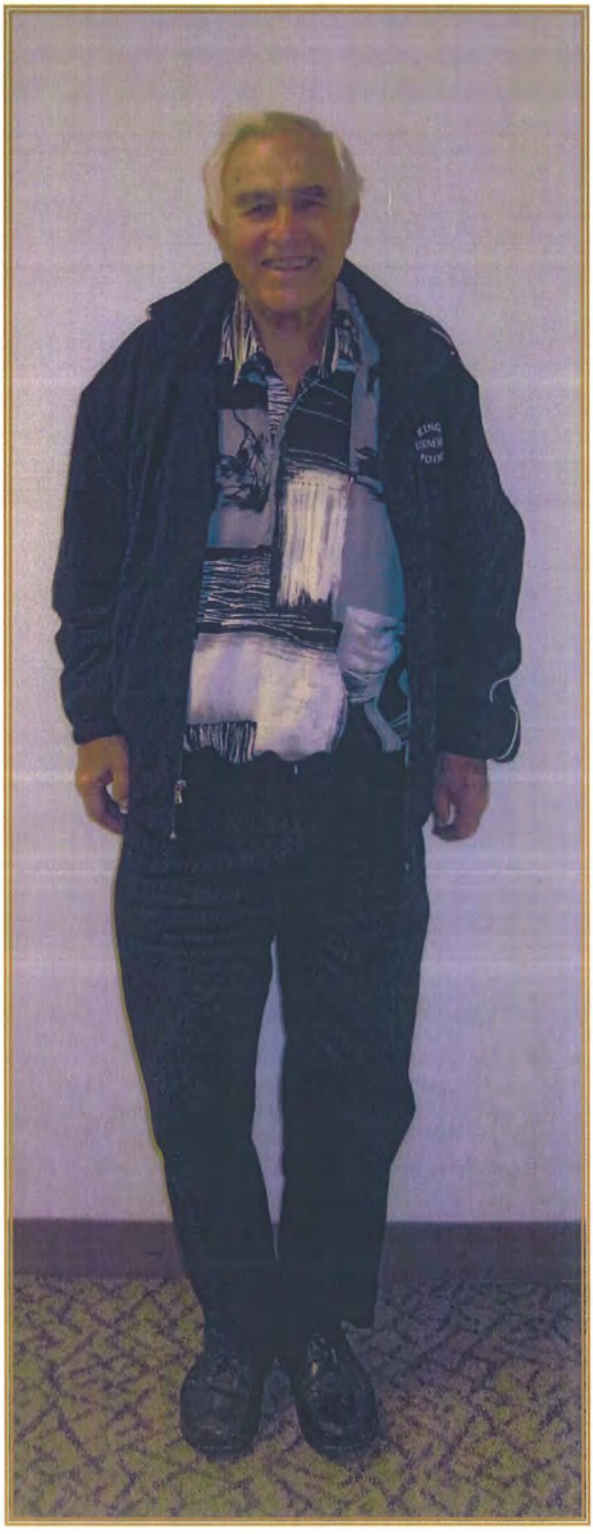
Charles H. Borowsky

World War II
U.S. Merchant Marine
US Naval Reserve
Atlantic, Mediterranean, Pacific
Adriatic and Aegean



Charles H. Borowsky

Veterans
History
Project
Transcript

Interview conducted
April 28, 2010

Niles Public Library
Niles Public Library District
Niles, Illinois

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Veterans History Project Transcript

Veteran:	**Charles H. Borowsky**	Rank:	**Lieutenant, USNR**
Branch of Service:	**U.S. Maritime Service** **U.S. Naval Reserve**	Theater:	**World War II – Pacific, Atlantic, Mediterranean, Adriatic, Aegean**
Interview Date: April 28, 2010, 1:30-3:30 p.m.		Place: Group Study Room	
Equipment: Philips Digital Pocket Memo Recorder		Interviewer: Neil O'Shea	

This Veterans History Project interview is being conducted on Wednesday, April the 28th, in the year 2010 at the Niles Public Library. My name is Neil O'Shea, and I'm a member of the reference staff here at the library. I'm speaking with Mr. Charles Borowsky who was born on June 6, 1927, and he now lives in Skokie. Mr. Borowsky has kindly consented to be interviewed for this project. And also accompanying Mr. Borowsky here today and present in the room during the interview is Mr. Charles Maladocian who served with Mr. Borowsky in the Merchant Marine. And we're grateful for Mr. Borowsky coming in today on this beautiful afternoon because he is the first veteran that we've had the opportunity to interview that served in the Merchant Marine. And he's promised to enlighten us with some details in the history of this important American institution. So, we'll begin now with our usual series of general questions. and we'll ask,

Mr. Borowsky, Do you recall when you entered the Service? (Interviewer's words in italics)

Yes. May 15th, 1945.(Mr. Borowsky's words)

May 15th, 1945, so World War II was still--

World War II was still in action. We had just declared VE Day in Germany in early May. And I was on a train to California for boot camp training while Japan was still an active combatant nation.

Had you completed high school?

Yes. I left high school early. If seniors in high school would join the service, they would allow them to leave early and get their diploma sent to their homes in the mail.

What high school did you attend?

Roosevelt High School in Chicago, Illinois.

So, you were a Rough Rider, then?

Yes. I was a Rough Rider.

That school is over on Kimball--

It's on Wilson and Kimball Avenue.

I interviewed another veteran, a Mr. Aronson who went to Roosevelt. So, why didn't you just stay home and get your degree? I mean, the war was almost over. What did you want to go in for?

Well, the war wasn't over.

It wasn't over. Well, it was going-- no, you didn't know that.

We didn't know that.

That's right.

In 1941, I was fourteen years old. And right after Pearl Harbor I joined the National Guard. And they found out I was underage, in order to expedite my getting out of the National Guard, they gave me an honorable discharge. So, I had an honorable discharge from the National Guard at fourteen years old.

How did your parents feel about your interest in things military?

My father was very much in favor of it. And my mother was very much against it. So when she found out what had happened, she went down to the National Guard Armory and made such a complaint that they finally decided that the best thing to do would be to issue me a discharge. Then I tried to join up with various services, and she said that if I would prove to her that I could get a high school diploma that she would sign off and let me go wherever I wanted to go. And I had tried to join the Marine Corps. I also tried to join the Royal Canadian Air Force because they were accepting recruits at sixteen. The Merchant Marine was accepting applicants sixteen years old.

But the reason I joined the United States Merchant Marine Academy was that it was officer training. And we were going to get a commission in the Maritime Service and a commission in the Navy simultaneously. So it was one of the last programs in which you could get an officer's commission within a reasonable time. And the chance to go to sea was almost immediate because the Merchant Marine Academy was the only federal academy in the United States that allowed midshipmen to go into wartime duty before they finished their classroom work.

So I went to San Mateo, California, which was their boot camp training for United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point. We were given six weeks training and then we were sent aboard a ship as a cadet midshipman. And then we were expected to serve a year at sea as a midshipman. The correct term is cadet midshipman.

So you were determined to enter the Service then!

Right.

You didn't mind if it was on land or sea?

I didn't care. I just wanted to serve somewhere. Or the air.

Even in the air, wow!

Yes. I was trying to get into the Royal Canadian Air Force. They were taking applicants at sixteen.

Was there a tradition of military service in your family?

My father had joined the Army when he was sixteen years old. He came from Poland, and he was in New York. As soon as World War I started, he joined the Army and was a frontline soldier for the entire war.

So he was part of the American Expeditionary Force, 1917.

We were the only federal academy in the United States that had battle flags. We lost men as midshipmen. We had two titles. We were cadets in the Merchant Marine Academy, and we were midshipmen in the Naval Reserve. It was a dual rank in all cases, so we were Naval Reserve and Merchant Marine at the same time. And I will have to explain what Merchant Marine means.

Yes.

Merchant Marine is just a general term that's applied anywhere in the world where someone has a fleet. A nation has a fleet of ships; they all sail under a certain flag. So when a ship is sailing, normally, it is a ship that is ocean-going and it's considered part of the nation's Merchant Marine. They could sail the Liberian flag, the Panamanian flag.

But at our time, we had the largest Merchant fleet in the world. We had close to ten thousand ships under the American flag. And then in order to work the situation out in terms of handling the wartime service, the United States government set up the War Shipping Administration (1942) to direct the Maritime Service. So it was expedient to leave these ships under house flags. So these flags were American President Lines, Lykes Brothers - these were the companies that operated the ships normally during peacetime. But during wartime, they all agreed to be part of the War Shipping Administration and take their orders through the War Shipping Administration out of Washington so we could be a coordinated effort. They didn't want one ship taking off and going to China, another ship going to the Mediterranean, another ship going here. They went wherever the United States government told them they had to go. So the War Shipping Administration administered all the ships at sea. And then they had the U.S. Maritime Commission which was involved in training seamen and also had oversight for the officer training program at the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

Now, the United States Merchant Marine Academy is a federal academy that has the same status as West Point or Annapolis. As a matter of fact, it was established prior to the Air Force

Academy. So there's the United States West Point Army Academy. Annapolis is the Naval Academy. The Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut and United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, Long Island, New York. And there's the Air Force Academy in Colorado. Those are the five established Service Academies. Now, when we were cadet midshipmen at the Academy, we also retained the rank of a midshipmen as well. So we were midshipmen in the Naval Reserve and we were cadets in the Merchant Marine Academy at the same time. We had simultaneous commissions when we graduated. We got commissions as an ensign in the United States Maritime Service and in the United States Naval Reserve. We got commissions simultaneously from both services. And we had a choice to go wherever we wanted. We could go into the Navy. We could go into the Merchant Marine.

