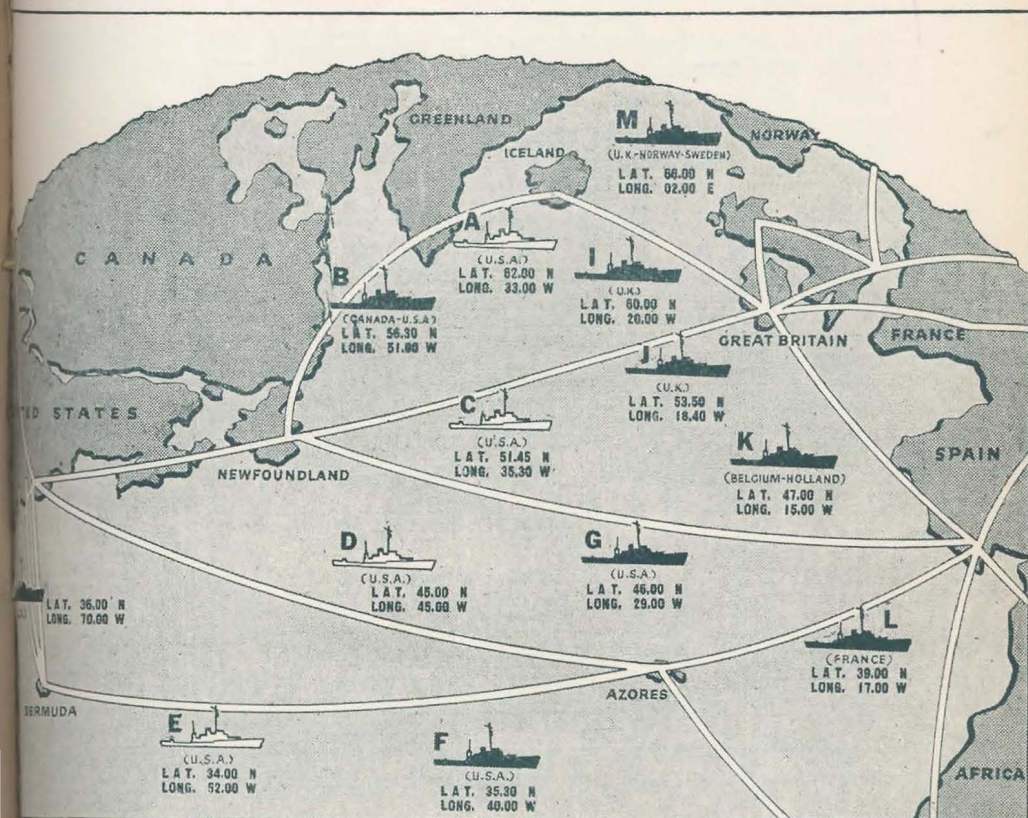


THE LOOKOUT

MARCH, 1947



Courtesy Navy and N. Y. Herald Tribune

NORTH ATLANTIC WEATHER PATROL

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
OF NEW YORK

Sanctuary

FOR THE FAMILY OF NATIONS

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, guide, we beseech thee, the Nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(From the Book of Common Prayer)

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXVIII, MARCH, 1947

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As we go to press word comes of the sudden death of Mrs. Marie Higginson, THE LOOKOUT'S volunteer photographer. The Institute staff and seamen will greatly miss this loyal and devoted friend.

NOTE: An automatic record player recently donated by Mrs. Diego Suarez to the Institute has been installed so that music is played at intervals throughout the day to the thousands of merchant seamen who pass through or gather in the main lobbies. The innovation has been very well received and all we need now is *MORE RECORDS*. If you have current recordings you no longer want, please send them to: Dept. of Special Services, 25 South St., New York 4. Or, if you're in New York City, telephone Special Services (BO 9-2710) and ask them to pick up your donation.

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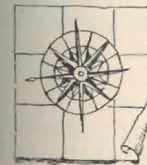
North Atlantic Weather Patrol To Mean New Safety At Sea

Based on a Story by Gill Robb Wilson — Jan. 5, 1947 Herald Tribune

OVER the bitter wastes of the North Atlantic, crossed via water or air by the craft of all nations, there is to be spread a network of thirteen stationary ships scientifically located to report weather conditions, help in air and sea rescues and provide navigation facilities for ocean going vessels and planes. To be known as the North Atlantic weather patrol, the plan is to be inaugurated not later than July 1, 1947.

The attention of seamen and airmen alike has turned toward providing fresh safeguards for commerce.

The foundation of safety and economy for air and sea commerce is a knowledge of weather conditions over the oceans. Despite all progress in marine engineering, weather at sea remains the primary cause of loss and disaster.



M. D. C.

On April 15, 1912, the luxurious and "unsinkable" Titanic struck an iceberg and sank with appalling loss of life. Shocked, the nations called an international Safety of Life at Sea Conference and from this came the decision to create the *International Ice Patrol*. This patrol has been efficiently operated by the United States Coast Guard, with untold saving of life and wealth.

So that sudden freak turns of weather may not continue to wreck vengeance on North Atlantic air and sea commerce, the nations propose to do something about it.

The Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization, created by the Chicago convention of 1944, was the sponsor of the weather-ship plan, which was first drawn up at a regional conference in Dublin in March, 1946. The International Meteorological Organization gave assistance and approval.

