

AMERICAN
MERCHANT MARINE
VETERANS

NEWS MAGAZINE



AMMV member Dick Burbine recalls sinking of the SS Henry Bacon — page 15



Portraits of Honor: Alabama man travels the country to photograph WWII Veterans — page 18



WWII Veteran Charlie Montanaro celebrates 100th birthday — page 12

HEAVE HO! MY LADS, HEAVE HO!
(SONG OF THE MERCHANT MARINE)

In Tribute

BOB ULRICH



WWII Merchant Marine Veteran (Radio Officer)

1927 - 2021

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Left front cover: Col. Carl Cooper, as photographed by Jeffrey Rease

Upper right cover: Richard with father, Joseph Burbine, and older brother Leonard (circa 1928)



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AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS

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Region SIX – AR, AZ, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX

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Vacant

Region EIGHT – AUS, CA, HI

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Editorial **Capt. Christopher Edyvean** *Midwest Chapter*
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Government Affairs **vacant**

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

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2020/2021 National Convention Committee

Convention Chairman ... **Capt. Dru DiMattia** *Member-at-Large*

Registration Head **Dennis Kelly** *Member-at-Large*

Finance Chair **Lynn Kelly** *Member-at-Large*

Committee Member **Cynthia Driscoll-Komlos** *Member-at-Large*

Committee Member **Capt. Christopher Edyvean** *Midwest Chapter*

Committee Member **Dennis Ng** *Dennis A. Roland Chapter*

Committee Member **Sindy Raymond** *North Bay Mariners Chapter*

Committee Member **Laura Johnson Riddle** *Member-at-Large*

Committee Member **Steve Snyder** *Member-at-Large*

Committee Member **Sheila Sova** *Member-at-Large*

Notice: Rescheduling of the

AMMV 2020/21 National Convention

The new tentative convention dates are September 21st-24th at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, MD. Join us as we celebrate the legacy of the U.S. Merchant Marine, and the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal!



Detailed convention information and registration forms will be mailed to all AMMV members and supporters once details are solidified. We hope to see you there! HEAVE HO!





National President Capt. Anthony “Dru” DiMattia



More than a year has gone by since the pandemic was declared, and yet mariners continue to do what they have always done: safely move cargoes. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those who have suffered. The Merchant Marine has made strides during this time and continues to rally for support because the job is not done! The Congressional Gold Medal designs will soon be

reviewed by the CCAC and the USAC. From there, it's off to the Secretary of the Treasury for the final decision. The Congressional Gold Medal Committee, on which the AMMV has had four seats, forwarded four of our recommended designs. The U.S. Mint has consistently conveyed the same estimated time of completion to be in June 2021.

Continued efforts on the Hill include Congressman Garamendi addressing appropriations for funding the duplicate bronze medals. H.R. 104 targets MARAD having the conduit to award these medals to our WWII Merchant Mariners. AMMV will be engaging in multiple fundraising campaigns in our maritime community ensuring we take care of the Merchant Mariners of our Greatest Generation who remain with us today.

AMMV needs your help! I challenge our members to engage their Congressional representatives and educate them regarding our battles to gain recognition for our WWII Merchant Mariners. We thank the legislative body which supported the Congressional Gold Medal Act which was signed into law in March 2020. When contacting your representatives, do not hesitate to mention the current legislative proposals which require the same enthusiasm. The Jones Act currently has exemption applications being filed by multiple cruise line companies. Do these exemptions have clauses addressing protections for the U.S. Merchant Mariner? Are there any economic offsets that would direct funding towards the maritime training of our U.S. Merchant Mariners?

Again, I ask our membership base to get involved!

Shipmates, it's the fourth quarter, we have the ball inside the 10-yard line. First and goal! "LET'S FINISH THE JOB!"

The Winning Combination: "The United States was a member of a fighting team of the (Allied) nations that won

the greatest war in history. There were three major players who represented the United States on that team: our fighting forces overseas, the production army here at home, and the link between them – the United States Merchant Marine."⁽¹⁾

Our WWII Merchant Mariners have been waging these worthy battles for recognition stretching over 75 years. I'm advocating our final push, with your help, to get into the end zone! I'm talking about H.R. 39, just reintroduced by Rep. Al Green of Texas, which, if enacted, would achieve a compensation package of \$25,000 for each of our eligible Merchant Mariners of WWII!

There may be variants to the current bill, as written, but just like everything I've ever seen aboard ship, nothing is ever what it seems. We remain fluid and show resilience!

Regardless what side of the aisle you may reside, we are talking a WIN for our WWII Merchant Mariners. This remains the mission of AMMV since its founding; this is how I see our current playbook. Please join this effort to support H.R. 39, reintroduced in this 117th Congress (January 3rd, 2021 to January 3rd, 2023), as we require multiple volunteers both engaged on the field and on the sidelines to strategize this effort!

I give a personal "shoutout" to our remaining AMMV chapters that stay together with communications in this current restrictive environment. I personally appreciate the three chapters that continue to send their newsletters: GOLDEN GATE, RAZORBACK, and THREE RIVERS!

To former Editor and National Office Administrator, Sindy Raymond, who has been with the AMMV in various capacities for over 20 years: We call upon your commitment reconfirming your current National Public Relations position. AMMV needs a high level of outreach during this critical time frame!

AMMV continues to seek worthy opportunities created by you, the members of the American Merchant Marine Veterans organization! Make no mistake, to our WWII mariners who continue to TOLL THE BELL, it is ringing loud and clear! We pay homage to those who have crossed the final bar. Exercising patience and working outside the box avails steady achievement.

Please join our cause! HEAVE HO!

Capt. Dru DiMattia
AMMV National President

⁽¹⁾LAND E.S. War Shipping Administrator; Report to the President; The Merchant Marine at War January 15 1946, page (3)





National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly



VERY IMPORTANT MESSAGE:

AMMV Memberships expire on June 30, 2021. A small number of members have paid ahead by adding additional years to their memberships which will expire in 2022 or later. Please check your last membership card which you received upon renewal and make sure of your annual expiration date. If you are in doubt, please call me, 475-470-9200 or email me ammermarvets@gmail.com. I am happy to check for you. If you need to renew for the July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 annual membership year (as most of us do) please use the pre-addressed envelope in this magazine and enclose a \$32 check made out to AMMV and mail it to our headquarters in Connecticut. To renew online go to our website www.ammv.us, scroll down and hit the red join/renew button. If you belong to a chapter please contact your chapter Secretary or Treasurer. Thanks.

Ballots for IRS status change

The voting deadline was extended to mid- January due to the problems with the U.S. Postal Service. Some members received the ballots four to five weeks after they were mailed out from our printer. Apparently, the combination of the pandemic and the holidays delayed all postal processing in the country. The result of our members' voting was in overwhelming support of the necessary changes to the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws which will enable AMMV to apply to the IRS for a status change to 501 (C) (3) which indicates a regular non-profit organization. This more flexible designation will enable us to do much more as far as outreach and fundraising in the future. As explained in the ballot packet, due to attrition, our membership makeup no longer supports the requirements dictated in our 501 (C) (19) limited veterans' designation. Since the changes were approved by our members, we have now provided the attorneys with the additional necessary information and forms and they are in the process of applying to the government to have our IRS status permanently changed. Thank you to our members who took the time to read over the information and vote.

New magazine publisher

AMMV has decided to try a new magazine printer and distributor. The Board of Directors is hoping our membership agrees that the new color format and higher quality paper makes for a more enriching experience. One important change is that contributing photographs to be used in our magazine be in color whenever possible. Our new company is Ad-Vantage Marketing, Inc. in Santa Rosa, California. They have done many print jobs for us in

the past and we have been happy with their work. We are fortunate to announce that our longtime layout contractor, Susan Alexander, will continue to do our magazine layout, and that Capt. Chris Edyvean has agreed to serve again as Interim Editor on this spring 2021 issue.

Officers for the July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023 Board

Every two years the membership has the opportunity to vote for a new slate of officers. Those who wish to run for office must declare his or her interest by December 31st of the year prior to elections by notifying either the AMMV President or the National Office Administrator by mail or email. New officers will begin serving on July 1, 2021, therefore anyone who wished to declare their candidacy would have had to do so by December 31, 2020. This is not new at AMMV and has been in our By-Laws since the 2018 revisions, which were approved at the St. Louis convention. This year, as an additional reminder, Past President John Pitts included a letter in the ballot packet reminding anyone interested in running for office to declare his or her intentions in accordance with the current By-Laws.

This past year has been particularly demanding for our officers considering the pandemic, a canceled convention, the Congressional Gold Medal passage, necessity to change our IRS status along with the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws, switching banks, switching magazine publishers and editors, and the loss of so many of our key WWII long time active members. It is always beneficial to any organization to show volunteer enthusiasm and willingness to serve. A good indicator of that is

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)



NEWS Magazine Editor

Capt. Christopher Edyvean



The “new” AMMV

In late 2020, the AMMV Executive Board, with proper legal guidance, produced a draft of a revised Constitution & By-Laws to facilitate the transition from a 501(c)(19) non-profit group to a 501(c)(3) non-profit. This change has been on the horizon for years, as the Executive Board feels that such change is an absolute necessity for the ultimate

survival of the organization.

A ballot was mailed in mid-December to all AMMV members-in-good-standing to vote on the approval of such organizational change, and to approve the accompanying revised Constitution & By-Laws. Full details for this vote were also posted on the AMMV website. The initial deadline for received ballots (established by former National President John Pitts) was December 31st, but the Executive Board extended this deadline to January 14th to allow for more votes to be received. The final recorded tally was nearly unanimous in favor of accepting the change of non-profit status.

Without any doubt, I'm sure the founding members of AMMV were extremely proud of incorporating a 501(c)(19) non-for-profit veterans' organization. However, due to attrition, AMMV has become under serious threat of eventual extinction. First, it had become impossible to properly conduct organizational business under our previous chapter-based By-Laws, which led to the approved revisions of such at the 2018 National Convention. Next, with fewer WWII veterans in the organization in each passing year, it became clearly evident that AMMV could no longer meet the criteria for a 501(c)(19) veterans' organization. Change was imminent.

Wise past leaders of AMMV saw all of this coming. While not everyone back then was in agreement, most were in favor of organizational change. Momentum began to build regarding the concept of handing down AMMV to younger generations with the goal of keeping our Merchant Marine history alive.

Later in this issue are the approved revisions of the Constitution and By-Laws, which will now allow AMMV to chart a course into the future; this has been a long time in the voyage planning stage. I would now like to quote

the leaders of AMMV past, who had the initial vision of “Project Survival”...

► *Enclosed is a copy of a proposal that I circulated several years ago dealing with a plan to restructure AMMV in order to perpetuate its continued existence... If you feel, as I do, that this is something that must be addressed then I ask that it be place on the agenda at this year's convention.*

Bert Hinds, OKI Tri AMMV State Regional Vice President
2/27/2004 letter to National Officers & Directors

► *Some will argue that this action would make us less of a “veterans” organization and therefore this would not be an appropriate item. I, however, disagree. There is nothing to prevent us, as a restricted group, to continue the fight for the Merchant Marine Veteran but, in addition we will be expanding our areas of interest in order to attract a broader base of membership.*

Bert Hinds, OKI Tri AMMV State Regional Vice President
Circa 2004, article “We are a dying breed”, AMMV News

► *Within our organization, veterans have offered suggestions of opening up membership so our organization can provide representation of our history in the future. Others have fought it because they fear diluting the AMMV would diminish WWII Merchant Marine Veteran standing. Keeping our original name and bringing in those our constitution presently allows would help immensely. Meanwhile, we could be turning over some operational efforts to younger people while we still have enough steam to assist in the transition.*

A.J. Wichita, AMMV National President
Spring 2009 AMMV News

► *We need to attract younger Merchant Mariners along with their spouses, family and friends, to our group and, in that way, assure continuous representation at the national and local levels and educate the future generations of the importance and the sacrifices of this proud group of men who have served the United States of America since 1776.*

Donald Trimbath, AMMV National Secretary
Summer 2009 AMMV News

► *We must increase the effort to gain veteran status for Mariners who served in war zones during wars beyond WWII, such as Korea and Vietnam, and to gain deserved recognition for Mariners of the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars.*

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

NEWS Magazine Editor's Report

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

Our By-laws commit us to this project.

Morris Harvey, AMMV National President

Summer 2011 AMMV News

► *The tale of an organization preparing to change course. The AMMV is in the turning basin and the tug ropes are tight. We are moving into a new channel, one where prop dredging may be necessary. The AMMV Founders gave us PURPOSES in our by-laws that can set our heading into the future. This is not an either/or situation - there are still outstanding WWII issues such as compensation and recognition, however, we can also move our efforts to support current Maritime issues and to the retired and active - post WWII Merchant Mariner concerns: in current technological terms - multitasking. We need to be part of their future - to become a support organization that they can rely on. Our History drives our Service.*

Morris Harvey, AMMV National President

Winter 2011/12 AMMV News

► *Now for the new addition to "Project Survival" - I will be*

obtaining outside support to rejuvenate our internet presence and will be adding a blog. In conjunction with this effort, I will initiate a project to give us a presence on Social Media sites such as Facebook, and YouTube. Twitter, Pinterest, and LinkedIn may also be utilized if the workload permits. This idea was approved at the 2013 National Convention.

Morris Harvey, AMMV National President

Winter 2013/14 AMMV News

The future of which these wise leaders spoke is here, and now. Think of how little recognition has been given to our U.S. Merchant Mariner Veterans of WWII during their own lifetime. Then ponder how history will remember their service and sacrifice in 20, 30, or 50 years from now. It is clear that our work is far from done.

Wishing everyone a happy spring season!



Capt. Christopher Edyvean
Interim AMMV News Editor
Past National President



National Office Administrator's Report

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

agreeing to stand for office, which is a large commitment no matter what your personal circumstances. However, this year we did not have people offering to run for office, and therefore those candidates who did express their willingness were uncontested. As you may recall, the election process two years ago was the same. We did not mail a slate this year or two years ago because the candidates were uncontested in 2019 as well. We are fortunate to welcome two of our new board members, both daughters of WWII MMs, as AMMV's very capable and dedicated new officers. Sheila Sova (VP-elect) and Cynthia Komlos (Secretary-elect) are joining the Board effective July 1, 2021. As we have in the past, I sincerely hope that our members give the new officers their full support and appreciation for their continued commitment.

Everything has been affected by the pandemic. We did not have our 2020 convention and the Board has not been able to meet in person. This year the current officers actually reached out to some of our volunteers who have exhibited a desire to be involved asking them to consider running for office, but in many cases the opportunity was declined. We try to be as fair as we can possibly be within the confines of our By-Laws. That said, if anyone has reservations about how the election process was handled please

reach out to me or one of the current officers (Dennis or Dru) for clarification. If anyone has the desire to serve as an officer on the 2023 Board, please notify me or the President at any time. You do not have to wait until December of 2022 to express your intentions. The Board welcomes your participation.

Donations "in memory of" and "in honor of"

We have noticed a significant increase in donations that are marked "in honor of" or "in memory of", very often from people who are not current AMMV members. Of course, AMMV is proud to be named as the recipient of such contributions. No special forms or procedures are necessary. If you wish to make such a donation just send a note with the donation check naming the person whom you wish to honor either "in memory of" or "in honor of". If you provide me with a name and address, I will send an acknowledgement letter to the honoree in the case of an "in honor of" contribution or to the family in the case of an "in memory of" contribution, as well as to the donor.

