

the Deck Log

The Official Newsletter of Historic Ships in Baltimore



Muster Roll Research Reveals *Taney* WWII History Details and also Some Interesting Questions

By Paul Cora, Museum Curator

A recent research effort at the National Archives has added considerably to the museum's collection of USCGC *Taney* source material and yielded interesting details on the ship's World War II service. During March and April 2009, I spent several days at the downtown Washington DC branch of the National Archives in order to locate and copy the ship's monthly muster rolls.

The ship's Muster Roll for each month is a basic listing of the officers and crew assigned to *Taney*, individuals assigned for temporary duty, and passengers carried aboard for various reasons including medical treatment. The Muster Roll also provides details on personnel transfers, promotions, and assignment of non-judicial punishment.

Among the first pieces of information yielded by the project was an indication of the number of personnel carried aboard *Taney* at various times during the war. In December 1941, 212 officers and men were assigned to the ship, while in 1942 and 1943, the numbers rose into the 250 to 275 range, depending on the month. In April 1944, at the start of *Taney's* Atlantic convoy stint, the Muster Roll lists 271 individuals including the task force commander, CAPT W.H. Duvall, USN, and his 14-member staff. The April 1944 roll also includes a US Army Captain, Joseph Payne, who transferred aboard for medical treatment from the Liberty Ship SS *Button Gwinnett*. A year later, at the start of the Okinawa Campaign, *Taney's* Muster Roll lists 286 persons, though this number is misleading. Carried in the roll for April 1945 are 27 US Marines who had originally reported aboard three months before at the Boston Navy Yard. A month after stepping aboard in Boston, this detachment, which was most likely a communications unit, apparently received new orders temporarily assigning them elsewhere. Throughout 1945, the Marines continued to be carried on *Taney* Muster Rolls. Curiously, RADM Calvin Cobb, USN, and his staff are not listed during the spring and summer of 1945, though there is no doubt they were aboard.

Among the unique Muster Roll entries is one "Straggler" who came aboard in the midst of the 7 December 1941 Japanese attack on Hawaii. At 1100 hours that morning, one L.N. Spink, a US Navy Water Tender 2nd Class, apparently found himself

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USS *Constellation* - Dangerous Duty, Even in Peace-Time

By Stephen Bockmiller

From a contemporary view, we all look at the majestic image that is USS *Constellation* and see her as a romantic and historic link with the past. To us she is a museum, a classroom, and a memorial. Even though she fired only a few shots in anger, to the men who served aboard her she was a killing machine - and one to be respected as she could be just as dangerous to them as to any enemy sailor.

Days after *Constellation* left Portsmouth Navy Yard for deployment in the Mediterranean in March 1862, Captain of the Forecastle John Campbell (a.k.a. John Alexander) was washed overboard and drowned. In June, Ordinary Seaman Albert Dyer fell from the mizzenmast and later died of his injuries in Naples, Italy. More bad luck befell the crew before the end of 1862 when, in November, Seaman William W. Clark was killed when he was crushed by a falling yard. Between accidents and illness, no fewer than 11 of *Constellation's* crew died in the service of their country during her 1862-65 Mediterranean deployment.

Some accidents, while not fatal, had lasting impacts: According to pension records, marine Private Alexander McLeod

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USS Constellation appears at left in the Summer of 1886 before she left Portsmouth Navy Yard, days before the fatal accident that claimed the lives of four crew. (Naval Historical Center)

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Successful USS *Constellation* BLAST! supports Historic Ships

Over 350 people gathered on board USS *Constellation* and on Pier 1, *Constellation* Dock, for the 10th annual USS *Constellation* BLAST!, held on Saturday, May 30th. The event could not have been better with perfect weather, excellent food from Absolutely Perfect Catering, Faidley's Seafood of Lexington Market, and a host of local restaurants and purveyors. M&T Bank was the lead sponsor of the event followed by several other corporations and individuals. Musical support was provided by E. Joseph and the Phantom Heart.

Historic Ships in Baltimore would like to thank everyone listed below who contributed to making the event a success. A complete list, including silent auction donors can be found at our website, www.historicships.org.

