



MAINS'L HAUL

MARITIME MUSEUM
\$0.50



MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

VOL. 31, NO. 1

A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY

FALL 1994



\$2.50



On the cover . . .

From September 29 to October 4 of this year, the Maritime Museum played host to the PRIDE OF BALTIMORE II, a topsail schooner built along the lines of a 19th century Baltimore clipper. Such vessels played an important role in U.S. maritime history from the Revolutionary War until 1850. They were the first American-designed sailing vessels.

Photo by Greg Pease © 1994 Greg Pease Photography

MAINS'L HAUL

MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

VOL. 31, NO. 1

A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY

FALL 1994

Contents

4	The Battle of Leyte Gulf: A Photo Essay
9	BUTCHER BOY: A 1902 Workboat, <i>Craig Arnold</i>
14	When the Queen Sailed into San Diego, <i>Al Deahl</i>
16	The Wooden-Electrics: Ferries that Served Faithfully, <i>John C. Richards</i>
20	From the Helm
20	Development Report
21	Library Log
22	Ship Model Shop
23	Volunteer of the Quarter
23	Curatorial Report
24	Star of India Auxiliary
24	Calendar of Events

Craig Arnold, Editor

Mains'l Haul is the historical journal of the San Diego Maritime Museum, 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101. Send all submissions and queries to Editor, *Mains'l Haul*, at the above address. No portion of this journal may be reproduced or stored in any electronic retrieval system without the written permission of the Editor.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf: A Photo Essay

Fifty years ago this autumn, the greatest naval battle of all time was fought. It was the greatest in dimension, both in numbers of ships engaged and in the area fought over.

The battle took place as American and Australian forces began the liberation of the Philippine Islands from Japanese control. In 1941-42, the Japanese overran the islands in about six months, and after that, the Allies slowly fought their way back—through the

American force before him and closing in on Leyte Gulf when, inexplicably, he turned his powerful fleet about and lit out for home. Although losing a few cruisers and the battleship *MUSASHI* over the preceding days, he was still overwhelmingly strong for what he had to do. Why he chose to break off the action, with victory in his grasp, has never been wholly explained.

Five major engagements were fought over as many days, beginning with U.S. submarine attacks on the approaching enemy and concluding with Admiral "Bull" Halsey's mad dash to the north, taking the bait offered by Vice Admiral Ozawa's decoy force. Controversy rages to this day over Halsey. He did weaken

Solomons, New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, the Gilberts, Marshalls and Marianas. There had been a number of naval engagements in these campaigns, but the Japanese kept their main fleet in reserve for the showdown, which both sides knew would take place around the Philippines. Once in control of the archipelago, the Allies would cut the sea lanes running from Southeast Asia to Japan, and so sever the flow of raw materials fueling the Japanese war machine. Such an event would make it impossible for Japan to continue the war.

The battle was given the name "Leyte Gulf" for the area where the first Allied landings took place, although actually it was a whole series of battles spread over several days and hundreds of square miles. If one looks at Leyte as a campaign, then the time frame extends over four months.

The Japanese had a clever plan for the defense of the islands. Like most Japanese plans, it was complex, depending on tight coordination between different fleets coming from different directions. At first the Japanese would deploy a decoy force to the north of the islands, to draw the most powerful American fleet, the Third, in that direction. Then the Japanese center force and southern force would slip through gaps in the islands, turn to annihilate the weakly defended landing force, and trap the Americans ashore on Leyte.

Before criticizing the Japanese plan, it is important to remember that it almost worked. In fact, it would have worked, but for the loss of nerve of one man—Vice Admiral Kurita, who commanded the center force.

In one of the more famous blunders with which military history is replete, Kurita was driving a small

the American defense in the center by his withdrawal. On the other hand, he caught up with Ozawa and sent the remnants of the Japanese carrier fleet to the bottom.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf crippled the Imperial Navy in every class of ship—carriers, battleships, cruisers and destroyers. It opened the way not only to the liberation of the Philippines, but to the final victory over Japan. Seldom has any battle produced more decisive and far-reaching results. Luck played a role, but the victory was won by American sailors and pilots, whose skill and courage prevailed against a desperate foe. No armed forces in history ever produced better fighting men than the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps did in World War II, on the long and bloody road to Tokyo. It is these men we honor today, fifty years afterward.



Fortunately, there was an outstanding chronicler of their struggle. Captain Edward Steichen, a brilliant photographer in peacetime, assembled a group of fellow experts. Their job was to sail into battle with the fleet and record moments great and small. Steichen himself was a wizard with a camera, and, using black and white film, he captured life aboard the new queen of battles, the aircraft carrier. To mark the 50th anniversary of the decisive clash in the Pacific, we present a sampling of his work.



The Japanese still had superior battleships—including the mammoth YAMATO and MUSASHI, the largest such vessels ever built, with 18.1-inch main batteries. (The largest U.S. battleships, the IOWAS, had 16-inch guns.) This shows YAMATO early in the war. She fought the Americans off Samar and was sunk near Japan the following April. Maru Special



The first action in the Battle of Leyte Gulf came off the island of Palawan, westernmost of the Philippines. U.S. subs DACE and DARTER ambushed the oncoming enemy center force, sinking two heavy cruisers and damaging a third. DARTER was soon lost, but her crew survived. This picture shows the control room of a U.S. sub, with an officer using the periscope. The cramped, claustrophobic conditions of life in a submarine are apparent. Steichen Collection

At left, the aircraft carrier—highly mobile, armed with fighters, torpedo planes, and dive bombers—was the dominant weapon of the Pacific War. American carrier production did not hit full stride until 1944, when the ESSEX class appeared. After losing seven carriers at Midway and the Philippine Sea, Japan could not keep up. Steichen Collection



American leadership would be sorely tested in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Here Vice Admiral John McCain (left) converses with Admiral William F. Halsey. Historians still argue the correctness of Halsey's veering away from Leyte to pursue Ozawa. Halsey was a popular commander in the service and was lionized by the press. His salty comments made good copy, and his menacing scowl graced many a page.

Steichen Collection

The second major engagement near Leyte Gulf took place in the Sibuyan Sea, as U.S. carriers pounded out air strikes that sank the Japanese battleship *MUSASHI* and damaged other ships. Carrier pilots like this one considered themselves the elite of the Navy and Marine Corps.

Steichen Collection



After Sibuyan Sea came the night engagement in Surigao Strait, between Leyte and Dinagat. A line of American warships under Rear Admiral Jesse Oldendorf "crossed the T" against the Japanese southern force, virtually annihilating them. Surigao Strait was one of the very few battleship vs. battleship actions in the Pacific War. Here a 5-inch gun fires a round from a U.S. ship at night.

Steichen Collection

Carrier pilots walk to their planes from the ready room. They wear one-piece flight suits, inflatable life vests and parachutes. Behind them is the ship's island, the raised structure used to conn the ship and supervise flight operations. The man in the foreground strides across an elevator, used for raising and lowering planes between the flight and hangar decks. *Steichen Collection*



While the planes were in the air, pilots still aboard the carrier listened tensely to radio transmissions from airmen in combat. This picture was taken in a ready room aboard USS MONTEREY (CVL-26), which supported the Leyte landings. *Steichen Collection*

Eventually, when the air battles off Samar and Cape Engano were over, the planes returned—those which had survived, at any rate. A carrier's flight deck looks tiny in the vast expanse of the sea, and landing is best described as "a controlled crash." Here the Landing Signal Officer, or "LSO," waves signal paddles to guide the pilot in. The LSO platform is at right. The aircraft is an F6F Grumman Hellcat, widely considered the best naval fighter in the war. A destroyer follows astern, ready to rescue pilots who hit the drink. *Steichen Collection*

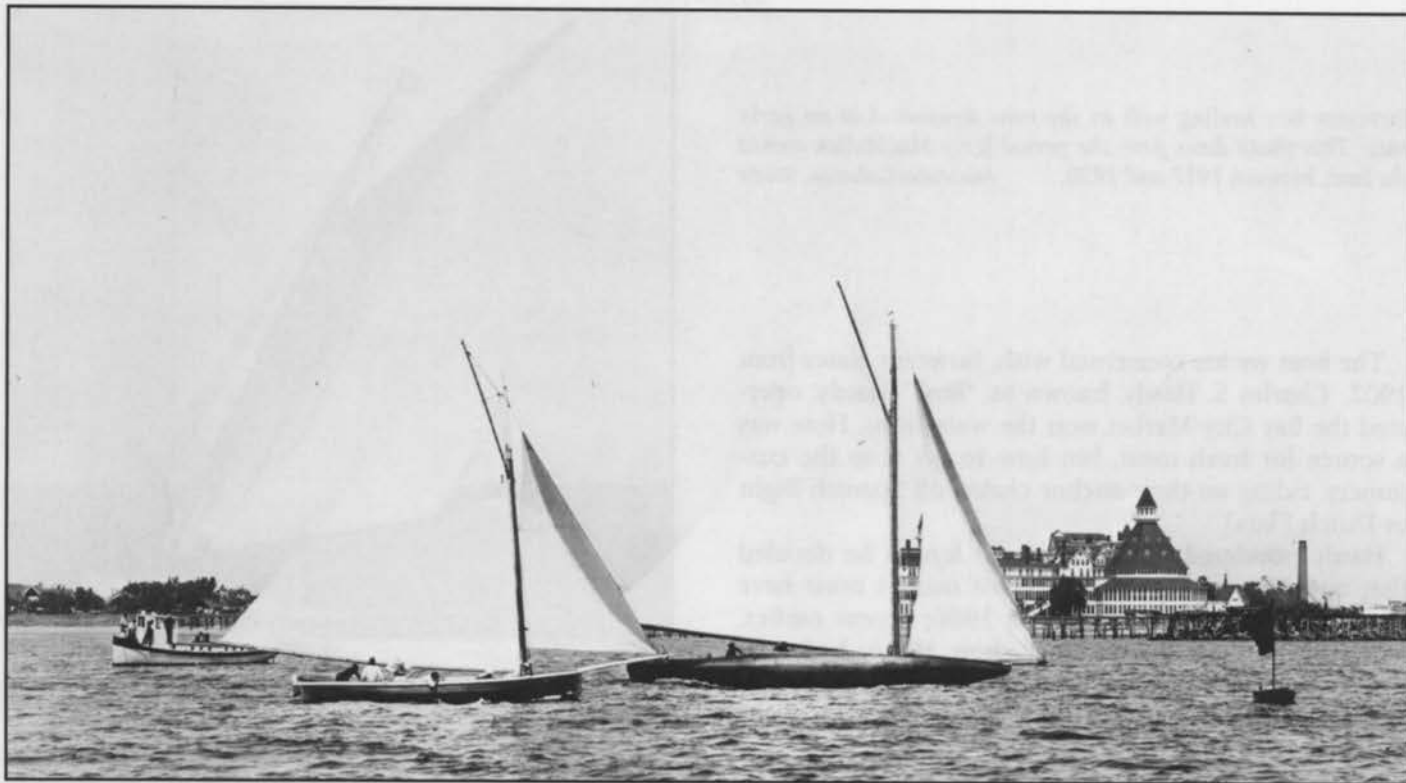




As the battle receded, the Japanese, facing defeat, resorted to the desperation tactic of suicide planes. These aircraft and their pilots, called "kamikaze" ("divine wind") fell upon U.S. ships from Leyte Gulf to war's end. Here one is diving on the starboard side of a U.S. carrier, her deck crammed with parked aircraft. The Japanese plane's starboard wing is afire. Anti-aircraft fire shot down most kamikazes, but numerous ships were sunk or damaged. It was the last gasp of a dying empire. *Steichen Collection*



After the battle comes the reckoning. A Navy chaplain wrote: "It is said that war does not always begin or end. That war does not always have a winner or loser. And that war has only one truth: that some who go to war shall not return." *Steichen Collection*



The famous yacht race between BUTCHER BOY and DETROIT off the Hotel del Coronado, August 30, 1905. The bigger and faster "racing machine" DETROIT won, but BUTCHER BOY, at left here, gave the out-of-town boat a good run for its money. Title Insurance & Trust Co.

Butcher Boy: A 1902 San Diego Workboat

By Craig Arnold

In the early years of this century, there was a growing demand in West Coast harbors for workboats of a rugged type which could perform a variety of tasks. San Diego was no exception to this demand, and one of the types which found favor here was the double-ended salmon boat.

In those circa-1900 days, if you were up and about at 4 a.m., standing on the Coal Bunkers Wharf at the foot of G Street, San Diego, you could see the ghostly shapes of sails gliding slowly down the bay under the offshore wind. Once out of the harbor mouth, they trolled along the kelp beds. On a good day, they had their fill of barracuda or yellowtail by noon, then caught the north-west breeze for the run back into port. Their catch, cleaned and iced, would be sold at market or peddled door-to-door the next day.

The double-ended salmon boat was ideal for this task. Sometimes referred to as "dago" boats, these were snug craft indeed. A typical one was about 25 feet long, flush-decked and with three small hatches. The smallest hatch, farthest aft, was where the helmsman sat. Amidships was the fish hatch, and forward was a hatch either for fish or, for those boats with more than one man, a pair of bunks. Many of these vessels were sailed by one man, who had to handle tiller, sheets and other

lines all at once. It required no small skill at seamanship to do so.

Fishing and sailing at the same time, it was vital to maintain a straight course. The double-ended boats, with their easy lines, could be made to do this with a minimum of effort at the tiller. Although unable to turn as sharply as a racing sloop, they were remarkably swift and agile.

Other jobs lay at hand besides fishing. In those far-off days, the great Cape Horn fleet of windjammers were rounding "Old Cape Stiff" and sailing up to West Coast ports.

The men on board were the scourings of the seven seas, and they were hungry. By the time they reached a port like San Diego, they had likely been many weeks at sea, subsisting on salt beef and salt pork. Such "salt junk," as it was commonly called, might be kept in casks for months on end, until inedible. Clearly, a bit of fresh meat held much appeal for these crews.

Hence the employment of the so-called "meat boat." In San Diego Bay and other harbors, these boats took meat to the square-riggers who sailed in. BUTCHER BOY was a generic name for such boats, and there was more than one of that handle at San Diego during various periods.

BUTCHER BOY heeling well as she runs downwind in an early race. This photo dates from the period Jerry MacMullen owned the boat, between 1917 and 1930. *MacMullen Collection, SDMM*

The boat we are concerned with, however, dates from 1902. Charles S. Hardy, known as "Boss" Hardy, operated the Bay City Market near the waterfront. Here was a source for fresh meat, but how to get it to the customers, riding on their anchor chains off Spanish Bight or Dutch Flats?

Hardy pondered the problem. At length he decided that nothing would do but that his market must have its own meat boat. This was in 1886; a year earlier, when he'd opened his butcher shop, Hardy had peddled beef to the windjammers in a Whitehall boat.

So it happened that Hardy's first BUTCHER BOY, about which little is known, was built in 1886 and served the Cape Horn fleet for some 15 years.

By 1901, Hardy was in need of a new meat boat. Sometime in that year, he approached Manuel Goularte, a native of the Portuguese Azores who ran a boatyard on the San Diego waterfront. Goularte, his wife, and a confederate, one Manuel Madruga, set about designing a workboat for Mr. Hardy's needs.

The obvious model was the so-called Sacramento River salmon boat, which appears closely related to the Columbia River salmon boat of fishing legend. In fact, some maritime authors honor both names for the same boat, perhaps to give equal credit to each region.

Regardless of geographic origin, this was to be a classic double-ender built of bending oak and Port Orford (Oregon) cedar. The late maritime historian Jerry MacMullen felt the boat showed a definite Azores influence; he seemed certain Goularte and Madruga were influenced by their Portuguese heritage in designing the craft.

Be that as it may, the boat that rose in the Goularte yard between January and April, 1902, was 29 feet, 11 inches long; 8 feet, 6 inches in beam; and had a draft of 2 feet, 7 inches. She carried 604 square feet of sail in her big mains'l and jib, all of which was sewn by Mrs. Goularte. The spars of BUTCHER BOY measure as follows: mast, 35 feet, 9 inches; boom, 30 feet, 9 1/2 inches; gaff, 13 feet, 6 inches; bowsprit, 10 feet, 1 inch—the latter measured from the stem to the tip of the spar.

She was framed in oak, planked with cedar, and copper fastened throughout. She carried a long bowsprit, long overhanging boom, a small cabin forward on her flush deck, a main fish hold (or "fish box") amidships, and at the stern a small hatch or cockpit, on the edge of which the helmsman sat. Her mast was spruce, stepped 7 feet from the bow.



BUTCHER BOY carried 2,000 pounds of lead outside on her shallow keel. The lead ran her entire length and projected two inches abaft the forward edge of the rudder—which certainly helped when running through kelp. Her flush deck plus her cabin made her an exceedingly comfortable boat for ordinary purposes. (The cabin is still a bit cramped; later owners installed a head, which Captain Ken Reynard, who sailed her to her present home, said "only a dwarf could use.")

Years later, the two hatches were joined to form a roomy cockpit and the cabin was enlarged and extended aft. This arrangement gave her four berths below by running two of them out under the cockpit seats.

The little sloop was launched in April of 1902 and immediately entered the employ of Boss Hardy.

It appears that meat-boat work was more a matter of delivery than soliciting orders. The Cape Horn captains were all acquainted with Boss Hardy by this time, and placed their orders at Bay City Market almost while their anchor chains were still rattling out the hawsepipes.

BUTCHER BOY loaded meat on the waterfront (Hardy's market was at Fifth and Broadway), then set her sails and sped forth on her errands. It is easy to picture the lean-faced crew of a "limejuicer" just in from Callao or Valparaiso, lining the bulwarks as BUTCHER BOY came alongside. And Boss Hardy had the jump on any competitors in this trade: not only was he the first man to ship Arizona cattle to San Diego by rail, he ran an advanced meat-freezing operation, and even

a steam-powered sausage machine!

At length, around 1905, Hardy decided to sell BUTCHER BOY. His reason for doing so was doubtless economic, and may have had something to do with the fact that steam-powered boats were rapidly taking over all sorts of harbor work. (In later years, Hardy managed Rancho Santa Margarita—now Camp Pendleton. He died in 1931.)

BUTCHER BOY's second owner was Kent Hamilton, a well known San Diego yachtsman. Hamilton could appreciate her good lines and nose for a breeze.

So the sloop now entered upon her long career as a private yacht. No more would BUTCHER BOY's deck resemble a floating butcher shop; now she ran in tonier company.

Hamilton rebuilt the sloop to his own taste, although his modifications are thought to have been minor. His purpose in doing so soon became clear: Hamilton became commodore of the San Diego Yacht Club, and he and BUTCHER BOY vied for the Lipton Trophy in these waters. (In all, the sloop would be the club's flagship three times.)

BUTCHER BOY took part in a famous match against the superb yacht DETROIT off the Hotel del Coronado in 1905. This match, for which DETROIT was shipped to San Diego, was handily won by that sloop—being larger, faster, and built from the keel up for racing. Little BUTCHER BOY put up a sturdy battle, however, and

dogged the big eastern boat's heels most of the way. Although not designed for racing, she showed promise. (Today a diorama at the San Diego Maritime Museum depicts a tense moment in this match.)

BUTCHER BOY finally passed from Hamilton's hands into, successively, the ownerships of William Barker, Charles Tyerman, Walter Jahries, and Jerry MacMullen—San Diego yachtsmen all.

MacMullen bought the boat in 1917, when he was twenty. Then a journalism student at the University of California, he was destined to become one of the premier maritime historians of the West Coast. His hundreds of newspaper articles and four books on shipping elevated him to near-legendary status among old sea dogs and landlubbers alike.

MacMullen had the boat until 1930, and he never tired of singing her praises then or later. As early as 1934, he wrote for *Yachting* magazine about BUTCHER BOY:

"While her long keel made her slow in stays, she was a delight to steer at sea, and was fast and comfortable. And when it got nasty, she went through the water with far less pounding and fuss than her modern rivals. Of course, such a model is not the best thing for smart windward work, but with a quartering or beam wind, there was nothing which could stay with her. She gloried in a fresh breeze, and yet was remarkably good at ghosting along in light airs."



Another "early days" photo of BUTCHER BOY—taken by someone astride her bowsprit—shows the forward part of her first cabin well. SDMM file photo

One of young Jerry's colorful escapades with the boat occurred sometime in the 1920s. It seems that a local yacht club (which Jerry kept nameless in an article) decided upon an overnight jaunt to La Jolla—then a somewhat isolated satellite of San Diego. Accordingly, the yachtsmen sailed the few miles from San Diego Bay to La Jolla Cove, where they anchored their boats and went ashore.

BUTCHER BOY's owner was present when "the then commodore," as Jerry relates, "a lusty and profane man, all dressed up in his shoregoing best, had upset his skiff while coming in through the surf. When he scrambled ashore, he was saying—very loudly—things more suited to the ears of the crew of a lumber schooner than those of the conservative La Jollans who had gathered to greet him. Later in the evening, being himself one of the problem children, the commodore joined the wackier members for a bit of a good time."

The "good time" turned out to be a rousing drunk capped by stealing a lot of old Spanish costumes from a hotel basement. The more ebullient yachtsmen donned this gear and swayed up and down the sedate streets till dawn.

"As they marched," Jerry resumes, "they sang, and their singing was not good. Not only were they off-key at times, but the wording of some of their numbers was both inappropriate and improper. La Jolla was shocked, and not without reason. Finally most of the visitors tired of their fun, or just plain passed out."

The next day, a committee of distinguished La Jollans approached the bloodshot-eyed commodore, and firmly requested that neither he nor his seagoing myrmidons ever set foot in La Jolla again.



In 1930 MacMullen sold the boat to a Los Angeles yachtsman, and she left her San Diego home port for 41 years. In 1935 she was purchased by young Grant Allen, who whiled away a pleasant summer with a pal sailing from San Pedro to Catalina and back. "The reason for purchasing the boat," recalled Allen, "was to sail it to the South Pacific and live the romantic life as portrayed in various Hollywood films. We got as far as the Isthmus at Catalina Island where better sense prevailed and we returned to San Pedro."

Allen bought the boat for \$800 in those depression days. In September of that year he resold it for \$850 and resumed his education at UC Berkeley.

Like Jerry MacMullen and numerous others, Grant Allen loved to sail the sloop. His recollection is worth quoting at length:

"Being gaff-rigged did not allow the Butcher Boy to point as high into the wind as Marconi-rigged sloops, but when sailing 'off the wind' there was no boat in San Pedro or vicinity that could come close to the speed of the Butcher Boy. . . .

"During 1935 the cockpit arrangement was single, oval-rounded at the stern, and with a coaming approxi-

mately eight inches high. . . .

"Butcher Boy had kerosene running lights and two kerosene lamps below decks mounted on gimbals. The boat had a fairly large mains'l, which had a single row of reef points; these were used whenever the wind exceeded 25 knots.

"The point I remember most about the boat was how beautifully and easily she handled with the wind from about 45 degrees forward of the beam to about 45 degrees abaft the beam. Even with the low freeboard she was very dry and there certainly was no boat in the area that could match her speed with such wind directions."

Before and after Allen had her for that glorious summer, BUTCHER BOY was owned by W.W. Pedder, Harry Batcher, and Bob Daniels—all yachtsmen in the Los Angeles area.

In 1940 she was acquired by Rolland "Rollie" Kalayjian, a jolly sailor of Armenian descent, who decided to make some changes. Rollie rebuilt part of the boat, raising the freeboard and making other modifications. Originally, the boat had been equipped with a centerboard. This was now long gone, and Rollie installed a rocker fore-and-aft keel from the forefoot to the sternpost. He also added between 600 and 800 pounds of lead ballast. BUTCHER BOY still had her original cast-iron ballast blocks in place between her floor timbers; the blocks appeared custom-made for the boat, and were fitted with lifting rings. Rollie said they fit very snugly into place, more evidence of the craft that went into her building. On the chain-plate bolts, Rollie found old slot-machine tokens doing duty as washers. In the argot of BUTCHER BOY's youth, these were dubbed "Chinese coins"—and gave rise to a story that she actually had Chinese money hidden in her hull.

During Rollie's eight-year ownership, he kept the boat at San Pedro. Each May she participated in a race from that port to Coronado, and also in mid-winter regattas at San Miguel Island.

Rollie sold the boat to Al Upton in 1948, and he kept her in Los Angeles until 1952, then sold her to another party. Passing through several more hands, she was purchased by Ed Peterson in 1968. A few years later, veteran San Diego yachtsman Joe Jessop heard that she was still in existence somewhere in L.A.

Joe began a personal search. He finally heard that BUTCHER BOY—or what seemed to be BUTCHER BOY—was at Playa del Rey, lying quietly in the basin.

Jessop and Captain Ken Reynard (who at the time was supervising the restoration of STAR OF INDIA) took a jaunt north to see whether this really was the fabled BUTCHER BOY. At first sight, they were dubious. She was a double-ender, all right, but she just didn't look that old. Closer inspection and comparison with various documents revealed that, yes indeed, this was BUTCHER BOY.

The boat now sported a trunk cabin "with all the discomforts of modern conveniences," according to

Reynard. There were three cramped bunks, the aforementioned head "that only a dwarf could use," a four-cylinder Gray Seascout engine that could not easily be reached, and other annoyances. As a final touch, there was a "Princess" telephone—"about as useful as radar on a dugout canoe," grouched Reynard.

At this time (1971), the boat's owner was a faraway bank. Funding for BUTCHER BOY's purchase for the San Diego Maritime Museum had been raised by the Star of India Auxiliary. Reynard and Jessop arranged an inspection haul-out, which was "muffed" according to Reynard. After further negotiation, Reynard obtained control of the boat from the bank, and decided to sail her to San Diego, where a proper haul-out could be done.

Reynard later described BUTCHER BOY's voyage south to her old home:

"When a few riddles of the Seascout had been solved, we stowed some chow and other necessities aboard and shoved off, carrying only a small bit of cargo—a two-pound hunk of bacon to be delivered in San Diego by BUTCHER BOY, performing again a service she had not done in 65 years."

Reynard and a companion first went to Catalina under power:

"I thought my math had slipped a little," he said, "because we averaged 6.9 knots with that little egg-beater, and I would have been quite content with 5.0 or 5.5. At Avalon we topped off with gas, set sail, and were off in a light N'westerly—and she stepped right out, too, with her hand-me-down suit of sails of which the main constituted about a double reef in the mains'l of yore.

"The smell of gas persisted and we found the deck-fill pipe leaked at the deck, and couldn't be got at, at all. We found a piece of hose and siphoned out several gallons to end the danger—gas does *not* taste good! We were off Point Loma by 11:45 p.m.; about 6.7 knots under sail, and only a moderate but fair wind. Her legendary speed was real!"

Reynard brought her safely in, to the stares of the curious and admiring, and ever since that day, she's been part of the small craft collection of the San Diego Maritime Museum.

Today she rests in storage. The Maritime Museum hopes eventually to have BUTCHER BOY as the centerpiece in a permanent exhibit of small craft, alongside the Kettenburg PC racer WINGS, the Monterey fishing boat BUCCANEER, and other examples of fine boats the Museum has acquired over the years.

BUTCHER BOY represents the ultimate model of the salmon boat, a development that began in the 1860s. She is among the last few harbor workboats in existence dating from the turn of the century. Workboat, racing yacht, and pleasure craft, she symbolizes a colorful time in West Coast maritime lore.



BUTCHER BOY comes home! From left to right, Joe Jessop, Ken Reynard, Bill Cooper and a deckhand make her snug at a San Diego dock, c. 1971—after an absence of 41 years from the city of her birth. SDMM file photo

Sources

- Allen, Grant. "Memories of the Butcher Boy", *Mains'l Haul*, Fall 1988.
- Jessop, Joseph. Letter to Jerry MacMullen about BUTCHER BOY, 1971. MacMullen Collection, San Diego Maritime Museum.
- Kalayjian, Roland. Telephone interview with author, October 9, 1989.
- La Dow, Charles R. *The Ships, The House and The Men: A History of the San Diego Yacht Club*. San Diego: Frazee Industries, 1977.
- MacMullen, Jerry. "The Butcher Boy Comes Home", *Mains'l Haul*, June 1971.
- _____. "Notes from 'The Butcher Shop'", *Mains'l Haul*, September 1971.
- _____. "Salmon Boat Saga", *The San Diego Union*, May 29, 1960.
- _____. "The La Jolla Invasion: Once was Too Often", *The San Diego Union*, September 1, 1963.
- _____. "Navy & S.D.: Boss Hardy Deserves Some Credit", *The San Diego Union*, July 25, 1965.
- _____. "The Salmon Boat", *Yachting*, June 1934.
- Reynard, Ken. Unpublished monograph in MacMullen Collection, San Diego Maritime Museum.



BRITANNIA, the royal yacht of Great Britain, makes a grand entrance into San Diego Bay in 1983. The yacht is operated by a special Royal Navy crew for the British monarchy.

Photo courtesy of Ed Coffey

When the Queen Sailed into San Diego

By Al Deahl

"This letter just came in for you, and look at the back. There's a real seal, and I mean a real seal."

I was in the studios of KPBS radio and was talking with our receptionist. At that time I was a community producer for the station, and some time earlier the word had leaked out of Washington that Queen Elizabeth II was planning a visit to San Diego.

Since this was the first time that a reigning British monarch had visited the west coast, her appearance in Southern California became an historic event beyond the glitz of the proposed tour. During the ensuing weeks, I pestered every known source to garner a spot on Broadway Pier near the area where the royal yacht BRITANNIA would be moored. We had planned a full day's radio coverage of the occasion.

Finally, a week before the planned arrival, I was told that it would be impossible for KPBS to have a location on the pier. It seems that there were more than 6,000 credentialed reporters clamoring for space in addition to CBS, NBC and ABC. So, I had given up hope.

Then "the" letter arrived with the great seal. I was more than curious. I opened the envelope with care, and there "it" was, an invitation to meet the queen at a reception aboard the BRITANNIA.

Finally the day arrived, February 26, 1983. It was a day not easily forgotten, not just for the queen, but because of the weather.

It was cold, foggy and generally miserable. Each hour seemed to be introduced by a torrential downpour. Our engineers finally got us on the air. Cables of all

descriptions lay on the open floors like so much displaced spaghetti. It was a wonder that we all didn't get electrocuted.

Suddenly some voices raised above the ruckus: "There she is. . . . She's coming."

Squinting through the rain, a blue shadow quietly sailed into San Diego harbor. I must say, it was impressive. With all flags and banners flying, Her Majesty's Yacht *BRITANNIA* moved out of the fog as the rain stopped and the sun poked through the fleeting clouds.

By now thousands of people had gathered at the Embarcadero on San Diego's waterfront. Hundreds of police and law enforcement officials seemed to suddenly appear everywhere. But the crowd was in a festive mood; after all, the fairy tale queen had come to their town by sea. It all seemed so appropriate and far more dramatic than an arrival from a smoke—and noise—belching airplane.

Now it was time to go aboard. With invitation, press and security passes, I presented myself at the ship's gangway and noted that there were 60 of us from the press, culled from the 6,000 reporters covering the event.

A short protocol briefing advised: "Please don't squeeze too tightly during the 'hand shake phase,' as the queen must meet and shake hands with thousands of people during the next days."

Once aboard, we were ushered to the covered after part of the ship. Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip stood next to each other and greeted us individually. Moving down the reception line, a staff member pointed us in the direction of a bar, a welcome oasis for a tired group.

The magnificently dressed steward, in a most salubrious tone, inquired if I wished a cocktail. I thought for a moment, and rationalizing that I was aboard the most famous ship in the United Kingdom, decided I should have a gin and tonic. Turning to watch the queen, I didn't pay attention to the bartender. He had filled the

glass with gin, with a touch of tonic and a lemon peel; no ice, as the Brits do. Having been up and broadcasting for hours, I was desperately thirsty and, as I took the drink, I gulped.

I suddenly understood, to my horror, that I was partaking of the finest gin, and by the time I realized it, I had drunk beyond half the glass. I remember recalling quite vividly how I would control myself should I start to wobble.

That didn't happen, thank heavens, and San Diego's reputation remained intact.

We were aboard for the better part of an hour and it was amazing to watch two of the most famous persons in the world and how they handled their duties. As a wag once told me, just think of Britain as a great factory and the queen as the Chairman of the Board.

Her job, with the assistance of her husband, Prince Philip, is to sell her product, Great Britain. And that, she does with grace. She had the ability to put everyone at ease with a pleasant approach centering on questions about California, an area that she genuinely seemed to find fascinating.

The *BRITANNIA* is small by most standards, being rated a bit under 6,000 tons. She carries 21 officers and 256 enlisted personnel. Half of the crew are permanent members and remain attached to the ship for their entire career. All are volunteers from the Royal Navy.

An interesting side-note: As far as possible, orders on the upper deck are executed without spoken words or commands. Talk about being trained with class.

Soon it was time to leave, and I took one last look at a life style that probably will disappear in our lifetime. It's too bad, because a good old-fashioned fairy tale is food for the soul. San Diego will never see the likes of it again.

(Ed. Note: Al Deahl, a longtime Museum member and frequent contributor to *Mains'l Haul*, is associated with KSPA-AM Radio. This article is reprinted with the permission of the Pomerado Newspaper Group.)





The sun is just rising and the diesel-electric ferry SILVER STRAND is nearing the Coronado slip, from San Diego, in this 1950 view. Built by General Engineering at Alameda in 1927 she originally was the GOLDEN SHORE of Southern Pacific-Golden Gate Ferries Ltd., and later the Puget Sound Navigation Company's ELWHA. Brought to San Diego during World War II, she served well until her 1969 retirement.

MacMullen Collection, SDMM

The Wooden-Electrics: Ferries that Served Faithfully

By John C. Richards

San Francisco Bay became the diesel-electric ferry empire of the west coast with the building of a massive fleet of diesel-electric ferries in the Roaring Twenties. These included the sturdy "Wooden-Electrics" and the graceful "Steel-Electrics," the latter being neatly illustrated in the 1993 Spring and Summer issues of the San Diego Maritime Museum's journal of maritime history, *Mains'l Haul*.

Why the names of these classes? Wooden-Electrics had wooden hulls and diesel-electric propulsion while the Steel-Electrics were built with the same propulsion but with steel hulls instead of wood. The history of the Steel-Electrics can be read in the issues mentioned above.



The first of the Wooden-Electrics and the first ferry of diesel-electric propulsion on San Francisco Bay was the 1922 GOLDEN GATE. She was built by the Robertson Shipbuilders of Alameda and measured about 220 feet in length. Entirely of wood construction, her car deck

was about three-quarters covered over. The passenger deck featured a mostly sheltered promenade around the passenger deckhouse and a stacked deckhouse at each end which contained staff accommodations and elevated wheelhouses. Her stack, off-centered, was a short rounded can with a lid on top.

The second Wooden-Electric was more modern. Measuring about the same as the GOLDEN GATE and built a year later by the same yard, this one was named GOLDEN WEST. She had the same end design as the GOLDEN GATE, but the passenger cabin was extended to the full beam with just the ends serving as open promenades. Passenger heads were located on the centerline at one end of the cabin while the galley occupied the other end with the restaurant, complete with blinds, located at one of the four corners. Like the GOLDEN GATE, this one was all-wood in construction.

Alameda's General Engineering and Drydock Company was awarded a contract to build five larger Wooden-Electrics. These measured 240 feet in total length and 60 feet in total beam. The first was launched

in 1926 and was named GOLDEN STATE. She had an almost fully enclosed passenger deckhouse and an additional staff deckhouse was added behind a more elevated wheelhouse at each end.

She was followed in 1927 by the GOLDEN BEAR, GOLDEN POPPY and GOLDEN SHORE. The last in this fleet of Wooden-Electrics was the 1928 GOLDEN AGE. All five of these had the same kind of stacks as the two smaller, earlier Wooden-Electrics, but these had two instead of one. The latter four were better in design with sheltered promenades at each end. Rooflines of these promenades followed the angles of previous vessels built for Bay services, especially the sidewheel steamer EUREKA.

The GOLDEN AGE was the most advanced vessel in this class with dining area improvements and a revised wheelhouse access to make her, perhaps, the only double-ended ferry on the Bay that offered her captain and navigating assistants total sheltered wheelhouse access. Also, on all five vessels, one end had vertical sliding doors on the car deck. These five ferries had an unusual "humpback" sheer.

Unlike their 1927 Steel-Electric counterparts, the Wooden-Electrics were fitted with external rudder tillers with the steering cables and chains exposed. They required rudder locking pins.

Machinery for the Wooden-Electrics was of the Werkspor and the Ingersoll-Rand varieties. Three diesel-electric sets were fitted in the 240-footers and two were in the two smaller ones.

All seven Wooden-Electrics had an airhorn whistle and a white 360-degree light installed on top of each of their wheelhouses and red and green lights were installed on the sides.

The original owner of these vessels was the Golden Gate Automobile Ferry Company. Their ferries were originally golden in color and operated from Hyde Street, San Francisco, to communities north. By the turn of the 1930s, all of the GGAFC ferries were repainted basically white and merged with the automobile ferries of the rival Southern Pacific and Northwestern Pacific railroads. This line was known as Southern Pacific Golden Gate Ferries, Limited, and was successful until the great Bay bridges of the late 1930s opened to traffic and gave the ferries the pink slip. Automobile ferries ended their runs out of San Francisco by the turn of the 1940s, but the Wooden-Electrics finished their Bay careers in the late 1930s.



The GOLDEN WEST was immediately sent to the San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company for service on San Diego Bay, where she was renamed NORTH ISLAND. Her passenger cabin was drastically narrowed to make room for open promenades on the sides. Lifeboats were moved from the corners to the sides to make way for foot passenger debarkation gates. Windowpanes were removed from the car deck windows and were enlarged to resemble the giant portholes of the 1929 CORONADO



The San Diego ferry NORTH ISLAND, formerly the GOLDEN WEST, in the Coronado slips on September 2, 1940. The shorter of the two stacks is hers; the taller one belongs to the ferry MORENA behind her.
Photo courtesy of John L. Whitmeyer

II and 1931 SAN DIEGO. An unusual feature on these three was that much of the passenger deck railings were routed in towards the deckhouse with a large amount of void outer deck space. An interesting question could be asked. Did the U.S. Coast Guard or U.S. Navy request this space to be immediately available for placing extra lifesaving equipment during wartime?

