



# the LOOKOUT

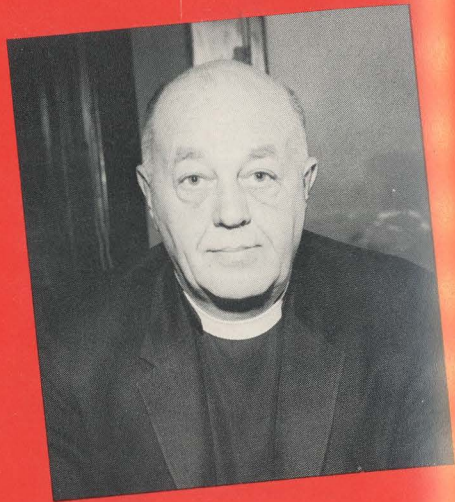
SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



CHRISTMAS 1964



## CHRISTMAS 1964



*"How bright appears the morning star,  
With mercy beaming from afar."*

People wonder sometimes if the Christmas star still shines. Has its light gone out? Are there so many satellites, telestars, rockets now in orbit that the Christmas star cannot be found in the skies? Has an anti-missile missile knocked it out of the Heavens?

A star gives its light by reflection. If you want to see the Christmas star, look for it where its light is reflected. Look around you and you can see it in the fight against disease: cancer, multiple sclerosis, polio and all the others. You can see it in the fight against slums, in the struggle for civil rights, in the war against poverty. You will see it in the dedication and concern of every church, in countless private agencies, local, national and international, whose concern is with some aspect of social welfare and human betterment. You will see it in the lives of millions of human beings who care enough to give something of themselves to help their brother man; men and women not afraid to nurture a sense of mutual responsibility.

You see, the Christmas star gets its light from the Son of God and its reflection shines in the hearts and lives of men. Satellites and sputniks couldn't put it out. The darker the night, the more brightly it shines. And wise men will always see it, turn towards it, and follow it.

*"How bright appears the morning star,  
With mercy beaming from afar;  
The host of heaven rejoices."*

To men of good will of every race  
and clime the world over go our  
prayers and our heartfelt best  
wishes at this holy season.

*"On His day we give you greeting,  
In His name we wish you peace,  
With His favor may God bless you,  
In His love your joy increase."*





Not a Christmas goes by that I don't remember the most unforgettable Yule of them all. It occurred aboard our C-2 cargo ship, the *S.S. Nathan Eliot*, as we were crossing the Atlantic one bleak December. Six days out of Sandy Hook we were enveloped by that nemesis of the sea—fog. The gray mist swirled around us in soft, white shrouds isolating us from the rest of the world. The only sound one could hear was the ship's intermittent whistle of warning.

But it was Christmas Eve! This was no time to worry about the fog outside of the usual precautionary measures. There was food to prepare; a piping hot feast of fowl and baked ham with all the trimmings. The officers' mess was ably trimmed and decorated by our two Filipino messmen. Candles, wreaths, holly and table settings of red and green gave it a festive air. The chief steward was prowling through the storeroom peering into mysterious boxes for his best beverages and the cooks were the happiest of all.

Ah-h-h, the aroma was something to talk about. It wasn't a spic-and-span galley. It was Mom's kitchen, the ranch chuck wagon, and Pierre's French Cuisine all rolled into one. Down in the engine room the first assistant engineer was humming a carol as he worked on his daily log. The wipers, those much-abused denizens of the black gang, were revelling, for theirs was the lightest of work. And there was little sleep tonight in the seamen's quarters. A tired squeeze box and an equally tired guitar were exploring the melodies of the Yule carefully, but delightfully.

As for myself, I was out on deck for a breather after struggling to decorate the coffee urn with several strings of lights. We had overlooked a tree; how or why I shall never know, but I suspect a pre-Christmas outing ashore had something to do with it. Thus the coffee urn had to do double duty. However, it made an admirable tree, with the lights reflecting brilliantly in its highly polished surface.



On the shelves under it were a few presents surreptitiously placed there by various members of the crew. I knew that the tie-clasps, rings, carved napkin holders, and other craftwork represented many hours of hard but pleasurable work. The gay colored wrappings appeared out of nowhere. The galley crew saw to it that chains of popcorn and iced trimmed cookies were in abundance. Yes indeed, we might be short on the luxury end of the holiday, but we were happy.

I certainly wish I could end this little narrative right here by telling you that the captain and the chief engineer were holding their "championship" cribbage finals, or that the crew found time to catch up on odds and ends. But I can't. For at that moment I heard it. Then it was heard on the bridge. Like an invisible wireless it summoned most of the crew outside.

It was the whistle of another ship somewhere off to our starboard. Again and again we heard it and our own whistle answered. Then it ceased.

After five long minutes we heard nothing more, and we were worried for fog is treacherous with sound. It appeared that we were once again alone with not a sound to be heard except that of our ship knifing through the water. But that other ship had to be out there somewhere. In one swift moment our fears were realized. Something had happened to that ship!

By now the radio operator was sweating out signal after signal. The

# HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SAVED US

Two ships nearly collide in heavy fog on Christmas Eve—only the sounds of Christmas carols pierce the fog to warn one approaching ship of the presence of another ship off starboard.

skipper, no longer a genial host, appeared on the bridge in his great-coat. He paced endlessly and his brow wrinkled into a thousand little worries.

"Keep that whistle open, Mr. Briggs. Have all lookouts report to their stations. Cease all activities at once until further notice. I want all hands to stand by."

Short, terse words that meant "Goodbye, Christmas." Each engineer stood by the panel board and speaking tube awaiting orders. The deck gang hid themselves to all lookouts fore and aft and in the crow's nest. The cooks readied hot coffee and sandwiches for the long vigil. We knew we had to spot that ship before it was too late to avoid a collision.

Sparks kept in continual conference with the Old Man. The ship's position was perilously close to ours, he reported. Engine difficulties had affected her whistle—we had to find that ship first.

The purser stepped out of his Santa Claus costume and began checking his medical equipment. The only thing to bring Christmas back to us was a little musical powder box that the second mate had bought for his wife. Over and over again it kept repeating "Silent Night . . . Holy Night . . . Silent Night . . . Holy Night" until, from sheer exhaustion it was stilled. From time to time the captain would glance up at the fog half hoping the Star of Bethlehem would come to our rescue. At that moment, a strange thing occurred.

