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## On Convoy Duty in World War I: The Diary of Hoosier Guy Connor

*Edited by Jeffrey L. Patrick\**

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During World War I the United States Navy's primary role was the safe transport of troops and supplies to the war in Europe rather than classic engagements with enemy ships on the high seas. This vital mission guaranteed the arrival of over two million American troops to the front lines, along with tons of supplies to support them, in the short nineteen-month period of active United States involvement in the war. The navy could proudly claim that no American troop transport was lost to enemy submarines while eastbound to Europe. "For this splendid record," wrote one report, "the Navy, which armed, manned, and convoyed the troop transports, deserves the highest commendation."<sup>1</sup>

Some 503,000 enlisted men and 32,000 officers were serving in the American Navy at the time of the November, 1918, armistice.<sup>2</sup> One of these enlisted sailors who helped protect the flow of American troops and supplies to the Allies was Guy Burrell Connor, a resident of Cromwell, Indiana.<sup>3</sup> His diary, written during the last year of the war, reflects the daily life, concerns, and observations of an average battleship sailor risking his life escorting ships in these Atlantic crossings. Connor wrote of two convoy missions he participated in, noting the daily happenings on board his ships, his brief stop in the Azores with descriptions of the people and scenery, and the persistent concerns of sailors, such as mail, liber-

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard P. Ayres, *The War with Germany—A Statistical Summary* (Washington, 1919), 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-48.

<sup>3</sup> Guy Burrell Connor was born in Cromwell, Indiana, on July 19, 1894. He enlisted in the United States Navy on June 15, 1917, in Indianapolis, Indiana, for the duration of the war. Connor gave his occupation as telegrapher, with his nearest relative as Mrs. Mollie Longnecker, his mother, also in Cromwell. Physically, Connor was listed as 5 feet 3/4 inches tall, weighing 120 pounds (14 pounds underweight), with blue eyes, black hair, and ruddy complexion. National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, letter to author, September 10, 1992.

ty, and pay. Although much has been written about the combat experiences of American soldiers in France during the war, the navy has received far less attention due to its less glamorous but indispensable role in the conflict. Connor's diary is a brief but enlightening glimpse into the life of the American sailor during the "Great War."

What follows are the surviving entries of Connor's diary.<sup>4</sup> Some passages have been deleted, such as Connor's careful detailing of his ship's coordinates while at sea. Apparently several pages are missing, so the entries begin abruptly in July, 1918, and quickly move to the start of his first convoy duty in September of that year.

### July, 1918<sup>5</sup>

Got back to the Pennsylvania<sup>6</sup> at the Brooklyn Navy Yard July 17th after having the best leave and I certainly did hate to get back. Everything is in terrible shape and things are being rushed so as to get through before time is up. Have been trying to get transferred to a landwire job but guess it won't go through. There's too many men in the radio force on the Pennsy and I want to get where I can have more of an opportunity to do something. Left Navy Yard July 15th and landed at Base Two the next day.<sup>7</sup> All we do is stay at this place and I wish I could get somewhere. We passed a ship on the trip down that was torpedoed shortly after.

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<sup>4</sup> The diary is currently in the editor's possession.

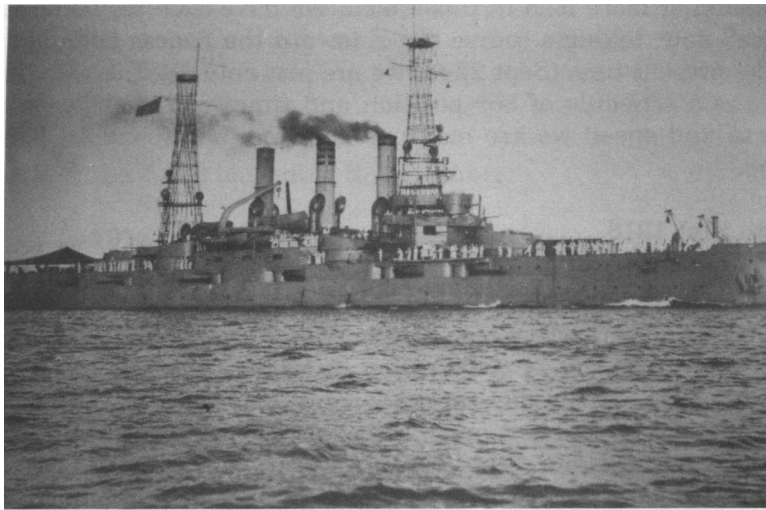
<sup>5</sup> In an effort to provide the most authentic reproduction possible, Guy Connor's account is presented here much as it originally appeared. Connor provided an immensely detailed account of his duties during World War I; his position as telegrapher allowed Connor to record precisely the ship's latitude and longitude. Ellipses have been used where Connor listed hourly latitudinal and longitudinal readings. Bracketed text with a question mark indicates places where Connor's handwriting was not fully decipherable. Connor's original spelling and punctuation have been used in this transcription; in cases where it was impossible to distinguish whether Connor had used upper or lower case, modern usage has been followed. Location and spacing of dates have been standardized and set in bold type.