Meanwhile, the GOLDEN GATE was reportedly dismantled.

During the above period, Alexander Peabody of the Puget Sound Navigation Company, better known as the Black Ball line, was in search of more ferries for his overburdened services. He bought the remaining Wooden-Electrics and others and had them towed north to Puget Sound. The GOLDEN BEAR didn't make it, as she was wrecked en route and her remains were used as a breakwater in British Columbia. The other four arrived safely and eventually donned the Black Ball color scheme of black hulls and band below the car deck windows, white superstructures with buff trim, and crimson and black stacks.

Lifeboats on the GOLDEN AGE were moved up to the hurricane deck and alterations were made to the cabin outer corners on the GOLDEN STATE to create foot passenger debarkation gates and these were assigned to routes out of Seattle as KLAHANIE and KEHLOKEN, respectively. GOLDEN POPPY and GOLDEN SHORE were basically unchanged and were renamed CHETZEMOKA and ELWHA I, respectively. The 240-foot Wooden-Electrics were seen on most Puget Sound ferry runs.



In 1944, Black Ball sold the ELWHA I to the San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company and she went down south as SILVER STRAND to help the CORONADO II, SAN DIEGO and NORTH ISLAND handle traffic on the short San Diego Bay crossing between San Diego and Coronado. SILVER STRAND was altered the same as KLAHANIE for the installation of foot passenger debarkation gates.

Photographs indicate that the galley smokestacks

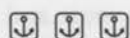


The wreck of the SILVER STRAND at the Fish Harbor Breakwater in Los Angeles, on December 3, 1970, following the great Thanksgiving Day storm of that year. It was a sad end to a fine old ferryboat.

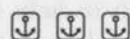
Photo courtesy of John L. Whitmeyer

were missing on the NORTH ISLAND and SILVER STRAND, an obvious indication that they were stripped of their galleys. This crossing was only a half mile in length and galley service was impractical. Windowpanes were removed from the car deck windows on the SILVER STRAND, which remained their former size. Also, the "cubby holes" were removed. The SILVER STRAND may have possessed the biggest passenger cabin anyone could imagine seeing on any ferry run of the shortness of the San Diego-Coronado run!

In 1954, the 242-foot, all-steel diesel-electric vessel CROWN CITY joined the run and had a completely open car deck and a much smaller cabin with upholstered benches running lengthwise.



Heading back up to Puget Sound, some 80% of the Black Ball ferries, including the Wooden-Electrics, were taken over by the State of Washington on June 1, 1951, and were placed under a new agency called Washington State Ferries. The fleet was repainted green and white. The new ferry system modernized the KLAHANIE by replacing the windows on her car deck with plywood sheets with portholes cut in them. She was virtually the cleanest-looking Wooden-Electric on the Sound. The "cubby holes" were removed from her and the CHETZEMOKA. The Wooden-Electrics on the Sound, which carried 50 cars and 400 to 770 passengers, continued to serve their customers for many more years and began to show their age later on. The three made their final runs in the early 1970s and were retired in 1973 when Washington State Ferries introduced the double-ended ferries SPOKANE and WALLA WALLA.



In San Diego, meanwhile, the completion of the Coronado-San Diego Bridge in 1969 marked the end of the ferries on San Diego Bay. Of the two Wooden-Electrics there, the SILVER STRAND went north to Los Angeles

and was wrecked dockside by the Thanksgiving Day windstorm of 1970. The NORTH ISLAND went to Ensenada, Mexico, for use in the fisheries industry and was later dismantled. Their steel-hulled comrade CROWN CITY journeyed north to Puget Sound to become the KULSHAN and was sometimes assisted on the Mukilteo-Clinton run by the SILVER STRAND's sister, the CHETZEMOKA. The KULSHAN, not liked by many Puget Sound riders, was known as the "Pneumonia Wagon" as motorists shivered on cold winter crossings (ferry regulations require vehicle motors be turned off during crossings) and her coffee machine was prone to breakdowns. KULSHAN left the Sound in 1982 and went to New York to work on the Lower Manhattan-Governors Island run as the GOVERNOR for the U.S. Coast Guard.

Before all that, an unusual event may have taken place on San Diego Bay around 1968. Two ferries which had borne the name ELWHA at various times may have met each other. Washington State Ferries awarded a contract to National Steel and Shipbuilding Company of San Diego to build four monstrous superferries. These 382-foot, 160-car, 2500-passenger ferries were constructed there between 1966 and 1968. They were named HYAK, KALEETAN, YAKIMA and ELWHA II. When the new ELWHA II went out on sea trials and on her delivery voyage to Puget Sound, she may have passed the SILVER STRAND, which was ELWHA I when she was on Puget Sound.



All was not well for the dispositions of the rest of the Wooden-Electrics on Puget Sound. The CHETZEMOKA left the Sound at the end of a tow line in 1977 and was sunk in a Pacific storm en route back to San Francisco to become a boutique. The KEHLOKEN was towed to the Lake Washington Shipyard in Houghton for mooring. KEHLOKEN was arsoned in September of 1979 and the burned hulk was towed to the south end of Whidbey Island and sunk for use as a fish reef. The KLAHANIE



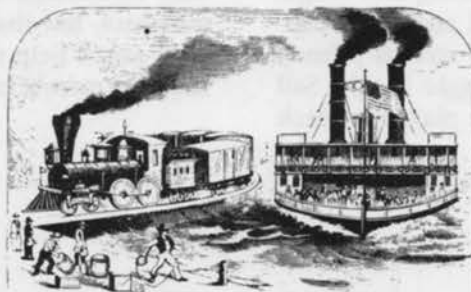
A view of the San Diego-Coronado ferry landing on the Coronado side of our bay. The ferries CORONADO (left) and NORTH ISLAND (right) are loading vehicles for their next runs. This was a view familiar to countless San Diegans and Coronadoans during the 1940s, '50s and '60s.

Photo courtesy of Robert Sharp

passed through numerous owners and was moored at several locations, at last coming to rest on the mudflats of the Duwamish River. There she began to fall apart. Finally, in July 1990, a mysterious fire destroyed her. This punctuated the end of the fleet of Wooden-Electrics.

While most of the Steel-Electrics have enjoyed pro-

longed careers, the Wooden-Electrics have vanished. Four of them laid the foundations of modern ferry service on Puget Sound and all seven served California. Many people will remember these wooden ferries with fondness as these vessels have given their riders faithful service. So long, Wooden-Electrics!



From the Helm

These are difficult days for the Maritime Museum, but they are also days of change and renewed hope for the future. The Museum has recently initiated a major staff reorganization, seeking to reduce operating costs.

As you know from recent mailings, the financial situation of the Museum continues to be a source of grave concern. The downturn in the local economy during the past two years has had a severe impact on our revenues, which are largely dependent on paid admissions. We are making every attempt to turn this situation around, and to generate additional revenue.

Exhibits are being rotated and numerous improvements have already been put into place. An active

search is under way for a new Executive Director, who will combine the duties of that office with those of the Curator. The Library is being kept open with a combination of part-time professional and volunteer labor.

We ask that all our members stand by us in this difficult time. The citizens of San Diego have always come through for the Maritime Museum in the past, and we believe they will do so again. The recovery process will take time—but with the community's support, we can make it happen. We thank you for your past assistance, and request that you "stay the course" with us.

—Charles R. Allen, President

Development Report

Change is often feared, yet it is the most important factor separating the many small museums which struggle year-by-year to attract the same audiences, same grants, and same publicity.

Museums which fully understand the need to change, to display contemporary attitudes in their exhibits, and stress entertainment, education, and fun at their events, realize the fruit of their labor immediately in ticket sales, memberships, donations, visibility, and growth.

While I have only worked at the Maritime Museum for four years, I have been writing about the Museum, ships and crew for 10 years. I have watched the Museum slowly test the water in so many areas. I believe that what the Museum does today will make tomorrow possible, and I applaud the hands-on approach of our Board of Trustees in ushering in this change.

One major change at the Maritime Museum is the events calendar initiated at the beginning of 1994. Now, as we near year's end, I am pleased to report that 1994 was most successful in that regard. We have never had a year of events quite like this, and we introduced thousands of people to our ships.

We hosted movies and music throughout the year which appealed to audiences of all ages. We wrapped up *Movies Before the Mast*, our classic nautical film series on the sails of the *STAR OF INDIA*, with *The Bounty* in October. Other classic films included *Swiss Family Robinson*, *The Sea Hawk*, *The Sea Wolf*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, and *Reap the Wild Wind*.

Chanteymen who played the decks of our ships included the delightful Jackstraws, headed by Loren Smith and David Kendall, and featuring the magic violin of Wanda Law. Others who held audiences captive with their musical magic were the eternal Johnny Walker and the highly entertaining Raggle Taggle. Sail handlers worked high aloft as the music played on deck below.

As you read this, Museum staffers are preparing a

lively calendar for 1995. We are working towards a sea chantey concert series, comic opera on *STAR OF INDIA*, theatrical performances, and more movies. Among the movies being considered are *The Crimson Pirate*, *Captain Horatio Hornblower*, *South Pacific*, and *Hook*. We'll also bring you a whole new selection of nautical cartoons dating back to the 1930s.

We would like to host storytelling and puppet shows for children on *STAR OF INDIA*, and are presently seeking quality programs. Any of our members with background in these areas are encouraged to call me with ideas. Needless to say, we are also seeking sponsors in the community.

A new and exciting program is now being developed. We hope to have overnight classroom visits to the *STAR* in 1995 which will play up the history of our ships and waterfront. If successful, we plan to host overnight visits up to 25 nights a month, throughout the year.

Our goals for 1995 are many. Primary among these is the move to a permanent shoreside facility. A move to Broadway Pier would allow the Museum to build a cultural and interactive future on shore. Maritime Museum staff and trustees are working very hard to that end, which would mark the beginning of a whole new era.

Another goal is to boost our membership and annual donations. You can help us in a number of ways. In this issue of *Mains'l Haul* you will find a membership application and donation envelope. Please take a moment to fill out both.

Soon you will receive the calendar of events for 1995. We hope you'll not only mark your calendar early and take advantage of the many discounts available to members, but that you'll bring your friends along. We hope you'll help us now as we strive to build our exhibits, our membership, and our place in the community.

—Joseph Ditler,
Development Director

Library Log

By far one of the best benefits of my position with the Museum is the opportunity to speak to people and teach them about maritime history. Historians are in essence teachers. They use various media—print, films, slides, lectures, artifacts and collections—to teach the present about the past.

In working for the Speakers Bureau, some of our most receptive audiences have been students. Young people can be bored stiff by a lifeless presentation of history. But if the story is told with humor, colorful anecdotes and an artifact that a pirate or explorer might have used, the kids' interest blossoms.

One of the best classes I have taught recently was Ms. Patricia Koerv's seventh graders at Jefferson Middle School in Oceanside. It was indeed a privilege to teach these kids for a couple of hours, so keen was their enthusiasm. In educating young people, one is inspired by how everything is fresh and new to them, and their questions often show an original viewpoint.

Ms. Koerv's students sent me letters later, and some of their comments are interesting:

"You taught us about the ships really neatly. You knew exactly what to say to us. It's very hard work to work with the sails. I know you need balance for that." (Chris Duffy)

"It was interesting to find out how ropes are made. I thought the living conditions [on board EUTERPE] were

horrible. I liked the part about the training for the crew." (Johanna Hummer)

"I learned about navigation from the diagrams you drew on the board and talked about. I learned that people on the ship who wanted to raise the sails had to climb about 100 feet. I also learned what the people on the boat ate. They were brave travelers." (Summer Bray)

"The pictures of the Star of India were great. I learned that the Star of India is real old. I hope to see you again in our classroom." (Jessica Lopez)

"I learned how the sailors use the ropes. I learned that the Star of India needs plenty of workers. The Star of India carries lots of people." (Zaide Franco)

"What I learned from your visit is that the Star of India is so old yet it can sail for many more years and not have too many problems. I learned how to use the black sun dial [sextant] and that she does not have any motors." (Bernadette Sanchez)

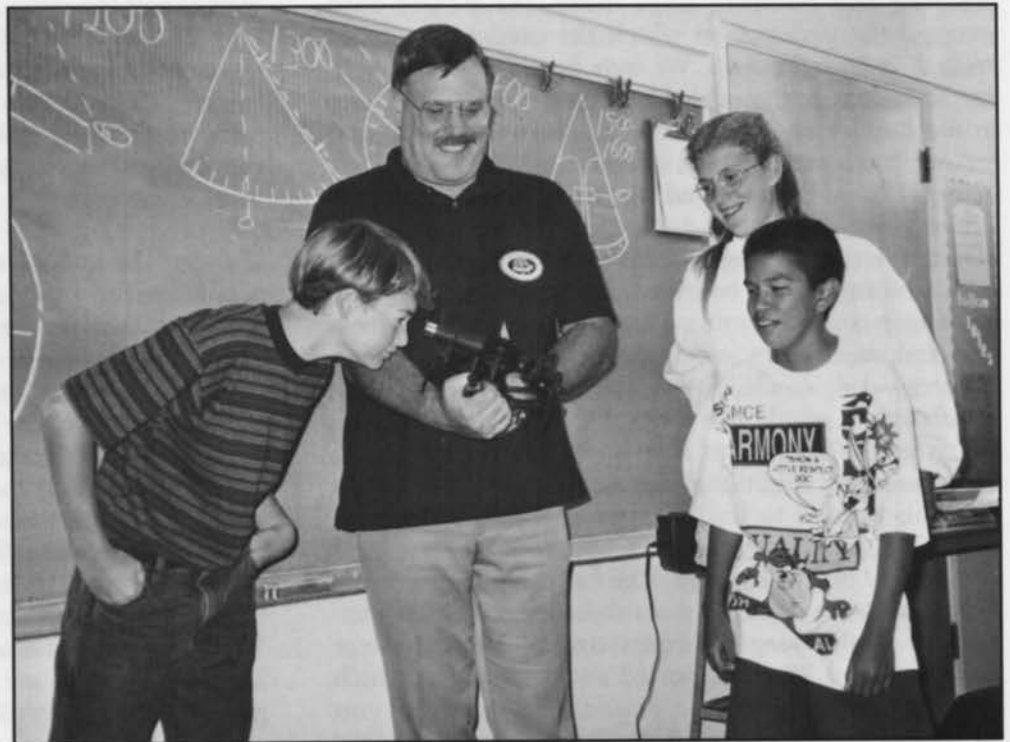
"I learned that (1) the past is cool, (2) the sextant came a long way, (3) the Medea did not belong to T. Roosevelt. I hope to see you again." (Marshall Richter)

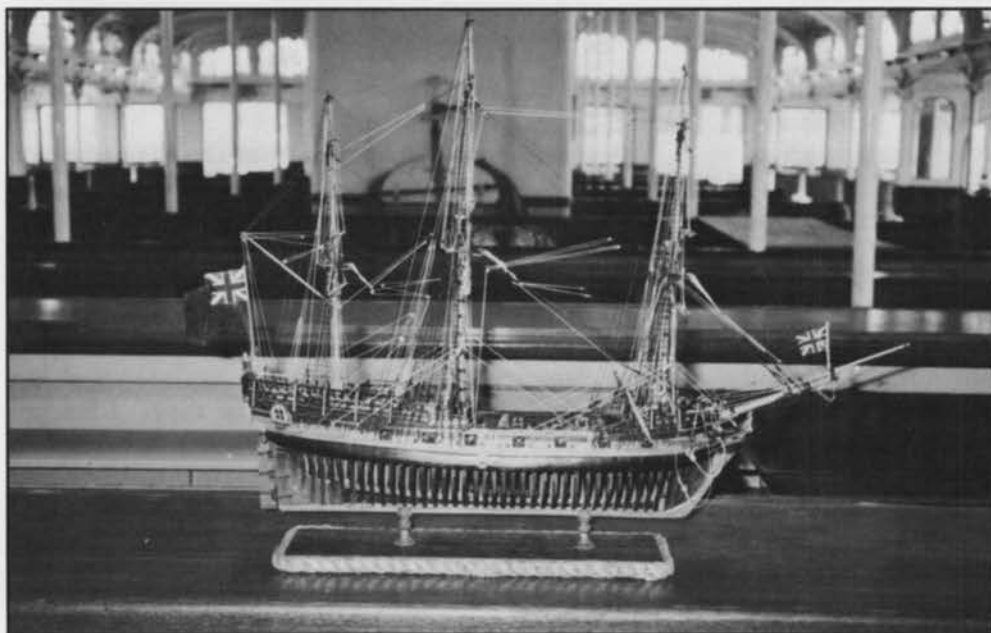
Yes, Marshall, I couldn't agree more—the past is "cool" indeed, and I hope you and your fellow students will continue to learn about it. Thanks, all of you, for the chance to introduce you to a small part of maritime history.

—Craig Arnold, Librarian

Museum historian Craig Arnold shows members of Mrs. Patricia Koerv's seventh grade class at Jefferson Middle School in Oceanside the workings of a sextant.

Photo courtesy of Patricia Koerv





Ship modeler Jack Klein has just finished this superb plank-on-frame model of the British sloop-of-war KINGFISHER, showing her as she appeared during our Revolutionary War.

Photo courtesy of Jack Klein

Ship Model Shop

It is embarrassing to say that for the first time ever, I was responsible for the near destruction of one of our best models, that of the M.V. SAN DIEGO. While rearranging the ferry exhibit recently, a fellow crew member and I were hoisting the case from the model using block and tackle. As the case cleared the point of doing damage to the loading ramp attached to the model, the top of the case fouled something. In the process of clearing and hoisting once more, the power cord snagged the pedestal on which the model rested and "rolled" it onto the deck. We were heartsick at the damage to such a fine model. My thoughts kept returning to the builder of SAN DIEGO—my friend, mentor, and former business partner, the late Bill Benson. That being a Friday, the weekend was glum.

The vessel herself had fared rather well, with no major structural damage except the passenger deck railings, running lights, boat and davits on one side. The passenger compartment separated from the deck as a unit and, aside from some pillars and pilothouse deck features—i.e., cowled vents, engine order telegraphs, search lights, pilothouse doors, etc.—was undamaged. Every seat or bench, but two, broke free as well as the stack assembly. Additional small items too numerous to mention needed to find homes. The plastic "sea" in which the ferry was mounted was in six large pieces and dozens of small shards. The car ramp and hoisting towers were the darndest three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle you could imagine, consisting of a dozen large structures and 75-100 assorted sticks, many of which seemed interchangeable depending on what you wanted to build from them. In short—the Erector Set from hell.

Monday morning brought frenzied activity in the shop. I had been feeling guilty all weekend and was

eager to set things to right. Joe Bompensiero and Jack Klein were eager to help in the restoration and got started by sorting all of the many pieces shortly after being briefed on the situation. But with Joe tackling the "sea," Jack working on the passenger compartment and pilothouses, and me working on the passenger deck and hull, all that was lacking, by the end of the work-day, were a dozen loose benches, the trolley (all 50 pieces) and the ramp support towers (still in pieces).

By 10 a.m. on Wednesday morning all of the repairs were completed and once again the case was raised to receive M.V. SAN DIEGO.

I want to thank Jack and Joe for all of their help and the dispatch with which they worked. Well done, gentlemen!

In other news, the Covered Wagon Association has changed the site for their September 1995 reunion to San Diego to dedicate the model of USS LANGLEY (CV-1). However, some degree of frustration has set in with this model, as we are four months beyond the brass due date and no delivery yet. Joe has begun work on the Revolutionary War privateer OLIVER CROMWELL in the interim with the hull quite advanced.

Jack was putting the last items on his British sloop-of-war KINGFISHER when interrupted by the SAN DIEGO accident. He is virtually finished. Bob Cunningham was in Arkansas and missed the fun with ferries session, but his Alaska Packers STAR OF INDIA is looking fine in her "straw" colors and extended deckhouse. Chuck Hill and Suzanne Levonian are well along in their respective rigging jobs with CUTTY SARK and HALF MOON, respectively.

—Robert Crawford,
Curator of Ship Models

Curatorial Report

As our members know, we are now making changes at the Maritime Museum. Change is sometimes needed for an organization to grow and prosper. In the case of a museum, this is especially true of its exhibits.

The Curatorial Committee has already carried out several alterations of exhibits. Visitors to the main deck of the BERKELEY will note that a number of displays have been shifted or replaced in the ongoing effort to make our Museum more inviting. Efforts are under way to improve the lighting in dim areas, and to upgrade the signage. Good signage is a "must" for exhibits, for that is how artifacts are interpreted by visitors.

A museum is judged by its exhibits. This is true for paying visitors as well as those who award grants and endowments. A museum with poor exhibits will not succeed in attracting new members and donors, or even in keeping its attendance up. Every once in a while, a museum must overhaul its exhibits, rotate them, and bring in new material to keep the public coming back. The public is easily bored, and will stay away in droves from a museum which does not make a constant effort to attract them.

It does not take a great deal of money to improve exhibits—but it does require thought. For one thing, it is vital to have a sense of what attracts the public. New trends in exhibits include interactive, "hands-on" displays that adults and kids can manipulate to "see how it worked." An example might be the steering wheel of an old sailing ship, or a rope to haul on to raise a sail.

Mixed media exhibits are also growing in popularity. In these displays, different elements such as documents, photographs, artifacts, etc., are blended in the same area to achieve an overall effect. For example, an old sea captain's life might be shown in a wall case holding a photo of him, an old spyglass and captain's uniform, a log book open to a dramatic passage, a letter, his clay pipe and so on.

Color is very important. Color should be everywhere in a museum. People are largely attracted to a place by the sensory effect it has on them. Sound is used in the more advanced museum, ranging from music to informational messages at exhibits. Some museums are experimenting with tactile exhibits which allow visitors to feel certain textures.

The point is, you have to give the public variety. You have to give them not just information, but an *experience* they will remember—and want to enjoy again.

Keeping all these things in mind, we are working hard to improve *your* Maritime Museum. We need your help to accomplish this. Ideas and suggestions are always welcome, but better still is the person willing to pitch in and work, or donate funding for new exhibits. With *your* support for change, ladies and gentlemen, we can make it happen.

—William Brown,
Curatorial Chairman,
Board of Trustees

Volunteer of the Quarter

Our Volunteer of the Quarter for the Fall 1994 issue is Charles "Chuck" Hill, one of our devout tribe of ship modelers.

Chuck, a San Diego native who spent 30 years as a biology and physiology teacher at Point Loma High School, first became interested in ship models through a course given on the subject by the late Bill Benson, at UCSD Extension. When the course was over, Benson invited Hill to work at The Gray Whale, a ship model shop that Bill operated. When Benson moved on to the Maritime Museum, Chuck Hill followed, by then thoroughly hooked on the fun of building miniature vessels.

Since his retirement from teaching, Chuck has spent an increasing amount of time in our model shop, primarily working on a beautiful wooden model of the clipper ship CUTTY SARK. "I can't imagine a more invigorating environment for ship modeling," he says.

So far, Chuck has built five ship models altogether. Within the Museum's current model collection, he most admires our John Washington model of the frigate RALEIGH, calling the late modeler "a tremendous craftsman . . . an inspiration." Hill also salutes the late Dr. Charles "Doc" Stern, whom he found always ready with helpful suggestions. (It was Dr. Stern who



*Volunteer of the Quarter
Chuck Hill labors painstakingly on his model of
the composite clipper ship
CUTTY SARK.*

Photo courtesy of Chuck Hill

restored the RALEIGH model.)

"Individuals at the Museum have always been open and helpful," comments Hill. "They have an incredible library and picture collection, and my fellow modeler Bob Crawford has been exceedingly helpful. I certainly am grateful for the help of modelers Jack Klein and Joe Bompensiero, too."

For all that you add to the Museum, Chuck, we salute you. Keep up the good work!

Star of India Auxiliary

The STAR OF INDIA celebrated her 131st birthday on November 14, 1994. A fun party was held two days earlier, sponsored as always by the Auxiliary. It was great to toast the "old girl" on making it through yet another year.

Our annual Christmas Bazaar and Luncheon on November 16 was a rousing success. We thank everyone who came. It was fun to get some of our Christmas shopping done early, and help the Museum at the same time.

Don't forget our Parade of Lights Party to be held on December 11, 1994. This is our biggest party of the year and is almost always a sellout. So get your reservations in early. All seating will be reserved.

The Rummage Room at the "B" Street Pier is open every Monday from 9:30 to 11:30, so clean out your cupboards and closets and help us have the greatest Rummage Sale ever! We are back to the drawing board on our elevator, but we are still on track! We hope to start construction soon.

—Rita J. Greig,
President, Star of India Auxiliary

Calendar of Events

Note: Please call the Museum Office at 234-9153 for details of time and exact location, where not given.

DECEMBER

11: Parade of Lights Party, BERKELEY. Don't miss this great party—the biggest and best of the year! Call Mrs. John Sullivan at 237-1039 or Mrs. John Mawhinney at 696-6068 to reserve your place today!

20: Auxiliary Christmas Party

MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

A non-profit, educational corporation
Council of American Maritime Museums
Conference of California Historical Societies
American Association of Museums
International Congress of Maritime Museums

Board of Trustees

Charles R. Allen, *President*
Patrick Goddard, *First Vice President*
Michael O'Bryan, *Second Vice President*
Bob Baker, *Secretary-Treasurer*

Kenneth Andersen
Capt. Carl G. Bowman
Dr. William F. Brown
Ray Carpenter
Arthur DeFever
Roy Drew
Sam Duran
Daniel Duvall
William Dysart
August Felando
Dan Frank
Gordon Frost

Dr. Fred Frye
Hal Georgens
Anthony Ghio
Bruce Gordon
Rita Greig
Gordon Lacy
Sen. James R. Mills
Marge Palmer
C. Edward Paxton
John Rebelo, Jr.
Capt. Dave Sinclair
Milton Stratford

MAINS'L HAUL is published quarterly (wind and weather permitting) at the headquarters of the Maritime Museum aboard the ferryboat BERKELEY, 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, California 92101. (619) 234-9153.

Mains'l Haul—An order in tacking ship bidding 'Swing the main yards.' To loot, steal, or 'acquire'.

—John Masefield

Craig Arnold, *Editor*

MARITIME MUSEUM ASS'N. OF SAN DIEGO

Bark *Star of India*

1306 N. Harbor Dr., San Diego, Calif. 92101

NON PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

San Diego, Calif.

Permit No. 1089





MAINS'L HAUL



MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

VOL. 31, NO. 2

A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY

WINTER 1995



\$2.50



On the cover . . .

One of the worst disasters to Allied arms in World War II was the sinking of USS Indianapolis (CA-35) by a Japanese submarine on July 30, 1945, and the subsequent week-long ordeal of her crew, adrift on the vast wastes of the western Pacific. San Diego marine artist Richard DeRosset has created this dramatic scene of the vessel's loss.

MAINS'L HAUL

MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

VOL. 31, NO. 2

A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY

WINTER 1995

Contents

- 4 The Loss of USS INDIANAPOLIS: An Oral History,
 Dr. Melvin Modisher with Robert G. Wright
- 11 Last of the Great Liners: QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, *Richard W. Tatelman*
- 15 What Our Ships Were Doing . . .
- 19 From the Helm
- 20 The Cabin Bookrack: *The Heart of a Man: A Naval Pilot's Vietnam Diary*
- 21 Library Log
- 22 Development Report
- 22 Star of India Auxiliary
- 23 Ship Model Shop
- 23 Volunteer of the Quarter
- 24 Calendar of Events

Craig Arnold, Editor

Mains'l Haul is the historical journal of the San Diego Maritime Museum, 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101. Send all submissions and queries to Editor, *Mains'l Haul*, at the above address. No portion of this journal may be reproduced or stored in any electronic retrieval system without the written permission of the Editor.



A superb view of INDIANAPOLIS under way. With her handsome lines, it is easy to see why Admiral Spruance chose her as his flagship.

SDMM file photo

The Loss of USS *Indianapolis*: An Oral History

By Dr. Melvin Modisher with Robert G. Wright

Ed. Note: The sinking of USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA-35) and its horrifying aftermath near the end of World War II has been documented in at least two books, numerous articles, and even a TV movie over the years. However, Maritime Museum Oral Historian Robert G. Wright recently provided a fresh perspective on this tragedy via a lengthy interview with one of the cruiser's survivors, Dr. Melvin Modisher, who at the time was a medical officer in the ship. As this year marks the 50th anniversary of the sinking, we present Mr. Wright's interview with Dr. Modisher.

ROBERT WRIGHT: What is your full name?

MELVIN MODISHER: Melvin Wayne Modisher. I was born in Sharpsville, Pennsylvania on May 9, 1916. At the time of Pearl Harbor I was a medical student at Temple University in Philadelphia. . . . I joined the Navy and was commissioned an ensign in the Naval Reserve, May 15, 1942. This was a part of the Navy V12

program. I graduated from medical school under that program, December 16, 1943. I was then commissioned a lieutenant (junior grade) in the Naval Reserve. . . .

I reported aboard the INDIANAPOLIS, November 11, 1944 at Mare Island, California. The ship at that time had come back for repairs and was in dry dock. After the ship was repaired, we left San Diego in January of 1945. We went to Pearl Harbor, [then] on to Ulithi, which is a staging area in the South Pacific. I was on the INDIANAPOLIS at the time of the strikes on Japan in February of 1945 and, also, the Iwo Jima campaign in February of 1945. The INDIANAPOLIS was a flagship carrying Admiral Raymond Spruance. . . . He was the admiral in charge of the Iwo Jima campaign and most of the other campaigns in the South Pacific.

RW: Who was the skipper of the ship at the time?

MM: The skipper was Captain Charles B. McVay. He was a young captain, but had come aboard shortly before I went aboard in 1944. After the Iwo Jima campaign the INDIANAPOLIS proceeded to Okinawa and was

in on the bombarding prior to landing in Okinawa, but on March 31, 1945 we were hit by a kamikaze that went down through the dining room for the enlisted men, killing nine sailors and injuring 17. It destroyed the function of two screws on the port side, therefore it made it necessary for the INDIANAPOLIS to come back to Mare Island. Admiral Spruance left the INDIANAPOLIS temporarily and sent us back to Mare Island for repairs. We left Hunter's Point [shipyard] on July 16, 1945 after being repaired at Mare Island, again setting a speed record to Pearl Harbor, averaging just under 30 knots.

RW: Weren't you carrying something very valuable at that point in time?

MM: Yes. We left Hunter's Point rather unexpectedly on the 16th of July because we were carrying something that was top secret and was going to change the course of the war. The top secret material (we thought) was in the port hangar of the ship because there was a Marine guard watching that 24 hours a day, and much attention was given to that area of the ship. Along with this were two Army officers, both of whom had artillery insignia. . . .

So, we left, went through Pearl Harbor—where we stopped just long enough for refueling—and proceeded on to Tinian. We delivered this important cargo on the 26th of July. This, we found out later, was the atomic bomb. The major portion of this bomb was about the size of the average garbage can. This [part] went off [the ship] first and there was a lot of gold braid around receiving this cargo. . . .



MM: After delivering this cargo we went on to Guam where we stayed overnight. Because we had left the United States in such a hurry we needed to bring the complement up to date. There were many who had left the ship and the complement just needed to be replenished and, also, the gunnery exercises, and so forth. That is usually the course of events after you've been in Mare Island and other places to be repaired. We omitted our gunnery . . . so we were being sent to Leyte from Guam to get more personnel and to go through gunnery exercises. In fact, we were supposed to have been met on the 2nd of August near Leyte by planes and drones, and we were going to be able to practice gunnery.

However, halfway between Guam and Leyte, soon after midnight on July 30, the ship was suddenly hit by at least three, probably four, torpedoes from one of the latest Japanese submarines. I happened to be asleep in my bunk in a room that was to accommodate three officers on the port side of the ship, up near the forward part of the ship. There was a terrible concussion. The three bunks just telescoped out into the center of the room. I looked up to find that I could see out the porthole. During wartime the portholes are closed at dusk so you can't see out and so that there would be no lights visible to the enemy. Of course, this had been

closed at dusk, and I was amazed to find that the porthole had been shaken loose and was on the deck. After picking myself up, I went over to look out the porthole to see what was happening. At this time, all I could hear were screams and cries from sailors.

We had been issued life jackets, two or three days before this. . . . I had mine stored above the sink, so I decided I better take it. There was another one there, so I took both of them. I went out in the passageway and went up on the ladder that took me out on the fo'c'sle very near to the forward part of the ship, near the forward turret. At this point, the ship was beginning to list. There was smoke and fumes but no flames (that I saw), but there was oil all over the deck. I was in my bare feet. I had on a skivvy shirt and a pair of trunks. I put the life jacket on, and someone came up after me who did not have a life jacket on (I don't know who that was), and I gave him the life jacket that I was carrying. It was lucky that we had these because these life jackets were supposed to have been good for 72 hours. The ones that were older than that were supposed to be good for 48 hours.

Men kept coming up the same ladder that I came up. A few of them were burned almost to a crisp, others were in very bad shape. There was a medical box on the deck that I was able to open and give morphine, burn jelly, and this type of thing to some of the men that came up. There was not time, really, to do very much because soon after I started to do this, the ship began to list much more.

RW: To starboard or port?

MM: It was listing to starboard because the port side of the ship was coming up to the surface.

RW: The torpedoes hit on the starboard side, then?

MM: Yes, and we took the water on the starboard side, and the ship was listing to starboard. It wasn't too long before orders came down, by word of mouth, from the captain. The captain was up on the bridge by this time, and he gave the order to abandon ship.

RW: Did you hear it from him directly?

MM: Yes, I heard it from him directly.

RW: You were that close to the bridge?

MM: I was that close to the bridge. We were just under the bridge, really, and he could yell down. Now, if you were in the after part of the ship, you would not be able to hear this because there was a midship, and the after part of the ship behind the hangars, and behind this you would not have been able to hear this.

RW: So it would have to be by word of mouth?

MM: It was by word of mouth. With our life jackets we were able to walk off the ship. It was just like a beach because you went down the side of the ship and walked right into the water on the port side. Because I had heard (and many of us had heard) that you should be as far away from the ship as you could get before it really went down because the suction might pull you under with it, I walked off into the water and swam as fast as I could to get away from it. Then I watched as

the ship began to list more and, finally, it went down. The bow of the ship went down first and the stern went up in the air. You could see the screws turning and hear men on the after part of the ship, yelling and screaming as it went down.

Now, many of these men were saved. Apparently they went down with the ship but when they got in the water they were not sucked under like we had been led to believe, but they were able to surface. . . .

As some of the fellows went down along the sides of the ship, they cut the ropes that were holding some of the rafts. I think about six or seven rafts floated—not in the area I was in, unfortunately. The captain and other members of the crew were able to get on rafts but the majority of personnel on the ship were not on rafts. They were in kapok jackets. Our chief pharmacist's mate did not have one of those, he just had one of the inflatable ones. He did survive and was able to get a kapok jacket about the third day (as I recall) when one of the sailors drowned and abandoned his life jacket.

RW: How long was it from the time that the torpedo hit to the time the INDIANAPOLIS sank?

MM: My estimate was that the ship went down within 15 minutes from the time it was hit, which isn't very long for a ship that size. I feel that most of the under structure of the ship was destroyed and I feel (from talking to people and from what I observed) that there was no one below the waterline that got off the ship. We had 15 pharmacist's mates including the chief. The chief survived because he was in the chief's quarters above the waterline in the after part of the ship. The rest of the pharmacist's mates all went down with the ship because they were in sick bay. Sick bay was air-conditioned. Instead of sleeping in the various parts of the ship where they should have been, they were sleeping in sick bay because it was air-conditioned. Sick bay was under the waterline and probably took a direct hit, so they went down with the ship.

RW: When the ship was hit, did they instantly lose all power so that they couldn't radio?

MM: That's right. All power was knocked out at the time so there were no lights, they could not radio for help, and they could not give the orders over the loud-speaker system because there was no power. Apparently, there was a lot of fire . . . in anything that was near an oil or fuel tank. There was no fire in the area I happened to be either before or after I left the ship. I estimated—and I don't think anybody can give any reliable figures—that half the crew of 1,200 got off the ship, and half did not. Out of the half that got off the ship—approximately 600—we had 316 survive.

During the five days we were in the water, half of the people that got off the ship succumbed from one thing or another—mostly by drinking salt water, becoming hallucinogenic, or becoming disoriented. There was really no one from the groups that I happened to be in who had any severe injuries. They might have had slight burns or saltwater ulcers or cornea ulcers of the



INDIANAPOLIS survivor Dr. Melvin Modisher as he is today.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Modisher

eye but no severe injuries. None that were hurt badly survived any period of time after they got off the ship, if they got off the ship.

According to the people that spotted us five days later, there were supposedly six main groups. The two groups farthest apart were 25 miles apart. Some of the smaller groups coalesced. For instance, on the second or third day, Lieutenant Commander Haynes, the chief medical officer, joined, with a number of others, the group that I was in. The group that I was in finally had somewhere around 75 or 80 people in the group.

RW: I assume that you were all floating together.

MM: Yes. We would tie ourselves together at night because, even though we were in rather warm water, at night we became chilly and would shiver and shake because of the cold. By this time, all I had was my shorts because during the daytime I would tear parts of my skivvy shirt off to cover my eyes. By doing this I was able to avoid the cornea ulcers which some of the men had because of the salt and the sun. . . . We had nothing to eat or drink because we had no rafts near us. However, we knew there were some rafts that must have gotten off because at night they would send up flares from the rafts whenever they saw a plane going over or thought there was a ship nearby. So, we felt there were some survivors on rafts. Those that were, of course, were lucky. For example, the captain was in a group that had three rafts and they had water, concentrated food, and still had all their clothes. So they were in much better shape than we were. . . .

RW: Were you covered with oil?

MM: Yes. We would float in and out of oil slicks during that time. . . . When we were in the oil slick, it would make us nauseated. So, in addition to not having any fluid to take in, we would vomit. After two or three days of this, we hated to urinate because it was just like urinating fire. . . . On about the second or third day a crate of raw potatoes came floating by. We split up the raw potatoes and we each had half of a raw potato in the group I was in. This was the only food or fluids that we took in during that time.

