
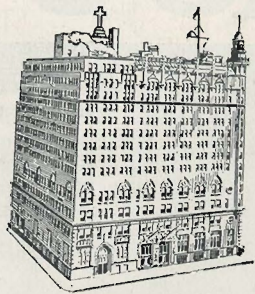


# The LOOKOUT

SEPTEMBER 1956



SEAMEN'S  
CHURCH  
INSTITUTE  
of NEW YORK



**T**HE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK is a shore center for merchant seamen who are between ships in this great port. The largest organization of its kind in the world, the Institute combines the services of a modern hotel with a wide range of educational, medical, religious and recreational facilities needed by a profession that cannot share fully the important advantages of home and community life.

The Institute is partially self-supporting, the nature of its work requiring assistance from the public to provide the personal and social services that distinguish it from a waterfront boarding house and so enable it to fulfill its true purpose: being a home away from home for merchant seamen of all nationalities and religions.

A tribute to the service it has performed during the past century is its growth from a floating chapel in 1844 to the thirteen-story building at 25 South Street known to merchant seamen the world around.



## The LOOKOUT

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SEPTEMBER, 1956

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CLARENCE G. MICHALIS  
President

REV. RAYMOND S. HALL, D.D.  
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TOM BAAB  
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Secretary and Treasurer

FAYE HAMMEL  
Associate Editor

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**THE COVER:** September song . . . a half-century of autumns have come and gone for this old sailing vessel which John Penfold found peacefully dreaming in a small river in Wiscasset, Maine.

*Tickets for the Institute's Fall Theatre Benefit, the November 15th performance of Major Barbara at the Martin Beck Theatre, are now on sale. Send reservations to Mr. Clifford D. Mallory, Jr., Chairman, Benefit Committee, 25 South Street, New York 4. Orchestra seats \$28.00, \$25.00, \$18.00.*

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Motorists who go past the Hudson River Reserve Fleet, located 40 miles upstream from New York City, often mistake the red-lead protective coating on the ships for rust. The vessels are well cared for and are, in turn, caring for an important share of the nation's grain reserves.

*U.S. Maritime Administration Photo*

## They Also Serve

**T**HE American Liberty ship, the workhorse and "ugly duckling" of World War II, is again nosing into news columns around the country because of the successful conversion of four such vessels by the Maritime Administration. With Libertys comprising roughly three-fourths of the 2,000-ship U.S. Reserve Fleet, they cannot be too quickly scrapped by a nation that has done very little shipbuilding since these 10-knot tubs were bucked together at our wartime shipyards. If we were attacked tomorrow, they would provide the bulk of our marine muscle. For the sailor this is an almost intolerable prospect; modern submarines go almost three times as fast as Libertys. Conversion for higher speed or else replacement by a newer prototype is therefore imperative.

Yet, as these old grandmas look back on their troubled years, they have no cause

for shame. History cannot forget their awesome contribution to the Allied cause. So great it was that even today as they rest quietly in their red-lead petticoats, these homely ships send the visitor away from a Reserve Fleet anchorage with a throbbing family pride. Like many another grandma, the Liberty has not, moreover, lost all usefulness. Even before the Korean War some of these vessels had begun serving an important peacetime purpose. In 1949, the Government, seeking mainly to keep grain prices at 90% of parity, had acquired a larger share of the harvest than could be brought in out of the fall rains. Every commercial warehouse was smothered to the rafters.

Farmers were corralling their unshelled corn with snow fence and leaving it piled right in the field. But their wheat could not stand such exposure, and in this crisis the

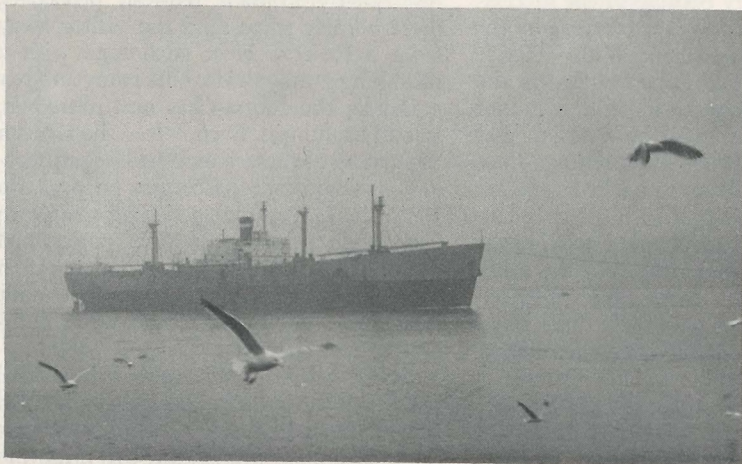
grandmas of the Reserve Fleet held out their commodious aprons. By the end of the year, 63 Libertys from the Hudson River Fleet had settled down with 14 million bushels of golden wheat, all of which was ready for export in 1950 and 1951 at the onset of the Korean War. The wheat's loss in quality and quantity was described as "exceedingly small" by the Department of Agriculture.

