



the Quarterdeck Log

Membership publication of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association. Publishes quarterly — Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall. Not sold on a subscription basis. The Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association is a Non-Profit Corporation of Active Duty Members, Retired Members, Reserve Members 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 10

Spring

Number 2

CGCVA Members Remember Iwo Jima Campaign

Thousands of veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima converged on our nation's capital the weekend of Feb. 17-19, to pay tribute to one of the bloodiest and costliest events of World War II. Among them were 55 Coast Guard veterans of Iwo Jima

and their families. The USCG Iwo Jima veterans, who traveled from 21 states, were treated to a reception at the Coast Guard Telecommunications and Information Services Command in Alexandria, Va., on Feb. 17, a memorial service at the National Cathedral, and a banquet Feb. 18.

President Clinton addressed the thousands who gathered Feb. 19 at the Marine Corps Memorial in Arlington, Va.

"We must determine to remain the strongest nation in the world so freedom is never again threatened," said Clinton.

The Navy and Marine Corps planners of the Feb. 19 ceremony took good care of the Coast Guard veterans, giving them "blue ribbon" front-row seats, closest to the podium of the president.

"The Coast Guard Iwo

Jima veterans were truly thanked and honored by their service and nation," said Coast Guard Reservist LCDR Jim Brewster, liaison officer to the national World War II Commemorative Committee. The weekend's events were sponsored by the Coast Guard

Iwo Jima Veterans Committee, chaired by Mr. Jack Campbell of West Long Branch, N.J.

Meanwhile, far to the west in Las Vegas, Nev., eight surviving Coast Guardsmen of the USCG-manned *LST-792* gathered to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Iwo Jima invasion. While beached at Iwo, their ship was shelled by Japanese 80mm shore batteries, taking 13 hits. For them and for many of those in Washington, D.C., it was the first time together since the end of World War II. Now, 50 years later and thousands of miles from Iwo Jima, their memories were made afresh bringing with them tears of sadness and tears of healing.



Coast Guard Iwo Jima veterans and their families listened to President Clinton from "blue ribbon" seats at the Marine Corps Memorial Feb. 19.

PA1 Ed Kruska, USCGR
Editor, Reservist Magazine



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The Quarterdeck Log

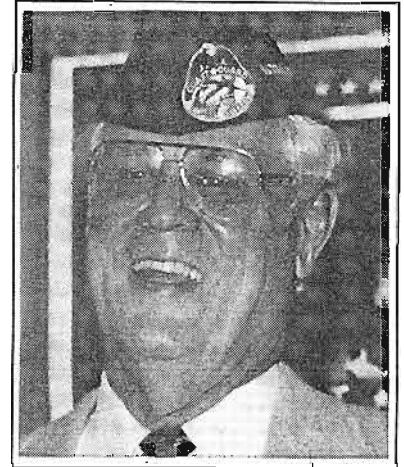
LT Ed Swift, Editor

The Administrative Offices are for contact with the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association for all matters, i.e. change of address, membership, tax-deductible contributions, and articles and photos for The Quarterdeck Log.

From the President

Hi Shipmates:

It hardly seems possible that nearly six months have already gone by since our Reunion in Norfolk. It's been a busy winter, one that's had some memorable World War II commemoration events that many of you may have been involved



A.D. "AL" GRANTHAM

in. Three 50th anniversary commemorations: the loss of the *USS Serpens*, the Iwo Jima campaign, and the Okinawa campaign, each received tremendous media attention in the Washington, D.C. area and many Coast Guard veterans participated.

The *USS Serpens* commemoration was held at Arlington National Cemetery, sponsored by the Capital Chiefs Chapter, Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers' Association. Loss of the *Serpens* was the largest single disaster suffered by the Coast Guard in World War II. There were only two survivors. One of the survivors, Mr. Kelsie Kemp, attended the ceremony and placed a wreath at the *Serpens* Monument.

By the way, good news from our Secretary Ed Burke. Our CGCVA logo, which was originated by John G. Carnila, has been registered with the U.S. Copyright Office at the Library of Congress. From now on you should see the official "registered" mark at the lower righthand side of the logo. Thanks for making this happen Ed and special thanks to John Carnila for designing our CGCVA logo!

Get well soon wishes go out to Gil "Frenchy" Benoit of our Board of Directors staff. Frenchy is going in for a hip replacement and I'd like to wish him a speedy recovery on the part of the entire association. Some folks will do anything to get in a record book. In Frenchy's case, it's his fifth hip replacement (which apparently is a medical record). Anyway, best wishes Gil!

Al Grantham

From the Vice President

On Jan. 6, I attended a Coasties luncheon hosted by CGCVA members John Stamford, Dick Jones and Vince Anthony. It was a casual get-together with more than 40 members present. John brought along photos, slides, movies and Coast Guard handouts. Also on display were various ship models from World War II. Everyone had a great time lunching, swapping sea stories and reliving our history.

If you are interested in having a luncheon in your town, some planning is necessary to make it a successful and enjoyable occasion. First you must find out how many members would attend, locate a nearby restaurant with a meeting room and negotiate a luncheon price per person. Next, send out invitations well in advance to your members announcing the lunch date. If only a few members desire to attend, consider a get-together at someone's home instead. To locate members in your area, contact the CGCVA Secretary, Ed Burke, for a

computer-generated listing. As for photos and slides, they're nice to display but are only as important as your personal experience. And of course, sharing your experience with your fellow Coasties is the real purpose of such a luncheon.

January 20 marked the 50th anniversary of the Coast Guard's largest single disaster in World War II, the sinking of the *USS Serpens*. A commemorative memorial and wreath-laying ceremony was held at Arlington National Cemetery that day at the Serpens Monument. I attended the

ceremony with Ed Burke and our Treasurer Baker Herbert. *Serpens* survivor Kelsie Kemp and families of several of his shipmates were there and it was a very moving experience. I was proud to have had the privilege to pay homage to our fallen shipmates. I highly recommend a visit to Arlington and the Serpens Monument, the final resting place of 193 Coast Guardsmen.

Joseph Kleinpeter



USS Serpens survivor Kelsie Kemp and RADM Richard M. Larrabee III salute the Serpens Monument after placing a wreath at the site on the 50th anniversary of the disaster.

From the Editor

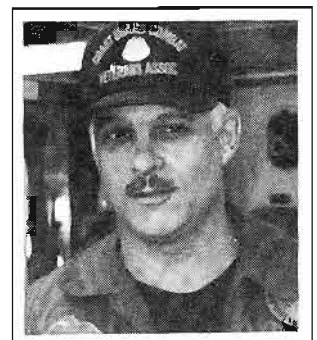
Sorry if this issue is a bit late...a situation at work has resulted in my assuming additional duties. The situation was compounded by computer troubles but now things seem to be falling back into place.

With the 50th anniversary ceremonies of World War II events winding down, I will try to include more and more material on Korea, Vietnam, Desert Shield/Storm, etc. I have been holding onto stories and photos on these subjects but I could always use more. Send all submissions to Ed Burke, Attn: *The Quarterdeck Log*. Thanks!

I tend to keep pretty flexible deadlines for the

newsletter so I won't publish specific ones. Try to get material for the Summer issue to me by early June though.

Remember, the more photos the better. I'll try to get photos returned as quickly as possible but the ones that get used in the newsletter take a while and I have to request them from Baker Herbert.



Swiftly

ED SWIFT

From the Secretary

Remembering The USS Serpens

In 1897, Rudyard Kipling wrote "Recessional." He ended each stanza, except the last with, "Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget — lest we forget!" Appropriate words indeed for the beautiful remembrance ceremony for the *USS Serpens* (AK-97) at Arlington, Va., on Jan. 29.

193 Coast Guardsmen, 56 soldiers and one USPHS doctor died in the *Serpens* fifty years before at Lunga Beach, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. There were but two survivors: Kelsie K. Kemp and George S. Kennedy.

The U.S. Navy Ceremonial Band played the introductory music, National Anthem, "Taps," "Eternal Father" and "Semper Paratus." The Coast Guard Ceremonial Honor Guard paraded the Colors, retired them and provided a rifle salute. RADM Richard M. Larrabee, USCG, was the keynote speaker and performed the wreath laying ceremony with *Serpens* survivor Kelsie Kemp and the Ceremonial Honor Guard.

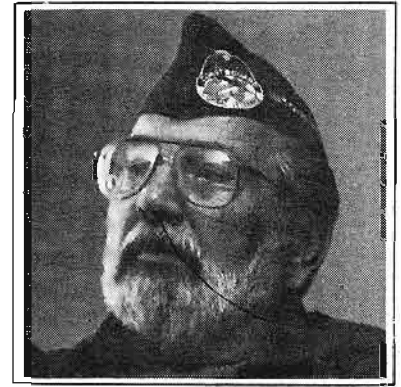
Representing our Association were Immediate

Past President Dick Stent, Vice President Joseph Kleinpeter, Treasurer Baker Herbert, and Tom McHale. VP Kleinpeter made presentations from the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association to survivor Kelsie Kemp and families of deceased *Serpens* crewmembers.

The Capital Chiefs Chapter, Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers' Association sponsored the memorial service and a reception for everyone at the Fort Myer Community Center Ballroom.

Miscellaneous

Thanks to all who have provided the required documentation to go with their records. For those who haven't, please send it in! **Ed Burke**



E.P. "ED" BURKE



Coast Guard personnel, *USS Serpens* family members and other participants in the Jan. 29 *Serpens* 50th Anniversary Commemoration pause at the Fort Myer Community Center following a memorial ceremony at the Serpens Monument in Arlington National Cemetery.

From the Treasurer

Treasurer's Report

As of Feb. 27, our funds on hand include \$12,000 (Life Member C/D; \$5,350 (Life Member passbook account; and \$10,611.99 (General Fund).

CGCVA Headgear and More

Our CGCVA one size fits all baseball caps are available at \$10 ea. (plain visor), \$12 (senior visor) and \$13 (flag visor). Fore 'n aft caps with the Association name and logo are available at \$30 ea. but we must have your size to order. If you are a life member, you may want that sewn on your cap as well. All prices including mailing. CGCVA 4" patches are available for \$5 ea. For any of these items, send check or money order made payable to CGCVA to: Baker Herbert, Treasurer, P.O. Box 544, Westfield Center, OH 44251-0544.

CGCVA History Book

Less than a dozen responses were received regarding making a second CGCVA History Book so, at least for now, the project has been scrubbed.

CGCVA War Stories

For those interested in publishing a magazine-like booklet, the estimated cost is about \$10 and you should let me know within 30 days of receipt of *The Quarterdeck Log*. This booklet would contain the articles that you want published about your war story, your picture and a short biography. I will make copies of each submission and send the original to a printer if we get enough interest. When the printer reviews this proposed

publication he will inform me of the costs and I will then pass the information along. What we are attempting to do is give everyone their shot at their war story, personal history, etc.

Certain stories about the Greenland Patrol, Atlantic & Pacific World War II, CG Aircraft, the Normandy Invasion, Korean Area Service, Vietnam Service, Dominican Republic Service, Gulf War, you name it.

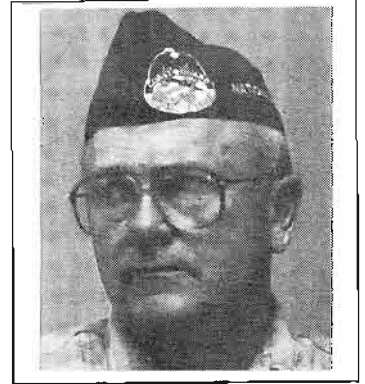
If you are interested in this project, first let me know by postcard or letter. If there is enough interest, I will ask you to send me your material. I reserve the right to condense and edit any material submitted, or if in bad taste, reject it. The rest is up to you!

