



In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Hello to Family & Friends

Yup, traffic certainly looks like LA. Of course we Wisconsinites have to drive through Chicago, which can be even worse if it's bad weather.

This was on my way back to Long Beach and the Queen Mary. I did a couple loops due to veering right when I should have stayed left, or vice versa, before pulling into the parking lot.

I checked last night and they want \$60 for an RV. No way I'm paying that. But, all four lanes lead directly into the Queen Mary parking lot. No choice but to go on in. However, I arrived a good hour early, the gates were up and no one was there to collect any money. I did park quite far away just in case, but the lot was empty. (There will be an addendum to this parking issue later on).

While on the freeway I spotted a Muffler Man. Not on my list and the traffic was slow enough for me to grab the camera and get a shot off.

This guy originally stood at the Dominguez Hills Golf Course back in the sixties. He was reborn in 2013 as a Porsche Motorsport racer holding a checkered flag (looks like the flag is no longer around). His fireproof suit was stitched by hand in France. I guess Porsche couldn't find a tailor in Germany worthy of the task.

Day 48
Wednesday,
February 19th

The
Queen Mary

Weather
50's to 60's Sunny

In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



Last night I was able to purchase a Go Los Angeles card. There are about 40 attractions on the card but, a couple are for whale watching cruises, a couple for food, and again The San Diego Zoo, Legoland, Knott's Berry Farm (for some reason I think we were here when I was a kid. Gops?), the LA Zoo, about 20 of the sights I have no interest in or have been to already. I should still be able to save enough to make it worthwhile, like I did in San Diego, and I have the next two weeks to get as many in as possible.

This is the best I can do to fit the entire ship in the frame unless I go across the bay and shoot from there.



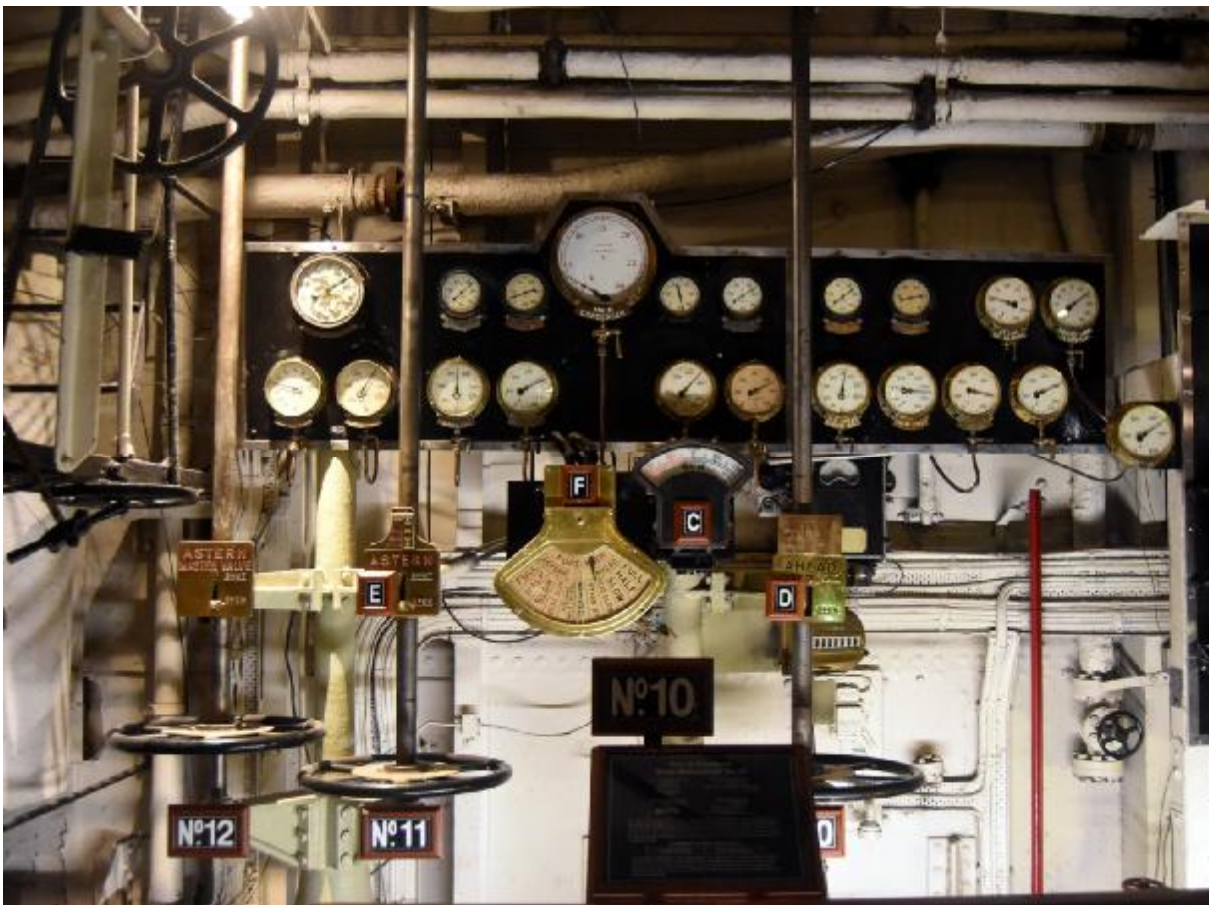
I was the first one in line, and I was ahead of a family of three and there was no one else. Its gonna be great having the place to myself.

