

LST534 Newsletter

July/August, 1999

Volume II, Issue 4

Just How Many People Watched "Onto Rugged Shores"?

By this time, you all know that we hired a public relations firm to help get the message out about the airing of "Onto Rugged Shores". We, meaning me and my New York office staff, working together interviewed four public relations companies, but when we all met the firm of Stone-Hallinan, we knew it would be them. That was early April. For the next nine weeks, we were all intensely involved with Kathleen, Judy, Karen, and Tim.

PR is really a lot of work. Kathleen took on the responsibility of newspaper interviews. Judy and Karen took on radio and TV. (Tim sent the bills ☺).

Kathleen and I worked together closely to try to get each shipmate that appeared in the show an interview in their home town paper. In addition, she wanted me interviewed by anyone who she could get. I've never met anyone with such a drive. She set up phone interviews with over 26 outlets. Each one took between 40 and 60 minutes, most lasting closer

to the hour. Everyone who interviewed me became enamored of this story. I decided to share some of the writers and their opening statements with you. All of the stories, in their entirety, make you cry.

Jerry Gable, Editor of the Pelican Post in Oak Island, North Carolina (Norris Long's area) began his story like this:

"This is a story of a young woman and an old man who met and became like family against the backdrop of the turmoil and carnage of World War II. But, during that war the old man was then a young man, a Navy veteran of the European and Pacific campaigns, and the woman was but a twinkle in her father's eye."

Kevin McDonough, a freelance journalist who wrote this article for New York Newsday, titled his piece "A Different Kind of Love Story". It begins:

"A daughter's love for her father. A veteran journalist's love for a ship. You don't often

turn to the History Channel for love stories, but both can be found in the documentary "Onto Rugged Shores: Voyage of LST534", filmmaker Linda Alvers' fascinating oral history and moving elegy to her Dad and his generation."

The Asbury Park Press covers the territory of Andy Cumella and we were both interviewed by **Mr. Shannon Mullen**. Shannon's story entitled "The Drama that was D-Day" starts out like this:

"It's alphanumeric name makes it sound more like a metallic element than a ship. In fact, there wasn't much more to the LST534 besides cold, gray metal. The 326 foot long US Navy vessel was boxy, cramped and noisy. Designed with a flat bottom for beach landings, the ship rattled so violently as it moved on the open water that the crew feared it would break apart at any moment...But on the morning of June 6, 1944 - 55 years ago today - LST534 helped turn the tide of World War II."

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Tim Feran, staff writer for the Columbus Dispatch in Columbus, Ohio wrote:

“Sturdy, flat-bottomed and ungraceful, the landing ships of World War II - the LST's - were most unglamorous. Yet, according to veteran broadcast journalist Howard K. Smith, who covered the conflict, “The LST won the war and people need to know that.”

“A Human Story” is how **Ms. Diane Eicher** named her article. She is a staff writer at the Denver Post.

“A daughters quest to recover the past her father lost to Alzheimer's disease led her to produce her first-ever TV documentary about the crew of an unremarkable World War II ship with the decidedly common name of LST534.”

Frank Vinluan is a reporter with the Yakima Herald-Republic in Yakima, Washington. His story, “A Man and His Ship” goes like this:

“Although a firearm would have made a more sensible wartime companion for many in the military, Duncan Robey held something else close while serving in World War II - his bible. War involves conflict, but the conflict that Robey felt didn't involve guns, torpedoes or warships. The sixth of the Ten Commandments is “Thou shalt not kill,” Robey noted. “How

do you obey that commandment, then pick up a gun” the former sailor asked.”

Gene Downs works for the Savannah Morning News, in Savannah, Georgia. He interviewed me and Willie Gunn, Y2c.

“To this day, Linda Alvers doesn't know what happened onstage at Lincoln Center the night she received the first letter.

It was early June 1997, about a month after Alvers had decided to find some of her ailing father's World War II shipmates. She had written to a museum in Evansville, Ind., where her father's vessel - a landing ship tank known simply as LST534 - had been built.

