



# the Quarterdeck Log

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

Volume 32, Number 4

Winter 2017

## 2019 CGCVA Convention in Charleston, SC

*North Charleston Marriott Hotel will be site of biennial event April 15-18*

The CGCVA Convention Committee is pleased to announce that Charleston, South Carolina has been selected as the destination for the Association’s 2019 convention/reunion, April 15-18, an “in-season” time for Charleston. Much time and effort was dedicated to this effort and we know that you will be pleased with the selection of the North Charleston Marriott Hotel for hosting the event. The hotel has been completely renovated in 2017 with a spacious lobby, bar, dining area, ballroom and exercise room.

The North Charleston Marriott “blends modern accommodations infused with Southern charm and state-of-the-art technology” and is located a quick 11 minute drive to the downtown area with all its shops and tourist spots with many historic sights to see and experience.



The hotel offers free shuttle service between the airport and hotel every 30 minutes as well as the nearby Target Outlet.

The Convention Committee selected Charleston because it is a destination location that presents the perfect combination for attendees, offering a great

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## Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

### ELECTED OFFICERS

National President — Stephen Petersen, LM  
National Vice President — Terrence O'Connell, LM  
National Secretary/Treasurer — Gary Sherman, LM,

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman — PNP Michael Placencia, LM  
Two-Term — William Figone, LM & PNP Gil Benoit, LM  
One-Term — Bruce Bruni & Robert Macleod, LM

### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE\*

National Secretary/Treasurer  
P.O. Box 777

Havre de Grace, MD 21078

Phone: (610) 539-1000

E-mail: [cgcva@comcast.net](mailto:cgcva@comcast.net)

Website: [www.coastguardcombatvets.org](http://www.coastguardcombatvets.org)

\*use the Administrative Office for contact with the CGCVA on all matters except *QD Log* submissions.

### THE QUARTERDECK LOG

Editor In Chief — PNP Ed Swift, LM  
(Send submissions to [swiftie1@verizon.net](mailto:swiftie1@verizon.net))

### AUXILIARY OFFICERS

National President — Javaughn Miller  
National Vice President — Beverly Johnson  
National Secretary/Treasurer — Mimi Placencia

### APPOINTED OFFICERS

**By-Laws** — Thomas W. Hart, LM; **Convention Planners** — PNP Mike Placencia, LM, Gary Sherman, LM, and Bruce Bruni, LM; **Membership** — PNP Mike Placencia, LM; **Parliamentarian** — (Vacant); **Historian** — PNP Paul C. Scotti, LM; **Service Officers** — Thomas Huckelberry, LM; Richard Hogan, Jr., LM, and Floyd Hampton, LM; **Budget Director** — Gary Sherman, LM; **Chaplain** — Vince Patton, LM; **Master at Arms** — (Vacant); **Webmaster** — Richard Ames; **Nominating Chairman** — Bill Figone, LM; **Cape May Liaison** — Tom Dougherty, LM and John Schubert, LM; **MEAP**: Ed Bachand, LM and PNP Ed Swift, LM.

## From the President

Ahoy Shipmates,

It is with extreme pleasure to announce that Reunion/Convention Planners Bruce Bruni, Gary Sherman and Mike Placencia have selected Charleston, South Carolina as the official site where we will hold our Association 2019 reunion. All suggested sites by the membership were evaluated and considered. There were several site visits, numerous e-mails and phone calls made during the process, looking for the best possible location. It is not an easy process but their efforts paid off. I believe that Charleston is going to be a big hit with the membership.



*Steve Petersen*



Years ago, while traveling through Mississippi, from an association event, I came across The Veterans Memorial Museum in Laurel, Mississippi. This is a real

Next *QD Log* deadline is May 1, 2018.  
Please email articles and photos to the editor at: [swiftie1@verizon.net](mailto:swiftie1@verizon.net)

## From the President

fine museum that honors our veterans. Like many other places we visit, there was an absence of Coast Guard memorabilia. I asked the curator why, and he informed me that there were very few donations from the CG, but if he had them he would gladly display them. CGCVA member Phil Kies donated his complete uniform, and even purchased the mannequin for the display, which was transported 60 miles in the back of his pickup truck. The ride was a little rough and during transit the "Capt. Phil" mannequin dislocated an arm and leg but we were able to effect repairs and donate a great piece to a quality museum. (The photo on the previous page shows me with "Capt. Phil" and Phil Kies. A few other

photos of this museum are on page 11.)

I would like to acknowledge CGCVA member John Schubert, a WWII veteran who continues to professionally represent us at Cape May graduation ceremonies; Richard Ames for his tireless work on our association website; and Richard Hogan, who continues to upgrade our small stores inventory. These guys are our hidden work force that are rarely seen or appreciated.

Additional Fast Response Cutter commissioning's are in the near future and each will include a CGCVA representative. Based on the locations of the ceremonies, you may be called upon to do the CGCVA plaque presentation. Stay well everyone!  
**Steve Petersen**

## From the Vice President

Our Association's least animate honorary life member, Chieu Hoi, has raised nearly \$4,000 for our general fund during his last dozen reunions. The monies were paid by winners of auctions who bid as much as \$500 for the privilege of being the caretaker of our illustrious mascot for a two year period. As you can see from these photos, Chieu Hoi has traveled cross-country in a golf cart, he has sat at the bar of dozens of VFWs, American Legion posts and service clubs nation-wide. He has been an honored visitor in numerous cutters and other Coast Guard units and even had hand-made products made in his image. All-in-all, he has been an Ambassador for the CGCVA and its missions and has been present while his caretakers have signed on many of our newer members. The funds that he earned have contributed to the many initiatives in which we are involved; however, Chieu Hoi's contributions have



fallen short of our fund raising goals so, if he could actually speak, he would join me in asking for your assistance in helping our Auxiliary with their silent auction at the next reunion.

Auxiliary President Javaughn Miller will be reaching out to our membership to explain the silent auction details. Please make an effort to help replenish our coffers through the sale of your donated CG-related articles during the 2019 reunion.

Your obedient servant,

**Terry O'Connell**

**Okay, so what's the speed of dark?**

## From the Secretary-Treasurer

### **Your Email Addresses Needed!**

Out of the 1,300+ members of the CGCVA, only about 450 of you have submitted your email address to me at the Administration Office. That's only about 35 per cent.

So why is your email needed? Simple — if we have your email address on file with your record, we can:

- quickly notify you of CGCVA events in your area or special regional events in your area where Coast Guard veterans are needed,
- make announcements quickly to the entire Association membership that cannot wait until the next *QD Log* issue,
- send you an email reminder on the first of the month that your dues are past due and you need to send in the money right away in order to keep your membership active,
- contact you quickly if we have a question about a payment. For instance: If the return address on your check doesn't match the return address on your envelope and neither address matches what we have in the system, we can quickly contact you to verify your

### **Welcome New Members**

<u>New Member</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
Howard L. Case	The Association
Emily H. Brockway	Mike Placencia
David Livingston	Walt Vigienzone
John D. Parker	The Association
Mike Moreno	The Association
Chester B. Boutilier	Gary Sherman

correct mailing address.

Bottom line: Email is the best current form of expedient communication available. It saves the Association money by not having to mail out postcards to let you know your dues are overdue and I simply don't have the time to telephone members for this purpose.

Please consider joining the 21st century and send us your Email address. Just type in [cgcva@comcast.net](mailto:cgcva@comcast.net) and put "email" in the subject line and we'll take it from there.

Gary Sherman



Gary Sherman

### **Crossed The Bar**

**Edward "Gene" Floyd, LM**  
**Robert H. Patterson, LM**  
**Laurence "Hal" Robbins**  
**Thomas S. Hargest, LM**  
**Richard E. Ahrens**  
**Myron Baldwin**  
**William B. Clarke, LM**  
**Robert R. Moodie, LM**

## From the QD Log Editor

Greetings Everyone,

I'm sure you all got tired of seeing my "QD Log Still Looking For an Editor" ad in the past several issues. Well, I'm delighted to announce that someone has finally agreed to take over the job. Actually it is three people — PNP Michael Placencia, Sec'y/Treas Gary Sherman and Trustee Bruce Bruni. Welcome aboard guys and thanks mucho!

