

Coast Guard History

Coast Guardsman with Thompson submachine gun on board World War II picket boat.

**By Dr. Robert Scheina
Coast Guard Historian**

The United States Coast Guard is maritime service to the nation. Its administrative evolution is complex and defies a terse narrative. Suffice to say, "once upon a time, there were five federal agencies. Their responsibilities grew to be overlapping and interdependent. Most were shuffled around the government and rechristened on occasion. They were united

and slowly amalgamated into a single service, the United States Coast Guard...."

The serious student of Coast Guard history must understand the administrative roots of the service so that he will know where to seek its documentation. Enough said of a complex lineage; the real heritage of the service rests in its responsibilities and achievements.



Boston Light, the oldest lighthouse in the United States, established 1716.

Aids to Navigation

Providing aids to navigation is the oldest maritime service of our government. Today, the Coast Guard maintains more than 42,000 aids to navigation of all classes along 47,000 miles of coast, lakes, and rivers — a length equal to nearly twice the circumference of the Earth. If placed along the equator, there would be an aid every half mile.

Since the beginning of time, man has challenged nature, and success has been the measure of technological achievement. Today, the yardstick might be the spaceship; at the turn of the century, the standard was the ocean liner; and during the 18th and early 19th centuries, the measure was the lighthouse. Lighthouses were built wherever ships were endangered by the meeting of land and sea.

Lighthouses are unique because each site demands individual considerations. Colonial and Federal lighthouses have walls seven feet thick at the base and two and a half feet thick at the top some sixty feet up. Mass challenges the violence of the sea. Pre-Civil War Chesapeake Bay lighthouses are wooden dwellings mounted atop screw-pilings; weight is widely distributed over the mud seabottom. Antebellum Florida Key lighthouses are open steel towers; hurricane winds pass through the structure harmlessly. Surely, there have been more than a thousand lighthouses built in our country. They were the essence of aids to navigation for the first fifty years, standing alone as traffic lights of the sea. There was no bureaucracy, no

buoys, and no fleet of tenders; there was only the beam of light. The first lighthouse built in the English colonies was Boston Light on Little Brewster Island, constructed in 1716.

The heart and soul of a lighthouse are its optic and source of light. Although most towers have remained unchanged from the time of their construction, the optic and source of light have continually evolved. Reflectors, lenses and prisms have been used to concentrate light and to direct it in a plane around the horizon or in a beam or limited arc. About 1763, the parabolic reflector was introduced. In order to render the light more powerful, lamps were mounted on a chandelier, each with its own reflector. Thus, in the Federal Era, Boston Lighthouse had 14 lamps and Sandy Hook had 18.

The French physicist Augustin Fresnel revolutionized the design of lighthouse lenses in the beginning of the 19th century. He invented a system of annular lenses, refractors, and reflecting prisms, all of glass and surrounding a single lamp. The first Fresnel lens to be installed in this country was at Navesink Lighthouse, New Jersey, in 1841. These beautifully cut and polished glass optics are still in wide use and are commonly referred to as classical lenses. The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and The Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia, have the largest types on exhibit today.

The source of the light has also continuously evolved. Oil lamps were used

early in this nation, if not from the first lighting of the Boston Light. Fish oil, sperm oil, colza oil, lard oil, mineral oil, kerosene oil, and electricity were used in turn, increasing expense in each case compelling the change.

Sound has been used to warn mariners of fog. In colonial times, cannons were fired on shore to guide ships. In 1719, the keeper of Boston Light petitioned the General Court that "A great gun be placed on Brewster Island to answer ships in the fog." Improvements followed at Boston Light, as they did across the nation. A fog-bell (1852), a mechanical striking bell (1869), a fog trumpet (1872), and an air siren (1887) succeeded each other.

As technology progressed, new aids to navigation came into service. Lightships were first stationed on the Chesapeake Bay in 1820 and hundreds have since served on exposed stations. Lightships were positioned where it had been impossible to build a lighthouse with pre-World War II technology. These craft carried the same warning equipment as contemporary lighthouses.

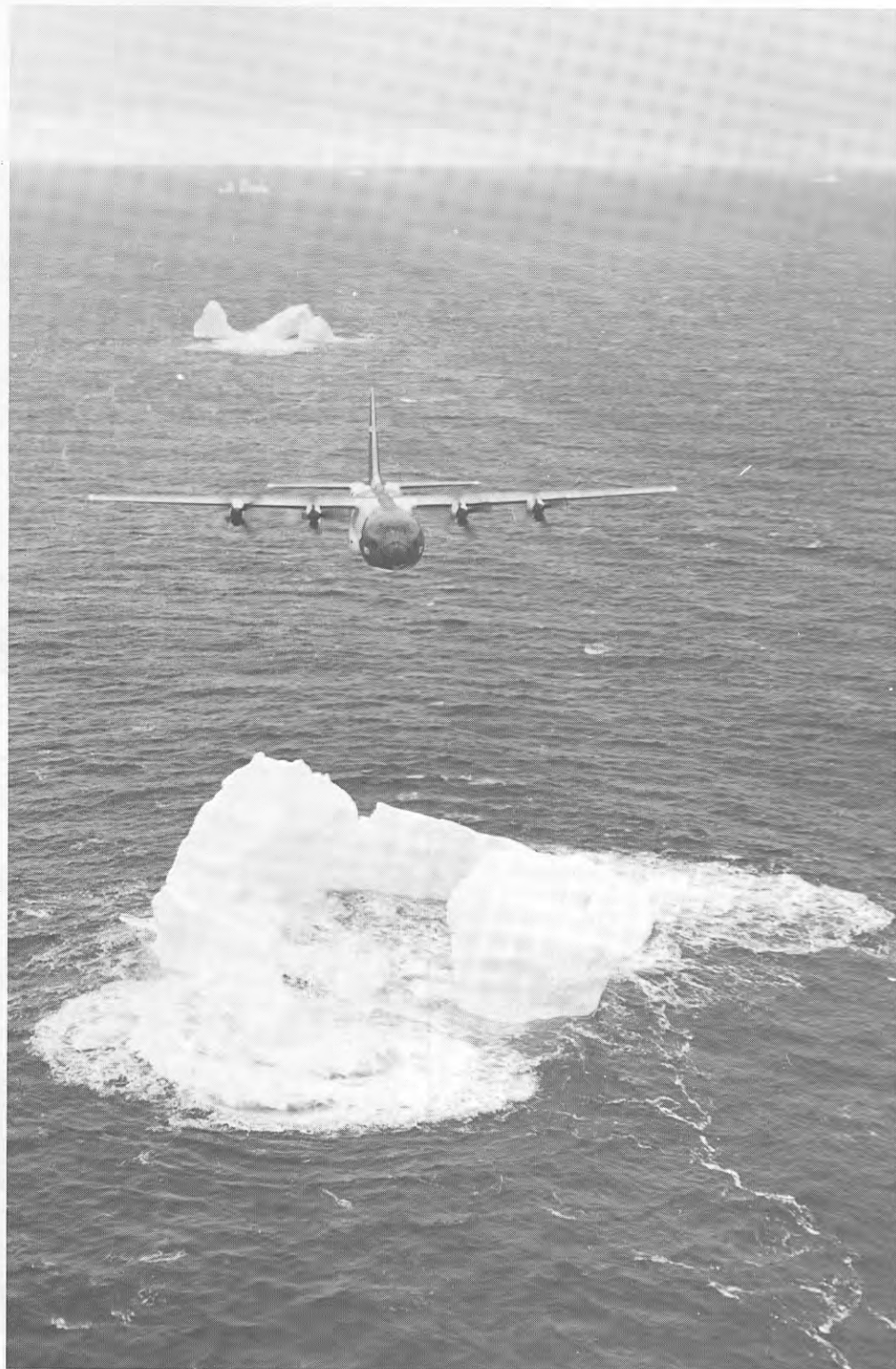
The lightships were beaten up by storms and run down by ocean liners. The giant *Olympic*, sister ship to the ill-fated *Titanic*, plowed the Nantucket Shoals Lightship under the waves on May 16, 1934. The liner, bound to America, was steering by the radio beam emitted from the lightship and then changed course for New York. *Olympic* encountered fog; at times, there was visibility for miles, then none at all. The lightship was obscured. Although approaching at only two or three knots speed, the bow of the 45,000-ton liner

crushed the small craft. The lightship sank instantly, with the loss of seven men. The Ambrose Channel station was the most dangerous. During its 56 years of existence, the lightship was struck four times.

