

Coast Guard



Military • Multimission • Maritime

IN THEATER

The Coast Guard deploys to the Middle East and the Mediterranean in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Liberty Shield



Strike Force

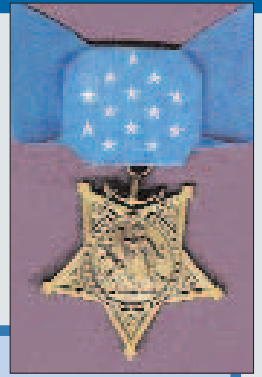


Recovering a hero

Heroes

The world's best Coast Guard

SIGNALMAN FIRST CLASS DOUGLAS A. MUNRO



The following is a copy of Lt. Cmdr. D.H. Dexter's letter to the parents of Douglas Munro, written soon after their son was killed in action by the enemy at Guadalcanal Sept. 27, 1942. Dexter was Munro's commanding officer at the time of Munro's death.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Munro:

Believe me when I say sincerely that this is a very sad letter for me to write advising you of the death of your son Douglas, but as commanding officer of the unit to which he was attached at the time of his death, I have pride in telling you that he covered himself with honor, and I hope glory, and fulfilled the mission so satisfactorily that almost all of the men he had under his charge returned to their unit and, without exception, all had praise for your son's execution of his duties.

It was a year ago last June that Douglas and Raymond Evans came to me and asked if they could be transferred to Capt. Ashe's staff. I succeeded in getting them and since that day have felt that Douglas was one of my boys, for both Douglas and Ray Evans have been with me, and his loss has left a very decided space which I feel will never be filled so far as I am concerned.

On Sunday the 27th of September, an expedition was sent into an area where trouble was to be expected. Douglas was in charge of the 10 boats which took the men down. In the latter part of the afternoon, the situation had not developed as had been anticipated, and in order to save the expedition, it became necessary to send the boats back to evacuate the expedition.

Volunteers were called for and, true to the highest traditions of the Coast Guard and also to traditions with which you imbued your son, he was among the first to volunteer and was put in charge of the detail.

The evacuation was as successful as could be hoped for under fire. But as always happens, the last men to leave the beach are the hardest pressed because they have been acting as the covering agents for the withdrawal of the other men, and your son, knowing this, so placed himself and his boats so that he could act as the covering agent for the last men, and by his

action and successful maneuvers brought back a far greater number of men than had been even hoped for. He received his wound just as the last men were getting in the boats and clearing the beach. Upon regaining consciousness, his only question was 'Did they get off?' and so died with a smile on his face and the full knowledge that he had successfully accomplished a dangerous mission.

I am sending this to you direct for I feel that you should have the privilege of knowing the facts, but request that you keep it confidential until such time as the official notification is received. I regret having to make this request but feel that it is for the good of all concerned. I consider this a personal letter and not an official report.

In the year and a half that I have known Douglas, I have grown to admire him and through him, you. He was the true type of American manhood that is going to win this war and I hereby promise that I will make all efforts to personally call on you whenever it is my privilege to be near Cle Elum and to pay homage to you both as parents of Douglas.





Coast Guard

April/May 2003

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Features



PA1 TOM SPERDUTO, PADET NEW YORK

PSC Timothy A. Beard of PSU 313 from Tacoma, Wash., stands guard on the Mina al Bakr oil terminal in the North Arabian Gulf off the coast of Iraq April 7. [Page 22](#)

22 **A Mighty Force**

By PA2 Joe Patton, G-IPA

A photographic glimpse of the Coast Guard's historic role as part of coalition forces in the Middle East for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

38 **High Demand**

By Lt. Rick Wester, CGC Walnut, with contributions from Scott Price, G-IPA-4

The CGC Walnut is capable of a variety of missions, and, as a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the cutter's versatility has been in high demand.

42 **National Strike Force**

By PA1 Tom Sperduto, PADET New York

The Coast Guard's National Strike Force is in the Middle East to support environmental response operations as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

46 **Who Let the Dogs Out?**

By PA3 Donnie Brzuska, LantArea

Meet the newest breed of Coasties, which can uncover what is inside containers, walls and suitcases by using only their noses.

50 **Special Missions Training Center**

By PA3 Zachary Crawford, Special Missions Training Center

This center is training Coast Guardsmen on Maritime Security tactics as preparation for possible real-world endeavors both in the U.S. and abroad.

56 **Looking for a Lost Hero**

By PA2 Lauren Smith, 14th Dist.

Investigative teams comb the Vietnamese countryside in search for the remains of the only unaccounted-for Coast Guardsman from the Vietnam War.



PA1 TOM SPERDUTO, PADET NEW YORK

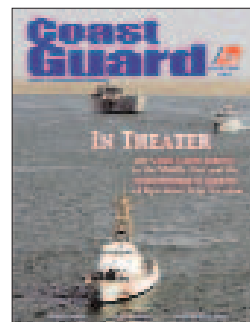
The deck department handles an Iraqi buoy aboard the CGC Walnut. The cutter is deployed in the Middle East as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. [Page 38](#)

Departments

12 **News Beat**

Check out **Coast Guard** magazine on the web. www.uscg.mil/magazine

Look for more stories on Operation Iraqi Freedom in future issues.



ON THE COVER

The CGC Wrangell escorts the Sir Galahad, a British ship carrying food supplies and humanitarian aid, to the people of Iraq up the Khawr Abd Allah River.

PHOTO BY PA1 TOM SPERDUTO, PADET NEW YORK



UP FRONT

STANDING OVATION

President George W. Bush is given a rousing welcome from Coast Guard members at the Port of Philadelphia. Bush spoke at the Coast Guard facility in the port, where he praised the service's men and women and announced the addition of up to 700 new boats for patrolling harbors and waterways.

PHOTO BY TELFAIR BROWN, G-IPA

UP FRONT







UP FRONT

ARMED PATROL

BM3 John Kourtz stands by an M-60 machine gun mounted in the bow of a Coast Guard Harbor Patrol and Homeland Security boat alongside the Coast Guard Harbor Tug Pendant in Boston Harbor April 2. Both boats are taking part in increased security efforts since the start of the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

AP PHOTO

UP FRONT

A TIME TO WRITE

HST1 Ben Mulkey of PSU 313 from Tacoma Wash., writes a letter to his wife Jennifer while on the Mina al Bakr oil terminal in the North Arabian Gulf off the coast of Iraq April 7.

PHOTO BY PA1 TOM SPERDUTO, PADET NEW YORK









UP FRONT

RAISING THE COLORS

Seaman Apprentice Brian Willkow raises the colors aboard the CGC Grand Isle, from Gloucester, Mass. The cutter is one of four 110-foot patrol boats deployed to the Mediterranean in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

PHOTO BY PA1 JOHN GAFFNEY, USCGR





UP FRONT

SHOW OF SUPPORT

BM3 Terry Sercovich, a reservist from Port Security Unit 308 in Gulfport, Miss., participates in a parade held by the citizens of Harahan, La., in support of troops April 12.

PHOTO BY PA3 KYLE NIEMI, 8TH DIST.

Operation Liberty Shield calls on CG

WASHINGTON D.C., March 17 — From sea to shining sea and all across this great nation, Operation Liberty Shield is in effect.

This national plan was implemented by the Department of Homeland Security here today as a result of the increased threat level facing the nation.

During his remarks from the DHS briefing room, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge said, "The intelligence community believes that terrorists will attempt multiple attacks against U.S. and coalition targets worldwide in the event of a U.S.-led military campaign against Saddam Hussein."

Ridge later remarked that, "Operation Liberty Shield will increase security at our borders, strengthen transportation sector protections, enhance security at our critical infrastructure, increase public health preparedness, and make sure all federal response assets can be deployed quickly."

Operation Liberty Shield is a multi-department, multi-agency, national-team effort that is ultimately designed to increase protection of America's citizens, land and way of life.

Liberty shield efforts include:

- Increased security at borders
- Stronger transportation protections
- Ongoing measures to disrupt threats against the nation
- Greater protections for critical infrastructure and key assets
- Increased public health preparedness
- Federal response resources positioned and ready.

At the forefront of maritime security is the Coast Guard. Under Liberty Shield, the Coast Guard is doing much of the same business, but just more, more, more! The Coast Guard's taskings include more patrols, more escorts of passenger ships, more Coast Guard Sea Marshals, and more enforcement of security zones.

More patrols means just that; security has been increased at major U.S. ports and waterways with more Coast Guard patrols by aircraft, ships and boats.

In the interest of safety and security for the people who transit the country's many waterways, whether for business or pleasure, the Coast Guard will continue to escort more ferries and cruise ships.

Likewise, the domestic and foreign ships entering or passing through U.S. waterways will also continue to have a Coast Guard eye on them. Every high-interest ship arriving at or departing from American ports will have armed Sea Marshals aboard, closely watching the ship's crew and ensuring that it makes its port



PA3 MIKE HROZDA, PADET NEW YORK



WHITE HOUSE PHOTO

Top: A 25-foot Coast Guard boat from Station New York patrols New York Harbor March 21.

Left: Secretary Tom Ridge announces the Homeland Security Advisory System in Washington D.C., March 12. The system, designed to measure and evaluate terrorist threats, is based on threat conditions of five different alerts: low (green), guarded (blue), elevated (yellow), high (orange) and severe (red).

call safely.

Finally, under Liberty Shield, the Coast Guard will enforce security zones in and around important infrastructure sites in key ports across America.

As always, the men and women of the Coast Guard have proven during Liberty Shield their willingness, ability and readiness to answer the call to protect, secure and safeguard the needs of the American people.

Compiled by G-IPA staff

Coast Guard

America's Lifesaver and
Guardian of the Seas

Adm. Thomas H. Collins
Commandant

Vice Adm Thomas J.
Barrett
Vice Commandant

Rear Adm. Kevin J. Eldridge
Assistant Comdt. for
Governmental & Public Affairs

Capt. Jeff Karonis
Chief, Public Affairs

Patricia Miller

Deputy Chief, Public Affairs

CWO3 Lionel Bryant
Chief, Imagery Branch

PA1 Elizabeth Brannan

Editor

PA1 Jacquelyn Zettles

PA2 Joe Patton

Assistant Editors

Subscriptions: Call (202) 512-1800 or write to Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. To subscribe online follow the link at our web site at www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/cb/magazine.htm

Submissions: We need your stories, photographs, comments and suggestions. Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month. Articles will appear 1.5 months after that deadline. Submit your stories to: U.S. Coast Guard (G-IPA-1), 2100 2nd Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20593-0001, or e-mail them to cgmag@comdt.uscg.mil. For more guidelines, visit the magazine Web site and click on "submissions" or call the editor at (202) 267-0928.

Letters to the editor: Please limit remarks to 150 words or less. No names will be withheld. Provide rank, first and last name, phone number and unit. Letters may be condensed because of space. Not all letters will be published.

