



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 Association 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.

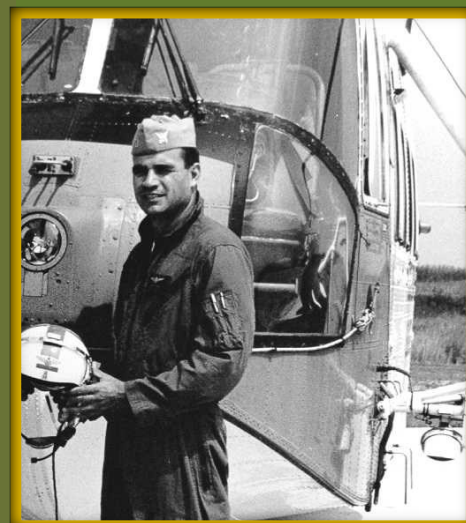
Volume 35, Number 3

Fall 2020



**LIEUTENANT JACK
COLUMBUS RITTICHER, USCG**
August 17, 1933-June 9, 1968

REMEMBERING JACK RITTICHER THE COAST GUARD'S SOLE MIA DURING THE VIETNAM WAR



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REUNION UPDATE

**The CGCVA reunion has been
rescheduled for Virginia
Beach, VA, June 9-13, 2021
Information on pages 20-21**

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

ELECTED OFFICERS

National President—Stephen Petersen, LM

National Vice President—Terry O'Connell, LM

National Secretary/Treasurer—Gary Sherman, LM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman—PNP Michael Placencia, LM

1st Term—Bruce Bruni, LM, Floyd Hampton, LM

2nd Term—William Figone, LM, Gil Benoit, LM

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE*

National Secretary / Treasurer

P.O. Box 969

Lansdale, PA 19446

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*Use the Administrative Office for contact with the CGCVA on all matters

THE QUARTERDECK LOG

Publisher — Bruce Bruni, LM bfb203@gmail.com

Publisher Emeritus—PNP Ed Swift, LM

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

National President—Javaughn Miller

National Vice President—Beverly Johnson

National Secretary / Treasurer—Mimi Placencia

APPOINTED OFFICERS

ByLaws—Gary Sherman, LM

Reunion Planners—PNP Michael Placencia, LM
Michael Johnson, LM and Bruce Bruni, LM

Membership—PNP Michael Placencia, LM

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Service Officers—Thomas Huckelberry, LM,
Richard Hogan Jr., LM, and Larry Jones, LM

MAA—Russ Weeks

Chaplain—Vince Patton, LM

Parliamentarian—Michael Placencia, LM

Nominating Committee—Bill Figone, LM

Cape May Liaison—Thomas Dougherty

MEAP—Edward Bachand, LM, and
PNP Ed Swift, LM

Small Stores—Rich Hogan, Jr.

COAST GUARD HISTORY CONTRIBUTOR

Dr. William Theisen, Ph.D, CG Historian

Shipmates,

These are challenging times for all of us and for your Association. Our reunion planners have been working overtime to assess the current and future COVID-19 situation. For the safety of all, our leadership has cancelled our previously selected time and

location. This required a serious review of all aspects that make a reunion meaningful, but mostly safe. I won't bore you with the details, but in the final analysis, a new site and date were selected. So, look out sailor town, the Coasties are coming to Norfolk in June 2021. All new information is published in this edition of the Log. The reunion planners have done an outstanding job and should be commended.

The Association has selected two outstanding individuals out of many candidates, to co-share Person Of The Year. These awards will be conducted in accordance with base safety policies, which excludes us from making the presentation. This will be accomplished at a local level by the command. Coverage of this event will be in the next issue of QD Log. Again, an altered way of doing business.

Secretary/Treasurer Gary Sherman and the Investment Committee continue to monitor and adjust our finances. When the final bell tolls for 2020, the members should be pleased. We are lucky to have such dedicated people in our group.

The Coast Guard has named all sixty-four Fast Response Cutters and ten will be in honor of combat veterans. We, as an association, will continue our plaque and book presentations to the crew, even if we cannot attend. My sources have told me that the FRC Douglas Goldman, Bronze Star Medal recipient, will be commissioned the first part of 2021 and will be assigned to Patrol Force Southwest Asia. The Goldman will be one of six to go to the Gulf region.

I am anxious to see everyone at the Virginia Beach. Reunion and I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. ~ Steve



FROM THE NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

While I was in U.S.Navy boot camp, I soon learned that NAVY is an acronym for Never Again Volunteer Yourself. That saying has never been the norm within our Association. As I approach the ending of my fourth term as the CGCVA National Vice President, I'd like to acknowledge the many members that currently volunteer their time and effort to ensure the continued success of our association.

President Steve Petersen, Secretary and Treasurer Gary Sherman and the entire Board of Trustees; Michael Placencia, Bruce Bruni, Gil Benoit, William Figone and Butch Hampton ensure the compliance with the association by-laws and federal non-profit association regulations. They maintain the continuity of our relationships with the USCG and attend countless Coast Guard official and unofficial events.

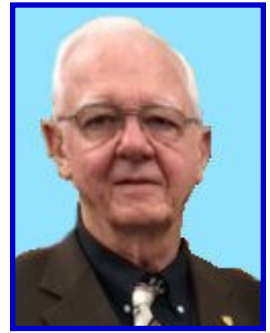
The Webmaster of our website, Richard Ames shares his expertise and time to keep the site active and current. Richard Hogan, Jr., is the proprietor of the Ship's Store; he maintains the inventory and ensures applications are quickly fulfilled. Historian Paul Scotti has compiled and continues to maintain the Association's Historical Record. Thomas Dougherty is our Cape May Training Center coordinator and assists with our recognition of noteworthy Boot Camp graduates. John Seubert and George Hamilton present the CGCVA challenge coins to the outstanding Physical Fitness

graduate at TRACEN Cape May during each graduation ceremony. Edward Bachand represents the Association's during Parents' day events at the USCG Academy. MAA Russell Weeks maintains law and order and custody of the Lucky Bag. When necessary, Service Advisors Tom Huckleberry and Larry Jones will assist veterans with issues concerning the Veterans' Administration programs.

An important topic of this QDL issue is our 2021 reunion. The reunion is discussed in detail elsewhere, but it is appropriate to acknowledge the Reunion Committee for their continuing efforts to ensure a successful and meaningful event, Bruce Bruni, Michael Placencia and Michael Johnson. Bruce Bruni has been very active since our last reunion. He is an elected Trustee, Reunion Committeeman and the Editor of this magazine which is among the best of its kind. We thank you one and all.

Finally, lest we forget the ladies of the CGCVA Auxiliary. They play a vital role in providing the charm and decorum at the reunions that might otherwise be absent without their involvement.

~ Terry O'Connell



HONORING LT JACK RITTICHIER AT THE COAST GUARD MUSEUM

Many Coastie might have heard of LT Jack Rittichier, who was the only Coast Guard MIA in the Vietnam War. But what you may not realize is that he is the only Coast Guard aviator lost in combat in any war. To commemorate LT Rittichier's sacrifice and memory, a bronze bust is being made and funded by the Coast Guard Aviation Association for placement in the Coast Guard Academy Museum. The preliminary clay

bust to the right is what the finished product will look like.

The CGCVA will donate \$1,000 for the purchase of a wooden pedestal for displaying the bust at the Coast Guard museum.



FROM THE NATIONAL SECRETARY / TREASURER

REUNION/CONVENTION DURING COVID 19:

Our great Reunion/Convention team of Bruce Bruni, Mike Johnson and Mike Placencia are constantly monitoring the COVID 19 situation and preparing for contingencies due to the worldwide pandemic that has plagued this planet for most of 2020. The Reunion Committee's concern, and that of Steve Petersen is for the safety of our members. Therefore, after much discussion and concern, it has been decided to move the reunion to Virginia Beach-Norfolk to occur next June 9-13. There is just no easy way to plan anything, as I'm sure all of you understand, but I think that this is a great alternative to what initially had been planned in New Orleans. We will look at New Orleans for a future reunion, but for now it is full steam ahead for Virginia Beach.

WE NEED MORE VIETNAM VETERANS!

We currently have 530 Vietnam Veteran members in the CGCVA, which is only a small percent of the 8,000 total U.S. Coast Guard members who served in Vietnam.

Please call your shipmates and ask them to consider joining the CGCVA. The Quarterdeck Log magazine, alone, is worth the price of membership and should bring back memories of times past, and is a great source of stories and articles about the Coast Guard's participation in this nation's conflicts. Most of us weren't given the respect and acknowledgement we deserved upon our return from Southeast Asia, but when we read about our history, we learned about the proud tradition of the wartime U. S. Coast Guard as an Armed Service. This makes us proud to have served and hopefully your shipmates will benefit from association with the CGCVA. Please call that shipmate who probably wants to hear from you, anyway!

PAYABLE TO CGCVA!

This is just a reminder that when you're mailing in a check to the new address (P O Box 969, Lansdale, PA 19446), please make the check payable to CGCVA only. If it's for dues, small stores or Booster, please indicate that on the memo line so it can be applied appropriately! It drives the bank crazy when we get a check payable to "Boosters."



DON'T USE THE OLD P O BOX 777!

