



# the Quarterdeck Log

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

Volume 10

Fall

Number 4

## “CG Person Of The Year”

### *ASM1 Michael Odom honored by Commandant and CGCVA*

October 23, 1995 was a special date for the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association. On that day the association honored ASM1 Michael G. Odom as its 1995 “Coast Guard Person Of The Year.”

Odom was recognized for his heroic actions the night of January 24, 1995, when he was part of an Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C. HH-60J helicopter crew responding to a distress call from the sailing vessel *Mirage*. The 42-foot vessel was caught in 25-foot seas and high winds nearly 400 miles off the coast of Savannah, Georgia.

Odom was deployed from the helo as a rescue swimmer. As the aircraft hovered at about 70 feet, Odom managed to get three of the five men aboard the vessel hoisted to safety. Then things went awry.

As the third man was being hoisted, the mass of twisted metal wires which make up the hoist cable began to part. The man in the basket was still about 10 feet under the aircraft. Feeling the wires snap as they slid through his hand, the hoist operator had only one chance to save him — quickly run the cable into the drum before it parted. The victim was

pulled into the cabin but the cable spun wildly inside the drum, becoming inoperable. Low on fuel and unable to retrieve their rescue swimmer in the water, the flight crew could do no more than toss a life raft to Odom before heading back to shore.

Odom, expecting the basket again, was surprised to see a life raft heading at him instead. “I was very scared,” Odom said. “I saw the helo flying away and kept waiting for them to turn around. When they didn’t, I thought I’d been left for dead. I have never been that scared in my life.” He was rescued himself nearly five hours later by another Coast Guard HH-60J.



The CGCVA “CG Person Of The Year” ceremony held at CGHQ included National Vice President Joe Kleinpeter, Treasurer Baker Herbert, ADM Robert Kramek, ASM1 Michael Odom, President Al Grantham and Secretary Ed Burke.



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## THE QUARTERDECK LOG

L.T. Ed Swift, Editor

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

## From the President

Dear Shipmates:

On Oct. 23, 1995, I had the distinct pleasure of representing our fine association at CGHQ when I, along with Coast Guard Commandant ADM Robert E. Kramek, presented the CGCVA's "Coast Guard Person of the Year" award to ASM1



A.D. "AL" GRANTHAM

Michael G. Odom of Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C. I was joined by our Vice President Joseph Kleinpeter, Treasurer Baker Herbert, Secretary Ed Burke and QD Log editor Ed Swift for the presentation, made in ADM Kramek's office.

Petty Officer Odom was selected from a group of Coast Guard personnel who had all distinguished themselves during the past year in a heroic manner. Odom was involved in the rescue of several persons from the 42-foot sailing vessel Mirage in 25-foot seas 380 miles offshore of Savannah, Georgia on Jan. 24th. When his helicopter's hoist malfunctioned, Odom was dropped a raft and had to fend for himself for several hours in the storm until another aircraft could arrive at the scene. Odom was unconscious when help arrived and was lucky to survive the ordeal. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions in this case.

This was the first such "off-year" presentation of the CGCVA "Coast Guard Person of the Year" award and I am extremely grateful for the support provided by ADM Kramek. In addition to assisting with the actual presentation, the admiral gave the CGCVA officers and myself a 45-minute personal explanation of "Streamlining The Coast Guard" and it was quite an eye-opener. You'll find the overall picture of streamlining in this issue but keep in mind, all the details aren't yet finalized.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that last year's recipient of our "Coast Guard Person of the Year" award, BMCS Clendenin, finally received his CGCVA plaque on Aug. 11th. Take care all! **Al**

## From the Vice President

By the time you read this, "The Nation's Parade" will have already taken place in New York City. This event, held on Veteran's Day, November 11th, was a tribute to all who served in World War II and concluded the 50th anniversary commemorative events.

Among the 30,000 marchers representing 70 veterans organizations were 50 CGCVA members. There were approximately one million spectators cheering as veterans proudly marched the 31 blocks of the parade route.

All veterans were invited, including those from our WWII Allied nations. Military academies, service bands and honor guard units, active duty and Reserve personnel, current military vehicles and equipment, vintage WWII vehicles, patriotic floats and balloons and dozens of veterans groups comprised this huge parade. Concerts, fireworks, historic and modern aircraft fly-overs, and special salutes to the WWII veterans and those who served in factories and farms "on the home front" were also part of the festivities.

In regard to our association, I sent out several hundred invitations to members to participate in "The Nations Parade" and about 250 responded. I wish to thank all those CGCVA members who were able to take part in this grand event.

In addition to our CGCVA members, the Coast Guard had other representation, including a 9x9 marching unit (81 members) from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., the Coast Guard Band, a color guard unit comprised of members of the Ceremonial Honor Guard, a 9x9 marching unit from Training Center Cape May, N.J., and a vintage WWII LARC from Long Island, N.Y.

Our members were also easily identified by the large CGCVA banner they took turns holding.

Quiz time...What has more action than *Cops*, more nail-biting suspense than *Court TV* and all the real-life drama of *Rescue 911*? It's *Coast Guard*, the new syndicated action-adventure TV series. This half-hour show features live footage of our Coast Guard people and actual missions. It's definitely a "must-see!" Check your local listings to find out when the program airs in your area. It's worth it! Take care!

Joe



**JOE KLEINPETER**

## From the Editor

Wow! It's been an incredibly busy time the past several months for me and the Coast Guard. I've moved from the Commandant's Bulletin over to Community Relations in the CGHQ Public Affairs Staff. The Coast Guard has announced its streamlining plans and the changes it calls for are already underway.

You'll no longer see any advertisements in the Quarterdeck Log because it is now illegal under postal restrictions for Special Bulk Third-Class Rates. This includes our own CGCVA products as well so, if you're interested in ballcaps, patches, mugs, etc., you'll have to contact the Treasurer for prices and specific information.

Printing the Quarterdeck Log is one of the

Association's major expenses so bids were requested from several printers. As a result, we have a new printer. Not only will we be saving money, we will be able to do spot color work on the covers. In addition, the covers themselves are printed on a heavier, coated stock than before. This is our first issue with the new printer and I hope you like the changes in the magazine. Also, thanks to all for the great submissions.



**ED SWIFT**

Swiftly



## From the Secretary

The following is the text of my Oct. '94 — Oct. '95 report to the CGCVA National President on the occasion of our annual meeting in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 23, 1995:

I obtained approval to purchase a new computer as the 386 was getting loaded down and becoming very slow to operate. My advisor recommended a Gateway Pentium 75 computer so the 386 was passed along to the National Treasurer. This sped up his operation as well as mine and provided us two computers sharing similar information. With the Pentium, I purchased Windows '95 and everything is running great.

I continue to make progress and reduce the number of members that do not have support documents in their file. I am able to scan whether a member is in compliance or not through renewals, address changes and the handling of membership updates. I estimate we have about 100 members that still require documentation.

As of Oct. 20, 1995, I have processed 232 new members, however, we are losing members at about the same rate. Our membership is now:

|                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Officers/Directors/Appointees..... | 18          |
| Members.....                       | 1382        |
| Life Members.....                  | 248         |
| Associate Members.....             | 3           |
| Honorary Members.....              | 5           |
| Friends.....                       | 6           |
| <b>Total.....</b>                  | <b>1662</b> |

As of Oct 20, 1995, the records indicate we had 57 members "cross the bar." There are 353 former members that we have dropped for Non-Payment of Dues, no forwarding address, or no support documentation. In the last category, members either would not provide them, would not respond to my correspondence or refused to send documentation. The majority of the members who were requested to provide documentation cooperated and I appreciate their help.

I attended the Memorial Service for the USS Serpens at Arlington National Cemetery along with National Vice President Joseph Kleinpeter,

National Treasurer Baker Herbert, and our Immediate Past President, Richard E. Stent, Jr.. This was a touching ceremony sponsored by the Washington, D.C. area CPO Chapter and Coast Guard Reserve.



**E.P. "ED" BURKE**

On March 16th, I attended the Commandant's annual "State of the Coast Guard" address at Bolling AFB, along with CAPT Alex R. Larzalere, USCG (Ret.) and LT Ed Swift, USCG.

On June 1st, I sent a letter to CGHQ regarding our "Coast Guard Person of the Year" award. We received a list of very deserving Coast Guard members and our unanimous selection was ASM1 Michael G. Odom of AirSta Elizabeth City, N.C. LT Ed Swift made the arrangements and the CGCVA officers were all in attendance Oct. 23rd in ADM Kramek's office for the presentation to Petty Officer Odom.

I represented the Coast Guard (as well as our association) at the USMC Sunset Parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial on July 26th. This ceremony honored all Korean War veterans and was a totally first-class affair.

The following day I again represented the Coast Guard at the wreath-laying ceremony by President Clinton at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery. Nancy and I met the President, Vice President Gore, Korean President Kim and several Medal of Honor recipients from the Korean War. We participated in the official dedication of the Korean Memorial.

This has been a full and rewarding year of service to our association. We have been instrumental in several of our members receiving recognition in one form or another. Vince Stauffer recently came to Washington, D.C. to represent the Coast Guard on the hill as a WWII veteran. Tom Mullings represented the CGCVA (continued on page 5)

## From the Treasurer

The following is the text of my Oct. '94 — Oct. '95 report to the CGCVA National President on the occasion of our annual meeting in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 23, 1995:

### Funds on hand:

Life Membership savings acct.....\$2,735.00  
Life Membership C/D's (6.23).....5,000.00  
(matures 1/5/97)  
Life Membership C/D's (5.52).....12,000.00  
(matures 5/1/96)  
General Account.....8,896.01

Because of new postal U.S. Postal Regulations (effective Oct. 1, 1995) we can no longer advertise in *The Quarterdeck Log* and continue to receive non-profit mailing privileges. If you want to know what we have for sale, please call me at (216) 887-5539. Basically, they're the same items mentioned in previous issues.

**Dues:** Again, thanks for mailing in your \$25.00 dues for two years from the expiration date on your issue of *The Quarterdeck Log*. It does save considerable time and postage.

