

# Internet-Newsletter May 2017

## *AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE VETERANS SACRAMENTO VALLEY CHAPTER*



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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. Most writing by Bob, Ken, and Ramona.

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

**This issue..**

**Prez Sez by Ken Blue**

**Minutes by Larry Starn**

**Another Member passes**

**Letters to the Editor**

**Letters to your Congressperson supporting our bill HR 154**



THE PREZ SEZ by Ken Blue

May issue.

We are still on a campaign to get our bill "HR 154" through Congress this year. I was at the kick off in San Diego all those many years ago and I would like to see the conclusion this year.

This subject is dealt with in our current, Spring 2017, AMMV News magazine.

Our current and recent national presidents have come up with good ideas to help push our "bill" along. Morris Harvey used the "Storm the Hill" method during the last Congress and now Pres Capt. Chris Edyvean urges all members to contact their congressperson to support this bill. The only way we can get it passed is for every one to get busy and contact their Representative.

Also get your friends and relatives to contact their Congressperson. The more letters or telephone contacts that are made the more chance we have to get our bill passed. The previously mentioned Spring 2017 magazine has a chart of all the Congress Districts with names, addresses, and telephone numbers, both in Washington D.C. and their home district.

To use a nautical metaphor, "I believe the wind and the tide are favorable". There has been lots of publicity about neglected veterans. Many politicians are pledged to support veterans issues. Please help our cause with a loud "WE TOO"

Oh! I like the logo and cartoon "HELL NO, WE WON'T GO AWAY". Some say I posed for the cartoon. I didn't but I could have. Ken

**Editors note : Read my comments about my email campaign on your behalf later in this Newsletter. This was made possible by our friends in the Navy League who put together a piece of computer software which helps the process and which I was able to use. Bob**



## The Minutes....by Larry Starn

Present: Larry, Jim, Ken, Bill & Bea, Sally, Steve & Bonnie, Bob, Ray and guest Bill

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 by President Ken Blue

The National Convention was great. It was hosted by Golden Gate and the Sacramento chapter with Bob Ulrich, Ken Blue and Frank Mendez acting as co-host chairmen. That's another way of saying that they get to do most of the work.

Several talks are on our web site including that of William Geroux and his talk on the book about the Mathew's Men—a group of mostly unrelated residents of the town of Matthews, a sea faring town, who were lost in WWII. The other talk is about extending the Maritime Trust from protecting the sunken grave site of the Civil War ironclad Warship Monitor, (the first Iron Clad war ship ever) to include the many WWII American Merchant ships and also the German subs sunk off the east coast and Caribbean. These are also the gravesites of American Merchant Marine seamen as well as German sub crews. Our chapter got several plaques, including one for the chapter newsletter given to Ken Blue and Bob Ulrich. At the meeting Ken presented it to our newsletter guru Bob Ulrich. Here is Ken's story. He used to do the newsletter himself. It was a lonesome job. After Bob joined him they made some changes. Photos were added. Bob came up with more interesting subjects and he also started a website—ammvsacvalley.com. The electronic version of our newsletter was singled out by President Chris Edyvean. This has long been Bob's doing since 2006. When the plaque was presented to Ken, Ken said, "Here Bob, the plaque really belongs to you." (See photo elsewhere in this issue.)

Our club had 10 or 11 members at the convention. Bob had 6 and Ken had his niece from Las Vegas.

The Conference had outstanding speakers. The convention magazine raised considerable money so even though we comped more rooms than usual, we still did okay financially.

Sally Raanes reported that our friend Richard Hill of Golden Gate is ill and is not doing well.

Larry did a talk about the "Murder of Robert Kennedy". Based on the book Cause of Death, which states that since the bullet that killed RFK went into his head from a distance of not more than 2 inches based on the autopsy and that Sirhan Sirhan was at least 2 feet away, although Sirhan tried to kill RFK, he could not have fired the bullet that killed him. Two of his bullets hit RFK in the shoulder and the third went through RFK's clothing. Therefore the bullet that killed RFK must have been fired by someone else, perhaps the security guard next to Kennedy.

Bill mentioned an incident at RFK's funeral in New York at the Saint Marys Cathedral. 2000 people were in line and there was a bomb reported. The fire department, instead of evacuating, went looking for the most prominent people in their bomb book. The main suspect was lying on the bed in a 75 cent a day room being bitten by a rat. They grabbed him.

Bob said that the RFK coverage was the last on camera TV coverage of an election that he did. They finally, just switched to the network for the rest of the night. Bob said his thought was, "This can't be happening."

Ken passed out some plastic cups left over from the conference urging passage of HR 154. Its easy to keep the numbers straight with one of these.

Dave Yoho has written a 3 page summary aimed at Congress and the public explaining why the bill should be passed. Dave, trained at Sheepshead Bay, N.Y. when he was 15, is now a successful motivational speaker and businessman with over 500 paid speeches to his credit. He gifted a 10,000 dollar check to our National Organization at the Conference. Dave will also speak about the Merchant Marine at the National Monument this Memorial Day. Bob hopes to be able to broadcast, both audio and video, on our web site after the fact. Watch for it on our web site.

500 WWII veterans are dying every day. It has been estimated that there are 2000 Merchant Marine veterans of WWII still alive.

Our guest, Bill Carter, went on a cruise on the Golden Bear out of the California Maritime Academy. After high school he went to sea as an ordinary seaman for 6 months on a Mobile Oil gas tanker (a T-2 tanker) on which his neighbor was captain. He made good money and wanted to stay, but his father didn't want him to go to sea. He ended up being a fire department captain in Westminster, California.

