



# the QUARTERDECK LOG

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

Volume 33, Number 3

Fall 2018

## USS SERPENS (AK 97)

### SUNK BY ENEMY ACTION OR THROUGH ACCIDENT



### THE SINGLE LARGEST LOSS OF COAST GUARD PERSONNEL OF ANY WAR

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On Monday, January 29, 1945, the *USS SERPENS (AK 97)*, an EC-2 Liberty-type vessel, blew up at 2318 local time while moored at Berth Number 24, Lunga Point, Guadalcanal, British Solomon Islands. 197 Coast Guardsmen, six Army and one Public Health Service personnel lost their lives as the result of the explosion, the single largest loss of Coast Guard personnel of any war. First believed that the sinking was from enemy action, it was later concluded that the explosion was possibly the result of the rough handling of high explosive cargo. There remains unanswered questions that have some rethinking this decision. How would your opinion differ?

*(Story continues on page 9)*

# FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT



## COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

### ELECTED OFFICERS

National President—Stephen Petersen, LM  
National Vice President—Terry O’Connell, LM  
National Secretary/Treasurer—Gary Sherman, LM

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman—PNP Michael Placencia, LM  
2nd Term—Bruce Bruni, LM, Robert MacLeod, LM  
1st Term—William Figone, LM, Gil Benoit, LM

### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE\*

National Secretary / Treasurer  
P.O. Box 777

Harve de Grace, MD 21078  
Phone: 610-476-8061 (cell)  
Email: [cgcva@comcast.net](mailto:cgcva@comcast.net)

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

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

### THE QUARTERDECK LOG

Executive Publisher—PNP Ed Swift, LM  
Editors—Bruce Bruni, LM, Gary Sherman, LM  
PNP Michael Placencia, LM

### AUXILIARY OFFICERS

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

### APPOINTED OFFICERS

ByLaws—Thomas Hart, LM  
Convention Planners—PNP Michael Placencia, LM  
Gary Sherman, LM and Bruce Bruni, LM  
Membership—PNP Michael Placencia, LM  
Parliamentarian—(Vacant)  
Historian—PNP/Founder Paul C. Scotti, LM  
Service Officers—Thomas Huckelberry, LM,  
Richard Hogan Jr., LM, and Floyd Hampton, LM  
MAA- Russell Weeks  
Chaplain—Vince Patton, LM  
Nominating Committee—Bill Figone, LM  
Cape May Liaison—Thomas Dougherty  
MEAP—Edward Bachand, LM, and  
PNP Ed Swift, LM

Greetings Mates,

This past July-August, Vice President Terry O’Connell and I, accompanied by our wives Kay and Rene, made a whirlwind trip to Arlington, VA for the commissioning of the Fast Response Cutter



*USCGC NATHAN BRUCKENTHAL* and then onto Grand Haven, MI, as special guests at the Coast Guard Festival. After almost two weeks on the road, traveling 2,459 miles together, we still talk to each other and remain friends!

While in DC, we met up with Trustee and Editor Bruce Bruni and wife Jeannie, and PNP/(past editor) Ed Swift and wife Mare. We all enjoyed dinner together in Alexandria and talked about our Association and looking forward to the upcoming convention in Charleston.

After leaving DC, we traveled to Harve de Grace, MD, to inspect CGCVA Headquarters located in Gary and Janie Sherman’s home. After a thorough inspection and inventory of equipment (Just a joke), Gary also editor, treated us all to lunch at an excellent Tavern/Burger restaurant located on the water. Another good time had by all.

Next, it was on to Grand Haven for the yearly Coast Guard Festival, with many thanks to Swifty and Festival Executive Director, Mike Smith, Commander, USCG (Ret), for laying the ground work for our VIP visit.

While I’m on this course, I would like to recognize all the members that represent our Association at various ship commissioning, changes of command, veteran get togethers, and other events. To date, our organization has attended the commissioning of 12 Fast Response Cutters, one National Security Cutter commissioning, numerous changes of commands, and the yearly memorial service at the Douglas Munro gravesite, Cle Elum, WA. Special thanks to Bill McLaughlin who did the wreath presentation.

There are other local and not so local events all over the

## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT



country that are attended by our members. Thank you for your dedication, as you do this willingly on your own time and own dime. It should be noted that the CGCVA does not pay travel, lodging or

meals while attending these events. Our members give this as a gift, to make sure that we, as combat veterans, continue to be recognized as a supportive role in today's modern Coast Guard activities.

After attending the all-hands muster at Sector Grand Haven, Terry and I were without transportation back to our motel. A CG Auxiliarist flagged down one of Grand Haven's finest, Police Safety Officer Andy Cannon. Not only did Officer Cannon give us a lift back to the motel, he also provided us with a waterfront tour along the way. He was able to deliver us in time for our next event. Just another example of the love that this city extends to the Coast Guard. Thanks Officer Andy!

Photos of the *CGC BRUCKENTHAL* pre-commissioning party were unavailable at the submission deadline for the Summer Issue of the QDL. Here are some photos taken of that event, including the presentation made to the commanding officer, Lieutenant Bryan Kilcoin and a photo of the family of DC3 Nathan Bruckenthal with the ship's crew.



Pictured above is *CGC BRUCKENTHAL* crew with the family of DC3 Nathan Bruckenthal, Rear Admiral Meredith Austin and Admiral Karl Schultz, Commandant of the Coast Guard



National President Steve Petersen presenting the CGCVA plaque to LT Bryan Kilcoin, Commanding Officer of CGC BRUCKENTHAL

Pictured right is President Steve Petersen, National Trustee Bruce Bruni, LT Bryan Kilcoin and Vice President Terry O'Connell



## FROM THE NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT



It pays to know a chief. With limited time to wait for a ship's tour of *CGC ESCANABA*, OSC Ryan Clark invited President Steve Petersen and NVP Terry O'Connell to a special tour of the ship. Pictured is NVP Terry O'Connell and Chief Petty Officer Clark. Thanks Chief!!

Steve and Kay and Renè and I were privileged to have been invited to be Special Guests at the 2018 Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival. Kudos to PNP Ed Swift for introducing us to the Festival Director.

We joined the Distinguished Guests and the Honored Guests at all of the Festival Committee

activities. It was indeed an honor to join ranks with hundreds of past and present Coast Guard women and men while enjoying the Festival activities.



Equally enjoyable was our 2400-mile trip together from St Louis, MO, to Alexandria, VA, where we participated in the *USCGC NATHAN BRUCKENTHAL* commissioning ceremony. We had a week to get to Grand Haven, so we took the time to visit Gary Sherman at his home in Havre de Grace, MD. From there, we visited the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, PA; the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland; a shoreside tour of Lake Erie; a tour of Detroit's Henry Ford Museum and a tour of Ford's Rouge Assembly plant; and a day enjoying the sights in Holland, Michigan.

The four of us had a memorable time traveling together to participate in two noteworthy Coast Guard ceremonies with a few happy hours in between. I think it is important to note that no CGCVA funds were expended during our official and non-official visits.

~ Terry O'Connell

## CROSSED THE BAR

Leslie E. Burkins, LM  
John D. Cruikshank, LM  
James A. Griffith, LM  
Howard I. Hayes, LM  
Martha Johnson  
John J. Knyff, LM  
Roy W. Kronlein, LM  
Clinton E. Marshall, LM  
George Marshal

Lellous K. McGuire, LM  
E. Frank Oliver, LM  
Stanford A. Orfila, LM  
John D. Parker, LM  
Harry S. Raleigh, LM  
James R. Rhinehart, LM  
Crook Stewart, LM  
James C. Verhille, LM  
Eugene Swiech, LM

## FROM THE NATIONAL SECRETARY / TREASURER

### CHARLESTON—2019

If you've never been to a CGCVA reunion, please consider coming to our next reunion in Charleston.