Calm Seas,



Lynn C. Kelly



American Merchant Marine Veterans

Profit & Loss

July 2020 through February 2021

	Jul '20 - Feb 21
Income	
402 · Contributions	69,982.42
403 · Interest Income & Bank Bonuses	766.44
405 · Mission Support Fund	775.49
409 · Miscellaneous Income	16.00
410 · Chapter and MAL Dues	
DAR · Dennis Roland	832.00
EOH · Edwin O'Hara	32.00
GLD · Golden Gate	689.00
HIR · High Rollers	200.00
JTS · John T. Schmidt/Palmetto	600.00
LON · Lone Star	175.00
MAL · Members at Large	16,182.59
MWE · Mid West	510.00
NBM · North Bay Mariners	350.00
NOA · North Atlantic	64.00
OHV · Ohio Valley	300.00
ORV · Oswego River Valley	75.00
THR · Three Rivers	625.00
410 · Chapter and MAL Dues - Other	96.00
Total 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues	20,730.59
411 · Convention Income	
412 · Convention Registrations	-290.00
Total 411 · Convention Income	-290.00
Total Income	91,980.94
Expense	
500 · Fixed Expense	
507 · Telephone	260.88
511 · Service Charges - Paypal	57.46
Total 500 · Fixed Expense	318.34
514 · Convention Expenses	
515 · Convention Events	-200.00
Total 514 · Convention Expenses	-200.00
520 · Mission Advance	
525 · Mission Support Exp	332.54
526 · Internet Initiative	442.95
Total 520 · Mission Advance	775.49
530 · AMMV News Magazine	
533 · Postage	2,648.97
536 · Printing	9,520.59
538 · Layout	3,900.00
539 · Editorial Fee	600.00
Total 530 · AMMV News Magazine	16,669.56
550 · Personnel	
551 · Administration	12,400.00
Total 550 · Personnel	12,400.00
560 · Operating Expense	
564 · Office Supplies	584.14
565 · Postage - Office	1,383.55
566 · Printing - Office	2,721.08
567 · Licenses & Fees	522.32
Total 560 · Operating Expense	5,211.09
Total Expense	35,174.48
Net Income	56,806.46

American Merchant Marine Veterans


Balance Sheet

As of February 28, 2021

	Feb 28, 21
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
105 · Chase Bank	192,601.40
Total Checking/Savings	192,601.40
Total Current Assets	192,601.40
TOTAL ASSETS	192,601.40
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
20000 · Accounts Payable	1,945.58
Total Accounts Payable	1,945.58
Credit Cards	
200 · Chase Credit Card	70.00
Total Credit Cards	70.00
Other Current Liabilities	
312 · Member Recruitment	893.00
314 · Mission Support Donations	64,732.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	65,625.00
Total Current Liabilities	67,640.58
Total Liabilities	67,640.58
Equity	
32001 · Retained Earnings	68,154.36
Net Income	56,806.46
Total Equity	124,960.82
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	192,601.40

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STEAMSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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EST. 1955

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO HAVE CROSSED THE FINAL BAR

RICHARD T. BARA, SR.Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
LOIS BOYLERichmond, CA
PAUL J. CAMPBELLKingston, MA
MANLEY "JOE" CLEMENTSWright City, MO
ALEXANDER H. DORMANRensselaerville, NY
PAUL L. HENDERSONRidgecrest, CA
DIANE HINDSCincinnati, OH
JOHN J. HOWARD, JRGlenshaw, PA
LIVIO P. MARINELLIStoughton, MA
LEONARD NICHOLSTucson, AZ
GLENN B. PETERS.Chesapeake, OH
GEORGE RATCLIFFEDarien, CT
HELEN RIEKSGastonia, NC
CAPT. ANDREW SUBCLEFFEdmonds, WA
ROBERT ULRICH.Davis, CA

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.

WWII Veteran Charlie Montanaro skydives to celebrate 100th birthday

Submitted by Capt. Dru DiMattia – AMMV National President

I'm sure you all know the story by now, but what follows is the complete rundown of events, just in case you may not know some of the finer details that were months, days, and hours leading up to Charlie Montanaro jumping out of a perfectly good airplane!

It all started back when Charlie was only 98 years young, as he stated to his friends of the Honor Flight Nevada, in Reno, that he wanted to sky jump on his 100th Birthday!



Charles as a baby

Well, one conversation led to another within the Honor Flight Nevada family, and that's all it took! They found out through Charlie and our AMMV family network, as word spread from the High Rollers, to the Razorbacks, to the Southeast Region of the United States. Bob Ross and Shirley & Crawford Knight got wind of this adventure and had originally planned to travel to South Florida. Shirley got talking to the Director of Honor Flight who was then introduced to our own extended family, and wonderful duo performers, Sally and Roy Langwah. They immediately jumped into action passing the word and drumming up some special plans which I'll highlight soon!

Sally included our SWFLA AMMV Chapter in the communication chain which introduced me to the Director of the Honor Flight Nevada, Adam Wagnanski.

The Reno team, consisting of ten volunteers, was initially scheduled to fly from Reno, NV to Fort Lauderdale, FL on January

25th, 2021. Adam informed us that,

"World War II Merchant Marine Veteran Charlie Montanaro's wish to parachute jump for his 100th Birthday will be granted. Charlie Montanaro was invited by the U.S. Army Golden Knights Elite Parachute Team to accompany the team on his jump. Charlie will be

making this jump on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 (time is to be determined). We will provide the time of Charlie's jump well in advance. He will be jumping from the Homestead Air Reserve Military Base in Homestead, Florida located at 29050 Coral Sea Blvd in Homestead, Florida." Adam and I spoke about gaining interest from our AMMV members in South Florida. After placing some feelers out there, word

was received that Charlie would have a cheerleading squad on the sidelines displaying our colors!

However, on December 18th, Adam notified us that the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team had to regrettably cancel due to COVID.

By December 20th, Adam had already started working on new plans finding a drop zone in Eloy, Arizona, for the dates of the 27th or 28th of

January! This Honor Flight team from Reno wasn't messing around!

Lynn Kelly, our Administrator, provided me the contact info for our Arizona-based AMMV members, of whom I informed of this event. Laura Riddle immediately chimed in and stated she has certified jumpers in her family willing to jump and fly the flag on the way down! We also heard from Norman Palmer who reluctantly stated he

couldn't make it, but wished us fair winds, and soft landings! Staying in close contact with all parties we learned that Laura's team could not participate solo with the scheduled tandem jumpers. But that didn't slow Laura down at all!

I could not turn down the



Charles in WWII



"Team Charlie"



Capt. Dru DiMattia & Laura Johnson Riddle

opportunity in seeing our WWII member Charles Montanaro turning 100, but also being part of this incredible adventure. With the green light available on travel and accommodations availed in Arizona, I arrived on the 26th of January and found my way down to Chandler, Arizona. Upon checking in and settling down at the hotel bar for a cool adult beverage, I immediately heard some cheers and laughter coming out of a nearby conference room. As I was getting served, multiple emails from Sally arrived! Sally had promised to send Charlie a special personal birthday wish, along with a special rendering of her very own version of “HEAVE HO”! At that moment a fellow was walking by and I saw a very distinctive t-Shirt with a 100, and Charlie, written across the front! I excused myself and asked him if he was part of the Honor Flight traveled from Reno, and he answered, “that’s us!”

I couldn’t believe the timing! Sure enough, the laughter and cheers were the Honor Flight Nevada Team with

WWII Veteran Charles Montanaro! As we greeted each other, I immediately asked if I could share a couple of special tributes from some very dear friends of Charlie’s, Sally and Roy. In moments, they had the files sent to a big screen, and Charlie was being serenaded by Sally’s eloquent Marilyn Monroe’s Happy Birthday song, of which only Sally can do! This special tribute alone is enough to have made the trip worth all the effort just to see Charlie smiling from ear to ear. But so much more was yet to come! As the night wore on and the midnight watch was about to take over, I couldn’t believe this group was still going! Charlie is to blame! I had to excuse myself and seek some sleep, as jet lag was setting in. The group chairman, Adam, stated loudly that we will see you in the lobby at 0730 hours, as I was thinking to myself, what the hell have I gotten myself into? Again, all Charlie’s fault!

Rise and shine on the 27th with Charles smiling and saying, “LET’S GO”, Honor Flight Nevada ready to go!”

The next thing I know we are caravanning down Interstate 10 towards Tucson at 85 knots! Last time I was on this stretch of highway, I got pulled over!

We arrived at the Pima Air and Space Museum at 0905 and started the tour of this 80-acre outdoor display and 250,000 square feet of indoor hangers. This was an incredible day enjoyed by all. Charles did not once slow down, as we tried to keep up with him. We enjoyed lunch at the Flight Grill, and picked our tour back up with so much more to see on the grounds outside. Three hangers were dedicated to WWII vintage aircraft.

Day two: January 28th, “Jump Day” started with mustering up at 0900 in the lobby, and we soon headed off to Eloy, Arizona – the drop zone!

Upon arrival, I immediately realized that I had a decision to make: do I jump? Hell, yeah! I registered and got in line to sign my life away with about 20 pages of paperwork! Again, Charlie is at fault!

Laura Riddle, with husband, Kevin and daughter,



Honor Flight Nevada

Bailey, arrived around 1300. She had her seabag and was prepared to educate on WWII Merchant Marine history. Laura and family were right there supporting the cause, displaying the flag, and cheering on Charlie! A huge thanks to Laura Riddle and her crew for showing up.

As Charlie was getting briefed on the tandem sky jump with his instructor/guide, he was informed that he would need additional weight in order to have the proper descent. Charlie agreed, and more weight was then strapped to his special suit. Upon safely landing and getting untethered from his instructor and parachute, the Honor Flight crew unstrapped the weight pouch to reveal 20 silver dollars to commemorate his 100th birthday jump!

Laura and I presented Charlie with a small plaque from the AMMV for his special day. There were no less than three TV networks on station to record Charlie's 100th birthday wish of parachuting! As you have already seen, the story was well documented showcasing our young at heart, Merchant Mariner Charles Montanaro. He did a great job getting the word out there about our all too frequently forgotten WWII Merchant Marine Veterans and their sacrifices!

Dozens of video clips and various news reports featuring Charlie's 100th birthday celebration and skydive can easily be googled and found online.

Bravo Zulu to Charlie and the entire Honor Flight Nevada Team!

Upon returning to Chandler, Arizona, we went directly

to a predetermined dinner location, where the staff was ready to celebrate Charlie's birthday wish of a sky jump. We arrived at Lagunitas Brewing Company, where they had welcoming signs highlighting Charlie's 100th birthday, and of their slogan; "BEER SPEAKS, PEOPLE MUMBLE"!

Amongst our cheerful dining and sharing stories of the day's jump, we paused to honor the Gold Star family members Sherry Zaehring, mother of Marine Sgt. Frank Zaehring III KIA, October 10th, 2010; and Steven Ward, father of Marine Eric Ward KIA, February 2010. Freedom is not free, it's paid for in blood!

AMMV wishes to thank the entire "Honor Flight Nevada" family, for making this very special event come together. The entire event was top shelf, honoring our WWII Merchant Mariner, Charles Montanaro, and what the Honor Flight program



Charlie comes in with a soft landing

represents.

AMMV wishes to send Charlie a sincere thank you! Well done, shipmate! You are a youthful Centenarian leading the charge! May we all take heed of how high you have set the bar! Charlie, you have created an awesome outcome shedding light on the story of our WWII Merchant Marine, which remains utterly untold to so many people! Please let me know when you are going to jump again! HEAVE HO!

Charlie, you now have joined the elite Centenarian club of AMMV members like Charles Mills, and an ever-growing list this year! AMMV is so blessed to have all of our WWII Merchant Marine warriors.



Welcome Aboard to these New Members of the AMMV

GAIL L. ADAMS	SHELBY	OH
LINDA CAFFREY	MOHEGAN LAKE	NY
ROBERT GOMEZ	SHERMAN OAKS	CA
JOHN LAUGHTON	HOLLISTER	CA
CHRIS MAPLES	RENO	NV
MIKE MC ANDREW	N.HIGHLANDS	CA
TIMOTHY A. OLSON	MELBOURNE	FL
WILLIAM PRUITT	ST. AUGUSTINE	FL
SETH R. SCHNEIBLE, SR	BETHLEHEM	PA
CHARLES SELLERS	JACKSONVILLE BEACH	FL
CAPT. THOMAS STAPLETON	NEW BRAUNFELS	TX
PETER E. TSARIDES	ROCHESTER	MA

AMMV member Dick Burbine recalls the *SS Henry Bacon* sinking

There are many heroic tales involving our Merchant Mariners of WWII, and one of these phenomenal events is the story of the last Allied vessel to be sunk by the Luftwaffe. At the forefront of this story is AMMV member Richard "Dick" Burbine.

Burbine is not only a Merchant Marine Combat Veteran of WWII, but he has also lived an interesting life. Born in Massachusetts in 1926, Burbine lost his father at age two due to long term complications stemming from being gassed in WWI. Burbine and his brothers were then sent to live in Nova Scotia with their grandparents. Once England went to war against Germany, the Burbine brothers had to return to the states or lose U.S. citizenship. (As an interesting side note, Burbine traveled to/from Nova Scotia on ferry ships operated by the Eastern Steamship Company, such as the *SS Yarmouth*.

Ironically, he would later work as a crew member aboard such vessels.)

At age sixteen (1942), Burbine joined the WWII Merchant Marine. His younger brother, Warren J. Burbine, would follow in his footsteps and also ship-out during WWII. Dick Burbine sailed in the Engine Department during and after the war on many ships, including the *SS John Stevens*, *SS Sea Marlin*, *SS Tulsa*, *SS Alcoa Planter*, and the Liberty

Ship *SS Henry Bacon*. It was his experiences on the *Henry Bacon* which vividly stand out not only in his memory, but in the archives of U.S. Merchant Marine history.

The *SS Henry Bacon*, one of 126 Liberty Ships built at the North Carolina Shipbuilding Corporation (Hull # 862), was launched on November 11, 1942. Its lifespan would only be 836 days. The *Henry Bacon* was named after the famous architect who, among other accomplishments, designed the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

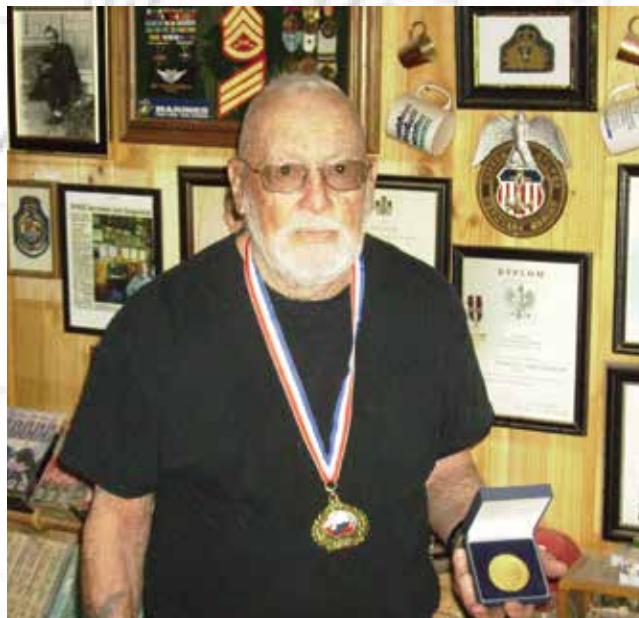
The complete story of the sinking and rescue is captured in "*The Last Voyage of the SS Henry Bacon*". This book is unique in itself, having been

started in the 1960's by one author, then set aside for several decades until another author stepped-up and finished the work, with the publishing occurring in 2001.

In short, the vessel departed Murmansk, Russia on February 17th, 1945 in ballast and in convoy formation. The days following departure were plagued by mechanical issues and severe weather, and the *Bacon* became separated from the convoy. Carrying 19 Norwegian refugees, the *Bacon* was attacked by 23 enemy aircraft on Feb. 23rd. In a gallant fight, the Navy Armed Guard gun crew, with assistance



Burbine in an undated photo



Burbine displaying recent Norwegian medals

from various Merchant Mariners, shot down at least four aircraft and inflicted damage on other planes before being terminally hit by a torpedo.

