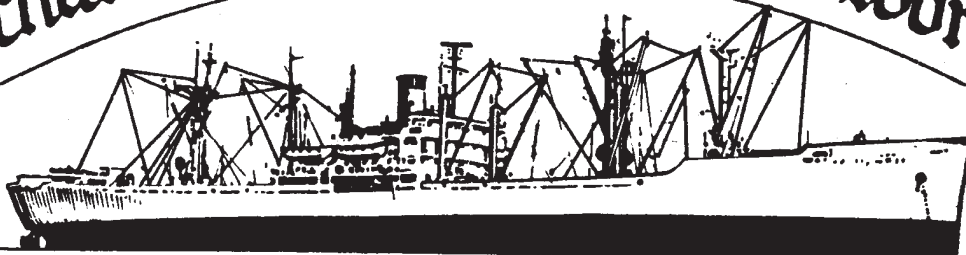


U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans World War II



Volume 27

The Anchor Light

Number 8
August 2009

EVER WONDER WHY SOME YOUNG MEN THOUGHT THEY WERE JOINING A MILITARY SERVICE?

The Anchor Light will run several more WWII-era posters in the coming months. They were an obvious attempt by the U.S. government to mislead young men into believing they were joining one of the military services and would be given all the benefits accorded to the military. Today, someone would have a class-action lawsuit filed already.



“Be a ship's officer in the U.S. merchant marine for information to become a cadet-midshipman U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps”
United States Maritime Service 1943



“Voluntary Enrollment for Seagoing Men... Three months Training with Pay...Annual Training and Retainer pay...Apply to U.S. Maritime Service Washington D.C. or U.S. Coast Guard”
(Coast Guard was in charge of training 1938 to early 1942)

LANE VICTORY SUMMER CRUISES

September 26, September 27 www.lanevictory.org

THE ANCHOR LIGHT

U.S. MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS
WORLD WAR II
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MONTHLY MEETING

General meetings of the USMMVWWII are held the second Saturday of the month in the Lane's museum at Berth 94, San Pedro. Refreshments at 10 am Meeting at 10:30 am



VISIT THE SS LANE VICTORY ON THE INTERNET
WWW.LANEVICTORY.ORG
E-MAIL TO
SSLANEVICTORY@JUNO.COM

HONORED SHIPS, AUGUST 15 & 16, 2009**SS HALO, SS HENRY KNOX****SS HALO**

Home Port: New York, NY
 Company: Cities Service Oil Co. New York, NY
 Master: Ulrick Fred Moller
 Gross Tons: 6986
 Built: 1920 @ Alameda, CA
 Dimensions: 435'x 56' x 32'

Sunk by the German submarine U-506 May 20, 1942, 50 miles from the entrance to the Mississippi River.

At 0100 CWT, a torpedo struck on the starboard side under the bridge and blew that part of the ship to bits. A second torpedo hit on the same side, forward of the engine room, tearing the ship apart. She sank by the bow with the screw still turning. Within three minutes after the attack she was gone.

Twenty-three men from the after part of the ship survived the explosions. With no time to launch the lifeboats, they grabbed life preservers and jumped overboard, swimming away from the ship as it went down. The position where the ship sank was ablaze for six hours.

The men huddled together in the water throughout the night and the next day. Then the survivors began dying. On the third day, May 23, wreckage from the ship started floating to the surface. The seven remaining survivors tied boards together with strips of canvas torn from life preservers.

The crude oil came up and laid a film of oil about 4" thick around and on the survivors. On May 25 at 1400 CWT, the Mexican freighter SS Oaxaca sighted the oil slick and debris.

They picked up the three remaining survivors. One was dead and was buried at sea. The other two men were taken to a hospital in Tampico, Mexico, arriving at 0230 CWT on May 28, 1942.

One man died 30 minutes after arriving at the hospital, leaving one survivor, the second engineer. Two other survivors were picked up from a raft at 1122 CWT May 27, by the British tanker SS Orina and taken to New Orleans, Louisiana.

While the survivors were struggling for their lives in the water for six days, and only 50 miles from the entrance to the Mississippi River, patrol planes were observed almost every day with the exception of May 23 and 24.

Some of these planes were flying so low that the survivors could see the star on them. Two twin-engine planes passed over them every day one hour after dawn heading west, and about one hour before sunset heading east, yet not one of them came down lower to investigate the tremendous oil slick.

The captain of the SS Oaxaca reported he saw the oil slick from the bridge of his ship from ten miles away. On May 25, a destroyer with two smoke stacks aft, circled the two survivors on the raft three times, but did not pick them up.

"She was not a big ship. More modern tankers carried larger cargoes and showed greater speed. But she did her job faithfully from the time Cities Service purchased her in 1923, hauling crude oil to the company's east coast refineries

with occasional runs to South America and the Far East. And she had guts.

"The Halo was known as a lucky ship, and so was her last skipper, Captain Ulrich Moller. But in the early months of the war, their luck ran out. In May, 1942 two Nazi U-boats caught the tanker in the Gulf of Mexico and sent torpedoes crashing into either side. She sank in a matter of minutes. Only three of the crew of 42 survived.

"She was only a tanker – just one of the day laborers that helped to haul goods across the broad back of the oceans in the free exchange of produce that helps make the world a better place to live in. She did her job, and died with her boots on."

This text hangs above a glass enclosed five-foot model of the Halo in the Marine Department conference room of Grand Bassa Tankers, Inc., Tulsa, Oklahoma.

MERCHANT SEAMEN LOST

Bensignor, Jacob I. (Messman)
 Conroy, William J. (Deck Maintenance)
 Costello, James E. (OS)
 Emsley, William J. (Chief Engineer)
 Forbes, Alexander W. (Wiper)
 French, James E. (Oiler)
 Gallagher, Cornwall (Wiper)
 Gietek, John S. (V Engr.)
 Glassco, James M. (Pumpman)
 Gordon, William J. (Oiler)
 Harker, Fred F. (Oiler)
 Harris, Frederick (Messman)
 Hellum, Sigurd O. (Chief Mate)
 Henderson, Donald C. (AB)
 Hilton, Donald R. (F/W)
 Hogge, Jesse D. (Cook)
 Hope, John B. (3rd Mate)
 Hullihen, Milford K. (Messman)
 Judnik, Stanislaw (F/W)
 Krauth, Phillip T. (AB)
 Magnuson, Harold R. (AB)
 Mahan, Paul (Messman)
 Mangett, Paul W. (AB)
 Meachem, William D. (AB)
 Moller, Ulrick, (Master)
 Moore, Fabian D. (Wiper)
 Noonan, Michael F. (F/W)
 Pedersen, Blame (AB)
 Radzik, Andrew (AB)
 Rodrigues, Luis (Steward)
 Sanchez, Norton C. (OS)
 Sharp, Edgar J. (OS)
 Shea, Bernard M. (2nd Mate)
 Sill, William H. (F/W)
 Smith, Thomas J. (OS)
 Vanderwater, George E. (Galleyman)
 Weinstein, Isadore (Radio Operator)
 Winslow, John C. (3rd Engineer)

SS HENRY KNOX

Home Port: Los Angeles, CA
 Company: Matson Navigation Co., San Francisco, CA
 Master: Eugene M. Olsen
 Built: June 1942 @ Los Angeles, CA
 Gross Tons: 7176
 Dimensions: 441'x 57'x 37'

The Liberty ship, SS Henry Knox was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine I-37 (Otani) at 1350 GCT on June 19, 1943 in the Indian Ocean (00-01 North/71-15 East) en route alone from

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Bandur Shahpur, Iran via Freemantle, Australia with 8,200 tons of Lend Lease cargo.