Up in the crow's nest, Neils Swenson placed a hand to his ear and looked to the starboard. At that pre-Christmas outing ashore I mentioned earlier, the Swede took, and administered (for the record), a terrific wallop from a Norwegian. It concerned an argument we would do well to leave alone. Needless to say, however, we carried Swede with loving tenderness back to the ship. So at this moment Neils

couldn't be sure of what he heard. Why report it to the bridge?

At the bow, Gerry cocked his head to one side with a look of utter disbelief on his face. Call the bridge? And be logged for such nonsense? Instead he kept looking and straining to see past the fog just off the starboard bow. Gerry had been sailing for over twelve years, torpedoed thrice in the last war, too. Perhaps he could attribute this to a headache because what he thought he heard—well, could you blame him for being doubtful?

But other members of the crew were hearing it now. I was beginning to think they were all a little bit off until I heard it, too. The bridge was alive with excitement. Flares were sent up with more frequency and Sparks was busier than ever. Our captain was wiring frantic instructions that he was standing by to give assistance but above all a collision must be averted. Positions must be in constant check at all times. We couldn't see their flares and, until now, we didn't hear them.

Off the starboard beam as clear as a bell now we heard a group of voices singing, "Hark! The Herald Angels sing! Glory to the new-born King! Peace on earth and mercy mild . . ." The voices were closer now and we were beginning to see their flares. Symbolically enough, they were red and green.

It was a good, great world again. Even the stars were making desperate attempts to penetrate the gloomy fog. We dispatched our engineers over to the stranded ship, and in the meantime, extended a Yule invitation to the crew via some of delicacies sent over by lifeboat.

In the officers' salon the two captains sat together and a special group from the ship visited us to sing carols. But of all they sang the most beautiful one was:

"Hark! The Herald Angels sing! Glory to the new-born King!"





**City of Ships!**  
**(O the black ships! O the fierce ships!**  
**O the beautiful sharp-bow'd steam-ships and sail-**  
**ships!)**  
**City of the world! (for all races are here,**  
**All the lands of the earth make contribution here)**  
**City of the sea! city of hurried and glittering tides!**  
**City whose gleeful tides continually rush or recede,**  
**whirling in and out with eddies and foam!**  
**City of wharves and stores—city of tall facades of**  
**marble and iron!**  
**Proud and passionate city—mettlesome, mad, ex-**  
**travagant city!**

Walt Whitman

## city of ships



Actor Robert Ryan in the Marine Museum

Clasping a trench coat about his 6'5" frame, the distinguished-looking gentleman climbed the stairs of SCI. He seemed oblivious to the smiles of recognition from seamen and employees. One man greeted him by name; he acknowledged warmly. With two other men carrying cameras, the seasoned star of screen and television, actor Robert Ryan, was "on location" posing for pictures in the blanket-mist of a gray November day. With his first glimpse of the thrilling view from the "flying bridge" 13 floors above South Street, Ryan exclaimed: "fantastic." Producer said: "This is great!" The cameraman said: "How about this for a great mood shot!" The wind tousled Ryan's graying hair. He didn't mind.

Actor Ryan and his associates were making still pictures to promote the documentary "City of Ships" which was shown on local NBC television, December 17. It was Ryan's assignment to narrate the one-hour color show, and although he described the work of the Institute while scenes of SCI were shown, he had never visited the Institute before. When he was invited to the Marine Museum to pose for pictures, he found the displays so interesting that for a moment or two the producer lost him in the maze of showcases.

The documentary which Ryan helped make the success that it was followed the harbor's activities from dawn to sundown and beyond, and in Ryan's words, "so important to us and yet so often unnoticed."

The memorable program opened on an aerial view of the waterfront—five hundred squares miles of water, one thousand square miles of land. Using film which had been taken in a research project lasting nearly three months, NBC had delivered a factual, well-organized chronicle of the ships and the people of the harbor, those who depend upon them and those who police them. It refused to gloss over the facts of obsolescence of port facilities, unemployment, threat of automation and high labor costs.

At one point in his commentary, Ryan said: "The electronic age has

been changing the pace of the harbor since the introduction of the time ball. New York's last one is atop the Seamen's Church Institute. It drops at exactly twelve o'clock released by an electric telegraph signal from the U.S. Naval Observatory." While his voice described our curiosity, viewers saw the ball in operation.

Further along in the program, actor Ryan began his comments on the Institute, while viewers saw seamen enjoying the services of the Institute. Ryan continued: "There's room for a social life in the harbor, too. The Seamen's Church Institute and similar clubs provide a haven for the sailor who shuns the bright lights of Broadway or the dubious charms of waterfront entertainment. The Institute began life in 1844 as a floating chapel. Shanghaiing was a common harbor problem then, but nobody ever had to shanghai seamen to the Institute. Today it's the world's largest shore center for merchant seamen of all nations, races and creeds. Here a visiting Mariner can get his three squares at reasonable prices. More than 800,000 meals a year are served to hungry tars. And movies, television, a library and athletic facilities are provided."

While he spoke, the camera focused on clean-cut young seamen passing through SCI's cafeteria. The next view showed a seaman lounging in his room, while Ryan commented: "You can get a dry bunk here, too . . . they've got 750 of them available."

The next brief but charming interval opened in the 5th floor Christmas Room while the camera closed in on a Woman's Council volunteer wrapping gifts included in SCI's boxes for men at sea and in hospitals on December 25. The seasonal colors of gift wrappings and the gay smocks worn by the volunteers provided a vibrant moment on the color screens. Simultaneously the narrator commented: "There's something about a sailor that brings out the mother in women. And women play a big part in the Institute's activities. For months now volunteers have been wrapping Christmas gifts for seamen in port



NBC camera crew visits International Seamen's Club

during the holidays and year 'round the gals work hard to make the Institute the proverbial home away from home."

The cameras moved rapidly from the Christmas room to the dance floor of the International Seamen's Club where seamen and hostesses were gyrating in a fast "twist." Ryan continued: "But home was never like this. . . . Twice weekly the Institute provides a place for a sea-weary sailor to kick up his heels and dance."

With that scene, the SCI sequence faded, and the program went on to discuss the development of the Battery in the days of Peter Minuet. Still photographs provided the video here, and SCI provided one of the views of South Street as it appeared in 1890.

