

THE LOOKOUT



CONVOYS TO VICTORY

*U. S. Navy, Official
Courtesy, National Geographic
Magazine*

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

VOL. XXXIV—NUMBER 5

MAY, 1943

Sanctuary

A Sun at Sea*

O God, through tomorrow and the next day and the next,
Watch o'er the sea!
Let starlit nights prevail,
I ask of Thee!
Be Master of the waves that toss the ship upon the deep,
And safely guard a little boy
I used to rock to sleep!

By Margery Ruebush Shank

* This poem was sent to the LOOKOUT editor by Mrs. Carl Dalbey whose son, a radio operator in the American Merchant Marine, has been reported by the U. S. Navy as "missing". Our prayers join with hers that he may still be alive.

The LOOKOUT

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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.

The Lookout

Vol. XXXIV

May, 1943

No. 5

Janet Lord Roper

WHEN I arrived in New York last week, they told me that Mother Roper had passed on. They are mistaken. They are landsfolk who do not live in our world. Mother Roper lived in our world. Our world is each ship that we are on.

History can change overnight. You can be visited by Fire, Flood, Famine or Epidemics, but our little world goes plowing along under the stars, without one little care about your Politics, your Ration Books, or your Easter Parade.

Mother Roper belonged to a thousand ships. Therefore she belonged to a thousand little worlds. When we are ashore she took care of us in your world, which is foreign to us, until we went back aboard our own little worlds.

Mother Roper has not passed on. She is still with us, in Mrs. Cathers* staking us to another night's lodging and three more meals. In Miss Lang's* correspondence to people looking for their missing sons, brothers or fathers. In Miss Conrow's fingers as she plays our favorite pieces on the organ in the Chapel or hands out a best seller from the Library. In Dr. Kelley's pat on the back as he says, "Well done, sailor." In a thousand different ways, she is still with us and always will be.

She has dropped her anchors in Snug Harbor but her Anchor Lights are so bright that sailors can see them around the world.

By Seaman Arthur George Montagne

*Mrs. Cathers is in charge of the Credit Loan Bureau; Miss Lang at the Social Service Desk; Miss Conrow is the Institute's organist and librarian. Dr. Kelley is Director of the Institute.

THIS ISSUE OF THE LOOKOUT IS DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF MRS. JANET ROPER. SEE PAGES 8-14.

83 Days on a Raft

THE 70-day voyage of Robert Tapscott and Roy Widdicombe, survivors of the torpedoed British freighter *Anglo Saxon*, had stood as the record voyage, surpassing that of the survivors of the *Bounty* and *Hornet*. Recently, a British seaman, William Colburn, was picked up at Trinidad after drifting 76 days in an open boat, but his record did not stand for long, for on March 10th the Navy released the story of Basil D. Izzi, twenty-year old American Naval gunner who was rescued with two Dutch merchant seamen* after 83 days adrift on a raft in the South Pacific. But even this amazing record of endurance was surpassed, for on April 19th, from London came the remarkable story, released by the British Ministry of War Transport, of a Chinese who survived 130 days alone on a small life raft after his ship was torpedoed—47 days longer than any man has ever been known to endure the rigors of a lifeboat or raft.

Listening to Seaman Izzi's story as he told it at the Todd Shipyards to the workers there, and to the radio audience on "We the People," THE LOOKOUT editor was impressed by the stamina and ingenuity of this young New England sailor who survived the long ordeal. He and his two fellow survivors, Dutch seamen, used their toes as bait to lure a shark into a rope noose. After they had run out of food, they decided on this desperate measure. They were man-eating sharks, too, he said. They dropped the rope noose over the side of the raft and placed their bare feet in the water. The shark was attracted and as it started into the noose, the seamen pulled it tight. They ate the liver and heart.

One day they felt a plop on the canvas. It was a blackbird. One of the men grabbed it. They had it

for breakfast. They caught fish by an ingenious method: removing an iron rod from one end of the raft and tying one blade of a pair of scissors from the medical kit, they managed to spear small fish. On the 20th day they saw their first ship, burned their flares and waved a flag but the ship did not see them. On the 42nd day they sighted another ship, but their one remaining flare was too wet to burn. "On the 66th day," continued Izzi, "George Beazley took a turn for the worse. That night we put him to sleep under the canvas. The next morning we found him dead. Each of us said a prayer. Then we took from his finger his ring to give to his girl friend. Then we put him overboard. On the 68th day my gunnery officer, Lieut. James Maddox, started getting sick. He, too, began going blind and couldn't do. There wasn't much we could do. We'd been out of water for four days. He began calling for his wife. We wet his head to try to revive him, but the next morning he was dead. It was on a Sunday—about the 77th day adrift. Only the two Dutch seamen and I were left. Each of us said a prayer and lifted him over the side. It affected me pretty badly. We saved his wedding ring. That night we saw our first plane, but we were too weak to stand, so the plane didn't see us. A few days later we saw smoke. Then we saw a bunch of ships and later a warship. We were afraid that we would be passed up, so one of the Dutchmen said he'd stand up and wave the flag. We held his knees to keep him from falling. Then we saw a signal from the ship showing that they had found us. I weighed 145

* The two Dutch seamen, 17-year old Nick Hoogendam (who had survived two previous torpedoings) and 37-years old Cornelius van der Slot, visited the Institute recently and met old friends and former shipmates in the Home for Netherlands Seamen located on the third floor.