At 1350 GCT, a torpedo struck on the port side at #3 hold. Immediately following the impact, a great sheet of flame shot upwards when the gun powder exploded. The deck was showered with flaming capsules of cordite, which killed and wounded many seamen.

Deck cargo was blown all over the ship. The controls to the main engine jammed and she gradually came to a stop. The ship took a sharp list to port. At 1700, June 19, 1943 she sank, going down by the head.

The master ordered the ship abandoned at 1353 GCT. Damage to the falls and reels made the lowering of the lifeboats difficult. The falls were cut to drop the boats into the sea. As the deck was nearly awash, they only had to drop about four feet.

The three boats launched, #2, 3 and 4 were badly damaged by the fire and the sails had burned away. Several men jumped overboard and managed to get aboard rafts that had floated free.

The captain slid down a line into the water, after making sure everyone alive had left the ship. He was picked up by #3 lifeboat. During the night several men were picked out of the water by this boat. Many of the men were suffering from burns, broken limbs and other injuries.

During the night two men died. The master ordered the boats to stay together and steer northeast for the Maldives Islands about 200 miles away.

In the rough weather, the boats separated and went on alone. On June 23, a badly burned man in #2 boat died and was buried at sea. On June 27, 14 men in #3 boat, including the captain, made a landfall on an uninhabited atoll in the Maldives Island group.

They were about to make a safe landing when a sudden squall upset the boat, throwing them into the sea. The exhausted men managed to reach the beach. They hailed a passing native lugger which took them to Mamigili Island several miles

away. After being cared for by the natives, a native lugger took them to Male, arriving July 4.

Eventually they were taken to Colombo, Ceylon. The 27 survivors in the other two boats landed at Colombo on July 27, after being rescued by a Maldives sailing vessel.

About 1430 GCT, 40 minutes after the attack, the submarine surfaced and the #2 boat was signaled by flashlight to come alongside. This boat was occupied by the chief mate and four others. They were questioned by the sub commander concerning the ship, its cargo, destination, etc. and were threatened with death if they did not give correct answers.

After releasing the boat, the sub returned alongside again and took away their charts, sail, rations, and two "get-away bundles." They were kept alongside the sub for 15 minutes and then the submarine left. At daylight, two men from #3 boat and 8 from a raft were transferred to #2 boat.

The I-37 (Kamimoto) was sunk on November 19, 1944 east of Yap Island by the USS Conklin (DE-439) and USS Reynolds (DE-440).

MERCHANT SEAMEN LOST

Chase, Harry D. (Steward)
 Elam, John E. (Messman)
 Kenyon, Everett J. (Chief Engineer)
 Kowal, Matthew E. (OS)
 Kreffer, Thomas J. (2nd Engineer)
 Medicis, George (Deck Engineer)
 Pavilonis, John (AB)
 Ritter, Darel M. (F/W)
 Schule, Victor (OS)
 Siffringer, Eugene J. (OS)
 Smith, William (AB)
 Stacey, Charles W. (Radio Operator)
 Tulai, Keli (F/W)

UNITED STATES NAVY ARMED GUARD

The names of the thirteen men lost are unavailable at this time. Research is ongoing and they will be honored in a subsequent service when this information is obtained.

BLACK OUTS AT SEA

By Loring L. Bigelow

Being a USN signalman attached to the Armed Guard, my duty station was the signal bridge, the highest part of the ship's deck house. Most of the time I slept on a cot there. I was also handy to the gun to which I was loader if not working signals.

I preferred to sleep there as it was so darned hot most of the time in my quarters. Heat from the engine room rose to the inside of our quarters. The galley also gave off heat. Each night the ship was "blacked out." This meant that all ports were closed and passageway doors were tightly shut.

These doors had triple layers of heavy black cloth so no light would escape if said doors were opened. There were to be absolutely no visible lights away from the ship and no lighting of a cigarette outside at all. The knowledge was that if

one made the mistake of "lightning up," over the side he might go and he would go down on the records as "missing at sea."

It was so dark that when in convoy, the ship ahead was often difficult to see as it was blacked out as well. The ship ahead would often tow a spar and the forward bow lookout of the ship astern could see it and, if necessary, phone the bridge.

On mostly clear dark nights, the skies were unbelievable as there was a 360 degree horizon and sailing alone the sight was astounding. There were millions upon millions of heavenly bodies up there. Many shooting stars and many planets everywhere you looked.

On one night, the gunnery officer was enjoying the sight with me. Upon leaving the bridge he said, "Enjoy it Bigelow as we may be blown to bits by a sub at any moment."

EAST COAST CHAPTER REPORT

By E.J. and Eva Heins

We are sorry to say that not much has been happening lately with our SC Chapter. We continue to answer inquiries, especially about H.R. 23 and S-926.



E.J. Heins, Jr. and wife Eva at a reception on the Coast Guard school ship "Eagle" in Charleston, SC

Many people call and think that because the "Belated Thank You Bill for Merchant Mariners of WWII" has passed in Congress it is a done deal. They are disappointed to learn that this bill still lingers in the Senate.

The only bright point lately has been

Charleston Harbor Fest.

Fifteen Tall Ships of various nationalities sailed into Charleston, South Carolina for "Charleston Harborfest" from June 26 through 29.

Among them was the U.S. Coast Guard school ship, the CG Barque "Eagle." E.J. Heins, Jr., represented the U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans World War II at a pre-festival reception on June 25. Rear Admiral Steve Branham, Commander Seventh Coast Guard District hosted the reception. We are including a few pictures from this event.

Also the Mount Pleasant Waterfront Park, the newest park in South Carolina located at the base of the Ravenel Bridge, opened July 3, 2009, kicking off a three-day July 4th celebration.

The park features a fishing pier built into the Cooper River on pilings that once supported the old Cooper River Bridge, a war memorial, a visitor center, an open-air pavilion for sweetgrass basket weavers and a playground.

We went there on Sunday July 12, specially interested in the war memorial. We had been promised that the U.S. merchant marine would be included in the memorial and we are very happy that this time we were not disappointed.

The memorial depicts a mourning woman clutching a folded flag and at her side stands a rifle with the helmet of a fallen soldier. The statue is surrounded by an open circle of pillars.



E.J. Heins, Jr. with the war memorial statue at the new Waterfront Park, Mt. Pleasant, SC



War Memorial at the new Waterfront Park in Mt. Pleasant, SC

The respective services are depicted with their logo on each pillar. The U.S. merchant marine plaque is the first one as you enter the circle of the memorial.

With so many other memorials never mentioning the U.S. merchant marine, we are happy that this time the merchant marine was included and in its rightful place.

Wishing everyone a happy summer,

LIBERTY SHIPS & VICTORY SHIPS AFTER THE WAR

By Steve Miller

After the completion of WWII, many Liberty ships and Victory ships remained in service for several decades in the U.S. Maritime Fleet. Some of them came down the ways with U.S. Navy designations and remained in-service in the same capacity after the war, or were modified for such things as radar picket duty.

Liberty ships and Victory ships saw service in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Many of the ships were ultimately sold to foreign governments and to private owners. Eventually, a large portion of the ships were sold as scrap.

There are no Liberty ships remaining in the U.S. National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF). The NDRF was created in 1946 by the Merchant Ship Sales Act, and is operated by the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD).