World War II Stamps & Drawings

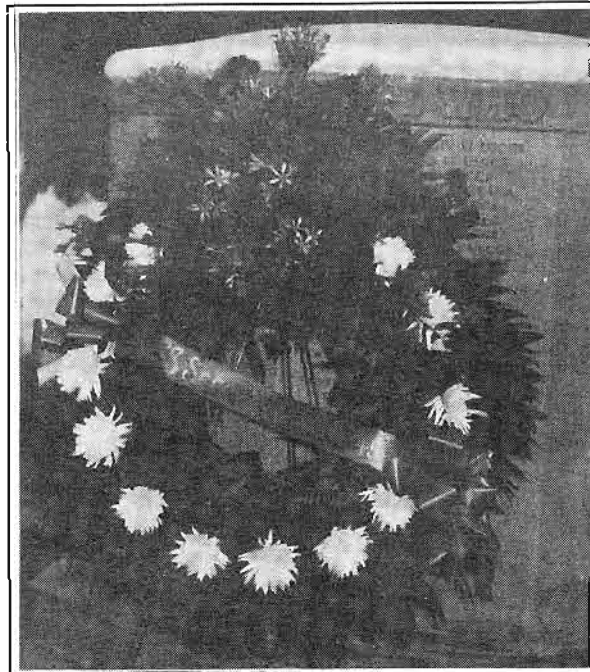
I have in stock a limited number of Coast Guard World War II stamps at \$1 each or \$2 for the two plate block.

There is also a limited number of line art drawings that we'd like to get a nice donation for. We hope to upgrade our computer programs to better serve the membership. Any and all donations will be most appreciated. The line art drawings are World War II vessels and some sailing vessels but all are Coast Guard-manned at one time or another. There is even an FS and some other rare vessels that some old salts may have sailed in.

Baker Herbert



BAKER HERBERT



A wreath marks the 50th Anniversary of the USS Serpens disaster at the Serpens Monument and mass grave at Arlington National Cemetery.

Classified Ads

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U.S. COAST GUARD

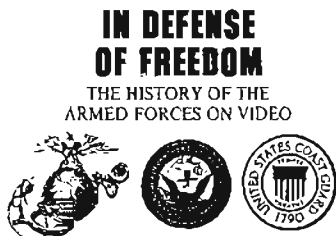
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 Ship Name: _____ Ship #: _____

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#2220 Approx. 45 minutes \$29.98

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The U.S. Army Story
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Reunions — Notices — Unit Ads

USS Cavalier (APA-37)

A World War II Reunion for crewmembers of the *USS Cavalier* will be held Sept. 14-17, 1995, in Pittsburgh at the Holiday Inn - Greetree. We are always looking for former shipmates and their families that served in this CG-manned assault transport and they are certainly welcome to attend our reunions. This will be our seventh. For more information, contact me at 4151 Sanderliq #346, Las Vegas, NV 89103. Hope to see you there!

Herb Cohen

LST-886 Reunion

We will have a reunion in conjunction with the national LST Association in Cincinnati from Aug. 30 - Sept. 5, 1995. **Contact: Joseph McAuley** at 89 Jeanette Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10312. Phone: (718) 984-4349.

Combined Reunion

All former crewmembers of the following Coast Guard cutters are invited to attend a reunion in Pensacola, Fla., from Sept. 14-17, 1995. **Contact: George Kingston** at 1611 Woodbridge Circle East, Foley, AL 36535-2267. Phone: (205) 943-7823.

USCGC Acushnet (WMEC-167)
USCGC Avoyel (WMEC-150)
USCGC Cherokee (WMEC-165)
USCGC Chilula (WMEC-153)
USCGC Commanche (WMEC-202)
USCGC Escape (WMEC-6)
USCGC Lipan (WMEC-85)
USCGC Modoc (WMEC-194)
USCGC Tamaroa (WMEC-166)
USCGC Ute (WMEC-76)
USCGC Yacona (WMEC-168)

Proposed Reunion

I am attempting to organize a reunion for World War II shipmates of the *USCGC Onondaga (WPG-79)*. Date and place to be announced. **Contact: Dana Yudovin** at 1770 Stuart Street, Cambria, CA 93428. Phone: (805) 927-8496.

USS LST-21

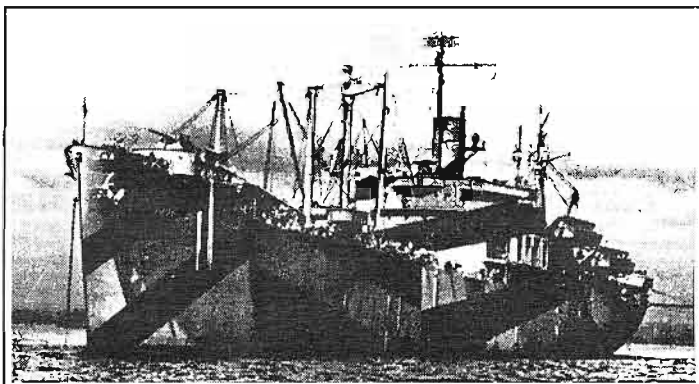
Former crewmembers from the *USS LST-21* are invited to attend a reunion in Cincinnati, Ohio from Aug. 31 - Sept. 5, 1995. **Contact: Irv Hoffman** at 858 Village Square North, Palm Springs, CA 92262. Phone: (619) 320-3568.

USCGC Duane (WPG/WHEC-33)

Oct. 20-22, 1995, at Hyannis, Mass. **Contact: R.C. Golec** at Tory Hill Road, Alstead, NH 03602. Phone: (603) 835-6009.

USS Belfast (PF-35)

Our reunion is scheduled for Sept. 14-17, 1995, at the Red Lion Hotel Airport, Seattle, Wash. **Contact: Art Wells** at 5 Beaverbrook Drive, Toms River, NJ 08757-5836. Phone: (908) 240-9293.



USS Calaway (APA-35)

CG-manned attack transport *USS Calaway* will hold its 29th reunion for all hands on Sept. 12-14, 1995, at the Best Western Motel, Mystic, Conn. **Contact: R.L. Stambach** at 4283-B Island Circle, Fort Myers, FL 33919. Phone: (813) 481-0359.

Greenland Patrol

The 3rd Annual Reunion of the Greenland Patrol — all 47 CG vessels and three Navy ships, CG PBY's and bases (1940-1945), will be held at the Corpus Christi, Texas Sheraton Bayfront Hotel Oct. 10-14, 1995. **Contacts: Al Courter** at (813) 856-7387 or **John Stamford** at (516) 223-1467.

Reunions — Notices — Unit Ads

PC-556 Reunion

Our reunion is planned for July 26-30, 1995 at the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Stamford, Conn. For more information, contact: **George Derkach** at 43 Calton Road, Apt. 2F, New Rochelle, NY 10804.

Navy — Coast Guard Reunion

Navy and Coast Guard World War II veterans who were crewmen aboard the CG-manned *USS Poole (DE-151)* and the *USS Gandy (DE-764)* are invited to attend a reunion Sept. 21-24, 1995, in Burlington, Vt. **Contact: Donald Macchia** of 256 Spruce Street, Bloomfield, N.J. 07003-3644. Phone: (201) 748-0731.

Korean War Veterans Memorial Dedication

The long awaited dedication ceremony for the Korean War Veterans Memorial in the Nation's Capital is scheduled for July 26-30, 1995. More than a half-million veterans and their families from all over the world are expected to attend.

Theme for the dedication is "Freedom Is Not Free...A Victory Remembered."

There will be a parade, a mass muster, memorial services, fireworks, a major presidential entertainment gala at the Kennedy Center, a film festival, and academic seminars.

A souvenir "passport" will identify participants. It is not required but will serve as a fitting souvenir. These are available for \$15 each from the Korean War Veterans Memorial, P.O. Box BR057, Washington, DC 20055-0057.

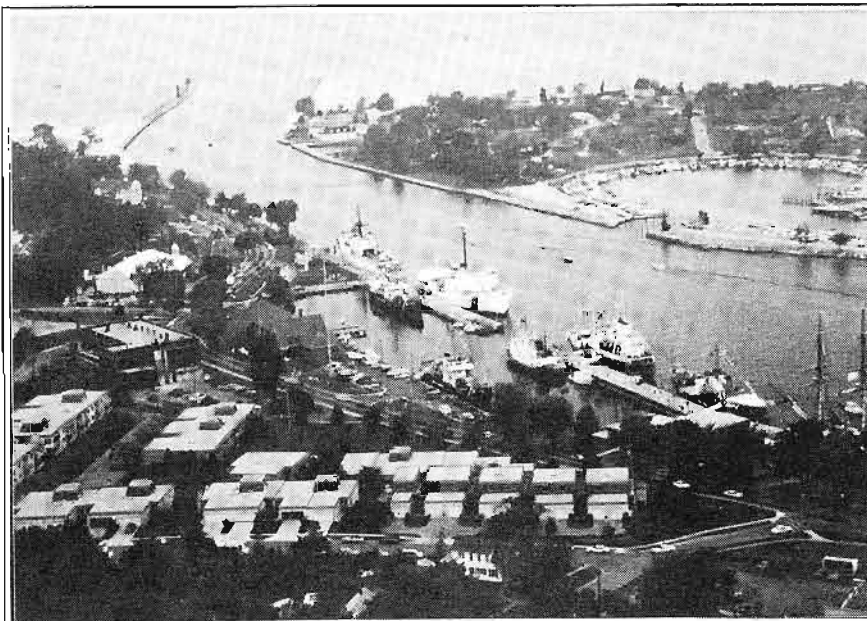
Thusfar, \$18 million has been donated for the project with every penny going solely into the design and construction of the Memorial. Those wishing to donate should mail checks to:

Korean War Veterans Memorial
Advisory Board (Dedication Committee)
18th & C Streets, Room 7424
Washington, DC 20240-9997

Special discounts have been established for those veterans coming to the Dedication who make their travel and hotel reservations early. Call your travel agent or World Travel Partners Office at 1-800-840-8856 for information on travel and hotels.

Contact: Brian Fiffe at 1-800-KORVETS.

COAST GUARD DAY FESTIVAL IN GRAND HAVEN



Grand Haven during 1990 CG Day Festival. Coast Guard cutters Mackinaw, Bramble and Katmai Bay will attend 1995 Festival.

The annual Coast Guard Day Festival in Grand Haven, Mich., (Coast Guard City, USA) will be held July 28 - Aug. 6, 1995. The public is invited, and especially any ex-Coasties!

Schedule of Events

- Carnival — Aug. 1-5
- Retired Coast Guardsmen Reunion and Dinner — Aug. 2nd at J.C. Clubhouse
- Grand Parade — Aug. 5th (noon)
- Musical Fountain Show followed by Grand Fireworks Display — Aug. 5th (dusk)
- Music at Waterfront Stadium — Scottville Clown Band (Aug. 1); Big Band Music (Aug. 2); "Beatles 1964" (Aug. 3); Coast Guard Band (Aug. 4)

Reunions — Notices — Unit Ads

Looking For...

Anyone who served on the USS Vigilant and the USS Marion during the period 1940-45. Also the Captain of the Port in the Virgin Islands during the same period. **Contact Charles B. Graham** at 855 Silverado Court, Lake Mary, FL 32746. Phone: (407) 322-9566.

