



# U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

## APRIL

### Daily Chronology of Coast Guard History

#### 1 April

- 1813-At 1100 in the morning, while at anchor in Charleston Harbor, the powder room of the cutter *Gallatin* exploded, blowing off the cutter's stern and quarterdeck. The explosion and subsequent fire killed three crewmembers instantly and seriously wounded five more. The cutter sank at its anchorage. A Charleston newspaper reported, *"Between the hours of ten and eleven yesterday forenoon, a most awful explosion took place in this harbor, on board the Revenue schooner GALLATIN, commanded by Capt. John. H. Silliman. . .There were about 35 persons in all on board; of this number about 10 were on the quarter deck and in the cabin; part of them employed in cleaning the arms. Thus situated, the dreadful explosion took place, and in one instant the whole quarter deck with all of those upon it, were hurled into the air. Some of the bodies were thrown nearly as high as the mast head of the vessel; others were driven through the cabin and lodged upon the main deck. The whole stern of the vessel was torn down to a level with the water."* Those who were killed were Gunner's Mate Thomas Feld, George Segur, and one unidentified seaman. The reported wounded were William Pritchard (Gunner), John McCoan, Benjamin Chart, George Craft, and William Hunter (Boy).
- 1897- Under an Executive Order dated May 6, 1896, federal Civil Service rules were applied to the Life-Saving Service.
- 1916-1 April 1916 marks the official birthday of Coast Guard aviation. On this date in 1916 Third Lieutenant Elmer F. Stone reported to Pensacola Naval Air Station for flight training. He was the Coast Guard's first aviator.
- 1945-The invasion of Okinawa in the Ryukyu Islands commenced. In all, seven Coast Guard-manned transports, 29 LSTs, the cutters *Bibb* and *Woodbine*, and 12 Coast Guard-manned LCI(L)s participated in the bloodiest invasion ever undertaken by the United States. Over 13,000 Americans were killed and another 36,000 were wounded during the conquest of this Japanese possession.
- 1946-A tsunami swept away the light station at Scotch Cap, Alaska, killing the station's entire five-man crew. They were: BMC Anthony L. Petit, MoMM 2/c Leonard Pickering, F 1/c Jack Colvin, SN 1/c Dewey Dykstra, and SN 1/c Paul James Ness.
- 1967-The Coast Guard ended its 177-year association with the Treasury Department when it transferred to the newly-created Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT was created when President Lyndon Johnson signed Executive Order 167-81. The Coast Guard was the largest agency in the new department.
- 1969-The Coast Guard established an Ocean Engineering Division within the Office of Engineering. The new division was formed to improve engineering support for the marine sciences and short-range aids to navigation missions.
- 1977-CGC *Dauntless* operating along with CGC *Cape Fox* in the area of Cay Lobos Bahamas boarded F/V *Big Champ*. The boarding party discovered 5,000 lbs. of marijuana. The vessel and marijuana were seized and the four POB were arrested.
- 1978-CGC *Acushnet* changed designation from WAGO to WMEC "to allow for the increased multi-mission utilization of the vessel." *Acushnet's* primary mission



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continued to be Marine Science Activities (MSA) "due to its special capabilities for environmental buoy deployment."

- 1984-CGC *Gallatin* made the largest maritime cocaine seizure to date when it boarded and seized the 33-foot sailboat *Chinook* and her crew of two. A boarding team discovered 1,800 pounds of cocaine stashed aboard the sailboat.

## 2 April

- 1924-Congress appropriated \$13,000,000 for ten air stations and equipment. Congress first authorized the stations on 29 August 1916 but did not provide for sufficient funding until this date.
- 1982-The first aircraft of the newest addition to the Coast Guard's air fleet, the HU-25A Guardian, was dedicated and christened at Aviation Training Center Mobile.
- 1983-The State Department forwarded a request for assistance from the United Arab Emirates to help prepare for an oil spill cleanup in the Persian Gulf. The spill occurred after combat operations during the Iran-Iraq war had left many oil wells burning and leaking oil. Four Coast Guard pollution experts responded to the request.

## 3 April

- 1882-The schooner *Morris* was unable to enter Muskegon, Michigan, between the piers and was aided by the lookout of Station No. 8, Eleventh District. He used a heaving-stick and throwing a line to get a hawser to the vessel. The same service was rendered later in the day by two of the station men to the schooner *Willis Smith* of South Haven.
- 1968-Coast Guard exchange pilots arrive in South Vietnam to fly combat SAR missions with the Air Force.
- 2014-CGC *Mackinaw*, home-ported in Cheboygan, Michigan, conducted an escort on Lake Superior near Whitefish Point. *Mackinaw's* crew worked together with the crew of Canadian Coast Guard Ship *Pierre Radisson*, home-ported in Quebec City, as part of an ongoing bi-national agreement between the U.S. and Canada, to break sheet ice that was nearly 40 inches thick.

## 4 April

- 1912- President William Howard Taft recommended abolishing the Revenue Cutter Service. Instead of elimination though his actions led to the creation of the Coast Guard by consolidating the Revenue Cutter Service and the Life-Saving Service on 28 January 1915.
- 1933-The Navy airship USS *Akron* crashed near the Barnegat Lightship. The ensuing search and rescue efforts employed over 20 Coast Guard vessels and aircraft.
- 1972- On 4 April 1972 BMC (later BMCM) Thomas D. McAdams became the first Coast Guardsmen to receive the new Coxswain insignia. Then-Commandant ADM Chester Bender presented the insignia to Chief McAdams at a ceremony at the Coast Guard's Small Boat School in Ilwaco, WA, where McAdams was the OIC.
- 1975-Four Coast Guard helicopters saved 36 crewmen from the 557-foot tanker *Spartan Lady* after the oil-laden vessel broke up in heavy seas 165 miles south-east of New York. Two of the helicopters were from AIRSTA Brooklyn and two were from AIRSTA Cape Cod.



