

MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



SEA SERVICES SCUTTLEBUTT

April 2015



John Cecil

A message from the President

Greetings,

Most of Sebring's winter guests (snow-birds) have departed for the far North. Consequently, we are already seeing the decline in visitors to the Museum that usually occurs during the summer months. This time of the year is an excellent time for groups of school children, scouts, etc. to visit the Museum. There is no charge for children 18 years and under. Active duty military are also admitted free.

Once again the Board of Directors expresses its sincere thank you to Bill Fincke, Bud Farmer, and Gordon White our snow-birds who volunteer to stand duty at the Museum while in Sebring.

This was the fifth winter for Bill from Bethlehem, PA, the fourth winter for Bud from Bassett, VA, and the first winter for Gordon from Mount Sydney, VA. The Board also thanks Fred Carino from Sebring. Fred travels quite a bit and sometimes works outside of Florida. But when he is in town, Fred stands duty in the Museum. These four men provide welcome relief to me, Gene Kissner, and Roy Fairfield who stand duty at the Museum year around. With so few permanent local residents who volunteer to stand duty at the Museum, the Board is always concerned about burn-out, so we thank God for men like Bill, Bud, Gordon, and Fred.

John

Welcome Aboard New Members

On 4 February 2015, James and Alice Vargo became the Museum's newest members. James and Alice reside in Sebring, FL.

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.

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

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

Memoriam

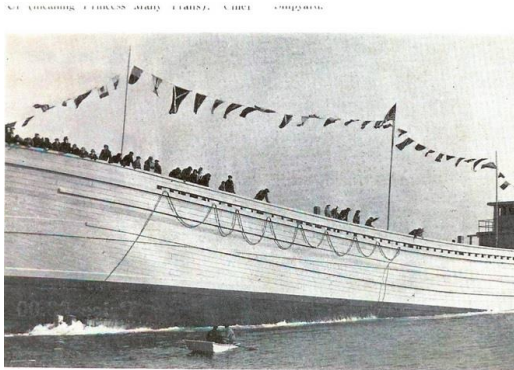
We are saddened to hear of the passing of Roger E. Mitchell on 7 April 2015. Roger was a life member of the Military Sea Services Museum. He served 22 years in the U.S. Navy and retired as a Chief Warrant Officer (CWO4). At the time of his passing, Roger was serving as the National Vice President of the Fleet Reserve Association and as a volunteer Hunter Safety instructor for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Fair winds and following seas Roger. Rest in Peace! Our thoughts and prayers are with the Mitchell family.

MRS. FDR CHRISTENS BARGE

Dear Editor,

This is in response to our recent telephone conversation. This is not really a piece of naval history but may do to occupy an idle moment. This will give you an introduction to the cast of characters involved. The site of this event is the idyllic coastal community of Camden, Maine, a popular summer retreat for the obscenely rich of Philadelphia, New York and other sources of great money. Here we find a family which needs no introduction, namely the Bok clan. I know you will instantly recognize Bok as the family which owned Curtis Publishing, home to the Saturday Evening Post, Ladies Home Journal and other lesser offerings. Now, for one final character Eleanor Roosevelt. This event took place during World War II and Mrs. FDR was the nation's first lady.

To make some sense of this we must add two more to the cast, Camden Shipbuilding & Railroad and the vessel Pine Tree, built for the U.S. Maritime Commission.



The barge Pine Tree, christened by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, slides into the bay

Now that we have our cast assembled, let us turn the clock back to February 8, 1943. That date will mark the launch of the Pine Tree at the Camden yard. During the war years shipyards and boat yards in Maine produced for the Maritime Commission, U.S. Navy and U.S. Army a total of 1358 craft of all types ranging from submarines and destroyers to lifeboats. This number is important to demonstrate the need for sponsors. The basic requirements are quite simple namely, female, the ability to memorize a single line and wield a bottle of champagne. Some ladies did have their moments. Now, to our candidate.

