

Editor's note:

Thelma Andersen McNeill died at the age of 98 on January 2, 2014, in Houston, Texas. As her son and only child, I was fortunate to be with her during her last days and at the end. She had retained her cognitive skills, so we spent many days and hours reminiscing about our lives together and her early life before I came along. My mother was an avid reader of biographies, history and current events, and I think that kept her mind and her wit as sharp as a tack. Over the years she collected volumes of correspondence, pictures, journals and other memorabilia, beginning with her childhood in Whitley Bay, England and covering her adventures in the Southwest Pacific during the war, the Dominican Republic where I was born, Israel in the early 1950's where we decamped for a year while my father worked on a water project, and then in many places in the United States. My mother was very organized in caring for her "stuff". Each letter, photo album and picture was scrupulously categorized and arranged chronologically, topically and geographically. Her last apartment was a visual tribute to the places she had visited and lived, the people she had known, and the many homes she had come to love.

In August 2013, Thelma was organizing this myriad collection for the last time when she came upon her picture albums from World War II. With the memories these sepia-aged pictures inspired, she set about writing in long hand a story about the time she spent in Australia during World War II. I have set out that story on the pages that follow, and added some of her photos with italicized comments for context. Following her story, I have added a short post-script about my mother's life and the memories she bequeathed to those of us who knew and loved her.

By way of background, Thelma served with the American Red Cross in the Southwest Pacific from December 1943 until April 1945. She was initially stationed in Caloundra, South East Queensland, Australia, then on the island of New Britain (between the Solomon and Bismarck Seas off the coast of New Guinea), and finally in Calasiao, Philippines on the island of Luzon. Her duties in Australia were centered on a guesthouse used by the U. S. Army to house and attend to American refugee families who had been rescued from the Philippines. These Americans were business people, educators and clergy who were stranded when the Japanese invaded the Philippines in early 1942. They were lucky enough to connect with guerilla units and, beginning in late 1943, were able to escape the islands as part of a secret mission to provide logistical and command support to the guerillas. The U.S. Navy deployed large, long-range submarines from Darwin and Freemantle to resupply coast watchers and guerillas operating in the Philippines and other archipelagoes located to the east and north of New Guinea. As the submarines offloaded supplies for the guerillas, usually at night on any number of jungle-concealed beaches or fishing piers, these refugees were taken onboard for the return trip to Australia, and eventually the guesthouse in Caloundra. Organized under the direct command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur by Navy Commander "Chick" Parsons, this operation was called "Spyron" and its successful execution was critical in the Allies' island hopping strategy and in re-taking the Philippines.

*Malcolm F. McNeill
August 2014*

Memories of Australia: The Story of a Submarine and a Guesthouse

By Thelma Andersen McNeill



In November 1943, the U.S. Navy in the Southwest Pacific dispatched to the Philippine Islands the biggest submarines in our Naval forces. This mission was fraught with danger, mostly because the submarines were operating three thousand miles behind the Japanese lines. This was 1943, and the Allied Forces had not yet invaded and taken possession of the Japanese-held islands around New Guinea and the southern Philippines. The submarine's mission was twofold. First, it had to supply our guerilla forces that were operating in the Philippines with guns and ammunition, medical supplies, and food and clothing. Secondly, the sub was to bring out of the islands those American refugees who were able to rendezvous with the sub.

In 1942 when the Japanese invaded the Philippines, hundreds of Americans were able to escape to other islands and to the many mountains that occupied all of the Philippines. These refugees were aided and supported by native Filipinos who sheltered and fed them, and gave them sanctuary at the risk of their own lives. The Japanese were everywhere, infiltrating all the Islands, making it impossible for refugees to stay in one place for any length of time. They were constantly on the move, trekking through deep jungles, over mountain trails and through swampland. They could only take with them a few possessions, the young children had to be carried, and life for them was fearful and physically debilitating. They never knew, at a bend in the trail, if they were going to be ambushed, or if they would run into pro-Japanese Filipinos who would betray their whereabouts. These American refugees were a diverse group of people. There were bankers, engineers, university professors, Catholic nuns and priests, and all types of business people who, for many years, had lived in the Philippines representing American institutions and business interests.

