



the QUARTERDECK LOG

Membership publication of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association. Publishes quarterly—Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. Not sold on a subscription basis. The Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association is a Non-Profit Association of Active Duty, Retired, Reserve and Honorably Discharged Former Members of the United States Coast Guard who served in, or provided direct support to, combat situations recognized by an appropriate military award while serving as a member of the United States Coast Guard.

Volume 38, Number 1

1st Quarter 2023



USCGC Sherman (WHEC-720) Operation Southern Watch The Sinking of M/V Zainab

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DON'T MISS OUT**

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Vietnam page 17**

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS ASSOCIATION

ELECTED OFFICERS

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National Vice President—Bruce Bruni, LM

National Secretary/Treasurer—Gary Sherman, LM

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1st Term— Joe Prince, LM, Mark Pearson, LM

2nd Term—Floyd “Butch” Hampton, LM, Michael Johnson, LM

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE*

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*Use the Administrative Office for contact with the

CGCVA on all matters

THE QUARTERDECK LOG

Editor/Publisher — Bruce Bruni, LM, bfb203@gmail.com

AUXILIARY OFFICERS

National President—Barbara Weeks

National Vice President—Linda Kay

National Secretary / Treasurer—Javaughn Miller

APPOINTED OFFICERS

ByLaws—Gary Sherman, LM

Reunion Planners—PNP Michael Placencia, LM

Michael Johnson, LM, Bruce Bruni, LM, Joe Prince, LM

Membership—PNP Michael Placencia, LM

Historian—PNP/Founder Paul C. Scotti, LM

Service Officers—Thomas Huckelberry, LM,

Richard Hogan Jr., LM, and Larry Jones, LM

MAA— Russ Weeks

Chaplain—Vince Patton, LM

Parliamentarian—PNP Michael Placencia, LM

Nominating Committee—Bill Femia, LM

Cape May Liaison—Thomas Dougherty, LM

MEAP—Edward Bachand, LM, and

Ship’s Store Manager—Russell Allyson

COAST GUARD HISTORY CONTRIBUTOR

Dr. William Theisen, Ph.D., CG Historian

President’s comment Feb 2023

Last year and its numerous adverse weather events are well behind us as we set our sights on our May reunion at Reno, NV. Kudos are due for PNP Mike Placencia, LM, NVP Bruce Bruni, LM, Mike Johnson, LM, and Joe Prince, LM, for their continued work in planning and negotiating a suitable location for the membership to reunite at our biennial social event. It is not too early to consider a location for our 2025 reunion; therefore, we request that you bring your choice of three cities, east of the Mississippi River, to the business meeting or e-mail your choices to cgcva@comcast.net. We’ll have a vote at the business meeting to determine the top three cities from which the reunion committee will select an ideal location. Consideration will be given to proximity to Coast Guard presence, interesting nearby attractions, numbers of members in the region, and amenities available at local hotels. We have had a good initial response for attendance at the 2023 event; however, time is drawing near so we urge you to complete the form on page 16 and send it to the address indicated.



Since our founding nearly 40 years ago, we have modified our logo many times. Our most recent rebranding features a more majestic eagle and adjustment of the coloring. We will use the newest logo on our latest initiative to promote the Coast Guard’s military readiness role and its past combatant successes. We are working with the leadership at the USCG Officer Candidate School to develop a physical fitness readiness award to recognize a candidate in the Direct Commission Officer Program. The award will be our latest commemorative coin; it will honor Vietnam veteran and Silver Star recipient CDR Lonnie L. Mixon, USCG (retired). Lonnie is one of the most decorated aviators on the Coast Guard Aviation Association’s Roll of Valor. His story, and those of other Coast Guard aviators in Vietnam, was featured in the last issue of the QDL as well as in this one and in the upcoming 2nd Quarter 2023 issue.

Until we meet in May, Semper Paratus,

Terry O’Connell

FROM THE NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

The reunion has been on the front burner for those of us who are on the Reunion Committee. As stated in previous QDL editions, we have worked diligently to find a great venue with an affordable lodging rate, and Reno offered that opportunity. We know that the economy is not as great as it was two years ago, and many are facing a limited income, but we hope that you will make the reunion your vacation destination for 2023. This will be the last QDL before the reunion, but you can still register to attend. At the reunion, you will be meeting new friends and reconnecting with old ones. I truly hope to see all of you in attendance. The reunion registration form is on page 16.

Reservations with the hotel may be made by calling this number, 800-648-1177. Use the code GCGVA23 to request the reunion rate. If you would like to make your stay a longer vacation than just the reunion, the same rate of \$79/night is offered for the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights prior to the reunion and the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights following. Additionally, there is complimentary self-parking and valet parking for all hotel guests and attendees. I have to give Mike Placencia the credit for negotiating the deal. Great job Mike!

Terry O'Connell recommended bringing location suggestions for the 2025 biennial reunion, as well as recommendations for improving our organization. Also, be sure to read the proposed changes to the bylaws, found on page 14 of this issue, before casting your vote for approval or disapproval at the reunion's business meeting.

As Terry and Gary have mentioned in their comments, the CGCVA has recently developed another challenge coin to recognize the physical readiness of a graduate from the OCS-Direct Commissioning program. The program offers candidates, with a certain desired skill, a commission into the Active or Reserve components of the Coast Guard. Those skills include aviation, lawyer, cyber, engineering, maritime academy

graduates, medicine that include physicians, dentists and physician assistants, prior service military officers and candidates from the Selected Reserve. Many of the latter category are members of the CGCVA, including me. We look forward in providing a similar coin to the OCS graduates at some point in the future.



As noted in the last couple of issues, the CGCVA is rebranding its image with a revised logo, new polo shirts, challenge coins, ball caps, and patches. Please visit the Ship's Store on page 30 to see what is being offered for sale.

The silent auction at the reunions is one source of income for the CGCVA. We always are impressed with the variety of items that are donated for this fund raising effort. Please read Auxiliary President Barbara Weeks's article on page 7 about the silent auction, and think about donating an item to the event. Time is running short for submission, so hurry.

This quarter, 15 new members joined the CGCVA. It is through your recruiting efforts that this has occurred. Our numbers have dwindled over the past several years, so recruitment is vital. A special Bravo Zulu goes out to Life Member, Charles A. Hawken, for his recruitment efforts of seven new members. Well done. Keep up the great work.

Finally, this edition of the QDL contains the second part of the story about the ten Coast Guard aviators who were members of the 37th Aerospace Recovery and Rescue Squadron. It is a story that is little known among Coast Guard personnel and veterans, even more so unknown by the general public. I hope that you enjoy reading "Bear" Mosely's impressive story. The third and final part will be published in the next edition of the QDL.

~ Bruce Bruni, NVP

FROM THE NATIONAL SECRETARY / TREASURER

FROM THE NATIONAL SECRETARY/ TREASURER: 1st Quarter 2023

RENO 2023

Nine weeks out from the start of the Reno Reunion, we already have 60+ members (and spouses) signed up and paid, so we are hopeful to have record attendance for this reunion. The Reunion Committee has picked a terrific venue, planned activities and set us up for a great time.

If you haven't submitted your CGCVA registration and made hotel reservations, it's certainly not too late to do so. Please get your registration and check in as soon as possible so we can notify the hotel and meet our contract obligations, which gave us the lowest hotel rate we've had in ten years.

In addition to the bus trip, we have Associate member, Robert Breen and author Dr. Douglas Campbell who will give a presentation on the USS Serpens and the loss of the U. S. Coast Guard crew on 29 January 1945.

It should be an interesting presentation and all are welcomed to attend.

SHIP'S STORE NEWS

We have been re-branding our Ship's Store with the new logo and have created a new baseball cap, which will be available in late March. Please check out the Ship's Store page of the website to see what new items are available.

The new polo shirts are selling, we have plenty in stock, and we'll be ordering more very soon. These new shirts are top quality, with a no-wrinkle finish. The same shirt at a retail sportswear store would be \$60 but we're selling them for \$44 plus shipping and making some money for the Association.

NEW CHALLENGE COIN

It occurred to our National President, Terry

O'Connell, that we currently present the Jack Campbell Physical Fitness Award to one member of each Recruit Company, at Cape May. The CGCVA also awards the CDR Quentin Walsh Physical Fitness Award to one male and one female of the First Year cadets at the Coast Guard Academy.



The CGCVA has been recognizing the Cape May recruits and Academy cadets for their physical fitness since 1997, but haven't recognized candidates at the Officer Candidate School (OCS) or the Direct Commission (DC) program. Many of the future leaders of the Coast Guard are commissioned through these programs, including National President Terry O'Connell (OCS), and National Vice President, Bruce Bruni (Selected Reserve DC).

The fitness award for the OCS program is currently tabled, but the OCS director recently approved our proposal in recognizing the individual of the Direct Commission program that scores the highest mark in physical fitness for each of the classes that convene three times a year.

For the award's namesake we have selected Commander Lonnie L. Mixon. CDR Mixon is a 1958 graduate of the OCS program and served as an exchange helicopter pilot with the U.S. Air Force in Vietnam. He was awarded the Silver Star for his conspicuous gallantry in his attempt to rescue a downed pilot on 1 July 1968. It was only fitting to honor CDR Mixon by naming the award after him.

We will have photos of the new coin in the next issue, and we are stocking all coins so that these programs continue well into the future!

Semper Paratus!

Gary Sherman
National Secretary/Treasurer

BOOSTER CLUB

THE QDL BOOSTER CLUB

The QDL Booster Club provides a tax-exempt opportunity to donate funds to offset the cost of printing and mailing the Quarterdeck Log. Donations should be sent to the Administrative Office with the memo section of the check marked "QDL Booster Club." Contributor's names will be published with dollar amounts remaining confidential. We greatly appreciate the following members who have made contributions to the Booster Club since the last edition of the QDL was published.

