

The

# LOOKOUT



*Photo by Marie Higginson*

OUTWARD BOUND

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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JANUARY, 1947

No. 1

# The LOOKOUT

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## Sanctuary

When planning for Things Ahead  
O Master Mariner, as we attempt  
To chart the Future's unknown seas,  
Lay thou upon our hearts a clearer vision,  
Steadfast purpose, and a will to dare  
Where others have not ventured.  
As we plan, we would anticipate the needs  
That must arise, and through awareness  
Of the present task, make preparation  
For the storm of changing fortune.  
In the coming days, in sunshine  
And in leisure hours, when a straight way  
Seems smooth and certain, give again  
A driving urge, that will call forth  
Our highest powers. May we be buoyant  
When we slacken sail. Help us to keep our log.  
With understanding, to take soundings true.  
After good adventure, bring us safe to port.  
We trust thy power and purpose, Lord.

DOROTHY ANN GARDYNE

From "Prayers for a Busy Day" (The Woman's Press)

THIS MONTH'S COVER shows the square-rigged sailing ship "DAN-MARK" as she sails past the Statue of Liberty, homeward-bound for Denmark. Photo taken from the Institute's roof by Marie Higginson.

# The Lookout

Vol. XXXVIII

January, 1947

No. 1

## The House that Courage Built

By Frank Laskier\*

Reprinted from "Coronet", December, 1946

*The Seamen's Church Institute is a living monument to a fighting pastor who cleaned up New York's waterfront.*

IN THE days when great four-masted ships docked with their bowsprits arched across South Street, the Port of New York was known as the worst in the world. A man before the mast was an out-cast and unwanted; no laws protected him afloat or ashore. In dark alleys along New York's waterfront, sailors were robbed and exploited. To kidnap them was normal business, and murder went unpunished.

One daring and courageous man was to change all this. Today, the great building on the waterfront, known to seamen all over the world as "Twenty-five South Street," is a monument to his life's work. He was Dr. Archibald Romaine Mansfield of Spring Valley, New York, who grew up far from the sea and its harsh realities.

As a youth, Mansfield decided to take Holy Orders in the tradition of his family. But from the first year of his training, he was determined not to lead the quiet life of an up-state parson. Instead, he planned to go out West as a missionary. To that end his studies were devoted, until a call came for him to go to New York and meet Benoni Lockwood, an old friend of his father's.

It was the year 1896 and young Mansfield was 24 years old — a



Dr. Archibald R. Mansfield

giant of a man, black-bearded, blue-eyed, and with the husky build of a stevedore. In New York he walked the hideous rounds of sailor town.

Lockwood was on the board of managers of a seaman's mission—a chapel built upon the hulk of an old ferryboat moored at the foot of Pike Street—and he was in search of a man to fill the post of chaplain. Soon, Mansfield gave up all thoughts of the West and work. Instead, he accepted the post of chaplain and also that of superintendent for the attached mission house—a gloomy little hostel at 34 Pike Street. From here he watched the "crimps" at work.

These men, keepers of common lodging houses and worse, were unofficial masters of the port. Sel-

\*Frank Laskier is a British seaman, son of a seafaring family, who lost a leg from a torpedoing during the war. Until he was hospitalized he had never had any thoughts of writing. He is the author of two books, "My Name is Frank" and "Log Book", with a new one coming out soon, and numerous stories in national magazines. Mr. Laskier is on the Seamen's Committee of the Artists and Writers Club at the Institute.

dom was a seaman hired except by their say-so. Daily they set out in small boats to meet ships as they entered harbor and on these journeys took women and liquor. Once aboard ship they would persuade the crew to come ashore and have a good time, knowing the men were penniless until the ship paid off.

The crimp footed all bills for this hospitality, and in a few days was standing at the sailor's side as he drew his meager pay. The crimp then presented his own account, which was paid on the spot. There was never an argument—the crimp had the backing of all shipping authorities.

Later, the seaman, robbed of the rest of his money, was left derelict upon the waterfront, where he either paid the crimp an advance on his first month's pay for another berth — or starved. There were ship's captains of such unbelievable brutality that no man in his senses would ever sail willingly under their command. These skippers went to the crimp and paid "blood money" — so much a head for each man clubbed or drugged and hauled aboard ship before sailing time.

This was the evil that Mansfield set out to conquer. With the first money he raised, he bought an old warehouse on Pike Street, inviting all seamen ashore to leave their luggage in his care and urging them to use the address for forwarding mail. For many a man before the mast, this was the first kindly treatment he had ever experienced on land.

The crimps laughed at Mansfield, but when the chaplain began to equip his warehouse and hostel with beds and reading rooms, it was borne upon them that he was in opposition to them as a man of God — and as a boarding-house keeper.

In that first year Mansfield also founded in the little hostel New York's first free school of seaman-

ship and navigation. Yet while he struggled to raise funds and secure public support, the clip joints and deadfalls did a booming waterfront business. Jack ashore still had little coming to him but brass knuckles and knockout drops behind the bar, while out in midstream, hardcase skippers waited to pay "blood money" for a crew.

Chaplain Mansfield, speaking from his many city pulpits, insisted that the welfare of seamen belonged to no one religious sect. Soon, women's groups were formed, benefits were held, and with part of the money so raised he bought a launch and telescope. From a vantage point on Staten Island, he watched tall ships enter the Narrows and then set out to meet them himself, in opposition to every crimp in harbor.

He was jeered at, insulted, threatened, yet he met every ship. There was something of the ship captain in his look—the piercing blue eyes, the air of command. He cut through the riffraff of the waterfront, the cursing men and the leering women, and told sailors aboard ship that he was offering clean beds, good food and honest dealing. Before long, more beds were needed at the hostel.

Mansfield next decided to find berths aboard ship for the men who lodged with him. This was dangerous. Crew hiring had for years been the exclusive business of the crimps. But because the men from the hostel were sober and well-equipped, they were soon in demand. After all, a healthy man with a well-filled sea bag was a better hand aboard ship than a blood-spattered, groaning wretch in the bottom of a boat.

