



the Quarterdeck Log

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Volume 28, Number 2

Summer 2013

Happy 223rd Birthday to the U. S. Coast Guard!

CGCVA Leaders Attend Coast Guard Festival in “Coast Guard City, USA” Grand Haven, Michigan

Author's Note: It began with a telephone call when Steve Petersen called me and asked, “Want to go to Grand Haven?” That call began an adventure that we would call a once-in-a-lifetime experience. My wife Mimi and I met up with Steve and his wife Kay, who had driven up from Texas. We hope you enjoy the story as much as we enjoyed the trip.

By Mike Placencia and Steve Petersen

The 89th Coast Guard Festival in Grand Haven, Michigan was in full force when we arrived. We were designated members of the Official Party by CDR Michael Smith (ret.), CG Festival Executive Director and put into the care of Ms. Mary Eagin, Official Party Hostess. In port and open for public tours were *CGC Mackinaw*, *CGC Mobile Bay*, and the Canadian *CGC Samuel Risley*. Street fairs, car shows and a carnival dotted the downtown streets of Grand Haven. The entire Tri-Cities Area came out in force to recognize the men and women of the Coast Guard and CG Auxiliary over a

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Steve Petersen (left) and Mike Placencia stand by the Coast Guard City USA sign outside the CG Sector Office, Grand Haven.



USCG 223rd Birthday Cake prepared for the Retirees Dinner.

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THE QUARTERDECK LOG

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From the President

Greetings Shipmates

As this *QD Log* issue gets ready to go to press, VP Steve Petersen and his wife, Kay, and Mimi and I are recovering from a full week of whirlwind activities at the Coast Guard Festival in Grand Haven, MI. Steve and I attended as CGCVA representatives. Coverage of our trip is included in this issue. But leading up to the trip, I had to really think if I had ever been in the Ninth Coast Guard District. By the way, merely changing planes at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport doesn’t count. After about a week I came up with two instances — A Super Bowl weekend in Buffalo with a side trip to Niagara Falls and a Chicago vacation — 30 years apart. And yes, both Buffalo and Chicago are in the Ninth. Not knowing what to expect, I called upon PNP Ed Swift and PNP Paul Scotti. Both have attended this annual event in an official CGCVA capacity and both indicated they had outstanding times. We look forward to an equally rewarding experience. BTW, my thanks to Swifty for “greasing the skids” for us with the festival’s executive director, Mike Smith, an old shipmate of his. All four of us were treated like royalty throughout the entire visit.



Mike Placencia

2013 Reno Reunion — It’s a Wrap!

Put this one in the books. Steve, Gary Sherman, and I have dotted the i’s and crossed the t’s. Financially it was a big success and judging from comments of those who attended, we scored on that account as well. If you did not attend, we hope you enjoyed Paul Scotti’s outstanding narrative. We could not have asked for a better supporting cast and I hope they will enlist for another go in 2015, regardless of where we end up. I would like to point out that Chief Master at Arms Ed Floyd was the one who rang the bell signifying those who had crossed the bar since the last reunion.

2015 Reunion Update

Steve Petersen and I remain as reunion planners. We have added the “Cat Lo Repair Force” who will provide ground support. Let us know if you are interested in getting

Next QD Log deadline is November 1, 2013. Please email articles and photos to the editor at: swiftie1@verizon.net

From the President (cont.)

onboard. We can guarantee you a great time. We have received several proposals to host the next Reunion. Still in play: Buffalo, NY; Cape Cod, MA; Jacksonville, FL, Tampa, FL. We will be hearing from Williamsburg, VA and Knoxville, TN shortly. Two new sites have surfaced:

Pensacola, FL and Portland, ME. It is our goal to narrow the list to three finalists by Fall 2013 and have a selection in January 2014.

Until next time, I wish you great health and high spirits.
Semper Paratus,
Michael Placencia

From the Service Officers

Meaning of the Flag Draped Coffin

Have you ever noticed how an honor guard pays meticulous attention to correctly folding the United States of America Flag 13 times? You probably thought it was to symbolize the original 13 colonies, but we learn something new every day!

The 1st fold of the flag is a symbol of life.

The 2nd fold is a symbol of the belief in eternal life.

The 3rd fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing the ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of the country to attain peace throughout the world.

The 4th fold represents the weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.

The 5th fold is a tribute to the country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, 'Our Country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong.'

The 6th fold is for where people's hearts lie. It is with their heart that they pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty

and Justice for all.

The 7th fold is a tribute to its Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that they protect their country and their flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of their republic.

The 8th fold is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day.

The 9th fold is a tribute to womanhood, and Mothers. For it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.

The 10th fold is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of their country since they were first born.

The 11th fold represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies in the Hebrews eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The 12th fold represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in the Christians eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.

The 13th fold, or when the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding them of their nations motto, 'In God We Trust.'



Let Your Name Live On

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

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



Gary Sherman

Shipmates,

The Association has had a few requests, this year for donations and we have had to prioritize our participation and contribution level to determine which causes to support that best match the interests of the Association's membership.

In February we donated \$750 to fund the reception for the Nathan Bruckenthal Memorial dedication, and fortunately PNP

Joe Kleinpeter came to the rescue by funded that request (even though he was unable to attend the ceremony). Thank you Joe K!

We were also asked to support the building of the National Coast Guard Museum, that is being undertaken in New London, CT. We donated \$1,000 to make a significant contribution to this new project that will feature the bravery and sacrifice of all Coast Guardsmen, in both war and in peacetime.

Lastly, we donated \$1,000 to help build the Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial that is being planned and constructed at Training Center Cape May. This is the only Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial being planned and it is being built as a tribute to all Coast Guard enlisted men, whether they completed their training in Cape May or Alameda.

On the horizon, the CGCVA Scholarship Award is coming up and will require that we match the generous donation of the Van Campen Taylor family, with a \$1,000 donation.

Where does all this money come from? It comes from the money we make bi-annually at our National Reunion/Convention, and from the generous donations made in memory of members like Donald Clapp and from each and every member of the Association who pays their membership dues and throws in an extra \$5, \$10 or \$50 or more for the QD Log Boosters. And it comes from the Life Members who also donate to the Boosters time and time again.

The Association's officers and trustees scrutinize each and every request for donations and many times we have to say "Sorry, but we can't support that, at this time". However, there are some causes that are closer to our hearts and deserve to be considered and supported, at least at some level.

What can you do to help? Keep on giving generously to the QD Log Boosters! It all goes in the same pot and we use the money to get you the *Quarterdeck Log*, four times a year and support those causes that are more closely related to our Association's original purpose and current direction.

The QD Log Boosters is a way for both Life Members and Regular Members to provide some additional oil to keep the machinery running!

Your support is greatly appreciated! Thank you!
Semper Paratus, Gary Sherman

Prinsendam Rescue Reunion

A reunion celebrating the 33rd anniversary of "one of the Greatest Sea Rescues in Coast Guard History" will be held Oct. 5, 2013 in Seattle, WA. For details, contact YNCS (Ret.) Stan Jaceks at stanley2421@localnet.com or stanleyjaceks@gmail.com.

Welcome New Members

New Member (Sponsor)

Kenneth D. Ames, Sr. (Mike Placencia)
Richard M. Barren (Mike Placencia)
Ralph M. Dyssegaard (The Association)
Frederic J. Grady (The Association)
Marc S. Pryor (Mike Placencia)
Verne Anderson (Bill Demander)
Damon P. Juarez (Mike Placencia)
Terrence C. Phillippe (The Association)
Betty Schambeau (The Association)

Crossed The Bar

Raymond J. Buchonis, LM
Garret Conklin, LM
Herbert Copeland, LM
Raymond J. Evans, LM
Gary Hodge
Conrad Wilkie, LM

Auxiliary News



Betty Schambeau

I am honored to have been chosen as your CGCVA Auxiliary National President. I am a native Floridian and I know there are very few of us that are born and raised there. I left Florida as a young adult for a job with Delta Airlines and a few years later I married a home town Coast Guard man, Jerry Schambeau. After touring the U.S., thanks to the Coast Guard, plus 42 years of

marriage, we retired in our home town in San Antonio, Florida. We have three married children and three wonderful grandchildren (soon to be four). Grandkids are the best.

Jerry and I had the opportunity to go to the CGCVA 2013 reunion in Reno. The camaraderie and animated stories were a real privilege to be a part of. Then, I was chosen to be the president of our CGCVAA... what a privilege to be a part of such a fun and friendly group.

I feel it is wonderful that not just the spouses but also relatives of a CGCVA member have a purpose. We have a reason and things to do as members of the CGCVAA. Also, at the reunions it makes us feel we should be there to join in and celebrate. Please help share this news and promote membership in the Auxiliary.

I welcome and ask that if an Auxiliary member takes part in a veteran's event that you would share that with me. I would love to have the opportunity to boast about it in my article here in the *Quarterdeck Log*. A picture of it would be a great addition also.

I may be reached at:

Email: Betty.schambeau@embarqmail.com

Phone: (352) 279-3279

Mail: PO Box 207, San Antonio, FL 33576



Mimi Placencia and Kay Petersen at the Grand Haven, Michigan American Legion, site of the Enlisted Dinner at the 2013 Coast Guard Festival.

COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS AUXILIARY ASSOCIATION

Membership Information: NEW _____ RENEWAL _____ RETURNING _____ (Please print clearly)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Phone Number: _____ Cell: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Member name & relationship: _____

MAY 2013 renewal — \$15 for two year membership to expire in May 2015. In order to increase auxiliary membership, we would like to make this offer to new as well as elapsed members. Qualifications: Members limited to spouses of members in good standing of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association. For additional information please contact: **Mimi Placencia** (Secretary/Treasurer) at (661) 444-0186 or mimiplacencia@hotmail.com. Mail completed application and check (payable to CGCVA Auxiliary Assn) to Mimi Placencia at 9804 Iroquois Lane, Bakersfield, CA 93312.