Korean War Veterans Reunion

The first National Korean War Veterans Reunion is scheduled for Oct. 19-21, 1995, at Virginia Beach, Va. This event will allow all Korean War vets to finally get together and several hotels in the Virginia Beach - Norfolk area are now taking reservations for this reunion.

A National Korean Veteran Parade will be held the morning of Oct. 21 on Atlantic Avenue in Virginia Beach. There will be a major fireworks display and, at 2100 on Oct. 21st there will be a major reenactment of the last hour of the last day of the war.

To obtain registration forms or additional information, contact: **MSG Richard R. Gallmeyer, USA (Ret.)** at 808 Oldham Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23464. Phone: (804) 467-1233.

Victory In The Pacific Celebration

A reunion victory celebration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II will take place Sept. 20-25, 1995, in Honolulu, Ha., hosted by VETS.

VETS is the military reunion information service for the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. They track, plan or coordinate outfit reunions and operate the Finders/Seekers buddy location service.

Several Waikiki hotels will serve as hosts for the Victory in the Pacific celebration. VETS has developed a low-cost package including five nights hotel accommodations, special round trip airfares, taxes and gratuities, welcome reception, tours to the Arizona Memorial and National memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, nostalgic 50th anniversary dinner and dance, and more.

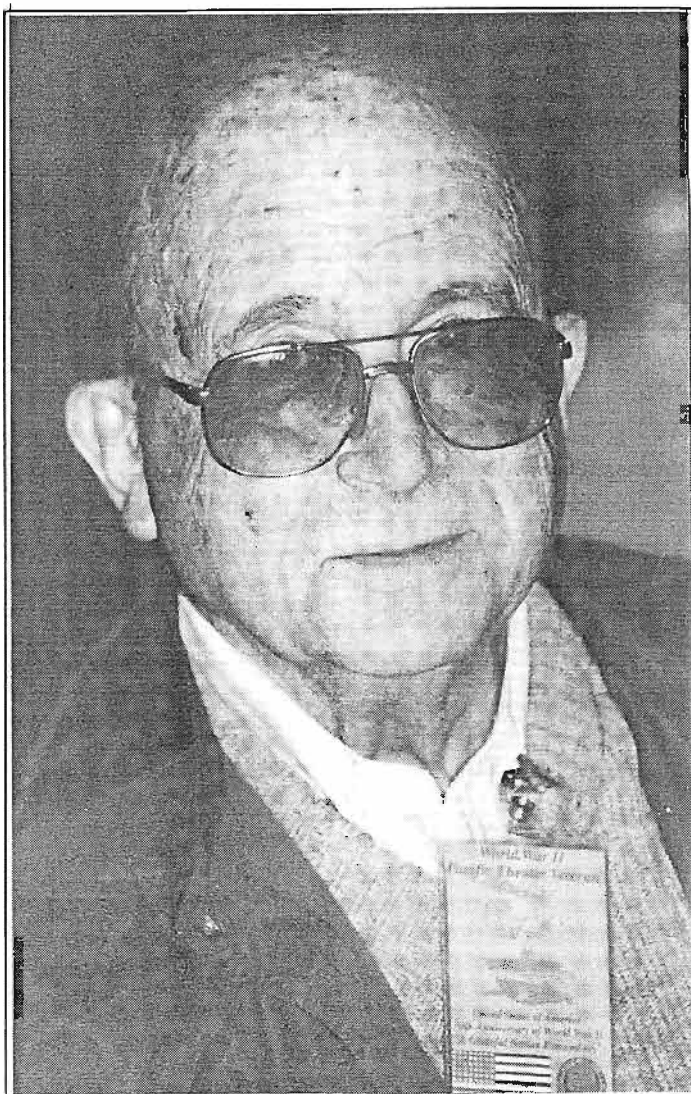
Participating veterans and their families will

also be offered special discounts in selected restaurants, nightclubs and retail stores. Prices start at \$719 per person.

For reservations and further details, call 1-800-837-5999.

Battle of Midway Dedication

The International Midway Memorial Foundation (IMMF), will dedicate a monument on that island Aug. 31, 1995, to honor veterans of the Battle of Midway. For further informations, **contact: James M. D'Angelo** at 11004 Arroyo Drive, Rockville, MD 20852. Phone: (301) 530-8954.



Aaron Goldberg, one of 55 Coast Guard Iwo Jima veterans who attended 50th anniversary commemoration activities in Washington, DC on Feb. 17th.

Reunions — Notices — Unit Ads

Ohio LST Reunion

May 19-20, 1995, at Mount Sterling, Ohio.
Contact: Norm Woehrle at 100 Orchard Lane,
Westerville, OH 43081. Phone: (614) 882-6666.

USS Aquarius (AKA-16)

Our reunion will be held Sept. 21-25, 1995, in
Wichita, Kansas. **Contact: Evelyn Amacher** at
730 Fairmount Drive, North Port, FL 34287.
Phone: (813) 426-5286.

Looking For...

Francis Kibler, a member of the U.S. Naval
Institute, desires to contact crewmembers of the
USS LST-70 who served during landings on
Puruata Island and Bougainville on Nov. 6-6,
1943. Contact Francis at 835 O'Farrell Street
#402, San Francisco, CA 94109.

New Book on Vietnam Available

Revisit the Navy's Vietnam experience with a
striking new illustrated history book, "By Sea, Air,
and Land," which dramatically recounts the
Navy's 25-year involvement with the war in
Southeast Asia.

Includes 500 black-and-white and color pho-
tographs, maps and charts. Appendixes include
Navy Medal of Honor recipients, Secretaries of
the Navy and key Navy officers, carrier deploy-
ments, aircraft tailcodes, and enemy aircraft shot
down by naval aviators.

"By Sea, Air, and Land" is available through the
Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954,
Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954 for \$43. Phone
orders to (202) 512-1800.

Looking For...

Mrs. Brenda Bamber is trying to locate Robert
J. Carmichael, who was a CG petty officer at
Poole, England during the D-Day landings in
1944. He apparently retired from the Service
about 1962 after serving 20 years, and may have
then moved to Alaska. Robert's sister indicated
that (as of 1994) he had been living with a couple
in New Orleans who were taking care of him.

If any member knows the whereabouts of Mr.
Carmichael and can assist Mrs. Bamber, she can
be reached at 50 Rodney Court, Whatleigh
Close, Poole, Dorset, England BH15IRL.

Attention CGC Atak Shipmates

Mr. Malcolm Marsden of the Captain Scott
Society is looking for surviving crewmembers of
the *CGC Atak* who served during the time the
vessel rescued survivors of the wreck of the
Terra Nova on Sept 12, 1943. The *Atak* was
assigned to the Greenland Patrol at the time.

The Captain Scott Society is embarking on a
project to build a replica of the *Terra Nova* to pro-
vide Wales with a tall ship for youth training, etc.

Anyone who could provide Mr. Marsden with an
eye witness account of the rescue may contact
him at The Captain Scott Society, c/o The Royal
Hotel, St. Mary Street, Cardiff, CF1 1ll.

Vietnam Tours Available

A wide range of affordable Standard and
Custom Tours to Vietnam for tour groups and
associations is available through **Vietnam
Tours**, 1121 East Missouri, Suite 115, Phoenix,
AZ 85014 or by calling (602) 230-1122.

Four 12-day tour packages are available, each
with a varying slate of destinations. Each
includes round trip airfare from Los Angeles to
Saigon; ground transportation (with A/C); person-
al tour interpreter; double occupancy, air condi-
tioned hotels; and U.S. passport and Vietnam
visa information.

Prices range from \$1,595 per person (10 per-
son party) to \$2,295 per person (2 person party).

Attention Okinawa World War II Survivors

A 50th anniversary "Celebration of Life" for sur-
vivors and a "Memorial Service" honoring all
Navy, Marine Corps, Army and Coast Guard per-
sonnel who lost their lives at Okinawa will be held
June 10, 1995 at the Navy memorial in
Washington, D.C., at 1000.

This event is sponsored by shipmates from the
USS William D. Porter (DD-579).

Membership

Progress Is Being Made

Attention shipmates — The Coast Guard and our organization are certainly making progress, getting the attention of various publications (Commandant's Bulletin, Sea Classics, VFW Papers, etc.), as well as considerable coverage on TV and in the newspapers. We are starting to get the respect that the Coast Guard so rightfully deserves. Ship reunions and our own CGCVA reunion have all contributed in our effort to spread the word about our Service's place in history.

When the recent Cuban and Haitian crises were at their peak, TV played a big part, displaying Coast Guard cutters in action, some packed with hundreds of refugees. Thousands of lives were saved within a few weeks thanks to the work of the Coast Guard.

The ground work has been set, however we

can still do much more. Type up that Coast Guard story you have and send it to your local paper. Chances are much better that they'll consider it for publication. Remember to keep it short and simple and stick to the facts. It's something you can clip out for your grandchildren to see and read long after you've been deep-sixed.

Of course include your name and address in the story and try to mention our association. Who knows, we may pick up some new members as a result of your story. There are thousands of former Coast Guardsmen just waiting to be found. Your story may do the trick so let's find them and bring

them back into the Coast Guard picture. Make copies of the CGCVA information sheet and application form in this issue and use them!

Albert F. Courter
National Membership Chairman



CGCVA Auxiliary Notes

Cruising For New Members

Hello ladies. Al and I recently returned from our Panama Canal cruise and, in spite of the fact that both of us came down with horrendous colds, we had a great time. It took us over a week to recuperate and start to get back on our feet. I can only say that it was a cruise that we will remember because it was so spectacular. The rain forest, in particular, was beautiful. We went ashore twice, once in Guatemala, then again in the Cayman Islands, and participated in many of the other shipboard activities.

We are having cards printed up for our membership chairpersons and as soon as our Secretary gets them, they will be mailed to you. Hopefully, we will have more than three mem-

bership chairpersons by the time *The Quarterdeck Log* is printed.

The CGCVA Auxiliary is growing slowly but surely and I would appreciate your input on ideas to attract new members. Please get back to me on this most important issue — all ideas will be considered.

I now have an up-to-date membership list and will be sending out letters to all members in the near future. If you have had a change of address recently, please get in touch with me.

A copy of our membership application is included with this newsletter. Please clip it out and make some copies for potential members.

Edith M. Courter
National President, CGCVA Auxiliary



Association News — Mail Buoy

Help For California Widows

California recently enacted legislation for military widows who own their own property in that state. The law provides them with a property tax exemption of up to \$150,000 from the valuation of their residence. The exemption lasts until a military widow remarries or no longer owns their residence; and it can be taken with them if they sell their home and repurchase another.

There is an application form that is filed with the county assessors office and must include:

- A letter from the Dept. of Veterans Affairs stating the widow's spouse died on active duty or as a result of a service-connected condition.
- A copy of the spouse's death certificate.
- A copy of the widow's marriage license.

Bonus of up to \$300 for their service during those wars/conflicts. Veterans must have been a Mass. resident for six months prior to entering the Armed Forces, during the stated periods of service, and have received a discharge under honorable conditions.

You can contact the Office of Treasurer & Receiver General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108-1608. Request an Application For Bonus Under Chapter 731 (World War II), 440 (Korea), or 646 (Vietnam).

