



WAVE



Number 186

“the ship comes first”

December 2024

The Newsletter of the Barque *Polly Woodside* Volunteers Association Inc.



Our Bosun Jeff Melancon with his new granddaughter Greer.

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Chairman's Report:-, *Achieved 450 Hrs worked on Polly Woodside so far to 19/11/24.*

Our Tuesday Gang of volunteers consists of our new recruits Colin and Drew. Jeff is back, and me. Campbell was also back after a 2 hour trip from Bendigo, and Mike Ridley is coming down whenever he can. We miss Mark as he has stated that he cannot work with the NTAV.

Roger Wilson is home with Fran caring for him, and he is looking forward to his return. I have talked with Fran, and passed on our best wishes and for his rapid recovery.

Also we will always welcomed Wayne Bette back whenever he is free.

Our Bosun is all at sea with his brand new granddaughter, as can be seen from the front cover. A new volunteer for Polly?

The Deckhouse:-

The deckhouse starboard cabin door has been renewed and primed ready for painting, and the other exterior doors have also been sanded and primed.

Once we finish the outer paintwork, it will be time to consider galley and cabins fittings.

The mystery deepens as 3 cabin door lintels we restored have disappeared, and no amount of searching can find them.

The Ship:-

Decks & scuppers have been cleaned, & we cleared the rubbish from under fo'c'sle head, but she still requires painting.

With the Poop awning replaced with its new patch the water entry into the officers' quarters appears to be fixed (we hope). After a week or so of rain, the aft accommodation remained dry,

We have started overhauling the hatch covers, ready for re-oiling.

Jeff is preparing a replacement base for the starboard side poop steps as the deck planks are showing signs of the 'worse for wear'.

Unfortunately she doesn't look any better, with even the officers' quarters are now looking tatty.

The Site:

The wine barrels, though there are many of them in various states of disrepair, do contribute to the maritime atmosphere of the site, where there are other things along the docks, so the atmosphere won't be lost. The sound barrels have been cleaned, and checked, while the wine barrels that were unsafe and beyond repair have now been dismantled and removed.

The site has been cleaned and tidied, with lots of miscellaneous rubbish cleared, with the result it doesn't look too bad.

Guess what! We are being used for zooming practice by a Mudlark, which has made a nest on port side of the fore-course yard.

The 'man overboard' orange boat has been cleaned, with a new canvas cover to be fitted over it.

Low Water Levels Reveal Sunken Nazi Ships Full of Unexploded Munitions in the Danube River.

Due to a drought in Eastern Europe, the scuttled German vessels are reemerging 80 years after they disappeared beneath the river's surface



*Earlier this month, scuttled World War II-era ships were visible in the Danube River near Prahovo, Serbia.
Amir Hamzagic / Anadolu via Getty Images*

As Soviet forces advanced in Eastern Europe in 1944, Nazi troops began deliberately sinking their ships in the Danube River. For much of the past 80 years, the scuttled German vessels—including torpedo boats, tugboats, transport ferries and barges—remained hidden beneath the surface.

Earlier this month, however, some of the vessels re-emerged from the water, per Reuters.

A summer drought caused the river's water levels to drop, revealing the World War II wreckage near Prahovo, a river port town in Serbia. Some of the ships were almost completely buried under sand, while parts of others were more visible, including their command bridges, hulls, masts and turrets, according to Reuters.

The sunken vessels make it difficult for modern boats to navigate parts of the Danube, which travels 365 miles through Serbia. In Djerdap Gorge near Prahovo, the sunken ships have narrowed the waterway to roughly 330 feet.

However, removing them presents another set of challenges, as the wreckage still holds unexploded munitions.

"The ships are full of mines, shells and unexploded [ordnances], which could cause major, catastrophic problems if they were to explode," Velimir Miki Trailovic, a local historian, tells Ognjen Zoric of Agence France-Presse (AFP).

This isn't the first time the ships have emerged: They also surfaced in 2022 amid record-low water levels.

Around that time, the Serbian government launched a roughly \$30 million operation to remove 21 of the vessels, which was funded by the European Investment Bank and Western Balkans Investment Framework. Crews successfully pulled the first ship, a minesweeper, from the river last month, per AFP.

European Union officials are motivated to support the project because shipping goods via waterways is usually cheaper and more energy-efficient than moving them on land.

"As an example, one ship can carry the same amount of grain as 120 trucks," said Emanuel Giaufret, the E.U. ambassador in Serbia, in a 2022 statement.