A viewing audience in the millions listened as Robert Ryan brought the hour to a conclusion with a discussion of the outward signs of the port's problems—outdated and dilapidated docks, obsolete facilities, threat of automation to seamen and longshoremen, prohibitive labor costs—but ended optimistically with some excellent narrative about the ambitious face-lifting project for the port as proposed by the Department of Marine and Aviation.

The final seconds of the program were filled with Ryan's reciting Walt Whitman's "City of Ships!"





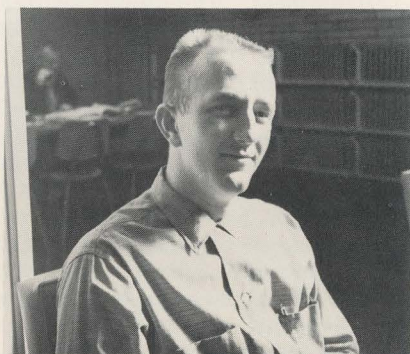
**MILTON MORT**  
Pacific, California

This tall seaman, veteran of his first trip, expects to be hospitalized on Christmas Day to have some corrective work completed. Milt first heard about SCI while talking to other seamen at the Union hall, and finds the Institute a pleasant place while waiting out an assignment on a transport home to California. Just 20, seaman Mort was a highwire circus performer before he followed the sea. Undoubtedly he will receive one of SCI's Christmas boxes while he recuperates in the hospital on Dec. 25.



**JAMES POWERS**  
Methil, Scotland

Nimble, peppery Scotsman, James Powers is as bright as a new dime at 73. An apprentice seaman by 1909, "Scottie" has sailed the seven seas while making his home at SCI off and on since the building opened in 1913. He remembers Dr. Archibald Mansfield, Superintendent of the early SCI. "Scottie" will most likely spend the holiday with his half-sister and her children in Methil, Scotland, but observed after taking a deep puff on his pipe: "Takes a bit o' money, tho'."



**MARK BENNETT**  
Ocean View, Maryland

"I begin my exams for 3rd engineer next Wednesday; if I pass, God willin', I'll be home for Christmas in Maryland with my wife and little boy." Luckier than most, seaman Bennett has spent Christmas at home in four years of shipping. "We Bennetts always enjoy big, old-fashioned family gatherings with sisters, brothers, grandparents—totaling 18—at Christmas. I sure miss it when I can't make it home."

**JOSEPH SCHINDLER**  
Stuttgart, Germany

Strapping, 17-year-old Schindler expects to be mid-Atlantic this Christmas, the second time in his two years shipping out. Although reluctant to talk much about it, he admitted that he'll miss like heck the traditional, old-fashioned and gregarious family observance of Christmas, the kind with wax candles, green trees, and an Advent wreath. While awaiting his next assignment, Joe perfects his billiards techniques in SCI's game room.



## WHERE WILL THEY BE ON CHRISTMAS!

*LOOKOUT* canvassed the Institute just before Thanksgiving and asked a representative group of seamen where they expected to be on Christmas Day. We got interesting, if not so surprising answers.



**LEONARD ANGIELCZYC**  
Buffalo, N. Y.

"It looks now like I'll be in Africa for Christmas. I expect to be back on the MSTs survey ship *Valdez* by December. Shipping is a good life, but Christmas is lonely."

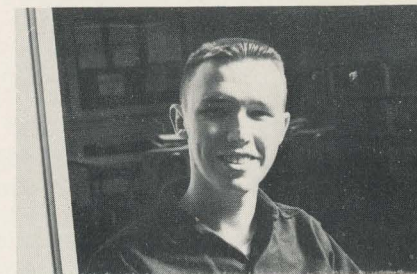
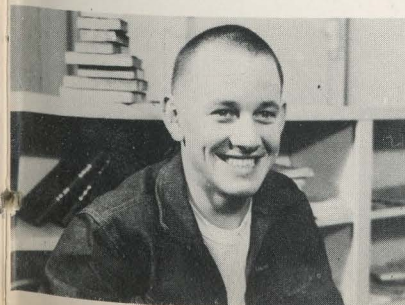
Seaman Angielczyk has spent only three Christmases with his wife and 15-year-old daughter during the last eight years he's shipped. The blond, stocky, youthful look A.B. is studying for his 3rd's in SCI's Marine School.



**JOSEPH ESTRELLA**  
Bronx, New York

"Christmas, I'm afraid, will find me where it's warm—down off the coast of South America. Last year was the first Christmas I spent with my wife and two-year-old daughter in the Bronx."

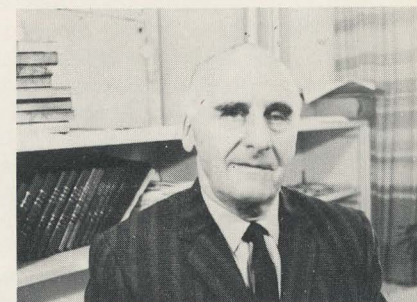
Able bodied seaman Estrella is preparing for his 3rd mate's examination but takes advantage of leisure time at sea to do more studying.



**STEPHEN WALKER**  
Caronsville, Maryland

"This will be my first Christmas at sea, and the way I look at it, separation from family during the holidays is a necessary evil of the trade and we accept it. I have to make a living."

A youngster with a disarming Southern drawl, seaman Walker has one year behind him in the merchant navy, a hitch of two in the U.S. Navy. His family—mother and sister—are living in Catonsville, and Steve has not missed many Christmases at home in past years. He is studying to be an oilerman, taking instruction when he can in SCI's Marine School.



**AUGUST HOFF**  
New York City

Retired A. B., Hoff shipped for many years with Tidewater tankers and is enjoying less strenuous years at 25 South Street. This Christmas he is planning to visit his brother and family in Boston, but then again he enjoys his friends at SCI and might remain in the city. "I have spent most of my Christmases at sea since I first shipped out in 1916. Last year the seamen on my ship mounted a spruce tree on the stern shortly after we left port." August mentioned that he was looking forward to Thanksgiving at the Institute.





