

AMERICAN
MERCHANT MARINE
VETERANS
NEWS MAGAZINE

IN PEACE AND WAR



1775

\$6

Spring/Summer
2023



Delivery and dedication of MM monument in Florida — page 10



WWII Tuskegee aircraft found in Lake Huron — page 26



Coverage of AMMV 35th National Convention — page 20

The 35th AMMV National Convention was attended by several eras of U.S. Merchant Mariners



WWII Merchant Marine Veterans



Vietnam Era Merchant Mariners



Desert Storm Merchant Mariners



Iraqi Freedom Merchant Mariners

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National President Capt. Anthony “Dru” DiMattia



To our active AMMV members, family, friends, and our maritime stakeholders:

Continued efforts in gaining recognition of our vital U.S. Merchant Marine past and present wages on. Whether it's locally in your townhall, public park, the recent “SAIL IN” event, or in the Halls of Congress, AMMV's mission remains focused on the legacy of our

WWII mariners and subtle public awareness of this vital service. These efforts have collectively placed this organization in a good place during a good time to “TOLL THE BELL”.

The impact of our WWII Mariners being awarded the highest honor bestowed by Congress is having continued reverberations throughout the maritime and veterans community. Though we are approaching a year gone by since the official ceremony of the Gold Medal, its tribute effectively “*tolls the bell*” loud and clear! We are grateful to have our WWII AMMV members along with their families sharing their ceremonies with us. There are many celebrations and ceremonies around the country continuing to take place. Many WWII mariners are *new* to AMMV and we embrace them with our fraternal brotherhood. We hope to interest them and their families to become AMMV members!

You may be wondering about who's tolling the bell? Our Band of Brothers member WWII Merchant Mariner Mark Gleeson quoted, “A few years ago at a May 22 National Maritime Day program in Pennsylvania, the speaker reviewed the exploits of the Merchant Marine in WWII and ended his remarks by asking, “**Tell me shipmates, who tolls the bell for us?**” He answered his question by saying, “**We do, here today, we do.**” He was explaining that our Merchant Marine of WWII was not just forgotten, but what they did to help win the war was virtually unknown.

I'm calling down to the engine room: **Chief, we need more speed!** Come join our cause!

Recently, AMMV held its 35th convention at the Gold Coast Casino in Las Vegas. We shared this gathering with eleven of our WWII mariners, family, and friends from around the country.

Six WWII AMMV members were surprised to receive the Convoy Cup medallion and certificate! We wish to thank our Region #7 Vice President Jens Inge Egeland for making these worthy honors happen on very short notice. Bravo Zulu, Jens!

A big shout out goes to our High Rollers Chapter along with West Coast patrons who really assisted with our convention work. On Monday morning as I was just getting acclimated with the Convention space layout, the High Rollers were already on scene and setting up at 08:30! Each of these volunteers seemed to know exactly what needed to be done and turned to the task at hand without hesitation.

Our line-up of speakers represented an incredible legacy of service spanning from WWII to the Korean War, including discussion of the critical components of the Jones Act, Cargo Preference, Maritime Security Program, and an in-depth analysis of container cargo. I wish to give a special shout out to our convention presenters: WWII mariner Dave Yoho, WWII mariner Capt. Hugh Stephens, Toni Horodysky (usmm.org), Korean War mariner Burley Smith, Maritime Expert – John McCown, ABMC Chief of Staff Mike Conley, MARAD Administrator RADM Ann Phillips (via pre-recorded video), historian and author Carmen Reid, and Transportation Institute Vice President, Legislative Affairs, Sara Fuentes.

Michael Conley of the American Battle Monuments Commission (abmc.gov) gave a wonderful presentation which included the organization's role in honoring WWII Merchant Mariners. The ABMC was initially involved with the construction of the National WWII Memorial in D.C. ensuring the U.S. Merchant Marine shield was included in the base of the flag poles. They re-dedicated the tributes to the East Coast memorial located in the Battery, NYC. They have a future project which will add honors recognizing the WWII Merchant Mariners serving in the Pacific Theater to the West Coast memorial at San Pedro, CA.

The current conversations of understanding the vital role the U.S. Merchant Marine is at the forefront of many maritime industry leaders, labor, and government policy makers. There are multiple maritime stakeholders that will keep you informed with these issues. Sara Fuentes made possible our cross marketing with the American Maritime Voices platform. She conveyed the importance of all of us staying informed and how we can have a voice in this vital service.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)



National Vice President Sheila M. Sova



GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END

As June 30th rolls around, I will be stepping down as National Vice President and leaving the AMMV. Eight years ago, I set out on a mission to gain recognition for the WWII U.S. Merchant Marine and to honor the legacy of my father, Orville Lee Sova. I

have come full circle in this personal process. I will still be involved with World War II USMM Veterans despite leaving the organization.

The Congressional Gold Medal legislation was passed by the efforts of Storm the Hill gang with the support of Mark Ruge of K&L Gates. You may have not heard his name before but he was instrumental in our 2019 efforts in Washington D.C. Mark rallied over 100 maritime-related organizations to sign a letter of support to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the WWII U.S. Merchant Mariners. This letter was mailed to all members of Congress. Many institutions have tried to take credit for getting this bill passed but AMMV was the primary force.

For three years straight, Charles Mills, Eugene Barner, Bob Weagant, and Morris Harvey were the regulars who traveled with me and Laura Riddle to Washington D.C. Cynthia Komlos and her father Gerard Driscoll, along with Dennis Ng joined us on the last trip. What an experience these trips were. I can't thank Christopher Edyvean

enough for suggesting to Morris Harvey, to send this "Proud Daughter of a WWII USMM Veteran" along with the veterans to walk the halls of Congress. It was a terrific learning experience watching the wheels of Congress turn as we fought for the passage of this bill.

It is unfortunate that efforts made by Charles Mills and his Granddaughter Veda Handy, along with Congressman Al Green, that H.R. 39 (formerly known as the Just Compensation bill) was passed in 2021 by the House (in a version of the Defense Authorization bill), only to have that version thrown out in the Senate. As you know, in my last column, I tried to get the outdated verbiage of the bill changed, but to no avail and lack of interest.

Along the way, I met a multitude of amazing people in the maritime industry. These amazing people stood by me and supported me as sponsors during the tribute at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, I can't thank you enough. It was your generous outpouring of support that helped make this event so meaningful. The passage of the bill and the ability to honor each of these heroes, while remembering those who have crossed the bar, well it doesn't get any better than this.

Eight years ago, I never imagined how much would be accomplished in the first four years as we took the AMMV to the public, by way of social media. We put the AMMV on the map and brought in many new members, mariners, and children/grandchildren of WWII USMM veterans. In that short time, so many doors opened to the organization. We paved the way for the current leadership of AMMV.

We paid tribute to the legacy of the famous "Lifeboat Baby", Jesse Roper Mohorovic, and the doctor who delivered the baby, Dr. Leonard Conly. MARAD presented the Distinguished Service Medal posthumously to Dr. Conly's son and grandson. We honored the legacy of Captain Hugh Mulzac and his amazing family history with his MARAD medals. Getting to interview and write about Dr. "Billie" Adels Pennings, female radio operator in WWII, was history in the making. She was able to achieve veteran status and receive her medals from MARAD as well.

Having traveled to Washington D.C. four times, being on the CGM Design Committee, and to be present at the U.S. Capitol for the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal are things that I will never forget. The October tribute at the National WWII Museum was just icing on the cake!

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)



Shadowbox of WWII medals for Bille Pennings, who sailed in both the Norwegian and American Merchant Marine

National Vice President's Report

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)



Shadowbox of medals presented to the Mulzac descendants at the 2021 National Convention in Baltimore

Someone asked me once on the phone what my role was in the organization. I explained to them what this volunteer work meant to me and that it was not a paid position. The person said to me, "but you are getting paid and I can hear it in your voice!" She was right! The veterans paid me often with their million-dollar smiles or their phone calls. Meeting them in person, hearing their stories, and watching them beam with pride, were all bonus payouts!



Shadowbox posthumously awarded to Dr. Leonard Conly, who delivered a baby in a lifeboat after his ship, the M/S City of New York, was torpedoed on March 29th, 1942. Photo is from the 2017 National Convention in Reno, where the shadowbox was presented to the Conly descendants on the 75th anniversary of the sinking.

The recognition for the WWII USMM Veteran has come full circle for me. Just the other day, the magnitude of my accomplishments, was summed up by my sister who reminded me that I did make a difference. And for that, I am grateful. No one can ever take that away from me.

Sheila M. Sovia
National Vice President



National President's Report

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

Check out these organizations:

americanmaritimevoices.org/come-aboard/
usamaritime.org
navyleague.org

AMMV is riding on the coattails of all those WWII mariners who continue to "toll the bell" along with those who have gone before us. We need our members in arrears to renew their memberships. The convention business session included motivated conversation of our financial statements, past and future projects, and mission support. A resolution voted was passed to increase dues by \$18.00 a year. This translates to a \$1.50 a month, or a total \$50.00 per year for all members.

Here's a shout out to our Administrator, Lynn Kelly, for handling all her duties along with this convention registration process seamlessly. Her *Harvey-Wichita Award* recognition is well deserved for the outstanding work!

As we look towards next month and pay homage to our National Maritime Day honoring all those who have and

continue to go down to the sea in ships, we reflect on the U.S. Merchant Marine service which is vital to our national security and economic prosperity. We reflect on the women and men who crew our vessels both domestically and on foreign trade routes. There are many National Maritime Day events taking place involving our AMMV members. We ask you share these wonderful stories with us on multiple social media platforms or for our next magazine issue.

AMMV has been invited by the Veterans Administration to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Memorial Day. We have accepted this special invitation and have already ordered the wreath. Two WWII mariners will be laying the wreath as guided by the Sentinel of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We look to honor those mariners who sacrificed all and remain in their watery graves. We honor those who have sacrificed all to maintain our freedoms.

See us on the web, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Have a good watch!

Captain Dru DiMattia
Master Mariner
President AMMV





National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly



At our recent Annual Meeting the membership voted to increase the annual dues to \$50. As you know, the cost of printing and shipping has increased over the last few years, more than increases in most other industry sectors. Our AMMV News magazine is the main tangible benefit that is provided with membership. We receive many compliments

on the quality and content of the publication. We have upgraded the issues to be 100% in color and on a much higher quality of paper. Even with the use of a volunteer editor and editorial staff, as well as a volunteer business manager who provides the financials for the magazine, our overhead can only be limited to a certain degree since we have no alternative but to hire a paid layout designer and professional printer and shipper and, therefore, these costs are set by industry standards and the U.S. Postal Service. The professionals we use have been contracted by AMMV for many years and do an excellent job. The editorial staff feels it has done everything possible to keep costs as low as they are. However, the fact is the current dues do not cover the cost of the magazine production which runs about \$7,000 per issue. Although we have spoken about a membership increase many times, the dues have not increased in about ten years. A survey of other maritime industry organization's annual dues revealed a fee of \$75 to \$150. All members, both members at large and chapter members, will pay the same annual membership dues beginning July 1, 2023

In effort to lessen the impact of the increase, we are, for the first time, offering a multi-year discount. If one wishes to pay for one year it would be \$50; for two years \$90; for three years \$130.

Our members can help keep costs down by making their dues payment in a timely manner. If the dues are not paid by September 30th, we need to do a "reminder mailing" to all those who have not paid. That cost is between \$400 and \$500 depending on how many members have not sent in their dues.

