

SDFSA Bulletin February 2007

This bulletin is provided as a service to members of the  
SCUBA DIVERS FEDERATION OF SA

Working to develop the sport of Scuba diving in SA  
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We are publishing this electronic bulletin as a separate publication to our normal monthly SDF News Sheet. Future issues of this "SDFSA Bulletin" will include lengthy articles about matters of interest to recreational divers. We welcome contributions from our readers.

If you don't have the time to read through everything in this bulletin, take advantage of the following table of contents. Click on any item of interest to proceed straight to that section.

**CONTENTS:**

<a href="#">CLIMATE CLUES IN SA CORAL</a> .....	1
<a href="#">DATA ON SHARK SIGHTINGS</a> .....	2
<a href="#">SHIPS SUNK IN JAPANESE AIR RAID ON DARWIN</a> .....	5
<a href="#">SUBMARINES &amp; LIBERTY SHIPS</a> .....	6
<a href="#">SUBMARINE WRECK SITES</a> .....	6
<a href="#">'AUSTRALIAN' SHIPS HIT BY JAPANESE TORPEDOES</a> .....	8
<a href="#">LIBERTY SHIPS</a> .....	9
<a href="#">THE NAMES OF LIBERTY SHIPS</a> .....	11
<a href="#">VESSELS SUNK TO CREATE ARTIFICIAL HARBORS</a> .....	11
<a href="#">ICE-BOUND CARGO VESSELS DELIVERED FROM DULUTH TO CHICAGO</a> .....	11

**CLIMATE CLUES IN SA CORAL**

Article from: AAP

"While great attention is being given to the threat of global warming to corals of the Great Barrier Reef, the corals off southern Australia are giving scientists information about climate change. As divers and fishermen in southern waters know well, corals are not restricted to tropical waters. The most obvious of the southern versions occur in large boulder-like formations known in South Australia as bommies. They are now throwing new light on the history of Australia's southern oceans, revealing details of past climates and the human impact on the sea. Sam Burgess of the Australian National University and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, is completing a PhD on these little-known South Australian corals, proving their importance to issues of climate change and ocean health. "Most people are surprised to learn that there are large corals in these colder waters," Ms Burgess said. "They think corals only occur in the warmer waters of the tropics." Ms Burgess has treated areas off the coast of Adelaide and the Spencer Gulf as her workplace for the past four years. "There is a lot more diversity in temperate reefs and cold-water corals than people expect," she said. "This coral species occurs sporadically as an encrusting growth form on the Great Barrier Reef, but in the temperate waters (of southern Australia) they are the dominant coral species." By drilling out small samples of coral bommies and studying their chemical content, Ms Burgess has found ways to read the temperature and pollution of the waters back hundreds of years. So far

the corals have confirmed a 1.5 degree rise in water temperatures over the last 130 years, as has been shown in other coral reef studies of the tropics. "(The study) helps add to the knowledge gained from research conducted in the tropics by filling in the holes in our understanding of the ocean's chemistry in the past," Ms Burgess said. The corals show signs of contamination from human activities, with traces of some chemicals and heavy metals increasing since industrial development in the area.

Source: <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,21141499-2682,00.html>

## **DATA ON SHARK SIGHTINGS**

There has been the usual media frenzy about shark sightings this summer. The never-ending reports would not have helped the dive industry at all. We are endeavouring to gather data on shark sightings that provides us with the facts needed to be able to question media reports. Let us know if you have any information that may be of some assistance. Below is an example of the value of factual information about shark sightings:

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On 30<sup>th</sup> January a newspaper featured an article suggesting that a Great White shark sighted 7km off of St Kilda, SA was a threat to boaties. The report inferred that the number of recent shark sightings was becoming a problem. Below is a copy of that report: -

“Great Whites too close

by Matt Williams

Large schools of snapper in the middle of their summer breeding season are drawing Great White sharks closer to shore, experts warn. Already this year, the Fisheries Department has recorded 11 Great White sightings, with one spotted just 100m offshore at Tumby Bay on Eyre Peninsula.