The first time I went to a reunion was to Reno in 2009. I knew Baker Herbert from talking on the telephone, but I knew no one else. I could not have felt more welcomed by those present, then at my first CGCVA reunion. I had a blast. So ....you're missing a "blast". It's just that simple. Come and tell some sea stories and share your experiences with men and women you served with and you'll have the same experience!!!

### MY REUNION THIS SUMMER

This July I went to my 50th high school reunion. I like to go to a high school reunion about once every 50 years, so I guess this was it.

While I was there I got to see an old classmate, Dennis Barber. He was shorter than average with moderate athletic skills and wanted to play high

school football, but because of his size became the football equipment manager, and because it was high school, he got very little respect for his hard work.

50 years later I spotted Dennis, greeted him and we begin talking about what we've been doing since high school. You see, Dennis was drafted into the Army and was assigned to artillery in Vietnam, where he received a Bronze Star with Combat "V" for his efforts. Dennis is still the nicest guy you'd ever want to meet, and it just goes to show you that you cannot judge a book, or an equipment manager, by it's cover. Now Dennis is my personal hero. My hat's off to you Dennis. Way to go!

~ Gary Sherman

**There is still time to donate to the Life Member Challenge!!**



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

### MEMBER

Paul D. Branaman  
James Lovenstein  
William K. Glenzer  
Lellous H. McGuire  
David A. Knapp  
Wilson G. Hamilton

### MEMBER

Gennaro A. Ruocco  
Christopher Obermeyer  
Maynard B. Palmer, Jr.  
Zachary A. Kinchloe

### SPONSOR

Brian Dudley  
CGPATFORSWA  
Barry Stahr  
John Parsons

## AUXILIARY NEWS



### **CHARLESTON'S MOST ICONIC DISHES AND HINTS OF WHERE TO GET THEM**

Hello esteemed CGCVA members, Auxiliary, family, friends and supporters! I hope

this letter finds you well and excited as we look forward to our upcoming reunion in Charleston. As you take in the sites of this beautiful and historic city, be sure to enjoy some of the great iconic foods that this city is noted for.

If you like Boils, a highly recommended place to head to is Bowen's Island Restaurant where you will find a combo of shrimp, sausage, corn, potatoes and Old Bay Seasoning, a Charleston favorite.

Of course everyone knows the South is known for its Shrimp and Grits, and according to some of the locals, it is supposed to be a "must have" dish at the Early Bird Diner. Another great culinary delight, The Glass Onion, serves up a "Fried Green Tomato Po Boy", a tried and true dish that rose from the field hands of yore.

And if it's a sweet tooth you have, head over to the Charleston Grill for a Carrot Cake Fritter, or how about Whiskey Bread Pudding at Halls Chophouse? And no trip to the South is complete without Vanilla Bean Brulee from High Cotton.

No matter what you go for, I'm sure this city has something delicious to share. Enjoy your visit to Charleston and enjoy some local favorites along the way. We are so looking forward to the good food, good times, and most importantly the good company as we all get together!

### **REUNION 2019**

Our 2019 Reunion is quickly arriving and I've only received two Silent Auction donations so far. I'm sure there are more out there so please send in your Silent Auction Item Registration as soon as possible. Remember, all funds raised by the Silent Auction go to the CGCVA operating fund. Please email your donation forms to [jmiller@lptribe.net](mailto:jmiller@lptribe.net) or complete the Auction Form below you can fax it to (619-478-2125) or mail it to 8 Crestwood Road, Boulevard CA. 91905.

To make sure I received your donation, please ensure you receive an email confirmation or like receipt back from me. Don't forget, if you didn't renew your Auxiliary membership at the last reunion or want to renew early you can use the Membership Application found on Page 7 and mail in your money to our Auxiliary Treasurer Mimi Placencia at 9804 Iroquois Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93312.

Chieu Hoi, Wayne and I look forward to seeing you in Charleston!!!

*~ Javaughn Miller*

#### **Silent Auction Item Registration Form**

Description of Item: \_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Minimum Bid: \_\_\_\_\_

Please email this form to Javaughn Miller at: [jmiller@lptribe.net](mailto:jmiller@lptribe.net), Fax 619-478-2125 or Mail to 8 Crestwood Rd., Boulevard, CA 91905

Please ensure you receive an email confirmation of receipt.

## AUXILIARY NEWS

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

Membership Type: Auxiliary: \_\_\_\_\_ Associate: \_\_\_\_\_ New: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal: \_\_\_\_\_ Returning: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

## LIFE MEMBER CHALLENGE

In September 2018, the following Life Members have challenged their Life Member shipmates, stations or units to meet or exceed their recent donation to the Association's Vanguard account, as a restricted donation. Thank you all!

LIFE MEMBER	CHALLENGE	LIFE MEMBER	CHALLENGE
Gary Sherman	CGC Castle Rock	Scott McCone	Port Security Unit 301 (Desert Shield/Storm 90-91)
Ernest Johnson	CGC Wacuset / Squadron 1	Billy C. Smith	Anthony Lloyd
Edward Bachand	CGC Castle Rock		Richard Gobble
Sidney Tartarkin	LST 19	John B. Norall	All Cutters & Duty Stations
Herbert Cohen	All WWII Members	Allen T. Warner	CGC Boutwell
Horace Leprell	Loran Sta Pusan, Korea		CGC Southwind
	Oshima, Japan		CGC Point Cypress
Emmett Knapton	All DE Sailors, WDE,		CGC Point Hudson
	WDS 489 Durance	Fred Mononen	Squadron 1, RVN
	Cape May Echo 12	Ernest T. Maxey	USS Gen Gordon AP117
	Group Moriches	James Lasher	CGC Owasco
Edward Ketch	All WWII Members		

Please consider these friendly challenges to other Life Members who served on the ships, units or stations listed above. Please answer the challenge by making your payment to:

**CGCVA, Attn: LMC, P.O. Box 777, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.**

## BOOSTER CLUB AND MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

### QUARTERDECK LOG BOOSTER CLUB

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

Since publication of our last magazine, the following individuals have made donations and become members of the QD Log Booster club:

**Dennis Duprey ~ James Lasher ~ Frank Bullock ~ James Fay ~ Herbert Cohen ~ Sidney Tartarkin  
Thomas Dougherty ~ Charles Billings ~ James Warwick ~ Daniel F. Bothe ~ Frederick Armstrong  
Delno P. Hansen ~ Charles Bevel IMO Joyce Bevel**

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

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



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

China Service Medal \* American Campaign Medal (must have at least one 5/16 bronze battle star) \* Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal \* European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal \* Korea Service Medal \* Armed Forces Expeditionary

Medal \* Vietnam Service Medal \* Southwest Asia Service Medal \* Kosovo Campaign Medal \* Afghanistan Campaign Medal \* Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal \* Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal \* Korea Defense Service Medal.

Unfortunately, there will be future world conflicts that will add to this list.

## COVER STORY

In the latter days of the war in the Pacific, Coast Guard crews were heavily involved in supporting many amphibious operations with carrying munitions and personnel to the battle front in the war with Japan.