The role of the Merchant Marine is different than the Coast Guard or the Navy, right? You actually are-- the role of the Merchant Marine, say, in the North Atlantic, how is that different from--

The Merchant Marine, any ocean.

Any ocean.

The Merchant Marine is simply a ship that is engaged in commerce for a particular service.

> Mr. Maladocian: The Merchant Marine is not a military operation. The Merchant Marines are civilians in maritime operations.

But the thing is that many of the ships carry Naval Reserve status, too.

If a ship had Naval Reserve status, they could make a phone call, and every member of the ship's crew would automatically become a member of the Navy simultaneously. So that was their position in case there was some particular problem that had to be taken care of right away. Also, almost all of the ships in World War II were armed. And the ships carried, usually, four inch to five inch cannons on the stern, 3.5 inch cannons on the bow and 40 or 20 millimeter automatic cannons and machine guns. Now, sometime, those armaments were manned by U.S. Naval gun crews. They would come aboard separately; they were really part of the crew, but they were usually under command of a Naval officer. But, almost exclusively, all the ships that were running under the American flag, were armed with heavy cannons and with automatic antiaircraft weapons, and we were trained in that when we went to basic training as midshipmen. We became familiar with firing cannons, automatic weapons, machine guns.

Was that in San Mateo?

Yes. It was right outside of San Francisco, and we always took Naval Science classes. And with the Naval Science classes we took, we were given almost the same type of course that they were getting in Annapolis, but in an expedited form in San Mateo because we were told to get on board ship within six weeks. So one of the very interesting aspects of that is that we were under fire in the North Atlantic, and all over, while we were still cadet midshipmen. So we were the only academy that was in the war zone before we even got out of school. And we had one

midshipman, O'Hara. Actually, there was a ship, the Johns Hopkins, that was fired on by a German raider. And the German raider was very heavily armed, and most of the ship's crew from our Liberty ship was under fire and abandoned the ship. But this midshipman, O'Hara, manned the five inch gun on the stern by himself and almost sank the German raider and was ultimately killed. But he so damaged the raider that it was caught by a British cruiser and sunk. But this one eighteen-year-old kid stopped this huge German raider by manning this gun which normally takes six or seven men to operate.

Wow. That was in the North Atlantic?

North Atlantic.

Yes

Did you find that you were anxious to enter the Service?

Yes.

You didn't have any trouble adjusting to life in the Service or?

No, I--

Discipline?

No.

Or training, food, clothes, being away from home?

I liked it all.

You liked it all?

Yes. I felt it was something I wanted to do. And I wanted to get into the invasion of Germany and Normandy. But I just missed it because I was on the train when I was getting information on the capitulation of Germany. But I got into California, and we were planning the invasion of Japan.

It would have been the biggest armada in the world.

Yes.

And we had eight thousand ships being readied on the West Coast. So at every port that you went to, if you could go into San Francisco and you could see the fleet there, you could almost walk across San Francisco to Oakland on the ships.

Yes.

Because they were just rafted up stern to stern and bow to bow and port to port.

We just had a program here at the Library on the 65th anniversary of the Okinawa campaign. And, of course, the whole point of Okinawa was to conquer the island and then use it as a staging point for the invasion of Japan. And, as you say, they-- Okinawa, the invasion, began the first of April and wasn't complete until June 23rd. So this period of May, June, there, everybody was thinking it's probably going to be on to Japan.

Oh, the ship, yes. That's exactly what we thought. The ammunition ship that I was going to be sent on was scheduled to go to Okinawa.

Do you remember the name of the ship?

Yes. Petersburg Victory.

Petersburg Victory.

Yes. And that ship was laid up after the war. We were all told we were going to be part of the invasion fleet. If my memory serves me correctly, just the Merchant vessels alone were eight thousand ships, which was enormous. I mean, if you think about it. And most of them were all set to sail from West Coast ports. So the whole West Coast was being set up for the invasion and everything. And we didn't know anything until we all got word that the atomic bomb had been dropped and that Japan had capitulated.

That must have been quite a day! Were you disappointed or celebrating?

Well, just half and half. I, myself, was angry because I wanted to see the invasion. I was prepared to go.

Oh, wow!

But, again, there was jubilation that we figured that a million men were going to be saved.

Yes

We didn't have the complete word, but we knew there was a huge Kamikaze fleet that was sheltered in the mountains and airfields in Japan that was set up so that they could try to obliterate this fleet that was coming towards them. So Japan had stored fuel and ammunition and bombs.

Yes.

And hid these Kamikaze planes in anticipation of the invasion.

So did you eventually set sail from--

I set sail from San Pedro, California.

On the Petersburg Victory?

The Petersburg Victory.

And your rank then was--

Cadet midshipman.

Cadet midshipman.

Yes. I spent six weeks in San Mateo and then I was sent to Petersburg Victory. There were always two midshipmen for each ship. And I was sent to the ship but I couldn't find it. I couldn't find the ship! And I found out that the ship didn't exist. So I found out that it was in a shipyard being built. So I had to go over and find some quarters over in Long Beach, California until the ship was finally built. And then we set sail for the South Pacific. And they changed our orders, and they sent us to the Panama Canal. And then they sent us up to Baltimore. And in Baltimore, the ship was declared not necessary for any service. The Petersburg Victory never sailed to Japan, but it was mothballed. However, it was taken out of mothballs for the Korean War. And a very good friend of ours, Admiral King, was their captain. And he became the captain of the Petersburg Victory while it was engaged in the Korean War.

And the Petersburg Victory, that was a Liberty ship, or a destroyer?

It was a Victory ship.

A Victory ship?

Yes. The Liberty ships were the original ships that were mass produced for the war. And then, right after that, they built the Victory ship, which was a little faster and had different types of propulsion and what not. See, we figured the war in Japan was going to last another two years. We figured the invasion would last almost eight months, and then it would be another year and a half before we could subdue Japan. That was the general consensus of opinion at the time. So we were all preparing for that.

And then when I got to New York, I reported to the Academy. We had an office on 90 Church Street with the rest of the Navy Department. And I was told I was going to get another ship. And they sent me on the SS Examiner. And that ship was used to help supply the Marshall Plan for Europe. So I went from there to Italy, Turkey, Lebanon, Spain, Alicante, Malaga, Marseilles.

This was on board the--?

The SS Examiner.

And your duties, your duty, on the SS Examiner?

Same thing. Cadet midshipman.

I was in the engineering department so I had to learn how to run the engines and work all the equipment on board the Examiner.

Back in high school, had you shown aptitude in any of those subjects?

I liked engineering a little.

Engineering, yes.

I always messed around with the cars.

Tinker, yes.

I went to the automobile shop, and I always had a car. I had a Model A Ford, and I had some old junker cars that we cobbled together and other things like that.

Your dad had come from Europ; was that your first time in Europe across the Atlantic then on the SS Examiner--

Yes.

That must have been very interesting to tie into that world.

Oh, yes, it was. We actually pulled into these ports right after the German Army had left, so we got into Athens. The German Army had left and swept the entire city clean of food. So they took all the supplies with them. And, so, we gave the Greek population whatever food we could spare. And we also had some supplies from the Marshall Plan so we gave them Carnation canned milk. We had different supplies. Same thing for Italy and other countries that we called on. I made two trips to the Mediterranean. We were one of the first American ships to enter Spain after the end of World War II. We went to Marseilles. Then we went to Piraeus, which was a port of Athens.

Then we went to Istanbul, Turkey, Smyrna, and another couple of ports in Turkey. Then we went to Alexandria, Egypt.

All these legendary, classical destinations!

Yes. Yes. We went through the entire Mediterranean.

So did you get any shore leave in any of these places?

Yes. We had a lot of shore leave because those days the ships weren't container ships. They were what they called great bulk ships. They would have pallets and they would just pile bags of rice,

or whatever, on the pallets. And the ship's boom would pull it up and then just hoist the product and drop it down on the dock. And stevedores had to handle it by hand. You had to load it from the hold onto the pallets then. It had to be picked up and then dropped on the dock and then unloaded again.

Were you directly involved in those operations?

No, that wasn't my area.

Yes.

The other midshipman that was on board the ship was a deck midshipman, and that was his field of endeavor. My field was engineering. So I occupied myself with the engineering. He occupied himself with running the ship at sea, from the deck, to the wheelhouse. And, also, he was involved with loading and unloading the ships.

Was the SS Examiner armed?

No. They took all the guns off of it when the war ended. They removed the guns; the turrets were still there but they removed the guns and the ammunition.

The rest of the people on the ship, they were paid by the company?

They were paid by the company under the jurisdiction of the War Shipping Administration.

The War Shipping Administration.

The War Shipping Administration.

And you were paid from the U.S. government directly?

No, when we were aboard a ship, we were paid by the War Shipping Administration, so our salary was paid by the government while we were ashore. The crew was paid just by the voyage. In other words, in the Merchant Marine, you only get paid for the voyage, so you sign up for the ship, and they pay you from the point you leave to the point you come back. So, you're never paid for clothing, or you're never paid for food ashore, or transportation. You're only paid for the actual days you spend aboard the ship.

Now, the SS Examiner, if there were no war on, it might still be plying the seas, but it wouldn't necessarily have a cadet ensign on board or--

Well, it would. Yes.

We kept up that tradition. That went on beyond the war. In other words there are cadet midshipmen that are aboard U.S. flagships that are sailing today. But we've fallen down from the most prominent Merchant Marine maritime nation in the world to somewhere around 140th.

