

MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



SEA SERVICES SCUTTLEBUTT

August 2015



John Cecil

A message from the President

Greetings,

Summer is just about over and school children are everywhere. I urge everyone to pay close attention to their surroundings when driving. A young child can quickly dart out from anywhere and drivers must be sufficiently aware to be able to react safely.

Improvement projects at the Museum are moving along. The large, leaking, inoperable 1941 era water cut off valve that was very close to the deck of the

Museum office has been replaced with a single lever valve at about 3 1/2 feet up (great height for our volunteers whose bodies are not quite as flexible as they used to be). Also, the toilet in the Lady's bathroom has been repaired, and the rotting carpet in the office has been replaced with tile. The engineer certified drawings for the front entrance remodel project are in the hands of four local contractors. We hope to have Board approved specifications to the contractors by early September and receive bids by 15 September. Unofficial cost estimates are around thirty to thirty five thousand dollars. Once we received the bids and firm cost from the contractors, we will approach the Sebring City council and request that they share some cost. The remainder of the cost will have to come from the funds the Museum saved over the years, and from donations from Museum Members and Friends. A donation in any amount from anyone will be greatly appreciated and dedicated to this remodel project. Any donations received will help preserve some of the Museum's limited savings for emergency repairs and future improvements/expansion. Donations may be sent to Military Sea Services Museum, 1402, Roseland Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870.

Watch out for the School Kids! Stay safe!

John

Military Sea Services Museum
1402 Roseland Avenue, Sebring,
Florida, 33870 Phone: (863) 385-0992
E-Mail: navmargrd@gmail.com

Hours of Operation
Open: Thursday through Saturday
Noon to 4:00 p.m.
Web site: <http://milseasvcmuseum.org/>



Museum entrance now



Museum remodeled entrance

Welcome Aboard New Members

On 28 June 2015, Douglas and Karen Lemieux became the Museum's newest members, signing up as life members. Doug served in the U.S. Marine Corps and is a Vietnam Veteran. He is self-employed and has experience in Transportation- Logistics and sales management. Karen is a retired Department of Defense Comptroller. Their son Austin reported to Navy Boot Camp at Great Lakes on 3 August 2015. We wish Austin every success in the U.S. Navy.

A very hearty welcome aboard to our newest members! A sincere thank you to all our members for their continued support. Without member support, the Museum would not be able to pay its bills and would have to close the doors.

Chief Petty Officer Shannun M. La Morte Retires

On 7 August 2015 Chief Navy Counselor Shannun La Morte retired from active duty. Her many duty stations included USS Simon Lake (AS 33), Naval Station Norfolk Port Operations, USS Ashland (LSD 48), Naval Recruiting District Indianapolis, Amphibious Construction Battalion Two, Strike Fighter Attack Squadron One Zero Five, Navy Information Operations Command, Carrier Air Wing Eight including another deployment, this time aboard the USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77). Among her numerous decorations and awards are the unusual achievement of qualifying for four warfare pins---Aviation Warfare, Surface Warfare, Seabee Combat Warfare, and Information Dominance Warfare. The U.S. Navy will certainly miss this very experienced sailor.



Chief La Morte and her Pop Pop

Chief La Morte retirement ceremony was held in Norfolk, Virginia, and was attended by many Navy officials, including Captain Daniel Martin, Commander, Carrier Air Wing Eight; shipmates; family, and friends. Mary Anne La Morte was there and we know that Shannun's beloved Pop Pop Tony was there in spirit, with his chest bursting with pride, smiling down from heaven. The guest speaker was Captain Charles B. Johnson, USN (Ret), former Commanding Officer of the Navy Information Operations Command and Task Force Commander. (((Both Captain Johnson and Chief La Morte are long time members of the Military Sea Services Museum.)))

Chief Shannun La Morte graduated from Sebring High School in 1995 and she holds Associate and Bachelor of Science Degrees in Psychology from Saint Leo University. Shannun plans to pursue a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. We are confident that this accomplished sailor will succeed in whatever and wherever she tackles in civilian life.

We wish her Fair Winds and Following Seas.

Stories Wanted

We would like to publish in the Scuttlebutt short stories of Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard personal experiences, and/or short stories of sea services historical events. We are sure there are plenty of stories out there that would be of interest to Scuttlebutt readers. Please email your stories to navmargrd@gmail.com or mail to the Museum.

What Happened to Shorty???