CURRENT QDL BOOSTER DONATIONS

David "Boog" Powell, Thomas Dougherty, Gerald A. Nauert, Paul Flynn, Robert Breen,
Rex M. Wessling, Taylor Lapham, Jr., Edward Hludzenksi, Joe Aills

IN MEMORY OF DONATIONS

Stephen and Kay Petersen, IMO Tommy Bowden, Ed Floyd, and Jack Barker;
Daniel Irwin IMO Wally Chase, QMCM CGC Hamilton, RVN 69-70,
Jack R. Hamlin IMO U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Flotilla #1, Normandy
Les Koehn IMO Rear Admiral "Bud" Sparks
Pete (Sack) Levance IMO Stanley Vilitiski
William Femia IMO Jack Prohoda, CGC Chase

CROSSED THE BAR

It is with sadness that we take note of the following members who have crossed the bar.

John Krantz, LM, WWII; Donald M. Grandstaff, LM, WWII;
Richard R. D'Agostino, DST, Gerald A. McGill, RVN, Carroll R. Logue, LM, WWII

NEW MEMBERS

NEW MEMBER	SHIP/UNIT IN COMBAT ZONE	CONFLICT	SPONSOR
Patrick A. Fruscello, Jr	CGC Hamilton	RVN	
Paul J. Carmony	CGC Winona	RVN	Charles A. Hawken, LM
Roger J. Jergeson	CGC Winona	RVN	Charles A. Hawken, LM
Dennis L. Andreas	CGC Winona	RVN	
Duane L. Allen	CGC Winona	RVN	Charles A. Hawken, LM
Kenneth M. Bienko	PSU-301	DST	James Cudney/Bruce Bruni, LM
Randy P. Aversano	CGC Winona	RVN	Charles A. Hawken, LM
Andrew K. Pannelli	CGC Sherman	AFEM	
Dennis R. Kleckner	CGC Winona	RVN	Charles A. Hawken, LM
Philip J. Muise	PSU-312	GWOT	
Christopher B. Randolph	CGC Sherman	GWOT	Edward Semler
David S. Showell	CGC Winona	RVN	Charles A. Hawken, LM
William A. Davis	CGC Winona	RVN	Charles A. Hawken, LM
Melvin L. Kankelfritz	LORSTA Lampang, TH	RVN	

AUXILIARY NEWS



AUXILIARY NEWS *National Auxiliary President*

Hello and Happy (almost) Spring!

The CGCVA Auxiliary board members are looking forward to seeing everyone at the reunion and convention!!

The CGCVA Reunion committee has now finalized the plans for another wonderful reunion and convention in Reno, NV, May 2023.

The Auxiliary luncheon is planned for Tuesday, May 9th, and offers an opportunity to make and re-establish friendships new and old. Our speaker is yet to be determined, but if you have suggestions for a speaker, theme, or prefer just social time, please contact the committee, Javaughn Miller, Linda Kay or me.

Please remember to bring your dues up to date by contacting Javaughn Miller at: Jallsmiller0@gmail.com. (That is a numerical zero (0) after miller).

Also, just a reminder that we are in need of a nomination committee chairperson/persons whose responsibility will be to enlist future candidates for positions within the Auxiliary. Please feel free to contact me at: weeksbarbara1@gmail.com with your ideas, interests and suggestions. (That is a numerical one (1) after barbara).

Please see page 7 for information on shipping donated items for the reunion's silent auction. We do have several nice items that have already been donated for the auction, but we encourage you to consider making a donation if you haven't already done so. The silent auction is one of the methods for funding the organization.

Warm wishes and hope to see you soon!

Barbara

COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS ASSOCIATION AUXILIARY MEMBER APPLICATION

Membership Type: Auxiliary _____ New _____ Renewal _____ Returning _____
Two Year Membership from May 20 _____ to May 20 _____

Name: _____ Date: _____ 20 ____ Email Address: _____

Home Phone Number: (____) ____ - _____ Cell: (____) ____ - _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Dues: **\$15.00 for a two-year membership.** Make check or money order payable to CGCVA.

Mail to: [Gary Sherman, CGCVA National Secretary/Treasurer, P.O. Box 969, Lansdale, PA 19449](mailto:Gary.Sherman@CGCVA.org)

Auxiliary Membership Qualifications: Family of members of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association in good standing

Associate Membership Qualifications: All other interested parties. Associated membership is a non-voting membership

For additional information, please contact: Javaughn Miller (Auxiliary National Secretary/Treasurer)

Email: jallsmiller0@gmail.com or (619) 328-8576

AUXILIARY NEWS

DONATED ITEMS FOR SILENT AUCTION

We ask that you consider donating items for the silent auction. Donations continue to be our largest fund raiser. To date, we have been notified of some very impressive donation items. If you are unable to transport your items, MCPO (ret) George Ingraham, an association member who resides in Reno, has agreed to accept packages after March 17th.

Make sure that you fill out the Silent Auction Item Donation Form found below. We need to know what is being donated so that we can track the items, ensuring that all donated items are received.

NOTE: In the past reunions, some poorly wrapped items sustained loss or damage during shipment. In one instance, a shipper's box

containing unsecured heavy brass items split open, resulting in the partial loss of the contents. Please make sure that all items are individually wrapped to prevent damage or loss while in transit. It is also recommended that you insure the items that you are shipping as well.

Once your items are ready for shipment, please contact me via email for mailing instructions and shipping address. My email address is: **weeksbarbara1@gmail.com**. (That is a numerical one (1) after babara).

Thank you!

Barbara

SILENT AUCTION DONATION FORM

Your Name: _____

Email: Address: _____

Description of Item: _____

Value: \$ _____ Minimum Bid Requested: \$ _____

Please email **this form** to Barbara Weeks at : weeksbarbara1@gmail.com or snail mail the form to: **Barbara Weeks, 722 Glenvale Drive, Coopersville, MI 49404**.

Barbara will acknowledge receipt of the form you send and will provide the mailing address and shipping directions for sending the donated item(s) to MCPO George Ingraham.

Please ensure that you receive an email from Barbara, confirming that she has received your donation information.

Thank you,

Barbara

COVER STORY

USCGC SHERMAN (WHEC-720)

PERSIAN GULF 2001

M/V ZAINAB SINKING

M/V DIAMOND, M/V GEORGIOS, AND M/V KADE JAH SEIZURES

By Ed Semler, CGCVA member

USCGC Sherman (WHEC-720) was deployed in the Persian Gulf from 28 February to 10 May 2001, enforcing United Nations Sanctions against the country of Iraq and participating in Operation Southern Watch. *Sherman* transited to the operating area with the *USS Stethem (DDG-63)* and the *USS Paul F. Foster (DD-964)*. Once in the Persian Gulf, they joined the *USS Harry S. Truman (CVN-75)* battle group.

After operating in the Northern Persian Gulf, *Sherman* was assigned in early April to the Southern Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. While most of the U.S. and allied warships were participating in another joint exercise, Neon Falcon, *Sherman* was on the prowl for smugglers.



Map of Persian Gulf with Kezar & Comiskey holding area along with site of *M/V Zainab* sinking

Stethem needed to depart for carrier duties with the *Truman* in support of Neon Falcon, and handed *Sherman* custody of the *M/V Diamond* anchored in the Kezar holding area, was just off the coast of the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.).

While maintaining custody of the *Diamond*, I boarded her several times along with one of our corpsman, HSC Liz Beck, conducting health and comfort visits. *Sherman* also maintained a six member custody crew aboard *Diamond*, which was rotated every 12 hours. Eventually, *Sherman* was tasked with escorting *Diamond* to Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. for disposition.

On the 11th of April, while in transit with *Diamond*, *Sherman* was redirected to rendezvous with *Foster* in the Northern Arabian Gulf to take over custody of the Georgian flagged *M/V Zainab*, enabling *Foster* to proceed to Neon Falcon. *Sherman* left a six-man custody crew with *Diamond* and steamed to meet *Foster*. After taking custody of *Zainab*, *Sherman* placed a custody crew aboard. The *USNS Catawba (T-ATF-168)*, aka “the Desert Cat”, rendezvoused with *Sherman* and continued to escort *Zainab* along with *Sherman* back to secure *Diamond*.

While in transit on the 12th, the *Mighty Duck 746* (a Navy HH-3 helicopter) delivered four Navy EOD divers and four loads of cargo and mail. *Sherman* was experiencing severe vibration with her propulsion shafting, and the divers were flown out to inspect them. It was an interesting evolution with the *Mighty Duck* lowering the divers and their gear down onto our flight deck. We anchored in 208 feet of water so the divers could clear fish netting from our propeller shafting. When they finished, the *Mighty Duck* came back out and hoisted them and their gear back up, and off they went. With the fish netting cleared, *Sherman* and the flotilla proceeded on.

By the 13th, *Sherman* had four gold boarding team members on *Catawba*, seven gold members on *Zainab*, and eight blue team members on *Diamond*. When the *Zainab* was caught, she was loaded down with over 3,800 tons of illegal Iraqi oil and was headed out of the Persian Gulf to Pakistan. The Navy boarding team that seized her had been told by *Zainab*’s crew that her only two diesel fuel

COVER STORY

storage tanks were contaminated with seawater. Therefore, the Navy crew was having to transfer diesel fuel via a small boat in 5 gallon cans to *Zainab* to keep the engines running, a very labor intensive process. When *Sherman* took custody, our Engineering officer, LT Dave Soggi, went aboard to investigate and within hours found a third diesel fuel storage tank full and uncontaminated. The crew had been lying about not having a good fuel source.

Zainab and her crew were bad characters.

In September 2000, she was intercepted by *HMS Marlborough* but released as she was unseaworthy and sabotaged. In December 2000, she was intercepted by the U.A.E. In January 2001, she was intercepted by *USS Hewitt* and released after being cleared of an engine casualty. And finally in February, she was intercepted by *USS Arleigh Burke*, but released once again for being unseaworthy.

On the 14th of April at 0702, while transiting back to *Diamond*, along with *Zainab* and *Catawba*, *Sherman* conducted a morning boarding on *M/V Qamar*. *Sherman* had no problem multi-tasking! The vessel was cleared as having legitimate cargo.

Zainab and *Catawba* were slowly trailing behind *Sherman*. They had dropped behind as they had to transit around several Iranian claimed islands and the sea state had worsened. Unknown to the custody crew, the captain of the *Zainab* had been pumping sea water into the ship thinking we would release his vessel if we thought it was sinking and unseaworthy, as had happened in the past.