Also, there were hundreds of American soldiers who had managed to escape the invading Japanese. They took to the hills and deep jungles, and with the help of the natives managed to survive. Before long, these American soldiers were formed into guerilla units. By radio, they were in touch with General MacArthur's headquarters in Brisbane, Australia. A chain of command was

set up, and soon these guerilla forces were harassing Japanese outposts and fighting back. Wealthy Filipinos supported them financially, and fed and housed them; doing everything they could to aid the American cause.

Back to the submarine! The moonless night would be clear and black with only the stars out when this huge submarine quietly surfaced. She came up from the deep like a huge black monster, but to the men, women and children hiding in the jungle behind the beach, she was the blessed road to freedom.

Quickly, sailors let loose huge rubber rafts and began the job of unloading food, medical supplies, and ordinance for

the guerillas. The rafts were paddled to the beach – quietly, with as little sound as possible – and quickly unloaded by the guerilla forces. With last goodbyes to the brave guerillas left on the beach, the refugees then filled the rafts for the return trip to the submarine. They were frightened, exhausted, many were weak from malaria and other diseases, but overjoyed with the prospect of escape and safety. In time, the refugees were pulled aboard the sub and directed below. The sub then slipped silently beneath the sea and started her long and dangerous journey to her homeport, far to the south, in Darwin, Australia.

Quarters were crowded, with a large crew and sometimes over thirty passengers occupying every corner and bunk. But so many wonderful joys! Hot showers, delicious Navy coffee, real (fresh) milk, and food they had not tasted for nearly two years. And, an endless supply of cigarettes – real ones. A pharmacist mate interviewed each of the passengers, wanting to know names, age and possible health problems. He was alarmed to learn that one lady was pregnant, but relieved when told the baby was not due for three months. Delivering a baby on his submarine was not his cup of tea.

I do not know how long that trip took to Darwin, but it was over a week and maybe longer. At any rate, the day finally arrived when the order was given to surface the submarine, and the



U.S.S. Narwhal (SS-167), launched on 17 December 1928 at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, had a displacement of 2,730 long tons, a length overall of 371 feet and beam of 33 feet. In 1943, she carried a compliment of 9 officers and 80 enlisted men. She had a range 9,400 nautical miles at a surface speed of 10 knots, and her test depth was 300 feet. Narwhal participated in the Battle of Midway and saw action in the Aleutian Islands before being tasked to Spyron. From October 1943 to September 1944, during six patrols, Narwhal evacuated 128 civilians from the Philippine Islands; she earned 15 battle stars for service during the war, making her one of the most decorated ships in the U.S. Navy. Another highly decorated submarine, Narwhal's sister ship, the U.S.S. Nautilus (SS-168), and a number of other submarines assigned to Spyron also carried out missions to supply the guerillas and evacuate civilians. From December 1942 to January 1945 there were 58 such missions.

bedraggled refugees climbed up through the conning tower and assembled on deck. There before them lay Australia, and freedom. Launches came out from shore bearing top Navy brass and nurses to welcome and to assist. It was an emotional time, filled with gratitude and joy that they had survived such terrible experiences and tragedies.

Some of these tragedies were legend; like the massacre of a missionary group reported shortly before the refugees left the Philippines – missionary families who were ambushed by the Japanese and hacked to death - men, women and children. This ambush occurred on the same forest trail our refugees had used to rendezvous with the submarine.

After leaving the submarine, the refugees were taken to a military base where they boarded a plane to Brisbane. On arriving in Brisbane, transport was then arranged to their final destination, Caloundra, a tiny village 70 miles north of Brisbane.

Settled by Greeks, Caloundra was a small fishing village, with a main street not more than five or six blocks long. There was a grocery shop, small lumberyard, and a community hall where village affairs were settled and movies shown, but only on Saturday nights. It was an isolated spot and a good safe place for these people to come, where no one knew them (or where they had come from), and where no one was going to bother them. It was so important to keep secret that our submarines were penetrating behind the Japanese lines to supply our guerilla forces and bring out the refugees.



Strathallan Guesthouse, circa 1944

Built high on a hill overlooking the beach and the Pacific, was a small guesthouse called Strathallan. It had accommodations for about 30 people, not including staff. It was a two-story building with wide verandas facing the sea. On the second floor was a large living room off where the bedrooms were, and downstairs were four small bedrooms, a small living room and a dining area off a large country kitchen. The kitchen was equipped with huge wood burning stoves and ovens - and a long wooden table in the middle.

