



# Coast Guard Retiree Council — Northwest



# RETIREE NEWSLETTER

*“They Also Serve”*

VOLUME XI ISSUE 3

## CHANGE IN 13<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT COMMANDER

*13<sup>th</sup> CGD Public Affairs*

Rear Adm. Keith A. Taylor relieved Rear Adm. Gary T. Blore of command of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District in a change-of-command ceremony held on Pier 36 in Seattle, Tuesday, July 12, 2011.

Rear Adm. Blore assumed command of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District in July 2009. As District Commander, he was responsible for U.S. Coast Guard operations covering four states, more than 4,400 miles of coastline, 600 miles of inland waterways, and 125 miles of international border with Canada. He was in charge of more than 5,770 active duty, reserve duty, civilian and Auxiliary men and women; whom annual conducted more than 3,000 search-and-rescue missions, executed more than 3,200 law enforcement boardings, and inspected more than 5,700 vessels. Rear Adm. Blore retired from the Coast Guard, during a July 14, 2011, ceremony in Astoria, Ore., after serving the American public for more than 36 years.

Rear Adm. Blore graduated, with honors, from the Coast Guard Academy in 1975 with a Bachelor of Science in economics and holds an MPA Degree from Columbia University. His personal decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, five awards of the Legion of Merit, two Meritorious Service Medals, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals and the Transportation 9-11 Medal, as well as other service and campaign awards. Admiral Blore also wore the title of Coast Guard Ancient Albattross which means he had held the designation as an aviator for the longest period in current active service. This title as passed in a formal ceremony at Sector Columbia River to former 13<sup>th</sup> District Commander and current Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, Vice Adm. John Currier on July 14<sup>th</sup>.



*Coast Guard Rear Adm. Keith A. Taylor(Left), relieves Rear Adm. Gary T. Blore(Right), of command of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District during a ceremony at Pier 36 in Seattle, July 12, 2011. The change-of-command ceremony was presided over by Vice Adm. Manson K. Brown, Coast Guard Pacific Area Commander. USCG photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan W. Bradshaw.*

Rear Adm. Taylor’s previous assignment was at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he served as the Assistant Commandant for Resources and Chief Financial Officer for the U.S. Coast Guard. In this capacity, he was responsible for Coast Guard financial management and resource activities including planning, programming, budgeting, and execution of the service’s appropriations.

Rear Adm. Taylor, a native of Westfield, Mass., earned a Bachelor of Science degree with

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honors from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1983, a Master of Science in Industrial Administration degree from the Krannert School at Purdue University and a Master of Business Administration degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was a Sloan Fellow in 2000/2001. His military decorations include the Legion of Merit, three Meritorious Service Medals, the Air Medal, two Commendation Medals and the Transportation 9-11 Medal.



*RADM Blore passes his aviator's scarf on to VADM Currier during an Ancient Albatross Change of Watch Ceremony at Sector Columbia River in Astoria, July 14. Ancient Albatross is an honorary title given to active duty CG members, enlisted and officer, who have the longest history in aviation among the service. Blore, who served for 36 years, received the title in 2009. USCG photo by Petty Officer Shawn Eggert*

## COAST GUARD DAY AT CLEAR LAKE - A SUCCESS STORY

*By Paul and Susan Luppert*

We had another successful Coast Guard picnic at Clear Lake on Saturday, August 13. It looked very much like the previous USCG picnics for the Spokane area. Lots of great raffle prizes; people sharing sea-stories and comparing experiences; friendships renewed; lots of great picnic food for all; perfect weather for a perfect day. It should be noted that Del and Paula Clark once again outdid themselves in putting everything together, setting it all up, making arrangements and coming up with even better raffle prizes than we've seen in the past. Those



prizes included some nice prints of CG Small boats in the surf, a magnificent nautical-themed porcelain chess set (hand made by Paula Clark) and two really great Mead Telescopes. (There must have been something wrong with the raffle drawing. I was counting on taking home a telescope. I only wanted one of them.) I don't know how many raffle prizes there were, but there were a lot. And, I don't know if the raffle ticket sales took in enough money to cover Del's expenses. I'll try to find out and let you know.

The one big difference I noticed from previous Spokane area picnics was that we had a much smaller group this year. In years past, I think we've had 80 to 90 people in attendance. This

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year, I don't think we had more than 50. I think I know the reason for the decline in numbers and it is simply that we aren't getting the word out. I don't have a solution for that problem. In the past, a lot of people were notified of the picnic by the quarterly hard copy newsletter that they used to receive in their mail. We can't ever go back to mailings and I don't know how to get people to look at the CGRetireeNW newsletter on line or the website. The information was there, but people seem to prefer the info to come to them rather than for them to seek it out. I know that it has been frustrating for you as well, trying to get people to look at the website. I sent out a few emails to everyone on my email list, but that goes out mostly to people I've met at prior picnics and those people tend to come back nearly every year anyway. I asked a few people why they thought attendance was so low this year. I was told that a lot of people only heard about it through word-of-mouth, by talking to other retired Coasties who'd heard about it. A couple people said they heard there was an email about the picnic but they hadn't seen it.