Coast Guard, COMDT PUB P5720.2, is produced for members of the U.S. Coast Guard. Editorial content is unofficial and not authority for action. Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Homeland Security or the Coast Guard. Stories may be reprinted except Associated Press wire stories and articles reprinted from other publications.

LIBERTY SHIELD/IRAQI FREEDOM

ADAK IS AT IT CG captures Iraqi sailors

PERSIAN GULF, March 22 — The CGC Adak, a 110-foot patrol boat homeported in Highlands, N.J., captured three Iraqi sailors early yesterday after they jumped overboard from their patrol boat moments before it was attacked by coalition forces.

The sailors will be processed as enemy prisoners of war.

Approximately 1100 Coast Guard men and women are participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom in the Persian Gulf aboard four patrol boats, a high-endurance cutter, a buoy tender, two law enforcement detachments, two port security units and a harbor defense command unit.

Coast Guard Forces Southwest Asia



The CGC Adak patrolling around the Brooklyn Bridge Aug. 22.

PAT TOM SHERIDAN, PADET NEW YORK

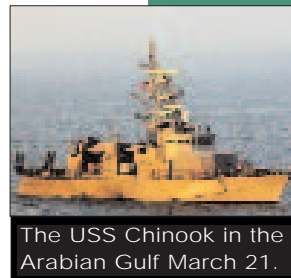
CG finds Iraqi Weapons Cache

PERSIAN GULF, April 4 — Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 205, homeported in Yorktown, Va., located and

secured a large Iraqi military equipment and weapons cache hidden in coastal caves in Southern Iraq.

Among the weapons found were small arms, grenades, rocket launchers, missiles, explosive devices, gas masks, uniforms and ammunition. The weapons will be destroyed by explosives ordnance handling personnel.

Members of the detachment are embarked aboard the USS Chinook, a cyclone class patrol boat. Coast Guard Forces Southwest Asia



The USS Chinook in the Arabian Gulf March 21.

NAVY PHOTO BY PH1 WILLIAM GARDY

WEBHOT!



<http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/ptc/downloads/Master%20-kids-book.pdf>

This month's Webhot! selection leads you to the children's book "My Coast Guard Adventure." The book was written by Chaplain Bryan Finch to encourage children of deployed Coast Guard parents who experience sadness and other emotions when their parents go away.

The story is written from the viewpoint of six-year old Amy, the daughter of two Coast Guard parents.



MIKE WEBB, ILLUSTRATION ARTIST

She is seen as fun-loving and cheerful until she gets the news that her dad has to leave on a Coast Guard mission.

Amy copes with her sadness at a nearby oak tree. She says, "I go there to let my imagination run wild and dream wonderful dreams. I play and sometimes I pray, or if I am sad, I even cry."

The love of her mom and support from the Coast Guard chaplain also help Amy deal with her feelings.

At the end, Amy encourages other children. She says, "If you or your friends have parents who are in the Coast Guard, you should

know that even though sometimes they have to go far away because of their jobs, they always love you and think about you."

Think your Web site is unique?
E-mail the URL to
jzettles@comdt.uscg.mil

HOUSE OF PAIN

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 3 — MST3 Don Warden demonstrates a disabling technique on GM3 Martin Schuler, both from Marine Safety and Security Team 91104, during boarding team training at the YMCA here today. About 30 members of the MSST from Galveston, Texas, came to Memphis to patrol the Mississippi River and to train local Coast Guard members in law enforcement and security procedures.

PA3 Kyle Niemi, 8th Dist.



Around the world, around the clock

The Coast Guard detained an 880-foot oil tanker in the Delaware Bay with two Iraqi national crewmembers aboard March 21. Under Operation Liberty Shield, the Coast Guard is screening and tracking all foreign flagged ships and increasing port security boardings before ships arrive in U.S. ports.

The CGC Wrangell, homeported in Portland, Maine along with a Coast Guard rescue helicopter from Air Station Honolulu deployed with the CGC Boutwell, escorted the first waterborne humanitarian aid shipment into the port of Umm Qasr in the Persian Gulf March 28. In addition, PSU 311 from San Pedro, Calif., assisted other coalition forces protecting the harbor.

The 7th District keeps in step with the Coast Guard-wide efforts to increase patrols in concurrence with the President's directive that raised the national threat level from yellow (elevated) to orange (high). Coast Guard cutters, aircraft, and boats are patrolling to protect the homeland and closely monitor maritime activity more than ever.



Coast Guard units, local law enforcement and marine agencies conducted an exercise March 25 to test and evaluate upgraded communication and tracking technologies and evaluate emergency response plans in Port Everglades, Fla. The exercise scenario includes detection of unknown vessels and people in a restricted area.

FY'03 By the numbers compiled March 5

Lives saved: 1,036
SAR cases: 10,599
Marijuana: 9,757 pounds
Cocaine: 48,440 pounds
Migrants: 2,705
Security Zones: 184

Source: G-IPA-2

PSU 311 in theater

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 17 – Coast Guard Port Security Unit 311, from San Pedro, Calif., departed March Air Reserve Base here today to support the global war on terrorism and to prepare for future contingencies in the Persian Gulf.

“We are trained and ready to execute our mission,” said Cmdr. Donald Karol, PSU 311’s commanding officer. “This deployment shows our determination to safeguard our nation’s security both at home and abroad.”

Reserve members, most with careers in local law enforcement, form the majority of PSU 311. The unit is a deployable unit organized for sustained operations to support military missions worldwide. PSU 311 members train in specialized combat, weapons and boat skills to provide waterside security and maritime force protection in support of military and commercial shipping.

PSU 311 patrolled the Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors with other Coast Guard assets immediately following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. On October 3rd, 2001, PSU 311

was called to active duty for service in the Persian Gulf for a six-month deployment.

Story by CWO Lance Jones, PADET San Pedro



PA3 LOUIS HERBERT, PADET SAN PEDRO

HS2 Elizabeth Figueroa is interviewed by a local television station for a news story about the deployment of PSU 311.

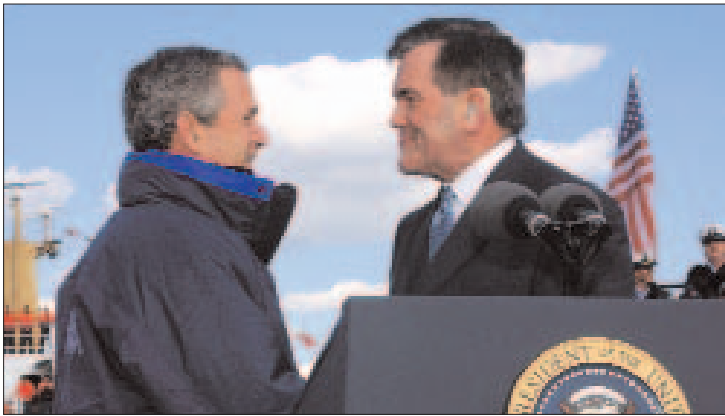


PA3 LOUIS HERBERT, PADET SAN PEDRO

The 120 members of PSU 311 begin to depart from March Air Reserve Base in support of the war on terrorism.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF GIVES SPECIAL THANKS TO CG AUXILIARISTS

Bush rallies CG crew



Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge welcomes President George W. Bush at the podium for his address.

PHILADELPHIA, March 31 — President George W. Bush visited Marine Safety Office/Group Philadelphia today to applaud and thank members of the Coast Guard for their support of Operations Liberty Shield and Iraqi Freedom.



Auxiliarist Manny Greenwald in 1998.

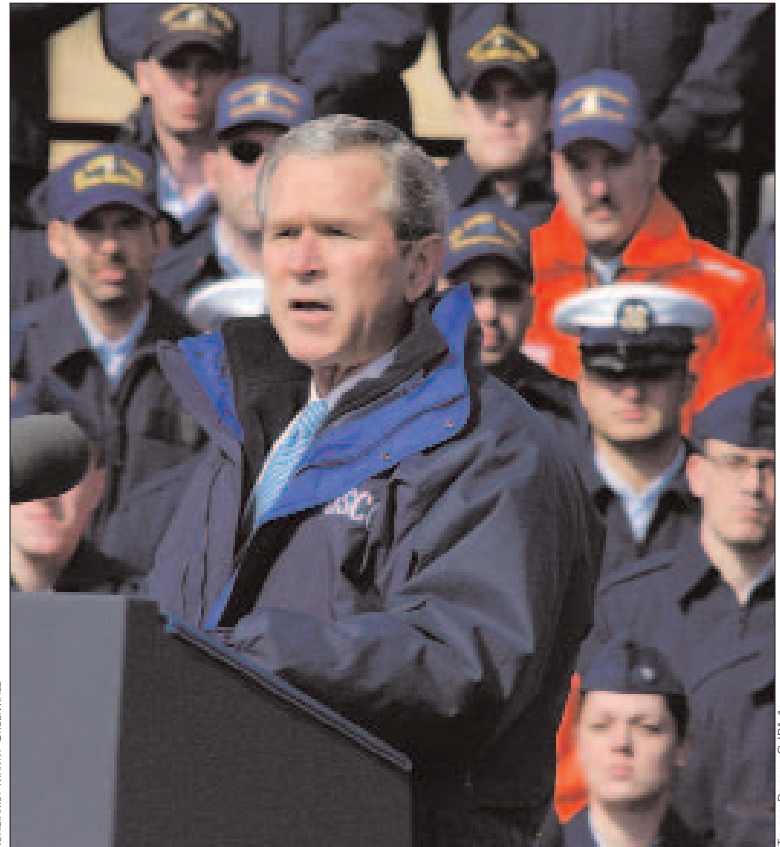
In his speech, Bush said, “We know that liberty must be defended by every generation. Today in the Middle East, and on other fronts in the war on terror, this generation of Americans is fighting bravely in the cause of freedom. And that includes the good people of the United States Coast Guard.

“The men and women of our Coast Guard are showing once again that you are ‘always ready.’ You’re always ready to serve with courage and excellence. You are always ready to place your country’s safety above your own. You shield your fellow Americans from the danger of this world, and America is grateful.”

The men and women of America’s Coast Guard are a diverse group of people, with many different uniforms. The president took the time to recognize those members of the Coast Guard family who wear the uniform of the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

He specifically thanked Auxiliarist Manny Greenwald, who serves as a watchstander at MSO/Group Philadelphia.

“I was briefed today by Adm. Hull who told me there’s auxiliarists all across the country who are helping the Coast Guard achieve their vital mission,” said Bush. “I want to thank all the Mannys across America who are helping our Coast Guard do its job. Manny’s only 92-years-old, and he’s still working hard.”



Bush addresses the men and women of the Coast Guard at MSO/Group Philadelphia and praises them for their wartime efforts.