Burbine had been assisting with repairs to the steering motor when the *Bacon* was first attacked. He then helped load ammunition throughout the fight, and upon the torpedo strike was immediately reassigned to help free-up lifeboats. It was during this task that a wave knocked him and the lifeboat into the sea.

Amazingly, Burbine was able to right the survival craft. However, Burbine chose not to climb out of the water, in fear that he would freeze to death. He soon found a life ring buoy, and ultimately swam around to connect with three other individuals. The four huddled and interlocked legs, with one person in the center of the ring buoy. The wait for

rescue would be over two hours in the harsh, unforgiving Arctic environment.

Once the British vessel *HMS Zambesi* finally arrived on scene, rescuer Sub Lt. Ian Rodney Bowden entered the frigid water and tied a line around Burbine in what was thought to be a body recovery. That is, until Burbine was aboard and bystanders witnessed eye movement! Shouts of "He's alive!" were heard, as Burbine had clearly defied the odds of survival. He and the other three were among the survivors!

Undeterred from this incident, and holding fast to the slogan, "You bet I'm going back to sea!";



HMS Zambesi R66

Burbine soon found himself on another vessel. His patriotic service did not end there. He later enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served in the Korean Conflict, and would even make a return to the Merchant Marine in the early days of the Vietnam War.

Burbine's collection of official medals and ribbons is expansive: WWII Victory Medal; U.S. Merchant Marine Honorable Service Medal; campaign theatre medals: Pacific, Chinese, Philippine, Atlantic, Mediterranean,

Middle East; Norwegian War Medal; Republic of Poland War Cross; Republic of France Liberation Medal; Republic of France War Cross; French Algerian Medal; Arctic War Zone Medal; U.K.'s "Battle of Britain" Medal; Yugoslavian War Cross; Belgian War Medal; English medal for "Running the Dover Straits Gauntlet"; Philippine

Liberation Medal; Taiwan (Formosa) Liberation Medal; and more recently the Ushakov Medal and the (Norwegian) Convoy Cup Award. As Burbine's son pointed out, there has been more recognition from appreciative foreign governments than from our own.

The AMMV Editorial staff caught up with Dick Burbine to ask a few questions about his remarkable experience on the *Henry Bacon*.

AMMV: The book about the SS *Henry Bacon* sinking tells the story of two young Russian girls (sisters) who attempted to stowaway but were caught before departure from Murmansk. What



Burbine with Rodney Bowden, the man who saved him (2002)

do you think was their fate?

Burbine: The two sisters died soon after their arrest by the Soviet authorities.

AMMV: When you were washed overboard while readying a lifeboat (and briefly knocked unconscious), what was your immediate thought upon entering the frigid sea? Did you ever think you wouldn't make it?

Burbine: It never entered my mind that I would not survive. After coming to, I was focused on righting the lifeboat.


AMMV: Much has been written about the *Bacon's* Chief Engineer, Donald Haviland, who was initially seated in a lifeboat but then gave up his seat to a younger crewmember, only to go down with the ship moments later. As you know, Haviland posthumously received the U.S. Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Award. Having worked for Haviland in the Engine Room, what can you say about this man?

Burbine: Chief Engineer Donald Haviland was a true American patriot, who valued life but sacrificed his own life to save a younger man.

AMMV: What is the first thing you recall after being rescued and realizing you were safe aboard the *HMS Zambesi*?

Burbine: Warmth, and the feeling of friendship from *Zambesi's* crew.

AMMV: How do you feel, overall, about the manner (or lack of) of which Merchant Mariners of WWII have been treated by our government?

Burbine: I felt that the Merchant Mariners had been insulted, like a slap on the face by our government. Other countries had recognized the sacrifices made by the U.S. Merchant Marine during the war and for many decades after, while our own government failed to recognize us for 40+ years, after many of our number had already passed away. 



SS Kyska, another of Burbine's ships (Vietnam era)

BOOK REVIEW:

The Last Voyage of the SS Henry Bacon

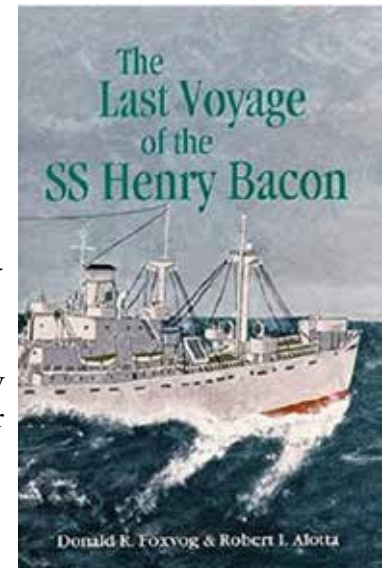
Reviewed by Capt. Chris Edyvean

Although *Last Voyage* is not a new release, my intriguing interview with WWII Merchant Mariner Dick Burbine led me to this book, of which I felt inclined to share with the AMMV membership. Initial research for this manuscript began in the 1960's, as author Donald Foxvog conducted interviews with many of the survivors. However, with government reports still deemed classified, the research was eventually shelved by Foxvog. That is, until decades later when the second author, Dr. Robert Alotta, dusted off the Foxtrot's work and, armed with declassified information, finished the book. It was published in 2001.

Last Voyage paints not only the story of the ship and its cast of Merchant Mariners and Armed Guard sailors, but also provides firsthand accounts of WWII Murmansk, and in doing so, captures the palpable friction between the U.S. and Russia. Also detailed is the back story on how the specified Norwegian refugees ended up on the *Bacon*.

The book can get confusing as the author(s) often skip around among viewpoints and recollections of the survivors; notwithstanding, this is a solid piece of Merchant Marine history and should not be excluded from the bookshelves of avid history buffs!

Last Voyage is available from Amazon/Kindle.



Portraits of Honor:

ALABAMA MAN HONORS WWII VETERANS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Professional photographer Jeffrey Rease of Alabama has a very unique and interesting hobby: photographing WWII veterans. Mr. Rease's work caught the attention of national news headlines last fall, which in turn aroused the interest of AMMV. The AMMV editorial staff recently caught up with Mr. Rease to learn more about his unique efforts.

AMMV: First things first... How/when did you become involved in photography?

Rease: I was into photography a bit starting in high school on the yearbook staff, and then into college. My college degree was in graphic design and that's what I did all through my career. As digital cameras improved in quality and became less expensive, I was able to incorporate that into my design work myself and not have to rely on hiring photographers. I also began to freelance as a photographer starting around 2008. When my last design job ended in 2017, I became a full-time freelance photographer.

AMMV: Please tell us how and why you became involved in recognizing WWII veterans through photography.

Rease: I was motivated after seeing a photographer in the United Kingdom photographing British WWII Veterans and I decided that I could do that in the United States as a way for me to give something small back to veterans to honor their service and sacrifices. After all, I am a portrait photographer and I have loved reading about WWII heroes and watching movies all my life. I lost an uncle who was in the Coast Guard in WWII when

his destroyer escort was torpedoed by a German submarine in the North Atlantic. And my father was a paratrooper in the Korean War. I wish I had thought to do this back when

he was alive. I know he would be really proud of it. I thought it would be an interesting project to meet and photograph a few actual WWII veterans. I had no idea it would impact me so deeply from that very first veteran I met, and that it would become a passion project that I cannot stop. I plan to continue this as long as I can find veterans who can sit for a portrait.

AMMV: What are your ultimate plans, in regards to preserving the details of your work? You

"What began as a way to give back something small to the heroes of the 'Greatest Generation' has become somewhat of a journey for me – a journey to not only make the portraits of living World War II veterans, but to hear their stories firsthand. Not just reading about the most famous veterans' heroics in books, but also the everyday soldier, sailor, airman, mechanic, nurse, pilot, radio operator, or whomever served in that war that changed the world and to share them with everyone I can. Because everyone needs to know what some of the 16 million plus Americans whom served sacrificed for their country and their families." – Jeffrey Rease

mentioned a potential book deal.

Rease: All of the portraits are on my Portraits of Honor website (www.portraitsofhonor.US), and the video inter-

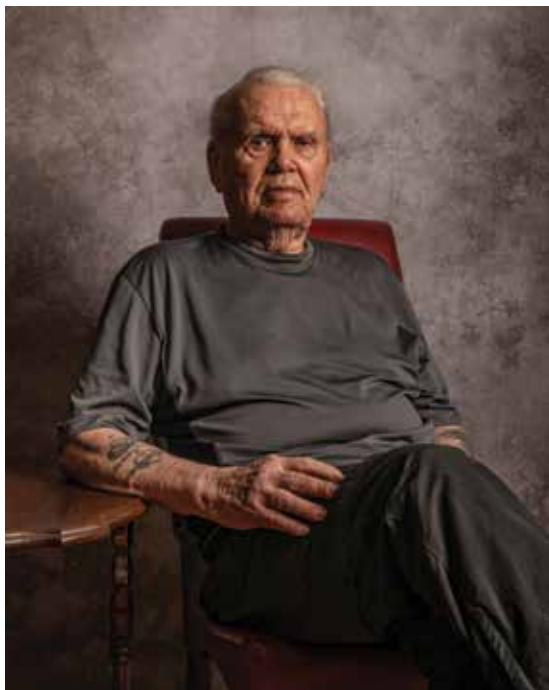
views are being posted to a YouTube channel I created. I have received some interest in doing a book through a literary agent in New York, but that hasn't advanced anywhere at this time. And other exciting opportunities are developing that I hope will work out this year.

AMMV: What is the easiest way to contact you if someone knows of a WWII veteran who'd like to participate?

Rease: The best way is to reach out to me through the "Contact" tab on my website at www.portraitsofhonor.US.

AMMV: If anyone is interested in contributing to your efforts, what is the best way to donate?

Rease: Again, through my website on the "Donate" tab that takes

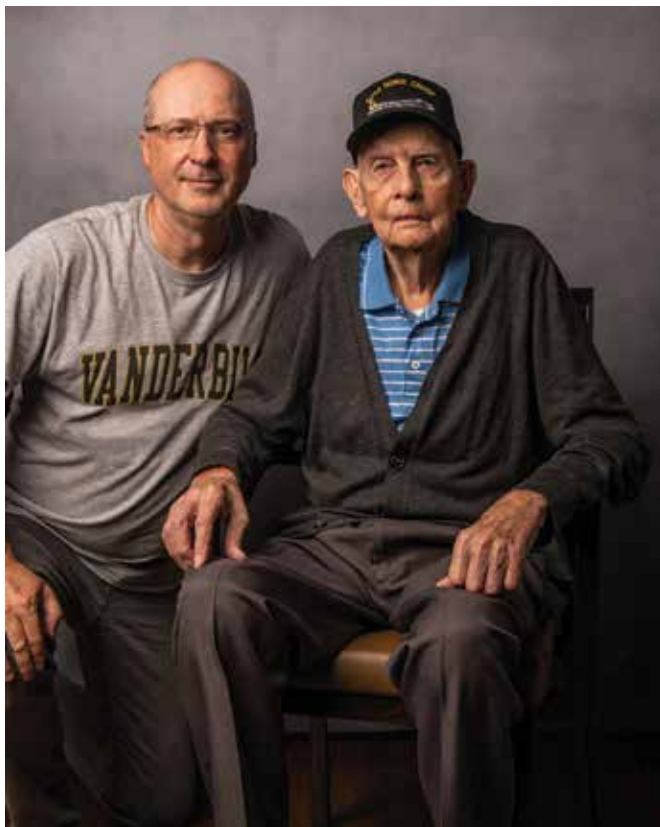


WWII Merchant Mariner James Schmidt

you to a GoFundMe page. I welcome any contributions to help me travel to meet the veterans and provide free prints shipped to them and their families.

AMMV: Can you tell us about the most interesting veteran of whom you've photographed and interviewed?

Rease: Lt. Bill Massey is one of many I've met who stand out because of what they did. I visited the VA Home in Pell City, Alabama which is about a half hour drive from my house. The activities director said she would arrange for me to meet several WWII veterans who live there. I had no advance list of them or their history. I just met them when they came into the chapel where I had setup my gear. A gentleman came in shuffling his wheelchair with his feet along the floor and held out his hand to shake mine. He told me his name and that he was on a B-17 in the war. I was excited about that because I had a fondness of B-17s since I was a kid. Then he said he was a pilot, and I was twice as intrigued! He then told me he was shot down on his 19th mission, and I was absolutely sure this was going to be a great story! He wasn't scheduled to fly the mission that particular day in April, 1944. However, another pilot was a bit hungover from the night before and his crew didn't want to fly with him. Bill Massey was asked to fly in his place, but he preferred to fly with his own B-17 and crew, who agreed to go. While flying over France they were hit by flak and a fire started in the forward area of the plane, filling the cockpit with thick smoke. Massey told the crew to bail out. He made his way to the nose of the plane and was preparing to jump, still holding his parachute in his hand, when an explosion blew him out of the aircraft at 26,000 feet altitude. I can't imagine how he could survive it. The air temperature at that altitude was around -40° below zero. He didn't have a parachute strapped to him (pilots have no room in the cockpit to wear



*Photographer Jeffrey Rease with
Army Air Corps Lt. Bill Massey*

them in flight). He thinks it was around 3,000 feet altitude that he had attached the parachute enough to chance it opening for him. It did, and his boots flew off his feet with the force of the opening canopy. He landed hard in a French field. He had seen one farmer and tried shouting to him, but the farmer moved on without acknowledging Massey. Later, another farmer came around and appeared to be looking for him. That farmer took him to hide in a wagon and later to a farmhouse with the two other survivors from his plane so that Germans could not find them. They remained hidden on various farms for about eight weeks and even aiding the French Underground resistance movement until Allied soldiers made their way into the area.

AMMV: How many WWII Merchant Marine Veterans have you encountered?

Rease: I have met two Merchant Marine veterans so far. The first was James Schmidt who enlisted in the Army Airborne at age 14, with his mother completely unaware (she thought he was staying with his father, a soldier based at Camp Campbell, KY). He obviously lied about his age, though at 6 feet tall and weighing 200 pounds he apparently was convincing enough. At 15 years old he made a jump with the 82nd Airborne into Sicily. It was after that jump and a minor injury that his mother found out where her son was. Her stern letter to President Roosevelt got him quickly sent home and out of the Army. However, Schmidt soon ran off and joined the Navy with similar results months later. He finally joined the Merchant Marine since there was a lesser age requirement, and he served there through the end of the war. The second was Leslie Ellis who served on the SS *Josiah B. Grinnell*, the USNS *Mission Solano*, and SS *Longview Victory*. He married a girl who was a "Rosie the Riveter" factory worker building airplanes. ⚓



*Leslie Irvin Ellis with wife, Frances. Ellis was a
WWII Merchant Mariner and served in the
Engine Department.*

A CARGO DOOMED TO BOOM

PART I

This story was told by John Laughton, Second Mate on the SS Hobbs Victory, and written by his wife Lorna in the mid-1960s. He is referred to as "Big John" in the story, because he was called that by some on his ship. Laughton is a member of AMMV and turns 100 later this year. He has recently recovered from a bout with COVID.



**John Laughton,
WWII Merchant Marine
Deck Officer**

Captain Izant had left orders for an early morning call believing that this might very well be the day for setting sail toward destination "X." It was Easter Sunday, 1945, and it was near 0600 local apparent time as the merchant ship *S.S. Hobbs Victory*, swinging at anchor in the Ulithi Atoll, awaited orders to proceed to its undisclosed destination. This

U.S. merchant vessel had left its launching only six weeks earlier from Richmond, California. She was brand-spanking new, and nothing could make her or her crew take a back seat for fitness.

