



The Cuttermen

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*'The Cuttermen' is the Official Newsletter of
the Coast Guard Cuttermen's Association*

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New Chapters Forming

The association continues to grow rapidly and new chapters are forming and chartered monthly. The Alameda Cuttermen led the charge and became our first local chapter. They hold Cuttermen's Calls at Quinn's and other establishments in the area. One note worthy Cuttermen's Call was hosted by RADM Sullivan: The initial "Bay Area" Cuttermen chapter officers include President Capt Kelly Hatfield, Vice President LCDR Steve Adler, Secretary GMC Michael Phillips, and Treasurer OSCM Lisa Starliper. We also approved a New London Chapter with President CDR Aldante Vinciguerra, Vice President Capt Diane Durham, and approved a Puget Sound Chapter with President Capt Bill Meese. The national board also received a Southern Most Chapter request from Key West Cuttermen and a Columbia River (Astoria) Chapter request. More are forming from the Great Lakes to Bahrain, thanks to all the local leaders and sailors for your collective efforts to build our membership.

Association Activities and Annual meeting

The Association had a very busy past few months. We supported ACUSHNET's decommissioning ceremony, SMILAX's Queen of the Fleet ceremony, participated in a JO-CPO team building event sponsored and funded by the Surface Navy Association (SNA), funded refreshments at Hopley Yeaton Day, sponsored a San Diego Cuttermen's Call at Coronado, initiated graduated membership dues based on rank, offered new three year and corporate memberships, sponsored an event at the NNOA conference, and distributed plankowner certificates for members who joined before 4 August 2010.

Our first Annual meeting on 3 May was well attended and a great success. Thanks to LT Eric Cooper for coordinating the event. ADM Papp, a lifetime member, addressed our membership and congratulated us on a establishing something long discussed but now a reality, this Cuttermen Association. The membership heard a great presentation on the Revenue Cutters' role in the Civil War. Election coordinators, Rusty Dash and Mike Cribbs, presided over the election of our new executive board: President Capt Chris Sinnett, Vice President CDR Kevin Wirth, Secretary CDR Tony Russell, Treasurer BMCS Roger Fuller (ret.), and immediate past president (and voting member) Capt Brian Perkins (ret).

We continue to seek ways to help fellow Cuttermen as described by our president on the next page.



From the President

Ahoy Shipmates!

I could say it's an exciting time to be a Cutterman, and that would be true. The simple truth of the matter, however, is that it's ALWAYS an exciting time to be sailing in the fleet, supporting the fleet, or in any way supporting the missions that are faced by our afloat community.

The Coast Guard's origins rest with the original Revenue Cutter Service, and our evolution into today's Coast Guard has been driven by the needs of our nation and the citizens we serve. The challenges we're facing right now as a country and a service may seem unprecedented, but our elders faced great challenges in their day as well, and they persevered.

Executive Board

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*Chris Sinnett
CAPT, USCG*

Vice President

*Kevin Wirth
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*Roger Fuller
SCPO, USCG (Ret.)*

Secretary

*Tony Russell
LCDR, USCG*

Past President

*Brian Perkins
CAPT, USCG (Ret)*

We all want to know how long we'll be running our older cutters & when the new ones will be ready for ops. We want to know how much money we'll have so we can plan ahead for routine operations and still be prepared for emergencies. But the simple, basic truth is that no one has a crystal ball to tell us what the future holds.

So to help settle the seas a bit and give you a tool for the upcoming days, I want to borrow a phrase that the British government used during the Second World War. I learned of this phrase when I was fortunate enough to visit Winston Churchill's War Rooms in London. It's a simple phrase, and that's a big reason why I like it. The phrase is, "Keep Calm and Carry On."

"Keep Calm" means exactly that. You should definitely keep yourself educated about the serious challenges our nation and the world are facing, but maintain a realistic sense of concern, and don't be an alarmist. Be smart... be aware... make smart personal financial decisions.....and remain firm in your resolve that we will persevere.

"Carry On" means to stay focused on your service to the nation, to your family, and to yourself – to those things which are critical to your life and livelihood. For a shipmate on a cutter, this is very simple. Be professional, be safe..... be the shipmate everyone else can count on, no matter which billet you fill. Likewise, when it comes to your personal life – make smart decisions and you will keep your "personal stress" low and manageable.

One of the reasons the Coast Guard is successful across a variety of missions is because we're good at focusing on the mission at hand. Put the distractions away – and focus.

As we move forward with the Cuttermen Association we're going to focus on those things which will provide value to you, our members. Current ideas include: mentoring events which allow seasoned sailors to provide guidance and advice to newer shipmates; tips on how to manage your financial health & future; what it takes to get a civilian merchant license, and more.