# CHRIST'S PRESENT TO SANDY & ME

by seaman John Krauklis

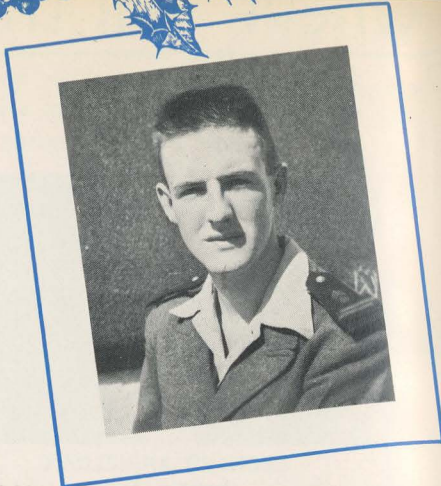
I met Sandy in March, 1961, while my ship was being unloaded in Oran, Algeria. As I was paying my bill in a small French restaurant the waiter mumbled something to me in French that I did not understand. At that moment a voice from behind asked in clipped British, "Are you an American by any chance?" I turned to see a French Foreign Legionnaire. That is how I met Sandy.

Following what seemed like hours of small talk I invited Sandy to visit my ship for dinner. Safe in the knowledge that we would be unloading for several more days, the captain granted me permission to take a couple days to visit Sandy's barracks in Sid-bel-abess just south of Oran. I was as responsive as any tourist as Sandy described the major points of interest along the wide, parched main streets built by the Legion. I saw the squalor of the narrow alleys in the Arab quarter which mushroomed outside the town.

Sandy had multitudes of friends among both French and Arab townspeople, but especially among the kids. They were orphaned Arabs whose parents had been murdered in the guerilla war which smoldered between France and Algeria; Sandy frequently organized soccer games for them for what little enjoyment they knew.

One especially hot afternoon we stopped at his favorite "pub" to rest and soon were joined by some of his Legion friends. It was obvious he was a great favorite among them, although his manner was unaggressive, quiet and contemplative. From him I learned about the Legion, its history. He insisted it had benefited many people all over the world.

Later we visited the Hall of Honor, whose hushed main hall reminded me of West Point. I signed the guest book



and hurried on to study portraits of valiant heroes and their medals hung below. At the end of the hall, in an alcove, burned the perpetual flame lighting the names on the roll of the fallen.

Sandy surprised me when he asked if I had a King James version of the New Testament printed in English. Fortunately I had an extra one, and gave it to him later. It was a collector's item in Algeria where everything is in French or Arabic, and he cherished it. Among men in the service Sandy was a paradox. Moreover he told me that he listened to Sunday church services on shortwave.

I learned more about Cpl. Sandy Forbes the soldier, one of the most respected men in his unit. During rest periods after long marches he read his Bible while others scoffed. Continued heckling did little to discourage his reading. He lived by the Golden Rule, and was loved in return.

Before I shipped out Sandy invited me and two other seamen from my tanker to be guests of the Legion for Christmas dinner when our ship returned to Algeria that December.

We berthed at Oran on December 22 according to schedule. I didn't hear word of Sandy until the 24th, when a jeep arrived at the dock and a French Foreign Legion officer boarded the ship to invite us to their Christmas party.

He said Sandy was dead. My friend had been killed in combat on the last patrol before Christmas; he died sav-

*Continued on page 21*

*The Missing Seamen Bureau played Santa for a young Norwegian housewife.*

## WINTER REUNION

"We have not heard from Karstein for five years and are very worried," began the distressed handwriting in the letter postmarked Gudbrandsdalen, Norway. It was addressed to the Missing Seamen Bureau.

The young housewife continued: "Our parents know nothing about Karstein's being away, and I hope I can keep it a secret; they believe all is going well with him. It is nearing Christmas and we wish him home." That was last September.

Her brother, according to the translation, was a 20-year-old seaman, and when last heard from was shipping on Norwegian freighter *Lars Meling*.

MSB searches for strayed mariners often are begun with less fragmentary information than that the Norwegian housewife provided. But when the routine MSB questionnaire was sent to Norway by return mail, asking for additional information, she responded with many helpful clues. A most conspicuous mark, wrote the sister, was a "lady in a glass" tattooed in vibrant colors on his right hand. "He wears his hair long in back, and has outstanding eyes and rather small ears," she elaborated. "Please help us; it's about five years since we last saw him," she pleaded, enclosing a wallet-size snapshot of her brother.

Aided by such lucid description, the MSB made a preliminary check of SCI files. Chaplain Frank Daley, Supervisor of the Bureau and his assistant, Mrs. Miriam Goetz, ferreted through hotel records to determine if the man had been a resident here. He had not. Other records routinely checked are those in the medical and dental clinics, baggage checkroom, deceased seamen list, credit bureau, savings account deposits list, mail-holding service of the Post Office, SCI's safe-deposit files, the Al-

coholic's Assistance Bureau, employment service, and finally, with Seamen's Bank for Savings. The search proved futile.

Chaplain Daley then described the blue-eyed, curly-blond-haired seaman in a letter to the Norwegian Consul in Singapore where seaman Karlson had last been heard from.

"That was when 'somebody upstairs' joined the search," smiles Chaplain Daley, commenting on the post card he received shortly before LOOKOUT went to press. Printed on it was a brilliant color photo of the seaman's home town—a small community of pastel-colored houses nestled in a verdant, fjorded valley.

The message from a grateful relative on the back matched the serenity of the picture. The sister wrote Chaplain Daley that her brother had finally written her and a winter meeting was assured, perhaps in time for Christmas. She signed the card with a very Merry Christmas to the Missing Seamen Bureau.

Home and hearth in snow-frosted Gudbrandsdalen, Norway, will be measurably warmer this December 24, and, using an 'old cliché', SCI again helped play Santa Claus.







CHRISTMAS  
ON PORCELAIN



Our author explains the origin of the famous Danish "Christmas Plates" and tells why more often than not they incorporate seascapes and seamen in their designs.

The peninsular kingdom of Denmark, lashed by the Baltic's wrath on the east, swept by the North Sea's breakers to the west, has quite naturally developed a robust, seafaring people. Three-fourths of her population are islanders; her capital and largest city is on an off-shore island, quite apart from the land mass extension of Europe. No wonder, then, that maritime design and sea lore are so pre-eminent in Denmark.

Incorporating these maritime heritages, two Danish manufacturers developed the idea 69 years ago to commemorate the birth of Christ each year by issuing delicate porcelain plates which would incorporate three things close to the hearts of her people—the sea, seamen, and Christian symbols either man-made or in nature.

