

**Excerpts from “Sea Diary of Charles Augustus Sauerwine of Pennsylvania, Electrician 1<sup>st</sup> Class, USN, 1917 – 1918, Destroyer, Convoy Duty**

*Sent to SoWP by the late Alan Douglas of Massachusetts and transcribed by Bob Rydzewski*

*[Note: This xeroxed copy of a handwritten original logbook lists only one author (Sauerwine) but contains at least 3 distinct styles of handwriting. The first section, on radio reception of various stations in various places in 1914, predates his start of Navy service (May 6, 1917) and so was probably the logbook of a radioman preceding him on the USS Missouri, his first ship. A section in the second type of handwriting relates the unknown writer’s experience in being on the first US Navy destroyer to transit the Panama Canal on the way to the 1915 Pan Pacific Exposition in San Francisco (also predating Sauerwine). Beginning in 1917, Sauerwine then used the remaining blank pages for his own personal, non-official sea diary. Or at least that’s our best guess. Most grammatical, punctuation, and capitalization errors are in the original, though some arose during transcription. I had no desire to plaster this document with [sic]s when the writer had more pressing concerns than what casual readers might notice a century later. We begin with the 1914 radio reception tests by the unknown radioman...]*

The contents of this book gives the audibility readings taken on various radio stations together with other characteristics of each station as observed by this vessel during the European Cruise of Practice Squadron covering the period from June 10<sup>th</sup> 1914 to August 10, 1914.

The apparatus used at time of securing all data consists of Wireless Specialty Apparatus type IP76 – 1912 type, using galena detector, 2400 Ohm headphones, Wireless Spec type, and amplifier. The resistance used for audibility readings is of the Evershite type, 9999 ohms direct reading, and is part of the “Bridge Megger” outfit.

In every case when obtainable, audible readings were taken on received signals direct from the I.P. Receiver as well as with Amplifier in Rec circuit.

	<b>Radio Station</b>	<b>Page</b>
Sayville, L.I.	WSL	1
Cape Cod Mass.	WCC	5
Cape Race, N.F.	VCE	8
Arlington, Va.	NAA	10
Key West, Fla.	NAR	30
Phila. Pa.	NAI	50
Norfolk, Va.	NAM	52
Newport, R.I.	NAF	54
Poldhu, Eng.	MPD	57
Eiffel Tower, Paris	FL	65
Clifton, Ireland		70
Norddeich, Germany	KAV	72
Gibraltar	BYW-(Z)	74
Flores - Azores	CRD	76
Cadiz, Spain	EAC	78
USS South Carolina	NSW	66

*[Here are some representative audibility test readings that appear later in the book...]*

Arlington, Va. NAA

**June 11, 1914**

1:10 PM ship time, June 11<sup>th</sup> rec'd time signal. Signals just audible using amplifier.

3:18PM ship time, rec'd signals from Arlington

2:00 PM schedule, signals very clear using amplifier. Signals just audible on receiver. Following "OFM" intercepted from Arlington to New York (NAH).

Govt Comofficer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery.

Your radiogram of tenth received. In order to make tests of working wireless apparatus as complete as possible hope you will send when practicable messages for me direct to Arlington Naval Radio Station. Congratulate you on good work in getting New York.

*S?[illegible] 3:27PM*

Distance 950 miles from Arlington, daylight...

**July 5<sup>th</sup>**

3:30 AM ship time. Enroute Naples for Gibraltar heard Arlington – 10:00 PM time signal readable but interference prevented copying HSWB wind report. No shunt reading.

Distance 3900 miles...

### **Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1:35AM ship time, 3:00 AM Greenwich time. Received time signal and wind reports from Arlington. Shunt with amplifier. 110 Ohms.

Distance 4545 miles...

Key West, Fla. NAR

### **Aug 7<sup>th</sup>**

3:23 AM ship time – 1:04 AM. Heard NAR answer NAA on 1:00 AM (75<sup>th</sup> time) schedule – signals fair. Did not have time sufficient to take shunt reading.

Distance 2040 miles...

Gibraltar “BYW” North Front

The large station aerial is of the fan type and is suspended from the top of Rock. This station has same schedule of sending every half hour on the half and hour using about 3000 wave length. The duration of sending lasting about ½ minute on the average. The signals at schedule time as in the manner given.