If you have ideas on what you'd like to see YOUR Cuttermen Association provide to YOU, e-mail them to me at Joseph.C.Sinnett@uscg.mil and I'll be happy to present your thoughts to the Executive Board.

Remember – Keep Calm and Carry On.



Smilax becomes Queen of the Fleet

Courtesy of Coast Guard Compass, the official blog of the U.S. Coast Guard.



Pictured left are the Commanding Officer, CWO Scott McAloon and crew of USCGC SMILAX with Commandant and Gold Ancient Mariner Admiral Bob Papp. SMILAX took the place of ACUSHNET as the longest serving cutter. USCGC STORIS preceded ACUSHNET, and USCGC FIR was the last buoy tender prior to SMILAX to serve with gold numbers. USCGC INGAM held the "queen of the fleet" distinction until decommissioning in 1988 when FIR, a Light House Service ship became queen.

April 14, 2011 -- Sailors love their ships, and while it's probably best demonstrated in how we care for them, it's probably most evident in the ceremonies we conduct during their service lives. But one ceremony in particular brings together the best of both: relieving the watch as Queen of the Fleet. Today, I had the distinct pleasure and privilege of presiding over a relief of watch ceremony in Atlantic Beach, NC, as Coast Guard Cutter Smilax (WLIC 315), became the latest Queen of the Fleet. It was a joy to see the ship's hull numbers painted in gold, a distinction that goes with this title.

Chief Warrant Officer Scott McAloon, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Smilax, reveals the gold hull numbers that designate the cutter Queen of the Fleet. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley. The Queen of the Fleet is the ship with the earliest date of commission into active Coast Guard service. Smilax became the oldest commissioned cutter when Acushnet, previous Queen of the fleet, was decommissioned from service on Mar. 10. Smilax was commissioned on Nov. 1, 1944, as World War II raged on in both the European and Pacific theaters.

Built at Dubuque Boat & Boiler Works in Dubuque, Iowa, more than 66 years ago when Franklin Roosevelt was president, Smilax has remained in good running condition. Then Seventh District Commander Rear Adm. R.W. Durfey, in an effort to dissuade his superiors from decommissioning Smilax in 1977, wrote, "The Smilax is in good condition and provides excellent mission suitability." I am proud to say Smilax still does that 34 years later and it's a testament to the ship's current and all previous crews.

Smilax also continues to perform a valuable mission, maintaining 1,226 fixed aids to navigation such as lights and range markers and 26 buoys throughout the Outer Banks of North Carolina to help mariners navigate safely. The ship provided similar service to mariners in Florida from 1944 to 1965, and Georgia from 1966 to 1999. The value of this service in preventing the loss of lives, property and damage to the environment over the course of almost 70 years is immeasurable. Smilax is now only superseded in age among U.S. naval vessels by two sailing ships; USS Constitution, which was commissioned (christened) on Oct. 21, 1797, and Coast Guard Cutter Eagle, which was commissioned on Sept. 17, 1936.

As a U.S. Navy vessel, Constitution does not qualify for Coast Guard Queen of the Fleet and Eagle's original commissioning date was into the German navy before World War II, which prevents its qualification. After the war, however, Eagle was brought to the U.S. and commissioned into the Coast Guard fleet on May 15, 1946.

This is a significant detail as Smilax is on the leading edge of an aging fleet of ships across the Coast Guard that are becoming harder and more costly to maintain and operate. And Smilax will continue to provide value for the public into the foreseeable future so that we can focus limited funds for new equipment on the more urgent acquisitions of national security cutters, offshore patrol cutters and fast response cutters to protect our nation. Some of Smilax's greatest service may well begin as a septuagenarian!

Congratulations to Smilax and her crews, and thank you for your service.

Cuttermen's Association Bylaws Revision

At the 2011 annual meeting in May LT Eric Quigley briefed the membership in attendance on the progress of revising the Association Bylaws. Based upon the feedback received at that meeting and discussions at the monthly meetings of the Board, the first revision to the bylaws is complete and ready for membership review and vote.

The bylaws provide a foundation for conducting the business of the Association. The proposed revisions will allow for greater participation by non-board members during meetings, and provide committee chairs broader ability to conduct business outside of normal meeting times.

There are two different approaches available to update the bylaws of an organization 1) revision or 2) amendments. Revisions can be as drastic as a complete rewrite of the document, where the previous version is superseded by the new document. Using amendments involves small scale changes to specific sections of a document. In this case, a revision was chosen to correct and update a broad range of formatting and content.

The next step includes distributing the proposed bylaw revision to the membership for review and a vote to approve or reject the proposed revision. As members review the document, please consider the procedures outlined in the proposed revision to amend the bylaws. Each annual meeting will include a review of proposed changes and a membership vote. Implementing this revision is critical to improving the efficiency of the Association and will help us better serve the membership and the Cuttermen Association.