As some of you know, I was using oxygen during the

2011 Convention in Herndon, Virginia. I was diagnosed with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF), a disease that has no known cause or cure. Just a month later I was using oxygen 24/7 and found it difficult to climb one flight of stairs. I began pulmonary rehab and a dialog with the Inova Fairfax Hospital Transplant Clinic. After going through many, many tests, I was eventually put on the national lung transplant list in mid-2012. By August, 2012 the disease had gone through my entire right lung

## From the QD Log Editor (cont.)

and half of my left. To compound matters, I then contracted pneumonia. After being rushed to the hospital and put in an induced coma, my wife, Mare, was told I had 24 hours. The only thing that could save me would be an immediate lung transplant. At the eleventh hour, a "nearly perfect" matched left lung was identified in Norfolk and flown to Inova. I was awakened eight days later with a new lung and no further need to use bottled oxygen. And six months ago marked five years for me post transplant.

So this may be my final issue as Editor-in-Chief and its kind of ironic. My very first *QD Log* was Vol. 8, No. 4, the Fall 1993 issue so with the completion of this one it will be over 24 years of producing the magazine for you. It has been my great pleasure and I hope I have done the Association and its members justice over the years. The magazine has undergone many changes over that time and will no doubt see many improvements with Mike, Gary and Bruce sharing the helm.

Thanks to all who provided submissions! **Swiftly**

## Auxiliary News

### ***Reunion 2019***

Our 2019 Reunion will be held in beautiful Charleston, South Carolina at the Charleston Marriott. Once again the Auxiliary has planned a Silent Auction. I'm requesting your help by asking you to donate some really new creative items for everyone to bid on. Remember, all funds raised by the Silent Auction go to the CGCVA. Operating Fund. Please complete the Auction Form on page 29. You can either email the completed form to me at [jmiller@lptribe.net](mailto:jmiller@lptribe.net), fax it to me at 619-478-2125 or mail it to 8 Crestwood Road, Boulevard CA. 91905.

And don't forget if you didn't renew your CGCVA Auxiliary membership last reunion or want to renew early you can use the form below and mail in your money to CGCVA Auxiliary Treasurer Mimi Placencia at 9804 Iroquois Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93312. Chu Hoi and I look forward to seeing you in Charleston. **Javaughn**



*Javaughn Miller  
Auxiliary President*

## COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS ASSOCIATION AUXILIARY & ASSOCIATE MEMBER APPLICATION

Membership Type: Auxiliary: \_\_\_\_\_ Associate: \_\_\_\_\_ New: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal: \_\_\_\_\_ Returning: \_\_\_\_\_  
Two-year membership May 20\_\_\_\_\_ to May 20\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues: \$15 for two-year membership.** Make check or Money order payable to: CGCVA Auxiliary Assn.  
Mail to: Mimi Placencia National Secretary-Treasurer, 9804 Iroquois Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93312

Auxiliary Membership Qualifications: Family of members of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Assn. 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](mailto:mimiplacencia@hotmail.com) or (661) 444-0186

### **CG Vietnam Vet Honored**

The mayday call came over the radio on the night of Feb. 23, 1969, alerting 25-year-old Kent Williams and his crew that a U.S. naval gunfire liaison unit was under attack by more than 100 North Vietnamese soldiers, and was in danger of being overrun.

The Coast Guard crew sailed in on its 82-foot patrol boat until the group was 50 yards off the shore, and started shooting .50-caliber machine guns. Thirty minutes in, they started receiving rocket fire from the enemy.

“Your choice is fight or flight. Do I stay here? Or do I pull back off 500 yards where the rockets can't get me?

But I can't do a whole lot for those guys on the beach,” said Williams, 74, now a retired vice admiral. “Once you buy into the mission that you're there to support them, to protect them, you're not going off the beach.”

Williams was one of four Coast Guard Academy graduates to be inducted into the school's Hall of Fame recently. The others, inducted posthumously, were Vice Adm. Thomas R. Sargent, Capt. John M. Austin, and Adm. John B. Hayes. (Note: Sargent and Austin were CGCVA)

For four hours, Williams and his crew of 14 men exchanged fire with the enemy, virtually exhausting their ammunition supply. About 3 a.m., Feb. 24, it was announced that the enemy had been stopped. They

### **QD Log Booster Club**

The printing and postage for the *QD Log* is by far the largest expense item we have and it was determined that if every member contributed \$10 or more to the QD Log 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 as “QD Log Booster Club”) and all those contributing will have their names listed in the subsequent magazine. Contribution amounts will not be published but all contributions are greatly appreciated. We have been told many times we have the best reunion magazine out there and we'd like to keep it that way. Since publication of our last magazine, the following individuals have made donations and become members of the QD Log Boosters Club:

**R. E. Ahrens  
David Peverly  
George Moberg**

**Gary Fortner  
John Macfeat  
Christopher Murphy  
Richard “Archie” Pelley**

**Daniel Bothe  
James Bell  
Herb Cohen**

**Anthony Kopke  
Carol Logue  
Thomas Dougherty**

**Mike and Mimi Placencia IMO Ed Floyd**

**Michael A. Johnson IMO Ed Floyd**

**Christopher “Woody” Wood IMO CGC Chase shipmates who have CTB**

**Brance McCune IMO Kim McCulloch, DVM, USMC Vietnam vet**

**Thomas J. Johnson IMO my grandson, Matthew J. Moser**

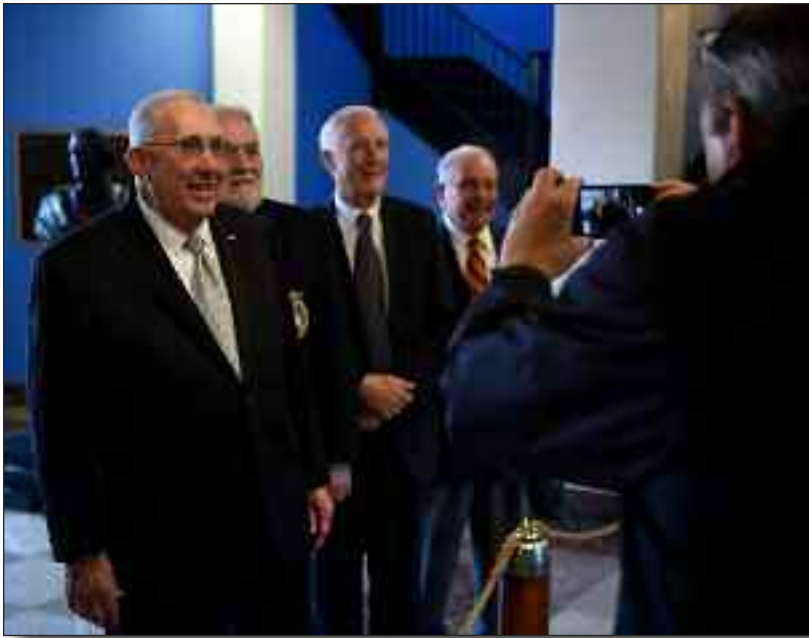
**Richard Gobble IMO Vice Admiral Thomas and Lucy Sargent**

**Lance Jones IMO Howie Block**

**Emmett Knapton, Sr. IMO Ginny LeClair Knapton**

Thanks to all to have become QD Log Booster Club members so far! All contributions are appreciated!

And remember, these deductions are tax deductible as we are 501.c.



*(Left) Retired Coast Guard Vice Admiral Kent H. Williams, left, poses for a photo with fellow members of the class of 1965, from left to right, Angelo Arecchi, Bill Carr and Lloyd George on the quarterdeck of Chase Hall on Thursday, November 9, 2017. Williams toured the academy with his family, fellow members of the class of 1965 and family of three other Wall of Gallantry inductees today prior to the official induction ceremonies. Williams, as a Lieutenant in 1969, in command of the patrol boat Point Young, WPB 82303, provided gunfire support of a unit on shore and maintained position and fire support through a night under fire from North Vietnamese forces. (Sean D. Elliot/The New London Day)*

### *US Icebreaker Suffers Flooding, Engine Failure in Antarctic*

America's aging, sole remaining heavy icebreaker suffered several engineering challenges, including flooding and engine failure, on its way to completing a recent mission in the Antarctic, highlighting the U.S.' need for new polar icebreakers.

The 1970s-era U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Polar Star* is called upon each year to aid the delivery of fuel and supplies for National Science Foundation research stations in Antarctica, carving a navigable path through the Ross Sea where seasonal and multi-year ice is sometimes as much as 10 feet thick.

During this year's Operation Deep Freeze mission, *Polar Star* suffered the failure of one of its three main gas turbines on January 11. The crew was able to continue the mission without the turbine after a programming issue was discovered and troubleshot between the engine and the cutter's 40-plus years old



*Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star breaks ice in McMurdo Sound near Antarctica in January 2018 (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Nick Ameen)*

were going back to North Vietnam. The naval unit was safe.

