# The Daybook

Volume 7 Issue 4

## In This Issue…

New Items and Changes to *Wisconsin*.....3

Model of the Armored Cruiser *Maryland* in the Works.....4

Freedom Fighter: Battleship *Wisconsin* in the Korean War.....6

HAMPTON ROADS NAVAL★MUSEUM

*Local History. World Events.*

### *About* The Daybook

*The Daybook* is an authorized publication of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum (HRNM). Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy, or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof. Book reviews are solely the opinion of the reviewer.

The HRNM is operated and funded by Commander, Navy Region, Mid-Atlantic. The museum is dedicated to the study of 225 years of naval history in the Hampton Roads region. It is also responsible for the historic interpretation of the battleship *Wisconsin*.

The museum is open daily. Call for information on *Wisconsin*'s hours of operations. Admission to the museum and *Wisconsin* are free. *The Daybook*'s purpose is to educate and inform readers on historical topics and museum related events. It is written by the staff and volunteers of the museum.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum editor. *The Daybook* can be reached at 757-322-2993, by fax at 757-445-1867, e-mail at gbcalhoun@nsn.cmar.navy.mil, or write *The Daybook*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.hrnm.navy.mil.

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## Features

**The Director's Column**.....2

"Can't Ask for Better Duty"

**Book Reviews**.....10

*The Navy and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex, 1847-1887* by Kurt Hackemer. Reviewed by Ira Dye

*At War, At Sea: Sailors and Naval Combat in the Twentieth Century* by Ronald Spector. Reviewed by Joseph Judge

**The Museum Sage**.....12

*Picky, Picky, Picky: Three inches, two feet, 152 mm, 155-mm or, 157 mm??*

**Cover Photographs:** The central photograph shows Turret No. 2 opening up on Communist targets near the 38th Parallel in support of South Korean and U.S. Marine ground forces. The lower left photo is the damage caused by a 152-mm shell. The lower central photo is *Wisconsin* passing through the Panama in 1951 and the lower right cartoon was what the ship should have been called, at least according to the deck department.

# "Can't Ask for Better Duty": *Wisconsin's* Honor Guard

## The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

Since April 16, a cadre of top-notch enlisted sailors have stood watch over our battleship, providing safety and security for both the vessel and the 400,000 visitors who have walked her decks. This column will profile the young men and women who are assigned to the *Wisconsin* as members of the Commander, Navy Region, Mid-Atlantic Honor Guard.

The Honor Guard is by definition an elite group, hand-picked from all the Navy commands in Hampton Roads. Honor Guard members are selected based upon their professional bearing and work performance. Duty is for six months and then the member returns to the parent command, although the individual can request to stay longer. The museum has been allotted two honor guard teams of three members each on a rotating basis. The sailors work regular duty when the ship is open to the visitor, and before and after hours for special events.

What is amazing to me is that the members of the Honor Guard represent a cross-section of America ranging from their hometowns to their interests, and yet are all alike in a shared genuine interest for American naval history and American war heroes. Here are their stories.

Petty Officer **Shane Hawkey**, a Muskegon Michigan native, arrived on April 8, 2001 and opened the ship to the public eight days later. He is the old-timer of the group. Hawkey is a six year Navy man, an Aviation Boatswain Mate Fueler 2nd Class. His parent command is NAS Oceana, his title is Supply Program Manager at the fuel farm. To him the *Wisconsin* is a "piece of history that keeps you free, and you better respect it." Hawkey enjoys his educational role to the public, and particularly enjoys the kids and veterans that he meets. Hawkey wants to make the Navy a career and has been with the Honor Guard for one and half years.

Petty Officer **James Jordan**, another veteran of *Wisconsin's* opening day, was reassigned but returned back here two weeks ago. Jordan is the Honor Guard's Lead Petty Officer and is an Electrician's Mate 2nd Class.

*Adm. Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations, paid a visit to the museum and the battleship* Wisconsin *in the earlier part of November. He is shown here with the museum docents, members of the battleship honor guard, and TPU personnel. (Photo by ET1 Paul Duer)*

From Philadelphia, he has been in the Navy for six years, served on the *John C Stennis* (CVN-74) and now belongs to the Naval Station Norfolk Color Guard. Petty Officer Jordan is amazed at the sea stories he hears from the veterans, one of the most interesting being the WWII veteran who was sunk twice by the Japanese, once on the *Langley* (CV-1) and two days later, onboard the US destroyer that orginally saved him.

Our resident Cajun is **Derek Causin**, an Aviation Ordnanceman from the Atlantic Ordnance Command at Oceana NAS. Derek joined the Navy two years ago from Donaldsonville, Louisiana to further his education. Derek is 20 years old, married and someday hopes to be a State Game Warden. He loves being with the Honor Guard and is appreciative of the thanks he receives from the visitors, particularly older Americans who take the time to shake his hand and say, "thank you for all you do."

**Jonathan Bedford** comes from New Boston, Illinois. One and half years ago, he followed a family tradition of joining the Navy. Jonathan felt honor bound to contribute to our country's service, and the educational offerings that the Navy provided were impressive. Petty Officer Bedford is an Electronic Technician 3rd Class. His parent command is at Norfolk Naval Base's Airport. Jonathan's quote forms the title of this column. He likes the uniqueness of being stationed on a battleship. "Who else in the Navy can say that?" he asks.

Damage Controlman 2nd Class **Dennis Hogan** is a world traveler. Since joining the Navy almost five years ago, he has been on three deployments and visited exotic ports in Thailand, Australia, and Hawaii. His favorite port so far is Victoria, Canada. Twenty-four years old and married since May, he and his wife will be parents of a son next March. Hogan's immediate goal is to make chief. His parent command is the Norfolk Naval Station Color Guard. He says that his uniform makes a big impression on kids; they look to him as an example and ask him questions about his job. Little ones ask if he is the Captain.

Airman **Michelle Zuidema** is 20 years old and a Californian. She joined the Navy to get an education and gain job experience. She was selected for the Honor Guard three months ago. She is an air traffic controller and loves being in the Honor Guard. She sees her primary role on the ship as an educator. Many people ask her about women's roles in the Navy. She likes interacting with different people, learning from the visitors and the museum docents onboard *Wisconsin*.

These brief bios offer just a surface treatment of the diverse talent found onboard the *Wisconsin*. Please take the opportunity to come by and say thanks to our Honor Guard for bringing today's Navy to downtown Norfolk.

Becky

# Changes and New Items on Board *Wisconsin*

by Mary Mosier

On December 7th, when USS *Wisconsin* was towed into her new berth in downtown Norfolk, the peak tourist season seemed so far away. Summer was a long six months away; It is hard to believe that it has come and gone. We had over 400,000 plus visitors. Unknown to the average tourist was the ongoing busy schedule and work of all the people that make the ship the success it has become.

Some of the most frequently heard visitor comments concern the outstanding material condition and cleanliness of the ship. It does not take long for a ship to lose the just painted look. *Wisconsin's* continued pristine condition is the result of three groups. The first is the contract crew from Lyon Shipyard that is continually recaulking and painting the public areas. The second group is made up of sailors that are assigned to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum for short temporary duty periods. They pick up and empty trash, clean the waterways, scrape up chewing gum, sweep the decks, wash the portholes, rig anti-pigeon barriers and all the other daily "fun" jobs. NJROTC units, Boy Scouts, and other youth groups are doing the fine tuning onboard, such as shining brass.

There have been many changes and improvements since the ship's arrival and there are more to come. Within the first few weeks of opening we discovered more trip and bang hazards. Although we can't make the ship totally safe for visitors, we try to find quick and innovative solutions to potential danger areas. For example, we now have "nonskid" on the ladder railings so our young visitors do not play sailor and slide down the rails. The tomahawk loading rails are now painted with bright yellow stripes. Cargo netting was installed on the railings on the 0-3 level and across the bullnose. Bright orange cones are used to cover trip hazards and some ladder steps were widened.