Long-established prestige manufacturers, Royal Copenhagen and Bing & Grondahl have each year since 1895 issued fragilely thin, highly glazed works of art to satisfy the world demand for these collector's items. Collectors include not only travelers who bought their first plates while visiting the storybook kingdom, but thousands and thousands of Scandinavians and their island neighbors in Britain.

Designs for each new Christmas plate are submitted by Scandinavia's most famous painters, and a committee of ceramists and artists makes the final selection for the blue and white scene which will be cherished around the world.

While not every Christmas plate has been inspired by seamen and the sea,

a great many of them have been, combining the elements of ships, sea and Christian symbols in timeless taste.

Even the process by which these plates are produced traces its introduction to the sea, for it is said that during the Ming dynasty, seamen brought back the priceless ingredients of fine porcelain after long and perilous voyages to ancient Cathay in China. The secret ingredients they brought back are no longer secret, but the technique remains in the custody of the two original manufacturers. Fine clay, called kaolin, is measured exactly into granulated quartz and feldspar. The resulting malleable dough is cast in plaster molds under great pressure. The molds themselves have been cast from the artist's design. Areas of the plate are raised and thick while others are thin and translucent, accounting for the fact that they seem to emit light. The final casting complete, the soft delft blue colors are applied, subtly blending with or highlighting the relief of the clay. The raw product is then ready for the kiln where it is fired at 950 degrees to a high glaze. After each year's quota is produced, the molds are destroyed.

The commemorative plates evolved from the Danish custom among feudal lords of presenting servants with plates heaped with good things on Christmas Eve. The plates were undoubtedly wooden at first, but later, after the introduction of porcelain and the technique of baking clay with fine, translucent finishes was developed, the delicacies were presented on porcelain.

Certain patterns produced through the years have naturally been more popular than others. The "Jul Commemorative Plate of 1927" which we reproduce above would make any New England captain wax nostalgic. Profiled is a "ship's boy," wrapped in oilskins, at the tiller on Christmas Eve. A single star shimmers above in the cold sky, lighting a path on the still water in a wonderfully expressive scene which the artist Ben Miller, titled "Peace on Earth."

Denmark's insular possession, Greenland, is for the most part an icy, uninhabited wasteland, and her ice and ships in ice are popularly sculpted in porcelain. The 1939 plate captures the desolateness of Greenland, the blue-white ice, the brilliant stars, a sailship possibly trapped—the elements of a Scandinavian classic. The artist was Nic Nielsen; the ship the whaler *Gustav Holm*.

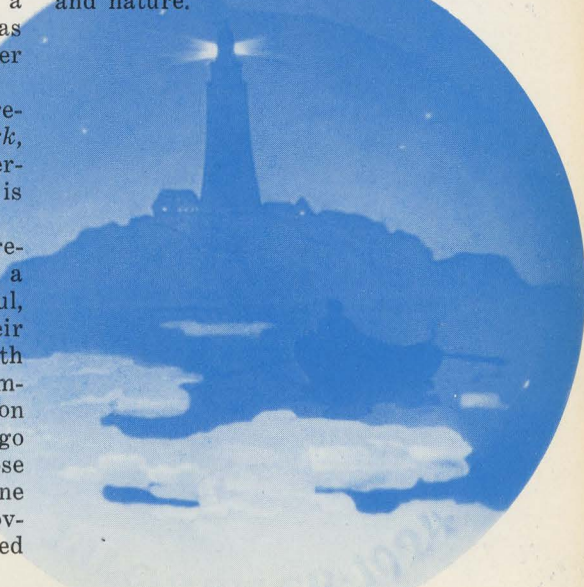
The beauty of the existing square-rigged training vessel, the *Danmark*, which participated in this year's Operation Sail in New York Harbor, is memorialized on the 1961 plate.

Again, Denmark is a country wherein lighthouses are a necessity, not a tourist attraction, and her colorful, beacons monoliths have found their way to the Christmas plate, along with her windmills, which she has in numbers surpassing Holland. Artist Achton Friis, in 1924, painted the Sprogø lighthouse on Sprogø Island, whose tower light glows above a seaman alone in a bobbing dory adrift on an ice-covered sea. Bing & Grondahl produced

this enchanting seascape.

The 1953 Bing & Grondahl plate commemorates the visit of King Fredrik IX and Queen Ingrid to Greenland. The King's yacht is depicted in the waters of Davis Strait against the ice-peaked mountains of Greenland's coast. These annual memorials to the sea have used modern passenger liners, ferryboats, fishing boats in their motifs. One of the most beautiful was the 1917 scene—the arrival of a passenger ship in Copenhagen on Christmas Eve (pictured).

Denmark's varied shorelines, her ships and the seamen on them, continue to commemorate the most important Day in the Christian world. And, more often than not, the Danes turn for inspiration to God's beauty in water and nature.







## silent night

by seaman *Kenneth Hardman*

What is there about Christmas, wonders the author, that makes mariners so disgruntled with a life that is otherwise quite bearable? For seamen like Ken Hardin, SCI Christmas boxes opened around the world on December 25, serve as a reminder that Christians remembered him and his lonely calling.

Around the ship the world is an empty bowl of darkness, slashed by a silver spoon of moonlight lying across the smooth sea. Overhead, in the east, a solitary star glitters like a pin-prick in a dark cloth.

On the afterdeck a man stands by the rail, gazing out along the path of moonlight. He is neither young nor old, and his shadowed eyes have seen all the oceans of the world. His foot rests on the lower rail and his elbows on the top one, a stance he has perfected in countless bars in many lands. But he is not now thinking about bars.

If I could walk along that strip of moonlight, he thinks, it would lead straight home. I would come in through the door, and Julie would be laying out the presents under the tree.

There wouldn't be much of course; just the construction kits for Mike and the cowboy outfit for little Johnny. But the room would be filled with a warm love that would seem to sparkle and dance like the colored glass balls on the old threadbare tree.

How many years have we had that tree now, he muses. Five—no, six—we bought it the year Mike was born. Six Christmases. And I have seen it on the Day just once.

Half-angrily, he flings the stub of his cigarette into the dark sea, remembering the tears in Julie's eyes as he had brought the tree down from the attic two weeks ago. Damn it, a man ought to be at home with his family for Christmas, not stuck in the middle of some God-forsaken ocean. God-forsaken? His forehead creased. No, that is wrong. Men could be nearer to God on the ocean than most places, if they chose to be.

