



United States Coast Guard Retiree Council North West **PACIFIC CURRENTS NEWSLETTER**



“They Also Serve”

VOLUME XIII ISSUE II

COAST GUARD GUADALCANAL HERO, RAY EVANS, 92, LAID TO REST

PACS Dan Tremper.

Coast Guard Guadalcanal hero laid to rest



Coast Guard members stand in formation during the funeral procession of retired Coast Guard Cmdr. Ray Evans at the Mountain View Funeral Home & Memorial Park in Lakewood, Wash., June 5, 2013. More than 350 Coast Guardsmen from local units attended the ceremony to honor the decorated WWII veteran. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Seaman Saladino)

LAKEWOOD, Wash. – Retired U.S. Coast Guard [Cmdr. Ray Evans](#), 92, was laid to rest Wednesday with full military honors.

Evans was the final Coast Guard survivor of a dramatic rescue of a group of Marines pinned down by machine gun fire during the [Guadalcanal Campaign](#), September 1942 where he earned the Navy Cross.

Among those who attended the memorial service was his wife of more than 70 years Dorothy, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and Coast Guard Vice-Commandant [Vice Adm. John Currier](#).

Members of the [Marine Corps Security Force Battalion Bangor](#) performed a three-volley salute at the funeral signifying the bond Evans and the Marine Corps have shared since the darkest days of World War II.

Evans joined the Coast Guard alongside [Medal of Honor](#) recipient [Douglas Munro](#) in September 1939.

“(I) Came out of high school and looked for a job all summer in 1939 and it was a very poor time for jobs and went to the Coast Guard and they said they had not taken a recruit in 7 years,” said Evans in an oral history recorded in 1992. “They called me back in September and said, ‘Are you still interested? We’ve got seven openings. I said, ‘yes I am’. And that’s how it started, as an Apprentice Seaman at 21 dollars a month.”

After joint assignments that took Evans and Munro from Washington State to New York City, the two shipmates found themselves aboard the U.S. Army transport ship [Hunter Liggett](#). It was during a trip to India, 250 miles south of Cape Town, South Africa on a quiet December morning in 1941, they heard over the radio that bombs had fallen on [Pearl Harbor](#).

In less than a year Evans and Munro were reassigned as coxswain and crew of a [Higgins](#) boats that were responsible for transporting Marines to and from Guadalcanal. In the Second Battle of the Matanikau, part of the Guadalcanal Campaign, after successfully taking Marines from the 1st Battalion 7th Marines 1st Marine Division ashore, the two

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Coast Guardsmen returned to their previously assigned position. Almost immediately, they learned that conditions ashore were different than had been anticipated and the Marines were surrounded by enemy Japanese forces on the beachhead. It was necessary to evacuate the Marines immediately. Both men volunteered for the job and brought their boats to shore under heavy enemy fire, then proceeded to evacuate the men on the beach.

Evans remained at his post during the entire evacuation. He maintained control of his boat with one hand on the wheel and continued to fire his weapon with the other until the last boat cleared the beach. For his actions, Evans was awarded the [Navy Cross](#).

Evans' friend would not fare as well. When the majority of the Marines were in the boats, complications arose in evacuating the last men, whom Munro realized would be in the greatest danger. He placed himself and his boats in such a way that they would serve as cover for the last men to leave.

"I saw that Doug was facing forward, and I was standing up by the coxswain looking back, I saw this line of waterspouts coming across the water, and I yelled at Doug to get down," said Evans during his oral history. "He couldn't hear me over the engine noise, and it hit him. It was one burst of fire. And that's how he died. And that's how it happened."

Munro remained conscious long enough to say four words: "Did they get off?"

"He said 'did they get off?' and that's about all he said. And then he died. I don't think he ever heard me answer him. It was very quick fortunately. Can we talk about something else?" said Evans remembering his friend who had died many years before.

Evans remained humble about his contribution during his service on Guadalcanal.