On Friday, fisherman Gary Green, of Salisbury North, encountered a 4m-long Great White 7km off St Kilda beach. "There were about 30 boats out there but the shark decided to come and have a look at mine," he said. "I was fishing with a mate and we were catching lots of small snapper, not much bigger than your hand, and hoping for some bigger ones, but didn't expect to see a Great White. When he circled the boat my heart was pumping a bit harder and we pulled our rods in, but he was quite placid and it was a pretty awesome sight." Fishing expert Shane Mensforth said Great White sightings had increased this season, with many swimming closer to the coastline as they follow schools of snapper. "(The greater number of shark sightings) is probably a result of a combination of extra boats in the water and the extra snapper," he said. Boat owners with smaller vessels should beware when a Great White circles their boat. "They are powerful and not easily deterred if looking for a feed, so in no circumstances should they be treated flippantly," Mr Mensforth said.”

Source: <http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,21139914-2682,00.html>

These are the facts in my view: -

Giant shark? At 4m long it falls short of the 6m giants that we often hear about.

Only one Great White shark was sighted, not several as suggested on the map featured with the article.

Why all of the fuss with headlines, etc.. about a shark that bothered no one? One fisherman got lucky with a couple of photos, that's all.

As for the large number of sightings reported, there have only been two others in the past 11 days. These were both reported by abalone divers on the west coast on the same day (27/1). Some reported sightings refer to a shark already sighted recently. The Tumby Bay sighting occurred on 29/12, not this year. There were no reported sightings from 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January? This is a one-week period during the recent summer school holidays.

All things considered, it doesn't seem like we have a shark problem along Adelaide's metropolitan beaches at present. Yet exactly just days later (on 3<sup>rd</sup> February) the newspaper was continuing its attack on sharks with yet another report about a sighting of a 4.5m shark by a fisherman at The Barges off of Port Noarlunga. No incident occurred, the only capture being some (mobile phone?) video footage of the inquisitive shark. Then there was the report about the whale carcass at KI being attacked by sharks. "Great White Sharks more than 6m long"! Yes, about four Great Whites were spotted by one man. And yes, one of the sharks was thought to be about 6m long. The report however, suggested that there were many sharks, each one 6m long.

In the meantime, here are some facts about shark attacks on SA scuba divers: - Records indicate that there have only been 4 reported shark attacks on scuba divers in SA waters (in just over 40 years).

These four incidents range from an attack on Neil Williams in 1983 to the one on Jarrod Stehbens in 2005.

The four scuba divers (with details) were: -

Neil Williams	24/12/83	Dangerous Reef, South Neptune Island
Terry Gibson	18/9/87	near Marino Rocks
Jonathon Lee	8/9/91	Aldinga Drop-off
Jarrold Stehbens	24/8/05	Glenelg Tyre Reef

All, except Lee were collecting scallops, abalone or cuttlefish eggs. None were wearing a shark deterrent. Lee wore a black wetsuit, contrary to his club rules.

White Sharks were said to be responsible for each of the four attacks.

Neil Williams just had his fingers bitten but the other three divers lost their lives.

Terry Gibson was diving alone and there were no witnesses. His body was never recovered. The State Coroner determined his death to have been caused by a shark attack because a diver's weight-belt said to be Gibson's was found unbuckled and it had shark bites all over it.

The death of diver Paul Buckland was due to an attack by a White Shark at Smoky Bay on 30/4/02, but he was using surface-supplied air whilst diving for scallops.

As far as I can determine, earlier attacks on two divers (in 1962 & 1974) did not involve the use of scuba. Dan Argyll had his right leg bitten whilst diving at Dangerous Reef in 1962. Terry Manuel lost his life to a White Shark whilst diving for abalone at Streaky Bay in 1974.

If you take all of the above attacks into account, there were 7 attacks involving 5 deaths over the past 45 years.

Three of the attacks occurred on the west coast, two at Dangerous Reef, a well-known spot for White Sharks and the site of a sea lion colony.

Other shark attacks have occurred on snorkellers, skindivers, freedivers, etc.. especially spearfishers. Jack Evans was spearfishing at Port Hughes on 31/12/57 when a shark