But tomorrow stretches starkly before him, lifeless and empty, despite the good meals, the few cans of beer, the inevitable silly paper hat to match the streamers of colored paper stretched across the naked steel beams of the messroom deckhead. He must make the best of it, of course; but nothing can possibly make up for Julie and the children. What is there about Christmas, he wonders that makes him so disgruntled with a life that is otherwise quite bearable? What is Christmas, anyway?

What is Christmas, echoes the captain as he lies sweating in his bed, his grey head dark against the white pillow. We have lost the meaning of it, buried beneath a mountain of customs and commercialism. Christmas began as a simple religious celebration of the greatest day the Christian world has known; and now what is it—a complicated mish-mash of present-giving, over-eating and getting drunk. Goodwill to all men. He stirs uncomfortably in his bed, conscious of the similarity of his feelings to those of



Dickens' Scrooge.

Look at the ridiculous things he is supposed to do tomorrow; before dinner he must go around to each mess in turn and make a little speech. Then after dinner he and his officers must change places with the stewards and wait on them, cringing and running in mock servility at every shouted order.

The captain is a shy man, and these things come hardly to him. He could refuse to do it, of course, or delegate the job to one of his officers. But the iron grip of custom is upon him; and after all, it is only once a year. He sighs, burrowing his head into the pillow. Perhaps a few whiskies beforehand will get him more into the spirit of things.

Down in the crew recreation room a Christmas Eve party is just warming up. It began spontaneously with the drifting together of restless men, aware that this is a time for rejoicing and determined not to let it slip away. Cardboard cases of canned beer are stacked beneath the table, fenced in by a forest of bare brown legs. Feet tap in unison with the rhythmic twanging of two guitars, played competently and with great concentration by youngsters who in different circumstances might easily have still been at school.

The air is heavy with tobacco smoke and reckless young voices. Laughing faces drip sweat on to naked chests, mingling with the condensing perspiration from the cold beer cans. Everywhere there is an air of new-found comradeship as these men who were strangers a scant ten days ago, share the most sacrosanct of all family occasions. Many of them are content enough to be away from home, for home means very little to them. Some are disappointed; they began planning their voyages as long ago as last June, trying to "work it" so that they would be home for Christmas. Good-naturedly they laugh at their failure by a few days. Maybe next year they will do it—.

The chief cook leans back wearily in his chair, listening to the muted twang of the guitars along the alley-

way. It's all right for them, he thinks dispassionately. He is a small, wizened man who has seen many Christmases at sea come and go, and each one seems a little bit harder than the last. There was a time when he had tackled the extra work that Christmas involved with a certain amount of zest; all the days of preparation and the unfamiliar once-a-year dishes had been a challenge. But now it is all something of a bore, and an exhausting bore at that. Perhaps, he thinks, I'm getting past it.

He closes his eyes, and disjointed items from tomorrow's menu march across his tired brain; tomato soup, roast turkey, roast duck, four vegetables, the inevitable Christmas pudding—.

His eyes snap open again and he leans forward, takes up a can opener, and pierces two triangular holes in one of the cans of beer on his table. The can makes two little hissing sounds, like rapid intakes of breath.

"Merry Christmas, Cookie," he says ironically, raising the can to his lips. "It'll soon be over."

Down in the brilliantly lit bowels of the ship, among the crowded machinery and thundering pistons, the young engineer on watch stands beneath the cool draught of the ventilator. His lips move, but the words are snatched away and lost in the maelstrom of noise. He hears the song quite clearly in his head though: "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas."

The sweat trickles like tiny running insects under his once-white boiler suit, but he hardly feels it; his thoughts are three thousand miles away in the cold dark streets of Liverpool.

This time last year he was walking Joyce home through the newly fallen snow of those streets, both of them laughing and singing *White Christmas* at the tops of their voices. He remembers the unbroken whiteness of the snow in the quiet grove where Joyce lives. The beauty of it after the quickly ruined black slush of the main streets stopped them both in their tracks. From one of the houses, a

gleaming, diamond-studded swath of light leapt over the white-shrouded garden hedge and ran across the roadway.

"Seems a pity to spoil it, doesn't it?" Joyce had whispered.

"Madam, we shall do as little damage as possible," he had answered; and with a mocking bow he had swept her up in his arms and carried her the length of the grove, proud as a bridegroom at the nearness of her.

The engineer stops singing and raises his eyes to the wide-open skylights. He can just see the moon peering down through the iron-ringed gratings. Perhaps, his heart sings, she is looking at that same moon right now.

In the silent darkness of the wheelhouse, the helmsman stares fixedly at the busily clicking gyro-compass. The soft green light illuminating the compass card reflects back on to his weather-lined face, which seems to float disembodied in a sea of blackness. The light accentuates the deep-set eyes; they glow softly like candle flames in twin caves.

It is a strong, kindly face that has seen more Christmases than are left to see, many of them lonely ones spent in the Sailors' Homes and Missions of inhospitable ports. Unlike most men, he tries to be away at sea for Christmas, for on a ship he finds a feeling of

being part of a huge family that he used to have in his young days at the orphanage.

His powerful hands on the wheel spokes anticipate every movement of the compass automatically, leaving his thoughts free to wander the homeless face of the earth. Once again he feels inside him the ache of regret that he has not done more with his life, that he has not taken some girl and raised a family of his own. It is not that he hasn't had the chances; there was that girl in Manchester, and the other one in Hull. Strange, he can't even remember their names now. But he was too wild in his youth, and too timid in the late years; and it's too late altogether.

He shrugs and smiles a little. It has been a good life though; indeed, it still is. There seemed to be something about Christmas that brought on this peculiar feeling of having failed in the important things of life. Perhaps it is because of what the Man whose birthday it is accomplished in His brief life.

He glances at the dimly lit clock; it is exactly midnight. Late relief again, he thinks as he reaches for the bell lanyard. Still, what can you expect on Christmas Eve? The four double notes of the bell sweep swift and clear across the ship and the whispering sea.

It is Christmas.





