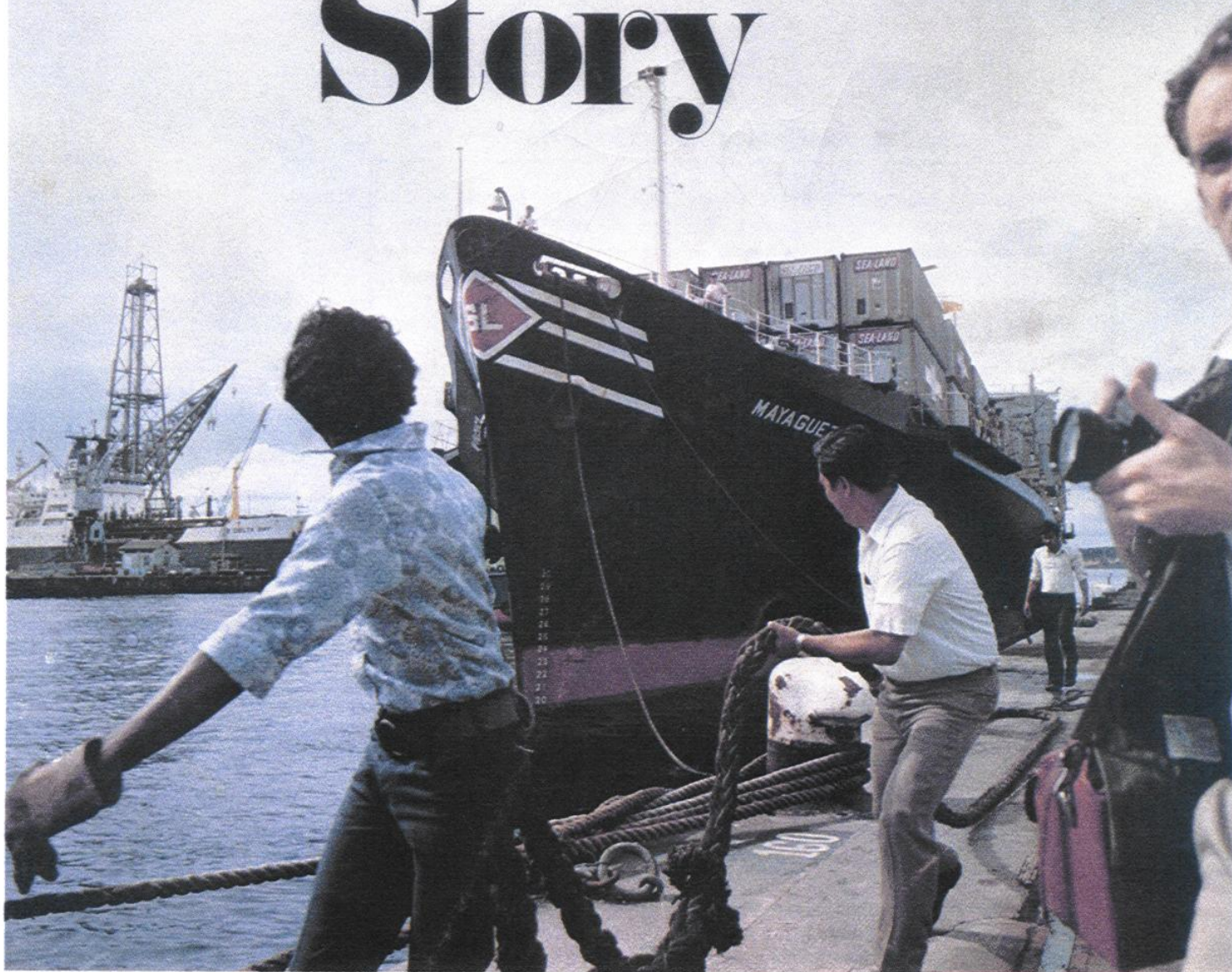


The Mayaguez Story



SEA-LAND SERVICE, INC.



On Monday, May 12, 1975, the S. S. MAYAGUEZ and her crew were steaming north in the Gulf of Siam about 19 hours from Sattahip, Thailand, her destination, in what, up until then could only be described as a very routine voyage.

The sun was shining—the day bright—and the sea smooth—the scene serene—when suddenly a shot was fired across the bow of the MAYAGUEZ and the Sea-Land containership and every one of her crew of 40 were thrust into center stage of the world's attention.

From the time the MAYAGUEZ and her crew were seized on Monday, and through their release on Thursday, people all over the world were anxiously following the hourly dispatches and actions of our government to effect the rescue of the crew and the recovery of the ship.

While history and books will record the details of this episode on the lives of the crew, and the political and military effects of our government's response, we have gathered the highlights of this eventful week in May in this special issue for our employees.

E. N. Gilroy
Editor

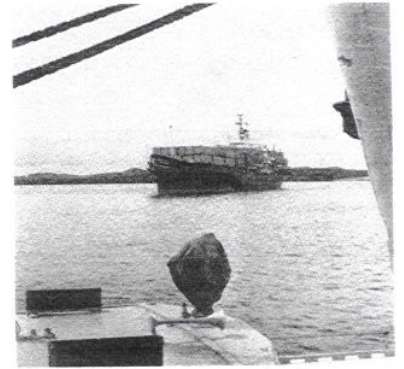
The Mayaguez Story

HER SEIZURE AND RETURN

After steaming serenely for 3½ days—first through the South China Sea and then the Gulf of Siam en route from Hong Kong to Sattahip, Thailand—the saga of the MAYAGUEZ began at 2:18 p.m. local time, Monday, May 12, when a Cambodian gunboat suddenly appeared from behind Poulo Wai, a small island covered by heavy jungle. The MAYAGUEZ was located about 6.5 miles from the island and more than 60 miles from the Cambodian mainland. While approaching the MAYAGUEZ, the gunboat fired anti-aircraft guns and finally sent a rocket over the containership's bow. At this point, Captain Charles T. Miller, Master of the MAYAGUEZ, ordered his radio officer to send an

emergency message: "S.O.S., S.O.S., we are being fired upon and boarded by Cambodians", it read. At the same time, he gave orders to the mate on watch to reduce speed, because as he stated in a subsequent news conference, "Once a man fires across your bow, international law says he can sink you if you don't obey."

Within minutes after the firing, seven Cambodians armed with grenade and rocket launchers, AK47 automatic rifles and a U.S. army field pack radio, boarded the vessel, pointed toward their gunboat and directed Captain Miller to follow it. (Since the crew of the MAYAGUEZ did not understand Cambodian and their Cambodian captors spoke no



The MAYAGUEZ prior to docking in Singapore.

