

# Hotel Information

## AMMV (37<sup>th</sup>) National Convention

***April 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025***

**Norfolk Waterside Marriott**  
235 East Main Street  
Norfolk, Virginia, 23510

For reservations, call:  
(757) 627-4200

To receive our group rate of \$159 plus tax, mention *American Merchant Marine Veterans*; last day to book rooms at the AMMV rate is March 11<sup>th</sup>.



- ◆ free Wi-Fi ◆ restaurant on-site ◆ pool ◆ fitness center ◆ business center ◆ room service ◆
- ◆ 9 miles from airport (ORF) ◆ pets not allowed ◆

Parking options: (All parking owned/operated by City of Norfolk.) Valet parking \$33 per day; off-site parking \$3 hourly/\$20 daily; on-site parking \$22 daily. (Pricing does not include 6% tax.)

***\$159 + applicable taxes per night***  
***Book online using the AMMV rate:***

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?guestreslink2=true&id=1728572388818&key=GRP>





**Convention Registration Form**  
*AMMV 37<sup>th</sup> National Convention*  
April 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Norfolk Waterside Marriot  
235 East Main Street  
Norfolk, VA 23510

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional names(s) in party: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fee**.....\$125 (first person) + \$100 (additional persons in party) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Veterans of the WWII Merchant Marine, NAG, and ATS = waived registration fee)*

*Includes Friday, 4/04 trip to Mariners' Museum w/ luncheon, and access to all business meetings, guest speakers, and Hospitality Room. Excludes banquet dinner. AMMV business session starts 09:00 on 4/02. For WWII veterans & caretakers, please check w/ AMMV HQ for sponsorship/reimbursement opportunities which may materialize. For any additional questions/inquiries, please contact AMMV HQ.*

**Victory Rover Boat Tour (Thursday 4/03)**..... \_\_\_\_\_ x \$30 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Note: Afternoon excursion, boards 4:15 p.m.)*

**Banquet Dinner (Friday 4/04)**..... \_\_\_\_\_ x \$100 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**(please provide meal choices for your party)**..... # of rib eye \_\_\_\_\_ # of salmon \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL due for all selections**..... = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\* Please monitor AMMV website & Facebook for agenda/schedule updates and for availability to register/pay online. Registered attendees will be notified via email with updates \*\*\***

**Note: Convention Registration does not include your hotel stay.**

Please make check payable to: AMMV  
Mail check with completed form to:

**AMMV, Attn: Convention, P.O. Box 2024, Darien, CT 06820**

# William Geroux returns to AMMV Convention to promote new book!

**The Fifteen: Murder, Retribution and the Forgotten Story of Nazi POWs in America (publishing date – March 18, 2025)**

**THE SURPRISING TRUE STORY OF THE NAZI POW KILLINGS IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA AND A HIGH-STAKES DIPLOMATIC SHOWDOWN AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II**



The American government was faced with an unprecedented challenge: where to house the nearly 400,000 German prisoners of war plucked from the battlefield and shipped across the Atlantic. On orders from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Department of War hastily built hundreds of POW camps in the United States. Today, traces of those camps—which once dotted the landscape from Maine to California—have all but vanished. Forgotten, too, is the grisly series of killings that took place within them: Nazi power games playing out in the heart of the United States.

Protected by the Geneva Convention, German POWs were well-fed and housed. Many worked on American farms, and a few would even go on to marry farmers' daughters. Ardent Nazis in the camps, however, took a dim view of fellow Germans who befriended their captors.

Soon, the killings began. In camp after camp, Nazis attacked fellow Germans they deemed disloyal.

