

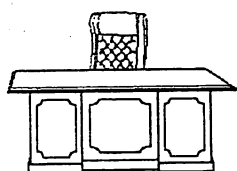
GOBS' GAB

USCGC INGHAM ASSOCIATION



SPRING ISSUE

MARCH, 1995



From the President's Desk. . .

I want to apprise you of recent happenings concerning our INGHAM family. Some of them may require assistance on your part.

Scott Price, of the office of Historian, U.S. Coast Guard, is conducting research into the history of the Secretary class cutters during the North Atlantic campaign. He has made an appeal to our Association that we assist him in obtaining photographs and personal reminiscences from veterans from their archives. The role of the cutters during this period, according to Mr. Price, needs to be presented, documented, and saved for future generations of Coast Guard personnel, as well as the general public.

Three questionnaires were received from the historian's office which are too lengthy for printing in this issue. The first is a general list of 24 questions of a personal nature, directed at USCG Escort Sailors of WW-II. The second is a list of nine questions concerning 327-foot cutter sailors. The third is a list of specific questions focussed on the cutters and their operations during the "Bloody Winter" era of '41 - '43.

This is a wonderful project for our Association to be involved in. Since many of us served in INGHAM during all these time periods, we are in a position to assist the Historian's office in its quest. Contact me if you are interested, and copies of the

questionnaires will be sent to you for completion.

I recently learned that **Frank E. Olschner** crossed the bar on December 17, 1994.

The sick bay list continues to grow. **George A. Messersmith** suffered a major stroke last summer, and is paralyzed on the right side. Wife Nancy and daughter are taking care of him since he can't walk, talk, or see out of his right eye, and has limited vision in his left eye. George is recuperating at home.

Robert A. Smith underwent successful knee replacement surgery in January. Unfortunately, on February 4, he suffered a stroke and is unable to speak. He is recuperating in a convalescent home. Cards and Get Well wishes may be addressed to him at **Heartland of Chillicothe, Room 24, Columbus Street, Chillicothe, OH 45601.**

Vice President **Herman J. Spinosa** suffered a heart attack earlier in the years, and underwent quadruple bypass heart surgery, from my last conversation with him. He is at home, recuperating, and doing well.

Our membership is starting to grow. Our newest member is **Harry Long, 1203 Beverly Drive, Richmond, VA 23229.** Harry served from '43 to '46 as a WT2/c.

Dick Booth has mailed out six membership applications to potential members. Anyone with a lead on new members should direct this information to Dick.

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A REMINISCENCE FROM HUGH MORGAN

THE PORTUGUESE WINE CAPER

There wasn't much doing aboard the INGHAM this lazy afternoon in July, 1941. It was Saturday and it was a hot one. The sun beat down on the Tagus River and turned its waters into shimmering strands of silver and blue. The wind gently and softly blew up river as did the current of the Tagus. The city lay like a great cluster of buildings on the port side, while to the starboard side, a great bay opened - upon which vessels traversed back and forth.

One of the working boats in the bay swung its head into the wind and proceeded towards the INGHAM at three knots. When the barge came alongside, it was made fast to the port side and began discharging potable water along with other liquids.

Watching the water barge and only waiting till the O.D. got tired of seeing that no crew members got too close to it were Kolassa and Lehtinen.

"Jesus Christ, what the hell is Mr. Martin doing? I thought he'd only give the barge the once over and then get below for the rest of the watch." said Kolassa.

"Take it easy, Mike. Martin is only doing his job. We've got plenty of time to get the wine we ordered. I only hope that the Portuguese master of the barge hasn't caught wise to what his men are doing." Lehtinen said.

"Where the hell is Ray Souza? I hope he's still aboard because he's the only one these guys will listen to." affirmed Kolassa.

"Ray went ashore at 1300 and said he was going to stay at his cousin's." said Gallaher. Having overheard them.

"Damn it all, he was going to give them our next order." said Lehtinen.

"There's Ray's cousin, Manny Costa, who speaks Portuguese. Why not get him?" asked Gallaher.

"Because the guys on the water barge don't like him. The all came from the same village and Costa's people stole pigs or something. It all happened about two hundred years ago, but they sure hold a grudge."

explained Kolassa.

"Hell, that's crazy. Costa's great grandparents settled in Provincetown when they came to the United States about a hundred years ago; Manny never stole a pig in his life." said Gallaher, "Besides," he continued, "what about Ray. He's Manny's cousin, isn't he? How come they like him and hate Manny?"

"For Christ's sake, I don't know. I only want a few bottles of wine, I don't want to get mixed up in any more feuds over pigs." said Lehtinen. "Let's try Costa once more and see if things work out. He's only going to talk to them, for Christ's sake."

"I'll tell Costa that you people want to see him." said Gallaher, "I'm going right by his bunk."

"O.K., tell him to get his ass up here fast," Kolassa said.

Mr. Martin finally tired of looking at the water barge, thinking, "What of it if some of the crew manage to get a few bottles of wine aboard. It's too nice a day for me to worry about things like that. To hell with it!" Aloud, he said, "Ingersoll, let me know when the water barge secures. I'm going below."

Ingersoll, QM2c, grunted a reply without lifting his eyes from the comic book, "Popeye and Friends."

Lehtinen said, "Martin's gone into the wardroom. Where's Costa?"

Here he comes, now." replied Kolassa.

The big surfinan went up to Kolassa and said, "I'm here, and it better be good. I was woke up by Gallaher and he told me you wanted to see me right away. What the hell is it that is so important?"

