



# the Quarterdeck Log

Membership publication of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association. Publishes quarterly — Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Not sold on a subscription basis. The Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association is a Non-Profit Corporation of Active-Duty, Retired, Reserve, and Honorably Discharged Former Members of the United States Coast Guard who served in or provided direct support to combat situations recognized by an appropriate military award while serving as a member of the United States Coast Guard.

Volume 26, Number 3

Fall 2011

## CGCVA Member Frank Spatuzzi Honored

*WWII Veteran Receives 40th Stand and Salute American Heroes Award at Major League Ballgame*



*With his son Michael guiding, LTJG Frank Spatuzzi, USCG (Ret.) throws out the ceremonial first pitch.*

On Sept. 10th, CGCVA member and WWII veteran Frank Spatuzzi was presented the 40th Stand and Salute American Heroes Award at Tropicanna Field in St. Petersburg, Florida prior to the Boston Red Sox and Tampa Bay Rays baseball game. Frank also got to throw out the first pitch.

Assisting as “Boots On The Ground” for this event were CAPT John Turner, commanding officer of the USCG Air Station Clearwater, MCPO John Milbrandt, and SCPO Michael Aviles, who remarked, “We are humbled to serve those, whom have served our Nation.” They escorted Frank and his wife on the field for the

Continued on page 14



*Frank Spatuzzi (sitting) surrounded by his son Michael, his wife Inge, MCPO John Milbrandt, MCPO Michael Aviles, CAPT John Turner, and Tampa Bay Rays pitcher Cezar Ramos.*

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\*use the Administrative Office for contact with the CGCVA on all matters.

### THE QUARTERDECK LOG

Editor In Chief — PNP Ed Swift, LM  
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## From the President

### New CG Stamp(s) in the Works?



Ed Swift

Who knows how it will turn out but the CGCVA is making a concerted effort to make it a reality. Both PNP Joe Kleinpeter and I have recently written to the Coast Guard asking them to endorse our suggestion for a new stamp or better yet a set of new commemorative postage stamps highlighting the U.S. Coast Guard's present day missions and that they forward our letters with their endorsement to the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee for consideration.

Our suggestion meets all criteria regarding citizens and organizations wishing to propose commemorative stamps and the only U.S. Coast Guard stamp ever printed goes back 66 years. It was a single stamp depicting a WWII landing craft (manned by Coast Guard personnel) and it can be seen on page 29 of this issue. Both Joe and I feel that the Coast Guard has changed so much since that time that the Service's current challenging missions should now be highlighted. Commemorating these modern-day missions through a set or series of postage stamps would be an ideal way to promote understanding and awareness of today's Coast Guard and its invaluable service to the American public.

Hopefully this suggestion will be met with approval. I will keep you informed of any progress.

### Pearl Harbor Day 70th Anniversary

Dec. 7th 2011 will mark not only the 70th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but also will be the 25th anniversary of the decommissioning and donation to the City of Baltimore of *USCGC Taney*. And, as is custom, *Taney* will host a Pearl Harbor commemorative ceremony with a wreath-dropping at the exact time that the Hawaii Navy Base was attacked. Although the ceremony will have already been held by the time you receive the *QD Log*, it is hoped that several CGCVA members will have had the opportunity to attend this year's event. As part of the ceremony, *Taney* will be presented with a special heritage

Next QD Log deadline is February 1, 2012. Please email articles and photos to the editor at: [swiftie1@verizon.net](mailto:swiftie1@verizon.net)

## From the President (cont.)

award by The World Ship Trust, and principal speaker will be Coast Guard Commandant, ADM Robert J. Papp.

### ***2011 USCG Commandant's Ball***

Although I was dragging around my oxygen canister all evening, Mare and I attended the 2011 Coast Guard Commandant's Ball on Nov. 4th in Alexandria, VA. I had a chance to chat with the Commandant, as well as Vice Commandant Sally Brice-O'Hara, and Master Chief of the Coast Guard Michael P. Leavitt. I also spoke about the



*(Left) Ed and Mare Swift at the Ball*

CGCVA to other attendees who are qualified to join. It was truly an awesome evening, complete with performances by the Coast Guard Silent Drill Team, the Coast Guard Band's Brass Combo, and the USO Liberty Bells.

### ***Miscellaneous***

My thanks to **Maryanne Watson**, **Milton Croall**, **Dr. William Theisen**, and Asst. Editor **Frank Bari** for their

feature submissions for this issue, and to the other members who submitted news articles and photos.

Finally, a heartfelt thanks to all who have emailed, written, or called me to say "Get Well". I am dealing with chronic pulmonary fibrosis and have to use oxygen during much of the day. As a result, I had to quit work and am limited to my physical activities. Still, I am hoping to attend as many CG-related events as possible and keep the CGCVA in the forefront.

Here's hoping everyone got to celebrate Veterans' Day in some manner. Wishing you all a safe and happy Holiday Season. Semper Paratus!

**Swift**

*(Left) Vietnam-era USO "cookie girl" Mare Swift poses with the USO Liberty Bells at the Commandant's Ball.*



## From the Vice President

Greetings Shipmates!

It seems like the Convention/Reunion was just yesterday and all the great times we had but time moves on quickly, so in saying that, lets move on...

Here's hoping this finds you and your family doing well and getting prepared for the upcoming holidays. Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Of course by the time you read this, another important holiday will have already passed. I refer to Veterans Day and I hope all did their part to remember and support all our veterans! God Bless our troops, their families, our veterans and God Bless America.

It appears that my wife and I will be in Baltimore representing the CGCVA on December 7th aboard the *CGC Taney*. We are looking forward to this annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance event and we'll be sure to have some extra warm clothes on as I'm sure the winds off the water will be cold in Baltimore Harbor. I'm sure there will be other

upcoming events that are on the scope and I will be proud to attend as a CGCVA representative.

We had an Old Timers Reunion here in The Swamp recently and I met a couple of airdales that were on a CG C-130 that flew into Danang in '68/'69 so I'll have to get CGCVA membership papers to them.

If you need to get in touch with me please call (252) 338-1996 (home) or (252) 267-1067 (cell). My email is: [poppopof2@hotmail.com](mailto:poppopof2@hotmail.com). I bid you and yours Fair Winds and Smooth Sailing. Stay Safe and God Bless.

Semper Paratus!

**Butch**



*Floyd "Butch" Hampton*

## From the Secretary/Treasurer

### Dues Reminders

Even though I've been in the insurance profession for close to 25 years, today, I'm gonna do something you'll never expect... I'll be brief!

We've been getting e-mail addresses from some of you and they are greatly appreciated. If I have your email address and your dues are late, I can instantly send you a reminder e-mail, which costs the Association nothing. By having your email address on file, I am also able to send timely Coast Guard and CGCVA-related news to you when applicable.

For those whom I do not have email addresses for, we are now mailing out "Late Pay" postcards. This is the quickest and most cost effective U.S. Mail method to get the word out, for those who occasionally forget to check their membership expiration on the mailing label of your *Quarterdeck Log*. If you get a postcard from us, just send us a check for \$40, to keep our great magazine coming to your mailbox and your CGCVA membership active.

### Donations

My thanks to all who have made contributions to our QD Log Booster Club this year. Because of your help, we are able to continue producing a 32-page full-color national

magazine that is truly one of the finest such publications out there. I'd also like to acknowledge a special donation sent in by **Charles G. Derderian** in honor of Joe Kleinpeter, first recipient of our Don Kneip Award.



*Gary Sherman*

Finally, I'd like to personally wish each and every member and their families a very happy Holiday Season! May God Bless America!

### Crossed The Bar

**William P. Bailey**  
**John E. Conner**  
**John D. Cruikshank, LM**  
**Paul Dowling**  
**CAPT Henry C. Keene, Jr., LM**  
**Joseph B. Nelson**

### Welcome New Members

#### New Member

Alexander P. Brewer  
William C. Carl  
Lois C. Bouton  
Warren D. Talbert, II  
Jeremy S. Clark  
Spencer J. Filzen  
Wayne S. Nelson  
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## From the Service Officers

### 2012 Retiree COLA Released

Military and federal civilian retirees, survivor benefit annuitants, disabled veterans and Social Security recipients will see a 3.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment in January, their first since 2009. The 3.6% COLA will be effective Dec 1 and will be reflected in January retired pay, SBP, Social Security, and VA disability compensation checks.

### Extra Earnings for Military Service

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty (including active duty for training), you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These

extra earnings credits may help you qualify or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

If your active military service occurred from 1957 through 1967, the extra credits will be added to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits. You will be credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

If your active military service occurred from 1968 through 2001, you do not need to do anything. The credits were automatically added to your record. For every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you will be credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

After 2001, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

## Auxiliary News

Greetings All,

Here it is time for my column again. The months seem to fly by. There are many things going on around here. We stay busy with family activities with birthdays and now all the holidays that are coming up. I want to wish each of you happy holidays ahead.

For those of you who would like to join the auxiliary following is an application form. Welcome to those of you who have joined and I hope that many more of you will join us.

**Liz Scotti, Auxiliary President (321) 474-0007**

### COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS AUXILIARY ASSOCIATION

Membership Information: NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ RETURNING \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print clearly)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member name & relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

MAY 2011 renewal — \$15 for two year membership to expire in May 2013. In order to increase auxiliary membership, we would like to make this offer to new as well as elapsed members. Qualifications: Members limited to spouses of members in good standing of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association. For additional information please contact: **Liz Scotti** (President) at [els699@aol.com](mailto:els699@aol.com) or (321) 474-0007. Or **Mimi Placencia** (Secretary/Treasurer) at (661) 444-0186 or [mimiplacencia@hotmail.com](mailto:mimiplacencia@hotmail.com). Mail completed application and check (payable to CGCVA Auxiliary Assn) to Mimi Placencia at 9804 Iroquois Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93312.

### *Digitization of "Reservist" Magazine*

Starting in January 2012, the *Reservist* magazine will be only be produced in a totally digital format and no longer available in hardcopy. It will be available at <http://www.uscg.mil/reservist>. Please direct any questions to CDR Collins, Chief, Reserve Information/Evaluation Division, Commandant (CG-1313), U.S. Coast Guard, 2100 2nd Street SW, Stop 7801, Washington, DC 20593-7801 or email [Ruby.L.Collins@uscg.mil](mailto:Ruby.L.Collins@uscg.mil).

### *Kudos to Asst. Editor*

I hope that everyone enjoyed the series of short stories written about me by Asst. Editor Frank Bari. This idea was conceived by Frank after we had talked a few times on the phone, swapping sea stories and about me writing down my Coast Guard memories. The thought was that any Coastie could relate to my experiences and it would spark those long forgotten memories that all of you have (especially the boot camp part) just waiting to be rekindled. I strongly suggest that you too contact Frank and let him help you bring your Coast Guard memories to the surface once again so that we can enjoy hearing about who you are, where you went and what you did. Just like Swifty, Frank has a way with words and can make any story form a unique visual picture that all Coasties can relate to.

Thanks Frank, It was fun working with you matey. Most respectfully,  
**Woody (Christopher Wood)**

***Editor's Note:*** *If you would like to get some help with your story you can email Frank at: [Frkbari@aol.com](mailto:Frkbari@aol.com).*

### *John Cullen, Coast Guardsman Who Detected Spies, Dies at 90*

In the spring of 1942, Seaman John Cullen was assigned to one of the Coast Guard's less glamorous tasks in an America newly at war.