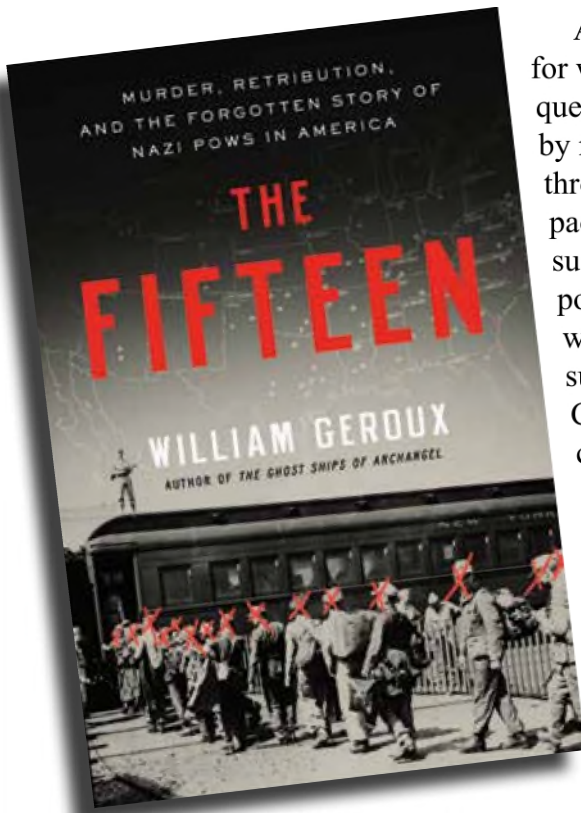
Fifteen were sentenced to death by secret U.S. military tribunals for acts of murder. In response, German authorities condemned fifteen American POWs to the same fate, and, in the waning days of the war, Germany proposed an audacious trade: fifteen German lives for fifteen American lives.

Drawing on extensive research, journalist and author William Geroux shines a spotlight on this story of murder and high-stakes diplomacy, and on the fifteen American lives that hung in the balance—from a fearless P-51 Mustang fighter pilot to a hot-tempered lieutenant colonel nicknamed “King Kong.”

Propulsive and vividly rendered, *The Fifteen* reminds us that what happens to soldiers when they exit the battlefield can be just as harrowing as what they experience on it.

**About the author:** William Geroux is the author of *The Mathews Men* and *The Ghost Ships of Archangel*. He spent more than 25 years as a journalist, writing often about the military and winning awards for breaking news coverage, feature writing and investigative reporting. A native of Washington, D.C. and graduate of the College of William and Mary, Geroux lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

## **Book excerpt: The Fifteen: Murder, Retribution and the Forgotten Story of Nazi POWs in America** (author – William Geroux)



After their capture at Tunis, the *Afrika Korps* men were held for weeks in pup-tent cities in the North African desert, where they queued up in long lines for turns at the water tank. They were plagued by mosquitoes, extreme temperature changes, and the ever-present threat of abuse by vengeful Arabs and French guards. Then they were packed like sardines into boxcars and cattle cars, with no latrines or sufficient water, and carried by rail for more than 500 miles to the ports of Oran in Algeria and Casablanca in Morocco. Those ports were the delivery points for convoys of Allied cargo ships hauling supplies and reinforcements across the Atlantic from the U.S. East Coast. Most of the vessels were Liberty ships, newly built American freighters, whose cavernous cargo holds could accommodate 9,000 tons of supplies. Once the cargo was unloaded in North Africa, the prisoners were loaded into the ships' empty holds for the return voyages to the United States. There were so many German POWs that even luxury ocean liners were pressed into service to carry them to America. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was surprised to discover he was sailing with German prisoners aboard the *RMS Queen Mary* on his way to meet with Roosevelt in June 1943.

Many of the POW ships were hopelessly overcrowded. Heino Erichsen and his fellow Germans slept on the steel deck in the cargo hold, wrapped in blankets the ship's captain had provided. Erichsen witnessed fierce political arguments on the ship that "convinced me that the Nazis still felt powerful, not only in Germany but in our midst." The ardent Nazis on another POW transport ship gave American merchant mariner Jim Greer the creeps. They glared at the American crew and spoke only among themselves, in low tones. "They always looked like they were scheming," Greer recalled. On a different transport ship, a U.S. Army nurse, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Yvonne Humphrey, found some of the German officers openly hostile: "You felt rather than saw the great loathing inside them for all things democratic and American."

The voyage from North Africa to America took from six days to three weeks, depending on the weather and the level of U-boat activity. In one of the war's many ironies, German POWs sailed to America under constant threat from their own submarines, which stalked the North Atlantic convoys in wolfpacks. A captured U-boat crewman on his way to America, Rudiger von Wechmar, found the voyage particularly frightening because, "I know what torpedoes do to ships." At one point in the trip, the captain announced over the ship's loudspeaker that U-boats had been detected ahead and that all the prisoners should put on their life vests. The vests would be little help if the ship was sunk in midocean. It carried nowhere near enough lifeboats for all the prisoners, and no other ship would stop to pick up survivors and risk becoming the U-boats' next victim. The captain tried to reassure the prisoners by telling them he had radioed the Red Cross to warn the U-boat commanders not to kill their own comrades. Von Wechmar thought to himself, "Well, that will never work."