Williams' crew did not suffer any injuries, and the boat was miraculously undamaged. He was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat "V" device, and was cited for outstanding leadership and courage under fire. Williams and his crew, whom he called heroes, never assumed they would receive any recognition from that night; they were just doing their job, he said.

"You don't do it for any medal," said Williams, dressed in a suit, during a brief interview at the academy before being inducted into the hall of fame. His friend and classmate, William Carr, a 2015 Hall of Fame inductee, sat next to him, filming the interview on his phone.

"Friends for 50-plus years to share in this moment with me as well as my family who supported me through roughly 24 moves in 32 years," said Williams, who lives in San Antonio, Texas.

Williams commanded the *Point Young* for only one month, taking over in the interim for the previous commanding officer until his replacement arrived.

During the year that he served in Vietnam, Williams patrolled in three different patrol boats, including the *Point Young*.

"Yeah, I couldn't keep a job," he joked while seated in a room adjacent to where a plaque, honoring his 32-year service, now hangs on the wall in Chase Hall on the academy's grounds. **Julia Bergman, New London Day**

electrical system.

Problems continued on January 16, when *Polar Star's* shaft seal failed causing the engine room to flood. The crew stopped the flow using an emergency shaft seal and dewatered the engineering space to make more permanent repairs to the seal.

No injuries were reported as result of either incident.

"Although we had less ice this year than last year, we had several engineering challenges to overcome to get to the point where we could position ourselves to moor in McMurdo," said Capt. Michael Davanzo, the

commanding officer of the *Polar Star*. "Our arrival was delayed due to these challenges."

The 399-foot cutter went on to refuel at McMurdo Station, Antarctica on January 18 and continued to develop and maintain the ice channel in preparation for two U.S. Military Sealift Command resupply ships, *Ocean Giant* and *Maersk Peary*, in the days following. *Polar Star* is expected to return to the U.S. in March.

"The crewmembers aboard *Polar Star* not only accomplished their mission, but they did so despite extreme weather and numerous engineering

### *Birth of the "Bender Blues"*

I was reading the "Racing Stripe — Fifty Years of Coast Guard Brand Identity" in the Spring 2017 QD Log. The article described the rescue by the CGC Pontchartrain of all passengers from a Pan American plane that ditched at sea in 1956 while on Ocean Station November. One grateful survivor stepped aboard the cutter and expressed thanks to the "Navy" rescue! I know that many old timers remember well being asked, "How's the Navy since we wore Navy Blues with only the small Coast Guard shield on the sleeve.

I write this as I was present when our present day distinct uniform (nicknamed Bender Blues) was birthed.

Fast forward to 1965 when then Rear Admiral Chester Bender was 9th District commander in Cleveland. I was his aide as a former YN1, newly minted ensign. We were in Chicago where Admiral Bender was guest of honor at an event hosted by the governor of Illinois. More than once he was identified as a member of the Navy. After the 3-day conclave we got on our plane to return to Cleveland. I could tell he was annoyed. He was a man of few words. As I sat and listened he expressed his frustration and blurted out, "I'm damned tired of being mis-identified as a member of the Navy! We need our own uniform and I'm going to see what I can do to get it."

Fast forward to 1970. Admiral Bender is appointed commandant of the Coast Guard and soon starts the process for a new uniform which garnered the name "Bender Blues". The rest is history!

A side note: In 1972, I was serving as aide to Assistant Commandant Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent. Admiral Bender's aide, LCDR John Faigle, and myself were the first to wear and model the new uniform. Like the Coast Guard Racing Stripe, I believe the new uniform largely solved the problem of the Coast Guard being mis-identified as Navy. I proudly wore my "Bender Blues" until retiring in 1976.



*LCDR Richard Gobble modeling the "new" Bender Blues uniform at CGHQ in 1972.*

**LCDR Richard "Dick" Gobble, USCG (Ret.)**



challenges,” said Vice Adm. Fred Midgette, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area.

However, *Polar Star’s* mechanical problems follow similar issues faced in recent years and further highlight America’s need for new heavy icebreakers, especially as maritime traffic is increasing through the Northern Sea Route and Northwest Passage, and countries such as Russia continue to bolster their polar icebreaking fleets.

*Polar Star*, which was built more than 40 years ago, is the only operational heavy icebreaker in the U.S. fleet after sister ship *Polar Sea*, also commissioned in 1976, was taken out of service in 2010 due to major engineering problems. The medium icebreaker *USCGC Healy* entered service in 1999, but its ability to operate in heavy ice is limited.

“If the *Polar Star* were to suffer a catastrophic mechanical failure, the nation would not be able to support heavy icebreaker missions like Operation Deep Freeze, and our nation has no vessel capable of rescuing the crew if the icebreakers were to fail in the ice,” Midgette said.

**Eric Haun**  
web editor of [MarineLink.com](http://MarineLink.com)

### **TRICARE Users No Longer Need Referrals for Urgent Care**

TRICARE Prime enrollees will now have an easier time accessing urgent medical care. As of Jan. 1st, most TRICARE Prime users won't need referrals for urgent-care visits — something that was previously required after the first two urgent-care visits each year. Point-of-service charges also will no longer apply for urgent-care claims, the Defense Health Agency announced.

Active duty servicemembers should still use military hospitals and clinics for their medical care. Those enrolled in TRICARE Prime Remote who don't live near a military hospital or clinic, however, won't need a referral when seeking urgent care.

Those on TRICARE Select or any other TRICARE plan can visit any authorized provider — in or out of network — for urgent care

Urgent care is for non-emergency illnesses or injuries requiring treatment within 24 hours. Examples, according to the DHA, include a sprain, a rising temperature, or a sore throat.

### **Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial**



In late November our Association received a thank-you letter from the Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial Foundation, Inc., for our \$1,000 donation. The CGCVA also donated \$1,000 a couple years ago when the project was first getting off the ground. Hopefully, this fitting memorial, which will honor all those Coast Guard enlisted men and women killed in the line of duty, will soon be erected. CGCVA members who wish to contribute individually can send donations to: Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 476, Cape May, N.J. 08204. Donations are tax deductible.

If you're not sure whether to seek urgent care, you can call the 24/7 Nurse Advice Line at (800) TRICARE (874-2273) — Option 1, according to the release. A registered nurse can answer questions, give advice, and assist with finding a provider or scheduling an appointment.

Urgent care can serve as a good option if you're traveling or your primary doctor is unavailable. TRICARE users can find a nearby facility by using the provider-search tool.

Any TRICARE Overseas Prime users in need of care while on temporary duty or leave status in the U.S. may access urgent care without a referral or an authorization. Active duty troops must follow up with their primary-care manager, though, per DoD and service-specific regulations.

### **Helping You Understand Your TRICARE Benefit**

Do you have questions about your TRICARE medical

and dental benefit? The TRICARE publications webpage at <https://tricare.mil/publications> can help you find the answers.

You can view, print or download TRICARE handbooks, newsletters and other educational materials. Select categories from the sub-headings or use the search field to search all publications. You'll find products ranging from broad topics like the TRICARE Plans Overview to detailed topics like the Maternity Care Brochure. Products are continuously updated and added. If you have suggestions for new products or feedback about existing products, we would love to hear from you. Fill out the publications survey so we can better serve you!

This is your benefit. Learn more about the 2018 changes at <https://www.tricare.mil/changes>, visit the publications page at [www.tricare.mil/publications](http://www.tricare.mil/publications) and take command of your health!

### *CG-Manned Navy Ships in WWII*

I really enjoyed reading the article of the *USS Cambria PA 36* by Albert Duffield in the Fall 2017 *QD Log*.

Here's a few additional facts about that time:

- The Coast Guard crewed nine Navy amphibious ships.
- They were involved in every invasion in the Atlantic and Pacific in WW2
- *USS Callaway PA-35* was hit with a kamikazes attack with many KIA.
- *USS Cavalier PA-37* was torpedoed January 30th 1945

A monument to all the nine ships is located at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. **Herb Cohen**

**USS Cavalier PA-37**

### *Coast Guard Eyes Leasing Civilian Jail Ship to Hold Detainees*

After a year in which the Coast Guard made a record number of maritime drug interdictions and sent unprecedented numbers of drug smugglers to the United States to stand trial, the service is considering the possibility of investing in a platform that would do nothing but hold detainees until they can be transported to the mainland.

Last November, *The New York Times* published an investigative story decrying the conditions under which suspected smugglers are held aboard Coast Guard vessels, sometimes for weeks or months at a time.