There are, however, nine Victory ships laid-up in the NDRF, as of January 2009. Five of them are at the NDRF anchorage in Suisun Bay, CA. The remainder are scattered about in either Beaumont or Brownsville, TX, or James River, VA. All nine ships have been designated for disposal; most likely to be scrapped.

Interestingly, the NDRF currently has 207 ships in inventory, with a peak of 2,277 in 1950. Only six are designated as "militarily useful." There are 51 ships of different varieties (mostly service/cargo vessels) in the Ready Reserve Fleet.

MARAD is given funding annually to use various means for keeping the RRF preserved in a way that the ships only need exterior paint work and some other minor repairs, in order for them to be activated and put to sea.

The Vietnam War was the last time there was a major NDRF activation when 172 ships were put back into active service.

As a final note, the NDRF has ships of varying ages. The oldest ship in the inventory right now is the USS Hoga, YT-146. The Hoga was commissioned in 1941, after being launched at the Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation in Morris Heights, New York.

The YT-146 is a diminutive 325 tons with an overall length of 100 feet, and a beam of 25 feet.

The old yard tug was assigned to Pearl Harbor and made it there under her own power. She was instrumental in helping many ships during the attack on December 7, 1941.

Of her 11-man crew, everyone except the cook was aboard ship on that fateful morning. The skipper, Joseph B. McManus, and the XO, Robert Brown, got her underway within ten minutes of sighting the Japanese planes.

Yard tugs in those days carried fire-fighting equipment. So, in addition to saving drowning sailors and moving burning ships, she fought fires for 72 straight hours.

The boat and crew were given a written commendation by Fleet Admiral, Chester W. Nimitz. The tug continued to serve at Pearl Harbor throughout the war. The ship was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1989.

The City of North Little Rock, Arkansas bought the tug in 2005, but arrangements are still pending on how and where the tug will be moved to its final resting place. All hail the little ship that could! A fitting tribute to the oldest ship in the Reserve Fleet.



Coast Guard Barque "Eagle" docked at the Port of Charleston, SC, June 25, 2009

ORDERS FROM HEADQUARTERS!

[Desktop publisher's note: My mother used to say this when there was no room for argument about what we were to do: "Orders from headquarters!" Below are the words of your shipmate Jan; consider them to be "orders from headquarters."]

Jan has done an outstanding job of sharing her memories of her friends and shipmates who have "crossed the bar" and she is encouraging all of you to do likewise.

I know that writing does not come easily to everyone, including the editor of The Anchor Light. I managed to just get two short sentences out of him about his friends Bill Skinner and Irv Aldrich.

Even those short sentences are enough to provide a short reminder...

I invite everyone, including those in our nationwide chapters, to send in even short "reminder" sentences about their friends, as well as longer articles. I'll be happy to print them all and I know your friends will welcome the reminders of who these people were. Photos, especially digital, are always welcome too.]

FROM JAN MICHAELIS:

*"Shipmates,
you too have stories tell about your shipmates
who have passed away,
but should be remembered, not forgotten.
Sit down and tell us your story."*

LIBERTY SHIPS: WORLD WAR II'S BEASTS OF BURDEN

By Jeff Markell

Copyright Jeff Markell and Professional Mariner

U.S. MARITIME COMMISSION EMERGENCY CARGO VESSEL

The immense fleet of Liberty ships built during World War II is now all but forgotten except among a few history buffs and the few left who sailed them. But they understand the crucial role played by these ugly ducklings.

When they were built, the need for vessels to transport war materiel was so urgent that corners had to be cut in their design.

The underpowered Libertys were very slow. They cruised at only 11 knots, making them easy targets for both German and Japanese submarine and air attacks. But without the Liberty ships, the Allies could not have won the war.

REVIVING AN INDUSTRY

After World War I, the U.S. shipbuilding industry went into a steep decline. For the 15 years between 1922 and 1937, a total of two dry cargo ships were built in the United States, along with a few tankers.

By 1936, Congress passed a Merchant Marine Act creating the U.S. Maritime Commission. It was in charge of creating a new and efficient U.S. merchant fleet. The purpose was to develop a fleet for both domestic and foreign oceanic commerce. If needed, this fleet would also serve the national defense.

Shipbuilding had reached such a decline by the time the commission was established that there were only 10 shipyards in the entire country capable of building oceangoing ships over 400 feet long.

In 1937, a 10-year construction program started to replace the elderly merchant fleet. It called for building 50 ships a year. The replacement fleet was to consist of fast tankers and three types of fast cargo ships.

While the basic hulls and power plants were standardized, much of the equipment for cargo handling and crew accommodations were varied to fit the needs of different shipowners and operators.

Shortly before the war in Europe started in 1939, the original schedule was doubled to 100 ships a year, and then doubled again in 1940 to 200 ships a year. By that time, the 10 operating shipyards of 1936 had grown to 19.

The ships being built under this program were excellent vessels and comparatively fast. In 1940 one of the new ships made a trans-Atlantic crossing averaging a speed of 17 knots. During that same year the commission completed its first all-welded vessel.

This technique enabled shipbuilders to assemble vessels much more rapidly than by riveting. Welding also reduced the weight of a ship by about 600 tons.

In 1939, war broke out in Europe. By

1940, the Nazis had swept through western and central Europe, leaving Britain alone. Germany's U-boats were sinking ships faster than the British could build them. They sank 150 ships in the first nine months of the war.

In September of 1940, a representa-

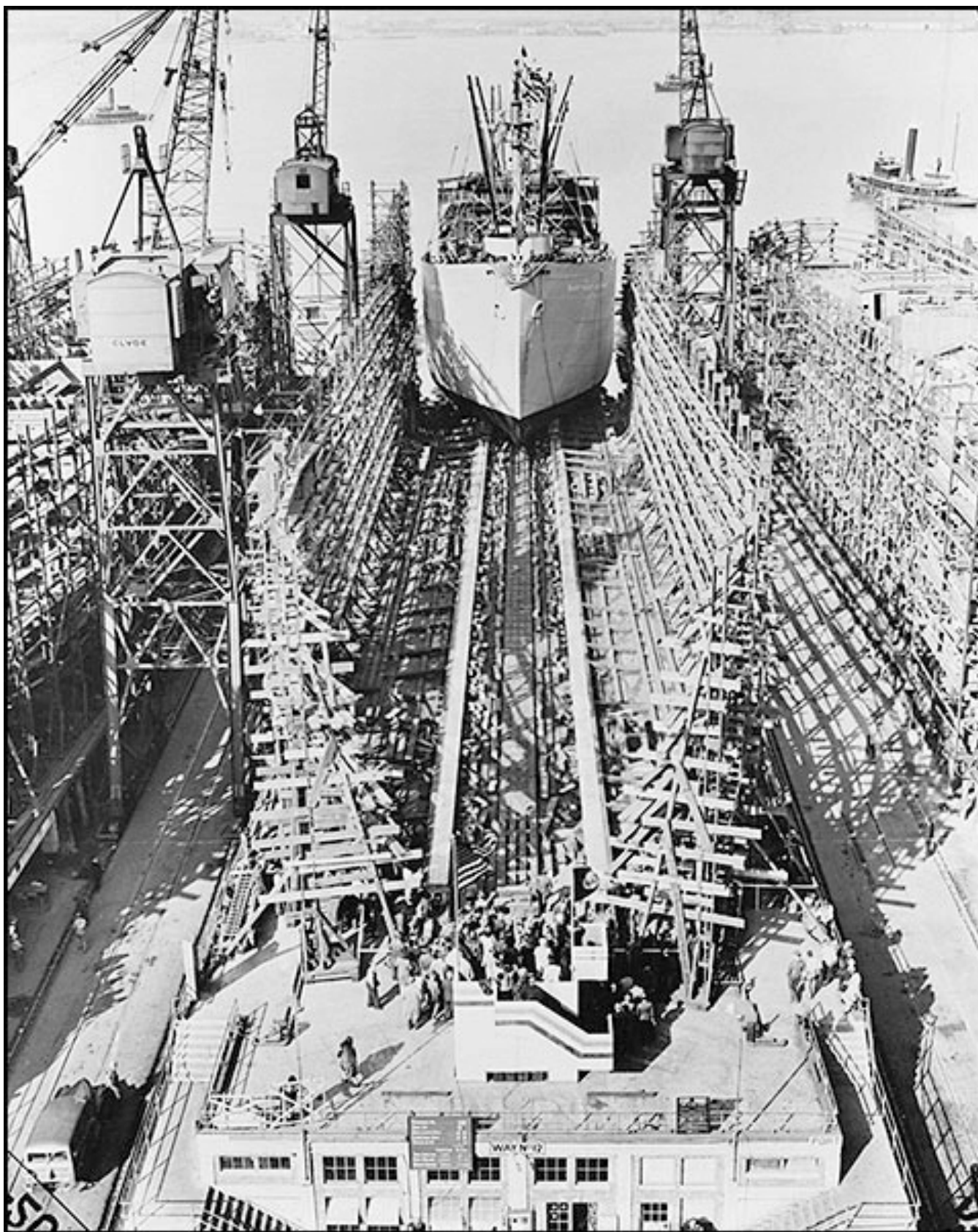
tion appeared to be an ideal combination to build them. They'd have to be built in new shipyards or not at all.

