

**Index to the Oral History of  
Admiral Merlin O'Neill  
U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)**

**Alaska**

Coast Guard operations in the Bering Sea area in the early 1920s, 13-22  
In 1924 Army fliers had problems in Alaska during an around-the-world flight, 17-18

**Alcohol**

In the mid-1920s the Coast Guard patrolled off the East Coast for rumrunners, 25-31, 36-37

***Alexander Hamilton, USCGC***

Served in the late 1920s as a training ship for Coast Guard Academy cadets, 38, 107

**Aleutian Islands**

Coast Guard operations in the Bering Sea area in the early 1920s, 13-22  
In 1924 Army fliers had problems in Alaska during an around-the-world flight, 17-18

**Algeria**

In 1943 the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) picked up German prisoners at Mers el-Kébir and took them to the United States, 80-81

***Algonquin, USCGC***

In 1924 operated on Bering Sea Patrol around Alaska, 17-22

**Allen, Rear Admiral Edward C., Jr., USCG (USCGA, 1938)**

Served during World War II in the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) and in the early 1970s commanded the Fifth Coast Guard District, 79

**Amphibious Warfare**

Service of the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) in the November 1942 landings in North Africa, 69-75  
Service of the *Leonard Wood* in the July 1943 landings in Sicily, 76-80  
Service of the *Leonard Wood* in the November 1943 landings in the Gilbert Islands, 83-84, 91  
Service of the *Leonard Wood* in the February 1944 landings in the Marshall Islands, 86-87

***Apache, USCGC***

Cutter that operated out of Baltimore in the mid-1930s, 44-50, 53  
During World War II was used by the Army in the Philippines, 45

**Army, U.S.**

Role in connection with the invasion of Sicily in the summer of 1943, 76-80  
Procedures in connection with amphibious operations in World War II, 88-89

**Army Air Service, U.S.**

In 1924 Army fliers had problems in Alaska during an around-the-world flight, 17-18

**Attu, Aleutian Islands**

Work of the natives in the 1920s, later captured by the Japanese in World War II, 15-16

**Baltimore, Maryland**

The Coast Guard cutter *Apache* operated out of Baltimore in the mid-1930s, 44-50  
Coast Guard operations around the port in 1944-45, 52-53, 92-93

**Bear, USCGC**

Operations around Alaska in the early 1920s, 13

**Bender, Admiral Chester R., USCG (USCGA, 1936)**

In the late 1940s was the pilot for the Commandant, Admiral Joseph Farley, and in 1970 became Commandant himself, 98-99, 109-110, 128

**Budgetary Issues**

Annual process in the late 1940s-early 1950s in getting Coast Guard budgets approved, 100-104, 114-115, 119-120, 136-137

**Caliendo, Captain Anthony J., USCG (Ret.)**

Early in his career, around 1940, had a role in the formation of what became the Coast Guard Auxiliary, 62

**Casablanca, French Morocco**

Site of amphibious landings in November 1942, 73-74

**Cassin, USCGC (CG-1)**

Destroyer that operated off the East Coast in the late 1920s, 36-37

**Chesapeake Bay**

A hurricane in the autumn of 1933 caused considerable damage in the Chesapeake Bay area, 44-46

Operations out of Baltimore by the cutter *Apache* in the mid-1930s, 44-50

In 1942-43 the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) did rehearsals around Cove Point for the invasions of North Africa and Sicily, 67, 69-71, 74-76

## **Coast Guard, U.S.**

- Operations in Louisiana in the early years of the 20th century, 2
- Operations along the Atlantic Coast in the early 1920s, 8-10, 12, 23-24
- Operations along the Pacific Coast in the early 1920s, 11-21
- In the mid-1920s patrolled off the Atlantic Coast for rumrunners, 25-31, 36-37
- Operations around the Chesapeake Bay are in the mid-1930s, 44-53
- Role of Coast Guard Headquarters in the late 1930s-early 1940s, 53-65
- In the late 1930s set up the civilian Coast Guard Reserve, which later became the Coast Guard Auxiliary, 55-65
- In 1941 the Coast Guard transferred from Treasury to the Navy Department, 32-33, 60-61
- A Coast Guard crew manned the Navy attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) from 1942 to 1944, 66-91
- Role of Coast Guard Headquarters in the late 1940s-early 1950s, 97-138
- The marine inspection function moved into the Coast Guard in 1942, 116-118
- Ocean station role in the 1950s, 120-122
- In the 1950s the Coast Guard took over some ships from the Navy, 120-121
- Questions over the years as to which cabinet department was the best fit for the service, 32-33, 102-103, 123
- Work of Coast Guard promotion boards in the early 1950s, 132-134
- Limited role for the service during the Korean War, 134-135

