



Station Charlotte, New York

Later-Station Rochester

USLSS Station #4, Ninth District

Coast Guard Station #233

Location:	East side of Rochester Harbor, 9/16 mile west southwest of Rochester Harbor Light.
Date of Conveyance	1875
Station Built:	1875
Fate:	Still in operation, now designated as Station Rochester

Remarks:

Station moved in 1878 and again in 1885.

[Click here for a narrative of George M. Gray's and his crew's 15 December 1902 Gold Lifesaving Medal rescue.](#)

The History of the U.S. Coast Guard at Rochester, N.Y.

By Michael Scott and Chilloa Young (Unit Historians), December 3, 1988

1. IN THE BEGINNING

The beginnings of the Life Saving Service at Rochester are found in the opening of Lake Ontario for commercial transportation. As the young country pushed westward, ships plied the Great Lakes transporting people, household goods, building supplies, and all the essentials for a new start. As each new waterfront village developed, port facilities were built to facilitate growth. The first mariners were left to their own resources to find safe channels through the shifting sand

shoals. Navigational landmarks consisted of hills, identifiable trees, and other natural phenomenon. In 1789, the federal government recognized the need for dedicated aids to navigation; thus beginning the U.S. Lighthouse Service. This Service established lights and ensured they were maintained at significant ports. One such Light was established at Charlotte in 1822 and rebuilt in 1858. Even with the aid of lighthouses, sailing ships did not always make port safely. Shifting channels were always a hazard, and reliance on the wind for propulsion made it difficult to back out of dangerous situations. Though sailing ships were self—reliant when at sea, they were at the mercy of the elements when they approached shore.

Congress directed the Revenue Cutter Service to make "seasonal cruises along the coast for the relief of distressed mariners" in 1837. The following year, a Senate committee suggested it would be logical to station lifeboats at the established lighthouses. Most wrecks, with the resulting loss of life, occurred near harbors; and this brought about the U.S. Life Saving Service. Not until 1847 was the first appropriation made for land—based rescue equipment. Throughout history, mariners have sided each other in time of need. When ships were found stranded, sinking, aground, or otherwise in trouble, anyone capable of assisting would rally to their aid. Often the problem arose that able—bodied people were available to help, but the tools necessary to perform the rescue would not be found close at hand. Beginning on the East Coast, shelters were constructed and stocked with equipment necessary for rescues at the scene of a shipwreck. Lines, floats, first aid equipment, surfboats, and all the necessary accessories were stocked for emergency use. Initially, this material was procured and forgotten; nobody thought about the need for maintenance or training! Soon a Keeper was assigned to each station, with the responsibility of training volunteer crews and maintaining the equipment in full readiness.

The Life Saving Station at Charlotte was originally authorized in 1875 as part of a Service build—up throughout the Great Lakes. It was opened October 2, 1876. However, this station lacked adequate planning or foresight. It was located about a mile upriver from the mouth of the Genesee River, and back from the water. The lifeboat provided to the station was too heavy for men to move, "whence to get it into the water would require half a day's work"(UA, 9/12/1878). No provisions were made to have a team of horses available for emergencies. It was reported November 12, 1877 (UA) that the boat was not launched when a schooner was driven ashore near Long Pond, and that the boat had never even been launched for practice during the preceding year due to the difficulties involved. Although there were parts of the country where the quality of personnel of the Life Saving Service was in question, such was not the issue in Rochester. They simply couldn't use what they had!

1878 saw the arrival of a new lifeboat built by J.S. Hingston of Buffalo. This boat measured 26 feet long with an 8-foot beam, with a hull constructed of white cedar, and sides and other additions of oak. It was propelled by 6 oars, each sixteen feet long; and there was a mast of the same length for use when the wind permitted. There were five seats, not counting the bow and stern; yet it was rated for a capacity of 50. To ensure safety, there were METALlic airtight compartments located under the seats close to the sides. Canvas bags filled with cork shavings ran the length of the boat to add to the flotation and to act as fenders, "to prevent injury by concussion with the side of a ship or dock"(UA, 6/4/1878). It was considered one of the finest rescue boats available, capable of safely challenging any weather Lake Ontario might experience.

The Life Saving Service was still in a period of expansion throughout the Great Lakes in 1878, and many of the problems in Rochester were remedied. A new station was built on the Government Dock, still near the lighthouse. An inclined ramp was provided so that the boats could be launched directly into the Genesee River. It still remained a mile from the river mouth, but now the facilities could be used. The light surfboat was recorded in use at the scene of a wreck on September 11, under the command of Captain Doyle; but the details are not known at this time.

Though an unusual situation, it seems that the Keeper of the Charlotte Station was not their Captain. W.R. Way is recorded as being in charge of this new station, receiving \$200 per year to look after the property and equipment. The volunteer crew consisted of twelve men under the direction of Captain Doyle. An article in the Union & Advertiser reported, "They turn out occasionally for practice, but the absence of any compensation therefore does not encourage them to drill as much as is necessary for the efficiency of the service. The commanders of revenue cutters are the inspectors of life saving stations, and while they can do no less than approve of the management of the station, they should go farther and recommend a more liberal appropriation for its support during the season of navigation."(UA, 9/12/1878) In addition to the lifeboat, the Charlotte Station had the Beach Cart Rescue Apparatus standard to all such stations. In the belief that most assistance would be required in close proximity to shore, and in severe weather conditions, this apparatus was designed to rescue stranded mariners and bring them to shore. A Lyle gun, or small cannon, would fire a thin line up to 600 yards to the stranded vessel. This line would be used to haul across a hawser, or heavier line, which was rigged between a mast on the vessel and shear legs on the beach. Beneath this cable was suspended either a Breeches Bouy or a Lifecar to transport the sailors safely to the beach. The lifecar was "a METALlic car..., impervious to water having no openings when the cover is screwed down except numerous air holes no larger than pinholes which are punctured from the inside so that the METAL projects around them on the exterior

surface. These cars may be be hauled rapidly through the worst surf without the slightest danger to the occupants who will not even be wetted in the transit" (UA, 9/12/1878). When the messenger line could not reach the stranded vessel, or there was no point high enough to rig the line, the only alternative was the surfboat.

In 1883, the Collector for Customs in the Port of Genesee, W.T. Simpson, was ordered by the Army Signal Service to cease the display of "cautionary signals" at Charlotte. W.H. Hazen, Brigadier General, regretted the decision but was under orders from the War Department to save money. It is not clear what these signals cautioned of, but from news accounts of the day the action was considered a grave loss to the maritime community. Two years later, the Life Saving Service at Charlotte again faced major reorganization. To this time, volunteer crews were available to man the rescue equipment, after the fashion of the British and Canadian stations. The custom developed of paying \$10 per man per call, in recognition of their service; but no pay was offered for drills. The Life Saving Service was finding this method impractical, especially in the larger towns, as there were "apparently fewer good men at leisure than formerly" (D&C, 3/26/1885). Charlotte was the last station in the Ninth District to remain under the volunteer system; all others had taken on paid full—time crews. As 1885 opened, it was anticipated Charlotte would also abandon the use of volunteers. The increasing business in the port required reliable service.