(Despite numerous U-boat sightings, no Allied vessel transporting German prisoners to the U.S. was ever sunk by a U-boat. But in the Pacific on July 1, 1942, an American sub in the South China Sea sank a Japanese merchant ship, the *Montevideo Maru*, that was carrying more than 1,000 Allied prisoners, including 850 Australians. It was Australia's largest loss of life at sea during the war.)

From the book *THE FIFTEEN: Murder, Retribution, and the Forgotten Story of Nazi POWs in America* by William Geroux. Copyright © 2025 by William Geroux. Published in the United States by Crown, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

# Mark H. “Buz” Buzby – Guest Speaker

## AMMV (37<sup>th</sup>) National Convention



### **Former U.S. Maritime Administrator, The Honorable Mark H. Buzby, Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)**

Mark H. “Buz” Buzby has spent his entire adult life in the service of our country, most recently serving from 2017 to 2021 as Administrator of the Maritime Administration in the U.S. Department of Transportation. In that role, he vigorously defended the Jones Act and strongly advocated for strengthening our Nation’s diminished sealift capability. He was instrumental in funding and beginning construction of a new class of five modern

school ships in support of training the next generation of seafarers – the first ships built by MARAD in decades. Prior to this, he served in the U.S. Navy for 34 years as a Surface warfare officer, serving principally at sea in cruisers and destroyers. At the time of his retirement, he was a Rear Admiral serving as Commander, Military Sealift Command with over 125 ships under his command.

Admiral Buzby is a 1975 graduate of Admiral Farragut Academy, a 1979 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and holds Masters degrees from U.S. Naval War College, and Salve Regina University. He has completed senior business studies at the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler School of Business. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree from Maine Maritime Academy in 2018.

He remains active in the maritime industry, currently serving on boards of Fincantieri Marine Systems, Maritime Institute, Rose Cay Marine, Tall Ships America, and Sea Machines. In his spare time, he serves as a senior Ship handling and Seamanship instructor in the Navy’s Mariner Skill Training Center simulator facility in Norfolk.

Originally born and raised in Atlantic City, NJ, Buz is a lifelong yachtsman, commanding his first vessel at the age of 9. He and his wife Gina – and their yellow Lab Sylvie - enjoy cruising their power vessel “NOR’EASTER” throughout the Chesapeake Bay.

# Interactive, Intergenerational Dialogue Activity with Dr. June Klees

## *Lives of Service: U.S. Merchant Marine*



As AMMV looks ahead to the future, bringing together mariners from different generations becomes increasingly important. At this year's convention, we are excited to offer an intergenerational storytelling and discussion session that will highlight and honor the different ways that merchant mariners have served our country over the decades "In Peace and War."

This interactive session will be hosted by Dr. June Klees, a historian and educator at Bay College in Michigan. June has expertise in running historic-memory dialogues. As June notes, "Sharing and capturing stories intergenerationally allows for vibrant exchanges that can go deeper in content and meaning than individual interviews." Session attendees will be placed into groups comprised of members of different generations and guided through an interactive "table-talk" dialog that asks them to share and discuss memories from their time in the United States Merchant Marine.

June holds a bachelor's degree and certifications in education and a master's and doctorate in history with a certification in public history. She is a local and national advocate for civic engagement and dialogue and is a co-founder and primary advisor of the Civics Corps – an organization open to students from across the country that promotes intergenerational dialogue in service to community. As part of its education and outreach, AMMV is partnered with the Civics Corps for their annual *Veterans Speak* intergenerational dialogue event held each November in honor of our country's veterans.

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## **Victory Rover Naval Base Cruise/Tour**

Don't miss this excursion as part of the 2026 AMMV Convention! This Norfolk Harbor cruise aboard the *Victory Rover* is your front seat to the naval fleet! See amphibious assault ships, destroyers, subs, and other vessels while taking in the sights of the harbor.



