



AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS SACRAMENTO VALLEY CHAPTER

*IF YOU SERVED IN THE
U.S. MERCHANT
MARINE, IN PEACE OR
WAR, YOU ARE
WELCOME TO JOIN
OUR ORGANIZATION.
WE ALSO WELCOME
THE U.S. NAVY ARMED
GUARD.*

OFFICERS: You may contact our officers below by phone or email. Go to our web site by double clicking on the web site address.

Kenneth Blue, President, 530 477 1908 email ken1@nccn.net

Robert "Bob" Ulrich, Vice President & Editor 530 758 6570 email bulrich@pacbell.net

Larry Starn..Minutes..RVP and Secretary

Webmaster Robert "Bob" Ulrich Web Site Address <http://www.ammvsacvalley.com>

The Web Site is owned and paid for by Bob Ulrich for the benefit of the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the American Merchant Marine Veterans.

Electronic and picture editing by Bob.

For larger image. Click Ctrl +(plus) For smaller image click Ctrl -(minus)

This issue..

Prez Sez by Ken Blue

Minutes of Jan meeting..Larry Starn...RVP and Secretary.

The SS El Faro Black Box tells story of El Faro's last hours..Bob Ulrich

Phelps Hobart to speak about the cargo ships upon which he served.

Upcoming National Conference in March... adjenda

Registration forms for National Conference sign them ..send them.

Also available on our web site ammvsacvalley.com



THE PREZ SEZ by Ken Blue

During WWII our merchant fleet grew from 400 ships to several thousand. How to crew all those ships was a problem. The government formed the Maritime Service with it's schools. Some of the unions ran schools. Pre war regulations regarding "moving up" were changed. Before the war an ordinary seaman had to serve two years before he could upgrade to able bodied seaman. The time (and time for all grades) was cut in half.

Men with former navy service were treated equal to merchant seamen. A former navy guy with four years service as bosuns mate could sit for his third mates license. If he had been a machinists mate he could sit for his third engineers license.

Even some shore side experience was allowed. I sailed with a third engineer who had only fired boilers in a laundry. He said this was his first trip to sea. I ask him about his shore side license. He discribed the same certificate my father had used to fire boilers in the oil fields and fish cannerys. Of course my father was out of the running. He was down with a stroke. The thought of my dad and I sailing together was just a fantasy.

Experienced cooks were sought to go to sea. I often wondered what an experienced shore side cook thought when going aboard a liberty ship only to find that the galley range was fired with coal.

Now about we radio operators. The pre war rule said that a newly licensed operator could not sail as a solitary operator on a large ship. The place to start was as second or third operator on a passenger ship or on a smaller vessel like sea going tugs or Fishing vessel. With the war on there wasn't time to meet this qualification. It was waved. I got my first job as radio operator with no experience just the hard to get FCC license with no time on it.



AMMV Sacramento Valley Chapter minutes for Jan. 18, 2017

At 11:10 Bob began playing music which culminated at 11:20 with "Heave Ho."
MEMBERS PRESENT: Larry, Ken, Bob, Bill & Bea, Steve & Bonnie, and Phelps.
Ray called Larry to tell him he was not yet physically able to make a meeting.
The Meeting was called to order at 11:23 by President Ken Blue.
The Flag was saluted
There was a minutes of silence for departed shipmates.

Ken said that in Congress our old bill ran out of time but it had been reintroduced by Congressman Al Green. Again it was for a one time payment of \$25,000.

Here Larry read the latest news about the EL FARO from the SIU Newsletter. (Read El Faro Black Box story elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Ken told the story of being on a new Liberty Ship coming into San Francisco which got turned sideways in the “Potato Patch.” Since it had a cargo of asphalt in the lower hold Ken said Everything that was loose took flight. The galley was white with flour. The Coast Guard officer said, “What the hell happened to you guys?”

Bob said that when he was on the MS Timber Hitch he couldn't get the weather report out of Panama because of heavy atmospheric static. He and the first mate were up on the flying bridge. The mate spotted a blackness ahead, ran down to break out all hands and tie everything down. Over the course of several days were driven 100 miles back from where they hit the storm. Such storms are common for Central America's Gulf of Tehanapec.

Ken reiterated the story, told in the Prez Sez of the last newsletter about singing Heave Ho acapella at the Grass Valley American Legion Post on Veteran's Day. Bob gave Ken a miniture mp3 player with a recording of Heave Ho, the Canadian Merchant Marine song and the Kings Point band playing a medley of all the service branches music including “Heave Ho.” He called it the “Heave Ho” award presented to Ken for singing the song solo at the recent Veterans Day ceremony in Grass Valley.

Ken has taken on the Treasurer's Job as Ray has resigned because of his recent illness. We are hoping he will be back as a member.