On 29 January 1945, the 14,250 ton EC-2 Liberty-type Coast Guard manned vessel, *USS SERPENS (AK 97)*, was moored at Berth 24, Lunga Point, Guadalcanal. Army crews from the 492nd Port Battalion were loading plane parts, general cargo and 600 tons of munitions simultaneously from both sides of the 441' 6" vessel. Precautions were being taken to prevent the collision of cargoes during the loading process.

The cargo holds were sheathed that ensured that there were no sharp corners or project nails that would come into contact with the ammunition.

At the time of the explosion, 2318 hours (local), the munitions on board or on a 100-ton barge moored alongside were 3,399 unfused bombs, each containing 350 pounds of Torpex, totaling 856,548 pounds of the high explosive. There were, in a separate strong room located in Number 1 hold, 1,026 AN MK 230 Mod 3 and Mod 4 bomb-tail



**AN MK 230 Bomb Tail Fuse**

fuses in steel boxes, each weighing 14.5 pounds, with four fuses per box.

When loading the bombs, three bombs were placed on a single pallet. Two pallets with six bombs were then loaded onto an amphibious DUKW, then transported to the side of the ship. A single pallet was then loaded into a cargo net for hoisting aboard the vessel and into the hold. The individual bombs were then rolled across dunnage to their final stowage point. There were three



**MK 54 Depth Bomb fixed on an aircraft wing.  
Each carried 350 pounds of high explosive  
Torpex**

inches of dunnage between each layer of the 660 bombs in Number 4 hold.

The night of 29 January 1943 was a peaceful one. *USS SERPENS* lay at anchor about a mile offshore in 19 fathoms with a smooth sea, a light easterly breeze, clear sky and bright moon and a steady easterly current. In other words, a perfect night for an enemy submariner looking for a target.

Seventy-five enlisted personnel had just returned to the ship after enjoying some well-earned liberty ashore at Guadalcanal's base. A short time later, ten officers returned from a party aboard another Coast Guard manned attack cargo ship (AKA).

The commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Perry L. Stinson, USCG, was ashore along with eight others from *USS SERPENS*.

# COVER STORY

At 2318 hours, two explosions were heard, the first one dull sounding, like a “thud”, followed by a bright flash and very loud blast a second later, loud enough to be heard 70 miles away. The explosion disintegrated everything aft of Hold 2 of *USS SERPENS*, instantly killing everyone aboard and those on the loading barge, save two Coast Guardsmen who were asleep in the forward Bos’n Locker. George Kennedy and Kelsie Kemp made their way out of the bow which remained afloat for a short period of time. Kennedy and Kemp were quick thinking enough to grab battle lanterns during their escape which they used to signal rescuers as they clung to the floating bow.

The terrific blast and subsequent shock wave knocked over everything afloat or ashore for a distance of a mile, including LCDR Stinson who was standing on the dock. It created an eight foot title wave onto the beach and the ground shock was felt as far away as five miles. The *USS YMS 281*, *USS LCT 317* and *HMNZSQ 400* moored at various distances away from *USS SERPENS* also suffered some piercing damage.



**LUNGA POINT, GUADALCANAL**

Debris rained down on the shore as well. A soldier on the beach was killed by shrapnel and a

chunk of boiler plate crashed through the roof of a hut, slicing a bed in half “like a piece of bread.” Out of the 50 bunks in the hut that night, it was the only one that was not occupied.

Thirty minutes after the sinking of *USS SERPENS*, a Japanese submarine was located three and one-half miles away. Navy crews dropped depth charges for three hours with undetermined results. Tokyo Radio reported the explosion at Guadalcanal before any communication had gone out over official U.S. Government channels.

The following Sunday, a mass funeral service for the more than 250 Army and Coast Guard personnel killed on 29 January was held on Guadalcanal, with Catholic, Protestant and Jewish Chaplains officiating. Only fifty seven graves were prepared to hold those who were recovered. The natives of Guadalcanal who were friends with the crew of *USS SERPENS* arrived, dressed in their tribal garments and performed their own special funeral rites.

On 15 June 1949, those crewmembers who were killed aboard *USS SERPENS* were returned to the United States and buried in Section 34 of Arlington National Cemetery.



**USS SERPENS MEMORIAL AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**

## COVER STORY

Section 34 is located at MacArthur Circle, intersection of Grant and Jessup.

But what really happened to *USS SERPENS*? Associate CGCVA member Robert G. Breen, son of Fireman 2/c Gerald Clement Breen, who was killed with the rest of his crew aboard *USS SERPENS*, wants to know. Breen has made it his life's mission to find out and has been pursuing an answer since 2012.

On 31 January 1945, *USS SERPENS* commanding officer, LCDR Perry Stinson, submitted his official report to the Secretary of the Navy. In the report Stinson states, *"I am unable to state whether the explosion which destroyed the ship was due to enemy action and the explosion of the depth charges constituting its cargo or to the explosion of the cargo alone."*

A report was made by Colonel T. L. Dunn from information gathered from LCDR Stinson and submitted to the Field Inquiry Hearing at Guadalcanal. In it Dunn states, *"It is believed that the original blast was caused by enemy action, probably by an enemy submarine, since Tokyo radio boasted of the explosion before they possibly could have learned about it from us."*

Another unclassified report divulged the findings of the official Court of Inquiry hearings that were endorsed by the Pacific Command in Hawaii, as well as the U.S. Naval District in San Francisco, Treasure Island. The report cites the discovery of the enemy submarine lurking nearby and states that *"there is a possibility that the explosion was due to rough handling and the court could not reach an agreement as to the probable cause. The majority of the court blamed it on enemy action, while the minority report blamed it on rough handling. There was, however, absolutely no evidence of rough handling, and the minority report was obviously based on the bad reputation which Torpex has."*

However, the final document of the U.S. Naval

Judge Advocate Hearings in Washington, D.C., dated August 1949 was checked out of the National Archives in 2003, after the results were declassified by a retired individual from the Office of the U.S. Naval Judge Advocate's Office. It was never returned.

Some time between March 1945 and June of that year, when the deceased crewmembers were interned in Arlington, the Navy Department ruled that the explosion was a result of an accident, caused by the rough handling of the munitions, rather than by enemy action. This decision would prevent those wounded or killed by the blast from receiving the award of the Purple Heart. This begs the question, if the majority of the Court of Inquiry believed that it was the result of enemy action, specifically a torpedo from the Japanese submarine discovered near by, why would the Navy agree with the minority opinion, in spite of no evidence to support it? Even more puzzling is that the U.S. Judge Advocate's Office refuses to provide the name of the ship dispatched from Lunga Point Naval Base to drop depth charges on the Japanese submarine, or the contents of the ship's log for the night of 29 November 1945. Was this a coverup and if so, for what purpose?

Breen also discovered that during the loading of munitions, the Naval Headquarters at Lunga Point had no perimeter security surrounding Berth 24 at Lunga Point, Guadalcanal.

Robert Breen has been attempting to find answers, but has consistently met roadblocks along the way when seeking information through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), claiming he has been *"steamrolled by the bureaucracy at the National Archives, as well as the U.S. Naval Judge Advocate's Office."* Breen claims that there is more information that the National Archives won't release even under FOIA guidelines. Hopefully, Breen will get his answer and these men will be properly recognized for their sacrifice.