grabbed the fish attached to his belt & towed him seaward. Jack was not injured in the incident. Three males were threatened by a shark at Laura Bay on 7/12/59. The unidentified shark made a threat display. One of the divers shot the shark in the jaw after which the three divers killed the shark with their knives. They were not injured in the incident. Brian Rodger was injured when attacked by a 3.7m White Shark whilst spearfishing at Aldinga on 12/3/61. Clyde Buttery was injured whilst spearfishing at the Glenelg breakwater later that month. A 2.4m Bronze Whaler shark took his entire catch, lacerated his knee and tore his wet suit as it brushed past him on 30/3/61. Geoffrey Corner was killed by a 4.3m shark whilst spearfishing at Carrickalinga Head on 9/12/62. A spearfishing competition was apparently being held at the time ~20kms away at Aldinga. Rodney Fox's well-documented shark attack whilst spearfishing occurred at Aldinga on 8/12/63. Howard Forster had his spear-gun bitten by a 3m Bronze Whaler shark whilst swimming off of Cape Jervis on 4/2/68. He was not injured in the incident. Darryl Richardson was skindiving at Point Lowly, north of Whyalla when he was bitten by a 2.7m shark. His right leg was bitten below the knee and his left ankle & foot were lacerated in the incident on 19/9/76. Shirley Durdin was killed by a 6m White Shark whilst free-diving for scallops at Port Lincoln on 3/3/85. Doug Chesser was killed by a 4-5m White Shark whilst free-diving for abalone at South Neptune Island on 28/6/98. As already mentioned, Dangerous Reef/South Neptune Island is a well-known spot for White Sharks and the site of a sea lion colony. Shark cage-diving operations had been occurring about that time, with the operators berleying the waters with a mixture of fish meat and tuna oil to attract Great Whites. The remoteness of the area was a key reason for the death of Doug Chesser. Well, that's some 10 incidents involving shark attacks on snorkellers over a period of almost 50 years. Make that 12 incidents if you include Dan Argyll & Terry Manuel. Just four snorkellers (& 1 shark) lost their lives in those 12 incidents. Dr John Paxton from the Australian Museum and John West from Taronga Zoo prepared a report for SOCOG regarding the 'likelihood of shark attack in Sydney Harbour during the 2000 Olympic Games'. It stated that the risk of shark attack on Sydney Olympic triathletes is "virtually nil". Source: "Australian Scuba Diver" magazine, Sept/Oct 2000. This is in spite of the fact that NSW has had many, many more unprovoked shark attacks (& fatalities) than SA.

WA diver Peter Buzzacott wrote a report titled "An estimate of the risk of fatal shark attack whilst diving in Western Australia" for the SPUMS Journal in 2005. According to the report, Buzzacott concluded that "The risk of a fatal shark attack whilst scuba diving in Western Australia is estimated to be less than one in three million dives".

This is in spite of the fact that WA has had more unprovoked shark attacks than SA.

Figures regarding shark attacks in Australia are available from both the Australian Shark Attack File and the Global Shark Attack File. Some statistics from the ASAF featured in the article "What you should know about Great White Sharks" by Phil Kemp. A draft of this was published in the Marine Life Society of SA's 2006 Journal. Visit <http://www.mlssa.asn.au/journals/2006Journal.htm> for more details. (Owing to the very large amount of information and pictures contained in the Journal, it may take longer than usual to download it. A high-speed connection is best.)

According to the final version of Phil Kemp's article (which the SDFSA has a copy of), "1940 Australians were killed in road accidents in 1994. Swimmers at SA beaches are more likely to drown than be killed by a shark. More than 1200 people were drowned in

SA up to 1994 compared to a total of just 9 people who were killed by sharks in SA since the first reported (fatal) attack in 1926.”

Source: “Great White Fight” by Phillip Coorey, a feature article in The Advertiser, 21<sup>st</sup> September 1995

Seven (or eight) people were killed by sharks in SA in the 8 years from 1998 to 2005. Only the last two of these fatal attacks occurred off of the metropolitan coast. The other six fatalities occurred west of Yorke Peninsula.

### **SHIPS SUNK IN JAPANESE AIR RAID ON DARWIN**

As mentioned in our February news sheet, 19<sup>th</sup> February is the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Japanese air raid on Darwin Harbour. Eight ships were sunk as a result of the raid. They were the *Peary*, *Neptuna*, *British Motorist*, *Mauna Loa*, *Meigs*, *Zealandia*, *Mavie* and the *Kelat*. Below are some details on the topic: -