**Life Memberships:** Under age 30 (\$200); 31-40 (\$185); 41-50 (\$165); 51-60 (\$145); 61-70 (\$115); 71-80 (\$85); 81-89 (\$50); 90 and up (none).

My records indicate we had 2,021 actual signed-up members and some widows from the time we began keeping accounts in 1986/87 but, due to deaths, non-payment of dues, no forwarding addresses and lack of proper documentation support we have lost almost 300. This isn't really bad considering the average estimated age of our membership. Breaking the membership down we show one WWII member; 1248 WWII members (about 75% of CGCVA); 51 Republic of Korea members; 283 Republic of Vietnam members; one Dominican Republic member; 97 Desert Storm members; one Grenada member; and one "Just Cause" member.

Admiral Sobel calls frequently to inquire about our proposed "Sea Stories" supplement to our CGCVA History Book. To date there has been

very little interest and it doesn't appear that this project will get off the ground, despite the admiral's offer to help. All of our CGCVA History Books have been distributed to Coast Guard District Offices and major commands.

Starting with this issue, we will include information to members wishing to leave any part of their estate to the CGCVA. This information will appear in all subsequent issues of *The Quarterdeck Log*.

Ed Burke and I attended the 34th annual Wisconsin Coast Guard Reunion on Sept. 16th. We represented the CGCVA, however, very few of the attendees were qualified to join. We signed-up one new member and passed out applications.

### Fore 'N Aft Caps

For those who have ordered the CGCVA fore 'n aft caps, I apologize for the lengthy wait in getting them to you. The caps are each hand sewn in Florida with "Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association" and in many cases "Life Member" and the name of the CGCVA office you hold. Anyway, the tailor waits until he has about eight orders before doing the work. Also, our CGCVA representative in Florida lives a good distance from the tailor and limits his trips. Your patience is appreciated.



**BAKER HERBERT**

### OVER THE BAR

RADM Glenn O. Thompson (Aug. '95)  
Jerry E. Marceau (Oct. '93)  
William M. Black (July '95)  
Robert Mars (Sept. '95)  
Joseph R. Lacourse (Feb. '95)  
Harry A. Brown (Sept. '95)

## Reunions — Notices — Wrap-Ups

### From the Secretary (continued)

on a cruise aboard the *USS Brown*, a Liberty ship that was restored and sailed from Baltimore to Washington. To my knowledge we are one of the fastest growing veterans organizations. Let us hope and pray that it continues to grow. We really must get new and younger members to join with us and to start taking over the various offices to ensure the CGCVA will continue for many years to come.

In my opinion, we are promoting and enhancing the image and posture of the Coast Guard as laid down in the preamble of the CGCVA Constitution and By-Laws.

Ed Burke

### USS GEN Hugh L. Scott (AP-136)

Our reunion is scheduled for May 19-22, 1996 at the Daytona Beach Hilton Ocean Front Resort in Daytona Beach, Fla. Contact: Joe Strong at 834 20th Ave., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169. Ph: (904) 428-2084.

### USCGC Modoc (W-46)

Our 9th reunion will be held May 16-20, 1996 at the Columbia Hilton Inn, Columbia, Md. Contact: Bob Woodbury at 18 Ninth Ave., Halifax, MA 02338, ph: (617) 293-7992 or Moe Stienburg at P.O. Box 178, Carle Place, NY 11514, ph: (516) 334-5309.

### USCGC's Winnebago (W-40) & Chautauqua (W-41)

Our next planned reunion will be in Las Vegas, Nevada during Sept.-Oct., 1996. Contact our reunion committee at 3212 N. Goleta Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89108.

### USS Theenim (AKA-63)

Our group held its 3rd reunion Sept. 4-5, 1995, at Branson, Mo. Our first was at the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., the second at Training

Center Cape May, N.J. Twenty-two ex-*Theenim* shipmates attended this latest reunion with a total of 40 people in attendance.



USS Theenim shipmates at their 3rd Annual Reunion at Branson, Missouri.

Branson was an ideal location. The city is known for its theaters specializing in country western entertainment. We enjoyed a number of shows and extended a "Well Done" to Leon and Nadine Frederick for arranging the activities. All the shows included a patriotic theme.

I arrived early to sight see the area and visited the Cultural Center at Table Rock Dam. While chatting with an attendant there, Ken learned the man was also a *Theenim* shipmate. No kidding — Jesse Maddux, a former RM, had no idea about the reunion but was sure happy he met up with me.

Ken Black



Some of the celebrants at the May 1995 CGC Modoc Reunion

## USS Merrill Reunion

Our group recently held our third reunion in a row ('93, '94 and '95) and it gets better each year. It was held in Milwaukee and lasted six days. Everything from dances to fish fries, even a visit to a brewery for a small beer bust.

Several of the families within driving distance of Milwaukee brought fancy home-made baked goods, cheeses, salamis and fruit. We had a large refrigerator in our hospitality suite so everything was great; kept food and beverages from beer to orange juice.

We fielded 40 players this time, even several wives of our departed shipmates. How's that for family! Seems like we did much more than simply serve together — seems like we all grew up together. Anyway, what a success.

Abner "Flags" Giannino

end of the war. Compared to some of the fishing boats we manned early in the war, she was a "thing of beauty." Bob Iles

## The Hurley, Wisc. CG Reunion

Long ago, Ed Burke and I decided we were going to visit a Korean War shipmate from the *Escanaba* (W-64), even if it meant driving to Wisconsin.

What a great group of former Coast Guard people with wives, family and friends. Hurley, Wisc., was a visitor-friendly town, as was Ironwood, Mich. The Holiday Inn went all out for us. Ed and I walked by our W-64 shipmate several times. Names tags are a must after 42 years. How pleasant it was to see Big Lew and meet his family and friends.

(continued on next page)

## Remembering Back 50 Years

It's August 13th and I'm watching the Phillies. I get bored — and it's only the second inning. My thoughts drifted back 50 years to August 14th, 1945, when the Japanese surrendered and I turned 24. I was attending a visual signalling school for LST signalmen at the Navy Amphib Base, Camp Bradford, Va.

My mind went back to my first ship, the *CGC Carrabasset* (W-55), a seagoing, ex-Navy tug converted to coastal convoy duty, mostly between Norfolk — around Cape Hatteras — to Cape Lookout, N.C. We were in company with the buck-and-a-quarters' *Bedloe* and *Jackson* and a Navy PYC, the *Cymophane*. I was a QM on the ship from Sept. of '43 until my transfer in the spring of '44.

During the severe fall hurricane of 1944, while on a rescue mission, I understand both the *Bedloe* and *Jackson* capsized and each lost half their crew.

My ship, the *Carrabasset*, was commissioned in 1919. I was told she was removed from service shortly before the



U.S.S. CARRABASSET 1944

Kneeling (l to r) Sn1/c Clare Davis, Sn1/c John Basalay, and Sn1/c Dick Miller. 2nd Row (l to r) MM2/c Ted Chreene, QM1/c John Pahr, RdM3/c LaWayne Enke and QM3/c Bob Iles. Back Row (l to r) PhM3/c Vernon Kirk, Sn1/c Earl Moorman and RdM3/c Edward Olson aboard the *CGC Carrabasset* (W-55).



## Reunions — Notices — Wrap-Ups

### Hurley, Wisc. CG Reunion (cont.)

Sea story after sea story. None of us realized until the Norfolk Reunion, when another *Escanaba* shipmate, Woody, told us how we took a 72-degree roll with a 73-degree reciprocal, lost



National Secretary Ed Burke (left) and National Treasurer Baker Herbert (right) flank new member Richard B. Lewis. All three served aboard the *CGC Escanaba* in the early '50s and attended the Harley, Wisc., reunion in September.

our port lifeboat and did other damage in Aleutian waters.

From my point of view, you just can't beat a Coast Guard reunion with shipmates, sea stories and, at this point in my life, non-alcoholic beer.

**Baker Herbert**

### Alexander Hamilton Survivors

Members of the *Alexander Hamilton* Survivors Association will hold their next reunion June 2-5, 1996 at the Days Inn Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Md. For more information, call the Association at (301) 953-2386 or write to them at 8002 Aladdin Drive, Laurel, MD 20723.

### USS Cepheus (AKA-18) Reunion

The next reunion of crewmembers from the *USS Cepheus (AKA-18)*, will be Aug. 25-29,

1996, at Fisherman's Wharf, Boothbay, Maine. Contact: Milton H. Wooster at 6 School Street, Thomaston, ME 04861. Ph: (207) 354-8010 during the day or (207) 354-0045 on weekends.

### 1996 Reunion/Convention

Members are hereby notified that the next CGCVA Reunion/Convention will be held at the Radisson Hotel San Diego, 1433 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108. Telephone: (619) 260-0111; Fax: (619) 497-0813; Radisson Worldwide Reservations: (800) 333-3333.

The Reunion/Convention is scheduled for Oct. 31 - Nov. 4, 1996, so make your reservations early. If you haven't been to San Diego recently, you don't know what you're missing. It is one of the (if not the) most beautiful cities in California. The climate is fantastic and there are plenty of things to do.

### By-Law Amendments

Now is the time for the membership to propose any changes they may want to see made to our By-Laws.

A request for change in the By-Laws may be submitted by any member in good standing. Requests for changes must be submitted to the Board of Directors at least six (6) months prior to a regularly scheduled reunion/convention.

### Ulithi Atoll Reunion

My wife and I attended the 10th Navy WWII Ulithi Atoll Reunion in Kissimmee, Fla., last year and this year's reunion in Gloucester, Mass. Once again I was the only Coast Guardsman there. Everyone else were ex-Navy men who had been stationed on the little islands of Falalop, Asor, and Sorlen within the Atoll. The fact that a Coast Guard LORAN station, with 26 men, was located on the island of Potangeras was unknown to them.

The group's next reunion is scheduled for Salt Lake City in 1996 and it would be great to have other Ulithi LORAN Station Coasties attend.