Please note the new address is:
CGCVA, P O Box 969, Lansdale, PA 19446

Thank you!
Semper Paratus,
Gary Sherman, NS/T

ENVOYS WANTED:

We need more CGCVA representatives!

There are events taking place throughout the country, and your community may request that the CGCVA furnish a member to represent the CGCVA and the U. S. Coast Guard. If you would be interested in representing the CGCVA and the USCG at an event in your area, please do the following:

Send an email to cgcva@comcast.net.

Please indicate your name, contact information and what area or territory you would be able to attend.

It can be an area, a state or multiple states, what ever does not require an overnight stay.

Please join the CGCVA Envoy List!

Thank you!

BOOSTER CLUB AND MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

QUARTERDECK LOG (QDL) BOOSTER CLUB

The printing and postage for the QDL is by far the largest expense item we have and it was determined that if every member contributed \$10 or more to the QDL Booster Club each year, it would pay for all the expenses that go into printing and mailing the magazine. Donations can be sent to the Administrative Office (marked in the “memo” section of your check as “QDL 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 that we have the best association 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 QDL Booster club:

Thanks to all who have become QDL Booster club members so far!

All contributions are appreciated!

And remember, these contributions are tax deductible as we are a 501(c)19.

NEW TO THE QDL BOOSTER CLUB

Terry Carnila, Sally Brice-O’Hara, Thomas Frischmann, J. Timothy Riker, Paul C. McCurry,
Daniel F. Bothe, Stephen Van Renssealer, Frederic Armstrong, Thomas Dougherty,
Franklin Bullock, Herb Cohen, Paul J. Prokop, John J. Fanelli, Robert Weber, Michael A. Johnson

IN MEMORY OF—IN HONOR OF

Charles Bevel IMO Joyce Bevel, Jack Hanlin IMO Crew of #83408, D-Day June 6, 1944,
Robert Heater IMO SN Thomas Sherry, Walt Viglienzone in Honor of Mike Placencia and William Figone,
John MacFeat in Honor of USCGC Chase 718

QUARTERDECK LOG BOOSTERS

To all Life Members:

Please don’t abandon the QDL Boosters. This money is still needed and there is still availability for all members to make contributions of any amount, at any time. We don’t want to see QDL Booster donations cease.

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions regarding both the RMC and the QDL Boosters. Our goal is to sustain the Association financially and be able to pass it on to the next generation of Coast Guardsmen who served in combat theatres anywhere in the world.

If you have any questions, please call the Administrative Office at 410-690-8000

Thank you!

~ **The Officers and Trustees of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association**

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS



The above campaign and service medals are authorized for CGCVA membership and are shown from top left to bottom right:

Navy Expeditionary Medal, * China Service Medal * American Campaign Medal (must have at least one 5/16 bronze battle star) * Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal * European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal * Korea Service Medal * Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal * Vietnam Service Medal * Southwest Asia Service Medal * Kosovo Campaign Medal * Afghanistan Campaign Medal * Iraq Campaign Medal * Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal * Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal * Korea Defense Service Medal. Unfortunately, there will be future world conflicts that will add to this list.

NEW MEMBER	SHIP/UNIT IN CONFLICT	CONFLICT	SPONSOR
Rand I. Bartlett	CGC Campbell / CGC Owasco	RVN / DST	
David P. Bichrest	CGC Cook Inlet	RVN	
James B. Brendel, Jr.	CGC Dallas	GWOT	Bruce Bruni
James M. Loomis	Jolly Green Combat Rescue	RVN	
Tobey W. Morison	PSU 301	DST	
Roc A. St. Martin	PSU 308	GWOT	Bruce Bruni
Andrew M. Thompson	CGC Wrangle / CGC Monomoy	GWOT	Tom Dougherty
Diane E. Avery	PSU 301	DST	Bruce Bruni
Robert T. Kelly	CGC Dallas	RVN	
Jared A. Frerichs	CGC Aquidneck	GWOT	
Gregory P. Hunton	PSU 303B	DST	
Samuel O. Williams, Jr.	CGC Basswood	RVN	
George C. Obusek	CGC Pt Dume	RVN	

CROSSED THE BAR

It is with sadness that we take note of the following members who have crossed the bar.

Hurbert J. D'Ambrosio, LM WWII; Nick Adams, LM, WWII; Laurence H. Robbins, RVN; Keith A. Barker, RVN; Daniel R. Cinq-Mars, LM, RVN; John W. MacMillan, LM, RVN

CROSSED THE BAR

We are sad to report the passing of Dave Andrus. David Andrus and brother, Scott, who are pictured on the right, were our bartenders at many Association reunions where they worked their tails off. Hanging out at the bar was always fun with them. Dave will be greatly missed.

Editor's note: Dave and Scott Andrus began their association with the CGCVA when they first attended one of our reunions with their father who was a member and WWII veteran. Both veterans, with Dave retiring from the USAF with 23 years service as a Senior Master Sargent and Scott a Navy veteran.



**David Andrus on the left with
his brother Scott**

AUXILIARY NEWS

COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS ASSOCIATION AUXILIARY AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER APPLICATION

Membership Type: Auxiliary: _____ Associate: _____ New: _____ Renewal: _____ Returning: _____

Date of Application: _____ 20 _____ Two-year membership: From May 20 _____ to May 20 _____

Name: _____

Email: _____ Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Dues: \$15.00 for two-year membership. Make check or money order payable to: CGCVA Auxiliary Association

Mail to: Mimi Placencia, National Secretary / Treasurer, 9804 Iroquois Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93312

Auxiliary Membership Qualifications: Family members of a Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association member in good standing.

Associate Membership Qualifications: All other interested parties. Associate membership is a non-voting membership.

For additional information, please contact: Mimi Placencia (Auxiliary Secretary / Treasurer) at mimiplacencia@hotmail.com or at (661) 444-0186.

AUXILIARY NEWS

Hello esteemed CGCVA veterans, Auxiliary, family, friends and supporters! I hope this letter finds you and your families safe and well. Wayne and I are so excited as we look forward to our upcoming reunion in Virginia Beach. It is unfortunate that we needed to change the reunion venue, but circumstances warranted it. We hope that we will be able to return to New Orleans for a future reunion, possibly in 2023.

The cities of Virginia Beach, Norfolk and the entire Hampton Roads area offer many opportunities to visit historic sites like the Yorktown Battlefield, where America won its freedom from Great Britain in 1781. Another great historical site is Colonial Williamsburg, with its 17th and 18th century architecture. The waterfront of Virginia Beach offers a relaxing “day at the beach” for those who like the sun and surf. And there are many great golf courses in the area if that is your desired activity. The large CGEX in nearby Chesapeake, which is a quick drive from the hotel, offers the shopping opportunity for Coasties looking for that special CG souvenir, uniform parts and the general CG Exchange shopping experience.

To our Auxiliary members, please remember to reach out to Mimi Palencia if you need to bring your dues up to date. We are also in need of a Nominations Committee Chair. This is a very important duty as we may have three potential positions available, which are Auxiliary President, Vice President and Secretary. If you’re interested or have questions, please email me or call me as soon as possible at jallsmiller0@gmail.com or 619-328-8576.

REUNION 2021 will be a challenging year with the COVID-19 situation. And, as you know, our Silent Auction and your donated items for it will be more important than ever. Remember, all funds raised by the Silent Auction go to the CGCVA operating fund.

Silent Auction Item Registration Form

Description of Item: _____

Name : _____ Email Address: _____

Value: _____ Minimum Bid: _____

Please email this form to me, Javaughn Miller, at: jallsmiller0@gmail.com (the 0 is a zero) or snail mail to: **109 Bent Oak Cove, Marble Falls, TX 78654**. Please ensure you receive an email confirmation from me confirming I received your donation information. We will provide an address for shipping the auction item(s) in the Winter QDL and on the CGCVA webpage if you are unable to transport them yourself.

With respect, admiration and appreciation for all that each of you do and have done,

Javaughn

Golden Flashes-Two Days in the Life of an American Hero

By LCDR (Ret.) James Loomis
U.S. Coast Guard, CGCVA

PART ONE

HOMECOMING

OCTOBER 30, 1954

Autumn begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio

by James Wright

In the Shreve High School football stadium,

I think of men nursing long beers in Tiltonsville.

*And gray faces of steelworkers in the blast furnace of
Benwood,*

And the ruptured night watchman of Wheeling Steel,

Dreaming of heroes.

All the proud fathers are ashamed to go home,

Their women clucked like starved pullets,

Dying for love.

Therefore, their sons grew suicidally beautiful

at the beginning of October,

And gallop terribly against each other's bodies.

Jack Rittichier's formative years were in Coventry, Ohio, an Akron bedroom community where lived many automotive tire industry workers, including both of his parents. He was a star athlete at Coventry High School, in track where he claimed two team all-time records, and in football where he made the All-City (of Akron) team. He was well liked and played well with others. Coventry was located in the Portage Lakes District, so named for its trail of disconnected lakes stretching northward to Lake Erie where indigenous native Americans would canoe (much of it requiring "portage") to Cleveland to trade. He was a good student and was accepted at Princeton where he had to decline because Ivy League Schools did not offer athletic scholarships, accepting instead a football

scholarship to the University of Kentucky, coached by Paul "Bear" Bryant who would go on to fame at the University of Alabama. The players in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) were of a caliber Jack had never seen before. He saw no future in the SEC so he returned home to attend Kent State University (KSU) on a full athletic scholarship. Jack did well there, academically, athletically and socially. His best year athletically was 1954, his junior year when his team, the "Golden Flashes," was enjoying one of its best seasons ever.

