# VWOA NEWSLETTER

Email Issue #32 Francis T. Cassidy Editor 2008

## Miles D. MacMahon PhD

In Email Newsletter #30, I reported that former VWOA Vice President Miles MacMahon and your Newsletter Editor have been devoting most of their waking hours during four months of 2007 towards the effort of building a Registry of Radio Officers lost during World War II.

The Database as of September 2007 contains 226 documented lost Radio Officers with details of their ships and circumstances of loss of life, with credit given to Sources of Information, so the Viewer can obtain the Source Material for more detailed study if so desired.

Web Master Douglas Stivison, our 2nd Vice President has been able to publish this Registry on the VWOA Web Site on February 7, 2008. Please visit the Web Site at www.vwoa.org

Every aspect of the 226 Slides can be SEARCHED by the Viewers computer. Some of the typical searches viewers might like to attempt are:
NAMES OF ROs (Last, First …)

SHIPS BY NAME OR TYPE (Freighter, Liberty, Transport, Steamship, Tanker …)

CAUSE OF SINKING (Torpedoed, submarine, mine, aircraft …)

LOCATION OF SINKING (Ocean, Bay, Gulf or Lake of occurrence--)

DATE OF SINKING (Exact Date, Month, Year..)

RM will pick out all the Armed Guards that we know of right now.
These are some examples of the computer doing all the search work.

When Slide One appears on your Computer Screen:
Click on the Icon to the right of the Zoom percentage to make the document the full width of the Screen.

Click on the down arrow on the right hand side of the Find Icon and choose with your mouse "Case Sensitive".

*YOU ARE NOW READY TO SEARCH ALL THE SLIDES!!*

Put your mouse pointer on Find in the Find Icon. Type Boherer (a known RO's Last name); Depress the Enter key on your keyboard and that Slide Record will appear.

Assuming the viewer knew the SHIP of another RO Lost, place the mouse arrow on the Find Box and type Dorchester and the Slide record of the Dorchester will appear, but if a SHIP is listed several times because of Multiple ROs Lost; put your mouse click on the Icon Arrow last in the Row which will Find Next occurrence in the DataBase, continue clicking this arrow until notified that "No More Matches are Found".

Put your mouse pointer on Find in the Find Icon. Type submarine and view all SHIPs sunk by submarines, again using the Find Next occurrence in the DataBase until notified that "No More Matches are Found".

Assuming a viewer has a full or partial DATE; Put your mouse pointer on Find in the Find Icon. Type May 14, 1942 and the Slide will appear for a Ship Sunk or RO Lost on that DATE. The numerals of the year by itself will give all the ROs or RMs lost in that year.

When you have problems reading some of the written Print, Click on the + Magnification Icon to the left of the Zoom percentage as many times as necessary, on the area of interest for Magnification.

Please try these examples and contact VWOA if they don't satisfy your search questions on the Lost Sparks Registry at www.vwoa.org

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VWOA Members who would like to assist in updates, corrections and investigation of additional Viewer submitted information for changes to the Memorial, please contact the Editor. Your assistance will be appreciated.

ftcassidy@optonline.net

*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**

## The Introduction by Author James A. Jolly PhD

PART TWO

## Aggressive Submarines

As the war progressed there were developed ways to protect the merchant ships that were moving up and down the East Coast. One of these was over night anchorage areas that were protected by steel nets. One such anchorage area was established near the port of Key West, Florida. To enter the anchorage was a twisting narrow path with secret instructions known only to a pilot that would guide a ship into the anchorage. The perimeter of the anchorage, just outside of the nets had mines located at strategic points to further protect the anchorage area. On one occasion, when the M.S. Edmond J. Moran was in the Key West area Captain Kroll decided to spend the night in the anchorage. The anchorage offered rather smooth water while the sea at the time, was rather rough as the result of a storm that had just passed. The M.S. Edmond J. Moran, being only 125 feet long, rolled and tossed quite violently in rough seas. So we were anchored in this apparent haven when somehow a German submarine figured out how to penetrate the safety zone, and torpedoed a tanker. It was well into the night. There was a very large explosion followed by flames many feet high. The entire crew and ship were all lost. It was a very disconcerting experience. We were not informed how the submarine penetrated the safety net. We also never heard if the submarine was detected and destroyed.