Seaman Cullen was a "sand pounder," the term for Coast Guardsmen who patrolled beaches looking for signs of lurking German submarines or perhaps someone or something suspicious on the

sand.

"Once in a while you might run into somebody, but very rare," Mr. Cullen, who died on August 29th, told a Coast Guard oral history interviewer in 2006, recalling his patrols on the eastern Long Island shore near his station at Amagansett.

On Friday the 13th of June '42, Seaman Cullen was on patrol about a half-hour past midnight when it was "so foggy that I couldn't see my shoes."

He spotted a figure in the mist and the outlines of three others behind him. "Who are you?" he called out, shining his flashlight at the group, his Coast Guard insignia visible.

The man closest to him said that he and his companions were fishermen who had run aground. He spoke English well enough, but one of the others, dragging a bag, shouted something in German.

Seaman Cullen was "armed" only with a flare gun for sending signals when he came across what he figured were surely German spies. Moments later, he fled from the men and ran back to his station to sound an alarm. He led fellow Coast Guardsmen to the spot where he had encountered the four. They were long gone, but the Coast Guard dug up explosives they had buried.

Thus began a hunt for saboteurs who had been sent to the United States on U-boats by the German military spy service in a plot to blow up rail facilities and war-industry plants.

Eight men — the four who landed on Long Island and another four who arrived in Florida — were arrested before any sabotage could be carried out, and Seaman Cullen became a hero.

Mr. Cullen, who was 90, died of congestive heart failure in Chesapeake, Va., his daughter, Jean McLaughlin, said. He had retired there with his wife, Alice, in the early 1990s after working as a dairy company sales representative on Long Island and living there in Westbury.

John Cornelius Cullen was



*Petty Officer John Cullen in WWII*

## Notices & Association News

born on Oct. 2, 1920, in Manhattan, but grew up in Queens. He enlisted in the Coast Guard a few weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

A few minutes after he discovered the supposed

fishermen on that foggy night in June '42, the leader of the group, dropping all pretence, asked Seaman Cullen if he had a mother and father who would presumably grieve for him. The man did not display a weapon but said, "I

### *QD Log Booster Club*

The printing and postage for the *QD Log* is by far the largest expense item we have and it was determined that if every member contributed \$5.00 to the CGCVA each year it would pay for all the expenses that go into the magazine. The idea was hatched at our Tampa Convention and several members contributed at that time, thereby creating the QD Log Boosters Club. Donations can be sent to the Administrative Office (marked as "QD Log Booster Club") and all those contributing will have their names listed in the subsequent magazine. Contribution amounts will not be published but all contributions are greatly appreciated. We have been told many times we have the best reunion magazine out there and we'd like to keep it that way.

Since publication of our last magazine, the following individuals have made donations and become members of the QD Log Boosters Club:

Ralph Ramph	Gordon Halsten	Charles Hawken	Wilbert Huebner
Armond Lisle	Rex Messling	Milton Croall	Jon Uithol
Robert Samuelson	Thomas Meriwether	Edward Bartley	Robert Bibens
Colin Woodbury	Lois Csontos	Richard Trevallee	Jerry Lemon
Alex Soltesz	Phillip Edwards	Stanley Beras	Carl Tomasek
Harry Huggins	Larry Dixon	Troy Styron	D. P. Gatto
Donald Petersen	Gerald Ballard	Nicholas Poliski	Eugene Dugan
Paul Butler	Thomas Frischmann	Stanley Robbins	Charles Graham
David Andrus	John Cromwell	Gordon Huggins	

Byron Jennings in memory of (IMO) USS Theenim (AKA-63)  
Gordon Grimes IMO 10/10/1945 typhoon survivors who later perished by another act of nature  
Baker & Marylou Herbert IMO Shirley Ramsey  
Harold Steindler IMO E. Divisions WWII CGC's Southwind and Northwind  
Ralph & Blanche Brookins IMO Robert Brookins  
Joseph Larday IMO departed USS Sheliak (AKA-62) officers and crew  
Joel & Patti Aills IMO Shirley Ramsey  
George Moberg IMO all shipmates  
Baker & Marylou Herbert IMO Jack Campbell, Bill Donohue, and VADM Thomas Sargent  
Robert Swaney IMO CGC Northland #1  
Edward Bachand IMO QMCS Carl Backman, Jr.  
Gary & Janie Sherman IMO QMCS Carl Backman, Jr.  
Joyce Kaut for Charles Rummel

Thanks to all to have become QD Log Booster Club members so far! All contributions are appreciated! And remember, these deductions are tax deductible as we are 501.c.

wouldn't want to have to kill you.”

But then the tone changed. The man offered Seaman Cullen what he said was \$300 in American money, saying, “Why don't you forget the whole thing?” Seeing a chance to escape, Seaman Cullen took the money, promised he would never identify the men and ran back to get help. (He then found he was shortchanged; he had been given \$260).

The four German agents, minus their explosives, took the Long Island Rail Road into Manhattan that morning, arriving at Pennsylvania Station. A week later, the group's leader, George Dasch, shaken by his encounter with Seaman Cullen, traveled to Washington and surrendered to the F.B.I., hoping he would be regarded as a hero in America by exposing the plot.

That led to the roundup of his fellow conspirators in Operation Pastorius, named for Franz Pastorius, who in 1683 led the first German settlement in America.

### ***2011 Scholarship Recipient***

Congratulations to Kenneth P. Clarke of Norfolk, Virginia, the recipient of the CGCVA's Philips Van Campen Taylor Memorial Scholarship Award for 2011. Kenneth is attending Virginia Military Institute and received a check for \$2,000 to assist with his studies. Special thanks go out to Kristen Taylor (daughter of Philips Van Campen) and to the selection committee.



*Kenneth P. Clarke is presented the \$2,000 scholarship check by his grandfather, CGCVA member CWO4 Harry Huggins, USCG (Ret.) during Labor Day weekend at Virginia Military Institute. Congratulations Kenneth!*

At a secret military trial in Washington, Seaman Cullen identified Mr. Dasch as the man he had encountered on the beach. Six of the eight saboteurs were executed on Aug. 8, 1942. Mr. Dasch and another conspirator who cooperated were given prison terms and deported to West Germany after World War II.

Seaman Cullen became enveloped in the Coast Guard's publicity machine. He was brought to news conferences to tell of his adventure; appeared at parades, ship launchings and war-bond drives; and received the Legion of Merit. He remained stateside throughout the war as a driver for high-ranking Coast Guard officers, then left military service.

In addition to his daughter, Seaman Cullen is survived by his wife, Alice; a son, Wayne; his sisters, May Donnelly and Edna Beaver; five grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

During the hullabaloo over the spy story, a personnel employee at Macy's in Herald Square who had hired Mr. Cullen as a deliveryman's helper before his Coast Guard enlistment described him to *The New Yorker* as “a thoroughly wholesome, typically American boy” with “a modest demeanor.”

Seaman Cullen played down the hero angle when he appeared at a Coast Guard news conference in 1942. “The German fellow was nervous,” he said, “but I think I was more nervous.” **Richard Goldstein, *New York Times***

### ***Helpful Websites***

[www.onlineschools.org/gi-bill-and-education-benefits](http://www.onlineschools.org/gi-bill-and-education-benefits).

A website with an informative and resourceful page on the GI Bill and benefits is:

[www.rivervet.com](http://www.rivervet.com) Don Blankenship's River Boats in Vietnam website.

[www.tricare.mil/deers](http://www.tricare.mil/deers). Eligibility (DEERS) and ID Cards.

[vetrecs.archives.gov/](http://vetrecs.archives.gov/). The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided this website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214 online. Note: This site only allows one to print the request form required to mail or fax to NPRC for obtaining a copy of ones DD-214.

***“A government big enough to give you everything you want, is strong enough to take everything you have.”***

Thomas Jefferson



***Imagery from Operation's Unified Response and New Dawn***

New CGCVA member ME1 Sean R. Reagan, USCGR, a member of Port Security Unit 313, provided the below photos of PSU 313 during deployments to Iraq and Haiti. Hopefully Sean will soon have all the members of PSU 313 joining the CGCVA.

*(Right) Members of PSU 307 and 313 treating a Haitian who had been shot during civil unrest after the earthquake. The gunshot victim was brought to the port's parameter at ME1 Reagan's security position by the Army who requested Combat Life Saver support. The victim was CASEVAC'd by Coast Guard boat to the USNS Comfort where he recovered fully.*



*(Above) ME1 Sean Reagan (left) and ME1 Collin Russel while serving on the Al Basrah Oil Terminal in Iraq on a Maritime Security Detachment for Iraqi Maritime in July 2011 in support of Operation New Dawn.*

*(Right) Devil's Squad Operation Unified Response, comprised of members of PSU's 307 and 313, in Haiti taken the day the watch was secured in Port au Prince.*



***Congratulations Graduates***

Each week at graduation ceremonies at USCG Training Center Cape May, N.J., the CGCVA sponsors the Physical Fitness Award to a graduating recruit.

A CGCVA watch and certificate are presented, often by an attending CGCVA member. The below listed Cape May graduates have been awarded the PNP Jack Campbell — CGCVA Physical Fitness Award since the last *QD Log* issue:

**FA Tyler J. Maryott** (India-185) of Harrisburg, PA, reports to Station Los Angeles/Long Beach, San Pedro, CA.

**SN Kai S. Clark** (Juliatt-185) of Alameda, CA, reports to Port Security Unit 312, San Francisco, CA.

**SN Nicholas R. Hogan** (Kilo-185) of Newark, NJ, reports to *CGC Dependable*, Cape May, NJ.

**SA James W. Johnson** (Lima-185) of Louisville, KY, reports to Station Fishers Island, New London, CT.

**FA Miguel J. Dacosta** (Mike-185) of Minneapolis, MN, reports to Station Port Aransas, TX.

**SA Edward M. Jones** (November-185) of Baltimore, MD, reports to Station Grays Harbor, Westport, WA.

**SA Michael S. Goins** (Oscar-185) of Woodbridge, VA, reports to Station Hobucken, NC.

**SA Jose L. Mendez** (Papa-185) of Lakewood, CA, reports to *CGC Polar Sea*, Seattle, WA.

**SN Lauren W. Steeson** (Quebec-185) of Vancouver, WA, reports to *CGC Rush*, Honolulu, HI.

### *A Letter to the Secretary*

Dear Shipmate:

I wish to make a donation to support the CGCVA in honor of PNP Joe Kleinpeter, the first recipient of the Don Kneip Award, and also to recognize his devotion to his comrades.

Memorializing Coast Guardsmen who made the supreme sacrifice, giving their lives in time of war for their Nation. Being from Long Island, NY, I met Joe a few times at Coast Guard events and was tremendously impressed with his sincere concern of our organization and former Coast Guard shipmates. His priorities have had a lasting effect on me with his many, many documented good deeds. Thanks Joe!

And keep up the good work with the *Quarterdeck Log*! Semper Paratus! **Charles G. Derderian** (WWII vet)

### *Korean War National Museum*

Sixty years ago — what seemed only moments after World War II — American men and women were once again sent into war. Politicians called it a “police action” but it was war. Sadly, the Korean War has become the “forgotten war” — the war nobody talks about. That is a disservice to the 1.8-million Americans who served with courage and distinction.