That's one of the things we've been working on. When this earthquake in Haiti came about, I thought to myself that maybe we could reestablish a couple of these older ships. I contacted the Jeremiah O'Brien in San Francisco, a Liberty ship, and the crew there volunteered to go to Haiti. We were going to try to supply rice from some of the rice farmers who donated the rice from California.

Wow.

And we were going to make that trip down there, but their hull wasn't considered seaworthy by the Coast Guard. The shipyard wanted about a million bucks to weld some plates and things like that. I was in California at the time, so I wasn't able to get in touch with the people that I knew. See, those ships could be unloaded in a port that's damaged. They were made for that. You can go into a port. You don't need these huge cranes that come up and pick up a container. The ship comes alongside. They have their own cranes that pick up these pallets and just dump them on anything. They can dump them on a barge. They can dump them on a small boat. They can dump them on a dock. So it's particularly valuable, I believe, for a place that has an earthquake, like Chile or Haiti.

Where the port facilities are destroyed.

Where the port facilities are destroyed, you can immediately send these ships. So I called friends of mine in the Maritime Administration and tried to work with them to get something going. And they got something working. They got an air-cushioned ferry boat out of Hawaii or somewhere. If they had some ships that were ready in the reserve fleet, they mothballed them like in San Francisco and different places in the United States, keeping them in reserve. But then there is a certain amount of cost in bringing them out of reserve, you know.

Were you able to stay in touch with your family while you were away overseas?

No.
We were only able to send mail through the military, so whenever we were someplace the British Army would forward our mail. Or we wouldn't get any mail, but we could send through the Army or Navy if there was a base somewhere. But we rarely got letters from home. We only got our letters when we landed into a U. S. port. So when I was at sea, I was out of touch with my family.

Yes.

But there was no communication. Obviously, you couldn't make a phone call for anything. Because most of the ports were just torn apart. In the Piraeus, for example, there wasn't a building that was left standing that was untouched. In most every building, either the roof or the side was blown off. The British had bombed the city, and there was a German torpedo gunboat there. It fired off all the torpedoes, and it blew a hole in the ground about two or three blocks long, a couple of blocks wide, thirty feet deep.. It killed everybody around there. It was almost like a bomb blast there.

The citizens of these different countries or ports must have been glad to see you, were they?

Oh, they loved us. I mean, we were just heroes, you know.

We weren't so welcome in the ports in Egypt. Egypt was under British control. We weren't too welcome in Lebanon. It was under French control.

French control, yes.

We weren't too welcome in Istanbul, in Turkey. But they loved us in Italy.
And Greece. Spain was very happy to see us, but, there, I saw worse poverty there than in any other part of the world that I had ever seen.

Really?

Yes. Franco had literally killed almost all the people of the other party. He killed the males of the other party so that the women and children were left without support. They used to come to the ship every day to pick out our garbage or whatever food we could give them. But we couldn't say anything about Franco, because if you said anything about Franco, you would wind up in prison. And that is another story that--

Sad story, yes.

That needs to be told. In Russia, if any British or American sailor said anything about Stalin, or brought some food ashore for a friend or a magazine, worst of all, they wound up in the salt mines in Russia. To this day, there are five thousand men that are missing from the British and American forces that went there to help supply them.

That was a terrible run, wasn't it? Fraught with danger.

Terrible. Terrible.

Yes.

Thirty-two ships would start out. Maybe eight or nine would come through. And then, sometimes, if you hit the water, you would have ninety seconds to live. In many cases, they got into lifeboats. And when they found the lifeboats, they found all the sailors at their oars frozen stiff. They thought they'd save somebody, and they'd pull up to the lifeboat, but they were all sitting straight up holding their oars, frozen.

In many cases, when you finally got through to Murmansk, the Germans were attacking by air, by submarine. And when we had our wounded brought ashore there, the Russians would sometimes just nail the windows shut and doors shut, and leave these people sitting there. They were treated very poorly. Not in all cases, but in certain cases. When the war was in balance, our seamen were treated pretty well. The British and Americans were treated fairly well when they got ashore. But when the war changed, or Stalin felt that he was on the move, and the German

Army was being steadily pushed back, the conditions changed very much. Then they mistreated our people quite a bit.

Yes.

They mistreated the British as well as the Americans. And Churchill wrote — I read some of his memoirs, that he mailed to Stalin complaining about it. And Stalin wrote back and said, "Well, your men aren't abiding by our local rules and regulations." He made no apology for it. So we still have men that disappeared in a black hole over there.

Yes.

So, you made two trips across with the SS Examiner, and the Marshall Plan unfolding.

Right.

And then?

Then we went back to the Academy and finished up our school work. And then I got in under the wartime program, which was a shortened program. When the war ended and, incidentally, they considered wartime service for the Maritime, we were considered in wartime service up until December 1st, 1946. One of the reasons for that is we went through a lot of German minefields and a lot of dangerous waters that we had some problems with. So we were considered in war zones after the war had been delayed, but then we got back to the Academy. And we went through our regular courses. I was in the first class that was after the end of the war. So we had to stay on longer. It took us longer to get our commissions, and our diplomas, and everything. And then I got out. I had played football for the Academy, and I had torn my cruciate ligament in my knee. So it was very difficult for me to serve on board a ship because of the long ways to go down into the engine room. You had to go down five flights of stairs. So I joined the submarine service.

I noticed that. Submarine D--

D 925. That's the submarine division we had here in Chicago. It was considered one of the best submarine divisions in the Reserves. And I didn't have to climb up and down. Everything was on pretty much of a level platform.

So when you graduated from, when you completed the training back at the Academy--when you graduated from there, you were a--

I was a civilian.

A civilian.

Yes. But I had commissions. I had commissions in the Maritime service. So I could have gone on board a ship and been a ship's officer. Also, I got an engineering license, so I could sail any ship, any ocean. And I was Naval Reserve.

Naval Reserve.

I could have gone, but in 1948, they didn't really want any Naval personnel. They were discharging. The Navy was sort of quieting down.

Yes.

So I became an insurance inspector. And I joined up the submarine division in Chicago here. We had a submarine here, the SS Silversides.

Oh, that's right, yes.

We trained aboard the Silversides. Then I went through the training program over in Connecticut. And two weeks during the year, I would go to Norfolk, Virginia.

So, this was in the Naval Reserve at this time?

Yes. Right. So, I would go for two weeks on an active submarine.

How did you find, being in a submarine is a whole different kind of psychology, isn't it, I mean? Or not necessarily?

Not necessarily.

I mean, isn't it, you know, tight quarters and being cooped in?

It didn't bother me. I enjoyed it.

Wow.

Yes. And I liked the submarines. The food was very good, and we got fifty percent extra pay. Hazardous duty pay. And I was all set to go to the Korean War. And they told us that anybody with submarine qualifications could not get into the regular line Navy, because we had two hundred sixty-eight submarines laid up all over the United States and Hawaii. We thought we were going to get into a war with China.

Even then?

Yes. We thought China would get involved in the Korean War.

Yes. Yes.

And then we didn't have enough surface vessels to combat the coast of China. We were all assigned submarines, to demobilize the submarines, get them over to the Chinese coast, and blow

up all the shipping that was coming out of China. So over in the Korean War, we were told to stand by and just stay with our units wherever we were. We had units in Chicago.

So you stayed on assignment then in Chicago during this time, yes.

Yes. As a matter of fact, I met Admiral Nimitz. I was the adjunct at that time and I took him around. We had an armory right out on Lake Michigan on the S curve. It was torn down.

Oh, it was that close to downtown?

Yes. It was downtown.

Yes.

It was right in the downtown area where the Chicago Yacht Club is. We had a pier going out into the water. And we had the submarine.

Yes. I think I've seen a picture of it.

Right.

Yes. Where is the Silversides now? Is it in a museum? Up the lake somewhere?

No. It's in Michigan somewhere. It's one of these small towns on the other side of the lake.

Like Muskegon?

Yes. I think it's Muskegon, Michigan. They made a museum out of it. What happened is Mayor Washington didn't want to spend the money and keep it tied up because when the Navy decided they wanted the unit, they tore down the armory. They had no place for it. So, we boarded it over on Navy Pier. And then Mayor Washington wanted to charge us rent for keeping it in Navy Pier. So we donated it to Muskegon.

And then, incidentally, after I got out of submarines, I got into Naval public relations. And we were involved in getting the U-505 to the Museum of Science and Industry.

The U-505 was the German U-boat that was captured?

Right. It was in an East Coast port there. And our public relations unit got together, and we got people interested in moving the submarine. And Admiral Gallery was part of our unit, I think, at the time. He was the skipper of that aircraft carrier that captured the U-505. And we had a couple of radio personalities on our program. So we all got together and worked on getting that U-505 over to the Museum of Science and Industry. I just saw it recently again.

It's been a couple of years since I've--

Well, they cut it in half, originally, and then slapped it up against the museum. And then one of one of my friends, Bruce Felknor, wrote some of the most definitive war articles about the Merchant Marine and the war.

The-- when you saw the German submarine up close, was it the same kind of design, or the same construction, as an American submarine, or different, or just older, or--

It was a little smaller. And it had innovations that were very good. Like an American submarine, you see movies where the skipper goes around with a periscope.

Yes.

In the German submarine, the skipper sat on a chair, and it was electric. With the controls, he could ride around with the periscope on his little chair, so he didn't have to walk around. And their optics were very good, and their torpedoes were different than ours. Ours were steam-driven turbines. The alcohol was fired off, and then the alcohol derivative made steam. And their torpedoes were all electric. They were all battery operated.