In September, 1946, P. I. C. A. O. called a final conference in London where representatives of nine nations—the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Sweden and the United States—signed an agreement, contingent on approval by their governments, to create the North Atlantic weather patrol.

Responsibility for maintaining the thirteen weather ships was decided by the same yardstick used in the establishment of the International Ice Patrol. The United States will furnish and man seven of the weather ships. The United Kingdom will furnish two and France one. The remainder will be jointly manned, in one case by Canada and the United States, in another by Belgium and Holland, and a third by the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden.



Drawing by Thomas Musser

Three Ships for Each Station

The set-up of each of the thirteen ocean stations calls for three vessels which will spell one another at periods of twenty-one days. The manning of each station is estimated to cost approximately a million dollars annually, but economists have figured that in the saving to air and marine traffic the costs will be returned by several hundred per cent from the very beginning of the service.

Each ship will be fully equipped with the latest meteorological and navigational instruments. Surface and upper air atmospheric data on temperature, pressure, humidity and wind velocity will be taken every three hours, as will water temperature and other oceanographic information valuable to mariners and weather forecasters. All this data will be beamed to shore in international weather code for calibration and distribution throughout the world.

Each ship will also transmit radio beam signals upon which both vessels and planes may home, and all crews will be trained in the technique of search and rescue.

The control of United States weather ships was returned by the Navy to the Coast Guard in 1946 and it is the latter which will operate the American weather patrol fleet.

Personnel Bottleneck

According to the Coast Guard there will be sufficient ships available for the work, but the training of skilled personnel is a serious bottleneck. Each vessel requires a total crew of approximately 100 seamen and technicians. The work is rigorous and exacting and equal in its demands to combat conditions in war. Vessels employed will probably be the standard 327-foot cutter, the 255 foot A. V. P.s or A. K. A.s.

Not without possibility for the new service is the idea of the Armstrong Seadrome. Tentative plans to construct a prototype of the seadrome are afoot. Experts claim it would have undeniable economy and greater utility and would in the final analysis provide better accommodations for personnel.

The idea of the weather-ship pattern brought about through the agency of P. I. C. A. O. is not new. It was proposed and in several instances employed during the recent hostilities when the number of stations reached twenty, but this also included south Atlantic coverage.

The first two, located in 1940, were on the route between Bermuda and the Azores. In 1943, when it became apparent that the United States must fly aircraft to Europe via the northern route, two more stations were located in the Davis and Denmark Straits. Gradually the number was multiplied as the air armada increased until, by D-Day, the United States manned thirteen and the British seven weather ships.

Out in the Pacific a like pattern was formed, and by V-J Day the Navy had twenty-four units in operation. The first two of these were between Alaska and Pearl Harbor.

EMPHASIS ON SAFE SHIPS Future American Liners Will Be Built And Equipped to Meet Severe Tests

By George Horne

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Special Convention Elects Bishop Gilbert



Bishop Gilbert and Dr. Kelley in the latter's office at 25 South St.

ON January 28th, almost one thousand clerical and lay delegates met in Synod Hall at the Cathedral to elect a successor to Bishop Manning. Dr. Kelley, the Director of the Institute, was unanimously chosen to be the permanent chairman of the Convention. The selection of Dr. Kelley was a testimonial to the confidence in him shared by all groups within the Diocese. He was a fair and impartial presiding officer, as we all knew he would be.

Bishop Gilbert's elevation from Suffragan to Diocesan carries with it the honorary presidency of the Institute. The Bishop paid his first visit to the Institute since he became president when he was guest of honor at the monthly Clericus luncheon in February.

By Louis W. Pitt, Rector of Grace Church and a Clerical Vice-President of the Institute.

Last Command

By Charles Lemoon

TOM MATTISON was grey-haired and slightly stooped. Around the harbor he was known as Old Cap. In his old fashioned mariner's cap and the dark blue double breasted suit so traditional with old seafarers, he was a well known figure to the people of the waterfront.

But to them he was also a relic of the bygone days of sailing ships. He belonged to a lost generation, to the age of "wooden ships and iron men".

Many years ago he had come, intending to stay ashore only for a little while, waiting for another ship. But somehow, the days and the years slipped by and eventually he found himself out of touch with the world that once was his. Slowly and relentlessly the sailing ships were driven from the oceans and with them went the breed of men like himself.

It was almost twilight one day when Tom Mattison was slowly walking toward the darkening harbor.

A red sun had set in a wall of rising mists and the old sailor could almost smell the approaching fog. The vapors would turn into fantastic shapes, and he thought for a moment that he saw a ship under full sails in the shadowy mists. When he looked again it was gone.

It startled him a little and brought back to his mind the memory of his last command. He could still see the harbor bulletins telling the shipping world that the Clipper *Polar Star* was again in port after a record voyage.

Ship Master Tom Mattison and the *Polar Star* had for many years been known as a dependable combination in the Clipper Fleet. In



time he had come to love the ship as life itself. They had been one, the man and the ship, and there had been times he could have sworn that she responded to his voice.

Once, on the windswept beach at Tamatave, he had been told of his and the ship's ultimate fate. He well remembered the old native fortune teller pointing at the ship and in highpitched voice saying:

"One day lost in sea. Many moons after, you find again."

