



# 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 29, Number 2

Summer 2014

## CGCVA Honored at TraCen Cape May

### *Association Officers and Several Members Attend July 6th “Sunset Parade”*

On July 6, 2014, the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association was honored at USCG Training Center Cape May, N.J., with a Sunset Parade held in dedication to the association’s many contributions to the service and the training center. The Marine Corps League was also honored at the special event. The Sunset Parade included a march-on of the recruits currently undergoing training at Cape May, the recruit silent drill team, cannon fire and a low-level helicopter flyover. The event



*CGCVA President Mike Placencia makes remarks at the July 6th Sunset Parade at USCG Training Center Cape May, N.J. (photo by Ed Swift)*

lasted nearly 45 minutes and the reviewing stands were filled with Cape May residents, tourists, and several CGCVA members, their family and friends.

CGCVA President Mike Placencia flew in from California, VP Steve Petersen flew in from Texas, and Secretary/Treasurer Gary Sherman drove in from Pennsylvania so all the elected association officers

(continued on page 14)



*Mike Placencia presents a custom-made USCG plaque to Cape May Training Center Commanding Officer Capt. G. Todd Prestidge. The plaque, containing a WWII-era USCG Magazine and several first-day covers and stamps, will be placed in the training center’s museum. (photo by Ed Swift)*

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## Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

### ELECTED OFFICERS

National President — Michael Placencia, LM  
National Vice President — Stephen Petersen, LM  
National Secretary/Treasurer — Gary Sherman, LM,

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman — PNP Ed Swift, LM  
Two-Term — William Figone, LM & Floyd Hampton, LM  
One-Term — E.P. "Ed" Burke, LM & Ernest "Swede" Johnson, LM

### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE\*

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\*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 — Betty Schambeau  
National Vice President — Beverly Johnson  
National Secretary/Treasurer — Mimi Placencia

### APPOINTED OFFICERS

**By-Laws** — Thomas W. Hart, LM; **Convention Planners** — Steve Petersen, LM, Mike Placencia, LM, and Bruce Bruni; **Membership** — PNP Joe Kleinpeter, LM; **Parliamentarian** — Terry Lee, LM; **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** — Ed Floyd, LM; **Webmaster** — Richard Ames; **Nominating Chairman** — Bill Figone, LM; **Cape May Liaison** — Terry Lee, LM; **Investment Committee** — Gary Sherman, Steve Day, PNP Joe Kleinpeter, and Ernest "Swede" Johnson

## From the President

Greetings Shipmates!

The feature article in this month's *Quarterdeck Log* is the Sunset Parade at Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May honoring our Association. First off, I want to thank those who attended and a special Bravo Zulu to Terry Lee who coordinated the event with the training center. No way was I going to miss this one and true to its billing, the Sunset Parade is worthy of a highlight reel. The recruit companies in formation, the training center band and honor guard marching by with our national emblems raised proudly — a proud moment to be sure. They looked sharp, attentive to every detail and you just had the feeling they wanted to be there as much as we did.

Thanks to PNP Joe Kleinpeter, we came bearing gifts. We were able to present two World War II commemo-



*Mike Placencia*

orative plaques to commanding officer, Capt, Todd Prestidge, asking that they be displayed so that the recruits will never forget the greatest generation of USCG heroes. Capt. Prestidge, thank you for the invite. It was indeed an honor.

*(Left) The "Four" Amigos at Cape May (left to right) Gray Sherman, Steve Petersen, Mike Placencia, and Ed Swift (photo by Mare Swift)*



### 2015 Reunion Update

National Vice President Steve Petersen and I made a short trip to Buffalo after the Cape May Sunset Parade. We met with Joyce Curry of the Millennium Hotel and Dionne Williamson of Visit Buffalo/Niagara. We toured the property and surrounding areas. We presented the

Next *QD Log* deadline is November 1, 2014. Please email articles and photos to the editor at: [swiftie1@verizon.net](mailto:swiftie1@verizon.net)



## From the President

full scope of our reunion and we are very confident that it will be a great time. The hotel has a lot to offer and the proximity to the Walden Galleria is a huge plus. We also met up with CGCVA member Capt. Bruce Bruni (Ret.). He graciously took us around the Buffalo Niagara area, including Coast Guard Sector Buffalo. We met with the senior leadership and they are looking forward to participating. We were so impressed with Bruce that we made him a member of the planning committee. Full details plus registration forms are included in this issue. Make your reservations as soon as possible. Thank you.

### CGCVA Challenge Coin

This item is a hit and there are less than 90 coins remaining of the original allotment. Make it a sell out and get yours today.

### Looking Ahead

Next year marks the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War Veteran. The Association has been asked to become a partner in this three year program. PNP Paul Scotti has agreed to be our chairperson. More news will be in the next *QD Log*.

Your Shipmate in Service, **Michael Placencia**



### Yellow Ribbon Program

Late last month, CGCVA Member Steve Watts represented our Association at the Post Deployment Yellow Ribbon Event for Port Security Unit 301 and RAID Team 19. The event was held in Boston, MA. Here's a couple photos of the event. Great Job Steve!

*(Left) Steve Watts presents a CGCVA ballcap to CDR Robert Cooper, outgoing commander of the Yellow Ribbon Program.*



*Dependent children of the deployed troops were all recognized and received gifts at the event.*

## From the Vice President

Greetings Shipmates,

It was great seeing everyone that attended the Sunset Parade Event at Cape May, N.J. honoring our Association. This was my second visit since entering Boot Camp in 1960 (Kilo 44). The first trip back was for the Vietnam Memorial that our Association installed at the Training Center in 2004. It was at that event that I was motivated to take a more active part in our Association. Young recruits mingled with us old fellows and all asked if the training center had changed much. "Yes, I replied, I don't recognize any of the buildings". But, one thing was still as I remembered it. The ocean! It was still in the same place.

I just got wind of the 50th Anniversary of the *CGC Diligence (WMEC-616)*. A special Veteran's Day Weekend is planned at Wilmington, N.C. I have already

decided to attend and represent our Association on this occasion. To those CGCVA members that served aboard the *Dilly*, please take note, would love to see a good turn out. I hope to see some of our elected officials to explain that the Coast Guard really knows how to get the most mileage out of a Coast Guard ship. Just think, if she was a Navy vessel she would have been a diving reef or razor blades twenty years ago.

I have a few other things in the mill, but that's for the next *QD Log* issue.



*Steve Petersen*

**Steve Petersen**

### *Adventures With Our NVP*

While I was at the CGCVA Cape May event in July, I was on "Master Chief Overload", spending some time with Mike Placencia and Steve Petersen.

On one of the days, Steve Petersen and I decided to visit the Wildwood NAS museum, which we highly recommend, since it has a good portion of the museum devoted to the USCG.

On the way to the museum, we passed "The Forgotten Warriors Museum" and on the way back to the hotel decided to stop there and check it out. When we parked at the Forgotten Warriors Museum and started walking in, we noticed a memorial outside, with four large stones, one for each of the "Four" branches of the military. Apparently the "warriors" wasn't the only thing that was "forgotten"! We then noticed the flags of each branch of the military, but there was no Coast Guard flag. We did notice there was one empty flag pole, but we weren't sure what flag had been on that pole.

As we walked into the museum, which was dedicated to Vietnam Veterans, we met a guy named Tom Collins, who turned out to be the founder of the

museum and an Army Vietnam Vet. Tom was in a motorized wheelchair, and was missing his right leg.

I was concerned about the lack of respect shown for the Coast Guard, but Master Chief Petersen was ready to start the inquiry with Mr. Collins.

Steve asked Tom, "Why no Coast Guard stone plaque and no Coast Guard flag?" Frankly, I was prepared for a response like "Was the Coast Guard in Vietnam?" or something like that.

Mr. Collins told us that he couldn't find a Coast Guard medallion to mount on a stone, the same size as the ones he had for the other branches of the military. Then Steve said, "What about a Coast Guard flag."

Mr. Collins then saved the day by saying that he had just bought all new flags, one for each branch, including the Coast Guard, but with his missing leg, he just couldn't change the flags out!



*Gary Sherman*

### *Welcome New Members*

#### New Member

Thomas O. Armstrong  
Francis N. Babyak  
Capt. Matthew T. Bell  
Koral G. Gabik  
Roland J. Gorney  
Phillip J. Kies  
James R. Lasher  
Craig M. Oravitz  
VAdm. Charles W. Ray  
Cdr. Alan Tubbs  
James F. Cudney  
Robert Eerland  
Jacob M. Engelman, Jr., LM  
David S. Hennessey  
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Robert W. O'Gorman  
Garry W. Trexler  
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*Gary Sherman and Steve Petersen at the Forgotten Warriors Museum*

We're very glad that Mr. Collins had the right answer and we were very happy to help him get the Coast Guard flag hoisted at this terrific Vietnam Veterans museum. If you get a chance to check it out, please do so! And remember that Coasties are responsible for raising those flags!

Thank you and Semper Paratus!

**Gary Sherman**



### *Greetings All,*

During the month of May the active duty Coast Guard touched our lives again. My husband is Vice President of International Ship Management and one of his crewmen, Lee Ellison, was on board a tug barge unit outbound from Tampa when he started to have severe chest pains. His office upon being notified by the tug contacted the Coast Guard requesting a medevac.



*Lee Ellison, Lt. Murphy, PO3 Garrison & PO2 Altavilla.*

Luckily there was a Coast Guard aviation unit out of Clearwater Air Station on a training mission nearby and was able to air lift the crewman and fly him to Tampa General Hospital's Cardiac Unit. Upon arrival they found one artery 100 percent blocked and another one was 80 percent blocked. Thanks to the Coast Guard this crewman will sail again.

To follow-up on this mission we contacted the



*International Ship Management Office staff, Lee Ellison and Coast Guard crew.*

Coast Guard indicating that Lee wanted to personally thank the air crew that saved his life.

On July 29th he was able to meet and thank pilot Lt. Kevin Murphy, rescue swimmer Petty Officer 3rd Class Bradford Garrison, and flight mechanic Petty Officer 2nd Class Andre Altavilla. The co-pilot Lt. Michael Carroll, had been transferred to Alaska since the rescue. Garrison, the rescue swimmer said, "We don't get a chance to meet our survivors very often. It's awesome to have them come to base, and it really gives you the sense that you're doing good."