An interesting thing, also. This U-505 crew was sequestered in Georgia, and they were told that they could not communicate with their relatives or the International Red Cross. Because we had captured their code books, we were able to crack their codes, so they were kept incommunicado. And after the war, they were told that, they would all be granted automatic American citizenship. So about fifty percent of the U-505 crew automatically became U.S. citizens and are here today. And they come down to the museum every once in a while, and they are helpful in bringing pictures, articles and information about the ship, and how they operated. So it's very, very authentic. That is one of the most authentic displays I've seen of the Merchant Marine and the submarines.

So the-- and the Museum of Science and Industry is very happy to have the U-boat there and there's no--

Yes.

And there's no question about maintaining it, or anything, at all?

No, it's beautifully maintained.

We originally cut it in half, and we took half of it and put it up against the wall, cut a hole in the wall and then made an exhibit that way. So, you could come into the museum and see the inner workings. But just recently - and I had nothing to do with it, they took the submarine and welded it back together. And it's housed in a huge hall all by itself. It's up on blocks, so you can actually go through the submarine in its entirety, and it's all fixed up. It has all the machine guns, and everything put together in there.

So the Naval Reserve then, for how many years were you at sea then, for two weeks, or whatever?

It was every summer.

Every summer.

Yes. Every summer, I would go somewhere, and then when I got too old for that, I joined the p Naval public relations unit. And then I just kept my Reserve status. I had to give up my Reserve status up in 1967.

And then that final rank was?

Lieutenant.

Lieutenant. The German minefields that you had to sweep were those in--

We didn't sweep. We had to go through them.

Go through them, that was in--

In the Adriatic.

In the Adriatic.

The Aegean Sea.

Yes. Yes.

So when you-- there's a couple of questions we always ask, as we get towards the end, and I'll switch, it's--

And, actually, I didn't explain the Merchant Marine.

Yes. I'll give you a chance to--

I understand that. I don't want to get--It's so easy to digress from this.

It's all fascinating. I'm enjoying this very much. Thank you.

How do you think your military service affected your life?

Well, it disrupted it. In other words, there were things that I would have done differently. Had I not been hurt playing football, I would have stayed with the Merchant Marine for a number of years because there was an opportunity there.

What position were you playing in?

I was playing left guard.

Left guard.

And we were playing a very tough schedule. We played Boston College. We played Villanova. We were all just seventeen-eighteen-year-old kids. We always lost a year at sea, so we were never a complete team. And yet we were playing against veterans from all the wars at all these big colleges. So we were outclassed in many ways and then a lot of kids left and were recruited by different colleges.

Yes. Does your knee still pain you at times?

Yes, yes, sure. I really should get a new knee. I should get a knee replacement.

So if you had stayed with the Merchant Marine--

Mmm-hmm.

That would have been for five years, ten years?

About five or six years.

Five or six years, and during that time, how much of the year would you be at sea or on those voyages?

During those voyages you stayed at sea until you decided to get off the sea. In other words, you could decide to make a voyage. Those days, you could make a voyage and then go home, if you wanted to, and then come back and make another voyage.

Yes.

You could split it up that way or you could stay at sea continuously. It was up to you. Today, most of the merchants --we have such a small fleet now, and most of them are container ships. They don't spend any time in port, so the officers, I don't know about the crew so much, have, like if they are employed more or less by the companies, the tankers, and things like that--

Yes.

And they would stay, for example, three months on and one month off, or they would take four months on and a month off, because they don't get any breaks when they get into port. They're out in twenty-four hours, so it's really continuously at sea. They break it up so you have like nine months on and three months off, or something like that.

So, you were back in Chicago in a civilian capacity like in 1949, or something?

Yes.

Yes. And did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life or--

No.

Able to get a job pretty easily or?

Jobs were relatively difficult to get.

Still difficult, yes.

They were difficult to get. I worked as a boiler inspector for an insurance company and we inspected buildings like hospitals. As a matter of fact, one of my accounts was Notre Dame. I had to go to Notre Dame and inspect the boilers and the machines.

High school or college? University. Oh. Yes.

Yes. The university.

Yes.

I just happened to remember it, because somebody else was telling me when I was at Notre Dame at the time. Then I decided I wanted to get a master's degree in business administration, so I went in.

To the University of Chicago. Yes.

And then I got my master's degree there, and I went to work for a bank for twenty years. And then I started a couple of my own companies. I had three plastics companies, and I had a transformer company out here in Elmhurst, Bensenville. Then I retired in 1986.

I think you have written here the Industrial War College, U.S. Industrial War College?

Yes. I used to take correspondence courses at the Navy War Industrial College. So in case of mobilization, they wanted people to call on us to get the production going. But then our whole shipping industry just died. We don't build ships any more. The only things that were built recently are gambling boats and aircraft carriers. A lot of my classmates became submariners. They worked for General Dynamics. One of Maladocian's classmates was chief engineer for General Dynamics, building submarines in London. I was also given a chance to start a couple of shipping companies,

Yes. That sounds like it might be--

Yes. It was very interesting to me.

Ships were being sold from our fleets all over the world. We don't have hardly any ships under the American flag anymore.

Yes.

It's more expensive to run an American ship because we have Coast Guard regulations. And we have regulations for the crews for their comfort and safety and lifeboats. But the other counties don't have that.

Yes. You met Admiral Nimitz. Did he impress you?

Yes.

Did he have the habit of-- was he a leader?

Very, very small, quiet fellow, not given to a very expansive attitude at all. Very modest, you know, and he was a submariner, too. He was one of the first submariners.

Yes.

And he was very, very quiet. We had dinner together.

To be a submariner, you don't have to be a certain size?

You can't be too big.

You can't be too big.

Don't say.

But they would take a left guard, though.

Yes. They didn't want anybody too big, or too bulky, or too heavy. First of all, you spent two weeks in intensive physical exams. They don't do this anymore -- it's too dangerous -- but they had these towers that were a hundred feet high. And they were filled with water. So you entered the bottom of this tank, and you got into a little tube. You locked the door and the tube started filling up with water. And then you had to take a breath of compressed air and let the water in from the top. Then you floated out. There was a steel wire that went up to the top, and you had to hold your breath for four minutes, because it took four minutes to get to the top.

Four minutes?

Four minutes. But you could do it because the air you took on at the bottom was compressed.

Oh.

So you had to go up just the right speed. You can't go up faster than your bubbles. If you looked down and the bubbles were down there, you would be going up too fast, and you would expand your lungs and burst your lungs. And if you went up too slow, then you would run out of breath, so you had to keep just the right speed. They spent two weeks testing you and giving you physical exams, and hearing, and--

I'd always wondered if they give psychological exams?

Oh, yes, sure.

Because you're in that confined space, I was just wondering.

Oh, sure. They give you the first psychological exam as soon as you get there. It's the first day. They have a steel chamber. It's about twelve feet in diameter. And just iron seats, metal seats on both sides. You had to get completely undressed. There's no rank there. If you ever go through submarine school, there's no rank. You could be an admiral, you could be a captain, you could be an ensign. I'm talking about the officers. I don't know about the enlisted men, necessarily. They might have had the same thing. I don't know. But you would go into this tank, maybe forty or fifty people, and they would put up pressure on the tank. They would turn up the pressure. The pressure would get hotter and hotter and tougher and tougher. And, pretty soon, your eyes felt like they were being pushed in, and your eardrums were being pushed in, and your chest was being pushed in, and you couldn't breathe. It was hot, and guys would pass out. They would look through the porthole, and they would run out, and pull you out. And then they knocked out forty or fifty percent of the people the first hour by this hyperbaric pressure chamber. And they had all kinds of things like that.

Now, after you went up this tower, they told you that you have to put your left hand up, and your left foot on, and if you grabbed the rail with your right hand instead of your left hand, that disqualified you for it.

Wow.

And they had a bunch of different tests. They would weed out eighty or ninety percent of anybody that would have a problem on a submarine, you know.

Yes.

They don't do it any more because you can't escape from more than a hundred feet from a submarine. I mean, it was an impossibility. But there were chambers, and we could do that. We would put a submarine down a hundred feet down in Norfolk or something. A guy would get in an escape chamber and fill it up, take a breath of air, and go up to the surface. And he could escape that way, but the water was very cold and a hundred feet in the Atlantic Ocean.

Yes. You have to want to do that.

They also had a complete submarine built under a huge dome. And you could practice making the submarine go up and down. It was a simulator, but long before we ever had those simulators, and they had a huge granite polished duplication of the ocean up on top, so when you lifted up the periscope, you could see the exact same horizon that you would see on a ship. And then they had little tiny ships that went around. You would have to work your torpedo data processing and all that so that you could learn how to fire a torpedo.

When you retired and maybe had more time, did you feel like you want to get out on the sea again or go for cruises?

Oh, yes, sure. I love it. I would go. My wife is a difficult traveler. She loves it, but it's difficult for her to travel for many reasons.

Yes.

So we don't travel that much. We've made a number of cruises to the south on the Caribbean.

Yes.

I went through the Panama Canal in 1945, and I went down there about ten years ago, and everything is exactly the same. I mean, the same engines, the same equipment, the same gates, the same power. The only thing different is they have the lampposts; they have huge lights. And the lights are on swivels, so an aircraft carrier can get through there. But other than that, it's in a time warp.

So, when you go aboard a ship, do you say, "I need to see the engine room"?

Yes. I go to the engine room. I like to go on the bridge, because years ago, a group of guys from Kings Point, and different people who went to sea got hold of a small Navy ship. It's 84 feet long. And we operate it to this day. We train Sea Scouts and Naval midshipmen from Notre Dame, and Northwestern, and things like that. And it's all ex-guys like myself that are running this ship. And we pay so much a month to be members. And then we get some money from the Navy League and some money from different places. As a matter of fact, we train recruits from the Great Lakes Naval Station. They don't have a boat out there.