To conclude his speech, Bush once again applauded all the military for a job well-done.

“You in the Coast Guard take rightful pride in the uniform you wear and the mission you have accepted. You, and all who serve in our military, are ready for any challenge. And by your skill, and by your courage, we will prevail.

“May God bless you and may God bless America.”

Story by White House public affairs

AUXILIARY POWER

The Coast Guard Auxiliary's volunteer hours augmenting the active duty Coast Guard during Operations Liberty Shield and Iraqi Freedom:

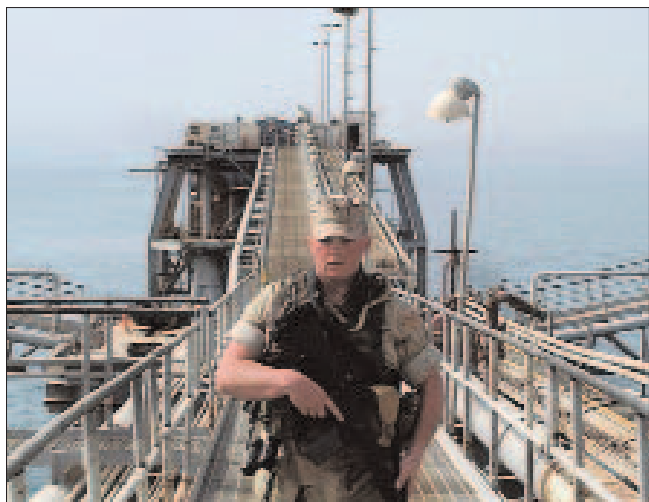
Mission Area	Hours
Vessel Inspections	583
Surface Patrols	46,151
Air Patrols	2,229
Air Logistics	448
Search and Rescue	231
Public Education	25,417
Misc. Programs	284,277
Total Hours	359,300

Watching over Texas ports



An HH-65 Dolphin from Air Station Houston takes a closer look at a ship inbound to the Houston Ship Channel March 4. Port security overflights have become the norm for Air Station Houston since Sept. 11, 2001, and even more so during Operation Liberty Shield.
Coast Guard photo by Mark Sowa/NASA

CG protects captured Iraqi oil platforms



LT. TONY RUSSELL, 7th DIST. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A Coast Guardsman from PSU 313, based in Tacoma, Wash., stands watch on the Mina al Bakr Oil Terminal.

PERSIAN GULF, March 22 — Members of Coast Guard Port Security Units 311 and 313 relieved Marines earlier today of responsibility for security on two gas and oil platforms in the Northern Persian Gulf. The Marines had held both platforms after Navy SEALs secured them from the Iraqi regime.

Members in PSU's train in specialized tactics, weapons and boat skills to ensure waterside security and maritime force protection in support of the U.S. joint, allied and coalition military operations.

Coast Guard PSU's have previously been called for service in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti and Operation Desert Storm.

Coast Guard Forces Southwest Asia



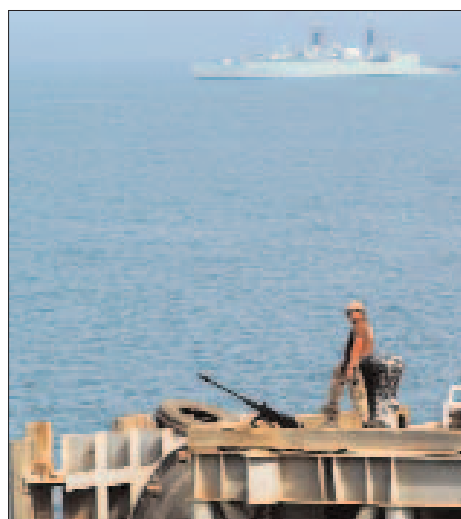
PAT TOM SPERDUTO, PADET NEW YORK

PSU 313 members stand over a picture of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that has been turned upside down at the Mina al Bakr oil terminal.



PAT TOM SPERDUTO, PADET NEW YORK

Coast Guardsmen from PSU 313 aboard the Mina al Bakr oil terminal.



LT. TONY RUSSELL, 7th DIST.

A PSU member stands watch with the support of the HMS Chatham and other coalition naval forces.

Guarding the Golden Gate



A crew from Coast Guard Station Golden Gate patrols the waters near the Golden Gate Bridge Jan. 13.
PA3 Louis Herbert, PADET San Pedro



PA2 PAUL ROSZKOWSKI, PADET WESTERN GREAT LAKES

Keeping watch in Chicago

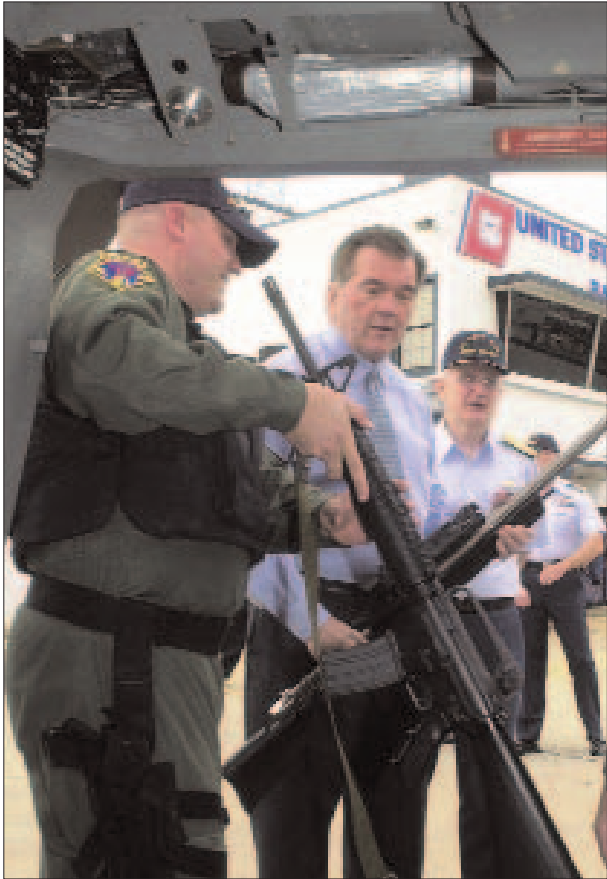
CHICAGO, March 24 — Coast Guard Seaman Kevin Lamb looks for anything suspicious during a homeland security patrol near Chicago's Navy Pier. Lamb, a member of Coast Guard Station Wilmette Harbor, Ill., is one of more than 100 Coast Guard active duty and reservists patrolling the Chicago area.

In addition to added security patrols, the 9th District has also been especially busy in their ice-breaking mission area.

As noted on the Department of Homeland Security Web site, in the wake of the most challenging ice season in 25 years, Coast Guard icebreaking cutters, in concert with their Canadian counterparts, worked to keep critical Great Lakes sea lanes open, permitting passage for 619 ore carriers and other vessels carrying cargo worth an estimated \$620 million in this economically vital region.

Compiled by G-IPA staff

7th Dist. secures the homeland



PA2 DANA WARR, PADET MAYPORT



PA2 DANA WARR, PADET MAYPORT

TOP: PSC Robert Gleichauf and MST2 James Benton walk down the loading ramp of the USNS Bob Hope after inspecting storage plans and procedures for military cargo during outload operations at Blount Island Terminal in Jacksonville, Fla., Feb. 12. A cargo safety team was brought in to inspect all hazardous materials and equipment being loaded onto military ships during the operation at the port.

LEFT: Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge holds a .50-caliber rifle used for counter-drug operations. Ridge arrived at Group Mayport, Fla., March 28, and spoke with various commands stationed and operating in the area.

BOTTOM: A Coast Guard 47-foot motor lifeboat crew enforces the Naval Vessel Protection Zone around the USNS Gordon while transiting out of Charleston Harbor Jan. 4. One of the Coast Guard's responsibilities as the lead agency for maritime homeland security and as a branch of the Armed Forces is to ensure the safety and security of military outloads in U.S. ports.



SEAMAN CRYSTAL NORMAN, GROUP CHARLESTON

A CLASS ACT

New defender class under construction



A new Defender Class boat sits outside the Port Orchard factory.



Ward Wulf (left) and Kurt Joy, employees of SAFE Boat International pose for a picture in front of the future Defender Class Coast Guard boats.

WASHINGTON, March 31 — President George W. Bush announced today the purchase of up to 700 Homeland Security Response Boats from SAFE Boats International of Port Orchard, Wash.

The new “Defender Class” boats are scheduled to replace nearly 300 non-standard shore-based boats and provide a standardized boat across the fleet.

During his rally speech at the Port of Philadelphia March 31, Bush said, “By giving the Coast Guard new resources, we are supporting the men and women who defend us all.”

The 13 District began working with SAFE Boats International when they had a work force of only three. The small business since has increased its workforce to 93 employees. They are scheduled to manufacture all the new Coast Guard boats at their facility in Port Orchard.

The total value of the contract is \$145 million and each new boat will cost approximately \$180,000.

Story compiled by G-IPA staff

Photos by PA3 Kurt Fredrickson, 13th Dist.



Dago Casas, a SAFE Boat International metal fabricator, welds a seam on the bow of one of the new Defender Class boats.

