

Crowds Line Up To Watch Nerve Gas Ship Head Out To Sea

The Southport waterfront was the scene of busy activity late Sunday afternoon as the liberty ship LeBaron Russell Briggs carrying a deadly cargo of nerve gas passed through the local

harbor on her way to sea for her final voyage. On Tuesday she was scuttled, carrying down with her the controversial munitions shipment. (Photo by Spencer)

Nerve Gas Is Gone; Port Back To Normal

By ED HARPER

Southport accepted the nerve gas for what it was—another cargo of dangerous war materials that pass through Sunny Point every day. But when the rusty, gray hulk of the SS LeBaron Russell Briggs was towed from the Cape Fear River Sunday afternoon, local residents, along with the rest of the country, breathed a sigh of relief to know that it was gone.

The near-derelict Liberty ship and its cargo of lethal nerve gas were headed for a point 282 miles off the Florida coast, where it

was scuttled Tuesday in 16,000 feet of water.

Weather delayed the ship's departure from Sunny Point; political clamor nearly postponed the operation indefinitely.

Florida Gov. Claude Kirk, arguing that the seadump involved unwarranted risk, joined with the Environmental Defense Fund and sought an injunction that would halt the operation. Federal Judge June Green refused to issue a restraining order that would keep the ship moored at Sunny

Point, although she did request that the Army find another disposal area where the water was not so deep.

Kirk and the environmental group appealed the decision and the case was heard by the U.S. Court of Appeals Sunday morning. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Warren Burger had ordered that the ship not leave port until 10 a.m. Sunday, but the three-member appellate court extended the delay another 24 hours while the special court session was held in Washington.

The court upheld Judge Green's decision and a quick check with Gov. Kirk and the Environmental Defense Fund indicated they would not appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court. The nerve gas convoy was cleared for sailing.

The destroyer escort Hartley and the Coast Guard cutter Cape Upright preceded the Liberty ship downriver. The obsolete Navy ship was towed by one commercial tug while another was nestled beside the 442-foot vessel. Three Sunny Point tugs followed.

Hundreds of Southport residents lined the waterfront to watch the memorable shipment pass by. They were bothered more by a sudden shower that sent them scurrying for shelter than by the deadly cargo in the hold of the Briggs.

The Coast Guard clamped a tight security lock on the lower Cape Fear River. Small boats, some manned by curious observers and others operated by fishermen minding their own business, were kept at a distance, and the vessel that was to meet the nerve gas convoy offshore and retrieve two Cape Fear River pilots was allowed to continue only after official clearance.

The ominous ship left port in equally-threatening weather. The sky was overcast as the convoy made its way down the Cape Fear, then cleared for a few minutes only to cloud again and rain as the towed vessel passed the waterfront. Few waited to see the ship leave the river.

Once at sea the convoy was joined by USCG ships Mendota and Cherokee. The smaller Cape Upright returned to port along with the Sunny Point tugs, and ships anchored offshore awaiting the departure of the nerve gas were allowed to enter the harbor.

Army officials claim this is the last nerve gas that will be disposed of at sea, and admit

Preparations To Begin Fall Term

Summer vacation for the approximately 6,000 school students in Brunswick county will end next week as they report and register on Friday, according to Ralph C. King, Superintendent of Brunswick County Schools. This first day will be orientation day and school will operate on a short schedule. All students are urged to be present and register, so as to reflect an accurate enrollment count.

Principals of all county schools are currently on duty and are available to clarify inquiries about school matters relative to their particular school operations. Principals are presently involved in planning for school opening.

Principals serving in the schools are as follows: Bolivia High School, Wade H. Duncan; Brunswick County-Southport, E.L. Pettiford; Leland High School, W. Nelson Best; Lincoln Elementary School, James F. Clemmons; Shallotte High School, Jasper T. Keziah; Southport Elementary School, Col. Marion L. Burn; Union Elementary School, Jonathan Hankins; Waccamaw High School, Roland W. English.

The county's 260 teachers and staff members will report for work on August 27 and will devote their efforts to planning for the new school term.

School buses will be picked up by drivers on August 26th. A meeting of all bus drivers will be held in the Shallotte High School auditorium prior to taking charge of buses.

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JUDGE RAY WALTON

Judge Walton At Alabama

Judge Ray H. Walton of the North Carolina 13th District Court has been awarded a scholarship to the 1970 American Academy of Judicial Education. The scholarship is supported by a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the United States Department of Justice. The Academy will be held at the University of Alabama from August 16-28.

The purpose of the Academy, which is co-sponsored by the North American Judges Association and the American Judicature Society, is to provide

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Board Hears Erosion Talk

The Board of County Commissioners met Monday and heard several citizens from the Holden's Beach area in a general discussion of a recently enacted safe boating law. At the conclusion of this discussion the County Attorney was directed to take the proper action in setting up a public hearing in regards enforcing safeboating regulations along the inland waterway in his area of the county. The board set September 21 as the tentative date for the public hearing.

Odell Williamson and M.C. Gore, developers from Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach, came before the board to discuss the erosion problem along the entire Brunswick county coastline.

