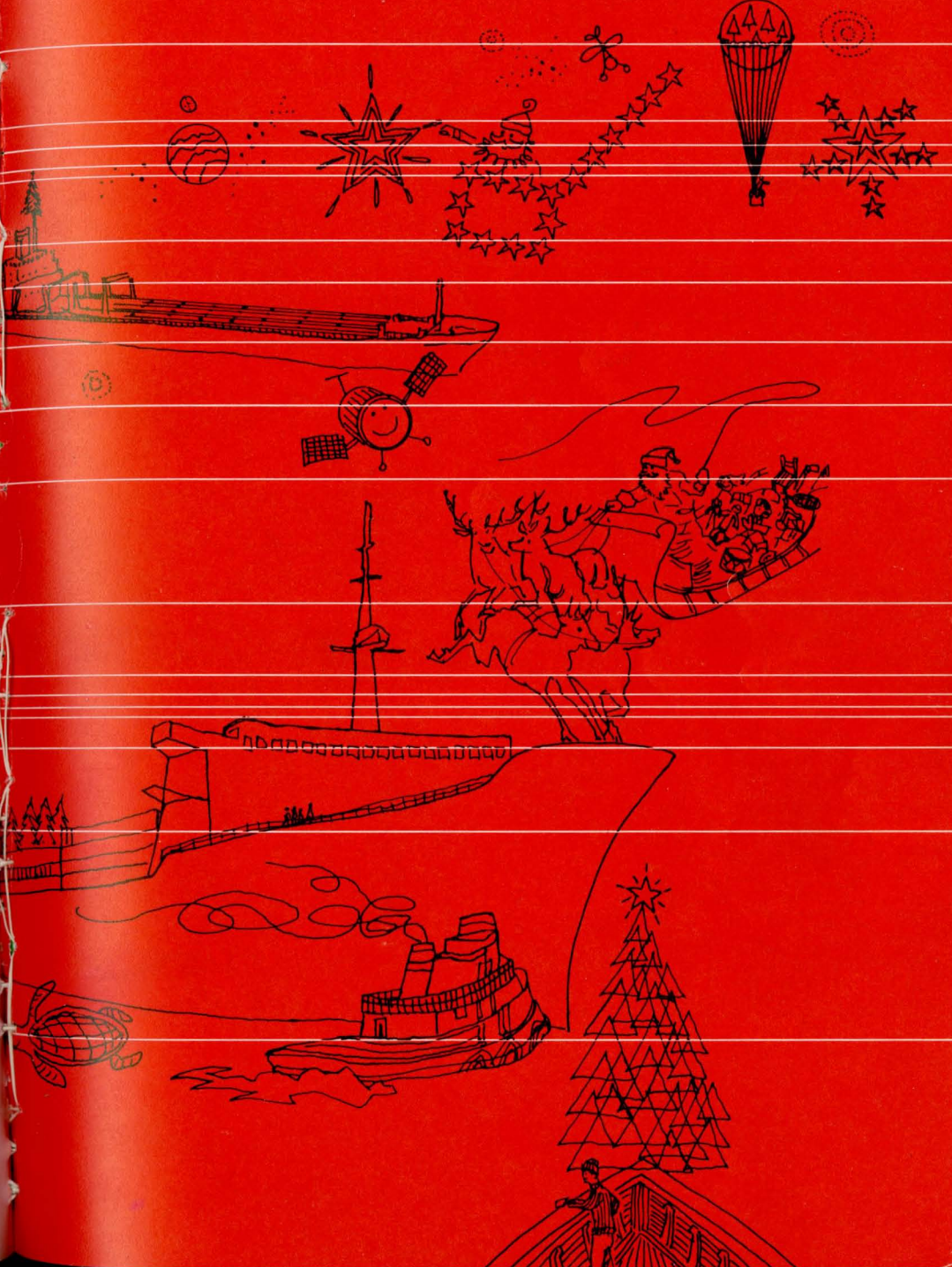


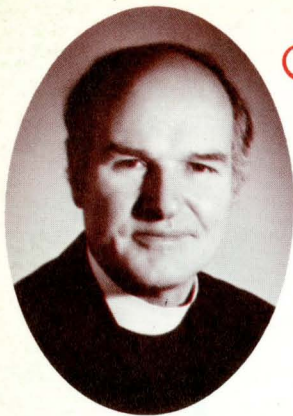
DECEMBER 1978

The LOOKOUT



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY





A Holiday Message



Dear Friends,

Once again it is my special privilege to bring you Christmas greetings on behalf of the Board, the staff and the thousands upon thousands of merchant seafarers who have benefited from your support this year.