To enhance this story, over 20 years ago, Lee, along with two other crewmen, were airlifted off a manned ocean going barge that had broken away from a tug in a storm off New York City in over 100-mph winds.

Needless to say Lee has a high regard for our Coast Guard.

Until the next quarter yours truly,

**Betty Schambeau, Auxiliary President**



*Betty Schambeau*



*CGCVA Auxiliary member Mare Swift (center) with CGCVA member and former SPAR Charlotte Bart (right) and Charlotte's daughter, Diana, during the July 6th Sunset Parade at USCG Training Center Cape May, N.J. (photo by Ed Swift)*

### **Adm. Paul F. Zunkunft Assumes Command of U.S. Coast Guard**

In ceremonies held May 30th at the Douglas A. Munro Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., Adm. Paul F. Zunkunft became the 25th Coast Guard Commandant, relieving Adm. Robert J. Papp, Jr.

Upon relieving Adm. Papp of his command, the new commandant reflected on the outgoing commandant's accomplishments.

"Adm. Papp's leadership and resolve have left an indelible mark on the service," said Zunkunft. "The Coast Guard is more proficient, more capable and more resilient due to his contributions and I wish him fair winds and following seas."

Zunkunft also introduced the guiding principles which

will frame his direction for the service over the next four years:



*Adm. Paul F. Zunkunft assumes command of the U.S. Coast Guard during ceremonies on May 30, 2014.*

### **QD Log Booster Club**

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

**Hans Slade  
Timothy Mobray  
Chuck Billings  
Bert L. Compton  
John F. Ryder, Jr.**

**George Moberg  
Doak Walker  
Paula Billings  
Sidney Tartarkin  
James Wihlborg**

**Richard Souza, Sr.  
Phillip Smith  
John Seubert  
John Rosemergy  
Terry Phillippe**

**Hugh J. Sharpe  
Newt Neuciler  
Frederick Dailey  
A.E. "Gene" Radin**

**Ack Adams IMO A01 Dick Bridge  
Baker & Marylou Herbert IMO CWO Norman Hundwin (W-64)**

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.



**Service to the Nation** — We will serve our Nation through the selfless performance of our missions.

**Duty to People** — We will honor our duty to protect those we serve and those who serve with us.

**Commitment to Excellence** — We will commit ourselves to excellence by supporting and executing our operations in a proficient and professional manner.

As the 25th Commandant of the Coast Guard, Zukunft will lead the largest component of the Department of Homeland Security, comprised of 41,700 active duty, 7,800 reserve and 8,300 civilian personnel as well as 31,000 volunteer Coast Guard auxiliaries.



*Adm. Paul F. Zukunft is congratulated by outgoing Commandant of the Coast Guard Adm. Bob Papp during a change of command ceremony at the Douglas A. Munro U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., May 30, 2014. Zukunft assumed command as the 25th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. Photos by PO2 Patrick Kelley.*

A 1977 graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy, Zukunft has commanded six units and served extensively in the cutter fleet where he commanded the cutters *Cape Upright*, *Harriet Lane* and *Rush*. In 2010, Zukunft served as the Federal On-Scene Coordinator for the Deepwater Horizon Spill of National Significance where he directed more than 47,000 responders, 6,500 vessels and 120 aircraft during the largest oil spill in U.S. history. A flag officer since 2006, Zukunft most recently served as commander, Pacific Area, and commander, Defense Force West following on tours as commander, Eleventh Coast Guard District, and director, Joint Interagency Task Force West.

***Editor's Note:*** *Then Vice Adm. Zunkunft served as keynote speaker at the 2013 CGCVA Convention in Reno and we hope he will keep our association on his scope in his new capacity as commandant. We wish him and the Zunkunft family the very best and we extend "Fair Winds" to Adm. Papp and his family. We remain Semper Paratus!*

### **PSU 312 Hard at Work in Cuba**

The coxswain calls "Cast off forward!" as he prepares to get the boat underway. Soon, the sleek gray 32' Transportable Port Security Boat (TPSB) is outbound at over 30 knots from Guantanamo Bay with a crew of four, some of the many Coast Guard men and women providing anti-terrorism force protection for Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (JTF GTMO). Armed with crew-served weapons as well as personal defense weapons, the crew of 32110 is trained and ready to carry out their port security mission.

The Coast Guard maintains a Maritime Security Detachment as part of Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (JTF GTMO), a role currently filled by Coast Guard Port Security Unit 312 from San Francisco, CA. The 74 deployed members of the unit carry out the mission seven days a week, 24 hours a day, patrolling offshore and across Guantanamo Bay, securing JTF GTMO and the Naval Station with six boats capable of intercepting and deterring vessels posing an imminent threat to the base or its personnel. The Coast Guard has had a Maritime Security Detachment in Guantanamo Bay since shortly after the JTF was established, with the first group of Coast Guard men and women arriving in 2003. Working closely with both Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and the JTF, the Coast Guard Maritime Security Detachment has successfully carried out the mission for over 11 years.

The Coast Guard's Port Security Units, like PSU 312, are rapidly deployable Reserve units, organized for sustained operations worldwide. The PSU provides waterborne security and point defense force protection



Brokaw, members of Congress, Senators, significant military personnel like the Chief of Naval Operations.” At the time, the Coast Guard conducted operations within Guantanamo Bay itself, while a larger vessel patrolled offshore, maintaining the naval security zone for the JTF and Naval Station. That offshore mission is now conducted by the same Coast Guard boats conducting missions inside Guantanamo Bay. “The optempo was very high then. We didn’t have commissions like we do now, but we sometimes were responsible for bringing detainees across, and we had even more DV’s than we do now,” said LT Henson. That high operational tempo and sharp execution of the mission has continued to define the Coast Guard in Guantanamo through the years.

for strategic shipping and critical port facilities as directed by Theater Commanders. A full PSU has over 140 personnel, and is equipped with Transportable Port Security Boats (TPSBs), as well as command, control, unit security, medical, engineering and logistics capabilities to support their mission of Harbor Defense/Port Security operations. The first PSU’s were deployed to Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War, and they have been utilized in theaters worldwide ever since. From Kuwait and the Iraqi oil terminals in the North Arabian Gulf throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, to Korea, Bahrain, Egypt, and other ports around the world, the Coast Guard’s Port Security Units are an essential element of expeditionary maritime security.

The PSU mission as the Maritime Security Detachment for the Joint Task Force has evolved over the years as the JTF operations have matured in Guantanamo Bay. LT Travis Henson, the deployed Operations Officer for PSU 312, was first in Guantanamo from 2003-2004 not long after the JTF was established. Then, he was a first class Boatswain’s Mate (BM1), driving the armed Coast Guard boats as a highly trained tactical coxswain. LT Henson said, “We stayed inside the bay then, unlike today when we’re also offshore. The Coast Guard did all vessel escorts through Guantanamo Bay, we did security patrols, and brought a lot of very high-visibility Distinguished Visitors (DV’s) from Leeward to Windward. Major media like Tom

In addition to operations on the water, during its history in GTMO the Coast Guard has also provided courtroom security for detainees in the expeditionary legal complex during military commissions as well as more traditional Coast Guard missions such as assisting mariners in distress in cooperation with Naval Station Guantanamo. According to BM1 Dunn, a PSU 312 tactical coxswain, “Some parts of the mission are the same as they were when I was in GTMO few years ago. The anti-terrorism force protection mission hasn’t changed; last time we were here we did commissions and security patrols. Floating for freedom. We also worked with other JTF personnel as part of the courtroom security teams then. It was interesting being part of history.” The Coast Guard’s security mission in Guantanamo today, while it doesn’t include the







expeditionary legal complex, does involve escorts of Coast Guard cutters arriving and departing the Naval Station, as well as other military shipping.

Members of Coast Guard PSU 312 carry out their security mission on the water, while also conducting extensive training with the Marine Corps Force Security Company, part of the permanent forces at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay as well as other security forces deployed to JTF GTMO. The Coast Guard boat crews routinely train with the Marines in case there is ever the need to conduct a medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) of personnel from anywhere around Guantanamo Bay, as well as tactical training essential to maintaining the expertise of both the boat crews and the Marines. Often, the fastest way to move a potentially injured Marine from a remote Marine Observation Post is by Coast Guard boat, to be sped across Guantanamo Bay directly to the US Naval Hospital for treatment. According to LT Henson, "The Marines here having floating Stokes litters, so no matter what they can get the injured Marine out to the boat, even if we have to float him out for the MEDEVAC."

Life in Guantanamo isn't all work, however. The Coast Guard is an integral part of life on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay; taking part in sporting events, community service projects, and holiday celebrations. The crew of PSU 312 recently completed the first Coast Guard 100-mile relay Run to Remember in Guantanamo, in honor of fallen Coast Guard personnel, as well as taking part in the base Captain's Cup competition, recreational

softball and soccer tournaments, scuba diving, and other activities.

The nation's smallest service has a large role to play as the Maritime Security Detachment in JTF GTMO operations, and the crew of PSU 312 carries out the mission with vigilance.