We have not been focusing just on safety. We have been taking our veterans' and visitors' suggestions. Because our visitors cannot tour the interior of the ship we have been trying to give them a better "peek" inside. With the help of the crew from the IPC *Ronald Reagan* (CVN-77) we have been outfitting the spaces that can be seen from portholes so that our visitors can better imagine what life was like aboard *Wisconsin*. We installed lexan (bulletproof) glass in the door to the XO's stateroom in order to open the hatch. We plan to do more doors on the main deck and 0-1 level. There are now six small sets of stairs under portholes so that children can see the spaces. The flag bag legends have been refurbished and a utility boat was installed in the port davit. Lastly, we installed new signs around the ship to enchance her interpretation.

*A new ribbon board will be installed to update and correct* Wisconsin'*s ribbon board. The battleship now will have 18 ribbons. Among the new medals is the Korea Service Medal (last row, far right), which was authorized by South Korea in 1951 and then authorized for American service members in 1999.*

What is next on our "to do" list? Marines from Marine Corps Force Security Battalion Norfolk will have the Corps's emblem repainted on the aft starboard 5-inch gun soon. The *Ronald Reagan*'s volunteers will rerig the lines. The ribbon board will be repainted with three additional awards and the brass tompions for the 16-inch guns will be remanufactured. Outfitting of interior spaces will continue. Last, but not least, the canvas installation will be completed.

These improvements come about due to the dedication of a talented museum staff, the hard work and innovativeness of the Navy Inactive Fleet Command, inspiration of our docents and visitors and the support of the Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic and the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation. Thank you all for an amazing beginning. It has truly been a team effort.

*One of the many new additions to the battleship is the reunion of the battleship and one of her liberty boats. It can now be seen on the port side of the vessel. (Photo by Gordon Calhoun)*

# Cruiser USS *Maryland* Coming to Museum

## Museum to Receive a Model of a Newport News-built "Big Ten" Cruiser

In the near future, the museum will expand its impressive collection of ship models with the addition of the armored cruiser USS *Maryland* (Armored Cruiser No. 8/ACR-8). Greg McKay of New Mexico is putting finishing touches on a model that will complement the museum's Age of Steel gallery. Mr. McKay has built several models for the museum including the cruiser CSS *Florida*, the ironclad USS *New Ironsides*, and the aircraft carrier USS *Ranger* (CV-4).

*Shown here is turret no. 2, which was equipped with 8-inch/40 caliber rifles. (Photo by Greg McKay)*

Authorized by Congress in 1900, *Maryland* was a *Pennsylvania*-class warship and the fifth of the "Big Ten" series of armored cruisers. Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry-dock Company won the contract and commissioned her on April 18, 1905. She was 502 feet in length, drew about 24 feet of water, and displaced 13,680 tons.

Maryland *came with 12 small boats for landing parties. On the model as on the ship, each of the small boats is different. (Photo by Greg McKay)*

*Maryland* had a mixed bag of armament including four 8-inch/40 caliber rifles, 14 6-inch/50 caliber rapid-fire guns, and two torpedo tubes. The eight-inch rifles were found to be effective weapons and became particularly well known for their destructive force. Self-propelled or "locomotive" torpedoes were a new trend in naval warfare and almost every warship from the battleships to the tiny torpedo boats were equipped with them. Eight boilers provided 28,900 horsepower and allowed the ship to achieve slightly over 22 knots during builder's trials.

*USS* Maryland *(ACR-8) is shown here breaking in the Navy's newest drydock at the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston, 1909. Built by Newport News Shipbuilding, she was one of the "Big Ten" series of fast armored cruisers constructed for the Navy shortly after the Spanish-American War. (U.S. Naval Institute photo)*

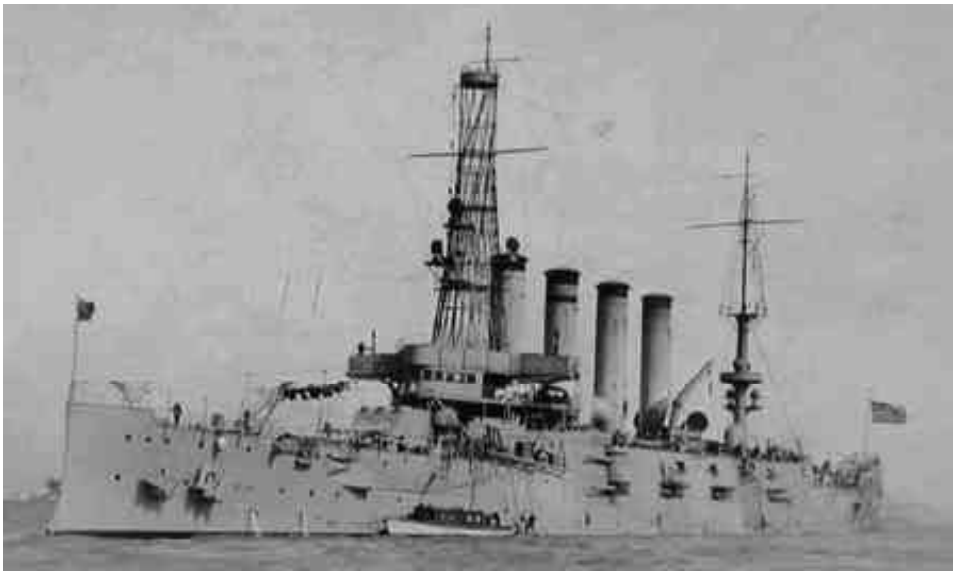
The "armored cruiser" became very popular among some naval theorists after the Spanish-American War as these ships were not only speedy vessels, but also had a respectable main battery and were more heavily armored than smaller types of ships. The public perceived the armored cruisers *Brooklyn* and *New York* as extremely successful ships during the 1898 conflict. Theorists envisioned that these new ships would form a scouting force for the main battleship squadrons.

In many ways, however, this ship and her sister cruisers were rather odd vessels. Despite being labeled a cruiser, *Maryland* was slightly longer and displaced more water than the more heavily armed battleships. Since speed was the number one priority, her engineering plant produced over twice as much power as the battleships. But to save weight, her armament was significantly less powerful than a battleship, which was equipped with 12 and 13-inch guns, and her armor belt was six inches thinner than a battleship.

This paradox of a large ship with small guns provoked a storm of debate between naval theorists and architects. Naval historian Ivan Musciant discovered a side by side comparison of *Maryland* and the Newport News-built battleship *Virginia* (Battleship No. 13/BB-13) written by a contemporary flag officer, which outlines one of many criticisms of the ship. The officer commented that *Maryland*'s armor scheme was grossly flawed as the side armor was not only thinner than *Virginia*, but a lower percentage of the hull area of the *Maryland* was armored than *Virginia*. Forty-five percent of *Maryland*'s hull was armored compared to 60 percent of *Virginia*'s hull. Another critic summed up by simply stating that the armored cruisers were "inferior to battleships in so many respects and superior to them in so few."

Nonetheless, the ship had its good points. It had a high freeboard allowing the ship to fire in heavy seas. It was one of the first ships to be equipped with the new "balanced" turrets with sloping armor faces allowing the guns to elevate to 55 degrees. Most importantly, the designer's intention of speed was achieved as they were among the fastest ships in the fleet. Only the torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers were faster. If

***USS* Maryland *continues on page 5***



*On the verge of World War I,* Maryland *had upgraded systems, a new hull color (wartime slate grey), and a new name. The Navy renamed all of their armored cruisers with city names.* Maryland *was renamed* Frederick. *Along with her sister armored cruisers, the Navy assigned* Frederick *to protect valuable Europe-bound troop convoys from German surface raiders and U-boats . (HRNM photo)*

***USS* Maryland *continued from page 4***

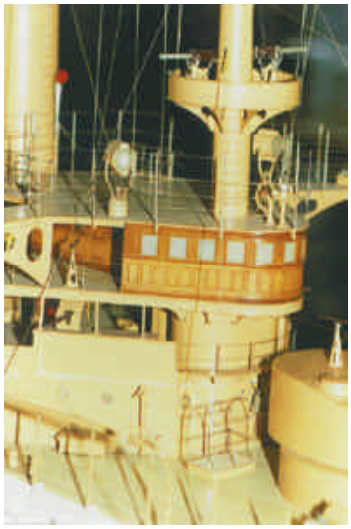
nothing else, this class of ships has some of the most beautiful lines of any warship designed.

Once *Maryland* was commissioned into the fleet, the ship spent much of its time in training with the fleet and training new recruits. She also served as a transport vessel for matters of state including carrying the secretary of state to Japan for the funeral of Emperor Meiji Tenno. After that, she steamed three times to Mexico and Nicaragua to assist American citizens during domestic turmoil in those two countries.