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- 1977-The Coast Guard designated its first female Coast Guard aviator, Janna Lambine. She was Coast Guard Aviator #1812.

## 5 April

- 1941-President Franklin Roosevelt signed the official order to transfer all 10 Coast Guard *Lake-Class* cutters of the Coast Guard to the Royal Navy under Lend-Lease.
- 1950-The Coast Guard announced that former enlisted women of the Coast Guard Reserve could apply for enlistment in the "Women's Volunteer Reserve." Enlistments were to be for a three-year period with written agreement to serve on active duty in time of war or national emergency.
- 1967-The commander of all Soviet fishing vessels in the Far East, Evgeniy Gromov, invited representatives from the Coast Guard and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries to meet aboard the Soviet vessel *Olivtorka* off Kodiak, Alaska. The purpose of the meeting was to improve understanding in the implementation of the recent U.S.-Soviet 12-mile fisheries agreement that went into effect on 15 March 1967.

## 6 April

- 1894-The President authorized the Revenue Cutter Service to enforce the Paris Award, which was concerned with the preservation of fur seals in Alaska.
- 1917-The United States declared war on Germany and joined the Allied Powers in World War I. The Coast Guard, which at that time consisted of 15 cruising cutters, 200 commissioned officers, and 5,000 warrant officers and enlisted men, became part of the U. S. Navy by Executive Order. The cutters immediately reported to their assigned naval districts for duty. Cutters provided armed parties to seize German ships that had been interned in U.S. ports. Coast Guard aviators were assigned to naval air stations in this country and abroad. One Coast Guardsman, First Lieutenant (Eng.) Charles E. Sugden, USCG, commanded the Naval Air Station at Ile Tudy, France, and was later awarded the French Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Another officer, Second Lieutenant (Eng.) Philip B. Eaton, USCG, commanded Chatham Naval Air Station and he piloted one of two HS-1 seaplanes that attempted to bomb and machine gun a surfaced U-boat off the coast of New England after the U-boat had shelled a tug and barges four miles off Cape Cod. Eaton's bombs failed to explode, however, and the U-boat escaped. One cutter, CGC *Tampa*, was lost in action with all hands while on convoy duty in British waters.
- 1949-A U.S. Coast Guard HO3S-1 helicopter completed the longest unescorted helicopter ferry flight on record. The trip from Elizabeth City, NC to Port Angeles, WA via San Diego, a distance of 3,750 miles, took 10-1/2 days to complete and involved a total flight time of 57.6 hours.

## 7 April

- 1866-The first Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Ellsworth P. Bertholf, was born in New York City on this date in 1866. He entered the Revenue Cutter Service as a cadet on 14 September 1885 and graduated from the Revenue Cutter School of Instruction with the Class of 1887.
- 1938-Congress passed HR 8982, an amendment to the Alien Fishing Act (50 Stat. 639). The amendment clarified the earlier laws on salmon fishing in Alaskan waters by



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limiting commercial salmon fishing in the vicinity of Bristol Bay, Alaska, to U.S. citizens only. The act was enforced by the Coast Guard.

- 1942-A Coast Guard aircraft directed a Royal Navy trawler to a life boat with 24 survivors off the coast of North Carolina.
- 1952-The breakup of ice in the Missouri River and its tributaries at Bismarck, North Dakota, and above, and on the Big Sioux, created the worst flooding conditions in that area in thirty years. U.S. Coast Guard personnel rendered assistance, utilizing small boats, mobile radio stations, automotive equipment, helicopters, and fixed wing aircraft. The Coast Guard evacuated stranded persons, transported critical relief supplies, evacuated livestock from low ground, transported personnel engaged in levee construction, and generally assisted the Red Cross, local, state, civil, and military authorities.

## 8 April

- 1902-President Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., and his party of 40 guests boarded USRC *Onondaga* in Charleston Harbor. The cutter, which had been dressed in "rainbow fashion," extended to the President "all honors as prescribed by the Regulations, Revenue Cutter Service." The cutter and its crew of transported them to Fort Sumter and back. The cutter expended "42 6 pdr saluting charges" by firing two separate 21-gun salutes.
- 1909- Race Point, Massachusetts-The sloop *Keewaydin IV's* mast was carried away and the sloop anchored 2 miles SW of station, but dragged ashore. Station crew was on the beach when she struck and the keeper rowed out surf and threw a heaving line on board. One of the two men was rescued by this means. The other jumped overboard and was pulled ashore by the keeper. The sloop drifted up on the beach and became a total wreck.
- 1913-USRC *Seneca*, designed from the keel up as the nation's first "derelict destroyer," inaugurated the service's participation in the International Ice Patrol.
- 1978-CGC *Katmai Bay* was launched at Tacoma Boatbuilding Company, Inc., in Tacoma, Washington. *Katmai Bay* was the first cutter in the Coast Guard's new class of icebreaking harbor tugs. The cutter was sponsored by Ms. Jeanmarie Griffin.