Another thing you should know about is that Del and Paula announced that they've had enough of being in charge of the picnics and this was their last. They've done every CG picnic we've done here and I think they date back to 2001 or 2002. Del said he would be glad to assist and advise anyone who would like to take over the picnics in the future. Two CG retirees stepped forward and agreed to work together to set up and run the picnic next year. Retired BMC Bud Coombes and retired AMC Jim Nelson both volunteered on the spot and Del will work with them so they can use his contacts, ideas and expertise. So, even without Del and Paula Clark in charge of it, there should be another CG Picnic in the Spokane area next year. Jim Nelson and Bud Coombes have some big shoes to fill, but they're energetic, enthusiastic guys and they've both been at the picnics just about every year so they know what they're getting into.

## COAST GUARD CELEBRATES 221ST BIRTHDAY, OFFICIAL MONTH DESIGNATION

*Alaska Governor Sean Parnell proclaims August Coast Guard Appreciation Month*



*A United States Coast Guard C-130 leaves Juneau en route to Kotzebue for Operation Arctic Crossroads recently. Gov. Sean Parnell has proclaimed the month of August 2011 as United States Coast Guard Appreciation Month. In addition, today is the 221st birthday of the Aug. 4, 1789, authorization of Congress creating the Revenue Cutter Service, now known as the Coast Guard.*

*By Klas Stolpe JUNEAU EMPIRE*

There is much to celebrate on the waters of Alaska, the United States, and beyond as Gov. Sean Parnell officially proclaimed the month of August 2011 "United States Coast Guard Appreciation Month." In addition, the Coast Guard marks its 221st birthday since its founding as the Cutter Revenue Service on Aug. 4, 1790.

"For decades Alaska has relied on the courageous and professional service of the U.S. Coast Guard," Parnell said. "We honor these heroes for their day-to-day protection and for their selfless, extraordinary acts on our behalf."

In his written proclamation dated July 26, Parnell encouraged all Alaskans to recognize and appreciate the honorable service provided to the residents of Alaska and our nation by the brave men and women of the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard has 42,000 active duty personnel and is the premier maritime safety and marine law enforcement agency, a branch of the Armed Forces and the sole military organization within the Department of Homeland Security.

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*Alaska Governor Sean Parnell takes over the controls of a Coast Guard 47-foot motor lifeboat while Chief Petty Officer Ryan O'Meara, officer in charge of Station Juneau, explains the performance characteristics of the boat and the challenges of working in Alaska's maritime domain.*

*USCG Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley*

Alaska is represented by the 17th District which includes two sectors, active support facilities, small boat stations, cutters, air stations, an aids-to-navigation team and marine safety units. The district oversees roughly 44,000 coastal miles, more than the 49 other states combined, plus 900,000 square miles of ocean in the Exclusive Economic Zone. Nearly 75 percent of Alaska's population lives in coastal communities.

"The Coast Guard is deeply honored by Gov. Parnell's proclamation," said Coast Guard Capt. Adam Shaw, acting Coast Guard District 17 chief of staff. "The fact that the Coast Guard will also be celebrating its 221st birthday on Aug. 4th makes the proclamation even more special to the Coast Guard men and women stationed throughout the state. Our service has a long and distinguished history of serving and protecting the Alaskan people, their way of life and the state's bountiful natural resources. Our relationship with the state started with the arrival of the revenue cutter Lincoln and her crew in 1867 and has grown since then to include more than 3,100 active duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliary personnel and their family members serving at various units throughout the state."

Coast Guard Station Juneau alone performs 100-150 search and rescue cases annually. The

crew also conducts around 300 law enforcement boardings per year, including recreational, boating safety, fisheries and Homeland Security missions.

The station dates back to the mid-1950s. It was located in Auke Bay until 1978, when it was moved to its current location. They performed all missions assigned today as well as servicing manned lighthouses.

The first Coast Guard was founded by the efforts of then-Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton and President George Washington as the Revenue Cutter Service. Under control of the Treasury Department, the mission, according to Washington, was "That service of a few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at a small expense be made useful sentinels of the laws."

The Revenue Cutter Service combined with different federal services, including the U.S. Lighthouse Service, the Steamboat Inspection Service, the Lighthouse Board the U.S. Life-Saving Service and the Bureau of Navigation. The Revenue Cutter Service merged with the Life-Saving Service on Jan 20, 1915, when President Woodrow Wilson signed the act to create the Coast Guard.



*Coast Guardsmen and Coast Guard Auxiliary members wave at cheering crowds during the 2011 Alaska Airlines Seafair Torchlight Parade on July 30, 2011. The Seattle parade celebrates true family and community entertainment. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Eric J. Chandler.*

## COAST GUARD CUTTER NAMED FOR RICHARD ETHERIDGE

BY JOY CRABAUGH



*RICHARD ETHERIDGE removed from cradle moving toward water. (Photo by USCG Bos'n Rick Ball)*

The U.S. Coast Guard's second 154-foot Fast Response Cutter, the Richard Etheridge, was launched at Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, La., Thursday, Aug. 18, marking a significant milestone in the Coast Guard's acquisition of the Sentinel-class patrol boats.

All Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutters will be named after enlisted Coast Guard heroes.

