FIRE ISLAND LAND PIRATES

Nicholas L. Bruen

The following story comes to us from the Disaster Books in the Marine Library of the Atlantic Mutual Insurance Company. Founded by Walter Restored Jones, a Long Islander, in 1842, Atlantic began to keep detailed records of all marine disasters ten years later. Entries were posted each morning and the ledger was placed on the president's desk for him to estimate reserves needed for possible claims. Walter Restored Jones was succeeded as president in 1855 by his nephew, John Divine Jones, who remained at Atlantic's helm until 1895. Both are buried at St. John's Church in Cold Spring Harbor where their memorials may be seen today.

As background to the story of the *Helen J. Halloway* is the fate of the *Great Western* which was wrecked a week earlier in the same place. Her crew of thirty six all survived, unlike the hapless six on the *Helen J. Halloway*. She carried a cargo consisting mostly of oranges and lemons—many of which were gathered up by the same "Land Pirates" mentioned in this article. Neither ship could be salvaged.

The schooner *Helen J. Halloway*, which went ashore on Flat Beach about nine miles east of Fire Island, at four o'clock on Tuesday, will in all likelihood prove a total loss. She stands firmly fixed in the sand, with her head straight to the shore, full of water. Her cargo consists of 300 hogsheads of sugar and ten casks of molasses and is insured by the Atlantic Insurance Company. The vessel, which was worth probably $25,000 was mostly owned by the Messrs. Holley of Machias, Maine. In a vessel of about 230 tons burden and is a neat, trim craft.

The sole survivor of her crew, Jackson Beale, of Machias is still on the beach opposite Sayville, L.I. He is a sturdy looking, intelligent Eastern sailor. Beale says the *Halloway* left Cionfuegos 13 days before the disaster occurred which proved so fatal to his shipmates. The weather on the trip had not been very bad. It took them seven days to reach Hatteras, and the remaining portion of the time was consumed on the way to the point at which the unfortunate vessel struck. The crew of the *Helen J. Halloway* were mostly young men, and it appears the Captain had totally miscalculated his position, and to this fact the disaster is to be traced.

According to Beale's story, the Captain judged himself 120 miles from Montauk Point at noon on Monday. His intention was to stop off that point in case the weather proved unfavorable and when all was fair to run down by Block Island and so on his course to Boston. He had no business and no intention of coming on the side of the island at which the vessel struck. Running soundings were taken during the day on Monday and also at midnight on Monday night and at the latter time there was found to be 33 fathoms of water. In consequence of this discovery, no precaution was taken against danger ahead, for none was feared.

As the night wore on, however, and the breeze stiffened, sail was taken in, and when the schooner struck the sand she was running under a double reefed mainsail and jib. When about 300 yards from shore the men on the schooner heard the roar of the breakers, but it was too late to avert the impending danger by an effort to shift her yards. The Captain thought, however, that she was running on an outside shoal, and hoped to do something toward saving his vessel by letting go his anchor. To accomplish this the men set to work, but had only gotten it over the side when she struck fast.

Panic must have then seized all on board, for they hurried to do the last thing they should have done. The yawl was lowered, and they all got in, the Captain taking with him his chronometer and some of the ship's papers. Jackson Beale was the last man to step into the yawl, and just as he sat in the bow, before his comrades had time to ship their oars, a heavy sea struck the boat and overturned her in the breakers.

Beale says that when first thrown out of the yawl, his feet touched bottom; but so strong were the breakers that he was

tossed and tumbled over and over, until through sheer good fortune he found himself standing in a few inches of water, about a hundred yards westward of the ship. It was still very dark, and he continued for an hour or more to hover about his ship, which then stood almost broadside to the shore, heading to the west. But he soon saw that no one of the seven but himself had escaped, and Beale, as the day broke, found his way first to the Government House, about half a mile to the westward.

There was no one there, however, the custom being to withdraw all the men on April 1. After a while he straggled further west and finally came upon the tent occupied by the wreckers engaged on the wreck of the *Great Western*. At first Beale was regarded by the wreckers as one of the hundreds who lounge about the wreck. After hovering about the entrance to the tent for some time, Beale asked if he might dry himself and have something to eat, telling the men he had just been wrecked and his mates all drowned.

The men heard his story with surprise, but saw the confirmation of it in the presence of the schooner high up on the beach to the east. Beale was taken in and kindly treated by the wreckers and several men went to the vicinity of the schooner, but found no trace of the lost men.

Captain William Merrit, who is in charge of the Coast Wrecking Company's men, took charge of the schooner cargo for the Atlantic Insurance Company, but the sea ran so high yesterday nothing was done to save anything but the sailors' trunks and such of the ship's papers as might be found. One of the first things brought on shore was Stanley's book of travels in Africa, which afforded considerable amusement to the crowd of idlers about the wreck.

The Sand Pirates of the Great South Bay seem to regard these wrecks as their legitimate prey. They infest the shore at all hours of the day and night by the hundred, although their attendance necessitates a sail across from the mainland of five or six miles, and there is no place at which they can get anything to eat except the wreckers' tent, where they should least expect a kindly welcome.

As the work of unloading the *Great Western* progresses, these people gather about the ship, getting in the way of the wreckers, crowding about, and purposely jostling the men who are removing the cargo so as to make them drop it. When it falls, a horde of these beach ravens tear the package open and distribute its contents in an instant. Some attack the carts that convey the oranges, which were a portion of the *Great Western's* cargo and run off with the boxes in the presence of the watchmen. Everyone brings a bag or basket in coming to the beach and all carry them away full of oranges or anything else they can pick of value.

During the rain storm of Monday, a number of women were among the piratical visitors to the wreck, and even at the risk of exposing themselves to the driving storm they stripped themselves of their outer garments to utilize them in carrying away fruit. No matter how cold it is, these people walk into the water until it is almost breast high for the purpose of securing a few oranges. They are not content with stealing from the vessel, they steal from one another.

The other day while one pirate helped himself from a box of oranges in the cart, another pirate helped himself from the first pirate's pockets. When the first was discovered and proceeded to sneak away with his booty, his astonishment on finding that he had been the subject of tricks as vain as his own was indescribable. Sometimes the men would throw into the water a box of spoiled oranges when pestered too much by the crowds, and as the crowd rushed for this, they would pelt them with other oranges from the ship's wreck. But the pirates, instead of being driven away, turned about and picked up the missiles with which they had been assailed to see whether they were worth preserving.

The news of the wreck of the schooner, when it became known that she was laden with sugar, increased the number of these visitors to the beach yesterday and each one had either an empty basket or bag. As the cargo was not touched, however, they were obliged to return empty handed or remain all night on the sand hills, or in their boats, to await future developments. It would require the services of an entire regiment of soldiers to successfully prevent the depredation of these scavengers of the beach.

The yawl in which the crew of the schooner endeavored to escape was dashed to pieces after being upset, and a little gig hanging at the vessel's stern was also stove in during the night.

A brief account of this ship disaster appears in the May 1960 *Forum*. DeVerne Swezey names the ship the *Helen J. Holaway* and the sole survivor Jack Biel. He wrote that the ship "came on the beach a little to the west of what the old people called Joe Stillman's hut. Some fishermen were staying there at the time. A few hours before sunrise one of the fishermen named Hiram Swezey went over to the surf and he saw the wreck and came running back and told his story. The others in the fishing party got dressed and went over to see the wreck and by the time they got to the vessel, Captain Goddard (of the wrecking crew working on the *Great Western*) was aboard."

VF- Shipbuilding + Shipwrecks

LOOKING PAST TOURISM

Landmark Decision Re-examines Public Trust Doctrine

BY SUE MORROW FLANAGAN

In June 1987, the beaches of East Island, off Glen Cove, Long Island, were lined with fishermen at the water's edge casting their lines out as fishermen had for over a century. John Cacciola's son, Johnny, saw a friend and police officer from Glen Cove striding purposefully down the beach. Recognizing Johnny, he said, " Get out of here, kid. We're handing out summons." Cacciola's son ran from the beach. His father had just arrived to drive him home and watched the scene with binoculars.

Today, Cacciola, still sounds shocked by his son's description of the event, "I couldn't believe it. I asked him 'What did you do, hit your head on the way up from the beach?'" But, it was true. Sixteen fishermen were ticketed for trespassing on Pryibil Beach and the area west to Matinecock Point and Dry Dock Place.

As secretary/treasurer of the Fishermen's Defense Fund, Cacciola now leads the fight for access to the East Island beaches from his Glen Cove sporting goods store.

In a series of bitter court cases against the East Island Association and the State of New York, the fishermen initially lost a Supreme Court battle but, in the higher Appellate Court, obtained a victory which has changed New York legal history.

Bill Sharp, legal council for the NYS Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources and Waterfront Rehabilitation, maintains that the East Island battle which is called Carlton Smith et al. vs. The State of New York "is one of the most important cases to come down the pike in a long time."

Even Lawrence Berger, attorney for the East Island Association, agrees that the case is the nub of a private versus public property debate which will be

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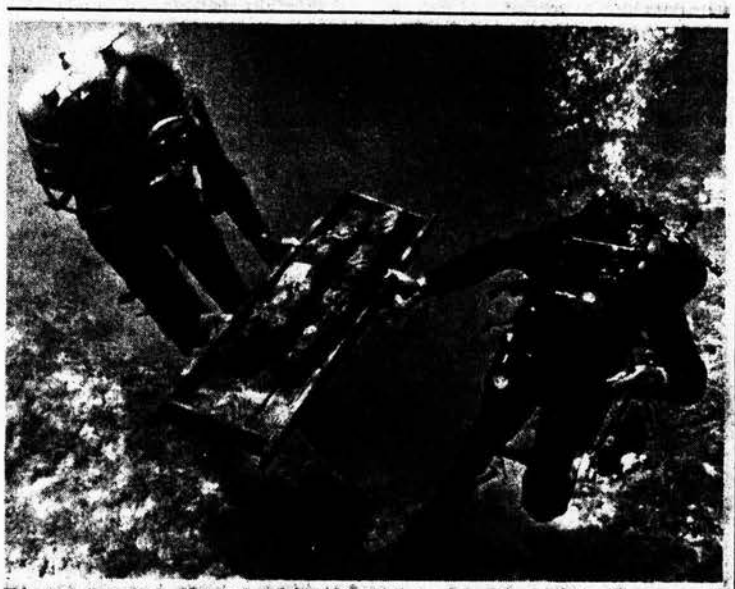

Divers rescue pieces of hull from a shipwreck on the ocean floor.

PHOTO: INSTITUTE OF NAUTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Sunken Ships: Will They Be Protected?

BY KATHLEEN FLEMING

Howard Klein, a self-proclaimed, "normal average American citizen, makes his living as the owner of an electrical contracting firm in New York City when he isn't diving on shipwrecks, lobbying against laws restricting the salvage of shipwrecks and joining court battles over ownership rights to shipwrecks.

The Long Island man who serves as executive director of the American Sport Divers Association began diving on shipwrecks after he returned from the Vietnam War and found himself with, as he put it, "a void to fill in." In Klein's lexicon, shipwrecks are an extension of himself, objects that become personal property upon discovery.

"Coming upon a new wreck is amazing," he says. "It's like when your first-born is born."

The trouble is Klein's would-be child belongs to the public, not to him, according to federal legislation known as the Abandoned Shipwreck Act, which was signed into law in April, 1988. The act overturned the rule of "finders keepers" which previously had reigned supreme over submerged lands, allowing commercial salvors to view the thousands of shipwrecks scattered at the bottom of the sea as claims just waiting to be staked.

Under the new act, shipwrecks were removed from the jurisdiction of the federal Admiralty Court, which previously upheld the "finders keepers" seafaring tradition, and turned them over to the jurisdiction of individual states. It had been assumed under the admiralty laws, which date back several hundred years, that all shipwrecks were commercial commodities that needed to be rescued and returned to commerce.

Paul Forsythe Johnston, curator of maritime history at the National

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Canal Hearings Widen Scope of Legislation

BY CONNIE COHN

New York's Barge System is a state and national treasure. Li great steam engine canals pumped century commerce dustry and settlers into the heartla America. Plowshares forged in P kill were carried up the Hudson and through the legendary Erie Ca midwestern plains, where they bro sod and built the agricultural wealt has been a foundation of this na power.

Now, underutilized and und nanced, the canal system is a de rating, half-buried treasure that a of legislators would like to turn i tourist mecca.

Some observers fear a Coney Is type monster, an environmental ho Others are delighted.

"With foresight and careful plan it could equal the extraordinary c in northwestern Europe, the British and Canada," said John and J Hultberg, owners of a Lake Ontari and breakfast at a hearing in Roch on Dec. 6, 1989.

They added, "When consid development and much-needed r ues, please preserve the natural b as well as the historic importance s wonderful legacy will be availabl our grand-children and generatio come."

The Rochester hearing was one held between September and Ja along the 524 miles of canals canalized rivers and lakes that link Erie in the west with the Hudson and Lake Champlain in the east. purpose was to elicit public com on two legislative bills that would tourism to revitalize the canals nearby communities.

The first bill is a constituti amendment that would free the sta charge fees for use of the canals to grant long-term leases of canal

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INSIDE

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

Water Ways March/April 1990

Sunken Ships — Finders Keepers No Longer Applies

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, argued last fall in an article in SEA HISTORY magazine: "It is ludicrous to consider a wreck site that has stabilized over the course of decades or even centuries 'in peril,' yet that is exactly what admiralty lawyers in the employ of treasure hunters have successfully argued in courts all over the world."

The new legislation was intended to give states the power to determine which shipwrecks found in their waters have historical importance that overrides commercial salvage value.

But attitudes that are centuries old die hard and not without a fight.

"There is no way that anyone on the other side can tell me that the government knows what's best for us. We're American. We know what's best for us," says Klein.

His challenge to the government and the archaeology community could not be clearer: "They will have to pry my dive light and my lift bag from my cold dead hands before I stop diving shipwrecks."

Actually, however, if Klein were worried only about diving shipwrecks he would have no reason to be upset. The Abandoned Shipwreck Act and New York State's regulations both are designed to protect the sport diver's right of access to wrecks, with the proviso that they look but don't touch.

The termination of some segments of the diving community and of commercial salvors, who argue that they can be true to their pocket books and history at the same time, is met with a sense of outrage among members of the archaeological and historic preservation communities. They have likened salvage for profit with pot hunting for Indian artifacts in Yellowstone National Park, grabbing a piece of the Alamo for a personal souvenir or painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa.

The problem, the scientists say, is that once an intruder has removed material from or tampered with an historic site, the educational value of that site is lost forever. Archaeologists see the artifacts found on a wreck as pieces to a puzzle, clues to the past that can only be understood when seen together as a whole.

Commercial salvage for profit by its nature entails selling off artifacts to anyone who will pay for them. Once the historic material is scattered, archaeologists argue, it can never be meaningfully reassembled.

"Archaeological resources are nonrenewable—once you've messed around with them, they're ruined," says Nicholas Westbrook, executive director of Fort Ticonderoga museum on Lake Champlain. His museum has undertaken, along with the state of Vermont, the protection of shipwrecks in that lake.