THE QUEEN MARY CARRIED TWO 16 - TON ANCHORS, STILL LOCATED ON THE BOW OF THE SHIP. THIS THIRD ANCHOR WAS KEPT IN SOUTHAMPTON, ENGLAND FOR QUICK REPLACEMENT IN CASE OF ACCIDENTAL LOSS.

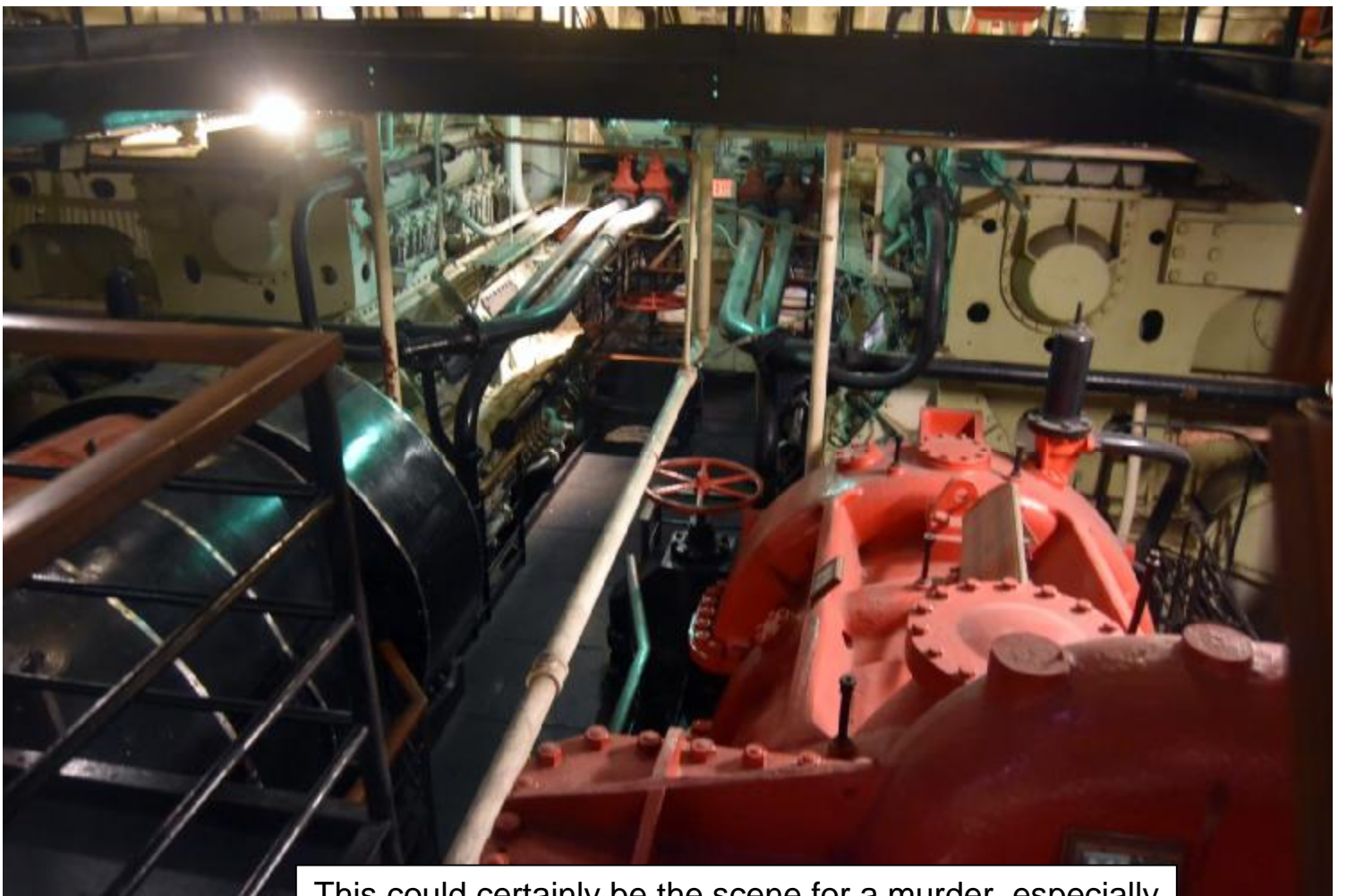
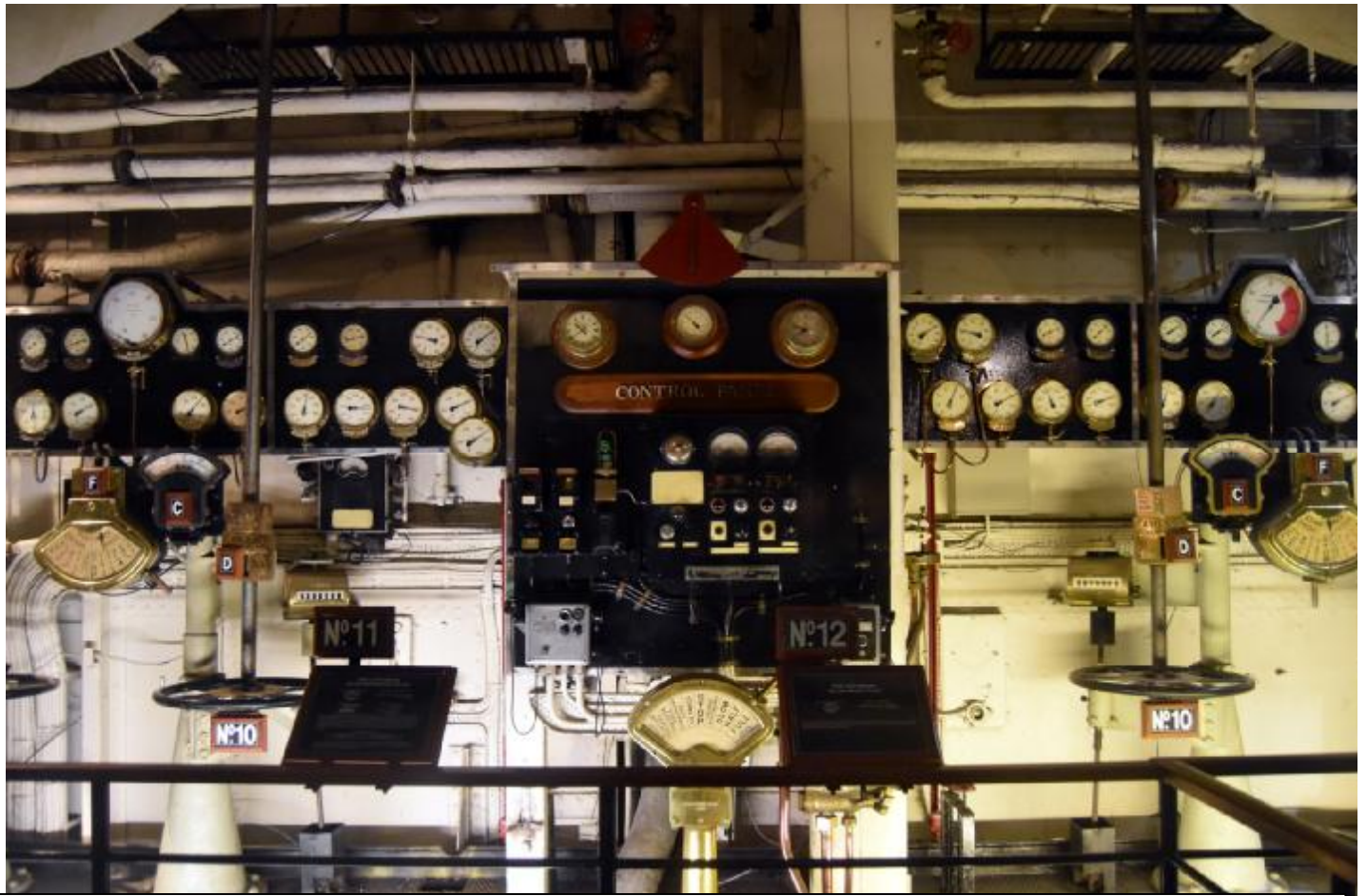
EACH ANCHOR WAS ATTACHED TO 990 - FEET OF CHAIN, SUCH AS THE SECTION ABOVE YOU. EACH LINK WEIGHS 224 POUNDS, AND WAS TESTED TO A LOAD OF 290 TONS.