Richard Etheridge, a Manteo native, became the first African-American to command a life-saving station when in 1880, the service appointed him as the keeper of the Pea Island Life-Saving Station in North Carolina.

Etheridge's rigorous training drills proved to be invaluable Oct. 11, 1896, when the three-masted schooner, the E.S. Newman, was caught in a terrifying storm. En route to Norfolk, the vessel was blown 100 miles off course and came ashore on the beach two miles south of the Pea Island station. The storm was so severe that Etheridge had suspended normal beach patrols that day.

But the alert eyes of surfman Theodore Meekins saw the first distress flare, and he immediately notified Etheridge. Etheridge gathered his crew

and launched the surfboat. Battling the strong tide and sweeping currents, the dedicated lifesavers struggled to make their way to a point opposite the schooner, only to find there was no dry land.

The daring, quick-witted Etheridge tied two of his strongest surfmen together and connected them to shore by a long line. They fought their way through the roaring breakers and finally reached the schooner. The seemingly inexhaustible Pea Island crewmembers journeyed through the perilous waters 10 times and finally rescued the entire crew of the E.S. Newman. For this rescue, the crew, including Etheridge, was awarded the Coast Guard's Gold Lifesaving Medal.

While in the water, the cutter will undergo a series of tests and evaluations prior to its planned delivery early next year. The launch is one of many steps in the construction process, leading to sea trials and crew training later this year and, eventually, the commissioning of the vessel and commencement of its Coast Guard operations. The Sentinel-class patrol boats are the replacement for the service's legacy Island-class, 110-foot patrol boats.

The Richard Etheridge will be capable of reaching speeds in excess of 28 knots and is designed to independently conduct multiple missions including port, waterways and coastal security; fishery patrols; search and rescue; and national defense. The patrol boat is equipped with a stern launch ramp that allows the vessel to deploy its cutter boat in a wide range of sea conditions.

The Richard Etheridge's 24-person crew will conduct additional testing and evaluation prior to the cutter's commissioning in 2012. The cutter will be homeported in Miami and will primarily perform missions to save lives, enforce U.S. and international maritime law, and ensure security in the Coast Guard's 7th District area of responsibility that includes the nation's Southeastern maritime border and the Caribbean Sea.

## COAST GUARD SOON WILL REQUIRE MORE RESOURCES IN ARCTIC, COMMANDANT SAYS

By Mickey McCarter

While the Arctic Ocean becomes increasingly navigable as polar ice recedes, the US Coast Guard will require more specialized assets to patrol the area and respond to incidents, the commandant of the Coast Guard testified August 12<sup>th</sup>.

Speaking at a field hearing of the Senate Commerce Committee in Anchorage, Ala., US Coast Guard Adm. Robert Papp said the Coast Guard has conducted exercises off the coast of Alaska but it has not yet run drills inside the Arctic Circle due to a lack of vessels that can sail those waters.

“For the past four years, the Coast Guard has been conducting limited Arctic operations during open water periods. However, as operational tempo increases in the Arctic, the Coast Guard will require specialized vessels, aircraft, and crews trained to operate in extreme climates,” Papp told the committee in his written testimony.

As the Arctic becomes increasingly open, oil companies have begun exploring drilling in the Arctic, which holds the promise of large oil deposits. To test its response capabilities for an oil spill in the Arctic, the Coast Guard has been conducting exercises with skimming systems and oil recovery systems around Alaska. No exercises have occurred north of the Arctic Circle to date, Papp said, as they systems cannot operate in areas with icy waters.

The White House fiscal 2012 budget request would provide funding for research and development on oil detection and recovery in icy water, Papp said, as part of an effort to extend the capability of skimming and recovery systems.



Anchorage, Alaska - Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Bob Papp, provides testimony at a field hearing hosted by Sen. Mark Begich, Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard in Anchorage, Alaska, Aug. 12, 2011.

U.S. Coast Guard Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley.

“[W]e must determine our nation’s vessel requirements for transiting ice-laden waters, consider establishing seasonal bases for air and boat operations, and develop a force structure that can operate in extreme cold and ice,” Papp stated.

The Coast Guard only has one active boat that can sail through icy seas -- the Healy, a medium icebreaker, which is used for scientific research, Papp reported. The agency plans to bring a heavy icebreaker, the Polar Star, back into service by 2013 after a major refurbishing. Another heavy icebreaker, the Polar Sea, is being decommissioned. Both heavy icebreakers are more than 30 years old.



Coast Guard Cutter Healy breaks ice during Arctic survey that will help define the Arctic continental shelf. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer Patrick Kelley

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Although the likelihood of an incident in US waters covered in ice remains low, the United States would have only the Healy to depend upon as well as assistance from allies operating icebreakers should something occur.

But the Coast Guard needs more than ships to extend its operations in the Arctic, Papp said.

“The Coast Guard’s most immediate operational requirement, however, is infrastructure. Energy exploration is emerging on the North Slope of Alaska, but the existing infrastructure is extremely limited. The Coast Guard needs facilities to base crews, hangar aircraft, and protect vessels in order to perform prevention and response missions,” he commented.