General MacArthur had requested funds from the American Red Cross in Washington to set up Strathallan as a place of refuge for those rescued from the Philippines. The U.S. Army supplied 13 Filipino soldiers to maintain the inn, including a cook, whose name was Felix, and kitchen staff. An Army doctor and nurse were also provided. The Red Cross supplied an administrator, Alice Thompson, and I was her assistant.

There were a few private homes – summer cottages scattered outside the village; otherwise, Caloundra was many miles from any other habitation. The beach that lay before Strathallan was wide and white, so clean and lovely, with great swimming. Gum trees and old cedars dotted here and there - and about one half mile out was Bribie Island.

Long and narrow, Bribie Island was uninhabited except for a very important Australian Naval station manned by about 20 personnel. They had a small radio station, barracks and mess hall, and it was always great fun when the officers invited Alice and me to dine at their “mess”. They came over in their launch to get us, and would bring us home in the moonlight with much singing. There was absolutely no entertainment at all in Caloundra, except what we made for ourselves. So, going to Bribie Island was much looked forward to.

From the second floor veranda at Strathallan we could look over Bribie Island, and watch all of our naval ships heading for the harbor at Brisbane. From time to time, we could see aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers and destroyers – a mighty naval force.

Alice and I were supplied with an Army pick-up truck and a 9-passenger van for our trips back and forth to Brisbane. Alice drove the truck and I had the van. One of my big jobs was transporting our guests to Brisbane for medical appointments and shopping. The U.S. Embassy in Canberra issued Australian coupon books for clothes and shoes, and also gave each family a generous amount of cash. I loved those trips.



The road was narrow - two lanes along the coast with beautiful scenery – farms and hills, and parallel to the road were deep forests of gum trees with fantastic birds and wallabies.

Caloundra was truly a dream assignment, and I have always been grateful that Mr. Christiansen, the Red Cross Director, gave me the job. Getting to know our guests, caring for them and helping them was wonderful. They were so grateful for any support we could give them, and Alice and I did all that we could to help erase, as much as possible, the terrible fears and bad memories of what they had endured for over two years.



First group to leave (arrived in late 1943) comprised of missionaries, teachers (Silliman University), and engineers, Strathallan, 1944



Last Group to leave, Strathallan, July 1944

One of the happy times together was when we gathered around that long table in the kitchen, and talked and talked. Mary King, our Army nurse, and Alice and I would sit spellbound for hours listening to the stories, keeping the coffee pot filled and serving cookies and cake. Our guests could never get enough sweets. This was the second group to come out of the Islands, and it included many of the faculty of Silliman University on the island of Dumgrete. Dr. Bell, head of the English Department, and his wife and two children, Dr. Silliman, president of the university, and his wife and two children, Abby Jacobs, an English teacher, Laura and Henry Schuring from a mining company in Mabbak and Ben Zimmerman were a few I remember with special affection. Silliman University was run by the Presbyterian Board of Missions, which was located on Madison Avenue in New York City.

The Ford family has to be mentioned. They were extremely wealthy and had been tremendously supportive of the American guerillas – financing whole units of guerillas. Mrs. Ford came out of the Islands with a sugar sack full of jewels, including diamonds, emeralds, rubies and sapphires. She had broken up her jewelry, separating the stones, and it looked like a king's ransom to me. The Fords, before leaving us to go back to the States, treated all of Strathallan to a real Philippine luau, and that was the greatest fun. We had two pigs impaled on long pieces of wood

over a fire that had been built in a deep hole in the ground. We all took turns basting the pigs with a highly spiced sauce. That celebration went on long into the night.

In our front garden were two large frangipani trees, one pink and one yellow. Their fragrant, waxy flowers were so exotic that I shall never forget them. Another memory is that of our woodman coming up our road early in the morning with our daily delivery of wood for the kitchen. He had an old cart and an old horse, all of which was so picturesque. We also had to have huge tanks of water delivered – this part of Australia was really primitive in many ways.

Our basic food supplies and all linens came from Army Supply in Brisbane, and Alice and I made at least one trip a week to fill up the pantry. Fresh milk and produce we got from the little grocery shop in the village. That proprietor was so happy to get that huge order and made special efforts to get the best from the surrounding farms. He had always supplied Strathallan before the war, but not to the extent of our needs. He was so discreet! He never questioned the activities at Strathallan, or where our guests came from. He was a nice, cheerful Aussie to do business with.