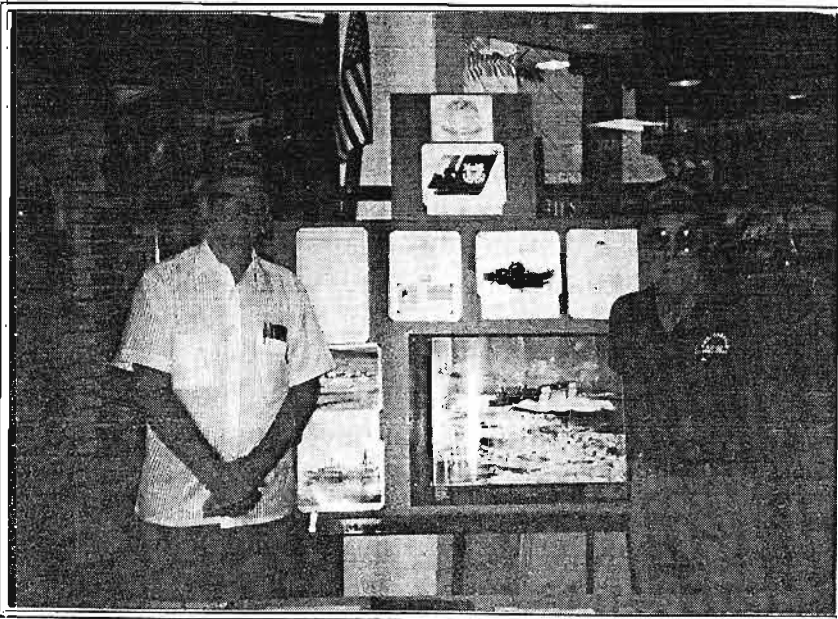
New York State Conspicuous Service Cross

The State of New York awards its Conspicuous Service Cross to any current New York State citizen or individual who was a resident there while serving on active military duty, that received a personal decoration issued by a brigade or equivalent higher headquarters, during active service since 1917. Such active duty service does not have to be during a period of war or conflict and the award of service and/or campaign medals does not qualify.

Those awards qualifying include a service cross, distinguished service medal, meritorious service medal, commendation medal, achievement medal, Combat Action Ribbon, or lifesaving medals. In addition, those who directly participated in the D-Day Normandy Invasion qualify.

Application form (DMNA Form 106A-R) and a complete list of awards that qualify may be obtained from The Adjutant General, Division of Naval Affairs, Attn: ARP-PSB-AD, 330 Old Niskayuna Road, Latham, NY 12110-2224. When submitted, the form must

include documentation showing Honorable Discharge, list of awards, medals or certificates, and orders indicating current or former New York State residence while on active duty.



CGCVA members Jim Bunch (left) and Bob Stoneham man a booth at the 2nd Annual Veterans Fair, sponsored by The Citrus County (Fla.) Chronicle. The event was held at the Crystal River Mall during Veterans Appreciation Week. More than 22 veterans organizations had table set-ups and exhibits and three government offices were on hand to outline and conduct seminars regarding veterans benefits. Jim and Bob included photos of Coast Guard vessels and information on our association at their table. Nice going guys!

Massachusetts Veterans' Bonuses

Massachusetts veterans of World war II, Korea and Vietnam, who have not previously received a Mass. State Bonus, are still eligible for a Military

New CHAMPUS Claim Form

Champus will soon be replacing its standard patients claim form in the U.S. and Puerto Rico with a new, simpler version. The new form, "Patients Request for Payment (DD Form 2642)" will eventually replace the current DD Form 2520. The old form will continue to be used overseas and may be used in the U.S. until Dec. 31, 1995.

The new form is half the length of the current form and doesn't require a provider's signature (providers of care who send in Champus claims on behalf of patients must use HCFA Form 1500 or UB Form 92). With the new form, patients need only fill in a few simple blocks of information, provide other health insurance information, attach copies of medical bills and mail to the appropriate Champus claims processing center.

Got Your "Ruptured Duck" Pin?

The Honorable Service Lapel Pin, affectionately nicknamed the "Ruptured Duck" by many returning service members, was issued to all honorably discharged members with service during World War II.

The small, goldplated brass emblem had its beginning in 1925, when authorized by War Department General Order No. 13 as a "Badge of Service" for honorably discharged veterans. It was described as an eagle perched within a ring which displays seven white and six red vertical stripes and a blue chief along the wing bearing the words "National Defense."

After the war, veterans proudly wore this small symbol of service on their civilian lapels. Later, it was replaced by organizational, veterans, or service clubs lapel pins considered more appropriate for wear in a world no longer at war.

World War II veterans who never received their

pins or may have lost or misplaced theirs can now obtain the Honorable Service Lapel Pin. To be eligible, one must have been honorably discharged for service between Sept. 8, 1939 and Dec. 31, 1946. Former Coast Guard veterans (as well as Navy and Marine Corps veterans) should include a copy of their World War II discharge papers when requesting their pins in writing to: National Personnel Records Center (Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps Records), 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132. The center can be reached at (314) 538-3071.

Attention Veterans

Information On Internet —The Department of Veterans Affairs' information computer bulletin board service, VA-ONLINE, is now available on Internet. The toll-free number is 1-800-US1-VETS and the Internet TelNet/FTP address is VAONLINE.VA.GOV or 192.26.48.131.

Veterans Affairs Secretary Jesse Brown said of this service, "We just placed the quickest, single source of veterans affairs and other veteran-related information at veterans' fingertips," adding, "the potential for growth and expansion of services is limitless."

New Veterans Handbook — The latest edition of one of the federal government's best-selling publications, "Federal Benefits for Veterans and

Dependents," is now available through the U.S. Gov't Printing Office for \$3.25.

The 111-page handbook describes federal benefits for veterans and dependents such as medical care, education, disability compensation, pension, life insurance, home loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation and burial assistance. It also explains require-

ments for eligibility and outlines claims procedures. To order, call (202) 512-1800 and ask for GPO stock no. 051-000-00205-9.

Members who have CROSSED THE BAR

Adolphus S. Piragis
Theodore R. Johnsa
Ed Goff
D. G. Kneip
Les Elder
Charles A. Quilico

Association News — Mail Buoy

Active World War II Cutters

As the observances continue honoring the 50th Anniversary of World War II across the nation, CGCVA members are advised that the following World War II Coast Guard cutters (name, designation & commissioning date) are still on active service:

USCGC *Acacia* (WLB-406) - 9/1/44****
USCGC *Basswood* (WLB-388) - 1/12/44***
USCGC *Bittersweet* (WLB-389) - 5/11/44
USCGC *Bluebell* (WLI-313) - 3/24/45
USCGC *Bramble* (WLB-392) - 4/22/44
USCGC *Buttonwood* (WLB-306) - 9/24/43
USCGC *Conifer* (WLB-301) - 7/1/43
USCGC *Cowslip* (WLB-277) - 10/17/42
USCGC *Firebush* (WLB-393) - 7/20/44
USCGC *Gentian* (WLB-290) - 11/3/42****
USCGC *Hornbeam* (WLB-394) - 4/14/44
USCGC *Iris* (WLB-395) - 8/11/44
USCGC *Ironwood* (WLB-297) - 8/4/43**
USCGC *Laurel* (WLB-291) - 11/24/42
USCGC *Mackinaw* (WAGB-83) - 12/20/44
USCGC *Madrona* (WLB-302) - 5/30/43
USCGC *Mallow* (WLB-396) - 6/6/44
USCGC *Mariposa* (WLB-397) - 7/1/44
USCGC *Pawpaw* (WLB-308) - 10/12/43
USCGC *Planetree* (WLB-307) - 11/4/43*
USCGC *Primrose* (WLIC-316) - 11/23/44
USCGC *Rambler* (WLIC-298) - 5/26/44
USCGC *Sassafras* (WLB-401) - 5/23/44
USCGC *Sedge* (WLB-402) - 7/5/44
USCGC *Smilax* (WLIC-315) - 11/1/44
USCGC *Sorrell* (WLB-296) - 4/15/43
USCGC *Spar* (WLB-403) - 6/12/44
USCGC *Storis* (WMEC-38) - 9/30/42
USCGC *Sumac* (WLR-311) - 11/11/44
USCGC *Sundew* (WLB-404) - 8/24/44
USCGC *Sweetbriar* (WLB-405) - 7/26/44
USCGC *Sweetgum* (WLB-309) - 11/20/43
USCGC *Woodrush* (WLB-407) - 9/22/44

- * - Also served in Korea & Vietnam Theaters. First Coast Guard cutter to serve in 3 war zones
- ** - Also served in Korea & Vietnam Theaters.
- *** - Also served in Vietnam Theater.
- **** - Served in recent Haitian Operation Uphold Democracy.

World War II Greenland Patrol

Although formally organized on Oct. 25, 1941, the Coast Guard had long experience in

Greenland and Arctic waters and, in spring of 1940, a number of cutters cruised to Greenland. These cutters, along with airplanes, surveyed the east and west coasts looking for sites for land and air bases and weather stations. This activity was one of the most closely guarded secrets of World War II. Phase-out of the Greenland Patrol began in May, 1945.

The Greenland Patrol consisted of a variety of Coast Guard cutters, including ice breakers, gunboats, sub chasers, arctic trawlers and harbor tugs. Participating cutters included: The *Active*, *Aivik*, *Aklak*, *Alatok*, *Algonquin*, *Amarok*, *Arluk*, *Arundel*, *Arvek*, *Atak*, *Big Horn*, *Cactus*, *Cayuga*, *Citrus*, *Comanche*, *Eastwind*, *Escanaba*, *Evergreen*, *Faunce*, *Frederick Lee*, *General Greene*, *Laurel*, *Manitou*, *Modoc*, *Mohawk*, *Mojave*, *Naugatuck*, *Nanok*, *Natsek*, *Nogak*, *Northland*, *North Star*, *Raritan*, *Sorrell*, *Southwind*, *Storis*, *Tahoma*, *Tampa*, and *Travis*.

Other Coast Guard units were the *Sea Cloud*, *Monomoy*, *Muskeget*, and *Manhasset*, which were part of Weather Station #2, and 12 Coast Guard PBY-5A Catalina aircraft.

Completing the Greenland Patrol were the Navy ships *Albatross*, *Bear*, *Bluebird* and *Bowdoin*.

The cutters *Escanaba* and *Muskeget* were torpedoed and sunk. The cutter *Natsek* iced-up and capsized with the loss of all hands.

Arnold Sobel Endowment Fund Scholarship

Each year, the Arnold Sobel Endowment Fund, sponsored by the Coast Guard Foundation, offers up to two four-year undergraduate scholarships to dependent sons and daughters of enlisted men or women of the Coast Guard and CG Reserve on active duty, retired or deceased.

Grants of up to \$5,000 per year to each student, are renewable for four consecutive years so long as the students continue to qualify.

For additional information regarding this program, contact Commandant (G-PWL-2), Attn: Mrs. Jessie Broadway, Room 4406, U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, D.C. 20593. Applications must arrive there no later than April 1st.