**Gordon L. Baxter**



## Streamlining the Coast Guard

Headquarters, the districts, maintenance and logistics commands and support centers are about to be streamlined. This is the latest part of a four-year belt-tightening initiative required of the Coast Guard and other federal agencies.

Between 1994 and 1998 the Coast Guard must cut about 4,000 people and save \$400 million. The Coast Guard will accomplish the cuts by downsizing and streamlining. Downsizing will account for 75 percent of the reductions. Streamlining will account for 25 percent.

Downsizing involves cuts without changing the basic structure of the service. An example would be what happened to recruiting field offices. Several recruiting offices were cut. The remaining offices had to cover large geographic areas.

Streamlining involves changing the organization without affecting the public. An example would be what happened to the recruiting-support system. Several years ago there were district recruiting supervisors overseeing and supporting that district's recruiters. This support system was reduced to three regional offices and recently reduced to one office. During each of these changes, the Coast Guard was able to reduce recruiting-support staff without cutting field recruiters. The public did not notice the change.

Fiscal 1994/95 cuts were part of downsizing. Approximately 2,300 civilian and military mem-

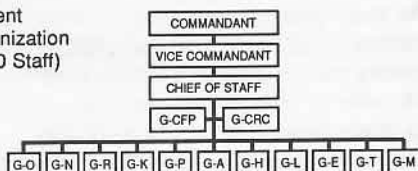
bers, 15 cutters and 14 aircraft were cut and \$149 million saved without changes to the structure of the Coast Guard. For fiscal 1996, the Coast Guard is proposing to continue downsizing by cutting an additional 870 people, three cutters, three aircraft and 23 smallboat stations. The Coast Guard will also cut 1,400 positions and save \$100 million through streamlining during fiscal 1996/97. These changes will

*"Almost all of the people who interact with the public will be moved out of headquarters."*

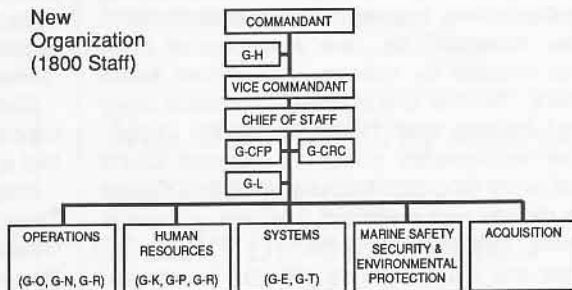
## Coast Guard Headquarters Streamlining

- Reduce Staff by about 300
- Relocate about 300 Staff to Field Units
- Recurring Savings of \$15M-\$20M

Current Organization  
(2400 Staff)



New Organization  
(1800 Staff)



affect the way Coast Guard units are supported but should be invisible to the public. This proposal (continued next page)

## Current News — Coast Guard Events

### **Streamlining** (continued)

al has been accepted by the administration and is now with Congress.

### **Streamlining changes**

CG Headquarters will be reduced from 2,400 people to about 1,800. Three hundred people will move out of the building.

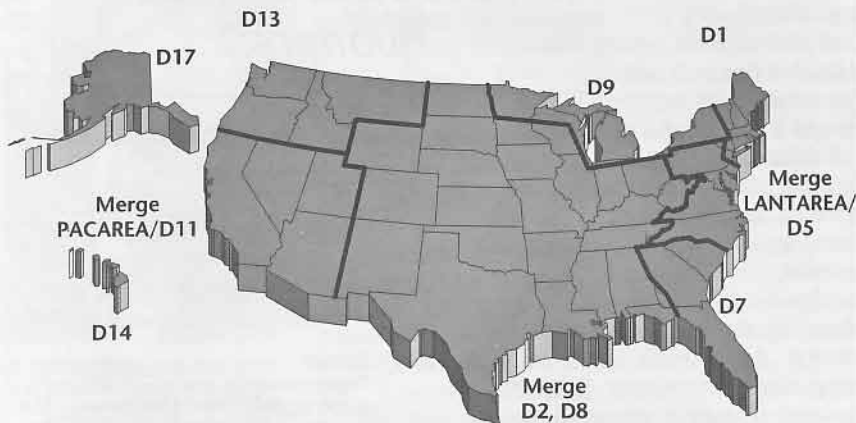
"Almost all of the people who interact with the public will be moved out of headquarters," CAPT Jim Doherty of the Streamlining Implementation Team, said. "Headquarters will deal with the administration and Congress, and provide policy, planning and resources to the field. Resources involve money, replacement of assets and changes in billets."

The Engineering and Logistics Center at the Yard, Curtis Bay, Md., and the National Maritime Center, Arlington, Va., are examples of commands created by moving people from headquarters. "Neither one of these commands make policy," Doherty said. "The Engineering Logistic Center implements policy to support Coast Guard units, and the National Maritime Center deals directly with merchant mariners, shipyards and other external customers."

Area and district offices will also be streamlined. The districts will concentrate on command and control of operational units. The 2nd District office in St. Louis will be merged with the 8th District in New Orleans. A senior captain will remain as director of western rivers operations in

St. Louis. The 11th District office in Long Beach, Calif., will move to Alameda, Calif., and merge with the Pacific Area office. Atlantic Area and MLCLant will leave Governors Island, N.Y., and merge with the 5th District office in Portsmouth, Va.

New operational commands, called Activities, will be opened in New York, Baltimore, Corpus Christi and San Diego. Activities will merge oper-



ations centers, communications centers and support staff of groups, marine safety offices and other units where possible. The goal is to draw together port operations and better use resources.

District support to units will move to MLCs and support centers. Personnel, financial and industrial support will be provided by these units.

Integrated Support Commands will be created. They will be super support centers for Coast Guard units. The ISCs will be located in Boston, Portsmouth, Va., Miami, Cleveland, New Orleans, St. Louis, Honolulu, San Pedro, Calif., Alameda, Calif., Seattle, and Ketchikan and Kodiak, Alaska.

"The support centers and MLCs already have support functions," Doherty said. "By

### **Streamlining** (continued)

concentrating support functions there instead of at the districts we will be able to decrease personnel and save money without hurting service to the field." Because of the changes, \$15 to \$20 million will be saved.

All operations will be moved from Governors

or lead to personnel reductions, but it will improve the way the Coast Guard trains and teaches leadership.

A new Performance Technology Center will be established at Yorktown, Va. The center will develop job-performance aids, correspondence courses, resident training, computer-based training and unit-level training.

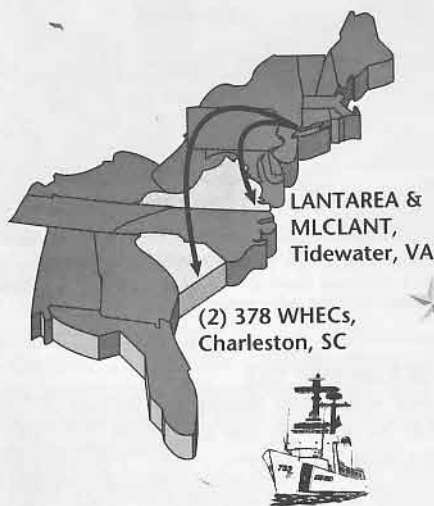
A leadership program for military members, civilian employees, reservists and auxiliarists will be established at the Academy, New London, Conn.

The Coast Guard will also combine similar components of different "A" schools. For example, this is being done with the electronic rates. Similarly needed skills in nonelectronic rates could also be taught with the electronic rates.

### **The future**

The downsizing and streamlining moves should be completed by 1998. But the service will continue to become more efficient beyond 1998. The first of the new seagoing buoy tenders, for example, is ready for duty. This class of cutter will be bigger, faster and have smaller crew complements. By using the new tenders, the service will be able to provide the public with the same level of service and cut 500 people. These gains in efficiency will continue with other cutters.

(reprinted from Commandant's Bulletin, Jan '96)



Island by the end of fiscal 1997. The CGCs Dallas and Gallatin will move to Charleston, S.C., and a new activity will be established on Staten Island, N.Y., to handle the needs of New York harbor.

The research and development program, and electronic, communications and computer-support systems will also be streamlined. There will be a combined military and civilian personnel command in the Washington, D.C. area. From these initiatives, \$3 to \$4 million will be saved and a total of 1,350 positions will be eliminated.

### **Training**

Along with the streamlining initiative, a training plan was released. The plan will not save money

*The downsizing and  
streamlining moves  
should be completed  
by 1988*

### CGCVA 1994 and 1995 "Coast Guard Persons Of The Year"



Honorary CGCVA member Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Rick Trent presents plaque to 1994 recipient BMCS F. Scott Clendenin.



ADM Robert E. Kramek presents plaque to 1995 recipient, ASM1 Michael Odom. CGCVA National President Al Grantham assists with presentation.

#### Regarding the *Gresham*

The recent article on the *Gresham* brought back many memories, including this "sea story."

I graduated from the Coast Guard Academy in 1931 and was assigned to the *Sebago*, stationed in New York. The *Gresham* was also stationed in New York at the time, so naturally, I was aboard her many times.

My sea duty totalled nearly 22 years and I have many, many shipmates. One I shall always remember was a Chief Machinist Mate with whom I enjoyed talking "old times." Although he has passed on, I'll always recall him saying, "I enlisted in 1912 and my first ship was the brand new *Gresham*. When I reported aboard I found that the officers were the only people on the ship I could talk with. The entire deck force spoke Scandanavian to the extent that the bo'sun gave his orders in either Swedish or Norwegian. Everyone in the "black gang" spoke Spanish."

These were the "rum-running" days of the '30's and there were plenty of "old timers" around for me to substantiate the story and believe it.

CAPT Oscar "Pete" Wev, USCG (Ret.)

#### So What's Buggin' Ya?

Waverly Hammond stated in a recent QDLog story that he was on the *Gresham*, the oldest WPG in active WWII convoy duty. I phoned him to challenge this outrageous assertion since I was on the *WPG Unalga* for a while and I was sure as hell it was the oldest.

Unfortunately for me, Hammond had at hand a compilation of CG vessels which indicated the *Gresham* was built in 1898 whereas the *Unalga* was a relatively recent arrival, built in 1912.