Today, plans are being made to build a long overdue Korean War National Museum. It will be the only museum in the country dedicated to honoring and preserving the legacy of all who fought, all who were wounded, all who gave the supreme sacrifice in that brutal conflict.

Currently, the museum is located in Springfield, IL but with its growing number of exhibits and increasing number of visitors, the museum is relocating to New York City and into a larger building. The Korean War National Museum is dedicated to honoring the legacy of our warriors and their loved ones by telling the whole story. It represents a chance to paint the complete picture about what really happened in Korea from June 1950 to August 1953. In just over three years of conflict, it became one of the bloodiest, most brutal wars in our history.

The Korean War is barely mentioned, if at all, in history classes. Students go straight from World War II to Vietnam, with some Cold War thrown in. The Korean War isn't just the “forgotten war” — for today's generation, it doesn't even exist.

To learn more about the Korean War National Museum, write them at 47 West Division St., Box 1950, Chicago, IL 60610 or go to [www.kwnm.org](http://www.kwnm.org). Phone: 888-419-5053.

**Denis J. Heal**  
Chairman, Korean War National Museum

### *Veterans Honored in East*

#### *Meadow Ceremony*

It wasn't just a piece of paper.

Joe Alvino held the certificate he received Sunday from Nassau County — formal recognition of his service in Vietnam — and was at a loss.

“I don't know exactly how to put it,” said the 64-year-



*A Veterans Day Service and Vietnam Veterans Certificate Presentation was held at the Veterans Memorial Plaza in Eisenhower Park, NY on Nov. 6th. John Barry Sheu, 66, (right) stands with Roland Costen, 66, of East Meadow. (Photo courtesy of Steven Sunshine)*

*“I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.”*

Winston Churchill

old Island Park resident, who served in the Marines from 1966 to 1970. "I just feel like we're finally getting some recognition."

Nassau's annual Veterans' Day service, held on a blustery, sunny morning at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow, NY, acknowledged military service members from as far back as World War II. But as the number of survivors from older conflicts dwindles, this ceremony focused on those who fought in Vietnam and then fought a chilly reception back in the States.

Joseph Slattery, president of the United Veterans Organization of Nassau County, noted studies showing that Vietnam veterans have a higher mortality rate than those from World War II or Korea.

"So while you're still here," the Army veteran of the Vietnam War told them, "we want to give you the welcome home you didn't get when you came back."

A color guard from veterans groups across Nassau marked the occasion, which also included remarks by County Executive Edward Mangano and the state's acting director of Veterans' Affairs, William Kraus.

For servicemen and women back from Iraq and Afghanistan, Kraus said, "We need to improve outreach; we need to do better."

He said helping a veteran "is not just a bumper sticker," and called on fellow veterans to offer their assistance, be it counseling or encouraging the pursuit of higher education.

"The military gives us a family," Kraus said. "In our world, every day is Veterans' Day."

Afterward, Frank Bari, a Coast Guard veteran who served in Vietnam, sought to find his father, a World War II soldier, on the wall of names at the Veterans' Memorial Plaza.

"Today was very emotional," said the 60-year-old Mineola resident, pointing to his chest. "It breaks up a little bit of the numbness."

Asked about today's returning forces, he paused.

"When I came home, I hid it," Bari said. "I'm glad that, today, at least people are shaking their hands."

**Paul Larocco, Newsday**

### *Flags Across America*

As the sun rose over Arlington National Cemetery, a group of Coast Guard members and their families gathered. With steam rising from their coffee cups, they set out amongst the cemetery's autumn leaves to perform the most humbling of acts — to honor generations of Americans who



*CGCVA member Wilton A. Lisk with Coast Guard Commandant ADM Robert Papp in December 2010. Wilton was among a group of WWII veterans visiting Washington, DC on Volusia Honor Air Flight #6 from Deland, FL. ADM Papp was the principle speaker at the group's luncheon.*

defended freedom.

From sea cadet to retired Coast Guardsmen, the diverse participants assembled at the cemetery to pay their respects as part of Flags Across America. The event is stripped-down from pomp and circumstance and is a simple tribute of Americans showing their gratitude.

"It's blue jeans and warm clothing," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Jon Ostrowski, president of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Chief Petty Officers Association. "It's a great low-key opportunity for families to just come and learn something about veterans."

But what the event lacks in flourishes, it most certainly makes up for in honor and reverence as servicemembers and their families visit veterans' graves.

Started on Veterans Day 1999 by retired Chief Warrant Officer Ed Kruska, the event continues to grow. For the first time, recruits from Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, N.J., were invited to attend the event.

Recruits from Sierra 185 and Tango 185 piled out of buses, taking in the crisp fall air. It was their first time off

***"If you don't read the newspaper you are uninformed, if you do read the newspaper you are misinformed."***

Mark Twain

base since the start of basic training, but the fact they spent their liberty hours honoring servicemembers was an opportunity they embraced.

“You might think we would be disappointed because we weren’t going to get leave or liberty, but the more we thought about it, and now that we are actually here, I couldn’t have asked for anything better,” said Seaman Recruit Robert Haas. “We are the first ones to actually get to do this, and it is such a privilege.”

“We are here representing the Coast Guard and to show these veterans we remember,” added Seaman Recruit Gillis Weaver. “I am proud we are the ones to be here and honor these veterans.”

As participants dispersed to place Coast Guard standards and national ensigns at each grave, recruits stayed behind and marched towards the USS Serpens Monument. The monument commemorates the largest single disaster suffered by the Coast Guard in World War II.



reservists.

“I really wanted the recruits to have a quiet moment of reflection at the monument,” said Allen. “I wanted them to assimilate a sense of their sacrifice and the tie they have in the long blue line.”

Spouses, children and neighbors spread out across the cemetery to pay their respects. But Allen hopes that his actions, and those of the Chief Petty Officers Association, will inspire others to show appreciation of those who have served and are currently serving. He urges others to seek opportunities to learn more about veterans’ history and to visit a local cemetery.

“It makes it more real than reading it in a book,” says Allen. “When you visit a historical place, take what you learn in your heart. Take it with you to remember those who have contributed so much.”



Recruits circled around the monument with Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Bob Papp and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Michael Leavitt, reflecting on the granite inscription.

The monument is especially meaningful for Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Reserve Force Mark Allen. Of the 193 Coast Guardsmen who perished in the explosion, 176 were

***Comment:*** “Sure wish the Coast Guard would make an appearance at the overseas cemeteries where many of our shipmates are interred or memorialized on the “Walls of the Missing” at Cambridge, Normandy, Sicily/Rome, Tunis, & Manila. We must never forget those who made the supreme sacrifice and did not return to receive a Veterans’ Day salute for their service.” *Joseph Kleinpeter, Past National President, Coast Guard Combat Veterans Assn.*

### **Coast Guardsmen Recently Awarded Bronze Stars**

Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Draughton III, from Slidell, LA, was awarded the Bronze Star, the fourth-highest combat decoration, at Naval Support Activity, Bahrain, Oct. 6,



***“Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys.”***

P. J. O’Rourke, Civil Libertarian



*Coast Guard Capt. Scott Bauby, chief of cutter and aviation forces, Coast Guard Atlantic Area, pins the Bronze Star on Chief Petty Officer Timothy Wallace while aboard the 225-foot Coast Guard Cutter Oak in Charleston, SC, on Nov. 7th. (Photo by PO3 Jessica Potter)*

2011, for his performance while training Iraqi Coastal Border Guard personnel in Iraq.

Beginning in Dec. 2010, Draughon volunteered to deploy with U.S. Coast Guard Training and Advisory Team Four, operating in support of the Army's 36th Infantry Division, at Contingency Operating Bases Basrah and Umm Qasr.

Draughon trained Iraqi Coastal Border Guard personnel in small-boat operations, and small-boat engine operations on the Shatt al-Arab River. At times, Draughon's training team came under small

arms, rocket and mortar fire. The team was escorted by soldiers from the Army's 36th Infantry Division.

Draughon's deployment ended in Sept. 2011.

"I would definitely do it again," said Draughon. "It was definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Cameron Naron, commodore, Coast Guard Patrol Force Southwest Asia, said the deployment was a perfect example of what the Coast Guard does best.

"It's a perfect example of how Coast Guard training and Coast Guard personnel are often the multi-tool that is able to do things with other sectors, foreign militaries, with other agencies, and with many others," said Naron. "That makes us such a powerful tool within the defense establishment."

Also receiving Bronze Stars recently were Chief Petty Officer Timothy Wallace for his service as an advisor to the

Iraqi Coastal Border Guard and Petty Officer 1st Class George Taylor for his performance as part of the team responsible for training Iraqi Coastal Border Guards.

## In The News



### *Military Appreciation Night*

*Coast Guardsmen from several Oahu-based commands stand at attention during the Military Appreciation Night half-time show at Aloha Stadium in Honolulu, Nov. 5, 2011. The Coast Guardsmen were nominated by their commands for their exemplary service and commitment and represented the Coast Guard alongside the other military services. (Photo by PO3 Anthony L. Soto)*



### *Coast Guard Alaska*

*Capt. Bill Deal, Lt. Cmdr. Jon Bartel and Petty Officer 3rd Class Devin Lloyd, from left, attend a reception following the premier of "Coast Guard Alaska" aboard the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York, Nov. 5, 2011. The Coast Guard members appear in the new reality series "Coast Guard Alaska," which highlights search and rescue cases that occurred off the coast of Alaska. (Photo by PO2 Jetta H. Disco)*

*"The only difference between a tax man and a taxidermist is that the taxidermist leaves the skin."*

Mark Twain

*Continued from page 1*

event in uniform. Once there Frank threw out the first pitch of the game and received a bat that was made for him by Phoenix Bats.

Combat-wounded and Purple Heart veterans throughout the country are being honored by SASAH at major sporting events during 2011-2012. Frank was the first Coast Guardsman to be honored by SASAH.

Before his service in World War II, Frank Spatuzzi was on track to play professional baseball. At the age of 19, Frank graduated with a bachelor's degree and by the age of 21, Frank not only had a Masters degree from Seton Hall University, but also a college baseball batting average well over 400.

Frank entered the US Coast Guard Academy, in New London, CT., as a cadet in November of 1942. He graduated as an ensign in March of 1943, and was then assigned to New York City as Recreation and Morale Officer to 2,500 men until March of 1944. He was then assigned to *LST-205* in Long Beach, CA, for duty in the South Pacific with his home base at Pearl Harbor. There he participated on D-Day Invasions in Saipan and Tinian through June of 1944.

In October 1944, *LST-205* went to Mindoro twice, moving equipment, until December 29th when they were hit by an explosion by a suicide plane aboard their ship. Frank was the only one injured and was taken from the ship on December 30th, 1944. Frank spent almost two years in hospitals and in June 1946, Frank received a Purple Heart and also retired from the Coast Guard.

Stand & Salute American Heroes falls under the parent program of "Our Fallen Soldier" which is a 501 (c) 3 Organization and also supports Our Heroes Journey, a major program supporting active military units. Stand & Salute American Heroes will continue honoring our combat wounded and fallen, one hero at a time throughout the 2011/2012 season.