Lightships are being taken over by technology. During their zenith in the early 20th century, five score stations existed. Today, the last lightship station, Nantucket Shoals, is vacant. Lightships have been replaced by platforms, supported by legs driven into bedrock beneath the sea, and by large buoys.

The sinking of the luxury liner *Titanic* in 1912 led to the creation of the International Ice Patrol. Each year since 1914, with the exception of war years (1917-18 and 1942-45), the Coast Guard has maintained the patrol. The duties of the ice patrol are to find and to keep track of, day by day, icebergs and field ice, determining their set and drift, broadcasting the information to merchantmen, and reporting the location of ice to the hydrographic office. Ice observation begins in February and concludes in July. The patrolled area is about the size of Pennsylvania and is in the general region of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. During the latter part of the ice season, April to July, a blanket of fog created by the meeting of the Gulf Stream and the Labrador Current, adds to the danger.

Besides monitoring ice and warning passing vessels of the danger, the Coast Guard directs scientific studies such as the influence of the currents in the vicinity of the Grand Banks, the physical properties of the ice, its drift, erosion,



An HC-130-B "Hercules" plane hedge-hops icebergs on Ice Patrol off Canada.

and melting, temperatures of sea water and atmosphere in the vicinity of the ice, habits of birds and seals with regard to ice and, in short, all information that might help the navigator in those regions. Not a single ship has been lost to ice in the patrolled area since the *Titanic* sank.

Within the past few decades, one aid to navigation — Ocean Stations — was created, served its purpose, and abolished. Ocean Stations, mid-ocean sites manned by cutters, were established in 1940 to provide weather reports and to serve as emergency rescue sites for aircraft. With the outbreak of war in Europe, merchant vessels no longer provided voluntary weather reports to the U.S. Weather Bureau. Also, there

was increased air traffic due to the beginning of trans-Atlantic passenger service. By 1944, there were 13 stations in the North Atlantic and by the close of the war, 24 stations were established in the Pacific. Immediately following the war, only three stations were retained.

A dramatic rescue in 1947 at Ocean Station "Charlie", midway between Ireland and Newfoundland, focused attention on the program. On Oct. 14, the "Bermuda Sky Queen" en route from Ireland to New York was forced down by a storm. Only the presence of the Ocean Station cutter *Bibb* averted disaster. The aircraft homed on the *Bibb*'s radio signal and crash-landed near the cutter. All 69 persons on board were rescued. By the mid-1970s, technology

had eliminated the need for Ocean Stations. Radar, satellites and buoys now provide weather data more cheaply and aircraft reliability has significantly improved. The last Ocean Station patrol ended in September 1977.

In 1936 the Coast Guard was officially tasked to perform icebreaking, but in reality, had been performing this mission for a number of decades. During World War II, the need for patrols off the east coast of Greenland and the requirement to keep domestic navigation open, particularly on the Great Lakes, more deeply involved the Coast Guard in this duty. In 1965, an agreement with the Navy placed all icebreakers under Coast Guard control. Annually, the Coast Guard has participated in polar scientific

On brasswork

Oh, what is the bane of a lightkeeper's life,
That cause him worry and struggle and strife,
That makes him use cuss words and beat up his wife?

It's brasswork.

The lamp in the tower, reflector and shade,
The tools and accessories pass in parade,
As a matter of fact the whole outfit is made,

Of brasswork.

I dig, scrub and polish, and work with a might,
And just when I get it all shining and bright,
In comes the fog like a thief in the night.
Goodbye brasswork.

And when I have polished until I am cold,
And I'm taken aloft to the heavenly fold,
Will my harp and my crown be made of pure gold?

No. Brasswork!



The crew of a lighthouse tender — probably before World War I.



Ocean Station Cutter to the rescue of the American tanker *Fort Mercer* which broke in two in an Atlantic storm in 1952.

programs. In August 1969, the Coast Guard icebreaker *Northwind* escorted the icebreaking supertanker *Manhattan* across the top of North America to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and the newly discovered oil fields.

During the 20th century, electronics were adapted to aid navigation. Lightships and lighthouses in heavily traveled areas emitted radio beams in order to guide shipping. During World War II, a radio navigation system, Loran (Long Range Aid to Navigation) was developed. This, along with radar, was among the closely guarded secrets of the war. As the Allies advanced across the Atlantic and Pacific, Loran stations were built on the heels of the amphibious forces. World War II Loran was accurate

to about 15 miles at its extreme range of about 500 miles. Today, Loran-C is in operation. Its accuracy is 1,000 feet at a 1,000-mile range. Loran-C is so versatile that it may be used in rescuing, surveying and mapping, as well as aiding navigation.

People have always been the most important element in servicing aids to navigation. Often the life was arduous and boring. The responsibility — regardless of adversity — was to keep the light burning.

Danger lurked everywhere. There was the obvious enemy — the sea. Dozens of lighthouses have been crushed and washed away. This was a common occurrence in the southern United States during the early 19th century, where

construction preceded technology. Lighthouses were outposts of civilization and exposed to sometimes-hostile Indians. John W.B. Thompson, assistant keeper at Cape Florida Lighthouse, wrote concerning 4 p.m. on July 23, 1836:

As I was going ... to the dwelling house, I discovered a large body of Indians within 20 yards of me ... I ran for the lighthouse ... At that moment they discharged a volley of rifle balls, which cut my clothes and hat and perforated the door ... As I was turning the key the savages had hold of the door ... I kept them from the [light]house until dark.



Buoy tender crewman stands ready to trip the chain stopper.

They then poured in a heavy fire ... [and] they set fire to the door and to the window even with the ground.... Their balls had perforated the tin tanks of oil, consisting of 225 gallons. My bedding, clothing, and in fact everything I had was soaked in oil.... I retreated to the top of the [light].... At last the awful moment arrived, the crackling flames burst around me.

The savages at the same time began their hellish yells.... The lantern was now full of flame, the lamps and glasses bursting and flying in all directions, my clothes on fire, and to move from the place where I was, would be instant death from their rifles. My flesh was roasting, and to put an end to my horrible suffering I got up and threw the keg of gunpowder down the scuttle. Instantly, it exploded and shook the tower from top to bottom.

It had not the desired effect of blowing me to eternity...I got up, went down inside the iron railing, commending my soul to God ... when something dictated me to return and lie down again.

The fire died down; the Indians, believing the keeper to be dead, left. Keeper Thompson was rescued from his precarious perch the following day.

The sea is a ceaseless enemy. During the great gale of April 1851, the newly constructed Minots Ledge Light was washed into the sea; two keepers drowned. In 1893, three lighthouses in the Chesapeake — Wolf Trap, Smiths Point, and Solomons Lamp — were swept away by ice.

The hurricane of 1906 destroyed 23 lights along the Gulf Coast. The Gulf Lighthouse Inspector sent the following telegram: "Sand Island light out, island washed away, dwelling gone, keepers not to be found." At Horn Island, the keeper, his wife and daughter drowned. Point Arena Lighthouse, California,

was wrecked by the great earthquake of April 1906.

In May 1912, the keeper of post lights on the St. Johns River, Florida, continued with his work, in spite of serious injury. "I arrived at the light at 9:30 a.m. I took the lamp out, and as I went to blow it out, it exploded and knocked me off the light (a 22 foot height), and I did not know anything until 12 p.m. (midnight). When I came to, I found the lamp was gone. I crawled back to boat (250 feet away), got another lamp and put it on the beacon and lit it. Then came home (8 miles distance). Injuries; broken leg just above the ankle and severe bruised skin and bruised arm and lick on head."

Dozens of women have served as lighthouse keepers — this being one of the few professions open to females during the 19th Century. Their deeds are inspiring. Ida Lewis was the keeper of the Lime Rock Lighthouse, on a ledge in Newport harbor, for 32 years. During her service, she rescued 13 people

from drowning. The female keeper of Angel Island Light in San Francisco Bay reported that after the fog signal machinery broke down on July 2, 1906, she "struck the bell by hand for 20 hours and 35 minutes, until the fog lifted..." Two days later, the mechanism failed again, and she "stood all night on the platform outside and struck the bell with a nail hammer with all her might."

Servicing aids to navigation will never be completed. Nature alters channels and coast lines, shipping needs evolve, and technology creates new demands as rapidly as it dissolves old ones.



Lightship 56 in 1913, on the Great Lakes.



A gunner from *Point Chico* helps send *Islander*, a seized drug runner, to the bottom off San Francisco.



At left, a motorboat makes contact with a liquor-laden British schooner off the New Jersey coast in 1923.