<sup>6</sup> The battleship USS *Pennsylvania* (BB-38), launched in 1915 and commissioned the following year. Department of the Navy, Naval History Division, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (9 vols., Washington, 1959–1991), V, 250–54. This work is hereafter cited as *DANFS*, followed by volume and page number. Connor served on the *Pennsylvania* from December, 1917, following his graduation from Naval Radio School, until his transfer to the USS *New Hampshire* in September, 1918. National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, letter to author, September 10, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Connor probably meant August 15 rather than July 15.

**Sept. 6th -**

At 8:30 AM I was transferred to the New Hampshire<sup>8</sup> with W.W. Walsh and glad to get away from the Pennsy.<sup>9</sup> The N.H. is going into some sort of active service for they are getting a new Radio Gunner two chiefs and myself and Walsh. We left Yorktown for New York at 4 pm Sept 6th not knowing if our final destination was Russia, Japan or just out on convoy duty. We have stores enough for several months and coal for a month so I guess we are going somewhere. Some of the crews living compartments are



USS *NEW HAMPSHIRE*

Reproduced from *Battleships of the U.S. Navy* (New York, 1912).

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<sup>8</sup> The USS *New Hampshire* (BB-25) was a Connecticut class battleship launched in 1906. The ship had a relatively uneventful history before World War I, consisting of cruises to Europe and support operations for U.S. troops intervening in Central America and the Caribbean. Once war broke out, the ship served as a training vessel for a year and a half until it began the convoy mission described by Connor. The ship continued in active service until decommissioned in 1921. Her complement was 850 men. *DANFS*, V, 56-57. Detailed information regarding the *New Hampshire's* armament, engines, personnel, and other features can be found in Department of the Navy, *Ships' Data—U.S. Naval Vessels, January 1, 1916* (Washington, 1916), 14-23; Naval History Division, *The Battleship in the United States Navy* (Washington, 1970), 44-45; and Department of the Navy, *Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, January 1, 1917* (Washington, 1917), 282, 344.

<sup>9</sup> The *New Hampshire's* deck log for September 6, 1918, reported that Electrician 1st class G.B. Connor, USNR, and W.W. Walsh, Electrician 2nd class reported on board from the USS *Pennsylvania*. *Deck Log of the USS New Hampshire*, Record Group 24, National Archives, p. 699. Hereafter referred to as *Deck Log*.

filled with coal.<sup>10</sup> At 4 pm Sunday Sept 15 we left New York Harbor and when outside we picked up a convoy of seven transports. The cruiser "Pueblo" destroyers "St Louis" Stribling and Stringham are also in the escort.<sup>11</sup> After proceeding on a south by south-east course we met a detachment from Hampton Roads and now we have eleven transports, one cruiser, two destroyers and a battleship with us. The St. Louis left shortly after delivering the Hampton Roads detachment. The transports are the = Pocahontas, Martha Washington, Powhatan, Aeolus, Finland, Henderson, Koenigen Der Nederlanden, Calamares, French SS Patria, British SS Ulna and British (Anglo-Russian) Kursk.<sup>12</sup> Theres about twenty thousand or more men in this bunch. We have been traveling just a week now, taking a course direct toward the Azores Islands and at the present time (Sept 22nd) we are just entering the war zone. Here is a schedule of our position and time, which shows what course and speed we are making. The time is Greenwich Mean Time.

#### Sept. 21st 1918. . . .

Last night I picked up all of Washingtons arc and spark schedules but they were very weak. I have been standing my watches on the bridge until some of the new men missed a few messages and now I'm in the main radio but I'd rather be on the bridge where theres plenty of air. In the day the uniform is white pants and undershirts and at night blues and watch caps. We are routed out about four a.m. to man our general quarter stations for thats the time the subs like to attack. About two days out, the Finland broke

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<sup>10</sup> The *New Hampshire* anchored off Tompkinsville, New York, on September 7, at 5:45 P.M. *Deck Log*, p. 703.

<sup>11</sup> The ships Connor refers to are: the USS *Pueblo* (originally named *Colorado*), armored cruiser number 7, launched in 1903 and commissioned in 1905, *DANFS*, V, 400, II, 145; the USS *St. Louis* (cruiser No. 20), launched 1905, commissioned 1906, *DANFS*, VI, 245-46; the USS *Stribling* (destroyer No. 96), launched and commissioned in 1918, *DANFS*, VI, 653; and USS *Stringham* (destroyer No. 83), also launched and commissioned in 1918, *DANFS*, VI, 655.

