

# The LOOKOUT



*Symbol of Christmas*

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE  
OF NEW YORK

No. 12

DEC. 1943

## Sanctuary

May all the ships that bear Liberty's name  
That carry the cargoes without glory or fame,  
Come safe home to haven and journey's end—  
This is the Christmas prayer I send.  
May peace come soon, dear God, we pray  
May all our loved ones far away  
Come home to family and friend,  
This is the Christmas prayer I send.

—M.D.C.

# The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXIV, DECEMBER, 1943

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CLARENCE G. MICHALIS  
President

THOMAS ROBERTS  
Secretary and Treasurer

REV. HAROLD H. KELLEY, D.D.  
Director

MARJORIE DENT CANDEE, Editor

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## LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit nevertheless the following as a clause that may be used:

I give and bequeath to "Seamen's Church Institute of New York," incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of

.....Dollars.

Note that the words "OF NEW YORK" are a part of our title.

It is to the generosity of numerous donors and testators that the Institute owes its present position, and for their benefactions their memory will ever be cherished by all friends of the seamen.

Merry Christmas to Lookout Readers

# The Lookout

Vol. XXXIV

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## Tribute to Liberty Ships

We dedicate this issue of THE LOOKOUT to the officers and crews of the more than 1,500 LIBERTY ships which have been built by the U. S. Maritime Commission during the past two years.

We are glad that censorship has relaxed so that the names of some of these gallant ships may be mentioned and the stories of their tremendous contribution in this war may now, at last, be told.

### THE STORY OF THE "PATRICK HENRY"

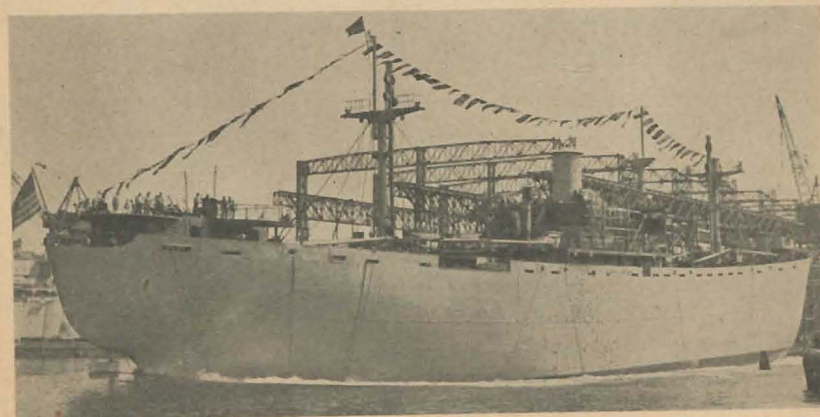
The PATRICK HENRY was the first Liberty ship launched—the first of 1,500 "Liberties" built in two years' time.

The PATRICK HENRY was christened by Mrs. Henry A. Wallace, on Sept. 27, 1941. After her completion she was turned over to the Lykes Lines. The Maritime Commission said in its release on Victory Fleet Day, celebrated on

Monday, September 27, 1943:

"The PATRICK HENRY has survived prolonged efforts by the Germans to sink her by attacks from air and under water. She has made several Atlantic crossings to Russia, the British Isles and the Mediterranean theater of war, and participated in the North African invasion. While declining, for obvious military reasons, to reveal the present location of the vessel, the Commission did say that she still is in active war transportation service under the operational supervision of Lykes Bros. Steamship Co., Inc."

The PATRICK HENRY is a true war veteran that has proved worthy of her famous namesake. In nearly two years of service the "PATRICK HENRY" has proved herself to be a model Liberty ship—staunch and seaworthy. On many seas she has been attacked by submarines, bombed by planes, while enduring the ordinary perils of navigation. Her valiant crews have always brought her through.



Liberty Ship "Janet Lord Roper" on Launching Day, June 26, 1943.

An American merchant vessel, the SS WILLIAM WIRT, has not only survived five air attacks in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean but shot down several enemy planes.

This Liberty Ship, first of the great Allied merchant convoy to dock in the North Africa invasion, was built at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard, Baltimore, Md., was launched July 4, 1942, and is operated by the Alcoa Steamship Company of New York, N. Y. She was named in honor of the early Maryland lawyer and statesman. She was commanded on her eventful war voyages by a Baltimorean, Captain C. D. Simmons, whose son, Sidney, was also a member of the crew, recruited largely in Baltimore.

The five air attacks on the WILLIAM WIRT took place last January. The Navy gun crew, commanded by Lieutenant (j.g.) Robert H. McIlwaine, USNR, of New

York City, shot down four planes and is credited with two more "probables."

Although damaged by near misses and by a bomb which penetrated to its highly inflammable cargo but failed to explode, the WILLIAM WIRT held her position in the convoy and discharged her cargo on schedule. With temporary repairs, the vessel continued on duty many weeks before returning to the United States. When last reported she was still in action, carrying materials of war to our fighting forces.

#### THE LIBERTY SHIP THAT WOULDN'T GIVE UP

EXAMPLES of the toughness and ability to "take it" of Liberty ships now being produced by American shipyards are legion. Seldom, however, has a ship been called upon to take it as much as the SS RICHARD BLAND,



Photo by Marie Haggins

CAPTAIN AND PURSER OF THE LIBERTY SHIP "JANET LORD ROPER" which will be "somewhere at sea" on Christmas Day receive from Miss Charlotte Kennedy packages of Christmas gifts for all the crew, sent by the Merchant Marine Auxiliary of Oklahoma City. The Christmas boxes were prepared at the request of the Central Council of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York.



U. S. Maritime Commission Photo

Anti-aircraft platform of a Liberty ship in convoy at sea.

which was launched Feb. 28, 1942, at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyard.

Workers at the yard received a telegram from Admiral Emory S. Land, head of the War Shipping Administration: "The epic story of your Liberty ship S. S. RICHARD BLAND is a remarkable tribute to the stamina of the ship you built.