ON THE LOOKOUT

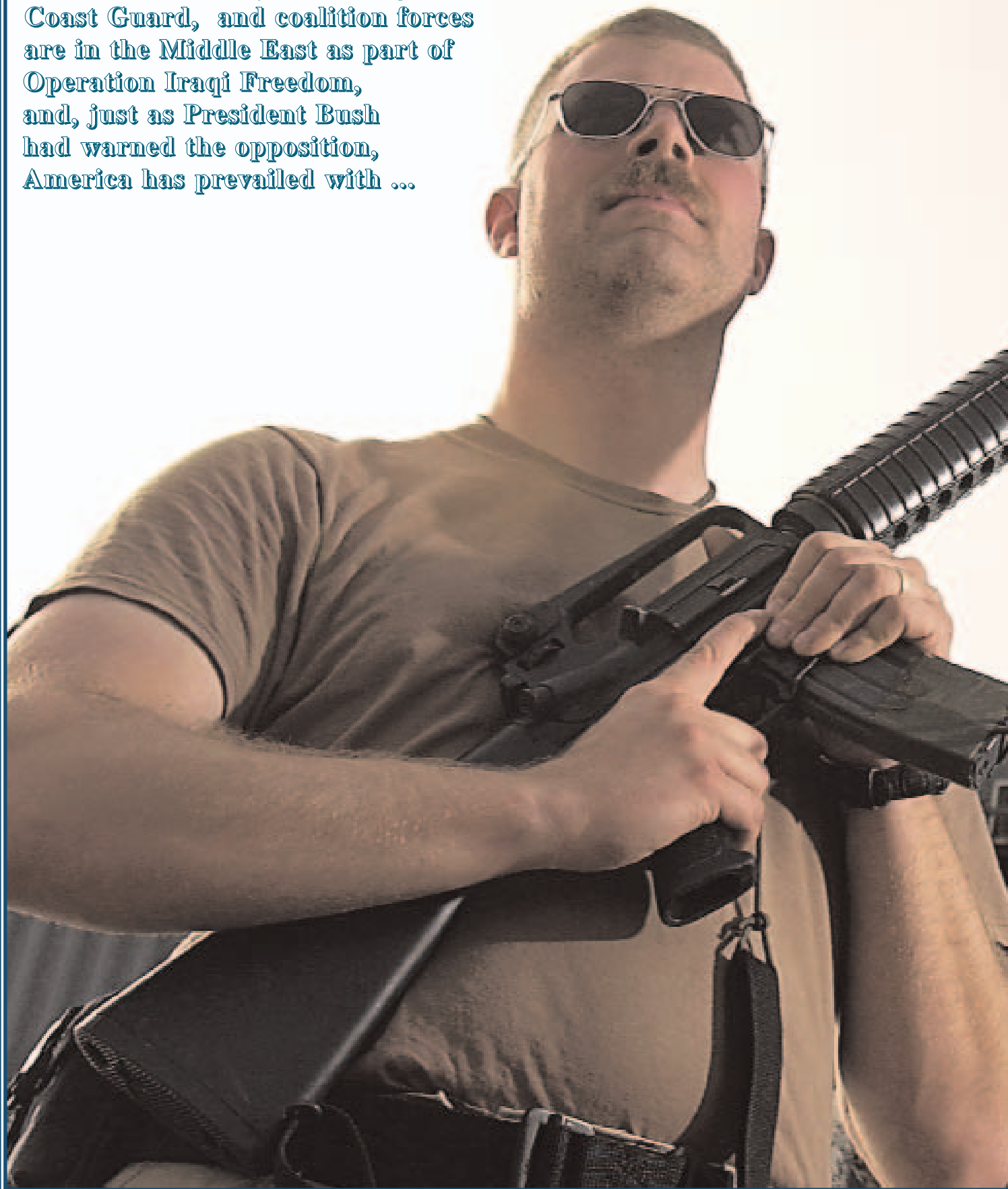
KODIAK, Alaska, March 30 —

Crewmen from the CGC Alex Haley stand ready to protect an oil tanker transiting Prince William Sound en route to the Port of Valdez. The Alex Haley and crew form a vital part of the Coast Guard’s maritime homeland security strategy by escorting and protecting mariners and ports from possible terrorist activities.

Coast Guard photo



America's military, including the Coast Guard, and coalition forces are in the Middle East as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and, just as President Bush had warned the opposition, America has prevailed with ...





“A MIGHTY FORCE”

Story by PA2 Joe Patton, G-IPA

Photos by PA1 Tom Sperduto, PADET New York
with contributions from PA1 John Gaffney,
7th Dist., Navy and AP

TAKING CHARGE

BM2 Glen Brannon of PSU 313 from Tacoma, Wash., stands guard at the Mina al Bakr oil terminal. PSUs are maintaining security on oil terminals in the Persian Gulf

“We know that liberty must be defended by every generation. Today in the Middle East, and on other fronts in the war on terror, this generation of Americans is fighting bravely in the cause of freedom. And that includes the good people of the United States Coast Guard ...

“In Operation Iraqi Freedom, our Coast Guard is playing a critical role. We have sent many Coast Guard cutters and over a thousand of our finest active duty and reserve members to the Persian Gulf and surrounding waters. Coast Guard personnel are protecting key ports and Iraqi oil platforms. They’re detaining prisoners of war. Members of the Coast Guard are performing their duties with bravery and excellence, and America appreciates your fine service.”

With those words during a visit to the Port of Philadelphia March 31, President George W. Bush thanked the Coast Guard for its role as part of coalition forces fighting to disarm a dangerous regime and to liberate an oppressed people.


Coast Guard assets are fully involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom, which ended the regime of Saddam Hussein, and is aimed at eliminating Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and capturing or driving out terrorists sheltered in Iraq.

The assets include:

- Two 378-foot high endurance cutters -- the CGC Boutwell and the CGC Dallas
- The CGC Walnut, a 225-foot buoy tender
- Two Mobile Support Units
- The National Strike Force
- Eight 110-foot patrol boats, including the CGC Wrangell, CGC Adak, CGC Aquidneck, CGC Baranof, CGC Grand Isle, CGC Bainbridge Island, CGC Pea Island and CGC Knight Island
- PSU 313 from Tacoma, Wash., PSU 311 from San Pedro, Calif., PSU 305 from Fort Eustis, Va., and PSU 309 from Port Clinton, Ohio.

“The men and women of our Coast Guard are showing once again that you are ‘always ready,’” said Bush.

“You shield your fellow Americans from the danger of this world, and America is grateful. ... In this time of war, the Coast Guard’s service in America’s waters is more important than ever.”

The pages that follow provide a photographic look at the Coast Guard’s involvement in this historic military operation. 





WHO'S NEXT?

The Coast Guard boarding team "Swordfish" off of the CGC Boutwell, homeported in Alameda, Calif., heads to another boarding after completing one aboard the Pantanassa, a tanker from the Marshall Islands enroute to Iran from Kuwait. Coast Guard boarding teams are searching vessels for weapons, terrorists and Iraqi military personnel.

NIGHT WATCH

Top Inset: A boarding team from the CGC Boutwell patrols the North Arabian Gulf at night March 21.



UNDER A WATCHFUL EYE

Left: BM3 Shawn Carman and Seaman Michael Joiner, boarding team members from the CGC Boutwell, keep an eye on personnel from the tanker ship Elona from Dubai during a boarding in the North Arabian Gulf March 23.

GUARDIANS OF THE SEA

Below: BM2 Brett Christenson, from the CGC Boutwell, circles the tanker ship Elona, while a boarding team aboard the tanker searches the vessel.





NAVY PHOTO BY JOC WILLIAM POLSON



FOLLOW THE LEADER

Above: The CGC Boutwell leading the USS Tarawa Battle Group in the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

WAR PATROLS

Left: BM1 Colin Redy from the CGC Adak, a 110-foot patrol boat homeported in Highlands, N.J., looks out at the pier shortly before the Adak's first patrol in the Middle East. Four 110-foot patrol boats are currently deployed in the Persian Gulf, the first time Coast Guard patrol boats have deployed to a theater of war since the Vietnam War.



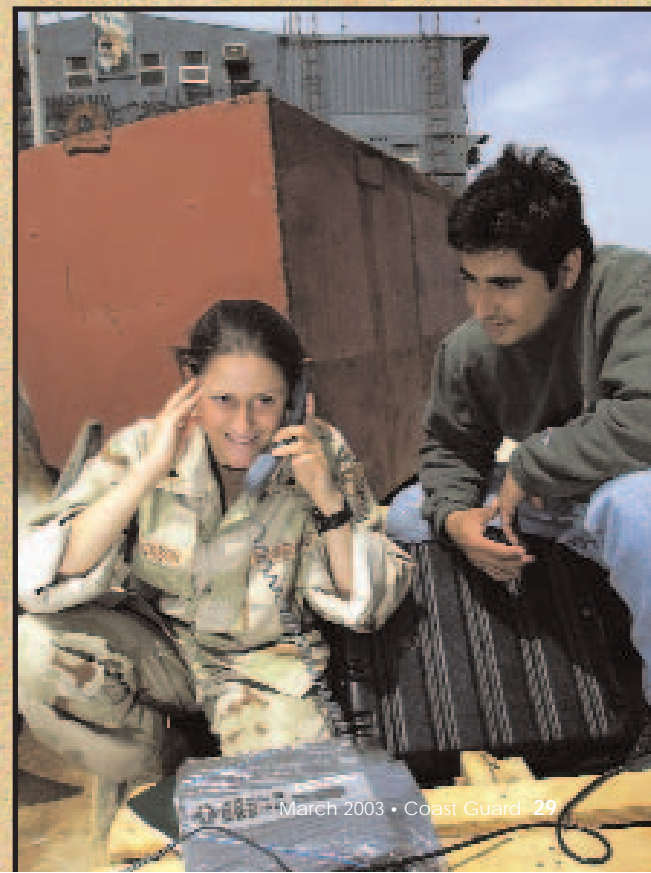


ALL SECURE

MK1 James Ratcliff (*above*) and PSC Timothy Beard (*left*), members of PSU 313 from Tacoma, Wash., stand watch at various locations on the Mina al Bakr oil terminal in the North Arabian Gulf off the coast of Iraq April 7. Coast Guard PSUs are maintaining security on oil terminals taken over by coalition forces.

PHONE HOME

Below: TC2 Jessica Jackson of PSU 313 from Tacoma, Wash., makes a rare phone call home by satellite phone provided by Juan Renteria, a cameraman with KCBS-TV from Los Angeles.





GEARING UP

BM3 John Mayer and Seaman Charity Knoll (*above*) and Seaman James Reeves (*left*) put on Mission Oriented Protective Posture gear during a chemical attack drill aboard the CGC Boutwell. Coast Guard personnel have their gas masks with them 24-hours a day while on patrol in the Gulf.

MAKING THEIR MARK

Below: Ensign Brian Bartlett, a boarding officer from the CGC Boutwell, paints a white circle on the Pantanasia, a tanker ship from the Bahamas enroute to Iran from Kuwait, to indicate the vessel has been inspected.