With onset of the First World War, the Navy made several changes to the ship. The cruiser was given more reliable boilers from the famed firm of Babcock & Wilcox, minesweeping gear, a sixty-foot topmast, and a new fire direction system. Her hull was painted slate grey, which was the standard wartime color scheme, in place of the peacetime white and "Panama Buff" color scheme.

Lastly, the ship received a new name. All of the armored cruisers were stripped of their state names in the 1910's and renamed after cities located in the ship's former namesake. For example, *Pennsylvania* was renamed *Pittsburgh*. In this spirit, *Maryland* was renamed *Frederick*. The state names were used in new battleships currently under construction. *Maryland* gave up her name for Battleship No. 46, which was concurrently under construction at Newport News.

During the Great War, the ship and her fast speed were ideal in protecting Europe-bound troop convoys against surface commerce raiders and U-boats, which known to be operating in the western Atlantic. Operating out of Hampton Roads, *Frederick* and her sister cruisers escorted the troop transports to the mid-Atlantic and then turned over the protection duties to destroyers for the dangerous journey into



*Shown here is* Maryland's *bridge, right behind turret number one. Notice the smaller guns, specifically Maxium machine-guns, above the bridge. (Photo by Greg McKay)*

British coastal waters. For a short time, she was assigned to the South Atlantic to be on guard for enemy commerce raiders. When the war ended, she made six round trips to Europe to bring American soldiers home.

One of her last duties was to carry the U.S. Olympic team to Antwerp, Belgium for the 1920 Olympic Games. After spending a few more months on a South American cruise, she was retired to the Reserve Fleet and scrapped a year later.

# *Wisconsin* Visitor Information

**General Information:** 757-322-2987
http://www.hrnm.navy.mil

**Volunteer Opportunities**: 757-322-3106
tdandes@nsn.cmar.navy.mil

**Honor and Ceremonies**: 757-322-2988
pduer@nsn.cmar.navy.mil

**Historical Information:** 757-322-2993 or 322-2984
gbcalhoun@nsn.cmar.navy.mil

**Information on visiting Nauticus and Nauticus' *Wisconsin* Exhibits**: 757-664-1000
www.nauticus.org
jburge@city.norfolk.va.us

***Wisconsin* Project Partners:**
USS Wisconsin Association:
www.usswisconsin.org

Battleship Wisconsin Foundation:
www.battleshipwisconsin.org

# *Freedom Fighter*

## *Wisky* is Awakened to Fight the Communists in Korea

by Gordon Calhoun

When the Communist forces crossed the 38th Parallel in 1950, the Navy had only one battleship, USS *Missouri* (BB-63), in commission. Due to a combination of severe budget cutbacks and a need on the part of the American public to get back to a normal life, all of the other battleships, including *Wisconsin*, had been "mothballed" by 1947. But the Korean crisis called for at least a partial rearming as many national security analysts saw the invasion as part of a larger worldwide threat. As a result, after just three years of rest, "*Wisky*" was called to serve again.

When *Wisconsin* arrived in Korea, the war had just entered a stage of World War I-like stagnation. The U.S.-led United Nation forces had recently thrown the Chinese-led forces back across the 38th parallel and settled down into a series of trench warfare battles. The U.N. strategy at this point in the war was to hold on to what they had and to attempt to convince the Chinese and North Koreans to negotiate a cease-fire. Initial talks were promising and General Ridgeway ordered U.N. forces to cease offensive operations northward and prepare for what he called an "active defense."

*One of the great advances of the Korean War was the use of the helicopter.* Wisconsin*'s aviation detachment used the Sikorsky H03S (shown here on BB-64 in December 1951) for spotting targets on shore and for search and rescue of downed aviators. (Photo from* Wisconsin *veterans collections)*

*Wisconsin*'s role in this strategy was to assist three divisions holding the eastern flank of the U.N. line: the ROK's (Republic of Korea) Capital Division (situated right along on the eastern coast, south of Kosong), the 11th ROK Division (situated slightly to the west and south of the Capital Division), and the U.S.'s 1st Marine Division, which was holding the center of the line between the two ROK Corps east of a valley labeled the "Punch Bowl." Additionally, *Wisconsin* and other ships of Task Force 77 had the responsibility of protecting a series of coastal islands strung out along the eastern coast.

Unlike the armadas of World War II, *Wisconsin*'s "battlegroup" was significantly smaller in size. With a smaller defense budget and with other commitments worldwide, the Navy in Korea was strapped for ships.

Her task force consisted of the aircraft carriers *Antietam* (CV-36), *Philippine Sea* (CV-47), and *Valley Forge* (CV-45), the heavy cruiser *St. Paul* (CA-73), the light cruiser *Manchester* (CL-83), around 12 destroyers, and a few oilers and landing ship, tanks (LSTs). Rarely, would all of the ships be group together as Seventh Fleet would frequently rotate the ships between the Operating Area "Sugar" (around the 38th Parallel) and Japan. *Wisconsin* and *St. Paul*, for example, would often rotate as the heavy gun ship.

The battleship arrived on the bombline on December 1, 1951. Accompanied by the destroyer USS *Wilstie* (DD-716) (usually the battleship was joined by only one destroyer while bombarding shore targets), the ship opened up with her first hostile shots of the war with her secondary battery at 1824 on December 2. These initial shots with the five-inch guns would be the first of many low intensity nighttime bombardments conducted in support of the troops of the 1st ROK Corps. Around sunset, *Wisconsin*'s gunners would fire only about six rounds per hour. Higher rates were fired as needed, particularly if troops of the two North Korean corps facing U.N. forces launched an assault. The purpose of these low-intensity bombardments was to both keep the enemy hunkered down in their bunkers, officially called "harassing fire," and provide illumination to friendly troops attempting to fight off a nighttime attack. The raids were conducted in close co-operation with friendly troops on shore, as liaison officers from both American and South Korean units were a frequent sight on board. The close co-operation paid quick dividends. On December 4, *Wisconsin* fired off three illumination rounds in support of South Korean troops. The rounds lit up the battlefield just in time for the South Korean soldiers to massacre a North Korean assault.

*After a quick shakedown cruise to Britain with the Midis on board,* Wisconsin *headed to Japan enroute to Korea. But first she had to squeeze through the Panama Canal (Photo from* Wisconsin*'s 1951-52 cruise book)*

The main guns were lit off for the first time in Korea when Marine forward observers from 1st Division called in a fire mission on December 3. With the

***Freedom Fighter continues on page 7***

Wisconsin *served on the eastern coast of the Korean theater between late November 1951 and April 1952. While there, she served as flagship for the Seventh Fleet, provided much needed fire support for U.S. Marines and South Korean Army units, and disrupted North Korean ground and naval forces. (Map adapted from a 1966 official U.S. Army map of the Korean Peninsula)*

***Freedom Fighter continued from page 6***

Commander of the Pacific Fleet on board to observing the action, this first 16-inch gunfire mission was rather modest with only five shells being fired. As modest as it was, this initial attack destroyed at least one enemy tank, two artillery guns, and a supply dump. More intensive fire missions were called in over the next three days. Before *Wisconsin*'s first week on the bombline was over, she fired 116 16-inch shells, 808 five-inch shells, and 157 starshell/illumination rounds. In addition to the damage caused by the first fire mission, *Wisconsin* destroyed 17 bunkers, destroyed six more artillery guns, and leveled a cave.

The battleship presence can not be understated. During this period of trench warfare, Communist forces built their bunkers on the north side of hills and mountains to keep them out of the line of fire from ground based artillery. Not only were the bunkers in good defensive positions, but the Army and Marines lacked sufficient heavy artillery (155-mm and 8-inch) despite several attempts to procure sufficient quantities.

The first alternative was air power, but airstrikes were scarce as both the Air Force and Navy air wings concentrated their missions on strategic targets such as transportation infrastructure and factories. The second alternative was heavy guns from battleships and heavy cruisers. With complete command of the sea, the heavy ships could work their way into a firing position that would allow them to pulverize a bunker trying to hide on the opposite side of a hill.

