

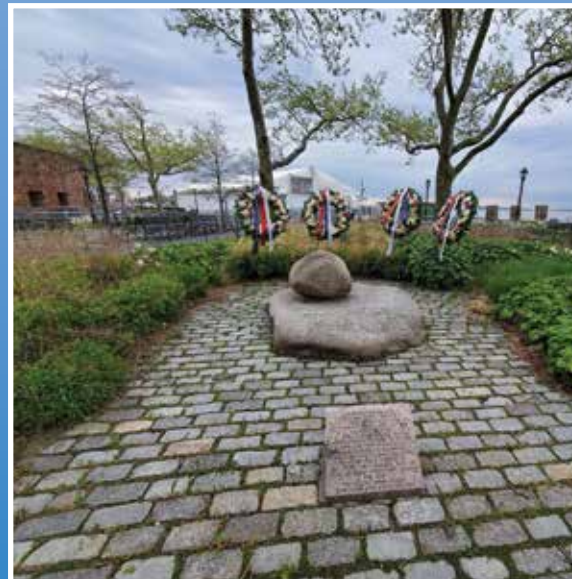
AMERICAN
MERCHANT MARINE
VETERANS
NEWS MAGAZINE



Charles Mills' 100th Birthday — page 13



SS Jeremiah O'Brien - Pier 45 Fire — page 24



Maritime Day Ceremonies — page 42



This movie is the result of a screenplay written by Tom Hanks, who stars in the movie and does credit to those who served during WWII and deserves kudos for his realistic depiction of historic events plus the stamina, dedication and courage demanded of those who serve in combat situations. The screenplay is based upon C.S. Forester's fictional novel "The Good Shepard" and tells the story of Commander Ernest Krause who is assigned with the destroyer *USS Keeling*, codenamed Greyhound, to escort an international convoy of 37 Allied ships to Liverpool across the North Atlantic.

For the most part, the film's introduction soon becomes a non-stop action filled thriller centering on actions involving US Navy Fletcher class destroyer assigned as one of three destroyer escorts charged with protection of a Merchant Marine convoy during the period the convoy is out of range for air cover while crossing. The film depicts the daily shipboard routine as well as the frantic, think on your feet, no do-over actions required while engaged in life and death combat situations.

Even though the destroyer, and its Captain, are the focal points, the fate and phenomenal story of courage, desperation and loss experienced by the WWII Allied Merchant Marine are well documented in this film. I would recommend this film to anyone who has an interest in wartime naval actions.

Mr. Hanks repeatedly portrays individuals forced to make difficult command decisions and has brought welcomed attention, on more than one occasion to the U.S. Merchant Marine in Peace and War. My personal thanks go to Mr. Hanks for penning the screenplay and following through with his outstanding performance in this film. His ability to present the human frailty and emotion of dealing with the most unusual circumstance allow those who have not personally handled the currency paid for our freedom through combat to better understand the immense dedication, fortitude and character of those who have paid the price.

This film was released exclusively by Apple TV for viewing via Apple TV on Friday, July 10th. While Apple TV equipment is required, you can sign up for a one year free trial of Apple TV programming.

— John Pitts

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Commemorative Magazine Design **Susan Alexander** *Member-at-Large*



National President John Pitts



The 34th annual AMMV convention was scheduled to be held last March 24th through 29th. Due to COVID-19 virus, the Maritime Conference Center, where the convention was scheduled to be held closed out of concern for the safety of their staff and attendees to their facility. In an at-

tempt to predict the future, and re-schedule before all the dates were taken, the AMMV made arrangements to re-schedule the convention November 17 through 20, 2020. The AMMV Convention Committee held a meeting and reviewed the conditions presented by COVID-19 and saw that they may still have a negative effect on the November 17 through 20, 2020 dates and decided to change the dates, again, to **May 19 through 23, 2021** to coincide with the US Maritime Administration National Maritime Day activities. We are hoping that the design of the Congressional Gold Medal will have been decided by those dates, and possibly, presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal.

MARITIME DAY – MEMORIAL DAY – INDEPENDENCE DAY 2020

National Maritime Day falls on May 22nd every year. The President of the United States issues a proclamation recognizing the United States Merchant Marine for all it does to facilitate our commerce and protect our interests at sea. Typically, a service would be held among a gathering of people paying their respects to those who have gone before us and celebrating the US Merchant Marine of today and those who serve. This gathering would take place at Merchant Marine memorials around the country. Some would be a small vigil and others would be an all-day event.

I have had the honor of being involved with arranging and attending the National Maritime Day event at the American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial in San Pedro, California for the past 25 years. A memorial service takes place in the morning followed by a lunch in the afternoon complete with speakers extolling the virtues

of the US Merchant Marine, past, present, and hopefully, future. I have to say that due to this year's cancellation of that annual gathering, I have a profound feeling that something is missing and is out of kilter.

The same issue followed National Maritime Day when Memorial Day and Independence Day ceremonies were cancelled. In thinking about the cancellation of these events, I realized that the ships still sail, the crews still work, life goes on, albeit at a different pace and for all these years, we have been preaching to the choir about the US Merchant Marine. The story and the reverence remain the same.

This year, despite the restriction brought on by the pandemic, the US Department of Transportation and US Maritime Administration celebrated National Maritime Day 2020 via virtual programming and prominently featured the AMMV's own Dave Yoho. I applaud all involved for continuing to hold this important remembrance, even though subdued and in an alternate format. It was great to see the 2020 National Maritime day celebration broadcast from Washington, DC so that all interested could have a sense of continuity knowing that the day, and what it represents had not been forgotten or moved aside.

I miss seeing the familiar faces who attend the services each year and being updated about people and the industry, but perhaps we need to avail ourselves of existing technology and utilize other means to communicate the very important message about the US Merchant Marine. Instead of lamenting the fact that we can't do what we've always done, let's investigate alternate methods of telling our story.

JUNE HIGHLIGHTS

This past June celebrated two 100th anniversaries: Charles Mills' 100th birthday, and the 100th anniversary of the Jones Act. When I think of Charles Mills, I think of success. He has lived to be 100 and is still under his own steam! In his seagoing career he attained the rating of Bos'n, marking his success as a Sailor. He was an elected representative of the National Maritime Union attesting to his success as a diplomat. He raised a beautiful family who worship him, which makes him a success as a Father and family man. His success continues as a key member of the Storm the Hill gang who influenced lawmakers' decisions to vote in favor of passage of the Merchant Mariners of WWII Congressional Gold Medal Act. After 100 years, I

continued on next page

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am sure there is much more of which I am not aware, but from my perch I see a remarkably successful man and role model. Thank you Charles!

The Jones Act turned 100 also and has been under attack during most of its existence. In summation, the Jones Act is the only legislation that keeps the US-flag ships and US Merchant Mariners working and I am glad it remains unaltered and hope it will continue in effect for another 100 years. If it is ever replaced, let it be replaced by legislation that bolsters the intent and protection it provides the US Merchant Marine and its related industries.

June 12th was the 243rd birthday of the US Merchant Marine which preceded the US Navy and US Coast Guard. June 12, 1775 was the date that Captain Jeremiah O'Brien and his crew of the *Unity* captured the British vessel *Margaretta* at the Battle of Machias in the current state of Maine, in the first naval engagement of the American Revolution.

June 25th was also the 10th anniversary of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Day of the Seafarer recognizing the accomplishment and necessity of the Merchant Marine worldwide as being responsible for the transportation of global, waterborne commerce. Unfortunately, during this time of pandemic, getting relieved from a vessel has proven difficult with quarantines and travel restrictions. Some seafarers are being held aboard far in excess of their agreed upon contract and to add insult to injury they are restricted to the ship while in port. Attention is being drawn to this issue, especially by unions and other groups representing labor. This is a particularly important issue that is not getting the notoriety it deserves due to the nature of the job and the numbers of Seafarers affected. It is just one more issue created by living with the COVID-19 pandemic.

HONORING OUR OWN

In the last three months we have witnessed many things that we are not used to. We have been forced to deal with a viral pandemic, civil unrest, political angst, and actions that are sometime difficult to comprehend. Our traditions for gathering to memorialize our fallen and honor their memory and sacrifice on Memorial day and National Maritime Day and the Fourth of July have been severely stifled. Schedules curtailed and lives altered due to circumstances beyond our control have tested our wills and tried our patience. Through it all, we continue. We do what we can and forge ahead hoping that we will return to some semblance of normalcy. As bad as this may seem, we are still here to move forward. The same cannot be said for 22 of our members who crossed the final bar. They are mentioned on the following pages, but I would like to make special mention of a few who will be remembered especially by me for the glowing stars that they were: **C.M.**

Beech Dale was a tireless promoter of the AMMV and all Congressional actions designed to give recognition and benefit to US Merchant Marine Veterans. His unapologetic, diplomatic, matter of fact style made him a force to be reckoned with. I have had the honor of speaking with Beech on many occasions and discussing his voluminous correspondence with governmental representatives, military advocates, Veterans affairs personnel, and anyone who had the ability to assist his cause. I found him to be a truly remarkable person and a pleasure to have known. **Patti Ammv Scaffidi** reminded me of a Tempest in a Teacup. Full of energy and always displaying her emotions proudly for all to see. She never did anything half slow and was a moving force in everything in which she was involved. She was an ardent AMMV supporter and head cheerleader. Her dynamic personality and ability to inspire will be missed. I met **Ruth Ran** at the AMMV conventions she attended with Stanley Blumenthal. Ruth had been married to AMMV member and US Merchant Marine Veteran Milton Ran and continued to attend the conventions after Milton's death. She always comported herself so proudly and I looked forward to seeing her each year.

All the AMMV members who have crossed the final bar will be fondly remembered and sorely missed. Fair Winds and Following Seas!

STAY SAFE & STAY THE COURSE

I am sure you share my hope of getting to the point of remembering the days of the COVID-19 virus, instead of living them. Please take any precautions you need and take care of yourself like AMMV Chaplain Bob Ross. He was ill, received treatment and is on the mend. Best wishes to Bob for a full recovery.

I wish you all the absolute best this life can offer and appreciate your membership and participation in this great organization. I am amazed when I think of all the AMMV, Inc. accomplishes and the few people who drive those accomplishments. While there are many contributors who deserve our thanks, these folks are the everyday drivers who make our engine run. They deserve special recognition and our thanks: Vice-President Dru Di Matia; National Administrator Lynn Kelly and her husband, Treasurer Dennis Kelly; Sindy Raymond, without whom this magazine would not get published; Government Affairs representative Sheila Sova; Past President Chris Edyvean. Thanks again for all you do!

Best regards with appreciation for your service and sacrifice. Lest we forget!

Faternally,

John Pitts
National President
American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc.



National Vice President Capt. Anthony "Dru" DiMattia

A LONG AWAITED DONATION



A long awaited Bridge Simulator, to be donated by the Navy League's Suncoast Chapter to the Heritage Museum in Punta Gorda, FL. is finally on the horizon. The funding campaign has been completed; however, an operational date is pending.

Designed to play into the recruitment aspects of our sea service, the statement for justification for this equipment reads:

Simulators are playing an increasingly important role in the training of commercial and military maritime services around the globe. We have worked with VSTER, an internationally recognized simulation builder, to develop a desk top version of their International Maritime Organization (IMO) approved shiphandling and navigation simulator. Nautis Simulators are used worldwide by fishing fleets, Navies and commercial shipping companies to provide realistic training to mariners of all levels of experience.

The desk top version for the museum will provide:

1. A dynamic visual view out the bridge of the ship showing a 3D graphics presentation of other passing ships, navigation aids and port facilities
2. Radar screen display showing passing ships, land masses and nav aids. This display is synched to the bridge view so that items on the radar will show up on the bridge visual.
3. Ship's conning panel for ship control such as course, speed, engine status and controlling anchoring on a touch pad screen
4. Navigation screen that displays the ship on an electronic chart. This is a fully functional Electronic Chart

Display and Information System (ECDIS) - a computer-based navigation system that complies with IMO regulations and is used as an alternative to paper navigation charts.

5. A small desktop helm and throttle unit for realistic ship control. The ship simulator will be an excellent complement to our very popular flight simulators. It will provide visitors with the experience of handling a large warship in open seas, in restricted channels and in some historic naval settings such as the English Channel and the Straits of Hormuz. Boating is popular in South West Florida but handling a large ship with 100,000 horsepower engines is an experience that they cannot get anywhere else in the region. It also has high potential as a training tool for local High School NJROTC units and Sea Cadet Battalions.

We will have a selection of ships to use in the simulator both Naval and Coast Guard. We'll start off with an Arleigh Burke class destroyer (DDG) as our principal vessel and then add a coast guard cutter later. You can see a video demonstration at the following link. <https://www.vstepsimulation.com/nautis-simulator/nautis-maritime-simulator/naval/>

Further information will be presented when available.

Fair Winds and Smooth Sailing,

Capt. Dru DiMattia



Example desktop station with all the components we are planning to add. The center bridge view will be much larger, 65", similar to the flight simulators. We will be building a console to make our unit a stand-up station to hold the helm/throttle unit with the three supporting displays in a console configuration around the simulation user.



National Secretary Stanley Blumenthal

SECURITY CLEARANCE IN THE MERCHANT MARINE AND IN THE MILITARY



I have made no secret that I was once a member of the Communist Party (CPUSA). I actually joined after WW II. It was during the late 50s and early sixties, the cold war and Joe McCarthy era, I, and all Merchant Mariners known to be members of the CPUSA, were forced

to give up their seamen's papers and also FCC licenses; mine included my ham license.

Myself and two other comrades, one a sea going RO like me and the other a ham operator, were assigned lawyers pro bono.

However, to the question are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party, all of us answered we were not now a member but refused to answer were we ever a member. It went through the court system; all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court which decided on a 3 to 4 vote that we had not answered all the questions; so we were denied our FCC licenses. *Blumenthal, et al vs FCC*, (et al refers to the two others)

Many years later after I married and my 3 kids left our nest, I heard there was a shortage of sea-going ROs. I wrote a letter to the Coast Guard and they gave me back my seamen's papers and FCC licenses and even gave me interim security clearance when I joined a ship going to a

war zone in the Gulf war. By then I was not a member of the CPUSA.

After I came ashore from the Gulf War, I ran for Florida's Congress, unsuccessfully, I'm afraid, in 2010 and 2012 registered with the Independent Socialist Party.

I have been elected, now, as the National Secretary of the American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc. I am still fighting for causes I believe in, including trying to get the American Legion to promote recognition of the U. S. Merchant Mariners of WWII.

The fight goes on.

Stanley Blumenthal



ATTENTION AMMV MEMBERS:

**Submit your email address to
National Headquarters today!**

AMMV is asking all members that don't currently have an email address on file to please supply us with your contact information.

If you do not receive emails from National Headquarters, please email:

ammermarvets@gmail.com so we can place an email address on your records and keep you informed!