## Sparks the Helmsman

One assignment of the M.S. Edmond J. Moran was to salvage a torpedoed ship off the coast of the Georgia. The seas were moderately rough. It was difficult to get a line aboard the damage ship. The tug had an aft steering position as well as the normal bridge steering position. The aft steering position was well up on the tug and gave a very good view of all operations to the aft. The tow line machinery and the storage of the towing cable and hawser were all on the aft deck. For this maneuver Captain Kroll had shifted the ships controls to the aft steering position. The steering position consisted of a wheel to turn the rudder. As the wheel was turned right or left (which would turn the tug right or left) there was a pointer indicator that showed the amount and direction the tug would turn in points. Each point represented five degrees. Straight ahead was zero with eight points going either right or left. Also adjacent to the wheel was a control for speed. The tug was diesel electric. The diesel engines ran generators. The generators were connected by electrical cables to the motors. There were two 2000 hp diesel engines, each with its own generator which was connected to the motor that it would drive. The tug was twin screw with a separate motor on each propeller. With this arrangement the helmsman had complete control of the speed of the tug. The control made it possible to go from zero to full forward, back to zero and then full reverse. The major calibration was in one eighth steps. During an operations of this nature it could become very stressful and a man could be easily injured or the tug damaged as a large wave came crashing across the deck. To have maximum help on deck captain Kroll had sent the helmsman to assist the seaman on the aft deck and was operating the controls of the tug by himself. He found that he need to be more free to move around from side to side or what ever to best direct the operation. He called for the Sparks, I responded to the call. When I came to the aft control position Capt. Kroll ordered me to take the helmsman position. He barked out orders, two point to the left, four points to the left, six points to the right, half forward. stop, half reverse, stop, quarter forward, on and on. Apparently the captain was satisfied with my help. We managed to put a line on the ship. Soon the helmsman, on duty, returned and I was relieved. This all happened so fast that I hardly was aware of what went on. Captain Kroll said, "You did a fine job Sparks, back to the radio room" that was all. It was a memorable day for me, being in control of that large sea going tug with two thousand HP diesels being controlled by simply moving the forward - aft engine control.

## Chesapeake City -The Assignment

During December of 1942 the M.S, Edmond J. Moran was ordered to Chesapeake City, Md. to take in tow two large empty flat barges. The barges were 100 feet wide and 300 feet long and could carry 200 tons. The destination of the barges was not disclosed, but the orders were to Cristobal, Panama. At Cristobal we were further ordered to proceed through the Panama Canal towing the empty barges. Each time a port was designated we would then obtain further information to proceed to the next port. This chain of commands took us to Puntarenas, Costa Rica, Salina Cruz, Mexico, San Pedro, California, and Seattle Washington. Each stop was mainly for fuel, food supplies and new orders to proceed to the next port. We arrived in Seattle 23 February, 1943. The total trip took 80 days. The reason that it took so long for the trip was that the M.S. Edmond J. Moran was towing the two 100 ft by 300 ft barges. The speed underway was probably not more than 6 knots. perhaps less in bad weather and perhaps more in calm weather. Most of the trip was without major incidence. We did have a Navy escort until we entered the Panama Canal. Only a few days out of Chesapeake City, in the Atlantic Ocean, our escort discovered a German submarine either planning to attack us or simply was watching the shipping lane that was our path. In any event the escort took all of the proper actions to sink the submarine using many depth charges.

## Puntarenas, Costa Rica

This fuel and food supply port was interesting because the dock was relatively new and adequate to accommodate large ships. The Germans had been very active in this area of Central America. The steel docks and other improvements of the port had been the work of the Germans. Now that the U.S.A. was part of the Allies in the war, the Germans had returned home or at least were not visibly active in this country although the Germans were quite active in opposition to the Allied effort in some of the South American countries like Columbia and Equador. The tug was in port long enough for the officers and crew to have a few hours of shore leave. At that time the streets of Puntarenas were sand. The buildings were very simple, few had doors or windows which were not needed because of the tropical weather. We were warned not to drink the water or eat the food, but it was ok to drink their beer, which was enjoyed by some.

## Gulf of Tehuantepec

The normal ship lane (path) between Puntarenas and Salina Cruz crosses the Gulf of Tehuantepec. This gulf is noted for bad storms that seem to appear out of no where

with little advance warning. Because of his concern Captain Kroll decided to hug the coast and follow a much longer path to get to our next port of call, Salina Cruz. During this segment of our journey, by luck, the weather remained quite reasonable, so the long path was probably not necessary, but it did afford the crew the opportunity to see the coast line as we progressed North. While crossing the Gulf of Tehuantepec we encountered a sea of large turtles. They were perhaps two to three feet across their shell and so closely spaced as they swam along that it appeared so solid that a person could walk from one to the other along the back of their shells. The crew captured one of the turtles. The steward (cook) planed to make turtle soup, which did not materialize. It was estimated that the turtle that was caught was over 100 years old, so it would have been very tough. The crew saved the shell as a trophy.

