

Vinalhaven Historical Society

41 High Street, P.O. Box 339

Vinalhaven, Maine 04863

Phone: 207-865-4410 Email: vhhissoc@myfairpoint.net

Web Page: www.vinalhavenhistoricalsociety.org

Annual Newsletter 2012

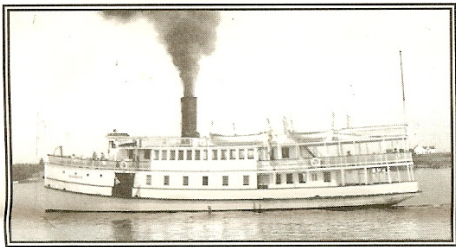
A Salute to the Men and Women of WWII

In Praise of Those Who So Proudly Served Our Country

We salute the men and women of Vinalhaven who served our country so bravely during WWII. We are pleased to be honoring them in our 2012 Newsletter and Summer Exhibit.

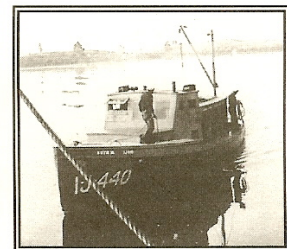
When the United States entered the war in December 1941, Vinalhaven, like so many other towns across the country, responded immediately and resolutely to the call to service. Within months our community was stripped of most of its young men; those who were drafted, or volunteered, and those who went to work in war industries. With so many of our young men gone, women and older men were left to carry on in the face of hardship and uncertainty. Women did their part by managing the Civil Defense Lookout Tower on Armbrust Hill, making surgical dressings for the Red Cross, knitting woolen scarves for the soldiers and tending to love ones who remained behind.

During the next several months many island families moved to Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut to work in factories to help with the war effort. Children were uprooted from their homes and small school to go with their parents to larger towns and schools, which was intimidating to many. However most met the challenge effortlessly, as is evidenced by stories told by many of those who left the island during that time.



So many changes came to our island. The daily round trips of our mail and passenger boat, the W.S. White (pictured left), was cut off when the government decided to take her to be used as a troop carrier.

For several months local fishermen stepped up to help, but the expense and danger was too much to keep up with. Charles Phillbrook captaining his own boat, the Ruth M. (pictured right), provided all necessary services to islanders for about a year and a half despite many challenges.



Nighttime blackouts were mandatory. Older men assigned as air raid wardens patrolled designated areas of town to enforce all blackout regulations.

Islanders took their duties seriously and unflinchingly, each doing their part in serving and helping to protect their country.

Our summer exhibit will try to recapture the atmosphere of that era and highlight the difficulties of the war years through artifacts and stories. Despite the fact that the island was an isolated community it was never isolated from the consequences and importance of the war.



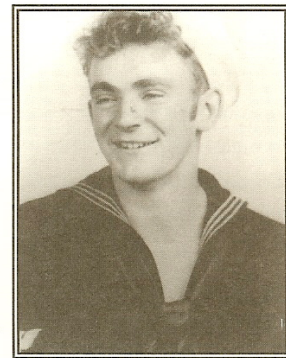
Ivan H. Olson of Vinalhaven Training for Duty on Landing Ship

Ivan H. Olson, a resident of Vinalhaven and second son of the Olson's now serving with the U.S. Navy, has been chosen to serve aboard an LSM (Landing Ship, Medium), the Speed Carrier of Attack that has been especially developed for Pacific duty. Now stationed at the Amphibious Training Base in Little Creek, Virginia, Olson is going through the vigorous training program to prepare for duty as Boatswain's Mate on the swift new invasion vessel. The amphibious ship on which the Vinalhaven resident will serve has been designed with a shallow draft that enables it to negotiate the coral reefs of the Pacific islands. It crosses the ocean with its cargo of tanks and machines and discharges them directly onto enemy-held shores over its landing-ramp bow. Olson was engaged in the wholesale fish business before he joined the Navy in

July of this year. He is a former student of Vinalhaven High School. William, his brother, is a Motor Machinist's First Mate Second Class, USNR, and is now on duty overseas. (Rockland Courier Gazette-1944)