RW: How about fish or sharks?

MM: We did see sharks of varying sizes and other fish that resembled sharks. None were very big. The only survivors that seemed to be bothered by fish or by

sharks were those that had open wounds. Burns and saltwater ulcers also seemed to attract the sharks. I did not see any survivor being attacked by a fish or shark of any kind.

RW: But it did happen, though?

MM: From what we were told afterwards by other survivors who actually witnessed this, it did happen. Most of the trouble was that the survivors became discouraged because after the second day we realized that no one was out looking for us. Evidently word did not get off the ship that we were going down, so we felt that it was almost a futile hope that we would survive until someone might accidentally spot us and pick us up. Many of the men said that they were going to take their life jackets off and dive down into the number three mess hall where there was nice, cool water to drink. They were thirsty so they would try to dive down and get a drink . . . and, many times, we would never see the person again.

RW: This was what they imagined?

MM: This was one of the hallucinogenic things that they were imagining, probably after drinking some salt water. . . . We tried to talk them out of this. Many of them felt they could see an island they could swim to, again, taking off their life jackets so they'd be able to swim faster and get to the island. Others thought they could see a boat that was on the horizon. So, they imagined a lot of things and would try to take advantage of their hallucinations. . . . It was almost impossible to talk them out of it.

RW: Was there any praying or moral support?

MM: . . . After Dr. Haynes joined us, he and I tried to give them advice on how to handle themselves so that they would be able to last for a longer period of time. At least several times a day, I would be approached to pray for the group. . . . I prayed for myself as well. I do believe in prayer and feel that my survival was probably an answer to prayer. I feel that I have lived many years on borrowed time. I feel that I should have gone down with the 880 that did go down instead of being one of the 316 who survived.

RW: The phenomenon is that a lot of guys who have gone through things like this feel guilty that they did survive.

MM: Yes, that's true but I never felt guilty. I felt that I did what I felt was best. We did tie ourselves together at night in groups to try to keep warm. . . . We did stay together, we did pray, we did have a raw potato on the third day, we did try to support one another, we tried to talk people out of the crazy things that they did dream up even though it was futile in many cases. But, on Thursday (after being sunk just after midnight on Sunday) we did see an airplane. We saw many airplanes go over, but on Thursday we spotted a plane that went over and, then, came back. It circled around and dropped down to a much lower level. This gave us hope that we were being sighted.

RW: Did a flare go up?

MM: No. This was during the daytime. This plane was piloted by Lt. Gwinn, and had come out from Peleliu. They were just out on patrol. The pilot, Gwinn, was having trouble with his antenna. He crawled back to the tail of the plane in an attempt to fix it. During this time his neck became tired so he just rolled over to rest it and was looking out through the tail blister and saw this huge oil slick which he felt was very unusual. He asked the co-pilot to drop down to a lower level so they could inspect the oil slick. It was at this time that they could actually see people bobbing in the water and rafts. So they wired back to base that they were investigating this. It was later that a PBY bomber came out and landed.

RW: I understand that at that time they didn't know whether you were Japanese or American.

MM: They had no idea what had happened until this PBY landed. As a matter of fact, the first plane that came and also the PBY—which was flown by Lt. Adrian Marks—dropped inflatable rafts and also dropped water. But the containers that held the water would explode when they hit the ocean. This broke the container seams which caused the water to gush out, making the attempts to give us fresh water futile.

We did get some of the rafts inflated. It took Dr. Haynes and I probably four hours to inflate them because, by this time, we were becoming fatigued . . . and we were almost in shock. . . . But we finally got them inflated and by having these rafts we were able to hang on to them instead of having to tread water. This preserved some of our strength. One of the ensigns in the group that I was in had taken in a lot of water. I don't remember his name but we were able to get him up on the side of this raft and I was able to do some artificial respiration on him. Unfortunately, he had taken in too much water and it was futile to try and save him. . . .

But the rest of us did hang on to the raft or were in the raft for short periods of time during Thursday night. Before dusk the PBY had landed and Adrian Marks circled around the group and picked up the stragglers because he felt that they were the ones that probably would not survive until more help arrived. . . .

After picking up the first survivor, that was the first that anyone knew that the INDIANAPOLIS had gone down and that we were survivors. That was wired back to headquarters, then ships in the area were alerted. Many of them, then, tried to converge on this area where most of the survivors were located.

During that night, we were able to hang onto the raft or spend a little bit of time, taking turns, being in the raft until just prior to daylight. The next thing that I knew was that a searchlight came on and was going over the area. This ship came up close enough that someone on a cargo net came over and helped me up onto the deck. . . .

I don't remember a thing after getting up on the deck until hours later when I came to, in the bed of the

doctor that was on this destroyer escort, USS CECIL J. DOYLE (DE-368). . . . I was lying in his bed, with all my oily skin on it, and was receiving a unit of plasma. . . .

As I looked out the door of the room that I was in, I saw Lt. Commander Haynes lying down in the ward room on a bunk, so I knew that he had been saved. We were on the DOYLE just a few hours until they took us to Peleliu, which was the nearest base. . . . We were kept there for about two days until a completely new hospital ship, the TRANQUILLITY (AH-14), came over and picked up the survivors at Peleliu and took us to Guam where we were placed in base hospital number 18. We stayed there for some time before we came back to the States. . . .



MM: What happened on the INDIANAPOLIS was really the greatest naval disaster of the Second World War—except for the ARIZONA at Pearl Harbor. . . . [The Navy] wanted to minimize this so they sent a special team from Pearl Harbor out to Guam, then from Guam to the Philippines. They were able to get a complete list of the casualties and the survivors back to Washington so that, when they announced the surrender of the Japanese . . . they were also able to headline the sinking of the INDIANAPOLIS. This was only, I think, 10 days or less after we were sunk, so they really accomplished quite a thing. This turned out to be a problem in that many of the next of kin of the survivors had not yet received the telegrams going out to them. Since the headlines announced that the INDIANAPOLIS had been sunk with 100% casualties, this was the first word that many of them got. Fortunately, my parents had received the telegram and, even though my wife had not, they were able to telephone her and communicate with her that the ship had been sunk but that I was safe.

RW: The Navy did a lot of covering up according to the book, *Abandon Ship!*. You were involved in that, too, weren't you?

MM: Yes, I was. I came back to the United States on September 26, 1945—and, incidentally, we came to San Diego—and after I came back from leave, I reported into Norfolk Naval Hospital on November 11, 1945.

RW: Did you recover reasonably quickly?

MM: The immediate recovery did not take too long, but I felt that it took me at least a year to recover my normal resistance to colds and other infections. People ask me how much weight I lost and, although I have no idea, I think I probably lost between 25 and 30 pounds and I did not have a lot of fat on me in those days.

RW: Did you have any residual psychological trauma?

MM: No, I don't think so. I was able to cope with the psychological aspects of it quite well. I tried to help others who were having more trouble than I was because on our way back we were on a baby flat top and kept together. There were a few of the officers and the captain that were flown back. The majority of the survivors came back on a baby flat top called the

HOLLANDIA from Guam. We came through Pearl Harbor and, then, into San Diego on, as I said, September 26.

RW: Were you frightened when you were seeing this massive ship sinking?

MM: I think so. I probably was apprehensive because we didn't know whether word had gotten off the ship that we needed help. So, I think that for the first couple of days we had hope that somebody would come looking for us and we were in good enough shape that we would survive. But it was after that period of time that depression settled in and that people became very discouraged. But, I think initially for the first couple of days, we all had hope that word had gotten off the ship, an SOS, so that somebody would come looking for us.

But, being spotted accidentally, why, certainly I think that the hand of God was in all of this. I think that those of us who had a strong religious faith were relieved that we were picked up. I think that a good many of us would not have lasted another 12, and certainly not another 24, hours after we were spotted, picked up, and given medical attention and fluids which we needed. We had been in the water all this time and we were really dehydrated. . . . The severe dehydration and depletion of proteins was something that one would not want anyone else to go through.



MM: After I was assigned to the Norfolk Naval Hospital, I was ordered to appear at the court martial for Captain McVay in December. . . . I eventually testified at his trial on December 15. They asked me to verify the fact that he had given the order to abandon ship. He was being held on two counts. One was his failure to zig-zag and the other was his failure to give the order to abandon ship. I think that through my testimony and some others', that he was cleared on the second count of not giving the order to abandon ship. I was on the stand 15 or 20 minutes. I went back to Norfolk and was discharged from the Navy on June 8, 1946.

RW: The problem of the zig-zag was really never resolved, was it?

MM: The trial for Captain McVay had a "first" in U.S. naval history, and that was that they brought the captain of the submarine that torpedoed us back to testify against Captain McVay. . . . I saw Captain [Mochitsura] Hashimoto but I couldn't talk to him because he talked through an interpreter. His testimony indicated that if the ship had been zig-zagging, this would not have helped at all. He happened to surface at a position [where] he could have adjusted very easily and could have hit us with the same number of torpedoes whether we had been zig-zagging or not. It had been a dark, rainy day the day before we got torpedoed. Apparently we were getting into a clearing area but the clearing was intermittent. After the ship was sunk and we were in the water, we did see the moon come out, so we were in a clearing area. But it was a moot point as to whether [McVay] should have been zig-zagging. Apparently he



After the cruiser's loss, the Navy brass came under intense criticism for being unaware of the sinking for days after it occurred. The man ultimately responsible for all naval operations in the Central Pacific, Admiral Nimitz, had to face the press with the Navy's final report on the tragedy. Nimitz is second from right in this picture, taken at a shipyard.

Steichen Collection

was going to begin zig-zagging after the change of watch at midnight but we were hit too soon before this could take place. The Japanese commander said that this would really not have made any difference as far as being able to hit the ship.

RW: What was your feeling about why the Navy needed a scapegoat when, apparently, it was their own direct orders and the *INDIANAPOLIS* didn't have to account for where they were? I understand a combat ship could leave port and was not required to report where they were.

MM: I guess this is true. Being a medical officer, I knew very little about the function of the ship navigation-wise. My feeling was that we probably never should have been sent from Guam to Leyte alone. Usually we always went escorted. A ship of that size has no underwater sound gear and usually depended on destroyers, destroyer escorts, or smaller vessels that did have underwater sound gear to escort them. I think we probably never should have been sent alone because they knew that there were Japanese submarines in that general vicinity. We had been warned about them. They had been spotted and detected but here we were alone, without any way to detect submarines.

Also, we were due in Leyte on Tuesday and no one reported us as being overdue. We knew that we were supposed to be in Leyte on Tuesday and assumed that if we didn't arrive they would say, "Well, where is the *INDIANAPOLIS*? Somebody needs to go out and find her." But that didn't happen and no one did. No one knew

that anything had happened to the *INDIANAPOLIS* until that first survivor was picked up by Adrian Marks and his *PBY*. The Navy had a lot of things that they were afraid to account for, I think, so they tried to minimize the whole thing as much as they could by getting word to the next of kin of the survivors in record time.

RW: In the book *Abandon Ship!* by Richard F. Newcomb, it said: "A commander can be at fault but not the system." Apparently the Navy system really was at fault on not keeping account of where the *INDIANAPOLIS* was at all times. Now, I understand, a ship has to radio where they are every four hours.

MM: That could be. All the survivors felt that Captain McVay was not at fault, that he shouldn't have been court martialed, and that he shouldn't have had all the numbers taken away from him. We felt that he was a good skipper who came from a Navy family and who shouldn't have had all this happen to him. I just mentioned to you before we started to tape this that the survivors of the *INDIANAPOLIS* meet every five years for a reunion. I've been to three of these reunions. On November 6, 1968, three years after the reunion I went to in 1965, Captain McVay finally did commit suicide in the front yard of his home in New England.

RW: Did he shoot himself?

MM: He shot himself. I'm sure he carried this with him all these years and it was finally too much for him. There was no other reason for him to commit suicide as far as any of us know.

RW: Spruance was the head of what versus Halsey?

MM: Halsey was in charge of the air strikes and the air part of it but all the landings were in the charge of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance. They were both four-star admirals but Halsey sought all sorts of publicity and notoriety whereas Spruance was sort of in the background but he was the brains of the whole thing. He had a small but very good staff. Instead of having a battleship as a flagship, he just had a cruiser as a flagship. He was the one that really won the war in the Pacific as opposed to Halsey. [Ed. Note: For much of the war, Spruance's flagship was INDIANAPOLIS. The admiral was not aboard on her last trip.]

RW: What about Nimitz?

MM: Nimitz was five star and he was over them all. . . . Halsey was over the Third Fleet, Spruance was over the Fifth Fleet, and Kinkaid was over the Seventh Fleet. They were really in the same thing and, according to who was in charge, they'd call it either the Third, Fifth or Seventh Fleet. That's the way they did it.

RW: According to the book *Abandon Ship!* those guys weren't talking to each other and that's why the INDIANAPOLIS was in between the different fleets.

MM: That could be true. I wouldn't know that because the medical corps was a long distance from them.

RW: In *Abandon Ship!*, they pointed out that there was a

lot of animosity between the different commands. You were saying that when the HOLLANDIA came in to San Diego, you left and had a parade up Broadway. The Red Cross had fresh milk for you.

MM: Yes. This tasted so good, I can still remember how welcome that fresh milk from the Red Cross was. When we got off the ship and headed for the jeeps that would take us up Broadway, this was a real treat for us.

RW: This was September 26, 1945 with a real parade up the street.

MM: Yes, that's right.

RW: Do you consider yourself a hero?

MM: No. A lot of these fellows considered themselves heroes and feel that they should be treated specially but I was just lucky to survive and when I got out I had my mind on other things. I was happy to participate in three reunions back in Indianapolis. The city of Indianapolis usually invites Gwinn and Marks. . . . They are the heroes. They are the ones that spotted us and they are the ones that we owe our lives to. . . .

RW: Thank you very much. I appreciate your time and I'm sorry to have to dredge up some unpleasant memories.

MM: I'm glad to do it but I think this will be my last one. I don't think I'll do it anymore.



Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz was in command of the Central Pacific Theater of Operations during nearly all of World War II. Here he poses (front standing row, directly under center gun) with other officers near the forward turret of INDIANAPOLIS. The officer immediately to the left of Nimitz is Admiral Spruance.

Steichen Collection



QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 is the latest in a long line of superb passenger liners—a tradition upheld by Cunard for 155 years.

Courtesy of C & B Cruise Promotions

Last of the Great Liners: Queen Elizabeth 2

By Richard W. Tatelman

Much has been written lately about the grand era of ocean liners, which has almost come to an end. Very few survive. There are a couple in service and even some on odd assignments; examples are the HIKAWA MARU (NYK Line) and STELLA POLARIS (Clipper Line), now renamed SCANDINAVIA. Both are anchored as hotels in Japanese waters. The ENCHANTED ISLE—formerly BERMUDA STAR, ARGENTINA and more—was filling in as a hotel in St. Petersburg, Russia, but has recently been re-scheduled to American cruising waters.

The greatest survivor is generally recognized as the QUEEN MARY. Not only is she still extant, though she has had periods of great financial insecurity, she has grown into a legend. As an identifiable ship with the passage of time, at least in my life, her recognition is right up there in the ship's hall of fame with SANTA MARIA, TITANIC, NORMANDIE, and maybe even Noah's Ark!

We all have our favorites and reasons for having such, just as there are reasons each famous ship has earned her niche in history. Often fame and beauty is right in front of our eyes—no need for a time machine or museum. I am thinking of the QUEEN ELIZABETH 2, a

household name—"QE2". Of course the P.R. people at Cunard love to tell us that she is unique: the one and only. For once the truth exceeds the myth.

But why? What is she? Why is she? This one and only?

She was simply Cunard's successor to the previous transatlantic weekly express ships QUEEN MARY and QUEEN ELIZABETH. But times had changed and Cunard changed with them. When the Atlantic became dominated by jumbo-jet travel, management wisely made the QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 a cruise liner and secondly an express ship with North Atlantic capabilities. Accelerated turnarounds would permit possibly 20% more crossings over a given period of time than either of the replaced Queens. Flexible scheduling for QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 permits additional European cruises mainly out of her homeport of Southampton—such as last June's anniversary of the landing at Normandy. First entering service in 1969, she is still doing these crossings and is one of the few ships constructed for the North Atlantic. I will only believe she is operating in the red if she is withdrawn from service.

And she's fast. Not like the S.S. UNITED STATES; even a

Corvette is not as fast as a Ferrari. She crosses the Atlantic in five nights—a jet takes one. When she's cruising she can do Honolulu to the North American West Coast in a day less than the old LURLINE did and still have time to treat her passengers to a stop in Maui or the Big Island. In other words—she's flexible.

And a major part of that flexibility is her engines. Such was not always the case. When she sailed on her preliminary trials from Greenock, Scotland in December 1968 all went well, except for some fuel oil contaminating her feed water. So her main trials were delayed and she sailed to the Canaries with several hundred Cunard employees aboard as passengers.

There had been some concern about the possibility of vibration as she was the largest fast twin-screw liner yet built. Those fears materialized on Christmas Eve, 1968. It turned out that there had been turbine blade failure and it took some time to correct, delaying her maiden voyage till May 1969. The new QUEEN was captained by Bill Warwick, father of the present captain, who had the honor of showing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II the new flagship.

Her only other major problem was south of Bermuda, in 1974, when an oil leak shut down all three boilers, forcing her to transfer her passengers to the SEA VENTURE.

In the mid-1980s, Cunard evaluated her future and made the momentous decision to completely re-engine her. So in the fall of 1986 she sailed for Bremerhaven, Germany where she became the fastest diesel-electric ship afloat, achieving almost 34 knots on her new trials. I can attest to a lower vibration level almost everywhere, except at the "one deck pool" located directly on the fantail, so that certainly isn't surprising. As my latest cabin was slightly abaft amidships and near the funnel uptakes I wondered what noises I would hear. Other than the usual pleasant "ship sounds" I

heard nothing—until I was in my cabin when we were leaving port and the generators were "powering up" and down. Then and only then could I detect a small whine but *only* as the generators were speeding up or slowing down. Had passengers heard that on the NORMANDIE, the only larger "electric" ship built?

Another advantage that accrued from this refit is her new and larger funnel. From an aesthetic viewpoint the ship has never looked better. When she first came into service I didn't feel that she really looked like a Queen. The funnel was skinny, white and black and abaft amidships. Now her traditional Cunard colors on the "pipe" really make a difference and the added deck suites—some think they make her look top-heavy—I feel bridge the gap to her bridge and rather substantial mast. Add to that her red boot-topping (it was originally blue) and you now have a truly graceful Queen, probably better looking than the MARY and as balanced as the first ELIZABETH, her namesake. Of course that's all in the eye of the beholder.



So with such fondness for beautiful ships, when I found out that QE2 would be in Ft. Lauderdale the same day that I arrived on Vistafjord, it was an easy decision to decide to return on her as she commenced the first leg of her annual World Cruise.

This would be the last World Cruise for Captain Robin Woodall, who was accompanied by his wife. Captain of the Queen is to the maritime world what Madonna and Michael Jackson are to the entertainment world, though I like to think that it takes a considerably greater amount of professional knowledge.

After our Ft. Lauderdale fireboat send-off I settled down to dine in the Columbia Restaurant, largest of the dining rooms that became First Class during her North



The QE2 in Pedro Miguel Locks, Panama Canal, alongside SONG OF NORWAY, January 10, 1994. Photo by Richard Tatelman

A passenger on board the QE2 poses in front of a mural honoring Cunard's great ships from 1840 onwards.

Photo by Richard Tatelman



Atlantic shuttle. My table-mate (whom I had met previously) was the well-known TITANIC lecturer Charles Sachs. Unlike me, he is such a discerning gourmet and connoisseur that I had to remind him not to correct our waiter, who had previously been drafted to serve the Royal Family. Moreover, it just isn't wise to tackle a waiter who as captain of the ship's soccer team during a match with VISTAFJORD once injured so many of her crew as to delay her sailing.

It was good seeing crew members and passengers I had known before. Surely QE2 must be the only ship afloat with a professional librarian, and this winter during the ship's overhaul the library will be enlarged among other ongoing improvements. A previous waitress of mine, Carol, is now Chief Purser Jamie Luke's secretary and Jamie's twin brother David is the Finance Officer. The crew is a family, even if a large one, with a few members going back to her initial entry into service.

We used our high speed to dash to St. Thomas, an obligatory stop even on world cruises where duty-free prices entice almost everyone to "tender-in". The U.S. Navy was conducting maneuvers in Roosevelt Roads so we detoured north of Puerto Rico, past the beautiful lights of San Juan, then south through the Mona Passage.

This ship makes news wherever she goes. In Cartagena, the President of Colombia had been invited aboard and although he didn't show up some of his retinue weren't about to pass up a chance to tour the QUEEN ELIZABETH 2.

The entertainment was non-stop in the Grand Lounge and I learned from Victor Borge that "an oboe is a clarinet with a cold." One night the lounge was "off limits" to passengers after 11 p.m., as the crew was having a party for fellow members who would be leaving the ship in Los Angeles. There were certainly plenty of other rooms for passengers to use, including the posh

"Queen's Lounge" with its gold-plated bust of Her Majesty.

For me the high point of the trip (as it is with many passengers) was the Panama Canal transit. I had been offered "Courtesy of the Bridge" during the trip and I certainly wasn't about to pass up the offer to see the canal that my family helped build from the bridge of the most famous ship to transit it. Well, maybe the battleship MISSOURI or "Old Ironsides" were more famous when they went through, but QE2 paid more! The actual total was \$128,955—and that doesn't include tugs.

When we entered Limon Bay at the northern (or eastern) end of the Canal I saw a major squall sweeping in from the hills behind the old naval base at Coco Solo. Being an ex-Zonian, I beat a hasty retreat to the dining room for breakfast. I've had my fill of Panamanian rains and I was ready for eggs benedict!

Tourists usually find the lake passage very pastoral and here we pass the Atlantic-bound traffic. After the lake and approaching Gamboa I made my way through tight security to the bridge. After Gamboa we started into the Gaillard Cut (also known as Culebra—or snake). Then came the Chagres River, where in early Canal days the torrential waters pouring down the river sometimes forced passing ships into the opposite bank. This problem was corrected when Madden Dam was built upstream.

We snaked our way through the cut and past a memorial plaque on the bank honoring the Canal builders before entering Pedro Miguel Locks. With three sets, Gatun is the longest lock set, while Pedro Miguel is the shortest with only one set, yet it is probably the prettiest as it is nestled in a saddle. I remember during the Second World War when cables were strung across those hills to snarl potential low-flying dive

bombers. That was more unusual to me than the endless barrage balloons.

Paralleling us in this lockage was the SONG OF NORWAY. The view was truly dramatic as the two liners "danced" up and down, first them, then us. A sort of maritime ballet. But regardless of the level, we always seemed to tower over the SONG OF NORWAY.

Then came Miraflores Locks with its swinging bridge, permanently left in the open position now that the Bridge of the Americas graces the southern entrance to the Canal. In the distance I saw the Canal Administration Building dominating a hill and its view down the Prado. To locals it was always known as "THE Building." No matter where you were, if you said, "I'm going to the Building," people knew what you meant. We also referred to the opposite side of the Isthmus as "the other side." So you had to remember where you were standing when you said, "I'm going to the other side." It could mean Pacific or Atlantic.

As we left Panamanian waters I had one last memory of our short visit there. Cruise ships rarely dock there as it is still considered an unstable area, so when I had transitted eastbound on the VISTAFJORD my cousin and his wife had come down to the reviewing stand to wave, and they stood there alone. On the return trip the same reviewing stand was full, as was the parking lot. Sophisticated locals won't turn out for even a five star ship like VISTAFJORD, but when they hear that QUEEN ELIZABETH 2 is coming through they come out complete with TV cameras. The San Blas Indians had even set up stands selling their colorful "Molas"!

The run up the West Coast to Los Angeles was uneventful, except for a stop in Acapulco where I went

ashore with some crew members who had invited me to their "Pig 'n' Whistle" pub. That was a greater trophy to me than all the wonderful "repeater parties" as well as being received in the Captain's Quarters and the Officers' Wardroom—both of which are filled with enough nautical memorabilia to fill a museum. Examples would include the bell off the AQUITANIA, an original oil of the old record breaker MAURETANIA, and gifts from various dignitaries including the British Royal Family.

I didn't look forward to docking in Los Angeles as I had just spent over a month on Cunarders. I steeled myself for the last breakfast in the Columbia Dining Room. When my table companion ordered breakfast he was greeted with the reply: "I'm sorry, Mr. Sachs, public health regulations in Los Angeles demand that there be no open container with cream cheese for your morning bagel."



QUEEN ELIZABETH 2
Cunard Line, Southampton

Builders: Brown, Clydebank
Yard no.: 736
66,450.63 Gross Registered Tons; 963 feet length overall; 9 x 9 cylinder Diesels rated at 10.5 megawatts each connected to 2 electric motors rated at 44 megawatts each.

(Ed. Note: The QE2 has called at San Diego a number of times. The ship is also the largest single consumer of caviar in the world, and the author, Dick Tatelman, partook of a goodly amount of it.)



The world's greatest liner as she originally appeared, with a taller stack.

Courtesy of the author



EUTERPE during the 1890s was nearing the end of her career with the Shaw Savill line, "running her easting down" in the long voyages from Britain to the Antipodes. The strain of hard service is apparent on her rusty side in this portrait, probably made at London. She is still painted in the "gunport" style adopted by Shaw Savill in 1882.

SDMM file photo

What Our Ships Were Doing . . .

25 Years Ago:

In 1970, the *STAR OF INDIA* was well along in the restoration process, with Captain Ken Reynard in charge. Already talk was circulating about sailing her again. They'll never do it, said the scoffers. Why, her bottom might just fall right out! As we all know now, she sailed very well indeed when America's Bicentennial rolled around. Meanwhile, Mayor Frank Curran proclaimed August 29, 1970 as "Star of India Day" in San Diego. The mayor even came aboard and handled a main royal clewline as the ship's new suit of sails—sewn by Reynard—were sheeted home.

The *BERKELEY* had not yet joined the museum, but would do so in three more years. At this date she was a floating "Trade Fair" at the ferry slip in Sausalito, her days of service for the Southern Pacific having ended in 1958.

MEDEA was still in Europe, locked in the ice of the Baltic Sea at Oskarshamn, Sweden. Her owner at this time was Captain K. G. Holmberg, of Jarnforsen, Sweden. Capt. Holmberg was a master mariner as well as a marine artist, and stocked the yacht with paintings. In other respects, however, her appearance was not up to the standards of Major William Macalister Hall, her

first owner. Fortunately, *MEDEA* would soon be purchased by an American, Nelson Paul Whittier, and restored by him. In two more years, she, too, would join the Maritime Museum.

50 Years Ago:

In 1945, the Second World War was drawing to a close. Newspapers and radio reports were filled with news of the Allied invasion of Nazi Germany, and the savage battle of Iwo Jima in the Pacific. The *STAR OF INDIA* at this time was moored on the San Diego waterfront, her upper masts and spars sent down a few years earlier by a Navy crew "shaken out of the trees somewhere down around Alabama," according to historian Jerry MacMullen. The sailors had made a hash of the old ship's rigging, and the people operating her as a public attraction did not have the money to repair the damage. (It was forthcoming from the federal government about 20 years later.) All in all, things looked grim for the old girl—but that was nothing new for her.

The *BERKELEY* still plied her routes between San Francisco and Oakland, with an occasional side trip to Sausalito, in the ferry service of the Southern Pacific



Emigrants such as John Griffiths, who kept a remarkable diary in *EUTERPE* on her voyage of 1875-76, faced both physical and psychological hardships. Griffiths recorded how "One of the salloon passengers named Capt. MacBarnett committed suicide by cutting his throat in his bunk while in the orrers. He did it a little before breakfast in the morning. . . . They brought him out of the bunk and put him on the main deck to wait the inquest. . . . He was sowed up in a piece of sailcloth and buried in about four hours after he had done it."

Photo courtesy of the Griffiths family, New Zealand

Railroad. At the age of 47, and with great new bridges now spanning the Bay, her working life would dwindle down to barely another decade.

MEDEA at this time was in the British Royal Navy. An accommodation vessel at Peterhead, Scotland, she was laid up on August 9, under the Director of Sea Transport. That November, she was sold back to her former owner, Job Longson Wild of London.

75 Years Ago:

In 1920, the aging *STAR OF INDIA*, then sailing for the Alaska Packers in the Bering Sea salmon business, got off to a slow start on her voyage. The return trip to San Francisco late that summer was even more unusual for the old ship, as Jerry MacMullen related in his classic work, *Star of India: The Log of an Iron Ship*:

"By 1920, it was becoming difficult to get square-rigger crews, and *STAR OF INDIA* lay at anchor for many days before receiving her full complement. In fact, she was delayed so long that at last it was decided, her people being aboard at long last, to tow her north. So her old friend *NUSHAGAK* passed her the hawser and away they went on May 5, the latest she had ever left San Francisco. The tow kept on for 17 days, *STAR OF INDIA* helping out by setting her canvas when the wind was in a favorable quarter. By that time they were up to Cape

Sarichef, at the north end of Unimak Pass, and she finished the last three days of the passage on her own.

"In mid-August they were homeward bound, on a voyage which was to prove that the race is not always to the swift. *STAR OF INDIA* and *STAR OF FRANCE* cleared Unimak Pass together, and Captain Marzan, waving cheerily to his old ship, made some appropriate remarks through the megaphone, about beating *STAR OF INDIA* back to San Francisco. In a growing haze, the two vessels "split tacks"—one standing away on the port tack, the other on the starboard. They did not see each other again, and nothing was further from Captain [Frank] Weidemann's mind than any idea of the poor, slow little *STAR OF INDIA* even attempting to catch up with her yacht-like rival. One can imagine his surprise when, on reaching San Francisco, *STAR OF FRANCE* was nowhere in sight. The story is summed in two days' Shipping Reports in the *San Francisco Chronicle*:

SEPT. 9, 1920

Arrived At This Port

Bark *Star of India*, Widemann [sic], 23 days from Nushagak, 9:20 a.m. [Sept. 8]; 27,827 cases of salmon to Alaska Packers' Assn.

SEPT. 12, 1920

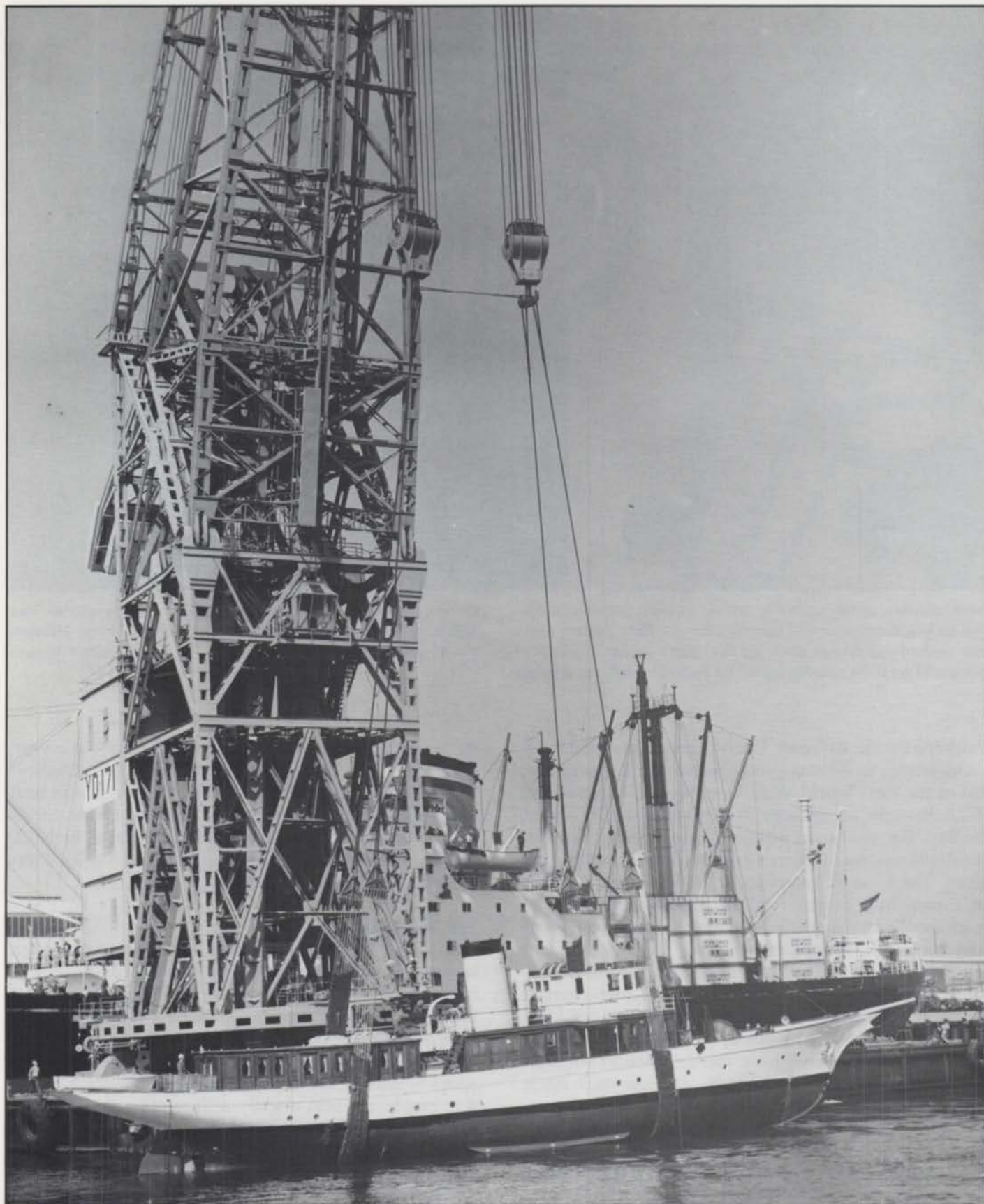
Shipping Notes

Bringing 15,200 cases of salmon, the Alaska Packers' Assoc. ship *STAR OF FRANCE*, Captain Marzen [sic] arrived yesterday, 27 days from Bristol Bay.

"Weidemann, of course, had found wind where Marzan had not. Several years later, when he was 'ship's husband' of the laid-up *STAR OF SHETLAND*, he related the tale with obvious relish:

"'Yesus!' he chuckled (and there was a lot of him to chuckle) 'Vas Marzan mad!'"

The *BERKELEY* in 1920 was hard at work for the



When the steam yacht MEDEA was brought to this country in 1971 aboard the German container ship RIEDERSTEIN, she was off-loaded in Los Angeles for the trip under her own power to British Columbia, where restoration would be carried out. Note the yacht's long aftercabin, later cut back to its original size.

Note also the wheelhouse, a 1960s abomination since removed to restore the clean, open appearance of a 1904 bridge. The giant crane has an interesting history, too: it was built in Germany and survived World War II before coming to L.A. SDMM file photo



Every museum which aspires to restore its ships properly needs both technical expertise and generous donors. Here are two men who worked wonders to clean up *BERKELEY*'s engine and boiler rooms and get them running again: Ed Paxton, at left, supervised

the restoration of the ship's triple-expansion steam engine. Tom Sefton, at right, bankrolled the project. The Maritime Museum owes a great debt to both.

SDMM file photo

Southern Pacific Railroad. She had been converted from a coal-burner to oil some years previously, and with the end of the First World War, the economic boom of the 1920s brought an upsurge in commuter traffic across the Bay. The two great bridges in place today had not been built yet, so the ferries continued to dominate the scene. The average American at this time did not own an automobile, commercial air travel was still a few years away, and the railroads were the primary means of land transport. Passengers traveling from the East to San Francisco usually transferred from their trains to the *BERKELEY* and other ferries in Oakland, then enjoyed the short but visually spectacular trip over to the ferry terminal in Frisco. By this date, the "good, gray city by the gate" had recovered from the devastation wrought by the San Andreas Fault in 1906, and was once again the commercial and cultural beacon of the West.

MEDEA in 1920 had just been sold out of the French Navy the year before. During the final year of the Great War, she had served in the 2nd Flotilla of Patrol Boats for the Division of Normandy, based at Cherbourg. Armed with a 75-mm gun, depth charges, and an observation balloon, her job had been to convoy French sailing ships up the Channel. Now she was in the hands of an English owner—M. Graham-White, of Warsash House, Hants. Graham-White installed electric lighting

in the yacht, but was only to own her for about a year, selling her to a Member of Parliament, one H. Dudley-Ward. He in turn sold her in the following year to a Captain F. E. Guest, Distinguished Service Order, Member of Parliament, and Royal Yacht Squadron. In 1923, *MEDEA* left England for the sunny skies of the Mediterranean, to be based at Gibraltar for three years.

100 Years Ago:

In 1895, *EUTERPE*, as the *STAR OF INDIA* was then known, set sail from the port of Liverpool on April 9, running her easting down to the New Zealand ports of Wellington, Dunedin, and Napier, and returning to Liverpool on April 30, 1896. Her skipper for this trip—and the one before and the one to follow—was Alexander S. Banks. The Shaw Savill line, for which Banks was employed, was already selling off sail and going into steam, and three years hence they would dispose of *EUTERPE*, one of their best ships and a steady workhorse for 21 trips around the world, over the course of 27 years. By 1900, she would be an American ship, and in 1906, change her name to *STAR OF INDIA*.

The *BERKELEY* and *MEDEA* did not exist in 1895, the former appearing three years later, and the latter in 1904.

From the Helm

Among public historians, it is an axiom that history museums are only partially about the past. They are really about communities, and the kinds of things that communities wish to identify as important about themselves when they set about creating a public memory. How strange it is then, that in this most modern of communities with the brightest of futures, we should choose to venerate among the centerpieces of our maritime identity the creations of a distant and vanished world.

It is easy to understand why individuals should want to do this: ships, almost any ships, are infinitely captivating. As John Ruskin argued in the age that would produce *STAR OF INDIA*, ships are arguably the finest things that humanity, acting in concert, has ever created. This is no antiquated sentiment; every visitor that walks through our gate validates it in small part. But why a *community* should want to devote a portion of its limited philanthropic and public resources to such endeavors is another question entirely, especially when our community, like every other, is beset with a host of social and economic problems competing for attention. It is an important question, as the prospects for our museum hinge partially upon the answer.