After graduating from Radioman "A" School in December 1958, I reported aboard Naval Air Station Pensacola, FL as a Radio Seaman and was assigned to the communication center at Sherman Field. We had a direct teletype link to NAS Pensacola, a message center and an air-to-ground CW circuit on which we communicated with the USS Antietam that was serving as a training carrier for Navy pilots. There were 3 sailors assigned to each watch section with 24/7 coverage.

One very slow Sunday mid-watch a fellow radioman by the name of Shorty on my section, who had the "hots" for a 2nd class wave decided to make an attempt to impress her. Her boyfriend was stationed on board the USS Antietam which was currently out to sea. Shorty typed up a fake emergency message from the Antietam stating among other things that they had capsized and were requesting emergency assistance. The message looked valid and he placed it as the first message on the operations department's message board as he knew she would pick up the board first thing Monday morning. Well she did and immediately spotted the message and let out a loud shriek just as the Operations Officer was passing behind her and he grabbed the message board from her and raced to the operations center before anyone could stop him! Luckily, Shorty notified the Ops boss before any action was initiated except for the base Admiral being alerted. Not long after the dust settled, the Admiral's car appeared and Shorty was hauled off. I'm not sure what ever happened to him other than losing his secret clearance and he was never seen again!

Submitted by Lou Mezie, RMC(AC), USN (Ret)

Thank you Lou.

AVIATION HISTORY

In aviation history, decades before geeks and nerds altered our way of life, young and gutsy aviation pioneers changed the world with their wood sticks, bailing wire, canvas and aluminum.

How many of you know that in 1910, mighty Martin Marietta got its start in an abandoned California church? That's where Glenn L. Martin with his amazing mother Minta Martin and their mechanic Roy Beal constructed a fragile biplane that Glenn taught himself to fly.

It has often been told how Douglas Aircraft started operations in 1920 in a barbershop's backroom on L.A. 's Pico Boulevard. Interestingly, the barber-shop is still operating.

The Lockheed Company built the first of their famous 'Vegas' in 1927 inside a building currently used by Victory Cleaners at 1040 Sycamore in Hollywood.

In 1922, Claude Ryan, a 24 year old military reserve pilot, was getting his hair cut in San Diego, when the barber mentioned that the 'town's aviator' was in jail for smuggling Chinese illegals up from Mexico. Claude found out that if he replaced the pilot 'sitting in the pokey,' that he would be able to lease the town's airfield for \$50 a month — BUT he also needed to agree to fly North and East — BUT not South!

Northrop's original location was an obscure So. California hotel. It was available because the police had raided the hotel and found that its steady residents were money-minded gals entertaining transitory male hotel guests.

AVIATION HISTORY continued

Glenn Martin built his first airplane in a vacant church, before he moved to a vacant apricot cannery in Santa Ana. He was a showman and he traveled the county fair and air meet circuit as an exhibitionist aviator. From his exhibition proceeds, Glenn was able to pay his factory workers and purchase the necessary wood, linen and wire. His mother, Minta and two men ran the factory while Glenn risked his neck and gadded about the country. One of his workers was 22-year old Donald Douglas [who WAS the entire engineering department]. A Santa Monica youngster named Larry Bell [later founded Bell Aircraft] ran the shop.

Another part of Glenn Martin's business was a flying school with several planes based at Griffith Park, and a seaplane operation on the edge of Watts. His instructors taught a rich young man named Bill Boeing to fly. Then, Boeing bought one of Glenn Martin's seaplanes and had it shipped back to his home in Seattle. At the same time, Bill Boeing hired away Glenn's personal mechanic. Later, after Boeing's seaplane crashed in Puget Sound, he placed an order to Martin for replacement parts.

Still chafing from having his best mechanic 'swiped,' [a trick he later often used himself] Martin decided to take his sweet time and allowed Bill Boeing to 'stew' for a while. Bill Boeing wasn't one to 'stew' and he began fabricating his own aircraft parts, an activity that morphed into constructing entire airplanes.

A former small shipyard nicknamed 'Red Barn' became Boeing Aircraft's first home. Soon, a couple of airplanes were being built inside, each of them having a remarkable resemblance to Glenn Martin's airplanes that, interestingly, had its own remarkable resemblance to Glenn Curtiss' airplanes.

A few years later, when the Great depression intervened and Boeing couldn't sell enough airplanes to pay his bills, he diversified into custom built speed boats and furniture for his wealthy friends.