Leslie B. Dyer Jr.-Helmsman for the Destroyer *Hancock*

Leslie B. Dyer Jr. enlisted November 10, 1941 and was called for duty December 16, 1941. For 23 months he served with 38-58 Task Force in the Pacific on the Destroyer *Lewis Hancock* and was a helmsman, steering the great ship. He was in many battles; his ship received many medals. His ship survived the Typhoon of December 17-19, 1944, when many other ships and men were lost. Les' leg was badly injured during a kamikaze attack off Okinawa, and he was taken by naval transport to the VA Hospital in San Francisco, and from there to the VA Hospital in Corvallis, Oregon-finally being sent to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital, where he was a patient for a year. He was discharged February 6, 1946. His leg was amputated at Togus in 1960.



Just before the typhoon struck, the fleet of ships was ordered to fuel up, but 80 mph winds made it a difficult, almost impossible task. One ship, *Spence*, had tried four times to connect with the fuel hose, but was unsuccessful. When it was time for the *Hancock* to fuel up, the helmsman expertly guided the ship to the fuel hose. Impressed by what he had seen, General Halsey called the Captain to give "compliments to your helmsman." The Captain of the *Hancock* replied, "Captain Halsey, you have to understand I have a Down East clam digger on the wheel." That clam digger was Leslie B. Dyer, Jr. (Written by Les Dyer's wife, Emily)

Miss Elizabeth Gray Has Joined the Army Nursing Service as 2nd Lieutenant



A demure young woman sat in the lobby of the Thorndike Hotel Saturday afternoon, awaiting the departure of the early afternoon train. The young lady was Miss Elizabeth Gray of Vinalhaven, bound for Camp Devens to become a member of a nursing unit, and transferred to-well, your guess is as good as ours, or hers. Miss Gray is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Gray, and graduated from Vinalhaven in 1934. She trained for nursing at St. Barnabas Hospital in Portland, and has lately been on staff at Boston Children's Hospital. A desire to be of greater service in this new world war led her to try admittance in the Navy, but some technicality prevented it, and now she's in the Army, destined to be a very popular and efficient member of some nursing unit. (March 20, 1942 Courier Gazette)

To Summer Guests Editor of the Courier Gazette

Visitors are here now in the so-called dim-out and sky-glow area and it is imperative that all cooperate with the Army and Navy in keeping lights curtailed to a minimum in order to stop silhouetting of ships at sea. We know summer residents will cooperate with the Civilian Defense organization and draw curtains when lighting room lights to deflect the direct light which is causing considerable sky-glow and jeopardizing merchant men.

Also it is illegal in Maine to take photographs for the duration of the war. Anyone taking pictures will be apprehended.

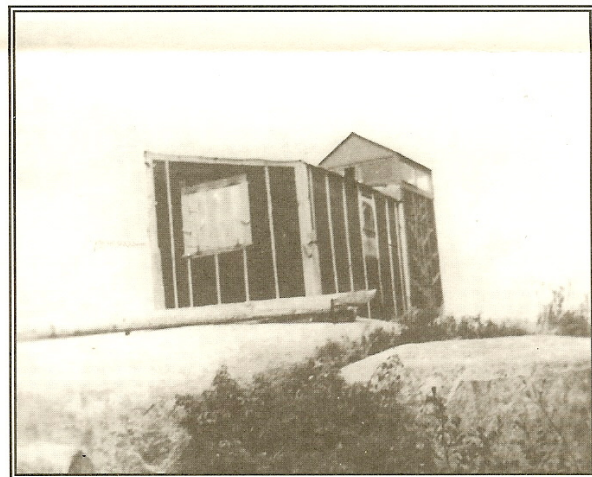
We hope the summer colony will enjoy themselves while here and feel that they will cooperate 100% so that boys in the Army, the Navy, the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marines may have a better chance for their lives. Thank you.