English, all communications had to be accomplished by sign language.) Captain Miller indicated that he would comply with their wishes and follow the gunboat. He did so at about half speed hoping that U.S. military aircraft would soon respond to his message. At about 4 p.m., he dropped anchor off Poulo Wai Island. Soon after, his captors (through charts and sign language) ordered him to proceed to the port of Kompong Som, once known as Sihanoukville, on the Cambodian mainland. As a delaying action to keep the vessel from reaching the Cambodian mainland, the Captain indicated that he could not comply with their wishes because the ship's radar was not functioning properly and that he could not navigate without it in the darkness.

Meanwhile, nine thousand miles away in Washington, D.C., the MAYAGUEZ's S.O.S. message had been relayed to the State Department where it was passed on to Secretary of State Kissinger and subsequently to President Ford who received it about 7:40 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time. President Ford called for a meeting of the National Security Council at noon, and ordered reconnaissance planes to the scene to keep the ship and crew under surveillance. He also issued a statement which read that he considered "this seizure an act of piracy," and warned, "failure to release the ship immediately will



Map shows course taken by MAYAGUEZ en route from Hong Kong to Sattahip and point where she was seized.

have the most serious consequences.”

Turning back to the MAYAGUEZ, at about 6:00 the next morning, the Cambodians directed Captain Miller to proceed to Wharf No. 2 at Kompong Som, but the Captain stalled again, this time claiming the water was too shallow for the passage of the MAYAGUEZ. He somehow conveyed to his captors that his depth finder was calibrated in meters rather than fathoms. The Captain was determined to do his best to prevent his captors from taking them to the mainland of Cambodia because once there, he felt he, his ship and its cargo would be lost forever. He also felt his stalling was “buying time”—time needed for the arrival of the hoped for U.S. planes. Accepting his explanation, the Cambodians directed him to Kas Tang and the Captain weighed anchor and proceeded as directed.

“A launch came alongside with more insurgents, and at 4:00 p.m. May 13, the crew was ordered to get off the ship,” Captain Miller said. “They put us in two fishing boats, one Cambodian and one Thai, escorted by two armed patrol boats which took us to a small cove off Kas Tang Island where we anchored. The island was heavily fortified with 20mm cannons, anti-aircraft guns and rocket throwers.”

Early that evening, a Cambodian officer from one of two gunboats

which tied up alongside the fishing boats, came aboard and wanted to know what was in the locked rooms aboard the MAYAGUEZ. One of the crew members, a steward's utility, who could speak some Cajun French, was able to interpret this interrogation.

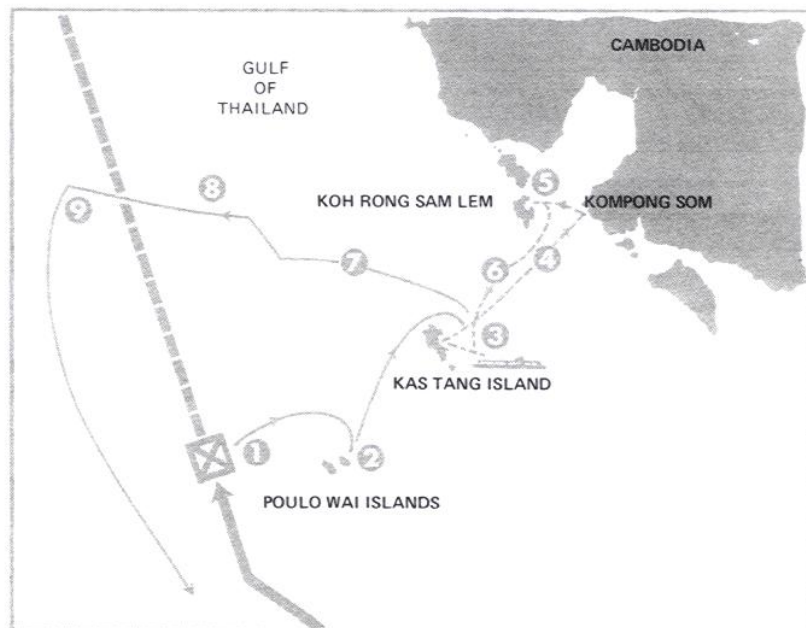
“The chief engineer and I agreed to go back to the ship and open the rooms to show that we had no arms or ammunition or electronic surveillance equipment in the rooms,” Miller said. “We arrived and boarded the MAYAGUEZ as our jets began dropping explosive flares so that they could take pictures of the MAYAGUEZ. This apparently unnerved our captors, because we were removed from the ship without opening the rooms and we slept on the open decks of the fishing boats, while a U.S. reconnaissance plane circled overhead throughout the night.”

At 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 14, the men on the Cambodian fishing boat were placed aboard the Thai fishing boat which was operated by five Thais who had been held prisoner for five months, for fishing in Cambodian waters. As Captain

Miller has stated many times since, “This was the reason the Marines landed on Kas Tang. The Navy reconnaissance plane which had been circling overhead since the previous day saw the crew go in on two fishing boats and only one fishing boat leave the following morning. Our intelligence then believed half of my crew was still on Kas Tang.”

“That voyage was something that this crew will never forget,” Miller said. “Our jets had arrived. They can put a thread through the eye of a needle a mile away and they did everything that was possible without

Enlarged area where action took place is indicated by the numbers: 1). Where MAYAGUEZ was intercepted and seized; 2). Point where she spent first night at anchor; 3). Next morning she is moved to Kas Tang Island and anchored; 4). Crew in Thai fishing boat under attack by U.S. planes; 5). All crew moved to Cambodian military compound; 6). Crew is released, boards USS WILSON and then MAYAGUEZ; 7). MAYAGUEZ towed by USS HOLT; 8). MAYAGUEZ proceeds under her own power; and 9). MAYAGUEZ ordered to change course and proceed to Singapore.



hitting the boat to try and make us turn around and go back to the ship.

"We were strafed and bombed within ten feet of the bow . . . when they saw that wasn't going to work, two jets overflew our boat from bow to stern, about 70 feet above us and they tear gassed us." The Captain related that the first gassing wasn't too bad.

He also explained that he understood what the pilots were trying to do and he didn't blame them for the gassing. "They were only trying to keep us out of Kompong Som. The Thai fishermen were willing to cooperate. The helmsman turned the boat around once, but one of our guards put a gun to his head and told him to get back on course.

"After a half hour had passed, we were gassed a second time," said Captain Miller. "I don't know whether it was tear gas or nausea gas but everyone on the boat vomited. Our skins were burning, three men were struck by shrapnel and the third engineer who has a bad heart, passed out for about 20 minutes—we thought he was dead."

At last the U.S. planes that were trying to turn them around flew off, to be replaced by a reconnaissance plane sent to keep track of the crew's locations. The fishing boat finally reached Kompong Som at around 10:00 a.m.

