

# The Cutter

*The Newsletter of the Foundation for Coast Guard History*  
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## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>New Book</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Marvin Parret</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Awards 2004</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Oral History</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Blood Stained Sea</b>	<b>5</b>

## WEBSITE:

Check out the website for the Foundation at:  
[ww.fcgh.org](http://ww.fcgh.org).

See all the recent newsletters with pictures in color and an abundance of information and links to other related sites.

Visit, log on and give us your ideas by addressing either webmaster, Ken Laesser at [Ken@fcgh.org](mailto:Ken@fcgh.org) or the Executive Director/Editor, Fred Herzberg at [Fred@fcgh.org](mailto:Fred@fcgh.org). We welcome your comments in our continuing effort to make this organization a useful tool for all who are interested in or helped create Coast Guard history.

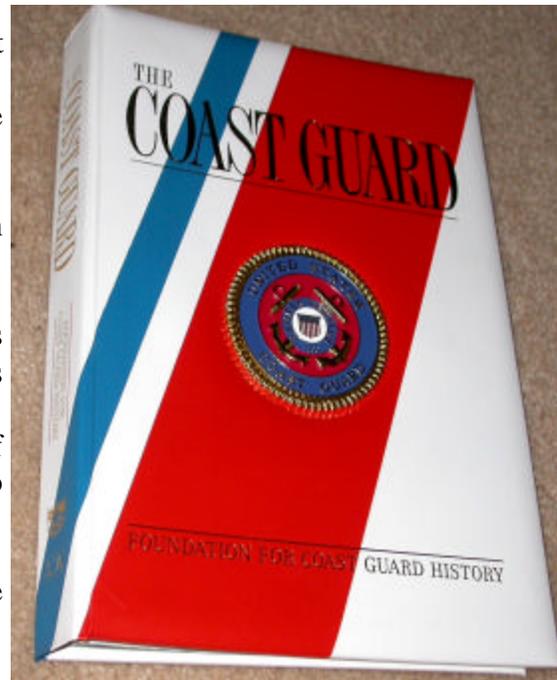


## NEW COAST GUARD BOOK COMING SOON

The Foundation For Coast Guard History is proud to sponsor and prepare a new book about the many missions of the United States Coast Guard. The book is to be published in September.

The picture to the right is the cover. The medallion in the middle of the racing stripe is not just printed on. It is a metal medallion inserted into the cover.

The book measures 10.5 x 14.5 inches, has nearly 750 pictures on 368 pages. Some of the pictures are so spectacular, you wonder where the photographer might have been standing.



The book contains 12 major articles by 11 different authors, plus a foreword by Walter Cronkite. In addition, many shorter articles were contributed by many additional authors. LCDR Tom Beard is the Editor-in-Chief, Larry Hanson is the Managing Editor and CWO-4 Paul C. Scotti is the Graphics Editor. Those three and many others worked for two years to put this masterpiece together. This will be the definitive volume about the Coast Guard and its many missions for years to come. It will be a handsome addition to any library and belongs on the coffee table in every Coast Guard home. It will be a gift anyone with Coast Guard connections will be proud to have. It should be available at all major book sellers by late September.

## MARVIN PERRET: HIS STORY

Submitted by Norm Paulhus.

I got this from my friends Bob Ross and Pat Philbin in Coast Guard's Strategic Analysis shop. If you've never met him, Marvin Perret is a bit of a legend. His reminiscences of D-Day and WW-II are stirring, and his enthusiasm is contagious as he tells the stories. He also blows a mean boatswain's pipe: most recently, I watched as he "piped Admiral Casto ashore" at his retirement ceremony. His energy level, for a man of his years, is absolutely amazing. And, as should be obvious, he loves the Coast Guard.

But let's let Mr. Perrett tell his own story, .....Dear Charlie:

My carefree but somewhat disturbed life took a turn to adventure somewhere around December 7, 1941. I couldn't get Pearl Harbor off my mind. This rang true for a multitude of young and older persons at this critical time. It was my desire to join the military the next day. I would have done so in a heartbeat; however, I was only 16 years old at the time. One could join at age 17 with parents permission however, my father would not sign for me. Having been WW I and a Purple Heart soldier he made me wait 'til I turned 18, or draft age.