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Welcome Aboard to these New Members of the AMMV

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CAPT. MICHAEL DINDIO.....	FOLSOM.....	CA
JENS INGE EGELAND	EUGENE	OR
DENNIS R. FLYNN	RIO GRANDE	NJ
MARIA FUSS	VALLEY VILLAGE	CA
FRANK THOMAS HIGGINS	HEALY.....	AK
JENNIFER JAWORSKI.....	NOKOMIS.....	FL
JENNIFER T. JESKE.....	DENVER.....	CO
BRIAN D. KELLY.....	PORTLAND.....	OR

SAMUEL RICHARD OHMACHT.....	GLOUCESTER.....	VA
GARY J. PIRKIG	BENICIA.....	CA
JAMES R. PREMAZA	VILLAS.....	NJ
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CAPT. HUGH STEPHENS.....	FRANKLIN SQUARE	NY
ANDREW C. SUBCLEFF	EDMONDS.....	WA
ARTHUR WATSON.....	CLEVELAND	TX
EDWARD J. WITT	NEW PORT RICHEY	FL



National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly

Members-at-Large:

Please send in your dues if you have not already done so. Our memberships expired on June 30, 2020 and many people have not renewed for the July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 membership year. Please mail a check for \$32 made out to AMMV to:

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

If you would prefer to renew online by credit card using Pay Pal please go to www.ammv.us and choose the button which is labeled RENEW. You will be prompted to enter your credit card information and contact information. When I receive the form, I will send you a new membership card and a letter acknowledging your renewal. Please don't delay!

If you are not sure if your dues are up to date, please call me at 475-470-9200. –Lynn Kelly

WAR BRIDE SHIPS

According to the WW II War Brides Association as many as one million women from fifty countries married American servicemen between 1942 and 1952. "Operation War Bride" brought between 60,000 and 70,000 women and children to the U.S. from the United Kingdom and 7,000 from Australia and New Zealand. In all it is believed over 100,000 made the trip from all over the world. U.S. Servicemen were promised that their wives and children would receive free passage to America. Not all chose to come but, many were from war torn European and Asian countries and saw marriage as a means of escaping the devastation at home.

In December of 1945 an act of congress called the War Brides Act eased immigration laws and opened

up a three-year window where non-American spouses and their children were permitted to be reunited with their American husbands.

Passenger and hospital ships as well as troop carriers provided the transportation. Cunard ships were often utilized, the most famous of those being *RMS Queen Mary* beginning in 1946. It was during one of these trips ferrying "brides" and children that the *Queen Mary* made her fastest Atlantic crossing in 3 days, 22 hours and 40 minutes. From February 3 to May 19 in 1946 the *Queen Mary* alone made six war bride trips delivering 12,886 women and children to the U.S. and Canada. From May 23 to September 18, 1946 the *Queen Mary* made seven voyages between Europe and Canada and hosted ten stowaways on the first of those seven voyages.

For more insight on the War Bride Ships I was fortunate to speak to AMMV member Neil Jones from Denver, CO. who signed onto the *Edmund B. Alexander* in July 1946. Neil writes:

When we declared war against Germany in 1917 the German passenger liner *SS Amerika* was lying at Boston.

We claimed her as a WW I war prize, changed the spelling of her name to *SS America* and used her as a troop ship. After WWI she was re-conditioned and entered transatlantic passenger service for United States Lines. Then, in 1939 United States Lines launched a new *SS America* and the old *America* became the U. S. Army Transport *Edmund B. Alexander*.

In July 1946, with WWII not yet officially over but with the fighting stopped, the *USAT Edmund B. Alexander* was re-assigned from a troop ship to a Bride Boat, the business of transporting soldier's wives from



continued on next page



A war bride and child from Surrey, England to America.

New York to Bremerhaven then sailing from Bremerhaven to Southampton and embarking English war brides for New York.

In July 1946 the ship was lying at Staten Island's Pier 15. I went aboard as a Wiper. I was 17 years old, just out of high school.

Our passengers coming aboard at New York were the wives of U.S. soldiers remaining in Europe as Occupation troops. Other than personnel from the Stewards and Medical Departments, crew members were not allowed in the passenger areas. Patrolling military personnel known as Masters-at-Arms and appropriate gates and signs enforced that Rule.

Being up on deck for arrival at Bremerhaven was an exhilarating time for any observer. It was impossible not to grin at the hundreds of soldiers on shore waving and shouting at hundreds of waving and shouting women lining the Promenade deck.

In late afternoon of September 7th, 1946, we departed



Troops and war brides return aboard the Queen Mary.

Bremerhaven bound for Southampton. There, British ladies married to U.S. servicemen would come aboard for the voyage to New York.

After that first voyage, I was promoted to Oiler. I was now the Oiler for the starboard main engine on the 12 to 4 watch.

That night, just a few minutes before midnight, I descended the steep steel ladders down through the engine room fiddley to the engine room's operating platform to relieve the watch. About fifteen minutes later I had just finished checking the temperature of the starboard engine's crank bearings when there was a hellish explosion. The ship lurched violently; the engine room went instantly dark. It was like being inside a huge steel drum when a giant slammed it with a huge hammer. From where I was sprawled on the floor plates just abaft our starboard engine and only a couple feet from the bottom step of the engine



Bon Voyage from British wives and the children of American G.I.s.

room ladder, I heard the clatter of unseen metal objects making loud clanging noises as they tumbled down through the fiddley combined with the piercing screech of high-pressure steam escaping from broken steam pipes somewhere. In the darkness I could see across to the port side where phosphorescent sea water poured into the ship where the big intake for the port engine's circulating pump had broken from the hull. It seemed only a few seconds passed before I heard the Chief Engineer bellowing above the cacophony, almost stepping on me as he arrived at the bottom of the engine room ladder, "Get those emergency lanterns on, the minesweepers must have missed one. We found it!"

The ship's crew kept the ship afloat through the night. The next day we were towed to the dry-dock at Bremerhaven where the ship remained for some months. After a couple weeks, the crew got a ride back to New York aboard the troop ship USAT General C. C. Ballou..



National Treasurer Dennis Kelly

THE U.S. MERCHANT MARINE: MSTS IN VIETNAM



The Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS) was established in 1949 as a successor to the Army Transport Service. It consisted of U. S. flag merchant vessels under contract to MSTS from whom they receive their orders.

MSTS involvement in Vietnam actually began in 1954 with the partitioning of Viet-

nam where their vessels evacuated approximately 300,000 Vietnamese refugees from North to South Vietnam in what became known as "Passage to Freedom". During the war, MSTS was responsible for delivering war supplies to Vietnam and serviced four separate customers: the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. By 1965 MSTS had approximately 300 freighters and tankers supplying Vietnam with an average of 75 ships and over 3000 merchant mariners in Vietnamese ports at any one time. MSTS vessels were crewed by civilians and carried 95% of the supplies used by our Armed Forces in Vietnam, including ammunition, bombs, and fuel. These supplies were delivered into combat zones often under fire. In fact, over 40 U.S. flagged Merchant vessels were "struck" by enemy fire, some of which sank. In all, 44 U.S. Merchant Mariners lost their life in the Vietnam War. One of the worst casualties was the SS Badger State, with a cargo of 8000 bombs and rockets, which sustained an on board explosion while en route to Vietnam, killing some 26 merchant seamen.

In 1970 MSTS became Military Sealift Command (MSC). On March 28, 1975 MSC vessels helped evacuate approximately 10,000 refugees from Da Nang, and later Saigon returning the next day, when Viet Cong forces had already overrun Da Nang, to evacuate thousands more. U. S. Merchant Mariners served with honor and distinction during the Vietnam War. They delivered ammunition, medical material, food and so much more. They brought in troops and brought home many of those named on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Many mariners paid the ultimate sacrifice. Their names belong on the Wall.

On a personal note, my involvement with the Vietnam War began on 14 June 1971 – 5 days after graduation from Kings Point. The KP Alumni Association and Foundation

called and asked if I would be interested in a Third Mate's position with American Trading Transportation Co., Inc. Of course I said yes and a couple of days later I was on a plane to Los Angeles, CA. I signed on as junior 3rd Mate at Terminal Island on the SS American Trader, a jumboized WWII era tanker. I sailed just under a year-and-a-half on the vessel while on charter to the MSC carrying jet fuel to various U. S. bases in Southeast Asia and Japan, including Da Nang and Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam. While in Cam Ranh Bay in November of 1971 we came under enemy fire from the foothills surrounding the bay. We had about 15,000 tons of jet fuel on board. When we finally broke free of the navy lighter and raised anchor, the enemy fire had come within approximately 250 yards of our position. For the next week, we sailed out of Cam Ranh Bay at sunset and returned at dawn the next day in order to avoid nighttime attack. It is an experience I will never forget.

As in all wars in which the United States has been involved since 1775, the American flag Merchant Marine played a vital, honorable and decisive role in Vietnam.

Dennis E. Kelly
AMMV National Treasurer

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NEWS Magazine Editor Sindy Raymond

THE JOYS OF DOING SEVERAL JOBS:



Helping the AMMV in several capacities recently re-opened a world-wide connection for me. When the late A. J. Wichita was National President of our organization, a chapter of the AMMV was officially founded in Australia, chaired by a gentleman named Ern Flint. This chapter was named the Small Ships Mariners chapter and for a

number of years was quite active. When Mr. Flint Crossed the Bar a few years ago, we slowly lost contact with that chapter and assumed that it had been discontinued.

However, a few weeks ago, a call came into my office from Down Under. As I have a very dear friend in Perth, Australia, who calls me quite often, I'm afraid I familiarly answered the call with "Hello, Luv". After an embarrassing explanation, the conversation started anew.

As you'll read later in this NEWS, a Melbourne-based group - the U. S. Army Small Ships Association, Inc. - is very much alive Down Under and enthusiastic about working with AMMV in future collaborations: to allow for recognition of WWII Merchant Marine participants, and especially to commemorate V-J Day in August. This 75th Victory in Japan anniversary marking the end of World War II will get especial attention world-wide and should be honored accordingly. They also expressed enthusiastic interest in our legislative efforts, including the "Storm the Hill" actions and are interested in further gratitude due to Congressman Garamendi and Senator Murkowski's support and the successful campaign for achieving the Congressional Gold Medal.

AMMV National President John Pitts has also been in contact with the Australian group and we are looking forward to further communication with them. Maybe (?) I won't be quite so familiar next time; however, you never know, Mate.

DESIGN OF THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL:

Since the news of the passage of our Congressional Gold Medal bill was featured in the Spring edition of the

AMMV NEWS Magazine, the most asked question that I've heard from AMMV members is: what will the medal-lion look like?

As reported by National Vice President Capt. Dru DiMattia later in this issue, the design process is moving forward – albeit slowly. This is partially due to the current pandemic situation and partly due to the many steps involved. If you would like further information, my door is always open and Lynn Kelly, at the National office, is always happy to provide updates, if they are available.

A SPECIAL COMMEMORATION OF SORTS:

Having just realized that this Summer issue of the *AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE NEWS MAGAZINE* marks an anniversary of some sort – 13 years of my Editorial efforts, it has struck me, again, that I haven't been the only one due credit for participating in this quarterly endeavor.

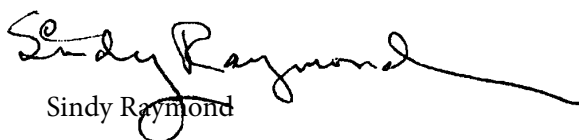
Our Graphics Design person, Susan Alexander, should be given major accolades for having so much patience with me during our "production" times and for reading my mind so well, when I'm thinking something but fail to put the proper thoughts into words. THANK YOU, Susan for all your due diligence over the years!! I could not have done this without you!

Many thanks, also, to our Editorial Committee members, AMMV National President John Pitts and National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly, who have both kept me on my toes for the last year. Their constant attention to detail is phenomenal and much appreciated.

TO ALL MEMBERS:

Social isolationism may be dirty words to some of us right now; but they are necessary ones in these pandemic times. Please, oh Please, take care of yourselves and no group hugs are allowed; darn it anyway! However, no matter how foolish we feel we look in a face mask, be careful and we look forward to seeing you and hearing from you in the future.

FAIR WINDS AND FULL SAILS,


Sindy Raymond

Celebrating 100 Years

Pearland resident Charles Mills probably figured his 100th birthday on June 18, 2020, wouldn't go unnoticed. But what happened that day was more than just a birthday celebration. According to the Pearland, (TX) NEWS, a procession of 100 vehicles, one for each year of his life, paraded past Mills' home in Country Place, a community for people age 55 and up. Mills retired from the National Maritime Union in 1989, and he and his late wife Wilhelmina moved to Country Place. Charles Mills served for 13 years as director of security for the community.

The Galveston native, who served in the U.S. Merchant Marine in World War II, sat in his front yard beneath a Merchant Marine flag as people in the passing vehicles gave birthday greetings. The event also included a presentation of a proclamation in Mills' honor by Mayor Tom Reid

Mills, who is African American, recently reflected, in a Navy League of the United States interview on his life and times, noting that his union had desegregated in 1937, much earlier than other parts of society. As worldwide attention focused on the death of George Floyd, who died on Memorial Day in police custody in Minneapolis and was buried in Pearland, Mills said he would have thought that more progress toward racial harmony would have been achieved by now.

The Navy League interview states: *As testament to the critical humanitarian operations of the Merchant Marine, Charles Mills' first voyage took him to the West Indies where he delivered vital food supplies to a suffering population. This sixteen-year-old boy who had been attending high school only a few weeks prior, was now a hero traversing the rough seas and saving lives. This is the life of a Merchant Marine, and it would become a lifelong calling for this self-described "born seaman."*

As World War II exploded across the oceans, Charles and his crewmates set sail for India. Aboard their ship was ammunition, cars, train components, and other military supplies. Like most Merchant Mariners at the time, Charles

became a critical asset to the war effort. Guiding the ship and its vital cargo through treacherous waterways they would be forced to change course and arrive in the Persian Gulf, finally delivering their supplies in Iraq with the help of Indian longshoremen (a truly international effort). The U. S.

flag ships were a favorite target for enemy attacks and changes to ship routes and port of destination became necessary for the safe delivery of military supplies.

Charles speaks passionately about the role of the Merchant Marine in wartime. When the military needs supplies, "we are the suppliers". During the war the Merchant Marine would deliver over 4,800 tons of supplies every hour! Thousands were killed, injured, or taken prisoner. They faced the same dangers as the other armed services, but, like his fellow Merchant Mariners, Charles would not receive the recognition he deserved until quite recently.

Still, it is clear that Charles is not concerned about his personal glory. He remembers his shipmates

and the mission of the Merchant Marine. "On a ship, every man has to look out for the next man," says Charles. He has that same attitude today as he commends the work of his fellow mariners. "The average American is not aware that the United States is a maritime country. We trade with other countries. We need U. S. ships to do that."

