



United States Coast Guard Retiree Council North West PACIFIC CURRENTS NEWSLETTER



“They Also Serve”

VOLUME XV ISSUE I

COAST GUARD CUTTER RUSH (KIA’I KAI NO KA OI) DECOMMISSIONED AFTER 45 YEARS OF SERVICE

CWO Patrick Wills, Rush crew 1975-1976



Following Naval tradition, crew members disembark Coast Guard Cutter Rush during its decommissioning ceremony at Base Honolulu, Feb. 3, 2015. The ceremony paid tribute to the accomplishments and sacrifices of crew members who served aboard Rush in its 45 years of service. (USCG photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Melissa E. McKenzie)



Crew members from Coast Guard Cutter Rush present a Coast Guard unit commendation pennant to Capt. Aldante Vinciguerra, commanding officer, during its decommissioning ceremony at Base Honolulu, Feb. 3, 2015. The decommissioning ceremony marked the retirement of Rush as a unit of the operating forces of the U.S. Coast Guard. (USCG photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Melissa E. McKenzie)



Vice Adm. Charles W. Ray, commander, Pacific Area, shakes hands with Capt. Aldante Vinciguerra, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Rush, at the ship's decommissioning ceremony at Base Honolulu, Feb. 3, 2015. The ceremony marked the retirement of Coast Guard Cutter Rush after 45 years of dedicated service. (USCG photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Melissa E. McKenzie)

Editor's note: With the decommissioning of USCGC Rush, half the fleet of 378' cutters are gone and the remaining six 45 year old ship's departures won't be far behind. This story is the story of my 378' and it will be played out a dozen times before we bid adieu to this great fleet of ships. It is not possible to publish every decommissioning story in our newsletter so we chose to include Rush's ceremonies as a prototype for all the crews.

HONOLULU – The Coast Guard held a decommissioning ceremony for Coast Guard Cutter Rush (WHEC 723) at Base Honolulu, on 3 February 2015. The ceremony honored 45 years of Rush's service to the Coast Guard. Vice Admiral Charles W. Ray, Coast Guard Pacific Area commander, presided over the event. Capt Kalas McAlexander, Chaplain, Pacific Area opened retirement ceremonies after the Navy Band played the National and Hawaii State Anthems. VADM Ray's remarks were followed by Captain Vinciguerra, CO of Rush who gave his remarks, then conducted the formal decommissioning. After the Rush

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crew descended the brow, Captain Vinciguerra invited former Rush crew members in attendance to stand with their shipmates in formation for the closing of an era.

Since the cutter was launched on 16 November



Former crews of Rush stand with the current crew during decommissioning ceremonies on Sand Island, Honolulu, Hawaii on 3 February 2015. Photos by Michalene Wills

1968, it has served the U.S. in a variety of roles including defense operations during the Vietnam War, counter narcotics patrols off Central and South America, fisheries enforcement throughout the Pacific, and search and rescue missions around the world.

Rush is the fifth Coast Guard cutter to be named after the eighth Secretary of Treasury, Richard Rush. Secretary Rush was a member of John Quincy Adam's cabinet from 1825 to 1829. Rush was the ninth Hamilton Class High Endurance Cutter built in Avondale Shipyards in New Orleans, Louisiana. Hamilton class ships have a flight deck where they carry HH-60 J Hawk or HH-65 Dolphin helicopters while on patrols. She was originally home-ported in Alameda, California across from Jack London Square. By 1975 it was noted certain design flaws resulted in cracks in her superstructure which necessitated in modifications astern of the aft stick. After battling heavy north Pacific seas for over a decade the ship underwent Fleet Renovation and Modernization (FRAM) in 1990-91. Rush weapons and electronics have undergone several changes since commissioning,

but the reliable twin Fairbanks-Morse diesel and Pratt & Whitney gas turbines lovingly nurtured by the crew have powered the ship throughout her long career.

Rush is the sixth high endurance cutter to be decommissioned, with six remaining in service on the West Coast (Mellon 717 Seattle, Boutwell 719 San Diego, Sherman 720 Honolulu, Morgenthau 722 Honolulu, Munro 724 Kodiak and Midgett 726 Seattle). The Coast Guard Cutter Sherman replaced Rush in Honolulu and assumed Rush's responsibilities.

These 378' high-endurance cutters are being replaced by the capable fleet of National Security Cutters, which perform critical homeland security, law enforcement and national defense missions around the world. The Coast Guard plans on building 8 National Security Cutters which are 40 feet longer and 11 feet wider at the beam. The new National cutters are 1,300 long ton heavier but have a range 2,000 nautical miles less than the Hamilton cutters. The National cutters likewise are powered by twin diesel engines but coupled with only 1 gas turbine. The new boat's crew compliment is 54 less than the 378 required and she carries more possible aviation mixtures than a 378 could host.

The Coast Guard is working with the State Department to transfer Rush to the Bangladesh Navy as part of a Foreign Military Sale through the Foreign Assistance Act. She was sailed by the former crew of CGC Sherman back to San Diego the week after decommissioning for removal of nationally sensitive gear prior to turnover.



Launching Rush at Avondale Ship yards, New Orleans, Louisiana 16 November 1968

Federal Emergency Management Agency



OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE TO SERVE--ATTENTION ALL CG RETIREES! FEMA WANTS YOU!

MCPO-CG Skip Bowen, U S Coast Guard (ret)

As the co-chairs of the Commandant of the Coast Guard National Retiree Council, RADM John Acton (ret) and I have been working with FEMA on an exciting opportunity for Coast Guard retirees. Throughout my CG career I took pride in the fact that the organization that I was a part of was a humanitarian service. Rescue and emergency response are the missions that initially attracted me to the CG and they are largely why I stayed with the CG for an entire career. Now I am retired and I am still interested in service to my fellow citizens. I believe that most of my fellow retirees are also. With that in mind we have worked with FEMA to create a unique and exciting opportunity for retirees called the U.S. Coast Guard Retiree to FEMA Reservist Initiative. If you are semi-retired or fully retired and have a flexible schedule this part time opportunity may be for you.

FEMA Reserves serve as the bulk of the FEMA Response workforce during a disaster. FEMA Reserves are trained and qualified to perform a myriad of tasks during a disaster response. When deployed FEMA Reserves are reimbursed for travel and paid as intermittent FEMA employees. Currently FEMA is experiencing a critical shortage within its Reserve Program. Over 2,700 FEMA Reserve positions are vacant. Reservist positions are managed through FEMA Cadres and the skills needed to serve in most Cadres are generally equivalent to many Coast Guard ratings and officer specialties. CG retirees may already have experience in disaster response, rescue, first aid, ICS, hazardous material handling, survivor support, recovery ops and many other areas of expertise needed in the aftermath of a disaster.