In 1953 the Department of Agriculture again turned to the Libertys as the wheat reserves began to overflow commercial storage space, and these vessels have figured in the Government's grain storage program continuously since then.

Preparing a Liberty for grain storage involves towing her from the anchorage to the loading port, where contracts are let to have her fumigated, have her holds cleaned and repaired, her decks and hull made waterproof, her hatch and vent covers properly fitted, and to have a simple ventilating system installed for cooling and drying the grain. After she gets a clean bill of health from National Cargo Bureau inspectors, she is piped her 228,000 bushels of wheat, sealed up and sent back to the fleet.

Only Liberty ships are used for storing grain. Why? They are plentiful, they have large hatches that can be manually opened, and having only one 'tween deck, they are especially suited to bulk cargo. Currently, 388 ships—one-fourth of the Liberty fleet—

Photo by James Dobyns



Looking forlorn, a Liberty is towed back to her Hudson River anchorage after having been to New York, where her cargo of surplus grain was discharged for export.

are allocated by the Maritime Administration for grain use. These ships can shelter nearly 80 million bushels, not quite 10% of the Government's present wheat holdings. One-hundred and two grain vessels are anchored at Jones Point, 40 miles above New York in the Hudson River Reserve Fleet, and 111 are 40 miles above Norfolk, Virginia, in the James River Reserve Fleet. The balance are on the West Coast in the Astoria and Olympia Fleets.

As a result of grain exports to Yugoslavia, Germany, India, Brazil, United Kingdom, Belgium, Portugal and France, around 130 ships on the East Coast have been discharged and reloaded—which means that the James and Hudson Fleets have, to date, handled about 340 cargoes. For towage charges and preparing these vessels for grain, the Maritime Administration has been reimbursed about 4½ cents a bushel by the Department of Agriculture. Higher costs on the West Coast bring the average up to 6.3 cents. Other charges, like loading and inspection, also have to be met by the Department of Agriculture. However, the Department finds that grain can be stored for two years and beyond more cheaply in ships than anywhere else.

Furthermore, Department of Agriculture grain inspectors are well pleased with the Liberty's ability to keep wheat safe and sound for long periods. As storage bins, ships enjoy a measure of natural protection

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U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Photo

The Department of Agriculture takes meticulous care of its ship-stored wheat. These samples are having their temperatures taken.

from rodents and insects, and the surrounding water keeps the grain at a much more constant temperature than is possible ashore. Sound hulls and tight hatch covers are not the only safety factors, however. Examination, sampling and fumigation (if needed) in every hold of each ship by Department of Agriculture grain inspectors at least once a month insures the sound condition of these valuable cargoes. Fans are used to force cool dry air into "hot spots" the thermometers may reveal. Moist grain in the center of a pile tends to "heat."

Since most of this reserve grain will ultimately be exported, ship storage offers a remarkable convenience. This is particularly true in New York, where unique elevating equipment makes it possible for the grain to be transferred directly from the Liberty to the transporting vessel. This trick is handled by six elevator ships operated by the International Elevating Company.

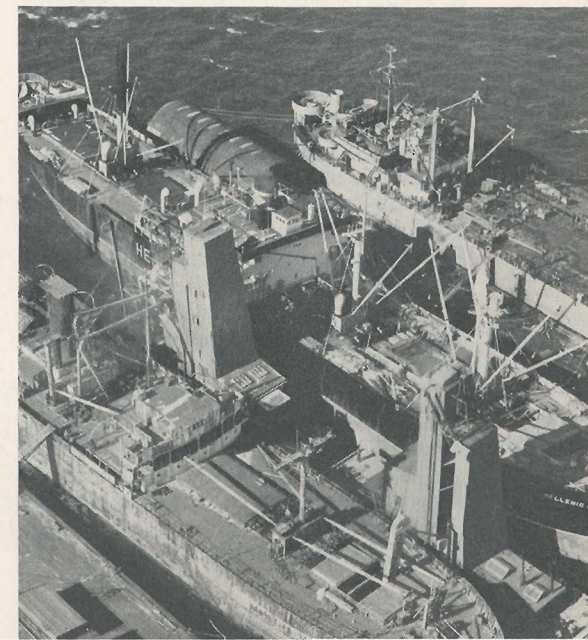
One wonders how long this ship storage of surplus and reserve grain will continue. The Department of Agriculture has no definite answer. A spokesman for its Commodity Stabilization Service emphasizes

that it is Government policy to use commercial storage for grain when available. However, he notes that while millions of bushels of new space is being built annually, there is a substantial loss each year in space abandoned because of poor location and condition. Crop controls are offset by higher yielding seed grains, more and better farm machinery, heavier use of fertilizer, better land management, and more complete control of insects and diseases. In a note of despair he observes, "Perhaps the one thing that would most effectively decrease production would be several successive years of drought—and who wants that?"

