



Coast Guard Retiree Council - Northwest



RETIREE NEWSLETTER

"They Also Serve"

FROM THE CHAIR

The Coast Guard is at war every day. The story continues. The chronicle is lost. The Foundation for Coast Guard History is dedicated to telling your story. It has been in existence for less than two years and has already inspired grants of \$35,000 for preserving the heritage of the U. S. Coast Guard. It was started by a group of retired Coast Guard people in the Northwest who became aware of the need to do something about saving our history. Tight budgets have prevented official funding for much of the work necessary to do this. The Foundation for Coast Guard History is a private non-profit organization, encouraged by the Commandant to assist the Coast Guard Historian preserve artifacts and tell the story of our rich heritage. The Foundation has granted funds for providing oral histories of past Commandants, given awards for books published on Coast Guard topics and recognized individuals who have provided inspiration to the program for preserving our history. The Foundation for Coast Guard History is now embarking on a program to capture the stories of many of the Coasties who have added so much to the unique flavor of our service. The brochure included with this newsletter tells more about the organization and how to help tell your story.

We plan to develop a page on our retiree web site (<http://www.cgretirenw.com>), which will tell the stories of some of our shipmates as well as those who have gone before us. We need your help and participation both as Foundation members and a source of worthy stories of real people who you feel have made historical contributions to our great and respected service. Please note, the Foundation is a registered non profit organization and, your membership dues and gifts are tax deductible.

Al Manning, Co-Chair

Alaska loses a good friend—Admiral John Hayes, Former USCG Commandant Buried at Arlington



The remains of Admiral John Hayes slowly make their way to the burial site in Arlington National Cemetery

WASHINGTON - Admiral John B. (Jack) Hayes, 76, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard from 1978 to 1982, died on January 17 in Tavernier, Fla., after being accidentally struck by a vehicle during a hike along the Florida Keys. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, of Boothbay Harbor, Maine; four children, Christie Hayes, John Hayes, William Hayes, and Virginia Hayes; and seven grandchildren. and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on January 31. He is best remembered as a sailor and a champion of the Coast

Guard as well as a beloved husband, father and friend.

“Admiral Hayes was one of our most dynamic Commandants, an icon in the legacy of the Coast Guard. He was a personal mentor and role model to literally thousands of Coast Guard Officers, including myself. He is truly loved by this organization and will be greatly missed,” said Admiral James M. Loy, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Admiral Hayes was born in Jamestown, N.Y., August 30, 1924. He entered the Coast Guard Academy July 14, 1943, and graduated June 5, 1946, with a commission as Ensign. He spent most of his Coast Guard career in command positions ashore and afloat. Admiral Hayes returned to the Coast Guard Academy as Commandant of Cadets before his promotion to Rear Admiral in 1973. . He was commander of the 17th Coast Guard District at Juneau from 1974 to 1978. He went directly from Juneau to become Commandant of the entire Coast Guard in 1978 and served there until his retirement in 1982

As Commandant, Admiral Hayes ordered a comprehensive Roles and Missions study that helped to shape the present-day Coast Guard. In all, he spent 36 years on active duty before returning to civilian life. After his retirement from active service, the Coast Guard Foundation established the Adm. John B. Hayes Award for the Pacific Area command that exemplifies “commitments to excellence and professionalism.”

Admiral Hayes received numerous awards over the course of his distinguished career. Among those were:



FT. MYER, Va. (Jan. 31)—The Rev. Joan Phelps stands in silence while Coast Guard Commandant Adm. James M. Loy and Chaplain of the Coast Guard, Navy Capt. Leroy Gilbert salute while the Honor Guard prepares the flag for presentation to Elizabeth Hayes, widow of the former Coast Guard Commandant Adm. John B. Hayes. USCG photo by PA2 Jacquelyn Zettles

Admiral Hayes from page 1

eight campaign medals, eight unit citations, and 14 individual awards, including two Coast Guard Distinguished Service medals and a Navy Distinguished Service medal, the Legion of Merit with one gold star, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Coast Guard Commendation Medal.