MAIL CALL

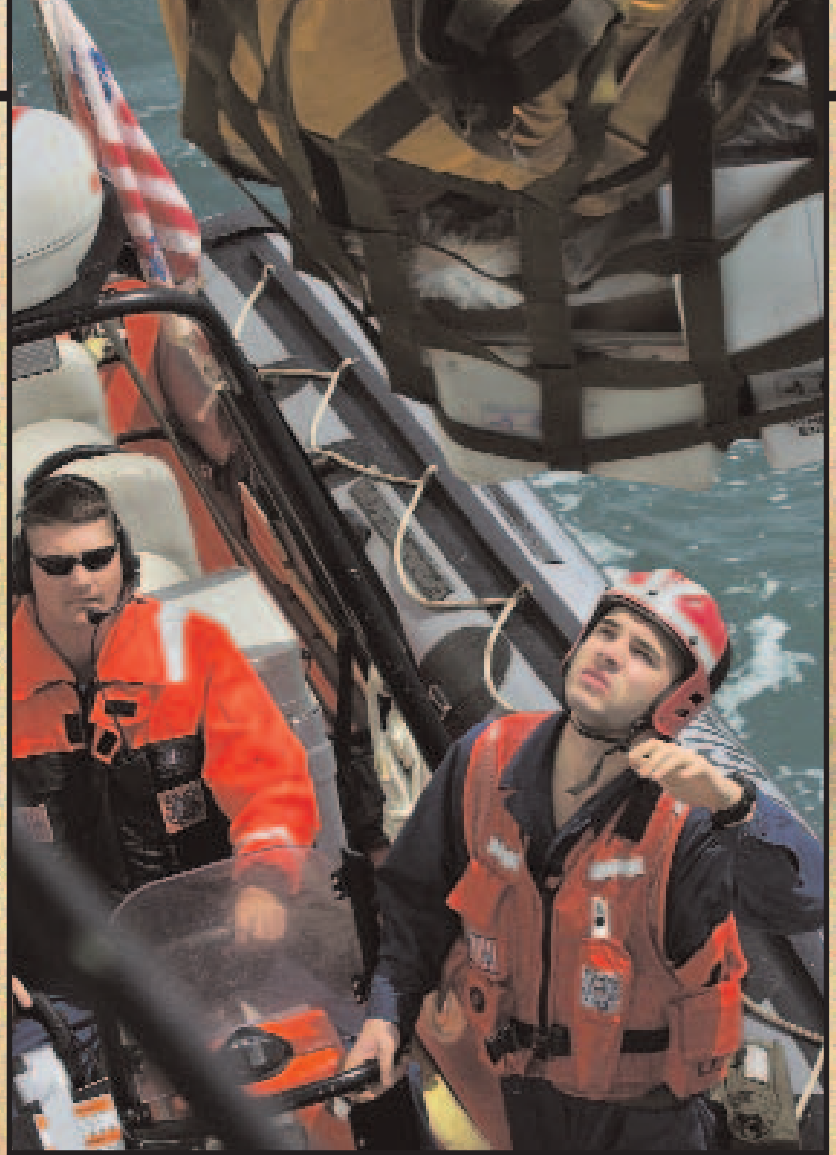
Right: SNBM Jason Jackson waits for mail to be lowered down from the CGC Boutwell in the North Arabian Sea March 23. The mail will be delivered to the CGC Walnut, also in the region.

ON PATROL

Below: The CGC Dallas, homeported in Charleston, S.C., passes a Navy ship while on patrol in the Mediterranean Sea.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Bottom: Coast Guard personnel from PSU 313 from Tacoma, Wash., discuss security strategy aboard the Mina al Bakr oil terminal.





PAT JOHN GAFFNEY, 7TH DIST.



PAT JOHN GAFFNEY, 7TH DIST.

GETTING THERE

Above: The motor vessel BBC Spain transported four Coast Guard 110-foot patrol boats to the Mediterranean in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

AT AIM

Left: A gunner stands at the ready during training aboard the CGC Knight Island, homeported in St. Petersburg, Fla. The cutter is one of four 110-foot patrol boats deployed to the Mediterranean.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Top: Navy Chaplain Michael Parisi reads from the Bible during an Easter worship service aboard the CGC Walnut, which is deployed to the Middle East.



SUPPORTING THE MISSION

Right: The CGC Dallas, homeported in Charleston, S.C., is one of two 378-foot high endurance cutters deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



NAVY PHOTO

THE FIX IS ON

Bottom: GM2 Randy VenSwency repairs a .50 caliber machine gun in the Port Security 311 Armory in Umm Quasr, Iraq.





OUT BY THE SUN

Above: Seaman Apprentice Brett Davidson works a line aboard the CGC Adak, a 110-foot patrol boat homeported in Sandy Hook, N.J., in the North Arabian Gulf off the coast of Iraq April 10.

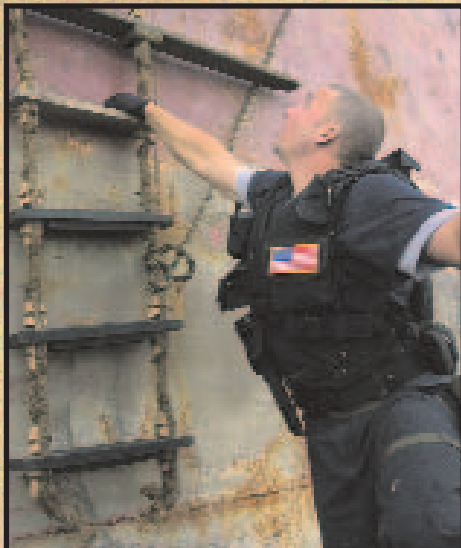
BIG GUN

Left: PS2 Paul Floge of PSU 311 from San Pedro, Calif., provides security with a .50-caliber machine gun on the Khawr al Amaya oil terminal off the coast of Iraq.



TRACK LIGHTING

Above: RD3 Jesse Switzer tracks vessels in the North Arabian Gulf off the coast of Iraq from the combat center aboard the CGC Boutwell April 9.



CLIMBING UP

Left: Seaman Michael Joiner, from the CGC Boutwell, prepares to board the Pantanasia, a tanker enroute from Kuwait to Iran. Coast Guard boarding teams are searching vessels in the Gulf region for weapons, terrorists and Iraqi personnel.

SHARP EYES

Below: Seaman Katie Palmer, of San Antonio, Texas, looks for unidentified vessels during a General Quarters emergency aboard the CGC Boutwell.



A large, high-contrast photograph showing the silhouette of a person's arm and hand raised in a fist, set against a bright, hazy sky with a large sun. The person is positioned on the right side of the frame, and the background is a vast, calm body of water under a clear sky.

DOWN AND OUT

Top: A giant statue of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is brought down by Marines as people watch the demolition in Baghdad April 9. Jubilant crowds swarmed into Baghdad's streets, dancing, looting and defacing images of Saddam Hussein as U.S. commanders declared that his regime's rule over the capital had ended.

CELEBRATION

Center: Seaman Apprentice Brett Davidson celebrates aboard the CGC Adak in the North Arabian Gulf off the coast of Iraq.



AP





PART OF THE COALITION

The CGC Walnut at sea. The Walnut left its homeport of Honolulu Jan. 18 to begin its deployment in support of military operations in the Middle East.

The CGC Walnut is capable of a wide variety of missions, and in the Persian Gulf, as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the cutter's versatility has been in ...

HIGH DEMAND

Story by Lt. Rick Wester, CGC Walnut
with contributions from Scott Price, G-IPA-4





PHI BREN AVO, FLEET COMBAT CAMERA, ATLANTIC

While other Coalition assets clean out the Iraqi regime, the CGC Walnut, a 225-foot buoy tender homeported in Honolulu, stands ready as an environmental first responder to clean up after Saddam. But just like the Coast Guard itself, the Walnut is capable of a wide variety of missions, and its versatility has been in high demand in the Persian Gulf.

Becoming the very first 225-foot buoy tender to deploy to a combat zone came as a surprise to some, but Coast Guard cutters and buoy tenders have deployed in support of the nation's major military operations for the past 100 years. During World War I, they served as mine and submarine net tenders in all of the nation's major ports. During World War II, Walnut's namesake serviced aids to navigation and did combat search and rescue in the Pacific Theater.

The conflict in Vietnam required the service of Coast Guard buoy tenders such as the Basswood, Blackhaw, Ironwood, and Planetree. The buoy tender Sagebrush served as a mother ship during the Coast Guard's deployment in support of the Grenada operation in 1983. When coalition forces were sent to Haiti in 1994, the Coast Guard buoy tender Pawpaw led an armada into Port-Au-Prince Harbor, becoming the first U.S. "naval platform" to enter the harbor. And now, the Walnut sails in support of an operation in far away waters — carrying on a well-established Coast Guard tradition.

The Walnut's role in world events and its



PAC TYLER JOHNSON, 14TH DIST

TEAM EFFORT

Top: K-Dog, a bottle nose dolphin, leaps out of the water in front of Sgt. Andrew Garrett near the USS Gunston Hall in the Arabian Gulf March 18. Dolphins are assisting military units conducting deep and shallow water mine counter measure operations to clear shipping lanes for humanitarian relief. The CGC Walnut facilitated the relief by marking area waterways.

Left: Children wave goodbye as the CGC Walnut departs its homeport of Honolulu to begin its deployment in support of military operations in the Middle East.



VERSATILITY Right: BM1 Dave Phillips returns to the CGC Boutwell after delivering mail to the CGC Walnut in the North Arabian Sea March 23. Walnut crewmembers conducted aids to navigation (Below) and towed abandoned barges (Left) in the North Arabian Sea as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



place in history is not lost on the crew.

“The Iraqi citizens that we have met on our boardings were all very supportive of our role in ousting Saddam and his henchmen,” said QM2 Wangdu Hovey. “That really left an impression on me that what we’re doing out here goes way beyond enforcing weapons inspections. We’re going to give them a new beginning.”

Fittingly, the Walnut received its deployment order just after completing a search and rescue case during its annual fisheries patrol that also included aids to navigation. After two months of intense preparations, including weapons and force protection training, the Walnut got underway Jan. 18, stopping in Guam and Singapore enroute Kuwait.

Once the Walnut arrived, 41 days after leaving Honolulu, it was ready to carry out its environmental response mission, a unique capability that would help fight any acts of environmental terrorism by the Iraqi regime. The regime had already proved its willingness to do so during Desert Storm when they dumped 5 million barrels of oil — 20 times that of the Exxon Valdez spill — into the Persian Gulf. The Walnut, with its 400-gallon per minute skimming capacity, stood ready to fight this threat and protect the fishing grounds and desalination plants scattered across the Gulf. Fortunately, with the fall of the Al Faw Peninsula, and the capture of the port of Umm Qasr, the chances of a maritime release of oil decreased every day.

While the Walnut remained *Semper Paratus* for oil recovery, it carried out a number of other roles and missions, just as it does back in Hawaii. Shortly after their arrival in the Gulf, the Walnut marked a shipwreck with a 20-foot buoy.

After successfully marking the wreck, the Walnut shifted its focus to law enforcement. In Hawaii, the Walnut's boarding teams conducted a variety of boardings. The cutter's law enforcement operations are often more akin to those found on medium endurance Coast Guard cutters. This breadth of experience was vital as the Walnut was assigned on short notice to the enforcement of the United Nations Security Council


resolutions against Iraq — also known as the "food and medicine for oil program." The Walnut's boarding teams inspected vessels arriving in and departing from Iraq, ensuring full compliance by inspecting containers and sounding all tanks to ensure that no contraband was onboard.

The Walnut's highly maneuverable and stable characteristics also have led to the cutter's assignment to a variety of other tasks, including shipping thousands of pounds of Navy equipment from Hawaii to Kuwait on its spacious buoy deck, towing a derelict barge, refueling a stranded Iraqi civilian tug, conducting search and recovery efforts for two British helicopters that collided, and recovering five Port Security Unit crews who had been battered in heavy seas for 12 hours aboard their 25-foot security boats.

