



CG 95308

10 September 1953 -- 12 January 1983

by

James A. Mooney

2003

Revised 11 Nov 2005

INTRODUCTION

During the month of June, fifty years ago, twelve United States Coast Guardsmen and their officer assembled at the Coast Guard Yard at Curtis Bay, Maryland. These men, along with others who came before, and, those who followed them that summer in 1953, were there to be the first crews on newly introduced 95-foot patrol boats being constructed at the Coast Guard Yard. These 13 sailors are to crew the boat having the hull number of 95308, one of the first to be commissioned into the Coast Guard's fleet.

A ship is a living thing to the sailors who command and crew her. Sailors come to rely on their ship and trust

her. They come to love her even as they may damn and cuss her. We reference our ships with feminine pronouns so there is no doubt that once the 95308's machinery was operating, and her first crew came aboard she came alive. As a ship that has lived, grown old and passed on, she deserves to be remembered, as do the Coast Guardsmen who crewed her over her lifetime. This memoir is intended to do just that.

To ignore her existence would be an unforgivable slight to the ship and her crews that served the United States and the United States Coast Guard honorably for almost thirty years, never failing in their duty and mission. *Semper Paratus*.

James (Jim) A. Mooney

USCG 1950 – 1954

CG 95308

THE BEGINNING

Following World War II, the free world found itself threatened by two developing Socialist powers: the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and the Republic of China. Korea, a country that had been occupied by the Japanese before and during the years of WWII, and one many of us in the United States knew little of, or paid any attention to, was separated at the 38th Parallel into two nations. North of the 38th Parallel was the communist half, North Korea, and the other, South Korea, the democratic nation. [\(1\)](#)

On 25 June 1950, the army of North Korea swarmed over the 38th Parallel attacking South Korea. This attack resulted in the involvement of the United States and later by other countries of the United Nations in what was described at the time by our President, Harry Truman, as a "police action" intended to "push" the attacking army of the North back across the 38th Parallel. This "police action" lasted over three years during which Russia, and China joined in against the United Nations. The UN troops fighting for the South pushed the North Koreans back over the 38th Parallel; all the way to the Yalu River. Across the Yalu, in China, the Chinese massed a huge army that then spilled across the river and drove our vastly outnumbered and outgunned troops back to Pusan in South Korea. After several years of fierce fighting, the enemy was again driven back beyond the 38th Parallel and an armistice was eventually negotiated and signed on 27 July 1953. The continuing threat by the Soviet Union and its allies created a need for the U. S. Coast Guard to develop a shallow draft vessel for use as an anti submarine warfare (ASW) craft. The 95-foot patrol boat was the result of this decision. [\(2\)](#)

The Coast Guard Patrol Boat 95308 was one of the first such boats, later to become the "A" class of three distinct classes that evolved over the years as the mission for the boats shifted from ASW (Anti-Submarine Warfare) to SAR (Search And Rescue).

In late 1952 and early 1953 the crews were being selected for the first of the new patrol boats to be built. The Enginemen so selected were required to attend a two-week training course in the operation and maintenance of the boats' main propulsion engines manufactured by Cummins Diesel of Columbus, Indiana. The enginemen of the CG 95308 attended this training at the Cummins' Plant during the month of February 1953.

The CG 95308's crew began arriving at Curtis Bay in June of 1953. As might be expected in an endeavor of this scope and size, there were engineering and design changes made along with other considerations that affected the original completion dates. These delays resulted in the back up of crews all staying in the Curtis Bay barracks during a stifling hot and muggy summer typical of the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. area. In today's world, enlisted men in the military live in billets having single or double occupancy rooms. In 1953, enlisted men's quarters ashore consisted of a large room having two tiered bunk beds. CPO's (Chief Petty

Officers) were billeted in separate quarters, as were the officers.

In 1953, in order to air condition a space one had only to open the windows, which we did, hoping there might be a breeze that would cool us down or at least provide a modicum of relief from the sweltering heat. There didn't seem to be many breezes that summer at Curtis Bay. In the barracks mattress and pillow covers became permanently stained by the men's perspiration. Following a shower, as quickly as one would towel off, perspiration would replace the shower's water making it difficult to know what parts of the body had been "dried". This condition also made it very difficult to pull a tee shirt and then a blouse over the head, especially a tight tailor made blouse, when dressing.

During the week, the men were assigned various "make work" tasks such as security patrols. SNAFU ("Situation Normal, All Fouled Up") is an acronym that would fit the bunching up of the crews who were arriving on schedule for boats that were behind schedule. Weekend liberty typically began on Thursday and ended Tuesday morning of the following week. During this period many jokes were told, sea stories swapped, and considerable amount of booze drunk all of which contributed to the bonding of the crews. Also, because of the "ganging up" of the crews waiting for their boats, friendships were developed between some of the men and the crews of the other boats, many lasting to this day. For the crew of the 95308, the stay at Curtis Bay was a long one, from June to the beginning of September.

THE FIRST CREW

During the incubation period when the crew was bonding at Curtis Bay, the men were sizing each other up. Meeting people for the first time knowing that you are going to be sleeping, eating and working with them caused one to give his shipmates a critical eye. Members of a crew depend on one another, so it is natural in my opinion that at first there is some anxiety. The most important crewing question to the men was who the skipper would be.

We were soon to learn that **Lt (jg) John Packard** was to be the skipper of the '308. John Packard was a veteran of WWII, during which, according to the story that circulated among the crew, he was a pilot of a B-17. He was discharged from the Air Force following the war, as were many pilots and crews deemed surplus at the time. He later joined the Coast Guard as an enlisted man and was commissioned a Coast Guard Officer following the beginning of the Korean War. (3)

To the best of my recollection, there was no biography of the 308's future captain mimeographed and passed around. Neither do I remember a mustering of the crew at which the skipper spoke of his background. It was just known, that's all. Like so many other bits and pieces of information of which the crew had knowledge. Learning who our commander was to be pleased us. Based on what we had heard, John Packard was a good guy; fair, honest and straight arrow. Since he had been a "white hat" (enlisted) it was felt that he was one of us.

I can picture most of my shipmates on the 95308 from so many years ago. Each one an image of the youth they were in 1953. Memories, however, tend to fade as time goes by, so please forgive me if I cannot remember first names or how to spell last names. There are one or two men I can't recall at all. I am going to introduce the men who joined me in stepping aboard the 95308 as her first crew and give my take on each.

Chief Boatswain Mate and XO was a man named Bates. I don't believe he was the first Chief selected. Frank Albright, QMC (Ret.) wrote that the first was a man named "Frenchie" Lahomedue. Bates, however, was the one who came across the gangplank for the first time. I found it uncomfortable talking with Bates for some reason. He had a tendency to be somewhat "GI". He was married but I can't recall if he had any children. I don't think he had any deep-water experience as he seemed to me to exhibit a "dune hopper" (shore based) mentality. Bottom line? He was an OK guy just hard to warm up to.

Eddie Cornell, the Chief Engineman, was quite a guy. He was from Rhode Island and drove his 1953 Plymouth back and forth to see his wife when he had a liberty of enough time to accommodate the trip. He

was a very good mechanic and knew his business. He was strictly a leader not a boss and espoused the practical approach to maintenance that was, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." I got to know him quite well when we were at the Cummins Diesel plant in Columbus, Indiana, and liked him. Eddie loved life and liked having a good time, but was all business when the situation called for it.