We had a cordial chat and he finally agreed with me that the *Unalga* probably had more cockroaches. Many a night I awoke with cockroaches crawling over my face and in several instances I was actually chewing them. Yuk! War is hell.

In another instance while shopping at the Bolling AFB commissary and wearing my Patrol Frigate Reunion Ass'n windbreaker, I was stopped by a fellow DE sailor. He remembered the *Unalga* and even some of the crew. What a small world. Forgot his name but I gave him a CGCVA bumper stickers.

Juan del Castillo





Curator Roger Gisler (left) of the Sonoma, Calif. Museum and Fred Aulwurm, president of the Tuolumne County Veterans Committee inside Veterans Memorial Hall. The museum, which is filled with memorabilia from World War I to Operation Desert Storm, opened in September.

### Burley — A War Dog

On Dec. 7, 1943, the *USS Burlington* (PF-51), was launched in Wilmington, Calif., and in the weeks that followed went through the drills and was commissioned.

The Coast Guard crew went aboard, stores and ammo were loaded, there was shakedown. Finally, it was off to San Pedro, Calif., for a full load of fuel and the 51 was ready for duty.

In San Pedro, one more crew member joined us — a small black and white puppy brought aboard by the Chief Gunner's Mate. It was never determined where he got the dog but we named her Burley, after the ship.

The 51 left the following day for the South Pacific, non-stop to Espirito Santo in the New Hebrides Islands. When the ship crossed the Equator, all the crew including Burley, went through the usual ceremony and became Shellbacks. From the New Hebrides, the ship proceeded to New Guinea, then, on to Morotai.

While firing on enemy planes and bringing back the LST's to New Guinea, Burley had free run of the ship at all times. Between Oct. 16-22, the 51 was in the middle of the invasion of the

Philippines, getting the LST's on and off the beach and through the smoke, gunfire, noise and heat. Burley directed the action, barking and giving everyone a friendly wag of her tail. Through the heat, poor food and little water, Burley seemed happy to be part of it all.

On Nov. 12th, we were on the way back to Leyte with another convoy. After getting the LST's on the beach and waiting for them to unload, there was a Kamikaze attack. Burley barked encouragement to the gun crews of the 51 as they shot Japanese planes out of the sky. Duty changed for the 51 as they went back to Pearl Harbor and liberty — where Burley drank beer with the crew and liked it.

After repairs in San Francisco, the 51 sailed to the Bering Sea and the Aleutian Islands. It was bitter cold in January so a crewmember made a heavy sweater for Burley. For eight months the 51 worked the Bering Sea and the decks were awash almost every day, but Burley had better sea legs than some of the crew.

The U.S. government decided to give the 51 and 74 other PF's to Russia. The ship was taken back to Cold Bay, Alaska while the crew and Burley went to Seattle for R&R at a camp on Mt. Ranier. The second day at camp, Burley was missing. A search party found her, apparently killed by a bear. The crew was heartbroken. When she was laid to rest, they were no dry eyes among the crew — they had lost a dear friend and shipmate.

One big fireman said, "Burley never stood a chance. She knew nothing about trees, bushes or mountains, and she sure as hell knew nothing about wild animals. She was a sea dog who only knew the sea."

When the time comes for the crew of the 51 to cross over the bar, they'll be welcomed by Burley with a happy bark and wagging tail. A sailor couldn't ask for more. At all reunions of the 51, the crew still talks about Burley and misses her.

C.J. Potter, *USS Burlington*

### **A Poem By Bob Mars**

(Can be sung to "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling")

When LST's went sailing,  
Across the shining seas.  
They did their job with honor,  
To keep our country free.

They carried tanks and armor,  
And troops and much, much more.  
They brought them to the beachheads,  
Right to the foreign shore.

They sailed the mighty oceans,  
Through storms with waves so high.  
That nature seemed to be saying,  
You're next, it's time to die.

The grit and courage of our crews,  
That formed our mighty fleet.  
Took pride in those brave LST's,  
And helped to free the seas.

We were proud to be together,  
To form that mighty fleet.  
To serve our country nobly,  
And bring victory, not defeat.

We must always try to remember,  
When we see the shining sea.  
We had our day of glory,  
Serving on the LST.

### **V-J Day Reunion in Hawaii**

by Barbara Ruane

As one of the organizers of the 50th anniversary celebration of the D-Day Normandy invasion held in England, Jack Campbell thought he had seen his share of "once in a lifetime" opportunities. Not so.

Campbell, who in 1944 was a crewmember of the Coast Guard Rescue Flotilla One, led fellow Coast Guard veterans to Hawaii for the 50th anniversary of V-J Day, marking the end of the war in the Pacific. There he had the honor of being selected as one of 20 individuals, including



Jack Campbell meets President Clinton at the Honolulu Veterans Parade (above) and Admiral Kramek aboard the USS Carl Vinson (below).



Medal of Honor recipients and other dignitaries, to sit with President Clinton during a parade at Wheeler Army Airfield.

"Something like this rarely happens to the average guy like me," said Campbell. Still, he was chosen to sit next to the president because of his efforts in escorting 25 Coast Guard veterans to the celebration.

"What we did tends to get overshadowed," he said. "No one thinks of the Coast Guard when they think of D-Day and V-J Day." Jack's most recent adventure was helping plan Coast Guard veteran participation in New York City's recent "Nation's Parade."

### Allentown Reunion Spotlights CG War Role

Since the end of WWII, crewmembers from scores of Coast Guard vessels have held reunions, celebrating and documenting their part in the war. Such was the case for the crew of the *USS Allentown (PF-52)* which held its 35th annual reunion in Montvale, N.J. The event was attended by 19 shipmates, many with their families.

The *Allentown*, known within the Coast Guard as the "Amazing A," escorted convoys, hunted enemy submarines and provided anti-aircraft protection. It also had the distinction of being a vessel group leader. As such, in addition to its own captain, there was a commodore aboard who was responsible for the five frigates in the group and all ships under escort.

During their duty in the Pacific, the *Allentown* crew saw a lot of action. One incident involved the capture of a suspected Japanese spy. While in port at Moritua, the Philippines, several crewmembers had liberty. Once ashore, they were approached by some Filipinos who explained that a Japanese soldier was hiding in the woods nearby. They caught the man and turned him over to American military police in the Philippines. He was found to speak exceptionally good English so, it was conjectured aboard the *Allentown* that he had probably been dropped off by a Japanese submarine in order to obtain information on ships in the area.

Though the years have diminished their number, many *Allentown* crewmembers having "crossed the bar," for those remaining the reunions serve to perpetuate the bonds forged over 50 years ago, which have come to include their families as well.

This year's reunion continued the tradition started in 1960, when the first *Allentown* reunion was held in Stony Point, N.Y. Since then, the annual reunions have been held in many parts of the

country, enabling most of the former shipmates (who number about 100) an opportunity to attend a reunion reasonably close to home. The *Allentown's* 1996 reunion is scheduled for Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., and plans are being made to hold their 1997 reunion in Allentown, Pa., the namesake of the ship.



The *USS Allentown (PF-52)* as it looked in the Pacific during WWII.

### They Gave So Much For Their Country

I am not a survivor of Normandy, or even a veteran of the Armed Forces, but I have spent hours listening to the "old men" who were but "boys" during that invasion. I have watched the trembling of their chins and mouths, the tears running down their cheeks and the huskiness of their voices filled with emotion as they recall the thousands of young men lying on the beach and in the water. Some had been shot, some drowned, and others mutilated, not only from gunfire but even run over by vehicles on that horrible day. I sit and weep unashamedly with them. True, they are survivors from death, but the emotional experience will always be torture to them.

For me, after hearing about those horrible experiences, I can only say, "Thank you, God, for such people who can give so much for this country."

When I see the Stars and Stripes and stand at attention to proudly salute it, I see more than just a banner. I see all the blood and lives that have been given that I may say, "This Is My Flag!"

Marge McLendon

## Association News — Mail Buoy

### Military Wives

The good Lord was creating a model for military wives and was in his sixth day of overtime when an angel appeared. She said, "Lord, you seem to be having a lot of trouble with this one. What is wrong with the standard model?"

The Lord replied, "Have you seen the specs on this order? She has to be completely independent, possess the qualities of both Father and Mother, handle every emergency imaginable without a manual, and be able to carry on cheerfully, even when she is pregnant or has the flu. She must be willing to move to a new location 10 times in 17 years, wave good-bye to her husband from a pier, a runway or depot, and understand why it's important that he leave."

And the Lord said, "We will give her an unusually strong heart so it can swell with pride in her husband's achievements, sustain the pain of separations, beat soundly when it is overworked or tired, be large enough to say "I understand" when she doesn't, and say "I love you regardless.""

Finally, the Lord said, "We will have to make her strong enough to carry on, even if her husband returns to her not with hugs and kisses, but in a flag-draped coffin. And, after the good-byes are said and the tears wiped away, be able to brave the future alone, raising her children as living memorials to their Dad!"

Author Unknown

### Status of PA33-21

I am trying to solve a problem regarding the current status and history of an LCVP and hope some readers can assist. Here's the background:



About two years ago, I learned that folks in the New Orleans area wanted to erect something in

the memory of Andrew Higgins, the designer of a shallow draft boat which beached easily and retracted from the beach under its own power. (Note: The Higgins boat became the prototype of small landing craft used in WWII).

Also about two years ago, my son who is in the Coast Guard Reserve, gave me photos of an LCVP in excellent condition being used by the



Army Corps of Engineers. It was being sent to USCG Base Mobile, Ala. for placement in a museum in New Orleans. After checking, I learned it would be displayed in the National D-Day Museum at 1600 Canal Street there.

Now my question. The boat clearly indicates, "PA-33-21" on its hull and stern. Would this make it boat #21 from the *USS Bayfield* (APA-33)? I'd like to know because I was stationed aboard the *USS Callaway* (APA-35). Besides, if it is, perhaps some of the Bayfield crewmembers would like to see and touch this boat.

If anyone can answer this question, please contact me at 4334 Dawes Lane, Mobile, AL 36619.