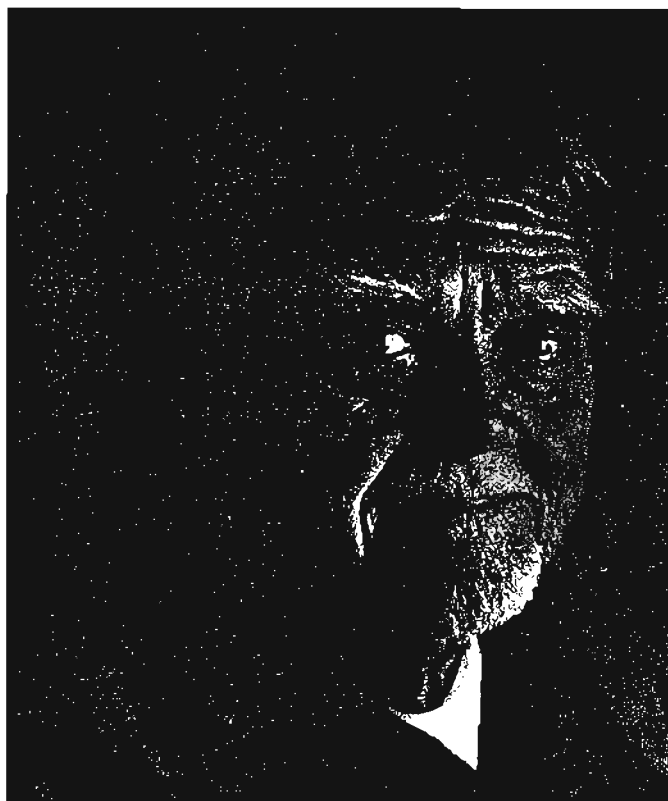
Association News — Mail Buoy

World War II Exhibit Includes Coast Guard

The Sanoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, Calif., will open an exhibit of World War II photographs, memorabilia, documents and posters on June 30, 1995. The exhibit will run through Sept. 24. Included in the exhibit will be a collection of drawings by Jim Fisher, of Santa Rosa, who served in the Coast Guard throughout the war. A student of noted artist Thomas Hart Benton, Fisher painted and sketched shipboard scenes and other topical subjects while in the service. This will mark the first time these drawings have ever been shown to the public.

Fisher's work concentrates on the experiences of enlisted men during the war, representing shipboard and port life in an honest and detailed way. While it is not a common theme normally chosen by maritime photographers and formal oil painters, day-to-day life of enlisted men is as much a part of history as the famous missions and vessels they served on.

Fisher served on a buoy tender and a patrol frigate during World War II, achieving the rank of QM1 before being discharged in 1947.



Artist and Coast Guard combat veteran Jim Fisher



Sketch by artist Jim Fisher, titled "Gale In The North Atlantic"

As a helmsman, his "sanctuary" was the wheelhouse and he remembers the arduous task of synchronized "zig-zagging" with tankers or freighters to avoid torpedo attacks. He likewise remembers the enormous flash and explosion of tankers carrying fuel being hit by torpedoes.

When Fisher wasn't on the bridge he found time for his past-time of sketching and painting, usually on chart paper. While many of his drawings were given to family members, 130 remain as his collection.

Fisher hopes these drawings may remain intact as a collection and that a trust fund be established for them some day.

Dennis Purcell
125 McConnell Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Association News — Mail Buoy

Citizens Flag Alliance

You're probably already aware of the Citizens Flag Alliance and may have already provided support to us by signing a petition. We are hoping for the adoption of a constitutional amendment allowing the states and Congress to enact laws prohibiting physical desecration of the United States flag.

A petition is included in this issue of the Quarterdeck Log. It is self-explanatory. Please consider making copies of the form and getting others to sign the petition. Your assistance is needed. We hope to have a total of 20 million signatures by Flag Day. Thanks!

Gordy Manhard

LST-886 Reunion Is Bittersweet

Combining forces with the CGCVA group, LST-886 held its reunion in Norfolk, and, while it was a great time for all who attended, a pall was cast upon it a week before. On Oct. 19th member Paul Flanagan and his close friend Dotty Thompson were killed after being struck by a car in Quantico, Va. Most of the crew met Dotty back during World War II; we'll miss them both. Our thanks to the CGCVA for making Paul an hon-

orary life member. In retrospect, I offer this poem for the Reunion, penned by Joe Mars...

REMEMBERING

Here it is October, the year is ninety four,
We stand around together, we've already paid our dues.
You see, we had a similar gathering in October forty four,
Remember proudly standing all dressed up in blues.

We watched with fear and wonder as they cut the final line,
Our LST was ready, a beauty to behold.
We whispered individually, now she's mine, all mine,
But the 886 heroics were just starting to unfold.

She slid down the ways to water, deep and blue,
Ready for her shakedown cruise and ports of many names.
Ready to accept the men that formed her gallant crew,
Ready for all the action that would bring her justly fame.

We've come from towns and cities across this beautiful land,
To share this time together with Coast Guard hand-in-hand.
We look back with memories of the fifty years that passed,
And treasure all the friendships we know will always last.

We've lost some wonderful shipmates from our gallant crew,
So let the teardrops show, they've earned their justly due.
Let's share the thoughts and memories of fifty years gone by,
Keep the Coast Guard sailing, and our flag will never die.

Joseph McAuley, LST-886



CGCVA Member David A. Desiderio has been spreading the word on our Association and looking for new members. Recently, he obtained additional support from the Commander, Pacific Area, VADM Richard D. Herr (left), and Commanding Officer, Support Center Alameda, CAPT Richard P. Oswitt. Here Desiderio presents them with copies of the CGCVA History Book



Nightmare on the Hamilton

(reprinted from D14's Pacific Shield)

"There was steam everywhere, my hair was burned off and my arms were burned," said Dallas O'Neal, one of the cutter *Sassafras*' four former crewmen to travel to Hawaii last May for the buoy tender's anniversary. O'Neal served aboard the *Sassafras* in 1946, but his nightmarish combat experience didn't occur aboard the Honolulu-based buoy tender.

Fifty-three years ago, O'Neal was assigned to the cutter *Alexander Hamilton*, which was performing escort duty off the Iceland coast. The 75-year-old North Carolina native was the sole engine room survivor after the *Hamilton* was torpedoed by a German submarine Jan. 29, 1942.

The 327-foot cutter had just released the tow of a Navy tug off Iceland and was heading in for fuel when the U-boat found its target on the cutter's starboard side, almost amidships, said O'Neal.

The then 20-year-old fireman 2/c was painting in a compartment just above the engine room when the torpedo struck. Everyone in the engine room was killed, he said, and the blast was followed by a flash and a fire.

He said at first he thought the ship's generator blew up. The explosion was so loud it ruptured O'Neal's eardrums and caused the grating he was standing on to give way.

He could hear and feel the water rushing in around him. "It was pitch black and hot. I knew there was a ladder near me; I couldn't see it so I felt around until I found it." He was almost at the top of the ladder when it broke free and sent him back down into the engine room. "I don't know what I climbed after that; I just kept grabbing anything I could get my hands on, trying to get up."

But when he reached the open doorway, he

was too exhausted to pull himself out. "I had both my arms hanging over and I was just hanging inside. A signalman came along, saw my arms and pulled me up. By then, I felt like I was choking to death."

O'Neal was taken to sick bay on the cutter where the wounded and dead were already filling the room. He recalled hearing an order to take the wounded off the ship; by then there were several Navy destroyers in the area searching for the U-boat.

O'Neal was wrapped up in blankets in one of the *Hamilton's* small boats and could see little outside the boat. However, at one point, he glanced back and saw the smoking cutter settled in the water.

He and a group of other wounded crewmen were taken to Iceland for treatment. O'Neal was initially taken to a private home before being transferred

to a military hospital. It was there he learned his ship had been torpedoed. He also discovered that 20 of his shipmates had been killed. Six more later died of burns.

On the day following the attack, the *Hamilton* capsized and it was later sunk by U.S. destroyer gunfire. O'Neal said that for a couple of months, he was listed as "missing in action" because his identity was mistaken for another crewman when he was evacuated from the cutter and he had no identification on him.

After several months in a New York military hospital, he was transferred to a buoy tender on Long Island. He remained in the United States for the remainder of the war.

The *CGC Alexander Hamilton* survivors have held three reunions over the years, said O'Neal, who now lives in Virginia Beach, Va. For several years he had nightmares about the harrowing episode. "For a long time, I had trouble sleeping; I lost some good friends that day."

**CWO2 Ed Moreth
D14 Public Affairs**



Dallas O'Neal during his CGC *Sassafras* reunion in Honolulu in May, 1994.

The Rings

For the past six years, Coast Guardsmen who manned General Class, WWII troop transports have held reunions. Originally called the Five Generals Association, it was expanded to include some Navy vessels and is now known as the AP Transport Association.

At the 1993 Baltimore gathering a remarkable event occurred. Two former shipmates of the *General Richardson (AP-118)*, Jim Sheridan and Howard Porter, met for the first time in 48 years.

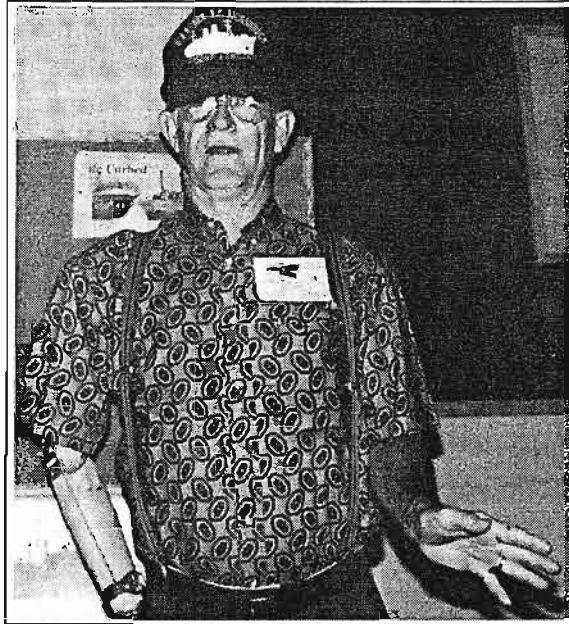
While on liberty together in Karachi, India, the two buddies each purchased China-Burma-India theater rings, great yet inexpensive souvenirs of their voyage half way around the world.

In the Mediterranean enroute New York a terrible accident occurred. Howard was working in the ship's laundry. Without his knowledge the safety switch on the extractor had failed and, while reaching into the machine Howard's right arm was severed four inches below the shoulder by the whirling blades.



Shipmates Jim Sheridan and Howard Porter at the AP Transport Association Reunion in Omaha.

Howard, bleeding profusely and in shock, climbed four ladders to the mess deck, then was rushed to sick bay. It was 0230 and his buddy, Jim Sheridan, was on duty as a hospital attendant.



General Richardson (AP-118) veteran Howard Porter.

Since the lower arm was gone, Dr. Wilbur Bennett, USPHS, realized all he could do was prepare the stump for a prosthesis. Quite a frightening realization considering the doctor was not a surgeon but rather an obstetrician.

Nevertheless, Dr. Bennett did a quite professional job, stitching a flap of skin from Howard's upper arm to cover the protruding bone, thus making it possible to accept a prosthesis later.

When Jim Sheridan and others readied Howard's severed arm for burial at sea, Jim removed the CBI ring, planning to return it when they again met. However, like many wartime shipmates, they lost contact.

It wasn't until 1993 that Jim learned of the AP Transport Association reunion. He called and found out that his buddy, Howard, had registered to attend. Jim decided to do likewise and return the ring he had held for 48 years.

"I brought the ring and presented it to Howard very privately and quietly. Our wives were unaware of what took place until later. It was very emotional and nostalgic for both of us," said Sheridan.

At the AP Transport Association meeting in Omaha in June 1994, Howard brought this amazing tale to a fitting conclusion. Before nearly 400 people he described his terrible accident and then called his buddy, Jim Sheridan, up to stand by his side. For both men the war was finally over and the ring back where it belonged. It was a very emotional moment for us all.

Joe Hannan, AP Transport Association

Ex-Coast Guardsman Returns To Normandy

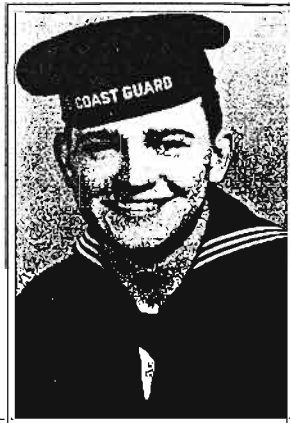
On June 6, 1944, just two days after his 20th birthday, Coast Guard Seaman 1/c Charles Berka took part in the invasion of Normandy, France. "I was hoping the invasion would have started on my birthday like it was originally planned — what a birthday party that would have been," he said.