Photo by Press Association

20 Year Old Seaman Basil Izzi and his two Shipmates after 83 Days on a Raft

pounds when my ship was torpedoed. I weighed 80 pounds when I was picked up. When I got aboard the rescue ship they asked me what I wanted to eat. I thought about that spaghetti my mother makes. But I was aboard a Navy ship, so I asked for beans. Actually, I got glucose and saline injections, and broth."

The story of 32-year old William Colburn of Liverpool, England, was relayed from Trinidad. Originally there had been twenty shipmates with him in the lifeboat, after they had abandoned their torpedoed freighter, but as the days and weeks slipped by, the sun, and lack of food and water took their toll, and one by one the other seamen died.

Colburn did not have enough strength to throw the last five overboard, and when the lifeboat was found, Colburn, delirious, was found huddled in the bottom, surrounded by his dead companions.

The Chinese who survived 130 days alone on a life raft (his name has not been revealed) is presumably recuperating in a hospital in South America where he was rescued. According to P. J. Noel Baker, parliamentary secretary of the War Transport Ministry, who released the story, the Chinese became adept at catching birds and fish and trapping rain water on his precarious perch after his emergency rations ran out at the end of 60 days. Such is the horror of the war at sea.

Convoys to Victory *

By Harvey Klemmer

"YOU will find your ship at the explosives pier." I pricked up my ears at the mention of explosives. The mere sound of the word gave me a sinking feeling . . . I had been very casual about the

whole idea of crossing the Atlantic by freighter. It was too late to back out. . . .

There was nothing to do but go through with it and hope for the best. Besides, the explosives prob-

ably didn't amount to much. A few anti-aircraft shells, perhaps, or some bombs with the fuses removed. I had a good lunch and set out for a certain desolate area adjoining one of our great ports. . . .

Sailors were battening down a hatch as we came aboard, preparatory to loading Army trucks on deck.

"What's in the hold?" I asked with as much nonchalance as I could muster, looking over my shoulder at the rows of guards and the piles of neat white boxes standing on the dock. One of the sailors rubbed the sweat from his face and came over to where I stood. "TNT," he whispered. . . .

The ship was a modern vessel. Like all Norwegians, she was well kept and beautifully clean. . . . The Captain, Frode Bjorn-Hansen, was a great lean man with large hands and a strong face. He was typical of the Norse seafarer—quiet, capable, determined. . . .

The men were obviously good sailors. They bore the stamp of an

early start and long experience—twin requisites of good seamanship. Many had worked in sail. Some had already had experience with Nazi U-boats. One chap, a mere boy, had survived three sinkings—twice by torpedo, once by mine. . . . Most of the men had families in Norway. . . .

It is no accident that Norwegian seamen, when attacked, fight in a cold fury and that, when their vessels go down, they ship again at the first opportunity.

The Norwegians have been maintaining a good portion of the Atlantic lifeline and I was anxious to see them in action. . . .

Making up the convoy is a complicated operation; sailing 60 ships in a group would be a feat of seamanship in time of peace; in time of war, it is sheer genius. We were told to be ready to leave at 3 o'clock. . . .

Each skipper had been given a diagram of the convoy at the conference, showing the position to be taken by his ship. We made our

way slowly out of the harbor, joined other ships outside, and finally, after considerable maneuvering, found our place in the line-up.

Convoys, contrary to popular opinion, do not proceed in long lines fore and aft. Instead, they are spread out sideways. A convoy is thus likely to be wider than it is long. . . .

The reason for this method of grouping is that ships are more vulnerable to attack from the side than they are from the bow or stern. Ships sailing side by side protect one another's flanks. . . . The system must work, for subs have become increasingly wary in their encounters with convoyed vessels. . . .

Our convoy included vessels of every type. Freighters, of course, predominated. There were oil tankers, including some very fine ones. There was a famous whaling ship, with the greatest carrying capacity of any ship now afloat. There were little ships. There were oil burners and coal burners, and motorships. There were reefer (refrigerator) ships. There were old ships and new ships.

The only thing that matters in a convoy is speed. Ships doing 10 knots, say, go in one convoy; ships doing 12 knots go in another. The type of vessel doesn't count. . . .

We had cargo of every description—food, explosives, ammunition, steel, medical supplies, guns, bombs, machinery, planes, tanks, timber, trucks. Also an item that bodes no good for the Axis in Europe—invasion barges.

Most of the freighters carried deck cargoes. They were piled high with vehicles and machinery. . . .

We were on our own individually and we were on our own as a group. We were a little world in ourselves: 60 ships, 3,000 men, pledged to deliver the materials and the implements of war. . . .

Convoys don't turn back. The toll may be heavy, and they may be

forced to scatter, but, sooner or later, they turn up at the ports to which their cargoes are consigned.

We kept double lookout throughout the voyage; one man on the bridge, another on the fo'c'sle head. In addition, the officers usually overstay their watches, while the Old Man more or less lived on the bridge. . . . Somehow, crossing the Atlantic in time of war, with TNT for company, makes one very conscious of the beauties of Nature!

All ships naturally are blacked out. Portholes are painted over. Outside lights are removed, while alleyway lights are replaced with blue bulbs. . . .

Three weeks later, at noon, we dropped anchor in English water.

There was no man who had been so long at sea that he did not get a thrill from the thought. We had come over the greatest sea route of the war; we had faced the enemy and outwitted him; we had brought to the people of these harassed islands 400,000 tons of food and weapons with which to carry on the struggle against tyranny; we had helped to hold—briefly but effectively—the life line of liberty.