Your loyalty has also been a constant source of inspiration as we have dealt with the many challenges and problems of a very busy past twelve months. Twelve months during which, I might add, we have made considerable progress towards securing the future of this Institute.

That is why I think it is especially worth remembering at this time of year that were it not for the birth of the infant Jesus, the very existence of the Seamen's Church Institute would never have come to be. More particularly, the Institute, its work, and the support of all those who give so generously to its work are, in fact, gifts honoring Him and His message of new life and love given first to the seamen of Galilee and then to all the world.

Thank you for your continued support, encouragement and prayers.

Sincerely,

James R. Whittemore
JAMES R. WHITTEMORE, Director

The LOOKOUT

Vol. 69 No. 9 December 1978

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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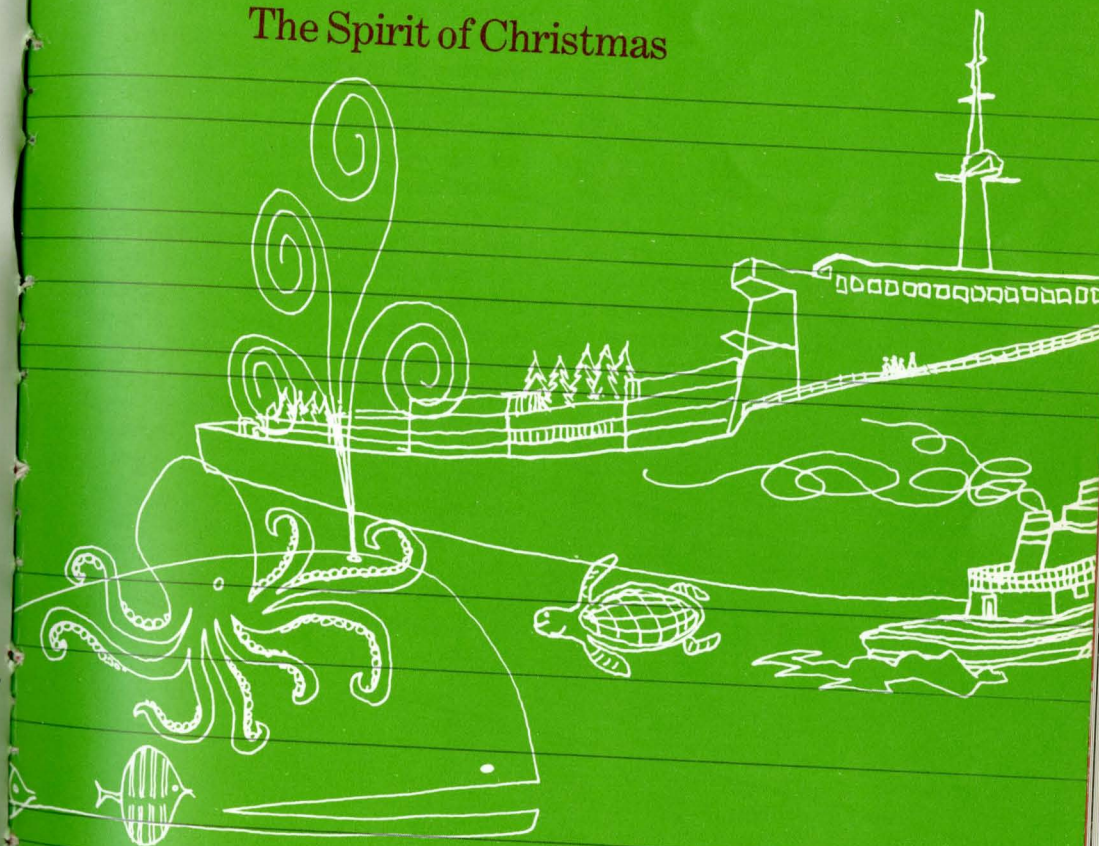
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To help launch this Holiday season, we once again send to you a special potpourri of Christmas poems, stories and greetings.

Sprinkled liberally with salt from the sea for added zest, we hope that it gladdens the heart, pleases the eye and helps to capture that "special something" known to all who will recognize it as



The Spirit of Christmas



From our roving seaman/reporter

William P. Mote

A VERY MIXED BAG



A week before Christmas last year I found myself in a tropical port staring into a glass of Guinness and wondering if the crew of the ship I'd just paid off could have qualified for its own Book of Records. I had taken the job several months before, signing on as 3rd Mate/Radio Operator to get away from the lovely New York winter. I had just paid off by candlelight, it was that kind of a trip. We had many adventures but, as another crew member is writing a book about them, I will comment only on the crew which was an adventure in itself.