Within the CG retiree population I believe that many former Coast Guardsmen will have the time, aptitude for volunteerism, and the skills

necessary to become FEMA Reservists. This is an opportunity for retirees to still be of service... but on a flexible, part time basis.

Reaching out to CG retirees will serve as Phase 1 and “proof of concept” for a larger initiative targeting all military veterans. During Phase 2, FEMA with the help of CG Retire Council co-chairs will reach out to all retirees of the other four Armed Services. Phase 3 will entail a targeted effort toward all military veterans in general and wounded warriors in particular. For the Phase 1 effort FEMA will work with the co-chairs of the CG Retiree Council to continue mapping out equivalent CG rating and officer specialties versus FEMA Cadre specialties.

FEMA has modified their website to include a section dedicated to the recruitment of CG retirees for this exciting program. The section includes CG retiree specific content, information on the application process, forms, and resumes.

To learn more about the Reservist-Coast Guard Retiree Initiative, visit www.FEMA.gov and search for “Reservist Program, Coast Guard Retirees.” Or use this link. <https://fema.gov/information-employees/us-coast-guard-retiree-fema-reservist-initiative>

You can also contact the FEMA Call Center at 855-377-FEMA (3362) email FEMA-IWMO-Program@Fema.dhs.gov

The main Incident Workforce Management Division can be contacted at email IWMDFrontOffice@Fema.dhs.gov

If you still have questions after you have looked through the information please feel free to contact me. My email address is charles.w.bowen10@gmail.com. MCPOCG Skip Bowen (ret)

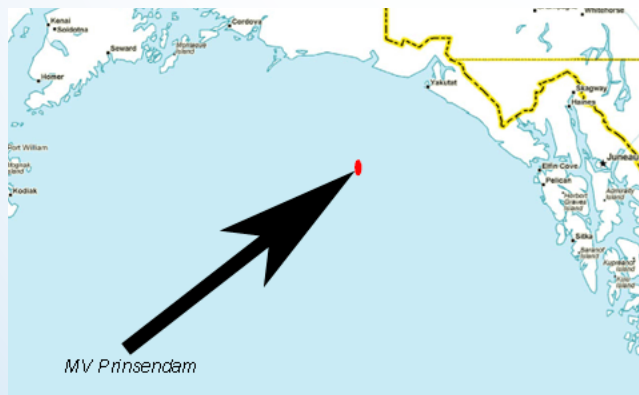


2015 PRINSENDAM RESCUE REUNION -

“Calling on all former Shipmates, Aviators, and personnel stationed ashore who assisted in the rescue of 519 passengers and crew aboard the burning Dutch Cruise Ship Prinsendam on 4 - 5 October 1980 in the Gulf of Alaska". If you or someone you know was attached to any of the below listed units during the rescue and/or subsequent sinking of the Prinsendam and are not listed on my roster **"I Want To Hear From You"**:

USCGC Boutwell - USCGC Mellon - USCGC Woodrush - USCGC Bitt - USCG Air Stations Kodiak and Sitka - USCG Support Center Kodiak - USCG Marine Safety Offices Valdez and Juneau - PACAREA - CCGD17 - CCGD13 - CCGD12 - USCG CAMPAC - USCG Communication Station Kodiak - USCG Group Ketchikan - Elmendorf Air Force Base - Royal Canadian Air Force/Canadian Air Force - Alaskan Ham Radio Operators - Yakutat Fire Department - U.S. Tanker Williamsburgh - C/V SOHIO Intrepid - C/V Portland - Dutch Cruise Ship Prinsendam (Crew & Survivors)

Our Fourth Annual Reunion will be celebrated with activities beginning on Friday, 2 October through Sunday, 4 October 2015 in Seattle, Washington to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of "One of the Greatest Sea Rescues in Coast Guard History". A special invitation is also extended to rescued passengers and crew aboard the Prinsendam. If you require the assistance of a Stokes Litter to get that sorry



caboose of yours out of Charlie Status one will be provided at no cost. Note: Subsequent and additional charges for transport via the new Coast Guard HITRON Helicopter may apply. Contact YNCS Stan Jaceks, USCG, (Ret.) by email at stanley2421@localnet.com Phone (509) 760-4866 (c) to become a member of our Association, make a reservation or get additional information.



4 October 1980 Dutch M.V. Prinsendam Ship Fire Gulf of Alaska

2015 STATE OF THE COAST GUARD ADDRESS



Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunfi delivers the 2015 State of the Coast Guard Address. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley.

Written by Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunfi.

Countries in our hemisphere are on the cusp of instability. The United States leads the world in oil and gas production. The cyber domain is

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transforming industries and governments at an astonishing rate. Arctic waters continue to open. There is no question – the United States Coast Guard is operating in a world unlike ever before.

Today I delivered my first State of the Coast Guard Address and outlined how America's Coast Guard will meet the challenges of today while preparing for complexities that remain ahead. I began by addressing a growing concern as the Department of Homeland Security faces a potential lapse in appropriation; unquestionably, the Coast Guard's workforce, acquisition programs and daily operations will be adversely impacted. However, should a lapse occur, our military, civilian, military retirees and annuitants will receive pay for work performed through February 27. While the challenges of a shutdown are significant, I am optimistic we will get through it.

Despite this budget uncertainty, we are facing unparalleled demands on the Service. We must: build the 21st century Coast Guard; defeat transnational organized crime; safeguard maritime commerce; operate in the Polar regions; maximize return on investment; and drive out sexual assault.

Combating transnational organized crime networks within our own hemisphere requires an offensive strategy; one that targets and disrupts criminals where they are most vulnerable – on our turf, at sea. The Coast Guard will do this through intelligence-based operations and persistent offshore presence. The backbone of this presence will be the Offshore Patrol Cutter – the physical manifestation of our at-sea authorities. The Offshore Patrol Cutter is a key element of our Western Hemisphere Strategy and is my number one acquisition investment priority.

On the energy front, there has been a ten-fold increase in oil and natural gas transits on the Mississippi River compared to four years ago. Additionally, a new tank barge entered the stream of commerce every day in America in 2013. These dramatic changes in U.S. energy production and shipbuilding have increased the demand on the entire maritime transportation system. As a maritime regulator, we must keep pace with this demand. The Coast Guard will improve our marine safety workforce and focus on innovative technologies to advance the Nation's waterways management system.

