

# A SHIP CALLED "SHE"

While attending a reunion of graduates from the King's Point Merchant Marine Academy held aboard the restored World War II cargo ship *SS Lane Victory*, docked in San Pedro, California, I met shipmates I hadn't seen or heard of in many years. Many were showing their years since WWII, some fifty plus years ago. The program director requested that each member stand, starting from the first table, give their name, the year they graduated and the status of their present station in life. To a man, they expressed their pride in having served. Many were now retired; some from the US Navy, some from a life in shipping but most stayed within the maritime establishment.

After the meeting I was browsing the well stocked museum of mementos when I came across a picture frame with a faded blue silk pillow case under the glass and on that pillowcase was a silver scripted embroidery work with the question:

## "WHY IS A SHIP CALLED SHE?"

Instantly my mind spun back in time to the late 1920's with a memory of a pillow case with the same inscription that adorned our living room davenport. My mother often put in her lap to prop up a book she was reading until the year she became ill and took to bed. As thoughts will, one thought led to another and an image drifted through my mind of an incident a few years later of my dad and I standing on a wharf in a misty fog at Tacoma, Washington with a cluster of men looking at a vessel laying along side the dock. The vessel's topsides showed that she had suffered considerable fire damage.

I asked my father why so many men were there at that time in the morning and why they were so interested in such a shabby, ratty old boat. Our conversation was interrupted with an announcement by a gentleman with a booming voice who was standing on the bed of a stake truck and shouting through a megaphone that a U.S. Marshal's sale was about to begin. He then read off the list of particulars, including the owner's lack of insurance coverage, condition, age and tonnage of the documented vessel, and that there was a starting bid of \$3,000 to cover the debt owed. Everyone stood silent as the man looked expectantly at the crowd. He then

*Why is a ship called a she?*

*A ship is called a 'she' because there is always a great deal of bustle around her; there is usually a gang of men about, she has a waist and stays; it takes a lot of paint to keep her good looking; it is not the initial expense that breaks you, it is the upkeep; she can be all decked out; it takes an experienced man to handle her correctly; and without a man at the helm, she is absolutely uncontrollable. She shows her topsides, hides her bottom and, when coming into port, always heads for the buoys.*

asked \$2,500. Still no response. Then, to my surprise, my father blurted out that he'd make an offer of \$2,000.

The man on the truck immediately rapped a gavel on the roof of the truck calling out, "Going once... going twice... SOLD to that man in the blue jacket with the handsome young lad standing at his side!" Then he pointed the gavel at my dad and added, "For 2,000 dollars cash...pay the beautiful lady in the office."

Carrying the memories of those moments around for so many years, I have decided to put them down on paper before I forget. Time has faded so many of the details into but foggy remembrances.

Dad was a Chief Boatswain and a qualified hard Hat Diver when he retired from the US Navy. He and his younger brother, Lester, had inherited "The Earle Brothers Tug & Barge Co." after the accidental death of their father in the mid-1920's The company had two operations; one on the Columbia River in Astoria, Oregon and the home office in Tacoma.

My Grandfather was very active in waterfront affairs and had served on several harbor committees, earning the title "Commodore". He and his long-deceased brother had a good reputation up and down the coast for getting a job done, whether shepherding the huge log rafts down the coast to Southern California, pulling barges off the beaches or rescuing stranded vessels. Their large "Great War" iron-hulled steam tug, *Josephine*, was the pride of the company, maned by a crew of 11 men. *Josephine* was 168 feet on deck by 48 feet wide, rated at 480 tons, with a triple expansion engine 600+ IHP using Bunker "C" fuel oil and had two 16 foot Scotch fire tube boilers with two burner boxes each. She was always on call for vessel assist, moving barges or docking ships. She was also in demand because of her two large water cannon monitors that could pump thousands of gallons of seawater on fires aboard ships or along the many lumber shipping docks that rimmed the Puget Sound seaway.

My mother's health, always delicate, deteriorated after a bout of flu during the Influenza Epidemic and was later forced to stay in bed. I would come home after school and we would sit and talk. Mom had a large box full of albums and photos which she would shuffle through, pointing out her sister and aunts and uncles whose names and birthdays she had written on the back of the pictures. She would explain important items such as birth certificates and marriage licenses that were stuffed in a photo album. I remember her unfolding a document with the U. S. Navy letterhead with a statement that read:

"While serving as leading petty officer, Boatswain Mate First Class Damon NMI Earle, assigned aboard the mine sweeper-trawler *USS Acorn* escorting convoys in the war zone, his ship took direct enemy fire and he was wounded as he directed its crew to safely abandon their sinking ship. Awards: Navy Distinguished Service Medal (upgraded later to Navy Cross) Purple Heart and Commendation Medal."

Another attachment was what appeared to be an article from a publication: "Recouping from his wounds at a Navy Hospital, First Class Petty Officer Damon Earle completed his education and was returned to active duty and reassigned to

Mare Island Naval Shipyard as Chief Boatswain in command of a yard utility vessel, Steam Trawler *Narkeeta* 109' OAL/23' Beam/8 ½ Draft. The vessel was once decommissioned from the US Navy, stricken from rolls then chartered back to the Navy with a name change on West Coast. She operated as steam supplier to vessels providing heat while they were undergoing boiler repairs. Chief Earle's ship was also used as an experimental hard-hat diver training platform, testing decompression and re-compression chambers with assorted oxygen and helium mixtures, differently designed dive suits and an experimental diving chamber. Chief Earle also took diving instructions to qualify as a hardhat diver.”

Written in pencil on another small folded page was a notation... “Greek Legend...Damon and Pythias...Damon means 'a true and loyal friend'.”

My mother and I lived in the housekeeper's suite on the lower floor while dad was on active duty in the Navy. Uncle Les and Aunt Mary occupied the upper floor in the two story waterfront house built by my grandfather during the heydays of the Alaska gold rush of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Tacoma was the main jumping off port for the Alaska gold seekers because the town was at the very end of the railroad lines.

After my mom's passing I stayed with Aunt Mary and Uncle Lester for several years until dad retired in 1931, after 23 years in the Navy. Aunt Mary was the Tug and Barge Company's bookkeeper and Uncle Lester was the office manager. When my dad returned home from the Navy he convinced Uncle Lester, because of a downturn in business, to change the direction of the company from local tug and barge work and pile-driving. Dad's idea was to expand and specialize in salvaging, explaining that his Navy experience would put him at the head of the list of Salvors in the Seattle area.

Bidding for that inoperable vessel at the dockyard created a confrontation between my dad and Aunt Mary that really put pressure on the family. Because of a weakening economy, work prospects other than the pile-driving contract to enlarge the railroad docks, were becoming scarce. Payroll and expenses were becoming greater than income and Aunt Mary said the company wouldn't be able to survive if other work didn't come in before the next quarter. I heard her tell uncle Lester that she was very upset over my dad spending their hard earned savings to purchase the relic at the auction.

Aunt Mary was the most loving and caring person I've ever known. She took exceptional care of my mother to the end and always treated me as if I were the son she never had. She didn't approve of my dad's life style. Since he returned from the Navy he'd often go out and visit his old haunts and sometimes he'd come home a little tipsy. But next morning he would be up before anyone else was up and about. He showered, made coffee and read the Tribune newspaper from front to back, along with the most recent accounts from the local waterfront fish-wrapper. Dad was up before anyone else for most of his twenty-some years in the Navy, where he was known as “Chief Early”. Most everyone pronounced the “e” like a “y” at the end of Earle and it was a futile attempt on his part to get anyone to change.

My school let out for the summer so I became my dad's shadow. At first he

insisted that I accompany him but after a few outings I couldn't wait for the next day's adventure to begin. He introduced me to all his buddies along the docks, showing a hint of pride at being my father. It made me proud and I loved it.

On one occasion while sitting at the mess table across from the galley, several crew members of the company's tug, *Josephine*, were having their coffee break when dad and I came in. Dad announced that they should make preparations for a three to five day trip to Grays Harbor to bring back a 140 foot Geodetic Research vessel that had the misfortune to grapple ground tackle, destroying her prop and rudder.

*Josephine's* skipper, an old sea dog with a 1,000 ton Captain's license and Pilot endorsements for most of the Northwest and who had been employed with the Earle Brothers company for many years, asked my dad to follow him out on deck. I tagged along. When they were out of ear-shot from the rest of the crew, the Captain turned to my dad and said, "Chief, (most everyone along the waterfront called him Early or Chief) the crew has heard about the vessel at Westport, but our paychecks are signed by Mary and Lester. I think the crew should get an OK from them first."

"Captain Evans," my dad said, "I understand your concern for doing things with the proper authority, but, understand this and make it clear to the rest of the crew. I am now the operations manager. Mary and Les are the office and business Managers. All employees will take their day to day working assignments from me...is that understood?"

"I understand what you've just said," the Captain replied "but there are Maritime laws and rules to be considered in the event of any accidents or violations. Who in the company is going to take that responsibility? So, if you don't mind, I would prefer to clear up the technicalities with Mary and Les first. My license could be on the line."

I was growing a little ill-at-ease at the tone of the conversation between the two men and had drifted off to the side. My dad called me over and told me to go up to the office and ask Uncle Les to bring down the document outlining the new change of operations that was supposed to have been posted in the shop and aboard the tug and derrick.

The skipper and dad returned to the mess table and were finishing up coffee when I came back aboard, breathless from carrying out my important task. Soon Uncle Les came aboard and thumb-tacked the document outlining the new management roles above the blackboard where the menus and daily work orders were written in chalk.

Dad asked Uncle Les to read it out loud to the seven or eight crew members present and then dad asked if there were any comments. Not hearing any, Uncle Les left the ship.

