



# The Cutter

*The Newsletter of the Foundation for Coast Guard History*  
5006-236th Ave. N.E.  
Redmond, WA 98053

Newsletter 16, Spring 2005

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### Editorial

The Foundation for Coast Guard History has existed for nearly six years. Our accomplishments are many, our goals are endless. Bit by bit we are making progress. This edition of *The Cutter* marks another small step, presenting history in greater depth. This newsletter is longer and more comprehensive. As your editor expands his knowledge, your newsletter will continue to improve. I hope you like it.. Fred

## Beach Patrol 1942 ——Northern California

Verbatim report by T. Roberge relating the difficulty of operating a Pacific Coast Beach Patrol during WW II (Provided by Coast Guard Museum/NW).

MEMORANDUM TO BEACH PATROL OFFICER,  
TWELFTH NAVAL DISTRICT 19 September, 1944

Subj: History of Beach Patrol Station "E", Twelfth Naval District

In compliance with your memorandum dated 7 September, 1944, file:CG-601, the following is a complete story, compiled mainly from memory, covering the organization, operation, administration, personal anecdotes etc, of subject matter:

On Saturday afternoon of 15 August, 1942, while engaged in issuing departure permits to several crews of Italian sardine fishermen the office of the Captain of the Port at San Francisco, California, the Operations Officer of the District Coast Guard Office called me up and directed that on the morning of August 17<sup>th</sup>, I was to report to him for instructions and immediately thereafter depart with a detail of men assigned to patrol some beaches along the coast.

As I was scheduled for the day's duty from 0900 Sunday to 0900 Monday, and having some idea as to what I would be up against all day and night on Monday, an attempt was made to convince some of my good friends and office mates that they would be doing me a great favor by taking over the duty which would then allow me to get squared up and a night's sleep before departing on Monday morning. But, as expected, all hands either had a date or could do nothing about it. The Chief of Staff informed me that I should have taken the matter up with him on the previous day, which would have been the day before I heard of the assignment. Maybe I should have gazed into a crystal ball. However the day's duty was duly carried out, and it so happened

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that there was constant activity throughout the day and night, resulting in very little rest.

On Monday morning, although feeling a little tired and sleepy, a rush out home was made; packed my bags and rushed back to the office for necessary orders and instructions. The in-

The informer must have thought the Mendocino Coast was in the center of San Francisco.

structions received were to the effect that a beach patrol was to be established by the following night at the most strategic beaches between

Point Arena and Shelter Cove, Calif. (a distance by highway of approximately 110 miles) and that the men were to be billeted in hotels or boarding houses in the town of Albion, Westport, Rockport and such other places of same size, and it was also mentioned that if the cost of boarding the men was too high in any hotel, I was to go to another. The informer must have thought the Mendocino Coast was in the center of San Francisco. It was then I fully realized that I was in for a real job. No plans had been thought out, no advance arrangements for the billeting and subsistence of the men had been made, no helpful instructions or information were received –but I was told about the different hotels in Albion and Westport. There may have been hotels or boarding houses somewhere these town sites before the lumber mills burned down and most of the people had moved out some twenty years ago.

The time was getting late to start on such a trip, and after several calls to Treasure Island, the executive officer at that place finally announced that the men would be over at 1300. They arrived at 1530. There were eighty recruits in five trucks all having not more than one month’s service, and not a rated man amongst them.

At about 1600 the caravan finally got underway. The weather was hot over in Marin

County, and the men being packed in canvas covered trucks, we had not gone far before everyone wanted to stop for a while. Their wish was granted at the first likely looking service station and the “Boots” were not long in piling out. The service station was soon sold out of ice cream, pop and candy; after some delay in inducing these hardy men that they should get aboard, the caravan again continued. At each stop for gas or other reason, the men would abandon the trucks as though they were on fire, but in getting underway, things were much different. They would be scattered around town, some lying under shady trees, others having a sparing match or a foot race, while many would be in a nearby orchard eating green apples. As we were not provided with a bugler or a leather-lunged boatswains mate, it was soon found that the best way to get going was to blow the horn and start moving. This really had the effect of making them pile on board, and one would think the men themselves were on fire and that the trucks were water tanks, the way they piled in.

Knowing the blackout regulations and the foggy conditions along the coast, and also having a good idea as to what would be found in the line of hotels and restaurants in the “city” of Albion, I was very anxious to reach our destination before dark, and to make things a little more cheerful, that old familiar phrase “When do we eat?” or “Where do we sleep?” was heard above the roar of the trucks.

Finally, the city of Albion was reached, the place where some of the men were to be put up in hotels. It was pitch dark and foggy and how it became known that the place was supposed to be Albion, this information was

The proprietors agreed to furnish lodging and meals for prices ranging from \$1.50 per man per day to \$2.00 per man per day.

prominently displayed on a roadside sign. That sign was the only prominent thing seen. For a short distance along the highway there were several blackout shacks and not a light or person was seen. It was then decided that Fort Bragg would be our immediate destination.

A short distance south of Little River we had our first accident, but we were fortunate in that it could have been real tragical. In passing a large lumber laden truck with trailer at a place where the roadway was narrow and having a deep gully on either side, our leading truck was side-swiped by the lumber truck which was traveling at an excessive rate of speed and did not give sufficient way for clearance. Our truck came to an immediate stop on the extreme edge of the gully. Upon surveying the damage, it was found that the canvas cover was badly torn to its full length and one of the men sitting within with his back against the canvas was seriously injured and unconscious. Another man who was sitting near the one injured also appeared to be unconscious or seriously injured, but it was soon learned he had merely fainted due to fright. He was moved to the driver's cab alongside of me and he soon became fully recovered.

