



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 30, Number 4

Winter 2015

2014 CGCVA Person of the Year Recognized

Air Medal Recipient AST2 Christopher Leon presented CGCVA Honors at AirSta San Francisco

On January 4, 2016, CGCVA National President Mike Placencia presented the 2014 Person of the Year award to Petty Officer Second Class Christopher Leon at Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco before an all-hands assembly. Association Trustee Bill Figone presented Chris with a framed CGCVA Honorary Life Membership Certificate. Also participating in the award ceremony were Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Michael Campbell and Command Senior Chief Shannon Fortune.

Petty Officer Leon demonstrated superior performance of duty in aerial flight while serving as Rescue Swimmer aboard a Coast Guard helicopter on June 20, 2014 during a daring

night rescue of four persons from the Ocean Rower *Britannia* 60 miles offshore of Monterey, Calif. Thirty-



CGCVA National President Michael Placencia with 2014 Person of the Year, AST2 Christopher Leon.

knot winds and fifteen-foot seas rendered the vessel unseaworthy and in danger of sinking. Petty Officer Leon was deployed to the frigid waters and swam to the partially submerged vessel. Once aboard, he rapidly assessed and selected the survivor in the worst condition to enter the water with him for a basket recovery. Upon entering the water, he and the survivor were fiercely swept away from the vessel. Then, with

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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 — Bruce Bruni, LM & Robert Macleod, LM
One-Term — William Figone, LM & Floyd Hampton, 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)

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

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

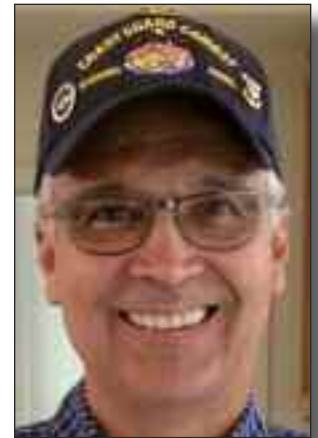
APPOINTED OFFICERS

By-Laws — Thomas W. Hart, LM; **Convention Planners** — Steve Petersen, LM, Mike Placencia, LM; **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** — Tom Dougherty, LM and John Scubert, LM; **Investment Committee** — Gary Sherman, LM; Steve Day, PNP Joe Kleinpeter, and Ernest “Swede” Johnson, LM

From the President

Looking Back

No one can dispute that the Association had a great 2015. The reunion in Buffalo was a resounding success, as was our participation for the CGC *Heriberto Hernandez* commissioning ceremony in San Juan, P.R. Our members worked tireless hours representing us before the recruits at Cape May and the cadets at New London. We were found at Baltimore for



Mike Placencia

the American Legion convention, at the Nation’s capitol for the salute to the Vietnam Veteran, and at Normandy, France where member Jack Read raised the CG flag in an impressive ceremony. Every year, we find Swede Johnson at the memorial service for Douglas Munro. Since Betty Schambeau became president of the our Auxiliary in 2013, we find both her and husband, Jerry at numerous events and reading about them in the *QD Log*. For years we have been indebted to Terry Lee for “carrying” the Association banner at recruit graduations week after week. Terry’s recent passing has saddened us all. Stepping in and not



The CGCVA plaque is now proudly hanging on the CGC Heriberto Hernandez (WPC-1114) next to the FN Hernandez poster and cutter name plate. The cutter’s commanding officer Lt. Charles Bare was sent copies of the Fall 2015 QD Log for all crewmembers.

Next QD Log deadline is May 1, 2016.
Please email articles and photos to the editor at: swiftie1@verizon.net

From the President (cont.)

missing a beat are Association members John Seubert and Tom Dougherty. I am so very proud of them and of you for making the CGCVA as fine a veterans organization that ever was. Bravo Zulu!

Looking Ahead

It looks like 2016 will be another high octane fun-filled year. This is what we have done and what is on tap:

Person of the Year. On Jan. 4th, Trustee Bill Figone and wife Maggie and I and my wife Mimi, presented the 2014 Person of the Year award to Petty Officer Second Class Christopher Leon at a ceremony arranged by his unit, CG Air Station San Francisco. Christopher's story is featured in this issue.

VFW Commander in Chief. On Jan. 20th, I had the pleasure of meeting VFW Commander in Chief, John A. Biedrzycki at a special event hosted by VFW Turlock, Calif., Post Commander and CGCVA member Rear Adm. (ret.) Mike Seward. You may recall from previous articles that Mike is co-guardian of Chieu Hoi for 2015-2017. Mike did an outstanding job as host, one that befits his two-star ranking. CIC Biedrzycki and I traded challenge coins and a few stories. It was quite an



(Left) President Michael Placencia presenting VFW Commander in Chief, John Biedrzycki our challenge coin.

honor.

Sentinel Class Cutter Commissioning Program. We have decided to present CGCVA plaques to the crew of sentinel class cutters named for CG combat veterans that have been previously commissioned into service. The plaques have been designed and when ready, Association Vice President Steve Petersen volunteered to make the presentations at the ship's home ports of Miami and Key West, Fla., in the near future.

CGC Donald Horsley Commissioning. The commissioning ceremony of the Sentinel Class Cutter named for the 44-year Coast Guard veteran will take place this spring in San Juan, P.R. We will post more information as it becomes available on the CGCVA website.

2017 CGCVA Reunion Update. We have received a number of hotel proposals from Branson, Mo., San Antonio, Texas, New Orleans, La., Portland, Ore., Seattle, Wash., and San

Diego, Calif. The committee will be reviewing these and others that may come in. We are looking for the review process to be completed no later than mid-April. Check out our progress on the website.

The Finest Hours. We gave you the

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Chieu Hoi with VFW Commander in Chief, John Biedrzycki (center) surrounded by CG vets: Mike Seward, Mike Placencia and Carl Lasiter. Photo taken at VFW Post 5059, Turlock, CA.

(Left) Chieu Hoi flanked by President Mike Placencia and Army Command Sergeant Major (ret.) and Mike's high school classmate Nick Piacentini. Photo taken at their favorite Sacramento, Calif. watering hole, Chargins.



From the Vice President



Steve Petersen

Ahoy Shipmates:

I'll start this article with the sad news of the passing of Terry Lee. My condolences go out to all the Lee Family. Terry was, among other things, our Association Rep for Cape May Training Center. I kindly referred to Terry as our "Watch Guy". His dedication and thoughtfulness will be missed, but not forgotten.

Association member Jim (Flag Bag) Fay has sent another nautical term for you all to

ponder — Charlie Noble. Google it. He again thought he got me, but I knew that one, also.

On Veterans Day this past November, I decided to break from my usual participation in local events and pay a visit to Jerry, a Vietnam veteran. After an hour and a half drive to Corpus Christi, Tx., there was plenty of time to think about the fact that he and I had a lot in common, being that we were both enginemen and we were close to the same age. We were never stationed together, but both of us were part of the 8,000 Coasties that served in Vietnam.

Driving on Ocean Drive we saw many signs and flags that were honoring our veterans. Upon arriving, we followed the signs to the office. A nice gentleman behind the desk asked to be of assistance to us. I told him that we

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From the Secretary/Treasurer



Gary Sherman

Donations Count

Over the past few years, we have been able to support various Coast Guard-related causes, with cash donations, for associations like the Coast Guard Museum in New London, the Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial Fund in Cape May and many other important groups, associations and events that have asked for our help.

We pay for all these donations by holding

successful reunions (bi-annually), by receiving donations from members to the Quarterdeck Log Boosters, and from general donations of members, family and friends of the association.

Our Regular and Life Member dues are not sufficient to pay the cost of printing and mailing the *Quarterdeck*

Welcome New Members

New Member (Sponsor)

William S. McLaughlin (The Association)
Bradley S. Bohnsack (The Association)
Nat'l Coast Guard Museum (The Association)
Michael R. Niles (The Association)
John J. O'Hara (Gary Sherman)
Alvin E. Cooley (The Association)
Jeffrey Creighton (The Association)
Nelson F. Del Valle (Lt.Cdr. James K. Cullen)
Bruce L. Nattress (Lt.Cdr. Joseph Lisko)
James L. Shoptaugh (The Association)
Alexander D. Strobehn (The Association)
James L. Warwick, LM (The Association)
Frank C. Lytle, III (The Association)

Crossed The Bar

Vincent J. Anthony, LM
Marshall R. Lafon, LM
Terry Lee, LM
PNP Robert Maxwell, LM
BMCM Artuur D. Michell
Stanley Syrek, LM
Marion (Walter) Weshinskey

From the Secretary/Treasurer (cont.)

Log, so we have to use any and all donations to keep the presses turning, to ensure the *Quarterdeck Log's* arrival in your mailbox, each and every quarter.

We greatly appreciate the QD Log Boosters, who have helped us maintain our position as an important Coast Guard veterans association and we thank you for what

you've given in the past.

