

USS BRISTOL DD857

VETERANS ASSOCIATION

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Operation Ivy Bells

Operation Ivy Bells was a joint [United States Navy](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA), and [National Security Agency](#) (NSA) mission whose objective was to place [wire taps](#) on [Soviet underwater communication lines](#) during the [Cold War](#).^[1]

Background

During the Cold War, the [United States](#) wanted to learn more about Soviet [submarine](#) and missile technology, specifically [ICBM](#) test and [nuclear first strike](#) capability.

In the early 1970s the U.S. government learned of the existence of an undersea communications cable in the [Sea of Okhotsk](#), which connected the major Soviet Pacific Fleet naval base at [Petropavlovsk](#) on the [Kamchatka Peninsula](#) to the Soviet [Pacific Fleet](#)'s mainland headquarters at

[Vladivostok](#).^{[2]:172} At the time, the Sea of Okhotsk was claimed by the [Soviet Union](#) as [territorial waters](#), and was strictly off limits to foreign vessels, and the Soviet Navy had installed a network of sound detection devices along the seabed to detect intruders. The area also saw numerous surface and subsurface naval exercises.

Installation

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Despite these obstacles, the potential for an intelligence coup was considered too great to ignore, and in October 1971, the United States sent the purpose-modified submarine [USS Halibut](#) deep into the [Sea of Okhotsk](#).

Funds for the project were diverted secretly from the [deep-submergence rescue vehicle](#) (DSRV) program, and the modified submarines were shown with fake DSRV simulators attached to them. These were early [diver lockouts](#). Divers working from Halibut found the cable in 400 feet (120 m) of water and installed a 20-foot (6.1 m) long device, which wrapped around the cable without piercing its casing and recorded all communications made over it. The large recording device was designed to detach if the cable was raised for repair.

The tapping of the Soviet naval cable was so secret that most sailors involved did not have the [security clearance](#) needed to know about it. A cover story was thus created to disguise the actual mission: it was claimed that the spy submarines were sent to the Soviet naval range in the Sea of Okhotsk to recover the Soviet [SS-N-12 Sandbox](#) supersonic anti-ship missile (AShM) debris so that countermeasures could be developed.

Although created as a cover story, this mission was actually carried out with great success: U.S. Navy divers recovered all^[citation needed] of the

SS-N-12 debris, with the largest debris no larger than six inches (150 mm), and a total of more than two million pieces. The debris was taken back to the U.S. and reconstructed at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory. Based on these pieces, at least one sample was [reverse engineered](#). It was discovered that the SS-N-12 AShM was guided by radar only, and the infrared guidance previously suspected did not exist.^[3]

Use

Each month, divers retrieved the recordings and installed a new set of tapes. The recordings were then delivered to the NSA for processing and dissemination to other U.S. intelligence agencies. The first tapes recorded revealed that the Soviets were so sure of the cable's security that the majority of the conversations made over it were unencrypted. The eavesdropping on the traffic between senior Soviet officers provided invaluable information on naval operations at [Petropavlovsk](#), the [Pacific Fleet's](#) primary nuclear submarine base, home to [Yankee](#) and [Delta](#) class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines.^{[2]:188}

Eventually, more taps were installed on Soviet lines in other parts of the world, with more advanced instruments built by [AT&T's Bell Laboratories](#) that were [radioisotope thermoelectric generator](#)-powered and could store a year's worth of data.^{[2]:189} Other submarines were used for this role, including [USS Parche \(SSN-683\)](#), [USS Richard B. Russell \(SSN-687\)](#), and [USS Seawolf \(SSN-575\)](#). Seawolf was almost lost during one of these missions—she was stranded on the bottom after a storm and almost had to use her self-destruct charges to scuttle the ship with her crew.^[4]

Compromise

This operation was compromised by [Ronald Pelton](#), a disgruntled 44-year-old^[citation needed] veteran of the NSA, who was fluent in Russian. At the time, Pelton was \$65,000 (\$202,000 today) in debt, and had filed for [personal bankruptcy](#) just three months before he resigned. With only a few hundred dollars in the bank, Pelton walked into the Soviet embassy in [Washington, D.C.](#) in January 1980, and offered to sell what he knew to the [KGB](#) for money.

No documents were passed from Pelton to the Soviets, as he had an extremely good memory: he reportedly received \$35,000 from the KGB for the intelligence he provided from 1980 to 1983, and for the intelligence on the Operation Ivy Bells, the KGB gave him \$5,000. The Soviets did not immediately take any action on this information; however, in 1981, surveillance satellites showed Soviet warships, including a salvage vessel, anchored over the site of the tap in the Sea of Okhotsk. The [USS Parche \(SSN-683\)](#) was dispatched to recover the device, but the American divers were unable to find it and it was concluded that the Soviets had taken it. In July 1985, [Vitaly Yurchenko](#), a KGB colonel who was Pelton's initial contact in Washington, D.C., defected to the United States and provided the information that eventually led to Pelton's arrest.^[1]

As of 1999, the recording device captured by the Soviets was on public display at the [Great Patriotic War museum in Moscow](#).^[5]

Editor's Note: Our shipmate, Earl "Charlie" Weaver was a saturation diver and served in USS Halibut. Charlie was a member of Team 1 placing the

recording equipment on the undersea cable connecting the Soviet Navy's base and the Soviet Pacific Fleet mainland headquarters. If you get a chance to read "Blind Man's Bluff", you will be amazed at the heroism of the crews of the various spy subs. The dive teams had to decompress in decompression chambers. Charlie and his team mates spent over 8 days decompressing.