After they gave friendly ground troops more fire support, *Wisconsin* went on the offensive. Based on intelligence provided by the South Koreans, *Wisconsin* and the destroyer USS *Twining* (DD-540) located several enemy troop concentrations north of the front lines. The two ships headed north to the town of Kojo, located about 30 miles north of the front, for what was labeled a "special fire mission." The main guns opened up at 1332 with the five-inch guns opening up soon after that. For the next seven hours, the two ships leveled 17 bunkers, a 122-mm artillery battery, an anti-aircraft battery, a North Korean Division command post, and three ox carts of ammunition. When the latter was hit, it set off a series of spectacular secondary explosions. More targets would have been hit if it were not for the large amount of smoke caused by a recent napalm drop by Navy fighters.

On December 10, while on the bombline, the destroyer *O'Bannon* (DD-450) handed over a North Korean solider that they caught trying to make his way back to friendly territory on a make shift boat. The solider was in bad health and was suffering from mortal combat wounds. Upon questioning, he readily gave out personal information. His name was Xun Pyuykuk, and he was a North Korean intelligence officer attempting to deliver information back to his superiors. He also mentioned that he was married and had three children before he died later that night. The next morning, the agent was buried at sea on board the battleship with full honors.

The fire support and bunker busting missions sometimes became secondary. At this point in the war, a series of small, but sharp actions began off both west and east coast of the Korean peninsula. During the 1950 advance into North Korea, U.N. forces seized several coastal islands. When the Chinese intervened and forced a hasty withdrawal from the North, U.N. garrisons continued to hold the islands. As many of these islands were north of the main battle line, they were useful in conducting intelligence and special forces-type operations against Communist positions. Naval historian James Field noted that the threat of these islands kept three Red Chinese armies and three North Korean corps occupied on coast defense duty instead of the front line. Ironically, according to several histories of the war, U.N. negotiators had already conceded the islands during peace talks.

This is not to say Communist forces were content with the situation. During late 1951, they made several raids on the coastal islands and were successful in taking a few of them on the west coast. Alarmed by the communist gains, U.N. commanders felt they needed to organize a better defense plan for the islands. This was not done until a meeting involving commanders of all branches of American and South Korean forces was held aboard *Wisconsin*, which was serving as Seventh Fleet flagship, on December 9.

The second solution to the Communist raids was a more pro-active approach. On December 20, *Wisconsin* set course for the port

***Freedom Fighter continued on page 8***

***Freedom Fighter continued from page 7***

city of Wonsan. Located on the east coast of Korea and several miles north of the 38th Parallel, South Korean marines and irregular forces had possession of a few islands on the outer edge of the harbor. The Navy had kept the city under a state of siege for a little over a year, both to support the South Korean forces and to keep enemy ground forces occupied. The *Wisconsin*-led task force prepared for an all-out strike to preempt an expected Communist offensive on the

Wisconsin's *16-inch and five-inch guns fire off shells into the Korean twilight sky. The battleship's five-inch guns were often used in night strikes to harass enemy troop concentrations or to provide illumination shells for South Korean ground troops and U.S. Marines. (HRNM photo)*

Wonsan islands. It would be more correct to say *Wisconsin*'s operations officer, Commander I.J. Superfine, and his staff prepared for an all-out strike. While the orders came down from Seventh Fleet, the burden of planning the attack fell to *Wisconsin*'s staff, and not at the higher echelon commands. With the planning at least somewhat in place, the light cruiser *Manchester* and destroyer *Gregory* joined *Wisky* and steamed north. While the surface ships steamed north, *Antietam* prepared her F9F Panthers, AD Skyraiders, and F4F Corsairs to join in at the appropriate moment.

*Wisconsin* fired first and directed her fire at suspected coast artillery positions in the inner part of the harbor. As the squadron moved closer, *Wisky*'s five-inch guns, along with *Manchester* and *Gregory*, opened up on several anti-aircraft batteries located in various parts of the harbor. By noon, all of the AA batteries were believed to have been destroyed, at which time *Antietam*'s Skyraiders and Corsairs began their run on the small boat yards. Additionally, with the defenses sufficiently suppressed, the battleship's main guns were turned to the railroad marshalling yards and naval facilities.

Before the smoke cleared, *Wisconsin* had done considerable damage with her main guns. During this one strike, the battleship fired 112 16-inch shells at the port. Post strike reconnaissance reported the following destroyed: eight anti-aircraft batteries, the division headquarters, a bridge span, six gunboats that were to be used against South Korean-held islands, and the marshalling yard.

Commander Superfine noted in the after action reports, however, that the strikes could have been much better. He noted that during the initial planning of the strikes, *Wisconsin*'s planning staff was left out of the loop and only given intelligence about potential targets at the last moment. When the intelligence reports were handed down, it was then up to the battleship's staff to coordinate.

As soon as the strike on Wonsan was over, the squadron immediately went south to support the Marines. *Wisconsin*'s aviation detachment stayed behind on the South Korean-held island of Yodo, located at the entrance to Wonsan harbor. Piloted by Lt. Logan, ADC Rol, and one other enlisted person, the battleship's Sikorsky H03S flew thirty-five miles into North Korea. Word had reached them that a pilot from *Antietam* had been forced to ditch his plane and was in need of rescuing. The rescue team found the pilot, a Lt. Seymour Marshall, on 3,600-foot mountain and picked him up. The helicopter was fired at by enemy troops at least three times. All three men later received air medals for the heroic rescue.

*Wisconsin* was temporarily relieved of her bombardment duties by *St. Paul* towards the end of December. For Christmas, Cardinal Spelleman, the archbishop of New York and frequent dignitary to American military facilities, arrived aboard on Dec. 27 and held mass. The ship then headed back to Japan to rearm and refit.

*Being the flagship of 7th Fleet,* Wisconsin *rendered honors to many VIPs. Syngman Rhee, the vehemently anti-Communist dictator of South Korea and his American wife were among them. Cardinal Spelleman, the archbishop of New York, also paid a visit. (Photo from 1951-52 cruise book)*

Since *Wisky* was the flagship of the Seventh Fleet, the crew rendered honors to many other VIPs such as Senator Furgeson, NBC radio reporter John Rich, the U.S. ambassador to South Korea, and most importantly, the president/dictator of South Korea, Syngman Rhee. Each VIP visit unfortunately disrupted normal operations. When the VIP inspection or visit ended, the battleship was forced to leave the bombline for at least 48 hours in order for the ship's helicopter to be in range to take the VIP to shore.

The ship left Japan and returned to the front in early January 1952. Over the next two weeks, the ship, in conjunction with the destroyers USS *Dehaven* (DD-727) and *Marshall* (DD-676), commenced several fire support and bunker busting missions on behalf of 1st MarDiv and I ROK Corps. Well timed communications from South Korean forward observers allowed *Wisconsin* to drop major bombardments on North Korean troops assembling for an attack between January 15 and 16. In one case, an entire company of enemy infantry was caught out in the open and eliminated. During the two-day raid, at least three enemy companies were wiped out before they could even get close to friendly forces. After firing over 400 16-inch shells and 905 five-inch shells, *Wisconsin* destroyed 26 shelters, cracked open 10 bunkers, and leveled four caves. The ship had succeeded exhausting one third of her magazine capacity in just 48 hours. That evening, the ship and her escorts retired to Sasebo, Japan to rearm.

***Freedom Fighter continued on page 9***

***Freedom Fighter continued from page 8***

The turnaround time was very quick and there was barely enough time for the crew to catch their breath and with no time for liberty. The ship arrived in Sasebo at 0400 on January 17. After receiving 306 16-inch shells, over 200 power bags, and exchanging 40 homeward bound sailors for 37 new sailors (many fresh from boot camp and schools), *Wisconsin* was under way and headed back to Operation Area Sugar by 1600 the same day. There was no time allowed to receive fuel or secondary ammunition. The turnaround was so short that four of *Wisky*'s sailors arrived after the ship left.

*Wisky* arrived on station by the next morning where the battleship joined *Essex* (CV-8), *Antietam*, the heavy cruiser USS *Rochester* (CA-124), and nine destroyers already in formation. Once there, *Rochester* and *Wisconsin* prepared to receive some much needed fuel from the oiler USS *Guadalupe* (AO-32). The fuel tanks were running low after the battleship averaged 25 knots going to and from Sasebo. After the refueling, the ammunition ship USS *Rainer* (AE-5) came along side and transferred 900 five-inch shells for the very active secondary guns. While the deck department, gunners, and engineers worked to refit the ship, Vice Adm. Martin, commanding officer of Seventh Fleet, came on board to plan out the next few weeks of bombardments with his staff and *Wisconsin*'s operations staff.