The crimps, determined to put the chaplain out of business for good, began the bloodiest war ever seen on the waterfront. His men were not permitted to join ship. Gangs lay in wait to beat them up; they were lured into bars and drugged; many were murdered. Ships swung at anchor in midstream, wait-

ing for men who could not possibly force their way aboard. Yet through all this, the doctor fought on alone and unafraid.

The crisis came in 1900, when the four-master *Benjamin F. Packard* needed a crew. Mansfield picked 20 seamen, signed them in front of a shipping commissioner, then sent them to the ship anchored in the East River. Crimps waylaid the men and beat them so severely that only three reached the ship.

The chaplain found more men. This second crew battled the crimps on the waterfront, then rowed out to the *Packard*. But there they were waylaid by still another gang as they tried to go aboard, and the fight was continued upon the vessel's deck.

Police were called; and when the riot was finally quelled, an agent of the Shipping Commissioner was found dead on deck, six inches of steel in his back. This was sufficient for Mansfield. Armed with the facts of his own four-year struggle against intolerable wrongs, and with the example of a government servant killed in line of duty, he took his case to the pulpit and the news papers, arousing the conscience of all New York. That year, he was instrumental in securing passage of a bill prohibiting crimps or their agents from boarding ships in New York harbor.

Any other man would have rested with this victory, but not Mansfield. He knew that although the bill had passed, there was no law to keep the sailor from going to the crimp as soon as he set foot ashore, for the crimp was a traditional part of a sailor's life. Seamen were without rights, privileges or franchise, and they went to the crimp because there was no one else to whom they could turn for help in finding lodging or amusement.

There was room, however, for more hostels in New York, and the chaplain built them—one on State Street and two across the river in Brooklyn. They were incorporated

under a board of managers of the venerable society renamed in 1906 as the Seaman's Church Institute of New York. Edmund Lincoln Baylies was president, and he worked untiringly to aid the chaplain. Thus strengthened in his fight, Mansfield returned once more to the self-appointed job of eradicating the waterfronts evils.

Active on the board of managers was a young lawyer who helped Mansfield immeasurably. Between them, they scored many impressive triumphs.

In 1904 they brought Federal legislation to bear against the crimps; in 1906, a law against the kidnaping ("shanghaiing") of men. In 1909 they struck at the barge-owners of New York, forcing them to provide railings aboard craft so that men would not be swept overboard. But it was the crimp who felt the full anger of these two fighting men. By 1909, New York's boarding-house keepers were licensed and forced to open their premises for rigid inspection.

Later in life, the young lawyer who so valiantly aided Dr. Mansfield sent him a photograph to remind him of the days they had spent together on the New York waterfront. The picture was signed "Franklin D. Roosevelt."

The four hostels prospered, marking Mansfield's first great step toward an ultimate goal. In his mind was the dream of a great modern building, where a seaman could find good food and a comfortable bed. There would be a legal department to protect his rights ashore or afloat, a hospital for his health, a chapel for his soul. This edifice, in the heart of sailor town, overlooking all ships in harbor, would be dedicated to the service of all seamen, regardless of race, color or creed.

Mansfield, honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1911, had one very potent argument—the knowledge that a good sailor made a good ship—and he voiced this faith across all New York. Ship-



owners listened to this man whose black beard was graying but whose shoulders never stooped, and they gave him the money he needed. No philanthropist crossed his path without giving.

He projected the plan of the institute himself, and arranged that each room, each bed, even the chapel chairs should be endowed. Indomitably he devoted himself to the project and in 1912—some 16 years after his first walk down South Street—he was present at the ceremony of laying the cornerstone.

While the ceremony was in progress, news came of the greatest maritime disaster in history. The *Titanic* had gone down in mid-Atlantic. Survivors, landed by the *Carpathia* in New York, were the first rescued men of the sea to be cared for by the institute in its temporary quarters. Their names were to head a long and tragic list.

Two years later World War I started and every resource of the building was called upon. To Dr. Mansfield, these were years in which to spread and find strength. And during the black Depression that followed the war, when ships were laid up to rot and derelict men walked the waterfront, Twenty-five South Street again became a welcome refuge.

Because seamen did not want

charity throughout those years of depair, meals were provided at Twenty-five South Street for a token sum of ten cents. A bed was not much more. If a man could pay his way—well and good. If not, he could live on credit and pay when he found a berth. Meanwhile classes in seamanship and navigation, in engineering and cooking, in every trade that the sea demands, were stepped up. The doctor fought to keep his men alert and ready in case of a job.

Never once did Mansfield lose faith in his men and his project. And in that faith he died in 1934. The greatest tribute to his spirit and courage lay in the fact that though he died—and in his death was mourned the world over—not one iota of his life's work suffered in his passing.

The "Port of Missing Men"—a department inaugurated by the Institute in 1920—continued to find missing seamen and reunite them with their families. The Marine Medical Service, brought into being the same year, increased in scope and effort. A radio station was built on the roof of Twenty-five South Street, where physicians flashed advice to aid the sick, far out at sea.

By 1939, sailors were ready once more to man the world's ships and deliver wartime cargoes.

In the days that followed, the pick of the Allied merchant marine went down to the sea and met death without complaint. They fought and died in the creed of Dr. Mansfield himself—and never was a creed so gloriously upheld by men who had nothing to give for their faith but their lives.

They saw ammunition ships go up in a holocaust of flame and flying metal; they saw burning tankers stain the night with red; their bodies were washed up on beaches from Halifax to Houston. And those men who survived returned to the sea again and again, as though their ghastly experiences were nothing.