The second mate, Big John, as he was appropriately called by the entire crew, had the four to eight watch and thus drew the duty of directing his look-out man to calling the cooks for the galley while he attended to arousing the skipper. This accomplished, he directed Whitey, the Able Seaman attached to his watch, to lower the starboard motor lifeboat to the main deck level for the possible last mail call pickup at the island some three miles away.

Later while morning chow was being consumed amidst curiosity and anxiety, Captain Izant was still in the ward room with most of the other ship's officers having their second cup of coffee. Big John swung down from the flying bridge and interrupted excitedly, "Captain, here's a message that just came in from shore. Flags caught it on the blinker."

Scanning the message form hurriedly, the Skipper said as a happy grin crossed his face, and his burly eyebrows lifted, "Now hear this,

men; this is from the convoy commander on the island. He directs the armed guard lieutenant and me to come ashore immediately for convoy grouping information and other matters pertaining thereto, and he suggests that a full head of steam be brought up on the boilers."

"It looks like this is what we've been waiting for."

"Big John, have yourself relieved from watch, get some chow, and be ready to take the lieutenant and me to shore in fifteen minutes."

"Yes Sir!" replied the second mate as all the officers scrambled out to take care of last-minute preparations.

The trip to the island was as speedy as a motorized whale boat could handle while the waiting time for mail pickup and the convoy meeting was even less. In less than two hours from the time that the early morning message was received the anchor was weighed, and the *Hobbs Victory* was under way taking number seven spot in a convoy of seven ships.

"Where does destination 'X' take us, Skipper," asked Big John in the chart-room as they got into position and headed for open sea.

"The scuttlebutt flags picked up from the flat-top this morning was correct about the invasion of Okinawa," replied the Skipper.

"That's where we are headed; so, here's our routing. Plot our course from the coded check points in case we get



Launching of a Victory-class ship

separated from the convoy. If all goes well, we should arrive on the morning of the fourth."

"Very well, sir," answered Big John happily as he went to work laying down the course in the direction of the new battlefield in the far Pacific.

The next two days out from Ulithi were normal and uneventful. On the evening of the second day "Sparks," the chief radio operator, Gordon Brown, picked up a severe storm warning message stating that a hurricane was headed in the direction of the convoy. By the next morning the fringes of the storm were upon them. The convoy commander ordered the course altered thirty degrees to starboard, which meant that if they stayed on the course very long, delay on arrival was inevitable.

By nightfall the waves that had been long and rolling in that morning had turned into greater heights with white-caps churning wildly on their crests. Midnight found the convoy possibly two hundred miles east of the eye of the hurricane. All ships must have been shipping green water over their bows inasmuch as the lookout man on the *Hobbs* was forced from the bow lookout to the flying bridge. This made it more difficult to stay in convoy position because of very poor visibility. Sleep was impossible for the off-watch crew as the ship listed, pitched, rolled, and vibrated throughout when part of the propeller stuck its blades above the waterline. On the morning of the fourth day, the convoy with speed cut in half was still heading in a northerly direction instead of northwest, and the wind remained constant at one hundred knots. By noon the wind was down somewhat from its peak, and on the change of the 1600 hour watch all seven ships were still in sight. Speed was increased and the course altered 80° to due west. Two days overdue and six days out of Ulithi, landfall was made in a group of very small islands five miles south of Okinawa. These tiny islands, referred to as Kerama Retto, were situated as to form a natural enclosed harbor for the U.S. naval fleet in the area. The *Hobbs Victory* with her six companion ships pulled into the anchorage and dropped its hook.

"Looks like we're in luck for protection, Big John," drawled the armed guard lieutenant. "There's the *Indianapolis* on our inshore side and the *New Mexico* on our offshore side."

About fifteen minutes after the lieutenant's remark, Flags received a message by blinker to the effect that all merchant ships carrying explosives or gasoline will proceed out of their present anchorage to one around the small-

est westerly island. Now here was the *Hobbs Victory* with a cargo of some six thousand tons plus of ammunition destined for the army just five miles north of here. With the firepower protection of two score U.S. "Man of Wars"

all around their present anchorage, the *Pierre Victory*, *Logan Victory*, and the *Hobbs Victory* must now proceed to an area almost unprotected as far as firepower was concerned.

By the time the move was completed it was 1500. The furnaces were banked for a minimum amount of steam in the boilers, and the watches were doubled by the armed guard for maximum lookout. A navy LCM pulled alongside and her captain hailed captain Izant. "Is everything okay, Skipper?" asked the Lt. Commander.

"Aboard ship, yes, but how come the orders from SOPA (senior officer present afloat) ordering us over here? We're a sitting duck in this area," retorted Captain Izant.

"Don't worry," returned the commander, "all has been quiet here for four days. Your own guns will give you all the protection you need," he continued. "It's only a safety precaution that you were moved out of the fleet area so as not to endanger them in case you were knocked off near them. We'll be around in the morning about starting to discharge your cargo."

"Okay, commander, see you in the morning; thanks for the information." The skipper threw him a salute as the LCM pulled away.

Thirty minutes had passed when all hell broke loose; Jap suicide planes came out of nowhere it seemed. One was a Zeke that crashed into a navy LST loaded with barrels of fuel oil causing it to become a complete inferno. The other was a Betty, which came straight in toward the fantail of the *Hobbs*. This twin-engine enemy plane looked like a two-story building bearing down at the stern of the ship when a top-notch gun crew opened fire with all it had – a five inch 38 aft, four 20 mm along each side, and a three inch 51 forward. The five-inch projectiles puffed explosions right in front of the nose of the plane as it came in. These caused the Betty to take a 90° turn to the left and head for the broadside of the *Pierre Victory*, which was still unalerted because of the quick attack of the enemy. Just 200 yards from the *Pierre* the 20mm crew on the port side aft on the flying bridge of the *Hobbs* brought down the plane into an easy roll and into the drink.

...To be continued in the AMMV News summer edition.



John Laughton will turn 100 years old in 2021!

IN TRIBUTE: BOB ULRICH

Editor's note: Robert Ulrich was an active member of AMMV. For many years, he and Ken Blue were the leaders of the Sacramento Valley Chapter. Together, with the Golden Gate Chapter, they hosted several Western Region Conferences in Reno. Bob also managed the Sac Valley website. However, perhaps Bob's greatest efforts were in promoting the Merchant Marine anthem, *Heave Ho, My Lads!* Bob worked tirelessly at getting the sheet music for *Heave Ho* into the hands of bands and musicians, so that the WWII Merchant Marine could be properly recognized. He will be sorely missed.

The following interview/story with Bob Ulrich was compiled on July 13th, 2020 by Michael T. Naya, Jr., and is reproduced with Mr. Naya's permission.

My name is Robert Ulrich and I was born in 1927 in Wewoka, Oklahoma. We came to California in 1931 because my grandfather had a farm in Livingston. My grandmother had died so we came here to live with my grandfather. The farm had no electricity, no running water, we had a windmill pump fifty feet from the house. We had a two holder pot out there in the shed where we went to the bathroom. That was what it was like on the farm, no electricity, and no radio until we got one when I was twelve when we moved from my grandfather's farm to another farm. When I was thirteen, I never thought I'd be running radios on a tanker during the war.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, I had just turned fourteen, and if the radio broadcasted anything at all, it was constantly interrupted by announcements advertising for anybody who knew morse code. I was fourteen so I couldn't volunteer. Two young men from my same class were dead before I graduated high school. I had a friend who was a torpedo gunner and he was shot down during the Battle of Coral Sea. I had another classmate who was a star football player who was a little older than me by two or three months. He would have been drafted, so he enlisted and was killed on Anzio beach. Our life growing up during

the war was something I lecture to kids about a lot now. Everybody was in the war, that was on our minds constantly. We gathered rubber for rubber drives and we would collect essential materials such as scrap. We manned kiosks where we served as aircraft spotters. We would listen and keep an eye out and spot airplanes as they flew over, and then we'd

report the number of engines and which direction they were flying. We were very close to Kassel Air Force Base about six miles from our house. That may have been the only reason we spotted aircraft. I was about fifteen or sixteen doing that. My brother, who was two years younger, did spotting as well.

Everybody wanted to do their part in the war.

I had two objectives. I wanted to go to sea and I wanted to serve my country. I was afraid the war would be over before I got in it. I enlisted when I was a senior in high school, and high schools in those days knew what we were going to do: join the military. For me, it was allowed since I had taught myself morse code and electronics. Nobody in my hometown knew any of that. I learned by using a little morse code machine and by studying electronics. I got my licenses and passed my Federal Commission exam. I was sixteen when I took the Greyhound to San Francisco to take those exams. I was good at sending code but not good at receiving code. My high school, knowing I was going to go into the service, allowed me to leave before graduation to attend a radio school in San Francisco. My words went from eight to sixteen words a minute. I got my license, had my Coast Guard papers, and I was ready to go. I wanted to wait until graduation, and I kept going to radio school before graduating as Ensign Robert Ulrich. I would have served as an Ensign but was too young to receive a commission as I wasn't nineteen years old yet.

I enlisted in June 1945 toward the end of the war. I caught the tail end of it and I was assigned to a cookie cutter liberty ship. The *HMS Victory* was like the *Kodiak* which was my second ship. We went to Saipan and the battle was



Ulrich (seated) with fellow WWII Vets and Rep. Garamendi (2019)

fairly quiet even though we had Kamikazes. The anti-aircraft guns were right outside my cabin, as Kamikazes would target the radio communication room. I had an armor plate protecting me as the 16 mm guns would go off. We carried a 5" cannon on the stern, a 3" gun on the bow, and we had eight anti-aircraft guns on the ship.

We delivered cargo to the Marianas. I didn't know then but learned later that the Marianas had two islands, including Tinian, which is where the atomic bomb had just been delivered. I was about four days off of Tinian when they dropped the bomb.

I got home on VJ Day when the war ended, which was also my eighteenth birthday. I managed to get off the ship and people were going crazy. It was hard to get around and I made my way to the Greyhound bus depot which I knew well from when I was younger. I got out of San Francisco to my hometown of Livingston. When I got there, everyone was downtown having a giant bonfire celebrating. I got off the bus and found my folks there before I even got to the house. We spent the evening there and folks were going crazy. We were losing so many men that people were dying left and right, and it meant that the killing would be stopped, so people went nuts!

After the war ended the Merchant Marine were told to extend our careers another year by the President in order to get things back to normal. We got on ship and were back out within ten days. We went to the Marianas and loaded cargo and it was like a locomotive, you couldn't get it stopped. Everything had to keep going until they could stop in a smooth manner. We went to Okinawa right in the middle of a hurricane. That night we received five or six SOS distress signals, with ships capsizing and men in the water. When we got to Okinawa, there was a Liberty ship on the sand like a giant whale. We didn't want their cargo and we had to wait there for a few weeks to figure out what we'd be doing. We were sent to Japan and they weren't too happy to see us. We were sent to a Japanese seaport which reminded us of San Francisco. The Japanese lost a lot of ships. We observed what was like a giant ant hill with loads and loads of Marines walking on the pier throwing men off the pier into the salt water. There was a giant load of guys doing that. Nagasaki was only ninety miles away

and we didn't know much about radiation. I am sure there was a lot of radiation around and we were exposed. The Japanese didn't like us, and you can't blame them since we dropped a bomb on their relatives.

I wanted to stay in the service to see more of the world so I sailed on five ships for two and a half years before I quit to go to college. So once World War II was over, we started to get things back to normal. The steamship companies would put one radio officer on each ship instead of three. One day I was at the union hall and the guy making assignments asked, "do you want to go out to sea again?" I said "anything", and I jumped on a boat and went out to the anchorage and climbed a ladder. I held my bags with one finger on each and with my left hand I climbed the ladder. I got up there and a sailor grabbed my bags from me. I pulled myself over the rail on the deck and they hoisted the anchor. I asked the man to point me to the radio room, and there I went. As we departed the anchorage, I had to do a radio communication with the shore. I walked in the radio room and saw equipment I had never seen before, but I managed to get it running in a few minutes. It was my first time as a radio officer on a 10,000-ton tanker. I was the sole communications on that ship and that made me nervous at

eighteen years old. By the time we got home eighteen months later I was considered old by many of the other sailors. I was in a lot of danger after the war with icebergs and engine failure.

After the war I went to college! When I was on my last ship, it was during the summer of my freshman and sophomore year. I spoke with the guys about becoming a radio announcer and they all said I never had a chance. They discouraged me, but as soon as I got home, I got a part time job in San Jose where I went to college. I was never without a job for the next twenty years. During most of that time as a radio broadcaster, I worked in San Jose. I won a national award for a documentary production and won a service medal for the Merchant Marine Veteran Organizations. What really makes us proud is that we were recently awarded the Congressional Gold Medal and that is the highest award Congress can give. I am proud to have served in the Merchant Marines during World War II.



Ulrich at the 2015 Western Region Conference in Reno



Editor's note: The following article appeared in the St. Augustine Record in January. It was written by Lorraine Thompson, and is reprinted with permission.

Island resident to be awarded Congressional Gold Medal Bar



Trester on leave in Brooklyn

St. Augustine Beach resident Ed Trester has more than one reason to roll the drums these days. Trester, who heads the swing and jazz band “E.T. Swing the Thing” which through the years has performed at local venues on and off the beach, is also co-founder of the St. Augustine Jazz Society, a local organization that helps high school students receive music scholarships.

He traces his love of music back to the Big Band Era. While in high school in Brooklyn, New York in the 1940's he began playing the drums, and admits, after more than 8 decades, “the beat goes on!”

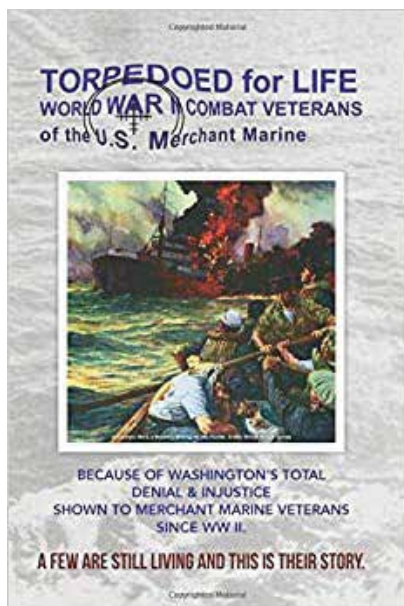
Trester recently learned that he will soon be awarded the Gold Medal Bar from the Congress of the United States for his contributions during World War II as a U.S. Merchant Marine.

Now 94 years old, Trester, who has resided in St. Augustine Beach since the early 1980's, recalled his wartime experiences.

“I dropped out of high school in 1943 while World War II was raging,” he explained. My idea was to become a sailor, join the Navy and ‘see the world’, but the Navy wouldn’t have me. They told me I was too young and to go back to school.”

Disappointed, Trester sought another option. He applied, was accepted and soon began training as a Merchant Marine at Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn, New York. The job of the Merchant Navy was to carry vital troops, food, fuel and equipment to wherever needed in the fight against the Axis alliance of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

His work as a deckhand during his 6 years as a Mer-



Torpedoed for Life was co-authored by Trester in 2013 and is available from Amazon

Life” which he co-authored with another Merchant Marine, H. Gerald Starnes, in 2013. Starnes, who resided in Crescent Beach, died in St. Augustine at the age of 88 in 2015.

On March 14, 2020, President Trump signed legislation authorizing the “Congressional Gold Medal for American merchant mariners whose honorable deeds were critical to U.S. and Allied objectives and ultimate success

chant Marine earned him Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Pacific War Zone medals. Because the Merchant Marine was not designated as a military branch, its veterans did not receive the G.I. Bill and other benefits given to designated branches of the U.S. military, even though that service recorded one of the highest wartime casualties of other services.

Trester’s Merchant Marine memories and those of others in that service are told in the book “Torpedoed for

in World War II.” The Congressional Gold Medal Bar is one of the highest honors bestowed by the U.S. Congress.

