

VWOA NEWSLETTER

Email Issue #31

Francis T. Cassidy Editor

2008



NEW VWOA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS TERM OF OFFICE 2008-2009

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Eli Morawiec



Director Eli Morawiec Veteran Member

Eli presents his credential as follows:

**Seton Hall University School of Law, J.D. 1/1991 – Admitted
New York State Bar
State University of New York College at Fredonia, B.A.,
5/1986, Magna Cum Laude**

**United States Naval Reserve Construction Force (Seabees)
10/1983 – 6/2007
United States Coast Guard – Communications Technician
11/1974 – 12/1978**

Over 20 Years of Commercial Insurance brokerage experience with an emphasis on utilizing legal training to provide internal and external clients with a broad scope of Account Management, Risk Management Consulting, Coverage Analysis/Risk Assessment and Claims Consulting Services.

Eli mentioned that in the past few years he was involved in the negotiating and placing of project specific Professional Liability Insurance for the design teams involved with major infrastructure projects in downtown Manhattan.

More recently he was involved with the negotiating and placing of the project specific Environmental Insurance for the construction manager, and the project specific Professional Liability Insurance for the design team and construction manager for the new Giants and Jets football stadium currently under construction in the Meadowlands.



JAMES A. JOLLY PhD W6QPV

Same uniform 62 years after World War II

**Professor Emeritus, California State University, Sacramento.
First licenses, 1939, same call.
XYL, W6QPV, Rose, ARRL,
QCWA, DXCC**

Introduction by James A. Jolly PhD

PART ONE

My early years were near Turlock about 80 miles South South East of San Francisco. My dad had a dairy farm. I earned my amateur license while a Junior in High School. During the Summer, after my first year of college, the year 1941, I

read in the QST magazine about a school at Gallups Island, Boston Harbor, operated by the Coast Guard for the U.S. Maritime Service, that upon graduation qualified you to sail as a radio operator on U.S. merchant ships. The qualifications to attend were a high school education, an amateur license (later the amateur license requirement was dropped), and over 18 years of age. My home was inland. I had never even been a passenger on a large ship, but the idea of seeing the world as a radio operator on a ship that sailed the high seas was very attractive. I figured I could qualify and applied. By the end of the Summer I was on a train on my way to Gallups Island. I was in class at Gallups Island when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese. I advanced one class and so was ready to graduate in May of 1942. Unfortunately just before formal graduation I became ill with scarlet fever. My class went off to sea and left me behind. My story begins when I was well and ready to go to sea. Soon after I returned from a week of leave and after recovering from the scarlet fever, I received my orders. The first set were simple enough, the orders included a train ticket to New York City where I was to report to the U.S. Maritime Office, it had been my understanding that most of the graduates had reported to the union office for assignment so this seemed unusual. There I received a new set of

orders. This was quite a surprise. They told me I was assigned to a ship that needed a radio officer but that no more details could be released because of security. I had walked into a cloak and dagger type of drama. I was given a set of orders with instructions and tickets for the first leg of my trip. I was to go immediately to the Airport, there I was to take a plane to Jacksonville Florida. I was to stay at a particular hotel. At the Hotel desk was an envelope for me. My orders were to go to the airport and take a plane to Miami and again to check into a specified hotel and check at the desk for an envelope.

I followed all of the instructions and arrived at the Miami Florida hotel. The instructions for me at the Hotel desk said that I would be contacted the next morning in the Hotel lobby. The next morning a seedy man approached me in the hotel lobby and asks if I was James Jolly, did I have an I.D. etc. He then said he was my driver and I was to go with him and he would take me to my ship. He didn't want to tell me any more at that time. After leaving Miami and driving for some time he said we were headed for Key West Florida. This was an interesting drive down the keys of Florida. Much of the highway is over bridges that connect the keys (islands) together. After many



OCEAN GOING TUG *M.S. Edmond J. Moran*

hours of driving we arrived at Key West. The driver took me to the dock. At the dock was a large ocean going tug with the name M.S. Edmond J. Moran. My orders told me to report to the captain. The captain, Hugo Kroll, a short stout man of many years with a pipe in his mouth and a friendly smile greeted me and said, "Son we have been waiting here for more than seven days expecting your arrival. Now we can get under way." We were at sea within the hour.

The M.S. Edmond J. Moran was a powerful diesel electric twin screw ocean going tug. It was new and had made only one voyage before I joined her. The radio room was a combination radio room and sleeping quarters for the radio officer. The equipment was of new design similar to what we had been trained on at the

Gallups Island radio school. Included was an auto alarm that would notify the bridge and the radio operator anytime it was on and the radio operator was off duty. I was the only radio operator, so it was necessary to use the auto alarm for my off time. I stood watch from 0800 hours to 1200 hours and again from 2000 hours to 2400 hours, midnight.

