

RETIREE NEWSLETTER

“They Also Serve”

COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 3

PENTAGON PLANS TO DROP ID CARD SSAN

Military Officers Association of America
Last year, the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) urged the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to explore options to protect service members from identity theft by removing the Social Security account number (SSAN) from military ID cards.

The fallout was a provision in the FY2007 Defense Authorization Act that tasked the Pentagon for a report and recommendations on how to address this pressing issue.

The Pentagon report, forwarded to Congress in July by Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) David Chu, cited the difficulties of moving entirely away from use of the SSAN, which is fundamental to all of the services' personnel records and innumerable embedded networks of security and record-keeping systems.

However, it acknowledged that the current system poses problems that need to be addressed and said the Defense Department intends to phase out the use of the printed SSAN



on ID cards over the next several years.

The plan is to move to an ID card that would print only the last four digits of the SSAN, with the full SSAN electronically encrypted on the card. This would provide additional protection to the individual members while still preserving data deemed essential for hundreds of purposes, from validating commissary check purchases to confirming the identities of prisoners of war.

The reason for the multi-year phase-out is to allow time to convert the large numbers of hardware and software systems to conform to the new card, and also to allow a phased replacement of more than three million ID cards of current members, retirees, family members, and survivors so ID card facilities aren't overwhelmed.

MOAA recognizes that making changes on such fundamental data elements is never easy or quick. We commend the Armed Services Committees for pressing the issue and defense leaders for acknowledging the problem and initiating a plan to address it.

HOLIDAY STOCKINGS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

Each year as family's gear up for the holidays there are over 2,000 children in the Seattle area that Santa might forget. These children live in 50 different homeless shelters around Puget Sound. In an effort to bring a little cheer to an otherwise dark holiday, some special friends are poised to do what they can to help. Holiday Stockings For Homeless Children is a non-profit foundation created by Coast Guard Families and friends. Its goal is to provide holiday stockings filled with toys, books, gifts and personal items for each child in area shelters. We try to combine the little gifts that every child likes to receive along with some essential items such as toothbrushes, gloves and socks that children off the street would find useful. Our gifts are appreciated. Shelters tell us that children hand their stockings by their beds for weeks after the holiday as a reminder that Santa did find them each year.

Our event will take place December 7th and 8th at Coast Guard Integrated Support Center, Pier 36. We are a non-profit 501-c3 and welcome help to create this little Christmas miracle



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each year.

If you'd like to donate or get some more information, check our website: holidaystockings.org or contact: bobette@holidaystockings.org and pearlgrantham@comcast.net



**USCG Healy Diver Memorial Dedication
Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Seattle, WA
August 17, 2007**

E-Mail Newsletter -- electronic mail notification resumes with the November 2007 newsletter published by the CG Retiree Council—NW. If you have already signed up for this notification, it is not necessary to submit a change. To add your name, or change your prior e-mail address, use the Retiree Council—NW website: <http://www.cgretirenw.org>. To make the change “click” on the block for Council Members and send YNCS Ev Black, Secretary or ETCM Tim Lackey, Council member.

FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY

Ev Black

Time once again to gather up some little known information for passing along to the retiree community.

By the time you read this edition of the CG Retiree Council – NW newsletter the Retiree Council Office located in Building 1, ISC Seattle will have relocated. The office will move further away from the main entry door to the building. This will allow the volunteer staff space for two (2) private interview rooms and a waiting/conference area. Office hours and days of operation remain Tuesdays and Thursdays from 0900 to 1400 hours. Walk-ins are welcome, however, should you need more than 5-10 minutes to present a question, you are advised to call ahead (206-216-6188) for scheduling a longer appointment. Please leave a message and a return call will be made on the staffs following working day.