The first fire missions back were the routine fire support missions for South Korean units on January 23. The main guns were brought on line two days later and destroyed a North Korean command post and leveled 20 caves. With the warm-up period over, TF77 moved north and anchored off Kojo, a small coastal town that was headquarters for the III North Korean Corps. This particular attack would be nothing like the earlier raid on Wonsan, but nonetheless called for a combined attack with naval aircraft. The secondary guns opened the action at 0717 on January 25 and aimed their shells at suspected anti-aircraft batteries. While the AA guns were being suppressed, four bombers flew overhead and attacked an ammunition dump. The main guns opened up two hours later on troop concentrations, the Corps' headquarters, and a second supply dump. While several secondary explosions were observed, spotters failed to communicate target coordinates in a satisfactory manner, which caused several misses.

Two days later, South Korean commanders requested that *Wisconsin* suspend her usual fire support missions to drop a bridge near the North Korean held town of Kosong (about 20 miles north of frontlines). The bridge itself was right on the coastline and could be seen directly by *Wisconsin*'s observers. *Wisconsin*'s gunners succeeded in dropping one span of the bridge and severely damaging the other with little effort. The next morning (January 29), they fired on the same bridge. This time they caught repair crews out in the open. They succeeded in dropping the second span damaged the morning before and in creating "a big hole on the south end of the bridge." While there, spotters located the headquarters of the 15th North Korean Division and directed main guns to destroy it.

*Sometimes,neither the big guns nor the secondary battery were needed. Here, the starboard 40- mm antiaircraft guns open fire on a North Korean train trapped by a collapsed tunnel during the March 15 strikes. (Navy Historical Center photo)*

The fact that *Wisconsin* had to bombard the same bridge in two different fire missions was symbolic of the frustration of Korea as a whole. The enemy was found to be a very determined opponent when it came to handling UN air and naval raids. According to Army historian Walter Hermes, the North Koreans had committed several thousand workers for the sole purpose of repairing bridges, building fords across rivers, and rebuilding roads. As a result, gun and air raids often had to be duplicated several times to have a lasting effect. This often could not be done as air and naval resources in the theatre were already in short supply.

More frustration came with a second attack on Wonsan. This raid included three destroyers and aircraft from *Antietam*. The attack began at 0730 with *O'Bannon* running an ASW screen, and USS *Brush* (DD-745) and *Twining* taking up the dangerous task of entering the inner part of the harbor. *Brush* exchanged shots with coastal defenses on Hodo Pando, a peninsula on the north edge of the entrance to the harbor. *Wisconsin* once again targeted the railroad marshalling yards (repaired since the first attack). She succeeded in destroying nine railroads cars and several hundred feet of rolling stock. Gunners had to check their fire when a pilot off *Antietam* was downed and forced to ditch in the harbor. *Twining* quickly rescued him and *Wisconsin* resumed fire just four minutes later. They would have to check their fire several more times throughout the day as aviators got too close to the main guns. A note was later passed to the aviators telling them to stay clear. To top off a frustrating day, post strike photos

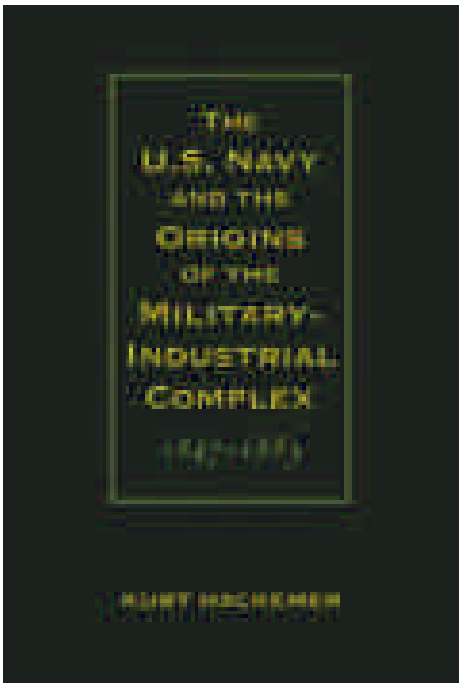
*Navy aerial photography took this picture of Wonsan's railroad marshalling yards after* Wisconsin's *main guns dropped several shells on it. (From 1951-1952 cruise book)*

***Freedom Fighter continued on page 14***

# Book Reviews

## *The U.S. Navy and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex, 1847-1883*

by Kurt Hackemer
Reviewed by Ira Dye




The title of Professor Hackemer's book is formidable but it does tell the prospective reader exactly what the book is about. It is a book very much worth reading, and it deserves a place in the library of anyone interested in the history of the "Old Navy." The naval history of the antebellum period from 1815 to 1861 has received very little attention from naval historians, and the period from 1865 until about 1890, even less. Most naval history readers are aware that the period following the Civil War was the lowest point in the effectiveness of our Navy. But they have little understanding of how we actually made the transition from the post-1815 wooden-hulled, sail-driven, muzzle-loading, backward-looking navy to the steel-built, steam-powered, rifled-gun fleet that overwhelmed the Spanish in 1898 and beyond. This book tells the story of that transition, and tells it in an interesting, readable way, albeit with lots of detail on administrative matters.

Kurt Hackemer. *The U.S. Navy and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex, 1847-1883*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001. ISBN 1-55750-333-8. 181 pages. $45.00.

The pre-Civil War Navy was very skilled in building wooden warships of the old style. These ships, frigates, sloops and even ships-of-the-line, were built exclusively in the Navy Yards, under the close supervision of sea-going naval officers. The officer corps in those days was very conservative and backward-looking, and would have happily continued to replicate "Old Ironsides" on into the future. There was little strategic pressure on the United States to change this mindset; it was a time of deep peace and was not under any threat. But in Western Europe, the strategic situation was different. The two old enemies, Britain and France, faced each other, with the evolving technologies of the Industrial Revolution available to them. A new naval arms race between the two started up, and the Royal Navy quickly found that the fleet needed the cooperation of British industry. Before long, both Britain and France were building steam powered, ironclad ships, the products of strong relationships between their navies and their national industries.

In the United States, by the 1840s and 1850s, naval expansion became more popular as part of the Manifest Destiny concept that saw the American nation as filling up the continent. Also at work was the ardently nationalistic Young America movement. The Young Americans wanted to see a collective effort of the Navy and private shipyards to build up and modernize the Navy, looking abroad to Great Britain for inspiration.

There were different, competing engine and propulsion technologies available that had been developed for the merchant marine by private industry. The Navy's response to the situation was intelligent and pragmatic: the department advertised for companies to build steam propulsion to fit into Navy-built wooden ships. They allowed for considerable flexibility in the responses, and after some experimentation, worked out a usable system of competitive bidding and contracting. There were several types of engines all described by the author, plus a really good water-tube boiler that came to light during the procurement process. Within a few years, the contracting process had evolved to the point that entire ships were being built by contractors. This was all excellent preparation for the Civil War, which was to come in 1861.

The Civil War tested the Navy's procurement system to the limit. Private contractors proved to be very innovative. For example, John Ericson produced the highly successful *Monitor* and others developed the new "ironclad" technology. The implementation of the ironclad technology was beyond the capability of the over-worked Navy Yards. But several creative approaches to the ironclad problem were produced by private firms.

The end of the Civil War brought a swift regression in naval power. Budgets were cut, contracts canceled, ships laid up, and the operation of the Navy turned over to Adm. David Dixon Porter, who was convinced that the Navy had gone downhill since the introduction of steam. This was followed by a period of politicization and corruption, and by the early 1870s the United States was a third-rate naval power. We were unable to face down Spain in a serious manner and when we tried to protect American interests during the War of the Pacific, in 1879, were told by Chile, who had modern cruisers, to mind our own business.

Finally, after several discussions, the "Second Advisory Board" in 1883 started a four ship building program that was the start of the steel navy and the turning point in the fortunes of the U.S. Navy. This led to the fleet that fought the Spanish-American War, and then on to the Great White Fleet and to today.