His profound impact on many individuals' lives was mirrored in his other interests and passions. An Eagle Scout, he continued his affiliation with the Boy Scouts as a troop leader and a member of the National Council. Both Bigelow Laboratory, a marine sciences laboratory in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, and the Armed Services YMCA benefited in many ways from his expertise and skills in long-range planning during his tenure as a member and Chairperson of their Boards of Trustees.

Admiral Hayes was an active member of St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Boothbay, Maine. He served as Senior Warden for four years and was a driving force in guiding the mission's efforts in planning for a church building.

The Hayes family requests memorial donations be sent to one of the following: St. Columba's Episcopal Church Building Fund (P.O. Box 297, Boothbay, ME, 04537); Boy Scouts of America (BSA, National Office, 1325 West Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079); or Bigelow Laboratory (W. Boothbay Harbor, ME, 04575).

Ironwood Sails Into History

Coast Guard's Second Oldest Ship Is Decommissioned, Prepared For Sale to Nigeria

By Ron Irwin and Sonia Kojin Special to Military.com

COAST GUARD STATION KODIAK, Alaska (Oct. 6, 2000) — Nearly 200 civilians and Coast Guard members were on Kodiak Island Friday to bid adieu to the Ironwood, the fleet's second oldest active-duty vessel, and to marvel at its history.

The Ironwood (WLB 297) was decommissioned after 67 years in service.

The now-venerable buoy tender was sent to the South Pacific immediately after its 1943 commissioning, during the heat of World War II. Ironwood and her crew have served nobly through three wars, including Korea and Vietnam.

"Losing the Ironwood is like losing a national treasure," LCDR. Joanna Nunan, the Ironwood's last captain, said at the decommissioning ceremony. "If anyone would have made a movie about Ironwood, I never would have believed it"

A Storied Past

Nunan told of how, in its nearly six decades of service, the ship had done much more than service navigational buoy beacons. She spoke of the heroism of every crew that had ever stepped onboard the tender and the heroism of those who had to be pulled aboard.

"I got a letter from an old Marine Corps major who is definitely thinking about us today," Nunan said. "He was rescued by Ironwood in two different wars. In 1953 in Korea, he was flying as a forward artillery observer and he became engulfed by fog and had to head for the coast. Just as he hit the water, before he could pull his chute he was pulled aboard Ironwood. Twelve years later in Kamron Bay, Vietnam, this major was in a patrol boat when it suddenly lost all its power, and after issuing a call and [being] adrift, an hour later, who should pull aside but Ironwood."

Nunan shared other Ironwood stories during the ceremony — of finding downed NASA space capsules, going deep into enemy territory in Vietnam, or dealing with the brutal waters of the Bering Sea.

The boat has weathered its six eventful decades well. During the Ironwood's final inspection, Rear Adm. Tom Barrett, commander of the 17th Coast Guard Fleet, said the buoy tender probably looks better than it ever has. The paint was bright and the brass sparkled, obvious signs of the Ironwood crew's energy and pride.

RETIREE NEWSLETTER

The RETIREE NEWSLETTER is a publication containing news of general interest, suggestions, and information to keep Coast Guard retirees and their dependents informed of recent developments. This publication shall not be considered authority and is non-record material. Comments and suggestions should be directed to the editor, Patrick Wills, care of:

COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST
USCG Integrated Support Command
Worklife (Retiree Council)
1519 Alaskan Way South, Bldg. 1
Seattle, Washington 98134

"But it is time, it is time for her to go," Barrett said. "Fifty-seven years is a long time. The ship has been held together by the dedication of its people, but it is time for its departure."

Sailing On To New Service, New Crews

The Ironwood's commissioning officer, the late LCDR M.G. Magnusson, commanded the ship until 1946. His wife, Madeline Poland, represented LCDR Magnusson at the Kodiak ceremony.