Investments in those resources soon will become very important as oil companies are increasingly moving into the Arctic, Papp said. Shell submitted a plan for exploring wells in the Arctic to the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management Regulation and Enforcement this past May and other companies like ConocoPhillips and Statoil may soon follow. Shell has updated its exploration plans and has been preparing equipment to engage in drilling operations in the Arctic perhaps as early as spring 2012.

The Coast Guard has been preparing as well as possible to prepare for response missions under the circumstances. It has established several temporary operating bases far north in Alaska to train its crews to operate its air and sea assets under near-Arctic conditions and to expand its situational awareness in the region. The Coast Guard also has been flying two air sorties per month to examine any corporate or governmental activities occurring in the Arctic. Those sorties have provided valuable insight on Coast Guard infrastructure requirements, Papp said.

Meanwhile, the service has been talking to companies about their responsibilities in the Arctic to ensure the private sector has

appropriate response capabilities in the event of an incident such as a large-scale oil spill.

“Those engaging in offshore commercial activity in the Arctic must also plan and prepare for emergency response in the face of a harsh environment, long transit distances for air and surface assets and limited response resources. We continue to work on raising awareness of these challenges, and foster continued development of contingency plans, and communications,” Papp said.

## HEALY TO BE FEATURED IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



*U.S. Coast Guard by Ens. Holly McNair*

On Aug. 15, two videographers from National Geographic, a photographer, and a journalist from the University of New Hampshire Alumni Magazine, conducted an interview with Dr. Larry Mayer, a professor from UNH. Dr. Larry Mayer is the chief scientist during the Coast Guard Cutter Healy’s Arctic West Summer 2011 Mission and extended continental shelf mapping with the Canadian coast guard icebreaker Louis S. St-Laurent.

The University of New Hampshire will feature the story in their alumni magazine to represent the university’s contributions to scientific research and furthering institutional accreditation.

In conjunction, National Geographic will also

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feature the story, scheduled to air Spring 2013.

This is the fourth year of collaboration the Healy has had with the Canadian coast guard icebreaker Louis S. St-Laurent to map the floor of the Arctic Ocean. The Healy is helping to create a more complete picture of the topographical features of the Arctic seafloor. Another mission will include deploying several types of hydrographic moorings, as well as recovering hydrographic moorings deployed on earlier missions.

## US COAST GUARD STARTS \$50 MILLION SOLAR ROOFTOP RENOVATIONS IN PUERTO RICO

*By: Cheryl Kaften*

On any U.S. Coast Guard ship, "PV" refers to a passenger vessel. But now some shore-side personnel are learning a new lexicon, as their bases in Puerto Rico launch a photovoltaic project.

In August, Schneider Electric, an energy management firm based in France, announced that it had clinched a \$50 million energy savings performance contract (ESPC) from the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to carry out rooftop renovations at its Puerto Rico facilities.

New solar arrays, combined with "cool roofs," are expected to save the USCG about 40 percent in utility-purchased electricity, when the renovations are completed in September 2012.

The contract will enable the USCG to meet renewable energy mandates without direct capital investment, and to stabilize energy costs and security in nearly one million square feet of USCG facilities - including Rio Bayamon housing, Air Station Borinquen, and Air Station Borinquen housing.

Already, Schneider said "pilot projects [have] tested the abilities of cool roof technologies to achieve multiple goals, with better-than-expected results."

Once the rooftops are refurbished, Schneider Electric will construct and install 300 photovoltaic systems - expected to deliver 2.89 megawatts (MW) of power, or more than four million kilowatt-hours per year. The new rooftop materials and solar arrays should reduce the annual cooling load of the buildings by 3.9 billion British thermal units.

The USCG project is the first of its kind to combine the Renewable Energy Services Agreement (RESA) financing structure within an ESPC financing vehicle, thus maximizing the incentives and overall value to USCG and enabling extension of the renewable energy financing term beyond 10 years. Funding the investment relied upon the U.S. Department of the Treasury grant rather than the investment tax credit.

This is the largest solar project ever undertaken by the USCG. In October 2009, the Coast Guard awarded the first Power Purchase Agreement in its history to SilRay Inc., of Silicon Valley, to deploy a four-acre array of solar panels at its Training Center in Petaluma, California.



Four-acre solar array field at TRACEN Petaluma (Coast Guard photo)





Contact: Elizabeth Hillestad

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## Health Info on the Go with New TriWest Mobile Website, App

Delivering Mobile Support to Military Members,  
Families

**PHOENIX (August 23, 2011)** — You're 2,000 miles from home, just about to board a flight. You need to see if your doctor referral was processed and all you have is your smartphone.

Tap... Tap... Scroll... Tap... Got it!

TriWest Healthcare Alliance has launched its mobile website and a mobile application, allowing TRICARE West Region beneficiaries to easily tap and scroll their way to their healthcare information, right from their smartphones and mobile devices.

TriWest manages the Department of Defense's TRICARE health program for 2.9 million military families in the western United States.

### Healthcare Info Goes Wherever You Go

Military families face distinct challenges in their daily lives, routinely managing family moves, household duties and the prospects of a loved one's deployment.

Providing direct, mobile access to their healthcare information is one way TriWest hopes to reduce some of the burden on military members and families.



"We're excited to unveil this technology to our customers, because it brings a whole new level of convenience to their busy lives," said TriWest President and CEO David J. McIntyre, Jr.