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Willie & Joe!

Contributed by Harris Arneson via Walter Marczak

He meant so much to the millions of Americans who fought in World War II, and to those who had waited for them to come home.

He was a kid cartoonist for Stars and Stripes, the military newspaper;

Mauldin's drawings of his muddy, exhausted, whisker-stubble infantrymen

Willie and Joe were the voice of truth about what it was like on the front lines.

Mauldin was an enlisted man, just like the soldiers for whom he drew; his gripes were their gripes, his laughs their laughs, his heartaches their heartaches. He was one of them. They loved him.

He never held back. Sometimes, when his cartoons cut too close for comfort, superior officers tried to tone him down. In one memorable incident, he enraged Gen George S. Patton, who informed Mauldin he wanted the pointed cartoons celebrating the fighting men, lampooning the high-ranking officers to stop. Now!

"I'm beginning to feel like a fugitive from the law of averages."

The news passed from soldier to soldier. How was Sgt. Bill Mauldin going to stand up to Gen. Patton? It seemed impossible.

Not quite. Mauldin, it turned out, had an ardent fan: Five-star Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, SCAFE, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe. Ike put out the word: "Mauldin draws what Mauldin wants." Mauldin won. Patton lost.

If, in your line of work, you've ever considered yourself a young hotshot, or if you've ever known anyone who has felt that way about him or herself, the story of Mauldin's young manhood will humble you. Here is what, by the time

he was 23 years old, Mauldin had accomplished:+

"By the way, wot wuz them changes you wuz gonna make when you took over last month, sir?"

He won the Pulitzer Prize & was on the cover of Time magazine. His book "Up Front" was the No. 1 best-seller in the United States ..

All of that at 23. Yet, when he returned to civilian life and grew older, he never lost that boyish Mauldin grin, never outgrew his excitement about doing his job, never big-shotted or high-hatted the people with whom he worked every day.

I was lucky enough to be one of them. Mauldin roamed the hallways of the Chicago Sun-Times in the late 1960s and early 1970s with no more officiousness or air of haughtiness than if he was a copyboy. That impish look on his face remained.

He had achieved so much. He won a second Pulitzer Prize, and he should have won a third for what may be the single greatest editorial cartoon in the history of the craft: his deadline rendering, on the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, of the statue at the Lincoln

Memorial, slumped in grief, its head cradled in its hands. But he never acted as if he was better than the people he met. He was still Mauldin, the enlisted man.

During the late summer of 2002, as Mauldin lay in that California nursing home, some of the old World War II infantry guys caught wind of it. They didn't want Mauldin to go out that way. They thought he should know he was still their hero.

"This is the' town my pappy told me about."

Gordon Dillow, a columnist for the Orange County Register, put out the call in Southern California for people in the area to send their best wishes to Mauldin. I joined Dillow in the effort, helping to spread the appeal nationally, so Bill would not feel so alone. Soon, more than 10,000 cards and letters had arrived at Mauldin's bedside.

Better than that, old soldiers began to show up just to sit with Mauldin, to let him know that they were there for him, as he, so long ago, had been there for them. So many volunteered to visit Bill that there was a waiting list. Here is how Todd DePastino, in the first paragraph of his wonderful biography of Mauldin, described it:

"Almost every day in the summer and fall of 2002, they came to Park Superior nursing home in Newport Beach , California , to honor Army Sergeant, Technician Third Grade, Bill Mauldin. They came bearing relics of their youth: medals, insignia, photographs, and carefully folded newspaper clippings. Some wore old garrison caps. Others arrived resplendent in uniforms over a half century old. Almost all of them wept as they filed down the corridor like pilgrims fulfilling some long-neglected obligation."

One of the veterans explained to me why it was so important: "You would have to be part of a combat infantry unit to appreciate what moments of relief Bill gave us. You had to be reading a soaking wet Stars and Stripes in a water-filled foxhole and then see one of his cartoons."

"Th' hell this ain't th' most important hole in the world. I'm in it."

Mauldin is buried in Arlington National Cemetery . Last month, the kid cartoonist made it onto a first-class postage stamp. It's an honor that most generals and admirals never receive.

What Mauldin would have loved most, I believe, is the sight of the two guys who keep him company on that stamp.

Take a look at it.
There's Willie. There's Joe.

And there, to the side, drawing them and smiling that shy, quietly observant smile, is Mauldin himself. With his buddies, right where he belongs. Forever.

What a story, and a fitting tribute to a man and to a time that few of us can still remember. But I say to you youngsters, you must most seriously learn of, and remember with respect, the sufferings and sacrifices of your fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers in times you cannot ever imagine today with all you have. But the only reason you are free to have it all is because of them!