Work on updating distribution procedures of the Council newsletter is nearing completion. Many of you contacted the Council regarding an incorrect middle initial in your name. This has been a long going situation with the electronic files at Retired Affairs Section (RAS), Topeka. A new electronic file system and issuance of Employee ID Numbers (EMPLID) beginning in December 2007 may lead to a correction of the problem. Regarding another issue, **your current mailing address**, if you have moved or your street address has changed recently, notify RAS Topeka in writing. Change requests sent to the CG

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COAST GUARD RETIREE COUNCIL NORTHWEST
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Seattle, Washington 98134

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Retiree Council - Northwest signed by the retiree will be forwarded to RAS after the Council records have been updated. A change of address must be signed by the retiree or annuitant.

A proposal to establish a volunteer program assisting recent widows and widowers with guidance through the maze of forms and instructions unfamiliar to them is under review by the CG Retiree Council – Northwest. More information will be available as the program proceeds towards launching. A project like this is one of many issues discussed during the Council’s quarterly meetings.

Tentative 2008 Council meeting dates will be presented at their October 20, 2008 quarterly meeting. Proposed dates are:

- January 12, 2008
- April 12, 2008
- July 12, 2008
- October 18, 2008

All meetings begin at 1030 hours in the Coho Conference Room located in the BEQ, ISC Seattle and last approximately one (1) hour. Guests are welcome. Should you arrive a half hour early (1000 hours) this time has been allocated for meeting the Council and other early arriving guests.

The Council web site www.cgretirenw.org is updated with new information from time to time. Updates usually are notice of changes to medical, pay information, identification cards, military humor or human interest articles (these notifications are informational only and not authority for action). EMCM Ken Laesser, the web master has recently added a block for email registration. You may use this method. Beginning in September 2006 a “counter” was added and through September 2007 there have been approximately 25,000 site visits.

ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT????

The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs as well as other Federal Agencies and corporate America have experienced many aspects of “Identity Theft.” Within the Federal Government your Social Security Number (SSN) has been used as identification. For Coast Guard retirees and annuitants beginning later this year you will be issued an Employee Identification Number (EMPLID). To lessen the threat of loss, when corresponding with an entity that uses the (SSN) for identification, Give your name, address, telephone number and the last four (4) numbers of SSN 0000.

FIRST-EVER PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST GUARD BALL A MAJOR SUCCESS

It was an evening marked by formal dress, tradition, fine food, dancing – and a lot of fun.

Nearly 400 people attended the Inaugural Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Ball at the Bellevue Westin Hotel on Saturday, 8 September. The event was sponsored by the Navy League of the United States-Lake Washington Council, and drew guests from all services.

Members of the Official Party were U.S. Coast Guard Chief of Staff, VADM Robert Papp, Jr.; Commander, 13th Coast Guard District, RADM John Currier; the immediate past District Commander, RADM Rick Houck (retired); 13th District Command Master Chief John Dunn; Coast Guard Headquarters Command Master Chief Bryan Clemons; and Navy League-Lake Washington Council President Dave Visneski, CAPT, USCG (retired). VADM Papp was also the keynote speaker. Each was welcomed to the Westin Ballroom by a bagpiper from the Coast Guard Pipe Band.

Among the distinguished guests was RADM Bert Kinghorn, Co-Chair, Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest. Heading the list was Bellevue Mayor Grant Degginger, who declared 8 September “Pacific Northwest Coast Guard Appreciation Day” in the city. Washington Governor Christine Gregoire sent her written greetings, expressing “best wishes for a memorable evening.” • Also attending were

- Navy League Northwest Region President-Elect, David Todd, Captain, U-S Navy, retired.
- Former U-S Navy Third Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Barry Costello, Retired.
- Former 13th Coast Guard District Commander, Rear Admiral Jeff Garrett, Retired
- Former 13th and 7th Coast Guard Districts Commander, Rear Admiral John Lockwood, Retired
- Rear Admiral John Parker, U-S Coast Guard, Retired.
- Representing Rear Admiral James A. Symonds, Commander, Navy Region Northwest, is Captain Thomas Dargan, Chief of Staff, Navy Region Northwest
- Thirteenth Coast Guard District Auxiliary Commodore Bruce Miller
- Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Integrated Support Command, Captain Jeff Belmondo

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OFFICIALS WELCOME CUTTER MUNRO TO NEWLY RECOGNIZED COAST GUARD CITY

By SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN, Kodiak Daily Mirror Writer

Monday, September 17, 2007: Kodiak was officially named homeport for the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Munro Friday at a change-of-port ceremony at the Kodiak Coast Guard Base, but for some Munro crewmembers the town had already achieved that status.