## Seattle Washington

It was while in Seattle that we learned we would be going on to Alaska. Our final destination was still not known. We were issued very cold weather gear, parkas, gloves, fur lined boots, all the clothing needed for the very cold Alaska. We were also put through a military type training program and each member of the crew, including the captain were issued an M3 rifle. We were given instructions on maintaining the M3 and had considerable rifle range practice. A Naval gunnery officer was assigned to the tug, but because of space the Naval Officer did not have a Navy crew. His job was to direct the crew of the M.S. Edmond J. Moran if need be.

When at sea the crew was told that the next major destination would be Kodiak, Alaska. To get there we went up through the inland passage on to Safety Cove, Canada, Ketchikan Alaska, Excursion inlet Alaska, Thumb Cove, Alaska and finally arrived at Kodiak on March 16, 1943. On the way the Navy gunnery officer had all of the crew participate in scheduled practice sessions using the 20 MM guns mounted on the Starboard and Port near the bridge and in firing the M3s. A target would be thrown overboard, perhaps an empty crate from the galley, with a flag added. This was an interesting target to shoot at, but the noise from the 20 MM cannon was not very pleasant.

In the winter it is very cold and has lots of snow. The walking paths from the dock to the buildings had a wall of snow on each side. While in Kodiak the officers were invited to the Officers club and the crew were invited to the non-commissioned club. We took on new supplies, refueled and were soon on our way. The instructions were to rendezvous at a specific longitude and latitude where we would expect other ships.

The route to the rendezvous was via Dutch Harbor, Unalaska, Makuslin Bay, Chumanski, and on to the point of rendezvous. As we progressed along the islands of the Aleutian chain the weather was most difficult. The unique winds in that region are called "Willie-Walls". They blow very strong in one direction and then for no known reason will suddenly change direction. In one harbor during a strong storm we were anchored heading into the wind with the engines full power ahead and were still drifting toward the shore – when for no reason the wind changed direction only to attempt to blow the tug out to sea. The sun was seldom seen and fog, snow, and/or rain were expected most every day. On our voyage from Dutch Harbor to Kiska/Attu , which was the point of the rendezvous we pulled several grounded ships free that had had the winds place them on the shore.

## Invasion of Attu, Holtz Bay Alaska (May 1943)

May 11, 1943, D day, was the high light of days in Alaska. This was the invasion of Attu by the American troops. The Navy battle ships USS Idaho, USS Nevada and USS Pennsylvania were constantly blasting the shore with their big guns. In addition to the battle ships there were Navy cruisers, and destroyers and at least one small carrier that made up the Navy task force. The shore of the island was very steep, also there were not nearly enough landing craft available as the invasion of Attu was in competition with other war efforts, so the landing craft were augmented by the use of tugs and barges. The technique used was to place one of the 100 foot by 300 foot 200 ton capacity barges on each side of a sea going tug. There were other large sea going tugs besides the M.S Edmond J. Moran that had towed barges to the invasion. The tugs would then come along side of a troop ship. Men and equipment were loaded on to the large barges. Once loaded the tugs would head for shore with a barge on each side. The tug pushing the barges would strike the beach and the tug would tread water to hold the barges against the steep beach. Ramps were put down and bulldozers lead the way for the mechanized equipment and troops to follow. While the landing was in progress, there were bombers overhead and the Navy ships were continuing to shell the Japanese placements. And no surprise to anyone, the Japanese were returning the fire. The M.S. Edmond J. Moran was strafed during the early hours of the landing. During the first few days of the landing over fifty trips were made from the troop ships to the beach by the tugs with the barges on each side. One Japanese plane dropped a bomb within 500 feet of the M.S. Edmond's stern. The M.S. Edmond J. Moran took a serious shaking, but no major damage. All members of the crew of the Edmond J. Moran were awarded the combat

ribbon as recognition for their participation in the invasion of Attu.

I had been on the M.S Edmond J. Moran for a year and three months. It was decided to replace the crew. I was sent back to the states as a passenger aboard the S.S. Indian Arrow, a Liberty Ship and arrived in Seattle, September 9, 1943.