So, whether you're a Regular or Life Member, please continue to support the CGCVA with your generous donations. You are keeping us vibrant, and we continue to rely on your support to continue going forward.

Semper Paratus!

Gary Sherman

Cape May Lisison Terry Lee CTB

It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the passing of our shipmate and Cape May graduation coordinator, CGCVA life member Terrance "Terry" Lee, who crossed the bar on January 23, 2016. Terry served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1967 to 1971 as a Yeoman Second Class. He served on the *CGC Dallas* and saw duty on Weather Stations throughout the North Atlantic, search and rescue missions, ocean station patrols, as well as a tour of duty in Vietnam. Terry was proud of his Coast Guard service and drove four hours, each way, from his home in central New Jersey to present the CGCVA-sponsored Jack Campbell Physical Fitness Award. at every graduation he could attend. Like many of us, Terry was influenced by and very proud to have known Jack Campbell and was honored to follow in Jack's footsteps by presenting this CGCVA award to our new recruit graduates. We will sorely miss Terry's enthusiasm and character very much! He was a terrific CGCVA representative. We are glad to have John Seubert and Tom Dougherty making the award presentation, following in Jack and Terry's path.



Auxiliary News

Proud Coast Guard Veteran

Communities and government paid tribute to our brave Veterans for Veterans' Day including our new community, Tampa Bay Golf and Country Club, which hosted a sellout event "Honoring Our Tampa Bay Veterans". This event



Proud Coast Guardsman Jerry Schambeau (standing in back) belts out "Semper Paratus".

was to show how to acknowledge our own Veterans. "Let's look them in their eyes, let's shake their hands, let's thank them for serving our country".

This event consisted of a buffet breakfast (free to all veterans) and the attending World War II Veterans were each presented with a small memento. One of our local ROTC Honor Guards presented the colors followed by a speech by a local reprehensive. They recognized all five branches of service and had a sing-a-long of each branch of service song. They asked the member of each branch to stand during their song. It was quite a showing!

Until next *Quarterdeck Log*, stay warm and safe.

Betty Schambeau



Betty Schambeau

Rolling Thunder XXIX

The annual Rolling Thunder “Ride for Freedom” will be held May 29, 2016 in Washington, D.C. Assembly area is in the North Pentagon parking lot at 0800. At noon there will be a ride through Washington, D.C. to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to pay respects to those who gave their lives for freedom and for the full accounting of all POWs-MIAs and Veterans Rights. For additional information, contact the Rolling Thunder, Inc. National Office at 908-369-5439.

Boot Camp Awards

At each graduating boot camp company at Training Center Cape May, N.J., the recruit earning the Physical Fitness Award is presented a CGCVA watch and certificate, in memory of PNP Jack Campbell who initiated the award several years ago. The following graduating recruits have been presented the CGCVA/Jack Campbell Physical Fitness Award since the last *QD Log* issue:

FA Gavin J. Perkins (Xray-191) of Charleston, S.C., reports to Station Bodega Bay, Calif.

SA Thomas E. Vroman (Yankee-191) of Manhattan, N.Y., reports to Station Castle Hill, Newport, R.I.

SN Eric J. McDonnell, IV (Zulu-191) of Alameda, Calif., reports to *CGC Hickory*, Homer, Alaska.

SA Vincent R. Lara (Alfa-192) of Phoenix, Ariz., reports to Station Monterey, Calif.

FA Alex N. Rojas (Bravo-192) of Honolulu, Hi., reports to Air Station New Orleans, La.

SA Collin W. Jayroe (Charlie-192) of Irving, Texas, reports to *CGC Venturous*, St. Petersburg, Fla.

SA Nicholas M. Krol (Delta-192) of Malden, Mass., reports to MK “A” School, Yorktown, Va.

SA Allen-Jorge B. Gargia (Echo-192) of Chesapeake,

Va., reports to *CGC Hamilton*, North Charleston, S.C.

SN Donato R. Geraci (Foxtrot-192) of Jacksonville, Fla., reports to Station New York, Staten Island, N.Y.

‘Boatlift’ Video

A short documentary titled “Boatlift: An Untold Tale of 9/11 Resilience,” shares the story of Coast Guardsmen ferrying thousands to safety on that fateful day. Created for the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001, and narrated by actor and veterans advocate Tom Hanks, it’s worth a watch. Check it out at navytimes.com/boatlift.

Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty: Rep. Howard Coble, USCGR (Ret.)

For many Coast Guard members, their service will stop when they take off their uniform for the final time and retire from duty with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Other times, people choose to continue their service.



Rep. Howard Coble preps for an interview in his office in June 2014. (USCG grayscale photo by PO2 Patrick Kelley)

PNP Bob Maxwell CTB



It is with deep regret that I announce the passing of Association Past National President Robert J. “Bob” Maxwell, III. Bob passed away on December 1, 2015. He was the third CGCVA president and served from July 1988 to Sept. 1991. Bob & Jane Maxwell and Ed & Nancy Burke comprised the planning team for several CGCVA conventions. Bob also arranged annual national VFW conventions and his prowess at negotiating those events often resulted in discounted rates for the CGCVA when using the same hotel.

Remembrances can be sent to his wife, Jane, at P. O. Box 2790, Burney, CA 96013. Farewell Bob!

Whether serving as a government employee, activist for a veterans group or even a member of Congress, these people take the notion of service beyond wearing a military uniform. Rep. Howard Coble was one of these people.



Coble was presented the Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf Award in July 2012. (USCG photo by PO2 Patrick Kelley)

Enlisting in 1952, Coble served as an active duty Coast Guard member for more than five years, with service off the coast of Korea during the Korean conflict. After departing from active duty, Coble joined the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, serving

20 additional years and rising to the rank of captain.

After his more than 25 years of service with the U.S. Coast Guard, Coble chose to continue his service. He was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives in 1979. He followed that with service in the U.S. House of Representatives beginning in 1984, just two years after retiring from the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

During his time in Congress, Coble became a champion for the Coast Guard, as the first chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation subcommittee during its creation in 1995 and serving as an active member ever since. Prior to this position, he serviced on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, which had

tee during its creation in 1995 and serving as an active member ever since. Prior to this position, he serviced on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, which had

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 contibuted \$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 contibuted 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:

James Warwick, LM	James F. Fey	Tom Patterson	Steve Hines
Howie Block	David Moyer	Terry Carnila	Sam King
John Palmer	Herbert Cohen	Anthony Kopke	William Hitt
Robert Marzen	Brance L. McCune	Richard Trevallee	

William "Bill" Kitt IMO USS Serden (AK-97) PT Guadalcanal
 Joseph Lisko IMO BM2 Andrew "Rock" Lisko & Lt. William "Bill" Bart
 Nancy Burke IMO Baker Herbert & PNP Robert Maxwell
 Charles Bevel, Sr., IMO Joyce Ann Bevel

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.



Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft with Rep. Howard Coble at a Coast Guard Caucus breakfast in 2014. (USCG photo by PO2 Patrick Kelley)

jurisdiction over the Coast Guard, from 1985 to 1994.

Throughout the entirety of his tenure, Coble was a dedicated supporter of the U.S. Coast Guard, especially during

times of change. He was there for the expansion of the ports and waterways security mission following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and witnessed the transition of the service from the Department of Transportation to the newly formed Department of Homeland Security.

Coble also acted as a champion for Coast Guard budgetary needs, fighting tirelessly to support the Coast Guard Authorization Bill and secure funding for the Coast Guard's aging fleet of boats, cutters and aircraft.

In an interview with the Coast Guard in 2014, Coble said that the one thing he wished was that Americans would fully support the service.

"I wish Americans would more openly embrace the Coast Guard," said Coble in the interview. "Oftentimes I would go to a Veterans Day program and the four marching hymns naturally would play. Conspicuously absent? You guessed it, Semper Paratus."

His support of the Coast Guard didn't stop with his political activities. He was also a life member of the Reserve Officers Association and was highly supportive of Coast Guard Reserve activities, especially in his home

Vietnam War Commemoration

On Nov. 21st, CGCVA member Bill Ross (pictured on right with Missy LeBlanc Bournes), served as guest speaker at a Vietnam War Commemoration 50th Anniversary program sponsored by the Deborah Avery Putnam Chapter, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution and William L. Mercier VFW Post 5446 in Plainfield, Conn.

Following a moment of silence for those who died in Vietnam and recognition of digitaries, Bill spoke on the Coast Guard's many roles in Vietnam. Following his remarks, pins and certificates were presented to those who served during the Vietnam Era.

Pictured below are (l to r) Denise Bachand, Mary Tomeo, Missy



LeBlanc Bournes, April Staley (State DAR Regent), Ed Bergman (Commander, VFW Post 5446), Bill Ross, Sherry Arel (VFW 5446 Auxiliary Commander), Carol Ryley, Marilyn Martin, and Marie Sweet-Martel.



state of North Carolina.

