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ISSUE : [Issue 64](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1993/8/1

Capt. Walter Boudreau's Story: Louisbourg Rescue, 1943, & the Sinking of the Angelus INTRODUCTION: 50 years ago, at the mouth of Louisbourg Harbour, a United States naval ship, the SC 709, was encased in ice, listing and grounded on a bar • the 26 sailors trapped on board. Walter Boudreau was one of the men who res? cued those sailers. In Issue 41 (January 1986) of Cape Bre? ton's Magazine we published "Louisbourg Fishermen Res? cue U.S. Seamen, 1942." Actu? ally, it was January, 1943, and it took the separate efforts by Louisbourg fishermen aboard the motor vessel W. G., and by the crew of the Angelas, to save all the American sailors on the grounded subchaser SC 709. And in this 50th anniver? sary year, we are now able to offer more information about that Worid War Two rescue, about the crew of the barken- tine Angelas, and about their disastrous exoeriences after they sailed away from Louis? bourg Harbour that March. Walter Boudreau was on the Angelas. He joined the ship in Louisbourg, participated in the rescue, finished loading and re? pairing • and then sailed from Louisbourg for Barbados. On the way back, the Angelas was stopped by a German submarine. The rescuers soon became shipwreck victims. But we'll let Wal? ter Boudreau, one of the two survivors, tell the story: Part 1: Rescue of the American Sailors (Walter, why were you in Louisbourg Har? bour during the Second World War, at just that time?) Walter Boudreau: Well, I was in the Mer? chant Marine. And being in the Merchant Marine meant that we got jobs on ships of many nationalities going to different parts of the world. North Atlantic con? voys, southern-bound convoys, and so on. So it just so happened that I had always wanted to sail on the square-rigger. I had just come off a Norwegian ship in the North Atlantic convoy system and I heard about this job in Halifax with the Shaw Steamship Company. And they said, "There's a square-rigger (the Angelus) up in Louis? bourg loading for the West Indies." So I applied for the job and they sent me up there. I believe it was in January. And we were (in Louisbourg) through January into fl / ". February loading lumber to take down to Barbados. And then one day (while loading the Angelus) Captain Jensen said. "There's a wreck out? side . A United States ship, naval ship, is wrecked on the reef." We didn't comment much on that, just ate our potatoes--which is about all we had. And then the following day he said, "They can't get the men off!" And it went on from there. I believe that Cap? tain Jensen had been contacted, or contacted somebody in Louisbourg and said that he had, probably, some men who could--they had an idea how to reach that wreck. The idea based on the fact that he was going to have us go around to a far point. I think there's a park there, or used to be; they called it Cemetery Point or something, way out far from Louisbourg town. And so some people of Louisbourg provided us with a truck to give us a drive out there, and some new oars, and two dories which were upside down in the snow. And cut down the barbed wire fence. The only thing they didn't do was to get in the dories and row out to the wreck. Now, meanwhile, the Louisbourg fishermen (who also rescued U.S. seamen) were in a Cape Breton's MAGAZINE • Number Sixty-Four Wreck



Cove, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia BOC IHO Publications Mail Registration Number  
3014