"In the past few weeks, I have seen many old friends who have said, 'Welcome back,'" Capt. Craig Lloyd, commander of the Munro, said during his remarks at the ceremony.

Lloyd was stationed here before as commanding officer of the cutter Alex Haley. He spoke to an audience of about 100 Kodiakans and the majority of the Munro's 150-member crew inside the gym on Base.

The ceremony included the usual formalities - uniformed Munro crewmembers standing at attention, a presentation of flags by the Coast Guard color guard, and a sextet on loan from the Air Force Band of the Pacific, playing "Semper Paratus."

But Lloyd's sentiments about Kodiak - that an island in the North Pacific with roughly 13,000 residents is a fine place to call home - was the chord most often struck during speeches at the ceremony.

"I know that you will have a long and important relationship with the city and the borough, and with the State of Alaska," state Sen. Gary Stevens of Kodiak told the Munro crewmembers.

Kodiak's strong ties with the Coast Guard are often described at ceremonious occasions on Base, and there is evidence the speakers are not simply preaching to a choir of supporters. Local organizations such as the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce often have current and retired Coast Guard employees as board members. Other boards reserve seats for Coast Guard representatives, such as the non-voting seat on the Kodiak Island Board of Education and a seat on the local hospital

advisory panel.

What do a dessert baker, a sea-kayaking guide, an assistant city clerk and the person managing the local landfill all have in common? In Kodiak, all are former Coasties. For whatever reason, the community Coasties nicknamed "The Rock" has become homeport for more than just two or three cutters and a fleet of helicopters and airplanes.

"This crew has returned to a community they can, and will, call home," said Vice Adm. Charles Wurster, commander of the Coast Guard Pacific Area Command said. "And to the crew of the Munro, I say, 'Welcome home.'"

Wurster, too, has ties to Kodiak. The Pacific Area Command is based in Alameda, Calif., but Wurster is a previous commander of Integrated Support Command Kodiak, the official name of the largest U.S. Coast Guard Base.

The following evening, Wurster and Rear Adm. Arthur Brooks, commander of Coast Guard District 17, based in Juneau, read a proclamation from Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad Allen naming Kodiak a Coast Guard City.

Kodiak is the eighth city in the U.S. to receive the designation since Congress created it in 1998.

Wurster also took time to motivate the Munro crew with a few words about their ship's namesake, Coast Guard signalman and World War II hero Douglas Munro.

Munro was a World War II hero who died leading several Coast Guard landing craft during an evacuation of U.S. Marines at Guadalcanal in September 1942. Munro was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism and is the only Coast Guardsman to have received that honor.

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KODIAK, Alaska-The Coast Guard Cutter Munro transits Womans Bay on its way to its new homeport in Kodiak Sept. 4, 2007. The Munro was previously homeported in Alameda, Calif. Official U.S. Coast Guard photo by PA1 Kurt Fredrickson.

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Eyewitnesses said Munro, while manning the gun on his landing craft, had his crew position their boat as a shield between attacking Japanese forces and the evacuating marines.

Munro's story involves not just heroism, but a signalman's quick rise to position of gunner and commander of a small flotilla because he was needed. The story is often retold in the Coast Guard, as motivation and as proof that no enlisted man is unimportant for the job at hand.

In the version of the story Wurster told Friday, Munro's last words during the evacuation of the Marines were "Did they get off?"