Another proposal, accomplished by November 20, 1885, was to move the station to the lake shoreline. The new site for the station was to be the Lake Beach near the East Pier in Summerland, later called Summerville. Lifeboats were getting larger, to carry more equipment; and it was logical to sail the. to the sight of disaster whenever possible. This was easier to do from a station at the mouth of the river. With the assignment of paid crews to the Life Saving Stations, a regular routine developed which continued well into the 1950's. Daily training consisted of beach cart apparatus, lifeboat drill, signaling, "restoration of the apparently drowned" (Silvester beck pressure—arm lift artificial respiration method) and first aid. Saturday was a Field Day, cleaning everything in sight. Once or twice a week the station would perform the entire beach cart evolution. Each station had a pole with yardarm to simulate a wrecked ship. The beach cart was pulled into position. Once "on scene", the crew was expected to shoot the messenger line across, pass the hawser, rig the Breeches Bouy, and pull a man to "shore" — all within five minutes. Stations took pride in their speed, and often competed in their proficiency. It was not uncommon for spectators to assemble to watch the crews perform. Superintendent Kimball reported once that evolution times of two minutes were achieved at some stations.

Another drill that drew public attention was the lifeboat drill. Crews would

launch the boat and row around for at least half an hour, so they would be properly fatigued. Then, the crew would capsize the boat, reright it, and continue rowing; so they would be conditioned to react properly if the surf should upset the boat during a rescue. This was spectacular enough to be requested at many local celebrations. The signal drills were necessary to be sure all members of the crew recognized the flag signals (in hoists of one, two, three, and four flags), use of the Code Book, and pyrotechnics signals. The first aid consisted primarily of familiarization with the contents of the medicine chest. Another job that befell the regulars of the Life Saving Service was to maintain a lookout watch for vessels in distress. Towers were integrated into the plans of each station. These were first manned only during the day, counting on beach patrols after dark, but later they were used in the evening and during periods of inclement weather. In time, these lookout towers would be manned 24 hours a day.

A schooner beset by weather in the fall of 1896 destroyed the existing lookout tower, when its foreboom crashed through the support legs. After E.E. Chapman, Superintendent for the Ninth District, and LT S.M. Mandry, Resident Inspector, examined the damage, they determined a completely new tower was needed. (Inspectors were usually officers from the Revenue Cutter Service, selected for their technical knowledge, to assist the Life Saving Service maintain quality equipment standards.) The new tower would elevate the watchman's eye 34 feet above the waterline. The foundation would be set through the deck planking and ballast of the Government Pier using Norway pine. A watchman's house was built at the top of three flights of stairs, accessed through a trap door in the floor. There were three box windows and one paneled door. White pine was used to finish the outside and inside. An observation gallery surrounded the house, with a railing of galvanized iron pipe. "The outside of the structure is painted light gray, and the inside finished in oil"(UA, 7/24/1897). Superintendent Chapman personally inspected the new tower and was quite satisfied. The new tower was completed July, 1897. In the interim, the crew could not abandon their responsibility. The cupola of the boat house was utilized as a temporary watch tower until the replacement tower was ready.

There are indications that the Charlotte Life Saving Crew participated in many daring rescues. It was reported in 1885 by the Democrat and Chronical that Station earned Gold Life Saving Medal for the rescue of the schooner E.P. DORR "a few years back". In her book History of Charlotte, Emma P. Greer recounts a rescue December 15, 1902 when the crew saved the personnel of the schooner *John R. Noyes*. A summary of her account follows:

The *John R. Noyes* was carrying coal 23 miles east of Charlotte, 3 miles off Lakeside, when people on shore sighted her rigging aflame. The telegraph operator at the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railroad sent a call for help to

the Charlotte LSS. "Captain George N. Gray enlisted two flat cars to carry two boats, several villagers, and a caboose to carry his crew to the scene. Horses and bobsleds were waiting at the end of the 23 mile run to cart the boats through deep snow to the shore. Only with great difficulty was the still—floating, ice-coated hulk located several miles away.

"'Thank God you found us,' was the crew's first greeting." Captain Donovan and his half—frozen crew were taken to a local hose, where they were warmed before a special train returned them to Charlotte.

It is reported that Captain Gray and his seven surfmen received the federal Gold Life Saving Medal for this rescue. The people of Rochester recognized them too, proud of their surfmen.

2. ENTER THE COAST GUARD

The Progressive Era of America's history brought public cries for economy and consolidation. Another concern was the growing conflict in Europe. Beginning in 1912, the concept of consolidating the Life Saving and Revenue Cutter Services was studied and debated; but the administration under Taft did not support the change. With the additional consideration that, as a military force, the cuttermen would provide a trained Naval Reserve if needed for World War I, the proposal cleared Congress. January 28, 1915, President Wilson signed into law (28 Stat. L. 800) the merging of the Revenue Cutter Service and the Life Saving Service into the United States Coast Guard.

There were many problems associated with the reorganization from a civilian to a military service. From the Life Saving Service, district superintendents were made commissioned officers; keepers became warrant officers, Number 1 Surfmen became petty officers, and the rest of the Surfmen were enlisted personnel. With these ranks came military pay and benefits, as well as imposed discipline and uniform requirements.

The Coast Guard was divided into three major groups, or Field Services: Cruising, Patrol, and Lifesaving. The Lifesaving Service divided the Great Lakes into three Districts: the Ninth covered Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron to Hammond's Bay; the Tenth covered the rest of Lake Huron, the east coast of Lake Michigan, Beaver and Mackinac Islands, and Louisville, KY; and the Eleventh included Lake Michigan's western shore and Lake Superior. The Districts were respectively headquartered in Buffalo, NY; Grand Haven, MI; and Green Bay, WI.

In January, 1920, Congress passed the Volstead Act and Prohibition began. The Coast Guard was charged with intercepting alcohol smuggled by sea, and the facilities and manpower grew annually to combat the endless flow of liquor until the Twenty—First Amendment was passed in December, 1933, ending prohibition. It is not known how this period affected the Rochester Station. Smuggling liquor from Canada was a problem until 1930, when Canada passed the King Resolution and reduced the flow from the north. As with most stations, it is assumed the manpower doubled from 1920 to 1928.

The Coast Guard reorganized again in 1935, dividing the Great Lakes into the Cleveland and Chicago Divisions of the Northern Area. The Ninth District was the Cleveland Division, while the Tenth and Eleventh Districts together formed the Chicago Division. In typical Service fashion, the District ordered all lifeboats stations to compete against each other in 1937 to determine the fastest crew. Captain George E. Jackson proudly watched his crew beat out the crew from Niagara by eleven seconds on the two—mile course set up on the Genesee River; though there were few other spectators. They were to compete next against the winner of the race between the stations at Oswego and Galloo Island, and that winner would represent Lake Ontario to challenge the winners of the other Great Lakes. No further articles appear on the subject, so it is assumed the crew met their match in the second round.