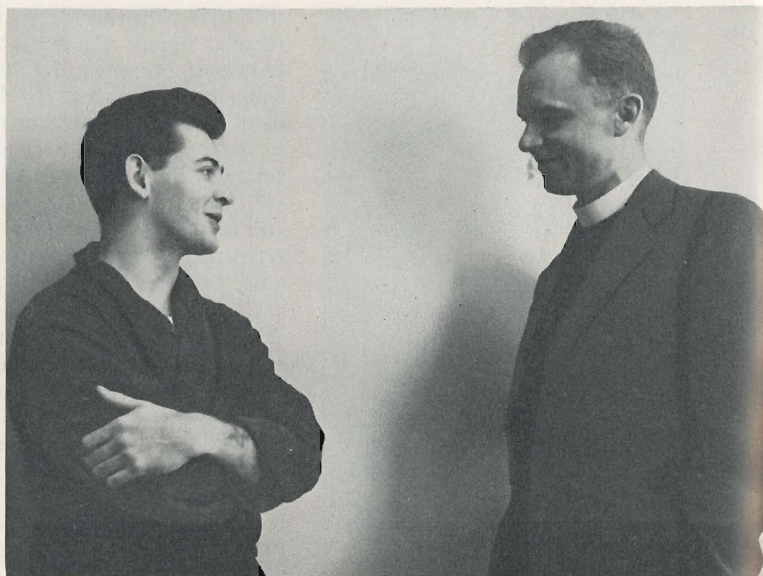
So the grandmas of the Reserve Fleet have something to look forward to. Nobody knows how many of them will be refurbished and decked out with 17-knot fittings; in the meantime, it is probably good for our household that so many of them have so much to hold in their laps.

Two floating grain elevators are here shown transferring wheat directly from the storage ship to the vessel that will carry it to Greece. These unique elevators handle much of the loading and all of the discharging of surplus grain cargoes in the port of New York.

Photo by Rotkin, P.F.I.



Making his rounds at Staten Island's Marine Hospital, the Institute's staff chaplain, Richard Bauer, stops to chat with a seaman. Institute chaplains also make regular visits to seamen at Manhattan Beach and other New York hospitals.



## The Edge of Growth

A NURSE rushed into Chaplain Richard Bauer's office at the Marine Hospital on Staten Island the other day with a rather unusual request: could he speak Egyptian? One of her patients, a Mohammedan, was about to undergo surgery and wanted an Egyptian priest. Bauer, who is the Seamen's Church Institute's resident chaplain at the hospital and a very adaptable fellow, said he'd do the best he could. The man was delighted with him. "You see," he told Bauer in broken English, "I am a follower of Mohammed, but I believe in all faiths." And to prove it, he proceeded to remove from under his pillow the tokens of his belief—a Koran, the Jewish Torah and a Crucifix. "This man," Bauer says, "was taking no chances."

Substituting for an Egyptian priest when the occasion demands is only one of the facets of Chaplain Richard Bauer's unique ministry to seamen, who make up the large bulk of patients at this hospital. Completing his first year of service this month, the lanky young chaplain with the

modest manner and the warm smile has become one of the best-liked people in the hospital. Constant cries of "Hi, Chaplain" greet him as he makes his daily rounds through the wards, pausing in the recovery room to give a word of comfort or say a prayer for the most seriously ill patients, stopping with one man to discuss the world situation or with another to find out how his back is today. "Many of these men," says Bauer, "simply need someone to talk to, to alleviate the loneliness of hospitalization. It helps them to know that somebody really cares how they're getting along. Others would like to have letters written, or small favors done for them, or prayers said for them. Still others are in need of serious help, on emotional and spiritual levels. Whatever their needs are, we try to meet them."

An 18-year-old seaman came into Chaplain Bauer's office one day in desperate need of help. In near hysteria, he told Bauer that his life was hopelessly ruined, and that this visit was his last resort. It seemed that

the young man had a penchant for marriage-at-first-sight, and his second wife had turned out to be unfaithful, was demanding huge sums of money from him, and threatening to tell all to his mother (who had not been told about her son's hasty second marriage), if he didn't pay up. Bauer made a quick phone call to the mother, patched up the situation between her and the boy, made another call to a lawyer who contacted the girl. She agreed to settle for a small sum of money and a divorce. The boy left after an hour, his life temporarily on an even keel, with a word of advice from Bauer about the wisdom of long-term engagements.

Most of Bauer's work, however, is with less theatrical cases. One seaman with a leg injury that had kept him hospitalized for over a year became fixated with the belief that, since he had not been cured, the doctors were experimenting with him, using him for guinea-pig purposes. Talking with him for over a month and a half, Chaplain Bauer was able to convince him that the doctors were working for him, not against him, and that many cures have, of necessity, to be long-term affairs.