Lehtinen then explained that they wanted to get a few cases of wine which they had ordered as well as placing a new order for the next time the water barge came.

Costa shook his head and said, "The crew of that barge will have nothing to do with me., I've tried to talk with them before and they acted like I wasn't here. Ray Souza's your best bet. Why don't you get him to do the talking?"

Kolassa looked at Costa and said, "Ray is ashore, and you're our only hope. Get us the wine and you can have two bottles of it for nothing."

Costa thought that would be fair enough, and so he agreed to act for them.

Lehtinen said, "Martin isn't watching any more, so there won't be any better time than now. Go ahead, Costa, tell them to produce the wine now."

Costa thought that the wine would be the country wine which was available in every bar in Lisbon. Instead, he almost shit when they turned out to be the most expensive of the Portuguese vintages. There were four cases on the deck of the water barge just waiting to be picked up. Costa glanced at the cases of Sandman port and Leacock madeira and saw he would need help to bring the bottles aboard. He went back to Kolassa and Lehtinen and told them, "I hope you guys have the dough to pay for this. That wine they've got is expensive!"

Kolassa said, "Quit your worrying. We've got enough money to cover the price of the wine."

Just then, Tony Agcoili and Terasio Doliva, the Captain's chef and steward, walked aboard the water barge.

"Hey, what are those guys doing?" Lehtinen asked.

"Well, they'd better not be buying our wine. Those two just walked onto that barge like they owned it," declared Kolassa.

"Or else they were expected," added Costa.

"Look, they're shaking hands with the crew. This doesn't look good for us. Where I come from a handshake means something like an agreement has been reached."

Costa said, "You're right, it means the same thing here."

Lehtinen declared, "Those two little pricks. I hope that wine is sour. That would fix them."

"Here comes Agcoili. Oh shit, he's headed right for us. I hope he's not trying to sell us the wine," said Kolassa.

Agcoili said to the three of them, "How would you like to be able to have something on the Captain?"

He received answers in the affirmative.

"All right, come with me." He led them aboard the barge and the Portuguese crew started to get upset when they saw Costa.

"Jesus, I knew this would happen. I just knew it," said Costa. "They've got me mixed up with somebody else and I can't tell them they're full of shit for not letting me talk to them."

Doliva, on hearing the reasons for the Portuguese being upset said, "Too goddamn bad. Costa is going to help us or their captain will hear from our captain about it. Tell them what I said, Costa."

This finally broke the ice and Costa and the three Portuguese shook hands and hugged each other.

Kolassa said, "Ask them about our wine, Manny. Maybe it's this stuff right here," pointing to the Sandemans and Leacocks.

Agcoili said, "Like hell it's yours. You and the whole crew of the INGHAM couldn't afford to buy this wine! This is for the Captain's table."

Lehtinen was getting impatient. He didn't give a goddamn about the Captain's table, he just wanted to know where his wine was and how much it was going to cost.

Doliva immediately put the clamp on all of Lehtinen's thoughts by saying, "All right, you guys, let's go. Each of you grab a case and take it up to the Captain's cabin. Then come right back. I might have something for you."

Each of them took a case of wine and Lehtinen started to bitch. "Here I am, the biggest goddamn fool there is. I thought for sure I'd be half cocked by now. Instead I'm lugging booze for the Captain."

"Stop the bullshit, Tauno, let's get rid of this and get back to Doliva. He said he might have something for us."

After dropping off the cases, the three of them returned to the barge, leaving Agcoili in the cabin. There they saw eight cases of the wine which Doliva had just finished counting.

"So there you are. These cases are going to the wardroom. They are for the use of the officers, but I don't think they know they are here yet. Pick them up and bring them down there, will you."

Goddamn it. Everyone is having their wine delivered to them but us. I hope there will be some left over so that Lehtinen and I can get a taste." complained Kolassa, bitterly.

After a couple trips each to the wardroom, there were still two cases left on the barge. Costa and Lehtinen said they would get them while Doliva and Kolassa remained in the wardroom, overseeing the stowing of the wine. A few officers were there at the time, but they paid little attention to what was taking place. The only one to show any interest was Mr. Martin, the O.D., and he merely wanted to know whether he should sign for them or not. Doliva told him he had better not sign anything or the government would be after him about five years from now to explain why his signature was the only connection to a breach of Coast Guard regulations. Mr. Martin thought about this and thanked Doliva.

Soon, the cases were all stored away, and Kolassa, Lehtinen and Costa were on their way out of the wardroom, when they were stopped by Lt. Chester, who was just coming in from his stateroom.

"Kolassa, Lehtinen, Costa - what do you think you're doing back here? You know better than to be here, especially on a Saturday. this is officer's country and you had better get your asses out of here. If I see you here again, I'll put you on report."

The three of them left the wardroom mad as bastards. When they got topside they really had something to bitch about. The water barge had left.

THE END

REMEMBER
WHEN



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hugh Morgan was a Yeoman, 2nd class on INGHAM between 1940 and 1943. He was discharged from the Coast Guard in 1946 with the rank of Chief Yeoman.

Hugh graduated from Suffolk University Law School, Boston, and was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar. Between 1965 and 1971, he was a Representative to the State Legislature.

Hugh was a Selectman in Wakefield, MA for 9 years. Other positions held were: Assistant District Attorney for Middlesex County, MA, and Assistant Attorney General for the state.