The solution was new yards built by a partnership between Todd Shipyards Inc. and a consortium of companies owned by Henry J. Kaiser.

This appeared to be an ideal combina-

we had. Land finally, but reluctantly, decided to adopt the already available "slow" British design. The triple-expansion steam engine was also based on a British design that dated to about 1900.

BUILDING THE LIBERTY FLEET



Liberty Ship Construction, Baltimore WWII

Photo of Bethlehem Fairfield shipyards, near Baltimore, Maryland, showing the construction of a Liberty ship. Office of War Information

tive of J.L. Thompson, a major British shipbuilder, came to the United States to order ships here. The company brought plans for a freighter based on a Thompson-designed prototype built in 1939: a 10,000-ton vessel driven by a 2,500-hp engine cruising at 11 knots.

In New York, the British group met the chairman of the U.S. Maritime Commission, Adm. E.S. Land. Understanding the awkward position Britain was in, Land saw no point building these "simple, slow" ships.

He wanted the Brits to buy 60 of the commission's much faster C-ships. This certainly would have been an excellent idea, except that no yards were available

tion, since Todd was a well-established shipbuilding firm, and Kaiser was equally well-established in heavy construction.

Although hull construction was soon proceeding well in these new yards, the high-powered engines needed to drive the new C-ships were complicated.

Adequate numbers of these engines simply were not going to be available quickly enough. By 1941, it was obvious that these faster, more complicated vessels would have to wait. What was needed immediately was quantity rather than quality.

Clearly, a new design would require time-consuming development and testing, taking time that neither the British nor

No mention was ever made to those of us who sailed on them, or to those who built them, or to the public, that the ship was based on a British design. However, the adaptation of this design to mass production was entirely an American accomplishment.

Probably the most important change was the method of assembly. At the time this program started, riveting was still the standard method for building ships. However, welding had been tried in the United States and found to save considerable weight and to allow for much faster assembly.

Welding sped up the shipbuilding

(Continued on page 5)

LIBERTY SHIPS: WORLD WAR II'S BEASTS OF BURDEN, CONT.

process tremendously. In 1919, a 50-way shipyard built a total of 69 riveted ships in a year. In 1943, a 12-way shipyard launched 205 welded ships.

The move to welding required a number of alterations in the designs. The original high standards of the U.S. Maritime Commission for the C-ships were reduced and reduced again, with the intention of simplifying these vessels for speedier and easier construction.

One major change was to provide quarters for the entire crew in a single midship deckhouse. The Maritime Commission considered this arrangement safer for open-ocean passages, and it allowed for savings in piping and heating.

The normal crew consisted of 45, plus a Navy gun crew of up to 36. The ship's armament normally consisted of a 3-inch antiaircraft gun mounted on the bow, a 5-inch gun on the stern and four 20-mm machine guns mounted on the deck above the bridge.

After the design modifications were completed, the general specifications for the hundreds of cargo ships that were finally built were established:

- carrying capacity, 10,500 dwt
- length overall, 441' 7"
- beam, 56' 10"
- loaded draft, 27' 7"
- cruising speed, 11 knots

The same basic hull was modified to build tankers, colliers and other specialized vessels. Some 220 Libertys were fitted out as troop carriers; others were altered for use as hospital ships. The Navy used them variously as repair, picket and training vessels.

A total of 2,710 Libertys were built

problems. Not only was it necessary to construct new yards in which to build these ships, but also vast numbers of workers were needed.

Since the U.S. shipbuilding industry had shrunk so drastically, by the 1940s, the supply of experienced shipwrights was equally small.

The lessons of mass production learned in other industries were applied here. Complex jobs were broken down into simple steps that could be accomplished by a worker with very little training, so great numbers of people could be trained quickly.

Of course, as a result of hasty training, there were many defects, but what was really astonishing was that hundreds of ships performed entirely satisfactorily, even though they were built by thousands of men and women who were totally new to shipbuilding.

WELDING DEFECTS

A series of structural failures occurred with these newly welded ships that became major problems. Some of the failures were the result of defective welds. In other cases, the structural failure was the result of inappropriate uses of welding.

The hulls of several ships split apart in Arctic waters. It was found that the Arctic cold makes ordinary mild steel very brittle. The steel then shatters under strains that would be no problem in more moderate temperatures.

In one instance, a ship split just forward of the deckhouse. The section with the No. 1, 2 and 3 holds sank. The engine room and associated machinery, the deckhouse, living quarters and holds No. 4 and

training.

In the merchant fleet during the war, the entire crew was paid off at the end of each trip, and everyone signed off the ship. Each crewmember then had the choice of signing on to the same ship for the next voyage or taking whatever shore leave had accrued.

When a seaman's leave expired, he could turn down the first two ships he was offered but had to take the third. Merchant seamen thus had an option people in the Navy did not.

In the Navy, once assigned to a ship, you stayed until you were ordered elsewhere. Most merchant sailors figured they were better off than in the Army or the Navy. However, statistically this was not so, since the personnel losses in the merchant fleet were higher than the Army, the Navy, or the Coast Guard, but we didn't know that until much later.

Libertys were basically carbon copies of each other, so changing ships merely meant a different captain and different crewmembers. Ammo ships and tankers were good ones to stay away from.

A mixed cargo of food, machinery, guns, clothing or other not particularly flammable supplies was preferable in case your ship got hit. About 200 Liberty ships were lost to enemy action during World War II.

LIBERTYS IN PEACETIME

By the end of the war, the United States, had a gigantic fleet of new merchant ships, totaling approximately 40 million tons of shipping; three-quarters of them were Libertys. However, the country did not need a large merchant marine,

changes meant that ships capable of at least 15 knots were needed.

By the 1960s, both the Libertys in the reserve fleet and those in active service were getting old. By 1967, the reserve fleet was down to about 650 ships, and by 1969, it had dropped to 428.