Below, "ice-gunboat" *Northland*, built in 1927 as a replacement for *Bear*, provided law enforcement in remote reaches of Alaska.

Law Enforcement

The Coast Guard's law enforcement responsibilities have been threefold. First, to ensure that the tariffs are not avoided. Second, to protect shipping from pirates. And third, to intercept contraband.

Today tariffs hardly seem controversial. But for the first Congress under the Constitution (1789), the imposition of these taxes was a bold act since such taxes had been a primary catalyst for the War of Independence. The young government's need for money was urgent. Trade revenue had to be the lifeblood of the treasury if the new nation was to survive. During colonial days and the War of Independence, smuggling had been a patriotic duty of maritime America. Seamen were admired who circumvented King George's trade laws, and later outran his fleet during the war. In 1789, a new respect for tariffs was needed.

Congress, guided by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, created a fleet of ten cutters whose responsibilities would be enforcement of the tariff laws. The spirit of the maritime service was captured in Hamilton's insistence upon thrift and responsibility to the public. Hamilton's creation collected money — and did not spend it. Seven of the ten cutters were built for the allotted \$1,000 each. Two New England cutters

exceeded the amount. Due to the severity of the winters, these vessels had to be larger than their southern sisters. Hamilton appreciated the unique problem, but insisted that the boats "be confined to the smallest dimensions...consistent with safety on ... [the Massachusetts] coast however eligible a larger one might be."

The third cutter to exceed appropriations was that of Philadelphia. Costs exceeded the \$1,000 figure by \$500. Where the extra money came from is unclear, but it didn't come from Secretary Hamilton or the public treasury. The port revenue collector and the citizens of Philadelphia probably paid for the cost overrun. During the cutters' first ten years of service, the imports and exports of the nation rose from \$52 million to \$205 million.

Along with financial responsibility, Hamilton demanded that the officers be servants of the people. "They [the officers] will always keep in mind that their Countrymen are Freemen & as such are imparient of everything that bears that least mark of a domineering Spirit."

National tariffs did not go unchallenged. In 1832, South Carolina tried to nullify these laws. Five cutters were ordered to Charleston Harbor by Presi-



dent Andrew Jackson "to take possession of any vessels arriving from a foreign port, and defend her against any attempts to dispossess the Customs Officers of her custody...." President Jackson added, "if a single drop of blood shall be shed there in opposition to the laws of the United States, I will hang the first man I can lay my hands on, upon the first tree I can reach."

Protecting commerce also meant suppressing piracy, still a practiced trade well into the 19th Century. In 1819 the cutters *Alabama* and *Louisiana* engaged and captured *Bravo*, commanded by Jean LaFarge, a lieutenant of the notorious Jean LaFitte of New Orleans. These same two cutters destroyed Patterson's town on Breton Island, a pirate stronghold. In 1822, *Louisiana*, cooperating with the British and U.S. Navies, swept the Caribbean, capturing five pirate vessels.

Intercepting contraband has been the Coast Guard's most controversial commerce protection responsibility. Slavery was the tumultuous social issue of the first half of the 19th century. In 1794 cutters were charged with preventing the introduction of new slaves from Africa. By the Civil War, cutters captured numerous slavers and freed almost 500 slaves. An unpopular, total embargo of the importations was declared by President Thomas Jefferson in 1808 and cutters closed all ports in the nation. Prohibition in the 1920s made the United States a "dry" nation; Coast Guard cutters conducted the unpopular "Rum War at Sea."

During the early days of prohibition, the Coast Guard was seriously handicapped by the lack of vessels, particularly fast ones. By 1924, "Rum Rows" not only graced New York's doorsteps, but fleets of all sorts of rum-running craft from broken-down fisherman to freighters of considerable tonnage, hovered off the coasts of the United States, more or less, permanently.

On March 20, 1929, *I'm Alone*, of Canadian registry, was anchored off the coast of New Orleans with 2,800 cases of liquor on board. When the cutter *Walcott* came into sight, *I'm Alone* moved

seaward. *Walcott* asked the Canadian to heave to so that she could be boarded and examined. *I'm Alone* refused. *Walcott* fired several shells from her single three pounder across the Canadian's bow. Then the *Walcott's* gun jammed and she called for assistance. The cutters *Dexter* and *Dallas* responded. That evening, *I'm Alone* hove to. An unarmed officer from *Walcott* was allowed to come on board but the Canadian skipper refused to permit any search. The officer returned to his cutter and the pursuit continued.

Next day, *Dexter* and *Dallas* joined in the pursuit. *Dexter* ordered the Canadian to "Heave to or I shall fire at you." The skipper of the *I'm Alone* refused on the grounds that he was then on the high seas 14 or 15 miles from land or well beyond the legal limit of 12 miles. *I'm Alone* was sunk at Latitude 25 degrees, 45 minutes West by gunfire from the cutters, interrupted by repeated demands to "heave to." All but one member of the crew was rescued. The commander of the *Walcott* insisted that the *I'm Alone* was but 10.8 miles from the coast by his calculations. The Canadian government sent a strongly worded protest to Washington and the controversy dragged through years of legal and diplomatic bickering, finally being settled by arbitration.

In another celebrated case, the Coast Guard Boat 249 overtook a motorboat off the Florida coast. The two men on board had 20 cases of whisky. A young Coast Guardsman and a member of the U.S. Secret Service were killed in a melee that ensued. One of the two rum runners turned State's evidence and was sentenced to a year and a day in prison. The other was hanged at the Coast Guard Base at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, after the Supreme Court refused to review the case.

Having taken on board no less than half a million dollars worth of liquor at St. Pierre Island, the *Holewood* ran down the coast to a point off New York where her crew proceeded to camouflage her to look like a well known American coaster, *Texas Ranger*. Disguised, she steamed up the Narrows and was re-





Red Beech crewmen haul aboard bales of hashish in 1981.



The Coast Guard aids Cuban refugees in 1980.

ported as the latter vessel by marine observers. A careful Coast Guard officer, however, detected the fraud. He consulted a shipping news bulletin which reported the *Texas Ranger* was in the Gulf of Mexico that day. The pseudo *Texas Ranger* was overtaken near Havershaw, her captain and crew attempting to escape in a ship's boat. A search revealed the \$500,000 of choice liquors, the Coast Guard's largest single catch.

When the profit was taken from liquor running by the repeal of prohibition (Dec. 5, 1933), smuggling declined, but did not cease. Several small boats in the Gulf of Mexico continued to run guns to Central American countries and return with narcotics before World War II. It was estimated that 80 to 90 percent of the narcotics smuggled into the United States by 1937 were brought in from the Orient. The dropping of narcotics in waterproof containers by incoming vessels became so widespread that Coast Guard patrol boats were assigned to meet these ships far out at sea and trail them right in to their docks.

Intercepting contraband had been the Coast Guard's prime mission prior to World War II. This responsibility had been magnified by Prohibition, which lasted from 1920 through 1933, and later in that decade by the prelude of World War II. Following the war, the Coast Guard's prime responsibility shifted largely to safety at sea and aiding navigation.

In the early 1960s, law enforcement once again assumed increased significance. In 1959, Fidel Castro took power in Cuba and within two years, the Coast Guard established patrols to aid refugees and to enforce neutrality, interdicting the transportation of men and arms. This responsibility peaked in 1965 due to increased restrictions on immigration from Cuba and then abated. During the early 1970s, an old law enforcement job, drug interception, took on increasing emphasis which continues. From 1963 through 1979, the Coast Guard seized 304 vessels, confiscated over \$4 billion in contraband and made 1,959 arrests.



A World War II crew watches a depth charge explode in the ship's wake.

Military Readiness

The Coast Guard, through its forefathers, is the oldest continuous seagoing service and has fought in almost every war since the Constitution became the law of the land in 1789. Following the War of Independence (1776-83), the Continental Navy was disbanded and from 1790 until 1798. When the U.S. Navy was created, the revenue cutters were the only national maritime force. The Acts establishing the Navy also empowered the President to use the revenue cutters to supplement the fleet when needed. Laws later clarified the relationship between the Coast Guard and the Navy.

The Coast Guard has traditionally performed two roles in wartime. The first has been to augment the Navy with men and cutters. The second has been to undertake special missions, for which peacetime experiences have prepared the Service with unique skills.