## Final Note

Following my voyages on the M.S. Edmond J. Moran I made several voyages to the South Pacific on the liberty ship S.S. Samuel W. Williston. This was followed with a voyage to Europe on the Victory ship S.S. Frontenac Victory. My last ship was the S.S. Young America, a C-2 troop ship that was assigned to bring home troop from South Korea and Japan.

Upon returning home I went back to college. I earned a degree in physics from the University of Pacific, Stockton, California. After college I went to work for Eitel McCullough (Eimac Tubes) and worked first in their research laboratory and then later as a factory engineer and finally as the Manager of the Industrial Microwave Division. After 19 years I left Eitel McCullough and returned to college to earn my doctorate degree at the University of Santa Clara, Santa Clara California. I was a associate professor at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California, for seven years and then a professor at Sacramento State University, Sacramento California, for 14 years. I retired in 1990, and was granted the title, Professor Emeritus.

I am active on CW, W6RWI. I am a member DXCC and enjoy many phases of amateur radio. My wife Rose is also a licensed amateur, W6QPV. We have been married 62 years; have three grown children, seven grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

James A. Jolly, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus
W6RWI

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We sadly report that we have received notice recently of the following:

## VWOA LIFE Member
## David J. Bechtold
## SK on June 28, 2007

David first sailed as a E.R. officer on the William L Marshall, a Corps of Engineer Vessel from 1943 to 1946 From 1951 to 1959 he was with the Utility Mobile Radio System in Towanda Pa.

David was an ardent reader of the VWOA Email Newsletters and responded as follows:

Hi Francis---As usual I enjoyed the contents of the latest Newsletter. Nice job!

Reminiscing is very pleasurable to us old fossils, who have enjoyed radio for a big part of our lives. When radio science advanced to the extent that our shipboard jobs were obsolete, it was a shock and we all still wish for the old days.

But time has marched on. Since then maritime radio has continued to advance technically. Last evening I was reading an issue of "Cruising World" (a pleasant publication wherein one can read about all sorts of personal world cruising experiences.) There also was an article on the latest in available radio gear for use aboard, and it was an eyeopener! Wow! Even the amateur sailors with their own boats can afford the stuff and it's capabilities are unlimited. Epirbs, radar, charts, course plotters, depth readers, etc.--you name it, it seems to be available today. No more sextants, keys, or code--it's all right there on your desk in the cabin, so easy to use it that anyone can use it, no specialists needed. So--as we long for a return of the 'good old days'--they were great, --but they're really long, long gone-!!

73;s --Dave Bechtold, W3DB

We at VWOA usually end our Newsletter asking Members to respond. David J. Bechtold W3DB did and brought to our attention an article he wrote for the US Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District; It was and still is, an excellent article. Give a visit to the URL !!!

## *David J. Bechtold W3DB*

### The saga of the Philadelphia District hopper dredge *William L. Marshall* in World War II

The following narrative comes from the World War II memoirs of David J. Bechtold then of Johnstown, PA, who thought the story would be of interest to our VWOA Members. It relates largely to the activities of the Philadelphia District's seagoing hopper dredge William L. Marshall in 1944 and 1945, when Bechtold (an Army warrant officer with a bachelor's in electrical engineering) served aboard the vessel.

To read his narrative, visit the following URL.
http://www.nap.usace.army.mil/cenap-pa/w0102/marshall.htm

We at VWOA will miss him.

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# VWOA MEMBER NEWS

From: "John J. O'Connor"
To: <ftcassidy@optonline.net>
Subject: Re: VWOA NEWSLETTER #31
Date: Friday, January 18, 2008 1:39 PM

Sir,

Please forward to Robert Schrader that I used his textbook in 1969 when I was taking a radio engineering course for the FCC Second Class Commercial License. I passed the exam OK and went on to pass the the First Class ticket as well. I attribute the textbook to my professional development.

I kept the book (still have it) while a Signal Officer in the National Guard for 27 years.

OOHRAH!! There are a lot of retired Army wireless guys around.

COL John O'Connor, (Ret)
WA6QGM

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From: "Wendell R Benson"
<wenben@nyc.rr.com>
To: "Francis T. Cassidy"
<ftcassidy@optonline.net>
Subject: VWOA member William DeVoe
Date: Wednesday, January 23, 2008 11:17 AM

QRZ bio updated just this past Thursday....

Graduated Tenafly HS 1940. Worked as bank messenger NY Wall St area until fall 1941. Lafayette College freshman until Summer 1942. US Merchant Marine 1942 to 1945. Graduated Gallups Island Maritime Radio school March 1943 - Sailed as Chief Radio Officer until end of WWII. Made Murmansk run. Sailed all theaters. Lost two ships. Graduated college as Mechanical Engineer in 1949. Technical sales in USA, Europe and Far East. Have 5 childern and 7 grandchildren. Now enjoy Ham Radio (QRP CW and QRO SSB). Especially enjoy visits from children and grandchildren.