The ship was quite small with a total crew of nine and had, for years, run in the Islands. Now headed for delivery overseas we began to crew-up — the search was on. Our foreign flag meant no

union, so all hands had to be compatible and willing to help at any job. As one put it, "yachting with cargo" and while it was not always a pleasure trip, it was different.

We ended up with quite a "mixed-bag". The sea experience of the gang ranged from several years deep sea, down to a couple of trips on the Staten Island Ferry.

Our nationalities looked like a roster of the UN: Panama, Martinique, Sri Lanka, USA and Bermuda. The religions represented included: Moslem, Jewish, Buddhist and Christians of several denominations. English was the common language but we had additional abilities in French, Spanish, Arabic and several of India's dialects. Foodwise we ranged from very strict vegetarian to "eat-anything". There was no pork aboard of course, but plenty of beef. The favorite dish was "Shake and Bake" chicken.

What impressed me most was that we all got along very well with no conflicts as to race or religions. I learned quite a bit of the Arabs' faith and had some of my misconceptions cleared up. We all worked together and within different departments in order to keep the ship running. I feel it was a worthwhile experience and would be happy to sail with any or all the group again. I believe we all profited from the voyage. By now, the small crew is scattered all over the globe, probably never to meet again. But, I know we will long remember the trip and that I shall remember them especially as the Christmas week comes around.

William P. Mote ... Parita Bay, R.P. ... 13
July 1978

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

by Joseph C. Salak

The drama that developed aboard the S.S. *Santa Rita* on Christmas Eve of 1911 could have been taken from one of Herman Melville's sea epics.

The *Santa Rita*, then one of the largest tankers afloat, carried oil to South America, Hawaii, Panama and Alaska.

When she was built by the Union Oil Company in the early 1900's she had no wireless. Much later a wireless shack was added at the after end of the hurricane deck, clear across the deck, with one door on the starboard side or end of the shack.

During the Christmas Holiday week of 1911, the *Santa Rita*, bound for Seattle, from Port San Luis, Calif., ran into an indescribably vicious, full-scale storm off the Oregon Coast.

The roaring wind scooped up the sea and rolled wave after wave of spray over the hurricane deck. Under the assault the wireless shack rattled and vibrated under the steady deluge; and the operator could only pray that he and his precious equipment would not be washed overboard.

Even going to mess below became an

ordeal. It required perfect timing, teeth tightly clenched, waiting for a towering wave to roll across the deck, dashing out, grabbing a watertight steel hatch cover, lifting it, jumping down inside and closing it before the next billowing wave hit. The return trip to the wireless shack was equally treacherous.

The captain realized that to survive the fury and relentless lashing he must run with the storm, not fight it. This he did and was blown four days out to sea before the storm exhausted itself.

But before the calm, a huge wave with herculean force crashed aboard, caved in the door of the wireless shack and flooded the room with salt water two feet deep.

With his guard up, hair plastered down, the wireless operator, in a yellow slicker, sloshed around to inspect the damage. The motor generator, used to



change the ship's direct current to alternating current to operate the wireless, appeared to be a soggy ruin. The only reason it still remained was due to the double-duty bolts binding it securely to the deck. If anything, it would go down with the ship.

Because the *Santa Rita* did not carry any auxiliary equipment, which did not become a requirement until 1912 after the *Titanic* hit an iceberg, the operator decided to wait until the tanker got into Seattle where port repairmen could put it back into operation.

Not wishing to disturb the captain who had his hands full keeping the rolling tanker under control, the operator crawled into his soaked bunk and thought of the outside world ... folks walking to church, singing "Silent Night" and "Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem."

He visualized Christmas trees decorated with snowy white popcorn strung on long threads and brilliant red cranberries on another string draped around the tree. He could almost see the sputtering red and green candles, attached to the limbs.

As he worried helplessly about his link with the dry, warm and safe outside world cut-off, the receiver on the table, not damaged, suddenly came to life and began to talk, giving out a weather report.

By now, the wrath of the storm, having pulled out all the stops, abated and the *Santa Rita* was retracing its way back to Seattle.