And we need more Merchant Mariners like Charles Mills.

Today, Mills has not given up striving for what he thinks is necessary. In 2019, at the age of 99, he and fellow supporters "Stormed the Hill" in Washington, DC petitioning Congresspersons and Senators to rally in support of recognition for equal rights for World War II Merchant Mariners. His efforts continue valiantly.

One of the dreams he has fought for, and seen through to fruition, is the attainment of recognition for US Merchant Mariners of WWII through the passage of the Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act into law. Thank you, Charles!



LIFE OF CHANGES:

Treatment in the U.S. Merchant Marine

While discussing the protests of the killing of George Floyd and demands for racial equality, I heard the comment "We are living in a time of change". We are; but the speaker seemed to use this phrase as an explanation, or excuse for the protests and demonstrations as if change were a singular event in time. In my mind, change is constant. If we did not change we would stagnate. Change is inevitable and is a response to the need for improvement. The improvements at the forefront currently are for racial equality. This is not a singular event in time and has demonstrated the need to be addressed again.

In each of the presentations made at National Maritime Day ceremonies or other talks to fellow mariners or in a public forum, I have made special note of the fact that the US Merchant Marine was never segregated. I was very proud to be associated with a progressive industry and organization with no history of segregation as if it were an altruistic decision. As I began to look deeper and address the issue from a business point of view, I realized that in the Merchant Marine segregation was bad for business. When a Captain needed a full crew to enable the ship to operate efficiently, the warm body theory becomes a business reality. Many seamen were hired off the dock in "Pier Head Jumps" at out ports by the Captain to fill a need.

Even though the Merchant Marine had no segregation policy in WWII, I won't mislead anyone in thinking it was a place where all were treated equally and justly. The same social prejudices and racial hierarchies existed aboard ship just as ashore, but in an environment where you didn't have to like your other shipmates, but you had to work with them, sometimes at a distance. There was limited defense against fixed job calls and onerous work assignments. Jim Crow was alive and well and even crews who got along aboard ship couldn't carry that camaraderie ashore. In some cases, entire shipboard departments were populated according to race. In fact, some working parts of the vessels themselves were referred to in terms that are racially unacceptable by today's standards. They were racially unacceptable then as well, but change evolves, it isn't always immediate. In the meantime, those unfortunate recipients of such injustice and dishonor had to tolerate it to survive.

In researching the names of those WWII Merchant Marine Veterans inscribed on the American Merchant Marine Veterans Walls of Honor in San Pedro, California, I was astonished to find names representing ancestry from

Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and every corner of our world. These Merchant crews were composed of seamen representing each ethnicity and religious belief. Unlike the uniformed Military services, the Merchant Marine, at that time, was a place where you could "run away to sea" with very few, if any, questions asked, and no testing or qualification required. During WWII there were training "boot camps", which did provide training and lent to the military posture of many Merchant Mariners at that time, but participation in that process was not required to ship out on a Merchant vessel.

Merchant Seamen have a history of less than desirable treatment, especially if sailing in the forecabin (fo'c'sle), before the mast, or in an unlicensed capacity, and that is without categorizing that treatment according to race, religion, ethnicity, etc. As today, Shipboard officers were required to have a license, schooling, training, sea going experience, or combination, to qualify for their position, and like ashore, the conditions improved as you moved higher through the ratings. Prior to recognition being brought to the plight of Merchant Mariners through the book "Two Years Before the Mast" and later, through the maritime labor movement in the late 1800's, Seamen were regarded as chattel with no rights, especially at sea. In societal priority they were considered less than slaves and indentured servants. The value of a seaman was less than that of a slave as related to the US Electoral College where slave owners were given credit for votes based on the number of slaves they owned. Each slave was considered 2/3rds of a person, or 2/3rds of a vote for the owner. As deplorable as considering a human being as 2/3rds of a person is by today's standards, a seaman did not even have this affixed value to protect against damage or loss (read: death) to the Master's property.

The title Master for a ship's Captain not only indicates a person considered to have reached the top of their profession, it also recognized a Captain at sea as Master under God who could make or break laws with impunity when dealing with their crew and be answerable to no one for their actions, including murder. Herman Melville's "Billy Budd" takes a stab at explaining how expendable a Seaman's life was considered in the era of the War of 1812, as well as other books like "Mutiny on the Bounty".

Before change evolved via the Red Book and maritime union's efforts to protect Seamen by holding those offenders accountable for their actions, Seamen were considered

less than slaves even though a payment for their services was expected. Seamen were paid off at the end of the voyage after payment was received by the Captain/Agent for the sale of the cargo, all vessel expenses were settled (pilot, towing, line handlers, etc.) and stores for the next voyage were loaded and paid for. In some cases, the Seaman did not receive any pay for the voyage. There was no appeal process or grievance and no one to whom they could plead their case or cared.

Times have changed and are changing again and hopefully, will continue to change in a positive way. What was once considered acceptable is no longer so, and we will all be better for the change. Due to the conditions endured, the racism and discrimination, both active and passive, that has limited the true potential of so many, I admire those who have gone before me in my chosen profession as a Seaman and stand in awe of those who endured, tolerated and fought to change such injustices and improve life at sea and ashore for all.

My appreciation for the experiences of many of my fel-

low mariners, who have lived through racist practices and been discriminated against, is limited because I have not been subjected to the same. At the same time, I hold them in high esteem for being successful against compounded odds that the majority of us will never personally experience.

I cite US Merchant Marine Veteran and AMMV member Charles Mills and dedicate this article to him. He celebrated his 100th birthday in June. He has witnessed, been party to, and contributed to many positive changes in the course of his life, and continues to fight for his beliefs, with a smile.

My current feelings for my Country are akin to those I hold for a Family member who is ill. I hope and pray she recovers and becomes stronger for the experience.

Fraternally,

John Pitts

National President

American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc.



Merchant Marine vessels with mixed-race crews were known as "checkerboards." Here, mariners from the Liberty ship SS Booker T. Washington play with their mascot, Booker. National Archives, 111-SC-180663.

American Merchant Marine Veterans

Profit & Loss

July 2019 through June 2020

Income	
402 · Contributions	40,741.72
403 · Interest Income & Bank Bonuses	926.45
405 · Mission Support Fund	7,537.51
410 · Chapter and MAL Dues	
HUM · Humboldt Bay	125.00
AKG · Alaska Greatlands	224.00
BEE · Beehive Mariners	75.00
BSM · Big Sky Mariners	140.00
DAR · Dennis Roland	1,376.00
EOH · Edwin O'Hara	150.00
GLD · Golden Gate	1,039.00
HIR · High Rollers	1,425.00
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
Total 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues	32,400.58
411 · Convention Income	
412 · Convention Registrations	630.00
413 · Comm. Book Ads	7,000.00
414 · Convention Donations	7,295.00
Total 411 · Convention Income	14,925.00
Total Income	96,531.26
Expense	
500 · Fixed Expense	
501 · Bank Charge	45.00
507 · Telephone	390.00
511 · Service Charges - Paypal	173.94
Total 500 · Fixed Expense	608.94
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
Total 514 · Convention Expenses	8,488.18
520 · Mission Advance	
525 · Mission Support Exp	5,492.50
526 · Internet Initiative	876.50
528 · JCC Storage Expense	886.40
Total 520 · Mission Advance	7,255.40
530 · AMMV News Magazine	
533 · Postage	3,606.53
536 · Printing	9,861.58
538 · Layout	5,200.00
539 · Editorial Fee	1,200.00
530 · AMMV News Magazine - Other	26.00
Total 530 · AMMV News Magazine	19,894.11
550 · Personnel	
551 · Administration	18,600.00

Total 550 · Personnel	18,600.00
560 · Operating Expense	
564 · Office Supplies	439.92
565 · Postage - Office	352.89
566 · Printing - Office	1,531.64
567 · Licenses & Fees	254.43
569 · Legal Fees	1,000.00
Total 560 · Operating Expense	3,578.88
Total Expense	58,665.90
Net Income	37,865.36

Members-at-Large:

Please send in your dues if you have not already done so. Our memberships expired on June 30, 2020 and many people have not renewed for the July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021 membership year. Please mail a check for \$32 made out to AMMV to:

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

If you would prefer to renew online by credit card using Pay Pal please go to www.ammv.us and choose the button which is labeled RENEW. You will be prompted to enter your credit card information and contact information. When I receive the form, I will send you a new membership card and a letter acknowledging your renewal. Please don't delay!

If you are not sure if your dues are up to date, please call me at 475-470-9200. –Lynn Kelly

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

	<u>Jun 30, 20</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
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
Total Checking/Savings	<u>144,942.90</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>144,942.90</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>144,942.90</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
20000 · Accounts Payable	1,637.41
Total Accounts Payable	<u>1,637.41</u>
Credit Cards	
200 · Chase Credit Card	637.83
Total Credit Cards	<u>637.83</u>
Other Current Liabilities	
311 · Dues Receivable 2020	4,969.46
312 · Member Recruitment	893.00
314 · Mission Support Donations	65,507.49
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>71,369.95</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>73,645.19</u>
Total Liabilities	73,645.19
Equity	
32001 · Retained Earnings	33,432.35
Net Income	37,865.36
Total Equity	<u>71,297.71</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>144,942.90</u>

**AMMV BUDGET: FISCAL YEAR
July 1st, 2020 - June 30th, 2021**

INCOME

402 CONTRIBUTIONS	\$41,000.00
410 DUES Chapter Dues \$25. mbr.	\$8,000.00
MAL Dues @ \$32 mbr.	\$24,000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED DUES	\$32,000.00
404 Interest Income + Bank Bonuses	\$925.00
405 Mission Support Fund	\$7,550.00
TOTAL INTEREST, BONUSES, MISSION SPRT.	\$8,475.00
411 CONVENTION INCOME	
412 Registrations	\$630.00
414 Donations	\$7,295.00
TOTAL CONVENTION INCOME	\$7,925.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$89,400.00

FIXED EXPENSES

501 Bank Charges	\$45.00
507 Telephone	\$390.00
511 Service Charges PayPal	\$174.00
500 TOTAL FIXED EXPENSES	\$609.00

512 Memorial Expense	\$150.00
513 Advertising	\$100.00
TOTAL MEMORIAL & AD EXPENSES	\$250.00

514 CONVENTION EXPENSES

515 Convention Events	\$950.00
517 Convention Misc. Expenses	\$6,400.00
TOTAL CONVENTION EXPENSES	\$7,350.00

520 MISSION ADVANCE EXPENSES

525 Mission Support ExpenseS	\$5,500.00
526 Internet Initiative	\$875.00
TOTAL 520 MISSION ADVANCE EXPENSES	\$6,375.00

530 AMMV NEWS MAGAZINE EXPENSES

533 Postage	\$3600.00
536 Printing	\$9,900.00
538 Layout	\$5,200.00
539 Editorial Fee	\$1,200.00
TOTAL AMMV NEWS MAGAZINE EXPENSES	\$19,900.00

550 PERSONNEL EXPENSES

551 Administration	\$18,600.00
TOTAL 550 PERSONNEL EXPENSES	\$18,600.00

560 OPERATING EXPENSES

564 Office Supplies	\$440.00
565 Postage - Office	\$350.00
566 Printing - Office	\$1,500.00
567 Licensing & Fees	\$250.00
569 Legal Fees	\$1,000.00
TOTAL 560 OPERATING EXPENSES	\$3,540.00

TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES	<u>\$56,624.00</u>
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NET INCOME	<u>\$32,776.00</u>
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THE JONES ACT'S BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT BASE

From the AFL-CIO Maritime Trades Department on July 7, 2020; and forwarded to AMMV by Paul Doell, American Maritime Officers Union's National President.

Last month, the maritime industry and the nation recognized the 100th anniversary of the Jones Act, the freight cabotage law that states cargo moved from one domestic port to another must be moved aboard a U.S.-crewed, U.S.-built, U.S.-flagged and U.S.-owned vessel.

Passed shortly after World War I, the Jones Act was part of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, which addressed the lack of U.S.-flag shipping capacity to move, export and import goods. The Jones Act is only the latest in a series of laws passed by Congress going back to its first session in 1789-90 to support U.S. maritime interests.

Throughout the month of June, elected officials serving in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives representing both major political parties have proclaimed their support for the law.

In a joint statement issued by Sens. Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA), the chair and ranking member of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, as well as Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Sam Graves (R-MO), the chair and ranking member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, "As bipartisan leaders of the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over maritime matters, we are committed to preserving the Jones Act.

"The Jones Act has been a pillar of American security and prosperity for a century. With the pandemic at hand, it is more valuable than ever to our security and economic interests. We are committed to seeing the Jones Act preserved for years to come," the foursome wrote.

Reiterating his longstanding support for the measure and the industry, Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) declared, "Congress must continue to support our nation's maritime workforce by upholding the Jones Act and opposing deeply misguided efforts to undermine it."

National security was an important factor in several of the remarks made to back the Jones Act.

"This pillar of maritime policy is to credit for successfully protecting our our maritime economy and our national security for nearly a century," said Rep. John Rutherford (R-FL). "Removing the market certainty that the Jones Act provides would decimate the American maritime industry, putting our national security in jeopardy."

Added Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), "The Jones Act underpins U.S. maritime defense policy and is essential to preserving national security interests at home and aboard. Jones Act crews and vessels play a critical role in securing the nation's strategic interests."

From Michigan's Democratic Senator Gary Peters: "Each and every day, 365 days a year, the Jones Act func-

tions to protect our nation's 95,000 miles of coastline and inland waterways, limiting access to foreign vessels and crews while mariners serve as the eyes and ears to strengthen border and homeland security. Over the last 100 years, the men and women of the U.S. maritime workforce have also unfailingly answered

the call of duty, providing vital services to support the nation in times of crisis."

"At its heart, this law strengthens American naval capabilities, prevents foreign ships from roaming throughout our inland waterways, and protects our country from unknown foreign threats," noted Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA).

From his neighboring state of Mississippi, Republican Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith said, "The Jones Act has enhanced American prosperity and national security ever since its enactment on June 5, 1920. It puts America first over subsidized foreign shipbuilders and foreign vessel operators that do not pay U.S. taxes or comply with U.S. regulations."

Rep. Filemon Vela (D-TX) responded, "For the Department of Defense, maintaining a U.S.-flagged fleet is critical to ensuring we have sufficient U.S. sealift capability, available at a moment's notice, to defend our nation. Not



only does the Jones Act support this vital national security requirement, it also provides and economic benefit to our nation.”

The chair of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY), pointed out, “The bedrock principles and protections of the Jones Act are as essential today as they were when the Congress bill was passed a century ago. We are, at our core, a maritime nation. We cannot be complacent in our defense of the Jones Act, which remains a critical component of U.S.maritime and military strategy.”