Our statutory role in ensuring the maritime transportation system is resilient also includes the cyber domain. In coordination with the Department of Homeland Security, I intend to sign a Coast Guard Cyber Strategy to defend our own network and protect maritime critical infrastructure.

The Coast Guard's mission of safeguarding the homeland connects to nearly every facet of the Nation's maritime interests, including the polar regions. In the Arctic, we are witnessing a significant spike in human activity. Managing increased activity, including the development of natural resources, is critical to the safe and responsible use of this region now and into the future. The Coast Guard will continue to partner with other Arctic nation coast guards through the Arctic Coast Guard Forum. Most critically, we will continue to advocate for a national capability in the polar regions through a whole-of-government approach as the United States assumes chairmanship of the Arctic Council later this spring.

This unparalleled demand for the Coast Guard requires a 21st century workforce that is specialized, adaptive and diverse. For nearly 225 years, Coast Guard men and women have been the model for efficient, affordable and accountable government. Our human resource system must attract, include and retain diverse people who can lead and operate in complex environments against sophisticated adversaries. A 21st century workforce inspires public trust, beginning with driving out the scourge of sexual assault from our ranks. All Coast Guard men and women must stand together and collectively say "Not in my Coast Guard." This crime occurring in our service causes me great unrest and I remain steadfast in reinforcing a culture of respect inhospitable to sexual assault and the behaviors that enable it – such as hazing, harassment and predatory conduct.

As many challenges lie ahead, Coast Guard men and women must have the platforms and resources they need to serve the Nation now and into the future. As Commandant, I am committed to ensuring our budget is driven by strategies aligned with national priorities. I will take decisive action to alleviate the strain of an austere budget environment and will make tough decisions in the face of our increasing demands. Through investing in our people, the recapitalization of our aging fleet and

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sustainment of our front-line operations, the Coast Guard will return more operational value on every dollar to meet the demands of today while preparing for tomorrow.

Right now, Coast Guard men and women are standing the watch around the world. They deserve America's investment as they continue to protect the Nation's interests, security and prosperity as we have for 225 years.

Semper Paratus.

35 YEARS AGO, USCGC BLACKTHORN (WLB-391)



USCGC Blackthorn (WLB-391) underway in 1972. U S Coast Guard Photo

USCGC Blackthorn (WLB-391) was a 180-foot seagoing buoy tender (WLB) which sank in 1980 in a collision near the Tampa Bay Sunshine Skyway Bridge, resulting in 23 crew member fatalities. An Iris-class vessel, she was built by Marine Ironworks and Shipbuilding Corporation in Duluth, Minnesota. Blackthorn's preliminary design was completed by the United States Lighthouse Service and the final design was produced by Marine Iron and Shipbuilding Corporation in Duluth. On 21 May 1943 the keel was laid, she was launched on 20 July 1943 and commissioned on 27 March 1944. The original cost for the hull and machinery was \$876,403.

Blackthorn was one of 39 original 180-foot seagoing buoy tenders built between 1942-1944. All but one of the original tenders, USCGC Ironwood (WLB-297), were built in Duluth.

Blackthorn was initially assigned to the Great Lakes for ice-breaking duties, but after only a few months, she was reassigned to San Pedro, California. She served in San Pedro for several years before being brought into the gulf coast region to serve in Mobile, Alabama then

transferred to Galveston, Texas for the final years of her service until the accident.

In 1979-1980, Blackthorn underwent a major overhaul in Tampa, Florida. However, on 28 January 1980, while leaving Tampa Bay after the completion of the overhaul, she collided with the tanker SS Capricorn. Shortly after the collision, Blackthorn capsized, killing 23 of her crew. The cutter was raised for the investigation, but ultimately was scuttled in the Gulf of Mexico after the investigation was complete. She currently serves as an artificial reef for recreational diving and fishing.



The accident

Having just completed her overhaul at the Gulf Tampa Drydock Company, which included overhaul of the main propulsion generators, Blackthorn was outward bound from Tampa Bay on the night of 28 January 1980. Meanwhile the tanker Capricorn, owned by Kingston Shipping Company and operated by Apex Marine Corporation of New York, was standing (traveling with right-of-way) into the bay. Blackthorn's captain, Lieutenant Commander George Sepel had departed the bridge to investigate a problem with the newly installed propulsion shaft. Ensign John Ryan had the conn.

Earlier the cutter had been overtaken by the Kazakhstan, a Russian passenger ship. When requested by Kazakhstan to pass, the Blackthorn navigated starboard permitting Kazakhstan to pass. The Blackthorn then navigated to almost mid-channel and resumed course. (Some contend that the brightly lit passenger vessel obscured the ability of the crews of Blackthorn and Capricorn to see each other.)

Capricorn began to turn left, but this course would not allow Capricorn and Blackthorn to pass port-to-port, as the rules of navigation generally required. Unable to make radio contact with Blackthorn, Capricorn's pilot blew two short whistle blasts to have the ships pass starboard-to-starboard. With the Blackthorn's officer of the deck (Ensign Ryan) confused in regard to the standard operating procedure and rules of navigation, Blackthorn's captain issued orders for evasive action. Despite the Blackthorn's evasive action, a collision occurred.

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USCGC Blackthorn being raised after accident in 1980. The cutter was raised for the investigation, but ultimately was scuttled in the Gulf of Mexico after the investigation was complete. She currently serves as an artificial reef for recreational diving and fishing. USCG Photo



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Damage to the Blackthorn from the initial impact was not extensive. However, Capricorn's anchor was ready to be let go. The anchor became embedded in the Blackthorn's hull and ripped open the port side above the water line. Then as the two ships backed away from each other, the chain became taut. The force of the much larger ship pulling on it, caused Blackthorn to tip on her side until she suddenly capsized. Six off-duty personnel who had mustered when they heard the collision alarm, were trapped inside the ship. Several crew members who had just reported aboard tried to escape and in the process trapped themselves in the engine room. Though 27 crewmen survived the collision, 23 perished.