**CDR Tiffany Danko**

***Editor's Note: CDR Danko is the Commanding Officer of PSU 312. We (CGCVA) attended their pre-deployment yellow ribbon event last March. She was asked to consider penning an on-scene, first-hand report for the QD Log and she was kind enough to provide the above story and photos. Many thanks commander and Semper Paratus to everyone in PSU 312!***

### **Crossed The Bar**

**Robert G. Oxenger, LM  
George Simon**



*Crew of the Coast Guard Cutter James Rankin salute after placing the historic Francis Scott Key buoy in the Patapsco River, June 8, 2012. The buoy commemorates where the ship carrying Francis Scott Key, the author of "The Star-Spangled Banner," was anchored during the bombardment of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. Photo by SN Lisa Ferdinando.*

### ***I'd Like to Find the Guy That Named the Coast Guard***

Many a Coast Guardsman, staring from the deck of his ship at the soft hills of Ireland or the coral and palm of some far Pacific atoll, has wondered what coast "they" had in mind when they named the Service. The question occurred to Lt. Scott Wilson, USCGR, veteran of the invasion of Saipan, one day in the spring of 1943, and he began to hum some words. He talked it over with SP1/c Chris Yacich, USCGR, who had some song-writing experience, and the latter wrote the song. It was first played on a New Orleans radio program and a few months later was presented on a radio network program from New York. Submitted by Chris Yacich. The lyrics are:

*I'd like to find the guy that named the Coast Guard  
And find that bit of coast he had in mind.  
I wonder if he's telling where invasion barges roar;  
The coast that we are shelling on a South Pacific shore.  
Wherever troops invade, we're there to land 'em  
With LCIs and LSTs galore  
With the shot and shell are raining,  
Won't someone start explaining,  
Oh, I'd like to find the guy that names the Coast Guard!*

*I'd like to find the guy that named the Coast Guard  
And find that bit of coast he had in mind.  
Whatever he was thinking is a thing that puzzles me  
When submarines I'm sinking in the middle of the sea...  
And when I'm dosging enemy torpedoes  
Or landing troops upon a foreign shore,  
Then I have a salty yearning,  
While my hands my gun is burning  
Oh, I'd like to find the guy that named the Coast Guard!*

*I'd like to find the guy that named the Coast Guard  
And find that bit of coast he had in mind.  
It wasn't on the tanker we'd protect from submarines.  
The coast of Casablanca wasn't soft by any means,  
I couldn't find it at Guadalcanal.  
If he thinks the name will rate it,  
Where the hell can I locate it,  
Oh, I'd like to find the guy that named the Coast Guard!*

*I'd like to find the guy that named the Coast Guard  
And find that bit of coast he had in mind.  
I spend my time in sneezin' in the Greenland icy night  
While my knees are freezin' and there's not a coast in sight.  
No gals, no grub, no place to scrub each morning,  
Just icy floes and Eskimos and seals,  
From my ears the ice is fallin',  
While my weary voice is callin'  
Oh, I'd like to find the guy that named the Coast Guard!*

### ***Fallen Warrior Ceremony***

CGCVA member Chuck Billings represented the CGCVA in a solemn ceremony held in Brunswick, Maine on Memorial Day. The Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1044 in cooperation with the Mid-Coast Veterans Council, conducted a Fallen Warrior Ceremony in memory of military men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, as well as those listed as missing in action or prisoners of war. The ceremony honors all of those from Brunswick who did not return from the battlefield from World War I to the present. A ceremonial bell was rung once for each name of a soldier read aloud. A hymn was performed, followed by a rifle volley and the playing of taps. The Fallen Soldiers Memorial, also known as a Battlefield Cross, consisting of Vietnam-era helmet, rifle and boots was assembled during the ceremony. The memorial was adorned with dog tags, an American flag, and red and yellow roses. Chuck Billings served in Vietnam with CGCVA Secretary/Treasurer Gary Sherman on the CGC Castle Rock. Thanks for helping out Chuck!



*Representing the U.S. Coast Guard, CGCVA member Chuck Billings salutes during the Memorial Day Fallen Warrior Ceremony in Brunswick, Maine.*



### *Commemorating WWI 100th Anniversary*

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I in Europe, the World War I Dawn Patrol Rendezvous will bring the excitement of early air power to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force near Dayton, Ohio Sept. 27-28. The event will feature vintage reproduction aircraft, period reenactors, precision flying in the skies, era automobiles, flying exhibitions by WWI radio-controlled aircraft, guest speakers, and a collector's show for WWI items. Gates will be open each day from 9 a.m. — 5 p.m. EDT. Admission and parking are free. For more information, visit the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force webpage at [www.nationalmuseum.af.mil](http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil) or telephone the museum at (937) 255-3286.



### *Former Commandant Tapped as Arctic Diplomat*

Retired Coast Guard Commandant, Adm. Robert J. Papp, was named as the first U.S. special representative for Arctic issues, overseeing American policy in the icy region that is becoming a global focus for economic opportunities and security concerns.

In a statement, Secretary of State John Kerry said Papp has broad foreign policy experience and a “passion” for the Arctic that makes him the ideal diplomat to advance U.S. interests in the region.

“I could not be happier that he agreed to postpone his well-deserved retirement and join our effort in a cause about which he is both passionate and wise,” Kerry said of Papp, who stepped down as Coast Guard commandant at the end of May.

Next year the U.S. will chair the Arctic Council, which is made up of eight nations that reach into the Arctic Circle and aims to protect the thawing region as its seas open to commercial shipping traffic. The U.S. touches the Arctic Circle in Alaska, and that state's two U. S. senators have long pressed the Obama administration to name a permanent envoy to the region.

Other council members are Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden

The Arctic is growing hotter faster than any part of

the globe. Global warming has melted sea ice to levels that have given rise to what experts describe as a kind of gold rush scramble to the Arctic.

U.S. officials estimate the Arctic holds 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil reserves and 30 percent of undiscovered gas deposits.

Until recently, however, the resources that could reap hundreds of billions of dollars in revenues were frozen over and unreachable. **Lara Jakes, Associated Press**

### *More Adventures With Two Quills and the Gearman*

No matter what I do I just can't get any slack from our Association President. Last year, it was the Grand Haven Event, this year it was the Cape May, N.J. Sunset Parade and a side trip to Buffalo, N.Y. for site familiarization. He calls me every few days like I don't have anything else going on in my life. My computer is burning up. If he isn't at the doggy park, he's at Starbuck's with his file of notes and maybe a desk top computer, probably has his own plug-in. Most patrons think he's with the company. Papers scattered all over the tabletop, planning, corresponding, problem-solving, devoting a good portion of his every day activities to the CGCVA. There is no Rope Yarn Sunday (look that up in your nautical books) for Mike. We, as members, and me as VP, are very fortunate to have him at the helm navigating us through the calm and sometimes rough seas. As you might have guessed, I am delighted that I am a member of his crew.

Last year I started the Grand Haven visit. This year the call came from headquarters (Starbuck's) from Mike saying he wanted to go to Cape May for the Sunset Parade honoring our Association “What do you think”?

ROAD TRIP!! Two Quills and the Gearman without adult supervision. Look out East Coast, here we come. I'm all in.

We had a great event at Cape May with several Association members and fellow Coasties. Representing the CGCVA was inspiring to say the least.

While there, it was a bonus to relax and share sea stories with some of those whom we had not seen in a

while. It was great to discuss business on an informal basis with Go Fast (Swiftly), PNP & QD Log Editor, and Gary (The Rock), Sherman, Secretary-Treasurer. Swiftly indicated that it was great to see everyone and it was great for all of us to see Swiftly, considering all he's been through.

We all shared a base housing duplex cottage at a reduced cost. Both had double bedrooms, kitchen and living rooms.

Of course, prior to check-out, the quarters had to be cleaned and all linens removed, the decks swabbed and the trash taken out.

Since I shared one half of the unit with Swiftly and Mare, I received my marching orders from the MMAA (Mare — Master at Arms). I got to thinking — holy slop shoot — this little package (MMAA) is harder to please than when I was a scullery maid on the *CGC Campbell* in 1961. Association member, Jack Barker, then a BM1 MAA, stayed on my FA boot ass for 28 days while on Ocean Station Delta. Pots, pans, trays, bowls, coffee cups and silverware were my specialty. Great job to have in the winter on the north Atlantic. Well, Jack, I thought you were tough but Mare's got you beat. Be at Buffalo and I'll let her prove it to you. Gosh, I hope she will talk to me the next time we see each other, and if Swiftly gets mad at me, I might wind up being the new *QD Log* Editor. That ought to be a good one — I can hardly light off the laptop and then its two-finger typing for me. Mare, I take back all that I said.

With Cape May completed, it was on to Buffalo for a

### ***Do Lipton Tea employees take 'coffee breaks?'***

two-day whirlwind look see. Mike had it all planned out for maximum time allotted. Everyone we dealt with was more than accommodating and helpful. Buffalo is shaping up to be a "one of a kind reunion". I don't think there will be another event that will top this one. The Buffalo visit is a whole other story. **Steve Petersen**

### ***CGC Diligence 50th Anniversary***

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of *USCGC Diligence (WMEC-616)*, the Wilmington Harbor Enhancement Trust, along with the City of Wilmington, N.C., the Navy League, and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, have joined together to plan a series of events honoring the cutter for her years of service. These events will be held Veteran's Day Weekend (Nov. 8-11). All past and present *Diligence* crewmembers are invited to attend. The celebration will include static displays, a golf tournament and tours of the ship. On Tuesday, Nov. 11th, there will be a recognition ceremony at Coast Guard Moorings, Wilmington to honor *Diligence* and recognize her 50 years of service to the country.

### ***Spencer Association Reunion***

A reunion of the USS Spencer Association will be held Sept. 25-27, 2014 at the Sheraton Suites Key West Resort in Key West, Fla. A registration payment of \$150 per person should be mailed to **Bob Marzen** at 917 Center St., Jim Thorpe, Pa. 18229-2209. For additional information, contact Bob at 570-325-4414.

***"Never kick a cow chip on a hot day."  
— Will Rodgers, Jr.***

## **Let Your Name Live On**

For years, the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association has been operating from day-to day through the collection of dues and contributions of our members. The time has come for us to be more concerned about the future. Will you consider naming the CGCVA in your will? Any help in the form of cash, stocks, or life insurance policies will help assure the future of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association.

**Remember: The CGCVA is a Non-Profit Association. All donations are tax-deductible.**



### **USCG Auxiliary Turns 75**

Congress founded the Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1939 as an organization of volunteers to promote boating safety and to augment the United States Coast Guard. On 23 June 2014, the Auxiliary celebrated its 75th anniversary of dedicated and heroic service to our Nation. The Auxiliary provided sustained mission excellence to the Nation and the Coast Guard during their diamond anniversary year, as it has throughout its proud history. This year, Auxiliarists delivered over 4.2 million hours of operational and administrative manpower to Coast Guard missions. Auxiliary instructors spent over 96,000 hours teaching boating safety classes, and its vessel examiners performed over 130,000 recreational and fishing vessel safety checks. Auxiliary operators performed more than 66,000 hours of SAR mission support saving over 470 lives and assisting 13,000 members of the boating public. Much to the credit of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the number of boating safety-related deaths in the U.S. reached a historic low for a second consecutive year.

### **Shuffle On Up To Buffalo**

Here's a quick look at the 2015 CGCVA Convention & Reunion. . .