A-HS-NQ-WX? 42A-HS-NQ-WX-2300-HS-NQ-WX-VSD – Washington House voted authorize sale battleships Mississippi, Idaho, Greece: Athens understood Greece accepts – Turkey’s proposal for reinstatement compensation refugees – Admiralty announces creation naval air service with own ranks distinct uniform civilians permitted enter direct overtakes coast guard service where air coast guard stations same place – Forbes Premier Baron Scotland found dead throat cut Hotel Dundee – Liner Gothland on shore rocks near Land’s End and feared total loss eight hundred passengers transferred another steamer – 1431 – 1431 – Z

June 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:05 PM ship time

*[Here follows the section about the transit through the newly-opened Panama Canal in 1915]*

The first battleships to make the passage of the Panama Canal and the Official Opening of this monument to present day achievement was the occasion for unrestrained celebration on the part of the Army and Navy Officialdom in the Canal zone today when the three ships Comprising the midshipmen’s practice Squadron, The Missouri, The Ohio, and the Wisconsin passed through enroute to the Panama Pacific exposition.

The day was one of intense thrills and incomparable admiration for all on board and not until the rolling swells of the Pacific bore the Squadron out to sea did the excitement abate to a normal level.

The emotions experienced by all were of Varied nature. Paramount perhaps was the pride of the native land that had made possible the Completion of such a Colossal task. Keen appreciation of the military strategy involved and the immense general benefits evolving on the world at large were borne in upon the immigration.

The three ships proceeded individually from Colon and gathered in Gatun Lake 85 feet above the sea level on the night preceding their trip through the Canal. Bright and early the following morning the crew turned to decorating the ships for the guests of honor who were to take passage on board the Squadron. Through the Canal a profusion of tropical palms combined with flags and bunting soon transformed the Grim Men of War into Veritable palm gardens. The Visiting parties Consisted of Army and Navy Officials, representatives of the Government of Panama and Civil Officials of the Canal Zone. At Ten O'clock the squadron weighed anchor and forming column with Missouri as the leading ship headed toward the source of Gatun Lake. This Body of Water, the Keynote of the Canal which furnishes Water supply to the locks, is one of the most interesting features.

It is for the most part artificial as the water level has been raised by damming the outlet and many miles of the surrounding Country have thus been inundated. Shortly before noon, the towers of the Darien Wireless Station marking the mid-point of the Canal were sighted and at noon the Squadron hove to abreast of the station and fired a National Salute of 21 guns. Here the ship remained until after the dinner hour while all hands tumbled below for the mid-day meal.

At one o'clock the Squadron was underway again and within half an hour had passed the Chagres River at the head of Gatun Lake and were headed up Gamboa Reach toward Culebra Cut where are quartered the fifth, tenth, and 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry and other Units making a complement of more than seven thousand men. As the ships nosed their way through the cut throngs of soldiers which thronged the Bands(?) set up shout conveying with it the thrill of Victory. Suddenly a hush settled over all as the strains of the Star Spangled Banner rose above the cheers, and every one stiffened to attention, rendering homage to their Country and Service after which a pandemonium of human Voices broke forth giving vent to the emotion stirring within them, which the Regimental and ships Bands played Dixie, Yankee Doodle, and other characteristic American standbys.

Approximately the trip through the Canal was accomplished in nine hours, as ample time was given to examine minutely each characteristic of the mechanisms controlling the workings of the Canal. Two hours of Slow Steaming after leaving the Pacific Breakwater and the Squadron was headed out to Sea. The passage of the Panama Canal by an American Battleship had been accomplished, an action which was forever burned in the memory of all present.

*[We now proceed to the section of the logbook that is clearly all by Sauerwine.]*

**C.A. Sauerwine  
35 S. Ninth St.  
Allentown, Pa.  
40 33 N, 75 32 W**

<b>Names of former German vessels</b>	
Vaterland	Leviathan
Kronprinzessin Cecilie	Mt. Vernon
Kaiser Willhelm II	Agamemnon
Amerika	America
Hamburg	Powhatan
Grosser Kurfurst	Aeolus
Koenig Willhelm II	Madawaska
Neckar	Antigone
Rhein	Susquehanna
Princess Irene	Pocahontas
Frederick der Grosse	Huron
Barbarossa	Mercury

**USS Missouri  
C.A. Sauerwine  
Elec 3c (R.)  
Elec 2c July.27.17  
Elec 1c Nov 1, 17  
Elec 2c Jan 8, 18  
Elec 1c March 1, 18  
Elec 2c May 13, 18**