And your boat is--

Right out on Monroe Street.

Oh, that's yours.

Yes. The Manatra (acroynym for Marine Navigation and Training Association)

The Manatra.

Yes, and we made a movie out of that once, too, *The Jackal*.

It was used in the film The Jackal?

Yes. It was used in the film *The Jackal*.

That's a Frederick Forsyth novel.

So you say the Merchant Marine, the American Merchant Marine, is much smaller these days than it was?

Yes.

But is the-- but there's still an important need for the Academy?

Oh, yes.

And its future is safe?

Well, the Academy has morphed. And that's what we've been working on. First of all, the Academy is probably one of the finest officer training programs in the country today. Our graduates now graduate into all kinds of things. Matter of fact, right now, I just had reason to call down in Houston. One of our graduates is one of the top astronauts in the country, Captain Kelly. He's a Navy captain. And he's in training now. You can't talk to them when they're in training. But we have astronauts. We have Naval officers. We have Marine Corps officers. The requirement is now that you have to put in five years of federal service. So you can join the FBI, you can join the CIA, you can join the Marine Corps, Air Corps.

One of Maladocian's and my classmates who just passed away, Rick Alvarado, was wing commander of Air Force One. He was flying Jack Kennedy all over. He was the last guy to see Kennedy alive in Dallas.

It's open to all the services. And you can pick out a government service. State Department is another one. CIA, Secret Service. You're required to put the five years in service in, which I think it's a good idea, but you have the flexibility of a particular Service.

But when you're at the Academy, it's maritime to a degree?

Maritime is what you're learning. But you're learning military. You're learning--

Principles. And, yes. Yes.

You're going through Naval Science. When we graduated, you could only go into the Navy. I mean, we have people going into Army Corps of Engineers. But now, it's more of a training program for officers of all kinds.

We also have a graduate school that teaches intermodal transportation. That's containers, container ships, transportation. And the admiral that was in charge of it got switched over to the Maritime Administration. And our superintendent who was a lieutenant general in the Marine Corps became an admiral, because we had a disruption in this last election, in the Maritime Service. He resigned. And I was hoping that he could get back, because we lost a lot of good men there. Our Academy is located right on Kings Point, Long Island, so you can see Manhattan from the harbor there.

We have all kinds of things. We have the America's Cup race there. The guy from CNN, Ted Turner, was our skipper. He won the cup for the Academy. And we have huge resources for yachting and for racing and things like that. When I was there, Barbara Hutten had donated her yacht, the largest sailing schooner in the world. We sailed it down to Buenos Aires, and we--

Wow.

We had the trip as a very Goodwill Ambassador type of thing.

You would have crossed the equator then, right?

Yes.

Did you have a celebration when you crossed the equator?

I didn't go because I was playing football.

Oh, you were tearing up your-- yes.

But our guys went there. Yes, they had a celebration across the equator.

Yes.

When I was with our Naval public relations unit, we had a plane over in Glenview Naval Air Station. I don't know if you remember that or not?

Vaguely, yes.

Now, its called The Glen.

Right, yes. But that was a Naval Air Station?

Yes.

At the time.

Every year, we used to take a couple of planes and fly all around the world. We'd fly to London, and then to Paris, and then to meet with all the consular officials. And we have guys in the State Department and all different parts of the world.

Yes.

So, it's expanded. Now, I would like to see us expand. We have some more space set out. We've got extra barracks.

During wartime, it was essential to save the country because if England went down, Russia would have gone down. If Russia would have gone down, it would have been very, very, very difficult to fight an enhanced Germany and Japan. We would have been squeezed from both sides. So the fact that we were able to bring supplies to Russia and supplies to England at that critical time was the most important thing at the time. When you read the book--

The book, yes.

It will bring out that aspect of it.

Yes. Mr. Borowsky has left us a book entitled The Men and the Ships of the War Years 1942 to1945, drawings and text by Lauren S. McCready. (See Appendix for helpful exerpts.)

Right.

And you knew Mr. McCready?

He was my engineering professor, the head of our engineering department. And he helped Charlie and me graduate, because we were both injured, and they wanted to discharge us. He got us a waiver so that we could graduate.

Did Charles, did he play football, also?

No, no. He was hurt in something else. We were in the same hospital together. That's how we got to be really good buddies. We were at the Saint Albans Naval Hospital. I was there for my knee, and he had some exotic disease.

Is that in New York, Saint Albans?

Yes. And Kings Point is not too far from LaGuardia Airport. It's Walter Chrysler's old estate which is described there in the book.

How do you think your association with the Merchant Marine, and the U.S. Navy, and World War II, and events and awareness of Korea, how do you think it has affected your view of war?

Well, my personal feeling is that there is no point in fighting a war unless it's absolutely

essential. These were wars of choice now. You know, I'm sure that people, a lot of people, wouldn't agree with that. But I don't think this was. We had a pure war. We knew what we were doing. We knew where the enemy was. It was kill or be killed. I mean, if we didn't win that last war, we wouldn't be sitting here talking. That's my personal feeling. And I think that these wars here now are, I don't know, maybe there's some reason for it, maybe there isn't, but I can't quite see it.

Yes.

I'm not even sure that I think that the Korean War was all that terribly essential either, nor the Vietnam War. I think that these were wars of choice. Again same with Granada, same with the invasion of Panama. Maybe there's something I don't know about.

Now, I think, we're in asymmetric warfare, so we don't have masses of ships. The only things really stopping us right now from being annihilated probably are the submarines. The nuclear submarines, I think, were our safety factor since World War II. I worry more about asymmetric warfare, nuclear warfare, and cyberwarfare.

I think those are the battlefields now, as opposed to these huge conflicts, but I do think that it's very important that the Merchant Marine is not left alone. Your best example was this Icelandic volcano going off. Now, if your planes are grounded for any length of time, the only way you are ever going to keep everybody alive is with a maritime fleet. And no great nation has ever survived without a strong maritime presence. Even though it may cost us a little bit more to run a ship, even if we got a little more safety regulations on a ship, so what! We don't want to race to the bottom. It doesn't cost that much more to run a ship. I mean, these ships are almost run by computers, anyhow. So I've been pushing for a long time to try to rebuild our merchant fleet. And I've been talking to people in the Maritime Administration. I've been talking to my congresswoman. I've been talking to people in Washington.

That would be a government sponsored program to provide incentives for American companies?

Right.

To get back into--

Yes.

Yes.

The one thing we could do right immediately is make it mandatory that any military supplies are carried--

Are carried on American ships, yes.

It's that simple. It's a safety standard, really. I guarantee you if we have to, like in the Gulf War, pay huge amounts of fees to foreign ships to bring our tanks and our equipment and all that to the

battlefield, we pay more than it would ever cost us to maintain our merchant fleet. So, we should keep a strong maritime presence. And I think it ought to be somewhat similar, patterned after World War II, where there ought to be some auspices, like a shipping administration, that has some control over the ships so that if we need ships to go into a dangerous situation they would have to go. In some way or the other, we would change that ship into a military ship. If we have dangerous waters, they have to go in. We have to go in. There was no question about it. We never thought about it. I mean, if somebody told us that we had to go to Murmansk, that was it. We didn't think twice about it even though we knew that most of the ships wouldn't get through. And the same with any place else. If they told us to go through a minefield, we just put on a life jacket and slept on deck. There was nobody who thought to say, "I'm not going to do that!" And, today, if you try to send a foreign merchant ship somewhere like that, it would drive you crazy.

And I talked to these fellows that have sailed through the pirate waters.

I was just going to ask you that, yes.

Oh, I spent a lot of time with them. I talked to a number of skippers that are co-captains. They're on the same ship line, the Maersk ship line, that this Captain Phillips is on. And they said their protocol now is to round the crew up and lock them up in the engine room, and then for the captain to run into a room, get on a satellite phone and lock himself in there. In our day, we were all trained to fire twenty millimeters, and thirty and forty millimeters. Nobody would get near us. I mean, if a pirate had tried to grapple a line on there, my God, we would have--

Blown him to Kingdom Come or something.

Oh, my God! If they stuck their head above the rail, there wouldn't be any head there!

Yes.

I don't understand it. And I've talked to our military personnel. They've got some of the ships, under the maritime laws of different countries. They don't like weapons aboard ships.

When you get into harbors, they want you to check your weapons. You could go to the United Nations, which they are doing now, and get certain protocols because now they can't even arrest these guys. They get the pirates, and they don't know how to do it.

Yes. Where are they from?

Yes. Where are they from? You give them back to Kenya or someplace like that.

Yes.

Years ago there was no such thing as a pirate. He's dead. We'd throw him overboard. You wouldn't have thought twice about it. You saw a pirate, you're not going to take him to court in Kenya. He would be feeding the fishes.

Mr. Borowsky, this has been a very informative and comprehensive interview. As we move a little bit toward the end, we always ask, is there anything you would like to add, you can think of, that you'd like to talk about that we haven't perhaps covered in so much detail?

Yes. I've digressed quite a bit. But what I wanted to bring out, in many ways, is that we-- the Merchant Marine personnel in World War II was very unfairly treated. Not so much myself, but guys who signed up to go on these trips to the North Atlantic and things like that, were shot up. They were never compensated. They were never given any medical care. They were-- it was all--

GI Bill-- no GI Bill.