When Mattison pressed him for details he only shook his head, hastily reached for his fee and disappeared.

Ever since the ship had sunk under his feet in that long vanished past he had a feeling of still belonging to her. Mattison remembered that the old seer had said he would lose the *Polar Star*. But he had also predicted that he would one day get it back. Well the ship had been sunk a long time ago and he had been stranded on a hill by the harbor for years.

He came out of his deep thoughts with a start. There was a heaviness in the air and he had a premonition of something mysterious.

He watched the fog closing in

over the harbor. Thick clouds rolled in and enveloped the waterfront giving it an eerie look. Sounds of deepthroated foghorns blended with the sharp blasts of sirens and the clanking noises of anchor chains.

Men's voices could be heard, at times from far away and then again quite near, as if carried by the vapory clouds.

For a moment the fog lifted a little and Mattison could see the old pier with the dark water of the harbor slapping against its rotted piles. Never more to be used by busy cargo ships or luxurious passenger vessels, it had once felt life, moving and vibrant. Now there were only shadows left: shadows of ships and men that once passed here, their names forgotten, their destinations unknown.

He could hear a ship clearing the harbor, slowly finding its way through the fog. A voice called a name, a name Mattison knew well. Again he heard it.

"... ship *Polar Star* ... ship *Polar Star* ..."

To Mattison the name seemed to be carried by the surrounding mists. He listened for the wind singing in the rigging and the unfurled sails, forgetting about reality and time.

Awakened winds swept the fog and mists away. There was a strange light over the old pier toward which Mattison walked. He saw but could not believe his eyes.

But there she was, a thing of beautiful lines, his ship, the *Polar Star*.

He saw a gangplank out and he stepped aboard. Once more he stood on her deck as the master of the ship and of his own destiny. He had an exalted feeling. It was the fulfillment of a great longing; it was his last command. A mighty sound filled the air. As the winds from the seven seas it roared into his ears, then infinite silence and nothingness . . .

The men who work between land

and sea found Tom Mattison and did for him the last service. Up on the hill overlooking the harbor they laid him to rest. After it was all over one of them said, "Too bad about poor Old Cap' drowning that way. He must have lost himself in the fog and walked off the pier."

Another answered after a pause, "I don't think he got lost. To me it's more like Home is the sailor."

MINNIE THE ROUSER

We are indebted to Lillian W. Browne (poet laureate of the Cats and vice-president of The American Feline Society) for a story about a cat with unusual consciousness of time. "Minnie" owned Chief Richard Edenfield, for four years on the run from New York to Tampa and Mobile. As long as he had Minnie along, Chief Edenfield could enjoy his shore leaves and not worry overmuch about the morrow. The faithful and time-conscious Minnie saw to it that he was "on watch at two bells" whether he liked it or not. She would purr and lick his face and even, when it seemed necessary, gently scratch it until he arose. What a bunk-mate!

BRITISH SEAMAN BEFRIENDS HOMELESS CHILDREN

Seventeen "unwanted" youngsters moved recently into a large house at Market-Rasen England, that had been bought for unhappy children by a 21-year-old ship's mate. It cost him all his savings, £500, and a £150-a-year mortgage on his income for twenty years, a total of £3,500.

The donor, Leonard Chantry, wanted to remain anonymous, but Pane Field, warden of the home, run by the Children's Family Trust, would not have it so. Mr. Field related that he first met Leonard ten years ago when, as a social worker, he was visiting institutions for homeless children.

Concerning Mermaids

By Marjorie Dent Candee



Drawing by M. D. Candee

IN the archives of nautical research you will find but limited space devoted to the subject of mermaids. Even sea serpents are given much more attention. And yet for years THE LOOKOUT editor has been hearing stories from sailors about the mermaids they have seen on their travels. Recently, we had an opportunity to talk with two men who have been doing a little private research on the subject of the fabulous creatures. They are John Pennekamp, associate editor of the Miami Herald, and Dan Beard, Jr., director of the U. S. Fish and Wild Life Service in Florida. Their findings will interest LOOKOUT readers.

Science is wonderful, but rather disillusioning. Mr. Beard says that a mermaid is a manatee, or sea cow. Through the ages they were ap-

parently borderline creatures. They couldn't decide whether to live on land or in the water, but eventually they stayed in the water. Their heads, when they come up to breathe, are similar to human heads. (Mr. Beard likens them to a sunburned, very wrinkled old man, but the sailors have described them as glamorous sirens!)

Just recently, the mermaid (or manatee) which was captured off Windley Island, a key about 80 miles south of Miami, gave birth to a baby. This is the second "baby mermaid" to be born in captivity. The first was born in May, 1930 to Maggie Murphy, a sea cow who lived in a tank in the old *Prinz Valdemar* sailing vessel aquarium, anchored off Miami. This blessed event caused much excitement among scientists at that time. Bear-

ing out the neither-fish-nor-fowl-nor-good-red-herring theory is the fact that although sea cows live underwater, they have no gills or apparatus for breathing underwater, and they have to come up every five to eight minutes for air. Their lungs, huge bellows, can withstand an enormous amount of water pressure.