The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral John B. Hayes, approved the report of the marine board of investigation on the collision between Blackthorn and Capricorn. The board determined that the cause of the collision was the failure of both vessels to keep well to the side of the channel which lay on each ship's starboard (right) sides. Concurring with the marine board's determination of the cause, the Commandant emphasized in his "Action" that the failure of the persons in charge of both vessels to ascertain the intentions of the other through the exchange of appropriate whistle signals was the primary contributing cause. Additionally, Admiral Hayes pointed out that attempts to establish a passing agreement by using only radiotelephone communications failed to be an adequate substitute for exchanging proper whistle signals.

The marine board found evidence of violation of various navigation laws on the parts of Capricorn's master and pilot. There were similar findings on the part of Blackthorn's commanding officer and officer of the deck. These matters were referred to the commanders of the Seventh and Eighth Coast Guard Districts for further investigation and appropriate action.

The Commandant also acted on various safety recommendations made by the marine board concerning training and equipment aboard Coast Guard vessels, and navigation considerations in Tampa Bay.

Seaman Apprentice William "Billy" Flores was originally from Carlsbad,

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New Mexico and a graduate of Arlington Heights High School in Fort Worth, Texas. In 2000 he was posthumously awarded the Coast Guard Medal, the service's highest award for heroism in peacetime. SA Flores, who had been out of boot camp just one year, opened the life jacket locker as Blackthorn capsized, securing its hatch open with his belt, and made sure that his shipmates were able to access and use the life jackets. His actions saved a number of lives during the accident. His heroic role was initially overlooked by the two official reports by the Coast Guard and the NTSB, but was later given the recognition he deserved. His family was presented with the Medal on 28 January 2000, the 20th anniversary of the tragedy. Seaman Apprentice Flores died aboard



SA William Flores, USCG
Photo



USCGC William Flores (WPC 1103). USCG Photo



Blackthorn on that tragic day. On 3 November 2012, the third new Sentinel-class fast response cutter was commissioned and named the William Flores.



Austere budgets have been especially hard on Gunner's mates

THE COAST GUARD'S MOST POTENT WEAPON DURING PROHIBITION? CODEBREAKER ELIZEBETH FRIEDMAN

A pioneer of her time, Friedman was a crucial part of the fight to enforce the ban on booze

By Carrie Hagen, smithsonian.com

On April 11, 1931, during the height of Prohibition, federal agents raided the New Orleans headquarters of a Vancouver-based liquor ring. They arrested nine people and issued warrants for 100 more, including four members of Al Capone's Chicago gang and at least a few Mississippi deputy sheriffs. For two years, investigators had watched, listened to, read, and deciphered the activities of four distilleries, united in New Orleans as one of the most powerful rum rings.

A grand jury indicted 104, and in 1933, Colonel Amos W. Woodcock, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, led the prosecution against 23 members of what he called "the most powerful international smuggling syndicate in existence, controlling practically a monopoly of smuggling in the Gulf of Mexico and on the West Coast." His star witness was a five-foot-tall Coast Guard codebreaker named Elizebeth Friedman.

The government knew how the ring operated: smugglers hid liquor on rum runners carrying legal cargo, shipped them down the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, and at rendezvous points outside of United States waters (12 miles, or a one-hour's sail away from the shore), unloaded cases onto high-speed boats. The motorboats carried the liquor to Mississippi deltas or Louisiana bayous, where smugglers then packed the booze as lumber shipments and drove them to the Midwest.

To convict the accused, Woodcock had to link them to hundreds—if not thousands—of encrypted messages that passed between at least 25 separate ships, their shore stations, and the headquarters in New Orleans. Defense attorneys demanded to know how the government could prove the content of enciphered messages. How, for example, could a cryptanalyst know that "MJFAK ZYWKB QATYT JSL QATS QXYGX OGTB" translated to "anchored in harbor where and when are you sending fuel?"*

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Elizebeth Friedman, the prosecution's star witness, asked the judge to find a chalkboard.

Using a piece of chalk, she stood before the jury and explained the basics of cryptanalysis. Friedman talked about simple cipher charts, mono-alphabetic ciphers and polysyllabic ciphers; she reviewed how cryptanalysts encoded messages by writing keywords in lines of code, enclosing them with letter patterns that could be deciphered with the help of various code books and charts rooted in the schemes and charts of centuries past.

The defense did not want her to stay on the stand for long.

"Mrs. Friedman made an unusual impression," Colonel Woodcock later wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury, whose department oversaw the Coast Guard. "Her description of the art of deciphering and decoding established in the minds of all her entire competency to testify." Woodcock commented on the role of military intelligence in cracking the case, stating that the Coast Guard, with its control of radio intelligence and cryptanalysis, "is the only agency of the Government connected with law enforcement which has such an extremely valuable section." When "that valuable section" of the Coast Guard began, it had two employees—Friedman and an assistant.



Elizebeth Friedman

When Friedman first joined the Guard, the agency employed neither uniformed nor civilian women. Savvy, quick-witted and stoic, she weighed some of the 20th century's most difficult ciphers: her findings nailed Chinese drug smugglers in Canada, identified a Manhattan antique doll

expert as a home-grown Japanese spy, and helped resolve a diplomatic feud with Canada.

Friedman's work as a cryptanalyst began in 1916, when she went to work for Riverbank, a privately run Illinois laboratory-turned-think tank during World War I. Three years earlier, she had graduated from Hillsdale College with a degree in English, and she didn't know what to do with herself. Elizebeth (née) Smith was the youngest of nine children, and her father, a wealthy Indiana dairy farmer, hadn't wanted her

to pursue higher education. She went anyway, borrowing the tuition from him at a six percent interest rate. After graduation, she spent time in Chicago, where friends encouraged her to visit the Newberry Library, which held one of Shakespeare's first folios. A librarian there told her that a wealthy man named George Fabyan was looking for a young, educated contributor to a Shakespearean research project.

Before long, Elizebeth Smith was living at Riverbank Laboratory, an estate owned by Fabyan in Geneva, Illinois. It's where she also met her future husband, William Friedman, who worked for Riverbank as a geneticist. Both collaborated on a project that attempted to prove that Sir Francis Bacon, a cryptologist himself, had authored Shakespeare's plays ("Decoding the Renaissance," a current exhibit at the Folger Shakespeare Library, features the Friedman's scholarship on the topic.)

Within two years, Fabyan, a rich businessman with an outsized sense of his own self-worth, convinced the government to allow his team of cryptanalysts to specialize in decoding encryptions for the War Department. In unpublished memoir notes available through the George C. Marshall Foundation, Elizebeth Friedman speaks of her initial shock at the assignment: "So little was known in this country of codes and ciphers when the United States entered World War I, that we ourselves had to be the learners, the workers and the teachers all at one and the same time."