Calm Seas,

Lynn C. Kelly
Lynn C. Kelly



ALERT:

Our membership dues expire on June 30, 2023. Some members have paid ahead and would have a membership card showing a different expiration date, such as June 30, 2024 or June 30, 2025. If you are not sure if you need to make a payment, please call me at (475) 470-9200. To pay for the year beginning July 1, 2023, please send a check made out to AMMV for \$50 to:

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

If you wish to pay by credit card you may do so by calling me at (475) 470-9200.

Welcome Aboard to these New Members of the AMMV

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----|
| DONALD AIRINGTON | KANSAS CITY | MO |
| LEON D. ATKINSON | DELTONA | FL |
| JOSEPH BASILE | CAMBRIDGE | MA |
| MARK ENGELSEN | WOODVILLE | TX |
| JOHN GEORGE | HERNANDO | FL |
| DANIEL GLAZIER | SAN DIEGO | CA |
| CAPT. GEORGE HAYNES | CLYDE | MI |
| CAPT. CLARENCE HILL | JACKSONVILLE | FL |
| LINDA HINSON | CINCINNATI | OH |
| JAMES COZINE | LAS VEGAS | NV |
| DR. JUNE KLEES | ESCANABA | MI |
| CHERYL MUFFOLETTO | PARKVILLE | MD |
| LAWRENCE NEFF | CANTONVILLE | MD |
| CAPT. JOHN O'NEILL | JACKSONVILLE | FL |
| CHRISTIAN ROBERTSON | KISSIMMEE | FL |
| CAPT. GREG STREETER | JACKSONVILLE | FL |
| CAPT. BOB WHITKOP | JACKSONVILLE | FL |
| GEORGE ZELUFF | SAN DIEGO | CA |



NEWS Magazine Editor Capt. Christopher Edyvean



AMMV's 35th National Convention

The 35th AMMV convention was a success. Attendance was on par with recent years, and the line up of speakers was top notch. Although the organization opted not to offer excursions or hire entertainment, the level of camaraderie among the guests was amazing.

It was nice to see the return of many members who have not attended recent AMMV events; likewise, it was encouraging to meet new members and veterans attending their first convention.

Living History

The AMMV organization was founded with the focus on our WWII mariners. From obtaining veteran status in 1988 to being presented the Congressional Gold Medal in 2022, the Greatest Generation have always been at the forefront of AMMV. However, it was a storyline and hero from the Korean conflict that stole the show at this convention. H.J. Burley Smith is the last living mariner who served on the *Meredith Victory* during the famous Hungnam evacuation of 1950, in which 14,000 human souls were loaded and transported to safety.

Burley Smith was one of three featured speakers at our closing banquet. Knowing that Burley would be offering comments and remembrances of those historic days on the *Meredith Victory*, I asked AMMV President Capt. Dru DiMattia if the organization could present Burley with the *American Legacy* recognition plaque. Dru agreed, and offered to let me present.

Now, listening to Burley Smith speak, it was quickly apparent that he is an intelligent, confident, and successful man who has lived a long, wonderful life; the *Meredith Victory* episode was but a tiny sliver of his 95 years. Yet as I was presenting Burley with the *American Legacy* plaque, I looked in his eyes, and for a fleeting moment I saw, or perhaps just felt the presence, of a young Merchant Marine officer who was just doing the right thing by serving his country. For me personally, I have never felt so close to history.

In that moment, I wondered about the officers and crew of the *Meredith Victory* during those critical hours.

Did they feel prepared? Did they doubt their ability to pull off the mission? Were they concerned for their own lives as the hostile forces surrounded the port? How did they manage their emotions and fears as 14,000 refugees flocked aboard the vessel?

In the end, it was a success. Capt. Leonard P. LaRue, Burley Smith, and the other mariners of the *Meredith Victory* completed their assigned task in what may have been the proudest moment in the history of our maritime service.

Fact: The Christmas miracle of 1950 was brought to fruition by the U.S. Merchant Marine. Sadly, you will not read about the Merchant Marine in the textbooks of our school systems, yet the Merchant Marine has been present in so many pivotal moments in American history. You will not hear about the Merchant Marine on the channel 6 evening news, yet the service and the sacrifice of our Merchant Marine are fused into the backbone of our democracy.

Let us never forget.

Capt. Chris Edyvean

AMMV News Editor & Past National President



On April 13th, AMMV National President Captain Dru DiMattia, along with WWII MM Captain Hugh Stephens and Thomas Reilly, attended the 34th Battle Standard Dinner at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point. Pictured (L to R): Thomas Reilly, Capt. Hugh Stephens, Capt. Dru DiMattia, Maryann Zappulla, and Midshipman Coughlin.



Region #1 Vice President Stephen Snyder

SS Dorchester Memorial Service

On Friday February 3rd, 2023 at the Chapel of the High Speed Pass, Cecil Field POW/MIA Memorial, Jacksonville, Florida, a memorial service was held on the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Dorchester*.



This very special event commemorates the four WWII chaplains (Methodist Minister George Fox; Rabbi Alexander Goode; Catholic Priest John Wash-

ington; and Reformed Church Minister Clark Poling) who died at sea while rescuing civilian and military personnel as the American troop ship *SS Dorchester* sank on February 3rd, 1943. The *Dorchester* was a civilian liner converted for military service as a War Shipping Administration troop transport. It was torpedoed in the North Atlantic by the German submarine *U-223* off the coast of Newfoundland.

The chaplains joined arms, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship.

Also honored was Charles Walter David, Jr., who served as a Steward's Mate 1st Class in the United States Coast Guard.

David was serving aboard *USCGC Comanche* escorting a convoy that included the *SS Dorchester*. David was one of the *Comanche* crew members who volunteered to dive into the frigid waters to rescue exhausted crew and passengers from *Dorchester*. David also rescued several other *Comanche* crew members, who grew exhausted. He came down with pneumonia after the exertion of the rescue, dying a few days later. David was posthumously awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal.

The event was hosted by Rev. Patrick A. Archuleta Sr., Chapel of the High Speed Pass.

The Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation announced that B/G Michael Fleming, USA, Ret. has been selected as one of six nationwide to receive the prestigious Bronze Medallion for Humanitarian Service. This honor is bestowed on General Fleming for his selfless service to his local com-

munity as well as impacting the broader regional, state and national scale.

February 3, 2023 marked the 80th Anniversary of the sinking of the *USAT Dorchester*. The guest speaker for the memorial service was the Honorable Mose L. Floyd, presiding judge for the Veterans Treatment Court of Duval County.



Merchant Marine Monument delivered and dedicated in Atlantic Beach, FL

Battle of the Atlantic Memorial Placed in Atlantic Beach Memorial Park (JACKSONVILLE) –

Early Tuesday morning on 7-March at the Veterans Memorial Park in Atlantic Beach, Florida, “A Memorial to All Who Served in the U.S. Merchant Marine and the Navy Armed Guard” was placed at the Beaches Veterans Memorial Park.

The Merchant Marine suffered 6,839 lost lives, and the Armed Guard suffered 1,810 lost lives. 731 ships were sunk between 1941 – 1945. Their motto was, “We aim to deliver, and we did.” The monument also recognizes the 142 cadets from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy who were lost during the convoy effort in World War II.

The placement was a result of a year of coordination between the Naval Order and the U.S. Merchant Marine Association in Jacksonville with the City of Atlantic Beach. The monument was a ‘second’ from a USMM Group in Cape Coral, FL (the original purchase of the Merchant Marine Monument was by the generous donation of the Gunterberg Foundation and Carol Culliton family) and when it was noted as available, coordination began to get it positioned in Jacksonville. A number of sites were considered, but the park in Atlantic Beach which honors all services



AMMV Member Tom (Sonny) Suneson and his son, Abram Suneson, transported the monument from Cape Coral to Jacksonville

including the Merchant Marine was selected. The park is also home to a walkway of pavers for the 37 crew members lost in 1987 on USS Stark, pavers

for chaplains killed in service through the years, and many other memorials. Among those present to observe the placement of the beautiful two-sided memorial and thank Merchant Mariners was Bob Whitkop, Commander General of the Naval Order of the United States; Clarence Hill, Past National Commander of the American Legion; Stephen Snyder, Regional VP of American Merchant Marine Veterans; Charlie Sellers, Merchant Mariner; Jimmy Hill, former Atlantic Beach Town Council Member; Scott Williams, Atlantic Beach Public Works Director; and Beth Heath, President of We Can Be Heroes Foundation.

There is still some minor cosmetic work to pursue, but the monument is in place and will serve as a reminder of our country's commitment to freedom of the seas and keeping our sea lines open for free flow of commerce. A dedication ceremony is planned for later in the spring. "This beautiful two-sided memorial is a reminder to all Americans of the Merchant Marine valor, dedication and heroic history," said Beth Heath.

Written by Beth Heath (WCBH) and Bob Whitkop. Reprinted with permission from authors.



Group photo from the April 2nd monument dedication

Dedication ceremony

On Palm Sunday, April 2nd, 2023 a dedication of the monument honoring WWII Merchant Mariners and the Naval Armed Guard, was held at Beaches Veterans Memorial Park, West First Street, Atlantic Beach, FL. The event was hosted by the City of Atlantic Beach and the Naval Order of the United States, First Coast Commandery, and the American Merchant Marine Veterans (Region # 1).

Speakers included: Introduction: ETCM (SW) John Kraft, USN (Ret.) Commander Naval Order of the United States, First Coast Commandery; invocation: Rev. CDR Stevens Souders, CHC, USN (Ret.), Naval Order of the United States; welcome statement: Honorable Kevin Hoggancamp, Deputy City Manager, Atlantic Beach; dedication speech; Captain Robert Whitkop, USN (Ret.) Commander General, Naval Order of the United States; USMM remarks: Charlie Sellers, USN/ USMM, AMMV member, who was

instrumental in obtaining the monument for Atlantic Beach; blessing of the monument: Rev. Father Raphael LaVilla, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church; AMMV remarks: Steve Snyder

AMMV Region # 1 VP; benediction: Rev CDR Steven Souders. Also in attendance was AMMV member Tom (Sonny) Suneson, who transported the monument from Cape Coral to Jacksonville.

The monument can be viewed online at:
<http://www.coab.us/merchantmarine>

Steve Snyder
AMMV Region # 1 VP



About the Naval Order of the United States

Editor's note: At the AMMV convention, I met Charlie Sellers who is a member of the Naval Order of the United States. This group has been involved in AMMV-related activities in Florida, and I agreed with Charlie to give a "shout out" to them in this issue of our magazine.

Mission

To encourage research and writing on naval and maritime subjects, preserve documents, portraits and other records of prominent figures' deeds and memories of our naval and maritime history, and through fellowship of our members advance the Naval Order's unselfish service and worthy aims for the security and enduring well-being of our country. To foster, among all American citizens, informed interest in the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine, with the understanding that their efficiency is essential to national security and that readiness to make victory in war certain and speedy will deter

aggression and minimize dangers to world peace.

Uniqueness

The Naval Order is the oldest American hereditary exclusively naval society. From its beginning, the Order has had a dedicated interest in Naval History and has encouraged its recording and preservation. The Order has a provision for membership based upon lineal descent, which ensures a strong continuing interest in the deeds and accomplishments of companions and their forebears in perpetuity. The Order's linkage of present companions with their predecessors forges a common bond of responsible, honorable service to our country.