Upon arrival at Fort Bragg at about 2230, the injured man was placed in the local hospital and then my troubles really started. Only one hotel and one small restaurant were known to be open at that time, and to provide food and lodging for eighty-five men, which included the five truck drivers, was my immediate concern. As we were about to take over the entire hotel, the town marshal suggested that the Community Club House, he thought, would be available. As the men had their own blankets and a mattress, the marshal's suggestion was acted upon. The entire upper floor of the club house was taken over and mattresses were spread out on

the oily floor. Many of the men found newspapers to lay under their bedding, but those who did not care or could not be bothered, just spread out their gear and let it go at that.

In the meantime, arrangements had been made for meals in the one and only lunch room which was open for business at that hour of the night. Meals were served in relays, and at about 0200 when the last man had finished, my stomach felt as though a little nourishment may do me some good, but I was out of luck, as everything in the lunch room had been neatly and completely consumed, so I drank a bottle of beverage and turned in – but not to sleep.

Orders had been given the men to be up at 0600, pack up, have breakfast and stand by for a further move. So the next move was the problem which kept me awake. It has often been found that when fully concentrating the mind long enough on the solution of any problem, and also being fully aware of all the responsibilities involved for the success of an undertaking or operation, the proper solution will usually unfold itself. Therefore by 0530 the solution had been sufficiently unfolded and I then decided to turn out.

..many men were required to walk or hitch hike to and from their post which, in some places was a distance of five miles each way.

The lunch room had been able to procure a sufficient supply of provisions during the early morning, so breakfast for all hands was provided. This time I did not lose out. The telephone was then put to good use and by 1030 all arrangements had been completed as to moving, billeting and feeding. A lecture and instructions were given the men; the most likely looking men were picked out to take charge of each of the several groups and they were on their way to their respective patrol areas.

The Windsor Hotel at Fort Bragg was chosen as my headquarters and twenty five men were billeted in the entire upper floor of the same hotel and meals were served them in the hotel café; twenty five went north to Rockport to be billeted in loggers cabins of the lumber mill and were to eat in the cook house with the mill workmen; the other thirty went south and were evenly divided between the Little River Inn, near the town of Little River, and Navarro-By-The-Sea, an old hotel located at the mouth of the Navarro River. Verbal agreements, and later formal contracts were drawn up whereby the proprietors agreed to furnish lodging and meals for prices ranging from \$1.50 per man per day to \$2.00 per man per day. The contract prices were later increased in most establishments, but in spite of the increase in cost, and when all factors were considered, it is believed that operations were carried out at a considerable saving as it eliminated a staff of commissary stewards (sic), cooks, mess equipment and the necessity of leasing or erecting buildings for barracks.

There are many beautiful coves, inlets, gulches and beaches scattered along the fifty miles of coastline between Navarro River and Rockport, and it was necessary that all possible landing places be covered before night fall with the limited number of men available, the balance of the day was spent in a tour of the area, and before darkness set in, a complete patrol in groups of three men to each post were covering all the most strategic coves and beaches along the fifty mile stretch.

The patrol had been successfully started, but it was far from being an efficient organization. The men were young, untrained and inexperienced; most of them were from states around Missouri and Arkansas and of course had never before seen the ocean or anything like the coves, beaches and rugged coast line of the Pacific or any other ocean, but they were

at least intelligent and I was quiet (sic) sure they could be trained within a short time to efficiently discharge their assigned duties. So this part of the organization was not my major problem, and neither was the lack of trained assistants or rated men. The major concern was the lack of equipment and supplies, lack of transportation and communication facilities, lack of proper foul weather clothing and small arms. All the satisfaction I could get from the office were the old familiar phrases such as “We can’t get them”, “Everything will be taken care of as soon as possible”, “They will be sent up as soon as possible” etc. On the first day, when the men were transported to their outposts, the five trucks immediately returned to San Francisco and the only vehicles available for setting out, relieving and returning the patrol was by means of two light carryall trucks which were loaned from other units, consequently many men were required to walk or hitch hike to and from their post which, in some places, was a distance of five miles each way. The maximum capacity of a carryall is nine men, but twelve were packed on board. Telephones were to be immediately installed, but they were a long time in coming.

In case of a report from the patrol, it was necessary for the men to make their way to the nearest telephone equipped ranch house which were, in most cases over a mile away. The real joke was arms, (pistols, rifles and machine guns). Such equipment for duties of this nature, especially in war time, should be of paramount importance. But what were the patrol armed with? The answer is fencing sticks; little wooden sticks having a leather guard to protect the hand against injury when fencing

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with a tough Jap or Nazis who would be very anxious to land on a dark hostile beach and of course do a little fencing with the patrol. Those sticks were not very popular with the men, especially those who were naturally not too bold and kept enquiring as to when they were to get guns. They were put off with the statement that guns in the hands of inexperienced men were too dangerous and would jeopardize, not only their own lives, but the lives of their mates or other innocent parties. These sticks also had a curious effect on the natives – although their inquisitiveness was not unusual in everything we did. Several wanted to know what those sticks were for; and one wanted to know whether they were secret weapons. He was told his guess was correct, but to tell no one about it. Needless to say the “Secret Weapons” were fast disappearing and pick handles, knives and guns of all description were being substituted.

At last the small arms arrived, rifles, revolvers and sub-machine guns, and then things began to happen. It seemed they wanted something to shoot at and they didn't much care what it was.

much care what it was. One took a shot at a rustling in the brush, another let go at someone with a light on the railroad track; one took ten shots a supposed men on the beach who refused to halt upon demand – it turned out to be the mast and cabin of an anchored motor fishing boat which was rolling in the seaway; the next morning a rifle bullet was dug out of the boat's hatch coaming. The prize of them all was a big Swede who threw a shell into the chamber of his rifle with the muzzle pointing in the direction of someone's feet and nonchalantly pulled the trigger. He claimed he didn't know it was loaded. Word came down from Rockport that Red got separated from his mate while on patrol and when they finally came within sight of each other, Red thought his

mate was a saboture (sic) and fired at him, just missing his head. After that no one wanted to go out with Red.