"In a chaplaincy of this sort," explains Bauer, "it is often difficult to see long-term results. Sometimes we can move a man only one step of the way and hope for the best." One such case was that of a man on the verge of organic brain disorder as a result of alcoholism. He asked to see the chaplain in order to make his first confession in a life of almost complete, dissipation—so complete, in fact, that he hardly knew where to begin to confess. Bauer told the man to make a list of all the things he felt he had done wrong in his life. "Later," said Bauer, "we knelt together in the chapel and the seaman unburdened himself before God. Through this experience and the assurance of forgiveness it gave him, this man found, for the first time in his life, a source of strength outside of himself. The act of confession gave him a chance to re-evaluate his life experiences and get ready to start again."

Several of the men with whom Bauer works are alcoholics, and one of them was responsible for the longest counseling session of his career—it lasted eight hours.

The man walked into the chaplain's office at three o'clock one afternoon and announced, "As soon as I walk out of here, I'm going to go and get drunk again." It took Bauer until eleven o'clock that evening to convince him that liquor was not the answer to his problems. Today, through help from the Alcoholics Assistance Bureau at the Seamen's Church Institute, to which Bauer referred him, the man shows every indication of being on the road to recovery.

Bauer helps other men on different levels. He is currently working with two seamen who had been amateur writers before they went to sea. He has encouraged them to take up writing again, to use their time at the hospital constructively and creatively. This is an example of what Chaplain Bauer calls finding a man's "growing edge"—that area of his life in which there is potential for development—and helping him to move in that area. "For some men this may mean religious and spiritual growth," he says, "for others it may be expressing themselves artistically, for some it may simply mean that they stop beating their wives. We try to help a man on whatever level he is capable of growth."

Many men come to Bauer on their own, others meet him through the weekly chapel services, and still others are referred to him by the doctors, nurses, social workers and psychiatrists, with whom he has a close working relationship. And then of course, there are those who don't want spiritual help at all. At the request of the patient's wife, Bauer asked one man, in a state of delirium, "Could I have some prayers for you?" "No," the man shouted, "I don't want prayers, I want some beer—beer, beer, beer! Do you hear?" Bauer heard all right, and to ease the man's pain, he and the wife brought him some ginger ale, which satisfied him.

But there are easy cases too. "I don't know how many men I've had," says Bauer, "who come into my office, talk for an hour or two, only giving me a chance to nod, or say 'uh-huh' or 'I see,' and when they've finished they turn to me and say, 'Chaplain, you don't know how much you've helped me.'"

— Faye Hammel

# The World of Ships

## THE GOOD SHIP

The old sailor's notion that ships and boats have personalities of their own may or may not be so, but a boat with a guilty conscience is something new. At any rate, such a craft is the hero of a British film called "The Ship That Died of Shame." The mortified vessel is a motor gun boat which was captained by a very decent young man during the war. After the war, however, the captain is persuaded to use the boat for smuggling purposes and the boat protests by coughing and choking and refusing to respond to the helm. It ultimately brings on its own destruction by smashing itself along a rocky coast.

Currently playing in theatres in the United States, the film, written by Nicholas Monsarrat, author of "The Cruel Sea," strongly suggests the possibility that in some cases, a boat may have a more acute conscience than a man. Which is something to think about, at that.

## POSTSCRIPTS

Now that the crew of the *Andrea Doria* has gone back to Italy, letters of thanks from crew members who stayed here have been coming in to the Institute. From a seaman in Gradisca, Italy: "... I have to thank you for everything you have done for me and all the Italians that were recovered in the Institute... there are very few people in the world that do so much good as you. Everybody here says, 'Bruno, you have found in New York the best man you needed.' My mother, all my family, my girl, too, have very good words for you and thank you very much. I'm very far from you, but my heart is with you."

From a group of the crew now in Portugal: "While we make the first stops in Europe, our thoughts come to you and the

whole staff of the Seamen's Church Institute. With our thanks, our best greetings."

From a seaman in Genoa: "... it will be impossible for me to forget either the enormous disaster or the courtesies, attention and care that you generously gave us, which enabled me to bear the sad predicament in which we were thrown, and alleviate my strong desire to make a prompt return to my loved ones... More than all others, you have known how to read into our souls, and you did not spare yourself to lift some of the anguish from our hearts. The baseball game and outing to Brooklyn will remain one of my liveliest memories."

## FOOLPROOF

Radar may one day be replaced by an automatic radio alarm to prevent ocean and air collisions, if one Wallace Francisco of Los Angeles has his way. A former associate of the radio pioneer Dr. Lee Forest, Francisco says the warning would come by sound, unlike the visual system of radar. In order for the system to be completely effective, all passenger ships and airplanes would have to be equipped with the system by international agreement.

## INDIAN TROUBLE

Progress usually treads heavily on somebody's toes, and among others feeling squeezed by the St. Lawrence Seaway are the members of the six Indian nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. They are claiming that construction of the Seaway will take away land guaranteed to them nearly 200 years ago by a royal charter.