He became so well-known for his support of and prior service in the Coast Guard, that his colleagues in Congress referred to him as ‘Master Chief.’

Coble retired from his political service in January 2015, after serving in Congress for more than 30 years. With his combined service time, he spent more than 55 years of his life serving with and supporting the U.S. Coast Guard. He was the last Coast Guard veteran serving in Congress. Less than a year after retiring, he passed away in his home state of North Carolina on Nov. 3, 2015.

“The men and women of the Coast Guard had no better or more humble champion on Capitol Hill than Representative Howard Coble,” said Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft. “He dedicated his life in Service to our Nation with more than 25 years of extraordinary service in the Coast Guard followed by nearly three decades of service as a member of Congress. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and he will be missed.”

Through his dedicated service, one theme remained constant: pride for the service.

“I’m very proud of having been affiliated with America’s oldest, continuous, sea-going service,” said Coble in an interview with the Coast Guard in 2014.

Coast Guard Compass (Nov. 13, 2015)

CG Mascot Sinbad — Not the Dog!

On the *CGC Point Hudson* we had a mascot, which we named Sinbad. Things went well for him until one day our cook let the bird fly free from below decks. We had been keeping him in the galley area. The poor bird couldn't fly



Sinbad on his perch in the Point Hudson galley.

very well. He flew a short distance, then he fell into the water. We were on the Delta headed up river and the current was moving fast. I saw the bird hit the water a short distance from the boat. I put on a life vest and went overboard to try and save Sinbad. It was in vain, because of the strong current and I wasn't able to reach him before he drowned. I brought his lifeless

body back to the boat and our captain placed him in a little box. We had a moment of silence. Then with a 21-gun salute we buried Sinbad at sea. It took me a long time to forgive our cook for what he did. Sometimes just a little mascot can cheer a crew up.



Keeping watch

I was a 3rd class gunner's mate assigned to the *CGC Point Hudson* in the spring of 1967. After arriving in country at Tan Son Nhut air base, I flew to Da Nang to join my boat. We started working our way south to Division 13 Squadron 1. On the way down we patrolled Chu Lai, Binh Dinh, Nha Trang, and Cam Ranh Bay. We ended up at Can Tho on the Mekong River Delta and we encountered action on the way south. On the night of the 29 February 1968 Tet



Sorting through debris from the sunken junk.

Offensive, the *Point Hudson* joined the *CGC Winona*, which had a 5-inch .38 gun, and we tracked a VC trawler coming down from the North. There were three of us on the gun crew waiting on the bow as night fell. It was very hot night and I could feel the sweat rolling down my back. We kept getting reports from the bridge that the trawler was getting closer to the Ca Mau peninsula. We tried to make radio contact with them with no response. Then all hell

broke loose. Our cutter, another 82-footer and the *Winona* began taking fire. The *Winona* with the 5-inch .38, *Point Hudson* and the other 82-footer began firing back. I think it was the third round from the *Winona's* 5-incher that hit the trawler. The night sky lit up like day. We stayed around to search for survivors but there were none. The next morning we searched through the debris field. We found Chinese communist rifle butts, small pieces of the junk, and gray life jackets. Some of the life jackets were still tied. I think that night turned boys into men. We were lucky no one on the *Point Hudson*, *Winona* or the other 82-footer were hurt. There were a total of four trawlers that tried to supply ammunition to the VC that day. Fortunately none made it to their destinations.

William (Bill) McLaughlin

Mary Hoff: POW-MIA flag creator passes away in Orange Park, Fla.

The woman behind the POW-MIA flag, a recognizable symbol of hope and comfort for families of men and women who have gone to war and are still unaccounted for, died at the age of 84 Tuesday.

Mary Hoff, who came up with the idea for the flag

nearly 50 years ago, lived a majority of her life in Orange Park, Fla., and leaves behind a lasting legacy.

The idea for the flag came to Hoff in the early 1970s, not long after her husband, a naval aviator was reported missing in action. She wanted to create a symbol to honor and remember members of the military, like her husband, who were never found. Her son, Joe Hoff, said it is an honor knowing that her



Mary Helen Hoff, shown in 1981 with three of her five children, inspired the creation of the POW/MIA flag after her husband, Lt. Cmdr. Michael G. Hoff, went missing in action when his plane crashed over Laos in 1970.

Fundraising Breakfast for Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial

On Nov. 18th, a breakfast meeting hosted by former Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad Allen (Ret.), was held at Westwood Country Club in Vienna, Va. Government leaders, industry leaders and representatives from various Coast Guard associations attended and were given a first-hand look at the planned design and location of the planned memorial. Among the CGCVA members attending or presiding at the breakfast meeting were Adm. Allen, Rear Adm. Bill Kelly, former MCPO-CG Vince Patton, PNP Ed Swift, and Tom Dougherty. The memorial will include a pyramid-shaped granite monument with a bronze eternal flame on top. The sides of the monument will have the engraved insignia for each of the Coast Guard's predecessor services. Also, a bell hung from a granite structure, allowing for proper honors to be rendered during appropriate ceremonies. An artist's conception of the final design is on the back cover of this magazine.



Organizers of the Enlisted Memorial Foundation Fundraising Breakfast, former MCPO-CG Skip Bowen, Former MCPO-CG Vince Patton, former Commandant Adm. Thad Allen, MCPOCG Steven Cantrell and CGRFMC Eric Johnson. (Photo by MSTCM Brian Diner)

legacy will always live on.

Joe Hoff said the flag started out as a banner that hung on his family's door. His sister still has the banner. Now, the flag flies over many government buildings, is on pins like the one Joe Hoff wears and is flown by many throughout the year.

"A rest stop, there it is. I think it's really awesome when I see how it affects just individuals, how coworkers have come to me when they hear the story, asked me why I wear the bracelet, and then I get to know what it means to them," Joe Hoff said.

Joe Hoff said that after his father was shot down, his mother wanted to act. She helped design the flag, saying that she wanted it to be black and white, something Joe Hoff said is likely because she wanted it to be reserved, much like her personality. He said hearing how much the flag means to people is something his family takes pride in.

"I did not serve in the military so I do not know what they are going through. I tried to take pride in what my mom accomplished and what my dad sacrificed. And I try to live a certain way to honor that," Joe Hoff said.

He said he even saw the flag on a car hood at a gas station recently. He said he hopes people keep in their memory those that came back and those who are still missing.

"It's extremely important that we remember what people have done as a society, as a country and as a human race. All of us, we need to remember what people have sacrificed so that we can learn from that and move forward to a better place for everyone," Joe Hoff said.

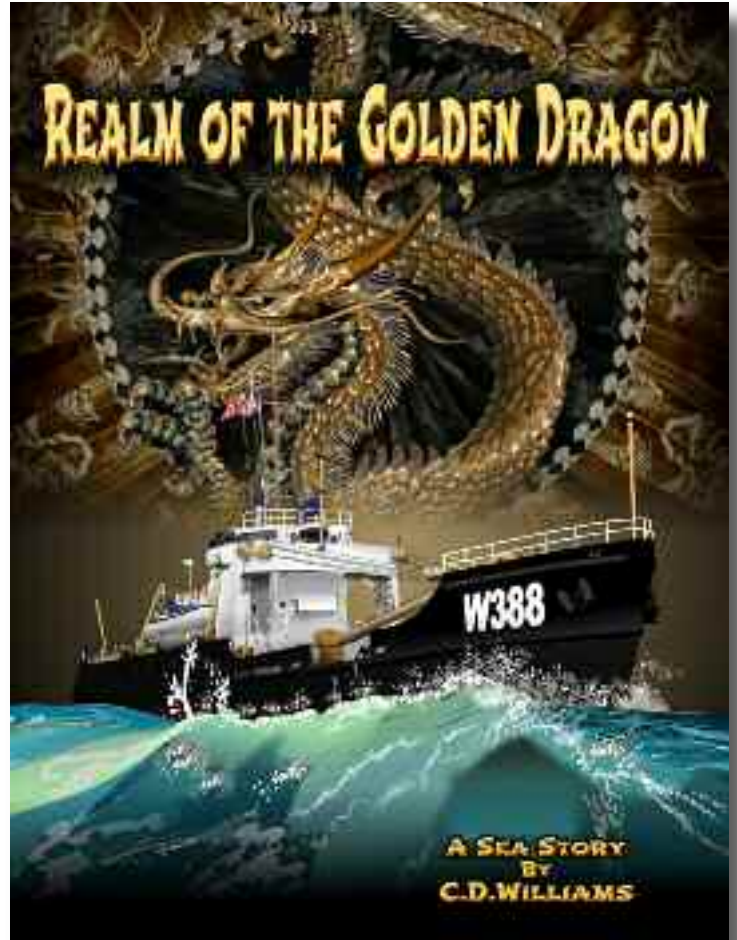
Hoff said that especially on a day like Veterans Day, he and his family have a lot of pride that a small symbol created by his mother can provide a little bit of comfort for families whose loved ones are still unaccounted for.