<sup>12</sup> Connor noted the following ships: the USS *Pocahontas* (SP 3044), a ship seized from Germany at the start of the war, converted to a troop transport, and commissioned in 1917, *DANFS*, V, 333; the USS *Martha Washington* (SP 3019), launched in 1908, seized from the Austrians in 1917, and commissioned as a troop transport in 1918, *DANFS*, IV, 252; the USS *Powhatan* (SP 3013), built in 1899, seized from the Germans, converted into a troop transport and commissioned in 1917, *DANFS*, V, 365; the USS *Aeolus* (ID 3005), launched 1899, another converted troop transport originally seized from Germany, commissioned in 1917, *DANFS*, I, part A, 81-82; the USS *Finland*, a troop transport launched in 1902 and commissioned in 1918, *DANFS*, II, 406; the USS *Henderson* (AP-1), also a transport, launched in 1916 and commissioned the following year, *DANFS*, III, 295; the *Koenigen der Nederlanden*, launched in 1911, a converted troop transport seized from the Dutch and commissioned in 1918, *DANFS*, III, 675; and the USS *Calamares* (AP 3662), a troop transport and refrigeration ship built in 1913 and commissioned in 1918, *DANFS*, II, 10. The exact identities of the *Patria*, *Ulnaland*, and *Kursk* are unknown.

down and had to drop behind while she repaired her port and starboard engines. We called the St Louis to stay with them and we continued. They caught us about thirty hours later. A couple days later the Henderson and Stribling dropped back to fuel the destroyer but they decided to wait until dark. After midnight one night we saw five big transports going back to the U.S.

A submarine stood back a couple miles one day and took a shot at the convoy in hopes of getting at least one ship. We saw the wake of the torpedo headed for the Henderson in time to save them.<sup>13</sup> The Stringham came alongside us three days ago and received sealed orders from the Captain. They left at once and returned last night about nine o'clock. . . .

**Sept. 22nd 1918 . . .**

**September 23rd**

. . . Have the 4 to 8 am watch this morning.

**Sept. 24-1918.**

Have the 8-12 am watch now. . . .

Worked hard all day yesterday fixing the buzzer system and putting in a Key Reactance. They have been setting the clocks ahead so much lately that a person has to hurry to keep up with the time. When we start back it will be the other way. I have been picking up lots of stations over here among them are Madrid, Eiffel tower, Horsea, and Nanen, Germany. Also some Italian station.<sup>14</sup> This morning I heard Darein working San Diego (6000 arc).

. . . some Spanish station sending on spark comes in on 2400 and 6000 covering Washingtons schedule completely. We called our naval station in the Azores five times without any results. Also Broadcasted msg. to them on "J" and "M".

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<sup>13</sup> According to high ranking American naval officers, a U-Boat would be very fortunate to acquire any "kills" on transport ships by this point in the war for several reasons, including "the comparative scarcity of troop transports, the width of the 'lane' in which they travelled (1400 miles), the high speed which they maintained, and their constant zigzagging." Rear Admiral William Sowden Sims, *The Victory at Sea* (New York, 1920), 361-63.

<sup>14</sup> Nanen was the largest German radio transmitting station, located outside Berlin. For a detailed account of the U.S. Navy's radio communications network and its enemy competition, see Josephus Daniels, *Our Navy at War* (New York, 1922), 250-55. Horsea was a British Admiralty station, exact location unknown, in operation as early as 1912. Department of the Navy, *Wireless Telegraph Stations of the World, including Shore Stations, Merchant Vessels, Revenue Cutters and Vessels of the United States Navy* (Washington, 1912), 26. For an account of the training of U.S. Navy radiomen during World War I, see C.H. Claudy, "Training Radio Men," *Sea Power*, V (October, 1918), 257-87. For a detailed account of U.S. Navy communications equipment of the World War I period, see Captain L.S. Howeth, *History of Communications-Electronics in the United States Navy* (Washington, 1963).

**Sept 25th 1918**

Heard stations in Morrocco Spain, England and Germany working last night and also heard British warships working. We are very near the coast of Europe. Last night instead of copying Washington press, I went on arc and copied English press from Horsea and Carnarvon. They send it about twenty eight or thirty per minute and I got four pages in less than forty five minutes. We have been having abandon ship drills today and I also went aloft to fix the antenna. I heard that in the entire convoy there was only seven or eight deaths since we started. One Marine Captain on the Henderson died.<sup>15</sup> Most of the sickness and death is due to Spanish Influenza which is spreading some now. . . .

Reports came down from foretop just now of firing heard off port bow. Four distinct shots heard. I just sent a message to Sigourney and rec'd one from him. He used commercial procedure, I used U.S.N. procedure. Covered 600 on black receiver all during 12-4 pm watch. Heard Cape Finisterre Spain, Alfonso XII and Reina Maria Cristina working all afternoon. About six o'clock p.m. a bunch of destroyers met us and the Pueblo and Stribling started back. We remain with the convoy until we reach longitude 15°. There's about a dozen destroyers with us now.<sup>16</sup>

**September 26th**

Have the Midwatch . . .

Unable to hear Washn spark this am Lat 4451 Long 1713. Azores too weak to copy. Heard Casablanca (Morrocco) sending war warnings. Copied Italian press from Roma (S. Paolo).

At 12 noon we left our convoy and started back for the United States making 17 knots per hour. As soon as we started back we headed into heavy seas and the ship is sure rolling and pitching now. Was unable to hear any of Washingtons spark schedule account too far away and heavy static. . . .

**Sept 27th 1918**

Last night our port engine broke down and we are making only ten knots with starboard Engine. We would sure be a good target for a

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<sup>15</sup> Probably Captain William Workman, who died on the *Henderson* on September 24, 1918. Department of the Navy, *Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, January 1, 1919* (Washington, 1919), 897.