Professor Hackemer lucidly traces this story as the relations between the Navy and private industry evolved from the 1840's on through the 1880's. He has thoroughly researched his subject and uses primary sources to a large extent. The story is well-documented, and any reader wishing to go further can easily track any subject dealt with in the book back to its source materials.

While perhaps not everyone's dish of tea, I found this book to be interesting and filled with material that was completely new to me. I recommend it to any student of naval history. It will fill a gap in the knowledge of even those who think they have a thorough knowledge of how the Navy to got where it is today.

# *At War At Sea: Sailors and Naval Combat in the Twentieth Century*

by Ronald H. Spector
Reviewed by Joe Judge

Anyone who has lived through the 20th century, or even a significant part of it, can attest to the feeling that it was the pace of events that marked the period. Change, driven by technology, swirled around every field of human endeavor. Naval history was no different: the century dawned with the big battleship enthroned as the capital ship, and ended with naval forces preoccupied with air power, undersea power, missiles and intelligence. One of the country's foremost naval historians Ronald H. Spector has turned his considerable talents to a history of naval warfare in this fast-paced century.

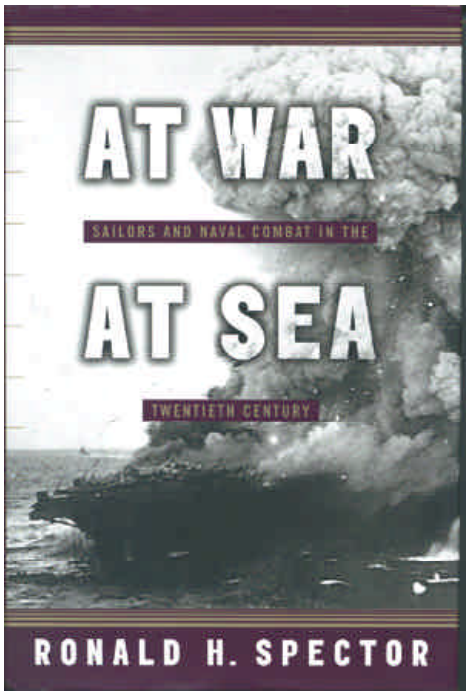
*At War at Sea* is a sweeping survey of different navies fighting different wars throughout the century. Spector's examination is not a straightforward recounting of naval events, but rather a book-length essay that examines the human factor in naval warfare.

Ronald H. Spector. *At War At Sea: Sailors and Naval Combat in the Twentieth Century.* New York: Viking Penguin, 2001. ISBN 0-67086-085-9. 436 pages. $29.95.

Mr. Spector writes: "Looking back on this century of relentless and often revolutionary technological change, it is little wonder that most naval historians have tended to emphasize technology … Technological determinism fails to explain why navies with similar weapons systems chose to employ them in dramatically different ways, as the British and Americans did with naval aviation in the 1920s and 1930s. … Obviously these questions can be answered only by reference to people, their training, ability, political and cultural background, experience, knowledge, expectations, and a host of other social and psychological factors…"

Cynics will be not be surprised to find the responses less than happy. One of Mr. Spector's themes is the shadow of hide-bound tradition and class-consciousness that was often cast over navies trying to grapple with complex problems. Britain's Royal Navy, in so many ways the world's greatest in many different centuries, suffered from this problem: "Much time and energy were devoted to satisfying the obsession with brilliant paintwork, spotless decks, and gleaming brass which so preoccupied naval officers in the late Victorian and Edwardian years. … In many ships, clips designed to lock watertight doors firmly in place had been filed and polished so intensely that their doors could no longer be considered watertight." As for the U.S. Navy, until the 1930's commissioned rank was virtually limited to Annapolis graduates. Here is Mr. Spector's account of the Naval Academy at the beginning of the period: "the great majority of those who entered Annapolis were from well-to-do families … Only one per cent had fathers who were unskilled factory workers or farm laborers. Blacks were wholly excluded and Jews extremely rare. … Annapolis education was not designed with any concern for intellectual rigor." Japan and Germany, two other navies that receive extended treatment in the first half of the book, suffered from systems that placed little value on the well-being of their crews. The Japanese navy was so brutal, writes Spector, that a Japanese sailor compared it to being "a slave on a pirate ship."

But Spector counters these illuminating tales with a broader point: "navies, beneath their rituals and regalia, are extremely adaptive, fast-changing organizations. Entirely new types of seagoing warfighters and specialists have been accommodated within the traditional structure of the service." In many cases, this accommodation was the result of the presence of a decisive, forward thinking individual (or group of individuals) that took on naval problems with originality. In Britain two such men were Admiral John "Jacky" Fisher and First Lord Winston Churchill. In the U.S. it was outsiders, primarily reservists and civilians, that promoted naval aviation after World War I. Spector writes of "an odd organization of enthusiastic, wealthy and well-connected Ivy




League graduates" that purchased their own aircraft and took private flying lessons. This group, which became known as the First Yale Unit, had a budget for airplanes that equaled more than 50% of the congressional appropriation for naval aviation in 1916.

*At War at Sea* compliments such analysis of naval developments with accounts of major sea battles where the navies of the world tried to apply the lessons of peacetime. Jutland, the Coral Sea, the British evacuation of Crete and the Battle of the Atlantic are just a few of the sea fights discussed in the book. The largest section of the book is devoted to World War II, where Mr. Spector's most vivid writing covers the great carrier battles of the Pacific War. The last section of the book focuses on the American navy during the Cold War and Vietnam. These accounts of military campaigns are used to illuminate naval developments and issues, not as histories for their own sake. Yet they are reliable and useful histories.

This book is a serious and detailed examination of how navies of the world conducted their business during the twentieth century. It is directed toward the serious student of naval history, although there is much to enlighten the general reader. It leaves the reader asking the question: who are the forward thinkers that will come to the aid of the Navy and the nation today? Where are our Jacky Fishers and First Yale Units? Let us hope that the sea service is flexible enough to find them and let them contribute to solve the problems of the twenty-first century.

# *Picky, Picky, Picky*

Whoever coined the phrase "Don't sweat the small stuff," the Sage is here to tell you just how wrong you are. In the Sage's opinion, it is the "small stuff" which starts the biggest and most intresting historical arguments.

As The Sage has alluded to in previous columns, there are certain people who love to concentrate on the little "fun" facts of history. These facts are usually about who was the first this or the last that. If these facts were to be changed, Earth

## *The Museum Sage*

would not come to a screeching halt. However, some people get very passionate about these little statistics. If one were ever to discuss military history at a bar, then this is the type of history to be found.

Now don't misunderstand The Sage. This is an important aspect because it keeps the subject of history fresh in the minds of people who would normally not have anything to do with it.

The battleship *Wisconsin* is no exception to this. You would not believe the arguments the Sage has overheard between veterans over who served on the longest battleship! Readers who are familiar with *Wisconsin* are no doubt familiar with the fact that BB-64 is allegedly three inches longer than the other Iowa-class battleships. This minor extension in the 887-foot battleship's hull occurred, so the story goes, when shipyard workers placed the bow of unfinished *Kentucky* (BB-66) on to *Wisconsin* after her collision with the destroyer *Eaton*. As *Wisconsin* is three inches longer, she is the largest battleship currently in the world. Fine. Problem solved you say.

So The Sage will let his readers be the one to argue with the group of *New Jersey* (BB-62) veterans who claim that their magnificent ship is TWO FEET, longer due to a mistake during construction at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in 1944 making her the largest battleship in the world.

There are some of these little facts, however, that The Sage is certain that are in need of correction. One concerns the size of the North Korean shell that hit *Wisky* on March 15, 1952. Every (save one) book the Sage has come across that mentions the "Temper Temper Wisconsin" incident (so called because BB-64 promptly blasted the enemy gun battery that caused the wound into the next time zone with a full 16-inch broadside), states that the battleship was a hit by a 155-mm shell.

The Sage has wondered about this for some time and only recently has come across the source of the problem. *Wisconsin*'s deck log for March 15, 1952 reads "believed to be 155-mm gun." Many secondary sources take this as the unquestioned truth. Some other "sources" have said 157-mm and The Sage doesn't really want to know where that came from.