## **2019 CGCVA REUNION AT A GLANCE**

**WHERE:** Charleston, South Carolina

**WHEN:** April 15 through 18, 2019

**HOTEL:** The North Charleston Marriott Hotel

Redesigned hotel with 280 rooms, full restaurant and bar on premises, close to the airport, complimentary parking and only nine miles to Historic Charleston. Check the hotel webpage for a full list of amenities. The hotel is close to the Tanger Outlet Mall with complimentary shuttle service. Plenty of dining options too.

**COMPLIMENTARY AIRPORT SHUTTLE:** 0500 to 2300 Call **(843) 747-1900** for pickup

**NORTH CHARLESTON AMTRACK**—The station is located 1.4 miles away. Call for pickup.

### **PLANNING IN PROGRESS**

**(Check the CGCVA website for periodic updates)**

**Vice Commandant and CGCVA member, Admiral Charles Ray invited to be the Awards Keynote Speaker**

**MCPO Jason Vanderhaden invited to speak at the Business Meeting**

**50th Commemorative Anniversary Ceremony for Vietnam Veterans**

**Acknowledging Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA) Veterans**

**Acknowledging Coast Guard Port Security Unit (PSU) Veterans**

**Silent Auction**

**Chieu Hoi Auction**

**And many hours of good fun and camaraderie, swapping lies and sea stories.**

## REUNION 2019

We are less than six months away from the 2019 CGCVA reunion start date of April 15th. Those of us who make up the convention committee truly believe that Charleston is an ideal location because of its tourism destination. We have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to schedule this event at the height of Charleston's tourism season, where the average high temperature for April is a comfortable 74 degrees and the average low is 58 degrees with about a 25 percent chance of rain, ideal for any visit. We hope that you will join us.

Recent editions of the Quarterdeck Log have included various locations that can be found in the downtown Charleston area. This edition includes two other sites that may be of interest to you. We encourage everyone to seek out the many opportunities to enhance your reunion experience.

### SHEM CREEK KAYAK TOURS

Located just five minutes from downtown Charleston on the charming shrimping creek that has become the symbol of Mount Pleasant, the flagship campus of this company offers everything needed for a great day on the water.



The tours are led by a professional guide that shares their knowledge about local history, wildlife and ecology as you take in the views of Ravenel bridge, Fort Sumter, a shrimping village and downtown Charleston. Dolphins, manatees, and a myriad of birds including egrets, pelicans, herons and ospreys can be observed. No experience is needed for this tour. The company will tailor each outing to the group's experience level.

Shem Creek Kayak Tours is just one of a number of touring companies offering similar vacation experiences.

### THE WESCOTT GOLF CLUB

Wescott Golf Club is located in the heart of the low country just minutes from Charleston International Airport, historic plantations and gardens, and beautiful beaches.



Course architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan designed this 27-hole course with his trademark environmental sensitivity. Set among centuries old live oaks and built on one of the low countries oldest plantations, the design captures the traditional flavor of low flowing earthworks and classic bunkering. Each hole is separated and framed by vegetation and natural wetlands.

The three 9-hole courses are Oak Forest, Burn Kill, and Black Robin. Each presents players with a different feel and look such as wide fairways and subtle greens for an accurate tee shot into the immense and undulating greens and another requiring the ability to shape your shots through tree lined fairways to well guarded greens. All will offer a day of pure enjoyment in a beautiful surrounding for the golfer of any skill level.

**Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association**

**REUNION / CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM**

April 15—18, 2019

**THE NORTH CHARLESTON  
MARRIOTT HOTEL**

4770 Goer Ave  
North Charleston, SC 29406



For the online registration,  
go to the CGCVA webpage

(<http://www.coastguardcombatvets.org>)

and click on the Convention Registration Button

Make sure that you ask for the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association Reunion 2019 rate.

**Room Rates: (Single or Double occupancy) \$135.00**

Fees to register, luncheons and banquets 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 the reservation form with your Luncheon/Awards Banquet and meal selections along with your check.

**(Payable to CGCVA) to:**

Mike Placencia  
9804 Iroquois Ave  
Bakersfield, CA 93313-5323  
Phone: (661) 401-0609

Email: [cgmaterchief22@hotmail.com](mailto:cgmaterchief22@hotmail.com)

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Cell) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date / Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) to appear on Badge(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Vessel / Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

**Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association**

**CGCVA CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM**

<b><u>Early Registration:</u></b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>How Many</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
<b>Received by March 8, 2019</b>	<b>\$25.00/person</b>	<b>X _____ =</b>	<b>_____</b>
<b><u>Late Registration:</u></b>			
<b>Received after March 8, 2019</b>	<b>\$40.00/person</b>	<b>X _____ =</b>	<b>_____</b>

**Monday, April 15, 2019**

**Registration and Opening Ceremony**

**Tuesday, April 16, 2019**

Open Day to take advantage of the many tours offered throughout the Charleston area, visit the shopping district along Kings Street and enjoy a fantastic dinner at one of the many fine Charleston restaurants. Check out the official Charleston tourism website at: <http://www.charleston-sc.gov/index.aspx?NID=184>. If you are still undecided upon arrival in Charleston, there will be a more comprehensive list of things to do included with your registration pack.

**LUNCHEON AND AWARDS BANQUET RESERVATION FORM**

**Wednesday, April 17, 2019**

**CGCVA Business Meeting / Luncheon (CGCVA Members only)**

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

**Poultry: \_\_\_\_\_ Beef: \_\_\_\_\_ (Note if you have dietary requirements, advise Mike Placencia)**

**Wednesday, April 17, 2019**

**Auxiliary Friendship Luncheon (Open to all)**

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

**Poultry: \_\_\_\_\_ Beef: \_\_\_\_\_ (Note if you have dietary requirements, advise Mike Placencia)**

**Thursday, April 18, 2019**

**Cocktail Hour (5:00 p.m. with Cash Bar); Awards Banquet (6:00 p.m.)**

**\$55.00 / person X \_\_\_\_\_ people = \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Indicate: Poultry: \_\_\_\_\_ Beef: \_\_\_\_\_ Fish: \_\_\_\_\_**

**(Note if you have dietary requirements, advise Mike Placencia)**

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

**Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association**

2019 Reunion / Convention Itinerary

**NORTH CHARLESTON MARRIOTT HOTEL**

4770 Goer Ave

North Charleston, SC 29406



Sunday, April 14

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

Monday, April 15

9:00 a.m. Registration and Hospitality  
Room opens  
4:00 p.m. Opening Ceremony  
5:00 p.m. CG Vietnam Veterans 50th  
Anniversary Commemoration

Tuesday, April 16

9:00 a.m. Registration and Hospitality  
Room opens  
(Free day to take advantage of  
what Charleston has to offer  
tourists)

Wednesday, April 17

9:00 a.m. Registration and Hospitality  
Room opens  
11:30 a.m. CGCVA Business Meeting and Luncheon  
11:30 a.m. Auxiliary Friendship Luncheon

Thursday, April 18

9:00 a.m. Hospitality Room opens  
5:00 p.m. Cocktail Hour (cash bar),  
Hospitality Room closed  
6:00 p.m. Awards Banquet  
Hospitality Room reopens after  
Awards Banquet

Friday, April 19

Check Out. We wish you a safe journey  
home

**NOTE:**  
Upon arrival at the  
North Charleston  
Marriott Hotel, be  
sure to  
check the times of  
the events as they are  
subject to change

## **Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association**

### **General Information for Members and Visiting Associations**

Please wear your nametag at all times while in the Hospitality Room, you will not be served without it. There are special discounts throughout the hotel for those wearing their nametags. If you registered early, your ship/station/group name will be added to the nametag if you have indicated it. This will make it easier to be recognized and attract others to speak up and get acquainted.