List of Numbers and Names of Torpedo Boats and Destroyers		
1 - Cambridge	26 – Perkins	51 – Obrien
2 - Barry	27 – Sterett	52 – Nicholson
3 - Chauncey	28 – McCall	53 – Winslow
4 – Dale	29 – Burrows	54 – McDougal
5 - Decatur	30 – Warrington	55 – Cushing
6 - Hopkins	31 – Mayrant	56 – Ericsson
7 - Hull	32 – Monaghan	57 – Tucker
8 - Laurence	33 – Trippe	58 – Coynham
9 - McDonough	34 – Walke	59 – Porter
10 – Paul Jones	35 – Ammen	60 – Wadsworth
11 - Perry	36 – Patterson	61 – J. Jones
12 - Preble	37 – Fanning	62 – Wainsright
13 - Stewart	38 – Jarvis	63 – Sampson
14 - Truxton	39 – Henley	64 – Rowan
15 - Whipple	40 – Beale	65 – Davis
16 - Worden	41 – Jouett	66 – Allen
17 - Smith	42 – Jenkins	67 – Wilkes
18 – Lamson	43 – Cassin	68 – Shaw
19 - Preston	44 – Cummings	69 – Caldwell
20 – Flusser	45 – Downs	70 – Craven
21 – Reid	46 – Duncan	71 – Givin
22 – Paulding	47 – Alywin	72 – Conner
23 – Drayton	48 – Parker	73 – Stockton
24 – Roe	49 – Benham	74 - Manley
25 - Terry	50 - Balch	

*[There follows address from the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, that would be unimaginable today. Most likely the message was sent in code and transcribed on the ship. It is chronologically out of order with the daily logs that follow it.]*

Brooklyn, N.Y. Twelve Alnav. March 1, 1918.

The President, Commander in Chief, of the Army and Navy, has issued the following order: “The President, Commander in Chief, of the Army and Navy, following the reverent example of his predecessors, desires and enjoins the orderly observance of the Sabbath by the Officers and

Men in the Military and Naval Service of the United States. The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian Soldiers and Sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiment of a Christian people and a due regard for the Divine Will, demand that Sunday labor in the Army and Navy be reduced to the measure of strict necessity. Such an observance of Sunday is dictated by the best traditions of our people and by the convictions of all who look to Divine Providence for guidance and protection, and in repeating in this order the language of President Lincoln, the President is confident that he is speaking alike to the hearts and to the conscience of those under his authority." (Signed) Woodrow Wilson.

*[The bulk of the C.A.Saurwine's diary then follows...]*

### **Radio Shack of C.A. Sauerwine, Elec 3c (R)**

**March 12, 17**

Philadelphia Navy Yards, Pa:

Came on board, looked over set, pretty bad condition, dirty shack. Yard workman took out Radiation Ammeter. Ship taken out of dry dock 1PM.

**March 13, 17**

Looked over antenna, 1 – 18" insulator in guy of main antenna missing, also, turnbuckle broken. 6 volt Edison Storage cell put on charge. R.A. brought back Edison battery taken off charge next AM.

**March 14, 17**

Made chart of taps taken for different wavelengths of oscillation transformer and loading inductance, changed hammock. Weather report copied from N.A.A.

**March 15, 17**

Introduced by Gunner Delaney to new Gunner by name of Dougherty. Copied from Arlington, N.A.A. **(Over throw of Russian Government)**

**March 16, 17**

Scrubbed paint work over whole shack for Captains inspection. Copied weather report from NAI (!) and N.A.A.

**March 17, 17**

Started Motor-Generator for first time. Bearings heat quickly. Removed and cleaned out the dash pot of Auto Starter. Captains inspection at 11:45...

**March 19, 17**

Dusted Radio shack and scrubbed paint work. Looked over Motor-Generator, requires Generator shaft oil well. Took Auto Starter resistance units out and measured same #1-2. 21

ohms R. #3-4, 34 ohms R. (#3 end connection lug torn off) #5 362 ohms R. General quarters and master. 10 new recruits sworn in by Captain Jacobs. Recruits from Atlantic City gotten by new system of sending out recruiting parties from ship...

**Thursday, April 5, 17**

Stood 6 to 12 PM watch at NAI worked NCL(?)

**Friday, April 6, 17**

Went on liberty at 6:00 PM. **Received ASTA at 10 PM of Presidents sig to Decl. of War.**

**Saturday, April 7, 17**

Captains inspection, scrubbed clothes. Dead man, german, of interned ships fished out of water in back channel alongside *Ohio*...

**July 20, 17**

\$17.00 coming. Draw \$2.00. Took examination for 2<sup>nd</sup> class. Signed up August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1917. Effective since July 27, 17. Which gives me a total pay of \$44 + 8 = \$52 per month...