"Now...back to the trip to Westport," dad said turning to Marty, the derrick operator and Luke, his rigger-boiler-tender. "You two will stop the pile-driving project and load up the large truck with as much canvas, tar-paper, boards, hammers and tacks as you can load, then head over to Grays Harbor. Try to seal up

the topsides and house to keep out any seas. You can never tell what the weather will offer so make her tight enough so we can take her under tow. If you leave this afternoon you should get a fresh start on her in the morning. It shouldn't take but a few hours and then you can return home.” Turning to the crew, now swelled to ten men, the Chief continued, “The rest of us will load up with anything we might need. We'll be going into Grays Harbor and drag that research vessel back to their home dock by the boat yard here in Tacoma. If there are any questions Captain Evans will answer them.”

As my dad and I walked towards the office I asked him if I could go along on the tug, to which he replied, “Sure kid...you'll do messman duties, clean up the sleeping compartments, including the heads, and anything else a crewman asks of you. And do a good job or I'll put your ass on the first bus home. Understood?”

“Yes Sir!”

I had learned a long time ago that he expected a positive and direct answer anytime he gave an order or when he asked a question. I was also tempted to salute but thought better of it.

As we entered the office Aunt Mary called out to my dad, “Chief we've got to talk and I mean right now!” I've always sensed a testy relationship between the two. I couldn't tell if it was that he was afraid of her or that she was afraid of him. “Do you have any idea what this new job is going to cost the company in expenses?” she demanded.

“I've got a four hundred dollar advancement on the tow job at Westport. It should cover expenses and we'll get the balance for the job when we deliver her here,” my dad responded.

“I haven't heard anything about any advancement and I just found out about the tow job twenty minutes ago. Our bank account is bone dry and you want to take off and spend money like a drunken sailor, if you'll pardon the pun, without even letting us in on your little money-making enterprises. Give me the tow advance money and I'll deposit it and write out a check for your expenses.. You need a lesson in operating on company finances. It's obvious they didn't teach you that in the Navy.” She leaned back in her chair and fixed dad with a stern expression...and dad just stood there taking it.

I take it no one has ever chastised my dad as she did and dad stood there and took it without batting an eye. He took a check out of his pocket and handed it to Aunt Mary. Then announced, “By the way...I'm taking the kid along.”

In total indignation Aunt Mary sputtered, “You're taking what kid along?...Where are you taking this kid?...Whats his name?...Do you have another secret I'm not aware of?”

“I've decided that its about time that Ron learns a bit of how this family earns their living, besides I want to spend some time with him. God knows...here he is thirteen and I've never been home enough to really get to know him.”

I interrupted, “Please Aunt Mary I really, really want to go...Dad said if things didn't work out he would send me home on the bus.”

“Ron, go stay with your uncle Les. I have a few things I want to go over

with your dad.” I left the room but stood near the hallway door to listen in on their conversation.

There was a short pause, then aunt Mary began to unload on him. “I don't know if you are aware of just how much Maddie (my mother's name was Madelyn) loved you and your son. She hid her illness from you until it was too late to call you home, just so you could finish that salvage project down at Monterey that you were so wrapped up in. Maddie was a very jealous person, not of any other woman, but of that damned ship you always lovingly referred to as “she”. In fact, once we went to a church bazaar where she spotted a throw-pillow with the inscription “Why is A ship called She?”. Maddie brought it home and it never left her sight. Guess she kept it just to remind herself that the other woman in your life was a blasted ship. When she was so ill, she pleaded with me to convince you not to blame yourself for not being with her when she died. She explained to Ron the whole situation of her love for you and him and that it was her wish not to call you home. Just for your information, Maddie was like a sister to me. I didn't then, and I still don't think you deserved the love of a woman like her. Now you've got a thirteen year-old boy on your hands that you hardly even know. Take him with you, but only if you mean to be consistent with this new-found love you have for the boy. He's not a novelty nor a toy that you can pick up and play with or toss aside as the mood strikes you. If you hurt him, so help me God, I'll make you pay for it! If you do no other good thing on this earth become the father to Ron he never had.”

In overhearing Aunt Mary's outburst, tears swelled in my eyes. I don't know if the tears were for me, my mom, or my dad. I took off in search of Uncle Lester.

I stopped in the bathroom on my way to Uncle Lester's office to wash the tears from my cheeks and put cold water on my reddened eyes then, continuing down the hallway, saw my dad. He rapped two times on the office door, then walked in.

I paused outside the office door just as Dad said, “Your wife can cut the heart out of a man without batting an eyelash. It's taken ten minutes for me to recover from her lashing. How in hell can you put up with her heartless attitude?”

Uncle Lester sat up straight in his chair, “Now hold it right there Dam. I won't have you saying a word against Mary, she's got the biggest heart and is the finest woman I've ever met. I don't know what went on between you two...and I really don't give a damn. Whatever it was, she was probably right. She's most defensive of those she loves...me, Ron, the company, and Maddie. Sometimes she's like a mother hen with most of the guys who work for us when they have problems, and she often helps them through their crises....All the customers and suppliers are aware of her honest and down to earth business attitude so they make sure not to cross her. Don't forget she was reared on this waterfront and without her loyalty and her know-how, this company wouldn't still be in business.”

Dad hung his head sheepishly, “Points taken. I'm sorry. We're all lucky to have her and I mean that sincerely. I guess I'm just not used to someone talking to me like that...especially when she's right. He straightened his shoulder's, “Now,

back to business. This trip could take to the end of the week. Will that affect any work schedules?"

Les shook his head and said, "No, we're ahead on the piling contract."

Dad continued, "Please...try to arrange some sort of a truce between Mary and me." Then, as if he almost forgot, added, "I'll need some company checks to cover expenses. I don't dare ask Mary...will that be a problem?"

Uncle Les smiled, "It shouldn't be a problem this time...but...to keep the peace, go easy on the spending...By the way what's so important about the vessel we just bought?"

"It's a long story, but my main reason is she still has much of the equipment aboard her that she had when I last served on her. She's worth more in salvaging her equipment than at the breakers, what with the low price of scrap. Just the heavy-duty towing winch, that has its wire in excellent condition, by the way, and all the blocks and tackle, are worth the bid price alone. And that's not counting the generators and pumps."

Dad started to go on to try and convince uncle Lester that it would be a profitable investment for the company but uncle Lester interrupted his brother with, "There's something else that your not telling me. I kind of get the feeling that there is a personal attachment with the vessel."

My dad replied, "Maybe someday I'll tell you her story, but let's save that until after we get her safely at our dock."

At first light we left Tacoma, transited up Puget Sound past Seattle then headed through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and out to Cape Flattery. We then turned south towards Grays Harbor. The oncoming seas and wind from the Southwest reduced our headway. My dad must have been concerned for my comfort, thinking I might get seasick, and asked every few minutes how I was doing. Little did he know I was having the time of my life. I hurried through my duties so I could go up to the pilot house and watch as *Josephine* dove into the oncoming swells as they broke into large rollers and then died down and disappeared. It was so exciting I didn't have time to be uncomfortable.

Several hours later, about three in the afternoon, we entered Grays Harbor and spotted the research vessel laying at a dock near the entrance at Westport. We pulled along side and made preparations for towing her. Two of the research vessel's crew had stayed behind to assist hooking up the bridle and towing wire. They waited on the wharf as we eased out into the channel, then they took off for their home base in Tacoma about a hundred miles inland, as opposed to our approximately 300 mile trip up around Cape Flattery, down the Strait to Seattle then down to Tacoma while towing their 140 foot research vessel.

The trip up to Cape Flattery was more exciting than the trip down. We were running with the swells on our quarter and yawing from one side to the other, all the way to the entrance of the Strait. The crew spent their off watches in their bunks. The cook, because of the sea's gyrations, could only make biscuits and a stew which he left on the range, simmering, so the crew could grab a bowl anytime they wished. The cook told me to find something else to do, saying that he would

handle the galley.

Dad was busy standing wheel watches with the Captain, both keeping a close eye on the tow and towing wire. I didn't want to go to my bunk so I stayed in the mess area offering to refill the crew's coffee cups and fetching whatever else they wanted.

Pete, the Chief Engineer, asked if I'd like to go down in the engine room to work with him for awhile during his watch. I excitedly agreed. When uncle Les would go aboard the tug and derrick to deliver job orders he would let me tag along, only if I promised I would stay by his side. Aunt Mary would fuss at him for letting me go with him. But now this was different! I was a crewman and wanted to make the most of it. I often peeked into the engine room hatch from the fidley, looking down through the deck grates into the boiler and engine areas. It was kinda scary, all that noise with steam hissing and pumps thumping and pounding.

I followed Pete around the top of the engine cylinders that stuck up about two feet above the gratings then we descended down a steep ladder to the generator landing where one of the two small steam engines was working away. Pete said, "This is where we make electricity for the lights." He said it so casually, but I was wide-eyed in amazement. This ship actually made its own electricity! I had never thought of it before. Electricity was something you got when you plugged in a cord or flipped a switch...but we made our own! When Pete wasn't so busy...maybe when we got back home...I'd ask him to tell me how the ship did this magic.

We went down another ladder to another area. Sitting on a high stool at a shelf-like desk sat the Oiler/Fireman reading a well-worn cowboy dime novel. This was the Engineer's station and had several gauges for temperature and steam pressure mounted on boards surrounding the area.

Pete told me to sit on the stool while he and the Oiler made their rounds. I watched as they went forward to the boiler area, checking more gauges. They disappeared behind the main engine, checking pumps, opening and closing valves. Then I saw Pete pat the crankshaft throws with the back of his knuckles each time they made a revolution, which was about ninety times a minute. He told me later that he was checking for heat in the bearings.

I stayed on the stool afraid, expecting any moment that the big engine would explode into a million pieces...but as time went by my panic turned to wonder that such a mass of iron could be kept under control and all the parts could perform together like in a spirited dance.