M/V Zainab
taking on
water



M/V Zainab
with decks
nearly awash

Photo
courtesy of
FN Kort
Huettinger

At 0815 *Sherman* received a report from *Catawba* that *Zainab* was taking on water. By 0850 *Sherman* had the rescue and assistance team aboard *Zainab* conducting damage control. MKC John Young was aboard *Zainab* and told me the crew acted indifferent about the condition of their vessel, almost as if they had been on a sinking vessel before.

As I watched from the *Sherman*, you could see she was very low in the water and was producing a large sheen of oil. As *Zainab* steamed closer, she was taking on water over her port side and this forced her in a circular motion to port as if her rudder was hard over. The rescue and assistance team, upon investigating below decks, determined the vessel was sabotaged and flooding. They quickly set up dewatering measures to slow the flooding. By this time, she had drifted into U.A.E. waters and they had sent a small boat out, *U.A.E. 655*, to investigate. At 1247 the eleven-member crew of *Zainab* were transferred to the *U.A.E. 655*. At 1259 six of the boarding team members were removed and transferred back to *Sherman*. As the small boats circled *Zainab* and transported personnel to and from her, their hulls became coated with floating oil. From the deck of *Sherman* the smell of crude oil permeated the air.

The rescue and assistance and boarding team kept trying to dewater the vessel, but the flooding was too bad and it finally took the vessel over. At 1322 when all hope of salvage was lost, Captain Ryan, *Sherman's* Commanding Officer, gave the order to pull the remaining team members from the vessel. Minutes later at 1340 we watched the *Zainab* roll to

COVER STORY



Evacuating the boarding and rescue and assistance teams from *M/V Zainab*

Photo courtesy TC2 Chris Guinther

her port side and her bow start to go under.

It didn't take long for the *Zainab* to sink like a rock. After she went down, she left behind a pretty good sized debris field of anything that would float. To limit the navigational hazard this floating junk may cause, *Sherman* opened up on the junk with machine gun fire in an effort to sink the bigger items. After sinking a majority of the floating hazards, *Sherman* secured machine gun fire due to vessel traffic in the area.

I will have to say that over my eleven years at sea, I have responded to countless search and rescue cases involving vessels sinking, but I have never witnessed a vessel of this size going under. Watching the video I took of the event years later, it's still amazing!



M/V Zainab sinking

The *Zainab* is now a permanent fixture at the bottom of the Persian Gulf under about 85 feet of water, 20 miles off the coast of Jebel Ali, U.A.E. at 25° 14.9'N 054° 51.5'E.

We lost the *Zainab* but we still had the *Diamond* in custody.

On the 15th, I boarded *Diamond* and had an interesting encounter with their engineering officer who spoke broken English. I was conducting the boarding to find out about liquid load information, which he provided me. We then sat down to eat the military's prepackaged meals, ready to eat (MRE), together. As a good will gesture while conducting health and comfort boardings, we always tried to get to know the crew and would break bread with them. He and his crew seemed to really enjoy the small bottles of hot sauce in the MREs, and he asked if I had more. I really didn't like hot sauce and had a bunch of left-over bottles in my back pack and gave them to him.

He was an interesting Iraqi man who was obsessed with the cost of goods in America compared to Iraq. In our conversation, he was determined to convince me that Iraqi goods were cheaper than goods in the United States. He seemed to have pleased himself when he asked me how much a chicken costs in the United States, and I gave him my answer of about \$3.00. He said in a proud voice that it was much cheaper in Iraq! With all the sanctions and turmoil going on in his country, I wondered if you could even find a chicken in Iraq.

I would spend the night on *Diamond* with the rest of the boarding team as we spent the 16th transiting. On the 17th, we had eight boarding team members on *Catawba* and seven on *Diamond*. We were using the *Catawba* as a platform to stage boarding teams to rotate out on *Diamond* so we could still conduct flight operations and vessel surveillance. The three of us were slowly making our way to Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. for disposition.

By this time, the captain of the *Diamond* had lost his patience with us and submitted a letter demanding we release his vessel. Captain Ryan replied that his letter would be forwarded to the proper authority. Even with his vessel in Coast Guard

COVER STORY

Aboard
M/V Diamond -
MKC John
Young & MKCM
Ed Semler
(author) seated.
RD3
Steve Oakford
and
MK1 Dwayne
Fontenot
in background



Iranian Hendijan class gunboat shadowing us

custody, the *Diamond's* captain was still responsible for the safety of the *Diamond* and crew.

The 18th found us still making our way to Abu Dhabi. The *Diamond* was experiencing an oil leak on one of its engines. I went back over to the *Diamond* along with several other machinery technicians (MKs) and we stabilized the oil leak. After getting back on board *Sherman*, we left the *Diamond*, with twelve members of security team "Q" aboard. With *Catawba*, we lined up on *USNS Pecos (T-A-197)* to take on 90,521 gallons of fuel and 26 pallets of cargo, via their helicopter, before heading on to Abu Dhabi.

Refueled and resupplied, Captain Ryan requested clearance to conduct intercept operations in the Southern Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman with hopes of locating the high value smuggler *M/V Fal II*. This was granted and on the 19th in the Gulf of Oman, we started to query the *M/V Al Asshaar*. On the 20th, we started tracking the Honduran flagged *M/V Hurmoz* in relatively the same location as *Asshaar*.

We continued patrolling and had moved into the Strait of Hormuz. At 0923 on the 22nd in location 26° 24.1N 56° 43.6E, we made contact with the *M/V Georgios* and maneuvered to intercept her.

When we neared the strait, an Iranian Hendijan class gunboat came out to make sure we stayed out of their territorial waters as *Georgios* steamed just inside of them. The gunboat came right up to us in a threatening manner, and we set general quarters. As

they shadowed us, we saw that they had their guns covered, so they posed no immediate threat. Nevertheless we stayed prepared and they shadowed us until we reached the strait, at which point they broke off. This class of vessel is known to carry Noor missiles. But after reviewing my video of the event, I could not see them mounted on the vessel that came out to inspect us.

When we cleared the Strait of Hormuz, there was a window of opportunity when *Georgios* was in open water and fair game. That's when we had Boarding Team Black ready and waiting to board her. As the boarding team approached, the captain of the *Georgios* threatened to blow his vessel up if we attempted to board her!

As the boarding team stood off of *Georgios*, they noticed that although the captain was calling his vessel *Georgios*, the name painted on the stern was *Gillian Everard, London*. The *Georgios* was still acting erratically and threatened to ram the small boat that the boarding team was in. At this point, our window of opportunity to seize *Georgios* was closing, and Captain Ryan decided to break off contact with her and she once again entered Iranian waters.

We continued to track *Georgios*, and on the 24th at 1707, we intercepted her in the middle of the Gulf of Oman, north of Muscat, U.A.E. She was just over 260 feet long and was designed to carry cargo, not liquid loads. Her pilot house sat to the rear of the vessel and she had two cargo masts, one amid ship

COVER STORY



RD3 Steve Oakford and CWO Paul Sepp on the bridge wing of the *M/V Georgios*

and one toward the bow.

Boarding Team Black was readied and sent to board her with *Sherman* standing off for protection. Team black made a quick board at 1745, and the *Georgios* captain was reported as being compliant, although he claimed that the vessel's steering was inoperative. I was sent over at 1812 to assist the boarding team and investigate the steering casualty.

At 1845 Boarding Team Golf, with CWO Paul Sepp in charge, was onboard *Georgios*. *Georgios* was found to be carrying illegal cargo. At 1946 the Black Team was relieved and sent back to *Sherman*.

During this event, we also detected a second suspect vessel, the *M/V Kade Jah*, transiting along the edge of Iranian territorial water. On the 25th, we intercepted her and Boarding Team Black was placed on board at 0504. We thought she looked familiar. It turns out she was recently renamed and was previously the *M/V Al Maha*, a vessel we tracked and had to let go back on the 18th of March, after she slipped deep into Iranian waters. Needless to say, this time she was found to be carrying illegal cargo.

We still had control of *Georgios*, and at 1726 we exchanged boarding teams, so the Gold Team and I were back on *Sherman*.

With the *Georgios* and *Kade Jah* in custody, we headed back into the Persian Gulf. On the 26th,

security team "Q" caught back up to us. MK1 Andy Vandewarker, who was part of the team, said they had turned over custody of the *Diamond* to the U.A.E. Coast Guard and transited back to Bahrain with the *Catawba*. They stayed in Bahrain a few days and then were flown out on the *Desert Duck 744* to the *USNS Mount Baker (T-AE-34)*, and from there transferred to *Sherman*, via small boat. The *Mount Baker's* helicopter, 4824, also transferred three loads of mail to us.

At 0822 on the 28th, we handed them over to the *USS Mitscher DDG-57* at the Kezar anchorage.

Not long after handing the *Georgios* over to the *Mitscher*, she was once again causing problems. The *Mitscher* was acting as the guard ship over her on the 30th of April, when two of her crewmembers dove into the snake infested waters of the Persian Gulf. The *Mitscher* lowered her RHI small boat to retrieve the two crewmen. Initially they put up a fight, but *Mitscher* noted "after they realized their peril" gave up and were eventually hauled out of the water and returned to the *Georgios*.

A few days later, *Mitscher* handed off responsibility of the *Georgios* to *HMCS Charlottetown*. But this would not be the last time the *Georgios* would be caught smuggling oil. Four months later, in August, she was boarded by a U.S. Navy boarding team in the Northern Arabian Gulf. After boarding the *Georgios*, the boarding team noticed an oil sheen coming from her and she was determined to be sinking, more than likely sabotaged. The twelve member Iraqi crew was evacuated, two to the *USS Enterprise (CVN-65)* due to pre-existing medical conditions, and the rest to the *USS Stout (DDG-55)*. The *Georgios* subsequently sank about 60 miles off the coast of Kuwait with an estimated 2,898 tons of illegal oil.

In the midst of everything going on with the *M/V Zainab*, *M/V Georgios*, and *M/V Kade Jah*, coalition aircraft, including those aboard the *USS Truman*, targeted Iraqi air defense radar

COVER STORY

and artillery on the 12th and 19th of April. The sites were targeted to protect coalition aircraft enforcing United Nations mandates.

Later in the day on the 28th, after being relieved of the *Georgios* and *Kade Jah*, we lined up on the *Pecos* one last time and took on 92,600 gallons of fuel.