It quoted a former Coast Guard attorney who referred to the ships as "floating Guantanos" and detailed conditions that are often cramped and sometimes frigid aboard the service's cutters.

For the record, the commandant of the Coast Guard, Adm. Paul Zukunft, has little sympathy to spare for these detainees.

"We can't lose sight of the fact that these individuals who were detained, they're peddling poison. They are responsible for 64,000 deaths in the U.S.," Zukunft told [Military.com](http://Military.com) during an exclusive interview in December. "These aren't just down-on-their-luck fishermen; they have a choice. You can either fish, or you can be a criminal."

### *Gulf War Anniversary*



The week of January 15th marked the 27th anniversary of Operation Desert Storm. Also referred to as the "Persian Gulf War", it was a coalition of 38 countries led by the U.S. against Iraqi's occupation of Kuwait. From beginning to end, the war lasted 43 days. Nearly 700,000 U.S. troops took part in the war and 299 lost their lives. Last year, many veterans organizations supported legislation that approved Washington D.C. as the location for the memorial to those who served on active duty of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

The *Times* story was told sympathetically from the perspective of one of these detainees, who described scant meals and fear due to being separated from family. Zukunft called it slanted and without an appreciation for the conditions under which the Coast Guard crews themselves work and live below decks.

The Hamilton class of high-endurance cutters has been

in service since 1965, and still has four ships in active service.

“Go below deck and look at where my crew is berthing,” Zukunft said. “The living conditions in any prison system in the United States [are] better than the berthing areas in my 52-year-old ships. We are operating out of prisons.”

### *Veterans Memorial Museum: Honoring the Sacrifices of our Heroes*

As reported on “From the President” on page 3, the Veterans Memorial Museum in Laurel, Mississippi had no Coast Guard display of any kind until CGCVA member Capt. Phil Kies, assisted by president Steve Petersen, provided a mannequin complete with full USCG captain’s uniform recently. The museum curator would be more than happy to receive and display additional USCG items. Their address is 920 Hillcrest Drive in Laurel, MS 39440 and their phone number is 601-428-4008.

Tucked into the center of a 10-county area, the museum was developed by a concerned group of veterans who wanted to offer a learning center for students and citizens of Southeast Mississippi. The 6,000 square foot museum houses hundreds of artifacts, as well as a reference library that includes books,



newspapers and documents from all war eras. They have over 200 movies and documentaries for viewing and offer frequent programs such as speakers, book signings, reenactments, dinners and special events.





*A boarding team aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton apprehends four suspected drug smugglers in international waters in the drug transit zone of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, February 23, 2017. (U.S. Coast Guard photo/Mark Barney)*

While detainees were in the open air above deck, Zukunft said temperate climates in and around the U.S. Southern Command area of operations mitigate some of the hardship of exposure to the elements.

But while Zukunft said he isn't too concerned about the conditions these suspected smugglers have to contend with, he has other reasons for wanting to get out of the floating jail business.

"We're spending about a third of our ship time right now moving these detainees from one ship to another to provide them the best creature comforts at sea until we can land them in Panama, which is the only country right now that will accept detainees for further transport back to the United States," he said.

There's just one other option available to Coast Guard cutters: to transit through the Panama Canal and reach Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In light of these challenging logistics, which contribute to the length of time detainees can spend on a Coast Guard vessel, Zukunft said the service is exploring the possibility of leasing a dedicated commercial vessel that would do nothing but hold suspects until they can be transferred to the United States.

The ship might actually be leased through the Department of Defense or SouthCom. It might be something like a commercial offshore supply vessel — a platform abundantly available given limited offshore

drilling activity.

While it would be a civilian ship, Zukunft said it would be staffed with Coast Guard law enforcement augmentees to supervise the detained population.

Though not the primary goal, he added that one outcome of acquiring such a vessel might be improved conditions for prisoners.

"That might have better accommodations than we have on ships with flight decks and helicopter hangars to at least get people out of the elements," Zukunft said. **Hope Hodge Seck**

### ***VA Photo IDs Now Available Through Online Application***

In 2015, a law was passed that requires the Dept. of Veterans Affairs to issue a hard-copy photo ID to any honorably discharged veteran who applies. Now, those honorably discharged veterans can apply online for the photo ID,

which can be used in place of DD-214 forms as verification of service for discounts on goods and services offered to veterans by public and private institutions.

To apply for the card, veterans must register with [vets.gov](http://vets.gov), a process that authenticates users through the ID.me system, similar to registering for eBenefits.

Registering requires users to upload a copy of a valid government photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport, and provide their Social Security number, among other information. No protected information will be printed on the ID card.

To complete the card application process, users must then upload a recent photo to the VA site that can be printed on the ID. The cards will be mailed directly to the veteran.

The new cards will not qualify as official government issued IDs for air travel or other uses.

To find out more, visit: [vets.gov/veteran-id-card](http://vets.gov/veteran-id-card).

**The colder the x-ray table, the more of your body is required to be on it.**

**Everyone has a photographic memory; some just don't have film.**

**If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.**

(continued from front page 1)

venue for the convention and vacationing activities. We hope that you will consider attending, making it a memorable experience for you, your guests and the Association.

Why Charleston? It is a beautiful city, visited by thousands of tourists each year and has been selected as the Number One tourism city in America and the Number Two in the world for five consecutive years by Travel and Leisure Magazine, July 2017 edition. There are a host of things to see and do in Charleston, including:

### HISTORIC KING STREET

Historic King Street is more than 300 years old,



*(Left) St. Michael's Episcopal Church, one of many old and beautiful churches whose steeples dot the Charleston's skyline.*

named as one of the "country's top 10 shopping streets" by US News and World Report. "Crossing through the middle of the Charleston peninsula, its wide, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, chic boutiques, antique shops, three-story brick and stucco buildings, and central location make it easy to see why King Street is an unforgettable dining and shopping experience."

Charleston's most historic taverns and pubs can be found along upper King Street. There are a number of European-style pub tours that can be arranged to visit many of these fine establishments while hearing tales of Charleston's magnificent history.



*(Far left) Carriage Tours. Palmetto Carriage Works is the largest and oldest carriage company in the city and a great way to tour some of the historical districts.*



*(Left) Charleston's City Market*

named after King Charles II, and was the main thoroughfare into Charlestown. The revitalized King Street was

### CHARLESTON'S CITY MARKET

The three buildings (called "sheds") of Charleston's market, one of the city's most visited sites, has survived two centuries of earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados and devastating war. Local entrepreneurs have the opportunity to sell their antique wares that keep visitors and locals coming back again and again.

### FORT SUMTER

The first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter. Located just a 30-minute relaxing harbor cruise tour from Charleston, where passengers receive a historical narrative as they prepare to explore the battlements of this site.



*(Left) Aerial view of Fort Sumter*

## CHARLESTON'S HISTORIC BATTERY

The 1737 Broughton's Battery (later known as Fort Wilkens) was in service until the mid-1780s and then decommissioned in 1789. Its wall and promenade was retained and finished in the 1820s. There are many historic antibellum home that line the wall which has a fantastic view of Fort Sumter, Sullivan's Lighthouse and Castle Pinckney.

## RAINBOW ROW

Charleston's iconic Rainbow Row was an area of houses that were considered slums after the Civil War, through the early 1900s. In the 1920s, a number of these dwellings were purchased by innovative individuals who began renovating a handful of homes. One of these owners, Dorothy Porcher Legge, began painting the properties she owned with pastel colors, similar to what is found in the Caribbean islands. Thus began the effort



*Rainbow Row*

to paint the houses in this area with pastel paints, thereby earning the name "Rainbow Row".

## THE CITADEL

The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, is located in Charleston. Founded in 1842, there is a Corps of Cadets numbering about 2,300 students, with another 1,000 students attending the school's graduate program. "For the seventh straight year, the Citadel has been recognized by the News and World Report as the South's top public college for institutions granting up to a master's degree." The Citadel holds a parade each Friday afternoon that is open to viewing by the public.

These are just a few of the areas to experience while

attending the 2019 CGCVA convention. There are a number of tour companies that offer walking tours, tours by horse drawn carriage and even harbor cruises. We hope that you take advantage of these activities during the times there is no CGCVA business being conducted.

If you choose to remain in Charleston a few extra days after the conclusion of the convention, the Marriott will offer the same reduced room rate, if booked when booking your initial stay.

Upcoming QD Log issues will publish convention registration information and forms, as well as the Marriott's link for our convention to receive the discounted room price. You'll also be able to check the CGCVA Facebook page and webpage for periodic updates between now and April 2019.