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Welcome Aboard Richard Kim-Solloway, Director of Development

In March of this year, Historic Ships in Baltimore welcomed Mr. Richard Kim-Solloway on board as the museum's new Director of Development. The Director of Development is the chief fundraiser and fundraising program manager for the museum. A native of Scotland, Richard comes to us with previous experience in the development field at United Cerebral Palsy and the Foundation for Physical



Richard Kim-Solloway

Therapy. Richard's expertise in fundraising will be very helpful to the Historic Ships as we move forward with many projects including the capital campaign for the USS *Constellation* Education and Heritage Center. Richard can be reached at 410-539-1797 X 467 or rkimsolloway@historicships.org.

USS *Constellation* Cup October 17th

Planning for the 2009 USS *Constellation* Cup Fundraising Challenge is well underway. In 2008, 40 yachts participated and over \$12,000 was raised supporting education and preservation initiatives at the Historic Ships. The after-race party for this event is becoming legendary!

In 2009, we are anticipating an even larger event with more yachts and additional classes. Being contemplated for this year, in addition to the race in the outer harbor, is a rowing regatta in the Inner Harbor in *Constellation*'s new ship's boats. These sleek 26' rowing craft will be incredibly fast and exciting to watch. Participants will compete in heats, much like *Constellation*'s crew did against other US Naval vessels in the mid-19th century.

For last year's race totals and photos visit the race website at www.constellationcup.org. Look for the sailing directions, course and party details to be updated in July. If you would like to be a member of the organizing committee please contact Historic Ships Director Christopher Rowsom by phone at 410-539-1797 X 402 or via e-mail at crowsom@historicships.org.



Willow and Crew Preparing for the Start

Volunteer in the Spotlight

Since 1997, Gilbert Bohannon has logged thousands of hours of volunteer time aboard USS *Torsk*. Visit the boat on any given Saturday during the year and your likely to find him busy at work on any number of projects ranging from cataloging plans and blueprints to identifying and organizing historic images of *Torsk* from her 23-year active career. Perhaps the longest serving volunteer in the museum, Gil Bohannon has seen many improvements in the boat's public display offerings and he takes great pride in having played a part in many of them.

Gil grew up in the Baltimore-Washington area and early on nurtured an interest in naval ships, especially submarines. "I first visited *Torsk* around 1981," he recalls, "and fell in love with her. It was a dream come true to become involved as a volunteer in 1997." Working with then Baltimore Maritime Museum Curator, Pam Overmann, one of Gil's first projects was thorough photographic survey of the boat in which he took pictures of all of *Torsk*'s interior compartments and topside equipment. A glance at this 12-year-old photo collection today underscores the tremendous amount of progress that has been made since. "Back in 1997," Gil recalls, "the boat seemed empty and sterile. Many of the spaces were missing equipment and gear. Today, many items such as crew bunks, torpedoes, mess deck benches, radio equipment, and much more are back in place. These items give the visitor a much better idea of life aboard *Torsk*."



*Volunteer Gil Bohannon
on board Torsk*

A founding member of the *Torsk* Volunteer Association (TVA), Gil has been very active in the TVA's many projects over the years. He finds his most enjoyable work to be tasks involving the boat's history and crew. "My greatest satisfaction is making contact with *Torsk* veterans and hearing their stories of their service aboard *Torsk*," says Gil. "It's always fascinating to see photographs or documents that have been hidden away for years in a crew member's collection. The highest priority project I am personally working on is digitizing and organizing the TVA photo and document collection. I have recently started scanning some of the qualification manuals provided by two of our former officers."

Historic Ships in Baltimore greatly appreciates the countless hours of volunteer service put in by Gil Bohannon since 1997 and looks forward to many more down the road. *Torsk* is definitely better off for his involvement.