For more information: www.navalorder.org



American Merchant Marine Veterans Profit & Loss

July 2022 through March 2023

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Income | |
| 402 · Contributions | 6,142.57 |
| 403 · Interest Income & Bank Bonuses | 554.04 |
| 405 · Mission Advance Support | 13,407.24 |
| 406 · Gold Medal Fund Support | 8,147.98 |
| 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues | |
| DAR · Dennis Roland | 365.86 |
| EOH · Edwin O'Hara | 225.00 |
| GLD · Golden Gate | 725.00 |
| HIR · High Rollers | 150.00 |
| JTS · John T. Schmidt/Palmetto | 50.00 |
| LON · Lone Star | 50.00 |
| MAL · Members at Large | 12,326.00 |
| NBM · North Bay Mariners | 275.00 |
| NOA · North Atlantic | 32.00 |
| OHV · Ohio Valley | 225.00 |
| ORV · Oswego River Valley | 50.00 |
| THR · Three Rivers | 575.00 |
| 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues - Other | 32.00 |
| Total 410 · Chapter and MAL Dues | 15,080.86 |
| 411 · Convention Income | |
| 412 · Convention Registrations | 10,760.00 |
| 414 · Convention Donations | 11,348.00 |
| Total 411 · Convention Income | 22,108.00 |
| 420 · Magazine Ads | 375.00 |
| Total Income | 65,815.69 |
| Expense | |
| 500 · Fixed Expense | |
| 507 · Telephone | 293.67 |
| 511 · Svc Charges - Paypal & Square | 359.60 |
| Total 500 · Fixed Expense | 653.27 |
| 512 · Memorial Expense | 1,350.00 |
| 514 · Convention Expenses | |
| 515 · Convention Events | 16,930.73 |
| 517 · Convention Misc. Exp | 5,799.31 |
| 514 · Convention Expenses - Other | 1,997.48 |
| Total 514 · Convention Expenses | 24,727.52 |
| 520 · Mission Advance Expenses | |
| 521 · Awards | 1,652.56 |
| 525 · Mission Support Exp | 10,814.68 |
| 526 · Internet Initiative | 940.00 |
| Total 520 · Mission Advance Expenses | 13,407.24 |
| 530 · AMMV News Magazine | |
| 533 · Postage | 2,435.32 |
| 536 · Printing | 8,955.47 |
| 538 · Layout | 2,600.00 |
| Total 530 · AMMV News Magazine | 13,990.79 |
| 540 · Gold Medal Expenses | 6,648.34 |
| 550 · Personnel | |
| 551 · Administration | 15,300.00 |
| Total 550 · Personnel | 15,300.00 |
| 560 · Operating Expense | |
| 564 · Office Supplies | 502.92 |
| 565 · Postage - Office | 570.59 |
| 566 · Printing - Office | 897.86 |
| 567 · Licenses & Fees | 1,036.42 |
| 569 · Legal Fees | 7,900.07 |
| Total 560 · Operating Expense | 10,907.86 |
| Total Expense | 86,985.02 |
| Net Income | -21,169.33 |

American Merchant Marine Veterans Balance Sheet

As of March 31, 2023

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| ASSETS | |
| Current Assets | |
| Checking/Savings | |
| 103 · Paypal | 697.57 |
| 105 · Chase Bank | 332,270.12 |
| Total Checking/Savings | 332,967.69 |
| Total Current Assets | 332,967.69 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 332,967.69 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | |
| Liabilities | |
| Current Liabilities | |
| Credit Cards | |
| 200 · Chase Credit Card - DKelly | 4,443.47 |
| 201 · Chase Credit Card - DDiMattia | 16,085.18 |
| Total Credit Cards | 20,528.65 |
| Other Current Liabilities | |
| 311 · Dues Receivable | 480.00 |
| 312 · Member Recruitment | 893.00 |
| 314 · Mission Advance Fund | -8,906.21 |
| 315 · Gold Medal Fund | 11,135.12 |
| Total Other Current Liabilities | 3,601.91 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 24,130.56 |
| Total Liabilities | 24,130.56 |
| Equity | |
| 32001 · Retained Earnings | 330,006.46 |
| Net Income | -21,169.33 |
| Total Equity | 308,837.13 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY | 332,967.69 |



*Francis Hynds tests out his new electric chair courtesy of
Scott Nowak, Three Rivers Chapter.*

APPROVED BUDGET: FISCAL YEAR July 1st, 2022 - June 30th, 2023

| INCOME | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 402 | CONTRIBUTIONS | \$7,964.09 |
| 409 | MISCELLANEOUS INCOME | |
| 410 | DUES | \$21,000.00 |
| | CHAPTER MEMBERSHIPS | |
| | MEMBERS AT LARGE | |
| | TOTAL ESTIMATED DUES | \$21,000.00 |
| 401 | INTEREST + MAG. ADS. | |
| 403 | INTEREST INCOME + BANK BONUSES | \$738.72 |
| 404 | INTEREST INCOME + BANK BONUSES | |
| 405 | MISSION SUPPORT FUND | \$12,792.99 |
| 406 | GOLD METAL SUPPORT | \$10,863.97 |
| | TOTAL INTEREST, BONUSES, MISSION SUPPORT | \$24,395.68 |
| 411 | CONVENTION INCOME | |
| 412 | CONVENTION INCOME - OTHER | |
| 412 | REGISTRATIONS | \$9,428.00 |
| 413 | CONVENTION SPONSORSHIP FLYER | \$6,800.00 |
| 414 | CONVENTION DONATIONS | \$5,000.00 |
| 415 | CONVENTION DINNER | |
| 416 | CONVENTION TABLE | |
| 420 | MAGAZINE ADS | |
| | TOTAL CONVENTION INCOME | \$21,228.00 |
| TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME | | \$74,587.77 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| 500 | FIXED EXPENSES | |
| 501 | BANK CHARGES | |
| 503 | RENT/NATIONAL OFFICE EQUIP. | |
| 506 | INSURANCE | |
| 507 | TELEPHONE | |
| 508 | RENT/OCCUPANCY | \$1,056.00 |
| 509 | UTILITIES/NATIONAL OFFICE | \$149.90 |
| 511 | SERVICE CHARGES - PAYPAL & SQUARE | \$369.33 |
| 500 | TOTAL FIXED EXPENSES | \$1,575.23 |
| 512 | MEMORIAL & AD EXPENSES | |
| 512 | MEMORIAL EXPENSE | |
| 513 | ADVERTISING | |
| | TOTAL MEMORIAL & AD EXPENSES | |
| 514 | CONVENTION EXPENSES | |
| 515 | CONVENTION EVENTS | |
| 517 | CONVENTION MISC. EXPENSES | \$19,321.05 |
| 518 | MEMORY/SPONSORSHIP BOOK EXPENSES | \$464.00 |
| | TOTAL CONVENTION EXPENSES | \$19,785.05 |
| 520 | MISSION ADVANCE Expense | |
| 521 | AWARDS & RECOGNITION | \$11,800.00 |
| 522 | AMMV Marketing | |
| 525 | MISSION SUPPORT EXPENSE | \$14,066.77 |
| 526 | INTERNET INITIATIVE | \$1,700.00 |
| 527 | WEB HOSTING FEE | \$20.00 |
| | WEBSITE MAINTENANCE | |
| | SEO SERVICES | |
| | SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING | |
| 520 | TOTAL MISSION ADVANCE EXPENSES | \$17,586.77 |
| 530 | AMMV NEWS MAGAZINE EXPENSES | |
| 533 | POSTAGE | \$3,200.00 |
| 536 | PRINTING | \$18,000.00 |
| 538 | LAYOUT | \$3,200.00 |
| 539 | EDITORIAL FEE | |
| 530 | TOTAL MAGAZINE EXPENSES | \$24,400.00 |
| 540 | Gold Medal Expenses | \$6,648.34 |
| 550 | PERSONNEL Expense | |
| 551 | NATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR | \$20,400.00 |
| 552 | NATIONAL PRESIDENT | \$4,000.00 |
| 553 | NATIONAL SECRETARY | \$500.00 |
| 554 | NATIONAL TREASURER | \$500.00 |
| 555 | NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT | \$1,500.00 |
| 556 | REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS | \$4,800.00 |
| 550 | TOTAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES | \$31,700.00 |
| 560 | OPERATING EXPENSES | |
| 564 | OFFICE SUPPLIES | |
| 565 | POSTAGE - OFFICE | \$1,330.52 |
| 566 | PRINTING - OFFICE | |
| 567 | LICENSING & FEES | \$250.00 |
| 569 | LEGAL FEES | \$7,900.07 |
| 560 | TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES | \$9,480.59 |
| TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES | | \$111,175.99 |
| PROJECTED NET INCOME | | (\$36,588.21) |

EUGENE "GENE" BARNER



Eugene Barner at MITAGS prepping for 2015 "Storm the Hill"

One of our most active AMMV members crossed the bar January 25, 2023 at the age of 97.

Eugene Barner of Overland Park, KS graduated in 1943 from high school in Kansas City, KS, and went into the U.S. Merchant Marine, training at Sheepshead Bay, before serving primarily in the South Pacific. In 1947 he married the love of his life, Beverly Grace Daish. He worked in the automotive repair business owning Century Body Works until his retirement in 1977.

He joined AMMV sometime after it was organized. Gene actively helped in the crusade to get Veterans' status for WWII members, which was successful in 1988. When Just Compensation legislation was introduced into Congress, Gene jumped in to help.

Over the next years, Gene wrote members of Congress, called them pleadingly and sent them anything he could think of as reminders that the U.S. Merchant Mariners needed their support. He quietly searched for other ways to enhance the recognition of the Merchant Mariners of WWII. When the Maersk Alabama was hijacked in 2009, Gene waited a while and then somehow contacted Captain Phillips about helping the AMMV cause. He was invited to a party at Phillips' home, jumped in his car in Kansas City and went to the party in New England, becoming good friends with Phillips' sister. Captain Phillips remained a friend and later attended an AMMV convention in Baltimore.

Gene testified, along with Ian Allison, Frank Dooley, and others before the U.S. House Veterans Affairs Committee on behalf of the Just Compensation legislation and continued with those efforts. Gene was also involved in getting memorials to the USMM erected and other recognition causes. He enjoyed traveling and always visited friends and relatives as he toured the United States regularly, often stopping especially at these memorials.

He was a passive man but felt very strongly about USMM recognition. So when the Congressional Gold Medal legislation was introduced, he joined in the efforts whole-heartedly and in his quiet, tranquil and ever-friendly manner, was a major contributor to the successful "Storm the Hill" efforts.

He is sorely missed. RIP Gene.

Submitted by Sindy Raymond, former AMMV News Editor

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO HAVE CROSSED THE FINAL BAR

EUGENE BARNER..... Overland Park, KS
MARVEL D. BRONS..... Oregon City, OR
JAY M. ELLIOTT Pasadena, CA
CHARLES R. FRERE Bel Alton, MD
JAMES ALVIN JOLLY Fair Oaks, CA
HENRY "HANK" KAMINSKI..... Clinton, NJ

DONALD STEESE KINSER..... Hillsboro, OR
JOHN W. "JACK" KNOWLTON..... Phoenix, AZ
WILLIAM PAVKOV..... Hastings, IA
GEORGE PEDERSE..... Seattle, WA
ANTHONY PETROVICH..... Pt. Pleasant, NJ
JOHN E. SCHMIDT, JR..... Tallahassee, FL

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.