Realm of the Golden Dragon

My new novel is coming out in April of 2016 and is now ready for pre-publication order. Go to: www.pocolpress.com, click on Books for Sale and then go to the War Stories category. Beat the crowd and get your copy reserved now.

On 17 August 1967, after many years of being home ported in Honolulu, Ha., the 180-foot U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Basswood set sail for her new home port on Guam in the Marianas Islands. With this sailing she would begin a fifteen month odyssey across the Pacific Ocean and into the Philippine and South China Seas.

During her travels she would unleash 60 fun loving, frolicking, fornicating, fighting, young Coasties on 47 Pacific Islands and five Asian Nations. Young, tough, kids from all parts of the U.S., many of whom were away from home for the first time. They worked hard and they played hard as they crossed the 180th Meridian, became Golden Dragons and went on to discover the mysteries of Asia and the Far East.



This epic voyage would take them to the hooker bars and short time hotels of Olongapo in the Philippines. The Vietcong infested bays and rivers of Vietnam and the vaunted Namenoue Red Light District in Naha, Okinawa. They would look in wonder at the temples of Bangkok, Thailand and explore the back streets of Keelung Harbor in Taiwan. Then they would sail to islands in the Pacific so remote that they have been virtually untouched by modern civilization.

Travel along with Doc Wilson and Guns Gunderson. Share the adventure as Doc and Guns and their rowdy shipmates experience the rigors of going to sea on a small ship and as they enjoy the pleasure of wild Pacific Island girls and porcelain-skinned Asian beauties. And when they

lose one of their own, discover the fortunes of war.

Take McHale's Navy, Mr. Roberts and Onion Head and resurrect them in the Vietnam Era. Then add a little touch of the Voyages of Captain Cook and those of the *HMS Bounty* and you will have some idea of what the "Realm of the Golden Dragon" is all about. **Charles D. Williams**

Editor's Note: Charles D. Williams was born in Sacramento, California in 1939. In 1957 at the age of seventeen he enlisted in the U. S. Coast Guard Reserve. He later switched to the Regular Coast Guard. When he retired in 1984 he was a Chief Warrant Officer. During his twenty-seven year career Williams served on four ships and visited numerous exotic ports of call in five Asian Nations and forty-seven islands in the Pacific. He served in Vietnam in 1967 and on a remote fifteen man LORAN station on Palawan Island in the Philippines from 1969 to 1971. Williams has been to all fifty U.S. States. He has lived in seven of them including Alaska and Hawaii. Chuck and his wife, of 45 years, Maripi now make their home in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"Realm of the Golden Dragon" is Chuck's second novel. Read his story, "Then There Were Buoy Tenders" on pages 24-29.

Tricare's Long-Term Prescription Policy Changes

As of October 1, 2015, there was a big policy change by the Defense Department. It issued a major change to how beneficiaries receive long-term brand name medications. As of that date, all reoccurring (maintenance) medications must either be ordered through the Tricare mail order pharmacy system, Express Scripts, or picked up at a military treatment facility (MTF). Continuing to fill long-term brand name medications at retail pharmacies will result in the military member paying 100% of the cost.

The reason why is abundantly clear — to save money. The government is always looking for ways to

save money and this is yet another avenue they are choosing to go down. 61 million prescriptions, last year alone, were filled at retail pharmacies using Tricare, costing the government \$5.1 billion.



Using military treatment facilities or Express Scripts will save the government 32% on brand-name maintenance medications over retail store purchases. Government officials estimate this new policy will save \$88 million annually.

It isn't just the Department of Defense that will save money. Beneficiaries are forecasted to save around \$176 per prescription over the course of a year by no longer paying co-pays at retail pharmacies and instead having them filled at an MTF or through Express Scripts.

For immediate needs, new prescriptions for brand-name

New Honorary Members



In a long overdue ceremony, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft (right) and MCPO-CG Steven Cantrell (left) were presented CGCVA Honorary Membership certificates. The presentation was made by PNP Ed Swift at the annual Greater Washington, D.C. area USCG Retiree Holiday Party on Dec. 13th.

long-term care medications can be filled at retail pharmacies, but only for a 30-day supply or less. If more than 30 days is needed, the beneficiary is required to get further medication from a MTF or through the Tricare mail order pharmacy.

Because it doesn't cost the government nearly as much, beneficiaries can still fill generic drugs using Tricare at retail pharmacies. Medications that treat acute illnesses and prescriptions that are covered by other insurance can also continue to be filled at retail pharmacies.

Maintenance drugs are medications taken on a regular basis for chronic, long-term conditions. These include drugs that control blood pressure, antidepressant medications and painkillers, for example.

If you are unsure if your prescription should be switched over to Tricare mail order pharmacy system, call Express Scripts at 1-877-882-3335.

Fallen Guardians Monument

On Nov. 10th, the Fallen Guardians Monument was dedicated at USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park in Mobile, Ala. The monument is dedicated to personnel who lost their lives while performing Coast Guard missions in Alabama. Participating in the event were CGCVVA members

CGC Taney Vietnam Crew Reunion

On Aug. 30th, a crew reunion of the *CGC Taney's* Vietnam Cruise was held on board the historic cutter at its berth at Pier 5 in Baltimore. A program was held on deck and concluded with the dropping of a wreath from the *Taney's* fantail and followed by the playing of "Taps" in memory of crewmembers who have crossed the bar.

In 1969-70, during the Vietnam War, *Taney* participated in "Operation Market Time" in the South China Sea. As a unit of Coast Guard Squadron III, *Taney* interdicted illegal arms and supplies along the coast of South Vietnam, fired over 3,400 rounds of 5"/38 ammunition in support of American and South Vietnamese troops, and provided medical assistance to more than 5,000 Vietnamese civilians.



CGCVVA life member BMCS Jack Crowley (Ret.) at the Fallen Guardians Monument.

Adm. Thad Allen (Ret.), Jeff Davis and BMCS Jack Crowley (Ret.).

Alongside the Fallen Guardians Monument plaque is another entitled "Semper Paratus". That monument is dedicated to the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard and its predecessor agencies who have served since the assignment of the Revenue Cutter Alabama to the port city of Mobile in 1819. It reads, "Their bravery and dedication to

(Left) Complete view of the newly dedicated Fallen Guardians Monument in USS Alabama Battleship Park in Mobile, Ala.



duty have brought honor and respect to our Nation and credibility to their motto — Semper Paratus.

The following day, Veterans' Day was celebrated at the Fort Whiting Armory in Mobile, including an Honors Luncheon recognizing the 2015 Patriot of the Year and 2015 Veteran of the Year. Adm. Thad Allen was selected as Mobile Bay Area Patriot of the Year and BMCS Jack Crowley was among the distinguished nominees for Veteran of the Year.

327 Sailors Reunion

There will be a reunion of all previous 327 sailors September 27-29, 2016, at the Doubletree Resort by Hilton Grand Key in Key West, Fla. Sponsored by the USCGC Campbell and USCGC Ingham association in Key West, Fla., this will mark the 80th birthday for these ships. Those interested in attending, particularly the Vietnam veterans, should make an attempt to be there. Make reservations at the Doubletree by calling 1-800-222-8733 and mentioning Group Code "IBD". Room rate

Oh, that Jerry!

CGCVA Vice President Steve Petersen at the gravesite of EN2 Jerry Phillips (1939-1966), U.S. Coast Guard, on Veterans' Day. Jerry was killed on board CGC Point Welcome (WPB-82329) and was one of our seven fallen brothers lost in the Vietnam War.

Note: One of Jerry's markers over the years had sunken into the earth. The gentleman who escorted us to his gravesite could not have apologized more about seeing this condition. He said he would immediately prepare a work order to have the site restored to its proper order.



Veterans' Day Event in Connecticut

On Nov. 10th, CGCVA life member Christopher Wood spoke, along with two other veterans, at Connecticut's Stafford High School's Veterans Day Assembly in their Veterans Memorial Auditorium. Woody wasn't going to miss a chance to put the Coast Guard in a favorable light. He told about his time on board the CGC Chase and Market Time duty followed by two short stories. One was about a little girl who was brought to the Chase following a MEDCAP to be X-rayed and patched up after being shot thru the ankle. She was then given gifts by the crew with more sent back with her, all happening around Christmas. His other story was about a playground he and the Chase crew made and assembled in a coastal village for the kids there. Woody spoke for about 8-10 minutes, backed up with a slide show. He told the teacher that asked him to speak that he didn't do well with this stuff as he gets very emotional when talking about his crew and the good things they did in Vietnam. She convinced him he could do it, and he did!. Following the three speakers, the large group broke up into smaller groups for questions and answers. A total of 37 veterans attended, although not all are in the photo on the left. By the way, the gentleman at the lower right is a Bataan death march survivor and a friend of Woody's. Nice job Chris!



is \$129.00/night + tax and includes complementary breakfast. You can also make your reservations on line at: double-treekeywest.com. If you want additional nights before or after the reunion, call the hotel directly at 305-293-1818. Additional info is available on the USCGC Ingham's Facebook Page. This promises to be a big event with tours, Key West attractions, parties on the ship, dinners, and of course a banquet and special guest speaker.