Chiefs Mess Luncheon aboard *CGC Sherman* while in Bahrain. L-R: MCPO-CGR George Ingraham, SCPO Lew Myers, MCPO Walter Wozniak (PSU309), Navy 5th Fleet CMC Terry Scott (later became 10th MCPO Navy) and author MCPO Ed Semler

On the 29th, we pulled into Manama, Bahrain, for six hours to handle logistics issues and debrief the Navy's 5th Fleet. At 1810 we slipped our berth and

started to slowly head for the Strait of Hormuz and our exit from Persian Gulf operations.

Sherman ended up conducting 219 queries, 115 boardings, and five diverts of vessels. The *USS Stethem* (DDG-63) recorded the third largest arrest of a vessel violating oil sanctions when she seized the *M/V Diamond*, carrying 7,462 tons of illegal oil. The seizure also included documents that provided intelligence on illegal vessel trafficking routes. *Stethem* stated in their command history report, stated, "The seizure of this oil prevented Saddam Hussein from making two million dollars."

To watch videos of the sinking of the *M/V Zainab*, Iranian gunboat coming alongside *Sherman*, and other operations in the Persian Gulf, check out my videos on YouTube at <https://youtube.com/@MKCMLT>

This article was taken directly from my book "USCGC Sherman (WHEC-720) Circumnavigation Deployment 2001" and the CGCVA has my permission to reprint it.

~ Ed Semler, MCPO, USCG (ret), CGCVA member



Troops will get an extra \$100,000 in life insurance coverage March 1

By Karen Jowers, Navy Times (abridged)

Service members will automatically receive an extra \$100,000 of life insurance coverage as of March 1st, increasing the maximum Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage amount to \$500,000.

All service members will automatically get the increased coverage, including those who have previously reduced or declined their Servicemember SGLI. The boost in coverage applies to all those eligible for SGLI, including active duty, Guard and reserve members.

Troops will pay a premium of \$31 per month for \$500,000 worth of coverage, a \$6 increase, which will be deducted from their pay. The monthly SGLI premium is the same regardless of the service member's age or other factors. Currently, troops pay \$25 a month for \$400,000 of life insurance coverage. That rate hasn't changed; the cost is still 6 cents per \$1,000 of insurance. SGLI coverage is offered in increments of \$5,000.

Also on March 1st, the maximum coverage for Veterans' Group Life Insurance, or VGLI, is also increasing to \$500,000, up \$100,000 from the current \$400,000. That is not automatic. Eligible veterans must request it.

All monthly SGLI premiums include \$1 for TSGLI. Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection provides short-term financial support to help eligible service members recover from a severe injury such as a loss of limb or a variety of other injuries. SGLI also includes \$10,000 coverage for the service members' dependent children at no extra cost. There is no change to the coverage amounts for the separate program called Family SGLI, which provides extra life insurance for spouses and children.

Service members leaving the military on or after

March 1st who had maximum SGLI coverage can purchase VGLI coverage up to \$500,000. Veterans under age 60 who currently have \$400,000 maximum VGLI coverage will be able to purchase additional coverage, in increments of \$25,000, at a specified anniversary coverage.

The new coverage allows everyone to get the insurance without medical underwriting, even if they previously reduced or declined coverage.

For more information see www.benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/SGLI-increase-faqs.asp.

CGCVA PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGES

MAY 9, 2023, RENO, NV

The following Bylaw changes are being proposed, and as required, the proposals are announced in advance of the biennial reunion for members to review and consider before voting.

An amendment to allow the National President and/or Vice President to serve more than 2 consecutive terms, if there are no other nominations for those offices at the conclusion of the biennial Business Meeting.

PURPOSE: This original Bylaw limitation, was adopted to allow and encourage more members to serve as National President or National Vice President. With our membership getting older, the number of members who are volunteering to serve has been limited, to the point where there are few, if any, willing to serve in office. Removing this limitation enables the Association to maintain leadership in the future.

An amendment to provide authority for the National President to recommend, and the Board of Trustees to rule, on the termination of a member who has disparaged another member or has conducted themselves inappropriately, bringing dishonor to the Association and the U. S. Coast Guard.

PURPOSE: Currently there is no provision in the Bylaws to permit the Association to terminate membership in cases of stolen

valor or a member making disparaging remarks about other members in a public forum or any words or actions that diminish the standing of the U. S. Coast Guard.

An amendment to provide the authority to the National President to designate a current Board of Trustees member as Chairman, in any case where the immediate Past National President is unwilling or unable to serve as Chairman or to serve as a Trustee.

PURPOSE: Currently there is no provision to pick a Chairman of the Board of Trustees if the immediate past National President is unable or unwilling to serve as Chairman or to serve on the Board. This amendment would provide direction as appropriate.

An amendment to correct language in the Bylaws, regarding the National Secretary/Treasurer's duty to present the Association's financial position. The words "Annual" would be removed and replaced with "Biennial" where appropriate.

PURPOSE: The Bylaws required the National Secretary/Treasurer to provide "Annual" financial statements to the Membership. Financial reports should be disbursed to the membership at the Biennial meeting only. The annual financial statement should be provided to the National President and Chairman of the Board for dissemination to membership.

DON'T MISS IT!

2023 CGCVA REUNION

RENO/SPARKS, NV

MAY 8-13, 2023

**Time is running out to register
for the reunion**

Catch up with old shipmates

Make new friends

**Support the CGCVA with your
participation**

REGISTER TODAY!!!

RENO 2023 REUNION MAY 8 – 12, 2023 – CGCVA REGISTRATION FORM

The 2023 CGCVA Reunion is scheduled for **May 8-12** at the Nugget Casino Resort located at 1100 Nugget Ave, Sparks, (Reno) NV. Listed below are the registration, meal, and bus tour costs. **Reunion Registration fee is \$40 per person.** **Mail all registration forms to the address below.** Make checks payable to CGCVA and include with registration form. If paying by credit/debit card, mail the registration form and go to www.coastguardcombatvets.org and look for "DONATE" PayPal button in the right column to process your online payment. **Be sure to include the 5% credit/debit card fee.** Hotel reservations made by calling **800-648-1177**, using the **Group Code GCGVA23** for the **\$79/night rate**. **Reservations and reunion registration must be made not later than March 15, 2023**, for the special rate. **The first 80 registrants will receive a CGCVA commemorative pint beer glass.**

THE COST OF ALL TUESDAY BUSINESS AND AUXILIARY LUNCHEON MEALS ARE \$35.00 PER PLATE

Entrée includes San Marzano Tomato Bisque with mini grilled cheese and Lemon Meringue Tart, Coffee, and Tea
Multiply the number of luncheon entrées by \$35.00 = Total \$ Amount

Tuesday (5/9/23) Business Luncheon (CGCVA Members Only)			Tuesday (5/9/23) Auxiliary Luncheon (Open to All)		
Cobb Salad	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____	Cobb Salad	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____
Fajita Beef Salad	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____	Fajita Beef Salad	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____

THURSDAY EVENING (5/11/23) AWARDS BANQUET DINNER – OPEN TO EVERYONE

Choose entrée below with the associated price & indicate number of meals desired at right & total the amount at right
Entrée includes Caesar salad, white chocolate cheesecake dessert, coffee, and tea

Pan Seared Salmon (\$61.00)	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____	Oven Roasted Chicken (\$57.00)	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____
Pork Tenderloin (\$54.00)	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____	Roasted Vegetable Wellington (\$53.00)	# of plates _____	Total Amount \$ _____

Wednesday Bus Tour to Virginia City \$35.00 per person

(Money will be reimbursed if trip is canceled due to lack of participation)

Bus Tour (\$35 Per Person)	# of people _____	Total Amount \$ _____
Reunion Registration (\$40 Per Person)	# of Registrants _____	Total Amount \$ _____

Total Registration Fee Amounts	\$ _____
Total Luncheon Meal Amounts	\$ _____
Total Dinner Meal Amounts	\$ _____
Total Bus Tour Amounts	\$ _____
Total Amount Due to CGCVA (No added fee if paying by check)	\$ _____
If paying by credit/debit card, multiply the total amount in red above by 1.05 for final amount	\$ _____

Mail registration and check payment to: CGCVA
P.O. Box 969
Lansdale, PA 19446

**Hotel Reservation & CGCVA
Registration cutoff date is
March 15, 2023**

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NAME (FOR NAMETAGS) _____ NEED WHEELCHAIR? _____

SPOUSE/GUEST NAME _____ NEED WHEELCHAIR? _____

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ARE YOU STAYING AT HOTEL? Y____ N____ ARE YOU FLYING? _____ DRIVING? _____ R/V? _____

ALL CHECKS MADE OUT TO CGCVA

FEATURED ARTICLES

COAST GUARD AVIATION OPERATIONS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR—PART TWO

This is the second part of a three-part series about Coast Guard Aviation in Vietnam called, “Combat Rescue and Recovery” by John “Bear” Moseley, CG Aviator 743.

PART TWO

In Vietnam, the rescue pilot was faced by two major obstacles in the recovery of downed pilots. First, the triple canopy on jungle trees, rising 200 feet above the tangled bush, karst*, mountainous terrain, and swamps. The forest penetrator, a plumb bob-like device that carried the hoist cable through the thick foliage, was developed to cope with this problem. It could be ridden down and used to extract the downed airman. The second, was enemy opposition. With Soviet help, the North Vietnamese constructed one of the best integrated air defense systems in the world. This included MiG interceptors, SA-2 missiles, and a stable of anti-aircraft guns, from 23 mm to radar directed 100mm weapons. The North Vietnamese shrewdly did not challenge the US air superiority; instead they concentrated on achieving “air deniability,” that is, denying the use of the airspace in specific locations. Throughout the war 23mm, 37mm, and 57mm weapons, working in combinations with heavy machine guns, were placed in areas with large numbers of combatants. These weapons were mobile and could be moved from location to location. A rescue helicopter flew at a slow speed and a low altitude so these weapons posed a great threat. Red dots on charts carried by the helicopters showed where these guns were known to be. Some areas on these charts were solid red. If a pilot could fly his crippled aircraft to an isolated jungle area, or if he could head out over the Gulf of Tonkin, his chance of rescue increased. Isolated areas, designated as SAFE areas (Selected Area for Evasion), were much better than those infested with enemy troops, like the

Ho Chi Minh Trail.⁽¹⁵⁾

On 1 July *Scotch 3*, an F-105 Thunderchief was hit. LtCol Jack Modica thought he could stay air-borne long enough to reach the gulf. This did not prove to be the case, and he was forced to eject just north of Dong Hoi. A second pilot in the vicinity saw the chute and noted the approximate position as Modica disappeared into the North Vietnamese jungle. It was a low level ejection, and when he hit the ground, he was knocked unconscious. It was two hours later that he filled the overhead FAC in on his condition. The time delay had given the North Vietnamese time to get to his location. To compound matters, he reported that something had happened to his back and he couldn't move.