Meanwhile, the United Wireless Station at Seattle kept calling, hour after hour. A rush of ice-cold terror swept over the wireless operator. Maybe some ship

was in distress. Maybe the *Santa Rita* was being diverted elsewhere. Maybe ... maybe ... The long persistent calls sounded urgent, after all, the *Santa Rita* had been out of touch for five days, so the operator jumped out of his bunk and started to work on the generator.

He hung a bank of electric light bulbs around the machine and when it dried he scooped out the salt, cleaned the commutator, the collector rings and the bearings. As he labored, he encouraged himself, "Everything will be all right."

While thus engaged, Seattle continued calling. Finally, with cold, trembling hands, he pulled over the field coil resistor starting handle. It took off instantly and worked perfectly. Thank the Lord!

Now, tense and impatient, he waited for Seattle to sign off so he could open up and answer. And he did, tersely explaining why there had been no signal for five very un-Christmasy days. In reply he was told, "We have a very important message from local newspaper."

The weary wireless operator, blinked his eyes furiously, fighting back his burning tears, as he received the message:

*To: Captain Grant, S.S. Santa Rita.
Wish you, your officers, and crew Merry Christmas.*

(signed) Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

"...GOOD ENOUGH FOR SEAMEN"

by Max L. O'Starr

Since the day I quit the sea, I have done most of the cooking at home. I learned the trade on American and Norwegian ships. One Sunday I felt quite nostalgic and whipped up a pot of lobsouse, a boiled salt meat hash.

"What is that slop?" my wife at that time asked.

"Lobsouse," I replied. "it is an ancient but well-liked sailor's dish."

"It still looks like slop to me," she retorted.

This exchange of domestic repartee made me realize that the general public knew little about the dietary history of the maritime world. It is even possible that many couldn't care less.

The origins of seafaring are obscured by time. As far as we know, the first methods of water travel were logs, then rafts. There was no need to store food for the crew. Our ancient mariners most likely drifted or paddled to the shore and hunted if they wanted meat, or scrounged for fruits and berries if game was scarce. As for water, it was all around them. When man became an offshore traveler, river craft proved inadequate and boat design advanced rapidly. Food had to be carried for long periods of time. Most likely this would consist of dried meats, fruits, vegetables, water, and fermented juices to help enliven things. On fishing expeditions, some of the catch would suffice.

With the development of coastal trade (and piracy), although ships were beached at night with the crews foraging for food and water, some supplies had to be stored for emergencies if intractable



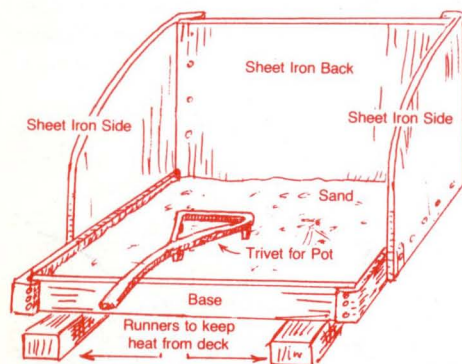
coasts forced them to remain at sea. Many ship-masters, if they knew the coast, would "dare the wrath of the gods" and stay at sea for several days without beaching. This required adequate victualing. When civilization advanced with the resultant increase of colonization and international trade, long non-stop voyages became routine.

Underwater archeologists recently discovered a Grecian ship of the Trojan era in Turkish waters. Located in what would correspond to the crew's mess area were olive pits and fishbones. The "Odyssey," a prime source of historical information for this era, informs us that supplies on Grecian vessels included barley-corn and cheese. Ulysses has been quoted "...I had nine ships and it didn't take me long to get them manned. The men feasted for six days; I had plenty of animals to sacrifice and to eat. On the seventh we slipped our moorings and set sail from Crete..."¹ This is a basic trick of any steward's department — feed well at the *beginning* of a voyage.

For unnumbered centuries, all hands were partners in the voyage. Each took his turn at the oar and shared the common pot. But gradually a schism developed. The owner remained at home, appointing his officers who hired the sailors. To cut costs, thereby increasing profits, the quality of the sailor's ration deteriorated. Good food was available only the first week of any voyage. The ordeal of salt meat, dried fruits and pickled vegetables, sour wine, rancid water, and weevily flour had to be endured. On long voyages, scurvy and

death were unwelcome shipmates.

An English manuscript of the 14th Century mentions salt, bread, beer, wine, boiled and roast meat served on a ship crossing the Channel.² Ship stoves at that time were open sandboxes on deck, the fire being dowsed in a high sea.