Today only two of the 2,710 Liberty ships that were built are still afloat: Jeremiah O'Brien in San Francisco and John W. Brown in Baltimore. These are kept in pristine condition by volunteers determined to keep alive the memory of these ships and what they accomplished.

Jeff Markell spent three years aboard Liberty ships during World War II. Serving aboard three different ships, he made multiple crossings of the North Atlantic and came under air attack twice.

SIGNALING IN THE EARLY DAYS

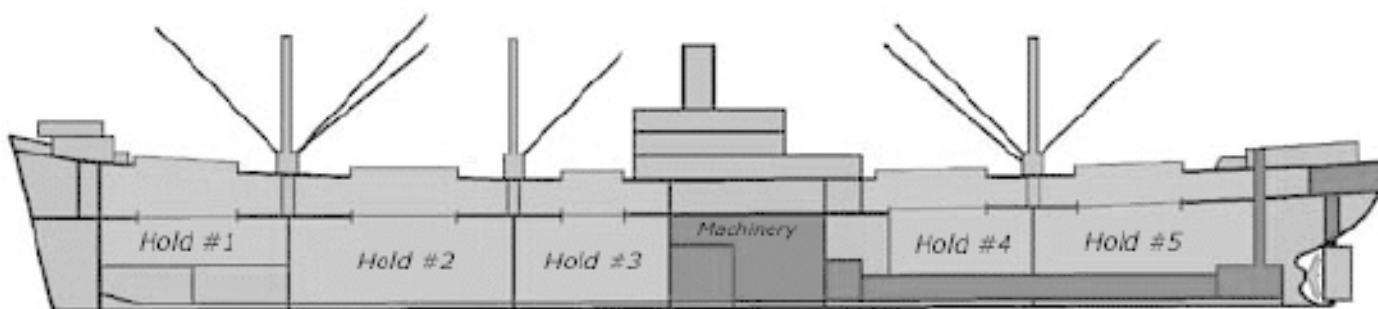
By Loring L. Bigelow, SM2/c, USN Armed Guard, emeritus, SS Lane Victory

John Paul Jones had an acquaintance in France, Chevalier du Pavillon, who invented a system of signaling by which 1600 different commands, questions, answers or information could be communicated through a fleet of ships by flag hoist.

This system is described by Lt. de Vaisseau Mouchez in *Revue Maritime*, January, 1929, on pages 641-644. It consisted of 10 flags representing numbers 0 through 9 and three long pennants representing 100, 200 and 300. Thus any number through 99 could be done with a two flag hoist and any number through 399 by the addition of a long pennant.

By making the hoists on different masts or halyards, the possible combination could be raised to 1600. Each number corresponded to a phrase and the key was given in a signal book of 100 pages. Jones obtained a copy and tried to have it translated to use while he was in command in the Russian Navy, but without luck.

Prior to this, signaling was poor and done through a voice trumpet, a single flag or pennant or often calling for meetings between captains of different ships or in Jones's case, by literally rowing from ship to ship while hove to, or at anchor, and delivering the messages verbally. Even then, these messages were often disobeyed.



in 18 different shipyards on the East, West and Gulf coasts. The first one built was named Patrick Henry. She was on the ways for 150 days.

Eventually Robert E. Peary took the prize for the fastest construction time: she was launched four days and 15 1/2 hours after her keel was laid, and was ready for sea three days later.

As mass production took hold in the shipbuilding industry, Henry J. Kaiser soon emerged as the leader. Kaiser and his associates, not being traditional shipbuilders, approached the problem simply as a matter of finding a way to mass-produce a product. In their shipyards, bow units, stern units, deckhouses and other major sub-sections were pre-assembled and then welded together to form the ship. This approach resulted in ever-shorter delivery times.

The unprecedented mass production of these ships inevitably produced some

5 alone remained afloat. The stern half was salvaged and towed into port, where an entire new half was put on.

LIFE ABOARD SHIP

The drama and tragedy of U-boat and air attacks on these ships have been amply described elsewhere. What is seldom mentioned is that unless your ship was badly damaged or sunk, living conditions aboard were pretty good. You got three substantial meals a day and your own bed to sleep in off watch.

The major disadvantage was that if your ship was hit, the odds for its survival were not good. Libertys were built to carry cargo, not to withstand torpedoes, bombs or gunfire.

If your ship sank, your chances of being picked up were poor. If you were seriously wounded or injured, the only person aboard with any medical background had the rating of pharmacist's mate, with about four months of medical

which would actually be a liability, since it would have to be subsidized.

However, the war had clearly demonstrated that a small peacetime merchant fleet was inadequate in the event of a major international crisis.

The Liberty ship had several desirable features for post-war use. It was economical to operate, and it had excellent deck and cargo-handling machinery, as well as substantial cargo capacity for its moderate draft.

A Liberty required only removal of the armament and life rafts to make it ready for general service. Britain, Italy, Greece, France, Norway and China, having suffered heavy shipping losses, all wanted and got some. Then a great many others were mothballed and placed in the reserve fleet.

The Korean conflict in 1950 brought all the fast ships -- the Victories and C3s -- out of retirement, but very few Libertys. Post-war political and military

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1222



1117



1121



US MM Veteran w/ ship



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The story of a great ship and its role in the history of America's proud maritime heritage. Aside from his own wartime love affair with her and some of the recollections of others who fell under her spell, the author has uncovered data that otherwise might never have been brought to the surface. Witness the American Mariner's varied, interesting and sometimes mysterious life cycle.

NEW! Patriots and Heroes: True Stories of the U. S. Merchant Marine in World War II, Vol. 2. Gerald Reminick, \$22, #3325.

Volume 1 of *Patriots and Heroes* touched such a chord with readers that it is in its third printing. There were so many requests for more stories that we brought out Volume II: all new and all true stories of the merchant marine in World War II. As with the first volume, Mr. Reminick gathered the stories to honor the men of the merchant marine. Each story bears witness to the courage, loyalty and fortitude displayed by the thousands of mariners who served their country.

NEW! From the Bridge. Kelley Sweeney, \$17.50, #3351. This book gives us a peek into the world of the merchant marine -- a glimpse of a world that most of us know nothing about. Captain Sweeney humanizes the industry while tackling serious issues that obviously need to be addressed. He cajoles us, entertains us, makes us laugh and gets us angry -- and hopefully leads us and the people in the marine industry to demand the changes that are sorely needed, and recognize the incredible contribution that the people in the merchant marine make.

NEW! A Few Years at Sea. Carl Marcoux, \$20. *A Few Years at Sea* deals with the life of a young sailor from 1943-1945. Jim Hurley starts his maritime years, first as a shipyard worker, and then going to sea in different capacities. His first ship takes him to areas of conflict where he is involved in fighting, aiding in the defense of his ship from attacks by German aircraft and submarines. In his final wartime trip aboard another cargo ship, a German submarine succeeds in sinking his vessel. A brief postscript deals with the subsequent life of the young sailor following the war's conclusion.

Nightmare in Bari, The WWII Liberty Ship Poison Gas Disaster and Cover-up. Gerald Reminick, \$22, #3338. On Dec. 2, 1943 in Bari Harbor, Italy, the German Luftwaffe laid waste to the busy port. Seventeen allied ships were destroyed. A Liberty ship laden with a top-secret cargo of mustard gas bombs exploded. The loss of life was appalling. Yet to this day few have heard of the disaster at Bari.