If your visiting group desires a separate meeting room and luncheon, please contact Mike Placencia and he will attempt to make arrangements with the hotel to meet your needs. However, be advised that it is unlikely that the hotel will be able to provide a different menu item from that being served to the CGCVA without an increase in cost. Please make this request known prior to arrival to the hotel in order for Mike Placencia to coordinate the request with the hotel. Mike can be contacted at: (661) 401-0609 or at:

**[cgmasterchief22@hotmail.com](mailto:cgmasterchief22@hotmail.com)**

Remember, all guests are encouraged to attend the CGCVA Auxiliary Friendship Luncheon. We have attempted to make this event comfortable for you so that you will feel welcomed to our convention and reunion. If we have overlooked anything, please let us know.

### **Extending Your Stay at the North Charleston Marriott**

The hotel is offering the same reservation rates for three days prior to and three days after the convention. Please tell the hotel when making your reservation that you intend to take advantage of this offer.

### **Refund Policy**

Requests for refunds, will be honored for some or all payments, for compelling reasons if received by March 15, 2019. Refund requests after that date may be 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 expenditure of monies for necessary and contracted convention items and services.

### **Makes checks payable to the CGCVA**

Please help the committee by making your reservation as early as possible after May 14, 2018. We must provide a headcount in advance. It takes much time and effort negotiating to get the best deals possible so that everything is in place when you arrive. Please help us by filling out the preceding forms and sending them with your check, payable to the CGCVA, to Mike Placencia as early as possible.

Thank you for your assistance and consideration. ~ *The Convention Committee*

## SIGNALMAN DOUG MUNRO COMMEMORATION

On September 27th, the date of the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U. S. Coast Guardsman, Douglas Munro's supreme sacrifice, at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, members of the United States Coast Guard and the CGCVA place memorial wreaths at the gravesite of the U. S. Coast Guard's only Medal of Honor recipient. Representing the CGCVA was member Bill McLaughlin, who placed a CGCVA wreath on the gravesite in unison with various members of the Coast Guard, the Chief Petty Officers Association and others in attendance.

in the enemy's line of fire. "Did they get off" was Signalman Munro's last words, as his only concern was getting those Marines to safety. It was Marine



Commander 13th Coast Guard District, RADM David Throop, delivering commemoration speech

Corps legend Colonel Lewis "Chesty" Puller who recommended the Medal of Honor for Munro.

Each year, on the anniversary of Signalman Doug Munro's heroic actions, the CGCVA places a wreath on his gravesite located in Munro's hometown of Cle Elum, WA. The gravesite has been illuminated for more than 20 years, the cost of which is funded by the CGCVA.



Douglas Munro's heroic action, putting himself between Japanese forces and a division of 500 U. S. Marines, who were being evacuated from the beach on Guadalcanal, led to him putting himself directly



## NOTICES AND ASSOCIATION NEWS

### FIRST COAST GUARDSMAN INDUCTED INTO THE KENTUCKY VETERAN'S HALL OF FAME

On September 8, 2018, CGCVA member Commander Michael Hart, USCGR (ret), was inducted into the Kentucky Veteran's Hall of Fame, the first Coast Guardsman to receive such honor in order to recognize his service to the nation, not only as a member of the Coast Guard, but also as a former U.S. Marine and law enforcement officer.

Mike Hart of Louisville, KY, entered the United States Marine Corps in 1968 and completed infantry training and Scout Sniper School. He participated in combat operations in Quang Tri Province where he was awarded the Silver Star for his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against a superior North Vietnamese force. He was medically discharged in 1970 due to a wound received in which the bullet could not be removed.

As a police officer, Mike served with distinction with the Louisville Police Department for 28 years, receiving Exceptional Meritorious Awards, Unit Citations, Mayor's Service Award and the Mayor's Task Force Award.

While a police officer, he enlisted into the Coast Guard Reserve, receiving a direct commission to Ensign because of his prior military and law enforcement experience. He served with Port Security Units PSU-302-B, PSU-309 and was Commanding Officer of PSU-308 from 2006-2009. He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Brightstar, as well as deploying to Guantanamo Bay with PSU-308 as part of the Anti-terrorism / Force Protection Task Force.

Hart retired from the Coast Guard in 2009. Not ready to sit back and relax, Mike volunteered his law enforcement expertise, serving as a civilian law enforcement expert for 18 months with 10th Mountain Division combat teams including a 12 month deployment to Afghanistan and assisting in

the establishment of the Afghanistan National Police Academy in Bahglan Province, providing Afghan police officers with instruction in community policing and criminal investigations.



**Commander Michael Hart with CGCVA member Rear Admiral A. Scott McKinley, USCGR. Not pictured but also present was CGCVA member Rear Admiral Steve Day, USCGR (ret).**

Mike continues his support to the local community, serving as a volunteer to instruct cadets of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps and NJROTC in small boat operations. As a member of the Marine Corps League, he is a standout volunteer for Toys for Tots and a regular with the League's Detachment Honor Guard.

Bravo Zulu to Mike Hart for his many years of dedicated service to the nation and the Louisville community and for his induction into the Kentucky Veteran's Hall of Fame. It is well deserved.



## NOTICES AND ASSOCIATION NEWS

### **PACAREA deputy commander visits Coast Guard Reservists deployed to Africa, awards warfare pins**

Rear Admiral, Pat DeQuattro, the Deputy Commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area (PACAREA), spent the last few days of November 2017 visiting Coast Guard reservists deployed to Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, in the Horn of Africa. DeQuattro is the first Coast Guard flag officer to visit Camp Lemonnier in support of Coast Guard reservists deployed there.

Djibouti is strategically located near some of the world's busiest shipping lanes and Coast Guard reservists embedded with Navy Coastal Riverine Squadrons (CRS) in both California and Florida forward deployed to the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations. There the reservists assist with the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied, joint and interagency partners, to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Maritime force protection of U.S. naval ships calling on the Port of Djibouti and sailing through threat-prone waters adjacent to the Horn of Africa is a primary mission set of the detachment deployed to Camp Lemonnier. A CRS WAVE deployment has a typical complement of three Coast Guard reservists in this Navy-lead mission that now has an end strength of close to 250 personnel. Coast Guard reservists have continuously been deployed with the CRS missions to the Horn of Africa and Bahrain regions since February 2013.

The afternoon of November 30, 2017, DeQuattro, assisted by PACAREA Reserve Command Master Chief Andreas Apenburg, took time to present Petty Officers First Class Robert Hemenway and Victor Mahew with their Navy Expeditionary Warfare (EXW) Specialist pins. Hemenway and Mahew had both just completed seven-month deployments.

The Navy EXW qualification is similar to the Coast Guard Port Security Badge, but there are subtle differences between the two warfare devices. The Port Security Badge was developed in 1991 and may be earned by both officers and enlisted members. In contrast, the Navy EXW pin was developed in 2006 and may be earned only by enlisted members assigned to Navy expeditionary combat units.

Both qualifications are extremely challenging to earn and require a high level of expeditionary warfare knowledge and experience. For Coast Guard members hoping to earn a warfare qualification in their careers, both warfare devices are excellent qualifications to pursue, but do have their own separate, distinct paths to completion.

