

CAPTAIN'S

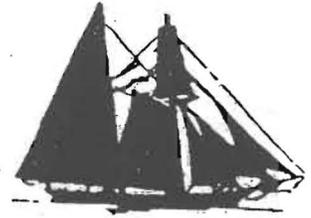


QUARTERS



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Spring 2009

PUT SHIP IN SHIPPING

Relieve our overused roadways by shifting to underused waterways



MATT WUERKER

COASTAL SHIPPING OFFERS US A SPLENDID ALTERNATIVE AND A GREAT ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITY.

BY ROCKFORD WEITZ,
SCOTT G. BORGERSON
AND JOHN CURTIS PERRY

Transportation authorities recently closed a two-mile elevated section of Interstate 95 in Philadelphia for several days to conduct emergency repairs after discovering a 6-foot crack in a concrete support pillar. Luckily, a highway inspector noticed the widening crack and helped avert a tragic collapse such as the nation witnessed in Minneapolis last August. Baltimore is also at high risk to suffer a catastrophe from crumbling infrastructure due to the confluence of six aging major highway systems.

When it comes to transportation planning, we need a detour from the usual remedy of building highways — a detour that removes traffic from the roads altogether and onto one of our most under-utilized transportation resources: the sea.

The incidents in Minneapolis and Philadelphia illustrate the fragility of our nation's interstate highway system and its vulnerability to disruption by terrorist attack, natural disaster or collapse from overuse and lack of maintenance. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) rates over 25 percent of our country's 599,893 bridges as either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.

This situation threatens the daily commute of millions of Americans and the constant flow of goods upon which our just-in-time economy depends. And growing traffic volumes will add further strain on our interstate highway system. According to forecasts, U.S. freight tonnage will increase by 70 percent between 1998 and 2020, with trucks handling most of the increase.

Expanding the highway system to accommodate more traffic is expensive. The ASCE estimates

that improving the nation's surface transportation infrastructure would require \$155.5 billion annually. Contrast this with the Federal Highway Administration's budget of \$40.1 billion for fiscal year 2009. We simply have not allocated sufficient resources to pave our way out of this challenge.

Fortunately, America has another, now virtually unused medium of transport. For interstate highways paralleling our shores, coastal shipping offers us a splendid alternative and a great entrepreneurial opportunity.

Marine highways do not need periodic resurfacing or massive land acquisition for expansion. They only require relatively small investments at each port termi-

nal. Increased coastal shipping would also provide a new resilience to our transportation network, thereby contributing to national security.

Moreover, an alternative transport mode for heavy trucks would slow the aging process of the interstate highway system. According to a Federal Highway Administration study, trucks were responsible for 40 percent of the agency's program costs while accounting for less than 10 percent of total vehicle miles traveled. We must extend the useful life of our interstate highways as long as possible.

We might begin simply by putting trucks on ships. The shipping industry already builds vessels for that purpose, and the shore facili-

ties for such ships are relatively simple and cheap. Trucking companies, struggling with the shortage of drivers, should welcome the opportunity to move long-haul trailers from one port to another. And they too would be pleased with less congestion on the coastal interstates.

The new marine medium would be a source of new jobs, both at sea and on shore. Furthermore, studies have shown that ships have the potential to carry three times more cargo per unit of energy consumed than trucks do. Thus they can cut transport costs and lower prices across the market, with benefit to both producer and consumer.

And, it gets better: New "green" propulsion systems, such as marine engines fueled by compressed natural gas, offer even lower emissions and better air quality. No more choking on diesel fumes; everyone benefits.

The creaking infrastructure under I-95 near Philadelphia should be a wake-up call. The U.S. needs to find innovative ways to move heavy trucks off our strained interstate highway system.

If we do nothing, increased traffic flows will lead to total gridlock. Frighteningly, the drive from Baltimore to D.C. — hardly enjoyable at the moment — could get even worse. Coastal shipping presents a more affordable alternative than adding yet more lanes to interstate highways or railroads along our shores. Marine highways are the taxpayers' best return on investment.

Rockford Weitz is a fellow in the Maritime Studies Program at the Fletcher School of Tufts University. Scott G. Borgerson is an international affairs fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. John Curtis Perry directs Fletcher's Maritime Studies Program.

EDITORS NOTE:

This is your newsletter. If you have any news or item which you believe might be of interest to members of The Marine Society as a whole, please don't hesitate to hand it, mail it or "e-mail" it to Karen Laino, Office Administrator. Thank you.
J.R.S.

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The Marine Society of the City of New York is a charitable and educational organization, the regular membership being comprised entirely of seafarers, all of whom must have been Captains or Officers of merchant vessels under the United States of America flag or of U.S. Naval /U.S. Coast Guard Officers of the rank of Commander or above. It was formed in Colonial days, formerly chartered in 1770 by King George III to "improve maritime knowledge and relieve indigent and distressed shipmasters, their widows and orphans." Among early members of the society was President George Washington. By and large, the Marine Society of New York has performed its charitable service quietly through the years without fanfare, as becomes an organization of seafarers. It stands today as the watchdog of their interests and interests of American shipping as a whole.

Be sure and request your next of kin or a friend to notify the Society in case of illness or incapacity.