**August 18, 17**

Draw \$15. (Layed over at Charlottesville, Va. And Atlanta Georgia)

**Tuesday, August 22, 17**

Transferred to the *U.S.S. Los Angeles* lying at New Orleans. Made trip south by L.I. Railroad to Penna station (N.Y.) Penna Railroad to Washington. Stayed in Wasn. Till next morning. Left 9:00 for New Orleans. Arrived at 11:45.

**August 25, 17**

(Tanker) Arc equipment, no spark. Set had been sealed up. Met gunner Delaney who was formerly on the *Missouri*.

**Wednesday August 29, 17**

After 3 day hard work had set in commission. Continuous oscillations are broken up by a chopper so that on 300, 600 meters it can be read on ordinary spark receiver. NAT said spark was fine on 300 and 600. 12 to 4 watch. Receiver not working however. Found ground lead disconnected...

**September 21, 17**

Left Norfolk, Va. at noon and anchored off the Capes. Underway **the 22<sup>nd</sup>** 6:00 AM. Rough weather. After 3 days calm weather came until about **Oct 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>**.

**Oct. Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>, 17**

5:30 PM. Torpedo passed to port by about 15 yards. 2 torpedoes hit ship Champagne (convoying ship) and sunk her in about 7 ½ minutes. The ship which was sunk was a large 4 mast, single funnel ship and acted as convoy for the bunch of ships (between 25 and 30 in number) from the time we left Norfolk Va. for sea (Sept 22, 6 AM) until the time she was sunk (Oct 10, 5:30 PM) somewhere south of England. Just at noon of Oct 10, 17 about half of the

ships parted company for France. This left us with a total of 11 vessels and several English destroyers (our destroyers left us to convoy the other ships to France, those that had left us at noon). It was about 5:25 PM when seated at the table in the mess hall that I heard two shots strike with a dull thud (or rather explosions) which made the ship vibrate. At the first shot I thought a door or hatch cover had been slammed shut but at the second shot I ran out off the mess hall and to the upper deck where I saw a group looking forward the starboard bow (I afterwards learned that the four master had been torpedoed being struck midships and aft.) When I came on deck I noticed that the four master was down, lower aft than usual but did not think anything of it as a ship when going fast takes such a position. General alarm was then sounded and I immediately took up my position in the Radio room relieving the other operator on watch and half an hour later I heard that the four master went down astern after several boilers exploded, and that we narrowly escaped being torpedoed by about 15 yards.

The English destroyers we had as convoying vessels were doing a lot of scouting duty far ahead and on the sides but there were none astern, and which no doubt gave the submarines (there were no doubt 2 or more as 4 torpedoes are said to have been seen, 1 fired at a destroyer, 1 at us and two at the four-master vessel)- a chance of submerging and then rising just at the time we reached that spot where they had submerged. We of course put on full speed and after a restless night which was as dark as the color black itself, we continued our voyage at full speed and reached Dover, England at 5:40 PM (ships time was about 5:50 PM) G.M.T. Oct 11, 17 Thursday...

### **November 11, 17**

Church call was just sounded on the bugle. I guess I will attend, even though I am busy writing a letter to Mother...

### **December 1, 17 (Plymouth, England)**

About noon the 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Engineer Mr. Murray and the Paymaster went ashore to purchase fresh water for our storage, during that time word was received to sail and our sailing was delayed until they had come aboard. In the meantime destroyers had preceded us out and some of them returned it is said because of submarines lying off the port. Toward evening we sailed and were making just about 6-7 knots and I had just mentioned to the other fellows in the mess hall that at the speed we were making we were bound to be torpedoed. No sooner said than done. I had just walked back to the Radio room when two explosions about 30 seconds apart and one about a minute later rent the air. The night was pitch dark and we considered ourselves safe, but alas they had mined one vessel of our convoy. One the Bide(?) SOS but once, the *[illegible]* of *[illegible]* in communication with GLD for about 2 hrs. before she sent a message stating that the crew was in boats please send destroyer to recovery same position 49.50 4.40. The Mesabo a tanker even though she was hit was more lucky as she still is afloat this morning (**Dec 6, 17**). A little later during the evening I heard an SOS from the KYM (not listed in the call book) stating Armenia torpedoed crew in boats 20 miles east Stark Point. Nothing further happened during the night and I am on 8 to 12 watch again this morning.