"I thought it was very moving, very wonderful to have the ship here, where he also finished his career as a fisherman," Poland said. "It was kind of coming full circle, if you will, having the ship he first commissioned [being] decommissioned here."

On Oct. 7, the Ironwood set forth on her last cruise for the Coast Guard. The crew is sailing her to San Pedro, Calif., where officials are waiting to see if a planned sale of the cutter to the Nigerian government will take place. At one point, Barrett said, the plan was to turn the ship over to the Nigerians during Friday's ceremony, but there were still too many details to be worked out.



As for Nunan and her crew, most of them will be heading to Wisconsin, where she will be the commissioning officer of the new Coast Guard Cutter Spar. Nunan and crew will return their new boat to Kodiak.

Only one commissioned ship in the Coast Guard, the Kodiak-based medium endurance cutter Storis, has been in commissioned service longer than the Ironwood. The training barque Eagle, based at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., was built in 1936 but not commissioned by the Coast Guard until 1946.

Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest Meeting Schedule 2001

7 APRIL 2001 - Council will meet at 10:00 a.m. in Port Angeles, Washington at the Callam County Veterans Center on Francis and 3rd.

14 JULY 2001 - Council to meet at 10:30 a.m. ISC Seattle (Bear Room). Elevator available.

13 October 2001 - Council to meet at 10:30 a.m. Tentatively scheduled for Portland, Oregon

The Retiree Council – Northwest wants to meet and talk with as many retirees about issues of interest. In the past the Council has held meetings in Seattle, Portland, Illwaco and Port Angeles. Individual Council members have indicated a willingness to meet with small groups of retirees. These small group meetings can be scheduled on the availability of a Council member. The Council will also entertain an "All Hands meeting to accomplish meetings where all can voice their concern, It is necessary that each of you contact the Council or a Council member.

The Council currently is interested in knowing how many retirees, Would be attending the October Council meeting in Portland, Oregon. Those persons interested can contact Ralph Preston by telephone at (503) 256-3595 or email Rbarbwire@cs.com. Those interested should do so before the Council's July meeting. A "spouse's and annuitants" meeting is being considered for Seattle hosted by Mrs. Myrna Hackney (widow of CAPT R. V. Hackney). This gathering is slated for this summer. Those persons interested can contact Mrs. Hackney by calling (425) 643-8268 or email: MLHackney@aol.com. Location for this informal get together has not been settled. As soon as some figures on attendees can be tabulated a time and place will be announced.

Watch the Council web site: www.cgretirenw.com for further information.

VA Warns Veterans about Scam to Purchase Benefits

Washington, D.C. — Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) Hershel W. Gober warned veterans about a financial scam that offers lump-sum payments in exchange for monthly VA disability checks or pensions.

"These schemes seem to target the most desperate of our veterans," said Gober. "No financial expert on this planet would encourage anyone to accept 30 cents today if they could get a dollar tomorrow. Doing this to veterans is reprehensible."

Federal law outlaws the direct sale of VA benefits. VA is also prohibited from paying pensions and disability compensation to anyone other than a veteran, a family member or a lawful guardian.

The latest schemes, however, attempt to avoid the long-standing federal prohibition by representing these transactions as loans. Companies persuade veterans to give up their disability and pension checks for a specific period – up to eight years – in exchange for a lump-sum cash payment typically worth 30 – 40 percent over that same period. In some cases, the veteran must also take out a life insurance policy naming the company as beneficiary.

In the case of a veteran with a disability rated at 50 percent,

Scam Continued on page 4

VA Scam warning from page 3

it could mean receiving a one-time payment of about \$20,000, then forfeiting a \$609 monthly payment that in the course of eight years would bring in nearly \$60,000.

"VA lawyers are still studying the fine print in these schemes to determine whether or not they are legal," Gober said. "Even if they're legal, they're despicable, because they take money away from people in the direst financial straits." VA pensions go to wartime veterans incapable of self-support for reasons unrelated to their military service. VA disability compensation is paid to veterans with lingering health problems related to their time in uniform.



TRICARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR RETIRIES

By CWO Bruce Thomas, USCG ISC Seattle

The Fiscal Year 2001 Defense Authorization Act made significant improvements in TRICARE. The legislation included a number of health care provisions that collectively represent the most significant change to the military health care benefits in the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS, now called TRICARE) since the program was established by Congress in 1966.

Key Features for Retirees:

Effective April 01, 2001, the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program provides Medicare-eligible retirees of the uniforms services, their family members and survivors the same pharmacy benefit as retirees who are under age 65. It includes access to prescription drugs not only at military treatment facilities, but also at retail pharmacies and through the National Mail Order Pharmacy. This benefit is expected to be implemented by April 01, 2001 and more details on this benefit will be forthcoming. All beneficiaries, who turn 65 prior to April 01, 2001, will automatically qualify for the benefit whether or not they have purchased Medicare Part B. Those beneficiaries who attain the age of 65 on or after April 01, 2001, must be enrolled in Medicare Part B to receive this benefit.

Effective October 01, 2001 all Medicare-eligible military beneficiaries become eligible for all other TRICARE benefits. This means TRICARE will become second payer to Medicare.

- If the medical care received is a benefit of Medicare and TRICARE, Medicare will pay the allowable amount for the care. TRICARE will pay the amount that is the Medicare cost share, as well as any Medicare deductibles. Most, but not all medical services are a benefit under both Medicare and TRICARE.

- If the medical care received is a benefit of Medicare, but NOT a benefit of TRICARE, Medicare will pay its normal amount and the beneficiary will be responsible only for the Medicare deductible and cost-share. An example is certain types of chiropractic care that are covered by Medicare.
- If the medical care received is a benefit of TRICARE, but NOT a benefit of Medicare, Medicare pays nothing. TRICARE will pay the amount it pays for the same service received by a retiree under the age of 65. In this case, the beneficiary must pay the applicable TRICARE cost-share and deductibles. An example of this type of coverage is the prescription drug benefit.

Basically the change allows the over age 65 beneficiary to utilize TRICARE Standard in conjunction with Medicare. It does not allow the over age 65 beneficiary to enroll in TRICARE Prime. More information will be forth coming as Fiscal Year 02 draws closer.

What Do I Need To Do Now?

Enroll in Medicare Part B: Beneficiaries who have already turned 65 and do not have Medicare Part B should enroll if they would like additional health benefits through TRICARE. Medicare allows enrollment each year from January 1 though March 31. Coverage under Part B will be effective July 1st of the same year. Beneficiaries with questions regarding Medicare and Part B can visit any Social Security Administration (SSA) office, call Social Security Administration toll free number, 1-800-772-1213, or call the toll-free Medicare number, 1-800-633-4227. You can also find information on the Medicare Web Site at <http://www.medicare.gov>.

Please remember that if a beneficiary age 65 or over does not have Medicare Part B, they will NOT have the TRICARE benefit to help pay the cost of their doctor and hospital bills when the new benefit begins October 01, 2001.

Don't Drop Supplemental (Medigap) Policies Yet: Because of the delayed effective dates, any decision to drop Medicare supplemental insurance policy (know as Medigap) based on the new law is premature. The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), and the Military Coalition (TMC) and the National Military & Veterans alliance are trying to provide the most accurate information on what should be considered before any supplemental policy is dropped.

Update Information in DEERS: Beneficiaries should have up-to-date information in Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). DEERS is used to determine benefits in TRICARE and must be up-to-date. Beneficiaries may update their addresses in DEERS in a number of ways.

- Visiting local personnel offices that have an ID card facility like Coast Guard ISC Seattle.
- Calling the Defense Manpower Data Center Support

Office Telephone Center at 1-800-538-9552.