It is also important for regular members to let your next of kin know that they have the right of relief in case of future need.



The 239th Annual Dinner, Marine Society of the City of New York was held on the 20th of April, 2009 and honored Rear Admiral Brian M. Salerno, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship, U.S. Coast Guard. --and whose remarks were well received by a capacity house.

2009 Marine Society Honoree

Rear Admiral Salerno assumed his current position as Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship in October of 2007. He formerly served as the Assistant Commandant for Policy and Planning, and as the Director of Inspections and Compliance at Coast Guard Headquarters.

Rear Admiral Salerno is responsible for developing and promulgating national marine safety, security and environmental protection doctrine, policy, and regulations, as well as ensuring policy alignment throughout the Coast Guard and among federal and international partners. In addition, he leads and oversees the important work of numerous federal advisory committees, industry/stakeholder partnerships, and international delegations on marine safety, security, and environmental protection.

Rear Admiral Salerno was commissioned as an Ensign after attending Coast Guard Officer Candidate School in December of 1976. His assignments have predominantly been within the Coast Guard's marine safety program.

After initial marine safety field assignments in Baltimore, MD and Port Arthur, TX, Rear Admiral Salerno was assigned to the Merchant Vessel Inspection Division in Coast Guard Headquarters in 1987, where he participated in various tanker safety initiatives following the Valdez, AK oil spill. From 1991-1994, he served as Executive Officer of MSO Portland, ME. During this assignment, he participated in the location and recovery of recently discovered mercury inside a WWII shipwreck off the coast of Maine.

After a follow-on assignment at Coast Guard Headquarters between 1994 and 1996, he was assigned as Commanding Officer / Captain of the Port at MSO San Juan, where he served until 1999. He participated in numerous emergency response operations throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands during this tour, including the recovery from Hurricane Georges, the most powerful hurricane to strike Puerto Rico in 70 years.

From 2000 - 2001, he served as the Marine Safety Advisor to the Panama Canal Authority, as a member of the U.S. Embassy in Panama City, Panama.

In May of 2001, Rear Admiral Salerno assumed command of MSO Boston. He served simultaneously as Captain of the Port, Officer in Charge Marine Inspection, Federal On-Scene Coordinator for oil and hazardous materials releases in the coastal zone, and following the implementation of the Maritime Transportation Security Act, as Federal Maritime Security Coordinator. This tour was noted for heightened security concerns and extreme public sensitivity over Liquefied Natural Gas tankers entering the port.

Rear Admiral Salerno is a 2000 graduate of the U.S. Army War College, with a Masters in Strategic Studies. He also holds a Master's degree in Management from the Johns Hopkins University. He is licensed as a master of small passenger vessels.

His personal military decorations include the Legion of Merit, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals, and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal.

Origins "Cup of Joe"

Josephus Daniels (18 May 1862-15 January 1948) was appointed Secretary of the Navy by President Woodrow Wilson in 1913. Among his reform of the Navy were inaugurating the practice of making 100 sailors from the fleet eligible for entrance into the Naval Academy, the introduction of women into the service and the abolishment of the officer's wine mess. From that time on, the strongest drink aboard U.S. Navy ships could only be coffee and, over the years, a cup of coffee became known as "a cup of Joe".

CAPTAIN GAVE HIMSELF UP TO SAVE CREW FROM PIRATES

BY KATHARINE HOURELD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NAIROBI, Kenya — In a riveting high-seas drama, an unarmed American crew wrested control of its U.S.-flagged cargo ship from Somali pirates yesterday and sent them fleeing to a lifeboat with the captain as hostage.

The destroyer USS Bainbridge, one of a half-dozen warships that headed for the area, arrived at the scene this morning a few hours before dawn, said Kevin Speers, a spokesman for the company that owns the Maersk Alabama.

He said the boat with the pirates was floating near the ship — the first with an American crew to be taken by pirates off the Horn of Africa.

A family member said Capt. Richard Phillips surrendered himself to the pirates to secure the safety of the crew.

"What I understand is that he offered himself as the hostage," said Gina Coggio, 29, half-sister of Phillips' wife, Andrea. "That is what he would do. It's just who he is and his responsibility as a captain."

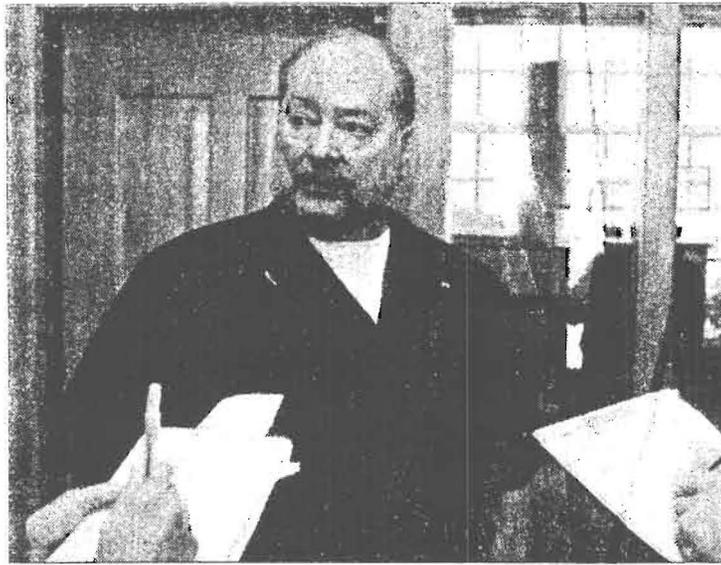
Details of the day's events emerged sporadically as members of the crew were reached by satellite phone, providing a glimpse of the maneuvering.