Col. Whitley (aide to Gen. MacArthur), Thelma Andersen, Mrs. Jean MacArthur, Alice Thompson (ARC Director), Col. Jaeger (Chief, 42nd General Hospital), Mary King (an Army nurse) at Strathallan, Spring, 1944.

We had many celebrities visiting Strathallan. First and foremost, was Mrs. Jean MacArthur, often escorted by General Huff, one of the staff officers who came out of the Philippines on the PT boat with Gen. MacArthur and his family. Mrs. MacArthur usually came on a Saturday and had lunch with us. She was a charming, lovely lady, easy to talk to and friendly with all of us. Many of our guests had known her in the Philippines and we hosted many happy reunions.

At the time, we did not have an American ambassador to Australia but we did have a minister in Canberra, Mr. Johnson. He was a delightful elderly gentleman, who enjoyed our lunches and meeting with our American guests. Also, Mr. Raglan, the American Consul in Brisbane and Col. Baldwin, the military attaché at our ministry in Canberra were frequent guests.

And lastly there was U.S. Navy Commander “Chick” Parsons, the top brass who commanded the whole submarine supply and rescue operation, and his right hand man (and brother-in law)



Left picture: Cmd. “Chick” Parsons (right) and Maj. Elwin at Strathallan, 1944. Right picture: Thelma and Maj. Tom Jurika at Strathallan, 1944. The Japanese must have thought Cmd. Parsons and Maj. Jurika were mythical forces of nature because they placed a very high bounty on each of their heads. Cmd. Parsons would be awarded two Navy Crosses, the Distinguished Service Cross, a Bronze Star and the Philippine’s Medal of Valor – Gen. MacArthur once referred to him as “the bravest man I ever knew”. Maj. Jurika would go on to lead one of the units that liberated the infamous Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila, only to learn that the Japanese had executed his mother, Blanche Jurika, when a traitor betrayed her role in the Philippine resistance.



Major Tom Jurika. They became close friends of Alice and mine.

The U.S. Army and Navy G-2 intelligence people were very interested in our refugees. They came from Brisbane and questioned all of the refugees. These people had maps and locations, and knew where the Japanese and their arsenals were located, which villages were pro-American or pro-Japanese, the safest mountain and forest trails, where the guerilla forces were hidden, and where they were operating.

Alice and I always said that the plans for the invasion of the Philippines were laid in our dining room in Strathallan – and many of them were.

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There can be little doubt that Commander Parsons and his colleagues collected valuable intelligence from Strathallan’s guests. Many of the refugees had been on the run since early 1942, yet managed to survive in the Islands until 1944 when the Spyron missions were running at full throttle. Living under primitive conditions and constantly on the move, these civilians made it their business to know where Japanese forces were concentrated, their supply routes, the types and condition of their vehicles and equipment, the conditions of roads and bridges, the location of Japanese sympathizers...countless details only people on the ground would know. Sitting around that dining room table at Strathallan with the refugee groups, the Army intelligence people took it all in - group after group, day after day, slowly and deliberately cross-checking map coordinates and details, until finally they were able to synthesize the whole. Thanks to those bedraggled, malaria-ridden refugees, Gen. MacArthur probably knew more about the enemy’s capabilities in the Philippines than did the Japanese.

Post-script

Thelma was born in 1915 in Whitley Bay, North Tyneside in Tyne and Wear on the North Sea coast of England, the oldest of three children of Harald and Kathleen Andersen. At the time, her father was a captain in the British Merchant Marine service, having gone to sea at the age of 14 as a training cadet in the Danish Merchant Marine. Harald would move his family to the United States in 1922 when he became a U.S. citizen and a commissioned officer in the U. S. Naval Reserve. They settled in Floral Park, New York, on Long Island about 25 miles from New York City. My mother graduated from Hempstead High School in 1933, and lived at home helping out because her father was often at sea for months at a time. So, it was a very special occasion when he invited Thelma to celebrate her 21st birthday aboard his ship on a voyage to several Gulf Coast ports, including New Orleans. In 1936, Thelma went to work with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in New York City. All of that was to change with the entry of the United States into World War II in December 1941.