*Hey Bill. Come to another meeting or join up. We would like to have you.*

Maritime Day is May 22, Monday. It was proposed we cancel our regular meeting and have a celebration on that day at the memorial outside of Old Town Sacramento at the Tower Bridge. Larry moved and Bea seconded the motion to do that. The vote was unanimous. Bob noted that Ralph Buehl, our bugler, has passed on. He was a wonderful man and was always there with his bugle when the event warranted.

Bill said that according to his marriage license he and Bea will be married 70 years tomorrow. Ken said he and Helen just passed 67.

Ray Westberg had his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday last week. Congratulations to all of you!

Meeting ended after lunch.



Newsletter Award From National, Above: Ken is handing the award for the Newsletter to me (your editor). Ken plays a big part in this as he not only writes his monthly column but then prints my eNewsletter, folds, collates, stamps and hauls it to the post office and mails the paper edition. We are partners in this endeavor. Its a partnership that seems to work. The award will hang proudly on my office wall.

Bye the way: The medallion hanging around my neck came from the SS Jeremiah Obrien and I had a jeweler solder a catch on it so it would take a chain. The idea came from Larry Starn who did the same with his and did it first. It does draw attention. --

#### **In Memorium: Finnes Bowman**

**Condolences;** We sadly announce the passing of long time Sacramento Valley Chapter member Finnes Bowman of Jackson. Finnes took basic training at Catalina Island. He sailed during the last year of World War II and for two years after and concluded his Merchant Maine duties as a Able Bodied Seaman. Finnes was buried in a family plot in Blue Eye, Mo. He is survived by his wife June and several caring nephews and nieces. Smooth sailing Finnes.



**Notice: Veterans Memorial Cruise  
Aboard the Liberty Ship SS  
Jeremiah O'Brien**

**Veterans Memorial Cruise  
Aboard the Liberty Ship SS  
Jeremiah O'Brien  
May 20, 2017**

**Boarding 11:00am, Departure 12:00pm, Returns  
4:00pm**

The Veterans Memorial Cruise is an annual tradition for the SS Jeremiah O'Brien. It commemorates the gallantry of all veterans who have served in defense of America's freedom. Just outside the Golden Gate Bridge a wreath-laying ceremony is conducted complete with Color Guard.

**Tickets are free for World War II and Korean War Veterans. For Veterans tickets, please call (415) 544-0100 to register.**

**If others are going with you be sure to inquire about prices in advance. Remember that veterans are free but others are not.**

**Prices...Adults \$ 125 Youth \$75 Familys \$300**

Letters to the Editor

From Ward Marshal

Apr 27

Hi Bob,

I'm still here or as Eve used to enjoy saying, I'm still breathing. Eve passed away Feb. 8th after three massive strokes over a two week period. She was under the care of Kaiser who moved her to three of their locations during that period. I think she should have remained in their South Sacramento Hospital during that short period but Kaiser felt otherwise.

I miss her of course, but I am making adjustments to live alone after 70 1/2 years of marriage. Our two "kids" ,70 and 66 this year, live in Plymouth and Seaside.

Glad to hear about the new Bill in Congress. Can you tell me with our DD 214 can we join the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars? Do you recommend that as a possible aid in helping the Bills momentum?

Thanks Bob for all your effort and that of Ken Blue in giving this Bill a chance. My last two voyages during WW II were with the SS Santa Monica a former West Coast passenger ship converted to a troop carrier. We had over 700 Army troops and all their gear ready for the invasion of Okinawa on D Day +2. When we arrived close to Nagasaki Bay there was a heavy Kamikaze attack. We were waived off and told to steam toward Formosa, turn around and be back at Nagasaki Bay on D Day + 5. We did that exactly and when we got back into the Bay a single Kamikaze set us up as his target. What a prize that would have been for him and for Japan had he been successful. As it was, over 30 U.S ships including ours, fired on him. Every tenth bullet was a tracer and as we had practiced the gunners followed that steady light,, got in front of the plane and let him fly into the bullets. He crashed into the sea about 1,000 feet off our starboard bow.

With the GI Bill of Rights all armed forces personnel were entitled to it's benefits. But not the Merchant Marine or Maritime Service personnel. We have struggled all these years without that benefit. Justice is long overdue.

Lets hope we are successful this time.

Ward

Back at you.....

Lets hope so Ward. I think the effort to push the bill is as vigorous as it has ever been. Lots of folks working on it.

I am sorry to hear about Eve's passing. I remember her well. Its quite an adjustment after seventy and a half years.

The American Legion has been helpful, has backed our bill and will accept our membership. I do not know about the VFW but I won't join them because of the shameful way they have treated the Merchant Marine in the past. They have hurt us badly by actually testifying against us. I think it was mainly their top level people and not necessarily the rank and file. Thats just my opinion.

Cheers.

Bob Ulrich

**To all Members from Editor Bob Please read next item.**

More on the offer I made last month to send a personal email to your congressman in your name asking for their support for our bill HR 154. I included the letter's contents in last month's Newsletter. I said I had no time to poll the membership and unless I heard from a member opting out, I would include everyone...one at a time.. No one objected so I did it. The job took two and half days. It was to each of your congresspersons, one at a time, using your name and address. The only thing that was mine was the email address from which they were being sent. I sent a total of 40 emails which is a little more than our membership but I was using a year old roster.

If you are into computers and you want to send additional letters you will find the email address on page 30 in the latest National News magazine which is just out. Give it a try. The more letters the better..

Hope to see everyone at the Tower Bridge Monument on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Maritime Day, for our next meeting and to celebrate National Maritime Day. Thanks to Phelps Hobart and the Navy League we have a speaker. Lunch afterwards at the Embassy Suites or not. Its your choice. Nancy and I always enjoy it.

End 2017 eNewsletter May Sacramento Valley Chapter Bob Ulrich  
Editor.