FRC Horsley Update

The USCGC Donald Horsley (WPC-1117) is currently under construction in Bollinger Shipyard, Lockport, La. Date of the cutter's commissioning is not known but 22 of its 24 crewmembers have reported in and are making progress preparing for the ceremony

which will be held in the Horsley's homeport of San Juan, P.R. Once a commissioning date is set, the CGCVA will make plans to have representatives attend and a plaque will be presented from the association. More news to come as it is received.



"The Finest Hours"

When I bought the book, "The Finest Hours", at the Coast Guard Heritage Museum in 2014, I remember being told that Disney might be considering making a movie, based on this true story of the heroism of Bernie Webber and his crew, who saved 32 lives on that February night in 1952 off Cape Cod during a N'or Easter. As I was reading I kept thinking how a movie could ever be made that would properly and accurately depict 70-foot seas and two tankers splitting in two on that incredible night. I was surprised to

see that Disney has done it. The movie closely follows the book and tells this story of extreme heroism. It's been a while since I've seen a movie, in a theatre where the audience actually applauds at the end of the movie, and the beginning of the final credits. And it was even more surprising that the audience remained in their seats, soaking up the events they had just witnessed, and remained in their seats until the final credits came up and the house lights came on. This movie will make us proud of Bernie

Webber and his shipmates and very proud to have served in the United States Coast Guard! If you haven't seen the movie, you are in for a treat!
Gary Sherman

USS Serpens Monument

The largest single disaster suffered by the United States Coast Guard in World War II was the destruction of the USS Serpens (AK-97). The 14,250-ton ammunition ship exploded off Lunga Beach, Guadalcanal, British Solomon Islands on the night of

January 29, 1945. Servicemen were loading depth charges when the USS Serpens exploded. The 250 men who died included 193 U.S. Coast Guard sailors, 56 U.S. Army soldiers, and Dr. Harry M. Levin, a U.S. Public Health Service

surgeon. Of the 193 Coast Guardsmen, 17 were regular Coast Guard and 176 were reservists. The USS Serpens Monument was dedicated on November 16, 1950. Each year, a memorial service is held at the monument on the anniversary of the ship's loss and each year the CGCVA provides at least one representative.



Editor's Note: Gary also recently attended Terry Lee's funeral, one of more than 500. He was eulogized by his brother Bill (one of Terry's three older brothers who all served in the Coast Guard).

Also speaking was retired Vice Adm. Sally Brice-O'Hara who spoke of Terry's attending over 500 recruit graduations and proudly representing our association. Our thanks to Gary and Sally.

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story line of this movie in the Summer 2015 issue of the *Quarterdeck Log*. The heroic deeds of Bernie Webber and others are documented in this Disney feature film. I



Honored guest: Lt. Col. (ret.) Robert Friend, WWII Red Tail pilot.

accepted an invitation to attend the first screening at the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood on January 25th. The day began with a trip to the (actor) Gary Sinise Foundation Office. During the meet and greet I gave Gary a CGCVA challenge coin and the book, "Coast Guard Action in Vietnam, signed by our own Paul Scotti. It was nice to see Ms. Stacey Benson, the 2015 Coast Guard Spouse of the Year. The screening of the "Finest Hours" was everything a Red Carpet event should be. I had the honor of escorting Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Power, a fellow Coast Guard veteran who served aboard the cutters *Eastwind* and *Cactus*. Coast Guard Commandant Paul Zukunft attended as well as the Coast Guard Band and scores of Coast Guard men and women in uniform. Our service and the crew of motor lifeboat *CG-36500* has been honored by this film. This special screening and events leading up to it would not be possible without the generous support of Disney Studios, the Gary Sinise Foundation and American Airlines. The "Finest Hours" is a must see movie!

Coast Guard Museum Exhibit Advisory Panel

(Left) Surprise dinner guest Clint Eastwood addressing the veterans banquet.



I accepted an invitation to attend the first screening at the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood on January 25th. The day began with a trip to the (actor) Gary Sinise Foundation Office. During the meet and greet I gave Gary a CGCVA challenge coin and the book, "Coast Guard Action in Vietnam, signed by our own Paul Scotti. It was



Actor Gary Sinise at his GS Foundation office with Coast Guard "family".

On Feb. 6-7, members of the National Coast Guard Museum Association, Inc. Museum Exhibit Advisory Panel (MEAP) held their kick-off meeting at Joint Base Anacostia



Finest Hours actor Eric Bana, who portrays CWO Daniel Cluff in the movie, stopped by to say hello.

Bolling (JBAB) in Washington, D.C. Sponsored by the Foundation for Coast Guard History and hosted by the National Coast Guard Museum Association, the meeting brought together representatives from myriad Coast Guard associations, Coast Guard history and artifact professionals, Coast Guard museum curators and representatives from the companies contracted to build the new museum and produce exhibitry. The MEAP will meet twice yearly — once in New London, Conn., the site of the new museum and once at an off-site location. Representing the CGCVA at the kick-off meeting in Washington, D.C. was PNP Ed Swift who provided ideas and suggestions regarding potential exhibits and artifacts associated with the Coast Guard's wartime roles throughout its long history. Serving as the CGCVA representative at the New London meetings will be Ed Bachand.

Have a Splendid Spring! Yours in Service,

Mike Placencia

From the Vice President (cont.)

continued from page 4

were there to visit Jerry and he was more than happy to help us find him. We followed him to where Jerry was and he then left. With a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes, it was time to visit with Jerry. During the short time we had together, I left him with three miniature flags — American, Association, and, of course, Coast Guard, as well as an Association challenge coin. While there, Kay took some pictures of me with Jerry. We said our goodbyes and left knowing that we had visited a veteran on this special day. There were many restaurants in Corpus that were offering free lunches to veterans this day but Jerry would not be

joining us. Still, he would be very much in our thoughts.

Steve Petersen

Editor's Note: Are you wondering who Jerry is? So did I. To find out, look on page 14 and you'll understand why Steve's descriptions of things were somewhat vague. Many thanks for taking the time to make this visit Steve!

- *When fish are in schools, they sometimes take debate.*
- *When you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.*

Top Story

continued from page 1

extraordinary strength and stamina, he firmly grasped the survivor, swam hard to keep their heads above the rising waves and lifted the survivor into the swinging basket. Swept away 500 yards away from the vessel during the evolution, Petty Officer Leon was recovered by the helicopter and redeployed to the vessel. With time to complete only more hoist due to minimum fuel, he boldly departed from normal procedures and forced two survivors into the basket to be hoisted together, while he remained with the lone survivor. Demonstrating heroic judgment, he

remained with the lone survivor, huddling to protect him from the frigidly spraying waves to keep him warm for more than two hours in the raging dark seas until the helicopter could return to complete the rescue. His valor and skill under the most taxing conditions saved four lives from certain peril and on Feb. 2, 2015, Petty Officer Leon was awarded the Air Medal for his heroic actions.

Petty Officer Leon

enlisted in the Coast Guard in April 2009. His first assignment following basic training was Station Cape Disappointment, Wash., at the mouth of the Columbia River. After a two-year stay, he began his formal training to become a Rescue Swimmer, first at CG Air Station Humboldt Bay, Calif., and to Aviation Survival Technical School in Elizabeth City, N.C. Upon graduation in October 2011, he was assigned to CG Air Station San Francisco, CA his present duty station.

Overall, Petty Officer Leon was instrumental in saving six lives and assisting ten more during 36 challenging search and rescue cases. He truly merits the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association 2014 Person of the Year. Bravo Zulu!



CGCVA Trustee Bill Figone presents AST2 Chris Leon with a CGCVA Honorary Life Membership Certificate.



(l to r) Mike and Mimi Placencia and Maggie and Bill Figone at CG Air Station San Francisco after the award ceremony.

Alexander Hamilton: First Member of the Long Blue Line

by William Thiesen, Ph.D, Atlantic Area Historian

“A few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at a small expense be made useful sentinels of the laws.”

— **Federalist Paper #12**
(27 November 1787)

In the above quote, author Alexander Hamilton described a fleet of Federal vessels that he believed the newly created United States required to enforce tariff laws and interdict smuggling.

Considered the father of the United States Coast Guard, Hamilton played an integral role in the formation and development of the government of the United States. When the new government got under way in 1789, Hamilton was appointed the first Secretary of the Treasury. He began at once to place the nation's disorganized finances on a sound footing. In a series of reports, he presented a program not only to stabilize national finances but also to shape the future of the country as a developing industrial nation. He proposed establishment of a national bank, funding of the national debt, assumption of state war debts, and the encouragement of manufacturing. In addition, he was the driving force behind Congress' creation of a revenue marine service, the precursor to the Coast Guard.