**The Millennium Hotel** — Situated five miles from Buffalo and three miles from the airport, the Millennium Hotel offers full service, a great price and a good fit to host our 30th anniversary celebration. It will be fully renovated prior to our arrival. Guests are guaranteed superior rooms. There is also an indoor swimming pool. The hotel is adjacent to the Walden Galleria Mall with over 200 stores and shops and The Cheesecake Factory, Gordon Biersch Brewery, The Melting Pot and Bar Louie just to name a few eateries. You will be provided the following on a complementary basis: airport shuttle, wi-fi in all rooms and common areas, parking, and shuttle service to the mall.

**30th CGCVA Anniversary Celebration** — This special event will take place right after the Opening Ceremony on the first full day.

**Niagara Falls and Niagara Seneca Casino** — The group event will feature a trip to Niagara Falls. We provide round trip transportation for \$25 and you decide what you want to do and how much you want to spend. Upon arrival you decide if you want to take the

full "Niagara Falls Adventure" for about \$36, which includes a 30-minute boat ride on the *Maid of the Mist*. Or, for about \$2, you will have unlimited use of the trolley at Niagara State Park. The bus will also drop you off at the Niagara Seneca Casino, which by the way is only a short walk across from the state park entrance. You will have plenty of time to do both. We are currently negotiating a casino rebate for taking the bus. It will be in form of free slot play and a food coupon.

**Awards Banquet** — We will begin one hour earlier to ensure we have ample time to re-open the hospitality suite for a nightcap and to say our goodbyes.

**In The Mix** — Negotiating shuttle service into and around Buffalo; Silent Auction (in the capable hands of the CGCVA Auxiliary.); Chieu Hoi Auction; Fifty-Fifty Drawing(s); and negotiating the Hospitality Suite Entertainment.

#### **What's New**

The Millenium Hotel is offering an \$11 breakfast (includes tax and tip). We can get half price admission to the Naval & Military Park (regular price is \$10). Bottled wine will be available for purchase at the Awards Banquet and the Buffalo/Niagara Tourism Board will have a Hospitality Table set up. Don't miss it!

### **Know Your Service Officers**

For CGCVA members with questions regarding veterans entitlements, making VA claims, and all manner of veterans affairs, you can obviously contact service officers at your nearby VFW, American Legion, and DAV posts and chapters but did you know our association also has fully training service officers? These men are thoroughly trained to assist you so consider contacting any of them if you need assistance or simply have some questions. Here's the CGCVA Service Officers and their contacts:

**Tom Huckelberry.** Phone: 239-947-5499. Email: [hucksandy@embarqmail.com](mailto:hucksandy@embarqmail.com).

**Floyd "Butch" Hampton.** Phone: 252-338-1996. Email: [poppopof2@hotmail.com](mailto:poppopof2@hotmail.com).

**Richard Hogan, Jr.** Phone: 314-552-9888 (office) or 314-560-1402. Email: [Richard.HoganJr@va.gov](mailto:Richard.HoganJr@va.gov).

***Why did Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?***

## Continued from page 1

were present. Also attending were PNP Joe Kleinpeter who drove down from New York and PNP Ed & Mary Swift who drove in from Virginia.



*PNP Joe Kleinpeter, Sec'y/Treas Gary Sherman, and VP Steve Petersen in the official reviewing stand. (photo by CWO John Edwards)*

the *QD Log* and website, and, of course, the upcoming 2015 Convention/Reunion in Buffalo, N.Y., abounded.

Having the three elected officers plus the Chairman of the Board of Trustees together provided a perfect opportunity to discuss association business in a relaxed, unofficial manner. As a result, many ideas regarding membership, promotional items,



*President Mike Placencia (in his distinctive Jerry Garcia tie) prepares to review the troops with the official party. (photo by CWO John Edwards)*



*One of the recruit companies march past the official reviewing stand. (photo by CWO John Edwards)*

And, when PNP Joe Kleinpeter arrived, the discussions became even more engaging and lively... or maybe that was just the raunchy “sea stories”. Regardless, it was great to openly discuss strategies to benefit and grow the CGCVA face-to-face rather than the usual phone calls and emails. Much was accomplished and we all left Cape May feeling very optimistic about our fine association.

Thanks go out to our Cape May representative Terry Lee who coordinated activities with the training center; to the many CGCVA members who made the trip to Cape May, some with their families; and certainly to Capt. Prestidge and the men and women serving at the training center for honoring the CGCVA. It truly was a wonderful and impressive ceremony.

**Swift**

*(Left) The training center's ceremonial honor guard prepares for their performance. (photo by Ed Swift)*



Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

REUNION/CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

May 17 - 22, 2015
THE MILLENIUM HOTEL
2040 Walden Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14225
Reservations: 1-800-323-3331

Room Rates: Single or Double occupancy \$90.00 plus 13.75% tax
Courtyard Room \$100 plus 13.75% tax

PLEASE BOOK YOUR ROOM DIRECTLY WITH THE HOTEL
(Be sure to mention Code: 1501COASTG)

Fees to register, tours, luncheons and banquet are shown on the following page. After selection of the activities you wish to attend, fill in the corresponding amounts and total them. Send this page and reservation form with your Tour/Meal selections along with your check (payable to CGCVA) to:

Mike Placencia
9804 Iroquois Lane
Bakersfield, CA 93312-5323
Phone: 661-401-0609
cgmasterchief22@hotmail.com



(Please type or print clearly)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_
Address: \_\_\_\_\_
City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_
Arrival Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_
Name of Spouse/Guest: \_\_\_\_\_
Name(s) to Appear on Badge(s): \_\_\_\_\_
Vessel/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

**Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association**

Registration/Tour/Banquet/Lunch Reservation Form

CGCVA Registration:

<u>Early:</u>	Cost	How Many	Total
Received by March 1, 2015	\$25.00/person	X _____ =	_____
<u>Late:</u>			
Received After March 1, 2015	\$35.00/person	X _____ =	_____

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

**Bus Transportation to Niagara Falls State Park and Niagara Seneca Casino**

\$25.00/person                      X \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday, May 20, 2015 11:30 a.m.

**CGCVA Business Meeting/Luncheon**

\$20.00/person                      X \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Poultry: \_\_\_\_ Beef: \_\_\_\_ (Note: If you have dietary requirements, advise Mike)

Wednesday, May 20, 2015 11:30 a.m.

**Auxiliary Friendship Luncheon**

\$20.00/person                      X \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Poultry: \_\_\_\_ Beef: \_\_\_\_ (Note: If you have dietary requirements, advise Mike)

Thursday, May 21, 2015

**Cocktail Hour (5 p.m. with Cash Bar); Awards Banquet (6 p.m.)**

\$50.00/person                      X \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Poultry: \_\_\_\_ Beef: \_\_\_\_ (Note: If you have dietary requirements, advise Mike)

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED FOR ABOVE ITEMS: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Please help the committee by making your reservations as early as possible. We must provide headcounts in advance. It takes a lot of time and effort negotiating to get the best deals possible so you can come and everything is in place when you arrive. So again, please help us by filling out these forms and sending them with your check to Mike Placencia as early as you can. Thanks for your help and consideration!



**Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association**

**Reunion/Convention Itinerary**

**THE MILLENIUM HOTEL**

**2040 Walden Avenue  
Buffalo, New York 14225**



Sunday, May 17

**4:00 p.m. — CGCVA Officers/Trustees Board Meeting.  
— CGCVA Planning Committee Meeting**

Monday, May 18

**9:30 a.m. — Registration and Hospitality Room open.  
4:00 p.m. — Opening Ceremony.  
5:00 p.m. — CGCVA 30th Anniversary Celebration.**

Tuesday, May 19

**9:00 a.m. — Registration and Hospitality Room open.  
10:00 a.m. — First Bus Run departs for Niagara Falls & casino.  
11:15 a.m. — Second Bus Run departs for Niagara Falls & casino.**

Wednesday, May 20

**9:30 a.m. — Registration and Hospitality Room open.  
11:30 a.m. — CGCVA Business Meeting/Luncheon.  
11:30 a.m. — Auxiliary Friendship Luncheon.**

Thursday, May 21

**9:30 a.m. — Hospitality Room open.  
5:00 p.m. — Cocktail Hour (cash bar).  
6:00 p.m. — Awards Banquet.  
Hospitality Room reopens after Awards Banquet.**

Friday, May 22

**Check Out. Have a safe trip home.**



**Note:**

Upon arrival at the Millennium Hotel, be sure to check the times of the events and tour as they are subject to change.

## Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

### General Information for Members and Visiting Associations

Please wear your name tag at all times while in the Hospitality Room. You will not be served without it. There are special discounts when you wear your name tag around the hotel. If you registered early and indicated such, your ship/station/group name will be included on your name tag. This will make it easier to be recognized and attract others to speak up and get acquainted.



If your visiting group wants a separate meeting room and luncheon contact Mike Placencia and he will do his best to have the hotel accommodate your needs. Please be advised that it is highly unlikely that the hotel will be able to provide a different meal from what the CGCVA & Auxiliary are having without a price difference, if they have the staff to accomplish another meal. Please accomplish this type of request prior to your arrival at the Millenium Hotel to give Mike time to accomplish your request. You can contact Mike at 661-401-0609 or [cgmasterchief22@hotmail.com](mailto:cgmasterchief22@hotmail.com).

Remember, guests are encouraged to attend the CGCVA Auxiliary Friendship Luncheon. We have tried to set up everything to make you comfortable and welcome to this reunion and the CGCVA Convention. If we have overlooked anything, please let us know what it is.



#### Refund Policy:

Requests for refunds of all payments will be honored for compelling reasons if they are received by April 17, 2015. Refund requests after that date honored after the convention, subject to the availability of funds, after all convention expenses are paid, Registration fees are not refundable. This is due to the fact that the monies have already been spent for necessary convention items.



## Face To Face With Lend-Lease

by S1/c David H. Hendrickson, USS Albuquerque (PF-7)

In my high school history class before America entered World War II, things like Lend-Lease were a big yawn, even when our teacher quoted Senator Burton K. Wheeler that Lend-Lease “will plow under every fourth American boy.” It meant little to us that President Roosevelt sought to “sell, transfer, exchange, lease, lend” any defense articles to any country deemed vital to the defense of the United States. But when passed into law in March, 1941, unknown to me, my role in FDR’s grand design would blossom in August 1945.

