

VWOA NEWSLETTER

Email Issue #59

Francis T. Cassidy Editor

2010



J. Michael Shaw accepts the *David Kintzer Memorial Award* from Jolanda Kintzer and VWOA Chaplain Rev. Douglas S. Stivison

VWOA Historic Preservation Award Plaque
Captain George W. Duffy
United States Merchant Marine
VWOA Commendation Plaque
Bill Miller

Descriptions and photos of the Awards and those living recipients have been published in the 2010 Yearbook previously distributed and available on the VWOA Web Site at URL:

<http://www.vwoa.org/2010Pubs.htm>

Our VWOA Chaplain and Second Vice President Rev. Douglas S. Stivison, NR1A, gave the Invocation for the VWOA Awards Luncheon.

The **2010 VWOA AWARDS LUNCHEON** was celebrated on **Saturday, June 5, 2010** by the attending VWOA Membership and their Guests on the Street Floor of the Seamen's Church Institute in Manhattan. Although the meeting could not be held on the top floor Dining Room due to mechanical problems associated with the SCI elevator system, the fraternal spirit was still evident in nooks and corners of the Dining Room.

Awards presented were the:

Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Achievement
Thomas St. John-Coleman

Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Service
Captain Olav Aune

David Kintzer Memorial Award
J. Michael Shaw

Marconi Memorial Scrolls of Honor
For Distinguished Service in the line of Duty
James G. Greer
John V. O'Reilly
George E. Sloat

WVOA Member Theodore K. “Ted” Phelps W8TP recently provided WVOA with a copy of the OUR VILLAGE VOICE which is The Resident Newspaper of Oak Crest Village of Parkville, Maryland and published in August 2010 with a story from Ted reproduced by WVOA from newsprint as follows:

“PEARL HARBOR BLASTED PEACETIME AWAY”

By Theodore K. “Ted” Phelps W8TP

This report begins on the American peacetime date of December 3, 1941, when my ship, *SS Stanvac Melbourne*, a nearly new Panamanian-flagged tanker, owned and operated by Socony Vacuum Oil Co., was approaching the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal on her initial passage. I was her radio officer, or “Sparks.”

This trip would take us through the canal to our first Pacific port-of-call, the Peruvian refinery at Talara, which we reached by December 6, 1941

After my 1941 summer job as chief radio officer aboard Great Lakes passenger ship *SS Alabama*, I intended to return to the University of Michigan in September but there were two compelling reasons why I didn't.

1. My draft board said I was deferred from military service as a merchant

seaman, not as a student, implying that I would be drafted immediately as a student.

2. My funds were too low for a full college year with no real prospect of improvement any time soon.

I was assigned to *SS Stanvac Melbourne* at Staten Island, NY which sailed September 26, 1941, for Aruba in the Caribbean. Our chief mate Bill Wilds, met me on deck that afternoon. Almost shouting, he said, “We just fired our last “Sparks” for smoking on deck, don't let me catch you doing that.”

My ship began a series of Atlantic shuttles from Aruba and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, to Santos, Brazil. Our cargo was gasoline.

In last November, we were lying at anchor in the bay off Port-of-Spain, (where we found time to enjoy ice-cold Canadian beer ashore). A large convoy of merchant ships was assembling. Many carried deck cargoes of warplanes. We were not included and soon shifted our operation to the west coast of South America.

After making our first canal transit with a stop in Gatun Lake to take on fresh water, we arrived at the refinery port of Talara, Peru on December 6, 1941

The next day, Sunday, December, 7, about noon, with my radio room sealed off by Peruvian Customs, I was in my cabin listening to news reports from the States on my personal radio. Suddenly, a voice broke in urgently: "Japanese warplanes have attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor."

I quickly knocked on the stateroom door of our captain, Andrew T. Lagan. He came to my cabin, stood in the doorway and listened with me as the war bulletins poured in.

"Sparks, you better go tell the other," he said. I walked aft to the officers mess, where a noisy poker game was in progress. After a couple of shouts, I got their attention but they didn't believe me.