The first Jolly Green to go in was driven away several times and had to leave because of low fuel. LCDR Lonnie Mixon, USCG, was next to try. The *Sandys* went in with suppression fire but Mixon soon learned it had little effect. The North Vietnamese hit him with ground fire and damaged a fuel tank, ruptured a hydraulic line, and knocked out part of the electrical system. He pulled off and the suppression aircraft went back in. Darkness was falling, but the rescuers decided to try one more time. Mixon told the on-scene commander that his helicopter was still flyable and that he would go in and make the attempt. He started in and tracers lit the night as the helo was hit again and again. Mixon had to break it off. Modica, having hid himself the best he could, would spend the night on the ground.⁽¹⁶⁾

The next morning the *Jollys* tried again, but it didn't go well. An A-1 was shot down, killing the pilot, and a badly shot up HH-3E was returning to DaNang with a rocket lodged in the belly. It had penetrated a fuel cell but had failed to explode. Rescue forces were recalled. Several hours later, after a B-52 bomber strike close to the scene, a decision was made to make another attempt.

Jolly 21 was low bird and the crew, LT Lance Eagan, USCG, Aircraft Commander, with Major

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Bob Booth, USAF, copilot, Sgt Herb Honer, Engineer, and A1C Joel Talley, the PJ, knew that it was going to be a rough one. They would have to penetrate a well-established “flak-trap” in order to make the pickup. Lance descended through very heavy 37mm anti-aircraft fire, using twisting evasive maneuvers. He took several hits, and the concussion from airbursts staggered the helicopter. Then he was through it and into a box canyon peering for *Scotch 3* through the triple canopy. Eagan made radio contact and could see the smoke the downed airman was sending up, but due to the extremely dense jungle, it was impossible to sight the man. Modica was unable to help himself which made it necessary to send the PJ down on the penetrator. Eagan spotted a small opening in the jungle near Modica’s smoke, and Talley was lowered. Once on the ground, Talley looked up at the flight engineer who pointed in the direction of Modica. The undergrowth was so dense it took him a good bit of time to find the man. It was determined Modica’s pelvis was broken and that he must be moved as little as possible.

Talley used his radio to vector the helicopter to his position. Eagan found himself in a small valley with tall trees, and three sides rising 200 ft above him. There was no hostile fire directed at the *Jolly 21* at this point in time, but Eagan knew the North Vietnamese would zero in on the smoke. He had to get to Talley and Modica quickly and bring them up. With his height above the terrain limited by the length of the hoist cable, he edged ever closer to Talley’s position. The rotor blades clipped the top of several trees as he went until he could get no closer to the towering dominant tree that the injured pilot lay against. The penetrator was dropped and Talley carried the pilot the short distance to it. He had been on the ground for 18 minutes. He strapped himself and the pilot in, then pushed his radio switch. Eagan heard Talley say “Take us up.”

Honer, the flight engineer, started the hoist up and at that instant Eagan caught sight of movement in front of him. The whole world seemed to erupt. The

enemy, waiting for the moment of vulnerability, sprang the trap. Intense automatic weapon fire came from several directions. Hostile fire punctured the windshield, spraying powdered glass all over him, but Eagan could not move until the PJ and rescued pilot cleared the tree tops. It seemed like an eternity, then he heard a shout from the back that Modica and Talley were clear of the trees. Without hesitation he pulled away, and the PJ and injured pilot were brought aboard. He kept the Helicopter in low at first and then climbed out and went directly to the field hospital at Dong Ha.



A CH-54B Skycrane airlifting *Jolly 21*, LT Lance Eagan’s helicopter from Dong Ha back to DaNang. *Jolly 21* was deemed to be unflyable

Eagan and his crew checked their *Jolly*. The titanium armor plating and luck saved them. The intensity of the fire showed in their battle damage. They had taken direct hits from large caliber automatic weapons. A total of 40 bullet holes were counted in the fuselage; the tail section had a gaping hole; four of the five rotor blades had been hit; and the self-sealing fuel tank had nine punctures in it. Eagan had missed being killed by a matter of inches, and the copilot was saved by the titanium plating under his seat. The *Jolly Green* was deemed unflyable and was transported back to DaNang by a CH-54B Skycrane helicopter. The rescued pilot, LtCol Jack Modica, was quoted as saying, “I’ve heard of the incredible jobs done by these rescue forces and now I’m convinced of it!”⁽¹⁷⁾

The daily mission commitment had two HC-130Ps out of Tuy Hoa, providing continuous coverage of two holding points; one over the Gulf of Tonkin and the other over Laos. The 37th AARS would place one or two HH-3E’s orbiting over the Gulf of Tonkin; two HH-3Es on strip alert at DaNang; and two likewise deployed to Quang Tri, which was nearer to the North Vietnamese

FEATURED ARTICLES

border. The holding patterns and the strip alert at Quang Tri cut down on the response time. If you could get to a downed airman within 35 minutes the rescue probability was good but after that it fell off rapidly. Quang Tri was a U.S. Marine compound where the pilots had their own shelter referred to as the “alert shack.” It had a floor, cots, several chairs, a VHF-FM radio. Next to it was the outhouse.



Alert Shack at Quang Tri

Not all rescue operations were downed airmen. The Jolly Greens were called upon by the Army to extract a Special Forces team, call sign *Carrot Top*, which had come under heavy fire in

the A Shau Valley near Laos. *Jolly 10* and *Jolly 28* were briefed by the on scene *Spads* (A1s out of Pleiku) that they had been conducting suppressive fire, but due to a 1,000 foot stratus deck directly above the LZ, the results were questionable. Two Army UH-1F gunships were also on scene, and when the ground part reported a pause in the ground fire, LCDR Lonnie Mixon, USCG, in *Jolly 28*, with the gunships as escort, made the first rescue attempt.

The reconnaissance team was halfway up the mountainside in a small clearing which ran up against a 2000 foot cliff face. Because of the rocky sides, there was only one way in and out of the canyon. Mixon came to an abrupt hover 10 feet over the center of the shallow, elephant grass covered LZ. Near the rock wall ahead and to the left, several men waited alongside the bright orange fabric on the ground that they carried for pinpointing their retrieval location. Mixon pivoted the aircraft, which measured three quarters the diameter of the circular clearing, to face his exit. As the turn was being completed, a second group stood erect and began firing automatic weapons into the left side of the aircraft. The PJ in the back yelled, “Gunfire!”, and the flight engineer simultaneously announced over

the ICS that they had taken numerous hits and a fuel line had been severed, causing a massive fuel leak. The copilot grabbed his rifle and shot back. Mixon finished the turn and abruptly flew the helicopter off the mountain. The PJ in back was unable to bring his weapon on target and didn’t fire. The two crewmen in the cabin were drenched with JP4, and the downwash from the rotor blades coming in through the open cockpit windows whipped up the volatile fuel, coating everybody and everything. For a time, Mixon refrained from working any switch or using the radio for fear of a spark that would obliterate them. When they shut down the fuel boost pump for the severed line, the leakage stopped. The flight back to DaNang took 45 minutes, and upon landing they evacuated the aircraft immediately. Yet the day’s work for Mixon and his crew were not over. — They obtained a replacement HH-3E, *Jolly 21*, and after briefing the 37th ARRS Commander and Operations Duty Officer on the situation, launched and returned to the rescue scene. *Jolly 10*, the second helicopter to make the rescue attempt was shot down. Two of the crew were killed. The two survivors joined with the Special Forces personnel and made their way to the bottom of the hill where a third Jolly Green made a successful rescue. Mixon and his crew flew *High Bird* on this pick-up.⁽¹⁸⁾

In the Air Force qualifications system, a pilot started as a co-pilot and by means of training and



LCDR Lonnie Mixon, USCG, on alert duty at Quang Tri

FEATURED ARTICLES

experience became a qualified Aircraft Commander. The next step up was the designation of Instructor Pilot, a pilot qualified to train others. Top qualification was Flight Examiner. The Coast Guard aviators arrived as fully qualified Aircraft Commanders and all had a good amount of helicopter flight time -- most of it in the HH-52 with much the same characteristics as the HH-3E. As a result, they were designated Instructor Pilots and were used extensively to flight train newly arriving pilots. Several Coast Guard aviators were designated as Flight Examiner.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles R. Klinkert, USAF, the 37th ARRS Commander in October 1968 said, "The Coast Guard Aviators have been a terrific assist to the Air Force. Very few of us had any experience in this helicopter. These gentlemen came in here and helped us become real effective in this type of mission. I can't say enough about them."⁽¹⁹⁾

The praise was not just at the local level. The Commander, 3rd ARR Group, wrote a letter to the Coast Guard Commandant praising the Coast Guard aviators for their courage and flight ability and additionally noted the extensive work they had performed in developing highly proficient crews. Mixon was further cited for developing new improved water recovery tactics and medical evacuations from surface vessels.

The *Jolly Greens* became the best at what they did. A number started with little experience but of necessity they learned fast and they learned well. No one can question the courage and dedication to the mission exhibited by the Air Force crews.. A number of the pilots flew on second and third combat tours, and the enlisted crews were almost all multi-tour vets by 1972. Col Frank Buzze, who flew F-100s in the war, wrote the following; "They were called *Jolly Greens* with near reverence by US combat pilots. Jet pilots are a pretty individualistic lot, and will argue about almost anything, but a sure way to start something is for someone to bad-mouth the *Jollys*.

No one did." The Coast Guard aviators were fiercely proud to be part of the *Jolly Greens*. The Air Force treated them as their own. They were called "Coasties." The term was one of acceptance and respect.