AMMV News back-issues now available online

Issues of AMMV News, beginning with the Winter 2008-09 edition, are now viewable from the AMMV website at <https://ammv.us/about>. This includes convention publications from 2015 forward.



World War I Merchant Marine Hero Remembered

At Londonderry, Ireland, a monument was recently dedicated at the gravesite of Erik Kokeritz (1885 – 1918), who served as Master of the U.S.-flagged *S/S Rochester* during the first World War. On November 2, 1917, the *Rochester* was torpedoed, forcing Kokeritz and his crew to abandon ship. According to records retrieved on www.findagrave.com, the lifeboat assigned to Captain Kokeritz held 21 seamen. They suffered nearly five days in the extreme elements, and it was only the “strict discipline exacted by the captain that enabled the party to reach the Irish coast in safety”. Prior to losing his ship, Capt. Kokeritz had gained fame as a successful blockage runner. In fact, he attracted enough attention to find himself the target of a German bounty. Kokeritz passed away only a few months later due to wounds suffered during the attack. 



SAILING TO THE CANARIES

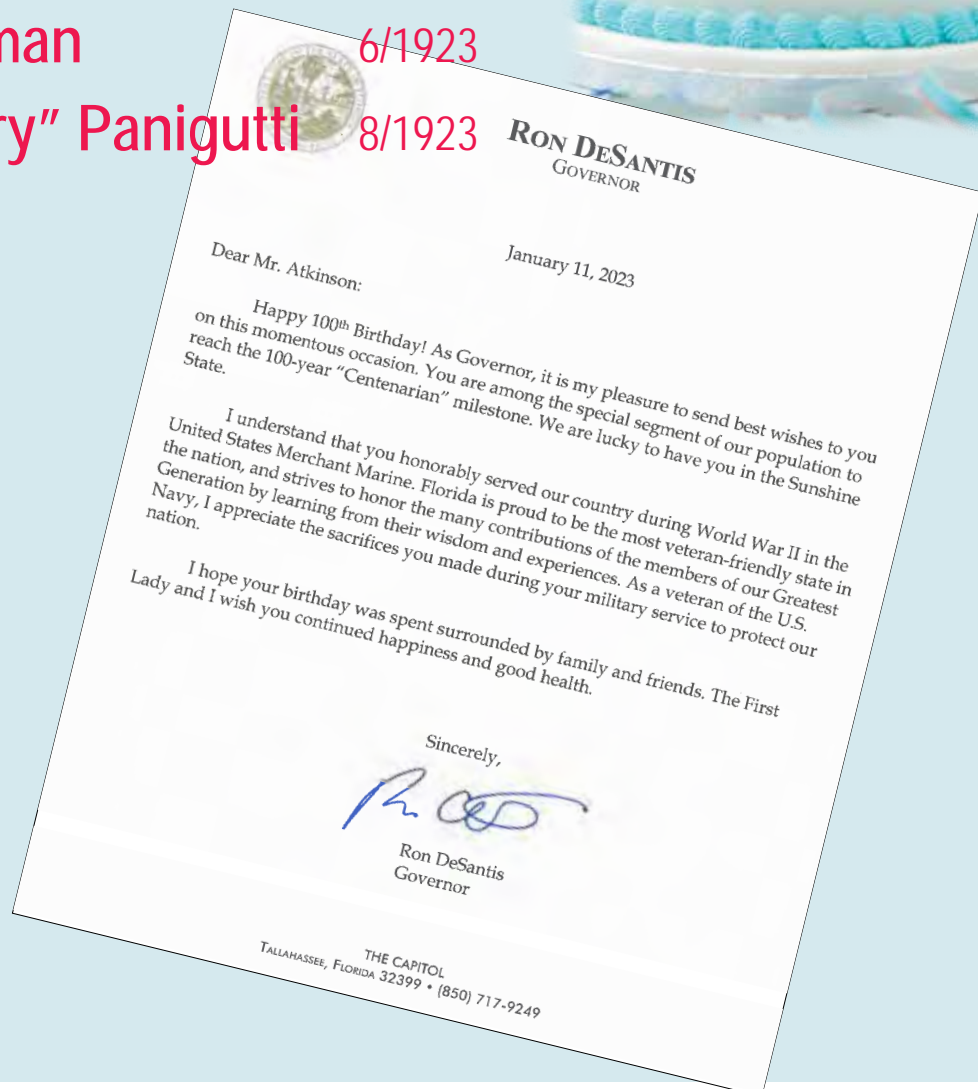
(by Glen Chesnut)

We left Casablanca
on the *SS Mariposa*
(It means butterfly in Spanish)
headed for the Canary Islands.
Sailing along the coast of Africa,
a string offshore wind came up
blowing from the east, off the Sahara.
We could see it coming –
a great orange cloud.
And then it was upon us,
and the ocean disappeared.
We were sailing through a sandstorm.
The sandblasted-ship rolled and
pitched.
All ventilators were shut down.
It was difficult to breathe the hot,
stifling air.
And just when we all thought
we would suffocate,
the sandstorm was over, the sea was calm
and the sun was shining.
The sailors were on deck with hoses
washing down the ship,
and both the *Mariposa* and the day were
sparkling
as we docked in the port of Santa Cruz
on the island of Tenerife.
I saw no canaries
in the Canary Islands.
But a lovely lady of the waterfront
had a parrot that spoke Spanish.
The parrot said, “Como esta, como esta?”
And I said, “Muy bien.”
And the parrot said, “Muy bien, muy
bien.”
And the lady said, “Muy bien.”
And it was. Everything was muy bien
that afternoon in Santa Cruz
on the island of Tenerife.

For more info, please visit: <https://glenchesnut.com>

Happy Birthday to our AMMV members who turn 100 years old in 2023!

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Harry T. Krim (101) | 6/1922 |
| Leon D. Atkinson | 1/1923 |
| John C. Froneberger, Jr. | 7/1923 |
| Keith Baker | 5/1923 |
| Howard W. Pfeifer | 9/1923 |
| James W. Greer, Sr. | 12/1923 |
| Loyd Stout | 9/1923 |
| George Kritzman | 6/1923 |
| Lorenzo "Larry" Panigutti | 8/1923 |



AMMV as History's Caretakers


On March 30th, I had the privilege of attending the American Merchant Marine Veterans' annual conference sessions via Zoom invitation. Having recently been introduced to the organization's important work, I was impressed by the presenters' expertise and passionate commitment to remembering and honoring the service and sacrifice of our country's Merchant Marine veterans. As a longtime history educator with a background in public history (an aspect of the discipline focused on empowering the general public with knowledge of the past), I quickly saw not only how vital AMMV's work is in promoting an often-overlooked part of our nation's history but also how it exemplifies what a dedicated group of individuals can do for the common good over time.

Though not able to attend all the day's events and despite some audio difficulties, I was honored to witness speakers like Burley Smith, Hugh Stephens, and Dave Yoho. All of these men took us right to the source of what matters the most in history: the lived experiences of the people who made it. Additionally, presenters like John McCown, reminded us of the critical importance of our Merchant Marine to the security of our country, past and present. The awards given throughout the program further


deepened the meaning and solemnity of the day.

To this humble historian's eyes, the history of AMMV's work itself is an important reminder of why historical knowledge in action matters. It connects people in the present to our shared humanity with those of the past and illuminates timeless values like, service, determination, and sacrifice. Through its hard-won fight to obtain veterans status for our World War II Merchant Mariners in 1988, the successful lobbying of government officials for Congressional Gold Medal recognition, and its sustained efforts to raise public awareness through "AMMV News" and co-sponsored events across the country, AMMV as an organization is the very definition of public history at work for a greater good. It truly was a gift to witness the professional results of the hard work and heartfelt dedication of AMMV's crew of volunteers as they honored our veterans and continue to caretake the history of America's Merchant Marine for future generations.

With deep respect,

Historian and new Member-at-Large, June Klees, PhD
 Escanaba, Michigan 

AMMV member Holmes visits father's vessel

AMMV member David Holmes was able to arrange a side trip while attending the 35th National Convention in Las Vegas, so that he could tour the Liberty Ship *Jeremiah O'Brien*. Dave's father, David Holmes, Sr., served as the Second Mate on the vessel's seventh voyage from July 1945 to January 1946. This trip took the *O'Brien* from California, to Australia, India, Shanghai, Manila, back to Australia, then finally back to San Francisco. This last voyage would transport 'war brides' from Australia to San Francisco. 

| NAME OF SHIP, OFFICIAL NUMBER AND CLASS | | DATE AND PLACE OF ENGAGEMENT | RATION |
|---|--|---|---------------|
| 7 | S/S GARGOYLE OFFICIAL No. 221,070 TANKER | JULY 17 1945 PORTLAND ME | CADET D |
| 8 | <i>Irony Victory</i> 215 493 <i>Sto</i> | 7/12/44 S. F. Calif | 2nd mate |
| 9 | <i>S.S. Alcom Patriot</i> 240890 | 9/5/44 S. F., Calif. | 3rd mate |
| 10 | <i>Jeremiah O'Brien</i> 240890 | JAN 4 1946 SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA | THIRD MATE |
| 11 | <i>Jeremiah O'Brien</i> 243622 | 7-27-45 Los Angeles Calif. | 2nd mate |
| 12 | <i>Old John's</i> 244770 | 3-29-46 New York | 2nd mate |

Discharge book of David Holmes, Sr., (2nd Mate) marking his voyage on the O'Brien



David Holmes sits on the bed once occupied by his father



David Holmes (center) with Head Docent Brian Agron and Arlen Susmilch

Lawrence Abrams receives his CGM

WWII Merchant Mariner & AMMV member Lawrence Cobb Abrams recently received his Congressional Gold Medal. Abrams embarked on several voyages during the Second World War, including trips to Normandy and Murmansk.

An email from his daughter Peggy states, “Dad joined the Merchant Marines in February 1943 at the age of 17. His parents had to sign for him to join. His family needed the money as did many families at that time. His first voyage was May 6, 1943, on the *Theodore Foster*. Other ships were the SS *Sandwich*, the SS *John F. Myers*, the SS *DeSoto* (the Normandy voyage), the *Wood Island*, the *Grace Abbott* (the Murmansk voyage), the *Frances J. O’Gara*, the SS *Frostburg*, the SS *Anson Jones* (his last before he got married), and the SS *Oliver Wendell Holmes*.”



L. Abrams, circa 1943



American Maritime Voices is dedicated to a strong American Maritime and was created in partnership with the American Maritime Partnership as a place to convene, educate, and activate the voices of Americans who care deeply about the future of American Maritime.

Whether you or somebody you love works in the maritime industry on a shipyard, at a port terminal, or on a vessel; or if you yourself care about American Maritime and want to make sure our nation remains dedicated to being the maritime nation that it has always been, American Maritime Voices is the place for you.

American Maritime Voices offers its member “Voices” a place to learn more about American Maritime, what’s happening in Washington DC and throughout the world that impacts maritime, and a platform to use your VOICE to speak up about issues that matter to you.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Who will my email be shared with?**
Nobody but the American Maritime Voices team. For this project, we have built our own database. We will keep it private. We will not sell or share your information with anyone.
- **How much spam will I get if I sign up?**
None! We will not share your email so the only emails you’ll get will be from us.
- **How many emails will I get from you?**
It’s up to you! We will calibrate based on your engage-

ment. If you take action with every email, you’ll see more. If you only open one email a year, you’ll only get emails when there’s an attack on the Jones Act.