"On her first voyage through northern war zones the BLAND struck floating ice, staving a hole in the bottom of the No. 1 hold and damaging the forepeak. When diver inspection showed damage too extensive for repairs at a near-by port, she proceeded to destination with collision mat covering the damage.

"After safely discharging all but a small portion of cargo and after repairs, the BLAND started her return voyage. An attack by bombers did no damage. Later an enemy torpedo slowed her down but she held her place in the convoy. On the same day she was attacked by 18 enemy planes with no material damage.

"Next day heavy weather scattered the convoy and, proceeding alone for two days, another torpedo struck. Engines were stopped, the stern settled and part of the crew was ordered off in lifeboats. The rest of the crew—61 men—carried on until a third torpedo hit amidships, when the stern sank. The forward half of the vessel was towed safely to port by a trawler and half of the crew was picked up by near-by vessels."

#### THWARTED ENEMY

Ability of Liberty Ships in convoy to thwart enemy attacks is graphically proved by the performance of the SS GEORGE B. SELDEN on her maiden war zone voyage. Her master, Captain Walter A. Shea, of San Francisco, reported his ship's adventures after returning from North Africa with huge quantities of captured Axis munitions by battling through the Atlantic and Mediterranean war zones.



Helmsman on navigating bridge of a Liberty ship in convoy at sea.

"On our maiden voyage we saw a periscope and shot at it until it disappeared," said Captain Shea. "On the second trip we encountered no submarines, but off the coast of Africa felt heavy concussions of the depth charges dropped by the convoy's warships.

"Submarines were off the starboard beam and the whole convoy made a quick emergency turn. The general behavior of the GEORGE B. SELDEN was wonderful. It can't be beat for steering; the steering engines worked perfectly and the ship has excellent maneuverability."

Commenting on the last leg of the voyage, Captain Shea said:

"On the first trip in the South Pacific we ran into very heavy weather and the ship performed excellently. Conditions were so bad we had to heave to for three days as we had bombers on deck which were very fragile.

"Speed was above average and the engine very economical as far as oil consumption was concerned.

"I want to express to the men and women in the Richmond yards of the Kaiser Company my deep appreciation for the outstandingly good job they did on what these days is a 'rush' order." The SEL-

DEN is operated for W.S.A. by the Matson Navigation Company.

### SAVED BY SIX MEN

Abandoned when she was blasted by two explosions off the African Coast several months ago, a Liberty Ship, the SS MATT W. RANSOM, and her cargo were saved when the master of the vessel and six volunteers reboarded her and brought her into port.

Details of the feat were revealed when the crew members arrived at a United States port. They told how Captain John Metsall, of 350 Caprini Boulevard, New York City, with three members of the Navy gun crew and three merchant crewmen got the ship under way again.

Although virtually the entire crew volunteered for the task, Captain Metsall selected from the Navy armed guard its commanding officer, Ensign Earl J. Cohn, USNR, 67 Lovering Avenue, Buffalo, N. Y.; J. C. Rehmert, Seaman First Class, USNR, of Rural Route No. 1, Dayton, Ohio, and John J. Enright, Seaman First Class, USNR, of 815 East Sixth Street, Anaconda,



U. S. Merchant Marine cadet rigging scrambled rope above lifeboat for emergency use immediately after clearing port. Taken on a Liberty ship at sea.

Mont. From the merchant crew he chose K. V. Gately, Third Assistant Engineer, R.F.D. 382, Jacksonville, Fla.; Peter Drevas, Wiper, 14 Winderid Street, Quincy, Mass., and C. Clyde Boyer, Able Seaman, 1129 Eighth Street, New Orleans, La.

The vessel, built in the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company yard, Wilmington, N. C., and operated by Smith and Johnson of New York, N. Y., was approaching an African port with a large cargo of Army supplies when a violent explosion opened her bow. The ship shuddered and greyish-black water was thrown a hundred feet in the air. A second explosion followed and the ship began to settle, fire sweeping her decks and threatening the fuel tanks.

The vessel apparently was doomed and the order was given to abandon ship. When all hands were safe in the lifeboats, Captain Metsall saw that the vessel had ceased to settle. With the six volunteers he climbed to the slanting deck, the bow then being almost buried in the sea. Two men re-fired the boilers while the others fought the fire, and finally the logy vessel got underway as the screws began to turn again.

Manned by the skeleton crew of four men above deck and two below the MATT W. RANSOM proceeded without further incident to port with the help of another vessel and discharged her cargo.

"I give credit to all hands for their coolness," reported Captain Metsall, "and special credit to Liberty Ships, which can stand an explosion of this magnitude and still be able to come in under their own power."

"This magnificent job by the men who built and sailed the MATT W. RANSOM has again honored our American Merchant Marine," commented Rear Admiral Emory S. Land, Chairman of the Maritime Commission and War Shipping Administrator.

### ZIGZAGGED TO SAFETY

The Liberty Ship's maneuverability and accuracy of its armed guard's fire saved the SS NATHANIEL CURRIER when it was attacked by Japanese planes on its maiden voyage. Reports of the attack also contain tributes to the courage and efficiency of merchant seamen assigned to assist the Navy gun crew.

The ship was lying off a Southwest Pacific base, unloading cargo onto barges when the base was assaulted by "Aichi 99" dive bombers. At first warning of the enemy's approach all barges were cast off and ordered away from the ship. General quarters sounded, the crew went to their stations on the run, guns were manned, cases of loose ammunition were broken out, and the vessel cleared for action, its log relates.

It continues:

"The NATHANIEL CURRIER was under way and zigzagging when the enemy planes peeled off for attack. The first plane started a fore and aft run. With a gun on him he had to swerve away and with the vessel swinging to starboard his bombs missed. The hottest action lasted three to four minutes, during which two planes were shot down, two others badly damaged, while another made off with smoke coming out of him, apparently on fire."