We are confident that you will find the 2019 convention to be one that you will remember for many years to come. We look forward to seeing you and your guests at the convention.

**Convention Committee  
(Bruce Bruni, Mike Placencia and Gary Sherman)**



*(Left) Weekly parade of cadets at the Citadel.*

# Commodore Barry and the Battle of Little River

by William H. Thiesen, PhD, Atlantic Area Historian

*[At] about 1 p.m. five launches of men (about 250) started from them [Royal Navy ships] for the harbor. In a few minutes the firing commenced and continued for nearly two hours, then it ceased.*

**Maine fisherman who witnessed the Battle of Little River, August 3rd, 1812**



*Artist's rendering of a revenue cutter from the War of 1812 era. (Coast Guard Collection)*

In the quote above, an anonymous Maine fisherman recounted the engagement between Revenue Cutter *Commodore Barry* and units of the Royal Navy. It was the first of many wartime encounters between revenue cutters and the enemy in which brave cuttermen were vastly outnumbered and outgunned yet fought bravely nonetheless.

During the War of 1812, revenue cutters pursued their missions in American waters despite regular patrols by units of the Royal Navy. Missions of the revenue cutters included law enforcement and interdicting smugglers and the busiest areas for smuggling included the U.S. border with Canada. To

*(Right) Watercolor painting by Irwin Bevan of the Battle for Little River depicting the vastly outnumbered Commodore Barry crew defending their cutter on August 3rd, 1812. (Mariners Museum Collection)*



*Section of antique chart showing rocky shore of Downeast Maine and Little River Harbor (lower left) located between Machias and Campobello Island. (NOAA Chart Collection)*

deal with smuggling between Canada and Maine, the Treasury Department relied on cutters, such as the *Commodore Barry*. Purchased on Long Island in March 1812, the two-masted six-gun schooner began service in the spring under the command of Maine revenue cutter master Daniel Elliott.

In early summer 1812, the *Barry* patrolled the



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Passamaquoddy District of Maine, located along the border with Canada. The cutter apprehended numerous smuggling vessels and brought them into port for adjudication by local courts. On June 27th, the *Barry*

a local court adjudicated the cases of three more vessels seized by Barry for carrying illegal British cargoes.

In the summer of 1812, the Royal Navy's Halifax squadron deployed on a mission to capture or destroy American shipping along the Maine coast. Comprised of 38-gun frigate *HMS Spartan*, 36-gun frigate *HMS Maidstone*, 18-gun brig *HMS Indian* and 12-gun brig *HMS Plumper*, the squadron deployed to Downeast Maine near the border with British Canada. On Sunday, August 2nd, Master Elliott first learned of this squadron after hearing cannon fire between the British warships and armed American privateers in Haycock Harbor, to the east of his anchorage in Little River, near Machias. By then, it was too



*Prison camp on Melville Island in Halifax, home to three Commodore Barry cuttermen after their capture. (Oakville Public Library, Ontario, Canada)*

seized the schooner *Cranberry* for carrying British goods in U.S. waters. Next day, the *Barry* escorted the *Cranberry* withdetained schooners *Theresa* and *Rising Sun* from Eastport, Maine, back to Portland. Just a day after arriving in Portland, Commodore Barry detained the schooner *Nymph* for carrying an illegal cargo. In all, the revenue cutter apprehended five smuggling vessels and, early in August,

late to escape and there was nowhere to hide. For self-defense, Elliott beached the cutter next to the American

*(Right) A flintlock pistol from 1810 similar to those used by cuttermen during the War of 1812. (Coast Guard Collection)*



privateer Madison and the two ships' crews set up shore batteries behind fortifications improvised from cordwood. At about 1:00pm on August 3rd, the British deployed five armed barges with approximately 250 officers and men to attack the trapped American crews and their makeshift defenses. The British paid dearly for the attack, suffering as many as 20 dead and wounded, but they carried the day. All but three of the cutter's crew escaped into the woods, and these three cuttermen became the first POWs in Coast Guard history. The British took their prisoners to Halifax, where they were the first of many cuttermen incarcerated at

*(Left) Naval style cutlass similar to those used on board cutter Commodore Barry. (Coast Guard Collection)*

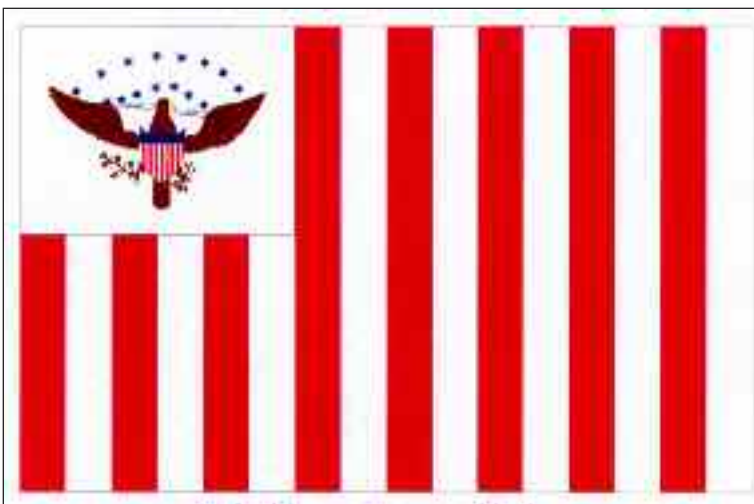


the military prison on Melville Island.

After the battle, the British troops plundered the surrounding area, burned the beached privateer and re-floated the cutter. When the squadron sailed for Saint John, Nova Scotia, it brought along the *Commodore Barry*. Local authorities there had been searching for a vessel to protect local merchant shipping from

American privateers and purchased the *Barry* to serve that role. Saint John authorities fitted out the former cutter, re-named her *Brunswick* and sailed her until July 4th, 1815, when they sold the vessel out of service.

Master Daniel Elliott continued to serve as a revenue cutter officer for his district even after the loss of his cutter. After the capture of the *Barry*, Elliott took command of the smaller, but swift revenue boat *Income*, stationed out of Machias. By September of 1813, the newspapers reported that the revenue boat had captured a former prize ship captured by the British privateer *Dart* and sent to Halifax. The captured schooner had a British prize crew on board, except for one American prisoner, who piloted the schooner



*A facsimile of the Revenue Cutter Service ensign flown during the War of 1812. (Coast Guard Collection)*

through thick fog into the hands of Elliott and his revenue boat.

In February 1814, while sailing off Jonesport, Maine, Elliott encountered the British privateer *Hare* of St. Johns. Elliott beached the *Income* at nearby Sawyer Cove and his crew took cover with small arms. The privateer's armed landing party rowed to shore to seize the revenue boat. With the aid of local militiamen,

Elliott's crew killed one, wounded two and captured another of the British landing party before the privateersmen escaped back to their ship. In addition, on March 4th, 1814, Elliott took possession of British prize vessel *Porpoise* from the American privateer *Nonsuch* and sent the captured vessel to Machias for adjudication.

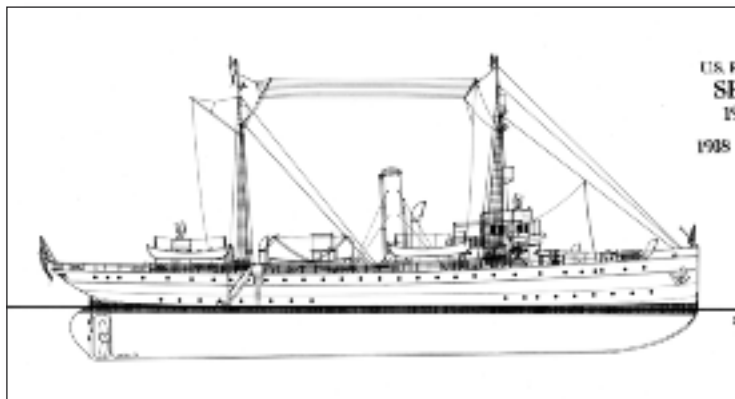
War of 1812 cuttermen, such as Master Daniel Elliott and the brave crew of *Commodore Barry*, are now long forgotten and lost to the cobwebs of history. But these men who went in harm's way to defend American freedom deserve recognition as some of the earliest heroes to walk the long blue line.