As the war progressed, the Coalition relied heavily upon the Walnut's ATON expertise to properly mark Iraq's Kwhar Abd Allah waterway to facilitate humanitarian aid shipments. Also, the Walnut is replacing channel buoys in the Khor Abd Allah Waterway that flows to the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr.

“The current condition of aids to navigation in the KAA is so bad that they actually serve as a hazard to navigation rather than an aid,” said Lt. Cmdr. Chris Smith, Walnut's commanding officer. “We hope to improve the ability of all vessels — military, humanitarian aid, and commercial — to safely navigate the narrow channel that services Iraq's most critical seaport.”

In addition to ATON, the Walnut's 40,000 pound capacity crane has also proven useful in supplying captured off-shore oil terminals.

The multi-mission capabilities of the Walnut have put its services in high demand in the Northern Persian Gulf, but it is the flexibility of the crew that really makes it all possible, according to Smith. 

From Prince William Sound to the Persian Gulf, whether it's an accident or an act of terror, when it's oil or any other hazardous material, for personnel, expertise and equipment call the ...



NATIONAL STRIKE FORCE

Story and photos by PA1 Tom Sperduto, PADET New York



STANDING READY Members of the Coast Guard National Strike Force assigned to the Middle East to respond to possible environmental disasters pose for a picture while aboard the USS Comstock. From left to right are BM1 Patrick McNeilly, BMC Mike Russell, BM2 Chet Davis, MK1 David Wojciechowski, DC2 Ben Perry-Thistle, Lt. Cmdr. Ron Cantin, and MKC Patrick Nichols.

While dozens of war ships prepare for battle with Iraq, the USS Comstock from San Diego has a dual mission — support combat missions ashore and support the Coast Guard and civilian contractors aboard in the event of an environmental disaster.

Nine members from the Coast Guard National Strike Force and 16 civilian contractors from Global Phillips Cartner, a salvage and pollution response company based out of Williamsburg, Va., joined the sailors of the 609-foot ship March 1.

“We are excited and eager to support the Maritime Environmental Response Operations,” said Navy Cmdr. Jonathan Padfield, commanding officer of the Comstock. “It’s an extremely important mission, and we are glad to be a part of it.”

Also playing a major role in MERO is the CGC Walnut, a Juniper-Class buoy tender with a 50-person crew homeported in Honolulu. The Walnut is the first buoy tender to deploy to a potential war zone since Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti in 1993, according to Lt. Rick Wester, the Walnut’s executive officer.

The planning stage for the MERO operation began in December and was an uphill adventure before taking to the water according to Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Ron Cantin, the in-theater MERO coordinator who normally serves as executive officer of the Pacific Strike Team.

“Well, the first thing we had to do was find a boat,” said Cantin, who has been serving in the Coast Guard for 23 years. “We could not forward deploy from land with so much equipment, so we knew we needed a ship.”

Cantin recalls walking with MSTC A.J. St. Germaine into a military office busy with wartime planning and stating, “Hi. I need a ship for MERO.” The response he got was, “You can’t just walk in here and ask for a ship.”

The Comstock was designated the MERO platform soon after, and planning the response to potential environmental terrorism that could dwarf the size of the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1990 in Prince William Sound, Alaska, began to take form.

Five million barrels of crude oil were released into the Arabian Gulf by Iraqi troops during the 1991 Gulf War.

And even now, millions of gallons of oil could be dumped into the Arabian Sea if Saddam Hussein chose to destroy key oil platforms, pipelines or refineries, according to John Himes, an assistant on-water supervisor for this deployment and retired Navy interior communications technician chief aboard submarines.

Himes said they would do their best to prevent any

FAR FROM HOME Personnel from the National Strike Force and Navy civilian contractors from Global Phillips Cartner, a salvage and pollution response company based out of Williamsburg, Va., pose for a group photo aboard the USS Comstock in the North Arabian Sea.





TESTING TIME DC2 Ben Perry-Thistle, of the Coast Guard's National Strike Force, calibrates a device used to monitor toxic vapors in the air.

potential spill from hindering military operations and hurting the environment.

Preparing for a potential wartime oil spill of such a large magnitude is a mission new to everyone involved.

"It's a challenge of the unknowns," said BM2 Chet Davis, response supervisor and liaison for the National Strike Force. "This is the first time anybody has planned and prepared to skim oil in a wartime environment."

One of the major challenges facing the Coast Guard, Navy and GPC team is deploying the necessary gear needed to control and clean up a major oil spill if it occurs.

Equipment needed for such a large scale operation includes six 24-foot work boats, two 36-foot oil skimmers (that stand 18 feet tall when assembled), six 8-foot containers, one rigging container, one workshop container and one cleaning container, according to Himes.

"This is the first time that this equipment has been used from a ship," said Himes. "This poses logistical and coordination challenges, especially working within the tight quarters."

The Coast Guard, Navy and GPC team working together — and doing it well — is a must to assure the success of the MERO mission.

"Teamwork is critical," said Cantin.


The team completed a comprehensive training exercise and now spends hours of preparation each day to ensure everyone is ready if called to respond to what could possibly be the largest oil spill in history.

"This mission shows the crew how globally important what we are doing is," said Padfield, the Comstock's commanding officer.

As with many of the military personnel serving in the Middle East, there is no X on the calendar marking the day when the MERO team can return home to their families.

"We don't know how long this will last, and like everyone out here, we miss our families," said Cantin.

But with new technology such as E-mail at sea and late night card games with new friends, morale is high. And if called to do so, the MERO team is ready to do what they do best.

"We are well trained and ready to get the black stuff out of the blue stuff," said BM1 Patrick McNeilly of the National Strike Force. 



SMILE

MK2 Jason Rutledge
from MSST 91102 with
his dog Bumper.



WHO LET THE DOGS OUT

Story and photos by PA3 Donnie Brzuska, LantArea

There is a new breed of Coastie in the fleet with the incredible ability to uncover what is inside containers, walls and suitcases by using only their noses. These recruits will spread across the country with the sole mission of protecting our ports and ensuring the steady flow of commerce. These new Coasties are Labrador Retrievers. They are part of the Coast Guard's push to employ canines for their unique ability to find explosives and drugs.

"This is just another tool the Coast Guard can add to its continuously expanding tool belt," said BM3 Rick Leland, MSST 91103 from San Pedro, Calif.

The dogs' training platforms consist of old run-down movie theaters, vacant hotels, Coast Guard cutters and abandoned cruise ships, just to name a few. They are trained to work through all conditions and through any distraction. One slip in their line of work could cost them a law enforcement case, their lives, or worse, the lives of those around them.

The four-legged students are the first Coast Guard dogs trained at Auburn University's Canine Detection Training Center on Fort McClellan, Ala., where both man and beast are tested. This is the first Coast Guard-wide dog detection program since Coast Guardsmen patrolled the beaches of the nation during World

War II with about 2,000 dogs.

Eight petty officers, who were chosen because of their law enforcement backgrounds and their fondness of animals, attended the university. Marine Safety and Security Teams 91101 from Seattle, 91102 from Yorktown, Va., 91103 and Tactical Law Enforcement Team South from Miami all sent people to the small Alabama town to become experts on discovering many different types of explosives, detonating devices and the four "base drugs" — marijuana, cocaine, heroin and crystal methamphetamine.

"We asked the Coast Guard for their best people, and they gave us that and then some," said John Pearce, the deputy director at Auburn University's Canine Detection Training Center.

The Coast Guard looked at several different canine-detection training programs throughout the country, but decided on Auburn.

"The university was one of the few canine training centers that could meet the Coast Guard's unique training requirements in

the maritime environment," said Pearce.

"The training we've received here has been top notch. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience among the instructors and rest of the staff,"

GOING UP
FT2 Michael Boyle pulls his dog, Dusty, up to a two-story platform.



said GM3 John Cunningham from MSST 91102.

The canine Coasties started their training when they were just 10 weeks old. Families in the local community around the training center foster the dogs for Auburn. The families' task is to socialize the dogs and expose them to as many new things as possible. The dogs are brought back to the university after about 12 to 15 months and begin their training in odor recognition.

After the dogs pass the odor recognition aspect of their training, they are united with their new human partners. The teams train for eight rigorous weeks on search techniques, field training and how to recognize new odors. The dog-handler teams will remain together throughout the duration of their Coast Guard careers after their training.

During training, platforms are laden with explosives and narcotics

of all kinds. The dogs lead their handlers to the potential threats with 100 percent accuracy and consistency. The handlers, in turn, have learned to sense the slightest bit of behavior change in the dogs, amplifying the precision of the dog-handler team.

The Coast Guardsmen describe their leash as an umbilical cord that runs between them and the dogs. The dogs read and work off their partners' behavior just as much as the handlers read theirs.


The retrievers trained extensively in Coast Guard maritime and aviation environment. In real-life scenarios, they serve as a force multiplier for Coast Guard boarding teams on homeland security and counter-narcotics boardings.

The canine-team members also were specifically trained to adapt to the multiple missions and multiple assets of the Coast Guard. The dogs

don't flinch at being hoisted on a ship in a harness or at traveling in a modified pet carrier via Coast Guard ship or helicopter.

Moving around on cramped ships was something the dogs caught onto quickly. They were hesitant to climb the steep ladders at first, but by the second day aboard a ship, the canine Coasties were hustling up and down the ladders with ease.

The teams were placed in central locations on both the East and West Coasts after their graduation March 28. They have the capability to deploy to critical ports and waterways and other potential threat areas with maximum speed and efficiency.

The Coast Guard canine program will amplify the Coast Guard's ability to do its missions. It is also another step the Coast Guard has taken to strengthen security along the shores and in the waterways of our nation. 



THE GRADUATES

The future of the Coast Guard canine program ... Top row (left): GM3 John Cunningham from MSST 91102 with Cooper, BM3 Chad Olson from MSST 91101 with Cisco, FT2 Michael Boyle from MSST 91103 with Dusty, TC3 Daniel Watson from TACLET South with Deana. Bottom Row (left): MK2 Jason Rutledge from MSST 91102 with Bumper, BM3 Rick Leland from MSST 91103 with Asia, GM3 Cyrus Bowthorpe from MSST 91101 with Chase, YN3 Steven Haban with Lottie.



WHAT'S IN THERE?
BM3 Cyrus Bowthorpe from MSST 91101 and Chase search a set of drawers aboard an abandoned cruise ship, The State of Maine.

Special Missions Training Center

Training today's Coast Guardsmen for tomorrow's missions

Story and photos by PA3 Zachary Crawford, Special Missions Training Center

Story compilation by PA1 Liz Brannan, G-IPA-1



WHO GOES THERE?

Two role players acting as a husband and wife requesting asylum approach the Coast Guard's entry control point during a Maritime Security Course. The Coast Guardsmen manning the post went through their operating procedures to make sure the couple was allowed inside their compound. The wife managed to make it through the gate, but the husband was dragged away by two men acting as the host nation police.