Mr. Beard explained that the mermaid "myth" probably grew out of the fact that when a manatee is nursing, it looks from a distance like a human mother nursing her child. The mother feeds on grasses at the bottom of the ocean. Since sea cows are very wary, and come to the surface only to stick their nostrils out for a breath of air, few manatees are ever seen by people. Many have been killed by getting into fishermen's nets, and by blasting operations. Boat propellers have also killed them. Mr. Beard says they have no natural enemies of the sea, and they have no method of defending themselves except by flight.

To give an example of the size of a manatee, Maggie Murphy, who was harpooned and captured by Capt. R. H. Denny and Capt. Fred Seager of Miami, was nine feet long and weighed 1,200 pounds. She was taken to the *Prinz Valdemar* aquarium where she gave birth to her baby.

Incidentally, the *Prinz Valdemar* was built originally for the Danish Navy as a training ship, and in her day was the largest and fastest sailing vessel afloat. (There was no hint then that she would ever become renowned—and then forgotten—as the birthplace of a sea calf!) In 1926 the vessel, loaded with lumber, entered the channel at Miami and turned over and lay across the channel for months. Finally she was towed ashore and converted into an aquarium.

The new little mermaid of Windley Island seems destined to receive as much attention from the scientists as did Maggie's child in

1930. Dan Beard says that he is heading up a scientific study to observe the manatee's offspring.

So much, then, for the mermaid legend. Disillusioning? To console ourselves, we picked up the book, "Peabody's Mermaid" by Guy Pearce Jones, and were soon engrossed in that delightful tale about a mermaid discovered off the Bahamas. Sometime later, while re-reading the diary of Robert Juet, mate of Henry Hudson's ship *Half Moon*, we came upon this curious entry:

"We set our mainsayl and sprit sayle and our top sayles and steered away e.s.e and se by e. off into the mayne sea. Some of our sailors reported they did see a mermaid, not far off from our vessel."

Our guess is that the mermaid legend will continue so long as sailors enjoy spinning yarns.



M.D.C.

A KING REPAYS A CAPTAIN

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, Jan. 25—A wireless message was sent to the U.S.S. *Cimarron* today authorizing her captain to buy ten sheep and a supply of rice, sugar, tea, shortening and fruits at the expense of King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia.

After visiting the 25,000-ton fleet tanker at Ras Tanura the King ordered that a gift of ten live sheep, 1,000 pounds of rice, 200 pounds of sugar, twenty pounds of tea, 200 pounds of ghee (refined cooking butter) and 1,000 pounds of assorted fruits be sent to the vessel.

When this truckload of food arrived at the dock the vessel had already set sail for Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands with a load of Arabian oil.

When the King learned that his gift had been left behind he asked that a message be sent authorizing Capt. John W. Murphy of Washington, D. C., to buy the supplies at his next port of call.

DANISH SHIP HITS MINE

Copenhagen: The Danish steamer *Karla* struck a mine and sank within five minutes. Sixteen crew members were missing. Twenty-eight were rescued. The *Karla* was repairing an undersea cable southwest of Finland.





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- \$273.97** for the deficit in operating costs for an entire day. (Red Letter Day—donor may select date).
 - 5.81** to provide the average loan to "tide over" an individual seaman with food, lodging and clothing.
 - 3.02** for food only. 
 - 2.79** for lodging only. 
 - 6.00** dormitory beds for 10 men.
 - 22.35** for operating Game Room and giving recreation to an average of **297** men for one day.
- 
- 60.71** to provide one evening's movie program for **700** seamen.
 - 50.00** for entire cost of weekly dance (includes music and refreshments).
 - 35.00** music only, for dance.
 - 15.00** refreshments only, for dance.
 - 11.33** afternoon coffee in Lounge. 
 - 17.34** Alcoholics Anonymous—service to an average of **22** for a single day.

Please make all checks payable to THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK, 25 South Street, N. Y. C.

It's the warm hearts of generous friends that keep the Institute "steady as she goes."



"Hurricane Track" by British seaman John Russell Chancellor, one of the paintings from the recent United Seamen's Service art exhibition.

One bright and sunny morning in mid-November, 1943, we were sailing under convoy, along the track of the prevailing Westerlies. The sea was a glassy one, broken only by the ship's bows and propellers, which turned up small bubbly wakes. Visibility was unlimited. In the warm air one could see for miles with a rare clearness. The aneroid barometer, which hung in the chart-room, registered an atmospheric pressure of 30.77 inches on its dial — an unusually high reading. Here, Nature was whispering in her subtle way, "Get ready for the tempest to come."

And come it did! The hurricane came roaring out of the tropics from a west southwesterly direction. The ocean soon became a turbulent mass, being churned into mountainous waves. All this happened in about four hours. According to the ship's anemometer, a device for measuring wind velocity, an eighty-mile an hour wind reached us at 10 o'clock that very night. However, this was not a steady reading, but an indication of the fitfulness of the storm.

The Hurricane

By Harry L. Payne

The hurricane had closed in with all its fury, and little did we know that it was to be with us for the next 96 hours. Being in a storm at sea was bad enough, but being under convoy with other ships all around was something to be feared; feared because of the imminent danger of collision.

We were headed into the teeth of the storm and in consequence, we had to meet the onrushing waves. By directing the helmsman to veer the ship at a sharp angle each time on meeting a large wave, I was able to keep the ship from pounding on the next wall of water. In this manner I was able to avoid the certain disaster, which an angry sea so often inflicts.