That aspect was not lost on several other members of the House when the Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces met June 23 to review the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

Subcommittee Chair Joe Courtney (D-CT) recalled earlier remarks from U.S. Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby and U.S. Transportation Command Deputy Commander Dee Mewbourne (a U.S. Navy vice admiral) when he said they “reiterated strongly the fact that the Jones Act is really critical to making sure that we have the auxiliary fleet, sealift fleet.”

Retired Navy commander, Rep. Elaine Luria (D-VA), added during the hearing, “We all know the value of the Jones Act on our national security, on our U.S.-flag merchant fleet, and in protecting American jobs for American mariners.”

Referring to the Jones Act, Rep. Rob Wittman noted, “We understand how incredibly important it is to U.S. maritime interests.” But Congress wasn’t alone in realizing the value of the Jones Act to the global economy.

The London-based International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) wrote, “It is the standard towards which other national seafarers and their unions strive to achieve, since it protects the right and opportunity to work in their national trade on higher national wages and working conditions. The Jones Act also helps raise global wages and working conditions for seafarers in international trades through the establishment of such high standards.”

The chair of the ITF’s Cabotage Task Force, Jim Given of Canada who also serves as the MTD Eastern Area Executive Board Member, flat out declared, “The Jones Act is the ‘flagship’ of cabotage laws.”



RAISE YOUR HAND RAISE YOUR VOICE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



AMMV Membership Dues were due July 1, 2020

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

American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV)

P.O. Box 2024

Darien, CT 06820-2024

Chapter Members, pay your dues to your CEO or Treasurer

A SPECIALIZED EFFORT

THE AUSTRALIAN WWII U.S. ARMY SMALL SHIPS SECTION

Editor's note: Recently, AMMV was contacted by a non-profit organization – the U. S. Army Small Ships Association, Inc. in Melbourne, Australia. Further “developments” are pending.

WHAT WAS THE U.S. ARMY SMALL SHIPS SECTION?

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, they rapidly seized as many islands in the Pacific as they could. They landed on the north side of the island of New Guinea in 1942 and began to sweep down the islands, heading geographically, towards Northern Australia and the Australians were, understandably, worried about their safety.

The entire Australian Army was fighting with the British in North Africa and the only thing that stood between their home and Japanese invasion was the American Army and Navy. When General Douglas MacArthur established his headquarters in Australia, the Aussies knew he

was not falling back any further and their country would surely be safe. By 30 March 1942, the Navy would command the Central Pacific while MacArthur would retake New Guinea and the islands north of Australia.

The idea of organizing a unit of small sailing ships of adventurous civilians and soldiers with sailing experience to deliver supplies to Bataan, in the Philippines, called “Mission X,” was suggested. The Australian government endorsed the decision on 14 April 1942. However the inter-service rivalry meant the US Navy could spare no Marines and landing craft for MacArthur. He had to find another source. When the idea for a small ships unit originated, the US Army was still holding onto the peninsula of Bataan in the Philippines with the promise of help, but the US Army and Navy had few resources to deliver much needed supplies. The Army Transportation Service (ATS) had no ships available to supply troops in the South Pacific

and the US Army would not have an amphibious capability until 1943.

MISSION X:

Experience had proven that small craft would be necessary for any war in the Pacific. Thus began work with “Mission X”; this organization’s initial plan was to find a way to relieve the Philippines using small watercraft purchased in the Pacific. These would in theory go unnoticed by the Japanese. Continued advances made by Japanese forces ended any hope of relieving the Philippines and the defense of Australia became the primary goal in the Pacific.



The Mission X cadre flew to Melbourne, Australia in bombers in March 1942 to create a Small Ship Section of MacArthur’s Southwest Pacific Area to provide transport to the beleaguered defenders of Bataan, but on 9 April 1942 shortly after Mission X’s arrival, the US Army on

Bataan surrendered. Mission X would become the Small Ships Supply Command, later Small Ships Division, under the Transportation Service of the US Army Forces in Australia (USAFIA). The Small Ships’ mission was to deliver ammunition, medical supplies, and perishable food to outlying bases that could not be reached by deep draft ships and assist in tactical operations when required.

A WORK IN PROGRESS:

To assemble the fleet of Small Ships, the USASOS purchased what was available locally, requisitioned from the United States, and began construction in Australia and New Zealand. The original officers of the Small Ships split up upon arrival to find adequate vessels. Using the reverse Lend Lease Program the Small Ships purchased or commandeered with promise to pay all sailing craft they needed, but they needed a skillful eye to ensure they acquired serviceable watercraft. War shortages meant that



ships were procured from wherever they could be gotten in Australia created a fleet like none seen before. The vessels ranged in any size, shape and age, some powered by motor or sail including several built in the previous century. Fishing trawlers made suitable landing craft for the islands because they had shallow draft, a stern anchor and best of all a winch for hauling in nets. The crew could attach the anchor chain to the winch and use it to pull the vessel off the beach.

Because Australia had to build up an army to fight in the Pacific, the Australian Government did not allow the US Army to recruit any man eligible for military service; so consequently, the Small Ships could only recruit old men and young boys, or men physically unfit for military service. These civilian crews initially signed up for six month contracts and issued two sets of khakis, shoes and cap. Most wore civilian clothes aboard ships and bought the billed caps with the Army Transportation Service insignia for going ashore and impressing the girls. These Australian sailors were paid in American money, which was considerably higher than normal Australian wages. Upon completion of their six-month contracts, they sailed home to Australia where they could sign up for another six months.

The odd assortment of boats with their crews made their way to New Guinea, specifically to Milne Bay on the tip of New Guinea to be the primary means of supplying the American and Australian Troops battling the Japanese Army for control on New Guinea and the protection of the Northern Coast of Australia.

The New Guinea coast had not been charted since the previous century, which meant that these sailors had to face unknown reefs and shallows when bringing supplies and equipment to the Allied forces,

to include artillery and light tanks. Local natives, known as "Fuzzy Wuzzies," were hired to unload the boats by hand once they came ashore. In an attempt to avoid enemy air attacks night runs were common but extremely dangerous and required the teaching of celestial navigation to all boat commanders. But the small ships were the best option for delivering supplies; what roads existed were trails, and the few airstrips were hampered by continual rains.

As the war continued some of these vessels and their crews would follow the Army's advance to the Philippines as they continued to provide supply operations with tugs and barges, and operate small ships used for medical evacuation. While the Small Boat Service personnel would continue to operate their boats in the Philippines and areas of the Southwest Pacific that had been successfully retaken, the growing American military might meant that larger war built vessels manned by American crews were taking their places in the coming invasions. Many small boat personnel would sign onto these vessels and continue to serve until the end of the War.

The Small Ships Section had played a vital role in driving the Japanese out of New Guinea and providing the only assault landing craft capability until the arrival of the 2nd Engineer Amphibian Brigade (ESB). The Small Ships accomplished with wooden sailing ships and crews unfit for military service what the 2nd ESB and US Army harbor craft units with modern landing craft and steel-hulled vessels would perform later in the war.

DEFENSE OF AUSTRALIA, IF NECESSARY:

During this time, 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 Kengo 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”.

During 1943 a Seamanship Apprentice School operated 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."

KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE:

Established in 1963, 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 75 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.

TODAY – A SPECIAL PROJECT:

We can purchase an Historical Registered Vessel named SHANGRI LA, which served Small Ships Section and carried MacArthur's personal staff to the Philippines during 1944. The vessel is available at a very cheap price, approximately 7,000 AUD, however we would require significant funding to restore her.

We have a plan to operate the vessel as a living museum dedicated to Small Ships Section, in conjunction with a youth mentorship program.

If we cannot raise the funds required to restore the vessel, we would like to purchase her anyway for display in a local maritime museum.

Given that the vessel may be destroyed if we do not purchase her, it has become a matter of priority to save her as a significant historical relic.

There is much moral support for our proposal in Australia, however our Association does not have the purchase price and the full restoration cost of 1 million AUD is beyond the reach of our members.

For a copy of the full proposal about restoring the "MV Shangri-La", please check out the website: <http://www.usarmysmallships.asn.au/> or email: usassa@hotmail.com



A FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION: and the source of an answer

One of most frequently asked questions Lynn Kelly, AMMV National office Administrator, Sindy Raymond, AMMV NEWS Magazine Editor and others receive is “Where can I find shipping records and/or logs for my (deceased) WWII Merchant Mariner relative?”

The response has recently been updated. In a December, 2019 press release the National Archives News announced:

The public now has access to previously unavailable information concerning former merchant mariners and their maritime service through Merchant Marine Licensing Files, made available by the National Archives at St. Louis.

The public can access these records in two ways: through a request made via an offsite reference request (with reproduction provided for a fee), or via onsite viewing at the National Archives at St. Louis Research Room.

Reference request mailing address:

National Archives & Record Administration
National Archives – Saint Louis
ATTN: RL-SL
P.O. Box 38757
Saint Louis, MO 63138-0757

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/nationalarchivesstlouis/>

The press release continued: - The collection opened to the public on December 2, 2019.

"Service in the Merchant Marine was considered civilian service under several different civilian personnel agencies. However, service was considered military in nature for those who served between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946. Due to the multifaceted nature of the Merchant Marine, we are very grateful to obtain this collection in order to provide clarity to their service," said Theresa Fitzgerald, Chief of Archival Operations in St. Louis.

Merchant mariners or merchant seamen are assigned to vessels that primarily transport cargo and passengers during peacetime. During wartime, however, they can become an auxiliary to the United States Navy—called upon to deliver military personnel and materiel for the military. She explained that the files provide a unique glimpse into our nation's maritime history and offer a visual record of the toll that wartime service took on these merchant mariners.

"Though looking into the past, it is usually rare that we can also look into the faces from the past. That is not the

case with the Merchant Marine Licensing Files," Fitzgerald said. "These records not only tell the complicated stories of merchant mariners, some of whom served in peacetime and were transitioned to very different wartime service, but they also, almost consistently, show the faces of the young men and women in service. It is not uncommon to find multiple pictures in these files. Here at the National Archives at St. Louis, we are honored to observe the change in a face over time-in-service via these photographs. It is humbling to see how service affected these individuals."

The first block of this series contained 4,800 cubic feet of records. The series includes personnel records with papers documenting the service of merchant seamen licensed by the United States in the years up to and including 1967. These pre-1967 records, from Record Group 26, Records of the U.S. Coast Guard, Merchant Marine Personnel and Licensing Records, contain a wealth of information. Most notably they contain rich genealogical history, photographs, and artifacts such as ID cards or log books that relay information from their journey over the seas.

Each file provides the name and address of the seaman, place and date of birth, and license numbers. It also notes the name of vessels served on and the seaman's status. The personnel record can contain an identification number ("Z" number), relevant contract renewal and discharge information, and the date and place of issue of other certifications, applications, licenses, and correspondence. The record may also contain photographs, birth certificates, and documents related to union membership.

Another two blocks in this collection, approximately 3,283 feet of records, will be accessioned at the National Archives at St. Louis in the coming months.

The Coast Guard National Maritime Center (NMC) in Martinsburg, WV, is still the approving official for World War II Merchant Marine separation documents. The National Archives at St. Louis does not provide information for benefits or separation documents, such as DD-214s, for these records. Requests for these documents should still be made to:

**National Maritime Center (NMC-421), ATTN: WWII
100 Forbes Drive, Martinsburg, WV 25404**

**Main Inquiry Line: 1-888-I-ASK-NMC
1-888-427-5662**

Alternate Line: 1-304-433-3400

Pier 45 blaze adds another close call to mighty SS Jeremiah O'Brien's history

Written by Carl Nolte for the San Francisco Chronicle May 30, 2020

Something woke Joan Raphael in her room aboard the old gray Liberty Ship Jeremiah O'Brien last Saturday. It was just after 4, the darkest time of the night, nearly two hours before sunrise. "I didn't know what woke me exactly," she said. "But I was awake, and then I heard this huge sound. I heard it before I saw it. It was fire." The ship was tied to a pier, and the pier was ablaze.

Raphael — everybody calls her Joanie — is a member of the volunteer crew of the O'Brien, a ship that is both a floating museum and a living memorial to the American flag merchant marine. The ship is 76 years old and survived wartime service in the Atlantic and Pacific. It almost did not survive that night.

The story is personal for me because I sailed on the O'Brien on its 1994 voyage from San Francisco to Europe to commemorate the 50th anniversary of D-Day. I worked as a deckhand and wrote stories for The Chronicle about



the trip. I got hooked on the ship and have done volunteer work aboard off and on ever since. All sailors — even amateur ones like me — will tell you that once you sail in the crew, a little of that ship stays with you. So the fire was personal, as if someone close to me nearly died.

Here's what happened. Raphael and three other crew members were spending the night aboard at the ship's berth at Pier 45 at Fisherman's Wharf to do some work

and for security reasons. She acted quickly when she realized the danger. "I jumped up," she said. "And I pounded on the doors where the others were sleeping. 'Get up! Get up! Fire!'"

By that time the pier shed, not 50 feet away from the ship's side, was blazing and roaring, a wall of fire. "It was terrifying," Raphael said. She and the others managed to lower the gangway. It had been pulled up for the night, but the fire was close and out of control.

They had to get away.

Raphael and Jeff Croutier ran down the pier away from the fire as fast as they could. Steve Wright and Bob Jarvis jumped in their cars parked in the shed and tried to drive out. The smoke was rolling and black. "I couldn't see where I was going," Wright said. "I kept running into things, like bumper cars." But they couldn't stop. "I looked back and saw the other cars right where we had been parked just engulfed in fire."

All four got away, shaken but safe. In the meantime, San Francisco firefighters were on the scene with engines and ladder trucks; it was a



four-alarm fire, the biggest on the waterfront in years.

But now the Jeremiah O'Brien was in grave danger, tied to the pier with stout mooring lines, the engine cold and dead. The only way to get the ship off the pier would be with tugs if any were available nearby at that hour. There was no time for that.

Just then the San Francisco fireboat St. Francis came steaming to the rescue. The St. Francis can pump 18,000 gallons of bay water a minute and poured water between the burning pier shed and the O'Brien. Later a second SFFD fireboat, the Phoenix, came to help. The shed, where the fire smoldered for two days, is a total loss, but the O'Brien sustained only minor damage. There was no doubt the fireboats saved the ship.

"It was a miracle," Cevan LeSieur, captain of the O'Brien, said later. "I don't use that word easily, but it was a miracle. We will be eternally grateful to the San Francisco Fire Department for their quick and professional response, but I think we can also thank the angels above



said, "That will do, but she's rather an ugly duckling."

The O'Brien first sailed in the Atlantic. On D-Day in 1944, it carried 167 tons of ammunition, 135 armored vehicles and 573 American soldiers across the English Channel

to France. According to ship historian Chris Friedenbach, the O'Brien was at anchor off Omaha Beach when it was targeted by German bombers. They missed, but shrapnel hit one of the lifeboats. Later the ship sailed to South America and then to the Pacific carrying ammunition. It also went to India and



that were on watch early this morning."