A report of the Office of Chief of Naval Operations says:

"Information has been received in the Office of Naval Intelligence that certain members of the merchant crew aboard the SS NATHANIEL CURRIER rendered commendatory services while the vessel was under attack by enemy bombers at a Southwest Pacific base on 16 June 1943. The names of the crew members and the services rendered by each are as follows:

"Cadet-Midshipman William E. Sigman, (721 East Main St., Flat River, Mo.) assisted at the 3-inch gun as second loader and carried

out his assignment in a cool and efficient manner. During the engagement the jackstaff of the NATHANIEL CURRIER was shot down and the flag fell to the deck. Sigman retrieved the flag and lashed it to the stub of the jackstaff without neglecting his duties."

"Able Seaman Leo S. Whelan, (534 Page St., San Francisco, Calif.) was at the wheel during the attack and carried out every order of the master in a cool and expert manner, although for several minutes the gunfire was so heavy that the master had to give his orders by hand motion. Whelan disregarded planes passing overhead, falling bombs, and heavy gunfire to watch the master's signals and to carry out orders.

"Cadet-Midshipman Lester G. Hammon, (care of Cisco Grove, Soda Springs, Calif.) Second Officer Joseph B. Gaier, (518 State St., Perth Amboy, N. J.) Ordinary Seaman John A. Larsen, (518 South Jefferson St., Hastings, Mich.) and Messman Jerome Reed, (349 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, Calif.) performed their assignments at the guns in a cool and efficient manner. Gaier also assisted in spotting and identifying enemy planes."

The report of the NATHANIEL CURRIER'S master, Captain D. W. Hassell, says:

"The ship handled extremely well, at times exceeding the designed r.p.m. of main engines. All orders to the engine room were executed with dispatch and the greatest co-

operation. I believe the reason we escaped casualties among the personnel and damage to the ship was on account of the volume and accuracy of the barrage put up, also the maneuvering of the vessel. I am proud to have commanded this crew, who, although never having been under fire before, behaved like veterans and lived up to the highest traditions."

The NATHANIEL CURRIER was launched at Permanente Metals Corporation shipyard No. 1, Richmond, Calif., on March 11, 1943. She is operated by R. A. Nicol & Co., of New York, N. Y.

### GOOD NAMES, GOOD SHIPS

New Liberty ships are to carry the names of twelve American newspaper and radio correspondents who have lost their lives in this war. Two of these men were on the staff of THE TIMES. Byron Darnton died on the New Guinea front a year ago this week, in an accident attendant upon the kind of action he was covering. Robert P. Post was one of a group of correspondents taken on a raid over Wilhelmshaven last February. His plane did not return. Death came to other correspondents in various ways. They had risked it gladly to bridge the gap between the fighter and the people at home . . .

As much as anything that man builds, a ship stands for courage and a sense of duty. In dangerous waters and under perilous skies a good ship holds its course. All those who follow loyally the trade of gathering and presenting news will think it fitting that these ships should carry the names of "Barney" Darnton, "Bob" Post and the others. May the ships all come safe to port, but whether safety is their fate or not may they, in the brave spirit of the old Greek epitaph, still set sail.

*Editorial, Oct. 21, 1943, N. Y. Times*

Pacific Railroad.

Three seamen and a Navy passenger lost their lives in the torpedoing.

The M. H. DE YOUNG did not sink but was left immobile in the water by the blow the torpedo struck. A Navy vessel was ordered to the scene and the stricken Liberty Ship to an island post. The MARK HOPKINS then was instructed to proceed to the island. There she lifted the M. H. DE YOUNG'S cargo and removed her surviving crew.

Two Liberty Ships, both built in California and bearing the names of prominent pioneer Californians who were intense and unyielding rivals, ironically proved comrades in a recent torpedoing drama in the South Pacific, the War Shipping Administration disclosed today.

Survivors of the attack on the M. H. DE YOUNG, named after the co-founder of the San Francisco Chronicle, have been landed at a home port by the MARK HOPKINS, named for the capitalist who helped build the Central

## Service at Cathedral for Merchant Seamen

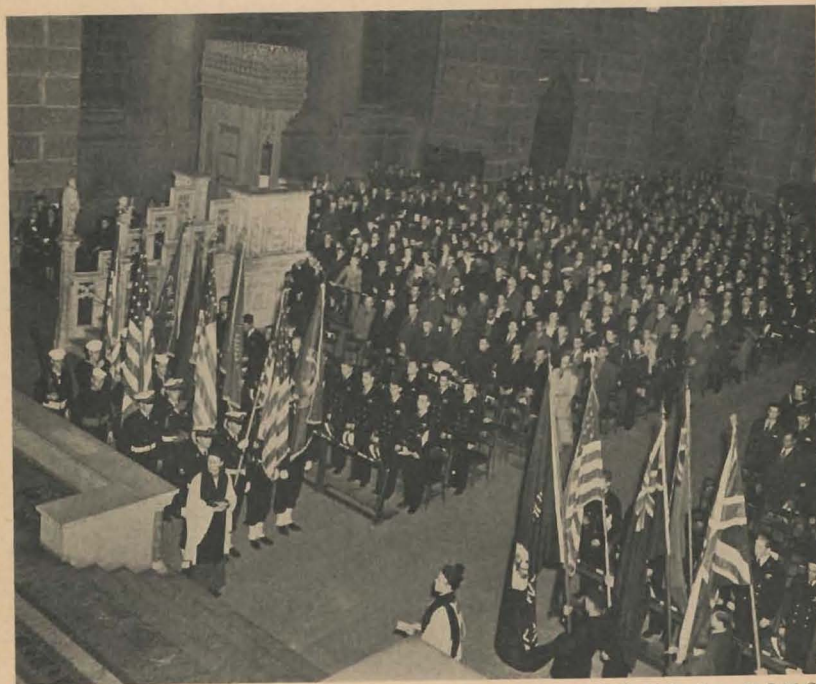
MERCHANT seamen of the United Nations were honored in a service of prayer and pageantry in Sunday, November 7th at 4 P.M. at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The Right Rev. William T. Manning, D.D., Bishop of New York, presided and the Rev. Harold H. Kelley, D.D., Director of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York preached.