It was May of 1942, shortly after the U.S. had joined the allies and declared war on Germany. The Germans had sent their fleet of submarines to the coast of the U.S. and were sinking many of the U.S. merchant ships. This was a bad period for the U.S. merchant ships. The M.S. Edmond J. Moran was mainly being sent to assist merchant ships that had been torpedoed but were still floating. The object was to put a line on the highly damaged merchant ship and if possible get it to port or ground it so that the cargo could be saved. Each day there were SOS signals received and many SSS signals received. The SSS signal represented a submarine sighting. A ship would send out an SSS when a submarine was sighted. Normally all ships maintained radio silence, but when a submarine was sighted the ship sighting the submarine could no longer hide from the submarine so she would break radio silence and send an SSS. All too often the SSS would be followed by an SOS. The ship's

position was copied as part of the message and reported to captain Kroll. If we were near he would divert our course in order to arrive at the location and help with any rescue possible.

One of the early assignments of the Tug Edmond J. Moran was to go to St Lucia to tow a ship. The ship was the S.S. Umtata. It was loaded with iron ore. It had visited the harbor at St Lucia for fuel and had been torpedoed while tied to the dock. The torpedo had hit midship and destroyed the engine room. The U.S. wanted the cargo so a crew, some how, were able to plug up the hole with concrete. The water in the engine compartment of the ship was pumped out and the S.S. Umtata was again floating. With some help from harbor tugs the Edmond J. Moran was able to put a line to the bow of the Umtata and tow her to sea. We had one Navy escort with us. The escort was faster than we were as the tug could only make eight to ten knots pulling the very large Umtata. The seas were favorable and after several days we were off the coast of Florida. To take advantage of the Gulf current we were traveling within sight of land. This was before the strong rules about black out on shore had been enforced. As we passed Miami there were many lights on shore. For a submarine this was ideal for at night we and the Umtata made a silhouette

target. Even though we had a Navy escort, the German submarine waited until the escort, in its circle around us, was on our land side. The submarine then torpedoed the S.S. Umtata. It was the middle of the night. The captain ordered the tow line to be cut so that the sinking Umtata would not drag the tug down with it. We then circled and picked up crew from the Umtata. The Navy escort did the same. As far as I know all crew were rescued. We then went into the port of Miami and landed the crew there. Navy personnel arrived to question the officers and crew. After a day in port we were on our way again. The fate of the submarine was unknown. The U.S. Navy escort did attempt to locate the submarine and did drop depth charges, but there was no proof of contact with the submarine. After a torpedo attack it was normal for a German submarine to dive rapidly to escape.

Why didn't the German submarines torpedo the Tug? The answer was very interesting. The tug was diesel electric, twin screw, with high speed propellers. At cruising speed the propellers turned at about 170 revolutions per minute. A normal steam driven cargo ship had a propeller speed of about 70 or 80 rpm. The Navy escort ships had a propeller design similar to the tug and their propeller also turned at about 170 rpm

when they were cruising. Submarines had listening devices and could find a ship by listening to the propeller sound. They could identify a cargo ship and a Navy escort ship and where one was a target the other was a potential disaster. This was a fortunate protection for we spotted many submarines during the months spent along the East Coast and the Caribbean Sea. When they heard the Tug they would submerge and hide from us. A few months after I came aboard the tug we were taken into drydock and 40 MM guns were mounted on the Port and Starboard side of the bridge and equipment to release depth charges over the stern were installed. We had the potential to destroy a German submarine. We did not have a Navy gun crew because there was a lack of bunk space on the tug. The crew of the tug went through 40 meter gun operation and the procedure to discharge depth charges.

One of our assignments was to join a convoy of three troop ships that were headed for passage through the Panama Canal. We started from an East Coast port and progressed South toward the Canal. The Windward Passage is the passage between Cuba and Haiti. It is narrow enough to see across on a clear day. The water through the passage is relatively shallow. As it is a major sea lane, German submarines would lay on

the bottom until they heard a ship, then surface, take an advantageous position and then torpedo the ship. The submarines had the preference of firing a torpedo from a position of broad side to the ship. This reduced the error and was most effective if the hit was midship. For this reason a submarine would most often surface to port or starboard. The troop convoy was well protected by Navy escort vessels who continually circled the convoy. The convoy consisted of three troop ships, three tugs, and several Navy escort ships. As we approached Windward Passage the lead troop ship, that carried the admiral who was in control, sent orders using flags for the ships to form a line with a tug between each troop ship and the third tug to trail the third troop ship. The M.S. Edmond J. Moran was in line following the lead troop ship and just ahead of the second troop ship. All went well. The formation was in order as we approached Windward Passage. Then the alert, submarine in area, flags went up on the lead troop ship. Minutes later a submarine partly surfaced inside the ring of Navy escort vessels and to the Port side of the lead troop ship heading at an angle directly in line to collide with the M.S. Edmond J. Moran. The submarine commander, observing the situation immediately started to submerge. Because of the forward speed of the submarine and the short distance

888

jinx! My experiences with Kings Point cadets differ greatly from some of the newer cadets!