Sailors are superstitious. It's bad luck to whistle on a ship, it's bad luck to start a voyage on a Friday, and it's bad luck to say a ship has good luck. Fingers crossed, they do say the O'Brien is a lucky ship.

Named for a Revolutionary War hero and launched on June 19, 1943, in South Portland, Maine, the Jeremiah O'Brien was built in 56 days, one of 2,751 almost identical cargo ships. Only two remain. The other operational Liberty Ship is the John Brown in Baltimore.

They were built to a simple design, powered by an old-fashioned steam engine that developed only 2,500 horsepower. They were slow — 11 knots was a good speed for a Liberty Ship. That's 12.659 land mph. They were not beautiful. Shown the design of the first Liberty Ship, President Franklin Roosevelt



Australia. Not a scratch.

After the war the ship was laid up in the Mothball Fleet in Suisun Bay at the head of San Francisco Bay. It stayed there for 33 years in a state of suspended animation until a group of volunteers, headed by retired Rear Adm. Thomas Patterson, brought the ship back to life as a memorial to the merchant marine and the Naval Armed Guard who sailed aboard in wartime.

The O'Brien has been sailing on San Francisco Bay for 40 years, and its last big adventure was in 1994 when volunteers — average age 70 — took the ship to Europe and back for the anniversary of D-Day.

All of the Jeremiah O'Brien's wartime crew is gone now, and many of the hundreds of the men and women who volunteered on the ship in the years since have also crossed the bar for the last time. "I think those people must have been looking out for us," LeSieur said after the fire.

Editor's note: the SS Jeremiah has since been moved to dock at Pier 35 after much of Pier 45 burned. The two memorials – to WWII Merchant Mariners and Korean War Mariners – which were situated next to the ravaged building were saved and are temporarily situated aboard the Jeremiah O'Brien. Repairs to the JOB from fire damage include repainting the port side due to blistering from the heat of the fire.

San Francisco Fire Department's Lt. Jonathan Baxter said during a press conference that his "professional opinion" is that without the fire boat used during the fight against the powerful blaze, the Jeremiah O'Brien would have been burned.

Fire boat 3 was detailed and tasked with saving the ship, Baxter explained. In doing so, the fire boat battled greater than 100 ft length of flames over the ship and structural collapse.

"The fire boat did an amazing, amazing defensive fire attack and defended our history specifically on Memorial Day Weekend. It saved that vessel."



AN UNEXPECTED DONATION

William "Bill" Galvez, US Merchant Marine Veteran and AMMV member, recently crossed the final bar. Shortly after his passing, the AMMV was notified that Bill designated the American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc. as beneficiary of the distribution of his Individual Retirement Account (IRA) upon his death.

Bill's forethought and generosity are impressive and appreciated very much! At a stage in time when the youngest Merchant Marine Veterans are in their 90's, the backbone of the AMMV, who founded and maintained the organization all these years, and accomplished so much, are limited in their numbers and ability to support the AMMV as in the past. Bill's beneficial donation to the AMMV upon his passing acknowledges his desire for us to continue the fight for recognition and benefits for American Merchant Marine Veterans. Thank you Bill for your service, membership, friendship, and continued support!

Mariners and others of a certain age may make a donation to AMMV from their Individual Retirement Accounts. Individuals who have reached the age of 70½ may direct some or all of their required minimum distributions di-

rectly to AMMV. By directing an IRA distribution directly to AMMV, the individual will avoid incurring taxable income, may avoid being pushed into a higher income tax bracket, and might preserve certain tax deductions and avoid increased tax liabilities on Social Security income.

To make this donation, instruct your IRA custodian that you want to make a *Qualified Charitable Distribution* directly to "American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc."

Be sure not to withdraw the funds yourself and then forward them to AMMV, because that will leave you with taxable income, which will cost if you don't itemize. Most IRA custodians can assist you with this distribution, which must be made before December 31 of the year in question.

You may also designate AMMV as a beneficiary to receive all or part of your IRA when you die. You would instruct your IRA custodian, on an updated beneficiary designation form, what portion of your IRA should pass to American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc. after your death.

Submitted by AMMV National President John Pitts, with thanks to Chuck Durante and Dan Stanek of Connolly-Gallagher for their contribution to this article.



Richard Burbine, AMMV Member-at-Large

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THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HISTORIC VOYAGE OF THE S/S MEREDITH VICTORY: THE CAUSE MOVES FORWARD

The cause for Servant of God Brother Marinus, O.S.B. (Captain Leonard LaRue) continues to move forward in spite of snow storms and a pandemic. Here are some of the things that have occurred since my last article.

- ✠ The pandemic prevented us from having a meeting at St. Paul's Abbey on March 30, 2020. Instead, we held a GoToMeeting on May 28, and formally instituted the Guild for Servant of God Brother Marinus, O.S.B. The goals of the Guild are:
 - Promote the public knowledge of Servant of God Brother Marinus;
 - Encourage the recitation of the prayer of Brother Marinus, and asking him for his intercessions;
 - Financially support the expenses related to the cause;

I certainly invite AMMV members to consider praying the prayer and becoming a guild member for \$50.00 per year. (<https://aosusa.amercommerce.com/store/pg/51-Cause-for-Brother-Marinus/Capt-LaRue-clone1.aspx>)

- ✠ Bishop Serratelli established two commissions for the cause. They were the Theological Commission and the Historical Commission. The job of the Theological Commission is to review the writings of Captain LaRue for their orthodoxy. For us, this has been a two-edged sword. There are very few writings by Brother Marinus/Captain LaRue. So, this will not take long. However, there are very few writings by Brother Marinus/Captain LaRue. So, it limits our understanding of his spiritual and theological ideas.

The Historical Commission will be responsible for building a biography of Brother Marinus. Again, this will be a challenge because of Brother Marinus' unassuming character. He was a

ship master who did his job, and he was a monk for 40 years who ran the gift shop and was the abbey porter. There is not a lot of historical information outside the *Ship of Miracles* story.

- ✠ Fortunately, the author Philip Lacovara has spent the

last year in research on Brother Marinus' life. He has researched the archives at the Pennsylvania Nautical School and the national archives, and has interviewed the living witnesses of Brother Marinus. Lacovara plans to publish his work this Fall so that it will be available for the 70th anniversary of the *Ship of Miracles*.

- ✠ One of the *Meredith Victory's* 14,000 refugees onboard was the 14-year-old Kim Young-Sook. After the war, she and her family left Geojedo for Busan, and in 1955, she was baptized Catholic, and took the saint name *Bernadetta*. In 1962, she traveled to Germany, and with six other young Korean women, she became a professed sister of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

We will work with the Diocese of Busan to have a tribunal interview with Sr. Bernadetta. We want to capture her story of the voyage, and why she has felt for decades that Captain LaRue was a saint. We are waiting until the pandemic subsides and her health improves.

- ✠ As reported in my last installment, Staff Officer Robert Lunney was interviewed by the Tribunal. The hope was the Merl Smith and Burley Smith would also be interviewed. Then a snow storm shut down the city. The interviews were rescheduled for April, and then the pandemic took hold. Now, dates have been set for September. Pray that these men's stories can be captured for the cause and for history.
- ✠ Finally, Ned Forney the grandson of Colonel Edward Forney was on South Korean television on June 25, 2020. Col. Forney orchestrated the evacuation from Hungnam in 1950. During the interview, Ned shared how important the evacuation was for those who were rescued and the future development of the state

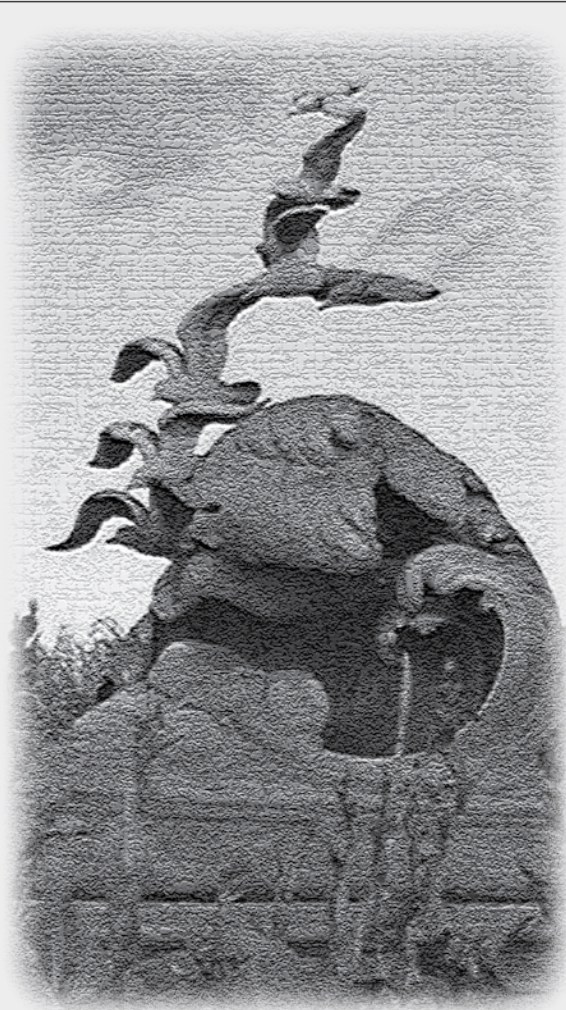
of South Korea. You can view this 12-minute interview on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhCEU7H5o.

Thanks to the American Merchant Marine Veterans for being one of the first organizations who threw their support behind our cause for Servant of God Brother Marinus, O.S.B.



Sr. Bernadetta, one of the refugees of the Meredith Victory.

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.*

EDWARD J. BEGLEY	BARNEGAT, NJ
GLENN LOWELL COAN	PLACERVILLE, CA
LLOYD E. COX	GUTHRIE, OK
C.M. "BEECH" DALE	LINCOLN, NE
SALVATORE ESCALDI	WEST BABYLON, NY
RUBIN "RUDY" FRANK	NEW YORK, NY
ROBERT FREY	KANSAS CITY, MO
ELLIOTT S. FUSS	VALLEY VILLAGE, CA
WILLIAM GALVEZ	FAIRFAX, CA
MARTIN HRIVNAK	ALBUQUERQUE, NM
BOLESLAW "BILL" JAWORSKI	NOKOMIS, FL
ROBERT M. LAMPREY, SR	CHARLTON, MA
CAPT PATRICK MALONEY	REDDING, CA
RODERICK D. MC FARLIN	BROOKLYN, NY
AUBREY R. MOORE	SAN DIEGO, CA
WILLIAM H. OPALKA	DES PLAINES, IL
RUTH THELMA RAN	SUNRISE, FL
PATRICIA M. SCAFIDI	DIAMONDHEAD, MS
WALLACE B. SMITH	MILBRAE, CA
WILLIAM ROBERT THOMPSON	CHICKAMAUGA, GA
RAYMOND VAN ARSDALE	CALABASH, NC
WILLIAM AUSTIN WYNOT	SIGNAL MOUNTAIN, TN

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.

SEAFARER STORIES:

OLIVER LUA; A NAVY LEAGUE INTERVIEW

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020 A bit of a natural born rebel, Oliver Lua found his calling in the Merchant Marine. In a matter of months, he would go from cutting class to braving Japanese attacks in the South Pacific. While his journey seems like a strange series of coincidences, Lua feels that his service in the Merchant Marine was more akin to destiny. "It was like I was supposed to do it."

Lua's disciplinary issues in school were less about inability to follow the rules than they were about a young man eager to get out into the world. He remembers hearing of how ships were being sunk by enemy forces and he wanted to do something about it. So intense was his eagerness that he hitchhiked his way to San Francisco to attend the school for Merchant Marines. As though by divine providence, the vehicle that picked him up was full of Merchant Mariners on their way to get their papers.

With the help of an altered birth certificate and doctor's letter procured by his sister and father, Oliver completed his Merchant Marine training and received his first assignment aboard the William S. Ladd. He was only 15 years old. The ship's first mate didn't know what to make of the 5-foot 6-inch-tall, 117-pound boy standing in front of him. He asked if Oliver knew how to tie a knot. When Oliver proved he could, the first mate shouted, "Stow your gear!"

The William S. Ladd sailed off to the Pacific theater, carrying 138 tons of artillery, 800 drums of gasoline and 52 amphibious tanks. The tanks were dropped off to a unit preparing to storm a Japanese-held island, and the Ladd sailed on to the Philippines. Prior to reaching its destination, one of Oliver's crewmembers died tragically after falling into the water and breaking his neck. Oliver tried to save him but was unable to do so. Oliver, a young boy only a few weeks away from home, was called upon to sign

the death certificate for his crewmate. To this day, Oliver laments that the man had a wife and family that he would never see again.

Upon arriving in the Philippines, the convoy of ships accompanying the Ladd would come under regular attack

from Japanese forces. Oliver watched as ships were pounded by torpedoes and kamikazes. The Ladd courageously fought with all their might, shooting down four enemy planes before an enemy fighter collided directly with the Ladd's hold containing the fuel and artillery. There was little to be saved on the exploding vessel, so the abandon ship order was given. Miraculously, Oliver and his shipmates would escape the vessel with injuries but no loss of life.

Oliver returned to San Francisco in January of 1945 and prepared for his next assignment, which would mirror his prior voyage so closely that he actually passed the wreckage of the Ladd still floating outside of the Leyte port in the Philippines. This trip would not have the same dangers, as the Japanese were now on the precipice of defeat.

When Oliver returned home after this trip, he would learn of that the atomic bomb had been dropped and that Japanese surrender was imminent.

After the war, Oliver joined the Army and served in the 11th Airborne in Hokkaido, Japan. Receiving his Merchant Marine ribbons in the mail, he pinned them on his uniform prior to battalion inspection. At first stunned and outraged at the strange ribbons that seemed to violate uniform regulations, his superiors learned of his experiences in the Merchant Marine and told him to "wear those ribbons proudly" -- all except his 1st sergeant, who would remain irritated by the ribbons and by this rebellious Merchant Mariner for the rest of his time in Japan. But that's Oliver Lua, a rebel with a good cause.



*Past National President Capt. Chris Edyvean,
AMMV Member Oliver Lua*

SEAFARER STORIES:

LEONARD BLAKE; A NAVY LEAGUE INTERVIEW

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020 While we are quick to recognize the heroic service our World War II veterans provided nearly a century ago, we often forget that many of them continued to carry injuries and mental trauma ever since, even up to the present day. Such is the story of Leonard Blake, who experienced severe injury and PTSD. Blake's difficult experience was compounded by being a Merchant Mariner, instead of a more widely acknowledged branch of service member.