RADIO CHECK

BM1 Troy "Monty" Toungate, from the CGC Munro, performs a radio communications check while waiting for further instructions from the lead boat.



Coast Guardsmen of the Special Missions Training Center at Camp Lejeune, N.C. recently trained servicemembers from throughout the Coast Guard on Maritime Security tactics to prepare them for possible real-world endeavors both in the United States and abroad.

A port security instructor for the SMTC said they are trying to transition these people from doing their normal day-to-day jobs, such as being mechanics and electricians, into becoming operational port security Coast Guardsmen. It was not exactly a smooth transition in the beginning, but it turned out well in the end.

"It is a difficult task to take your everyday Coast Guardsman whose background is law enforcement or a job in the mechanic field and make him or her think about topics such as locating, closing with, and destroying the enemy," said PS2 Emilio Quintana, Port Security Division, SMTC.

Other training given at the SMTC included an Over The Horizon course and a Transportable Port Security Boat course.

This TPSB course is the first of its kind handled by the SMTC. Until recently, the majority of the courses put on by the training center have been Coast Guard courses with Coast Guard students, taught by Coast Guard instructors. However, due to some drastic changes in today's world, the idea of using force protection and anti-terrorism tactics has become more frequent, and interoperability between services has become paramount while

operating in a real world environment.

"Our number one rule here is 'all of us are better than one of us,'" said BM1 Bill Eppright, lead TPSB instructor at SMTC. "The Navy guys, like the Coast Guard guys, want to be the best at what they do."

"I believe that we here at SMTC feel that interoperability is the key to the military's future. It's a crucial aspect of our efforts to effectively guard our assets both within the United States and abroad," said BM3 Scott Brown, SMTC. "More likely than not, we [Coast Guard/Navy] will be running into each other in the future and it's important to be on the same sheet of music so we can accomplish the mission."

The Over The Horizon course wrapped up with students from two West Coast-based cutters, the CGCs Munro and Sherman.

"One of the most important things these people can take away from this training is to know how to execute any mission they'll be given," said BM2 Robert Truttier, Fast Boat Division, SMTC. "More importantly, this course is about confidence building, not only for the guys driving the boat, but for the entire crew including the engineers, the gunner's mates and the other crewmembers."

"The training we received here is top of the line," said BM3 Corey Bradshaw, CGC Sherman. "As for the rest of the students and for myself, I can guarantee that we all now have the ability to chase down a fast mover in any condition." 📍



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

MK3 Billy Owens, Special Missions Training Center, acting as a crewman aboard one of the opposing forces boats, tries to outrun some of the students practicing escorting procedures and high speed boat tactics during the Transportable Port Security Boat Course held at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

WHERE'S THE DOOR?

Students of the Maritime Security Course, hosted by staff members at the Special Missions Training Center, had to perform many tasks and go through many periods of instruction before deploying. Here, students learn various methods on how to enter and clear a building by going through windows.

“Being here at the course made me realize how vulnerable you and your unit really are, and that no matter which country you go to, you’re always a possible target. Knowing you have the skills it takes to prevent someone from hurting your country, your comrades or yourself is the best thing anyone can learn from this course.”

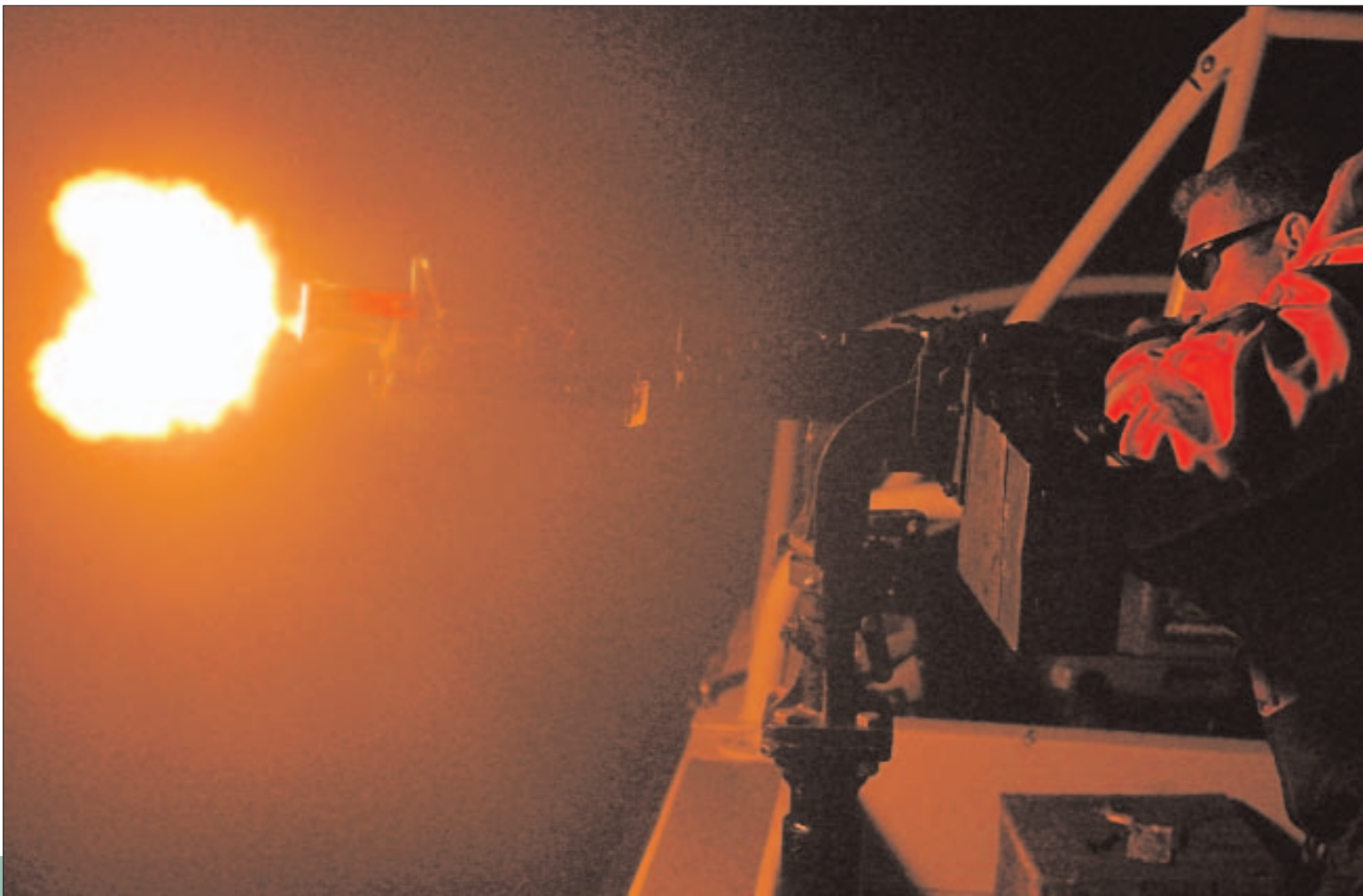
**— MK3 June Bernardino,
Integrated Support Command
St. Louis**



TEAM WORK

One of the things students were taught by the staff of the Special Missions Training Center was team building. Here, Lt. John Larkin, Field Support Unit 2, leads his squad in doing 'Squad Push-ups.' Exercises like this taught the individual squads that some things cannot be done by an individual alone, but by using team effort to get the job done.





BANG!

GM2 Mark Jackson, Mobile Security Unit-3, Detachment 31, engages opposing forces with his M-60 machine gun during a night operations exercise as part of the Transportable Port Security Boat Course hosted by the Coast Guard's Special Missions Training Center at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

"The realism of the training we received here helped us become more aware as to what was going on around us and made us think more about the reality of terrorist attacks. When we did our scenarios with the instructors out in the field, there were role players walking around with weapons, talking in different languages, spitting and cursing at you, trying to get inside the perimeter, and so on. The hostility and reality of the scenarios might not have been the most enjoyable part of the training, but it was an important part of it. I think we all learned from our mistakes, and together we corrected them."

— GM3 Joshua Moss, Training Center Cape May armory, Cape May, N.J.



MOVING FAST

Special Missions Training Center students get a taste of the Over the Horizon Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat's capabilities as they practice high speed boat tactics to chase down an opposing-forces boat full of instructors.



TIGHT FIT

Here, students of the Special Missions Training Center's Maritime Security Course try on their gas masks for the first time and ensure they fit properly before receiving training in the gas chamber at Camp Lejeune.

"The things they are shown throughout the course are designed to help them stay alert and alive in a real-world situation." — **PS2 Emilio Quintana, Port Security Division, SMTC**

NIGHT LIGHT

BM2 Troy Stallings, Port Security Unit 307, reloads his M203 with an illumination round during a night-fire evolution as part of the Coast Guard's Special Missions Training Center's Transportable Port Security Boat Course.





CAN'T YOU SMELL THAT SMELL?

(above) — Students of the Maritime Security Course, taught by instructors at the Special Missions Training Center, are shown here going through gas chamber training at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Some of the students had trouble donning and clearing the gas masks properly and in turn got the chance to taste and experience CS gas, also known as O-chlorobenzalmalononitrile.



ROLE PLAYING

(left) — One of the role players from the Special Missions Training Center is dragged away by two other role players during the Maritime Security Course.

Looking for

Story and photos by PA2 Lauren Smith, 14th Dist.



a lost hero



CRASH SITE

The search and recovery team, along with local Vietnamese people search the grounds of the crash site where the HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter was shot down by ground fire in Laos June 9, 1968.

Coast Guard search and rescue pilot Lt. Jack Rittichier drank chocolate milk shakes every day of his life and called being a part of the Coast Guard “food for the soul.” As a student at Kent State University, he was captain of the football and track teams, and also was a great artist, singer and dancer. His widow, the now remarried Carol Wypick, said he looked like a cross between “Burt Reynolds and Marlin Brando,” and that he had a “biting sense of humor.”

“He was interested in making better men out of the men that were around him by being an example himself,” said Carl Rittichier, his younger brother by one year. “He was always my idol.”

Like many family members at the time, Carl did not understand why his older brother was volunteering to go to Danang Air Base in 1968 during the Vietnam War to work as an exchange pilot with the Air Force 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron and conduct search and rescue missions.

“Why would you volunteer, you’re breaking mom’s heart,” pleaded Carl, before his brother shipped out.

Jack had heard stories from other rescuers who were in Vietnam at the time and felt a sense of duty. “What am I still doing here waiting for the next boat to wash up on the rocks?” Jack rhetorically asked his brother. “This is what I’ve trained for for years, this is what I know, this is what I want to do,” he said.