Gallant Ship, Brave Men. Herman E. Rosen, \$25, #3347. A spellbinding war memoir of a torpedoing and the fight for survival of 24 men in a life-boat. Hank Rosen, cadet-midshipman aboard a Liberty ship, tells the dramatic story of his 30 days adrift in the Indian Ocean.

Forgotten Heroes. Brian Herbert, \$27, #3344. Drawing from historical documents, government records, diaries and interviews, Herbert has constructed a brilliant history that details the heroism, self-sacrifice and grim determination that has been the hallmark of the United States merchant marine.

Extreme Waves. Craig B. Smith, \$30, #3354. *Extreme Waves* is a fascinating book based on the science and history of waves. Covering both the headline shores as well as incidents that are less well known but equally startling. The author-amateur sailor will keep you riveted from the first chapter to the last.

Ship Model Booklet. Ron Stahl, \$15, #3333. Full-color photographs of 27 finely crafted ship models displayed aboard the S.S. Lane Victory with a brief description and background narrative of each ship.

The Lane Victory. New edition by Capt. Walter Jaffee, \$30, #3130. An update of the 1997 publication of the history of the last active Victory ship, from construction in 1944 to the present-day living memorial to merchant seamen. Includes information about the Lane's use as a movie set as seen in many films and TV shows.

Action in the North Atlantic. Guy Gilpatric, \$30, #3324. This book was the inspiration for the Humphrey Bogart/Raymond Massey movie honoring the contributions of the Merchant Marine in WWII.

A Medal for Marigold. Michael Skalley, \$8, #3322. From the journal of Captain Robert Skalley. The story of the hospital ship Marigold began in Seattle when the Army converted the liner President Fillmore into a 765 bed sea-going hospital. During WWII she traveled 78,000 miles in the Atlantic and the Pacific. Though classed as a safe conduct ship with Red Cross markings, she experienced enemy shells, bombs and mines.

The Ordeal of Convoy NY119. Charles Dana Gibson, \$25, #3118. This book tells the story of a U.S. Army convoy of seagoing tugs, harbor tugs, yard tankers and barges on a 31-day passage to an English port in 1944. Cited by the U.S. Naval Institute in 1973 as one of the year's significant books on naval history.

Odyssey of a Merchant Mariner. Capt. Peter Chelemedor, \$23, #3139. The story outlines Capt. Chelemedor's adventures that led him to sea, his experiences during WWII and his attempts to find a place to settle down when ready to come ashore.

Operation Drumbeat. Michael Gannon, \$17, #3116. The true story of Germany's first U-boat attacks along the American coast during WWII.

The Presidential Yacht Potomac. Capt. Walter Jaffee, \$30, #3131. A wonderful biography of a ship, or in this case, "yacht" by Capt. Jaffee. A part of history...a tale worth reading.

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Voyage of the Ship Revere. Madeline Rouse Gleason, \$16, #3106. This book traces the development of deep-water trade on the Pacific Coast beginning in 1849, with experiences on the sailing vessel Revere.

Appointment in Normandy. Capt. Walter Jaffee, \$30, #3102. The story of the Liberty ship Jeremiah O'Brien's historic voyage back to the beaches of Normandy.

Burning of the General Slocum. Claude Rust, \$11, #3125. The story of one of the most appalling disasters in maritime history, researched by the author whose grandmother was one of the victims.

Hog Islanders. Mark H. Goldberg, \$20, #3134. The story of an almost forgotten type of merchant ship, the passenger-cargo liner, built at the Hog Island shipyards of Pennsylvania.

Sailing West. Carl Marcoux, \$25, #3340. A must read based on what every maritime service school seaman will certainly associate with his own war time experiences, from the hiring hall loud mouths (being sent to the hall in his "sailor suit") to learning what it's like to be the low man on the totem pole on his first assignment aboard ship.

FARE THEE WELLS...

MEMORIES...

By Jim Baker A.B.,
Charter Life Member

With the loss of each of our old shipmates, comes a flood of memories that go all the way back to 1989, to the days when the SS Lane Victory had just arrived in San Pedro.

That was 20 years ago when we were all 20 years younger, yet everyone was over 60. We were a lot stronger, agile, energetic and enthusiastic, able and delighted to relive some of that we did almost half a century before.

Putting the Lane back together was one hell of a challenge, with a tremendous amount of work for us, who took it on. You know who you are... those of us who by the grace of God are still alive and kicking, although somewhat slower.

Very recently we lost two of the "originals" who were there at the very beginning of the Lane's restoration, both were A.B.s during the war.. They sailed on Victory ships and signed on "for life" on the Lane, we all knew them as shipmates and friends: Bob Simpson and Bill Loenhorst.

At first, 1989, the Lane was a "dead ship," no power, no water no coffee, no heads, no nuthin'. No heads? Remember that brick sxxx hxxx on the dock that housed a bunch of cats that scared the

didn't work -- silence above and below. No air, and it stayed that way. Bob and I found something else to do. We didn't have to look far. Bob had a hell of a sense of humor and enjoyed telling about some of his adventures.

He was on a Victory ship in '44 standing the 12-4 watch. They had sailed from San Francisco bound for the South Pacific. As they progressed west and south, it got warmer and warmer. It was getting hot!

The skipper was a dapper younger man who took great pride in his appearance, so to cope with the increasing temperature he donned white knee length shorts, a white short sleeve dress shirt, white shoes and white knee high socks, plus his "scrambled egg" high pressure cap and a white neck scarf.

Bob was on the wheel when the skipper took the bridge and was quite impressed with his "Hollywood" captain. The next day the mate appeared in similar attire. Hey! This is pretty neat, thought Bob, I ought to do that.

But without resources of the "brass," Bob had to improvise. He put on a pair of printed boxer shorts and high sweat socks. To that he added a white T-shirt and a dish towel for a scarf, and of course his white Lundbergh Stetson.

That's what he wore when he next took his trick on the wheel. "What the hell are you supposed to be?" yelled the



"From the Kaiser coal docks on, Bill Skinner and I were friends and shipmates. He was an integral part of the SS Lane Victory operation and maintenance from the very beginning and had the respect of the entire crew." -- Allen Thronson

had been stored for some 27 years. Everybody had a thousand things to do.

The deck gang needed a boson's locker for all the gear needed to rig the ship. Plus an area to store tools, work benches, personal lockers and a place to take a break. We took over #1 and started to work. Another one of the "originals" taking part in the action was Bill Loenhorst, an AB in WWII on Victory ships.

Bill was on watch on the Cuba Victory when it was rammed by the Saginaw Victory in a mid sea collision. There was serious damage, although no casualties. "But it sure scared the hell outta me" said Bill.

Bill, a retired deputy sheriff San Bernardino County, was a wiz at carpentry. His efforts greatly contributed to successful restoration of the Lane. In putting together # 1 as a deck department HQ, one of the items needed was an area for planning plus R&R.

Bill scrounged around and found materials enough to build an upholstered bench in our R&R area. It became "Bill's bench" and Bill was gratefully given the choice seat.

The mess rooms were pretty much taken by the black gang and others, so we decided to build our own "coffee and tool room." We didn't have plumbing, although we put in a sink and a slop bucket. We needed a refer for liquid libation and it was Bill who found, bought and installed the required cooling machine. We were in business.

Bill made his weekly trip for years from Redlands to the ship. He'd drive down every Friday and stay over the weekend and return on Monday. It was close to 200 miles round trip.

Bill, Bob and I used to sit on the fantail of an evening and shoot the breeze, and watch the ships go by. It was a good time. I miss them both. They were good shipmates, good friends. God bless them.