One morning a bayonet was discovered to be missing and no one knew where or how it became lost. The patrol detail who were on duty during the night and were responsible for its safety were again sent out with the admonition that they would be sent out each day in addition to their

regular patrol until the bayonet was found. That had the desired effect and it was soon found. Another lost his cartridge; it too was found after the party concerned with its loss was

One night the fog suddenly lifted and revealed the flashing light of Point Cabrillo Lighthouse in the distance. This was immediately reported as someone flashing a signal.

threatened with a court martial. Cartridges were disappearing at a fast rate, which would indicate they were being shot at something during the night, but not many reports were turned in explaining why. Revolvers would be turned in full of sand; some bayonets showed evidence of being used for chopping drift logs or rocks. The problem was solved by appointing a tough man to as as gunner's mate; he checked all arms as they were turned in and he had courage enough to report any discrepancies noted.

Alarms were being constantly sent in by the patrol and reports were made describing all sorts of incidents seen and in many cases imaginary. There would be signal lights blinking from the beaches, the highway, the hills or at sea; every prominent light would be reported as a flare; strangers would be seen prowling around on the beaches or in the brush. All lights at sea including prominently displayed running lights of passing fishboats would be cause for alarm. One night the fog

suddenly lifted and revealed the flashing light of Point Cabrillo Lighthouse in the distance, this was immediately reported as someone flashing a signal.

All incidents reported which could not be immediately and correctly explained without a doubt were immediately investigated by a squad of machine gunners. When under way to the scene of an incident, this squad paid no attention to speed limits or those sharp curves along the coast highway, blackout regulations or fog; fortunately they had no serious accidents. Alarms and reports were coming in much too frequently to be consistent with good judgment, so all hands were called to quarters and a lecture was in order. They were told that it was not the intention of the machine gun squad to ignore or disregard any reports coming in and that all incidents or cause for alarm would continue to be investigated but, on the other hand, they were expected to use some judgment or a little common sense before deciding whether everything they heard or sighted was connected with a landing, sabotage or invasion. However the point was stressed that everything unusual or any way doubtful were to be reported. The running lights of vessels at sea were then explained, so were the flashes of lighthouses, and the seemingly blinking lights of vehicles when going through the woods, passing picket fences and other like obstructions or rounding the many curves of the coast highway; the rustling and other noises made by animals in the brush. Thereafter the alarms were not so numerous and the machine gun squad was able to relax and get a full night's sleep once in a while at least. This continued until a new draft of recruits arrived, when the whole story had to be gone over again.

After about six weeks of luxurious living in the Windsor hotel we took over an old unused bunk house of the Union Lumber Company Mill and moved in; several of the men did not approve of this move as they would then be required to make up their own beds and keep their quarters

clean without the assistance of a chamber maid, but their wishes in the matter did not bear much weight. The building was a large two story red painted wooden structure which had been used for years as a storehouse for old records which completely filled all rooms of the lower floor; this floor consisted of a large sitting room with huge fire-place, lavatory and eleven bed rooms. The upper floor contained a long central hallway with seventeen bed rooms on either side. One of the lower rooms was cleaned out for my use and the entire upper floor was taken over by the "Thundering Herd". This arrangement was a gross mistake, as I should have gone above. The building was like a big drum; every little sound or foot step carried throughout the interior and even a person walking overhead in their bare feet could be heard below. To make matters worse everyone bought themselves heavy cow hide shoes and I being on the lower floor received the full benefit of the "Thundering Herd" constantly passing overhead and it so happened that two of the largest bulls were in the room directly above mine. It appeared as though this overhead room was especially chosen as a meeting place for the play boys, and on one occasion the band and all the jitter-bugs congregated there. The wailing of the sax, the flat notes of the cornet and even the time keeping taps of the feet were patiently endured, but when they started to jitter-bug, no time was lost in my joining the party. The orchestra immediately dissolved and the dance was over. It was later

The upper floor was taken over by the "Thundering Herd". This was a gross mistake.

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learned that they wanted to see how the old man would take it.

The men were given permission to purchase heavy shoes which would be more appropriate for their work than the lighter service issue, and, as is usually the rule, give them an inch ant they will take a fathom. This ran true to form when one of the big lanky boys from down Arkansas way, who was always doing the wrong thing, came thundering through the building one morning wearing a pair of loggers caulked shoes which were fully spiked from heel to toe. He was immediately transferred to Rockport where a pair of spiked boots would make no difference in gouging out the floors which had already been thoroughly gone over by loggers over a period of thirty years.

We later took over all the rooms on the lower floor and some of the overhead thundering was eliminated. This was accomplished by the simple method of moving all the heavy hoofers downstairs. Their shoes were inspected and those who were iron shod or heavy on the heels were moved below. Paratroopers were also present, those who would jump from the turn in the stairs to the floor below. When a few of these were immediately moved to one of the more isolated outposts, this jumping stopped. When the patrol was changed at Midnight, two hours sleep would be lost, as one watch thundered out and an hour later the relieved patrol would thunder in.

The first three weeks after moving in the bunk house were spent in scrubbing, scraping and painting, and what a mess they made of it. None of the men had ever been taught the fine points of scrubbing but they soon learned enough about it to get by. After three scrub-

Scrubbing, scraping and painting, and what a mess they made of it.

bings and using 100 pounds of sal soda in the process, the

floors and paint work were still dirty. Their method was to dump buckets full of soda solution on the upper floor and then try to break the speed limit in sweeping it down the stairs; they would then turn to with dirty swabs and give the muddy corners a nice rounded and smooth finish. They were not long in learning how to scrub and to take care of the corners. The interior was completely renovated by painting, papering, laying a new floor in the day room, new stairs, and linoleum runners with felt pads were layed in the hallways. All material being furnished by the Mill Company. Steam heat was also installed, so in the course of a short time the quarters were clean and comfortable and it was seen to that they were kept that way.

The men were fed along with the mill workmen in the cookhouse and this was something which was thoroughly

enjoyed by all hands, as none of them ever had the pleasure of previously seeing the dining table of a lumber camp or manner in which all dishes are kept filled with a large variety of well prepared food, and it was possible for them to eat as many eggs or hot cakes as they desired.