Trester is not sure when he will receive the award. He was notified that it will be presented by Congressman Michel Waltz on a date to be determined. In the meantime, the local musician will continue his “drum rolls” while waiting for Covid-19 restrictions to loosen so he and his band may resume performances.



Trester on the drums



Ed Trester (photographed by Lorraine Thompson)

Coming soon:

The AMMV website, ammv.us, will be undergoing a complete rebuild in the near future. Please bear with us as we complete this important and necessary work. Many thanks to Capt. Dru DiMattia, AMMV National President, for taking the lead on our website rebuild!

William Geroux, author of the books *The Mathews Men* and *The Ghost Ships of Archangel*, is researching a new book and looking for any Merchant Marine veterans who sailed aboard merchant vessels carrying German POWs from North Africa to the United States after the Allied victory in North Africa in mid-1943. He is particularly interested in hearing from anyone who had encounters or conversations with the POWs in the course of the voyages. If you can help, he would appreciate hearing from you at billgeroux@gmail.com.

AMMV member George Koch honored at local ceremony

On Saturday, February 6th, a ceremony was held in Punta Gorda, FL to honor WWII Merchant Marine Veteran & AMMV member George Koch, who recently received the Ushakov Medal from the Russian Embassy, for serving on ships delivering critical supplies to Murmansk during the war.

Michael Wooster, President of the Sun Coast Chapter of the U.S. Navy League, served as the Chairman of the event, which was held at the Military Heritage Museum. AMMV National President Capt. Dru DiMattia was on scene to represent AMMV.

Congressman William “Greg” Steube was slated to attend, but had to cancel at the last moment. However, his District Director and Staff Assistant did participate, and presented Mr. Koch with a flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol building. In a press release the following day, Steube stated, “On Saturday, our team recognized one of these heroes in Punta Gorda. We were honored to present WWII Merchant Marine veteran, George Koch, with this month’s FL-17 MVP award. This was a particularly special ceremony because he was also presented with the Ushakov Award for his outstanding military service and assistance to our allies. At the young age of 16, George put everything on the line to serve our country, assist our allies, and defeat evil. His service truly embodies the spirit of the Greatest Generation and it was an honor to be a part of this ceremony to recognize his lifetime of patriotism and valor.”

Capt. DiMattia and Mr. Wooster both spoke at the ceremony. Also in attendance was the Charlotte High School Junior ROTC unit.

A special rendition of “Heave Ho” was played, recorded by TV star Mike Rowe, best known for hosting “Dirty Jobs”. Rowe had an uncle who served in the WWII

Merchant Marine; this version was recorded for National Maritime Day in 2020. A reception followed, with food/cake supplied by Smith Island Cakes.

In total, about 75 people were in attendance, including Mr. Koch and his wife, Jean. Proper social distancing and COVID protocol were followed.

About the Medal of Ushakov


The Medal of Ushakov (Russian: Медаль Ушакова) is a state decoration of the Russian Federation that was retained from the awards system of the USSR post 1991.

The Medal of Ushakov was created on March 3, 1944 by decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. It was named in honor of Russian admiral Fyodor Ushakov who never lost a battle and was proclaimed patron saint of the Russian Navy.

The Medal of Ushakov is awarded to soldiers and sailors of the Navy and of the

Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation for bravery and courage displayed while defending the Motherland and the public interests of the Russian Federation in naval theatres of military operations, while protecting the state borders of the Russian Federation, in carrying out naval combat missions with vessels of the Navy and/or Border Guard Service of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, during exercises and maneuvers in the performance of military duties under conditions involving a risk to life, as well as for excellent performance in naval combat training.

Among the foreign recipients of the Medal of Ushakov are US Navy and Royal Navy personnel and merchant mariners who participated in Arctic Convoys in WWII.

The Russian Federation Order of Precedence dictates the Medal of Ushakov is to be worn on the left breast with other medals immediately after the Medal of Zhukov. 



WWII Merchant Mariner George Koch at the podium



George with wife, Jean



AMMV National President Capt. Dru DiMattia



Group photo with Jr. ROTC unit



Navy League of the United States SUN COAST Council

Serving Florida's Collier, Lee, and Charlotte Counties

130 East Marion Ave # 510783 Punta Gorda, FL 33951

February 10, 2021

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Captain Dru DiMattia

President

American Merchant Marine Veterans
Cape Coral, FL

Dru,

I am writing to express my appreciation for all your effort to pull together the event honoring George Koch on February 6th. First of all you are a pleasure to work with, full of energy and enthusiasm and obviously committed to these efforts to recognize our Merchant Marines. You worked early on to get the Ushakov Medal to George even before we got involved. You contacted the Congressman's office and convinced him to participate. You brought numerous artifacts and displays to create an educational atmosphere around the event. And you gave a dynamic speech as the key note speaker that was inspirational and informative. Your hard work and dedication created an event that truly honored our veteran, George Koch. Not only that, but I heard from several of the NJROTC students that the event raised their interest in the possibilities of a Merchant Marine career!

For the Navy League the event honored George and gave us a unique and special way to recognize the Merchant Marine, one of the Sea Services that we support.

I look forward to more opportunities to work with you in the future.

Bravo Zulu Shipmate! Well done!

Sincerely,

Michael H. Wooster

Michael H. Wooster CDR USNR (Ret)
President
Board of Directors



THE SUN COAST COUNCIL OF THE U.S. NAVY LEAGUE IS A 501(c)(3) NONPROFIT CORPORATION, CLASSIFIED BY THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AS AN EDUCATIONAL FACILITY AND THEREFORE EXEMPT FROM REGISTRATION WITH THAT DEPARTMENT. IN COMPLIANCE WITH IRS RULES, THE MOST RECENTLY FILED IRS FORM 990 IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

Letters to the EDITOR

Research on the WWII Merchant Marine

Each year books are written about some special event of the Merchant Marine in WWII. Lately, the dangers and agonies of the North Atlantic and the Murmansk Run seem to be the main subject. There has even been a movie produced lately starring Tom Hanks that deals with the struggles in the Atlantic. Several academic papers were written a few years ago that tell stories of the Merchant Marine in WWII. One is a thesis written about the building of the thousands of ships in just a few years and the other is a Master's thesis exposing how the general public perceived the average Merchant Mariner.

The first paper is the Doctoral Thesis of **Christopher Tavassa** at Northwestern University who wrote about the shipbuilding era from 1940-1945. It outlines how 16 shipyards were basically constructed in a few months, how the design of ships was managed, and how it all wound down at the end of the war. It is shame that most of the records of most of these shipyards were never saved. A terrible example is the main yard of Bethlehem Steel company in Maryland. When the steel company went out of business, so did all the company records. The first Liberty ship, the *SS Patrick Henry* was launched at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Yard. The thesis is on the internet: Launching a Thou-

sand Ships: Entrepreneurs, War Workers, and the State of American Shipbuilding, 1940-1945.

The other thesis dealing with the Merchant Marine was written by **Andrew Waber** as a Master's thesis at Florida State University. It deals with all of the poor mouth talk aimed at the Merchant Marine and the seamen that was popular at the time, especially from the radio newsman, Walter Winchell. The average seaman was portrayed as a simple minded individual, drunk most of the time, chasing women, dodging the draft, and refusing to serve his country. Many of these charges were picked up and became common talk. Some still exist. The thesis does a fine job of putting it all together. It is on the internet: Popular Perceptions of the American Merchant Marine during WWII.

The more a person knows about the history of the Merchant Marine, the better that person will be able to educate and inform. The military history of our country is really the story of how the United States became and has stayed so great.

There is a wonderful website on the Merchant Marine of WWII: usmm.org. This should be the first place a person goes to gain understanding and knowledge on the merchant marine of WWII.

Mark Gleeson

shamrock172@comcast.net



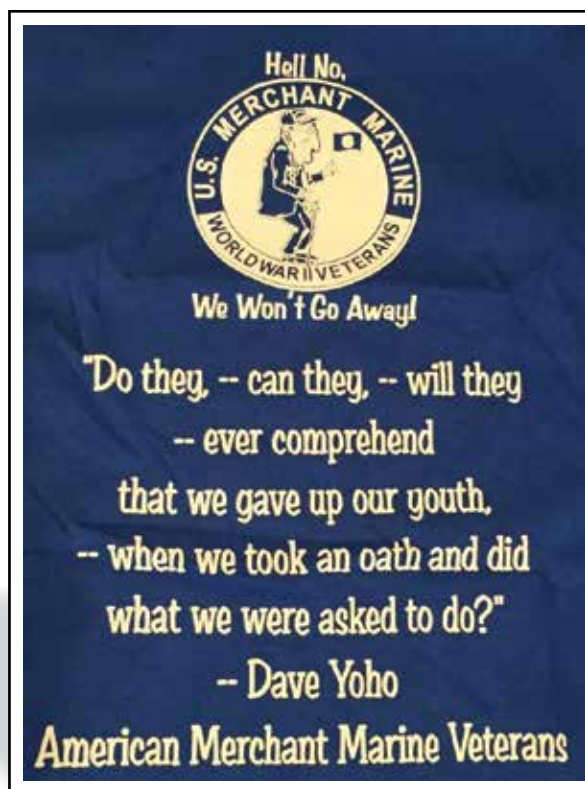
Dave Yoho featured on American Warrior Radio

WWII Merchant Marine Veteran & AMMV member Dave Yoho was featured on American Warrior Radio on February 27th.

Mr. Yoho's interview was both fascinating and informative. In addition to telling his own story, Mr. Yoho laid out the facts of the U.S. Merchant Marine's vital role in WWII. A vast amount of information was covered in just under 44 minutes of airtime.

Dave Yoho is considered one of the top professional speakers in the United States, having made over 5,000 speeches in every state in the U.S. and over 20 foreign countries. Attendees at the past four AMMV National Conventions (2016-2019) have had the pleasure of seeing him in person. Mr. Yoho is a driving force behind AMMV's efforts, and we are proud to have him as a member!

The interview is available at <https://americanwarriorradio.com/podcasts>.



The following is the approved revision of the AMMV Constitution and By-Laws, which was first approved by the AMMV Board of Directors, then approved by the AMMV membership via a mail-in ballot.

AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS INC.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Preamble

The American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) is a not for profit pro-American organization established to gain recognition for what the AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE has accomplished for our country in war and peace. Our key purpose is to celebrate the accomplishments of the American flagged Merchant Marine and to assist the veterans of the American Merchant Marine and their families, and all veterans of the military of the United States and their families, by providing counseling to veterans, and their widows and orphans, to assist them in legal, financial, and emotional matters resulting in connection with service to our country, and to provide information regarding benefits and services available to them.

AMMV is also dedicated to promoting, and educating the U.S. people and government as to, the services that American Merchant Mariners have provided to the nation in connection with the war efforts and preservation of national security. Further, AMMV is dedicated to promoting, and educating the U.S. people and government as to, the value and importance of maintaining and supporting a strong American Merchant Marine fleet.

CONSTITUTION

Article I - NAME OF THIS ORGANIZATION

The name of this corporation is the "AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS, INC."

Article II - ENABLING LAW

The corporation is organized pursuant to the State of Florida "Not for Profit" Corporation Act.

Article III – OUR PURPOSE IS:

A. To provide counseling to veterans of the American Merchant Marine and all branches of the American military, their widows and orphans, to assist them in legal, financial, and emotional matters in connection with those veterans' service to our country, to provide information regarding benefits and services available to them.

B. To educate the American public about the services that American Merchant Mariners have provided to the nation in combat and preservation of national security, and the continuing importance of the American Merchant Marine fleet.

C. To encourage loyalty to our country's laws and constitution.

D. To do such acts and carry on such business as may be permitted of nonprofit corporations under the laws of the State of Florida, in order to accomplish charitable and educational purposes of the Corporation; and

E. To solicit, receive and administer funds, grants and property for the charitable and educational purposes of the Corporation.

F. There shall be no discrimination by any Officer, Director, or Member against anyone because of race, creed or national origin.

Article IV - MEMBERSHIP

ELIGIBILITY: The following persons are eligible for membership in this Corporation:

Any and all persons who have the desire and interest to support the purpose of the American Merchant Marine industry.

Honorary membership may be offered to any individual who through the Arts and Sciences and/or through his or her efforts has furthered the cause of the Merchant Marine. Such membership must be approved by the Board of Directors. Honorary members pay no dues and will not have a vote in membership elections or other matters.

Each member shall pay annual dues as prescribed by the ByLaws.

Article V - ORGANIZATION

The governing body of this organization shall be a Board of Directors to be constituted as the ByLaws prescribe.

Article VI - MEETINGS

The organization will meet once a year to elect officers and conduct such other business as may be properly come before the membership. This meeting shall be called the National Convention.

In addition to the National Convention, business of the organization may be conducted at regularly scheduled meetings, or at special meetings. Meetings may occur in-person, or by use of any means of communication by which all participants may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting.

The Board of Directors shall convene at the National Convention or at any other time that may be determined necessary by a majority of the Board.

Article VII – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

This Constitution and ByLaws may be amended as provided in Article V of the ByLaws.

AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1 - MEMBERSHIP

All paid up members shall be considered as active members and entitled to privileges of voting and active participation in all activities of the organization.

Application for membership shall be accompanied by national dues. Applicants must meet eligibility requirements as described in the Constitution.

At some future date, life membership may be available upon payment of life membership dues as established by the National Board of Directors.

Membership in this organization shall be suspended for non-payment of dues 90 days after they become due. Names of suspended members shall be removed from the mailing list of the National publication.

The National membership list of names and addresses shall not be released to anyone, public or private concerns. This does not preclude distribution and use of member contact information by Officers and Board of Directors members in the performance of their assigned duties. If any individual Chapter wishes to exchange their membership list with another Chapter, that would be at their discretion.

ARTICLE II - NATIONAL OFFICERS

SECTION 201 – ELECTED OFFICERS AND VACANCIES

- A. The officers of the national organization shall consist of:
1. President
 2. Executive Vice President and a minimum of 7 Regional Vice Presidents.
 3. Secretary
 4. Treasurer
 5. National Directors (all duly elected officers, Past Presidents, Regional Vice Presidents and Executive Officers of each Chapter shall be a National Director.)

6. All AMMV Past Presidents shall serve as an ex-officio director of the Board.

- B. An elected officer may resign at any time. Such resignation shall be made in writing to the Board of Directors.
- C. Any officer, elected or appointed, may be removed for just cause by the Board of Directors by a majority vote whenever the best interests of the organization will be served thereby.
- D. Any vacancy occurring in any office, except that of President, shall be filled by a person receiving a majority of votes of the Board of Directors at a special meeting or by mail poll after proper notification. A vacancy in the office of President shall be filled by the Executive Vice President.

SECTION 202 – ELIGIBILITY, NOMINATIONS, ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE.

To be eligible for any National or Regional Vice President office, the candidate must be a member in good standing. A member may hold one elective office and more than one appointive office. Elections for National office will be held on odd numbered years; elections for Regional Vice President office will be held on even numbered years.

All persons seeking National or Regional Vice President office (including those eligible for re-election) shall notify AMMV National Headquarters (Office Administrator) and/or the National President by mail or email by December 31st of the year prior to desired election. Beginning on January 1st of any given election year, no previously undeclared candidate(s) will be considered. Nominations “from the floor” during the National Convention for any National or Regional Vice President office(s) will not be allowed. All elected National Officers shall hold their office for a term of two (2) years commencing at the start of the fiscal year, as stated in Section 209 of the ByLaws, and shall hold office for a term of two (2) years or until installation of their successor, if after the end of their fiscal elected year. Installation shall be before the end of the annual convention at which the officer is elected. In the absence of any duly elected officer, he or she may be installed when represented by any member selected for that purpose. No president can serve over two (2) year terms. However, if the president is elected after absence from office for at least one (1) term, then he or she shall be eligible for two (2) consecutive two (2) year terms.