PORT & STARBOARD AHEAD MANEUVERING VALVES



This was a self-guided tour of the engine room, and with the subdued lighting, painted black walkways and dark corners behind large pieces of equipment, I'll admit, it was just a little spooky being down there all by myself in the bowels of such a large ship.



This could certainly be the scene for a murder, especially when there's a ghost tour of the ship later on.



This is one of the four propeller drive shafts



Now, this is what I call a clamp.

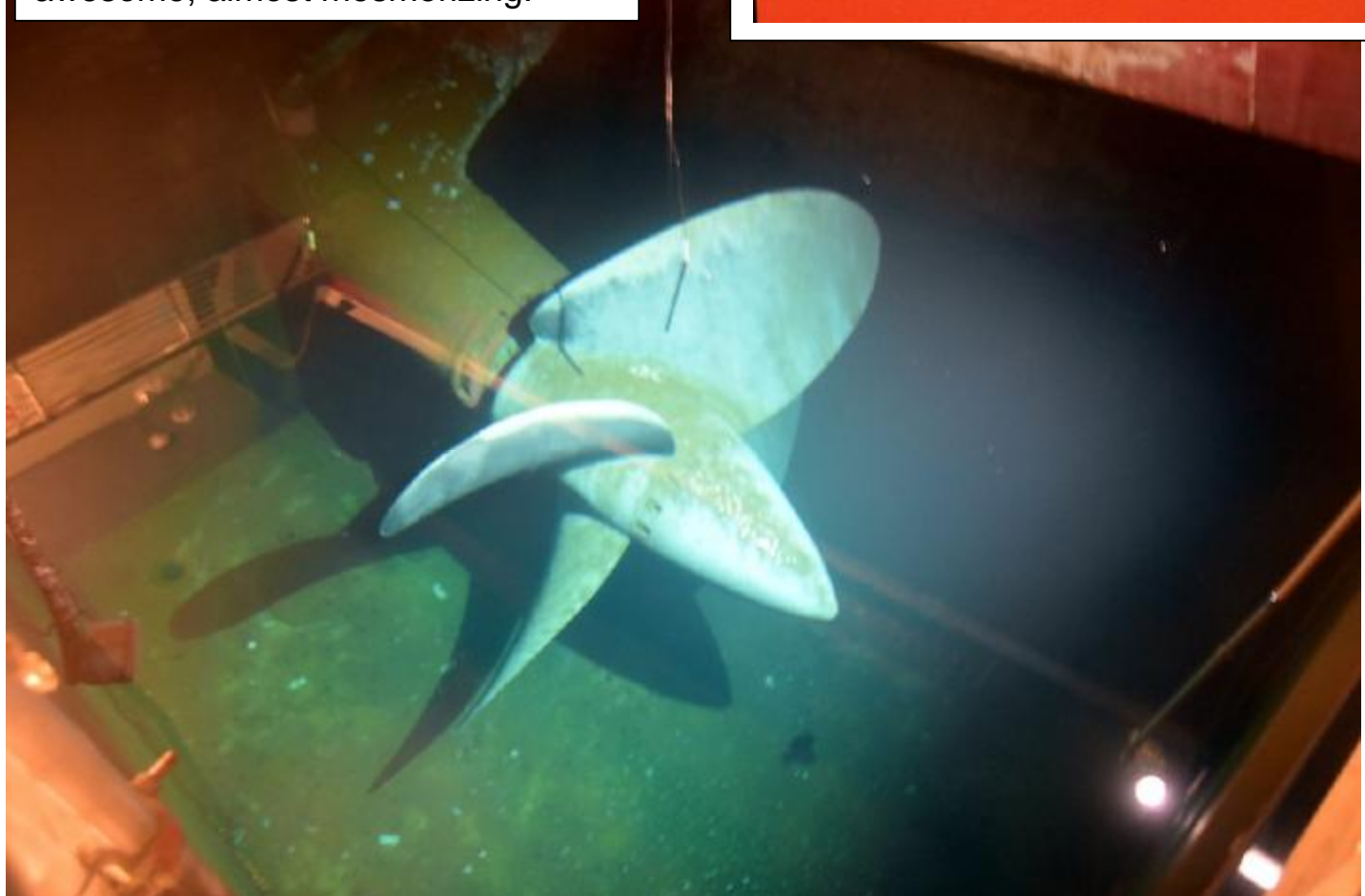


I'm at the stern of the ship, possibly below the water line right now. See how the ribs narrow together and nearly meet just yards away.

PROPELLER BOX

To view the last propeller intact aboard the Queen Mary, you actually walk through the hull into a unique dark-ended chamber containing approximately 200,000 gallons of water. Still attached to its large drive shaft, the manganese bronze propeller, one of four, weighs 35 tons and measures 18 feet from tip to tip.

This view of the propeller was pretty awesome, almost mesmerizing.



