'm proud of it now."

A significant feature of the Veterans History Museum is its collection of rare and often unique artifacts. Harold Wellington's Merchant Marine exhibit displays summer and winter uniforms, a lifeboat sextant, a ship's clock made by the Chelsea Clock Company of Boston, and a life preserver off the Merchant Marine tanker SS Mission Delores, as well as books, photos, medals and ribbons.

New hours of operation are Thursdays Fridays, Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Social distancing and masks are mandatory in accordance with guidelines

set by the CDC and NC Department of Health and Human Services.

The museum is located at 21 East Main Street, next to the courthouse. For more information, please visit the website [www.theveteransmuseum.org](http://www.theveteransmuseum.org) or call 828-884-2141 during open hours shown above.







Membership Application for:

## AMMV MEMBER-AT-LARGE

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

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

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



Join online at [ammv.us](http://ammv.us) or complete the following information and send to National Headquarters:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

D.O.B: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF APPLICATION: \_\_\_\_\_

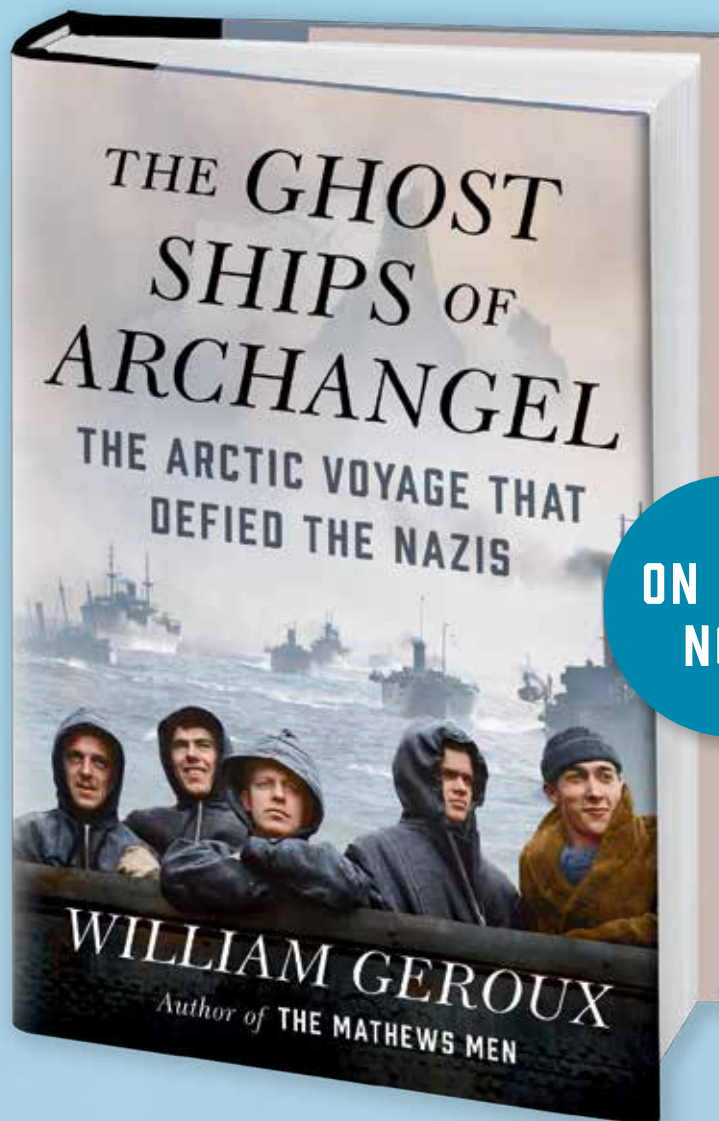
Do you have a DD214? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, from what service(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

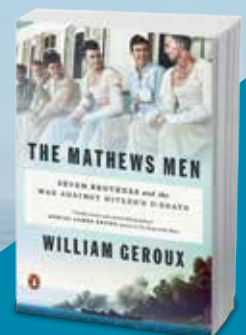
Questions? Please call AMMV HQ: (475) 470-9200; email [ammermarvets@gmail.com](mailto:ammermarvets@gmail.com)

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American Maritime Partnership (AMP) is honoring Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks with the American Maritime Hero Award. The award recognizes individuals or groups of individuals who have added to the rich heritage of the U.S. as a maritime nation through their professional contributions, courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities.

Widely regarded as one of the finest actors of his generation and an American cultural icon, Hanks has drawn global attention to the bravery of American maritime heroes by starring in the film "Captain Phillips," narrating the documentary short "Boatlift - An Untold Tale of 9/11 Resilience," and starring in and writing the screenplay for the film "Greyhound." Through his acclaimed and award-winning films, he has recognized the valor, bravery, and unrelenting importance of the men and women of the American maritime industry.