“On 19 February 1942, only just over nine weeks after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour, 188 aircraft lifted off five aircraft carriers in the Timor Sea. Only one hour later, the planes attacked Darwin, Darwin Harbour and the Airforce Base. The effect was devastating. The harbour had a large number of vessels in it. These were mostly from a convoy that had departed Darwin on 15 February 1942. In the convoy were four transport ships, SS *Meigs*, SS *Mauna Loa*, SS *Port Mar* and SS *Tulagi*. These ships were escorted by the Australian warships HMAS *Swan*, HMAS *Warrego* and the US warships USS *Peary* and USS *Houston*. The convoy had not got far when it was attacked by a Japanese flying boat and on the 16th it was attacked by bombers. They returned to Darwin as the danger was too great to continue. Considering the attacks on these vessels on the 15th and 16th, it is surprising that the forces in Darwin were really caught with their pants down when at 9.57am on 19 February 1942, the aircraft pummelled Darwin with the first of many attacks. The planes had been detected at 9.37am at Bathurst Island when Father John McGrath has sighted the Japanese planes over his mission and he warned Darwin Coast Radio of the threat. As well as the ships mentioned above, there were a number of other large vessels in and around the port. These included HMAS *Deloraine*, HMAS *Gunbar*, *Benjamin Franklin*, *Admiral Halstead*, *Neptuna*, *British Motorist*, *Kelat* and other assorted vessels. During the attack, 243 people were killed and the *Meigs* (12,568 tons), *Mauna Loa* (5,436 tons), *Zealandia* (6,600 tons), *British Motorist* (6,891 tons), *Kelat* (1,849 tons), *Neptuna* (5,952 tons) and the *Peary* (1,190 tons) sunk.

**References:** *Wrecks in Darwin Waters* by Tom Lewis.”

Source: [http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page\\_id=446](http://www.michaelmcfadyenscuba.info/viewpage.php?page_id=446)

The *Neptuna* was an Australian passenger and cargo ship being used as an ammunition ship. She was hit by the Japanese planes and exploded in Darwin Harbour. The *Kelat* was an Australian coal hulk. She had been brought to Darwin by the RAN for coal bunkering operations. She also sank in Darwin Harbour after being hit by Japanese planes. The *British Motorist* was a British tanker. The *Zealandia* was an Australian troopship. Both the SS *Meigs* and the SS *Mauna Loa* were US troopships. The USS *Peary* was a US destroyer. The *Mavie* was an RAN lugger.

## **SUBMARINES & LIBERTY SHIPS**

### **SUBMARINE WRECK SITES**

The wreck of the Imperial Japanese Navy submarine I-1 is in the Guadalcanal area at Tambea in the Solomon Islands. She sank there after hitting a reef during a running battle with the New Zealand corvettes HMNZS *Kiwi* and *Moa* on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1943. She now lies in water between 5m (bow) and 30m (stern). See page 49 of the January 2007 issue of Dive Log for more details.

The Imperial Japanese Navy submarine I-123 was sunk off of Guadalcanal by the USS *Gamble* (the ship which laid the mines that sank the SS *President Coolidge* and the USS *Tucker*).

The 1942 wreck of the I-124 is somewhere in the Timor Sea, west of Darwin, 64kms north-west of Charles Point. It was declared a war grave on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1978, making her a protected wreck under the Historic Shipwrecks Act. See page 58 of the May/June 1998 issue of Scuba Diver magazine and the February 2006 SDFSA Bulletin for more details.

The WWI Australian submarine HMAS AE1 disappeared on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1914 whilst on patrol after the successful taking of Herbertshohe. There were 35 hands on board the sub which was in calm but very deep waters.

The AE1's sister ship (submarine) HMAS AE2 sank in some 73m of water in the Sea of Marmara 7½ months later on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1915. Details were reported in the November 2006 SDFSA Bulletin.

The Submarine Institute of Australia is raising funds in order to be able to preserve the wreck (& raise it?). Dr Mark Spencer was the first Australian to visit the site in 1998 following its discovery. Read "Australian History in a Turkish Sea" by Bill Sellars in the January/February 1999 issue of Scuba Diver magazine for more details. The story of her discovery in 1998 can also be found at

[http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/heritagensw/dec98/10\\_art.htm](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/heritagensw/dec98/10_art.htm) . For further details about HMAS AE2 visit <http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/submarines/ae2.html> and <http://www.navy.gov.au/spc/history/ships/ae2.html>

The former Royal Netherlands (Dutch) Navy (RNN) submarine *K-IX* (K9) is now resting south of Seal Rocks on Fiona Beach, NSW where it ran aground on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1945 after slipping the tow of its transport on a voyage to Brisbane. Details were reported in the January 2006 issue of the SDFSA Bulletin.