After being on patrol half the night they were not bashful when it came to seconds, or even thirds, and some cases fourths.

After being on patrol half the night they were not bashful when it came to seconds, or even thirds, and some cases fourths. In the course of about a week's time, when their stomachs began to bulge out, one of the men who had gained some ten pounds or more made a casual remark to the effect that "The bacon is not so good this morning". Other minor complaints were overheard at times but generally all hands were completely satisfied with the entire set up.

Six to seven tables of six places each were regularly assigned the patrol detail and it so

happened that my usual companions consisted of Faylor, Y3c, local boy with not much service to his credit but learning fast, very dependable and worth more than many old time yeomen I have known; in addition to his regular secretarial duties he also stood day's duty, checked patrols and was one of the regular members of the machine-gun squad; he was later appointed to officer's training and made

..a typical southerner of the slow motion variety; never gave any trouble, as that would be too much of an effort.

chosen as the station leader; knew nothing about mechanics or the art of house cleaning but was very reliable in checking the patrol and keeping the men in line. Galeter, AS who was later rated up to BM2c; a quiet young student from North Dakota; had a reputation as a boxer and was appointed to act as master-at-arms, also assisted Sutton and was on the machine gun squad. Wofford, AS who was later rated to Spec.(D)2c and put in charge of the mounted outpost; he was a robust and florid cattle buyer from Arkansas who was always willing to do any job in the best way he knew. Hogan, AS who was later rated to Sea.1c and detailed to the mounted patrol; a big quiet easygoing service station attendant from Arkansas; a typical southerner of the slow motion variety; never gave any trouble, as that would be too much of an effort..

A glance over the other tables would show that the men had that satisfying look on their faces; some were loud in their talk, others were demonstrating that well known "Boarding House Reach", a few were handing empty dishes to the good looking girl waitresses for a refill and at the same time possibly asking the girls what they were doing on their day off. Any desire to bolt their meals and leave the mess room in a hurry was usually during the noon meal, be-

Ensign. Sutton, AS who later was rated up to BM2c, a clerk from St. Louis; one of the elderly men and originally

cause of the fact that if the weather was clear, they had the afternoon off and were permitted to go up town. During the evening meal plenty of time was taken, as half of them were due to go on patrol immediately after they had finished, and all time spent at the table by those scheduled for patrol was that much less time to be spent on the cold beach. Breakfast was usually hurried in order to give the girls a chance to clear things up. Two men were detailed to lend a hand after breakfast, and twice a week three or four men assisted in scrubbing the place out.

The unit as a whole constantly expanded and became more efficient in all respects. Additional outposts were established at Usal and Casper. A mounted patrol outpost having ten horses was established at the Helela Ranch, about five miles north of Fort Bragg, and was successfully carried out without undue incident. The major problem in establishing this outpost was putting the buildings in condition for occupancy. They were old unpainted structures which had not been occupied in years and resembled a scene in the motion picture "Tobacco Road". Many of the shakes were off the barn roof, the single board walls bulged in or out and daylight could be seen through the walls and roof in all directions. The "Chick Sale" was off in the brush and it was minus the door, roof, one wall and the counter; the old open well was full of rubbish; the pumping system was out of order, all water pipes in the dwelling had been completely stripped and the place was full of fleas. Four of the most likely carpenters were detailed to make repairs. After

They were old unpainted structures which had not been occupied in years and resembled a scene in the motion picture "Tobacco Road"

about one month's time and the expenditure of a few hundred dollars for material and household supplies, the place was put in good order

and ready to received the horses on the stated date, which was to be just three weeks after actual work had started, but, as expected, the horses arrived a month late and without shoes; so an extra week was spent looking for a horseshoer and having the horses shod before the cow hands took to the beach as the Mounted Beach Patrol. The personnel of the mounted patrol consisted of farm hands and cow boys from Arkansas, Arizona and Texas. They appeared to enjoy their assignment and in most cases were sorry to leave. Hogan, from Little Rock stated that he would be very happy to remain there for the duration.

In due time two commissioned officers, several petty officers and additional nonrated men arrived, and several of the original men who proved themselves worthy were promoted to petty officer ratings, which then allowed a petty officer to be placed in charge of each outpost. An old time C.G.M. arrived and he was given the detail of traveling drill master and inspector of patrol posts. One Ensign was retained at headquarters as executive officer and the other was assigned to take charge of the Rockport and Usal outposts.

Six motor vehicles arrived which took care of our transportation needs, and telephones were installed at all patrol posts. A radio was installed in headquarters barracks and also in four of the motor vehicles, so the communication system was then in order.

Dog kennels were erected at all outposts, excepting the mounted post, and soon thereafter thirteen Specialists (D) 3c, arrived from the War Dog Reception and Training Center at San Carlos, California, with fifty-two dogs. The Specialists were members of the regular detail who had been sent to the Training Center for a course of training. Some two weeks later, after the men and dogs became fully acquainted through drills, contact and exercises, teams consisting of two men and a dog were

organized and the DOG PATROL got underway. The big difficulty encountered with the dog patrol was the fact that at about this time there began a considerable turn-over in personnel, men being transferred out for various reasons and new men coming in, and it was therefore necessary to break in new teams as the dogs had to get acquainted with the new masters and vice-versa. Most of the dogs proved to be very efficient, reliable in their duties, and a wonderful companion to the men on those lonely beaches during the night, while others had to be shipped back and exchanged as they were too friendly and inattentive to duty, or couldn't be bothered as to who came on the beach.

Regular inspections, quarters and drills were carried out daily; patrol posts were constantly checked at irregular times during the night; the men were constantly drilled or instructed in their duties as well as Coast Guard Regulations, Customs of the Service, wigwag, semaphore and blinker signals, infantry drill including the handling of small arms and safety precautions, and all hands were put through the complete course of small arms target practice with each type of fire arm. Not many experts were made, but the great majority qualified as either sharpshooter or marksman.

