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The First Coast Guard Couple, Literally!



Bob and Donna Smith, WWII Coast Guard veterans and first Coast Guard couple, both now in their 80s [as of 2005], revisited the Washington, DC area in September 2005. After more that 60 years, they are still together and still going strong. Some said it would never last.

Robert Neil Smith enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1940. After basic training attended YN school. While stationed at Coast Guard Headquarters Military Morale Division in 1943, YN2 Smith met Donna Lone Miller, a Coast Guard SPAR. The couple married April 21, 1943. Since they were the first Coast Guard couple to be married, many members of the Coast Guard were in attendance at their wedding and surprised the couple with a reception at the Shoreham Hotel. The couple's wedding photo at the left was used as a recruiting poster.

PO Miller joined the US Navy Waves in 1942, after attending basic training in Hunter College (USS *Hunter*), in Bronx, NY, she attended YN training in Oklahoma A&M in Stillwater, OK. Upon completion of training, a Coast Guard Officer came on campus and asked them if some of them would like to transfer over to the SPARS to help them get started. She decided it would be something special and agreed to the transfer. After the orders were approved, PO Miller was transferred to Coast Guard Headquarters Military Morale Division. PO's Smith and Miller were married in April 1943. After becoming pregnant Donna was given an honorable discharge from the SPARs in June 1943 and moved to the family home in Washington State.



YN2 Bob Smith attended OCS at the Coast Guard Academy later that year. After graduation, ENS Smith was transferred to the USS *Salvia* (**above, right**) a Coast Guard Lighthouse Tender in the Great Lakes. After the cutter changed homeport to Portsmouth, VA in May 1944, ENS Smith requested transfer to the Pacific.



He served briefly aboard US Army Y-9, a Coastal Tanker/Oiler (**upper left**). In August 1945, LTJG Smith reported to LST-769 (**left**) as their Gunnery Officer. LTJG Smith was given an honorable discharge from the Coast Guard in June 1946.

Both Bob and Donna have always been proud to have been members of the U.S. Coast Guard and the military during WWII.

SEMPER PARATUS!

[Click here](#) to read Donna Lone Smith's oral history.

[Click here](#) to read Robert Smith's oral history.