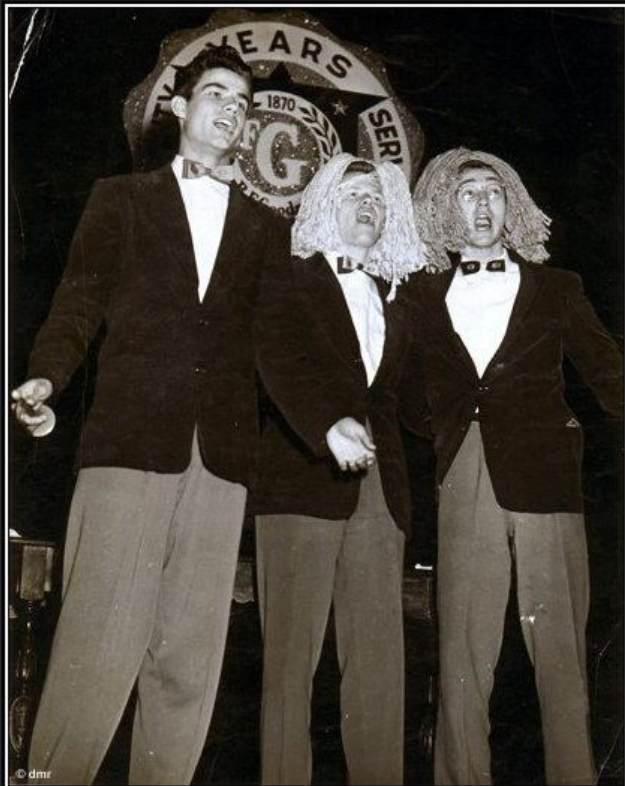
October 30, 1954, was homecoming day for KSU and there was something for everyone, be it catching up with former classmates, roommates, teammates, and professors; a judging of the best decorated dorms, sorority and frat houses, and the day culminating with an SRO soiree, dancing the night away to the music of the great Jazz band of the day, "Woody Herman and his Herd." Oh, and did I tell you there was a football game to be played? Although Jack Rittichier loved the campus scene and was normally a more than willing participant in the revelry, make no mistake; this day was first and foremost about football! Jack, whose teammates called him "Cornell" because he was "polite enough to be an Ivy Leaguer," knew this wasn't just any game; it was one of the biggest games in the school's history with a post season bowl game at stake which would be a first in KSU history! What also made homecoming special for the team was the opportunity to play before thousands of friends, family and alumni.



**LT Jack Columbus
Rittichier, USCG**

COVER STORY

This, the leading KSU rushing team of all time, was special. The running game was still in vogue in much of Ohio, or as legendary Ohio State coach Woody Hayes called it, “three yards and a cloud of dust.” As a starting running back, Jack was an integral part of this offense, averaging an excellent 8.9 yards per carry, good enough to gain him all MAC second team honors, this in a conference loaded with running backs, several of whom went on to play professional football. Their opponents, forty year arch rival Bowling Green State University (BGSU) who defied the philosophy, as one wag put it, “the forward pass is illegal in the state of Ohio,” had a different look to their game plan. In keeping with their nickname, the Falcons had a very good passing game, a contrast virtually guaranteeing an interesting matchup. All that was left was to play the game; and play it they did!



Jack (left) and the Mopheads

The game was a real nail-biter as the lead seesawed throughout most of the game, with Jack scoring one of the team's two first-half touchdowns. The Flashes went into the halftime locker room holding a 14-0 advantage, but BGSU fought back using that vaunted aerial attack to close the gap. Things looked grim when the Falcons scored on a touchdown pass to go up by four with only minutes left on the clock. Bill Bradshaw, the BGSU punter, was the leading punter in the country for two consecutive seasons, showed why when he kicked a booming punt that pinned the Flashes back on their own 10 yard line with the clock winding down. But lightning struck on KSU's first play from scrimmage. Jack took a pitchout, circled right end, then followed two crushing blocks to break into the open and raced the length of the field for a game winning 90-yard touchdown run. This story would have had a perfect ending had the Flashes won their bowl game. Although they acquitted themselves well, but victory was not to be as they fell to the University of Delaware's strong passing game led by gifted quarterback, Don Miller. Miller would go on to become the winningest coach in New England college history as the head coach for Trinity University in Hartford, later the long-time quarterback coach at the Coast Guard Academy. Here's another interesting tidbit - Miller threw only two interceptions in 1954, one of them was by (guess who?)

PART TWO JUNE 9, 1968

SCRAMBLE THE JOLLYS!

Jack graduated from KSU in 1956 with an Air Force ROTC commission and his new bride, Carol, also a former Kent State student. So, it was off to flight training and ultimate qualification in the B-47, the Strategic Air Command's (SAC) long range six jet engine bomber. This was during the height of the “cold war” with its ever-present threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. It would be

COVER STORY

an understatement to say that he didn't enjoy his six years of flying nuclear weapons for SAC. The thought of having to drop his was anathema to him, but he told his brother on more than one occasion that if ordered to do so he would comply but he was not sure he would be able to live with himself had he done so. Fortunately, neither he nor the countless number of fellow pilots ever received those orders. But the B-47 was a "widowmaker" in its own right with one of the worst safety records of any military aircraft ever flown, with 203 crashes taking more than 450 pilots and bombardiers to early graves, this in peacetime.

After Jack left the Air Force in 1962, he tried his hand at civilian flying, first flying a crop duster that ended abruptly when he lost a battle with some powerlines, escaping unharmed but totaling his aircraft. Next, his father-in-law helped him purchase a small helicopter which proved to be a bad investment. Giving rides at county fairs was not what he had anticipated. While considering job



LT Jack Rittichier (left) with LT Lance Eagan and LCDR Lonnie Mixon with the Jolly Green

options, he heard about the USCG Direct Commission program. The thought of saving lives appealed to him. He wanted to fly helicopters but his interview board had other thoughts; his 5,000 hour "heavy iron" time making him a prime candidate for the burgeoning C-130 fleet, but Jack was adamant and convincing. And so he was selected for helicopters, probably the lowest time helo pilot ever accepted in the Direct Commission Aviator program. Being a neophyte helicopter pilot, he was first sent to Pensacola to complete basic helicopter training; then it was off to Elizabeth City for his first USCG duty assignment. By all accounts, Jack loved the Coast Guard and its lifesaving mission. He quickly accumulated a lot of flying time, much of it during a temporary



HH-3E "Jolly Green" Rescue Helicopter

assignment to CGAS New Orleans for flood relief in the wake of hurricane Betsy. His next tour was AIRSTA Detroit, an assignment he enjoyed, it being close to his hometown. He was awarded his first Air Medal there for a night flight through heavy snow to assist a sinking tanker in Lake Huron.

In 1967, Jack got wind of a pilot exchange program with USAF in which USCG aviators would fly HH-3E combat rescue helicopters in Vietnam and returning USAF pilots would be assigned to CG Air Stations. He requested this

COVER STORY

assignment and he, LCDR Lonnie Mixon, and LT Lance Eagan were the first three selected.

A year of intensive training followed, including CH-3 qualification, HH-3E “Jolly Green” combat crew training, and combat and jungle survival schools. Then it was off to the 37th ARRS in Danang, Vietnam, where in short order they were designated Rescue Crew Commanders (RCC) and put to work; their primary mission the recovery of shot down U.S. airmen anywhere in the southeast Asia theater. LT Rittichier had an immediate impact, participating in several demanding rescues, earning three Distinguished Flying Crosses in barely over a month of flying.

June 9, 1968, was hot in Vietnam in more ways than one. Following North Vietnam's (NVA) bloody spring Tet offensive, the ground and air fighting was intense. This day marked a signal event in CG aviation history. The crews of Jolly Green 23 (JG23) with Rittichier the assigned RCC, as “Hi Bird,” whose primary responsibility would



The beautiful and rugged A Shau Valley

be to come to the assistance of JG22, the “Lo Bird,” or primary rescue aircraft, should it be required. The crews were the designated alert crews for the day. After an Zero dark hundred wakeup, the ready crews proceeded to carry out the ritual duties of

aircraft pre-flights, followed by crew, weather and intel briefings. On a routine day, JG23 would have an easier day, but this was hardly going to be the case on this day.

Meanwhile, at the Chu Lai USMC airbase 55 miles south of Danang, two USMC aviators got similar early wakeups for a fragged mission in their A-4 jets, Hellborne 215 and 216, to provide close air support for ground forces operating in the A Shau Valley, 45 miles west of Danang, one of the most heavily North Vietnamese Army (NVA) defended pieces of real estate along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the critical supply line stretching from North Vietnam, through the mountains of Laos, into South Vietnam and Cambodia. The assigned flight leader, who was a Captain with 200 combat missions under his belt, ceded his flight leader position to his wingman, a decision that would prove critical, but within his authority to do. Walter Roy Schmidt, the young First Lieutenant had recently flown his 100th combat mission, qualifying him to assume the flight leader position.