Born in Charlestown on the West Indian island of Nevis on January 11, 1757, Hamilton immigrated to New York in 1772. Although not yet twenty years of age, by 1774 he authored many widely read political publications. Not long

after the start of the American Revolution, Hamilton received the captaincy of an artillery unit and fought in the principal campaigns of 1776. In 1777, he advanced to the rank of lieutenant colonel, joined the staff of General Washington as secretary and aide-de-camp, and soon became Washington's close confidant. Hamilton ended the war as a lieutenant colonel commanding an infantry regiment, which he led with great success during the siege at Yorktown.



1880 painting of Alexander Hamilton by Caroline L. Ormes Ransom commissioned by the Treasury Department. (Treasury Department Collection)

Already in 1787, Hamilton had articulated the need for the revenue marine in the Federalist Papers. As the fledgling nation sought to combat smugglers seeking to avoid payment of import tariffs, Hamilton advised Congress to build a fleet of ten cutters to help direct ships to specific ports of entry along the East Coast of the United States. Hamilton's small fleet proved the basis for establishment of a revenue marine, later known as the Revenue Cutter Service. Congress adopted Hamilton's plan on August 4th, 1790, which the Coast Guard celebrates as its birth date. Since the Continental Navy and marines disbanded following the conclusion of the American Revolution, this revenue marine was the nation's only sea service in the early years of

the new republic.

Hamilton assigned revenue cutters to the East Coast's ten major seaports, allowing for import tariff collection, critically important to the economic viability of the nation. In addition to their law enforcement role, the fleet of cutters rendered aid and assistance as needed "for the protection

of lives and property at sea,” a humanitarian life-saving role that defines the Coast Guard to this day.

Hamilton resigned from the cabinet in January 1795 and never returned to public office. His two last major political acts came in 1800 and 1804 and both targeted aspiring political leader Aaron Burr. When Burr and Thomas Jefferson tied in the 1800 presidential election, Hamilton used his influence in the House of Representatives to secure Jefferson’s presidency. In 1804, Hamilton also maneuvered to defeat Burr’s chances of becoming governor of New York. In response to Hamilton’s political moves against him, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel on the pretext that the latter had expressed a “despicable opinion” of him. The duel took place in New Jersey, on Wednesday, July 11th, 1804. Burr mortally wounded Hamilton, who died the next day. Hamilton was laid to rest at Trinity Church in New York City.

Alexander Hamilton established a service that has stood the test of time for over 225 years. Today, Hamilton’s name



Photograph of newly commissioned National Security Cutter Alexander Hamilton (WMSL-753), sixth Coast Guard cutter to bear the name. (U.S. Coast Guard Collection)

graces the hull of the newest National Security Cutter, CGC Alexander Hamilton (WMSL-753), the sixth Coast Guard cutter to bear his name.

Joshua James: U.S. Life-Saving Service Hero

by William Thiesen, Ph.D, Atlantic Area Historian

Joshua James was not just a man of the sea; he was also a man of the surf. He was born in 1826 in Hull, located on the beaches south of Boston; and he would grow, reach adulthood and live out his days in Hull. And he would dedicate the majority of his long life to rescuing those imperiled by stormy weather and heavy seas in the waters surrounding that seaside town.

In the 1800s, it was not uncommon to live a lifetime in one place; and not uncommon to be born into a large family like Joshua’s of twelve children. James loved his family, but he adored his mother, Esther Dill



James, a native of Hingham, Massachusetts.

As a youngster, James gravitated to the sea. He learned every trade a waterman could do to earn a living. He also developed a unique sixth sense from living on the coast and experiencing every kind of weather and sea state. According to Joshua James lore, the youngster could “hear the land speak,” from the sounds of the sea as it washed over beaches and rocks, and broke against islands and inlets.

In April 1837, an event occurred that left a lasting impression on James

(Left) Famous photograph of Joshua James showing his collection of Life-Saving Service medals. (U.S. Coast Guard Collection)



A rare photograph of Keeper Joshua James and his U.S. Life-Saving Service crew posing in front of their surfboat. (U.S. Coast Guard Collection)

and changed his life forever. On Monday, the 3rd, Joshua's mother and sister were returning home from Boston on board his brother's sailing vessel. Ten-year-old Joshua watched from shore as the vessel approached the anchorage through treacherous Hull Gut. Only half-a-mile from the harbor, a sudden squall threw the vessel on its side filling it with water. To Joshua's horror, the boat sank and took his mother and sister to their deaths. Unable to rescue them, young James resolved to prevent the same fate from befalling others, and to do all he could to save those at the mercy of the sea.

In December 1841, James made good on his pledge. He joined a volunteer crew of the Massachusetts Humane Society (MHS) when it launched a surfboat off the beach at Allerton to rescue survivors of the *Mohawk*, a grounded ship hammered by heavy seas. The MHS was a privately run charitable lifesaving service that operated stations along the Massachusetts coast. James would remain a faithful volunteer of that organization for decades.

But James's story does not end there. During his lifetime, the Port of Boston enjoyed a dramatic increase in shipping traffic, becoming the busiest port in the nation. The Nantasket Ship Channel, located off Hull's shoreline, saw 100 ships a day sail past on their way to or from Boston Harbor. The growth in commercial shipping during the mid-1800s and stormy Northeast weather resulted in greater numbers of shipwrecks, with hundreds of vessels going ashore and thousands of victims needing help.

recognized at age twenty-four with the MHS Bronze Medal for rescuing the crew of the brig *L'Essai*. At the age of fifty, he became an MHS station keeper. In 1884, he received the MHS Silver Medal for more than forty years of "brave and faithful service."



Picture of the official funeral procession for Joshua James in 1902. (U.S. Coast Guard Collection)

Likely, the highlight of James's lifesaving career took place in the late 1880s. During the Great Storm of 1888, from November 25th to the 26th, he led his MHS crew in rescuing twenty-nine men from six different shipwrecks. It was an unprecedented feat of skill, leadership, and sheer physical strength, especially for a man of sixty-two years of age. For this rescue, James received the MHS Gold Medal as well as the United States Gold Lifesaving Medal. James is the only man to receive both gold medals for one rescue.

And yet, the Joshua James saga was far from over. By 1890, after nearly fifty years of dedicated service, he had saved over 450 victims without a single loss of life. That same year, at the age of sixty-three, he became keeper of the new U.S. Life-Saving Service (USLSS) Station located at Point Allerton. This was in spite of the Federal service's maximum age limit of forty-five years.

For the next thirteen years, Joshua James served as keeper of the Point Allerton Station, rescuing another 540 individuals. This was 100 more souls than he had saved in his previous fifty years as an MHS surfman and keeper. Again, no loss of life was associated with James's rescue of these victims. He and the surfmen from Hull, both MHS and USLSS, became renowned for their amazing prowess as lifesavers.



CGC Joshua James, the latest National Security Cutter commissioned by the Service. (U.S. Coast Guard Collection)



Image of the James Medal presented every year by the Service to the most deserving Coast Guardsman. (U.S. Coast Guard Collection)

On Monday, March 17th, 1902, tragedy struck Cape Cod's Monomoy Island Life-Saving Station. During a rescue attempt, nearly all of the station's surfmen were

accidentally drowned by the panicking victims they had tried to save. James learned the news two days later and felt the loss deeply. On Wednesday, the 19th, he ordered his men to the surfboats for intensive practice and drilling. Working the steering oar, the seventy-five-year old James ordered the boat ashore. He stepped off the boat, collapsed on the beach and, according to eyewitnesses, issued his dying words, "The tide is ebbing."

Joshua James's record of achievement has stood the test of time. He devoted sixty of his seventy-five years to the service of others. During that time, he went in harm's way to rescue over 1,000 shipwreck victims without any loss of life. James and his Life-Saving Service crewmates were true models of heroism in their time and ours. Today, Joshua James's name graces the hull of the newest National Security Cutter WMSL-754, CGC Joshua James; and he is the namesake of the Ancient Keeper Award presented by the Office of Boat Forces to a boat station commanding officer in recognition of their longevity of service and outstanding performance in boat operations.

Are They the Coast Guard's Forgotten Warriors of Vietnam?

By Cdr. Bob Douville, USCG (Ret.)

Are they the Coast Guard's forgotten warriors? Do the official records of their deployment to Vietnam remain hidden in perhaps yet to be declassified files? What follows is prompted by the personal account of an aging

ex-Coast Guard seaman recalling bits and fragments of a youthful adventure some 53 years ago.

It rings true, with factual recollection, admittedly dimming, of details too specific to be fabricated, short of

the richest imagination. It does not sound like merely another sea story; the fanciful tale spinning and embellishment of an old Coast Guard veteran.