Parks C. Fields, county supervisor for FHA and C.D. Pickrell, City Manager for Southport, came before the board for a discussion of the growing solid waste and garbage disposal problem. Fields explained the operation of a program which the FHA helped finance and implement in Sampson County recently. He promised the full cooperation of his department in hopes that a plan can be worked out and

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Waccamaw Bank Announces Promotions

Lester V. Lowe, vice-president in charge of the local office of the Waccamaw Bank & Trust Company, announced this week the following promotions affecting personnel in the Southport office: Robert D. Howard, to assistant vice-president; Douglas H. Hawes, left, to cashier, and W. Jackson Keith, Jr., to assistant cashier. The bank is pleased to recognize the outstanding work each of these men, Lowe said. (Photo by Spencer)

Wreck Fatal To Local Citizen

James Bernice Russ, former postmaster at Southport and more recently a city employee, was killed instantly Saturday night when the automobile in which he was returning from Wilmington with his wife ran off highway No. 133 near Lilliput Creek. Mrs. Russ was painfully injured but is convalescing at Doshier Memorial Hospital.

The couple had been to Wilmington to attend a show as a celebration of their 16th wedding anniversary.

The deceased was a native of Southport, and following graduation from Southport High School attended Duke University. During World War II he served as an officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve. Following his release from service he was named postmaster at Southport, but during the Korean conflict was called once more to active duty in the Navy.

Survivors include his widow, Mrs. Thelma A. Southerland Russ; a son, R. David Peters of Charleston, S.C.; two daughters Mrs. Shepard of Weaverville, and Mrs. Diane Bazydlo of Troy, Mich.; a brother, W.A. Russ, Sr.

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Education Board Ponders Problems

The Brunswick County Board of Education met in special session on Monday.

The board granted a teaching contract to Mrs. Dorothy Blue, librarian, Southport School for the 1970-71 school year.

The resignation of John Vereen as committeeman for Brunswick County-Southport High School was accepted.

The board was informed that Southport Methodist Church officials had not submitted cost estimate for possible utilization of church facilities for housing students during the 1970-71 school year. This estimate is to be forthcoming, but the use of this facility is subject to

approval by the church membership Sunday on September 6.

Authorization was extended to Superintendent Ralph King to receive bids on additional mobile units to house students at Southport. The board is to determine at its regular meeting in September whether these units are to be purchased.

The following teacher aides were employed for the 1970-71 school year: Bolivia-Elizabeth R. Mercer, Esther P. Willetts, Aileen B. Ward, Wanda F. Williamson, Mary C. Palmore, Nancy Vereen; Leland-Annie L. Brown; Shallotte-Aggie

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Library Group Backs Service

A Friends of the Library meeting was held Thursday evening at the home of the president, Mrs. A.P. Henry, at Winnabow. Minutes of the last meeting were read and approved and the treasurer, Mrs. Catherine Skipper, reported a balance of \$755.

Mrs. Mary Hughes Bliss reported that the appointment committee including Mrs. Bobby Jones and James F. Clemmons had met with the county commissioners and that Mrs. Jones had presented the needs of the library and had asked for increased financial aid. The commissioners heard their request but made no commitment.

Mrs. Christine Andrews reported that the contact with the ABC Board revealed the fact that the local board has no authority to make any changes in their budget. This would have to be done through contact with the State Representatives in the General Assembly. Mrs. Henry has contacted one of these men and was advised that a bill should be presented to the legislature asking for more support for the library.

The new bookmobile has started making its rounds to communities throughout Brunswick county and the committee discussed ways to pay for this vehicle.

Mrs. John Dingle was a visitor at this meeting and gave some inspiring and helpful suggestions to the group. The organization decided to place a donation box at each library and also on the bookmobile for the convenience of anyone who would like to make a contribution. Signs on the boxes will read "We are happy to share our library with everyone. Would you like to make a donation?"

Board Meeting Held Wednesday

The Brunswick County Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday.

The following teachers contracts for the 1970-71 school year were approved: Bolivia, James E. Duers; B.C.H.S., Glenda Scott, D.R. Crutchfield, Frank Barbee and William Robert Thorsen; Leland, Mamie G. Hepler and Donna Goldstein Norris; Shallotte, Thomas Franklin Roberts; Union, Bobby D. Golden; Waccamaw, Karen Bledsoe and Wanda Sue Westcott Sellers.

Wade H. Duncan was elected principal of Bolivia High School upon the recommendation of Superintendent Ralph King.

The board agreed to allow partial placement of the Board of Elections trailer on Bolivia School property adjacent to Agricultural Building and the Bolivia Fire Station.

Superintendent King informed the board that Trinity United Methodist Church of Southport would submit by Monday the estimated cost for housing one grade of the elementary school for the 1970-71 school year.