Frank Albright was our Quartermaster 1/c. Frank was a very knowledgeable and capable quartermaster and navigator. The Skipper depended totally on him to get the boat from where we were to where we were going and back. He was a good-looking guy who seldom lacked a smile on his face. I can't help but think of Frank when someone brings up "self confidence".

Rulof Whiteman, Electrician Mate 1/c. Like Frank Albright, "Whitey" always exuded an aura of self-confidence in himself and his specialty. He kept the batteries charged and the electronics working. He was a good-looking young man with wavy red to sandy hair and freckles. Whitey had an infectious grin that appeared to almost break into a smile. I sailed with him previously on the Half Moon (WAVP 378). He was married and lived in New York City. I remember that he owned a late model Chrysler that was a luxury car at the time and was always willing to give a guy a lift if he needed it.

Alan Wescott, Gunners Mate 2/c. Like the others on the boat, he was a very professional gunners mate. The 95308 sported Hedgehog rockets and launchers, roll off depth charges and a twin 20mm gun. His job was to keep them in working order and he never failed in this responsibility. I really didn't know him very well as our specialties were poles apart so we had minimal contact. He was a friendly guy and was easy to speak with. He was married to a schoolteacher and went home whenever he could.

Commissary Man 1/c Richard Deficiene. We were very, very fortunate to have this man as our cook. He loved to bake and would become upset when his cake would set on the ship's roll leaving the cake in one side of the pan deeper than the other. At breakfast we had an open menu, as Richard would fix whatever we wanted. He was good person and a religious man of high morals and integrity. The cook we were supposed to have was a fellow nicknamed "Ski". I felt that Ski had a lousy attitude. Kind of a "me first" type person. I recalled that when I was a boot at Cape May during guard week I had the sick bay on my watch and Ski was a patient who had been severely battered while on liberty. Ski was stationed at Rehoboth, Delaware, at the time. I decided at that time that I didn't care for the guy so was even more pleased when we got Richard.

Engineman 1/c Jennings. Jennings was a quite man and although he was a "good guy" I did not get to know him. I am unable to provide any more information. I believe he was from the south.



**Engine Room Photo:
Jennings kneeling**

Engineman 2/c Eddie Baird was a short timer. He was discharged within a few months of the commissioning. During his time aboard, however, he demonstrated a genuine talent for things mechanical.

He quickly became Eddie Cornell's favorite as he had "the feel" for the job. He and Eddie painted the machinery in the engine room by using the Electrolux vacuum cleaner we had as equipment. They did a fantastic job. I remember wishing at the time how I'd like to have the natural mechanical ability exhibited by Baird and I admired and was at the same time somewhat inhibited by his confident manner.

Engineman 3/c was I [the author].

Vinny Vincent Sonarman 3/c. I believe that "Vinny was short for Vincent which meant that Vinny was a man having two first names, or two last names, however you choose to look at it. He was a young man of small physical stature being very slight having short-cropped hair and freckles. He had a laugh that was more of the "heh, heh" variety than the "har, har". Vinny and I got along well. I liked the guy, having got to know him quite well while the two of us were on TAD (temporary additional duty) assignment at the Coast Guard Headquarters Building in Washington and living per diem in a basement apartment on Connecticut Avenue for several weeks during the long summer wait for the boat. He was, as far as I knew, a very professional sonar operator. Maybe the "pings" got to him (the sound of electronic waves being returned made a "ping" noise), but he was somewhat weird in some things that he did. He told me once that the Detroit Police picked him up when he was in high school because they found a shoe horn in his pocket. I asked him why he was walking around with a shoe horn and he replied that he liked shoe horns. OK!

Seaman Raymond Jewell was the "old man" on the boat. Ray was in his early thirties. To young sailor lads in the late teens and early twenties, thirty is OLD. Remember. In my estimation, Raymond Jewell was the best damn sailor I ever went to sea with. Ray was a seasoned seaman who knew the ropes and needed no prompting as to what to do, when to do it or how to do it. He was a good shipmate as well. He'd never knowingly let you down.

Bobby Blake was the other Seaman aboard the boat. Blake was a young sailor who had a handsome head of black hair and was from South Carolina. He didn't have a lot to say, so didn't. He worked well with Jewell and was a good seaman as far as I could tell. He seemed to fit in with the crew well.

THE SHIP



Photo by Robert Beyer

At boot camp in the summer of 1950, there was an eighty-three footer at Cape May. (4) As this boat passed the base on her way out to sea, the sight would thrill me. I loved her looks and the deep-throated sound of her Sterling Viking engines as she all but idled while making way through the channel. In my opinion, the eighty-three footer had the look of a fast combat ready patrol boat. As young people today might say, “she looked mean.”



**CG 83529, Cape May, NJ
(Photo from Fredsplace.com)**

When the Chief Yeoman at the Third District Offices in New York City three years later asked me if I'd like to be assigned to a ninety-five footer, the image of the eighty-three footer instantly popped into mind. I hope it is understandable, then, when I say that first sight of the ninety-five footer was somewhat of a shock. To me, the ninety-five footer was given a sleek hull and a utilitarian deckhouse that might better fit a tug boat. Then there was the smoke stack. A *smoke stack* on a patrol boat!. The pilothouse was more like a green house than a warship's wheelhouse. It had so much glass that a bullet could send countless glass shards into the crewmen manning the bridge. I was not considering that the Coast Guard was building a boat to fit its many varied missions. As we use to say, “If it ain't got a towing bit, it ain't Coast Guard”.

Although I came to love the boat, as did my shipmates, in some ways it was like having an ugly girl friend who would be beautiful were it not for the wart on her nose. I think the superstructure and deck housing of the boat that was copied on her smaller sisters in later years may have contributed to the USAF strafing deaths of the commanding officer, the XO and helmsman on the bridge of the Point Welcome, CG 82329 in Viet Nam on 11 August 1966. (5) The high profile deck housing in my opinion may well have had something to do with her misidentification.

The 95308 had a 20-foot beam and a hull of 3/16” galvanized steel. With the exception of the watertight transverse bulkheads and framing of the hull and main deck that was of steel the interior construction of the

boat and its deck housing was of aluminum. The 95308 was an "A" class having four Cummins V-12 turbo charged main propulsion engines; two engines per shaft connected in tandem by a very complicated and intricate system to a gear case with a disconnect gear so each engine could be removed from the reduction gear all of which was designed by Cummins Diesel. Each engine was rated at 600 HP providing 1200 HP to the propellers on each shaft. The maximum speed of the boat (6) was 20 knots with a range of 1400 miles. The draft forward was 2 feet and 4 feet aft.

The ship was configured as follows as best that I remember. The chain locker was at the bow as was the sail/paint locker. Next was a berthing compartment. Aft of this compartment were two staterooms; on the port side was the chiefs' stateroom (shared) and on the starboard was the skipper's stateroom. The crew's quarters forward and the staterooms had heads and showers. Aft of this was a ladder that led to a two-tiered deckhouse consisting of the operations area with the sonar and radio operations (CIC) in the lower level and the pilothouse on the higher level. Below the pilothouse was the battery room. Next was the engine room housing the four main engines, two 271 GM diesel powered generators, and instrumentation booth (main engines were controlled from the bridge). Aft the engine room was the galley (port side) and mess deck with a door aft leading to the aft berthing compartment with head and shower. The small arms locker was in the center of the after berthing compartment and contained a variety of handheld weapons. The last compartment was a storage locker referred to as the lazaret.

In the operations area, the ship was equipped with a Sperry gyroscope compass, a Raytheon radar system, AM and FM radios on the bridge as well as sonar gear and a loran electronic navigation receiver in the CIC. The CIC doubled as the chart room.