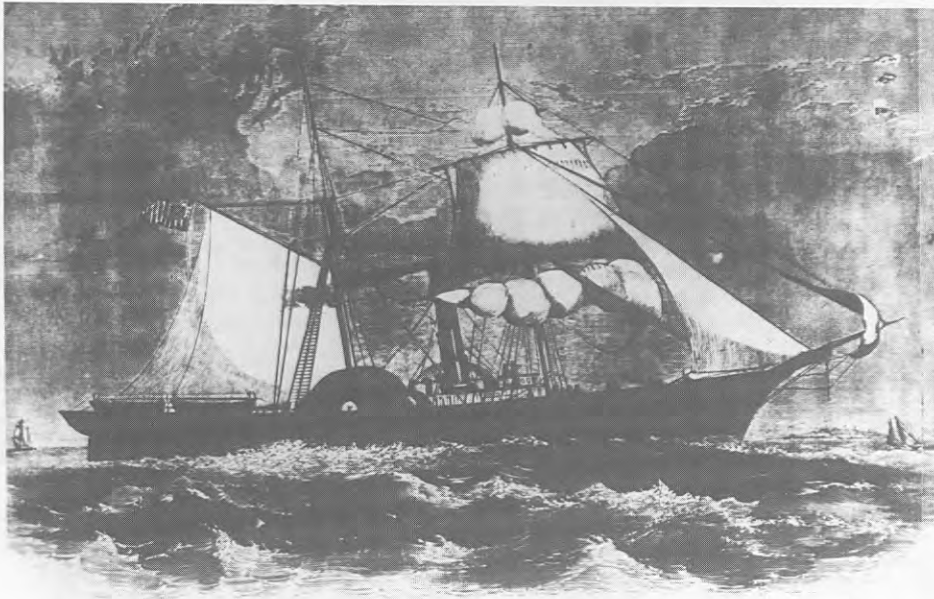
During the Quasi War with France (1798-99), eight cutters operated along our southern coast in the Caribbean Sea, and among the West Indies Islands. Cutters captured 18 prizes unaided and assisted in the capture of two others. The cutter *Pickering* made two cruises to the West Indies and captured 10 prizes, one of which carried 44 guns and 200 men — three times her own force.

Augmenting the Navy with shallow-draft craft evolved out of the War of 1812 into a continuing wartime responsibility. During the opening phases of the War, Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin requested of Congress, "We want small, fast sailing vessels ... there are but six vessels belonging to the Navy, under the size of frigates; and that number is inadequate...." During the last two centuries, cutters have been used extensively in "brown water" combat.

A cutter made the first capture of the war. One of the most hotly contested engagements was between the cutter *Surveyor* and the British frigate *Narcissis*. The *Surveyor* was captured. The British Captain wrote to Captain Samuel Travis on the following day:

Your gallant and desperate attempt to defend your vessel against more than double your number excited such admiration on the part of your opponents as I have seldom witnessed, and induced me to return you the sword you so ably used in testimony of mine...I am at loss which to admire most, the previous arrangement on board the *Surveyor* or the determined manner in which her deck was disputed inch by inch.

The defense of the cutter *Eagle* against the attack of the British brig *Dispatch* and an accompanying sloop, is one of the most dramatic incidents of the War of 1812. The cutter was run ashore on Long Island, her guns were dragged up



THE UNITED STATES REVENUE CUTTER "HARRIET LANE"

The Revenue Cutter *Harriet Lane*.

At right, 19-year-old twins Genevieve and Lucille Baker, were the first women to serve in the new Coast Guard during World War I.



on a high bluff, and from there the crew of the *Eagle* fought the British ships from 9 o'clock in the morning until late in the afternoon. When they had exhausted their shot, they tore up the ship's log book as wads and fired back the enemy's shot which lodged against the hill. During the engagement the cutter's flag was shot away three times and was as often replaced by volunteers from the crew on the hill. Finally, the British took the beached cutter with overwhelming numbers.

Revenue cutters fought a tenacious riverine war (1836-39) with the Seminole Indians in Florida. Cutters attacked parties of hostile Indians, broke up their rendezvous, picked up survivors of massacres, carried dispatches, transported troops, blockaded rivers to the passage of Indian forces, and landed riflemen and artillery for the defense of the settlements. These duties covered the whole coast of Florida.

At the outbreak of the Mexican War (1846-48), the Navy was once again critically short of small steamers and schooners; cutters filled the void. Charles Walke's beautiful lithographs of American amphibious operations accurately depict shallow-draft revenue steamers towing ashore naval craft packed with Marines and seamen.

Military preparedness has never been limited to declared war. Second Lieutenant James E. Harrison, of the Revenue Cutter *Jefferson Davis* stationed in Puget Sound, accompanied Company C, 4th US Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant W. A. Slaughter, USA, during the Indian uprising in the state of Washington in 1855. The Service had been assisting the Army throughout the Puget Sound area and Harrison was acting as second in command. On December 3, while in camp, Indians ambushed the company and killed Lt. Slaughter, placing the command of a regular army company

on Lt. Harrison. He immediately rallied the company and engaged in a hot fire-fight to beat off the ambushers. Harrison then led his company back to Fort Steilacoom, arriving on Dec. 21, 1855. In 1858, the cutter *Harriet Lane* was part of a naval squadron sent to blockade Paraguay.

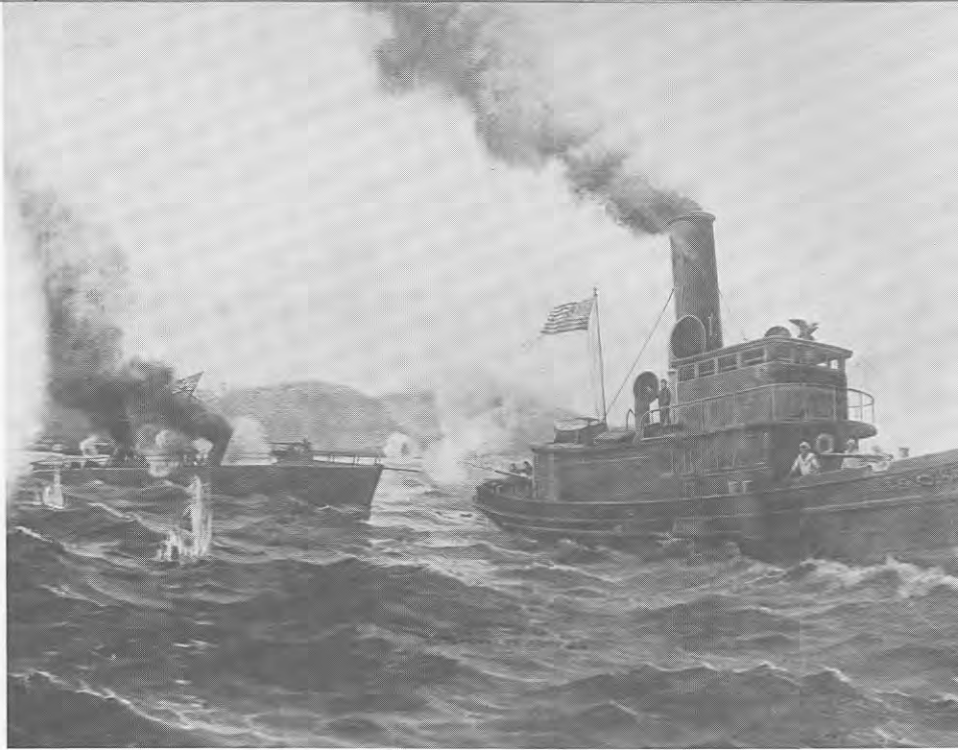
"If any men attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot." Secretary of the Treasury John A. Dix telegraphed this message on the evening of January 15, 1861, attempting to retain under Federal control the cutter *Robert McClellan*, then lying in the port of New Orleans. As within the country, the sympathies of the cutter force were divided between the North and the South.