A shrill whistle came out of a hose-like contraption at the desk, breaking up my thoughts. The Oiler rushed over and pulled out a plug and yelled into the hose, "Engine room. Jigs here." He then put the hose to his ear and listened. He walked towards the shaft alley yelling for Pete. Pete came to the desk and put the hose to his ear, then he spoke into the hose, "He's here with me. I'm going to make an Engineer out of him...OK." Then he turned to me, "Your dad wants you topside in the pilot house...see ya later kid."

Climbing the four levels to the wheelhouse was an effort, especially as the



seas seemed to be getting rougher. It took a few moments to adjust my eyes to the darkness when I reached the pilothouse and I was surprised that it was pitch black outside with only a hint of light glowing from inside the binnacle hood over the compass. My dad asked what I thought about the engine room. In awe, I explained it was like a whole new world I never knew existed.

“The reason I wanted you to come up here was to introduce you to the other part of seafaring. The art of navigation... and the best navigator of them all is Captain Evans,” dad said as he wrestled with the large spoked wheel. “Before we get home I asked the Captain if he would give you a bit of briefing on coast-wise fixes that determine our exact location on the charts.”

Captain Evans asked me to describe what I could see in the direction we were going. I looked out the window and only saw a light flashing ahead on the horizon. He told me to remember the dot and flash sequence, then turned on a dim light over a large map (chart) on a large flat shelf behind the helm and pointed to the chart, “See if you can find that light on the chart.”

I saw a pencil line, which I took to represent our course, running north towards the end of a land mass and “Lt.” printed off-shore. Next to “Lt.” was printed a series of dashes and dots that seemed to imitate the light flashes I had witnessed. At first I took it to be Cape Flattery, but on closer viewing I saw the light was on a smaller dot with the name of Tatoosh Island. Guessing out loud I said, “We must be about here,” and pointed to an area on the pencil line several miles south of Tatoosh Island.

“Hey Chief...your son's a natural! With a little more book learning and arithmetic he'll make a good seaman.”

Until that moment I took school to be just a chore that I had to struggle through, filled with numbers, grammar, reading and history. I felt they were a waste of time. But now that I'd seen how arithmetic and geography were applied, it was like opening a window to a new and interesting world. I told my dad that I never knew how the importance of the engine-room and all its machinery or the Pilot house with its charts and instruments were to the operation of a ship. In my juvenile innocence I thought you just got aboard and turned a key...like you would in an automobile.

I was totally exhausted when I turned in but the excitement of all I had seen and the events of the day kept flashing through my mind and kept me awake and wide-eyed late into the night. The cook roused me up just as daylight was breaking and we crept slowly down Puget Sound past Seattle on our final leg to Tacoma and home.

It was the weekend and after securing the Research vessel to their dock and removing all our equipment, we steamed over to the new addition to our fleet.

The crew was curious as to what was so important about the damaged vessel and couldn't wait to clamber aboard to explore her. My dad told the men to hold up going aboard until we got her to our dock then they could inspect until they dropped. It took less than an hour to snuggle her to the dock with *Josephine* tied up outboard.

Uncle Les met us at the dock just as Captain Evans canceled all sea watches. My dad had already named our new vessel *Madelyn*, after my mother. He invited the crew to go aboard and survey their areas of interests and asked them to give him a report on their findings. Her profile, with the deck house and engine room aft, was referred to by old sea-dogs as a trawler or stem-winder.

The mid-ship cargo hatch had already been made weather proof by the previous owners. Some cosmetic repairs were in evidence (mostly just painted over). She didn't appear as badly damaged as on first sight until you went below decks.

Uncle Les stayed with dad to inspect the topsides. Pete, the Chief Engineer, Jigs and I went down into the dark engine room pulling lamps with long extension cords. This was obviously the source of the serious damage. The boiler must have exploded and the oil fire burned up through the engine room to the topside compartments until the crew were able to shut off the fuel valves.

I was told to stay on the generator flat and not go off on my own or I might fall into the bilge and drown in the filthy bilge water. That was enough to scare me, so I told Chief Pete and Jigs that I'd go back topside.

With lights now strung with power from *Josephine*, I could make my way through the living compartment. At the open after-hatch I found the crew, Uncle Les and dad inspecting the towing winch.

"Now that we've got her, what do you propose to do with her?" Uncle Les blurted out, showing a sign of concern for her condition. "Please help me understand why you felt the need to spend so much money on a vessel that is going to cost us even more money just to get her up and running, You know Mary is going to ask for my opinion."

"Not now Les, please don't challenge me now. Give me a few days to work things out," dad responded. "I told you the value of her winch and wire...that should keep Mary satisfied for a while."

My dad moved his things aboard *Maddie*, as he was now calling the new addition to the fleet. I stayed on with Aunt Mary and Uncle Les but went to visit dad most every day. Pete and dad rigged up a heavy duty hose to transfer steam from *Josephine* to *Maddie* to test the pumps and the low pressure ex-navy turbo generator. The starboard boiler held pressure but the port side boiler needed rebuilding and a new fire box. Dad spent hours steam cleaning the outside of the boilers and all the overhead and deck areas, including the bulkheads in the boiler areas that were blackened by the fire.

The main engine and bilge became the greatest challenge. To put the fire out, tons of water had been pumped aboard, raising the bilge water to the crankshaft and main bearing level and leaving a thick tar-like mass of thickened raw bunker oil that no amount of steam pressure alone would wash down.

In the meantime, one of the men that was at the marshal's sale contacted dad to see about purchasing *Maddie's* towing winch. The present winch on his tug was too small for the work they were doing. However, dad's asking price, along with cost of transferring, was beyond the buyer's expected expenses. After much

haggling, they did work out a deal where dad made back twelve hundred dollars by taking the buyer's old winch in trade. Dad offered to pay for the transfer but not the mounting costs and the transfer had to be accomplished within a specific time frame.

Captain Evans was not happy with the deal because he reasoned it would put their competitor on par with the *Josephine*, bidding on the same jobs. Dad made the Captain privy to his long term plans; plans that he hadn't even mentioned to Uncle Les. That seemed to ease the problem with the Captain as well as creating a closer cooperation between the two.

The time came to take the old winch off the buyer's tug. She tied up to the derrick, the boom lifted her winch off with ease and set it on the barge. *Josephine* brought *Maddie* over to the derrick but, try as they may, the derrick winch and boom couldn't lift the large winch off of *Maddie*. Dad suggested they unload the two-inch wire on the large winch to the barge, which took a couple of hours of hard labor. Then they tried to lift the winch free from *Maddie*. It took every bit of muscle the men could muster as they laid on their pry-bars trying to loose it from its bed. Slowly it rose, and while suspended they swapped the position of the two vessels so all they had to do was lower the winch atop heavy timbers in place of the old winch on the buyer's tug. Their wire was transferred from the derrick barge and coiled in large loops on the tug's fantail. When it was over, money and receipts were exchanged. Dad handed out ten dollar bills to our crew as a bonus for a job well done.

When dad handed Uncle Lester the check for the winch, I saw him smile and wink as he said, "Here, Les, maybe this'll ease some of Mary's animosity towards me."

I saw little of my dad for several weeks. When I did visit him he was working in *Maddie's* engine room trying to get the goop off the machinery and into barrels where he heated it with steam coils so they could pump the fuel oil back into the bunker tanks. It was a dirty job and I got bored just sitting watching. Besides, Aunt Mary wasn't too keen on my being on "that filthy boat", as she put it.

A deckhand off *Josephine* was replacing the woodwork in *Maddie's* topside cabin area as a part time job on his days off. *Josephine* worked on and off moving barges and assisted docking ocean vessels to the piers and wharfs. The pile-driving went on, keeping that crew busy.

The Boiler Works Company that maintained both the derrick and *Josephine's* boilers, inspected and made recommendations to repairing the port boiler on *Maddie*. The boiler company was also hurting for lack of work so they made a deal to repair the boiler on their down-times at a greatly reduced figure and they allowed some of Earle Brothers crew to do much of the grunt work.

Dad and I attended a Navy surplus sale up at Kitsap near the Navy Base. Dad made a bid on some surplus diving equipment which included a hard hat outfit with suit, air pump and hoses. The Navy Depot required that all bids had to be made on the company's letterhead stationary along with a bank-certified earnest money check. I think having to get Aunt Mary's blessing was the hardest thing my

dad had to do throughout the whole *Maddie* rebuilding project. My dad requested that a meeting be scheduled to include Aunt Mary, Uncle Les, Captain Evans and Chief Engineer Pete Pedersen at the earliest possible moment.

School had started after the summer break so I missed out on that meeting and as I heard little snippets of that meeting later I learned that everyone but Aunt Mary readily went along with the plan. A special agreement was made to gain Aunt Mary's support in that she had the final OK on all expenditures.

Buying the diving equipment meant that it was finally time for dad to explain his attachment to the *Madelyn* (ex *USS Narkeeta*), his plans for her, and the reason for the meeting.

Dad was a secretive sort and he rarely opened up on his personal affairs. Anything I learned of him was what my mother told me or what I overheard between my aunt and uncle. I found out that *Madelyn* was the ex-navy *USS Narkeeta* and was dad's first command. When the navy decommissioned her he was assigned to several salvage vessels on both coasts as a Diver Technician.

During the time my mother was sick, dad was leading a submarine rescue and salvage section at Mare Island Naval Base down near San Francisco, California. A malfunction of the main induction diving valve occurred on a new submarine during sea trials, resulting in its sinking in shallow waters just off shore from Monterey, California with no injuries or loss of life. Dad assisted in the salvage operation. The boat was raised to the surface with four large pontoons and towed to Mare Island and placed into drydock for inspection and repairs.