The winter of 1937 saw the arrival of a new trailer for the station's surf boat. This need for mobility developed from the Coast Guard's response to annual flooding in the Mississippi River valley. Surf boats and motor life boats from throughout the Ninth District (Great Lakes) were called to assist the devastated regions. In 1936, Rochester's surf boat had been sent to the Ohio River. To accomplish this response in past years, the boat had been launched and run to Buffalo. There it was loaded on a railroad flatcar for the rest of the trip.

The trailer cost \$1,600 and weighed 3,500 pounds. With the new trailer, a truck could tow the boat directly from Rochester. To make it unnecessary to even launch the boat into the water, new doors large enough for the trailer were cut in the boathouse opposite the launching railway. The alternative had been to launch the surf boat into the river, sometimes chopping ice away from the ramps, so the boat could be hauled on to the trailer.

Fire threatened the station on April 24, 1938 when the New York State Railways building at the end of St. Paul Boulevard caught fire. The fire spread to the Summerville Restaurant next to the station, threatening the Coast Guard garage building. Coast Guardsmen joined St. Paul Blvd. firefighters under Fire Chief Fred C. Klein to contain the blaze before it reached Government property or, more critically, the personal vehicles of the crew!

Late 1938—early 1939 was a period of anticipation, as Europe went to war and the United States watched and waited. The Coast Guard Cutter Jackson was a 125—foot cutter stationed in Rochester for Search and Rescue, though it mounted a 3" gun and was capable of carrying "several more." The top speed was 10 knots, and it carried 6,900 gallons of fuel, consuming 8 gallons per hour. She was one of 33 boats built in 1927 during the prohibition period to chase rumrun— nera. There were 22 officers and men in her crew, including four radio operators.

The patrol area for CGC Jackson in 1940 would be from the Niagara River to Sodus Bay, but in February of 1939 they

were dispatched with an electronic technician to repair the equipment on isolated Galloo Island. On their return, the cutter was diverted to rescue a stranded boat and similarly became stranded in ice 2—3 feet thick. The crew was stuck three days before the wind shifted, enabling them to proceed; but when they returned, BNC Edward Doten observed, "All in a day's work. It was something new for the younger men of the crew, but nothing for old—timers ——— nothing at all"(D&C, 2/17/1939). Upon arriving home, the crew turned to scrubbing the decks and chopping away built—up ice. BMC Doten added, "Next time the younger boys will know enough to take along plenty of cigarets."

Several other changes came about in 1939. The Coast Guard took over the duties of the U.S. Lighthouse Service. Established lighthouses at Sodus Point, Charlotte, and Manitou Beach became the responsibility of the Coast Guard. In March, 1939, Charlotte Lifeboat Station entered the age of modern electronics with the installation of radio. It was one of fifteen stations so equipped on the Great Lakes, operating voice transmissions on 2182 kc (to supple-sent code traffic on 2698 kc). This traffic would be controlled by stations at Wilmette Harbor, Cleveland, and Buffalo. The installation cost \$2,300.

June 6, 1939 couldn't come too moon! That was the day the new station was opened. It had 21 rooms and cost the government \$43,000. There was a basement, two floors, and attic and a lookout tower. An equipment building costing \$10,000 was also accepted. The old building would be demolished and replaced with a lawn.

3. THEN CAME WAR

On the 150th anniversary of the Revenue Cutter Marine (8/4/1940), Rochester had a joint command of the lifeboat station and the CGC Jackson,

which were on Opposite aides of the river but under the same Commanding Officer. Thirteen men were attached to the station and twenty—two to the cutter.

The war started out slowly on Lake Ontario. It wasn't until August 28, 1942 that BMC George Jackson received orders from the Ninth District to secure the station grounds. Armed sentinels with guard dogs patrolled the grounds and blocked access to the government piers. A 55—foot cabin cruiser which had been commandeered "for the duration" patrolled Sodus Bay in the summer with a 7—man crew attached. BMC James P. Lewis was in command, with MMC Walter H. Sullivan as exec. In the winter, the boat was drydocked at the Rochester Yacht Club; but the crew still lived aboard. As with the civilian population, they took their ration of food stamps to town daily to provide for their meals. In their free time, they were permitted to lounge around inside the deck house and listen to the radio.

When Ensign J.A. Trantor was commanding the Charlotte Station, he recognized the confusion that was created by the unit name. CGC Jackson had been moored in Charlotte, before it was detached for convoy escort duties; and the station was in Summerville. After 59 years of confusion, the unit name was officially changed from "Charlotte Station" to "Rochester Station" on February 22, 1944. The presence and participation of the Coast Guard Reserve, which became the Auxiliary/Temporary Reserve, was essential to the operation of the station. Late in 1942, LT J. Webb L. Sheehy and ENS Harold L. Field lead the Rochester unit of the USCGR(T) which reached a strength of 75 by the end of the War. For eighteen months, the TRs provided four men every eight hours (12 men each day) for "lookout, sentry and emergency duty." LT J. Webb Sheehy was to later recognize CPO Walter Van Eppa, a veteran of the Navy, for his "unflagging work in whipping the outfit into shape as a smoothly—functioning military unit."

The Temporary Reserves, formed in reaction to Pearl Harbor, performed through September, 1945. Effective October 1, Flotilla 3—01 reverted to civilian status, ceasing to exist as a military unit at the direction of the Ninth District; but providing the foundation for the newly—conceived Auxiliary. This did not signal the end of assistance, but only the shift from a military to a civilian organization.

With the end of the War, the military began to release personnel and to shrink back to peacetime strength. In the process, many units felt the pinch, and Rochester Station was no exception. In May 1946, the Station had only six of its seventeen billets filled; and two more men were scheduled to depart soon. This would leave only four men to run the Station. BMC Kenneth Call asked the Auxiliary to once again provide assistance.

As is typical, the manpower forecast was optimistic at best! Through the summer, personnel were removed until, in June, the Officer in Charge had only one regular reporting to him. The Auxiliary supplied the necessary support for the Station to function until September 1, when BHC Call announced that six men were to be transferred to the unit. Of these, four were "rookies" straight from Recruit Training and of little immediate use; but they brought the physical count of bodies to seven, slowly approaching the billeted allowance of eleven.

Also in September 1946, CDR Edwin J. Rolland, Chief of Staff for the Ninth District, announced that CGC Yeaton would be sent to Rochester. Replacing the CGC Jackson, her sister ship which had been lost in the Pacific during World War II, this 125—foot cutter with its 25—man crew would be responsible for Search and Rescue on Lake Ontario. At the same time, the Naval Reserve and N.Y. Naval Militia would receive a 136—foot minesweeper.

The following year saw little improvement. In March, Officer in Charge William Thorington was hospitalized, leaving only four men reporting to BM Folwell. Buffalo sent Edward Dykhuis, Chief Machinist Mate, for temporary duty. Even with his help, the Station could only give one man liberty each night! With "3 oversized buildings" to clean and maintain, four boats and mobile life saving equipment to care for, lookout-tower and radio watch, and the ever-necessary training, there wasn't much free time for the crew (D&C, 3/1/1947). This time, the situation continued through August with no relief.