The 95 footers were originally designed to have the engines exhaust through the transom at the stern of the boat similar to the 83 footers. However, because of the turbo charged engines, the back pressure was too great, reducing the effectiveness of the turbo chargers and hence the engines' performance. An engineering/design change resulted and the exhaust pipes for the engines were run through a funnel located aft the pilothouse (the smoke stack). The funnel and tripod mast configuration was something new for boats the size of the 95 footer. This configuration made them unique.

The flared bow design made the boat well suited for deep water allowing it to easily attain its maximum speed of 20 knots.

For armament the "A" class 95 footers in 1953 consisted of two hedgehog (7) launchers located port and starboard forward of the deckhouse each having its own ammunition box for the rockets. Aft the funnel was a twin 20mm cannon and its ammo boxes. On the after deck, two port and two starboard "roll off" type depth charge racks carrying two charges each, were installed.

The watertight transverse bulkheads were located forward of the forward berthing compartment and aft the staterooms. The next separated the engine room from the mess deck and the after sleeping quarters and the last closed off the after storage compartment. These bulkheads required the crew to go topside in order to gain access to the forward compartments, engine room and mess deck and lockers.

THE COMMISSIONING



The Commissioning Ceremony
Facing the crew reading his orders, Lt(jg) John Packard,
First Row, L-R: Chief Cornell, F. Albright, R. Whiteman, E. Baird, B. Blake, Wescott
Second Row, L-R: Chief Bates, Deficene, J. Mooney, and R. Jewell
(Photo supplied by F. Albright)

The CG 95308 was commissioned on 10 September 1953. We all got spiffed up in our dress whites and tans and assembled on the dock across from our new boat. Captain Edwin Comstock, Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Yard, Curtis Bay, was in attendance.

Following the commissioning ceremony and our moving aboard the boat, there was a lot of work to be done getting ready to put our boat into service. To the best of my memory (here we go again), it was sometime after 20 September, perhaps the 25th, that we finally got underway. We were on our “shake down cruise”.

Prior to its final acceptance as a cutter in the US Coast Guard, a new ship must undergo a “shake down” cruise during which all equipment, machinery, gunnery and the ship itself are tested to confirm that all is working as designed. In addition, the crew looks for flaws in the design that might hinder the safe operation of the vessel. The 95308 left Curtis Bay and cruised down the Chesapeake Bay to Little Creek, Virginia, for her shake down. To the best of my memory, all systems were working correctly. There were some snags such as plugged fuel filters and some minor problems elsewhere, but the bottom line was that the boat was acceptable.

I remember that we had the boat at sea for at least one night. Since the engines and boat's direction were controlled from the bridge, there was no throttle board in the engine room. The engine room watch stander sat in a small sound proofed booth that contained all of the temperature, pressure and electrical gauges, operating lights and tachometers so that the functioning machinery could be monitored from this cubicle. During that first night at sea while standing watch I began feeling queasy, not from the ship's movement, but from not knowing how the boat would react to the sea since this was her first experience. I've often wondered if I was the only one on board that night who felt that way.

Having completed the shake down regimen we were heading for Portsmouth when we encountered the U.S. Marines making an assault on the beaches of Virginia. Huge transports lay off the coast with small landing craft taking men from the transport ships to the beach and others circling awaiting their time to move toward the landing zone. At first, the Skipper backed down. I'm sure that the next steps were mentally computed. Do we sit off shore and wait for the maneuvers to be completed? Go around the ships in the action? Or follow

the old adage, "The closest distance between two points...." I will never forget the sight of landing craft backing down to let the Coast Guard's 95308 head for the crew's promised liberty in Norfolk.

Once in Portsmouth, the crew left the boat for training at the U.S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia. It was there that we went through (endured and survived) fire fighting training, damage control training (the simulated sinking of the USS Buttercup), Shallow Water Diving qualification (working with tools underwater with supplied air at a depth of either 25 or 100 feet), and Atomic, Biological and Chemical Warfare. We also performed gunnery practice and re-learned how to shoot, load and handle "hot" shells on the 20mm gun. The same careful handling of the "Hedgehog" rockets was also practiced. We had to learn how to arm the rockets and how to handle a "hot" misfire.



**20mm gun crew on the 95308 circa 1955
(Photo courtesy of R. Whiteman)**

Having satisfactorily completed all required training, the crew was turned loose and the boat headed for her first duty station.

ROCKAWAY BEACH, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

Rockaway on Long Island was a short ride on the BMT from mid-town Manhattan to Flatbush where a transfer to a bus was required. From the subway on Flatbush Avenue the bus would pass a city dump, land fill if you prefer, then Floyd Bennett Field, over Jamaica Bay and stop on the East side of the bridge from Brooklyn in a section of Queens called, Roxbury. Exiting the bus at this stop and walking down the hill leads to the U.S. Coast Guard Station at which the 95308 was to be based. In 1953, everyone called the area from the bridge to the tip of Long Island, Rockaway Beach.

The Coast Guard Station accommodated a U.S. Navy Harbor Protection unit. To the east of the station was the U.S. Army's Fort Tilton and to the south lay a community of summer cottages and a bar owned by a man named Kaufman. The bar was imaginatively named, Kaufman's. This bar was the main source of entertainment for the single guys at the station, Coast Guard and Navy and the soldiers at the Fort. It was soon to become the main source of entertainment for the crew of the 95308 as well. Kaufman would not only lend the guys money when they needed it, but carry a tab for a few days as well. And did I mention that Rockaway Beach was a summer resort? Well it was and probably still is. As such, many of the young women from Rockaway found Kaufman's a perfect place to await the sun and fun of summer during the darker days of winter. For a single sailor, Rockaway Beach was a dream come true. Actually, for some of the married sailors it was a dream come true.

For the married guys on the 95308, home was either in NYC or Rockaway. Rockaway, that was a short

distance to the north, was basically a bedroom community located between Jamaica Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. On the ocean side was a beautiful boardwalk and beach. I believe it was Beach 135th Street that pretty much was the business district with shops, movie theater and...Gallagher's Bar. There were only four north and south streets; Rockaway Beach Blvd., Newport, Cranston and Beach Channel Road. The homes were basically two or three story houses, which allowed the homeowners to rent out the upper floors that had been made into furnished flats to the summer visitors. The homeowners seemed to be of only two faiths; Jews and Irish Christians, mostly Catholics. The poor offspring of these folks were cursed in that they could come to swift and sure punishment by their parents if they were to do anything to bring shame on their folks as viewed by neighbors of the different persuasion. The bar of choice for the Irish was, of course, Gallagher's Bar. A fine place to be sure! Married sailors and soldiers would take their wives to Gallagher's for an evening's fun and relaxation. The local priests would hang out there as well off and on or at least on special occasions such as St. Patrick's Day.



**The ship at her berth at the Rockaway Beach LBS
(Photo courtesy of R. Beyer)**

The historic date of the 95308's arrival at the dock of the Coast Guard Station at Rockaway Beach is lost to me and I'm sure my mates as well. But historic it was. The men at the station, who seemed not to mind sharing their laundry machines and pool table with us, welcomed us. The commander of the station was a typical dune hopper. I drew that conclusion when I was told the story of the sailor who died many years before at the station and was cremated. As there was no legal instruction as to the disposal of the ashes, they remained over the years in a can in the commander's office

As the story went, whenever a sailor at the station would ask for permission to do something special, such as a special liberty, the commander would pull the can of ashes off the shelf and launch into his favorite recital, "Son, let me introduce you to the perfect sailorman. He never asks for pay, chow, liberty or special favors, etc., etc."

