

**By Don Moore - Senior Writer  
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Boatswain's mate Angelo Marinelli knew something big was up after a bathtub was brought aboard his ship, the heavy cruiser [USS Quincy](#), in December 1944 while it was moored at the Boston Navy yard.

"We put two and two together when the bathtub showed up. We knew there was something in the wind with the president," he said. "The newspapers were talking about the upcoming conference with Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin in the Crimea."

Before the Quincy left Boston, the captain took the whole crew (all 1,750 sailors) on the fantail and chewed us out from one end to the other for spilling the beans about taking the president over to the conference," the 78-year-old Port Charlotte man recalled. "Our captain said, if the Germans were to make an attempt to get the president of The United States, you can thank the blabber mouths on this ship.' We caught holy hell for telling everybody in the fleet about the president's coming trip."

At the navy yard in Boston they not only installed a tub in the admiral's quarters on the heavy cruiser, but a small elevator was also put in to take Roosevelt's wheelchair from the admiral's poop deck down to the main deck 10 feet below. In addition there was a mahogany and stainless steel gangplank used only to take FDR on and off the ship.

"We met the president at Newport News , Va. It was a very big secret when he came aboard ship," Marinelli said. "It was the middle of the afternoon when Roosevelt arrived. We all had to go below deck. Nobody was allowed topside, except a Marine detachment with rifles.

"After he was aboard, we went to sea. It wasn't until the next morning when we got up, that along came Roosevelt in his wooden wheelchair with his Filipino valet. The president was accompanied by Adm. King. The admiral was a short guy with stripes past his elbow," he said. "The president's daughter, Ann was with him too."

"I was part of the deck crew and we were going about our normal jobs when the president was on deck. He stopped for a moment and watched us do our work. He was covered with a horse blanket and was wearing a jockey cap.

"I don't think we were allowed to talk to him. So there I am working away and there was my president looking right at me. I smiled at him. He smiled back. When he did, he only had one front tooth," Marinelli said.

"We were told our primary duty was to rest up the president. They didn't want him to go into the conference weak.

"WE were taking him on a leisurely two-week cruise to the Middle East aboard the Quincy by the southern route. We left Newport News, skirted Bermuda, went by just south of the Canary Islands then we worked our way up the African Coast," he said. "The weather was perfect."

During the cruise, their ship was accompanied by a light cruiser that brought up the rear. Three destroyers steamed ahead, flanking the president's ship.

"When we got to the Straits of Gibraltar, they figured if the Germans were going to make their move, they would make it there because the straits are narrow," he noted. "They blanketed our ship with three flights of fighter planes that crisscrossed the Quincy and protected us."

Eventually the ship reached the island of Malta without any problems. When it arrived, the British ships in the harbor gave the president a 21-gun salute.

"Churchill and his daughter Sarah were at the dockside to meet Roosevelt and his daughter when they arrived. You couldn't see land or the buildings for the thousands of people who turned out to see Churchill. The people of Malta loved the prime minister," he said. "The standing ovation they gave Churchill gives me goose pimples every time I think about it. He gave 'em the 'V' for victory sign and waved his ever-present cigar. The people just went crazy."

From there the two world leaders were whisked by plane to Yalta in the Crimea for the week-long conference with Stalin. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Europe's postwar reorganization.



Goodwill tour: Marinelli was transferred to the USS Little Rock, a light cruiser that made the first American goodwill cruise to South America after the war. The ship is pictured dockside at Callao (Lima), Peru, in February 1946.

## Oil Business

While Roosevelt was meeting in Yalta, Marinelli and the rest of the Quincy's crew sailed on through the Suez Canal. They dropped anchor in Great Bitter Lake, between the canal and the Red Sea. Marinelli didn't know it, but the president would appear back on board their cruiser a few days later. Roosevelt was there for a meeting with the leaders of the oil-rich Middle East. FDR would cut an oil deal with these leaders for the United States for years to come.



King Farouk left and Arabian King Ibn Saud right  
meet with FDR

"King Farouk of Egypt and several other Arab leaders met the president aboard the Quincy the first day. Our whole crew was lined up along the railing in full dress uniform for hours while Roosevelt and the Middle Eastern heads of state were doing their thing on deck," Marinelli said.

The meeting between FDR and the oil sheiks went on for several days. Farouk and his entourage camped out in their tents on the foredeck of a near-by destroyer.

"On the other end of the destroyer, Farouk's slaves had a bunch of his goats or sheep penned up. They didn't eat anything but freshly killed meat. At 11 a.m. every day, a slave would take one of those animals and in two minutes he had it disemboweled. It was amazing how quickly he butchered it on the bow of the destroyer," he said. ([con't.](#))

(con't.) "They put their tents up and their carpets down on the destroyer's deck. They built campfires on the deck of the destroyer. Every sailor aboard was carrying a fire extinguisher in case the fires in their tents got out of hand. They were lucky. They never did.

"Because we were representing the United States of America, you always had to be in full dress uniform when the president was on board," he said. "That meant you might be cleaning or sweeping on deck in your dress uniform."

A few days later Roosevelt returned to the United States aboard the Quincy by the same route he had arrived. It was another leisurely, uneventful trip home.

### The USS LITTLE ROCK

After Marinelli returned to the states he was transferred to the USS Little Rock, a light cruiser that was being completed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. He was on a shakedown cruise off Cuba aboard his new ship on V-J Day, Aug. 14, 1945, the day the Japanese surrendered.