No such answer can be complete, but part of one might simply be this: even the seemingly brightest of futures is scary. Communities make their best guesses about the future and place their bets the same way individuals do, and like individuals, they take comfort and draw strength from past success in trials of judgment. As the embodiments of countless decisions of form, material, and technique, ships are the physical expres-

sion of what their own seafaring communities believe to be perfection in the conquest of all foreseen trials of nature, trade, or war. These trials, moreover, are expected from the outset to be waged over the horizon, commonly in complete isolation, and often in dark places without names. Every voyage is thus a trial of community judgment and when successful, a validation of community belief. When success follows upon success through time and changing circumstance, the outcome is imminently worthy of veneration. Something akin to this has survived from the seafaring of the Byzantine empire, when it was common for master mariners to have carved upon their headstones the images of their favorite ship. Maritime archaeologists often note the details of these while missing the subtle irony: were it not for qualities of the ship engraved on the tombstone, the mariner concerned could never have managed his burial ashore. The set of beliefs encoded in the image were the things they thought most worth remembering: the legacy of success. Likewise with our ships. *They have always won.*

Moreover, their trials, though now different in form, have continued under our stewardship. So long as they do, these ships reflect upon *our* judgment as a community and offer in return the powerful validation of their success. Rather than relics living in the shadow of past glory, they remain physical embodiments of our belief, in mid passage, with some of their greatest adventures still before them.

As your new Executive Director, I am flattered and grateful to be sailing with you for part of the way.

—Raymond Ashley, Executive Director

New Museum Executive Director Raymond Ashley has taken over the challenging job of leading us forward. Mr. Ashley will also serve as our Curator.

Photo by Joe Dittler





USS ORISKANY (CVA-34) was a rugged old workhorse of a combat carrier. During Vietnam, she made seven deployments to the "Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club," along with prior service in the Korean War. You can still catch her on the late show, in "The Bridges of Toko-Ri."
SDMM file photo

The Cabin Bookrack

The Heart of a Man: A Naval Pilot's Vietnam Diary by Lt. Frank Elkins and edited by Marilyn Elkins. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press. Illustrated. Hardcover. 132 pages. \$18.95.

One aspect of the Vietnam War which has received scant attention from historians is the eight-year campaign waged by American naval air power against the communist ground forces and infrastructure throughout Indochina.

From Operations Pierce Arrow and Rolling Thunder through the final major bombing campaign of December 1972, Navy pilots fought a sophisticated enemy who swiftly built up the heaviest anti-aircraft defenses in the world in North Vietnam. Pilots carried out bombing runs under strict restrictions as to areas that could be hit and even individual targets. Frequent bombing halts called unilaterally by Washington gave the enemy plenty of time to regroup, so that the same targets had to be attacked over and over.

For U.S. pilots, it was a conflict fraught with grave dangers and great frustration. Those of us who served with them in carriers such as USS ORISKANY (CVA-34), Lt. Frank Elkins' ship, used to marvel at their fortitude in the face of political interference, public indifference or hostility, and a foe who either executed downed airmen on the spot, or starved and tortured them as P.O.W.s.



However, this fascinating book is not about the politics of the war, or grand strategies and diplomacy. It is

simply the diary of an American A-4 pilot who participated in a grueling aerial campaign. Elkins planned to write a novel about the war, and kept his diary between May and October 1966 as a form of outline. It is an intensely personal document, never intended for public consumption, and therefore all the more revealing of Elkins' private worries and concerns. He had the same moral struggles any man of conscience has in battle—wondering if it's right to kill other human beings, even for a cause he believes in. Also present was the pride of a naval aviator, and the knowledge that his wingmen depended on him—as he did on them. Loyalty runs deep in fighter squadrons and rifle companies.

Like all ORISKANY pilots during that time, Elkins loved to fly. "Of course," he says, "it's like riding a motorcycle; you don't have any minor accidents. You hardly ever get hurt just a little bit." The land below intrigued him, even during a bomb run: "South Vietnam is beautiful. From the air it looks a lot like Florida, all green and swampy. It's as easy for me to imagine that I'll soon be seeing Gainesville, Florida, as it is for me to picture the dying which must be occurring on that beautiful countryside. There is a redness of the soil that shows even through the foliage, and from the air, this red soil is the only striking difference from Florida."

After a short period on "Dixie Station" off South Vietnam, ORISKANY steamed north to attack targets in the Red River Valley, where enemy defenses were first class. Elkins felt strongly challenged to take risks—and as time went on, he took more and more. He complained that some fellow pilots were not keeping up in skills, one in particular who "sulked" instead of taking correction.

Elkins flew numerous Iron Hand (flak suppression) missions, Alpha strikes, and so on, and his luck held for a long time. The A-4 Skyhawk was not a large aircraft, and seems rather primitive by today's standards. The war was increasingly fought with electronics, and the game was to keep our pilots one step ahead of SAMs (surface-to-air missiles).

"I hate night hops, but almost only when they're the first hop of the day. And every time I walk up on that deck knowing what's coming up, it's like facing death. Hell, more than that, it is facing death; but I think I face it sometimes more heavy-hearted than other folks. I think I'm sometimes more cowardly about it than others, more hesitant. But dammit, I do it. So where's the hurt as long as I manage to get it done?"

That was Elkins' last entry in his diary—October 11, 1966. The next day he went missing in action over North Vietnam. His diary was found by a shipmate who mailed it to his wife, in violation of Navy regs. This man lost his own life less than a week later in a ship-board fire.

It was extremely fortunate that the diary was preserved. Marilyn Elkins went on with her life with all the uncertainty that only the wife of an M.I.A. can experience. When a soldier is killed, his body usually

comes home promptly, and the healing process can begin. With an M.I.A., you simply sit and wait—often for years. Mrs. Elkins lived in Paris for three years and was a frequent caller at North Vietnam's embassy, seeking information. She earned an advanced degree in English and edited her husband's diary for publication. When the book first appeared in 1973, it drew little attention, but as the political climate at home changed, Naval Institute Press picked it for republication.

The work is the best one of its kind this reviewer has seen. It paints an honest, fair portrait of a special breed of men. In the plethora of books about Vietnam now in print, Elkins' memoir of life aboard a carrier in combat stands out with all the impact and flavor achieved by only the most skillful of diarists. Given the hectic pace of air ops in wartime, it is a wonder he was able to write it at all. Marilyn Elkins has done a judicious job of editing the work, leaving in all the authentic terms of the period, along with the author's moments of exaltation and anguish.

In January 1990, Frank Elkins' remains were identified and returned. He was awarded seven air medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

—reviewed by Craig Arnold

Library Log

This issue of *Mains'l Haul* is my 41st as editor, and I've enjoyed putting together all of them. It has been my privilege to work closely with the many dedicated people of the San Diego Maritime Museum over the past 10 years, and this has been a very pleasant experience for me.

During this period we have kept the Jerry MacMullen Library open and assisted many thousands of researchers. It is my belief that the main purpose of a museum is education. In this endeavor, the work of a museum library is fundamental. The library is a repository for many collections—books, photographs, ship plans, tapes, journals, charts and memorabilia. Library personnel are charged with organizing, maintaining and cataloging these collections, and making materials available on request. Those provided with information include our own Board, staff and crew, as well as members and the public.



A museum without a library is not really a museum at all. It may be a tourist attraction or some other form of business, but it lacks a facility for providing information. The large numbers of people who contact such a "museum" cannot get the assistance they seek. They may approach a public library, but likely will not get the specialized help they need.

As members of the San Diego Maritime Museum, you

can be proud of your library. A tremendous amount of work has gone into building it up and maintaining it over the years. The late Gregg Chandler, who founded this facility in 1977, would be pleased, I believe, by how far we have come. Past Librarian Carol Kettenburg put in a lot of labor, and so have our wonderful volunteers. The result is one of the largest maritime history collections in the United States.

I am deeply concerned about the library's future. We must act soon to move this facility ashore, where our priceless collections will be better protected. The dampness of our current environment is very bad for the books, the STAR OF INDIA logs, and other irreplaceable documents. We are constantly fighting the effects of mildew. Our 10,558 photographs form a superb collection—but are housed in ancient filing cabinets vulnerable to damp, theft, and other hazards. The BERKELEY herself is hardly a safe place for an archive.

Fortunately, the Board of Trustees has made a museum shore facility a top priority. Ideally, we need a climate-controlled facility where constant temperature and humidity can be maintained, ultraviolet light eliminated, and a "cold room" is available for our most important documents.

If we can achieve these goals over the next few years, we will be in good shape to carry on the vital work of education.

—Craig Arnold, Librarian

Development Report

Anyone on a sailboat, becalmed on a flat sea, remembers the distinctly fresh feeling of acceleration as the wind finally fills your sails and your hull gathers way.

The sails of the good ship "Maritime Museum" are filling with wind, and you can feel the power of our mighty hull as we make way through a choppy wind-swept sea.

We have survived a most difficult year. Nineteen ninety-four found us struggling to cope with a drop in attendance which nearly crippled us—the result being several cutbacks, layoffs, pay cuts, and belt-tightening in every department.

As we start the year 1995, I am happy to report to you, our loyal membership, that the Maritime Museum has survived the storm, and that we are doing everything possible to avoid such a catastrophe in the future.

Our lesson was a painful one, and one we are not soon to forget, or repeat. The ticket gate at the Maritime Museum comprises roughly two-thirds of our annual budget. Any drop in attendance is fatal.

Upon closer analysis of the ticket gate, we discovered that less than 10% of our visitors come from the San Diego area. This is appalling, yet, the fault falls squarely upon our shoulders.

Over the years the Maritime Museum has not recognized the need to change and rotate exhibits; to offer a new product to the people of San Diego.

Today we feature a unique and exciting exhibit on the orlop deck of STAR OF INDIA titled, "Coast Guard: The First 200 Years." Visitors actually view this exhibit below the waterline of the ship. It is comprised of numerous paintings depicting the history of the Revenue Service and the Coast Guard.

On the ferryboat BERKELEY we offer the America's Cup Exhibit, which is growing even as we move towards the America's Cup Finals. We offer thanks to the many people who have made these exhibits possible: Bill Brown,

Jack Sutphen, Jeff Saar, Mark Montijo, Mary Halley and all the rest, too numerous to mention here.

The new Executive Director of the Maritime Museum, Raymond Ashley, who also serves in the capacity of Curator, has in just a few short weeks developed a new exhibit plan designed to bring back our local waterfront audience.

As you walk through the ships of the Maritime Museum, you will notice the many changes already taking place. These range from visiting exhibits to permanent exhibits to improved signage.

Our goals for 1995 include a continued enhancement of our Curatorial Department, and the addition of a new educational program designed to introduce thousands of children to an overnight experience on STAR OF INDIA.

In addition, we are seeking to locate a permanent, shoreside facility for the Maritime Museum which will allow us to expand our collections and displays, and do a better job of educating and entertaining both the general public and visitors to San Diego.

In the months to come, we plan to enhance the image of the San Diego Maritime Museum in the educational community, and establish ourselves as not just a visual icon along the waterfront, but one with substance and appeal designed to make us one of the most successful museums in San Diego County.

Hang on, because we have one heck of a ride in store for you. Watch your mail for information on our calendar of 1995 events, and attend our membership meetings aboard the ferryboat BERKELEY.

This is the new Maritime Museum. Be proud that you support such a fine waterfront institution, and join us in celebrating the year ahead by visiting us often and bringing your friends.

—Joseph Ditler,
Development Director

Star of India Auxiliary

We are still waiting for the necessary papers to be filed by the Maritime Museum with the State of California to give us permission to install a residential-type elevator on the BERKELEY that would be larger and would allow us to use it for cargo. It seems a determination as to the type of structure the BERKELEY is listed as, in Washington D.C., is necessary before we apply for a variance! Our bureaucratic system has again raised its ugly head.

The Parade of Lights was a huge success! We served 432, the largest attendance we have had to date. We netted approximately \$5,700!

Our next big fund raiser is our annual Rummage Sale, to be held the 22nd and 23rd of April 1995. This should be one of the largest rummage sales we have ever had. So plan on coming down to the BERKELEY on these dates.

—Rita J. Greig,
Auxiliary President

Volunteer of the Quarter

Our Volunteer of the Quarter for the winter of 1995 is Bob Cunningham. Bob is a very highly respected ship modeler who is constructing a model of the *STAR OF INDIA* as she appeared during her Alaska Packers period. When completed, this model will be placed in its appropriate slot with our other two models of the vessel, those depicting her in the Shaw Savill Line (by Bill Brown), and as she looks today (by Lionel Meeker). Thus visitors will see how the ship's appearance has changed over 130 years, depending on what function she was performing during a given period.

Bob is a native of Chicago. His first major exposure to ships came during service in the U.S. Navy in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Ship modeling was a hobby he picked up while stationed in Japan. As with so many modelers, he found that the challenge of building accurate models is addictive, and thus has pursued it over the years, trying to perfect his craft.

In June 1993, Bob started work on the present model. Many trips to the Jerry MacMullen Library became required "homework" as through the study of photographs, many details of the ship in the APA period were revealed. A 1907 document detailing *STAR OF INDIA*'s paint scheme, obtained by the Library from San Francisco, showed the colors required. Of course, Bob also spent much time studying the actual ship—and while doing this, discovered that during her restoration the main and fore yards had been swapped.

The model will be finished this year. If Bob is unable to complete it before his planned move to Arkansas, fellow modeler Joe Bompensiero will take over.

Bob says that one of his greatest satisfactions has

been learning advanced techniques of modeling from Bompensiero and Bob Crawford, our Curator of Ship Models. The rigging is the hardest part of the job, but Bob says he has enjoyed learning how to do historical research, and how to overcome the many obstacles inherent in making an accurate, highly detailed model. Bob and his wife Leanne are sponsoring the cost of the model, and we are sure it will be a fine one. Thanks, Bob, for your excellent contribution to our museum.



Volunteer of the Quarter Bob Cunningham works on the Alaska Packers period model of STAR OF INDIA. Photo by Robert Crawford

Ship Model Shop

I would like to take a few moments to express my appreciation for all of the hours put into the Model Shop by our volunteers—7819 hours to be exact. Fifteen individuals contributed to those hours from as few as five hours to as many as 1764. Most of Joe Bompensiero's 1764 were put into the *USS LANGLEY* (CV-1) and the 1934 America's Cup Defender *RAINBOW*. The *RAINBOW* is our newest addition to the America's Cup Exhibit. We now look forward to finishing the *LANGLEY* sometime this summer.

Many of Jack Klein's 1510 hours have gone into a boat-building diorama being constructed for the museum, a model of *HMS KINGFISHER*, and answering visitors' questions. Bob Cunningham's dogged determination and 1428 hours are producing what will be one of our finest models, the Alaska Packers Association's *STAR OF INDIA*. I regret to say we will be losing Bob to Arkansas soon, but he leaves us a reminder of his skill

and devotion.

Chuck Hill and his *CUTTY SARK* are visitors' delights with his warmth and her beauty. Chuck has 469.5 hours in this past year alone. Suzanne Levonian, Tom Taylor, and Jack Slowiczek each put in 150 hours—give or take a few—and contributed much of themselves in the process. Ed White and John Fluck averaged 75 hours apiece by manning the shop one Saturday every month this year.

Finally, thanks to San Diego Ship Model Guild Members Phil Matson, K. C. Edwards, Jim Hawkins, Fred Fraas, Tony DeFeo and Doug McFarland for their efforts. Without these people, many of the projects and visitor interfaces would not be possible. Thank you, everyone.

—Robert Crawford,
Curator of Ship Models

Calendar of Events

Note: Please call the Museum Office at 234-9153 for details of time and exact location, where not given.

MARCH

15: Membership meeting, BERKELEY

21: Docents MEDEA Cruise

APRIL

14-15: Movies Before the Mast, STAR OF INDIA. "The Crimson Pirate," starring Burt Lancaster.

22-23: Annual Rummage Sale, BERKELEY

27: Maritime Research Society meeting, STAR OF INDIA

MAY

3: Auxiliary Board meeting, BERKELEY

17: Auxiliary general meeting, BERKELEY

17: Membership meeting, BERKELEY

26-27: Movies Before the Mast, STAR OF INDIA. "Wind"



MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

A non-profit, educational corporation
Council of American Maritime Museums
Conference of California Historical Societies
American Association of Museums
International Congress of Maritime Museums

Board of Trustees

Michael O'Bryan, *President*
Bob Baker, *First Vice President*
Marge Palmer, *Second Vice President*
and *Secretary-Treasurer*

Kenneth Andersen	Chris Frost
Capt. Carl G. Bowman	Gordon Frost
Dr. William F. Brown	Dr. Fred Frye
Ray Carpenter	Hal Georgens
Merrill Day	Anthony Ghio
Arthur DeFever	Rita Grieg
Roy Drew	Paul Kettenburg
Sam Duran	Gordon Lacy
Daniel Duvall	Morris Landon
William Dysart	C. Edward Paxton
August Felando	John Rebelo, Jr.
Dan Frank	Robert Sharp

Dave Sinclair

MAINS'L HAUL is published quarterly (wind and weather permitting) at the headquarters of the Maritime Museum aboard the ferryboat **BERKELEY**, 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, California 92101. (619) 234-9153.

Mains'l Haul—An order in tacking ship bidding 'Swing the main yards.' To loot, steal, or 'acquire'.
—John Masfield

Craig Arnold, *Editor*

MARITIME MUSEUM ASS'N. OF SAN DIEGO
Bark *Star of India*
1306 N. Harbor Dr., San Diego, Calif. 92101

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
San Diego, Calif.
Permit No. 1089



MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO



MAINS'L HAUL

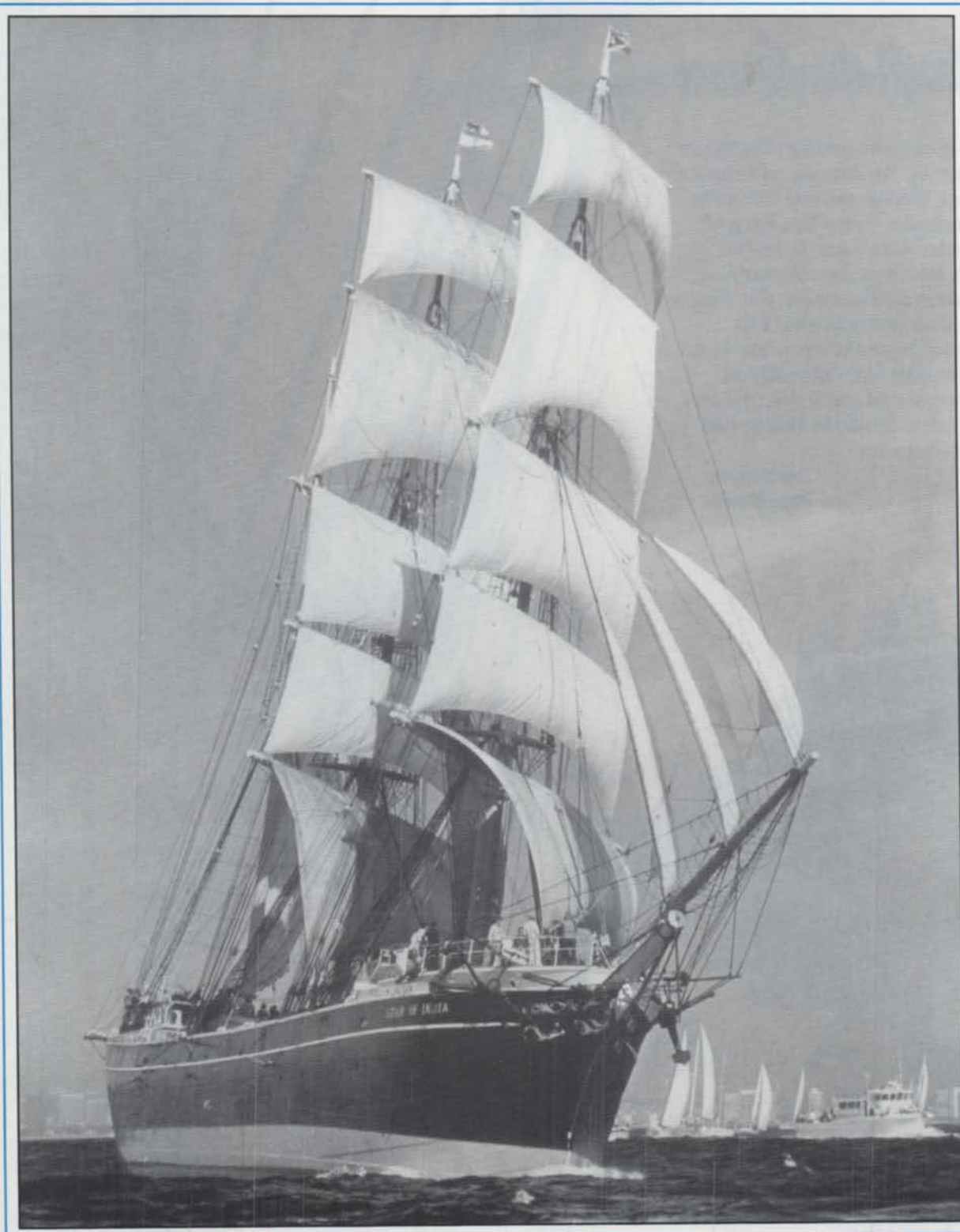
VOL. 31, NO. 3

SUMMER 1995

\$2.50



A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY





MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

COUNCIL OF AMERICAN
MARITIME MUSEUMS

CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA
HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MUSEUMS

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF MARITIME MUSEUMS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Michael O'Bryan,
President

Bob Baker,
First Vice President

Marge Palmer,
Second Vice President
and Secretary-Treasurer

Kenneth Andersen
Capt. Carl G. Bowman
Dr. William F. Brown

Ray Carpenter
Merrill Day

Arthur DeFever

Roy Drew

Sam Duran

Daniel Duvall

William Dysart

August Felando

Dan Frank

Chris Frost

Gordon Frost

Dr. Fred Frye

Hal Georgens

Anthony Ghio

Jacqueline Gillman

Paul Kettenburg

Gordon Lacy

Morris Landon

C. Edward Paxton

John Rebelo, Jr.

Robert Sharp

Dave Sinclair

"One by one the few remaining sailing ships are disappearing. They drop away, and are heard of no more. With them goes much that is worthy and incalculable. It passes like a high squall sinking beyond the horizon, wind and sea, motion and color, romance and inspiration, a whole range of human endeavor, all vanishing to leeward with the tall ships in their midst.... The sailing ship stood for a means whereby men were brought to their fullest development. She stood for a profession in which only merit could endure. She stood for things the world cannot afford to lose."

Lincoln Colcord,
Master Mariner

MAINS'L HAUL
is published quarterly
(wind and weather permitting)
at the headquarters of the
San Diego Maritime Museum
aboard the BERKELEY,
1306 N. Harbor Drive, San
Diego, CA 92101.

(619) 234-9153

FAX (619) 234-8345

MAINS'L HAUL

VOL. 31, NO. 3

SUMMER 1995

A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY



6



10



15

CONTENTS

-
- 5** From the Helm
-
- 6** The MAORI KING Affair, *Charles A. Bencik*
-
- 10** A Circle of Fate: An Oral History of the Sinking and Rescue of USS SQUALUS, *Robert G. Wright*
-
- 15** On Beam-Ends: Ships in Peril, *Captain R. A. Bowling*
-
- 21** Book Review: *The Commodore*, by Patrick O'Brian.
-
- 22** Book Review: *Magellan*, by Tim Joyner.
-
- 23** Notes and Comment
-

On the cover ...

The iron bark STAR OF INDIA heels well to port as she runs on a starboard tack during a recent sail off San Diego. The 122-year-old vessel is the world's oldest square-rigged ship still sailing, following the tragic sinking of the MARIA ASUMPTA off England a few months ago.

Photo copyright © 1984 by Steven J. Hausman



MAINS'L HAUL is the historical journal of the San Diego Maritime Museum, 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101. Send all submissions and queries to Editor, *Mains'l Haul*, at the above address. Contributors' guidelines available on request. For advertising rates and information, please contact the Development Department, San Diego Maritime Museum, at (619) 234-9153. No portion of this journal may be reproduced or stored in any electronic retrieval system without the written permission of the Editor.

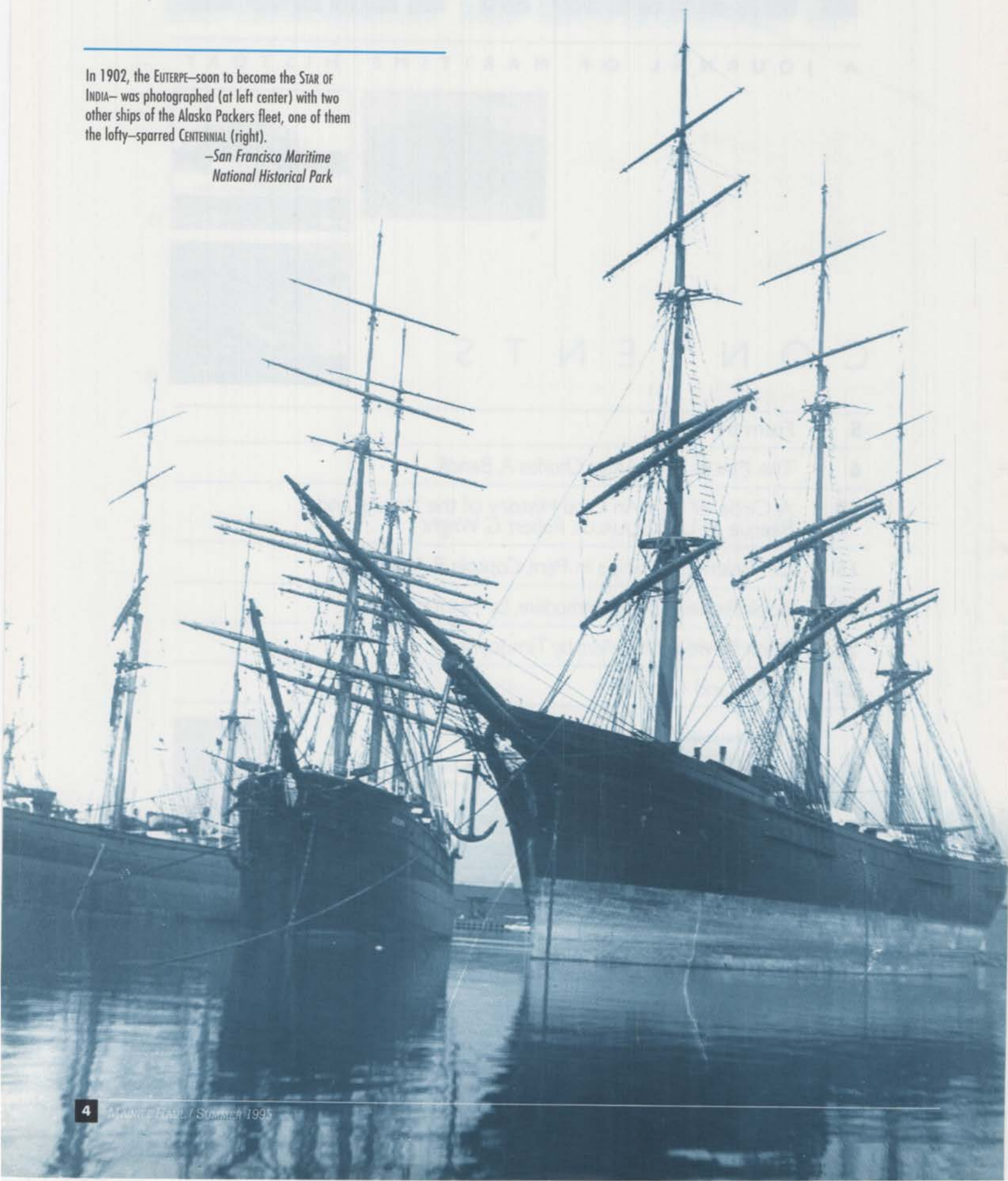
Craig Arnold, Editor



"Mains'l Haul—An order in tacking ship bidding
'Swing the main yards.' To loot, steal, or 'acquire'."
—John Masfield

In 1902, the EUTERPE—soon to become the STAR OF INDIA—was photographed (at left center) with two other ships of the Alaska Packers fleet, one of them the lofty-sparred CENTENNIAL (right).

—San Francisco Maritime
National Historical Park



FROM THE HELM



Like most museums, ours began its devotion to collection and conservation with little questioning of purpose. Acquiring the STAR OF INDIA and then decades later saving her from the deadly decline of fond neglect were heroic acts that needed no justification, for that was subsumed within the act itself. As a class, that deepwater, square-rigged sailing ship was a noble object, facing extinction from monumental technological and economic change. By saving one of them it seemed possible to convey to our future much of the worldview encoded within the fabric of the ship. As a lone survivor of an economic last stand, the ship would present herself as a curiosity and a mystery, and by those powerful attractions find the means to provide for her own upkeep. Who would crack the code and how, was a question left for another day.

It was answered in various ways. By collecting more ships and artifacts, the museum surrounded the STAR OF INDIA with a context that made sense of her and attempted also to make sense of her presence as a museum ship at a place she never visited during her working life. Over time, the museum supported this collection with a powerful literary apparatus: museum labels, a journal, a newsletter, archival material, a library, dedicated books, brochures and advertising, and continuous exposure in the media. Finally, in 1976 and every few years thereafter (and next time hopefully within a year of this printing), the STAR OF INDIA went to sea. There, the context of her natural element provided a glimpse of the vanished world, focused through a lens of straining canvas.

We have found, however, as most museums have, that the worldview of a vanished age cannot be experienced in its objects alone, or even in a literary interpretation of them. Especially this is true when a good deal of the knowledge needed to run things was passed on through demonstration and oral communication. For a long time our museum has relied almost exclusively on docents to perform this function, interpreting the ships to their public. The docents have done a

magnificent job of this, and have recently taken some profound steps that will make them even more effective. By next fall, we will have taken the human element one step further, giving the museum something it has never had before: a cohesive education program.

In conjunction with Orange County Marine Institute (recent winner of a prestigious national educational award), the STAR OF INDIA will convey five thousand children a year into the mid-nineteenth century, one classroom at a time, via overnight living history experiences. During the eighteen-hour sessions, children will live "in period"—acquiring a feel for sailing as a seaman or an emigrant in a square rigger, and perhaps more importantly, benefiting from the shock of encountering a different system of values first hand, one they might otherwise have only read about with a jaded sense of skepticism.

In addition, we are seeking funding to develop our own curricula for teachers bringing their classes to the museum for conventional field trips. Where heretofore, they have had only our own visitor information flyers to rely on, we want to provide them with lesson plans, study guides, worksheets, and reading lists covering a wide variety of subjects from simple machines to the thermodynamics of steam, including the scientific revolution, geography, labor history, nutrition at sea, and great voyages of exploration.

An important component of our educational program is geared to adults, and especially to members. By this printing, we will already have held our first boat building course to be followed by other courses in lofting, taking lines, and construction of fittings and hardware. In the future we will be announcing a course in the history of navigation, learning coastwise through celestial through the context of the great voyages and the scientific revolution. Finally, our members meetings will continue to host dynamic speakers capable of capturing the majesty and mystery of going to sea. Piece by piece, we will continue to crack the code.

Raymond Ashley
Executive Director



The MAORI KING Affair

By Charles A. Bencik



The newspaper headlines were blood-curdling, that Tuesday, May 7, 1907. Sleepy denizens of San Diego, the quiet little seaport town, started at the words: "1000 Chinese Mutiny on Ship—Ship Here in Dire Distress," cried the *San Diegan Sun*. "Chinks and Russians Wage Terrific Battle on Ship—Maori King's Decks are a Running Sea of Blood," panted that day's *Evening Tribune*. "International Trouble May be Result of Mutiny—Was the Chinese Horde Kidnaped?" (sic) the *Sun* pondered the next day.¹

The word "Russia" conjured up the recent news of a revolution, to some. Others knew of San Diego's small community of Chinese: quiet, polite but mysterious grocers, miners, laundrymen and fisherfolk. But now, here—on our very doorstep!—a huge horde of Chinese and Russians were convulsed in an incredibly hellish racial battle. Was San Diego hurtling headlong into the maelstrom of an international incident?

Lt. Don Stewart stands front and center with a detachment of the San Diego Naval Militia during the early 1900s. The Naval Militia was a forerunner of the modern Naval Reserve. These ardent lads would become embroiled in one of the most bizarre chapters in San Diego history, the MAORI KING incident.

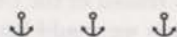
San Diego Maritime Museum



Early that morning, at the edge of the mud flats that bordered San Diego Bay, Don M. Stewart, 34, stopped and stared out over the water. Stewart, recently a real estate and insurance man with Harry Fisher and Co., was senior clerk with the Pacific Coast Steamship Company. He was also a lieutenant, and commander of San Diego's Third Division of the California Naval Militia.² Across the bay, below the distant spires of the stately Coronado

Hotel, the grotesquely filthy, rust-covered tramp steamer MAORI KING, a huge black banner fluttering from a line between her masts, intruded on the quivering, pristine waters he'd known so many years. Puzzled, he drew himself up and headed briskly for the offices of *San Diego Union City* Editor Walter T. Blake, thus embarking on what was to be a

long and dangerous voyage. Events had been set in motion months before in Shanghai. With twenty men, he was soon to undertake a task that the U.S. and British governments, the army, the Sheriff, the city police and the Governor of California found too bizarre to handle. He and twenty others, including ten Naval Militiamen, would see this hell ship safely around the Baja peninsula to Guaymas. The adventure would end fittingly aboard the *Sunset Limited*, a Southern Pacific Railroad train.



In the early 1900s the Southern Pacific's far-flung rail empire was expanding into Mexico. But the work had stopped. Mexico's squabbles with Yaqui Indians had created an impasse. The Yaquis were ambushing the Mexican laborers working in their territory, and the laborers were staying away.

To solve the Southern Pacific's Mexico problems, J. C. Epperly Co. of Portland, Oregon, who usually contracted to furnish them railroad ties, arranged with Appleby and Company of Shanghai and Vladivostok to get 1,000 or more Chinese laborers. Peasant Chinese were willing to work cheap. After years of drought, crop failure, depression and war, the prospect of coming to *Gum San*, as they called California—"The Land of the Golden Mountain"—must have seemed dazzling, but most of them had no other choice.

Fortunately for the railroad, the protectionist Chinese Exclusionary Act, passed by Congress in 1882, did not apply in Mexico. Early in 1907, Appleby & Co. assembled 1,000 Chinese in Shanghai to board the *BESSIE DOLLAR*, a new steamer recently off the Port Glasgow ways. As she was about to depart, a British gunboat stopped her and forced the Chinese ashore. Appleby then chartered the *MAORI KING*, a slow tramp steamer built by W. Doxford & Sons at Sunderland in 1890, owned by Ginsberg & Co. of Shanghai. They ordered her to Vladivostok, a Siberian port teeming with foreigners stranded when the Russo-Japanese War ended two years earlier. With very little room for passengers, *MAORI KING* booked passage for 214 people, mostly Russians

MAORI KING had been built to carry her officers, crew, and a few passengers—but not 1300 men!

with some Greeks, Serbs, Romanians, Montinegrins, and one Frenchman. The lot of them were quartered in the after section of the ship.



MAORI KING was a small ship by today's reckoning, but "huge" in the sight of a 1907 *San Diego Union* reporter: 3803 gross

tons, 365 feet in length, 44.2 feet in beam, and registered at Liverpool under the British flag.

There were fourteen cabin passengers for her voyage from Asia to North America: three British officers (Captain J. W. Duncan, First Officer Thomas S. Vernon, and Second Officer T. X. Oxley); also five Russian cabin passengers, hired by the Southern Pacific to be in charge of the labor draft; and six others, including representatives of the Southern Pacific. The crew comprised fifty-four Chinese. An assistant engineer was half Chinese.



While *MAORI KING* was getting to Vladivostok, Appleby & Co. hired a portly Chinese labor contractor named Lee Sun Sai, who went to Harbin in Manchuria and recruited 1,000 men from that area. Apparently he told them they would go to Hong Kong to work on the Canton Railroad, and even gave them copper badges marked "Canton R.R." By other reports it appears that, before the laborers had boarded the *MAORI KING*, Lee Sun Sai had promised that they would be landed in San Francisco, where a large, well-known settlement of Chinese already existed. He supposedly claimed that, American laws notwithstanding, they could stay if they were aboard a British ship.³

The laborers took a train from Harbin, but on arrival at Vladivostok, they refused to board the ship. Their reasons were not clear. Possibly the Manchurians (who were Chinese nationals) wanted nothing to do with their appointed Russian bosses.

Finally, on April 12, 1907, overcome by hunger and enticed by the proffered meals, the Manchurians could no longer resist. When enough had boarded the *MAORI KING*, the ship's crew moved quickly and quietly. While the Manchurians ate and chattered away, steam was raised, lines singled up, and the ship proceeded to get under way. Some of the laborers saw what was happening, and managed to get overboard and ashore before the ship was far out to sea. The rest resigned themselves to their fate.



MAORI KING had been built to carry her officers, crew, and a few passengers—but not 1300 men! Triple-tiered wooden bunks had been constructed for the Chinese in the forward cargo hold. On the main deck, rough 2x4 racks served as toilets; the scuppers, washed out occasionally with fire hose and push broom, served as lavatory plumbing. Sanitation was virtually nonexistent. Fresh water for personal hygiene and laundering was at a premium. A Russian naval doctor named Bensengro, who had served in Saigon, was on board, trying to reach St. Petersburg by way of New York.

Vermin infestations in their dirty quilted clothes threatened typhus for the Chinese, as well as for the others. Dr. Bensengro apparently was not overly concerned, or unable to improve the situation.