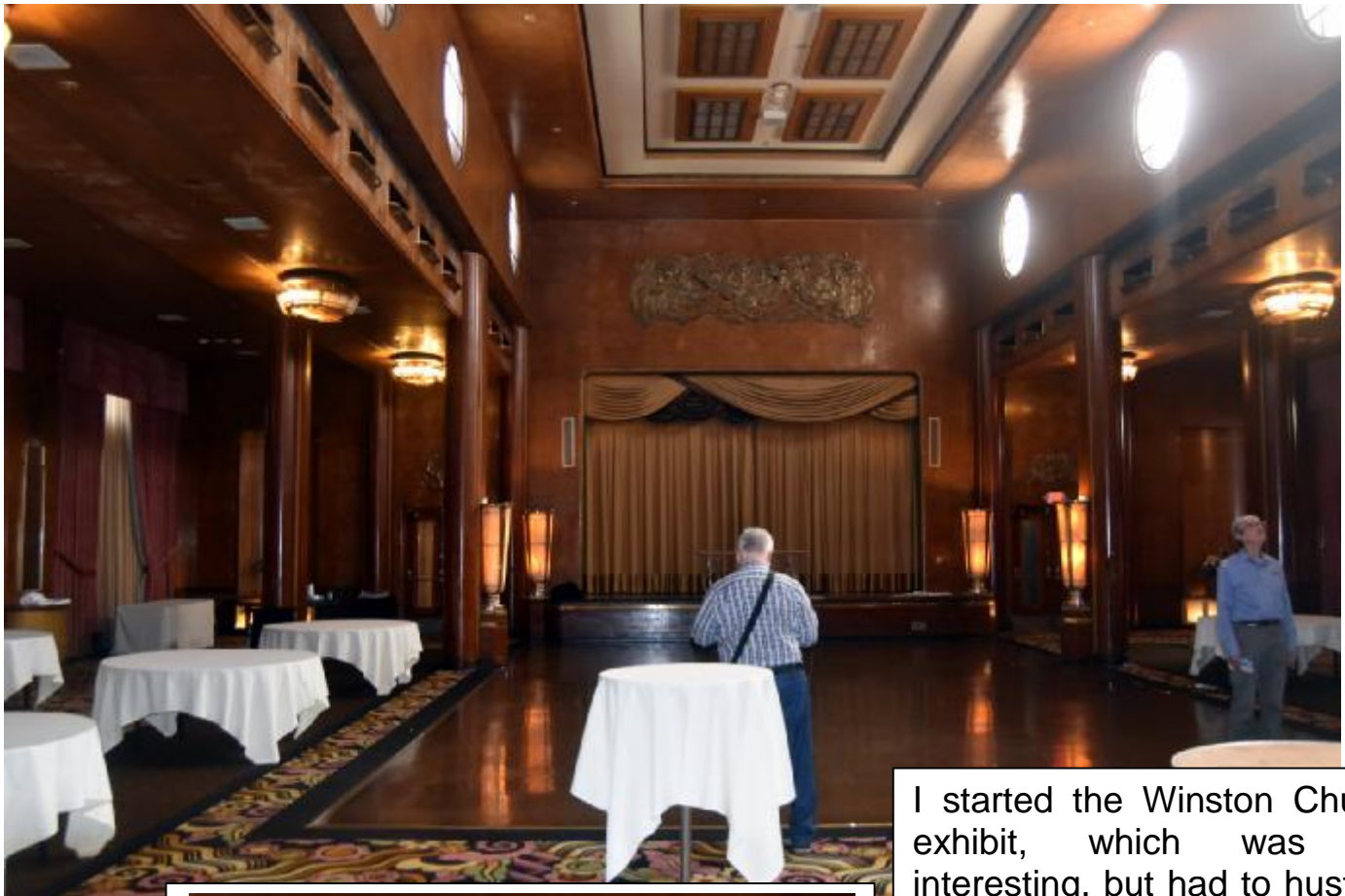


I would hate to be a worker here and have the boss tell me to go get the wrench off the wall. The paper is my brochure for the ship, about 8 inches high and 3 inches wide. This wrench is used to either loosen or tighten the nut that holds the propeller onto the driveshaft.

This was just one of several personal stories of being a soldier who was transported either to or from Europe on the Queen Mary. I thought it was the best.

“My sailing on the *QUEEN MARY* was early January 1945. I was a Private in the US Army being shipped overseas as an Infantry replacement. I was bunked in the lower deck swimming pool, which had been drained, of course, and fitted with bunk beds. I remember being told there were some 14,000 personnel on board for that sailing. The route was from New York via the North Sea to Glasgow, Scotland. One day out and we encountered a severe winter storm with waves so huge they seemed determined to sink even the *QUEEN*. The storm lasted for about three days. We were