## 9 April

- 1859-Samuel Clemens, who later gained fame under the pseudonym Mark Twain, was issued a steamboat pilot's certificate.
- 1867-The Senate ratified a treaty to purchase Alaska from Russia. The cutter *Lincoln* was dispatched with LT George W. Moore, USRM, as the first U.S. agent in the territory.
- 1941-The United States and Denmark signed an "agreement relating to the defense of Greenland." The Coast Guard, in part because of its experience in the Arctic environment, was the principal service used to carry out the agreement. The first action seen by U.S. forces in World War II was the seizure of a weather station and a pro-German vessel in Greenland waters by CGC *Northland* just before the U.S. officially entered the war.
- 1974-The oil tanker *Elias* docked at the Atlantic Richfield Terminal in Fort Mifflin, Pennsylvania, caught fire. CG 40412 responded and was first on scene and began SAR for any crew who jumped overboard. 40412 crewman Kim Lee remembered: "The



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response for our crew on 40412 was looking for personnel off the ship *Elias* that might be in the water. We were first on scene and I called back to base giving the update. The request by us was to shut the Delaware River down to all traffic due to crude oil on fire extending completely across the Delaware River. Captain of the Port (Capt. Goodwin) shut the river down which stopped all vessels traffic in the area. A while had passed and we then received a distress call from the Coast Guard Cutter *Cleat* and we quickly responded toward the *Cleat*. The crewmen from the *Cleat* were in the water and the *Cleat* was on fire and drifting into the *Elias* which was totally involved in fire. My crew (Petty officer Joe Friel and Allen Mowbray) began pulling the crew out of the river. We then attached a tow line on the burning *Cleat* and began towing it toward the middle of the channel. At one point while towing the *Cleat* our engines on the 40412 stopped because of the ships (*Elias*) mooring lines in our props. My crew quickly pulled up the mooring lines and cut them apart with a hand ax. Freeing one engine we were able to pull the *Cleat* to safety and put out the fires on the *Cleat*. All members of the *Cleat* crew were accounted for but one engine man who we found still down in the engine room trying to start the *Cleat's* main.

## 10 April

- 1938-The Coast Guard established a "Flood Relief Force" to assist the Red Cross and the victims of flooding of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers. The "Force" consisted of 26 motorboats, one communication truck, two portable radio sets, one Grumman JF-2 amphibian aircraft and 60 enlisted men, all under the command of LCDR Roy Raney and based at Selma, Alabama. On April 10 and 11 the Flood Relief Force was "engaged in removing persons from dangerous positions and in transporting Government and Red Cross officials throughout the flood area."
- 2014-CGC *Seneca* returned to its homeport in Boston after completing a 53-day deployment which included two weeks of training at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Virginia, and five weeks of fisheries patrols off the coasts of New Jersey, Virginia, and North Carolina. *Seneca* patrolled the Mid-Atlantic Ocean in support of the Coast Guard Fifth District's Operation Ocean Hunter. They boarded 26 fishing vessels from March 2 until April 5. During the patrol, *Seneca* ensured the commercial fishing fleet was in compliance with all federal fisheries regulations and issued two fisheries violations. In addition to law enforcement, *Seneca* conducted a workup with the Coast Guard Maritime Security Response Team and other deployable specialized forces units. Using *Seneca's* flight deck, MSRT members completed 76 vertical insertions and 44 hoists. They also completed 210 climbs where they boarded the cutter from a tactical boat via a caving ladder. *Seneca* also completed several helicopter in-flight refuels and vertical replenishments with Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina.
- 2015-CGC *Seneca* returned to its homeport in Boston after a 64-day deployment. The crew of *Seneca* completed Tailored Ships Training Availability (TSTA), served as a primary Search and Rescue Response asset along the eastern seaboard, and conducted fisheries enforcement boardings from South Carolina to Maine. During the patrol, the crew responded to the Motor Vessel *Grey Shark*, approximately 175 nautical miles off the coast of Cape May, New Jersey which was reported adrift and on fire. *Seneca* arrived on scene and escorted the vessel until the *Eileen Mcallister* took the vessel in tow to New York. The cutter's crew also participated in an international, multi-agency search



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and rescue exercise in Rhode Island Sound, conducting more than 45 small boat and helicopter hoist evolutions with partners from five Coast Guard units, the New York Air National Guard, and Canadian Forces. For the final mission of the patrol, *Seneca* hosted Maine Marine Patrol officers for a 24-hour fisheries enforcement operation, targeting lobster fishing boats off the coast of Rockland, Maine.

## 11 April

- 1917-With the outbreak of World War I President Woodrow Wilson issued an executive order transferring 30 lighthouse tenders to the War Department. All were subsequently assigned to the Navy Department and 15 lighthouse tenders, four lightships, and 21 light stations also were transferred to the Navy Department. One more tender was transferred on 31 January 1918 making a total of 50 vessels and 1,132 persons. The War Department used those assigned in laying submarine defense nets during the war and in removing these defenses after the war. Other duties performed by these vessels were placing practice targets, buoys to mark wrecks of torpedoed vessels and other marks for military purposes, as well as being employed on patrols and special duty assignments.
- 1938-Coast Guard Patrol Boat CG-240, part of the Coast Guard's Flood Relief Force established to assist flood victims in Alabama, evacuated 102 persons from the vicinity of Hohn Miller's Plantation, below Camden, Alabama.
- 1952-Immediately following the crash of a commercial overseas transport aircraft off the San Juan Harbor, Coast Guard forces coordinated with those of the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy to rescue 17 of the 69 persons on board.
- 1971-Coast Guard cutters *Rush* (WHEC-723) and *Morgenthau* (WHEC-722), assigned to Coast Guard Squadron Three in Vietnam, destroy an enemy trawler.
- 2003-CGC *Wrangell* and the USS *Firebolt*, with embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 406, escorted the first commercially transported humanitarian aid shipment into the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. The Motor Vessel *Manar*, owned by Manar Marine Services of the United Arab Emirates, delivered almost 700 tons of humanitarian aid including food, water, first aid and transport vehicles. This aid shipment was supplied and coordinated by the UAE Red Crescent Society. This was the fourth aid shipment to arrive in Umm Qasr after the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## 12 April