Thelma's father and younger brother soon found themselves on active duty. Her father had been commissioned a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1922, and was called to active service and assigned to convoy duty in the North Atlantic. In September 1943, during his second return voyage from Murmansk, Russia, Captain Andersen's ship was torpedoed off the coast of Nova Scotia. The Skipper, as he was called, was 63 years old at the time. He would spend almost a year and a half as a prisoner of war in Germany before being repatriated as part of a prisoner exchange in February 1945. Following World War II, the Skipper made three voyages to Incheon, South Korea resupplying American forces during the Korean Conflict. In 1953, fifty-nine years after he first went to sea as a cadet in the Danish Merchant Marine, he finally retired to a beautiful waterfront home near Sag Harbor, New York.

Thelma's brother, Cyril, interrupted his work as a junior accountant to join the Army, went through OCS and then on to the U.S. Army Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky. He would serve as a tank commander with the Third Army in France before being badly wounded at St. Lô following the Normandy landings in June 1944. Cyril would spend several years recuperating from his wounds before resuming his career and eventually developing a very lucrative tax accounting practice on Long Island's Gold Coast.

Thelma's active duty in the ARC began in September 1943, the same month her father was torpedoed off Nova Scotia. She spent three months in training at American University in Washington, D.C., after which she boarded a train to San Francisco where she joined an ARC unit headed for Australia. They embarked on a troop carrier, passing below the Golden Gate Bridge at dusk to rendezvous with a destroyer escort that would see them across the Pacific. On her arrival in Brisbane, Thelma was detached from her unit and driven to Caloundra by a senior ARC official and told (in no uncertain terms) to keep her destination and her orders to herself. Thelma never knew why she was selected for this particular assignment, though it may have been as simple as the alphabetical location of her last name.

Thelma worked at Strathallan for the next seven months, until August 1944, and then spent two weeks of liberty in Sydney before joining an ARC unit in Brisbane. That unit would be assigned to the 251st Station Hospital, attached to the 40th Infantry Division. In September 1944, the unit embarked first to the island of New Britain and then on to Luzon Island in the Philippines. During this time, Thelma would also spend a brief period aboard the U.S.S. Hope, a hospital ship stationed in Manila Bay. She recalled how the Hope had to leave the harbor every evening because the ship was lit up like a city block in order to identify her as a hospital ship, and those lights would betray the presence of many naval vessels also in the harbor.

Thelma returned to the United States in April 1945, and later that year met my father, Bruce McNeill. He had mustered out of the Army that summer after having worked on the Manhattan Project, the undertaking to design, test and build an atomic bomb. They married in 1946 and soon embarked for the Dominican Republic where my father worked on the engineering of a water aqueduct to move water from the mountains into Santo Domingo, the capitol. I was born there in April 1947, and we lived in the DR for about four years before moving to Israel where dad was engaged on another water project. This was 1951, not too long after the Partition, and Tel Aviv, where we lived, was a bombed out city. We lived in the only hotel (one of the few standing buildings) and I attended a little Hebrew school in what had served as a bomb shelter.

We returned to the United States in 1953 and eventually settled in East Williston on Long Island. Thelma took the Civil Service exam and went to work at the local high school where, as the years passed, she was able to keep an eye on my affairs. She later worked at the local bank for a few years after my parents moved into the Skipper's old home in Sag Harbor.

In the early 1970's Thelma redirected her focus to home remodeling, gardening, cooking, reading and volunteering. My parents enjoyed playing bridge and over the years that begot many close friendships. For ten years, they lived in Reedville, Virginia, their home overlooking the Little Wicomico River, just a mile or so from Chesapeake Bay. Thelma spent her time gardening, volunteering at a little rural library, hosting Ladies Club affairs, and perfecting her crab and oyster recipes. She even started a small catering business - such was her renown for creating culinary delights. Reedville was swarming with retired military and government people, all of whom enjoyed a good party from time to time, and Thelma was right at home with her own war stories. They moved to Marianna, Florida in 1982 to escape the increasing onslaught of weekenders from Washington and Richmond.