The Coasties had a little fun with being unique within a unique organization. They made up special squadron patches with the Coast Guard stripe and insignia on it. Butchka, Loomis, and Ritchie carried on the tradition when they sent Christmas Cards out from the "Coast Guard Air Station DaNang." It was a two-way street. The Air Force people joined in the little tongue-in-cheek exercise. When Jack Stice and Bobby Long arrived at DaNang in '72, they were greeted by the following in the squadron newsletter. Under the heading; - "Coast Guard Air Station DaNang" -- they were welcomed aboard. The article said in part; "They say they are not 2ndLts or 1stLts but full lieutenants (whatever that means). How did they do it? Well Jack and Bobby didn't have any MAC regulations to prevent it. They didn't even fill out a DOD or an AF form. Luckily the 3rd Group inspection team did not get hold of them. Due to the lack of records, forms, and regulations, we can only assume they are qualified."

The second group arrived in April of 1969. Their arrival, and the fact that they were all qualified Aircraft Commanders, was happily noted in the unit's Historical Record. Shortly after arrival, LT James Loomis, USCG, flew two back-to-back Coast Guard type missions. On two separate occasions in less than three days, Loomis and his crew evacuated personnel who had been injured at sea. Each mission covered almost one thousand miles over water. Using in-flight refueling, each mission was accomplished non-stop, taking eight hours. The flights were made at night. At the time, they were the longest over water medivacs that ever had been made by helicopter. Comments made by LT Butchka, LCDR Crowe and LT. Stice, confirmed by entries in the 37th ARRS SAR Log, indicate that operations

FEATURED ARTICLES

involving naval surface vessels was a “Coastie” operation. This would continue through to the cessation of hostilities. Casey Quinn had transferred to Tuy Hoa and was flying the C-130P directing recovery missions and refueling Jolly Greens. LT Dick Butchka, LT James Loomis, and LTJG Rob Ritchie were at DaNang with the 37th ARRS. In order to identify each other, Jim Loomis came up with a system. Casey was Coast Guard 1, Butchka was Coast Guard 2, Loomis 3, and Ritchie 4. Casey said, “This was well received at the squadron level, but a few of the Colonels were not terribly impressed with our humor and thought we were nuts — but I convinced my crowd that I had them surrounded.”

Casey was on a Laos orbit and Rob Ritchie was over Laos looking for *Nail 53*, a downed OV-10 pilot. The thick jungle canopy was making it difficult to locate the survivor, but Ritchie knew him to be somewhere on the west slope of the valley. Radio contact was established. *Nail 53* could hear the helicopter but he could not see it. After further conversation, Ritchie felt he had the pilot fairly well located and he lowered the penetrator. At this point radio contact was lost. Ritchie left the penetrator down as it was routine procedure for a survivor on the penetrator to signal he was ready to be pulled up by shaking the cable. After a reasonable period of time, the penetrator was raised and Ritchie moved to another spot, sending it down again. This continued but *Nail 53* did not respond. The low fuel warning lights came on and Ritchie informed Casey that he would need fuel. After a few more minutes with a nibble, he told his flight engineer to take up the penetrator because they had to get out of there. The flight engineer responded that it felt like someone was near the penetrator. Shortly thereafter came the pull up signal. When the low fuel lights came on in an HH-3, the pilot had 15 to 20 minutes of fuel left. Five minutes had gone by since the initial warning. It took additional time to reel in 210 feet of cable and get the survivor inside. Ritchie alerted Casey that his situation was critical—if he could not hit the drogue

on the first try, he would be in need of rescue.



An “all Coast Guard” operation. LT Casey Quinn is the pilot of the HC-130P; LT Jim Loomis and LTJG Rob Ritchie are the pilots of the HH-3E; The picture was taken by LT Butchka, pilot of the second HH-3E

Under a full power surge, Ritchie commenced his climb. Suddenly, the adrenaline flowed as something dark and massive appeared below him. It was an HC-130P with drogues streaming. Casey had left orbit and amazingly came up under the Jolly Green before he cleared the ridge line of the compact valley. Ritchie plugged in and they climbed out as one.⁽²⁰⁾

Note: Hitting the refueling basket in a drogue streaming from the HC-130 requires a measure of skill. The target tends five degrees left of the helicopter’s center line and to get the probe into the basket, the pilot enters into air turbulence caused by the C-130’s engines. The long probe extending forward will dip when the helicopter accelerates and rise when it decelerates. The pilot starts above the basket and flies into it. Furthermore, the probe has to impact the drogue with at least 160 foot-pounds of force for a seal to occur. Quinn came under the HH-3E as it was climbing out to put Rob in the right position. Ritchie hit the probe on the first try. The coordination, dexterity, and the marked degree of flying skill on the part of both pilots was exceptional.

FEATURED ARTICLES



HH-3E
pilot's view
from his
helicopter
"plugged
into" a HC-
130P tanker

Casey got another chance to once again test his skill a short time later. Word came in that two crewman had just ejected from *SeaBird 02* (F-105), just north of the Mu Gia pass in North Vietnam. Casey was aircraft commander of an HC-130, launched as *King 3* to supplement *King 2*. The mission of the C-130 was dual purpose. They provided in-flight refueling for the helicopters and mission control for the rescue effort. They were the command aircraft, and coordinated all the forces used in the recovery. The communication equipment was extensive, providing UHF, VHF, HF, and FM capabilities. Casey stated that the coordination within the C-130 was essential and the professionalism of the crews was outstanding.

Casey rendezvoused with two HH-3Es, four HH-53s and four A-1s. *King 2* recommended a holding pattern five miles west of the Laotian border for Casey's incoming flight and their fighter cap of *Fast Movers*, a term applied to F-105s or F-4s. The Joint Rescue Control Center did not concur with the recommended location because of SAM activity and directed him to a point nineteen miles farther south. Casey did not know it at the time, but the JRCC did not notify the fighter cap of the change in plan. Refueling began on a westerly heading with the north-south ridge line reaching 7,500 feet below them. Casey was in communication with the Jolly Greens. The co-pilot, 1stLt Joe Ryan, and the Navigator, Maj Tony Otea, were monitoring the operational frequencies for MiG and SAM activities. Tony plotted the locations on the navigation chart.

The HH-3s refuel first hooking up at 8,000 feet, the highest the H-3 could fly, keeping up with the

C-130, and not stall out. Casey had 70% flaps down and was flying at just over 100kts. The two H-3 helicopters had refueled, and *Jolly 70*, an HH-53B, was moved into position. *Jolly 71* and *Jolly 72* were in a loose trail with a *Sandy* sitting outboard. Jim "Jinks" Bender, who was in *Sandy 04* said, "A report came in on a MiG in our vicinity. This is when the first MiG hit the formation. The first missile missed and the second hit *Jolly 71* and it disintegrated. Everyone started yelling — **MIGS—MIGS—TAKE IT DOWN!**— We headed for the weeds."

The helicopters made for the ground at max rate and Casey sent his C-130 diving toward the earth. The refueling baskets for the helicopters were larger than those used to fuel the jets and had a max speed restriction when extended. This speed was exceeded before the drogues were fully retracted and both were lost on the way down. A second MiG-21 joined



LtCol Tyner, Squadron Commanding Officer,
presenting a medal to L. Casey Quinn, USCG,
along with Capt Mitchell, USAF

in and came after Casey's C-130. Casey by now was at tree top level. *Jolly 72* called out that a MiG passed by his right side and was headed for Casey.

When Casey was back at Eglin AFB checking out in the HC-130P, he had stated that the "Herk" performed so well that it was like a four-engine fighter plane. He was going to get a chance to prove

FEATURED ARTICLES

it! Casey said he knew it would take three to five seconds for the MiG to get a missile lock, so he picked the canyon just ahead and jinked and flew his “Herk” in a series of unpredictable erratic maneuvers between the walls at tree top level. No Missiles were launched that Casey knew of, but he could see the bursts from the MiG’s cannon hit the karst ahead. He said that he was too busy to dwell on it. Moments later, the C-130 emerged from the canyon — the MiG-21 never did! Casey says he got his MiG, but due to the chaos that existed, he never his confirmation on the “kill.”⁽²¹⁾

The goal of the combat rescue and recovery units was to get those in peril before “Charlie” did. Whether the mission was an extraction or the pick up of a downed airman, each time they were successful it was a win! It was called a “save” but a “save” was much more than a statistic to these men. A “save” was a person and they took it personally. The 37th ARRS was coming up on the 500th “save” in mid October 1969, and everyone was looking forward to it. They got number 487 and then hit a dry spell for about a week. On 24 October, *Misty 11* went down. LT Dick Butchka, USCG, got numbers 498, 499 and 500. LTJG Rob Ritchie, USCG, got number 501 and 502.

Northeast of Saravane, Laos, *Misty 11*, an Air Force F-100F flying around interdiction, had engine failure due to anti-aircraft fire. The two crewman were forced to eject. An airborne FAC, *Nail 07*, reported both survivors touched down within a hundred yards of one another and that he was in radio contact with them. *Misty 11A* had a broken leg, *Misty 11B* was unhurt. Before sending in the helicopter, the A-1s trolled the area, but their repeated passes brought no response. LT Dick Butchka, in the high bird slot orbiting at 3,000 feet, watched his good friend, Capt Charles Langham, USAF, descend for recovery. Langham came into a hover over *Misty 11A* and lowered his PJ by hoist. The PJ immediately had the downed airman on the

forest penetrator and gave the cable-up signal. Less than a minute had elapsed. When the penetrator was approximately 10 feet off the ground, the helicopter came under fire. Butchka saw three sides of the blind canyon twinkling. The Skyraiders rushed in to suppress fire, but the opening volley had shot the hoist assembly off its mounting, sending it crashing into the flight engineer’s chest. Realizing the hoist was inoperative, the flight engineer hit the switch cutting the cable and yelled to Langham to pull off.

Up above, Butchka had punched off his aux tanks and went into a plunging descent at max rate. Seeing Langham’s aircraft smoking and throwing fluid, Butchka told him to put it on the ground. Langham searched for a clear spot and put the aircraft into a small punch bowl shaped valley. Langham and crew jumped out of the helicopter into the elephant grass, looking for high bird. They did not have far to look. Butchka’s helicopter was in a 25 foot hover on the left side of Langham’s with its cable waiting. Butchka expected ground fire at any minute.