- 1808-Subsistence for Army officers was fixed at 20 cents per ration and later that year it was applied to all officers of the revenue cutters.
- 1843-Captain Alexander V. Fraser, Revenue Cutter Service, was appointed Chief of the newly-created Revenue Marine Bureau of Treasury. He therefore became, in effect, the service's first "Commandant".
- 1861-The cutter *Harriet Lane* fired the first shot from a naval vessel in the Civil War. The cutter fired across the bow of the merchant vessel *Nashville* when the latter attempted to enter Charleston Harbor without displaying the national flag.
- 1900-An Act of Congress (31 Stat. L., 77, 80) extended the jurisdiction of the Lighthouse Service to the noncontiguous territory of Puerto Rico and adjacent American waters.
- 1902-Congress authorized the retirement of officers at 3/4 pay for incapacity. Congress also made all promotions subject to examinations (mental and physical). Additionally, commissioned officers of the Revenue Cutter Service were granted the same pay and



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allowances "except forage" as officers of corresponding rank in the Army, including longevity pay.

- 1979-LTJG Beverly Kelley assumed command of CGC *Cape Newagen*, thereby becoming the first woman to command a U.S. warship.
- 1997-The Coast Guard commissioned CGC *Ida Lewis* (WLM 551) on this date in 1997. The tender was assigned to Newport, Rhode Island. *Ida Lewis* was the lead ship of 14 new 175-foot Keeper Class coastal buoy tenders built by Marinette Marine of Marinette, Wisconsin for the service. They were the first Coast Guard cutters equipped with Z-Drive propulsion units and were named after famous lighthouse keepers.
- 2013-The U.S. Coast Guard and Makah Tribal Council signed a Memorandum of Agreement to reaffirm their integral partnership, cooperation and coordination in pollution prevention and response. The focus of the MOA was to enhance consultation, improve the leveraging of resources within respective authorities as applicable, and to improve collective all-hazards prevention and response posture within the maritime environment that comprises the Makah Treaty Area.
- 2015-CGC *Active* returned to its home-port of Port Angeles after seizing more than \$17 million worth of illegal narcotics during an 88-day deployment. *Active* was deployed to the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coast of Central America in support of Joint Interagency Task Force South. During the deployment, *Active's* crew responded to search and rescue calls, detained a number of suspicious vessels and suspects and seized over 1,177 pounds of cocaine from suspected smugglers.

### 13 April

- 1909-Cleveland, Ohio, Lake Erie. Two boys were unable to pull against the wind, were in danger of drifting on the breakwater. Life-saving crew at Cleveland went out, took the two boys in their power lifeboat, and towed their boat to East Ninth Street pier.
- 2014-CGC *Stratton* returned to its homeport at Coast Guard Island in Alameda, California, after a 97-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Since departing 6 January 2014, *Stratton* completed a 22,000-mile patrol in support of joint counter-drug operations off the coast of California and in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. During this operational patrol, *Stratton's* law enforcement crews seized 500 kilograms and disrupted 1,650 kilograms of cocaine valued in excess of \$70 million. Additionally, *Stratton's* crew demonstrated their dedication to marine life when a crew aboard their small boat noticed a sea turtle entangled in fishing line about 500 miles off the coast of Panama 19 March 19, 2014. After bringing the turtle aboard the small boat, the crewmembers freed it from the line and sent it back to sea. During a port call in Panama City, Panama, *Stratton's* crew participated in a community relations project by painting and restoring a local orphanage.
- 2015-CGC *Escanaba* returned to its homeport in Boston after a 54-day deployment in the Caribbean. During the patrol, *Escanaba's* mission was to detect and interdict vessels suspected of narcotics trafficking in the waters south of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in support of Operation Unified Resolve. *Escanaba*, in conjunction with Coast Guard Cutter *Tahoma*, a 270-foot cutter home-ported in Kittery, Maine, pursued two go-fast vessels and assisted in two multi-agency interdictions resulting in the detention of eight suspected drug smugglers and 1,300 pounds of cocaine, valued at \$16 million. Prior to the patrol, *Escanaba's* crew completed Tailored Ship's Training Availability at



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Naval Station Mayport, Florida, which included 134 drills and exercises spanning five warfare areas: command and control, engineering, damage control, seamanship, and weapons.

## 14 April

- 1876-An Act of Congress (19 Stat. L., 132, 139) provided that any person "who shall willfully and unlawfully injure any pier, break-water, or other work of the United States for the improvement of rivers or harbors, on navigation in the United States, shall, on conviction thereof, be punished by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars."
- 1912-At around 11:40 p.m. on the night of 14 April, RMS *Titanic* collided with an iceberg off Newfoundland while sailing on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York. She sank a little over two hours later. There were 1,517 lost including 103 women and 53 children out of total passenger and crew of 2,207. Subsequently, certification and life saving devices were improved and an International Ice Patrol was created to patrol the sea lanes off Newfoundland and Greenland during the winter months. The Revenue Cutter Service took over the operation of the Patrol the following year.
- 1943-On 14 April 1943 Joseph C. Jenkins graduated as ensign in the Coast Guard Reserve, becoming the first officially recognized commissioned African-American officer in the Coast Guard.
- 2012-The Coast Guard commissioned CGC *Bernard C. Webber*, the first of the new 154-foot Sentinel-Class cutters. These cutters were built to replace the 110-foot Island-Class WPBs. *Bernard C. Webber* was built by Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana and was assigned the homeport of Miami, Florida.