The chiefs of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora tribes met on the Caughnawaga reservation, near Montreal, in August, to protest that the Canadian government is violating "sacred treaty rights." Indian lands, they say, have been "whittled away to make room for the Seaway while no adequate compensation has been given."

In 1763, said Chief Peter Diome of the Mohawk tribe, a royal proclamation had specified the Iroquois Confederacy as the sole owner of the Caughnawaga and pledged that the reservation would not be touched. "We cannot stand by and face possible extermination as a nation," said Chief Diome.

## SLIM AS YOU GO

There are hundreds of reasons for losing weight, but here's a new one: an increased tendency to seasickness among overweight persons. Fatties get "sicker quicker," according to an article in the NMU Pilot which reports on the results of a five-month study of seasickness among 17,000 servicemen.

On ten eastward and five westward crossings from November 1954 to April 1955, tests were run aboard military transport ships crossing the Atlantic. Passengers were given unmarked pills which were either placebos or anti-motion sickness drugs. Three of the drugs tested proved to be the most useful; they go under the trade names of Bonamine, Phenergan and Marezine.

Those with accommodations in midships are less likely to get sick than those quartered fore and aft, the report showed, and older persons have a better chance of escaping mal de mer than the youngsters. The first crossing, by the way, is the worst.

## NEW SERVICE

The *Giulio Cesare* and the *Augustus*, two of Italian Line's new post-war vessels currently in the Italy-South America service, will ply the New York to Italy route permanently, beginning in 1957, it has been announced by Guisepppe Ali, Italian Line's General Manager in the United States and Canada.

They will join the *Cristoforo Colombo* in providing express service between New York and Genoa with stops enroute at Gibraltar, Naples and Cannes. The *Vulcania* and *Saturnia* will continue their cruise-like voyages to Trieste, with stopovers at Lisbon, Gibraltar, Barcelona, Naples, Palermo, Patras and Venice.

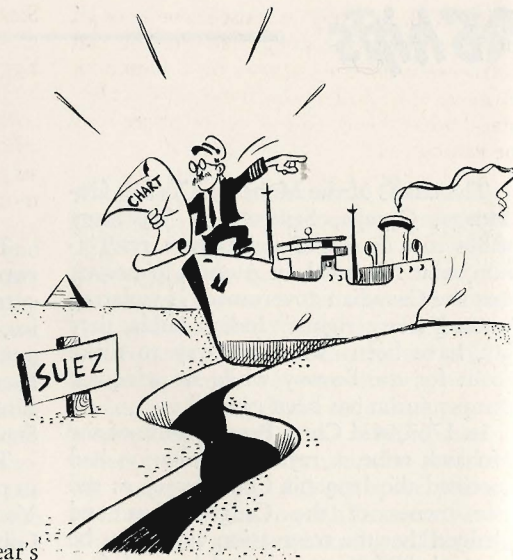
In addition, Mr. Ali announced that the 24,000-ton *Conte Grande* will join the line's New York-Mediterranean fleet this year for two special voyages in September and October to help relieve the heavy demand for space.

## BACKWARD, HO!

Most of the shipping world is going forward with automation these days, but one Englishman is planning on going backward with it—back to the days of sail. In a letter to London's "Journal of Commerce," a Mr. Geoffrey Bowles suggests that fuel-free merchant sailing ships could be revived by using "sails of the new light-strength fabrics handled by almost effortless new methods." In addition, wind that once plagued sailing-ship men, can now be 'bottled' electrically and taken along for calms, heating, lighting and cooking. More of the fascinating details are available from the writer, Mr. Bowles, at 25 Catharine Place, London.

# Piloting the Suez

## Sailor Between East and West



ANY sea captain with at least ten year's experience, top physical health, the ability to learn an intricate pilot's job and nautical terms in 13 languages, plus a penchant for working in a hot spot, would find himself very much in demand these days over on the Suez Canal. It would also help if he were an Egyptian. What with all the international shouting about who's to control the world's greatest artery between East and West, the problem of finding enough competent pilots to shepherd the big ships through the waterway is becoming more acute every day.

Actually, Premier Nasser's nationalization of the canal on July 26th did not create the pilot shortage, but only aggravated a condition that had reached near-crisis proportions some months back. In June of this year, the old Universal Suez Company laid the blame for the pilot shortage and the ensuing traffic tie-ups in the canal to the Egyptian government's refusal to grant visas to foreign pilots unless the company would agree to hire a certain number of Egyptian pilots. Although the company felt that only a handful of Egyptian pilots were qualified, they finally agreed to hire 32 of them, in return for which Egypt granted visas to 24 foreigners. Still, the current total of 207 pilots is far enough below the necessary 250 or more to cause overwork for the pilots and tie-ups on the canal. The situation is made still worse by the fact that 14

foreign pilots now on home leave are so far following the instructions of the Universal Suez Company not to go back to work for the Egyptian government while the dispute over the seizure of the canal remains unsettled.