Although *Stanvac Melbourne* displayed Panamanian nationality, she was American in every respect. All her officers, including me held U.S. licenses.

At Talara, Peru, we tied up to a sea buoy and began taking on our new cargo, highly volatile aviation gasoline to be discharged at Valparaiso for Chile's naval air force. Peacetime had been blasted away. The U.S. Merchant marine became an auxiliary to the armed forces of the United States.

We continued taking on cargo all that day, December 7, and the next. We began a

routine of sailing from Peru to Chile along the west coast.

Captain Lagan really played "by the book" and didn't take wartime precautionary measures unless he received instructions from *Stanvac* operation in New York. None came to us by radio.

In contrast, Standard Oil of New Jersey broadcast daily bulletins on wartime safety to their tanker commanders in clear text via Morse code.

I regularly copied the Esso war instructions for our captain to look at but not keep. Soon our sailors were following Esso tanker safety rules. I designed a single-tube radio set powered by dry batteries to take into a lifeboat if we were attacked and built it to operate in a short wave commercial band, hoping its signals could be picked up by some friendly station.

Our shuttle trips between Peru and Chile continued from December, 1941 until March, 1942. On one trip, we were diverted to a Chile shipyard where we received a wartime coat of gray paint that obscured our Panamanian nationality.

But our next sailing orders were scrubbed by our New York office and we were order to return to Chile quickly. Merchant shipping losses due to German submarine attacks off

the U.S. Atlantic Coast we beginning to occur around the clock.

Christmas 1941 came and went. It seemed strange to be in Chile's summer weather at that time of year as we continued our trips between Peru and Chile.

At Valpariso, the German consulate displayed their national flag and Nazi swastika. Our enemy was close by.

I had found a copy of the American amateur radio magazine, QST, with an article that urged radio "hams" to enlist in the armed forces. I decided to do so as soon as I could.

In March, 1942, we were ordered to return to the Caribbean and New York. We sailed without incident from Panama to Aruba, where we took on a cargo of kerosene or "pool burning oil."

We became part of a "convoy" with another merchant ship and an escorting old American four-stack destroyer which left us at nightfall. We steered an evasive course alone that took us out to the west of Bermuda.

One day we were buzzed by U.S. Navy aircraft, that checked our recognition panels. Later that day, a large American naval task force appeared on our starboard quarter.

Using their regular shutter/signal (Aldis) lamp, the Navy sent us position reports of enemy submarine activity on our northward course. While these exchanges went on, a Navy warship sailed astern of us where she could watch us closely in case we were not the ship we had claimed we were. In due course, we continued our homeward voyage.

It was late March, 1942, German U-Boats were having great success sinking Allied shipping along the U.S. East Coast. My ship radio was alive with distress calls and messages.

We sailed through a couple of days and nights of high winds and rough seas.

When the seas and weather calmed, we were not far from New York harbor. Suddenly, a Navy blimp appeared to guide us quietly into secure waters. It was a beautiful, sunny day. I left New York and took a train to Chicago where I checked in at Fifth Arm HQ and found that the "ham radio" program I sought was intended for electrical engineering students with previous credits toward a degree.

With about 30 others, I enrolled at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) and began accelerated training, six days a week, I also became a temporary U.S. civil service employee.

After about eight weeks of classes, most of us transferred to Illinois Tech for advanced training.

The second part of our Signal Corps-sponsored training began about June 1, 1942, with sessions six days a week.

But the summer of '42 wasn't all work. I had enough free time to see the young lady I had met the previous summer, when she was a passenger on *SS Alabama* and I was chief radio officer.

It was my third and final season as a Great Lakes sailor. We were married in Chicago on December 3, 1942.

I was assigned to a Signal Corps school in Philadelphia, operated by the Philco Corp. My bride and I found an apartment in Upper Darby.

I completed by civilian Signal corps training in early January, 1943. Shortly, I was sent to the U.S. Air Force base at Columbia, S.C. and immediately became an instructor in military Morse code radio operations, wearing sergeant's stripes.