The opposition among archaeologists to the commercial salvage of historic shipwrecks is so strong that three years ago the Council of American Maritime Museums decided it would rather not have information and materials if they had been acquired for profit. The council, which represents 42 member museums, amended its by-laws, officially banning the purchase or exhibition of archaeological material "illegally salvaged or removed from commercially exploited archaeological or historic sites."

But despite the Abandoned Shipwreck Act and the boycott by the official archaeology community, the historic shipwreck continues to be a species threatened by treasure hunters for a number of reasons.

First, the U.S. Department of the Interior, charged with handling the implementation of the Abandoned Shipwreck Act, has yet to release a final version of its guidelines to states on how to deal with shipwrecks.

The states, for their part, each handle shipwrecks differently, with some, such as Massachusetts and Washington, allowing salvors to keep most of their finds and to contribute only a small percentage to the state. Even states such as New York, whose strict regulations over shipwrecks date back to 1958, lack the organization, labor time and money needed to enforce those regulations. So that despite the illegality of artifact removal and salvage for profit on historic shipwrecks in state waters, the state does little to intervene.

Philip Lord, senior scientist (archeology) for the Office of the State Archeologist, Education Department, says, "We have so many other more pressing problems—toxic wastes, toxic dumping, air pollution—and governmental agencies don't seem to be able to get a handle on those—When you talk about toxic dumping that could poison our children and someone taking a canon from the lake, where do you send your police department?"

The problem of limited resources is compounded by the confusing overlapping of duties among state agencies involved in historic shipwrecks. The Office of General Services, the Education Department and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and their many subsidiary agencies, all share responsibility for wrecks.

At the same time, state officials readily admit that they are almost entirely at the mercy of private divers for their information about the existence and location of shipwrecks. They say that so far the state has not undertaken a comprehensive survey of shipwrecks.

When the federal government, in conjunction with the Abandoned Shipwreck Act becoming law, asked the state to submit a list of wrecks in its waters, the state responded with a list of 40. By all accounts, that list represents only a tiny fraction of the total. In Lake George alone, one estimate puts the number of shipwrecks dating back to the French and Indian War at 260.

Steven Resler, of Coastal Resources Management Program, says "Long Island is shipwreck alley," adding that divers discover and rediscover the same wrecks over and over again.

Paul Huey, senior scientist (archaeology) for the state Division of Historic Preservation, says still the existence of most of the dozens of wrecks which litter the sound is known only through historical records.

State officials acknowledge, however, that divers, even those interested in historic preservation, lack incentive to report their finds to the state. They say many divers either want to remove the artifacts illegally or are afraid that an announcement of the discovery might lead to the stripping of the wreck by other divers or the state itself.

The divers have to be "assured that the state is not going to greedily grab all the artifacts out of the wreck," says Huey. Resler adds, "There's got to be some conversation between the state and the diving community. From what I see that conversation isn't there. Most recreational divers don't trust government. They're going to keep their mouths shut."

"I think this is the biggest educational effort ahead of us: Telling the people

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symphony of gold, peach and silver greys. Clouds and river recreate the glory that inspired the Hudson River School of Painting. It is an awesome glory—shifting from moment to moment—impossible to capture on canvas, film—or in the written word.

Sunken Ships

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

of the State of New York, "This is all your stuff that's being taken," says Lord. "They (the people) are the state and it's their stuff that's being destroyed."

The outlook for historic shipwrecks, however, is not entirely bleak. State officials look both to sport divers who appreciate seeing history untouched and communities committed to holding onto their past with protecting the state's historic shipwrecks.

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Crown and state responsibilities

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Suffolk Co. - Seashore

Hunting History at the Sea Bottom

Newsday / Teresa A. Bellafiore

Clive Cussler, right, with expedition member Zeff Loria

By Michael D'Antonio

Port Jefferson — It lies somewhere offshore, perhaps 100 feet down, nestled in silt, a grave marker for 140 voyagers. Today, 143 years after the paddle-wheel steamer was last seen, ablaze and drifting on Long Island Sound, a team of shipwreck hunters is beginning a search for the Lexington.

Led by Clive Cussler, author of several novels, including "Raise the Titanic," the group from the nonprofit National Underwater and Marine Agency intends to add the Lexington to the list of historic wrecks identified off Long Island's coast. Their research has narrowed the Lexington's likely location to a six-square-mile patch directly off Port Jefferson, and that's where the search will begin.

"The big interest in the Lexington is the degree of the disaster," Cussler said yesterday as he planned the week's hunt. "It was the first really large loss of a steamer here involving that many lives."

It was an advanced ship for its time: plush, well-built, and fast, reaching a top speed of 16 knots, said the author. Records show that it caught fire on Jan. 13, 1840, while carrying a cargo of cotton to Stonington, Conn., and all but four aboard perished in the frigid Sound. Newspaper accounts said poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was supposed to have been aboard, but was kept in New York by the publisher of his work "The Wreck of the Hesperus."

Cussler, made wealthy by his writing, spends summers searching for wrecks with others who belong to the National Underwater and Marine Agency, the foundation he started five years ago and funds largely with his book publishing royalties. So far, he said, the foundation has found 33 of the 40 wrecks it has set out to find and recorded them for their historic value. The foundation does not raise the vessels, but recovers artifacts from them for museums and pinpoints their locations for marine historians and archaeologists.

The waters off Long Island are rich in wrecks, but most are on the South Shore, embedded in the sand off Fire Island. If Cussler and company find the Lexington quickly, they hope to scan Fire Island, where, Cussler said, "there's a wreck every 100 yards."

To look for the Lexington, the group will "sweep" the Sound using two boats, one trailing a magnetic sensor and the other a one-of-a-kind sonar device that can "look" through up to 30 feet of silt. Local filmmaker Zeff Loria will film the search for a one-hour documentary Cussler's foundation is sponsoring.

While the divers, deckhands and other specialists Cussler has assembled for the search are optimistic, yesterday he wouldn't predict that he'll find the Lexington. Quoting a character from one of his novels, Cussler said, "I don't count my chickens until the check is cashed."

THE WRECK OF THE LOUIS V. PLACE

In terms of loss of life, the worst shipwreck that ever occurred at Fire Island was that of the Louis V. Place. She was a 3-masted schooner of 730 tons, built in 1890 at Kennebunk, Maine. Under the command of Captain William Squires, she set sail from Baltimore, Maryland on January 28, 1895, bound for New York City laden with 1,100 tons of coal. Including the captain, there were 8 men on board.

As the Place sailed northward she encountered increasingly bad weather until the crew had been subjected to 4 days and nights of bitter exposure and arduous duties. By morning of February 8 the captain was unsure of his location, and the ship was almost totally unmanageable, little better than a drifting iceberg. An attempt to lower the anchors to ride out the storm failed, and shortly after 8:00 A.M. the crew heard the pounding of breakers ahead. Within minutes the schooner was slammed into the offshore bar on Fire Island, the seas breaking over her decks, and the crew with nowhere to go but into the rigging.

The Place was discovered immediately by a surfman from the nearby Lone Hill Life-Saving Station, who alerted the adjacent Point of Woods and Blue Point Stations, as well as his fellows who were absent at the 4-masted schooner John B. Manning that had stranded a half mile away a few hours earlier.

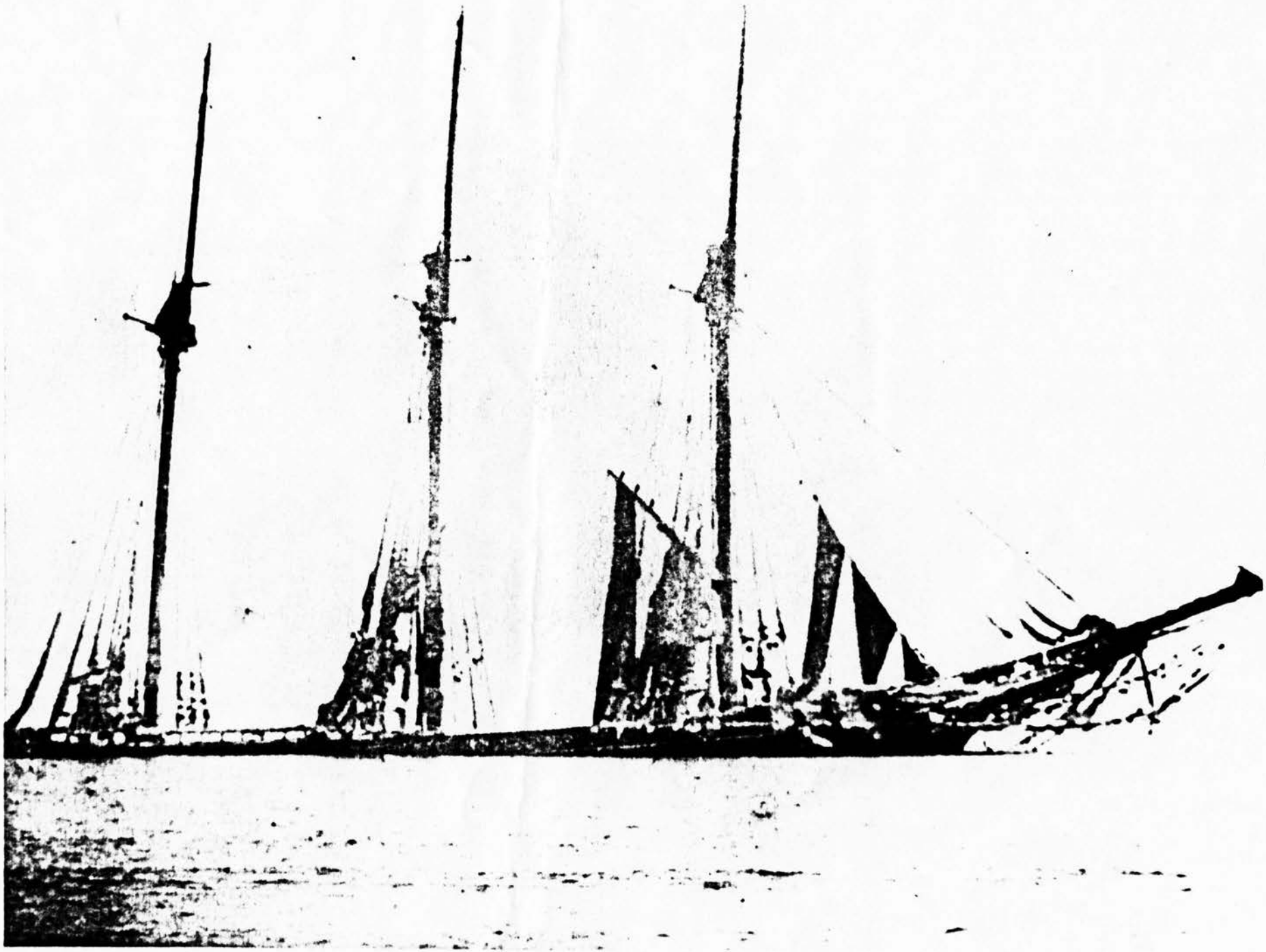
Fighting their way to the scene in 50 mile an hour winds and a temperature of 4 degrees above zero, the life-savers found that their surfboat could not be launched because the raging waves were filled with grinding chunks of ice. As they began to set up the rescue apparatus, 2 of the sailors in the ship's rigging, who later proved to be the captain and the cook, fell into the sea and disappeared.

The Lyle gun was used to fire 3 lines over the ship but those aboard made no move to reach them, and finally the weather closed in thick with flying snow for 3 hours. When the Place was again visible, only 4 men were left, 2 having fallen overboard and perished. 2 more lines were fired across the Place's masts before darkness, but still the survivors were unable to reach them. When night came the life-savers could only huddle by a fire on shore, waiting for a chance that never came to launch the surfboat.

With dawn of the second day, those on shore could see that only 2 men were still alive in the rigging. That entire day was spent in futile attempts to launch the surfboat and more lines up to a total of 9 were fired across the ship. Finally, around midnight, the conditions eased enough to launch and row to the Place, and the two battered survivors crept down to their rescue.

Brought back to the Lone Hill Station, their pitiful condition was revealed. Claus Stuvens was badly frozen about the face, ears, neck, hands, and feet. Soren Nelson's feet were frozen almost solid in his boots and he was barely alive. The next morning doctors from Long Island attended the pair, and they were sent to the marine hospital on Staten Island. Nelson's feet were amputated there, and he died on March 2. Stuvens miraculously recovered, the only survivor.

Of the 21 life-savers involved, 14 were frostbitten, one so badly that he was taken to Long Island in a coma. The bodies of the Place's crew washed ashore several miles from the wreck with the exception of the cook, who was never found. The ship and cargo were written off as a total loss.



ATLANTIC WRECK SERIES:

THE OREGON

by John Raguso

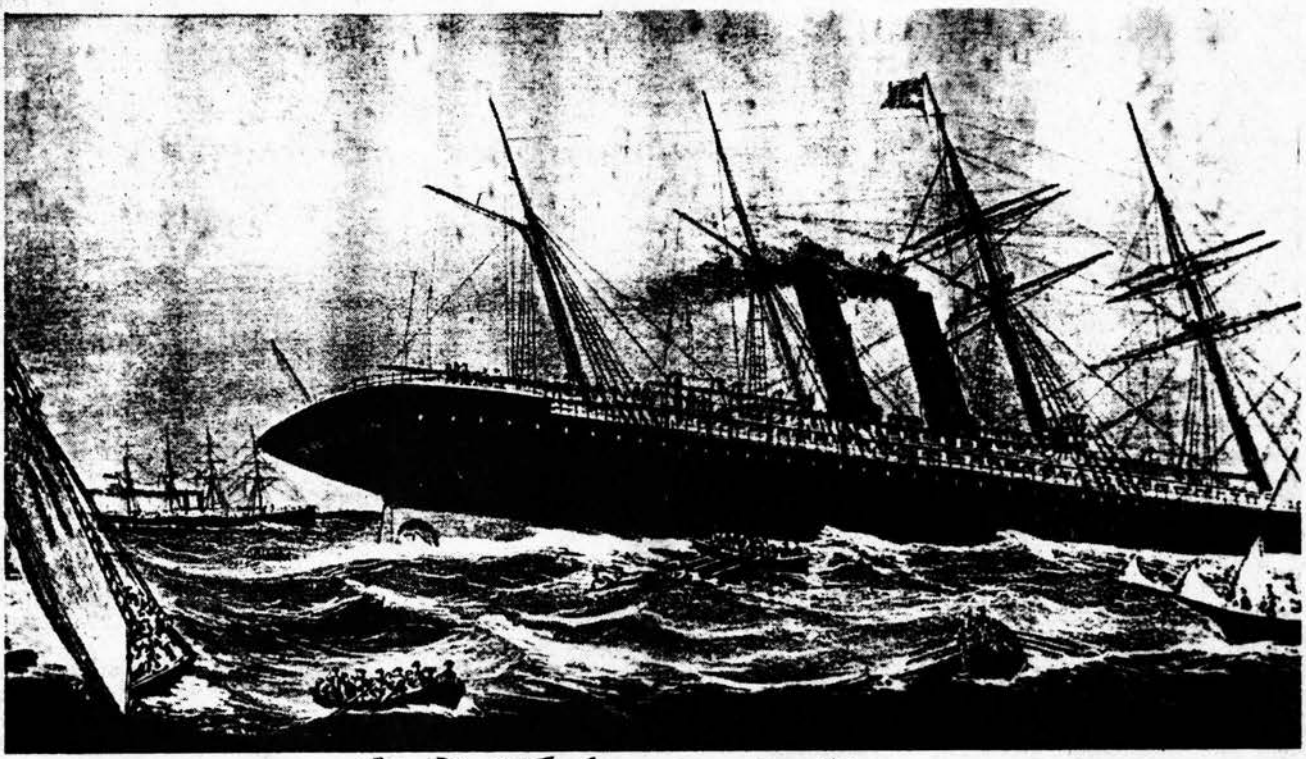
The big Cunard liner pushed westward through the inky blackness early on Sunday morning of March 14, 1886. She was bound for New York harbor from Liverpool under a full head of steam, making close to her maximum speed of 19 knots. Most of the 852 passengers and crew were asleep, and the navigator made her position to be just off Long Island, about a dozen miles south of Moriches Inlet.