With no thought to Lend-Lease, I enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard in the spring of 1943. Boot camp and seamanship school on Government Island (now Coast Guard Island) Alameda, California, and deck petty officer training on Treasure Island Navy school prepared me for sea duty (recommended for coxswain and qualifications for Boatswains Mate 2nd class). Liberty in Oakland and San Francisco where men were separated from the boys as they say, was another matter.

To erase the recruit image after boot camp, I eagerly visited Joe the Navy Tailor on Broadway in Oakland for form fitting bell-bottom dress blues. In tailor-made dress blues you were seen as an “old salt” on the dance floor at the Rose Room taxi dance upstairs on the corner of 12th and Broadway. I mostly stood around longing for “Double Veronica,” a blond taxi dancer whose hair tumbled over both eyes, not over just one eye like movie star Veronica Lake.

A big liberty meant catching the Key System “A” train for San Francisco on 14th Street near Government Island. First stop in the City was Pepsi Cola House on the corner of Mason and Market Streets for free Pepsi and hot dogs, then a climb up steep Mason Street to the Stage Door Canteen with a half-pint of Southern Comfort tucked in your sock. An experienced buddy instructed me on the role of Southern Comfort as a sure ice-breaker with San Francisco girls. To my lament, sea duty intervened before Southern Comfort proved its promise.

In December 1943, I boarded the newly commissioned



*USS Albuquerque (PF-7)*

patrol frigate, *USS Albuquerque (PF-7)*, one of nearly a hundred launched in 1943-44, seventy-five manned by the Coast Guard and twenty-one loaned to Britain. My rating was Seaman First Class, two steps above the bottom of the ladder and as high as I would go during my three year enlistment. With more than a full complement of deck petty officers and little chance of advancement to coxswain, I volunteered with two buddies to operate the ship’s laundry for \$30.00 a month extra pay. This act led to sealing my fate as a participant in FDR’s Lend-Lease scheme.

Following shakedown at San Diego, rumor had it that we were bound for Hawaii and the South Pacific. Some rumor, as *Albuquerque* deployed from Seattle in early April, 1944, assigned as lead ship Pacific Fleet Escort Division 27 (cort div 27) in the Bering Sea. We were sentenced to plod endlessly on escort duty from Tedium to Boredom to Apathy and back, or in our case from Dutch Harbor to Adak to Attu along the treeless, fogbound, windswept and storm plagued Aleutian Island chain. *PF-7* did its share of Guard Ship Patrol off the Russian Komandorski Islands as IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) responder to 11th Air Force B-24s flying from Adak on bombing missions to the Japanese Kurile Islands on the western limits of the Bering Sea, along with rescue missions, such as responding to the reef bound shipwreck of *USAT Northwind*, hard aground and breaking up in heavy seas on an outer island in the Shumagins off Cold Bay, successfully rescuing eighteen



men from an all but swamped boat.

Escape from the Aleutians and eternal bad weather broke in early June, 1945. On a gray morning moored to Ballyhoo Dock in Dutch Harbor, the captain announced return to Seattle to prepare the ship for Lend-Lease transfer to the USSR at Cold Bay. Departing Dutch Harbor with homecoming pennants flying, I defied the old warning not to look back at Priest Rock. A backward glance meant assured return to the Bering Sea. As a result, when nearly one half of the crew left the ship in Seattle, I drew the short straw in the laundry. I was now bonded to Lend-Lease.

Anchored in Cold Bay in mid-July, additional crew departed as nearly one hundred Russians from a Vladivostok transport reported aboard. The single Russian interpreter assigned to *Albuquerque* had no time for the laundry. Alone, I stood face to face with two Russian trainees at the laundry half-door, unable to exchange a word. “Semper Paratus” (Always Ready) I thought, as I began methodically pointing to valves and switches and making circular motions for an operating washer and dryer. We struggled on with sign language and gradual use of “yes, no” and “da, nyet..” As on the deck, on the bridge, in the galley and in the engine room, ingenuity and good will prevailed. Within a week the laundry was operating smoothly enough to pass inspection by FDR himself, who would have been pleased

with this low level consummation of Lend-Lease.

*Albuquerque* was transferred to the USSR on 16 August 1945. Returning to Seattle aboard the ancient transport *Baranov*, I was soon assigned to *USCG FS-34* and lastly to *USS Adm. E.W. Eberle (AP-123)* until discharge in San Francisco, April 1946. The Russians upheld their part of the loan agreement by returning the ship to the U.S. Navy at Yokosuka, Japan in 1949. Recommissioned, *Albuquerque* earned three battle stars in the Korean War, then loaned to Japan in 1953 and renamed *Tochi*, becoming a permanently moored training ship in 1965. Returned to the U.S. Navy, the former *USS Albuquerque (PF-7)* was sunk as a target ship in 1968. So in the end, that is how Franklin D. Roosevelt, the U.S. Congress, the Russians, the Japanese and I faced up to Lend-Lease. Perhaps Lend-Lease deserved more than a yawn in my high school history class of long ago.



## The U.S. Coast Guard and the American Civil War

by Truman Strobridge

Through the years, it had been known as the “system of cutters,” the Revenue Marine, Revenue-Marine Service, and Revenue Service until the title Revenue Cutter Service found its first statutory use in an act passed in 1863. Currently, the United States Coast Guard is the largest component within the United States Department of Homeland Security.

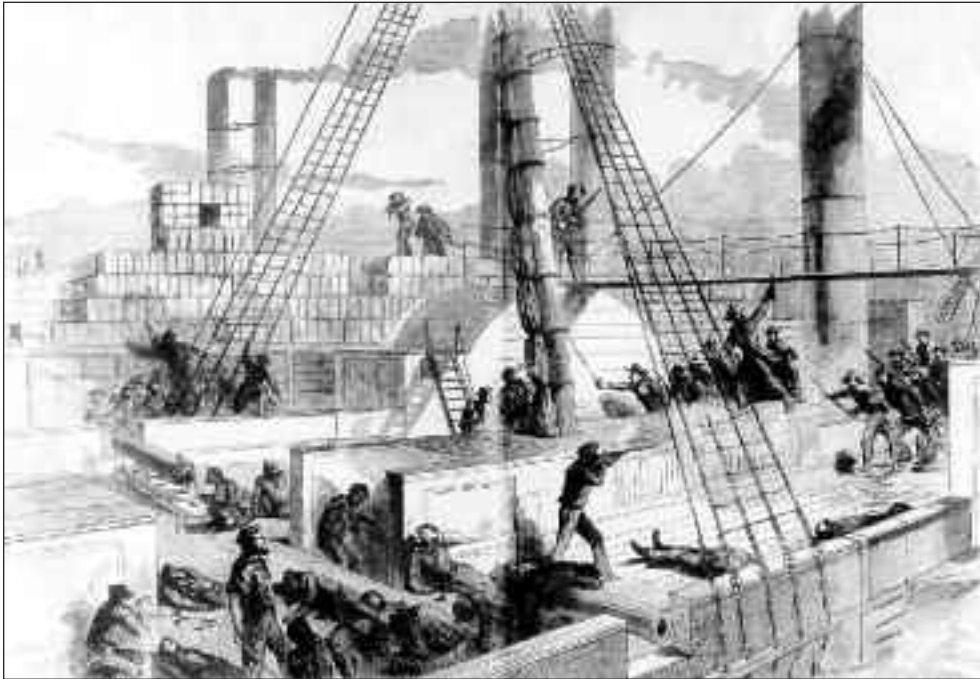
“You must give us bigger guns than that, boys,” shouted John McGowan of the U.S. Revenue Marine, as the U.S. Coast Guard was known, at the Confederate gunners, when their cannon ball fell short, ricocheted off the water, and



bounded completely over his vessel, “or you’ll never hurt us.” As if in reply, a Secessionist battery on Morris Island fired a heavier gun. The seaman taking soundings felt the ball slam into the hull below him and frantically scurried for safety. McGowan called after him: “You’re much safer where you were! Lightning never strikes twice in the same place!”

McGowan was commanding a lumbering, unarmed side-wheel freighter manned

*(Left) A painting illustrating gunners from the Harriet Lane firing the first naval shot of the Civil War.*



*An engraving illustrating the capture of the Harriet Lane by Confederate forces on 1 January 1863. She was at this time a commissioned U.S. Navy warship.*

by merchant seamen but carrying Federal soldiers and military supplies. This ship was far different from the swift, armed revenue cutters in which he had pursued slavers, smugglers, and pirates.

Now, on January 9, 1861, as skipper of the Federal-chartered merchantman *Star of the West*, he was attempting to bring supplies and reinforcements to the besieged Union garrison at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. He expected to use the same sort of trickery as those smugglers whose voyages he had sought to disrupt. Success depended upon secrecy, but this operation was one of the worst-kept secrets of the deepening national crisis. Ample warning and enthusiastic gun crews doomed the venture to failure.

*Star of the West* approached Charleston Harbor at first light. McGowan hoped his vessel would pass for a coastal trader. As soon as the batteries opened fire, he hoisted a second large American flag but, as the ranking Army officer on board observed, “the one was no more respected than the other.” The closer McGowan drew to Fort Sumter, the more rapid became the Confederate fire. Realizing the futility of continuing against the well-served shore batteries, McGowan reluctantly ordered his ship out of the harbor.

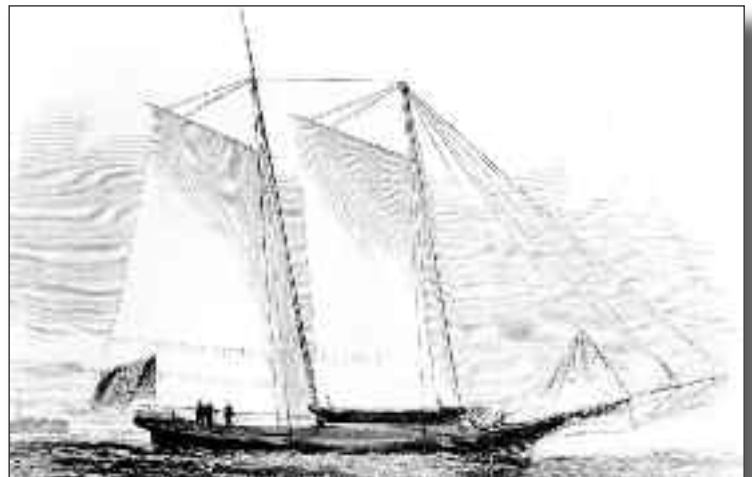
McGowan's rebuff by rebel artillery was the first skirmish of the American Civil War. Just three months later, Abraham Lincoln, new to the presidency but

determined to “hold, occupy and possess the property and places belonging to the Government,” dispatched warships to relieve Fort Sumter. The angry South Carolinians reacted on April 12, 1861 with a cannon bombardment that forced the fort's surrender two days later and touched off the four-year long, fratricidal struggle.