I became a cadre member in a group of 12 Army Signal Corps instructors. Most of us had brought our wives to South Carolina.

Later, I would attend Officer Candidate School and complete active duty in Okinawa and Seoul, Korea.

The End



Theodore K. "Ted" Phelps W8TP

EDITORS NOTE: Thank you Ted for your Report, I hope this encourages report submissions by other VWOA Members.



Raymond J. Mullin, PhD, Robert Marzen Jr. and Thomas J. O'Brien at the June 5, 2010 VWOA Award Luncheon



J. Michael Shaw receiving in Proxy the Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Achievement for Thomas St. John-Coleman from VWOA President Alan M. Ehrlich



Captain Olav Aune receiving the Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Service from 1st Vice President Richard T. Kenney



Presentation of the VWOA Commendation Plaque to Bill Miller "Mr. Ocean Liner" by VWOA President Alan M. Ehrlich



Presentation of the Historic Preservation Award Plaque in Proxy to the Grand Daughter of Captain George W. Duffy by Alan M. Ehrlich, VWOA President.

WENDELL'S NEWS CORNER

EDITORS NOTE:

We at VWOA were unable to obtain an Obituary of [Herman Arond SK, 02/27/2010](#) as of publication time of our last VWOA Email Newsletter #58, and have yet to find one as of this Newsletter, so we put together the following as a tribute to Herman, our former VWOA Treasurer and our Friend who always had a smile for you.

Award of the Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Service in 1989

Herman Arond was a native of New York City. He lived in Brooklyn for most of his childhood years, and in Manhattan during his later teens. After graduation from high school, he attended City College of New York full time for one and

one half years, and an additional year part time in the evening, while working as an office boy and clerk for an insurance company.

Some of his childhood friends joined the Merchant Marine before World War II and one of them suggested to him that he also go to sea. In August, 1942, Mr. Arond went down to the old U.S. Maritime Service Office in New York City. After a talk with the Chief Yeoman in charge, he was advised to go to radio school. He entered Gallups Island Radio School in September, 1942, and he graduated in May, 1943, the holder of a brand new FCC 2nd class radiotelegraph license.

His first ship was a Hog Islander, the "Liberty Ships of World War II" He spent the rest of World War II sailing on liberty ships, and was in Manila Harbor, waiting to go on what was thought to be the invasion of Japan, when the atom bomb was dropped.

Upon his return to the United States after the war, he sailed for several years on freighters, tankers, and finally passenger ships. His first passenger ship was the "old" Santa Paula. After several years on this ship, he left it and returned to college, graduating with a major in Economics, and a heavy minor in Mathematics. Mr. Arond then returned to sea, sailing for several years on various passenger ships, such as the "Old" Brazil, and the Grace Line 52 passenger-freighter combination, Santa Margarita. In 1958, he went ashore again, and

in between relief trips, he obtained a Master of Science degree, majoring in Mathematics Education. He then spent approximately two years teaching Mathematics in various New York City Junior High Schools. In 1962, he went back to sea on a steady basis, sailing on various passenger ships. He spent the last few years of his sea going career on the Independence.

Since his retirement from the Merchant Marine in 1967, Mr. Arond had been teaching Mathematics in the Ardsley Middle School, Ardsley, N.Y.

Mr. Arond held amateur call sign N2CCF. He has served as the VWOA treasurer since 1981. Besides the VWOA, he was also a member of the Gallups Island Radio Association, American Merchant Marine Veterans, American Radio Relay League, Society of Wireless Pioneers, American Merchant Marine Museum, South Street Seaport, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and the Association of Mathematics Teachers of New York State. He was also awarded honorary lifetime membership in the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers.

He received an Honorable Discharge from the U.S. Coast Guard in recognition of his wartime Merchant Marine service. He held a first class F.C.C. radio telegraph license and a U.S. Coast Guard Radio Officer's license.