Suddenly, a deep laden three-masted schooner loomed out of the darkness and struck the Oregon amidships on the port side, stoving three huge holes in the luxury liner's steel hull. The two vessels drifted apart in the night after the collision. Passengers on the Oregon could hear the despairing cries of the schooner's crew as she foundered quickly, taking all hands with her. The Oregon drifted for another eight hours before she finally went down, head first, with a great noise. All of her passengers and crew were successfully rescued, but the crew of the unknown schooner, thought to be the Charles R. Moss, perished in the frigid March Atlantic Ocean waters.

As the Oregon approaches her 100th birthday as the largest wreck given up as a total loss off Long Island's south shore, she is just coming into her own as a consistent producer of offshore game fish. The location of this wreck situated on the 20 fathom curve that parallels the Island's seaward shoreline produces a mixed bag of cod, bluefish, bluefin and yellowfin tuna, green bonito, skipjack, false albacore and various species of sharks in season. Indeed, a November 11th trip taken last season netted a potpourri of slammer bluefish, out-sized green bonito, dogfish and a brief tussle with a 300 lb.-class porbeagle shark before it broke off, all with the water temperature hovering at the 58 degree mark. An October junket the year before produced both school bluefin and yellowfin tuna, bonito and false albacore, while chumming at anchor with a combination of bunker and butterfish.

For the uninitiated, the Oregon is a fairly easy wreck to get to and find, being a full 520 feet long by 40 feet in beam, with a displacement of 7,375 gross tons. She lies only a short skip from Moriches, Fire Island and Shinnecock Inlets, thereby putting her in range even for some of the smaller 18 to 21 foot oceangoing center console type craft with sufficient fuel capacity. The steel hull is in relatively one piece, thus producing a strong echo picture on most quality recording depthfinders. When pinpointing the exact location of this wreck, the twin smokestacks can be clearly visible on the machine's graph printout, since the Oregon is lying keel down on the bottom with her giant screw buried in the sand.

The Oregon was built in England originally for Stephen Guion, owner of the American Line, by Elder Shipbuilding Co. in their Fairfield yard. Mr. Guion had a penchant for speed and this four-masted barque with a single screw steam engine was one of the fastest ships of her day, being the last American ship to win the coveted "Blue Riband" for the quickest Transatlantic crossing, until the USS United States recaptured the title in 1952. The Oregon was sold to the Cunard Line when Guion went bankrupt and she operated in the Transatlantic



trade until she went down in 1886.

Contradictory stories appeared as to the cause of the sinking, including such theories as internal explosions, and torpedoes floating in the water. Facts in general seem to bear out the coastal schooner explanation, but there was some disagreement among the passengers as to the competence and/or negligence of the Oregon's officers and crew during the ordeal. In any event, the following is an excerpt of Captain Philip Cottiers' story as told to a New York Times reporter:

"The Oregon left Liverpool at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning of last week. We had 186 cabin, 66 intermediate, and 395 steerage passengers on board. We had fine weather all the way across and the weather was clear at 4:30 o'clock Sunday morning, with a fresh breeze from the west, when a sailing vessel suddenly loomed up. When first noticed, she showed no light, but when she was close to clear she showed a white light. I cannot say on what part of her. The Oregon was running under a full head of steam. The vessel struck us amidships and stove a big hole in the port side. All the watertight compartments were closed at the time. The Oregon went down about 12:45. She floated for about eight hours after she was struck and now lies in 22 fathoms of water, north half west from Watch Hill, Long Island. The tops of her masts are visible above water, and the vessel is upright. She went down head first. We worked from the moment of the collision as if we expected her to sink. We took extreme precautions. The pumps were of no use, I might say. We worked them, of course, and to their full capacity, but they had no chance against the inrushing mass of water which eventually carried her down. The usual watch was on deck at the time of the accident and no time was lost in awakening the passengers. Few of them heard or felt the shock, as all were in bed at the time. Soon after the accident occurred, a steamer passed us, a National boat, I think, but went on.

"The vessel that ran into us must have sunk immediately, as when we looked, she was not in sight. She must have gone down with all on board. When I found that the vessel was sinking, I took the necessary steps to save our passengers. We first sent up rockets as signals of distress. Then the boats were lowered, but before 8 o'clock Pilot Boat No. 11 hove in sight. She came up to us between 7 and 8 o'clock, and two hours later the schooner Fannie A. Gorham, of Belfast, Me., Capt. Mahoney, hove to. The passengers and crew of the Oregon were transferred to the pilot boat and the schooner in our own boats. Four hundred were placed on board the pilot boat and the balance, about 500, on board the schooner. All the passengers were transferred by 11 o'clock. The steamship Fulda, of the North German Line, Capt. Rink, hove in sight about noon or a little before. She was within a half or a third of a mile from the Oregon. I never expected to see such an affair go off so easily. Not a soul on board the Oregon was lost.

"Everything went down with the steamer. Our cargo was valued at about L 1,000,000. We carried about 375 mail bags. Seventy-five of them were saved. The passengers lost all their baggage, I suppose."

The Oregon is resting on the Atlantic's bottom in 123 feet of water at 40-32-00 north latitude and 72-53-00 west longitude. A more accurate Loran C placement puts her at 26453.2/43676.5, but this reading will vary a few microseconds with each individual Loran unit.

This brings us to an issue that will come up each week as you attempt to build an accurate inventory of loran numbers. In order to be useful, these wreck locations should jibe with the coordinates that your machine puts out, but this is not necessarily the case every time. Different machines have different sensitivity levels and depending on the quality of your installation, your numbers may vary somewhat. You can use the weekly location numbers as a general guide, but in order to ensure accuracy, you must check out the wreck with your own unit and modify the loran coordinates accordingly. However, there is a scientific way to accomplish this task. Captain Vic Galgano of Spider Lures has published a 12-page illustrated pamphlet that describes what he calls a wreck "search pattern" in great detail. Thanks to his permission, I'm going to synopsize this procedure to give you a general guideline on how it's done.

First choose the wreck you're going to fish, jot down the loran coordinates, and determine the approximate depth so you can prepare the correct amount of line for your marker buoy (20 to 25 feet longer than the water depth). An empty Clorox bottle, old 80 to 130 lb. dacron line and a 2 to 4 lb. sash weight will do nicely, without setting you back too much dinero for this necessary tool.

Next step is to get to the wreck. On some of the newer Loran C units, you can simply punch in the coordinates and have the machine dictate the course to steer, also providing you with speed en route and time/distance to go until arrival. The older machines will require that you do these computations manually, but either method is superior to using the "Kentucky windage" approach of a compass and a stopwatch.

Once you arrive at your pre-determined destination, you may be fortunate enough to have the shipwreck appear magically on your depthfinder's graph paper. In most cases this will be the exception, especially if you are making your first trip to the wreck and using someone else's positional fix.

As an aside, let's presume that all loran data will be on this area's two most frequently used slaves: the

(Continued on next page.)

THE OREGON
Vital Statistics

Date Sunk: March 14, 1886
Length: 520 feet
Beam: 40 feet
Weight: 7,375 gross tons
Hull Construction: Steel
Depth of Water: 123 feet
Depth Over Wreck: Varies
Lat/Lon Position: 40-32-00 N/72-53-00 W
Loran C Position: 26453.2/43676.5

COMMUTER COURSES

Port	Distance (Nautical Miles)	Heading (Magnetic) To	From
Shinnecock Inlet	25.0	237°	57°
Moriches Inlet	14.5	212°	32°
Fire Island Inlet	21.5	117°	297°
Jones Inlet	33.0	107°	287°
Debs Inlet	41.5	107°	287°
Rockaway Inlet	50.0	103°	283°
Sandy Hook Point	53.5	98°	278°
Shark River Inlet	57.0	81°	261°

26000 (X) line which basically runs north and south, and the 43000 (Y) line which runs approximately east and west. As you become more familiar with your unit, you will notice that as you head north, the 43000 line numbers *increase* while the opposite is true for a southerly course. You will also recognize that as you head east, the 26000 numbers will *decrease*, while the reverse is true for a westerly track. In addition, each microsecond equals about 1/10th of a mile or 500 feet and each 1/10th of a microsecond covers about 50 feet of bottom. Understanding this simple relationship is mandatory for executing the next step, which is the controlled search pattern.

Now that you've arrived at your destination, you must ascertain the wreck's exact whereabouts. Be sure to position your craft precisely at the assigned starting point and drop your marker buoy. Let's take the coordinates of the Oregon Wreck for a specific example: 26453.2/43676.5. To start the search pattern, face northward and proceed one full microsecond (about 500 feet) on this course. When your loran indicates 43677.5, turn 90 degrees to the east, proceed 2/10ths of a microsecond to 26453.0 and turn 90 degrees to starboard (right). Proceed southward on the 26453.0 line, passing the original 43676.5 starting point and continue to 43675.5. At this point turn 90 degrees to the east and proceed another 2/10ths of a microsecond to 26452.8, turning 90 degrees to port (left). Start your northerly trek past the original 43676.5 mark up to 43677.5 again. You should repeat this process until you reach 26452.2 on your eastern border. If the wreck hasn't appeared, go back to the original starting point and start the entire process over again, carrying the search pattern between the 43675.5 and 43677.5 south/north borders while heading *westward* at 2/10ths of a microsecond intervals until you reach 26454.2. If your numbers are even remotely accurate, you should find the wreck somewhere within the search pattern. In essence, what you've done is to create a box around your original coordinates that extends 500' north, south, east and west of it. Be sure to keep the boat on a disciplined course line when proceeding north and south and this method should be a great help to your wreck fishing exploits. In case I've lost you somewhere along the way refer to the illustration for a graphic explanation that should answer all of your questions.

Don't forget, Capt. Vic Enterprises publishes a 12-page pamphlet of what I've condensed to 500 words or less so check The Fisherman for his ad for the details.

The last section includes a summary of all the Oregon's vital data. Next week, we'll cover our southernmost wreck for the Jersey-based Fisherman readers, *The Varange* (a.k.a. 28 Mile Wreck) situated south east of Atlantic City's Absecon Inlet

ATLANTIC WRECK SERIES:

THE SAN DIEGO

by John Raguso

The San Diego, lying approximately 7½ nautical miles south of Great South Beach on a line with Sayville, Long Island, is one of the south shore's most heavily trafficked wrecks. Its proximity to the beach (on a clear day the shoreline's silhouette is distinctly visible), in addition to being only a short skip from one of the New York Bight's busiest inlets (Fire Island), makes this wreck a natural for visits from many various types of fishing craft ranging from the 17 foot center consoles, all the way up to 50 foot Sportfishermen. Indeed, the San Diego, due to its enormous size and relatively intact steel hull construction, makes an ideal objective for virgin or novice wreck fishermen to sharpen their navigational and anchoring skills, since she rests only 13.5 nautical miles East/Southeast from Fire Island's Democrat Point in 97 feet of water.

Let's take a step back in time to understand the all-too-brief history of this great warship and recount the events which determined her destiny to rest in a watery grave on the 15 fathom curve that parallels the Island's south shore.

The San Diego was built at the Union Iron Works in Francisco in 1903 as an armored heavy cruiser and was originally named the California. She was commissioned in 1907 and her length was 503 feet with a displacement of 13,680 tons. Her twin 18' diameter screws gave her a top speed of 22 knots and this four-stacked warship's firepower was quite formidable. Her armament consisted of 18 three inch guns in side turrets, 14, six-inch guns in side turrets, a main battery of four, 8-inch guns, in addition to three torpedo tubes. This white-painted cruiser was the pride of President Teddy Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet." As a result of a change in the Navy's nomenclature system for capital ships, the California officially was renamed the San Diego on September 1, 1914. Her peacetime complement was 829 officers and men, but her crew was augmented by 360 men early in 1917 as war approached to bring her total close to 1200.

The San Diego was ordered to the East Coast and joined Cruiser Division 2, whose duty was to escort convoys on the first leg of their hazardous journey of shipping war supplies to the European front. Even though German U-Boats were frequently spotted in Long Island and New Jersey coastal water and had sunk 25 ships during May and June of 1918 alone, the San Diego had a perfect track record of shepherding her flocks of freighters, tankers and steamships safely to their destinations.

On July 19, 1918, the big white cruiser, bound from Portsmouth, N.H. to New York Harbor, entered the waters south of Long Island. A little after 11AM, the ship was rocked by an ear-shattering explosion which tore a huge hole on the port side, abaft the beam and this was quickly followed by two other, equally devastating blasts. As crew members scurried to their battle stations under a general quarters alert, some of the gunners who claimed they saw the periscope of a submarine, opened fire with their 3 inch and 6 inch batteries at anything that even remotely looked like a shadow in the water. One gun crew even claimed that a shot had hit home and destroyed the undersea craft.

The captain called for full speed ahead, and although the port engine was disabled, the starboard engine was making full turns as the San Diego limped north towards the Fire Island beach in an attempt to save the ship. It was all for nought, because the cruiser filled up with water rapidly, turned belly-up and sank

THE SAN DIEGO
Vital Statistics

Date Sunk: July 19, 1918
Length: 503 feet
Beam: 69.5 feet
Weight: 13,680 gross tons
Hull Position: Intact, keel up, smoke stacks buried in sand
Bow Attitude: 20 degrees (approximate)
Stern Attitude: 200 degrees (approximate)
Depth of Water: 97 feet
Depth Over Wreck: 53 to 65 feet
Lat/Lon Position: 40-33-18 N/73-01-20 W
Loran C Position: 26543.3/43692.9

COMMUTER COURSES

Port	Distance (Nautical Miles)	Heading (Magnetic) To	From
Shinnecock Inlet	31.5	248°	068°
Moriches Inlet	18.8	237°	057°
Fire Island Inlet	13.5	124°	304°
Jones Inlet	25.2	108°	288°
Debs Inlet	33.3	108°	288°
Rockaway Inlet	42.5	103°	283°
Sandy Hook Point	45.5	098°	278°
Shark River Inlet	50.0	078°	258°
Manasquan Inlet	53.0	073°	253°

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within 25 minutes of the first explosion. In the best naval tradition, Captain H.H. Christy was the last man to leave the ship, and as he jumped overboard wearing only a life jacket, the surviving crew members cheered and sang the national anthem as their former vessel slipped beneath the waves. There was a scare as three steamships converged on the scene to rescue those who were either adrift in lifeboats or clinging to rafts or lumber while in the water. The Steamer Bossom, who rescued 708 of the San Diego's crew, had passed over a school of about 20 sharks that were feeding on a dead whale's carcass while en route to the disaster area. According to a New York Times report, Captain James F. Brewer, master of the rescue boat stated, "The sight gave me a scare, for I was afraid they were after the men in the water, but I was told that no sharks had been seen by them.