1st LT Walter Roy Schmidt, Jr.



**Coordinates of the Rittichier crash site:
162144N 1070534E YD235100**

COVER STORY

Their brief flight over Danang then westward to A Shau was uneventful. Upon arriving on scene, Hellborne 215 prepared for his bombing run as Hellborne 216 orbited at altitude. 215 commenced his bombing run, but upon reaching his target his bombs had failed to release. The pilot had two options, to try another bombing run or RTB to Chu Lai, no questions asked. He opted for the former. This time his bombs released but he received extremely intense groundfire and was forced to eject at low altitude and fast speed directly above his target, a recipe for disaster. He hadn't been able to exit the immediate area, nor climb to a safer altitude for his ejection. He suffered severe injuries, including a badly broken leg and arm. His rescue would obviously require the assistance of the Jolly 23 PJ, further complicating the rescue. The HC-130P King, the airborne command post, and helicopter re-fueler was alerted and the command to SCRAMBLE THE JOLLYS! ...as passed to the Joint Rescue Coordination Center in Saigon which was quickly passed on to



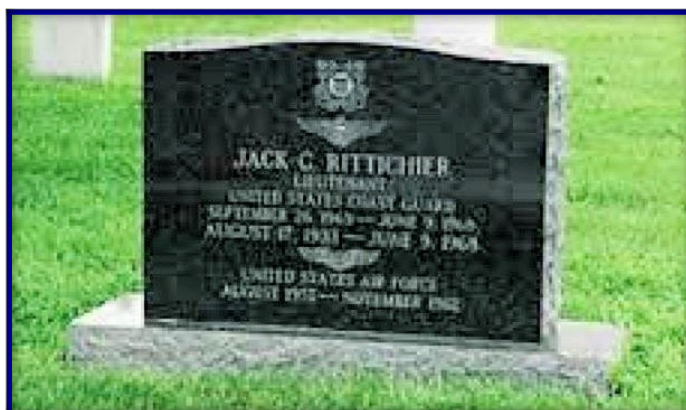
**LT Rittichier funeral at
Arlington National
Cemetery (USCG Photo)**

the operations desk at the 37th ARRS, and so they were. A PJ was on the ramp helping Jack put on his parachute and survival vest. He said that Jack had a big grin on his face, going off to do what he loved to do best.

JG22 made several rescue attempts, being driven off by withering groundfire. After additional strikes were put in by Air Force fighters and USMC helicopters, it was decided to make another attempt, but JG22, having removed his drop tanks for his previous attempt, no

longer had sufficient fuel to make another attempt. The survivor was either unconscious or dead but the NVA made no move to capture him, setting into play a helicopter trap. LT Rittichier agreed to make an attempt, but was driven off by intense groundfire. He retreated to a safe area while fighter jets pounded the area. Rittichier agreed to make another attempt, led in by USMC gunships. This time he was calling out the door just as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) yelled to Jack that his aircraft was on fire and attempted to direct him to a nearby clearing. Jack announced that he was headed for the clearing. The rotor on his crippled helicopter slowed to a near stop and JG23 crashed in a ball of flame killing him instantly.

In 2002, a combined team from the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii located the crash scene of Jolly Green 23. At the site, remains were recovered and tests identified crew members Rittichier, Yeend, Holden and Locker in February 2003. No found records indicate Roy Schmidt's remains were ever recovered. Jack Columbus Rittichier, Aviator 997, was one of seven Coast Guard service members to die in Southeast Asia. He was buried with full honors at Arlington National Cemetery on October 6, 2003.



LT Rittichier's personal awards include a Silver Star, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, Purple Heart and two Air Medals.

ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENT

FOR THE 2021 BUSINESS MEETING

BYLAWS CHANGE #1

SUBJECT: FRIEND OF THE ASSOCIATION

More frequently lately, we have received requests from individuals and/or family members to have some affiliation with the CGCVA. In those cases the individual is not eligible for Regular, Life or Associate membership, and is not a spouse of a CGCVA member, eligible for CGCVA Auxiliary membership. However, they have demonstrated, by their actions, or by their willingness to provide financial support to the Association, that they deserve some official status.

The Association's Microsoft Access software was set up by previous members Ed Burke, Baker Herbert and many others and a "FRIEND" category was included in the Status options, but there is no mention of this category in the ByLaws. The "Friend" category has been used by past national presidents to designate an individual as a "Friend of the Association" but that selection has been totally discretionary on the part of the National President.

It is therefore recommended that we formalize the category of "Friend of the Association" so that we can reward supporters with an official affiliation status and benefit from additional dues revenue. This status would be non-voting and dues paying, at the same level as Regular and Associate membership. Appointments to this category should have an annual limitation of no more than 5-10 appointments per year.

The bylaws change would be as follows:

"ARTICLE II – Membership

6. Friend of the Association: Non-Voting, Friend of the Association is a non-membership affiliation and is established for:

- a. Those persons considered, by the National President, to be supporters of the association by their actions or financial support, but are ineligible for Regular, Life, Associate or Auxiliary membership, can be nominated for affiliation as a Friend of the Association.
- b. Those persons considered as Friends of the Association will be placed on the Quarterdeck Log mailing list, but will have no voting rights in the Association's business, and their affiliation will remain in affect with payment of biennial dues, equal to the dues paid by Regular and Associate membership.
- c. The National President shall be limited to a maximum number of appointments to five (5) per year. Any appointments above the minimum must be approved by the Board of Trustees in any one year.
- d. Friend of the Association affiliation can be revoked at the discretion of the National President, at any time.

BYLAWS CHANGE #2

The Association currently has no provision to elect or re-elect an Association officer or trustee unless they are present at the reunion/convention business meeting. We are all getting older and the likelihood of an officer or trustee not being able to attend (for example, due to medical reasons or personal family crises, or for whatever reason) could result in an absence of that position, or someone else appointed for a 2 year term, when the current office holder is ready, willing and will be able to continue their duties in a few months. Having another member appointed, as a replacement, could be a detriment to the Association.

Also, if there are no members present at the business meeting, who wish to serve in the capacity of officer or trustee, having that position vacant

ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

could prevent the Association from functioning. If there is a Trustee position vacant, the Board of Trustees would have an even number of members and no tie breaking 5th vote.

Someone serving as National President or National Vice President, who served a 2 year term of office and sincerely wishes to continue in that position, but cannot attend for medical or personal reasons, should be allowed to be re-elected and continue their service to the Association.

The purpose of this proposed bylaw change is to allow the continuation of Association business by giving the National President (or the National Vice President, in his absence) the authority to appoint someone who is willing to serve, but not present, to be elected by the membership at the business meeting.

Under Article I – Organization, Para. 4, Term of Office, the following change should be added:

In the temporary absence of an officer or trustee not present at the biennial convention, the National President (or, in his absence, the National Vice President) shall nominate the existing office holder who is willing to serve but unable to attend, due to temporary illness or family crisis, (or other unforeseen circumstances). The Membership present at the Business Meeting can consider this nomination, or other nominations, equally in electing the officers and trustees. If this candidate for election or re-election is elected by the majority membership, they may be sworn into office remotely or sign an affidavit swearing their oath of office.

BYLAWS CHANGE #3

Our current Bylaws permit Associate membership by children of a deceased Coast Guardsman, whose life was taken prior to July 1985, the formation of the Association.

It is believed that consideration to have grandchildren included, was just not anticipated at that time.

It would be a benefit to the Association to have grandchildren of fallen veterans included as Associate Members, paying dues and receiving the Quarterdeck Log in their remembrance of their relative loss in combat. With that the below amendment is offered:

ARTICLE II – Membership

Change bylaw to read:

“c. A spouse, child, grandchild or orphan of a deceased Coast Guard Combat Veteran who died prior to the founding of the Association may be eligible for Associate Membership.”

ADMINISTRATIVE BYLAWS CHANGES:

BYLAWS CHANGE #4

Article II is titled “Membership”. This title should be broadened and should include Members, Associate Members, Friends (Affiliates).

Change bylaw to read:

ARTICLE II – Membership

Add: “/Affiliation” after Membership, to read ARTICLE II – Membership/Affiliation

BYLAWS CHANGE #5

Currently the Board of Trustees provides authority for all expenditures of \$2,000.00 or more. This should be changed to \$2,000.01 or more to allow the National President to spend \$2,000.00, at his discretion. As the current bylaw states, the National President only has discretion to spend \$1,999.99, which would be an embarrassing amount to send as a donation.

ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

The proposed change would be as follows:

ARTICLE IV – Officers

4. Board of Trustees

Approve expenditures of Two Thousand and 01/100s (\$2,000.01) or more.

BYLAWS CHANGE #6

The current Bylaws refers to “Regular Members” but that term is not defined in the Bylaws. For example, the Bylaws indicates that the Board of Trustees shall be made up of four (4) “Regular Members”. It should be indicated in the Bylaws that any reference to “Regular Membership” should consist of both periodic Dues paying members and Life Members.

The proposed change would be as follows:

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Add to the end of Paragraph 1 the following:

“Member” shall be defined as voting eligible members, consisting of Regular and Life Members.

