





Master of Errol Flynn's Yacht

ZACA

Captain Patrick C. Cother

Bonny J. Cother



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My personal thanks for the kind assistance, patience, and knowledge

goes to Mary, and her niece Gina.

Steve and Geneva - Tasmania.

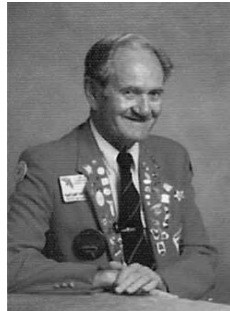
George & Margaret - Winter Haven.

My son Damien.

For my father's devotion to keeping all paperwork pertaining to

his life and especially his time at sea.

Without his devotion, I could not have put together the following.



Patrick C. Cother, RNVR, DSC.  
Charter Member Kiwanis Club Freeport 1965  
40 Year Service - Florida Clubs





## INTRODUCTION - Bonny J. Cother

My name is Bonny, an abbreviation for Veronica, my given name. My brother, just four years old when I arrived in the family circle, could not say V for Voni -- so I became Bonny. To my parents and grandparents I remained Voni, unless deemed naughty, then like a sharp rebuke: Veronica! I am the youngest daughter of Captain Patrick C. Cother and his first wife Ivy, and I was born at the end of WWII.

My sister was almost seven when I arrived in the family, and although in our later years we became close, as children we shared little but the family home. My brother and I spent time together as children, but our lifestyles took us along different pathways when I was 14 years old he joined the Royal Horse Guards.

Like my sailor father, I was a traveller and relocated to Australia as a young wife and mother at the age of 19. A few decades later I relocated to Florida, USA and it was in America that I re-united with my father; in his retirement we became neighbours. After the death of his beloved second wife Mauricette, I got to know a little of my father's lifestyle. He rarely discussed his seagoing life with me, although he was always keen to speak to his service and church groups about his very interesting life on the sea.

Captain Patrick C. Cother went to his final sleep on July 26, 2005, at the grand old age of 92 years. His last words spoken to me during a phone call were, "I love you Voni," and for some unknown reason that day, but for an inner prompting I responded, "I love you too dad." We found him on his bed on July 27<sup>th</sup>, as he would wish to go if given a choice, and knowing of his late in life spiritual awakening, maybe he had made the choice.

His seafaring memories awoke as I commenced the mammoth chore of sorting through cartons of carefully packed away paperwork. (He had constantly reminded me that I would inherit all his belongings, including three cats and one dog). *History* unfolding -- years of life on the sea, exciting action in the North Atlantic ocean during WWII as a member of the RNVR in the British Navy \*, black and white photos, aged and faint now, detailing the hardships during that time, life moves and relocations through to his reluctant retirement from being the Port Captain for a Norwegian shipping line in Miami.

I was 12 years young, yearning for adventure in our small hamlet on the south coast of England, when my mother broke the news. "Your daddy is the Captain of a yacht owned by a *moviestar*." I could not wait to get to school that day and brag to my class, "My dad, is the Captain of *moviestar* Errol Flynn's yacht." I felt very important; unfortunately though, few if any of the class including myself, had heard of Errol Flynn. But "film star" -- our minds had begun to awaken! The girls school offered little in the way of romance for young ladies approaching puberty, therefore I was treated with utmost awe that day, that my father should actually *KNOW* a film star.

During the following year I received photos carefully placed in order on white cards showing a carefree life aboard the yacht Zaca in the waters off the south coast of France. Meanwhile my mother worked to support us, as during this time, her weekly check was not arriving from the bank in Southampton. I did not know much about the financial affairs of our family; we were always well fed. My mother, an expert seamstress, used to hand sew many of my clothes. We were no worse off than neighbours in our small community, and certainly no better off, BUT for the status of "my daddy is working for a *film star*."