"I think there were two thousand civilians, armed to the teeth, just waiting to see us," Miller said of their arrival at Kompong Som. "Since they didn't appear too happy about our capture, my greatest fear was being paraded into town through this mob. But a half hour after docking, (near two Red Chinese freighters discharging cargo), a patrol boat came alongside and ordered our boat to an island in the harbor that looked like a military compound. It was obvious to us that mortal fear of about 100-150 U.S. jet aircraft overhead gripped our captors. We reasoned they got us out of there to prevent



This illustration represents just a fraction of the newspaper and magazine coverage throughout the world given to the MAYAGUEZ and her crew, during the entire episode.

the bombing of Kompong Som. We were not taken ashore at the military compound, but were anchored just off the island and given our first meal of rice, greens, and fresh water, since being taken off the MAYAGUEZ.

"Shortly after having been fed by the Thai fisherman, the same patrol boat came alongside with orders to proceed to Koh Rong Sam Lem whose shoreline includes a large bay. At the head of the bay, we came to a village of crude smelting furnaces and more than 40 huts built on stilts over the water. We tied up at one of the huts and for the first time since being captured were greeted by a man who spoke English. He shook our hands and welcomed us to Cambodia," Miller said. "Then he asked who was our speaker, and I informed him I was the Captain and would speak for the crew. Then they took us all ashore, and keeping in mind the tremendous fear they had of our aircraft, I began to negotiate for the

release of the crew and the ship with the deputy commander through an interpreter. They wanted to know whether we were CIA or FBI," said the Captain. "They also wanted to know how heavily armed the ship was, how much military cargo, arms, ammunition and bombs we carried.

"I insisted I had no military cargo whatsoever aboard the ship. I informed them that the MAYAGUEZ was a civilian trading ship operating between Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Singapore. I explicitly told them that the ship never went back to the United States, never went to a military port to load arms and that it was purely on a shuttle schedule."

After a dinner of rice, garlic greens and eggplant, washed down with tea and hot sugared water, Captain Miller continued his discussions with the English speaking interpreter and the deputy commander of the Kompong Som military region.



United States Marines wearing gas masks and bearing automatic rifles are pictured boarding and retaking the MAYAGUEZ.

The deputy in turn communicated with his commander (at Kompong Som) by walkie-talkie radio.

"I requested the crew be released and taken aboard the MAYAGUEZ to get enough steam and electricity up to be able to operate the single sideband radio. I told them that I would then call the Sea-Land office in Bangkok and have them request the authorities to stop the jet fighters, provided the vessel could sail from Cambodian waters within 24 hours," Miller said.

"After an hour, word came back that the local commander was relaying the message to superiors in Phnom Penh," Miller said.

That evening, Wednesday, May 14, the deputy commander agreed to allow Captain Miller, and his chief engineer, and seven of the crew, to return to the MAYAGUEZ, fire the boilers and phone Bangkok to request that the U.S. cease military operations.

"Darkness was falling and the jets were out in force so we decided it wouldn't be safe for us to go out in a

patrol boat because if the boat was spotted we might be blown out of the water and killed," the Captain said. "We agreed to go the following morning at six o'clock, subject to the approval of the superior command at Phnom Penh, and we spent the night in fishing houses built over the water."

Back in Washington, President Ford made final preparations for the military action he was now convinced was necessary. From the time the MAYAGUEZ was seized, there was never any diplomatic response from the Cambodian government to the U.S. demand that the ship and its crew be released. The President called for a final National Security Council meeting Wednesday afternoon and as a result of this meeting, he decided upon the following action: to have a Marine boarding party retake the MAYAGUEZ; to have a Marine force go ashore on Kas Tang Island (where the Pentagon thought half of the ship's crew were still being held) and to have jets from the aircraft carrier CORAL SEA

stage protective air strikes against Ream Air Field and other military targets around Kompong Som. The White House ordered the operation to begin at dawn Thursday.

First light was breaking over the Gulf of Siam as 11 "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters lifted off the U Tapao Air Base in Thailand and headed out to sea. An hour and 45 minutes later, three copters peeled off from the formation, and descended on the destroyer escort USS HOLT. Since the helicopters were too large to land on the HOLT, the Marines had to climb down rope ladders to the deck, as the copters hovered above the naval vessel.

The other eight copters, with 160 Marines aboard flew on to Kas Tang Island where they prepared to set down on a patch of sandy beach.

According to the original plan, it was hoped that the Marines would not have to do any fighting. Three men aboard the lead helicopter were Khmer language specialists who were equipped with bullhorns. When the copter landed, these men were to shout that the Marines would leave as soon as the crew members were released. But, the plan never materialized because their helicopter was shot out of the sky. The rest of the copters were met with extremely heavy automatic weapons fire and three crash-landed—two in the water and one on the beach. However, the other copters were able to land and establish a beachhead.

Meanwhile, the destroyer escort HOLT was steaming toward the MAYAGUEZ and as soon as she came alongside the containership, the Marines boarded her. As they made their way cautiously from deck to deck, searching for the Cambodians recently spotted aboard by reconnaissance aircraft, they were ready for action. But the ship was deserted—and the only evidence of recent life aboard was warm tea and rice in the ship's galley.

Following on the heels of the



Assured that the ship is secure, the Marines raise the flag indicating it was retaken.

Marines were six civilian crewmen from the Military Sealift Command's USNS GREENVILLE VICTORY and seven U.S. Navy engineering personnel to start the ship's power plant. They had been flown to the scene temporarily to man the MAYAGUEZ in case her crew was not released.

Concluding the search at 8:30 a.m., the Marines ran up the American flag indicating the ship was officially retaken. Then (since the MAYAGUEZ still had no power) they cut the anchor chain and the MAYAGUEZ was taken in tow by the HOLT.

Before going to sleep on the night of the 14th, Captain Miller had been informed that an answer from Phnom Penh would be received at 6 o'clock the following morning as to the outcome of his negotiations. Although word did not come until 7:20—it was favorable.

"The Cambodians were very friendly and wanted me to tell the American people that we had not been harmed. In fact, to demonstrate their friendliness toward us they asked us to pose for pictures," said Captain Miller.

"With six armed men guarding us, we boarded the Thai fishing boat and with the Cambodian fishing boat with 40 armed insurgents aboard following us, we headed for the MAYAGUEZ," said Captain Miller. "About a mile away from the village, the Cambodian boat pulled up alongside us and our guards were taken off our boat. At first we were all afraid that they were going to simply machine gun us all down and blow the Thai fishing boat out of the water. But when the Cambodians told the Thai fisherman they were free too, we all broke out shouting and hollering. This was the first time we ever knew the Thai fishermen could speak English. Until then, any time we tried to communicate with them they would simply hold a finger to their lips and cross their

wrists indicating they were captives and couldn't do anything to help us.

"Using bamboo poles," Captain Miller went on, "we had picked up in the village before leaving, we tied white shirts and mess jackets to them to wave at any aircraft that might spot us. Shortly after reaching open water, we were sighted by a reconnaissance plane that circled over us. We all stood and waved our improvised flags and after a second pass, the pilot dipped his wings indicating he had recognized us."