In spite of all efforts made in training the men, a fatal accident occurred at the Navarro River Outpost. It appeared that while the coxswain in charge was on liberty, the men engaged in playing cowboy and quick-

<p>He thought an older revolver and previously used holster would work better in a quick-draw. He pointed the gun at one of his mates and pulled the trigger.</p>
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on-the-draw with new revolvers which were then being delivered to them. One of the more irresponsible kids of the detail took one of the older revolvers from the arms locker, as he

thought an older revolver and previously used holster would work better in a quick draw. Not knowing that the gun was loaded, and violating all safety rules which had been drilled into him, he pointed the gun at one of his mates and pulled the trigger. The man was shot through the stomach and died while on his way to the hospital in a jeep. Four of the men at the outpost, who were held to be directly responsible or negligent in their duties, were tried by summary court martials. I, as commanding officer, and the second in command, a chief gunners mate, who were at their headquarters in Fort Bragg, about twenty miles away, were also deemed to be responsible and both were officially reprimanded by the DCGO.

Sea duty was considered a privilege reserved for those having good records. When this bit of information got around, many of the dry land sailors immediately acquired bad records.

The peak of the organization occurred in July 1943, when a total complement of officers and men recorded on the muster roll was 188, and after December, 1943, the complement gradually declined to the end. On 6 July, 1944, after

all animals, equipment and last man had been transferred, the decommissioning of Station "E" Coast Guard Beach Patrol Force, was completed and I departed to my new assignment as CO, CG Station, Point Arena, California.

In future contemplated organizations of a beach patrol or similar task force, it is believed that the following suggestions should be favorably considered:

Dispatch the CO to his area at least a few days prior to the arrival of his force. This will allow him much needed and valuable time to arrange for billits (sic) and to look over the coast line, strategic beaches, roadways, trails

and the lay of the land in general.

Include a sufficient number of efficient petty officers in the complement. This will relieve the CO of personally attending to every conceivable minor detail.

The men should be reasonably will trained before being assigned to duty of this nature, and they should be issued fire-arms at the outset; this will give them confidence and pride. If fencing sticks or other like substitute implements are issued them, it not only injures their pride, but their courage and morale will sink a long way below par.

Men who prove to be unsatisfactory, unreliable, untrustworthy or are trouble makers should be immediately transferred out upon request of the CO. This policy would have a tendency of creating efficiency in the organization and would materially reduce the number of disciplinary cases. In this respect, we were informed that men having bad records or who have had a court martial would not be transferred or sent out to sea, as sea duty was considered a privilege reserved for those having good records. When this bit of information got around, it is needless to say that many of the dry land sailors immediately acquired bad records.

In conclusion, I wish to state that the relations between the patrol and the Army Post at Russian Gulch were very pleasant and congenial; the officers and men of the Army cooperated to the greatest extent in every way. Colonel Woods King, Commanding Officer, and his staff, of the 107<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, took a very keen interest in the patrol organization and operations. All COs and many petty officers of the patrol force were given a two week's course of training in army tactics at one of the army camps near Santa Rosa, California, and the knowledge gained was very helpful in many ways. THEO. ROBERGE Lieut. USCG (Ret)

## LIVING LEGEND CELEBRATES 106 YEARS OF AGE

Press release by YN2 Susan Shanahan, USCGR

I believe it was no coincidence that Dorothy Stratton was born on the heels of a new century and in March — the month in which we celebrate women’s history. She was indeed one of the first pioneers for Coast Guard women; one who helped pave roads that many of us today are still trying to complete. For those of us who sometimes encounter barriers in the road toward future achievement, it often helps if we look back for inspiration, and remember collectively, how it all began.

There are some roads that can actually take you back in time...to a place, a memory, an era when things were different. I traveled that road Feb. 4, and it led me to the residence of CAPT Dorothy Stratton, the first woman officer in the Coast Guard Reserve.

She lives in West Lafayette, Ind., a small midwestern city that you would not normally associate with someone who once belonged to a seagoing service. It is 60 miles northwest of Indianapolis — the land is flat farmland and far from any ocean.

My memories collectively are less than 30 years old, yet the woman I am about to meet has 70 years on me. This, of course, is the main reason I’ve come to visit her. It’s not everyday that someone turns 106, but this isn’t just someone to me...or to many other people.

Dorothy C. Stratton was born on March 24, 1899 in Brookfield, Mo., daughter of the late Anna Troxler Stratton and the Rev. Richard Stratton, a Baptist preacher. She attended high school at Lamar, Mo. and Blue Rapids,

Kansas.. She then earned a Bachelor of Arts from Ottawa University, Ottawa, Kan.; a Master of Arts in Psychology from the University of Chicago; and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Student Personnel Administration from Columbia University. She was also awarded several honorary degrees.

While working on her advanced degrees, she taught at Brookfield, Mo., Renton, Wash. and San Bernardino, Calif. She

“I tried from the beginning to establish a more positive atmosphere.”

then joined the staff of Purdue University as Dean of Women and Associate Professor of Psychology in 1933, becoming a full professor in 1940. At Purdue, Dr. Stratton had already begun to hone the leadership skills for which she later became famous as Director of the Coast Guard SPARs. She remembers part of her role as Dean of Women was to act as disciplinarian.

"I tried from the beginning to establish a more positive atmosphere," recalls Stratton.

She did so initially by moving her fourth floor office to the ground floor, in efforts to make it easier for students to visit. At a university where the ratio of men to women was 7:1, Stratton understood that having an open-door policy provided an equally beneficial learning experience for her and her students.

The university was renowned for its agricultural and engineering studies, but did not offer a Bachelor of Arts. Its curriculum largely attracted students interested in scientific studies, so Dr. Stratton adopted a vision to make science more appealing to women, and devised an experimental curriculum for women. The experiment proved successful as undergraduate enrollment of women at Purdue increased from 600 to over 1,400. She also managed the construction of three new residence halls and

an employment placement center for women. With Helen B. Schleman, a colleague at Purdue who would later become a commander and Assistant Director of the SPARs, Dr. Stratton co-authored an undergraduate social usages book titled *Your Best Foot Forward*.