- **When will you contact me?**
We will send some regular updates, no more than one a month. Additionally, if there is ever a threat to the Jones Act, we will let you know! Those can be difficult to predict, but we will only alert you when we need your voice to make a difference. You will also get a Welcome email when you first join.
- **Are you going to ask me for money?**
No.
- **Are you going to ask me to donate to politicians?**
No. We will NEVER ask you for any money.
- **Can anyone sign up?**
Yes! Please share the site with your family and friends.
- **I’ve got some great sea stories about the Jones Act. How can I share them?**
Please use the “Share Your Voice” section on the site to share your story!



USTRANSCOM & MARAD honor WWII Merchant Marine Veterans at NOLA WWII Museum

Received from David Hatcher, Director, Sealift Support



Back row (L to R): MARAD's Director of Sealift Support Dave Hatcher, Transportation Operation Specialist Matt Butram, and Associate Administrator for Strategic Sealift Kevin Tokarski; Front (L to R): WWII MM Vets Mark Oncale, William Feaheny, and Donald Spierier

On March 15-16, the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) hosted a senior leader executive working group meeting at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans to discuss important topics in strategic sealift. Over 50 military, government, and industry leaders were in attendance.

As part of the event, leaders participated in an open discussion with three World War II Merchant Marine veterans to hear their stories and learn more about our great U.S. Merchant Marine lineage.

Mr. William Feaheny shared with leadership his experiences sailing as member of the U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps onboard the brand new T2 tanker *SS Fort Robinson* carrying high-octane fuel from the U.S. Gulf to the Pacific, including lighterage operations off Tinian.

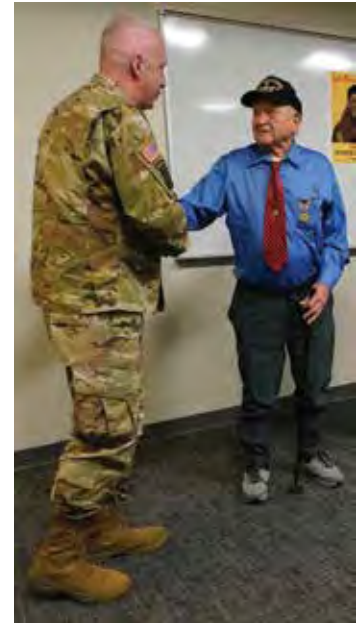
Mr. Donald Spierier shared with leadership his experiences sailing as an engine cadet onboard a T2 tanker in the Atlantic convoys to Britain during the war. Particularly insightful was his recollection of how ships maintained position in the convoy formation and reac-



WWII Merchant Mariner Donald Spierier



WWII Merchant Mariner William Feaheny

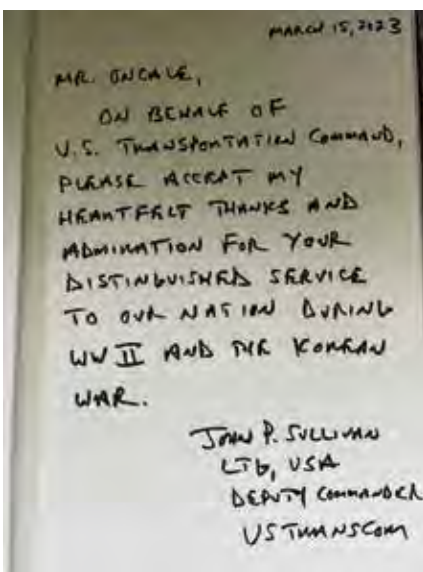


USTRANSCOM Deputy Commander LTG (3-star) John Sullivan congratulates Mr. Mark Oncale on his U.S. Merchant Marine Korean War Service Medal

tions to reported sightings of U-Boats.

Mr. Mark Oncale shared with leadership his experiences as a 15-year-old sailing on a Victory ship returning POWs from North Africa back to the European continent just after the war ended, his experiences sailing into Inchon during the Korean War, and how much of a positive impact his merchant marine service had on his life. It was the foundation that built his strong, and successful, work ethic in later years.

MARAD had previously been working with Mr. Oncale to validate his sea service and had just recently been able to validate his Korean War service. At the end of the discussion, the Maritime Administration surprised Mr. Oncale by presenting him with his official U.S. Merchant Marine Korean Service Medal, much to the delight of his family and the leaders present.



Report of AMMV 35th National Convention

Las Vegas, March 28-30, 2023

Monday, March 27th: Early arrivals & set-up work

On Monday, March 27th, AMMV's early arrival team was on scene to set-up the Registration Room. These volunteers included Capt. Dru DiMatia, Sandi Barth, Cindy Bledsoe, Ken Delancy, Pat Rafferty, Capt. Chris

Edyvean, Dennis Kelly, and Lynn Kelly.

Tuesday, March 28th: Arrival day (afternoon & evening)

Most attendees filtered in on Tuesday.

The Registration Room

was set-up with round tables. AMMV t-shirts were sold, some members set-up memorabilia displays, and all attendees received a welcome bag filled with maritime publications and other items. A separate upper-level Hospi-



Guest speaker H.J. Burley Smith

tality Room was available in the evening, stocked with drinks and snacks, and offering a great view of Vegas with the mountains in the

background.

WWII Merchant Mariners in attendance were Frank Mendez, Leroy Caplan, James Monteleone, Capt. Hugh Stephens, William Keim, Wilfred Archuleta, Dave Yoho, Bob Ross, Ken Edwards, Ernie Balogh, and Bill Balabanow.

Wednesday, March 29th: Organizational business day

The AMMV business meeting began at 9:05 a.m., March 29, 2023.

President Dru DiMatia opened the meeting with acknowledgment that women in the maritime industry represent almost 8% of the industry's personnel. He noted milestones such as Vice Admiral Joanna Nunan's, USMS, recent appointment as the first woman to be Superintendent of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and RADM Ann Phillips' new role as Maritime Administrator.

Resolution 01-2023: Raise annual dues to \$50 for all members effective



Attendees gather on arrival night

July 1, 2023.

Discussion focused on the fact that 1. Dues have not been raised in about ten years (2013) when they went up from \$27 to \$32 for MAL Members (chapter members pay less than \$32);

2. Other maritime organizations have set their dues much higher, for example, ISMA is \$60, CAMM is \$100, and CT Maritime is \$85; 3. The income from dues does not cover the cost to publish the news magazine (\$7,000 per issue).

Primary in our discussion was concern that some of the older members would not be able to afford an increase in dues. Mike Hoge and Scott Nowak, representing

chapters, expressed concern with affordability as well as the fact that chapter members also pay a small fee to the chapter in addition to the \$25 dues owed to the National Office. We agreed that if



Guest speaker Sara Fuentes, Transportation Institute



Keynote speaker Dave Yoho



Sean Torkelson

there is hardship an individual member should bring the concern to their chapter officer or to the national office.

Resolution 01-2023 was called for a vote — Should AMMV increase the annual dues to \$50 for all members? Vote results: 23 for increase; 2 for no increase; 2 abstentions. Motion carried.

Tom Stapleton brought up the idea of recognition for younger mariners, such as those active during the Korean War and Vietnam War. A discussion ensued regarding what has been done or is currently in the works to attract



Lynn Kelly receives the Harvey-Wichita Award, pictured with Past AMMV President Capt. Chris Edyvean (L), and AMMV National President Capt. Dru DiMattia

post-WWII members or potential members. Dru briefed us on some efforts:

There is a Detroit congresswoman who is proposing veteran status for those MM serving in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

Bob Lewis and the American Legion have been

hosting ceremonies for post WWII mariners and supplying them with certificates and/or medals where applicable.

Pat Cotter has been tirelessly working on having the Merchant Marine included in the Memorial Day ceremonies at the Washington Mall which is broadcast by PBS.

The extra MM monument from Cape Coral has been relocated to Atlantic Beach (Jacksonville Beach) with assistance from AMMV in col-

laboration with the American Legion. Dru stressed his opinion, a feeling expressed by many AMMV members that, “If we can’t get recognition for the WWII mariners, we won’t get it for younger mariners.” We continue our outreach and promotion wherever and whenever we can.

After a short coffee break, the meeting resumed at 11:09 a.m.

Dru went over the budget (printed in this magazine) explaining how the Mission Support income is used, highlighting the operating budget, and the fiscal year projection to June 30, 2023.



AMMV National Treasurer Dennis Kelly receives Outstanding Volunteer plaque

laboration with the American Legion.

Dru stressed his

Chris Edyvean called for a motion to accept the budget. Tom Schmidt seconded the motion.

Resolution 02-2023: To accept the current budget as proposed by AMMV President Dru Di Mattia. Vote results:

Yes – 26; No – 0; Abstentions – 0. Motion carried.

Next discussed was the possibility of reducing the magazine production from four per year to three. Our Editor, Chris Edyvean, believes that this might be a temporary solution to his very busy schedule as well as a cost saving mea-

sure. Karyn Holm brought up the possibility of putting the magazine online instead of in “paper print”. After discussion we decided that the “in print” magazine would continue. Chris



Capt. DiMattia presents a Member Appreciation plaque to Regional VP Dennis Ng (D.A.R. Chapter)



Guest speaker John McCown



Lisa Borges and AMMV Veterans Affairs Chair Robert Lewis



Midwest Chapter members Karyn Holm (left) and Paula Papamarcos

pointed out that back issues of AMMV News dating back to late 2008, and convention publications dating back to 2015, are now available online.

After a comprehensive discussion, Christian Yuhas called for a vote. Dennis Ng seconded the motion. Resolution 03-2023: To temporarily reduce the production of the AMMV News Magazine from four issues annually, to three. Vote results: Yes – 35; No – 0; Abstentions – 1. Motion carried.

Dru conveyed Patrick Cotter's report that even though the Veterans Administration does not recognize the AMMV as a veteran organization, they have asked us to lay a wreath on Memorial Day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We hope to have one of our WWII members represent AMMV at the event.

Dru offered thanks and recognition to VP Sheila Sovo for her outstanding contributions in growth of AMMV followers, increase in membership, and efforts in locating WWII mariners and their families.

After a break for our buffet style lunch, the meeting resumed at 1:00 p.m.

Dru gave out volunteer awards to recognize the dedication of AMMV's volunteer force. Specifically, Outstanding Volunteer plaques were presented to Patrick Cotter, Capt. Chris Edyvean, Dennis Kelly, Steven & Sandy Snyder, and Sheila Sovo. Membership Appreciation plaques were given to Dennis Ng, Jens Inge Egeland, Veda Handy, Carmen Reid, Rick Wobbe, Sinclair Oubre, Bob Lewis, and Kyle Knickerbocker.

The WWII vets in attendance who had yet to receive the Convoy Cup medallion and certificate were presented with such, thanks to coordination with AMMV RVP and Convoy Cup



Carol Ann Mendez and her father, Frank Mendez (Golden Gate Chapter)

Foundation liaison Jens Inge Egeland. Also, AMMV Veterans Affairs Chairman Bob Lewis presented Certificates of Honor to our WWII veterans

from the American Legion, Department of Massachusetts.

Next, Capt. Hugh Stephens

entertained us as a guest speaker and offered some interesting sea stories!

Resolution 04-2023: To appoint Dennis Kelly 'Acting Secretary' so that he can move money from our



WWII mariner Capt. Hugh Stephens with AMMV President Capt. Dru DiMattia

& Closing Dinner

Thursday offered an amazing

current checking account to a more profitable interest paying CD in the same bank. Dru called for a vote.