With the men safely on board, the next problem was getting out of there. Butchka did not want to back out the way he came in because of the heavy enemy fire. It was hot and humid; the pressure altitude was high, and the only other way out presented him with a vertical face of about 130 feet. It was decision time. Butchka said, “I headed for the face—pulled every bit of power I could, and with a little bit of airspeed, — drooped the rotor to 94%, — and just cleared the top.” As he cleared the ridge line, the Jolly immediately came under ground fire from a different direction. Miraculously they were not hit.

There were still *Misty* crewmembers and Langham’s PJ on the ground. The PJ, TSGT D.G. Smith, directed air strikes that bracketed his position. *Jolly 76*, out of Udorn, made three recovery attempts, but each time he received intense ground fire, resulting in extensive battle damage. *Jolly 76*

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Left to Right:
RADM Engels,
LTJG Ritchie
and LT Loomis

had to withdraw.

Later that afternoon the Jollys tried again. The Sandys made suppression runs and laid smoke. LTJG Rob Ritchie made his run. The normal procedure was to come into the wind. Ritchie used the smoke for cover, approached from a different direction, and came in fast and quickly put the aircraft into a hover over Sergeant Smith. After getting Smith and the injured crewmember on board, Rob moved to recover *Misty 11B* but was driven off. He would make three more attempts but the element of surprise was now lost. On the third try, his hoist was shot away and he had to break off any further attempts. *Misty 11B* was recovered later that day by yet another helicopter.⁽²²⁾

Coast Guard aviators, LCDR Jay Crowe and LT Rod Martin, arrived at the 37th ARRS in May of 1971. The HH-53 Super Jolly had replaced the HH-3E. The HH-53 was larger, more heavily armed, and with almost double the shaft horsepower. It had better overall performance and hover capability, especially at altitude. The air campaign was active in southern North Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos.

On 4 June, two Covey (OV-10) FAC crewmen successfully ejected over a heavily defended area, near Boloven's Plateau in Laos, after the aircraft had been hit by enemy ground fire. The area, which contained a considerable number of antiaircraft weapons, was first hit by the Fast Movers and then again by the Sandys. *Sandy Lead* felt there was one part of the area that was too close to the downed

pilots to "sanitize" so he planned to obscure this with smoke just prior to the Jollys inbound.

LCDR Jay Crowe, USCG, in *Jolly 64* planned to fly at maximum speed at treetop level along the canyon rim. He left orbit, dropping at several-thousand-feet-per-minute, when ordered the escort Sandys joined up and rolled out at 170kts on the inbound heading. He noted how "watching the Sandys lay smoke, swirl around in rocket, machine gun, and CBU passes really got the adrenaline flowing. By the time you could discern whose tracers were whose, you're too busy to do anything but to trust in God and the Sandys and jink like hell!" The first survivor was located and hoisted without difficulty. The second was different. He was on a jungle-covered ridge within the canyon. Trees were taller than the 250-foot rescue cable, so Crowe carefully eased the helicopter down into the tree canopy, moving in a vertical path with the main rotor blades, enabling the penetrator to reach the downed airman. During the egress, the helicopter came under fire, which was returned by the PJs. The helicopter sustained light damage.⁽²³⁾

"This one went well!" Crowe said. "I cannot describe the sensation of victory that I had as we rode wing on *King*," (HC-130P, on-scene control aircraft and tanker), "taking on fuel with the fast movers making aileron roll passes and loops around us; the sky was never quite so blue or the clouds so puffy white."

Major Ross, the second pilot to come out, said that he made radio contact as soon as he took cover. He added, "When I heard the Jolly Greens were coming, I was so damned happy I couldn't believe it! I knew if anybody could get us out, they would do it. I knew what kind of people they were and there's just something about the words Jolly Green — it stays with you from the first time you hear it until you need their skills." In one of those "*can you believe this?*" situations, Jay would again pick the

FEATURED ARTICLES

two pilots up several weeks later.

With improved performance of the rescue helicopters, such as the HH-53, terrain became a useful ally rather than a hinderance. The ridge lines, karst, and jungle canopy could now be used to minimize the effectiveness of enemy fire. The antiaircraft guns, which grew in number and caliber throughout the war, were limited by the same jungle that hid them. Gunners could track their targets only within the confining limits of geographic features.

Summer came and the action continued. Martin brought his total to eight saves, and Crowe got a couple more in an unusual way. He scrambled out of Bien Hoa to pick up two downed airmen in Cambodia. The two survivors were in an area surrounded by enemy forces. Crowe got a thorough briefing enroute to the pickup area by the on-scene FAC. The location of the downed airmen was well marked, so rather than sanitize the area, Crowe initiated a rapid descent from 8,000 feet using a spiral autorotation to a power recovery. Surprise was complete. The survivors were taken on board, followed by immediate departure. Sporadic tracer fire was noted on departure, but no damage was sustained by the aircraft.⁽²⁴⁾

The organization of the ARR Squadrons differed from the norm. The Air Force is organized into Wings composed of Groups, which are in turn made up of Squadrons, with separate flight and maintenance commands. The ARR Squadrons were under the operational control of the 3rd ARR Group at Tan Sa Nhut, but were unique in that they were self-sufficient within the squadron, and combined the maintenance and flight operations under one command. The commanding officer was a LtCol and a pilot. Under his command was an Operations Officer, a Maintenance Officer, and an Administrative Officer. Responsibilities are reflected by the title. The Administrative Officer was normally a non-pilot; the Maintenance Officer could be either a pilot or a non-flying officer. The

Operations Officer, always a pilot, was a Major and second in command. Each section had a staff of enlisted specialists. Collateral duties for squadron pilots were operational only. Jay Crowe, Lonnie Mixon, and Jack Stice served as squadron Operations Officers. It is in this capacity that Jay Crowe planned the Quang Tri evacuation. This was later referred to as the Miracle Mission.

Grouped in the Citadel, a walled military compound in the middle of Quang Tri proper, were 132 people, American advisors, and members of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Caught in the onslaught of the North Vietnamese offensive that had begun March 30, 1972, with a drive across the DMZ, Quang Tri was now surrounded by four North Vietnam Army (NVA) divisions. The enemy had cut Highway 1, the only escape route south to safety, and had been pounding Quang Tri with artillery, mortars, and rockets for several weeks. There was only one way out — by helicopter. On May 1st, five HH-53s of the 37thARRS were prepared to do just that.

End of part two. Part three in the next QDL edition.

15. Tilford, Earl H. Jr.: *Search and Rescue in Southeast Asia 1961-1975*

16. *Interview with Lonnie Mixon*

17. Shershun, Carroll S.: *The Lifesavers, USCG Aviation, supplemented by Mission Evacuation Report, AIC Joel Talley—(68-07-02)*

18. *Mission Narrative Summary 37thARRS (1-3-02-8279), 5 October 1968*

19. *Commander, Coast Guard Activities, Vietnam, news release #VN 75-68*

20. *Interview with Rob Ritchie*

21. *Interview with Casey Quinn*

22. *Interview with Dick Butchka*

23. *37thARRS History Summary 1 July—30 September 1971*

24. *Ibid 23*

VA BENEFITS AND INFORMATION

NEW LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM FOR DISABLED VETERANS

A new life insurance program has been launched by the Veterans Administration in January 2023. Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife) provides guaranteed acceptance **whole life coverage** of up to \$40,000 to Veterans with service-connected disabilities. Lesser amounts are available in increments of \$10,000. Under this plan, the elected coverage takes effect two years after enrollment as long as premiums are paid during the two-year period.

The VALife program offers whole life guaranteed acceptance coverage. Under this type of coverage, the face amount of coverage takes effect two years after the date of enrollment as long as premiums are paid during the two-year period. If the insured dies within this two year period, the beneficiary will receive all premiums paid plus interest.

The premium rate (the amount you will pay each month or annually for your coverage) depends on your age and the amount of coverage you elect. The premiums for VALife are fixed and based on your age when you enroll. There are no waivers for the premiums.

Go to the VA website to apply at:

www.insurance.va.gov/VALIFE/Fiduciary

NAVIGATING THE PACT ACT

Veterans can now navigate PACT Act info through the VFW PACT Act information website at: <https://pactactinfo.org> and enter their military service details and medical conditions to help determine if they are eligible for compensation benefits on a presumptive basis as a result of exposures to toxins while serving in the military.

The site will provide veterans with an option of having a referral generated to the VFW accredited representative in their state of residence. In

situations where a referral is not generated due to the answers provided by the veteran, the veterans may still choose to contact their VFW representative using contact information provided through the website.

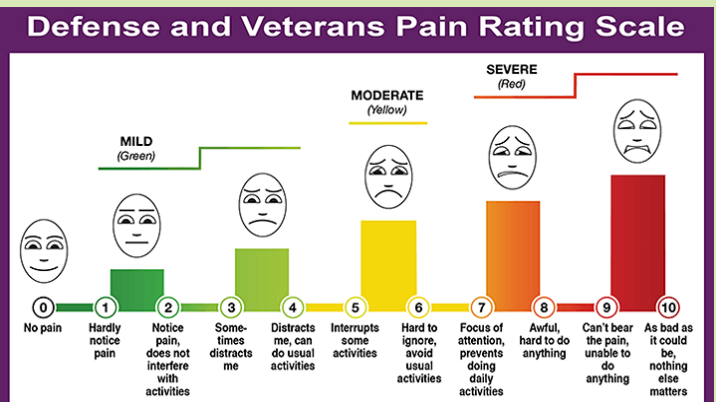
In addition to assisting the veteran for determining eligibility for the new PACT Act benefits, the site also warns against Claim Sharks and non-accredited entities which may try to exploit veterans for financial gain and instructs veterans on applying for VA Health Care.

DEFENSE AND VETERANS PAIN RATING SCALE (DVPRS)

In September 2022, a DoD pain management scale task force developed the Defense and Veterans Pain Rating Scale, or DVPRS, a new pain management scale.

DVPRS was created to improve the traditional 0-10 pain scale by adding more features for the ease of use and also includes occupational and social activities to help create a more accurate depiction of the patient's current symptoms.

