



Coast Guard Retiree Council — Northwest



RETIREE NEWSLETTER

“They Also Serve”

VOLUME XI ISSUE 1



COAST GUARD CUTTER MIDGETT HOLD BURIAL-AT-SEA CEREMONY

SEATTLE – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett, a 378-foot cutter stationed in Seattle, held a burial-at-sea ceremony honoring the life of a retired Coast Guardsmen during its five-day transit from Seattle to San Diego.

The burial-at-sea ceremony was on the cutter’s flight deck occurred just before sunset. The ceremony honored Coast Guard Retiree Council

Northwest Secretary, Evereste A. Black, retired Coast Guard Senior Chief Yeoman and stalwart champion of the retirees.

The service featured readings from three of the ship’s crewmembers, including a benediction from

CDR. Daniel Pickles, the Midgett’s executive officer, and a 21-gun salute.

“It’s a really meaningful way to honor our veterans, said Stephen P. Fainer, a deck-watch officer and ceremonial coordinator aboard the Midgett. This ceremony is symbolic of memorializing our return to nature,” Fainer said.

Black’s son, Tracy E Black, a retired Senior Chief Petty Officer, was present and acted as the urn bearer for his father. The ceremony concluded as the last note of taps played and the Midgett regained its course and speed, en route toward San Diego.

MCPO PATRICIA STOLLE NEW SECRETARY OF RETIREE COUNCIL

extracted from article by Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Swanson



Master Chief Petty Officer Patricia Stolle is presented the Legion of Merit by Rear Adm. Paul F. Zukunft, commander of the 11th Coast Guard District, during a command master chief change of watch ceremony, June 26, 2009. MCPO Stolle was the first woman to achieve the rank of master chief petty officer since the Coast Guard SPARs. (USCG photo/Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Swanson)

With the passing of YNCS Ev Black the Retiree Council has named retired MCPO Patricia Stolle to fill his post. The following is a background piece written about the Chief.

Patricia Stolle was a 1970s farm girl from Petaluma, Calif. She slopped the hogs and fed the chickens alongside her four brothers and three sisters. As a young woman she worked long hours, got dirty and often heaved heavy bales of hay and bags of feed.

The early mornings and long hours prepared her for the Coast Guard where at least she enjoyed sleeping



YNCS Ev Black, USCG (retired), Council Secretary, spent dozens of volunteer hours every week counseling retiring active duty members as well as already retired veterans on benefits and medical disability claims at an office in the Worklife center on Pier 36.

Visit our Web site at www.cgretirenw.org

in until 5 a.m. "I joined the Coast Guard to run away from the farm!" Master Chief Petty Officer Patricia Stolle laughed.

Serving in the Coast Guard for more than 35 years, Stolle overcame many struggles, and left a legacy of historical achievements and contributions to the service.

Stolle enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1974. A year earlier, legislation was passed to begin integrating women into active duty and reserve forces. She experienced the Coast Guard's transition from an all-male service to the equal opportunity organization it is today.

After boot camp, Stolle was sent to Training Center Petaluma to attend yeoman school, one of four available schools offered to women at that time.

While she attended Training Center Petaluma, many women excelled at yeoman school, typically offering good typing and organization skills. For that reason, the Coast Guard's workforce welcomed them into their ranks and many excelled in their careers, said Stolle.

After graduating from yeoman school, Stolle was sent to her first unit at Governors Island, N.Y., to work at the Coast Guard Third District. While stationed at her GOVIS, Stolle advanced to petty officer 1st class in three years and two months. Subsequent assignments included instructor duty at yeoman school at Training Center Petaluma where she advanced to chief petty officer in 1983. Soon thereafter, she received orders to report to the Coast Guard Cutter Mellon making her the first female chief petty officer to serve at sea.

"After eight years of skirts and panty hose while serving at Coast Guard administrative offices, I was convinced I would never experience sea duty, said Stolle. "I was petrified of the thought of leaving my husband in charge of the kids and finances!"