SECTION 203 – NATIONAL CONVENTION

- A. The National Convention shall be held at least one week prior to, or one week after National Maritime Day, May 22nd. Some flexibility may be allowed for obtaining

favorable rates, with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

B. The AMMV News magazine (official quarterly publication of the AMMV organization) shall serve as official notice to all members and existing chapters of the National Convention dates, location, and details.

C. The National Convention location should, when possible, be rotated by Region.

D. The minutes from the National Convention will be published in the next regularly scheduled issue of the official publication (AMMV News).

E. The purpose of this convention shall be to conduct business necessary for the efficient operation of the organization.

SECTION 204 – ELECTED NATIONAL OFFICERS – POWERS & DUTIES.

A. PRESIDENT

1. The National President shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors and the National Convention. The National President shall work to the best of his ability to further the aims and policies of the organization. The National President shall coordinate and supervise the activities of all National Officers.
2. The President shall be able to receive Expense allowance, to cover the cost of performing his duties in office, not to exceed \$4,000.00 annually.
3. Section 204 (F) details duties of the National President in relation to meeting payment obligations of the organization.

B. EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

1. The National Executive Vice President shall assist the President and in his/her absence, shall discharge the duties of the National President and shall assume the duties of the President for the remainder of term if the President is absent for any reason, including resignation or inability to serve for any reason.
2. The Executive Vice President shall be able to receive expense allowance, to cover the cost of performing his duties in office not to exceed \$1,500.00 annually.

C. REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

1. The National Regional Vice President shall assist the President and the Chapter Executive Officers (CEO) and Board of Directors in the operations of

their respective districts when needed.

2. They shall be available to each Chapter to arbitrate any Constitution and ByLaws violations.
3. They shall check and screen all Regional District applications for Charter to National. They must adhere to the Constitution and reject any infractions.
4. They shall notify all local Chapters within a Region and the Executive Officer and Board of Directors of a pending formation of same.
5. They shall carry out all assignments as directed by the National President and direct all correspondence to the National Office and a copy of all Chapters in their district.
6. The Regional Vice President shall be able to receive expenses to cover the cost of traveling to Chapters in his region. Also, for the postage and phone expenses while performing the duties of his office. This amount not to exceed \$600.00 annual expense allowance and is to cover the cost of performing his duties in office.

D. SECRETARY

1. The National Secretary shall attend all business meetings of the National Convention and meetings of the Board of Directors and shall be responsible for the minutes of the meetings. The National Secretary shall provide the Editor of the official publication with the edited and typed proceedings of the business sessions of the National Convention within thirty (30) days after the last business session of the National Convention.
2. The National Administrator will receive all monies and deposit them into the National Treasury and shall provide reports of deposits to the National Secretary to include information on all members who paid their dues. The National Secretary shall perform such duties as the National President may from time to time prescribe. The National Secretary shall make a quarterly report of his/her activities to the National President with a copy to the National Executive Vice President. The National Secretary may receive compensation as specified by the Board of Directors.
3. The National Secretary shall notify the Board of Directors of all meetings.
4. The National Secretary shall be able to receive expense allowance, to cover the cost of performing his duties in office not to exceed \$500.00 annually.

E. TREASURER

1. The National Treasurer shall attend all business meetings of the National Convention, and all meetings of the Board of Directors. The National Treasurer shall have custody of all monies, bonds and item of value; and shall compile and maintain a complete set of records to divulge the true financial records (status) of the organization suitable to be audited by a Certified Public Accountant.
2. The National Treasurer shall insure valid signatures specimens are on record at all institutions of deposit. Section 204 (F) details duties of the National Treasurer in relation to meeting payment obligations of the organization.
3. The National Treasurer shall purchase, at the expense of the organization, a fidelity bond covering all officers authorized to sign or countersign checks and any National officers handling monies or securities of the organization. The National Treasurer shall prepare a financial statement for the fiscal year ending June 30th. This fiscal statement shall be published in the August issue of the official publication. The National Treasurer shall prepare for the Board of Directors a quarterly financial report of the 15th day following the end of the quarter.
4. The National Treasurer shall be able to receive expense allowance, to cover the cost of performing his duties in office not to exceed \$500.00 annually.

E. NATIONAL OFFICERS & METHODS OF ISSUING MONIES/PAYMENTS DUE

1. There are two methods in which AMMV will meet its payment obligations. The first method is the longstanding traditional method, in which the National Treasurer shall pay out monies in payment of obligation only on authority given by the National President. If using this payment method, all checks shall be signed by the National Treasurer and countersigned by the National President or any Board Member (when necessary). The second method allows for the National President to directly issue due payments electronically via the use of online banking. If using this payment method, the National Treasurer will be notified by the National President via email with the details of each electronic transaction. The National Vice President shall be copied on such emails.
2. It is understood that the four elected National Officers have the means to set-up an online profile

and to view AMMV's transaction record at any time. On the authority of mutual agreement between the National President and the National Vice President, the National Office Administrator shall have "guest viewing" privileges to access to this online account in order to better perform his/her duties.

3. It is intended that the use of online banking, which allows for the automatic record keeping of payment transactions, will provide a quick and accurate recall of transactions for use in any audit situation. In addition, the separate email records of the National President, Vice President and Treasurer would give auditors additional information regarding the processing of online transactions.

SECTION 205 – NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

- A. The property and business of the organization shall be managed by a Board of Directors as per Constitution Article V. and as constituted per Article II Section 201, 205 and 206 of the ByLaws. A National Board of Directors member, unable to attend a meeting, may appoint, per proxy, a member in good standing to fulfill his duties. The Board of Directors member unable to attend shall submit a Proxy letter to this effect to the National President before said meeting.
- B. As entrusted by the Board, the National President, as Chairman of the Board, will designate an Executive Committee of the Board, consisting of the National Officers, immediate Past President and the Regional Vice Presidents, which will be empowered to act in all capacities of the Board when it is not in session, except for the authority to remove any elected National or Regional officer, or the authority to expend funds beyond an amount that is 10 percent of the approved Annual Budget. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be decided by a simple majority vote. The Committee shall maintain a written record of all of its proceedings and votes taken and render a written report to the Board not later than 10 days prior to the call to order of the National Convention. Two-thirds of the Executive Committee, including the National President, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of Board of Directors' Business.
- C. The National President shall call a meeting of the Board of Directors not later than the calendar day prior to the call to order of the National Convention. Additional meetings or polling by mail or telephone of the Board, may be called by the National President, or by a majority of the Board whenever the Executive Committee of the Board is unable to act on an issue or is viewed as having exceeded its authority.

- D. A legal quorum shall consist of a majority of the Board of Directors, one of whom shall be either the National President or National Executive Vice President.

SECTION 206 - VOTING PROCEDURES

A. SELECTION OF NATIONAL DELEGATES

Voting procedures (excluding full Board voting) outlined under Section 206 (A), paragraphs 1-4, will apply only for the purposes of voting on organizational Resolutions and/or other incidental business that may arise at the National Convention. Voting for National and Regional officers will be conducted via a mail ballot system as defined in Section 206 (C); voting on proposed changes to the AMMV Constitution and ByLaws shall be conducted as provided in Section 501.

1. Each local Chapter, at a regular meeting prior to the National Convention shall select a delegate or delegates to the National Convention to represent the local chapter members. The delegate or delegates shall represent the voice of their Chapter.
2. The local Chapter Executive Officer shall certify their Chapter delegates to represent the Chapter members and the respective secretaries will authenticate the delegates' credentials letter. The credentials letter of the local Chapter delegates shall list by name each member of the local Chapter they are representing. If the CEO is not attending the convention, a delegate may be designated to serve as a representative of the CEO, for convention Board of Directors business. Such credentials letter shall be initiated by each individual Chapter.
3. Each delegate will present the credentials letter to the Nominating & Credentials Officer prior to the first business meeting of the National Convention. The Nominating & Credentials Officer, with assistance from the National Office Administrator, will verify the credentials letter and determine if each member is in fact a bona fide member.
4. National delegates who have not presented their credentials to the Nominating & Credentials Officer before the Convention has been called to order will not be permitted to vote.

B. VOTING BY INDIVIDUALS

National members-in-good-standing with "Member-At-Large" status, while attending the National Convention, may cast an individual vote in each instance where a vote for an organizational Resolution or other incidental (non-Board) business is called for. Voting for National and Regional officers will be conducted via a mail ballot system

as defined in Section 206 (C); voting on proposed changes to the AMMV Constitution and ByLaws shall be conducted as provided in Section 501.

C. COUNTING AND RECORDING THE BALLOTS BY COMMITTEE

1. On any given election cycle, ballots for National offices or Regional Vice President offices shall be mailed by AMMV HQ to all National members-in-good-standing, regardless of whether such members are members of a chapter or Members-At-Large, and regardless of whether such members are full or associate members.
2. Each ballot will include a return envelope with current address of the AMMV National Officer Administrator.
3. The National Office Administrator will collect and transport all received ballots to the National Convention. All ballot envelopes will remain unopened.
4. A three-person Ballot Committee will be selected during the general business session to officially tally the votes and declare a winner for each contested office.
5. Any member-in-good-standing who wishes to protest and personally review the results may do so in the company of the selected three-person Ballot Committee and at least two officers (National and/or RVP). If such a recount is called for, it must be conducted on the same business day as the original count.
6. If only one candidate for a given office has been established per Section 202 (B), then such candidate will be considered the winner of said office; no counting/tallying will be necessary.
7. On any given election cycle, if all candidates qualifying per Section 202 (B) are unopposed, then such candidates will be considered the winners of their pursued offices.

SECTION 207 – APPOINTED OFFICERS

A. APPOINTED OFFICERS

The President shall, by resolution, appoint the following officers, and said appointments shall be announced by the National President and published in the first issue of the official publication following the National Convention.

1. JUDGE ADVOCATE – who shall be prepared at all times to give such legal counsel and advice as

the National President or National Convention may require. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority of all questions of parliamentary law and procedure, unless otherwise specifically provided in this Constitution & ByLaws.

2. CHAPLAIN – the Chaplain may, when possible, be an ordained clergyman and perform such duties as required by the Board of Directors.
3. EDITOR – (Official Publication)
 - a. The official publication shall be known as American Merchant Marine Veterans News. This publication shall be issued at least once each quarter. Any orders, official notices, and the financial reports published in the official publication shall be deemed sufficient and lawful notice to all members for all purposes whatsoever.
 - b. The editor shall be responsible for the publication and distribution of the official publication in accordance with instructions from the Board of Directors and approval of the President.
4. HISTORIAN – the Historian shall compile and maintain a brief history of the activities of this organization during his or her term of office, to be kept as a permanent record of this organization and shall perform such other duties as his or her office may require or the Board of Directors may direct.
5. PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER – the Public Relations Officer shall coordinate any and all publicity of the organization.
6. NOMINATING & CREDENTIALS OFFICER – the Nominating & Credentials Officer shall oversee all nomination, election, and Ballot Committee activities in strict accordance with AMMV's Constitution & ByLaws and make any decisions which may arise in such areas.

SECTION 208 – STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. The President shall, by resolution, appoint the following Standing Committees, which shall include at least one member of the Board of Directors. Said appointments shall be announced by the National President and published in the official publication.
 1. VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE – To compile information that will benefit Veterans, form policies beneficial to Veterans. Establish relations with other Service Veterans' organizations.

2. EDITORIAL COMMITTEE – To assist the Editor of the official publication whenever necessary and submit any policy changes to the Board of Directors.
3. CONVENTION COMMITTEE – The Convention Committee will oversee the planning and execution of our annual National Convention, including all financial duties and the production of the convention program book (aka Memory Book).
4. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS – This committee shall report on situations which could be detrimental to the well-being of the organization as well as Federal and State legislation pertaining to Merchant Marine Veterans. Also, legislation promoting the growth of the American Flag Merchant Marine.
5. CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS COMMITTEE
6. INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE – This committee shall oversee the official AMMV website and all official AMMV social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Committee members shall supervise the volunteers who run these sites to ensure that AMMV's views are properly represented.
7. SPECIAL PROJECTS & VETERANS OUTREACH – This committee will work under direction of the National President to facilitate advance outreach efforts and to carry out special projects based upon the needs of the organization.
8. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE – This committee will work diligently to recruit new members and to retain existing members.
- B. The appointed officers and chairpersons of Standing Committees will prepare, in writing, a quarterly report of their activities to the National President. At the National Convention, an annual report will be rendered by each appointed officer and chairperson of the Standing Committees.

SECTION 209 – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the organization shall be July 1st through June 30th of the next calendar year.

SECTION 210 – NATIONAL DUES

- A. The National dues shall be established by the Board of Directors, voted on by the membership at the National Convention and published in the official publication. The dues shall include a subscription to the official publication.

- B. Dues are payable by July 1 of the current fiscal year. Member's dues not paid by September 30 of the current fiscal year are removed from the mailing list.

SECTION 211 – BUDGET

The Board of Directors shall recommend and the membership shall approve a budget for the National organization at the annual convention.

ARTICLE III - CHAPTERS

SECTION 301 – FORMATION – CHARTERING

- A. A local Chapter may be formed by the authority of the Board of Directors on the application of not less than ten (10) persons, members of the American Merchant Marine Veterans, Inc., or who have applied for membership. Membership in the National organization is a mandatory prerequisite for valid membership in any Chapter.
- B. The application for a Chapter shall be signed by all elected officers pro-tem and shall list the names of all charter members of the Chapter. The application shall be forwarded to the National Secretary for approval of the Board of Directors. The Chapter shall comply with the National Constitution and ByLaws.
- C. Each Chapter must be self-supporting. Each Chapter shall be responsible for their own assets, property and liabilities. Each Chapter is also permitted to establish their own welfare fund.
- D. The National AMMV shall establish districts within the fifty (50) states. There shall be at least seven (7) districts as per Article II – NATIONAL OFFICERS, Section 201.A.2 of the ByLaws.
- E. These district boundaries may be changed, depending on the total membership in a said district. The National Board of Directors shall set district boundaries at the National Convention based upon the total chapters and the per capita tax for the given year. All Chapters shall receive a true copy of such districts and boundaries.
- F. All Chapters shall display the National logo on all chapter stationery.

SECTION 302 - SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF CHARTER.

The charter of a Chapter may be suspended for a period of sixty (60) days for violation of the laws and usage of the National organization. If no appeal is made within the period of sixty (60) days, the Charter of the Chapter may be canceled by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by the Board of Directors provided that thirty (30) days before the charter

is suspended, the CEO of the Chapter in question shall have been notified in writing, by certified mail, by the National Secretary of the charges against it.

SECTION 303 – CHAPTER DUES

Each Chapter shall set its own dues.

SECTION 304 – ELIGIBILITY TO OFFICE

National membership shall be a requisite for holding office.

SECTION 305 – VOTING PROCEDURE

Chapter members must also hold National member status to receive mail-in ballots as described throughout Section 206 and in Section 501.

ARTICLE IV – WELFARE FUND

SECTION 401 – PURPOSE

The fund shall be used for the benefit and welfare of the members and their next of kin as a group. Monies accrued from donation, drives, sales of memorabilia, and shall be dispensed by action of the Board of Directors through the National Treasurer.

SECTION 402 – ACCOUNTING

Each outgoing National President shall request an accounting from the National Treasurer of the donations received and funds expended. He or she will then report to National Convention on the reasonableness and propriety of expenditures.

ARTICLE V – AMENDMENTS

SECTION 501 – AMENDMENTS

To amend the Constitution or ByLaws, the board of directors must adopt a resolution setting forth the proposed amendment and directing that it be submitted to a vote of the members. Such a vote of the members may occur at an annual or regularly scheduled meeting, at a special meeting, or via mail balloting. Such meetings may occur in person or by use of any means of communication by which all participants may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A vote to amend the Constitution or ByLaws must be preceded by written notice setting forth the proposed amendment or a summary of the changes to be affected by the amendment must be given to the members. The proposed amendment shall be adopted upon receiving at least a majority of the votes cast.