* Excerpts from an article in the February, 1943 issue of the National Geographic Magazine. Reprinted by special permission

Sunset at Sea

AS SEEN FROM A RAFT

"I remember the sunset of that evening because the sweep of colors was so fantastic no one would have believed it on canvas. But sunsets are not edible nor drinkable, no matter how magnificent. I remembered the expression 'He drank in the sunset.'"

I wondered how it had tasted. The red could be strawberry; the yellow would be lemon—or grapefruit. I decided I would take lemon. The orange, of course, was obvious. The purple could be either grape or raspberry. I decided that if ever I should drink a sunset I would have plenty of ice in it. And on second thought, if anyone would hand me a few cubes of ice he could have the sunset."

—From "We Thought We Heard the Angels sing"

(Reviewed on Page 17)



British Information Service

At a Convoy Conference, Captains of Merchant Vessels Receive Last-Minute Instructions for the Voyage

The U-Boat Peril

THE Battle of the Atlantic took a turn for the worse during the month of March, when attacks by U-boats on Allied shipping to England and Africa increased, according to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. But two hopeful notes in recent announcements may be seen. First is the construction of the new Destroyer Escorts (D E boats), and second is the increasing use by the Navy of ship-based helicopters. In disclosing this, Captain Leland P. Lovette, chief of the Bureau of Public Relations, U. S. Navy, said

that there is a 500 to 600-mile gap in the mid-Atlantic which cannot be covered by aerial reconnaissance by shore-based aircraft. Captain Lovette said the helicopter's characteristics make it "an enemy greatly to be dreaded by U-boat crews, for it can drop bombs or depth charges with 100 per cent accuracy. He stated that the United States and Great Britain must convoy a minimum of 700 to 800 ships across the Atlantic each month if Britain is to live and fight efficiently. He described the Battle of the Atlantic as the "greatest naval task of all. Hitler is risking the last throw of the dice on the slim hope that the German submarine will prove decisive in the war at sea, thereby halting the ever-growing flood of men, munitions and supplies across the four or five routes of the Atlantic.

The fact that a depth charge brings up a patch of oil is no longer incontrovertible evidence that an enemy submarine has been finished. Often these wounded submarines, with double hulls and oil compartments placed between the two hulls so as to absorb the shock of depth charges, limp back to port for repairs and soon are again at sea.

The Nazis are reported to be producing U-boats well in excess of their loss rate.

Secretary Knox said that scores of auxiliary aircraft carriers suitable for convoying are also being rushed to completion, and the rate of launchings of Destroyer Escorts is now very good.

This is the situation at present. And merchant seamen, knowing this, still keep the ships sailing and the cargoes moving. Our prayers go with them.



U. S. Maritime Commission Photo

Officers, cadet and seamen checking deck load of tanks on a Liberty ship in convoy at sea. Navy gunners of the Armed Guard are alert at the anti-aircraft gun at upper left.

Janet Lord Roper

BY short wave radio, by telephone and telegraph and press associations, the sad news of the death of Mrs. Janet Roper was carried to her friends all over the world. Men and women in all walks of life have written and telegraphed to the Institute messages of sympathy from Maine to Oregon, from Hawaii to Australia, and even one radiogram from Capetown, South Africa.

At the Institute flags flew at half-mast in mourning for the woman who was known and revered by tens of thousands of merchant seamen sailing the seven seas. In inland towns and cities farmers and merchants, housewives, whose sons and brothers had left the prairies and plains and mountains and cities to follow the age-old call of the sea, learned by radio and newspaper of Mrs. Roper's passing and felt that they had lost a dear and personal friend. For Mrs. Roper, who for 28 years was a beloved member of



Mrs. Roper When She Was 17 Years Old

the staff of the Institute, and for 54 years an earnest worker in behalf of merchant seamen of all races and creeds, always answered the pleas from anxious relatives of seamen with personal, heartwarming letters.

At her funeral service, conducted in the Chapel of our Saviour, on April eighth, by Dr. Kelley and Chaplains McDonald and Harkness with several other clergy vested, cabin boys, mates and engineers, captains, shipping company officials, Institute Board members, contributors, and staff paid tribute to this woman whose friends were legion. Messages arrived from admirals, bishops, sailors' wives and mothers and many seamen.

Pall bearers at the service included three members of the Institute staff who knew Mrs. Roper for more than 28 years, Robert Brine of the Baggage Bureau, William Bunce of the Seamen's Funds Bureau and Trevor Barlow, Recreation Supervisor; and three merchant seamen who knew her for many years, Charles O. Jackson, bo'sun, Ernest L. Johanson, Mate, and Samuel Kendrick, engineer.



N. Y. Times Photo

Mrs. Roper in a Recent Photograph

Tributes to Mother Roper



N. Y. Post Photo

Mrs. Roper showing Captain Peter Erikson and Second Mate John Tuzo a knitted helmet. This was the last photograph of Mrs. Roper—taken just two weeks before her death on April 5th.

FROM A SEAMAN

Thursday might have been just another day to landsmen, but seamen everywhere lost a friend that day.

As I passed through the corridors of the Institute, there was a hush over all. The natural boisterousness of seamen was missing. The men spoke in low, quiet tones. Naturally, many of the men did not know her, for the Institute is a gathering place for seafarers of many lands. But true sailors respect the sorrow of their foreign counterpart, be he Russian, Greek or American. As the flags of all allied ships in convoy are lowered with the destruction of one, so did all honor the memory of a quiet, gray-haired lady, Mrs. Roper or "Mother" Roper as she was affectionately known to thousands of seamen everywhere.