With these successes at Purdue already behind her, the black cloud of World War II loomed ahead. Like many veterans of World War II, she felt an urgent need to serve her country. So in June 1942, she took a leave of absence from Purdue and joined the Women Appointed Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), otherwise known as the Naval Women's Reserve. She received her commission in the Navy as a lieutenant after completing the first WAVE indoctrination class at U.S. Naval Training Station at Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

While serving as Assistant to the Commanding Officer of the Radio School for WAVES in Madison, Wis., LT Stratton received a telegram to come to Washington, D.C. On Nov. 23, 1942, the president signed an amendment to Public Law 773, thereby establishing the Coast Guard Women's Reserve. Newly promoted LCDR Stratton was sworn in as its director just a few hours later, simultaneously becoming the first woman officer accepted for service in the history of the Coast Guard.

Semper Paratus—  
Always Ready.  
SPAR. "I like SPAR  
because it really has  
meaning."

Russell R. Waesche, Stratton wrote: The motto of the Coast Guard is "Semper Paratus — Always Ready." The initials of this motto are, of course, SPAR. Why not call the members of the Women's Reserve SPARs?...As I understand it, a spar is often a supporting beam and that is what we hope each member of the

Women's Reserve will be.... I like SPAR because it really has meaning."

Stratton's choice of title for women in the Coast Guard was in every way appropriate. The Coast Guard was well aware that no ship can function without its support, and indeed the Coast Guard might not have succeeded in its war effort had it not been for the dedication of all of its SPARs.

Promotions came quickly for LCDR Stratton. She was promoted to commander on Jan. 1, 1944, and to the rank of captain one month later. During the war, her only brother, the late Capt. Richard C. Stratton, served in the Medical Corps Reserve of the U.S. Army.

### Still "Semper Paratus Always Ready!"

Today, CAPT Stratton has good reason to brag of her many accomplishments, including making it to the age of 106. Yet bragging is the one thing she doesn't do. Her intelligence, grace, wit, and most of all, humility, are striking. I am wandering the halls of her residence building trying to find the world's first SPAR, and it is she who finds me.

CAPT Stratton is walking toward me, and she is neatly dressed in a cream silk blouse, black and white checkered trousers, and azure blue blazer. Though she uses a cane to help her walk, it is only the slightest of aid. Her shoulders and small frame stand upright as she moves her slim figure with an ease akin to Ginger Rogers. Her soft eyes and face are framed by a modest and recently coifed hairdo because she just came from a hair appointment. The captain recognizes me immediately since I am in uniform. She smiles and extends her hand with a warm hello as I introduce myself.

CAPT Stratton guides me to her room, marked by her nameplate on the door. There

I ask the captain if she has read the ten or so questions I sent to her. I am immediately taken by the fact that she appears more organized than me. Slightly intimidated, I am glad that I did my homework in reviewing her biography.

She seems more inclined to ask about me than to talk about herself. But it's not long before I move to an easy and obvious question — a question that you might ask anyone who is about to turn 106 years old.

"What's your secret to longevity?" I ask.

"I don't know," she says.

OK, so I asked her what prompted her to join the Naval Reserve and take a leave of absence from Purdue?

"Lilian Gilbreath," she replies, and asks if I had heard of her.

"Dorothy, you can't afford to do this."

"I can't afford not to."

I confess that I hadn't. She explains that Dr. Gilbreath was a very influential woman as professor of Engineering at Purdue. It

was she who encouraged Stratton to consider serving her country via the military, but in the case of Dorothy Stratton, as was the case for many WWII veterans, little encouragement was needed.

"I was willing to do whatever I could to serve my country," she recalls.

At that time, another woman trustee at Purdue said, "Dorothy, you can't afford to do this."

To which Stratton replied, "I can't afford not to."

### Always Interested in the Future...

Because of her good humored friendliness and reputation as a "talented raconteur," Stratton easily earned the affections and admirations of all who knew her. So, I asked her to recall a lighthearted moment from her time in the Coast Guard Reserve.

She obliges, remembering her attendance at a formal dinner with several other female dignitaries. CAPT

"A brilliant organizer and administrator—"

Stratton had been asked to speak but during introductions, the emcee made a humorous and memorable folly. Chuckling, she recalls how the introductory speaker tried to explain the definition of the word SPAR and its translation as the motto for the Coast Guard Women's Reserve. Mistakenly, the emcee repeated the motto as "Seldom prepared, always ready!"

When CAPT Stratton completed her service to the Coast Guard in January 1946, then Commandant ADM Joseph F. Farley awarded her the Legion of Merit. The accompanying citation, signed by then Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal includes the following comments:

"A brilliant organizer and administrator, CAPT Stratton demonstrated a keen understanding of the abilities of women and the tasks suited to their performance....under her inspiring leadership, the organization expanded to include approximately 1,000 officers and 10,000 enlisted women assigned to shore billets at the peak of the Coast Guard war program."

Upon receiving her award, CAPT Stratton replied:

"I am glad this medal is called the Legion of Merit, for it is to the Legion that it is awarded, the Legion of 11,000 who volunteered to do a

wartime job. As representative of the Legion of SPARs, I am happy to accept this award and to say how much we have appreciated the opportunity to serve in the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard utilized the highest percentage of women of any of the services. This is adequate testimony to the adaptability of the Coast Guard, and to the ability of the women who entered its service. We have liked serving in the Coast Guard and we shall always be interested in its future."

Though her brilliant career as Director of SPARs ended in 1946, it certainly didn't mean the end of her service to America. She served as the Director of Personnel for the International Monetary Fund from 1946-50, and then as National Executive Director of the Girl Scouts of America from 1950-60. She is still a member of the National Association of Deans of Women, American Association of University Women, Business and Professional Women's Club, National Education Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science and an associate member of the American Psychological Association.