Born Leonard Row, this heroic Mariner's entire life and even his identity would change in an instant one fateful day in Okinawa Harbor, Japan. As he rested in his bunk aboard the *Marianne Livermore*, a Japanese Kamikaze dive-bombed the ship and collided with

maximum force. Leonard was thrown through an escape panel with severe injuries to his legs and feet. The faces of shipmates who would not emerge from the flaming wreckage still haunt him to this day.

Surviving the attack, Leonard was brought to a naval hospital where he would learn that his occupation as a Merchant Mariner was viewed as a cowardly escape from real duty. "I have no sympathy for these Merchant Marines," said one doctor. "They're just a bunch of draft dodgers." Apparently, this doctor was unaware that Leonard had joined up to serve his country at fifteen, before he was even eligible to be drafted.

Leonard was not allowed to stay at the naval hospital

since he was not technically a member of the armed services. He would end up at a public hospital in California. Still a child, he was adopted by the parents of another crew member who had died on the *Marianne Livermore* named Bob Blake. And so, Leonard Row became Leonard Blake,

his name a daily tribute to a fallen comrade and the family that welcomed him as one of their own.

I wish I could say that this story happily ended there, but unfortunately Blake would spend the rest of his life fighting for the health care, compensation and acknowledgement that come standard among the other branches of the armed services. VA hospitals would continue to treat him with the same dismissive attitude as the Navy doctors did

years before. He would receive a fraction of the disability pay that he may have received had he been in the Navy or the Marines. He received a Merchant Mariner Medal but is ineligible for a Purple Heart. These are issues that should not be forgotten.

Still, Blake still thinks back fondly to his days sailing the oceans, climbing the rigging and delivering critical supplies to American forces around the world. His joyful memories of those days are crystal clear when he speaks of his service. Perhaps somewhere out there, on a ship floating carelessly on calm waters, Blake's shipmates stand on deck under a bright blue sky waiting for their friend to return to them.



An image of the Marianne Livermore, the ship Leonard Blake was on when hit by Japanese forces.

Top Secret Project Ivory Soap: the story of the aircraft repair ships in WWII

Editor's note: the late Bruce Felknor was a radioman in the merchant marine in World War II. After ten years in public relations, became an expert on election ethics as Executive Director of the Fair Campaign Practices Committee, and published the classic "Dirty Politics". He spent many years as an Executive and Editor with Encyclopedia Britannica and contributed quite a few interesting articles to the website: www.usmm.org before his demise. Excerpted here is one of them.

As 1943 ended, German forces had been defeated in Africa, and Italian troops were helping the Allies drive Germany out of their country. Operation Overlord and the Normandy landings were far advanced in strategic planning. Major planning efforts were under way to hasten victory in the Pacific.

The top-secret atomic bomb was a year and a half from its first test. In the Pacific Theater everything depended on conventional warfare, with B-29s bombers carrying the island-hopping war all the way to the Japanese home islands, with P-51s protecting the bombers.

One thing was certain: the invading aircraft would face a skilled and deadly foe in the air. Major damage to our planes was inevitable, but many of them would limp safely back to base. What then? No advanced air field had either the men or the machine shops and other facilities necessary for major airplane and engine repair and rebuilding.

Thus was born Ivory Soap, a secret project kept "classified" for more than a half-century. It is not even mentioned in the official history book "The Army Air Forces In World War II."

The idea arose in Air Corps staff meetings in Tunisia and Italy. It then went to Washington, where it was approved by the commander of the Army Air Corps, Gen.

Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, and by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Ivory Soap consisted of 24 ships and some 5,000 men drawn from the Army, Navy, and Merchant Marine.



The ships were six Liberties and eighteen 180-foot freight/salvage (F/S) auxiliary vessels that were converted into floating machine shops and repair and maintenance depots. Their main "clients" would be B-29s and P-51s but they could handle any other aircraft as necessary.

The Liberties were designated Aircraft Repair Units, Floating (ARUs),

each with a total complement of 344 men. The Aircraft Maintenance Units (AMUs) were 187 foot long ships built by Higgins in New Orleans and had a complement of 48 men. The ARUs (Libertys) had shop space big enough to accommodate components of the enormous B-29s. The more numerous and smaller AMUs could handle the fighters. Be-

cause of their shorter cruising range fighters advanced bases had to be more numerous, and closer to the targets; so did their floating repair depots.

The ships were operated by the Army Transport Service (ATS), all of whose officers and men were merchant mariners. They were well-armed against air attack: each Liberty had a 3-inch 50 at the bow and a 5-inch 38 aft, plus twelve 20mms and two 40mms. Proportionately less firepower went aboard the auxiliaries. The guns were manned by Naval Armed Guard crews.

Acquiring the ships and getting them to the deepwater terminal at Point Clear, close to the Marine Air Technical Services Command at Brookley Field, outside Mobile, Alabama, began in the spring of 1944. Once in place, they had to be modified. For the Liberties this meant fitting them with machine tools, cranes, and all the elements of complete machine shops. Similarly, equipment





for sheet metal work, fabric repair facilities. They carried a large inventory of steel, lumber, aluminum, and other materials to manufacture needed parts.

Facilities had to be built into the ships to accommodate two big R-4B Sikorsky helicopters on board. These were to locate downed planes, rescue their flight crews and passengers, ferry shipwrights and mechanics wherever they might be needed on the islands of the Pacific campaign, and to haul parts.

Each ship was also equipped with two motor launches and two DUKWs or "ducks," amphibious trucks for carrying parts too heavy for the helicopters. Divers were part of each crew, so room for their support equipment was also necessary.

Similar work on the 18 smaller maintenance vessels, which would be principally concerned with smaller fighter planes, went on simultaneously. When the ships were ready, so were their crews and repair teams. Selecting the men and training them for the unfamiliar parts of their new assignments took time. The mechanics and machinists had to learn rudiments of seamanship and swimming, including how to abandon ship if need be. The Assistant Commandant was C. E. Hooten, a Mariner, and other Merchant Marine Officers were part of the Army teaching staff at Point Clear.

The Liberty ships selected for Ivory Soap:

Original Name	Name as Aircraft Repair Ship
Rebecca Lukens	Maj. Gen. Herbert A. Dargue
Nathaniel Scudder	Brig. Gen. Alfred J. Lyon
Richard O'Brien	Brig. Gen. Asa N. Duncan
Robert W. Bingham	Brig. Gen. Clinton W. Russell
Daniel E. Garrett	Maj. Gen. Robert Olds
Thomas LeValley	Maj. Gen. Walter R. Weaver

Inevitably, the six hybridized Libertys were known as "The Generals." The 18 auxiliaries, each named in honor of an Army Colonel, naturally, were "The Colonels."

These ships returned hundreds of wrecked or seriously damaged B-29s and fighters to battle. On October 1, 1944, SS Maj. Gen. Herbert A. Dargue sailed for New Orleans, then to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to join a convoy through the Panama Canal. Once in the Pacific, she sailed alone, chugging along at the Libertys 10 knots per hour toward Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands. There the Dargue was ordered to Saipan, in the Mari-

anas, where heavy action was about to begin. In November they dropped the hook in Tanapag Harbor near Saipan.

One of the ship's helicopter pilots, First Lt. Daniel A. Nigro, recalls: that they would carry so many parts needing repair that they taxed the helicopter's capacity. "We did anything -- even taking off the 'copter doors--to lighten our load," he said.

Editor's note: If further information on Operation Ivory Soap is of interest to you it's available on the internet; try websites: www. <https://www.columbian.com/news/2015/aug/08/operation-ivory-soap-vancouver-veteran-world-war/> or www. <https://mobilebaymag.com/operation-ivory-soap/>.



The USS Monitor and the Creation of America's First National Marine Sanctuary

by David W. Alberg

One hundred years after the creation of Yellowstone National Park - our Nation's first national park - another significant law was passed to protect special places in the marine environment important to our country. This law, known as *The Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972*, created a mechanism for the establishment and management of oceanic parks. The law, which is known today as the National Marine Sanctuaries Act or simply the "Sanctuaries Act," provided for the Secretary of Commerce to:

"...designate as marine sanctuaries those areas of the oceans, coastal, and other waters, as far seaward as the outer edge of the Continental Shelf...which he determines necessary for the purpose of preserving or restoring such areas for their conservation, recreational, ecological, or esthetic values."

Managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the first of those parks or sanctuaries would come soon after President Nixon signed the Act into law. In 1973, a team of researchers, led by Dr. John Newton from the Duke Marine laboratory in Beaufort, N.C., set sail to test scientific survey equipment with the goal of finding the remnants of the Civil War-era Union ironclad U.S.S. *Monitor*. Their efforts would soon pay off.

The *Monitor* was built at the Continental Iron Works in Brooklyn, New York, and was designed by Swedish Engineer John Ericson. Considered to be the most iconic ship in American history, the *Monitor* would forever change the face of ship design and ushered in a new era of naval warfare. Ericson envisioned a revolutionary new type of warship built primarily of iron that would sit low in the water, present-



Wreck-site of the S.S. Dixie Arrow. The wreck lies in 90' of water, 15 miles from Cape Hatteras, NC. Image Courtesy of NOAA

ing less of a target to enemy vessels. Although the *Monitor* would eventually incorporate more than 240 patent designs, her most significant design feature was her innovative revolving gun turret, which contained two, eleven-inch Dahlgren guns. Launched in January 1862, the U.S.S. *Monitor* sailed from New York to Hampton Roads, Virginia, where on March 9, 1862, she famously engaged the Confederate warship

C.S.S. *Virginia* (also known as the *Merrimack*) in a four-hour battle fought to a draw. The *Monitor* would survive a number of other military engagements but would be lost to a storm off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, on New Year's Eve 1862, less than a year after she was built, taking with her 16 of her crew.

The Duke Marine lab's hunt for the *Monitor* would



Sinking of the S.S. Dixie Arrow by the U-71, March 26, 1942. The Dixie Arrow went down with 11 of her crew including her Master, Captain Anders M. Johanson. Image courtesy National Archives



Deck and turret of U.S.S. Monitor on the James River - July, 9, 1862. Photographer James F. Gibson. Image courtesy Library of Congress

culminate in her discovery in August 1973 in 235 feet of water, roughly 17 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras. The announcement was not made public until March 07, 1974, but it created a whirlwind of interest in the ship and her history. Her discovery immediately posed the question - what should be done with the U.S.S. Monitor? Although still relatively new at the time, SCUBA diving was rapidly becoming a popular recreational activity and the question was raised, how can this important historic vessel and gravesite be protected? That concern led Congressman Walter Jones of North Carolina, and the state's governor at the time, James E. Holshouser, to request protection for the wreck through the Sanctuaries Act. In 1975, 111 years after her loss, the site of the *Monitor* would become America's first national marine sanctuary.

Today, 45 years after Monitor National Marine Sanctuary was established, NOAA continues to preserve the remnants of the actual shipwreck off North Carolina and works with partners such as The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia, and the State of North Carolina to assure her story is passed onto new generations. NOAA issues dive permits to the wreck site and works closely with the United States Coast Guard to assure the wreck is treated properly and that no artifacts are removed illegally. Much of NOAA's efforts focus on education and outreach. Between 1998-2002, NOAA and the United States Navy (USN) recovered key

components of the shipwreck for permanent display including her revolving gun turret which is still undergoing conservation treatment along with approximately 2,500 other artifacts. During that effort, NOAA and the USN recovered the remains of two United States Sailors lost the night the ship went down. Both men were laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors in March 2013.

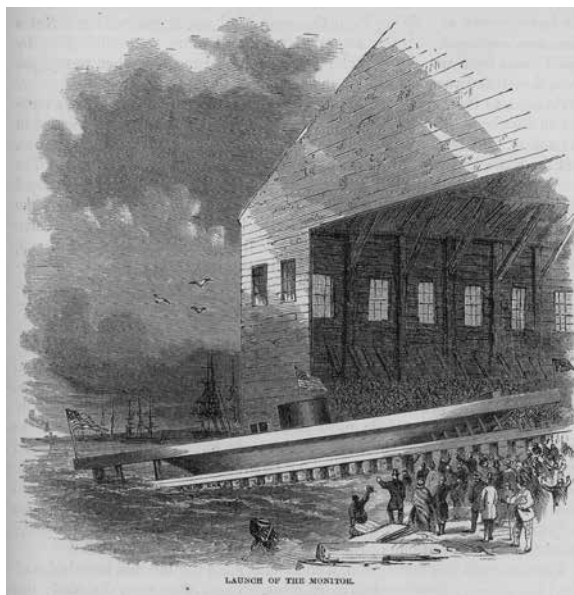
Sparked by public interest and concern over other war graves off the coast of North Carolina, particularly those from WWII, NOAA announced in 2016 an extensive effort to evaluate the benefits of expansion of the original Monitor National Marine Sanctuary's boundaries to protect other important shipwrecks and to bring greater public awareness of the second World War off the United States East Coast. The proposed expansion would protect as many as 80 vessels, many of them merchant vessels lost to German U-boats during the War and which serve as the final resting place for roughly 1,200 merchant seamen. NOAA's goal is to provide greater protections for these graves and fragile historic resources for future generations, and to preserve the memory of the brave Allied servicemen and U.S. merchant mariners who fought to rid the world of tyranny.

The expansion effort, which is still underway, would also create the first national marine battlefield in U.S. waters dedicated to our nation's involvement in WWII. The expanded sanctuary would be created in a way that would assure freedom of navigation for our modern merchant marine. Our Navy and Coast Guard could continue to train and operate in these waters, and fishermen, boaters and divers would be able to continue to visit these important places. What would change however, is that the removal of artifacts and the looting of these war graves would stop.

Now, during the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, NOAA is hoping to finalize the development of its expansion proposal and is working to gain support for the protection of these sites. Just as the establishment of our National Park System in places like Gettysburg, Shiloh, and Antietam led to a greater awareness of the importance of the Civil War

on our nation, NOAA believes that creating this underwater oceanic park will bring greater awareness of the history and sacrifice of our WWII servicemembers and the brave men of the United States Merchant Marine. Heave-Ho!

David Alberg is superintendent of Monitor National Marine Sanctuary.



Launching of U.S.S. Monitor at the Continental Iron Works in Brooklyn, NY - January 30, 1862. Image courtesy Library of Congress



JUST RECOGNITION

FURTHER INFORMATION; the design of the Congressional Gold Medal

Back in May of this year, the AMMV put together a Congressional Gold Medal Design Committee. The team consists of WWII Merchant Mariner Dave Yoho; WWII Merchant Mariner and Murmansk Run participant Captain Hugh Stephens; Vietnam Merchant Mariner and National Secretary Dennis Kelly; Operation Desert Storm (ODS), Operation Iraqi Freedom Merchant Mariner (OIF) Captain Scott Nowak; the proud daughter of a Congressional Gold Medal Recipient, Sheila Sova; and myself, Captain Dru DiMattia.