Death is no stranger to a seaman anytime, and in these days when instant destruction hovers ever near, one gets fairly accustomed to it. But "Mother" Roper seemed destined to go on forever. It has been seven years since I first saw her at the Institute, but through the years there has been no apparent change. Her familiar "salty" walk, her unbounded patience and kindness have brightened the moments of many a lonely, stranded seafarer.

A. B. Seaman David Harris

FROM PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT THE WHITE HOUSE

Dear Miss Roper:

My heart goes out to you and to your sisters in the great loss you have sustained in the passing of a loved and loving mother.

Men of the sea from all over the world brought their problems to her in full confidence of sympathetic understanding and practical helpfulness. To all who passed through the Seamen's Church Institute during the long years of her management of that haven for sailors and to those who worked with her on its governing body, she was guide, counselor and friend. To seafaring men everywhere her death will come as a personal sorrow.

Very sincerely yours,
Franklin D. Roosevelt.

FROM SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEWPORT

"This Institute extends to you, your staff and the members of Mrs. Roper's family and all sailors everywhere our deep sympathy. (She put on righteousness and it clothed her and sound judgment was the crown of her head)"

Roy W. Magoun,
Superintendent and Chaplain



Photo by Roy Pinney

Mrs. Roper serving tea in the Seamen's Lounge to two seamen, Chief Steward Arthur C. Irving and Captain Peter Erikson, who have known her for many years.

FROM BISHOP WILLIAM T. MANNING

Diocese of New York

Mother Roper's life was a help and blessing to countless numbers of seamen and the news of her death will bring genuine sorrow and sense of loss to many of them here and in many parts of the world. The devotion of Mother Roper to the men of the sea, her personal interest in them, and her care for everything which concerned them, illustrated nobly the ideals of the Seamen's Church Institute and the great service which it renders. The name of Mother Roper will long be held in affectionate remembrance by all who knew her, and especially by the seamen to whom she ministered.

FROM ADMIRAL EMORY S. LAND Chairman, U. S. Maritime Comm.

May I join in behalf of the Maritime Commission and the War Shipping Administration, the thousands of merchant seamen who will mourn the passing of Mrs. Janet Roper. Her long service in the Missing Seamen's Bureau stands as a guiding light to all who would follow the sea. I am sure that no one can ever fill her place in the hearts of the seamen of the United States Merchant Marine.

FROM LADY ARMSTRONG

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of
New York

I read this morning with deep regret of the death of Mrs. Roper. For a long period of years when my husband was British Consul General of this port it was our pleasure to come frequently to the Seamen's Church Institute, and who ever went there came away the better for having known "Mother Roper". I am sure myriads of sailors all over the world will read with deep regret of her passing, but after all, she has entered the great "Harbor" and is at rest in the Heaven which Christ has promised.

FROM MADELINE CARROLL

Special Representative
United Seamen's Service

"There is no one that I can think of who will be missed as much by the seamen as Mother Roper. No one will ever be able to take her place, but those of us who are left and who love the seamen as she did, will continue to do our very best to be as good a friend to them as she was."

BUREAU OF MISSING SEAMEN FOUNDER HELPED TO FIND 6,500 LOST MARINERS

Mrs. Janet Lord Roper, house mother since 1915 of the Seamen's Church Institute, 25 South Street, and founder of its Bureau of Missing Seamen, died yesterday at her home, 35 Orange Street, Brooklyn. She was seventy-four years old.

Known as "Mother" Roper to merchant seamen throughout the world, Mrs. Roper had devoted the whole of her adult life to seamen's welfare. The Bureau of Missing Seamen, which she organized during the last war, has helped to locate more than 6,500 mariners given up for lost.

Born in St. John, N. B., Mrs. Roper moved with her family to Boston early in her youth. When she was seventeen, Captain Knickerbocker, of the American Seamen's Friends Society, in Hanover Street, Boston, told her he was in need of a teacher for his Sunday Bible class, and she volunteered and was accepted.

Had Pupils Aged 70

It proved to be a large order for a girl of her age. In the class were men of all ages up to seventy, and their questions were sometimes disconcertingly deep. But Mrs. Roper continued to teach, and the longer she remained there the more interest in the work continued to grow. By the time she was nineteen she was visiting deep-water boarding houses, ships and shipping offices, and had already chosen her life's vocation.

While engaged in Sunday school work she had met a young college student, also a teacher, who became her husband. He was the Rev. E. H. Roper. With him, Mrs. Roper worked among the fishermen at Gloucester, Mass., and in the sailors' home at St. John, N. B. Then they moved to Portland, Ore., where, for ten years, Mr. Roper conducted a seamen's mission.

When Mr. Roper died in 1915, Mrs. Roper was urged to remain in Portland and carry on the work. That same year, however, she was offered the post of house mother in the Seamen's Church Institute in New York.

'Mrs. Roper Will Fix It'

At first her work was general. Trouble of any kind at the institute—trouble at the hotel desk, in the baggage room, anywhere—was taken to

Mrs. Roper. "Mrs. Roper will fix it" became an axiom.

Soon the seamen began taking their personal troubles to her. They confided in her their difficulties with women, family trials, the scrapes they were in. Mrs. Roper liked her job as "trouble fixer." She not only won the confidence of those who appealed to her, but she tried to find out what they wanted to do in life and to help them do it.