## 15 April

- 1909-The schooner *G.A. Hayden* grounded northeast of Station Point Judith. The sea being too rough for surfboat, the life-saving crew took the beach apparatus to the wreck and succeeded in reaching her with the second shot. The first of her crew was landed in the breeches buoy at 12: 10 am. After 4 trips the last one came ashore at 12: 45. The vessel was a total loss.
- 1986-The Libyan military, on orders from dictator Moammar Gadhafi, fired a missile at Coast Guard LORAN Station Lampedusa off the coast of Italy. The missile fell harmlessly in the Mediterranean and there were no casualties.

## 16 April

- 1820-Landing parties from the cutters *Louisiana* and *Alabama* destroyed a pirate base on Breton Island.
- 1908- Congress authorized the creation of the Office of Captain-Commandant and Engineer in Chief. Additionally, commanding officers of vessels were authorized to administer oaths of allegiance and other oaths for service requirements in Alaska.
- 1944-The Coast Guard-manned destroyer escort USS *Joyce*, along with her sister warship USS *Peterson* and a Navy DE sank the German submarine U-550 off New York. The U-boat first torpedoed what was at the time the largest tanker in the world as the convoy it was joining was forming up outside of New York harbor. The destroyer escorts then attacked the U-boat, forcing it to the surface and then sank it in a surface gun-battle. *Joyce* rescued the surviving u-boatmen as well as those off the stricken tanker.



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- 1947-The French-owned Liberty ship *Grandcamp* exploded while loading ammonium nitrate at Texas City, Texas in one of the worst peace-time accidents ever to occur in a U.S. port. Over 500 died and thousands were injured.
- 1965-Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze asked Secretary of the Treasury Henry Fowler for Coast Guard assistance to combat seaborne infiltration from North Vietnam. This naval operation in Vietnam was named Operation Market Time.

## 17 April

- 1805-The cutter *Louisiana* engaged two pirate vessels that had been fitted out at New Orleans. Twenty shots were exchanged but the pirate vessels escaped.
- 1851-The Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, the first one built in the United States that was exposed to the full force of the ocean, was swept away by a storm with the loss of the two men manning it. They were Assistant Keepers Joseph Wilson and Joseph Antoine who maintained their station, ringing the lighthouse's bell, until waves swept the tower away.
- 1943- Lieutenant Ross P. Bullard and Boatswain's Mate First Class C. S. "Mike" Hall boarded the *U-175* at sea after their cutter, *CGC Spencer*, blasted the U-boat to the surface with depth charges when it attempted to attack the convoy *Spencer* was escorting. These Coast Guardsmen were part of a specially trained boarding party sent to board the submarine to seize any code-related documents and cipher equipment they could find. The damage to the U-boat was severe, however, and it sank after they had boarded it and climbed up the conning tower. Both men ended up in the sea as the U-boat slipped beneath the waves but were pulled from the water unharmed. They carry the distinction of being the first American servicemen to board an enemy warship underway at sea since the War of 1812. The Navy credited *Spencer* with the U-boat kill. The cutter rescued 19 of the U-boat's crew and a sister cutter, *CGC Duane*, rescued 22. One *Spencer* crewman, RM 3/c Julius Petrella, was killed by friendly fire during the battle.
- 1987-LT Tom McClay received a direct commission as a flight officer for duty with the Coast Guard's E2C Hawkeyes. LT McClay was the first Coast Guard flight officer.

## 18 April

- 1805-The cutter *Louisiana* recaptured the merchant brig *Felicity* from privateers off the mouth of the Mississippi River.
- 1945-Airship training for U.S. Coast Guard personnel (nine officers & 30 enlisted men) began at Naval Air Station Lakehurst, New Jersey.
- 1993-Coast Guardsman Gary A. Openshaw rescued five persons in danger of drowning near San Francisco off Baker Beach. For heroically risking his life and saving those five people the Coast Guard awarded Petty Officer Openshaw the Gold Life-Saving Medal.

## 19 April

- 1995-A rental truck filled with explosives blew up half of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Coast Guardsmen from the Coast Guard Institute and a Coast Guard reservist responded soon after the explosion and helped set up security zones, directed traffic, searched for survivors, and whatever else was needed. They also took over a church kitchen and opened what later became nicknamed "Cafe Coast



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Guard." A rotating nine-person team worked around the clock to provide meals for the volunteer workers.

- 2014-Coast Guard marine inspectors conducted safety and security examinations on the first-ever container ship to arrive in Cleveland on 19 April 2014. The *Fortunagracht*, a 450-foot Dutch-flagged container ship, delivered the first-ever load of containerized cargo to the Great Lakes. Before the establishment of the Cleveland-Europe Express, shippers relied heavily on rail service to transport goods from the larger east coast container ports, such as New York and Baltimore, to the Great Lakes region. Talks to bring CEE to Cleveland began in the fall of 2013 with cooperation between the Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, the FBI and other government agencies.

## 20 April

- 1871-The Secretary of the Treasury was authorized by Congress to employ crews of experienced surfmen at lifeboat stations at maximum rate of \$40 per month, marking the end of the volunteer system. This was the beginning of direct Federal control over life-saving activities.
- 1997-Dikes along the Red River in North Dakota gave way causing dangerous floods. The Coast Guard responded to calls for assistance and rescued more than 200 people from danger.
- 2010-The *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig located more than 50 miles southeast of Venice, La., suffered massive explosions killing 11 and injuring 16 of its 126 person crew. The oil platform, which burned for more than a day, sank into the Gulf of Mexico on April 22, 2010. An estimated 60,000 barrels of oil gushed each day for 87 days, making the Deepwater Horizon spill and its response unprecedented. The Coast Guard mobilized 14% of its total workforce, active duty and reserve and its role expanded under the National Contingency Plan which called for the service to direct all response efforts to contain and clean up the oil spill.