Coasties on patrol in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea, Wurster said, experience "the most extreme weather on the planet," and would do well to follow Munro's example. "Remember the importance of teamwork, and take care of your shipmates," he said.



Picture taken at Laurel Hill Cemetery, Cle Elum, WA (Sept. 27)--Sgt. Bill Sumner, U.S. Army (ret.) honors Signalman First Class Douglas Munro in traditional Native American attire as members of the Chief Petty Officers Association line up around the gravesite. USCG photo by PA3 Jamie Bigelow

THE WAR

A Ken Burns series, The War began 23 September 2007 with stories from the Pacific Northwest. Local PBS affiliates are deeply committed to the communities they serve and are reaching out to their viewers and members to capture and preserve Northwest experiences during WWII by documenting stories from the diverse communities they serve. Many stories will be published to the PBS websites and some will be archived with Museum of History and Industry in Seattle, Washington. PBS will collect stories until 31 May 2008. PBS seeks stories from WWII veterans as well as from those who endured the war at the home front. Contact your local PBS station if you would like to participate.

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- Commander, Coast Guard Sector Seattle, Captain Steve Metruck
- Commanding Officer, Coast Group Port Angeles, Captain Scott Pollock
- Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Cutter POLAR SEA, Captain Carl Uchytill (YOO-kuhtill)
- Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Cutter POLAR STAR, Chief Warrant Officer Ken Stuber
- Commanding Officer, Naval Engineering Support Unit Seattle, Commander Marc Lebeau

And it was. The event drew not only Coast Guard officers, but many enlisted members, as well. Ranks of those in attendance ranged from E3 to O9.

The Ball featured a Table of Honor, the cutting of a ceremonial cake, toasting, and formal recognition of nine outstanding members of the Coast Guard family, including a Reservist and a Coast Guard Auxiliarist.

Ceremonial and dance music was provided by Navy Band Northwest.



Captain Ray Copin, USCG Ret. and friends at the Ball



L to R: unknown, CAPT Metruck's guest (Peggy Duxbury), CAPT Steve Metruck, LCDR Christine Fern

CG Ball Images Continued on page 7

COAST GUARD DAY SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 2007



Swapping Sea Stories



Must be good food.



ETCM Tim Lackey, Retiree Council member and QMC Del Clark, CG Day coordinators



Coast Guard sweets, must we cut it?

MEET RADM JOHN P. CURRIER, NEW D13 COMMANDER

Rear Admiral John P. Currier, hailing from Westbrook, Maine, was commissioned in the U. S. Coast Guard after graduating from Officers Candidate School in 1976 and, on completion of Naval Flight Training, was designated a Coast Guard Aviator in 1977. A graduate of the University of Southern Maine, he holds a Masters in Business from Embry-Riddle University. He is a 1996 graduate of the U. S. Air Force Air War College in Montgomery, Alabama. Previous assignments have included duty at Coast Guard Air Stations Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Sitka, Alaska. He was designated an Aeronautical Engineer in 1982 and served as Engineering Officer at Coast Guard Air Stations Traverse City, Michigan and Astoria, Oregon. Other assignments have included Deputy Program Manager (Engineering) for the U. S. Coast Guard HH-60J and Navy HH-60H helicopter acquisition at the Naval Air Systems Command in Washington DC. RADM Currier commanded Air Station Detroit, Michigan from 1996 through 1998. He served as Chief of Search and Rescue Operations and Director of Auxiliary for the Ninth Coast Guard District (Great Lakes) from 1998 through 2001. He then commanded Air Station Miami, the world's busiest air-sea search and rescue unit, from August 2001 through June 2003. Subsequently, he served as Pacific Area Chief of Operations, and then as Area Chief of Staff. Promoted to Flag rank in 2005, his most recent assignment was Assistant Commandant for Acquisition at Coast Guard Headquarters.

RADM Currier's awards include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Commendation Medal with "O" device, Achievement Medal with "O" device and others.