"The pilot continued to circle overhead until we could see the destroyer WILSON and another naval vessel tied up next to the MAYAGUEZ," Miller said. "At about 10:20 a.m. the crew and I boarded the USS WILSON and the Thai fishing boat was tied up alongside the destroyer." The Captain reported that he was taken to the bridge where he met with the commander of the destroyer. Then he was brought to the Navy's Intelligence Office where he advised his interrogators about the negotiations with the Cambodians and his promise to call off the aircraft if the crew and ship were released within 24 hours. He was told, however, it was too late as the attack which had begun at 8:00 a.m. on Kompong Som was already under way, and the Marines had landed on Kas Tang at dawn that morning.

"I then requested protection for the Thai boat and fisherman," said Captain Miller. The request was granted along with supplies of food, water, cigarettes, and diesel fuel. After being questioned several times by Navy Intelligence personnel at about 11:45 a.m. half the crew was taken by a USN motorboat to the MAYAGUEZ, which by then was already being towed by the destroyer escort USS HOLT.

"We boarded the MAYAGUEZ at 12:05," Captain Miller said, "and then the motorboat returned to the WILSON for the rest of the crew."

At this time, there were seven Navy sailors and six Military Sealift Command officers and crew aboard. Captain Miller took command and the chief engineer commenced lighting off the power plant. The MAYAGUEZ was towed nine miles out to sea and at 3:40 p.m. was cut loose and proceeded under escort of the HOLT.

At 4:48 p.m., the HOLT was recalled to Kas Tang and the MAYAGUEZ proceeded under her own power toward Sattahip. At 6:45 p.m., the MAYAGUEZ was met by two Army tugs, which removed the Naval and Military Sealift Command personnel and Captain Miller was advised by the captain of the tug that his orders had been changed and the MAYAGUEZ was to proceed to Singapore.

The MAYAGUEZ was escorted for a day and a half by a reconnaissance plane until it was felt safe for her to proceed on her own.

A radio message was sent from Sea-Land's Oakland office to the MAYAGUEZ at 11:05 (Oakland time) Thursday which read:

After release please bypass Sattahip and proceed to Singapore and advise this office your ETA and any casualty.

Then at 5:14 (Oakland time) Thursday, the first radio message was received at Sea-Land's Oakland office from the MAYAGUEZ since her capture on Monday. It read:

No casualties, minor shrapnel wounds two men and minor tear gas burns complete crew STOP lost port anchor and five and one-half shot of chain STOP some room doors damaged by Khmer Rouge otherwise vessel in good shape—Master

A reply was sent to the MAYAGUEZ by M. R. McEvoy, Chairman, Sea-Land Service, Inc., which stated: "We are all relieved to know that you and your crew are safe and well. It is the intention of

the Company to repatriate all members of the crew who wish to return. Please advise as soon as possible those crew members desiring repatriation. Your conduct and that of the entire crew is in the highest traditions of the American Merchant Marine. Very well done. Please confirm your receipt and understanding of this message." M. R. McEvoy.

Captain Miller replied accordingly: "Chairman of the Board your message received and understood STOP the entire crew thanks you for your kind message of understanding our situation."

The major U.S. military attack was launched over two hours before Captain Miller and his crew were being released by the Cambodians. Twenty-five fighter bombers from the CORAL SEA were dispatched to Ream Airport on the mainland where they destroyed seventeen Cambodian aircraft on the ground. Later, a second wave of American aircraft hit an oil refinery and a railroad yard.

Although the air strikes against the mainland went unopposed, the Marines on Kas Tang had their hands full. Since the MAYAGUEZ and her crew had been recovered, their objective now was solely to evacuate the island. This proved easier said than done because each time the helicopters tried to come in to remove the Marines they were driven off by heavy automatic weapons fire. At last, just after dark, under heavy air support from fighter bombers from the CORAL SEA, the helicopters did manage to get through and evacuate the Marines from the Kas Tang Island beachhead to the safety of the big aircraft carrier.

Back in Washington at 12:27 p.m. on Thursday, President Ford appeared in the White House press room and read a short release announcing that the entire 40-man crew of the MAYAGUEZ had been rescued by Marine forces.



Members of the crew line the rail of the MAYAGUEZ as she maneuvers to the dock for the first time since her capture.

Singapore Reception

On Saturday, May 17, at 3:30 p.m. the SS MAYAGUEZ docked at Sea-Land's terminal at Sembawang Port, Singapore.

Members of the crew not assigned to the engine room or bridge lined the port rails of the MAYAGUEZ as tugs maneuvered the 504-foot containership toward the pier. The men waved at the crowd of journalists, company officials, and local dockhands who had come to welcome them and hear the firsthand story of an incident which had held the world's attention for four long, anxious days.

As the ship moved alongside the quay, spontaneous conversations broke out between the crewmen and the crowd below. Newsmen hurled questions up to the men on deck, then held their microphones and recorders aloft in attempts to pick up the first public comments of the men since their release by the Cambodian Khmer Rouge two days before.

Mr. Michael R. McEvoy, Chairman of Sea-Land, was in Singapore to greet the crew of the MAYAGUEZ. Thanks to jet aircraft, less than 40 hours before, and 10,000 miles away, he'd held a press conference at Company headquarters in Menlo Park, New Jersey, expressing the Company's relief at the crew's release and the recovery of the ship. He had offered to open the ship and her containers to the world to disprove claims that she was a spy vessel or that she was carrying arms and ammunition.

Mr. McEvoy stood at dockside and chatted with the men on the ship as it was being secured. When the gangway was lowered, he and several other U.S. and local Sea-Land representatives boarded and were led to the Captain's quarters where Mr. McEvoy officially greeted Captain Charles Miller.

Soon after, the ship's officers and crew gathered in the officers mess

and Mr. McEvoy officially welcomed them back from their ordeal on behalf of Sea-Land and R. J. Reynolds Industries. He told the men that we were all relieved and happy to have them back unharmed and that we were proud of their behavior as seamen and as Americans. Mr. McEvoy said that the Company would fly any man who wished, back home to his family, and would give each officer and crew member a \$1,000 bonus. Members of the crew expressed their thanks to President Ford and the U. S. armed forces, and personally thanked Mr. McEvoy for his and the Company's concern and efforts on their behalf.

During this time, the crowd at dockside was growing steadily. Approximately 150 reporters, commentators, photographers, and cameramen representing media from around the world, anxiously awaited the start of the press conference which had been set up alongside the ship on the open area of the dock.

At 4:30 p.m., Captain Miller and Mr. McEvoy came down the gangway, followed by the other Sea-Land officials and the rest of the officers and crew.

Mr. McEvoy stepped to the microphones, welcomed the members of

the press and dignitaries, and introduced Captain Miller.

The slight, grey-haired Captain stepped forward to a warm greeting—a hearty round of applause from everyone in the area. As he reached the podium, all fell silent. As he began to speak, the only sound was the whirring of television cameras and the clicking of photographers. He first thanked President Ford and the men of the armed forces.