## **Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut**

- In 1918-21 was a small school with limited faculty and student body, 4-8
- Role of training ships, 1918-21, 7-8
- Role of the alumni association, 34
- Moved to its current location in 1932, 37
- Training and education of cadets in the late 1920s and early 1930s, 38-43
- In the late 1940s-early 1950s President Harry S. Truman made a visit to the Coast Guard Academy, 104-105
- In 1946 acquired the bark *Eagle* (WIX-327) as a sail training ship, 105-107

## **Coast Guard Auxiliary**

- Civilian organization that began as the Coast Guard Reserve in the late 1930s and was later renamed, 55-65

## **Coast Guard Reserve, U.S.**

- A temporary uniformed reserve was established around the beginning of World War II, 63-65
- Operation of shortly after the end of World War II, 114-115, 118-119

## **Commercial Ships**

- Operations off the Pacific Coast in the early 1920s, 14, 16, 19-20
- A banana-laden ship ran aground in the Chesapeake Bay in the mid-1930s, 48

## **Congress, U.S.**

Role in establishing the civilian Coast Guard Reserve in the late 1930s, 57  
Process in the late 1940s-early 1950s in getting annual Coast Guard budgets approved, 100-101, 114-115, 119-120, 136-137

## **Demobilization**

Thousands of men and women left the Coast Guard when World War II ended, 99-100, 114-116

## **Derby, Rear Admiral Wilfred N., USCG (USCGA, 1911)**

Served as Superintendent of the Coast Guard Academy from August 1947 to August 1950, 133

## **Dimick, Professor Chester E.**

Taught mathematics at the Coast Guard Academy in the 1920s and 1930s, 6, 39, 41

## ***Eagle*, USCGC (WIX-327)**

In 1946 began serving as a sail training ship at the Coast Guard Academy, 105-107

## **Eisenhower, President Dwight D.**

In 1953-54, early in his administration, there were questions about the best department for the Coast Guard, 33, 102-104, 123

## **Emmett, Captain Robert R. M., USN (USNA, 1908)**

Used the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) as his flagship during World War II amphibious operations, 71, 75, 77

## **Eniwetok, Marshall Islands**

Invaded by U.S. amphibious forces in February 1944, 86-90

## ***Ericsson* (CG-5), USCGC**

Former Navy destroyer that the Coast Guard used in the mid-1920s to patrol for rumrunners, 25-31, 34-36

## **Farley, Admiral Joseph F., USCG (USCGA, 1912)**

As a junior officer served in the cutter *Gresham* in the early 1920s, 50-51

Was executive officer of the cutter *Mojave* in 1924, 51

From 1946 to 1949 served as Commandant of the Coast Guard, 50, 96-98, 105, 107-110

## **Fifth Coast Guard District, Norfolk, Virginia**

Operations in the district in 1945, as World War II was winding down, involved ties with the Navy, 95-96

## **Fishing**

In the Alaska area in the early 1920s, 16-17

## **Food**

On board the Coast Guard cutter *Haida* (WPG-45) in the early 1920s, 16-17  
A banana-laden ship ran aground in the Chesapeake Bay in the mid-1930s, 48

## **German Army**

In 1943 the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) took a number of captured German soldiers from Algeria to the United States, 80-82

## **Gilbert Islands**

Role of the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) during the U.S. invasion of Makin in November 1943, 83-85, 91

## **Gresham, USCGC**

Operations out of New York in the early 1920s, 8-10, 12, 23-24, 51

## **Gunnery – Naval**

In connection with the amphibious landings at French Morocco in November 1942, 73-74  
Support of the amphibious landings in the Marshall Islands in February 1944, 87

## **Haida, USCGC (WPG-45)**

Operations out of Seattle in the early 1920s extended as far north as the Bering Sea, 11-19