A sailor who spoke to the Associated Press said all 20 crew members had been taken hostage but managed to seize one pirate and then successfully negotiated their own release. The man did not identify himself during the brief conversation.

The crisis played out hundreds of miles off the coast of Somalia — one of the most lawless nations on earth. President Obama was following the situation closely, foreign policy adviser Denis McDonough said.

The Maersk Alabama was the sixth vessel seized by Somali pirates in a week. Pirates have staged 66 attacks since January, and they are still holding 14 ships and 260 crew members as hostages, according to the International Maritime Bureau, a watchdog group based in Kuala Lumpur.

Andrea Phillips, the captain's wife, said her husband had sailed in those waters "for quite some time" and a hijacking was perhaps "inevitable."



CHARLES KRUPA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maritime professor Capt. Joseph Murphy talks with reporters about his son, Shane, who is second-in-command of the Maersk Alabama, which was attacked by pirates yesterday off the coast of Somalia.

Somalia's 1,900-mile long coastline borders one of the world's busiest shipping lanes and offers a perfect haven to the heavily armed pirate gangs. They often dress in military fatigues and use GPS systems and satellite phones to coordinate attacks from small, fast speedboats resupplied by a larger "mother ship."

The pirates usually use rocket-propelled grenades, anti-tank rocket launchers and automatic weapons to capture large, slow-moving vessels like the U.S.-flagged 17,000-ton Maersk Alabama, which was carrying food aid from USAID and other agencies to help malnourished people in Uganda and Somalia.

The ship was taken about 7:30 a.m. local time some 380 miles east of the Somali capital of Mogadishu. Analysts say many of the pirates have shifted their operations down the Somali coastline from the Gulf of Aden to escape naval warship patrols.

According to reports from the crew, the pirates sank their boat when they boarded the ship. The captain talked them into getting off the vessel using one of the ship's lifeboats.

Second Mate Ken Quinn told CNN in a live interview last night that the crew also had held a hostage.

"We had a pirate. We took him for 12 hours," Quinn said. "We re-

turned him, but they didn't return the captain."

Maersk Line Limited chief executive John F. Reinhart said his company received a call that indicated the crewmen were safe. But the call got cut off, and the company could not ask any more questions.

Reinhart said the company's vessels had received a heightened alert about piracy activity. He did not have particulars about how the ship was taken, but said the crew's orders were to hide in safe rooms until aid came. They did not have weapons, he said, and typically, their defense would be to fight the pirates off with fire hoses as they climbed up the stern.

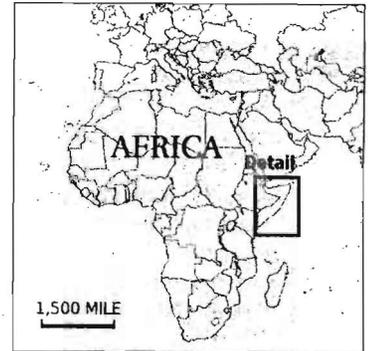
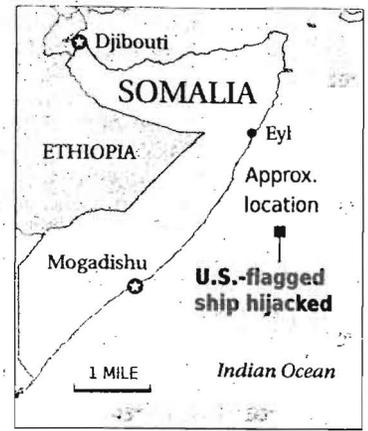


MURPHY

It remained unclear how the unarmed sailors could have overpowered pirates armed with automatic weapons.

Capt. Shane Murphy, second in command on the ship, told his wife, Serena, that pirates had followed the ship Monday and pursued it again for three or four hours before boarding it yesterday morning, family members said.

Capt. Joseph Murphy, a professor at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, said his son was a 2001 Massachusetts Maritime Academy



ASSOCIATED PRESS

graduate who recently talked to a class about the dangers of piracy.

The younger Murphy wrote on his Facebook profile that he worked in waters between Oman and Kenya.

"These waters are infested with pirates that hijack (sic) ships daily," Murphy wrote on the page, which features a photograph of him. "I feel like it's only a matter of time before my number gets called."

Multimillion-dollar ransoms are fueling a piracy explosion. There were 111 attacks in 2008, and more than half that number have occurred in the first four months of this year. Last year, pirates made off with up to \$80 million in ransom money, said Middleton. Those hauls included payment for a Saudi oil tanker and a Ukrainian ship loaded with military tanks, both of which were later released.

NATO already has five warships in the Gulf of Aden and is planning to deploy a permanent flotilla to the region this summer.