After WWI, a bunch of sharpies from Wall Street gained control of the Wright Brothers Co in Dayton and the Martin Company in L.A. and 'stuck them' together as the Wright-Martin Company. Wright-Martin began building an obsolete biplane design with a foreign Hispano-Suiza engine. Angered because he had been out maneuvered with a bad idea, Martin walked out taking Larry Bell and key employees with him.

From the deep wallet of a wealthy baseball mogul, Martin was able to establish a new factory. Then his good luck continued, when the future aviation legend Donald Douglas, who Glenn persuaded to join his team. Quickly emerging from the team's efforts was the Martin Bomber, the Martin MB-1. Although too late to enter WWI, the Martin bomber showed its superiority when Billy Mitchell made everyone mad at him by sinking several captured German battleships and cruisers.

In Cleveland, a young fellow called 'Dutch' Kindelberger joined Martin as an engineer. Later, as the leader of North American Aviation, Dutch became justifiably well-known.

AVIATION HISTORY continued

Flashing back to 1920, Donald Douglas had saved \$60,000, returned to L.A. and rented a barbershop's rear room and loft space in a carpenter's shop nearby. There he constructed a classic passenger airplane called the Douglas Cloudster. A couple of years later, Claude Ryan bought the Cloudster and used it to make daily flights between San Diego and Los Angeles. This gave Ryan the distinction of being the first owner/operator of Douglas transports. Claude Ryan later custom built Charles Lindbergh's 'ride' to fame in the flying fuel tank christened: The Spirit of St. Louis.

In 1922, Donald Douglas won a contract from the Navy to build several torpedo carrying aircraft. While driving through Santa Monica 's wilderness, Douglas noticed an abandoned, barn-like movie studio. He stopped his roadster and prowled around. That abandoned studio became Douglas Aircraft's first real factory. With the \$120,000 contract in his hand, Donald Douglas could afford to hire one or two more engineers. My brother Gordon Scott had been schooled in the little known science of aviation at England's Fairey Aviation, so he hired Gordon.

My first association with the early aviation pioneers occurred when I paid my brother a visit at his new work place. Gordon was outside on a ladder washing windows. He was the youngest engineer. Windows were dirty. And Douglas Aircraft Company had no money to pay janitors. Gordon introduced me to a towhead guy called Jack Northrop, and another chap named Jerry Vultee. Jack Northrop had moved over from Lockheed Aircraft. And all of them worked together on the Douglas Aircraft's world cruiser designs. While working in his home after work and on weekends, Jack designed a wonderfully advanced streamlined airplane. When Allan Loughhead [Lock-heed] found a wealthy investor willing to finance Northrop's new airplane, he linked up with Allan. Together, they leased a Hollywood workshop and constructed the Lockheed Vega. It was sensational with its clean lines and high performance. Soon Amelia Earhart and others flew the Vega and broke many of aviation's world records.

I had the distinct pleasure of spending time with Ed Heinemann who later designed the AD, A3D and A4D. He told me how my Dad would fly out to Palmdale with an experimental aircraft they were both working on. They would fly it around for a few hops and come up with some fixes. After having airframe changes fabricated in a nearby machine shop, they would hop it again to see if they had gotten the desired results. If it worked out, Mr. Heinemann would institute the changes on the aircraft's factory assembly line. No money swapped hands!

In May 1927, Lindbergh flew to Paris and triggered a bedlam where everyone was trying to fly everywhere. Before the first Lockheed Vega was built, William Randolph Hearst had already paid for it and had it entered in an air race from the California Coast to Honolulu. In June 1927, my brother Gordon left Douglas Aircraft to become Jack Northrop's assistant at Lockheed. While there, he managed to get himself hired as the navigator on Hearst's Vega. The race was a disaster and ten lives were lost. The Vega and my brother vanished. A black cloud hung heavily over the little shop. However, Hubert Wilkins, later to become Sir Hubert Wilkins, took Vega #2 and made a successful polar flight from Alaska to Norway. A string of successful flights after that placed Lockheed in aviation's forefront.

AVIATION HISTORY continued

I went to work for Lockheed as it 26th employee shortly after the disaster and I worked on the Vega. It was made almost entirely of wood and I quickly became a half-assed carpenter.

At this time, General Motors had acquired North American consisting of Fokker Aircraft, Pitcairn Aviation [later Eastern Airlines] and Sperry Gyroscope and hired Dutch Kindelberger away from Douglas to run it. Dutch moved the entire operation to L.A. where Dutch and his engineers came up with the P-51 Mustang.