Similarly, at the Danube-Drava National Park in Hungary, four ships built before 1950 also emerged earlier this month because of the drought. The origins of those vessels are unclear.

"We still don't know what this is exactly," Endre Sztellik, a guard at the national park, tells Reuters, adding: "An unfortunate fact is that the wreck is diminishing, as people are interested in it and parts of it are going missing."

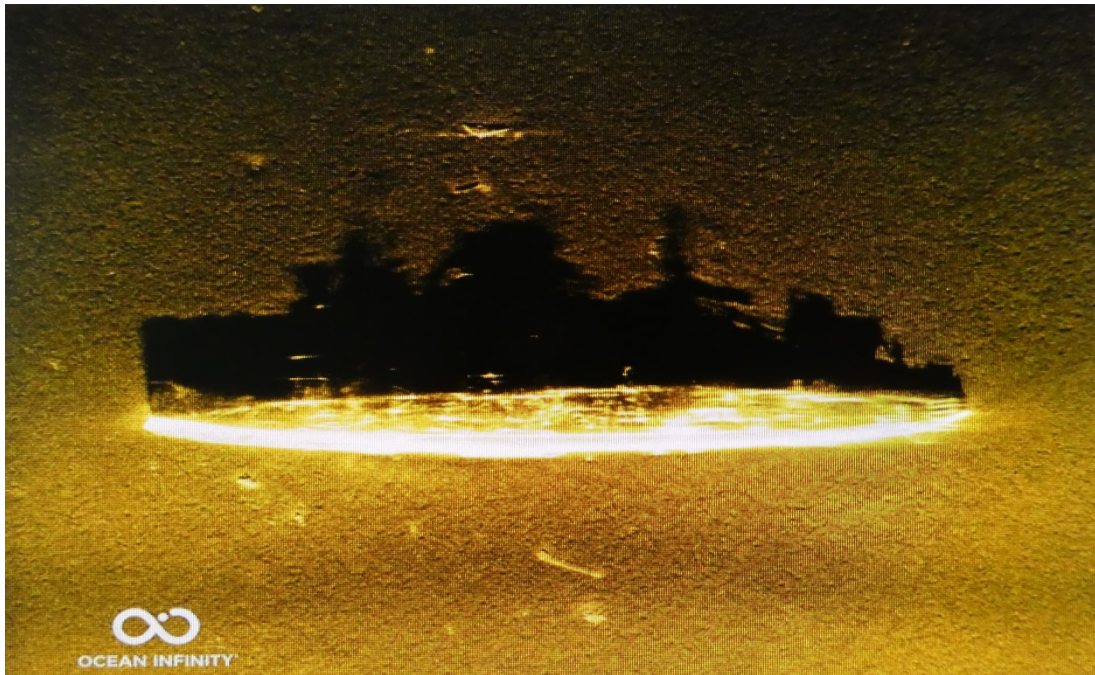
The drought in July and August created challenging conditions across Eastern Europe, sometimes leading to lower crop yields. For the third summer in a row, farmers in Serbia were forced to begin harvesting their corn and sunflower crops much earlier than usual, *Euronews* reported last month.

"You see, there are a lot of bare [corn stalks]," Tomica Vojnić, a farmer in the village of Tavankut, told the publication. "Many of them don't have an ear at all, or it's [very] small."

Meanwhile, parts of Central Europe are experiencing devastating flooding caused by heavy rainfall. According to the Associated Press' Vanessa Gera, emergency responders in Poland, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Romania have been reinforcing river banks and delivering food and drinking water to towns that have been cut off.

This Newly Discovered Sunken Warship Served on Both Sides of World War II

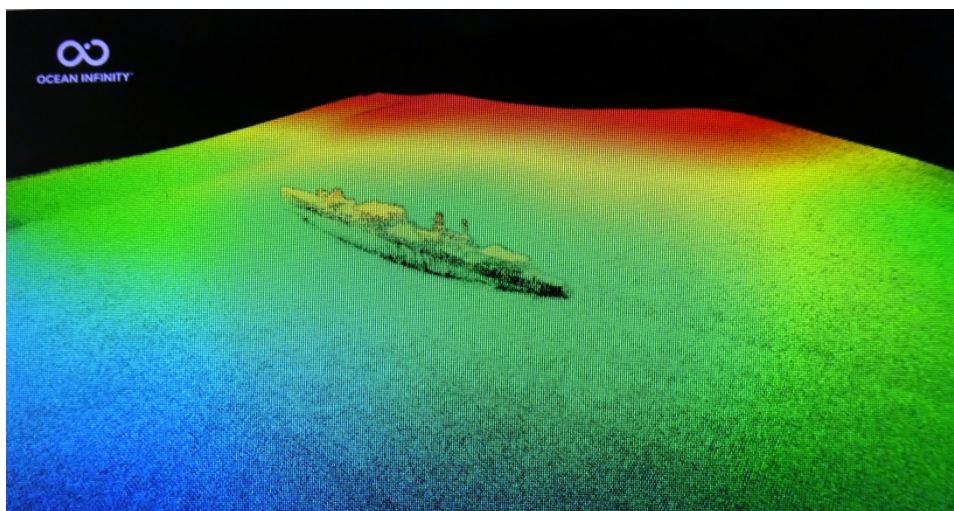
The USS *Stewart* was purposefully sunk off the coast of California after the war