Dear Editor

In my previous letter to you that you published in Volume 28/1 of the Quarterdeck Log, I mentioned that the fully Coast Guard-manned *LST 763*, on which I served and participated in the invasion of Iwo Jima, but I failed to include a photo which I am enclosing with this note with the hope that you might find use of it in some future issue of the magazine. Any use you make of this photo will be greatly appreciated by me and my former shipmates from the *LST*, who receive the magazine. Once again, thanks for your consideration and the excellent job that you are doing with the publication. Regards.

Michael Kristula RM3/c WWII

Editor's Note: Here's your ship's photo Mike and thanks for the kind words.



USCG-manned LST-763 at Iwo Jima.

With Special Forces in 1965 at Phu Quoc Island, RVN

In 1965 I was a junior petty officer on the staff of CG Squadron One. At the time the Squadron Commander was embarked on the *Krishna*, support ship anchored off An Thoi, Phu Quoc Island. One day I was given an assignment to go to the Special Forces A Team located at the PQ district town, Duong Dong. I was a Journalist ex-yeoman and my assignment was to type up a copy of a list of VC suspects that the SFA Team had so that the Task Force 115 (Market Time) units that patrolled from PQ could use the information during boardings. In those days there were no computers or copiers etc., and nobody had a mimeograph machine. It was a long list and I stretched it out to two nights and three days by trading some additional typing for the A Team Captain in exchange for a "tiger suit" set of camos.

This assignment was pretty exciting stuff for a kid in the Coast Guard. The A Team had occupied a house or colonial office building with direct access to the sea nearby. It was surrounded on three sides with an inner and outer perimeter that ran to the sea on both sides. Between the perimeters, a company sized unit of Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) troops was billeted. These were mostly overseas Chinese mercenaries hired out of Cholon, the Chinese ghetto of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). Because the SF did not trust them completely the CIDG were not allowed inside the inner perimeter after dark. There was one exception for the senior sergeant. This guy was probably Chinese but I'm not sure. He was a true soldier of fortune who had fought with the French against the Viet Minh and against French with the Viet Minh and now was fighting the VC with the Americans. There was nothing said about whether he had fought with the VC as well.

The Team had a large sign in the day room that declared in big letters, "There are no VC on Phu Quoc Island," which turned out to be a stupid and bitterly memorable quote from some visiting senior officer whose mouth overloaded his rear end. To drive home the black irony numerous weapons, including a Chicom rifle, taken from VC on the island were affixed to the sign board surrounding the quote. These, the board also informed, were NOT taken from VC cadre but rather from innocent farmers who had them only to protect their livestock and homes from marauding wild animals.

When I sojourned with them it turned out part of the Team was away from camp on an extended patrol elsewhere on the island. So not long after I arrived one of the team took me out to a gun position on the inner perimeter. The position was equipped with a 30 cal., MG on a tripod; assault rifle configuration. Did I know how to operate the weapon? Hey, hadn't I been through weapons



Bob Douville in 1965

training, including the 30 cal. MG, with the USMC at Camp Pendleton before we Squadron One plank holders departed for 'Nam? So I said "Sure I know how."

So this SF explained to me very matter of fact, "If we're attacked you get on this MG and start firing. If the VC start to come through the wire just set off one of these nearby Claymores. But if it looks like we are going to be overrun just take this thermite grenade, open the feed plate cover on the MG, pull the pin and set the grenade on the receiver with the cover resting on it. (At Pendleton a group of us watched such a grenade burn through a 1-inch steel plate in about 30 seconds; it seemed.) Then we'll fall back to the beach, get in our boats (inflatable rubber) and wait offshore for one of the CG patrol boats to pick us up."



Bob Douville today.

They had two 'four deuce' mortars. These things have a base plate that weighs as much as an adult Vietnamese male. Now, looking back, I don't know if the SF were entertaining themselves by shucking me or not but a couple of them decided they needed to be out at the airfield

You have to understand that this was explained with about as much emotion as describing what was for dinner. I thought to myself, "Attacked? Overrun? Rubber boats?" Fortunately there was no attack while I was there.

There were ARVN Regional Forces in Duong Dong. The SF called them, 'Ruff Puffs'. I think they were a sort of National Guard. Their organization and tactical practices left a lot to be desired as far as the SF were concerned. The last night I was at the Camp the Ruff Puffs went out to the DD airport to fire harassment at VC positions inland.

QD Log Booster Club

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

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

Robert S. Pinkerton	Ross Vanduser	William Hitt	Pasquale Panzarino
Edward Floyd	Douglas Scribner	Henry Wallace, Jr.	William Figone
Wilbert Huebner	James Hall	William C. Meyer	Alex L. Soltesz

Baker & Marylou Herbert IMO CWO Donald Clapp

Stephen Petersen IMO MKC Eugene (Gene) Hill

Baker & Marylou Herbert IMO CDR Ray Evans

Emmett Knapton, Jr. IMO All Korean War-era WDE's "They put in a lot of sea miles"

Thanks to all to have become QD Log Booster Club members so far! All contributions are appreciated! And remember, these deductions are tax deductible as we are 501.c.

with the 'Ruff Puffs' for this fire mission. When they asked I readily agreed to go along. The airfield was unsecured and inbound aircraft only landed if they saw the right color smoke of the day. The VC had leveled to operations/terminal bldg.

The fire mission was declared a 'charlie foxtrot' by my SF companions. It was black dark out. The Ruff Puffs had not set up a perimeter. The officers were arguing with one another and waving lighted flashlights around. The powder for one of the mortars was defective, apparently damp. They would drop rounds simultaneously in both tubes. One fired cleanly but when the other one left the tube it carried still burning propellant so fire shot out four or five feet around the muzzle temporarily lighting us up like a slow burning flashbulb. The round dropped drastically short in the nearby hills with a loud 'whump' followed by some interval with a far distant report of the other round exploding.

My SF companions got anxious about the situation, or so they said. They announced a return to the camp to retrieve a 30 cal., MG (with bipod) and some grenades. This we did, then drove back out to the airfield. (I had stuffed a hand grenade in my dungaree pants pocket. The darn thing made me nervous as I had images of the pin snagging on my clothes; with me unaware in the dark and 'blam' short toured.) We were in an Army truck, the kind that has the tarp cover and a tailgate; The MG was set up in the bed pointing out the rear with the tailgate dropped out of the way. In retrospect I don't know why I was nominated to be the gunner. But I still vividly remember my instructions, "If we get attacked you get in the back on the MG and we'll drive out of here." Then, pointing at the 'Ruff Puffs', "Don't worry about them. If they get in the way, shoot them too." We weren't and I didn't. When I got back to the ship, I told the Chief Staff Officer about my adventure to which he responded, "Damn Douville! If you'd been killed do you know how much paperwork we'd have to do?"

CDR Robert Douville, USCG (Ret.)

Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial

The Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association recently donated more than \$1,000 in support of the Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial Foundation. Members of the Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial Foundation accepted the donation from CGCVA life member Terry Lee near the planned site for the Memorial, which will be dedicated to the more than 1,500 enlisted Coast Guardsmen killed while in the performance of duty in times of war and peace. The

Enlisted Memorial Foundation plans to donate the memorial to the Coast Guard where it will be placed adjacent to the Signalman 1st Class Douglas Munro Memorial aboard Training Center Cape May, the birthplace of the Coast Guard enlisted corps.

"We are very grateful for the generosity and support of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association," said Tom Dougherty, the president of the foundation, a retired Coast Guardsman and a CGCVA member. "We still have a long way to go to break ground at the site; however, we are starting to see an upsurge of support for the memorial."

The Enlisted Memorial Foundation must raise \$450,000 to erect a memorial large enough to hold over 1,500 names in an honorable and respectful manner. Those interested in donating to the foundation can find more information at www.cgemf.org or send donations to P.O. Box 476, Cape May NJ 08204.

When it's constructed, the memorial will be centered on three granite walls; which identify by name, rating, and unit over 1,500 Coast Guardsmen who perished in the performance of Coast Guard missions.

The names begin in 1915, the year the Revenue Cutter Service and U.S. Life Saving Service were merged and Congress formalized the existence of the U.S. Coast Guard. It will be situated at the Coast Guard's only enlisted basic training facility where more than 80 percent of Coast Guardsmen start their Careers.



CGCVA member Terry Lee (right) presents check to Coast Guard Enlisted Memorial Foundation president Tom Dougherty, also a CGCVA member.

There is a memorial to Coast Guard officers located at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., the birthplace of the Coast Guard officer corps. The memorial at the Academy is called the Hall of Heroes and was spearheaded by the Academy Class of 1959.

Vietnam Museum

In late May I was in Virginia visiting wife's relatives and came across a privately owned Vietnam War Museum located in Ruckersville, Va., about 10 miles north of Charlottesville not far off U.S. 29. The web page is <http://www.vietnamwarfoundation.org/>. The gent who owns it says it is the largest private collection of Vietnam artifacts and memorabilia in the country.

It was no surprise to me to find nothing at all about the Coast Guard's participation in that war. I was there in the very early days of Coast Guard Squadron One ('65 and '66) and may have some photos I could contribute.

CDR Robert Douville, USCG (Ret.)

Editor's Note: This could be an opportunity for CGCVA members to offer CG-related Vietnam-era materials for display so if you have items that would help tell the story of the Coast Guard's roles in Vietnam, consider contacting the Vietnam War Museum to find out what they could use.

Coast Guard WWII Hero

Laid to Rest

Retired Coast Guard Commander Ray Evans, 92, was laid to rest June 5, with full military honors. Evans, who passed away May 30, was the final survivor of a dramatic rescue of a group of Marines pinned down by machine gun fire during the battle of Guadalcanal, September 1942 where he earned the Navy Cross.