The local newspapers got hold of the incident and tried to make the most of it, accusing the Navy of keeping the incident under wraps. Those against government waste were crying "cover up" because several similar accidents had recently occurred, and said the Navy feared a public outcry what with military budgets coming due. My dad's assessment in his report placed the incident under tighter scrutiny. A hearing was ordered and on advice of council a prominent San Francisco Admiralty Attorney was retained to protect the Navy's position. All this because of a comment my dad made in a report of the incident, which was leaked to the press and blown out of proportion. "In my opinion," the report read, "there will always be an occasional malfunction as we vie to improve the operation of our boats (an accepted description for a submarine) by installing new and innovative systems which require specialized training." None of my dad's superior officers were willing to stick their necks out defending his comment.

Dad was reassigned back to his old station near Bremerton. In the meantime the hullabaloo died down but a bad feeling was left in my dad's gut over the lack of support from his immediate superiors and was a reason for him to seek early retirement.

About six months after returning to Bremerton an attorney from the Admiralty Lawyer's office asked my dad for a deposition to clear up a few of the loose ends so they could close the case and get the report in "good marine fashion" which would hold up in court. The attorney told my dad that his knowledge and assessment in the sub accident at Monterey was a classic example of good

reporting and investigative work and offered to channel some of their cases his way should he ever be in a position to do the work. After retirement, the *Maddie* had come along at the right time and dad had contacted the San Francisco attorneys, who were still very open to the proposition they had offered.

All this was explained by my dad at the meeting he had called. After hearing dad's reasoning and plans to work and survey for the attorneys, Aunt Mary grudgingly went to work through her contacts and was able to secure enough financing to complete the outfitting on *Madelyn*. Aunt Mary was still mad as a hornet at dad because he hadn't explained his plans from the beginning. Dad tried to placate her by telling her that he didn't want to bother her with details of a plan he might not be able to follow through on if he couldn't find the proper boat. She exploded at the "bother her with details" statement and accused him of treating her like a silly woman who should be in the kitchen cooking rather than running a business. She told him if he ever "sandbagged" her again she'd kick his "nether region" up between his ears. I don't know how Uncle Les did it, but he finally calmed them both down to a point where they could speak to each other without yelling.

With the funds Aunt Mary conjured up, *Maddie's* boiler and fire box were rebuilt and certified. All damage to the topsides was replaced, and Captain Evans completed her sea trials. The company received its first assignment, along with a nice retainer, from an insurance broker through the Admiralty Law Office. The job required *Madelyn* to travel to the Narrows south of Juneau, Alaska to a site where an Alaska Packers "voyage chartered" vessel, the *M/V Arctic Trader*, sank. Alaska Packers had chartered the vessel to transport the processed and canned fish from their cannery to a dock in Seattle for shipment to Japan. The *Arctic Trader* was owned by a consortium of partners and its Captain and supposedly hit a rock and sank with a full load of canned fish. The six members of the crew, in the vessel's life boat, were rescued south of the Narrows.

There were many inconsistencies in the crew's stories, one of which was that Alaska Packers had advanced funds for supplies for a 15 man crew. The vessel's insurance carrier was requesting a thorough investigation.

Dad and Captain Evans decided that Ketchikan would be the best place for a home port because it had access to communication, supplies and local knowledge.

All of this was from information I was gleaning from conversations I overheard between Aunt Mary and Uncle Les when I got home from school. Hard as I had tried, there was no way I could convince Aunt Mary that being on board *Maddie* with my dad would further my education more than school. I heard dad had made a few deep dives in the pinnacle areas of the narrows at maximum high and low tides when they were at the least current flow; sometimes the tide's ebb and flow would run between four to six knots.

Uncle Les said dad found several smaller vessels down near the 150 foot depth but they didn't fit the description regarding size or profile of the *Arctic Trader*. A low pressure weather front was building up, forecasting a storm that would shut down all diving operations. They took *Madelyn* down past Annette

Island, thinking that Prince Rupert would offer a better shelter than staying in the Narrows. About twenty miles out they came across a drifting vessel with men waving their arms in distress. The *Madelyn* went alongside, asking if they needed help. The *Madelyn* later found out that the vessel's new diesel engine ran out of fuel before the crew could switch tanks, causing a possible time-consuming shut-down until the injectors could be bled. My dad offered to tow them to Prince Rupert.

At first it was hard for them to make out what the Indian crew was saying but, luckily, Captain Evans spoke a bit of pidgin or the "Chinook Jargon" and was able to communicate with the fishermen. The skipper of the fishing trawler came down from the house and, to the *Madelyn* crew's surprise spoke perfect King's English. He asked that they be towed to their village in the Portland Channel because the barometer was rapidly falling and the crew felt they should be at home with their families when the storm hit.

*Madelyn* took the trawler in tow. The boat's four-man Indian crew explained that they were fish buyers who traveled around to the Indian villages and small Indian fish boats to buy salmon. They would then, in turn, put the purchased fish in pen reservoirs in their village and about every week or so a cannery boat would pick up the fish to be processed. The tide was very high and as they approached the settlement a small group of friendly Indian fishermen assisted docking the fish boat and began tossing salmon into their pens. The fish that were still alive became active and the others (dead) were dressed out within minutes. The Indians offered Captain Evans beautiful slabs of salmon. The tribe invited *Madelyn's* crew to a tribal roast. The evening turned out to be a success; the *Madelyn* crew brought bread and biscuits, lemons and an assortment of fruit, but the several cases of beer was the hit of the meal which was served by an open fire.

As all enjoyed the feast the tribal leader, who was sitting next to Captain Evans, asked why his ship was in this particular area. The Captain wiped a bit of fish from his chin, "We were looking for a missing vessel believed to have gone down about two months ago in the Narrows area south of Ketchikan, but when we met up with your boat we were looking for shelter from a storm brewing up from the south. We thought Prince Rupert would be the safest haven in the area."

The leader nodded, "We don't see many large vessels this far from the Passage route. I remember that not too long ago my nephew was setting up fish pens on a stream several coves north of here. He thought it odd to see two large vessels tied together transferring many big boxes."

The Captain's interest was suddenly intense, "If I showed your nephew a picture of the vessel do you think he would recognize it? Tell him to come out to the ship early in the morning and we'll feed him breakfast."

Very early the next morning three dark, sharp featured muscular men clambered aboard the ship from their pirogue-like work boat. Captain Evans, no longer speaking to them in the pidgin tongue, invited them to sit at the mess table. He told the cook to fix them scrambled eggs, biscuits, jam and coffee while he went to wake my dad and get the photo of the *Arctic Trader*. When he and my dad

returned with the photo, the tribal chief's nephew quickly identified it as the same ship he had seen.

At that, the Captain and my dad got excited and asked if they would mind going with the *Madelyn* to the spot where they saw the two ships tied together. The Captain offered them money for their time, but they said that fuel oil would suit them better. He took their meaning that a 55 gallon drum of fuel would help if the ship could afford it. The deal was closed with a hand shake and preparations were made to leave immediately. The *Maddie's* crew was rustled out to weigh anchor and at the same time took the Indian's work boat in tow.

Less than five miles up the channel they came to a river inlet where the tribal chief's nephew directed them up-stream towards a cove. At a certain point he pointed down and said, "Right here." The Captain took bearings then reversed course and headed back down the coast to off-load their tribal fishing passengers. After hand shakes and many "thanks", the crew rolled a drum of diesel fuel into the water and the Indians climbed into their work boat and towed the drum ashore. The *Maddie* then headed back to the mysterious inlet. Soundings were taken, along with their bearing fixes, in several areas of the inlet. The depths ranged 75-175 feet at the deepest point on a rock bottom. In one place the lead-line struck something hard and barely 75 feet down. Dad took to the skiff with a grappling hook and made several passes in the area until the hook grabbed and held tight. A marker buoy with a flag was cast off and he returned to the ship.

As they were maneuvering to anchor, a large motor launch bearing a Canadian blue ensign with the coat of arms inset at her fly, cruised close to their location. The motor launch hailed the *Madelyn* to lay to, identify themselves, and state the purpose of their activities.

Having already loosed the anchor, Captain Evans invited the navy to come aboard and inspect their documents and log. With the two vessels tied together, the Canadian Navy instigated a beehive of activity, immediately going into all areas of *Madelyn* inspecting cabins and engine spaces.

It must be said here that there was little love lost between Canada and the two entities, "the Territory of Alaska and the United States". The Canadians still remembered the gold seekers who struck out then, trying to survive, turned into cons and robbers. They considered most Alaskans thieves, out to take anything they could "by hook or by crook", all with the American government's protection.

Seeking out the senior officer, Captain Evans challenged him, "What's the reason for all this hostile action with no explanation...after I invited you to come aboard?"

"Sir, we have word that a foreign flagged ship is off-loading contraband cargo and illegal emigrants to small vessels like yours. You have yet to tell me of your purpose here."

"And you, sir, have acted without asking me our purpose! However, since you've now asked so politely, the Captain said sarcastically, "I'll explain. Because of a developing front, we had to cancel our dive operations at the Narrows south of Ketchikan. As we couldn't find suitable shelter in the lee of Annette, we decided to

head for Prince Rupert until it was clear enough to go back. By good fortune we ran into a very friendly group of Canucks. They just might have solved a serious Barratry case that we're working on for an Admiralty Lawyer who has offices in San Francisco and Victoria.” He handed the officer work agreements with the name of Earle Brothers Co. under the letterhead of the attorney.

“You do know that these are Canadian waters and you need to have permits...you are intruding,” the officer said as he perused the papers.