# THAT EVENTFUL YEAR... 1878



the **seventh** in an historical series

The belfry of the floating church was diminished by the towering masts of schooners moored on the waterfront of 1878. There was ferment among seamen of the day that automation on steamers like the *Atlantic*, which could bring the "Swedish Nightingale" to New York from Liverpool in only 11 days, would soon "do them in." What was President Rutherford B. Hayes going to do for them?

With the impending obsolescence of rigged ships (or so they thought) and the dog-eat-dog existence to which they already were relegated, the seamen were, as a class, pitiable. It was in the face of these conditions and those even more intolerable along South Street, that the Young Men's Auxiliary Education and Missionary Society was working.

The Society's busy reading room at 34 Pike Street provided a center for the seamen who were ostracized everywhere else. Here he could talk out his problems and enjoy socials and smokers. The annals of 1878 describe the lantern slide shows that brought tears to the eyes of seamen. At the conclusion of each slide exhibition, favorite hymns were projected and seamen harmonized with the ladies of the "Guild of the Floating Church." It was this group, the predecessors of the Women's Council, who organized outings and picnics to get lonesome seamen

away from the waterfront elements.

If a seaman had managed to put away a few dollars for entertainment from the typical seaman's weekly wages of \$8.00, he would take his date to the fascinating exhibition up at Cooper Union of Thomas Edison's new "speaking phonograph." Or if his funds were extremely limited, he did what every visitor was doing in that year—he headed for 73 Broadway for a ride on the first new elevated subway which ran from Rector Street to 59th along 6th Avenue.

Of the wretched groups of seafarers were the bargemen and riverboatmen and their families who lived on houseboats clogging Coenties Slip. The Society conducted open air services each Sunday for them on Pier 6. Attendance at these services did not require fine clothing—the lack of which often kept destitute seamen and their families out of the churches.

The Rev. Isaac Maguire, the Society's "missionary," as they were called, in charge of boatmen reported results in "the improved life and conversation of this class, formerly so rough and hardened." He recalled his visit to Brooklyn when a young man, after politely calling his name and shaking hands, asked him to board a houseboat, with the assurance that his mother would be glad to see him. "On entering the cabin, I recognized her

as one of the women who was present at our services last winter. She stopped cooking dinner, and requested that I go into the cabin of an adjoining boat, as her husband owned both" he wrote.

"I was surprised to find such a remarkably clean, orderly, commodious home on the water. The cabin was artistically painted in various pleasing colors, a new, clean oilcloth covering the whole floor, and the walls were decorated with texts of scripture in ornamental frames. The alcoves were filled with convenient bureaus, and in a most conspicuous corner of the room, a handsome cabinet organ stood with an open hymn book on the top. 'This room,' said the wife, 'we have given to God. About 15 months ago while sitting on the deck of our boat, I heard you preach. I had been brought up by Quaker parents in the west of old England. I could find no peace until I came to Christ again. I have eight children in heaven, and oh, they seem so much nearer and dearer than they used to; what comfort fills my heart when I know that these four here and those in heaven will be all one family in Christ, forever.' One of the sons sat down at the organ and played a hymn, with all of us joining."

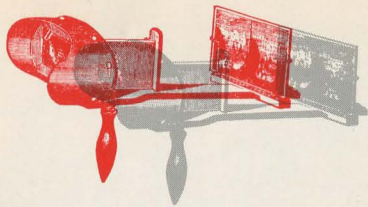
The Rev. Mr. Maguire noted that Coenties Slip, from nine in the a.m. until six in the evening, contained "the largest floating population" of any

street or slip along the East River. "These people have been weakened and blunted by the habits of years of indulgence in the beverages which the owners of saloons vend across their bars." He made an appeal for a temperance saloon or restaurant, "where those who feel so disposed could sit down to a warm, comfortable cup of tea or coffee, and thereby be delivered from the temptations and snares of the 16 liquor and beer saloons between Pearl and South." (There are still three).

New York was a city of immigrants and seafarers. Often the seamen were no better off than the immigrants they transported. From time to time the Society noted visits from many Italians who had just been processed through the Castle Garden reception center. Bewildered and destitute, they received help and encouragement from the Society in starting a new life in America.

Every year has its intrigue, and 1878 was not without items of gossip for the seamen. The bizarre crime of the year involved the remains of wealthy A. P. Stewart whose body had been stolen from a grave in the churchyard at St. Mark's in the Bowverie. His widow was offering \$25,000 for the recovery of her husband's body. The dastardly crime had puzzled New York's finest since 1876. Every seaman





had his idea of the identity of the culprits, along with suggestions on what to do about "Boss" William Tweed and his "ring."

Records of the day—and it might be noted here that "Seamen" was always capitalized in Society's printed matter, whereas "Christian" was not—discussed the origin of the circulating library service, still an important part of Institute service to seamen. In 1878 small collections of books were termed "libraries" and through the Society were presented to Christian masters or seamen. Publishers of the day donated magazines and books, but their contributions were small. "How pleasant to see the mariner's face light up as he recognized his own tongue in some Danish, French, Portuguese or Italian translation of a good book," one "missionary" wrote.

The rewards of stewardship were being repeated as the Society's missionary Robert Walker observed: "The Lord's Supper was administered in the Floating Church to a deaf and dumb sail-maker of the bark, *Chinaman*, of London; he had been rescued from a life of sin, and converted to a life of holiness by the perusal of a copy of

'Pilgrim's Progress' which had been presented to him by a Christian lady in England. At the conclusion of this affecting scene, he drew from his pocket a small porcelain slate and wrote the words, 'I am happy in Jesus.' The Society presented a 'library' of 50 volumes, enclosed in a neat case, a gift from a young gentleman, to the deaf and dumb sailmaker for the use of the crew," and, Rev. Walker related, the bark sailed for Hong Kong the following day.

Much of the Society's concentration in those early years was on methods to counteract ol' debil rum. In the annual meeting of the Society, held at Heavenly Rest on Sunday evening, April 27, 1879, the following appraisal of the waterfront conditions was read to the assemblage: "In a city of commerce and progress, as New York is, it seems needless to urge the cause of the sailor. His claim for our consideration is too patent. On every hand are the marks of his work, and all about us are the comforts, the luxuries, the riches he has brought to us—brought at the cost of great peril to himself, and with little chance of enjoying them. It seems then, eminently fit that to him we should give of those riches that surpass all others—and such is the aim of this Society—to go down by the waterside, as the Master went down to the borders of Galilee, and to give the seafaring man the riches of His word."