The hijackings — and the resulting jumps in insurance fees and shipping costs — have prompted many countries to send their navies to the region. The NATO warships patrol alongside three frigates from the European Union, and up to 10 American ships. India, China, Japan, Russia and other nations also cooperate in the patrols.

Case in Kenya Tests New Push to Prosecute Sea Attacks

BY SARAH CHILDRESS

NAIROBI, Kenya—As pirates hold an American hostage on a life boat in the Indian Ocean, a legal test case here could make it easier to bring other suspected hijackers on the high seas to justice.

Later this month, a Kenyan judge will determine whether he has jurisdiction to try seven suspected pirates detained by U.S. warships in February. They were turned over to authorities here as part of a memorandum of understanding signed in January between Nairobi and Washington.

If the judge allows the case to go forward, it could remove big legal hurdles that U.S. and international naval commanders have struggled to clear in their fight against a recent surge in piracy off the east coast of Africa.

Attacks often occur scores or hundreds of miles offshore, in international waters. It's long been unclear which court would have jurisdiction in crimes committed on the high seas. And it's often difficult to prove piracy, without catching a perpetrator in the act, legal and maritime experts say.

Francis Kadima, the attorney for the seven suspected pirates now awaiting a hearing in

Kenya, says his clients aren't guilty of piracy, but instead are fishermen. The judge is set to rule on whether the country has jurisdiction at a hearing scheduled for April 20 in Mombasa. If they are tried and found guilty, they could face life in a Kenyan prison.

The seven were apprehended by the U.S. on Feb. 11, after an apparent attempted attack on the Marshall Islands-flagged merchant vessel *Polaris*, a tanker, in the Gulf of Aden.

The *Polaris* sent out a distress call saying that seven men in a small skiff had slapped a ladder alongside their ship and attempted to board. The U.S. Navy dispatched a warship to intervene. The *Polaris* crew, meanwhile, pushed the ladder away and evaded the skiff.

A helicopter from the USS *Vella Gulf*, a guided-missile cruiser, intercepted the suspects' skiff shortly after the distress call.

According to the Navy, members of the *Polaris* crew recognized the white and light-blue skiff, and identified some of the suspects as the men who had attempted to board the ship.

The suspects were transferred to a nearby Navy supply ship, the USNS *Lewis and Clark*, which had converted an ammuni-

tion hold below decks into a makeshift detention facility, and were later transferred to a Mombasa prison.

Navy, Coast Guard and civilian officers, part of a multinational, antipiracy task force set up in January by the U.S., worked hard to put together a watertight case. They photographed, bagged and tagged evidence collected on board the suspects' skiff, including a handgun.

Although the case will be tried by Kenyan prosecutors, a U.S. federal investigator has been flying in to Mombasa to offer additional assistance.

Mr. Kadima, the pirate's attorney, said the U.S. Navy had no right to pick up the men in international waters.

"Nobody's given the U.S. the role to supervise people at sea," he said.

In the case of the pirates who attacked the *Maersk Alabama* on Wednesday, legal proceedings are likely to be a lot easier. U.S. law allows for an American court to try suspects in an attack on an American-flagged ship. The ship, which has an American crew, is owned by a U.S. subsidiary of Danish shipper A. P. Moller-Maersk AS.

WALL STREET JOURNAL, April 10, 2009

BUSINESS OF GREEN

Shipping firms slow to break dirty fuel habit

The shipping industry is responsible for about twice the emissions of carbon dioxide as aviation, and is growing just as quickly. While the airline industry has come under greater criticism for emissions, shippers have largely stayed below the radar.

Despite the growing availability of cleaner technologies, the global shipping industry has made little progress toward becoming greener, even as traffic grows heavier on existing routes and as new routes open in the Arctic. Yet the most recent efforts to tackle the problem have met resistance — less from the shipping industry, however, than from the big oil companies that supply shipping fuel.

While some shippers are trying to change their environmental profile — some are even beginning to plug into electricity outlets once they reach port — the oil industry has said it cannot meet targets to provide cleaner fuel for lack of refining capacity. Technical constraints have also slowed shipper's adoption of cleaner fuel, even as governments have refused to give cleaner energies tax breaks.

Weekend Business, Page 13

An Interesting History Lesson (sent in by George MURPHY)

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the U.S. railroads.

Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. And why did they use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools they used for building wagons which used that wheel spacing.

Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England because that was the spacing of the wheel ruts..

So, who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (and England) for their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels.

Since the chariots were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore the U.S. standard RR gauge of 4' 8.5" is derived from the original specifications for

an Imperial Roman chariot. Bureaucracies live forever.

So, the next time you are handed a Specification/Procedure or Process and wonder, "What horse's ass came up with that?" you may be exactly right. Imperial Roman army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses (two horse's asses") Now, a new twist to the story.

When you see a Space Shuttle on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. Those are solid booster rockets or SRB's. The SRB's are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRB's would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRB's had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site.

The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains and the SRB's had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track and the railroad track, as you know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds.

So, a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably, the world's most advanced transportation system was determined, over two thousand years ago, by the width of a horse's ass.

And you thought being a horse's ass wasn't important? Ancient horse's asses control almost everything. And CURRENT horse's asses are controlling everything else!