There wasn't much protection behind the canvas that stretched round the navigation bridge. The tarpaulin was only about four feet high and it enclosed an area of 81 square-feet. Overhead was another tarpaulin supported by stanchions at the four corners of the enclosed area. I gave the Chief Mate a hand to stretch more canvas on the weather side. Aside from this extra piece of canvas there was nothing to shield us watchstanders from the fury of the wind, rain and heavy seas. Our navigation bridge was known in "mariners circles" as an open bridge.

The helmsman wrestled with the steering wheel, having to put it "hard over" many times to steer as near the course as possible. He was unable to see the compass at times when blinded momentarily by the rain. The rain blew in on a parallel plane and with such force that it stung my face and filled my eyes, until I could hardly see. The mate, who relieved me at midnight, actually crawled on the deck, first pulling on one thing and then another, till he reached the bridge.

It was a grim sight as I watched

our ship's bow rise quickly and split through a wave. I experienced a tense feeling. The salt water, tons of it, would shoot skyward to about the height of a four story building and descend with a rousing crescendo upon the foredeck. Immediately, the white water would sweep aft and leave the vessel.

The big "Jumbo" block, used specifically for heavy lifts, jarred loose during the third night and began to bang into booms, masthouses, and the like. At this point, our crew, who were well-liked for seamanship, donned their boots, oilskins and sou'westers. They crawled forward on the lee side and lashed the block securely in its proper position. These daring seamen had no sooner returned when the largest wave of them all ripped off the port life-boat. It appeared as if some giant hand had reached out and snatched away the boat. The big iron davits which normally supported the boat had been broken off flush with the deck.

On the fourth day, the ship's radioman gave the news via the voice tube to the bridge that three Liberty ships had sent out SOS calls. Yes the ships were being destroyed by the ceaseless pounding of the angry waves. We received word, too, about a daring rescue of a great many survivors from one ship. This act was accomplished by a Norwegian tanker crew.

Came the calm — at long last. With the tempest gone, ships which had drifted off course and had scattered in different directions came straggling from over a fair horizon and had found their places in the convoy. Not all the places were filled. The hapless Commodore of the convoy had to signal the vessels to speed ahead and close these gaps. There will be other storms, of course, but to me, few winds will ever equal the intensity of that North Atlantic hurricane of November 1943, for it was then that seven Liberty ships went down beneath the waves.

"Little Joey" Is Beached

HER former skipper, Capt. Alan Villiers, often spoke of the little square-rigger affectionately as "Little Joey." He had named her "Joseph Conrad" in honor of the great seaman-novelist when he bought the ship from her Danish owners in 1934. She had been built in 1882 as the "Georg Stage" as a training ship. Capt. Villiers sailed her around the world in 1934-35 and 1936; then G. Huntington Hartford bought her. When the war came, he gave her to the U. S. Government and for the past six years she was used by the U. S. Maritime Commission as a training vessel.

Now comes word that "Little Joey" is to be permanently beached, after a long, and varied career. Congressional action is being sought to keep the famous old sailing ship in St. Petersburg, Florida, as a Museum ship.

Despite the fact that she had a masculine name the ship, always referred to as "she", was lucky.

Readers are referred to Villiers' book, "The Cruise of the Conrad" (Scribner) for an interesting account, with excellent photographs, of her 35,000 miles of voyaging.



The Man With The Black Fedora

By Capt. S. M. Riis*

Third Prize Winner in

"My Most Unforgettable Sea Experience" Essay Contest

THE S/S "X" had been wallowing in the bleak cold North Atlantic for five days. She was part of a convoy of some seventy odd ships carrying supplies to Murmansk. This was in the early days of the war. We had no naval escort to speak of and only a very few of the supply ships had guns. It was in the period when the activity of the Nazi undersea ships was most formidable, when it required real courage and determination to keep the supply lanes open. Our ships were being sunk a dozen at a time.

The convoy had been plowing through heavy seas, mist and fog for a solid four days and nights. It had been reported that two packs of Nazi subs were in the vicinity. The incessant whistling of ships, indicating their position in the fog-bound convoy, cut like knives into our over-worked eardrums. Judging from distances covered and courses made good, we had been sailing through a fog-covered area of more than a million square miles.

As days and nights dragged by, we began to recognize the different ships by the sound of their whistles. We named them accordingly. On our port quarter was the "Staten Island Ferry"; on our starboard, an "old screeching woman;" just ahead was the organ sound of Radio City Music Hall. At our stern was a basso of the Metropolitan Opera, while still others sounded like the warblings of prima donnas. All these sound signals indicated that most of the convoy, although unseen, kept together. There were many close and a few actual collisions of ships. Since some were loaded with live munitions, occasional reverberations of explosions in the night, lent added excitement

* Member, Artists & Writers Club

and tension to tired and overworked sensibilities. No one slept, except to doze off now and then in wet clothes.

It was during one of the darkest and foggiest nights of the voyage, that suddenly one of the lookouts on night watch reported that he had seen a strange man on the foredeck among large boxes of airplane parts stored as deck cargo. The lookout came into the mess hall, all out of breath, and badly frightened. "I just saw a man, between the boxes on the foredeck" he announced. "He wore a black fedora hat and a long gray cape. Then he disappeared".