Although Premier Nasser is a remarkably resourceful man, it will still take some doing to make a Suez Canal pilot overnight. Given his master's status, his ten year's sea experience and top physical and mental condition, a Suez Canal pilot still cannot be trained in less than two years. A sailor standing between East and West, he has one of the most intricate and exhausting jobs in the seafaring profession. He must know every inch of the 105-mile desert ditch that links the Red Sea and the Mediterranean as well as he knows the proverbial back of his hand. And the Suez Canal is one of the most cunning and crowded (Port Said carries twice the tonnage of the Port of New York) waterways in the world. The pilot must be familiar with the various menaces to navigation above and below the water. He must know how vessels with various superstructures and hull curvatures will react to different currents in the canal and how they will ride the gales—so distinctive throughout the years that they have become known as "Cat's Noise," "Broom," "Big Cakes" and

"Little Cakes." And he must know enough of 13 different languages so that he can converse with the captain of a Dutch or Russian ship and at the same time understand what the Arab moorer on shore may be yelling at him.

A number of shipping people are asking, "Why all this fuss about pilots? Couldn't a captain who's gone through the waterway many times take a ship through himself?" Claude Boillot, the New York representative of the Suez Canal Company, answered the question emphatically in a recent issue of the *Wall Street Journal*. "A lot of people think all you have to do to get a ship through the canal is head for the opening and go through. Well, I wouldn't give the canal ten minutes if a skipper without a Suez pilot aboard tried it." Between 50 and 55 ships per day go through the waterway, and since the canal is a one-way passage in most areas, the slightest mistake could throttle canal operations. Canal officials still remember the time in 1954 when the tanker *World Peace* rammed the post of a drawbridge at El Ferdan, even with a pilot aboard. No ships moved for three days.

Again, an average sea captain would be unfamiliar with the special rules that apply to navigating the canal. In some areas, a Suez pilot may have to steer left to turn right because of the ship's underwater curvature and the shape of the channel. Under certain conditions, a ship that begins to head left can actually compress so much water between its bow and the side of the canal as to force itself in the opposite direction.

Because the Suez pilot's job is such an arduous one, further aggravated by the driving heat of the sun, it has never been easy to find pilots. To woo them to Suez, the Universal Suez Company has paid them fat salaries, given them extended vacations and leaves and other employee benefits, and cut them in on a profit-sharing plan which is more than generous. A pilot with top rank drew, in 1955, a salary of \$12,000 plus profit-sharing earnings of \$6,000. The question of whether Premier Nasser would divvy up profits with the pilots or use every last cent to build the Aswan Dam is a matter of some concern in shipping circles.

Since Egypt has no sizeable merchant fleet of her own, the speed with which an all Egyptian piloting force could come into being is limited, and right now the trained foreign pilots hold the key to the operating efficiency of the Suez Canal. If they don't stay, Premier Nasser may find himself in more trouble than he bargained for.

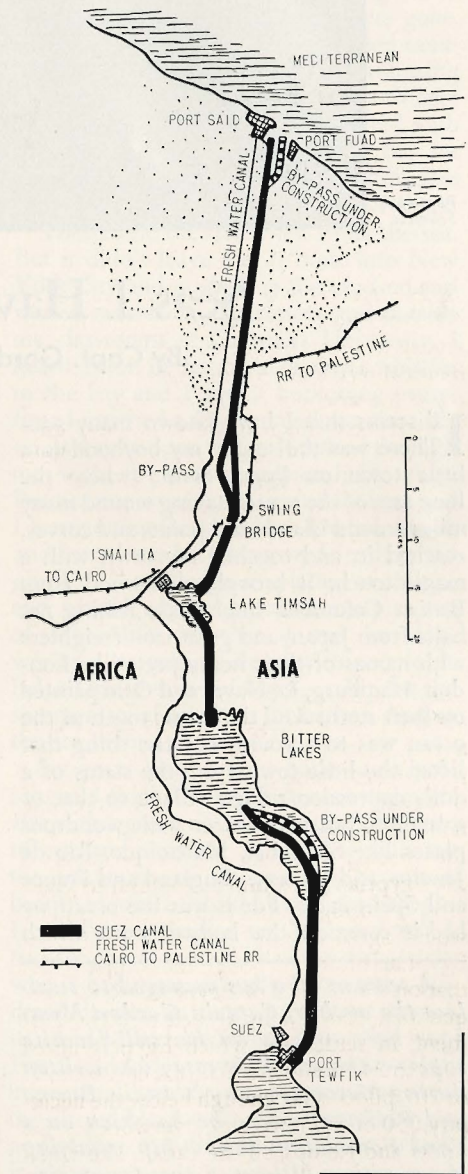
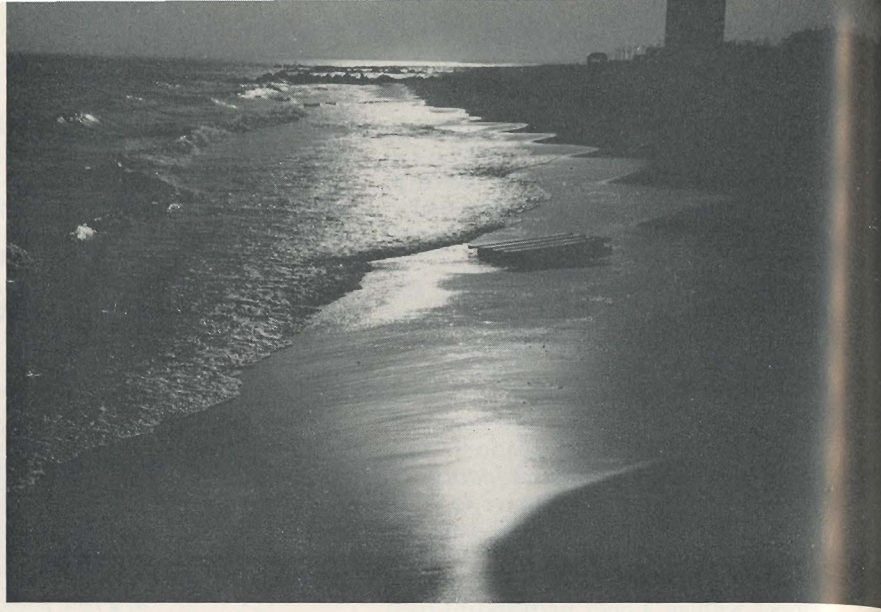