In 1921, the War Department asked the young couple to move to Washington. Elizebeth loved the town—deprived of cultural events during her adolescence, she remembered going to the theater multiple times a week when she arrived. Both had jobs as contractors specializing in code breaking: Elizebeth earned half of what her husband made. As William Friedman started in the Army's Signal Corps and on a path towards becoming a lieutenant colonel and the chief cryptologist of the Department of Defense, "Mrs. Friedman" moved among various agencies of the Treasury Department.

The armed service, which turns 100 today, formed on January 28, 1915, when President Woodrow Wilson united the Revenue Cutter and the Lifesaving Services as "the Coast Guard." Operating under the Treasury and functioning as part of the Navy during wartime, the Coast

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Guard combined the similar maritime services offered by its predecessors.

Prior to Prohibition, the Coast Guard protected American interests largely by supervising customs and maritime regulations in coastal waters. But as an arm of the Treasury, the Coast Guard became responsible for enforcing Prohibition enforcement on the seas, fighting piracy and smuggling in territorial waters once enforcement of the Volstead Act began in January, 1920.



Aboard the Coast Guard Cutter USS Seneca, Prohibition agents examine barrels of alcohol confiscated from a "rum runner" boat. (© CORBIS)

Five years into the Prohibition era, Captain Charles Root, an intelligence officer with the Guard spoke with Elizebeth about participating in a counterintelligence unit. Their initial choice was her husband, but William wanted to stay at the Signal Corps, where he was working to advance the military's ability to encode and decode messages. The job went to Elizebeth. She understood the unpopular public perception of the work she was about to do.

"The government law enforcement agencies had no more taste for [enforcing Prohibition] than the public who loved their drink," she wrote. "But the government officials, who with minor exceptions were honest at least, had no choice but to pursue the rigid torturous paths of attempting to defeat the operations of the criminal gangs who were so intent on mulcting the public."

Hundreds of messages in Coast Guard intelligence waited to be deciphered by Friedman. She and one aide worked through them in two months. Friedman was surprised that rum runners operated on simple encryptions, using words like "Havana" as obvious key indicators. "When choosing a key word," she wrote, "never choose one which is associated with the project with which one is engaged."

But between the second half of 1928 and

1930, the smugglers advanced from using two cryptosystems to 50 different codes. Patiently and persistently, Friedman and her clerk cracked 12,000 encryptions. At least 23 had to do with the *I'm Alone*, whose fate led to a short chapter in American history involving diplomatic tensions with Canada.

On March 20, 1929, at 6:30 a.m., the USCG Wolcott spotted the *I'm Alone* off the coast of Louisiana. This particular two-masted rum runner had taunted the Coast Guard along the New England and New York coasts for six years, ever since it was built in Nova Scotia. Records show that between December of 1925 and the spring of 1929, the Coast Guard had tracked the ship's movements almost daily. That day, the Wolcott was armed with the knowledge that the ship had recently picked up liquor in Belize with the intention to drop at rendezvous points in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Wolcott trailed the *I'm Alone* for a day while waiting for backup. The USCG Dexter arrived the morning of March 22. Two-hundred-and-twenty miles off the Gulf Coast,



Schooner 'I'm Alone' 1929

the two cutters cornered and fired upon the *I'm Alone*, tearing apart the ship's hull, and more dramatically, the Canadian flag hoisted on the mast. As the boat sunk, the Dexter rescued the 8-man crew from the water; it failed, though, to resuscitate one man, a French boatswain.

The incident angered the international community, particularly Canada, the United Kingdom and France. (At this time, Canada, while internally self-governing, was part of the British Empire). Less than a year before, the British had warned Americans about following rumrunners into their territorial waters off the Bahamas. Canadian ambassador Vincent Massey said the *I'm Alone* incident questioned the freedom of the seas.

The Canadian government filed a claim against the United States for \$386,803.18, which included damages for the ship, its cargo (including the liquor), and personnel losses. The United States said that because the Wolcott's chase started within U.S. waters, it was not

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at fault. Canada argued that two cutters could not have legally pursued the *I'm Alone* so far for so long. The two countries took the case to international arbitration.

Back in her office, Elizebeth Friedman was at work. She and her staff of one concentrated on 23 messages sent from Belize to "harforan," an address in New York. Operating on an earlier theory, she proved that while Canadians may have built and registered the *I'm Alone*, its owners were Americans. And judging from the content of the telegrams, they had clear intent to smuggle liquor into Louisiana. Once it was established that Americans had pursued their own ship, arbitrators awarded Canada a public apology from the U.S. for firing on the Canadian flag, and a fine of \$50,665.50, nearly \$336,000 less than its claim.

Citing the *I'm Alone* case as an example, in 1930, Elizebeth Friedman and her boss, lieutenant commander F. J. Gorman, head of Coast Guard intelligence, proposed a permanent place for a cryptanalytic unit in the Coast Guard, as opposed to a different agency in the Treasury, Customs, or Justice Departments. This execution would allow the Coast Guard to move beyond recording and deciphering codes to intervening in smuggling operations as they unfolded. Friedman became the head of a unit of six, and one year later, it was a Coast Guard intelligence office stationed in Mobile that intercepted hundreds of the radio messages that incriminated Al Capone's liquor smuggling group.

The New Orleans trial put the spotlight on Elizebeth Friedman – but she didn't want it. She didn't like how newspaper accounts differed in their delivery of facts – one referred to her as a "pretty middle aged woman" and another as "a pretty young woman." She didn't like "frivolous adjectives," and she didn't like reading quotes of hers that she remembered saying differently. But perhaps it wasn't the frivolity of prose that bothered her as much as the reason for its attention: she was a smart woman, and the backhandedness of this supposed compliment threatened to render it as an anomaly.

The men—the officers, the Commandants and judges and district attorneys—respected her as a colleague. "Many times I've been asked as to how my authority, that is the direction and superior status of a woman as instructor, teacher, mentor and slave driver to men, even to

commissioned and non-commissioned officers, by these men was accepted. I must declare with all truth that with one exception, all of the young men younger or older who have worked for me and under me and with me have been true colleagues."

Elizebeth Friedman retired in 1946, after helping her husband William and a team of military cryptanalysts crack "PURPLE," the codename for the Japanese cryptograph used in World War II. William several years later, and in 1957, they published the Shakespearean scholarship that had brought them together at Riverbank Laboratory before they were married. (They concluded that contrary to their former boss' insistence, the cipher defends William Shakespeare's authorship.) William Friedman died in 1969, and Elizebeth in 1980. In 1974, the Coast Guard was the first armed service to allow women to enter the officer candidate program.