"We just did a job," said Evans. "We were asked to take them over there, and we were asked to bring them back off of there, and that's what we did. That's what the Coast Guard does. We do

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Young Coast Guardsman is Cited. Raymond J. Evans, CSM, USCG, Bryn Mawr, Wash., 22, is the wearer of a Navy Cross. He was decorated for his heroism in the evacuation by Coast Guardsmen of a Marine Battalion trapped by the Japs at Guadalcanal. Rear Admiral Edward D. Jones, USCG, pinned the medal on him at ceremonies at the Coast Guard's station, Alameda, Calif.

U.S.N. "ALL HANDS" AUG. 1943

Raymond J. EVANS, Chief Signalman, USCG

NAVY CROSS

For extraordinary heroism as a member of the crew of a landing boat assisting in the rescue of a group Marines surrounded by enemy Japanese forces on a beachhead of Guadalcanal, Solomon Island, September 27, 1942.

Gallantly remaining at his post during the entire evacuation and with every other member of his crew killed or wounded, he maintained control of the boat with one hand on the wheel and continued to fire his automatic machine gun with the other until the last boat cleared the beach. He contributed directly to the success of his mission by saving the lives of many who otherwise might have perished.

COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTH WEST MEMBERS -

January 2013

LCDR John Allen
(CG Base Seattle Liaison Officer)
MKCS Tracy Black
ATCM Charlie Craig
CWO Tony Espejo
LCDR Michael J. (Mike) Foley
Mrs. Myrna Hackney
LCDR Phil Johnson (Co-Chairman)
RADM Bert Kinghorn (Co-Chairman)
ETCM Tim Lackey
CAPT Paul Luppert
Mrs. Evelyn Oliver
SKCS Gregory A. (Greg) Pankau
LCDR Ralph H. Preston
MCPO-CG Phil Smith
CAPT Dana Starkweather (emeritus)
YNCM Patricia Stolle (Secretary)
BMCS David J. Sweeney
YNCS Bob Wallace
CWO (F&S) Patrick L. Wills

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what we're asked to do."

His humbleness turns to awe as he remembers the Marines and his close association with them so many years ago.

"Got to admire those guys," said Evans. "I really feel a great deal of pride that when they received the Presidential Unit Citation for Guadalcanal, First Marine Division, that they gave to all us Coast Guard that were there with 'em. And that was, that was great."

In 1962, Evans retired after 23 years of service in the Coast Guard and passed away peacefully in his home May 30, 2013. And though another chapter of a heroic World War II veteran has closed, his sacrifices will never be forgotten.



Raymond Evans fought during the battle of Guadalcanal in September 1942 where he earned the Navy Cross. U.S. Coast Guard photo. -



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USCG Integrated Support Command
Worklife (Retiree Council)
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COAST GUARD PREPS FOR PT-SERVICEWIDE FITNESS TEST

Extract from article By Antonietta Rico NavyTimes Staff writer



The Coast Guard is looking exercises such as dead-hang pullups, for a possible PT test. (PAI Anastasia Devlin / Coast Guard)

The Coast Guard is looking six exercises in contention for part of a servicewide fitness test. They are: pullups, a 300-yard shuttle run, a standing long jump, a T-drill, an inverted row and a side bridge.

Men and women, and all ages, will be tested equally said Tim Merrell, a member of the Coast Guard's Fitness Advisory Committee. Specific standards, such as number of repetitions and time limits, have not been determined for each exercise. It's unclear whether the Coast Guard would also adopt a mandatory conditioning program, along with a servicewide test.

Officials will be looking to see if "performance on the test can improve with physical training" Leaders have said the service needs a baseline level of fitness for all Coasties to adhere to. The Coast Guard is the only military service that does not have a mandatory fitness test, although some jobs within the service, such as rescue swimmer, do. The Coast Guard does have a required weigh-in every six months. Coasties who do not meet weight standards face possible separation from the service. It's unclear what the consequences of failing the fitness test could be.

PT TestContinued on page 4

PT Continued from page 3**THE EXERCISES**

In preparation for a potential servicewide fitness test, the Coast Guard is studying service member performance in six exercises:

Dead-hang pullup. Person must perform pullup with palms facing forward in cadence, once every five seconds — no more, no less. There's no time limit: Subjects will continue to do pullups until they stop.

Standing long jump: Person will jump from a standing position, with both feet together in a line, as far forward as he can. There is no distance requirement.