Another Award in 1998; THE DAVID KINTZER MEMORIAL AWARD PLAQUE

This award recognizes avid unselfish cooperation while maintaining high standards of integrity, accompanied by an ardent devotion to obligatory tasks for the furtherance of VWOA prestige.

He first sailed as a Radio Officer in 1943 during war and peace and retired in 1967 to become a Mathematics Teacher. He joined the VWOA in 1975 and became the Treasurer in 1981. He has served in this capacity for 16 years and continued to serve as a Member of the Board of Directors until his retirement to Snug Harbor, NC, which he enjoyed and was well taken care of for many years, until he became an SK.

9V1W

John Davies
200 Pasir Panjang Road, 02-13
Singapore 118571,
Singapore

Web Site URL:

<http://xephemera.blogspot.com/>

In general a very interesting Blog, but his SHIPS posting with Photos should be very interesting to all VWOA Members.

----- Original Message ----- From: "Robert Roehrig (K9EUI)" <broehrig@aurora.edu>

To: "Old Tube Radios"
<boatanchors@theporch.com>
Cc: "Old Tube Radios"
<boatanchors@theporch.com>
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2010 9:04 PM
Subject: Re: Bletchley Part and the Codebreakers
----- "Jerry Proc" <jerry7proc@yahoo.com>
wrote:

Hello Everyone,
A while back, the Nova science series on Public Television featured a program on Bletchley Park and the Codebreakers titled "World War II Mind of a Code Breaker". It's a great documentary and for anyone who missed it the first time around, it now available on You Tube via this blog:

<http://rijmenants.blogspot.com/2010/04/mind-of-code-breaker.html>

Anyone interested in codebreaking should get the book "The Codebreakers" by David Kahn. Also "Kahn on Codes" and "Codes, Cyphers, and other Cryptic & Clandestine Communication" by Fred Wrixon.

Bob, K9EUI

Received the following from a reader of our www.vwoa.org Web Site who thought your VWOA Editor and Wendell Benson were with him at US Navy Schools.

After investigation an Interesting note from him was as follows:

From: TC Dailey
Sent: Tuesday, March 30, 2010 7:57 PM
To: ftcassidy@optonline.net
Subject: USN RM's
INT QSO K

I too was a US Navy Radioman, albeit a bit later on than you guys... I joined up in 1961, bound for ET-A school, but a diminished ability at higher math AND a Novice ham license bound me for RM-A school in SDIEGO. What caught my eye was that you'd served with the CAA (later FAA) as a CW operator. My Stepdad, James E. Carl - WØKI (SK), whom I just lost on 1 March, also did that. He was 37 years with the CAA/FAA, beginning in 1936, and retiring from them 37 years later. I'm sitting here typing this, as I look at his "Electric Specialty Mfg. Co. - Cedar Rapids Bug" that he built from a kit, waaaay back then. I never knew he had it, but in helping my Mom clean out the closets and such, I discovered it ALONG WITH his FCC RadioTELEGRAPH license, dated 1940, with endorsements from about 6 CAA/FAA sites where he'd operated. He mentioned that the nets were mostly on LF, around the 262 kc (tower) freq range, and Summertime nights were a real bugger on the ears (I remember working 500 kc at sea - same story) Me... I finished up as an RMC, and still have the Johnson Speed-X bug that I took my Speed Key Test with, back in 1963. I also own a Vibroplex Pres. Deluxe (special USN edition), bought in 1964, but it's the Johnson that

really flies... that key has a lot of historic messages sent on it's contacts - it was on duty the day Kennedy was killed, also the day we dealt with traffic about "The Tonkin Gulf Incident" (which was a lovely lie), and sent the ALNAV message announcing our "official" involvement in Vietnam.

Jim worked on the FAA's FIRST computers (used vacuum tubes), and would always shakes his head and grin whenever I'd mention some "glow in the dark Boatanchor" I'd just restored... he HATED tubes... said he'd changed enough 12AX7's to fill Lake Michigan.