In the basement of Twenty-five South, a compartment in the bag-

## My Time was Not Up

By Karl H. Larson

*Winners in the seamen's Essay Contest sponsored by the Institute are announced in this issue. The topic was "My Most Unforgettable Sea Experience", and the judges included John Mason Brown, Harry Hansen, Francis Hackett, Frank Laskier and THE LOOKOUT editor. The first prize winner, Karl H. Larson who receives \$25.00, is published here. Other winning essays will be printed in subsequent issues of THE LOOKOUT. The second prize of \$15.00 was won by William L. Rohde; the third prize of \$10.00 by S. M. Riis, and the honorable mentions of \$5.00 by Joseph I. Flynn, P. J. Middleton and Irving Hoffman.*

I WAS sitting in the Scandinavian Seamen's Home in New York when three friends entered and asked if I wanted to join them and sign aboard a ship going to Russia. As I had been ashore for three weeks and was in need of funds, I agreed.

We found the ship on the West Side and the Port Captain was aboard to sign us on. Soon after arriving aboard the ship I met an old shipmate named Karlson. This was December 19, 1941. I found the crew to be representative of most all nationalities. Among them there was a young Polish ordinary seaman who weighed 340 pounds. This was his first trip to sea. As I was contemplating the dangers of the voyage I asked the young Pole what had possessed him to go to sea. He answered gaily, "Oh, I am just going to make one trip and see what it's all about." As I understood the dangers we faced I thought to myself, "I hope you make it, Joe." I well knew that if anything happened it would be too bad for a person as big and clumsy as "Heavy Joe" was. I was assigned to the 12 to 4 watch and it so happened that Joe was on the same watch.

We left New York December the 26th for Halifax, Nova Scotia, where we were to join a convoy.

On the way over we struck rough weather and our heavy deck cargo of trucks and airplane parts broke their lashings and it was necessary for us to re-lash them completely when we arrived in Halifax. We also had trouble in the engine room and had to remain in Halifax for over a week for repair. This ship was an old Italian ship taken over by the U. S. Government. Her name was FRIAR ROCK. Since the United States had taken the ship over, we were sailing under a Panamanian flag. Because of the delay for repairs, we lost the convoy at Halifax and were ordered to go to Sydney, Nova Scotia, to join another. We left Halifax the eighth of January for Sydney and arrived there the tenth of January at twelve noon. As we came in the harbor, the convoy that we were scheduled to join was leaving. We could have very easily swung about and joined the convoy but the Captain said that we were low on water and would have to go on into Sydney and load some. He said the convoy was not supposed to make more than seven knots and we could do ten knots, therefore, we would be able to catch the convoy after we had obtained our water. I felt something was wrong since we had been in Halifax undergoing repairs and could have filled up with water there. However, we stayed in Sydney loading water until nine o'clock that night. About 9:30 P.M. we weighed anchor and set out to catch the convoy.

Since I was on the 12 to 4 watch I went to the flying bridge to take the wheel at midnight. On my way up to the bridge I noticed that the ship was brightly lit up with doors and port holes open. When I took the wheel I politely asked the Captain if we were not going to "black out". He answered that we would "black out" tomorrow. Nothing

(Continued on Page 12)

## A Letter From A Seaman to His Family



Dear Folks:

Well, here I am in New York City after my first trip to sea. When I ran down the gang-plank and looked up at the tall buildings I felt kind of lost.



I sure was glad when a shipmate came along and brought me over to the Seamen's Institute where I'm writing this letter. Most fellows call it "25 South Street". It's like a big city—has its own post office, library, movie theatre, church, school, stores, all just for merchant seamen.



When you're a stranger in a big city, it's hard to meet nice girls but the parties here remind me of the ones back home... You meet fellows of all nationalities and they have special clubrooms for British, Belgian, Dutch and Danish seamen.

They have real good food here, Mom, and they don't gyp you. How'd you like to cook 3,000 meals a day?



You know we don't get clean sheets on our beds in every port but you ought to see them here... as clean as yours! They tell me about 1,400 sleep here every night.



There are clinics for about everything. I had a tooth filled yesterday—cost almost nothing... You'd like the chapel here; there's a beautiful sea painting above the altar. They didn't even ask me what church I belong to... So don't worry, Mom, I'm with friends at "25 South Street".



\$150,000. is required annually to finance the Institute's health, welfare, recreational, educational and religious activities. We are counting on voluntary contributions to maintain these essential services. Kindly send gifts to the SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK, 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y.

## A Dutch Captain's Story

CAPTAIN K. A. VLIEK, Royal Packet Navigation Co., Netherlands East Indies, dropped into the Netherlands Seamen Club here at the Institute on October 11th and fell into conversation with Mr. Van Campen, the Director of the club and another seaman, A. Van Beest, Chief Cook. Captain Vlieg had been a prisoner in Jap prison camps for three and a half years. Conversation brought out that Van Beest had, too, and what's more they had "lived on the same street" in the same camp in Singapore.

As the two men reminisced, the whole terrible nightmare of the war years and its untold suffering unrolled again.

Captain Vlieg had been in Java, his line's home port, with his wife and they were both taken off to prison camps... different ones. He was in one in Batavia, then Bandoeng, back to Batavia, and then Singapore. His wife was in a camp for 3½ years also. She was liberated first and got hold of an American officer who made inquiries and found out where her husband was, then the ATC took her there (although they were not supposed to).

In the camp they were fed on rice, more rice... thin soup. Vlieg went down from 180 pounds to 115. They did hard labor in the Singapore camp, but Burma was worse because it was jungle. The prisoners got cuts from the long sharp grasses while working in the jungles... and the lack of vitamins kept their wounds from healing. The sores got worse and their legs had to be cut off... gangrene set in. No instruments... few drugs.

Van Beest lost 105 pounds. He was transported with 7,000 prisoners of war in a vessel that was torpedoed by an allied merchant ship. Six hundred and fifty people survived the torpedoing but many

more died of exposure in the water so that of the original 7,000 only 69 lived. They were in the water 24 hours before being picked up by a Japanese destroyer. If survivors were able to pull themselves up by the ropes over her side, they were allowed to. Many lacked the strength and drowned.

Captain Vlieg helped some foreign correspondents (English and American) to escape from Java before he was captured by giving them a life boat. They were on the Jap black list and had the Japs known, he would have been shot.