No GI Bill of Rights, nothing. In 1988, we got approval to declare us veterans. So we are considered veterans. I get pharmaceuticals from the V.A. You know, we had to apply for it. We get death benefits. In other words, a couple hundred dollars if you are buried. Or you could get buried in a veterans' cemetery. You'd get a flag. But there was no GI Bill of Rights. These people, their bodies weren't even shipped back. Their families had to pay for their bodies to be shipped back if they were killed somewhere. Most of them were lost at sea, so it didn't make too much difference. We had more casualties than any other service. We had more people killed than any other service.

Wow.

So the Marine Corps was the only service that surpassed us in one year when they had these invasions in Tarawa and Guadalcanal and things like that. But, proportionately, in the number of personnel that were involved, we had more deaths than any other service.

And they had to pay for their own clothes. They had to pay for their own equipment. They had to pay for their own transportation. So they only got paid from the day the ship took off to the day the ship got back to port. And they were isolated. So the fact that they made a few dollars extra for being in a war zone-- you know. There was a big rumor that they were making tons of money.

Yes, that's what I've heard, yes.

They weren't. For example, a Seaman First Class in the Navy would be getting maybe fifty or sixty dollars a month. But he got everything. He had no expenses other than that. They had to cover their own expenses, and they might have gotten a hundred twenty- five dollars a month, so the disparity was nothing. Forgetting about the GI Bill, just the day to day living expenses were very comparable. I mean, by the time you took off the cost of all these other things that you had to do. And you had to transport yourself. If you went home or something like that, you had your own expenses. You had your own expenses coming back. You had to buy your own clothes if you lost your clothes. And once you were torpedoed, your pay stopped. If your ship was sunk, your pay stopped. If you were captured by the Japanese or the Germans, your pay stopped. I met a number of seamen that were in Japanese prisoner of war camps for three years. They came out penniless. They had nothing. They had no money. They had no money, they didn't go home. I left a couple of them lying in the gutter in San Pedro, dead drunk. They had no money to do

anything. I mean, they were brought home. They were heroes, there was a parade. They were twenty years old. Their hair was white. And some of them were on the bridge of the River Kwai. They were on the bridge of the River Kwai where they were prisoners of war, and they were told to build that bridge somewhere that they had over there. And they were survivors of that.

So Kings Point was a little bit different because, basically, if we got hurt -- like I got hurt playing football -- they sent me to a Naval hospital because we were Naval Reserve. But in the Merchant Marine, they had what they called Marine hospitals. But they were very, very few and far between. There were maybe just a couple in the whole United States.

Yes.

And there was no transportation, and the care was very poor. It was like for indigents almost. So We have a bill in Congress now. House Resolution 23 is a bill to correct that. And we have a Senate Bill, I think it is Senate Bill 663. And it is being held up by Senator Akaka from Hawaii. He is chairman of the Veterans' Committee. And, for some reason, he just won't let that go. It's been approved unanimously by the House of Representatives. And it's being held up in the Senate. Those are things that we've been working on.

Yes.

Working on that for six years, you know, but--

When's he up for reelection?

Well, he will never get kicked out.

Oh?

Because he has an Asian community that supports him in Hawaii. Senator Inouye, he's for us.

He's a war hero.

He's a war hero.

Yes.

And he is for us. I've talked to his nephew and everything. Senator Inouye is for us. And Senator Akaka, he says he is not against us, but not for us. He won't let it out of committee, so he wants us to put it in as an earmark somewhere.

Oh.

All he has to do is let it out of committee. We've got enough senators to pass it, too. We've got enough senators that are cosponsors that would pass it.

And this bill would accord benefits and recognition.

Yes. It would give a thousand dollars a month to all surviving seamen that served before December 1st, 1946.

It can't be-- that's a dwindling--

Every month we lose a hundred fifty men. And we've got about ten thousand survivors. About three thousand, four thousand would get their documentation together to show where they went. You know, they lose the stuff.

Yes.

So you have to be very well documented, where you were and everything else. And you have to have your Z papers with documents. Mine is locked up in my--

When you say Z, that's not your discharge here?

No. Z papers showed when you sailed aboard ships. And you had a Z number. You know, in the Merchant Marine, you had a Z number.

Oh.

The captain would sign it off on a voyage.

I'm just wondering if you could touch on a topic--

Sure.

that you raised before we turn off the recorder here. You were saying about a group of farsighted individuals, was it in the thirties, that thought there might, that anticipated a need for--

It was both.

Yes.

And they helped form the Academy. They set up, they bought the estate there in New York and they set up training programs. And they went around, they begged, borrowed, and stole.

Were they former military men or academics?

Most of them were Merchant Mariners and Navy. And it's explained, some of it--

In the book, yes.

In the book. And some of the key characters, Admiral Stedman and Lauren S. McCready, would go around and find boilers and stuff like that that nobody was using and bring it in there. Our boilers were used to train people and also to heat the Academy.

Yes.

And we had museums. One of our alumni, Babsent, donated hundreds of millions of dollars to set up a museum. We have a very significant museum out there.

Yes. You were saying that these men that were blessed with some foresight. They foresaw some kind of a future conflict.

Yes. They foresaw World War II.

And a need for--

Shipping.

An organization?

To control the shipping.

To control the shipping?

Yes. If you let every ship go helter skelter … they saw what happened in World War I. And then they decided that they would not let that happen again. They were the ones that started the Maritime Commission. The Navy and the Maritime Service, these people put this whole package together. And one of the keystones of this package was the Merchant Marine Academy which was where they taught people and everything. And President Franklin Roosevelt was very much aware of this.

Had he been Secretary of the Navy or--

Yes. He had been Secretary in World War I. And his wife was a very big supporter. Eleanor Roosevelt was a regular visitor to the Academy. She used to come out quite frequently and spend a lot of time with us. Not with me so much, as a midshipman, but with the officers. And she was very interested in how the Academy ran and was helpful in getting funds and things like that. So we all owe her a debt of gratitude. She was a big supporter of the Merchant Marine, and so was Franklin Roosevelt. Had he lived, we would have had the GI Bill of Rights and everything. But he passed away before then and there were about 260,000 men involved in the Merchant Marine during World War II that were at sea. We had a huge percentage of casualties, especially in the North Atlantic, they were--

Yes.

Ships were being sunk, and then you couldn't pick them up. If you had a destroyer, they weren't going to stop to pick up survivors or anything like that. They just took off. Any time I injured myself or got hurt, or cut, or burned or something, I would go to the British Army or someplace to get some medical attention. There was no medical attention aboard the ship. The most medical attention you had was aspirin. The purser had a bottle of aspirin and maybe some alcohol.

You got burnt from steam in the engines or something?

Sometimes, yes.

Pipes, yes.

Yes, So you waited until you got ashore. Most of the places where we went to, that I went to, for medical attention were the British Army. They didn't have to, but I would go in there, and say, "Hey, I got a cut or a burn," or something like that. They would take care of it for me.

The English were helpful.

Yes, they were. Well, they knew that their survival--

They knew what side their bread was buttered on, yes, yes.

Of all the things that they were involved in, the fact that saved them was the fact that these ships came in there.

Yes.

At a crucial time.

Yes.

It's an interesting story.

Well, Mr. Borowksy, thank you for such a generous, wide-ranging interview. And, you know, you could have wound up being a lecturer at one of the, instructor at a war college, you have such a command of facts and history. And it's all such an engaging narrative.

I'm afraid it's a little bit--

We'll get to work here, and get this down, and then we'll get your approval. And I want to thank you for coming in today.

Oh, sure. Do you want these pictures?

I do, if I may.

Okay.

I'll turn off the recorder now. Thank you.

At a subsequent meeting to present his corrections to the first draft of the transcript, Mr. Borowsky made 3 further points:

→Full justice has not yet been rendered for those who served in the Merchant Marines. The U. S. Senate's Veterans Affairs Committee, headed by Senator Daniel Akaka from Hawaii, has not reported out SB663. The House has already passed H.R. 23. to establish the Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II.

→Mr. Borowsky believes a National Geographic film treatment of the Merchant Marine's underappreciated role in World War II would be very helpful, and he has access to valuable background material of the late naval historian Bruce Felknor who wrote The U.S. Merchant Marine at War 1775-1945.

→Mr. Borowsky has proposed to interested parties that the historic voyage of the SS Manahattan in 1969 be revisited in light of the current disappearance of the Arctic ice cap The **SS *Manhattan*** was an oil tanker that became the first commercial ship to cross the Northwest Passage. She was the largest U.S. merchant vessel as well as the biggest icebreaker in history. Such oil shipping would obviate the need for pipelines and target delivery to key points in the Northeast.

Reader's Note: The next eight pages of the Appendix illustrate Mr. Borowsky's interview. The reader will find wartime photographs of Mr. Borowsky, followed by helpful scans from Admiral Mc Cready's work, *The Men and the Ships of the War Years 1942 to1945* describing Attack Transport Ships and Liberty Ships. Background information is also provided on the Victory ship, successor to the Liberty. The final page is a photograph of Mr. Borowsky aboard the Manatra in Lake Michigan in 1997.

Mr. Borowsky at the US Merchant Marine Academy in King's Point, NY., 1945

Mr. Borowsky aboard training vessel, 1946

Outside home in Logan Square in Chicago, 1945

This is the cover of the 50th anniversary book, hand-lettered and drawn by Rear Admiral Lauren S. McCready and published in 1993 by the Alumni Association of The US Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, New York. The gallant ship depicted below is the APA –28 USS Charles Carroll. Many of her Navy personnel were "Kings Pointers." Mr. Borowsky was an engineering student of Admiral McCready.