Even though the Coast Guard has changed dramatically since the era of World War II, milestone makers like CAPT Stratton bid us to recall some of the positive things that have not changed. The Coast Guard still continues to utilize women to their utmost capabilities. Despite the many changes in the Coast Guard between CAPT Stratton's time of service and mine, one timeless common bond remains — we are both proud to have served in the Coast Guard, and, as CAPT Stratton noted in 1946, "we shall always be interested in its future."

For the women who are serving in the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve to-

day, and for those who are considering service to the Coast Guard in the future, CAPT Stratton sends her best wishes. She is grateful to have served the Coast Guard as the first Director of its Women's Reserve and is the last survivor of the original women's directors from World War II..

As our interview comes to a close, I find that I have a few more things in common with CAPT Stratton. I now know that we also share a love for reading (she just finished a large book on Charles Lindbergh) and a fondness for chocolate ice cream. So I hope that on or around March 24, CAPT Stratton will have the chance to enjoy some birthday cake with plenty of chocolate ice cream.

Happy 106th birthday CAPT Stratton! Thank you for your dedication, service, legacy to women, and to the Coast Guard and its Reserve.

*Editor comment: Rumor has it that on the day after 9/11, Dorothy Stratton, then 102, called the Commandant and offered her services, yet again. The legend continues.*

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**An Accolade** reprinted from the US Coast Guard Academy Alumni Bulletin

Run, do not walk, to your local book store for a copy of the Foundation for Coast Guard History's beautiful volume entitled *THE COAST GUARD*. Finally, our service has a coffee table book worthy of a place alongside those big tomes that honor the Navy, Marine Corps, Army and Air Force. Our your way home with the seven pound, 365 page, 700 photograph volume tucked under your arm, give a BRAVO ZULU to History Foundation Executive Director and Co-founder CAPT Fred Herzberg, USCG (Ret.) '55, editor-in-chief LCDR Tom Beard, USN/USCG (Ret.) and his staff, and to the author of the book's foreword, a Mr. Walter Cronkite.

Captain Bob Moss, USCG, (Ret.)

## MESSAGE FROM A MEMBER

The following was received from Vice Admiral Tom Sargent upon his receipt of *THE COAST GUARD*. He addressed it to VADM Howard Thorsen, CAPT Fred Herzberg, LCDR Tom Beard and CWO-4 Paul Scotti commenting on their work in editing and publishing the book.

“I am now on the threshold of the evening of my life (90 years young) and I think it is about time I express my great appreciation and admiration to four of the leading lights of Coast Guard history.

Your work, which culminated this year in the publication of THE BOOK, has set the stage for major improvement in the accumulation of the magnificent history of our Coast Guard.

I experienced the “old” Coast Guard from 1934 until the end of World War II. I learned a great deal from those years but, from that time to the present, saw our service improve tremendously and become an organization admired world-wide for its maritime, humanitarian and diversified missions for which I am so very proud.

You have formed the bridge to understanding the Coast Guard and its great value to this nation. My profound thanks to you, my friends—with admiration and respect—Semper Paratus/Memoria Semper” VADM Tom Sargent, USCG, Ret.

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### Current Projects

**THE COAST GUARD:** Your Foundation is currently engaged in many projects. Each is important in its own way, but perhaps leading the list is working on the next printing of the book *THE COAST GUARD*. Our best information is that the first print run of 18,000 sold out in about 8 weeks and requests for more arrive almost daily. We will put information on our

web site when the next printing can be expected. ([www.fcgh.org](http://www.fcgh.org).)

**RESEARCH PROJECT:** Your Foundation has funded a research project on the role of the Revenue Cutter Service in the Civil War, particularly focusing on the officers and crew of the Revenue Cutter Caleb Cushing.

**SUMMER INTERN:** Your Foundation is funding the work of a summer intern in the office of the Historian of the Coast Guard. Work will involve reviewing every photo and file in the office, placing the material in archival folders and preparing finding aids for the web site.

*The following are projects jointly pursued by The Foundation for Coast Guard History and the Coast Guard Museum/NW*

**NEW VESSEL NAMES:** As the Coast Guard builds new vessels and new classes of vessels to meet its new role in Homeland Security, it needs to find and research appropriate names for these vessels. Your Foundation has been providing CG Headquarters with suggestions and background information so well informed decisions can be made.

**ODYSSEY MUSEUM:** In the Port of Seattle Headquarters Building near the cruise ship terminal in Seattle, the Odyssey Museum has proposed providing a major display area to tell the Coast Guard story. Upwards of 100,000 people will be able to visit this display each year. Your Foundation is acting as technical consultant on this project.

**HISTORICAL MURALS:** The Coast Guard Academy Class of 1962 is sponsoring a project to create a new series of murals for the Academy Library. Your Foundation is providing technical guidance to the artists involved..

## RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

There are more books, of excellent quality, being published, long overdue. The Coast Guard has been sadly neglected by the scholars, historians and authors. Finally we are beginning to see real progress. The following are four recent or imminent publications.

### **Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf: First Commandant of the Coast Guard.**

**By C. Douglas Kroll, 2002,  
Naval Institute Press,  
Annapolis, MD**

Dr. Kroll starts off the story of the Coast Guard's first Commandant strong and ends it strong. In 134 pages, he paints a good picture of the professional, military officer by focusing on the significant historical events of the Jarvis 1300 mile expedition driving reindeer in an Alaskan winter to feed 275 stranded whalers, Bertholf's reconnoitering trek across Russia in winter, and his pivotal role before, during and after World War I to create our modern Coast Guard. However, the level of details about Commodore Bertholf's professional and personal life rises and falls like the tides in Ketchikan, Alaska (almost 20 feet at times and where the barracks are named in his honor) due to the feast and famine of materials that document his personal life as compared to those of his professional career. We are able to know the professional man by reading his Congressional testimony, but we miss the personal man, the father, the husband, and the man himself whose philosophy, intellect, writings and determination enabled his professional accomplishments and the Coast Guard's creation from two agencies (Revenue-Cutter and Life-Saving Services). Not Since Hamilton's letter to the first captains of the initial 10 Revenue Cutters has the Coast Guard's doctrine moved forward as it

did with Commodore Bertholf's insight from his service at sea, and especially in Alaska, "... our training forms the habit of endeavoring to accomplish whatever is to be done with the tools that are given us, and our experiences teach us that a task is often less difficult in retrospection than in contemplation" (p. 99), which I found similar to Lincoln's Civil War strategy of "we must fight with the tools that we have".