Although we all believed that the sailor, overworked and tired, had been seeing things, we investigated thoroughly. It was so dark, with the blackout and fog, that our vision only penetrated a couple of feet. The inspection was made by feeling around with hands rather than by eyes. Nothing suspicious was found. When daylight came another search was made. A thorough inspection was also made by some of the members of the crew voluntarily, but nothing whatever was found to indicate that a stranger could have possibly been stowed away on board our ship. Yet the belief that there was such a phantom stowaway on board somehow became fixed in the minds of most of the crew members, especially when others began to report also having seen the same apparition.

The idea was bizarre and unbelievable . . . yet . . . As the days passed, things became so bad that nobody dared to venture on the foredeck in the night unless accompanied by an armed officer.

Fog continued and we had to have



a lookout on the bow. There was no use sending nervous men on watch. Under such conditions, they could not possibly do their duty efficiently. Volunteers were called for. Among these was a messman, John, a mere boy of eighteen, who was making his first trip to sea. Reared on a small Pennsylvania farm, he had never been farther in his whole life from his home than to the movies in the village near by. He was a nice, clean-cut and honest boy.

Every night, he would stand watch. He had good young eyes and not infrequently, it was because of his vigilance that we were saved from running into other ships of the convoy suddenly looming up out of darkness and pea-soup fog.

One morning as we were nearing the shores of one of the European countries under enemy control, the messman, who had been on lookout, could not be found. All our combined efforts to find any traces of him finally ended with a terse entry in the ship's log: "John, a second messman, missing." He must have fallen overboard accidentally or committed suicide, we thought.

However, when his personal effects were being checked and stored, in preparation for delivery to his next of kin, a note was found. The note was addressed to the Master of the vessel in John's apparently shaky and hasty handwriting.

"Dear Captain, honestly I could not help it. I had to do it. There really was a man with a black fedora hat and a gray cape on board. The first night out, when I was alone on deck, this man came out of one of the deck cargo boxes and pointing a gun, made me enter the large box with him. This box was half empty, so far as cargo was concerned. The man with the black hat told me that he was a German submarine officer and that he had commanded a whole flotilla of subs. His ship had been sunk and now he was on his way back to assume his duties as chief of staff of the Atlantic submarine command. He showed me charges of some high explosives stored in several little kegs, lined up by a cot, on which he sat. He threatened to blow the whole ship up if his hiding place should be discovered. Then I had to bring him some food and water. I did not want the ship to be blown up. Then he took out a rubber raft from his hiding place and ordered me to help him launch it and go with him. He attached wires to kegs of explosives. He told me that if I would go with him quietly, nothing would happen to our ship. He needed me to help him paddle the raft. I had to go. So help me God. He also assured me that this ship would never be attacked by Germans, so long as he remained the chief of staff. (Signed) John".

It was found that in one of the large boxes of deck cargo, there was a charge of explosives, sufficient to blow up several ships. The contact wires to a battery near by had been disconnected. Every sign pointed to the fact that someone had been living in this strange secret hiding place. To the box had been built an ingeniously constructed secret door with well-oiled hinges.

The ship in question continued to carry supplies. Not a word was ever heard from the valiant mess boy, who had so courageously and in so strange a manner saved his ship, her cargo, and the lives of his shipmates.



Drawing by Phil May

Queenie

By Gunnar Nilsson

Best Sea Story of the Month for January

THE NAVARRO was a dirty, old scow. Condemned by the authorities in several countries, she finally ended up under the Panamanian flag, hauling peanuts between Pernambuco and New York.

We left New York one cold winter day and as we were a completely new crew we didn't know anything about the roaches that inhabited the NAVARRO. We were old-timers most of us and figured we had been on worse ships than this leaky rust-pot, but as we left the cold weather behind us and closed in on the Equator the roaches began to come alive and, by the hundreds, crawled out from their winter quarters. By the time we reached Pernambuco the roaches were practically in command and the captain ordered the ship fumigated.

But it takes more than a mere fumigation to get rid of those rugged little creatures. To our disappointment we found them still crawling around after our departure. The fumes had only decreased them in number and as the days went by they soon regained their former numbers. They were all over the ship, in the food and in the quarters. They even climbed the mast — maybe scouting for new hunting grounds.

The crew was pretty much dis-

gusted and even the bosun, a quiet, easy-going fellow, let off steam one morning. The previous night, he said, he had gone to the refrigerator in the mess room to get something to eat. When he opened the door to the refrigerator, he claimed that a huge roach pulled it closed. As the bosun had not been in an arguing mood he had gone to bed. Some fellows said that either the bosun was drunk or he was trying to disrupt the morale of the crew, but it was obvious that the roaches didn't care. They took the whole thing good-naturedly.

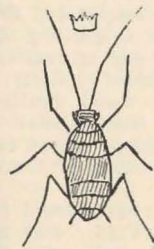
Of the crew, only Bill, one of the firemen came to their defense, stating that at least they kept the bed-bugs away. This in turn started a heated argument about which one were the most disagreeable, roaches or bed-bugs. Since there were no bedbugs present the roaches won the argument.

A few days later the same Bill was chalking up lines on the table in the mess room. Starting from a vertical line at one end of the table, he made several parallel lines toward the other end where there was another vertical line, made of sugar. To our curious questions his only reply was, "Wait and see."