THE BATTERY PARK CITY BROADSHEET



STORM WARNING: RISING WATER LINKED TO FALLING PRICES

BANKERS MULL RISKS, PLANNERS HAVING RETRO-FITS

By Matthew Fenton

Reports from government panels about coastal flooding, plus newfound caution on the part of mortgage lenders and insurers, are raising questions about the future of Battery Park City and what it will cost to live or do business here in years to come.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's New York City Panel on Climate Change released projections on February 17 that estimated New York's coastal waters could rise between two and five inches by the 2020s and almost two feet before the end of the century. Last month, the federal government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in a review of the nation's mid-Atlantic coast, said that waterfront regions "need to rigorously assess vulnerability" to sea level rise. And a New York State task force—the Climate Partnership, which is part of the State's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)—is preparing a third report that is expected to echo the warning that sea levels are rising higher and faster than at any time in recent memory, with possibly dire consequences.

This is sobering news for a

community built at the Manhattan shore line. While these changes have gone mostly unnoticed by the neighborhood, they have been quietly noted by the banks and insurance companies without whose help most condominium buyers cannot afford to purchase apartments and most rental building landlords cannot do business.

"Even lenders who are accustomed to dealing with Battery Park City's unusual ground-lease environment are now requiring extra flood insurance," said attorney Luigi Rosabianca, who frequently represents apartment buyers and sellers in the neighborhood. In the past, he noted, "the basic level of coverage carried by most buildings was enough for them." In the last six months, however, Mr. Rosabianca has noticed that more lenders insist on buyers purchasing supplemental flood insurance before they issue a mortgage for Battery Park City condos. "So far, this hasn't derailed many deals," he said, "but it does make it more difficult to get the deal done. Having to pay extra for flood insurance is frustrating enough for somebody who is buying on the 25th

floor," he said. "So this is one more factor that incrementally contributes to softer selling prices. Buyers either think 'enough is enough' and walk away, or else they expect the deal to be sweetened with lower prices."

"That banks, insurers, reinsurers and other people who study risk for a living are starting to recognize this and put a price on it is not at all surprising," said Mark Lowery, the coordinator of the DEC's Climate Partnership. "Unlike most people, they are trained and paid to think in terms of very long horizons." He added, "the fact that these people are starting to charge more for their products bolsters the argument that the effects of climate change are real and ongoing."

The Mayor's task force on coastal flooding is working to amend building codes so that discounted flood insurance will become more available. Nevertheless, said Roland Lewis, president of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance, "we have to recognize that there's going to be a higher cost for insurance, some mortgages and other products. New York is the third most vulnerable city in America—after New Orleans and Miami—to the effects of a major storm." He added that, "Battery Park City was developed the way much of New York City was built—right next to the shoreline. So the

question becomes what kind of adaptable features can we retro-fit onto Battery Park City, and the New York City shoreline as a whole, that will reduce our vulnerability?"

"I'm hopeful that some of the infrastructure dollars coming from the federal stimulus package can be used for this," Mr. Lewis said, "but the problem is that it's difficult to make the case for this kind of investment even in the best of times. In the present economic climate, it's going to be especially challenging."

"The Mayor's report and the others will have serious financial implications," said Community Board 1 vice chair Catherine McVay Hughes, "starting today and moving forward. The ramifications will impact potential buyers and prospective sellers—and also indirectly affect tenants whose landlords will have to bear increased costs."

She added that it is becoming increasingly important for people who reside in Battery Park City and elsewhere in Lower Manhattan, "to know the financial implications, short-term and long-term, of a decision to live or do business here." She added that CB1 hopes to schedule a discussion of projected sea-level rise, along with all its implications for the Downtown community, in the near future.

Case Closed On Ocean Puzzle

The bizarre markings spotted using Google Earth's new underwater search tool last week unleashed a tsunami of theories and speculation across the Web about the origins of the gridlike pattern.

The most popular theory was that the markings were signs of the lost city of Atlantis. But Bits readers also wondered if the maze of lines could be anything from the mystical island featured on the television show "Lost" to an underwater lair inhabited by former Vice President Dick Cheney.

According to Google, it's time to shelve those tinfoil hats.

In an interview, Steve Miller, product manager for Ocean in Google Earth, firmly debunked rumors that the crisscross markings were anything other than artificial data remnants left by

sonar-equipped boats collecting data from the ocean floor.

While sound waves are considered to be more effective than satellites for mapping strips of the ocean floor, they're often more expensive and time-consuming to use. "The boats have to go slowly. Otherwise, they make a lot of noise and can wash out the readings," said Mr. Miller. As a result, boats are used less frequently, leaving fewer gridlike sonar patterns visible on Google Earth's map of the ocean.

Was the whole Atlantis uproar a well-orchestrated publicity stunt for Google's new ocean maps, which were introduced in February?

Mr. Miller said no. But the reports certainly drew a lot of armchair explorers eager to view the waterlogged pattern. Searches for "google ocean" and "atlantis google ocean" spiked over the last several days.

JENNA WORTHAM

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2009

Unused crude



A GROWING POOL OF OIL

These days many oil tankers serve as little more than floating storage tanks. They are moored across the globe from the Texas coast to the waters off Europe and Nigeria. Now that the price of crude has dropped, oil is being stored until the global economy ramps up again.