RADM Currier is a veteran aviator with over 6000 flight hours in Coast Guard and Navy fixed and rotary wing aircraft. His professional recognition includes the Harmon International Aviation Trophy, the Alaska Air Command SAR Pilot of the Year Award, American Helicopter Society, Fredrick L. Feinberg Award and the Naval Helicopter Association SAR Aircrew of the Year, all awarded for hazardous rescue missions.

RADM Currier is married to the former Mars Jane Greenleaf of South Portland, Maine. They have two adult sons, Benjamin and Andrew.

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*Piper: Bellevue Police Officer Kyle Woodruff,
Coast Guard Pipe Band*



RADM Rick Houck, Ret. and Dr. Lani Houck.



*YN2 Mikel Kirker, HS3 Julie Row, YN2 Jacquelyn
Rocklage, and YN3 Trent Wood*

TRICARE EMPLOYER HEALTH PLANS:

Many military retirees who work for defense contractors, airlines, and certain state governments are getting letters from their employers that their health coverage options will change as of 1 JAN. In many cases, it's a notice that the employer will no longer be able to offer a TRICARE supplement as one of its health plan options. That's because a provision in last year's Defense Authorization Act (FY2007) bars civilian employers from offering their employees incentives to use TRICARE rather than the company's normal health plan. It specifically bars offering employees a TRICARE supplement. Congress has no problem with retirees choosing TRICARE on their own initiative, since they earned the right to the TRICARE benefit through their service. But Don and Congress developed extensive evidence that many employers - including several state governments - have been consciously working to shift their health care costs to TRICARE, sending letters to TRICARE-eligible employees urging them to use TRICARE rather than the employer's plan. And tens of thousands of TRICARE-eligibles across the country have taken up these offers in recent years. This was part of the reason that DoD proposed raising fees for TRICARE enrollees by up to \$1,000 a year - to help stem the tide of people opting out of employer-based plans. So far, Congress has agreed that imposing steep TRICARE fee hikes isn't the appropriate reaction. But the Armed Services Committees took a dim view of employers who seek to cut their costs at TRICARE's expense, and changed the law to try to discourage that behavior.

Initially, the law was interpreted as barring any reimbursement that could be used to cover TRICARE expenses. That strict interpretation would have barred TRICARE-eligibles from participating in company-sponsored cafeteria plans (under which employees can receive a specified amount of cash that can be used to purchase coverage) or plans that pay a flat monthly amount to any employee who elects to use alternative coverage, whether TRICARE or a spouse's employer plan. At MOAA's urging, the Committees included language indicating that these kinds of initiatives should not be barred because they are not specifically aimed at TRICARE. Put it's hard to argue that a TRICARE supplement isn't TRICARE-specific. So what can TRICARE-eligibles do if they get a letter notifying them that their employer is terminating a company-offered TRICARE supplement?

The first option is to ask the employer to offer a flat-rate payment in lieu of the supplement. If the company is willing to pay the cost of a supplement, one would think they'd be willing to pay up to the cash equivalent. But to be allowed under the new law, the payment needs to be non-TRICARE-specific. That is, it should be the same amount for an employee who chooses TRICARE as it is for an employee who chooses coverage under a spouse's employer plan. Many employers already offer such cash payment plans; it's just a matter of including TRICARE-eligibles in them.

Another alternative is to enroll in TRICARE Prime, if Prime is available in your area.