- Faxing address changes to 1-831-655-8317.
- Mailing the change information to DSO, Attn: COA, 400 Gigling Road, Seaside, CA 93955-6771.
- Visiting a DoD Military Treatment Facility like Madigan.
- Emailing information to addrinfo@osd.pentagon.mil and include the following information:
- Sponsor's name and social security number
- Name(s) of other family members affected by the address change
- Effective date of address information
- Telephone number.

To obtain more information on TRICARE benefits including the National Mail Order Pharmacy visit or call a TRICARE Service Center (TSC) or you can find information on the TRICARE Web Site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil>.

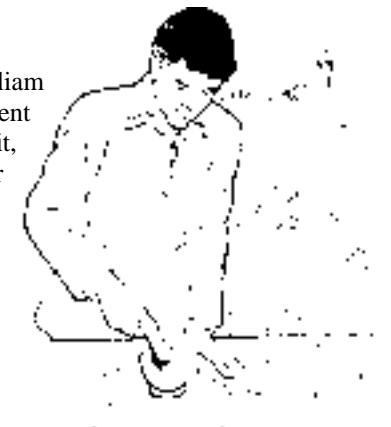
TRICARE SERVICE CENTERS IN WASHINGTON AND OREGON

Foundation Health TSC –Everett, WA	425-303-8638
Foundation Health TSC-Portland, OR	503-603-0621
Madigan Army Medical Center, WA	253-964-7136
Naval Hospital Oak Harbor, WA	360-675-0536
TRICARE Service Center Bremerton, WA	360-475-0725
TRICARE Welcome/Farewell Center, WA	253-964-1124
United States Army Clinic Yakima, WA	509-248-1350
USAF Clinic at McChord AFB, WA	253-581-0818
USAF Hospital at Fairchild AFB, WA	509-244-0732
General Information	800-982-0032

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12, 2000 — TRICARE officials propose to simplify co-payments for prescription drugs in accordance with last year's appropriations act. The new co-payments will be uniform for all beneficiaries and based on whether a generic or brand-name medication is dispensed.

The current co-payment structure is complex and confusing, said Army Lt. Col. William G. Davies, director of DoD Pharmacy Programs, part of the TRICARE Management Agency in Falls Church, Va. "We're trying to improve the TRICARE pharmacy benefit, to make it simpler to understand and more uniform consistent and equitable for everyone," Davies said. If the proposal is approved, he said, it would be kicked off DoD-wide April 1, 2001, when the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy program is operational.

Under the proposed changes, beneficiaries would pay \$3 for generic prescription drugs and \$9 for brand-name drugs at TRICARE-affiliated retail drug stores for up to a 30-day supply or through the National Mail Order Pharmacy program for up to a 90-day supply.



TRICARE Prime enrollees who choose to obtain their prescription drugs from non-TRICARE affiliated retail outlets would continue to pay a 50-percent point-of-service penalty after meeting their deductible. All others would pay the greater of a 20-percent co-pay or a \$9 charge per prescription. "There are cost savings available to the majority of the beneficiary population," Davies said, depending on how the prescription drugs are obtained. Prescriptions obtained through the mail program are generally less expensive, he noted, because the government gets federal pricing. Also, the patient can receive three times the quantity for the same co-pay as through a TRICARE retail pharmacy.

Davies noted there is no co-pay for prescriptions filled at military hospital and clinic pharmacies. This, he said, is the best financial value for beneficiaries. Beginning April 1, 2001, military retirees age 65 and over will be provided the same pharmacy benefit offered to beneficiaries under age 65.

Davies said the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy program would replace both the Pharmacy Redesign Pilot program conducted since July at Fleming, Ky., and Okeechobee, Fla.

Persons who turn 65 before April 1, 2001, may participate in the pharmacy program without having Medicare Part B, but those who turn 65 after April 1 must be enrolled in Medicare Part B to participate, officials noted.