Harland Townsend
Local Coordinator

Vinalhaven July 8, 1942

The Lookout Tower on Armbrust Hill

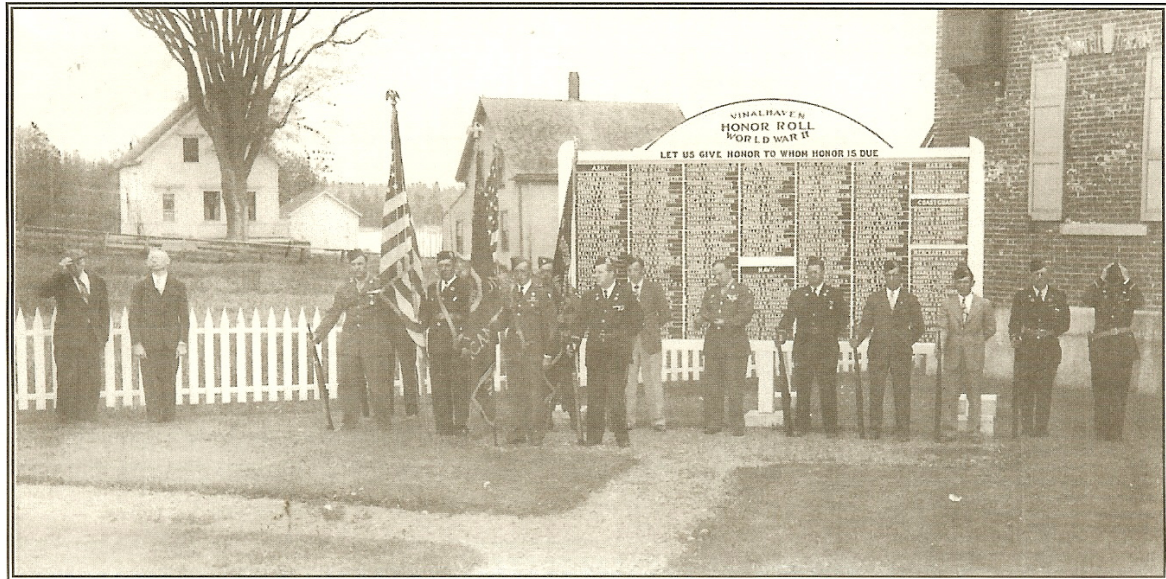
Sidney Winslow recorded in his diary on April 5, 1942...“I went walking in the afternoon during which time I visited the new Civilian Defense Lookout Station at Kittredge Hill.” By May 12 the facility was manned by volunteers whose assignment was to watch for unusual activity in the air and at sea. Anything suspicious was to be reported immediately to the civil defense switchboard in Bangor. Women, in pairs, worked three hour shifts during the day and older men and male high school students covered the night watches. (“Aunt” Caddie Vaughn, pictured)



English Doctor Comes to Vinalhaven to Temporarily Replace Local Doctor

Dr. Ralph P. Earle began his practice in Vinalhaven in 1937. When he decided to enter the war effort by joining the U.S. Medical Corps in 1942, many islanders were concerned about the loss of their good doctor. A national search was immediately put in place to find someone to fill the position. Dr. Ana Balfour and her two children answered the call and came to the island for the duration of the war.

Dr. Balfour and her family had lived on the Isle of Wight before the war started, but when German planes bombed the island in 1942, she and her husband knew it was unsafe for the family to remain. Dr. Balfour and her children left for America. The family stayed with friends in North Carolina for more than a year. After unsuccessfully finding work in the south, a job offer came from a tiny island off the coast of Maine. Dr. Ana Balfour became Vinalhaven's doctor from 1942-1945. As she had lost a leg in an air raid in England, Dr. Ana Balfour could not maneuver an automobile. Many islanders recall times driving her to patient's homes, and during the winter, Dr. Balfour's children could be seen pulling their mother on a sled to her office or home visits. A copy of a journal written by Dr. Balfour's daughter about their stay in Vinalhaven is on file at the museum.