## Guest Speaker: Tane Casserley



Tane Casserley joined the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries in the spring of 2001. As the Resource Protection and Permit Coordinator for both Monitor National Marine Sanctuary and Malloes Bay – Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary, Tane is responsible for the development of programs to address commercial and recreational uses in and around the sanctuaries. Tane's specialties include 19th-century warships and deep-water archaeology, as well as building collaborative partnerships, public outreach and exhibit design. Tane holds a graduate certificate in maritime archaeology from the University of Hawaii and a master's degree from the Program in Maritime Studies at East Carolina University.

He has led NOAA archaeological expeditions in the Florida Keys, the Great Lakes, California, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, and *USS Monitor*. He's participated in projects including a sunken Boeing B-29 Superfortress in Lake Mead, a Civil War blockade runner in Bermuda, *USS Arizona*, and was most recently part of an expedition to *RMS Titanic*. Tane's projects have used technical diving, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), and manned submersibles.

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Don't miss our field trip to the Mariners' Museum! *"The Mariners' Museum is a place to explore, learn, have fun, and above all else – connect to the world's waters and to one another."*

[www.marinersmuseum.org](http://www.marinersmuseum.org)



**AMMV CONVENTION TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE: 4/01: ARRIVAL & HOSPITALITY ROOM; 4/02: AMMV BUSINESS & INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ACTIVITY; 4/03: GUEST SPEAKERS & VICTORY ROVER BOAT TOUR OF NAVAL BASE; 4/04: TRIP TO MARINERS' MUSEUM (W/ LUNCH) & EVENING BANQUET DINNER; 4/05: EXPLORE NORFOLK (FREE DAY); 4/06: DEPARTURE**

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### **Guest Speaker: Sepp Scanlin**

Sepp Scanlin is a military historian and museum professional. He is currently the Museum Director for the U.S. Army Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis, Virginia. Previously he served as the Museum Director for the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum Museum from October 2016 until July 2022, where he oversaw the renovation and relocation of the museum to a new facility. As a U.S. Army Veteran he served 21 years on active duty, providing intelligence support to Armor, Infantry, Aviation and Special Forces before retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel.

A native of Virginia, Sepp has a BA in International Relations from James Madison University in Harrisonburg where he was commissioned in 1994 and completed an MA in National Security Strategy at the Naval War College in Newport, RI in 2007. A 2016 graduate from Johns Hopkins University with a Masters in Museum Studies with a specialty certification in Digital Curation, Sepp continues working to preserving and educate students using a wide variety of military history topics. He has facilitated a variety of military groups on educational tours of battlefields to include the World War II sites in Italy, Antietam and Lexington and Concord.

He currently serves on the board of the 10th Mountain Division Foundation and the Williamsburg Battlefield Association. Sepp currently lives in Williamsburg, Virginia with his wife, Amy. Sepp looks forward to partnering in sharing his love of history, service and the unique story of the U.S. Army. Stay Curious!





## Quilt of Valor presentations

- AMMV Region # 8 Vice President Scarlett Rose is helping facilitate Quilt of Honor presentations for our WWII Merchant Mariner Veterans at the Norfolk convention.
- Time is of the essence, so if interested – please do not delay registration!
- **Any WWIIMM veteran who is willing to accept a Quilt of Valor must be registered on the QOVF.org site first.** Here are the steps:
  - [https://www.qovf.org/nominations-awards/nominate\\_qov\\_tbw\\_info/#faq](https://www.qovf.org/nominations-awards/nominate_qov_tbw_info/#faq)
  - At bottom of the page, go to the form itself, answer the questions, click continue, and fill in all the necessary info about the WWIIMM veteran: [https://www.qovf.org/nominate\\_qov\\_tbw\\_certify/](https://www.qovf.org/nominate_qov_tbw_certify/) They need only a couple of points to personalize the award.
  - **Please type in that, "This request is in conjunction with a reunion of the AMMV association in Norfolk, VA on April 5, 2025. This has been coordinated with Patriots Triangle QOV of Virginia, Les Wallace. Please route this request to them for coordination."**
- After you finish the online form and submit the nomination, you'll receive a reference number. Email RVP Scarlett Rose [sroseQLTer@gmail.com](mailto:sroseQLTer@gmail.com) the reference number of your submission to ensure that Les' group has time to prepare the quilts.
- If the WWII veteran lives outside of VA and is not attending the convention, they will need time to ship the quilt in advance of the ceremony.
- For assistance/guidance with forms, email Scarlett or call her at (530) 945-2224.



Scarlett Rose at the 2024 AMMV National Convention in NOLA