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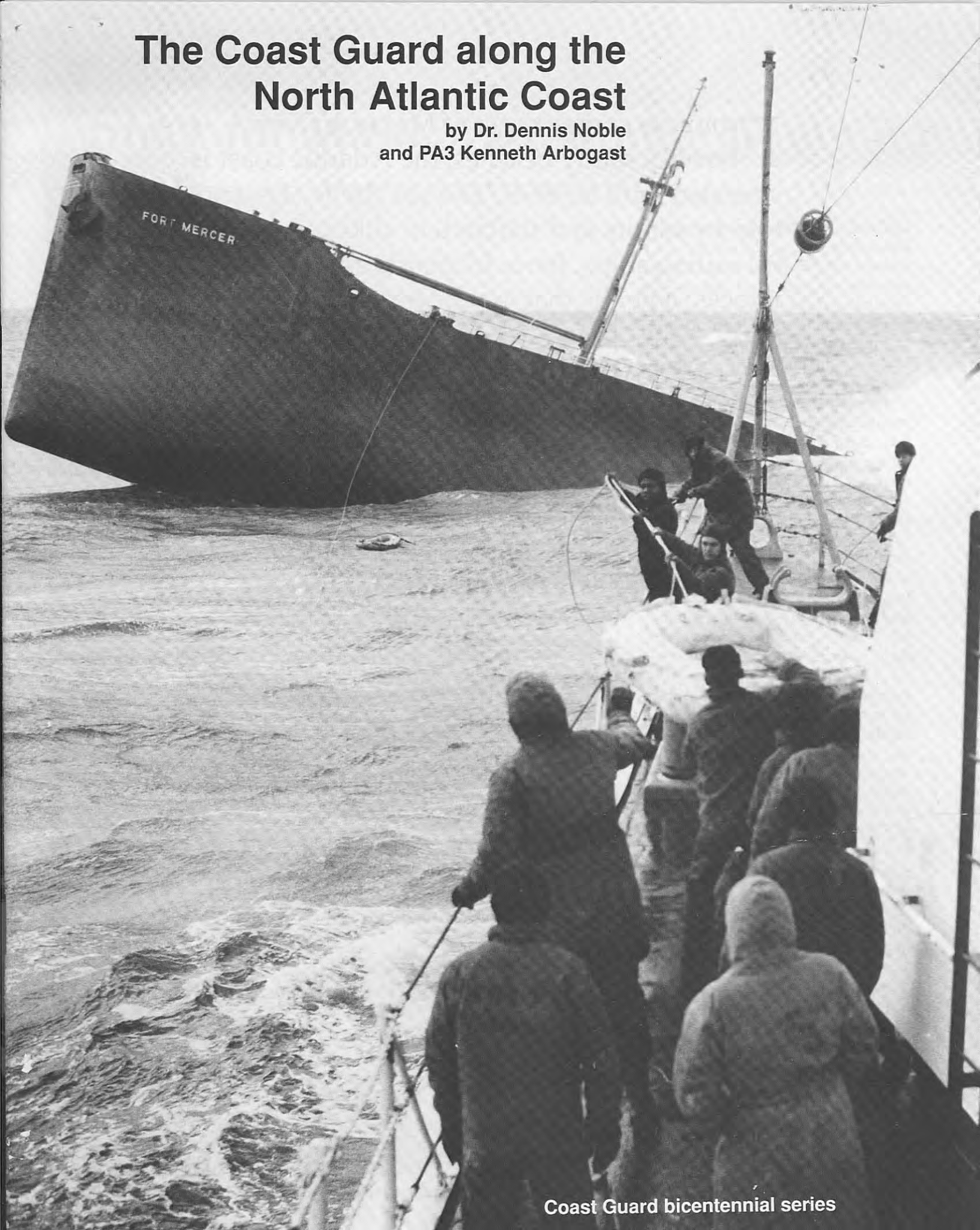
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