Marianna is about 60 miles west of Tallahassee amid the rolling hills, farms and cattle ranches of the Florida Panhandle. At the time, the town boasted a top-notch junior college, the best hospital west of Tallahassee, a very good public library, and one of the largest truck stops on all of I-10. My parents built a small home in the piney woods just outside of town, close to the college and as far as possible from I-10. Thelma volunteered at the library, became a Pink Lady at Jackson County Hospital, established a garden club, joined the local Audubon chapter where she abetted the annual bird count each year, and survived many chapter-sponsored birding treks through Florida's gator-laden swamps. That left just enough time for her garden, concerts at the college, and bridge parties. Thelma developed a love for walking while in Virginia and this was something she continued in Marianna. Most every day she would hike the mile and a half into town for their paper and mail, passing through quaint neighborhoods with some seriously steep hills. This probably added 10 years to her life.

Thelma celebrated all things Danish - be it cheese, castles, forests, wind farms, the flag, adult beverages, toasts, the people, whatever. If it was Danish, it was good - and if you didn't agree, then you must be invincibly ignorant! Denmark. That little country, whose Christian king and populace all adorned the Star of David on the day the Nazis invaded. Thelma was very proud of her Danish heritage, and sometimes confided in me that the Skipper must have been a Viking. Whenever she was able to scrape together the airfare, she would be off to Denmark for long visits with our cousins in Aarhus and northernmost Skagen, where the waters of the Skagerrak and Kattegat converge. Few Thanksgivings would pass without Thelma extolling the virtues of Christmas in Denmark. And each Christmas, right on schedule, she would receive a package from her cousin Karen in Aarhus containing little gifts for our Christmas tree and dinner table. It is simply impossible to overstate how important Denmark was to Thelma.

My dad passed away in 2003 at the age of 93. Thelma was then 88, and beginning to slow down. The family encouraged her to sell the house and move in with her younger sister Pat who lived in Vero Beach. This would be an important move for Thelma; she had been a Pink Lady, counted birds, and walked those Marianna hills for almost 23 years. She knew her life was going to change and her world was going to get smaller, but she acquiesced and accepted Pat's generous offer. These were difficult times for her, trying to adjust to age-related maladies while also losing much of her independence. Thelma would live in Vero Beach with Pat for a couple of years before moving to Houston to live with me.

Bringing Thelma to Houston was conditioned on surrendering her driver's license because Houston traffic was a far cry from that found around Vero Beach. I compensated by organizing visits to interesting places in and around town. Over the course of the next two years we became patrons of the finest theater, ballet and symphony companies in the country, and made many trips to Houston's museums, state parks and federal bird sanctuaries in Southeast Texas. Thelma joined St. Martin's Episcopal Church, which counted among its members former President George H. W. Bush and his wife, Barbara. So, it was to be expected Thelma would run into President Bush following the service one Sunday, introduce herself, and proceed to tell him how much she admired his service in public office...and that she too had served in the Southwest Pacific. A graceful and solicitous man, he listened and they had a little chat as the other worshipers nudged them down the aisle. I'm sure the Bushes experience something like this every time they go to church, but for Thelma, a dyed-in-the-wool Republican, it was an apogee event.

We moved Thelma into an independent living community in late 2009, where she had a little apartment of her own, no stairs to negotiate (unlike my townhouse), and many folks who, like her, had some pretty interesting backgrounds. She decorated her apartment with all of her closest keepsakes and her voluminous library. I was forever buying and putting together bookcases. She made some friends, and despite her increasing difficulties with walking, managed to care for her beloved Augie, a gray tabby. It was early 2013 when we moved Thelma into assisted living. She needed the care, but could not reconcile herself to the devastating loss of independence. She turned 98 that March, having outlived almost all of her peers, both family and friends. More importantly, she had reached that point in life when there is little to look forward to...when a failing body corrodes the spirit, begetting depression.

Thelma died on a Tuesday afternoon, surrounded by holiday flowers and cards and her beloved morning newspapers. Her passing was peaceful, and I was there holding her hand telling her softly that I loved her and all would be well. She looked at me briefly before closing her eyes, and then she was gone. My mother - who had traveled so far, who was devoted to her family and enriched the lives of so many people, who had always engaged life's vicissitudes and demanded the same from those she loved - had reached the end of her long journey. As was her wish, we brought her home to Oakland Cemetery in Sag Harbor, a place she loved and knew so well. There, she will rest with my father, the Skipper, and her mother, Kathleen, amidst shady knolls marked with the headstones of old whaling families, and those of soldiers and sailors who fought in every American war, from the War of Independence to Iraq. A fitting tribute for a modern-day Viking - so brave and true.

Godspeed, Mom.