When he had completed the design, he took a matchbox from one

of his pockets. Carefully he opened the box. To our amazement it contained a roach. Gently, as if it were priceless, he held it out toward us saying, "I'll give five bucks to anyone who'll produce a roach to beat mine, racing across this here table."

We all grabbed roaches and began racing them against Bill's. But it was no race; Bill's roach won every time. While ours went all over the table, crossing the lines and running back and forth without any sense of direction, the one Bill had headed straight for the line of sugar. If the roaches had been cursed before, that was nothing against the cascade of foul words that broke loose over their innocent heads. The guys were losing money.



M. D. C.

We finally came to the conclusion that Bill must have trained his little speedster and maybe starved it for a day. One of the trimmers said he would prove that point.

He went down in the stoke-hold where there is nothing but coal. There he grabbed a roach that seemed pretty fast and brought it up in the mess room, put it on the table, and after sitting still for a second and sniffing and taking in the situation, the little bugger made a bee-line for the sugar as if he'd been racing all his life. Some of us claimed that this one was even faster than Bill's Champ. Well, it had to be settled, and while a couple of excited seamen fetched Bill for another race. I collected the bets.

Bill's loftiness disappeared and his confidence was shaken when the newcomer won race after race. The Champ, now an ex, only won about one out of six. The trimmer's

new champion, Bel-Ami, was the acclaimed hero.

Bel-Ami lasted only another day.

Before this trip was over the trimmer again found a new champion. Queenie he called her, and she was without doubt the fastest roach that ever entered a race. She outdistanced everything that was put up against her. She made Cutty Sark and all the others look silly. It was like racing Sea-Biscuit against the Old Gray Mare. Her competitors were given as much as half the distance in handicap, and Queenie was still the undisputable champ. Although only about three quarters of an inch long, she beat with ease giants two and three times her size. Night after night she ran, and as she ran the young trimmer by and by cleaned up every cent on the ship. She was a gold mine. Several of us, while we still had dough left, tried to buy the ugly-looking little shrimp, but the trimmer didn't want to sell. He was offered one hundred dollars cash by the captain but refused to sell. The Old Man then tried on another beam. He said Queenie actually was the ship's property and rightfully belonged to him as the captain of the ship. It seemed to us that legally the Old Man was right as he was there to look after the company's property. But in debating with the trimmer he got into water up to his neck. Queenie's owner was a born sea-lawyer. He called upon his constitutional rights as a citizen of a free country to pick any roach he wanted to represent him in a race, and furthermore, did the captain threaten him?

The afternoon we pulled in to New York we threw our dirty working clothes overboard as the custom is at the end of a voyage. The trimmer did the same thing. As he always carried the match-box with Queenie on him, out the port-hole she went with the dirty pair of dungarees. He was broken hearted but we couldn't stop the ship to pick up Queenie.

GALE DELAYS TRANSPORT

Winds that blew 80 miles an hour were described by the master of the Army Transport *Gen. C. H. Muir*, which docked recently at Pier 11, Staten Island, six days and nine hours behind schedule.

The *Muir*, with its bow damaged by the huge waves, carried 1954 passengers from Bremerhaven, Germany.

"I have never heard of such continuous bad weather in all my years at sea," Cap. Archibald M. De Boer of Baltimore told reporters.

His face haggard from worry and lack of sleep, he told of a series of storms which churned the Atlantic shipping lanes. "As one would moderate, another storm would start up," he said. "The day the wind reached 80 miles an hour, part of the galley smoke stack was blown off. Then we developed engine trouble."

In actual sea time, the voyage took 14 days and 23 minutes, compared with a normal eight-day run. When the ship reached Ambrose Light she was forced to anchor because of fog.

WHISTLE FOR A WIND

Whistling for a wind was the traditional way aboard sailing ships of trying to catch a stray breeze when becalmed. When in the doldrums the crew sometimes threw a sea book over the side to propitiate the wind gods. If no wind was forthcoming, they might throw a pea jacket overboard. They also let their beards grow until the wind began to blow. In desperate straits, the sailors threw coins over the side. On today's merchant ships, they'll settle with the wind gods by throwing a pair of socks with holes in them over the side.

CITATION

The wartime merchant crew of a veteran tanker, *La Placencia*, won an official citation by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, then Navy commander in the Pacific, for "excellent service and outstanding cooperation" in the conquest of the Marshall Islands.

FLYING CLOUD SAILS AGAIN

The C-2 freighter FLYING CLOUD, recently purchased from the Maritime Commission by Isbrandtsen is following in the wake of her namesake, a famous American clipper ship.

The cargo ship sailed from Pier 14, East River and Maiden Lane, for the Far East. This same pier was the famous sailing clipper's berth when she sailed in the Far Eastern trade during the last century.

Another clipper namesake, the C-2 freighter FLYING ARROW, will go on berth next. Hans Isbrandtsen, president of the company, said that negotiations

have been completed to purchase two more C-2s and another vessel from the government.

(Just prior to the sailing of the S.S. "Flying Cloud", Dr. Kelley, as Director and Chaplain of the Institute, officiated at a brief benediction of the ship, at which time a photograph of Mrs. Nicoline Isbrandtsen, mother of Mr. Isbrandtsen, was hung in the dining saloon. This picture had hung for fifteen years on one of his former steamships named for his mother, the NICOLINE MAERSK. When she was torpedoed the picture was carefully saved by the Captain. Mr. Isbrandtsen, his wife, sister and other relatives and friends were present at the benediction of this historically named ship.) Editor.