The Auxiliary continued to pitch in. At the open house for Coast Guard Day, fifteen Auxiliarists were present to assist. They helped the four regulars show off their motorized lifeboat, picket boat, motorized surfboat, and pulling surfboat to the interested public. Auxiliarist C.T. Pensfeather was the unit Intelligence Officer, checking the veracity" of reports of mishaps. Flotilla 3-01 was able to keep Rochester Station functioning.

This support continued for several years. At an open house on May 12, 1950, CDR Russell R. Waesche, the Ninth District officer in charge of the Auxiliary, was expected to attend. Although he was unable to attend the function when he missed rail connections, the Auxiliary and local recruiter helped the station put on an impressive display. The regulars set up the Beach Cart apparatus, with the cook volunteering to be "rescued" from the practice tower, and Auxiliarist Frank Lux demonstrated operation of the rescue inhalator. Shortly after this open house, the Coast Guard announced it was tearing down the lookout tower on the pier. The new station had a watchtower built into the roof, and the crew had been using this perch in place of the old tower. CGC Maple, a buoy tender, would arrive to help dismantle the tower.

Perhaps as a response to widespread personnel shortages, or perhaps in fear of another World War, the Coast Guard asked Congress for authorization to establish a formal, military Reserve program in the fall of 1947. Unlike the former Reserve Bill, which intended to draw from civilian resources only in time of emergency, this proposal would keep a military force available for call at any moment. This force would come to play a significant role in the success of Rochester Station.

1949 brought a couple of interesting changes to Rochester. Most noticeable was the addition of a DUKW to the unit's resources. This vehicle was originally designed for amphibious assaults. It was a 2.5 ton truck on the highway, capable of running at 55 mph on six wheels. When it reached the water, it could continue at 6—7 knots. The drive train was connected to an eighteenth gear transmission, permitting the front and rear axles to be shifted, independently when necessary, to get in and out of the water. It carried a winch, and was the only "vessel" the Coast Guard had which could get into Irondequoit Bay. It was first seen patrolling Snipe races for Newport Yacht Club at Bayview on Irondequoit Bay, but it was to become an important *SAR* resource. The other major change involved policy toward enforcement on Irondequoit Bay. Many boaters were ignoring channel speed limits and other safety regulations in the area. The Irondequoit Town Board met to pass a resolution requesting federal assistance for patrol inspections on Irondequoit Bay to correct the problem. BMC Everett J. Mooring announced that the DUKW would permit the Coast Guard to hold unscheduled inspections, as directed by the District Office in Cleveland. It was expected that the amphibious vehicle would increase the enforcement efforts and would improve the safety in the area.

4. THE BUSY YEARS

From the initial search for information, it would appear that the Coast Guard had little activity in the 1950s. Upon closer inspection, it seems the action was still there; but more cases were handled by the Auxiliary. Perhaps this was due to the developing Korean Conflict, which was concerning the nation's leadership. Due to the shortage of personnel, a CG officer attending the Rochester Institute of Technology was called to reenlist the local recruiter, BMC(L) Maurice Worth, in 1952.

CG 63359, a patrol boat stationed at Sackets Harbor, was reported to be transferred to Rochester by May 1950 (TIJ, 3/22/1950). A District officer (CDR Russell Waesch) announced the move was possible because the Galloo Island Station was reactivating, making the cutter available elsewhere. The 359 would have a crew of eight with a Chief Boatswain's Mate in charge. In the same article,

it was announced that the Auxiliary had purchased a building from the estate of Lorraine Gussen. This building was on property leased from the federal government, known as "Lighthouse Property," as it was on River Street below the Charlotte Lighthouse. The 25' by 36' building was surrounded by a high wire fence. The building would serve as a base for Courtesy Motorboat Examinations and a radio station for the Auxiliary.

The tensions of war were growing as the Auxiliary hosted an annual Sailor's Night and Open House at the Coast Guard Station May 11, 1950 (D&C) for the crew and community. Three months later, District Commander (CAPT) James A. Hirshfield ordered all units to restrict visitor access. Floating units were prohibited from having visitors, and Rochester was closed to "casual strollers.. . Only persons having specific business or members of the immediate families. will be admitted. All visitors.. are to be escorted by Coast Guard personnel while in the area." (TU, 7/18/ 1950). Webb Sheehy was elected to the position of National Commodore of the CG Auxiliary for 1953. This office is the highest elected position in the Auxiliary, recognizing the success he had achieved building the organization in Rochester and as the leader of Area 0.

The DUKW responded to a medivac off Point Breeze in May 1954. Driving down the highway at 55 mph, escorted by Sheriff's cars from Monroe and Orleans Counties, it quickly covered the 40 miles to Point Breeze. There, it drove into the lake to find the 110—foot tug Ethel McAllister and evacuate the sick sailor, who was thought to have appendicitis. Returning to Point Breeze, the DUKW transferred the sailor to a waiting ambulance.

In September 1954, CWO David Smith relieved BMC Charles E. Poirer of command. CWO Merle Wilson relieved BMC George Stickles in December 1957. September 1959 still saw CWO Wilson in charge, with BMC Benjamin Check relieving BMC Ernest Lewis as executive officer.

The personnel demonstrated their humanitarian concerns November 11, 1955 when they responded to a German Shepard struggling in the river. It was seen struggling around a buoy near the river mouth. The skiff was launched and the dog brought to shore, where it took off as soon as it reached dry land. The Auxiliary conducted Search and Rescue competition regularly in Lake Ontario and inland lakes between flotillas. In 1950, the Rochester flotilla won the event held on Seneca Lake. Flotillas from Buffalo, Syracuse, Ithaca, and Niagara Falls came to Rochester in 1952. The boats searched for a target representing a downed Royal Canadian Air Force pilot, opening sealed instructions after proceeding four miles into the lake. The seas were rough, but an Auxiliary aircraft piloted by Lawrence C. Gleason reported that the Ithaca boat, operated by a crew of engineering professors from Cornell University, ran straight to the scene and won the event.

The Rochester flotilla conducted similar drills annually. However, in 1956, things didn't go quite as planned. Having run to Fairhaven, where they were to search for targets dropped by planes from Civil Air Patrol, the crews were informed a tug and barge had lost power and were in danger. Webb Sheehy's "Neaga" and George Gasset's "Ripple" got underway to assist. Neaga was able to tow the tug to safety while Ripple held the barge offshore until a Coast Guard 40-foot patrol boat could assume the tow. After sleeping in the next morning, the flotilla of 5 boats and 15 members set out - only to spot four heads bobbing in the water. The boys had been operating an outboard that capsized and immediately sank, so again the drills were abandoned for the reel thing. The practice target was never located, but nobody seemed to mind! In 1958, D&C reported 35 members in 7 boats were again underway training.