I thought you would all enjoy reading and seeing this bit of American history.

In God We Trust.



Breakfast on bed

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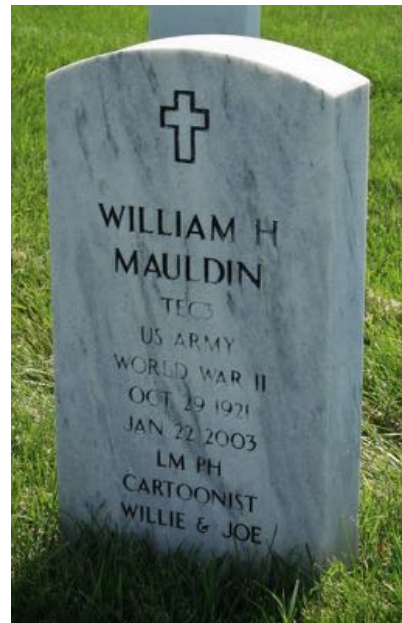
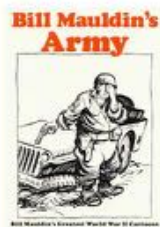
"Ordnance! Ah'm havin' trouble with mah shootin' arn."



"I need a couple guys what don't owe me no money for a little routine patrol."



"I calls her Florence Nightingale."



"Joe, yestiddy ya saved my life an' I swore I'd pay ya back. Here's my last pair of dry socks."



Spring 1966, USS Bristol left on a cruise to San Juan, Puerto Rico, from Brooklyn Navy Yard. No sooner that she entered the Narrows, Bristol encountered heavy weather. My sea detail station was fantail phone talker. Photo top left is what remains of our 26' motor whaleboat; top right is view from midships passageway of the next evening after the storm, pretty right? Bottom left is a sunken freighter at the mouth of San Juan harbor. Freighter is hung up on the rocks. This photo taken from the top of the fire control director. Captain Butler wanted accurate radar ranges to various "targets" when leaving the harbor. I should also have taken a photo of El Morro Castle, which "guards" the entrance to San Juan Harbor. The castle is actually a fort constructed by the Spanish back in the 1600s. Mount 51 partially lifted off main deck flooding up and lower ammo handling rooms. Repair One had to open handling room access door in CPO quarters to start pumps partially flooding CPO quarters. However, the damage control team did a superb job of evacuating the water by a bucket brigade to the CPO head that drained over board. The Snipes kept the Bristol steaming on even though we took green water in the forward stack. By the way, there was about 6 inches of salt in the fire control director.

Some Seagoing Celebrities

Jack Kerouac

He got so drunk that he enlisted in the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard on the same day!

In the summer of 1942, Jack Kerouac followed in the footsteps of Joseph Conrad and Eugene O'Neill and went to sea. After dropping out of Columbia University the previous Fall, the 20-year-old Kerouac signed up for the merchant marine and shipped out aboard the U.S. Army Transport ship *Dorchester*.

Although World War II had broken out at about the time of his departure from Columbia, Kerouac's motives for going to sea were more personal than patriotic. "My mother is very worried over my having joined the Merchant Marine," Kerouac wrote in his journal at the time, "but I need money for college, I need adventure, of a sort (the real adventure of rotting wharves and seagulls, winey waters and ships, ports, cities, and faces & voices); and I want to study more of the earth, not out of books, but from direct experience."

In October of 1942, after completing a voyage to and

from an Army command base in Greenland (which he would later write about in *Vanity of Duluo*), Kerouac left the

merchant marine and returned to Columbia. That was lucky, because most of the

Dorchester's crew—more than 600 men—died three months later when the ship was

torpedoed by a German U-boat. But the restless Kerouac lasted only a month at Columbia before dropping out again and making plans to return to sea. In December of 1942 he enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve. He wanted to join the Naval Air Force, but failed an aptitude test. So on February 26, 1943 he was sent to the Naval Training Station in Newport, Rhode Island. That's apparently when the photograph above was taken of the young Kerouac with his military haircut. It would have been right around the time of his 21st birthday.

Kerouac lasted only 10 days in boot camp. As Miriam Klieman writes at the National

Archives, "The qualities that made "On the Road" a huge success and Kerouac a powerful storyteller, guide, and literary icon are the same ones that rendered him

remarkably unsuitable for the military: independence, creativity, impulsivity, sensuality, and recklessness." According to files released by the government in 2005, Naval doctors at Newport found Kerouac to be "restless, apathetic, seclusive" and determined that he was mentally unfit for service, writing that "neuropsychiatric examination disclosed auditory hallucinations, ideas of reference and suicide, and a rambling, grandiose, philosophical manner." He was sent to the Naval Hospital in Bethesda Maryland and eventually discharged.

Strange guy, but I love his book, "On the Road"!