“Members in good standing” shall be defined as Regular Members, whose dues are current, and all Life Members.

BYLAWS CHANGE #7

Under Article I – Organization, Para. 4, Term of Office, indicates that officers and appointees are to be sworn in at the awards banquet. In the past 12 years we have not sworn in most appointees. In the case where a new National President is elected, the appointees have not been appointed at that time.

The Bylaws should read, “**officers and trustees are to be sworn in at the awards banquet**”.

REUNION—JUNE 9 TO 13, 2021

2021 CGCVA REUNION

The CGCVA reunion committee has moved the 2021 reunion to the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach-Norfolk Hotel and Conference Center. It was a necessary move because of COVID concerns but we think it will offer an opportunity for many more to attend that might not have done so in New Orleans. Working with Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. (AFRI) allowed for a quick selection process that might have taken weeks to accomplish. As with the 2019 reunion in Charleston, the 2021 reunion promises to another successful event.

We will be staying at the Holiday Inn Virginia

Beach—Norfolk Hotel and Conference Center. Located at 5655 Greenwich Rd, Virginia Beach, VA, every close to the I-64 and I-264 interchange. A free shuttle service from the Norfolk Airport (ORF) is also provided.

There is free parking for 420 cars as well as space for buses and RVs. The hotel has 175 double occupancy rooms with queen beds and 60 rooms with king size beds. **The cost per night is \$129.00 plus tax.** All rooms are non-smoking, but smoking is permitted outside. Some first floor rooms offer doors to the outside. Check out the hotel website at: www.HIVABeachNorfolk.com.

2021 REUNION IN VIRGINIA BEACH — JUNE 9 TO 13, 2021

For those who need mobility equipment while attending the reunion, they can be rented through Med Emporium located at 192 Hilltop East S.C., Virginia Beach, VA 23451, phone 757-428-0787.

The hotel is four miles away from the large Town Center shopping area and a fifteen minute drive from the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Downtown Norfolk can be reached via the Tide Light Rail system which is located just a five minute walk from the hotel, but they will provide shuttle service to the rail line stop if the shuttle is available. There is also free parking at the Light Rail stop. Cost of the rail is \$1.75 each way saving on the cost for downtown parking. In downtown Norfolk you will find the museum battleship, USS WISCONSIN and Norfolk's iconic Waterside Festival Marketplace allows visitors to enjoy the best national, regional, and local restaurants and offers live music, festivals, and more in an atmosphere that integrates Downtown with its glorious waterfront. The Norfolk Premium Outlets are also located a mere five miles from the hotel.



There are several area golf courses close by and the large Top Golf multi deck driving range just down the road from the hotel. "Top Golf features 102 bays over 3 floors, an amazing rooftop terrace, lively bars and a golf game concept that is sure to blow you away!"



Colonial Williamsburg is about an hour's drive to the west along I-64 with historic Yorktown about the same distance away. The large Coast Guard Exchange in Chesapeake is only a seven mile drive eastward on I-64 and is located across from the Greenbrier Mall.



The Virginia Beach Boardwalk has many bars, restaurants, shops and beach for those who will spend their time there. Make sure that you check out the Surf and Rescue Museum located 2401 Atlantic Ave which is a former U.S. Lifesaving Service building. See the informative weblink for the Boardwalk activity at:

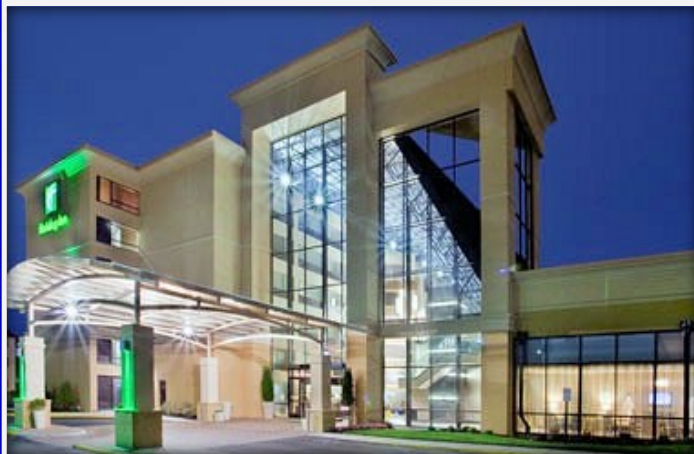
www.visitvirginiabeach.com.



2021 REUNION IN VIRGINIA BEACH — JUNE 9 TO 13, 2021



For those who are military aviation buffs, the Virginia Military Aviation Museum is only 17 miles away on Princess Anne Road in Pungo, VA, and is open 9:00am to 5:00pm, daily. With the world's largest collection of classic fighters, bombers, trainers and other aircraft dating from WWI and WWII, from the nations of the U.S., Great Britain, Russia, Germany, Japan and others, you will not be disappointed in your visit. See the museum's website and be sure to watch their short two minute video at: <https://militaryaviationmuseum.org>.



Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center

Hotel reservations can be made directly through the hotel by either using their direct number **757-499-4400** or through the hotel's weblink which can be found on the CGCVA website. **The group reservation code is CGC.**

This year we have changed the schedule of events to commence midweek and end on Sunday.

On page 19 is the CGCVA reunion registration form. You can either use the form to register or you can register via the CGCVA webpage at: www.coastguardcombatvets.org.

We need your attendance to make the reunion successful. We look forward to seeing you there. Additional local information on things to do will follow in the Winter edition of the QDL.

~ The Reunion Committee Mike Placencia, Mike Johnson and Bruce Bruni

- * Wednesday, June 9, for the check-in and opening ceremony;
- * Thursday, June 10, is a free day;
- * Friday, June 11, hosts the Business Luncheon and Auxiliary Luncheon;
- * Saturday evening, June 12, is the Awards Banquet;
- * Sunday, June 13, is Checkout.
- * The hotel is offering the reduced rate for Sunday, June 6 through June 13, should you want to arrive earlier.



Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center Lobby

VIRGINIA BEACH REUNION JUNE 9-13, 2021 – CGCVA REGISTRATION FORM

The 2021 CVCVA reunion is scheduled for June 9-13, 2021 and will be held at the **Holiday Inn, Virginia Beach-Norfolk Hotel & Conference Center** located at **5655 Greenwich Rd, Virginia Beach, VA**. Listed below are all reunion registration and meal costs. Please enter how many are participating in each event & total the amount. If paying by check or money order, send the amount payable to **ARMED FORCES REUNION NC**. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. There is a 3.5% service fee if paying online through the AFRI website link at www.afri-reg.com/CGCVA2021 **ALL EVENT REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED ON OR BEFORE MAY 7, 2021** **ALL HOTEL ROOM RESERVATIONS ARE MADE ONLINE OR VIA TELEPHONE** **The hotel booking site is auto-filled with dates June 6 to 13. Make sure you reserve only the nights for which you will be staying.** **Group Code: CGC. For the Holliday Inn direct number: 757-499-4400.** The CGCVA website offers the online hotel reservation

Mail registration to: **Armed Forces Reunion, Inc.**
322 Madison Mews,
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATT: CGCVA

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check# _____ Date Received _____

Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS MAY 7, 2021

ALL BUSINESS AND AUXILIARY LUNCHEON MEALS ARE \$30.00 PER PLATE

Wednesday Business Luncheon (CGCVA Members Only)
Choose entrée' listed below & indicate number at right

Wednesday Auxiliary & Friendship Luncheon (Open to all)
Choose entrée' listed below & indicate number at right

Entrée	(X)	# Meals	=	Total	Entrée	(X)	# Meals	=	Total
Grilled Vegetable Napoleon					Grilled Vegetable Napoleon				
Chicken Marsala					Chicken Marsala				
Eggplant Parmesan					Eggplant Parmesan				

SATURDAY AWARDS BANQUET DINNER – OPEN TO EVERYONE

Choose entrée' listed below & indicate number of meals desired at right & then total the amount

Entrée	Cost of meal/PP	(X)	# of Meals	=	Sub-Total
Pan Seared Salmon	\$55.00				
Chicken Boursin	\$55.00				
Sliced Sirloin of Oven Roast Beef	\$55.00				
Egg Parmesan	\$55.00				
AFRI MANDATORY REGISTRATION FEE PER PERSON Includes Hospitality Room and Administrative Expenses	\$40.00		# OF PEOPLE		

Total Amount Payable to ARMED FORCES REUNION, INC.
DO NOT STAPLE OR TAPE YOUR PAYMENT TO THIS FORM

Total Amount \$

PLEASE PRINT

NAME (FOR NAMETAGS) _____ WHEELCHAIR USE Y _____ N _____

SPOUSE/GUEST NAME _____ WHEELCHAIR USE Y _____ N _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____ PHONE (____) _____

VESSEL/UNIT _____ ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

DISABILITY / DIETARY / RESTRICTIONS _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PHONE (____) _____

ARE YOU STAYING AT THE HOTEL? Y _____ N _____ ARE YOU FLYING? _____ DRIVING? _____ R/V? _____

For refunds and cancellations, please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program.

CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY THRU FRIDAY 9:00AM-5:00PM EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays)

Call (757) 635-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain your cancellation code

FEATURED ARTICLES

AMERICAN HEALER

A Coast Guard Corpsman in Vietnam 50 years ago - by Joseph White, HMC, USCG (ret)

Reprinted from the Long Blue Line

What a way to fight a war—kill all the kids and the next day is routine as usual. ~ Chief Hospital Corpsman Joseph “Doc” White, 1970

[Editor’s note: This essay is transcribed from the original article written by Chief White with only light editing. A few words have been inserted in brackets to clarify meaning; however, the text remains largely unchanged. The term “American Healer” was used by the Vietnamese to describe American corpsmen who provided medical care for local villagers.]

I had just dropped off to sleep when I was suddenly awakened by the boatswain of the watch. “Chief White. Wake up! They blew up Song Ong Doc! They need you and Doctor Bunin right away.” It was just after 23:00 and I had been asleep an hour. Song Ong Doc was home for a small U.S. Army Special Forces Base and a U.S. Navy River Boat Squadron. The area was a known Viet Cong stronghold on the Gulf of Thailand and our squadron provided gunfire support for the military forces and medical and civil assistance for the civilians. The *USS Garrett County* was a [World War II-era] LST that provided the area with supplies and assistance. I felt sorry for the troops still in country—they would have to fight their way out. There was only one way to escape—that was by boat. The Viet Cong gave us advance notice that they were going to blow up the base; I just didn’t think it was going to be this soon.

LOWER AWAY

I grabbed my medical bag and headed for the 01 deck to catch a ride to the LST where all the action was going on. Doctor Bunin was there already and charged up to go. He was against the war in general, but a very good doctor. He saw no sense in all the

trauma war brings. I learned a lot from him and would put that knowledge to use many times tonight. Our 26-foot motor surfboat was hanging over the side waiting for the word to be lowered. It was pitch dark, but in the distance, you could see fires burning in the village—they must be catching hell. We had just gotten underway when two U.S. Air Force jets came over our boat, which was painted gray, and shined a bright strobe on us. I was scared as hell of Air Force planes; I knew the damage they could do. Someone must have told them we were friendlies. They buzzed us very low; the sound of the jets was deafening, and you could feel the heat and smell the fuel from their exhaust as they roared away. All at once everything turned dark and quiet again—just the sound of our engine and some small waves hitting the bow of the boat. It’s exciting when fighter jets buzz you, a real sense of their power. I don’t need any trouble from friendly fire.

DEAD AHEAD

Nothing could have prepared me for what lay ahead. I had training with the U.S. Navy Training Command at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (GITMO),



HSC Joe White at sea on board WHEC CGC *Bering Strait* during refueling operation from a U.S. Navy oiler. (Mrs. Misa White)

and Pearl Harbor for this type of evolution. I never believed I would be involved in a situation of mass casualties of this magnitude. This was a Navy war—I was Coast Guard. Things had changed; we were part of the Coast Guard Squadron Three out of Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, and under operational control of the U.S. Navy. Our mission was to train Vietnamese sailors to take over our ship and provide gunfire support for their troops. As we approached the *Garrett County*, an LCM [a large landing craft] from Song Ong Doc with a load of wounded passed us and were flying a yellow flag with large black letters with “F*** it.” I guess they had it. There was plenty of action on the *Garrett County*—sailors were running all over the deck. They were taking wounded off the (helicopter) gunship; other sailors were putting stabilized wounded on the same gunship for transfer to a better-equipped medical facility. Doc Bunin and I headed toward the Wardroom, which was the Primary Battle Dressing Station (BDS). It was easy—all we had to do was follow the decal signs to the BDS, that were on the gray bulkheads. Petty Officer Evans was the corpsman on the LST and an old friend of mine from U.S. Navy Independent School. We could work together very smoothly; I was glad he was here.

BDS

Evans would be the circulating corpsman tonight. It was his ship, and he knew where all the supplies and equipment were located. I knew he would be a good backup when we got into a jam. The crew helped us strip down two large tables to serve as our operating room tables. The OR [operating room] lights were permanently mounted for this type of emergency; Evans had all the packs laid out and we were ready to go. Doc Bunin started working on a kid right away. There were so many wounded civilians—mostly kids—I didn’t know where to start. The crying and moaning worked on you for a while. You could only do so much at one

time. The Wardroom started to pick-up the village smell—part diet, part war. I recognized it and put it out of my mind—there was work to be done. I picked up a kid who was close by and started the first of many procedures. Everything we learned at GITMO and Pearl started to fall into place. I’ll never bitch about Underway Training again.

MORGUE

The Chief’s Head would be the morgue; the Crew’s Mess was the triage center; and the Officer’s Head was for the seriously wounded. Evans had this all arranged before we arrived; it saved a lot of time and helped the patients’ outlook.

OPERATING ROOM

Just the two of us to work on the wounded. I knew we weren’t going to be able to save them all—there were too many and more on the way. Off in a corner were about eight Navy men from the 572nd River Boat Squadron—all were wounded and sitting there stripped to the waist. Some of the sailors were watching trickles of blood leaking

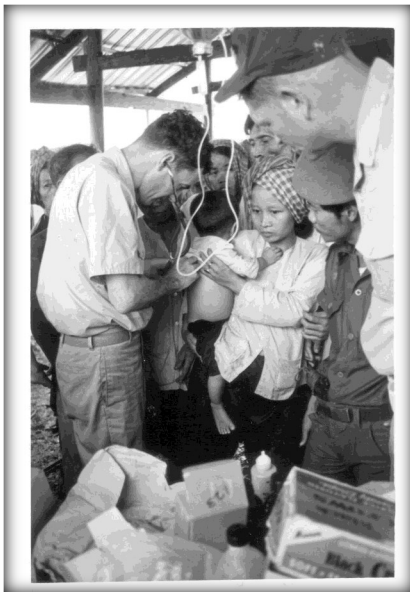


Aerial photograph showing helicopter gunships landing on *USS Garrett County*, APG - 786. (navsource.org) The ship had been a USCG LST during WWII

FEATURED ARTICLES

from their bodies. One man had a large stomach wound but refused treatment until the kids were taken care of properly. He said, "they were worse off than he was." It was true. The kids were dying on us quicker than we could treat them. I recognized some of them from the village where they would play with the hair on my arms. Now that I was looking at the shiny sockets where their arms and legs belonged. What the hell could have done this? A Navy man came over, looked at the wounds and said, "the gunship did all the damage." The Viet Cong would come into the village, throw a few hand grenades, and disappear. The villagers would run through the elephant grass to hide; the gunship would come over and illuminate the area; seeing the grass move and thinking it was the Viet Cong, it would open fire. The kids and civilians got hit all the time.

little girl who I knew very well was on my table with her left arm and both legs blown off their sockets. I knew I was losing her; she was in shock, turning gray. I did a tracheotomy on her and attempted to ventilate her. Doc Bunin came over and said, "she should have made it." He turned her over and found a deep head wound which swallowed his forceps. Now I knew what killed her. Ordinarily, I would have picked it up [when] doing a body survey, but they were coming so fast and had so many wounds, you threw the book away in some cases. We did our best to stabilize them for transportation to a better-equipped facility.



**Doc White
providing medical
care to wounded
Vietnamese
children during a
visit to their
village in South
Vietnam
(Mrs. Misa White)**

MORE WOUNDED EN ROUTE

The casualties kept arriving all night long. A lot of parents were in the Crew's Mess scared and crying. They were waiting for their kids to come out of our OR. I don't know who told them the bad news. It wasn't us. At times, we had two and three kids on the table at the same time. They didn't take up much space when their legs were missing. One

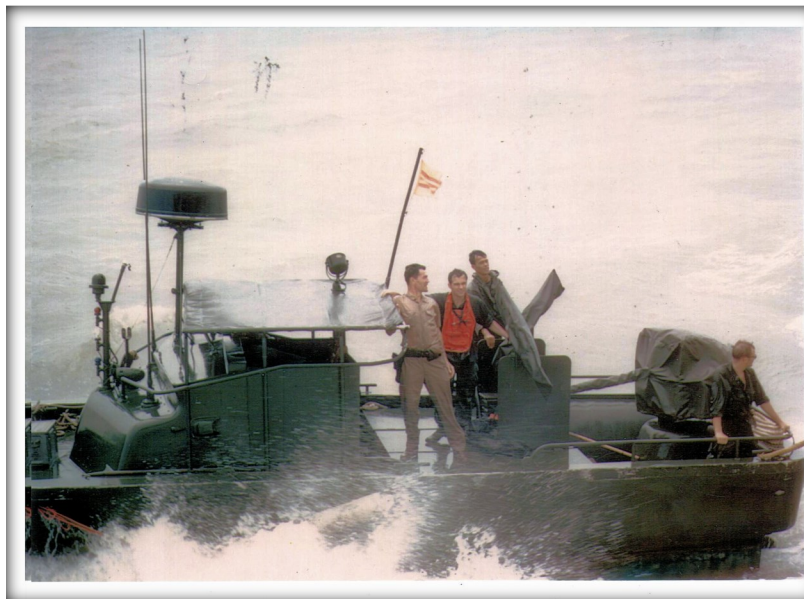


**Doc White providing medical care to wounded
Vietnamese villagers. (Mrs. Misa White)**

AFTER SHOCK

It was 04:00 and we had a short break and caught up for a while. I felt so bad for the little girl that I knew and lost that I went to the Chief's head and brought her back and started cleaning her up. Doc Bunin and I loosely sewed her limbs back in place and bandaged her wounds, so her mother didn't see the horrors her daughter went through before she died. I wish I could have cried; it might have helped, but I was cried out. More wounded were coming, but in smaller groups now. I took a quick head break and could barely get into the

FEATURED ARTICLES



Chief Hospital Corpsman Joseph “Doc” White catches a ride on a U.S. Navy patrol boat. (Mrs. Misa White)

compartment because of all the dead blocking the door. You keep looking at them--maybe they're not all dead, maybe one was in shock and was now breathing on their own. It just didn't happen. They were all dead.