Principal wartime duties of those cutters serving the Union were patrolling for commerce raiders and providing fire support of troops ashore; those serving the Confederacy were used prin-

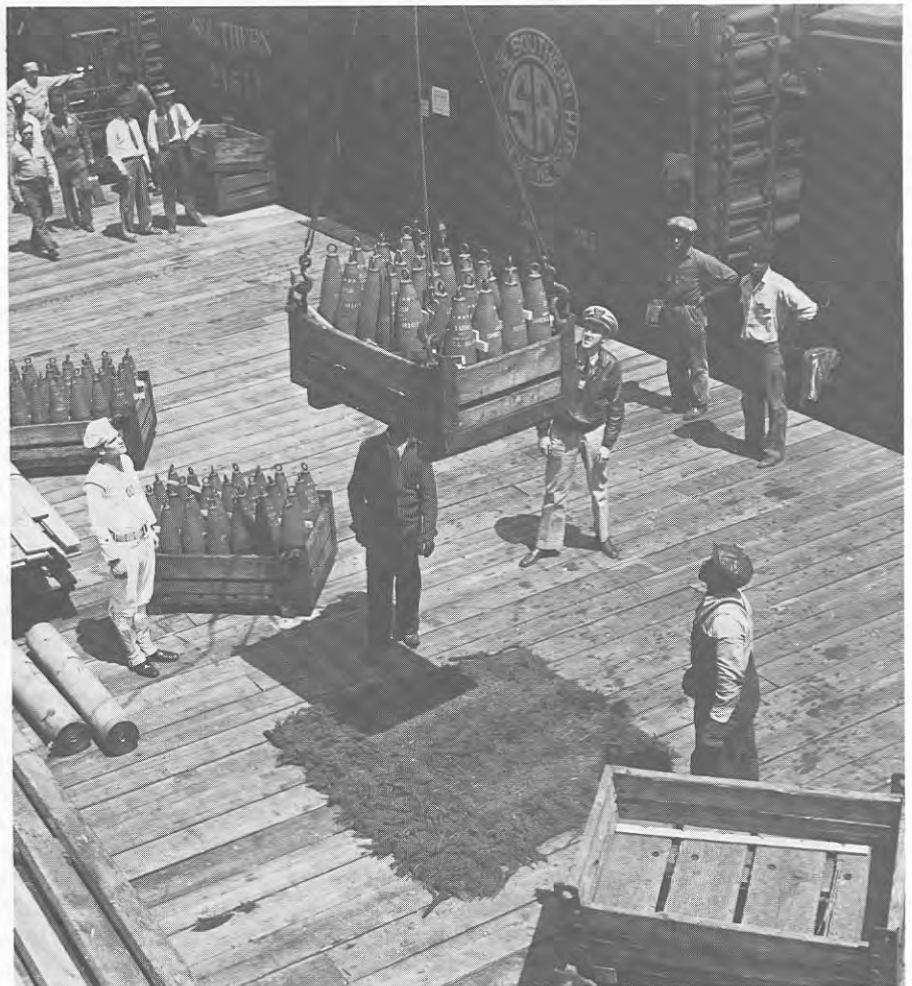
cipally as commercial raiders. Cutters were involved in individual actions. The first shots of the Civil War were fired by the cutter *Harriet Lane* under the command of Captain John Faunce. On April 11, 1861, she challenged the steamer *Nashville* with a shot across its bow. In December 1862, the cutter *Hercules* battled Southern forces on the Rappahannock River. The cutter *Miami* carried President Abraham Lincoln and his party to Fort Monroe in May 1863, preparatory to the Peninsular Campaign. Cutter *Reliance* engaged Confederate forces on Great Wicomico River, Va., in 1864; her commanding officer was killed in the action. On April 21, 1865, cutters were ordered to search all outbound ships for the assassins of the President.

In the Spanish-American War, cutters fought in the Caribbean and Far East. Eight cutters, carrying 43 guns, were in Admiral William Sampson's fleet, and on the Havana blockade. The *McCulloch*, carrying six guns and manned by 10 officers and 95 crewmen, was at the battle of Manila Bay, and subsequently was employed by Admiral George Dewey, USN, as his dispatch boat. At the battle of Cardenas, May 11, 1898, the cutter *Hudson* sustained the fight against the gunboats and shore batteries of the enemy side by side with the naval torpedo boat *Winslow*. When Ensign Bagley, USN, and half the crew had been killed and her commanding officer wounded, *Hudson* rescued the craft from destruction while under furious fire from the enemy's guns. In recognition of this act, Congress authorized that a gold medal be presented to Lieutenant Frank Newcomb, USRCS, a silver medal to each of his officers, and a bronze medal to each member of his crew.

Also during the Spanish-American War, the Navy assigned the mission of coast watching to the U.S. Life-Saving Service. As a result, approximately two-thirds of the Navy's coastal observation stations along the coastline of the U.S. were Life-Saving Stations. At no time was the elusive Spanish fleet observed along our coastline but, nevertheless, the 24-hour-a-day job was accomplished



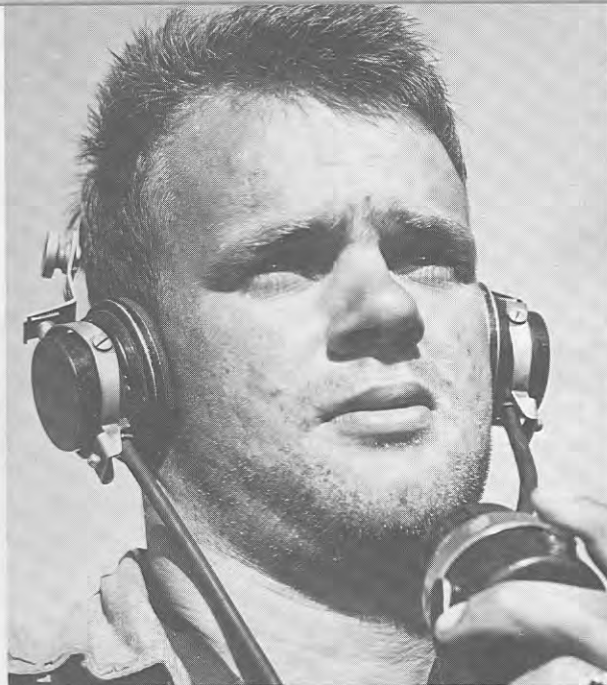
The cutter *Hudson*, during the Spanish-American War, tows the disabled *Winslow*.



Coast Guardsmen supervise the loading of munitions at Norfolk in 1944.



Burial at sea from a Coast Guard-manned troop transport, 1945.



A crewman serves as talker for a deck gun battery aboard a Coast Guard-manned fighting ship in 1944.



Captured U-Boat crewmen on board a 327-foot cutter in 1942.

to a large extent by a Coast Guard predecessor.

On the morning of April 6, 1917, a coded dispatch was sent from Washington by radio and by land wire to every cutter and shore station of the Coast Guard. Within a few hours the entire Coast Guard, officers and enlisted men, vessels and units, passed into the naval establishment as provided by law and began operating as part of the Navy.

In August and September, 1917, six Coast Guard cutters, *Ossipee*, *Seneca*, *Yamacraw*, *Algonquin*, *Manning*, and *Tampa* left the United States to join our naval forces in European waters. They constituted Squadron 2 of Division 6 of the patrol forces of the Atlantic Fleet

and were based at Gibraltar. Throughout World War I, they escorted hundreds of vessels between Gibraltar and the British Isles, and also performed escort and patrol duty in the Mediterranean.

On the evening of Sept. 26, 1918, *Tampa*, having acted as ocean escort for a convoy from Gibraltar to the United Kingdom, was proceeding toward the port of Milford Haven, Wales. At 8:45 p.m. a loud explosion was heard by persons on vessels of the nearby convoy. *Tampa* failed to arrive at her destination and search was made for her by U.S. destroyers and British patrol craft. A small amount of wreckage identified as belonging to the cutter and two unidentified bodies in naval uniforms

were found. It is believed that *Tampa* was sunk by a German submarine. Every officer and enlisted man on board *Tampa* perished — 115 in all, of whom 111 were Coast Guard personnel. With the exception of *Cyclops*, whose fate has never been ascertained, this was the largest loss of life incurred by any U.S. naval unit during the war. The British Admiralty wrote to Rear Admiral William Sims, USN:

Their Lordships desire me to express their deep regret at the loss of the U.S.S. *Tampa*. Her record since she has been employed in European waters as an escort to convoys has been remarkable. She has acted in the capacity of ocean

escort to no less than 18 convoys from Gibraltar comprising 350 vessels, with a loss of only 2 ships through enemy action. The commanders of the convoys have recognized the ability with which the *Tampa* carried out the duties of ocean escort. Appreciation of the good work done by the U.S.S. *Tampa* may be some consolation to those bereft and Their Lordships would be glad if this could be conveyed to those concerned.

Following the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, the Coast Guard carried out the extensive patrol to enforce neutrality as proclaimed by the President on Sept. 5, 1939. Port security began on June 22, 1940, when President Roosevelt invoked the Espionage Act of 1917, which governed the anchorage and movement of all ships in U.S. waters, and protected American ships, harbors and waters. Shortly afterwards, the Dangerous Cargo Act gave the Coast Guard jurisdiction over ships carrying high explosives and dangerous cargoes. In March 1941, the Coast Guard seized 28 Italian, 2 German and 35 Danish merchant ships. A few days later, 10 modern Coast Guard cutters were transferred on Lend-Lease to Great Britain.