How did Bertholf manage all of these inspiring achievements? Was it just sheer determination? Or, was it fortune that earned him a Congressional Gold Medal for the Jarvis Overland Expedition that vaulted him to the fore. Dr. Kroll has gleaned what he could from the few available letters of Ellsworth Bertholf. I hope there are more in an attic or sea chest somewhere. Fortunately, these questions do not detract from this fine, albeit short, biography of a Coast Guard legend. Dr. Kroll has done U.S. history and especially Coast Guard history a service by completing this work. His efforts were also recognized by the Foundation for Coast Guard History ( [www.fcgh.org](http://www.fcgh.org) ) which awarded him their Best Book on Coast Guard History for 2003-2004. I hope that such quality work and recognition will encourage other historians and novelists to research and write on our nation's oldest maritime service and its heroes.

Also, as a Coastie, I am grateful that we have another Coast Guard legend's biography to add alongside a founding father and a seagoing dog: Alexander Hamilton, the father of the Revenue Cutter Service; and Sinbad who was the mascot of the Cutter CAMPBELL.

*CDR Wm. J. "Willy" Wolter is a Coast Guard cutterman, who has sailed the same Alaskan waters that Commodore Bertholf did, and is a Naval War College Alum.*

## **RESCUED BY THE U.S.COAST GUARD-Great Acts of Heroism Since 1878**

**By Dennis L . Noble, 2005  
Naval Institute Press  
Annapolis, MD**

Although the U.S. Coast Guard enjoys a reputation as the best maritime rescue service in the world, details of its heroic history are not well known. Dennis L. Noble has corrected that oversight by taking a look back over the past century at some of the dramatic rescues carried out from shore-based Coast Guard stations, aircraft and boats.

The author highlights a day shortly before Christmas in 1885, when Keeper Benjamin Dailey and his U.S. Lifesaving Service Crew rowed five miles in seas almost as high as the length of their boat to pick up shipwrecked sailors and bring them safely to shore. He also describes a 1918 rescue of sailors from a sinking tanker when a USCG crew had to pull through burning gas and oil to extricate them. Among the most memorable is the daring rescue by Paul A. Langlois, of two people adrift in a sailboat. Langlois, in the darkness of a gale-swept night managed to maneuver his helicopter around rocky pinnacles to save them. More recent dramas are described by the rescuers themselves. Not every rescue attempt is successful though, as Noble reminds us. In in this collection he includes attempts that have ended in the deaths of those in distress as well as of those who attempted the rescues.

Everyone who enjoys man-against-the-sea stories will appreciate this overview of rescues and the people who carried them out. Likewise, maritime rescue specialists and historians will be drawn to the author's description of the changes in life-saving equipment, from oar-powered boats to modern forty-seven-foot motor lifeboats and the array of aircraft used by these Coast Guard heroes.

## **RESCUE AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD-The True Story of the Most Daring Arctic Rescue in History**

**By Shawn Shallow, 2005  
Paradise Cay Publications, Inc  
Arcata, CA**

It was the winter of 1897. President Mc Kinley has just received word that the bulk of the U.S. whaling fleet was icebound north of Alaska. Just 30 years earlier the fleet had been similarly trapped and not a single crewman survived. Five years before that, the crews of 32 ships slowly starved to death and disappeared without a trace. The United States couldn't absorb another horrendous loss of this nature. They needed a miracle.

The Revenue Cutter Service seemed the only hope. The *Revenue Cutter Bear* had just returned from Alaska, over 1,500 miles of pack ice separated the closest landing point from the stranded whalers, dogsleds couldn't carry enough food to feed 300 men until spring, the whalers probably couldn't survive four months of sub-zero temperatures, rescuers would have to travel over unstable ice, face wolf packs and mountain passes never before traveled in winter. And those were the easy problems.

To the benefit of today's readers the three vouunteers, Jarvis, Bertholf and Call recorded their struggles in daily journals, later submitted to Congress. These journals were combined with others and with additional research provided by The Coast Guard Museum Northwest, The Bureau of Indian Affairs and The New Bedford Whaling Museum. Shawn Shallow has recreated in vivid detail an almost minute-by-minute account of the entire rescue mission. The conversations are so realistic, the reader may feel he is actually helping herd the reindeer herds through the blizzards.

Don't be surprised if this book becomes the basis for a movie.

## **SINBAD OF THE COAST GUARD**

**Flat Hammock Press, 2005**

**Introduction by Mike Walling**

This is the adventurous, true story of Sinbad whose exploits on board the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Campbell* during World War II became legend. His chunky black and tan figure was known in a hundred ports, from Greenland --where he nearly caused an international incident-- to Africa where he was the guest at a Sultan's Palace and as far away as Japan.

Although famous to thousands of people in many nations, Sinbad was happiest at sea, treading the decks of the sleek *Campbell*, where he was treated as just another member of the crew. Battles and hurricanes never dulled his love of standing on the heaving deck with spray breaking over his wiry body. To Coast Guardsmen and sailors all over the world he was a hero and a real salty dog!

Appropriately, Sinbad's story was told by a fellow member of the Coast Guard, Chief George F. Foley, Jr., while the fine pictures were drawn by the outstanding Coast Guard Reserve artist, George Gray.

This new edition, the first in 60 years, adds photos of Sinbad, information about the *Campbell*, and an Introduction by Mike Walling, author of "Bloodstained Sea, The U.S. Coast Guard in the Battle of the Atlantic 1941-1944."

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