Berka was a crewman aboard the *USS Bayfield*, a Navy ship operated by the Coast Guard. He was part of a four-man crew on the 36-foot landing craft dropping soldiers at Utah Beach. "The ship had anchored 11 miles off the coast, out of gun range, and we were lowered into the water and loaded with troops almost immediately," he recalled.

"Our landing barge got within 200 yards of the beach when we were stopped by obstacles," he said, "concrete pyramids and railroad ties that looked like children's jacks." Berka's landing craft was part of the sixth wave and a total of 1500 soldiers were put on Utah Beach that day.



Charles Berka and wife, Irene, at CGCVA Plaque at Utah Beach, France in June, 1994.



Charles Berka (1943)

After the invasion of Normandy, Berka and the *Bayfield* went on to the invasion of southern France, then on to the Pacific where he took part in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

Berka was honorably discharged from the Coast Guard in May of 1946. After graduating from Case Western Reserve University in 1950, he joined Penton Publishing Co., Cleveland, where he was an editor until his retirement in 1992.

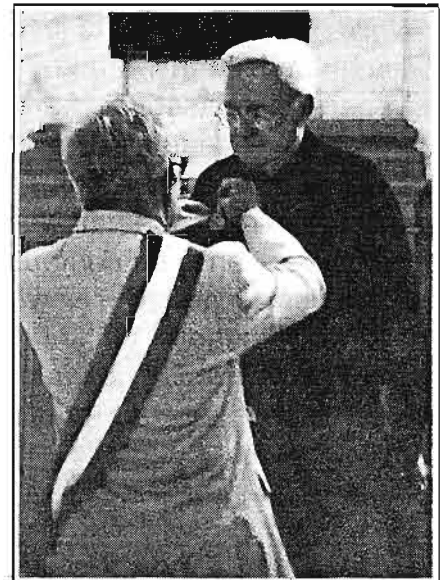
In June 1994, Berka and his wife, Irene, were part of a tour group that went back to Normandy for the 50th anniversary of D-Day. "I wore two hats on the trip. One was my *Bayfield* reunion cap and the other was a GI

white sailor hat that I had worn at Normandy. The sailor hat drew a lot of attention from the French and British school-children, some even asked me for my autograph," he said.

For Berka, the best part of the trip was when he and other veterans were honored by the French government for having participated in the D-Day invasion. In a ceremony at Caen, France, a representative of the French government presented him with a 50th anniversary commemoration medal.

"Believe it or not," he said, "it was a very memorable time for me. I was too young to be afraid and unaware that the invasion was the biggest military operation of all time."

PA2 Brian Huth, D9 Public Affairs Office



Berka receives commemorative medal for having taken part in D-Day landings, during visit to Caen, France in June, 1994.

50 Years After Leyte Gulf

Half a century before and half way around the world, General Douglas MacArthur's now-famous pledge, "I shall return," inspired a decisive battle of World War II.

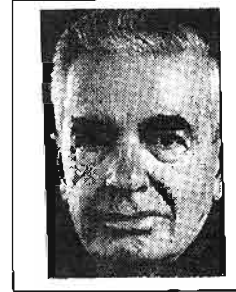
It was the Battle of Leyte Gulf, fought in late October 50 years ago.

During the battle, America committed dozens of ships and thousands of men to retaking the Philippines from the Japanese.

Two years earlier, the Japanese had overrun the islands, using them to defend vital supply lanes off the coast of China.

On Oct. 20, 1944, MacArthur kept his promise, invading the central island of Leyte. When he did, five Ocean County, N.J. men were among

the Americans who fought in support of the invasion. On Oct. 24, 1994, the five, including former



Art Wells today

Coast Guardsman Art Wells, were among 100 veterans of the Leyte battle honored at the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum in Manhattan.

Wells, now 70, joined the Coast Guard in 1942 and was a helmsman aboard the *USS Belfast*, a 304-foot patrol frigate, escorting a supply convoy to Leyte in November 1944. He remembers things had calmed down by then, but at night tracer fire lit up the sky over his vessel. The following month, the *Belfast* was part of another

convoy in the gulf and he remembers one ship sinking after a kamikaze hit.

Wells belongs to a 160-member VFW post, located in the club house of his retirement community. He and four other Leyte Gulf veterans from the community attended the 50th anniversary commemoration at the Intrepid Museum and participated in a memorial service with a wreath-laying ceremony.

Being the only Coast Guardsman there, Wells had the honor of placing one of the 30 wreaths, setting it adrift in the Hudson River.

Jeffrey Rubin
Asbury Park Press)
and William Gordon
(Star-Ledger)



Leyte Gulf veterans (left to right) Michael DePalma, Edward Bishop, ex-Coast Guardsman Artur Wells, Gasper Armand Siciliano and Emil Heydecke look over old photographs as they recall their tours of duty in the Philippines during World war II.

CGC Blackthorn Remembered

The early morning sun of Jan. 28, 1995, broke through the clouds, providing a perfect backdrop for the Annual Service of Remembrance for the 23 Coast Guardsmen lost in the *CGC Blackthorn* sinking 15 years earlier. The ceremony, held at the Blackthorn Memorial in St. Petersburg, Fla.,

greatest loss of all...as you look out on this lovely bay today, I pray that the years have eased your pain and that you see this Memorial, not only as a symbol of sacrifice and loss, but also as a proud symbol of service and as a celebration of the life you shared with your loved ones here on this earth."



The CGC Blackthorn Memorial adorned with wreaths of remembrance during services on the 15th anniversary of the cutter's sinking in Tampa Bay.

began at 11 a.m. with an aerial salute from an Air Station Clearwater C-130.

Group St. Petersburg provided an honor guard contingent and LT Wesley B. Sloat, USNR Chaplain Corps, asked the invocation.

About 225 people were gathered, including 21 family members and two survivors. AMC John L. Chassereau, USCG (Ret.), introduced guests including MCPO-CG Rick Trent who provided remarks and then introduced the keynote speaker, CAPT Roy J. Casto, commander, Group St. Petersburg.

CAPT Casto gave a deeply moving address on how tragic events, such as the loss of the *Blackthorn*, touch our lives and the lives of those around us; becoming a benchmark for measuring times and places.

In closing, CAPT Casto said, "To the *Blackthorn* survivors and family, who have suffered the

SCPO John Portless, USCG (Ret.) placed the Memorial Fund's wreath at the monument and Chaplain Sloat spoke briefly of the significance of the bible belonging to BM3 Michael A. Rhodes, which was found on the *Blackthorn* opened to the 23rd Psalm. That bible is now on display at the Coast Guard Academy.

Everyone sang the Coast Guard Hymn, followed by the benediction. "Taps" and "Echo" were sounded by buglers from the Admiral Farragut Academy, St. Petersburg campus, and the colors were retired to conclude the annual program.

John Chassereau

A Toast To The Flag

Here's to the red of it,
There's not a thread of it,
No, nor a shred of it,
In all the spread of it,
from foot to head.
But heroes bled for it,
Faced steel and lead for it,
Slept with the dead for it,
Bathing it RED

Here's to the white of it,
who knows the might of it,
But thrills to the sight of it,
through day and night,
Womanhood's care for it
Made manhood dare for it,
Purity's prayer for it,
Keeps it so WHITE

Here's to the blue of it,
Heavenly hue of it,
Star Spangled view of it,
Constant and true
States stand supreme for it,
Liberty's beam for it,
Brightens the BLUE

Here's to the whole of it,
Stars, Stripes and pole of it,
Body and soul of it,
O' and the roll of it,
Sun shining through,
Hearts in accord for it,
Swear by the sword for it,
Thanking the Lord for it,
RED, WHITE AND BLUE

Invasion of the Philippines

Coast Guard seaman Joe Cassidy and the other members of the landing party lowered themselves down the nets, with their full backpacks, carbines and other firearms, and into the *Cavalier's* landing craft. The invasion of the Philippine Islands was about to begin. Cassidy looked out over the horizon; he had never seen so many ships and boats in one place in his life.

Soon they hit the beach. Cassidy and his compatriots debarked and waded ashore a few hundred feet. Others spilled out of the other landing craft. The scene was organized chaos.

The shells and bombs never seemed to stop, hitting both land and sea. Cassidy heard a

sergeant from the 7th Division yell, "Sailor! Move out of there on the double!" Cassidy moved and within seconds a shell landed in the spot he had vacated. The sergeant happened to be a neighbor of Cassidy's from back in Brooklyn.

The Coast Guardsmen from the *Cavalier* and everyone else on



Joe Cassidy today

the beach made foxholes for the night. Most of the troops, ammunition, and equipment were brought ashore. General Douglas MacArthur and the president of the Philippines were on the beach.

Cassidy was in a restless sleep in the foxhole; his partner, Mike Kronitz, was on lookout duty. Awaking, he thought it was his time to go on watch. Mike said, "Do you still have those rosary beads you're always praying on?" Getting an affirmative, he said, "Come with me." They crawled up the beach a few hundred yards toward the village of Dulag, to a compound where several hundred Philippine civilians were being protected from a Japanese counter attack. When the people saw his rosary beads, they smiled.

Cassidy prayed with them, as did his partner. One young woman asked if she could touch his beads. Cassidy passed them to her saying, "Keep them as a gift from my mother and me." They all prayed quietly.

Cassidy returned to his foxhole. He was elated with the new prayer group he and his partner had found so far from Brooklyn. Before settling into sleep he mused, there are no atheists in a foxhole.

Courtesy of The Village Times



Coast Guard seaman Joe Cassidy in his foxhole on the beach at Leyte in the Philippines in October, 1944.

Recalling Okinawa

Fifty years ago, on April 1, 1945, American military forces landed on Okinawa, largest island in the Ryukyus, just 350 miles south of Kyushu Island, where the initial invasion of the Japanese



Milton Wooster about 1945.

home islands was to have taken place. Among those involved in the taking of the island was Coast Guardsman Milton Wooster. This is his personal account of the 380 Coast Guard enlisted men, among which 120 were boat crews.

"I was one of the boat crew members from the *USS Cepheus*, a 459-foot assault transport manned by the Coast Guard. On Easter Sunday, 1945, along with more than 40 carriers, 18 battleships, 200 destroyers, and hundreds of transports, cruisers, net layers, submarines, minesweepers and landing craft, we took part in "Operation Iceberg," the seizure of Okinawa."

"For two weeks we underwent a nightmare of 990 air raids, sleepless nights, unloading operations, constant gun watches and "making smoke." The entire time, the *Cepheus* was loaded with ammunition, high octane gasoline, dynamite and even detonators. Each day had its excitement and the Japanese gave us little rest, especially with their "fleet that came to stay" and their kamikazes."

"Our crew had been together for more than a year and had formed a close bond; we took care of each other so we never felt alone. That bond has, in later years, again been renewed and nearly 100 of the original crew gather together each year to remember."

"Knowing that we were being taken care of and that after the initial assault on the beaches we would return to the *Cepheus* made our job much better. The hardest thing we had to do was to leave the men we had taken to the beach, some wounded, some dead, just lying there."

"Our vessels delivered assault forces and supplies for 16 days and, during the operation, the *Cepheus* was credited with downing three Japanese planes — two "Bettys" and a "Val."