There is a little problem with this: the North Koreans didn't use the 155-mm howitzer, as it is an American caliber. It has been suggested that maybe the North Koreans used American guns captured during the UN retreat after the Chinese intervention. The problem with this suggestion is that if the North Koreans were using 155-mm guns, it would have been news to Gen. Mathew Ridgeway, commander of the UN forces, as he didn't have these guns in theatre. He had to practically beg the Joint Chiefs of Staff for permission to bring artillery battalions equipped with the famous "Long Tom" guns to Korea. (Joint Chiefs did turn down a request for the heavier 8-inch guns however, making *Wisconsin*'s presence all the more important, but we will save that argument for later.)

The North Koreans used equipment given to them by the Red Army. The Soviet Union has historically some of the best gunners in the world. It is a known fact the Soviets handed over a number of 152-mm guns to their North Korean allies. The 152-mm gun was an excellent piece of military hardware that the Soviets used with deadly efficiency against the Nazis in World War II and has been copied several times the world over. It had a range of about 13 kilometers and only required a crew of four to operate. So it is pretty safe to say that the officer of the deck on March 15 made a small error about three millimeters in size.

*Shown here is a battery of 152-mm howitzers manned by Red Army soliders and preparing to fire during the Battle of Kursk in 1943. It was an excellent gun that only required a small crew to operate. This is more than likely the weapon that the North Koreans used against* Wisconsin *on March 15, 1952 as the Soviets delievered hundreds of them to the North Koreans.*

With that settled (hopefully!), The Sage has to get back to work and find out why so many naval histories say *Wisky* was injured off the coast of Songjin when the deck log reported her position off the coast of Mayang-do island some forty miles to the southwest. These debates will never die. For the sake of The Sage's and historians' worldwide and their jobs, he hopes it never will. It is the little stuff keeps us employed and the spirit of history alive.

# *Understanding & Rembrance*

A two-day symposium on the Korean War. June 26-27, 2002
at Old Dominion University

Sponsored by the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation and Old Dominion University, the symposium will be comprised of an impressive roster of keynote speakers and panelists to discuss the war, review its historical legacy, and honor veterans. For more information contact the MacArthur Memorial at 757-441-2965 or e-mail to mac_koreanwarcom@mindspring.com

# Useful Web Sites

**http://www.navalhistory.dk/**This is a web site on the history of the Danish Navy. It covers (somewhat unfortunately) only between the years of 1801-1993 and this excludes some of the early glory years of the fleet. Nonetheless, the fleet does quite have an interesting history in the 19th and 20th centuries. This site is in English and Danish (for those of you who speak that beautiful language.)

**http://www.naval-history.net/** This is an excellent website for history on the Royal Navy during World War I and II. It is mostly in a reference format. That is, it has compiled basic facts, information, and maps that can be found elsewhere. However, the creator of this site has gone to the trouble of putting it all online. It also includes some information on other fleets of the world.

***Freedom Fighter continued from page 9***

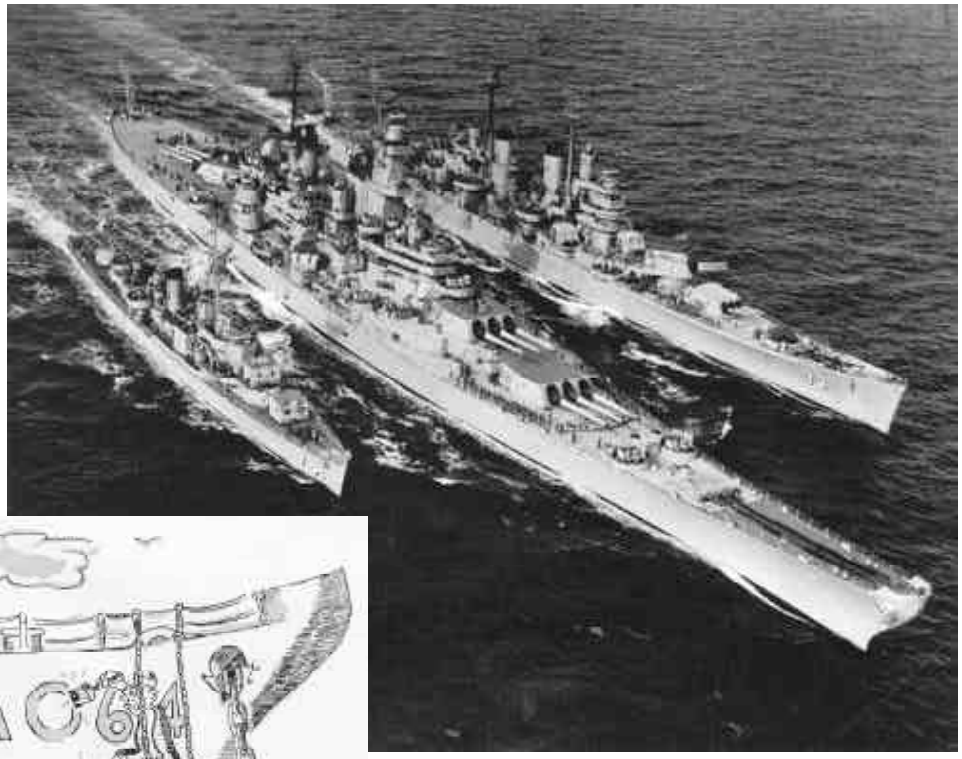
showed that the roundhouse, one of the main targets, was still up despite having 38 shells directed towards it.

But Seventh Fleet decided not to give up. The experience of the second raid on Wonsan prompted a third raid, this time with more firepower. Two more carriers, *Philippine Sea and Valley Forge*, joined *Antietam* and *Wisconsin*'s squadron. Four planes were sent up to provide better spotting, and the helicopter went aloft to prepare for search and rescue. As the task force approached Wonsan harbor, *Wisconsin*, and not her destroyers, began to lay down a carpet of five-inch shells, several filled with white phosphorous, on the coast defense and AA guns on Hodo Pando.

With shore guns suppressed, *Wisconsin* moved in closer to the outer part of the harbor and opened her main guns on several structures, including the elusive roundhouse. Aircraft from the three carriers made attack runs as well. When North Korean gunners downed one Corsair, *Wisconsin*'s helicopter went to look for the pilot and came under heavy fire. Several bullets hit the fuel tank causing the helicopter to start gushing fuel. With only eight gallons of fuel left, the Sikorsky called off its mission and made a hasty return to the ship. A second helicopter was sent from the tank landing ship *LST-799* that had been converted into a makeshift helicopter carrier. *Brush* and *Twining* also raced into the hornet's nest to rescue a pilot downed in the middle of Wonsan harbor.

After a brief bombardment of III NKPA Corps troops in Kojo, *Wisconsin* retired to Yokosuka Naval Shipyard for its first shore leave since arriving in Korea. The ship had stood at combat stations for over eight weeks straight. Even after liberty call ended, the ship did not immediately head back to the frontlines, as the next two weeks were spent training for the next series of missions and making repairs. By late February, the ship was considered ready and returned to sea.

When the battleship headed back towards Operation Area Sugar, the war had taken several frustrating turns. The peace talks that were initially going well had hit several roadblocks. U.N. commanders even suspected that the sessions were only being used as to cover for a major Communist offensive in the near future.



*Like World War II,* Wisconsin*'s armor and massive fuel capacity made it an ideal ship to refuel smaller ships operating in a combat zone.* Wisconsin *refueled so many ships that sailors began to wonder what kind of ship she really was. In the picture above, Wisconsin refuels the heavy cruiser USS* St. Paul *(CA-73) and the destroyer USS* Buck *(DD-761) (Above photo from Naval Historical Center, cartoon from 1951-1952 cruise book)*

In early March 1952, *Wisconsin* and the destroyer USS *Duncan* (DDR-874) steamed north as part of an overall effort by the Navy and Air Force to strike targets deep inside North Korea and prevent such an offensive from getting off the ground. *Wisconsin*'s target was a series of rail junctions and tunnels located along the east coast of Korea between the 40th and 41st latitudes. The battleship and the destroyer would first strike targets near the coastal town of Songjin (located about 150 miles northeast of Wonsan), then they would work their way southwest along the coast in the direction of the port city of Hungnam.