<sup>16</sup> According to American Rear Admiral William S. Sims, this would be an insufficient number of escorts for a convoy of this size. He wrote that "A convoy of four or five large troopships would be surrounded by as many as ten or a dozen destroyers." Sims, *The Victory at Sea*, 361.

torpedo now for we couldn't get out of its way. Scrubbed hammocks today.<sup>17</sup>

### Sept 28th 1918

Last night we sent a message to Commander US Naval Forces in Azores to be sent to Washington by cable. Both our engines are going badly and we are headed for the Azores to either get coal or get repairs. Just sent another message to Azores. Wasn't able to copy Washington Spark today but by tomorrow I think they will come in better. "Shorty" [Yeakll?] is handing out the dope on the Azores now. Bananas, wheat corn uncivilized and civilized. We may not get back to the states for a long time now. . . .

The "Stribling" Came to us today and is convoying us to the Azores. We only make about ten or eleven knots but should reach the Azores some time tomorrow. I got busy this afternoon scrubbed my hammock a jumper and some underclothes. Have orders from Gunner Recksiek to help Chief Weeden make a few jumper connections tomorrow. Will work at it in the Morning only for I have the twelve to four watch tomorrow. . . . Copied Monsanto a Portugese station and ponta Del Gada just a few minutes ago. First picked up Washington Spark to copy at 11 pm tonight Lat 3945 Long 2504W. Must get some press for the crew now. . . .

### Sept 29th 1918

Arrived at Ponta Del Gada this morning about ten o'clock and the Islands are the most beautiful sight I ever saw. They are like mountains, or rather they are mountains sticking up out of the ocean and far into the clouds. They are green at this time of year and the fields are laid off in even plots that seem plastered on the side of the mountain. Here and there white houses with red roofs dot the country, and the towns are built more compact than ours. The houses are similar to those of the Mexicans and the people are mostly Portugese. Ponta Del Gada has about 25,000 population. I imagine I would like to live here for a while at least and if I did it would be up on the mountain where everything is green and nice. The fields are all fenced off with hedges. In some places theres also a stone wall along the roads with broken glass on top to keep out trespassers. Admiral Dunn is our naval officer here and he is also

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<sup>17</sup> Connor's fear of submarine attack due to the *New Hampshire's* slow speed was not without foundation. As Rear Admiral Sims wrote, "Ships which made less than 12 knots an hour were not deemed safe" for transporting troops, as "one of the greatest protections which a ship possesses against submarine attack is unquestionably high speed." *Ibid.*, 360.

the power over the people of the city.<sup>18</sup> The “Tonahpaw”<sup>19</sup> an old monitor flies his flag and theres three subs of the K Type here, a couple of our gun boats and a few French sub chasers. The “Marietta” and “Arethusa”<sup>20</sup> are also here. When we moored here there was a big Portugese troop ship in which had been chased in here by subs. It sailed from Africa for Portugal and theres all kinds of people aboard with every kind of a uniform on also a few women. We are a curiosity here for the people hire bum boats and row around the ship to look us over. Some of the natives come out and dive for money in the water. One fellow threw five pennies in and one of the divers got them all before he came up again. I cant say how long we will be here but I can’t see why we should stay here for theres no place to get fixed up. All we can do is overhaul our engines. Its wonderful to know that we were about three days in the submarine zone with crippled engines and then got through without hitting a submarine. We copied one SOS today and one Allo. The “Henry George” was gunned and wanted immediate assistance.<sup>21</sup>

### September 30th 1918.

Still at Ponta Del Gada eating lots of pineapples. Natives come alongside with bumboats full of pineapples and other kinds of fruit to sell. Only one tenth of the crew gets liberty here each day and its only for six hours. Theres plenty to drink here. Every other store has wines and liquors to sell and things are very cheap. They all advertize their wines, private rooms and women. The women of the older families on the island wear a peculiar cape and hood or bonnet. Both are black, the cape reaching their shoe tops and the hood is narrow, long and high, standing up like the comb on a chicken. ‘Tis said that in years past the spaniards used to come over here and pick all the pretty girls and take them back to Spain

<sup>18</sup> Rear Admiral Herbert Omar Dunn, born in Rhode Island on May 29, 1857, and appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy on June 9, 1873. After graduation, he advanced through the ranks until promoted to rear admiral on August 6, 1915. He was placed in command of the Azores Detachment, Atlantic Fleet on November 22, 1915. Department of the Navy, *Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy, January 1, 1919* (Washington, 1919), 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Connor means the USS *Tonopah*, a double turreted monitor originally named the *Nevada*, launched in 1900 and commissioned three years later. *DANFS*, VII, 234, V, 51-52.

<sup>20</sup> The USS *Marietta* (PG-15), a patrol gunboat launched and commissioned in 1897 which served as an escort on convoy duty. *DANFS*, IV, 238-39. The USS *Arethusa* was a cargo ship built in 1893 and commissioned in 1898 which carried fuel oil from the United States to the Azores. *DANFS*, I, part A, 360-61.

<sup>21</sup> Connor refers to the USS *George G. Henry* (ID-1560), a tanker built in 1917 which entered navy service the following year. It was attacked by a German submarine on September 29, 1918. Although damaged, the ship managed to fight off the U-Boat. *DANFS*, III, 77.



so they got the idea of disguising the girls to make them appear older. Some of the older men wear these costumes also.