The German submarine U-864 was sunk by Allied forces off of Norway in February 1945. It is believed to have 65 tonnes of toxic mercury on board so there are plans to bury the sub in the seabed to protect the Norway coast from the toxic cargo.

The most accessible submarines for SA divers are the J Class submarines in Victoria.

There were seven J Class subs (J1 – J7) built for the Royal Navy between 1915-7, during WWI (although the last one (J7) was built for the RAN).

They all had triple screws and were the fastest in the world at the time. They were powered by three Vickers 3600hp diesel engines for surface propulsion, and three 1350hp electric engines for underwater propulsion. They boasted a top speed of 19.5knots (9.5 knots when submerged) but were also unreliable. They were stationed at Blyth with the 11<sup>th</sup> Submarine Flotilla during the war.

The J6 was accidentally attacked and sunk by 'friendly fire' from the British Navy's Decoy ship the *Cymric*. She was said to be lost.



subs generally. Visit <http://www.divevictoria.com.au/sites.php?site=18> for further details about the J1 sub. Visit <http://www.divevictoria.com.au/sites.php?site=17> for further details about the J2 sub. Visit <http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/page.asp?ID=250>, <http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/pages/pdfs/diveinfosheets/J490FtSubDiveInfoSheet.pdf> and <http://www.divevictoria.com.au/sites.php?site=6> for further details about the J4 sub. Visit <http://www.divevictoria.com.au/sites.php?site=15> for further details about the J5 sub. Written references include “Dive Australia 1986/87” by Peter Stone and “Underwater Victoria – The Submarines” (“Scuba Diver” magazine Sept/Oct 1998).

A wrecked submarine was found off Disaster Bay near Green Cape on the NSW south coast by a Jim Lester in 1967.

The Japanese midget submarine M24 site was discovered by a group of divers recently. Although the precise location of the sub is not known, it is in 70m of water 3nm off of the coast between Long Reef and Barrenjoey Headland (near Broken Bay and Palm Beach). This is in the general area that the sub was thought to have been located a year earlier (at a depth of just 20m). The eventual discovery of the sub was reported in the December 2006 SDFSA Bulletin. Visit [www.sydneyproject.com](http://www.sydneyproject.com) for more details about the Sydney Project.

#### ‘AUSTRALIAN’ SHIPS HIT BY JAPANESE TORPEDOES

Whilst discussing Japanese submarines, they torpedoed several ships on the Australian coast during WWII. Some five mother subs were said to have patrolled Australia’s east coast and attacking shipping during the war.

Several ships were hit between 1942-3 including the 7061 tonne US ‘Liberty’ ship *William Dawes*. The 126m-long ship was sunk off of the NSW south coast by the Japanese submarine I-11 on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1942. Her cargo included copper wire and lead ingots, plus army equipment thought to be worth more than \$2m. The site of the *William Dawes* was discovered by members of the Sydney Project a couple of years ago. The wreck is now protected and she lies on her (starboard?) side in an east/west position at a depth of >130m. Japanese subs are said to have sunk 16 vessels off of the NSW coast between 1942-3, including the SS *Iron Knight*, the *Iron Chieftain*, the *Iron Crown*, the merchant ship *Kalingo* and the *Starr King*.

Another ten vessels in NSW were also said to have been damaged by torpedoes from Japanese subs but these all made it back to port. They include the *Mobilube* and the *Peter H Burnett*, both hit within four days of each other in 1943.

The HMAS *Kuttabul* was the ship sunk by the midget sub M24 at Sydney’s Garden Island at 12.30am on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942. The *Iron Chieftain* was sunk by a torpedo on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1942. 18<sup>th</sup> January 2007 was the 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the merchant ship *Kalingo* which was torpedoed on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1943. The *Mobilube* was also torpedoed on the same day but did not sink. The *Peter H Burnett* was torpedoed four days later and she too survived the attack.

8<sup>th</sup> February 2007 was the 64<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the SS *Iron Knight* by the Japanese sub I-21 off of Bermagui on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1943. 33 lives were lost in the incident. The I-21 was one of the mother subs for the submarine attack on Sydney Harbour and the attacks on Newcastle in 1942. The *Starr King* was sunk two days later on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1943. A Japanese sub torpedoed and sank the Australian Hospital Ship *Centaur* near Brisbane at 4am on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1943. 268 lives were lost in the incident.