"Okinawa is composed of ridges and green rolling hills. On a tour inland through native villages we found deserted homes still standing, and many a pile of rubbish where bombs and accurate shelling from our battlewagons hit the target. Inspection of caves revealed Japanese families had joined their sons, brothers and fathers. Living conditions were just about impossible. Let us remember those who did not return and pray this world does not get involved in another war. Let us appreciate what we have and enjoy each day of freedom!"



Milton Wooster holds a rifle taken from a sniper he killed during the battle for Okinawa.

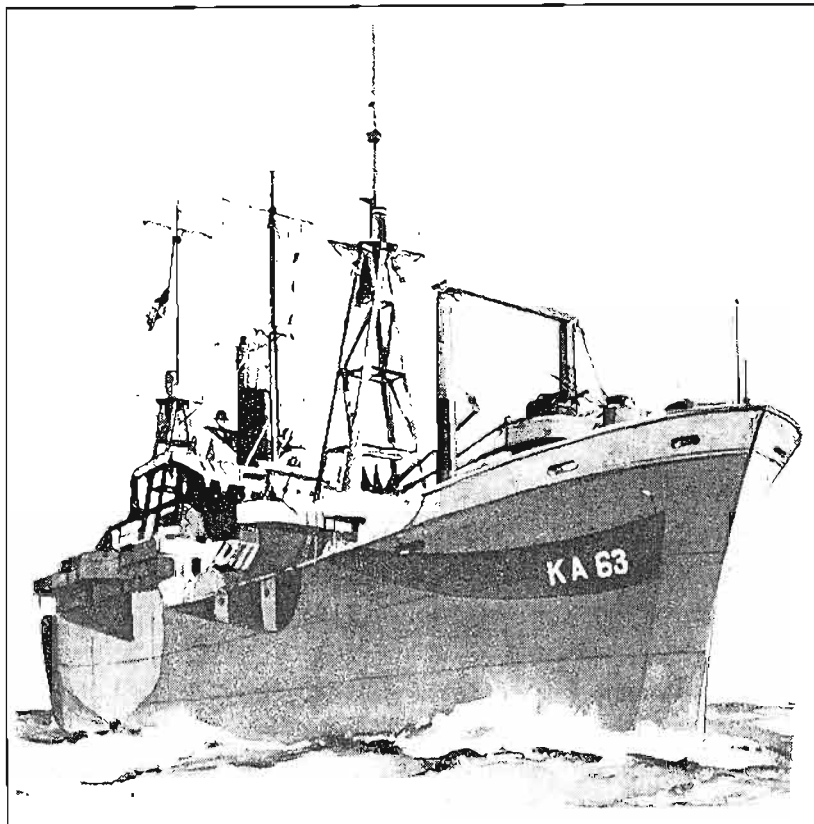
Association News — Mail Buoy

USS *Theenim* Holds 2nd Reunion

Coast Guardsmen who manned the *USS Theenim* (AKA-63) during World War II held a second reunion Sept. 22-23, 1994, in Cape May, N.J. Their first reunion was held Oct. 28-30, 1993, at the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn.

Eighteen crewmen attended the 1994 reunion and Coast Guard Training Center Cape May rolled out the red carpet for them. A company of recruits were graduating so the veterans were assigned to the VIP section to view the impressive ceremonies. That was followed by a luncheon at the Officers' Club and a tour of the training center grounds.

The *Theenim* was manned entirely by Coast Guardsmen, one of five such AKA's. Commissioned in Dec., 1944, the vessel served at Okinawa, carrying a crew of 43 officers and 327 enlisted men.



CG Stationed Remembered

Camp Glenn, the first Coast Guard Air Station, is gone, replaced by Carteret General Hospital, College and Post office.

Photographs taken between 1918-19 show the site filled with open cockpit seaplanes and messenger pigeon coops. One cockpit photo shows only three gauges in front of the automobile-type steering mechanism and a mounted compass, the plane's only instrument.

Back then, Camp Glenn airplanes were landing on water — the first step towards landing on boats in the water. Still, the pilots did more than simply practice flying for the military; they also looked for bootleggers smuggling liquor and spotting schools of fish for the fishing industry.

Later, when war oriented, their mission was to spot enemy submarines from the air. In April of 1920, the Navy stopped its activities at Camp Glenn and the Coast Guard took over. Their aircraft would be used for locating vessels in distress, rescuing crews, assisting in Coast Guard

work, while still maintaining vigilance towards spotting smugglers and reporting schools of fish.

To assist with their several duties, pilots would take carrier pigeons with them on missions. If they spotted anything of importance, the pilots would write down the information, attach the message to the pigeon and release them. The birds would return to Camp Glenn and the information then relayed or acted upon as necessary. Today, the Swiss Army remains the last bastion of military carrier pigeons in active use, maintaining more than 7,000 birds.

MM2/c John Jackson, whose photographs and stories detailed Camp Glenn and its activities, was recalled to duty in San Francisco to help "net" the harbor and protect it from enemy submarines. Ironically, the "netting" was completed at midnight on Dec. 5, 1941, just hours before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Jackson's photo collection clearly documented many significant activities at Camp Glenn, many of which shaped future airplane operations.

Memories of a USO Troupe

Not the slightest hint appears in the logs. I cannot pin down the exact date, but the unrecorded affair must have occurred on either July 13 or 30 or Aug. 19, 1944. These were the only times that the CG-manned patrol frigate *USS Albuquerque (PF-7)* called at Sheyma Island near Attu in the desolate Aleutian Island chain during our 17 dreary months of escort and patrol duty in the Bering Sea. In any case, we were en route from Adak to Attu and stopped briefly at Sheyma.

The late morning fog was lifting as the *Albuquerque* approached Pier #1, Alcan Cove, Sheyma. There, unbelievably to all eyes on deck stood three females with suitcases, wind breakers buttoned to the neck as a light breeze rustled their khaki skirts. Like wild fire, word spread that they were USO troupers needing a lift to Attu. Before the lines were doubled-up, all hands were on deck cheering and whistling as the girls waved and threw kisses. To the crew's dismay, however, once onboard the little troupe was immediately ushered into the wardroom for lunch with the officers.

Noon chow was piped. Across the mess deck sounds of laughter and the clinking of glasses drifted down the ladder at the rear of the mess deck that led to officers' country and the yeoman's office. Grumbling and ribald remarks about the officers having all the fun soon dominated noon chow.

As the chow line secured, Yeoman 1/c "Mother" Gardner stuck his head down the ladder to announce that the girls would shortly come below to greet the crew. With a crafty grin, SN 1/c Jack Watroba grabbed a paperback book and ducked under the ladder telling us to signal when the entertainers began descent to the mess deck.

A clatter of heels announced the ship's guests coming down the ladder. As they reached the bottom step waving to the mess deck crowd, Watroba materialized, nose buried in the book, pausing briefly to turn a page without looking up and murmuring "Pardon me" as he passed directly under the pretty noses. A lilted "Hi sailor" failed to distract Jack from his reading as knee slapping laughter swept the mess deck, followed by a chorus of raspberries and shouts of "We want the real thing" when our somewhat taken aback visitors called out "We blow you all a kiss". A few moments of strained attempts at gaiety was broken by the piping of special sea detail. A flutter of legs retreating up the ladder was the last we saw of the USO troupers until they debarked later that day after the *Albuquerque* moored to West Navy Pier, Massacre Bay, Attu.

SN 1/c David H. Hendrickson

Patrol Frigates Commemoration

A dedication ceremony Aug. 11, 1994, at Coast Guard Island, Alameda, Calif., marked the unveiling of a memorial monument commemorating the 75 CG-manned patrol frigates of World War II. About 150 CG veterans attending heard RADM Gordon Piche speak of the no-longer forgotten patrol frigates. It was a first-class affair!



Association News — Mail Buoy

(Editor's Note: CGCVA member Raymond Pasek sends this article. He doesn't remember who wrote it but it offers a first-hand look at the Okinawa invasion. Thanks Ray!)

A Letter Home

Dear: _____,

Now that a month has gone by since the start of the invasion of Okinawa, we are allowed to write home about our experiences. There are some things of course that we still can't tell about.

While we were down under the line in the South Pacific, I had a pretty good hunch we were going to the Ryukyus. We had a lot of practice landings on the beaches, simulating what we were going to do on the actual invasion. I enjoyed those a lot because I always got a chance to go for a swim and take a look around at the country there. I'll never forget how good the cold beer tasted down in that hot climate.

One morning we took on a bunch of troops and it was anchors aweigh. I thought that was it, but several days later we came into an anchorage chock full of all kinds of ships — carriers, LST's, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, transports, tankers and others. There were several beautiful hospital ships there too, all painted white. I felt pretty proud and a little bit insignificant as I looked over the huge fleet. I was told that this wasn't the whole show either.

Finally, one night all the ships started moving and we were really on our way. It was quite a thrill. We kind of expected at any moment to be routed out of our bunks for air attacks as the Japanese probably knew we were coming. Nothing happened however and we sneaked right up to within 10 miles of Okinawa before the fireworks started.

What an Easter Sunday morning that was! No

Easter egg hunt that morning — this was the real thing! First the rumbling of the big guns as we watched their flashes in the distance. We kept moving in with the other transports while the battleships lobbed shells over us toward the beach. At daybreak several small groups of Japanese fighters made their way over us and you should have seen the reception they got. All the ships started belching out anti-aircraft at once and the sky was full of tracers and flak. One by one the planes would burst into flames and plummet into the ocean. They were suicide planes trying to

crash dive on their targets, and a few of them made good. I felt sorry for the lads on the ships that got hit. We downed one of them headed at us, with the help of fire from other transports.

As the sun first showed, all the

transports started lowering their landing craft, filled with troops, tanks and "hot cargo". For the next hour the air was filled with the drum of small engines and the occasional "ack-ack" of machine gun fire peppering a Japanese plane. As the fleet moved toward shore we could hear the increased tempo of the big guns booming again and smoke from fires started on the island was clearly visible. This wasn't going to be another Tarawa — we had learned how to smash the enemy.

There were so many things that happened over the next six days I can't remember them but I do know we didn't get much sleep and chow was never at the regularly scheduled times. Air raids kept us at our guns almost continuously and we also had to watch for Japanese swimmers. They would try to sneak their way through the water to the ships. They had explosives strapped to them so when they reached their goal, they would pull

(continued next page)

“What an Easter Sunday morning that was! No Easter egg hunt that morning — this was the real thing!”

A Letter Home (continued)

the string and blast everything, including themselves, all to hell. Talk about fanatical tactics — those were it. We formed a rifle squad around the ship, day and night, and believe me we peppered away at anything moving in the water near the ship. An LST just ahead of us captured one of the swimmers so there must have been some near us.