Navy Truisms:

- A Sailor will walk 10 miles in a freezing rain to get a beer but complain about standing a 4 hour quarterdeck watch on a beautiful, balmy spring day.
- A Sailor will lie, cheat and scam to get off the ship early and then will have no idea where he wants to go.
- Sailors are territorial. They have their assigned spaces to clean and maintain. Woe betide the shipmate who tracks through a freshly swabbed deck.
- Sailors constantly complain about the food on the mess

decks while concurrently going back for second or even third helpings.

- After a cruise, a Sailor will realize how much he misses being at sea. And after retiring from the Navy considers going on a cruise and visiting some of our past favorite ports. Of course we'll have to pony up better than \$5,000 for the privilege. Just to think, Uncle Sam actually use to pay us to visit those same ports years ago.
- You can spend three years on a ship and never visit every nook and cranny or even every major space aboard. Yet, you can name all your shipmates and every liberty port.
- Campari and soda taken in the warm Spanish sun is an excellent hangover remedy.
- PO2 / E-5 is almost the perfect military pay grade. Too senior to catch the crap details, too junior to be blamed if things go awry.
- Never be first, never be last and never volunteer for anything.
- Almost every port has a "gut." An area teeming with cheap bars, easy women and partiers, which is usually the "Off-limits" area.
- Contrary to popular belief, Master Chief Petty Officers do not walk on water. They walk just above it.

- Sad but true, when visiting even the most exotic ports of call, some Sailors only see the inside of the nearest bars/clubs.
- Also under the category of sad but true, that lithe, sultry Mediterranean or Asian beauty you spent those wonderful three days with and have dreamed about ever since, is almost certainly a grandmother now.
- A Sailor can, and will, sleep anywhere, anytime.
- Yes, it's true, it does flow downhill.
- In the traditional "crackerjack" uniform you were recognized as a member of United States Navy, no matter what port or part of the world you were in. Damn all who want to eliminate or change that uniform.
- The Marine dress blue uniform is, by far, the sharpest of all the armed forces.
- Most Sailors won't disrespect a shipmate's mother. On the other hand, it's not entirely wise to tell them they have a good looking sister either.
- Sailors and Marines will generally fight one another, and fight together against all comers.
- If you can at all help it, never tell anyone that you are seasick.
- Check the rear dungaree pockets of a Sailor. Right

pocket a wallet. Left pocket a wheel book.

- The guys who seemed to get away with doing the least, always seemed to be first in the pay line and the chow line.
- General Quarters drills and the need to evacuate one's bowels often seem to coincide.
- Speaking of which, when the need arises, the nearest head is always the one which is secured for cleaning.
- Four people you never screw with: the doc, the DK, PC and the ship's barber.
- In the summer, all deck seamen wanted to be signalmen. In the winter they wanted to be radiomen.
- Do snipes ever get the grease and oil off their hands?
- Never play a drinking game which involves the loser paying for all the drinks.
- There are only two good ships: the one you came from and the one you're going to.
- Whites, coming from the cleaners, clean, pressed and starched, last that way about 30 microseconds after donning them. The Navy dress white uniform is a natural dirt magnet.
- Sweat pumps operate in direct proportion to the seniority of the official visiting.
- The shrill call of a bosun's pipe still puts a chill down my spine.

- Three biggest lies in the Navy: We're happy to be here; this is not an inspection; we're here to help.
- Everything goes in the log.
- Rule 1: The Chief is always right. Rule 2: When in doubt refer to Rule 1.
- A wet napkin under your tray keeps the tray from sliding on the mess deck table in rough seas, keeping at least one hand free to hold on to your beverage.
- Never walk between the projector and the movie screen after movie call and the flick has started.
- A guy who doesn't share a care package from home is no shipmate.
- When transiting the ocean, the ship's chronometer is always advanced at 0200 which makes for a short night. When going in the opposite direction, the chronometer is retarded at 1600 which extends the work day.
- When I sleep, I often dream I am back at sea.
- If I had to do it all over again, I would. TWICE!

GOOD SHIPMATES ARE FRIENDS FOR LIFE

How to simulate life on board a US Navy Ship...

1. Buy a steel dumpster, paint it gray inside and out, and live in it for six months.

2. Run all the pipes and wires in your house exposed on the walls.
3. Repaint your entire house every month.
4. Renovate your bathroom. Build a wall across the middle of the bathtub and move the shower head to chest level. When you take showers, make sure you turn off the water while you soap down.
5. Put lube oil in your humidifier and set it on high.
6. Once a week, blow compressed air up your chimney, making sure the wind carries the soot onto your neighbor's house. Ignore his complaints.
7. Once a month, take all major appliances apart and then reassemble them.
8. Raise the thresholds and lower the headers of your front and back door so that you either trip or bang your head every time you pass through them.
9. Disassemble and inspect your lawnmower every week.
10. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, turn your water heater temperature up to 200 degrees. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, turn the water heater off. On Saturdays and Sundays tell your family they use too much water during the week, so no bathing will be allowed.
11. Raise your bed to within 6" of the ceiling, so you can't

turn over without getting out and then getting back in.

12. Sleep on the shelf in your closet. Replace the closet door with a curtain. Have your spouse whip open the curtain about 3 hours after you go to sleep, shine a flashlight in your eyes, and say "Sorry, wrong rack."