*Frank Spatuzzi holds the specially engraved bat made for him by Phoenix Bats. With him are MCPO Michael Aviles (left) and CAPT John Turner.*



*Frank Spatuzzi gets a ride to the pitcher's mound by his son Michael.*



*Frank stands proudly by a display of his personal wartime items, including his Purple Heart, to the Armed Forces Military Museum in Clearwater, FL. He and his wife Inge were honored as Lifetime Community Partners there in 2009.*

# A Housewife in Combat (My Life With the Coast Guard During the American Invasion of Panama)

by Maryanne R. Watson

My husband came home from work unexpectedly. He appeared in the kitchen doorway just as I was pulling peanut butter cookies out of the oven. He had to go back to work overnight. His Navy boss suggested I go with him. This seemed unusual to me, but life in Panama was anything but normal as the wife of a Coast Guard Lieutenant assigned as the Officer-in-Charge of the two-person Naval Intelligence Unit at Coco Solo. I was sent because my husband's Navy partner departed PCS that morning, leaving him alone. I knew little about my husband's work, because I wasn't supposed to know. He never wore a uniform, was unarmed, and hardly ever cut his hair. He was a non-combatant with direct orders to avoid conflict.

It was December 19, 1989 and tensions were escalating quickly in Panama. Shootings, school bus hijackings, coup attempts, kidnappings, and cartel bomb threats were becoming routine. Due to the incredible unrest, my husband asked his command for BDUs and side arms. They adamantly refused, saying he was a non-combatant and would be pulled back to a U.S. base should hostilities arise. Then came the shooting death of a Marine officer on December 15th. Things were deteriorating rapidly.

After delivering my "thank you" cookies to the troops protecting our neighborhood, we packed for overnight and proceeded to our evening "accommodation". Our "accommodation" was a vacant building overlooking the Panama Defense Forces (PDF) Marine Infantry and Naval Base at Coco Solo. We had no idea why we were there, but we settled in and went to sleep. Throughout the evening my husband was awakened by calls, via secure communications, to ask what was happening

outside. He was never told that he was now a forward tactical observer... sitting between the American and PDF front lines... with his civilian wife... and time was running out.

At about 0030 his command at Fort Rodman, 50 miles away, finally broke OPSEC and told him that there was going to be a U.S. surprise attack at 0100. Their only guidance was to not get caught, because it would be considered espionage, and he could be shot as a spy. He urgently woke me up. He needed help moving furniture to block the door and to cover walls and windows to shield us from incoming rounds. Together we prepared our defensive position.

We tuned into the AFRTS radio station. They were broadcasting a special emergency alert directing all military into uniform. All civilians were ordered indoors. President George H. W. Bush announced that the invasion was targeting only Noriega and the PDF. The radio then played Phil Collin's "Another Day in Paradise." Perhaps the radio staff thought that was funny. The humor eluded us. We said the Lord's Prayer together, professed our love, and then took our position watching the PDF base through our binoculars.

BOOM! Suddenly, at 0045 the first shot was fired. I will never forget the smells, the sounds, and the sights of combat. The smell of cordite filled the air. The weapon sounds were a cacophony of gunfire. Like the sounds of an orchestra warming up, the distinct noises had no pattern. They were scary, confusing, and deafening. The smoky, dark sky was lined with streaks of pink. "What are those things?" I asked my husband. "Those are tracer rounds to see where your bullets are heading," he replied. We both thought



*LT Mark Watson (in battle uniform) in front of the PDF Naval Infantry and Navy HQ Coco Solo.*

## Feature Articles

we were seeing an optical illusion, because the streaks appeared to be coming at us. We realized then that we were under fire, under enemy attack. Our assault was not a surprise to the Panamanians. They were prepared to return fire, and they did.

Our building was hit by gunfire and was shaking. We dove for cover. My husband put his body between the enemy and me to protect me. Miraculously, we made it out of that gun battle alive. Many others didn't. Dangers were still lurking ahead for us.

My personal purpose soon began to be defined by need. I kept vigil watching for Noriega-on-the-run, should he try to escape the country by use of the nearby Panamanian boats. I also found myself coordinating meeting points for my husband and informants. I had no idea who these informants were. Could I trust them with my husband's life? The information gathered was essential to the protection of other lives. When my husband would go out to a rendezvous point, I wondered if I would ever see him alive again. God and I were speaking constantly!

The dangers to my husband were enormous. There was ongoing, sporadic, sniper fire from the jungles and buildings. He learned to vary the pace of his movements, never walk a straight line, and never remain out in the open, but instead dart from tree to tree, house to house. The dangers from the informants were real. Did their true loyalties lie with us or with the enemy? Surprisingly, his greatest danger was from the U.S. military. At one point he was thrown to the ground with an M16 in his back when he surprised an Army patrol. On two separate occasions, he rounded a building and found himself with a machine gun pointed directly at his chest. The machine guns were manned by nervous U.S. soldiers with shaky trigger fingers. So there he was, in the middle of an invasion, wearing civilian clothes, long hair, and carrying a suspicious looking



*Maryanne Watson (in battle uniform) on Fort Gullick near our house.*

backpack. By the nature of his job, he was supposed to look non-military...more like Jimmy Buffet than John Wayne. But for the American soldiers, it was hard to distinguish him from the civilian dressed enemy irregulars known as the Dignity Battalion.

The informants he met passed on precise information where the enemy was hiding and where caches of weapons were stored. My husband reported this into his intelligence channels. Soon the enemy and weapons were captured. This happened repeatedly during the days following the initial invasion. I began to trust the informants. The information they gave was fantastic. More importantly to me, our success did not cost my husband's life.

Though the intelligence-gathering mission was extremely valuable, I believe my greatest personal contribution was the immediate emotional support I



*Panoramic view of PDF Naval Base taken from our overnight "accommodations".*



rendered to the troops. This occurred during meals when we ate with our heavily armed military compatriots at a field galley. My being there was viewed with intense curiosity and disbelief, because I was in civilian clothes and a female. (In 1989 women were not allowed in combat.) What was a civilian woman doing on the front lines of battle? My husband, in civilian clothes, also drew his share of curious stares. That said, my presence among them seemed to lend a sense of normalcy to an otherwise insane environment. Our shared combat experience made us feel like instant family. With Christmas approaching, we needed that feeling. We didn't know if any of us would live through each day. After eating, we all returned to our war torn areas, hoping all would be present for the next meal.

During meals I found myself donning many hats in the eyes of the fighting men. Many soldiers relayed to me their battlefield experiences in an effort to seek forgiveness. I gained an insight into how a priest might feel upon hearing confessions. I vividly recall the sad story of one sobbing, teenage, soldier from inner-city Chicago. He joined the Army to pay for college. He felt he had made a poor judgment and now had to live with his overwhelming sense of guilt. He had spotted people carrying weapons at dusk next to the airport he was guarding. He launched a grenade. What he took for a threat turned out to be children playing with toy guns. The children were mimicking real life, as they saw it. I hope his speaking to me helped relieve his



*VADM Sally Brice-O'Hara presenting the USCG Meritorious Public Service Award to Maryanne Watson with her husband, CDR Mark Watson, USCG (Ret.) looking on.*

heavy heart. He was an emotional casualty of war.

Helping the soldiers deal with the pain of combat was important in aiding their recovery from the traumas. Perhaps the presence of a cookie-baking housewife on the front lines allowed the troops to find a compassionate ear when they needed it most.

***Editor's Note:** Maryanne's husband Mark was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon for the battle of Coco Solo. On 25 September 2011 the Vice Commandant, Vice Admiral Sally Brice-O'Hara awarded the USCG Meritorious Public Service Award to Maryanne for augmenting her husband's intelligence unit during Operation Just Cause.*

## Reginald “Reggie” Johnson, U.S. Navy WWII Vet and Uncle to Vice Admiral Manson K. Brown, USCG

by Frank Bari, QD Log Assistant Editor

At the age of 17 years old, Reggie Olander Johnson of Lynchburg, Virginia set out in October 1942 for U.S. Navy boot camp at Great Lakes, Michigan. The Services were not integrated at that time and Reggie, being of African American Heritage as well as the grandson of a Native American Indian, was sent to a section of The Naval Base for “Negroes.” That part of the base was called, Camp Robert Small, named after a slave who had captured a Confederate ship during the Civil War. Reggie was issued a Military ID card with the word “Negro” on it.

After Boot Camp, Reggie was sent to Hampton Institute Naval School to train as a Motor Machinist Mate. After graduation he was sent to a Navy Receiving Station in the state of Washington.

From there, Reggie was sent to a myriad of navy yards on the West Coast, as well as U.S. Navy Air Station Whidley, Washington. At all times segregation followed the African American Seaman. They were always sent to sleep in segregated “African Barracks.” This did not have an effect on the segregated sailors moral or patriotism. It

was something they believed would be and was corrected in the future.

Reggie was assigned to a navy barge to empty sludge at Pier 91, in Seattle. From there he was sent to Guam Naval Ammunition Dump 926, also a segregated outfit, during WWII. From that ammo dump, ships from all services fighting in the Pacific against Japanese forces were loaded with all kinds of ammo. Reggie states, "The ammo dump was bigger than Brooklyn, New York." There was an accident at the dump in which 40% to 50% of the sailors were killed. As the war wound down, the ammo dump was moved further into the jungles of Guam. Even after Japan surrendered, over 2,000 Japanese soldiers continued to fight in the jungles of Guam. The only relief the men got was the USO which was ten miles away from the dump and, like everything else, was segregated.

From August 1944 to January 1946, Reggie worked as a First Class Petty Officer at the dump on Guam loading and unloading ammo, many times while under fire from enemy forces.

In February 1946, Reggie and members of his unit were discharged from the Navy in Virginia. While in uniform and awaiting discharge from the Navy, Reggie and some of his buddies went out to a diner to eat. Their "Welcome Home" was a sign in the diner's window stating, "We don't serve Negroes in here."

After being honorably discharged from the Navy as a Petty Officer First Class, Reggie attended Virginia Union University, receiving a B.S. in Biology. From there, Reggie went on to receive a Masters Degree in Histology from New York University, and then to Columbia University School of Social Work where he graduated with an MSW Degree. This led him to a career with New York's City Department of Social Services. There he helped many people and came to the attention of New York's Probation Court of Special Sessions. He soon became Supervisor of The Sexual Offenders Probation Department, as well as Head Supervisor of Youth Gang Offenders. He retired from the New York City Department of Probation in 1984 and has been in private practice as a social worker since 1968.

Reggie still has a love of the service and his patriotism is unquestioned. He



*Reggie Johnson (left) with the owner of Katz's Deli, and VADM Manson Brown.*

recently attended a reunion of his University Fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, in Washington, D.C. It was the Fraternity's Centennial Celebration, celebrating "A Salute to the Military." Reggie was seated with his nephew, Vice Admiral Manson K. Brown, USCG as well as the Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Robert Papp. Reggie shares a special relationship with his nephew, VADM Brown, a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and currently Commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area. VADM Brown also served in Iraq where he received The Iraq Campaign Medal, while serving in Baghdad in a combat area.

On a personal note I have observed their special relationship. While interviewing Reggie for this article he decided to call his nephew by cell phone. VADM Brown at the time was in Japan but picked up his Uncle Reggie's call.

The pride and admiration was obvious through the conversation, as well as the proud look on Reggie's face. Reggie in his heart will always be serving his country, his family and those in need.