Almost immediately after the war, the Little Rock made the first American goodwill tour of South America. The captain and crew visited nine countries to thank the leaders of these countries for their support during WWII. When the ship sailed into Rio de Janeiro Harbor on Nov. 11, 1945, the crew ran into big trouble.

"When we got to San Palo, Brazil, 700,000 communists tried to assassinate our crew. When we reached port, half the crew went on liberty. [That's when the riot erupted](#). They had to use the Brazilian Army, police and fire department to round up and protect our sailors. This happened during the Christmas-New Year's holidays of 1946," Marinelli said. "We got everyone back aboard ship. Nobody was seriously injured in the riots, but we got out of there in a hurry."

The rest of the goodwill cruise aboard the Little Rock was without incident. When the ship returned to Norfolk in April 1946, Marinelli was discharged. He spent the next 30 years working for General Motors in its Framingham, Mass., plant.

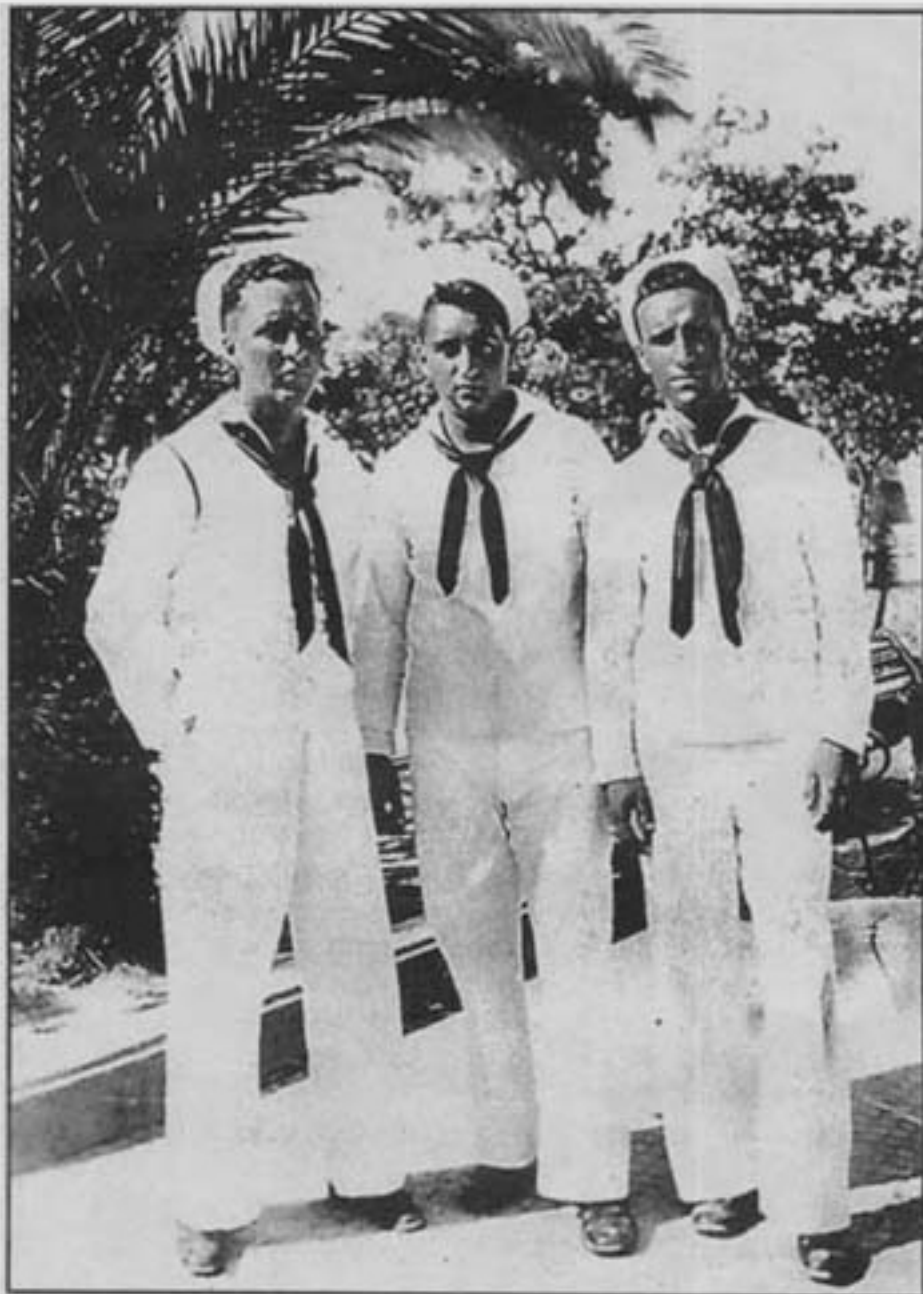


Photo provided

**On the town:** Marinelli is the swabbie in the center. He and his buddies had just dropped FDR off at Malta and were touring the island on a sunny Sunday in July 1944.



Sun photo by Don Moore

# The Flag

Almost 60 years later, after he served aboard the [U.S.S. Quincy](#) during the D-Day Invasion and the invasion of Southern France and took President Roosevelt to Malta to meet Churchill and Stalin at Yalta, Marinelli stood in the living room of his Port Charlotte apartment looking at a shadowbox of his World War II memorabilia. In the box were his medals and campaign ribbons. There was also his boatswain's pipe, pictures and a small flag.

"I wore the American flag under my T-shirt during the fighting because I wanted whoever found my body to know I was an American. I wanted them to bury me with the Americans. It was just a hang-up I had," he said quietly.

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Credit for finding this story goes to Larry Marinozzi USS Little Rock Association Member #93.



[USS Quincy](#)