As MAORI KING steamed across the North Pacific, things were quiet aboard until April 18, when one of the Manchurians stabbed another Chinese in the kidney over a game of chance. The Manchurian was put into irons. Examination of the wounded man showed he was in very serious condition. The laborers, meanwhile, expecting a short trip, had begun wondering why the voyage was taking so long. About April 25, Lee Sun Sai admitted that things were not as he had led them to expect. The ship was headed for Guaymas, Mexico, not San Francisco. But, he assured them, they would be able to get into the United States easily from there. (None of those aboard had read the *The Evening Union* reports about the Chinese recently convicted for trying to cross the Mexican border; those people would indeed reach San Francisco—and be deported back to China.)⁴

For a short time, the laborers in MAORI KING seemed content, but soon their leaders lodged a complaint against Lee Sun Sai of “shipping them under false pretences.” The Chinese threatened to kill all whites aboard the ship, as well as contractor Lee, if it did not turn back and head for China. (According to *The Evening Tribune* at a later date, they threatened to tie up the Europeans and take the ship back themselves.)⁵ After much arguing, all quieted down and the Chinese laborers were confined to their quarters.

But fights kept breaking out from the 25th on, whenever Chinese and Russians encountered one another. On Friday, May 2, one of the Chinese died—supposedly of diarrhea, exhaustion and either an overdose or a deficiency of opium.⁶ The Chinese would not permit his burial at sea, insisting that he be taken back to China. To mollify them, the crew fashioned a well-caulked coffin. The unembalmed body was placed in it, and the coffin stowed

in a passageway, under an overhead. In the cold North Pacific it was a workable solution.

On May 3, an altercation on the forecastle deck ended when a Russian struck a Chinese, cutting open his head and knocking him unconscious. Dr. Bensengro treated him, but made the mistake of not letting the other Chinese see him, and word got out that the Russian had killed him. The Chinese mobbed the Russians, and a pitched battle ensued. Most of the Chinese had knives, as did many of the Russians. Others grabbed “belaying pins, chunks of coal, and anything upon which they could lay their hands.” *The Evening Tribune* later reported:

“For over half an hour the fight raged back and forth over the decks of the vessel and blood ran over the side like water. Heads were cracked and the wounded trampled under foot.”

Captain Duncan’s Cantonese crew had been with him a long time, and he considered them loyal and trustworthy. But they reportedly had a “mortal and inextinguishable dread of the Chinese laborer [i.e., the Manchurians] and were useless in quelling the mutiny.” Duncan and his meager subordinates armed themselves, and after several hours managed to separate the combatants. Many made their way back to their bunks, some seriously wounded. A score from both sides lay prostrate on deck. Dr. Bensengro had his hands full.

The battle only served to rouse the Manchurians’ ire. Every moment it seemed a new battle was about to break out, and only with the severest measures was Captain Duncan able to keep order.

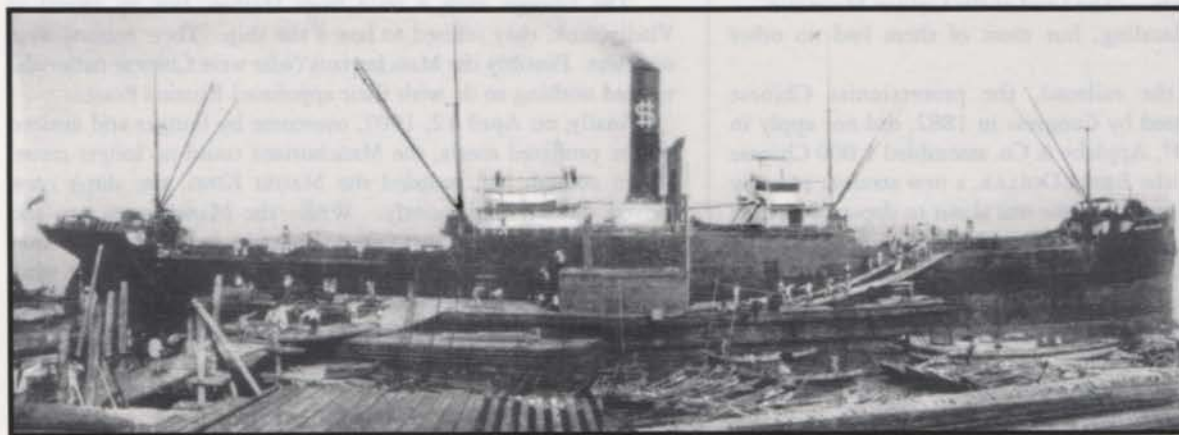


As if there weren’t enough problems, around the 1st of May the weather worsened, and the ship had a major engineering casualty while laboring in a terrific storm. As First Officer Vernon related to the *Union*:

“Even with a free crew we would have had great difficulty in riding her out. But with the row going on between the Chinese and the Russians it was awful. The Russians crowded at the Chinese from forward, and the Chinese struggled in a seething mob to reach the Russians.

“The propellor shaft smashed through its steel casing, and we had great difficulty in repairing it; all of this time we were being beaten to and fro in a raging storm, the waves washing over the deck at every sweep. But the Chinese were bent on murdering every Russian and the battle went on. Then they got to fighting among themselves, and sailed for the blood of the Chinese contractor who had shipped them. . . .”⁷

On Sunday, May 5, after 23 days at sea, the Chinese renewed



BESSIE DOLLAR, a tramp steamer similar to MAORI KING, as she looked in 1910. This was the first vessel chartered for the transport of Chinese and other laborers to Mexico. Photo courtesy of the author

MAORI KING as she appeared from the Spreckels Wharf on May 8, 1907. At 365 feet in length, she was considered a "huge" ship by a newspaper reporter. She personified the "tramp" steamer to the nth degree.

Photo courtesy of the author



their threats against Lee Sun Sai, saying they had been kidnapped, misled into thinking it would only be a ten-day voyage. Later, they "threatened to kill everyone aboard if the Captain did not steer a course for San Francisco where they could renew their supply of opium and cigarettes," according to a *Tribune* reporter—hardly an informed, impartial witness.

The terrified cabin passengers urged Captain Duncan to put into the nearest port and obtain a guard to protect them. Recognizing the idea's merit, the captain headed for land, though he lacked pilot charts for the California coast. Finally, the ship made landfall: about three o'clock on the morning of Monday, May 6, they saw Point Conception Light. A celebration began, with generous amounts of food passed out to all. At 9 that evening, the Russian passengers petitioned the captain to be put ashore at the nearest port, in order to take the train to Guaymas. Duncan set a course for San Diego. Elated Russians imbibed freely, and a revolver was discharged into the air, which did nothing to calm the Chinese.



Early Tuesday morning, May 7, MAORI KING approached San Diego. The ship, unable to detect the harbor entrance, made for the Coronado Hotel, Captain Duncan thinking it was the quarantine station. He anchored 200 yards offshore, and signalled for a pilot. Captain James Dunn, of the Coronado boat house, responded. Startled Coronadoans thought she was aground. The pilot brought her to the quarantine station, under the guns of Fort Rosecrans.⁸

During the morning, as the ship swung at anchor in quarantine, a band of Manchurians tried to rush the fo'c's'le head, possibly to cast the ship off. Captain Duncan went forward with Second Officer Oxley to separate the crewmen and the laborers, and might have succeeded, except that a passenger fired a shot from the bridge into the air. Within ten seconds, Captain Duncan related, "there was simply hell.

Both Russians and coolies were armed with knives, pistols, crowbars and belying pins, and I do not understand why there were not at least one hundred killed."

From high up on Point Loma, army observers stared through binoculars, aghast at the roiling battle being waged on the rust-covered vessel below. Quickly they telephoned for help from the authorities. Word got to Sheriff Jennings and Chief of Police Thomas that fourteen men had been killed (injured, said the *San Diego Sun*) and that "a pitched battle was going on."

Jennings assembled a posse; Thomas called all his men together,

and they discussed rushing the ship.⁹ All were petrified by the prospects of such an encounter. As the *Union* front pages reported, "it is understood by the local police and members of company B, N.G.C. [i.e., the local National Guard unit] that four long blasts of a whistle, at successive and rapid intervals, is the signal that mutiny has again broken out." One fly in the ointment: this was an incident with international implications. The militia were state forces, the quarantine station was considered federal property. Only if permitted to anchor in the inner harbor would MAORI KING come under the jurisdiction of local authority and be accessible to measures they might take.

Captain Duncan came ashore at noon, a bandage on his neck from a severe cut received in the melee earlier. He proceeded to the home of Allen Hutchinson, the British Vice Consul. At 1 p.m. they met with U.S. Commissioner Samuel S. Knowles and Immigration Inspector Emil Englecke. Duncan sized up the cause of the "mutiny" as "too much good food and nothing to do."

Dr. Bensengro agreed. He later told a reporter he thought the food, which was a little better for the Russians, was at fault, that because the Russians had it a little better, the Chinese had become jealous. "The trip has been anything but pleasant," he told the newsman in broken English.¹⁰

(Ed. Note: Part 2 of this article will appear in the Fall 1995 issue of *Mains'l Haul*.)

NOTES

- 1 *San Diego Sun*, May 7, 1907, p. 1.
The Evening Tribune, May 7, 1907, pp. 1 ff.
San Diego Sun, May 8, 1907, p. 1.
- 2 Don M. Stewart, *Frontier Port* (Los Angeles, CA: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1966), pp. 153-165. S. F. Black, *History of San Diego County*, Vol. II (Chicago, IL: S. J. Clark, 1913), p. 142 ff. Black indicates that Stewart had probably resigned with Fisher by 1906, and was at this time clerk for the Pacific Coast Steamship Company.
- 3 *San Diego Union*, May 8, 1907, pp. 1, 3.
- 4 *San Diego Union*, May 14, 1907, p. 11.
- 5 *The Evening Tribune*, May 7, 1907, p. 1.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 *San Diego Union*, May 8, 1907, pp. 1, 3.
- 8 *San Diego Sun*, May 8, 1907, p. 1.
The Evening Tribune, May 7, 1907, p. 1.
- 9 *The Evening Tribune*, May 7, 1907, p. 3.
- 10 *San Diego Sun*, May 8, 1907, pp. 1, 3.

A Circle of Fate:

An Oral History of the Sinking and Rescue of U.S.S. SQUALUS

By Robert G. Wright



U.S.S. SQUALUS snaps her towlines and plunges to the bottom in the failure of this early salvage effort. The sub was later successfully salvaged and renamed SAILFISH.

U. S. Navy official photo

U.S.S. SQUALUS (SS-192) was a SARGO-class diesel-powered attack submarine launched in 1938 and commissioned in early 1939. On the morning of May 23, 1939, SQUALUS made a test dive off the Isle of Shoals near Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Failure of the main induction valve caused the flooding of her after engine room, and the submarine sank stern first to the bottom in sixty fathoms of water.

Her sister ship SCULPIN (SS-191) located the stricken vessel and established contact with the survivors. Thirty-nine hours after the sinking, the McCann rescue chamber, an improved version of the Momsen diving bell, successfully rescued the thirty-three survivors; but twenty-six men were lost in the after section of the SQUALUS. For carrying

out the rescue and salvage under extremely hazardous conditions, four Navy divers were awarded the Medal of Honor—the last such medals to be awarded in peacetime.

In an arduous salvage operation later, SQUALUS was raised. She was subsequently repaired and recommissioned as U.S.S. SAILFISH. She participated in the Pacific theater in the Second World War, and was awarded nine battle stars and the Presidential Unit Citation.

On September 8, 1993, I attended a reunion of submarine veterans who had served aboard SQUALUS/SAILFISH and SCULPIN. My invitation had been extended by Judd Bland, who was a survivor of the sinking of the SQUALUS. This is his story:

ROBERT WRIGHT: Judd, could you give a description of what happened on the last dive?

JUDD BLAND: They give the order "Rig for dive" and everything is rigged. The air induction valves are put on automatic so that the man at the manifold only has to push a lever to close them. In order to rig for dive, they go through the procedure of rigging all these things and when the submarine is properly rigged for dive, there is an officer who makes an inspection of the forward half, and . . . an officer who makes an inspection of the after half. They report to the diving officer, "Ready to dive." They do it all by Klaxon instead of just saying, "Dive." The loud Klaxon gives the signal. The purpose of the dive was that we were doing it for acceptance trials. We had a Navy Yard superintendent aboard to witness the dive. Although it was built by the Navy Yard, it still has to be accepted by the government.

RW: I understand you saw the "Christmas tree" panel showing all green lights. (This panel indicates if all hull openings are closed or not.)

JB: Yes!

RW: You were also telling me about a barometric pressure?

JB: When they sound the Klaxon, the people on the bow and stern planes put them in their proper positions, and the electricians back in the maneuvering room change from engines to battery of the propulsion motors. All these things are done automatically on the sounding of the diving alarm. The man on the air manifold bleeds pressure in the boat and he reports by what he sees on the barometer. A high pressure means the boat is tight. The diving officer gives his orders to the planesmen [on] how he wants them [the diving planes] operated. . . . The diving officer gives whatever orders are necessary; if they are going down too quickly, he will blow certain tanks, like buoyancy. This is a perfected thing. We had a lieutenant standing by with a stop watch, watching the depth gauges. When we got to a point where it was considered periscope depth, that is the point that decides how long it took us to dive. [sic] Observing his stop watch, he says, "We're going to make it!", meaning we were going to get under in less than a minute. At 50 seconds he determined that we were already under.

Immediately thereafter word came over the phones to the control room speaker that the engine rooms were flooding!

RW: Were you in the control room so you could hear all this?

JB: I could hear all of it, yes!

RW: Where was the skipper, Captain Naquin?

JB: The skipper was in the conning tower. The exec, who was also the diving officer, was in the control room along with two planesmen. There was a man on the hydraulic manifold, a man on the air manifold, a man in the pump room, and myself standing by the intercommunication switchboard as well as a couple of other men.

RW: At the control room, you have the conning tower as a compartment above it, and you have a room below it?

JB: Right. It's called the pump room. The reason I was in the control room—which actually saved my life—[was that] we had a new type of what they called a low-pressure [10 lb.] blow. When they blow the water [by using air] out of the tanks, they use 2,000 lbs. [of] air. There's a lot of waste to that. So, they invented this new low-pressure blow. These huge motors were very noisy. We had not talked to machinist's mates on how to operate these new low-pressure blows. Me, being the auxiliary electrician, it was my job to stand by when we surfaced to use the 10 lb. turbo-blow. It was right on top of the hatch where I was standing by the IC switchboard. But, as it happened, we never got a chance to surface so I never got a chance to use it.

RW: When you heard, over the intercom, these guys yelling about flood-

ing—what did they say was flooding?

JB: They said, "The engine rooms are flooding. Take her up. The induction is open."

RW: That's what you could hear, clearly?

JB: That's right. The man on the telephone was a young yeoman, very inexperienced, and he was the only one who acted real excited. In other words, there was no panic, but obviously he was quite upset.

RW: I assume that even an old hand would have yelled out.

JB: Oh, yes, but this yeoman never had lung training.

RW: What happened then?

JB: The captain jumped down from the conning tower, and the diving officer gave word to blow the ballast. Had they known there was that much water aft, [they might have] started blowing the aft ballast tanks quickly instead of the normal procedure—forward, aft—which proceeded to lighten the submarine at the forward end. Perhaps had they blown the after tanks first, they might have checked her before going to the bottom. That is just my personal guess. But you don't deviate from your normal procedures. So the man who was told to blow the ballast started forward and blew them all! The weight of the water was so terrific that we took a tremendous list up by the bow [of] about 40 to 45 degrees. We slid down so slowly that we weren't even sure when we rested on the bottom. We hit that old blue mud so easy. . . .

RW: You didn't feel any bumps?

JB: No, it rested so easily, stern first in the old blue mud and the bow came

The conning tower of the *Squalus/Sailfish* is preserved today at Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire.

Photo by the author



"We slid down so slowly that we weren't even sure when we rested on the bottom. We hit that old blue mud so easy."

At Portsmouth may be seen the McCann diving bell, the revolutionary vessel which saved 33 survivors of the sinking.

Photo by the author



down gradually to where we had an 11 degree up by the bow at a depth of 240 feet.

RW: About how fast do you think she sank?

JB: I would say that this all happened within two or three minutes at the most.

RW: Could you really feel it sinking?

JB: No.

RW: I assume everybody had to grab on to something?

JB: Yes, because of the water that did get into the control room. A little bit of it came into the ventilation lines, so the deck was all wet which made the footing difficult, especially with that terrific angle. That was the main problem—the footing and trying to stand up.

RW: Did you have lights going out?

JB: No. The lights didn't go out until Gainer [chief electrician] pulled those disconnect switches. When he pulled the switches, the lights all went out because, by some quirk, the emergency lights were across the forward battery. The reason he pulled the disconnect switches [was that] he knew, by the terrific heat of the forward battery, that the after battery must be flooded and was shorting the forward battery. When he pulled the disconnect switches, the heat was so tremendous that it didn't even break the arc. There was a terrific discharge of around 50,000 amps. There were sparks flying all over the place!

RW: You said it affected his eyes?

JB: Yes. It almost blinded him right at the time. Over the years, he had eye problems.

RW: Was the switch in the control room?

JB: No. It was down in the battery compartment.

That was the other thing. He had to crawl down

into the battery compartment, and the battery compartment had a very low overhead. I would

say [it was] roughly three and a half to four feet

[high]. And you had to crawl under the decking

to get to it. And, the hatch was approximately

midway to the battery, and the disconnect

switches were 10 to 12 feet beyond the hatch.

McLees was down in that battery compartment taking

gravity readings. When they took the terrific

angle, he got out of the battery compartment

and went up to the forward torpedo room.

And Gainer was thinking about him, wondering how he was, and he opened the hatch, felt all that heat, and he had already surmised the trouble because he was taking [an] individual voltage reading. . . . The battery voltage was so low, it was almost a zero. So, Gainer, being an electrician all these years, realized right away that there must be a terrific discharge on that battery. So, when he opened the hatch and all that heat flew out, he knew damn well there was real trouble. So, he crawled down, went back to the disconnect switches, pulled them, came up, jumped out of the hatch, and said, "Got them"—just like it was a routine thing.

RW: You said that the admiral refused to give any award to him.

JB: What happened, after this was all over, and recommendations were made for any awards for whatever was done, the divers all got highly decorated for their diving, and the captain asked the admiral to give Gainer the Navy Cross for having saved [us from] a battery explosion. The admiral said, "No. He was chief electrician's mate, and that was his job!" Instead, later on, they did authorize a Navy and Marine Corps Medal for him. But [for] most of us, the consensus of opinion was that he should have gotten the Navy Cross, at least.

RW: That's the highest award given in the Navy, short of the Medal of Honor.

JB: There were 33 of us rescued and 26 were lost in the aft end. When we dove, there were only four men in the after torpedo room but the people in the engine room were trying to get into the after torpedo room. When the submarine was brought up, there were 17 bodies in the after torpedo room. So 13 of them had gotten through the hatch. . . .

RW: Actually, they could have dogged down [the] hatch at the bulkhead in the aft torpedo room, [and] they would have had air for a while except that you were saying that there were guys coming out of the engine room and the maneuvering room. . . .

JB: For the brief period of time that we were down, they would have probably had an oxygen problem, although [because] there was one oxygen bottle in each compartment, they would have had one oxygen bottle.

Now, we had an oxygen bottle in the control room and because of knowing that we were going to be down longer than one bottle was going to hold out, we took an extra bottle over to the forward battery compartment that was in the control room. The other thing that was very important . . . [was] when you are in a situation like that where the air gets a little bad, you are exhaling carbon dioxide. We have a method of solving that problem with a

soda lime absorbent. We were putting it out and it wasn't doing its job and in the control room quite a few of us got sick to our stomachs because of the bad air. The food we had was nothing but canned pineapples, peaches, things of that nature.

RW: The galley is down in that area, too.

JB: Yes. There was a little store room right under the control room where they kept dry stores. Captain Naquin sent some of the people from the control room into the forward torpedo room to kind of equal up the number of people we had in the two different compartments. There was a misunderstanding . . . of what actually happened during the sinking and it went all the way through the court of inquiry and everything. What actually happened was that the valve was closed! It opened because of a faulty mechanism in the hydraulic system. This, apparently, was a fault that could have been rectified after they found out the U.S.S. SNAPPER(SS-185) had this fault. The SNAPPER was making a dive of a lot less speed, and they took a lot of water before they resurfaced but they didn't have the accident like we did. Had they known, at the time, the severeness of the malfunction of the hydraulic system, they could have rectified it on the SQUALUS and this wouldn't have happened. The consensus of opinion when the accident happened was that the valve wasn't even closed. A lot of people got the misunderstanding that the valve wasn't closed but the valve actually closed. It had to be closed or they'd never have had the pressure on the boat or the indicator lights wouldn't have shown it closed. [Because of] the fact that it's quite a bit higher than the waterline and going down so rapidly and all, as soon as the water got close to the valve itself, the hydraulic malfunction could have seeped it open before there was any sea pressure whatsoever on the valve.

RW: They didn't do anything about the valves?

JB: No. They had a ship alteration that was to be done on them because of this malfunction. Sometimes it takes a lot of bureaucracy to get around to doing those things. They never did the alteration on the SQUALUS/SAILFISH. . . .

RW: What happened while you were down?

JB: Just toward the last, we realized the air was getting bad because quite a few of us got a little nauseated. They decided we were not getting the carbon dioxide taken care of properly. One of our sharper boys, the gunner's mate, Cravens, thought: "This stuff isn't working right. Let's see if we can't fix that." He pulled out the chart desk drawer, threw the damn charts away, and put soda lime in the chart desk drawers. It started working in

a hurry. You could see it boiling when it was absorbing the carbon dioxide. It was just a few hours before the actual rescue, before anybody thought of doing that. They had it in containers throughout the submarine—soda lime they called it. It was in a metal container. It wasn't as big as a five gallon can. I'd say it was equivalent to a two gallon can in powder form. The other thing we had was a little leak through some lines which caused the forward battery to get water in it. Nobody

thought, for a long time, how the hell it was getting up to the forward battery. Somebody . . . finally realized that it was the flow meter lines that went back to the maneuvering room to indicate what the hydrogen was, when you were charging batteries. Somebody thought about that. Well, that's one way the water was getting there. So, they crippled those lines off to shut that off, but by that time they'd already had enough splash water from the ventilation lines prior to them closing off the bulkhead flappers. Some water had gotten into the forward battery and there was this small amount of chlorine [gas]. So, we sealed off the forward battery compartment.

RW: Are you telling me that there wasn't any panic at all—everybody just, sort of, took it as it came?

JB: Very true. The only indication of a possible panic was the yeoman who had never had lung training. I think almost every one of us on the crew had lung training.

RW: How about that civilian naval engineer?

JB: That was the engineer from the Navy Yard. He, too, had never had lung training. He was cool. He didn't panic. After he was



Survivors Carl Bryson, Judd Bland and Leonard De Medeiros pose by the conning tower of SQUALUS/SAILFISH. The Japanese flags and ship silhouettes painted thereon represent ships sunk or damaged by this submarine during World War II.

Photo by the author

The other thing that was very important . . . [was] when you are in a situation like that where the air gets a little bad, you are exhaling carbon dioxide.

rescued, and after he got out of the bell, they say he cried like a baby for hours. The fact of seeing sunlight again was . . . he was so overjoyed from it and he apologized. He said he was sorry but he just couldn't help it. But, going back to the possible panic. No one seemed to panic whatsoever, except when the captain was mulling over what we were going to do. He decided to break out the Munson lungs and make preparations to go out with them. Captain Naquin passed the lungs out, and in the control room the only man had never had lung training was the talker that was on the phone. . . . He was shook up because he never had the lung training. When he thought we were going to go up with the lung, he kind of went a little bit to pieces—but did not drastically. That was the only sign of panic that we had.

RW: Was the boat structured to go down to 240 feet?

JB: Oh, yes. Their test depth was approximately 250.

RW: It was right on the edge, there.

JB: Yes.

RW: I understand that the best [escape swim] you guys ever did in training was 100 feet.

JB: That was in the tower at Groton. When they first started talking about the Munson lungs, I don't think there was anything done then. Up in the forward torpedo room we had a little torpedo man. We called him "The Greek." He was a Portuguese fellow. His name was De Medeiros. De Medeiros was considered a tough little fellow. I think it was anticipated that, should we go up with the lungs, he would lead the way. It's difficult to make an escape from one hatch like we had in the torpedo room—more difficult than we had [done] in our training because in our training we had a little lock where you would pour the water in and keep the pressure in it. People would get in the lock and, from their shoulder up, there was nothing but air pressure—no water. But in a compartment like the torpedo room, you had a hatch skirt, and you had to flood the whole compartment to make an escape. So, that was quite a bit different. But, anyway, the plan, if we did use the Munson lungs, was to let De Medeiros go first. . . .

[Ed. Note: The Munson lung was an artificial breathing apparatus specially developed by the Navy to permit men to escape from sunken submarines by swimming.]

JB: You have to put oxygen in the lung. You put oxygen in it, and then you put it in your mouth. You keep it vertical. If you should bend over too far, it actually will spill out; that's the little handicap for it. In the training they teach you that. As you go out the hatch, you keep yourself vertical by holding your hands down and keep your feet from flying up. You charged it with oxygen prior to starting to go up, you put it in your mouth, have it charged, then, as you go out, you keep yourself vertical, and go up 50 feet at a time. There's a mark at each 50 feet of the line that has the buoy on it that has been released to the surface. If you get to 50 feet, you stop to decompress yourself. You count for a certain length of time (I think it was 15 seconds, at least), then you get to the surface.

RW: How were you rescued?

JB: The first diver that went down was to attach the down-haul for the McCann [diving] bell. Working at 240 feet for the hard hat diver was rather slow and you could only work a short time before you were exhausted. He had a problem right off the bat when he landed. Fortunately, he landed within 10 feet of where he was to do his job. That was lucky because the submarine was 310 feet long. He had to push the marker buoy cable away, and it was not all paid out. There was 300 foot of cable on the marker buoy. When we released the marker buoy, it paid out enough to get to the surface but, then, some of [its cable] hung up in the superstructure. It was right across the hatch where [the diver] was to attach the downhaul. The cable had parted after the SCULPIN had found it. He was up there with a big, old diving suit on, kicking this cable and trying to get it off the hatch. He was cussing and they could hear every word he said down in the torpedo room. He finally got it clear and they brought him on back up. That diver was a big Polish fellow, whose name was Sibitzky. He was very well thought of. He was very smart. He went on, during the war, up to captain. He was a Boatswain's Mate Second [Class], I think, at the time of the accident, and he retired as captain.

RW: Who first went up in the bell?

JB: The McCann bell was a clumsy old thing. We'd used it in tests at 100 feet. It was never too successful, but everything worked perfect for us in that they were able to attach the bell because we only had an 11 degree up angle and

the bell attached very nicely. That portion of it worked fine. The weather was to our favor. On the fourth trip they had a little problem in that the windlass stuck. They couldn't go up and they couldn't go down. They were trapped four extra hours.

RW: The skipper was in on that trip, wasn't he?

JB: Yes. Another thing—they had originally planned to make five trips, and after making a trip, they decided they could do it in four trips. We could cram a couple of extra ones in. Then, the second trip—the one that I came up in—we had eight of us in that one, I think. The planning was that they would keep the last trip for the skipper and the lightest-weight ones. The rest of us were picked according to how many times we were nauseated. They sent an officer up on the first trip in the McCann bell. He was our gunnery officer. The purpose of sending him up was to let the people on the topside know what the conditions were below. . . .

RW: How do you feel now?

JB: I don't want people to get the idea that I think I was a damn big hero. I wasn't any hero. I was just damn lucky to get out of there. That's the whole answer to it. . . .



After four months of grueling work, the submarine was raised and towed to Portsmouth Navy Yard. In 1940 she was recommissioned and renamed the SAILFISH at the suggestion of President Franklin Roosevelt. During World War II, she completed twelve war patrols, sinking nine enemy ships and damaging other enemy shipping.

The circle of fate was completed on December 4, 1943, when the SAILFISH sank the Japanese aircraft carrier CHUYO with 23 survivors of USS SCULPIN on board. The SCULPIN, which found the sunken SQUALUS in 1939, had herself been sunk by enemy action on November 19, 1943.

[Ed. Note: Mr. Wright is a member of the San Diego Maritime Research Society and one of the original volunteers who restored the bark STAR OF INDIA to sailing condition. He is known throughout the San Diego historical community as an oral historian, whose tapes are now on file in the Jerry MacMullen Library of the San Diego Maritime Museum.]



ON BEAM-ENDS: SHIPS IN PERIL

By Captain R. A. Bowling, USN (Ret.), Ph.D., F.N.I.

Euterpe races to shorten sail as a squall drives in. This painting by San Diego marine artist Edward Ries gives an idea of her ordeal in the Bay of Bengal in 1865.

Photo courtesy of Edward Ries

Beam-ends. Said of a vessel when she is hove over or listed until her deck beams approach the vertical. *Knight's Modern Seamanship*

The following terse account for November 25, 1865 appears in the official log of the full-rigged ship EUTERPE (now STAR OF INDIA):

This day slipped from Madras to avoid an approaching Cyclone which unfortunately overtook us on 26th & to save the Ship from foundering we was obliged to cut away the Masts after which the Sea broke over the Ship in terrible fury Severely injuring a great portion of the crew. With the remainder of the Crew we erect-

ed Jury Masts & Made the best of our way towards the land. . . .

W. J. Storry Master
A. J. Whiteside 1st Mate

This might appear to have been a unique experience. But historically, to be dismasted, knocked down, tossed on beam-ends and to founder were not uncommon in the Age of Sail. Nor was the extreme act of cutting away the masts to save the ship when in danger of foundering.

Before scanning some cases, let us first briefly review the mechanics involved, such as the fixed factors of designed stability and the effect on them of variable factors, such as wind and sea, cargo loading, how sailed, and

For the next eight hours ... the ship lay on her port side with her port lower yardarms dragging in the water.

the enhanced stability that derives from the reduction of weight aloft, e.g., yards and masts.

The stability of a ship is a complex subject that starts with its design and continues through actual sailing. Fortunately, it is not necessary to get involved in esoteric design terms and higher mathematics in order to understand the basic fixed and variable factors that determine and influence the stability of a vessel and its ability to resist a knockdown. The design parameters of a vessel determine Static Stability, the tendency to right itself from a list, measured in terms of Righting Arm (GZ). The design parameters also determine Range of Stability, measured in terms of the Angle of List to which a vessel may be inclined before she capsizes. For example, in order to sail a vessel with a 0-70 degrees Range of Stability safely, her crew must operate, at minimum, within that range.

However, the master has considerable latitude in modifying the designed stability of a vessel—for better or worse. For example, lowering the center of gravity (up to a point) by adding ballast or reducing weight aloft, such as yards or masts, will increase stability. Conversely, reducing freeboard by loading a vessel deeper than her load lines or Plimsoll marks—a common practice, especially before the British Parliament adopted the "Plimsoll line" in 1890—decreases stability.¹

Two other factors that affect a vessel's stability also are within the control of the master and crew: cargo stowage and downflooding through hull openings that are normally above the waterline, e.g., ports, hatches and ventilators. Improperly stowed cargo that suddenly shifts to one side can alone cause a vessel to heel beyond her Range of Stability, and therefore, lay her over on beam-ends. In combination with high seas, wind and/or downflooding, shifting cargo usually doomed a vessel to founder.

Last, but far from least, is the admonition to resist the temptation to overdrive a sailing vessel, particularly a large square-rigger, with every possible stitch

of canvas drawing and the "lee rail under." That is indeed living on the edge. For a sudden squall can result in a knockdown at a lesser Angle of Heel than the designed maximum, e.g., 70 degrees. This is a basic principle applicable to all sailing craft: wind forces that normally cause an acceptable angle of heel if applied gradually and steadily can result in a knockdown if applied suddenly in a gust; particularly if the vessel is already carrying an appreciable angle of heel.

With these basic principles of stability in mind, let us explore some cases where large sailing vessels have been forced on beam-ends and either foundered or survived by cutting away their masts—that is, by decreasing dynamic wind force aloft and lowering the center of gravity, thereby increasing stability.

In August 1780, H.M.S. PHOENIX, a frigate of 44 guns, departed Port Royal, Jamaica, in quest of Spanish prizes. Under the command of Sir Hyde Parker, she encountered a hurricane in the passage between Jamaica and Cuba. The strenuous working of the vessel opened her seams to such an extent that she gradually filled with water despite all hands laboring at the pumps around the clock. As she sank deeper in the water she laid over "almost upon her beam ends" and would not right again. In imminent danger of foundering, senior Lieutenant Archer recommended cutting away the masts to save the ship. Sir Hyde readily agreed: "Aye, Archer, as fast as you can."

Later, in a letter to his mother, 2 Archer described the drastic action he then took to carry out the captain's order:

I accordingly went into the chains with a pole-axe to cut away the lanyards; the boatswain went to leeward and the carpenter stood by the mast. We were already [sic] when a very violent sea broke right on board of us, ... the main and

mizzen-masts went,
the ship righted ... 3

Although the ship righted herself, she was doomed; shortly thereafter she struck on a reef off Cuba. The boatswain and the carpenter seized their axes and proceeded to cut away the foremast to relieve her. To no avail. For the relentless storm pounded her to a shattered hulk on the Cuban reef—but not before most of the crew, some 250 men, had made it safely to shore.



On April 12, 1782 British Admiral George Rodney defeated the French Admiral Comte de Grasse at the Battle of the Saints in the West Indies.⁴ The following September, Rodney sailed his prizes, including De Grasse's 120-gun flagship VILLE DE PARIS, in a convoy under the overall command of Admiral Thomas Graves. The convoy was overtaken by a hurricane that wreaked havoc, seriously damaging most of its ships and sinking several. Among the casualties was the massive VILLE DE PARIS, which went down with 800 seamen.

One of the most controversial losses in this overall disaster was that of the British ship of the line CENTAUR. On the first night that the hurricane struck, CENTAUR, Captain Inglefield commanding, was thrown on her beam-ends and was to all appearances a lost ship.⁵ Captain Inglefield's official report graphically describes the action that he took to save his ship in this crisis:

... the ship being under bare poles.
... when a gust of wind ... laid
the ship upon her beam ends. ...
the ship lay motionless, and, to all
appearances, irrecoverably overset.
The water increasing fast, I gave
immediate directions to cut away
the main and mizzenmasts [in the
process, the foremast and bowsprit
also went by the board]. ... The
ship, upon this, immediately right-
ed, ... 6



The four-masted bark PAMIR, as depicted by marine artist Oswald Brett. She was knocked down and lost with eighty out of eighty-six crew in the North Atlantic in 1957.

*MacMullen Collection,
San Diego Maritime Museum*

Although cutting away the masts righted the ship, progressive flooding through opened seams caused by the terrific pounding she took spelled her doom eight days later. In her last moments, Captain Inglefield and eleven others abandoned ship in the pinnace and left the remaining crew to their fate. All perished.

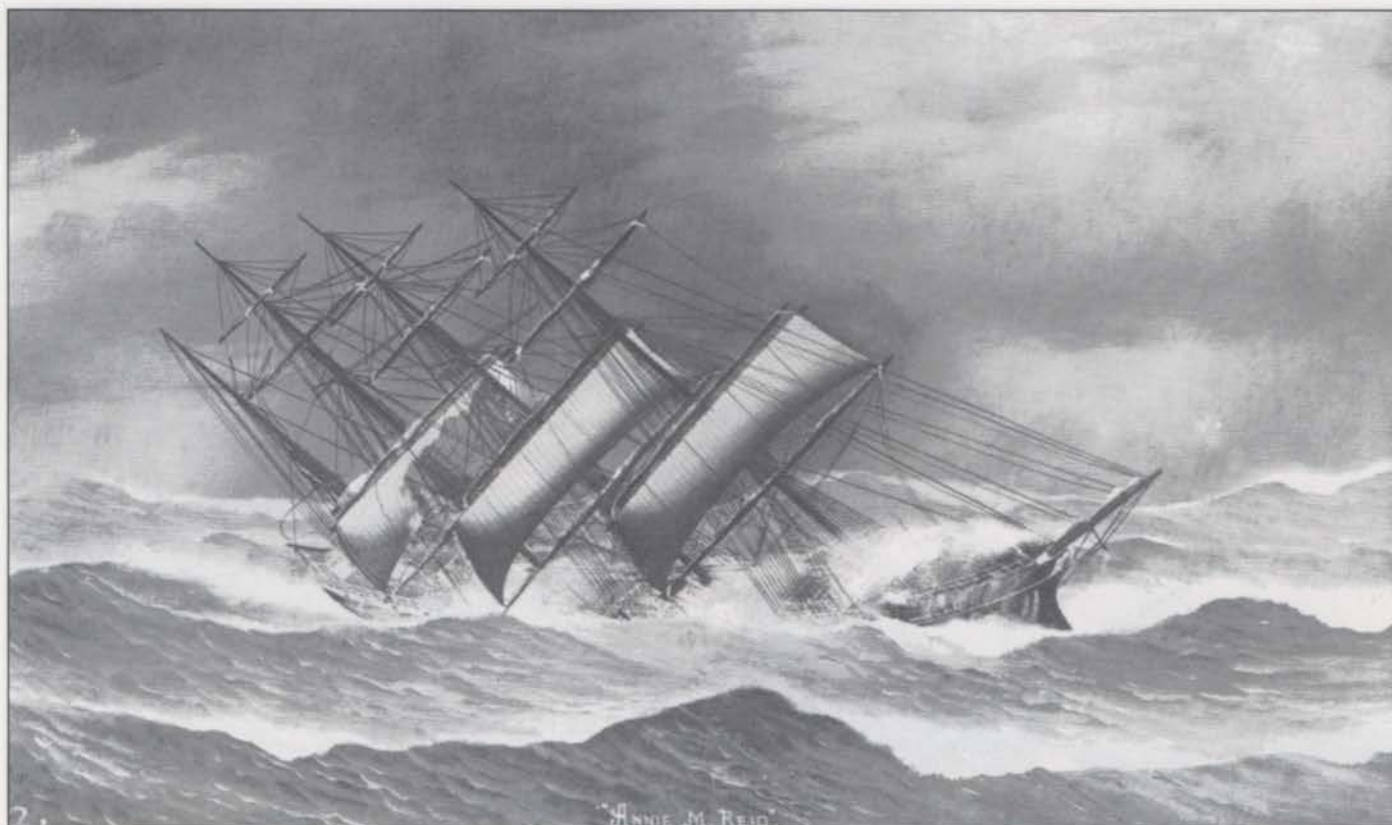


In the Pacific it was typhoons—tropical cyclones similar to hurricanes in the western hemisphere—that took their deadly toll of ships. One such near-victim in 1855 was the opium clipper EAMONT, caught in Chinese waters a day after leaving port. As the wind gradually increased and the barometer continued to fall, Captain Gulliver progressively reduced sail until EAMONT, under bare poles, was being mercilessly battered by the increasing ferocity of the typhoon. When the barometer had gone down to 27.3, the captain prepared for the worst.