Interestingly, just a handful of young men played roles affecting the lives of all Americans..... as it initiated the Southern California metamorphosis, from a semi-desert with orange groves and celluloid, into a dynamic complex, supporting millions.

Although this technological explosion had startling humble beginnings, taking root as acorns in — a barber shop's back room — a vacant church — and an abandoned cannery — but came to fruition as mighty oaks.

Source:

Denham S. Scott, North American Aviation Retirees' Bulletin
Submitted by CDR Eugene "Doc" Savage, USN (Ret).

Thank you Doc

Quotable Quotes

**If you put the Federal Government in charge of the Sahara Desert, in 5 years there'd be a shortage of sand.--
-Milton Friedman**

Only Government can take perfectly good paper, cover it with perfectly good ink and make the combination worthless.---Milton Friedman

The greatest danger to our American freedoms is a Government that ignores the Constitution.---Thomas Jefferson

The welfare of our country is the great object to which our cares and efforts ought to be directed.---George Washington

If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.---Ronald Reagan

Anniversaries

- 7 Aug 1782.** Inception of the Purple Heart. Purple Heart Day is celebrated annually on the anniversary of the inception of the Purple Heart.
- 4 Aug 1790.** Congress created the U.S. Revenue Marine, later became the U.S. Coast Guard.
- 29 Aug 1916.** United States Marine Corps Reserves founded.
- 7 Aug 1942.** U.S. Marines (1st Marine Division) conducted the first Allied offensive of WWII at Guadalcanal.
- 2 Aug 1943.** PT-109, commanded by LT John F. Kennedy, was rammed by the Japanese destroyer Amagiri and sunk in the Solomon Islands. Two sailors were killed and 11 survived.
- 6 Aug 1945.** First atomic bomb "Little Boy" dropped from B-29 named Enola Gay on Hiroshima, Japan.
- 9 Aug 1945.** Second atomic bomb "Fat Man" dropped from B-29 named Bock's Car on Nagasaki, Japan.
- 14 Aug 1945.** Japanese agreed to unconditionally surrender. V-J Day is declared-Victory over Japan.
- 4 Aug 1947.** U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps established.
- 23 Sep 1779.** CAPT John Paul Jones aboard Bon Homme Richard tell HMS Serapis: "I have not yet begun to fight."
- 17 Sep 1787.** U.S. Constitution approved.
- 10 Sep 1813.** Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry commanding his squadron from the USS NIAGARA defeated and captured the entire British squadron in the Battle of Lake Erie.
- 14 Sep 1814.** "Star Spangled Banner" written by Francis Scott Key.
- 1 Sep 1939.** Germany invaded Poland. World War II began.
- 9 Sep 1942.** The Japanese submarine I-25 launched a single engine floatplane piloted by Warrant Officer Nobuo Fujita near Cape Blanco, Oregon. The floatplane dropped two 168 pound incendiary bombs deep into the Oregon forest about 9 miles from Brookings, Oregon. The Japanese hoped the bombs would start massive forest fires. However they did not take into account earlier heavy rains, consequently the bombs did little damage. The I-25 was sunk almost a year later on 3 Sep 1943 by the USS PATTERSON (DD392) off the New Hebrides Islands.
- 2 Sep 1945.** Japan signed the formal surrender agreement on board the USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay. World War II, the most devastating war in human history, was over.
- 18 Sep 1947.** U.S. Air Force established.
- 11 Sep 2001.** Nineteen Al-Qaeda Islamic Terrorist flew two hijacked commercial planes into the World Trade Center and one into the Pentagon. The fourth hijacked commercial plane headed to Washington, D.C. crashed into a field near Shanksville, PA while courageous passengers fought to overcome the hijackers. The attacks resulted in nearly 3000 killed and at least 10 Billion dollars in damage to property and infrastructure.
- 11 Sep 2002.** The first Patriot's Day. In the aftermath of the Terrorist attacks on 11 Sep 2001, President George W. Bush designated 14 Sep 2001 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance for the victims of the attacks. On 30 Nov 2001, Congress passed a joint resolution that the President declared 11 Sep of each year as Patriot. President Bush signed the resolution into law on 18 Dec 2001. On 2 Sep 2002, President Bush proclaimed 11 Sep 2002 as the first Patriot Day--a Day of Service and Remembrance.