A high-resolution synthetic aperture sonar image of the USS Stewart Ocean Infinity

In May of 1946, the United States Navy gave one of their own battleships, the USS *Stewart*, a burial at sea—sinking it in a barrage of gunfire off the coast of San Francisco. Now, that vessel, called the “Ghost Ship of the Pacific,” has been rediscovered and photographed, thanks to high-tech underwater drones.

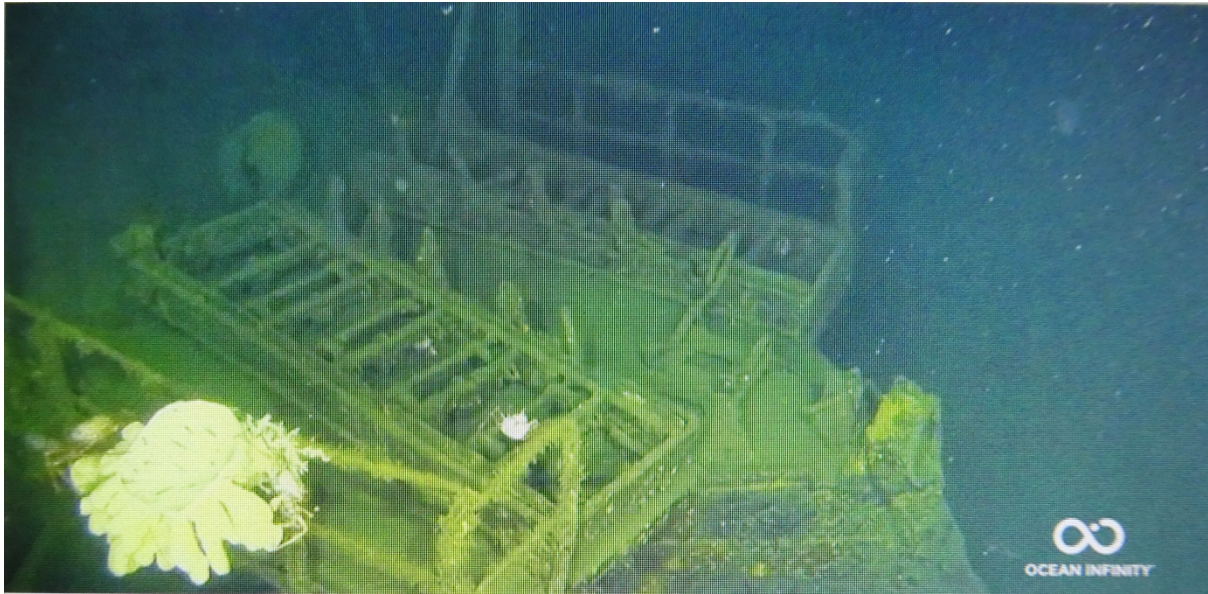
This August, the marine robotics company Ocean Infinity sent three autonomous underwater vehicles into the Pacific to conduct a scan of the seafloor and search for the wreck of the *Stewart*. According to a joint statement by Ocean Infinity, the non-profit Air/Sea Heritage Foundation and the archaeology company SEARCH—collaborators on the mission—the drones came back with “the stunning and unmistakable image of a sunken ship 3,500 feet below the surface.”



A multibeam image of the ship in its resting place off California Ocean Infinity

The 314-foot-long ship, also known as DD-224, is largely intact, with its “sleek and imposing” hull resting upright on the seafloor in the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary. Per the statement, its level of preservation is “exceptional” for a vessel of its age: It may be the best-preserved U.S. Navy destroyer of its type.

