



"MIGHTY Z" TRIBUNE

*The History and Restoration of the
Salvage Tug Zuni-Tamaroa*

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IT'S A SMALL WORLD!!

By Henry Helgesen and Bill Doherty



TAMAROA Unit
Patch - from the
1980's.

I have spent the better part of a year writing an article about the beginnings of the restoration effort on the Zuni-Tamaroa. It was finally published in March of this year in the Journal *Sea History*. While corresponding with the editor, she informed me that in the same issue with my article, there would be an article about the first use of wireless aboard ship. The author was Henry Helgesen, also of the Tamaroa. You could have knocked me over with a feather, for Henry Helgesen was the XO of the Tam when I was a lowly deck ape on board her. Long story short, Captain Helgesen and I traded a few emails back and forth. One memorable event he participated in was a patrol with a congressional delegation.

"It was forty years ago, 14 August 1967, that the Tam, while on patrol, got orders to pick up Congressman James J. Howard and staff along with Undersecretary of Transportation for International Affairs. Thirty newsmen and cameramen, also came along We picked them up in Staten Island. I was commanding on patrol and took them to the location of the diving operations off the New Jersey Coast. This was the sunken tanker diving operation whose purpose was to determine if any of the tankers that had been sunk off the coast in WWII still had residual oil in them, potentially harming the water and surrounding environment. We took them to the diving platform and location. The results indicated that all of the oil had left the ships over the years.

The entire crew did a great job impressing the Congressman, the Under Secretary and the press. The buffet luncheon, served on the fantail, was a great success and tasty. Very festive! After we cleared the dock at Staten Island to return on patrol; I complimented all via the IMC system."

Note: amongst the crew of the late 60's, Captain Helgesen (then XO and LCDR) was well liked and well respected for his ship handling abilities. I remember as a young 20 year old seaman being counseled by him regarding a decision I made to lateral to engineering. At the time the Commander recommended against it, but I requested the transfer to DC school anyway. B.D.

I'll Never Forget That Roll

By Steve Gorsch QM3 1982-84 crew

"The ship had two options...keep going or??..."

We were anchored in Cape Cod Bay riding out a storm when we received a distress call on the "eperb". The call was a fishing boat 300 miles off shore with the net caught in his propeller. We left the bay and had to maneuver northeast to go east. During the night, we were in extremely rough seas and took a heck of a roll. I can describe the roll like this: remember when we were kids we had the bean bag punching bags? The ones that had sand in the bottom and when you hit them, they heeled over and then came back up. If you hit them hard enough, they went over, paused for a bit, and then came back up.

The ship went far enough over to pause. We had two options...keep going or??... and she came back up! Late the next day, we arrived on site, set the tow in motion and began to pull him into Portland, Maine. During the tow operation, it was bitter cold. A day and a half later, we arrived in Maine. As we closed the distance to Portland, we continued to experience rough seas. Waking up the morning we were arriving at Portland, we chipped off nearly 1-1/2 inches of ice from the port side of the ship. Portland, Maine was a welcome site to all those who were out on that search and rescue mission.

I don't think I've ever been as scared as I was that night we took that roll.



Photo by Mark Madden, circa 1990-1992. Sully and Jackson playing a friendly game of poker.



The TAM being towed to Baltimore in fall of 2001

COMMERCIAL IRON WORKS

BY: *Bill Doherty*

The TAMAROA'S life began as a Navy Ocean Going Tug called the ZUNI. She was built at the Commercial Iron works in Portland Oregon. The firm is now defunct, but in its heyday, the yard produced about 200 vessels for the war effort. It was originally founded in 1916 and prior to World War Two, according to Wikipedia only built one ship. A small buoy tender for the Coast Guard.