Vinalhaven's World War II Honor Roll LET US GIVE HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE

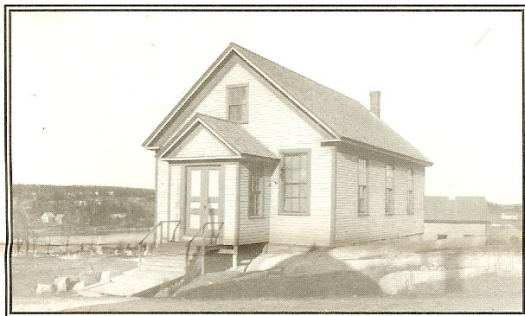
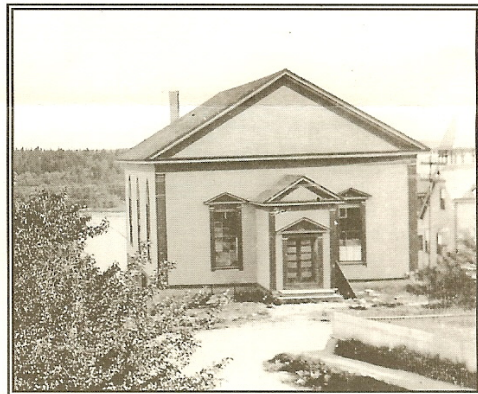
Vinalhaven's honor roll stood on the green by the town bank for almost 20 years. Made of wood and built in 1944, the original structure had the names of 229 men and women who were serving and/or were killed up to that time. By war's end the number had climbed to 265. A gold star was placed next to those who had lost their lives. Little is known about the decision to build the structure, but it is said that Ernest "Brud" Clayter and Sidney Winslow painted the names. In 1963, because of its deteriorating condition, the honor roll was torn down. Apparently all of it was destroyed and nothing of the original remains today. In its place stands a granite tablet with two bronze plaques. The top bears a star with the words "In Memoriam WWI, WWII Veterans, Vinalhaven, Maine" and the base "Korean War 1950-55, Vietnam War 1964-75. Dedicated Proudly by a Grateful Citizenry 1979 AD".

Vinalhaven Historical Society's Mission Statement

"The purpose of our organization is to collect, identify, preserve, exhibit, interpret and make available for education and research, information and artifacts which illuminate the history of Vinalhaven and its families from its beginning to the present.

Annual Appeal

As the Vinalhaven Historical Society readies for its 45th season in the "old Town Hall", we remember those who decades ago were responsible for an organization to collect and house Vinalhaven's rich history. Back in 1963, a small group of islanders, under the direction of Raymond Sennett, realized the importance of preserving Vinalhaven's rich history. Collected artifacts were housed elsewhere temporarily, until such time a permanent display area could be found. Incorporated in 1965, with Elliot Hall as its first President, the Vinalhaven Historical Society became a reality. Two years later the town leased the "old Town Hall" to the society and since then we have become a permanent part of this community.



Our collections have grown over the years, with the overflow now housed in the old Advent Chapel (Boy Scout Hall, pictured left). The cost of maintaining two buildings, preserving the contents in a relevant way, meeting daily operating expenses and offering genealogical and research services far exceeds our budget. We are not financed in any way through town funds (though town money was appropriated last year to help cover the cost of extensive structural repair). All expenses must be covered through our annual appeal, new memberships, contributing visitors and special gifts. We are proud of our facility and urge you to visit. We thank you for being part of our growing organization. Please consider a donation to your museum today. Help us keep the past alive for future generations!

We would like to thank all who so generously give artifacts, photos, ephemera and other items to the museum. We gladly accept any Vinalhaven related item. Please remember us when you clean out your attic, barn or home. Often historically valuable items go to the landfill. Perhaps that box of old letters, receipts or photos you think no one would want, may actually contain pieces of our island's history.

**2012
SUMMER SCHEDULE**

June 12 - September 8
Daily-Noon to 5:00
Call 207-863-4410 for Appointment

SUMMER EXHIBIT-2012
A Salute to the Men and Women Who Served in WWII
A Collection of Local Stories, Photos and Memorabilia



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William D. Chilles, President
Wyman Philbrook, Vice-Pres.
Lorraine Bunker, Secretary
Jean Thompson, Treasurer
Dallas Anthony
Joseph Bickford

Chandler Blackington
Roy Heisler
Jim McDonald
Astrid Philbrook
Torry Pratt
Priscilla Rosen

Jacob Thompson
Marion Tolman
Roger Young
Marion Carver, Emeritus
Susan Radley, Exec. Director