During the early years of the 20th century the financial geniuses of Philadelphia, New York and other places of power abandoned the humid, uncomfortable cities and built summer "cottages" on places like Mount Desserts Island. The Rockefellers, Ford's, Atwater Kent's and others favored Bar Harbor, Seal Harbor and other island spots. In this flight to the coast of Maine, Camden was not ignored and hosted some heavy hitters including the aforementioned Bok family.

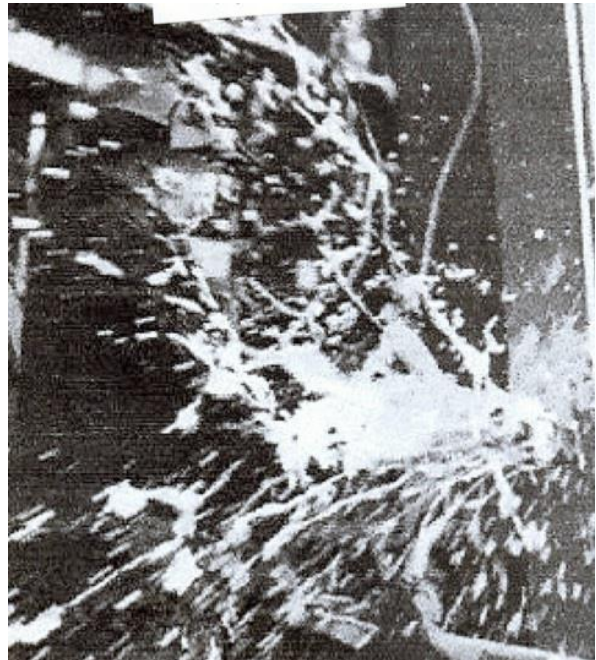
In short, a few phone calls to the White House and it was agreed that Mrs. FDR probably had a bit of cabin fever and would be pleased to take an early February journey into the heart of coastal Maine.

At this point we cannot ignore the arrival of the Roosevelt's private railroad car at Portland's cold and drafty Union Station or avoid the installing of Mrs. Roosevelt in Cary Bok's touring car. The 80 mile journey is in fine February form, bleak and barren and cold.

Our arrival in Camden is not greeted with a police escort, in fact the town has but one policeman and he works nights. The local fire department substitutes quite nicely. We can ignore all of the social functions and get directly to the scene of the launch.

Apparently there is no record of the first lady's impression of the vessel she will sponsor but when she mounted the platform and joined her sponsoring party of local bigwigs and maritime officers she could not fail to notice that she was the sponsor of the biggest damn barge she had ever seen. The monster was nearly 200 feet long and was just one great empty hull - nothing inside.

The ceremony itself concluded with the traditional bottle of bubbly. Here Mrs. FDR really out did herself. While we will never know what she had on her mind at the time, it can be noted that she seized the bottle by the neck, took a mighty roundhouse swing that would be the envy of Babe Ruth. When the bottle hit the stem it exploded like a hand grenade. Great showers of champagne filled the air and for just a moment our lady was invisible. Later it was determined that she was simply drenched with liquor.



The barge? She was designed to carry coal to ease fuel shortages on the East Coast. One can assume that she was pushed or pulled up and down the coast through the war years.

Contributed by Allie Ryan

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.

Anniversaries

1 April 1893. U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer rating established. Happy 122nd birthday Chiefs. Throughout the years, the Chiefs have been known as the backbone of the U.S. Navy.

15 April 1898. Spanish-American War began.

11 April 1900. Navy buys submarine Holland VI. - - - U.S. Navy Submarine Force born.

6 April 1917. U.S. enters World War I.

10 April 1942. Bataan Death March begins.

18 April 1942. The Doolittle Raiders, using B-25 bombers launched from the USS Hornet (CV-8) to strike Tokyo.

18 April 1943. U.S. Army P-38 fighter planes shoot down the airplane carrying Japanese Admiral Yamamoto over Bougainville.

7 April 1945. U.S. Navy carrier based planes sink the Japanese battleship Yamato as it heads for Okinawa.

30 April 1945. Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun commit suicide in a Berlin bunker as Soviet troops advance through the city.