“This crew would not be standing before you today if it were not for the brave men who fought and died

for our freedom,” Captain Miller said. “You don’t know how happy we are to be here. More than once in our experiences in Cambodia, we didn’t think we would ever get out. We thought we’d all be shot or have our heads cut off. . . .”

He went on to praise his crew for their courage and discipline throughout the ordeal.

The Captain’s speech was brief and sincere. He was followed by several officers and crew members who reiterated the Captain’s thanks but added that it was he, the Captain,

who had been their spokesman, negotiator, and leader throughout the four days.

Captain Miller then returned to the podium, and began his hour-long account of the three long days and nights he and his men spent on either the MAYAGUEZ, or a small captive Thai fishing boat, or finally on Koh Rong Sam Lem off the Cambodian coast. He spoke slowly and deliberately, recalling the harrowing four-hour trip to the mainland in the small fishing boat during which time they were strafed by U.S. jets many times, with machine gun fire coming very close to the vessel. He spoke of the tear gas which was dropped on the boat by the jets in attempts to force it to return to the MAYAGUEZ. He spoke of finally being put ashore on a large island, Koh Rong Sam Lem, where for the first time he was greeted by any one of his captors who spoke English. He told of his negotiations and his promises to attempt to stop U.S. military activities, if he and his crew were released and the vessel permitted to sail within 24 hours. He recounted the anxious trip back to the MAYAGUEZ, and finally, with tear-filled eyes and low voice, he spoke of meeting a Marine major in the hospital of the destroyer WILSON with half of his back torn off by shrapnel. “I cried. People were being killed to save me.” The Marine accepted his wounds with Spartan stoicism. He said, “Captain, all I wanted to see was your men released. Don’t worry about me. I have good medical treatment aboard this ship.”

After Captain Miller’s account, newsmen interviewed him and other crew members for another hour. Then several groups of journalists went aboard the MAYAGUEZ to have a look. As promised, they found not a spy ship, not a munitions carrier, but a peaceful merchantman that, at the time of capture, was involved in peaceful trade between nations.



In his quarters aboard ship, Captain Miller talks with M. R. McEvoy (second from left) with Chief Engineer C. J. Harrington (left) and J. J. Hayes looking on.



At reception held for crew in Singapore, the Captain is shown talking to (left to right): Don O’Hare, M. R. McEvoy, and R. A. McGregor.



The crew pictured around the table, listens attentively as their Captain relates their experiences to the press in Singapore.

At the conclusion of the press conference, several crewmen who had received minor shrapnel wounds from the strafing were treated at a nearby medical center.

Sea-Land then held a welcoming cocktail/dinner reception at the Mandarin Hotel and all crew members were invited to stay at the hotel while the MAYAGUEZ was in port in Singapore. During the recep-

tion each crew member, with his own audience, spoke of the fears and anxieties he had experienced at critical times during the ordeal, and all expressed relief to be home safely among friends.

Note: the MAYAGUEZ sailed from Singapore at 12 noon on Monday, May 19, for Hong Kong. Nineteen of her officers and crew stayed aboard. Twenty-one decided to return to the States to be with their families.

The MAYAGUEZ is currently operating between the same ports as she was when captured.

At Sea—Land & R.J. Reynolds

Monday, May 12

Michael R. McEvoy, Sea-Land's Chairman, received the news about the seizure of the MAYAGUEZ while attending a meeting at the RJR headquarters in Winston-Salem, and issued this statement. "At this point the safety of the crew is the primary concern of Sea-Land Service, and we are hopeful that the men will be released quickly."

After the White House had informed the world that President Ford considered the "seizure an act of piracy" and warned that "failure to release the ship immediately will have the most serious consequences," P. F. Richardson, Sea-Land's President, sent the following telegram to President Ford: "We at Sea-Land are grateful for your very prompt reaction to the piracy of our vessel in the Gulf of Siam. We are confident that you will do everything possible for the prompt and safe return of the crew and vessel and we stand ready to assist you in any way we can."

**Tuesday and Wednesday,
May 13 and 14**

During these two days, no formal release was made to the press. Editors and their staffs representing television, radio, newspaper and magazines were all on the line asking every conceivable question about the crew, the ship and her cargo.

Monday afternoon and night, all day Tuesday and on Wednesday, our telephone switchboards were jammed with frantic calls from all over the country. Additional operators were added to try to answer these requests for details of this unusual event. And these calls were not only limited to our headquarters location; many of

our outlying offices and terminals were also besieged with calls for information and interviews.

Many came in person to our headquarters at Menlo Park and to our terminal at Elizabeth, all seeking background information and interviews on the country's biggest story.

Thursday, May 15

At a press conference held in Sea-Land's corporate headquarters in Menlo Park, New Jersey, with over 100 reporters, TV cameramen, etc. jammed in attendance, Michael R. McEvoy, Sea-Land's Chairman made the following statement:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we've asked you here today to make an official statement regarding the release of the MAYAGUEZ's crew and the return of the vessel. I will confine myself to what we know to be fact, but I will be happy to answer any questions you may have after I have made my statement.

"We are elated that the crew of the vessel has been freed, and we owe the government a tremendous debt for its prompt action and support through the whole ordeal. The safety and well-being of the crew members has been our primary concern ever since we learned of the seizure of the ship.

"Yet, we are deeply saddened by the reported loss of American military men in this action. Our heartfelt sympathy and everlasting gratitude for the sacrifice they made goes to the families of these fine men.

"I know that the master of the MAYAGUEZ, as well as every mate, engineer, able-bodied seaman, oiler, wiper, and messman would join me and all Sea-Land employees in applauding the courageous action

taken by their rescuers. Their valor and their willingness to sacrifice their lives to protect American citizens make us all proud to be Americans.

"As Chairman of Sea-Land, I think I can speak for all our people in saying that we are equally proud of the prompt and forthright action taken by President Ford and that he can count on us as part of his number.

"We are now in touch with the released crew members. One of our top officials will meet with them to render whatever assistance we can at this time. We can only thank God that none of them was injured, and we commend them on their exemplary behavior throughout their captivity."

Later that same day, Mr. McEvoy and Mr. J. J. Hayes, Senior Vice President, would dash to the airport, grab a jet, and fly to Singapore to be on hand to personally greet the crew of the MAYAGUEZ. From New York to Copenhagen to Bangkok, and after 24 hours of flying time, they completed their trip and were at dockside as the ship pulled in.

That same day from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the following telegram was dispatched:

The Honorable Gerald Ford, President
The White House, Washington, D. C.

"We are very grateful for your action in recovering the crew of our ship, MAYAGUEZ, and we mourn the loss of the men in our Armed Forces who sacrificed their lives in this operation. We are seeking the names of those families. We are also attempting through the Defense Department to fly a new crew at our expense to the ship and return the ship's crew to their families as soon as possible. For the personnel of our Sea-Land subsidiary and ourselves we are very grateful to you and our Government."