fed two meals a day. Soldiers were issued large colored buttons (red, white or blue) which were used to determine which mess sitting was authorized. Due to the severe storm, eating hardly seemed worthwhile because so many soldiers were so sick the chow didn't stay down anyway.

I vividly remember that breakfasts consisted most mornings of hard-boiled eggs and oatmeal. The evening meal, in addition to the other foods, generally featured cream of tomato soup and saltines. The dining room floor was usually badly soiled with oatmeal or cream of tomato soup, this because of the terribly rough weather. It took about another 25 years before I personally could tolerate eating either oatmeal or cream of tomato soup.



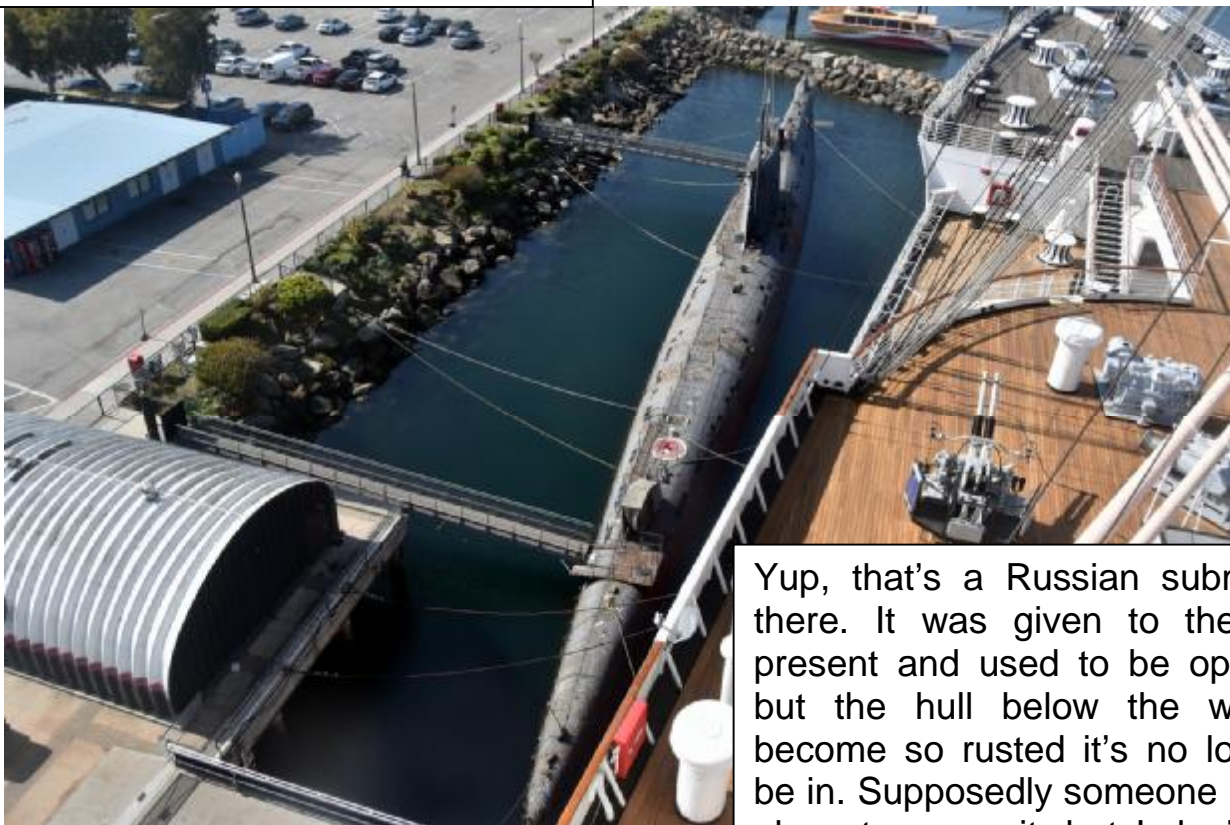
I started the Winston Churchill exhibit, which was very interesting, but had to hustle up a few decks for my tour of the history of the Queen. Robert was a good story teller and took us into a couple of locked rooms, this being one of them, the First Class Queen's Salon.