Sixteen consuls of the United Nations were in the procession, trustees of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, and 1,025 seaman cadets from the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, the N. Y. State Maritime Academy at Fort Schuyler, the Maritime Training Stations at Sheepshead Bay, Hoffman Island, and the Graduate School, Four hundred merchant seamen from ships of the United States, United Kingdom, Denmark, Greece, Poland, Yugo-

slavia, China, France, Norway, the Netherlands, and others nations marched in the procession, also representatives of seamen's welfare agencies, clubs and canteens.

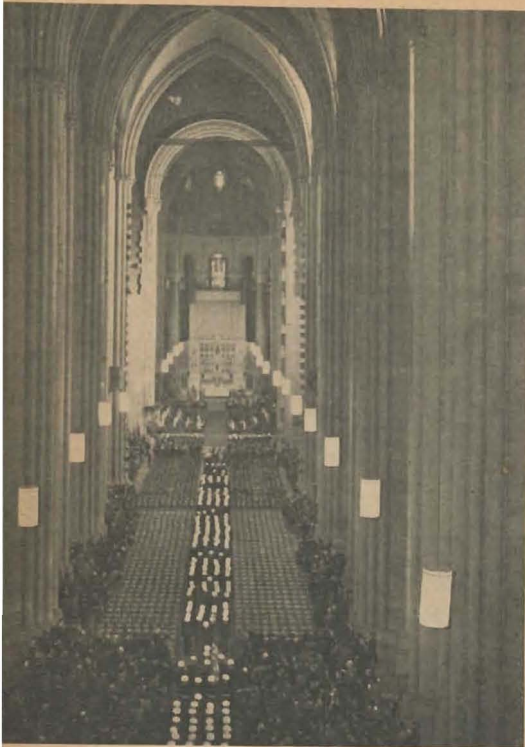
Bishop Manning blessed the 34 massed flags of the nations fighting the Axis, and invoked God's blessing and protection upon merchant seamen. He prayed for "a just and lasting peace for all mankind" to come out of the current conflict and praised the great role of merchant seamen in attaining that goal.

Dr. Kelley illustrated his sermon by the Cathedral itself, which, like a ship, is a multiplicity of arches. One pillar represents military organization; the other pillar industrial, and the crown and keystone of this living Victory arch are the merchant ships and seamen. "Without our merchant seamen," he declared, "Guadalcanal might now be a powerful Japanese air base and



*Photo by Lieut. C. C. Richardson, U.S.M.S.*

Massing of the colors at the Service held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on November 7th in honor of the Merchant Marine.



Australia a Japanese outpost. Russia might not have fought her marvelous campaign for freedom had not merchant seamen from the United States, Great Britain, Norway, Holland and Belgium been courageous and skillful enough to brave the heat of the Persian Gulf and the terrible wintry runs to Murmansk with supplies. Truly global has been the task of merchant seamen in this vast war. If they as a keystone had pulverized, the living arch would have collapsed and we would be rubble under the Nazi heel."

White caps down the nave of the Cathedral. Cadets from the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point march to their seats at the Service on November 7th for the Merchant Navies of the United Nations.

*Photo by Lieut. C. C. Richardson, U.S.M.S.*

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*Acme News Pictures*  
**A REHEARSAL OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS ABOARD A BRITISH WARSHIP**  
 A group of duffle-coated members of the ship's company unlimbering their voices while off-duty as a seagull listens politely.

## Christmas at Sea and Ashore

THROUGH the centuries, the symbol of Christmas has been the Christmas tree with its star shining "skyward and seaward".

Although New York's waterfront is dimmed out, and the Institute's 13-story building at 25 South Street no longer glows with lights to greet incoming ships, the friendly lights within still shine a real welcome to thousands of merchant seamen.

At sea, the Liberty ships and C-1, C-2 and C-3 freighters, and transports and the tankers laden with precious oil are ploughing their way through the seven seas under the ever-brilliant stars. Some men are alert for submarine and bomber attack, and those off-duty are dreaming of home and family and Christmas gifts around the tree.

Thanks to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, about 7,000 seamen on Christmas Day both afloat and ashore will enjoy the pleasure and surprise of opening a Christmas gift—made possible by generous gifts of friends who painstakingly filled special boxes with good things. Thousands of these boxes were placed by the Institute's ship visitors aboard ships which will be on the high seas on Dec. 25th, to be opened Christmas morning.

Ashore in New York, another 1,500 seamen will sit down to a turkey dinner at the Institute on Christmas Day and about 1,300 other seamen in marine hospitals will be visited by Institute chaplains and given Christmas boxes.

Throughout the Institute, in the various club rooms, and also at the Janet Roper Club uptown, entertainment is being planned, made possible by gifts to the HOLIDAY FUND.

### For a Sailor

We always hung a silver star  
 At the top of the Christmas tree,  
 He used to place it there himself  
 Before he went to sea.  
 When Christmas skies are filled  
 with stars

Above the ocean's rim,  
 Let one, high up, shine very bright,  
 Especially for him.

By Alice Hartich.

*Reprinted from The New York Times.*



*Courtesy, Socony-Vacuum Oil Co.*

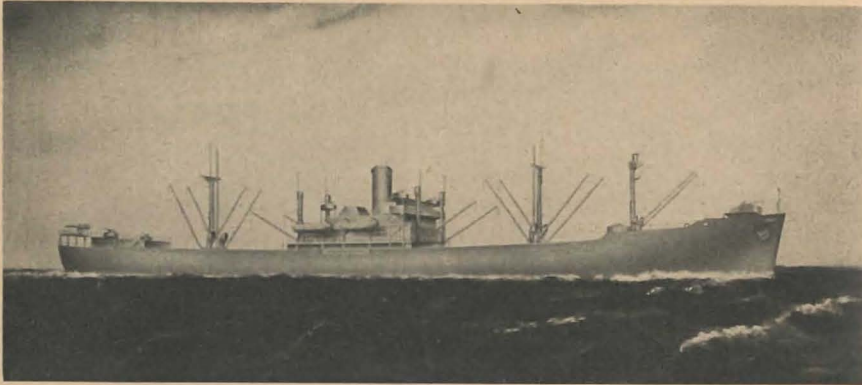
From the painting by Charles Rosner

From Christmas to Christmas all year round, day and night, the Institute's services to seafarers goes on.