During this action, the U.S. Revenue Marine (USRM) steam cutter *Harriet Lane*, commanded by Captain John Faunce, USRM, along with the rest of the naval relief squadron, helplessly lay off the bar at the entrance to Charleston Harbor. Not long after her arrival there on April 11th, recalled the famous Civil War correspondent, G. S. Osbon, who had been aboard the cutter at the time:

“... an incident occurred, which I have

never seen recorded, but which seems to me worthy of not. A vessel suddenly appeared through the mist from behind the Bar, a passenger steamer, which was made out to be the *Nashville*. She had no colors set, and as she approached the fleet she refused to show them. Captain Faunce ordered one of the guns manned, and as she came still nearer turned to the gunner. ‘Stop her!’ he said, and a shot went skipping across her bows. Immediately the United States ensign went to her gaff end, and she was allowed to proceed. The *Harriet Lane* had fired the first shotted gun from the Union side.”



*An engraving of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Aiken, surrendered to the secessionist South Carolina government on 27 December 1860. Photograph of an engraving first published in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 1861.*



## Feature Articles

Thus, a USRM vessel became the first one of either side to fire a shot in the Civil War. Ironically, the role that the U.S. Revenue Marine — the forerunner of the U.S. Coast Guard — played in this conflict has remained virtually unknown to the general public, most writers on this period, and even some scholars. This is due in no small measure to the fact that this unique military service — the nation's oldest continuous sea-going one — then operated as part of the Treasury Department during peace time and with the Navy during war. Moreover, through the years, it had been known variously as the “system of cutters,” the Revenue Service, and even the Revenue-Marine Service until the title Revenue Cutter Service found its first statutory use in an act passed in 1863.

After Fort Sumter, the cutter *Harriet Lane* soon saw action again. Because of her speed and shallow draft that permitted her to work close inshore to cover troop landings with her 8-inch gun and four rifled 32-pounders, the Navy used her extensively in blockading squadrons, bombardments, and amphibious assaults.

In late August 1861, the cutter participated in the first joint amphibious operation of the war. The objective was the capture of the strategic Confederate forts at Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina — the vital gateway for rebel privateers and blockade runners.

A war correspondent who was present wrote a graphic description of the cutter's part in the final successful attack:

“At twenty-five minutes past ten the *Harriet Lane* opened fire, and soon after the *Cumberland* came in from the offing and joined in the attack. The *Harriet Lane*, with her rifled guns, did good execution, several projectiles from the eight-inch going into the battery and one going through the ramparts. The fire was so hot that all of the enemy that could do so got into a bomb-proof in the middle of the battery.”

This action — the first real Union victory of the war —

was the last important one for the *Harriet Lane* as a cutter of the U.S. Revenue Marine. Soon after, on 17 September 1861, she left the service through a permanent transfer to the Navy.

The subsequent misadventures of this ship, probably the second most famous cutter in the entire history of the U.S. Coast Guard, took some of the luster off her earlier heroic exploits. On New Year's Day of 1863, the Confederates captured her at Galveston in a bloody, rough-an-tumble boarding with pistol and cutlass. After service in the Confederate Navy, she was converted into a blockade runner. With the end of the war, she entered the merchant shipping trade with a new name. Her end came ignominiously in 1884 off Pernambuco, Brazil, when she was abandoned after becoming waterlogged.

Even before the fall of Fort Sumter, as one Southern State after another seceded from the Union, many military officers were subjected to a soul-wrenching conflict of allegiances. Those in

the U.S. Revenue Marine were not exempt. Captain James J. Morrison, USRM, a Virginian by birth and the commander of the revenue cutter *Lewis Case* at Mobile, was a typical case. This weather beaten veteran of service aboard cutters in both the Seminole and Mexican Wars developed doubts about the morality of drawing his sword against his native state, relatives, and friends. In the end, he surrendered his ship to the authorities of the State of Alabama. His officers and crew, not sharing his sentiments but helpless to prevent his act, banded together. Under the leadership of Third Lieutenant Charles F. Shoemaker, they made their way throughout the length of the hostile South before reporting aboard other cutters.

When southern-born Captain John G. Breshwood, USRM, balked at moving his revenue cutter *Robert McClelland* from New Orleans to New York, Secretary of the Treasury John A. Dix responded firmly to forestall the surrender of the ship to the seceded State of Louisiana. He



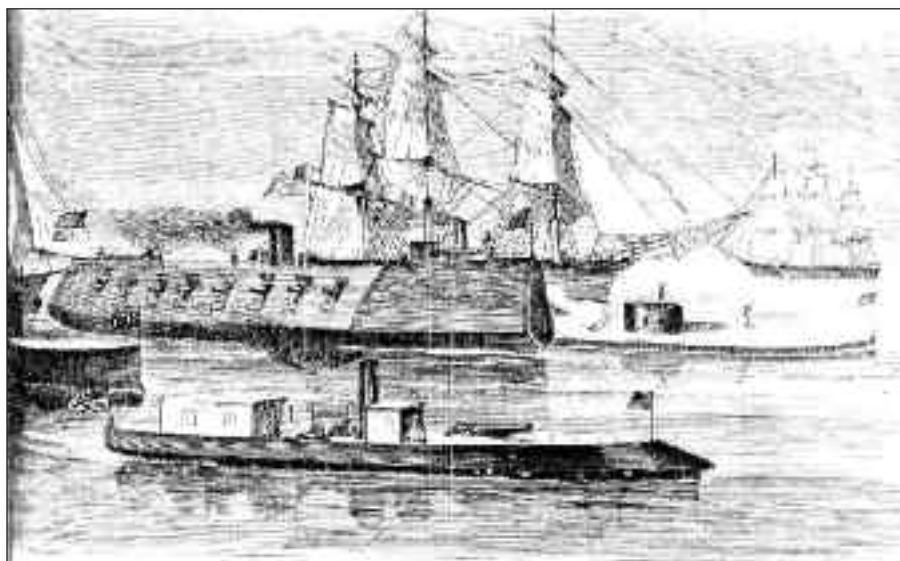
*Revenue Cutter Miami supporting the landing of Union troops on the beach at Ocean View, Virginia for the invasion of Norfolk on 10 May 1862.*

wired the second in command of the cutter, to arrest the captain, assume command, treat Captain Breshwood as a mutineer if he tried to interfere, and “If anyone attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot.”

These strong words, although intercepted and never delivered, would have fallen on deaf ears, for the second in command was as much a rebel sympathizer as his captain. They went over to the Confederacy, taking the cutter with them. Nevertheless, Secretary Dix had provided a stirring slogan and rallied Union morale at a critical point.

With the outbreak of hostilities, or even before, as in the case of the USRM cutter *Harriet Lane*, President Lincoln ordered several USRM cutters to combat duty with the Navy. Here, they performed whatever missions assigned, from blockade duty on the coast and inland waters — where the cutters rendered “incalculable service” by preventing men, mail, supplies, and money from reaching the South — to chasing Rebel privateers and providing naval support for Union military ventures. The cutters remaining under the Treasury Department were desperately needed for law enforcement under wartime pressure. With tariffs increased some 50 percent to help finance the war effort, smuggling had become a major industry.

The emergency found the USRM, like the other military services, ill-equipped. Already, the Confederate flag flew

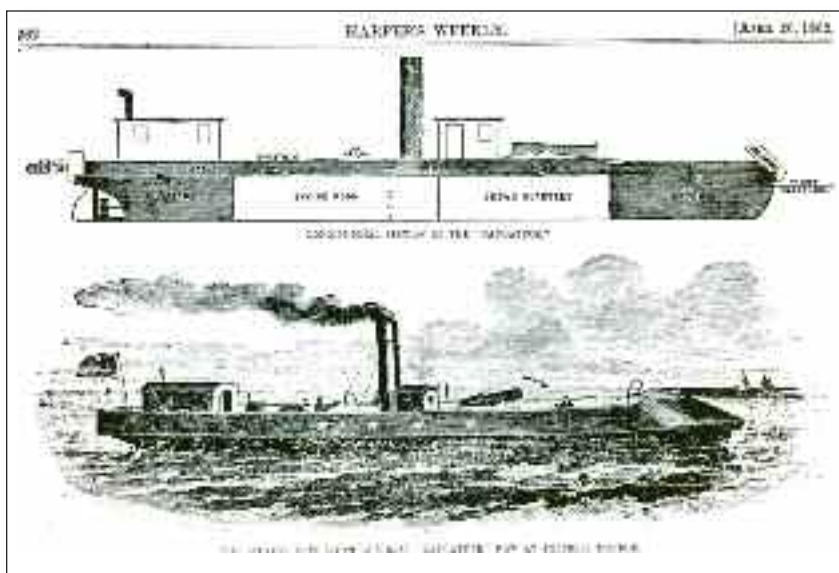


*Engraving showing the Naugatuck (center foreground) along with the USS Brooklyn and USS Monitor.*

over five seized cutters, while another had been lost during the Federals’ hasty withdrawal from the Norfolk Navy Yard. In the scramble for ships that ensued in the North, many strange vessels were commissioned, but the emphasis was on steamships, for the Age of Sail had passed. Witness the orders given to Captain H. B. Nomes, USRM, of the sailing cutter *Forward*, which had the mission of keeping open a course for transports in the Chesapeake Bay from Perryville, Maryland, to Annapolis. He was directed to “capture or sink any unfriendly craft” and to “urge any U.S. steamer he met to give his schooner in tow in furtherance of duty assigned.”