Photo by  
Schmidt



## Seas I Have Known

By Capt. Gordon Messegee

IT seems that I have known many seas. There was the sea of my boyhood in a little town on Puget Sound where the long arm of the ocean, having wound many miles around islands and points and curves, reached in and touched my town with a magic touch. It brought driftwood from British Columbia, huge glass fishing net balls from Japan, and great iron freighters with names of their home ports like London, Hamburg, Le Havre and Oslo painted on their stern. And the magic touch of the ocean was to a young boy the thing that lifted the little town from the status of a dull, depression-ridden village to that of a humble but true sharer with wondrous places like Shanghai, Martinique, Rio de Janeiro, and yes, even England and France and Spain itself. For it was the ocean we had in common, that body of water which

*A seaman who has managed to swallow the anchor, Captain Gordon Messegee here reflects on his still-favorite topic — the sea. This essay was written during Messegee's stay in India, Burma and Pakistan, where he has been on a Ford Foundation fellowship, studying the maritime history of these countries.*

a boy's hand touched, knowing in that instant that he was connected with the other side of the world. And when he strained his eyes and looked at the Sound, the towering line of firs behind which the Sound bent out of sight seemed to disappear and instead there were the wondrous cities, islands and countries of imagination.

There was the sea of my youth when I too sailed beyond the line of firs and the whole world unfolded before me, pushed open by the noble cut of the bow. There were the thousand dancing, laughing lights of the sun on the sea, the giant puffy cumulus, like snow-covered sleds and drivers in a majestic, silent march across the edge of the ocean, the lonely cherished lookouts on the bow at night when every star became a young man's friend and he got to know them so well that, looking up, he imagined he walked among them as in the streets of a familiar town. There were the wheel watches when a young man's hands gripped the smooth wooden spokes and he knew that he alone had direct contact with the sea—and sometimes, with the push of the sea on the helm, the tremble of a live ship, the open sea ahead, he felt for an elated dreamfilled moment that he

was master of the vessel.

And there were other things too in the sea of youth — times when sea and sky were a huge grey mass of cruel swirling motion and one became sick and sick again. Times when there were bugs in the porridge and bugs in the bunk and the fo'c'sle was ankle-deep in cold rushing water. Times when one wrestled a giant steam hose washing tanks in 120 degrees and little air, or knew the blistering eyes and rancid stench of cleaning holds which had long been filled with sulphur or hides.

But these were little things to a young man, for always the world hung just above the horizon—a great golden plum waiting to be picked. Each port, each command, each face of the changing sea and sky was a special thrill. The first glimpse of Fujiyama, grey against grey, and then startling white breaking through the late afternoon mist of a November day. The first sight of Rabaul—giant volcanic flames against a night sky and even the stars seeming to move back from the red hot glare. The first smell of a Chinese city, rich with things which made the skin prickle — cooking, drying meat and fish, incense, and much close human living. The first time in Honolulu with its sun and its fragile, flower-perfumed, edge-of-the-tropics air, the luring restful music of the Royal Hawaiian Band, and the blue dry hills rising beyond the green trees until they touched the lazily drifting tradewind clouds above. But there were things that were not so nice. The first glimpse of a street full of starving people with its listless futility and horror. The frightening first sight of a leper's half rotten face. The first time one heard gunfire in earnest when from a neutral ship you watched men making the insane gestures of war.