On April 9, 1941, Greenland was incorporated into a hemispheric defense system. The Coast Guard was the primary military service responsible for these cold-weather operations, which continued throughout the war. On September 12 the cutter *Northland* took into "protective custody" the Norwegian trawler *Boskoe* and captured three German radiomen ashore. This was the United States' first naval capture of World War II.

The Coast Guard was ordered to operate as part of the Navy on Nov. 1, 1941. During the war, Coast Guard-manned ships sank 11 enemy submarines and Coast Guard aircraft sank one. Coast Guard personnel manned amphibious ships and craft, from the largest troop transports to the smallest attack craft. These landed Army and Marine forces in every important invasion in North Africa, Italy, France and the



Coast Guardsmen pass fresh food to Vietnamese fishermen during an Operation Market Time boarding off Vietnam.

Pacific. Coast Guard coastal picket vessels patrolled along the 50 fathom curve, where enemy submarines concentrated early in the war. While on shore, armed Coast Guardsmen patrolled beaches and docks — on foot, on horseback, in vehicles, with and without dogs — as a major part of the nation's anti-sabotage effort. Coast Guard craft rescued more than fifteen hundred survivors of torpedoings in areas adjacent to the United States; cutters on escort duty saved another one thousand, and over fifteen hundred more were rescued during the Normandy operation. During the war, the Coast Guard manned 802 cutters (those over 65 feet in length), 351 naval ships and craft, and 288 Army vessels. Almost two thousand Coast Guardsmen died in the war, a third losing their life in action. Almost two thousand Coast Guardsmen were decorated, one receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor, six the Navy Cross, and one the Distinguished Service Cross. The Coast Guard returned to the Treasury Department on Jan. 1, 1946.

The Service performed primarily a

supporting role during the Korean Conflict. Its principal contributions were improving communications and meteorological services plus assuring port security and proper ammunition handling.

The Coast Guard served in Vietnam performing duties uniquely suited to the specialized skills of the Service. In 1965, 26 82-foot Coast Guard cutters were ordered to Vietnam. These were used in the "brown water" war, attempting to interdict enemy infiltration. In 1966 the first oceangoing cutters augmented the naval and Coast Guard surveillance forces already in Vietnam. Coast Guardsmen also were detailed to improve port security, especially in Saigon, to assist with problems involving the Merchant Marine, and to teach workmen the basics of safe handling of ammunition and other dangerous cargoes. An in-country navigation system was created and a Loran network was set up for Southeast Asia. "Vietnamization" began in February 1969 and was concluded by December 1971. In all, 56 Coast Guard cutters served in Vietnam.

Environmental Protection

The Coast Guard has helped to protect the environment for 150 years. In 1822 the Congress created a timber reserve for the Navy and authorized the President to use whatever forces necessary to prevent the cutting of live-oak on public lands. The shallow-draft cutters were well-suited to this service and were used extensively.

The ecological responsibilities of the service were greatly expanded by the purchase of Alaska in 1867. Fur seals were being hunted into extinction due to the value of their coats. Seal herds congregated each year to breed on the Pribilof Islands; the seals had been ruthlessly slaughtered. A quarter of a million were killed during the first four years of American control. In 1870 Congress restricted the number that could be killed. Beginning in 1894, small parties of Revenue Cutter Service personnel were camped on the Pribilof Islands to prevent raids on the rookeries. On May 11, 1908, Revenue Cutters were given the authority to enforce all Alaska game laws.

In 1885 the Revenue Cutter Service cooperated with the Bureau of Fisheries in connection with "propagation of food fishes." Twenty years later, cutters enforced the regulations governing the landing, delivery, cure, and sale of sponges in the Gulf of Mexico.

Clean waters have been a concern for many decades. The Refuse Act of 1899 was the first attempt to address the growing problem of pollution and was jointly enforced by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Revenue Cutter Service. Today, the current framework for the Coast Guard's Marine Environmental Protection program is the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972.

In 1973, the Coast Guard created a National Strike Force to combat oil spills. There are three teams, a Pacific unit based near San Francisco, a Gulf team at Mobile, Ala., and an Atlantic Strike Team stationed in Elizabeth City, N.C. Since the creation of the force, the



Response personnel deploy containment boom in Lake Michigan during Atlantic Strike Team/COTP Muskegon, Mich., drill.

teams have been deployed world-wide to hundreds of potential and actual spill sites, bringing with them a vast array of sophisticated equipment. Their most notable "battles" were with the *Metula* in the Straits of Magellan during August 1974, the *Showa Maru* in the Straits of Malacca during January 1975, the *Olympic Games* in the Delaware River

during December 1975, and the *Argo Merchant* during December 1976.

The 200-mile zone created by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 quadrupled the offshore fishing area controlled by the United States. The Coast Guard has the responsibility of enforcing this law.

Search and Rescue



A motor lifeboat conquers the surf.

Ever since man has gone down to the sea in ships, great risks have been run to rescue those in danger. To improve the possibility of success, responsibility had to be delineated and means appropriated. In 1831 the Secretary of the Treasury directed the revenue cutter *Gallatin* to cruise the coast in search of persons in distress. This was the first time a government agency was tasked specifically to search for those who might be in danger. In 1837 Congress authorized the President "to cause ... public vessels ... to cruise upon the coast, in the severe portion of the season ... to afford such aid to distressed navigators as their circumstance and necessities may require; and such public vessels shall go to sea prepared fully to render such assistance." This addressed rescue on the high seas, and yet, during the age of wood and sail, most disasters occurred close into shore.

From colonial days, the coastal colonies, later states, had certain responsibilities for the salvage of goods tossed upon their beaches from shipwreck. Many states also imposed upon the salvagers the duty to rescue persons on board shipwrecked vessels as a prerequisite to obtaining salvage rights. Persons appointed by the states, called "wreckmasters," "commissioners of vendue," "commissioners of wrecks," etc., were specifically charged with assembling a volunteer boat crew at each wreck that occurred within the wreckmaster's jurisdiction for the purpose of rescue and salvage. These early efforts were closely tied to maritime interests at the large coastal ports of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

The middle of the Nineteenth Century was the era of the immigration packet. Small sailing ships were packed with several hundred immigrants in Europe. As these ships neared New York, nor'easters, which prevailed in the winter months, drove many of the crowded vessels aground on the New Jersey shore. There, but a few hundred yards from safety, the surf would pound the sturdiest craft to pieces and the freezing,

tumultuous water would overcome the strongest swimmer. Many rescue attempts were made from shore under these circumstances but, on the average, only about half those people on board reached the beach alive. The losses were not for a lack of volunteers wishing to help but mostly because no means had yet been contrived to reach the wreck across the breaking surf and to retrieve the occupants of the stricken vessel.

An innovative solution was needed; techniques and equipment had to be developed in order to save those stranded so close to their new homeland. Beginning in 1848, a federal lifesaving service began to take shape. At first, the government provided a garage-like structure outfitted with rescue equipment. The coasts of New Jersey and Long Island had experienced the greatest numbers of wrecks with the result that these beaches were the sites for the new stations. The construction and equipping

was a joint project carried out by a Revenue Marine officer, the boards of underwriters, and local citizens associated with salvage work. There was a fully-equipped iron boat on a wagon, a mortar apparatus for propelling a rescue line, powder and shot, a small covered "life car" for hauling in survivors, a stove, and fuel. The keys to the station were entrusted to a community leader, usually a wreckmaster, and he organized his volunteer crew.

There were successes — in 1850 the immigrant ship *Ayrshire* grounded during a snowstorm at Squan Beach, N.J. Under the supervision of wreckmaster John Maxon, the volunteers rescued 201 of the 202 persons on board.

There also were failures — during the Civil War all save one of the iron surfboats were commandeered for use in the Hatteras Campaign. The remaining one was being used to slop hogs! Nevertheless, over the period 1848

through 1870, about 90 percent of the persons on board vessels wrecked within the scope of this Life-Saving Service survived.

