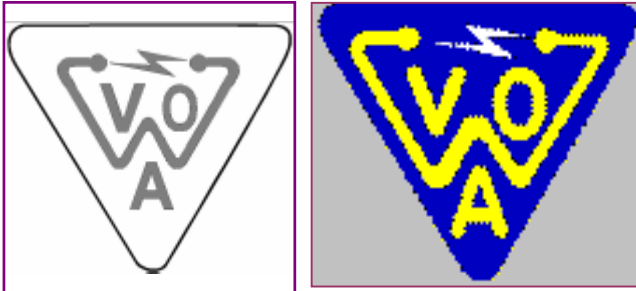


VWOA NEWSLETTER

Email Issue #17

2006



David Kintzer Memorial Plaque 1997 for 15 Years of service as VWOA Newsletter Editor and Secretary.

VWOA Life Membership 2003 as retiring Secretary.

VWOA Director Edward F. Pleuler Jr. W2EIQ became a SK on April 22, 2006.

Edward F. Pleuler Jr. was an Officer and Director of the VWOA for 30 years. As Secretary for 21 of those years he produced an informative Quarterly Newsletter keeping the Membership aware of all the issues that had an impact on Radio and Wireless topics.

Without the aid of a computer, just a trusty typewriter and Xerox Copier, he kept the Membership informed, the Officers and VWOA Directors challenged, with problems, meticulously detailed to be resolved by the Board, for the benefit of VWOA Members.

His VWOA Honors include the:

Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Achievement in 1990 as RO, Officer and VWOA Secretary



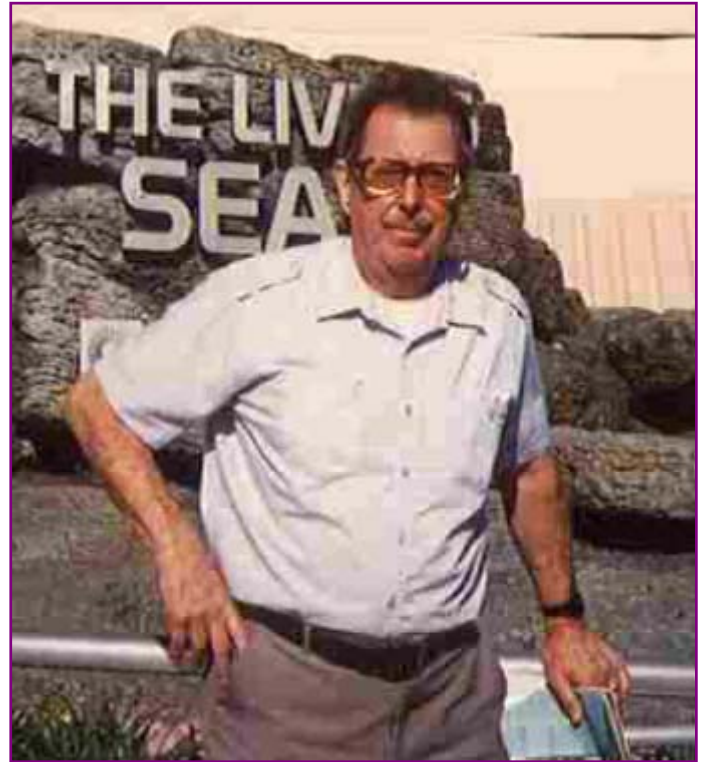
Treasurer J. Michael Shaw presents Brass Telegraph Key and VWOA Life Membership to retiring Edward F. Pleuler Jr. in 2003



John Dilks K2TQN

The 81st Awards Luncheon was well attended by Metropolitan Area VWOA Members. John Dilks gave an engaging talk on the attempts to transmit Radio from an Airship in 1910 trying to leave Atlantic City to cross the Atlantic.

He was awarded the **Marconi Memorial Award Plaque** by VWOA.



Eugene Kauder W4PRS

This Email Edition features a previously published story of Merchant Men and Ships during the Vietnam War in April 1975.

Eugene Kauder, who states that he has been a member of VWOA for many years, supplied the following background:

After graduation from High School in Brooklyn, NY, I enlisted in the US Maritime Service. Attended Sheepshead Bay Basic Training and qualified for Radio School at Gallups Island (Boston, MA).

Graduated in July 1945 and passed the FCC 2nd Class Commercial Radiotelegraph License exam.

I was sent to Seattle, WA and boarded the SKAGWAY VICTORY. My trip to the Pacific was 8 months long, sailing with Armed Guard (US Navy) gun crew and military cargo just before the end of World War II.

Upon return to the United States, I learned that US Merchant Marine ships were sailing with only one Radio Officer. I had earned my six months required experience and found out that I was in demand. Received my 1st Class R/T, RADAR endorsement. Time went on and I sailed for 56 years, from CW, SSB, Satellite, GMDSS Modes until I retired 2005 April. Fifty Six (56) Years and over 14,000 certified shipboard days, on Liberty, Victory, Tankers, Freighters, Breakbulk, Container and Passenger ships worldwide.

I am also an Amateur Radio Opr W4PRS ex W2EZV since 1950 Extra Class.

LAST VOYAGE TO VUNG TAU: A VIETNAM FINALE

By Eugene Kauder W4PRS

“A story that he had written for **THE RADIO OFFICERS UNION MONTHLY MAGAZINE** in May of 1975.”