## Four Missions that made Cutter Seneca Famous

by William H. Thiesen, PhD, Atlantic Area Historian

*Cutter Seneca (WMEC-906)* is part of the U.S. Coast Guard's "Famous"-Class of medium-endurance cutters. Many may wonder why the modern *Seneca's* namesake became "famous" until they learn of the original *Seneca's* heroic twenty-eight year career. Destroying derelict ships, saving lives in World War I, initiating the International Ice Patrol, and capturing rumrunners during Prohibition--these missions were a part of the

*(Right) Profile view of Seneca in her original configuration as a "derelict destroyer." (Coast Guard Collection)*



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*Seneca in her original black hull paint scheme from her Revenue Cutter Service years. (Coast Guard Collection)*

first *Seneca's* story.

Named for one of five Iroquois tribes of western New York, the first *Seneca* was built by Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Company in Virginia, and commissioned in 1908. She was designed as a "derelict destroyer" with her principal mission to locate and destroy abandoned wrecks still afloat and a menace to navigation. She had excellent sea-keeping qualities, long cruising range, good towing capability, and ample storage capacity for munitions. On November 29th, 1908, she destroyed her first derelict, a wreck off Hog Island, near the Bronx, and then returned to her station at Tompkinsville, New York, on Staten Island. Derelict destruction would remain one of her primary missions in the first part of her Coast Guard career.

In March 1913, *Seneca* was assigned to the International Ice Patrol. The *Titanic* disaster of 1912 had shocked the public on both sides of the Atlantic, initiating the 1913 Safety of Life at Sea Convention in England and establishment of the International Ice Patrol. Two U.S. Navy scout cruisers performed the patrol during the 1912 ice season, tracking icebergs and reporting their location to ships in the

*(Right) Seneca in the background with her original black hull paint scheme. (Coast Guard Collection)*

North Atlantic. However after the 1912 season, the Navy could no longer spare warships for patrols, so the Revenue Cutter Service assumed the duty. In 1913, *Seneca* and sister cutter *Miami* became the first two cutters to perform this duty steaming out of Halifax, Nova Scotia. *Seneca* conducted further ice patrols through the spring of 1916 after which she began service in World War I. In the spring of 1920, she returned to ice patrol duty and continued to do so well into the 1920s.

With the outbreak of war in Europe, *Seneca* cooperated with Navy warships to enforce neutrality of the United States. Later, she joined *Ossipee*, *Yamacraw*, *Algonquin*, *Manning* and *Tampa* to form



*Painting from the Coast Guard collection depicting a cutter destroying a derelict. (Coast Guard Collection)*

Squadron 2, Division 6, of the Navy's Atlantic Fleet based at Gibraltar. During the war, she escorted hundreds of vessels through the sub-infested waters between Gibraltar and the British Isles and performed patrol and escort duties in the Mediterranean.

During the conflict, *Seneca* also performed her



*(Right) Photo from 1915 ice patrol showing Seneca behind an iceberg. (Coast Guard Collection)*



traditional missions. Early in the morning of March 25th, 1918, the British naval sloop *Cowslip* steamed out of Gibraltar to meet a convoy escorted by *Seneca*. *Cowslip* was struck and almost broken in two by a German torpedo. Warned to stay away because of the presence of enemy submarines, *Seneca* followed the laws of her service, and three times stopped to send off small boats to take on survivors. These boats saved two officers and seventy-



*Faded photo of Seneca during her World War I service. (Coast Guard Collection)*

nine enlisted men. In late June, *Seneca* saved twenty-seven more men from the torpedoed British merchant steamer *Queen*. And, when the British merchant steamer *Wellington* was torpedoed in mid-September, a volunteer crew from *Seneca* attempted to save the vessel. The ship finally foundered on September 17th, and eleven Coast Guardsmen lost their lives trying to save her. All twenty of *Seneca's*

*Painting of the SS Wellington with Seneca in the background. This rescue effort is the most honored combat-related operation in Service history. (Coast Guard Collection)*



boarding party received the Navy Cross Medal, and one received the Distinguished Service Medal, making this event the most honored combat-related mission in Service history.

Late in August 1919, *Seneca* returned to the Treasury Department and her former station at Tompkinsville. Soon after, she began illegal liquor interdiction and enforcement of laws under Prohibition. On November 15th, 1923, *Seneca* received orders to seize *Tamoka* and arrest her crew. This vessel belonged to notorious rumrunner Bill McCoy, and had peddled liquor off the East Coast between the

Canadian border and the Bahamas. In the morning of November 24th, *Seneca* hailed *Tomoka* and ordered her

to heave to and prepare to be boarded. At first, *Tomoka* raised a British flag and cruised about so *Seneca's* boarding party could not overtake her. *Seneca* called general quarters, cast loose her forward gun, and ordered *Tomoka* to allow the boarding party on board. *Tomoka* appeared to comply and *Seneca* began steaming for the Ambrose Channel. Instead, *Tomoka* chased off the boarding party with a machine gun and did not follow the cutter.

*Seneca* returned, located her boarding party and instructed *Tomoka* that she would be fired upon unless she proceeded to New York. The rumrunner started in the cutter's direction then reversed course and turned toward the open ocean. *Seneca* gave chase, fired a shot across her bow then fired three more warning shots. The next shot was fired to hit and landed a few feet from *Tomoka*. The rumrunner finally stopped her engines and heaved to. *Seneca* mustered another boarding party, which boarded *Tomoka* and ordered her crew below deck. No further difficulty was encountered and *Seneca* turned over *Tomoka*, her crew and infamous master Bill McCoy to New York authorities.

From the mid- to late-1920s, *Seneca* continued her derelict destruction, law enforcement and ice patrol missions. In the early 1930s, she changed stations from New York to Puerto Rico and served there and the Gulf Coast until the mid-1930s. In early 1936, she enjoyed



*(Left) Image of the Navy Cross Medal, the medal awarded to twenty Seneca crewmembers. Many of Seneca's medals were bestowed posthumously. (Courtesy of Wikipedia)*

one last service highlight, when a big freeze came over the Mid-Atlantic coast. The Chesapeake Bay froze solid, stranding many vessels in the ice and *Seneca* was called to the rescue. In late February, she remained busy breaking ice and assisting ice-bound vessels, freeing five of them. In the spring of 1936 *Seneca* was decommissioned at the Coast Guard Depot. However, she returned to Coast Guard service in 1941. In 1942 she was turned over to the State of Pennsylvania and renamed *Keystone State* for use in training merchant marine cadets from Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New York. She was finally scrapped in

Baltimore in 1950.

Over her long life, *Seneca* performed the missions of search and rescue, ice operations, law enforcement, humanitarian relief and maritime defense. And, she recorded many firsts, including first cutter designed to carry out the derelict destruction mission and the first to participate in the International Ice Patrol. She also became famous for her honorable World War I service and Prohibition operations. *Seneca* and the men who sailed her remain a part of the legend and lore of the U.S. Coast Guard.

## USS *Serpens* — the Coast Guard's Greatest Loss

by William H. Thiesen, PhD, Atlantic Area Historian

*"I felt and saw two flashes after which only the bow of the ship was visible. The rest had disintegrated and the bow sank soon afterwards."*

**Lieutenant Commander Perry Stinson (USCG)  
Commanding Officer, USS *Serpens***

The quote above refers to the Coast Guard-manned *USS Serpens*. On January 29th, 1945, nearly 73 years ago,

a catastrophic explosion destroyed the transport. In terms of lives lost, the destruction of the *Serpens* ranks as the single largest disaster ever recorded in Coast Guard history.

In March 1943, an EC-2 class "Liberty Ship" was laid down under a Maritime Commission contract as "Hull #739" by the California Shipbuilding Corporation of Wilmington, California. She was launched less than a

month later as the SS *Benjamin N. Cardozo*. Two weeks later she was transferred to the U.S. Navy and designated AK-97. The transport was 442 feet in length, displaced 14,250 tons and had a top speed of 11 knots. For defense she carried one 5-inch gun, one 3-inch gun, two 40mm and six 20mm anti-aircraft cannons. Her crew consisted of 19 officers and 188 enlisted men. In late May, the Navy re-named the transport *Serpens*, after a constellation in the Northern Hemisphere, and commissioned the vessel in San Diego



*USS Serpens at anchor somewhere in the Pacific islands with derricks extended to take on cargo. (U.S. Navy)*



*An aerial view of Lunga Point, Guadalcanal, during World War II showing the airfield captured by the U.S. Marines early in the campaign. (U.S. Navy)*

under the command of Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Magnus Johnson.