Sincerely,

Colin Stokes, Chairman of the Board
J. Paul Sticht, President

R.J.REYNOLDS INDUSTRIES, INC.

After returning from his meeting with the crew of the MAYAGUEZ in Singapore, halfway around the world from Menlo Park, New Jersey, Mr. McEvoy sent the following letter to President Ford:

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the crew of the S.S. MAYAGUEZ, Sea-Land Service, Inc. and the thousands of people who make up our company, I extend to you my profound gratitude for your prompt and forthright action in securing the release of our crew and vessel. Your decisiveness in employing the military swiftly has earned you our heartfelt thanks and the thanks of the vast majority of Americans.

It is at moments such as these when the role of the President of the United States is most difficult and most lonely, but I believe firmly that your decision has gained the United States a new respect throughout the world.

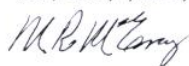
It is coincident that the rescue of the MAYAGUEZ and her crew should occur as we enter our bicentennial year, marking another point in our history when we can all say we are proud to be Americans.

As I told the press upon learning of the military action that freed the crew and vessel, you can count us as among your number.

I share your sorrow at the loss of American lives in the protection of the rights of United States citizens abroad, but I also believe their sacrifice has not been in vain. It has established to the world the willingness of the United States to safeguard its countrymen, particularly those engaged in peaceful pursuits.

Thank you again on behalf of all who are Sea-Land Service.

Very truly yours,



M. R. McEvoy

MRM/dv

President Ford's gracious reply follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 28, 1975

Dear Mr. McEvoy:

Before departing for Europe, I wanted to take just a moment to thank you for your kind letter of May 22.

The safe rescue of the SS MAYAGUEZ and its entire crew means a great deal to all Americans. I am immensely proud, as I know you are, of the military men whose valor and great sacrifice assured the mission's success. By their courage and skill America has demonstrated its resolve to protect its countrymen and its shipping against such hostile and illegal acts, wherever they may occur. As we enter our third century of independence, I am more confident than ever of the Nation's willingness to preserve and protect for the future the causes of honor, freedom and justice which they so gallantly served.

With best wishes to you and all those at Sea-Land Service,



Mr. M. R. McEvoy
Chairman
Sea-Land Service, Inc.
Post Office Box 900
Edison, New Jersey 08817



Mayaguez Cargo Is Inspected; No Weapons in Containers

A most significant chapter of the MAYAGUEZ story was recorded in Hong Kong on May 23rd when, sealed containers were opened so that newsmen could inspect them to determine if the vessel was really carrying arms, ammunitions and electronic spying equipment, as was claimed by the Cambodians when they seized the ship.

Opening the sealed containers, revealed automobile parts, fertilizers, butane gas, paint, office equipment and toilet paper.

On May 15 at the press conference Mr. McEvoy had offered to open *all* the MAYAGUEZ's containers for inspection by the newsmen if they so desired, but when they learned that it would take over 10 hours to do so, the press decided to inspect containers selected at random. Actually, after checking six containers, they were convinced, that the cargoes were routine trade items and our ship was not a spy ship, with secret gear or a "warship" loaded with the implements of destruction.

The History of the Mayaguez



The MAYAGUEZ as she looked coming into Singapore for the first time after her release.

The MAYAGUEZ was built in 1944 by the North Carolina Ship Building Company, Wilmington, North Carolina, for the U.S. Maritime Commission. She was originally named the SS WHITE FALCON.

The vessel was delivered by the shipyard to the War Shipping Administration (a wartime agency that controlled the U.S. Merchant Marine) which in turn turned the vessel over to American Export Lines to be utilized in the European theater supplying our armed forces.

The WHITE FALCON was operated by American Export Lines until May, 1946, when it was delivered to the Sea Shipping Co., Inc. (Robin Lines) which worked the vessel between South and East Africa for about seven months.

In December, 1946, the ship was taken over by Grace Lines, which put her into commercial operation in their South American-Caribbean service. She was renamed by her new owners the SANTA ELIANA.

The SANTA ELIANA was worked

by Grace as a dry cargo vessel until 1959 when she and her sister ship, the SANTA LEONOR, underwent conversion to containerships. The conversion was completed in January, 1960, and she sailed for Venezuela as the first full container vessel to operate in the foreign commerce of the United States.

However, upon arrival in Venezuela, longshoremen refused to unload the vessel and the SANTA ELIANA was returned to the United States and placed in layup with her sister ship. Negotiations were carried on with the Venezuelan officials and labor unions until clearance was granted for operation of the two vessels in the fall of 1962 and regular operations commenced once again.

The SANTA ELIANA was withdrawn from service in 1963 and in 1964 the two vessels were sold to Sea-Land and renamed the SS SEA and SS LAND. In 1966, the SS SEA was renamed the SS MAYAGUEZ and the SS LAND the PONCE.

During the first three years of service with her new owners, the

MAYAGUEZ saw service with the North Atlantic, the Puerto Rico, the Intercoastal and the Far East Divisions. In 1970, the MAYAGUEZ returned to the Puerto Rico service for a short spell then shifted to the Alaska Division and finally the Intercoastal Division. In 1971, she returned to the Far East, then to the Intercoastal Division and in April, 1971, joined Gulf Puerto Rico Lines (a subsidiary of Sea-Land). She remained in this service until October, 1974, when she was reassigned to Sea-Land's Far East service.

The MAYAGUEZ and her sister ship PONCE are 504 feet long, have a capacity of 274 containers, and a gross of 10,766 tons. They are powered by steam turbines that develop 6600 hp and a speed of 15 knots. The MAYAGUEZ and PONCE are both engaged as feeder vessels in the Far East where they are linked up with the SL-7 linehaul vessels which operate between the Far East and the West Coast of the United States.

& Her Master

Captain Charles T. Miller, the 62-year-old Master of the MAYAGUEZ, is a veteran of 42 years at sea.

He was born in Port Huron, Michigan, and gained his first experiences as a sailor (serving as a deckhand) aboard a vessel sailing the Great Lakes at the age of 17. The young midwesterner, although he didn't know it at the time, apparently had the sea in his blood—so he moved to the West Coast and signed on aboard the PRESIDENT COOLIDGE (Dollar Steamship Company) as a seaman,



Captain Miller, Skipper of the MAYAGUEZ, a veteran with over 40 years at sea.

for \$30.00 a month and all he could eat. He sailed with the same company until 1939 rising to Bosun Mate. It was during these years that Miller decided to make the sea his life.

In 1939, all the ships of the Dollar Steamship Company were tied up because of a lack of funds and our young sailor was forced to turn to land for a livelihood. He became a shipbuilder, employed as a plate handler initially, later as a night foreman and remained at this shore duty until 1942.