Captain Evans countered, “I told you that we are only here in Canadian waters to seek haven from a storm. But, if it's your purpose to stop our project then get on with it so we can secure the proper documents. Every delay on your part is allowing the crooks to run free. With the information that we've just learned from these villagers we might be able to finish up in a few days, and possibly also help solve your government's concern regarding that foreign flagged ship.”

He stared at the Canadian officer, who was beginning to look a bit uncomfortable. “We are legally within our rights to seek shelter from stormy weather. We accidentally learned of two ships anchoring and transferring cargo, less than two months ago, in this very spot. One of those ships just might be sitting beneath us as we speak. Our diver could go over the side and within a short time, if the ship we are seeking is down there, we can both solve our cases. Give us four hours.”

The Canadian officer smiled and said, “Two hours to prove your theory.”

My dad, now dressed in his hardhat diving suit that he had totally rebuilt by silver soldering new valves and adding a telephonic communicator, was over the side and descending the ladder. Pete maintained the pressure with a large hand wheel operated air pump (no one trusted power operated air pumps as their reaction time was not controllable) while a deckhand cleared the umbilical chord with its hoses, communicator and the tether recovery line.

The following statement was taken from my dad's assessment report regarding his dive:

“At 75 feet I called for more air as I followed the grappling line down. I landed on the number two cargo hatch. I removed the hatch cover flat bar. I cut away the canvas cover with my knife, exposing the wooden hatch covers, released them and allowed them to float to the surface. I lowered my light on a lanyard into the hold. It appeared to be empty. One half hour had elapsed into my dive. As I went to the starboard side I asked to let me descend. Slowly I went down to the 100 foot depth where I found a smooth stone outcropping that must have been worn down from the ice age. The vessel was nestled as if in a cradle. Working my way forward I saw the name *ARCTIC TRADER* painted on the bow. I called Pete to bring me to the surface as I now had proof that this was the vessel we were looking for.”

When my dad surfaced, he made a verbal report to Captain Evans and the Senior Officer in charge of the Canadian motor launch.

“*Mister* Lieutenant,” the Captain said with a self-satisfied smile, “since this is in your jurisdiction. I will turn over a copy to you of all our findings including



the position and history of the *M/V Arctic Trader* as we know it. Please make your report to your Commander. We have your name, your launches ID number, location, the date and time. Since time is of the essence and unless you have a reason to detain us, you can reach us at Ketchikan when this low pressure clears up. We have to inform our employers of our findings.”

Three days after the storm cleared and on arrival at Ketchikan, dad sent a wire to the lawyers in San Francisco informing them of the *Madelyn's* find and particulars, including a mention of the intervention of the Canadian Navy. He got an immediate reply of congratulations to him and the crew, along with an update in the case. They had added mass murder as well as the act of Barratry to the charges against *Arctic's* crew, as first reports were that there was a fifteen-man crew and only six crew members were accounted for. Their office was in contact with their other office in Victoria. The final words in the wire were, “Don't worry regarding the Navy. Good job. Go home.”

It took the *Madelyn* three days to make it home to Tacoma. They had been gone for almost two weeks. Not a lot had changed, except that a check was waiting from the attorney's that was greatly appreciated as it helped them over the hump for the quarter. While they were gone the *Josephine* had several docking assists along with several barge relocation jobs. The tug's relief Captain proved himself very knowledgeable and capable.

The legal entanglements went through many court procedures. Dad was subpoenaed several times but was excused, usually at the last moment. In the meantime he petitioned the Admiralty Court in Victoria for his right to claim salvage of the *M/V Arctic Trader*. She was American Registered but the fact that she lay in Canadian waters confused the issue. My dad complained to Aunt Mary and Uncle Les over dinner one night how hard it was to get anything done dealing with the Canadian government. Each level of government needed authorization from a higher level and when they did make a decision they handed you a list of requirements a foot long which included all kinds of insurance, legal fees, licenses, and a long list of the permits needed.

“Thank God,” he lamented, “we had a friendly Admiralty Attorney who knew the procedures or I would have given up at the start.”

Both the consortium that owned *Arctic Trader* and Alaska Packers, who had chartered her from them, claimed right to salvage the vessel and each had their own local salvage company lined up to take over. They tried every trick in the book to get my dad to drop his claim. At one point Alaska Packers insisted he was working for them and was hired as a Marine Surveyor only. Which, of course, was not true. Dad challenged them to prove that they ever paid him a dime to do anything for them. Their attitude changed when the Admiralty Attorneys in Frisco told them how he saved everyone one hell of a lot of trouble by locating the boat.

When my dad took the exploratory dive job he had no idea how involved it would turn out to be. More issues came to light when one of the crew members began telling a wild tale after he was threatened to be charged with the murders of the other nine crewmen originally claimed to be aboard the *Arctic Trader*. He

swore that the *Arctic Trader* had sailed with only a six-man crew and he described the other ship that took the cargo of canned halibut and salmon as a Japanese flagged ship with the name something like *Jima* or *Shima Maru* painted on the stern along with other Japanese characters.

Another issue arose when the *Arctic Trader's* insurance broker denied all claims, forcing Alaska Packers' insurance carrier to consider denying claims regarding their interests in the canned salmon shipment. In the meantime the court in Victoria granted a permit for Earle Brothers Tug and Barge Company, as finders of the sunken vessel, to proceed with the attempted salvage, with a stipulation that if criminal activity was proven the insurers of the vessel be in partnership at a mutually agreed percentage to be paid to the salvors, not to exceed fifty percent over and above actual expenses. They also stipulated that the American registered vessel *SS Madelyn* was entitled to a finder's fee from both the Alaska Packers and the *Arctic Trader's* insurance companies in the amount of not less than ten percent (from each) of any recovered assets.

This ruling by the Canadian Admiralty Court encouraged my dad to prepare for his second foray to his "sunken treasure" as he often described his salvage operation. He visited the Navy Base at Kitsap to try to rent or borrow four pontoons like the ones they used to recover the downed boat at Monterey. The Navy had six in stand-by at a training area on the Hood Canal and two that were scheduled for inspection and maintenance in Kitsap.

My dad received permission, "for old times sake", from a former shipmate Commander to inspect the two pontoons in Kitsap. He offered to do any maintenance work on the two in exchange for their use for a period not to exceed two months, knowing full well he could ask for an extension if need be.

These giant wooden pontoons were 16 feet diameter by 40 feet long, made of vertical grain fir planks, bounded on the circumference by 1¼ inch threaded rods every six feet and hatches with valves and fittings for injecting air and/or seawater at each end with swash bulkheads (window-like openings to allow water to flow from one compartment to another without surging en-mass). As these were the only two pontoons available in the Northwest area he would have to locate two more somewhere.

Remember, I overheard most of these things over the dinner table or from discussions between Aunt Mary and Uncle Les. My dad's plan was to have a sawmill, which had been on good terms with Earle Brothers for many years, make the two additional pontoons. Of course Aunt Mary rejected the whole idea; and I might add I then realized that my dad was the best sweet-talking con artist on the waterfront when he talked her and Uncle Les into visualizing the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Don't get me wrong, I loved my dad like no son ever loved a dad, he had so many plus qualities; but he became so obsessed with the salvage operation that he was able to thwart any obstacles that got in his way.

Normally Fall brings continuous fronts of barometric lows and stormy weather to this region. It curtails much of the shipping and many shippers wait for the short period of lulls before the next front approaches to load and get underway.

My dad said if we waited for good weather we'd never get anything done. After checking out the two large navy pontoons with the foreman of the sawmill, who made sketches of the pontoon's measurements, he loaded up *Madelyn*, making ready to take off with the two huge cylinders and left instructions that he be notified when the pontoons at the mill were finished.

Dad, being the manipulator that he was, engaged the *Josephine's* relief Captain to skipper the *Madelyn* with a negotiated salary plus a bonus if the salvage was successful. Chief Engineer Pete was, of course, a willing participant...In fact, he would have paid money out of his own pocket to come on this adventure. He knew my dad trusted him to handle the topside activities while he was down below on a dive.

The need for a second diver was evident so my dad called on some of his old diver shipmates at the Navy Yard who might have need for additional income. Dad learned that one of his buddies took his retirement and now operated a diving school in Coos Bay, Oregon. Dad approached him to join in the venture but instead was directed to a highly recommended recent graduate of the diving school. The young diver was eager to apply his new found profession on a salvage operation and came along with a complete dive suit borrowed from the school.

Aunt Mary called for a meeting with all the full time employees of the company. The cost of the salvage operation was getting out of hand, she said, and provided her ledger to prove her point. All costs were noted in red ink, income in blue ink. The projected costs such as payroll, insurance, rent of dock from the Harbor Department, utilities, loan payments on boiler repair and maintenance, construction of the two pontoons, fuel seemed insurmountable. The only people that were willing to ease up on loan payments were the fuel suppliers and the lumber mill. All the others were in the same financial down turn as the Earle Brothers.

Aunt Mary insisted, no...more like demanded...that changes must be made or the company would be forced to go out of business by the end of the year. She added that there was no improvement evident in America's financial situation and it appeared that we were headed for a major depression.

My dad called the lead Attorney in San Francisco and informed him that because of the lack of ready operating cash that we might have to give up on the salvage operation. The attorney requested that my dad not make any decisions until they could talk face to face and arranged to come up to meet with dad within the week.

The lead Attorney of the Admiralty office, who was also their Chief Executive Officer, came to Tacoma along with his Corporate Accountant and asked for a review of Earle Brothers Company books. After two days of going over the books, with Aunt Mary participating in every step, the accountant suggested a meeting with my dad, Aunt Mary and Uncle Lester. He stated that the bookkeeping was a true and accurate account of the company's finances. He suggested that many organizations, and this included employees in venture salvage operations, were often paid minimal money for their labor or investment during the salvage

operation, with a healthy share of the profits to be paid at the conclusion of the project. He concluded that if the company had to shut down for lack of operating money then everybody lost, even those not directly associated with the salvage.