"Military families can now manage their health care right from their phone, while they're traveling or at home with the kids—whenever they want or need to use it."

### Mobile Site

TriWest's [mobile website](http://m.TriWest.com) (m.TriWest.com) allows any beneficiary with a secure TriWest.com account to use their phone to:

Receive real-time status of healthcare authorizations and referrals

Check claims

Pay fees or premiums

### Mobile App

TriWest's mobile app provides added features to smartphone and iPad® users, including:

Compare TRICARE coverage plans

Change plans based on life events, such as birth or adoption

Create an address book for doctors

View guidelines for getting care

The app can be downloaded for iPhone®/iPad and Android™ devices.

Learn more about [TriWest mobile capabilities](http://TriWest.com/GoMobile), including text alerts, at [TriWest.com/GoMobile](http://TriWest.com/GoMobile).

## CONVENIENT ACCESS TO ONLINE ACCOUNTS WITH ONE PASSWORD

By Brian P. Smith

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

There is a logon that allows military families access to certain Department of Defense (DoD) benefit websites with one username and password: it's the DS Logon. Having a DoD Self-Service Logon (DS Logon) can mean remembering just one username and password for some DoD and Veterans Affairs (VA) websites.

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**TRICARE Continued from page 9****How to request your single logon:**

Sponsors with a Common Access Card (CAC) or DFAS myPay Login ID may request a DS Logon at [myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/dsaccess](http://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/dsaccess).

Eligible beneficiaries can request a DS Logon at TRICARE Service Centers (TSC).

Sponsors and family members can also request a DS Logon through the VA eBenefits portal.

**It's safe and secure**

If the sponsor does not use the CAC or DFAS method to request a DS Logon, beneficiaries must finish a verification process known as in-person proofing to be granted full DS logon access. To help protect your identity, users need full, or Level 2, access to view or change personal information through the websites below. You can complete the verification process at a TSC. National Guard and Reserve members who can't go to a TSC for validation may be eligible to complete a remote proofing process (more information at [www.tricare.mil/reserve](http://www.tricare.mil/reserve)).

After in-person (or remote) proofing, your DS Logon can be used to access these DoD and VA sites:

**Beneficiary Web Enrollment** ([www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe)): Manage TRICARE Prime enrollments and update contact information.

**Reserve Component Purchased TRICARE Application** ([www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/reserve-tricare](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/reserve-tricare)): Purchase TRICARE Reserve Select and TRICARE Retired Reserve coverage.

**TRICARE Online** ([www.tricareonline.com](http://www.tricareonline.com)): Set appointments and refill prescriptions at certain military treatment facility locations.

**myDoDbenefits** ([mydodbenefits.dmdc.osd.mil](http://mydodbenefits.dmdc.osd.mil)): Access and update information that goes directly into the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

**VA eBenefits** ([www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov)): Apply for Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, download your

*Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214)* and view benefits status.

**DS Logon Self-Service** ([myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/dsaccess](http://myaccess.dmdc.osd.mil/dsaccess)): Activate and manage your DS Logon account.

**What kind of identification do I need for in-person proofing?**

Beneficiaries need two current forms of approved ID; at least one must be a government-issued photo ID. DMDC's list of approved IDs: [www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess/pub/FAQ.do](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess/pub/FAQ.do).

**What about my secure [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) account?**

Your [triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) account does not use the DS Logon option. A [triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) username and password are required to manage your health care through a [triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com) account. Go to [www.triwest.com/Register](http://www.triwest.com/Register) to learn more.

**DIAGNOSED? HOW CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS COULD HELP**

*By Shari Lopatin*

*TriWest Healthcare Alliance*

When Ellen Beare learned she had Stage 3 breast cancer, she decided not to tell people at work.

"I just didn't want to be defined by cancer," Beare said.

For many, that sentiment rings very common today. Nearly 12 million Americans were diagnosed with some type of cancer in 2010, according to the National Cancer Institute.

Discovering you, or a loved one has cancer, is very difficult. Beare—who is a care coordinator in Tacoma, Wash. for TriWest Healthcare Alliance—struggled the most with telling her son.

"It was probably harder telling him than anything else," Beare said, pausing to keep from crying. "He is my only child."

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**TRICARE Continued from page 10**

For those who have received this type of news, TRICARE recently expanded its coverage for cancer clinical trials. This makes it possible for cancer patients with TRICARE to receive more types of treatments. Beare, who is 63 years old and cancer-free today, is a strong believer in finding a cure.

“Cancer is very real, very prevalent, but with research, there can be a cure,” she said.

**What does TRICARE cover?**

TRICARE covers three types of cancer clinical trials for those who are eligible. These trials test different ways to prevent, detect and treat various cancers. Of the three phases, Phase I trials were recently added as a TRICARE benefit:

Phase I trials: determine the highest dosage of a drug the body can handle, and the effects that drug has on the body.

Phase II trials: study the safety and effectiveness of an intervention method on a certain type of cancer, and how that method affects the body.

Phase III trials: compare promising new treatments to the standard treatments.

**How to sign up**

To take part in a trial, pre-authorization is needed. If you're TRICARE-eligible, you may be able to take advantage of the cancer clinical trials. The only exception is active duty service members, who would go through their military clinic instead.