And now, I have the time to compile a most interesting story about the great film star Errol Flynn and his beloved Zaca. The photos of a life that was, so enchanting, so unreal, yet ended so tragically when Errol Flynn died in 1959 just two years after my father resigned from working for him. The letters are frail now, with portions missing from years of travel and unseen critters munching on them with little respect for the content. The photos pale, but detailed enough to see the yacht, the sailors, the owner, his wife and child, and my father. There are copies of telegrams sent between Errol Flynn and my father, letters from Errol Flynn and notes, seemingly written by an unsteady hand. As erratic as this handwriting is, it appears Errol Flynn had many changes of mind, as to the future of Zaca -- to repair, to charter, to sell? My father was a detailed person, who given a task would perform it diligently to the end as you will note in his letters/reports sent to Errol Flynn wherever he was filming in the movie world.

Please note that some of the reproductions are not of good quality, this is due to age and condition of the original paperwork.

Unknown by many, Captain Patrick C. Cother was the someone who took the role of Master/Captain of the Zaca in Errol Flynn's absence during 1956 -- 1957.

\*\*([www.Royalnavyresearcharchive.org.uk/People\\_Cother.](http://www.Royalnavyresearcharchive.org.uk/People_Cother.))



## CAPTAIN P. C. COTHER MASTER OF ERROL FLYNN'S YACHT 1956-1957

Patrick Corfe Cother was born on June 20, 1913, the first son of English parents William and Kathleen St. John Cother. He was followed four years later by a brother Brian and then three years after that by a sister, June. At the time of Patrick's birth William was a tutor and Kathleen, a housewife.

After WWI, William applied for and gained a position to restore an estate garden in Holland that had been ravished by the war. The young family travelled by sea; it was an adventure for the wide-eyed Paddy (Kathleen's pet name for Patrick) that may have been the initial fuelling of his love for being on the water.



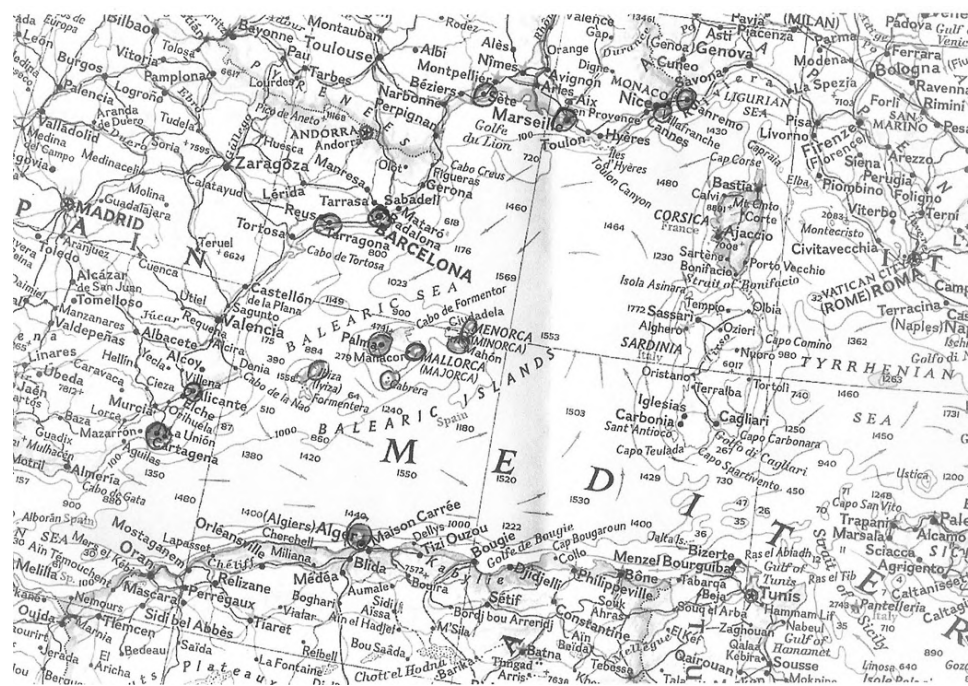
Patrick, Brian and baby June

The travel to Holland and return to England was only one of many moves this young family experienced. Through it all Kathleen was a demure, though strict, mother. William suffered with health issues and it was Kathleen whose strength and determination kept this family together.