Operations Department labeled the targets "Package," which were the tunnels, and "Derail," which were rolling stock. When the targets were picked, Operations assigned the "Package" targets a number and the "Derail" targets names such as "Jig" and "George." This led to targets being referred to as "Package 2" and "Derail George." *Wisconsin*'s gunners placed base detonating

Wisconsin*'s turret number two unloads on communist targets during a daylight attack. Daylight targets included bunkers and caves that were able to elude air strikes and ground based artillery. (Photos from Naval Historical Center and 1951-52 cruise book)

***Freedom Fighter continued on page 15***

***Freedom Fighter continued from page 14***

fuses on the shells to allow the 16-inch shell to penetrate the target before exploding. In what is a prime example of the destructive force of a 16-inch shell, the gunners did not make plans to use any armor piercing shells against the tunnels.

The two-ship squadron started the operation in the early morning hours of March 15. Arriving off the coast of Songjin at 0500, the main and secondary guns opened up on the "Package" targets first. After three hours of

*A North Korean 152-mm shell caused* Wisconsin*'s one and only combat wound. The enemy's four-gun battery ceased to exist shortly after making the attack. (Photo from* Wisconsin *veterans' collections)*

bombardment, the ship ceased fire, made 25 knots, and rushed to their next set of targets about ten miles southwest of Songjin. Forty minutes later and with her helicopter aloft, the main guns opened on the town of Tanch'on, which was a major rail junction, for three and a half hours. Around noon, the battleship ceased fire and continued her

*Niether Kim Il Sung's forces nor Old Man Winter could dampen the crew's spirits. Members of the deck division make a snowman while off the coast of North Korea. (Photo from the 1951-52 cruise book.)*

path of destruction southward.

The next target was a tunnel a few miles west of the coastal village of Ch'aho. The

*The Ides of March Offensive-In the early morning hours of March 15, 1952,* Wisconsin *and the destroyer USS* Duncan *(DDR-874) set off to cripple the North Korean rail system along the eastern coast. The squadron's target list for the day is named in the map above. (Adapted from an official 1966 U.S. Army map of Korea)*

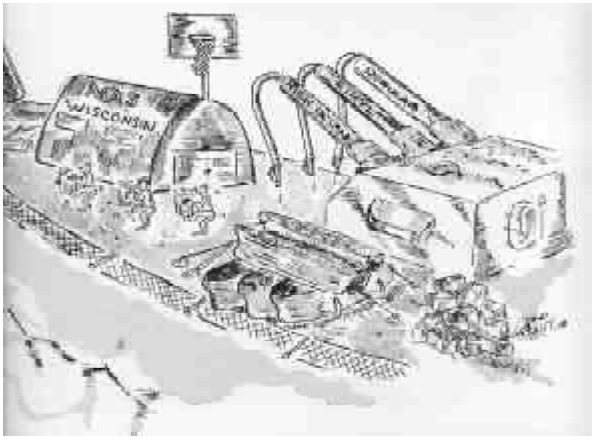
main guns were aimed not only at the tunnels and rolling stock, but also at the cliffs in order to cause landslides by breaking retaining walls. Two more tunnels were attacked. When the main guns leveled one, lookouts spotted a Communist train heading southbound. The train stopped close to the blocked entrance. Instead of just using the main guns or secondary guns, *Wisconsin*'s 40-mm anti-aircraft gun teams went into action in an extremely rare role for the guns. The 40-mm batteries fired a little over 100 rounds at the box cars, ripping them to pieces. One main gun turret was then fired against the locomotive. One of the 16-inch shells scored a direct hit on the locomotive.

*Wisconsin*'s aerial spotters detected another target. They reported an enemy coast defense battery about ten miles southwest of the battleship's position on the island of Mayang-do. The battleship then proceed at 15 knots towards the suspected position and opened up a preemptive strike on Mayang-do. The enemy returned fire. Lookouts spotted four distinct gun flashes coming from the peninsula, behind the island. A few seconds later, a splash 20 yards in diameter exploded 100 yards off the port bow. Two more splashes exploded off the starboard quarter. The ship immediately went to 25 knots and started to change course from 264 degrees to 234 degrees. Unfortunately, the ship turned too late and the fourth shell found its mark.

The shell penetrated the starboard side weather deck between frame 144 and 145 on the 02 level and tore a 24 by 30 inch hole in the ship. Three sailors, SA G.L. Alley, GM3 J.A. Thackerson, and SA J.T. Gormican from 40-mm mount #15 were injured. All three sailors suffered severe shrapnel injuries, but all of them had treatable wounds. The deck log reported that the shell was possibly a 155-mm shell; this has been repeated in several naval histories afterwards. However, this information was more than likely a minor technical error on a part of the officer of the deck. (See The Museum Sage on page 12 for more information.)

The minor wound inflicted by the North Koreans was quickly answered. The enemy gun flashes gave away their position and a retaliatory strike was ordered. All nine 16-

***Freedom Fighter continued on page 16***




*While the deck department thought of* Wisconsin *as "AO-64," the aviation department had another name: NAS Wisconsin. (Cartoon from 1951-52 cruise book)*

***Freedom Fighter continued from page 15***

inch guns were loaded with point detonating (PD) shells, in place of the delayed-fused shells used for leveling railroad tunnels. The PD shells were designed to explode on first contact with a solid object and used against soft targets as they spread a large amount of shrapnel. The ship changed course to 090 degrees and opened up a full broadside on the enemy battery at 1554 (13 minutes after she was hit.) Two direct hits were reported and the enemy battery ceased to exist. After observing *Wisconsin* returning the North Korean challenge in dramatic fashion, *Duncan* signaled to the battleship "Temper, Temper Wisconsin."

After eliminating the North Korean gun position, the main guns continued to attack a third railroad tunnel. Several 16-inch shells were lobbed at the tunnel and struck home. With darkness coming on and the mission complete, the ship secured from general quarters at 1700 and proceeded back to Operation Area Sugar. One final incident capped off the busy day when *Duncan*'s sonarmen thought they detected an enemy submarine. Fortunately, they concluded it was a school of fish and returned to station in front of the battleship. As the ship darkened, one of the busiest days in *Wisconsin*'s history came to an end.

Wisconsin *returned to the warmth of Norfolk from the cold, snowy weather of Korea in the summer of 1952. (Photo from* Wisconsin *veterans' collections)*

*Sixteen-inch shells are loaded on to Wisky while in Sasebo, Japan. The battleship would often race to Sasebo, load up 300 to 400 of the one ton shells and then race back to the bombline; all this in a little over than 12 hours. (Photo from* Wisconsin *veterans' collections)*

An officer who knew a thing or two about *Wisconsin* praised the ship's efforts. Adm. Earl Stone, *Wisconsin*'s first commanding officer and current commander of Cruiser Squadron One, came back on board his old ship. He proudly commented that "the gun strike conducted on 15 March by the USS *Wisconsin* and USS *Duncan* is noteworthy in that it demonstrated the great effectiveness of 16-inch gun fire...rail traffic in the Songjun-Chiao area was distributed for a period of five days."

For as busy the ship was on the 15th, Seventh Fleet had more work assigned for the ship as soon as she returned to the bombline (i.e. Area "Sugar") and joined up with *St. Paul* for continued support of allied ground forces and strikes against the III NKPA Corps. Before the strikes began, *Duncan* came alongside and took the three wounded sailors injured on March 15 to Pusan for further treatment.

The squadron stayed on station for another two weeks before retiring to Tokyo Bay. The ship pulled into to Yokosuka Naval Base to await the arrival of USS *Iowa* (BB-61).

*Wisconsin*'s five month tour in Korea showed the effectiveness of a battleship. The ship was able to cruise the east coast of Korea and provide much needed support to U.S. Marine and South Korean units who were often outnumbered and outgunned against a determined foe.

The ship soon returned to her homeport in Norfolk in the summer of 1952. Here, the sailors found warm temperatures and a warmer homecoming. The concluding remark in the after action report was the same as it had been everyday for the last six months: "Personnel performance was excellent."

# In Our Next Issue…

- *Privateering in Hampton Roads During the War of 1812*
- Wisconsin*'s Silver Service*
- *Book Reviews:* American Maritime Prisoners in the Revolutionary War *by Francis D. Cogliano and* On Seas of Glory *by John F. Lehman*