Among those who attended the memorial service were his wife of more than 70 years, Dorothy; his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and Coast Guard Vice Commandant VADM John Currier. Members of the Marine Corps Security Force Battalion Bangor performed a three-volley salute at the funeral signifying the bond Evans and the Marine Corps have shared since the darkest days of World War II.

Evans joined the Coast Guard alongside the service's only Medal of Honor recipient, Signalman 1st Class Douglas Munro, in September 1939.

"[I] Came out of high school and looked for a job all summer in 1939 and it was a very poor time for jobs and



Coast Guard members of Base Seattle's Honor Guard escort the casket of Commander Ray Evans from the hearse at Mountain View Memorial Park, June 5, 2013. Evans was a good friend of Douglas Munro, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his valiant sacrifice at Guadalcanal, and was there with Munro the day that he died. (Coast Guard photo by PO3 Amy Nuckolls)

went to the Coast Guard and they said they had not taken a recruit in seven years," said Evans in an oral history recorded in 1992. "They called me back in September and said, 'Are you still interested? We've got seven openings. I said, 'yes I am.' And that's how it started, as an apprentice seaman at \$21 a month."

After joint assignments that took Evans and Munro from Washington to New York City, they found themselves aboard the *Hunter Liggett*. It was during a trip to India, 250 miles south of Cape Town, South Africa, on a quiet December morning in 1941, they heard over the radio bombs had fallen on Pearl Harbor.

Notices & Association News

In less than a year Evans and Munro were reassigned as coxswain and crew of Higgins boats responsible for transporting Marines to and from Guadalcanal. In the Second Battle of the Matanikau, part of the Guadalcanal campaign, after successfully taking Marines from the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division ashore, the two Coast Guardsmen returned to their previously assigned position. Almost immediately, they learned that conditions ashore were different than had been anticipated and the Marines were surrounded by enemy Japanese forces on the beachhead. The Marines needed to be evacuated. Both men volunteered for the job, brought their boats to shore under heavy



Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard VADM John Currier presents Dorothy Evans, widow of retired Coast Guard Commander Ray Evans with the National Ensign at the funeral in Lakewood, Wash., June 5, 2013. Evans was a WWII veteran who earned the Navy Cross at the Battle of Guadalcanal and retired from the Coast Guard in 1962 after 23 years of service. (Coast Guard photo by PO2 George Degener)

enemy fire and proceeded to evacuate the men on the beach.

Evans remained at his post during the entire evacuation. He maintained control of his boat with one hand on the wheel and continued to fire his weapon with the other until the last boat cleared the beach. When the majority of the Marines were in the boats, complications arose in evacuating the last men, whom Munro realized would be in the greatest danger. Munro placed himself and his boat to serve as cover for the last men to leave.

“I saw that Doug was facing forward, and I was standing up by the coxswain looking back, I saw this line of waterspouts coming across the water, and I yelled at Doug to get down,” said Evans

Visit to Cle Elum, Washington

Here are pictures taken in Cle Elum, WA at the Memorial for SM1 Douglas Munro. The event was the Gathering of the Guard and Board Meeting for the Washington Patriot Guard Riders. We went on a motorcycle ride and stopped to pay respects to SM1 Munro on the ride. Bill & Suzie Frost.



during his oral history. “He couldn’t hear me over the engine noise, and it hit him. It was one burst of fire. And that’s how he died. And that’s how it happened.”

Munro remained conscious long enough to say just four words.

“He said ‘did they get off?’ and that’s about all he said. And then he died. I don’t think he ever heard me answer him. It was very quick fortunately,” recalled Evans.

Evans remained humble about his service on Guadalcanal, despite the heroics exhibited that day.

“We just did a job,” said Evans. “We were asked to take them over there, and we were asked to bring them back off [of] there, and [that’s] what we did. That’s what the Coast Guard does. We do what we’re asked to do.”

The Coast Guard’s first major participation in the Pacific war was at Guadalcanal. During the war, the Coast Guard manned more than 350 ships and hundreds more amphibious type assault craft. Evans, and others serving alongside him, performed their mission with valor and bravery that has left an indelible mark in our service’s legacy.

“He was a multi-dimensional man. He was a man both ordinary and extraordinary. An officer, a leader, a husband, a father, a hero. He was iconic in Coast Guard history, amongst the very giants in our 220 year past,” said Currier at his memorial service.

While another chapter of a heroic World War II veteran has closed, his sacrifices will never be forgotten.

SCPO Daniel Tremper

[National Coast Guard Museum](#) [Launches New Website](#)

The National Coast Guard Museum Association has launched a new Web site: www.CoastGuardMuseum.org, to inform, engage, and communicate about the design, development and programming of the new National Coast Guard Museum intended to be built in downtown New London, Conn. Developed by Quinn & Hary Marketing, a Regan Communications company based in New London, the new Web site brings to life the storied history and traditions of the United States Coast Guard, as well as showcases the current design plans and fundraising efforts for the new museum. The functionality of the site also allows for donations to be made and enables people to

Save the Storis Campaign



Groups hoping to preserve the former Coast Guard cutter Storrs as a historic museum have been able to contact its new owner to see whether there’s a chance to spare the ship from the scrapyards. “Through an intermediary, we have been in discussion with the apparent high bidder,” said Joe Geldhof, a board member of the Juneau-based, nonprofit Storrs Museum and Educational Center. “We’re in — I wouldn’t say negotiation — but we’re under preliminary discussions about whether or not we can still save it.” The chances, however, are likely slim. “It’s very late in the game and it’s long odds — but we haven’t given up the ship yet,” Geldhof told the Ketchikan Daily News.

communicate directly with Association board members.

“This is a wonderful addition to our development, fundraising and marketing efforts,” said John Johnson, Treasurer of the National Coast Guard Museum Assoc. “Quinn & Hary did a masterful job listening to our goals and objectives and then translating them into this comprehensive site. It gives us a solid online presence for the new museum.”

The National Coast Guard Museum Association recently launched a fundraising campaign to raise \$1 million by Labor Day. Through minimum donations of \$1,000, \$5,000 or a three year commitment of \$15,000, these initial contributors to the National Coast Guard Museum will become members of the “Barque Eagle Society,” which will receive a unique limited edition painting of the United States Coast Guard Barque *Eagle* created on canvas by famed Coast Guard artist Tony Falcone of Prospect, Connecticut. The image is being created by Falcone after

sailing on *Eagle* this summer. Each image will be signed and numbered by the artist and ready for immediate hanging by the donor. For more information or to make a donation, anyone interested may contact the National Coast Guard Museum Association at (860) 443-4200 or by visiting the new Web site, www.CoastGuardMuseum.org.

The National Coast Guard Museum Association, Inc. is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the United States Coast Guard history and tradition.

Historic Piano Located

It's no secret the remote but vibrant Aleutian city of Unalaska is home to many treasures of Coast Guard lore, yet one of the most prominent would seem unlikely: A piano.

This piano is so important the crew from Coast Guard Cutter *Munro* gathered in their service dress blues at the house of City Councilwomen Zoya Johnson just to see it.

Johnson generously opened her home so guests could gather around the piano keys and give a showing of the Coast Guard's hymn, "Semper Paratus."

The musical selection was not only fitting for the company; it was on Johnson's piano, in the Summer of 1926, that "Semper Paratus" was first composed!

Groundwork for the event began in January, when Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher King was studying for his advancement exams. He was deep in the history and traditions study guide when he "noticed a simple line saying 'Semper Paratus' was written on Unalaska." The island's name stood out, of course. He'd visited it many times. In fact, Dutch Harbor has been central to Coast Guard Bering Sea patrols since 1885.

"CAPT. Cawthorn always liked to talk to us [the crew] about history, so I mentioned the piano to him," said King. On this tip, CAPT Mark A. Cawthorn researched the find and made an announcement to his crew later that week: "Word has it they've got the piano Semper Paratus was written on, right here in Dutch. So, when you're in town, ask around. Who knows...maybe we can find it."

That's all it took. The search lasted less than a day.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Martin, then-president of *Munro's* morale committee and a volunteer for a community service event at the Unalaska City School District, took his captain's advice over lunch with Superintendent John Conwell. Conwell didn't know whether the piano was on-island anymore, but he referred the crew to his friend and neighbor, Zoya Johnson, the director of the Museum of the Aleutians.

She seemed likely to be the resident expert. But when Conwell contacted Johnson, he got a surprise. Not only did she know exactly where the piano was, it turned out that she had come to be its private owner. The story of how the "Semper Paratus" piano came to prominence and how it came to be with Johnson is equally noteworthy.

Eighty-six years earlier, America's oldest continuous seagoing service had no marching song, but it could not have had a more qualified composer than CAPT Francis Van Boskerck. Commissioned in the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service in 1891, his generation was witness to the heroic

feats of the *Bear* throughout Alaska, of the *Hudson* in the Spanish-American War and even the official birth of the modern Coast Guard in 1915 when the Revenue Cutter Service merged with the U.S. Life-Saving Service.

Soon, Van Boskerck became commanding officer of *Bear* and it was in 1922, while stationed aboard cutter *Yamacraw* at Savanna,

Ga., that Van Boskerck wrote down the lyrics to "Semper Paratus." But five years after penciling his ballad about the service he loved, he had still not come up with a melody. When comfortably cloistered on the Island of Unalaska in 1927 as a Bering Sea patrol commander, "Captain Van" finally found the time and the inspiration to finish his work. He had befriended Clara Goss, whose family owned the Unalaska Company. Goss' family then happened to own the only piano in the Aleutians; a 1913 Bush & Lane built in Chicago, which the family had shipped to their private home in town.