*VADM Manson Brown*

***Editor's Note:** VADM Brown recently joined the CGCVA and Katz's Deli on New York City's Lower East Side is where they filmed Meg Ryan's controversial faked orgasm scene in the movie "When Harry Met Sally" with Billy Crystal. In WWII, Katz's became known for their expression, "Send a salami to your boy in the Army."*

## My Time in World War II

by LM Milton L. Croall

In October 1942 at the age of 17, I enlisted in the Coast Guard. The recruiting officer asked why I chose the Coast Guard and I replied that I liked the ocean better than mud. He then asked why not the Navy? My reply was I liked small ships better than large ones. He then told me that the Coast Guard had the highest percentage of personnel overseas of all the services. With that in mind I went to boot camp at Government Island, Alameda, CA (now Coast Guard Island). I remember grueling jogs around the “grinder” carrying full sea bags.

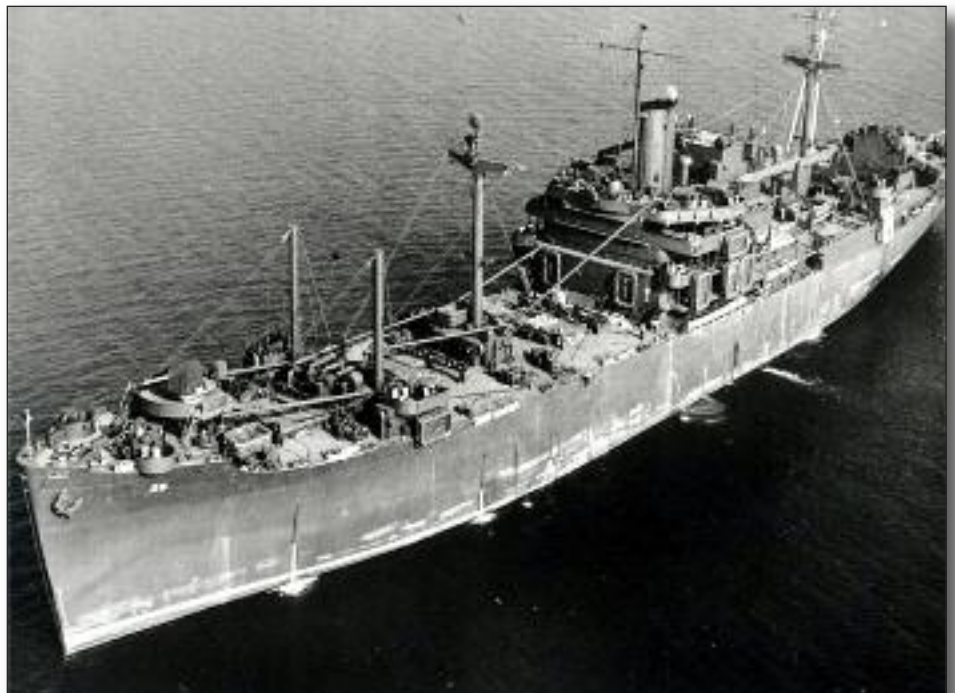
From there to a receiving station in San Francisco (a Simmons mattress warehouse) at Bay and Powell Streets. Playing my clarinet in a small marching band we marched the streets near Fisherman’s Wharf. Having worked the last two summers in a Santa Clara, CA cannery, I claimed mechanical experience and was sent to Hemphill Diesel School in Queens, N.Y. graduating as a MoMc 2/C. We were housed, however, at a hotel near Central Park at 70th and Broadway. I did not know then that it was in the heart of a gay district but that is when I found out that not all men liked women! I was just a naïve young sailor from Santa Clara. I returned to Alameda for one month of great duty aboard a 48-foot cabin cruiser patrolling San Francisco Bay, the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, and the Bay Bridge, then a stint at shore patrol duty. During this time my high school girl friend and I, having been engaged, decided to get married. Announcements printed, blood tests taken, and a two-week leave paper signed. Suddenly our chief told us all leave was cancelled; we were shipping out the next day! Knowing my situation he gave me a permission slip to return to base the next morning if I went over the fence that night. I hitch-hiked home to Santa Clara, about 45 miles to inform my sweetheart. My parents drove us back to the base the next morning to report in by 7 a.m.

Shipping out meant boarding a train coach, about 36 of us, with a porter in charge. Destination – Camp Lejeune, N.C. Eight plus days later we arrived after hooking on with several different trains.

After four months training in LCVP’s with the marines, a local would steer us through narrow waterways to finally get to the Atlantic for practice landings. And, after playing my clarinet in the local Coast Guard dance band at every Saturday officer’s dance with the lady marines, my group was scheduled to ship out to Norfolk, VA. The problem was that my name was missing. I went to see our commander in charge and was told that I was too important to the dance band with my “mean” clarinet. After much pleading on my part, he allowed me to join the rest of my group.

In November, 1943, at Norfolk, we were all assigned to the *USS Cambria (APA-36)* for a shakedown cruise off Cape Hatteras, N.C. The ocean was extremely rough with many of the crew feeling the effects! All landing craft were unloaded with their boat crews (no troops) and maneuvered most of the day (until chilled to the bone). Then, all but the coxswains had to climb a jacob’s ladder near the stern to board the ship. That was quite an ordeal for me as the ladder follows the curvature of the hull. Thank heaven there were two strong seamen at the rail to help lift you aboard.

Back at Norfolk we loaded a mixture of army, marines, and navy personnel to transport to Hawaii. The navy men



*Coast Guard-manned USS Cambria (APA-36)*

griped that they had to go to war aboard a Coast Guard ship!

We joined a group of ships to be escorted through the Caribbean in order to reach the Panamal Canal. I was picked to stand a “mid to 4 a.m.” watch which proved to be quite eventful. I witnessed many flashes from gunfire as the U-boats were a great threat. I was later told that one of our ships had been sunk. After having eaten a roast beef sandwich before watch, I woke up very ill. I made it to the “head” and asked another sailor to help me to sick bay. I was hemorrhaging from both “ends”. At sick bay I was given a shot in both arms and collapsed. Two days later I awoke but could not even hold water. My whole experience of the Panama Canal was in sick bay.

Once in the Pacific the group of ships joined together for their zig-zag trip to Hawaii. The *Cambria*, however, lost all power. After eight hours of floating about, power was restored and we proceeded alone to Hawaii.

In January, 1944, we docked in Honolulu harbor and in a few minutes a list of about a dozen names were called to be top-side with sea bags pronto — my name included.

Two LCVP’s were lowered, our sea bags in one, and we climbed down the net to get in the other. We pulled alongside the *USS Arthur Middleton (APA-25)* which was slowly moving out of the harbor. She had returned from Tarawa where she had left a few LCVP’s and their crews to help unload supply ships. As we climbed aboard we could feel the stares of these experienced sailors looking at we fresh kids from the states!

We sailed to Maui, docking at the primitive dock at Kahalui. Hawaiians were pulling in a large net to harvest whatever was caught. We loaded 22nd Division Marines and proceeded to Maalea Bay for maneuvers. I was

assigned as motormac to an LCVP whose coxswain had been at Tarawa. Then, back to Pearl Harbor for more supplies.

In February, 1944, we sailed for Kwajaein in the Marshall Islands. Our troops were held in reserve but the LCVP’s kept busy unloading troops and supplies from other ships. When the atoll was secured we proceeded to Eniwetok. Our first target was Engebi Island, the largest in the atoll with an airstrip. We landed our troops amidst mortar and machine gun fire. On our third trip to the beach, I went ashore for a souvenir although the fighting was still going on. I found a fallen enemy with his sniper rifle — my souvenir. After securing Engebi, we took five Japanese prisoners aboard, many casualties, and took those who died to shore for burial.

The next landing in the same atoll was Parry Island. Marines climbed down the nets to the boats at 0600. Again, as we headed to the beach, mortar fire was splashing all about us along with machine gun fire. After securing the island, the American dead were buried at an adjacent island. Our LCVP was one of the boats selected for the gruesome task of transporting the bodies. Two Marines with a stretcher and a Catholic chaplain were charged with the handling of the dead with the chaplain collecting the dog tags — truly the saddest day of the war for me. On the way back to Pearl Harbor one Japanese prisoner died as well as one Marine and both were buried at sea. Back at Pearl we unloaded casualties and prisoners.

While there, all hands went ashore and the ship was fumigated for dysentery. Ninety-three men ended up in the hospital and the ship was quarantined. We left Pearl to help a floundering LST and towed her back to Pearl.

One case of smallpox quarantined the ship again for a

short time and while we were docked I had to put on a full asbestos suit in order to retrieve the ships whistle inside the stack for repairs. This repair had to be done while the ship was docked because the heat would be too intense underway.

Off to Hilo, Hawaii where we loaded 2nd Division Marines. Back to Pearl, then more maneuvers at Maalea Bay, Maui, then



*Coast Guard-manned USS Middleton (APA-25)*

back to Pearl again before departing for Eniwetok to join the task force assembling for Saipan. D- Day at Saipan saw two separate attack groups — ours being diversionary, however, after a smoke screen was laid down all our boats made a right turn and joined one group hitting the beach. Two days later, while unloading supplies at the beach, we noticed that all ships were steamed up and weighing anchor. By the time we were alongside the moving *Middleton*, most boats were aboard and the executive officer called to us on his bull horn that they would be back for us and that the Japanese fleet was coming! For nine days the four of us lived in our 36-foot LCVP, getting “K” rations from the marine beachhead along with drinkable water. Cargo ships would come in one by one which we and a few other boats would unload. At night we would anchor out on the coral reef as the beach was not yet secured as one boat crew sadly found out. Each evening we were

visited by “Machine Gun Charlie”, flying just too high for our 30-cal. machine guns to reach. While at the beach a coxswain must keep the boat pointed straight ahead revving the engine to prevent waves from broaching the boat. In the meantime, the motormac keeps emptying the sand traps for the cooling sea water coming in to the cool the fresh water engine coolant in a heat exchanger. At this one time the suction stopped so I had to go over the side and pull the seaweed out to the water scoop. All the while the propeller was spinning while I was holding my breath under water. Then a moray eel brushed against my legs — Wow!

When our ship returned we loaded over 100 Japanese prisoners, mostly merchant seaman. They were locked in one of the ship’s storage holds and were stripped to their shorts and guarded from above. Imagine me with a “Tommy” gun! We, of course also had many of our casualties aboard. Finally, we started back to Pearl, stopping at Eniwetok, Makin, and Tarawa on the way.

At Pearl we again loaded serious casualties and headed for San Diego with two other ships. Our ship’s crew was most fortunate as each watch was given a 48-hour liberty whereas the others were only given eight hours off duty. I called Phyllis and told her when I would be home and for

how long so she sent me \$50 for a round-trip ticket from San Diego to San Francisco on a DC3 plus making arrangements for us to marry the 2nd day on July 20, 1944. It was



*Coast Guard-manned USS Middleton (APA-25)*

back to the ship the next day. Several weeks later we returned to San Diego with more casualties. Another 48 hour liberty for a brief honeymoon! Loaded 5th Division Marines plus Bob Crosby and departed for Hilo, Hawaii.