After graduating from high school I attended a radio school to obtain my radiotelegraph license. It was over a year before I could land a job in those deep depression years. Finally I sailed, incidentally with cadets on many ships in 1933 and found them all to be very superior young men. They would come back to the radio shack to visit the young Radio Officer, the only officer aboard about their age.

After my sea-going years, which had included several interesting happenings, in 1939 I jumped ship and joined the Alameda County Sheriff's Office in Oakland, CA as a gun-toting' badge wearing' uniformed Deputy Sheriff in the AM and CW communications department up on the hill above San Leandro until December 7th. Not long after that I became a Warrant Radio-Electrician in the USCGR and was sent to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, Great Neck L.I., NY to teach cadets radio and electricity. I wrote their textbook for the course. What a pleasure to teach those young men!

After the war it was back to being a Deputy Sheriff for a couple of months.

Then the job of teaching the radio course I had graduated from came up. I couldn't let it pass, so I became a teacher again. The old Oakland Central Trade School became the Oakland Laney College. I wrote the textbook for my course which was published by McGraw-Hill in 1958, and was called "Electronic Communication". It is still being published in its 6th edition! It cost \$6 in '58, but I would hate to tell you what it is being sold for today!

After retiring from teaching in 1969 and taking 3 years to build my home up here in the redwoods, I became the local Fire Chief. I also wrote several other textbooks, including one on "Fire Fighting, How It's Done." Now my activities only include a few stories of the old days of radio for the amateur radio magazines. But it has been a most interesting life.

73

W6BNB/Bob

----- Original Message -----

From: "wally" **WALTER H. KEY JR.**

W2DES

To: "Wendell R Benson"

<wenben@nyc.rr.com>

Subject: KPH ET ALL BACK ON AIR

> Hi Wendell, a million thanks for the

emails and the telephone call. I
> was able to hear WLO 2 4 8 12 5/5 =
KLB 6 1/3 12 5/5 = KPH 6 8 12 5/5 =
> KFS 12 5/5 = KSM 6 3/4 . I sent a
DHCO to K6KPH giving them the above
> reports with a sig of " WALTER H KEY JR
EX WSF 1955 - 1966 and received
> qsl for same. Must say it felt real good
to be pounding out QTC
> commercial style just one more time to
a good commercial cw operator at
> K6KPH. Worked him on 7050 KHz.
Here a 2 element beam and TR7A at 200
> Watts out. Didn't need the big stick
with the beam antenna. All best to
> you and yours , 73
> Walt

Wendell would like you to visit:

<http://www.amarad.org>

This is the Radio Mariners Assoc (French)
There are many interesting links available.
After entering the site:
On the left PANE visit FAVORITE LINKS
click on: Amver - SOWP - VWOA
Wendell

Response from Delbert D. Lingenfelter
Better late than never!
I was in the USAF for four years but I love
to read about
The SEA STORYYS!
Thank you
73 Dale/KF6MD

Former VWOA Vice President Miles D.
MacMahon notifies us that a half hour
program about the Merchant Marine and
WW2 is now on the NJN website of New
Jersey Public Television and Radio.

This Web Site includes a project
undertaken by Miles D. MacMahon, (a
DAR Member as well as a VWOA Vice
President), who produced a video for the
Dennis A. Roland Chapter-AMMV and
resulted in a DVD entitled "Victory in the
SeaLanes" which was Sponsored,
Credited and presented to the Dennis A.
Roland Chapter-AMMV and now shown on
the NJN website as part of Merchant
Marine History.

Go to www.njn.net

Click on "The War" A Ken Burns Film

Click on "Oral Histories"

Scroll down to bottom of page to Victory
in the Sea Lanes: The Merchant Marine

Click on "Watch the Video"

If video is blocked click on yellow banner
to give Active X permission.

If you have access to Cable Comcast "On
Demand" TV; Press "ON DEMAND"
button on your remote:

Highlight "Get Local" and press
"OK SELECT" button

Move highlight to "Armed forces"
Press "OK SELECT"

Move highlight to "WW II" and
SELECT - "Victory in the SeaLanes"

From: "Wendell R Benson"
<wenben@nyc.rr.com>
To: "Francis T. Cassidy"
<ftcassidy@optonline.net>
Subject: VWOA member Carl Young
Date: Saturday, October 20, 2007

If you haven't looked recently--take a look
at k5hk on qrz.com
He has a very long bio there. Secty/Treas
American Radio Association.