Before departing Djibouti, DeQuattro, Apenburg and Captain Evan Galbo, USCG, Coastal Riverine Group 1 (CRG-1) Coast Guard Advisor, attended the transfer of authority ceremony between the previous WAVE 8 and current WAVE 9 mission commanders.

~ Submitted by Captain Evan Galbo, USCG  
Coastal Riverine Group 1  
~ Courtesy of the Reservist Magazine,  
Issue 1, 2018



**Navy Expeditionary Warfare Specialist Pin**



**Coast Guard Enlisted Port Security Badge**



### COAST GUARD FESTIVAL

By Vice President Terry O'Connell

Coast Guard City, USA, hosts the nation's greatest celebration of the US Coast Guard's August 4<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Grand Haven, Michigan, Coast Guard Festival of 2018 was an extravaganza that was attended by a reported 350,000 people visiting this town of 11,200. Included among the visiting guest dignitaries were Commander, Atlantic Area, Vice Admiral Scott A. Buschman; Commander, Ninth District, Rear Admiral Joanna M. Nunan; Commanding Officer, *USCGC ESCANABA (WMEC 207)*, Captain Michael A. Turdo; The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, MCPO Jason M. Vanderhaden; Coast Guard Auxiliary National Commodore, COMO Rick Washburn; CGCVA National President, Steve Petersen and CGCVA National Vice President, Terry O'Connell.

The Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival has its roots in a 1924 Coast Guard Day Picnic during which Station Grand Haven celebrated the 134<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Coast Guard by holding boat rowing competitions among the crew. The first community festival began in 1937 and In August 1971 it was officially recognized as Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival, Inc., a charitable organization. On November 13, 1998, President Clinton signed Public Law 105-383 which specifically authorized the Commandant of the Coast Guard to recognize the community of Grand Haven, Michigan, as "Coast Guard City, USA." The community spirit showcasing the Coast Guard City, USA, is readily

apparent to any visitor to this waterfront city.

Early in the Festival celebration was the Parade of Ships which was a waterfront highlight as the *USCGC ESCANABA (WMEC 207)*, *USCGC NEAH BAY (WTGB 105)* and the Canadian CGS *CONSTABLE CARRIERE* entered the harbor and moored at Escanaba Park. The ships were open for guided tours throughout the Festival and each hosted several thousand visitors.

The theme of the 2018 Festival was "The Spirit



Lives On" throughout the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the *USCGC ESCANABA (WPG 77)* during WWII. To honor the heroic service of the *ESCANABA's* 103 crew members, a community memorial service was held at Escanaba Park on the anniversary date of the cutter's sinking, June 13.

The cutter's homeport community continued to honor the sacrifices of the heroes of that ship and its legacy in the presence of the *USCGC ESCANABA (WMEC 207)*. The special honored guests of the Festival were 94 descendants of the 103 officers and crew who lost their lives on that fateful day in 1943 when the 165' *ESCANABA* was sunk by either torpedo or mine while performing escort duty in the Atlantic Ocean. During the Festival, a most solemn event was held in Escanaba Park. A National Memorial Service recognized the active duty Coast Guard personnel who have passed on during the year with a special tribute to the heroes who perished with the sinking of *USCGC ESCANABA*.

## NOTICES AND ASSOCIATION NEWS



**USCGC ESCANABA WPG-77**

Each of the crew of the current *USCGC ESCANABA* placed a white rose, which represented each of the crew lost in their namesake cutter, at the base of the Escanaba Park Memorial. A WWII era aircraft performed a flyover near the conclusion of the memorial service.

Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup> was the final day of the festival and was the grandest day of all. Festival guests were treated to a healthy buffet breakfast prior to reporting to the staged vehicles in which they would be riding for the annual parade. This was a magnificent two-hour parade where the marching and mobile participants showed their re-



spect and admiration of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard dignitaries in the reviewing stand while spectators along the parade route waved, cheered and saluted from their porches, sidewalks and curbside.



**VP Terry O'Connell (left) and President Steve Petersen presenting MCPO-CG Jason Vanderhaden with a certificate of CGCVA Honorary Membership.**

*~ Photo by PAC John Mason*

Upon completion of the National Memorial Service honoring the crew of the 165' *USCGC ESCANABA*, which was sunk during WWII in 1943, NP Steve Petersen and NVP Terry O'Connell presented a CGCVA Certificate of Honorary Membership to the 13th Master Chief Petty Officer

## NOTICES AND ASSOCIATION NEWS

of the Coast Guard (MCPOCG) Jason Vanderhaden. The event took place at the base of the old Escanaba mast in the center of Escanaba Memorial Park, Grand Haven, MI. Pictured in the background is the present day 270' *USCG ESCANABA WMEC 207*, homeported in Boston, MA.



The 228<sup>th</sup> USCG birthday celebration and 2018 Coast Guard Festival at Grand Haven was made possible through the leadership and dedication of the Executive Director, Commander Michael J. Smith USCG (retired); Festival Chair, Joni Bennett; Official Party Hostesses, Mary Eagin and Kathleen Karpin; and over 700 volunteers. Liaisons to the Festival committee were The Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan Field Office at



**Commander Mike Smith USCG (ret) Executive Director Festival Chair, at the waterfront entertainment with the U.S. Coast Guard Piper Band in background. How about those shirts!!**

Grand Haven, Lieutenant Aaron L. Urbanawiz and Coast Guard Auxiliarist Joseph Sedlock.

One fact is certain, every active duty, reserve, retired, veteran or aspiring Coastie must plan a visit to Coast Guard City, USA to attend The Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival and celebration of the U.S. Coast Guard's birthday.



## PARENT'S WEEKEND AT THE COAST GUARD ACADEMY

Each year, the CGCVA presents an organization wrist watch to two incoming Coast Guard Academy cadets who achieved the highest score in the physical fitness testing.



CGCVA member Bill Ross is pictured above with 4/c Brielle Pearce (on his right) who earned the highest female score. 4/c John Harris earned the highest score for incoming males. He was away at an athletic event and could not attend the presentation. 4/c John Harris asked 3/c Sarah Wenzel to accept the award on his behalf and stands on his left in the photograph.

## BOOT CAMP AWARDS:

At each graduating boot camp ceremony at Training Center Cape May, the recruit earning the physical fitness award is presented with the Jack Campbell Physical Fitness Award which includes a certificate and a CGCVA watch. This award is named in honor of PNP Jack Campbell and has been a continuing award for many years. The following are the previous award winners:

**SN JAMES C. HOUSLEY**, Boise, ID, Golf 196 to Training Center, Petaluma, CA

**SN, MICHAEL J. KOTLESKI**, Hartford, CT, Hotel 196, to CGC Escanaba, Boston, MA

**FN JUSTIN A. BENOIT**, Dallas, TX, India 196, to CGC Douglas Munro, Kodiak, AK

**FA MARLY D. JONES**, Greensboro, NC, Juliet 196, to CGC Dauntless, Pensacola, FL

**SN ISAAH M. JONES**, San Antonio, TX, Kilo 196 to Station Georgetown, SC

**FN LILLYAN J. TENNEY**, Providence, RI, Lima 196 to Sector Guam, Santa Rita, GU

**SN CORY M. RICHARDSON**, San Francisco, CA, Mike 196 to Sector Mobile, AL

**SN MARIYA O. MCGILLIVARY**, Kansas City, MO, November 196 to CGC Eagle, Baltimore, MD

**SA JOHN D. BASS**, St. Louis, MO, Oscar 196 to CGC Healy, Seattle, WA



## FEATURED ARTICLES

### Port Security Units (PSU) in Korea

By Rear Admiral Michael Seward, USCGR (ret)

Having served as the Executive Officer of PSU-303-B in the latter part of Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia in 1991 and then as a member of a five person SLRP (Survey, Liaison, Recon, Party) in Somalia in late 1992, I was asked to join a five-person MARDESPAC team that deployed to Pohang Korea in July of 1994 for FTX Freedom Banner (FB-94). This was the Coast Guard's first operational engagement in an FTX in Korea in the Harbor Defense arena. We coordinated engagement with a Navy MIUWU (Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit) to secure JLOTS (Joint Logistics Over the Shore) operations for supplying logistical support for combined operations. We learned a lot. We needed harbor defense surface boats to do the job. We had none.