Kathleen was devastated by the death of her son Brian in WWII who had enlisted in the British Army, as his elder brother had volunteered for the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserves to follow his love of all things pertaining to "going to sea." Patrick served on many ships during the war years of Britain, in the cold, friendless waters of the North Atlantic. June was caring, nurturing, and chose nursing as her career. She took on the responsibility of caring for her parents in the absence of Patrick and after the death of her beloved brother Brian.

At the conclusion of WWII, with medals of honour for deeds well done, Patrick returned to his own young family. He married in 1935 and in 1937 his wife Ivy, gave birth to their first daughter followed by a son three years later and then four years later their second daughter was born, June 1944. Unfortunately he did not lose his love of the seas, and in 1948 returned to the life of a sea going rover. After many jobs and nautical miles later, Captain Patrick Cother was as the saying goes "in the right place at the right time" when in 1956 he met the film star Errol Flynn, a fellow Gemini with whom he shared not only a June 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, but also a love of the sea.

--The following is a story of the approximately 18 months my "dad" Patrick C. Cother spent as Master/Captain of Errol Flynn's yacht "Zaca." As if suspended in time by Errol's death in 1959 and Patrick's death in July of 2005, the photos and letters packed away for so long now shed light on a life well spent.--



1956 ZACA Bio: -- 200 Tons T.M. 118 ft O.A. 14ft draft 23 ft beam. Twin caterpillar diesel engines each 60 HP giving a speed in calm water of 7 knots. Auxiliary Caterpillar diesel generator 40 HP for battery charging. Yacht's circuit 110 volt DC - wired for shore to ship AC all purpose including deep freeze and air-conditioning.

Cruising range 1750 miles under power alone - Fresh water 9 Ton capacity. Boats - 1 American double ender 20' x 5'10" x 2'8" fitted Grey marine petrol engine giving maximum speed of about 10 knots. Decked fore and aft, fitted with spray dodger also 10' dinghy.

Radio-Telephone: Pye-Marine type PTC 110 - range about 150 miles, ship to shore and ship to ship frequencies. Frequency coverage for Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.

Accommodation: Upper deck from aft:- Sunk chart house with settee berth, chart table, radio.

Main Hatch: with companion way to alleyway between midship cabins.

Sunk Galley abaft foremast with large "Foodarama" Kelvinator refrigerator, six burner bottled gas stove and special oven.

Accommodation layout: - Aft double stateroom full width of yacht, large double berth to starboard, settee to port, dressing table, lockers and drawers. Starboard double stateroom to starboard of main companionway, fitted large double berth, lockers and drawers. Fully equipped toilet and johns forward, fitted washbasin shower and toilet WC with second door from this compartment into library.

Port Double stateroom:- fitted with two single bunks, wardrobe, chest of drawers etc.

Port Toilet:- situated abaft above cabin, wash basin, shower, and toilet.

Library:- to starboard of main alleyway abreast mainmast fitted with large book cases, desk and drawers on midship bulkhead, settee - back lifts up to form upper berth, possible two sleeping space.

Main Saloon:- full width of yacht, dining table fitted to starboard, writing table beside door to main alleyway, small settee and L shaped table with two long settees fitted one on forward bulkhead and one at ship's side to port. These settees capable of sleeping one on each. Large wardrobe fitted on aft bulkhead to port of door. At the fore - companionway leads up to galley, lockers and drawers.

Zaca originally built 1930 in Sausalito, California designed for Trans-Pacific sailing races - at that time under another name. Soon after the December 1941 race, the then owner of the yacht, offered her to the U.S. Navy.