There was a lot of artwork on board, this one is titled 'Unicorns in Battle'.

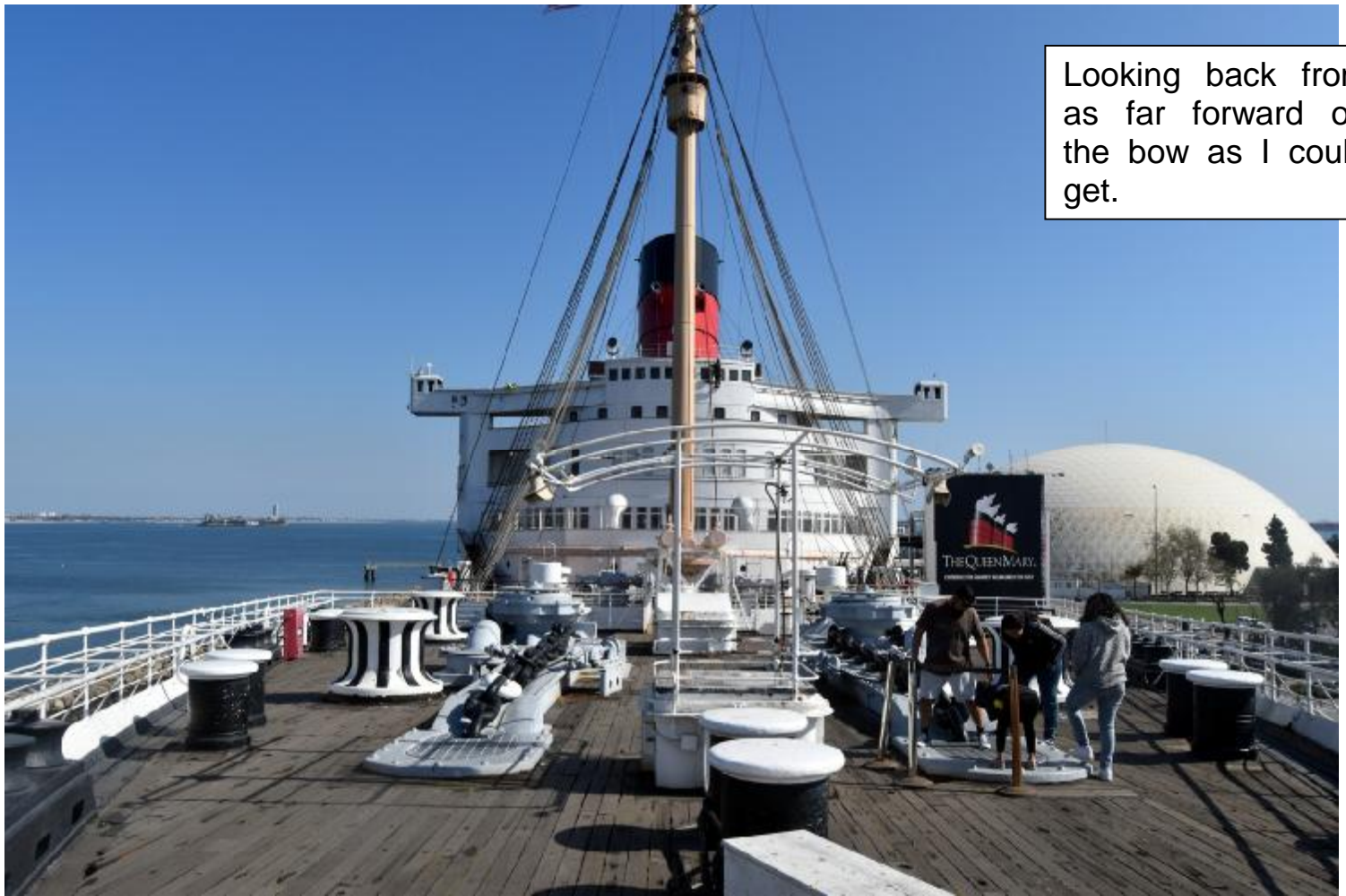
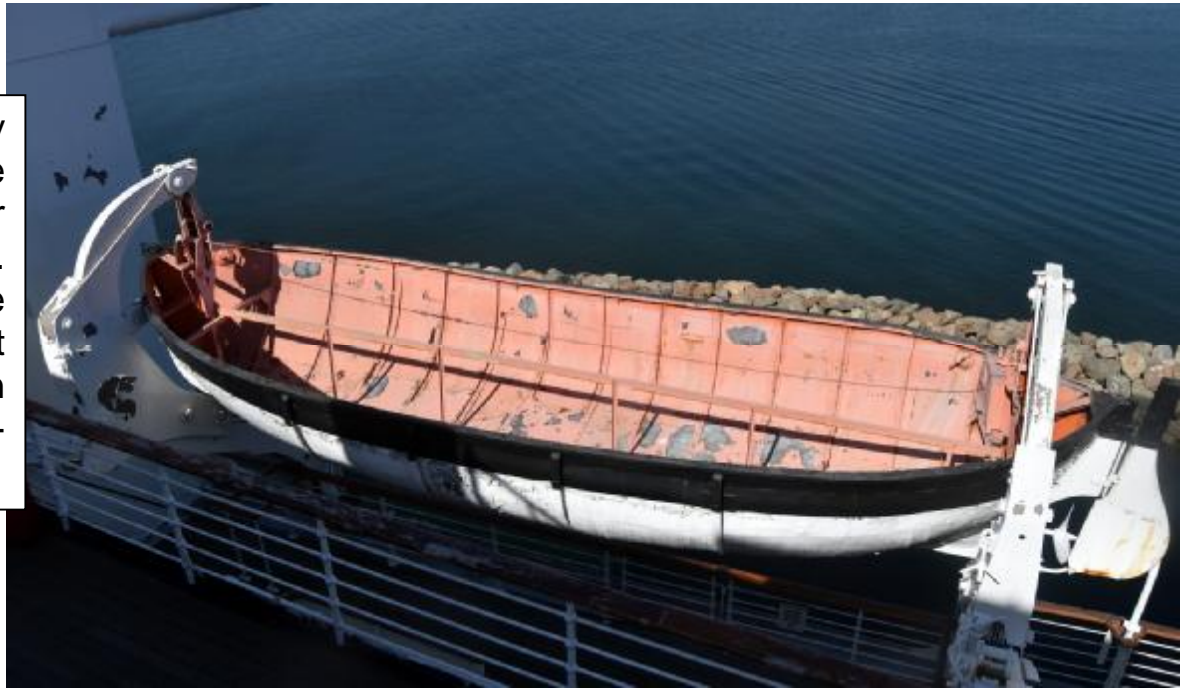