13. Make your family qualify to operate each appliance in your house - dishwasher operator, blender technician, etc.

14. Have your neighbor come over each day at 0500, blow a whistle so loud Helen Keller could hear it, and shout "Reveille, reveille, all hands heave out and trice up."

15. Have your mother-in-law write down everything she's going to do the following day, then have her make you stand in your back yard at 0600 while she reads it to you.

16. Submit a request chit to your father-in-law requesting permission to leave your house before 1500.

17. Empty all the garbage bins in your house and sweep the driveway three times a day, whether it needs it or not.

18. Have your neighbor collect all your mail for a month, read your magazines, and randomly lose every 5th item before delivering it to you.

19. Watch no TV except for movies played in the middle

of the night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch, then show a different one.

20. When your children are in bed, run into their room with a megaphone shouting that your home is under attack and ordering them to their battle stations. (Now general quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations.)

21. Make your family menu a week ahead of time without consulting the pantry or refrigerator.

22. Post a menu on the kitchen door informing your family that they are having steak for dinner. Then make them wait in line for an hour. When they finally get to the kitchen, tell them you are out of steak, but they can have dried ham or hot dogs. Repeat daily until they ignore the menu and just ask for hot dogs.

23. Bake a cake. Prop up one side of the pan so the cake bakes unevenly. Spread icing real thick to level it off.

24. Get up every night around midnight and have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on stale bread. (midrats)

25. Set your alarm clock to go off at random during the night. At the alarm, jump up and dress as fast as you can, making sure to button your top shirt button and tuck your

pants into your socks. Run out into the backyard and uncoil the garden hose.

26. Every week or so, throw your cat or dog in the pool and shout "Man overboard port side!" Rate your family members on how fast they respond.

27. Put the headphones from your stereo on your head, but don't plug them in. Hang a paper cup around your neck on a string. Stand in front of the stove, and speak into the paper cup "Stove manned and ready." After an hour or so, speak into the cup again "Stove secured." Roll up the headphones and paper cup and stow them in a shoebox.

28. Place a podium at the end of your driveway. Have your family stand watches at the podium, rotating at 4 hour intervals. This is best done when the weather is worst. January is a good time.

29. When there is a thunderstorm in your area, get a wobbly rocking chair, sit in it and rock as hard as you can until you become nauseous. Make sure to have a supply of stale crackers in your shirt pocket.

30. For former engineers: bring your lawn mower into the living room, and run it all day long.

31. Make coffee using eighteen scoops of budget priced coffee grounds per pot,

and allow the pot to simmer for 5 hours before drinking.

32. Have someone under the age of ten give you a haircut with sheep shears.

33. Sew the back pockets of your jeans on the front.

34. Lock yourself and your family in the house for six weeks. Tell them that at the end of the 6th week you are going to take them to Disney World for "liberty". At the end of the 6th week, inform them the trip to Disney World has been canceled because they need to get ready for an inspection, and it will be another week before they can leave the house.

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Humor in Uniform

A RETIRED MASTER CHIEF Master Diver Named George called the local phone company to report HIS telephone failed to ring when HIS friends called - and that on the few occasions, when it did ring, HIS dog always moaned right before the phone rang.

The telephone repairman proceeded to the scene, curious to see this psychic dog or senile MCPO. He climbed a telephone pole, hooked in his test set, and dialed the subscriber's house.

The phone didn't ring right away, but then the dog moaned and the telephone began to ring.

Climbing down from the pole, the telephone repairman found:

1 . The dog was tied to the telephone system's ground wire with a steel chain and collar.

2. The wire connection to the ground rod was loose.

3. The dog was receiving 90 volts of signaling current when the number was called.

4.. After a couple of jolts, the dog would start moaning and then urinate.

5. The wet ground would complete the circuit, thus causing the phone to ring.

Which demonstrates that some problems can be fixed by pissing and moaning.

Thought you'd like to know

Captain's Mast

In the 70s our ship visited Bombay (India) before it was renamed Mumbai. Now Bombay was a very hectic place back then, streets dirty filthy and probably the most populated city in the world. Horse/ donkey and cart on the main streets was a very common site. Disfigured people begging on the streets and those without legs scooting around on skateboard things. Come Monday morning two stokers (engineering sailors) are adrift (AWOL) but eventually made it back onboard before sailing. After sailing and doing a couple of exercises with the Indian Navy we depart and set

course for our next exotic destination. The following day these two have been charged by the Coxswain (Sheriff) and are required to attend the Captains table. Back then if you could tell a pretty good story and if the CO was in a good mood he would find you innocent and just give a reprimand. First sailor marches in and salutes, Coxswain reads out the charge of being adrift and CO asks what he pleads. Said sailor replies GUILTY sir with mitigating circumstances. CO says OK sailor explain. Sailor says, well sir I was at a bar and a really nice Indian girl starts talking to me and invited me back to her families home, Well being an ambassador for my country I couldn't refuse so I went with her where I spent the night. She didn't have an alarm clock so I woke up and thought I need to get back to the ship but didn't know where I was so I had to get a taxi. As it was peak hour I couldn't get a taxi so I hailed a guy who had a horse and cart and he agreed to get me back to the ship, He assured me we would be back in time. After about 15 minutes, and you wont believe this the horse drops dead so I had to walk all the way back to the ship and thats why I was adrift Sir. CO has a laugh and says