Vote result: Yes – 27; No – 0; Abstentions – 0. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned 3:06 p.m.

The Hospitality Room was open for a gathering on this evening.

Thursday, March 30th: Guest speakers



Handling registration duties are National Office Administrator Lynn Kelly (left) and Sandi Barth (High Rollers Chapter)

line-up of guest speakers. Leading off was Carmen Reid, who spoke about ongoing efforts to preserve the remaining structures of the Alameda,

CA Merchant Marine Officers' training facility. The second presenter was historian Toni Horodsky, founder of the usmm.org (Merchant Marine at War) website. Toni told the story of the S/S *President Harrison*, in which the crew were taken as some of the first





Bob Lewis presents a certificate to Wilfred Archuleta. In the background is Chuck Miller of Great Lakes Maritime Academy.

POW's of WWII. This included female crew-member Clara Gordon Main of New York. Fol-

the Jones Act was maritime expert John McCown. Finally, Michael G. Conley of the American Battle Monuments Commission gave a presentation on the ABMC organization, with focus on what is being done to recognize WWII mariners.

The evening closing dinner captured more speakers, starting with a special pre-recorded message from the U.S. Maritime Administrator, RADM Ann C. Phillips. The first speaker was Sara Fuentes of the Transportation Institute, who has been a great friend to AMMV and our veterans, dating back to her time with the U.S. Navy League. The Transportation Institute monitors political activity as it pertains to U.S. maritime, and advocates for a healthy U.S.-flagged fleet. Next was H.J. Burley Smith, who is the last living crewmember to serve on the S/S *Meredith Victory* during the Hungnam evacuation in 1950 during the Korean conflict. After his speech, Burley was presented with the *American Legacy* plaque from AMMV. This is a special recognition given when the organization comes across a mariner who was involved in a significant event in American maritime history. Finally, Dave Yoho topped the speaker agenda with another of his amazing speeches!

In other activities at the Closing Dinner, Lynn Kelly received the *Harvey-Wichita Award* as AMMV's person of the year, while WWII MM veteran William Balabanow received the award as a lifetime achievement recognition for his advocacy for the U.S. Merchant Marine. Balabanow sailed from WWII right up until the late 1970's. Sally Moore, wife

of Dennis Ng, won the 50/50 raffle. **Friday, March 31st: Clean-up & departure** On Friday morning, volunteers tore down the Registration Room and packed the convention materials and banners for shipment to Cape Coral. Another successful convention is in the books. Heave Ho!



Color Guard provided by Las Vegas U.S. Navy League Council



Regional Vice Presidents Bob Ross (left) and Christian Yuhas



(L to R): Scott Nowak (Three Rivers Chapter), John Pitts, Sean Torkelson, and Sandy Nowak

lowing Toni was Capt. Hugh Stephens, continuing with more of his recollections of serving in the Merchant Marine. Presenting on containerships and



(L to R): Dennis Kelly, Wilfred Archuleta, Capt. Dru DiMattia, Michael Hoge, & Frank Mendez



WWII mariners are presented American Legion Certificates of Honor from Bob Lewis

VETERAN SPOTLIGHT: William Balabanow

Editor's note: William Balabanow was the recipient of the Harvey-Wichita Award at the AMMV National Convention in Las Vegas. This award signifies a lifetime achievement in advocacy for the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Tell us how you came to serve in the WWII Merchant Marine.

The war in 1942-43 was the talk of our neighborhood, and although I didn't realize it at the time, I was a very patriotic kid and longed to wear a uniform. I left school in order to join the military. I was rejected by all branches and even the selective service couldn't find a place for me. Eventually, in 1944, I found something called "The Merchant Marine" and I was in! Gee, this was great, I'm in the military! What the hell is the Merchant Marine? I didn't know, but there I was in Boot Camp at Sheepshead Bay Training Camp. Now Mom found out where I was and that I had forged her permission and lied about my age. Never mind - I am in the service! That's another story...

How long did your Merchant Mariner career span?

I sailed from 1944 thru 1946 when the war ended, then sailed in the commercial Merchant Marine until retirement 1/01/1979.

What is your most memorable "sea story"?

My most memorable sea story occurred after the war when I was on a ship that ran aground in the Rio de la Plata for several months. After we were salvaged, the crew was repatriated. The Captain was required to remain in Argentina to settle things. He demanded that I remain with him because I spoke some Spanish. We remained there for 6-8 months. A chaotic flight home is rememberable.

What is your greatest accomplishment in regards to obtaining recognition for WWII Merchant Mariners?

There were many. I became an active advocate shortly after the 1988 signing of the PL 95-202.

I assisted Clarence Newcomer (AMMV member) with the formation of the Susquehanna Valley Chapter of the AMMV.

Bill Kelley (AMMV member) and I made dozens of presentations advancing the cause and familiarizing the public of the existence of the U.S. Merchant Marine during WWII.

Bill Kelley and I were instrumental in getting PA law enacted to issue auto licenses honoring the Merchant Marine the same as the other five branches of service.

Financially, I was the prime donor to erect a small Merchant Marine memorial at Indiantown Gap National Veterans cemetery.

Bill Kelley and I spoke at several schools enlightening the students of the existence and of the importance of the USMM during WWII.

Bill Kelley and I are honored, beyond belief, to have been invited

to the White House ceremony awarding WWII Merchant Mariners, the prestigious Congressional Gold Metal.

Most recently I am so proud to have been one of two WWII mariners to have been invited among 29 WWII veterans, nationwide, to attend the National Veterans Museum celebration of Armistice Day in New Orleans, Louisiana, November 11th, 2022.


Anything you wish you might have done differently?

Yes, I regret being silent from 1946 until 1988 while others carried the mantle, battling for benefits and to have the U.S. Merchant Marine recognized.



WWII MM George Offenhauser celebrates 99th birthday; attends rodeo event with Charles A. Mills

AMMV members & WWII MM George Offenhauser and Charles A. Mills attended the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo on March 1, 2023 for Armed Forces Day, held at the NRG Stadium in Houston. Their participation was planned by the Honor Flight of Houston. The day included a BBQ lunch with music played by the Marine Band. From there everyone was shuttled, in golf carts decorated in red, white, and blue with small U.S. flags, over to the livestock arena. They got to meet Medal of Honor recipient, Sargent Major Matt Williams, a veteran of the Afghanistan conflict in 2008. From the livestock arena, all were shuttled to the Wine Garden for more entertainment, wine, and snacks. With everything planned on a schedule, the next stop was the rodeo arena. The veterans rode in wagons, pulled by a team of four horses, circling the entire arena as part of The Grand Entry. The rodeo followed. George and Charles were the only WWII veterans in attendance and they were tired, but they had a fabulous time!

From Offenhauser's daughter, Rosalie Vance: On March 5th, we held an open-house in our home to celebrate Dad's 99th birthday. His actual birthday was February 22. Approximately 60 people attended. Charles Mills, 102 years old, also came. Another guest was our Congressman, Rep. Randy Weber. As a special surprise, he presented Dad with a "Certificate of Congressional Recognition" for his birthday. Everyone presented Dad with gift cards to use in buying "duck food", as he has about 30 wild ducks show up for two feedings per day. This keeps him active, and he enjoys them – except for all the "poop" he must clean off daily! Dad was overwhelmed with the attendance and generosity of everyone. It was a very special day. 



WWII Merchant Mariners Charles A. Mills and George Offenhauser (center) at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo



Rep. Randy Weber presents George Offenhauser with a Congressional certificate on his 99th birthday celebration



Red Tails in Lake Huron

by Wayne R. Lusardi

On April 15, 1943, the converted 632-foot 18,000 gross ton luxury liner *Mariposa* (WGEN) fired up its boilers at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York. Over 4,000

American troops boarded the ship, including 400 Tuskegee Airmen. The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African Americans trained to fly military aircraft for the U.S. Army. Pilots from the 99th Fighter

Squadron earned their wings at Tuskegee, Alabama, and remained at the segregated base for two years. The Army high command had no intention of utilizing the Airmen in combat roles, and only conceded because of social and



Aviation Cadet
Frank H. Moody.
Courtesy U.S.
Army, 1943.

political pressures. Not until April 2, 1943, when the 99th boarded a train for New York, did the Airmen begin their journey to the European theater of operations. *Mariposa* was bound for Casablanca where the Tuskegee Airmen would first see action in North Africa, then Sicily, and finally at Capodichino in Italy. They served primarily as escort fighter pilots for heavy bombers conducting sorties over Poland, Yugoslavia, Austria and deep into Germany. Following the deployment of the 99th,

additional single-engine fighter squadrons were formed at Tuskegee including the 100th, 301st, and 302nd Fighter Squadrons, collectively under the 332nd Fighter Group. Beginning in the spring of 1943, all newly commissioned fighter pilots were transferred from Alabama to Selfridge Field at Mt. Clemens near Detroit, Michigan for advanced training. Among them was 2nd Lt. Frank Heman Moody.

Frank Heman Moody was born in Castle, Oklahoma in 1921. He grew up in Los Angeles and following high school graduation enlisted in the U.S. Army. Moody became an aviation cadet and earned his wings and commission with 19 other men at Tuskegee, Alabama, Class 44-B-SE, in Febru-

ary 1944. He was immediately transferred to Selfridge Field to learn how to fly the Bell P-39 Airacobra. On April 11, 1944, Lt. Moody departed Selfridge Field with three



S.S. Mariposa. Courtesy Naval History and Heritage Command, 1943.

other aircraft to conduct live fire gunnery exercises over lower Lake Huron. Flying only 50 feet above the lake at nearly 300 mph, Lt. Moody pulled the trigger, fir-

ing all four .50 cal. machine guns. Something happened to the aircraft. It lurched upwards then plunged into the lake. Lt. Moody was killed instantly, and his body was recovered from the lake-shore near the Fort Gratiot lighthouse two months later.

Seventy years to the day of the accident, on April 11, 2014, diver David Losinski and his son Drew discovered the wrecked aircraft in 30 feet of water north of Port Huron. The airplane is badly broken and scattered across approximately 10 acres of lake bottom. Having been abandoned by the U.S. Army, the wreckage is now property of the State of Michigan. Mr. Losinski contacted the author (Michigan's State Maritime Archaeologist) and in July 2015 the archaeological documentation of the accident site commenced.

Bell Aircraft Company of Buffalo, New York developed the P-39 Airacobra in the late 1930s. The aircraft was designed to carry a 37mm cannon in the forward fuselage that could fire from the propeller hub. Two .50 cal. machine guns were mounted above the cannon and were



Tuskegee class 44-B-SE. Lt. Moody is standing forth man from right. Courtesy U.S. Army, 1944.



Bell P-39 Airacobra. Courtesy of U.S. Army, 1940.

synchronized to fire between the rotating propeller blades. Due to the placement of armament at the front end, the engine was positioned behind the pilot, and the

Airacobra was the first aircraft in the U.S. arsenal with a tricycle landing gear. The “Q” version of the Airacobra, like the aircraft Lt. Moody was flying, was additionally armed with a .50 cal. machine gun placed in a pod, one under each wing. Instead of the traditional roll-back canopy, the Airacobra’s cabin was entered through an automobile-style door manufactured by Hudson Motor Company. Although the P-39 was heavily armed, it was slow and not particularly maneuverable at high altitude compared to later designs, and most of the 20,000 Airacobras built at Buffalo were sold to the

Russians and used effectively against German tanks and gun emplacements on the eastern front.