BILL SKINNER, CHIEF MATE

By Jan Michaelis

[Excerpt from a personal profile published in the April, 1992 Anchor Light, author unknown.]

"Bill Skinner is our licensed chief mate. He has been renewing his license every five years since 1944. Bill is in charge of organizing all deck work and says he is in need of a bosun to work every day with him.

Bill sailed for 12 years before WWII and spent four years in the Navy 1936-1940 and in 1941 again joined the merchant marine. He sailed on the S.S. Will H. Point, S.S. Mary D., S.S. Larry Doheny, S.S. James Griffith, S.S. John Burk, S.S. Samoa, S.S. John Muir, S.S. Andreas Honcharenro, S.S. George Flavel, MS Tydol # 2, S.S. Norman E. Mack, S.S. Lompoc, S.S. Perryville, S.S. Shoshone, S.S. Bald Butte and the S.S. Kenai.

Bill worked for Texaco for 30 years loading tankers with petroleum product. His entire life has been around ships.

Although Bill and his wife had no children, he has been like a father to many, including Mark Campenelli and Tim Walker who are both crewmembers on the Lane Victory. He has watched the neighborhood children grow up, and now they bring their children to see him.

Bill worked every day while the paint crew was aboard. He supervised the painting and organized the clearing of equipment and gear.

Volunteerism is a new ball game for Bill. You can't hire and you can't fire! But he enjoys his work and has made many new friends.

A pat on the back and a word of thanks is so inadequate for Bill and the many volunteers. We hope you know



Bill Loenhorst, creator of "Bill's Bench," where the real work got done!

daylights out of the unwary visitor in the middle of the night?

One of the first guys I met was Bob Simpson. We started chipping paint on the funnel so we could paint it as a symbol of progress. The guys below had hooked up a shore line so we had a generator to give us compressed air.

We brought our own air hammers and went to work on the stack. Now that stack is 30' high and 10' in diameter. It's like a big drum and that's what it sounded like in the engine room when we started out with our air guns on the stack. It didn't bother Bob or me, we were on the outside, but to the "black gang" it sounded like an air raid.

Suddenly our air chipping hammers

captain.

"Well, sir", says Bob, "I'm just trying to follow the example of "the bridge."

"Get below and put on your clothes!"

"Yes sir," says Bob. That's the kind of humor Bob Simpson had. There are many more antidotes I could relate and some I couldn't.

It didn't take long for everything to really get moving on the Lane. Holds were opened, electric and water lines were hooked up, heads were activated, the office opened in the gun crew quarters.

Things were humming. Kenwood Keith arranged for dock cranes and we started bringing everything out of #3 that

FARE THEE WELLS..., CONT.

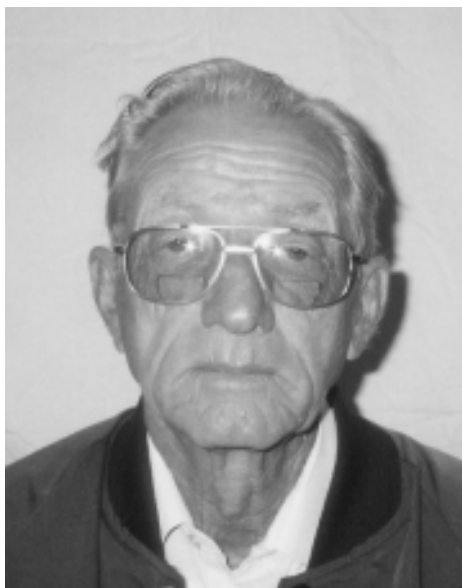
you are appreciated, Bill."

Bill "crossed the bar" on July 17, 2009. Many of his shipmates attended his memorial on July 22 at All Souls Catholic Cemetery; several of his shipmates spoke of his dedication and love for the Lane Victory. He was on board several days each week until a few years ago, when he fell and broke his hip, but that did not deter Bill, he continued, albeit at a slower pace to manage the many, many maintenance chores that now demanded so much time and labor by the all volunteer crew.

The early days of restoration, exciting and challenging slowly evolved into the mundane chores of chip and paint, passing inspections, conducting lifeboat practical tests, and manning the cruises with Coast Guard documented personnel. Bill Skinner will be missed; the results of his hard work are evident everywhere on deck.

IRV ALDRICH

"The first set of wooden steps we built (we pre-fabbed them), Irv Aldrich was number one in line to help carry them and put them in



place. Irv also took me aside and told me in no uncertain terms that I could get a ticket for using Wisconsin plates on my truck...."

-- Allen Thronson

REMEMBERING IRV ALDRICH

By Ernie Barker

I started work on the Lane in January 1993. Claude Gammel put me with Leroy Smith and Bob Alexander who were slopping around in the bottoms of deep tanks and inner bottom tanks in lower #5 — laying 2x12 planks in the remnants of fuel oil in preparation for tanks inspection by the Coast Guard. Since Leroy arrived on the ship between 0500 and 0530, I showed up about 0600 thereafter.

The first morning I arrived for work about 0600 Leroy was in the engine department mess room. A big man with a handlebar mustache was also in the mess room; he was preparing road-kill in a

crook pot. His name was George Tuttle.

Another man stuck his head through the mess room open doorway then continued on down the passageway. George chuckled and said, "Irv must be in a pretty good mood; he didn't say anything." That's the first time I recall seeing Irv Aldrich.

George and Irv worked together. They didn't need supervision; they found what needed doing and did it. Some leave a mess behind when they finish a job. Others are not too proud to do cleaning work. George and Irv cleaned up a lot of messes left by others.

One of Irv's last jobs of a work-day was putting tools away in their proper place.

The spirit of comradery was epitomized by the relationship between George and Irv. They were as unlike as day and night: George was jovial, always had a chuckle or a humorous word about someone; Irv was the straight man — often a protector of the engine department domain.

If someone came into the mess room and sat down for lunch with his hat on, Irv would ask, "Is your head cold?" Both men obviously enjoyed the respect of each chief engineer they worked under.

George Tuttle had gone to sea in the merchant marine as an oversized, 14-year-old kid. He later joined the US Marine Corps and he was a member of the First Marine Division which was in action on the Pusan Perimeter by early August, 1950.

The First Marine Division had been formed by stripping many embassies worldwide and taking drafts from the US Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, plus activating reserves.

On September 15, 1950, X Corps spearheaded by the First Marine Division landed at Inchon while the Eighth Army was holding the Pusan Perimeter. In late 1950 George's outfit made the trek up the Korean east coast to the proximity of the Manchurian border; then the Chinese entered the war. His outfit was a part of the massive drive south and evacuation by ship from Wonson.

George Tuttle died in late 1996. Irv was devastated. His loss of a comrade was obvious to all but he seldom spoke of his loss. That was Irv's MO; he just sucked it up and went on.

Sometime in the late 1990s we purchased a flat-bed truck load of angle iron from a county surplus facility in Orange County. We started building storage racks in upper, middle and lower #3 cargo hold. Irv gravitated to our little construction crew.

One day Irv watched while Frank Prentiss and I were measuring and using a framing square on a storage rack before Frank started welding. Irv asked, "Why are you so particular? It ain't no piano."

That "piano" phrase came up a number of times until one day I cut a corner and didn't square it up. Irv asked, "You're

not gonna make it square and plumb?" I said, "It ain't no piano, Irv."

As the years went by, we got into more sophisticated projects like a paint locker with exhaust fan and CO2 fire extinguishing installation, a bulwark gate at the head of the gangway, ladders and platform into #2 cargo hold -- the motor museum, installation of a second diesel MG set up forward, building Motel 4 and Motel 6 in upper #3, etc. By this time Dennis Wingert had joined our group.