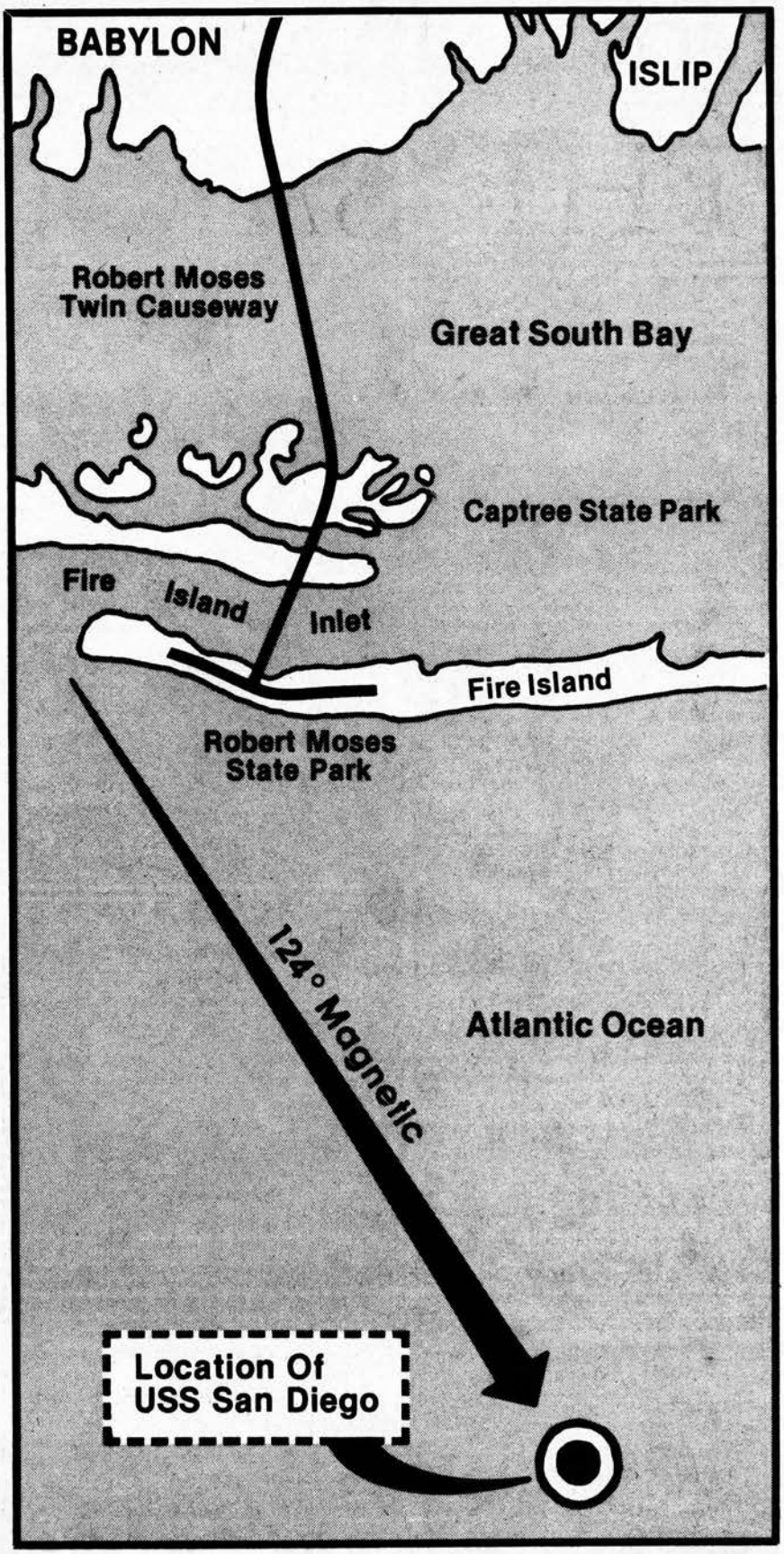
"It was a great sight on board my ship after I had started again for New York with my 708 new passengers. Some of the boys had shed all their clothes and thosew ho had more than enough to cover them divided wit those who had none. One of the officers was wearing two shirts, one where it should be and the other as makeshift trousers. Fortunately, I had plenty of food on board, and the boys turned to and helped the steward get a meal together.

A seaman survivor of the San Diego who was working on the forward twin 8" gun turret when the explosions took place, gave the following eye-witness account of the cruiser's last minutes:

"I was working on a gun in the forward turret at about 11AM, when I suddenly heard a terrific explosion which shook the ship. Immediately the ship started to list to port, and Captain Christy was on the bridge shouting orders.

"Guns were being fired from all sides of the ship, and I could hear the boys shouting that they had made a hit. They fired at most any object that met their eyes, under the impression that it was a submarine. This kept up for about 10 minutes, the ship continuing to list steadily but slowly. Then Captain Christy called out from the bridge, 'All hands abandon ship.' The old girl went down fighting."

Initial unofficial casualty reports had indicated that anywhere from 40 to 50 men went down to their deaths on the San Diego. This uncertainty was due to the excess complement of wartime crew, plus the fact that three different boats took survivors from the water, while two of the cruiser's dinghies with 27 men aboard made it all the way to the Fire Island life-saving station in Point 'O Woods. The official death count was finalized at six, some of whom were killed in the engine room by the initial explosion and a few who were struck by one of the ship's four smokestacks as it topped from its mounting due to the blast.



There was also some confusion as to what caused the San Diego's demise, the three most popular theories being a U-Boat's torpedo, a mine laid out by a U-Boat or German surface raider, or an internal explosion due to a faulty boiler. Captain Christy had subscribed to the torpedo theory in his final log entry, but was later overruled by a Navy fact finding committee which decided that the first explosion was caused by a German contact mine, the second by

(Continued on next page.)

the ship's boiler rupturing on the port side, and the third blast due to the ship's magazine going off. Supporting the official US Navy explanation, six mines were found floating the next day in the general area of the San Diego's sinking and the German Sub U-56 confirmed that she had put down a pattern of contact mines in the path that she suspected the San Diego would take in her journey to New York Harbor.

Taking a look at the San Diego from a fish-catching perspective, her resting place on the 15 fathom curve affords many possibilities based on time of the year, water temperature and bait supplies. As I mentioned earlier, this is one busy wreck that gets attention not only from fishermen, but scuba diving clubs as well. Some dive boats make a living taking anxious treasure hunters and adventure seekers to this rusting hulk, and a few years ago, some of these folks even brought home some live six inch artillery shells from the San Diego's armory. The authorities got wind of this and the projectiles were confiscated. The Coast Guard also declared this wreck to be temporarily "off limits" until a group of Navy divers could be sent to the scene to dispose of any other shells that might have been laying around.

Even though this area sometimes rivals Grand Central Station as far as commuter traffic, it does also support a healthy population of various finfish. Blues can be taken from here with a high degree of regularity throughout the summer and fall months. Cod, blackfish and Texas-sized sea bass are taken in season, and this area also supports a mix of bonito, skipjack tuna, false albacore, school bluefin and yellowfin tuna, dolphin and even a few stray mako s sharks when the water temperatures and concentrations of baitfish are at optimum levels. Two Septembers ago, we were chasing down a mixed school of skippies and dolphin near this wreck that were breaking water. We had picked up a few of each on cedar jigs when we spotted a center console craft drifting about 600 yards west of our position. Approaching him from his upwind beam, we pulled alongside and inquired if he was having any luck with the footballs. He replied that he had just broken off a 200 lb. class mako and had spotted two others roaming through his chum slick. We were a bit skeptical about his report, but became convinced of its veracity when one of the makos cruised past our transom as it circled his boat, gobbling up bits of chum.

So give the San Diego a shot this summer and if you hit the old girl on a quiet day, you might be surprised at what will come in on the business end of your line. The final section includes a summary of the San Diego's vital data. Next week we'll take a ride to the Jersey side of the Mud Hole and cover the by-product of an early 60s maritime disaster: the wreck of the Norwegian ship Stolt Dagali.

ATLANTIC WRECK SERIES:

THE STOLT DAGALI

by John Raguso

The starboard wing lookout suddenly called out, "Fog ahead."

The big luxury liner had just left Ambrose light about an hour before, and was making 20.5 knots as she sped southward on the first leg of taking 616 passengers on a Caribbean vacation. She had been running a southerly course in clear weather, with considerable wind and sloppy seas, when the Shalom unexpectedly ran into a dense wall of fog.

The stage was thus set for the drama of the Shalom and the Stolt Dagali to begin. Unknown to either crew, this meeting would end in tragedy, as the fates would have them collide early Thanksgiving morning, November 26, 1964. Only minutes after that shout from the Shalom's watch, this new $20 million Israeli luxury liner cut completely through the Norwegian tanker, taking 19 of the Dagali's crew to their deaths in the 50 degree water.

The following account was reported by the New York Times, made available from representatives of the Shalom's owners. It gives a minute by minute description of the events leading up to and directly following the collision, but obviously from their point of view, since it's taken from the logbook of the Israeli passenger liner.

Captain Abner Freudenberg indicated in the Shalom's log that, "They had departed from Ambrose Lightvessel at 1:12 AM on Thanksgiving Day. From that moment until the crash he steered 161 degrees true.

"Visibility was clear, at least seven miles. The Sandy Hook pilot had decided the sea was too rough to leave the ship and transfer to the pilot boat. He stayed for awhile on the bridge, with the master, two second mates on duty as watch officers and two seamen as lookouts.

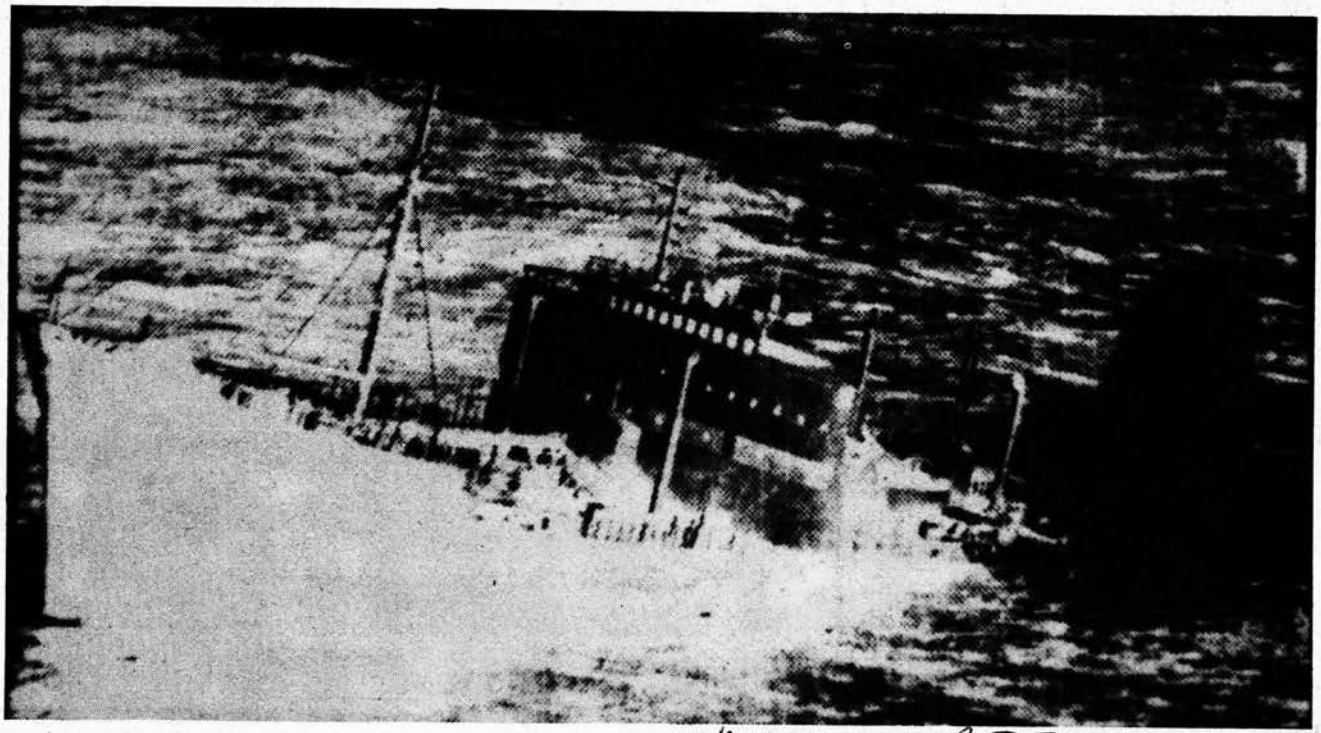
"After the pilot left the bridge and retired to the pilot's cabin, the master went to his cabin just below the bridge, leaving instructions with the watch officers that he be called if the weather deteriorated. The radar was scanned from time to time, the watch officers also checking the vessel's position as she proceeded.

"At and after 0200 (2AM), as the Shalom continued on her voyage, it was observed that the radar scope was substantially cluttered with sea return. At about 0200 while the radar was being scanned, various ranges and means were employed to obtain a clearer pictures. Seconds before 0215 (2:15 AM), the lookout reported fog and the master was notified. He came to the bridge immediately. A watch officer scanning the radar identified a vessel on the cluttered radar scope, bearing 1 point (11.25 degrees) on the starboard bow and 1.7 miles off.

"When he arrived on the bridge, Captain Freudenberg began reducing the ship's speed and started sounding fog signals. Then the fog signal of a ship was heard forward of the beam and the Shalom's engines were stopped. Those on the Shalom's bridge then saw the masthead and range light and the red side light of a vessel. The masthead and range were 'well open'."

As an aside, if these lights are "closed," or close together, it means that the other ship is headed toward the viewer. When these lights are completely "open," the other ship is at right angles to the viewer.