After changing hands, Zaca was fitted with underwater listening equipment in a special compartment under what is now the galley just aft of the foremast and close to the engine room, along with an extensive battery compartment.

The yacht spent many months sailing off the California coast as a long distance listening outpost, just in case Japanese submarines tried to interfere with USA vessels in shipping lanes. At the end of the war in the Pacific, the yacht was laid up and somehow Flynn managed to purchase it.



*Captain Patrick C. Cother*





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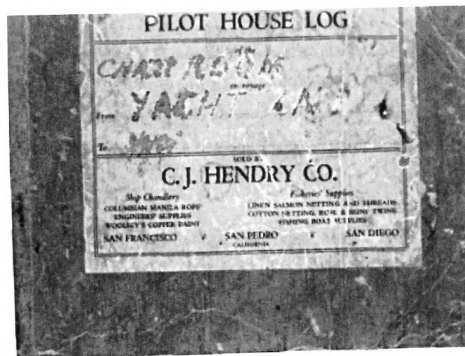


Letter to Capt. Cother from Errol Flynn, Titchfield Hotel, Port Antonio, Jamaica. Limited information re Zaca, recent two month charter, costly to him, he has ordered cut back of crew & lay the boat up. EF returning to rat race in New York after three very happy months in Jamaica.

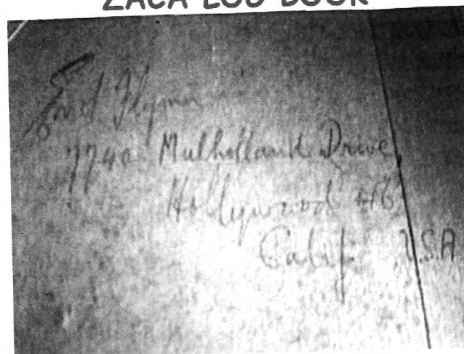
**Sailing On**

December 8, 1958 - Letter to Errol Flynn from Capt. Cother, wherein he 171 mentions possible sale of Zaca, also request for testimony regarding service as Master of Zaca. Capt. Cother wishes EF well and good luck in the New Year and many miles of carefree cruising.

Newspaper clipping, report from Australia - December 2007



ZACA LOG BOOK



Copy of the front cover and inside page of Zaca's log book, signed by Errol Flynn with current address -- Mulholland Drive. Log entries 1946-1948 are in pencil.



## Chapter One Introduction

April 12,20, 1946 -- Zaca Log--Newport to Coronado Island. First cruise Zaca sailed with Errol Flynn as Captain, details phone calls sent & received for Errol Flynn, Mr. Robert E. Ford, Mr. Bluminstock, John Connell, engineer Mr. Courtney, calls placed to Raoul Walsh and John Dekker by Errol Flynn and a call placed by Commander Hoyle to Ms. A. Jeffries.

August 14,16, 1946 -- Zaca Log--San Diego to Galapagos. Call to coast guard re entering San Diego harbour, permission given to enter. Weak signals and trouble with # 2 receiver, no calls through. Signed WJB

September 11,17, -- October 10,13,14,21,1947 -- Zaca Log--Port Antonio/Jamaica. -- Crew kept busy with daily chores including scrubbing the sails, deck and painting from 0700 to 1700 hours. Mr. & Mrs. Flynn leave for Kingston. Crew member hurt sent for medical treatment. Guest arrives from hotel. Proceed to point south of Navy Island, test out fire hose and fighting equipment. Return to anchorage. Mr. & Mrs. Flynn leave for USA. 4 tins of white enamel paint and the yacht's boat went missing, with a search for the boat held up for one day NO WORK on Sundays.

January 8, 1948 -- Zaca Log--Port Antonio--course NE 5 1/2 miles, drill crew 1730 and return to port.