In 1995, three Port Security Units were commissioned, PSU-305, PSU-309, and PSU-311. I took the helm of PSU-311 in January and commissioning the unit in May. Our six Transportable Port Security Boats (TPSB) arrived in late February from the 9<sup>th</sup> District along with gear split three ways after the Gulf War PSUs deployed. Being the only PACAREA unit, we did not get the pick of the litter for equipment. But we were able to hand-pick about 80 reservists out of 11th District to stand up the new unit. Incredible skills were soon developed under the leadership of three outstanding



TPSB being offloaded from an MSC ship

Chief Petty Officers.

We were tasked with supporting Freedom Banner 1995 (FB-95) in July as part of a Harbor Defense Command (HDC) with an HDC, MIUWU, PSU and other assorted Navy and USMC units. We had made amazing progress in qualifying weapons-certified crews to conduct forward deployed security operations in Korea in short order, with the unit further splitting into two groups to cover a four week exercise period. About the time the second echelon arrived in country, a cyclone hit the theatre of operations and cancelled the exercise with everyone sent home.



The PSU's muddy street in Korea

What was learned from that exercise is that the PSUs was designed to combat a small boat surface threat that had been identified in the 1988 tanker wars in the Persian Gulf. Henceforth, the PSUs could readily deal with surface threats but were unequipped for the North Korean (NK) threats, which were mainly focused on inshore subsurface threats. So upon return from FB-95 we commenced serious analysis of this threat and conducted research and development on subsurface warfare.

The only tool in our bag at that time was the MK3A2 concussion grenade which were last manufactured during the Vietnam War. While we trained with the grenades and all our arsenal of weapons at Camp Pendleton, it was quickly realized that those grenades alone would not deal with the

## FEATURED ARTICLES

combatant diver, a submerged unwater vehicle (SUV) and the mini-sub threat in the NK arsenal. So we tested commercial small sonars, tethered remotely operated vehicles (ROV), and worked with Naval Weapons Station (NWS) China Lake to develop ordnance and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) to combat this threat. We also worked with G-OPD to help update the ROC/POE (Required Operational Capabilities and Projected Operational Environment) documents for the PSUs over the next three years and the TOE (Table of Organizational Equipment).

October of 1996 saw us back again in Korea supporting FTX Foal Eagle held at Pusan, Korea. For the previous year's exercise we shipped our equipment over on a Military Sealift Command (MSC) ship. In 1996 we used USAF's Military Airlift Command (MAC) assets. Again, we learned a lot about the skillsets required to move equipment and personnel rapidly by air and qualified our own loadmasters to expedite the transit. We also took the attitude that if we were deployed and hostilities started, we wanted to be an asset and not a liability.

So we took a full combat load of ammo, CBR gear, and logistical support to keep us self-supported for two weeks. This was quite a lift on the Coast Guard to lean this far forward, but we had



**A member of the USN Marine Mammal Program (MMP)**



**PSU crews deploying anti-swimmer grenades**

demonstrated our commitment to U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) by qualifying all our personnel in weapons training in chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) gear and developing an extensive Unit Security detachment capable of establishing and securing a separate and secure compound. The Theatre Commander was very complimentary on our capabilities and professionalism and viewed us as an asset capable of immediate response. I think he was impressed that our boats deployed with a full combat load and conducted security over major Naval assets participating in the exercise.

October of 1997 we deployed again to Korea in FTX Foal Eagle in Pusan again. This time we learned two things. When you absolutely have to have it now, don't count on the USAF. Our equipment got waylaid in Guam for a week and we could only work a few days for the exercise with our boats. Also, when someone says you can draw ammo from prepositioned stocks in country, don't believe them. If you don't bring it with you, you can't count on it.

Lessons learned over the three years taught us to learn how to live in tents, barracks, and warehouses. It also helped us develop equipment requirements for CBR decontamination and cold weather operations along with deploying to counter a subsurface threat in the inner harbor. We also pre-deployed excess boats and equipment to Korea which were later withdrawn to support 9/11 operations.

## FEATURED ARTICLES

### Master William Ham, Revenue Cutter *Jefferson* and the War of 1812

By William Thiesen, Historian,  
Coast Guard Atlantic Area

On June 18, 1812, President James Madison signed a declaration of war against Great Britain and the War of 1812 officially commenced. At that time, the United States faced the Royal Navy's 600 ships with a force of 17 commissioned U.S. Navy vessels, a fleet of small gunboats, and 14 revenue cutters. On the day Madison signed the declaration of war, Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin sent a one-sentence circular to the customs collectors, who controlled the revenue cutters, writing, "Sir, I hasten to inform you that War was this day declared against Great Britain". Gallatin then ordered cutters stationed along the East Coast to dispatch the news to any underway Navy vessels.

As they would in future American conflicts, the revenue cutters went in harm's way and participated in some of the first encounters of the war. On Thursday, June 25, 1812, Norfolk-based Revenue Cutter *Jefferson* captured the British schooner *Patriot* bound from Guadeloupe to Halifax with a cargo of sugar. Termed "Prize No. 1" by the press, this was the first maritime capture in the War of 1812. *Jefferson's* captain, Master William Ham, had worked his way through the ranks. He served in Norfolk cutters as a mate starting in 1791 and received his master's commission in 1804, the first commission signed by President George Washington and the second signed by none other than President Thomas Jefferson.

William Ham would command *Jefferson* throughout the war and for several years thereafter. Built in Norfolk, Virginia, and commissioned in 1802, the *Jefferson* served out of Savannah until 1809, when Revenue Cutter *James Madison* took up station there and the *Jefferson* rotated up to Norfolk. While the *Jefferson* detained many vessels entering

the Chesapeake Bay and Hampton Roads, the local newspapers noted only a few cases. For example, on September 2, 1812, the *Jefferson* seized the brigs *Ariadne* and *Rockland* for carrying illegal cargoes and escorted them into Norfolk.