Captain Gulliver then ordered the carpenter and his mate to be stationed one at each mast with their sharpest ax; a hand at each weather shroud and backstay with a sharp knife and a boat ax. Should the squalls . . . overpower her, it was his intention to cut the masts away, . . . 7

Some five hours later, at about 11 a.m. of the second day of the storm, "one wild burst" of wind struck and "over went the EAMONT with her crosstrees in the water, flat on her broadside." The captain shouted "Cut!" But before the carpenter and his mate could execute the order, he almost immediately canceled it with, "Hold on all."⁸ For the ship had suddenly emerged into that area of all cyclones, known as "the eye," where calm reigns. The wind and rain ceased and the ship came back on an even keel of her own accord; she was in essence becalmed. Thus ended the crisis.





Not all knockdowns—and the ultimate act of cutting away masts to save the ship—resulted from incompetent seamen being in command. On the contrary, such incidents happened to some of the best sailing masters. One was the legendary Captain Robert Hilgendorf, a master of excellence in an illustrious line of sailing masters who served in the renowned Flying P Line of the Hamburg shipping firm of Reederei F. Laeisz. Starting as a master at age 27, he eventually became skipper of nine of the line's windjammers and rounded the Horn no fewer than 66 times in his 20 years as a windjammer master. But sooner or later—often more than once—windjammer captains, who by their very profession lived on the edge, were bound to face the agonizing experience of losing their ship. To Captain Hilgendorf it came late (c.1898)—and only once—when he had the bark *PARSIFAL*. Loaded with 1500 tons of coal and some 25 miles south of Cape Horn, westbound for Chile, she ran into heavy weather. After one large roll,

the entire cargo shifted to one side of the hold. Hilgendorf instantly ordered that the masts be chopped down, an action that, though it pre-

vented the *Parsifal* from capsizing, left her helpless before the heaving seas.⁹

The *PARSIFAL*'s strained hull sprang innumerable leaks that exceeded the capacity of her pumps. Reluctantly, the captain gave the order to abandon ship. Within hours, he and his crew were spotted and rescued by the British bark *SARAKA*. He didn't lose a single man.

The beneficial effect on stability of cutting away the masts of a ship when she is on beam-ends or nearly so is clearly illustrated by the case of the *DALGONAR*. On October 9, 1913 the big, full-rigged ship *DALGONAR*, ballasted with shingle and sailing in Chilean waters, was struck by a heavy squall which forced her over on her beam ends and caused the ballast to shift over to her lee side.

For the next eight hours . . . the ship lay on her port side with her port lower yardarms dragging in the water. The position of the *Dalgonar* was so serious that Captain Isbister gave the order to cut away the masts. . . . this desperate task was accomplished.¹⁰

That action slightly relieved the ves-

ANNIE M. REID, an American four-masted bark, is depicted nearly on her beam-ends in an old print. The late Harold Carpenter, helmsman of the *STAR OF INDIA* on her 1976 cruise and a longtime crewman of the San Diego Maritime Museum, was aboard the *REID* in 1919 when she survived this storm.

San Diego Maritime Museum

sel, but she remained essentially on her beam-ends because of the shifted ballast and the mass of tangled spars and rigging trailing alongside to leeward. Considering the situation hopeless, the captain ordered Abandon Ship. One lifeboat on the starboard side was launched, but almost immediately was swamped in the raging sea. In an attempt to save the men struggling in the water, Captain Isbister was swept overboard and drowned. No further attempts were made to launch lifeboats. On October 13 the French four-masted bark *LOIRE*, which had arrived on the 10th, was finally able to take off *DALGONAR*'s surviving crewmen.

Before departing, however, they cut away all of the spars and rigging still trailing to leeward. Relieved of this drag, the vessel partially righted herself some more, but she still had a heavy port list because of the shifted ballast. They then abandoned her off Taltal, Chile. By

The ship was to all intents and purposes in her death throes, but we had to save her if possible in order to save ourselves.

February 4, 1914 she had drifted some three thousand miles almost due west to where she was boarded by the captain of the schooner INCA. He reported "that though she had a heavy list to port, it would be quite possible for a steamer to tow her into the nearest harbour."¹¹ Finally, after a meandering drift of some five thousand miles DALGONAR fetched up on Mopihaa Island reef, west of Tahiti.



One of the most detailed accounts by a master who actually experienced a knockdown is that given by Captain James S. Learmont. He first went to sea at the tender age of twelve with his father, master of a small Scottish coastal schooner; made captain at age 23; and became skipper in 1902 of his first windjammer, BRENHILDA.

By 1906, when in his early thirties, he was master of the bark BENGALIRN, engaged in the coal trade from New South Wales, Australia, to Chile. For some years, this trade had given Learmont considerable concern because it accounted for the loss of more ships than any other trade he had ever known. He had discussed these losses with his father over the years and concluded that the losses were due primarily to the shifting of the coal cargo. Therefore, he "always ended the discussion [with his father] by saying that if ever my cargo shifted I would chop the masts out of her."¹²

In mid-June 1907, BENGALIRN departed Newcastle, Australia, with a cargo of coal bound for Antofagasta, Chile. Optimum loading for such a loose cargo would have been "full and down." That is, cargo holds filled to the hatch covers and the vessel just down to her load line or Plimsoll mark. But in this case—as in many others, apparently—the cargo was high density steam coal. Thus when the vessel was down to her load line (by weight), her cargo holds were not full. Therefore in rough weather, the cargo had room to shift.

Learmont had a well-deserved reputation as a "driver"—carrying more sail and shortening later than most other masters. But on this day, he chose to carry only three lower topsails and the fore course. He admitted later that he could not explain his reason for not "driving" as was his custom. Maybe it was a sixth sense—prescience—with which many who live on the edge are disproportionately blessed. In any case, the departure from his normal practice of carrying all possible sail materially contributed to his survival.

There was also a weather factor. BENGALIRN

was bowling along on a southeasterly course at eight or nine knots before a rapidly increasing wind. On the third day out, with the wind and sea on her port quarter and lurching heavily, she took a "particularly heavy lurch." Learmont recalled:

I heard an ominous sound coming from the hold and she failed to right herself. . . . I ordered [the helmsman] to put the helm up so that we could get away before the wind and so get the wind and sea astern, but she was as if dead and failed to answer the helm.¹³

Learmont then ordered the crew to "let fly" all sheets of all the sails—to little avail. His account went on:

From the minute she heeled over [to starboard] it was a terrifying sight, a fine ship on her beam ends with the seas battering the whole of her starboard side as she lay helpless, unable to escape from their fury as they stripped her of anything that was moveable. . . . The ship was to all intents and purposes in her death throes, but we had to save her if possible in order to save ourselves.¹⁴

The essential first order of business was to replace the No. 2 hatch cover, which had been torn away. The sea was pouring through the hatch and the resultant downflooding would have made any other efforts to save the ship academic. By a piece of outstanding professional seamanship, captain and crew succeeded.

With the downflooding under control, the captain then turned his attention to righting the vessel:

I decided to cut the topmast backstays and let the top hamper go. . . . The loss of the top hamper on the mizzen relieved the ship considerably so I decided to cut the main away as well. This action eased the leverage for in all on each mast [the weight would be] about forty tons [80 total] . . . at an angle of 60 [degrees] of heel, it was only when the ship was relieved of this weight that you realized how much it had affected her.¹⁵

Although the cutting-away had improved her stability, the lee rail was still under because of the shifted coal cargo and flooding. But after two days of pumping—fortunately, she had a donkey boiler to operate the pumps—and an all-hands effort moving the shifted coal back to port by means of a basket and trolley jury rig, the ship gradually and

Only six of her eighty-six male and female crew—many of them young cadets—survived.

partially righted herself still more.

But the raffle of cut-away spars and rigging that was still trailing alongside was in danger of holing the hull. Learmont took characteristically decisive action:

With the mate I went aloft, which was more of crawling than climbing on account of the list. On the lower cap we were over the sea. . . . With an axe I cut the wire brace runner that was holding the wreckage . . . the whole lot went.¹⁶

After five days of continued pumping, restowing cargo and clearing wreckage, the captain had rigged yards on the remaining foremast, set some sails, and set a course for the Australian coast. He made landfall at Jervis Bay, 120 miles south of Sydney, and was towed to Sydney.



But being tossed on beam-ends and foundering are not exclusively disasters of the past; oceangoing sailing vessels are still suffering the same fate. For example, on September 24, 1957 the German four-masted bark PAMIR, last of the Cape Horners to undertake a commercial voyage, was overtaken by Hurricane Carrie in mid-North Atlantic. Before she could reduce sail, a sudden gust pressed her down on beam-ends and her bulk cargo of grain shifted to the lee side, holding her there as she rapidly downflooded and foundered. Only six of her eighty-six male and female crew—many of them young cadets—survived. Similarly, in 1984 the MARQUES and in 1986 the PRIDE OF BALTIMORE were laid over on beam-ends by squalls, rapidly downflooded through off-center accommodation hatches and foundered with loss of life.¹⁷

Nor is cutting away of masts to save a vessel a relic of the Age of Sail. On the contrary, it is still accepted as the ultimate means for saving a vessel that has been tossed on beam-ends and remains

there in imminent danger of foundering. Riesenbergh, in *Standard Seamanship for the Merchant Service*, provides specific instructions for cutting away masts "when this becomes necessary, a vessel being down on her beam ends."¹⁸

Similarly, Captain Scott in *A Square Rig Handbook* advocates the "cutting away [of] rigging progressively" in case of a knockdown. Moreover, he recommends that sailing vessels should carry hydraulic wire cutters to cut present-day wire rigging that is set up with rigging screws as distinct from rope rigging set up with rope lanyards in the past.¹⁹

Statistically speaking, given the current proliferation of operational square-riggers—as well as fore-and-aft rigs—that are either restored (STAR OF INDIA) or replicas (PRIDE OF BALTIMORE [II]) or modern designs (ROYALIST), there will be more knockdowns in the future. Most of these will be clustered around the restored and older vessels. For the replicas—PRIDE OF BALTIMORE [I] was an exception—and the new designs are designed with yacht-like stability characteristics and a Range of Stability of more than 90 degrees. For example, ROYALIST was caught by a sudden squall and laid over such that her yardarms at one stage were in the water. But she quickly righted herself with no structural damage and minimal downflooding.²⁰

Hopefully, it will never again be necessary to chop away the rigging and masts of a large sailing vessel in order to save her and the crew after she has been thrown on beam-ends. But forehandedness is a primary personal characteristic that should be nurtured by all seafarers. Therefore, it would behoove modern operators of square-riggers to emulate Captain James Learmont and be prepared—materially, by having hydraulic wire cutters, and mentally, by having made the decision beforehand to do it—to execute the procedure if the situation arises. Knowing the procedure and being prepared to execute it certainly can do no harm. On the other hand, being prepared could save lives and, at best, save the vessel herself.

NOTES

- 1 Oliver E. Allen, ed., *The Seafarers: The Windjammers* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1984), pp. 28-29.
- 2 Frank Snyder, *Life Under Sail* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 121-133.
- 3 Ibid., 130. Ralph D. Paine, *Lost Ships and Lonely Seas* (New York: Century, 1922), p. 226. Charles Neider, *Great Shipwrecks and Castaways* (New York: Dorset, 1989), p. 177.
- 4 William O. Stevens and Allan Wescott, *A History of Sea Power* (New York: Doubleday, 1942), pp. 171-176.
- 5 Paine, *Lost Ships and Lonely Seas*, p. 341.
- 6 Snyder, *Life Under Sail*, pp. 134-135.
- 7 Ibid., p. 146.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Allen, *The Seafarers: The Windjammers*, p. 56.
- 10 Captain Donald Macintyre, *The Adventure of Sail* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 211-212.
- 11 Ibid., p. 212.
- 12 Captain James S. Learmont, *Master in Sail*, 2nd ed. (London: Percival Marshall, 1954), p. 167.
- 13 Ibid., p. 168.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid., p. 169.
- 16 Ibid., p. 171.
- 17 Lieutenant Commander Frank J. M. Scott, *A Square Rig Handbook* (London: The Nautical Institute, 1992), p. 103. Captain Scott, one of the foremost square-rigger masters today, started his square-rigger experience at age fourteen in the brigantine CENTURION. As a young cadet, he sailed in the Norwegian schoolship SORLANDET and recently as mate in the German bark ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT. He was boatswain during the fitting-out and trials of the brig H.M.S. ROYALIST and is now a regular relief captain for her. Currently, he is master of the brig ASTRID.
- 18 Felix Riesenbergh, *Standard Seamanship for the Merchant Service*, 2nd ed. (New York: Van Nostrand, 1936), pp. 788-789.
- 19 Scott, *A Square Rig Handbook*, pp. 63, 102.
- 20 Ibid., p. 103.

BOOK REVIEWS



Patrick O'Brian
Photo by Cheryl Clegg

Patrick O'Brian, *The Commodore* (New York: Norton, 1995). 282 pages. Cloth, \$22.50. Paper, \$10.95.

For veterans of the novels of Patrick O'Brian, *The Commodore* is like returning home after a year away. This may not be of comfort to first-time readers, but in all fairness, those of us who've followed the whole O'Brian series have had years to built relationships with not only Captain Jack Aubrey and Dr. Stephen Maturin, but the entire ship's company, their families, their friends, their enemies.

We have endured and enjoyed them through war and peace, through lust and love, richness and poverty. We have been at their sides in prison, fiery battles won and lost, and watched their children born into the world. Like one of Aubrey's crew, our respect was fast in coming, and we would do anything our captain asked of us—no matter what the odds.

For those new to O'Brian, the obvious suggestion is to start at the beginning and savor each page. Every ship must have a shakedown cruise, a maiden voyage. For new O'Brian readers, that occurs with the first volume of the series, *Master and Commander* (1970).

In *The Commodore*, as in most of O'Brian's novels, the morning cup of coffee is taken aboard His Majesty's vessel *SURPRISE*, an elderly 28-gun frigate that by now we know as well as our own automobile.

We join Aubrey and Maturin in savoring this cup of java in the luxurious cabin with stern windows. The music of Locatelli is being played by Aubrey and Maturin. They float in and out of traditional renditions and absurd improvisations on their instruments throughout the series. Herein lies their grip on sanity aboard a fighting ship in the early nineteenth century.

Lucky Jack Aubrey (now Commodore Aubrey) is headed home. Maturin, while still in denial of his various addictions, is eager to meet his daughter for the first

time. O'Brian introduces a new side to Maturin, a side that endears him even closer to readers as the relationship develops between father and daughter.

Aubrey has earned command of a fleet of British warships, and before long he and Maturin are on assignment in Africa determined to crush the slave trade. If successful, their reward could be a meeting with the French fleet on the open sea. The reader is sharpened like a cutlass or boarding axe in anticipation of this meeting.

O'Brian takes us a latitude at a time, nary missing a squall, blown topgallant, or meal of toasted cheese and claret. And Jack Aubrey's violin is the sweetest music we have never heard.

O'Brian takes the reader beyond Hornblower, beyond the characters of Kent and Sabatini. The reader travels a virtual voyage through the 17-volume saga.

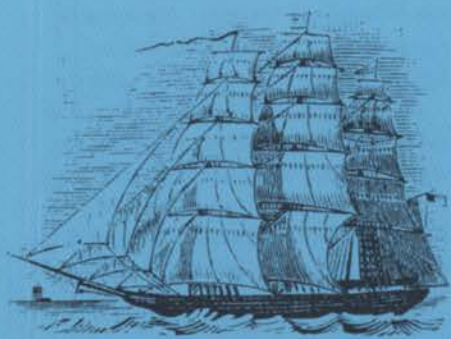
This book is not as riveting as *H.M.S. Surprise*, *The Mauritius Command*, *Desolation Island*, or *The Letter of Marque* (former O'Brian masterpieces), but it easily qualifies as another masterpiece by the reigning King of Historical Fiction.

The author leads us through an adventure punctuated with the smells of rare plants, the sounds of music, the vernacular of early England, and even the tastes of food aboard ship.

The Commodore is an excellent time machine to nineteenth century England and the Great Age of Sail for us to explore again and again. Yes, that's right, many of his loyal readers are on the series for the fourth and fifth time. "Post-O'Brian Letdown" is a common malady known to his followers.

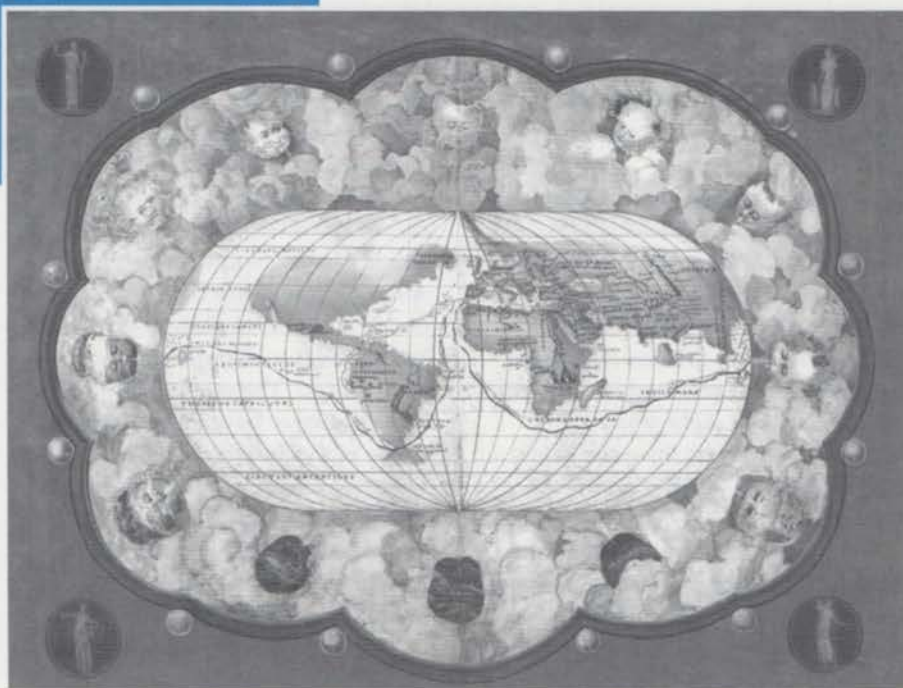
Indeed, O'Brian has breathed life into Jack Aubrey once again. It remains to be seen just how prolific the author will be. But *The Commodore* is a proud addition to any bookshelf. Just be sure you read the series in order. You won't regret it.

reviewed by Joseph Dittler



BOOKREVIEWS

Continued

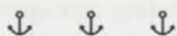


Tim Joyner, *Magellan* (Camden, ME: International Marine Books, 1992). 365 pages, illustrations, maps, chronology, appendices, index, bibliography. Cloth, \$24.95.

"It is for the sake of some remote, indeterminate goal, which they themselves do not comprehend, that men become heroes . . ."

Napoleon

We do not know how old he was when he died. He was a Portuguese knight who renounced his homeland to sail for Spain, earning him bitter condemnation. When he died, he left his family all but penniless. Even his name is uncertain, various sources giving it as Magalhaes, Magalhais, or Magallanes. We know him as Magellan.



It is a common misconception that Christopher Columbus, sailing to America three decades before Magellan's voyage, somehow proved that the world

is round. Columbus did nothing of the sort. He convinced himself to his dying day that he had found the Orient, but he hadn't done that either. What he *had* found was a wall of land separating the narrow Atlantic from the vastness of the Pacific—a vastness that, nonetheless, would lead men to the East.

It is difficult now to realize, but as late as the year 1500, Europeans had no idea the Pacific existed. They thought that only a narrow belt of sea separated the new-found land of America from the Orient's riches. And it was those riches—not America, a howling wilderness—that fired the lust of the two maritime powers, Spain and Portugal.

In 1493, shortly after the discoveries of Columbus and Dias, Pope Alexander VI—a Borgia, of the clan accustomed to poisoning their enemies—sat at a map and decreed that Spain should have all new lands found beyond a line drawn 100 leagues west of the Azores. Portugal might claim new lands found east of this line. Despite his cavalier allotment of the entire world to the tender mercies of these nations and their *conquistadores*, the pope apparently gave no thought to where east and west would

Battista Agnese's oval world map, made in Venice between 1543 and 1545, shows the impact of Magellan's voyage. His route around the globe is indicated by the wavy black line. Most of North America is blank, and the width of the Pacific is still underestimated, but the map represents a quantum leap in human knowledge.

*The John Carter Brown Library,
Brown University*

meet, on the opposite side of the globe.

Enter Magellan. After years of hard service in India and Africa for an ungrateful King Manuel of Portugal, he ended his allegiance in a stormy audience with the king, and promptly set his cap for Spain.

King Charles I was more receptive. Magellan managed to convince the young Hapsburg that he could reach the fabled Spice Islands, the Moluccas, by sailing west instead of east, thus avoiding the Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean. Charles was fascinated. Magellan talked on, and finally the king fitted out an expedition of five ships and nearly three hundred men to seize the Moluccas for Spain, before the Portuguese could get there. Control of the Spice Islands meant control of the immensely lucrative trade in pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and other delectables highly prized in Europe. Magellan's share of the swag was to be a nice cut of the spice trade, plus the title of viceroy in the islands.



Now came the little problem of getting there. From other sailors, Magellan heard that a strait existed in the far south of America. He knew of the Mar del Sur, the sea sighted by Balboa in Panama a few years earlier.

With this scanty information and little else, Magellan's fleet snaked its way down the east coast of South America in 1519. His Spanish captains hated him for his secretiveness and iron-fisted discipline, and finally a mutiny broke out. Three ships joined the mutineers, but

NOTES & COMMENT

Magellan overpowered all three. One offending captain was beheaded, drawn and quartered—an act designed to get the attention of anyone else disposed to mutiny—and another was marooned on the desolate shore of Patagonia.

Miraculously, they found and traversed the strait now bearing the explorer's name. One ship was wrecked and another deserted, but the remaining three sailed out across the Pacific, having no idea how far it was to the other side.

By the time they crossed the equator, they were eating the leather chafing gear off the yards. Powderized, weevil-infested biscuit and water reeking of rat urine were consumed. Scurvy made its dread appearance alongside starvation, and the men began to die.

They fetched land in the Ladrões—the Thieves' Islands—which we now call the Marianas. From there, they pushed on to the Philippines. Magellan rashly involved himself in a native feud, and died in a pointless skirmish on the island of Mactán. His bewildered survivors staggered on, finally reaching the Moluccas.

The native rajahs were for the most part not disposed to welcome them, and carried on a game of pitting Spaniard and Portuguese against each other.

Another ship, the *CONCEPCION*, was scuttled. The *TRINIDAD* was captured by the Portuguese, and only *VICTORIA* was left to crawl back home via the Cape of Good Hope, under Juan del Cano. In 1522, three years almost to the day from their departure, eighteen ragged scarecrows, wasted to skin and bone, brought her in to San Lucar and dispatched a letter to the king. Eighteen out of 270 who set forth.



The gist of Magellan's achievement was that, for the first time, men in Europe were given a good idea of the earth's size, and the disposition of its oceans and major land masses. Ironically,

there is no record that Magellan ever intended to circumnavigate the globe. He was only concerned with getting to the Moluccas—one way or the other.

Another irony: Magellan's voyage was a political, and very nearly an economic, failure. Spain did not gain the Spice Islands, although she did establish her claim to the Philippines and Guam, as well as the southern tip of South America. The profits from the cloves *VICTORIA* took home were blithely seized by the king, leaving Magellan's other investors bereft.

Relations between Spain and Portugal soured because of the voyage, which the Portuguese viewed as a grab at their turf. It was not until much later that Magellan's magnificent feat of discovery and endurance was hailed for its true worth.



Tim Joyner has done a superb job with his story, casting fresh light upon this mysterious man who dared so much. Joyner's work is especially valuable for its voluminous appendices and notes.

The appendices include shipboard routine, ships' rosters, biographical sketches, genealogy, and royal memoranda. The book's illustrations are mostly familiar, but have been chosen with care. The maps are adequate.

Maritime history is really the history of the world—the story of the opening of the world with one of man's cleverest tools, the ship. That ships as puny as Magellan's could follow the route they did, and that even one should survive, awes the modern reader. Barely able to navigate with crude instruments, these early voyagers seldom had a clear idea of where they were. They knew nothing of the waters, rocks, reefs, islands whither they were bound. They had, in the final analysis, only their own audacity to guide them.

reviewed by Craig Arnold

This issue introduces a new format for *Mains'l Haul*—one of a more scholarly bent. We've been moving gradually in this direction for several years. *Mains'l Haul* began as a two-page newsletter in 1964, and this September marks thirty-one years of continuous publication.

The focus of the journal, like that of our museum, continues to be (1) the maritime history of San Diego and vicinity; (2) the same topic within the scope of the West Coast of the United States; and (3) Pacific Ocean maritime history. Occasional maritime subjects from other regions are included, but we hope to confine most articles to the three areas specified.

San Diego, the West Coast and the Pacific Ocean all have rich and complex themes of maritime discovery, development and use. Perhaps the first people to "write" this history were the ancient Polynesians, moving across the vast face of the mightiest ocean on earth by following the tracks of the stars, the migration of birds, and the patterns of fish, kelp, and the waters themselves.

Later came other oceanic wanderers: the Chinese and Malays; the Indians of northwest North America; and finally the European voyagers—Magellan, Cabrillo, Bougainville, Cook and a host of others. We owe an incalculable debt to them all.

The more one studies these subjects, the more one is amazed at the sheer intrepidity of these early sailors. They attempted things very few people would attempt today—especially given the primitive craft they voyaged in.

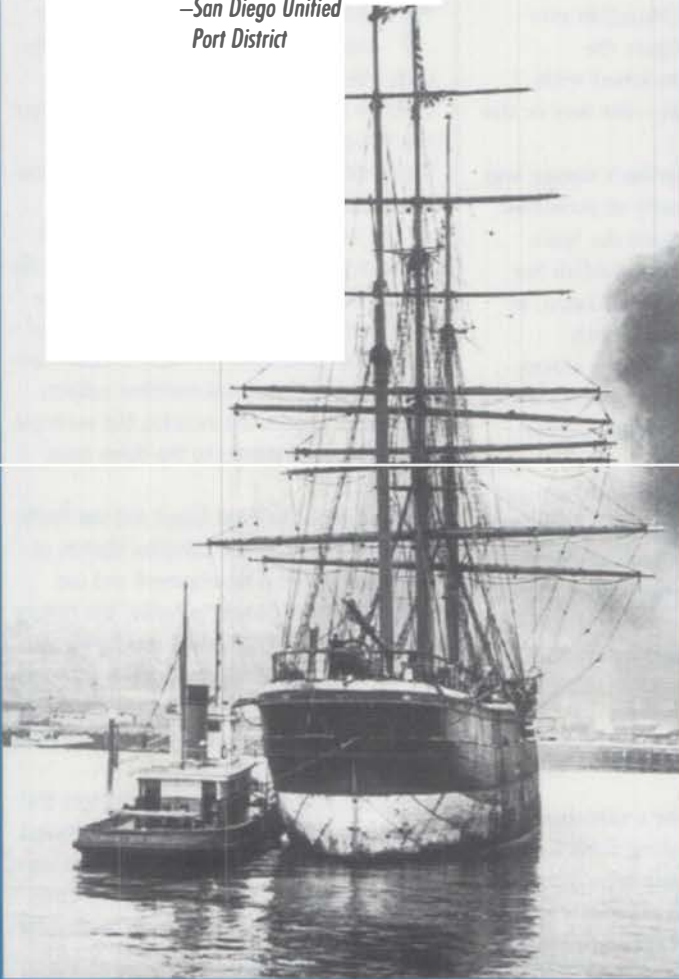
These are some of the things *Mains'l Haul* is going to continue to pursue. Like the early explorers, we too are embarked on a quest for knowledge. We know not where the voyage will take us, nor where it will end—and apparently it will never end. The story of humanity's adventure with the sea is an enormous and seemingly inexhaustible topic. Every range of human endeavor, every supreme act of courage and contemptible one of villainy, can be found in the record. Each horizon sighted is a fresh one, beckoning us to sail onward and to explore.

We hope you'll stay the course with us.

Craig Arnold,
Editor

For the Star of India, her fate was a happy one.
She was purchased by a group of San Diegans
and brought to our city under tow in 1927.
Here she is tugged to her berth.

—San Diego Unified
Port District



One Light Source that
has proven itself
throughout history...

Press Plus
One Printing Source
that has proven itself
throughout its history.

**619
474-0666**



MARITIME MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO

Bark Star of India
1306 Harbor Drive,
San Diego, CA 92101

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Diego, Calif.
Permit No. 1089

MARITIME MUSEUM ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO



VOL. 31, NO. 4

FALL 1995

\$2.50

MAINS'L HAUL



A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY



THE LOG

California's Boating Newspaper
Since 1971

The Spanish Navy's
training schooner JUAN
SEBASTIAN DE ELCANO, built
in 1928, is still sailing
the seas of the world.

THE LOG
SUPPORTS
THE SAN DIEGO
MARITIME
MUSEUM



MARITIME
MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION
OF SAN DIEGO

COUNCIL OF AMERICAN
MARITIME MUSEUMS
CONFERENCE OF CALIFORNIA
HISTORICAL SOCIETIES
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MUSEUMS
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF MARITIME MUSEUMS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Michael O'Bryan,
President

Bob Baker,
First Vice President

Marge Palmer,
Second Vice President
and Secretary-Treasurer

Kenneth Andersen
Capt. Carl G. Bowman
Dr. William F. Brown
Ray Carpenter
Merrill Day
Arthur DeFever
Roy Drew
William Dysart
August Felando
Dan Frank
Chris Frost
Gordon Frost
Hal Georgens
Anthony Ghio
Jacqueline Gillman
Paul Kettenburg
Gordon Lacy
Morris Landon
C. Edward Paxton
John Rebelo, Jr.
Robert Sharp
Dave Sinclair

MAINS'L HAUL

is published quarterly,
wind and weather permitting,
aboard the ferryboat
BERKELEY. Annual
subscription price is \$12.00.

(619) 234-9153
FAX (619) 234-8345

VOL. 31, NO. 4 FALL 1995

MAINS'L HAUL

A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY



6



14



20

C O N T E N T S

-
- 5** From the Helm
-
- 6** The Pacific War: A Sailor's Story, *Jim Verdolini*
-
- 14** The MAORI KING Affair (Part Two), *Charles A. Bencik*
-
- 20** Adventure, Triumph and Tragedy: A Retrospective Look at Guy Gilpatric, *Bruce A. Castleman*
-
- 26** Notes and Comment
-

On the cover . . .

On May 11, 1945, while supporting the invasion of Okinawa, the aircraft carrier BUNKER HILL (CV-17) was hit by two kamikazes. The ship sustained 346 dead, 43 missing, and 264 wounded. Although crippled, she reached Bremerton Navy Yard, where she was repaired and returned to service within four months. BUNKER HILL is part of Jim Verdolini's excellent memoir of wartime naval service in this issue, beginning on page 6.

Steichen Collection, U.S. Navy



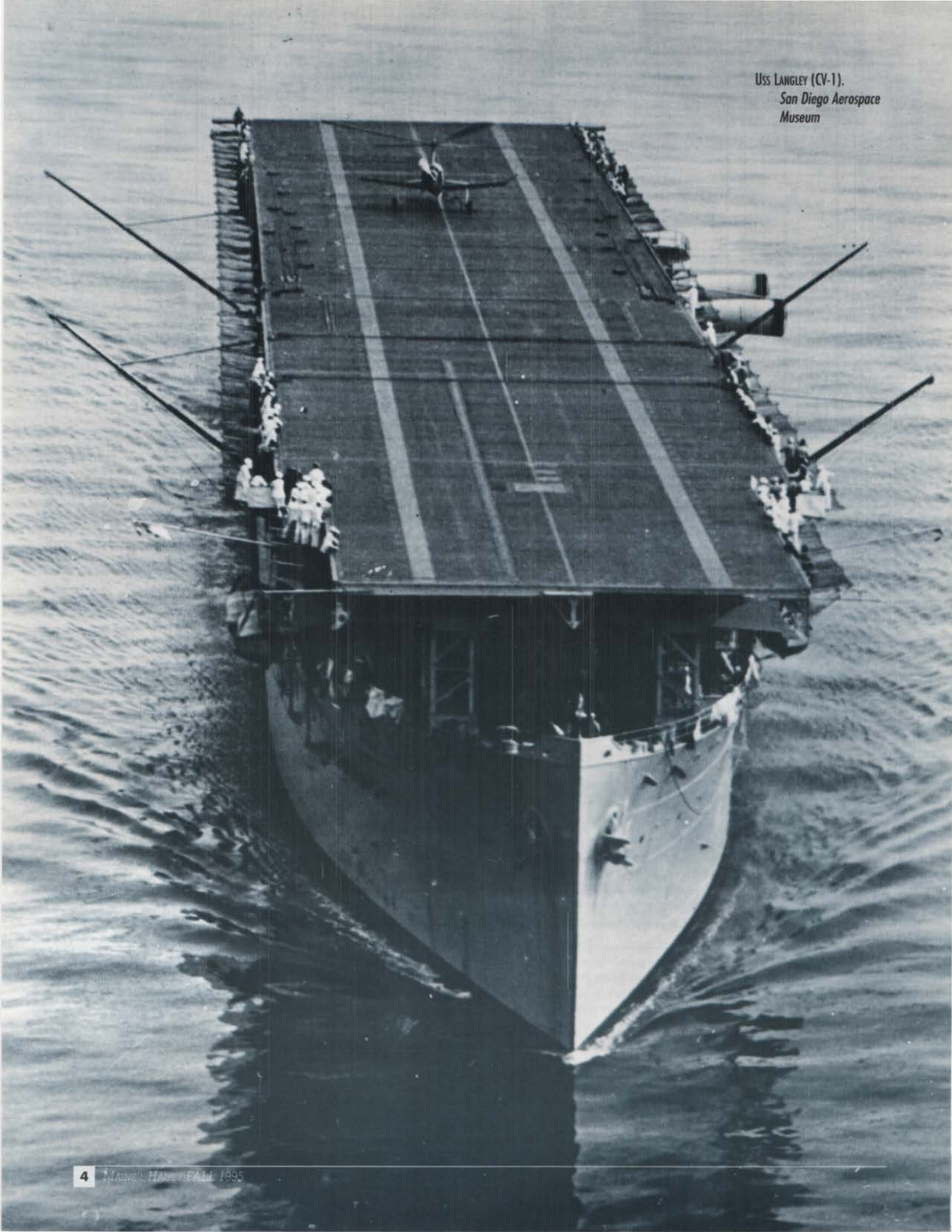
MAINS'L HAUL is the historical journal of the San Diego Maritime Museum, 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101. Send all submissions and queries to Editor, *Mains'l Haul*, at the above address. Contributors' guidelines are available on request. For advertising rates and information, please contact the Editor at (619) 234-9153. No portion of this journal may be reproduced or stored in any electronic retrieval system without the written permission of the Editor.

Craig Arnold, Editor



"Mains'l Haul—An order in tacking ship bidding
'Swing the main yards.' To loot, steal, or 'acquire'."
—John Masefield

USS LANGLEY (CV-1).
San Diego Aerospace
Museum



FROM THE HELM



The museum recently hosted the dedication of a new model to our collection, a lovingly detailed reproduction of USS LANGLEY (CV-1), our Navy's first aircraft carrier. For a period of several months, it was part of my morning ritual to pass by the model shop and observe the steady progress of this undertaking as the miniature ship moved toward its completion. The slow painstaking fabrication of Lilliputian machinery and structural components, their assembly, disassembly for fitting or painting, and reconstruction was a process I found fascinating for reasons difficult to explain. There seems to be a magic quality to miniature worlds that take shape under human direction, and a sense of control denied in the full scale of reality, as well as a hint of redemption. While the real LANGLEY died in the Java Sea under a hail of Japanese bombs, this one might safely voyage within its Plexiglas case, preserving indefinitely some embodiment of the original. Day by day as the model took form a connection was slowly forged linking the two, its integrity founded upon technique and good faith in adherence to historical accuracy. In physical form, the magic taking shape in the model shop was the sort of effect historians always strive for in their attempts to evoke an extinct past from its scattered textual remains. In either case, infinite pains are necessary to the proper effect, yet the reasons for making the effort at all remain elusive.

Even today, perhaps the highest expression of the modelmaker's art can be found in what are termed Admiralty Models, a collection of miniature warships produced under commission by a succession of seventeenth and eighteenth-century European governments. By convention of that time, the construction of a fantastically detailed model for any proposed warship or class was deemed a necessary part of the funding and production cycle. Creations of a baroque age, ships of the early modern era were masterpieces of ornamentation and their miniature counterparts reproduced these features in exact detail, as they did all other aspects of ship construction accessible to the observer's eye. These perfect miniature embodiments of actual ships today can be found in numbers in the British National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, in the Rogers Collection at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, and a few other places. They constitute an important repository of information on period ship construction and a source of wonder. Miniature though they are, these creations are still ships, and ships tend to hide their secrets from casual observers, sometimes for centuries. Until recently, no one knew what secrets lay hidden inside the Admiralty models.