thats a great story, Ive never heard that before so found the sailor not guilty and lets him go. After walking out the second sailor asks how he went and sailor 1 says not guilty. Second sailor is called and he marches in and salutes, Coxswain reads out the charge of being adrift and CO asks what he pleads. Said sailor replies GUILTY sir with mitigating circumstances. CO says OK sailor explain. Sailor says, well sir I was at a bar and a really nice Indian girl starts talking to me and invited me back to her families home, Well being an ambassador for my country I couldn't refuse so I went with her where I spent the night. She didn't have an alarm clock so I woke up and thought I need to get back to the ship but didn't know where I was so I had to get a taxi. As it was peak hour I couldn't get a taxi so I hailed a guy who had a horse and cart and he agreed to get me back to the ship, He assured me we would be back in time. After about 15 minutes, and you wont believe this SIR but we were making good time until some Indian guys horse collapses and dies blocking the road so I had to walk back to the ship. By this time everyone is in stitches rolling around the deck (well not quite) CO, case dismissed

now get out and don't come back to my table again.

CAPTAIN'S ACCIDENT REPORT

Dear Sir, It is with regret and haste that I write this letter to you; regret that such a small misunderstanding could lead to the following circumstances, and haste in order that you will get this report before you form your own preconceived opinions from reports in the World Press, for I am sure that they will tend to over dramatize the affair. We had just picked up the pilot, and the apprentice had returned from changing the 'G' flag for the 'H', and being his first trip was having difficulty in rolling the 'G' flag up. I therefore proceeded to show him how, coming to the last part I told him to 'let go'. The lad, although willing, is not too bright, necessitating my having to repeat the order in a sharper tone. At this moment the Chief Officer appeared from the chartroom, having been plotting the vessel's progress, and thinking that it was the anchors that were being referred to, repeated the 'let go' to the Third Officer on the forecastle. The port anchor, having been cleared away, but not walked out, was promptly let go. The effect of letting the anchor drop from the 'pipe'

while the vessel was proceeding at full harbour speed proved too much for the windlass brake, and the entire length of the port cable was pulled out 'by the roots'. I fear that the damage to the chain locker may be extensive. The braking effect of the port anchor naturally caused the vessel to sheer in that direction, right towards the swing bridge that spans a tributary to the river up which we were proceeding. The swing bridge operator showed great presence of mind by opening the bridge for my vessel. Unfortunately he did not think to stop the vehicular traffic. The result being that the bridge partly opened and deposited a Volkswagen, two cyclists and a cattle truck on the foredeck. My ship's company are at present rounding up the contents of the latter, which from the noise I would say were pigs. In his efforts to stop the progress of the vessel the Third Officer dropped the starboard anchor, too late to be of practical use for it fell on the swing bridge operator's control cabin. After the port anchor was let go and the vessel started to sheer I gave a double ring Full Astern on the Engine Room Telegraph, and personally rang the Engine Room to order maximum astern revolutions. I was

informed that the temperature was 83 degrees, and was asked if there was a film tonight. My reply would not add constructively to this report. Up to now I have confined my report to the activities at the forward end of my vessel. Down aft they were having their own problems. At the moment the port anchor was let go, the Second Officer was supervising the making fast of the aft tug, and was lowering the ship's towing spring down into the tug. The sudden braking effect of the port anchor caused the tug to 'run in under' the stern of my vessel, just at the moment when the propeller was answering my double ring Full Astern. The prompt action of the Second Officer in securing the shipboard end of the towing spring delayed the sinking of the tug by some minutes thereby allowing the safe abandoning of that vessel. It is strange, but at the very same moment of letting go the port anchor there was a power cut ashore. The fact that we were passing over a 'cable area' at that time may suggest that we may have touched something on the river bed. It is perhaps lucky that the high tension cables brought down by the foremast were not live, possibly being replaced by the underwater

cable, but owing to the shore blackout it is impossible to say where the pylon fell. It never fails to amaze me, the actions and behavior of foreigners during moments of minor crisis. The pilot for instance, is at this moment huddled in the corner of my day cabin, alternately crooning to himself and crying after having consumed a bottle of gin in a time that is worthy of inclusion in the Guinness Book of Records. The tug captain on the other hand reacted violently and had to forcibly be restrained by the Steward, who has him handcuffed in the ship's hospital while he is telling me to do impossible things with my ship and my person. I enclose the names and addresses of the drivers, and insurance companies of the vehicles on my foredeck, which the Third Officer collected after his somewhat hurried evacuation of the forecastle. These particulars will enable you to claim back the damage that they did to the railings of number one hold. I am closing this preliminary report for I am finding it difficult to concentrate with the sound of police sirens and the flashing lights. It is sad to think that had the apprentice realized that there is no need to fly

pilot flags after dark, none of this would have happened.