During the first world war, she was deluged with inquiries about missing seamen. Some of them came from shipmates, some from families. She hit upon the idea of establishing her Missing Seamen's Bureau. It proved such a success that she continued it after the war.

Lists of missing men were posted on the institute's bulletin board, and sent to ports all over the world. Mrs. Roper carefully checked each inquiry with her own voluminous files, with the files of steamship companies and those of the Maritime Commission.

Became World Famous

With the start of the present war, the volume of inquiries trebled. Mrs. Roper's fame had spread round the world. "Go to Mrs. Roper" was the advice seamen gave the families of missing men, and the families did. She began to receive about 100 appeals a week. It sometimes took months to get the information she was after, but "Mother" Roper never gave up.

The walls of her South Street office were hung with testimonials of her work, presents from seamen she had befriended. Among them are two death certifications — one from the French, and one from the American government. They are from the last war. The men killed had given Mrs. Roper as their "next of kin."

To the end she never lost her affection for seamen. She often said that, even as a girl, she never once had received the suggestion of an insult from any of them. And she would add: "I never met a sailor who was a coward, nor have I ever heard of heroic deeds from the men who have performed them."

Surviving are three daughters, Maude, Marian and Laura.

Reprinted from the New York Herald Tribune April 6, 1943



Janet Roper Memorial Fund

Ever since Mrs. Roper's death on April fifth merchant seamen, their wives and many friends have been writing to the Institute paying tribute to Mrs. Roper and asking if some Fund could be set up in her memory. The Janet Roper Memorial Fund has been established and contributions may be sent to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South Street, and are tax exempt. A good start was made by placing in this Fund \$5000 paid to the Institute from the insurance policy of a torpedoed seaman who had named the Institute as his beneficiary.

The "Mother" Roper Memorial Fund will be unique in that seamen themselves will contribute to it, many having expressed the wish to honor Mrs. Roper's memory in some practical way. Mrs. Roper completed last July 12th 54 years of work for merchant seamen, and on all the seven seas she was revered and beloved as a friend and confidante by men of the freighters and tankers.

The purpose of the Fund will be to continue and expand the Missing Seamen's Bureau and other personal services to seamen and their families. This will be similar to the Memorial Fund established in 1926 in honor of the Rev. Archibald R. Mansfield, D.D., to provide social service and special relief to needy seamen.

Under the Missing Seamen's Bureau the Institute is now compiling a "master card index" of all merchant marine war casualties reported by the War Shipping Administration as an aid to answering inquiries of relatives of merchant seamen. The list is continuously compared with the names of seamen using the Baggage Bureau, Clinics, employment bureau and other facilities in the Institute's 13-story building.

A biography of Mrs. Roper, by Jonathan Finn, which was begun several months before she died, will be published early in the Fall by Doubleday, Doran & Co.

A Sailor's Tribute

A WOMAN called Mother by hundreds upon thousands of seamen has passed and has been called to her reward. But yet her spirit lingers with us, for she had designed herself in a lifehood of humility and service to those she loved.

Her arms as a Mother reached for all seamen, and welcomed them without regard of their past and sought out for them a better future always. Because she felt that service incumbent upon her.

It mattered not whence the individual came, or whether he discussed with her the Bible, the Talmud, or the Koran, or even the Books of Confucius; and even as she talked peace came to the troubled, the sick, the lame and the halt.

Words cannot accurately portray the loss keenly felt by thousands of seamen or the void thus cast upon them. For her arms as a Mother were always open — those of a Friend!

And in her, all seamen recognized a human being, and through her their own frailties; because she was a human who had found the human equation without sitting in judgment upon her fellow human beings.

Her mission in life was not an easy task, but she fulfilled it with her innate simplicity. For in her humility she found for those who sought her surcease from a multitude of things. Her code was simple, yet, profound because she always believed that Truth and Light shall prevail—for each is inseparable from each other.

And by that code she was all encompassing and her hands lightly touched many and moulded them into better things, without seeming to do so or to interfere with their lives, for that is the thing that she least desired to do.



Photo by Roy Pinney

Mrs. Roper Arranges a Reunion

And as all came to her she patiently guided those who would accept it. With her quiet smile—which looked above and beyond this earth—she went her way without fanfare. For countless are the thousands, the hundreds and the scores who came to her—and none were refused their particular want.

To the depressed she gave ambition; the despairing, hope; the homeless, shelter; the ruthless, kindness; the sad and sorrowing, gladness and peace; and to the unbelieving she brought an immutable Faith; and even the selfish were filled with sacrifice and the weak with strength. For hers was that touch of magic that gently comes to humans but once in a while.

As a Mother to all seamen she saw much and said nought; walking her lonely way, gently correcting and guiding those who came to her. For she walked among her wards, revered as she will be remembered—a Saint without halo!

A Chaplain's Tribute

Editor's Note: On Sunday evening, April eleventh, Chaplain Lawrence Harkness preached in the Institute Chapel on "The Ministry of Friendship" as illustrated by St. Marks's record of the miracle of healing the man deaf and dumb. At the end he spoke of Mrs. Roper, for it seemed to him that she was "the friends" of the Gospel story and the following was the concluding thought.

