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The Bugle Call



November/December 2023, Volume 13, Number 10

Warminster, Pennsylvania

*Ann's Choice Residents and Guests are invited to attend Veterans Group Programs and Events
(Meetings are open to ALL with no charge)*

Veterans Day Program in the Liberty Commons PAC on November 10 at 11:00am

The Veterans Group will present the annual Veterans Day program on Friday, **November 10 at 11:00 am** in the Liberty Commons PAC.

The program will be on the origin, history and function of the United States Coast Guard as well as its



involvement in this country's wars.

Join us in the PAC as we honor all our veterans with this informative program which will include patriotic music provided by the Ann's Choice Chorus.

Members of the Veterans Club are encouraged to wear their official shirts. Do you know when the US Coast Guard officially began? Come to the program on November 10 at 11:00 am in the PAC.

VA Benefits



You may have received an application for VA benefits recently in a mailing from PA with your license renewal. If you are not already registered for VA benefits, take this opportunity to sign up.

The Veterans Group Service Officer, Jerry Byrnes is available to answer questions you may have about enrollment. He has blank forms and can be reached by e-mail at jgbyrnes54@yahoo.com or by phone at (917) 572-9346.

There is a lot of information about upcoming events for veterans and access to resources on news.va.gov

Meeting Schedule for

September 2023 to April 2024

Mon., Sep. 18 – Program Only
Mon., Oct. 16 – Bus. Meeting, Program
Fri., Nov. 10 – Veterans Day Program, Liberty Commons PAC
Tues., Dec. 12 – Military Movie Night, The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, Liberty Commons PAC, at 6:30pm
Mon., Jan. 15, 2024 – Business Meeting and Program (Multipurpose Room at 10:00 am)
Mon., Feb. 19, 2024 – Program only
Mon., Mar. 18, 2024 – Program only
Mon., Apr. 15, 2024 – Business Meeting and Program

Military Movie Night

On Tuesday, December 12, the Veterans Group will show the 1965 spy thriller **The Spy Who Came in from the Cold** in the PAC at **6:30 pm** with no pre-show. The runtime is 1 hour 52 minutes.

Alec Leamas (Richard Burton) is the operative for the British Secret Service overseeing the field Agents and their activities in Berlin. Recent activities in the



field in Berlin and Alec's long-term status in the position make his London-based boss, Control (Cyril Cusack), openly wonder if Alec is burnt out and thus needs to come in from the cold to a London-based desk job.

A donation of \$3.00 per person is requested to help support the service projects of the Veterans Group. Members wearing their shirts will not be asked for a donation.

Remember – movie starts at **6:30.**

“Z-Men”

“Did you ever hear of the Z-Men? Sounds like a gag, doesn’t it?” Bob Hope asked his audience over a Christmas radio broadcast in 1944. “Well it isn’t,” he continued. “Z-Men are the guys without whom General ‘Ike’s’ army and Admiral Nimitz’s navy couldn’t live ... Z-Men are the men of the Merchant Marine.”

Drawing from the name of the identification papers, or z-card, required of the men who served in the US Merchant Marine, Hope went on to praise the hundreds of thousands of men who enlisted to sail on merchant ships across the Pacific and Atlantic.

Early History

The first war in which an organized United States Merchant Marine took part was the American Revolutionary War. In 1775 the Continental Congress and the various colonies issued Letters of Marque to privately owned, armed merchant ships known as privateers, which were outfitted as warships to prey on enemy merchant ships. Later, American ships came under the aegis of France due to a 1778 Treaty of Alliance between the two countries.

The use of seamen for defense or official purposes waned after the War of 1812.

During the early twentieth century, the International Seamen’s Union organized to lobby for the Seaman’s Act of 1915 to regulate wages, working hours and conditions, and establish disciplinary action aboard ships. The outbreak of World War I convinced President Wilson of the need for an organized convoy system to combat German warfare, making merchant seamen crucial for maintaining supply routes in dangerous waters and, in turn, boosting their pay.

Once the war ended, however, and the United States entered a period of isolation, merchant sailors were left without the military necessity that presented better economic opportunities.