A FOLIO

THE MEN AND THE SHIPS OF THE WAR YEARS 1942-1945

FIRST EDITION

Drawings and Text by
LAUREN S. McCREADY

Admiral MacCready's recap of the war record of the famed ship, gracing his cover appears below. The APA's were attack transport ships.

THE USS CHARLES CARROLL APA-28

§ She began as a Delta Line passenger ship on a C-3 hull, DELURUGUAY, but the Navy took her when she was nearly completed at Sparrows Point. What a job she and her crews did for the Navy!

§ To say she went everywhere would be an understatement. She was an APA fitted to carry over 30 landing craft and 1500 or more combat-loaded troops. She was in many Invasions:- Oran, Casablanca in North Africa, Salerno, Sicily, several in the South Pacific, Okinawa where she battled Kamikazes, and the big one in Normandy on D-Day - then the Aug. 15th Invasion of Southern France.

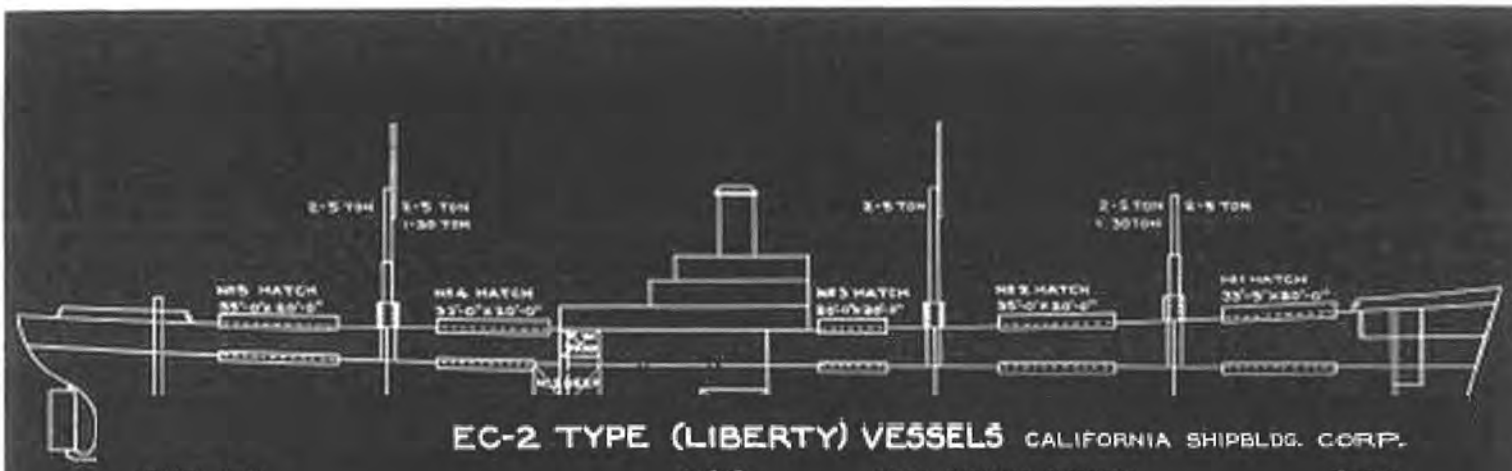
§ After V-J Day she was part of the Magic Carpet repatriating thousands of soldiers so glad to get home they didn't mind bunks five-high.

§ Aboard have been Eighth Army "Desert Rats", James Forrestal, King George VI, Ernie Pyle, many Divisions like 1ST, 36TH, 29TH, 3RD, 45TH, 82ND and 102ND Airborne, 69TH, 1ST and 2ND Marine Divisions and Others.

§ The painting was done in 1977 when Maurice J. Gross, '42 retired. He was her Chief Engineer at young age of 24. The scene is sunrise, H Hour, 0547HRS on D-Day, off OMAHA RED Beach, and her landing craft are all very busy. Seen also are USS BAYFIELD and the old battle ship TEXAS firing her 14" shells onto shore targets.

§ I am trying to pay tribute here to a gallant ship and the many more like her, and to the Navy personnel who did so well. Many were Kings Pointers and reservists. Maury Gross, Al Fiore, Malcolm MacIntyre, Zeke Mukhalian, Mike Chicurel, Pierre Becker Chas. Renick & more were Navy. They added a lot of lustre to the Navy, the Academy and themselves as Graduates and Alumni.

An "inboard profile" of the famed Liberty ship or "ugly duckling" appears on page 22 of Admiral McCready's folio and is scanned below. More than 2700 of the workhorses were produced to carry men, equipment, and supplies across two oceans to American and Allied forces. Mr. Borowsky was first assigned to a not-yet-built Victory ship, "the Petersburg" but would sail on the SS Examiner. The Victory class was a successor to the Liberty but could sail at 15 knots rather 11. 534 Victory ships were produced. FDR musing about the Liberty design, said, ""I think this ship will do us very well. She'll carry a good load. She isn't much to look at, though, is she? A real ugly duckling."



EC-2 TYPE (LIBERTY) VESSELS CALIFORNIA SHIPBLDG. CORP.

LENGTH O.A.	441'-8"	GROSS TONNAGE (APPROX.)	7180
LENGTH B.P.	416'-0	NET TONNAGE (APPROX.)	4370
BREADTH-MLD.	56'-10⅜"	DEADWEIGHT TONNAGE (TOTAL)	10807
BREADTH-EXTREME	57'-0"	DISPLACEMENT TONNAGE @ 27'-8½"	14330
DEPTH TO UPPER DECK-MLD.	37'-4"	DISPLACEMENT TONNAGE @ 7'-10½"	3423
DEPTH TO 2ND DECK-MLD.	26'-7"		
DRAFT-LOADED	27'-8½"	PASSENGERS	NONE
DRAFT-LIGHT	7'-10½"		

DEPTH TO UPPER DECK-MLD.	37'-4"	DISPLACEMENT TONNAGE @ 7'-10½"	3423
DEPTH TO 2ND DECK-MLD.	26'-7"		
DRAFT-LOADED	27'-8½"	PASSENGERS	NONE
DRAFT-LIGHT	7'-10½"		

CARGO CAPACITIES

HOLD	COMPARTMENT	GRAIN	BALE
1	HOLD	41257	36083
1	TWEEN DECK	42924	39328
2	HOLD	98860	92008
2	TWEEN DECK	46744	42650
3	HOLD	85459	79795
3	TWEEN DECK	27970	25904
4	HOLD	88841	82574
4	TWEEN DECK	35277	29689
5	HOLD	58629	51571
5	TWEEN DECK	34570	30864
1	No1 DEEP PORT	3659	2729
1	No1 DEEP STBD.	3639	3004
1	No2 DEEP PORT	7473	5294
1	No2 DEEP STBD.	7473	5578
4	No3 DEEP PORT	13674	12506
4	No3 DEEP STBD.	13188	12024
	TOTALS	562608	499573
	TOTALS LESS No3 DEEPS	535746	475043

TANK CAPACITIES 100%

FRAME	TANK	CAP. CU. FT.	BBLS. FUEL	TONS FUEL	TONS S.W.	TONS F.W.
	FORE PEAK	4845			136	
	No1 D.B.	5045	896	133	144	
	No2 D.B. PORT	6041	1063	159	173	
	No2 D.B. STBD.	6041	1063	159	173	
	No3 D.B. PORT	4453	783	117	127	
	No3 D.B. STBD.	4453	783	117	127	
	No4 D.B. PORT	2412			69	67.2
	No4 D.B. STBD.	2412			69	67.2
	No5 D.B. PORT	4485	789	118	128	
	No5 D.B. STBD.	4485	782	118	128	
	No6 D.B.	4191	733	110	120	
	AFTER PEAK	6310			192	
	No1 DEEP PORT	3985			114	
	No1 DEEP STBD.	3983			114	
	No2 DEEP PORT	7427			212	
	No2 DEEP STBD.	7427			212	
	No3 DEEP PORT	13583	2420	358	388	
	No3 DEEP STBD.	13101	2320	345	374	
	FRESH WATER PORT	987			28	27.0
	" " STBD.	987			28	27.0
	SETTLING PORT	1861	335	50		
	" STBD.	1861	335	50		
	TOTALS		12295	1834	3018	188.4
	TOTAL LESS DEEPS		7793			

SHIP'S STORAGE SPACE

DECK	COMPARTMENT	CU. FT.
UPPER	BOSN'S STORES FWD	3034
SECOND	" " "	3492
"	CABIN "	4329
"	LINEN LOCKER	585
BOAT	BONDED STORES	186
	TOTAL	11626

SHIPS REFRIGERATED STORES

MEAT	801 CF
FISH	173 "
VEGETABLES	768 "
DAIRY	176 "
TOTAL	1918 "

MANNING AUTHORITY

DECK		ENGINE		STEWARDS-PURSER	
MASTER	1	CHIEF ENGINEER	1	CHIEF STEWARD	1
CHIEF OFFICER	1	1ST ASST. ENG'R.	1	CHIEF COOK	1
2ND OFFICER	1	2ND ASST. ENG'R.	1	2ND COOK & BAKER	1
3RD OFFICER	1	3RD ASST. ENG'R.	1	ASST. COOK	1
CADETS	2	CADETS	2	MESSMEN	3
RADIO OPERATOR	1	DECK ENG'R.	1	UTILITY MESSMEN	2
CARPENTER	1	OILERS	3	TOTAL	9
BOSN. A.B.	1	FIREMEN-WATERTENDERS	3		
A.B. SEAMEN	6	WIPERS	2	PURSER	1
O. SEAMEN	3	TOTAL	15		
TOTAL	18				
				TOTAL CREW	43

FUEL CONSUMPTION @ LOADED DRAFT

SPEED	BBLS/24HR.	RANGE	DAYS	
11	170	72		MAX. SPEED
10	150	81		CRUISING "
9	130	94		
8	110	111		
6.5	80	153		

PORT CONSUMPTION IDLE 20 BBLS/DAY
PORT CONSUMPTION CARGO 35 " / "

GENERAL PARTICULARS

WINCHES
8 DOUBLE GEARED STEAM WINCHES FOR 5 & 15 TON BOOMS (7"x12")
2 " " " " " 30 OR 50 " " (10½"x12")

ENGINE
DIRECT ACTING CONDENSING THREE CYLINDER TRIPLE EXPANSION ENGINE
2500 I.H.P. @ 76 R.P.M.