The piano used by the late CAPT Francis Van Boskerck to compose the melody for "Semper Paratus" sits in the home of Unalaska, Alaska resident Zoya Johnson.

According to local tradition, when Goss learned about Van Boskerck's lyrics, she insisted he put them to music and made her piano available for the task. Thus Van Boskerck with two accomplices from the Public Health Service, Alfred E. Nannestad and Joseph O. Fournier, produced the enduring but simple compliment to his lyrics.

Sometime after Van Boskerck left Unalaska, the Goss house burned in an accidental fire and the piano was salvaged and brought to the original Jesse Lee Home for Orphans, also in town. No record was maintained of the piano's historical importance and, after decades of good use, it fell into disrepair. In the 1980s, the home discarded the piano to a town burn-pile. Johnson's husband, Robert, found the piano, rescued it from the refuse, patched it up and brought it to the family home where it resides today. As fate would have it, this historic instrument was in the household of a historian and museum curator.

"It wasn't until years later when we did a Coast Guard history day that we began to make the connection," Johnson explained to those gathered at her home. "There was only one other piano on the island that might have been old enough and it belonged to my neighbor." But on investigation, Johnson learned her neighbor's piano arrived on island almost a decade too late to have been the Van Boskerck instrument. The identity of her piano was settled, and the care for its legacy was assured.

"It's amazing," Johnson commented to the crew, gathered in her living room around the old upright, "We have always been so close to the Coast Guard here. So much that you are members of this community. To find a connection like this is remarkable." Mayor Shirley Marquardt, who was also present, heartily agreed. As it happens, her father CAPT Robert C. Towell was a Coast Guard aviator whose career spanned 30 years.

Prior to the gathering around the piano, *Munro* hosted Johnson and Marquardt aboard the ship and shared their deep appreciation for the hospitality of their generous hosts in Dutch Harbor and for their stewardship of a proudly shared heritage.

"In a 27-year career, I had never been to the Pacific or to the Bering Sea before reporting to *Munro*," Cawthorn



Coast Guard-manned USS Serpens (AK-97)

said at they gathered on the ship's flight deck. "And, in all that time, I have never felt so close to our history as I have right here." **LTJG Jacob Hauser**

Dear Editor

I really enjoyed the article a few issues back on the *Serpens* (AK-97). I knew that ship well and had several friends in the crew, including one close friend, William H. Harlow. My ship, *USS Celtic* (IX-137), crossed paths with *Serpens* on several occasions and we'd have a

get-together. *Serpens* made regular runs from Australia to New Hebrides (our base) to the Solomons. She made so many runs to Bougainville, we dubbed her the Bougainville Express.

We planned a meeting in the Guadalcanal-Florida Is. for January 30 or 31, 1945. *Serpens* was to be at Lunga Point at that time and we were at Purvis Bay to top off and pick up orders. On pulling into the slot the morning of January



USS Celtic (IX-137)

30th, we passed through a vast debris field. Our blinker to the *Serpens* was answered by the Navy Signal Station, informing us of the disaster. *Serpens* was not an ammunition ship, per se, but rather general cargo, liberty. This could have been her first time carrying explosives. Needless to say, that debris field was the *Serpens*.

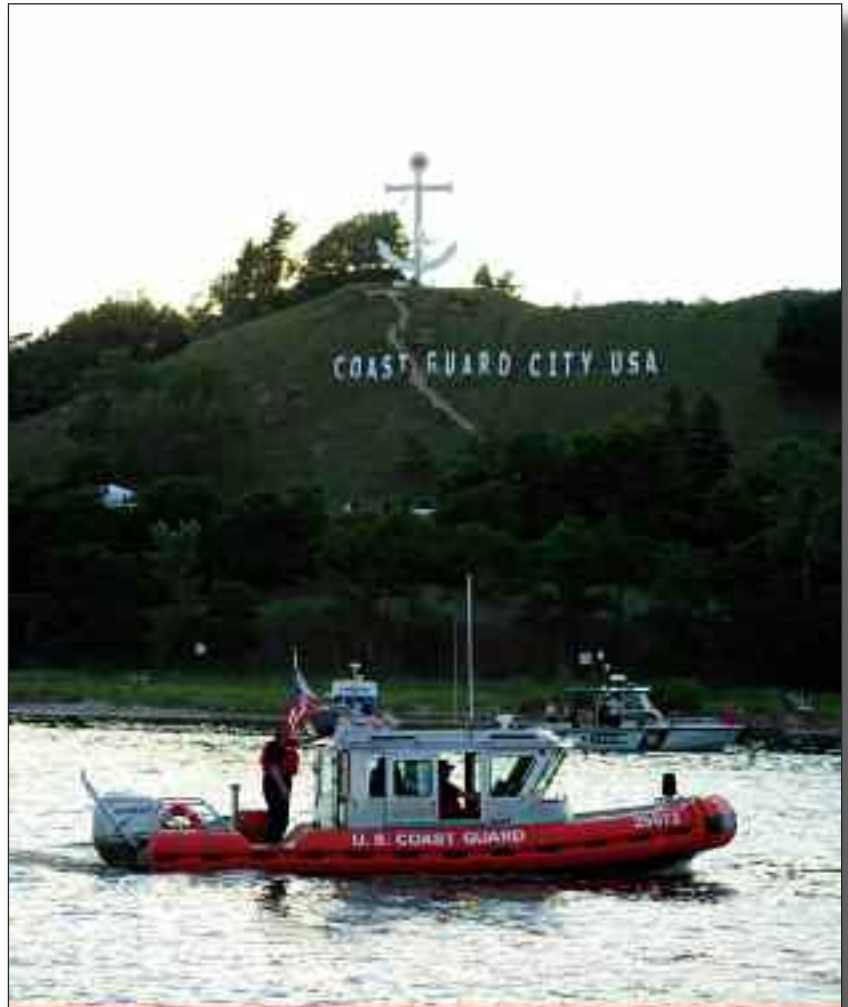
Celtic was a tanker. We were to top off, get orders and 'tow' a concrete tanker to Ulithi for the Okinawa Invasion. We won! Semper Paratus! **Bill Hitt, LM, USCGR '42-'46**

Happy 223rd Birthday

Whether you are active-duty, reserve, retired or a Coast Guard veteran; whether you may be serving overseas or stateside; and whether you attended a large Coast Guard festival celebration or just shared some cake and sea stories with an old retired pal, I hope you enjoyed the Coast Guard's 223rd birthday. Semper Paratus Shipmates! **The Editor**



(Above) CWO3 Bob Kreis (Ret.) and LCDR Ed Swift (Ret.) celebrate the Coast Guard's 223rd birthday on August 4th in Northern Virginia.



(Right) Coast Guard smallboats on patrol during the annual Coast Guard Day Festival at Grand Haven, Michigan.

Going...Going...Gone!



In this combination of Associated Press photos, Building 877, the largest non-historic building on Governors Island, is imploded to make way for the new Governors Island park, Sunday, June 9, 2013 in New York. The implosion was visible from various points in and around the New York Harbor, including the Battery in Manhattan, the Staten Island Ferry, and Jersey City and Liberty State Park in New Jersey.

(AP Photo/Jason DeCrow)

Editor's Note: This really struck a cord with me since the Swift Family lived in Bldg. 877 for two years on the second floor. I wonder how many other members lived in "the highrise" or at G.I. during the CG years?

Celebrating the Coast Guard's 223rd Birthday

(continued from page 1)

period of nine days, just as they have been doing this since 1924.

We caught up with the festival on Wednesday, July 31st by arriving in Grand Haven just before noon. The Chief Petty Officer's Association Grand Haven Chapter provided table space for CGCVA materials. A trip to the CG Exchange was in order and that was our first sighting of Commandant ADM Bob Papp. Inconspicuously dressed in civilian clothes, he moved about freely — that is until we recognized him. We greeted him, shook hands and began the first of three personal meetings we were to have with him. The Commandant was very attentive noticing our name badges and making us feel welcome to the festival.

Sea duty was calling to us as we boarded the *Mackinaw* for a personal tour conducted by CGCVA eligible MCPO Kristen Kiehl. When we got on the bridge, we were introduced to the Commanding Officer, CDR Michael Davanzo.

It did not take long for us to go back in time to our earlier careers. We brought him up to speed on the CGCVA and he mentioned that some of his crew may be eligible. To our disappointment we did not get underway but it was getting late and we headed to the Eagles Lodge for the Retiree's Dinner. More camaraderie, good chow and beverages, and a whole lot of story telling.



Ninth District Commander RADM Fred Midgette commenting at the Walk of Coast Guard History dedication.



Steve and Mike with YNC Stephani Norton, CG Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year.



Mimi and Mike Placencia, Kay and Steve Petersen at the Official Party Dinner sponsored by the City of Ferrysburg.



Steve and Mike with BMC Ben Snider, CG Enlisted Person of the Year.



Members of the CG Band entertaining at reception on the Mackinaw.

On Thursday, August 1st, Mike and Steve toured the *CGC Mobile Bay* and spent the afternoon wandering about the Grand Haven waterfront making friends. Later that evening, the four of us were invited to the Tri-Cities Community Dinner. We met the civic leaders of

(Right) Fly over at the Escanaba Memorial service with CG Honor Guard Detail on deck of Mackinaw.



Celebrating the Coast Guard's 223rd Birthday



View from the CGC Mackinaw awaiting the Escanaba Memorial Service.

Grand Haven, Ferrysburg and Spring Lake, the festival hosts. After dinner, back to the waterfront stadium to see the USO Liberty Bells/Salute to Veterans show: a musical medley of songs from the war years.

On Friday morning, August 2nd, two events were held at the same time. Mimi and Kay attended the Spouse's Breakfast hosted by Dr. Darren and Paige Riopelle at their home. Mike and Steve attended the "All Hands" at Station Grand Haven. We were the only retirees to have been invited. We met Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Michael Leavitt. He was first to speak to the assembled group



Mike Placencia, Coast Guard Commandant ADM Bob Papp, and Steve Petersen at the Enlisted Dinner.