“Maybe in time, you’ll understand,” he explained to his brother.

Wypick said his reasons for going were to save lives, contribute to the war ending sooner and to experience the adventure of it all. Already a published author, he wanted to someday write a book about his experiences in Vietnam. His wife didn’t rest easy with his decision.

“I hated that he was going,” she said. Their lives were so complete together, and she feared the imminent danger he would face.

“Our marriage was an 11-year honeymoon. Neither of us wanted children, which was good. We were together all the time and had an absolutely wonderful life,” she said.

His family members reluctantly honored his wishes, and on March 17, 1968, he saw his wife and family for the last time.

Today, the ground in the remote Ta-Oy district of the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic is abundant with greenery. Isolated, hand woven huts, villages and dirt roads dot the lush peaks and valleys. The once anarchic Ho Chi Minh Trail is now peaceful and isolated. Thousands of craters left by bombs are now used by the villagers as ponds. They also serve as reminders of the vicious combat that once took place there, killing almost 60,000 Americans.

On the morning of June 9, 1968 the backdrop was much different than it is today. Rittichier and his three-man crew, Air Force Capt. Richard Yeend, Staff Sgt. Elmer Holden, and Sgt. James Locker, set out on their HH-3E “Jolly Green Giant” helicopter, JG 23, to rescue 1st Lt. Walter Schmidt, a Marine Corps pilot whose A4-E Skyhawk jet had been gunned down by enemy fire on the ferociously fought-over Ho Chi Minh Trail, nine miles west of the Ashau Valley in Vietnam. According to declassified reports, visibility was good that day, but automatic and anti-aircraft weapons fire filled the sky. Several foxholes



IN COUNTRY

The crash site in Laos, Vietnam.

and bunkers were observed in the immediate vicinity. Other assisting rescue aircraft which had contact with Schmidt reported that he survived the crash, but had a broken leg, possible broken arm, and would likely require a parajumper to assist him.

Another HH-3E helicopter, JG 22, made the first two attempts at reaching Schmidt, but was forced away by severe ground fire. Eventually, the crew was forced to abort because the helicopter was about to run out of fuel.

JG 23 then approached, entered a hover, and began to lower a parajumper to assist Schmidt. As the aircraft made a clockwise turn over the site, the pilot reported receiving heavy ground fire.

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Dubois, an eyewitness who flew 1500-feet overhead on that day said, "I saw fire coming out of the left side near the engine and told JG 23 that he had a fire on the left side. He started pulling out and I advised him that there was a clearing 1000 meters north if he had to set down. He said he was going for the clearing. The fire appeared to extinguish and I advised JG 23 of that. He said he was going to set it down as he reached the clearing. When he started down into the clearing, the blades just stopped and the jolly green just dropped. There wasn't anything but a black hole in tall grass."

"When it burst into flames, it was just a ball of fire, it looked like someone had just dropped a can of napalm there," he said.

Alexander Christensen, the investigator in charge of the recovery site, and an anthropologist with the Army's Central Identification Lab located

at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, said, "It was a very hot fire. It was hot enough to melt the aluminum in the cockpit and it deformed the fiberglass. The only thing it didn't burn was iron and steel."

Because of these circumstances and witness accounts stating there was no chance anyone could have survived the crash, all four crewmembers were immediately listed as "killed in action, body not recovered."

Schmidt was never recovered either, and his remains are unaccounted for.

Rittichier became the first Coast Guardsman killed in action in Southeast Asia and the only Coast Guard serviceman unaccounted for in Vietnam. All told, six other Coast Guardsmen lost their lives in the war.

Back at home, family members grieved. "I was absolutely devastated," said Wypick. "It was horrible, I can't describe how terrible it was ...After all these years, it is still so fresh in my mind."

At the time, no ground search for remains was possible because of intense enemy presence in the area.

Thirty-four years later, beginning in November, 2002, investigative teams from

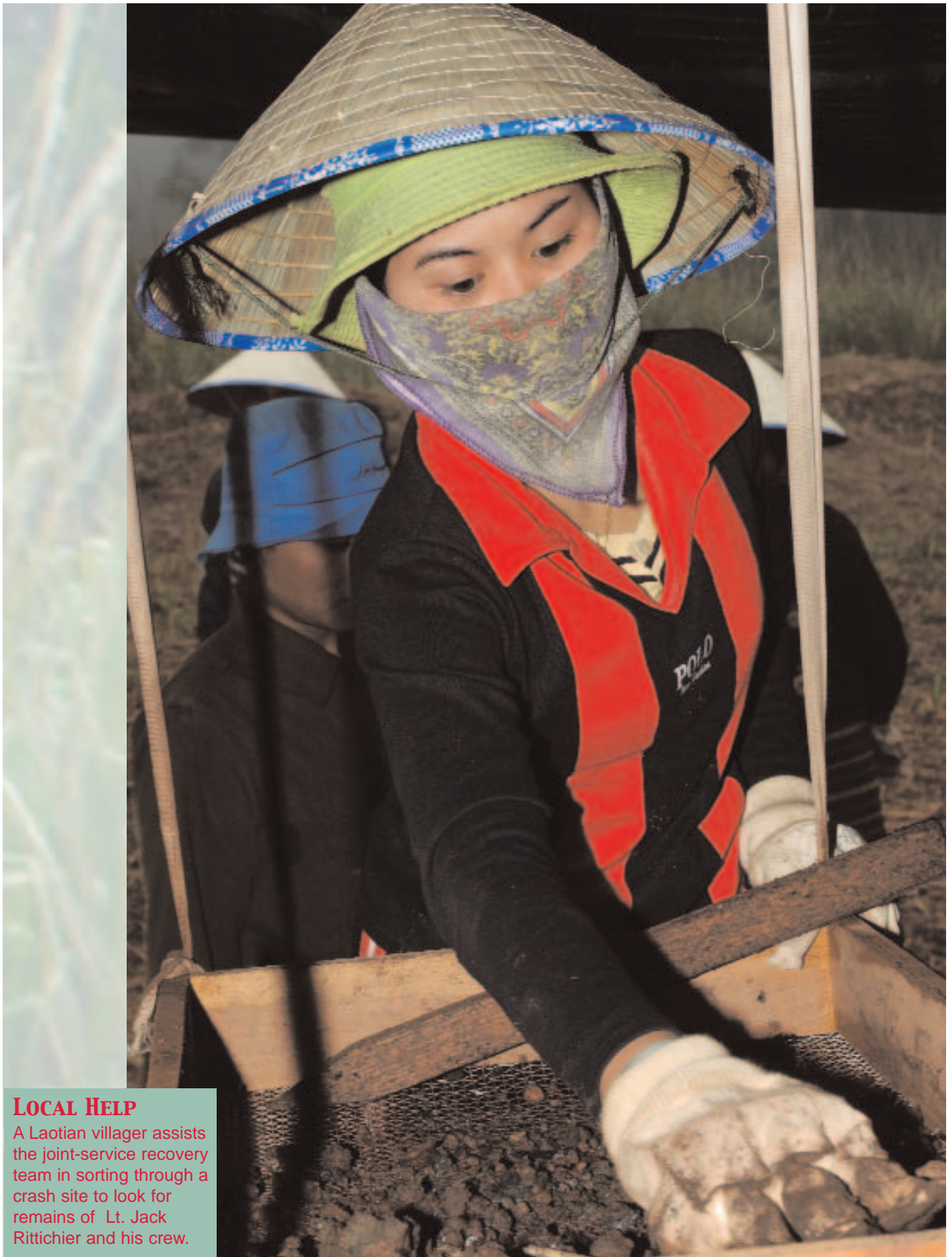
Joint Task Force-Full Accounting at Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, set out in 12-foot-high elephant grass to look



LOST MARLINSPIKE

Personal effects such as a watchband, pocket knife, and captains bars were found Jan. 28 at the crash site of Coast Guard Lt. Jack Rittichier and his three crewmembers, who were killed June 9, 1968 when their HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter was shot down by ground fire in Laos during an attempt to rescue a downed Marine Corps pilot. Rittichier is the only Coast Guard casualty from the Vietnam War whose remains have not been recovered, but an effort is under way to identify what remains were found at the site. The search and recovery team is comprised of mostly Hawaii-based U.S. military and Defense Department civilian specialists including personnel from Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii.

continued on page 61



LOCAL HELP

A Laotian villager assists the joint-service recovery team in sorting through a crash site to look for remains of Lt. Jack Rittichier and his crew.

for remains at the spot believed to be the crash site, and joint recovery operations began in January 2003. JTF-FA's and CILHI's joint missions are part of an ongoing effort to provide the fullest possible accounting for American service members still missing or unaccounted-for as a result of the Vietnam War. Since its inception in 1992, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting has conducted more than 3,500 case investigations and 600 recovery operations that have led to the repatriation of remains that may relate to as many as 500 unaccounted-for Americans.

"Our biggest goal is to bring these guys home," said Sgt. 1st Class James Elzie, the CILHI team sergeant of the 12-person site excavation team. "They didn't quit on us, so we shouldn't quit on them," he said.

Remains believed to be associated with the crew of Jolly Green 23 and another incident in the Lao area returned to American soil Feb. 14, at a repatriation ceremony on Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. They were transported to the U.S. Army's Central Identification

Laboratory, Hawaii where the forensic identification process is underway.

"Any time we pull something out of the ground, we get excited," said Air Force Capt. Jesse Lee Shaw, Jr., the CILHI recovery team leader for the crash site.

"We find something here everyday — boots, flight suit pieces, a pocket knife, captain or lieutenant rank insignia. It means a lot to the families of all the servicemen we're looking for," he said.

Wypick was excited and shocked to learn of the attempt to bring home remains from the site. "During the memorial service, we had a big wreath, and to have no body was difficult," she said. "It has always been nagging at the back of my mind."

"My mother-in-law always believed that he was running around in the forest over there. But now there is no illusion," she said.

Though Rittichier and his crew died for their country, they did not die in vain, and will not soon be forgotten.



COURTESY OF CAROL WYPICK

ON THE FLIGHTLINE

Lt. Jack Rittichier (middle) shakes a fellow serviceman's hand. As of 1975, there were 2,585 Americans still missing and unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia: Although the U.S. Government has thus far been unable to obtain definitive evidence that this number includes live Americans still being detained against their

will, the information available precludes ruling out that possibility. Therefore, actions to investigate live-sighting reports have and will continue to receive the highest priority. In 1973, 591 American prisoners of war were released during "Operation Homecoming." Not since that time has an American — whose fate was unknown to the United States — returned alive from Southeast Asia.

THE LOOKOUT

Seaman Robert Grant looks out from the deck of the CGC Adak, which is homeported in Sandy Hook, NJ. The Adak is in the Middle East as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

PHOTO BY PA1 TOM SPERDUTO, PADET NEW YORK