The bow of the ship from the Bridge



Yup, that's a Russian submarine down there. It was given to the U.S. as a present and used to be open for tours, but the hull below the waterline has become so rusted it's no longer safe to be in. Supposedly someone bought it and plans to move it, but I don't know how, the Queen Mary is stationary.

One of the many lifeboats. Unlike the Titanic, enough for everyone on board. Speaking of the Titanic, it would fit inside the Queen Mary one-and-a-half times.



Looking back from as far forward on the bow as I could get.



The Queen Mary Tour

TWIN 40 MM ANTI-AIRCRAFT HEAVY MACHINE GUN

When war was declared in September 1939, the British Admiralty began to consider how best to use the Queen Mary for the war effort.

After some debate, which included the strong possibility of conversion to an aircraft carrier, it was decided that because of her size and speed, she was best suited as a troop carrier.

For defense, the ship was fitted with a wide array of armament which included five 40 MM machine guns similar to this one.

The length of the barrels measure 94.8 inches, and the gun has a range from 3,000 to 5,000 yards. A crew of seven, headed by a gun captain, were assigned to man it.

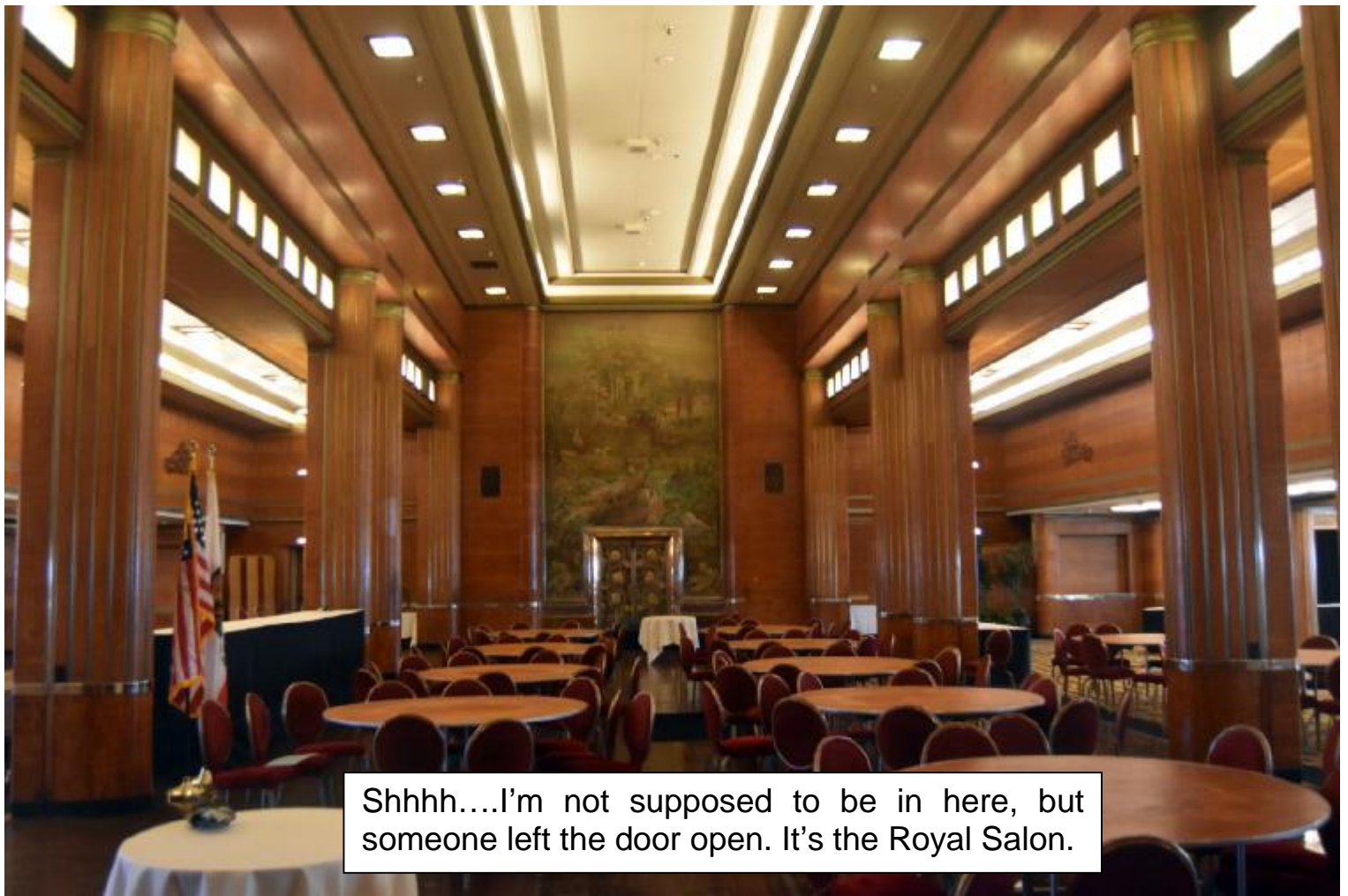
The crew were responsible for keeping the guns in good working order and ready for action, frequently firing them for practice.