Posting of the wreath that will lay before the CGC Escanaba mast.

of active duty personnel and reminded them that this was their chance to ask questions of the Commandant. After a greeting by Ninth District Commander, RADM Fred Midgette, ADM Bob Papp took the podium. He presided over two enlisted advancements, one officer promotion, and one re-enlistment. He spoke of a very encouraging 2014 budget and that they were currently working on the 2015 budget. He proudly stated that the Coast Guard was at ninety-six percent retention. And in a very sobering moment, reminded us that anything less than total respect in the workplace is unaccept-

(Left) Beatles Tribute Group entertaining CG personnel and families.

Celebrating the Coast Guard's 223rd Birthday

able. We knew what he meant. Then ADM Papp acknowledged our presence and advised that CGCVA keep telling our story and reaching out.

At noon, we joined up with Mimi and Kay at City Hall for the Walk of Coast Guard History Dedication and then to a Welcome Reception aboard *CGC Mackinaw*, where we enjoyed light refreshments and were entertained by members of the Coast Guard Band. Next was the National Memorial Service in Escanaba Park, noting the 73rd anniversary of the sinking of *CGC Escanaba*. We also paid

(Below) Mary Eagin, Official Party Hostess and CDR Mike Smith (ret.), CG Festival Executive Director.



Ms. Jeannie Sanson (center), CG Civilian of the Year with BMC Snider and YNC Norton.



Let the Parade begin.

time is was the Company Men, a repeat quartet from festival past. As we awaited the fireworks extravaganza (and it was spectacular), we saw two restored CG boats patrolling the waterfront — a 41-footer and a 47-footer — operated by the CG Auxiliary. One last event was the Afterglow — a chance to say goodbye to new friends and express our sincere appreciation to the many festival staff members and volunteers, Coast Guard men and women, Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the Tri-Cities civic leaders for honoring the Coast Guard. A special Bravo Zulu goes to Mike Smith and Mary Eagin. The special attention lavished upon us and the CGCVA made our visit most memorable. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your 89th Celebration of the United States Coast Guard. Semper Paratus.

our respects to the Coast Guard personnel who lost their lives during the past year. It was the time for the Enlisted Dinner, a short walk to the American Legion, our host. Food was excellent and the guests were entertained by the Coast Guard Pipe Band.

Everyone likes a parade and the entire area showed up for one. Mike and Steve were driven in a 1958 Oldsmobile convertible. Mimi and Kay chose to ride in the Trolley. Perched on the back seat, we rode the parade route to cheering crowds. Both sides of the car plastered with our Association name. A very proud moment for both of us as we waved and applauded the crowd for coming out.

We knew the festival was nearing its end. We were treated once more to great entertainment at the Waterfront Stadium later that evening. This



USCG Pipe Band marching in the parade.

“Skill, courage under enemy fire, and devotion to duty:” Bronze Star Medal Recipient Heriberto “Eddie” Hernandez and Coast Guard Smallboat Operations in Vietnam

by William H. Thiesen, Ph.D., Atlantic Area Historian

Editor’s Note: All events, descriptions and contextual information in this article derive from official records, original documents, first-hand accounts, and correspondence with Point Cypress crewmembers and members of the Hernandez Family.

Like many Vietnam veterans, Coast Guard boatswain’s mate Tom Hogan returned home from the war with a lot of emotional baggage. He would never lose that baggage. In 2007, at the 25th anniversary of the Vietnam War Memorial, he and his family joined other Coast Guard combat veterans in the nation’s capital. The day he visited the memorial, he searched for the name “Hernandez” among the thousands listed on “The Wall.” Hogan had to kneel before the monument to find the name he wanted. He found “Heriberto S. Hernandez” and brought out a pencil to rub its outline on a piece of paper. The inscription proved so long that he had to line up two sheets of paper to capture the full name on one line.

At that instant, on his knees while tracing the name of a fallen comrade, with his son and his grandson at his side, Hogan’s wartime experiences and pent-up emotions — good and bad — came rushing back. His tears flowed freely and his grandson grew confused asking why his grandfather was crying. It was difficult to explain to a four-year-old boy how Coast Guardsmen had fought and died in such a faraway place. And it was harder still to describe how men like Hogan,

who served in Vietnam, felt the loss of a fallen comrade, even if each had served aboard different cutters. It was as if he and Hernandez were related not just by common purpose, but by blood.

Like their predecessors who participated in every major American conflict since 1790, Coast Guardsmen who served in Vietnam shared a common bond. To many, the experience proved a defining event in their lives, never to be forgotten. While the Coast Guardsmen of Vietnam held within them this shared experience and the emotional scars that came with it, each was a unique individual. Like Hernandez, and Hogan, those who served in Vietnam came from different parts of the U.S. and each man brought to the Service, and the war, his own unique background.

And so begins the story of Heriberto Segovia Hernandez, who was born on July 13, 1948, in Laredo, Texas. His parents, Heriberto and Juanita Hernandez, came to the United States as migrant workers harvesting produce in the farm fields of West Texas. A second son, Hector

Segovia Hernandez, was born two years later and the two siblings grew very close over the course of their childhood. The family settled down in San Antonio, where a younger sister Margaret was born, and Heriberto senior began a long career with San Antonio’s famous Pearl Brewing Company. A hallmark of the Hernandez family was service to others. Pearl Brewing singled out Mr. Hernandez as a model employee and he and his sons were known to stop and assist stranded motorists along the roads of San Antonio



A color portrait of Heriberto Segovia Hernandez during his school days at Kennedy High School in San Antonio, Texas. (Courtesy of the Hernandez Family)

and western Texas.

Heriberto junior was a true Texan. To his family, he was known as “Betín,” but he acquired the nickname “Eddie” because his Anglo teachers and friends could not properly pronounce his first name. He had an extensive knowledge of, and love for, his home state and childhood vacations were spent with relatives living in Corpus Christi, where he enjoyed swimming, fishing and playing on the beach. His favorite song was “Tighten Up,” performed by the Houston rhythm and blues band Archie Bell & the Drells. In describing Eddie, one of his shipmates in Vietnam later claimed, “He was Texas.”

Eddie had two sides to his personality. On one side, he was helpful, easygoing and had the interests of many young men, such as girls and cars. His neighbors in San Antonio described him as “always willing to help in any way possible” and “always trying to better himself in every way possible.” His commanding officer in Vietnam, Jonathan Collom, remembered Eddie as an outgoing person who never bragged about himself and always smiled with “an infectious grin.” On the other side, Eddie could be strong-willed and tough, personality traits



Eddie Hernandez's black and white service portrait showing him prior to his tour in Vietnam. (Courtesy of the Hernandez Family)

shared by his siblings. While attending Kennedy High School, he took up boxing at the local gym and became a highly skilled lightweight boxer. Eddie was well liked by his shipmates in Vietnam, who remembered him for his compact yet powerful build.

It was Eddie's single-minded determination that led him to join the Coast Guard, volunteering as soon as he could. His fond memories of playing in the waters of Corpus Christi attracted him to the Service and, days before his seventeenth birthday, he began collecting the paperwork required to enlist. Against the wishes of his parents and well before he finished high school, Eddie joined the Coast Guard for a term of four years. On July 27, 1965, just two days after his birthday, he

departed San Antonio for the Coast Guard Training Center in Alameda, Calif. He left behind his saddened parents and siblings, and his high school girlfriend, who would wait to marry him after his enlistment ended.

Eddie had no trouble with the physical challenges of testing and training at boot camp. However, his stubbornness did pose problems for him as he learned to subordinate his own will to the dictates of the Service, and to work as

part of a team. Within two months of his arrival in Alameda, Eddie completed his



Profile view of Point Cypress showing 50-caliber machine guns mounted on the fantail and amidships with 81mm mortar/50-caliber combination mounted on the bow. (Courtesy of Gordon M. Gillies)

Feature Articles

training and received the rating of seaman apprentice. And by mid-October, he departed Alameda for Honolulu to deploy with the high-endurance cutter *Bering Strait* (WHEC-382). During his time on board the cutter, Eddie crossed the International Date Line and saw duty in law enforcement, search and rescue, and ocean station missions. His tour in the Pacific must have brought back childhood memories of those hot days on the water at Corpus Christi.

On March 31, 1966, Eddie transferred from the Bering Strait to the long-range navigation (LORAN) station at Saipan, Mariana Islands. It was during this one-year deployment on isolated duty that Eddie experienced the greatest challenges of his Coast Guard career. When he first arrived, he qualified as a LORAN watchstander, but in the summer and fall of 1966, he experienced a series of setbacks for absence without leave and insubordination. These infractions led to restrictions to the base and a temporary reduction in rating.

By 1967, Eddie changed the course of his career. In that year, he received no disciplinary action and was reinstated to the rating of seaman apprentice. In April, he transferred back to the States and served a year close to home at Base Galveston, Texas. During his time in the U.S., he received the National Defense Service Medal for honorable service and he earned a high school GED certificate. He was also advanced to the rating of Fireman and volunteered to serve a combat tour in Vietnam. At the end of his tour in



Hernandez with shipmate BM2 Alan Dillenbeck, the WPB's Vietnamese translator and another shipmate standing on the fantail behind the 13-foot smallboat. (Courtesy of Alan Dillenbeck)

Galveston, Eddie bade farewell to his shipmates at a going-away party at Sara's Lounge, the Coast Guard watering hole in Galveston, and then left for two weeks of leave back home in San Antonio.