President Lincoln, even though somewhat confused as to the proper administrative chain of command for the USRM, helped secure one vessel. Within weeks of the firing at Fort Sumter, he dashed off a note to the “Hon. Sec. of Navy,” realized his error and crossed out the word “Navy,” and substituted “Treasury,” requesting an interview for James Gordon Bennett, publisher of the New York Herald. In the end, Secretary Chase commissioned Bennett as a First Lieutenant to command his own yacht, which became the USRM cutter *Henrietta* and did blockade duty from Long Island to Port Royal, South Carolina, during the war. Although Bennett resigned from the USRM in May 1862, his tour of duty gave him a life-long interest in nautical and military affairs, for his newspaper became noted for its wide and detailed coverage of these fields.

The well-equipped cabin of the converted 225-ton



*A photograph of an engraving from Harper’s Weekly of the unique revenue “ironclad” Naugatuck. The engraving was first published in Harper’s Weekly on 26 April 1862.*



steam yacht *Lady le Marchant*, purchased by the USRM for \$25,000 and then armed with four brass howitzers and renamed the *Miami*, accommodated many high ranking dignitaries at various times during the Civil War. On one such occasion, a rainy night in May 1862, President Lincoln, Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, and General Egbert L. Viele, U.S. Army, gathered in it, while cruising down the Potomac River to Fortress Monroe. This visit had been prompted by the public impatience over the stalemate at Hampton Roads, where General [George B.] McClellan had allowed the Union Army to become bogged down before the city of Norfolk.

On this, his first visit to a battlefield, President Lincoln was trying his own hand at running a campaign. No sooner had the unescorted USRM cutter *Miami* delivered him safely at Fortress Monroe, then he set in motion the bombardment of the Confederate batteries at Sewell's Point by the Union fleet in preparation for an amphibious assault. The President himself, on May 9, boarded a tugboat and went here and there along the shore, scouting out a good place for troops to disembark and attach toward Norfolk. At 5:30 P.M., reported the log of the USRM *Miami*, "the President & Secretary Chase came off and gave us orders to immediately up anchor & follow the boat they were on to the rebel coast. On arriving lowered boat with officers and armed men to proceed on shore to reconnoiter." When several "horsemen who seemed to be soldiers of the enemy, appeared on the beach," Secretary Chase asked the President if the *Miami's* howitzers should "fire on them," but Lincoln "replied negatively."

Returning [to] the Fortress Monroe, President Lincoln ordered an immediate infantry assault by boats, which was hastily organized. At 7 P.M., the *Miami*, as its log relates, "received orders to return to Lynhaven Bay & cover with our guns the landing of our troops on their arrival." Early the next morning, the log noted the sighting of "the transports fleet standing on for the land" and, at 4 A.M., the "transports landing the troops."

Once ashore, the six regiments marched unopposed to Norfolk only to find it already evacuated by the Confederates. Only smoking ruins of the vast mounds of military supplies remained. This swift and easy victory for Northern arms apparently was due to President

Lincoln's presence and personal drive right on to the scene.

The following day, May 11th, the President rode through the captured town. At one point, he stopped to gaze upon the ruined hulk of the [Confederate] ironclad *Virginia*, blown up before the enemy's withdrawal. Interestingly enough, before being ordered by Secretary Chase "to proceed to the Washington Navy Yard as soon as possible," the commanding officer of the USRM *Miami* recorded in his log that he had received "on board the safety valve of the steamer ram *Virginia* as a present to be carried to Washington for President Lincoln."

But, probably, the oddest looking and most valuable acquisition to the service was the USRM *Naugatuck*, also sometimes referred to as *Ironsides* or *E.S. Stevens* in records. Of a radical design, she was a semi-submersible ironclad, needing only 15 minutes to take on enough water ballast to sink almost 3 feet. Thus, she could enter battle with only her impenetrable turret mounting a Parrot gun above water. Afterwards, she could pump the water overboard again in just 8 minutes flat.

Being contemporary with the famous *Monitor* and *Virginia*, she was rushed south in hopes of tipping the balance in the Union's favor. In her first action, she served as bait for a well-laid trap. Her commanding officer, Lieutenant D. C. Constable, USRM, placed the *Naugatuck* within a quarter of a mile of the Confederate battery at Sewell's Point and bombarded it until, as planned, the *Virginia* steamed out to investigate. Lieutenant Constable



*Photograph of an engraving that illustrated the bombardment of Sewell's Point by Union vessels on 8 May 1862. The cutter Naugatuck is the second vessel in line directly behind the USS Monitor, which is in the van. U.S. Navy photograph of an engraving published in Fiveash's Virginia-Monitor Engagement, Norfolk, 1907.*

then slowly retired toward a squadron of U.S. Navy steamers, amidst which lurked the *Monitor*, in hopes of trapping and destroying the Confederate ironclad. But the *Virginia* sensed danger, refused the bait, and retired.

When Norfolk fell two days later, on 10 May 1862, the *Virginia* was destroyed to prevent her falling into Union hands, and the James River was opened to the Federal fleet. Hoping to beat the Army troops under General George B. McClellan into Richmond, the navy now took a chance by sending a naval assault flotilla up the James River to try to shell the Confederate capital into submission. The Navy commander placed the USRM *Naugatuck* in the van, with the *Monitor* and the other Union ships strung out behind her, “on account of her submerging qualities and little draft of water, as in case of obstructions or torpedoes, she could, by pumping out, evade them and give warning of the danger to the rest of the fleet.” Just eight miles below the glittering prize, the squadron ran into a double barrier of “spiles, steamboats, and sail vessels” blocking the James River and guarded by a strong battery on Drewry’s Bluff, supported by sharp-eyed marksmen in well-dug rifle pits.

The four-hour long duel between naval and shore guns was a waste of gunpowder as far as the attackers were

concerned, for victory was not possible without the support of Union soldiers ashore. When the USRM *Naugatuck*’s Parrott gun exploded, “she continued in her position during the entire action, fighting her broadside guns.” Although the first Union attack on Richmond had failed, Lieutenant Constable could modestly, but proudly, report: “My officers and crew behaved to my entire satisfaction.” After being repaired, the USRM *Naugatuck* passed the remainder of the war guarding the approaches to New York City.

Countless other feats of the U.S. Revenue Marine, its cutters, and men occurred during the Civil War. These related here serve only in lifting the veil of anonymity from this forgotten service and its contribution to final victory. Interesting enough, one editor in 1864 not only recognized the value and potential of this unique organization, but also unknowingly predicted both the motto — *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready) — and the name — *Coast Guard* — destined for it:

“Keeping always under steam and ever ready, in the event of extraordinary need, to render valuable service, the cutters can be made to form a coast guard whose value it is impossible at the present time to estimate.

## Monuments Men: A Baltimore Writer Learns Her Father Helped in the Search for Nazi Plunder

By Susan Fisher Sullam

Nine years ago, I received a call from a well-respected historian who informed me that my father had played a leading role in one of history’s greatest treasure hunts. He told me my father had been involved in the recovery of billions of dollars of gold bullion, silver, foreign currency, artwork and the possessions of Holocaust victims stolen by the Nazis and hidden in the closing days of World War II. The historian, William R. Wells II, said he had stumbled across my father’s obit in the *New York Times* while doing an online search, and asked if I had any of his files.

I knew little about my father’s war experiences, but I did have some of his files from

his law practice that I had moved to my basement in Baltimore after he died in 1997. I found this all very interesting but told Wells I was too busy with a demanding job to look through the material. I wrote down his contact information and assured him that one day I would find the time to look.



I forgot all about it until March 2013, when Wells again reached out to me. This time he told me George Clooney was working on a movie titled “*The Monuments Men*,” which focused on the recovery of art plundered by the Nazis. Wells, a leading authority on the history of the U.S. Coast Guard, had a simple

*(Left) Lt. Commander Joel Fisher, on the right, with Army Private John Chicoine and driver Albert G. Fenoff in London.*



request: “Just file for a copy of your father’s U.S. Coast Guard service record.” The mention of George Clooney certainly got my attention. I put in the request.

It was a long wait.

Finally, that June, a young Coast Guard lieutenant called and said there was no record of my father. She asked if I had a service ID number for him. She also mentioned that sometimes when families file a request for service records, they find that their relative really never served in the military. Now I was alarmed.

My father, Joel Fisher, had been a well-respected lawyer in Washington. The summer after he died, my husband and I emptied a storage facility in Northern Virginia of files from his law office. We took only what we could fit into my minivan and stored it in a filing cabinet in the basement, where it sat undisturbed for 15 years.

After the call from the lieutenant, I immediately got a headlamp and finally went down to my basement to search. In addition to finding that my father’s name on his birth certificate was Joseph — not Joel — I found hundreds of pages of top-secret and classified documents and newspaper clippings chronicling the enormous theft of treasure

from countries invaded by the Nazis. The documents provided an almost day-by-day diary of the hunt for the stolen plunder in the final month of the war. And though it would take months, I was able to unravel my father’s role in his most important achievement.

In 1942, my father was a young lawyer with the U.S. Department of Treasury. He had tried to enlist in the Army and Navy but was rejected for bad eyesight and flat feet. That year, he was finally commissioned in the U.S. Coast Guard as an ensign and sent to the Aleutian Islands for a brief tour of duty. Because of his Treasury experience, in 1944 he was assigned to Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower’s SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) command in London. At SHAEF, my father was promoted to lieutenant commander and assigned to G-5, the Financial Division, where he served as chief of the Foreign Exchange and Property Control Section.

Although I knew my father had been assigned to Eisenhower’s staff, he never said much about it. When I was a child he once said that Ike used to call him his “Jew Boy” and that he had never voted for him.

The only other mention came shortly after “Patton,” starring George C. Scott, was released in 1970. After seeing the movie, my father told me that he had been on a mission for Ike to get to the “salt mines” before the Soviets. My father’s team of soldiers had to cross the lines of Lt. Gen. George Patton’s Third Army, and they were eventually stopped and given a hard time by the notoriously difficult general. According to my father, Patton finally said, “Hell, I’ll have to let you go because you’re ‘Ike’s boys.’” There was no explanation as to what the “salt mines” were and why they had to get there.

Growing up during the 1960s, I had little interest in what my father, or mother — who had served as a lieutenant in the WAVES — had done during the war. All that changed when I found the documents chronicling



*In April of 1945, a U.S. soldier views art stolen by the Nazis and stored in a church in Ellingen, Germany. (U.S. National Archives & Records Administration via Reuters /The Washington Post)*

my father's role in the hunt.