BOILERS
TWO MAIN BOILERS OF CROSS DRUM SECTIONAL SINUOUS HEADER STRAIGHT TUBE TYPE, FITTED WITH SUPER HEATERS, W.P. 230# FUEL BURNERS

PROPELLER
SOLID TYPE BRONZE 4 BLADE 18'-6" DIA. 16'-0" PITCH

Background of Mr. Borowsky's first ship, the Petersburg, a Victory ship, VC2-S-AP2

Victory Ships were built by the U.S. Maritime Commission during World War II. The Petersburg was launched at California SB Corp., Terminal Island, Los Angeles, California in 1945.

The predecessor Liberty ships had a maximum speed of 11 knots, making them easy prey for submarines, so early in 1942 designs for a 15 knot ship were begun.

The first of 534 Victory ships, the SS United Victory, was launched on February 28 1944, and like the Libertys, used production line techniques. The next 34 Victory ships were named for each of the Allied nations; the subsequent 218 were named after American cities, the next 150 were named after educational institutions, and the rest received miscellaneous names. Attack Transports were named after counties of the United States, except one named after President Roosevelt's personal Secretary, Marvin H. McIntyre.

The Victory ship (officially VC2) was 455 feet long and 62 feet wide. Her cross-compound steam turbine with double reduction gears developed 6,000 (AP2 type) or 8,500 (AP3s type) horsepower. One diesel Victory, the Emory Victory (VC2-M-AP4) was built. The VC2-S-AP5 was the designation given to Attack Transports built for the Navy (Haskell class). The three AP7 type were Victorys laid as AP3 or AP5 which were cancelled after VJ Day, and completed as combined passenger/cargo ships for the Carribbean trade.

Typically, Victorys were armed with:

One 5 inch stern gun

One 3 inch bow gun

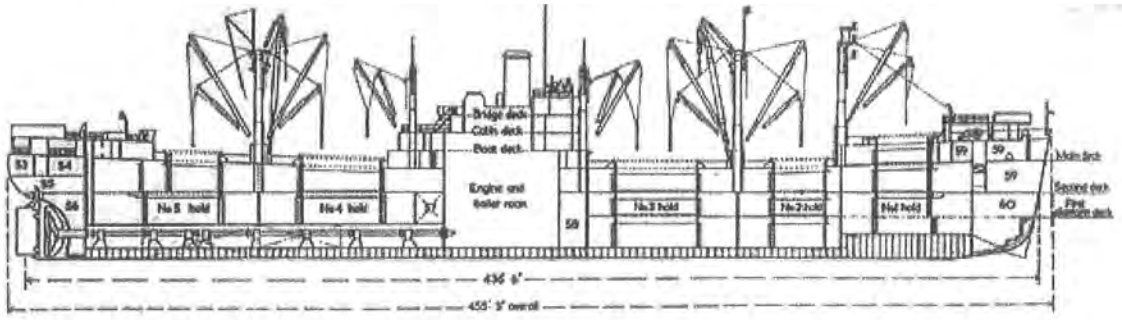
Eight 20 mm machine guns

Three Victory ships (Logan, Hobbs, and Canada) were sunk during World War II, all by kamikazes during the invasion of Okinawa. These Victorys carried a total of 24,000 tons of ammunition (54 million pounds or 24,000 metric tons), including the majority of 81 mm mortar available in the United States. This loss severely restricted combat during the invasion.

Victory Ship Photo

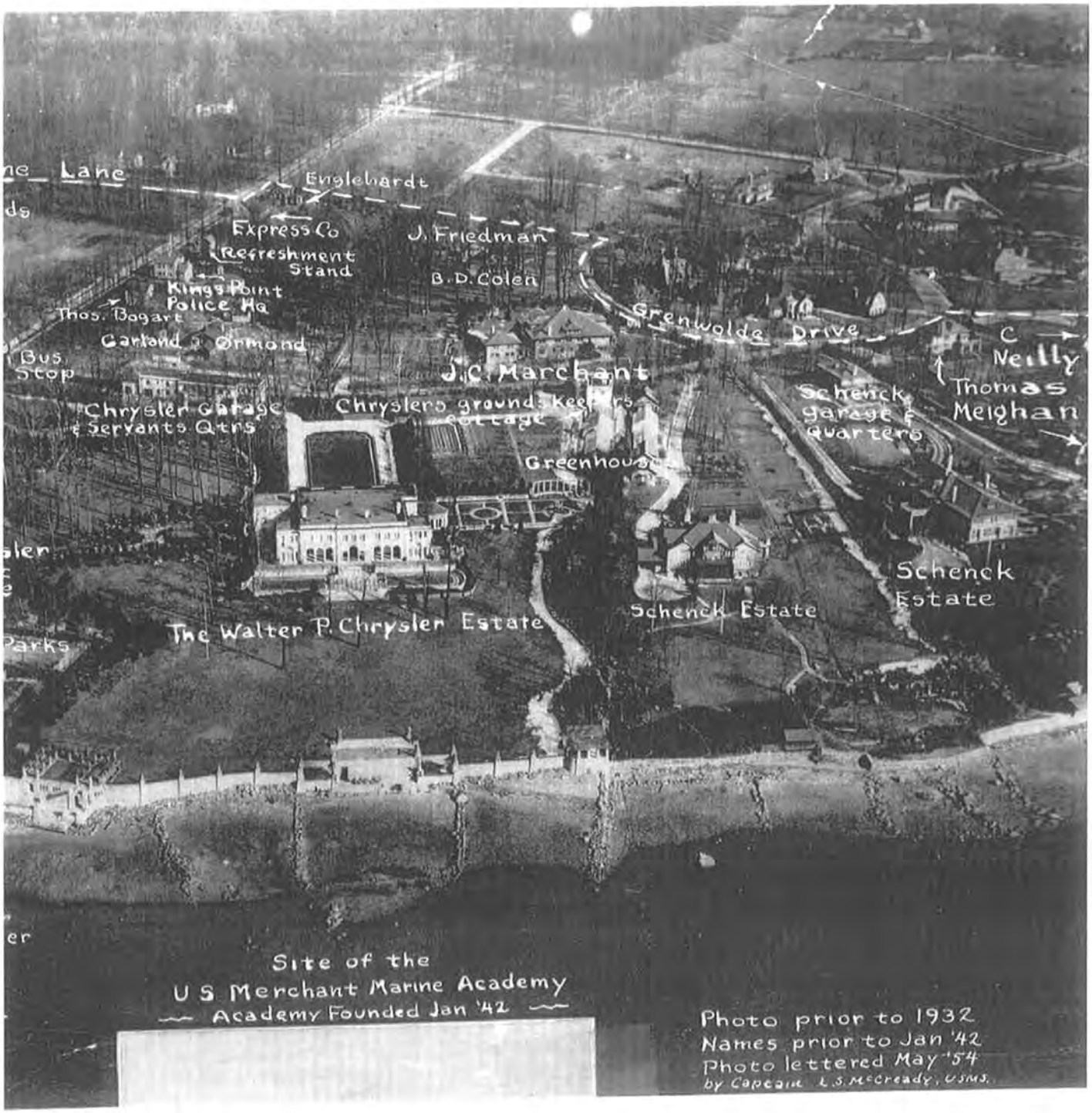
Photo of SS Harvard Victory after WWII, an AP2

Cross-section of VC2-S-AP3



Illustrations from **Victory ships and tankers; the history of the "Victory" type cargo ships and of the tankers built in the United States of America during World War II**, by L. A. Sawyer and W. H. Mitchell. Cornell Maritime Press, Cambridge, Md., 1974.

Scanned photograph of the Academy and grounds below appears on page 50 of Admiral McCready's The Men and the Ships of the War Years. Founded in January of 1942, the Merchant Marine Academy was established on the estate of Walter P. Chrysler who had purchased the mansion and its 12 acres from Henri Bendel in 1923. The government purchased the site for $100,000. The Chrysler mansion was named Wiley Hall in honor of the Admiral Henry A. Wiley. Situated on Long Island's Gold Coast, the elegant home contained 23 rooms and 10 baths. It would serve as the main administration building.



The Manatra on Lake Michigan

The ship's name is derived from the Marine Navigation and Training Association, formed by a group of Coast Guard reservists in 1946 to practice their seamanship and leadership skills. In the 1960s the Manatra association provided sailing experiences for the Sea Scouts and Boy Scouts. The Manatra III is now docked in the turning basin of the Chicago River, south of Navy Pier.

Mr. Borowsky appears below on the deck of the latest Manatra ship, cruising in Lake Michigan. The picture was taken during the making of the 1997 "The Jackal" motion picture which included scenes taken on the Chicago Lakefront. Mr. Borowsky appears in a scene about midway through the film.

Further information is available at the Manatra website
http://yp671.tripod.com/