After his brief stay at home, Eddie travelled to Coast Guard District Eight headquarters in New Orleans to be processed for duty in Southeast Asia. In February 1968, Eddie transferred from New Orleans back to Alameda for his second tour at Coast Guard Island, but this time his regimen included Survival, Evasion, Resistance & Escape (SERE) Training in techniques for survival, evasion of enemy forces, and land navigation. After completing the SERE Training, Eddie took the usual route to Vietnam, joining other military personnel on a contracted passenger jet bound to South Vietnam from Travis Air Force Base, north of Sacramento.

On May 14, 1968, Eddie's jet touched down at Saigon Airport and, for the first time, he tasted the hot humid air of



A smallboat mission with four crew, including Hernandez in the bow. Weapons included smallarms and M16s with battle helmets and flak vests providing crew protection. (Courtesy of Gordon M. Gillies)

Vietnam. He was assigned to the Coast Guard's Coastal Surveillance Force designated Squadron One, or "RONONE" as it was known. Under the direction of the U.S. Navy, the 26 Coast Guard cutters of Squadron One patrolled the coastal areas of South Vietnam. In 1965, the Navy requested the deployment of these 82-foot patrol boats, or WPBs. This was due to the Navy's lack of a riverine capability and the Coast Guard's reputation for shallow water combat operations, a reputation dating back to the earliest years of the Service. The 82-footers supported the Navy's "Operation Market Time" campaign intended to cut off waterborne movement of enemy personnel and war material from North Vietnam to Viet Cong guerillas in the south. Well before the Navy's Swift Boats and other riverine patrol craft deployed to Southeast Asia, the Coast Guard cutters of Squadron One patrolled hundreds of miles of South Vietnam's coastal waters, which were navigated by thousands of local watercraft.

From Saigon, Eddie flew in an Army helicopter to Squadron One's Division Eleven, based in the village of An Thoi, on Phu Quoc Island. Division Eleven's area of responsibility included the coastal waters of Vietnam's southern tip. And, on May 16, 1968, Hernandez reported for duty to the patrol boat *Point Cypress* (WPB-82326). Once on board, he met the crew, including the captain, LTJG Jonathan Collom, and executive officer, LTJG Gordon Gillies. Like her Vietnam-based sisterships, the *Point Cypress's* missions included maritime interdiction; troop landings and insertion of Special Forces personnel; humanitarian, rescue, and training missions; naval gunfire support; and intelligence gathering missions.

Eddie quickly acclimated to Vietnam's intense heat,



Eddie Hernandez practice firing the M60 machine gun from a standing position on the deck of Point Cypress. (Courtesy of Gordon M. Gillies)

high humidity and drenching rains. He had no choice. He also grew accustomed to the fast tempo of operations on board the *Point Cypress*. The cutter got underway over 70 percent of the time, deploying on five-to-six day missions within her patrol area. During these deployments, the WPB's crewmembers boarded numerous sampans and junks in search of smuggled weapons and enemy personnel. Within weeks, Eddie learned to care for the cutter's engines and qualified to stand watches as *Point Cypress's* Engineering Watch Officer. Later in the summer, he was

recommended to take part in the Coast Guard Service-Wide Examination for the rating of Engineman Third Class.

Point Cypress and the other Coast Guard patrol boats proved very effective in coastal fire support missions. The WPBs were equipped with four Browning .50-caliber M2 machine guns mounted amidships and aft on each side. The 82-footers also boasted a bow-mounted "piggyback," or "over and under," 81mm mortar with a fifth .50-caliber M2 fixed on top. In addition, the cutters carried an array of smaller weapons, including side arms, M16 automatic rifles, an M60



Hernandez on shore with the M60 during a smallboat patrol, also known as Salem Ops. (Courtesy of Gordon M. Gillies)



A smallboat mission showing dense cover provided by foliage along Vietnam's inland waterways. Hernandez is seated in the boat on the left. (Courtesy of Gordon M. Gillies)

light machine gun, and M79 shoulder-fired grenade launchers.

Naval gunfire support missions included “harassment and interdiction” assignments intended to disrupt enemy supply networks and operations, and fire support missions on specific targets, such as enemy bunkers and fortified structures. *Point Cypress* carried out both missions on virtually all of her deployments. In October 1968, units of Division Eleven even received a congratulatory letter from the Division’s commanding officer, stating, “I have been receiving almost daily compliments from both Vietnamese and American authorities on the outstanding performance of Division Eleven units, particularly those providing gunfire support. Recent reliable intelligence indicates that our gunfire has been more effective and has caused greater damage to the insurgents than we had realized.”

Point Cypress also supported smallboat reconnaissance missions, called “Salem Operations” by naval strategists, or “Sitting Duck Ops” by WPB crewmembers. These missions were similar to Special Forces reconnaissance operations and required the use of the 82-footers’ smallboat. Known as a “skimmer” by some Coast Guardsmen, or “bait” by others, the smallboat was a 13-foot fiberglass Boston Whaler, which was the size of a large dinghy and carried no armor or protection for the crew. In addition, the Whaler was equipped with an underpowered and unarmored 35-horsepower outboard motor, which was vulnerable to enemy fire.

Typically carried out under cover of darkness, Salem Ops missions required the smallboats to probe the canals

and waterways of Vietnam’s coast. These missions usually entered enemy-held territory without cover even though they received no U.S. air support. Often under the watchful eye of the Viet Cong, these missions gathered intelligence regarding enemy weapons, troop movements, fortified positions and bunkers. During Salem Ops missions, the smallboats took depth soundings and gathered navigation information, and they observed American artillery barrages and provided gunfire damage assessments for fire support missions. For some smallboat personnel, these missions probably brought new meaning to the old Coast Guard saying, “You have to go out, but you don’t have to come back.”

Eddie served regularly on these hazardous missions and, when in port, he visited other WPBs to get advice and discuss best practices with more experienced smallboat patrol veterans. During smallboat operations, Eddie rode point in the bow of the Whaler holding the M60 machine gun with bandoliers of extra M60 rounds draped over his chest similar to Mexican Revolutionary General Pancho Villa. A well-worn flak vest and World War II-vintage battle helmet provided his only protection from automatic weapons fire or rocket propelled grenades.

On Oct. 5, 1968, Eddie participated in a canal probe on the Ca Mau Peninsula in which his force came under heavy enemy fire, but *Point Cypress* and another WPB managed to destroy enemy river barriers, fortified structures, bunkers and armed sampans before withdrawing. And on Nov. 9, he deployed in the smallboat on a gunfire damage assessment mission near Hon Da Bac Island, on the west side of the Ca Mau Peninsula, to assess a fire support mission just completed by a U.S. patrol vessel. During this mission, Hernandez’s smallboat located and destroyed four enemy sampans. After the Navy launched “Operation SEALORDS (Southeast Asia, Ocean, River and Delta Strategy)” in late 1968, Hernandez frequently volunteered for reconnaissance missions into rivers and canals in enemy territory — many of them never before penetrated by friendly forces. These missions helped to determine whether the waterways could be navigated by U.S. patrol craft, such as Coast Guard WPBs, or the Navy’s newly introduced shallow-draft Swift Boats and PBRs (Patrol Boat River).

In the first days of December 1968, *Point Cypress*

conducted daily smallboat operations and gunfire support missions, destroying three enemy bunkers and damaging three more. On Wednesday, Dec. 4, the cutter rendezvoused with a Royal Thai Navy gunboat to embark CDR Charles Blaha, deputy commander for Coast Guard operations in Vietnam. Blaha visited the WPB to familiarize himself with Division Eleven cutter operations and evaluate the effectiveness of Salem Ops smallboat missions. Blaha and cutter CO, LTJG Collom, planned to deploy Blaha and the Whaler the next day to determine the depth of the Rach Nang River for Navy Swift Boat operations, and to see whether the Rach Tac Buo River intersected the Rach Nang somewhere upstream. *Point Cypress's* XO, Lt. j.g. Gillies, would serve as coxswain and Hernandez volunteered to ride point in the bow.

According to after-action reports, Hernandez embarked the Whaler with the two officers at approximately 2:30 in the afternoon, on Thursday, December 5th. Eddie brought the M60, while the others brought M16s, and the men took an M79 grenade launcher with spare rounds. The smallboat proceeded first to the mouth of the Rach Nang River, then over to the mouth of the nearby Rach Tac Buo. The smallboat probed the shores of the Rach Tac Buo for a connecting tributary with the Rach Nang.

The brief survey up the Rach Tac Buo indicated that there was no navigable connection with the Rach Nang, so Gillies steered the Whaler back to the mouth of the Rach Nang. The smallboat crew then radioed *Point Cypress* for further instructions. They received orders to proceed cautiously up the Rach Nang to find the location of "hooches (American slang for village huts)," bunkers and fortified positions for future fire support missions. In

addition, the smallboat was tasked with destroying the nearest hooches using the M79 grenade launcher and highly flammable night illumination rounds. The smallboat proceeded with the mission and closed to within 30 yards of the structures on shore.

As the smallboat approached the hooches, the crew noticed an armed Viet Cong guerilla entering a shoreside bunker. Blaha fired a volley at the fortification with his M16 and the Viet Cong returned fire. As soon as he heard the gunfire, Gillies gunned the engine and the Whaler motored away from shore, but it was too late to dodge the hostile fire. With only their flak vests to protect them

against the enemy rounds, each man suffered severe bullet wounds. Hernandez was hit near the chest and slumped into the bow of the Whaler while the officers received gunshot wounds to the head, back, arms, shoulders, and legs.

Blaha radioed *Point Cypress* that they had been shot-up and were motoring toward the mouth of the Rach Nang. As they proceeded toward the river's mouth, the Whaler received more incoming fire from shore. Blaha did his best to suppress it with bursts from his M16, but the enemy fire held no tracer rounds, so he failed to pinpoint the enemy positions within the foliage on shore. As they approached the rendezvous point with *Point Cypress*, Blaha and Gillies grew faint from blood loss and Hernandez remained slumped in the bow, alive but groaning in pain from his wounds.