**Typical Sandbox Stove
Used At Sea**

Duration of use unknown

Seamen on Spanish ships of the late 15th Century were provided with one hot meal per day served at noon, weather permitting. Rations provided were water, wine, olive oil, sea biscuit, hard tack, salt meat and fish, chickpeas, lentils, beans, rice, honey, almonds, raisins, onions, sugar, cheese, figs, garlic, olives, bacon, and flour.³ Salt flour was made into unleavened bread baked in ashes. The crew and officers ate the same rations although the officers' servants fancied it up for them. In 1583 the Spanish ship *Santa Ana*, coasting in the Mediterranean trade, served freshly baked bread daily. In that service she had access to fresh foods. However, the traditional salted and pickled provisions were stored to supplement the fresh bread.

In 1544, the French fleet was almost destroyed by food poisoning. At the same

time, several English ships suffered as a result of victualing with spoiled salt meat. The Portuguese acquired a reputation for serving rotten rations from this time until about 1750. Their crews were usually fed salt pork, badly dried codfish, and pulse, a porridge of dried legumes. Only the officers had unlimited fresh bread, meat, and water. In 1598, the Dutch began to issue lemon juice to combat scurvy. The English, following suit, decided on lime juice as a matter of economy.

For centuries, live-stock had been carried as fresh meat for officers and traveling officials. The common sailor seldom shared in this. However, there were those who did have the interest of the men of the sea at heart. Several official diets were promulgated over the centuries since sickness and death at sea are unprofitable. But the implementation of these diets was usually hindered on the grounds of economy. By 1784, the Dutch East India Company had decreed the issuance of brandy, barley, rice, prunes, salt beef, smoked pork, peas, white beans, fish, bread, butter, vinegar, beer, mustard, and olive oil. With the invention of canned foods at Napoleon's instigation—it was primarily for his armies—things immediately began to change for the better. However, in the Royal Navy, canned meats and soups were used at first only in the sickbay.

The mass emigrations from Europe to America and Australia provided the impetus for general improvements. Until



Ship's Pantry, Ship Balclutha

the mid-19th Century, all passengers provided their own food for the voyage which resulted in both crowded and unsanitary conditions. Soon the United States and Great Britain were forced to take a direct hand in the matter.

"In the late forties and early fifties, both the United States and British Governments passed strict emigration laws. In the Parliamentary scale of 1843 each adult passenger had to be issued with the following per week — water, 21 quarts; biscuits, 2½ lbs.; wheaten flour, 1 lb.; oatmeal, 5 lbs.; rice, 2 lbs.; molasses, 2 lbs.; with potatoes as a substitute for either rice or oatmeal."⁴

This was the turning point. With the use of steamships, the duration of sea voyages lessened and tourist trade could be solicited. With upper-class travelers demanding the best, the benefits soon filtered down to the steerage passengers and the crews. In a few decades, the passenger ship became a floating palace.



Dining Salon, Passenger Liner Blucher 1901

Cargo ships still presented problems and food conditions changed slowly during the following century. On uncounted occasions officers and men had to purchase supplemental food in shoreside markets when in port. Only through never-ending union and political activity did the lot of the seaman improve enough to equal (or even surpass) that of the land-dwelling citizen. This finally came to pass just before World War Two. Now fresh bread and pastries (for the

common seaman) are baked daily at sea. Fresh meat and produce are always at hand. Except on rare occasions, the spectre of scurvy has vanished. Under several foreign flags, meals are served family style — all is put on the table at once. American ships feed restaurant style via the printed menu. In fact, the most difficult part of a cook's job is the possibility of frostbite as a result of frozen pre-packaged foods. But, unfortunately, weevils still get into the flour.



Passengers' and Officers' dining hall, Steam Schooner Wapama.

Since the beginning of seafaring, preserved (salted) meats and other foods have been the staple diet of seamen. In the wake of modern packaging and refrigeration, ship personnel and passengers often eat better than on shore. There is no valid excuse for any ship to limp into port with the crew on the verge of mutiny or in sickbay because of nutritional deficiencies. Though man has gone to sea for uncounted millenia, humanity has but recently followed him. Give a sailor a good feeding ship, a clean place to spend his off-watch hours, and considerate officers — he will be content.

Footnote

1. The "Odyssey," by Homer, cir. 800 BC
2. "The Sailing Ship," by R. and R. C. Anderson, McBride & Co., 1947. From a manuscript at Trinity College, Cambridge, England.
3. "Columbus' Ships," by Jose Maria Martinez-Hidalgo, Barre Publ., Barre, Mass.
4. "The Western Ocean Packets," by Basil Lubbock, Brown, Son, and Ferguson, Publ., Glasgow, Scot. 1956 edition.