BY CHRIS KAHN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Supertankers that once raced around the world to satisfy an unquenchable thirst for oil are now parked offshore, fully loaded, anchors down, their crews killing time. In the United States, vast storage farms for oil are almost out of room.

As demand for crude has plummeted, the world suddenly finds itself awash in oil that has nowhere to go.

It's been less than a year since oil prices hit record highs. But now producers and traders are struggling with the new reality: The world wants less oil, not more. And turning off the spigot is about as easy as turning around one of those tankers.

So oil companies and investors are stashing crude, waiting for demand to rise and the bear market to end so they can turn a profit later.

Meanwhile, oil-producing countries such as Iran have pumped millions of barrels of their own crude into idle tankers, effectively taking crude off the market to halt declining prices that are devastating their economies.

Traders have always played a game of store and sell, bringing oil to market when it can fetch the best price. They say this time is different because of how fast the bottom fell out of the oil market.

"Nobody expected this," said Antoine Half, an analyst with Newedge. "The majority of people out there thought the market would keep rising to \$200, even \$250, a barrel. They were tripping over each other to pick a higher forecast."

Now the strategy is storage. Anyone who can buy cheap oil and store it might be able to sell it at a premium later, when the global economy ramps up again.

The oil tanks that surrounded Cushing, Okla., in a sprawling network that holds 10 percent of the nation's oil have been swelling for months. Exactly how close they are to full is a closely guarded secret, but analysts who cover the

industry say Cushing is approaching capacity.

It's the same scene at the four other massive storage sites in the United States, complexes on the East Coast, Gulf Coast, and West Coast and near the Rocky Mountains.

Some oil is ending up in giant ships and staying there. On these supertankers, rented by oil companies such as Royal Dutch Shell, there is little for crews to do but paint and repaint the decks to pass time.

More than 30 tankers, each with the ability to move 2 million barrels of oil from port to port, now serve as little more than floating storage tanks. They are moored across the globe, from the Texas coast to the calm waters off Europe and Nigeria.

"It gets expensive to do this," said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Alaron Trading.

"If you're sitting on a bunch of oil and you're stuck paying storage and insurance, and you can't find a buyer, you may have to sell it at a discount just to get rid of it."

On the other hand, as storage units on land have filled up, the companies that own the tankers have profited.

Tanker companies charge an average of \$75,000 a day, three times as much as last summer, to hold crude, said Douglas Mavrinac, an analyst with Jefferies & Co.

Demand for oil began to increase steadily in the early 1980s, and it went into overdrive in recent years as the Chinese economy surged.

That changed when recession gripped the globe, and frozen credit markets made things worse. Inventories swelled.

Refineries in the United States have cut way back on production of gas as the economy weakens and millions of Americans, many of them laid off, keep their cars in the garage.

The latest government records show U.S. inventories are bloated with a virtual sea of surplus crude, enough to fuel 15 million cars for a year. Inventories have grown by 26 million barrels since the beginning of the year alone. Oil from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Nigeria is finding few takers, even though much of it is used to make gasoline in the United States.

There are so many players in the international oil market that no one has enough control to sway prices. OPEC slashed pro-

duction by more than 4 million barrels a day, and still the price of a barrel of crude languishes near \$40. At its peak, it traded at \$147 a barrel.

Experts aren't sure what will happen when all that oil finally comes ashore.

One fear is that with oil prices so low, companies will slash drilling and production, setting the world up for an energy crunch that would send prices soaring. The number of oil and gas rigs operating in the United States has fallen a staggering 39 percent since August.

Others say prices would plummet if companies forced millions of barrels onto the market at once.

"If everyone's running for the exits at the same time, they'll engineer a price collapse," Flynn said.

THE STAR-LEDGER, MARCH 4, 2009

Libya: Boat Carrying Migrants Sinks

A fishing boat packed with up to 350 migrants heading for Europe has sunk off the Libyan coast and at least 10 Egyptians are among the dead, the Egyptian state news agency MENA said Monday. The agency quoted an official of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry as saying that Libyan rescue workers had found 36 Egyptian survivors, but no details were given on the fate of passengers from other countries. An Egyptian official said the ship left Libya's northern Mediterranean coast on Sunday morning and sank about 20 miles offshore. (REUTERS)

THE NEW YORK TIMES INTERNATIONAL TUESDAY MARCH 31, 2009

California: No Hazards in Rotting Ships

A fleet of mothballed warships rotting in waters near San Francisco Bay is not a major source of environmental contamination, federal scientists reported. A study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that levels of PCBs, toxic metals and other compounds were typically no higher around the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet than elsewhere in Bay Area waterways. Because of that, the agency said, it is not recommending any specific cleanup of sediments near the fleet. The more than 70 old ships were kept afloat in case of war, but many have fallen into disrepair. A 2007 study commissioned by the United States Maritime Administration suggested that the ships were shedding tons of toxic paint into the bay. State water regulators and environmentalists have sued the federal government, seeking the ships' removal. (AP)

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MARCH 13, 2009

Boat crewman chokes on bait fish during gag

A charter boat crew member choked to death after swallowing a bait fish as a joke in front of elementary schoolchildren during a field trip in the Port of Long Beach, authorities said yesterday.