Then one day war came to my ship and my sea. It came with the sudden engulfing crash of an exploding bomb—a blinding point in time where there was no room for past or future, only fear, pulsating and paralyzing. But then the fear leveled out and as the war went on one got used to it—as much as one ever did—and learned to live hour by hour, day by day. One ate well and slept well and wondered if you would see the next sunrise, never the next year or

anything as fantastic as the end of the war. And it seemed that the sea had become a deceitful thing, for this was a war sea where the smile of the sun or the caress of the moon could mean death and the worst of storms could mean life-saving obscurity from the eyes of the enemy.

Then one day the lights came on and it was a sea of peace and of monotony. The magic sea of boyhood, the thrilling sea of youth, the exciting sea of war were gone. It was a sea where one's life seemed sandwiched between the bare uncompromising bulkheads of routine and routine. Where the lustre of ports had been smeared with the black grime of war. Where the sea itself seemed a desert-land, a meaningless escape from the meaninglessness of shore.

Then came the day when I left the sea. But it didn't leave me. It came into New York City and pushed up the Hudson and waited outside my apartment and outside my classrooms at Columbia University. I heard its call in the sound of ship's whistles in the bay and I saw it beckoning every-time I watched a ship going down the river on its way to open water. It pulsed through me with an almost unquenchable fury. But as time went on it slowed its beat and I learned that the sea which I hated, loved, and feared was becoming my friend. It had given me knowledge of places, of things, and people which helped in every aspect of shore life, whether it was learning, working, or getting along with people. It helped me in material ways—a ship for the summer, relief officer in the harbor. And so the sea helped me leave the sea.

Six years later I went back—as a passenger. I think I enjoyed this sea the most. For with a greater calmness and experience of eye and someone to share it with me the panorama of sea and sky became a beauty of which I could never get enough. I could meet the sea on its own level. I had fought it—and if I had not completely won, I had most assuredly come out a fair draw. It was no more my master than I its. And I liked it so much better this way. For I could feel more keenly the timeless, impersonal quality, the tremendous size, the incredible moods, the eternal jungle and garden, the killer and life-giver, which is the sea.

# Book Watch



## DON'T GO NEAR THE WATER

By William Brinkley

Random House, New York, \$3.95

Everyone knows the immortal Navy watchword, "Don't Give Up The Ship." But until William Brinkley sat himself down to write this book, not everyone had heard about the motto that could have replaced it for the Public Relations Navy boys of World War II: "Don't Go Near The Water." Brinkley has written a delightfully hilarious spoof on the Navy's wartime love affair with the press and the new specimen of officer it produced; the public relations expert, a uniformed civilian, busy making absolutely nothing look like a "very, very four-O idea!"

The scene is set on a Western Pacific naval base called Tulura (it might be Guam), the headquarters of Com Fleets during the last six months of the war. The little island paradise, only recently freed from the Japs, is in the throes of a new invasion from debonair public information officers, pestiferous correspondents and vote-hustling Congressmen. The main activity of the public information boys, besides waiting bravely in line until the Officer's Bar opens at five each evening, is winning the Public Relations War. Led by Lieutenant Commander "Marblehead" Nash who was commissioned right out of a midwestern brokerage office "without the corrupting effect of any intervening naval training," they concentrate on such problems as to how to get the natives to wear breach cloths instead of their usual pants and shirts for "jungle" shots with the creator of Tarzan. Only two of the men have ever seen combat; and its no wonder that

one of them, Ensign Max Siegel, the book's hero, envisions the day when "there would be one Public Relations officer for each combat man in the Navy, and the fleet commanded by the president of the Associated Press, with a six-star rank of Admiral-Admiral, who would decide on operations solely on the basis of their news value, with transmission ships occupied by nothing but correspondents, with no operation dispatches being permitted until the fleet was wiped out to provide a good news item."

Brinkley's heroes are trapped into fighting the war of boredom, of human vanity and frustration, which plague men everywhere, in uniform or out. On this level, his book will inevitably be compared with "Mr. Roberts," but here, unfortunately, the similarity ends. From where Thomas Heggen's book was written out of that deep knowledge of man's suffering and joy which makes for high comedy inextricably linked with tragedy, Brinkley's humor is surface-level. True, it sparkles and glints in the sun, but it never probes beneath the surface of the characters. They are all pretty much one-dimensional, either very, very good, like the urbane Siegel, who sees beneath the follies and pettiness of his fellows, or very, very bad, which in this book usually means very stupid or callous. But even with these limitations, "Don't Go Near The Water," is a delightfully deft satire which combines extravagant farce with enough of the unpopular truth to make it hit the mark often enough.

## WIDOW'S WALK

My eye looks south  
where the sun sets right  
and the church bell sounds  
for a summer's day.  
But north, my mind  
where the left hand blows,  
no suns rise  
and my back is cold.  
My quick heart spins  
on a weather-vane.  
The south flung arrow  
seeks the northern compass point;  
my leaping heart is a kangaroo;  
I live in the land of the boomerang;  
my eye looks south, yet here I stand  
and brace my back when the cold wind burns  
until I see the moon, sun, his ship return!

A. Kirby Cangdon

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