Who will take Mrs. Roper's place? Many people have asked and are asking this question. No one can take her place in the life of the Institute and of the men of the sea because it is not vacant. She still holds it and will continue to hold it. We may not actually see her as of yore visiting in the rooms of the Institute with a graciousness and sincerity born of her deep interest in and understanding of her fellow men, but I rather think that, as time goes on, we will be ever conscious of her presence because the ministry of friendship, as she practised it, was so sane, so vital and so accomplishing.

Through the long years, she has woven the fibers of the spiritual forces of life, the qualities of soul, the things of God so firmly into the

fabric of our lives, making us feel her own unchanging faith and belief in us and in our being able to reach through ourselves the power and dignity and glory of manhood, giving us stronger desire and urge to attain the best that she would wish and expect us to reach, that, no matter what our condition may be or where we may be, we can never be far away from her nor she from us.

Mrs. Roper kept on her desk a copy of Sam Walter Foss' poem, "The House by the Side of the Road". As to her, 25 South Street was her "House by the Side of the Road". I quote from this poem.

"Let me live in my house by the side of the road,
It's here the race of men go by.
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong;
Wise, foolish—so am I.
Then why should I sit in the scorners' seat
Or hurl the cynic's ban?
Let me live in my house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man."

This was to Mrs. Roper a prayer dream which through her ministry of friendship, she made come gloriously true.

An Editor's Tribute *

Never has the admiration inspired by the good life been better demonstrated than by its universal recording in the daily press following the death of Mother Roper of the Seamen's Church Institute, New York. For months to come there will be heavy hearts in the ports around the world as word of her passing reaches the ears of merchant seamen. It was no accident that she was known to mariners everywhere as "Mother". For fifty-five years her great heart was open to men of

the sea. No trouble of theirs was too trivial to enlist her sympathetic understanding and cooperation. She was not the kind of Christian who thought that emotional pity was enough. She believed in action—and acted. Everywhere on the seven seas she was a warming point of contact between men who had never known each other. If you knew Mother Roper you belonged to the elect, and there were few on the ships of any nation who didn't know her. During the first

*Dr. Guy Emery Shipler *The Churchman*, April 15, 1943.

World War we printed in these pages a photograph of two seamen who were prisoners in a German prison camp. The boys had never met before, but one day they discovered that they both knew Janet Roper. They had their picture taken together and mailed it to her, with a touching inscription. It was significant not because it was unusual; it was significant because it was the kind of thing that happened so often.

FROM SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF PHILADELPHIA

"Mrs. Roper's family might like to know that the flowers we sent came from the following seamen: Captain Gustav Larson, a retired Tugboat Captain; Fred Little, a cook, who said that Mrs. Roper was the finest woman in the world; Edward Driscoll, A.B., who likewise paid personal tribute to Mrs. Roper; Francis Hogan, a ship's steward, who said that Mrs. Roper had often done favors for him and was truly a remarkable woman. All these seamen contributed voluntarily."

Percy R. Stockman
Superintendent and Chaplain

Editorials

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

Even our armed forces are no more vital to victory than the courageous crews that man the merchant marine of the United Nations. To keep their morale at a high pitch and to make them feel at home on our shores should be the concern of us all. The Seamen's Church Institute is the largest shore home in the world for active merchant seamen of all races and creeds.

The annual report of the Institute shows how its activities have mounted under the stress of war. Last year, for example, it provided lodgings for 435,000, compared with 266,000 in 1941. The number of meals served has reached 1,165,000, nearly double any past record except during the depression, when the Institute acted as a Federal and local relief agency. Entertainment facilities have been so expanded that men on brief shore leave can always find suitable and pleasant recreation. The Institute has played host to more than a hundred torpedoed crews. It maintains a convalescent home for survivors. A school, a job agency and Christmas and bon voyage packaging for seamen are among its varied services. Eighty per cent of the guests are American boys now flocking eagerly to our docks. All who go down to the sea in ships have reason to bless the Seamen's Church Institute.

Editorial, *The New York Times*,
Tuesday, April 20, 1943.

EMBLEMS FOR SEAMEN

Not often does Congress pass a bill that pleases "everybody." The measure authorizing the War Shipping Board to furnish and issue to merchant seamen insignia denoting their deeds and experience is a bill that Americans will unanimously favor. Anybody who has served in the Merchant Marine since Pearl Harbor is to be entitled to an emblem denoting that fact. Another sort of device will be awarded to a seaman who has served in the war or combat zones. A special honor bar will be given to a seaman who has served on a ship that has been attacked by the enemy. If the attacked vessel had to be abandoned on account of the attack a star will be added to the bar. If a seaman has been injured, wounded or subjected to dangerous exposure a medal and ribbon with a rosette will be worn.

Thus a scale of honors, each with its definite and separate significance, is provided for these men who face death every day, wear no uniform, make no complaints. They are without the gold lace that we are apt to consider a mark and prerogative of fighting men. From books, too, we know that a sailor's life has been one of the hardest of lots. Yet on the old sailing vessels storm, wreck, fire, mutiny were the worst, but only occasional, enemies. Compared with our men of today those of Clark Russell and Conrad had soft berths.

The deathman under the sea is always lurking for the sailors of today. You see them struggling in the water, facing hunger and thirst on a raft fighting off sharks. You see them helping or rescuing others. If they survive one torpedoing, they go out for another one . . . When they get their insignia we can read their proud history visibly displayed.

Editorial, *New York Times*, April
4, 1943.