Inverted row: Person will lie on his back, then proceed to starting position by holding onto a suspension strap 12 inches off the deck, his body rigid from head to toe, with only his heels touching the ground. Perform a row-up by lifting your body, then return to the starting position. Person must complete one repetition every five seconds — no more, no less. If the repetition is not complete, the event will be stopped.

T-Drill test: In this multidirectional, timed drill, four cones are placed in a T shape. Person will start at the base cone, shuttle up 10 yards to touch the second cone at the top of the T, shuttle laterally five yards to touch the third cone, shuttle laterally 10 yards the opposite way, past the second cone, to touch fourth cone, return to second cone and shuttle backward to the starting cone.

Side bridge: Person will lay on his side, his forearm and legs touching the ground in a "side bridge" position, with one foot in front of the other and the other arm across his chest. Coasties will be timed on how long they stay in the side bridge position.

300-yard shuttle: Person will run forward and back over a 25-yard shuttle-run course a total of six times.

Source: Tim Merrell, Coast Guard health promotion program manager.

CGC Winona (WHEC 65) Reunion



Darlene Amundson is organizing a CGC Winona reunion and looking for folks who have some connection with the "Wine Barge" and might be interested. She is also looking for folks who were stationed at Port Angeles Air Station during the time that Winona made her home port there. Darlene's husband served in CGC Winona and they now live in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. They have been very active with the annual all-ships' reunion for several years.

In you're interested or want to know more, please write to Darlene Amundson at: amundson1693@roadrunner.com And, indicate "Winona Reunion" on the subject line or else she might throw it out with the junk mail.

CALLING ALL CPO's

Greetings fellow retiree. My name is Wayne Jarvis I am a retired MCPO and active in the Seattle Chief Petty Officers Assoc. We meet the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1130 in the side dining room at the pier 36 dinning facility. We enjoy lunch and a meeting. Additionally we work on project together. For instance the CPOA is working on refurbishing the two 3"-50



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mounts that are up at Douglas Munros gravesite. One of the guns is all torn down and back from blasting and powder coating. Our goal is to have both completed for September dedication. What we could really use is the knowledge of any retired GM types with 3"-50 experience We would welcome all retired CPO's. For more information you can contact me by email.

wjarvis2000@yahoo.com

Wayne Jarvis MCPO (Ret)

USCG POV DECAL NOTICE OF TERMINATION

VADM Manson K. Brown,

Deputy Commandant for Mission Support.

The Commandant recently announced the termination of the USCG POV DECAL program and amplified the requirement for 100 percent ID card checks at all CG units. All designated CG issuing units shall cease issuing CG POV decals no later than 01 JAN 2014. The formal termination of the CG POV DECAL Program is 30 SEP 2014. All CG issued decals should be removed from POV and destroyed by 31 DEC 2014. Members that access DOD bases requiring decals can apply/obtain a DOD decal from that installation.

Presently, the CG POV decal program is an optional program designed to provide Commanding Officers a tool to help regulate private vehicle traffic on CG units. It has also been used as a tool for security forces to ensure only authorized vehicle were aboard CG units. The program has become a redundant security and access control system over the past 8 years because a 100 percent personal ID check is now required to access all CG/DOD facilities. All vehicle occupants must possess a valid CG, DHS, or DOD issued identification card to gain access to CG units.

This policy change does not impact the requirement that POVs seeking entrance to all CG/DOD facilities must be registered, inspected, and insured in accordance with State and local laws.

COAST GUARD DAY INFORMATION SO FAR.

Coast Guard Day activities in Seattle area will take place at Shoreline Park, North Ft. Lewis, 9 Aug 13, 1100-1500 hours.

POC: James "Art" Graddy Jr.
Regional Morale, Well-Being, and
Recreation (MWR) Director
USCG Base Seattle MWR
E-mail: james.a.graddy@uscg.mil

Point of Contact for other CGD13 areas:

North Bend - POC: LT Patrick Wright.

Sector Columbia River (Astoria) - Sector will hold its Coast Guard Day event 02 August at Colby Lake, 0900-1600. Anyone desiring more information should contact POC: LT Knies at 503-861-6328

Portland - POC: LTJG Gordon Gertiser.