Be sure and check your email for the by-law revision and VOTE.

Objectives and Purpose of the Cuttermen's Association

- To actively contribute to the continuation and preservation of the history of Coast Guard Cuttermen and the recognition thereof.
- To support the goals and advancement of Coast Guard Cuttermen and to promote the Cutter Fleet internally and external to the service.
- To maintain an informational liaison between present and past Coast Guard Cuttermen and the operational fleet.
- To promote interaction and camaraderie between all Coast Guard Cuttermen and supporters of the Coast Guard's cutter fleet through periodic gatherings, fraternal in nature, both national and regional in scope.
- To provide an organizational common link for all past and present Cuttermen for the purpose of strengthening the afloat community for present and future Cuttermen.

Benefits

- | | |
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| • Participation in professional organization | Subscription to a Quarterly newsletter |
| • Participation in Annual Meeting | Information on National and Chapter events |
| • Participation in local Chapter events | Camaraderie within the community |
| • Volunteer opportunities | Liaison with other professional associations |
| • Networking opportunities | |

Hampton Roads Cuttermen Test Shiphandling Skills



YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA – Seven competitors from three separate cutters faced off on Monday, January 10th, in the first annual Coast Guard Tidewater area shiphandling contest, the first of its kind for Coast Guard units in the Tidewater area. Participants came from various ranks and possessed a wide range of experience, ranging from months to years sailing aboard Coast Guard cutters.

Organized by the Coast Guard Cutter TAMPA and sponsored by the national Cuttermen's Association, the goal of the contest was to develop and refine shiphandling expertise, seamanship skills, and promote professional development. Inspired by similar exercises held by the U.S. Navy, the friendly competition brought together local shipmates while offering prize money towards the morale funds for the highest scoring units.

Competitors were judged on their command presence, judgment, use of commands, use of engine and rudders, and smartness during evolutions set up at the Army's Ft. Eustis simulator. Evolutions included mooring to a pier and recovering a person overboard. In addition, each competitor's knowledge of the Rules of the Road and maneuvering boards was tested as well. BMCM Stephen Atchley, Officer in Charge of CGC Seahorse (WPB 87361), took first place, winning \$100 for his cutter's morale fund courtesy of the Cuttermen's Association. LTjg Nathan Wojcik of CGC Tampa (WMEC 902) came in second place and secured a prize of \$50. Competitors and judges alike praised the event and hope to see more competitions in the future!

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

One Year Plankowner memberships expire in 2012!

SPENCER HONORS WWII VET

Shipmates, when I got a letter from Tennessee I had no idea who it was or what they wanted. We routinely get requests for unit ballcaps or patches or stamps but I realized immediately this was a different case. SN Carl Wattenbarger (shown seated on the right in the Dixie cup) served on SPENCER during WWII and one of his friends made a special request, just for a ballcap or something small. Well, the Capt and crew sent a box of goodies including a polished 76mm casing fired during a recent gun shoot. This is what it's all about. Hope you enjoy. v/r Michael Moyers



Observations from Mr Wattenbrger. I was told to grab my bag and that I was going on the Spencer. I asked what is the Spencer? The answer was that it was a "Straw Bottomed SOB" which I later learned referred to the fact that the Spencer had a very thin bottom. I was assigned the laundry duties, which suited me just fine. The laundry had a big sorting table which I slept on. So I had a private room with the biggest bed on the ship. We made 9 round trips across the Atlantic, sometimes going by the way of Iceland. When submarines attacked the convoys at night, we could see the ships exploding. We would look for survivors. We had a long pole which we would poke at them. If there was no movement, then we would leave them in the water due to the danger in stopping. We picked up one ship survivor on three different times. On the last time, he said "Here I am again boys". He was one lucky guy. Once there were three survivors hanging on to a piece of debris. We could not stop and rescue them because of a submarine in the area. They waved to us as we left them. That was hard. On sinking the submarine: We damaged the sub with depth charges and it surfaced. I was on the five inch cannon manning the trigger. The Germans came out of the conning tower and tried to fire at us. That was a big mistake on their part. We shot up the conning tower. I could actually see the shells in flight as they flew and hit the conning tower. I guess the survivors came out of the torpedo tubes or elsewhere.

Carl Wattenbarger SN USCGC SPENCER 1942-45

HAIL



FUTURE USCGC BERNARD C WEBBER UNDERWAY FOR BUILDERS TRIALS.

FAREWELL USCGCs CHASE, HAMILTON, ACUSHNET, ZEPHYR, TORNADO, & SHAMAL



10-12 January 2012



Surface Navy Association 24th National Symposium

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