Overhaul of National Security Apparatus Urged

By Steven Mufson The Washington Post
Thursday, February 1, 2001

Citing U.S. vulnerability to terrorist attacks, porous borders and new technologies, a congressionally mandated commission on national security recommended the creation of a National Homeland Security Agency, sharply higher spending on scientific research and education, and an overhaul of government institutions.

The U.S. Commission on National Security, led by former senators Gary Hart (D-Colo.) and Warren B. Rudman (R-N.H.), warned that "without significant reforms, American power and influence cannot be sustained." It offered the most far-reaching blueprint for reforming the national security apparatus since a similar effort in 1947.

The report comes as the Bush administration is in the midst of reexamining the government's foreign policy institutions....*The commission's proposals include unifying the Coast Guard, the Customs Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Border Patrol into the new homeland security body*, whose director would have Cabinet status. The new agency would coordinate defense against attacks as well as responses if an attack succeeded. The main task of the National Guard would be changed to deal with the prospect of an attack on U.S. soil.

"It is unlikely that we will continue to be the blessed country we've been all these years," Rudman said, referring to the possibility of an attack by a foreign power. "The threat is

asymmetric and we're not prepared for it." The report also suggested doubling federal funds for science and technology research by 2010, abolishing the National Economic Council, reducing the staff and role of the National Security Council, streamlining the Pentagon, merging authorizing and appropriations committees in Congress, and radically altering the structure of the State Department.

The commission's most pressing language was aimed at international terrorism. "A direct attack against American



Yorktown, VA (May 5)—A Coast Guard 25-foot Port Security Unit Raider Boat pulls up next to a cutter for a break. The Boston Whaler type 22, 25 and 27 designed raider boats have twin outboard engines, do 40 knots and are highly maneuverable. Each has a .50-caliber Machine Gun (MG) Forward/2 M60 7.62 mm MG's Aft. They have a crew of three or four. USCG photo by PA2 Stephen Baker

citizens on American soil is likely over the next quarter century," the group said. That seems to reflect a growing fear among policymakers at a time when the gap between the traditional war-fighting abilities of the United States and other nations has widened significantly.

Many of the report's suggestions focused on the State Department, which the group called a "crippled institution, starved for resources by Congress because of its inadequacies" and a "demoralized and relatively ineffective body." The group said the department "rarely speaks with one voice, thus reducing its influence and credibility in its interactions with the Congress and in its representation abroad." And the commission added that many of the department's "core functions were parceled out to other agencies."

The commission also was sharply critical of the Defense Department, where it said that the growth in staff had "created mounting confusion and delay." It suggested the Defense Department reduce its infrastructure costs by 20 to 25 percent over 10 years by outsourcing as many support activities as possible.

The National Security Council, the report continued, had assumed policymaking roles that it was never intended to have. The commission report said it should return to the much-needed role of policy coordinator. "The NSC adviser should keep a low public profile," the report said.

The Bush administration has already reduced the profile of Rice, the national security adviser, by making her position a non-Cabinet-level post.

Puget Sound Golf Association

Our first tournament to be 23 March at McChord's Whispering Firs Golf Course. We've got 10 tee times starting at 0830 and can probably get more if they fill up, but no guarantees. We will be putting out more info about format, fees and the like that we can probably posted to your web site.

Here are the dates/courses we are shooting for:

23 March	McChord - Whispering Firs
20 April	Snohomish GC
18 May	West Seattle GC
15 June	Gold Mt - Olympic
27 July	Kayak Point - Stanwood
17 Aug	River Bend - Kent
13/14 or 20/21 Sep	Admiral's Cup - McChord
12 Oct	Trohpy Lake/Druid's Glenn

The POC's for questions concerning membership dues, handicap system are:

Kevin Sullivan - President and Treasurer, (206) 220-7066
Andy Connor - Tournament Coordinator, (206) 220-7258

Duane Ridderman - Handicap chairman, (206) 217-6589
Kevin Jones - Ass't. Tournament/prize coordinator, (206) 220-7259
Evan Watanabe - Membership/Admiral's cup coordinator, (206) 217-6789

Maneuverable New Buoy Tender Joins Everett's Growing Armada

By KARL SCHWEIZER Herald Writer

EVERETT — Everett's newest ship won't sail halfway around the world to punish obstinate dictators. But it will make sure that the ships that do get there safely.