On August 19th, after the Jap surrender, no word had reached him and his fellow prisoners. They were still digging trenches for invasion. The first sign was when a Jap officer told them to look more presentable... wear more clothes (they had very few), clean their nails... They were given slightly better food. A Red Cross package, was split among three men... this was the second such package they had received.

Captain Vlieg made himself and 7 other captives eat very slowly when they were liberated... wouldn't let them grab at it. Many others died from plain overeating.

The Japs did not recognize International Agreements on prisoner treatments... the Red Cross was ignored, for instance.

They were cruel, sadistic, full of hate for their prisoners.

They made men drink water and then jumped on their bellies. They burned them with cigarettes. The officers would get drunk and come into the camps with sticks and beat men for nothing. The smallest offense was cruelly punished.

Captain Vlieg is to make one more trip to Java for his company and then retire. He plans to live in the United States. He is married to an English woman he met in New York.

## For Children at Sea:

THE United States liner AMERICA and the Cunard-White Star liner QUEEN ELIZABETH both have interesting accommodations for boys and girls who are privileged to travel on board these mammoth luxury ships.



The first class playground on the AMERICA opens into an outdoor play deck with no exit for little folks to scramble out of. Murals are by Allen Townsend Terrell, (a member of the Institute's Artists & Writers Club Committee.) Hundreds of panels depict flowers, birds, fish and animals to hold the youngsters' attention.



The nursery on the QUEEN ELIZABETH is a miniature bridge with steering wheel, and engine room with apparatus to amuse small fry. As a lad steers the wheel a moving panel shows changing scenery. There is also a speaking tube so the "captain" may give orders to the "engineer".

## Ship Rescues



Winter storms have buffeted ships in the North Atlantic and daring rescues have been effected, chiefly through the good work of the Coast Guard. Recently, the three-masted wooden schooner, *Lucy Evelyn*, was disabled about 280 miles east of Cape Henry Light, Va. The Coast Guard cutter *Dione* reached the 139.9 ft. schooner at 7:30 P.M. on November 18th, took her in tow and brought her safely to Norwalk, Va. on November 21st. The *Lucy Evelyn* is known as a "Brava Packet" as she trades among the Cape Verde Islands, the southernmost being named Brava. She delivered to the Islanders a general cargo from New Bedford including clothing, lumber, cement, trucks, furniture—all desperately needed. Finding a crew of men trained aboard windjammers was a problem, but Captain John F. Cota managed to sign on 12 hands. We hope that the little schooner, after repairs are made, will be able to continue in this trade with the Cape Verde Islands, near Dakar, West Africa.

The *Marine Flasher*, which left New York for Havre November 9th with 632 passengers, radioed Coast Guard headquarters for help because of engine trouble. The Navy tug *Hopi* was sent to her assistance, about 850 miles south-east of Newfoundland. The Liberty ship *Theodore Parker* developed boiler trouble because of the storms and the *Hopi* was sent to her rescue; also the trawler *Alger* was disabled.

A gale that swept southern and southwest Britain on November 24th damaged several ships. So mountainous were the seas in the Strait of Dover that a doctor taken by lifeboat to the American Liberty ship *Stephen W. Kearney*, decided not to bring ashore a steward dangerously ill with an acute abdominal abscess. The doctor injected penicillin and the patient remained aboard as the freighter ploughed her stormy way home toward New York.

Rough seas made it impossible for medical aid to be delivered aboard the American steamer *Zona Gale* which had radioed Plymouth, England, that two of her crew had been injured in a seventy-mile-an-hour gale and needed treatment.

Off Land's End, the 1,791 vessel *Josiah B. Cressey*, her engine room flooded by heavy seas, was escorted to port.

## Seagoing Pets

CATS AND DOGS PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT FOR LIBERTY SHIP CREWS

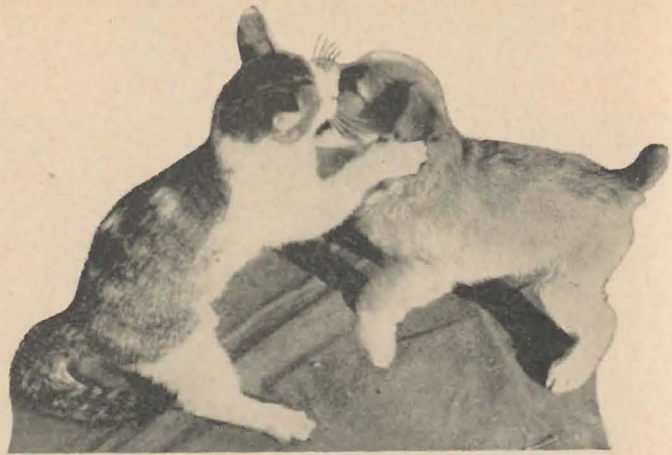


Photo reprinted from "The Mast," U. S. Maritime Service, by Special permission.

Commander H. S. Clements, USMS, Chief Engineer aboard the Liberty ship *John M. Harlan*, operated by Moore-McCormack Lines, took the photograph on this page which shows the kitten "Hitler" (because of his moustache) and the pup "Jumbo" engaged in a wrestling match at sea.

### THE HOUSE THAT COURAGE BUILT

(Continued from Page 4)

gauge room began to overflow, packed with the personal effects of men who would never return. Here they left the beautiful ship models they had hoped to finish in more peaceful times. Here lay their precious papers—an engineer's license, a cook's certificate—or a new suit or a pair of good boots, the few possessions of men denied, even in death, the last comfort of six feet of earth.

When the war ended, the seamen returned to the shelter of the building by the waterfront—that pleasant landfall of the Cross. Today their ships do not carry explosives, but returning soldiers, peacetime passengers and food for the world's hungry. They stay a few days, catching up on sleep, reading in the quiet Conrad Library, or laughing at shows that go full swing in the big auditorium—and then ship out once more.