Reports from 1956 show the station as having two boats, including a 30-foot steel utility boat. Following a heavy storm that hit in July 1, 1956, it was reported that the two station boats and three Auxiliary facilities responded to the calls for assistance. Only the station's cook was left at the station to man the radios, until aided by a Past Flotilla Commander from the Auxiliary. Once again, the close working relationship between the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary was apparent. In conjunction with the storm report, the papers state that 375 boats had been boarded for safety inspections so far, and Weather Service warning flags were displayed beginning at 6:00 a.m. daily.

Relations between the Coast Guard and Auxiliary were strained the following week, when remarks of an Auxiliarist were quoted reporting the unit was undermanned. Walter Kennedy, training officer, and I.L. Gillette, flotilla commander, were appearing on the weekly radio show "Eye on the News" on WHEC July 9 with host Kermit Hill, political writer for the Times Union. The next day, the Times Union carried an editorial bemoaning the lack of adequate manpower, and news stories documented the statements. In a follow-up story the next day, the Times Union elaborated on the comments and the meaning. The station's most powerful boat, a 30-foot power launch, had been ordered to Syracuse by District to patrol Olympic Rowing Trials on Lake Onondaga, and the DUKW had been twice diverted from a disabled boat off Nine Mile Point to rescue people from capsized boats. The article emphasized the 11 men assigned to the unit were adequate for normal operations, but they would be understaffed in emergencies; and that the purpose of the Auxiliary was to assist during these peak periods.

5 THE MOTORCYCLE COPS

Early in 1957, BMC George Stickles relayed a warning from the District office concerning new boating trends. Many boat manufacturers were following the automotive trends of placing fins, fashion lights, and other accessories on their boats for a flashy appearance. Some even incorporated headlights in their designs. The Coast Guard was warning the boating public that many of these designs would not meet legal requirements for navigational lights, and others (such as "brake lights") would be confusing on the water. New boaters were encouraged to take advantage of Courtesy Motorboat Examinations being offered by the CG Auxiliary at River Street. The local law enforcement officials informed the Coast Guard that there was a growing need for improved resources in the area. While the 30-foot UTL was a useful boat, Sheriff Albert W. Skinner complained it was not adequate. (The UTL was reported as the largest of the three boats at the unit. It is unknown when the MLB was removed, but it was known to be at the station in 1955.) Representative Kenneth B. Keating announced the delivery in June, 1957 of a modern 40-foot utility boat to perform patrol duty and search and rescue. The UTB was first used for a SAR case June 16, 1957, after a week of normal patrols (D&C, 6/17/1957).

At the conclusion of 1957, the Coast Guard reported 77,000 boardings resulting in 4,536 violations, as compared to 60,000 boardings and 3,770 violations the preceding year. Rochester Station had performed 1,758 boardings and issued 25 citations for violations, and they had been called to perform 52 assistance cases. The Motorboat Act of 1940 had given the Coast Guard the authority to issue citations for safety equipment violations. However, the Federal Boating Act of 1958 vested much greater power in the Coast Guard to control recreational boating safety. CG officials could now arrest and fine reckless boaters. The Summerville station would be expected to increase the law enforcement efforts in Monroe County. Prior to this, charges for negligent operations had to be prosecuted in the federal courts. Under the new law, the District Commander could set administrative penalties; and the case would go to court only if the penalty was appealed.

The Coast Guard had operated a four-man team on the lakes under federal jurisdiction in the nine counties surrounding Rochester in 1957. By 1959, eight of thou. counties were conducting their own patrols. (Genesee County was not patrolling its one "lake," Horseshoe Lake, because there were no known motorboats in use on the pond.) Livingston County was the first in New York State to have its own boat patrol. The new law wasn't the entire answer. Reckless boaters were still a problem on the lower Genesee River in May, 1961. The boat safety section of the Rochester Safety Council at the Chamber of Commerce requested Coast Guard assistance to control reckless boating there, and the Buffalo Office ordered Chief Warrant Officer Harold Baker "to cooperate with local authorities in enforcing federal and state navigation laws in the lower Genesee

River...." (D&C, 5/10/1961). To accomplish this, Coast Guard patrols would stop boats for violations and warn the operators. If the situation did not improve by June 30, city police officers would be detailed to ride with the Coast Guard and make arrests when warranted. This would require the offending boaters to appear before City Court judges for disposition of their cases. It is not known whether the City Court officials were tougher on violators than the federal officers determining Coast Guard fines; but the plan would prevent a buildup of Coast Guard paperwork.

6. THE COMING OF AGE

In 1965, the Coast Guard took a giant step forward. Throughout the country, the word "Lifeboat" was dropped from the unit title of the "Stations" that had performed so many different missions. Soon after, the distinctive orange and blue Coast Guard stripe was authorized to help distinguish the Service from the Navy. So begins the newest of the Coast Guard "modernization" programs. At this time, the Times Union reports (4/9/1965) that the Station is operating four boats: 40—foot utility boat, 30—foot light utility boat, 36—foot motor lifeboat, and 14—foot skiff. Communications improved with the shift from MF—AM (medium frequency) radio to VHF—FM (very high frequency). Initially, the Coast Guard experimented with this system for government traffic; but it was quickly adopted by the boating public. One of the Coast Guard frequencies, Channel 22A (157.10 MHz), was authorized for use by civilians to communicate with the Service. Through a system of Hi—Level antenna sites, supplemented by radios at each unit, complete coverage of the Great Lakes was attained. At Rochester, a Hi—Level site was located on top of the Russell Station power plant.

1967 was a big year for Coast Guard publicity. CGC White Lupine, a buoy tender, visited in late June. Then in August, CGC Mackinaw came to visit. Both ships held open house and drew large crowds. May 20, 1968 the unit received a new 44—foot, 3,600 pound Motor Lifeboat. CG 44380 was a vast improvement over the 36—foot "white whale." It was capable of 12 knots and was rated for seas up to 30 feet. It could roll completely over and right itself, ready to continue on the mission assigned. This boat was almost indestructible! It took ten days to ferry it up the East Coast and through the canals from Maryland, where it was built.

In 1972, the Auxiliary set out to assist the Coast Guard with the age-old problem of determining the positions of boaters in distress. From Oak Orchard to Pultneyville, 20—30 pelorus stations were to be established to provide lines of position to the distress sites. Volunteers in the area would be trained in the use of a pelorus, and when called would provide the bearing to a vessel. By combining two or more of these bearings, an accurate position could be obtained. [It was

reported that a similar system was operational 12 years before, in 1960; but there is no information from the local press. The first attempt failed because the original volunteers either moved or quit.] The experiment was attempted for two summers. High water in 1973 destroyed many of the pelorus sights; only six were operational. Flotilla Staff Officer James F. Hilbert, coordinating the operation, hoped to reestablish the effort in 1974.

Group Buffalo announced that the Station in Sodus Point would close 1 JUN 1973. This would increase the Area of Responsibility for the Rochester Station, to stretch from Oak Orchard on the west to Sodus Bay on the east. However, with an 82—foot cutter stationed in Oswego, it was hoped the increased load would be minimal. After much Congressional debate, funding was restored to the Coast Guard to reopen some of the stations. On July 26, 1973 it was announced that the Sodus Point station would reopen for weekends and holidays. Experimenting with a new concept, the station would be run using only Auxiliary boats.