**October 1st 1918.**<sup>22</sup>

Still at Ponta Delgada. We coal ship tomorrow and will no doubt leave in a day or so. All the fellows are getting money to keep for souvenirs. Would like to take some things back but theres nothing but cheap novelties to be had. The sidewalks here are very narrow and inlaid with fancy stones. When a person gets on one street here you have to go to the end for theres no cross streets or alleys. Wish I could get some mail from home. Will be glad when I can hear from Alice again for its been almost a month since I had a letter from her.

**Oct 2nd 1918.**

Still at Ponta Delgada. We have four corpses from the Chicago to take back to the U.S.<sup>23</sup> We are coaling ship today and will leave tomorrow for the U.S. I worked all day putting jumpers on the antennas and it was some job.

**October 3rd 1918.**

“Field Day” today getting cleaned up after coaling. We left Ponta Delgada at four thirty making fifteen knots all the way unless our engines go back on us. Will be glad to reach home once more so I can draw some money, get a haircut, decent bath and get all squared away again.

**October 4th 1918**

We had to slow down during the night on account of one of our engines going on the bum but we are again making 15 knots. Had another field Day and I finished the antennas. . . .

Wrote a letter to Alice and read a book until Midnight, as though I didn't need the sleep, but I also had some wet clothes in the 7 inch passageway drying. Took them out and went up on the main deck and flopped on a couple hammocks until general quarters.

**October 5th 1918.**

Today is payday but instead we get captains inspection. I guess I'll have some big roll coming when we finally do get paid. We wont be

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<sup>22</sup> The *New Hampshire* was honored on October 1 with a visit from the rear admiral commanding Portuguese naval forces in the area, who came aboard for twenty minutes. *Deck Log*, p. 757.

<sup>23</sup> The USS *Chicago*, a protected cruiser and flagship of the submarine force, Atlantic, launched in 1885 and commissioned in 1889. *DANFS*, II, 102. The *New Hampshire's* log reported only two caskets from the *Chicago*, with two others from unnamed ships. *Deck Log*, p. 759.

in for several days yet—possibly a week and I guess we get paid the very day we get in. One of our engines is on the bum again and we are making only about ten knots again. If we get back without getting torpedoed we are some lucky. . . . Saw a big school of whales today and they caused quite a little excitement for theres very few that ever saw any whales. We are making 16 knots now but can't tell how long the engines will hold up under that speed. Got Washington Spark fine tonight . . .

**October 6th 1918.**

Enroute to USA from Azores making good time. Quiet Sunday Nothing of importance happened. . . .

**October 7th 1918.**

Still enroute home from Azores. Heard we would get in on next Saturday. Hope I get some liberty then for I need lots of things. . . .

**Oct 8th 1918.**

Still several days out from U S A. About 970 miles to go yet. Guess we wont get in until about Saturday. I shifted a rat tail today and worked hard all day too. . . . Unable to hear Ponta Delgada at 10 pm . . .

**Oct 9th 1918—**

Woke up about 4 am this morning sick. Stomach all out of order and legs give out. Standing watch but don't feel very well. We are only making about 10 knots and are still about three or four days out. . . .

**Oct 10th 1918.**

We are still bound for U.S.A. and should be in inside 48 hours. The pay list was posted today and we get paid tomorrow. I just copied our first orders since we left New York. They were from C in C and no doubt about what we will do. Also picked up Norfolk so could copy but he had none for us. . . .

**Oct 11th 1918.**

About one fifty miles to go yet and making 16 Knots speed. Will get in tomorrow morning some time.

Got paid today, drew \$86.<sup>24</sup> Now I want mail and liberty so I can get cleaned up. Worked hard all day today with Chief Canning.

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<sup>24</sup> Detailed information regarding Navy pay can be found in the Department of the Navy, *Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, January 1, 1919*, 1011; and Archibald Owen, Jr., *Navy Yearbook*, Senate Document No. 418, 65th Congress, 3rd Session, 1918-1919 (Washington, 1919), 871-72.

**Oct 12th 1918.**

Had general quarters at 2 am this morn acct three torpedoes fired at us. We started zig zagging and made about 20 knots getting away from them. Had the 4 to 8 am watch and sighted land at 6 am. First time we have seen U.S. in month. Arrived in Yorktown about ten thirty am. I got ready for the recreation grounds but they were delayed so I went and scrubbed clothes and took a bath. No mail today but one hundred bags tomorrow.<sup>25</sup>

**Sunday Oct 13th 1918.**

Worked all forenoon on same [alnavs?] and on the main rattail and had the 12 to 4 watch in the afternoon. Mail started coming in in the afternoon and I got thirteen letters up until time to turn in. Only got one Cromwell paper so far.