This turmoil caused me to become a High School drop-out as a sophomore. I wound up working as a Civil Service employee on military airplanes as a "Aero Mechanic" in New Orleans.

On September 16, 1943 (day before 18th birthday) I presented myself at the Recruiting office of the U. S. NAVY. With my background I knew I would wind up on an Aircraft Carrier; or perhaps, a Battleship or Cruiser with Seaplanes in their arsenal. Was I ever wrong! To my surprise, I was turned away from the NAVY and directed to the COAST GUARD. At 9:00 a.m. I appeared at this office as a bewildered kid off the street. By 5:00 p.m., that same day, I was sworn in as the latest member .

of the COAST GUARD! I was handed a big brown envelope containing my ORDERS.

At 10:00 p.m. that same night, I boarded a train bound for St. Augustine, Florida (Ponce de Leon Hotel) to commence 6 weeks of "Boot Camp" training. In this one day I was I was a victim of "Shanghai" at the hands of an ambitious COAST GUARD RECRUITER!! (I'll have more to say about this guy later)

With six weeks of extensive "Boot Camp" training behind us, I became part of a 150 man crew bound for Camp LeJeune. N. C. In case you forgot, this was and still is, a U. S. MARINE Corps Amphibious Training Base. After another 6 weeks of grueling training, I departed this military reservation as an experienced "HIGGINS" boat COX-SWAIN!!

At Little Creek, Virginia, we acquired 28 to 30 new "HIGGINS" Landing Craft from the Distribution Center. We joined up with the Coast Guard manned U.S.S. BAYFIELD (APA33) in Norfolk, Virginia, my home for 21 months. She was an Assault Transport with a crew of about 500 persons and accommodations for 1500 troops. In February of 1944 we departed New York and made Plymouth, England our home port abroad. On the morning of April 28, 1944, we were positioned to deploy 1500 troops upon the shores of Slapton Sands, England. This was to be a training exercise for critical maneuvers. The Operation was named "Exercise Tiger." At about 2:00 a.m., nine German E-BOATS (Patrol Torpedo Boats) entered our convoy un-detected. They were on the prowl out of Cherbourg, France. They moved in under the cover of darkness, their low profile and fast speed delivered a crucial blow. They sank two of our troop laden LST's and crippled a third. We lost 950 soldiers and sailors that morning on maneuvers.

We later learned this was to be a "Dress Rehearsal" for D-DAY Normandy, yet to

Marvin Perret (continued)

On June 6, 1944 the BAYFIELD was the "flagship" for RADM Don P. Moon, USN., at the "UTAH" Beachhead.

On this day I would have the honor of transporting Maj. Gen. R. O. Barton, U.S. Army, Commanding General, 4 th. Infantry Division, ashore. This was accomplished by way of my "HIGGINS" boat LCVP , bearing my numbers; i.e., PA33-21. These numbers appear upon the "HIGGINS" boat on display at the D-DAY Museum, New Orleans, LA. A proud occasion for me! As "flagship" the BAYFIELD remained at "UTAH" D-DAY+19.

Returning to England, we sailed to Naples, Italy. Here we mustered Forces for the invasion of SOUTHERN FRANCE (8/15/44). We returned to Norfolk, Virginia and proceeded to the Pacific. We arrived in time to be present for the D-DAY Operations of IWO JIMA (2/19/45) and OKINAWA (4/1/45).

In recent years, I have been traveling the Country making personal appearances at social, civic, schools, military reservations and/ or reunions. I find this activity keeps me active for a 77 years-young, senior citizen. One of my dear friends recently said, "Marvin has been dead for two weeks... but he doesn't know it yet!"