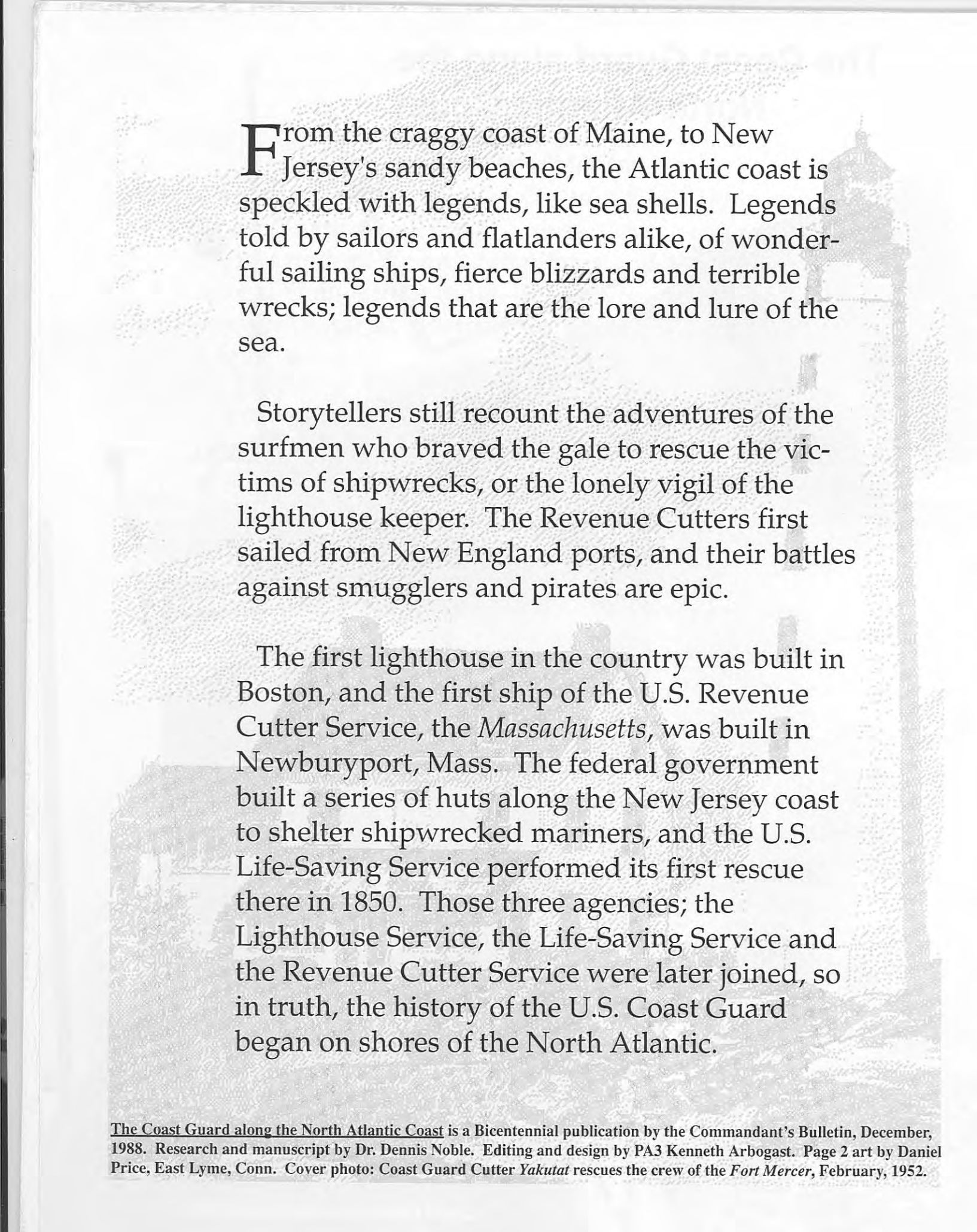
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The Coast Guard along the North Atlantic Coast