[Source: MOAA Leg Up 28 Sep 07]

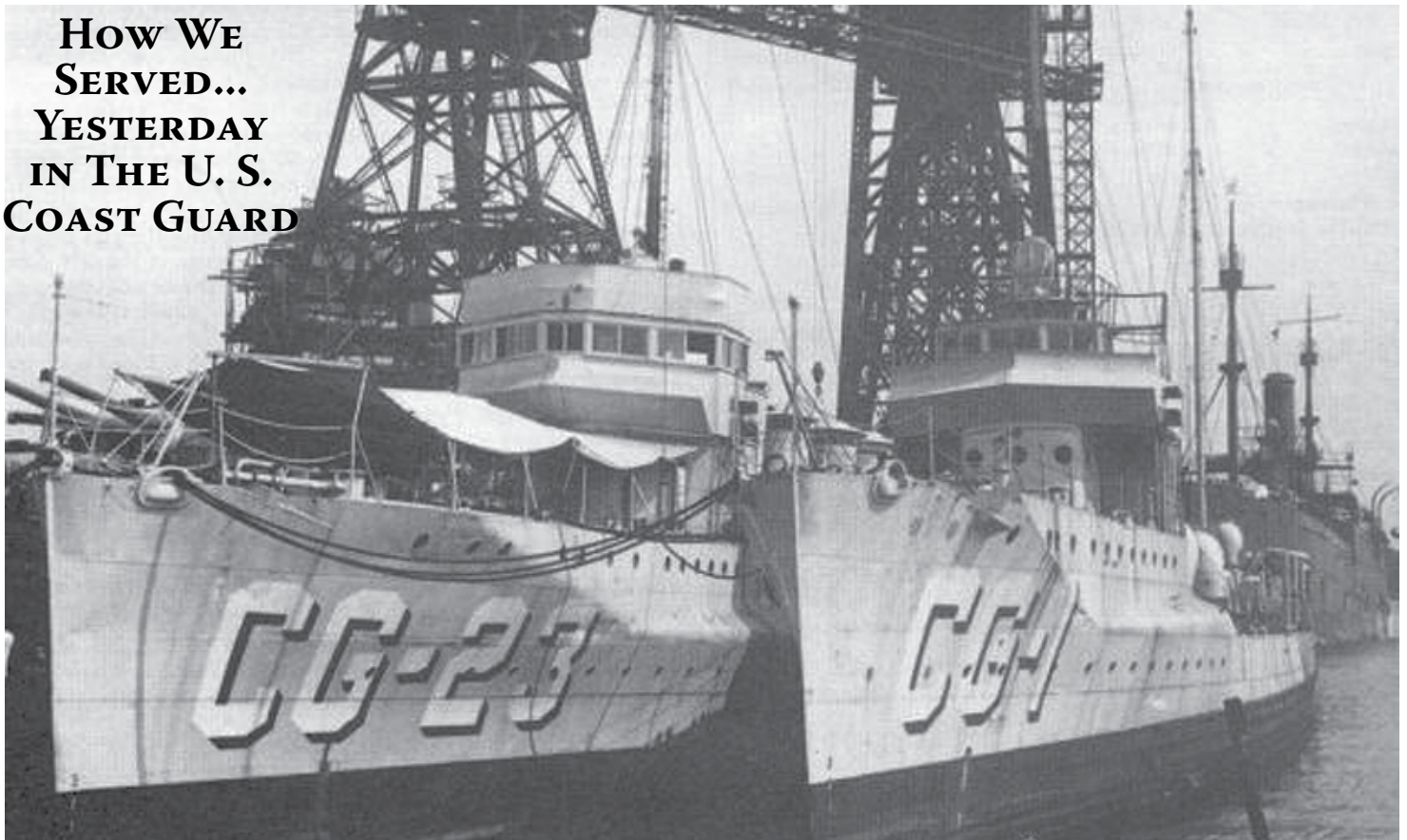
Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest Newsletter

c/o COMMANDING OFFICER
USCG Integrated Support Command
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1519 Alaskan Way South, Bldg. 1
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**HOW WE
SERVED...
YESTERDAY
IN THE U. S.
COAST GUARD**



The USCGC Tucker (CG-23) was a DD acquired in the 1920's from Navy for use during the Prohibition Era and commanded briefly by Russel Randolph Waesche who would later become the longest serving Commandant of the U S Coast Guard from 1936-45