Senior Chief Petty Officer Toby Vice, the command chief of the Mellon, helped Stolle adjust to being the first



A 1974 graduation portrait of Master Chief Petty Officer Patricia Stolle as a petty officer 3rd class. She is credited with being the first women chief petty officer to serve afloat, the first active duty women to make master chief petty officer since the SPARs and one of the first women to be selected for command master chief.

woman to serve as a chief aboard a cutter and become a valuable member of the male dominated Chief's Mess, the place where chief petty officers discuss and decide upon important issues that affect the enlisted workforce of the cutter. She was proud to serve as a role model and lead the junior women aboard the cutter, said Stolle.

Although the Mellon was a challenging assignment, her most difficult unit was not until she attained the rank of master chief petty officer in 1993 and returned to Petaluma to teach at the Chief Petty Officer Academy. Her promotion to master chief marked the first time an active duty woman had advanced to that rank. She was chosen to teach at the academy because one of her qualifications was a step aerobic instructor.

Part of the academy curriculum required three step aerobic classes to promote cross training. Stolle, with less than 20 years in the Coast Guard now, would teach 32 chiefs with large egos. Some chiefs would complain, "Do I really have to do this? I'd much rather go running." Stolle would then calmly remark, "No chief, you do not have to do step aerobics – you can go right up to the barracks, pack your bags and go home."

When Stolle was not enforcing step aerobics, she could also be found teaching chiefs how to attain a degree through distance learning. She soon noticed that those who were stationed at units with good educational service officers were further along in their degrees. Her opportunity to help change this inconsistency came later in her career while stationed at Maintenance and Logistics Command Pacific as the command master chief.

"Stolle positively impacted so many people by serving as a coach and mentor to countless young guardians and ensuring they were well trained and inspired to meet the Coast Guard challenges of tomorrow," Adm. Thad Allen, commandant of the Coast Guard, wrote in a letter for her retirement ceremony.

Vice Adm. Harvey Johnson, the commander then of Coast Guard Pacific Area, initially challenged Stolle and two other members of leadership to improve Coast Guard Pacific Area's educational service program. She loved the idea and requested permission to run with it.

"As a leader, Stolle has embodied our guardian ethos, to protect, defend and save," said Master Chief Petty Officer Charles W. Bowen, the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard.

She employed full-time civilian educational service officers because they didn't transfer every three years



like their military counterparts. “Everyone should have equal access to educational information,” said Stolle. “The opportunities to make changes as a command master chief are amazing.

To take something from nothing, get it started and to watch it grow Coast Guard wide is awesome!” said Stolle.

Stolle’s proudest achievement was developing Learning Centers at all the sectors in Coast Guard’s Pacific Area and equipping them with full-time civilian educational service officers. She added that since this implementation, Coast Guard Atlantic Area has begun to follow these practices to have a strong educational assistance program.

“By spearheading such initiatives as staffing learning centers with full-time educational service officers, Stolle made remarkable contributions to the professional development of Coast Guard members,” said Allen.

Stolle’s successes and many contributions to the Coast Guard during her 35 years active duty were possible because she recognized the need to set specific rules to continue being happy and successful in her career. Rule number 1-Job must be fun.

“If you want to be happy in your career and take control of your future, then you must decide early on what your rules are,” demanded Stolle. “Don’t do this job for the money. If you’re not having fun, then go find something else.”

Rear Adm. Paul Zukunft, the former commander of the Coast Guard Eleventh District who worked alongside Stolle, calls her a keeper. He compares her with the Coast Guard’s first lighthouse keeper Ida Lewis who maintained the Lime Rock Lighthouse, R.I., for more than 39 years and saved 18 people.

“Stolle has been a keeper, she has been a keeper in the Chief’s Mess and she has really raised the bar for future chiefs who may be seaman today,” said Zukunft. “If aspiring chiefs should set one goal, it should be to emulate Stolle’s career.”

The lasting contributions achieved by Stolle, once a gritty farm girl, positively impacted the entire Coast Guard workforce. She set the example that neither male or female, college student or farm girl, are limited in their potential to succeed.



COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NW MEMBERS -

07 JANUARY 2011

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

LCDR Ralph H. Preston

MCPOCG Phil Smith

CAPT Dana Starkweather (emeritus)

YNCM Patricia Stolle (Secretary)

BMCS David J. Sweeney

YNCS Bob Wallace

CWO3 (F&S) Patrick L. Wills

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MEET THE NEW CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE RETIREE COUNCIL

Phil Johnson enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve in 1965 and later became an ET. After graduation from the University of Washington in 1971, he completed Reserve Officer Basic Indoctrination and was commissioned an Ensign, USCGR.

Phil was one of a very few reserve officers who took the time and trouble to qualify as an underway OOD on a major cutter (USCGC Munro). Two of Phil's favorite Coast Guard memories are taking Munro out of Pier 36 and later taking it into San Francisco Bay. The latter evolution occurred on a sunny Saturday morning with hundreds of pleasure vessels in Munro's inbound path. His description of the experience: "I was very focused." He was also Master of Ceremonies for commissioning of USCGC Polar Star.

Phil was the second District 13 reservist to graduate from the National Search and Rescue School and become a District SAR Controller/Operations Center Watchstander (Command Duty Officer). He was later Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of two Reserve Units. Lieutenant Commander Johnson hung up the uniform in 1986 and retired for pay purposes in 2004.



Phil was a radio news reporter and anchor for most of his civilian career, much of which he spent at 710 KIRO Newsradio in Seattle. In

addition to local assignments, he reported from London, Belfast, Athens, Buenos Aires, Rhein-Main Air Base, Riyadh, and McMurdo Station. His last on-air radio work was a series of features sent to KIRO from USCGC Polar Sea during its 2006-07 Antarctic Deployment.



Phil Johnson on the ice with the CGC Polar Sea

COAST GUARD VEHICLE DECALS

We have been contacted several times during the last few months with questions about Coast Guard-issued decals for privately owned vehicles. Specifically, several retirees and beneficiaries have been told that the Coast Guard units near where they live will no longer issue decals to retirees.

If I am a Coast Guard retiree, why can't I get a decal for my vehicle? The Commandant's Instruction that governs vehicle decal use states that the program is utilized at the discretion of the commanding officer. The instruction also requires that the decals "not be used as the sole means to determine an operator's authorization to enter a Coast Guard facility." Since gate security personnel

are now required to inspect personal ID cards, some commanders have chosen for cost savings or other reasons not to issue decals to all who might want periodic access to their units, as is their prerogative. Not having a valid decal does not mean that you will now be denied access to a Coast Guard facility when you have a legitimate need to be there.

But, what if I cannot get a Coast Guard decal and I need to go to a military hospital, exchange or commissary on a DoD facility? The Commandant instruction specifically prohibits a Coast Guard unit that does not require decals for access to its facilities from issuing decals for the “sole purpose of allowing access to facilities not under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the unit.” So if you frequent a DoD base for any reason, and you do not have a valid Coast Guard decal, you should apply for a decal at that base.

Does this mean that the Coast Guard vehicle decal program is over for all retirees? No. Many Coast Guard units still use and issue decals to retirees. This is especially true at our larger units. At those units, the current commanders have determined that issuing vehicle decals to retirees is helpful perhaps because the system provides instant access to data on the owners of vehicles that are driving or parked on their grounds, or because they provide a second measure of security, or for any other reason. But again, the decision rests with the commanding officer. A new commanding officer may make different decision, so what you are experiencing is current practice, not a longstanding policy.

SIGN, CLICK, SUBMIT—TRICARE ENROLLMENT PROCESS STREAMLINED



*By Mike Walbert
TriWest Healthcare Alliance*

Enrolling into the TRICARE West Region now has the feel and ease of signing a credit card transaction at the market or department store.