He may sound like a tough commander, as well he may have been, but I can tell you many interesting things happened at that station in his absence and without his knowledge.

Three 95 foot patrol boats were assigned to the New York harbor area. The 95304 was based at pier 9, the Coast Guard station at the foot of Manhattan at South Ferry. The 95306 was based at Sandy Hook and the 95308 at Rockaway Beach. These boats were assigned to harbor entrance patrol. The mission of the patrol was to place any merchant ship having contact with a communist port or country under surveillance and escort the ship to Sheepshead Bay to await a Port Security unit that would search the ship for any explosives or contraband. As I remember it, the boats would rotate through the following schedule: one week on patrol, one week on standby and one week maintenance stand down. A crewmember who came aboard at a later

time remembered the rotation as being every two or maybe four days that it might have been in later years.



A run for home from Pier 9, NYC

The boats were also to perform Search and Rescue (SAR) when called upon as well as engage in anti-submarine warfare (ASW) if the need arose as part of their harbor protection duties.

Prior to going on patrol, the boats would receive a listing of the expected arrivals to the Port of New York during the duty week. Vessels that had been in a communist country in the last ninety days would be considered "surveillance vessels". The boats would lay off the Ambrose Lightship and NY Harbor pilot boat, running or drifting waiting for an arrival. Upon identification, the target ship would be approached, placed under surveillance and escorted to Sheepshead Bay where the surveillance would continue until the arrival of the port security unit. Being below decks, it was always exciting when the skipper would shove the throttles to full ahead to chase down a target. The boat could show its stuff, but her rock and roll could jar the teeth and kidneys of the best of us, as she cut at full speed through and over the ocean's swells.

In periods of heavy fog, the 95 footers would share the dangers of being unseen with the Lightship Ambrose. Listening to the radio chatter of fisherman and other small boat captains relating their close calls could be an exciting diversion to the boredom of waiting for a target. Thank God for radar.

During my time aboard the CG 95308, neither she nor her crew failed to turn in an exceptional performance. I left the boat the first of May, 1954, at the completion of my extended enlistment. It was with mixed feelings that I walked down the gangplank for the last time. I liked being a sailor in the United States Coast Guard and a member of such a fine crew as was aboard the '308. The prospect of civilian life was at the same time, both frightening and exciting but I had to take the step.



**The 20mm gun crew on the 95308 in action. The crew consisted of two loaders and the gunner. Note the empty depth charge roll-off rack under the gun's muzzles.
(Photo courtesy of R. Whiteman)**

MEETING THE END

Following her decommissioning, the 95308 was taken to the Training Center at Cape May, New Jersey to be used as a training ship for the recruits. She was stripped of her engines and the mess deck was cleared to be used as an additional berthing compartment. Ballast was added to compensate for the lost weight of her engines. Even though she was a mere shell of her former self, she still looked proud at the training center's dock.



**The training ship, *Cape Strait*, at Cape May, NJ, 1989
(R. Beyer Photo)**

Over the thirty years of her service to the Coast Guard, the 95308 had many men and later women call her their ship. Some loved her as I do, but whether they did or not, she never let any of them down. I was pleased to learn that the '308 was not treated shabbily at the end by being turned into scrap or sold off to a second rate third world country. She continues to serve by lying in the depths off the New Jersey shore forming a new reef to protect the shoreline and marine life of the Atlantic Ocean. *Semper Paratus*.



**Commander John Packard, Ret. (in civvies)
At decommissioning ceremonies January 1983.
(Photo courtesy of Nora Long, Cmdr. Packard's granddaughter)**

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



**Front Row: Boosalis, EN2, Porter, GM3, Cornell ENC, Albright QM1
Middle Row: Williams, SN, Packard, LTJG, Fisher, BMC, Whiteman, and EM1, BERRY CS2
Top Row: Unidentified seaman and Jennings EN1
(Photo taken 1955 Courtesy L. Williams)**

Click on above photo for larger image

Fifty years have passed since the 95308 was commissioned into the United States Coast Guard. At times the memories of that occasion are so fresh that it seems like only yesterday that we were there. But it wasn't. The first crew of the 95308 are all old men now. Some are no longer with us having passed over the bar. But their words, personalities, laughter all echo in my head when I relive in my reverie those days, both good and bad. Our life aboard the 95308 was not like some Hollywood maritime comedy. We were engaged in a serious business and we took our responsibilities seriously. We played hard when it was time to play, but we performed our jobs as professionally as we were taught to do. We did have our highs as well as our lows, and, as nature intended, time has a way of emphasizing the highs as the lows slide from memory.

From those days the men and women who served aboard the 95308 have grown. Some, staying in the Coast Guard and excelling to higher positions of responsibility. Others, who left the service, achieved success over the years as civilians. I would like to think that we all have benefited from the values learned during our formative years in the U.S. Coast Guard and from the dynamics of knowing and living with one another. The question just naturally follows; what has happened to those folks who at one time or other in their lives served about the '308? Well, before we venture into that, I am going to introduce one of the sailors who followed me aboard the boat. Mr. Robert Beyer.

Years ago, who would venture to even imagine that folks would someday have a personal computer in their homes. Now, one can hardly imagine what it would be like without one. This instrument, the electronic marvel, has brought several of us together again and others to meet for the first time. How magnificent. One such meeting took place when Mr. Robert Beyer, who came aboard the 95308 after I had been discharged, spotted a posting I made on Fred's Place.

In 1955, Mr. Beyer was a young Seaman 1/c, Quartermaster striker, who replaced Frank Albright aboard the CG 95308. Following Frank had to be an intimidating experience for a young fellow. It had to be a frightening experience for the Skipper as well, losing an experienced salt and having to depend on an inexperienced young sailor for navigation almost a half century before GPS.. No reason for concern as Bob proved he was up to the task gaining the trust of Mister Packard. .

Mr. Beyer's response to my posting, has grown into a valued friendship. He has provided several good stories about the 308 as well as several good photographs. It was through his relentless pursuit of locating others that I was able to renew my friendship with Rulof Whiteman, Frank Albright and, after an exhaustive hunt by Bob, Raymond Jewell. Also, because of Bob Beyer, I've been in touch with Lou Williams who was aboard the 308 with Bob, and through Lou, the Lt.(jg) who replaced John Packard, Commander Goward, USCG Retired. Rule Whiteman and Frank Albright helped with this memoir by sharing their memories and editing the work for errors.

I am now going to tell you what the men from the CG 95308 have been doing over the years and where they are now. It is hoped that from this small number more will be found and their stories can be told. I will ask of those who read this to please make an effort to locate their shipmates from the 95308 so that a complete list of crews can be presented at some time in the future. (8) Sea Stories are welcomed as well. It is in anticipation of a growing list that I will not end this memoir, but consider it continued.

THE FIRST CREW:

LT(jg) John Packard. It was reported by his second wife, Janny, that he passed away 2 May 2004. He was not aware that this memoir existed at the time of his death. The following was pieced together based on information supplied by his daughter Nina and granddaughter, Nora.