On September 1, 1944 we moved to Pearl and loaded the 96th Army Division. We had trouble getting away from dock — flood tide and wind caused the captain to let go both anchors — pilot error. After more maneuvers we departed Honolulu for Eniwetok and Yap Islands. While anchored in Eniwetok Lagoon, Martin Mariner sea planes carrying Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur landed changing our destination to the Philippines. The task force assembled at Manus Island before sailing to Leyte in the Philippines. During the initial landings I watched a single Japanese torpedo plane make it through all the flak and hit the cruiser *Honolulu*. The next day there were more air raids as we were still unloading ships. An Australian cruiser took a bomb. I witnessed General MacArthur and his staff wading ashore. There were dead Japanese floating in the water. Five days later left we Leyte with casualties while the navy was protecting us from the Japanese navy 90 miles away. Several casualties died and were buried at sea. We arrived at Hollandia, New Guinea, transferring some

personnel, then left for Morotai Isle and anchored. Japanese bombers harassed us the next four days but we had no damages and shot one down. Local natives paddled out asking for handouts. One woman was nursing a piglet! We took on fresh troops there and departed for Leyte. The next day our convoy was attacked by Japanese planes — dive and torpedo bombers — and many were shot down with only minor damage to convoy. We unloaded our troops at Leyte and sailed to Manus Isle, then left there for Cape Gloucester, New Britain where we loaded more troops and returned to Manus. Then on to Huon Gulf, New Guinea where we held more practice landings. Once, while on free time, we pulled up to this beautiful snow white sandy beach thickly lined with coconut palms. We were looking for pretty shells when, upon looking up, we saw all these natives standing, holding spears, beetle nut dyed hair and teeth filed to points! Needless to say we scrambled ‘pdq’ into our boat and left. We sailed to Finch Haven and loaded some new LCVP’s then anchored off Tulagi, near Guadalcanal, for liberty on the beach. Warm beer was served, one each. I gave mine away as I was more interested in doing a little exploring. After spotting several huge scorpions I decided the beach to be the best place! Then it was back to Manus to join a task force heading to Lingayen Gulf, Luzon.

On January 6, 1945, we entered Surigo Straits, Mindanao Sea, Sulu Sea, Negros and Panay Islands, Cuyo Passage to Mindoro Straits. Off Corrigador the convoy was heavily attacked by Japanese planes. Bombs were falling all around, one just off our port bow, with flak everywhere and 14 men were wounded aboard our ship. We anchored in Leyte Gulf near Tacloban and loaded gear and troops of the 1st Calvary, then left Leyte while shooting down a Japanese plane. *LSD-15* was hit by a torpedo and turned back. I saw the next torpedo just miss our bow. We witnessed a Japanese kamikaze hit a “jeep” carrier. Its deck was aflame and its planes overhead had to find another carrier to land on.

Arriving at Lingayen I was in “beach party” instead of boats. The beach was being shelled by rocket fire (rather than 5” and larger shells) and many did not explode. Going

in on a “waterbuffalo” in the first wave, my job was to guide incoming LCVP’s to avoid hitting any unexploded rockets. I had been issued a carbine, shovel, and knife. Resistance was light thankfully and later in the day when all was secured, Filipino people came to us. The women wanted soap, the men cigarettes, and the children candy, paying with Japanese invasion money. The next morning,



*Phyllis and Milton Croall*

after sleeping in a sandy foxhole, I saw my ship leaving, a second time! The beach master saw that we all received K-rations. After three days of guiding in boats, we had removed all rocket duds and I was taken aboard the *USS Cambria*, the ship I first started with. Back to Leyte Gulf where I was returned to the *Middleton*.

Back to sea heading for Guadalcanal, more burials at sea, then we passed a live volcano only three miles away then anchored at Florida Isle, Solomons. We left for gunnery practice off Guadalcanal and after anchoring there we loaded the 6th Marines and proceeded for maneuvers. We sailed for Ulithi, did another sea burial, then joined our next task force. CDR Jack Dempsey was now aboard. Several ships were hit by kamikazes.

Because of one case of spinal meningitis, all crewmembers began taking four sulfa pills a day. We had departed Ulithi and commenced refueling *APD-20* in squally weather. While pumping fuel the *APD* was too far forward and as she dropped back she hit in against our bow and damaged her side so badly she had to return to base.

April 1, 1945, was D-Day at Okinawa. Kamikazes filled the sky — some hitting their targets, and many crashing into the sea. One crashed just off our stern. The 5th day we left for Saipan, completely unloaded, passing a task force of our battle ships and cruisers. The sea was rough and being empty the ship really tossed about. By now our top speed was only eight knots. On to Pearl then to San Pedro where the *Middleton* was put in dry dock for repairs. Most of us had nearly two years overseas and expected to be transferred right away, but only those with over two years were listed to go stateside. My wife, Phyllis, and several other wives wrote to the Coast Guard commandant in Washington D.C. and soon all with 18 months or more

were sent ashore!

With the war not yet over, the gracious naval district rented small flea bitten trailers in Long Beach, CA, for our wives at \$30 per month. These had been used previously by shipyard workers.

After a 30-day leave, our belated honeymoon, with food and gasoline rationed, I was finally sent to Wilmington,

CA. to await the end of the war. Being married and with overseas time with seven battle stars allowed me to have enough points to be discharged October 6, 1945.

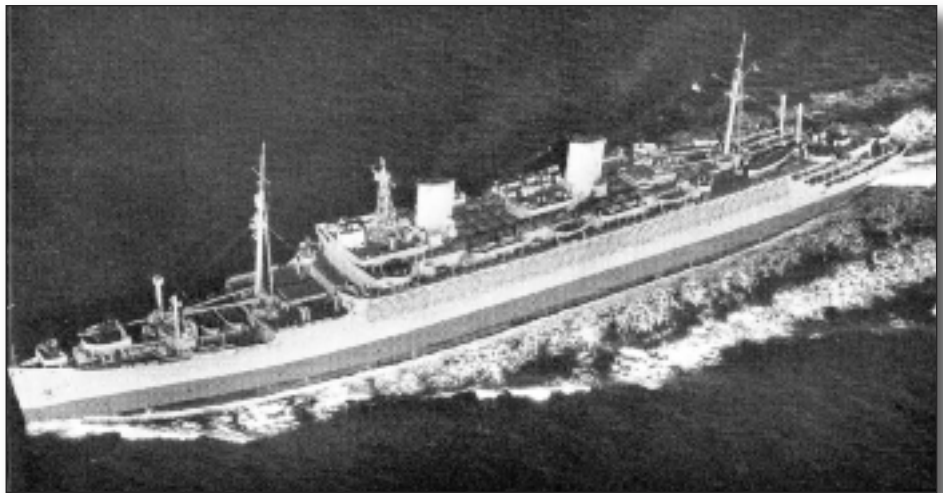
The *Middleton* was eventually transferred to the Navy and used to bring our troops back home. It was eventually placed in the mothball fleet and years later scuttled.

# Naval Operating Base “Cactus” and Coast Guard Operations in the Battle for Guadalcanal

by William H. Thiesen, Ph.D., Coast Guard Atlantic Area

If any battle marked the turning point of World War II in the Pacific, most experts agree that the six-month land, sea and air battle for Guadalcanal was the one. Even though the U.S. Navy had triumphed in early June 1942 at the pivotal naval battle of Midway Island, the struggle for Guadalcanal proved the first true test of all branches of the American military against determined Japanese forces within enemy-held territory. Called “The Canal” by the men who fought there, Guadalcanal was the first Allied amphibious operation of World War II, first of the navy’s “island-hopping” operations and a laboratory for testing the latest amphibious tactics and landing craft designs. It was also the campaign where the Coast Guard forged a relationship with the U.S. Marine Corps that continues to this day. The two services worked side-by-side to defeat the enemy and a Coast Guard coxswain or beach master was often the last comrade a marine might see before heading into enemy territory.

The Coast Guard had served with distinction in missions supporting the war effort well before the August 1942 Guadalcanal campaign and even before the December 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. For example, the Coast Guard participated in pre-war Neutrality Patrols escorting Allied convoys in the Atlantic and it oversaw the Greenland Patrol in air, sea and ice operations. At Pearl Harbor, the cutter *Taney* put up an anti-aircraft barrage against enemy aircraft and performed harbor and anti-submarine patrols alongside the navy. In January 1942, the Coast Guard-manned transport *USS Wakefield* delivered



*An aerial photograph of the Coast Guard-manned troop transport USS Wakefield, which evacuated civilians from Singapore early in the war, and returned to the South Pacific to deliver marines to New Zealand for the Guadalcanal Campaign. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*

Allied troops to Singapore, evacuated many of the island’s civilians and shot down the service’s first enemy aircraft. And, Lieutenant Thomas Crotty served as a demolitions expert in the Philippines, fought the Japanese at Corregidor in the spring of 1942 and died in an enemy prison camp located north of Manila.

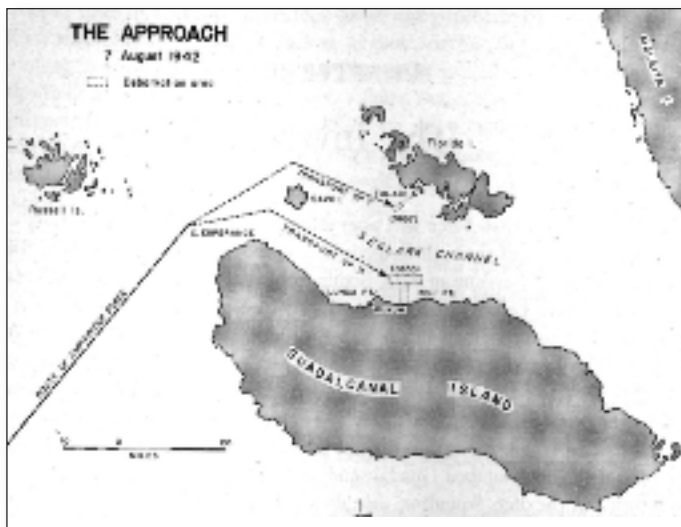
Well before the shooting war even began, American tacticians saw the need to develop an amphibious capability and they incorporated the Coast Guard’s expertise in transport and landing operations. In the spring of 1941, the navy began to prepare in earnest for the possibility of large-scale amphibious operations. It formed Transport Division Seven out of former army troop transports, including the Coast Guard-manned *USS Hunter Liggett*, *USS Leonard Wood* and *USS Arthur Middleton*.

By June 1941, the navy conducted amphibious training

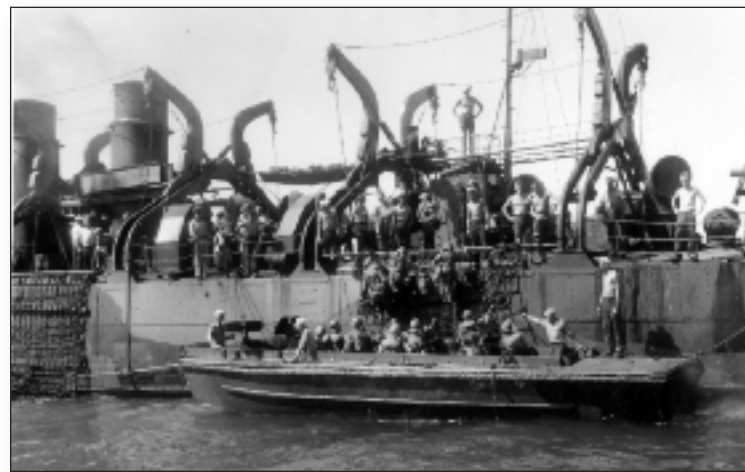
## Feature Articles

operations in the Chesapeake Bay, near Solomons, Maryland, and on the North Carolina coast at Onslow Bay. Coast Guard coxswains from lifesaving stations across the country reported for duty and demonstrated their expertise in surf conditions using the navy's newest amphibious landing craft, designated an LCP (Landing Craft Personnel) and referred to as a "Higgins Boat." The stanza from a poem composed by an anonymous Coast Guardsman on board the *Hunter Liggett*

recounted the hectic training schedule for the amphibious transport division during this busy period: "Some day will end this squirrel race, and there'll be many a smiling face, to see a cutter take its place, in Trans Division Seven."