Effectively communicating, our ideas have been conveyed to the official Internal Design Brief Team hosted by MARAD. Many decisions have to be hammered out touching upon concepts, slogans and reviewing the wonderful memorials from Coast to Coast! Among consideration for the design are the MM memorials in San Pedro, California and the one in Battery Park, New York.

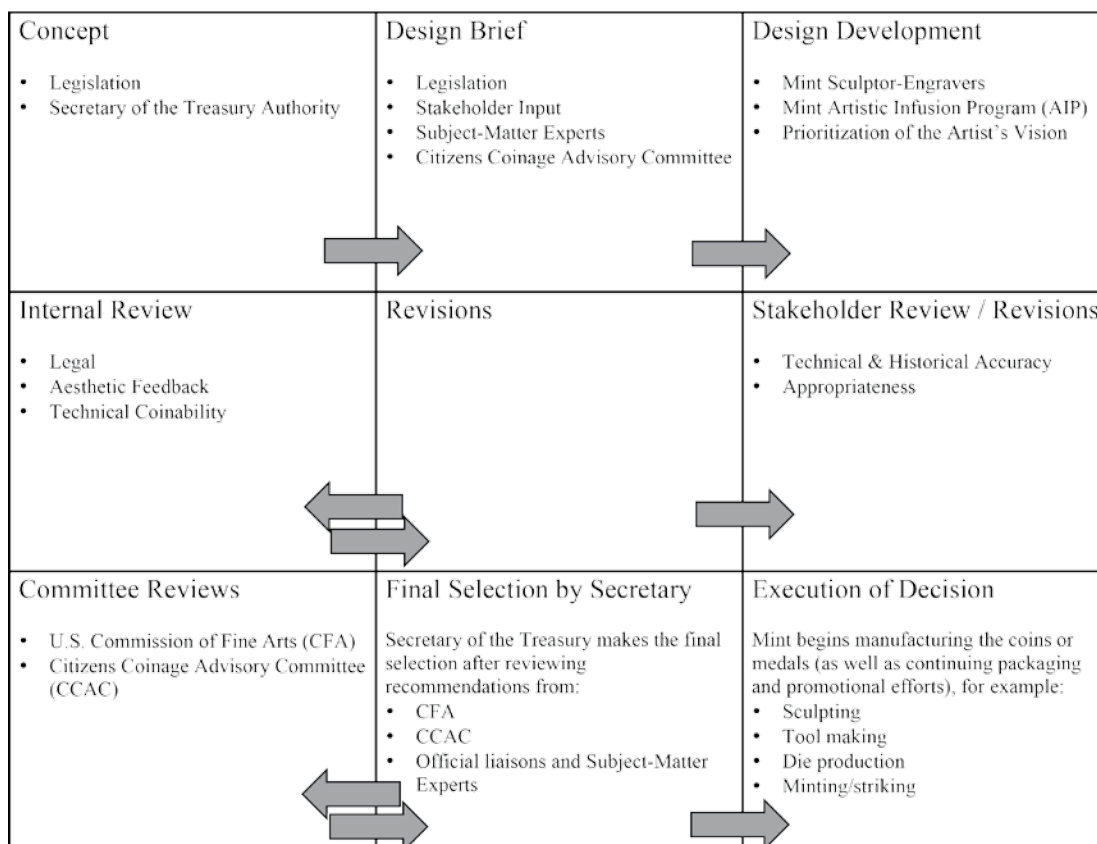
The process of the “United States Coin and Medal De-

sign Development Process” as stipulated by the U. S. Mint, is long and lengthy. We are in the step #2 Design brief stage of a lengthy 9-step process. The current status of this effort is finalizing the design brief which will be presented to the U.S. Mint for their artists to focus on.

We should have more information to share in the Fall edition of our NEWS Magazine. Contact has been made with Josh Smith, the Director of the USMMA Museum. They are contemplating display locations, including public ability to see both sides of the Medal, and lighting issues, as the final version of the Medal is slated to be on permanent display there, except when it's elsewhere, like conventions. More news on this project will be available in the future, also.

Thank you,
Dru DiMattia
National Vice President
American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc.

United States Coin and Medal Design Development Process





JUST RECOGNITION

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://www.americanmaritimepartnership.com/american-maritime-podcast/congressman-garamendi-wwii-merchant-marine-veteran-dave-yoho-on-importance-of-american-maritime-for-american-security/>



AMERICAN
MARITIME
PARTNERSHIP

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.

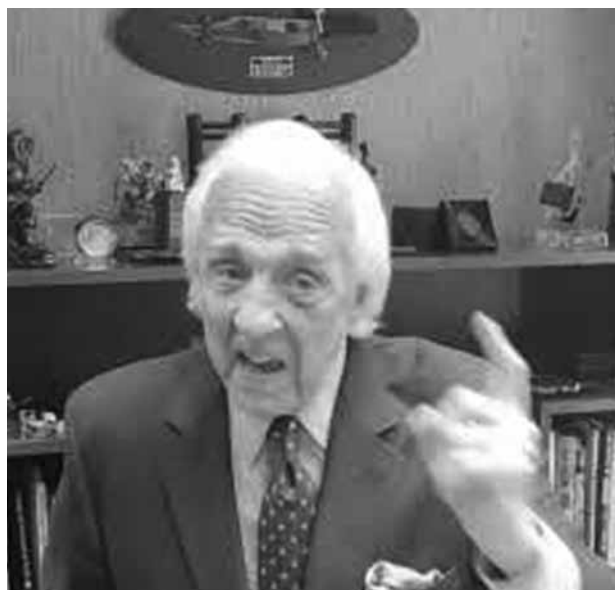
The Congressman also made a point of complimenting Dave Yoho and the U. S. Merchant Mariners for their participation and successful completion in the legislative process, which culminated in the passage of the Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020.

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 11th 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



AMMV member Dave Yoho

A TRUE TRIBUTE TO THE U. S. MERCHANT MARINERS: The Battery Park, NY, Memorial

Hidden away in the water off Battery Park in New York is one of the most moving memorials you are ever likely to see. The American Merchant Mariner's memorial, sculpted by Marisol Escobar in 1991, takes the form of three merchant seamen stranded on a sinking lifeboat, terrified, calling for help and trying to reach the desperate hand of one of their shipmates floundering in the water below. The monument is based on a true event, the sinking of SS *Muskegoe* by German U-boat 123 on March 22nd, 1942.

Dedicated in 1991, the American Merchant Mariners' Memorial was created as tribute to the 9,000+ American Merchant Marine sailors killed in the War.

Operation Drumbeat: German attacks on New York and the East Coast: 1941

Conceived in the days after the Pearl Harbor attack,

Drumbeat was a long-range assault on Allied shipping in American coastal waters. German planners believed, correctly as it turned out, that the United States would

be unprepared for a direct attack. Originally intending to send 12 submarines, only five could be mustered, and they pushed the limits of their operational range by striking the US coast.

The gamble paid off. When the submarines arrived off American shores in mid-January, they found a country that had made few preparations for war. Most merchant ships traveled without escorts, lights remained ablaze in cities and towns along the shore,

and there were few of the bombers and destroyers that harangued them in European waters. There were so many easy targets, commanders called this "The Second Happy Time"

Reinhard Hardegen was a German U-boat commander. He was the 24th-most-successful German submarine commander of the war, credited with the having sunk 22 ships. He was the commander of *U-123*, one of five German U-boats assigned to *Operation Drumbeat*.

U-123's first target was New York. Because the operation was so hastily arranged, the commanders were given spotty intelligence. For navigation, Hardegen was issued a large-scale chart of the eastern seaboard from 1870, a simple tourist map, and a guide to the 1939 World's Fair (this last piece would prove the most useful, as it included a detailed map of New York Harbor). They arrived off the coast of New York on January 14, 1942, and though they nearly ran aground off the Rockaways, they managed to negotiate the area safely, thanks in part to the lights of Coney Island and headlights from cars driving along the shore. That night *U-123* sank the tanker *Coimbra* just outside the harbor, aided by the silhouette created by the bright shore lights. Combined with the sinking of the tanker *Norness* off Montauk the night before, it was enough to stir a major panic. The sub then departed southward for targets off Cape Hatteras.



Plank Owner's Certificate issued in appreciation of a contribution to cover the cost of construction of the Memorial.





On left: copy of newspaper article written by Adm. Thomas A. King, USMMA. On right: picture of Marisol Escobar constructing clay model of Memorial.

A Second Try: 1942

After returning to Europe, for repairs and supplies, Hardegen's first foray to America was considered a success, sinking eight ships during the seven-week patrol, and killing 250 sailors and passengers. But it was events during his second patrol that would leave a lasting impression on the New York landscape.

After departing their base in Lorient, France on March 2, 1942, *U-123* again made the long and treacherous journey to America's shores. On March 22, approximately 425 miles northeast of Bermuda, the sub encountered an American tanker, *SS Muskogee*. After stalking the ship for two hours to get a good firing angle, *U-123* launched a single torpedo, which struck *Muskogee* amidships, sinking her in just 16 minutes. The ship had been missed by a first G7a torpedo from a stern tube at 17.06 hours.

The submarine then surfaced and found seven men huddled on a raft, and the U-boat approached the raft. Hardegen interviewed them about their ship. During this encounter, the German war correspondent aboard *U-123*, Rudolph Meisinger, snapped several photographs of the sinking ship and the survivors.

Then they were set adrift in heavy seas with a few supplies and information about their position. In the war's early days, German submarines would take survivors aboard, but

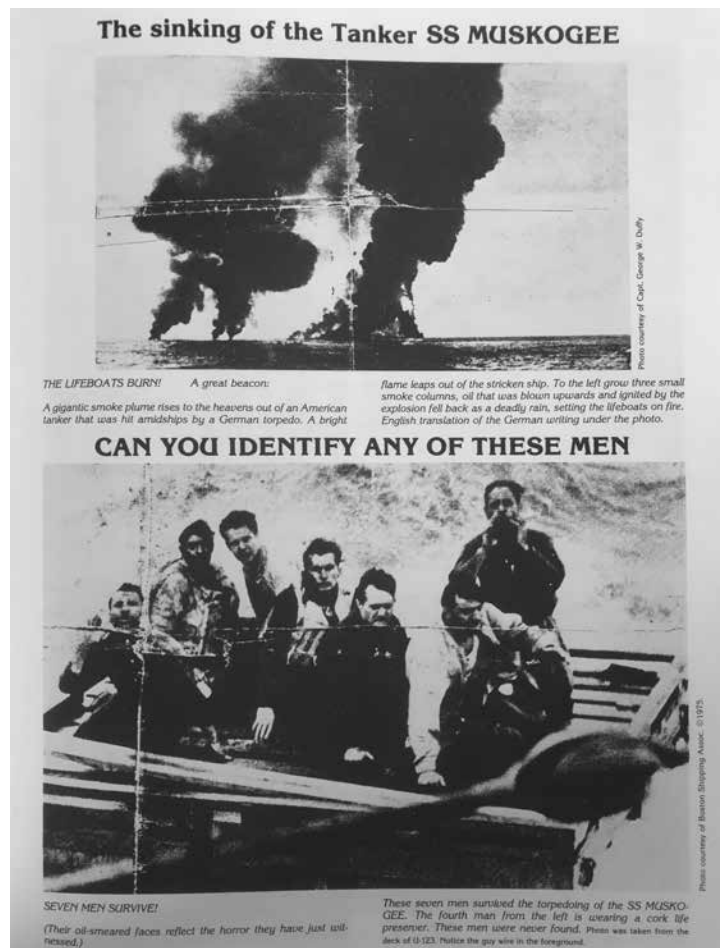
they were westbound at the very beginning of their patrol, far from their bases and with no room for seven more bodies.

Coincidental circumstances – 1942-1988 REDISCOVERING SS MUSKOGEE

The photographs have survived, but their re-discovery came through several meandering paths. Perhaps the most important figure in reconstructing the story of the *Muskogee* is George Betts, son of the ship's master, William Wright Betts. When the ship was lost with all hands, American sources had little information about its fate. George, who was a teenager at the time of his father's death, began researching the story later in life, and he eventually got ahold of *U-123*'s logs through the National Archives.

Following his discovery that the *Muskogee* had been sunk by a torpedo, he then learned that Hardegen was still alive, and wrote him a letter. The two corresponded for years, and they eventually met in 1987 in Canada. Hardegen shared what he remembered, and he gave Betts some of Meisinger's photographs, which he had kept.

Years later, how sculptress Escobar encountered the photo is an even more bizarre tale, involving someone completely unrelated to the *Muskogee*. George Duffy was a merchant sailor aboard the cargo ship *MS American Leader* when it was sunk by the German commerce raider *Michel* in the South Atlantic on September 10, 1942. 47 survivors were



picked up by the German ship, and then transferred to another German vessel, the tanker *Uckermark*. It was there that Duffy found a copy of the weekly newspaper *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*. In it he saw a full-page feature about the sinking of an unidentified American ship, including a photo of Hardegen, and of the seven men on a raft. He tore out the page and kept it.

Duffy and his shipmates were eventually transferred to Japanese custody, and he spent the next three years in labor camps in Java, Sumatra, and Singapore. Throughout this ordeal, he managed to save this newspaper clipping. When he returned to the US, he continued working as a seafarer, and he made attempts to identify the men in the photo, but it took more than 30 years before he realized that he had a photo of the *Muskogee*. It was this well-traveled copy that was eventually seen by Escobar and inspired her sculpture.

The memorial – today:

What makes the memorial so moving is that the helpless sailor in the water is covered by the Upper New York Bay with each high tide. His fingertips permanently out of reach to his companions, he drowns twice a day. The plaque next to the memorial makes the striking statue all the more poignant, where we learn that for the crew of the SS *Muskogee*; “left to the perils of the sea, the survivors later perished.”

The sculpture bears the following inscription: “This memorial serves as a marker for America’s merchant mariners resting in the unmarked ocean depths.” The *Muskogee* was sailing from Venezuela to Halifax carrying a cargo of petroleum. Without an escort and unarmed, the *Muskogee* was hit by a torpedo in her engine room and began to sink within a quarter of an hour, 335 miles north-northeast. Ten survivors clung to life rafts in the burning sea as the U-boat surfaced. The submarine captain Reinhard Hardegen took their photograph, and it’s from this, that Escobar based her sculpture.

Commissioned by the American Merchant Mariners’ Memorial, Inc., this memorial was conceived in 1976. In 1988, after an extensive competition, the artist Marisol Escobar, known as Marisol, was chosen to develop her design. Marisol developed a series of studio sketches from this

photograph, then fashioned a clay maquette as her winning design proposal for the monument. The work was dedicated on October 8, 1991.

Funding for memorials is always a major effort. The American Merchant Mariners’ Memorial Inc., chaired by the president of the AFL-CIO, Lane Kirkland, sought to commemorate the thousands of merchant ships and crews pressed into military service since the Revolutionary War. In World War II alone it is estimated that 700 American merchant ships were lost, and 6,600 mariners gave their lives in this global conflict. The memorial committee issued Plank Owner certificates in appreciation of outstanding support.