In May of 1976, the Coast Guard took another step into the age of technology. The Weather Service warning flags, flown at Rochester since 1936, were to be replaced by a radio broadcast to be made on 162.40 MHz. This broadcast would be revised regularly by the NOAA forecasters, and would be available much farther than the two miles the old flags and lights had been visible from Summerville. The broadcasts could also carry emergency information about missing boats, and an alert tone would activate special monitors to warn of impending storms. The system was a great step forward. (The flags had been flown from Niagara since 1/11/1904, and from Buffalo since 7/1/1907.)

The summer of 1976 also brought some local conflict concerning the fog signal at the mouth of the river. A new directive had caused the foghorn to again sound continuously, as it had the preceding year; since March the signal had only been sounding daily until 10:00 p.m. After two days of discussion, the Coast Guard agreed to permit the fog signal to be silent whenever visibility exceeded 5 miles, interpreting the new directive as applying only to a different class of signal.

On June 10, 1977, Station Rochester received a 41—foot new aluminum utility boat — well, almost! The flatbed truck delivering the boat was stopped on Highway 47 by a low bridge only a few miles from the station. After finding an alternate route, the boat was delivered to the Genesee River. It is not known how long this boat remained at Summerville, but it didn't stay long. A 56—foot Coast Guard cable boat sank on December 2, 1977 as it was transiting from Oswego to Niagara Station. It experienced 6—foot waves and winds of 50 mph as it approached Nine Mile Point. The boat was a converted landing craft (LCM), with an open deck, and it was taking water over the gunwale faster than the 3—man

crew could pump it out. Rochester's motor lifeboat was dispatched to the scene about two miles offshore, where it found the 50-ton cable boat listing to port. They took the boat in tow, but a wave parted the towline and the cable boat sank 2.5 miles east of Nine Mile Point. Two weeks later, a helicopter from the Sheriff's Department located the sunken cable boat in approximately 70 feet of water off Ginna Power Plant. The boat was salvaged the following week, and returned to Coast Guard service.

A couple of weeks later, a feature article described winter duty at the station. After the motor lifeboat was hauled from the water December 5, the crew commenced a duty rotation of 24 hours on/48 hours off. They maintained a fourman crew to respond with the ice skiff if needed. Most of the time was spent fighting boredom, working on cars, and sleeping. "After a while, it gets to be a real drag," said MK2 Roy Short, OOD. "The boredom really settles in during January and February" (TU, 12/30/1977). SA John Garbarino adds, "Summer duty makes up for all the winter drag." SA Mark Rudolph agrees, "Yeah, in the summer you get all the excitement you'd ever need." (Ibid.)

The Coast Guard began monitoring CB (citizens band) radio traffic at Rochester in the spring of 1978. They listen on channel 9, the channel designated for emergency traffic; and they only respond to distress calls. Even so, two-thirds of the calls received were determined to be prank calls. Also in 1978, the Coast Guard sent to Rochester a new fast-response boat, CG 214170. This 21-foot Boston Whaler was an open boat, reportedly capable of 50 mph, according to BNC Ben Critchley (D&C, 11/19/1978).

1980 proved to be a different year. The fifteen men attached to Rochester Station heard the news in August that they would be carrying sidearms on a regular basis during boardings. They didn't think they needed this type of protection for the cases they handled that summer, like the derelict "Port—sPot" (construction—site outhouse) that was located and rescued 1.5 miles off Durand Eastman Park. Initially the three-man crew was afraid to open the door in fear it might be occupied, but such was not the case. The crew tried to sink the seven-foot fiberglass structure, but even after several holes were chopped it continued to float; so they lashed it to the stern of the motor lifeboat and towed it ashore. When they arrived at the Station, a Monroe County Sheriff's boat offered to relieve them of their burden. The crew of the motor lifeboat is still trying to figure out what the Sheriff would have done with it!

A couple of weeks later, the crew was a little more serious when a 55-gallon drum which appeared to be a bomb was located a half mile off Webster at 10:54 p. m. The drum was tied to a wooden raft and was marked with "Danger, Explosives,

Caution" and a skull—and—crossbones. An orange tackle box was attached to the drum, later found to contain a clock, toggle switch, and four wires. The motor lifeboat stood watch from a distance overnight, and the Sheriff's bomb squad dismantled the drum and found it to be a fake. (The clock was set to activate lights on the raft at 10:00 p.m., about the time the GG received a report of an emergency flare.) Even so, the crew began to seriously think about security.

In October 1980 the District announced that Rochester would again receive a 41—foot utility boat. Oswego had their motor lifeboat transferred, and it was decided they needed one more than Rochester; so the boats were swapped. This would provide the unit with a faster response resource, to supplement the 16—foot Boston Whaler. The Station responded to 213 calls in 1980, compared to 160 calls in 1979.

The following May, the 41—footer was transferred to Station Erie, Pa; and Rochester received a 44—foot motor lifeboat (CG 44316) and a 22—foot Boston Whaler. It was reported that, over the next winter, the motor lifeboat would add one ton of lead ballast to increase her righting capabilities. In addition to the MLB, Rochester had two Boston Whalers (21 ft. and 14 ft.) and a fourteen foot aluminum ice skiff. P01 Kenneth Mitchell, the unit's Engineer, also stated they could rely on the CG Auxiliary: "If we lost two kids in a sailboat out on this lake, you'd probably have 50 to 60 units out looking for it." (D&C, 8/10/1980)

Again in 1982 it was announced that Rochester CG personnel would begin carrying sidearms. Although weapons had seldom been carried in the past, the war against drugs in Florida and the Gulf states was having its impact on the Great Lakes. BMC Donnie Gordon reaffirmed the policies announced by BMC Vern Williams two years previously, that the Rochester Coast Guard personnel would be ready to handle any problems that arose. The motor lifeboat received two additions to its electronics package in 1983. A new radar was installed, with a range of 12 miles and reported capable of picking out people in the water. At the same time, a LORMI—C unit valued at \$7,000 was installed to aid in navigation. These would have helped with many of the 194 assistance cases performed in 1982.

In January 1984 the Auxiliary proposed to establish a substation at Point Breeze on the Oak Orchard River. Orleans County was leasing an 11—acre site from the state, and agreed to provide space for the Auxiliary. Three boat slips, a headquarters, radio room, and classroom were planned. The Coast Guard was expected to fund the development. BMC Donnie Gordon agreed to seek an excess office trailer to use for the headquarters, to keep expenses low.

Unit security was tightened in the spring of 1984, as a result of threats of terrorism and sabotage against all military installations by organizations like the Puerto Rican FALN. With it came the policy of keeping the fence gates locked and closing access to the east Government pier. This was the only place available to fishermen while the west pier was closed for repairs. After meeting with the City Recreation Bureau and the Monroe County Fishery Advisory Board, BMC Donnie Gordon agreed to open the station gates from 6:30 a.m. to sunset; but guards would continue to patrol the grounds.