While the company's financial problems were being evaluated, my dad took the lead attorney on a tour of the facilities, the tug *Josephine, Madelyn* with all her diving equipment, the derrick, the two pontoons at the dock and over to the new pontoons under construction at the mill. My dad went over his plans for raising the *Arctic Trader* and filled the attorney in on the many events in locating the sunken ship.

On the third day the attorney suggested that we call a meeting with everyone involved in the salvage attempt: employees, vendors, labor service companies and suppliers. He said he would give a lecture on a program of give and take and if they wanted their money and the good possibility to make more, they should be sure to attend. He told Aunt Mary that everything was going to be on the table and that a clear understanding of everyone's position would be heard. If anyone chose not to attend and participate it would be their loss.

A meeting was arranged for the weekend at the high school auditorium. The attorney opened the meeting by complimenting Mary on her meticulous bookkeeping from a report by the Certified Accountant. He then went on to explain the gravity of the situation and that there was a chance that everyone could lose everything and no amount of expensive lawsuits instigated by Earle Bros. creditors would prevail if the company were to go into bankruptcy. "However," he continued, "I believe this company stands a very good chance to overcome its current financial difficulties. It would be unethical for me to personally invest in this salvage operation because I represent several clients in the matter. I should mention that the insurance pool which insured the vessel is made up of many small investors who deal through a broker, meaning that when a disaster such as this happens no one would suffer a catastrophic loss. Don't quote me but when they find themselves facing huge attorney fees seeking regress in the courts a majority would rather write off the loss than spend more money on the unknown.

You people have a different option and, if I might offer you my suggestions, you can join together and form a limited liability partnership and issue shares on any and all profits from this venture. This may be hard on some of you but weigh it against losing everything. I suggest that you list your minimum needs, then negotiate a pay and or payment adjustment with hope of recouping a good profit in the end. It's going to mean tightening your belts and living on beans, rice and air sandwiches...but, as I said, I think the salvage profits will be well worth your sacrifices. In closing, let me just say that usually I charge thousands of dollars for these recommendations when dealing with large corporations." He paused as his audience seemed to inhale in one huge gasp. He smiled, "I feel that I encouraged Mister Earle to pursue this venture so I offer this support pro-Bono. Thank you." He walked off the stage followed by hearty applause and laughter.

The attorney beckoned my dad to walk with him, and as they strode side by side out of the auditorium he handed my dad a mysterious (or so it seemed to my

young eyes) envelope and they shook hands. The attorney and accountant then headed for the airport and home to San Francisco.

After much discussion and haggling back and forth, finally all 75 people; employees, marine hardware suppliers and other vendors, Harbor Department managers, Utility management, boiler company and the Mill company reps agreed in principal and after a few days, and the help from an attorney friend, everything was in place to form the new partnership. It wasn't hard convincing them they were making the right decision as everyone felt that with the country's deepening depression it was the only sensible move to make.

Most of the unmarried crewmen elected to move aboard the two vessels from their boarding houses when Earle Brothers offered quarters and meals at cost while they were employed. It was also a hardship on the families with children and they were helped by the company according to their individual needs.

The "mysterious" envelope, I found out, contained a \$2,000 cash payment for expenditures incurred to date by the *Madelyn* for the *Arctic Trader* salvage operation and against future expenses. The source of this generous gesture, instigated by the insurance attorney, was never revealed to me. Whether my dad knew or not was a different story. Whatever the source, it put Aunt Mary in a much better mood, and with the \$2,000 infusion she started a new ledger for the corporation. Purchases from the vendors (now at their cost, to be paid later as agreed) began. Payroll (now reduced to nearly half) was met.

At one time my dad had grand illusions of taking over, as his own kingdom, the operation at Astoria which was now sitting dormant. It was shuttered and all employees, with the exception of a few principals who transferred north, had been let go. Their two small diesel tugs, a diesel operated barge crane and two other barges were listed for sale. After a month with not one offer being made, *Josephine* was sent to bring the flotilla to Tacoma. All employees volunteered to help with the evacuation and all vessels and crew arrived safely at our docks in Tacoma. This realignment of the company saved the company hundreds, maybe even thousands of dollars.

The concentration was now on business here in Tacoma and the salvage operation. My dad had the men rehearse diving procedures with the new young diver, a barrel-chested hulk of a man in his thirties named Jonah Davis. I was completely awed by Jonah as he could hold his breath longer than anyone I had ever heard of. I followed him around like a puppy dog just hoping for the times he would, just to make me laugh, hold his breath until I thought his eyes would pop out then bellow out, "I'm half fish, half man...I've got gills for ears and can breath under water!!" I watched them sink and raise the pontoons with the air compressor and seawater pumps. Men were splicing wire slings with eyes and thimbles at each end to go under the *Arctic's* hull for shackling to the pontoons on each side. Everything appeared to be coming together so plans were made to shove off, weather permitting.

*Josephine* would lead the flotilla with the two old pontoons in tow. *Madelyn* would follow towing the crane barge and the larger of the two tugs from Astoria. It

took five days fighting some strong currents from recent bad weather to reach our destination. With the assistance of the small tug, *Josephine* dropped off the two pontoons so they could be anchored in the inlet's shelter and then she paused just long enough to make sure everything was OK and say goodbye before heading back to Tacoma. Hopefully, the sawmill would have the two new pontoons ready and the weather would cooperate so *Josephine* could tow them up to the salvage location by the time dad needed them.

The weather cooperated and the water was clear. Dad made preparations for Jonah and him to go down and orient themselves and see how much effort it would take to pass the wire slings under *Arctic's* keel. Dad only allowed four hours a day diving time; two hours down, two hours rest, two hours down. They overlapped their down time so that each one was one hour into the other man's dive.

The wire slings were tunneled under the keel in several locations. The pontoons were towed towards the aft end of the *Arctic* and submerged on either side. Wires and shackles from bands around the pontoons were shackled to the slings. Then the pontoons rose as air was injected, causing a strain on wires and fittings while drawing the two cylinders closer to the hull. At this point both divers were concentrating on any movement of the *Arctic*. Suddenly the *Arctic* became buoyant and very slowly her stern appeared to rise. Dad immediately signaled to stop the air injection and sent orders topside for all operations to halt. He rose to the surface, removed his gear and had the crew begin eye-splicing more pendants from the 1¼" diameter wire, explaining to his diving companion the need to add a retainer sling aft of the propeller shaft struts to keep the *Arctic* from sliding aft once the forward pontoons started raising the bow. Dad told Pete that it wouldn't hurt for the pontoons to stay down overnight as this would allow them to swell at the seams and they could station them at the bow area for a test in the morning.

My dad wrote in his log journal "Lo and behold! *Josephine*, with black smoke belching from her stack, was spotted making her way around the point at first dawn, towing the two new pontoons."

Upon arrival of the other needed pontoons, excitement and urgency spread throughout the crew at the thought of finally seeing the result of their first salvage operation. The new aft retainer slings were completed and carefully attached. Dad made what he called a "white glove" inspection of the two pontoons to satisfy himself that they met specs. The small tug placed the new pontoons at the forward end of the *Arctic* and the crew filled them with water to submerge them. Meanwhile dad and Jonah suited up again, then dove down to hook them up. The crew began injecting air into the pontoons, forcing the water out until they had a strain on the slings that were attached forward. Slowly the slings came taught. The next few minutes would be the most crucial test of the whole project. Once committed to bringing her up, it would be hard to relocate *Arctic* back to her safe perch. It was a slow process as each pontoon was divided by a bulkhead creating two chambers, to allow for balance. Dad went over the side to keep a vigil on the progress. The compressors were working full bore and, finally, my dad announced she was afloat and free. It took a few hours for the *Arctic's* masts and house top to break to

the top. At first sight of her breaking the ocean's surface, a cheer erupted from the crew that dad swore could be heard for miles. At that point and after a conference with the lead people, it was decided to ease the whole assembly to shallower waters in case of an unforeseen malfunction and to allow for a decision to try to re-float her and, if not, make her secure enough for the tow home.

The weather looked like it would hold so the decision was made to tow her home buoyed between the pontoons. Dad went aboard the small tug, now tethered to the stern of the still awash *Arctic*, to keep a closer eye on the progress and assist in maneuvering if need be. *Madelyn* cruised at one side then the other ready to hook up the air lines to the pontoons if needed.

Their progress was at two to three knots if the current was against them, seven to eight if it was with them, making for a slow passage. The plan was to go into a floating drydock near Bellingham that was large enough to take in the *Arctic* and the four pontoons. This would allow them a chance to inspect *Arctic's* hull for any damages and to determine just what might have been the source of the scuttling...if, indeed, scuttling was the cause of her sinking.

*Josephine* marine-radioed the drydock company informing them of their estimated time of arrival. Most fortunately the drydock responded that they had the landing plans for drydocking the *Arctic* from her last haulout, which had been about a year previously. They added that their plans showed the location for all keel and bilge blocks and it would be easy to land the pontoons on sand bags and bilge blocks. Also, the dock would be submerged and ready upon their arrival.

They arrived at first light in the morning and mooring lines were passed to the drydock crew who began winching the *Arctic* and pontoons into the realm of the drydock. At the same time they pumped out water from the drydock's massive chambers at either side. Water was also being displaced from the pontoons with air. After three hours the *Arctic* started showing her hull and underwater attachments. Upon inspection, the props, shafts, struts and rudders all appeared to be in good shape. There was no sign of hull damage or holes from any explosive charge. Seawater continued to drain out from several through-hull locations (sea suction for engine and oil coolers or discharge of bilge pump waste). The keel showed no signs of damage.