RETIREE APPRECIATION DAY SCHEDULE 2013

Retiree Appreciation Days (RAD) are designed with retirees in mind. They're a great source of information for retirees and family members. RADs vary from installation to installation, but, in general, they provide an opportunity to renew old acquaintances, listen to guest speakers, renew ID Cards, get medical checkups and take advantage of lots of other retiree related services. Many RADs offer health screenings and vaccinations. Some RADs include special events such as dinners or golf tournaments, DFAS representatives, etc. For more information about

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a particular RAD, please contact the Retirement Services Officer (RSO) sponsoring the RAD.

Location	Date	RSO Phone Number
Idaho Army RAD Boise, ID	17 July	208-272-5755
Idaho Air RAD Boise, ID	8 September	208-272-5755
JB Elmendorf-Richardson, AK	2 November	907-384-3500

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE ALKI LIGHTHOUSE

Auxiliarist David Gunter

SEATTLE — The [13th Coast Guard District](#) and [Coast Guard Auxiliary](#) celebrated the 100th anniversary of the [Alki Point Lighthouse](#) in West Seattle, Saturday.

“Since 1856, when the U.S. Light House Service lighted Cape Disappointment, the Coast Guard has been a part of the rich history of the Pacific Northwest,” said Rear Adm. Keith Taylor, commander of the 13th Coast Guard District. “The Alki centennial not only represents our rich heritage, but also the future, and how committed we are to the Pacific Northwest and the Seattle community.”

In 1887, the United States Lighthouse Service installed a post lantern on Alki Point as an aid to navigation, and purchased the current property where the lighthouse sits in 1910.

The Alki Lighthouse was completed in April 1913 and opened for public tours on June 1, 1913. At that time, two lighthouse keepers were required to keep the light operational. They alternated 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week.

The Lighthouse Service merged with the Coast Guard in 1939 and assumed operation and maintenance of all United States lighthouses and lightships. The last civilian lighthouse keeper, Albert G. Anderson, retired in 1970, and Coast Guardsmen began standing watch 24 hours a day. The lighthouse was fully automated in 1984.

Today, the Alki Point Lighthouse continues to light the entrance to Elliot Bay and remains a historic landmark. The Coast Guard Auxiliary offers weekend tours to the public from the months of June till August from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

For more information about the Alki Point Lighthouse tours, please send request to AlkiPointLighthouse@msn.com.



Rear Adm. Keith Taylor, commander of the 13th Coast Guard District, commemorates the Alki Point Lighthouse in West Seattle during a ceremony to celebrate its 100th anniversary June 1, 2013. While Alki Point was originally established to mark its hazardous shoals and to light entrance to Elliot Bay, the Alki Point Lighthouse was constructed June 1, 1913, and continues to be a historic landmark of West Seattle. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jordan Akiyama)



Members of the 13th Coast Guard District and the Coast Guard Auxiliary gathered in West Seattle to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Alki Point Lighthouse, June 1, 2013. While legend says a farmer named Hans Martin Hanson hung the first lantern along Alki Point in the 1870s, it is the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary who keep the light shining for wayward mariners today. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jordan Akiyama)

LCDR JOHN ALLEN RETIRES

LCDR John Allen, who has been the Liaison Officer for the Retiree Council Northwest with Base Seattle for about the past three years recently retired. LCDR Allen's Retirement Ceremony took place 21 June in the Bear Room. John's relief (including Council liaison duties) is LCDR Jonathan K. Stehn.



CWO Al Thorne here presenting John the shadow box of the many ranks he has held. USCG Photo by Janie L Nicodemus



CAPT Marc LeBeau, Base Seattle CO presents LCDR Allen with a certificate of appreciation. Both officers have been tremendously supportive of the Retiree Council. USCG Photo by Jamie L Nicodemus

A short Biographical sketch of LCDR Allen's career is detailed below:



March 1991-May 1991: Coast Guard Recruit Training, Cape May New Jersey

June 1991-October 1992: USCGC Acushnet, Eureka, CA

October 1992-February 1992: Health Services Technician "A" School, Coast Guard Training Center Petaluma, CA