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Muster Roll, Continued from Page 1



The dramatic World War II Taney photo that most likely shows British merchant sailor George Hempenstall being highlined aboard for medical treatment on 19 September 1944. The officer in khaki, at right, appears to be Dr. Kemp Dowdy, Taney's Public Health Service surgeon during 1944.

stranded in downtown Honolulu without a way back to his ship, the light cruiser USS *Raleigh* (CL-7). Moored in Pearl Harbor, *Raleigh* was badly damaged by a torpedo hit and several nearby bomb explosions. At 0800 on 8 December, WT2 Spink departed *Taney* for the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. His ship was later salvaged and ultimately finished the war.

One Muster Roll entry from September 1944 very likely fixes a date and a name to a remarkable wartime photograph showing an underway highline transfer which has appeared in publications from time to time. On 19 September, during an Atlantic/Mediterranean convoy run, a British seaman was transferred aboard *Taney* for medical treatment. He is listed in the Muster Roll as George M. Hempenstall, a Boatswain in the British Merchant Marine. His ship was the gasoline tanker MV *Empire Wordsworth*, a veteran of many wartime convoys. Additional research on the tanker *Empire Wordsworth* could be conclusive where this image is concerned.

While the Muster Roll project was to include the collection of copies of the Muster Roll for each month during World War II, the scope of such an effort turned out to be beyond the time available. At present, a sampling of quarterly Muster Rolls from December 1941 to September 1945 have been obtained. In addition to its resource value for the museum, *Taney* World War II veteran Jim Kitchen will be using this collected material to help create a memorial plaque listing all of those who served aboard during the war. Mr. Kitchen hopes to present the complete plaque in person later this year.

Dangerous Duty, Continued from Page 1

was seriously injured when he fell down a hatchway. In January 1863, marine Private Daniel Sullivan was assaulted and stabbed by Gunner's Mate Charles Moore, who had become intoxicated while on shore leave in Genoa. Initially thought to be fatally wounded, Sullivan recovered and returned to duty.

Sadly, one accident may have hounded one man to his grave and beyond. On one morning, marine Private Dennis Reagan was working the "pump breaks" with a team of marines as the sailors holystoned the decks. Reagan walked to the forward hatch, presumably to visit the head, when sailors dragged a massive holystone across his foot, crushing it. Private Michael Powers related in a pension affidavit on Reagan's minor children's behalf that his comrades initially thought it funny watching Reagan jumping around while holding his foot and cursing at the sailors handling the stone.

Funny, however, it was not. Due to his injury, Reagan spent a long time off duty and when discharged from sick bay, he spent the rest of the cruise on light duty serving as the primary orderly at the captain's cabin. Reagan walked with a limp for the rest of his life. He fought ongoing problems with the foot, including major inflammation which spread up his leg and apparently contributed to his death, which was recorded as "consumption" (tuberculosis) on his death certificate. After he died in 1880, a pension was applied for on behalf of his two minor children, citing his injury as causing or contributing to his death, in spite of the contents of his death certificate. According to affidavits from other doctors in support of this claim, it is at least debatable whether tuberculosis truly claimed Reagan's life or the effects of his injury. It is not clear from the records whether his children received the pension.

Perhaps the worst accident that occurred on board *Constellation* happened off Cape Cod in August 1886, while sailing at 13 knots in half-gale winds. Naval Academy "Cadet" O.S. Schley of Indiana was the nephew of Col. William L. Schley, commanding officer of the 5th Maryland Infantry during the Civil War and a cousin of the Naval Academy Superintendent, Captain Winfield Scott Schley (later Spanish-American War fame). According to newspaper reports, Schley was in the lee foretop-mast rigging and "missed his footing and fell...a distance of one-hundred feet, striking the vessel's rail and falling into the water".

Orders were immediately given to deploy a lifeboat. With seven of her crew in place, the orders of the officer of the deck were misunderstood and the boat was prematurely let go and immediately swamped. Coxwains Emil Olsen, A. Carsen and M. Doland gave their lives in the attempt to save or recover Cadet Schley.

Although no one died of enemy fire aboard *Constellation*, we must always remember the many men who gave their lives in the service of their country aboard her, whether by illness or accident. Also, we must also be aware of our surroundings as we trod the decks of *Constellation*, as she was not built as a museum. She is a 19th Century warship, and as such, has inherent conditions to which we must always pay attention. Watch your footing and when below decks, watch your head!