Following a shakedown cruise off Southern Calif., *Serpens* loaded general cargo at Alameda, California, and, on June 24th, set sail to support combat operations in the Southwest Pacific. She steamed between the supply hub of New Zealand and various Pacific islands, such as Tonga, Vitu Levu, Tutuila, Penrhyn, Bora Bora, Aitutaki, and Tongatabu. In early December, *Serpens* moved her operations into the southern Solomons,

re-supplying bases and units on Florida Island, Banika Island, Guadalcanal and Bougainville. In February 1944, she was ordered back to New Zealand for dry-docking and, for another four months, she delivered materials to bases in the New Hebrides and Solomons.

In late July 1944, Lt. Cmdr. Perry Stinson assumed command from Lt. Cmdr. Johnson. From that time into the fall of 1944, *Serpens* resumed operations carrying general cargo and rolling stock between ports and anchorages within the Solomon Islands. In mid-November, she loaded repairable military vehicles from the Russell Islands and Guadalcanal and sailed for New Zealand. After offloading in New Zealand, three of her holds were converted for ammunition stowage. Late in December 1944, *Serpens* commenced loading at Wellington, completed loading at Auckland, New Zealand, and returned to the Solomons in mid-January 1945.

Monday, January 29th, found *Serpens* anchored off Lunga Point, Guadalcanal. Lunga Point had served as the primary loading area for Guadalcanal since the U.S. military's first offensive of World War II began there in August 1942. *Serpens's* commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Stinson, a junior officer and six enlisted men went ashore while the rest of her crew loaded depth charges into her holds or performed their usual shipboard duties. Late in the day, in the blink of an eye, the explosive cargo stowed in *Serpens's* holds detonated. An



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men, 51 U.S. Army stevedores, and Surgeon Harry Levin, a U.S. Public Health Service physician. Only two men on board *Serpens* survived--Seaman 1/c Kelsie Kemp and Seaman 1/c George Kennedy, who had been located in the boatswain's locker. Both men were injured, but were later rescued from the wreckage and survived. In addition, a soldier who was ashore at Lunga Point was killed by flying shrapnel. Only two Coast Guardsmen's bodies were recovered intact and later identified out of the nearly 250 men killed in the explosion.

At first, the loss of *Serpens* was



*Dedicated in 1950, the Serpens Memorial is located on Coast Guard Hill in Arlington National Cemetery. (U.S. Coast Guard)*



*Retired Coast Guard officer Richard Stoud sounds Taps at the Serpens Memorial in November 2013. (U.S. Coast Guard)*

attributed to enemy action and three Purple Heart Medals were issued to the two survivors and posthumously to Surgeon Levin. However, a court of inquiry later determined that the cause of the explosion could not be established from surviving evidence. By

listing all of her lost crewmembers was erected over the gravesite and dedicated on November 16th, 1950.

1949, the U.S. Navy officially closed the case deciding that the loss was not due to enemy action but an "accident intrinsic to the loading process."

Today, all that remains of the *Serpens* is her bow section sitting upside down on the sea floor off Lunga Point. Her dead were initially buried at the Army, Navy and Marine Corps Cemetery at Guadalcanal. The crew's mortal remains were later exhumed and shipped to Arlington National Cemetery for burial. On June 15th, 1949, *Serpens's* Coast Guardsmen were interred on Arlington Cemetery's Coast Guard Hill. A monument to the *Serpens*

**When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.**

## USCGC Maple's 'Tense' Voyage Through Icy Northwest Passage

by Robert Woolsey

The cutter *Maple* became the sixth Coast Guard vessel ever to transit the famed Northwest Passage last summer, when it completed the 8,000-mile trip from Sitka to Baltimore, Maryland.

Despite almost a year of planning, the trip was no cakewalk. Although the Arctic is undergoing significant changes due to climate change, the *Maple's* historic voyage demonstrated that major challenges remain for ships attempting to cross the northern edge of the continent.

Lt. Lisa Hatland discussed some of the difficulties in a presentation to the Sitka Chamber of Commerce. We've all heard that there is less ice in the Arctic than in the past — but less is still a lot, when you're new to it.

Lisa Hatland served as executive officer of the *Maple* during the voyage. It was smooth sailing until the ship was about 100 miles east of Utqiagvik, formerly known as Barrow.

"It was only about three-tenths ice, but then again if you've never seen ice while navigating you're like, Oh my god this is it! The visibility dropped to less than 100 yards of course and I was actually on watch dodging through that — it was a blast! We were staying behind the *Laurier* and *Frosty* — we let *Frosty* go in between us. They weren't really breaking an ice path, it was more of picking the best route."

The *Maple's* first encounter with ice was a field 100 miles east of Utqiagvik. "My god this is it!" Hatland remembers thinking, as she conned the 225-foot cutter through "three-tenths" ice. The *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* and the research ship *Frosty* were the first of four Canadian ships to escort the *Maple* on its voyage. A veteran "ice pilot" from the Canadian Coast Guard also served on board with the *Maple's* bridge crew.



*The USCG Cutter Maple awaits the arrival of the Canadian Ice Breaker Terry Fox in Queen Maud Gulf. The Maple's executive officer, Lt. Lisa Hatland, told the Sitka Chamber of Commerce that navigating through ice created the "most tense two days" of the 49-day trip. Hatland said that flooding — even through Maple's ice-strengthened hull — was a constant worry. Nevertheless, she said "I'll never forget this experience." (USGC photo/Lisa Hatland)*

And it turns out the northern patrol in Canada is a little more mellow than its US counterpart, as Hatland discovered on a visit to the *Laurier*.

"So they're allowed to drink underway. They can have their beers, and so we're like, No we can't drink, but they opened their cantinas and we all got all sorts of Canadian swag. We all got our *Laurier* t-shirts and ball caps. Swapping ball caps out there is everything."

And the *Maple* took on more than swag. After parting ways with the *Laurier*, the ship met the *CCCS Amundsen* in Queen Maud Gulf and loaded 11,000 gallons of fuel. The *Amundsen* — primarily a research vessel with 80 scientists on board — came down the channel that the *Maple* was heading up. After an exchange of information between the two vessels (the *Maple* had one researcher, Josh Jones, from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography), the *Maple* turned north to rendezvous



with its true ice-breaking escort, the CCCS *Terry Fox*.

Hatland says this is where things got serious.

“So 8,000 miles of a transit came down to these two days. *Terry Fox* would break ice in front of us. The problem was that this ice would just fill right back in the path that they just broke for us. And we had to transit at a particularly high rate of speed — about 6 knots, which you don’t think of as very fast — but when you’re only 200 yards behind the guy it’s kind of nerve-wracking.”

Hatland says the *Maple* used radar ranges to keep its distance from the *Terry Fox*, which was equipped with a type of brake light, to alert following ships that it had stopped. And it did stop, Hatland says, two or three times.

“We didn’t even have to back down. All we had to do was bring the throttles to stop and the friction of the ice would literally stop us within a couple of hundred yards.”

With a single screw and rudder, the *Maple* was also



*Maple in front of the LeConte Glacier*

less maneuverable than her twin-screw escort, and Hatland says it was difficult to make the tight turns around larger pieces of ice. The *Maple’s* hull is ice-strengthened, but the constant scraping required engineers to inspect the bilges for flooding ‘round the clock. Those factors, combined with unreliable electronic navigation in some parts of the passage made for the “most stressful two days” of the voyage.

And if those 230 miles of Icebreaker Channel, in Victoria Strait, are stressful for the Coast Guard, what does that mean for the commercialization of the Northwest Passage?

“So the Arctic is not open yet — and any ship going up there needs to be aware of the environmental conditions, the hazards. And don’t go up there blindly, otherwise they will become a SAR (Search and Rescue) case.”

The *Maple* was home-free by the time it reached St. John’s, Newfoundland, where the crew spent three days ashore after 31 days without touching land. From there it was a quick run down the eastern seaboard to Baltimore.

The crew has since come home, but in April they’ll return to Baltimore to pick up the 225-foot *Kukui*, a near-copy of the *Maple*, which will have been refurbished and ready for a voyage — this time through the Panama Canal — to its new homeport in Sitka.



*Lt. Lisa Hatland aboard the Maple prior to its departure for the NW Passage in July 2017. Hatland also will serve as the executive officer of the Maple’s replacement, the Kukui, on its trip from Baltimore to Sitka through the Panama Canal this April. (KCAW photo/Robert Woolsey)*

## Semper Paratus

by Al Zdon, Minnesota Legionaire April 2015

The Coast Guard's role in World War II is not as well known as the other services.

Those interested in the war might know that the Coast Guard patrolled the Atlantic coast guarding against German subs, and that Coast Guard cutters protected Allied convoys across the ocean.