Merchant Marine Act 1936

The Depression, and a growing concern among U. S. leaders for the fate of international shipping during growing tensions in Europe, prompted President Roosevelt to reconsider the importance of a merchant marine. Seeking to subsidize shipping companies that were necessary for trade and yet suffering losses due to tariffs, FDR signed the Merchant Marine Act in 1936. This act established the Maritime Commission that would oversee a multi-year ship-building program to replace the old and outdated fleet from World War I and granted subsidies to American-flagged private

ships to be on standby for defense purposes. These ships would be used for trade during peacetime but available for the Navy during war or a national emergency.

The Merchant Marine in World War II

The outbreak of war in Europe made the Merchant Marine significant for security and defense. The Neutrality Act of 1939 barred American ships from carrying war matériel purchased with cash by belligerent countries. It also had the effect of pushing newly unemployed seamen into the Merchant Marine Corps. Later, the Lend-Lease Act of 1941 boosted job opportunities by allowing the U. S. to lend or lease war supplies to any country “vital to the defense of the United States.” The Merchant Marine now took on a more crucial, yet dangerous role in transporting the goods produced by the United States overseas to allies.

Shipping became an integral part of both German and Allied strategy early in the war. German submarines attacked British merchant ships in the Atlantic, disrupting supply chains to America’s allies. As a result of these attacks, merchant mariners experienced some of the earliest action of the war.

On December 21, 1940, the German submarine U-68 torpedoed *SS Charles Pratt* off the coast of West Africa killing two merchant mariners aboard. In response to attacks like these, in January 1941 FDR ordered the mass production of cargo ships designed to carry large quantities of war matériel. Those mass-produced ships were known as Liberty ships. By March, the Maritime Commission rapidly increased production of Liberty ships.

These slow-moving ships and the civilian merchant mariners who maneuvered them were easy targets for enemy fire. At 8 am on December 7, a Japanese submarine torpedoed *SS Cynthia Olson*, transporting lumber for the Army from Tacoma to Honolulu. All aboard perished, making these merchant mariners among the earliest American casualties of the war.



Merchant crew and Navy Armed Guard practice operating a 20mm gun. Courtesy of the National Archives.



The Allied tanker Dixie Arrow after she was torpedoed in the Atlantic by a German U-boat. (U.S. Navy, Photo from a NAS Key West aircraft)

On the same day, the US Navy ordered SS *President Harrison* to evacuate US Marines from Beijing, but the Japanese attacked the ship and took 167 mariners prisoner.

FDR established the War Shipping

Administration on February 7, 1942. It took control of all off-shore merchant vessels under various charters; and it coordinated and instituted a new ship-building program to replace the clunky Liberty ships with more agile Victory ships. The dangers for civilian mariners, however, remained as they were plunged into some of the most dangerous missions transporting war goods and men. They remained easy targets on the ships for the German U-boats in the North Atlantic, the US East Coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the rest of the Atlantic.

Mariners transporting supplies in the Pacific theater fared little better than their counterparts in the Atlantic. On April 6, 1942, two Japanese planes attacked SS *Bienville* which was docked in the Bay of Bengal after completing a mission transporting manganese ore, jute, burlap, and general cargo from Calcutta to Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Japanese continued to fire on the *Bienville*, its crew seeking cover. Only 19 of the 43 survived the attack.

Recognizing the Merchant Marine

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt proclaimed, "Without our Merchant Marine this war could not be won, and it is greatly to our interest to make the life of our merchant seamen a worthwhile existence in the future, because I believe we are going to need our ships to sail the seven seas." And FDR repeatedly praised the Merchant Marine and "their skill and determination [that] will keep open the highway to victory and unconditional surrender." While signing the GI Bill in June 1944, he also trusted that "Congress will soon provide similar opportunities to members of the merchant marine who have risked their lives time and time again during war for the welfare of their country."

FDR's calls for Congress to recognize their sacrifices were not heard. The work of the Merchant Marine did not end when the war did; they transported men (including prisoners of war) and supplies for the

Why Do You Need the Veterans Group?

The Veterans Group provides several services to veterans and fellow residents of Ann's Choice. These include –

- Color Guard for presenting the U. S. flag at Veterans Group programs and at some Ann's Choice programs.
- Annual Memorial Day remembrance service in the Chapel for veterans.
- Annual program on Veterans Day.
- Deploying and retrieving memorial flags in front of the clubhouses.
- Deploying and retrieving small flags around the campus.
- Valet service for mobility devices
- Free transportation to the Horsham VA clinic.
- Military movie nights in the PAC.
- Having this newsletter to read.