STEAMSHIP ALASKA AGROUND

Seattle—The steamship *Alaska* lay at a wharf recently, at Cordova, Alaska, her ninety passengers and 100 crew members safe after an exciting eighteen hours in which the ship ran aground and later narrowly avoided sinking in Cordova Harbor. The vessel awaited arrival of a Navy tug from Kodiak to determine extent of damage caused forward when the ship grounded in Orca Bay, in a storm.

The *Alaska* was bound from Yukutat for Cordova, Valdez and Seward when she was grounded. After floating free, she made Cordova Harbor.

FIRE DESTROYS SHIP AT HALIFAX

Fire has destroyed the former clipper *Grandee*, which was built at Portsmouth, N. J. in 1873 and which plied for years between the United States and Europe as a passenger ship. Since 1900 she had been used to carry coal along the coast and later to bunker coal on ocean-going vessels.

The Holland-America liner *Veendam* has been turned over to her owners at Rotterdam, by the Netherlands Dock & Shipbuilding Co., of Amsterdam, her repairers, in preparation for her re-entry into the transatlantic service.

The 16,000 gross ton vessel, fully repaired and reconditioned, was scheduled to make her first post-war departure from Rotterdam for New York, via Southampton, on February 21.

The *Veendam's* return marks another important step in the rehabilitation of the Netherlands merchant marine.

The vessel was captured by the Germans when they invaded Holland in 1940, and was used by them as a U-boat officers' schoolship in various ports. She was found aground in Hamburg after the war with heavy bomb damage at the stern.

A DREAM AT SEA

By George Reoch

I don't claim to be a chemist,
Or a psychologist,
Nor a dreamy headed poet
Whom the blarney stone has kissed.
And yet I have concocted
In a test tube out at sea,
A vision of sweet perfection,
From a haunting memory.
The red gold from a setting sun
I spun with utmost care,
Then made upon a magic wheel
A glorious head of hair.
The tops of creamy whitecaps,
Where they lapped a sandy beach,
Give her skin the smooth complexion
Of a soft tree-ripened peach.
From a blue lagoon I stole the pearls,
Like any common thief,
And matching them, without a flaw,
Two rows of milkwhite teeth.
A coral reef of vivid red,
Cross which the breakers stream,
Became the tempting lips of her
Within my test-tube dream.
The colors from the brightest bow
The rain had ever made,
Gave her brown eyes, (I worked for hours
To get the proper shade).
I seized a cloud, that drifted past,
All melty soft and white,
Then by the glow of countless stars,
I shaped her form, that night.
Just one more touch I had to add,
And then, my task was through,
I dropped a freckle here and there
To make her warm, like you.

THE CREPE ESCORTING BOY

By Michael Waszko

Take the pessimistic guy and swing him
from the sky.
He's a swab who visions everything in
gloom.
He's a prophet of dire needs
And he strews his dismal seeds
Like a hardened Scrooge arisen from
the tomb.
"The ship is doomed", he said
"Her boiler fires are dead.
She's headed for the bottom with a rush.
I'm gonna leave her when
She ships a sea and settles 'neath the
hush."
Everything he views is adrift with dole-
ful news.
His timeworn phrase is, "Naw, it can't
be done."
He's the crepe escorting boy, the
harnacle of joy,
He's the crank who drags the clouds
across the sun.
Oh, it's the optimist for me.
He's the gold mine of the sea;

He's the lad who gives and shrugs
"Can't win 'em all."
He's the guy who plays the game nor
ever thinks of blame
When the breaks are on the other fellow's
ball.
He's quick to find excuse for the other
man's abuse.
To either side a cheer he'll gladly send.
On deck or in a port, he's a gentleman
and sport
And he's the guy I like to call a friend.

THE AGELESS DEEP

By Richard A. Wukasz

The Sea,
Undulating
Like the broad back of the whale that
it mothers,
Rolls under the leaden sky
Into Infinity;
And singing the song of the Ageless
Deep,
Sweeps back
In an all-embracing circle
Into the Arms
Of the Eternal.
*Composed in mid-Atlantic aboard the
S.S. John Barton Payne, July 25, 1946.*

EIGHT BELLS

By C. R. Schriver

Just yesterday, I heard that you had gone,
Can it be so, that you, from days of yore?
Who, when eight bells clanged it's
solemn tone —
With friendly hand knocked at my
stateroom door.
Can it be so? And I in comfort, too,
Snug anchored in the shadow of life's lee,
How could I know, my friend, that you
Were signing on for some Eternity?
I miss you. I can but laud your worth,
And through the eyes of friendship,
visualize,
You smiling back at us who wait on
earth,
Mounting your path of glory to the skies.
When comes the softened cadence of
eight bells
In the days to come, beneath some
distant sky,
I'll hear your knock and know that all
is well —
Not dead! Just gone away — Goodbye!

L'Envoi

On some far day when the God of
men shall stand
And choose from amongst the brave
of Seven Seas,
In a place apart and close on His
right hand —
You'll stand there, smiling, in your
dungarees.

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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."

* It is with keen regret that we announce the death on Feb. 8th, 1947, of Mr. William Williams, a loyal and active member since 1927.