John, a native of Needham, MA, met and married Polly when they were both in the U.S. Army during World War II. Polly, a nurse, out ranked him as she was a First Lieutenant and he a "butter bar" (Second Lieutenant). Shortly after their wedding, Polly was transferred to Saipan and he to Italy where he flew B-25's,

not the B-17's the scuttlebutt purported. Polly and John had three lovely and loving daughters, Nina, Susan and Betsy. Nina's son Ned attended Virginia Tech and upon graduation he was sworn into the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant by his granddad who also presented him with his USCG dress sword. Ned attained the rank of Captain before leaving the Army. John's loving and adorning granddaughter, Nora, worked with her Mom, Nina, finding and scanning some of the photographs in this memoir and providing the background on Mister Packard. The other grandchildren are Susan's Katie, Robin and Paul and Betsy's Emilia and Seth. The Skipper retired from the Coast Guard as a Commander. After leaving the 95308, John was XO on a buoy tender out of San Juan, PR, spent 5 years in Buffalo, NY, and was captain of the Cutter Nike out of Gulfport, Mississippi. He was transferred to his last station in Cleveland, Ohio, from which he retired. Following his retirement, John worked for 10 years for the Lake Carriers Association. His Polly passed away in 1985. In 1987, John married Janny, to whom he was happily married for seventeen years. He is buried next to Polly at the military cemetery, Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

BMC Bates left the boat early having been transferred to a Life Boat Station. There is no further information available. It is reported that he may have passed the bar.

ENC Ed Cornell. It is believed that Chief Cornell was transferred from the 95308 to an icebreaker, possibly the Northwind and went on to become a CWO. This information has not been confirmed. It was also reported that he had passed away recently.

QM1/c Albright. Frank is a USCG retiree. His Email "handle" is FOGI. One might think that goes with "old", but it really means, "Frank of Governors Island" and was suggested by COMDT, Admiral Kramek. What a magnificent career Frank has had. He got out in 1955 but stayed in the Reserves until 1962 when he reenlisted coming back as a QM2/c on the CGC Rockaway. He was transferred to the Half Moon. From there to the Rescue Coordination Center, NYC, then to the Gention, to the Durable, to Dallas, back to the Cape Strait, to Vigilant and to Jarvis. From the Jarvis, he was transferred to MIO New York, and on to Group New York as CPO Club manager. Frank donned his Khaki uniform as CPO on September 12, 1969, when he served at Air Station Kodiak in Alaska, the Rescue Center for the entire south and southwest of the Alaskan chain. At this station, he had five Quartermasters and five Radiomen reporting to him. Frank finished his career at Recruiting San Antonio/Corpus Christi, retiring with 31 years having served at sea for 14 years, 6 months. He was the third recipient of the Coast Guard's Ancient Mariner Award and is now the national Secretary of the CPOA. Frank has a daughter who lives in Key West who has three children and a son, Frank, who lives in New Jersey and has two children. All five grand children are girls.

EM1/c Rulof "Whitey" Whiteman. "Whitey" now prefers to be called "Rule". When on board the 308, Rule resembled a young singer named Eddie Fisher. He also had a smile that made him instant friendships. His great ambition in the Coast Guard was to become a Chief Petty Officer. Well, he did. And, he went on to retire in 1976 as a Lt. Commander. The writer served previously with him on the CGC Half Moon, WAVP 378. And ironically, Bob Beyer served with him later on the Westwind. Rule served on the Half Moon once more, but this time as the Assistant Engineering Officer. Additionally he served on the CGC Escanaba and CGC Rockaway as Engineering Officer. It is notable that during his career, Rule served on seven weather ships, two icebreakers and one sea going tug, the Tamaroa. After retirement, Rule worked for an insurance company as a regional supervisor over inspectors involved in new construction of pressure vessels, conventional and nuclear, including eleven nuclear power stations from Maine to Virginia. Following this, he became the Chief Inspector for the State of Florida. He now resides in Philadelphia with his wife and two poodles, Bonnie and Clyde.

EN2/c Ed Baird. No information available other than he returned home to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, when he left the '308 to work in his father's electrical business. When the writer was in Fort Lauderdale in 1956 he attempted to locate Ed and was told by a family member that he was going to college at Greenville.

CM2/c Richard Deficeni. No information is available except that it has been reported that he passed away. Deficeny took his discharge after twelve years in the Coast Guard.

EN3/c Jim Mooney. Jim finished his fourth year in the Coast Guard aboard the 95308 having extended his enlistment for 12 months. During his Coast Guard days, he served on the CGC Lilac, CGC Half Moon, CGC Mariposa, and at Group Atlantic City and the CG Headquarters Radio Station in Alexandria, VA. Following the Coast Guard he acquired a BS degree from Michigan State University on the GI Bill and later a MA degree from Central Michigan University. He was employed by General Motors Corporation and worked in Tarrytown, NY, Framingham, MA, Detroit, MI, and retired as Manager of Personnel and Public Relations from the Desert Proving Ground. He and his wife, Phyllis, live in Mesa, Arizona. He has a daughter, Laura, who teaches the mentally handicapped in Walnut Creek, CA, and a son who is an enrollment counselor for the University of Phoenix Online and lives in Tempe, AZ. Both are single. Jim is a "Bird" Colonel in the Civil Air Patrol, the USAF Auxiliary, and just recently stepped down as Commander of the Arizona Wing.

Seaman 1/c Jewell. Raymond Retired from the Coast Guard in 1966 as a BMC. His service career included assignments aboard the USS Durant following WWII when he was in the US Navy. Once in the Coast Guard, Ray served aboard the CGC Spencer, CGC Mariposa, CG 95308, CGC Durant, CGC Northwind and the CGC Westwind. Following retirement, he sailed on merchantmen supplying ammunition to our troops in Vietnam and later on tankers out of Japan. He now lives on his 83 acre estate in Corry, PA.

Seaman 1/c, Robert Blake. Bob married a woman from Staten Island after he was discharged and left the '308. Little else is known except that he was working for Procter and Gamble

THOSE WHO FOLLOWED:

Beginning with my departure from the ship the first of May, 1954, there began the normal rotation with transfers and replacements. I now turn to the stories of the Coast Guardsmen who followed those of the first crew beginning with the Skipper who replaced John Packard.

LT(jg) Richard F. Goward. Mister Goward reported aboard the 95308 on or about July 1955 and relieved John Packard as Commanding Officer. From the 308, he went to the RCC (Rescue Coordination Center) in the old Custom House in Manhattan, NYC. In July, 1959, he was assigned as the commanding officer of the CGC Marion, a 125 footer in Portsmouth, VA, and continued in this position until the ship was decommissioned in 1962. He then was transferred to isolated duty in Norway at a location some 130 miles above the Arctic Circle on a Norwegian Loran C station. A year later Mister Goward was transferred to San Francisco as assistant chief and then as Chief of Electronic Engineering. Departing San Francisco as a Commander it was on to the CGC Glacier, WAGB-4, as the Executive Officer, that he made two trips to the Antarctic and one to the Arctic. In 1969 he was assigned to the position of Inspector General in the 11th District where he retired in 1970. On the same day that he retired, his eldest son entered the USCG Academy. Following his retirement, Commander Goward entered the computer business as a programmer and operations manager. He eventually retired once again but this time as Director of Information systems for Century 21 International in Irvine, California, and went sailing on his 37ft sailboat for a year and one half. He and his wife cruised the ICW from Texas to Massachusetts and spotted the 95308 when they were in Cape May, NJ. When the former Skipper of the 308 tried to go aboard he was told that the boat was closed due to asbestos (can you imagine that?) The Commander resides with his wife in Southern California and they continue to sail their 37ft boat out of San Diego. It is noted that his eldest is himself now retired from the Coast Guard, leaving just this year (2003) as a Captain. How proud his Dad must be!