"The rudder of the Shalom was put hard right in an effort to swing clear of the Stolt Dagali's stern. The tanker moved ahead on a course crossing that of the Shalom. After the bridge housing of the Stolt Dagali crossed the Shalom's bow, and as the Shalom was responding to the hard right rudder, the bow of the Shalom collided with the port side of the Stolt Dagali at an angle of about 45 degrees well aft of the Dagali's bridge housing, penetrating across the beam



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of the Stolt Dagali. In an effort to clear the collision area for fear of a fire starting in the Dagali's ruptured tanks and spewing flame onto the passenger ship, Captain Freudenberg ordered full speed ahead and brought the Shalom's rudder over to swing her hard left, to get away from the tanker's stern as quickly as possible.

"The forward end of the Dagali had disappeared in the fog. The Shalom's engines were stopped and she stood by to render aid and to communicate with the tanker and notify the Coast Guard and other vessels in the area. The collision occurred at 0216⅓, only about a minute and a half after the Shalom had unexpectedly entered the fog bank which could not be detected on the radar screen, approximately 21½ miles on the Shalom's 161 degree true course line from Ambrose Lightvessel. After clearing the wreckage, the Shalom turned north and launched a motor lifeboat, having heard cries in the water. She picked up five survivors. Later on, the Coast Guard gave the Shalom permission to leave the scene, and she moved slowly back toward New York under her own power for repairs."

The Stolt Dagali, which was named after a mountain in Norway and means "Pride of Dagali," had sailed at 10AM the previous day (November 25th) from the Marcus Hook Sun Oil Company's wharves near Philadelphia and was en route to Newark and then Rotterdam with a cargo of vegetable oil, coconut oil and solvents. This 583 foot, 19,150 ton tanker carried a crew of 43; nineteen of whom perished as the 629 foot long, 25,338 ton Shalom cut diagonally across her aft beam, the cut angling from the starboard afterdeck slightly forward to the port side.

The master of the Stolt Dagali, Captain Kristian Bendiksen praised the Coast Guard action as "the best thing I saw in my life." He and nine other crewmen were rescued from the Dagali's forward section which was still afloat and later successfully towed to port by two Moran tugs. Fourteen other crew members were picked up from the water by various Coast Guard vessels that had converged on the scene. Most of those who died were in the aft section of the tanker, where the engine room and sleeping quarters were located. One of the survivors described that he was fast asleep, when he suddenly found himself swimming in the 50 degree water, clad in only his underwear. Members of the helicopter crew that saved him said they had to pry the hysterical youth's hands from the side of the rescue basket to get him into the aircraft. The aft end of the ship, about 187 feet in length, sank within minutes at the spot where the collision took place.

The U.S. Coast Guard did not conduct an official inquiry as to the cause and blame for the collision between these two ships, since no American vessel was involved and it occurred

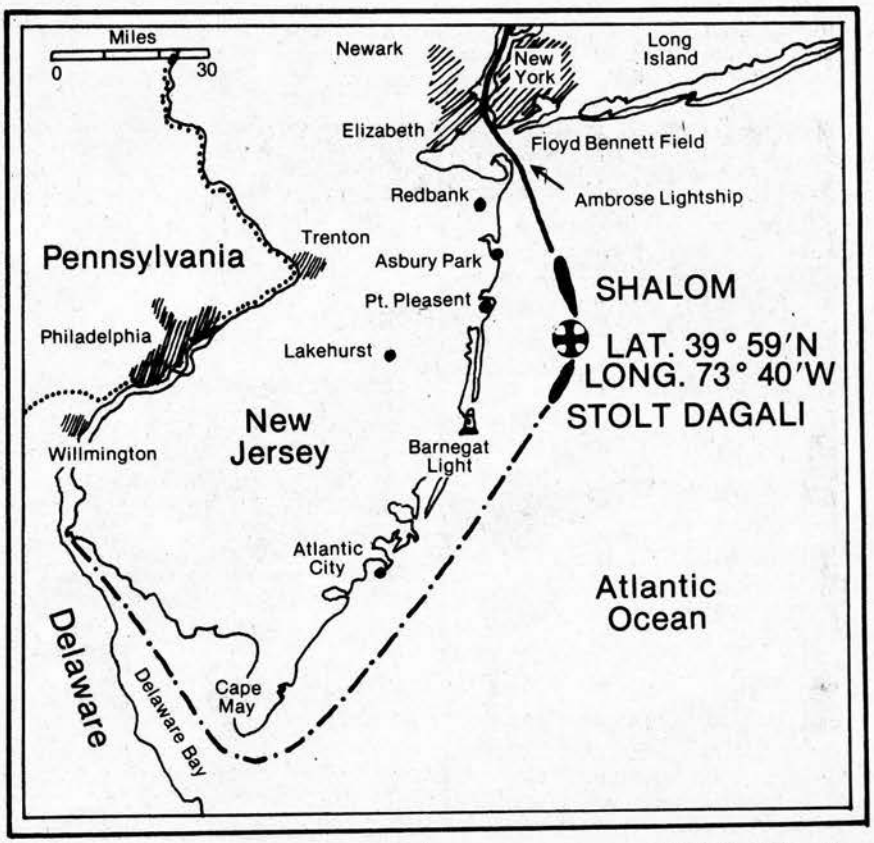
(Continued on next page.)

THE STOLT DAGALI
Vital Statistics

Date Sunk: November 26, 1964
Length: 583 feet
Length of Wreck (stern section): 187 feet
Beam: Unknown
Weight: 19,150 gross tons
Hull Construction: Steel
Hull Position: Starboard side down in sand
Depth of Water: 120 feet
Depth Over Wreck: At least 50 feet
Lat/Lon Position: 39-59-00 N/73-40-00 W
Loran C Position (position approximate): 26768.0/43410.0

COMMUTER COURSES

Port	Distance (Nautical Miles)	Heading (Magnetic) To	From
Moriches Inlet	63.0	235°	055°
Fire Island Inlet	41.0	217°	037°
Jones Inlet	35.5	200°	020°
Debs Inlet	35.8	187°	007°
Rockaway Inlet	35.4	172°	352°
Sandy Hook Point	32.4	164°	344°
Shark River Inlet	20.0	137°	317°
Manasquan Inlet	17.8	121°	301°
Barnegat Inlet	24.5	067°	247°
Beach Haven Inlet	40.7	057°	237°
Little Egg Inlet	43.0	057°	237°



outside United States' territorial waters. However, the Israeli government did contact their Norwegian counterparts in an effort to establish an Admiralty Court to investigate the crash, but for some reason the Norwegians declined this option. The matter of fault and liability was eventually worked out by the insurance companies, but the Shalom's owners did compensate the families of the 19 lost crew members of the Stolt Dagali a total figure of about $1/2 million to help ease them through this tragic transition period.

Of particular interest in this maritime disaster, were the efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard in handling the rescue operation quickly and effectively under adverse weather conditions. Room 639 of the United States Custom House at Bowling Green in New York was the nerve center of communications activity, and the following is the sequence of events as they transpired in the form of actual radio messages concerning the collision of the Shalom and the Stolg Dagali:

2:22AM—Boston Coast Guard Station teletypes New York: "Coast Guard Radio Station New York. This is Coast Guard Radio Station Boston. Are you reading a steamship with urgent traffic on 2182 kilocycles? Heard her call with PAN (a distress signal, less urgent than May-Day) but am not reading her too good."

2:23AM—Moriches, L.I. Coast Guard Station teletypes New York, reporting receipt of following Morse Code message: "S.O.S. This is motor vessel Stolt Dagali. Will amplify."

2:24AM—New York notifies Federal Communications Commission in Washington and F.C.C. automatically begins obtaining radio navigation fix on distressed ship.

2:25AM—Coast Guard ships at sea report hearing S.O.S. One cutter informs New York: "Shalom reports five minutes ago collision, unknown vessel, thick fog, position. Lat. 40-14.5 degrees N., Long. 73-44 degrees W."

2:31AM—Moriches tells New York: "Shalom says other vessel definitely needs assistance. Shalom doesn't know name of vessel."

2:33AM—Boston teletypes New York: "Heard words, 'collide and sinking', sounds like Stolt Dagali other vessel."

2:35AM—Moriches says: "Shalom reports Shalom doesn't see other vessel. We advised her that Stolt Dagali sent S.O.S. on 500 kilocycles and is sinking."

2:38AM—Coast Guard advises Shalom that helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft and the cutter Spencer (from Staten Island) are under way.

2:41AM—Coast Guard seaplane tender Unimak (on training course in area off Cape May, N.J.) reports she is proceeding to collision scene at maximum speed.

2:43AM—Moriches reports: "The tanker Stolt Dagali is sending S.O.S. again."

2:44AM—Boston hears: "S.O.S. This is Stolt Dagali. Collided with unnkown ship. Sinking, repeat, sinking."

2:52AM—Stolt Dagali radios Moriches: "My whole stern has disappeared." Moriches asks, "How long can you stay afloat?" and Stolt Dagali replies, "Now not sinking immediately."

3:05AM—Moriches tells New York: "Shalom reports taking on water in forward hold and returning to port. Will furnish Stolt Dagali boat if needed."

3:06AM—Dutch tanker Reza Shad the Great, 30 minutes away from collision area, offers help. The American Manufacturer is 30 minutes away.

3:21AM—New York messages Moriches: "Assuming vessel (Stolt Dagali) is abandoning ship. Have vessels on scene assist as necessary in retrieving P.O.B. (Persons on Board) from water."

3:19AM—Shalom says she requires only stand-by assistance.

3:36AM—Moriches says: "Stolt Dagali reports not abandoning ship yet. Visibility one half mile. No wind, sea or swells."

3:50AM—Shalom reports: "Have woman needing immediate medical assistance, internal bleeding."

3:58AM—New York requests that Moriches have Shalom send a steady radio signal so Coast Guard helicopter can "home in" on it.

4:03AM—Moriches reports: "Stolt Dagali says 10 P.O.B. but indicating he is missing afterbody (stern)."

4:09AM—Shalom says: "We are launching a boat and we hear survivors in water."

4:11AM—Moriches reports: "Shalom sees survivors."

4:12AM—New York tells Moriches to advise Shalom to continue sending radio signal becaue helicopter is "homing in on him now."

4:14AM—Helicopter and Shalom in sight of each other.

4:25AM—Stolt Dagali reports: "Coast Guard helicopter and plane circling around us but has not sighted us."

4:39AM—Moriches tells New York: "Stolt Dagali says 33 persons on after missing section (missing stern)."

4:45AM—Coast Guard helicopter radios Shalom: "Hurry this up. We're running low on fuel." Shalom crewmen deciding on best method of transferring injured woman to helicopter. Shalom reports she is still hemorrhaging internally.

4:58AM—Helicopter radios it has patient on board.

4:59AM—Seaplane tender Unimak reports both distressed vessels say they are unable to locate missing stern section of Stolt Dagali, with 33 persons aboard and are unable to communicate with it. Stolt Dagali says 10 persons are still aboard forward section and do not intend to abandon ship in near future. Dutch tanker Reza Shad the Great radios she had sighted Stolt Dagali on radar at 11 miles.

4:59AM—Moriches says: "Shalom has one boat overboard searching for survivors. So far have picked up five survivors (apparently from missing stern). The one boat off starboard quarter."

5:00AM—Coast Guard cutter Point Arden reaches Shalom.

5:05AM—Shalom says none of her passengers or crew are missing so far as can be determined.

5:28AM—Coast Guard cutter Point Glover arrives at scene. Other vessels arrive shortly afterward and major rescue operation to save Stolt Dagali survivors begins.

The site of the collision puts the aft end wreckage of the Stolt Dagali about 18 nautical miles southeast of Manasquan Inlet, sitting on the edge of the 20 fathom curve, just off the western border of the Mud Hole. According to divers' reports, this section is resting with her port side rising 70' above the ocean floor, with the "S" on her smokestack clearly visible. The Dagali's location, being a fairly deep water wreck, combined with access to the neighboring Mud Hole's even deeper water and submarine structure, should make this an ideal sport for many pelagic and bottom dwelling species of fish. Although I've never fished this wreck's exact coordinates, this will be one of the first ones I plan on visiting this year, as it seems a good locale for early season mako activity, as the sharks work their way north pushing the bluefish schools ahead of them. A few of my Jersey contacts have mentioned that the area immediately surrounding the Stolt Dagali's rusting stern quarter produces bluefish in the early summer, plus cod and sea bass in the spring, summer and early fall. As is typical of 20 fathom water located near a wreck or other bottom structure, you can also expect to come across school bluefin tuna, bonito, skipjack and false albacore in the late summer and early fall, as well as schools of small 5 to 10 lb. dolphin hiding under any floating debris. Supporting this, while working the waters a few miles northeast of the Dagali's general vicinity two summers ago, my crew was able to hook up to 9 of these golden "dorado" and landing 6 while trolling cedar jigs near a large floating chunk of wood in 75 degree water. And don't forget, where there are bluefish and small tuna, you'll also occasionally find sharks trying to catch them for a tasty meal, so no matter what's your pleasure, be sure to include a trip to the Stolt Dagali on this season's agenda. The inset box contains all the strategic information you'll need to find the remnants of the Norwegian tanker.

Next week, we're going to cruise about 20 miles southeast along the 20 fathom curve and cover one of 1942's first German U-Boat victims, which also happens to be one of the most prolific early season mako producers in the New York Bight: the wreck of the tanker, R.P. Reasor.

ATLANTIC WRECK SERIES:

U.S.S. TURNER

by John Raguso

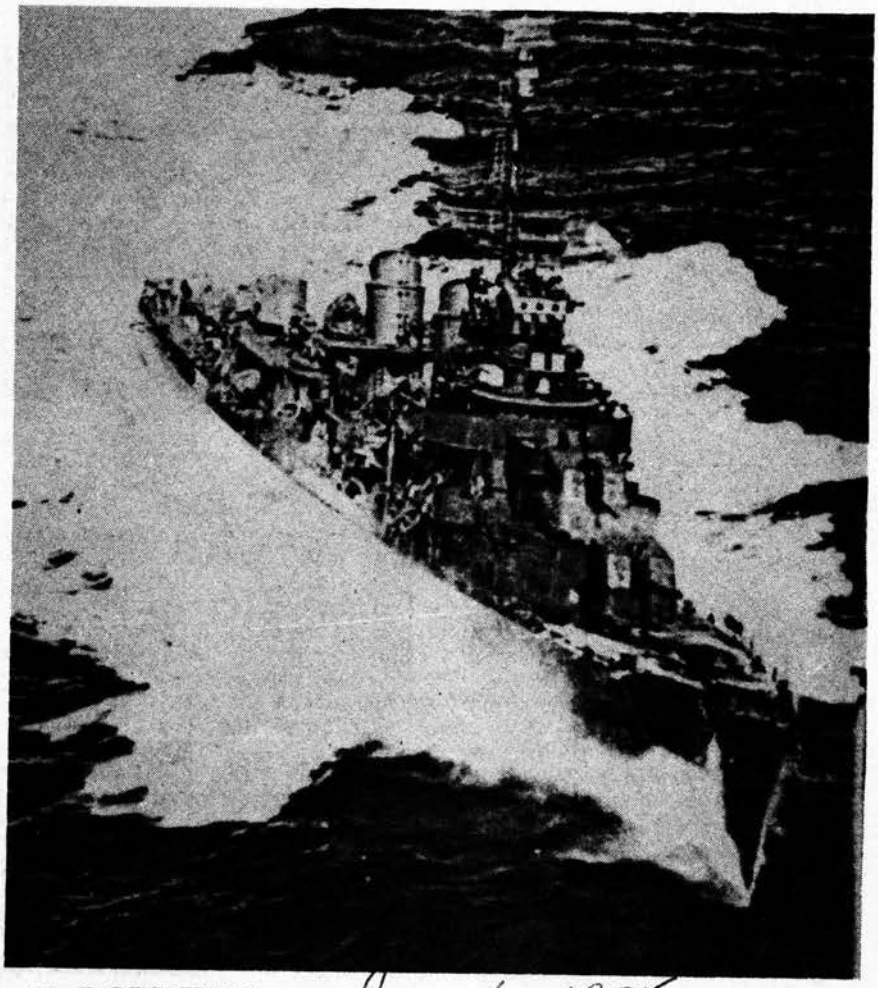
One of the biggest mysteries of World War II was the short life and untimely death of the Navy Destroyer USS Turner. This "Bristol Class" ship, one of 56 of this series that were built during the war years, weighed in at 1,700 tons and was put together at the Federal Shipbuilding facility in Kearny, New Jersey. Her keel was laid in November of 1942, the hull was launched in February, 1943 and the Turner was fully commissioned on April 15th, 1943. The entire process took only five months from start to finish, obviously due to the wartime urgency, but this is quick even by modern standards!