The *Stewart* was built in Philadelphia back in 1919. A rugged, heavily armed destroyer, it was part of a fleet of similar ships later dubbed the four-stackers. Most of these warships, including the *Stewart*, were completed too late to participate in World War I, but they factored heavily into the U.S. Navy’s World War II armada. And the *Stewart* has an especially unique WWII history: It served on both sides.



The USS Stewart's stern *Ocean Infinity*

In 1941, the *Stewart* was stationed in Manila, the capital of the Philippines. After Japanese bombers attacked Pearl Harbour that December, the U.S. Navy employed the *Stewart* in combat against Japan in the new Pacific Theatre of WWII. In February of 1942, the damaged ship was trapped in a repair drydock on the Indonesian island of Java, and its crew was forced to abandon it as Japanese forces moved in to seize the land. A year later, the *Stewart*—raised and repaired by Japan—entered the Imperial Japanese Navy as a patrol boat.

The United States learned of the ship’s new ownership when Allied pilots began reporting “the strange sight of an old American destroyer operating deep behind enemy lines,” per the statement. At the end of the war, when the Navy found the *Stewart* floating near Kure, Japan, “the mystery of the Pacific ghost ship was finally solved.”



The *Stewart* arrived in the San Francisco Bay in March 1946. Courtesy of Donald M. McPherson / U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command

Symbolically, the U.S. Navy recommissioned DD-224 before towing it to California, where they bid the vessel farewell. On May 24, 1946, soldiers used it for target practice. As the *New York Times*' Michael Greshko writes, "After withstanding two hours of fire, the stubborn ship relented and sank."

"The whole history of that ship was actually exceptionally well documented," Russ Matthews, president of the Air/Sea Heritage Foundation, tells the *Times*. "The only piece of that story we didn't have is, what does it look like today?"

Matthews had been trying to locate the *Stewart* for a while before connecting with Ocean Infinity. By April 2024, he'd finally found coordinates from the tugboat that pulled DD-224 to its final floating place, and he proposed that Ocean Infinity send drones to that area—a span of 37 square nautical miles. As Andy Sherrell, Ocean Infinity's director of maritime operations, tells the *Times*, mapping a region that size typically takes weeks, but the drones spotted the shipwreck in hours.

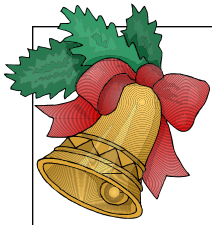


The U.S. Navy used the ship for target practice on May 24, 1946, sinking it. U.S. Navy

Ocean Infinity's robotics technology also helped discover the sunken battleship USS *Nevada* in 2020, and in 2022, it helped find the *Endurance*, the ship that Captain Ernest Shackleton attempted to sail to Antarctica in 1915. As Jim Delgado, senior vice president of SEARCH, tells the *Times*, "We're in the midst of, I think, a radical change in ocean discovery."

Back in 1946, as Americans pulled the *Stewart* back to home waters, they renamed it RAMP-224, borrowing the acronym "Recovered Allied Military Personnel." That label was reserved for liberated prisoners of war.

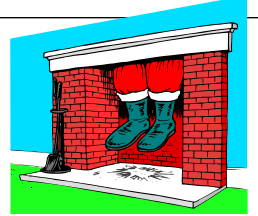
P.T.O. FOR INVITATION TO P.W.V.A. CHRISTMAS LUNCH IN DECEMBER



AHOY THERE! All you Volunteers!

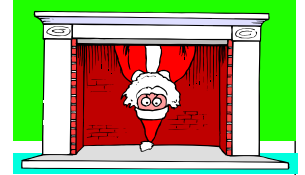
It's nearly Christmas,

And our lunch is on per usual!



DATE **Saturday, 14th DECEMBER 2024.**

PLACES **Sorry no 'Polly Woodside', this year.**



TIME **Lunch from 12:00 pm at 'Boat Builders Yard'.**

FORMAT **Lunch at your own cost.**

Drinks at the 'Boat Builders Yard', will be paid for by your Committee.

BOOKINGS R.S.V.P. by Monday 9th December 2024 to :

22 Delmore Crescent

Glen Waverley Vic. 3150

CONTACT **Anne & Neil Thomas phone 9802 4608, & 0402 037 800**

Or Email :- thomclan1@dodo.com.au

Santa Claus will be there with his sack of presents. To fill the sack we ask you to bring a wrapped present up to the value of \$5.00.

If transport is required or anyone willing to provide transport please contact Anne or Neil Thomas on 9802 4608.

Or email thomclan1@dodo.com.au