My dad couldn't wait for the water to recede enough to work his way to the engine room. Every step was an invitation to slip on the wet and slimy decks. Reaching the lowest engine room deck, he waded through mucky water to the hull sides and found what he believed to be the cause of the sinking and proof of the intention to scuttle the *Arctic Trader*. He went over to the large cast iron sea chest, which was designed as a manifold with four places for valves. Two valve bonnets were missing and he had little doubt they were tossed into the bilges. He worked his way to the opposite side and found the same scene there. He lowered himself slowly to waist deep and kicked around with his foot until he felt a metal object that, with a little effort, he could move around,. He bent down and felt around in the water with his hand until he found a valve hand-wheel with bonnet attached and brought it to the surface and set it in a vacant bonnet spot on the valve

manifold. He ordered several lengths of hose to siphon the bilge water out through the open sea chest to the drydock's floor.

In his report he surmised that members of the crew, in two groups, removed the nuts from the four valve bonnets and dumped them in the bilge. Then as the seawater from the sea chest leaked out the valve holes and slowly raised in the bilge, they abandoned ship.

Word gets around fast on the waterfront. Just after lunch of the first day she was in drydock, representatives of the Alaska Packers came to inspect the condition of *Arctic* and were surprised to find her in such good condition. Immediately they asked if Earle Brothers would consider an offer to sell their rights to her and questioned dad regarding his opinions after he had inspected the vessel.

“Ask any questions and make your offer to the Admiralty Attorney in San Francisco,” dad must have told them ten or twenty times. “We can't make that decision or give you any info...they're the guys who hired us and are paying our bills.”

Dad sent in his report, which included all the findings including the opening of the manifold and his opinion of the scuttling, and the offer made by Alaska Packers to buy out Earle Brothers interests. He also stated that the *Arctic's* diesels should be rebuilt immediately as they had been in saltwater over three months and if there was any chance at all of saving them, permission should be given from whoever had the legal say-so, whether it be the consortium who owned the vessel, Alaska Packers who leased the vessel, the insurance company or the salvage operation.

There was word in the newspapers of a threatening labor unrest developing on the waterfront which wasn't unusual in Seattle. Surprisingly, the “Wobblies”, a radical off-shoot of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) were still active after 10 years of the public's negative views. Many thought they were traitors for their stand during the Great War and when they campaigned against the legitimate craft unions. Fearing a work stoppage, the shipyard hurriedly secured the valve manifold, touched up a few spots with bottom paint and did what other tasks were necessary to put the *Arctic* and four pontoons back in the water. One newspaper, on their back page, commented on the Earle Brothers success in salvaging the *M/V Arctic Trader*.

As the *Arctic Trader* reached buoyancy, bouncing lightly on the keel blocks, my dad and the drydock crew descended into every accessible space below the waterline looking for traces of any leakage. None were found and the drydock resumed going down until everything was cleared.

In the meantime, *Josephine* had towed the small tug and crane down to Tacoma, thinking the *Arctic* would be in drydock for several days. My dad radioed *Josephine* to return immediately because of the possible labor strike at the shipyard. She arrived just as the drydock was about to float the flotilla, so hooked up and towed the *Arctic* out to the mid-channel with the four pontoons secured along side, then proceeded towards home, with *Maddie* following.



Dad took the *Madelyn*, with the two borrowed pontoons in tow, to the Navy base at Kitsap and was met at the dock by his Commander friend. While checking out the pontoons his friend commended him on the successful salvage project that he had read about in the newspaper. He also mentioned that several men in his group remembered "Chief Early" and said they hoped to see him in San Diego at an up-coming reunion. After the Commander and several raters inspected the two pontoons they agreed that the pontoons were in excellent shape and accepted their delivery.

Christmas Holiday was fast approaching and dad asked if I was interested in going down to San Diego for a three day reunion of his old Navy salvage and diver buddies. He said that he received free airplane tickets and hotel accommodations from the Admiralty Lawyer, who mentioned in his letter that he graduated from Annapolis, served his time and retired after the war. "He suggested," my dad said with a wink, "that I should keep my eyes and ears open because the event was sponsored by several diver supply companies displaying their latest equipment and eager to make deals. Whatever you do, though, don't tell your Aunt Mary about the diving supply companies being there...she'd find some way to keep us from going and shopping."

A week before we were to leave Uncle Les got an emergency call from one of our competitor tug companies asking for assistance. Seems their tug hit a rock while towing two barges loaded with milled lumber which, in turn, ran over the tug putting her on the bottom. The crew got off safely but the barges were in mid-channel now anchored by the sunken tug.

My dad took off with the *Madelyn* so he could appraise the situation. At the last moment, to my great surprise and excitement, he let me come with him. We tied up on the lead barge and my dad put on his dive gear and found the 85 foot Diesel tug in less than 100 feet of water. She seemed to be in good shape; very little damage to the hull but considerable damage to the house. He radioed Captain Evans aboard the *Josephine* to drag the two new pontoons to his location to assist in re-floating the tug.

Jonah, the young diver who assisted with the *Arctic* salvage, stayed on as a crewman on *Madelyn*, mainly because no one had yet been paid. Because of his experience on that dive he knew the procedures and my dad and he were able to suit up and go right to work. Three days later the tug was in drydock at Tacoma. The two loaded barges were delivered along side an Australian lumber ship and we still had some free time before we were to leave on our trip to San Diego. The grateful rival company paid us on presentation of our invoice. I don't think I'd ever seen Aunt Mary as happy as she was that Christmas season. She told me that the love of money might be the root of all evil, but knowing money was in the bank account was the root of all happiness!

We landed at an airport north of town Sunday after 6pm, (1800 navy time, dad informed me) and took a taxi to the hotel which was a short distance south of town. My dad was in civies and as we were checking in at the hotel, several naval personnel came up to my dad and started pounding him on the back, laughing, and

everyone trying to talk at once. One man even hugged him! This was a side of my dad that I'd never seen before and I just stood there with my mouth open. They couldn't wait to get my dad off to one side to ask about his salvage expedition. I found out that word travels fast when anything happens in the Navy on the West Coast, or anywhere for that matter. Scuttlebutt soon becomes common knowledge. He held up both arms in surrender fashion and pleaded to let him get his son settled in his room before starting with the sea stories...then he'll buy the first round. He put his arm around my shoulders and introduced me to the men. I don't remember their names...I was too startled to hear the pride in his voice as he pulled me forward and said, "my son, Ron."

While dad finished checking in, I occupied myself reading a large poster-board that was on a tripod near the reception desk showing schedules for tomorrow's events for the Navy Diver reunion.

Monday

8-10 – Dining Room...Breakfast social

10-12 - Ball Room...Introductions of speakers

(a list of prominent names Navy Officers and Civilian Marine Businessmen)...

1300 -1600 - New Hardware & Equipment...Auditorium

Break for dinner

1800 - Reunion Party...Ball Room

My dad and I had dinner in our room. We were tired from the long flight and having to change planes in San Francisco and again in Los Angeles, with wait times of over an hour in each place. Of course, I had never flown before and it was almost the most exciting experience that I had ever had, coming in a very close second to being on the boats with dad and the crew. The hotel was also new to my young teenage experiences. When dad picked up the phone and ordered dinner to be sent to the room I could hardly wait to see the results. When the white-coated man wheeled the cart in with the covered dishes I stood there speechless. We ate dinner and dad loaded up the cart and wheeled it outside the door. The food, of course, didn't come close to Aunt Mary's cooking, but I couldn't wait to get home and tell her about the part of just setting the dishes outside the door because, while she loved to cook, the cleanup was always the hardest and nastiest chore for her.

"I'm bone tired, son," my dad said. "I'm going to hit the shower and get a little sleep." He was in the little dressing room next to the bathroom and had his shoes and tie off when there was a knock at the door. Dad said, "Get the door and if anybody asks for me, tell them I'm in the shower, leave a card, and I'll get back to them in the morning."

I cracked the door open and standing there was a Naval Officer with four gold stripes on each sleeve. I recognized the uniform as that of a Captain and called out, "Dad, you'd better come out here!"

"Damn it Ron, I told you what to say!"

I rushed back to the dressing room, "But it's a four-stripe Captain at the door,

asking for Chief Earle. Here he gave me this card and asked to speak with you now.”

“OK let him in,” my dad said as he slipped back into his shoes.”

I opened the door to allow the Officer to enter. My dad stood at attention, saluted then grabbed the Captain's hand and shook it vigorously. They both put their free hands on the others shoulders in a gesture that I took to be of deep friendship.

I was introduced, then my dad told me to go take my shower. Our hotel suite had a sitting room where we ate dinner, a bedroom with double beds and the bathroom was off the bedroom.

As I was getting ready to shower, I heard my dad order a bottle of Black Label Scotch and a bucket of ice from room service. After my shower, as much as I wanted to stay up and satisfy my curiosity regarding the Captain and his relationship with my dad, I crawled into bed went right to sleep.

The next morning dad, all decked out in his chief uniform, went to the breakfast social in the main dining room with me tagging at his heels. We then I spent about twenty minutes going from one table to another, recognizing old shipmates and shaking hands with everyone.

This reunion was supposed to be a Navy diver get-together but wound up including many Navy salvage specialists from all parts of the country. Everyone seemed to know every one else or at least pretended to recognize names when introduced.

The Captain who visited with my dad the previous night was introduced to the audience as the Naval Base Commander. He welcomed everyone, saying that the Naval Base had been designated as the Pacific fleet's repair facility, then proudly self-confessed his experience as a diver and salvage master and said that he considered himself an active member of the reunion. His announcement was met with a tremendous outpouring of applause and cheering. When calm returned to the assembly he pointed to several shipmates in the audience, calling out their names and asking them to stand. After the fifth or sixth person was recognized I heard him call out, “Chief Dam Early! I see you back there; stand up.” Everyone applauded and as dad was sitting down, the Captain added, “Maybe if we have time he'll come up and give us an update on his recent *Arctic Trader* salvage.”