SM/QM Robert Beyer. Bob was one of the first of those who would come as replacements for plank owners. He took Frank Albright's billet, but as Bob tells it he never really replaced Frank who became Bob's role model in absentia. The crew would always say, "Frank would do this" or "Frank would do that." After he completed his tour of duty in the Coast Guard, Bob attended college on the GI Bill and went on to become a chemist for Mobil Oil in Princeton, NJ. He is now retired and living in New Jersey near his three children and seven grandchildren. His favorite hobby is woodworking but he fishes when he can get away. Getting to know Bob somewhat, I'd say that he would have to be good at both. My wife, Phyllis, and I were able to meet with Bob and his wife, Sheila Joan, while visiting in Philadelphia in 2002. Bob keeps in touch with other crewmembers from the '308 such as Len Davidson, an engineman who became a physician and John

Centra who became a college professor and another engineman. He was also in touch with affable Jim Lecky who worked for the railroad for many years until he passed away in 2002.

GM2/c Porter. After leaving the 308, Neil eventually was discharged and lived with his wife in Kearney, NJ, working as an insurance investigator. That is the last anyone has heard of him so there is no further information. Although Neil and Bob Beyer were close friends on the 95308 they later lost track of each other.

Seaman Lou Williams. Lou left the boat in 1956 when he transferred to COPTNY and then to Montauk where he was a BM 1/c aboard an 83 footer along with BMC Fisher. Lou made a career of the Coast Guard retiring as a BMCS. He now resides in Orlando, FL.

Here is a list of crew members when Beyer was aboard the 95308 circa 1954-1955 (not all at the same time):

LTJG John Packard	Fisher, BMC and XO
Cornell, ENC	Whiteman, EN1
Jennings ("Big Stoop") EN1	Len Davidson, EN3
Jim Lecky, EN3	Neil Porter, GM2
George Tureman, Seaman	Willie (Lou) Williams, Seaman
John Centra, Seaman	Wheeler Berry, Cook
Hohn Beal, Seaman	Indermuhle, SO3
John Lewis, Seaman	

SO3 Tom Shannon, 1962. There is no further information on Tom

SO1 Carl de Silveira, 1962-63. There is no further information on Carl.

EN2 Bob May, 1963-64. There is no further information on Bob.

EN2 Bruce Seamans, 1965-1966. Bruce Seamans enlisted on 16 October 1963 and graduated with Company Oscar 53 on 31 January 1964 at Cape May. Bruce is one of the few of us who remembers his barracks number, Building 258, to which he was transferred after the heating went out in his first barracks. Following a cold, wet, South Jersey winter at boot camp, he was assigned to Base Manhattan at South Ferry, NYC. Within a short period he was advanced to Fireman and transferred in April of 1964 to the CGC Point Batan, 82350, at Sandy Hook, NJ. In January, 1965, he was promoted to Engineman 3rd Class and transferred to the CGC Cape Strait, 95308, where he earned his second stripe being promoted EN2 on 2 May 1966. At the end of May 1967, Bruce was again transferred, this time to the CGC Point Franklin, 82350, out of Cape May. During the summer of that year, Bruce was assigned TDY to the CGC Cape Vincent for the summer doing escort and SAR (Search and Rescue). Following this stint, he returned to Cape May where he ended his active duty in the Coast Guard being discharged on 1 October 1967 to begin his inactive reserve service.

Since leaving the Coast Guard, Bruce worked as a carpenter helper, studied Tool and Die design, worked for North American Rockwell as a mechanical inspector and later as a Quality Control Manager in Swananoa, NC. He also worked for Bendix Corporation, Stow Manufacturing and Lehigh Foundry. Finding his niche, he has been working as an agent in the own agency for the past 28 years in New Milford, Pa, the place of his birth. Bruce will have been married for 32 years this June, 2005. They have a son and daughter.

Bruce remembers that his first skipper on the **95308** was an officer by the name of Consiglia who is believed to have been a Lt.(jg). Lt. Consiglia volunteered for a one year isolated duty assignment at a station in Greenland. Upon his return he was assigned as CO of the Rockaway Station. Lt. Consiglia was followed on the 95308 by Lt.(jg) Ernest Cummings, who Bruce describes as a very good officer. The following is taken directly from the home page of the Battleship Cove site and presented here as Captain Cummings' biographic. Captain Cummings has not been contacted.

Ernest Cummings, Lt. (jg) - A decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, Executive Director Ernst Cummings is a retired captain of the United States Coast Guard who commanded six of the eight cutters on which he served. Captain Cummings graduated from the Coast Guard Academy, where he was responsible for sail training, and from 1983 to 1988 he commanded America's tall ship, the Eagle (the vessel's longest reign for a CO), on which he recently chaired a Coast Guard Commission on Safety. Also a graduate of the Naval War College and the Army War College, he most recently served as the Cove's Chief Operating Officer for six years.

Captain Cummings is a member of the Historic Naval Ships Association and the New York Yacht Club, and serves on the board of the Bristol County Convention and Visitors Bureau. Captain Cummings' awards include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star with Combat "V" for valor, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, and three Coast Guard Achievement Medals.

Dennis Hobson, Ens – Bruce's last Skipper of the CG 95308 following Ernest Cummings. Mister Hobson was promoted to Lt(jg) shortly after arriving aboard the CG 95308. He also was transferred to Viet Nam following his duty on the "308".

Bruce Seamans also remembers the following men as being crew members during his time aboard:

GM3 Charles L. Fisher – From "somewhere near" Salinsgrove, Pa.

FA Donald S. Metcalf – From the area of Worchester, MA

SN Paul F. Perryman – No further information available

SN Leonard Kuzak – No further information available

CS2 Joseph Bennett – No further information available

EN1 Donald Olson – From Seattle, WA. Promoted to Chief and Warrant Officer aboard the 95308.

EN1 Clyde Portee – Was promoted to Chief Petty Officer while aboard the 95308.

RM2 Paul Raymond – No further information is available

SN William E. Stienman – No further information is available

SN Robert Fay - From Edwardsville, PA

GM3 David Holman – From Weatherly, PA

EM1 James Knapp- Was promoted to Chief Petty Officer while aboard the 95308..

EM3 Ronald Szymanski – From Phoenixville, PA, and

BM1 Zidow – No further information is available

Vic Librizzi, 1967-68. There is no further information on Vic.

Dan Lindberg, 1968-70. There is no further information on Dan

SN Craig McCrodden, 1976-77. Craig McCrodden started his military career in the US Army in December 1972. His ambition at the time was to be assigned to a boat in the transportation section. In its wisdom, and true to form, the Army decided he should be a military policeman. He attended MP school at Fort Gordon, Georgia, where, upon graduation, he was transferred to Fort Wainwright, Alaska. From there he was transferred out of the military police and into an experimental battalion at Fort Ord, California. He left the Army in December 1975, and began dating Bonnie Hayes who was from Brentwood, New York. After a month of civilian life, Craig enlisted in the Coast Guard following his brother who enlisted about a year before. After boot training at Cape May, he was assigned to the Point Herron out of Fire Island. This assignment was close to his family home at Oak Beach, LINY. On the Point Herron as a seaman, he worked three on and one off, the one "off" not always a full day. Craig describes his time on the Point Herron as always painting and cleaning pointing out that the bilges were painted white and kept that way. The skipper of the Point Herron was a BMCM, Richard Morris, who was a driver, but also according to Craig, a man who never made a mistake. "Never; not in seamanship, in maintenance, in personal matters, paperwork... nothing." Morris was, in Craig's opinion one of the best the Coast Guard had. Following a year on the Point Herron, Craig was transferred to the "Strait". Craig remembers the following as crewmembers on the 95308 at the time:

Lt. Bob Flynn, CO
EM/3 Walt Danielewski, Rec. Officer
QMC Billy Odom, XO
BM/1 Ficker, Deck Officer
SN Craig McCrodden
MK/2 Groover
SN Byron Wills

Having applied earlier for AT school to become an aviation electronics tech with the assistance of Mr. Flynn he left the Cape Strait in July of 1977. Following graduation in February 1978, he was ordered to Kodiak, Alaska, with his new bride. He became a Nav on a C-130 and H-3 crewmember. In 1982 he was transferred to Cape Cod, MA, as an H-3 radioman. He was transferred to Barbers Point and flew C-130's for three years. Then it was back to Elizabeth City for five years. He retired after twenty years from CGAS Clearwater in February 1993. Craig now lives in Raleigh, NC where he works for the North Carolina General Assembly as a computer systems specialist.

