

brick house furnished with eclectic artifacts from his travels. The sometimes petty Justice who would commandeer the communal Court car 364 days a year and fulminate when someone else bagged it for 24 hours can also be thoughtful and generous. When Solicitor General Robert Bork became a Washington outcast in 1973 for having reluctantly served as Richard Nixon's instrument in the Saturday Night Massacre, Douglas promptly arranged a luncheon at the Supreme Court in Bork's honor. "There's no official purpose," the Justice assured a dazzled Bork. "I just wanted you to know you still had friends."

Puzzling? Perhaps, but William O. Douglas, whose buccaneer's mind moves with more speed and subtlety than listeners generally can grasp, loves nothing better than a challenging paradox.

—ELIZABETH PEER

THE MARINES:

Conduct Unbecoming

The ink was scarcely dry on Sgt. Leonard Matlovich's discharge from the Air Force on grounds of homosexuality when the military moralists were at it again; this time the offense was heterosexual—and the offender a woman. Lt. Mary Niflis, the Marine Corps charged, had engaged in sexual relations with six enlisted men at an air station in Yuma, Ariz. Such fraternization with the ranks, said her superiors, was "unbecoming an officer and a gentlewoman" and merited a court-martial.

The carnal knowledge, countered Niflis's civilian lawyer, Jay Jeffcoat, occurred when the 23-year-old officer was off duty and frequently off base as well. To compound the injustice, added Jeffcoat, none of the six men involved was charged with misconduct. He also noted that during the trial explicit sexual details would naturally come to light—including those of her dalliance with senior officers. Last week, the Secretary of the Navy agreed to grant her an honorable discharge in return for her resignation. Of the many ironies in the case, the choicest, according to ex-marine Niflis, is that she met half of the paramours cited in a Marine human-relations class designed "to break down barriers of communication."

GREAT LAKES:

The Cruellest Month

According to a legend of the Chippewa tribe, the lake they once called Gitche Gumee "never gives up her dead." Modern-day mariners of Lake Superior know the legend has some basis in fact:

the largest and most treacherous of all the Great Lakes, Superior is also the coldest—deadly not only to man but also to the organisms that infest drowned bodies and bring them to the surface. During the gales of November—caused by the cold air of the Arctic meeting the lingering warm autumn weather—the lakes can become especially forbidding. On Nov. 11, 1913, a ferocious storm sank twelve ships, killing 254 people; on the same date in 1930, another one tore five ships apart and 67 people drowned. Last week, on the anniversary of those wrecks, rescue crafts were still hovering over the latest scene of the Great Lakes' cruelty: the 729-foot ore ship Edmund

and fighting hurricane-force winds. Only 15 miles from the relative calm of Whitefish Bay, McSorley radioed the ore ship Arthur M. Anderson, which was a few miles behind, that he was taking on some water through two broken ventilator covers, but that there was no immediate danger. Then, apparently in an instant, something happened. The Anderson's



Bert Emanuele

The Edmund Fitzgerald: Gone with the wind and waves

Fitzgerald and its 29-man crew had vanished without trace in a nighttime torrent of slashing winds and waves on Lake Superior.

When the Edmund Fitzgerald steamed from port at Superior, Wis., on a sunny Sunday afternoon, the huge, \$7 million vessel seemed adequate to weather the worst of storms. It was one of the largest ships on the Great Lakes, and its skipper, Ernest McSorley, 62, was a veteran of 44 years on the lakes.

But next day, the storm hit Lake Superior and the Fitzgerald; by evening the ship was rocking through 30-foot waves

Capt. J.B. Cooper remembers only that he lost sight of the Fitzgerald's running lights—and that "the next thing we knew they were off the radar screen."

Risk: What actually happened may never be completely clear, but experts believe the ship was probably riding two waves at once—one at the bow and one at the stern—and that the unsupported weight of its 26,000-ton cargo of taconite iron pellets cracked the ship in half, driving it to the bottom in a matter of seconds. At considerable risk to his own ship, Captain Cooper tried to search for survivors, but when the weather cleared there were none in sight—nor any sign of the ship itself. An intensive search the next day turned up only a few empty rafts, some life preservers and an oil slick. In

the lake's 50-degree water, Coast Guard Comdr. Charles Millrad said, a man could survive for only a few hours at best.

The aftermath was all too familiar. Relatives of the missing men gathered in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., to wait forlornly. Sailors banded in small groups and spoke quietly of previous November shipwrecks on Lake Superior. And in the stone, 126-year-old Mariners' Church in downtown Detroit, a minister offered prayers for the lost seamen and tolled the church bell 29 times in grim tribute to the unslaked furies of Lake Superior.

—JAMES R. GAINES with JON LOWELL in Detroit