

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW CARD
CEREMONY ABOARD SS JOHN W. BROWN
MAY 19, 1992
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. And welcome aboard this historic vessel. Thank you Captain Leback and a special welcome to Congressman Herbert Bateman of Virginia.

We are here to honor the merchant marines war dead in observance of National Maritime Day.

Our nation's merchant seafarers have earned the honor and respect of a grateful nation. They've provided vital support of our armed services in times of military challenge.

During this century the support of merchant mariners has been crucial -- and their sacrifices heroic. They have served in every armed conflict from World War I to Desert Storm. During World War II alone, despite enemy attacks which sank more than 700 U.S.-flag vessels and claimed the lives of more than 6,000 civilian seafarers, they transported our troops and kept open the supply lines that led ultimately to victory.

We hold these services each year not only to reaffirm our gratitude, but to tell their story to every generation so the memory won't fade. The **SS JOHN W. BROWN** is one of the two remaining Liberty Ships of the nearly 3,000 built to supply Allied troops during World War II.

These medals are newly struck. The ones we present today were hand minted as production of thousands of machine-minted medals will take a few months. We will present the first of these new medals to seven distinguished merchant marine war veterans, as representatives of all the civilian seafarers who served.

The Merchant Marine Expeditionary Award for service in Operation Desert Shield/Storm was first presented by Vice President Quayle last year. But we did not want to overlook that group today. And now, let me present the medals.

Captain David Smith served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Later he sailed as a licensed deck officer aboard ships ferrying military supplies to U.S. forces during the Korean War and subsequently to U.S. forces in the Vietnam War. Today he is receiving the Expeditionary Medal for his service in supplying U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf War.

(Present medal to Captain Smith)

Now, let's present the Vietnam Medal to **Captain Brian Hope**. He is now a Chesapeake Bay Pilot. From 1965 through 1967 he was Second Mate on vessels supplying U.S. forces in Vietnam.

(Present medal to Captain Hope)

Now, the Korean Medal to **Norman Matthews**. He served as deck engineer and third engineer on vessels supporting troops in the Korean War.

(Present medal to Norman Matthews)

And now for the presentation of the World War II Medals. First, the Mediterranean-Middle East War Zone medal to **G. Vernon Baseman**. Mr. Baseman served as a carpenter on ships in that theater. He also served on ships which were in the Atlantic and Pacific War Zones.

(Present medal to G. Vernon Baseman)

Now, the Atlantic War Zone medal to Chief Engineer **Charles Blockston**. He was on a Lykes freighter on route to Russia. The freighter was sunk in the Barents Sea by a German submarine on July 5, 1942. Mr. Blockston was among 16 survivors whose life boat 20 days later landed in Norway. They were picked up by German forces and spent two and a half years in a POW camp near Bremen.

(Present medal to Charles Blockston)

Now the final medal -- the Pacific War Zone -- to **Captain George Duffy**. **Captain Duffy** was sailing as Third Mate on the freighter **AMERICAN LEADER** which was sunk by a German surface raider on September 10, 1942, about 800 miles off Cape of Good Hope. Captain Duffy was among the surviving 48 persons who were picked up by the raider and turned over to the Japanese in Singapore. They were interned in a POW camp for more than two years.

(Present medal to Captain George Duffy)

There is one other medal presentation I want to make here today ... to Liberty Ship **JOHN W. BROWN**. **Captain Hope**, Chairman of Project Liberty Ship, please accept these medals on behalf of the ship.

These medals express our gratitude and are symbolic of our appreciation to all who served beside you.

Today, we meet also to chart the future.

We have with us this morning U.S. firms who ship 40 to over 80 percent of their cargo on American bottoms. They are motivated in part by the desire to support our nation's cargo fleet. But they would not be able to provide this level of support if our carriers did not offer dependable service.

- **Chuck Englebert**, Norplex-Oak, Inc., La Crosse, Wisconsin;
- **Mac Barrett**, McCormack and Company, Baltimore, Maryland;
- **David Bell**, Uniden America Corporation, Fort Worth, Texas;
- **Desimir Ugrimic**, (pronounced **Des'-i-mir Oooh-gree'-mitch**) Simpo Marketing Systems, Inc., Washington, D.C.

Thank you all for your support of the U.S. merchant marine. You shippers are very important to the future of our merchant marine because cargo is the lifeblood of our fleet.

In closing, let me just say that an Interagency Working Group, appointed by the White House, has been working hard on maritime issues. Stay tuned! Our report will help to chart a course that will improve productivity and promote the growth of our merchant marine. It will not be an easy ride, but it can be done. And I look forward to making the journey with you. You are a great industry and a proud merchant marine. Thank you very much.

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At an event earlier this morning, the following shippers received Merchant Marine Certificates of Appreciation. Would you stand as I call your names.

- **D. C. Power**, AST Research, Inc., Irvine, California;
- **Donald F. Cameron**, Bose Corporation, Framingham, Massachusetts;
- **Penny Parkin**, Dow Chemical Company, Midland, Michigan;
- **Eugene Freeman**, Enesco Imports Corporation, Elk Grove, Illinois;
- **Michael Mullens**, Cargill Grain Corporation, parent of Excel, Minneapolis, Minnesota;
- **Rudolf Vignone**, (pronounced **Vig-yon**) Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co., Akron, Ohio;
- **Nancy McMillian**, Hallmark Cards, Kansas City, Missouri;
- **Kishore Shah**, (pronounced **Key-shore Shah**) Harris Freeman and Company, Inc., Anaheim, California;
- **Charles E. Baron**, National Rubber Shippers Association, Washington, D.C.;