February 1992-June 1997: Coast Guard Group Air Station Humboldt Bay Medical Clinic, McKinleyville, CA

June 1997-June 1998: USN Surface Force Independent Duty Corpsman (SFIDC) School, San Diego, CA

June 1998-March 2000: IDC Aboard USCGC Courageous, Panama City, FL

March 2000-June 2000: Officer Candidate at Officer Candidate School, Coast Guard Academy, New London, CT

July 2000-July 2001: Primary Assistant, Coast Guard Healthcare Task Force Project, Coast Guard Health and Safety Directorate, Washington, DC

August 2001-June 2003: Chief, Waterways Management, Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Port Arthur, TX

June 2003-June 2005: Graduate Student at Baylor University

July 2005-June 2010: Clinic Administrator, Health Services Division, Coast Guard Aviation Training Center, Mobile, AL

July 2010-June 2013: Regional Health, Safety, and Work Life Regional Manager, Coast Guard Base Seattle, WA

13TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT'S CHANGE-OF-COMMAND CEREMONY HOLDS NEW BEGINNINGS

By PA3 Jordan Akiyama, CGD13 External Affairs



Rear Adm. Richard T. Gromlich (left) and Rear Adm. Keith A. Taylor (right) shake hands after Gromlich relieved Taylor of command of the 13th Coast Guard District during a formal ceremony presided over by Vice Adm. Paul F. Zukunft (center), commander of Coast Guard Pacific Area and Defense Forces West, held at Coast Guard Base Seattle, June 28, 2013. Taylor was recognized during the ceremony for his efforts in strengthening partnerships with local, state, federal and international organizations during his two years in command. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Katelyn Tyson.

SEATTLE — [Rear Adm. Richard T. Gromlich](#) relieved [Rear Adm. Keith A. Taylor](#) as commander of the [13th Coast Guard District](#) during a change-of-command ceremony at [Coast Guard Base Seattle](#), on 28 June 2013.

Taylor retired from the Coast Guard after dedicating 34 years to service and country.

“I am absolutely thrilled to be here,” said Gromlich. “I’m thoroughly impressed with the work done by the men and the women of the 13th Coast Guard District. This is truly a unique AOR (area of responsibility). We’ve got to ensure that we are ready to meet those challenges each and every day and I commit to you to do everything I can to ensure you have what you need to continue to get the job done. I am truly honored and humbled to be given this incredible opportunity. I’m really looking forward to

getting out into the field and seeing personally the great things that you do.”

Prior to reporting to the 13th District, Gromlich served as the Coast Guard’s first director of operational logistics, overseeing 13 bases and one base detachment responsible for delivering effective and integrated support services. Gromlich has also completed tours of duty at Air Station San Diego, Air Station North Bend, Wash., Air Station Savannah, Ga., and Air Station Cape Cod, Mass. With more than 3,600 flight hours, Gromlich has attained qualifications as an aircraft commander and instructor pilot in the HH-65 Dolphin and as an aircraft commander in the HH-60 Jayhawk.

Taylor assumed responsibilities as commander of the 13th Coast Guard District in July 2011. As commander, he was responsible for Coast Guard operations covering four states, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana; 4,400 miles of coastline, 600 miles of inland waterways, and a 125-mile international border with Canada. During Taylor’s tenure, the 13th District has conducted 3,284 search and rescue cases, saved 401 lives, assisted 6,350 lives, responded to 6,000 oil spills/chemical releases, and saved \$21.75 million in property.

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CWO Tony Espejo of the CG Retiree Council Northwest takes a moment to welcome Adm. Taylor to the “club” (the retiree community) and he said he was very happy to be a new member. USCg Photo by Tony Espejo

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“It’s great to have had the opportunity to lead the young men and women who serve our country so well in the 13th Coast Guard District,” said Taylor. “The respect I have for the communities here in the Pacific Northwest, for all of our partners, and the Coast Guard men and women, is incredible. We have an incredibly rich history out here. We’re a maritime nation and never is it more relevant than right here in the Pacific Northwest.”

As a native to Westfield, Mass., Taylor holds a Bachelor of Science degree with honors from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, a Master of Science degree in Industrial Administration from Krannert School at Purdue University and a Master of Business Administration degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was a Sloan Fellow.