There is one man who first came to the Institute at the age of 13. He was a red-haired freckle-faced boy then; he had an enviable reputation as a stowaway—four ships and 20,000 miles in four months. The Seaman's Church Institute of New York—to give Twenty-five South Street its full title—rescued him from the Children's Court and, despite his youth, enrolled him in its seamanship school. Then they found him a berth aboard ship.

Later he returned to the Institute to study for an officer's license, and still later was graduated from the U. S. Maritime School at Fort Trumbull. Now he has 200,000 sea miles behind him, and in five years afloat has had danger as an ever-present shipmate. He wears on his blouse the ribbons of the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Pacific and the Middle East, together with the combat ribbon and star which denotes one ship lost. He is Chief Officer Robert Stapp of the U. S. Merchant Service.

## Christmas at 25 South Street.

**T**WELVE hundred merchant seamen of all nationalities enjoyed turkey dinners with all the traditional fixings at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South Street, on Christmas Day.

Special Christmas parties and entertainment in the decorated lounges, foreign club rooms, and auditorium rounded out a full day of heart-warming fun and excitement for men who were unable to be with their own families at the Yuletide Season. Every man who was staying in the Institute's 13-story building on New York's waterfront found that "old St. Nick" had left a Christmas package containing books, candy, toilet articles and cigarettes on his bed. Over 7,000 of these boxes, packed by women volunteers, were distributed to Institute guests, seamen in marine hospitals, and aboard ships.



The Holy Communion was celebrated in the Institute's Chapel at 10:30. After midday dinner the men attended a showing of the movie "The Green Years" in the big auditorium, then they scattered to their favorite lounges and game rooms for relaxation and comradeship.

Thanks are due the many loyal Institute friends who help keep the lights burning bright on these special occasions and throughout the year. Because of them, the men who go down to the sea in ships need not feel homeless or forgotten when celebrations of warmth, jollity, and family reunion such as Thanksgiving and Christmas roll around. They know that gestures of generosity and good will from landsmen will create a "family holiday" atmosphere at their own shore home at 25 South Street.

### LAI D UP SHIPS GET GOOD CARE

Outwardly the laid up merchant ships now moored along our coastline may resemble the "ghost" fleets common after the last war, but actually, they are very different, according to the American Merchant Marine Institute.

Instead of being allowed to rust, the ships making up these fleets are given the "treatment," which is intended to keep them in trim, as a bulwark against future wars. When a ship enters the national defense reserve fleet set up by Congress, she undergoes certain changes to fit her for her period of idleness.

First all fire hazards are removed. Then dishes, kitchen equipment, electric

refrigerators, tools, bedding, furniture and silverware are removed for re-use or sale as surplus. Her remaining equipment is then secured and sprayed with an oil compound designed to prevent rust.

Compressed air lines connect the laid up ships with the shore. At intervals the air power is used to turn the idle propellers, to keep the machinery free. Fire lines are carried from ship to ship in case of necessity, and fireboats are kept in readiness. Each reserve fleet is located near a shipyard, which is charged with the indefinite maintenance of the vessels. The cost: \$4,000 per year for each of these ships, which cost \$1,800,000 to build.

## MY TIME WAS NOT UP (Continued from Page 5)

more was said. The next twenty-four hours passed as routine until I came up the next night at midnight to take the wheel. I noticed again that the ship was lit up. As I had been sailing back and forth to England during the European war I realized the seriousness of leaving lights visible.

I was a bit nervous over the exposed lights. I asked the Captain again if we were going to "black out". This time he answered me very abruptly and told me to mind my own business. And he added, "Who is in command of this ship, you or I, Larson?" I could say no more. The water was becoming very rough and the temperature was falling steadily. I could see that the officers of the ship were also nervous as the weather was getting worse and we still had not sighted the convoy. I caught myself thinking of our cargo of bombs in the Number Two hold and the ammunition in the Number Four hold. There were German submarines in the vicinity, but I tried to push the thought from my mind.

Several minutes before four o'clock when I was due to go off watch the first torpedo hit. It hit on the port bow. I was expecting the entire ship to explode into bits any minute but nothing happened and we had time to get into the lifeboats. The 340 pound ordinary seaman, "Heavy Joe", proved quite a task for us to get into the lifeboat. We had only two lifeboats.

I got in the starboard lifeboat and we had a difficult time getting away from the side of the ship. As I felt that the second torpedo would hit any minute I worked furiously. We had a number of green sailors and this hampered our cause. In five or six minutes we were away from the ship enough so that we would not be hit in case a second torpedo was fired. The port lifeboat was never seen. I think it either capsized or was crushed against the side of the ship. The port side of the ship was the weather side and was very rough. We heard someone shout but could not locate him in the darkness. Then, the second torpedo hit. It hit in the engine room on the port side. I figured only ten or twelve minutes elapsed between the torpedoes. A few seconds before the second hit I noticed a bright flashlight that I recognized to be the Chief Mate's, shining on the bridge. At the same time he blew one blast of the ship's whistle. Immediately after he blew this blast the second torpedo struck the ship. The ship went down with the second torpedo, carrying the Chief Mate with it.

We made ourselves as comfortable as possible in the lifeboat and set about to organize ourselves. It was so rough that we could make no headway with oars so we let the boat drift. The boat remained half full of water most of the time and we had to bail water out constantly. We were at this time about 200 miles off the coast of Newfoundland. We drifted around until daylight when I noticed that the man next to me was the Second Engineer. He looked at me and said cheerfully, "This is the second time in two months." I answered him, "Yes, but this time I don't think it is going to be so easy." He replied, "Don't worry, Larson, we will be picked up today sometime." I said, "I hope you are right because we cannot last long in this kind of weather." I have read before where sailors have been in lifeboats forty and fifty days. This length of time depends entirely on where and when they are in the lifeboat.