## **December 6, 17**

At 9:00 PM S.T. 9:10 G.M.T. I heard the SOS of the U.S.S. Jacob Jones as follows; U.S.S. Jacob Jones torpedoed 49 degrees 25 min N, 06 degrees 22 min W at 2006 at 8:00 PM. Survivors on board three life rafts still at large. On this same day and several afterward SOS calls were heard until we were fairly out of the war zone.

We had an uneventful trip outside of running into a barge with some structural steel aboard it. We had some target practice firing at the barge. 96 shots we fired at it, about 60 were hits but it did not sink. We broadcasted a warning of obstruction. This happened on **December 17<sup>th</sup>**...

Left for home on **December 22<sup>nd</sup>** on 24 hr liberty and returned on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Left for home on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>, returned to the ship on the 28<sup>th</sup> and worked on the 29<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) and the 30<sup>th</sup> and left on the evening of the 31<sup>st</sup> for home again and stayed over New Year. I was given a membership in the New Y.M.C.A. by Mrs. Steinhouser. During this stay I saw "The Silent Witness" another good play. I returned to the ship on the **5<sup>th</sup> of January** at noon and was placed on the report and given a raking over the coals... On **January 8<sup>th</sup> 1918** disrated to 2 c Elec. for being overleave about four days. On **January 15** set sail for hell knows where... On the evening of **January 30<sup>th</sup> '18** we came in sight of a lighthouse off the coast of Scotland (9:30 PM). Thus far we were not even attacked by any submarines...

Today **February 13, '18** I went up to request mast to change my rating to General Elec and transfer to the aviation branch of the service. Was told to make out a letter stating all my qualifications and if it was suitable it would be turned in to Washn. I made out a letter and turned it in... **March 4** we set sail for Port Arthur, Texas, **5<sup>th</sup>** we were paid. I drew \$25. My old rating Elec 1c was given back to me **March 1, 1918**... On **April 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday** a ship was torpedoed but did not sink, it carried women and children. Nothing else happened outside of the torpedoing of a tanker... We arrived in Plymouth [England] on the eve of **April 13<sup>th</sup>**.

On **the 14<sup>th</sup>** I went on an overnight liberty and had a good time. **On the 15<sup>th</sup>** went on liberty again from 1 to 8 PM had date but no overnight liberty so I did not have any good time. On **the 16<sup>th</sup>** set sail for U.S. at 2 PM. We had pretty fair weather on our return and arrived **May 2, 1918**. Had a liberty of 6 hrs on **May 3<sup>rd</sup>** on **the 4<sup>th</sup>** went up to ask for my request papers for transfer, change of rating. Did not get any civil answer from Captain at any time. Made a remark that "I would like to get back to a white man's outfit." Got summary court martial disrated and lost a month's pay. Was prisoner at large from **May 4<sup>th</sup>** to night before we sailed **May 16<sup>th</sup>**...

We arrived in Plymouth on **June 1-2 or 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Tried to make swap with several Electricians on the *Chester* and *Birmingham* but did not succeed. Had a fine time night of **June 5<sup>th</sup>** and **6<sup>th</sup>** with Miss Lucy Chislett. **Friday June 7<sup>th</sup>** set sail for U.S.A... On **June 24<sup>th</sup>** I managed to get 5 day furlough the first I had since I am aboard this bastard's packet. Had fine time home. Aunt Sarah prepared a fine chicken dinner for me. Sorry to see her go to such trouble for me... On **July 4<sup>th</sup>** we set sail for hell knows where and enjoyed ? the rottenest meal I have yet struck in a little over 2 years that I have been in the service, namely hardtack, sour corn(?), rotten meat and no bread or fries...

**July 16<sup>th</sup>** was down in sick bay to have my ear doctored as it was sore inside. Doc Cunningham spoke in Philipino lingo (at least so he said) and asked whether I understood what he had said. I

said no, but if he would say it in German I might be able to understand it. He said that language is no damn good. I said it was a good language as good or better than the english. Result put on the report. Shipmates (?). **Never!** Charges not sustained at the mast...

**July 18<sup>th</sup>** destroyer dropped several depth charges, general alarm no further excitement. We are going to France. Case of measles aboard... Passed quarantine **July 19<sup>th</sup>**. Today we reached Brest, France many miles from home but it certainly was a welcome sight to see the pretty hills yellow with grain and the calm appearance of Brest did not give a person any idea that a war was raging on the battlefields but 350 miles away... Tried to make swap with operators and destroyers and succeeded on the **28<sup>th</sup> of July**. Made swap with J. Berkel(?) Elec 2c U.S.S. *O'Brien*, destroyer 51. Same day left port at 4 PM.