Reaching for safety at low tide



Reaching for safety at high tide

AMMV CHAPTER - REGION REPORT AS OF 7-8-20

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REGION 7	STATES: AK, CO, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY		RVP - VACANT	
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BIG SKY MARINERS	P. O. BOX 1746 POLSON MT 59860-1746	406 676 0530	GEORGE SALOVICH	vgeosal@gmail.com
HIGH ROLLERS	2595 AVIV CT LAS VEGAS NV 89121-3947	612-325-6600	PATRICK RAFFERTY	captainpat2011@yahoo.com
BEEHIVE MARINERS	2 NORTHRIDGE LN. SANDY UT 84092-4902	801 572 5686	"JERRY" NELSON	jerrydixienelson@gmail.com
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NORTH BAY MARINERS	P.O. BOX 6312 SANTA ROSA CA 95406-6312	707 763 8167	HARVEY WALTERS	peterhoge@hotmail.com
MALS - CONTACT RVP	790 WEST J STREET BENECIA CA 94510			

CURTAILED BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: HONORS TO MERCHANT MARINERS CONTINUE

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, Merchant Mariners were honored on Maritime Day, May 22, 2020 and Memorial Day at various locations nationally, as well as internationally.

NEW YORK CITY: Maritime Day

David Wold reports: "As you can see we managed to place a few wreaths at Battery Park representing the Norwegian Maritime History organization, Norwegian Military History org., Warsailor/Arkivet and the "Kingdom of Norway" (represented by UN delegation and Consulate). We further had wreaths lain at the Norwegian Section at Pine Ridge Cemetery, Saranac Lake, NY for the sailors who died at the facility for TB that we had there during WWII.

"We also had wreaths placed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Lunenburg Nova Scotia. (training camp) and over in London on the grave of a sailor who died onboard the Norwegian destroyer "Eskdale" and our last surviving veterans of that battle, Trygve Hansen from Wilton CT, visited last year in connection with VE Day and dinner onboard HMS Belfast (a ship that took part in his battle with the German battleship "Scharnhorst" when he was onboard the Norwegian ship "HNoMS Stord"). We also made sure Norwegian authorities laid down wreath at the Norwegian Seamens memorial in Hyde Park, London and 1 monument on Iceland."



Battery Park, New York City



American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial, San Pedro, California

SAN PEDRO, CA: Maritime Day

Lest we forget!

Although the annual National Maritime Day Memorial service was cancelled this year due to COVID-19, wreaths were laid at the American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial in San Pedro California, one wreath from the Marine Fireman's Union and the other from Lupita Regalado and AMMV National President John Pitts.

WASHINGTON, DC: Memorial Day

AMMV member Dave Yoho participated in a virtually-filmed "wreath laying" at the National WWII Memorial in DC on May 25th. He was one of three selected for that ceremony.



Dave Yoho (left) at the National WWII Memorial, Washington, DC

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION:

National Maritime Day, 2020

Since the founding of our great Nation, we have relied on merchant mariners to deliver goods to market and strengthen our national security. On National Maritime Day, we recognize the United States Merchant Marine for all it does to facilitate our commerce and protect our interests at sea.

Our Nation's merchant mariners enable peaceful trade with countries around the world and provide vital sealift support to our Armed Forces. Whether on the ocean or our inland waterways, merchant mariners support our economy by transporting billions of dollars of imported and exported goods. These men and women also sail bravely into combat zones to deliver supplies and weapons to our military men and women, playing a critical role in the success of their mission.

This year, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, we pay tribute to the United States merchant mariners who served as the "Fourth Arm of Defense" for our Nation during the war. Earlier this year, I was proud to sign into law long-overdue legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the valiant civilian merchant mariners who maintained critical supply lines to our overseas troops and allies during the Second World War. Many of these mariners endured brutal attacks from German U-boats, and more than 6,000 of them perished at sea or were held as prisoners of war. This number includes 142 students of the United States Merchant Marine Academy — distinguishing it as the only one of the five service academies authorized to carry a battle standard.

As we remember the tremendous sacrifices of the World War II merchant mariners, we also continue to honor the presentday citizen mariners who make up our Nation's worldclass Merchant Marine. Today, we pay tribute to their expertise, patriotism, and dedication to serving our country and ensuring our national security.

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

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2020, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark this observance and to display the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

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

DONALD J. TRUMP

DOT and MARAD CELEBRATE NATIONAL MARITIME DAY

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) and the US Maritime Administration (MARAD) held a joint celebration to mark National Maritime Day on May 22, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held virtually. It featured remarks from several leaders within the government and military transportation community, as well as veterans of the Merchant Marine.

Deputy Maritime Administrator Richard Balzano described the day as a time to “honor America’s maritime heritage and show respect for the men and women who make it great.”

Secretary of Transportation **Elaine L. Chao** provided some of the history behind National Maritime Day, which was “established by Congress in 1933 to commemorate the first trans-oceanic voyage of the American steamship Savannah. It was a way to celebrate America’s long and deep maritime tradition, and the innovation that has powered it from Fulton steamship to nuclear ships and beyond. In World War II, Merchant Mariners were an essential part of the war effort and their casualty rate exceeded that of all the other armed forces.”

Discussing present times, Secretary Chao added, “We salute the men and women of the American maritime community who have helped ensure that people, supplies, and equipment get to where they need to be during times of peace, war, and natural disasters. Our US-flag fleet is an integral part of our national security and, as we face the COVID-19 crisis of today, the department is doing everything we can to support our

country’s maritime sector and ensure that the industry is able to ramp up when the economic recovery begins. As we celebrate National Maritime Day this year, we want to thank our country’s Merchant Mariners and all those who work in the maritime sector for your contribution and service to our country.”

Decorating the flag of the Merchant Marines is the motto “In Peace and War,” a sentiment that Maritime Administrator **RAADM Mark Buzby**, USN (Ret.) said is what drives those who serve at sea—the idea that they will get the ships through whether it is peacetime, war, or any other circumstance that may arise.

“Throughout our nation’s history,” said Administrator Buzby, “[and] before we were even a nation, this industry has persevered through a revolutionary war, with a civil war, through two global conflicts, two world wars, and any number of regional conflicts. You know, [the] Merchant Marine has always been there and has never faltered.”

He compared this history to what is happening with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This time instead of man versus man, it’s man versus a virus, and yet here we are Merchant Marines still persevering through it all.”

Just as ships devised countermeasures to reduce the threat of German U-boats and kamikazes to see their missions through during WWII, today’s mariners are using personal protective gear, social distancing, deep cleaning ships, and using





*Secretary of Transportation
Elaine L. Chao*



*RADM Mark Buzby
USN (Ret.)*



*Commander of TRANSCOM
GEN Stephen R. Lyons*



*Mike Rowe
TV Host*

other measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 and keep the ships sailing.

Determination is a common thread among Merchant Mariners—and that determination is now being recognized for one deserving generation. Congress just recently approved the Congressional Gold Medal to be awarded collectively to the Merchant Marine veterans of WWII in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during that conflict. The honor, said Administrator Buzby, is one for which all generations of Merchant Mariners should be proud.

“I think that’s a real tribute as much to you in this generation as it was to those who preceded you, and other generations who did what you had to do to get those ships through, and I think it’s something that you all should be very, very proud of. Going forward, you know, it’s now incumbent upon us to see this thing through,” said Administrator Buzby referring to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. “We’re making great strides, we’re making great progress, and I’m very, very proud of the conduct of all of you. Whether it’s been labor, whether it’s been ship owners and operators, or whether it’s been government entities—the level of cooperation that has been exhibited I think says so much about this industry and why we are so strong.”

GEN **Stephen R. Lyons**, USA, Commander of US Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), provided context to the relationship between the US Merchant Marine, TRANSCOM, and the Department of Defense (DOD). “TRANSCOM, one of eleven combatant commands, is responsible to the Secretary of Defense and the Commander-in-Chief to deploy and sustain military forces around the

globe to support our national security interests. In doing so, we count on a strong US-flag maritime industry—a maritime industry that has a long history of enabling military victory.

“Today, just as in WWII, the US-flag merchant ships, the mariners who crew them, and our commercial sealift industry continue to play a critical role in our nation’s defense by providing sealift ships, mariners, and access to global seaport networks. As a result, the United States’ ability to project and sustain military power across transoceanic distances remains a strategic comparative advantage,” explained GEN Lyons.

He also praised the mariners themselves as the greatest resource of a maritime nation such as the US. Adding that the high technical proficiency and competence, hard work, and innovation of the men and women of the US-flag fleet are what make their service essential to US national security.

The event continued with inspiring stories and words of wisdom from several WWII veterans of the Merchant Marines. Finally, the occasion ended with a rousing rendition of the Merchant Marine’s song, *Heave Ho*, and comments by **Mike Rowe**, host of the Discovery Channel show *Dirty Jobs*.

While it may have been virtual, the celebration of National Maritime Day excelled in bringing together and honoring the maritime community.

Editor’s note: The complete YouTube presentation can be seen and listened to on the website:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=135&v=dMle6TvvY6A&feature=emb_logo



Membership Application for:

AMMV MEMBER-AT-LARGE

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

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

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



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

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

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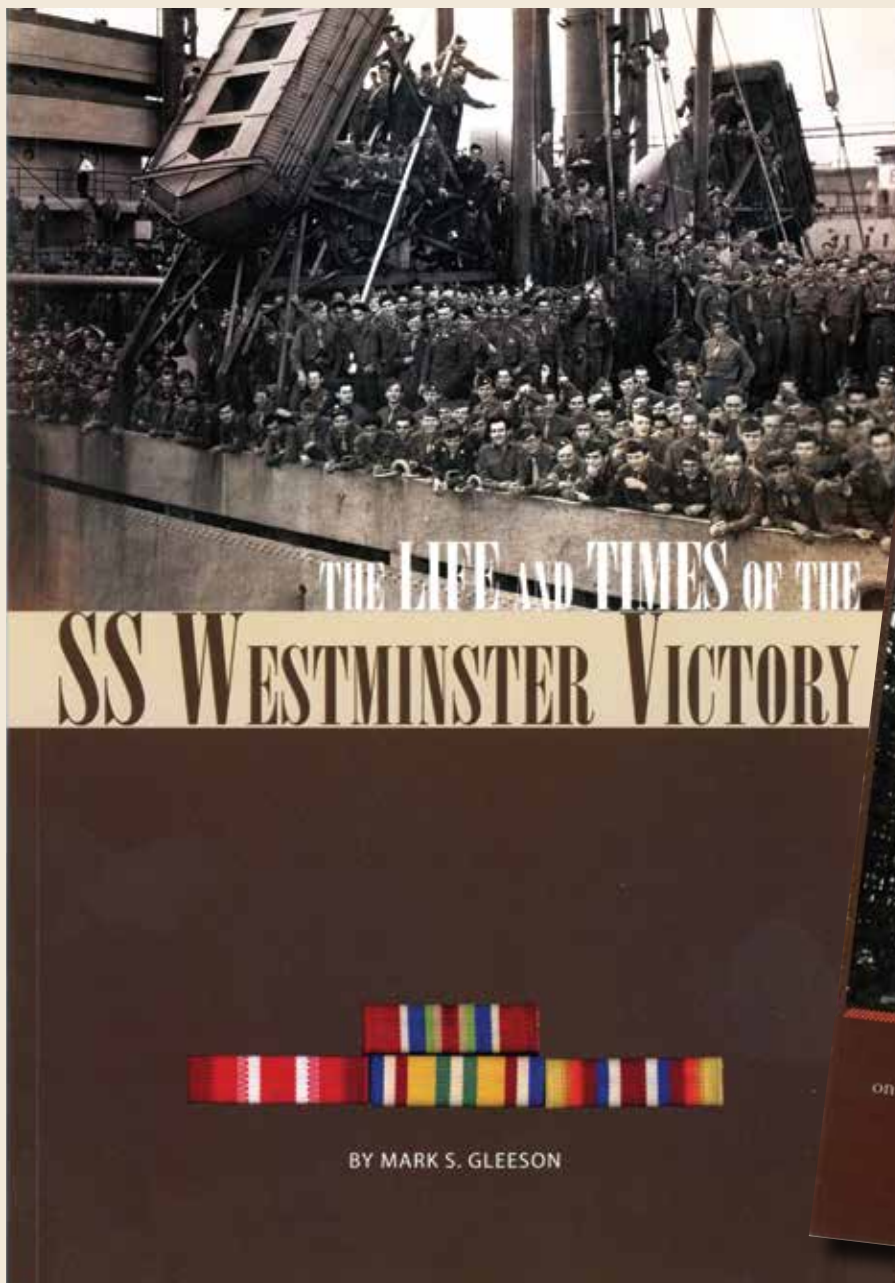
D.O.B: _____ DATE OF APPLICATION: _____

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

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

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

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



Beginning in 1944 the War Shipping Administration began to build a larger and faster merchant ship – the Victory Ship. There were 534 of these ships built during the war. In order to involve more of the general public in the war effort, 150 of these Victory class ships were named for colleges and universities. There were 13 of these named in Pennsylvania; Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania was one of these.

A book has been written which describes the life of the ship that served as a troop transport, **The Life and Times of the SS Westminster Victory**. After 13 voyages as a troop transport, it was sold to a Belgian firm and later to a Chinese firm that was the first company to start using containers. It finally met its fate in Taiwan in 1973 when sold for scrap. Excerpts from logs are included in the book.

Included in the book are stories about some of the voyages that include the death of the captain while at sea, and injuries to returning troops during an Atlantic storm as it sailed home. For the first time a story is included that was written by Erhard Koehler, Manager of the NS Savannah, that tells the history of the Ship Naming Committee. Naming information on the Liberty ships is also included.

The Life and Times of the SS Westminster Victory is only sold through the bookstore of the college. To purchase the book by phone or online, please call 724-946-6211 or go to www.bookstore.westminster.edu.

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- *The first Independence Day celebration took place in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776. This was also the day that the Declaration of Independence was first read in public after people were summoned by the ringing of the Liberty Bell.*
- *Every 4th of July the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia is tapped (not actually rung) thirteen times in honor of the original thirteen colonies.*
- *The Declaration of Independence was signed by 56 men from 13 colonies.*
- *Only John Hancock actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. All the others signed later.*
- *The average age of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence was 45. The youngest was Thomas Lynch, Jr. (27) of South Carolina. The oldest delegate was Benjamin Franklin (70) of Pennsylvania. The lead author of The Declaration, Thomas Jefferson, was 33.*
- *One out of eight signers of the Declaration of Independence were educated at Harvard (7 total).*
- *In 1776, there were 2.5 million people living in the new nation. Today the population of the U.S.A. is 316 million.*