COMMUNION AT CHRISTMAS

Emily Sargent Councilman

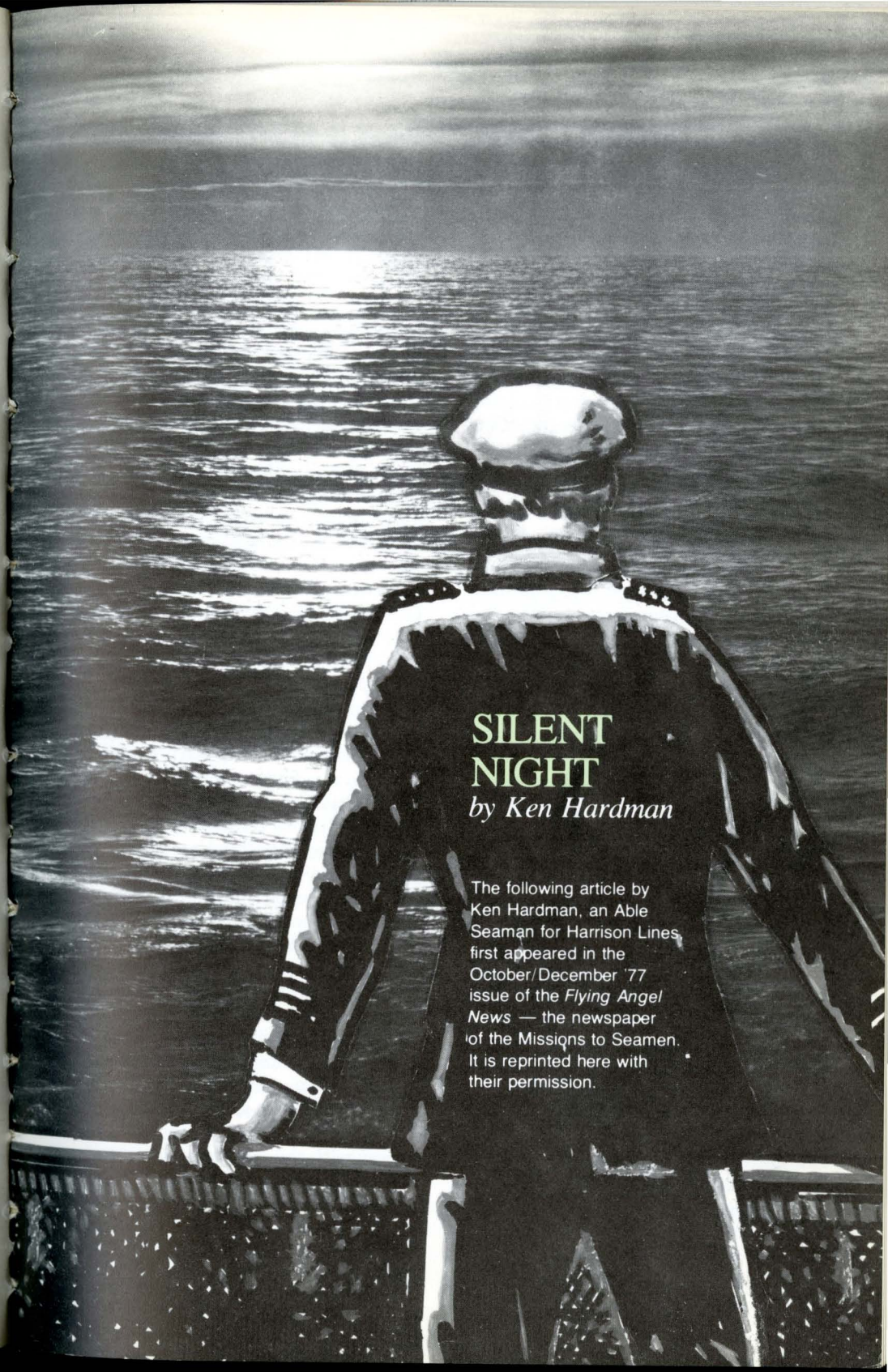
In a circle where Love takes us all in, we stood around the starlit manger-bed and spoke His name, "Jesus," remembering the angel's command to Joseph, "You shall give Him the name Jesus (Savior), for He will save His people from their sins."