## **Hawaii**

In 1943 the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) staged through Hawaii en route to invasions in the Gilbert and Marshall islands, 83

## **Humphrey, George M.**

As Secretary of the Treasury in the mid-1950s questioned whether the Coast Guard should be in the Treasury Department, 32-33, 102-104  
In 1953-54 extended O'Neill's term as Commandant of the Coast Guard, 136-137

## **Icebreaking**

By the Coast Guard cutter *Apache* in 1934 in the Chesapeake Bay, 47-49

## **Itasca, USCGC**

Used around 1920 as a Coast Guard Academy training ship, 7

## **Japanese Navy**

Reaction to the U.S. landings in the Gilberts and Marshalls in 1943-44, 85-88

## **Jenkins, Lieutenant Commander William A., USCG (USCGA, 1942)**

In the early 1950s served as aide and pilot for the Coast Guard Commandant, 110

**Kennedy, President John F.**

In the early 1960s was impressed by the appearance of the Coast Guard bark *Eagle* (WIX-327), 106

**Korean War**

Limited role for the Coast Guard during the war, 134-135

***Leonard Wood*, USS (AP-25/APA-12)**

In 1942 was converted from a straight troop transport to an amphibious attack transport, 66

Characteristics of the ship, 67-68

Service in the November 1942 landings in North Africa, 69-75

Service in the July 1943 landings in Sicily, 76-80

Service in the November 1943 landings on Makin in the Gilbert Islands, 83-85, 91

Service in February 1944 landings in the Marshall Islands, 86-90

Shipyard overhaul in California in early 1944, 90

**Lighthouses**

In 1939 the Bureau of Lighthouses moved from the Commerce Department to become part of the Coast Guard, 111-112, 116-118

***Liscome Bay*, USS (CVE-56)**

Torpedoed and sunk by a Japanese submarine in the Gilbert Islands in November 1943, 85

**Makin, Gilbert Islands**

Role of the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) during the U.S. invasion in November 1943, 83-85

**Marine Corps, U.S.**

Invasion of the Marshall Islands in February 1944, 86-87, 90

Training of beach parties in 1944 at the Quantico, Virginia, Marine Corps base, 91-92

**Marion Military Institute, Marion, Alabama**

In 1918 served as a prep school for prospective service academy students, 3-4

**Marshall Islands**

Role of the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) during the U.S. invasion of Kwajalein and Eniwetok in February 1944, 86-90

**Martin, Major Frederick L., U.S. Army Air Service**

Problems in Alaska during an around-the-world flight in 1924, 18

### **Mers el-Kébir, Algeria**

In 1943 the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) took a number of captured German soldiers from this port to the United States, 80-82

### **Military Academy, U.S., West Point, New York**

Regimen for cadets in 1917-18, 2-4, 41

### **Mojave, USCGC**

Transfer via Panama from the Pacific to the Atlantic in late 1924, 22-23, 51

### **Morocco, French**

Service of the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) in the November 1942 landings in North Africa, 69-75

### **Norfolk, Virginia**

Difficulties between civilians and service families during World War II, 94-95

### **North Africa**

Service of the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) in the November 1942 landings in French Morocco, 69-75

### **Olsen, Rear Admiral Carl B., USCG (USCGA, 1928)**

Was selected for flag rank in the 1950s after dropping his aviator qualification, 128

### **O'Neill, Admiral Merlin, USCG (Ret.) (USCGA, 1921)**

Parents of, 1, 4

Wife Esther, 10-11, 24, 37, 44, 53, 65, 91-92, 94, 97

Daughters Patricia and Marilyn, 44, 53, 91-92, 109

Boyhood in Ohio and Louisiana in the early years of the 20th century, 1-2

In 1917-18 as a cadet at West Point, 2-4, 41

Was a student at Marion Military Institute in 1918, 3-4

As a cadet from 1918 to 1921 at the Coast Guard Academy, 4-8, 11-12, 32

In 1921-22 served in the cutter *Gresham*, 8-10, 12, 23-24, 50-51

In 1922-23 served in the cutter *Haida* (WPG-45), 11, 13-16

In 1924 served in the cutter *Algonquin*, 17-22

Brief service in the cutter *Mojave* in 1924, 22-23, 51

In 1925-27 served as executive officer and later commanding officer of the destroyer *Ericsson* (CG-5), 25-31, 34-36