Once again, the sea beckoned and young Miller responded—this time as a third mate on the Liberty Ship—THE MATTHEWS LIONS. On all of his trips at sea, during World War II, he was only in convoy twice—both times while his ship was carrying troops. On the other occasions, while sailing unescorted, he was once attacked by kamikaze pilots and had a number of narrow escapes from Japanese submarines.

After World War II, he served as a Second Mate and then as Chief Mate aboard vessels removing American, German, French, and Russian evacuees from China at the time of the Communist "takeover." Subsequently, he was made Master of the PRESIDENT TYLER.

Next, he sailed as Master on charter trips from the East Coast of the U.S. to Pakistan, and after several voyages, he returned to California.

Then, Miller went back to sea as Second Mate with a newly formed passenger ship company that was operating between San Francisco and Hawaii.

While on this duty, he met and

married a young woman who was employed as the ship's nurse for young children.

About this time, the jet aircraft began to spell the doom of passenger ocean liners and soon Captain Miller found himself without employment. Then he and his new bride, Ann, established residence in Long Beach, California, and from 1958 to 1966, Captain Miller was self-employed. He operated his own steamship company called Western Shipping Corporation.

He had various ships on charter and while the company never enjoyed great prosperity, it was surviving until he came up with idea of converting a ship into a floating round-the-world trade fair. But he couldn't raise the necessary money to make the plan operational, and after losing his own savings in the attempt, once again shipped out as Third Mate on a vessel called THE VANDERBILT VICTORY, sailing from the East Coast of the United States to Vietnam.

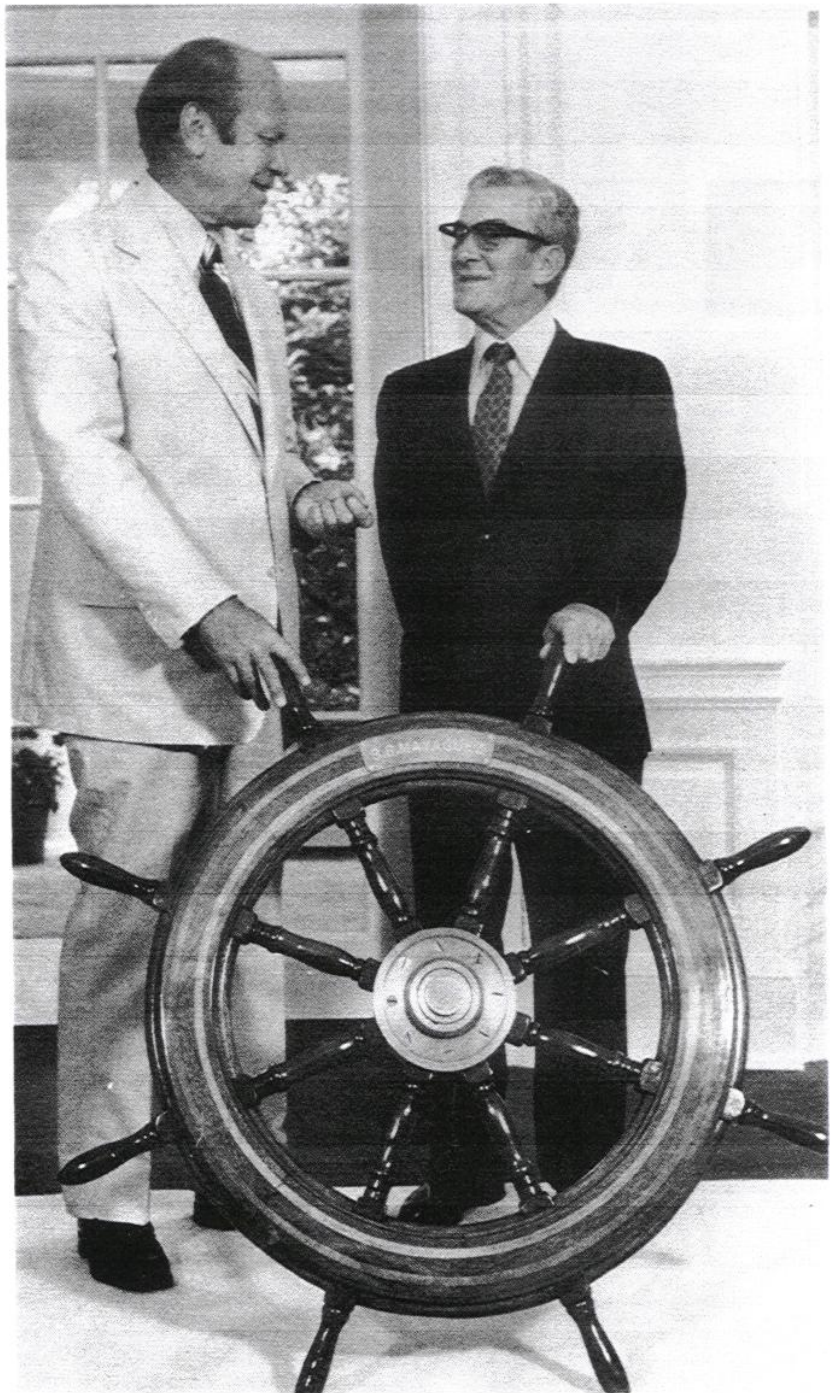
At this time, 1971, Captain Miller applied for a job with Sea-Land, and in July, 1972, was assigned to the ANCHORAGE as Captain. He made one trip—New York to Oakland and return—and was reassigned as Master of the OAKLAND and stayed on this vessel for two trips; then came assignments as temporary Master of the CHICAGO and permanent Master of the ROSE CITY. In a short time, the ROSE CITY was sold to the Puerto Rico Maritime Shipping Authority, and given an option, Captain Miller chose to stay with Sea-Land, at which time he was assigned the permanent Master of the MAYAGUEZ in January, 1975.

Another Day to Remember

Though the proud ship and her crew will continue to sail for many years to come, the "MAYAGUEZ Incident" was brought to a fitting climax in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, July 24—a day replete with activities that will be long remembered by all in attendance.

There in the Oval Room of the White House, Captain Miller presented President Ford with the ship's wheel as a token of his and his crew's appreciation for the quick and decisive action taken by their government to effect their rescue.

The President, in return, presented the Captain with a handsome pair of cuff links bearing the Presidential



President Ford chats with Captain Miller in the Oval Room at the White House. The Captain had just presented the President with the MAYAGUEZ's ship wheel (shown in the foreground).

Seal.

Before the presentations were made, the President had asked Captain Miller to describe to those attending the ceremony the high-

lights of the four-day ordeal at the hands of their Cambodian captors. At one point during the Captain's description, the President asked him what he felt when he saw the

American planes overhead. The Captain's immediate reply was, "Mr. President, they looked like angels from heaven to me."

On hand for the presentation ceremonies were: Michael R. McEvoy, Chairman, Sea-Land; Colin Stokes, Chairman and J. Paul Sticht, President, R. J. Reynolds Industries.