TriWest Healthcare Alliance, the Department of Defense contractor that manages TRICARE for the 21-state West Region, has rolled out electronic signature pads to nearly all of its TRICARE Service Centers (TSC) at West Region offices, bringing convenience to customers.

How It Works

Rather than flipping through pages of forms to sign, beneficiaries now can sign their enrollment and allotment forms on the electronic pad, click to submit and it's done.

Once the signature is submitted, the documents are electronically transmitted to TriWest's enrollment department, where beneficiaries are entered into the system.

Other advantages include:

If a record needs to be located, electronic forms can be found much faster than a paper form.

Electronic signature process helps reduce the amount of paper used; however, West Region beneficiaries can still receive a print-out for their records.

“We're excited about this automated process because it's extremely easy for our beneficiaries to use,” said TriWest President and CEO David J. McIntyre, Jr. “We recognize the enrollment process can sometimes be complicated. By streamlining it with electronic signatures, we're helping to make the entire process more convenient for our customers.”

For more, follow TriWest on Facebook and Twitter: www.facebook.com/triwest and <http://twitter.com/triwest>

“YES, THE VA DOES PROVIDE A SURVIVOR BENEFIT, HOWEVER.

by Shane Ostrom, CFPR

It's getting worse. Commercial financial firms are now phone soliciting for business using the VA's survivor benefit to get their foot in the door with you. Be warned.

Originally, we heard about commercial financial firms presenting the VA's survivor benefit to residents of retirement communities and assisted living facilities. Now these firms are directly contacting people over the phones.

Yes, the VA has a survivor benefit but there are conditions for eligibility. First off, the military member has to be deceased. I mention this because some firms try to get you to apply before the member has passed. This indicates some firms don't even know how the VA programs work; a clear sign that the firm's objective is not helping you with VA benefits but getting into your pocket. Eligibility for the VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is:

The military member's death must be Service-connected, or, Immediately preceding death, the member was VA rated totally disabled for a period of at least 10 years, or, From the date of discharge from the Service, the member was rated totally disabled for at least 5 years preceding death, or, Former POWs who died after 30 Sept 1999, and were totally disabled for at least 1 years preceding death.

DIC is not based on financial need. There are other VA programs for survivors that are based on financial need and by that I mean very low income-poverty level. DIC provides \$1154 a month and the other programs vary but are around \$650 a month. All VA benefits are tax-free.

The objective behind these financial firms is to get access to your financial data and sale you other financial products. Some of these VA programs require you to submit a financial report and that is the point of the solicitations. These firms gain your financial info in order to apply for the VA benefit and the sales pitches follow.

Some of these firms also pitch legal products like trusts to hide your assets so you appear

low-income to qualify for a VA program. They will also pitch insurance, annuity and investment products. All products that produce large commissions for the firms.

These organizations are not authorized Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) yet they may lead you to believe they are. A real VSO is chartered by the VA to help people apply and follow-up on VA claims. The VSO service is free. Go to a VSO if you have questions or need help. Here's where to find a VSO in your area:

Search for the County Veteran Service Office in your state at <http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>.

A complete list of all VSOs is at <http://www1.va.gov/vso/index.cfm>

The VA does not solicit for your business. If you are approached to conduct business with the VA, either walk away or proceed carefully."

Cliff Samuel
Pay & Benefits Policy Team Leader
Compensation Division
USCG Headquarters (CG-1222)

THE LAST ISSUE OF ITS KIND!

With the cost cutting imposed by government budget constraints the end of an era comes to pass, and a new one is heralded. For decades the Retiree Council Northwest has printed and mailed newsletters to retirees homes. Monies to continue to do this very expensive activity have dried up! This is the last **HARD** copy of the Retiree Newsletter, but not our last newsletter!

From Summer 2011 forward all copies of this newsletter will be produced in PDF format and will be made available for download from the Council website. This change will not only save thousands of tax dollars, but will also afford the council the opportunity to produce a larger color newsletter to help keep our members up-to-date on important information relevant to the community. Goto http://www.cgretirenw.org/cgretireweb_007.htm to download our newsletters.