## 21 April

- 1838-The passenger steamboat *Oronoko* suffered a catastrophic boiler explosion while tied up at Princeton, Mississippi that killed over 100 passengers. This was one of three fatal steamboat boiler explosions within as many months that forced the Federal Government to begin regulating merchant steam vessels.
- 1910-The U.S. Government took over the sealing operation of Pribiloff Islands from private lessees.
- 1924-In an effort to increase the number of cutters available for Prohibition enforcement, Navy destroyers were transferred to the Coast Guard for law enforcement purposes. The Coast Guard was also authorized to commission temporary officers.
- 1963-While returning home from duty on Ocean Station Charlie, CGC *Campbell* diverted to assist the sinking M/V *Helga Smith* 50 miles southeast of Cape Race, Newfoundland. Upon arrival, *Campbell* prepared to put a repair party aboard the merchantman but the master of *Helga Smith* ordered his crew to abandon ship due to the seriousness of the flooding. With *Campbell's* searchlights illuminating the scene, the crew abandoned ship in a motor lifeboat. The boat's motor would not start so the crew pulled away from the ship with oars. A lifeboat from *Campbell* then towed them alongside the cutter where the survivors were assisted aboard by a rescue party in a



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rubber lifeboat. Two commercial tugs arrived on the scene and commenced towing *Helga Smith* to St. John's, Newfoundland, with *Campbell* escorting. While enroute though *Helga Smith* settled by the bow and sank. *Campbell* then proceeded to Argentia, Newfoundland with the survivors.

- 1980-Boats with Cuban migrants on board began departing Mariel, Cuba. The first two boats arrived in Miami the same day, marking the beginning of the largest Cuban migration to the U.S. to date. Cuban leader Fidel Castro declared the port of Mariel "open", increasing the number of boats involved in the exodus and giving the exodus its name. This became the largest Coast Guard operation ever undertaken to date since World War II. The Coast Guard coordinated a three-wave operation. Coast Guard high endurance cutters operated closest to Cuba. U.S. Navy ships operated in the inner-wave and Coast Guard small cutters, 95 and 82-footers, served the waters closest to Florida. Over 660 Coast Guard Reservists were called to replace boat crews, and maintenance and repair teams. The Coast Guard Auxiliary lent support in many areas, including radio communications. Over 117,000 people in more than 5,000 boats were assisted by the Coast Guard and Navy forces during the Mariel Boatlift.
- 2011-On this date in 2011, the Coast Guard's first 154-foot Fast Response Cutter, CGC *Bernard C. Webber*, "entered the water" at Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, Louisiana. During a three day evolution, the cutter was towed from the fabrication facility, lifted on a crane and then successfully placed in the water.
- 2013-CGC *Waesche* returned to its homeport at Coast Guard Island in Alameda, California after a 91-day deployment to the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Departing on 20 January 2013, *Waesche* completed an 18,000-mile patrol in support of joint counter-drug operations off the coast of California and in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. During that time the cutter and crew demonstrated their capability as a multi-mission unit. During their patrol, *Waesche's* crew assisted two boaters in distress when their 12-foot sailboat began taking on water approximately three miles west of San Diego. Earlier in their patrol, *Waesche* participated in a search and rescue mission assisting two mariners 90 miles west of San Diego when their sailboat began taking on water. Also in January law enforcement crews aboard the cutter seized more than 2,400 pounds of marijuana from a boat approximately 300 miles west of San Diego, apprehended three suspects and recovered 70 bales which tested positive for marijuana. Additionally, during the mid-patrol break in Panama City, Panama, *Waesche* crewmembers participated in a community relations project by painting and restoring a local school.
- 2014-The Coast Guard concluded icebreaking operations on the lower Great Lakes on 21 April 2014, more than four months after it started on 15 December 2013. Operation Coal Shovel is a bi-national domestic icebreaking effort covering the St. Lawrence Seaway, Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, the Detroit/St. Clair River System, and southern Lake Huron. Crews aboard CGCs *Mackinaw*, *Hollyhock*, *Bristol Bay*, *Neah Bay* and *Morro Bay* were joined by crews from Canadian Coast Guard Ships *Samuel Risley*, *Griffon* and *Des Groseilliers*. In total the Coast Guard crews conducted more than 2,100 icebreaking hours during the 128 days of Operation Coal Shovel. Also assisting the ships with ice reconnaissance were aircrews from AIRSTA Traverse City and AIRSTA Detroit. During Operation Coal Shovel, U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard crews assisted 184 vessels and provided harbor breakouts to relieve or prevent flooding in four U.S. and one Canadian community.



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## 22 April

- 1790-The Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, submitted a bill to Congress to create a "system of cutters" to enforce tariff and customs laws along the nation's coastline.
- 1944-Coast Guardsmen participated in the invasions of Aitape and Hollandia in Dutch New Guinea.
- 1965-The Coast Guard and the Navy agreed on the deployment of 82-foot patrol and 40-foot utility boats to support *Operation Market Time* in Vietnam.