by Dr. Dennis Noble
and PA3 Kenneth Arbogast



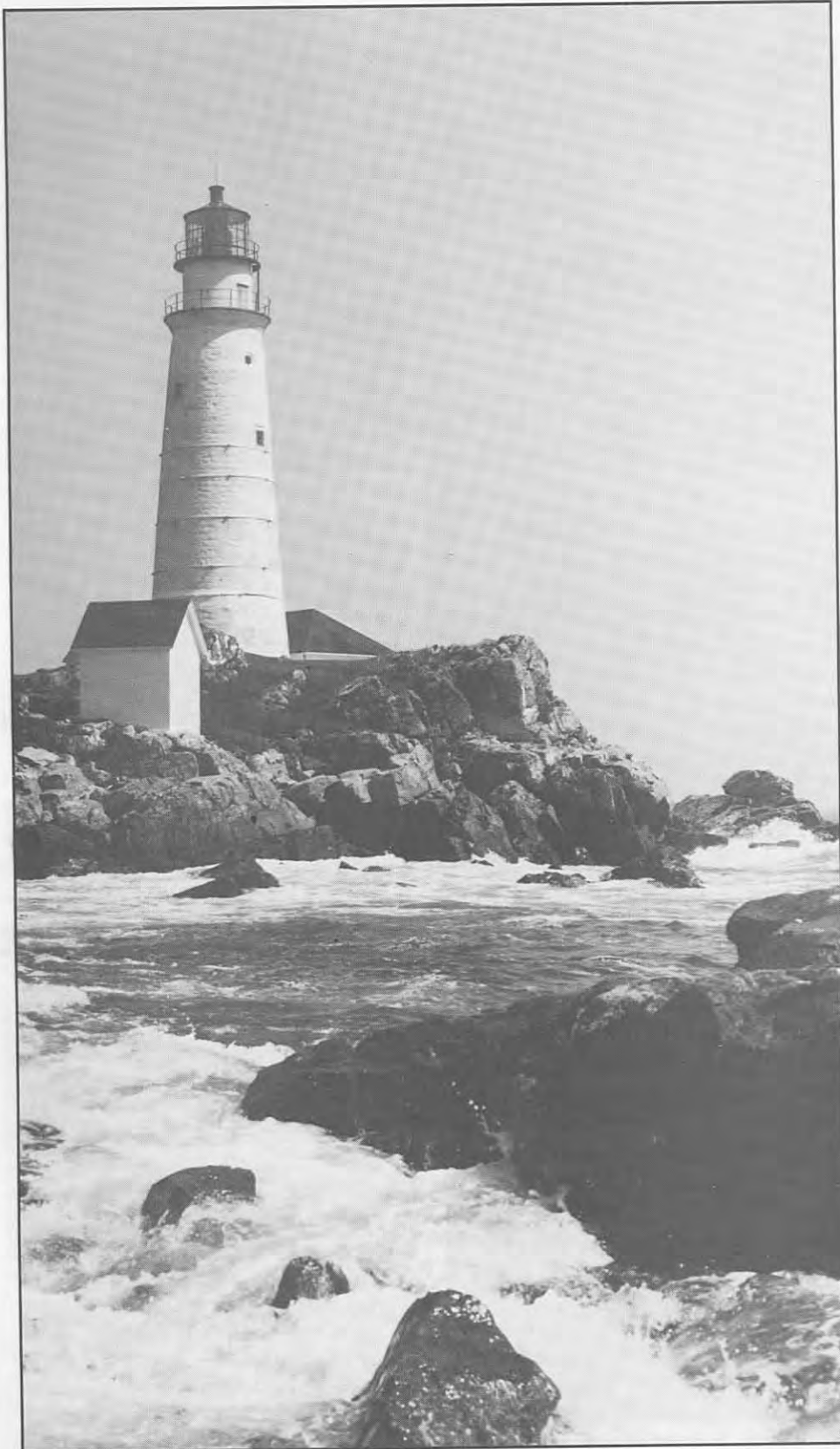


From the craggy coast of Maine, to New Jersey's sandy beaches, the Atlantic coast is speckled with legends, like sea shells. Legends told by sailors and flatlanders alike, of wonderful sailing ships, fierce blizzards and terrible wrecks; legends that are the lore and lure of the sea.