After *Point Cypress* received the message from Blaha, Collom had sounded general quarters and sped the WPB toward a rendezvous point at the mouth of the river. Once on scene, the 82-footer embarked the smallboat and wounded men. Next, Collom radioed a request for a medevac from the Navy's floating support base aboard the anchored landing ship, *USS*



Heriberto "Eddie" Hernandez on the deck of Point Cypress in his typical smallboat patrol attire of battle helmet, flak vest and machine gun bandoliers. (Courtesy of the Hernandez Family) Note: Photo has been enhanced from the original.

Washoe County (LST-1156). During the half-hour transit to the LST, *Point Cypress's* crew did their best to stabilize the wounded in preparation for the helicopter medevac from the Washoe County to a local field hospital. When Eddie was brought on board *Point Cypress*, he was still conscious, but the bullet that struck him passed through his upper torso causing heavy internal bleeding. His wounds proved too grave to treat with the limited medical supplies on board *Point Cypress* and he passed away just as the WPB approached the *Washoe County* to moor beside the LST.

After the cutter arrived at the support vessel, the wounded officers were embarked on board the anchored ship. Gillies and Blaha were treated and then medevaced by an Army helicopter to the 29th Field Evacuation Hospital at Binh Thuy, located to the southwest of Saigon. Next, the men were transferred to the 21st Casualty Staging Hospital in Saigon and then flown to a naval hospital in Yokosuka, Japan, for treatment before returning stateside for extended medical care. In the after-action report for the Dec. 5 mission, the recovering Blaha wrote, "For me, this incident was a moment of terror I will never forget — not only because of what did happen, but because I see that it could happen again and again." In the same report, he summed up his thoughts regarding Salem Ops smallboat missions: "If our aim is to control the river banks, this will have to be done by ground forces. To look at it another way, we are asking our untrained small boat crews to do the jobs really in the province of [Navy] SEALs or RACs [Army Riverine Assault Craft forces]."

Eddie's body was flown back to Travis Air Force Base and then returned with a Coast Guard escort to his grieving family in San Antonio. On Saturday, Dec. 14, 1968, his mortal remains were interred at 1 p.m. at San Fernando Cemetery with full military honors. Hernandez posthumously received the Purple Heart Medal and Bronze Star Medal with a "V" device for valor. His Bronze Star citation read, "Fireman Hernandez's professional skill, courage under enemy fire, and devotion to duty reflected great credit upon himself, and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service." In addition, the Coast Guard named the Fast Response Cutter Heriberto Hernandez in his honor. He is the first Hispanic-American Coast Guardsman to be so recognized for combat operations.

In an ironic twist of fate, in early 1970, Eddie's younger brother Hector found himself serving on a high-endurance

cutter sailing out of the same Hawaiian docks walked by his older brother when Eddie served aboard *Bering Strait*. Hector was very close to Eddie and when word reached home that his brother had died in Vietnam, it had a profound impact on the Hector. Determined to fight in Vietnam like his brother, Hector enlisted in the Coast Guard, underwent basic training at Alameda and was deployed to the Hawaii-based cutter *Chautauqua (WHEC-41)*. Fearful that a second son might be lost in Vietnam, Hector's mother Juanita Hernandez, petitioned her congressman to prevent her second son from serving in combat. Mrs. Hernandez's petition succeeded in keeping Hector out of the war, but it also caused him great disappointment and bitterness. After completing his enlistment in the Coast Guard, Hector returned to San Antonio, where he worked for the local Sears Department Store for over 20 years. After returning home from the Service, and well after the loss of his older brother, Hector still could not talk about Eddie — even with his family. Within a year of his retirement, in April 1994, Hector passed away and was buried beside Eddie at San Fernando Cemetery.

And so ends the story of Fireman Heriberto Segovia "Eddie" Hernandez, a Coast Guardsman with a home, family and friends, and a life different from any man before or after him. And, like any other Coast Guardsman, he was trained to do a job and he did his best to carry it out. A few years ago, while commenting on his friend Eddie Hernandez, another Vietnam veteran stated, "He's still 19, and I'm 61."

Back at The Wall, Tom Hogan tried to tell his grandson how this fallen comrade, who died 40 years before on the opposite side of the world, caused Hogan such sadness and remorse. The aging combat veteran did his best to explain how Eddie Hernandez went in harm's way and died in the line of duty for his country, his shipmates and for what he believed in.

Today, few Americans remember the Vietnam War and even fewer realize that the Coast Guard served in that war from the beginning to the end of the naval conflict. But Service members, such as Tom Hogan remember only too well. Even though they did not serve together, Hogan and Hernandez were shipmates in the most profound sense of the word. They were both members of the Coast Guard family and Hogan felt the loss of his comrade as if they were brothers.

Recovery of LT Pritchard's J2F-4 in Greenland

by Antonietta Rico, Staff writer, Military Times

When an Army Air Forces B-17 crashed on the Greenland ice cap during World War II, two Coast Guardsmen volunteered for the rescue mission to retrieve the lost crew.

On the first day, LT John Pritchard and Radioman 1st Class Benjamin Bottoms, serving with the cutter Northland, rescued some of the soldiers. On the second day, after picking up Cpl. Loren Howarth, their own plane would crash in a snowstorm while en route to the ship. The three went missing — for more than seven decades.

But last year the Coast Guard found their plane's crash site, and now the service is hoping to bring the Coast Guardsmen and soldier home.

A team of Coasties, contractors and other officials is expected to be on the ice by July 30 to start retrieving the remains from the plane.

There is no guarantee that the men are inside the plane, which would have been exposed to the elements for several years. But CDR James Blow, Chief of the Resource Management Division at the Office of Aviation Forces for the Coast Guard, said officials "highly suspect they are there."

An overflight of the area after the crash identified the plane and what appeared to be a pilot and the radioman inside the cockpit, Blow said.

The Coast Guardsmen represent the last two recoverable MIAs for the service, Blow said.

Pritchard was piloting the Coast Guard J2F-4 Grumman Duck that went down Nov. 29, 1942. The day before, Pritchard and Bottoms had used their amphibious plane to rescue two other Army airmen from the crashed B-17. After their Coast Guard rescuers were lost when they hit a snowstorm, the remaining B-17 airmen who were awaiting rescue spent several months on the ice, living on airdropped supplies, until they were saved.

Pritchard and Bottoms, for their actions, each posthumously received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

"When they say 'the greatest generation,' they definitely lived up to that saying," Blow said.

'Should be brought back'

Nancy Pritchard Morgan was 17 years old the last time she saw her brother, John.

She was attending college in California when she found out her brother was missing. For a year, the family held out hope that he would be found, but then the Coast Guard notified them that he was dead.

"The whole year they said he was missing in action, when they really knew he was killed." Morgan said. She



An expedition team transports an ice-melting machine near Koge Bay, Greenland, in 2012. They used it to locate the crash site of a World War II-era aircraft. (Coast Guard)

said the loss was very hard on her parents and family. In the 1970s, when the Coast Guard told her they were attempting to recover the remains, she thought at first they should just leave her brother there at rest. But over the years, she has come to realize that her brother's remains should be brought back to the U.S.

"This is very important to me, that we have closure. That these three men that gave their lives should be brought back to their home country and be recognized," Morgan said.

The team heading to Greenland includes four Coast Guardsmen, a National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency rep, five members of the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command, and eight contractors with North South Polar, Inc., which specializes in extreme recovery missions. Because of the harsh weather conditions, they will have until about the first week of September to complete the recovery before they must leave, Blow said.

"We are very excited, not only as a team member; the service as a whole is excited to be able to do this and recover our service members," Blow said.

Finding the remains

The service tried and failed in 1975 to locate the wreckage site. It turned out later the Coast Guard had searched the wrong location, Blow said.

The latest effort by the service to locate the remains of the Coasties started in 2008. The Coast Guard was worried that global warming would expose the crash site to salvagers, said Blow, who joined the mission in 2009.

"This was of great concern because remains of the fallen service members had never been recovered," he said.

A team in 2010 could not locate the crash site. They tried again in 2012 and had "sort of lost hope," Blow said. But on the last day, the team actually found a part of the plane, about 38 feet below the ice.

"That was the spark that we needed to go forward with our (current) recovery mission," he said. "To find it on the last day was very elating."

Recovery

Until about a few weeks ago, Blow wasn't sure that they would be able to recover the remains this year. The service



Lt. John Pritchard (Coast Guard photo)



Radioman 1st Class Benjamin Bottoms (Coast Guard photo)

is under the time constraints of Mother Nature. The weather in the area of the crash site is harsh during the Arctic winter, and Blow estimated they had a window between July and early September this year to attempt a recovery.

The team will be flown to Kulusuk, Greenland, by a C-130 from Air Station Elizabeth City, N.J.

When the team arrives at the site, they will have to do another survey of the area with ground penetrating radar. Once they mark the excavation site they will start removing the ice off the wreckage. The team will use tracked and studded trenching devices and loaders, chainsaws, hot water devices and other specialized tools to dig through the ice, Blow said.

Their first priority is to recover the remains of the three service members, but they are also looking for personal effects and any government property. Blow said the Army Air Forces member had 8mm film with messages from the survivors of the B17 crash that they hope to recover.

The remains will be returned to the U.S. They will need to be identified at a JPAC lab.

"Within a couple of months, they will be ready for transfer to their final resting place," Blow said. The families will determine where the Coasties will be buried.

There is only one place that Morgan wants to see her brother buried: the Coast Guard Academy.

"He just loved every minute of [his time there]. He treasured his wings," Morgan said. "I hope the Coast Guard Academy has a place for him."