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----- Original Message -----
From: Harold Lydick
To: ftcassidy@optonline.net
Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2008 11:20 AM
Subject: Re: VWOA NEWSLETTER #31

Thanks for newsletter. For some reason my OE would not acccept previous messages. I graduated from Hoffman Island January , 1944, and became a member of the ARA. I retired in October,1987. Quite a few of the ARA members belonged to the VWOA. Sorry to hear about George Maczali. He was in R-8 and I was in R-12. Later met him at HIRA conventions and in Houston when my son became a Houston a pilot. Look forward to receiving the newsletters

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To: Rick Kenney
Sent: Wed February 13, 2008 8:44 AM
Homeland Security plans to modernize Coast Guard navigation system
By Bob Brewin  February 12, 2008
The Homeland Security Department plans to modernize and upgrade the Coast Guard's terrestrial Long Range Navigation (LORAN) system to serve as backup to the satellite-based Global Positioning System, which is used for navigation to determine location and precise timing information. The decision ended a cliffhanger policy-making process that started in January 2007, when DHS and the Transportation Department asked for public comment on whether to shut down LORAN or upgrade it.

On Feb. 7, DHS spokeswoman Laura Keehner said the department decided to use an enhanced version, eLORAN, to provide backup to GPS. The system will "mitigate any safety, security or economic effects of a GPS outage or disruption," she said

The Transportation Department's Volpe National Transportation Systems Center urged development of an alternative to GPS in a 2001 report which concluded the satellite-based system could be knocked out by jamming its high-frequency, low-power signals. The report suggested LORAN as a backup. Keehner added that eLORAN has the capability GPS lacks in urban canyons as well as in heavy foliage to provide precise location and navigation information to first responders working in such areas.

The Coast Guard operates 24 LORAN stations nationwide to help users, including ships and planes, determine their location. Nineteen have been upgraded to eLORAN, which broadcasts a data channel to improve accuracy, signal availability and integrity of information. The International LORAN Association says the modernization boosts position accuracy to between 8 feet and 65 feet, with availability measured at 99.9 percent and integrity at 99.99 percent.

The DHS decision marks a "tremendous step forward" for eLORAN and a long-needed GPS backup, said Zachariah Conover, president and chief executive officer of Maine-based CrossRate Technology, which has developed integrated GPS/LORAN receivers for maritime users. Priced from $1,000 to $1,500, the equipment will go on sale in April, he said.

Despite Homeland Security's endorsement, eLORAN funding remains a problem, Conover said. The proposed fiscal 2009 DHS budget (page 98) for eLORAN is $34.5 million. Conover estimated it will take $45 million to operate the system annually. DHS said in its budget (page 501) that the system would be transferred from the Coast Guard to the National Communications System (page 513), which will oversee LORAN modernization.

On Oct. 5, 2007, Coast Guard Capt. Curtis Dubay told the National Position Navigation and Timing Advisory Board that modernization of LORAN system would cost $400 million plus another $50 million for expansion. Conover said the Coast Guard estimate is high and that the work could be done for about $120 million.

Mike Harrison, a consultant with Aviation Management Associates in Alexandria, Va., who wrote a white paper on GPS backup for the Federal Aviation Administration in 2006, said the eLORAN system could come in at less than a third of the cost to operate and maintain existing FAA ground navigation equipment. Such systems include the VHF Omni-Directional Radio Range (VOR) beacon that pilots use to get their bearings as they navigate cross country.

Harrison expected business aircraft and the 400,000 private pilots flying within the United States to embrace eLORAN. But commercial airlines, he said, will stick with GPS and another ground-based system, Distance Measuring Equipment, because LORAN and eLORAN systems do not have worldwide coverage.

CrossRate's Conover said eLORAN, which transmits high-power, low-frequency signals, can work much better in urban environments than GPS, which transmits high-frequency, low-power signals, and should be a boon to both first responders and truck fleet operators. Urban canyons can cause GPS outages as high as 80 percent of the time because receivers have a hard time picking up satellite signals, he said.

eLORAN also will provide a reliable backup for timing signals essential to the operation of all types of telecommunications networks, including cellular systems, Conover said. The eLORAN signals are so strong, network operators will be able to pick up timing data without installing an external antenna.

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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:

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