NORMAL ROUTINE

It is 06:00, we were finally finished taking care of the wounded from last night's attack, but there would be more nights like this. I said goodbye to Evans—he really helped us with all his preparation and knowledge. Doc Bunin and I went back to our ship; we had sick call for our crew at 08:30. What a way to fight a war—kill all the kids and the next day is routine as usual.

COMPASSION

You usually don't hear many stories about our military helping the Vietnamese civilians and it happened all the time.

Profile photograph of the High Endurance Cutter *CGC Bering Strait* in rare paint scheme of haze gray with Coast Guard “Racing Stripe.” (Mrs. Misa White)

A good piece of history was the Navy men who gave up their beds, food, and ship to help the wounded civilians. We took over their ship for the night and the crew volunteered to help us in any capacity. The wounded men who refused treatment until the kids were taken care of has a lot to say about the compassion of our young warriors.

NO PURPLE HEARTS

Later that night, the U.S. Navy Command called our ship to verify that a doctor had treated the wounded navy men. I couldn't find Doc Bunin and told the Navy “a doctor treated them all.” At the same time, Doc Bunin came into the radio room and got ahold of the microphone and told the

commander that Chief White treated half of the wounded. The Navy had some regulation that a doctor had to treat your wound to earn a Purple Heart. These men deserved more than a Purple Heart.

DOC WHITE'S CONCLUSION

The night on the *Garrett County* changed me. I never got close to the village kids after that night. We saved a lot of people that night and the crew of the USS *Garrett County* made the difference with their compassion and spirit. I do hope to see Evans someday as a Chief Petty Officer—he deserved it.



FEATURED ARTICLES

FLORENCE FINCH

Asian-American SPAR and FRC namesake dons uniform 75 years ago!

BY William H. Thiesen, Historian
Coast Guard Atlantic Area

Reprinted from the Long Blue Line

Of the thousands of women who have served with honor in the United States Coast Guard, one stands out for her bravery and devotion to duty.



**Florence
Finch**
(Coast Guard
Collection)

Asian American Florence Ebersole Finch was born in the Philippines in Santiago City. The daughter of a U.S. Army veteran and Filipino mother, she went to work for General Douglas MacArthur's army intelligence unit in Manila after graduating high school. She later married U.S. Navy PT boatman Charles Smith. In 1942, after the Japanese invaded the Philippines, her young husband died trying to re-supply American and Filipino

troops trapped on Corregidor Island and the Bataan Peninsula.



Japanese tanks entering Manila
(Photograph courtesy of U.S. Army)

After the Japanese occupied Manila, Finch avoided internment by claiming her Philippine citizenship. She was given a job with the Japanese-controlled Philippine Liquid Fuel Distributing Union where she was responsible for writing vouchers for the distribution of fuel. Working closely with the Philippine underground, she diverted fuel supplies to the resistance and helped arrange acts of sabotage against Japanese occupation forces. Meanwhile, her former U.S. Army intelligence boss had been imprisoned by the Japanese. Through the grapevine, he let Finch know how badly Allied POWs were being treated by their captors. She joined an underground group in Manila smuggling food and medicine to the prisoners.



**Coast Guard SPAR Finch with
Captain Dorothy Stratton, USCG**
(Coast Guard Collection)

In October 1944, the Japanese arrested Finch. Her captors beat, tortured and interrogated her during her initial confinement and sentenced her to three years of hard labor. In February 1945, when American forces liberated Manila and her prison camp, Finch weighed only 80 pounds. Through it all, she never revealed information regarding her underground operations or fellow resisters. Soon after liberation, Finch boarded a Coast Guard-manned transport returning to the United States.

FEATURED ARTICLES

She moved to her late father's hometown of Buffalo, New York, and enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard on July 13, 1945, while on board the Navy's *LST-512*, which was tied up in Buffalo Harbor. She joined the Coast Guard Women's Reserve, or SPARs, eager to continue the fight against an enemy that had tortured her and killed her husband.

Finch served through the end of World War II. After the war, she met U.S. Army veteran Robert Finch. They married and moved to Ithaca, New York, where she lived the remainder of her life. Of the thousands of SPARs serving in World War II, Finch was the only one honored with the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon. In November 1947, for aiding Allied POWs and Filipino resistance fighters, she was also awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest honor recognizing U.S. civilians. Her citation reads:

For meritorious service which had aided the United States in the prosecution of the war against the enemy in the Philippine Islands, from June 1942 to February 1945. Upon the Japanese occupation of the Philippine Islands, Mrs. Finch [then Mrs. Florence Ebersole Smith] believing she could be of more assistance outside the prison camp, refused to disclose her United States citizenship. She displayed outstanding courage and marked resourcefulness in providing vitally needed food, medicine, and supplies for American Prisoners of War and internees, and in sabotaging Japanese stocks of critical items She constantly risked her life in secretly furnishing money and clothing to American Prisoners of War, and in carrying communications for them. In consequence she was apprehended by the Japanese, tortured, and imprisoned until rescued by American troops. Through her inspiring bravery, resourcefulness, and devotion to the cause of freedom, Mrs. Finch made a distinct contribution to the welfare and morale of American Prisoners of War on Luzon.



**Coast Guard Veteran
Florence Ebersole (Smith) Finch
(Family of Florence Smith Finch)**

Florence Ebersole (Smith) Finch was one of the first Asian-American women to don a Coast Guard uniform. In 1995, the Coast Guard honored her service by naming the administration building for her at Coast Guard Base Honolulu. She passed away in 2016 at the age of 101 years old. Of her wartime activities, she stated "I feel very humble because my activities in the war effort were trivial compared with those of people who gave their lives for their country." Florence Finch was a distinguished member of the Service's long blue line and she will be honored as the namesake of a Fast Response Cutter.

FEATURED ARTICLES

LIFE ABOARD AN 82 FOOTER

By Jerry Sampont, LCDR, USCG (ret)
ET2 in Vietnam

I am quite sure that life on all the Division-13 cutters in 1966 was just about the same.

The *CGC Point White* (WPB-82308) was originally stationed in New London, Connecticut. In December 1965, the *Point White* along with eight other Coast Guard 82-foot cutters were shipped to Subic Bay in the Philippines to form Division 13 of Squadron One. Subic Bay was where most of the crewmembers were assigned to the *Point White*. On February 19, 1966, the *Point White* sailed from Subic Bay with the eight other cutters for their new home in Cat Lo Vietnam 900 hundred miles across the South China Sea, never to return to the USA.

Life for the *Point White* crew was exciting, interesting, boring, dangerous and tiring. The days were long, up to 12 to 16 hours a day when under way. Eleven men lived in very cramped quarters with intense heat ranging from 90 to 120 degrees, high humidity, monsoons, gale force winds, drenching rains, rough seas and dangerous river patrols. The crew consisted of nine enlisted men

and two officers.

Although *Point White* was 82 feet long and 17 feet wide, the actual living space for the crew was only in the forward narrow 35 feet of the cutter. Over half of the *Point White* was engine room and storage. In the bow were a very small enlisted crew's head, shower and sleeping for six. The six enlisted men slept three high on each side of the bow. There was barely enough room to turn around. Just aft of that was a small mess deck for eating, the galley, food storage locker and sleeping quarters for two more crewmen. The commanding officer (CO), executive officer (XO), and one chief petty officer had their sleeping quarters just under the bridge with their own head and shower. On patrols, a South Vietnam Navy advisor would be on board and slept in the commanding officer's quarters, making a 12-man crew on patrols. Patrols were usually four or five days long with in-port periods of generally 48 hours or less.

In addition to their regular duties, all the *Point White's* crew stood watches while on patrols, except for the commanding officer and cook. When on coastal patrols, the remaining nine crew members were divided into three watch sections with three men to a section. A watch section consisted of the officer of the deck, a helmsman and engineer. While one section was on watch a second section was on standby and served as the boarding party to board and search vessels. The third section was off duty unless there was some type of action. Each section stood two four-hour watches every 24 hours. In addition to their regular watches, each section served another eight hours as the boarding party. When on river patrols, the watch sections were divided into two sections. Each section stood two six-hour watches every 24 hours. River patrols were more dangerous and required more men on watch. Each watch section was responsible for overseeing the entire operation of the *Point*



USCGC Point White as she appeared before being assigned to Coast Guard Squadron One.
Photo from Wikipedia

FEATURED ARTICLES

White during their watch; however, overall responsibility always remained with the commanding officer.