Bell P-39Q Airacobra conducting live fire gunnery exercises. Courtesy U.S. Army, 1939.

The wreckage of Lt. Moody’s Airacobra was positively identified based on the radio call sign, 221226, still in place on the forward instrument panel. Following preliminary documentation, the State of Michigan issued an archaeological recovery permit to the National Museum of the Tuskegee Airmen in Detroit. In 2018, Grand Lodge President of the International Ship Masters’ Association, Capt. Luke Clyburn, provided a 28-foot Pursuit, and seven artifacts were retrieved from the site including the starboard side door, the instrument cluster, a wooden radio mast, the bulletproof glass windshield, an actuator, and both sections of steel drive shaft extensions used to connect the stern-mounted engine to the forward reduction gearbox and propeller.

The artifacts were transferred to the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in Alpena where the State of Michigan operates an artifact conservation laboratory. The process of removing invasive Zebra and Quagga mussels, highly corrosive to aluminum aircraft components, consisted of chemical baths and electro-chemical cleaning to stabilize the metals. Following conservation efforts, several of the artifacts were exhibited at the Experimental Aircraft

Association’s annual Fly-in at Oshkosh, Wisconsin in 2019. The exhibit was located at the World War II encampment and surrounded by dozens of flyable warbirds from that era. It was with great honor that the author was able to discuss the artifacts from the wrecked airplane with World War II veteran Tuskegee Airman Lt. Col. James Harvey. The artifacts are now exhibited in a temporary galley at the Charles A. Wright African American Museum in Detroit.



State Maritime Archaeologist Wayne R. Lusardi documenting the portside wing of Lt. Moody’s Bell P-39Q Airacobra in Lake Huron. Photograph by Erik Denson, 2015.

divers, and artifact curators. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division provided a research vessel (PB25-5), and the Michigan State Police deployed an autonomous underwater vehicle to acoustically survey the debris field. Over 300 artifacts were systematically mapped, photographed in place, recovered and transported ashore. The airplane’s control column or “stick,” complete with pistol grip, trigger, and cannon firing button, and the throttle and mixture control levers, were literally in the pilot’s hands at the time of the accident. Seventy-seven years later, Lt. Moody’s nephew Eric Bryant, was able to vis-



Forward instrument panel with radio call sign 221226. Photograph by Wayne R. Lusardi, 2015.

Despite a global pandemic, archaeological documentation of the site continued in 2021 and 2022. Nearly 80 volunteers from around the country participated in the project, serving as boat operators, topside personnel, sonar technicians,

it the site and hold the same artifacts in his hands. Utilizing a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) provided by the Noble Odyssey Foundation, two

engineering students from the University of Michigan, Eva Lusardi and Josh Beatty, were able to access the wreck,



Tuskegee Airman and World War II veteran Lt. Col. James Harvey discussing armored windshield glass with the author. Photograph by Nicholas T. Lusardi, 2019.

and for the first time, Mr. Bryant could see his uncle's aircraft through the lens of an ROV camera.

Perhaps the most significant machine

cant of the artifacts recovered to date are the four guns and the components of the propulsion system including the driveshaft extensions, throttle control, the reduction gear box, and the propeller assembly. Careful examination revealed bullet damage to all three propeller blades indicating the system had lost synchronization. When Lt. Moody pulled the trigger, the forward guns, designed to fire between the propeller blades, went out of sync, and the blades were shot off, causing the aircraft to careen into Lake Huron.

The aircraft's wings, with a span of 32 feet, remain on the lake floor. The portside wing was lightly covered in sand and gravel, and because it was protected, is much more intact than the starboard side wing that was exposed to the corrosive effects of invasive mussels. The portside red navigation light and pitot tube remain in place, and a five-pointed white star emblem is clearly visible on the wing's upper surface. Three hundred feet south of the wings sits the massive Allison V-1710 engine loosely attached to its chassis. The wings and engine have already been archaeologically documented and are slated



Eric Bryant, Lt. Moody's nephew, holding the throttle and mixture control quadrant from his uncle's downed aircraft. Photograph by Wayne R. Lusardi, 2021.

for recovery in Summer 2023.

The 2021 field season culminated in the dedication of a memorial honoring Lt. Frank H. Moody and the 14 other Tuskegee Airmen that were killed while training in Michigan during the Second World War. Their deaths represent 15 of nearly 16,000 pilots and flight crews killed in training accidents on U.S. soil during the war. A black obelisk with the names of the fallen now stands forever just north of the Blue Water Bridge at Port Huron. Its unveiling ceremony was graced by the presence of two original airmen, Lt. Col. Harry Stewart and Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson, as well as Lt. Moody's relatives, and many of the divers and project personnel that came together to make the event successful.

The Tuskegee Airmen project in Michigan is a collaboration of diverse partnerships. State, Federal, and municipal governments, law enforcement agencies, research institutions, museums, private businesses, dive organizations, high school and college students, and volunteers all

contributed to the success of the project. The continued documentation of the Tuskegee airplane in Lake Huron has proven to be much more than an archaeological investigation of a wrecked aircraft. It is a dive into history – and into a man's life. Lt. Frank Heman Moody was tragically killed while training in a Bell P-39Q Airacobra

over the Great Lakes. He was part of the now famous Tuskegee Experience, often referred to as Red Tails. Lt. Moody was one of less than 1,000 African American men that were trained to fly Army aircraft during World War II. Lt. Frank H. Moody was preparing to fight for his country; a country that did not want him to fight; a country that considered him physically and mentally incapable of flying an airplane; a country's military that refused to integrate. Tuskegee was designed to segregate. It was a place to keep black men and women, out of mainstream military service. The Tuskegee Experience was designed to fail. But it did not fail. The Tuskegee Airmen persevered. These pilots overcame unimaginable obstacles. They learned to fly. They became officers and leaders of men. They soared!



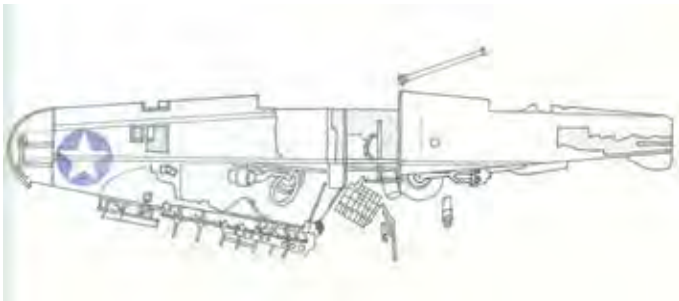
Propeller blade from Lt. Moody's Airacobra with bullet damage. Photograph by Wayne R. Lusardi, 2022.

Roll Call:

- 2Lt. Jerome T. Edwards (12/26/1918 – 5/7/1943)
- 2Lt. Wilmeth Sidat-Singh (2/13/1918 – 5/9/1943)
- 2Lt. Luther L. Blakeney (6/20/1918 – 6/16/1943)
- 2Lt. Nathaniel M. Hill (2/5/1919 – 6/16/1943)
- 2Lt. Johnson C. Wells (1920 – 9/28/1943)
- 2Lt. William H. Walker (1/20/1919 – 10/14/1943)
- 2Lt. Leroi S. Williams (7/30/1919 – 10/14/1943)
- 2Lt. Leon Purchase (10/8/1917 – 11/19/1943)
- 2Lt. William E. Hill (1923 – 11/22/1943)
- FO Nathaniel P. Rayburg (9/30/1916 – 12/12/1943)
- 2Lt. Cornelius F. May (1921 – 12/28/1943)
- 2Lt. Paul C. Simmons (9/22/1921 – 1/16/1944)
- 2Lt. Charles W. Dickerson (1920 – 2/18/1944)
- 2Lt. Vincent J. Mason (7/19/1923 – 3/18/1944)
- 2Lt. Frank H. Moody (12/18/1921 – 4/11/1944)

For additional Information:

- Nick Lusardi Tuskegee Airmen in Michigan (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foh0CXZbWTQ>)
- Aviators Down: Survey Summary (<https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/18aviatorsdown/welcome.html>)
- Honoring the Tuskegee Airmen in Michigan (<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDNR/bulletins/2f562a9>)
- Tuskegee Airmen of Michigan (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=175175827442155>)
- Michigan Wardens (https://vimeo.com/668011300/de211c29d4?fbclid=IwAR0UfhuuJk5HUPIABW25s9oZSFYQXaKFFgNOrpGeTCYn uj7_NaIRp50D2_g)



Scaled drawing of the Airacobra wings on the lake floor.
Drawing by Wayne R. Lusardi, 2015.

Wayne R. Lusardi is Michigan's State Maritime Archaeologist. He specializes in the discovery, investigation, and conservation of shipwrecks and aircraft archaeological sites on land and underwater. He can be contacted at great-lakesaviationdetectives@gmail.com



Wayne R. Lusardi



Dedication of memorial to the Tuskegee Airmen, Port Huron riverfront, August 2021. Seated with mask is Lt. Col. Harry Stewart. Also seated is Lt. Col. Alexander Jefferson. Standing left of monument is Lt. Moody's nephew Eric Bryant, and on right is Lt. Moody's grandniece Lauren Bryant. Photograph by Nicholas T. Lusardi, 2021.



Mulzac connection to Tuskegee Airmen

Pictured back at the 2021 AMMV convention is Henry Mulzac, grandnephew of Capt. Hugh Mulzac, the first African-American to sail as Master in the U.S. Merchant Marine during WWII. Henry's father, John L. Mulzac (left-most artwork), was a Tuskegee Airman; artwork compliments of Thomas Glenn Hill (right).

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.

F. 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. 



JUST RECOGNITION

Update on AMMV Efforts to Honor USMM Veterans January through March 2023

AMMV Membership on Veterans Affairs National Committees

On September 19, 2022, Capt. DiMattia applied for membership in the Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Day National Committee. The Committee will review AMMV's application and vote on whether to include us as an Associate Member in May 2023. Membership will be important so representatives of AMMV can attend the National Veterans Day ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown in Arlington National Cemetery for the first time in AMMV's history. As a result of Capt. DiMattia's application, AMMV was invited to lay a wreath at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day. This will also be the first time that AMMV has been invited to lay a wreath on Memorial Day with other distinguished veterans organizations. Capt. DiMattia is in contact with the USMM Academy in Kings Point, NY to schedule again their Midshipmen Color Guard, as they presented our colors during the Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony back in May 2022.

Please mark your calendar to view the 2023 Memorial Day ceremonies on Sunday, May 28 and salute more than 9,500 Merchant Mariners and their families who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War II. AMMV members should be proud that we have been recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs for participation in Memorial Day ceremonies. Standby for the results of the VA Committee's vote in May to allow AMMV to participate in the Veterans Day ceremonies.

Honor for Merchant Mariners during the National Memorial Day Concert

On December 14, 2022, Capt. Dru DiMattia sent a letter to Michael Colbert, Executive Producer for Capital Concerts regarding a decision to honor USMM WWII men and women killed in action during the National Memorial Day Concert. He enclosed a copy of the letter he received from the Department of Defense, dated April 20, 2022, expressing support to honor USMM WWII veterans. In January, Capt. DiMattia coordinated these documents with Lucinda Lessley, Deputy Administrator for MARAD, and her staff at MARAD to see whether their contact with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in January resulted in an agreement to include honors for the USMM in the National Memorial Day Concert. MARAD meeting with CPB to discuss including a segment in the 2023 National Memorial Day Concert to honor the U.S. Merchant Marine. Capt. DiMattia was assured that the meeting went well, and a segment honoring Merchant Mariners would be included.