"From pride," I said, new-hearing the Word. "When I listen, He saves me from the sin of pride, my spiritual pride too often disguised, unrecognized, ignored."

Another said, "From unforgiveness. When I remember to forget my wounds from other hands, He saves me."

Still another, "Why, I've been condemning by brothers. He saves me from my skin of intolerance of their intolerance."

Then my friend with sightless eyes spoke softly, wonderingly, "When I put my hand in His and walk with confidence, I do not stumble in futility, alienation, despair. He saves me, most of all, from darkness."



SILENT NIGHT

by Ken Hardman

The following article by Ken Hardman, an Able Seaman for Harrison Lines, first appeared in the October/December '77 issue of the *Flying Angel News* — the newspaper of the Missions to Seamen. It is reprinted here with their permission.

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.

It is like any one of a thousand other nights at sea and yet it is different. Aboard the ship, the difference is felt like a tangible thing, cutting deep into the hearts and minds of the men on watch, of the men lying open-eyed in hot bunks or slowly pacing the ringing steel which is only now losing the heat gathered from a day of burning sun.



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 creases. 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.

ONCE A YEAR

The captain is a shy man, and these things come hard 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 togetherness of restless men, aware that this is a time for rejoicing, and determined not 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 onto 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 voyage 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.

One deck below, the deck-boy lies on his bunk, listening wide-eyed to the stamping of feet above him. He has no idea what to expect of this, his first

Christmas away from home. Of one thing he is sure, though: It will be entirely different from his other 16 Christmases.

Everything has been different since he stepped aboard this ship on his first trip and, as yet, he isn't sure whether he likes it all or not. Deep down inside him a small ache of homesickness wells up, catching at his throat with a relentless familiar hand. Angrily he buries his face in the dark blue pillow.

"Soft sod!" he gulps. "It's what you've always wanted, isn't it, now?"



The chief cook leans back wearily in his chair, listening to the muted twang of the guitars along the alleyway. 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."

(Continued)

WHITE CHRISTMAS

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 draft 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 3,000 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.

DARKNESS OF THE WHEELHOUSE

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 this 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 belonging, the same feeling of being part of a huge family that he used to have in his young days at the orphanage.

His powerful hands 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 isn't 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, 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 Day.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS BOX... a journey of the heart



By the time you receive this *Lookout*, the Institute's Women's Council of Volunteers will be literally wrapping up the year's Christmas program for seamen. By mid-December they will have wrapped, cartoned and distributed some 9,000 Christmas boxes for seamen who will be at sea on Christmas Day.

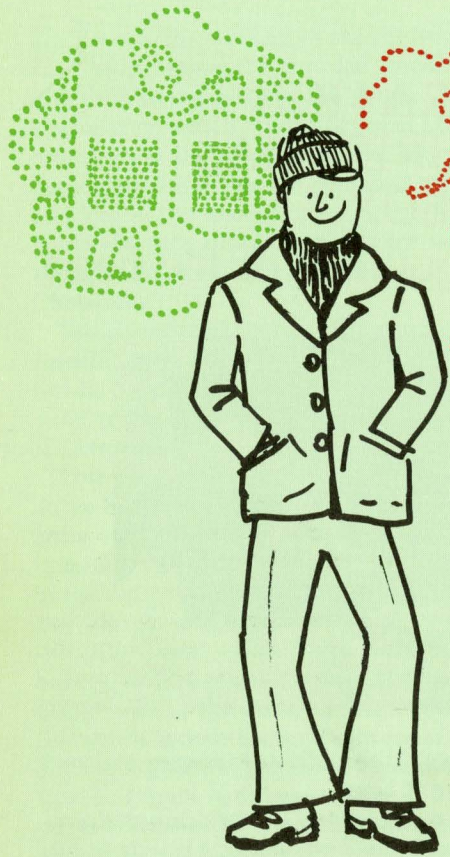
Most of the large cartons containing the gifts will have been put aboard ship by SCI shipvisitors and now, carefully stowed, will be crossing the world's oceans. Usually only the Captain knows for sure what is in the large unmarked packages. That way Santa can be sure that his gifts will be a surprise on Christmas Day.

To carry out such a mammoth sea going project requires the dedicated work of several thousand volunteer knitters and contributors plus the willing hands of hundreds of volunteers who each year come to the Council's Christmas

Room at the Institute to prepare and pack the gift boxes.