No one was more surprised than my dad was for the introduction and no one was prouder for him than I was. We were both grinning from ear to ear as I felt tears swell up in my eyes.

Dad and I agreed that after breakfast I would be on my own for the rest of the morning. While he and his buddies got together, he suggested that I try out the large swimming pool and handed me \$5 to buy lunch or spend as I wished. He said that my celluloid identification badge would show I was a hotel guest and grant me admission to most everywhere.

Walking through the lobby I spotted a sign painted with large letters, **DIVERS** and **SALVORS NEW EQUIPMENT**, with an arrow pointing towards double doors to another room. I was met at the door by a gentleman who wrote my

name in the guest book and asked, with an amused smirk, if I had an interest in diving gear.

“Yes Sir,” I answered timidly as he led me towards the rear of the big room where many different dive suits and helmets were on display. An odd shaped helmet mounted on a manikin wearing a body-fitting knitted material caught my attention.

“At what...” my voice cracked and I cleared my throat. “At what depth,” I continued, striving for a deeper more mature tone, “can this suit operate and for how long?”

Catching him off guard, he “hrumphed” and walked behind the velvet rope and read from the list of particulars while writing the information on the back of his business card. He studied the guest card pinned to my shirt for a moment then asked if by some chance I was from Tacoma. I nodded yes as I studied the information he handed me. Then he asked if I happened to be any relation to Chief Dam “Early”. I answered that he was my dad. The salesman said, “Give this card to your dad.”

The auditorium was filling up with people, mostly in uniform. Several people came to the gentleman talking to me, each telling him that a Mr. Powers (who must have been someone important) had just come in and maybe he should go over and see to his needs. The guide impatiently brushed them off with, “Not now, I'm very busy.”

He turned to me and said, “Please stay here for a few moments, I want to get something else you can give to your father.” I agreed and he hurried off. He returned in a few minutes with a large sealed manilla folder.

I went to our room to put the card and manilla folder in a safe place for my dad. While there I got into my swim trunks and put on one of the bathrobes provided by the hotel. After strutting up and down in front of the full-length mirror, admiring the fine figure I cut in the robe, I attached the room key by slipping it in the safety pin behind my name plate that I pinned to the chest area on my robe. What tales I'd have to tell to my buddies when I returned to school! I took the elevator down to the pool and swam for awhile. To my dismay, there wasn't anyone of my age in the pool area, so I went back to the room and lazed around...bored to death. I decided to get dressed and go back down to the dive exhibit area.

Upon entering, a man asked that I register and I told him I was already in the book. I started to walk on in when I thought about something my dad had mentioned about a new life saving lung designed by a Naval Officer named Momsen. I asked the man at the door if they had a Momsen re-breather lung on display. He pointed to a cluster of men around one of the vender locations. I went over to where a representative was demonstrating an odd contrivance hanging around the upper part of his chest. He had a clamp on his nose and two hoses hanging down from a mouth piece leading to what appeared to be air bags at his waist, and was describing how the contraption worked.

At the end of his spiel as he was removing the lung, I asked if it could be used for short and shallow dives, such as checking out hull damage or clearing

away line caught in the propellers. My question caught the interest of several in the group and we waited for his response. "I guess it could be used that way but it was designed for submariners in emergency escape situations." My question prompted a flurry of questions from the group and I stood there taking it all in and even occasionally interjecting a comment of my own to the debate.

I wandered up one aisle and down another. So much to see and all of it fascinating. One exhibit featured under-water welding and oxygen/acetylene equipment. I thought my dad would be interested in that and stuffed several brochures in an envelope the exhibitors provided for that purpose. There were all sorts of chain and wire cutting devices and no end to the hardware offered. I had only covered about half of the displays when I saw that it was past time for dinner. I went to our table but my dad was nowhere to be seen. A waiter told me that half the people didn't show up for dinner and suggested that I order right away before they stopped serving. My dinner came and I just picked at the food, hoping dad would come. I could understand why half the people didn't show up for dinner; Aunt Mary wouldn't have served the rubbery chicken and soupy mashed potatoes to her worst enemies. I waited, shoving the hard little peas under the chicken and burying them in the mound of potatoes. Finally, I was the last one to leave the table.

I went up to our room and found my dad passed out on the bed, still in his uniform. I removed as much clothing as I could; his jacket, shoes, pants and shirt, then straightened him up in bed, covered him up and let him sleep. I shook my head, thinking that tomorrow morning he was going to be upset because he'd missed the reunion party in the ball room tonight, but on second thought, from the looks of him he hadn't missed a darned thing.

Early the next morning he woke me up and asked what I wanted for breakfast then called room service to have it sent to our room. My dad had already showered, shaved and put on his civvies. Over breakfast he announced that in about two hours we'd be on our way home.

We were all packed and waiting when the bellboy knocked and took our baggage to the lobby and after dad checked out we were in a cab on our way to the airport. I had saved out the bulging envelopes from the exhibits and after boarding my dad and I went through the many hand bills and pamphlets. He was very interested in the one on the Momsen lung and asked how I came by it. I told him that I stayed for the demonstration. He said that he had worked with Swede (Momsen) on the East Coast. I mentioned that I asked if the lung could be used for free diving and that it had excited the group to bombard the demonstrator with all sorts of questions.

"Hey, you do pay attention," he grinned, "Maybe I'll give you a chance to try out on my dive team."

I showed him the business card from the rep at the exhibit that featured the newly designed hard hat and light-weight dive suit. The demonstrator had written on the back, "Hi Chief, he's a chip off the old block. Call me sometime. Andy"

Dad turned the card over and read, "Andrew W. Barham, New London,

Connecticut.” He shook his head and muttered, “I’ll be damned!”

At this response I asked who he was. “Another old shipmate,” Dad replied. “Did his twenty and retired.”

Our flight was direct to San Francisco where we changed planes to fly into Tacoma. For the first time in my life my dad and I talked “man to man” and I almost felt like an adult. I sensed he no longer looked at me as a little kid. He asked if I ever thought of what I’d like to do when I got older. I told him I always wanted to be like him, but after talking to Captain Evans and Pete that maybe college would be the next step after high school. “They both said college was necessary to succeed and they both suggested that with your contacts I should be able to get into either Annapolis or a good New England Maritime Academy.”

He chuckled, “Yeah, kid, I guess Annapolis would be a hell of a lot better than being like me. Keep up your grades and maybe it can happen.”

“Gosh, dad,” I quickly explained, “you know I didn’t mean that the way it sounds.”

He ruffled up my hair then hugged me around my shoulders, “I know it kid...I know it.”

After changing planes and settling in my dad asked me if I would mind staying on with Aunt Mary and Uncle Lester as he had been offered a job with the Government that he was considering and it involved traveling a lot. When I asked what kind of a job it was, he passed it off as being a consultant in maritime matters for the U.S. Naval Bureau of Construction and Repair and added that he would be on an “on call as needed” bases.

Two weeks after returning from our trip to San Diego, a representative of the Admiralty Law office arrived bringing partial payment checks from several entities involved with the *M/V Arctic Trader* incident. The checks covered all expenses, including all wages and even allowed for a partial bonus for those that agreed to participate in the vessels salvage. A mediation committee was meeting to evaluate the the actual market value of the ship. After inspection they found the ship in very good condition with the engines needing little more than routine freshwater rinsing. The lubricating and fuel systems required the most attention along with the generator and electric system, which needed drying out.

The law office representative said Alaska Packers was still interested in the ship and continued to up their offer at each stage of inspection, and that was the reason for the mediation as ordered by the court. In any event, Earle Brothers should expect a handsome check at the end of this last hurdle.

Fortunately, the ensuing years were successful for the Earle Brothers Salvage Company. Even the long drawn out West Coast waterfront labor turmoil had a minimal effect on their operations because of an understanding that Earle Brothers would not engage in any commercial activities and concentrate on rescue and salvage.

The tug *Josephine* had two large monitors capable of pouring many thousands of gallons of water on fires along the docks, so she was designated a critical on-call emergency vessel. She also had an agreement with the Navy to

assist when needed.

After receiving much discomfort and intimidation from the unions, Earle Brothers sold their derrick barge and small tug to the company that managed the railroad docks at Tacoma which were being picketed. An odd situation developed between the union and Earle Brothers when an appeal was made from the Governor of the Alaska Territory begging to allow shipments of food and necessary survival goods be transported to Sitka, then parceled to those areas up north that were most in need. A disposition was made to allow only barges (no cargo ships) to be loaded by union longshore workers and towed by Earle Brothers.

A very similar situation came up when the Territory of Hawaii was also feeling the pinch of no cargo heading in their direction. Store shelves were bare as a result of the West Coast work stoppages. Many essentials were being hoarded and then sold on the black-market. The Territorial Government appealed for the same terms as the Alaska understanding.

Dad did take that government job and left the salvage company in the capable hands of Aunt Mary, Uncle Lester, Captain Evans and Pete. Jonah took over the diving operations and was the company's head diver until it was no longer safe for him to go down. He also acted as my surrogate father, as dad was gone so much of the time. He taught me the fine art of hard-hat diving and allowed me to go out on the boats whenever possible.

It was easy to stay on with Aunt Mary and Uncle Les as I loved them dearly. Aunt Mary saw to it that I kept my grades up and yes, I did go to college and on to Kings Point and a career in the Navy. So, here I am, a retired geezer of 84 years at a Kings Point reunion aboard an old Victory ship in the San Pedro Harbor reminiscing over a poem embroidered on a silk pillowcase. And, like most men who take to the sea, my ship was my mistress and I loved her *almost* as much as the “she” that waited for me on shore.