ARTICLE VI – DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION

SECTION 601 – DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION

A. The corporation shall or may be dissolved and its affairs wound up by a majority vote of votes cast of the corporation's voting members.

B. In the event of dissolution, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively for the purposes of the corporation in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 C... (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by

C. A court of competent jurisdiction in the country in which the principal office of the corporation is then located; exclusively for such purposes as to such organization as such Court shall determine which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

D. Upon a vote to dissolve the AMMV Corporation, the original records of the history of the organization, the records of the Historian, copies of the AMMV News, photographs, audio tapes, video tapes and any other appropriate historical records shall be turned over to a Maritime museum willing to accept the same, such as the Merchant Marine Academy Museum, Museum Ships, Maritime Museum or a college/university library/archives.

E. All remaining assets shall be distributed equally between the five (5) WWII Merchant Marine Memorial ships:

1. SS Jeremiah O'Brien
2. SS Lane Victory
3. SS American Victory
4. SS John Brown
5. SS Red Oak Victory


ARTICLE VII – GRIEVANCES AND LITIGATION

SECTION 1 – PROCEDURE FOR RESOLVING MEMBERSHIP GRIEVANCES.

A. Every member or officer or chapter or region must follow the following procedure to resolve a grievance:

1. Every member agrees to follow this procedure for resolving grievances as a pre-condition of membership in the American Merchant Marine

Veterans Association.

2. The grievance shall be a written statement setting forth the facts, the identity of the people involved, a detailed account of the grievance, and a statement of how the grievant wants the grievance to be resolved.
3. The grievance must be submitted within thirty (30) days of the date of the occurrence by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the National President at National Headquarters.
4. The written statement must be sworn to in an affidavit form before a Notary Public.
5. Within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the grievance, the National President is to reply in writing to the grievant by certified mail, return receipt requested, stating the solution or resolution to the grievance. The National President may also request additional information.
6. If the grievant is not satisfied with this solution or resolution the grievant is to notify the National President within ten (10) days by CERTIFIED MAIL, return receipt requested, stating the reasons and requesting that the grievance be referred to the National Board of Directors by way of appeal. The National President will submit within Ten (10) days the record of the grievance to the National Board of Directors for a vote by this body and notification to the grievant with thirty (30) days.
7. By becoming a member of the AMMV, a member or officer or chapter or region accepts that the AMMV is a not for profit Florida Corporation subject only to the laws and jurisdiction of the state of Florida and its courts.
8. Under no circumstances is the grievant to resort to any court until the aforesaid procedure has been completed. Therefore, if resort is made to a civil court it must be a Florida court located in Lee County. If the grievant resorts to a Florida court before following the procedure set forth herein said grievant will automatically forfeit membership in AMMV. If the grievant does not obtain a judgment against the AMMV or its officers in the Florida civil court, the grievant agrees to reimburse the AMMV for its legal expenses, attorney fees, and court costs incurred in defending this suit.
9. If the grievant resorts to a court in any jurisdiction other than the state of Florida, said grievant will automatically forfeit membership in AMMV. 

It is Necessary for the National Defense



Salvatore R. Mercogliano, Ph.D.
AMMV News contributor

When Germany resumed Unrestricted Submarine Warfare in February 1917, the United States merchant marine found itself in the crosshairs of Imperial German U-Boats. In a few months, ten American ships were sunk, and sixty-four crewmembers killed, leading to President Woodrow Wilson asking Congress to declare war. (See Rodney Carlisle,

Sovereignty at Sea, 2009) The nation found itself with a merchant marine sufficient to handle its domestic trade, thanks to cabotage laws dating back to 1817, but deficient in the number of ships needed for its international commerce. This was exasperated by the need to transport a two-million-person American Expeditionary Force to Europe before the Allies collapsed on the Western Front. To ensure that the United States did not find itself dependent on foreign shipping, Congress passed the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, with a stated goal:

That it is necessary for the national defense and for the proper growth of its foreign and domestic commerce that the United States shall have a merchant marine of the best equipped and most suitable types of vessels sufficient to carry the greater portion of its commerce and serve as a naval or military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency.

Two decades later, the United States faced a similar situation but this time the attacks took place across the globe. As Japanese aircraft winged their way back to aircraft carriers north of the Hawaiian Islands on December 7, 1941, Japanese submarine *I-26* attacked and sank the American freighter *SS Cynthia Olsen*. Her crew of 35 disappeared with the vessel. (See Stephen Harding, *Dawn of Infamy*, 2016). Across the Pacific, along the coast of China, *SS President Harrison* was bound for Shanghai to embark the last of the American Marines and Legation Guards in China when Captain Orel A. Pierson learned of the Japanese attack. He attempted to return to Manila, but when a Japanese destroyer appeared, he decided to run the ship aground to

destroy her. (See David H. Grover and Gretchen G. Grover, *Captives of Shanghai*, 1990)

With American forces reeling from attacks, ships of the American merchant marine answered the call to provide the needed transportation to shore up Allied positions in Europe and Asia. As they did, nine Japanese I-Boats and fifteen German U-Boats set sail for the North American coasts in an unplanned, yet coordinated effort to interdict the flow of troops, materiel, and resources to the war front.

Prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, the United States was involved in maintaining several forward bases for its military in its effort to constrain not only the Japanese in the Pacific, but the Germans in the Atlantic. In the former it was the Philippines and Hawaii, and Iceland (occupied by the US in July 1941) in the latter. All these outposts required resupply, reinforcements, and this was accomplished by ships of the United States Navy, the Army Transport Service (manned by merchant mariners) and the commercial merchant marine.

On September 16, 1941, the Army Transport *Hugh L. Scott*, one of the 535-class of ships built by the U.S. Shipping Board during the First World War, arrived in the Philippines with the first of a line of reinforcements. Due to the high value of its cargo, and the safety of the ship and its merchant marine crew, the U.S. Navy assigned it an escort, the light cruiser *USS Phoenix*. More ships and convoys followed. When Japan attacked, a latter convoy escorted by the light cruiser *USS Boise* was in Manila preparing to offload, while that escorted by the heavy cruiser *Louisville* was returning and another, led by *Pensacola* had left Hawaii for the Philippines by way of Australia. The destruction of not only a substantial portion of the American Pacific Fleet in Hawaii, but also air forces there and in the Philippines, and the threat to the supply line to Australia made reinforcements critical. Concurrently, the British wished to reinforce its 8th Army in the Egyptian desert fighting the Afrika Korps and needed troops to relieve their forces in England.

To meet these challenges, the ships of the American merchant marine, including those involved in both the international and protected coastal trade – reaffirmed by Section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (known as the Jones Act) – responded to the call. Following the attack on Hawaii, commercial ships in Honolulu were held in port. On December 16, six of the ships were escorted to sea and then released to proceed; half of them fell victim to the Japanese. Matson's *SS Manini* was sunk the next day south of Hawaii by *I-75*. *SS Prusa*, bound for the Panama Canal of Lykes Lines, ran afoul of *I-72* and went down. On January 2, 1942, *SS Malama*, also of Matson Lines, came under attack from an E7KS Alf reconnaissance float plane. Strafed and bombed, the crew abandoned ship. They, along

with those from United States Lines' SS *Vincent*, bound from Australia to Panama, were picked up by the auxiliary cruiser HIJMS *Aikoku Maru*. The crews were later landed in Japan and remained as prisoners of war.


The Army advocated the individual sailing of reinforcement ships as soon as they were loaded, to reinforce the Hawaiian Islands, as there was a fear of an amphibious invasion. On December 20, *I-17* off Blunt's Reef in northern California attacked and sunk the Socony-Vacuum Oil tanker *Emidio* killing five mariners. The freighter *Montebello* and tanker *Absaroka* also fell victim off the California coast over the next few days. The threat posed by the Japanese between Hawaii and the West Coast precluded solo voyages and instead, the Navy adopted a convoy strategy. The Naval Districts began the process of gathering ships and loading them with available troops, aircraft, and supplies.

On December 16, 1941, Convoy 2005 departed from San Francisco under the escort of cruiser *St. Louis* and two destroyers. Over 9,000 military personnel, along with 58 P-40 and 8 P-39 fighters were embarked on the three crown jewels of the Matson Line – SS *Lurline*, *Monterey*, and *Matsonia*. All were built under the provisions of the Merchant Marine Act of 1928, the first two at the Bethlehem Steel Fore River Yard and the latter at William Cramp & Sons. These ships, whose dedicated service from the West Coast, which was vital for the Hawaiian economy, proved critical to alleviating the concerns of follow-on Japanese attacks. Other convoys followed with ships from American President Lines and new construction from the U.S. Maritime Commission.

To support Australia, New Zealand, and support bases to the United States and the Panama Canal, other convoys followed. On January 13, 1942, Convoy 2013 with SS *President Coolidge*, *President Madison*, and *Mariposa* sailed under the escort of USS *Phoenix*, *Aylwin*, and *Perkins*. Nearly 7,000 personnel and 70 fighters arrived in Australia the following month. Concurrently, another convoy built around the Matson liners left San Diego for Samoa with the 2nd Marine Brigade onboard in early January.


On the East Coast of the United States, Convoy BT-200 – ships from the Army Transport Service – sailed from New York for New Caledonia with the genesis of the Americal Division on board. From Charleston, Convoy BC-100 headed to Bora Bora – approximately midway between the Panama Canal and Australia – to establish a refueling station. Convoy AT-10 made up of two American and one British merchant ships, one Navy and one Army transport, with a massive 23 ship escort set sail on January 15, 1942. The threat posed by the German battlecruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen*, necessitated the strong protection, which included the carrier *Wasp*, battleship *Texas*, three cruisers and eighteen destroyers. They sailed from New York for Northern Ireland with 3,900 troops of the US Army's 34th Infantry Division on board,

the vanguard of a new American army in Europe. Three days after AT-10 set sail from New York, the first of the German U-Boats in Operation Drumbeat opened their attack on the East Coast of North America when *U-552* sank the freighter *Frances Salman* off Newfoundland and tanker *Allan Jackson* off Cape Hatteras by *U-66*. With the focus on escorting convoys across the Pacific and Atlantic, the East Coast of the United States was laid bare for an attack by Hitler's submarines.

In those weeks immediately following the loss of *Cynthia Olsen* and *President Harrison*, the ships, crews, and operating companies of the American merchant marine validated the mission as set forth in the Merchant Marine Act of 1920. Loaded with military personnel and equipment they provided the needed reinforcements for Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, islands across the Pacific, Iceland, and Great Britain. Ships from Matson, Lykes Lines, American President Lines, along with new ships built by the Maritime Commission were the lifeline that connected the war front to the home front and affirmed the need for a U.S. flagged merchant marine. 

NEW DOCUMENTARY COVERING THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC IS IN THE WORKS

Cineflix Productions in association with National Geographic International and Discovery Science are producing a two-part documentary on the WWII Battle of the Atlantic's Second Happy Time: the devastating six months in 1942 when German U-Boats sank hundreds of Allied ships off the coast of North Carolina.

Cineflix is also working closely with NOAA's Battle of the Atlantic archaeological team who dove on dozens of ill-fated torpedoed shipwrecks and four U-boats off of Cape Hatteras, NC, exploring and cataloguing them as part of a National Marine Sanctuary endeavor, and to investigate a little known deadly battlefield just a few miles off America's coast. 

Searching for Merchant Mariner crew lists and other records

Frequently at AMMV, we are asked by family members to help locate a veteran's Merchant Mariner records or to find a picture of their ship. Families are curious about the specifics of the ships their father or grandfather sailed on, such as crew lists or ports of calls. As an amateur genealogist, let me assure you, there are ways to view this information that don't require a paid subscription.

"FamilySearch Family Tree, the world's largest on-line family tree—home to information about more than 1.2 billion ancestors. The Family Tree offers access to billions of online records."

The website [Familysearch.org](https://familysearch.org) is FREE, and creating an account is easy! Open up the website: <https://FamilySearch.org> in your browser. In the top right corner, there is a box that reads "CREATE AN ACCOUNT". Click that box and enter the requested information. (Do not check the lower box if you are not a member of the Church of Latter Days Saints.) Next, select "Continue." You will then be prompted to create a user name and a password. Yes, it that simple! (You will be directed to reply to an email to activate your free subscription.)

On the top left of the home page (next to Family Search) is the word "Search". When you click on this, a drop-down menu will appear and you can select "Records". Several fields will appear for a first and last name, middle initial, and range of birth year and birthplace. Fill in these fields as best as possible. If you don't know the city of birth, entering the state info is usually enough.

Keep in mind that sometimes people went by a different name or used their middle name, so make sure to search every option if you can't locate a name. Talk to relatives that might have known of alternate names. Now select "Search".

Records will pop up including censuses, marriage records, and passenger lists; all records are shown lumped together. In order to sort them, there are two tabs at the top of the page called "Records" and "Collections". Select "Collections", then scroll down to the section entitled "MIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION." This is where the Passenger Crew Lists are found.

Each crew list is accompanied by a photo of the actual document (indicated by a small camera icon) and a record of details (indicated by a document icon). The record of details lists the name of the ship

and in some cases, the port of call. Clicking on the photo icon will open a photo of the original full crew list.

The details on the crew list are fascinating. You can zoom in to see many details of the manifest. An image index shows the listing of each person at the bottom of the photo. You will see the name of the mariner, along with years of service, position aboard the ship, age, height, and occasionally such distinguishing marks such as a scar or a tattoo.

Information on the ship, port of call, and date of arrival are listed at the top of the page. You can print out such crew lists to give to family members. Amazing discoveries may be found on these historic documents, such as the identification of shipmates recalled by your veteran.

Don't be discouraged, however, if you can't find any crew lists. Occasionally ship manifests were not properly submitted. Another reason could be that the mariner sailed under a different name to hide their real age. Using false identification papers was common in that era.

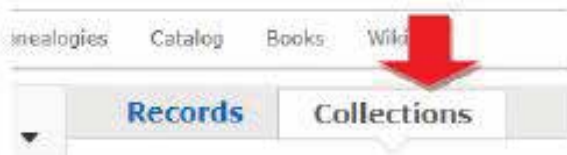
If you are searching for more accurate information or wish to get the DD 214 Honorable Discharge for a WWII US Merchant Mariner, contact your Congressman to initiate the request. More information can be found at usmm.org with information on records, veteran status, and a general FAQ page. There is also a guidance section on searching for ship photos.

If you hit a brick wall searching for a particular ship, don't fret! Another great resource for searching is the Library of Congress online. There is a section called "Ask a Librarian". Simply use a search engine (such as Google) and type in "*ask a librarian; Library of Congress photographs*", and the website link should appear. A blank field with your name and email should appear. Type in the name of the ship and ask for photos of the ship. Provide as much information as possible about the ship, such as dates of service. It may take a few days, but this service will respond with several photos of the ship, if there are photos in the archives. (Due to COVID, their service may be slower.) <https://ask.loc.gov/prints-photographs/>

Sheila M. Sova – AMMV National Vice President-Elect
Proud Daughter of a WWII USMM Congressional Gold
Medal Recipient




1. After your select search, select **Collections** from the top tab.








2. Scroll down until you see the collection of **Migration & Naturalization**. Select a category which will bring up several records. For example: Select New York Passenger and Crew lists.