I have had the good fortune to be interviewed on NBC Nightly News (Tom Brokaw) several cable television documentaries, and a locally produced documentary entitled "Andrew Higgins: The American Noah," to name a few. (Continued in next column)

## TELEVISION TIME

Your Executive Director/Editor had the good fortune to appear on the Seattle Public Television Station and talk about the Foundation and the work we are doing. It was only a few minutes, but our message reached thousands of people on the anniversary of D-Day. Captain Dick Malm created the opportunity. Thank you

When I returned to Normandy for the 50th anniversary of the D-DAY Invasion, I received coverage in the French press. I was reunited with the daughter of a French family that had invited me into their home to celebrate their liberation on D-DAY+7 in 1944. I also carried some letters from New Orleans school children and hand delivered them to their penpals at their school in Vimountiers, France. (1994)

My greatest joy came by way of a return speaking engagement at the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn. A similar appearance was awesome, at the "Boot Camp" in Cape May, New Jersey.

In addition to my World War II-related activities, I authored and published two historical books about New Orleans. In my spare time I make presentations on this subject matter. Not bad for a high school drop-out, if I say so myself. In fact, I just received an announcement that I am to be inducted into the "WARREN EASTON HALL OF FAME" by the Warren Easton High School Alumni! Quite an honor for a drop-out. Thanks to Uncle Sam for the opportunity to make up credits after WW II and receive my diploma! It will be a thrill to join ranks with such "HALL OF FAMERS" as Gen. J. Lawton Collins; Mayor Vic Schiro; Gen. Raymond Hufft; Eddie Price (football great); Arthur Hardy (Mr. Mardi Gras) ; Judge John Shea (Councilman) etc, etc.

A final word about that RECRUITER!!! I have been looking for that SUCKER since September 16th., 1943!!! Actually, I would like to shake his hand for making a man out of me!!!

To my U. S. Coast Guard friends...Semper Paratus! (Always Ready!)  
Sincerely yours, Marvin

*Marvin Perret tells his story. We would like to tell your story. Send it to us at [FCGH.org](http://FCGH.org) or to the address at the top of page one.*

## AWARDS 2004

Each year, your Foundation recognizes achievement in several categories of preserving our heritage. The categories are: best Book on History; Best Book on Aids to Navigation; Heritage Award; Best History Program by a Large Unit; Best History Program by a Small Unit; other recognition as appropriate.

The judging is done by independent committees of authors, scholars, retired officers and enlisted people. The entire effort is chaired and led by Pete Capelotti, Ph.D., USCGR. He keeps the committee members identity secret. They all deserve our thanks and appreciation for the many hours they devote to this program. The results this year are:

### **Best Book on Coast Guard History:**

Author: C. Douglas Kroll

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

Aside from the author's deep research and the publisher's excellent presentation of the book, the committee felt that the book made an important contribution to the field of Coast Guard biography.. They hope this will inspire others to help fill out that sadly neglected field.

The judges also chose two books for special recognition:

Alex Larzelere: *The Coast Guard in World War I.*

Dennis L. Noble: *Rescue of the Gale Runner*

### **Large Unit Award:**

USCGC TAMPA. In addition to its ongoing role writing 'new history' the Cutter TAMPA keeps Coast Guard history alive in several important ways. History is an integral part of TAMPA's qualifications for Cutterman; there are reminders throughout the ship of TAMPA's prominent place in USCG history including commemorations of the sinking of the unit's WWI namesake; celebrations of the life of one of its most famous former crewmembers, WWII LT Sloan Wilson. A new brochure in Spanish makes it easier for those

who do not read English to learn more of this important vessel and its place in USCG history.

### **Small Unit Award:**

Aids to Navigation Team (ANT) St. Petersburg, Florida.. Besides being a busy operational small unit, ANT St. Pete created a unit museum in its 'public area' that highlights both unit history and the history of the US Lighthouse Service. The unit adopted and adapted the Lighthouse Service insignia as its unit logo. The unit web page details the history of the unit and a daily history lesson/discussion reinforces the importance of the Coast Guard to all hands. A unit scrap book with historical documents preserves old records/documents.