Please send your contributions to the Seamen's Church Institute of N. Y., 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y., designated "HOLIDAY FUND."



## Victory Ship



The new Victory type ship, designed by the Maritime Commission as an improvement over the Liberty Ship, here shown in artist's preview sketch, will be a faster vessel, with finer hull lines and equipped with turbine-gear propulsion machinery of more than twice the horsepower of the reciprocating steam engine used in the Liberty.

Contracts for construction of 411 Victory Ships have already been let and mass production is expected to be under way by the fall of 1943. Deliveries are expected by the spring or summer of 1944.

	VICTORY	LIBERTY
Length .....	455 feet	441 feet, six inches
Beam .....	62 feet	57 feet
Deadweight tonnage .....	10,800	10,800
Cargo tonnage .....	9,146	9,146
Engine horsepower .....	6,000 or more	2,500
Propulsion power .....	steam turbine-gear	steam reciprocating
Decks .....	8	2
Speed .....	15 knots +	11 knots

### LIEF ERICSON

LIEF ERICSON is one of five colorful names assigned to Liberty Ships under construction at the shipyard of the Delta Shipbuilding Company, Inc., New Orleans, La., and announced recently by the Maritime Commission.

Ericson was born in Iceland in the Tenth Century. A son of Erik the Red, who was a son of one of the original settlers of Iceland and the discoverer of Greenland, Ericson spent the summer of the year 999 in Norway studying at the court of King Olaf Trygvason where he was converted to Christianity. On commission of the King, he returned home to Greenland the following summer to preach the Christian faith. En route he was blown off his course and sighted land in a new region. Because of the grapevines he saw he called the new

Greatest advantage of the Victory Ship over the Liberty will be increased speed. The Liberty has a speed of a little more than 11 knots, while the Victory is designed for 15 knots or more, for faster convoys and to challenge the U-boat menace.

The new ship will not be an over-all welding job, but will be riveted in certain parts of the main structure.

The general specifications of the Victory Ship compared to the Liberty Ship are as follows:

country Vinland. From descriptions of the journey and observations recorded, historians believe his country to have been New England or Nova Scotia, and as a result Leif Ericson is considered by many to have been the real discoverer of America. A few years later expeditions left Greenland to explore the new land and make settlements, but they were forced to leave after three years because of attacks from what are believed now to have been Indians.

A statue of Leif Ericson, hailing him as the first European discoverer of America, was presented to Iceland by the United States in 1930 during celebration of the one thousandth anniversary of the Althing, or legislative body. The statue, executed by Asmundur Sveinsson, stands in a square in Reykjavik.

## Wainwright's Son Helped Save Bombed Cargo Ship\*

By Walter Hamshar

EDITOR'S NOTE: Captain Jonathan Wainwright used to visit the Apprentices' Room at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York when he was a cadet studying to become an officer in the American Merchant Marine. His cousin, Col. J. Mayhew Wainwright, is a member of the Institute's Board of Managers.

Captain Jonathan M. Wainwright 5th, master of a merchant ship which was lost in a bombing attack during the battle of Salerno, related yesterday how a few days after his narrow escape in the bombing of his ship he headed a party of volunteers who saved another bombed and abandoned merchant vessel. He supervised the salvaging of the cargo of gasoline and ammunition and then piloted the ship across the Mediterranean although there was imminent danger that it would fall apart at any moment.

Captain Wainwright is the son of Lieutenant General Jonathan M. Wainwright 4th, leader of the last-ditch defense of Bataan and now a Japanese prisoner of war.

In an interview at the Recruitment and Manning Office of the War Shipping Administration, 19 Trinity Place, Captain Wainwright said his ship was hit by a bomb while it was standing by for orders in the Gulf of Salerno. Hurtling through the boat deck and mess room, the bomb exploded in a lower deck, starting a fire in a hold containing high octane gasoline.

Within a few minutes flames were shooting as high as the ship's foremast, Captain Wainwright said. The explosion had put the ship's firefighting apparatus out of commission and the rapid headway being made by the flames forced him to order "abandon ship."

Later, during a lull in the fire, he and Lieutenant Joseph G. Switzer, commander of the ship's naval armed guard, reboarded the vessel and were able to save several Navy gunners and crew members who had been too injured to abandon the ship, he said.

After burning all night the ship blew up. Captain Wainwright and members of his crew were taken aboard other ships to await a comparatively safe trip to the United States as passengers and at the same time draw full pay.

Two days later Captain Wainwright was asked to take command of another merchant vessel which had been aban-

doned after a bomb had blown up most of the rear of the ship. Despite heavy damage it had not sunk, although there were thirty feet of water in the engine room.

With nine members of his crew, who also volunteered to postpone their trips home, Captain Wainwright boarded the ship and for several days assisted in unloading as much of the cargo of ammunition and gasoline that could be saved. Twice during the unloading Nazi bombers attacked the helpless vessel, but they were driven off by American aircraft.

The cargo finally salvaged, the damaged ship was taken in tow by a naval vessel. Throughout a low trip through submarine-infested waters, the waterlogged freighter had to undergo the additional strain of heavy seas and high winds that threatened to break it up at any moment. But the ship was safely delivered to a North African port.