The change-of-command ceremony is a time-honored tradition that signifies the transfer of responsibility and formally restates the officer’s continuity and authority of command. Deeply rooted in the Coast Guard’s history, this formal custom is unique to the armed forces and publicly emphasizes the distinct nature of command in the Coast Guard. Most importantly, it signals a new beginning and a new opportunity for even greater achievement.

USCGC POLAR STAR’S BM1

Story by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jordan Akiyama

SEATTLE—A person’s character is determined by the choices they make when faced with adversity. It defines them as an individual and can drive them to succeed in everything they do. Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star, a heavy icebreaking vessel docked in Seattle, has been in caretaker status for more than six years. Throughout that time, it has been overhauled and renovated, broken down and built back up, to an operational, working asset of the Coast Guard. Its crew working tirelessly to ensure that the 40-year-old vessel is sea worthy and



Petty Officer 1st Class Jack Skinner (white hat), a boatswain’s mate aboard Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star, briefs Capt. George Pellissier (far left), commanding officer of Polar Star, and the crew about the small boat evolution that will take place April 1, 2013. Skinner has temporarily taken over the duties of deck force’s first lieutenant while also maintaining his duties as the ship’s weapons petty officer, small arms instructor, rescue and survival petty officer, small boat coxswain, deck supervisor, and in port officer of the deck. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jordan Akiyama)

capable of its icebreaking mission once again. The crew of Polar Star is full of Coast Guard worthy character; dedicated, hard working, and determined to once more set a course along the frigid waters of the Arctic and Antarctic. With a crew of more than 150 people who set the bar for character, it is hard to find someone who exceeds that bar almost everyday, yet one person has.

Petty Officer 1st Class Jack Skinner, a boatswain’s mate aboard Polar Star, has stepped up and filled the shoes of those who would be senior to him. When the ship’s boatswain retired in March of 2013, the ship’s deck force was left without a first lieutenant. Several weeks before the Polar Star was supposed to set off on its first shakedown cruise, the deck force master chief suffered an injury that prohibited him from getting underway. With no overhead and the next in the chain of command, Skinner took over their duties as well as the duties he already had.

“Right now, my official title, I am the first lieutenant standing by for master chief,” said Skinner. “I’m also the ships weapons petty officer, small arms instructor, rescue and survival petty officer, small boat coxswain, deck

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supervisor, in port officer of the deck, and I'm working on finishing up my underway officer of the deck qualification."

Under normal operating circumstances, it is very rare that a first class petty officer would fill the role of an acting department head on a ship of Polar Star's size and crew capacity. As the department head, Skinner not only oversees all of deck force, but also attends department head meetings alongside officers, warrants and master chiefs to whom he provides input and speaks on behalf of his department.

"We made the decision that Skinner was a strong enough BM1 to be able to do what he has to and also assume the role of the master chief and the warrant boatswain," said Cmdr. Daniel Frank, executive officer aboard Polar Star. "And he's been doing great. It's guys like Petty Officer Skinner that make me want to stay here and do another deep freeze."

Originally assigned to Coast Guard Cutter Polar Sea, Polar Star's sister ship, Skinner transferred to Polar Star when the crews of both ships merged together in 2011. Skinner played a big part in not only transferring parts of Polar Sea to Polar Star, but also getting Polar Star into working operational status.

From the start, Skinner dove head first into long days and even harder work. There in the shipyard, they put the Polar Sea through heavy maintenance. The ships crew began taking paint down to bare metal, repainting the structures, and rehabbing the decks of the 399-foot vessel; until, they were told that they would stand down and the crew of Polar Sea would merge with that of Polar Star.

"We literally rafted both ships off to each other and developed a plan to take all the good equipment from the Sea and transfer it to the Star," said Skinner. "For about six weeks, we were running cranes all day, everyday, running gear and transferring equipment. I was in charge



Petty Officer 1st Class Jack Skinner (right), a boatswain's mate aboard Coast Guard Polar Star, readies a small boat during a man overboard drill during the cutter's shakedown voyage through Washington state's surrounding waters April 2, 2013. Skinner took over as Polar Star's acting first lieutenant for deck force after the chief warrant officer retired and the master chief boatswain's mate was unable to get underway due to injury. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jordan Akiyama)

of getting everything we needed for Polar Star on board because there was a potential of Polar Sea getting taken off and mothballed as soon as we were done with those six weeks. We worked a lot of late days, got everything transferred over, and started coming up with a plan to get Polar Star reactivated."