*Chart showing the August 7, 1942, track of Task Force 62's groups "Yoke" and "X-Ray." (Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps)*



*An APD debarking marines into Higgins Boats for the landings at Tulagi, the Allies' original target and neighboring island to the larger Guadalcanal. The APD was a World War I-era four-stack destroyer converted for amphibious landing operations. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*

Japanese military advances in the Pacific continued through the summer of 1942. By July, the enemy occupied Guam, Wake Island, Hong Kong, Singapore, Southeast Asia, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands. In April, Allied naval strategists had already decided to make a stand in the Solomons at Tulagi Island. Tulagi was the capital of the southern Solomon Islands, a British protectorate and the only major settlement on those islands. The Japanese had occupied the small island with a garrison of 800

Imperial Japanese Navy troops and used it as a seaplane base for reconnaissance purposes.

Allied naval strategists later changed their assault plan to include occupying a large island located west of Tulagi, after the Japanese began building an airfield there. That island was Guadalcanal, a large tropical island with a mountain ridge stretching along its interior that experienced almost daily monsoon-like rains. Enemy aircraft flying from Guadalcanal could threaten Allied supply lines to Australia and New

Zealand. The Allies code-named the amphibious operation "Watchtower." The fighting men participating in Operation Watchtower would give it the nick name "Operation Shoestring," due to the shortage of supplies and provisions they experienced while serving on the island.

Throughout June and July 1942, Wellington, New Zealand, became a center for assembling marines, ships and supplies. The Coast Guard-manned *Hunter Liggett*, nicknamed "Lucky Liggett," departed New York on April 9, and arrived in New Zealand on May 28; while *USS*



*Rare photograph of the USS Hunter Liggett debarking troops for the Guadalcanal landings. Notice the use of cargo derricks to lower landing craft into the water. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*



*Wakefield*, a larger high-seas troop transport, delivered thousands more marines by early June.

On July 22, 1942, under the command of Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner, the combined fleet for Operation Watchtower, Task Force 62 (TF 62), departed for the theatre of operations under sealed orders. *Hunter Liggett* served as flagship for TF 62's Transport Group "X-Ray," under overall navy command of Commodore Lawrence Reifsnider. Commanded by Coast Guard Captain Louis W. Perkins, the *Liggett* carried 700 troops and nearly forty landing craft. Transport Group "Yoke"

served as a second group in TF 62. Several other entirely or partially Coast Guard-manned transports served in Yoke.

On July 27, TF 62 visited Koro Island, Fiji, to stage a rehearsal landing, which proved a failure. However, the fleet's circuitous route from Wellington by way of Fiji and very cloudy weather hid the fleet's movements from enemy

aircraft and submarines. Allied aircraft had been bombing Japanese forces in the Solomons for several days before the approaching d-day and the enemy units stationed there had received no forewarning from their command regarding a potential attack. On August 7, 1942, exactly eight months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the invasion fleet approached their target and the first Allied amphibious operation of World War II was set to begin.

On the morning of August 7, TF 62's Transport Group Yoke passed north of the small volcanic Savo Island and landed 3,000 marines at Beach Blue on Tulagi. APDs landed many of Yoke's troops. The "APD," also known as a "fast attack transport," was the navy designation for a World War I-era



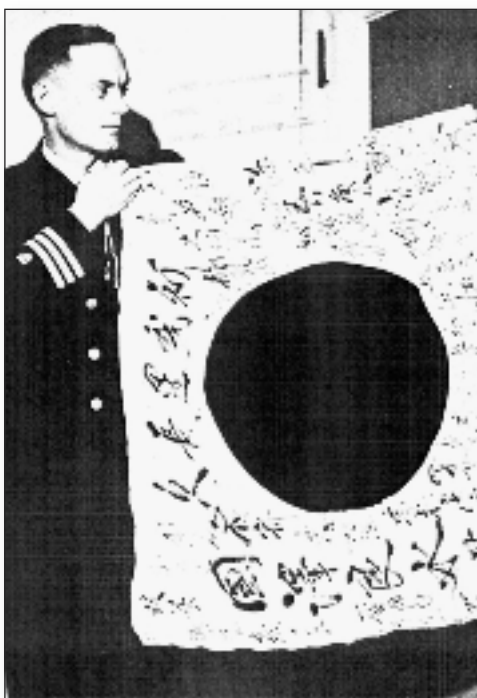
*A faded image of marines landing on Red Beach, Guadalcanal, on August 7th. The Japanese troops and civilian airfield workers on Guadalcanal were far outnumbered by the marines and fled to the cover of the island's jungle interior. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*

four-stack destroyer converted to carry a company of marines and four landing craft. It served as a prototype for later purpose-built amphibious transports, such as LSTs, LCTs, and LCIs. Within two days, the marines had secured Tulagi with only two-dozen Japanese prisoners left of the former enemy garrison. The U.S. Navy awarded Silver Star

Medals to Coast Guard coxswains Glen Harris, Dan Tarr, William Sparling, and Harold Miller, who endured withering fire to land the marines' First Raider Battalion on the small island. These Coast Guardsmen served as landing craft coxswains on the APD *USS McKean*. Coast Guard personnel would serve throughout the Solomons on these APDs and their respective landing craft.

Approximately twenty miles away from Tulagi, just off the beaches of Guadalcanal, the heavy cruiser *USS Quincy* began shore bombardment of enemy positions. The case of the *Quincy* serves as a testament to the tenacity of the struggle for Guadalcanal both on land and at sea. Coast Guardsmen on board the transports were awed by the destructive power unleashed by the heavy cruiser on Japanese shore positions the morning of the landing; however, within twenty-four hours this formidable American warship, only a few weeks out of its homeport of San Diego, would settle to the bottom of aptly named Iron Bottom Sound. It would be the first of many warships, from both adversaries, sunk due to enemy action.

By approximately 9:00am, waves of troops from the First Marine Division came ashore at Beach Red, Guadalcanal. The marines' total strength of 11,000 greatly



*Photo of newly promoted CDR Dwight Dexter after his return from the South Pacific. This cover image from the March 1943 Coast Guard Magazine shows Dexter displaying a captured flag taken from an enemy soldier.*

outnumbered the combined numbers of the small Japanese military force and over 1,000 construction personnel assigned to build the enemy airstrip. The Japanese beat a hasty retreat from their shore positions into the island's dense jungle interior.

Fortunately for the marines, the unsuccessful rehearsal landing at Fiji was not an omen of things to come. By D + 1, the marines had fulfilled the mission by capturing the partially completed enemy airstrip, and establishing a defensive perimeter around it and their beachhead. The same day, the Coast Guard-manned *Hunter Liggett* experienced its first bomber attack. It shot down four Japanese "Betty" bombers—two per side—and sustained no damage from the enemy attack.

At the Koro Island rehearsal, the task force's tacticians had decided to establish a landing craft base or boat pool operation on Guadalcanal. The base would maintain and operate a fleet of landing craft to ship troops and supplies between the transports and the islands. At 2:30pm on D + 1, Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Dwight Dexter came ashore from the *Liggett* with thirty Coast Guardsmen



*A rare aerial photograph of N.O.B. "Cactus" at Lunga Point, Guadalcanal. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*

to establish Naval Operating Base (NOB) "Cactus" (Cactus being the code name for Guadalcanal), or NOB Cactus.

Lt. Cmdr. Dexter established his headquarters in the former manager's house for the Lever Brothers coconut plantation, at the tiny village of Kukum, near Lunga Point. Dexter was a natural leader and he was devoted to those under his command. When the enlisted men on board the *Hunter Liggett* heard that he would command Guadalcanal's small boat operations, many volunteered to serve with him. The number of

NOB Cactus personnel would grow to approximately fifty, including a handful of navy enlisted personnel. This would become the first and only known case of a Naval Operating Base manned and run primarily by Coast Guard personnel.

Near Dexter's headquarters, the men built a small tool shed for servicing their landing craft and machinery. This they needed desperately because the landing craft were in constant need of maintenance and repair. Coast Guard signalmen Douglas Munro and Ray Evans built a signal tower out of coconut logs next to the headquarters shack and used the tower for Aldis lamp signaling during the day. They also built a makeshift five-by-eight foot shelter below the tower from packing crates and a tent roof. The rest of Dexter's men lived in similar accommodations located nearby. A dugout shelter located near the headquarters building held about a dozen men while smaller bomb shelters were located among the other tents and shacks.

During the first three months, NOB Cactus endured numerous air raids and enemy bombardments. Periodically, Japanese naval vessels and submarines would cruise offshore under cover of darkness to shell American-held positions. And, of the thirty artillery attacks that NOB Cactus personnel experienced, many of the shellings came from "Pistol Pete," a Japanese naval gun concealed in the jungle highlands and used to bombard the American-held airfield, named Henderson Field. This enemy artillery piece heavily damaged the signal tower Munro and Evans erected next to NOB Cactus headquarters.

NOB personnel also endured over 110 bombings by Japanese "Betty" bombers and this number did not include



*Photo showing an LCVP, which had lines similar to an LCP, or Higgins Boat, but boasted easier access between the cargo bay and the beach. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*

“Washing Machine Charlie,” an enemy floatplane that circled over Guadalcanal for hours every night dropping bombs on American positions to disrupt the occupants’ sleep. Dexter maintained a captured three-barreled Japanese machine gun, nick named the “Chicago Piano,” which he kept handy for air attacks. He managed to shoot down at least one enemy aircraft with it. Between the bombings, artillery attacks, frequent torrential rains and nightly naval battles on Iron Bottom Sound, Coast Guard personnel began to call to the nearby lagoon the “Sleepless Lagoon.”

At its peak, NOB Cactus supported nearly fifty watercraft, including over thirty LCPs (also known as Higgins Boats) and LCVPs, and a dozen LCMs. The LCP (Landing Craft Personnel) was the first purpose-built American landing craft. It had no bow ramp and carried two air-cooled Lewis machine guns in the bow. It could hold thirty-six men, had a top speed of nine knots, and men had to debark over the sides of the boat. The LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle/Personnel) had similar hull lines to an LCP, but it had an armored bow ramp and carried no guns up front. It could carry up to thirty-six men, supplies or a jeep, and the ramp allowed easier access from the cargo hold to the beach. The LCVP quickly superseded the LCP in

becoming the most common small landing craft of the war. The LCM (Landing Craft Mechanized), also known as a “tank lighter,” was a larger version of the LCVP. It could carry a larger load of troops and supplies than an LCVP, or a large military vehicle or light tank.