Despite the readiness of the Queen Mary's gun crews, she never encountered enemy action by air or sea, and never had cause to fire her guns in anger.

Most armament was removed from the ship in May and June 1945, the remainder was taken off during her post-war refit in 1947.



Who needs to go to LegoLand? This model is made from Lego's. You can determine the size by the young boy at the stern.



Shhhh....I'm not supposed to be in here, but someone left the door open. It's the Royal Salon.

After lunch in the Chelsea Chowder House & Bar, a pretty good burger, but not a \$16 one, I explored the rest of the ship deck by deck, top to bottom. Once again, it was not crowded and I was mostly by myself, especially when I checked out the Isolation Ward which took me a bit of searching to find. A couple rooms where contagious passengers could be quarantined; the ships medical area; capstans, which multiply the force, but no mention of what they were multiplying the force to; and the rope storage area. Several plaques told about sea rescues of injured people from other boats due to the better facilities; and telling of the crew and passengers which had died on board, the source of the ghosts I presume. Some were buried at sea.

My legs were getting tired by this time so I hiked back to the stern and the area of the Churchill exhibit, but opted for the 4D movie (Sharks) and sitting for awhile first.

Every time the *Queen Mary* set sail during World War II, it faced a formidable enemy: the so-called "wolfpacks" of German submarine U-boats. Over the course of the war, German submarines sank more than 120 Allied ships.

	QUEEN MARY	TYPE VII U-BOAT
TOP SPEED	35 mph	20 mph surface; 8 mph submerged

Some interesting facts from the timeline they had along one whole wall.



The *Queen Mary* receives a retrofit that increases its troop capacity.

The *Queen Mary* makes 30 voyages carrying troops across the Indian Ocean and between New York and Great Britain.

The *Queen Mary* accidentally sinks its escort ship, the *HMS Curacao*, killing 338 men.

The *Queen Mary* is hit by a freak 90-foot wave. This incident became the basis for the 1972 movie *The Poseidon Adventure*.

I probably should have put this earlier, but I think the photos told a decent story. The *Queen Mary* was started in 1930, but the depression held up completion until 1936. In 1942 she was refitted as a troop carrier and made several hundred crossings of the Atlantic taking over 800,000 troops and cargo both directions. Because she was so fast, setting an Atlantic crossing speed record soon after her maiden voyage, the German subs were unable to find or catch her, as noted above. By 1947 she was back carrying passengers until being retired in 1967, and bought by Long Beach. The advent of jet passenger planes in the late fifties put a dent in the need for passenger ships.

I spent seven hours aboard the Queen Mary, she took up my whole day. It was enjoyable to walk up and down the same passage ways and through the same doors as dignitaries like Winston Churchill, FDR, Harry Truman, celebrities like Cary Grant, Laurel & Hardy, Audrey Hepburn and Bob Hope among many more, and the Royalty of England. Trying doors marked 'crew only' to see what I could find. Making sure I entered every labeled nook and cranny on the brochure. It was fun.

From Her Majesty I drove over to the Shoreline Village, not much there of interest although I did buy some candy. I parked along the street which is reserved for boat owners with the proper permit. Do you notice how I don't like to pay for parking? Here especially. They want me to come in and patronize the stores and restaurants, then want me to pay for the privilege. Something just doesn't seem right there.

I'm in need of emptying my holding tanks soon. There was an RV park only half a mile away, but there was no one at the gate by the time I arrived.

I will try to find a spot tonight in Seal Beach. There's a grocery store lot that's a possibility. I would really like to try down the street from the Police Dept. No, really, the station is on the corner of a busier street and the cross street is about two blocks long and ends in a cul de sac. Why should any police vehicle pull out of the station lot and turn down a dead end street, only to have to turn around and go past the station again? Makes sense to me. And what could be safer?

No luck on Catalina for tomorrow, I may have to wait til next week for that.

It also looks like The Channel Islands may be a no go. Boat rides out there this time of year are limited to weekends and they're pretty well booked right now. I'll have to call to find out.

To get back to the parking issue. As I exited the lot I was stopped and asked to prove I was on the Queen Mary or pay for parking. Did I have the receipt from lunch? No. Did I have the receipt from the ice cream (and refund slip because the machine was not working)? No (I had thrown that away as I left the ship). How about my Go LA pass? That worked. I saw no notice that parking would be charged upon leaving the lot. Interesting way to do it. All roads lead to the parking lot, it looks like you're getting in for free, then they nail you on the way out. Nobody ever told me to hang onto a receipt for proof.

Until next time....