DVPRS also includes an assessment of the patient-reported impact of pain in four specific quality of life indicators. This assessment uses the 0-10 scale to describe how pain has interfered with their usual activity in: Activity, Sleep, Mood, and Stress. For an informative video go to: www.dvidshub.net/video/856198/new-dod-pain-assessment-tool



REMEMBERING USS SERPENS CREW

CGCVA Associate Member, Robert G. Breen, is the son of deceased Coast Guardsman, Gerald Breen, who was a crewmember aboard *USS Serpens* and was killed when *Serpens* blew up off Guadalcanal during WWII. Robert has been presenting the story of *Serpens* in hopes of securing the issuance of Purple Hearts for the 250 servicemembers that lost their lives in the explosion. It was initially thought that the explosion was a result of an enemy torpedo attack, with evidence supporting this position. The Navy later determined, without evidence, that the source of the explosion was negligent handling of high explosives by the stevedores off-loading the vessel. Labeling the tragedy an accident resulted in the denial of the Purple Heart for those killed aboard the *Serpens*, while those on shore who were killed or wounded by the blast received the Purple Heart.

Robert has been fighting for recognition of his father's death and others who were aboard *Serpens*.



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Lorence Boynes places a wreath at the *USS Serpens* Memorial in Section 34 of Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., Jan. 27, 2023. This year marks the 78th anniversary of the explosion and destruction of the *USS Serpens* (AK-97). 250 service members lost their lives. This was the largest single disaster in the history of the Coast Guard. (U.S. Army photo by Elizabeth Fraser / Arlington National Cemetery / released)

It has been an uphill battle, but he has made some headway in getting the *Serpens* recognized as a cargo ship, which it was by its true designation "97-AK," and not as "97-AE," the "E" indicating Explosive. Maybe there is light at the end of the tunnel.

'Heroic, humble' Coast Guardsman selected as 2022 USO Service Member of the Year

Story by PO1 Corinne Zilnick, CGD8

Selfless. Courageous. Reliable.

These are words that coworkers and family members repeatedly used to describe Petty Officer 2nd Class David "Jake" Flores, the Coast Guardsman selected as the 2022 USO Service Member of the Year.



PO2 David "Jake" Flores

Flores's shipmates offered up a portrait of a hardworking, dedicated team player, the kind of man who lifts up everyone around him. The kind of man who would dive into a river to save a baby's life.

On June 2, Flores and two of his teammates from Coast Guard Maritime Safety & Security Team Houston were patrolling the Rio Grande, squinting through early morning shadows for any signs of movement along the banks. Then came the alert from U.S. Border Patrol agents: a large group of non-citizens was trying to cross the river up ahead.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jarrett Guerra, coxswain of the 29-foot Response Boat-Small, quickly maneuvered around a bend in the river while Flores and Petty Officer 3rd Class Corey Connolly sidled up to the bow, flashlights in hand.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

The chaotic image of an overturned raft and people splashing frantically in the water rose to greet them, instantly catapulting all three Coast Guardsmen into rescue mode. Cognizant of the danger posed by the boat's propellers, Guerra killed the engines and hastily scanned his surroundings. Two women thrashed in the water, struggling to stay afloat. Drifting out of their grasp was a small baby, floating facedown and sinking fast.

"Jake, Jake, the baby!" Guerra shouted. "I'm going in!" Flores hollered back, almost simultaneously. In a move later described as "heroic" by his peers, Flores detached his law enforcement gear, leaped off the boat and swam toward the submerged infant.

"He acted without any hesitation," Guerra later recalled. "He was completely selfless." "My training took over," explained Flores, father of a 3-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter. "I pictured my own children and knew I couldn't let anything happen to that baby."

With the 1-year-old firmly in his grasp, Flores propped the boy up on his neck and swam back to the boat, kicking against the current. He passed the lifeless infant up to Connolly, who immediately began CPR. Guerra hoisted the two distraught women up into the boat and helped his close friend and shipmate, Flores, clamber back on deck.

After about three rounds of CPR, the baby stirred, then drew breath. He was soaked to the bone and coughing up water, but very much alive. Flores scooped the infant up and held him closely, trying to soothe and warm him during the short trip to the U.S. riverbank. Emergency medical services technicians met them there and whisked the survivors to nearby Mission Regional Medical Center for medical care. Much to their relief, Flores and his teammates later received word that the women and baby were all doing well.

When they learned of Flores's involvement in the

dramatic search and rescue case, many of his peers and supervisors said they were amazed, but not surprised.

"Acting that way is just a part of his character," said Chief Petty Officer Charles Havlik, Flores's direct supervisor at MSST Houston. "Ten out of ten times, I know he would do the same thing again," Guerra asserted.

When her husband came home and told her about rescuing the drowning baby on the Rio Grande, Vanessa Flores was simultaneously filled with pride and concern for his well-being. "He came home a little bit different," she said. "I think experiencing something like that made him appreciate the little things more. You realize how precious life is after a scary moment like that."

As he stepped up to the microphone and addressed his MSST Houston shipmates during the USO Service Member of the Year ceremony on December 1st, Flores's eyes shone with emotion.

"I know this is an individual award, but I feel it's a team effort," he said. "I'm extremely grateful for this honor."

Flores ascribing his success to his teammates aligns with supervisor Lt. Joshua Moore's glowing assessment of the 35-year-old maritime enforcement specialist. "He's such a humble person that he will never really admit how great he is," said Moore. "Truth be told, he's an inspirational person and a strong leader."

A native of San Antonio, Texas, Flores joined the Coast Guard in 2012 with the goal of saving lives.

His lifesaving actions on the Rio Grande and his unfaltering commitment to helping others prompted Flores's supervisors to nominate him for USO Service Member of the Year, an award that recognizes service members who perform extraordinary acts of bravery and embody the values of the Armed Forces and the USO.

YOU CAN EARN \$1,000 FOR REFERRING SOMEONE TO JOIN THE COAST GUARD

By Kathy Murray, MyCG Writer

Dec. 12, 2022—The Coast Guard renamed its Everyone is a Recruiter (EIAR) program and doubled the incentive to \$1,000.

The rebranded “Scout Talent and Refer” (STAR) program has been significantly expanded. In addition to active duty, reserve, and civilian employees, auxiliaries and retirees are now eligible to participate. All those successfully making a referral will earn both a Letter of Commendation (of Appreciation) and the \$1,000 bonus.

STAR also removed the restriction on prior service recruits. Participants may earn an award for recruiting active duty and reserve enlisted personnel, as well as anyone enlisting in the Coast Guard for the first time, even if they have previously served in the military. You will also qualify if you recruit someone with prior service in the Coast Guard who is not currently affiliated with the Selected Reserve (SELRES) or Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) or Individual Standby Reserve (ISL).

The Recruiting Command Incident Management Team (IMT) worked with Coast Guard leadership to implement these changes and improve our referral program as low unemployment continues to make it difficult to meet recruiting goals.

Since EIAR program launched in June, 242 employees and members have taken part. The service has already awarded 193 Letters of Commendation and 49 \$500 cash incentives.

But there’s still more to do, notes Capt. Richter Tipton. “To make sure the Coast Guard stops being the best kept secret in government service, we need everyone’s help,” he said. “Talk to lots of people, tell them about your best day in the Coast Guard, and

give us their contact information. The more people you can interest in the Coast Guard, the more people we can recruit—and the more money and formal recognition you can get, too.”

The best way to refer a candidate is via the email found here: www.gocoastguard.com/max. Members are encouraged to submit only high quality referrals. You can find guidance on what that means at the same web address.

(Note: Members serving in a recruiting assignment or assigned duties which could be perceived as causing a conflict of interest are not eligible to take part in STAR.)

How does it work? Incentives for the STAR program will be awarded using a process similar to EIAR’s. The recruiter will register the referral when processing the candidate. You will become eligible to receive the incentives when the recruit starts boot camp and confirms you as the referring member at a process integrity check.

Additional information on all Coast Guard recruiting incentives may be found at the website listed above. For other questions contact the Coast Guard Recruiting IMT at (202)372-8043.



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USCG VIETNAM PATCHES: RONONE, RONTNREE, Operation Market Time, Gulf of Tonkin Yacht Club - **\$6.50**

COAST GUARD COMBAT VETERANS ASSOCIATION



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please Print Legibly)

PERSONAL INFORMATION



Last Name		First Name		MI	Suffix	DOB
Street Address			City	State	Zip	
Telephone:	Cell	Home	Other	Email		

For those with a second address, please submit that address to cgcva@comcast.net. When switching between the primary and secondary addresses make sure that you notify the CGCVA of the address change so that you will continue to receive the Quarterdeck Log. To notify the CGCVA of a permanent address change, send an email with the new address to cgcva@comcast.net.

MILITARY SERVICE INFORMATION

Service Branch and Dates of Service	Grade, Rank, Rate at Time of Discharge of Retirement
(Indicate broken service or other service affiliation below: (continue on reverse if necessary))	
Service Branch and Dates of Service	Grade, Rank, Rate at Time of Discharge of Retirement

Qualifying Service Medal Awarded (See Ribbons above)	Dates in Theatre of Operations and Name of Campaign / Operation	Ship(s) or Unit(s) Assigned at Time of Deployment

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

This application MUST be accompanied by a copy of one or more of the following documents indicating applicant's participation in, or in direct support of, combat contingency operations: DD-214 (all pages), DD-215, NAV/CG-523, Letter(s) of awards or other "official" documentation stating participation WHILE A MEMBER OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD. If necessary, a certified statement from a former shipmate who is a member of CGCVA and in "good standing" stating that they served with applicant in a specific unit during a deployment location and timeframe that qualifies for membership

Dues: \$40.00 for two-year membership. Current active duty, including SELRES on Title 10 or long-term ADOS receive a four-year membership for same price.

Send application and payment to:
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Lansdale, PA 19446
Make checks payable to: CGCVA
Questions: 410-690-8000

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Check appropriate box: Regular Membership

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Change Service Requested



On March 20, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom commenced. Above is a Coast Guard Port Security Unit (PSU) boat patrolling the Persian Gulf and associated waterways, protecting coalition ships carrying warfighting cargo. The PSUs are manned and commanded by U.S. Coast Guard Reservists. All eight PSUs have deployed in support of OIF. (U.S. Coast Guard Photo)