Robert P. Brannon

### More On Military License Plates

Here's the Mississippi Retired Military License plate we've had on our vehicle for about six years. It's good to see other states doing this too.

Robert A. Bright





### Secrets Of World War II

The Second World War is sometimes remembered by veterans as having two bookends — the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and the American bombing of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945. The two nuclear detonations in Japan were the only time those weapons have ever been used in war. The controlled splitting of the atom and development of the atomic bomb was one of the most closely guarded secrets of WWII. Still, there was another top secret development taking place during the same period — one that many consider to be even more significant.

That mega-secret was Radar. The "... biggest and best kept secret of the war has been the development of radar — short for radio detection and ranging," said one national newspaper.

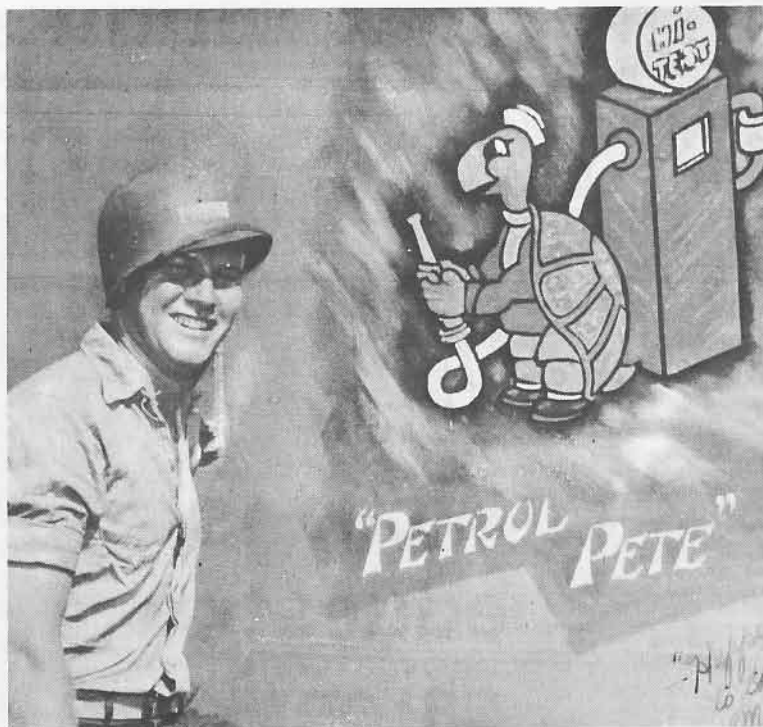
Coast Guard Radar Technician Eddie Olsen worked daily with that secret aboard the *USS Ammonusac*, an oil and gasoline tanker operating in the Pacific theater.

During the final gasps of the war, Olsen's ship visited Saipan, Iwo Jima and other key sites that American troops fought for in a series of bloody battles with the Japanese.

### WWII Veterans Honored

On Oct. 11, 1995, something historic and very special happened in Washington, D.C.

A couple of years ago, the Dept. of Defense established the World War II Commemorative Committee. Their duties were to coordinate



**Finding Time For Humor** — Eddie Olsen, a radar technician in the Coast Guard, won a prize in 1945 for inventing "Petrol Pete," the mascot for the oil and gasoline tanker, *USS Ammonusac*.

world-wide celebrations of the 50th anniversaries of significant WWII events. One of these events was a Special Joint Meeting of the 104th Congress of the United States. The committee requested that each branch of the Armed Forces provide four members who were veterans of WWII to represent their branch of service at this special meeting.

As I said earlier, this was indeed an historic event. There have been only 13 such Selected Commemorative Meetings of Congress in our history. The first was held Feb. 12, 1866, and the most recent, prior to this one, on March 27, 1990. The Joint Meeting of Congress was to provide Congress the opportunity to say to the WWII  
(continued on next page)

## Association News — Mail Buoy

### **WWII Vets Honored** (continued)

generation that the Nation will never forget those who literally saved the World 50 years ago.

I got involved when I learned my name had been submitted by CG Headquarters to be one of the four Coast Guard representatives. What an honor! Of course I would like to attend. A week

Representatives.

Once seated on the main floor, we enjoyed prelude concerts by the Coast Guard Band and the Army Chorus. The session was presided over by Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. The speaker made remarks, as did Vice President Al Gore and several members of the Senate and House who were WWII veterans.

This was a most impressive ceremony and I was honored to be a representative of our Service. Joining me were other CGCVA members Hank Rogers of Baltimore, Tom Mullings of Laurel, Md., and Ennis Whitaker of Banning, Calif.

This was definitely one of the most important incidents in my lifetime association with the U.S. Coast Guard. CWO4 Vince Stauffer, USCG (Ret.)



**CGCVA member Ennis Dan Whitaker of Banning, Calif., at the Vietnam War Wall Memorial. Whitaker was one of four Coast Guard WWII veterans representing our Service at the Oct. 11, 1995 Special Joint meeting of the 104th Congress saluting the Nation's WWII veterans.**

later, the DoD Committee informed me to say I had been selected and provided me details of the event.

The entire contingent met at the Fort Myer Chapel at 7 a.m. on Oct. 11th. I learned that recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor had also been invited and there were 75 comprising that impressive group.

We were bussed to the Capital Building and escorted to the Rayburn Room, given seat assignments and provided escorts to take us to the Hall of the House of Representatives, where we were greeted by several Senators and

and donate cancelled postage stamps to the VA Hospitals in Buffalo, Washington, D.C. and across the nation. At present, 90% of the stamps go to the Veterans Stamp and Coin Club in Tuscon, Ariz.

There are more than 84,000 veterans in VA hospitals and many collect items to keep busy. The VA doctors indicate collecting the cancelled postage stamps is good therapy. Any assistance you can provide is appreciated.

Send stamps to: Stamps For Veterans, c/o Bernie Elmore, P.O. Box 398, Depew, NY 14043-0398.

### **Used Stamps Needed**

DAver Bernie Elmore and the Senior Citizens Volunteers of the Buffalo, N.Y. Chapter American Lung Association collect

## George C. Marshall Museum CG Exhibit

This coming spring, a Coast Guard WWII exhibit will open at the George C. Marshall Museum at Lexington, Va., on the campus of the Virginia Military Institute. Part of this collection will be my photographs and documents from my days aboard the *USS Cambria* (APA-36).

I served as ship's historian for 26 months, including six invasions. On Sept. 23, 1945, the *Cambria* arrived at Nagasaki, Japan with 650 Marines of the 2nd Marine Occupational Forces.

For 50 years I have tried to explain how a Coast Guardsman could be involved in the service I saw during WWII so this past summer I started a crusade to educate the general public about our Service's participation. Getting a Coast Guard exhibit at a recognized museum is certainly a good start.

Included in the materials that will be displayed are photos of the *Cambria*, documents, medals, photos of Nagasaki and the signing ceremony. These were first shown at the museum as part of their VJ Day commemoration and will now become a permanent exhibit.

If any former *Cambria* shipmates or Coast Guard Combat vets have materials for this exhibit or wish to visit the George C. Marshall Museum, it would certainly be appreciated. I'd enjoy hearing from you. Write me at 7230 Scarlet Oak Drive, Roanoke, VA 24019.

**Robert L. Sams**

## It Pays To Belong To The CGCVA

While I was in Norfolk last year for the CGCVA Reunion, I bought one of our hardback books which listed many of our members.

In the "A's, I found a name I thought I recognized. Since Dick Stent is a neighbor of mine in Columbus, Ohio, I mentioned it to him. He had a roster of members and quickly looked up the name, Kenneth J. Archer. As soon as he said the

address was Plymouth, Mich., I said, "That's who I thought it might be."

I immediately called the information operator and got his phone number. Imagine getting a call after 50 years and recognizing each other voices. We made arrangements to meet in Toledo on Aug. 15th for lunch and believe it or not we immediately recognized each other.

Ken and I were shipmates onboard the *FS-182* in 1945. Ken was an RM1/c and I was a GM1/c. We made many a good liberty together, or should I say "some good, some not so good."

This was certainly an unexpected benefit of being a CGCVA member. Best wishes to all the other FS vets.

**R.G. "Mac" McAlister**

## Small Town Parade

Fredericksburg, TX — Fifty years ago, this small town celebrated the end of WWII. On Saturday, Sept. 2, 1995, veterans gathered at the same hill country (foothills of the Rockies) in what could be called the epitome of Small Town, USA (population 7,250) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of the war. They also honored one of their own — Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz

(continued on next page)



**Ken Archer and "Mac" McAlister in Cavite, Philippines July 15, 1945.**



**After more than 50 years, we meet in Akron, Ohio Aug. 15, 1995**

## Association News — Mail Buoy

### Small Town Parade (continued)

who, along with Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, were considered the architects of the victory over Japan.

More than 30,000 spectators watched the parade, including many WWII veterans (many with their families and wearing full dress uniforms that had been kept in a closet since the war). Many traded war stories, some watched the parade in silence — remembering. "You remember the faces of shipmates, the hurry-up-and-wait routine; you were always hungry for home vittles and you recall the occasional rough seas," remarked an LCI survivor who had participated in several battle landings.

Former president George Bush, himself a decorated Navy pilot with 58 combat missions in the Pacific Theater, was the guest speaker. He praised the nine Medal of Honor recipients on hand who served as parade co-Grand Marshals and said, "Our military is the best. It is the finest and everyone can be proud of it."

Also praising the veterans, including his father, Governor of Texas George W. Bush said, "Americans stood up against hatred and aggression with determination and courage. For all the sons and daughters of my generation, I say thank

you to all the mothers and fathers of your generation.

Vintage WWII aircraft roared overhead as the assembly passed before spectators. Everything from jeeps and half-ton ambulances to 5-ton trucks loaded with veterans were represented. Attracting the most attention was a restored Corsair fighter that buzzed Main Street with a thunderous roar, a sound that many of the veterans remembered well.

Aircraft and military vehicles remained in Fredericksburg for an airshow and ground attack demonstration, the latter including 60 assorted vehicles and 24 tanks.