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Henry Blake was commissioned at Naval Station Everett recently amid music and numerous speeches. The ship is a buoy tender, responsible for maintaining the huge markers that warn ships away from rocks, shoals and other dangers in Puget Sound. Although the 175-foot ship is unarmed, it has other special features. For one, it could run rings around many other vessels.

The supermaneuverable vessel is equipped with a special turning system that moves the ship into tight areas where warning buoys are deployed. It can remain in place in 8-foot swells and 30-knot winds, said Rear Admiral Erroll M. Brown, commander of the 13th Coast Guard District. "It is literally able to stop on a dime and give you 9 cents in change," Brown said.

The ship will travel to each of 136 buoys and other navigational aids in Puget Sound to repair and maintain them, said Quartermaster First Class James Brock, one of the crew members. The job can be risky because the buoys' anchors and chains weigh tons, Brock said. "Anything you do on a ship is inherently dangerous. The ship is moving. The water is moving. The buoy is moving," Brock said. "You just have to watch what you're doing." The cutter may also assist with law enforcement and search-and-rescue operations, although its primary mission is buoy tending, Brock said.

The Henry Blake was named for the first keeper of the New Dungeness Spit Lighthouse, the first lighthouse to be lit in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, said Petty Officer Robert Lanier. The ship replaces an older buoy tender, the Mariposa, which also was stationed at Naval Station Everett, Lanier said.



Adm. Russell R. Waesche Coast Guard Commandant Turned Small Peacetime Fleet Into Able Amphibious Force of World War II

By Bethanne Kelly Patrick Military.com Columnist

Adm. Russell R. Waesche entered a branch of the military known as the Revenue Cutter Service in 1906. By the time he retired 40 years later from the same service, it had become the U.S. Coast Guard. In those four decades, Waesche served through two world wars, Prohibition, and in the longest tenure ever as Coast Guard Commandant, from 1936 to 1945.

Waesche served most of his first 20 years at sea, including tours in the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Bering Sea, interrupted by an assignment to Coast Guard Headquarters during World War I. His commands included the Eagle-class patrol boat *Bothwell*, the cutter *Snohomish*, and the destroyer *Beale*. On the *Beale*, he was sent out against rumrunners during the government-sanctioned Prohibition on alcohol.

Described by his son as "jack of all trades and master of many," the unassuming Waesche brought his considerable brainpower to bear on some of the problems that had plagued his service for years. He originated the Coast Guard Institute and Correspondence School for Warrant Officers and enlisted personnel. He established the Coast Guard Reserve in 1941. While Commandant, Waesche was integral in bringing the Coast Guard under the Navy's wing for wartime purposes — and equally instrumental in the post-war separation of the services. Waesche strongly believed that the Coast Guard should improve safety at sea not just through search-and-rescue operations, but also through preventive measures. Thus, under his command, the U.S. Lighthouse Service was made part of the Coast Guard in 1939; the Bureau of Marine Inspection followed in 1943.



The U.S. Coast Guard fought in every major amphibious operation of World War II, from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean to the Pacific. As Commandant, Waesche oversaw the transformation of the small peacetime Coast Guard fleet into a force of 160,000 men manning 30 destroyer escorts, 75 frigates, 750 cutters, 290 Navy vessels, and 255 Army vessels, among scores of smaller craft.

His successful and productive years were marked by promotions to Vice Admiral in 1943 and full Admiral in 1944 — the first Coast Guard officer to achieve three and four stars.

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*Port Isabel, TX — Coast Guard members use vehicles and
helicopters to battle drug smugglers. Photo by PAC Joe Dye*



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