# Seaman of the month

◀ David  
Frey

Every advantage and opportunity has been lavished on this month's seaman, David Frey. Fine education, good family background, intelligence, sensitivity, uncommon good looks and personality. Merchant marine officer Frey, a San Franciscan, could find success in any profession—if he could prevent restlessness. His life, however, has been full of changes by his own choosing.

His first change was while attending Christ Episcopal Church, Cambridge, Mass., near his childhood home in Belmont. He moved from choir boy to altar boy when his voice changed.

When the family moved to the West Coast, Dave enrolled in the deck department of California Maritime School from 1949 to 1953 and then joined the Navy for two years. Discharged in 1955 he took advantage of the G.I. Bill and entered the University of Washington. Majoring in Far Eastern and Russian affairs, he assumed an academic load of 20 hours each semester, even choosing electives in economics as preparation for a career in the State Department.

Upon graduation he applied for a State Department appointment and was put on the waiting list. Jobs were slow in coming and Dave began selling McGraw-Hill textbooks throughout California and other western states, and remembers living in one motel after another. He sought refuge from that life by accepting a trainee spot with an ad agency. He found little reward as a media buyer.

Seeking adventure he renewed his 3rd mate license and shipped last February on Sealand and American Trading and Production on what was to be a two-year tour from the Persian Gulf to Okinawa. As one port after another was bypassed, Dave asked to be relieved after only four and a half months and was flown home by the company. He's making SCI his home while awaiting a new ship.

Dave is mature at 33 and has his life course charted. He'll give up the sea when he's 40 to settle down, like his father, as a teacher. Preparing for that day he's saving his money and absorbing much of the world.

## CHRIST'S PRESENT TO SANDY AND ME *Continued from page 10*

ing the lives of the officers and men on his patrol by leaping in front of them when a guerrilla rebel ambushed and machine-gunned them in the mountains. He had been hit in the chest and stomach and was put aboard a helicopter for the flight to the meds. Moribund, he turned to the medical officer and joked: "I just might be in Heaven for Christmas, doc."

He was.

Following Christmas Day I stood with Sandy's commanding officers at his grave. I saw his name placed with military heroes in the Hall of Honor.

He earned the Croix de Guerre and had been accorded all military honors.

My memory of our friendship is sad but not morbid. Sandy is gone. I lost a true friend. But Sandy was a Christian and even while facing death, knew the joy of being in God. I had believed in God but came to accept "Peace on Earth, Goodwill towards Men" pretty much as a department store slogan. Through Sandy I learned something of this joy, and the purpose of His birth. Sandy had known. In some ways it was a Christmas present.



# We are a kaleidoscope of the waterfront

*A look-in on the world's largest shore home for merchant seamen...*



**SOCCER SUCCESS**—Seaman Jose Martinez (C.) joyfully accepts SCI's 5th Annual Soccer trophy on behalf of his teammates from Colombian freighter "Ciudad de Armenia" at ceremonies last month in the International Seamen's Club. The victors competed against Dutch and German seamen in season of 44 SCI-sponsored games. Presenting the trophy to the crew of the Gran Colombiana Lines ship was SCI's Chaplain Joseph Huntley (l.) and ship visitor, Elias Chegwin. A similar trophy is presented to the winning crewmen in games played on Port Newark's soccer field.



**FOCUS ON MUSEUMS**—Their project being to appraise maritime museums throughout America and Europe prior to establishing a new National Maritime Museum in Tokyo, a study group of six men representing the Japan ship building industry made SCI's Marine Museum their place d'intérêt last month. Curator Herb Jennings gave the visitors an orientation tour preceding an outline of the Institute's objectives and the Museum's relation to them by Dr. Roscoe T. Foust, Director of the Department of Special Services. Following their visit to SCI the Japanese studied the collection in the possession of the Seamen's Bank for Savings.



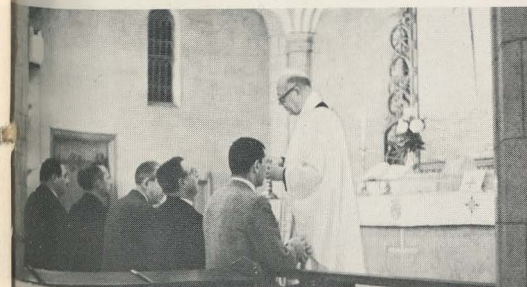
**RUSSIANS RETURN**—For the second year SCI was host to 25 young people from the Soviet Union visiting Manhattan through the Experiment in International Living. Some were men of the sea, some teachers, workers, farmers, but they all relished SCI's cafeteria food. Through an interpreter, SCI's Board member Gordon Fearey (center, above) interested a table of fishing boat captains in a discussion of American seamen, maritime unions and welfare benefits. The EIL promotes international understanding



**SCI AT ST. LOUIS**—Predictably, an enthused crowd gathered at SCI's exhibit in St. Louis to follow their favorites on TV during the World Series, coinciding with the 61st General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Kiel Auditorium, Oct. 10-23. The first public showing of our new exhibit was seen by the estimated 8,000 attending. Costs of producing the exhibit were generously supported by two of this country's great shipping interests—U.S. Lines (S.S. United States) and Farrell Lines (cargo and passengers to all African ports). Dr. Roscoe T. Foust, Director of Special Services, his assistant, Mrs. Ida Cathers and seminarian-employee Robert Smith, represented the Institute.



**CEREMONY**—No better setting than SCI last month for reading Mayor Wagner's proclamation of "Blue-jacket Guard Week" honoring the 28th anniversary of the naval cadet youth program to encourage good citizenship. Scroll was presented by Arthur Benline (3rd from r.) Commissioner, NYC Dept. of Air Pollution, himself a naval reserve officer, to Coast Guard Lt. Ted General (3rd from l.). Witnessing (l. to r.) were youthful Robert Saul, Juan Asevedo, Edward Wallace, Ronald Hammond and Robert Spencer, all of Brooklyn.



**THANKSGIVING**—The Rev. John M. Mulligan (above) serves Holy Communion to seamen attending Thanksgiving services in the Chapel during SCI's old-fashioned observation. Dr. Roscoe T. Foust delivered the sermon preceding the free holiday feast (below) in the cafeteria. A strolling accordionist complemented the dinner conversation.





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