There were twenty of us in the boat. The Captain told us to try to rig the sail and after much trouble, we managed to get it up. We set our course northwest. Early in the morning we caught the heaviest snow storm that I have ever seen in my life. We could not see ten yards ahead of us. This storm kept up until afternoon when the snow began to freeze and turn into sleet. By this time we were all soaked to the skin. I noticed that my friend, Karlson, did not have any shoes. He was in his stocking feet. I asked him how he could stand the cold. He answered, "What can I do? I had to get off the ship so fast I didn't have time to get my shoes." I wondered how he stood walking around in the boat with the icy water almost to his knees. The only thing that I could find for him was an old canvas bag that had been used to wrap some corned beef. I cut this in strips and wrapped it around his legs.

As night approached the Captain told us to drop the sail and put out the sea anchor. During the night we covered ourselves with the sail. I kept from going to sleep and warned the rest of them not to because I knew it would mean their freezing to death in the icy weather. We huddled together the first night and managed to last out those terrible long hours. At daybreak we found that the sea anchor had broken off and only the line remained. We knew better than to ask the officers where we were as we knew that no one knew. We put the sail up again and resumed our course northwest. It was then that I noticed a young Danish ordinary seaman looking peculiar. He had fallen asleep during the night and had frozen to death.

Karlson, the able seaman, Nelson, the bosun, and I got together and decided to bury the young seaman. I could not remember the proper benediction so I could only say "God help your soul, young fellow," and with this we dropped him over the side. After we had buried him, Karlson looked at me and said, "I wonder who will be next?" Poor Karlson never realized that I was soon to bury him too. But I am getting ahead of my story.

When night came, our real trouble began. We had lowered our sail and were crawling underneath it when I noticed the Second Engineer and an old Scotchman who was the Third Engineer had begun to crawl about the lifeboat pulling the sail from side to side. It seemed that they had gone crazy. They kept this up all night and caused much discomfort. As it became daylight, we found three more dead. They were a Brazilian mess boy, an American wiper, and an American ordinary seaman. So we had three more funerals.

I was working steadily bailing water and adjusting the sail. I believe this constant movement is what saved my life. I had a pair of oxfords on and a pair of woolen stockings. I took the woolen stockings off at regular intervals and wrung the water from them. Someone noticed a bag in the bow of the boat that was full of oilskins and sweaters. However, they were of such poor quality that they were of very little use. The water cut right through them. When I turned around I noticed my friend, Joe, the 340 pound ordinary seaman, sitting in the bottom of the boat. He had fallen down and since he was so heavy he could not get back up. He had lost his belt and his pants had dropped to his ankles. He was sitting in the icy water with nothing but his shorts. I asked him, "What's the matter, Joe, are you going to die like that?" He answered, "I can't get up, Karl." Three of us gathered around him and managed to pull him into an upright position but the boat was rolling and pitching so badly that he fell on top of us and knocked us all down. It was impossible for us to get his pants up. All we could do for him was drag him up into the bow and put an old canvas bag over him. Every so often he would holler for water and I would break up a little ice and give it to him. All our water was frozen solid.

That afternoon I noticed that the carpenter was acting very peculiarly. I said, "What is the matter, Chips?" He said nothing but simply pawed the air in front of him. The Second Mate said that he thought the Carpenter was blind. I said, "Chips, are you blind?" He could not even answer me. He was blind

and speechless with the cold. There was nothing we could do for him except give him something to chew on and he would not eat.

That night we followed the same routine. After we lowered the sail the Second and Third Engineers became more crazy and kept pulling the sail around. Then the Second Engineer began talking about going up to the second floor and seeing the landlady about the toilet. By this time I was convinced that he was crazy. Then he stood up and started to step over the side. I grabbed him just in time. I tried to make him stay under the sail but he and the Third Engineer kept crawling between us all and keeping us from resting. Somehow, we managed to last out the night and as daylight came I noticed that Karlson was picking his fingernails off and throwing them over the side. He had also loosened the canvas strips on his feet. I found some yellow ointment in the first aid kit and put it on his hands and feet. I knew by this time that Karlson was almost gone and if we did not get picked up soon he would die.

About this time the Captain, who had not spoken for hours, said, "Where is the Coast Guard now?" The Captain had a long mustache, and was wearing a long thick sheep skin coat. When I turned and saw him I was astonished at the sight. His mustache was covered with ice and his sheep skin coat was completely covered with two or three inches of it.

The next night was one of the worst we went through. Most all of the men in the boat went out of their heads. I was constantly fighting sleep as I knew the consequence if I dropped off. As daylight approached I discovered that four more had died sometime during the night. This was our fourth day in the lifeboat. After we had put up the sail again we started to bury the four that had died. They were the Third Engineer, mess boy, fireman, and the carpenter. We were able to bury the mess boy and the fireman but it was impossible to bury the Third Engineer and the carpenter as they were frozen in a twisted up position under the benches in the boat. Because of our weakened condition we did not have the strength to pull them from under the benches. It was at this time that the Second Mate told me that the Captain was also dead. He was sitting up on the side of the boat in a slumped position. He was a big man, well over six feet. He was frozen stiff and his legs were under the thwart of the boat. This prevented our moving him. We could not budge him and had to leave him in the boat. As Wald and I





continued to bail the water, I began to notice how weak I was becoming. I sat down and tried to think of something that we could do that might save us. I kept looking around the boat and saw a gallon can of kerosene under a thwart between where the Captain and the Second Mate sat. I knew we must have some kind of heat. The oars and wooden seats were all covered with two or three inches of ice. Then I noticed some upright pieces beside the air tanks in the boat that looked relatively dry and could be removed without damage to the boat. I took a hatchet and knocked the ice off the boards and found the paint to be about one-eighth of an inch thick. I scraped the paint off and found that the wood underneath was dry. I cut up a dozen of these upright boards into kindling wood. I had already figured what I would use for a stove. There was a cracker box about two feet long and a foot and a half wide made of sheet metal. I knocked a hole in the top of the metal box large enough to put a gallon bucket into. Then I broke up one of the frozen water cans and filled the bucket half full of ice and started a fire. At regular intervals I had to pour more kerosene on the fire. Everyone in the boat was so weak that they could offer no help and each move that I made was in agony. After the ice had melted in the bucket I put some corned beef and crackers into it and heated it up into a stew. I had to sit with my back to the sea to keep the salt water from getting into the fire. I was forced to sit so close to the fire that the smoke kept coming up and getting into my eyes and finally got so bad that I could hardly