## 23 April

- 1880-Captain Jerome G. Kiah and his crew of six surfmen from the Point Aux Barques Life-Saving Station responded to a distress signal from a stranded scow in Lake Huron. They departed their station in their pulling surfboat but the boat capsized a number of times in the icy water, eventually causing the six surfmen to perish from hypothermia. Only Captain Kiah survived the ordeal, but was severely injured from the cold water and forced to resign from the Service. He carried the psychological scars of the disaster for the rest of his life, but rejoined the Life-Saving Service later that year as District Superintendent.
- 1919-USS *Marietta*, under the command of future commandant Harry Hamlet, rescued 47 men from the USS *James* which was sinking in a gale off the coast of France.
- 1924- A tube transmitter for radio fog-signal stations, developed to take the place of the spark transmitters then in use, was placed in service on the Ambrose Channel Lightship and proved successful.
- 2007-The Intelligence Specialist (IS) rating was launched with a special ceremony at Coast Guard Headquarters.

## 24 April

- 1943-While loading a cargo of ammunition at a Bayonne, New Jersey pier, the freighter *El Estero* caught fire, threatening downtown Manhattan with devastation should the ship's cargo explode. Coast Guardsmen under the command of LCDR John T. Stanley responded immediately and were soon reinforced by local firefighters. Two Coast Guard fireboats along with commercial and New York City firefighting tugs headed to the area. LCDR Stanley boarded the freighter which was now burning out of control and he was joined by LCDR Arthur F. Pfister who was in charge of the Coast Guard vessels. Upon consultation with the Captain of the Port of New York, Third District commander RADM Stanley V. Parker, they decided to scuttle the ship. However, the sea cocks were not accessible and so they decided to fill the vessel with water. While firefighting teams fought the blaze aboard the *El Estero*, the tugs arrived and took the freighter under tow, heading to deeper water away from New York City. The tugs and firefighting vessels began spraying their water cannons on the freighter, filling her holds with water. The residents of the city were warned to expect an imminent explosion. Fortunately, the vessel began listing to starboard and soon thereafter sank northwest of the Robbins Reef Light, extinguishing the fires. All of the men aboard the vessel escaped harm. The fire was later ruled as accidental.



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- 1967-At the request of the U.S. Navy, five Coast Guard high endurance cutters (WHECs) were commissioned as Coast Guard Three (RONTHREE) at Pearl Harbor for service in Vietnam.
- 2004-Damage Controlman Third Class Nathan Bruckenthal, USCG, from Smithtown, New York, and two U. S. Navy sailors were killed in the line of duty while conducting maritime intercept operations in the North Arabian Gulf. He and six other coalition sailors attempted to board a small boat near the Iraqi Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminal. As they boarded the boat it exploded. Petty Officer Bruckenthal died later from injuries sustained in the explosion. Petty Officer Bruckenthal was the first Coast Guardsman killed in action since the Vietnam War. He was assigned to Tactical Law Enforcement South in Miami, Florida and deployed with Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia aboard the USS *Firebolt*. This was his second deployment to the Arabian Gulf for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## 25 April

- 1819-USRC *Active* captured the pirate vessel *Irresistible* in the Chesapeake Bay.
- 1838-The steamboat *Moselle*, with more than 265 passengers and crew aboard, departed from a landing near Cincinnati, Ohio for St. Louis. Her boilers exploded soon after casting off, killing 136. This was one of three catastrophic steamboat boiler explosions within as many months that forced the Federal Government to begin regulating merchant steam vessels.
- 1956-The U.S. Coast Guard issued new regulations for security screening of merchant seamen. Changes in the screening program were made for the purpose of conforming with a recent U .S. Court of Appeals ruling (*Parker V. Lester*) which held that procedures used by the Coast Guard did not meet the minimum requirements of due process of law. The legal background for the Coast Guard security program stems from the Magnuson Act, which authorized the President to issue rules safeguarding vessels and waterfront facilities when he found security endangered by a subversive activity. The President made such a finding in 1950 by Executive Order No. 10173 and directed the Coast Guard to set up and conduct the program.

## 26 April

- 1898-During the Spanish-American War, cutters *Morrill*, *Hudson*, and *Hamilton*, formerly revenue cutters and recently armed for service in the so-called "Mosquito Fleet," passed through Hampton Roads and after asking formal permission of the Commodore, proceeded to Key West. From that point they joined the Navy ships of the Cuban blockading fleet.
- 1899-On April 26, the Revenue Cutter Service signed a lease with two prominent Baltimore landowners for 36 acres of farmland surrounding Arundel Cove, Maryland. Two months later, LT John Moore, USRCS, arrived aboard the side-wheeler *Colfax* to establish the "Revenue Cutter Station at Curtis Bay," today's United States Coast Guard Yard.
- 1912-President William Howard Taft boarded the USRC *Mohawk* on this date in 1912. The cutter took the president from New York City's Recreation Pier on "West 50th Street" to Governors Island and back for the funeral of MAJGEN Frederick Dent Grant, son of former President Ulysses S. Grant.



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## 27 April

- 1865-The boilers on the 260-foot wooden-hulled steamboat *Sultana* exploded while the vessel was traveling on the Mississippi River near Memphis. *Sultana*, although designed to carry a maximum of 376 passengers, actually embarked over 2,400, most of whom were Union prisoners of war recently released from captivity. The explosion and consequent fire killed over 1,800 and ranks as the worst commercial maritime disaster in U.S. history.
- 1914-USRC Miami, under the command of Captain J. H. Quinan, while on the International Ice Patrol, carried out the first trials of the new fathometer built by Submarine Signal Company in Boston.
- 1949-When a C-47 of the Military Air Transport Service developed engine trouble and ditched near CGC *Sebago* on Weather Station "Dog" some 380 miles from Newfoundland, a motor self-bailing boat from the cutter immediately picked up the plane's crew of four. Although the C-47 sank within 12 minutes, there were no injuries or casualties.
- 1966-After a U.S. Air Force B-57 was reported overdue the U.S. Coast Guard Eastern Area Commander commenced an intensive air search. The two-day, large-scale, over-water search for the missing aircraft, all of which was coordinated by the Coast Guard, unfortunately yielded negative results.
- 1980-A Coast Guard HH-3F from AIRSTA Sitka safely rescued all 14 crewman from the F/V *Cathy-R* after it capsized and sank west of Cape Ommaney.
- 1989-President George H. W. Bush dedicated the Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence Center East, otherwise known as C3I, in south Florida. The facility, manned by Coast Guard and Customs personnel, was designed to give law enforcement agencies instant access to air and marine smuggling information.