For the first two years aboard the Polar's, Skinner shared the weight of deck force with another first class boatswain's mate. Together they split up responsibilities and were able to give those who worked under them the right amount of attention and guidance they needed. But when the other BM1 transferred in the summer on 2012, there was no replacement and Skinner went from doing not only his job but a job that two BM1's shared.

While the transition has been a huge weight on Skinner's shoulders, it is one that he not only accepts, but also takes in stride. For Skinner, making sure his department is taken care of is his biggest concern.

"You can't really get enough face to face time with everybody," said Skinner. "I think just trying to make sure that everybody is doing ok

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and that they don't have any kind of issues that they need help with is hard."

And it is that concern for their well-being and development that Skinner's shipmates appreciate him for.

"He surpasses my expectations as a supervisor," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Osborn, a boatswain's mate aboard Polar Star who works directly under Skinner. "I can honestly say he's the best supervisor I've had. He's willing to teach you and show you so you'll not only be better as a petty officer, but as a person. Under him I learned that there really is no limit on what you can do. If you put a lot into it, you'll get a lot out of it."

"I learned real quick that you have to step up and take responsibilities," said Skinner. "You have to step up and take collaterals. It's a lot of work, but you get used to the workload. It's a lot of fun. Hard work isn't always bad."

For Skinner, having a 'we got this, we can get this done' attitude has geared him in the right direction and has become the backbone that has helped him succeed. While Skinner won't always have the amount of responsibility that has been placed upon his shoulders, for now he stays true to the course and remembers the mission.

"I think the mission itself is probably the best thing," said Skinner. "It's pretty unique. We're (currently) the only heavy-duty polar icebreaker in the whole country. For us, our big thing this fall is to go down and break out McMurdo, so I got that in my sights. I look forward to being able to say I have that accomplishment. I was part of that unit where after a seven year down period, we took a cutter, got it back into commission and went to Antarctica and back. Just being able to go where only a few people have gone is pretty cool."



U.S. Coast Guard photo/PA3 Henry G. Dunphy

MH-60J FLEET RETIREMENT

By VADM John P. Currier, 23rd Ancient Albatross

As the Coast Guard aviator who accepted and flew 6001 from Sikorsky in March 1990, it is with great pride but mixed emotions that I recognize the retirement of the last operational MH-60J. The depot induction of CGNR 6024, from CGAS Clearwater on 14 May 2013, represents the conclusion of an 11 year effort to transition the Medium Range Recovery (MRR) fleet to the upgraded "glass cockpit" MH-60T. Through the combined efforts of COMDTs (CG-931), (CG-711) and (CG-41), the MH-60T has a robust logistics and training system poised to serve the Coast Guard for years to come. The MH-60T will reach full operational capability upon conversion of the remaining MH-60Js over the next year.

The MH-60T is a true upgrade in capability, giving the operational commander an asset capable of deploying with an impressive suite of onboard systems. While the MH-60T represents a leap forward in operational flexibility, navigation, and communications abilities, there remain numerous areas for continued improvement including implementation of upgraded engine controls, airframe vibration management systems and computer upgrades to allow MH-60T operations in the future National Airspace System.

Bravo Zulu to all team members at ALC Elizabeth City, ATC Mobile and AIRSTA Elizabeth City who have made outstanding efforts in realizing this goal.

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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PERMIT NO. G-157

HOW WE SERVED...TODAY IN THE U. S. COAST GUARD



A Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew lands on a frozen sheet of sea ice while embarked with Coast Guard Cutter Healy near Nome, Alaska. Ice landings are rare and require skis to be installed on the helicopter to keep the landing gear from settling in the snow. Ice landings are inherently risky and require testing of the ice's strength before attempting. Blowing snow can cause loss of all visual reference with the ground, adding further complexity to the landing.

Tom Hedderick