The Air Station Astoria, Ore., color guard presents colors during the opening of the Sector Columbia River activation ceremony at Air Station Astoria. Sector Columbia River was made official during the ceremony, in which Sector Portland, Ore., combined with Group/Air Station Astoria. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nate Littlejohn

COAST GUARD CREATES SECTOR COLUMBIA RIVER

The Coast Guard created Sector Columbia River when Sector Portland, Ore. combined with Group/Air Station Astoria, Ore., during a ceremony in Astoria, August 23, 2010. The formation of Sector Columbia River was part of an initiative commonly referred to as “sectorization,” part of a nationwide effort to consolidate the many responsibilities, missions and jurisdictions within the Coast Guard. The move is also aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of Coast Guard personnel and assets.

“The merger of these two major Coast Guard commands is designed to help improve and streamline our operational command and control organization for our many missions allowing for better service to our customers throughout the entire Columbia River region and along the Oregon coast,” said Captain Douglas Kaup, Sector Columbia River Commanding Officer.

USCG Sector Columbia River offices will be located at 2185 SE 12th Place, Warrenton, OR and will include the following subordinate units:

Unit

USCG MSU Portland
USCGC BLUEBELL (WLI 313)
USCG Station Portland

USCG Station Tillamook Bay
USCG Station Cape Disappointment
USCG Station Grays Harbor
USCG Aids to Navigation Team Astoria
USCG Aids to Navigation Team Kennewick

FY 2012 BUDGET IMPACT

EXCERPTS FROM SHIPMATES 10

Admiral Bob Papp, Commandant

There is no doubt that the current fiscal environment compelled us to make difficult decisions, however, even in these challenging times, it is clear that we continue to receive strong support. [The Budget] requests \$8.7 billion in discretionary funding, including \$1.42 billion to recapitalize our fleet of cutters, aircraft, boats, and C4ISR equipment.

The Budget fully supports pay and benefits increases for military service members and funds operation and maintenance of new assets and systems delivered to the fleet, including the National Security Cutter (NSC), Fast Response Cutter, Maritime Patrol Aircraft, Response Boat - Medium, and the Rescue 21 system.

We will proceed with the decommissioning of CGC HAMILTON, CGC CHASE, and CGC ACUSHNET this year. We continue to make great progress with the our NSC acquisition, including the planned delivery of CGC STRATTON, the third NSC, in FY 2011, and the award of the production contract for the 4th NSC and materials for the fifth NSC. The FY 2012 budget proposes the decommissioning of one High Endurance Cutter in FY 2012.

We will decommission MSST Anchorage in Fiscal Year 2011, furthermore, to best sustain polar icebreaking capacity, the Coast Guard plans to decommission CGC POLAR SEA in FY 2011, and focus our resources toward returning CGC POLAR STAR to full operational capability in 2013. With CGC POLAR STAR in the midst of a major overhaul that will extend its service life seven to ten years. In FY 2012, DHS will study icebreaking requirements [for] future icebreaking needs.

The budget requests \$642 million for vessel replacement, including six Fast Response Cutters and \$290 million for aircraft replacement and sustainment, including two HC-144s, and one HH-60 aircraft to replace CG-6017 lost in a tragic accident in 2010. Additionally, the budget includes \$187 million to recapitalize aged, failing shore infrastructure across the Coast Guard and provide infrastructure enhancements to support operation of new assets.

Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest Newsletter

c/o COMMANDING OFFICER
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**PRSR STD
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U. S. COAST GUARD
PERMIT NO. G-157**



KODIAK, Alaska - Family and friends wait patiently as the crew of the 110-foot Coast Guard Cutter Long Island ties up and disembarks the patrol boat in their hometown of Valdez following a 45 day deployment north of the San Juan Islands in support of security for the 2010 Vancouver, B.C., Olympics March 11, 2010. The crew transited more than 2,500 miles for the mission and this was the first time since the cutter's 2003 stationing in Valdez that it has left Alaska. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Lt. Erin Christensen.