Rochester celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1984, and part of this celebration was the Tall Ships Festival. Twenty ships arrived July 12 from a stop in Toronto, as part of the Lake Ontario Tall Ships Rendezvous '84. The 180-foot buoy tender CGC Mariposa, homeported in Detroit, also joined the fleet. 20,000 people were estimated dockside to greet the boats when they arrived. BMC Don Gordon estimated 1—2 thousand boats were drawn to the four square miles of water daily to see the various craft, with more anticipated on the weekend when the local boaters joined the crowd. To protect and control this crowd, 36 boats and over 100 personnel were drawn from law enforcement agencies at all levels, the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Reserves, as well as Station personnel. 24-hour patrols were run in the Genesee River and surrounding waters. The Station served as the command and communications center, as well as maintaining the communications guard for CGC Mariposa. Over 30 citations were issued for safety violations. BMC Gordon attributed the small number of problems to the large "visual presence" of patrol vessels. CWO3 Hank Murak, a crew member on the Mariposa, reported, "The station treated us real well" (Shipmates, Summer 1984). As a result of this effort, the Station, Reserves, and Auxiliary involved were awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Two Auxiliarists died in July, 1984 when their twin-engine Apache crashed shortly after takeoff. Herman "Skip" Mau, 38, and his mother Madeline, 60, were departing for a Safety Patrol of southeastern Lake Ontario when they crashed

near New Hope Airport. Madeline Mau was killed on impact; Skip died ten days later from burns suffered when he tried to rescue his mother from the wreckage. The effect of this tragedy, and a similar accident near Kenosha, WI. when an Auxiliary plane on patrol crash-landed injuring the pilots, was to seriously cut back the use of Auxiliary air facilities in the Great Lakes for many years.

The boathouse was enlarged in 1985 as part of a general renovation, to enclose the 44-foot motor lifeboat for winter maintenance. The addition was a needed improvement, providing light and heat to work through the cold winter

months. This boathouse was not in line with the boat slip; in fact, it was at right angles to it. A wheeled cradle costing \$18,000 was provided for a 41-foot UTB, and was still taking up space in 1989; but it was worthless for the heavier 44-foot MLB assigned to the unit. To haul out the motor lifeboat, a commercial crane was hired to lift the boat onto the welded cradle. The cradle was then jacked up and rollers (like telephone poles) were pushed underneath. The cradle was wrenched around and hauled into the boathouse. In the spring, this evolution was reversed to launch the boat.

The Station was renovated at the same time as the boathouse. Office spaces were modernized, and living quarters were redesigned to accommodate female crewmen. The second deck was built with four two-person rooms, each with a separate head (bathroom); and the third deck had two larger rooms for TAD berthing and a common head.

7. THE NEW HORIZON

There were seventeen men attached to the Rochester Station when BMC John M. Young took command 30 AUG 1985. Arriving from duty in Ocean City, N.J., Chief Young brought a new meaning to the concepts of communications and community involvement, continuing to build on the foundation laid by BMC Gordon.

When the Coast Guard Station at Sodus Point closed in 1973, it was reopened as a subunit of Station Rochester to serve as an operations center for Auxiliary patrols. In 1986, it was recognized as an independent command again, with BM1 Curtis Bull serving as Officer in Charge. Rochester continued to provide communications and computer support, and remained responsible for Sodus Bay for SAR during the weekdays; but local Auxiliarists and the Wayne County Sheriff's Marine Patrol could usually be counted on to respond at short notice for any needs in the area. BMC Young spearheaded the rejuvenation of Rochester's Boating Safety Council. In a unique approach to merchandising, Boating Safety Week was declared to coincide with the celebration of Rochester's Harborfest. This had the effect of using the associated land parade and carnival to draw attention to the safe boating information and displays. Each year a different maritime agency was honored at the event. In 1987 it was Pultneyville Fire Department with their WR-II (an old CC 40-foot UTB); in 1988 it was the Rochester Power Squadron. The 1987 lighted boat parade was highlighted by the impromptu water fight between the Marine Fire Department's Fire Tug "Sandy" and MLB 44316, with Monroe County Sheriff's Marine Units joining in fearlessly with water balloons. Sailing ships from Canada and the Canadian CGC Spindrift attended both years, and the USCGC Nesh Bay (a 140-foot icebreaking tug) was present for the 1987 show.

The Rochester Boating Safety Council has been honored by the New York Safety Council as having the most effective boating safety effort in the state for the years of 1986 through 1988. Under the leadership of Monroe County Sheriff's SGT John Nichols in 1987, and Mike Kelly of the USPS in 1988, and the continued service of BMC Mike Young as Vice President and Secretary, the efforts continued to improve. The Rochester Offshore Powerboat Association (ROPA) attempted to host its first race in July, 1986. The course was laid out between Webster and Sodus Bay. A headquarters was established in Pultneyville, with an independent radio center to control race operations. The weather for the race was miserable, with heavy seas. National officials, present to supervise and sanction the race, gave orders to start the first heat before the course was secure. The event ended in total chaos and confusion. Eleven minutes after it started, the race was canceled. When a race boat snagged a wave and injured all aboard. Had it not been for the total support and involvement of the Reserves and Auxiliary, as well as sheriffs' and fire boats, the event could have been truly disastrous.

Another attempt was made in July, 1988. This time the race was run strictly by the local organization. A triangular course was set up between the Genesee River and Irondequoit Bay channel, to a third buoy 4 miles offshore. A patrol of 18 Auxiliary boats, 3 Coast Guard boats, 4 police boats and 3 fire boats was assembled to supplement the sponsor's patrol for course integrity. The weather began moderately, but the wind and waves grew as the day progressed. The buoys to mark the spectator area never were placed, and there was a shortage of sponsor boats to protect the course. After a 90 minute delay, the course was clear and the first race commenced; but the racers didn't know the course. Instead of heading for the first mark, the boats turned 90 degrees at the starting line and raced at full speed into the center of the course, miming at the Patrol Commander's boat "SOMEDAY." Recognizing their mistake, some racers headed for Buoy 2, where they swung wide and ran through the spectator fleet. As BM1 Jim Molds, one of the Area Commanders, reported over the radio: "Chief, we've got trouble in Dodge." The race was stopped, but it was a slow process to notify all the boats. As the Patrol Commander met with race officials to correct the problems, some of the sponsor's boats decided to leave; and the remaining races had to be canceled.

A third attempt to hold a race was made in September the same year. For this race, the sponsors solicited suggestions from the Coast Guard to avoid the prior problems. For this race, the course was located between the river and Irondequoit Bay, but close inshore. With the shoreline providing a natural control line, and taking the course out of navigation lanes, it was much easier to patrol. The racers were taken on one lap for familiarization before the competition

started, so they would know the course. This time, the race was completed successfully, prompting the sponsors to plan another race for 1989.