Yours truly,
Master...
.....

How to simulate life on board a US Navy Ship...

1. Buy a steel dumpster, paint it gray inside and out, and live in it for six months.
2. Run all the pipes and wires in your house exposed on the walls.
3. Repaint your entire house every month.
4. Renovate your bathroom. Build a wall across the middle of the bathtub and move the shower head to chest level. When you take showers, make sure you turn off the water while you soap down.
5. Put lube oil in your humidifier and set it on high.
6. Once a week, blow compressed air up your chimney, making sure the wind carries the soot onto your neighbor's house. Ignore his complaints.
7. Once a month, take all major appliances apart and then reassemble them.

8. Raise the thresholds and lower the headers of your front and back door so that you either trip or bang your head every time you pass through them.

9. Disassemble and inspect your lawnmower every week.

10. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, turn your water heater temperature up to 200 degrees. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, turn the water heater off. On Saturdays and Sundays tell your family they use too much water during the week, so no bathing will be allowed.

11. Raise your bed to within 6" of the ceiling, so you can't turn over without getting out and then getting back in.

12. Sleep on the shelf in your closet. Replace the closet door with a curtain. Have your spouse whip open the curtain about 3 hours after you go to sleep, shine a flashlight in your eyes, and say "Sorry, wrong rack."

13. Make your family qualify to operate each appliance in your house - dishwasher operator, blender technician, etc.

14. Have your neighbor come over each day at 0500, blow a

whistle so loud Helen Keller could hear it, and shout "Reveille, reveille, all hands heave out and trice up."

15. Have your mother-in-law write down everything she's going to do the following day, then have her make you stand in your back yard at 0600 while she reads it to you.

16. Submit a request chit to your father-in-law requesting permission to leave your house before 1500.

17. Empty all the garbage bins in your house and sweep the driveway three times a day, whether it needs it or not.

18. Have your neighbor collect all your mail for a month, read your magazines, and randomly lose every 5th item before delivering it to you.

19. Watch no TV except for movies played in the middle of the night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch, then show a different one.

20. When your children are in bed, run into their room with a megaphone shouting that your home is under attack and ordering them to their battle stations. (Now general

quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations.)

21. Make your family menu a week ahead of time without consulting the pantry or refrigerator.

22. Post a menu on the kitchen door informing your family that they are having steak for dinner. Then make them wait in line for an hour. When they finally get to the kitchen, tell them you are out of steak, but they can have dried ham or hot dogs. Repeat daily until they ignore the menu and just ask for hot dogs.

23. Bake a cake. Prop up one side of the pan so the cake bakes unevenly.

Spread icing real thick to level it off.

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This is an email from a young ensign at sea aboard the USS Winston Churchill (DDG-81) to his father after hearing of the 9/11 attacks. Contributed by Earl "Charlie" Weaver

Note that "**Manning the Rail**" is a shipboard ceremony reserved for high-ranking dignitaries such as

Heads of State in which the crew wears dress uniforms topside and salutes the honoree.

Here is the young man's letter:

Dear Dad,
We are still at sea. The remainder of our port visits have been cancelled. We have spent every day since the attacks going back and forth within imaginary boxes drawn in the ocean, standing high security watches and trying to make the best of it. We have seen the articles and the photographs and they are sickening.

Being isolated I don't think we appreciate the full scope of what is happening back home, but we are definitely feeling the effects. About two hours ago we were hailed by the German destroyer, Lütjens, requesting permission to pass close by our port side. Strange, since we're in the middle of an empty ocean, but the Captain acquiesced and we prepared to render them honors from our bridge wing. As they were making their approach, our conning officer used binoculars and announced that the Lütjens was flying not the German flag, but the American flag. As she came closer we saw the American flag was flying half-mast, and her entire crew

topside standing at silent rigid attention in their dress uniforms.

They had made a sign that was on her side that read, "We Stand By You." There was not a dry eye on the bridge as they stayed alongside us and saluted. It was the most powerful thing I have seen in my life. The German Navy did an incredible thing for this crew, and it has truly been the highest point since the attacks.

It's amazing to think that only a half-century ago things were quite different. After the Lütjens pulled away, the Officer of the Deck, who had planned to get out later this year, turned to me and said, "I'm staying Navy".

I'll write you when I know more about when I'll be coming home, but this is it for now. Love you guys.

My thoughts: All sailors are shipmates in one way or another. Even those Soviet kids who were our "enemies" in my day would always have received a helping hand if it was us against the sea.

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World War Two

Merchant Marine Story

*Janis E. Brennan
Daughter of James E. Powers*

In the previous chapter, we learned that James Powers was in the theater in the Mediterranean-Middle Eastern War Zone sometime during 1941. I tried to find out the dates, as of this printing, I had not heard back from The War Department. After completing his duties in the Mediterranean, he signed up to ship out on the steam merchant ship named Syros, whose home port was Galveston, Texas. From the notes I have, it took on its cargo of ammunition, in a Philadelphia port, the exact dates are unknown when they headed out for Iceland.