In early 1945, as it became evident that Germany would fall, the Nazis were busy hiding the gold bullion and coins, silver bars, foreign currency, artwork and other possessions of Holocaust victims. The Nazis shipped much of the treasure out of Berlin — away from the advancing Allied armies — to a network of salt mines in the Merkers region and to Reichsbank branches in eastern and southern Germany.

Merkers is 80 miles northeast of Frankfurt. According to my father's files, the U.S. Army was racing against time to locate the treasure before the Nazis could transport it to Switzerland or before the Soviets, moving westward, could get their hands on it.

That February, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin had signed the Yalta agreement, reorganizing postwar Europe and deciding which countries would control land that had been occupied by the Nazis. The agreement added to the pressure to recover the stolen bounty because it placed the Merkers region under Soviet control after the war.

At the end of March, Patton's Third Army crossed the Rhine and began its sweep into the heart of Germany. On April 4, the mining village of Merkers fell. Nearby was Ohrdruf, a forced labor camp that was part of the Buchenwald concentration camp network. (Ohrdruf was the first concentration camp to be liberated by U.S. troops, and is the camp Eisenhower took international press to visit so reporters could provide an eyewitness account of Nazi atrocities.)

On the evening of April 6, American MPs stopped two



*U.S. soldiers examine the painting "Wintergarten" by French Impressionist Edouard Manet, stolen by the Nazi regime and hidden in a salt mine in Merkers, Germany. (U.S. National Archives & Records Administration via Reuters/The Washington Post)*

displaced French women there, one of whom was pregnant, to tell them of a curfew. The women were in search of a midwife, and the MPs decided to drive them into town to find one. They passed the Kaiseroda mine, and the women mentioned that Nazis had hidden valuables in the mine some 700 meters down and that it had taken slave laborers 72 hours to unload.

The Army Counter Intelligence Corps had heard stories of recent movements of German Reichsbank gold to potassium mines in the Merkers region. The U.S. Third Army quickly assigned soldiers to protect the entrances to the Merkers, Kaiseroda, Leimbach, Springen and Dietlas mines.

On April 8, U.S. soldiers and members of SHAEF's Financial Division entered the Merkers mine and found what was later referred to as Room No. 8, a 75-by-150-foot vault-like room that contained more than 7,000 bags and containers, stacked knee-high. Other room-size areas also held bags and containers filled with gold, silver, currency, artwork and Holocaust victims' personal possessions.



Among the treasures were plates used by the Reichsbank to print Reichsmarks, critical to funding the German war effort.

Four days later, Gens. Eisenhower, Patton and Omar Bradley toured the Merkers mine with international press in tow. The day that had begun with such promise did not end well, however. That evening, as the generals ate dinner, they received word that Roosevelt had died in Warm Springs, Ga.

In the days that followed, Col. Bernard D. Bernstein, deputy chief of SHAEF's Financial Division and my father's commanding officer, was ordered to take charge of recovering the treasure. Bernstein called on key members of his staff, including my father, to report immediately to Merkers.

In a Washington Post interview after the war, my father described the first time he entered the Merkers salt mine.

"The first thing that greeted us were open boxes filled with wedding rings, gold teeth inlays and gold and silver picture frames. The owners, we were informed by German guards, were dead. Right in the middle of the cold, white salt beds were these wooden crates. I got hold of something sharp and pried one open, and there was one of those beautiful paintings."

The discovery immediately activated a plan to locate and capture the remainder of Germany's assets. Intelligence reports indicated the Germans were trying to transfer gold, silver, foreign currency and art objects as a means of perpetuating Nazi influence after the war. G-5 teams were formed to enter towns captured by the Allies and locate valuables, then arrange for the nearest military unit to guard them.

According to the documents, my father was tasked with inventorying all the mines in the vicinity and interrogating Reichsbank officials in the hope of finding more assets. Much of his time was devoted to tracking plundered treasure that had been relocated to Reichsbank branches.

For weeks my father led 75 men dubbed "Task Force Fisher." The team followed U.S. troops as they fought their way through central Germany, tracking movements of gold and currency through the towns of Gera, Zwickau, Aue, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Wurzburg, Halle and Hof. Memos and communications detailed the task force's quest.

My father described traveling to Plauen on April 26 to interrogate Reichsbank officials. The officials admitted that there were many bags of gold in the vault, but they said the loot was impossible to retrieve because the vault key was



*To learn her father's full story, Susan Sullam used a headlamp and read his files. (Joseph Victor Stefanchik/The Washington Post)*

in the pocket of a bank employee who was buried under bomb rubble.

My father arranged for a combat engineer company to blast open the vault. In a column by Leonard Lyon of the New York Post datelined Frankfurt, my father recounted how one Reichsbank official snickered, saying: "You'll never do it. The walls are too thick." The dynamite charge was then set off, and the vault was blown. A soldier turned to the bank official and said, "Poof."

Inside they found 35 bags of gold coins, weighing about a ton, which had been deposited by SS chief Heinrich Himmler in April 1944. The Plauen Reichsbank also contained 17 bags of U.S. gold dollars, 1 million Swiss gold francs, 151,560 Norwegian gold kroner, 22 bags of silver German coins, and 98,450 Dutch gold guilders.

The search for assets continued. At the Magdeburg Reichsbank, 6,074 bars of silver and 536 boxes of silver were recovered, representing the total amount of Hungary's silver reserve. In Nuremberg, Task Force Fisher found that the bank director had burned 750 million French francs (in 1945 valued at \$17.2 million), and in the Eschwege Reichsbank, 82 gold bars were found.

A memo detailing the hunt for plundered Nazi loot conducted by the various G-5 teams states that from the discovery of the Merkers mine in early April until May 1, my father and his task force had traveled 1,900 miles and were responsible for the recovery of 6.65 tons of gold and 198,000 pounds of silver.

In an August 1945 interview with the New York Times, my father talked about how uncooperative the Germans had been. He told of how Germans systematically tried to hide their plunder, “with the result that gold alone was found in every conceivable sort of hiding place... under chicken coops at Coburg, in garbage cans and... in hollow trees.”

In an interview with Coast Guard Magazine in October 1945, my father explained that although the Germans would talk to him willingly, “they wouldn’t tell us the truth. They tried desperately to throw us off the trail with lies and distortions, but finally we had enough clues to continue our search.” He also described a harrowing experience.

He and his men were exploring a sub-basement of a Reichsbank when they heard an explosion. According to my father, they “rushed up to street level and found... that the bank building was right in the middle of an artillery duel, but that all American troops had withdrawn [leaving them]... alone in a no-man’s land.”

A German sniper was spotted on the steeple of a church across the street. My father lined up six riflemen at a large window and gave them the signal to fire. The sniper went down, and U.S. troops began to advance again.

In the same interview, my father told of arriving at “one notorious concentration camp and learning that three hours before the arrival of U.S. troops, German SS men had taken all the gold and silver rings” that had been confiscated from prisoners and had fled eastward. His task force “gave chase, cornered the Nazis in a forest and after a brief rifle skirmish, recovered the loot.”

My father was a graduate of Syracuse University’s law school, and in an interview with the Syracuse Post-Standard after the war he talked about what he felt was the greatest problem facing the Allies: The German people believed the Allies had caused the war. He recalled interrogating a prominent official with IG Farben, the chemical conglomerate that was notorious for producing Zyklon B, used to exterminate Jews in gas chambers. The official said that “he had suffered a skull fracture during Allied bombings and complained that our air tactics had been inhuman.” When my father reminded him that Germany

had started the war, he looked astonished and replied: “ ‘My dear sir, any history book will tell you the British declared war on Germany.’ ”

The Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives program was created by the Allies to protect cultural property after the war. Many of the world’s finest curators and art experts were attached to military units as Europe was liberated, working to return the artwork plundered by the Nazis to its rightful owners.

The monuments men worked for six years until their unit was disbanded. While millions of cultural treasures were returned, in fall 2013 the discovery of 1,400 pieces of stolen art in the Munich apartment of the son of a former

Nazi art dealer illustrates that the war is not over for many individuals and cultural institutions.

I don’t know why my father really never spoke of his exploits during the war — never mentioned that his commanding officer had nominated him for a Legion of Merit award, or that he led a team of men searching for stolen treasure.

These documents were a revelation to me — the very idea of my father, who was more klutz-like than athlete, tracking stolen Nazi loot and chasing, interrogating and shooting at Nazis was a total shock. I can only think that like many American soldiers who fought in World War II, or in any war, for that matter, all he wanted was to put his experiences behind him and

resume a normal life.

But his files let me chronicle his role in one of the biggest and most important treasure hunts in history. More important, they gave me a glimpse of a father I had never known: a man who faced enormous odds in his quest to make sure the Nazis would never profit from their crimes.

***Editor’s Note:*** Susan Fisher Sullam is the former communications director for U.S. Sen. Benjamin Cardin and now a freelance writer in Baltimore. Her article was previously published in the Washington Post Magazine, which graciously permitted reprinting of the article in the QD Log. And by the way, the historian who initially contacted Ms. Sullam was non other than our former CGCVA webmaster Bill Wells.



*The author’s father, Joel Fisher.  
(Joseph Victor Stefanchik/For The  
Washington Post)*



## [New Small Stores Manager Appointed](#)

*Our new small stores manager is Richard Hogan, Jr. (a former Storekeeper), appointed recently by National President Michael Placencia. Richard has volunteered to replenish many inventory items in short supply and he is also looking to expand the store with new items so he welcomes any suggestions in that regard.*

*Before the small stores was shipped to Richard, Gary Sherman took a full and complete inventory of the goods available for sale so you will notice some revisions to the inventory below. Some items have been discontinued and the current page reflects current items available.*

*Also, given the current state of technology, please let us know if you feel we should offer credit card payments (and passing the credit card fee on to the purchaser).*

*Please welcome Richard Hogan to this new position and let him know what you need.*

*The below listed CGCVA items are now available. Send orders to Richard Hogan at 4713 West Rock Creek Road High Ridge, MO 63049-3308. Please make checks payable to CGCVA. Prices shown include first-class or "Book Rate" postage.*

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*CGCVA National President Mike Placencia and Capt. G. Todd Prestidge, USCG Training Center commanding officer (center), along with other CGCVA members following the Sunset Parade saluting the CGCVA on July 6, 2014. (photo by CWO John Edwards)*