Her armament consisted of four, five inch guns in single enclosed, rotary mounts, ten, 21 inch torpedo tubes, and an assortment of dual 40mm and single 20mm anti-aircraft cannon. These boats could make some decent headway and her twin screws allowed the Turner to achieve a top speed of about 33 knots. In addition, the normal wartime complement for Bristol-class destroyers was approximately 200 men. The Turner was actually the second ship of that name, the other also being a destroyer and they were both in honor of Captain Daniel Turner of New York, a hero of the War of 1812.

Let's go back in time now to the morning of January 3, 1943, a scant nine months after this U.S. warship was drafted into active service.

New York lay asleep under the spell of a chill winter storm. The Destroyer DD 648 slid through the dark, braving wind, rain and sleet and at 3:30AM dropped anchor approximately 6½ miles east of Sandy Hook and 4 miles SE of Rockaway Point in 60 feet of water. She had just returned from a tour of escort duty in the North Atlantic and was to weigh anchor at 0700 hours after receiving her new orders. Many of the crew had just finished morning mess and the Turner's engine room gang puttered around the boilers, preparing for full steam for the 7AM departure. The watch was on deck.

. Suddenly and without warning at 0618 hours, a tremendous explosion up forward rattled the destroyer from stem to stern. The engine room quickly filled with smoke, but the well-trained crew stayed alertly at their stations, groping about in the darkness, some choking from the hot, fume-laden air. They kept up enough pressure to work the ship's fire-fighting apparatus, and stood by for orders from the bridge. But none came. The explosion toppled the "tin can's" mast and prevented any communication with either shore-based stations or other ships, even destroying the emergency radio transmitter. At the same time, the detonation killed most of the officers in the ship's main nerve center, as the entire bridge collapsed in a mass of grinding, screaming steel. Sailors were thrown to the deck plates and lay bleeding and in a state of shock. Some lay unconscious. An undetermined number were blown over the side and into the water. The initial blast even tore the forward five inch guns from their mounts. Surviving seamen later told how they watched in awe and disbelief as the cannon turned end over end against the now illuminated sky like toys blown in the wind. Flame gushed suddenly from another gun mount and soared against the night.



The explosion, although not apparent to the surviving crew until the Turner began to list towards the damaged area, tore a tremendous hole in the ship's port side near the bow. It was here that most of the damage was localized, but by good fortune, the majority of the ship's complement had left the forward mess area only a few minutes before.

Strange things happened ashore and far inland at the moment of the concussion. Sleepy householders awakened to hear pictures rattling, chandeliers clinking and doors opening mysteriously by themselves, as if led by some invisible force. Scores of

folks along both the Jersey and Long Island coasts told of a macabre whistling gust of wind sweeping through their homes or apartments. While the befuddled householders tumbled from their beds and turned on their lights ashore, the destroyer's crew continued to remain poised at their stations while attending to stricken buddies, even when the ship's fuel oil flared against the stormy winter sky and laid an imposing patch of sinister red flame upon the tossing waters.

Back at Sandy Hook, the early morning watch at the Fort Hanock coast defense facility saw the colum of flame leap towards the sky and were shaken by the blast. They peered through the wind-whipped rain to locate the source of the disturbance and hastily sounded the general quarters alarm. Lights suddenly flashed on in the barracks as officers and enlisted men fumbled to throw on their gear. They beat a hasty path down to the docks where the night was now filled with the roar of motors springing to life to take on the rescue task at hand. The commander of the Sandy Hook Coast Guard Station computed a course and distance to the burning ship and an 83 foot cutter, a 77 foot patrol boat and assorted other craft pushed out of their anchorage and rounded the hook, making full speed towards the flame track now looming larger on the horizon.

A pilot boat was the first to reach the disaster area and she had taken 39 survivors from the frigid Atlantic. As the Coast Guard boats reached the scene, their searchlights picked up sailors struggling in the sea. One man was even clinging to a bobbing mattress. They noticed that the Turner was listing heavily and they could make out figures outlined against the destroyer's rail. The 83 foot Coast Guard boat pushed her nose into the inferno and pulled up alongside the stricken Navy ship. Her crews tossed lines aboard and the Navy men lashed the craft together to begin the evacuation process. At about 0700 hours, the captain of the cutter ordered the Turner's crew to abandon ship, and the destroyer's crew began a calm, orderly but speedy evacuation onto the Coast Guard boat's deck. Flames illuminated the scene as if it were high noon, thereby making the rescue operation that much easier. Those who could not transfer directly to the cutter jumped into openings in the burning water, where the other rescue craft darted in swiftly to pluck them out. One seaman even stopped to gather the ship's mascot, a skinny little terrier, into his arms. The last man off the destroyer, chief machinist's mate Rene Pincetl, made one last search for possible survivors, but it was apparent that all who were alive were already off.

The timing of the rescue bordered on the miraculous. Only minutes after the "abandon ship" order was fulfilled and as the cutter and other rescue craft were backing or turning away from the cauldron, the destroyer experienced a second, more devastating explosion, as the fire finally touched off her magazine. The blast echoed and rumbled across the open water, drowning out the noise of wind-tossed snow and rain. On the decks of nearby craft men were blown from their feet and some even lost their coats in the incredible rush of wind that followed the concussion. The destroyer seemed to break amidship, rolled over to starboard, and slid into the sea. The surrounding waters bore great pools of flame for a few brief minutes, but the seas closed over them and the ocean went dark.

Only forty-seven minutes had elapsed from the first explosion to the second which caused the Turner to disappear beneath the waves to her final resting place. However, in this short time, the Coast Guard was able to muster up its boat crews, prepare and launch all rescue craft, navigate 7 miles through a raging winter storm and finally rescue 161 enlisted men and 2 officers under inclement and hazardous conditions, all without a single casualty to its own complement! That's some fancy bit of life saving work and shows the true value of this branch of the service which is often taken for granted.

This operation saw one of the first practical flights of Igor Sikorsky's "whirligig" invention— the helicopter. Adverse weather conditions had grounded all fixed wing aircraft, but when blood plasma was needed for the Turner's survivors, a chopper from Floyd Bennett Field braved the elements and limited visibility and stopped off at the Battery to pick up the medical supplies on the way to Sandy Hook. The entire flight was made in 14 minutes and it would have taken hours by more conventional transportation.

An eyewitness account of the Turner's last minutes was provided by a New York Times interview with the last man off the destroyer, chief Rene Pincetl of San Diego. He went on to say, "I was lighting off the boiler and getting ready to set off at 6:10AM. I just got through finishing putting the number 4 boiler on the main steam line when the explosion went off. All communications went out and I couldn't reach the bridge. The engine room filled with smoke from coming down. There were six men in the engine room.

"A Coast Guard ship tied up astern of us. A lieutenant commander on the Coast Guard ship pulled up alongside and ordered us to abandon ship. I tripped the generator and stepped off. She was listing badly to starboard. The next explosion split her in two. That's when she busted up—after 7. At 0712 she went down.

"During the fire, 40mm shells were popping all over. All the ammunition aboard the ship was afire. How did she look? Do you remember the pictures of the Wasp? She looked just like the Wasp. There was fuel oil and ammo everywhere. The Coast Guard did a wonderful job." The cause for this mysterious explosion was offici-

(Continued on next page.)

U.S.S. TURNER
Vital Statistics

Date Sunk: January 3, 1944
Length: Approximately 350 feet
Beam: Approximately 36 feet
Weight: 1,700 tons
Depth of Water: 59 feet
Depth Over Wreck: 35 to 40 feet
Lat/Lon Position: 40-29-48 N/73-52-30 W
Loran C Position: 26936.4/43725.5

COMMUTER COURSES

Port	Distance (Nautical Miles)	Heading (Magnetic) To	From
Fire Island Inlet	25.4	266°	086°
Jones Inlet	14.4	263°	083°
Debs Inlet	7.5	238°	058°
Rockaway Inlet	4.1	143°	323°
Sandy Hook Point	6.5	092°	272°
Shark River Inlet	19.5	030°	210°
Manasquan Inlet	25.5	029°	209°
Barnegat Inlet	46.0	025°	205°

ally listed as due to "defective ammunition," but this could have been wartime subterfuge. Since the ship was on active duty for less than 9 months before its demise, this explanation doesn't hold much water. Other, more popular (and sensational) theories could be attributed to U-Boat activity in the vicinity or sabotage. The Germans had sunk literally dozens of ships in this area since the war began and the heavy weather that existed on the morning of January 3, 1944 could have provided ample cover for a sub to sneak in undetected and either slip a torpedo or a well-placed round from her deck gun into the anchored, unsuspecting tin can.

A final death toll was not disclosed by the Department of the Navy, as it was not their practice to list those killed or the ship's complement in accordance with the usual wartime restrictions. However, if you figure that the normal wartime crew was about 200 men, and it was made public that 163 of the Turner's crew were rescued, it is logical to presume that about 37 to 40 seamen perished in this blast. Included in the list as "missing in action" was the captain of the Turner, Commander Henry Wygant, Jr.

Unknown to many who were involved in this operation, the explosions did not end when the destroyer went down. From hundreds of documented sources along the New Jersey and Long Island seaboard came the report of a final—and apparently the worst—blast at just before 8AM. This occurred underwater while the Turner rested on the bottom in 59 feet of water. Residents from Staten Island, just a few miles to the west, reported that it was shaken its entire length of 15 miles and breadth of 7 miles. Over 200 windows were shattered and many houses in the Rockaways and the Jersey Shore were also rattled. It seems the old girl still had a little fight in her before she was through.

From a fish-catching perspective, the Turner is certainly within easy striking distance for many New York and New Jersey anglers. Since it's a relatively inshore wreck, ling, blackfish, sea bass, porgies, and small blues are all plentiful during their respective seasons. In my travelings to the Turner's neighborhood, I've also run into numerous schools of green bonito, false albacore and weakfish, as they roam the bait-rich Ambrose channel area in search of a tasty meal.

The insert box contains all the data you'll need to locate the Turner, but be aware that this location experiences heavy commercial shipping traffic.

Next week we're going to slide on down the Jersey Coast a bit to visit the remnants of a small Chilean Freighter that fell victim to a U-Boat's deadly cargo in the Spring of 1942. She rests in 15 fathoms of water halfway between Manasquan and Barnegat Inlets—and her name is the Tolten.

ATLANTIC WRECK SERIES:

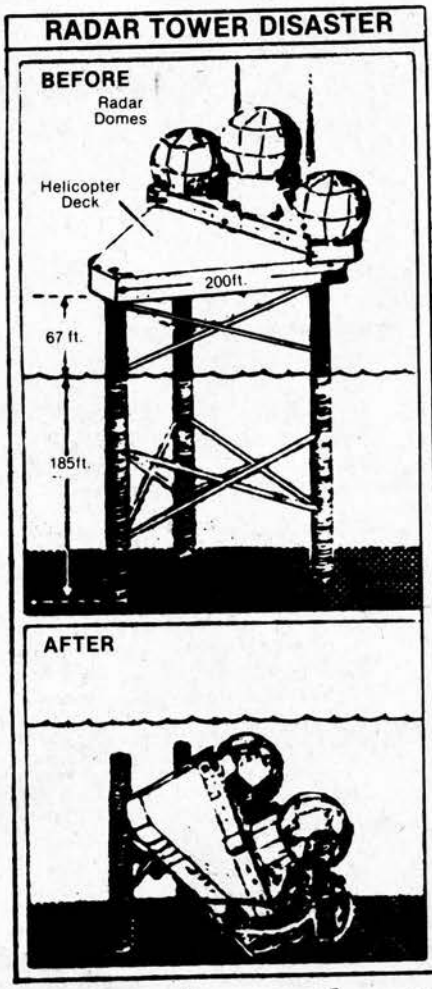
TEXAS TOWER NO. 4

by John Raguso

The skeletal remains of the Texas Tower is probably the most intriguing of all the wrecks we're going to cover in this initial weekly series. Many unsuspecting anglers fishing the Tower area for the first time expect to see some sort of massive steel structure rising from the sea bed floor and are disappointed to find only open ocean in its place. However, it's what's below the surface that counts, and the abundance of submarine debris created by the Tower's collapse during a severe winter storm 24 years ago give this location all the attributes of a shipwreck, providing shelter and forage to many baitfish and pelagic gamesters with one major exception. Whereas a typical shipwreck will normally come up only a short distance off the ocean's bottom (20 to 50 feet), the two remaining support legs of Texas Tower No. 4 ascend to within 60 feet of the surface in 186 feet of water! Combined with the rusting hulk of the crew's quarters, helicopter landing deck and three radar domes, the Tower supplies a huge underwater habitat over an expansive area to attract more fish more often to its protective shadows, hence its tremendous popularity with Long Island and New Jersey fishermen.

Before we get immersed in the details of the varieties of fish to be found in the vicinity of the Texas Tower, let's take a step back in time to learn of its history, so as to better understand how to unlock its secrets.