On a voyage from Sunny Point, North Carolina to Thailand during the latter week of April 1975, the PIONEER CONTRACTOR, with a full cargo of ammunition was diverted to Vung Tau, entrance to the Saigon River. We arrived amidst a vast armada of Naval and Merchant vessels standing by outside the 12-mile limit

We went into Vung Tau harbor to anchor and discharge ammo cargo into barges while several vessels were leaving for international waters, fleeing the approaching Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army. We discharged some 1200 tons in 36 hours, the only ship inside Vietnamese water although the SS AMERICAN RACER was anchored for some 12 hours at Vung Tau

At night, fires and explosions could be seen and heard along the nearby shore. A boatload of Arvin soldiers came out to notify the stevedores that the city had all but fallen. The stevedores quit work and left for shore.

When we left for the 12-mile limit to night steam, we took aboard 87 Vietnamese

refugees. They were missionaries representing the World Christian Youth Group, and a large boat with tons of supplies. Rice, canned milk, diapers, sleeping mats, utensils, etc. The ship's crew voluntarily labored all night taking aboard the cargo and stowing it. Outhouses were prepared, fresh water hoses rigged and food preparations were made ready for an additional 6,000 refugees, allotted us by the Military Sealift Command.

The following day we once again went into Vung Tau harbor, anchored preparing for further discharge of our ammo cargo, but MSC ordered us back to sea as the city was already in Communist hands. The refugees aboard, women, men and children, meanwhile made themselves at home, cooking food, washing clothes and hanging them on lines across the hatches. Just like a Vietnamese village.

We were still awaiting order to take aboard the 6,000 refugees and meanwhile dozens of fishing vessel appeared alongside with signs in English ---SOS, Out of Water, Help Us, etc. Several fleeing Arvin helicopters tried to land on our hatches and booms had to be laid out to prevent them from landing, as a crash and fire might have been the disastrous consequences, due to our cargo of ammunition. We could not take on board refugees without MSC permission.

About two dozen large fishing vessels with at least 5,000 people, with suitcases,

motorcycles and other worldly goods, came alongside and tied up. They were out of food and water, but thanks to good preparation aboard the PIONEER CONTRACTOR and the **Rev. Do** of our refugee group, we were able to feed and re-supply the helpless refugees. It was very orderly and with no signs of panic or mob scenes, as the religious leaders on the fishing boats took charge and rationed all the supplies. Fires were started to cook rice, children were fed and it was a great humanitarian undertaking by the Officers and crew and the completely unselfish acts of the refugee groups aboard our ship. **Captain Paul Gregware** did an outstanding job, showing great initiative.

We were finally turned down by the military in further efforts to take aboard refugees due to our cargo of ammunition and no room in the holds. April 29th and 30th, the sky was filled with hundreds of helicopters from US Naval Forces, as they came and went upriver to Saigon, evacuating the remaining Americans, including Ambassador Martin.

Our refugees which were beginning to assimilate with our own crew, were transferred to a US Naval vessel for evacuation to a sanctuary in the United States. We then proceeded to Sasebo, Japan, for further orders. Thus ended the Vietnamese episode, April 30th, 1975, and the United States involvement in Vietnam.

Several months later the voyage ended and a party was given by U.S. Lines attended by several US Naval dignitaries and Government officials. A letter of commendation was given each and every member of the ship's personnel. Communication work was handled on 2716 R/T and VHF channel 16. Some vessels were given 8230 kHz SSB which worked out best, as lots of QRN caused by unfavorable weather made contact on Low Frequency difficult. A special mercast setup was made 3 times a day with messages being sent CW in the blind, speed 25 to 30 wpm, no repeats. Messages were very long and replies were sent CW to NPN (Guam or NWC Australia).

A special commendation should be given to NPN, whose operators were always available to give corrections; repeats, mercast traffic or to receive messages, with lots of patience and skill. They speeded along the heavy ship traffic, through QRM and QRN.

U.S. Lines, five vessels, evacuated a total of 84,000 out of a total of 179,000 refugees. No doubt, each Radio Officer contributed an outstanding job and are a credit to their profession. They each have their own tale to tell, but this is mine and I hope this will serve for all.

The End of the LAST VOYAGE TO VUNG TAU

WVOA MEMBER NEWS

We at WVOA want to thank you for your favorable responses to your WVOA Email Newsletter.

We can only continue this form of Celebrating the Past if all of our WVOA Members make known some of their personal special events that contributed to their career in Wireless.

We want to hear from YOU. Dig into your memories and share them with the rest of your WVOA Members.

WENDELL'S NEWS CORNER

Wendell R. Benson brings to your attention a URL

The www.mariner.org/library which Mike Shaw recommends for a visit to a nice museum at Newport News, VA.

Douglas S. Stivison, WVOA 2nd Vice President and Web Master of www.vwoa.org has recently updated the WVOA Web Site with a PDF copy of the 2006 Awards Year Book. Visit the Web Site and get a preview of the Hard Copy that you will be receiving in the United States Mail.



May 20, 2006 VWOA Luncheon Photos by
VWOA 1st Vice President Rick Kenney and his
wife Donna Kenney.
Many thanks for the quick cooperation.

Millie Pleuler, wife of recent SK Edward F. Pleuler Jr. was presented with an Honorary Membership in VWOA and a copy of the Memorial Donation letter to the Seamen's Church Institute by Wendell R. Benson, VWOA Membership Secretary



Miles D. MacMahon was unable to attend the 81st VWOA Luncheon and was presented In Absentia the **DAVID KINTZER MEMORIAL AWARD** by Honorary VWOA Member Jolanda Kintzer to Miles D. MacMahon PROXY, 2nd Vice President Douglas S. Stivison

We at the VWOA Newsletter would like to hear from you and try to pass along to the rest of the VWOA stories of events that you have experienced and that you feel the rest of the membership would enjoy hearing about. Send us a picture or two and we will try to include it in one of our Email Newsletters.

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We would prefer to hear from you by Email at:

ftcassidy@optonline.net

Or

wenben@nyc.rr.com

but if you must, send mail to:

VWOA

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