Read and decide. If you know anything to prove or disprove any of this please write to the editor of *Quarterdeck Log*.

With many others, I proudly thought of myself, a plank-owner in Squadron One, as a member of the first cohort of Coast Guardsmen dispatched to Vietnam. We stood formation for a commissioning ceremony on the small boat dock at Government Island in Alameda in May 1965.

Early in 2015 I listened, at first with skepticism then, with increasing fascination as my new ex-Coast Guard acquaintance told his astonishing story while having his haircut and I awaited my turn.

A small cohort of Coast Guard personnel, Robert Albers said, operated two 40-foot utility boats in South Vietnam in 1962. The mission he described was waterside security patrols to protect an Esso facility from attacks by Viet Minh or Viet Cong insurgents. There were about 18-20 personnel including support staff. The two boats operated in 12-hour shifts. Albers said he arrived in Vietnam in February 1962 and departed in August. The boats were left behind, he said and apparently given to the South Vietnamese. No record of them could be found to show they were operated by the RVN Navy or from 1965 by the U.S. Navy or Army after they successively provided waterside security at Nha Be.

Each boat was armed with three 50 cal., machine guns, one forward and two aft. The crew also had individual small arms. Before departing the U.S., Albers had weapons training on the machine gun and M1 carbine.

In 1962, only one petroleum facility in the vicinity of Saigon justified a waterside security presence like the one Albers vaguely remembered. Nha Be was a river port south of Saigon with large bulk storage tanks and docks accessible to seagoing tankships of that time. Nha Be was near the Rung Sat Special Zone, a large swampy area between Saigon and the South China Sea and generally acknowledged as a Viet Cong refuge and stronghold. Petroleum products were imported and stored at Nha Be and distributed by river barges, highway tankers and



cartage trucks in 55-gallon drums. Shell and Caltex were located at Nha Be, in addition to Esso. Infrastructure was available at Nha Be to house the small Coast Guard contingent, to feed them, to warehouse supplies and store spare parts.

Albers recalled that his boat was the 40599 and that it was plastic-hulled. Also, he thought one of the boats in Vietnam had been at the Presidio in San Francisco where Albers was stationed before and after his combat sojourn.

Although I could learn almost nothing more about the 40599, the plastic hull recalled by Albers was consistent with available fact. The Mark VI series, the last thirteen 40-foot utility boats (40597-40609), were plastic-hulled, built from 1962 to 1966. In addition the 40599 was the third Mark VI. I inferred this made it possible to have been completed and transported to Vietnam early in 1962.

It is not known if this small cohort was the only Coast Guard small boat operation circa 1962 in the RVN.

Albers said a Lieutenant "Wills" was in charge, assisted by an Ensign "Williams." Analysis of available unofficial records showed only two possible officers fitting as to name and rank in 1962, neither in an assignment between February and August that implied unavailability for classified TAD orders to Albers's clandestine detachment in Vietnam.

Although there was no Coast Guard lieutenant named "Wills" in 1962, there was a Lieutenant Lester W. Willis who served in Vietnam. Willis (1919-1972) was born in Morehead City, North Carolina. He served in the Coast Guard from August 8, 1941 until he retired as a lieutenant commander on February 28, 1967. Willis is buried in Meadowbrook Memorial Gardens, Suffolk City, Virginia.

Feature Articles

A memorial plaque at his grave identifies him as a lieutenant commander and U.S. Coast Guard veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam. There is no published record that Willis served in Vietnam. I believe he did but have been unable to find conclusive proof. His WWII and Korea experiences and successful command assignments after OCS support an inference that he was a leader, well qualified to take Albers's small cohort in harm's way.

He completed OCS in December, 1953. A former warrant officer (likely a boatswain), he was commissioned as a lieutenant (junior grade) and ordered to the cutter *Agassiz* as executive officer. Later he fleted up to commanding officer. In July, 1957, then a lieutenant, Willis turned over *Agassiz* to his successor with orders to the triple-hatted command of Group Cape May, and collaterally as commanding officer of a collocated "Moorings" and Port Security Unit. Nothing more is known until the 1963 Register of Officers records Willis's promotion to lieutenant commander. The Academy Alumni Bulletin published the Annual Report for 1963-1964 of the Norfolk, Va., Alumni Association chapter. Lt. Cmdr. Lester Willis's name appears twice, once in a May 19, 1964 note of his attendance at a chapter meeting as speaker and a subsequent note reporting that during a meeting on June 17 he was elected to the chapter executive committee. He was XO of Base Portsmouth at the time.

Captain Alex Larzalere's book, "The Coast Guard at War — Vietnam, 1965-1975," is a comprehensive chronicle of all Coast Guard operations in not only Vietnam but also all other Coast Guard ops in Southeast Asia in those years. It contains nothing to indicate Willis served in that AOR between 1965 and February 1967 when he retired out of the 5th District.

The ensign may have been James E. Williams (1939-1992). He was commissioned an ensign in June, 1961, a member of the Academy class of that year, and ordered to the cutter *Bering Strait* homeported in Honolulu. In September 1962 unofficial records show that he was transferred to the cutter *Matagorda* where he remained assigned until early in 1964 when he was transferred to the Third

District (admin). Effective April 1, 1964, still an ensign more than a year after his class would have been promoted to lieutenant (jg), his appointment was revoked and he was discharged. In the Alumni Bulletin of April, 1992 "In Memoriam," his name appears as "Rev. James E. Williams, '61".

What happened to abort Williams Coast Guard career is a mystery. But only in retrospect does he appear to be an unlikely candidate as the ensign Albers remembers. Perhaps he failed in some way as Willis's number two. It seems very unlikely that whatever set the stage for his ultimate fate preceded a selection for classified TAD orders to Vietnam while in *Bering Strait*. Perhaps he suffered from some sort of post-traumatic stress when aboard *Matagorda* later. PTSD was not as well understood or accepted then as it is today. Albers did say there were several firefights. He recalled patching bullet holes in his boat with fiberglass repair kits and that one of the aft machine gun's mount cracked at the deck.

Albers was a seaman-radioman designate stationed at the Presidio (Fort Point?) when ordered to Vietnam and returned to that unit when the cohort left. Going to Vietnam he flew commercially from Oakland to Tokyo, then a military flight to Danang and a long military truck ride to Saigon.

Some names Albers recalls from his Vietnam service, are a GM2 Freddie Sampson, someone named John (surname unknown), a BMC Mays (sp?), in charge of 40599, an E3 Logan (sp?) and a third class machinist named Marshall (sp and given or surname unknown).



In a brief note the November 1962 Bulletin records that a Coast Guard Captain G. T. Murati was dispatched to Vietnam for two months that year. His task, attached to the "United States Operational Mission (USOM) to Vietnam," was at the request of the State Department. Working for the Public Safety Division of the USOM, the captain's reported mission was to survey the customs vessels of the RVN. There is no mention of Capt. Murati having anything to do with the utility boat detachment also then in Vietnam, according to Albers's recollection.

Then there were the Buoy Tenders

By CWO Charles D. (Doc) Williams, USCG (Ret.)

We have all read the exploits of our 82' patrol boats of Squadron One in Vietnam as well as those of the destroyer size cutters of Squadron Three. We know that there were Coast Guard Advisers to the South Vietnam Junk Navy and Hazardous Cargo Handlers and of folks assigned to MACV in Saigon. There were also the LORAN Personnel on Con Son Island and at Tan My and you may even know that there were Coast Guard Helicopter Pilots. Several of them flying downed aircraft rescue missions in an exchange program with the other services.

But what do we ever hear about the Buoy Tenders that served in Vietnam? Not much. No, we did not kill the enemy, do off shore fire missions or interdict enemy personnel, weapons or supplies. But we were there. From 1966 to spring of 1973 four Coast Guard buoy tenders were assigned to perform intermittent duties for a month or two at a time. These mission assignments took place all up and down the 1000-mile coast of South Vietnam as well as in the rivers and bays. The four tenders that served in this capacity were the *Planetree*, the *Basswood*, the *Ironwood* and the *Blackhaw*.

I served as the First Class Hospital Corpsman on the *Basswood* from 1966 to 1968. The *Basswood* was the second buoy tender to serve in Vietnam after the *Planetree* and subsequently the *Basswood* was also the last tender to make one of these patrols. The rest of this story will be about my experiences and observations as a "rider" on the *Basswood*. A rider was what they called crewmembers that did not have an actual hands-on role in the operation of the ship.

When I made the top of the promotion list for First Class Petty Officer, the first thing I wanted to do was get an independent duty assignment on a ship out in the Pacific. I received my wish in the form of orders to the *U.S. Coast*



(Left) Author leaving Honolulu for the last time.

Guard Cutter Basswood (WLB- 388), a 180-foot C-Class buoy tender home ported in Hawaii. When I passed through the main gate of Base Sand Island I knew at once that I had arrived at a place for sailors.