**Heritage Award:** To the 'Old Chief' USCG WWII veteran John Stamford for his long-time dedication to the preservation of Coast Guard history, especially his long-running weekly historical column in the New York City area newspaper *Harbor Watch* and his bi-monthly publication *Greenland Patrol Newsletter*, written, edited and published for former Greenland patrol personnel of all services.

**Special Recognition:** To BM3 Church of Station Sandy Hook, New Jersey, for an extensive hand-painted mural depicting the whole sweep of Coast Guard history that decorates the Mess Deck at the station. This work was done after-hours, in a voluntary demonstration of commitment to the preservation and integration of Coast Guard history into the lives of both the sailors working at the station and visitors to it.

Due to an oversight on our part there was no competition for best book on aids to navigation this year. We apologize for our error .

Congratulations to all the winners. Because of this program, everyone wins. The two Unit Award winners each receive a \$200.00 check from the Foundation for the unit morale fund.

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

We believe that history doesn't just happen. Some people make it happen. Other people watch it happen. Still others get caught up in it. Each of them have some observations to share, some lessons to contribute to future generations. We started a program to preserve the significant lessons of the many heroes still among us. These past few months, your editor has had immense pleasure in filming the stories of three true heroes.

Tom McAdams, BMCM, USCG, Retired, recipient of the Gold Lifesaving Medal, hero of hundreds of rescues off the northwest coast including the Columbia River Bar, Instructor and Officer-in-Charge of the National Motor Lifeboat School and storyteller par excellence. He still volunteers for the Newport Oregon Fire Department, still helping others.

Thomas R. Sargent, VADM, USCG, Retired, born at the start of WWI near London, England of British and Canadian parents, became Vice Commandant and for a while, Commandant pro tem. He tells the origin of our current uniform; was part of the research creating the CG "Racing Stripe", now adopted world wide as the symbol of rescuers. He built the South East Asia Loran-C chain in record time during the Viet Nam War. He was present at the sinking of the *Bismarck* in early WWII. He is widely and enormously respected and is just a nice guy.

Bernard Bailey spent only the WWII war years in the CG, was one of the first Reserve Officers to go to flight training, and made probably the last offshore landing to rescue downed Marines off the California coast, this after offshore landings had been banned. His choice was either a Court Martial or a failure to attempt a rescue. He chose the risk of Court Martial and received the Air Medal.

Your editor pushes his technical skills to the edge by loading the digital film into a computer, editing, adding music, inserting still pictures, creating DVD and sending the result to historical archives for researchers.

## BLOODSTAINED SEA

*The U.S. Coast Guard in the Battle of the Atlantic, 1941-1944*

Michael G. Walling has written about the Coast Guard's role in guarding the convoys of merchant ships carrying vital materiel to our allies during WWII.

In November 1941, under orders from President Franklin Roosevelt, and even though America was not yet officially at war, officers and crews of the U.S. Coast Guard painted their gleaming white cutters battleship gray and steamed into action against the menacing U-boats of the Third Reich.

Americans called it Torpedo Junction; to the Germans, it was Devil's Gorge. By any name, the North Atlantic of the early 1940s was one of the most dangerous fronts in a catastrophic war.

Through eyewitness accounts based on hundreds of interviews with crew members; personal diaries, notes, and letters and each cutter's logbooks and patrol reports Walling plunges you into the thick of the battle, recreating some of the most desperate encounters, heroic rescues, and harrowing missions of the Second World War.

Told largely in the voices of the men who lived it, this unforgettable tale is peppered with humorous and ironic anecdotes about life aboard ship during wartime. You'll meet the liberty-craving crew members who painted their entire ship in less than an hour; the ship's mascot who became canine-non-grata in Greenland; and the crew whose vessel was mistaken for the German battleship *Bismarck* and attacked by the Royal Navy.

Complete with dramatic photographs of the Coast Guard in action, *Bloodstained Sea* brings this epic drama to vibrant and pulsing life.

### E-mail

If you are receiving the *Cutter* in the mail and you have e-mail capabilities, you may wish to receive it in color over the internet. Just send us your address at fred @fcgh.org. It will save time money and paper. Thank you