M. J. Wixxon, CO, February 1982 – Spring 1984. After leaving the Coast Guard Mr. Wixxon earned his Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine degree and practices at the Guardian Animal Hospital. Nothing more is known of Dr. Wixxon. (Source: Fred's Place Reunion Hall)

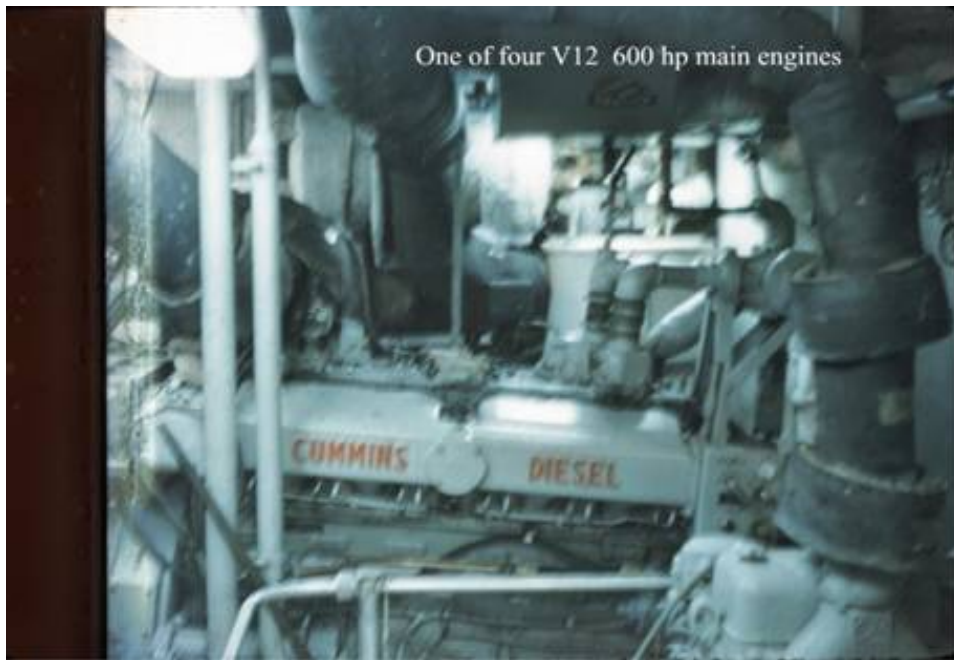
Photos to look at and cherish

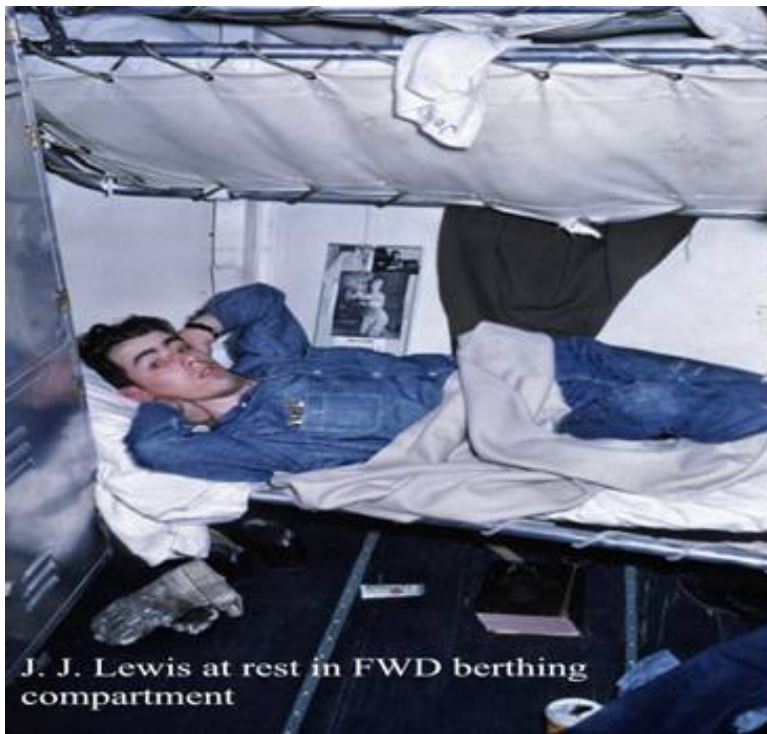
Many thanks to Robert Beyer who shared these photographs