Each seaman's gift box contains a hand-knitted sweater or a watchcap and scarf or socks and gloves. In addition, there are a number of other brightly wrapped, small but useful items, a handsigned Christmas card and a Christmas greeting from the Institute printed in five languages. Even the Christmas seals on the packages are donated by the volunteers.

According to those who participate in the program, this labor of love is as gratifying for them as it is for the seamen. For the volunteers, the gift is in the giving. For the seamen, these unique Christmas gifts are a poignant expression that someone remembers, cares and shares with others. This is why this Christmas, more than 9,000 seamen at sea will find Christmas is not so lonely after all.



Between the security of childhood and the insecurity of second childhood we find a fascinating group of humanity called "Seamen". They come in assorted sizes, weights and states of sobriety. They can be found anywhere: on a ship, in bars, on leave, in love and always in debt. Girls

love them, towns tolerate them, and shipping companies support them. A seaman is laziness with a deck of cards, bravery with a tattooed arm, and a traveler of the seas with a copy of "Playboy". He has the energy of a turtle, the slyness of a fox, the brains of an idiot, the stories of a sea captain, the sincerity of a liar, the aspiration of a "Casanova": When he wants something it is usually connected with the opposite sex. He dislikes: answering letters, superior officers, the chow, and getting-up for watch. Some of his likes are: women, girls, females, dames, and the opposite sex. No one else can cram into one pocket such things as a little black book, a pack of crushed cigarettes, a photo of his favorite "pin-up", a comb, a "Church Key", and what is left of last trip's pay.

He likes to spend some of his pay on girls, some on poker and the rest foolishly. A seaman is a creature of magic. You can lock him out of your home, but not out of your heart. You can scratch him off your mailing list but not off your mind. You might just as well give up, he's your long-away-from-home lover, and your one and only bleary eyed, good for nothing bundle of worry.

But all your shattered dreams become insignificant when your seaman docks and looks at you with those blurry, bloodshot eyes and says, "Hi-Ya Honey".

"WHAT IS A SEAMAN"

The following came to us via a lady who has been married to a seaman for quite a number of years. Although she claims no pride of authorship, she does confess that all-in-all, it is as much truth as fiction.



with a frown.

He loves his work, and he's openly enthusiastic about it. Wherever he goes, he spreads this happiness and enthusiasm.

Santa gives, but he never takes.

He is childlike in his simplicity, yet he can, and does, do miraculous things. In spite of these miracles, however, he never boasts.

He is forgiving. Some children may be bad in the eyes of grownups, but never in the eyes of Santa — he truly loves them, faults and all.

He is always gentle, kind and understanding. Many adults will not listen to children, but Santa always will.

He is dependable. As sure as the stars twinkle and the seasons change, so children know that Santa will come at Christmas, as he always has.

There are some who will say that Santa Claus isn't real. But what is reality?

Is it something you must be able to touch with your own fingers? If this is so, then the stars themselves are not real.

Or is reality something you must always be able to see with your own eyes? If so, then love, faith, hope and happiness are also unreal, yet we know this is not so.

Sometimes such things as Santa Claus are the only real and permanent things in a confusing and ever-changing world — more enduring than steel or stone. This is because they are loved, and that which is truly loved will always survive.

You'd think by now that the fat man in the funny red suit would realize that he no longer fits in with today's world. By modern standards of action and dress he's really "out of it."

In this jet age, for example, he still runs around in an antiquated sleigh. And that "Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas! is the same old comy greeting he's used for centuries.

The thing that's difficult to understand is: Why do so many millions still love him?

It could be that he remains, to society as a whole, a symbol of Man with all the evil removed ... to adults, a nostalgic memory of childhood, and to children, someone who loves them as much as they love him.

Santa has many other virtues seldom found compressed into one individual:

He is a happy soul who likes to make others happy. You just can't picture Santa

IN DECEMBER

*Paling in the light of winter's moon
the sky holds back the promise
as we look for the Star but fail to find it.
The time is not yet come when prophecy
shall be fulfilled, yet one senses
that the Child moves now in the womb,
that the Mother's journey is nearly done.
Come, call to the shepherds to be on watch;
call to those angels who attend this planet.
Do not the first rays of the Star already
appear to watchers on the highest peaks?
Soon ... the first crying out of the Child.
Prepare your song, prepare your gift -
there is not long, now, to wait.*

Elizabeth Searle Lamb



Wishing You

*A very Merry Christmas
and the
Happiest of New Years*

*The Staff of SCI
and all your Seamen Friends*

Seamen's Church Institute of N.Y. and N.J.

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