Welcome Home, Brothers

Tom Dailey

WØEAJ

former RMC USN

ZUT AR

Editors Response:

Yes, I was on active duty in the U.S. Navy and was Electronic Technician Mate 3 Class, then Aviation Electronic Technician Mate 2 Class during World War II.

Yes, I was on active duty in the U.S. Navy Reserve as Aviation Electronic Technician Mate First Class during the Korean War, but you and I trained at different U.S. Navy Schools and I visited and worked in Viet Nam and Cambodia as a civilian.

Many thanks Thomas C. Dailey, hope you find your school mate, you had an interesting career. —Francis Cassidy-

From: w6rwi@att.net

Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 2:58 PM

To: [Peter Dutton](#)

Cc: [Francis T Cassidy](#)

Subject: S.S. Untata 1942

April 6, 2010, Fair Oaks, CA, USA

Dear Peter Dutton:

On a recent search of some of my old papers I was surprised to find two letters that related to the S.S. Umtate incident, 1942. Copies of these two letters are attached. If the details should not be adequate, then please send me your address and I will post paper copies to you.

I trust that all goes well with you and that your research of your fathers activities have been very successful and rewarding.

Sincerely yours, James A. Jolly, Ph.D.

CC: Francis T. Cassidy, Editor VWOA

For those of you who did not hear the Lecture and Presentation of our Guest Speaker at the June 5, 2010 VWOA Awards Luncheon, here is a review written up on the Internet of one of his Lectures.

Gateway to the World: The Great Port of New York

It is the greatest port on the North American continent and seen in its great heyday, in the

1960s and '70s mostly. We tour the Port in photos with some noteworthy stops on our journey: the Staten Island Ferry, the Statue of Liberty, the Manhattan shore (bridges, tugboats and even skyscrapers included) and also the waterfronts of the likes of nearby Hoboken and Brooklyn. It is a grand and historic and very interesting voyage — the sights of the Great Port!

About Bill Miller ... "Mr. Ocean Liner"

Bill Miller is considered an international authority on the subject of ocean liners & cruise ships. This includes those great ships of the past, those “floating palaces,” as well as the current generation of cruise ships, the “floating resorts”. Called “Mr. Ocean Liner,” he has written over 65 books on the subject: from early steamers, immigrant ships and liners at war to other titles on their fabulous interiors, in post card form and about the highly collectible artifacts from them. He has done specific histories of such celebrated passenger ships as the *United States*, *Queen Mary*, *Rotterdam*, *France*, *Queen Elizabeth 2*, *Costa Victoria*, *Super Star Leo* and *Crystal Serenity*. In all, he has also written over 1,000 articles for newspapers, magazines and nautical journals & newsletters. He even has his very own ocean liner quarterly, the *Millergram*. He has made nearly 300 voyages to date: Atlantic crossings, tropical cruises, coastal runs and even trips on container cargo ships and exotic banana boats. He has appeared in some three

dozen video & television series, both in the USA, Britain, Europe and Australia, including *Castles of the Sea*, *The Floating Palaces*, *The Superliners*, *Inside the World of a Cruise Ship*, *Disasters at Sea* and *Deco: Age of Glamor*. He has also appeared on *The Today Show*, *CBS Evening News*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, *Good Morning America* and many other news broadcasts.

He has been guest lecturer aboard over 50 different liners, sailing with the likes of Crystal Cruises, Cunard, Carnival, Holland America, Princess, Radisson-Seven Seas, Saga Cruises and others. Miller was a public school teacher, in middle school and for social studies, for 32 years. He was named “Teacher of the Year” in 2002.

A native of Hoboken, New Jersey, the once busy port just across the Hudson River from New York City, Miller was named Outstanding American Maritime Scholar in 1994, received the United States Maritime Preservation Award and also the Ocean Liner Council's Silver Rib and Award, both in 2004.

