

Saw Real Action



CADET ROBERT ARATA
... Eight planes bagged

Old Greenwich Boy On Merchant Ship Which Made Record

Merchant Marine Cadet Robert Arata of Old Greenwich was aboard the scrappy Liberty ship, William Moultrie, which, on a recent trip to an Allied port, shot down eight German planes, damaged 12 others, chased away a submarine and scored a direct hit on a torpedo streaking toward the ship, causing the missile to explode.

The breath-taking tale of the William Moultrie's successful fight against terrific odds was told by the Navy yesterday, even though it occurred some time ago.

Cadet Arata, who is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis J. Arata of 8

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

Byron Rd., Old Greenwich, served aboard the vessel in several capacities, according to his mother.

He was graduated from Greenwich High School and attended the University of Connecticut, enlisting in the Merchant Marine in April, 1942. At present he is at the Merchant Marine Academy in Great Neck, L. I., where he is working for a commission.

The Moultrie, according to the Navy, made the trip unharmed due to its gallant fighting. She was part of a convoy which was under constant attack from both the air and under the sea for an entire week.

Part of the Navy statement concerning the little ship's valiant battle follows:

"The Moultrie is a Liberty ship launched in May, 1942, at the North Carolina Shipbuilding Company, Wilmington, N. C.

"For a week the convoy in which she sailed was under almost uninterrupted attack from Nazi planes and submarines. At every alert the armed guard unit manned the ship's guns and put up so effective a barrage that the attackers were forced to turn back, leaving the Moultrie unharmed.

"In the course of the long running battle, the Moultrie's gun crew inflicted heavy damage on the raiders. On one occasion when the enemy came over in great force, they shot down three bombers and damaged six. The same sort of attack developed the following day and again the Navy gunners downed three planes and damaged six more.

"Another time, an alert watch spotted a plane that dropped silently from the clouds at dusk, hoping to catch the ship unawares. The gun crew opened fire before the pilot reached the release point and sent the plane flaming into the sea. On another occasion the crew knocked down a lone enemy plane.

"Again, the crew sighted the periscope of a submarine moving in to attack. Accurate fire directed at it forced the sub to flee, hunted by the escort vessels accompanying the convoy.

"At another time, a torpedo was sighted racing through the water toward the ship. The guns of the Moultrie were trained upon it, and a direct hit caused the torpedo to explode in the water before it could reach its target.

"When the attacks ceased on the eighth day, the Moultrie's crew had destroyed a total of eight German planes, and had scored hits on twelve others. The Moultrie was unharmed."