**October 14th 1918.**

Mail still rolls in and I have about twenty letters now and three Cromwell papers only one Journal Gazette.<sup>26</sup> The new captain inspected this forenoon and we had inspection general quarters, fire drill, collision drill, torpedoe defence and abandon ship. In the afternoon Gunner Reiksiek, Sharp, [Meltvid?] Ammerman and I went over to the Pennsy and brought back a wireless telephone set. Saw a bunch of the boys and found that over half the ships company had had the influenza, 500 at one time. Chief Radio Electrician Snyder died with it. I stood watch with him when I first went aboard the Pennsy. Leslie Abell and [Tomy?] Conlon went to the Wisconsin.<sup>27</sup>

**October 15th 1918**

Coaling ship today and I wrote a couple letters in the forenoon and worked on the wireless telephone in the afternoon. Am pretty dirty right now but theres no use to clean up until after all the dust settles. Am still getting mail. Got seven letters and two papers today.

**October 16—1918**

Had the mid watch and we are still coaling ship. Take on about 3,500 tons and then take on stores tomorrow. We leave Friday for New York I understand.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Connor failed to note that two officers of the Brazilian Navy reported aboard for instruction. *Deck Log*, p. 785.

<sup>26</sup> Connor refers here to the Fort Wayne, Indiana, *Journal-Gazette*.

<sup>27</sup> At 2:35 p.m., a general muster was held in which Captain L.H. Chandler turned over command to Captain Ridley McLean. At 5:00 p.m., the log noted that one wireless telephone set was received from USS *Pennsylvania*. *Deck Log*, p. 793.

<sup>28</sup> To further explain the enormity of the coaling procedure, the operation took almost twelve hours on both October 15 and 16. On the 15th alone, 900 tons of coal were taken on board. *Deck Log*, pp. 795-97.

**October 17—1918.**

Taking on stores and cleaning up the ship today. In the afternoon I went over to the USS Supply after 300 foot of stranded lead conductor. Took Ware, Fehrman and C D Smith. Was on the supply from four pm until 9 pm.

**October 18—1918.**

Still cleaning ship and reading mail.

**October 19—1918.**

Captains Inspection Left Yorktown at 3:15 pm bound for New York.

**October 20—1918**

Have the 8 am to 12 noon watch this morning. I certainly had a bad night last night. A new regulation on the water-tight doors keeps them closed only when the watches are being changed. I had the six to eight watch and when I went up to get my hammock it was too dark to see. I couldn't find it so I slept in the tailor shop on deck, in the 4th div'n passageway, on a mess table and finally in the Interfleet. Hughes came in to get a bucket about 6 30 and dropped a big heavy angle iron on my head. I have a nice big bump and gash in my head now. We should reach New York this afternoon sometime and I hope we get some liberty so I can write some letters and send a telegram. We dropped anchor opposite Tompkinsville at 6:30 pm during a drizzling rain. Have been looking at the "Statue of Liberty" and wondering if I will get any liberty. So far things look very doubtful. Word from the Pueblo says they have had no liberty account influenza.

**Oct 22st—1918.**

Left New York yesterday at 3 pm for sea without any liberty. Ships present are Cruiser Charleston, destroyers Talbot and Preble and transports Pocahontas, Comfort and Sobral (Brazilian).<sup>29</sup>

**Oct 23rd—1918.**

"Field Day" today. Three transports and two destroyers with a cruiser joined us about three pm. The cruiser and one destroyer

<sup>29</sup> The ships Connor noted are the following: the USS *Charleston* (C-22), a protected cruiser, launched in 1904 and commissioned the following year, *DANFS*, II, 82-83; the USS *Talbot* (Destroyer No. 114), launched and commissioned in 1918, *DANFS*, VII, 16-17; the USS *Preble* (Torpedo Boat Destroyer No. 12), launched in 1901 and commissioned in 1903, *DANFS*, V, 368-69; the *Pocahontas*, referred to in note 12; and the USS *Comfort* (AH-3), a hospital ship built in 1906 and commissioned in 1918 which joined the Cruiser and Transport Force, Atlantic Fleet, to return American wounded from France, *DANFS*, II, 152-53. The *Sobral's* identity is unknown.

turned back. We now have six transports two destroyers and a cruiser. The hospital ship "Comfort" is with us this trip. I read a lot of stuff about the U.S. intentions to send the Comfort over with a complete civilian crew but I guess they changed their minds. I never thought I would be along when she went over though. . . .

#### October 23rd 1918

The "Sobral" fell back with port engine bad but proceeded at noon. Now we are hanging back with engine trouble. The convoy is out of sight over the horizon. . . . We now have the Aeolus Martha Washington, Duc D Aosta and Mayrant and Radford.<sup>30</sup>

#### October 24—1918

Made 15 knots all night and caught up with the convoy about 8 am. The captain figures on ten days going over and ten coming back. I only hope we pull into New York instead of Yorktown. Copied Bermuda this morning . . . Was on watch today from 7:45 am until 3:15 pm on account of Belmar starting to send a reply to Nanen on one of the peace notes. It was history in radio because it was the first time we have communicated with Germany direct since war was declared.<sup>31</sup> Now I have the eight to twelve pm watch making fifteen hours and thirty minutes on watch today. We are making fifteen knots all the time now and this will be a quick trip if we have no bad luck. . . .

#### Oct 25—1918.

Very rough today. At daybreak the convoy was about 20 miles ahead but now we have caught up with them. This trip has been enough to get on a persons nerves so far and before we get back I suppose it will be worse. I've aged about five years in the last week. . . .