Division 13 was sent to Vietnam to help cut off enemy supply lines. Ironically, few of Division 13's supply lines were in place when we arrived. Fresh water was in critically short supply, and all the cutters were told not to return to Cat Lo until they had exhausted every effort to take on fresh water. Where do you find fresh water in the middle of the South China Sea? Returning from a patrol, cutters in Division-13 would try to find a friendly Navy or merchant vessel to bum fresh water from and anything else we could get. Usually there were freighters anchored in Vung Tau harbor waiting to go up river to Saigon that would help us out if there were no Navy ships anchored in the harbor.



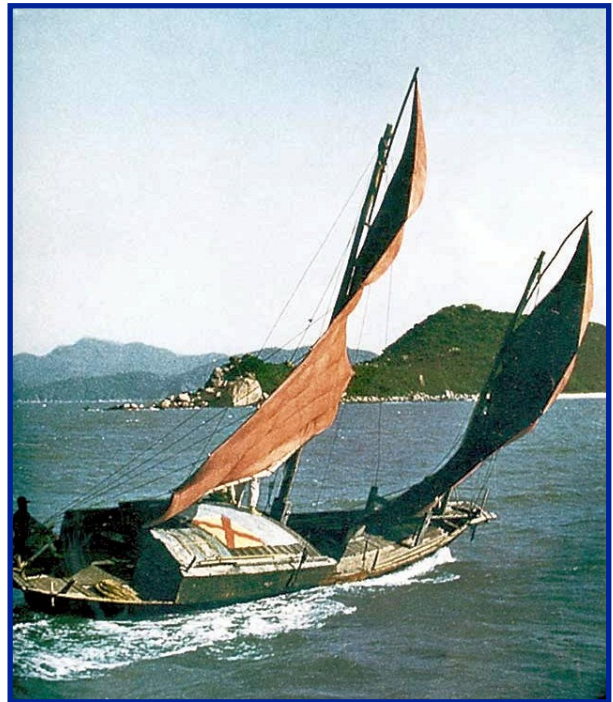
Cutters at Cat Lo

Photo by ENCM Ray Weitzel, USCG (ret)

While a fighting machine in every sense of the word, the *Point White* also carried one piece of equipment on deck that looked somewhat out of place on a small "man of war." We boasted a real wringer washing machine, complete with a 55-gallon rinse tub, which was lashed to the deck between two aft .50 caliber machine guns. We would take turns doing our laundry in the wringer washing machine and rinse tub. Drying clothes was

a matter of running a line from the bridge to the aft life rail and hanging them up. What a mess when we went to battle stations and got hung up in someone's big under shorts.

The washing machine was one of our prized possessions; we bought it before leaving Subic Bay in the Philippines. Shortly after arriving in Vietnam we became involved in a lot of dangerous river patrols. CO John Lockwood and the crew felt that to improve our safety we should place sandbags around the forward ammunition locker, the on-deck gas cans, and yes, even the wringer washing machine. On one of our river patrols, we were running at full speed when CO Lockwood had to make a hard-right turn. The *Point White* almost turned over from the extra weight of the sandbags on deck. As you can imagine, we quickly threw the sandbags overboard after that snafu.



Vietnamese Navy junk
V.Q. Truong photo collection

Thousands of thirty to fifty-foot Vietnamese vessels called JUNKS transported most commerce

FEATURED ARTICLES

and enemy supplies in the Division 13 patrol area. Boarding and searching a JUNK was dangerous and went on all hours of the day and night. We boarded JUNKS in the dark of night, foul weather, drenching rains and high winds. Whenever we made contact with a JUNK, we usually boarded and searched it. The boarding party had to jump from the *Point White* onto the JUNK with loaded automatic weapons.

Not only did we have to concentrate on safely getting from one boat to the other, but also what kind of situation we were jumping into. The JUNK could be friendly or full of Viet Cong ready to engage the *Point White*. More than one JUNK had a hole shot through their hull when a boarding party member accidentally squeezed the trigger on his automatic weapon as he landed on the JUNK. On one boarding the gunner's mate hooked his .45 pistol holster on the top life rail as he jumped onto the JUNK. He fell between the boats, but quick action by the helmsmen and crew saved his life.

The *Point White* also provided humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese, even if they didn't want it. One day while we were on a river patrol, we spotted a JUNK that appeared to be sinking, as it was full of water from bow to stern. Recalling the days of search and rescue so prevalent back in the states, we quickly pulled alongside, threw a suction hose into the boat and started pumping it out. It turned out the boat was not sinking but was transporting fresh water up the river.

The *Point White* engaged in a number of gun battles with the Viet Cong, from the shore and vessel to vessel. Our first engagement with the enemy occurred on March 9, 1966, just two weeks after we arrived in South Vietnam. On that night, the *Point White* under the Command of LT Eugene Hickey engaged a Viet Cong vessel on the Soirap River. A gun battle resulted, and the *Point White* was forced to ram the Viet Cong vessel in order to stop the heavy gunfire we were receiving. By the end of the

battle, eight Viet Cong were killed and four captured. One of those captured was a badly injured high-ranking Viet Cong officer for that area, which was known as the Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ). He was so appreciative of the care that the *Point White* crew and other Americans had given him that he gave the U.S. Military Assistance Command valuable intelligence information about Viet Cong operations in the RSSZ. For years the RSSZ had been a Viet Cong stronghold, which was used as a training camp, mine factory, supply depot and base of operations. From his information the U.S. Marines were able to shut down much of the Viet Cong operations in the RSSZ. During the battle the *Point White* was hit in the forward ammunition locker, setting mortar propellant packets on fire and striking 81-mm mortar rounds. Had it not been for the quick action of the crew, the *Point White* could have suffered serious damage or been lost. For their actions that night, LT Eugene Hickey was awarded the Silver Star Medal and Gunner Mate 2nd Class Lester Gates the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V". LT Hickey (Captain USCG ret) had safely gotten the *Point White* crew through their first engagement with the enemy. He had arrived in Vietnam in July 1965 with Division 12 and in mid-March 1966 he was reassigned to Division 13 staff.

LTJG John Lockwood (RADM USCG ret) took command of the *Point White* and, for the next ten months under his outstanding leadership, we were involved in several more gun battles and a number of gunfire support missions. On one of these gunfire support missions U.S. Army troops were pinned down near the beach. The *Point White* was called to assist the troops with gunfire support. We fired just over the top of the sand dunes, and when it was all over the U.S. Army troops got out safely. The *Point White* was credited with 35 enemy killed, and a number wounded. We saw several secondary explosions indicating our mortar rounds had hit enemy ammunition supplies.

FEATURED ARTICLES

We also inspected hundreds of vessels, landed and recovered U.S. troops on special operations, conducted rescue missions, and assisted other Coast Guard boats in Division 13 in the capture of a Viet Cong trawler. LTLG Lockwood safely returned his crew home in December 1966 when their tour of duty was complete.

CREW OF THE *CGC POINT WHITE*

LT. Eugene Hickey ~ CAPT, USCG (ret)

CO 01/66 to 03/66

LTJG John Lockwood ~ RADM, USCG (ret)

CO 03/66 to 12/66

LTJG Sheperd Lesser

XO 01/66 to 03/66

LTJG John Doukas

XO 03/66 to 12/66

BMC Archie French ~ USCG (ret)

01/66 to 12/66

ENC Raymond Weitzel ~ ENCM (ret)

01/66 to 12/66

BM1 Ernest Watson ~ CWO3 USCG (ret)

01/66 to 12/66

EN1 Joseph Moody ~ USCG (ret)

01/66 to 03/66

GM2 Lester Gates

01/66 to 12/66

CS2 Butch Clifton ~ USCG (ret)

01/66 to 12/66

ET2 Gerald Sampont ~ LCDR USCGR (ret)

02/66 to 12/66

EN2 Delmar Wilson ~ ENC (ret)

03/66 to 12/66

EN3 Karl Anderson

01/66 to 06/66

SN Leland Buzzelle

01/66 to 12/66



***CGC Point White* crew March 10, 1966, day after battle on Soriap River with Viet Cong junk.**
From left standing: CAPT LaFort, CO Sqdn One; LT Gene Hickey, CO; BMC Archie French;
 EN3 Karl Anderson; LTJG Shepp Lesser, XO;
From left kneeling: CS2 Butch Clifton; GM2 Les Gates; SN Lee Busselle; BM1 Ernie Waston;
 ET2 Jerry Sampont; ENC Ray Weitzel

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A Coast Guard Reserve manned unit, Coastal Forces personnel were the predecessors to today's MSRT, LEDET, MSST and PSU and were trained in SCUBA, parachuting and hand-to-hand combat. If anyone has more information about these units, please contact the QDL editor at the email found on page 2.



Top Row Left-Right: Bill Logay, Mike O'Grady, Ward Clarke, Stewart Salkin, Lyle Poolman, Henry Darmstadt, Mike Benjamin, Dave Maynard, Brian Redahan. Bottom Row Left-Right: Jack Lowe, Robert Smith, Darrel Kraxberger, Pete Vagenas, John Jeffcott, Jim Herrell, Al Roderigues, Ted Perez, Steve Richardson, Larry Lucy, Missing James Marquoit Officer LT Kenipe (top right)