“If clinical trials are available to someone through TRICARE, I would encourage them to get information, just as they should get information on the type of cancer they have and the current treatment options,” Beare said.

For more information, or to see about taking part in a trial, contact a TriWest Cancer Clinical Trial Coordinator by calling 1-866-427-6610.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RESCUE SWIMMER PROGRAM

*By LCDR Richard M. Wright, USCG (Ret.)*

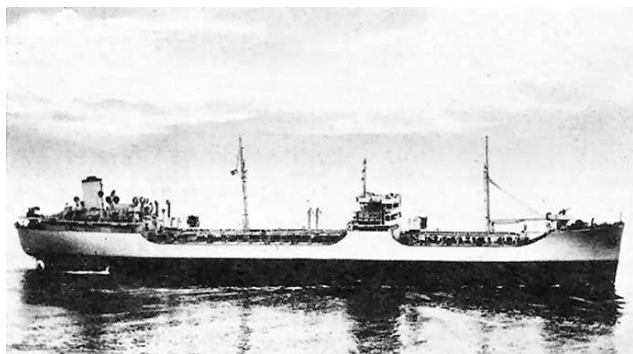
*Excerpt of article from USCG Historian Website*

On the evening of 10 February 1983, the M/V MARINE ELECTRIC sailed out of Norfolk, VA, enroute to Brayton Point, MA, with a 25,000 ton cargo of pulverized coal. Seas were rough, the skies were laden with a heavy overcast and the wind was cold and blowing in excess of 40 knots. The crew of 34 officers and men were experienced and had sailed in such weather on numerous occasions. As the ship proceeded on course, operations seemed normal. However, as the ship cruised off Virginia's east shore, the weather intensified. By the following morning, the seas were between 20 and 40 feet, with winds blowing at 60 knots. The MARINE ELECTRIC strained under the growing seas, as each successive wave crashed green water heavily over the decks. By midnight on 11 February, the ship seemed sluggish through the seas, and the Captain instinctively sensed that the ship was not recovering normally through the swells. He directed that the holds be inspected to ensure the cargo was secure. A frantic report returned that the holds were filling with sea water. Severely weakened over time with rust, weak spots in the hatch covers were allowing the sea to pour into the holds. With the storm still intensifying, the Captain



*A Coast Guard member enrolled at the Aviation Survival Technician A-School in Elizabeth City heaves himself out of the training pool at the completion of a training exercise. The 18-week AST A-School trains members to function operationally as helicopter rescue swimmers and emergency medical technicians. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd class David Weydert.*

**Swimmer Continued on page 12**

**Swimmer Continued from page 11***SS Marine Electric*

knew the ship was doomed. At approximately 0400 on Saturday, 12 February, a distress call was sent and acknowledged by the Coast Guard. An HH-3F helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, NC, piloted by LT Scott Olin, was immediately dispatched by Rescue Coordination Center Portsmouth. By the time the helicopter arrived, however, the ship had sunk, and 34 people were now desperately fighting for their lives in the frigid waters. As the H-3 hovered overhead, a rescue basket was prepared and lowered to the people in the water. Numbed by severe hypothermia, the men were unable to grab the basket and floundered helplessly. LT Olin quickly recognized that these victims could not be rescued with the capabilities at hand and asked RCC Portsmouth to make an immediate call to NAS Oceana to inquire if a Navy helicopter and rescue swimmer might be available to assist. Not normally maintaining a ready helicopter on weekends, the Navy recalled LCDR William Sontag, who quickly rounded up a crew including rescue swimmer Petty Officer James McCann. The Navy H-3 helicopter arrived on scene at 0605, and for over an hour, both aircraft positioned themselves to receive survivors. Petty Officer McCann swam to the point of exhaustion in 40 foot seas in his effort to save as many as he could. Conditions were so severe and the temperatures so cold that sea water on his facemask froze. Although only three persons were recovered alive, Petty Officer McCann was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his heroic efforts. Tragically, a total of 31 crewmen perished.

The Congressional Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee convened hearings to question why the world's premier maritime rescue service was unable to assist people in the water. It became apparent during testimony the existing techniques and

equipment were inadequate for rescue in such extreme circumstances as occurred with the MARINE ELECTRIC. Congress, therefore, mandated in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1984 that "The Commandant of the Coast Guard shall use such sums as are necessary, from amounts appropriated for the operational maintenance of the Coast Guard, to establish a helicopter rescue swimmer program for the purpose of training selected Coast Guard personnel in rescue swimming skills."

With this mandate from Congress, the Coast Guard immediately turned attention to developing rescue specialists who could assist incapacitated people in the water. The Aviation Division (G-OAV) at Coast Guard Headquarters was tasked with researching alternatives and recommending a plan. LCDR Dana Goward, of the Aviation Plans and Programs Branch, was tasked to develop the Planning Proposal that would incorporate the outlines of the Helicopter Rescue Swimmer Program and determine its funding. LCDR Ken Coffland, Chief of the Aviation Life Support Branch, was named Program Manager. To assist them was ASMCM Larry Farmer, the Aviation Survivalman (ASM) Rating Subject Matter Specialist at the Coast Guard Institute in Oklahoma City, OK.