Cindy is doing the accounting for the National Convention in Reno in March.

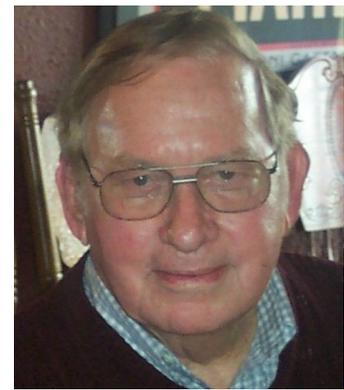
The remaining money from our last conference, about \$459, has been transferred into the Chapter account from what is now the National Conference account.

Ken was in the County Veteran's Office and read a brochure which said that veterans, including merchant marine veterans, could get a special license plate—and there was one specific to the merchant marine.

Bob told the story of having a car with press plates on it when he was a tv news reporter. When he sold the car he forgot to take the special plates off of it. The police later told him he had sold the car to San Jose's best known burglars..

Phelps said that the Pacific Merchant Marine Council with the San Francisco Council is having a luncheon on March 13 at Scoma's Restaurant and the guest speaker will be the executive director of the Port of Sacramento. He believed it was going to be \$55 per person.

Break for Lunch. Raffle ended at 1:00 and the meeting was adjourned.



By Bob Ulrich Compiled from reports by Wikipedia and the SIU's Seafarers Log

On Oct 1, 2015, the U.S. Flagged ship El Toro, an American Cargo ship went down with all hands during Hurricane Joaquine. There were 33 crew members on board. The voice recorder (ships black box) was recovered in August 2016 and tells us the El Faro's story. .

El Faro departed Jacksonville, Florida bound for Puerto Rico on the early morning of September 30, 2015, when then Tropical Storm Joaquin was several hundred miles to the east. After Joaquin had become a category 3 hurricane, the vessel likely encountered swells of 20 to 40 ft and winds of over 150 mph. .

On October 2, the forty year old ship was declared missing, and an extensive search operation was launched by the Coast Guard, with help from the Air Force, Air National Guard and Navy. They recovered debris, a damaged lifeboat, and an unidentifiable body.

On October 29th the the USNS Apache, located the El Faro in 15,000 feet of water with the ship in an upright position. It was not until August 9, 2016 that the ships data recorder (black box) was recovered. It had been attached to the ships mast and the mast had broken off making it very difficult to retrieve.

The following is the NTSB's summary of the bridge audio transcript:

The bridge audio recording began about 5:37 a.m. Sept. 30, 2015, roughly eight hours after El Faro departed Jacksonville, Florida.

“The first recorded conversation about the forecasted weather was captured the morning of Sept 30, between the captain and chief mate, who agreed on a course diversion they believed would keep them sufficiently clear of the eye of the Hurricane Joaquin.

The captain departed the bridge at 8 p.m. Sept 30, and returned at about 4:10 a.m., Oct 1.

At about 4:37 a.m. the chief mate received a phone call from the chief engineer regarding the vessel's list and engine oil levels. This appears to be the first recorded conversation about these issues. The information was relayed to the captain. The alternate chief engineer is heard stating at about 5:12 am that he has never seen the ship with such a list.

At about 5:43 a.m. the captain takes a phone call and indicates that there is a problem in the number three hold of the ship and sends the chief mate to investigate. They discuss suspected flooding over uhf radio, which appears to be the first recorded conversation about a flooding condition on the ship.

The captain indicates at about 6:13 a.m. that the ship lost propulsion. Numerous conversations are heard throughout the remainder of the recording about the ship's flooding condition, attempts to rectify the ship's list and attempts to regain propulsion.

The second mate began formating a GMDSS distress message at about 6:32 a.m. as directed by the captain. At 7:07 a.m. the captain notified TOTE Services designated shore-side-representative of the critical condition and that he was preparing to send an electronic distress signal. The captain instructed the second mate to send the distress message at about 7:13a.m. The captain gave the command to sound the ship's general alarm about 7:27 a.m. and about two minutes later the second mate exclaimed there were containers in the water and the captain gave the command to sound the abandon ship alarm. About four minutes later the captain relayed over the UHF radio to put the life rafts in the water.

The bridge audio recording ended at about 7:40 a.m. Oct 1, 2015, with the Captain and one of the helmsmen still present on the bridge.” Nothing more.

AMMV Sacramento Valley Chapter Guest Speaker Phelps Hobart Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Phelps will give a presentation on the two World War II vintage ships he served aboard – the cargo ships USS Algol (AKA-54/LKA-54) and the USS Vermilion, (AKA-107/LKA-107). This is a first for him; let’s have a good turnout to hear what he has to say and show us.