I wore casual clothing with service ribbons attached to my shirt. On my head I proudly displayed my CGCVA cap and medallion (plus my CPO collar device).

Amidst the milling veterans I was looking for canvas-covered booths that were set up to issue laminated commemorative badges to WWII veterans of the Pacific and European theaters. On the cover it showed the American flag, silhouette of a fighter plane, a combat infantryman, an aircraft carrier, and a submarine, with the words, "United States of America 50th Anniversary of World War II — A Grateful Nation Remembers."

On the reverse was an LST with bow doors open, two aircraft carriers in company with three other ships, a Flying Tiger plane, and the flag-raising at Iwo Jima.

This was a small town that really went all out for the veterans of WWII and I'd match it up against the ceremonies at any major city. Thank you so much Fredericksburg!

Rocky Byron



WWII members and spouses of the USS Merrill (DE-392) at their 1995 Reunion at the Sheraton Inn in Mayfair-Milwaukee, Wisc. More than 45 attended the group that made Milwaukee famous (or was that beer?)



### Coast Guard Art Presented

The crew of the *CGC Bainbridge Island* was honored in July with a watercolor painting illustrating their heroic late-night rescue the previous summer of a sport fishing vessel which sank in the Atlantic off Manasquan, N.J.

The artist contributing the painting was Harry "Buz" Rambo, a retired Coast Guard officer. Buz



Harry "Buz" Rambo (right), a retired Coast Guard officer and painter, presents his depiction of a 1994 rescue by a Sandy Hook crew to LT Anthony Gentilella.

is also a CGCVA member and an official Coast Guard artist. He presented LT Anthony Gentilella, commanding officer of the *Bainbridge Island*, and his 15-member crew with the 18" x 24" watercolor at Sta Sandy Hook, N.J., home-port of the cutter.

The watercolor depicts the dramatic rescue of seven members of the 28-foot *Lyl Cyn*, which sank in stormy seas about 30 miles offshore. One man drowned in the incident.

LT Gentilella described the weather conditions as the

worst he had seen during his 12 years in the Coast Guard.

The *Bainbridge Island* crew battled 50mph winds, 15-foot waves, rain, darkness and a few cases of seasickness to save the seven fishermen.

A wave, two stories high, smashed the windshield of the *Lyl Cyn* and it began taking water. A Coast Guard helicopter, responding to the call for assistance, dropped a life raft to the distressed vessel. Meanwhile, the *CGC Bainbridge Island* was diverted from routine patrol to render assistance.

Upon arrival at the scene, only a part of the bow of the *Lyl Cyn* was above water. Crewmembers from the cutter were able to rescue five of the survivors after the raft cap-sized and a Coast Guard helo later rescued the other two survivors.

Rambo said he took up painting as a hobby in 1974, after a 26-year career with the Coast Guard. While he paints many types of scenes, Rambo said he has "a great love of water" and most enjoys painting pictures of boats and the Coast Guard, especially rescue scenes.

Stephen Smith, Asbury Park Press



A copy of the 12" x 20" Rambo painting, "Rescue of the Survivors of the *Lyl Cyn*." The framed original was presented to the *CGC Bainbridge Island*.

## Association News — Mail Buoy

### Loss of USS Muskeget (YAG-9)

I read an article in the Summer '95 Quarterdeck Log concerning the unexplained loss of my father's ship, the *USS Muskeget (YAG-9)* during WWII. The article was written by Jason Morley, whose uncle was also lost on the ship. I would like to find other families who lost loved ones on the *Muskeget* and any assistance would be appreciated. Please contact Michael Sullivan at 4154 Burma Road, Mobile, AL 36693. Thanks.

My father was ENS Thomas M. Sullivan and he was the navigation officer on the *Muskeget*. I have been haunted by his death for 50 years and could get no information from the U.S. government regarding the ship's loss. I finally turned to the German government and learned what happened.

The *Muskeget* was sunk by U-7555, whose commander was Walter Goring. They gave me the location and date of the sinking too.

I am still bitter that I couldn't find out the details from my own country but had to turn to a former enemy. I don't even know if there's any markers or monuments dedicated to those who lost their lives in the Battle of the North Atlantic.

I read somewhere that there is a monument in Battery Park, N.Y., that has the names of seamen and sailors who were from New York and were lost in that struggle. My father was from New York but I am unable to travel there to see it if it does, in fact, exist. I also understand that the British were so grateful for the sacrifices made by American seamen in the Battle of the Atlantic that they have a memorial, complete with the names of those lost.

Our country seems to have a

memorial to every war and every branch of service but on Memorial Day how many tears are shed for those lost in the "Black Pit" or "Torpedo Junction?" They, including the brave men of the *USS Muskeget* seem largely forgotten.

I hope that the tiny weather patrol ship that had one of the most dangerous missions of the Atlantic war are never forgotten.

Michael T. Sullivan



The 8' 4" Coast Guard WWII Memorial statue in the studio of Coast Guard Combat Artist Norman M. Thomas (left) just before its dedication in Battery Park, N.Y. With Thomas are Petty Officer Alex Haley and LCDR Robert Monroe. The statue was dedicated in 1955 "in memory of the men and women of the Coast Guard who have served their country in World War II."

## Let Your Name Live On

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

— (Whatever is left after other bequests have been granted.) "All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, including real and personal property, I give, devise and bequest to the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association, a Corporation created under the laws of the State of Ohio, located at (give the current designated Administrative Office or Headquarters address)."

— "I give, devise, and bequest to the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association, a Corporation created under the laws of the State of Ohio, located at (give the current designated Administrative Office or Headquarters address), \_\_\_\_\_ % of my estate."

— "I give, devise, and bequest to the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association, a Corporation created under the laws of the State of Ohio, located at (give the current designated Administrative Office or Headquarters address), the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the (Name a specific fund), the principle of which shall remain in perpetuity."

Please remember: The CGCVA is a Non-Profit Association. All donations are tax deductible.

### CGC Calypso Model Being Built

In the last *Quarterdeck Log*, I read an interesting story of the *CGC Calypso (W-104)* and crewmembers Raymond Klein and Ira Lopata.

I was a Radioman aboard the ship in Spring '44 before I was sent to LORAN school at Groton, Conn.) on convoy duty between Stanton Island, N.Y. and Key West, Fla. Apparently Klein and Lopata were aboard after I left the *Calypso*.

I wonder how many other *Calypso* crewmen the author kept in touch with. By the way, a Mr. Jack Hudock of 1185 Forked Creek Road, Arnold, Md., worked at the U.S. Naval Academy the past few years and has been building a model of the *Calypso* for the Navy. Mr. Hudock has written me several times requesting specific details regarding the ship's superstructure, most of which I have not been able to answer. Perhaps Mr. Klein

could be of more help to Mr. Hudock, since he had been a member of the *Calypso's* deck force.

The *Calypso* is this in service, however not as a Coast Guard cutter. It is now working as a tour boat for Circle Line Tours in New York City.

Gordon L. Baxter

### A Hero From The Other Side

Prior to my enlisting in the Coast Guard, I worked after school at a local clothing store in Rockland, Maine. After entering the service, I kept in contact with a person who also worked there. She told me of a Miss Russell whom she knew because she was also from our town and was now a teacher at the Lincoln School in Honolulu (Territory of Hawaii). She asked that if I was ever there, I should look her up and, upon my arrival in Honolulu, I did just that.

(continued on next page)

## A Hero From The Other Side (cont.)

After our meeting, I also kept in contact with her and wrote that I had been island-hopping, had crossed the equator, and was in the initial assault of Okinawa. On July 7, 1945, her letter to me told the following:

"When you spoke of the Okinawa invasion, it made me think of a young Okinawan girl who went to our school at Paia, Maui; when I taught there. She went to Okinawa with her mother to see a sick sister before the war but was caught there by the war. When found she was hiding in a cave, but, because she understood English, she was able to act as an interpreter. With some encouragement by our soldiers, she was able to persuade many of the Okinawan civilians to leave their caves and come out into the open. Maybe you were there at the time and maybe you know of this girl."

This girl may have saved many lives by explaining to the holed-up Okinawans that we (U.S. servicemen) were not as bad as their leaders had told them.

To comprehend the task this girl had, one must understand the situation she was in. Okinawa was the island that, when the 3-month battle ended, tens of thousands of American servicemen, Japanese soldiers and Okinawan civilians, were dead. Emperor Hirohito's soldiers fought to the death and they, as well as the civilians,

were convinced it was a dishonor to be taken alive. The caves cost many lives because our soldiers didn't know what awaited them as they cleared them out. This girl alone was allowed to enter the caves to try to convince those inside to give up and follow her outside.

The name of this girl I never learned, however, it makes you realize that many, many heroes from WWII will never be known. To them I give my thanks!

Milton H. Wooster



(Above) The contingent of marchers representing the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association at the "Nation's Parade" in New York City on Veterans Day, were easy to identify. Thanks to National Vice President Joe Kleinpeter, a 10-foot banner was produced for use in events such as this 50th commemoration of the end of WWII. It will surely be proudly announcing the next CGCVA Reunion/Convention in San Diego but may be available for other events before then. For information on the banner, contact either Joe Kleinpeter or National Secretary Ed Burke.

(Left) On of the many CGCVA members taking part in the "Nation's Parade."



### Remembering our POW's and MIA's

I read with interest and pride the *Quarterdeck Log* story of the Coast Guard aviator who is "presumed dead" but still officially "missing in action." The story of LT Jack C. Rittchier, who was lost on a combat search and rescue mission near the Vietnam/Cambodian border on June 9, 1968, was inspiring.

It made me think of the POW-MIA remembrance ceremony which we conduct at every National Chief Petty Officer Association convention. A separate table is arranged and the National Chaplain usually reads the "remembrance" with the lights dimmed and a spot light on the table. believe me, it puts tears in your eyes and goose bumps all over your body.

I have enclosed a copy of this in hopes it will be reprinted for the entire association.

BMCS Jack Crowley, USCG (Ret.)



### *MIA/POW Remembrance Ceremony*

"As you  
entered the  
banquet hall  
this evening,  
you may have  
noticed a

small table here in a place of honor near our head table. It is set for one. Please let me explain."