Using the same fiber optic technology that makes

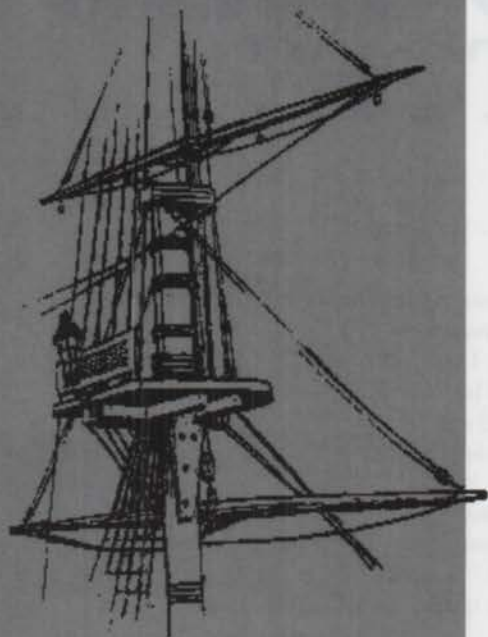
the internal structures of the human body accessible in medical diagnosis, the internal spaces of the Admiralty models were subjected to close scrutiny in a recent series of investigations. Inside their dark interiors, a miniature seventeenth century mariner's world was revealed in fantastic detail—the copper pans and cauldrons of galleys, tools and implements of masters, bosuns, and carpenters, even the rich parquer decks of captains' cabins, all submerged in darkness for three hundred years. A breathtaking wonder of art, but why go to the effort? These models were the products of teams of professionals, made with deliberation at great government expense, yet the interior details would seem to have no bearing on how the ship would sail or fight. So why include them, especially when no one could possibly see what was there?

Unless the builders believed that *someone* could see. Unless they assumed a connection between the miniature ship and the full scale version that it would ultimately generate. This was not only a religious age, but one commonly believed, especially among many educated and technical elites, to be governed by forces that could apparently (and against the teachings of Aristotle and Descartes) act at a distance across time and space. Gravity and magnetism were among these forces, but there was also a widely held belief in the principle of *signatures*, that the structure and workings of the universe were revealed in microcosm and that all things were linked by invisible bonds. When preparing to build that most technical of creations and launch it into that most dangerous of environments, perhaps to decide the fate of nations in pitched battle, who was to say if the smallest deviation from perfection in the creation of a model might court disaster for the full scale ship in a world of full scale peril?

And who is to say that the principle of signatures might not be just a little valid? For its own moment, the LANGLEY model dedication brought together people otherwise widely separated in space and time. Included among them were survivors of her last battle, naval aviation pioneers who flew from her decks, the admiral currently commanding the USS CONSTELLATION (CV-64) battlegroup, and a seaman who served in LANGLEY when she was the collier JUPITER during World War I and later on two occasions in her aircraft carrier configuration. This gentleman had seen the first aircraft take off from the decks of an American carrier, and only the day before the dedication, had watched as the nuclear-powered carrier USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) came into San Diego Bay.

Full scale or model, in their faith to perfection, ships connect things by invisible lines. Our job at the museum is to provide a place for as many of these lines as possible to intersect.

Raymond Ashley
Executive Director





USS LANGLEY (CVL-27) leads a line of warships
in the Pacific during World War II.
The second vessel in line is USS RANDOLPH
(CV-15), the author's ship.
U.S. Navy

THE PACIFIC WAR: A SAILOR'S STORY

By Jim Verdolini

Ed. Note: As a young man, Mr. Verdolini joined the Navy during World War II and saw a great deal of action. Fighting in both the Battle of the Atlantic and the American offensive against Japan, he recorded his experiences in a diary. An excerpt from this journal is published here for the first time. Mr. Verdolini entered the service at the age of seventeen, and, by his own admission, knew nothing about the workings of the officers. He simply wrote what he heard, thought and saw. He calls it "history from a non-historian's viewpoint." This excerpt begins early in 1945, after Mr. Verdolini's ship, the aircraft carrier USS RANDOLPH (CV-15), had reached the advanced fleet base at Ulithi Atoll in the western Pacific.

March 11, 1945

Ulithi Atoll, Western Caroline [Islands]. We are at fleet anchorage after returning from Iwo Jima, and Japanese areas. 2000 hours [8 p.m.]. I had just been relieved from watch in Rdo 1 [Radio 1] and had started walking aft, on the flight deck. My rack [bunk] and also my GQ [General Quarters] battle station, was Rdo 3. Normally I would write letters, and listen to Tokyo Rose, because she had the best Big Band music. I slept in Rdo 3, because it was a lot cooler up there. . . . As I started aft, I heard music from the movie on the hangar deck. It was the "Polonaise." I went down to the hangar deck, and stood at the rear, until it ended, at about 2007. I then

started to walk back on the hangar deck, to Rdo 3.

Suddenly, there was a terrific white flash, explosion, and the ship shook violently! When I jumped up, there were men lying all over the place. A man just behind me had his head covered in blood, and when I stepped back to look down at him, I saw he was dead. The GQ was sounded, the klaxon going bong, bong, bong, bong. "All hands, man your battle stations!"

The first few moments, we thought the ship might be going down. Fire and 20mm cannon shells were exploding all over. The sprinkler system had automatically gone off, and we were drenched. Smoke was terrible. I saw a Marine lieutenant, and told him that my battle station was in flames, so he told me to help move planes out of the fire, and help the wounded.

By this time, we knew what happened. A twin engine Japanese bomber, named Francis [the Allied term for a type of plane; all Japanese planes were given western names], had dived into our starboard side, just outside Rdo 3. Her bombs exploded [on] impact, and some exploded on the fantail. The entire rear end was aflame. I helped move planes out of the fire, then a corpsman grabbed me, and told me to hold some guy's stomach in, while he got a doctor. . . .

By this time my eyes were stinging me, and the smell of burned bodies and smoke was awful. It took about an hour and a half for the fire to be brought under control. Then I went back to Rdo 3, but there was just a big hole outside, and our steel hatch had disappeared. They were bringing three bodies out, but we could not identify them. Later found out they were Airedales [flight crew] who had gone into Rdo 3 to listen to music.

No radiomen were in there. I would have been, if I hadn't stopped to listen to music.

I then went up to Rdo 1, and as soon as I walked in, the Chief started screaming at me! "You will be court-martialed!", etc., etc. The Communications Officer took me aside, and explained. Seems the Chief had thought I was in Rdo 3, and was crying. When I walked in he was embarrassed, so he lit into me. I was filthy dirty, but I wasn't going below decks to get a shower. I just went up to Rdo 2, and one of the guys gave me a mat, and I slept behind the transmitters. Next morning, when I awoke, my eyes were swollen, so they sent me to sick bay. Seems I had flashburn from the explosion. It did not last long.

I went back to Rdo 3 to see if I could find my ring, that Bernice (my girlfriend) had given me. But the typewriters were melted, and the cabinet I kept it in was gone. The smell was so bad, I did not want to stay there very long, and right about then, they called GQ again, and I had no idea where to go, so I stayed right there. It was my GQ station, even though there wasn't anything left in there. It was just an alert, and they blew retreat from GQ.

We lost thirty men, and over one hundred wounded. There were parts of three kamikaze crewmen in the Francis. They had

come from Yap, about ninety miles south of Ulithi. They had told us that Yap was neutralized. They flew under the radar, and you might know, they picked my ship, out of hundreds. The battleships were at anchor all around us, plus thirteen other carriers, hundreds of destroyers, many cruisers. If that plane had hit forward, and exploded on the hangar deck, the death toll would have been horrendous. There were over one thousand [men] at the movie. Guess I will never forget March 11th.

April 6, 1945

USS RANDOLPH (CV-15) heading north by northeast to join up with Task Force 58. The ENTERPRISE has also been repaired at Ulithi, and is with us. Ulithi is approximately seven hundred miles east of Leyte in the Philippines. We also have nine destroyers in our group. Commander Carrier Division 2 has come aboard. Some of the FRANKLIN's men have also transferred aboard. They are all pretty well shell shocked. The FRANKLIN, another ESSEX-class carrier, lost over seven hundred men. She was hit by a kamikaze.

**I helped move planes out
of the fire, then a
corpsman grabbed me,
and told me to hold some
guy's stomach in, while he
got a doctor. . . .**

April 7, 1945

With the task force. We also have in our group the light carrier INDEPENDENCE, the battleships NORTH CAROLINA and WASHINGTON, several AA [anti-aircraft] cruisers, and light escort carriers (CVEs). The BELLEAU WOOD, a light carrier, goes by us at night. Crippled. Probably hit with kamikaze. The CV HANCOCK and CVL CABOT were damaged. We lost three destroyers. One hundred sixteen enemy planes were destroyed today. I understand that fifty-five [were] by aircraft

from our carriers, and the rest by our task group's guns. The largest battleship in the world, the Japanese YAMATO, was sunk by planes of our task force. She took eight torpedoes and eight bombs. This evening, around 2100 hours [9 p.m.], after we had secured from battle stations, suddenly our 5-inch guns started popping. I started to run to my new battle station at Rdo 2, forward, starboard side, just under the flight deck. A Japanese plane is dropping flares all around us. Probably to light the way for kamikazes. Our 40mm flamed it. It was a twin engine bomber, called Betty. No other planes attacked?

April 8, 1945

Okinawa area. Early this morning a Zeke [Japanese fighter plane] strafed us, then tried to crash-dive into us. Our gunners got it. Thank God we have great gunners. We are reported sunk, by Tokyo Rose. Hope Mom doesn't believe that. . . .

April 9, 1945

Our destroyers sank a Jap sub, just off our bow. Whew, we sure have been lucky. We stay at battle stations all day now. They bring us soup and sandwiches. The soup is in cups that have wax coatings, so the wax melts, and we have to scrape it off. Soup's OK, though. Oh, I almost forgot! After we secured from

battle stations, I was below decks, getting ready to hit the sack, when they blew Torpedo Defense. . . . Well, I started to run forward on the second deck, to be able to go up to Rdo 2, but they called Condition Zebra, which means they secure all the Z doors, for watertight integrity. . . .

It just so happened that we had to go through Officers Country, which was restricted to enlisted personnel, except as access to our battle stations. There was a tremendous roar of gunfire, and we certainly did not like the idea of being trapped below decks, but we could do nothing about it. This officer comes out of one of the staterooms, dressed like the rest of us, in our skivvies. He asked our names, so we said William Shakespeare, Kilroy, anything. He put us on report for holding a conversation, and gambling in Officers Country. During an attack! If we had cards, we would have played, but we didn't. . . . The officer was a mustang pilot. A "mustang" means he came up through the ranks to become an officer. My Com Officer said he was a miserable SOB, and wanted to show the enlisted men that he was an officer. We got even later, when his plane crashed, and a destroyer picked him up. We had the signalmen from our ship signal the destroyer, and tell them what an SOB he was. So, when they used a jacob's chair, to swing him over to our ship, the boatswain's mate on the destroyer just happened to lower him into the water about five times on the way over. . . .

May 11, 1945

Back at Okinawa. Clear beautiful weather. Too clear! At 1000 [10 a.m.] a whole swarm of kamikazes hit the task group. I saw the carrier BUNKER HILL, on our starboard side, hit by two of them. We can hear the explosions on her. Burning bad. We circle her, and throw light rafts in the water. Many men in the water. She lost about 265 men. A swarm of planes attack, we shoot one down, and the rest leave. We are back to having seven of the nineteen CVs.

May 13, 1945

Heavy attacks again today, by suicides. We are still in the area of the Inland Sea. Suicide Junction.

May 14, 1945

Again today, heavy attacks. Where do the Japs get all the planes, and men? Seems we've shot down ten million, but they keep coming. They come low on the water, now. From any direction. Saw one dive into the ENTERPRISE.

Admiral [Marcus A.] Mitscher comes aboard RANDOLPH. We are now flagship, and become Task Force 58. Wow, the Admiral had two ships shot from under him in three days, hope we're not next! He has a long visored cap, and while under attack he waves that damn thing at the Japanese planes. I'm sure they don't know who he is, because of his waving cap, but who knows? On one of our mid watches in Radio 1, he came down from Flag Plot, and we jumped up at attention, but he put us at ease, and we shot the breeze for a while. He had smelled our good radio shack coffee. . . .

We copy code for eight hours, with a break at each hour so we could tune our receivers. We would have code in one ear, and Tokyo Rose in the other earpiece of our headphones. . . .

May 20-25, 1945

Still supporting Okinawa. Heard today that the Navy lost five thousand men. That is the same as Army and Marines lost on Okinawa. The kamikaze took its toll.

There was a tremendous roar of gunfire, and we certainly did not like the idea of being trapped below decks, but we could do nothing about it.



May 26, 1945

Hooray! We are heading for Guam. Okinawa is pretty well under control, so they don't need our firepower. No kamikazes for a while, at least. We play poker, or craps, get our lockers cleaned out. Noticed my whites are all mildewed from the humidity and heat in the area. We are about eight hundred to one thousand miles from the equator.

May 30, 1945

Guam. Admiral leaves ship. Many wrecked Japanese ships in the area.

May 31, 1945

Heading for Leyte, Philippines. Just lounging around. No Japanese planes in this area. But we must be alert for submarines. I remember that in Nov. 1943, I lost friends on the escort carrier LISCOMB BAY. She was hit just at dawn by a torpedo, and went down in less than seven minutes. Of the nine hundred men aboard,

Young sailors such as Jim Verdolini, thrust into the horrors of war, had to adapt quickly. These two young men were caught in a rare moment of leisure by Edward Steichen, the great wartime photographer, who ranged throughout the Pacific theater.

U.S. Navy, Steichen Collection



A Navy Avenger torpedo bomber swoops over Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima shortly after the island's capture by Navy and Marine forces in 1945. American tents dot the volcanic landscape where one of the most annihilative battles of the war had raged. A photograph of United States Marines raising the flag on Suribachi became the model for the mammoth memorial built in Washington after the war.
U.S. Navy, Steichen Collection



The craggy features of Admiral Marc Mitscher assume a thoughtful look as he ponders a decision. Mitscher was the greatest of American carrier admirals and popular with his men. He bore no love for the Japanese foe. Once, when a nearby ship picked up an enemy pilot in the water and so reported to the admiral, Mitscher's signalman snapped back a one-word reply: "Why?"

*U.S. Navy,
Steichen Collection*

June 7, 1945

We have been loading bombs all morning, and we had Baker flying. That is the flag to show that we have live bombs being loaded. I was down below taking a snooze, when the ship suddenly lurched! We knew immediately we had been hit, and with all the ammo being boarded we really got scared. They called General Quarters, and when I got to the hangar deck, there were 500-pound bombs on dollies all over the deck. Smoke and fire were coming from the flight deck, with a big hole in it. Felt sure we had another suicide!

But it wasn't a Japanese plane. It was an American

P-38 fighter plane. Two had been buzzing the ship, even with Baker flying, and one did not pull out. It hit us forward on the port side, and as usual, a radio shack was just below the flight deck. No radiomen were in the radio shack (No. 6), but were lying on the flight deck getting a sun tan. A tremendous fire engulfed the flight deck, and the planes that were parked up there. They had the fire out in about one-half hour. Then we got the bad news! Many of our men were either blown over the side, or burned badly. Among them, Kenna, Symanski, and Segro, all burned very badly. Delahanty, a flag radio man, is missing. They find four men dead, and about eight to ten missing. They transferred the burned guys to the hospital ship USS REFUGE.

The Army says they have no planes missing. There were two P-38s, but the Captain told us to shoot the other one down, and when he saw our guns swing around, he high-tailed it out over the jungle. So we knew it had to be Army fliers. A Japanese pilot would have dived into us.

June 8, 1945

Symanski burned very badly, but will live. Kenna on the borderline, and Segro very doubtful. Segro is just seventeen. They tried

only one hundred fifty survived, so we think about that.

June 4, 1945

We change from TF58 to TF38. Probably to confuse the Japanese. We are in Leyte Gulf, Philippines. We passed Samar Island on our way into Leyte Gulf. There are many ships here. Among them are the carrier ESSEX; the battleships ALABAMA, NORTH CAROLINA, MARYLAND, PENNSYLVANIA, and TEXAS; the heavy cruiser SALT LAKE CITY, and many light carriers, small craft, destroyers, etc. . . .

June 5, 1945

Loading stores all day.

June 6, 1945

We go ashore on liberty. I had been restricted, but got off when I signed up for Liberty Bonds, so my division could get a beer party ashore. We go over to Tacloban, on Leyte. The entire beach is covered with wrecked planes, and ships. A lot of the trees were torn apart. Somebody had a tough time taking this place.

to dive down to see if they could find the pilot, but it is too deep. He had crashed on an angle, and gone right over the side, destroying our bank of 20mm guns on the port side, and leaving that big hole in the flight deck. If those 500-pound bombs had started to explode, we would have gone up like a roman candle.

June 9, 1945

At dawn, there is a terrible stench on the hangar deck. One of the bodies has floated up. Can't tell who it is, because it is swollen so badly, and his dog tags are buried in his skin. Three more come floating up as it starts to get dark. Hate to go up past the hangar deck, with the smell.

June 10, 1945

Three more bodies float up. And damn! One of them is Mahoney. He was a shipmate on my old ship, the USS GUADALCANAL. We both transferred to the RANDOLPH. That makes eleven killed, just because some damn fighter pilot had to hot dog around. Delahanty too. And another buddy, Bill, one of our Marines, who was always in Rdo 1 drinking coffee and shooting the breeze. They sure like to go after radiomen out here, and their friends.

June 11, 1945

Segro died! Really feel rotten. He had lied [about] his age, and was only seventeen when he died. . . .

The Army has finally admitted it was one of their pilots. The guy was transferring his plane to another location, and it was his last assignment. He was supposed to go home! Now along with all the telegrams going to my shipmates' families, his family will get one. They will probably tell his family that he died in the line of duty! I wouldn't want to be an Army pilot flying anywhere near our ship!

We got some more ships in today. They had hit a big typhoon, on the way down here. The carrier BENNINGTON had her flight deck torn up, almost half way down the flight deck. We hear the CV HORNET and the CVL BELLEAU WOOD got it too. The cruiser PITTSBURGH is almost broken in half, and is being towed.

June 13, 1945

Two more of our guys die! That makes a total of thirteen. The doctor said that some of the burns are so bad, that a few of the men will never recover fully.

June 14, 1945

The entire fleet is now here. We have been repaired by the JASON (repair ship) and we are ready! I am in awe looking out over the fleet. It is tremendous. Can't count all the battleships,

cruisers, carriers, destroyers, and so many other ships. The Japs better be ready for this bunch. We're getting ready to go get them. I hear scuttlebutt that we are going to get ready for the invasion of Japan. Whew! If they threw so much at us at Okinawa, what will it be on the Japanese homeland?

June 15-30, 1945

Rest and recreation. Liberty parties over on Tacloban. They warn us that Japanese are still nearby, so don't wander off. I like the Filipinos. But, we can't get near any of their girls. But at least we can see girls. Haven't seen one since January!

July 1, 1945

Set sail, and are off Mindanao, the large island in the south of the Philippines. We understand that we are going to be off the

main Japanese islands, on a hit and run operation. That way the kamikazes won't be able to mass attack, if they can't locate us, like at Okinawa. Hope that works. We will head north to Japan tomorrow.

July 10, 1945

I understand that there are four groups to our task force, which is now Task Force 38. Guess they changed it to confuse the Japs. Torpedo Defense! Submarine! The cans [destroyers] are dropping depth charges. No kill though! Now the Japanese will know we are coming. I heard an officer say that the last time we came this way, we were excited and ignorant. Not this time.

We know what can happen to us.

We had breakfast at 0200

[2 a.m.], and we are 150 miles off Tokyo! We start launching planes in the early dawn, and keep launching them all day. Not as much excitement as at Okinawa. A Francis was shot down off our bow, and another off our port quarter. We had three near misses by Baka bombs. We hear many bogies [enemy planes] overhead, but not in sight? General Quarters all day. Sure glad I am on the 20mm [guns], and not down below. Ever since I saw what the FRANKLIN looked like, I hate the thought of being trapped below. Aviation fuel had run down the hatches, and burned hundreds of men to death over on the FRANKLIN. . . . Would rather go down with the ship, and know that water is at least cool. I wonder, too, how the German U-boaters felt going down on the subs we sunk in the Atlantic? I think that their subs crushed at a depth, rather than them lying on the bottom somewhere waiting to die. . . .

July 11, 1945

We are heading south at high speed. Wonder why? . . . Another Jap submarine. They tell us there are many submarines around. We see many mines, and our people shoot them with rifles to detonate them.

He bore no love for the Japanese foe. Once, when a nearby ship picked up an enemy pilot in the water and so reported to the admiral, Mitscher's signalman snapped back a one-word reply: "Why?"

July 12, 1945

... It is getting cold. Had to sleep under blankets. Dawn was at 0230 today. Seems we never sleep. Eleven torpedo wakes were viewed crossing in front of our ships. No one got hit. We are now due east of Hokkaido, Japan. No wonder it's cold.

July 13, 1945

Weather cold, and very rough seas. Thinking if the kamikazes got us up here, and we had to abandon ship, it would be very cold in the water. But there seem to be more submarines than aircraft.

July 14, 1945

Clear today, and they tell us we are only thirty-nine miles off the coast of Hokkaido. Our planes have been bombing hell out of the area. But, we lose a lot of planes, and several pilots are returned aboard, injured. Must be rough on those guys up there.

July 15, 1945

Our planes from the task force dropped eighty-two tons of bombs, and used more rockets than ever before. The Japanese homeland is really being softened up. I guess invasion is near. Several bogies splashed nearby.

July 16, 1945

Tokyo Rose says they have a surprise for us? More kamikazes? Hope not. A British carrier joins us.

July 17, 1945

Very bad weather. Our planes are trying to get another Japanese battleship at Yokosuka, but due to weather can't get it. Our battleships go in as close as six miles to Tokyo, and bombard the area for three hours tonight.

July 18, 1945

Still bad weather, and still our planes strike the Jap homeland.

July 19, 1945

Heading southeast again, full speed. Still trying to confuse the Japanese? Guess so. They tell us that we can keep fifteen hundred planes in the air, from this task force. They have photos of the Japanese battleship. It is the NAGATO. And, the photos show that even with bad weather, it was heavily damaged.

July 20-23, 1945

Refueling, and loading ammo. Lots of mail. I get a notice from the Navy Dept., and a letter from James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy. I can now write home about U-505, and the capture.

I also got the Presidential Unit Citation for helping in the capture. Can't wait to tell Mom about the U-boat.

The carrier TICONDEROGA joins us. Also got lots of mail. We send V Mail. That is a small form that folds up. When we write, our officers censor everything. We can say we have seen action, but not much else. Lots of letters from girlfriends. Busy writing to everybody, now that I can tell the story of the U-boats. They did not say if we could tell about sinking the other two U-boats, so I won't mention them now.

July 24, 1945

We are back in the Inland Sea. Damn, that's Suicide Junction. We are just off Shikoku. Here they come today. A bogie just misses the stern of one of our cruisers. A Francis and Donna are

splashed. But not the thirty to fifty at a time like Okinawa. We also see hundreds of Army B-29s flying over us, on the way to pound hell out of the Japanese.

July 25, 1945

Our planes hit the Kure Naval Base. They hit the HARUNA! That was the battleship that Colin Kelly was supposed to have sunk. Guess that was our propaganda at the beginning of the war. There are many carriers, destroyers, cruisers and other ships there. I wonder why the Japanese did not get them under way, and at least come out to fight, instead of just being sitting ducks for our planes? [Ed. Note: By this date, the Imperial Japanese

Navy—or what was left of it—faced acute fuel shortages, due to U.S. submarines cutting Japan's supply lines to Southeast Asia. The last sortie of the battleship YAMATO in April had been severely circumscribed by this shortage. By July 1945, the Imperial Navy was finished as a surface fighting force.]

July 26, 1945

The carrier WASP rejoins. We have a new skipper. Flag Admiral Bodan is relieved and replaced by Admiral Duncan.

July 27, 1945

Feel sorry for the guys over on the carrier ESSEX. After being hit by three kamikazes, and being repaired, they told her she was going home! But suddenly they changed and she is going with us. It must be the start of the invasion.

July 28, 1945

Many, many bogies today. Notice a lot have torpedoes. A group of eighteen tries to close, but between the planes and our ship's guns, we get them all. Enemy aircraft come in all night. Not

**The Japs have some kind
of new kamikaze.
It's made of wood and
fabric, so our radar
doesn't pick them up.
They sank one of our
destroyers, and damaged
another. That's scary.
They come in at night.**



much sleep around here. Tried to get up a poker game, but everybody too tired, and jumpy.

July 29, 1995

The Japs have some kind of new kamikaze. It's made of wood and fabric, so our radar doesn't pick them up. They sank one of our destroyers, and damaged another. That's scary. They come in at night.

July 30-31, 1945

Refuel, provision and rest. But still have several sub contacts. We [were] due to go right into the Inland Sea again, but General Doolittle has his planes operating from Okinawa, so we don't have to go in there again. That's very, very good news.

August 3, 1945

Got word that our cruiser USS INDIANAPOLIS was sunk five days ago, and no one knew she went down. Nearly all her crew went down with her, or died in the water. Unknown cause. Probably a sub. And we have plenty around here.

August 4-7, 1945

One of our planes, on a practice run, had a wing fall off, and

Crewmen on the carrier LANGLEY's flight deck work to repair a bomb hole as the big carrier BUNKER HILL (CV-17) burns from a kamikaze hit in the distance. The author was an eyewitness to BUNKER HILL's desperate fight for life.

U.S. Navy

we watched as it crashed straight into the sea. All three men aboard lost.

August 8, 1945

We are hitting Hokkaido again. Lots of bogies again. We saw a Japanese plane go right over us, but it was overcast, and he never saw us. A mine misses the ship by ten yards. Today we get word of an atomic bomb? It was said to have destroyed one complete city. That means the war may be over shortly.

Ed. Note: As the young sailor surmised, the atomic bomb heralded the end of Japanese resistance. The Japanese government sued for peace a few days later, and on September 2, 1945, the instrument of surrender was signed aboard USS MISSOURI (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay.

The MAORI KING Affair

By Charles A. Bencik

Ed. Note: Part 1 of Mr. Bencik's story, which appeared in the Summer 1995 issue of *Mains'l Haul*, told of how the British tramp freighter MAORI KING steamed into San Diego from the Far East in the spring of 1907, loaded with Russian and Chinese railway workers. Hired in China and Siberia to build the Southern Pacific Railroad line in Mexico, many of these workers felt they had been shanghaied aboard the tramp. There were also racial antagonisms brewing. The result was a floating riot and bloody battles between the two groups, continuing until the ship put into San Diego on May 7. That day the vessel anchored near the quarantine station at La Playa, and her skipper, Captain J. W. Duncan, went ashore desperately seeking help from the local authorities. Mr. Bencik resumes his story at this point.



At first Captain Duncan hoped that a company of the California National Guard might be brought aboard. The local Guard unit, Company B, and the Naval Militia had been warned of a possible mobilization in the near future to assist in quelling a streetcar operators strike in San Francisco. U.S. Commissioner Samuel S. Knowles told him that, as the Guard came under the state governor, it was out of his province as a federal judicial officer. They conferred with the commander of Fort Rosecrans on Point Loma, Lt. Col. Charles G. Woodward, who refused to act without Washington's approval in the matter.¹ The *San Diego Union* wrote:

"A hurried trip was then made to the police station, where Chief Thomas at first

stated that he could send three men aboard for the night, who, with the three other customs officials would make six men, all armed and uniformed."²

But after Duncan departed for the mayor's office, the sheriff and chief of police determined that only when the vessel was within the city limits and a riot actually occurred would the ship be entitled to protection from the city police. They decided to appeal to the United States Marshal.

British Vice Consul Allen Hutchinson, "greatly exercised over the tragic events," left his home to spend the night aboard the ship, the *Union* said.³ Captain Duncan proceeded to the mayor's office. Trouble was still expected, as the whites and Chinese had been kept apart until shortly prior to arrival. The *Evening Tribune* pointed out:

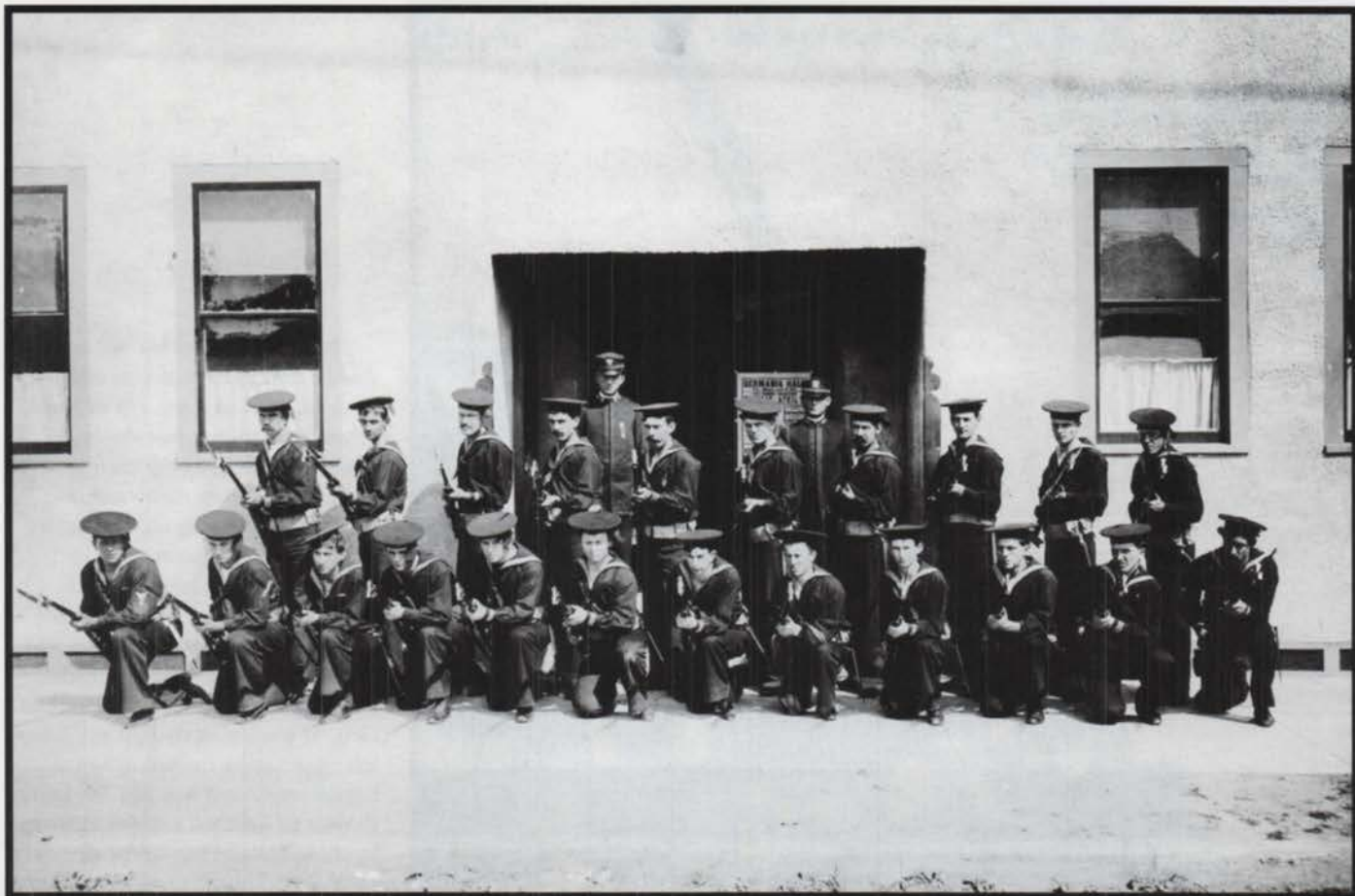
"The Maori King is now within reach of the guns of Fort Rosecrans, so that if any trouble should break out while in the harbor it would be easily quelled. The Chinamen are still insubordinate and may break out at any minute."⁴

At 3:00 p.m. on the 7th, Dr. McKay of the quarantine station returned ashore from the ship. He said the Chinese aboard seemed restless, and that "if the guard is not placed on board before night-fall there is liable to be more trouble."⁵ At the *Union's* city desk, Lt. Don Stewart of the Naval Militia and City Editor Blake discussed the situation. Blake pointed out that, as head of the local Naval



Ah Quin, a prominent Chinese-American merchant in San Diego, took a serious interest in the MAORI KING incident. He and the Chinese consul, Lun Hing, attempted to board the "hell ship" without success, following reports that her one thousand Chinese passengers had been shanghaied.

*San Diego Historical Society,
Photograph Collection*



Militia, he could help, and that Mayor John F. Forward, Sr., then serving his first (and probably most memorable) day in office, would assist gratefully in whatever he might manage to do. Stewart proceeded to the mayor's office, where he met Captain Duncan for the first time. They discussed the National Guard option, and Duncan soon learned that for "official reasons" it could not be done. But privately a guard of militarily trained men could be hired. The trip from San Diego to Guaymas, Mexico, where the railway workers were to be set ashore, might take no more than five days, after which all difficulties would likely be ironed out.



About 5:00 p.m., Stewart went with Captain Duncan in his boat to look over the situation. MAORI KING's stench assaulted his nostrils even before he climbed up her filthy, rusting sides.

"As soon as I boarded the ship, I beheld a mess that was almost beyond description . . . The 350 whites . . . [had] sufficient room to move around on deck without interference. Their situation was bad enough, but when I went forward, I realized what I was up against. The forward deck was literally alive with a moving mass of humanity—large, strong and well-built, tough-looking Manchurians, clothed with garments of heavy weight but not of the quality of the non-Chinese. There were few if any furs. They were simply alive with large, crawling, yellowish vermin at least 3/16th of an inch long . . . You could not find a single one without a few of these inhabitants, which later

Naval Militiamen of San Diego strike a combative pose around the time of the MAORI KING incident. Lieutenant Don Stewart, their commanding officer and the man who boarded the violence-torn ship with twenty armed guards, stands in the doorway behind his men.

San Diego Maritime Museum

received from the guards the name of 'seam squirrels.' This was the real shock to me." ⁶

The report of the writer from the *San Diegoan Sun* was equally nauseating.

"On boarding the ship . . . A Sun reporter saw a sight which . . . was sickening in the extreme. Of all the dirt, filth and stench from the ship, it is beyond the power of anyone to imagine how any human being could possibly live, the way these 1200 Chinese and Russians have been doing since April 12, when the ship left Vladivostok.

"On going out in a launch, when as far away as 1000 feet or more, . . . The stench even at that distance is plentifully powerful. [sic]

"On walking up the gangway steps to board the ship under the curious eyes of hundreds of Chinamen . . . One lands on the bridge, overlooking the entire length of the ship and it is from this point of view that one meets with a wonderful but sickening sight—a sight of a lifetime.

"Hundreds of Chinamen packed in as thick as peas in a pod . . . Some wearing very little or no clothing, others naked to the waist . . . But all filthy in the extreme.

Shantung Immigrants Boarding Daikoku

The sight that greeted Lt. Stewart and his guards as they boarded the MAORI KING must have resembled this one. These are Chinese workers of the period shipped aboard a freighter in the Far East.

American Heritage magazine



"Some were sprawled out on the deck asleep, groups of four and five were engaged in some sort of game, others were eating, but the large majority were devoting their time to picking fleas from their clothing. Many were assisting each other in killing these little insects.

"The decks present an awful mess. They look as if they had not been cleaned for many months, and as if so many hogs and pigs had mired in the same for that length of time. It seemed as though any refuse left from eating instead of being heaved overboard was just carelessly thrown to the deck and left there to be trampled and laid on by the swarming coolies . . .

"... The hold was even worse. Bunks constructed from the bottom of the hull, tier on tier up to the hatchways in each hold . . . And there is more scattered throughout that part of the ship than on the deck as there is not room on top for all." [sic]

Clearly the ship was not wanted inside San Diego Bay. According to U.S. law, allowing the Chinese ashore was illegal: a five thousand dollar fine could be assessed for each escapee. San Diego was not a port of entry. As a ship in distress she might only be allowed to get supplies and assistance.

Yet to Don Stewart mounting a guard for the ship seemed to be a sound business opportunity—even, perhaps, a chance to fulfill his family destiny. His paternal grandfather, James Stewart, had lost his life in the British Customs Service, the branch which dealt with smugglers. His father, Daniel Stewart, who also entered the Customs Service, had told his son stories about the horrors and atrocities he'd witnessed in the Crimean War and the Sepoy Mutiny

Some were sprawled out on the deck asleep, groups of four and five were engaged in some sort of game, others were eating, but the large majority were devoting their time to picking fleas from their clothing.

in India. Daniel had eventually moved the family to San Francisco and got work with the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, which ran steamers to San Diego. The family moved to the latter city in 1868.

As a young Naval Militia officer, Lieutenant Stewart had tried to follow in his father's footsteps. He'd been to Magdalena Bay and around the coast with the gunboats BENNINGTON and ALERT, and the auxiliary cruiser BADGER, on Naval Militia cruises. He knew Mexican waters from a private goat-hunting enterprise to Guadalupe Island in the schooner MAY. He was certainly steeped in British merchant and naval traditions, and must have felt great sympathy for these beleaguered British officers. A deal was struck.

Captain Duncan wanted a guard of twenty men aboard the MAORI KING. Stewart was to command them, and report to him. The guards would work for five dollars a day. (The *Union* said four dollars; either was excellent pay at the time.)* The guards would furnish their own weapons and ammunition. Stewart and Captain Duncan agreed that all work would be by contract only, and not in any way connected with the Naval Militia.

Stewart knew that, whatever the remuneration, no man would sign on if he "got a whiff of" things on the ship. He went ashore and contacted Henry C. Buckle, soon to be a Naval Militia ensign, who a year earlier had served in the San Francisco earthquake relief expedition; and Louis Almgren, the future city fire chief and former armorer aboard USS PINTA. They managed to sign up eight other militiamen, plus eight other men from Mrs. Dexter's boarding house on Front Street, and some firemen from Almgren's watch. It was a good mix of seasoned hands. One had been in the Army during the Indian campaigns; another had been shanghaied on a San Francisco whaler; and the militiamen were all disciplined, drilled in weapons, and familiar with conditions at sea.

That afternoon an astonishing decision was made. Dr. McKay, in charge of the quarantine station, gave the ship a clean bill of health!⁹ Politics must have dictated; it was certainly not medically justified. MAORI KING came farther into port from the quarantine station on the evening of the 7th, and moored near the Spreckels Wharf (off G Street) "with her decks running blood and some twenty wounded Chinamen and Russians aboard, many of them in danger of death,"¹⁰ the *Tribune* said. (Dr. Bensengro told the *Sun* reporter that only one man aboard was liable to die—a Chinese stabbed in the kidney.)