The site of the SS *Iron Knight* was also discovered by members of the Sydney Project. They first dived on the site on May 27<sup>th</sup> 2006. She sits in 130m of water. The ship was en route from Whyalla, SA to Newcastle with a load of iron ore. She sank in two minutes after being hit by a torpedo. Only 14 of the crew of 50 survived the incident. Details about the discovery & protection of the SS *Iron Knight* were included in the SDFSA Bulletin in September 2006.

#### LIBERTY SHIPS

As mentioned above, the 126m-long *William Dawes* was a US 'Liberty' ship. She was sunk off of the NSW south coast by the Japanese submarine I-11 on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1942. The site of the *William Dawes* was discovered by members of the Sydney Project a couple of years ago. The wreck is now protected. The US 'Liberty' ship *Robert J Walker* was sunk near Jervis Bay by the German U-boat U862 in 1944. So just what is a 'Liberty ship'? A late friend of mine once explained it to me but I had long since forgotten what he had said about it. My first attempt at searching for the answer on the Internet yielded this piece of information: -

“Liberty Ship crews consisted of a number of Merchant Marines (who were, in fact, not part of the U.S. Navy) and a group of Navy personnel called the Armed Guard who were trained to protect their ship and the Merchant Marines aboard it.” (The American merchant seaman is a civilian, serving voluntarily, and though often under enemy action has no military status.)

A further search revealed the following information about the ships themselves: -

“In the nearly 20 years following the end of the World War I, America's merchant fleet, including its cargo and passenger ships, was becoming obsolete and declining in numbers. A shipbuilding program began with the passage of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936. However, World War II provided the impetus to intensify those efforts eventually leading to a ship-building program that produced 5,500 vessels. Among them were 2,710 mass-produced ships known as Liberty ships.”

And this piece about their demise: -

“When the United States entered World War II at the end of 1941, it had the beginnings of a great merchant fleet. But the lethal U-Boats, submarines of the German Navy, prowled the shipping lanes hunting American merchant ships. The Liberty ships proved to be too slow and too small to carry the tons of supplies the United States and her Allies would need to win the war. In 1943, the United States began a new ship-building program. These new ships would be faster, larger, and able to carry cargo long after the war was finished. These were the Victory ships.”

Source:

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/116liberty\\_victory\\_ships/116liberty\\_victory\\_ships.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/116liberty_victory_ships/116liberty_victory_ships.htm)

Below is some of the information about Liberty ships from a “Fact Sheet Issued On National Maritime Day\*, May 22, 1945”.

\*(May 22<sup>nd</sup> in the US is designated as “National Maritime Day” each year. It was created in 1933 by Congress to commemorate annually the departure of the SS *Savannah* from Savannah, Georgia in 1819 on the first trans-ocean crossing using steam propulsion.

Source: <http://www.marad.dot.gov/Education/history/facts.html>)

The fact sheet was prepared by the Division of Public Relations of the United States Maritime Commission and War Shipping Administration: -

“The oceangoing ships built by the Maritime Commission since 1937 are 30 to 40 percent larger than those built during the previous war.

10-12 months were required in 1917-18 to build an oceangoing ship. Liberty ships, though a third larger, were built in 1943 in as little as 16 days in regular production in one of the most efficient yards. America's wartime shipbuilding capacity for oceangoing vessels is 2,000 or more annually, provided manpower and materials are available.

A Liberty ship can carry an amount of cargo equal to four trains of 75 cars each.

28 oceangoing cargo ships were the total of construction by the Maritime Commission in 1939. 64 times that many were built in 1943, in addition to more than 100 military vessels and numerous small craft.

A shipyard with 50 ways built 69 riveted ships aggregating 517,000 deadweight tons in 1919. In 1943 a 12- way Maritime Commission yard turned out 205 welded ships totaling 2,150,000 tons.

United States shipyards, responding to a Presidential directive to build 16 million deadweight tons of shipping in 1943, exceeded the goal by 20 percent, building a total of 19.2 million tons. Only 1.1 million tons were built in 1941, and 8.0 million in 1942.

The first Liberty ship, the *Patrick Henry*, was launched in September 1941, at Baltimore, Md.

The Liberty ship *Robert E. Peary* was built in a West Coast shipyard in the world's record time of one week flat.

Services of more than 40 skilled trades are required to build a Liberty ship.