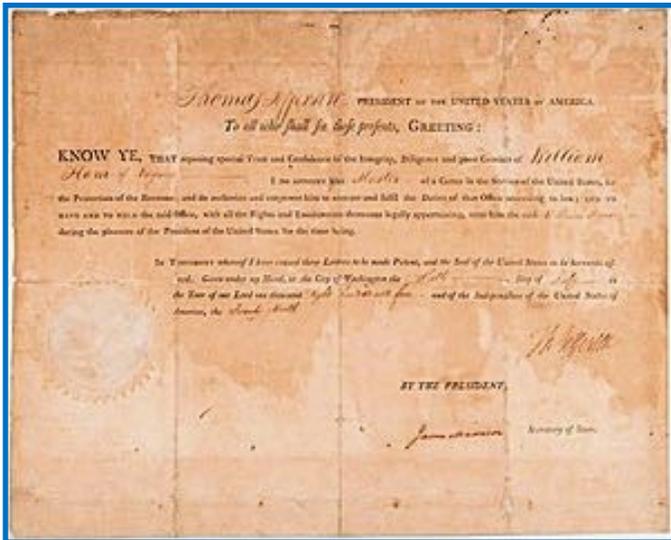
**William Ham's first mate commission signed by  
President George Washington in 1791  
(Library of Virginia, Richmond)**

During the War of 1812, revenue cutters undertook new missions and established their reputation as effective shallow water, or "brown water," naval vessels. The sailing warships of the U.S. Navy were too large to enter many inland waterways of the American coastline; however, revenue cutters were designed to catch smugglers in these waters and proved effective in shallow water combat operations.

After the British tightened their blockade of the Chesapeake Bay in early 1813, the Royal Navy began patrolling parts of the southern Chesapeake in search of unlucky American merchantmen. These British patrols often relied on shallow draft armed barges that relied on sail and oar power. One of these armed patrols met their match in April 1813, on the James River. On Sunday, the 11<sup>th</sup>, the *Jefferson* and a pilot boat with a contingent of local militiamen overhauled three Royal Navy barges. The barges attempted to escape up the James, but the *Jefferson* ran them down so fast that the flotilla hove to. Just as Captain Ham was about to fire a broadside into them, the British commander ordered the white flag raised

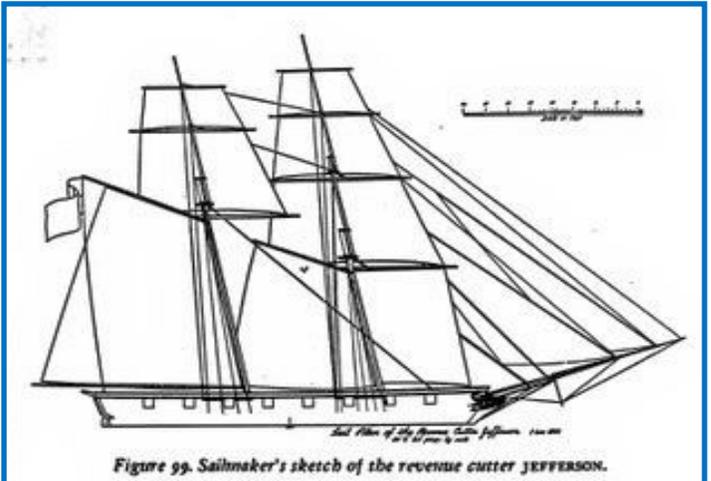
## FEATURED ARTICLES

and surrendered. Ham ordered the nearly sixty British officers and men ashore under an armed guard of forty riflemen. The Americans also repatriated the crew of the merchantman *Flight*, captured earlier by the enemy barges. The Alexandria Gazette reported, “*the loss of so many men and barges at this time will embarrass the enemy not a little, as it will weaken very considerably his means of annoyance*”.



**Master’s commission for William Ham signed by President Thomas Jefferson in 1804 (Library of Virginia, Richmond)**

Captain Ham and his cutter continued to fulfill wartime missions throughout the remainder of the conflict. Shortly after capturing the British barges, a Royal Navy squadron with troop transports entered Hampton Roads with the intention of capturing Norfolk and the frigate *USS Constellation* moored there. No records have survived indicating the role played by the *Jefferson* in the local June 22nd Battle of Craney Island. However, *Jefferson’s* cuttermen and cannon undoubtedly defended the port of Norfolk just as *Constellation’s* crew and guns served in that battle. And, the cutter did survive the attempted British invasion, which resulted in a major loss by the enemy attackers. For, on January



**Revenue Cutter *Jefferson’s* sail plan as drawn by noted maritime historian Howard Chapelle [found in Howard I. Chapelle, *The History of the American Sailing Navy* (New York: Norton & Co., 1949)]**

1, 1814, the Baltimore newspaper reported that the *Jefferson* boarded the schooner *Despatch* and sent her to Norfolk for breaching a U.S. shipping embargo.

On Christmas Eve, 1814, representatives from the United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent, in Belgium, to end the War of 1812. However, in North America the war continued until February, 1815. In that period between the treaty’s signing and President Madison’s final signature two months later, Americans under the command of Andrew Jackson defeated a large British army in the Battle of New Orleans. This was the last major land engagement of the war. On February 11, the Royal Navy sloop *HMS Favorite* delivered the peace treaty to New York City under a white flag and the war concluded after President Madison sign the treaty of February 16, 1815. Revenue Cutter *Jefferson* was later decommissioned in 1817.

**1795-1818  
US flag**



**15 stars  
15 stripes**

### COAST GUARD BOAT SMALL BOAT HANDLING SKILLS

In 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Port Security Unit 308 was at the Port of Ash Shuaiba, Kuwait, providing landside and waterside security for the large High Value Assets (HVA), ships that belonged to the Military Sealift Command, that were constantly coming and going, off-loading war material destined for combat operations in Iraq. Our mission was a joint operation with a newly established Navy Inshore Boat Unit (IBU) that had arrived in theater a month before but had very little boat handling experience before deployment. As expected, Coast Guard PSU crews were exceptionally skilled at small boat handling and eventually trained the Navy coxswains to become proficient over the next seven months, but those early days were tough going on the Navy's seven 32' aluminum hull patrol craft. Lucky for them the hulls weren't gel-coated fiberglass.

The Navy commodore at the time wasn't too fond of the Coast Guard and never was hesitant to express "feelings" toward the Coast Guard either. On our first day in theater he reminded us that we worked for him with his statement that "No one cares you're here. You belong to the Navy, so you might as well take U.S. Coast Guard off your uniforms." That set the stage for a strained relationship that lasted four months before he was relieved in December and sent home. Fortunately, his replacement held the Coast Guard in high esteem, but that story is for another day.

One day in early October 2003, the then Commodore and I were standing on the pier watching the Navy and Coast Guard 25' Boston Whaler "Guardian" boats returning from their patrols. It was a typical Middle Eastern fall day, with temperatures about 125 degrees in the shade, but the sun was blistering crews operating small

boats on the open water. The first boat to more up to the pier was a PSU boat. It made a clean 180 degree turn as it approached the dock and the crewmember, wearing a handkerchief as a do-rag to protect his fair skin from the sun, casually stepped off the boat and tied it up. The coxswain's skill at mooring the boat would have made any BMCM proud.

Next in line was a Navy IBU boat. Its approach was a little too fast and slammed into the end of the dock. The Navy coxswain put the boat into reverse, moved off about 20 feet and tried it again, slamming the bow a second time into the dock. The third attempt was the charm and they finally tied up.

I could see the Commodore's ears turning red, either by rage or embarrassment by his Navy crew's poor performance. He turned to me and pointed at the Coast Guard crewman and while gritting his teeth demanded, "Tell that man to get that do-rag off his head!" I replied, "Yes sir." But I couldn't help myself and grinning I included, "But wasn't it a great parking job?" The Commodore said nothing and quickly stormed off the pier. It made my day.

~ CAPT Bruce Bruni, USCGR (ret)



**U.S. Coast Guard Port Security Unit 307  
"Guardian" on patrol at Umm Qasr, Iraq**

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## VETERANS DAY 2018



# Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

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