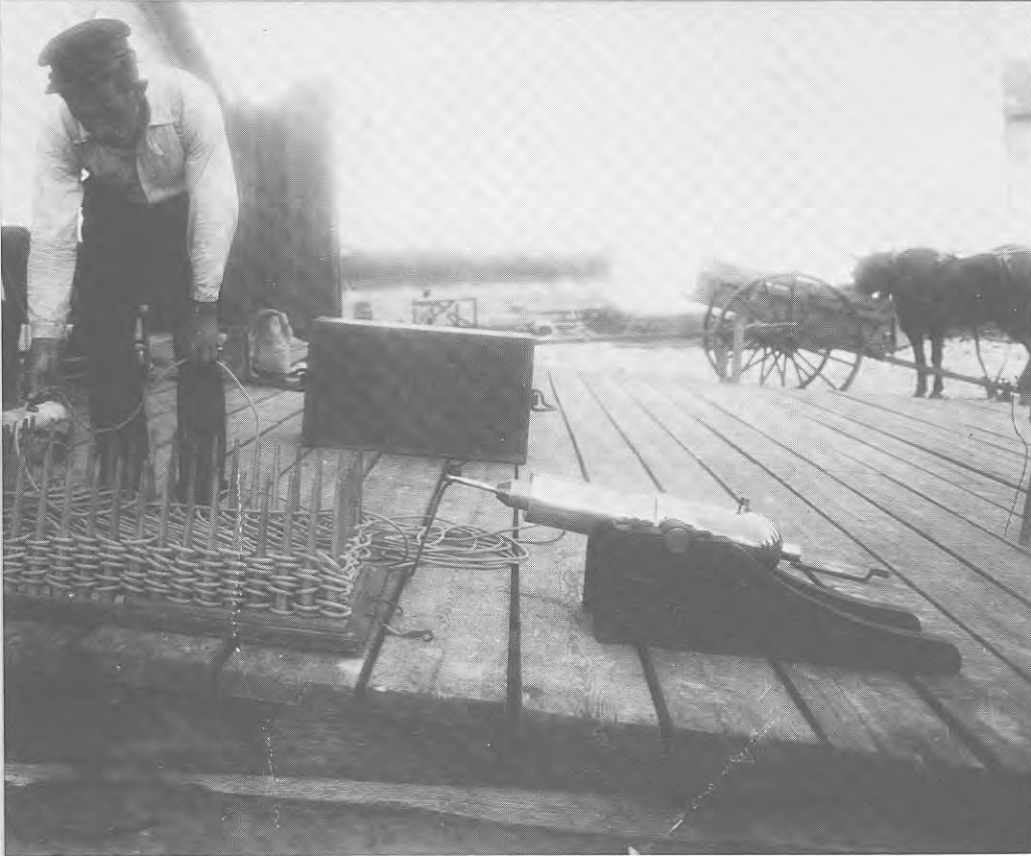
In 1871, following the war, the Life-Saving Service was "reborn" under the leadership of Sumner L. Kimball, ably assisted by Revenue Marine Captain John Faunce (who had had command of *Harriet Lane* at Charleston in 1861 during that fateful event). New stations were built; new equipment was developed; the scope of the Service was expanded beyond New Jersey and Long Island and personnel were federalized.

Much of the equipment and techniques developed during the mid-1800s, continued in use for a century. The Lyle gun, named for an Army captain who devised it, typifies this. This weapon of salvation was used to throw a line from the shore to a distressed ship.

Officers from the Revenue Marine played an important part in the opera-



Crewmen lay on the oars as their surfboat strikes the water in a launching from Station Rockaway Point, N.Y., 1924.



Making up the faking box after a breaches buoy drill in the late 1800s.



Rescuing a stranded family during an Ohio River flood, 1959.



A helicopter hoists a man from his home, shattered by Hurricane Betsy in 1965.

tions of the Life-Saving Service. Each LSS District — usually a first or second lieutenant — who reported to a Revenue Marine captain. He was assigned as the full-time Inspector of the Life-Saving Service. The inspectors performed training and administrative inspections, and conducted investigations in instances where lives were lost during shipwrecks.

In September 1888, the crew of Hunniwells Beach Station rescued fifteen persons from Glovers Rock in Maine. They had to lash the Lyle gun on the afterthwart of their lifeboat and set the shotline box on the stern. The gun was loaded with a one-ounce cartridge of powder, and fired, casting the line almost into the hands of those in danger. Removing the people by breeches buoy was impossible due to the rocks; a small dory was rigged instead, and the fifteen people were hauled to safety. During the same storm, the crew of the Lewes (Delaware) Station, fired their gun from the upper window of a fish house, and landed the crew of the distressed craft in the loft with a breeches buoy.

Drill — Drill — Drill! Crews had to be able to perform their duties in the dark. On Feb. 3, 1880 a storm wrought ruin upon the Jersey coast. At the height of the tempest, in the dead of night, Life-Saving crews rescued, without loss of life, the people of four ships. Beach apparatus was set up and worked in almost total darkness; the lanterns were



All alone, a tiny Coast Guard 53-footer fights a fire on the tanker *Key Trader* which collided with a freighter near the mouth of the Mississippi River, 1974.

thickly coated with sleet and were practically useless. The records of the Life-Saving Service are crowded with other remarkable rescues.

The schooners *Robert Wallace* and *David Wallace* were wrecked at Marquette, Michigan, November 18, 1886. The Ship Canal Station crew travelled 110 miles by special train and rescued the ships' crews.

In three days' work on the Delaware Coast, September 10-12, 1889, the life-saving crews at Lewes, Henlopen and Rehoboth Beach Station helped 22 vessels, and saved 39 persons by boat and 155 by breeches buoy without losing a single life.

The British schooner *H.P. Kirkham* was wrecked on Rose & Crown Shoal January 2, 1892. The crew of seven was rescued after 15 hours exposure. The lifesaving crew was at sea in an open boat without food for 23 hours.

There also were sacrifices. Seven surfmen lost their lives going to the aid of the Italian ship *Nuova Ottavia* on March 1, 1876.

Personnel from the Lighthouse Service and the Revenue Cutter Service also performed heroic rescues. On Dec. 31, 1839, the schooner *Deposit* was driven onto the Massachusetts coast by hurricane winds. T.S. Greenwood, keeper of the Ipswich Lighthouse, tied a line around his waist and swam through the roaring surf to the doomed ship. He then pulled a surfboat with a colleague in it to *Deposit* and the pair rescued the wife of the ship's captain. In 1897-1898, crew members of the cutter *Bear* drove a herd of reindeer 2,000 miles as food for

97 starving whalers caught in the Arctic ice.

The beneficiary of search and rescue operations continually changed. From 1830 through 1870, the immigrant packet proved to be the most vulnerable. The introduction of steel, steam, and improved aids to navigation significantly reduced coastal disasters affecting large passenger vessels. These innovations introduced more shipping into the high seas, resulting in a shift in the area of operation for search and rescue activity involving vessels with large numbers of persons on board. Smaller coastal sailing vessels remained as the primary focal point for Life-Saving Service operations until the turn of the century.

From 1871 to 1914, 178,741 persons received the services of the "Life-Savers." Although some of these people faced minimal risk, only 1,455 individuals lost their lives while exposed within the scope of Life-Saving Service jurisdiction.

"Blue water" cutters, joined by flying amphibians in the 1930s, became primary rescue platforms. Regular transAtlantic air traffic was initiated just before World War II, introducing new clientele. Ocean Stations were established, first in the Atlantic and later in the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific. A cutter was stationed in mid-ocean to provide rescue sites and to report on weather. Increased aircraft reliability and improved electronics have removed the need for the stations and the last was disestablished in 1977.

"Search and Rescue" has been dramatically influenced by technology from that day in 1831 when the federal government assumed a responsibility. Ironical-

ly, during World War II the Coast Guard was charged with developing the helicopter for anti-submarine warfare. The Coast Guard trained all helicopter pilots, both British and American. As the submarine threat abated in 1944, the emphasis of helicopter development was changed from anti-submarine warfare to search and rescue.

Following World War II, the search and rescue scene shifted back to the tidewater, the new patron being the boating enthusiast. Pleasure craft grew in increasing numbers and the helicopter emerged as a primary rescue tool. Each era has required new equipment suited to the needs of that day.

High-seas search and rescue has long presented the Coast Guard with one of its greatest challenges. When disaster occurs, hundreds of lives may be at stake. In October 1980, while almost 200 miles off Sitka, the Dutch cruise ship *Prinsendam* was jarred by explosions and stopped dead in the water after a fire started in the engine room. In spite of rough seas and strong winds, four Coast Guard, one Air Force and two Canadian helicopters plucked more than 500 shipwreck survivors from crowded lifeboats in the cold Gulf of Alaska. Many of the survivors, mostly senior citizens, were lifted in rescue baskets to the awaiting Coast Guard Cutter *Boutwell* and the commercial tanker *Williamsburgh*. Not one life was lost; *Prinsendam* sank seven days later.