*The Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer insignia.*

The main question arose as to who would become Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmers? Should the program be open to volunteers from any aviation rating; should a new and separate rating be established; or should one rating be transformed to provide rescue swimmers? Each option had significant implications to the existing enlisted force structure. The duties and training required of rescue swimmers would preclude most aviation ratings from performing their highly specialized maintenance duties while also maintaining demanding rescue swimmer qualifications. It was decided that the rating most easily transformed and one already identified with sea survival was Aviation Survivalman. Transition of the ASM rating, however, raised concerns for those individuals within that rating who were: in mid-career or had no interest or ability

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to become rescue swimmers. However, the Coast Guard was faced with a Congressional mandate that a rescue swimmer program be established. LCDR Coffland and ASMCM Farmer recommended that the fairest way to transition the ASM rating would be to exempt individuals who were E-7 or above and to offer all others who did not want to become rescue swimmers lenient conditions for changing to a different rating. In June 1984, with many details of the plan still to be refined, the Commandant authorized a five year period to implement the program throughout Coast Guard aviation. On 25 February 1985, an ALDIST message was disseminated announcing the requirement for all ASMs below the rate of E-7 to become rescue swimmer qualified. ASMs were given until 30 June 1990 to either become a rescue swimmer, be promoted to E-7, begin school to change to another rating, retire or resign. Recognizing the unquestioned demand for dramatic change but also in fairness to those who elected to make the difficult transition to rescue swimmer, the Commandant stated that virtually no waivers to these options would be given. The extraordinary physical demands required of rescue swimmers also raised the question as to whether the program would be open to females. Considerable thought was given to the physical standards required to perform the duties of rescue swimmer, and no other service allows females in such programs. The Coast Guard decided that physical fitness standards would be 'mission specific' and gender blind. If otherwise qualified, females who possessed the strength and stamina were as eligible as men to become rescue swimmers.

On 21 May 1984, LCDR Goward visited the Navy's Rescue Swimmer School at NAS Pensacola, FL, to discuss the Navy's program, looking particularly at its training, mission and equipment. Recognizing that the Coast Guard program would ultimately be a maritime rescue resource similar to the Navy's, the Coast Guard and Navy entered an agreement by which Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmers would be trained at the U. S. Navy Rescue Swimmer School at NAS Pensacola, FL. Commencing training on 10 September 1984, ASM2 Steve Ober and ASM3 Kelly Gordon became the first Coast Guard personnel to complete the four-week course, graduating on 5 October 1984. In addition to having the distinction of being one of the first Coast

Guard rescue swimmers, ASM2 Ober graduated as the Honor Graduate of his class, one of only four out of 282 graduates up to that time to be so honored. Petty Officers Ober and Gordon were joined shortly thereafter by more graduates of Rescue Swimmer School. ASM1 Richard Woolford, ASM3 Matt Fithian, and ASM3 Butch Flythe were qualified by the end of 1984. These five individuals were to become the first operational rescue swimmers when Air Station Elizabeth City reported operational on 5 March 1985. Air Station Elizabeth City recorded the first life saved by a Coast Guard rescue swimmer on 4 May 1985 when a severely hypothermic man was saved after clinging to the bow of his capsized boat. With the survivor unable to climb into a rescue basket, ASM1 Richard Woolford was deployed into the water and pulled the person to safety. Training for the Aviation Survivalman rating became extraordinarily intense. As of 1 January 1986, individuals have been required first to pass a physical fitness screening test and then attend sixteen weeks of Aviation Survivalman "A" School at ATTC Elizabeth City. This is followed by four weeks of training at Rescue Swimmer School. With weight and space limitations aboard HH-65A and HH-60J helicopters, there was concern regarding the ability to provide medical treatment to survivors once recovered. To eliminate the need for hospital corpsmen in the aircrew, it was decided that Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmers should also be qualified to administer first aid. Therefore, in addition to their other training, rescue swimmers are required to attend three weeks of training at EMT School at Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, CA. Only the most dedicated men and women complete this rigorous regimen of courses to earn the coveted title of Helicopter Rescue Swimmer. Since the program's inception, however, the idea of placing these individuals above their contemporaries as elite has been spurned. At every instance, rescue swimmers are reminded that they are merely part of a team. When not conducting rescues, it is expected that ASMs will perform their other duties as Aviation Survivalmen, maintaining the survival equipment depended upon by pilots and other aircrew. The concept of "The Quiet Professional" is ingrained from the beginning of their training and reinforced throughout their careers.

## RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nate Littlejohn



ASTORIA, Ore. — Petty Officer 3rd Class Tyler Gaenzle, an aviation survival technician at Air Station Astoria, Ore., returns from a training flight aboard an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter, Aug. 22, 2011. Gaenzle saved his first life in a daring cliff rescue near Archer Mountain in Skamania County, Wash., July 29, 2011.

USCG photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nate Littlejohn

ASTORIA, Ore. — Some people are driven to perform dangerous, high-stress jobs. These unique individuals choose professions that put them in harm's way, require impeccable split-second, decision-making skills and a knack for keeping their cool despite treacherous, life-threatening conditions. For Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Tyler Gaenzle, an aviation survival technician (AST) at Air Station Astoria, Ore., the sheer challenge of the job is what appeals to him.