Meanwhile, Stewart sent a telegram to Adjutant General Lauck of the California National Guard, requesting permission to absent himself from the area. At 9:00 p.m., he arrived in a carriage at the Star Boat House wharf (now Market Street and

Kettner Boulevard). He brought with him four 30-30 rifles, a Winchester shotgun, and ammunition for both. The ship was now in waters within local jurisdiction, and the guns were to protect Vice Consul Hutchinson, and to arm the three policemen and three customs officials who would guard the ship overnight. Stewart had given strict orders not to allow any of the guards ashore, nor any visitors on board. The captain and mate heartily approved. Stewart boarded the launch TERROR, taking the bundle of newspapers Duncan had requested, and ordered a *Union* reporter ashore, off the boat. An hour later, he returned to the landing from the MAORI KING, having set up the contract for compensation and return transportation from Guaymas for himself and his guards.

The *Union* reporter managed to get around Stewart's security measures, and, with the aid of Engineer Boyington, one of Stewart's guards, went alongside the anchored ship in a boat and hailed Captain Duncan. There was no barricade between the warring factions, the skipper told him. Asked about a rumor that fifteen Chinese had been killed and thrown overboard during the riots enroute to San Diego, Duncan supposedly said, "Those men are dead; make of it what you like."¹¹



As the dawn of the 8th came up, things seemed quiet aboard the ship. Russians and Chinese clustered in their separate ends of the vessel, which was as filthy as ever. Boats belonging to local Chinese living in shacks along the mudflats had begun to gather around the ship as soon as she had shifted to her anchorage off Spreckels Wharf. The local Chinese were following the story with great interest, and by morning, they swarmed around her. Chinese laborers hung over the ship's sides, conversing and gesticulating angrily to those below. The locals sculled about at a distance, some trying to make sense of the babble of Cantonese and Manchurian, others bumping up against the MAORI KING's sides, pleading in vain with the crew to be allowed aboard.

Word got to the Chinese consul, Lun Hing, who came out in a boat with Ah Quin, a prominent merchant and labor contractor who had learned English in a Cantonese mission school.¹² Messages were passed down the ship's sides on a string to the boats below. In a few hours, the Chinese consul general in San Francisco, Sun Sze Yee, received this telegram:

"One thousand Chinese on British steamer Maori King say they were kidnapped from Vladivostok, and that twenty-five were murdered by English officers, aided by Russians. What will we do? (Signed) LUN HING, Consul [and] AH QUIN."¹³

In the afternoon Captain Duncan must have been overjoyed and relieved as Lt. Stewart brought aboard guards Louis Almgren, S.W. Dobson, A.L. Nelson, Nick Cayton, E.



Rusty and unkempt, the British tramp steamer MAORI KING came to anchor on San Diego Bay in May of 1907, with a full cargo of trouble. Her dramatic story resembled a tale woven by Conrad — but was all too true.

Frontier Port, by Don M. Stewart

Boyington, Henry C. Buckle, J.J. Fisher, Rufus C. Payne, Frank H. Whitmore, C.H. Kraber, Walter Golay, E.C. Dancer, E.E. Hastings, C. Whittier, Edward F. Jones, C.E. Williams, R.E. Williams, J.F. Devine, R. Dalton, Max Rutledge, and more than a score of weapons. They settled into a portion of the officers' quarters on the main deck.¹⁴ The guns that came aboard must have been mostly privately owned. Stewart's guards were armed "principally with 12-gauge shotguns of the pump-gun variety, and shells loaded with BB's."¹⁵ He also took a pair of revolvers for himself. Preparations for departure began.

Meanwhile, the Chinese consul general in San Francisco finally wired back to Lun Hing and Ah Quin:

"Commissioner North has wired inspectors in charge in your city to confer with you and thoroughly investigate matter in question.

"After investigation wire me in full and I will request Chinese minister to United States to act with instant vigor if necessary."¹⁶

Lun Hing and Ah Quin returned to the waters alongside MAORI KING to see whether the investigation would take place. As they sought to exchange more notes-on-string, the ship's officers began hoisting the anchor.



The ship proceeded out of port at 5:00 p.m. on the 8th. Lun Hing and Ah Quin followed as far as they could, then returned ashore and sent a final telegram to San Francisco:

"... Maori King drew up anchor and steamed away for Guaymas, Mexico at 5 o'clock this afternoon while two Chinese bureau representatives were trying to get information from passengers on board ...

"Charges should be filed against Captain J.W. Duncan for

shanghaiing one thousand Chinese ...

"Please notify Chinese ministers in Washington D.C., and City of Mexico. Latter should take immediate steps to have Maori King held at Guaymas, and make full investigation. ...

"Chinese government should declare charter of company owning ship forfeited, and order arrest of officials responsible for kidnapping.

"Intense feeling prevails here."¹⁷

The day the ship departed Vice Consul Hutchinson poo-pooed the entire affair. Sounding much like a character from "HMS Pinafore," he stated, "... I really thought so little of the trouble that I have not even notified the superior British officials of anything at all ..."¹⁸

According to the *Union*, Captain Duncan's decision to leave was prompted by the realization that an investigation would uncover the full truth of what had happened. Stewart seems to confirm this notion in his book, *Frontier Port*, where he says the first mate "told me he was shivering in his boots until they passed Fort Rosecrans, as he expected the ship to be detained."¹⁹

Ed. Note: The third and final part of this article will appear in the winter 1996 issue of *Mains'l Haul*.

NOTES

- 1 *San Diego Union*, May 8, 1907, pp. 1,3
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- 4 *The Evening Tribune*, May 7, 1907, p. 1.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Don M. Stewart, *Frontier Port* (Los Angeles, CA: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1966), p. 154.
- 7 *San Diegan Sun*, May 8, 1907, p. 1.
- 8 *San Diego Union*, May 8, 1907, p. 1.
- 9 *The Evening Tribune*, May 7, 1907, p. 1.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *The Evening Tribune*, May 8, 1907, p. 8.
- 12 "Old San Diego had its colony of Chinese fishermen who

fished from a fleet of up to sixteen junks in the Bay and lived in the Chinese quarters in shanties on stilts on the waterfront near the Stingaree district. In 1879, Ah Quin, a native of Canton, opened a general merchandise store at the foot of Fifth. He died in 1914, one of the richest men in Southern California." Sid Love and the Editors of San Diego Magazine, *San Diego: Portrait of a Spectacular City* (San Diego, CA: San Diego Magazine Publishing Co., 1969), p. 33. See also Theodore H. Fuller, *San Diego Originals* (Pleasant Hill, CA: California Profiles Publications, 1987), p. 241 ff.

13 *San Diego Union*, May 9, 1907, p. 8.

14 *The Evening Tribune*, May 8, 1907, p. 8.

15 Stewart, *Frontier Port*, p. 156.

16 *San Diego Union*, May 9, 1907, p. 8. Also, according to the *San Diegan Sun* of May 8, 1907, the Chinese consul general left San Francisco for San Diego to investigate the incident, but no other record of such a trip or investigation is known to exist at this time.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Stewart, *Frontier Port*, pp. 156-157.



SHIP'S SALVAGE

Genuine nautical salvage filched from
dead & dying ships worldwide!

Ship's Furniture • Marine Clocks
Nautical Antiques • Lamps & Lanterns
Brassware • Hardware • Nautical Gifts

Catalog Available \$4.00

MAIDHOF BROS. LTD.

1891 San Diego Ave.,
San Diego, CA 92110



1-800-SEA-JUNK



Chalmers Hall
Marine Insurance
Since 1949

Leaders in the Marine Insurance Industry

Meeting all your insurance needs for commercial
and pleasure marine activities

2812 Cañon Street, San Diego, CA 92106

(619) 226-8661

ADVENTURE, TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY: A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK AT GUY GILPATRIC

By Bruce A. Castleman

Fifty years ago, a Scottish ship's engineer, Colin Glencannon, sailed across the pages of *The Saturday Evening Post* in a rusty tramp freighter and entertained millions of Americans. The nearly forgotten creator of these maritime adventures was Guy Gilpatric, one of the most popular American short story writers of the thirties and forties. Gilpatric loved to set his stories in pleasant and exotic places, so the S.S. INCHCLIFFE CASTLE and Glencannon called at San Diego on several occasions, including in "The Smugglers of San Diego," which appeared in the *Post* issue of April 13, 1940. *Collier's* published many of Gilpatric's other stories, such as "The Queen of Tijuana," which appeared in the December 21, 1940 issue.

John Guy Gilpatric was born in Manhattan on January 21, 1896, the only child of John Guy Gilpatric and May Smith Gilpatric. He grew up in New York City, and attended the Columbia Grammar School at a time when children still rode their bicycles down Broadway to get to school.¹ Young Gilpatric was an avid reader, and became fascinated with aviation at the age of seven, when he read in a magazine of the Wright brothers' first flights at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The youngster resolved that he, too, would learn to fly, despite his parents' opposition.

Guy did not go to high school. In order to get work as an aviator, he needed to get a flying license, so he lied about his age and commenced instruction. Surviving his first test, Guy went on to receive pilot's license number 171 from the Aero Club of America and the Federation Aeronautique Internationale on September 12, 1912.

The requirements for employment as a test pilot in 1912 were not as stringent as those that Chuck Yeager later faced, and Gilpatric immediately found employment on Long Island as a test pilot and as a flight instructor for the Sloane Aircraft Company. While working for Sloane, he first visited California and attended the 1913 air show at Dominguez, located between Los Angeles and Long Beach. Gilpatric was in California for several weeks, and apparently visited the San Diego area during that time.

Gilpatric returned to New York in 1913 and continued his work for Sloane. While preparing for a race commemorating the tenth anniversary of the first Kitty Hawk flights, he burned up his plane's engine. Undaunted, he stole another one from within a hangar at Belmont Park and installed it himself. His extracurricular efforts came to naught, for he placed only fourth out of the five entrants in the race around Manhattan.

Air races were glamorous, but they did not provide pilots with steady meals. Barnstorming around the countryside, giving demonstration rides and flight instruction, was the way to pay the rent. The typical three-day gig of a barnstormer produced only two paid flights per day, so Gilpatric had a lot of time on his hands. He spent much of it teaching himself to write.²

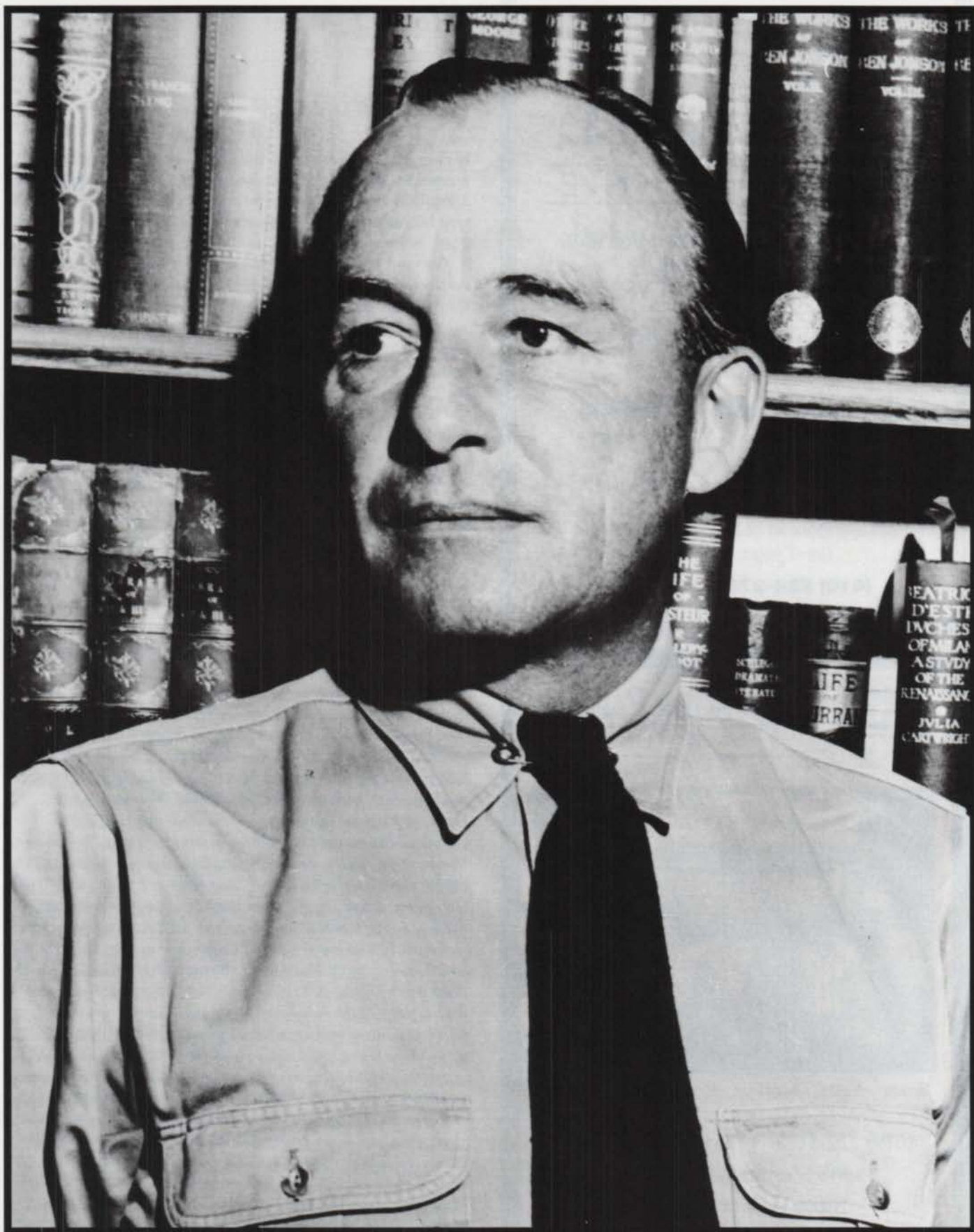
Gilpatric authored several technical articles that appeared in American and British aviation trade journals, then tried his hand at fiction. He published his first short story when he was just seventeen years old, in *Collier's*.

When the United States entered the First World War, Gilpatric joined the Army and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Service. The young pilot went to the front in France, joining the First Aero Squadron in 1918. He rose to the rank of captain and returned home to civilian life in 1919.³

Gilpatric emerged from the war a changed man. His love of aviation was dead, squashed by the horrors of war at the front. Many years and another world war passed before he published another aviation story, and *Guy Gilpatric's Flying Stories* stand in stark contrast to the slapstick humor of his seagoing adventures.



After mustering out of the Air Service, Guy Gilpatric made his living with words. He returned home to New York, and went into the advertising business. He married Maude Louis Lesser on March 27, 1920, and went on to prosper in the hurly-burly world of New York in the Roaring Twenties. By 1930, he had risen to a vice presidency of the Federal Advertising Agency.⁴ But once again, Gilpatric sudden-



Guy Gilpatric, author of the popular Glencannon stories.
Wide World Photos



SALUTES THE FINE JOB THE MARITIME
MUSEUM HAS DONE IN
RESTORING THEIR CLASSIC VESSELS

LET US HELP YOU RESTORE YOUR
CLASSIC VESSEL

DOWNWIND MARINE

Serving Your Every Yachting Need

From the crew at Downwind Marine.

We are located at 2804 Cañon Street
San Diego, CA 92106

(619) 224-2733 WHX 369



VOYAGER PACIFIC
YACHTS



Bruce Kelly Marilyn Roger Mario John

(619) 222-1183 • Fax (619) 222-1827

1901 Shelter Island Drive
Suite A, Kona Marina

We will find the boat that fits your needs.

ly changed the course of his life. *The Saturday Evening Post* had accepted several of his Glencannon stories and the prospects for a steady and substantial income must have appeared bright.⁵ He quit his job, moved to the south of France, and became a professional writer.

Guy and Louise took up residence in a villa in the town of Antibes, on the Cote d'Azur. He established a routine of writing for six hours each day, and enjoyed a range of diversions including fencing, marksmanship, and sport diving.⁶ Gilpatric explored reefs and grottoes all around the Mediterranean Sea, wrote a book about spear fishing, and even became a friend of Jacques Cousteau.⁷

Gilpatric turned to the sea for the setting of most of his subsequent work. He created Mr. Colin Glencannon, the Scottish chief engineer of a fictitious British tramp freighter, the S.S. INCHCLIFFE CASTLE. For some twenty years, Glencannon's antics were a staple of the *Post*, tickling the readers' sense of humor and helping keep up circulation. Gilpatric published a book almost every year after 1930, often by assembling anthologies of Glencannon stories from the *Post*. The canny Gilpatric thus got extra mileage and remuneration from most of his Glencannon stories, and these survive today in libraries and second-hand bookstores.

Mr. Glencannon was a brawling drunkard, a swindler, and a general scoundrel, but his victims generally got what they deserved. The readers loved him, and even formed fan clubs, such as "The Glencannon Rover Boys," whose members issued membership card No. 1 to their hero's creator.⁸

The Glencannon stories offer additional glimpses of Guy Gilpatric. They show him to be a strong Francophile. Not surprisingly for a veteran of the First World War who lived in France during the thirties, Gilpatric obviously disliked Germans, and so they fare poorly in stories such as "Scotch and Water." That he was decidedly anti-Bolshevik is evident in "He Might Have Been a Rooshan." "Star Dust and Corn" and "The Smugglers of San Diego" show that the expatriate remained a patriot, as Mr. Glencannon never gets the best of an American.

Gilpatric apparently limited his stories' settings to places he had visited himself. During the thirties, Glencannon repeatedly turns up in Gibraltar, London, and Marseilles. Although the INCHCLIFFE CASTLE was a world-ranging tramp, ports such as Yokohama are only mentioned in passing. After Gilpatric moved from France to California in 1939, Glencannon shows up in the Golden State from time to time. Chauncey Montgomery, the INCHCLIFFE CASTLE's first mate and the chief engineer's arch-enemy, even managed to spend a night in the Tijuana jail!

As a marine engineer, Mr. Glencannon is a wizard, without whom the INCHCLIFFE CASTLE's propulsion plant would come apart at the flange joints. However, Gilpatric apparently spent little time at sea and knew even less about boilers and steam engines. The Glencannon stories do not contain the technical detail of the *Flying Stories*, and the freighter is merely a vehicle for Gilpatric to set his characters' shenanigans on, around the world. Only passing snippets of technical detail appear in the

dialogue, and none of the stories ever describes a repair of the unreliable machinery. Authors with substantial shipboard experience generally include realistic details in their sea stories, and the Glencannon stories stand in striking contrast to works such as Richard McKenna's *The Sand Pebbles*, or Thomas Heggen's *Mister Roberts*. The knowledgeable reader even recognizes an occasional utter fallacy, such as when Gilpatric had the Japanese Navy using a cruiser to provide electricity to a secret base. A Japanese character in the story explains they were only copying the example of the U.S. aircraft carrier LEXINGTON, which had temporarily powered Tacoma, Washington.⁹ LEXINGTON had turbo-electric drive, an arrangement in which propulsion turbines drive large generators, which in turn power motors connected to the ship's screws. Ship's service electrical power was provided by much smaller machines, and the power for Tacoma came from LEXINGTON's propulsion generators. An author who knew marine engineering would know that a new cruiser of that period would have mechanical drive and only enough electric-generating capacity to power the ship itself.

In many places, Gilpatric provided descriptions of the INCHCLIFFE CASTLE's tonnage and size that were typical of freighters of those days. Also, he mentions standard nautical references such as *Knight's Modern Seamanship* and *Lecky's Wrinkles in Practical Navigation*—but that kind of information could easily be gleaned from marine trade journals and common library sources. The maritime background allowed Gilpatric to vary the stories' settings at will. This gave the reader a vicarious sense of being a vagabond rover, but the Glencannon stories are not sea stories per se.

When the Second World War broke out, the Gilpatrics got out of France in a hurry. They fled Antibes in September, 1939, on just twenty minutes' notice, and gave away their car at the pier. Along with their long-haired dachshund "Montie," they boarded the S.S. PIPESTONE COUNTY, a freighter built in 1919, and sailed for the United States. They went directly to San Diego, and chose Coronado over La Jolla. The Gilpatrics moved into the house at 840 Glorietta Boulevard in October, 1939.¹⁰ They later moved down the street to a bigger house at 1000 Glorietta.¹¹ Guy immediately re-established his regimen of concentrated writing, fencing, marksmanship, and dog walking. But, he became unhappy in San Diego.

Military mobilization accompanied the war clouds that gathered over the United States, and the training flight activity at the Naval Air Station, North Island, increased dramatically. The planes flew day in and day out, and Gilpatric found he could not concentrate on his work. The sound of the engines overhead must have awakened memories of the First World War's horrors, so in 1941, the Gilpatrics moved away.

They relocated to Santa Barbara, another town with weather like southern France. The introduction to a later edition of one of the author's works, *The Compleat Goggler*, cryptically states that Gilpatric did intelligence work during the Second World War, but this was probably not clandestine stuff. The knowledge gained from years of diving in the Mediterranean would



IS OUR INVESTMENT

*We proudly
support the
Maritime Museum
of San Diego*



PENINSULA BANK

• OF SAN DIEGO •

"Celebrating 20 years of Service"

Member F.D.I.C.

Call 226-BANK

The shy but colorful man who taught himself to fly and taught himself to write, now taught himself to die with his pistol after first ending his wife's life.

have been extremely valuable in planning amphibious invasions, and so it seems likely that he would have been called upon to participate in such efforts.

Gilpatric continued his writing in Santa Barbara, freed from the distraction of aircraft noise. The anthologies which contain the stories set in San Diego were published during the time in Santa Barbara.¹² His novel *Action in the North Atlantic* became the basis for the Hollywood film of that name. *Guy Gilpatric's Flying Stories* appeared in 1946, and his last work was *Mr. Glencannon Meets Tugboat Annie*, a joint effort with Norman Reilly Rane,¹³ author of the "Tugboat Annie" series.

Throughout their many years of marriage, Guy and Louise Gilpatric were a thoroughly devoted couple. Their neighbors admired the depth of their relationship. One noted that they "lived for each other," and another recalled that he never saw them quarrel during the eight years that he knew them. Louise was deeply involved in Guy's work, typed his manuscripts, and knew his characters as well as he did.¹⁴

In July, 1950, Guy and Louise learned from her doctor that Louise had cancer and required immediate surgery. The shy but colorful man who taught himself to fly and taught himself to write, now taught himself to die with his pistol after first ending his wife's life.¹⁵

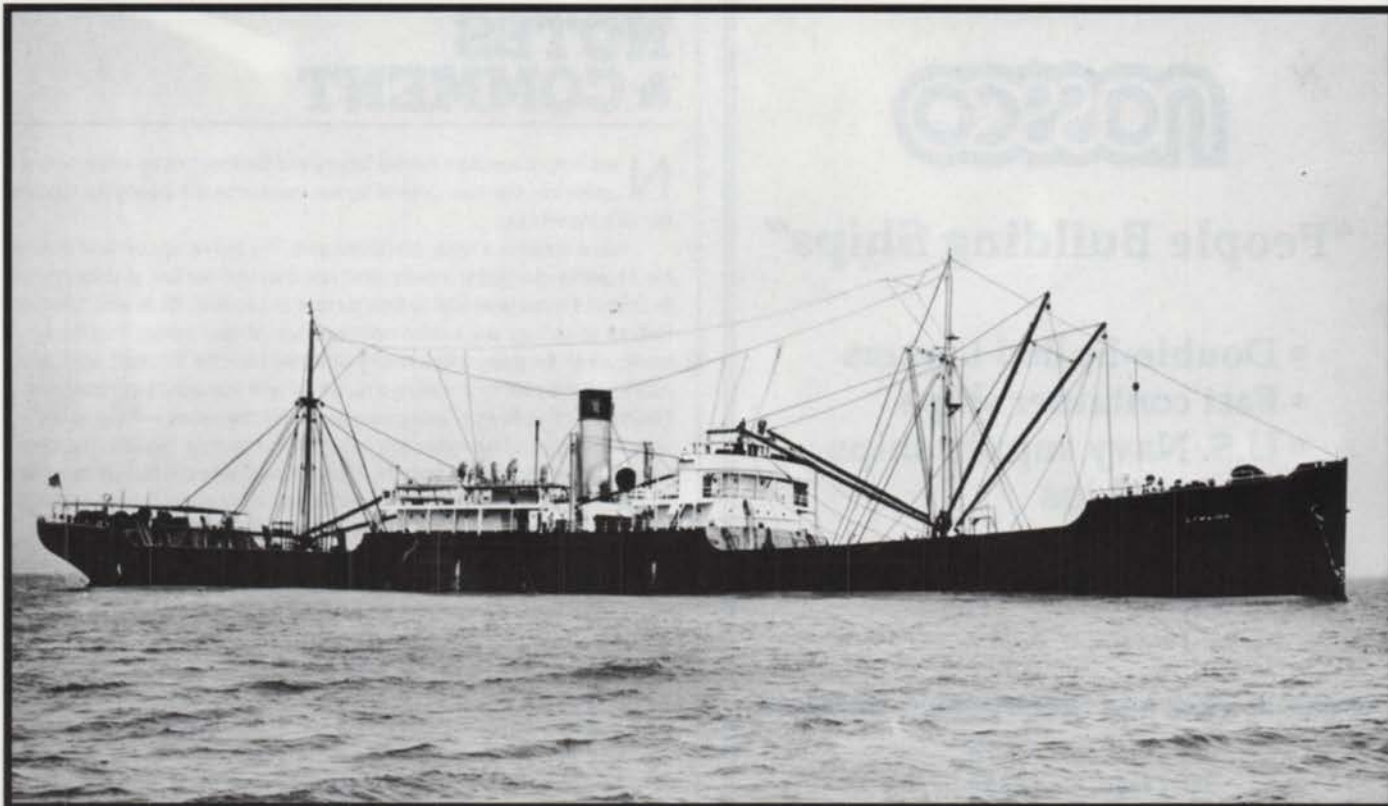


The Glencannon stories are marvelous works of slapstick humor. Gilpatric's prose paints a picture that could come from a travelogue, but then he tosses in a stink bomb with the rusty ship and the degenerate crew. Unfortunately, they are also rife with the derogatory, racist language that would have been used by a merchant seaman of that time. Gilpatric did not limit such images to characters' dialogue alone, and words like "Jap monkey," "squid-eating Dago," "filthy Spaniard," and "blackamoor" hammer away at the modern reader's sensibilities. Routine use of such language must say something about Gilpatric himself, especially in view of his special talent for conjuring pictures with his words.

Such attitudes were the norm in his day, so their presence in his work should not be taken to mean that Gilpatric was uniquely racist. The short stories of a contemporary, P.G. Wodehouse, enjoy a timeless sort of popularity today. Wodehouse used class distinctions as the basis for much of his comedy, whereas ethnic distinctions were one of Gilpatric's major foils. Gilpatric's stories are as much a product of their time as are Wodehouse's, but declined in popularity after his death, and now lie in the relative obscurity that their author sought for himself.

NOTES

- 1 Guy Gilpatric, Introduction to *Guy Gilpatric's Flying Stories* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1946), p. 11.
- 2 Ibid., pp. 9-12.
- 3 *History of the First Aero Squadron*, p. 7. Manuscript held by U.S. Air Force Museum, Research Division, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.
- 4 Letter, New York Public Library, Research Libraries, Economic and Public Affairs Division, to author, November 17, 1992. This author gratefully acknowledges the NYPL's generous research efforts on his behalf in the archive of the American Association of Advertising Agencies.
- 5 The records of payment to authors no longer survive in the archives of the *Post*. However, the pay must have been enough to support a pleasant lifestyle. P.G. Wodehouse was paid \$3,500 for his first short story in that magazine, which appeared in 1915. David A. Jasen, *P.G. Wodehouse: Portrait of a Master* (New York: Mason/Charter, 1974), p. 54. Gilpatric likely would have been similarly remunerated.
- 6 *Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary of Modern Literature* (New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1942), pp. 534-535.
- 7 Gilpatric, *The Compleat Goggler* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1939).
- 8 "The Glencannon Rover Boys," *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 10, 1947, p. 10.
- 9 Gilpatric, *Mr. Glencannon Ignores the War* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1944).
- 10 "Guy Gilpatric, Author, to Live Here," *Coronado Citizen*, October 12, 1939, p. 3, col. 4.
- 11 *San Diego City Directory 1940* (San Diego: San Diego Directory Company, 1940), p. 1146, and *San Diego City Directory 1941* (San Diego: San Diego Directory Company, 1941), p. 1132. Gilpatric does not appear in either the 1942 or the 1944-1945 editions of the directory.
- 12 Gilpatric, *The Canny Mr. Glencannon* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1943), and *Mr. Glencannon Ignores the War*.
- 13 Norman Reilly Rane (1895-1971) was also a successful Hollywood screenwriter. *Who's Who in America*, Vol. 32 (Chicago: A.N. Marquis Co., 1963), and *Contemporary Authors*, Ann Evoy, ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1973).
- 14 "Portrait," *The Saturday Evening Post*, August 26, 1950, p. 132.
- 15 "Gilpatric Slays Wife For Mercy, Kills Self," *San Diego Union*, July 8, 1950, p. A-1, col. 3; also "Guy Gilpatric, Noted Author, Slays Wife, Self," *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1950, p. 1, col. 1; and also "No Inquest in Gilpatric Case, says Ross," *Santa Barbara Press-News*, July 8, 1950, p. 1, col. 7.



Guy Gilpatric set his Glencannon stories aboard an old "three island" freighter similar to this one, the LAHAINA.
San Diego Maritime Museum

HELP PRESERVE STAR OF INDIA, BERKELEY & MEDEA



JOIN THE SAN DIEGO MARITIME MUSEUM



One

Light Source that
 has proven itself
 throughout history...

Press Plus

One Printing Source
 that has proven itself
 throughout its history.

**619
 474-0666**



"People Building Ships"

- Double-hulled tankers
- Fast container ships
- U.S. Navy supply ships
- Cruise ships
- Ferries
- Product Carriers

National Steel and Shipbuilding Company

P.O. Box 85278
San Diego, CA 92186-5278
2798 East Harbor Drive
Phone: (619) 544-3400 • Fax: (619) 544-3541

Walt Jacobsen
Wood Carving
Aboard the Star of India
233-8880

Scrimshaw
The Whaleman's Art
421-8245



NOTES & COMMENT

Naval history, merchant marine history, and the literature by which both are woven into the main cable of human experience, are among the topics of this fall's *Mains'l Haul*.

Naval history is a highly specialized area. The technology of naval warfare has frequently changed at a more rapid rate than land warfare, as states sought to control the sea lanes vital to their survival and establish trade with colonies. Perhaps no century saw a more rapid evolution of naval warfare than the sixteenth, when the galley, with a history stretching back five thousand years, was rudely pushed aside by the sailing ship, armed with a broadside of heavy guns. Nations that built fleets of sailing warships found themselves well placed to unlock the riches of the Indies, east and west, and to resist invasion. The locus of seaborne power shifted from the Mediterranean, where it had centered for five millennia, to the states of northwest Europe—principally England, Holland, and France. The impact of this naval revolution on world history was enormous; in some ways, its effects are still felt today.

Five hundred years later, another naval revolution was under way. The ironclad battleship replaced the "wooden walls" with their towers of sails; and very soon, the battleship itself fell victim to a new weapon of war, the aircraft carrier. In the Second World War, the aircraft carrier seized command of the sea. During some of the fiercest combat of that war, life aboard one of these floating airfields was written down as it happened by a young crewman. This diary we present in excerpt form, in "The Pacific War," by Jim Verdolini. Told in plain seaman's words, his firsthand account retains all the drama of the original events.

Backing up any naval fleet must be a strong merchant marine. In peace, the merchant marine plies the trade routes of the world; in war, it is the indispensable auxiliary of naval power. Yet life aboard a merchant vessel, even in peacetime, is not always comfortable or easy. What a "hell ship" a merchantman—especially a tramp—can become is vividly shown by Charles Bencik in his article, "The MAORI KING Affair," which has its second of three parts in this issue. Few passengers can have suffered as the unfortunate Chinese laborers described in this story did. To make matters infinitely worse, they were victims of one of the oldest and most nefarious of merchant marine practices, that of "shanghaiing."

The MAORI KING steams into San Diego Bay in this installment, as her master pleads for help and seeks to escape official investigation. The whole affair reads like something out of a Joseph Conrad novel. Mr. Bencik tells the colorful tale well, and we'll carry the surprising finish in our next issue.

The literature of the sea has attained a fame scarcely surpassed by real events. The world's greatest authors, from Homer to Melville to Kipling, have tried their hands at the genre—whether they ever reefed a sail or not. Among the lesser-known weavers of such yarns was the American writer Guy Gilpatric. His "Glencannon" stories, set aboard a British tramp plowing the seas of the world, entertained a generation of readers. The author's own story is presented here by Bruce Castleman, a new contributor to *Mains'l Haul*. Gilpatric had a special connection to San Diego, having lived in Coronado for a time and setting several of his stories in the region.

We hope these articles are of interest. In our next issue, we shall bring you another cargo of sea history and biography, along with more book reviews.

Craig Arnold,
Editor

MARITIME MUSEUM BOOK SALE

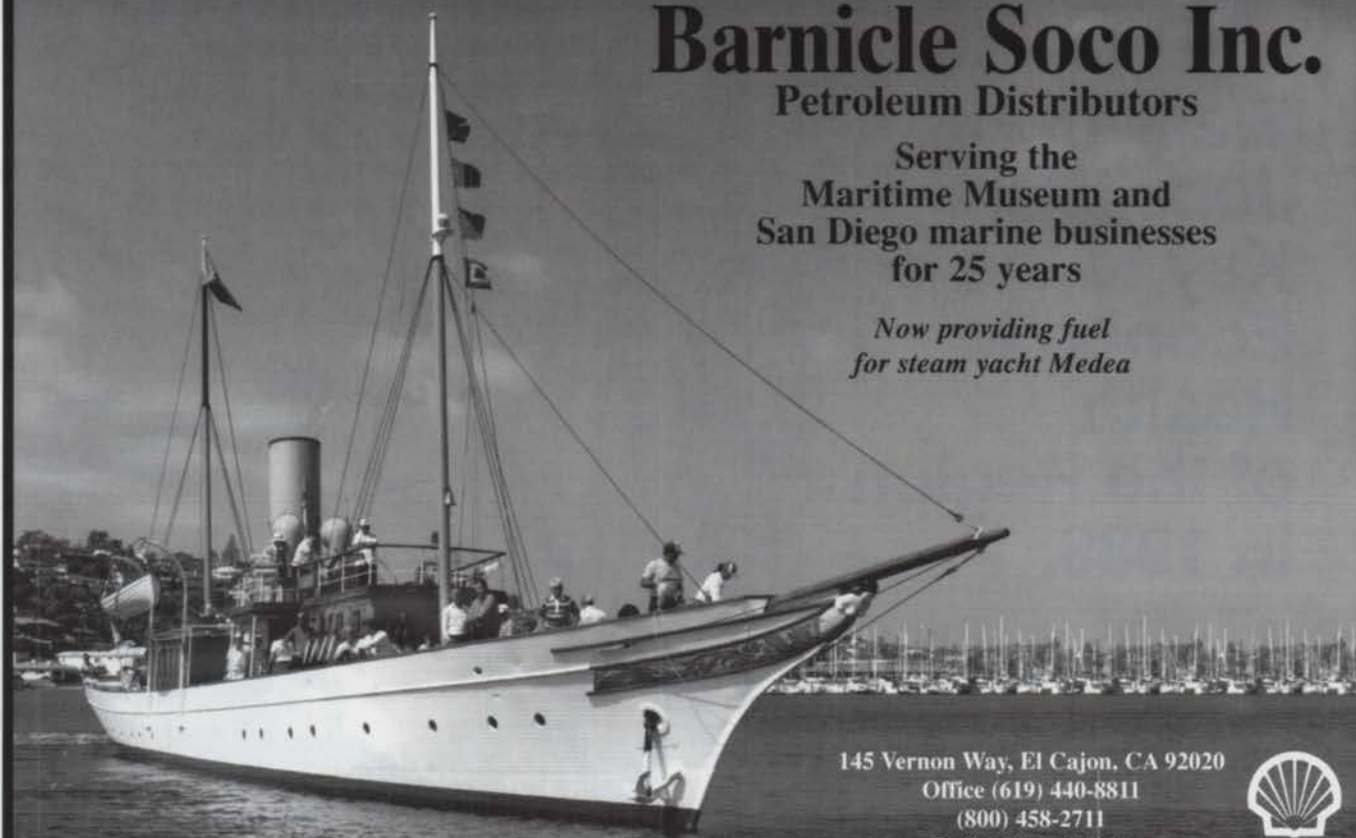
The San Diego Maritime Museum's Jerry MacMullen Library will hold its annual book sale on Saturday, November 18, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, on board the *BERKELEY*. Many excellent books on nautical and other subjects will be on sale. In addition, a selection of fine ship models will be offered to the public at greatly reduced prices.

Barnicle Soco Inc.

Petroleum Distributors

Serving the
Maritime Museum and
San Diego marine businesses
for 25 years

*Now providing fuel
for steam yacht Medea*



145 Vernon Way, El Cajon, CA 92020
Office (619) 440-8811
(800) 458-2711
FAX (619) 440-7143



ZOLEZZI ENTERPRISES INC.

Supports the work of the
Maritime Museum of San Diego



ZOLEZZI ENTERPRISES INC.
1050 Rosecrans,
San Diego, CA 92106
(619) 223-5576
FAX (619) 223-6761

Waterfront Jobs Were Key to the Economic Health of the Region in 1938,

*The south bearing box for the Mt. Palomar
Observatory telescope is offloaded at B Street
Pier in October of 1938.*

And Still are Today.

The Port of San Diego

Discover what's in it for you.



**MARITIME MUSEUM
ASSOCIATION OF SAN DIEGO**

Bark Star of India
1306 N. Harbor Drive,
San Diego, CA 92101