**Credit goes to Dr. David Joyner for piecing together this piece of Elizebeth Friedman's analysis in his work "Elizebeth Smith Friedman, up to 1934" (see page 15).*

Thanks to Jeffrey S. Kozak, Archivist & Assistant Librarian at the George C. Marshall Foundation, and to military historian Stephen Conrad, for research assistance.

THINKING ABOUT URGENT CARE?**THE NURSE
ADVICE LINE
CAN HELP**

<http://www.tricare.mil/LiveWell/HL/Articles/>

When an urgent health problem arises, it is hard to know whether you should try to tough it out or seek medical care. Luckily, TRICARE beneficiaries can call the Nurse Advice Line (NAL) to get advice on their health care questions. Not all health problems require a visit with a medical specialist but a Registered Nurse at the NAL can help you make the decision on whether you should seek care at an urgent care center.

While going to an urgent care clinic for a high fever or a sprained ankle may seem like the easiest option, if you call the NAL first you can save time and money. The NAL is made up of a team of registered nurses (RNs), who can answer your healthcare questions. There is always a live person on the line to answer your concerns.

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When you call, the nurse will ask several medical questions based on your symptoms. These questions were developed by physicians to help the RNs get the most accurate assessment of your medical problem. If you are not calling for yourself, please make sure that the family member in question is present so you can assess their condition as the nurse asks questions. If the person is over age 13, the nurse may ask to speak to them directly. Feel free to stay on another line or use a speakerphone option if that makes you more comfortable.

If self-care is recommended, the nurse may provide you with advice on home treatments and remedies. However, if you or your family member needs an urgent care appointment, the NAL will help you with next steps. If you are on TRICARE Prime and enrolled to an MTF or clinic, the NAL will try to schedule a same or next-day appointment for you. If you are a TRICARE Prime beneficiary enrolled to an MTF and the NAL is unable to get you an appointment in your MTF when you need it, the NAL will follow-up with your MTF to ensure your urgent care referral is submitted. If you are a Prime beneficiary and receive care through the civilian network, and the NAL determines you need urgent care, contact your PCM for care or to obtain a referral to an urgent care facility. Claims for urgent care services without a referral may process as Point of Service, which has higher out-of-pocket costs. Please keep in mind that if you get urgent care from another provider without a referral from your PCM, or if the NAL did not recommend you seek urgent care, you will be using the point-of-service option. The NAL will advise beneficiaries on all other TRICARE plans to seek care within the network.

The NAL is a new and easy option for beneficiaries to get information on their medical problems quickly and at any time. To access the NAL dial 1-800-TRICARE (874-2273) and select option 1. Get more information about the Nurse Advice Line on the TRICARE website.



WHY SHOULD I QUIT SMOKING OR CHEWING?

<http://www.uacanquit2.org/>



Your Mission, Should You Choose To Accept It...

This first step is all about deciding whether to accept the mission to stop smoking or chewing tobacco. If you're viewing this site, you've probably already thought about some reasons why you want to quit tobacco. Maybe you want to...

- Set a good example for your kids or your younger brother or sister.
- Stop blowing your hard-earned money on cigarettes or snuff.
- Stop smelling and tasting like an ashtray.
- Ditch the yellow teeth and brown fingers look that isn't so popular on the dating scene.
- Stop wheezing, coughing, losing your breath, and feeling cranky when you don't get your nicotine fix.
- Quit worrying about whether you will develop lung cancer, heart disease, or other harmful effects of smoking or chewing.
- Make yourself, your family, and your friends proud that you beat your nicotine addiction.

Make a list of all of your reasons for wanting to quit. When thinking about your reasons, remember: The benefits you list have to be greater, more important, than the downsides of quitting smoking or chewing. And your pros and cons might change as you go through the quitting process.

Practice Makes Progress

One other thing you should think about: setbacks.

The fact is, few people quit for life after just one try. So while you're making your list of reasons

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Smoking Continued from page 12

to stop smoking or chewing tobacco, also list situations that might tempt you to start again. What if one of your friends offers you a cigarette or snuff? What if you go to a party where everyone is smoking and the craving for tobacco kicks in? Write down some ways that you can deal with these types of situations, including ways to say no to cigarettes or snuff. On this site, we'll give you some tips and ideas.

The more effort you put into quitting smoking or chewing, and the more methods you use to help yourself, the better your chances for success. We'll be honest with you and give you the information you need!

Giving up tobacco is a process, and a tough one. But with a clear plan and some practice, you can quit and stay quit.

4 Steps to Quitting

No one ever said quitting was easy, but when you decide the time is right to stop using tobacco, our four steps will help prepare you for the challenges that lie ahead. Take it slow and review each step to create an effective plan of action. When you're done, you will be ready to face all your obstacles head on. Remember: planning ahead can be the key to your success in quitting tobacco for good!

- Step 1: Thinking About Quitting
- Step 2: Preparing to Quit
- Step 3: Quitting
- Step 4: Staying Quit

**Stay Quit**

Congratulations! You've done it - you've completed one of the most difficult things you will ever do in your life. Now it's time to make sure all of the hard work and difficulty you went through does not go down the drain.

You're no longer addicted to nicotine, but that does not mean you'll never feel the urge to smoke again.

A stressful situation causes you to light up a cigarette; you're going through a tough time at work so you dip again; you're at a bar with friends and a cute girl asks if you want go outside and smoke, so you do. Should you just give up? Should you quit quitting? No! A setback doesn't mean you've failed. It just means you're human. You can still quit smoking or chewing tobacco...and stay quit for life.

Most people who start smoking or chewing tobacco again do so under stress or peer pressure. So it never hurts to think through in advance how to handle difficult situations that test your ability to stay quit. We have resources to prepare you for situations that could happen so you're ready to handle them when they pop up.

People who are successful at quitting tobacco are the ones who learn from each attempt and keep quitting until they stay quit. If you do use tobacco after you've decided to quit, forgive yourself and quit again. For most people, quitting takes more than one try. The more you try, the greater your chances of quitting smoking or chewing tobacco for good.

PANEL WARNS TRICARE IN 'DEATH SPIRAL'

By Travis J. Tritten, Stars and Stripes, tritten.travis@stripes.com

The military's TRICARE health insurance is a broken system that is now in a "death spiral" and must be replaced, a congressional review commission told the House on 11 February 2015.