After completing each project Irv would ask — in a make-believe disgusted way — "Now what's you gonna get us into?"

Actually he enjoyed our projects. And we greatly enjoyed Irv's help and company during those years. After Dennis came into our group, one day Irv said, "It's a good thing someone with personality joined our group; you and I sure don't have any." That was Irv. He called it as he saw it.

Irv was an Iowa boy who worked on a farm while growing up. He also worked on the railroad, laying cross-ties. He was a couple of years too young to get involved in WWII but went into the US Army a few years later; he spent time in Germany and then was transferred to an army outfit in Barstow, California.

Barstow in summer is comparable to the Sahara Desert. Irv requested a transfer. The army obliged — sent him to Korea. Not only was there a war going on in Korea there but the Korean winters of 1951-52 and 1952-53 were the coldest since records of winter had been kept there.

In the late 1980s, author James Brady wrote a book entitled "The Coldest War" and in 2007 a David Halberstram book was entitled "The Coldest Winter." Each book capsulated the extreme cold weather conditions of the Korean War.

According to a poll I conducted in 2000, there were 13 Lane crew members who served in Korea during that war and four crew members who made one or more trips there on merchant ships.

George Tuttle returned from Korea with frost-bitten toes and fingers.

Irv was in the Eighth Army. I don't recall him ever talking about his experiences there. Dennis Wingert recalls Irv telling him that in order to keep his feet from freezing he kept a couple pair of socks



Here's a much better picture of Irv Aldrich. As Ernie says, "He almost looks like he's smiling..." We include the other "mug shot" photo from Irv's ID badge because it is typical of most of the WWII crew badge photos -- they look like guys you would really not want to run into in a dark alley...

stuffed inside his clothing, under his armpits, so he could change when the ones he was wearing were damp and near freezing.

After his hitch in the army, Irv worked in the oil fields where he met a retired Coast Guard CPO who apparently convinced him that since he already had four plus years service time in the army, he could join the Coast Guard and finish out a service career. He did. Although Irv never talked about his army service in Korea, from time to time he would relate some Coast Guard experience. He retired as a chief petty officer.

"He was sensitive to those who needed a lift and challenging to those who stepped across his line. He was as honest as the day is long."

Before the Lane dropped its rusty anchor in Los Angeles harbor, Irv had volunteered at a Los Angeles County Sheriff's station. Irv volunteered on the Lane from 1989 to 2009.

Irv was about as closed-mouth about family as he was about other people and matters. I recall that he mentioned his wife Agnes and step-daughter Jeannie a number of times — always positively. We understand the loss by Agnes, Jeannie and other family members. Our best wishes go to Irv's family.

Having depicted Irv as having little personality or humor is unfair to him. He had a dry sense of humor which could suddenly turn a serious situation into a laugh. He was sensitive to those who needed a lift and challenging to those who stepped across his line. He was as honest as the day is long. He was a friend.

We miss you, Irv.

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2. To improve the scope of recognition and benefits for Merchant Marine Veterans, and to assist them in getting up-to-date information and applications for all benefits and awards due them.
3. To promote a stronger American merchant marine industry.
4. To help us with your advice, volunteer work, publicity or funding for the restoration and operation of the S.S. *Lane Victory*.
5. To provide a nationwide forum for communication and fellowship for all merchant seamen, active or retired, Naval Armed Guard personnel, and for all interested associates and well wishers.

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FARE THEE WELLS, CONT.

BILL LOENHORST

By Janet Gibson

Bill was born in Holland, Minnesota on December 18, 1924. He came to Redlands, California in 1933. He lived in the Redlands, Mentone and the Angelus Oaks area for 76 years. He graduated in 1944 from Redlands High school.

Bill had 35¢ in his pocket and with a classmate they decided to hitchhike to San Francisco. He started real work, at the age of 17, (lied about his age) at the Benica arsenal driving loaders for the ships. He tried for the Navy but they said he was not sea worthy.

Wow! He then joined the U.S. merchant marine, I believe in 1943. His second cruise was on the Cuba Victory. That took him right into the war zone.

In 1958 Bill joined the San Bernardino Sheriff's office, first as a reserve deputy. Bill was the first resident deputy sheriff of the mountain area, Barton Flats, Angelus Oaks, Forest Falls and wherever needed.

He retired after 22 years. He was also very active and involved in the formation of the San Gorgonio Rescue Team for 30 years. After retirement he heard about the Lane Victory. He loved working on it and seeing it into the days of cruises and a wonderful museum.

Bill leaves daughter Charlene Eastman; son, Bill Jr. Loenhorst; grandchildren, Kyle, Amanda, Aaron and Darla Loenhorst all of Mentone; and his ex-wife and friend, Janet Loenhorst-Gibson of Redlands.

MY SHIPMATE AND FRIEND...

By Jan Michaelis

Bill was in WWII, a good seaman, and after the war a deputy sheriff. When he retired, he somehow learned about the SS Lane Victory coming to San Pedro to be restored. Thus began a 200 mile round trip almost every weekend for Bill, from Mentone, a small town near Yucaipa, California

Bill and I worked together during the early days, with Dale Kelly as bosun, and others to find, sort out and haul out onto the deck the various pieces of gear necessary to re-rig the deck gear stored below since 1969. Restoration was hard work, but we loved it. We stayed onboard on the weekends, and usually played cribbage in the evenings.

We worked together on many projects, whether it was removing dunnage from bulkheads and decks, creating our rigging loft in upper #1 or sorting out the gear.

We laughed when we found out that the first winches were bolted to their "beds" backwards and had to be reversed. We were proud as punch when the first utility boom went up.

Bill worked with Dale Kelly splicing wire. He was also the one, after a fruitless search by the rest of us, to find the missing "gooseneck" swivel needed to rig the final boom and the one who figured out where a small ventilator went, which was up on the foredeck, portside.

He was the one that told me never to approach any tangle in the gear that was under strain, as he had seen a WWII shipmate die in just such an attempt.

Once all the utility booms were up, we began working on the jumbo rigging. Bill and I (as his helper and gofer) spent some days pulling out and greasing the shivs for the jumbo's huge blocks.

He took great pleasure in his part in returning the Lane deck gear to operating status again, bringing the ship back to life. The old hands were proud of all the restoration done without the benefit of going into a shipyard.

Another of the great crew benefits was meeting someone you hadn't seen since you sailed with them in WWII. In Bill's case it was a reunion with Clare Peterson, a US Navy Armed Guard member on board the Lane.

They found that both had been on board the Cuba Victory during a voyage when the ship was involved in a collision with the Saginaw Victory while at sea. Bill was on deck forward when he saw the other ship coming at them on a collision course, he "ran like hell" to get out of harm's way.

Then there was the typhoon he recalled, and the visit to Mog Mog Island for a beer run, and the times he, as merchant mariner, found himself unwelcome at a USO; apparently laying your life on the line applied to military personal only...

Bill was a shipmate, and a friend; my reminders of him are the swivel and ventilator in particular. They help to me remember him, in the midst of a busy cruise, and to pause to look out at the white caps, the headstones of the merchant mariners lost at sea. Bill will join them on the Saturday, September 26 cruise. Be there...

IN MEMORIAM

HAROLD FALICK

USMMVWWII member Harold Fallick died on August 3. Our condolences to friends and family.

Let's hear from you --

We are always looking for stories from Anchor Light Readers!

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frances@thronson.net

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