However, the yard was also known for building ATF's and various types of amphibious landing craft. The ZUNI was built in 1943. We've been in contact with the present owners of the site. Unfortunately, they do not have any records from the World War Two era. The current owner, Zidell Machinery only has records for its own ship breaking business. Both Rich Cunningham and

Contributed by Mark Madden. Coming in to NYC on Special Sea Detail. Déjà vu all over again. Looks exactly as it did in 67. Photo taken 1990-1992.



LCS (Landing craft) under construction at Commercial Iron Works, 21 July 1944
(From Wikipedia)

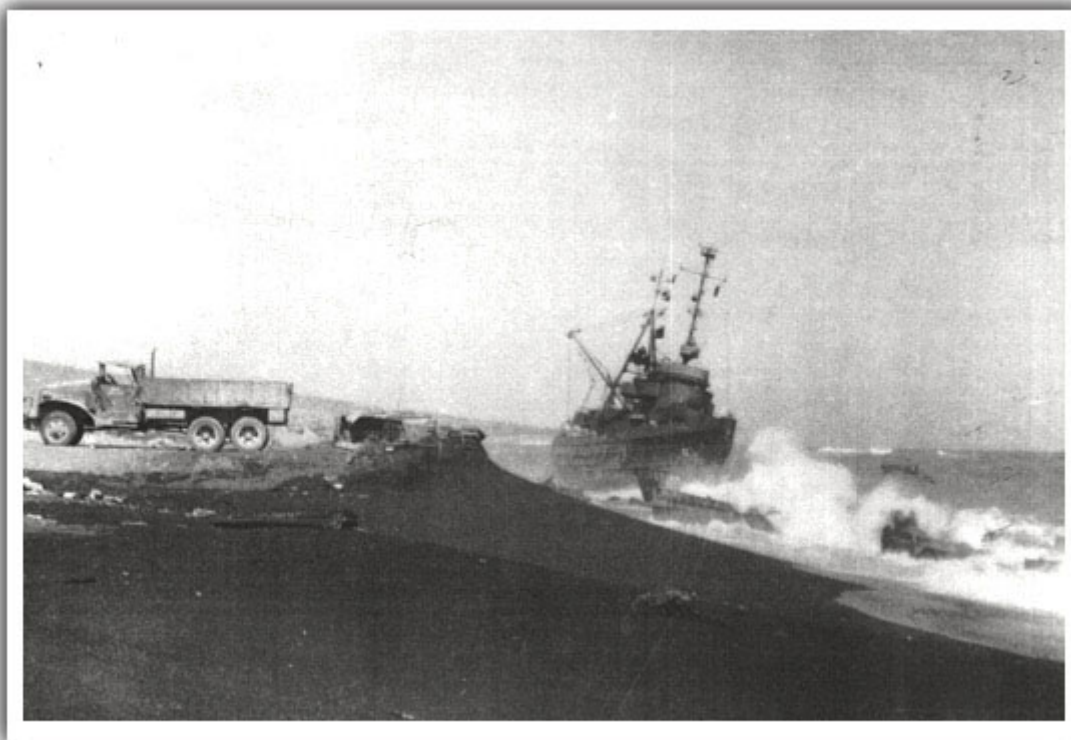
I have been in contact with the Portland Historical Society trying to get copies of photographs of ATF's being built. No such luck to date.



The Present site of Zidell Machinery where once Commercial Iron Works produced hundreds of boats (and the ZUNI) for the war effort. View from the Willamette River by the Ross Island Bridge. Courtesy of William Watson.

ZUNI AND THE SEABEES

We do not know much about some of the finer details regarding Zuni's participation at Iwo Jima. Recently, we received a letter from the Seabee Magazine. They are writing an article about the Zuni at Iwo Jima. We can't confirm it; but, the SeaBees are under the impression that they assisted in the repair of the Zuni's hull. Our Op's Director, Harry Jaeger, referred them to three former Zuni crew members who were on the ship at the time. We know of at least one person saying that the Seabees supplied the concrete but that the ship's crew made the repairs. Below is a photo of the Zuni on Yellow beach, broached and holed. Could that be a Seabee Truck next to it?



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