The insurance has been veering toward less choice and access since it was created and now falls far behind other networks in its number of providers and ability to incorporate new types of medical care, members of the Military Retirement and Compensation Modernization Commission testified before an Armed Services subcommittee.

The testimony is the beginning of hearings on Capitol Hill so lawmakers can consider legislation to overhaul the health coverage, troop retirement system and other compensation that the Pentagon says is growing too expensive to sustain. The Senate has also planned a series of subcommittee hearings to weigh a number of the commission recommendations, including a complete restructuring of 20-year military retirement system.

Commission member Stephen Buyer warned House lawmakers that the Pentagon and contractors will likely try to persuade them the TRICARE system is not in trouble and they should not believe the claims.

"TRICARE is a broken system ... do not get sucked into the status quo," Buyer said.

He said the essential problem with the military's system is that it has driven down costs by reducing its reimbursements to health care providers below that paid to Medicare, the government subsidized

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insurance system that functions as a measuring stick for the industry.

The low payments have driven doctors and providers out of the system, said Buyer, himself a former Congressman from Indiana. For example, the Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance network has 114 OB-Gyn providers in Fayetteville, N.C., where Fort Bragg is located, but TRICARE only has 36.

“Go talk to them,” Buyer said. “It is a reimbursement issue that these providers are not signing onto TRICARE.”

Furthermore, the system is very slow to cover new and emerging procedures for military patients because updates are done rarely on a cyclical schedule, said commission member Peter Chiarelli, a retired general.

“You are receiving medical care that is eight years in arrears,” Chiarelli said.

Such problems have continued to worsen since the inception of the TRICARE program and as the military continually seeks to save money, said commission member Edmund Giambastiani, a retired admiral. “I think our commission believes TRICARE is in a death spiral,” he said.

The commission is proposing replacing the health insurance with a wider selection of private plans for troops and their families, similar to what is offered to civilian employees. It would result in about a \$5 increase per year for a policy that costs \$535, and would save the military about \$6-7 billion per year.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said the increased coverage costs would roughly equal the cost of a Starbucks latte each year and create more choice of doctors and improve access to care. The realm of military personnel costs, especially health insurance, is one of the best areas to cut, Speier said. “We’ve just got to inject a little guts into each of us to do the right thing,” she said.



Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft meets with The Coast Guard Lady, Lois Bouton, a Coast Guard SPAR, Auxiliarist and honorary Chief. This summer marked her 41st consecutive year of writing to U.S. Coast Guard men and women – more than 40,000 letters altogether. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley.

WHERE TO GO FOR A COPY OF THE COAST GUARD NAVIGATION RULES AND REGULATIONS HANDBOOK?



A free electronic copy of the Coast Guard Navigation Rules and Regulations Handbook (ISBN: 9780160925665) is available at <http://live.cgaux.org/?p=4429>. The government printed version is listed at the U.S. Government Bookstore, call Tel: 202-512-1800 or email ContactCenter@gpo.gov for further information. Commercial facsimiles are also available but the Coast Guard does not attest to their veracity.

HOW TO FIND LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS (LNM)?

The LNM is the primary means for disseminating information concerning aids to navigation, hazards to navigation, and other items of marine information of interest to mariners on the waters of the United States, its territories, and possessions. These Notices are essential to all navigators for the purpose of keeping their charts, Light Lists, U.S. Coast Pilots, and other nautical publications up-to-date. The Notices are published weekly.

For Local Notices for Mariners visit the U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Center website: <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=lnmMain>



Information for Combat Veterans

Health care services through TRICARE® and the Department of Veterans Affairs

If you served in a combat zone or received hazardous-duty pay and believe you sustained a disease or disability connected to your service,* many programs and resources are available to help you. This fact sheet describes health care services and benefits offered by your military hospital or clinic, TRICARE network providers, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

* Eligibility for future health care services is dependent upon line-of-duty and disability determination processes.

TRICARE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS

Service members who separate due to a service-related disease or disability may be eligible for VA benefits and certain TRICARE benefits. If retiring, you are eligible for TRICARE as a military retiree and may also be eligible for certain VA benefits.

National Guard and Reserve members may qualify for veteran status and eligibility for VA benefits. The VA will determine your eligibility status as a veteran by reviewing your length of active duty service and type of discharge from active duty.

Note: If you receive disability benefits from the Social Security Administration, you are entitled to Medicare in the 25th month of receiving disability payments. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will notify you of your Medicare entitlement date. To keep TRICARE eligibility, most TRICARE- and Medicare-eligible beneficiaries must have Medicare Part A and Part B. For more information on TRICARE and Medicare, visit www.tricare.mil/medicare.

Separating from Active Duty

Transitional Health Care Coverage

The Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) provides 180 days of transitional health care benefits to help certain members of the uniformed services and their

families transition to civilian life. For more information, visit www.tricare.mil/tamp. If you are eligible for TAMP and have a newly diagnosed medical condition that is related to your active duty service, you may qualify for the Transitional Care for Service-Related Conditions (TCSRC) program, which provides 180 days of care for your condition with no out-of-pocket costs. If you believe you have a service-related condition that may qualify you for TCSRC, visit www.tricare.mil/tcsrc for instructions on how to apply.

When your TAMP coverage ends, you may qualify to purchase additional transitional coverage under the Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP). CHCBP is comparable to TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra, but requires premium payments. Enrollment is required within 60 days of the end of TAMP coverage. For more details, visit www.tricare.mil/chcbp.

TRICARE Reserve Select®

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) is a premium-based health plan available for purchase by qualified members of the Selected Reserve **unless** eligible for, or enrolled in, the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. TRS offers comprehensive coverage similar to TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra. For details, visit www.tricare.mil/trs.

Veterans Affairs Health Care Benefits

You may qualify for VA health care benefits if you served on active duty service, were discharged or released under honorable conditions, and meet length-of-service requirements.

To apply for VA health care benefits, complete the *Application for Health Benefits* (VA Form 10-10 EZ), available at any VA health care facility or regional benefits office, or online at www.va.gov. For additional information, call 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387).

*This fact sheet is **not** all-inclusive. For additional information, please visit www.tricare.mil.*

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Overseas, the VA will pay for medically necessary treatment of a service-related condition under the Foreign Medical Program. For details and registration information, visit www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/fmp/fmp.asp.

Some family members may be eligible for the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs. For additional information, visit www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva/champva.asp.