"The military caste is filled with symbolism. This table is our way of symbolizing the fact that members of our profession of arms are missing from our midst. They are commonly called "POW or MIA" or fallen comrades. We call them "Brothers." They are unable to be with us this evening and so we remember them because of their incarceration."

"The table set for one is small — symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner alone against his oppressors."

"The tablecloth is white — symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms."



"Remember — the single rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades-in-arms who keep the faith awaiting their return."

"Remember — the yellow ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the yellow ribbon worn upon the lapel and breast of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting of our missions."

"Remember — a slice of lemon is on the bread plate to remind us of their fate."

"Remember — there is salt upon the bread plate — symbolic of the families' tears as they wait."

"Remember — the glass is inverted — they cannot toast with us this night."

"Remember — all of you who served with them and called them comrades, who depended upon their might and aid, and relied upon them for, surely, they have not forsaken you."

Editor's Note: Besides LT Rittchier, six other Coast Guardsmen lost their lives in Vietnam. They included:

LTJG David C. Brostrom (Aug. 11, 1966)  
EN2 Jerry Phillips (Aug. 11, 1966)  
FN Heriberto S. Hernandez (Dec. 5, 1968)  
ENC Morris S. Beeson (March 23, 1969)  
EN1 Michael H. Painter (Aug. 8, 1969)  
LTJG Michael W. Kirkpatrick (Aug. 9, 1969)

## Feature Article

While going through the mass of memorabilia I have accumulated over the years, I found this article, "The Story Of A Prisoner Of War." It is the tale of Frederick John Mills, a gunner in the British Army. Mills was one of four British soldiers who traveled to Bombay before WWII, then returned from the Philippines to San Francisco after his incarceration. In both cases, he was aboard the *USS Joseph T. Dickman* (APA-13). The story, by James Boyd, Jr., is a most unusual, tragic and brave war story in which our ship played a part.

Ronald O. Reese

### The Story Of A Prisoner Of War

The gray transport rose heavily on the first swells of the Pacific. Over her white wake astern, the green hills and mountains of the Philippines were dropping into the horizon. The ship was on its way to San Francisco.

On board was the most welcome and precious cargo she had ever carried during her many adventures of the war. Along her rails leaned brown, thin men in khaki looking like battle-worn GIs. Their clasped hands were scarred and wrinkled. Their faces were blank and expressionless watching the waves curve off the bow and hiss by in an unending chuckle. Watching them more closely, one soon knew these were not GIs.

They had seen things no soldier in battle had seen. Their faces and eyes showed this. Then the way they talked; low, quiet voices and moved about the ship with a tiny, unconscious stoop. How they automatically stepped aside when a sailor approached. This was politeness never experienced aboard a crowded transport. The sailor felt a keen sense of guilt when these men drew to one side so completely to let him pass.

Very seldom did they shout or yell or carry on. Even when the ship's band played for them their faces remained expressionless. This hardened group of men that crowded the decks were Allied prisoners of war, liberated three weeks ago from under the heels of the Japanese. British and Canadians taken at Singapore and a part of the original British garrison taken at Hong Kong. Americans on Corregidor and long-lost U.S. civilians taken on Wake Island where they were building an airstrip.

I have talked to many of these men. For the most part, they are eager to talk, eager to exchange ideas about what has happened, about the future, about their homes and even politics. They are not so eager

to talk about their experiences though inevitably the conversation works around to this. I found that, except for minor details, their stories were all about the same.

This particular story is by no means complete. It is really a brief survey on what happened to one man, but there is enough here for his people, his mother, his sister to understand him and better breach the gap that will have sprung up between them.

The second day out from the Philippines found it gloomy and raining. I was in one of the officer's rooms writing up a report vaguely listening to the murmur of the rain and the whisper of the wind.

"May I come in?" a voice said. It was low and apologetic with a faint British accent emphasizing the last word. I glanced up to see a medium-sized man standing in the doorway. He was stripped to the waist, his brown skin hairless except for a thin patch of light hair on his chest. The faint face was clean-shaven and expressionless. But his full red lips were warm and his hazel eyes twinkled brightly under dark eyebrows.

"Yes," I said.

"I brought this for the Commander," he said, handing me a neatly lined paper. At the top I noticed the name — Frederick John Mills.

"I'll see he gets it," I said. "You Mills?"

"Yes," he said. He paused in the doorway. Then thinking he ought to explain, added, "You see they took my picture yesterday, and that's the questionnaire they asked me to fill out."

I glanced further down the sheet: Clacton-on-Sea...professional bricklayer...not married.

"From England," I said. "Is this for your home paper?"

"Yes," he said. He was silent for a minute, his eyes moving about the room as if searching for something more to say. "You see," he burst out, "I made my first trip on this ship in 1941."

I looked up startled. His face remained blank but his eyes grew more friendly noticing my surprise.

We started to talk then. The strained feeling of an invisible gap of complete loss concerning each others feelings had vanished. Gradually he told me his story.

It all started in England in 1940 when he was first called to serve his country. He quit his job as a bricklayer in London and reported for duty. He

(continued on next page)

*They had seen things no  
soldier in battle had seen.  
Their faces and eyes  
showed this.*

## Prisoner of War (continued)

trained in England for almost a year for desert warfare. His rank became that of a gunner in an anti-tank battery.

In early 1941, he received his first orders and boarded a transport bound for Capetown, Africa. He set out one dismal night to find himself back on native soil two days later with an eight days "survivors leave." His ship had had a collision in the fog off the Irish coast where all hands were transferred to another ship and brought back. He sat around for a few months during which time he stood fire watch on the docks of Liverpool and went through the famous "Eight day blitz" when the Germans tried their best to blast this part to oblivion. Finally, he was packed aboard another ship and this time got away safely. Six days later he arrived in Halifax where he got his first glimpse of the transport *USS Joseph T. Dickman*, which was to take him half way around the world then, and now complete that circle.

In a few days he was at sea again, this time on his first American ship with its huge square structure, its predominating stack and high bridge. America was not at war at the time but the ship held routine drills and observed all wartime regulations. The *Dickman* proceeded to Trinidad and then eastward across the Atlantic to Capetown where she had a three-day lay-over. From there she left for Bombay, India. Three weeks short of this port, the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor. Finally, on Dec. 27, 1941, the *Dickman* arrived safely in Bombay, where Mills was debarked and quartered just outside the city.

All the time the Japanese were on the move southward. England saw danger to Singapore so Mills and his gunners were sent east. They boarded the fast transport *Empress of Asia*. The trip was uneventful except for the end where disaster awaited them. Japanese bombers caught the fine ship off Singapore and straddled her with bombs. Even though mortally hit fore and aft and burning furiously, only one man was killed. The order to abandon ship was passed and a few moments later Mills was in the warm salt water with his only possessions — his shorts, socks and boots. Little did he know how long he was to wear these clothes. He waded ashore just in time to have a rifle and a bayonet shoved into his hands, then moved up to the front to be held in reserve.

But the British doughboys were pushed back. Mills stepped into the front line and took his station alongside a swathy infantryman exchanging shot for shot with these small, extraordinary harmless looking brown soldiers that kept pouring towards him in never-ending numbers.

This was his first taste of battle. In a few days, the Japanese cut off their water supply and on Feb. 15, 1942, the British capitulated. With bitterness, Mills remembers dropping his rifle on the growing heap and falling into the ragged, bewildered ranks that lined the dark street — a prisoner of war.

The first few days were uneventful. They were not bothered by their captors

probably because the Japanese were busy elsewhere. Mills stayed in his original barracks and ate the regular Army supply of food. Then they were ordered to a huge camp on the other side of the city.

There, their misery started in the form of frequent beatings done with a bamboo stick or a rifle butt. A Japanese guard would issue an order but the prisoners, not understanding the strange language, would stand fast shrugging their shoulders questioningly. The result was a slap across the face and a thorough beating for not moving quicker to execute the order.

It evidently never occurred to the Japanese that the prisoners did not know their language. Thus, the first job for every man was to learn enough Japanese to get along. Mills explained that by watching the guards, noticing their different reactions and listening to their chatter, it was not long before he could understand them fairly well and talk the language a bit himself.

In November of this same year, Mills was moved to Thailand along with thousands of others. Here started the most fantastic and horror-ridden months of his captivity. The Japanese had decided to put their prisoners to work building what the Allies termed the "impossible railroad" running between Bangkok and Mulmein (Burma).

The railroad ran through dense jungle filled with insects, thick underbrush and a terrible, wet heat. The Japanese saved some time by following the twisting banks of a slow, muddy river. This was the only bright spot in Mills' life. Here he was allowed to bathe and relax for a few minutes from the ceaseless, back-breaking work. Soon after his arrival, the trop-

(continued on next page)

*Their misery started in the form of frequent beatings with a bamboo stick or a rifle butt.*

## Feature Article

### Prisoner of War (continued)

ical monsoons started in earnest. There was mud everywhere and he lived in crude shelters made of bamboo and woven leaves with mud floors.

Nothing was ever dry. Either one sweated profusely or it rained. Mills still had his original clothing of shorts, socks and boots. These did not stand up well in their new surroundings and it was not long before he was living like a savage. After his boots went, he spent many agonizing weeks walking on bruised, bleeding feet until they became hard and tough.

But the worst hardship was the food. This consisted of a small bowl of rice two or three times a day with a small portion of soup which was really colored water. Once in a long while, trucks would struggle up from the coast bringing fresh vegetables and meat. But this supply would be consumed in a matter of days. Even so, Mills maintained that had things stayed in this state, life would not have been unbearable.

It was three months later that the terror struck. Four men in one of the camps died suddenly. They did not die from beatings or malnutrition but from an old and terrible disease. These men vomited blood, doubled up in pain, their skin turning a dark purple or black, and dying in agony a few hours later. Across the camps swept the feared word — cholera!