It takes volunteers to make these things happen.

Even if you don't use some of these services now, there may come a time in the future when you need to take advantage of them.

Our concern is that due to the declining number of veterans or the lack of awareness of the need for volunteers, we may not be

able to provide needed services in the future.

If you are a veteran or an interested resident and would like to help, please contact one of the officers and volunteers listed in the left-most column on page 1.

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occupation of Japan, and they refused to give up their fight for veteran status.

The Department of Defense maintained that mariners did not qualify as veterans because they did not meet its criteria based upon training and the organization of the service. In 1988, however, a US District Judge ruled that DoD's views were arbitrary and unfair, prompting recognition of mariners who served in specific defense capabilities between 1941-1945 as veterans, eligible for GI Bill benefits.

Sources include an article on Wikipedia and an article on the World War II Museum website.

Veterans Flags

For certain national holidays, the Ann’s Choice Veterans Group deploys government-issued U. S. flags in front of each clubhouse. The holidays are Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Veterans Day. There are twenty-one in-ground mounts in front of the three clubhouses and Rose Garden. These flags



have been donated to the Veterans Group by families of veterans.

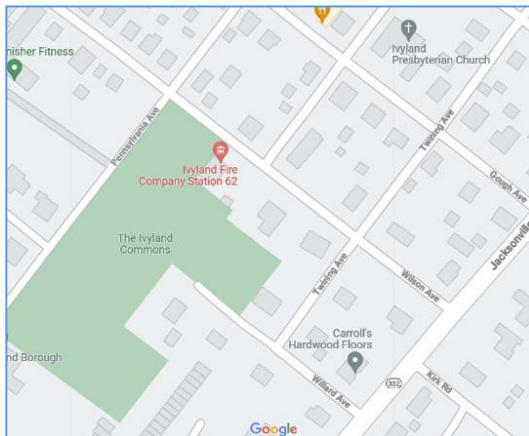
Twenty-one flags are deployed on the three holidays. Volunteers deploy these flags and take them in after the holiday. **Volunteers are needed.** If you would like to join this team as a way to honor veterans, contact Gordon Larson at (630) 926-7334.

Membership Open

At the Veterans Group meeting in June 2022 the membership approved changes to the By-Laws to expand eligibility to all residents for membership in the Veterans Group. Veterans may apply to be a Member, and non-Veterans may apply to be an Associate Supporting Member. Lifetime membership fees are \$50 and \$35 respectively and the membership fee includes an official Veterans Group shirt.

All members 1) receive a copy this monthly newsletter, *The Bugle Call*, 2) will not be asked for a donation at Military Movie Night if wearing their Veterans Group shirt, and 3) may participate in any of the service projects of the Veterans Group. Note: Associate Supporting Members are not eligible to be elected to the Board of Directors.

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Proper Flag Disposal

We have learned that an Eagle scout in nearby Ivilynd Borough has set up an American Flag Disposal Container. The flag disposal



AV Opportunities

There is an opportunity to help with the Veterans Group during the meetings and programs in the Multipurpose Room and for Military Movie Nights in the PAC by volunteering to help with AV services.

Contact Keith Lawrence at (215) 444-0116 for more information about this service opportunity.

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Wreaths Across America



This December 16 will be National Wreaths Across America day when balsam veterans' wreaths will be placed on the headstones of our fallen heroes, including those at Washington Crossing National Cemetery. The mission of Wreaths Across America is

Remember the fallen. Honor those who serve. Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

If you would like to help support this effort, you may donate through the Ann’s Choice Veterans Group. All donations will be combined and added to the Veterans Group own donation and mailed to Wreaths Across America in Columbia, Maine. To donate through the Veterans Group, make your check payable to “Ann’s Choice – Veterans Group” and put “Wreaths Across America” in the memo. Note that by combining your donation with others, your name will not be added to their mailing list. Put your donation in cubby PV-318, Rose Torgerson.

As of the day the newsletter was printed, there had not been a decision as whether Ann’s Choice would sponsor a bus to take people to Wreaths Across America at Washington Crossing National Cemetery

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unit is in the Memorial site on Wilson Avenue just after the Firehouse and playground. All flags deposited into the disposal unit will be disposed of properly according to US law. (map is from Google Maps)