Some might know that Coast Guard helmsmen were used on many of the boats involved in invasions, and others might know Coast Guard cutters plied the waters off Normandy during the D-Day invasion, and rescued over 400 Allied soldiers, airmen and sailors.

A few might even know that Hollywood actors Gig Young and Cesar Romero served honorably in the Coast Guard during World War II.



*Anderson and his machine gun on Hunter Island.*

But hardly anybody knows about the Coasties riding up and down the Carolina coast during the war, or when they cornered a large sea monster.

Iver Anderson knows about it. He was there.

Anderson was born in Kansas City, Missouri, the son of Swedish parents. When he turned 20 in 1942, he knew that he was about to be drafted. He asked his dad what he should do. "My dad told me to go where the food and the bed were in the same place."

That meant either the Navy or the Coast Guard. Anderson joined the Coast Guard on October 7, 1942,



*Iver Anderson and his horse "Bill" at Hunter Island on the South Carolina coast.*

and got on a train bound for somewhere. "We had no idea where we were going. We knew there was Coast Guard training on both coasts. It was a military troop train with bunks three deep in the Pullman cars. When the train went through Terre Haute, Indiana, the recruits knew the East Coast was their destination.

"We had four weeks basic training at Manhattan Beach in New York. It used to be a very nice resort with cabins on the beach. The Merchant Marine Academy was just up the coast"

Like most recruits, the new Coast Guardsmen marched and drilled and learned discipline. "You have to learn to do what someone tells you. One morning I couldn't get out of bed. I cleaned the head every morning for a week."

The recruits also learned to paddle a raft. :It's not as easy as it sounds. You have to sit up on the bench and rotate the oars as you paddle. It was like a cadence count. If you miss the cadence, you might fall off the bench and into the water."

Anderson's first duty was in Boston as a switchboard operator in the Coast Guard station there. He lived in the city in an apartment. "We lived right on Beacon Hill on Pinckney Street, the same street Louisa May Alcott lived on when she wrote Little Women." He stayed there about a year before he and others in the office were



*The U.S. Coast Guard Mounted Patrol on Hunter Island. Iver Anderson is on the right.*

replaced by SPARS, women Coast Guard members.

Anderson and his friends had been undergoing defense training. "We had to learn how to box. Jack Dempsey was one of our coaches. We learned how to knock a .45 out of a guy's hand. And we learned how to fight with a knife."

Anderson was first sent to Charleston, S.C., for patrol duty around the docks, and then to Savannah, Georgia, where much of the ammunition bound for Europe was loaded onto ships.

His next duty station was his favorite.

"When we were in Boston, my buddy, Lou Guette, and I would go to this stable and ride horses all the time. When I learned the Coast Guard had this horse patrol, I thought that was great. Instead of paying to ride a horse, now they were going to pay me to ride them."

Anderson was sent to Hilton Head Island. "A lot of people don't realize that from Maine down to Florida, the whole East Coast has this series of outer islands. That's where the Coast Guard was often stationed."

His actual duty was on Hunting Island, just north of Hilton Head. "We built a barracks and stable. There were 15 of us. We rode the horses with a cavalry saddle, it was split in the middle to protect the horse's back. We were riding cavalry horses that came from Fort Riley, Kansas. They weren't young horses."

At night for fun, we'd race the horses down the beach. Some really enjoyed it, and they'd actually come down the beach and run in the water. Others would just hop along."

The men would go on four-hour patrols up and down the beach. "We were looking for anyone who came ashore. We had just received notice that a German soldier had come ashore on Long Island with two backpacks of demolition stuff. He was caught by a Coast Guard guy on patrol. They alerted all the stations on the East Coast.

Anderson carried a pistol in a holster and there was a machine gun in a holster on the horse.

"My horse's name was Bill. When I'd talk to him, his ears would flap. We could communicate with each other. One night was pitch dark out on the beach. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. It was a bad night. All of a sudden, my horse stopped and

his ears moved forward. I couldn't get him to budge an inch. He knew something was out there on the beach. He had better eyes than I did."

"They told us to yell, 'Who goes there?' and I did but no one answered. My heart was really pounding. I pulled out my .45 and held it in my hand. We never carried a flashlight with us because then you become a target. I radioed back to the station what was going on and gave them my location."

A second Coast Guardsman was sent through the woods to a spot on the other side of the mysterious beach visitor. As he approached the spot from the opposite direction, his horse also stopped and wouldn't move.

By this time, all 15 of the shore patrollers were



*Anderson perches on a railing aboard a Coast Guard patrol boat in Savannah harbor.*

involved. “The rest of the guys went through the woods and were trying to look through the sand dunes to see what was on the beach. It was about 2 a.m. so we just waited for daylight.”

When the first rays of dawn illuminated the beach,



*(Above left) Iver Anderson at his Bloomington, Minnesota home during the interview for this story.*

*(Above right) Anderson in the Coast Guard during World War II.*

the wary patrollers hope they could finally see what had halted their horses and kept them up all night. They strained their eyes and could finally see it. It was big. It was green — it was a turtle! A huge sea turtle, several feet across, and she had come up on shore to lay her eggs.

Anderson next was assigned to a wooden cutter in Savannah that had previously been used to chase down smugglers. “It was a beautiful boat, all wooden, with mahogany all over. It still looked like a yacht but it had two depth charge racks on the stern. When we patrolled the harbor each day, we’d go by a shrimp boat and they would give us a five-gallon pail of shrimp.

His next job was to operate a small boat that took a harbor pilot out to ships leaving the harbor. When the ship was clear of the harbor dangers, Anderson’s boat would pick up the pilot again. Anderson manned the engine and the steering and the other Coastie was in charge of throwing the line to the ship and helping the pilot in and out of the boat.

Anderson took a test at this time to see if he could get into the Coast Guard Academy. His

scores weren’t good enough for the academy but they did land him in one of the branch’s elite schools for sonar training in New London, Connecticut.

After school, he finished his East Coast duty with a tour in Key West, Florida, doing anti-submarine patrol using sonar. “You could tell on the Doppler whether a sub was moving towards you or away from you.”

One day, a French submarine that had escaped Nazi control in France came into Key West. “We got permission to go aboard and we tried to talk with one of the French crewmen. He offered us some wine, and we each said ‘Sure.’ He got out the ine and his cup. Before he poured the wine he tapped the cup against the bulkhead to get the cockraches out. We changed our minds about the wine.”

With the war winding down in Europe, Anderson was sent to Oakland, California, and then took a transport ship to Leyte in the Philippines. Soon he was part of a patrol operation up and down the west coast of the Philippines.

“The canteen on the beach was open to both petty officers and officers. I was in there one day and I ran into an officer from my hometown. He suggested that we go out and have a beer together. I said I couldn’t do that because I couldn’t get into the officers’ club. He said that would be no problem. We went back to his room. We were about the same size and I just put on one of his uniforms. So there I was having a beer



*Anderson (at left) with the Coast Guard honor guard in Washington, D.C.*

## Feature Articles

in officer khakis with ensign bars on my collar.”

By this time, Anderson had earned enough points to be sent back to the U.S. He finished his duty in Washington, D.C. in the legal department at Coast Guard Headquarters. He also served on the national Coast Guard color guard.

His sister came out to the Nation’s Capital to work and live, and when he was visiting her he met a woman named Elaine who was part-time caretaker of the apartment complex where his sister lived. She was also in the service. “She was a yeoman first class and I was a sonarman second class so she outranked me. But I asked her out to dinner and she accepted. She became my wife.”

Anderson left the Coast Guard but in April 1947 he joined the Naval reserves as a sonarman. “When the Korean War came along, I asked the officer who would be activated first, the older petty officers or the young guys we were training. He told me it would be the young guys. He was wrong.

Anderson found himself an active duty stationed aboard the *USS Sproston (DDE-577)*, a vintage World War II destroyer the Navy was just taking out of mothballs to beef up the Pacific Fleet because of the war.

“We left San Diego and went up to Long Beach to pick up ammunition and then to Hunter’s Point. We knew something was up because we had a bunch of spooks aboard — Naval intelligence. I think they just wanted to see what kind of crew we were. When we got to Hunter’s Point, they left the ship.

When *Sporston* left the harbor and went under the San Francisco Bay Bridge, it was one of four destroyers escorting a seaplane tender, the *USS Curtis (AV-4)*. As the ship passed the bridge, the captain came on the speaker and announced their orders. They were heading to Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands as part of Operation Greenhouse. But that’s another story.



*Anderson met his wife, Elaine, when they were both stationed in Washington, D.C. She outranked him.*

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