Captain Wainwright emphasized that only the constant co-operation of the nine volunteers enabled the ship to get through. They were Charles Fox, third engineer; John E. Warner, radio operator; T. Huffman, chief steward; Orville Holmes, boatswain; Santiago Candea, chief cook; Everette Hensley, utility man; Donald Maxwell, messman; William Souminen, deck engineer, and Angel Romero, fireman and water tender.

The R. M. O. completed yesterday repatriation of the volunteers.

Captain Wainwright lives at 579 Sixty-first Street, Brooklyn. Instead of following an Army career, he joined the merchant marine in 1933 as a seaman. He said yesterday he attained his master's rank "the hard way." He sailed with the United States Lines and Grace Lines before getting his present berth with the American South African Lines.

\*Reprinted from the N. Y. Herald Tribune by special permission.

Does anyone have a silver coffee urn which is not in use? Quantities of this beverage are consumed daily at the Janet Roper Club. If you live in New York City, we'll gladly send a messenger for the coffee urn. Please write or phone our Department of Special Services, 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y., BO 9-2710.

## Storm Damages Merchant Ships \*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Another indication that the age-old hazards of the sea are no respecter of persons, places, or wars, was evident when on October 27th a raging north-east storm damaged shipping on the Eastern Atlantic seaboard. One of the freighters, the JAMES LONG-STREET, buried itself in the sandy shoals off Sandy Hook. The crew were all taken safely to shore and later the ship was refloated.

A battle against raging seas, with the lives of 71 crewmen of the United Nations cargo ship James Longstreet, at stake was being waged today off Sandy Hook, the Third Naval District announced.

The 7,916-ton vessel — one of four grounded by the northeast gale in sea approaches to New York harbor—sent up flares and SOS calls for help about dawn. It had been driven against a reef, its radio reported, and was rapidly breaking up.

Coast Guardsmen, already beleaguered by cries for help from other ships in distress, dispatched emergency squads to Sandy Hook. A line was shot aboard the ship and preparations were made to attempt a rescue of the crew in breeches buoys.

### Other Ships Periled

Meantime, another vessel, the F. J. Luckenbach, 7,861 tons, was grounded near Belmar, N. J. Seven of its crew were brought ashore in breeches buoys, but the ship was believed in safe condition.

A third ship, the Exilona, 4,991 tons, was reported in similar condition off Sandy Hook, and a fourth vessel, the Fort Douglas, 7,100 tons, managed to free itself after being grounded near Fort Hancock.

Third Naval District Headquarters said no serious injuries in any of the strandings had been reported.

All four ships were driven aground during the height of the gale.

The James Longstreet, resting on sandy bottom, was being pounded by huge waves that threw clouds of spray aloft.

### Crew Visible from Land

Members of its crew could be seen from shore, standing along the rail and on deck, waiting to be taken off. First to ride the buoy to safety was a signalman who brought help to the ship by flashlight.

Later, signal flags, flares and the radio brought Coast Guard crews from half

a dozen Jersey stations, as well as fire companies, nine ambulances and three mobile canteens of the Red Cross.

By late morning, the wind, which reached gale velocity of 75 miles an hour at its peak, had subsided, also the torrential rains which accompanied it.

### SHEEPSHEAD BAY GRADUATE ONE OF FEW TANKER COLLISION SURVIVORS

A case of last being first and the virtue of remaining cool and deliberate under extremely hazardous conditions probably saved the life of Robert E. Gehrke, recent graduate from this Station, but he would be the first to admit that the element of luck played an important part.

Gehrke was a member of the crew of one of the two vessels which recently drew front page headlines by colliding off the East Coast. Of the 116 members of both crews, only 28 survived. Gehrke was the first of the 28 to reach New York after the catastrophe.

Just before midnight, Oct. 20, Gehrke climbed out of his bunk on the tanker on which he was a fireman to stand his 12 to 4 watch. His ship, traveling in ballast, at that moment crashed into the side of a smaller tanker filled with gasoline, spraying flaming fuel over both ships and the surrounding water.

Grabbing his life jacket, Gehrke went over the stern. He had difficulties in putting on his jacket while struggling in the water and it is to this that he attributes his survival.

The delay put him some distance behind two other swimming seamen and he saw them caught in the current and disappear into the flames, felt the heat of the flames in his face and then saw the fire blow away in another direction as the wind changed.

Gehrke swam around a bit and then saw a burning lifeboat. Clinging to the side with one hand, he splashed water on the flames with the other until only a rim of smouldering fire encircled the gunwhale.

After climbing aboard, he saw four others in the water and dived in to rescue them. One of the men began to extinguish the low flames still burning in one part of the boat, but Gehrke pointed out that the light would be almost certain to attract airplanes. Eventually they were picked up by a naval craft.

From Heaving Line, Nov. 6, 1943.

## Seamen Love To Sing

around the Piano at the  
JANET ROPER CLUB



Miss Elsie Arnold and Miss Bobby Barrantine of the musical play "OKLAHOMA" entertain some of the seamen.



An apple a day may not guarantee good health, but it's a mighty pleasant pastime, judging by the way the apples in the bowl on the snack bar at the Janet Roper Club disappear so quickly when a crowd of merchant seamen gather. Does any reader live on a farm where there are plenty of apples? It's difficult to get apples either in the wholesale or retail markets today. If you can spare a box or barrel of this fruit, kindly send to the Janet Roper Club, 3 East 67th Street.

ALSO, we would appreciate homemade cookies for our COOKIE JARS, in the Seamen's Lounge and at the Janet Roper Club.

Miss Grace Castagnetta, concert pianist, entertained at the Club.  
George Granberry, now a ship's purser, was formerly Miss Castagnetta's piano instructor.

DONNA DAE, singer, and TOM WARING, song writer and FRED WARING'S PENNSYLVANIANS entertain women.

Miss Helen Helwig (secretary to Fred Waring); Mr. and Mrs. Carl Dalbey, whose 11-year old son was a radio operator in the American Merchant Marine, and who was lost at sea, gave a special birthday party in memory of their son at the Janet Roper Club on October 22nd.