Migration & Naturalization Showing Top 5 - Show All 11

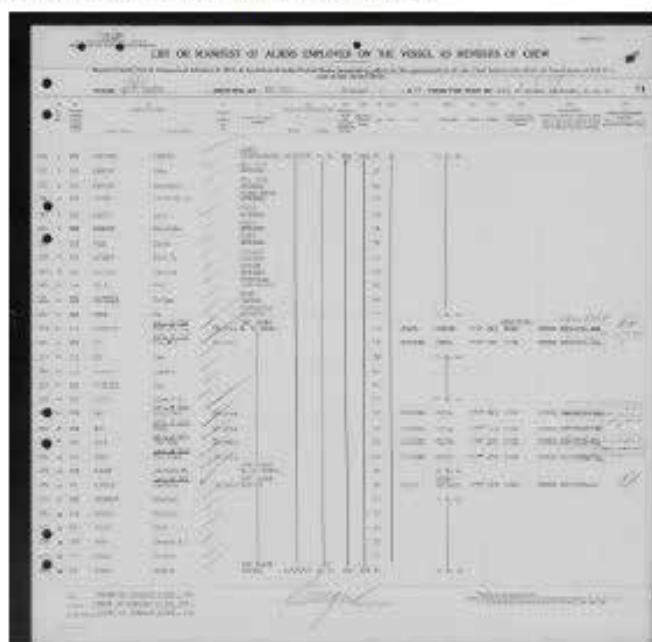
Title

-  New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957
- United States Border Crossings from Canada to United States, 1895-1956

3. Several records will then show up and each one is visible by selecting the image of the **camera**.

Name	Events	Relationships	View
Charles [redacted] New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957	birth: 1917 U S A immigration: 1949 New York City, New York, United States		  
Charles [redacted] New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925-1957	birth: 1916 U S immigration: 1944 New York City, New York, United States		 

4. Ship crew list will come up with the ability to zoom in. Ships name will be on top of manifest.



WWII Veteran Eligibility Requests & Using Vessel Logbooks as Proof of Eligibility

Editor's note: The following guidance is found on the United States Coast Guard National Maritime Center website, and deals with establishing eligibility as a Veteran based on serving as a U.S. WWII Merchant Mariner. Specifically, guidance is provided on using vessel logbooks to provide suitable evidence to meet such criteria.

United States Merchant Mariners who served in ocean going service during December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946, are considered "active duty" under the provisions of Public Laws 95-202 and 105-368. To determine eligibility for a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, DD Form 214, or a Report of Casualty, DD Form 1300, a member must not only have served within the qualifying period, but also meet the following:

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Was a merchant marine serving as a crewmember of a vessel that was:
 - operated by the War Shipping Administration or the Office of Defense Transportation (or an agent of the Administration or Office);
 - operated in waters other than inland waters, the great Lakes, and other lakes, bays, and harbors of the United States;
 - under contract or charter to, or property of, the Government of the United States; and
 - served the Armed Forces.
2. While serving, was licensed or otherwise documented for service as a crewmember of such a vessel by an officer or employee of the United States authorized to license or document the person for such service.

Requests should be submitted using a **DD Form 2168**, Application for Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of Group Certified to Have Performed Active Duty with the Armed Forces of the United States. You can save this form to your desktop then e-mail it as an attachment with all of your supporting documentation.

In addition, Public Law 105-368, which applies only to service performed during the period of August 16, 1945 to December 31, 1946, requires that the Coast Guard collect a \$30 processing fee for each application. If qualified oceangoing service was served and you wish to have this period certified, please mail a copy of the completed DD Form 2168 along with a check or money order made payable to the U.S. Treasury at the following address:

Mailing Address:

USCG ART/Others
PO Box 979119
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

Overnight Courier Address:

U.S. Bank Government Lockbox
1005 Convention Plaza
Attn: Government Lockbox, 979119

St. Louis, MO 63101

Reference Information Paper # 77 (Using vessel logbooks and other documents to serve as evidence of proper eligibility)

United States Merchant Vessel Logbooks

Official Logbooks were issued to American registered vessels in the foreign trade at the beginning of each voyage, and were turned in to the United States Shipping Commissioner at the port where the vessel ended its voyage. After 1937, these logs were also issued to vessels engaged in the coastwise trade.

Most of the logbooks for the World War II period became part of the records of the United States Coast Guard, and were originally consolidated and retired for storage in the National Archives' Washington National Records Center in Suitland, MD. These logbooks were subsequently transferred for permanent retention and preservation to the eight National Archives Regional Archives located geographically closest to the ports where the logs were originally turned in.

The National Archives in Washington, DC, also holds logbooks for many ports for years up to and including 1941.

A list of the addresses of National Archives units, which currently house collections of merchant vessel logbooks, is provided in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 is a listing of the specific logbook groups in the custody of each National Archives Regional Archives. Appendix 3 is a listing of logbooks in the custody of the National Archives in Washington, DC. Appendix 4 is a list of "Other Sources of Information for Merchant Seamen".

Using Logbooks to Verify World War II Veteran Status

Veteran status was finally granted to merchant seamen who served on oceangoing voyages during World War II on January 19, 1988. On that date, the Secretary of the Air Force, on behalf of the Department of Defense, signed a Secretarial Determination. This document was published in compliance with orders issued by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. It stated that, "...the service of the group known as the 'American Merchant Marine in Oceangoing Service during the Period of Armed Conflict, December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945, shall be construed active duty for the purposes of all laws administered by the Veterans Administration."

The United States Coast Guard has set up a special unit to assist former merchant seamen to obtain the evidence of wartime service required to qualify them for veteran status. This unit should be the first point of contact for former seamen, who should submit copies of any documents in their possession which could help to verify their service, along with Form DD 2168. "Application For Discharge of Member or Survivor of Member of Group Certified To Have Performed Active Duty with the Armed Forces of the United States." Form DD 2168 can be obtained from offices

of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (formerly called the Veterans Administration).

Acceptable forms of documentation are:

Certificates of Discharge (Forms 718A)

Continuous Discharge Books

Company letters showing vessel names and dates of voyages.

Requests should be addressed to:

Commanding Officer

U.S. Coast Guard – National Maritime Center

Attn: Records Management Branch (NMC-41)

100 Forbes Drive Martinsburg, WV 25404

If a veteran cannot locate any of the above documents, and the Coast Guard cannot locate evidence of service in its records, then the logbooks held by National Archives units may be the next best source of verification (see below).

How to Obtain Copies of Merchant Vessel Logbooks from the National Archives and Records Administration

Requests for copies of merchant vessel logbooks should be addressed to the Director of the National Archives and Records Administration unit which holds logbooks for the port at which the individual's vessel ended its voyage and the appropriate date. Please note the following:

Requests for logbook copies must be made in writing (See Appendix 1 for addresses of National Archives Records Administration units);

Requests for Copies needed to verify veteran status must state that copies are needed for this purpose;

Requests must include:

- a. Full name of vessel (e.g., SS Walter Scott, not SS Scott)
- b. Name of port where the voyage ended, and
- c. Approximate dates of the voyage (month and year).

If the requested logbook(s) can be located, the veteran will be provided, FREE OF CHARGE, ONE copy of the logbook pages needed to verify veteran status. These are:

The logbook cover;

Page 3, which shows inclusive dates of voyage, man of master and, usually, the name of ports visited;

Pages containing the entire crew list; and

Pages containing, any entries which specifically relate to the injury, illness and treatment/ hospitalization of the requester.

See below for information about restrictions on the availability of information, and for information about costs of copies.

Restriction on the Availability of Logbook Information

Since official Merchant Vessel Logbooks contain information relating to many individuals which may be of a personal nature, they are subject to the privacy

provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 522). Thus, entries which relate to medical or disciplinary matters concerning individuals OTHER THAN THE REQUESTOR may have to be deleted from copies provided, under Exemption (b)(6) of the Freedom of Information Act, which exempts the release of information, "...the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Also, please note that the location of logbooks for some ports is presently unknown. The Coast Guard and the National Archives and Records Administration are attempting to locate logbooks for ports not listed in Appendices 2 and 3, and this list will be updated as new information becomes available.

Vessels Registered in Foreign Countries: Information provided by the Coast Guard indicates that vessels registered in foreign countries (for example, Panama, Honduras, the Philippines) were not required to maintain and turn in logbooks of this type. This is the case even if the vessel were owned by an American company and operated under War Shipping Administration control. Neither the Coast Guard nor the National Archives and Records Administration will be able to provide crew lists for such vessels.

Cost of Copies

As stated above, there is NO CHARGE for ONE copy of the logbook pages, of each logbook, needed to verify veteran status. Requests for more than one copy of the required pages, however, and all requests for copies of pages not needed to verify veteran status, are subject to a MINIMUM charge of \$10.00.

The National Archives will send a bill with the copies, or notify the requester of the cost if it is more than \$10.00, in which case payment must be received before copies can be mailed. DO NOT SEND PAYMENT WITH THE INITIAL REQUEST. All payments must be made by check or money order made payable to NATIONAL ARCHIVES TRUST FUND BOARD (or NAT) and addressed to the National Archives and Records Administration unit from which the copies are ordered. Before ordering copies of complete logbooks, please read the following section.

Information Contained in Merchant Vessel Logbooks

The logbooks in the National Archives and Records Administration are NOT the "traditional" ships' logs often referred to as "Deck Logs," in which Masters recorded daily entries concerning the position and operation of the ship. Deck logs were traditionally considered to be the property of the owners of the ship. After World War II, however, the deck and engine logbooks of vessels operated by the War Shipping Administration were turned over to that agency by the ship owners, and were destroyed during the 1970s.

Logbooks in the National Archives and Records Administration are those issued to masters of vessels in accordance with federal laws and regulations passed to protect the health and welfare of merchant sailors. Entries initially were required to record offenses and desertions punishable by forfeiture of wages, and injuries or illnesses

of crewmembers. Later legislation required entries concerning circumstances surrounding collisions in which the vessel was involved, and noting the death, births or marriage of passengers aboard the ship. Also required were entries recording emergency drills held, and the watertight integrity of the vessel.

Logbooks in the National Archives DO NOT usually contain descriptions of wartime actions in which the vessel was involved. The Armed Guard Reports created by the U.S. Naval detachments which provided gun crews for merchant vessels, are better sources for such information. See Appendix 4 for information about where to write for access to these records.

Some World War II period logbooks do not name ports visited during the voyage due to wartime security restrictions. Also, due to the privacy provisions of the Freedom of Information Act previously discussed, some entries relating to individuals other than the requester may have to be deleted from copies provided from logbooks in National Archives holdings.

Please visit the USCG NMC website for Appendixes 1-3.

Appendix 4: Other Sources of Information for Merchant Seamen

1. If service was performed on a vessel operated by:

Army Transport Service – Send DD Form 2168 to:
Commander
U. S. Army Human Resources Command
1600 Spearhead Division Avenue, Department 540
Fort Knox, KY 40122-5504
Attn: PSV-V

Naval Transportation Service – Send DD Form 2168 to:
Commander
U.S. Navy Personnel Command (PERS-312)
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38054-5045

2. If the veteran is uncertain as to the port where the voyage ended, the National Archives and Records Administration has Vessel Movement Cards of the 10th Fleet which was in charge of convoys and routing during World War II. These cards can provide dates, ports of arrival and departure and convoy numbers for most American and some foreign registered vessels. Requestors must provide the Center with the full name of the vessel and approximate dates of the voyage. The Center prefers that requests be made in writing.

Write to:

National Archives and Records Administration at
College Park
Modern Military Records
8601 Adelphia Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Note: Convoy operations for North Russia and in the Mediterranean Sea were under Royal Navy control. Information concerning convoy numbers may be obtained

by writing to:

Public Records Office
Ruskin Avenue
Kew, Richmond
Surrey, TW9 4DU, ENGLAND

3. Information concerning Service-Connected Aggravated Injuries or Illness may be available from:

A. Medical information on merchant seamen treated at U.S. Public Health Service Hospitals (former Marine Hospitals). Requests for information should include the name seaman used as a patient, date of birth, Social Security Number, Z Number, location of hospital where treatment was received, and approximate date and kind of treatment.

Write to:

Gillis W. Long Hansen's Disease Center
Health Data Center
Attn: Director
1770 Physician Park
Baton Rouge, LA 70816

B. Files on Awards and Decorations granted to merchant seamen may contain information about the basis for which the medal/award was given. Requests for information should include the full name of the seaman, Coast Guard Z or Book Number, and World War II home address.

Write to:

U.S. Maritime Administration (MAR-630)
Office of Sealift Support
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

C. Records of merchant seamen trained by the U.S. Maritime Service may be available. Requests for information should include the name the seaman used during training, date of birth, and Social Security Number.

Write to:

National Personnel Records Center
(Military Personnel Records)
9700 Page Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
Civilian Personnel Records
National Archives & Records Administration
ATTN: Archival Programs
P.O. Box 38757
St. Louis, MO 63138

D. Academic, medical and training records of seamen who were enrolled as cadets at the U.S. Maritime Academy may be available. Requests should contain name seaman used as a cadet, date of birth, Social Security Number, and dates of enrollment.

Write to:

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, NY 11024-1699
Attn: Director of External Affairs

E. Vessel Status Cards that identify vessels owned or operated by the War Shipping Administration (WSA), and of vessels owned or operated by the WSA that suffered war damage may be available at the Maritime Administration. Requests for information should include the name of the vessel:

Write to:

U.S. Maritime Administration (MAR-630)
Office of Sealift Support
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

F. The National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, MD, has a collection of Armed Guard Reports (and logs) submitted by the Naval gun crew detachments. Requests for copies of the reports should include the full name of the vessel and the approximate dates of the voyage.

Write to:

National Archives at College Park
Modern Military Records
8601 Adelphi Road College Park, MD 20740-6001

G. Medical Treatment Folders of Merchant Marine personnel treated at Army or Air Force Medical Facilities may be available. Requests for information should include the patient's name, name of medical facility, year treated, date of birth, Social Security and Z number.

Write to:

National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
Civilian Personnel Records
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118

H. Medical Treatment Folders of Merchant Marine personnel treated at Naval Medical Facilities may be available. Requests for information should include patient's name, date of birth, name of facility, year treated, Social Security and Z Numbers, and whether inpatient or outpatient. (If outpatient, list facilities and years if treatment was continued.)

Write to:

National Personnel Records Center
Organizational Records Section
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132

I. The National Archives in Washington, D.C., has a series of records titled "Marine Board Case Files, 1943-58" which include the record of investigation, transcript of hearing, findings of fact, and other information concerning collisions of vessels, injuries, and loss of life. Requests for copies of these records, which are part of Record Group 26. Records of the U.S. Coast Guard, should include the name of the vessel and the date of the incident.

Write to:

Navy/Maritime Team
Old Military and Civil Records
National Archives and Records Administration
Washington, DC 20408-0001

J. The National Archives in Washington has, in Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, a collection of Records of Consular Posts 1790-1963. This record group includes records of seaport consulates, which may contain information concerning services performed for American ships, and seamen, including lists of seamen shipped, discharged, or deceased. This series may be helpful to seamen who were discharged in a foreign port for medical or other reasons during World War II. The completeness of the records varies greatly for different consulates. Requests for information or copies from these records must include the names of the seaman and ship, the name of the foreign port at which discharged and as close an approximation of the date as possible.

For records dated 1790-1963, write to:

National Archives at College Park
Civilian Records
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

4. Shipping Companies and/or Maritime Unions may have information, which might help to verify wartime service. The U.S. Maritime Administration publication, "Maritime Labor Management Affiliations Guide," contains listings of the names and addresses of these organizations.

Write to:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration, MAR 250
Office of Maritime Labor & Training
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

5. The Marine Index Bureau, Inc., a non-governmental organization, has records relating to illness, injury, and treatment of merchant seamen. This company has indicated that they would prefer that requests for information from their records be forwarded to them through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (formerly called the Veterans Administration). The veteran should contact the nearest Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and request that they contact the Marine Index Bureau (address below) on his behalf.

Write to:

Marine Index Bureau, Inc.
44 East 32nd Street
P. O. Box 1964
New York, NY 10156-0612





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