Attorney Anderson informed the board that a fee simple deed of trust had been drawn and submitted to proper attorneys for consideration and approval

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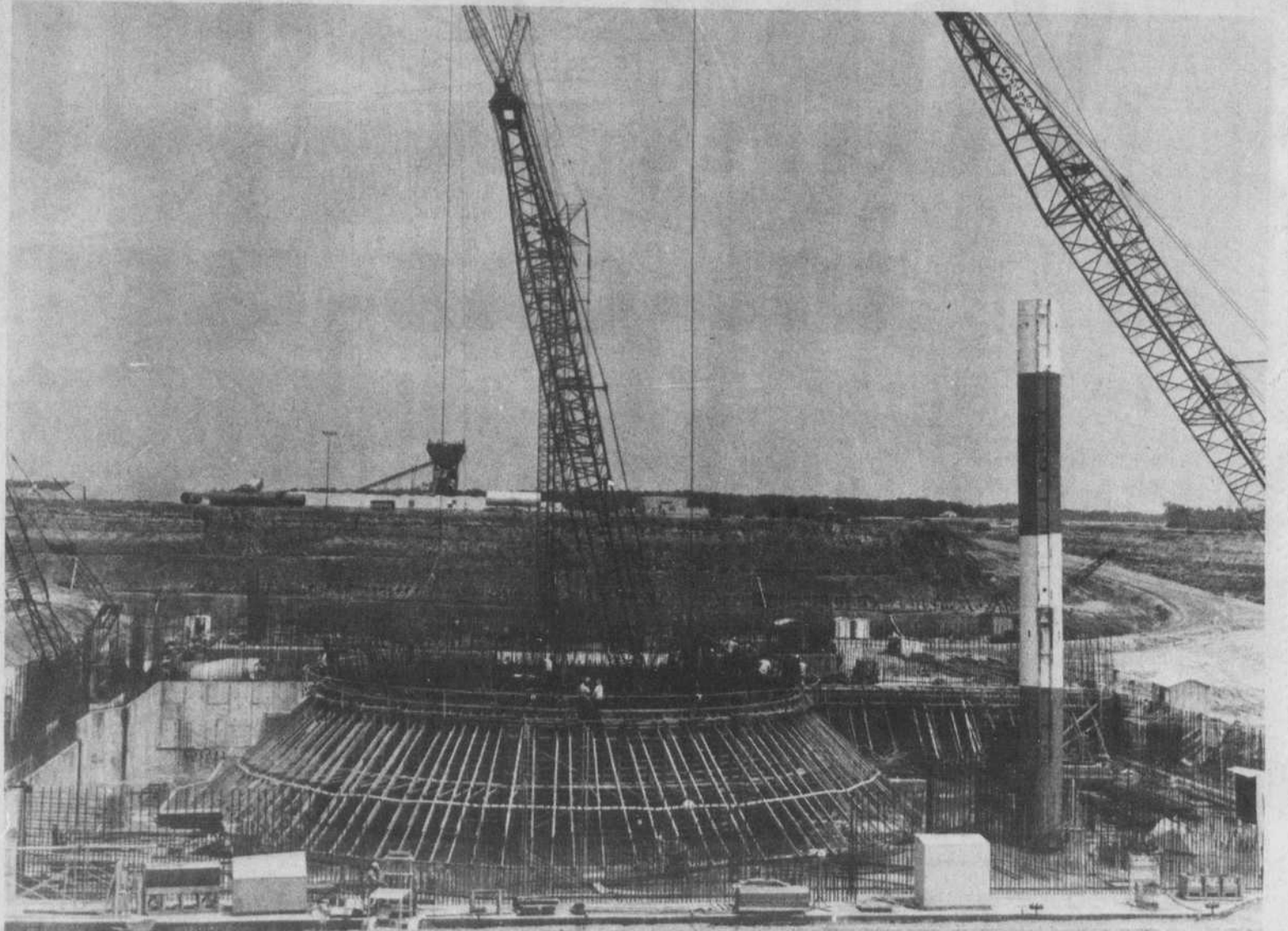
Time And Tide

The little Coast Guard patrol boat Naugatuck was off on a mission—looking for rum-runners. This may sound a bit funny, but the year was 1935, and the story appeared in our August 14 issue. Other news from this vessel was that the pet fox that was her mascot had been lost at sea during the last trip outside. Shipping had been plentiful during the past weekend, with five cargo vessels having passed through the Southport harbor in two days. The threat of fire to tobacco curing barns was dramatized by a front page picture showing one ablaze.

The survey by State Highway engineers to determine the best route to be followed in paving Highway No. 130 from Shallotte to Whiteville had been completed, and the editor urged that politics and local jealousies be left out of the final decision in the hope that the project would be speeded to completion.

The Border Belt Tobacco Market opened late in 1940—on August 20, in fact. A headline proclaimed that "Whiteville's Six Big Warehouses Await Opening Tuesday". Completion of the paving project on Highway No. 130 was announced, just in time for Brunswick farmers to haul their crop to market on hard surfaced roads. A huge passenger liner had sought refuge in the Southport harbor Sunday from a hurricane that caused a score of deaths and thousands of dollars in damage along the South Carolina coast. There was no damage in this area.

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Work Progressing On Nuclear Power Plant

This was the scene at the CP&L nuclear power plant site near Southport this week as work progresses on the construction of this \$300-million instal-

lation. The tubular structure on the right is the base for a new super-power crane to be used in construction operations. (Photo by Spencer)