3 April 1949. NATO founded.

10 April 1963. USS THRESHER (SSN 593) the world's most advanced attack submarine of the time was lost in the Gulf of Maine during a post overhaul test dive. The entire 129 member crew was lost in the world's worst submarine disaster ever. This tragedy led directly to significant changes in the Navy's submarine safety programs that have kept the U.S. Navy submarines safe ever since.

15 April 1969. U.S. Navy EC-121 belonging to VQ-1 was shot down by two North Korean MIG-17s while on a reconnaissance mission over the Sea of Japan. The EC-121 crashed 90 nautical miles off the North Korean coast. All 31 Americans aboard were killed. The U.S. did not retaliate against North Korea other than a naval demonstration in the Sea of Japan a few days later and resumption of reconnaissance flights.

30 April 1975. Saigon fell to North Vietnamese troops. One day after the largest helicopter evacuation in history where 7000 Americans and South Vietnamese were evacuated.

12 April 1981. First U.S. space shuttle launched.

11 April 1991. Persian Gulf War official cease fire.

19 April 1995. Oklahoma City federal building bombed in a domestic terrorist attack by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. The attack killed 168 people and injured 680 others. McVeigh was executed 11 June 2001, Nichols was sentenced to life in prison.

1 May 1898. Admiral Dewey's squadron destroys Spanish squadron in Manila Bay.

4-8 May 1942. Battle of the Coral Sea. U.S. Navy repels the Japanese. This helps save Australia and blocks the Japanese juggernaut in the Pacific.

13 May 1908 Navy Nurse Corps established.

Anniversaries Continued

7 May 1941. Bob Hope's first USO show, March Field Air Base, California.

7 May 1945. Unconditional surrender of all German forces signed.

8 May 1945. Victory in Europe (V-E Day) is declared.

10 May 1925. U.S. Coast Guard Band Established.

2 May 2011. U.S. Navy SEALs kill al-Qaeda terrorist leader Osama bin Laden.

16 May 2015. Armed Forces Day celebrated.

25 May 2015. Memorial Day observed.

Quotable Quotes

No man is a leader until his appointment is ratified in the minds and hearts of his men.

---Anonymous

Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword, obviously never encountered automatic weapons. ---
General Douglas MacArthur

Everything that is really great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labor in freedom. ---
Albert Einstein

This Nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened. ---John F. Kennedy

I've learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances. ---Martha Washington

Well Traveled Museum Members

Have you heard of The Extra Miler Club (EMC)? The EMC was founded in 1973 with membership to anyone having specific travel goals. The primary purpose of the EMC is to encourage members to visit every county (and equivalent jurisdiction) in every state. According to Wikipedia, there are 3144 counties and county equivalents in the U.S.

Museum members, Gordon and Linda White are EMC members who have visited every county and county equivalent in the U.S. Following is the story of their completion trip.

The Whites!

Gordon & Linda White

EMC #200 (recruited by Roy Carson)

ALPCA #3868

On Saturday, August 2, 2014, we entered Fremont County, ID to complete all 44 counties of Idaho and all of the US states. There are 4 Fremont Counties in the US. The others are in CO, IA & WY. Fremont County, ID may be the only US county to border 2 counties of the same name in different states. Fremont County borders Madison County, ID & Madison County, MT as well as Teton County, ID & Teton County, WY.

On August 3rd, we celebrated by revisiting Yellowstone NP and again seeing Old Faithful before heading to FL. Actually our summer route would seem strange to some, but not to Extra Milers. We had left from VA in mid-July to visit a friend in Syracuse, NY and then we attended the ALPCA meet in Rochester. From there we headed directly to the southeast corner of MT. Eastern and northern MT were soon completed as we passed across northern ID and visited our 8 remaining counties in WA. We then traversed through the middle of ID to complete the 56 counties of MT (or was it 58?). After much zigzagging, we completed the 44 counties of ID and our bucket list quest. The trip mileage was just under 10,000 miles.



We'll remain in EMC and enjoy reading of the trips of others. By the way, we have also been to (feet on the ground) 187 different countries.

Gordon says it took more than 25 years to complete their mission and they are proud of their accomplishment----well they should be.

Well Done Gordon and Linda!!!!