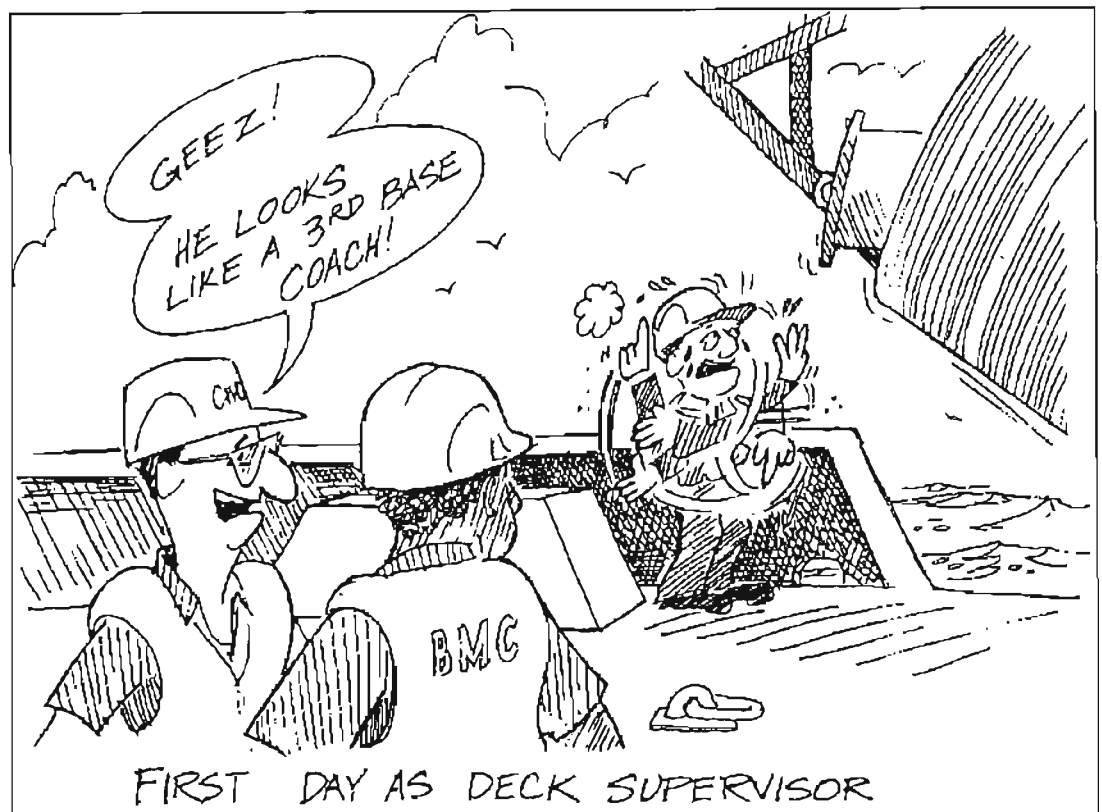
Our Beach Party had quite a time ashore. Not what you'd think — with bonfires and toasting marshmallows — but setting up ship-to-shore communications, controlling the movement of landing craft to the beaches, salvaging damaged craft and evacuating the casualties. They'd live in the sand dunes in foxholes and work day and night whenever conditions would permit. They'd get strafed by enemy planes and snipers would infiltrate down through the lines to hamper them. None of our fellows got hurt and they got commended from the Task Force Commander for doing a swell job, so we felt pretty proud.

We were delayed quite a bit in unloading our ship, I believe it was on account of the beaches. They were the toughest ones experienced so far for landing boats. A coral reef extended out as far as 750 yards from the beach and it was full of pot holes and various obstacles. They could unload at high tide but even then many of the boats would get stranded on the coral. They tried to blast channels through the stuff but the holes would just fill up again with sand and broken coral.

I don't think I'd want to live on Okinawa, although the weather wasn't too bad. Everything there looked poor — health conditions, the people, even the animals. There were no modern conveniences at all, no stoves and no water system. In the middle of this town there was a cement pool filled with green, slimy water. That's where the townfolk bathed and washed their clothes. There was no plumbing — not even any outhouses — so people "went" right where they were, men and women alike. It really made me appreciate all the wonderful things we enjoy back in the states.

One of the nicest things I can remember is the fresh water shower I had after our ship was unloaded and on its way out of that place. Up to that time we hadn't much time for showers and even when we did, they were cold salt-water showers.

Well folks, that will give you a brief idea of our week in Okinawa — I know I've left out a lot but then I'll have to save something for the time I get home to tell about. Besides, I have to quit this some time. Love to all!



FIRST DAY AS DECK SUPERVISOR

From the President (continued)

Wrapping Up The Year

We ended 1994 on a sad note. CAPT Don Kneip, one of our Association's founders and a past member of our Board of Directors, passed away in December, succumbing after a long, brave struggle with a recurring brain tumor. Our Association and the Coast Guard family have lost a respected member.

In February, accompanied by directors Bob Maxwell and Bill Figone, we visited San Diego, site of our 1996 Convention/Reunion, for the purpose of selecting a location to hold our meetings. We have selected and signed a contract with the Raddison Hotel on Hotel Circle for the period Oct. 31 - Nov. 4, 1996, so start making your plans to make this the best Reunion yet!

We will need members from the San Diego area to step forward and form a host committee to help plan the program and activities for the 1996 Reunion. If you can help, please contact either Ed Burke or myself.

Along these lines we are finding out that having less than two years in which to plan a reunion is proving somewhat inadequate hence we must start even now to plan our 1998 Reunion. So, if you have any thoughts regarding a location for 1998, let's hear 'em. We have already received some input regarding Houston, Texas.

In March, Ed Burke, Ed Swift and I attended a luncheon at Bolling AFB in Washington, which featured the Commandant's State of the Coast Guard Address. The Service is on the threshold of a sweeping reorganization to streamline the current way the Coast Guard does business to meet the goals of downsizing the government. The Coast Guard Reserve has already been trimmed down by a third, to 8,000, and fully integrated into the active duty Coast Guard for administration and employment. The active service will lose 4,000 more people in the next four years, with a commensurate reduction in funding. ADM Kramek is determined to reach these goals with as little change in service to the public as possible.

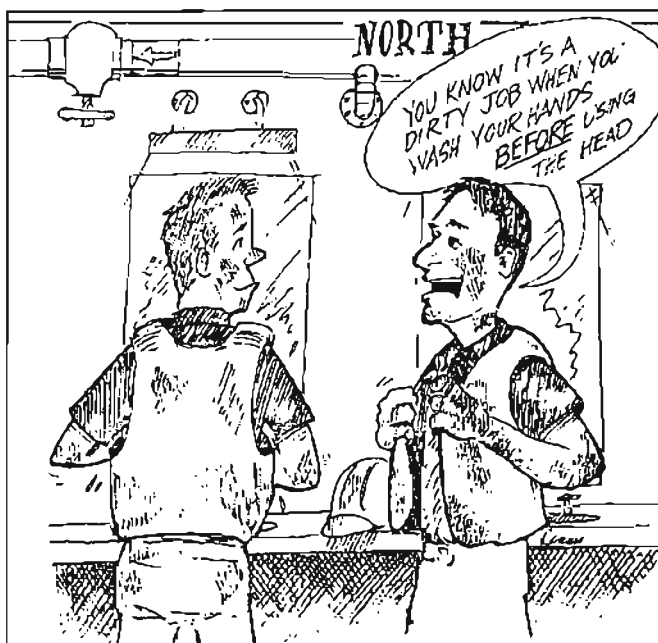
Ed Burke has advised me that the updating of

our Association's membership records has been completed. This was an important task that needed to be accomplished so I extend my thanks to all who had to submit (or resubmit) documents to verify eligibility in our association. We're sorry for any inconvenience that this may have caused and I ask you not to harbor any ill feelings toward Ed Burke. As our elected secretary, Ed was doing what the membership of the Association had tasked him to do and he tried to accomplish a difficult task with as little pain as possible on the members having no documentation on record. Thanks Ed! We are indeed fortunate to have you as our secretary!

In early March I attended the annual luncheon of the Northwest SPARS at Coast Guard Air Station Port Angeles, Wash. There were nearly 60 of these original Coast Guard women attending and I felt very honored to be present at this meeting.

During the month of April our association lost another good friend, but only in an official capacity. Jim Ward, chief of the Community Relations Branch at CG Headquarters, and our champion on the Public Affairs Staff there, decided to take early retirement. All our best wishes for Fair Winds and Following Seas to Jim in whatever he decides to do next! Semper Paratus!

Al Grantham



Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association General Information

The Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association is a Non-Profit Corporation consisting of active duty members, retired members and honorably discharged former members 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 or United States Coast Guard Reserve.

Being mindful of the traditions, duties and purposes of the United States Coast Guard, our duty to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and believing that through social association and mutual acquaintance, we may further perpetuate the memory of our fallen comrades, assist the widows and orphans, assist honorably discharged and retired Coast Guard Combat Veterans, promote and enhance the image and posture of the United States Coast Guard.

Upon acceptance into the association, you are furnished a Membership Card, the association By-Laws, a logo pin and a copy of the current newsletter "The Quarterdeck Log" that you will receive quarterly for the duration of your membership. The newsletter contains articles, pictures and ads of reunions to bring you back into the flow of the Coast Guard picture and a lot more. There are baseball caps available for a minimum charge with "Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association" in gold lettering.

Our member's number over 1600 and we continue to grow. The membership consists of veterans from every conflict from W.W.I; W.W.II; Korea; Vietnam; Cuban Blockade; Panama and Desert Storm. You may have a long lost shipmate that is a member and there is a very good chance that we have your ship and shipmate listed in our computer database. Our records must be able to support the tax-exempt status that has been given us by the IRS. We insist that copies of supporting documents accompany applications for membership, i.e., Discharge, DD-214, Letter of Medal(s) awarded, etc.

There is a reunion/convention biennially with the time and place decided by the Officers and Directors. The place is convenient and reasonable for the majority of the members. This is the time that members can voice their opinions and participate in the governing process of the association at the biennial Business Luncheon. The association encourages members to get together with shipmates they are in contact with and hold a reunion within a reunion. At the last reunion in Norfolk the Greenland Patrol and a group from the Sebago did exactly that.

There is an Auxiliary membership available to your spouse. We try to cover everything to make it a most rewarding membership for the qualified Coast Guard Combat Veteran.

The CGCVA has very reasonable dues at just \$12.50 per year or \$25.00 for two years. Once you are a member in good standing, we have a very attractive "Life Member" rate. Inquire now about joining our elite veterans organization. Get an application from where you received this information sheet. You can call the CGCVA Administrative Office and speak with the Secretary or leave your name and number and he will return your call and provide you with the answers to your questions. (301)570-5664. If You Are A Coast Guard Combat Veteran, don't let this organization pass you by. "Jump Aboard," get re-acquainted and have fun with those who have been there the "Same as You Were" and know what a "Coast Guard Veteran" is.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A LOT OF GOOD COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS

Semper Paratus



Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association
Membership Application
(Please Print)

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Last First Middle Init.

Address: _____ Date Of Birth: _____

City: _____ Telephone Number _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Sponsored By: _____

Summer Address
On Reverse

Military Service

Branch of Service	Service Number	From:	To:
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Medals/Campaign Ribbons

Type	Date(s)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Continue awards on reverse if necessary)

List Combat Units Served With, Their Location and Dates
On Reverse

(As Required)

Rank/Rate at Present, or at Retirement or Discharge: _____

Amount of Membership Dues enclosed: \$ _____ **Dues: \$25.00 Every 2 years**

Make Checks Payable to: CGCOMVETS

Signature: _____ Date: _____

IMPORTANT: Furnish a COPY of DISCHARGE, DD-214 or other Applicable Document
Attach Your Document, a check or M.O. and send To:

E. P. "ED" Burke, National Secretary
Coast Guard Combat Veterans Assoc
17728 Striley Drive, Ashton, MD 20861-9763
Msg. or Fax: (301) 570-5664

Coast Guard Combat Veterans Auxiliary Membership Application



Name: _____ Spouse: _____
Last First Init. First

Address: _____
Street or Box Number City State Zipcode

Eligibility: _____ Sponsors Name: _____
Wife, Husband, Daughter, Son, Other-Explain

Amount of Membership Dues enclosed: \$ _____ Dues: \$10.00 Every 2 Years

Make Checks Payable to: CGCVA AUX

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