Photo No. KN-9103 USS Vermilion (AKA-107) in May 1963



Proposed Schedule of Events

National Conference

Reno, Nevada – March 26 – March 30, 2017

Sands Regency Hotel

Notes: All activities listed below will be in rooms on the Mezzanine of the Regency Tower.

Sunday, March 26, 2017

1:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Membership Registration - Regency Room E & F

1:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Hospitality Room

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Board of Director's meeting, Room TBD

Hospital Room reopens

Monday, March 27

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Membership Registration continues

General Session. Opening Ceremonies: Presentation of Colors, Pledge of Allegiance

Welcome: Mayor City of Reno, State Commander American Legion, Introduction of Chapter Reps, National President Chris Edyvean New Legislation, Report on Status of Veterans Status for Korean Vets.

12:00 Noon - 1:30 PM

Hospitality Room Open

12:00 Noon - 1:30 PM

Ladies Luncheon

1:00 PM - 3:30 PM

General Session continues: President Edyvean Election of National Officers. Any new resolutions or

By-law changes

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Guest speaker TBD

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Hospitality Room Open

6:30 PM

BANQUET

BANQUET; Guest speaker: Jeremy Hope, Pacific Ports Agent, International Organization of Masters, Mates, & Pilots

Hospitality Room Open

Tuesday, March 28

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

General Session

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

*Bus Tour, Lunch Buffet at Grand Sierra Hotel
Tour of Antique Cars Harrah's Auto Showroom
Visit to Planetarium at University of NV, Reno*

Hospitality Room Open
Free night to explore or gamble

Wednesday, March 29

9:00 AM - 12:00

General Session

President Edye to introduce William Geroux, Author of "The Matthews Men" who will talk about his book and the sinking of the S.S. City of New York and events that happened in the lifeboat, ., Dr. Leonard Conly assisted in the birth of a baby boy to passenger Desanka Mohorovic. We hope to have descendent's of the lifeboat survivors in attendance.

12:00 lunch break

1:00pm 3:30

General Session continues.

Dave Yoho, Dave Yoho Associates; 10803 West Main St, Fairfax, VA 22030 David Alberg, NOAA Sanctuary Superintendent Douglas Alvord, sculpture artist

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Open Mike

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Hospitality Room

6:00 PM

FAREWELL BANQUET

Guest Speaker: Capt. Harry Bolton, Skipper of the Golden Bear Training ship of the California Maritime Academy Awards Ceremony.

Hospitality Room Open

Thursday, March 30

HOMeward BOUND

AMMV 31 st annual National Convention Registration
March 26-29 th , 2017 (Sands Regency Hotel, Reno, NV)

Name _____
Affiliation/Chapter _____
Spouse/Other _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Convention Fee (No fee for Spouse or Companion) \$75 x _____ = \$ _____
Board of Director's Meeting..... (Sunday, March 26: 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM)
Business Meeting: Opening Ceremony..... (Monday, March 27: 9:00 AM)
Business Session..... (Monday, March 27: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM)
Ladies' Luncheon (Monday, March 27: 12 noon)
 Croissant Crab and Bay Shrimp Sandwich \$18 x _____ = \$ _____
 Cobb Salad \$18 x _____ = \$ _____
President's Reception Dinner (Monday, March 27: 6:30pm)
 Roast Pork Loin, Roasted Potatoes & Asparagus, Carrot ... \$35 x _____ = \$ _____
 Baked Herb Crusted Cod, Twice Baked Potato, Green Beans,
Carrot Cake. \$35 x _____ = \$ _____
Business Meeting..... (Tuesday, March 28: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM)
Reno Bus Tour (Tuesday, March 28: 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM)... \$55 x _____ = \$ _____
Harrah's Automobile Collection, Buffet Grand Sierra Hotel, Planetarium, University of Nevada
- Reno
Business Meeting General Session..... (Wednesday, March 29: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM)
Farewell Banquet (Wednesday, March 29: 6:30 PM)
 12 oz. Oven Roast Prime Rib, Twice Baked Potato, Asparagus,
Tiramisu..... \$45 x _____ = \$ _____
 Pacific Salmon Teriyaki, Twice Baked Potato, Green Beans,
Tiramisu..... \$45 x _____ = \$ _____
Total Due for Convention Fee, Meals, Event, & Tours..... . _____

Make check payable to: AMMV 31 st National Convention 2017
Mail Check (No Cash) with completed form to: Cindy Raymond, 2722 Maynes Ct., Santa Rosa,
CA 95405

Make room reservations at the Sands Regency 800-233-4939. For special room rates of
\$25/night plus \$17 tax, tell them you are with the Merchant Marine Conference.

Free airport shuttle, call upon arrival & check with Bell Desk before departure. Conference
dates: March 26 - March 29 (Depart on 30th).

End E Newsletter Feb 2017 Bob Ulrich Editor