There was the black-hulled Coast Guard Cutter *Kukui*, a freighter, tied up there along with two destroyer-size white cutters, six buoy tenders tied up two by two, a boat house with three 40-footers and just passing by in the channel a 95-footer that was normally tied up at Pier Four across from the base. I had never even seen a buoy tender up close, but I was about to.

As I hauled my sea bag up the brow and saluted the colors and the OOD, he saluted back and said, "Welcome aboard

Doc . A little shiver went up my spine as I finally realized that was me he called "Doc." This was my first assignment



Battle stations in Saigon River — Author with SNBM Sitton.

Feature Articles

as an Independent Duty Corpsman and I was on my own. The messenger took me below to meet the executive officer, my new boss. Then I was shown to my Sick Bay and where I could stow my gear. As I came aboard I noticed that the ship was very much squared away both inside and out. This ship, built in 1943, was neat as a pin.

I had barely gotten used to the ship, my duties and Hawaii when we had a bunch of major changes. We got a new skipper, a new XO, a new ensign, a new Warrant Bosun, and a bunch of new seamen. Our new crew included 10 extra bodies bringing our complement up to 64. With this came the announcement that our homeport was being changed to Apra Harbor in Guam and that our list of assignments was going to keep us underway most of the time for the next year and a half including a deployment to Vietnam.

Well the ship was abuzz with scuttlebutt about where we would be going and in particular what we would be doing in Vietnam. The *Planetree* which had been tied up just down the pier from us had gotten underway for WESTPAC and Vietnam a couple of months before and we had heard nothing of her since. It was a busy time and everyone was excited about the journey to our new



Saigon River.



Saigon River.



Author on Con Son Island.

homeport and the subsequent long deployment, none more so than me. This was what I signed on for, the open ocean to the horizon and beyond and the adventures to be found there.

The first part of the trip took us to Johnston Island, part of the Pacific Missile Range. There was also a LORAN Station there and we had some supplies for them. The next stop was the 180th Meridian, aka the International Date Line, where we held the traditional crossing ceremonies. Following that it was Kwajalein and Eniwetok Atolls and then on to Guam. We were welcomed to our new homeport with fireboats and a welcoming committee of local and military dignitaries.

We were in Guam for less than a week when we left to service some buoys and do some other work on Truk and Ponape in the Caroline Islands. When that work was completed we returned to Guam for exactly three days before we got underway for the long trip. We worked some aids in the Palau Islands and then sailed for the Philippines. It would be my first time there but certainly not my last.

At the Subic Bay Naval Station our CO and officers were briefed on our mission into South Vietnam by a group of Navy and



(Left) The Royal Court 180 Initiation.

Con Son Island in Vietnam then took the refer boxes back to Subic Bay.

The living conditions aboard the *Basswood* during our time in Vietnam were not a lot of fun. We had a crew of 64 and four Navy Seals. That's nearly 70 people living on a ship that was usually manned by a crew of just over 50. We were really packed in. There was also no air conditioning and we had to keep the portholes closed while we were in the War Zone. This deprived us of even the smallest breezes we could get into the ship under normal circumstances. It was a sweltering, smelly place particularly for the men packed butt to belly button in the crews berthing. Then there was the water situation. The ship did not make potable water and we had to take on water when it was available. When it wasn't we were on water hours and sea showers. Those

Coast Guard officers from MACV in Saigon. We received two additional .50 cal. machine guns to go with the two we already had. They also issued us a couple cases of M-16 rifles and ammo for them as well as a supply of half pound granular TNT Swimmer Grenades. The ship would be taking four Navy Seals aboard when we reached Cat Lo in Vung Tau Harbor. When the word of all this got out to the crew the scuttlebutt would have you thinking we were off to World War Three.



Author

Next, we were off to Phu Qua Island and An Thoi. There was a floating base there made up of APL barges and floating docks. The APLs

The first trip into Vietnam had nothing to do with Aids to Navigation. We were going to make a logistics run to our LORAN "C" crew on Con Son Island. Before we left Subic they put two large refers in our Main hold — one was a freezer and the other was a chill box. We were to take these to Sattahip, Thailand to the big Army Supply Depot there and get them filled with frozen and perishable food supplies for the twenty-nine man crew of the Loran Station. We did that and while we were there the skipper had a work detail go to the beach and fill sandbags for our .50 cal. gun mounts, two above the forecastle and two back on the fantail. When that was done we delivered the supplies to



Hooking up with the Point Cypress in Vung Tau Bay.

were for housing and eating facilities as well as a repair shop for the Navy Swift Boats and Coast Guard 82-foot patrol boats of Squadron One, Division 11. Their anchors were not holding them in place during heavy weather. Our mission was to install large Mooring Buoys that would hold the floating facility in place in any kind of weather. We were going to do this using some of the largest ground tackle most of us had ever seen. This was going to be a dangerous and complicated undertaking for our deck crew.

The equipment, chains, buoys and anchors (the size that they used on Navy Cruisers) were waiting for us on the beach along with a crane and a large barge. We were hampered by two problems. First, it was some kind of a native holiday and they were superstitious about making the crane work as if it had some kind of a life of its own. That cost us a whole day. Next were the monsoon rains. Finally we got the barge loaded and out alongside the ship. Then the Deck Force went about setting it up.

The buoys were fourteen feet across and there would be three legs on each buoy with a cruiser anchor at the end of each one of the legs. Holding them together at the buoy was a steel ring that weighed 100 pounds by itself. Part of this gear was laid out on the buoy deck and part on the barge deck. When they were ready they would knock a big pelican hook open with a sledge hammer and off it all went like a set of giant dominos. This heavy gear got a foot and a half off the deck and was just a blur as it flew off both the ship and barge decks. God help anyone who got in its way. You would be lucky to find pieces of them big enough to identify. It took us longer than we had planned — thirteen days — but we got it done and



Author on Basswood mess deck having surf and turf while still in Hawaii.

done right and no one was injured or killed in the process. Now it was off to Vung Tau.

We had work to do in Vung Tau and then up the Saigon River. We were in the process of changing out the old French gas buoy system with our new modern electric lighted buoys. This sounded good on paper when the planners were dreaming it up, but it turned out to have some unique problems. We would no sooner get one of these new buoys set up when some Vietnamese fisherman would pull it apart and steal the Batteries and the Lamp for his LBGB (little bitty gook boat) Hey, that's what everybody called

them over there. The same thing with the Day Boards and Channel Markers — this was a poor country and the peasants could always find a use for good American materials in their daily lives.

So, we and the other tenders found that we were doing a lot of our work over and over again. Well there we were in Vung Tau Harbor. We tied up at the



CGC Basswood in Vung Tao Bay. (USCG photo)

Vietnam Navy Base at Cat Lo. While we were there we picked up our four Navy Seals, a lieutenant, two Petty Officers First Class and one Second Class. During our time off we hoisted a few drinks with some Australian Marines who were assigned there. Then we got a call to do some urgent work up the river. So, we



(Left) Basswood at sea off Vietnam. Note the .50-calibers mounted on the forecastle.

did a temporary fix on the Vung Tau Harbor buoys by putting hot packs on them. We would fix them permanently when we returned back down river.

We were about four hours up the Saigon River when we got a radio message telling us that some other Navy Seals had disarmed the bombs on the harbor buoys. They had mistaken our temporary battery packs for bombs. And that's how things went in the War Zone. So why did we have Seals aboard in the first place you might ask. We were going to be working in some hostile areas up the rivers and they would recon the places we needed to go before we

had taken 19 VC rocket rounds in this very same spot just two week earlier. And then we ran aground. So, we remained at general quarters for about six hours more until a combination of things allowed us to refloat the ship. We were transferring ballast back and forth running the engines first forward and then astern and finally the tide came in just enough for us to break free.

The rest of our trip up the River went smoothly and we pulled into Saigon and had a couple of days of Cinderella Liberty while we were waiting for some parts and supplies to arrive for us at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Then it was back

down the river and north to Cam Rahn Bay and then Qui Non and finally Da Nang. We completed all our work in those areas with no problems and then it was off to Bangkok, Thailand for five days of R&R then back to the Philippines — Sangley Point this time. Then home to Guam to get ready for our forthcoming deployment on a Medical Research Mission to the remote outer Caroline Islands.

My time on the *Basswood* was one of the best tours of my 27-year Coast Guard career. This story only scratches the surface of my experiences and adventures on that great old



(Left) Working the sea buoy outside Vung Tao Harbor.

Feature Articles

ship. The *Basswood* had subsequent tours to Vietnam including the last deployment by a buoy tender to that country. By then, however, I was on a LORAN Station in



Tied up at Apra Harbor in Guam.

the Southwest Philippines or getting ready to go aboard a 378-foot high endurance cutter in Hawaii and those my friends are stories for another time.

(Left) Working a buoy in Vietnam.

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