Preventive Safety

Safety at sea requires preventative and corrective measures. Too much is as bad as too little. A ship is similar to a delicately tuned instrument. If excessive cost and weight are devoted to safety, the ship will not be competitive and probably will never be built. Throughout the history of commercial vessel safety, there has been the constant struggle to provide a balance between the greatest degree of safety and reasonable cost.

The steam engine was married to the sailing ship in the early 19th century. Beginning in the second decade of that century, there was a series of shipboard boiler explosions, resulting in huge losses of life. Almost immediately two schools of thought concerning commercial vessel safety crystallized. There were those who favored strong federal regulations and those who opposed government interference into transportation. At first, the federal government followed a laissez-faire philosophy. Secretary of the Treasury Richard Rush remarked in 1825, "Legislative enactments are calculated to do mischief rather than prevent it...."

State governments attempted to establish safety standards for steam vessels; these due to the interstate nature of waterborne commerce. The catalyst for federal action occurred in 1837 when the steamboat *Pulaski* exploded in North Carolina; 100 lives were lost. Congress passed an act "For the better security of the lives of passengers." This was the birth of commercial vessel inspection. The act provided the installation of fire-fighting and life-saving apparatus. Enforcement was the weak link; district judges appointed local persons to be inspectors. Obviously, in this small blossoming industry, the local individual competent to pass judgment must have had close ties with the shipowners. Also, no standards were set. Each inspector used his own judgment as to what was the maximum steam pressure permitted, and so on.

The evolution of technology outstripped these mild legislative controls even though updated, and disasters continued. From December 1851 through July of the following year, there were seven major disasters, costing nearly 700 lives. Congress responded with the Steamboat Inspection Act of 1852. This expanded the responsibilities of the Act of 1838 and corrected the major flaw of the earlier law by controlling inspections and licensing. This new law had its shortcomings as well. Only steamships carrying passengers were subject to its provisions. Thus, steam tugs, freighters, canal boats — whatever — were exempt from the provisions of the 1852 law, although still remaining subject to those of the 1838 one.

The Civil War diverted America's efforts from commercial vessel safety, as it had from life-saving, and an awesome price was paid. Fifteen hundred people perished on board the stern-wheeler *Sultana* in 1865 in the largest U.S. commercial maritime disaster. *Sultana* embarked nearly all of the 376 allowed passengers. Taking advantage of the wartime environment, 2,000 Union veterans — most of whom were recently freed prisoners of war — were also packed on board. While plying the river between Memphis and Cairo, Ill., a boiler exploded and the ship went up like a torch.

Future disasters brought in sharp focus areas needing improved safety regulations. Almost 1,000 lives were lost on the *General Slocum* in 1904; as a result, safety regulations and inspection equipment were improved. More than 1,500 lives were lost on the *Titanic* in 1912; certification and life-saving devices were improved. More than 100 lives were lost on board the *Morro Castle* in 1934 and another 45 on the *Mohawk* the following year. Partly as a result of these two disasters, more marine legislation was passed in 1936 and 1937 than during the previous twenty years. To the

novice, commercial vessel regulations seem a reaction to disaster. In fact, disaster has proven a catalyst for perfecting efforts previously undertaken.

The Coast Guard is a 20th century agency. The United States is an active member of the International Maritime Organization, an arm of the United Nations. IMO, composed of more than one hundred nations, has focused on such problems as safety at sea, prevention of pollution from ships, and technical cooperation among governments. These problems are under continual study and as solutions emerge, IMO sponsors conferences to draft international conventions and agreements. The Department of State looks to the Coast Guard as the agency having the expertise to enable effective U.S. participation.

Safety at sea depends upon competent mariners as well as safe ships. Since the early 1700s, harbor pilots had been licensed by colonial and later state governments. Illustrative of their widespread use, George Washington's presidential barge was manned by local pilots as he traveled throughout the country in the early 1790s.

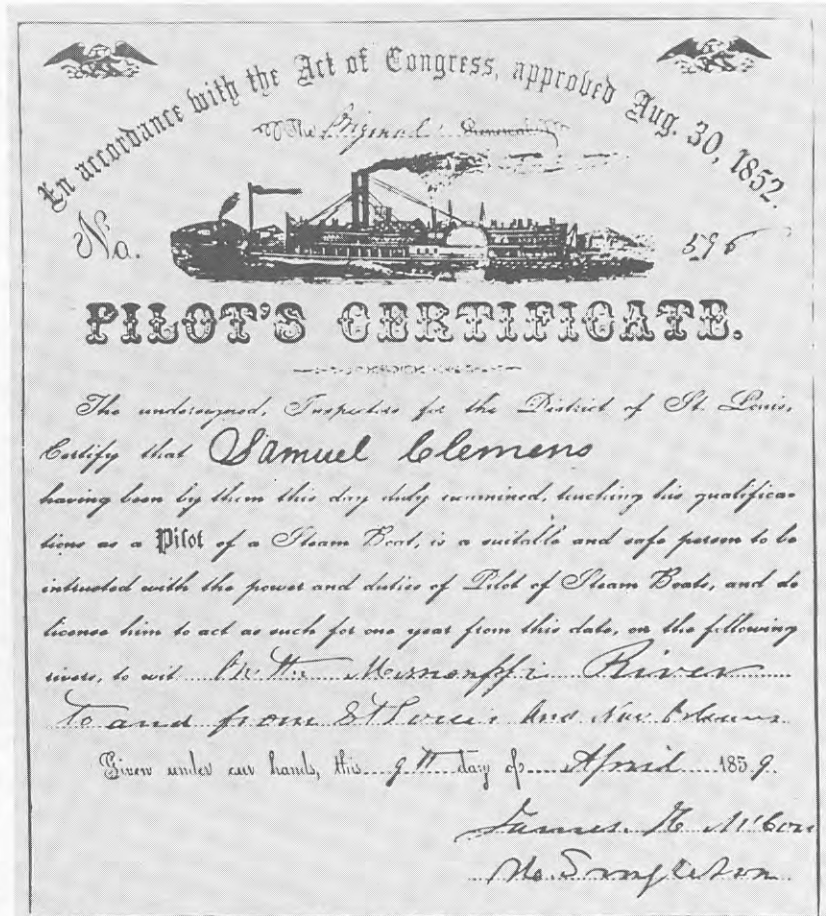
The first federal licensing of mariners was required by the Act of 1852, which authorized the Steamboat Inspection Service to issue licenses to engineers and pilots of steamers carrying passengers. Licensing has been refined and expanded throughout the decades to include masters and chief mates plus others in positions of responsibility on board all types of ships. Licensing and certificating of U.S. maritime personnel is another of the safety functions of the Coast Guard.

Today, one of the most visible missions of the Coast Guard is boating safety. And yet, the beginnings of this responsibility are obscured by indecisive legislation. In 1896 the Secretary of the Treasury was authorized "to prescribe regulations to insure the safety of passengers on ... [all] craft ... attendant ... upon ... regattas "Although a very narrow law, it was the first attempt at regulating pleasure boat safety. In 1908 this modest responsibility was transferred from the

Treasury to the Department of Commerce and Labor, which had only a single vessel to enforce the law!

The Motorboat Act of 1910 finally established a creditable boating safety program. The act required boats to be equipped with navigation lights, whistles, fire extinguishers, and life preservers. Although enforcement was still a problem, the number of accidents immediately declined.

The next mile-stone occurred in 1939 when the volunteer organization, known today as the Coast Guard Auxiliary, was created. The Auxiliary, working side by side with the regular Coast Guard, has significantly contributed to solving the enforcement problem. The 1940 Motorboat Act improved safety standards. Advances in technology have required constant updating in the law, with major changes occurring in 1958 and 1971. The Coast Guard's philosophy toward boating safety has been to educate the public rather than carry out punitive measures. The boating fatality rate during 1981 was 8.3 deaths for each 100,000 craft as compared to 21.4 deaths during 1965. There are fourteen million boats in American waters requiring constant vigil.



The river pilot's license issued here in 1859 to Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), to which was appended this proof of oath: "I, James H. McCord, inspector of the district of St. Louis, certify that the above-named Samuel Clemens this day before me solemnly swore that he would faithfully and honestly, according to his best skill and judgment, without concealment or reservation, perform all the duties required of him as a pilot, under act of congress, 'to provide for the better security and the lives of passengers on board of vessels propelled, in whole or in part, by steam.'"

Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, was issued this river pilot's license in 1859.



Collision aftermath: a speedboat went out of control and rammed a moored houseboat, killing one occupant.



Launching into the surf during a Lifesaving Station drill.