School district officials sent letters home to parents about the incident and offered crisis counseling to the students who were on board, authorities said.

THE STAR-LEDGER APRIL 2, 2009

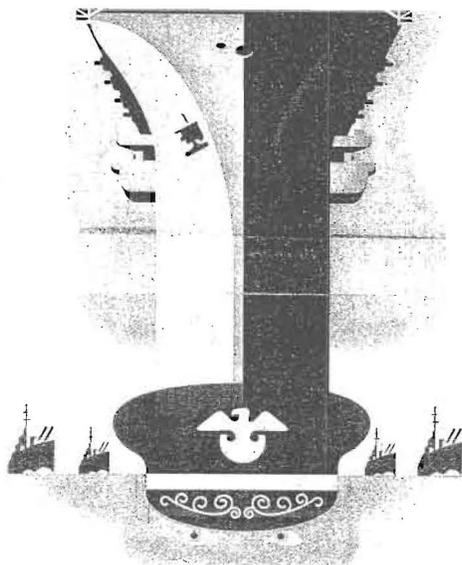
is, combat between fleets of ships at sea — became almost extinct. Thus it is easy to understand the fascination of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the last great naval confrontation of the 20th century, fought from Oct. 23 to 26, 1944, between the American and Japanese Navies in the waters off the Philippines. The scale of the battle was immense, involving four separate engagements extending over hundreds of miles, between fleets that included 35 large and small aircraft carriers, 21 battleships, 34 cruisers and hundreds of destroyers, along with submarines and motor torpedo boats and more than 1,700 aircraft.

A number of talented authors have written about Leyte Gulf, among them C. Vann Woodward, the great historian of the American South, and James A. Field Jr., who was actually there, and won a Bronze Star. Samuel Eliot Morison devoted an entire volume to the battle in his "History of United States Naval Operations in World War II." Now Evan Thomas is trying his hand, and it's likely his predecessors would have enthusiastically approved of the result. "Sea of Thunder" is an engaging and thorough account based on extensive research in both the United States and Japan that describes the war in the Pacific and culminates at Leyte Gulf.

An assistant managing editor at Newsweek, Thomas is the author of books on Washington politics and American espionage, as well as a biography of John Paul Jones. He is known for his ability to explain and illuminate important and complex developments in government, international behavior and crisis decision making through a close exploration of the beliefs, personalities and formative experiences of the key players. His approach here is again to focus on personalities: Vice Adm. Takeo Kurita, the top Japanese naval commander; Adm. William F. (Bull) Halsey, commander of the American Third Fleet; Vice Adm. Matome Ugaki, who commanded a battleship division that included the world's two largest battleships; and Cmdr. Ernest E. Evans, captain of the destroyer Johnston.

Halsey and Kurita are obvious choices. They were the leading commanders at Leyte Gulf, and both committed almost inexplicable errors in the course of the battle. But it is unclear why Ugaki and Evans are included. Evans, posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, commanded a ship famous for its brave fight against overwhelming odds in the climactic phase of one engagement, and Ugaki left a detailed diary that has been a useful source for historians. Yet neither man played an important role in determining the course or outcome of the battle.

Thomas presents his four subjects as different types of warriors. Halsey, one of the greatest popular heroes of the war, became a prisoner of his own legend. Evans, a



Paul Rogers

Cherokee who was imbued with the warrior tradition of his American Indian community, was the complete fighter, in an echo of John Paul Jones. Ugaki exemplified the unthinking militarism and the kamikaze spirit — indeed he became a kamikaze — of many Japanese career officers, while Kurita represented a more complicated type; he was a military leader unwilling to sacrifice lives endlessly in a hopeless enterprise.

The four engagements collectively referred to as the Battle of Leyte Gulf resulted from the Japanese Navy's all-out effort to halt or fatally damage Gen. Douglas MacArthur's invasion of the island of Leyte in the Philippines. This was a place the Japanese could ill afford to lose because it lay across Japan's supply lines to its recent conquests in Southeast Asia. So the Japanese developed a complicated plan. The basic idea was to use the navy's few remaining aircraft carriers, with their handful of planes and pilots, as bait to lure Halsey's Third Fleet, the strongest part of the American naval forces, far to the north. While Halsey pursued the almost empty carriers, two additional fleets, composed of Japan's still numerous battleships and cruisers, would pass through the narrow seas and straits of the Philippines and destroy the American landing forces off Leyte.

The Japanese suffered heavy losses but their plan succeeded because of the Americans' divided command and their unbelievably poor communications. Halsey took the bait and steamed north. Meanwhile, Kurita brought his battered but still formidable fleet through to Leyte, where he found only the small escort

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

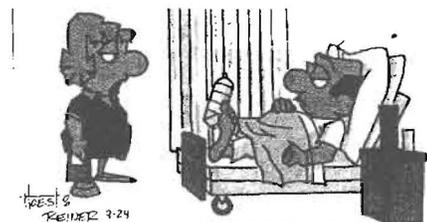
American forces would have been annihilated had not Kurita decided to withdraw. This seemingly inexplicable decision has been the subject of speculation in Japan and the United States ever since. Thomas's explanation, relying on new evidence from his Japanese informants, may be the best available. He argues that Kurita simply could not bring himself to sacrifice thousands of lives.