Also, he has been chairman of the Port of New York Branch of the World Ship Society, serves on the selection committee for the American Maritime Hall of Fame, created the passenger ship database for the Ellis Island Museum and currently serves as Adjunct Curator of Ocean Liner Studies at Manhattan's South Street Seaport Museum. He has also organized a 14-week college course on liners, helped to

create & then served as historian at the US Merchant Marine Museum and has written commissioning books for three brand new cruise ships. His private collection includes 4,000 books on ships, over 15,000 photos and some 900 miniature ship models, most of them being passenger ships.

In early 2006, Miller had four new books, all of them about liners, in the works and has been guest lecturer aboard the brand new *Queen Mary 2*, the largest liner yet built, on no less than 15 voyages.

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

Life Veteran VWOA Member
Robert J. Byers WA6D
SK 06/09/2005

Veteran VWOA Member
Albert D. Spain N1NM
SK 02/09/2008

Veteran VWOA Member
Harold Leroy Lydick
SK 12/14/2009

Veteran VWOA Member
Alan H. Craddock WB6DXZ
SK 05/24/2010

As a Nation we have again remembered 09-11-2001 this year. The VWOA on May 18, 2002 at the Annual Awards Luncheon honored the six Broadcast Engineers who lost their lives while on duty at the top of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center.

Miles D. MacMahon as Master of Ceremonies addressed the relatives of those six men and read a Poem that he had composed in their Honor. The Poem entitled "The Silent Men" by Miles D. MacMahon was never published at the time by VWOA, but Miles recently provided VWOA with a copy of his presentation. It is attached as the Last Page of this VWOA Newsletter.

The VWOA Editor is desperately in need of news stories . Can you take some time out of your Daily Chores and submit something, short, medium or long. We would prefer to hear from you by Email at:

Or ftcassidy@optonline.net
wenben@nyc.rr.com

SILENT MEN



Far above the busy-ness of the city, the to-and-fro of the harbor,
Far above the noisy traffic and the clamor of the market
The tower reached for the stars, and its antenna pierced the heavens.
Signals pulsed from the antenna and reached for the horizon.
And where the signals went they settled on the land like blankets of security.
And in the sharing of awareness, the people became a community.



The signals, engendered and nurtured by the tumult of the city,
Coursed upward through the electronic nerves of the tower
And at the top, where the tower ended and the sky began,
Silent men moved their hands in controlling gestures
Among the knobs and switches by which they guided the signals
To the metal complexity of antennas and out into the universe.



The signals reached the people and gave shape to many lives.
The signals taught the people about themselves and their world.
They brought the people vivid images of conflict and concern
And provided vital knowledge to build new understandings.
The silent men, custodians of the signals so important to the people
Cared for the equipment with tenderness and the signals flourished.



Each of the silent men loved his signal as one loves truth and beauty.
He cherished the tranquil hum and the comforting glow of the equipment
He was aware that his signal added a special meaning to his life
And an exalting dimension to his work at the top of the tower.
When he walked the earth among his fellows, his spirit soared.
He rode aloft on the wings of his signal and its song filled his heart.



Out of the clear cruel skies of September came another message.
A message of isolation and alienation, of ignorance and degradation.
The tower exploded in cataclysms of hatred and violence.
The silent men were at their posts and acted as duty demanded.
Hoping to preserve the systems, they stopped the hum that was tranquil no more
And extinguished the glow that no longer gave comfort.



The silent men powered down the systems, and the signals were silent.
They said a brief prayer and thought of their families,
And, in the roar of destruction and the chaos of extinction,
They vanished into a deeper silence than any they had known.
And the antenna vanished, and the equipment vanished
And the tower vanished. It seemed that hope had vanished.



But the silence of the signals sent a message to the people
And the people heard the message. It was of unity and community
It was a message of faith and harmony, of humanity and sanity.
And the people learned caring and sharing, and felt some consolation.
The silent men, custodians of the signals so important to the people.
Sent a message that changed the lives of the people.

Six Broadcast Engineers lost their lives while on duty at the top of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center:
Rod Coppola, Donald DiFranco, Steve Jacobson, Bob Pattison, Isaias Rivera, and Bill Steckman

VWOA, May 18, 2002 The Silent Men By Miles D. MacMahon