Some background history of how Iceland got involved. Iceland was ruled by Denmark and the Germans had already overthrown them in April of 1940 and had taken over Poland. Britain was concerned that the Germans would invade Iceland and they offered them help. Iceland refused any help, and chooses to become independent, and wanted to remain neutral. British and Canadian troops still went into Iceland. They

were fearful Germany would invade, after all, Denmark had also been neutral. Germany now invades France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands in May of 1940 and Norway surrenders by June the same year. The Iceland government made an agreement with the United States and in July and American troops are now in charge. It remains neutral and becomes a staging location for both land and sea.

We now have the stage set; the Syros is loaded with its cargo and goes to Iceland arriving before May 21, 1942. The Syros meets up with the other ships that are registered in England, the Soviet, Panama, United States and Holland that are assembled there. They sailed in groups, called a convoy, for protection against the enemy both from the air and under the sea. When you are in the Arctic, in May, you are in the time-period of the midnight sun. This perpetual daylight occurs in the summer months.

These convoys were given code names PQ going to

Russia and coming back, they were QP. Each was then assigned a number. The name given to this group was PQ16 and was part of the Arctic Convoy. Another name by which it was referred to during World War Two was the Murmansk Run because they sailed into the northern ports of Russia. The two major ports were Arkhangelsk and Murmansk.

In the early days, they were escorted by either the Royal Navy or the Royal Canadian Navy. They were there for protection and to pick up survivors when a ship under attack was sunk. You see, there were orders that the transport ships were not to stop. The cargo had to get to its destination. Seems a little cruel, but it was war. If another merchant ship stopped to help, they too could have been lost.

Now, to the story of how James Edward Powers fits into all this. Yes, Jimmy had signed onto the Syros that headed for Iceland and then to Russia. On May 26, 1942, at one minute to three, in the

wee hours of the morning, the ship was hit port side by the first torpedo. When the second torpedo hit hatch #2 it caused the ammunition in the cargo hole to explode. The ship sank in a matter of 80 seconds. They were 200 miles southwest of Bear Island. The water was cold and full of large chunks of ice. The HMS Hazard a minesweeper of the Royal Navy picked up the survivors. My father never talked about any of this. There was a newspaper article in 1993 that interviewed men who had been aboard ships in 1942-44. They told of being in the lifeboats for days and serving on tiny sea creatures that clung to the seaweed. They survived, that is what is most important.

On May 30, 1942, after a battle that lasted six days and nights from air attacks and also from U-boats, nineteen merchant ships and a few escort ships all went to Murmansk, a port city on the Barents Sea. The remaining ships of Convoy PQ16 arrived in Arkhangelsk the same day. Eight merchant ships were

lost. The convoy was such a success that the Germans made greater efforts in the future to disrupt the convoys.

Jimmy spent about six weeks waiting for a ride back to Iceland. The Merchant Marines are not part of the military. They are a civilian organization. Hence, he was housed in a refugee camp. There were 26 men from the Syros, who boarded the ship SS Hybert, a freighter, in convoy QP13 on June 27, 1942, for the return to Iceland. On July 5, 1942, during the evening of heavy fog and miss calculations, the ship hit a minefield and sank. All hands on deck were picked up. Yes, Jimmy was on this ship too. The FFL Roselys, a French Corvette, picked up 179 survivors on the same day. This escort ship left them in Reykjavik, Iceland on July 7, 1942

Since these men were considered civilians during the war, they did not receive pay when they were not aboard ship. Yes, Jimmy was able to land a ride to the territory of Alaska and from

there he made his own way back down to the lower forty-eight. It was 1942 so we did only have 48 states. We know Jimmy was an enterprising young lad and I can only imagine how he found his way back to good old U.S.A. I do not know how long it took him. I have heard stories about some of his frolics along the way.

1942 was the worst year during the war for lost or captured ships. Being a crew member on a ship was more dangerous than joining as a Marine. The Merchant Marines' percentage of U.S. casualties was the greatest out of the total Department of Defense.

There are a few facts in the story of the sunken ships that are a little murky. I have several accounts that were from the internet. I have one account that came from Jimmy's personal effects, and I have a verbal account he told one of his grandchildren in 2000. According to Jimmy, he spent time in two refugee camps, one was twenty-seven miles from the Finnish border,

and the other was in Iceland. Why he said the Finland border and not Russia will always be a question. These were his words. He also said that it was the USS Siboney that took him to the territory of Alaska from Iceland. Remember Alaska was not yet a state. The majority of internet findings say they return to New York. Most accounts do not tell you that the minefield that the SS Hybert ran over was a British one and the captain of the ship looked at the maps wrong. I have learned from life that you always need to look at who is telling the story and it is their recollection and why. Sometimes Jimmy did just that; tell a story, based mostly on facts. Whether he went to New York or Alaska, when he returned from The Murmansk Run is not important. What is amazing he was on two ships that sunk within a few months of each other and he lived to ship-out another day. He always said: "I went to war and came home without a scratch and broke my leg hoping a trolley car".



In Memoriam

Shipmate James Holloway, SA 1961-62, died in 2019.



GOOD SHIPMATES ARE FRIENDS FOR LIFE