Thomas's discussion of Kurita's and Halsey's strange behavior is balanced and judicious. He presents their decisions as based as much on their personalities as on their reading of the tactical situation. Halsey, for instance, is presented as an aggressive fighter who let his aggressiveness get the better of him in trying to win a decisive victory.

Still, while Thomas's personality-based approach has many advantages, it can easily overshadow other considerations that are at least as important in forming a judgment about these four individuals. Thomas does not really do justice to Halsey's fine work in the South Pacific theater in 1943 where, in effect, he functioned as the head of what would now be called a joint and combined command, a job that demanded different qualities than those of a plain-spoken seachief. Similarly, Thomas suggests the differences in outlook and behavior between Kurita and Ugaki can be explained simply in terms of their relationship to Japan's militarist culture. Yet they were men associated with separate factions within the Imperial Navy whose differences dated back to the early 1920s; factions that carried on their rivalries with only slightly less ruthlessness and fanaticism than they carried on the war.

In the end, however, what makes "Sea of Thunder" a singularly appropriate explication of Leyte Gulf is the reality of the battle itself. The outcome was determined not by technology and tactics. Victory in the South Pacific ultimately depended on human judgment and will. □

Ronald Spector teaches history at George Washington University. His book, "In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia," is scheduled for publication this summer.



"THE DOCTOR SAID IT'S A HAIRLINE FRACTURE, SO IT SHOULD RECEDE QUICKLY."

Cocaine slips in beneath water's surface

U.S. officials say smugglers use submarines to bring in tons of drugs from Colombia

BY WILLIAM BOOTH
AND JUAN FORERO
WASHINGTON POST

MEXICO CITY — When anti-narcotics agents first heard that drug cartels were building an armada of submarines to transport cocaine, they thought it was a joke.

Now U.S. law enforcement officials say that more than a third of the cocaine smuggled into the United States from Colombia travels in submersibles.

An experimental oddity just two years ago, these strange semi-submarines are the cutting edge of drug trafficking today. They ferry hundreds of tons of cocaine for powerful Mexican cartels that are taking over the Pacific Ocean route for most northbound shipments, according to the Colombian navy.

The sub builders are even trying to develop a remote-controlled model, officials say.

"That means no crew. That means just cocaine, or whatever, inside the boat," said Michael Braun, a former chief of operations

at the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

The subs are powered by ordinary diesel engines and built of simple fiberglass in clandestine shipyards in the Colombian jungle. U.S. officials expect 70 or more to be launched this year with a potential cargo capacity of 380 tons of cocaine, worth billions of dollars in the United States.

"This is definitely the next generation of smuggling conveyance," said Joseph Ruddy, an assistant U.S. attorney in Tampa who prosecutes narco-mariners.

The submersibles are equipped with technologies that make them difficult to intercept, even though U.S. forces use state-of-the-art submarine warfare strategies against them. Authorities say most slip through their net.

"You try finding a floating log in the middle of the Pacific," one DEA agent said.

U.S. officials and their Colombian counterparts have detected evidence of more than 115 sub-

mersible voyages since 2006. They have apprehended the crews of more than 22 submersibles at sea since 2007. Six crews have been arrested this year. The Colombian navy has intercepted or discovered 33 subs since 1993.

U.S. officials fear that the rogue vessels could be used by terrorists intent on reaching the United States with deadly cargos.

The vessels do not fully submerge but skim the sea surface. They move quickly at night, then drift like sleeping whales during the day. Under cover of darkness, they slither out of Colombia's shallow rivers and 10 days later rendezvous offshore along the Central American coast, usually near Guatemala, where cocaine is offloaded and the subs are sunk.

Smugglers first experimented with heavy steel subs dubbed "coffin ships" by the Colombians. Trial and error quickly advanced their capabilities.

"These vessels are intelligently designed. They are not very comfortable, but they are now very seaworthy. They are capable of carrying multi-ton cargos. They can travel thousands of miles without refuel or resupply. And they are

very hard to detect," said U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Joseph Nimmich, director of the Joint Interagency Task Force South, which pursues drug interdiction in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific Ocean.

Nimmich stood on a dock at the task force's headquarters in Key West, Fla., beside a vessel dubbed Big Foot II. Captured last year 350 miles off the Guatemalan-Mexican coast, the sub had a four-man Colombian crew and 6.4 tons of cocaine aboard, worth more than \$100 million.

Almost 60 feet long, the craft employed water-cooled exhaust mufflers to reduce its infrared heat signal. It was camouflaged in blue-gray paint. A small conning tower jutted from the deck at an angle designed to confuse radar signals.

The latest submersibles can go 3,000 miles without refueling.

"You don't want to see one of these trekking up the Hudson River," Ruddy said.

Officials estimate that the subs cost about \$1 million to manufacture in Colombia. Colombian officials say some former military personnel might be helping to design, construct and direct the vessels.

THE SUNDAY STAR-LEDGER JUNE 7, 2009

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