Dry dock at St. George SINY



Tied up at St. George Base
Staten Island, NY





J. J. Lewis at rest in FWD berthing compartment

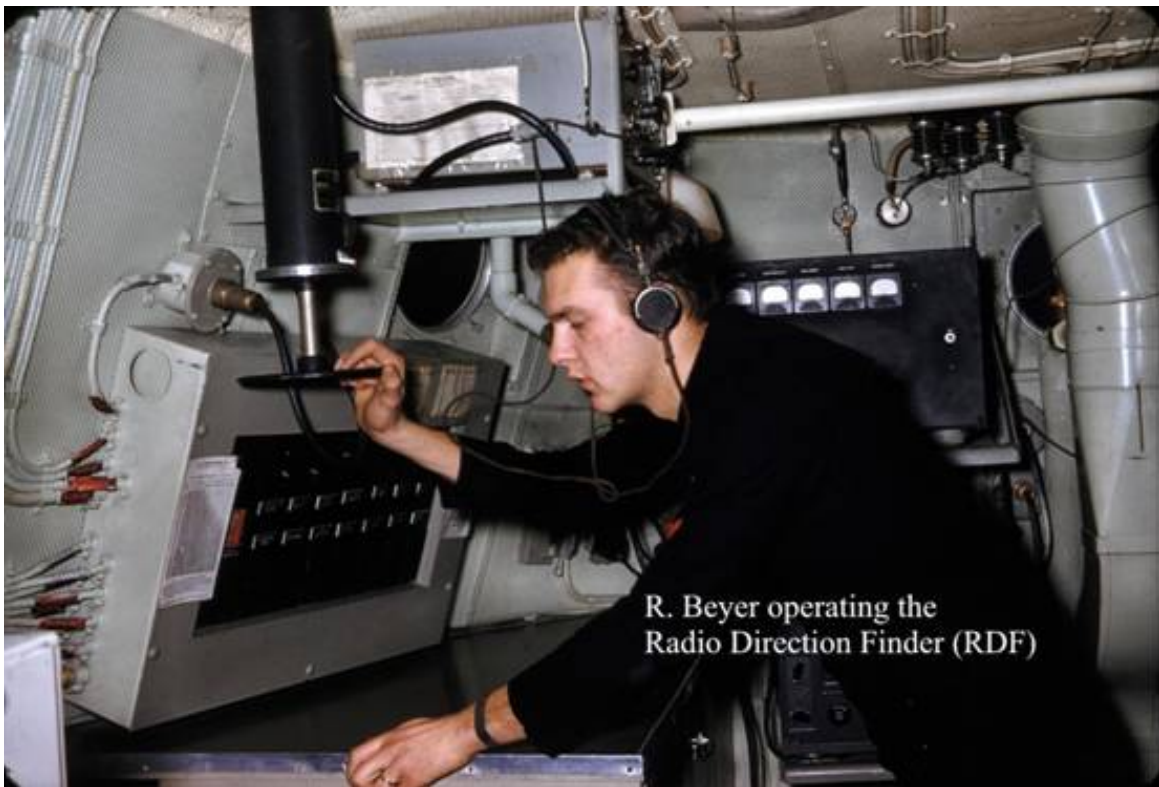
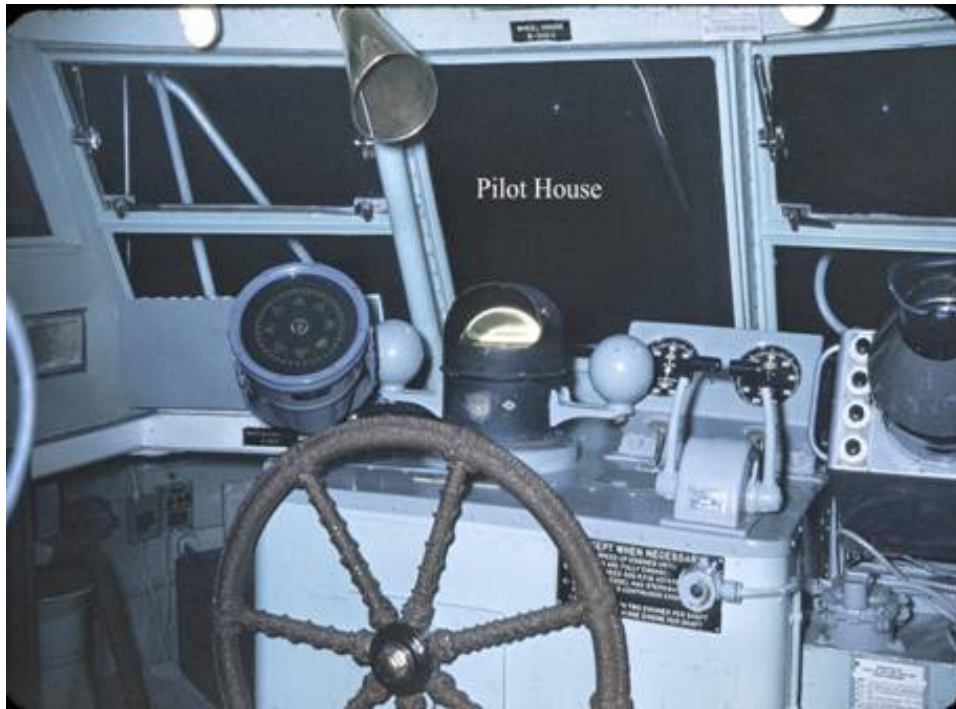


Len Davidson

Unfamed EN CPO

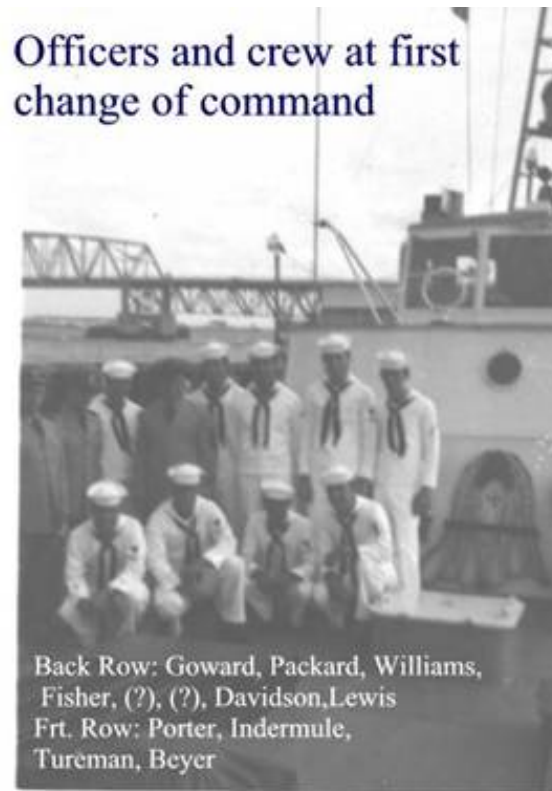
Schroeder

CHOW DOWN!





Change of command
(L to R): Chief Bates, Lt.(jg) Packard,
Lt. (jg) Goward the new Skipper



Officers and crew at first
change of command

Back Row: Goward, Packard, Williams,
Fisher, (?), (?), Davidson, Lewis
Frt. Row: Porter, Indermule,
Tureman, Beycr



USCG LBS, Rockaway Beach,
LINY, home port of CG 95308





NOTES

- 1)** Korea, South, a country in northeastern Asia that occupies the southern portion of the Korea Peninsula; officially known as the Republic of Korea. South Korea is bounded on the north by North Korea; on the east by the East Sea (Sea of Japan); on the southeast and south by the Korea Strait, which separates it from Japan; and on the west by the Yellow Sea. The capital and largest city is Seoul. The nation of South Korea was established in 1948 following the post-World War II partitioning of Korea between the occupying forces of the United States in the south and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the north. (http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761562354/South_Korea.html)
- 2)** Later to become designated as “Cape Class” cutters
- 3)** The accuracy of this bio of John Packard cannot be attested as it is written by an older man prone to fading memory and based on scuttlebutt to begin with. The last of the original crew members who were in contact with John up through the 70’s have lost track of him so he cannot be asked to contribute. Let it be said that the crew held him in very high regard. The crew was pleased with him and it is believed that he was pleased with us as well; although it can be assumed that there were times when he surely wondered what he had done wrong to deserve his fate.
- 4)** At the time the author was at Cape May as a “boot”, the Coast Guard’s 83 foot patrol boats were wooden hulled and resembled in his opinion the US Navy’s patrol torpedo boats.
- 5)** http://www.uscg.mil/history/WEBCUTTERS/Point_Welcome.html
- 6)** “Boat” and “ship” are used interchangeably. The crew referred to her as “the boat” as she was after all a Patrol “Boat”. Due to her length, she more properly should be called a “ship” or a “cutter”.
- 7)** The “Hedgehog” is a rocket-propelled depth charge. It is fired off of a specially designed launch “rack” simultaneously with other charges landing in the water ahead of the boat in a spread pattern..
- 8)** It is hoped that those receiving copies of this document will share it with others keeping the CG 95308/ Cape Straits alive in memories along with those who served aboard her. If other members of the commissioning crew surface, or if someone knows of what happened to them, it would be most appreciated if they would contact the writer at either his Email address: jamoone@cox.net, or his mailing address: 2440 E.

Hale Street, Mesa, AZ 85213. Also welcomed is the identification of others who served aboard the 95308 with updates as to where they are now.

[\[Historians' Office\]](#) [\[Cutters & Craft List\]](#)

[\[USCG Home Page\]](#)

Added: 2006