Retiring from Active Duty

Transitional Health Care Coverage

You may be eligible for TAMP after retirement if your retirement date was postponed because you were retained on active duty in support of a contingency operation (*stop-loss*). If you are eligible for TAMP and have a newly diagnosed medical condition that is related to your active duty service, you may qualify for the TCSRC program, which provides 180 days of care for your condition with no out-of-pocket costs. If you believe you have a service-related condition that may qualify you for TCSRC, visit www.tricare.mil/tcsrc for instructions on how to apply.

TRICARE Retired Reserve®

TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) is a premium-based health plan available for purchase by qualified members of the Retired Reserve until reaching age 60 **unless** eligible for, or enrolled in, the FEHB Program. TRR offers comprehensive coverage similar to TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra. For details, visit www.tricare.mil/trr.

Veterans Affairs Health Care Benefits

When you retire, you may be eligible for certain VA health care benefits in addition to your TRICARE retiree health care benefits. If you are eligible, TRICARE provides coverage even if you received treatment through the VA for the same medical condition in a previous episode of care. For details about VA benefits, contact the nearest VA regional benefits office. For locations, visit www.vba.va.gov. You can also contact the nearest Vet Center or visit www.vetcenter.va.gov.

For more information on your TRICARE benefits after you retire from active duty, visit www.tricare.mil/retire.



The United States Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley (WMEC-39) is a former U.S. Navy vessel that was recommissioned for Coast Guard duty on July 10, 1999. USCG Photo

TRICARE FOR LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

VA providers cannot bill Medicare and Medicare cannot pay for services received from the VA. If you are eligible for both TRICARE For Life (TFL) and VA benefits and elect to use your TFL benefit for non-service-related care, you will incur out-of-pocket expenses when seeing a VA provider. By law, TRICARE can only pay up to 20 percent of the TRICARE-allowable amount. If you receive care at a VA facility, you may be responsible for the remaining liability. When using your TFL benefit, your least expensive option is to see a Medicare participating or Medicare-nonparticipating provider. If you want to seek care from a VA provider, check with Wisconsin Physicians Service, which administers the benefit under TFL, to confirm coverage details and determine what will be covered by TRICARE. For contact information, see the *For Information and Assistance* section of this fact sheet.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HEROES OF ALASKA'S COAST GUARD

by PA1 Shawn Eggert, Wednesday, February 25, 2015



Rear Adm. Erroll Brown began his Coast Guard career in Alaska aboard the icebreaker CGC Burton Island in the early 1970's. Brown went on to become the Coast Guard's first African-American flag officer. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

Every February, the Coast Guard, along with the rest of the nation, commemorates the contributions and hardships faced by African-Americans. From Capt. Richard Etheridge and the brave men who served at the Pea Island Lifesaving Station to Master Chief Vince Patton, the first African-American Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard is proud to celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of African-American Coast Guard men and women throughout its storied history.

The history of African-Americans within the Coast Guard extends more than 130 years and spans every ocean across the globe, and that includes the Arctic and Pacific waters off the coast of Alaska. Black Coast Guard men and women have sailed the freezing seas and soared through the howling, northern skies since

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Alaska's earliest days as a U.S. territory, many of them going on to leave an indelible mark on the service and strengthening the proud legacy of African-American heroes to the nation.

One of the most accomplished African-American Coast Guard members to serve within Alaska is Rear Adm. Erroll Brown. Brown began his career in the Coast Guard as a damage control assistant and assistant engineering officer aboard the icebreaker CGC Burton Island conducting oceanographic and scientific studies of Cook Inlet and other Alaskan waters during the early 1970's. In addition to earning an Arctic Service Medal for his time in the Bering Sea, Brown went on to become the Coast Guard's first African-American flag officer. Brown retired from the Coast Guard in 2005 after 33 years of distinguished service and now serves as the program evaluator for the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.



Chief Petty Officer Alex Haley became the Coast Guard's first Chief Journalist after sharing the stories of his shipmates with the world. The CGC Alex Haley, homeported in Kodiak, Alaska, honors his contributions to the Coast Guard. U.S. coast Guard photo.

Though he never served aboard a ship in Alaska, the name Alex Haley should be

familiar to anyone who has looked out over the waters of Kodiak. Chief Petty Officer Alex Haley, perhaps best known for authoring the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, enlisted with the Coast Guard in 1939 and rose from mess attendant 3rd Class to become the Coast Guard's first and only chief journalist ten years later. Haley collected and published the stories of his shipmates, earning the Coast Guard the attention of the public during World War II, and the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley, homeported in Kodiak, bears his name in honor of his tremendous contributions to the Coast Guard and the American people.

Finally, no list of heroic Alaskan mariners would be complete without mention of Capt. "Hell Roaring Mike" Healy. Following the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1876, Healy earned his place in the future state's history books for his accomplishments with the U.S. Revenue Cutter

Service, a forbearer of the U.S. Coast Guard. The son of an Irish immigrant and a mixed-race African-American slave, Healy is now recognized as the first American of African descent to command a ship of the U.S. government. The icebreaker CGC Healy (WAGB 20), a frequent visitor to Alaskan waters, bears his name and continues his legacy of search and rescue, law enforcement, exploration and the pursuit of knowledge.

African-American Coast Guard members make incredible contributions to the service every day and these are only a few examples of their historic accomplishments; proof positive that the performance of the Coast Guard's diverse missions and responsibilities is only improved by the diversity of those who serve. To learn more about the history of African-Americans in the Coast Guard, please visit the Coast Guard historian's website at <http://www.uscg.mil/history/AfricanAmericanIndex.asp>.



Capt. "Hell Roaring Mike" Healy was the son of an Irish immigrant and a mixed-race African-American slave. He is today regarded as the first American of African descent to command a ship of the U.S. government. U.S. Coast Guard photo.



Unidentified USCG Seaman posted by USCGAlaska

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



The 125-foot USCGC McLane seen here in Seattle in her white pre-WWII colors. She and the Ketchikan halibut schooner YP-251 Foremost, Coast Guard-manned for service during the war years, engaged in combat with an enemy sub in the waters off the west coast of Prince of Wales Island on 9 July, 1942. During this attack, the commanding officer of the McLane saw a torpedo pass underneath his cutter's bow. Both vessels continued to drop depth charges in the area. The crewmen reported seeing large air bubbles as well as oil come to the surface. The Coast Guard District Officer gave them credit for sinking a submarine in the area soon after this attack. USCG Photo