Photos by Marie Higginson



\*From the Journal-American, Oct. 27, 1943.



## Thanksgiving Day at 25 South Street

SUNNY skies and balmy weather and news of Allied victories helped to make Thanksgiving Day at the Institute especially cheerful. The observance of the holiday really started on Thanksgiving Eve, when pumpkin and mince pies were served in the Seamen's Lounge, and seamen complimented the Institute chef on baking pies "like mother used to make."

At the Janet Roper Club, seamen were entertained on Thanksgiving afternoon by Private Winston Ross (brother of Lanny Ross) who sang, and Miss Adelaide Abbott, singer from "Lady in the Dark", and Mrs. Frieda Ross who played concert music.

Chicken salad, mince and pumpkin pies and coffee were served and greatly enjoyed by the seamen. A Swedish seaman who turned out to be a former concert pianist, entertained during the evening.

Chapel services were held on Thanksgiving morning at 10:30, and the seamen enjoyed singing the familiar hymns of praise and thanks for the harvest. Almost 1500 sat down to a turkey dinner in the cafeteria and officers' dining room. The men spoke most appreciatively of the delicious turkey which was served with mashed potatoes, turnip, peas, cranberry sauce, and a choice of pies for dessert.

A group of women volunteers presided at the cigarette table and wished each seaman a "Happy Thanksgiving" and presented him his favorite brand of cigarettes or pipe tobacco. One of our faithful volunteers, Miss Francis Seeley, who is about the same height and build as Mother Roper, was frequently greeted "Hello, Mother!"

as the men passed her table.

Following the dinner, movies were shown in the auditorium: "So Proudly We Hail" starring Paulette Goddard, Claudette Colbert and Veronica Lake, and a technicolor feature, "Mardi Gras". The Institute's Director, the Rev. Harold H. Kelley, D. D. addressed the seamen briefly and asked for a show of hands as to how many were here last Thanksgiving. Out of about 800 men, there were only about ten hands. When Dr. Kelley asked how many were in the South Pacific a year ago there were a few more hands, but when he asked how many were in Africa last Thanksgiving, there was a much larger showing of hands, and how they laughed when Dr. Kelley commented: "Things were very busy in Africa last year!" Asking how many spent last Thanksgiving at their own homes, only a half dozen or so had had that privilege, but when he asked, "How many were at sea?", nearly all the remaining hands went up, a salty demonstration of the way of a ship in the sea in taking men away from home.

In the evening, the Auditorium was again filled with seamen who enjoyed the movie, "Varsity Show" starring Dick Powell, Priscilla and Rosemary Lane and Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians.

Special hospitality was extended to 116 U. S. Navy gunners who are members of the Armed Guard aboard merchant ships, and to 113 Coast Guardsmen studying in the Merchant Marine School to be coxswains and boatswains mates.

This Thanksgiving Day dinner and entertainment were made possible by the gifts of thoughtful friends to our HOLIDAY FUND.

## Shipmates Ashore

THERE'S salt in the air each Saturday at Station WNEW. Add a dash of international good will and you have "Shipmates Ashore", a colorful British-American variety show presented for six Saturdays before an audience of merchant seamen of the United Nations in the Auditorium of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, and in London's Merchant Navy Club. The program is short-waved by the BBC to merchant ships on the seven seas. From this side of the Atlantic, Paula Stone, able Master of Ceremonies, carries on, and in London, Doris Hare, "sweetheart of the British Merchant Navy" is "emcee."

First of the series was held on October 16th and Ethel Waters, singing star of "Laugh Time" entertained her maritime audience. After the broadcast she very grac-

iously sang extra numbers in response to enthusiastic applause from the seamen. A British seaman who had been torpedoed was interviewed on the program, and from London an American merchant seaman sent greetings to his family here. Jack Pearl and Harry Green, stars of the current comedy "All for All" amused the audience with their comic talk. Margo, star of the moving picture "Behind the Rising Sun" sang, and Merle Pitt and his orchestra played.

Other programs in the two-way program included Arthur Tracy, "The Street Singer"; Miss Madeleine Carroll, "Queen of Hearts of the Merchant Seamen of the United Nations" who gave up her career as a top ranking film star to turn all her tremendous energy and talent to war work for the men of the Allied Merchant Fleets. Miss Carroll



"SHIPMATES ASHORE" — OCTOBER 30, 1943

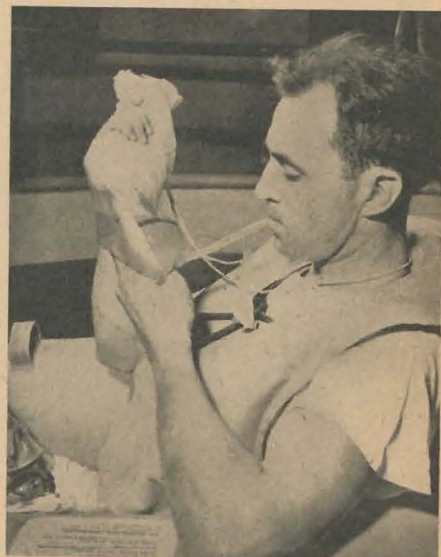
BBC/WNEW exchange series "Shipmates Ashore" held at The Seamen's Church Institute for United Nations sailors and merchant seamen with Paula Stone, actress and radio commentator as master of ceremonies, from New York. Guest Stars: Jerry Lester, stage and radio comedy star; Mary Healy, singing star; Jerry Wayne, radio and night club singer.

spoke to her mother, via short wave, who lives in Bromley, Kent, and Second Officer Pat Gordon of the British Merchant Navy who recently received the Distinguished Service Medal from His Majesty, King George the VI, at Buckingham Palace, also spoke to his mother, who, by a nice coincidence, also lives in Bromley, Kent! On another program Lady Hardwicke (wife of Sir Cedric Hardwicke, actor) and Roland Young did a skit and Gloria Blake sang. Gertrude Lawrence and Dick Brown entertained on November 13th and on November 20th Miss Sara Ann McCabe sang. But the chief interest was in hearing from England an eight-year old girl, Sylvia Thornton, sing "I'm Dreaming Of a White Christmas" for her brother, 17-year old Norris Arthur Thornton, a British seaman from Hull who is now in the Marine Hospital at Ellis Island after being torpedoed.