Every Liberty ship has its own distillation system to make seawater drinkable.

41% of all of the oceangoing shipbuilding in United States merchant shipyards in the last 30 years was done in the single year of 1943, when 1,896 vessels were built.

The Maritime Commission in 1937 embarked on a ten-year program to build 500 cargo ships. The cargo ships built between that time and March 1, 1945 include more than 2,500 Liberty ships, about 450 C-type cargo vessels, 550 oceangoing tankers, 175 Victory cargo ships and a variety of military, coastal, and smaller craft.

In 1939 the British Empire controlled about one-third of the world's ocean shipping and the United States about one-seventh. The United States now has more than the rest of the world combined.

Trained personnel of the American Merchant Marine has increased from about 55,000 at Pearl Harbor to 215,000 in March, 1945.

Two-thirds of the world's merchant fleet now flies the American flag.

The Maritime Commission is now devoting a considerable part of its shipbuilding facilities to special types of combat vessels for use in the Pacific theater of war.

The Liberty ship construction program of the Maritime Commission, after producing more than 2,500 ships in 3.5 years, will end in 1945. Faster and more Modern vessels are now being built in Commission yards.

Despite the tremendous wartime merchant shipping losses suffered by the United Nations, they had been replaced in the aggregate before the end of 1943 by production in American shipyards.

Some yards building Liberty ships have delivered these 441-foot vessels in 16 days in regular production.

The first Liberty ship required 244 days to build. By the end of 1945, the average building time for all Liberty shipyards was under 40 days.

Tonnage production in United States merchant shipyards in 1943 was 67 times that of 1938, 52 times that of 1939, 28 times that of 1940, 17 times that of 1941 and 2.3 times that of 1942.

Giant oceangoing tankers, which in pre-war days required 10 to 12 months for completion, are now built for the Maritime Commission in three months.”

Source: <http://www.marad.dot.gov/Education/history/facts.html>

#### THE NAMES OF LIBERTY SHIPS

What do you notice about the ships *William Dawes*, *Robert J Walker*, *Patrick Henry*, *Robert E. Peary*, etc..? They are all people's names! The first Liberty ship was named after a Patrick Henry, 100 were named after merchant seamen who died in wartime service, 114 carry the names of women and 18 have been named for Negroes.

#### VESSELS SUNK TO CREATE ARTIFICIAL HARBORS

One of the breath-taking innovations of WWII was the creation of artificial harbors on the Normandy coast to permit unloading of troops and supplies for the invasion of France. Thirty-two obsolete or badly damaged vessels were sunk to form breakwaters, buttressed by concrete piers constructed especially for the purpose in England and towed across the Channel by tugs. One thousand merchant seamen volunteered for the task. The artificial harbors replaced some of the advantages of the natural facilities destroyed by the Germans and gave the Allies the choice of landing beaches.

Source: <http://www.marad.dot.gov/Education/history/facts.html>

#### ICE-BOUND CARGO VESSELS DELIVERED FROM DULUTH TO CHICAGO

To effect delivery of three badly needed cargo vessels that were ice-bound in Maritime Commission yards on the Great Lakes in January, a new \$10,000,000 ice-breaker was given a successful trial. A 70-foot path was cut through heavy ice in the Soo Canal and St. Marys river districts. The three vessels made the trip from Duluth to Chicago with ease, opening the definite possibility of all-winter traffic on that route. The Nation's wartime merchant shipbuilding capacity has been increased considerably by building ocean vessels on the Great Lakes. The only way of getting these large vessels to salt water is via the Chicago drainage canal and Illinois-Mississippi river system to New Orleans. Superstructures are removed to get under Chicago bridges, and steel pontoons are attached to the sterns for the river trip, to lift them out of shallow water.

Source: <http://www.marad.dot.gov/Education/history/facts.html>

The Scuba Divers Federation of SA is a member of the following: -

Rapid Bay Jetty Design Group

SARFAC (SA Recreational Fishing Advisory Council)

Fleurieu Reef Management Committee (Ex-HMAS *Hobart*)

TRAIL COMMITTEES - SA Trails Coordinating Committee (Office of Recreation & Sport) and Port Noarlunga Reef Underwater Trail South Australian Trails

Contact the Federation's Secretary on [info@sdfsa.net](mailto:info@sdfsa.net) to be included on the mailing list for this electronic bulletin.

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