"City of Flint"

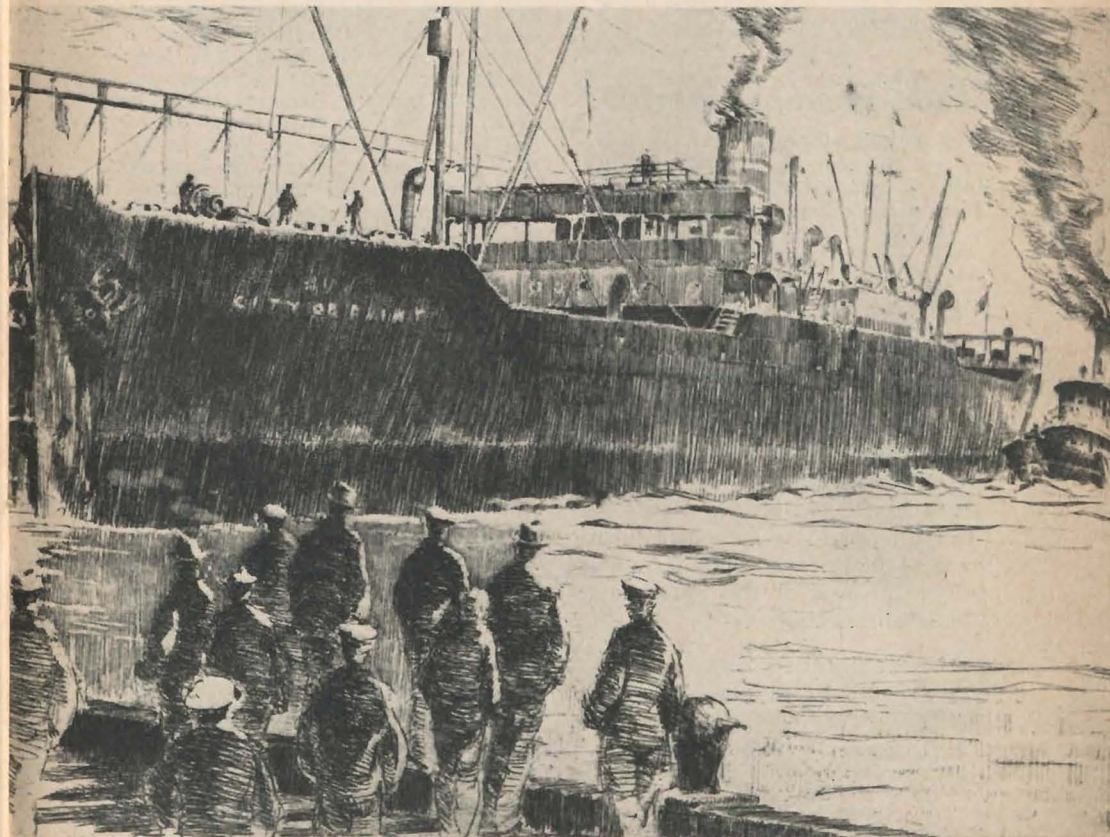
She was an American freighter whose adventures began a few days after war was declared. A recent announcement made by the Navy reported that the old ship was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine late in January, 1943.

Because of the interest which centered on the 4,900 ton freighter in September, 1939, when she picked up more than 200 survivors of the torpedoed liner "Athenia", the Navy departed from its practice of not naming merchant ships and stated that the ship was the "City of Flint." The Institute's ship visitors always covered the pay-offs of this vessel, and so became well acquainted with the crew. The Navy reports that there were 48 survivors and 17 lost.

When the *Flint's* wireless picked up on September 4, 1939 the news that the *Athenia*, westbound, with many Americans, had been torpedoed 200 miles off the Irish coast, Captain Joseph A. Gainard changed the *Flint's* course and took on board 229 men, women and children from lifeboats. Plodding for Halifax, with supplies short and accommodations strained, the *Flint* was met by the Coast

Guard cutters Bibb and Campbell, (which recently distinguished herself by ramming and sinking a U-boat) which carried blankets, medical supplies, food, tooth brushes, etc.

On October 3, 1939 the *Flint* sailed for England with a cargo of tractors, grain, fruit and leather. Six days later the German battleship *Deutschland* intercepted her and put a prize crew aboard, declaring that the *City of Flint* was carrying contraband. The Nazis also put aboard the survivors of the British freighter *Stonegate*. With her prize crew aboard the *Flint* put in at the Norwegian port of Tromsø, and thence to Russia's Arctic port of Murmansk. Conflicting reports of her fate reached the outside world. Finally, the Germans piloted her down the Norwegian coast to Bergen, where the Norwegians interned the German crew and directed Captain Gainard to sail for home at his own convenience after his cargo had been sold at auction. He brought his ship safely into the harbor of Baltimore on January 27, 1940 and since then had made many voyages carrying supplies to the United Nations.



Etching by Cliff Parkhurst

Ship News

DIONNE "QUINS" CHRISTEN FIVE SHIPS

The Dionne Quintuplets, who are to sponsor five new coastal cargo vessels which will be launched in May at the Walter Butler Shipyard, Superior, Wisconsin, will participate in what will be one of the greatest mass launchings in the history of Great Lakes shipbuilding, the Maritime Commission announced today.

Each of the Quintuplets will sponsor a new coastal vessel built under Commission contract. Water from Niagara Falls, symbolizing the unarmed boundary and the continuing friendship which has existed between Canada and the United States for many years, will be used in the ceremony.

"Our Good Shipmate"

As a good shipmate if not a sailor, for she never went to sea, "Mother" Roper is certain of a berth in Fiddlers Green, the place where all good sailors go on their last voyage Home.