#### Oct 26—1918.

Very rough seas today. While on watch this a.m. the receivers audions and everything slid off the shelf on me but I saved them from getting smashed. Waves were coming high enough to pour in

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<sup>30</sup> The ships Connor refers to which have not been previously identified are the USS *Mayrant* (Torpedo Boat Destroyer No. 31), launched in 1910 and commissioned the following year, *DANFS*, IV, 283-84, and the USS *Radford* (Destroyer No. 120), launched and commissioned in 1918, *DANFS*, VI, 12. The identity of the *Duc D'Aosta* is unknown.

<sup>31</sup> Connor refers to the U.S. Navy radio receiving station at Belmar, New Jersey. Daniels, *Our Navy at War*, 250-55. The text of the note to Germany can be found in Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (65 vols., Princeton, 1966-1992), LI, 417-19. Further information regarding armistice negotiations and the role of the U.S. Navy can be found in Howeth, *History of Communications-Electronics in the United States Navy*, 295.

the stacks at times. The wind is blowing about 90 miles per hour too. The "Radford" turned back last night with broken steering gear and not enough fuel to make Hampton Roads Va. When day-break came we could only see three of the whole convoy. We haven't seen the Charleston all day. The Gunner asked me about going up for chief but I told him no. It takes too much money to start in.<sup>32</sup>

**October 27th 1918.**

Still very rough today. We have all the transports except the "Radford" but the destroyers have turned back. We wont turn back until about next Friday. . . .

**Oct 28th 1918. . . .**

The weather is very rough yet and both the main and gun decks are flooded. We have been in this rough weather a week now. Can just hear Washington spark set now. Tried to get Ponta Delgada but something wrong with radiation. Could not get him.

**October 29th 1918.**

Still trying to get Ponta Delgada this morning. We have heard that the "Kansas" was sunk and some say they met a raider but I don't know how true it is.<sup>33</sup> We are stilling rolling from the heavy seas but the wind has gone down. We meet the destroyers Friday and turn back for the U.S. . . .

**October 30th 1918**

Last night while I was washing clothes torpedo defense sounded and we fired two shots at a submarine and put on all speed getting away from torpedoes. We were at our stations about an hour. . . . I was busy all day doing lots of little personal details and am not through yet. We meet the destroyers about tomorrow some time and will turn back soon after that. We will no doubt go back alone and if we have good luck it will be about the 10th of November when we get back. Hope I get leave soon as we get back so I can get to see Alice once more. I'll bet she thinks I'm gone.

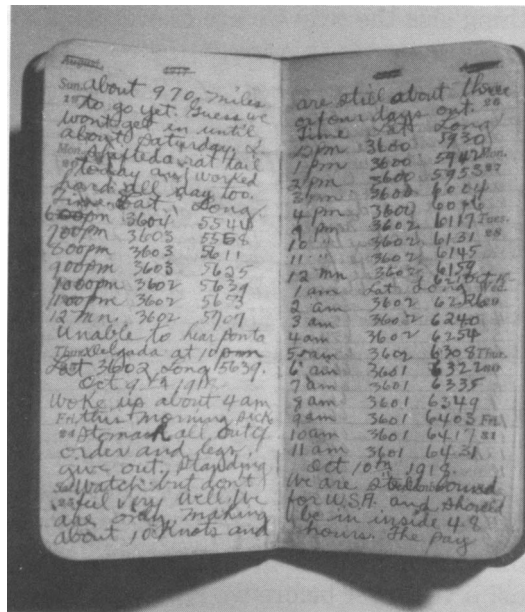
**October 31st 1918.**

We are waiting for some call from our destroyer relief now and they should pick us up some time today. . . .

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<sup>32</sup> Connor not only suffered misfortune due to rough seas, but the heavy seas also "washed out temporary bulkheads and from 15 to 20 tons of coal were washed overboard." *Deck Log*, p. 817.

<sup>33</sup> The rumor was not true. The battleship USS *Kansas* (BB-21) was launched in 1905 and commissioned in 1907. It was not attacked by German forces during World War I. *DANFS*, III, 597-98.



PHOTOGRAPH OF GUY CONNOR'S DIARY

The destroyers met us about one thirty today and we also passed a ship which resembled a German cruiser but I guess she was one of our own ships. Have been hearing nearly all the stations over here working.<sup>34</sup>

#### November 1st 1918. . . .

Fixed the field set so it would work last night. When I got up it was very foggy and raining. Good weather for subs and we are right where they are thickest. We left the convoy at 130 pm today and headed for the U.S. against a nor'wester.

#### November 2nd 1918. . . .

Still encountering heavy seas and not making such good time. We are due in the states Nov 12th and I hope we get there. Nearly half the crew has Spanish Influenza and its a surprise to me that they

<sup>34</sup> The *New Hampshire* encountered several ships on this day. At 2:50 p.m. a ship was sighted heading toward the *New Hampshire*, so at 3:07 p.m. General Quarters was sounded. Only a few minutes later, however, at 3:35 p.m., the ship secured, undoubtedly realizing the mystery ship was not German. At 4:10 p.m., two steamers were sighted, along with a third at 4:20 p.m. *Deck Log*, p. 827.

haven't something else the way we are crowded up and the things we have had to contend with this trip.<sup>35</sup>

**November 3rd 1918.**

About 40 go into the sick bay each day with the "flu" and only four or five coming out. We have 7 or 8 from the radio bunch in there now. We are proceeding very slowly now and wont be in the U.S. for about ten days. . . .<sup>36</sup>

**November 4th 1918.**

Making very slow time account short of coal.