The Station has worked closely with the other maritime agencies in the area. Through the winter of 1988, station ice skiff crews drilled with fire departments from West Webster, Lakeshore, Seabreeze, and others to practice and share ideas. Fire departments would usually be closer to any calls for assistance, but the Coast Guard would now be called for backup and support. For calls on Lake Ontario while the motor lifeboat was in winter storage, Rochester Marine Fire Tug "Sandy" was always available and would respond. St. Paul Blvd. Fire Department provided the unit with ambulance support whenever it was requested.

Another field of improved relations was in law enforcement. In 1987 and 1988, agents of the FBI, Customs, Drug Enforcement Agency, Sheriff's Departments, and Coast Guard Intelligence were invited to join Coast Guard boarding officers in several all-night law enforcement activities. The second year, it was difficult to find enough boats for all the officers who wanted to participate! The result was increased liaison between the various federal and local agencies. Through the late 1980's, Reserve and Auxiliary support gained new heights. Reserve duty sections qualified personnel to run the boats, with MK1 Jeff Klein, MK1 Gary Landry, MK1 Jim Marshall, and PS3 Tom Richards qualified as coxswains. Each weekend, the Reserve section would take charge of the station boats for training and SAR, leaving the regulars free for law enforcement. In 1988, when financial cutbacks reduced the number of Reservists augmenting, only three weekends per month would be covered by Reserve crews.

The Auxiliary provided the primary Search and Rescue coverage on weekends during the summer. Four boats were regularly patrolling each weekend day, with boats from Oak Orchard, Sandy Creek (4—8), Braddock's Bay (4—5), and the Genesee River (4—2). In addition, facilities from Flotilla 4—7 and 4—9 patrolled Seneca and Conesus Lakes; and Flotilla

4—4 spearheaded the Division's support for the Auxiliary Operated Station at Sodus Point, working with OinC BM1 Steve Oliver. Rochester initiated the procedure of refueling Auxiliary facilities from the unit's hand—cranked gasoline tank to stretch the limited patrol funds. In 1988, over 300 sets of patrol orders were cut by Station Rochester, with an additional 60 sets issued from AUXSTA Sodus Point.

Rochester also reached new heights in Auxiliary operational support. A petty officer was detailed to liaison with each flotilla in Division IV, to assist with

training, communications, and leadership. BMC Young personally provided the liaison with the Division IV Board and Staff. The Station's computer was made available to process Auxiliary administrative records, regularly entered by Auxiliarist Lyle Van Tyne. Auxiliarists Michael Scott and Lyle Van Tyne explored new ground when they qualified as Officers of the Day in the fall and winter of 1987, respectively. Both were qualified as watch-standers at the unit, with Van Tyne having considerable experience from working at AUXSTA Sodus Point. Scott had been recognized as an OOD at Station Wilmette Harbor, where he had worked under (then-BM2) Jim Nolda; but augmentation in that role had been limited to SAR cases when the regulars were occupied.

BMC Young received approval from CDR Steve Cornell at Group Buffalo to utilize these Auxiliariats on a regular basis. Scott, as a high school math teacher who was free over the summer, assumed QOD of the Starboard Duty Section for the summer of 1988; while Van Tyne stood OUD when the Port Section had weekend duty, and for several holidays throughout the year to give liberty to regulars. This is the first known utilization of Auxiliarists as OODs for a Regular Station since the War Years. With the Reserves, Auxiliary, and regulars working so closely each weekend, Rochester served as a prime model of the One Coast Guard Family.

In the fall of 1988, Rochester was visited by an inspection team from the National Motor Lifeboat School at Cape Disappointment. This team toured the country to compare the material condition and training at units with MLBs. Rochester ranked highest among those units visited. The weekend of 24—25 September 1988, Station Rochester served as the operating base when over 80 Reservists and regulars trained on the new 22—foot Raider port security boat. Based on a battle-gray Boston Whaler hull powered by twin 140—h.p. outboard, with radar and armed with .50 cal. machine guns, this boat was an awesome sight. A security zone with a 5—mile radius was established nine miles north of Sandy Creek, with Auxiliary and Sheriff's boats patrolling the perimeter. PSC Jim Volke was in charge at the range sight, coordinating the firing runs and crew changes. An Auxiliary aircraft provided an overflight of the range to ensure the area was clear before firing commenced, and later it was called to assist searching for an overdue pleasure craft. This was the first Auxiliary air patrol known on Lake Ontario since the fatal accident in 1984, and it was appropriate that it would be flown from Rochester.

Following a personal trip through the Erie Canal to ferry a boat home for his parents-in—law, BMC Young requested the Auxiliary to check the bridge lighting in Rochester's section of the canal. The results were discouraging. Not one bridge was showing lights, and many were even missing the fixtures to show lights. The District Office in Cleveland was immediately advised.

The Coast Guard has long been concerned with the rights of commercial operators to earn a living assisting disabled boats, and policies were established to avoid competing with commercial operators. In 1988, the first such commercial service appeared in the Rochester area. Timesaverm, Inc., based in Irondequoit Bay, operated the tow vessel Mavis for a couple of months until September 15, 1988, when a new law for licensing operators engaged in commercial towing came into effect. When vessels calling for assistance were determined not to be in distress, the Station was required to issue a Marine Assistance Request Broadcast (MARB) before the Coast Guard could respond. The MARB would be used to request assistance from any source, private individual ("Good Samaritan") or commercial, that would be listening to the marine radio. If no response was received, the Coast Guard could then respond by dispatching Auxiliary facilities or station boats.

When the first press release was issued, announcing the new procedures, weekend SAR came to an abrupt halt. Area boaters were heard calling friends for assistance instead of the Coast Guard, to avoid paying for commercial assistance. The Station responded to 303 cases in fiscal 1988, but only 26 were performed in the last month of September. 247 boardings were conducted in the same year. Most notable of these was the boarding done in conjunction with the Monroe County Sheriff's deputies following a complaint that intoxicated boaters had large quantities of fireworks on the Genesee River on board the cabin cruiser "Iron Maiden". When the boat was located, a small amount of drugs was found along with the fireworks. This led to the first seizure on Lake Ontario under the federal government's new "Zero Tolerance" drug enforcement policy, supervised by BM1 Jim Molds, OinC (Acting); and it created a significant impact on the local community.

Two weeks later, the first boarding enforcing new federal regulations on Alcohol Condition was conducted. Monroe County Sheriff's deputies reported a boat operating suspiciously with many teenagers on board. When the boat was located, the operator was tested and found to have a blood alcohol content of 0.18. The new regulations provided an effective way to combat accidents due to intoxication.

Keepers:

George W. Way was appointed keeper on 14 SEP 1876 and left in 1878.

Joseph O. Doyle (G) was appointed keeper on 11 JUL 1878 and was medically discharged on 23 OCT 1893.

[George M. Gray \(G\) was appointed keeper on 5 DEC 1893 and resigned for physical reasons on 24 OCT 1907.](#)

William M. Fobes was appointed keeper on 21 OCT 1907 and was still serving in 1915.

Photography:

[\[Historians' Office\]](#)

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

Added: January 2001