As a supporting plan, Sen. Elizabeth Warren's staff is waiting to hear from Capital Concerts about her request to honor USMM WWII men and women killed in action during the National Memorial Day Concert. On January 17, I had a conference call with Sen. Warren's staff to discuss the status of their outreach to Capital

Concerts. I was informed that a letter had been sent to Michael Colbert who supervises the National Memorial Day Concerts. As of the preparation of this report, Sen. Warren's letter is under review by Mr. Colbert. Roger Mercaldi, Jr., an AMMV member living in Massachusetts, also contacted Sen. Edward Markey in January regarding the National Memorial Day Concert. The more AMMV members who reach out to elected officials about the National Memorial Day Concert the better!

In February, Capt. DiMattia sent thank you letters, including a *Battlin' Pete* patch, a description of the patch, and the history of the USMM anthem *Heave Ho! My Lads, Heave Ho!* to Sen. Warren; Ann Brachman, VP Government Affairs at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; and Michael Colbert, Executive Director at Capital Concerts. The thank you letters were sent to acknowledge support for the incorporation of a segment in the National Memorial Day Concert to honor USMM men and women who were killed in action.

I encourage you and your loved ones to tune into the PBS broadcast for the 2023 National Memorial Day Concert on Sunday, May 28 to see what the show's producers do to honor those courageous Merchant Mariners who gave their all during WWII.

USMM Officers' School in Alameda, CA

On January 20, I participated in a Zoom meeting of the California State Historical Resources Commission to support Carmen Reid's continuing efforts to have the USMM Officers' School buildings in Alameda, CA listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A number of presenters expressed their strong support for the listing. This effort has been going on for months. AMMV will participate actively with Ms. Reid's efforts, through testimony at hearings, to make sure our organization's strong support is communicated to State of California decision-makers. AMMV recognizes Ms. Reid dedication and persistence on this matter, even though there has been significant opposition from the City of Alameda and difficulties with the State Historic Preservation Officer. Standby for future developments.

Afterword

If you or your AMMV friends have additional stories or activities that will help with our goals and negotiations, I would like to hear from you. Please take a moment to send me an email about your activities. I would be glad to provide information if you need support.

Patrick Cotter
Member-at-Large
AMMV Government Affairs Standing Committee
coolenvconsulting@gmail.com





JUST RECOGNITION

Rep. Al Green (TX) reintroduces WWII Merchant Mariner “compensation” legislation

Editor’s note: Rep. Al Green has once again introduced legislation which, if enacted, would provide a lump sum of \$25,000 to eligible Merchant Mariners who served in WWII. This legislation in its current form dates back several years, having first been sponsored by former California Congresswoman Janice Hahn. Prior to Hahn’s version, other “compensation” legislation cleared the U.S. House of Representatives multiple times, but ultimately failed to be passed into law.

**118th CONGRESS, 1st Session
H. R. 39**

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 9, 2023

Mr. Green of Texas introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Honoring Our WWII Merchant Mariners Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. PAYMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVED DURING WORLD WAR II IN THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE.

(a) Establishment of Compensation Fund.--Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“Sec. 533. Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund

“(a) Compensation Fund.--(1) There is in the general fund of the Treasury a fund to be known as the ‘Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund’ (in this section referred to as the ‘compensation fund’).

“(2) Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, amounts in the compensation fund shall be available to the Secretary without fiscal year limitation to make payments to eligible individuals in accordance with this section.

“(b) Eligible Individuals.--(1) An eligible individual is an individual who--

“(A) during the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this section, submits to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require;

“(B) has not received benefits under the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (Public Law 78-

346); and

“(C) has engaged in qualified service.

“(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), a person has engaged in qualified service if, between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, the person--

“(A) was a member of the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) serving as a crewmember of a vessel that was--

“(i) operated by the War Shipping Administration or the Office of Defense Transportation (or an agent of the Administration or Office);

“(ii) operated in waters other than inland waters, the Great Lakes, and other lakes, bays, and harbors of the United States;

“(iii) under contract or charter to, or property of, the Government of the United States; and

“(iv) serving the Armed Forces; and

“(B) while so 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.

“(3) In determining the information and assurances required in the application pursuant to paragraph (1) (A), the Secretary shall accept a DD-214 form as proof of qualified service.

“(c) Amount of Payment.--The Secretary shall make one payment out of the compensation fund in the amount of \$25,000 to an eligible individual. The Secretary shall make such a payment to eligible individuals in the order in which the Secretary receives the applications of the eligible individuals.

“(d) Authorization of Appropriations.--There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2024 \$125,000,000 for the compensation fund. Such amount shall remain available until expended.

“(e) Reports.--The Secretary shall include, in documents submitted to Congress by the Secretary in support of the President’s budget for each fiscal year, detailed information on the operation of the compensation fund, including the number of applicants, the number of eligible individuals receiving benefits, the amounts paid out of the compensation fund, the administration of the compensation fund, and an estimate of the amounts necessary to fully fund the compensation fund for that fiscal year and each of the three subsequent fiscal years.

“(f) Regulations.--The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section.’’.

(b) Regulations.--Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prescribe the regulations required under section 532(f) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(c) Clerical Amendment.--The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item related to section 532 the following new item:

“533. Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund.”



AMMV 35th National Convention

Las Vegas, March 28-30, 2023



(L to R): Sally Moore, Dennis Ng, Cindy Raymond
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Ernie Balogh and his daughter Rebecca Balogh
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Bob Ross (left) with Bob Lewis Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Carmen Reid, assisted by her husband Matt, presents on the Alameda MM Officers' School



Roger Mercaldi Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Sandi Barth and Ken "Sinbad" Delancey
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



James Monteleone and Sheri Nehila
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



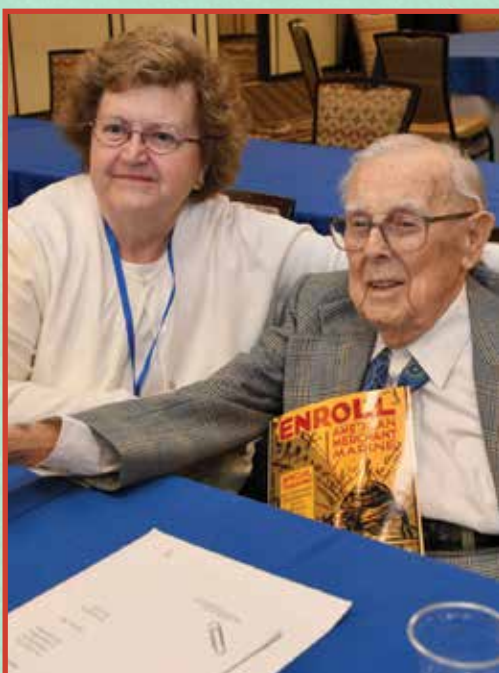
Bob Lewis, Cheryl Muffoletto, Sandy Snyder
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Maryann Zappulla & Capt. Hugh Stephens
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Mike Hoge (left) with Dave Yoho
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



William Balabanow and sister, Linda Davis
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Andrew Truelson (Navy League of Las Vegas Council) & wife, Jan Truelson, with Capt. Dru DiMattia
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Cynthia Bledsoe (left) and Sue Huron Pushard
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Leroy Caplan and wife Rhonda
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Charlie Sellers
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Larry Starn (Golden Gate Chapter) Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Wilfred Archuletta
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Sandy Snyder and John Pitts
Photo credit: Lisa Borges





Dave Yoho and Carmen Reid



Ken Edwards Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Patti Holmes
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Tom Schmidt (left) and Eric Schmidt
Photo credit: Lisa Borges



Ernie Balogh, with Steve Snyder in background to the right Photo credit: Lisa Borges



William Keim Photo credit: Lisa Borges



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Norm Palmer



DON'T FORGET TO WRITE

Recollections of Merchant Marine bootcamp, by Mark Gleeson

My mother was a schoolteacher, first grade. She was a good teacher and loved working with the young students. Upon reflection, I realized she taught using reverse psychology, always telling the students not to do this, not to do that, not to be late, not to get bad grades, not to forget to study. Unfortunately, my mother would often relate to others the same way, and this was not always good.

My mother was also a prolific writer of notes. In the days before TV, cell phones, electronic messages, people would write notes to each other. My mother would not only write a thank you to someone who did something nice, she would respond to that person who had written back thanking her for the nice note, thanking her for thanking her. I remember sitting at the dining room table watching her write those notes in her beautiful Palmer method script.

I enlisted in the merchant marine and the time came for my mother, father, and I to drive to Pittsburgh as I would leave for the Sheepshead Bay training camp in New York on the evening train out of PA Station. As our group was leaving the station to board the train, my father gave me a big wave, a smile, and said good luck. He was a highly decorated veteran of WWI, serving in the artillery of the Second Division. He had already said the same thing to my two older brothers who were in the Army. My mother said she had something for me, which was a small address book full of names and addresses. Then a hug, and she said, *Don't forget to write.*

Training life at Sheepshead Bay was simple and repetitive, lots of classes each day, repetition of important things that would be needed at sea. All trainees had to swim and then the jump off a 15-foot tower for the abandon ship drill. Lots of physical training. Classes were about an hour, and we moved on to the next subject in another classroom.

It was probably the fourth week of training when a member of the Ship's Company came to the classroom door. Our instructor

met the lady and then motioned for me to come out of the room. I asked the lady if there was a problem and she said that I was supposed to go to the Chaplain's office. I remember asking why, and the vague answer was it had something to do with home.

All I could think at the time was that something bad must have happened. My father came through the war with bad hearing from the artillery, but he had a bad stomach from all the gasses he had been exposed to. He had almost died a few years before with a bleeding ulcer. My oldest brother was on an Army attack transport in the Pacific and my second brother was an infantry officer preparing for what was going to be an invasion of Japan. People just don't go to the Chaplain in the middle of the morning unless there is bad news waiting.

The Chaplain was an older officer, gold stripes on the sleeves and rows of ribbons. He was tall, pleasant looking, gray hair. He shook hands with me and asked me to sit down. All I could think was here it comes, be brave.

The Chaplain said he had had a call from my mother. I knew she was aggressive at times, but how she found him was a wonder. He paused, looked at me, trying to be serious, and said, "Your mother is upset as you have not written to her in the four weeks you have been here. What is going on?"


I thought I would die with embarrassment. He looked at me, smiled, said something about mothers worrying, and asked me to take care of it. We shook hands, he smiled, said God loves us, but he did not want to see me on this issue again.

I returned to my group that had moved on to the next class. Everyone looked at me expecting something bad. I could detect sorrow in the faces of my close friends. When the class ended, I told everyone that my mother had been confused about something and needed me to give her some information very quickly. She did not have time to write and wait for an answer. Just a little lie, but it seemed to work.

I did start to write more often.



From the Archives

Recently, long-time Seafarers International Union President Michael Sacco retired. Mr. Sacco was a great friend and supporter of our World War II Merchant Marine veterans. Replacing Mr. Sacco is David Heindel, another staunch supporter. Mr. Heindel was a keynote speaker at AMMV's 2016 National Convention in New Orleans. AMMV congratulates Michael Sacco on his retirement and a job well done, and wishes the best of luck to David Heindel! 



Pictured at the 2007 AMMV National Convention in Baltimore are (L to R) Michael Sacco, Cindy Raymond, and Ian Allison of the Just Compensation Committee, aka "Mr. A".



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