Seaman David Harris

New Honors for Sports Heroes

San Francisco, April 22 (A. P.).—Names of the immortals of the sports world will be given to seven Liberty ships to be launched during the next thirty days at the Richmond shipyard No. 2 of the Permanente Metals Corporation.

The ships will be named:

S. S. Knut Rockne—honoring Notre Dame's great football coach.

S. S. James J. Corbett—known as "Gentleman Jim" during and after the

NEW SHIP RADIO FOILS U-BOATS

Maritimers, cut off from U. S. radio programs since discovery that their receivers were radiating signals audible to enemy subs, are now going to be able once again to get entertainment and news from home while at sea.

The War Shipping Administration is installing 2,600 newly invented, non-radiating short and long-wave receivers for crews on ships.

MERCHANT MARINE ACHIEVEMENT TROPHY TO BEAR NAME OF JANET ROPER

On National Maritime Day, May 22nd, the American Merchant Marine Achievement Trophy, awarded annually to an outstanding citizen by Mrs. Lily W. Reed, will be given posthumously to Mrs. Janet Roper. Her daughters will accept the Trophy in behalf of their mother. The award will be made on the steps of the Sub-Treasury Building on Wall Street, New York City at noon in the presence of maritime, civic and fraternal officials. A floral tribute to the heroic dead of the Merchant Marine will be cast upon the waters of New York harbor.

days he was heavyweight boxing champion of the world.

S. S. Walter Camp—originator of all America football teams.

S. S. Hobart Baker—renowned hockey champion.

S. S. Christy Mathewson—one of baseball's great pitchers.

S. S. George Gipp—described by Knute Rockne as the "greatest football player of all time."

S. S. John L. Sullivan—former world's heavyweight boxing champion.

Book Reviews

WE THOUGHT WE HEARD THE ANGELS SING

By Lieut. James C. Whittaker
E. P. Dutton & Co. \$1.50

This little book is destined to become one of the greatest epics of the war. The author was co-pilot on the plane carrying Eddie Rickenbacker on a secret war mission. From his salt-encrusted diary he has reconstructed this dramatic story of the 21 days spent by eight men in small rubber rafts in the south Pacific. It is the story of eight men against the sea, and of their turning to God and of the miracles God wrought in answer to their prayers. Theirs was the experience which a number of merchant seamen have also survived—thirst, hunger, sharks, tropic sun, storm. Seven men came through the long ordeal. By their courageous example they have shown their fighting strength and their spiritual faith. A harrowing—but also an inspiring tale. —M. D. C.

MODERN MARINE ENGINEER'S MANUAL Volume II

Alan Osbourne, Editor-in-chief
Cornell Maritime Press \$4.00

This is the modern "Bible" for marine engineers, and its editor, who is senior engineer for the U. S. Maritime Commission, has made a thorough job of it. Supplementing the turbine and reciprocating-engine material in Volume I, this Volume features the Marine Diesel Engines. Ten other sections including full operating guides on electricity, refrigeration, heating systems, steering gear and deck machinery, propellers and propulsion. This complete and comprehensive manual, of 2,900 pages and 940 illustrations is an essential guide for every marine engineer today.

Wm. Russell, (Instructor,
Engineering, Merchant Marine School)

HOW TO NAVIGATE TODAY

By M. R. Hart
Cornell Maritime Press \$1.50

Here is a simple and readable discussion of the principles of navigation, eliminating many phases which are unnecessary since the publication of modern navigation tables. Specific problems are studied, such as navigating by the sun, meridian altitude, identifying the stars, aerial navigation, etc. However, this reviewer would not recommend this book for the absolute beginner, for some basic knowledge of astronomical principles is essential for a thorough grasp of the science of navigation.

Lieut. Commander Frederick Just
(Principal, Merchant Marine School).

WE FIGHT WITH MERCHANT SHIPS

By M. B. Palmer
Bobbs-Merrill \$2.75

This book takes the reader from the time of our decline in shipping up to date. It is a very well-written story of the reason for the state in which our merchant service was. The author shows what a large job the government and army are doing to keep the supplies moving.

It is a very interesting and enlightening story that comes at a time when sharp criticism is in the air, and should put a lot of people on the right track.

The author points out just why the neutrality act was put in force and also repealed. He explains the shift of American flag vessels to the flag of Panama and the Battle of the Atlantic, which went on before our entry into the war and the arming of our ships and why some people did not want them to be armed.

He also discusses our effort to stay out of trouble by ignoring the sinking of our ships, and presents very fairly the "beefs" of the Union and why they were made, something which the public has not understood.

Reviewed by John Tuzo, 2nd Mate

UNITED STATES SERVICE SYMBOLS

By Cleveland H. Smith and
Gertrude R. Taylor

Duell-Sloane & Pierce. \$1.50

The authors have prepared a useful handbook of the symbols of all of our services, bringing it up to date enough to include even certain phases of Civilian Defense. From the point of view of a merchant seaman, however, although it is a concise and helpful publication, this reviewer wonders why the U. S. Maritime Service is completely omitted. This comparatively new service is often not recognized by the public and inclusion in such a handbook would have helped the public become acquainted with its uniforms.

—A. W. C.

THANKS

The Conrad Librarians are grateful for the immediate and excellent response to the appeal for detective stories and "pocket-book" novels. The seamen love these and take them to sea to while away the "dull"?! hours when off duty.

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