

# Rescue of the Motor Vessel *Maersk Alabama*

FROM THE SEAMAN'S EYE COLLECTION OF MARITIME PAINTINGS

by DICK WHALEN

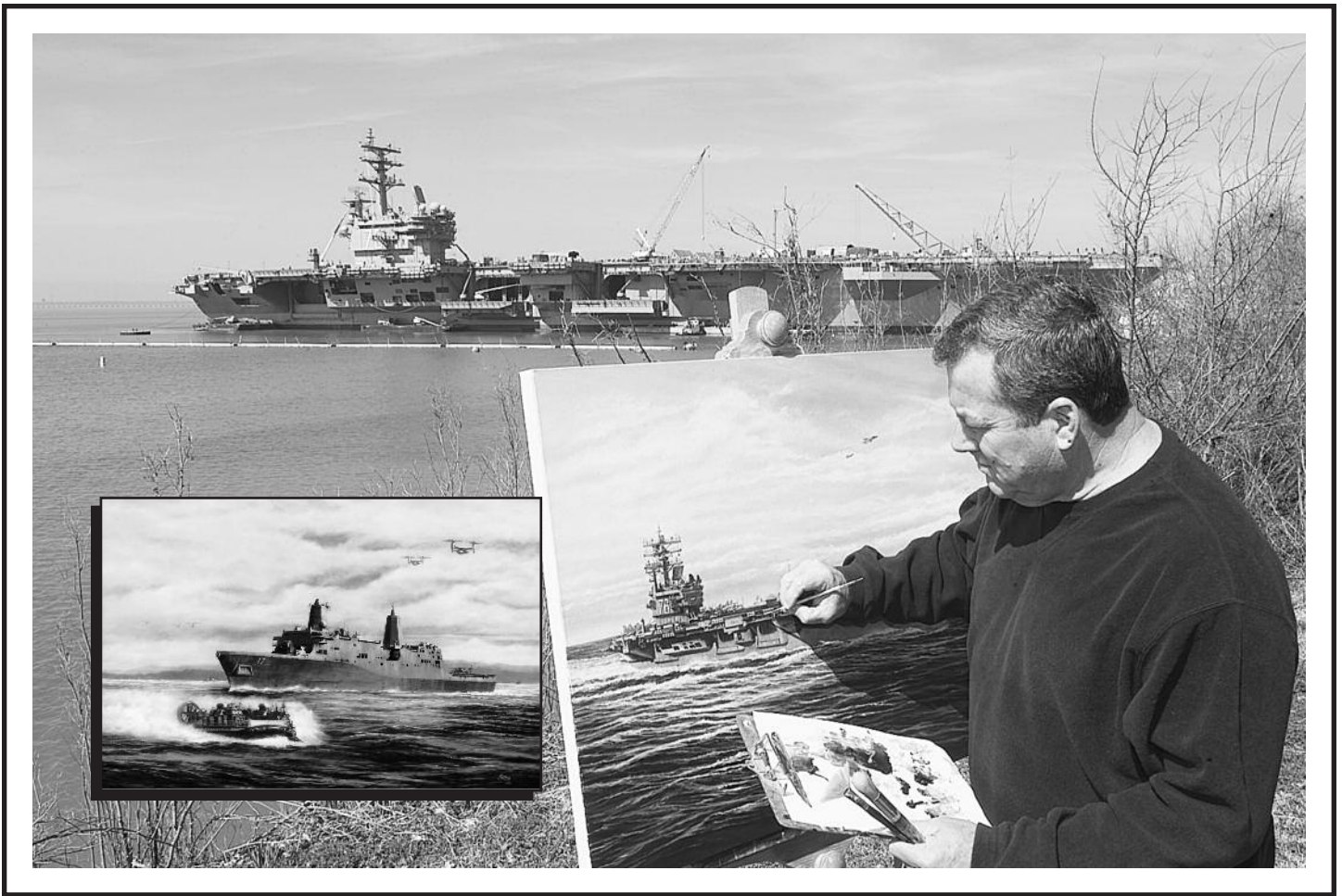


*A* dramatic painting portraying the April 2009 rescue of Captain Richard Phillips, master of the Motor Vessel “MAERSK ALABAMA” from Somali pirates, is the most recent addition to the “Seaman’s Eye” collection of maritime art by retired Navy Captain Dick Whalen.

Commissioned by the MAERSK Line, Limited, the canvas depicts the final stages of a flagrant act of piracy in the Indian Ocean which captured worldwide attention. The daring rescue began as the U.S. flagged vessel was enroute Mombasa, Kenya with a cargo of food products. Four young brigands boarded ALABAMA, resulting in a five-day standoff which saw the ALABAMA civilian crew fight to regain control of their ship and Captain Phillips put his life in the hands of armed criminals to protect his shipmates.

The crisis was ultimately resolved when the Navy guided missile destroyer USS BAINBRIDGE was ordered into the area at high speed by the Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. Captain Phillips had been earlier seized by the pirates and taken aboard one of ALABAMA’s rescue lifeboats. As seas worsened, the Somalis allowed the powerless lifeboat to be taken in tow out of rough waters by the Navy destroyer. When the destroyer Commanding Officer observed Phillips tied up and in imminent danger of being killed, he authorized U.S. Navy SEALs, who had parachuted into the area, under cover of darkness, to open fire. The well-trained snipers dispatched the three pirates, firing just three rounds from the pitching after deck of BAINBRIDGE in the nighttime takedown.





Dick Whalen, the son of Navy parents, was born in Honolulu, Hawaii just weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor. His career as a marine artist had its beginnings during World War II when, as a youngster on cross-country family trips to visit his father, returning from the Pacific Theater for ship repairs, he sketched sea battles under the watchful eye of his mother. Many years later, he would paint each of the vessels in which his dad had served. These early maritime portraits collectively represented his first major efforts of portraying the sea in a manner best rendered by those who have lived life on the bounding main.

Self-taught and self-styled, Dick sketched his way through high school in Norfolk, Virginia as a newspaper editor. Prior to graduating from the Naval Academy in 1963, he contributed a wealth of art to the institution's rich heritage, including the official "crest", gracing the rings of his Academy classmates. He went to sea on graduation where he developed his "seaman's eye" for marine authenticity over the next thirty years on deployments around the world.

Dick's bold compositions pay tribute to the rugged existence and spirit of the seagoing profession. He works in all mediums and each of his highly detailed canvases is the product of extensive research on site and through studies of engineering drawings. He is frequently sought to render portraits of newly constructed vessels and his works have appeared as covers of numerous national magazines.

His marine portraits are maintained in public and private collections across the country, including by a U.S. President, Defense Secretaries, and Chiefs of Naval Operations. Additionally, his works are displayed in museums such as the United States Naval Academy, the Ronald Reagan Museum, and the City of Mobile Museum, which maintains the Commissioning portrait of Aegis Cruiser USS MOBILE BAY, in which Dick served as the vessel's first Commanding Officer. He is particularly pleased and honored whenever commissioned by former Navy Sailors seeking lasting remembrances of their time at sea, serving the nation.

Dick retired from the Navy in 1993 as a captain and is currently military director for Old Dominion University in Norfolk. He resides near the coast in Virginia Beach, permitting him ready access to ever-changing sea and sky conditions, so vital to his marine panoramas. Dick and his wife, Marti, have three grown sons, including two with naval service, and one an architect who inherited many of his dad's artist talents.