Collections Update

Historic Ships in Baltimore gratefully thanks and acknowledges the following people who have made donations to the museum's collection:

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 Mr. Robert Sparks of Centreville, VA
 Dr. Barbara Thomson of Springfield, NJ
 SFC David F. Whiting, USA (ret)



(Left) A Louis A. Scherr & Co. marine chronometer and wooden case, dated 1810-1860 from the estate of Richard Thomson. Donated by Dr. Barbara Thomson.



(Above) A metal boatswain's pipe which belonged to Joseph Clayton Whiting, father of the donor, possibly during his service on USS *Constellation* in the early 1900's. Donated by SFC David F. Whiting, USA, ret.

(Right) A copper linseed oil tank that was removed from *Constellation* prior to the ships return to Baltimore. The tank bears a plaque stamped "CONSTELLATION. / 45. GAL-LONS." Acquired from Naval Historical Detachment Boston.



New and Returning Members & Donors (Through 1 May 2009)

Thank you very much to all of the individuals and families that supported Historic Ships in Baltimore during this time.

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The Overnight Adventure Series (1 of 3) Cub Scouts Man *Constellation*

On March 20, 2009, Cub Pack 496 from Stevensville, Maryland was welcomed by Master-at-Arms Szimanski and his corporals Rauscher and Wright on Pier 1 of Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

Mr. Szimanski announced that it was March 10, 1862, and in the morning the ship would set sail for the Mediterranean Sea to protect Union merchant ships from Confederate raiders. He added that as the Master-at-Arms he was responsible for the education and care of the young sailors on board, called Ships Boys, for the next three years. As the scouts stood wide eyed and mouths agape, they learned that their parents, the Landsmen in attendance, had signed them up for the Navy because it was hard to provide for them back home on the farm during the Civil War.

Upon boarding the ship, the new Ships Boys and Landsmen were put to work and learned how to trim sail by manning the braces and how to lift heavy cargo onto and off of the ship using the ship's upper capstan.

At dusk, the new recruits helped the Master-at-Arms and corporals lower the National Ensign before washing their hands and going down to the galley on the Gun Deck for supper with Cook Barrett. Since the ship was at port and had not begun its journey, there were plenty of fresh supplies to make a hearty meal of beef and vegetable soup and hardtack. Cook Barrett also provided the new recruits with some dried fruit and flavored lemon water for something sweet after supper.

After dinner, the Ships Boys and Landsmen were taken on a tour of the ship. They learned how food was stored in the Hold, why Ships Boys could never be captains, why hammocks were better than beds, and where the entire *Constellation* crew would go to use the bathroom. Then, the crew assigned the new recruits hammocks and shifts on the Night Watch. During the night, Ships



New Recruits Learn to Brace the Yards



Anchors Aweigh!

Heaving on the Capstan and Working Up an Appetite.

Boys and Landsmen walked *Constellation's* decks to ensure no rebels boarded and that the ship was secured.

In the morning, Mr. Szimanski's Boatswain's Pipe effectively, if somewhat abruptly, awoke the recruits. They were then instructed on how to trice up their hammocks before inspection. Once all the hammocks were properly tied and the Ships Boys and Landsmen declared "clean," they returned to the galley for a hot meal of burgoo (oatmeal), bacon, and soft buttermilk biscuits.

After the morning meal, Ships Boys and Landsmen went to work with the VIII-inch Chambered Shell Guns. Following the Gun Drill, Mr. Szimanski led the recruits to the Spar Deck to shoot the 20-lb Parrott Rifle as a reward for all their hard work.

The Ships Boys' and Landsmen's three-year enlistment was over before they knew it and by 0900 they lined up to disembark. Shouting three loud cheers, they left *Constellation* for home with some exceptionally fine memories and sea stories.