Accidental Gun Explosion Aboard USCGC Tampa

by Robert M. Pendleton

The *U.S.S. Coast Guard Cutter Tampa*, Captain Charles Saterlee, USCG, was assigned as Ocean Escort to her 13th Convoy (H.G. 76), Commodore, Acting Captain W. H. Kelly, R.N.R. aboard the *S.S. Janus* while the Vice Commodore, Captain G. W. Parker, Master, was aboard the *S.S. City of Cairo*.

Convoy H.G. 76, Gibraltar to Davenport, U.K., composed of 35 merchant ships departed Gibraltar Bay at noon 16 May 1918, and was clear of the straits at 1730.

A Brief Narrative of the Voyage

17 May — Fine weather continued and at 1600 Fast and Slow Convoys were detached and escort left and outside columns of convoy started to zigzag.

18 & 19 May — A moderate head wind was experienced but ships were able to maintain the 7-knot speed.

20 May — Weather was calm. At 1800 hrs. in N. Lat. 44°00' - W. Long. 10°00' a ship's boat with her bows stove in was passed and at 2000 hrs. an overturned boat was passed.

21 May — Calm weather continued. At 0400 American tugs were detached. At 1100 Home Escort joined convoy. At 1550 hrs. *U.S.S. Tampa* had an explosion on board and a man injured. Having no surgeon on board, *S.S. City of*

Cairo stopped (under destroyer screen) and British Surgeon Edward Morrison Adam was sent to *Tampa* to examine the injured man.

22 May — Calm weather continued with low visibility and at 1400 hrs. thick fog set in. Weather cleared at 2200 herewith increasing West wind.

23 May — Strong Westerly winds and fine weather prevailed. Destroyers were withdrawn from convoy at 1800 hrs.

24 May — SW gale and heavy rain. Convoy passed through Folkestone Gate at 0700, arriving in Downs at 0900 hrs., GMT.

Gun Captain Albert Hans Hahn, Coxswain, USCG

On August 28, 1912, Albert Hans Hahn, aged 28 years, 9 months and 27 days, enlisted as an Ordinary Seaman for one year on board the *U.S. Revenue Cutter Miami* (Later *USCGC Tampa*). Captain Aaron Lichtenberg Gamble, U.S.R.C.S. commanding, at Arundel Cove Depot, South Baltimore, Md.

He was born in Marienberg, Germany, on Nov. 1, 1883, and listed his mother, Hedwig Hahn, residing at Hafenstrahse 140, Hamburg, Germany, as his next of kin.

Albert's civilian occupation was listed as Mariner and his citizenship as alien (he would later become a naturalized U.S. citizen).

The examining medical officer described his physical features: Height, 5ft. 4in.; Weight, 153lbs.; Eyes, grey; Hair, brown; Complexion, tanned; Distinguishing marks, scar in left groin.

Albert served his entire career on board the *Miami/Tampa* from Aug. 28, 1912 to May 22, 1917 (5 years, 8 months and 25 days).

Explosion of the Gun

Crew of Gun Station No. 2/3:
Albert Hans Hahn, Coxswain, gun captain.



Upon completion of her refit work, a tug shifted CGC Tampa to Boston's Charlestown Navy Yard, Dock No. 3, on Sept. 15, 1917.

As plugman, Hahn was in the act of putting on the muzzle bag at the time of the explosion.

Arthur Thomas Harris, Seaman, first loader.

Homer Bryan Sumner, Ordinary Seaman, first pointer.

Lewis Avery Thomas, Ordinary Seaman, site setter.

John Fred Miller, Coxswain, clean up/cover up telescope, train gun 1 point on the bow.

The explosion (an accidental discharge of the forward Number 2 three-inch gun) took place while it was being secured after a gun crew exercise. The only rating that suffered serious wounds was Albert Hans Hahn, while acting as Gun Captain.

During this particular voyage, Tampa's Assistant Surgeon Lt (j.g.) Hadley Howard Teter, Medical Corps, U.S.N.R.F., was absent on leave and since there was no medical personnel on board *Tampa* at this time British Surgeon Edward Morrison Adam was detached by the Commodore of the convoy from the Vice Commodore's vessel, *S.S. City of Cairo*, and was sent to the *Tampa* to attend to the case of Coxswain Hahn.

Surgeon Adam's Statement

"On examination of patient I found a large lacerated deep wound of the right forearm and palm. A compound fracture of the first phalanx of the right thumb, many small abrasions and cuts on the whole of the right arm and chest and two lacerated wounds on the left palm. The patient was attended to and died at 2:10 a.m., May 22, 1918 of shock and cardiac failure. The wounds were compatible with the fact of having been caused by explosion."

The statement was certified to be a correct copy by J.F. McCourty, 2nd Lt., USS Coast Guard Cutter Tampa.

At midnight on May 23rd, *Tampa* was detached from the convoy and proceeded independently for Plymouth, where Hahn's remains were delivered to H.M. Royal Navy

Hospital Plymouth where they were embalmed and placed in cold storage.

At the time of the explosion of the service charge, Coxswain Hahn was securing the muzzle bag. The gun went off at 3:05 p.m. and Hahn was found near the muzzle trying to pick himself up from the deck and was helped up by members of his gun crew.

On June 14, 1918, the remains of Albert Hans Hahn were placed on board the cruiser *U.S.S. San Francisco* for return to the United States.

On July 3, 1918, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Dept., was advised by the Naval Hospital, New York Navy Yard, Brooklyn, N.Y., that the remains of Albert Hans Hahn were interred in the U.S. National Cemetery, Cypress Hills, Brooklyn, N.Y., in Section 2, Site 7783.



CAPT Charles Saterlee, USCG, in London, England, in 1918. (Photo courtesy of Robert M. Pendleton)

...The Board is of the opinion, that the responsibility of the accident rests upon Homer Bryan Sumner, Ordinary Seaman, U.S. Coast Guard, who was the pointer using the unauthorized method of securing the sear, but that this method of securing the sear by holding it back by hand was, in his mind, accomplishing the same thing as the authorized

Finding of the Board of Investigation convened aboard the USS Coast Guard Cutter Tampa on June 18, 1918

"The death of Albert Hans Hahn was due to an explosion of a service charge while he was securing the muzzle bag on the gun. That this explosion was not due to defective ammunition or fault of gun but that it was due when securing the gun with the

method; he was unaware of the danger connected with it.

The Board is further of the opinion that the discharge of the gun was purely accidental and due to the overzealousness of the said pointer, Sumner, who in order to get quick results used a method which turned out to be dangerous.

Proceedings, findings, and opinions of Board approved and referred to the Squadron Commander.”

Signed by Chas. Satterlee, Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Commanding.

Statement of Stanley Shields Cook, Acting Coxswain, Gun Station No. 1/4” forward starboard

“Stated to the Board that he had been trained to take the sear arm out with finger before loading the charge. If the gun is uncocked the firing pin is housed completely and cannot strike the primer. And if the sear arm was not held back far enough, could make a hair trigger of it and when the block goes almost up it releases the firing pin — the shell was pushed forward by Harris and the explosion took place.”

Referred to Rear Admiral Albert P. Niblack, USN, Commanding Squadron 2, of Division 6, Patrol Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Base Nine, Gibraltar, U.S.S. *Decatur*, Flagship. The Dept. of the Navy held that the death of Albert Hans Hahn was incurred in the line of duty and was not the result of his own misconduct.

Editor’s Note: Many may already be familiar with the circumstances regarding the loss of the *Tampa* on 26 September 1918, the day of the Franco-American attack in the Argonne, but if not, here is a recap...

Tampa was escorting convoy HG-107 from Gibraltar to Milford Haven, Wales. During the late afternoon, *Tampa* parted company with the convoy, which she had just escorted into the Irish Sea. Ordered to put into Milford Haven, England, she proceeded independently toward her destination. That evening, as she transited the Bristol Channel, the warship crossed the sights of UB-91. The U-boat made a submerged attack which sank *Tampa* with a single torpedo.

It appears that the action took place sometime between 2030 and 2100. Ships in the convoy lost sight of her as she slipped over the horizon at about 1900, and the radio operator on board the convoy flagship reported having felt the shock of an under water explosion at about 2045. Furthermore, German records of UB-91's war cruise specifically identify a ship very closely approximating *Tampa* as the ship she sank "at evening twilight" on 26 September. In all probability, *Tampa* went down rapidly. She sank with all hands: 131 officers, crew and passengers. Search and rescue efforts over the succeeding three days turned up only a single body and some wreckage clearly identified as coming from *Tampa*. Two other bodies in U.S. naval uniforms later washed ashore in Wales. *Tampa* was struck from the Navy list as of the date of her sinking.

The dead included 111 Coast Guardsmen, four U.S. Navy men, a captain of the British Army (unconfirmed) and ten seamen of the Royal Navy, and five British civilian dock workers.

On 13 October 1918 a British patrol boat located the body of Acting Quartermaster Alexander Louis Saldarini, USCG and buried him at sea. As for the two bodies that washed ashore in Wales the authorities were able to identify one as being Seaman James Marconnier Fleury, USCG, but the other was never identified. They were both buried with full military honors at Lamphey Churchyard (a small country churchyard in Wales). Fleury's family later brought home his body and buried him in a cemetery in Long Island, New York but the

unidentified Coast Guardsman still rests in Lamphey Churchyard. Local citizens care for his grave to this day. Two other *Tampa* crewmen perished before the sinking. One, Coxswain Albert Hans Hahn, you just read about in Robert Pendleton's story. The other, Ordinary Seaman John Christopher Gagnier, died of "acute endocarditis phelitis" on 28 November 1917 while at the U.S. Naval Dispensary on Gibraltar. Gagnier was first buried on Gibraltar and was later reburied in his family's cemetery plot in St. Michael's Cemetery in Springfield, Mass., after the war.

CGC *Tampa* Memorial



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