Later in the day in the auditorium of the Commerce Department before an audience that included cabinet members, members of Congress, ranking military personnel, government department heads, and many others, Captain Miller was awarded the United States Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medal and Citation by Secretary of Commerce Rogers C. B. Morton. The award was in recognition of his outstanding leadership and tact in negotiating the safe release of the captured crew and ship from the Cambodians.

The six crew members of the USNS GREENVILLE VICTORY, who boarded the MAYAGUEZ with the Marines to act as an emergency



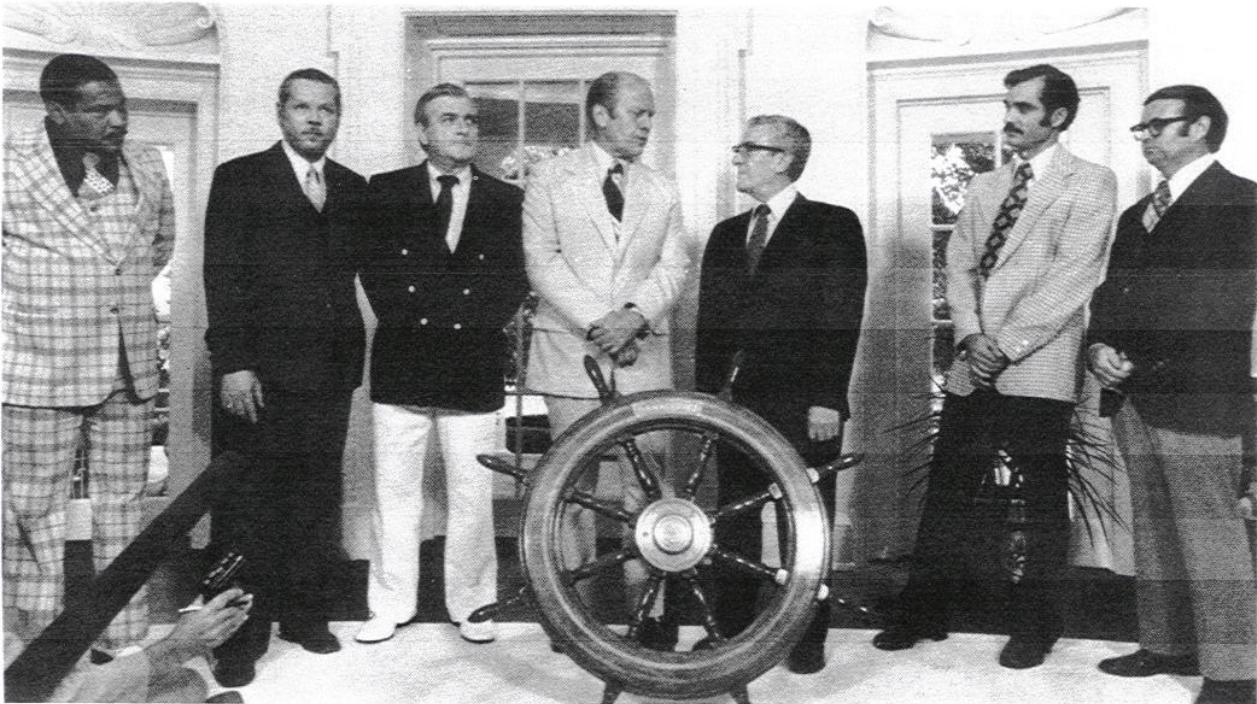
Secretary of Commerce Rogers C. B. Morton pins Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medal on Captain Miller for his negotiating safe release of crew and ship.

crew in case her own crew was not released, were awarded the United States Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal, also by Secretary Morton. This honor was for their volunteering to assist in the hazardous duty to recapture the MAYAGUEZ. In addition, Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf presented the six crew members the Navy Distinguished Civil Service Award.

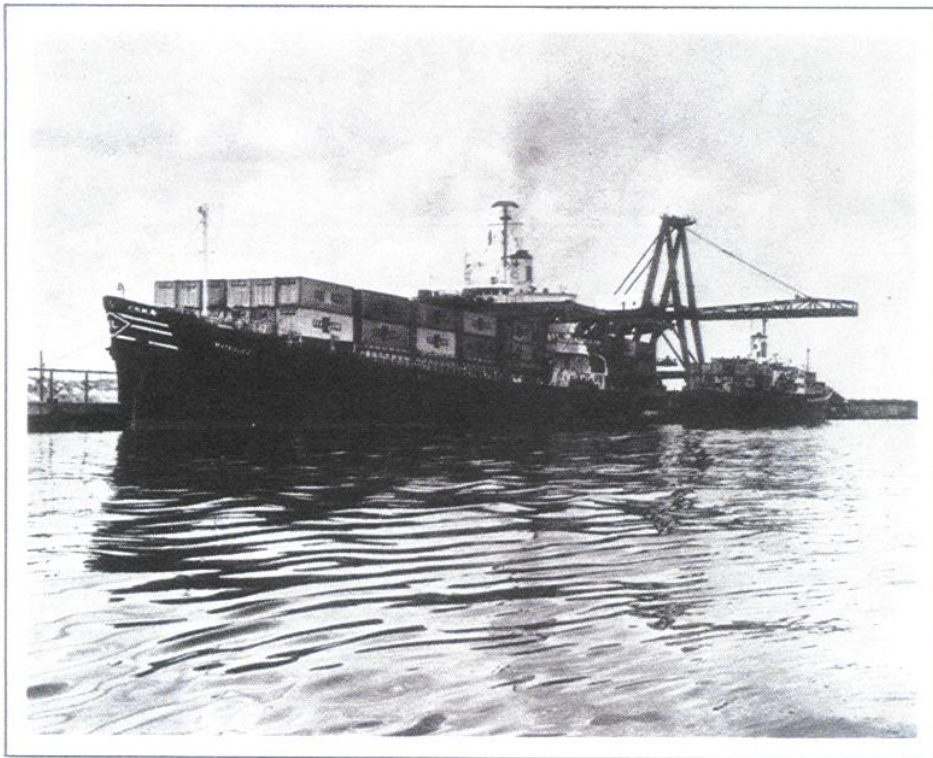
All participants and guests, including the families of the men from the

GREENVILLE VICTORY, who attended the ceremonies at the Commerce Department were invited to a reception at the University Club where they were able to personally meet the Master of the MAYAGUEZ and hear firsthand some of his experiences during the incident.

Thus, the activities experienced in the Oval Room of the White House and the Commerce Department on July 24, made possible another day to remember in the MAYAGUEZ chapter in history.



Five of the six civilians from the USNS GREENVILLE VICTORY who boarded the MAYAGUEZ on the heels of Marines as a substitute crew are shown with the President and Captain Miller.



Do you recognize this photograph? We thought you might because it is undoubtedly the most widely circulated containership picture in the world, since it was the best picture available when the MAYAGUEZ affair began and it appeared in the media throughout the world.

SEA-LAND SERVICE, INC.