OVERNIGHT ADVENTURES

Historic Ships in Baltimore offers Overnight Adventures on board USS *Constellation*, USS *Torsk*, and USCGC *Taney*. Each program is different, engaging and exciting for both young, and not-so-young, sailors. Overnights are excellent special occasion events for birthdays! Historic Ships offers a full menu of activities for all types of groups.

For more information, or arrange to bring your group aboard, please call 410-396-3453, or contact us by e-mail at sberry@historicships.org.

**Special FAMILY NIGHT on board
USS *Torsk* December 11, 2009.**

CONSTELLATION'S SHIPS BOATS ON COURSE FOR COMPLETION

Senior Shipwright Bruce MacKenzie and his apprentice Elijah Racicot are on track to have the first two of *Constellation's* Ships Boats complete by the second week in September. When complete the boats will be on display at the Douglass Myers Maritime Park until davits are installed on *Constellation*. Davits will allow the boats to be hung from *Constellation* in their traditional underway positions.

The construction of these boats was funded, in part, by a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network (www.baygateways.net). Bruce has enlisted the help of students from the Living Classrooms Foundation Fresh Start program to assist with some of the construction, including the steam-bending of the frames. Eventually, the boats will be used for rowing and seamanship programs at *Constellation*.

A third boat, a double-ended "whaleboat" is also currently under construction. The "whaleboat" is smaller than the first two cutters and is of lapstrake construction. It is being built with the assistance of students from the Living Classrooms Voyages of Exploration program funded by the National Science Foundation. The Voyages program is based around STEM curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and traditional boat-building is a perfect fit for exploring these subjects. Over 150 students have participated in the building of the whaleboat. A second whaleboat will be started in October of this year. If you would like to see the ship boats in progress please visit the Douglass Myers Boat Shop at 1417 Thames Street in Fells Point.



Whaleboat planked and ready for finishing



Students prepare for the next plank on the "whaleboat"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LIGHTSHIP STATIONS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

Saturday, July 11th at 2 PM

Did you know that for almost a century-and-a-half lightships, not lighthouses, were the primary aid to Chesapeake Bay navigation? Join Capt. Greg Krawczyks, U.S.N. (ret) in the crews' mess aboard the Lightship Chesapeake and learn more about the 17 lightships that served throughout the Bay – where they served and how they did it.

SHIPS COMPANY ON BOARD!

ALL DAY - July 25th, August 22nd, September 26th

USS *Constellation's* living history interpretive unit of Civil War era sailors and marines. Presentations and hands-on activities provide unique insight into the life and times of those who served in Mr. Lincoln's navy." To learn more about Ship's Company, visit www.shipscompany.org

MARITIME RADIO HISTORY

August 8th, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Join members of the "ON STATION" Armature Radio Club on board Lightship Chesapeake for a presentation on maritime "wireless" radio communication and history.

VICTORY NIGHT! HONORING THOSE WHO SERVED AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE HISTORIC SHIPS TODAY

August 22nd, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM:

Walk in the footsteps of your ancestors. Former crew members and their descendants are always welcomed aboard, particularly for the Historic Ship's annual Crew and Descendant Reunion. Come join crewmembers of *Taney*, *Torsk*, *Chesapeake*, descendants of *Constellation's* crew and Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse keepers, and their families. This delightful event is free to all members, volunteers, former crew and their descendants. Food and drink are provided. Simply RSVP to your invitation (to be sent in the summer) or call 410-539-1797 if you are a crewmember or descendant who is not yet on the Historic Ships list.

USS CONSTELLATION TURN-AROUND CRUISE

Friday, September 11th, 3 - 6 PM

USS *Constellation* will get underway for her annual Turn-Around Cruise on Friday, September 11th, at 3:00 p.m. Spectators may view this event from the Inner Harbor Promenade, Federal Hill, Fells Point and Ft. Mc Henry. Historic Ships members at the Commodore and Admiral levels will receive invitations to be on board for the annual Turn-Around cruise. Please call 410-539-1797 X 422 or visit our website for information on how you can become a member of Historic Ships in Baltimore.



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SAVE THE DATE
October 17, 2009
Historic Ships in Baltimore's
USS Constellation Cup
Regatta & Bull Roast