Geo Levites called my attention to the
large ad ARA puts in QST every month
looking for seagoing radio ops.
Wendell

+++

From: "Wendell R Benson"
<wenben@nyc.rr.com>
Subject: Emailing: 19arctic
Date: Monday, October 22, 2007 12:13
PM

The message is ready to be sent with the
following file or link attachments:

Shortcut to:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/19/
us/19arctic.html?_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/19/us/19arctic.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

For those interested in the Coastguard I
have added a page to my web
site for Falmouth Coastguard.

More pictures are to follow but you may
find it of interest.

Robert Maskill - G4PYR - Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
MF Coastal Radio

www.coastalradio.org.uk

----- Original Message -----

Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2007 2:03
AM

Subject: Re: Fw: Worlds Largest Cargo
Ship

Hey Bob Marzen

[http://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/phot
os/06/1205/](http://www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/photos/06/1205/)

Here are some more **photos** of this
monster.

Rene

An interesting recommendation from
vwoa member Walter Prang...

----- Original Message -----

Sent: Wednesday, December 05, 2007
12:39 AM

> [http://brooklynsteel-
bloodtenacity.com/default.aspx](http://brooklynsteel-bloodtenacity.com/default.aspx)

----- Original Message -----

From: [Clay & Margaret Scott](#)

To: [Wendell Benson](#)

Sent: Sunday, December 23, 2007

Subject: Re: An Interesting Story

Season's Greetings, Wendell,

A while back, I had an unusual and pleasant experience, as described below, that I thought may interest you in some way, so I have put it together best that I can and sending it off to you..

Some few days ago, at home and in the early evening, I received a phone call. My wife answered the call and spoke with the caller for a few moments. She then gave me the phone and said that a lady wanted to speak with Clay Scott. The lady said that she was calling from San Francisco and that she hoped that I could help her with some information about her deceased father. She further explained that her father had served on board the SS Joseph Pulitzer in the early years of WWII. I was curious as to why she had called me. Further into the conversation, she revealed that she had entered a search into Google for "SS Joseph Pulitzer" and a link to the VWOA Newsletter #21 came up with "My Story-60 Years Ago." With help of the information that she found, she was somehow able to contact me. Perhaps a

friend or one of her children had made the search since we never had e-mail contact.

The lady said that her name was Margaret Scheinman and that she was 72 years old and was doing a search for information about her dad, Mr. Harry Krausz, to be included in a leather-bound book project for her grandson. She was especially interested in locating a large color picture of the Pulitzer, and I assured her that I would be delighted to do what I could to help her. She then promised to mail me documents that would be helpful to me in my efforts to find her father's history in connection with the SS Joseph Pulitzer.

In a couple of days I had received a hefty package of documents showing the particulars of her dad's experience in the late years of WWII. The documents showed that Mr. Krausz was a signalman and a member of the naval armed guard group that was assigned to the Pulitzer soon after it was built and commissioned on the 18th of August in 1942.

Unfortunately all events and entries shown by the documents predated the time of my own experience on the Pulitzer. Also, the photo of her dad showed no familiarity with anyone that I knew from that era. As promised, though, I searched through my old maritime archives for some snapshots of some deck activity on the Pulitzer. About 8 or

10 black and white photos were used and made into an album. No large color picture of the Pulitzer was available, so I used a 12 x 20-inch souvenir color drawing of a sister ship of the Pulitzer and used a camera to make a digital copy. A little help with Adobe photoshop and I was able to produce a suitable substitute simulation of the original and make it into an 8.5 x 11-inch gloss color photo for Ms. Scheinman's project. Other photos and documents were gathered together along with a letter and mailed to Ms. Scheinman

A few days later I received a beautiful and tender letter from Ms. Scheinman who wanted me to know that she was thrilled to receive the pictures and letter and wanted to thank me for responding to a request from, in her own words, "a total stranger." In her letter she enlightened me to the fact that Joseph Pulitzer was Hungarian, as was her family, who came to America as immigrants through Ellis Island. With love, gratitude and respect to now be proud Americans her grandson has been named Matthew "Ellis" Thompson in honor of their route to America and in memory of all their relatives who came through Ellis Island. Finally, as an expression of her appreciation for my assistance in this project, Ms. Scheinman and her husband

invited me, should I ever be in San Francisco, to her home to be entertained. I believe Margaret Scheinman to be a fine and wonderful lady.

Clay Scott

The Editor found an interesting article in the AFCEA Signal Magazine on **Harbor and Coastal Security** and asked them for permission for VWOA to use the following link on our website.

<http://www.afcea.org/signal/articles/anmviewer.asp?a=1468&print=yes>

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.

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

PO Box 1003 Peck Slip
New York, NY 10272-1003