## 28 April

- 1908-The Revenue Cutter Service became the primary federal agency in charge of patrolling regattas.
- 1918-CGC *Seneca* saved 81 survivors from the torpedoed British naval sloop *Cowslip* while on convoy route to Gibraltar. *Cowslip* had been attacked by three German U-boats.
- 1919-While in command of USS *Marietta* in the Bay of Biscay on 28 April 1919, Captain Harry G. Hamlet rescued a crew of 47 persons from USS *James* which was sinking at sea. For his actions that day he was awarded a Gold Lifesaving Medal. His award citation noted: "This rescue was made extremely difficult and hazardous owing to high seas, which threatened to send the two vessels crashing together. In effecting the rescue, Captain Hamlet displayed admirable seamanship." Captain Hamlet would later serve as Commandant of the Coast Guard from 1932-1936.
- 1993-Coast Guard PACAREA LEDETs, operating from the USS *Valley Forge* and USS *Cleveland*, boarded the St. Vincent-flagged 225-foot freighter *Sea Chariot* about 300 miles southwest of Panama. The boarding team discovered bales of cocaine in some of the containers on board and then seized the vessel. The vessel was escorted through the Panama Canal to Station Miami Beach where a search of the vessel's containers turned up 11,233 pounds of cocaine.



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- 2001-A LEDET assigned to USS *Rodney M. Davis*, with later assistance from CGC *Active* made the largest cocaine seizure in maritime history to date when they boarded and seized the Belizean F/V *Svesda Maru* 1,500 miles south of San Diego. The fishing vessel was carrying 26,931 pounds of cocaine.

## 29 April

- 1965-President Lyndon Johnson approved the commitment of Coast Guard forces to service in Vietnam under the Navy Department's operational control. The formation for service in Vietnam of Coast Guard Squadron One (RONONE) was announced.
- 1975-Coast Guard discontinued operations at Con Son Island LORAN Station.
- 1992-CGC *Storis'* 3-inch/.50 caliber main battery was removed from the cutter. It was the last 3-inch/.50 caliber gun in service aboard any U.S. warship. The 3-inch/.50 was a dual-purpose weapon (surface and anti-aircraft) that had been in U.S. service since the 1930s. It was shipped to Curtis Bay where it was made inoperable and then loaned to a VFW club.
- 2014-The Boston-based CGC *Escanaba* returned to its homeport after a 36-day patrol in the North Atlantic. While out on patrol, the medium-endurance cutter focused on fisheries missions in support of Operation Atlantic Venture. *Escanaba's* crew conducted 26 law enforcement boardings during the patrol. Crew members measured fishing gear, inspected daily catch limits and ensured that vessels' safety gear was in good, working order. The cutter crew also conducted 46 training evolutions with the crew of an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod.

## 30 April

- 1789- President George Washington was inaugurated in New York City as the nation's first President. His inauguration marked the beginning of U.S. Constitutional government.
- 1798-Congress established the Department of the Navy on this date in 1798. Nevertheless, the United States Navy traces its origins to the Continental Navy, which the Continental Congress established on 13 October 1775 by authorizing the procurement, fitting out, manning, and dispatch of two armed vessels to cruise in search of munitions ships supplying the British Army in America. In 1972 Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt authorized the recognition of 13 October 1775 as the Navy's official birthday.
- 1818-Congress authorized use of "land and naval forces of the United States to compel any foreign ship to depart United States in all cases in which, by the laws of nations or the treaties of the United States, they ought not to remain within the United States." This was the basis of neutrality enforcement.
- 1832- All commissions of naval officers serving in the Revenue Cutter Service were revoked. All vacancies were then filled by promotion from within the Service for the first time.
- 1967- BM1 Edgar A. Culbertson gave his life attempting to rescue three boys in Duluth, Minnesota. BM1 Culbertson, along with two other members of Station Duluth, volunteered to venture out on the North Pier at Duluth to rescue three boys who had been reported to be out on the pier during a severe storm. Witnesses had seen a wave wash one of the boys away but two were apparently trapped near the lighthouse at the



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end of the pier. Culbertson's Coast Guard Medal citation noted: "Lashing themselves together, the three men proceeded, with hand lanterns as the only illumination, to the end of the breakwater. Despite the high waves, winds gusting to 40 knots, driving rain and 36 degree water, the rescue party diligently searched the breakwater and light but found no trace of the boys. While returning to the beach a 20-foot wave swept Petty Officer CULBERTSON off his feet and hurled him up to and over the breakwater parapet into the sea. Despite the strenuous efforts of his teammates, Petty Officer CULBERTSON perished in this gallant rescue attempt." He was posthumously awarded the Coast Guard Medal. The other two Coast Guardsmen, BM2 Richard R. Callahan, and FN Ronald C. Prei, were also awarded the Coast Guard Medal for their heroism.