see. It took almost three hours for me to heat the stew sufficiently to eat. I had been so absorbed in preparing the stew that I had not noticed Karlson and the Bosun. When I looked up I saw that they were both near total collapse. I took half a can that had contained corned beef and used it for a dipper. I filled it with hot stew and tried to give it to Karlson. He was so weak he could not swallow it. I tried to pour it down him but it was of no avail. He died then right in my arms. I thought then that if only I had thought of warming some stew earlier I might have saved Karlson's and the others lives, but we had all been so occupied with trying to sight a ship that it had not entered our minds. Soon after Karlson had died the bosun and Joe, the Polish ordinary seaman, also died. Now only seven of us out of the original twenty remained alive.

Karlson was lying on top of the bench in the boat and was a small fellow. I managed to bury him without too much difficulty. And there I buried a good shipmate and a wise sailor.

The Second Mate then asked me to do some steering. He and the Captain and the Chief Engineer had taken turns steering and since the Captain had died, it had put more strain on the Second Mate. He asked me if I would steer for awhile as he was pretty tired and wanted some rest. I told him I would steer but for God's sake not to go to sleep or he would be gone. He put his head on his arms and rested on the back of the Captain's body. He was sitting in front of me and at intervals I punched him in

the back to prevent him from going to sleep. He didn't go to sleep during the day but that night after we had lowered the sail, he fell asleep. After dark he fell down into the bottom of the boat and I was lying in the water when I noticed him. We pulled him up on the bench and he was half dead then.

Thanks to the radio operator, Mr. Wilson, we had plenty of cigarettes. The cigarettes and some matches were in a copper container. But that night the top of the container came off and ruined the matches.

That night we shot all our distress rockets hoping some ship would see us and come to our rescue. We did this after much deliberation. Some in the boat feared that the Germans would see them and come and machine gun us. However, we figured that we might as well take a bullet as freeze to death, as we were all slowly doing.

At daylight the next morning I asked some of my shipmates to help me hoist the sail. They were all so weak that none of them could move. Because of thick ice on the rope I could not pull it through the block. I knocked the rope against the mast until I tore my fingers and gloves but I could not get the ice off. I managed to get the sail about half way up the mast but could get it no further. I made the sail fast at half way. Getting the sail up weakened me even more than I was and I had to sit down. I was beginning to see black stars and rings in front of my eyes. I looked around at my shipmates and saw that there was not much use of fighting anymore, we were all doomed anyway. At that time, in my mind, I said goodbye to my folks and to my son.

The only thing that gave me satisfaction was that I had left my son insurance. I began hoping that he would use it wisely and not lose it or throw it away foolishly. But, as I said in the beginning of the story, my time was not up. When the sea pushed the lifeboat up on a swell I could see a ship in the distance heading for us. However, I attributed the sight to my nearly delirious condition and refused to believe it until the sea pushed the lifeboat up again and I saw the ship once more. I rubbed my eyes and the third time that we went up on the swell I could see that the ship was a destroyer. Then I shouted to my shipmates, "Ship in sight, mates". The only one that could answer me was the Chief Engineer who said, "Is there really a ship, Larson?" I answered, "Yes, there is a ship straight ahead coming right for us." I lowered the sail and put it away and sat there for what seemed years for the destroyer to come up to us.

The sea was very rough and it took a long time for the destroyer to come alongside without capsizing the lifeboat.

The destroyer finally got close enough to throw a line and I took the line and made it fast to one of the thwarts. How I ever mustered the strength to tie that line I do not know to this day. I noticed that they dropped a net over the side about midships. I knew nothing more until I had a line about my waist and was being hauled aboard. A few sailors carried me down to the Officer's mess where there was a doctor waiting. The first thing that they did was to cut our frozen clothing from our bodies. We were given clean heavy underwear. I forgot to mention that as soon as the seven of us that were alive were brought aboard the line holding the boat alongside the destroyer was cut and set adrift with the dead bodies in it. The Captain of the destroyer said that they could not risk losing time taking care of the dead because of the submarine menace. They were taking a great risk picking us up. After we had put our underwear on the doctor came around and gave us three highballs and a bowl of soup. He gave us excellent care for our hands and feet. He rubbed them in alcohol and glycerine and then wrapped them in cotton. The destroyer happened to be one of the fifty American destroyers given to the English in 1940.

I was placed on a sofa in the mess hall with a pillow and two blankets. As soon as I laid down on the sofa I dropped into sleep and slept through the night. When I awoke the next morning we were near Halifax. The destroyer had made twenty-two knots. We arrived in Halifax at 7:00 A. M. on the eighteenth of January. About an hour after we arrived an ambulance arrived and took us to the Halifax Infirmary. The Second Mate, who was Danish, was in such a weakened condition that he lived only twenty minutes after arriving in the hospital. At the hospital we received the best of medical care. Numerous societies came around and furnished us with cigarettes and magazines. About two weeks after we had been at the hospital I got word that the remaining five of my shipmates were all going to lose their legs. My feet and hands were returning to normal and the doctor told me to have no fear of losing any of my limbs. This news made me feel much better but made me even more sorry for my shipmates.

Since the disaster I have been sailing steadily in the South Pacific, North Atlantic and Mediterranean, and nothing more of particular significance has happened.

## Book Reviews

### THE SPEAR IN THE SAND

by Raoul C. Faure.