Alvers was on her way out for the evening when she picked up the nine page letter from the man who had been the communications officer on LST534. Once in her seat at Lincoln Center, she began reading “I never paid attention to the performance,” she said. As I read the letter, the tears were rolling down my face, and I thought “Do I have the strength and courage to do what I am about to do, which is dig into the life of my father and war, sadness and devastation?” But when I walked out of there, I said, “I do.”

This project was blessed to have the experience and expertise of

these, plus other, eloquent and distinguished journalists.

May I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them.

Next issue I will talk to you about the radio & television station aspect of public relations.

Reunion August 29-30

The LST534 Reunion will again convene during the US LST Association Convention. The LST534 suite will be open on Sunday, August 29 and Monday, August 30.

The US LST Association convention runs through Wednesday night, September 1. However, the LST534 suite will be open only two days, Sunday and Monday.

Rose Cumella has graciously volunteered to help me out on the reunion committee. We have a lot to do – decorate, plan events, plan food and get everyone there. As plans firm up, we will mail you information about the happenings in the LST534 suite.

Until then, sign up for San Diego, August 28 – September 1, 1999. Please be sure to attend if at all possible. You may not realize it, but the LST534 is now the starlet of LST's.

So come along and meet and greet, see old friends and share old stories. Call 1-800-228-5870 to register.

Birthdays

August 11

Larry Gray, F1c
101 Forrest Hill Drive
Taylors, SC 29687

August 12

Robert A. Goldsmith, MoMM3c
95 Shepherd Drive
Wakefield, RI 02879

August 16

Joseph H. Blackburn, S2c
4206 Deer Run Drive
Knoxville, TN 37912

Luther Curtis Lyles, S2c
2407 Reynolds Road
Wauchula, FL 33873

September 18

Donald Sabin, S1c
92 University Avenue
Providence, RI 02906

October 1

Robert Ware, GM3c
2602 Darwood Court
Mobile, AL 36605



October 2

Emmett Cull, F2c
P.O. Box 1885
Portolla, CA 96122

October 4

Leo F. Wilson, Lt (jg)
5 Malvern Road
Norwood, MA 02062

October 27

Johnny Medeiros, Cox
1363 Northeast 56th Street
Ocala, FL 34479

October 31

Oscar Cress, GMC3c
224 Northwest Monroe Circle
North
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Get Well Wishes

If you need to be on the get well list, please call Linda at 1-800-237-1224.

Alfred Ellis, F1c
28910 Ann Arbor Trail
Westland, MI 48185-1829

Please send him encouraging words when you have a minute to do so. It means a lot.

Finding More Shipmates

Here is an incredible story:

“I was watching TV and all of a sudden there was my ship. And there were all my buddies. I called the History Channel to find out how to get a hold of the producer. They sent me to Linda Alvers.”

Linda said - “And who are you?”

He said - “I'm Jim Miller, Pharmacists Mate, LST534.”

I sent Jim a welcome package which included all of the crew and their phone numbers. Jim called some of you and recalled the good times on board LST534.

Isn't it incredible how Jim Miller found us?

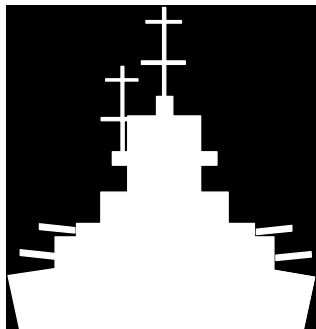
We have also located the families of two deceased shipmates.

Romie Williamson
and
Niels Jorgensen

Don't forget, we are still looking for shipmates!

Jim Miller's phone number is (602) 373-9586.

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Jokes By Jim

I went to a child psychologist.
The kid didn't help me at all.

When I had my first case of puppy love,
I got fleas.

I lost my wife in a crowd.
It took me two hours to do it.

Nautical Terms

In memory of James Richard Drew who contributed
to this column until his passing.

Butt: The end of a plan in the ship's side or
bottom where it joins the end of another plan.

Cheeks: Large, upward – curved knee pieces
between the knee of the head and the bow on
either side.

Eyes: Those parts of a ship near the hawse holes,
at the forward end.

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