Served on the staff of the Coast Guard Academy from 1927 to 1930, 37-43

Brief duty in other destroyers in the early 1930s, 36-37

Commanded the cutter *Apache*, 1933-35, 44-50

Served in Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington from 1935 to 1942, 52-65

Commanded the Navy attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) from 1942 to 1944, 66-91

Brief duty in 1944 at the Quantico, Virginia, Marine Corps base, 91-92

In 1944 headed the Baltimore subsection of the Fifth Coast Guard District, 52-53, 92-93

In 1945 commanded the Fifth Coast Guard District in Norfolk, 93-96, 130-131

Served 1946-49 as Assistant Commandant of the Coast Guard, 97-115

Selection in 1949 to become the next Commandant, 107-109

Served 1950-54 as Commandant of the Coast Guard, 102-103, 122-138

**Penn, Commander Richard T., Jr., USCG (USCGA, 1949)**

Coast Guard officer who married Admiral O'Neill's daughter Patricia, 109

**Philadelphia Navy Yard**

In the mid-1920s reactivated destroyers for use by the Coast Guard to patrol for rumrunners, 25-26

**Phillips, Captain Wallace B., USN (USNA, 1911)**

Used the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) as his flagship during World War II amphibious operations, 77

**Power Squadron, U.S.**

In the late 1930s was concerned about the establishment of a civilian Coast Guard Reserve, 58-59

**Prisoners of War**

In 1943 the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) took a number of captured German soldiers from Algeria to the United States, 80-82

**Prohibition**

In the mid-1920s the Coast Guard patrolled off the East Coast for rumrunners, 25-31

**Quantico, Virginia**

Training of beach parties in 1944 at this Marine Corps base, 91-92

**Richmond, Admiral Alfred C., USCG (USCGA, 1925)**

Served as Coast Guard Assistant Commandant, 1950-54, and Commandant, 1954-62, 102, 110-111, 123-124, 128, 137

**Rose, H. Chapman**

Served 1953-55 as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, 103-104

**Sailing**

Sail training at the Coast Guard Academy around 1920, 7

In 1946 the bark *Eagle* (WIX-327) began serving as a sail training ship at the Coast Guard Academy, 105-107

**Search and Rescue**

By the Coast Guard cutter *Apache* in the mid-1930s in the Chesapeake Bay, 44-48

## **Selection Boards**

Work of Coast Guard promotion boards in the early 1950s, 132-134

## ***Shaw, USCGC (CG-22)***

Served in the late 1920s as a training ship for Coast Guard Academy cadets, 38-39

## **Ship Handling**

In Coast Guard destroyers in the mid-1920s, 27-28

## **Sicily**

Role of the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) in connection with the invasion of Sicily in the summer of 1943, 76-80

## **Smith, Admiral Willard J., USCG (USCGA, 1933)**

Served as Commandant of the Coast Guard, 1966-70, 137-138

## **Snyder, John W.**

As Secretary of the Treasury, 1946-53, the Coast Guard came under his purview, 104-105, 107-108, 110

## **Training**

On board the attack transport *Leonard Wood* (APA-12) in 1942, 69-70

Of beach parties in 1944 at the Quantico, Virginia, Marine Corps base, 91-92

## **Treasury Department**

In 1941 the Coast Guard transferred from Treasury to the Navy Department, 32-33, 60-61

Process in the late 1940s-early 1950s in getting the Coast Guard's annual budgets approved, 101-104, 119-120, 136-137

In 1953-54, early in the administration of President Dwight Eisenhower, there were questions about whether Treasury was the best department for the Coast Guard, 33, 102-104, 123

## **Truman, President Harry S.**

In the late 1940s-early 1950s made a visit to the Coast Guard Academy, 104-105

## **Waesche, Admiral Russell R., USCG (USCGA, 1906)**

Served from 1936 to 1945 as Coast Guard Commandant, 51-52, 55-57, 59, 64-65, 96-97, 137

## **Weather**

A hurricane in the autumn of 1933 caused considerable damage in the Chesapeake Bay area, 44-46