Harper, \$2.50

This first novel of a young Frenchman describes the strangest adventures a man could have, and it has been many years since I have read a story which impressed me more with its substance and beauty. Sausal, a young scientist, joins a small expedition to chart the course of an ocean current in the South Pacific, hoping to escape the monotony of his humdrum existence and to discover the meaning of life. Feuds and a monsoon wreck the expedition, and Sausal is alone on the schooner, fated to endure the complete solitude and infinite contemplation of the zone of the Great Calms, from which no one had ever returned. After six months the ship drifted to a perfect tropical isle, and he began to taste life to the full, to revel in the untrammelled freedom of his solitude.

The author writes with haunting beauty and great feeling of the disintegration of the human ego under the touch of absolute perfection. "The sun was always too high or too low, the days too full of colored indolence", Sausal found, for anything but reverie and observation of the wonders of the tropical seas and skies. Open the book at random, and read vivid and violent descriptions, paragraphs of consummate beauty beyond realization. The writing is impressionistic, like fine poetry or exquisite painting.

Sausal struggled to discover the secret of the island, but after thirty years of passionate solitude "there was no conclusion and no summing up. He had solved nothing because there was nothing to solve." He knew perfection as a living death, cruel, ruthless, possessed only at the cost of yourself, and, lost too, only at the cost of yourself. Like Conrad, Faure shows unusual perception, and in his attempt to make you hear, to make you see, and above all, to make you feel, he succeeds better than any contemporary novelist.

Louise Noling.

### THAT SKIPPER FROM STONINGTON

by Theda Kenyon.

Julian Messner, Inc., \$3.00

A book to delight anyone with a taste for adventure and a love for the sea. We circle the globe on a whaler; watch from her deck as from a grand-stand seat the

battle between the CONSTITUTION and the GUERRIERE; live through gales on the land and on the sea; follow the progress of shipbuilding through the exciting years of the nineteenth century.

The characterization is as vivid as the action. Does it seem preposterous that Richard Loper should be master of a ship at 14? Not to one who had followed that young gentleman's career since the day he ran away to sea at 10 because a war was being fought and there was no other man of his name to take part in it.

In every generation the Loper men had had two consuming loves: the sea and one woman. Richard is no exception. The conflict between his two loves forms the core of the book. *Mardie* wins. Thus, when war breaks out again, Richard is playing again a dramatic role, but this time ashore, building in a month the landing boats which the navy swore could not be finished in less than 90 days.

D. Page

## Benefit Report

The net proceeds of our Annual Fall Theatre Benefit this year totaled \$3,198.55. The benefit was a performance of "The Playboy of the Western World" starring Burgess Meredith and with a distinguished cast of Irish and American actors.

The purpose of benefits is to raise EXTRA gifts to make up deficits, and we trust that no one will regard taking tickets as a substitute for his regular annual donation on which we are counting.

We greatly appreciate the loyal and generous support of all those who made the benefit a success, either by taking tickets or by sending complimentary gifts.

## Marine Poetry

### FIRESIDE REVERIE

I sit by the fireside, of other days dreaming  
Of far away lands, and of shipmates I knew.  
The thundering seas with the surf whitely creaming  
The lift and the roll and the race of the screw.  
In the comfort of home, and a loved one's devotion  
I'm anchored secure in the lee of the land.  
Yet my thoughts slip their moorings and cross the wide ocean,  
To raise the strange headlands at memory's command.  
Outbound once again, as I sit in the fireglow  
I see Cape Trafalgar loom up through the haze  
And I thrill as of yore as I did on the "Benbow"  
When the Rock of Gibraltar came under my gaze.  
Aden, Colombo, the ports of our calling  
I see in the glamour of things that are gone  
Sunset at sea, with the night swiftly falling,  
The gold and the crimson, that herald the dawn.  
Oh the days of my youth I will ever remember,  
As I sit by the fire at the close of the day,  
And life slowly fades with the last glowing ember,  
While I wait sailing orders and anchors aweigh.

By Thomas Hill.

H.M.S. Benbow, Royal Navy.

### WANDERLUST

My first sea-going ship.  
There is little now of gladness  
There is more in me of sadness  
And perhaps a taint of madness,  
In the constant urge to roam.  
But there's no escape or turning  
There's no outlet for its yearning  
And it's like a passion burning  
And it's stronger than a home!  
For there are horizons lure me;  
In their beauty they implore me;  
And there's one thing that can cure me,  
And that's the sea alone.  
And the sea's become my haven  
And to satisfy its craving  
I must see the foams' crest waving,  
I must hear the sea wind moan.

By Joseph F. Ferran

### REMEMBRANCE OF THE CONVOYS

My standby calls up, "Lights are burning bright."  
What, in these waters where the ordered lines  
Of blacked-out ships slog eastward, gray as night,  
And cheerily each heart with valor shines?  
These very waves are witness; touch and go  
The battle went for years, with roar and flame;  
Our merchant seamen took the utmost blow  
The Hun could strike. If laurels wreath their name,  
They're pleased; if not, the convoy job was done,  
The cargoes fed the front. Today the foam  
Has lost its tinge, save when the setting sun  
Blazes for us the welcome pathway home.  
I pace the bridge. Watch-fires of our return,  
I bless the running lights that brightly burn.

John Ackerson, U.S.M.S.

Reprinted from N. Y. Times

### FAREWELL TO THE SOUTH SEAS

By John Reynolds Robertson, Oiler

The sun goes down o'er the watery plain  
A wind comes whispering by  
And the stars come peeping one by one  
In the turbid lilac sky.  
A red star down by the horizon  
A fellow traveller, seems  
As we hold the course for the blustery north  
Where the frigid Pole Star gleams.  
The Albatross that followed us  
Through many a listless day,  
Turns for his home and the white of his breast  
Fades to a hazy gray.  
We're leaving it all behind us  
The wind and the sea and the sky  
And the Southern Cross and the Albatross  
And the islands that drifted by.  
The pleasant isle of Aves  
The isle of Blushing Morn  
And the windswept coral atoll  
Where dreamers' souls are born.

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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," a corporation 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. If land or any specific property such as bonds, stocks, etc., is given a brief description of the property should be inserted instead of the words, "the sum of.....Dollars."