May 24, 1948 -- Crew list & wage details per week unless otherwise noted:

Lawrence Daniels	--	-- Boatswain	-- \$12.00
Wm. Mills	--	-- Seaman 30/- wk	-- \$ 6.00
Lloyd Smalling	--	-- Engine room	-- 10/- wk
Aston	--	-- Boy	
Bob Sutherland	--	-- Cook \$3.10	-- \$14.00
David Barrett	--	-- Ast. Cook \$3.00	-- \$14.00
Albert deKidd	--	-- Waiter 30/- wk	-- \$ 6.00
Peter Soas (signed log entries)			-- \$35.00
Peter Higlton	--	-- Carpenter	-- \$ 4.00

Steamship YACHT ZACH YACHT

Sailing from NEWPORT to CORONADO and Return

MAGNETIC COURSE	TIME ON COURSE		ACTUAL DISTANCE	DISTANCE BY LOG	REVOLUTIONS BY WHEEL	WIND	WEATHER	BAROMETER	THERMOMETER	REMARKS
	HRS.	MIN.								
APRIL 12, 1946	07	10								CALLED KOV FOR INFORMATION REGARDING EXACT TIME OF DAILY WEATHER REPORT.
	11	35								CALLED KOV FOR A PERSON TO PERSON CALL TO MR. FLYNN. F. FORD LOS ANGELES TEL. 607 FROM MR. FLYNN. FLYNN MR. FORD WAS NOT THERE SO THE CALL WAS NOT COMPLETE.
	11	41								CALLED KOV AND ASKED THEM TO CALL MR. FLYNN WHEN MR. FORD IS AVAILABLE.
	12	40								CALLED KOV AND ASKED IF ANY CALLS CAME IN.
	12	45								CALLED KOV TO CHECK RINGER, RINGER O.K. LEFT ON RINGER.
	13	05								KOV CALLED AND RINGER WORKED O.K. WORKED 2 TIMES TO TRANSMIT.
	13	35								KOV CALLED AND RINGER WORKED O.K. WORKED 2 TIMES TO TRANSMIT.

ZACA KOV  
Newport to Coronado

April 12, 1946 07.10 Called KOV for information regarding exact time of daily weather report

11.35 Called KOV for a person to person call to Mr. Robert E. Ford Los Angeles (Tuker 607) from Mr. Errol Flynn. Mr. Ford was not there so the call was not complete.

11.40 Called KOV and asked them to call Mr. Flynn when Mr. Ford is available. Oceanside

12.40 Called KOV and asked if any calls came in.

13.05 Called KOV to check ringer, ringer O.K. Left ON ringer.

13.35 KOV called and ringer worked O.K. Del Mar  
Worked 2 times to transmit.

Steamship YACHT ZACH YACHT

Sailing from NEWPORT to CORONADO and Return

MAGNETIC COURSE	TIME ON COURSE		ACTUAL DISTANCE	DISTANCE BY LOG	REVOLUTIONS BY WHEEL	WIND	WEATHER	BAROMETER	THERMOMETER	REMARKS
	HRS.	MIN.								
APRIL 12, 1946	13	35								ANY PAUTE CURRENT ANTENNA CURRENT 00 ANY LA TALLA FOR TROUBLE AND REPLACED 3/4 AMP - 3000 V - FUSE SET THEN WORKED FINE.
	13	55								CALLED KOV AND ASKED MR. FLYNN WITH MR. FORD.
	15	30								CALLED KOV TO INQUIRE IF MR. FORD ANY MESSAGES HAD ARRIVED.
	19	05								CALLED KOV TO PLACE A CALL TO MISS ANN JEFFRIES AT HILLSIDE HOUS. LOS ANGELES. CALL WAS PLACED BY COMMANDER BJT. HOME.
	21	15								CALLED KOV TO PLACE A CALL TO RACHA WALSH AT SU 20026 LOS ANGELES. CALL WAS PLACED BY ERROL FLYNN. A CALL WAS ALSO PLACED TO JOHN DEKKER IN LOS ANGELES.