**November 5th 1918.**

Still loafing along slow. The big storm is about over now. . . .

**November 6th 1918.**

We headed into a hurricane this morning and have been bucking it all day. At least a week yet before we reach the states and more if we continue to run into these storms. We have had only about one day of good weather during the entire trip. . . .<sup>37</sup>

**November 7th 1918.**

Payday today—drew \$26. Two men died aboard ship today. Things are in an awful state due to crowded quarters. . . .<sup>38</sup>

**November 8th 1918. . . .**

Cape Race came in very good this morning. Was told by Mr. Mathis that I would teach theory to the radio men beginning Monday. We had general quarters and all kinds of drills today.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The *New Hampshire's* log recorded frequent squalls from 4:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. To make matters worse, on November 1 the log admitted that "Influenza took on an epidemic form aboard this ship October 30," so bad that general quarters was omitted on the recommendation of the medical officer, with an "overflow of cots on port side main deck aft." On November 2, 1918, 112 cases of influenza remained aboard, with 137 cases occurring since September 18. *Deck Log*, pp. 825-35.

<sup>36</sup> Connor was correct in his estimation of the seriousness of the influenza epidemic aboard his ship. The ship's log for November 3, 1918, noted 152 influenza cases on board. *Deck Log*, p. 837.

<sup>37</sup> The ship's log recorded that from 8:00 a.m. until noon the wind increased, and the sea became moderately heavy. At 1:00 p.m. the *New Hampshire* encountered "a gale from the southward which lasted for an hour." *Deck Log*, p. 843.

<sup>38</sup> The ship's log stated that one man died of pneumonia at 9:35 a.m. *Deck Log*, p. 845.

<sup>39</sup> "Mr. Mathis" was Ensign A.J. Matthes, who arrived aboard the *New Hampshire* on June 10, 1918. *Deck Log*, List of Officers Nov. 1-30, 1918. Connor was correct about the drilling. From 8:00 a.m. to noon the ship held torpedo defense drill, general quarters, battle drill, etc. *Deck Log*, pp. 846-47.



**November 9th 1918. . . .**

We were turned out for torpedo defense about two am. this morning. Its getting cold and very rough also raining. Three men have died with influenza. We are making very slow time. Too slow for me.<sup>40</sup>

**November 10th 1918—**

Last night I copied the USNavy press telling of the Kaisers abdication and now everyone is talking peace and a chance to get back home. Theres where I want to be right away. The sea is smooth today and I passed a very lonesome Sunday. Sure wish I was home where I belong. . . .

**November 11th 1918.**

Hostilities ceased at 11 am today and everyone on the ship is highly elated. The band marched around the gun deck with about half the ships company behind in single file singing and playing different pieces. Everyone is talking of going home but there will be some that wont get home until the full enlistment is served. If peace is declared I will sure make every effort to get out for I only came in on account of the war. It will be at least six months before any one gets home though and it will take time to get settled.

**November 12th 1918**

Swinging ship all day to check up compass etc. We get in tomorrow forenoon.

**November 13th 1918.**

Arrived at Yorktown at 10 a.m. Now I want some mail and then liberty. A piece of press copied last night says the men in the army and navy will be let out according to occupation. If this is so I should get out acct being telegrapher. We have been underway 24 days without a stop. Everyone is glad to get back even to this dead place.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The *New Hampshire's* log noted that torpedo defense was sounded at 1:32 a.m., but the ship was secured at 2:00 a.m. The sea was recorded as choppy, with rain squalls. At 5:30 p.m. the ship went to Torpedo Defense stations, held searchlight drill, and secured at 5:56 p.m. *Deck Log*, p. 849.

<sup>41</sup> The *New Hampshire* dropped anchor at Base #2, Yorktown, Virginia, at 9:25 a.m., November 13, 1918. *Deck Log*, p. 863. Connor continued to serve on the *New Hampshire* until his discharge on July 28, 1919 at the U.S. Navy Demobilization Station in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, letter to author, September 10, 1992.

Connor's later life is unknown. But his contribution to the Allied war effort probably afforded him great pride in the years following the conflict. He could certainly look to none other than Rear Admiral William Sowden Sims, commander of the American naval forces in European waters during World War I, who wrote this testimonial to the men under his command:

Too much praise cannot be given to the commanders of our troop convoys . . . as well as the commanders of the cruisers and battleships that escorted them from America to the western edge of the submarine zone . . . these commanding officers had the loyal and enthusiastic support of the admirable petty officers and men whose initiative, energy and devotion throughout the war enabled us to accomplish results . . . On the whole, the safeguarding of American soldiers on the ocean was an achievement of the American navy . . . And in performing this great feat the American navy fulfilled its ultimate duty in the war. The transporting of these American troops brought the great struggle to an end.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Sims, *The Victory at Sea*, 366.