"I wanted to do something challenging," Gaenzle said. "The Coast Guard recruiter said this was the most challenging job in the Coast Guard. I told him to sign me up."

Aviation survival technicians, better known as "rescue swimmers", are lowered from Coast Guard helicopters to rescue people in distress. The nature of their job demands a set of strong personality traits.

"A rescue swimmer has to refuse to quit and have a good attitude," stated Gaenzle.

Gaenzle's refusal to quit, positive attitude and

ability to remain composed and think clearly led to the successful rescue of an injured 16-year-old hiker and his companion, stranded on a cliff near Archer Mountain in Skamania County, Wash., July 29, 2011.

The harrowing situation, marking Gaenzle's first search-and-rescue mission, provided more challenges than many far more experienced rescue swimmers have ever faced. The unique area of responsibility for Sector Columbia River, Ore., provides a variety of missions and terrains. Crews here perform rescues not only in and near the water but, as in this case, heavily forested, mountainous terrain.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew from Air Station Astoria responded when Skamania County cliff rescue and high angle teams were unable to reach the injured hiker that evening.

In the dark, the crew spotted the stranded teenagers on a steep cliff side. Hovering approximately 150 feet above the survivors, the crew found a small opening in the trees barely large enough to perform a hoist.

"When we arrived on scene, we didn't know if a hoist was possible," said Gaenzle. "We couldn't see any openings through the trees large enough for a safe hoist. After a few minutes we found a small open spot and decided, as a crew, to lower me down there to check it out."

After being lowered through the opening, Gaenzle saw conditions less than favorable for a successful rescue.

"I found the cliff was steep with no level areas. I saw both teenagers. I knew one of them had fallen over 50 feet, was seriously injured and in a lot of pain. I realized that there would be nobody else who could get him out of there."

Gaenzle was unable to reach the survivors while remaining clipped into his harness.

"At that moment I decided to disconnect from the cable and start making my way over to the teenagers."

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**Challenge Continued from page 14**

Despite the steep cliff face, Gaenzle was able to reach the boys. He checked the one who had fallen for injuries, and realized it was serious.

"I did a rapid trauma assessment. He had broken bones in his legs and serious back injuries to say the least." Gaenzle quickly summoned the courage of the injured hiker's friend. "Your buddy's only chance of getting out of here is for us to work together and carry him up to the litter."

They were able to get him onto a backboard, and after several close calls, made their way to where the injured hiker could be placed in the rescue litter and hoisted to the helicopter. Soon everyone, including Gaenzle, was in the safety of the helicopter heading to the hospital.

Gaenzle's thirst for challenge may be the driving force behind his motivation to perform the duties of a rescue swimmer, but that isn't enough to ensure success.

He credits education, efforts of all flight crewmembers, and the mentorship of other swimmers with providing him the foundation required to perform successfully.

"School prepares you for the pressures and stresses that come with the job. They put you in a ton of situations where you're tired and have nothing left. They put pressure on you and you have to perform and rise to the occasion. The guys in the swimmer shop in Port Angeles, where I started the Airman Program, were great mentors. My current chief and first class have prepared me very well and obviously I couldn't have done my part of the rescue without the rest of the flight crew."

"Tyler is one of the most energetic, motivated and motivating individuals I have ever met," boasted Chief Petty Officer Jason Schelin, lead AST at Air Station Astoria.

"His drive and positive attitude are infectious. He has worked at a blistering pace to get qualified as an MH-60 Jayhawk rescue swimmer.

Gaenzle's ability to take on the arduous task of getting qualified in such an efficient manner is a true testament to his dedication and outstanding work ethic."

Schelin notes that Gaenzle's desire to learn and meet challenges led to the successful rescue on the cliff that night.

"Gaenzle took all the skills, techniques, and advice we gave him and put it all together on his first case as a qualified rescue swimmer," he said. "This case would have been a challenge for even the most experienced of rescue swimmers."

"I remember watching the hoist footage, listening to the audio and commenting to the other ASTs as to how calm, cool, and collected Gaenzle came across during his radio communications with the helicopter. He sounded as if he was a seasoned operator and had been doing this for years."

Gaenzle hasn't been doing this for years, but after his performance on the cliff that July night, we hope he will keep it up for years to come.



*Petty Officer 2nd Class Eric Young, a Coast Guard rescue swimmer from Air Station Astoria, Ore., conducts a simulated search and rescue operation. The Coast Guard is looking for people who are Born Ready, motivated to save lives, protect the environment and defend America's coastlines and waterways. USCG photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Luke Pinneo*

**Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest Newsletter**

c/o COMMANDING OFFICER  
USCG Base Seattle  
Attn: Work Life (Retiree Council)  
1519 Alaskan Way South, Bldg. 1  
Seattle, Washington 98134



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**HOW WE  
SERVED...  
YESTERDAY  
IN THE U. S.  
COAST GUARD**

*June 1944, the USCG-6 (83334) off the coast of Normandy. Note her unofficial skull and cross-bone insignia hand-painted beneath her flying bridge. Photo # 4078, photographer unknown.*