The Texas Tower-type USAF radar installations got their name because of design similarities to the Gulf Coast offshore oil drilling rigs. They were an integral part of a four system network of early warning radar stations designed to pick up precious seconds in tracking incoming missiles and planes for the nation's air defense back in the mid-50s. The other pieces of the puzzle were land-based stations, a picket fleet of converted Liberty ships designed to operate east of the string of Texas Towers for 500 miles, and finally a squadron of special aircraft. Originally, the game plan called for four towers, all situated off the northeast Atlantic Coast. Plans for tower No. 1 were scrapped, but towers 2, 3 and 4 were constructed and put into use. Towers 2 and 3, located 110 miles east of Chatham, Cape Cod and 50 miles east of Nantucket Island respectively, were situated in water 85 to 90 feet deep. The ill-fated Tower, known officially as No. 4 and unofficially as "Old Shaky," was the largest of the three installations at almost 5,000 tons, being positioned approximately 57½ nautical miles south/southeast of Fire Island Inlet. It was also the last of these structures put up, becoming operational in 1957. The tower itself cost $9 million to build, its radar and other electronic equipment adding an additional $12 million to the price tag. This platform stood a minimum of 67 feet above the water that was about 186 feet deep, which was more than twice as deep as the two other installations. The tower platform, an equilateral triangle with 187-foot sides, had two full decks and a third partial deck. On one of these, a big recreation room was provided for the crew with pool and ping-pong tables. Another deck housed a gymnasium and a galley, and the typical tower also included a woodworking shop, ceramics shop and electronics hobby shop. Two of the three support legs of the tower were filled with fuel oil and the third with sea water used for distilling into fresh water. The pilings of Tower No. 4 rested on sand and clay, while those of its counterparts were dug into solid rock. Unlike the other towers, due to its extended height above the seabed, the legs of Tower No. 4 were specially buttressed to provide additional support. Even with this added feature, the structure sometimes swayed as much as 14 feet, thereby picking up the notorious nickname of "Old Shaky" from those who were stationed there.



The atmosphere of these installations was somewhat desolate and not unlike that of a big Navy ship, except that the men referred to themselves as "troops" instead of a "crew," no doubt due to their USAF status. Those servicemen stationed at the towers were typically young and generally specialists in electronics. A normal duty rotation was 45 days on the tower, after which the serviceman was brought ashore by helicopter or ship for 15 days leave. The 45 days on, 15 days off routine would continue until 365 days active duty on the tower was accumulated, after which he would be transferred to a less isolated post. The ready complement of the tower was 70 servicemen.

Texas Tower No. 4 began experiencing trouble from its inception. According to a New York Times report, two of its principal leg braces were damaged during its up-ending procedure in the Summer of 1957, but the Navy officer-in-charge at the scene decided to proceed with its activation anyway, instead of towing it back to Portland, Maine for repairs. Subsequent to the installation, the two lost leg braces were replaced by two alternate braces of a different type and the job was completed in November, 1957. Bad luck continued to plague Tower No. 4 and two September Hurricanes, Daisy in '58 and Donna in '60, severely damaged the underwater bracings of the three supporting legs of the 22 foot thick triangular platform. Repair work was almost a continuous operation whenever wind and seas permitted and the Tower seemed to live up to its "Old

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Shaky'' monicker long before the night of its fateful demise. After Hurricane Donna buffeted this installation with 100 knot winds and 35 foot seas on September 12, 1960, the Air Force recognized the potential danger for the crew members who manned the radar platform.

Texas Tower No. 4 was partially evacuated on November 1, 1960 when it was determined that the damage sustained a few months earlier, by Hurricane Donna was more severe than originally anticipated. A bare subsistence crew of 14 servicemen and 14 repairmen remained stationed on the platform, but were known to have complained that ''Old Shaky'' was worse than ever.

The storm that doomed the radar tower began on Thursday, January 12, 1961. The early stages of this winter tempest had caused some new damage to the installation's support braces and this information, along with the pessimistic weather forecast, was relayed to Sector Command at Stewart Air Force Base. Since plans had already been developed to complete evacuate Texas Tower #4 on or about February 1st , so as not to subject the crew and repairmen to any unnecessary risks on future storm damage, the Sector Commander didn't see the need to move the date forward. However, as the storm of January 12th continued unabated and progressed into a more mature stage of rage, those stationed at the Tower could sense that something was amiss. By early Sunday afternoon of January 15th, winds were a steady 40 to 50 knots and the tower was being buffeted from the constant pounding of 30 foot seas. What made matters more hopeless was that the forecast now predicted that things would indeed get worse before they'd get better. At this point, the Tower Commander, Captain Gordon Phelan, decided to establish radio contact with the aircraft carrier USS Wasp stationed nearby, to expedite the evacuation process.

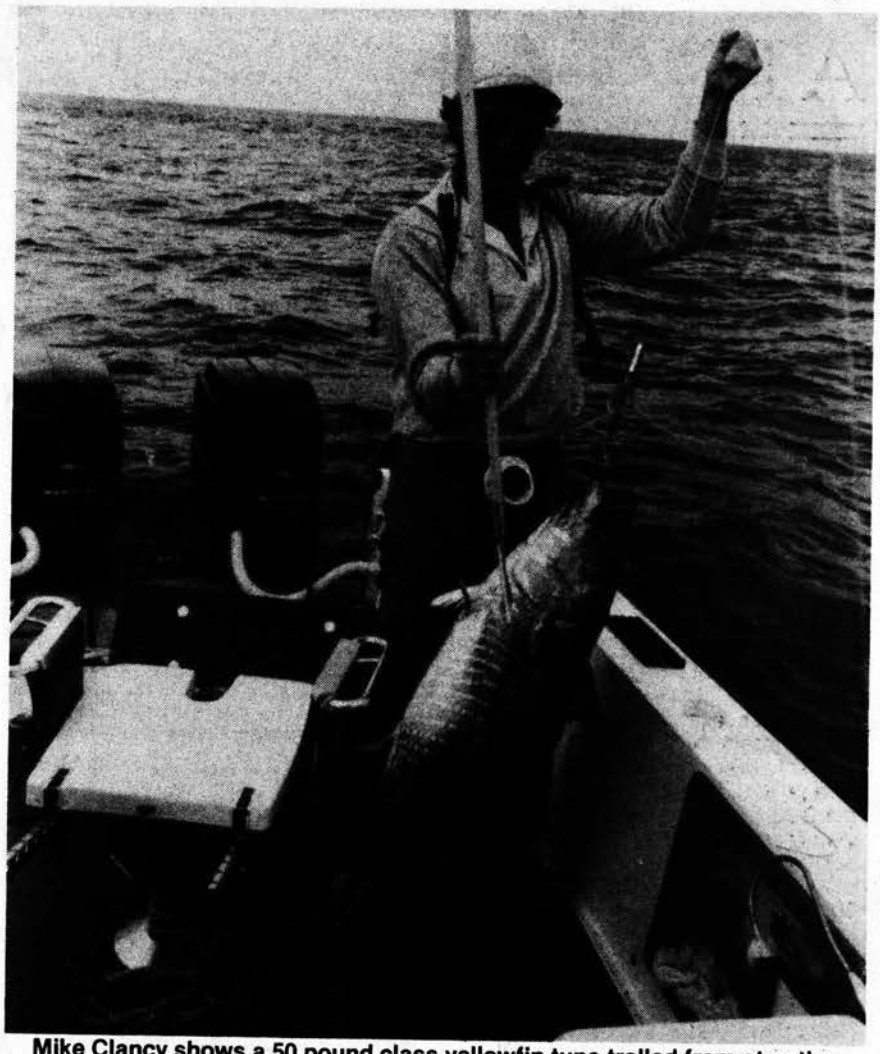
The plan was to pick up the men in the tower by helicopter, during the next lull in the storm, predicted to be at 2AM the morning of Monday, January 16th. They never made it.

By early evening, winds had increased to 50 to 70 knots and seas climbed to a towering 35 feet. According to New York Times coverage of this disaster, the final scenario of the doomed tower occurred as follows:

The USAF indicated that Captain Phelan had wanted his men evacuated as the wind and seas rose on Sunday. However, he believed he could wait until daylight on Monday for rescue helicopters from the Wasp.

Captain Phelan has remained in radio contact with a military sea transport service ship that had brought him supplies a few days earlier. The Tower Commander had been concerned about forecasts of bad weather and had asked the supply

(Continued on next page.)



Mike Clancy shows a 50 pound class yellowfin tuna trolled from atop the remains of Texas Tower No. 4.

TEXAS TOWER NO. 4
Vital Statistics

Date Installed: November, 1957
Date Sunk: January 15, 1961
Height: 186' above seabed floor, 67' minimum clearance above sea level, 90' clearance of platform deck above sea level.
Structure Width: 3-sided triangle, 187' each side
Weight: approximately 5,000 tons
Depth of Water: 186 feet
Depth Over Wreck: varies, but minimum of 60'
Lat/Lon Position: 39-48-24 N/72-40-20 W
Loran C Position: 26313.0/43267.8

COMMUTER COURSES

Port	Distance (Nautical Miles)	Heading (Magnetic) To	From
Shinnecock Inlet	63.0	201°	021°
Moriches Inlet	59.3	189°	009°
Fire Island Inlet	57.5	163°	343°
Jones Inlet	63.2	152°	332°
Debs Inlet	70.0	147°	327°
Rockaway Inlet	74.5	141°	321°
Shark RiverInlet	66.5	124°	304°
Manasquan Inlet	65.5	119°	299°
Barnegat Inlet	66.3	101°	281°
Beach Haven Inlet	77.5	089°	269°
Little Egg Inlet	80.0	088°	268°

ship to stand by.

"Things getting worse, tower shaking and beginning to break loose," Captain Phelan told the supply ship late Sunday afternoon. At 7:10 PM, he told the ship he was expecting evacuation during the next break in the storm, presumably the next morning.

At 7:25PM all hell broke loose and the Tower transmitted a "Mayday," the International signal for distress. At 7:33PM Sunday evening, Texas Tower No. 4 disappeared from the supply ship's radar screen, plunging into the turbulent, frigid Atlantic waters and taking all 28 crew members to their deaths.

Darkness and the unfavorable elements severely hampered any rescue attempts. According to a New York Times report, early Monday morning, the 16th of January, a Coast Guard official said that "a realistic view at this time must be that the men in the Tower are no longer alive!" He added that, "salvage teams are giving it everything they have on the assumption that they may still be."

One body was recovered from the water and another was sighted downwind of the Tower in a night-and-day search by 11 ships, 6 aircraft and 31 divers. The search for the 26 remaining men, regarded as hopeless by mid-morning, was galvanized into new urgency when a destroyer's sonar equipment picked up tapping noises coming from the Tower's sunken hulk. Hope flared higher when the "tin can" reported that it had exchanged signals with the tappers and that it heard what might have been a human voice.

Searchers said it was possible that some of the missing men had found a pocket of air inside the 5,000 ton structure when it went under. A diving bell and salvage equipment were sent to the scene but by late Monday afternoon, the Commanding Officer of the rescue flotilla from aboard the Wasp said there was no more than an "outside possibility" of rescuing any men from the Tower. He said that the tapping signals had become "weaker and more random" and had finally ceased about 2:30PM Monday. This was 19 hours after the Tower had collapsed and four hours after the sounds were first heard by the destroyer McCaffrey.

Attempts were made by the divers to reach the interior of the superstructure and according to a USAF spokesmen, "the wreckage clearly indicated there was no time for an organized attempt to abandon the Tower."

Compounding the tragedy and loss of life of the Texas Tower incident was the sensational publicity surrounding the event. Political and public outcry demanded a scapegoat to blame for the disaster, and Col. William Banks, Commander of the Boston Air Defense Sector which had jurisdiction over the 3 Towers, was forced to undergot court-martial proceedings for dereliction of duty. The charge

specifically stated that "despite his knowledge of the weakened structural condition of the Tower and his receipt of a severe weather forecast, Col. Banks failed to keep himself appraised of the developing weather situation; did not maintain contact with the officer in charge of the Tower and with the commander of the squadron, and failed to hold himself readily available for any action necessary in view of the developing dangerous situation of the Tower." When this proceeding was informed of a Senate sub-committee investigation report that indicated various engineers had recommended abandoning Tower No. 4 weeks before its collapse due to its structure being only 55 percent of rated strength, the fate of Col. Banks seemed sealed. However, he was eventually cleared of the negligence charge in August, 1961 by a very unusual "silent verdict," where the presiding court officers offered no objection to the defense counsel's motion that the case against Col. Banks be dropped, due to insufficient proof.

Now that we have a fairly good idea of the historical events that led up to the Texas Tower's demise, let's attempt to understand why the Tower area is one of the hottest, fish-catch-ingest spots in the New York Bight. As mentioned earlier, the mangled structural remains provide an ideal habitat that continuously lures large game fish to this location.

The Tower's unique underwater profile acts like a beacon to the various tunas and marlin in their forays from the Hudson Canyon's vortex, a scant 12 miles to the southeast, to the northern flats in their search for food. The Tower's familiar shadow acts like a junction that funnels this traffic to and from the canyon's entrance. Add to this the rusting bones of the Rumrunner "Bacardi," four miles N/NE of the Tower's position and the Bidevind, an unknown wreck and the West Wreck about four miles to the W/NW and you can see why this area is hot stuff!

Indeed, this region produces a steady pick of albacore and yellowfin tuna, white marlin, blue marlin, outsized mako sharks, dolphin, wahoo, occasional king-size yellowfin tuna and has been known to hold school bluefin tuna over the wrecks into mid-November.

For those skeptics who doubt that blue marlin would venture into 30 fathom water in search of a meal, I must admit that at one time I was a member of your ranks. However, coming back from a Hudson Canyon trip a few years ago, we stopped at the Texas Tower to try tolling for a few tasty yellowfin tuna for the BBQ grill. We set out a spread of lures parallel to another boat that had just put out his baits, when one of his outrigger lines dipped down suddenly and a fish was on. The next instant, a 400 to 500 lb. blue marlin disguised as a runaway locomotive rocketed out of the water within spitting distance of our boat on its way to the Delaware shores. We pulled in the baits and watched the action from a safe distance for as long as we could, but we never found out if that lucky angler ever landed that big blue. Enough said about what you can expect to find at venerable old Tower No. 4.

Before we get into the vital statistics info, allow me to offer a word of caution. Remember, the closest lee you'll have against any wind out there is 57½ nautical miles away. Wind makes waves, and that means that just about any sustained, moderate wind that's been blowing for awhile will create at least 4 to 6 foot seas out in Tower country, even in a stable weather pattern. If you have small 21 to 26 foot outboard or I/O boat like I do, be sure to take enough fuel, leave a float plan with your marina, go out with a couple of other boats if possible, and keep an ear to the weather station for wind and barometer data.

Next week, we'll investigate one of the most frequenteed wrecks off of Long Island's south shore: The San Diego.

ATLANTIC WRECK SERIES:

THE VARANGER (28 MILE WRECK)

by John Raguso

Many Fisherman readers may not recognize the official name of this huge 9305 ton Norwegian oil tanker, but mention the 28 Mile Wreck and visions of king sized cod, waves of school bluefin tuna and pods of tail-walking white marlin will assuredly come to mind.

The Varanger was one of the first Allied ships sent to the bottom along our New Jersey/Long Island Coast after the commencement of WW II hostilities, and she was attacked early the morning of January 25, 1942. This sinking, actually the sixth in United States waters since Axis submarine warfare began off the Atlantic Coast on January 14, 1942, took place off Sea Isle City, New Jersey, where all the survivors were landed. Those unlucky ships that preceded the Varanger to their watery graves were the Norness (south of Montauk Point), the Coimbra (south of Shinnecock Inlet), The City of Atlanta and Ciltvaira (off the North Carolina coast) and the Allan Jackson. What was remarkable about the Varanger's misfortune was that the entire crew of 41 was rescued with no fatalities. This was no small feat when you consider the 35 degree water temperatures that usually predominate during late January, the fact that rescue boats didn't arrive at the scene for 4½ hours after the Varanger went down and that this towering vessel foundered only 15 minutes after the first of three torpedoes struck.