During the initial stages of the Guadalcanal campaign, there were no patrol craft to defend against enemy submarines, so for the first ten days NOB personnel fitted a landing craft with depth charges set for fifty feet deep and conducted nightly anti-submarine patrols. During one of the first nights on patrol, a Japanese mini-sub lit up the landing craft with a flood lamp. The sub crash-dived and the landing craft crew sped away missing the opportunity to be the first landing craft in history to sink a submarine! On another night, a



*Supplies landed on the beach at Guadalcanal by landing craft. Dexter’s men and watercraft kept critically needed supplies flowing to the First Marine Division fighting in the jungles of Guadalcanal. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*

Japanese destroyer ran down a NOB Cactus anti-submarine patrol, machine-gunned the crew and left them for dead. The only survivor, a coxswain who played dead by floating face down in the water, later found himself alone in the dark and treading water in the middle of Iron Bottom Sound. He

had to swim thirteen miles in order to reach the safety of American-held Tulagi.

NOB Cactus served as an important communication hub between land forces and offshore vessels. During the day, signalmen Douglas Munro and Ray Evans operated Aldis lamps from the coconut-log tower to waiting offshore transports. These Allied ships sought protected anchorages at night, and signaling at night was prohibited anyway since it attracted shellfire from patrolling Japanese warships and submarines. The NOB headquarters also used radios and Morse code to communicate with its landing craft. By mid-August, NOB Cactus also initiated mail and shuttle service across the eighteen-mile stretch of water between Guadalcanal and Tulagi. On the inaugural date of this service, a Japanese I-boat submarine surfaced, chased the Higgins boat and shelled the landing craft with its deck gun. The NOB boat nearly lost the deadly race before Tulagi’s Marine Corps artillery opened fire and chased off the Japanese I-boat. After that, Guadalcanal’s command discontinued the service until air cover



*Image of SM1 Douglas Munro, hero of Point Cruz and the only Medal of Honor recipient in the history of the U.S. Coast Guard. (Courtesy of the U.S. Navy)*

could protect the landing craft over the twenty-mile transit between the islands.

NOB Cactus's Coast Guard personnel performed rescue missions just as they had back in the United States. Whenever possible, NOB landing craft would set out following the periodic nighttime naval battles on Iron Bottom Sound to rescue floating Allied sailors and Japanese prisoners, and retrieve bodies for burial on Guadalcanal. When aerial dogfights took place over the water, NOB watercraft also took to the open ocean to retrieve downed American pilots and capture Japanese aviators shot down by the Americans. In one case, a NOB landing craft rescued a downed American pilot and then tried to rescue a Japanese pilot the American had shot down. The enemy aviator tried unsuccessfully to shoot the American pilot using a water-logged pistol and then tried to shoot himself. Next, the frustrated enemy pilot tried to swim into the landing craft's propellers; however, the Coast Guard crew managed to pull him on board the boat before he could hurt himself.

NOB Cactus's personnel performed a multi-mission role with their various watercraft. In addition to the missions listed above, NOB boats collected supplies from the water left by sunken Allied transports. NOB men caught fresh fish to supplement the Guadalcanal diet by throwing hand grenades into schools of local fish and collecting the dead ones. NOB Cactus even positioned its landing craft in the middle of Iron Bottom Sound at night, nearly ten miles from either side of the body of water, to serve as early-warning picket boats to identify Japanese naval patrols.

Dexter's men and machines also supported marine patrols and combat operations conducted along the shoreline. For example, NOB landing craft landed marine units on the distant Russell Islands, located sixty miles across open ocean, and retrieved the marines after each

patrol. By September 1942, NOB watercraft began supporting reconnaissance missions composed of native scouts and marines. British Colonial Forces officer Martin Clemens led these nighttime operations and Lt. Cmdr. Dexter detached SM1 Evans to oversee their water transportation.

NOB watercraft also transported larger troop movements. For example, on September 27th, NOB Cactus landing craft delivered Colonel "Chesty" Puller's marine battalion behind enemy lines at Point Cruz. Point Cruz was an enemy stronghold, located along the coast west of NOB Cactus and the Japanese used this position to observe NOB operations. After landing the marines, SM1 Ray Evans

remained behind with a landing craft to take off any wounded troops. Enemy fire from shore wounded his coxswain, so Evans returned to NOB Cactus to deliver the wounded crewman. When he arrived at NOB, Evans joined a flotilla of landing craft led by SM1 Doug Munro returning to Point Cruz to evacuate Puller's battalion, which had run into an enemy ambush. Using their machine guns, the landing craft fought the Japanese at



*An artist's depiction of the N.O.B. Cactus mission to evacuate Chesty Puller's ambushed marine battalion at Point Cruz, Guadalcanal. Official recognition for this Coast Guard operation included Munro's Medal of Honor, two Navy Crosses, and a number of Purple Hearts. Franklin D. Roosevelt later recognized all members of Dexter's Coast Guard unit with the Presidential Unit Citation as part of the First Marine Division. (Courtesy of the Coast Guard)*

close quarters and managed to evacuate most of the marine battalion. Munro lost his life trying to protect the last marines evacuated by NOB Cactus boats; and, on the recommendation of Vice Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, he posthumously received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his valiant efforts, the only such medal awarded to Coast Guard personnel.

Despite all of these important operations, NOB Cactus's foremost mission remained the running of men and supplies from offshore transports to the beaches of Guadalcanal.

## Feature Articles

NOB Cactus's operations ensured the survival of the troops by keeping open this important lifeline of supplies and fresh troops to the island. During Guadalcanal's six-month campaign, American transports made numerous roundtrips to New Zealand to re-supply the troops on "The Canal." These shiploads were landed using watercraft from NOB Cactus and landing craft provided by each transport.

By November 1942, the first wave of marines and Coast Guard personnel had served on Guadalcanal for three months. Many servicemen had been lost in action, including at least five NOB Cactus men, such as Douglas Munro. Those who contracted malaria lost a great deal of weight, were no longer fit for duty, and had to rotate back to the United States for rehabilitation. Included among this group were SM1 Evans and Lt. Cmdr. Dexter. Nevertheless, by this time the battle for Guadalcanal had reached its climax and the defeat of Japanese forces on the Canal appeared likely.

In early December 1942, U.S. Army General Alexander Patch relieved Marine General Alexander Vandergrift and the battered First Marine Division received the Presidential Unit Citation from Franklin D. Roosevelt. The "First Marine Division, Reinforced" received the award and the word "Reinforced" honored support units, such as the Coast Guard's NOB Cactus and its personnel. For their heroic efforts at Guadalcanal, NOB Cactus's personnel also received two Navy

Commendation Medals, numerous Purple Heart Medals, a Bronze Star Medal, two Silver Star Medals, one Navy Cross, and one Medal of Honor. In addition to Douglas Munro's posthumous Medal of Honor, SM1 Evans received an ensign's commission in addition to his Navy Cross, while Dexter received a promotion in rank and the Silver Star Medal. And, by February 1943, General Patch declared the island secured of all Japanese military forces.

After Guadalcanal, the Allies would remain on the offensive for the rest of the war while the enemy fought a lengthy retreat all the way back to the Japanese home islands. In the Pacific theatre of operations, the Coast Guard participated in amphibious operations, such as Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Guam, Okinawa and many others. Coast Guard personnel also operated hundreds of army and navy supply ships that supported the troops and fighting fleets in the Pacific. In late summer and fall of 1945, Coast Guard manned ships participated in Operation "Magic Carpet" and transported thousands of troops back to the United States. And, on January 1,

1946, the Coast Guard returned to its place within the Treasury Department having provided nearly 250,000 personnel to support the war effort.

In the battle for Guadalcanal, the Coast Guard fought alongside other U.S. military branches as it had in every conflict since 1790. Coast Guard personnel pitched in to help defend Marine Corps land positions by digging in gun emplacements, serving artillery pieces and providing infantry support. In fact, the greatest single loss of life in the Coast Guard's history occurred at Guadalcanal late in the war, when the attack transport *USS Serpens* exploded and killed more than 200 Coast Guardsmen. And Coast Guard personnel serving at Guadalcanal received dozens of medals for heroism and devotion to duty, making the battle for Guadalcanal one of the most honored Coast Guard combat operations in service history.



*Ray Evans receiving his Navy Cross for action seen at Point Cruz. Evans would receive further recognition with an officer's commission. (Courtesy of the Coast Guard)*



*In November 1945, the U.S. Postal Service issued the Coast Guard stamp showing landing craft and transports to commemorate the service's role in World War II amphibious combat operations.*

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Fore'n aft cap with embroidered CGCVA color logo and "Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association" in white lettering. Must state size. **\$26.00**.

### HOODIES (New Item!)

Sizes M, L, XL and 2XL in colors white and navy blue, light to medium weight with embroidered CGCVA on upper left. Price does not include shipping due to the different shipping zones. CGCVA only makes about \$4.00 on each sale. White Hoodie in sizes M, L, or XL **\$25.00** (**\$31.50** for white in 2XL). Navy blue in sizes M, L, or XL **\$26.00** (**\$32.00** for navy blue in 2XL). Call for shipping cost with address to where item is to be shipped. Postage costs range from \$6 to \$12.

### PATCHES (some shown here)

CGCVA (small) **\$4.00**. CGCVA (large) **\$5.00**. RONONE, CON-SON, ELD-Eagle, Market Time, and Squadron Three. **\$5.00** each. Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club **\$6.00**.





# Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please Print Clearly)

### Personal Data

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Init.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have two (2) residences? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (This is for Quarterdeck Log mailings)

If Yes, please furnish the below information:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ When There? From: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored By: \_\_\_\_\_

### Military Data

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Service Number: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

**Important:** This Application MUST be accompanied by either a copy of your Discharge (both sides); or, a copy of a DD-214; or, a copy of a DD-215; or, a copy of NAV/CG-553; or, a copy of your letter of awards; or, a copy of some other "official" document that states your participation in or your direct support of a combat situation. You may further get a certified statement from a former shipmate who is a CGCVA member in "Good Standing," stating that you served with him on a particular ship/station during a particular period of time.

Rank/Rate: \_\_\_\_\_ Present \_\_\_\_\_ @Discharge \_\_\_\_\_ @Retirement \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues: \$40.00 for two (2) years.** Amount of Membership Dues Enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_ **Make checks or money orders payable to: CGCOMVETS** and mail to: Gary Sherman, LM, CGCVA National Secretary-Treasurer, 3245 Ridge Pike, Eagleville, PA 19403. Phone: (610) 476-8061. E-mail: [cgcva@comcast.net](mailto:cgcva@comcast.net)

**Please! Look at the Exp. Date on your label  
and renew if due. The Quarterdeck Log**

**COAST GUARD COMBAT  
VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

**3245 Ridge Pike  
Eagleville, PA 19403**

Change Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE

**PAID**

WOODBIDGE, VA  
PERMIT NO. 9



*(Above)) The Coast Guard Ensign and National Ensign mark the grave of former CGCVA member VADM Thomas Sargent. (Photo by PO2 Etta Smith)*

## **FLAGS** ACROSS **AMERICA**



*(Above) Coast Guard Commandant ADM Robert Papp talks with members of Coast Guard Recruit Companies Sierra 185 and Tango 185 during the annual Flags Across America ceremony near Arlington National Cemetery on Nov. 5th. (Photo by PO2 Annie R. B. Elis)*



*(Left) Members of Coast Guard Recruit Companies Sierra 185 and Tango 185 search for graves of fallen Coast Guardsmen. (Photo by PO2 Class Annie R. B. Elis)*