Men looked at each other in dread, wondering who would be struck down next. A few thought of escape but the wilds of the jungle and the death sentence if caught were enough to discourage them. In the wake of this disease came others — dysentery, beri-beri, malaria, and the fungi disease gotten from a tiny scratch causing a huge tumor that often necessitated amputation.

But the Japanese did nothing. What medical care there was was done by British doctors. These men did all they could under impossible conditions, many being sick themselves. For the thousands that died, more were brought in to take their place. In the camp of 2,000 men that Mills was in, over 1,600 died and his immunity could not hold out forever, especially now in his weakened condition. Finally, he was stricken with beri-beri, dysentery and several times with a touch of malaria. What saved him was his fine physique developed from a boyhood lust for sport.

Near the end of the work on the railroad, Mills thinks he must have gone out of his mind as he can remember little except that men were shrivelling up

and dying like flies all around him. In Nov. '43, the ghastly work was finished, a project that had cost the Allies over 26,000 lives and many more in broken spirits. Still, Mills was kept deep in the jungle at the half way point on the railroad between Bangkok and Mulmein.

Then in June, Mills learned he was leaving. Down to the coast he went riding on the same rails that killed so many of his friends. The men were dirty, unshaven and naked. Mills did not notice this drastic change in his appearance. His bare feet were hard and scaly, and his skin, stretched tightly over his sharp bones, was black and leathery from long exposure to sun, wind and rain.

He was a walking skeleton, weighing 118 of his original 150 pounds. Even more fantastic, he was an inch and a half shorter. This is what 27 months of captivity by the Japanese had done.

On the coast, the Japanese awarded the prisoners with a decent meal

and a new set of clothes. The clothes were most grateful but the meal made the men sick — their stomachs were unaccustomed to digesting such food.

From here Mills went aboard an old British freighter, named by the Japanese the *Osaka Maru*, with 500 other prisoners. The ship was heavily loaded with iron ore bound for Japan. At first, the Japanese kept them in one small hold forward. Life was unbearable with no ventilation and their only sanitation a bucket dropped down from above to be hoisted at various times throughout the day whenever the crew got around to it. Either the Japanese skipper took pity on them or the stench of human sweat and dirt became too much for them as later on their first day the men were moved topside. There they had their own mess on deck and could lounge around at will in the clean, fresh air and cool ocean breezes.

The first week was uneventful with not even a stray American patrol interrupting the quiet. Then nature decided to take a hand in matters. The barometer went down like a rocket and the gentle breezes of the South China Sea rose to a howling hurricane of better than 100 mph. The ship was too old and clumsy to navigate the gigantic waves and a mortal leak sprung open forward.

For three days all hands pumped and bailed. But finally the green water took a hold and the skipper did the only thing left — headed for the nearest land.

(continued on next page)

*Men were dying in agony  
and across the camps  
swept the feared word —  
cholera.*



## Prisoner of War (continued)

With her decks awash, he grounded her high on the reefs off the southern tip of Formosa. During these last hours, Mills was down sweating it out in the fire room shoveling coal. During the storm 26 men had died from over exposure for the prisoners had been kept on deck the whole time. By some miracle, no one was lost over the side. But now they were aground and in great danger of being rapidly dashed to pieces by the giant waves. There were no boats aboard and it was certain suicide to try to swim for it. Suddenly out of the rolling mountains of sea, two gray Japanese destroyers plowed toward them and hove to just off the wreck. Then, with expert seamanship, the Japanese sailors ran the gauntlet time and again in their small rowing boats to rescue every man aboard the doomed ship.

Mills was surprised and impressed by his first acquaintance with the Japanese Navy. He said these men and their general behavior was as different from that of the army as black and white. The sailors treated them well, gave them cigarettes, candy and a good hot meal. There were no beatings or harsh words. These men were clean, orderly and strangely polite with their survivors.

The destroyers took them to a nearby port and transferred them to a Japanese troopship, the *Hakusan Maru*. Here they were quartered in holds back-to-back, shoulder-to-shoulder. They were made to crouch in small racks one on top of the other. Twenty minutes a day was all that was allowed for a stretch on deck and a breath of fresh air.

While on this ship, their convoy was severely attacked by American submarines and planes. Mills had a curious sensation of joy and fear watching the bombs strike home or blow holes in the sea, filling the air with fine salt spray. During one attack, he saw a large German raider, which was acting as an escort, disappear in a cloud of smoke when caught by torpedoes. It was a great sight seeing the Japanese get it but at the same time, a terrible thing knowing that thousands of fellow prisoners were going to their watery deaths each time a Japanese ship was blown to the bottom. Finally, two weeks later, the ship docked and Mills stepped down the narrow gangway into the cold air of Moji, Japan.

It was a Aug. '44 and Mills still had enough energy

to stare at the strangely shaped houses and narrow streets and small, slant-eyed people that scurried about. The air was bracing and clean compared to the hot, humidity of Burma. The Japanese gave the prisoners a rare treat in a hot bath and a thorough cleaning of all their gear. Then there was mail, though Mills did not get any. This was a great disappointment since his last mail was in Bangkok and these four letters had been written before he had been captured. He mentioned that mail was very poor for

everyone because the Japanese did not believe in mail and consequently whole bags never reached the men.

Mills was put to work in a large shipyard near Osaka where destroyers and troopships were being built. He was not allowed to work on the ships, only in the shops where they could be carefully watched by the guards. He

was amazed at the poor quality of equipment that was installed in these ships. This revelation convinced him that the Japanese would be defeated even though he had heard nothing concerning the true state of the world. Mills met his first Japanese civilians at this shipyard — people who were working for practically nothing and were starving along with the prisoners. A strange feeling of comradeship sprung up between them. The civilians refused to overwork and expected the prisoners to do likewise.

Then, on Nov. 30th, Mills watched the earth destroy half of Japan's third largest city, Osaka, in one of their worst earthquakes. The concussion of a bomb or the roar of a gun he was quite used to, but this new sensation of everything moving, swaying, high scaffolding crashing to the ground and the whole earth moving awed and terrified him in its immensity of unseen power.

Three months later, the whisper of the cold breeze was filled with danger again for this city, this time in the form of man-made horror. Giant American B-29 bombers flew in over the target, flying so high only their vapor trails were visible. Mills could see Japanese fighters going up to meet this white trail. Soon the fighters would become a vapor reaching up, up and then stop, turn and curve down — the bombers were just too high for them.

At night, two-engined bombers came in, swooping low and dropping their sticks of incendiaries in ceaseless layers, spreading fire everywhere. Again, Mills experienced that strange feeling of hilarity

(continued on next page)

*Mills saw a German raider, which was serving as an escort, disappear in a cloud of smoke when caught by torpedoes.*

## Feature Article

### **Prisoner of War** (continued)

watching these planes wing their way over the burning city, coming in so low that it seemed their sleek bodies would touch the flames that licked skyward. His camp fared far better than the city. The prisoners, veterans of the blitz of England, know how to handle a fire bomb. But the Japanese went absolutely wild having had no experience in this type of warfare and having made no preparations.

It was in May '45 that Mills was sent to Omi to work in a Carbide factory. This job was almost too much for him with its extreme changes in temperatures between stoking the furnaces and stepping outside into the cold air. But to compensate for his strenuous work came the startling novelty of his new camp. Amongst the prisoners was a British officer who had smuggled in a powerful radio set. During the week he would pick up bits of news then tell the men each Saturday. In this way Mills caught up on what had happened since his capture. He knew of the invasion of Okinawa and the coming intensified attacks by B-29s on more Japanese cities, and finally, the drastic results of the atomic bomb.

At last they heard from San Francisco that the war was over. But the cold, blank voice of the radio sounded strangely unconvincing. Yet the Japanese changed — there was a sudden quietness everywhere. Their guards no longer bullied them or ordered them to work. Something had surely happened.

It was on Sept. 16th that Mills learned that the war was really over. It was a bright, cool day with the sky startlingly blue between the white clouds. The men were all out in the square waiting for their noon meal when they heard the familiar drone of approaching planes. Between the clouds, American fighter planes appeared going west. Twice they came in with the second group, a little lower. At last, one must have seen something, perhaps the 500 men in the square waving their shirts and shouting, opening their lungs and hearts to the heavens shouting. The plane dropped low, circled, then flew away to the west. The men stopped yelling, their shirts dropped limply to their sides. A strange, sad silence settled over them

as they looked down where a little breeze stirred the gray dust at their feet. Then the quiet was disturbed by a deep throbbing. The men looked up. Suddenly, out of the fleecy clouds, out of the blue to the west they came, their wings gleaming, their propellers flashing in the sun. Nearer, nearer...could it be, could it be!

They were almost overhead, the deep drone a magnificent thunder. Then, one, two, three, four — they peeled away from their perfect formation and came hurtling down, straight down toward the men who stood like stones unable to understand, unable to believe it had happened. Down they came, their propellers rising to a shattering scream. Just above the men they leveled off, gunning their engines in bursts and frantically wiggling their wings in the international salute of all pilots. Still more came and more thundering over the men who stood bare headed in the square, tears streaming down their faces, choking with sobs.

A few days later, B-29s and liberators came over and dropped food and clothing. After this the Japanese took Mills and the others through Tokyo to Yokohama where the more serious cases were put aboard waiting hospital ships. Mills went out to a nearby airstrip and stepped aboard his first airplane, a C-54. He flew to Okinawa and then to Manila. Here, in his new quarters, he saw a cot again and felt the soft mattress and cool, clean sheets. He had forgotten such luxury existed.

Ten days later, he stood on a long steel dock looking up at the big gray transport which was to start him on his way home. He shook his head and blinked hard. Yes, it was the same stack, the same straight bow and high superstructure. He almost let himself laugh thinking of the strange turn of events. Here he was going home on the same ship that had brought him out of to all those years of misery. With a strange feeling of joy and sadness, he walked up the steep gangway on his way home at last.

**Final Note:** A letter was received from Mrs. Mills in England, saying her husband, Frederick, had died on June 8, 1990.

*Mills almost let himself laugh — here he was going home on the same ship that had brought him out to all those years of misery. With a strange feeling of joy and sadness, he walked up the steep gangway on his way home at last!*



## Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association

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