According to a New York Times story, although the official Navy announcement was not specific on the point, there was a strong possibility that more than one German U-boat may have taken part in this attack. Interviews with survivors were not permitted by either the U.S. Navy or Norwegian merchant marine officials, but a Sea Isle City doctor who treated several of the crewmen for exposure and oil toxemia said that the men to whom he talked were convinced that there were at least two submarines involved in the attack.

An irony of the Varanger's sinking by Axis submarines was that the forty-one survivors, most of them Norwegian nationals, were picked up by two 30-foot fishing boats manned by Italian-American captains. Dewy Monchetti, master of the first vessel to spot the survivors, told reporters how he had seen the flash of the ship's explosion as he set out to sea shortly after 3AM, but ignored it because he "did not think much about it." He sailed his boat, the San Gennaro, out 22 miles to the cod fishing grounds, paying out five tubs of hook-strung line in the meantime. At 7:30AM, Captain Monchetti and his crew were pulling in the lines when the Varanger's survivors caught up to them, about 21 miles offshore.

Two lifeboats, one equipped with a motor, and both with their sails up, came into view, with the motorized boat towing the other. Captain Monchetti did not suspect that he was about to become the rescuer of torpedoed mariners. He just thought that they were men out too far for the limited size of their craft. As the boats drew nearer to the San Gennaro and he heard the hoarse shouts of the stricken crew, he could see by their physical state that these "poor devils" were survivors of a maritime disaster.

According to a New York Times

THE VARANGER —28 Mile Wreck— Vital Statistics

Date Sunk: January 25, 1942
Length: Unknown
Beam: Unknown
Weight: 9,305 gross tons
Hull Construction: Steel
Depth of Water: 126 feet
Depth Over Wreck: 76 feet
Lat/Lon Position: 39-00-23 N/74-04-57 W
Loran C Position: 26828.3/42805.0

COMMUTER COURSES

Port	Distance (Nautical Miles)	Heading (Magnetic) To	From
Barnegat Inlet	45.0	191°	011°
Beach Haven Inlet	32.0	175°	355°
Little Egg Inlet	30.0	172°	352°
Absecon Inlet	27.4	157°	337°
Great Egg Inlet	28.0	141°	321°
Townsend Inlet	30.7	113°	293°
Cape May Inlet	36.6	093°	273°

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report, Captain Monchetti stated that, "They were so smeared up with oil that on some of them all you could see was the whites of their eyes. Some were lying in the bottom of the boat, and one or two looked like they were hurt bad." The crew of the San Gennaro took the injured men aboard, then tossed a line to the lead boat, making flank speed for Townsend Inlet and shore. On the way in, they overtook the Eileen, captained by Dominick Constantino, and gave him one of the lifeboats to pull in so they could make better time. The rescue boats finally landed about 9:30AM and were immediately taken in charge by the Coast Guard. The Varanger's crew was escorted to the local Coast Guard station and was kept incommunicado throughout the day and evening. A naval officer from Philadelphia came to Sea Isle City to get their story, and it was after this that the official naval report confirmed the exact details of the sinking.

The Varanger was a motor vessel/tanker of 9305 gross tons, built in 1925 in Amsterdam. She was carrying a heavy cargo of fuel oil, part of which had been picked up in Africa and the remainder in the West Indies. She was due to put into New York Harbor at noon on January 25, 1942, but was stopped nine hours short of her destination.

There was evidence of the Varanger's cargo on the faces and bodies of all her surviving crew. Dr. Alexander Stuart, the physician who treated them, said that they were coated so thickly with the heavy oil that he had to give them all kerosene baths. In a tribute to the tanker's crew, the doctor stated that they were a tough gang and could take the ordeal of the sinking.

A spokesman for the fourth naval district in Philadelphia, who confirmed the sinking, described the U-boat attack as follows:

"The ship was struck at 3:10 AM by a torpedo amidship on the port side. The force of the explosion knocked the radio room and a four inch gun overboard (explaining why the Varanger could not send a May-Day). Seven minutes later the ship was struck by a second torpedo. Five minutes later a third torpedo struck. The Varanger sank immediately after the third torpedo." The Navy spokesman who said that the crew included two Americans, declared that apparently two submarines were engaged in the attack, but said that this report had not been wholly confirmed. It is interesting to note that as the Varanger proceeded north along the Jersey coast to New York Harbor, she was attacked from the port beam, indicating that at least one of the U-boats was inshore of the 28 mile mark where the tanker went down.

Back on shore, the explosion of the torpedoes ripping into the Varanger's side awakened many residents and rattled numerous windows in Sea Isle City and was heard as far away as Atlantic City. The San Gennaro, which played the leading part in the rescue operation, was viewed by many curious townsmen after it tied up at the Townsend Inlet dock. The typical drab gray coloration of the fishing vessel was offset by big splotches of black oil on deck, indicating where the survivors had lain.

As a counterpoint to the tragedy of the Varanger's sinking, UPI issued an interesting news release dated 3/7/42 regarding game fish off the Atlantic Seaboard. According to Bryan Travis of Cape Charles, VA., a chief boatswain's mate in the Coast Guard who also held many saltwater fishing records at that time, "Game fish off the Atlantic Coast have mostly disappeared and won't be back until the war ends. Torpedo and shell-fire explosions have run the fish away. Some knew it was coming. They were warned by their fleeing brothers who had already been under fire. They can sense danger, locate food and plot the future. When the first torpedo exploded off the coast it probably killed every living thing within a quarter mile area and a like distance in depth. It may be years before another fish will enter that area."

There's a message here for all you sports-minded anglers the next time you release your catch. Before you place the tag and clip the leader, ask your grateful quarry if it has any hot stock tips or knows who's going to win the fifth race at Belmont. Since these fish can alledgedly "predict the future," who knows what resonse you'll get!

Now let's get back to the serious stuff. The Varanger's resting spot along the 20 fathom curve makes it an ideal stopover point for many of the pelagic species on their northward migrations. Although I have never personally fished the 28 Mile Wreck, some New Jersey anglers I've questioned indicated that this wreck is a good spot for bluefish during the spring, summer and fall; codfish all year round; school tuna, bonito and skipjack during late summer and early fall; white marlin under favorable water temperatures and an occasional shark during their northward migration in early summer.

The 28-Mile Wreck is so named due to its approximate distance from Great Egg, Absecon and Brigantine Inlets. The Varanger's location was originally confirmed by the USCG Cutter Gentian, reportedly being clear to 76' above the wreck. Divers have observed the hull and have described it to be in good condition, with its fuel storage tanks opened up. You should expect to get a sharp, clear image in your recording depthsounder when attempting to locate this wreck.

The last section includes a summary of the Varanger's vital data. Next week, we'll discuss one of the "hottest" wrecks on the East Coast that's not even a legitimate shipwreck, but the remains of a U.S. Air Force radar installation: Texas Tower #4.

The Wreck of The Elizabeth

VF Long Island Shipwrecks

There were literally hundreds of shipwrecks on, and off, Fire Island during the 19th century and one of the most celebratred was that of the bark Elizabeth on July 10, 1850. A large bronze statue of the southern statesman, John C. Calhoun, was lost in the surf off Point O'Woods when the ship rammed onto the offshore bar and subsequently broke up.

The statue had been made in Europe by the sculptor Hiram Powers for the city of Charleston, South Carolina, which intended to present it to the city of Columbia, the state capital. Calhoun had died on March 31 1850 at the age of 68, only weeks before th loss of his statue. He may be mentioned in other Long Island connections. Following his being graduated by Yale College in 1804, he studied law at Litchfield, Connecticut, under Tapping Reeve who was a native of Brookhaven, Long Island, and was the founder of the nation's first law school at Litchfield.

Another connection was that Calhoun was serving as a United States Senator from South Carolina when William Henry Harrison was elected President. Harrison married a native of Riverhead town, Anna Symmes. Also, after Harrison's death, two months following his inauguration, Calhoun was appointed Secretary of State by President John Tyler who married another native Long Islander, Julia Gardiner of East Hampton.

As for the ill-fated statue of Calhoun, the Charleston Courier of November 5, 1850 reported that it had been recovered. Harper's Monthly of December 1850 ran the following item, "The statue of John C. Calhoun made by Powers (Hiram) for the city of Charleston, and which was lost by shipwreck off Fire Island, has been recovered and forwarded to its destination. The left arm was broken off at the elbow. With this exception it was uninjured."

The forgoing is quoted because time and again in accounts of the wreck of the Elizabeth it has been written that the statue of Calhoun was never recovered. As a matter of record it was unveiled at the capitol building in Columbia, but it stood there for less than 15 years. During the Civil War, according to Taft's History of American Sculpture, New York, 1924, the statue was completely destroyed by fire. The fire had been set by Union troops of General Sherman on the night of February 17, 1865 when more than half the city, including the old State House went up in flames.

Many fanciful stories were printed following the wreck of the Elizabeth, probably because of the sensation caused by the loss of its four passengers - Margaret Fuller, her husband Count Ossoli, their infant son, Angelo, and the child's nurse. It was said afterwards that Henry Thoreau, the naturalist and essayist, who with friends of Margaret Fuller visited the scene of the wreck, found the infant's body and had it buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Boston.

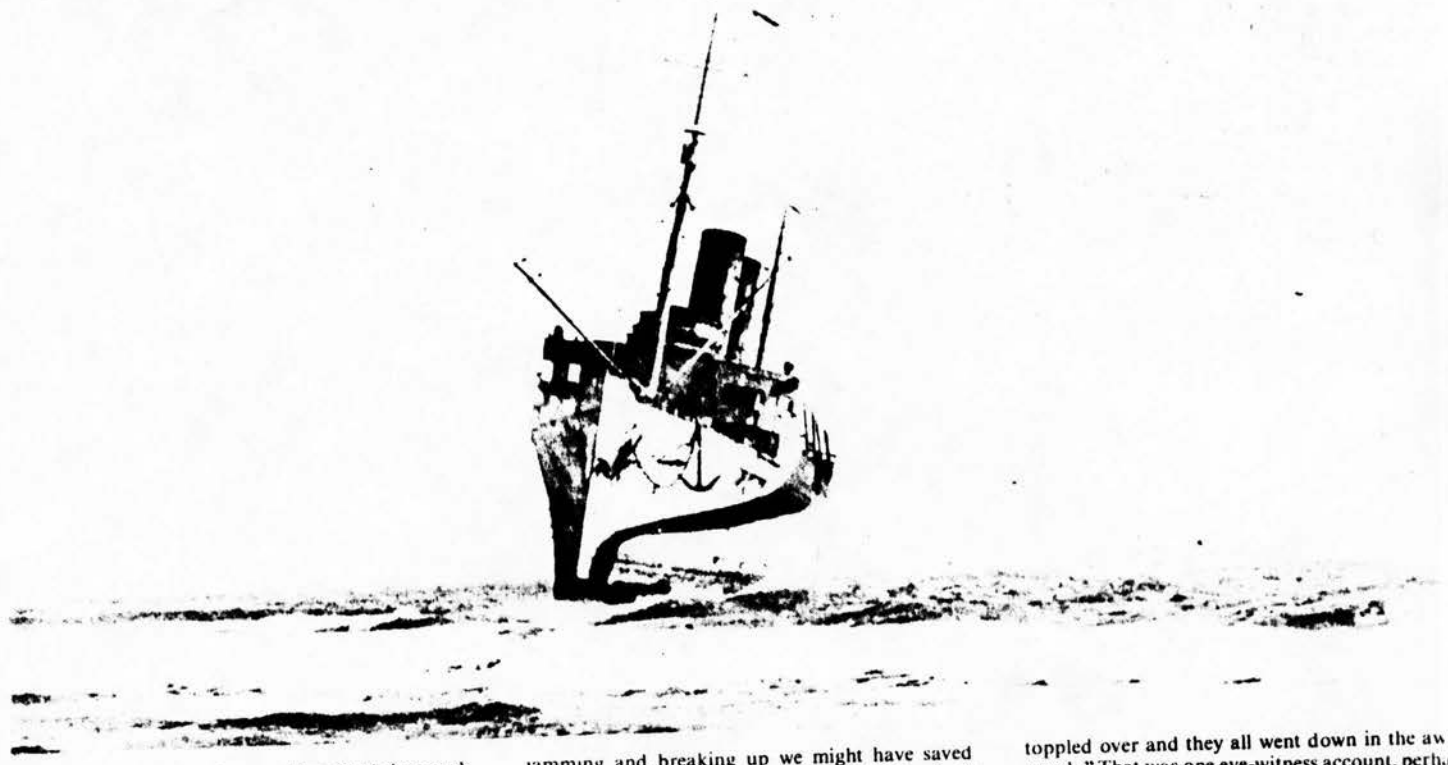
There were repeated reports that Margart Fuller's body had been found. One that a fisherman came upon it washed ashore on Coney Island and buried it in the sands of that then remote community without having it identified. None of the reports were ever substantiated.

A bronze tablet was erected at Point O'Woods in the 1890s in memory of the famous writer and first woman newspaper reporter but it too was lost to the sea. The tablet read: "To Commemorate Margaret Fuller, Marchioness Ossoli, who with her husband, Marquis Ossoli and their child Angelo perished by shipwreck off this shore July 19, 1850 in the 41 year of her age. Noble in thought and in character, eloquent of tongue and of pen, she was an inspiration to many of her own time and her uplifting influence abides with us. Erected 1901."

There was for many years another marker nearby above the resting place of Harry West, the sailor who perished in an attempt to save Margaret Fuller's little son. The grave was afterwards described as being among the sand dunes about half a mile east of the "Signal Service Observatory" and marked by a plain pine headboard stained and battered by many storms. It was something of a tourist attraction in those days and Host David S.S.Sammis kept the legend alive as he spun tales of Fire Island for the guests at his Surf Hotel.

One of the old salts sailing Surf Hotel guests on

(Continued on page 20)



day trips around the bay used to tell of the wreck, "The Elizabeth was not over a hundred yards from shore, about six tiers of rollers between her and the beach but we were helpless to do anything. Those on board had climbed up into the yard-arms and couldn't hear us. She was breaking up fast and if those people had jumped off before the cargo began jamming and breaking up we might have saved most of them. About nineteen sailors jumped off and were thrown ashore more dead than alive, but we saved them.

"Way up on the yaradarm was Margaret Fuller and her husband, and a young child. They hung there until it was too late and pretty soon the mast toppled over and they all went down in the awi wreck." That was one eye-witness account, perha augmented a bit by the writer of the account. I report went on, "Ten days afterard we found t woman's body five miles below the wreck. Sa Homan found it. He's sailing a boat around B Shore now (1890)."