## Sea Water to Drink

JOSEPH N. SHANER, Pharmacist's Mate 2nd class, illustrates the main step in the conversion of sea water into potable drinking water by the process perfected at the Naval Medical Research Institute, Bethesda, Md. From beginning to end, the procedure takes about 45 minutes, although an experienced operator can do it in less than a half hour. Equipment consists of four plastic filters, but a two-bag method also is practicable if each is equipped with a filter. It is the latter method which is illustrated here.

The water is safe to drink. It possesses a sulphur taste, but, in this respect, tastes very much like some spring waters. Note that the bags cannot get away from the "survivor", being secured by cords that fit around the neck. Two young naval officers perfected the process: Lieut. William V. Consolazio and Lieut. (jg) C. R. Spealman.



Official U. S. Navy Photo, from O. W. I.

## SIMPLE HANDSHAKE DELIVERS RE-BORN NORMANDIE TO NAVY

Less than 22 months from the day that fire and water combined in an elemental fury to destroy her forever, the former French luxury liner Normandie, floating high and even in her North River berth, today rejoined the U. S. Navy.

Climaxing an engineering miracle of salvage costing \$4,500,000 to date, the ceremonies were marked by none of the speeches, music and parades which marked her first voyage as Queen of the Atlantic in 1935.

Instead, with 700 workmen putting finishing touches on compartments which require \$15,000,000 in new fittings, the re-born U.S.S. Lafayette was given over to Navy jurisdiction with a handshake.

Exchange of the 83,000-ton vessel, which capsized at Pier 88, North River, after a fire on Feb. 9, 1942, was made to Capt. H. V. McKittrick, of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, by Capt. Bernard E. Manseau, salvage supervisor for the Bureau of Ships.

"Capt. McKittrick," he said, "the salvage of the U. S. S. Lafayette is completed after 18 months of unflagging work. That she is floating again on an even keel is a tribute to the skill and the perseverance of all those who worked on her."

## Book Reviews

### WHO DARE TO LIVE

Narrative Poem by Frederick B. Watt,  
Lieut. Commander, R.C.N.V.R.

The Macmillan Co. 1943—\$1.25

Here is a tale, told in excellent rhymed verse, of a typical freighter captain of the Canadian Merchant Navy, and of his experiences sailing ships in convoy, and of his family life ashore. The author, in pursuing his duties as Naval Boarding Officer, has met many such captains and understands their problems, their hopes, and their dreams. The poem is a beautiful tribute to the men who sail the Merchant Fleet from the men who escort and guard the convoys. Here is a sample of the simple, fluid verse:

"I have loved ships too much, perhaps,  
For my own good.  
God help us sentimental chaps  
When steel and wood  
And faithful craftsmanship can so con-  
trive  
To work their spell,  
Until that alchemy becomes alive  
In you as well."

The author dedicates the book to two of his maritime friends who are listed as missing. A most suitable Christmas gift for seamen and landmen alike.

M. D. C.

### OUR NAVY, A FIGHTING TEAM

By Taussig and Cope

Whittlesey House. 1943—\$2.50

The backbone of a modern fighting fleet, according to the authors, is the strongest and most powerful type of battleship. This backbone must be supported by cruisers and destroyers which operate on the surface, by submarines which operate on and under the surface, and by airplane carriers with their land planes and airplane tenders with their sea planes. It was when the battleship became the nucleus of the various task organizations in the Southwest Pacific that the tide of battle turned in our favor.

Designed especially for Navy indoctrination courses, this book has been written entirely by high-ranking Naval officers, each having held a command of the type of ship he describes. Thus there is given a complete picture of the Navy as a united force with tremendous striking power. There are also, besides these factual descriptions, many action anecdotes of World War II.

OUR NAVY is well illustrated with 25 photographs.

I. M. A.

### PRIMER OF CELESTIAL NAVIGATION

By John Favill

Cornell Maritime Press \$2.00

The Author is not a navigator by profession, but has taken up navigation as

a hobby, and became deeply interested and fascinated by the subject. Because of this fascination, which is usually lost by the professional navigator after a few years of practice, the author has produced a book remarkably clear, sufficiently complete and with a touch which makes the book interesting to the student, arousing his desire to learn more than just that which is necessary to know in order to work navigation problems by a set formula. Three methods of determining Longitude are covered, Marcq Saint-Hilaire, H. O. 211 and H. O. 214, the latter two being short cut methods. Dead Reckoning and the Sailings are also well covered.

Lieut. Roland Harrison, U.S.C.G.R.  
Instructor, S.C.I.  
Merchant Marine School

## CENTENNIAL FUND

The year 1944 will mark the Centennial of the incorporation of the Institute. As part of the celebration and to honor the event, the Board of Managers will ask for special contributions to pay off the balance of our building debt which is now \$100,000.

In anticipation of our Centennial, the Institute will be happy to receive special Centennial contributions during the current year as well as during 1944. We trust, however, that these gifts will in no manner cause a reduction in projected gifts to our Holiday and Ways and Means Funds for 1943, and which are still urgently needed.

As gifts to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York are deductible from net income up to 15% in any one year, the approximate cost in actual money to the donor, for example, of a \$500.00 gift, under Federal and New York State income taxes,

on a net income of \$10,000 is \$335.00  
on a net income of \$20,000 is \$240.00  
on a net income of \$50,000 is \$145.00

## BENEFIT REPORT

The net proceeds of our annual Fall Benefit (this year we had a performance of "Connecticut Yankee") were about \$3,400. We deeply appreciate the loyal and generous response of all who supported the Benefit.

# SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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