Storytellers still recount the adventures of the surfmen who braved the gale to rescue the victims of shipwrecks, or the lonely vigil of the lighthouse keeper. The Revenue Cutters first sailed from New England ports, and their battles against smugglers and pirates are epic.

The first lighthouse in the country was built in Boston, and the first ship of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, the *Massachusetts*, was built in Newburyport, Mass. The federal government built a series of huts along the New Jersey coast to shelter shipwrecked mariners, and the U.S. Life-Saving Service performed its first rescue there in 1850. Those three agencies; the Lighthouse Service, the Life-Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service were later joined, so in truth, the history of the U.S. Coast Guard began on shores of the North Atlantic.

"Steer for yonder light"



Boston Light stands on the site of the first American lighthouse.

Early settlers found New England a hostile home. The rocky soil was difficult to farm and the winters were severe. For a time the solution was easy; continued dependence upon Europe and the sea. Sailing ships brought manufactured goods like clothes from England. Colonial boats fished for cod, and later lobster, throughout Massachusetts Bay.

Navigation was difficult. Sailors depended upon the sun, stars and primitive compasses. There were no accurate charts of the American coasts. As early as 1700, colonists realized the need for lighthouses to guide ships to port.

Massachusetts erected a lighthouse on a small island in Boston Harbor in 1716. The next year, a cannon was put on the island to be fired in fog and storms. Boston Light became both the first lighthouse and the first fog signal in the country.

More lights followed as America's maritime trade grew: Brant Point on Nantucket in 1746; Beavertail Light, in Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island, in 1749; and Gurnet Point, at Plymouth, Mass., in 1768. Sandy Hook Lighthouse was built on a New Jersey point outside New York harbor in 1764. Because it has never been rebuilt, Sandy Hook is the oldest original lighthouse operating in the country.

Lighthouses played a curious role in the American Revolution. The colonists and the British both took turns attacking Boston Light to prevent the other from using Boston harbor. The light was finally demolished. Nearby Gurnet Light was struck by a cannonball from a British frigate.

The first woman keeper was Hannah Thomas who took over at Gurnet Point Light in 1776 when her husband, General John Thomas, went to Canada to assume command of American troops there.

An incident in the next war with England demonstrated how important women would later become to the Lighthouse Service. During the War of 1812, the British warship *Hogue* sailed into the harbor of Scituate, Mass. The lighthouse keeper was away on business, but his two young daughters saw the danger. With a fife and drum, the girls hid in the dunes and began playing as loudly as they could. Thinking the 'Army of Two' was a regiment of militia approaching, the British withdrew and did not attack.

After the revolution, the colonies gave 11 lighthouses to the new federal government. Realizing the importance of navigation to the growing country, Congress established the Lighthouse Service in 1789 to erect and repair all the lighthouses, beacons and buoys in the new United States. In 1790, President George Washington authorized the completion of a new lighthouse in Portland, Maine, the first built by the federal government.

As the number of lighthouses along the coast increased, it became increasingly difficult for the mariner at sea to distinguish the light of one port from another port. From a great distance, lighthouses looked like identical steady white lights. The easiest way to distinguish between the lights was to put more than one light together. The first twin towers were built on Thatcher's Island, near



Twin tower lights, like these on Cape Ann, Mass., helped mariners determine which light they were seeing from a distance.



The first Boon Island Light was built in 1811 after many shipwrecks.

Gloucester, Mass., in 1771. Twin towers also were built on Navesink Highlands, New Jersey in 1828. Three identical towers were built on Nauset Beach, Cape Cod.

Clearly, building several towers together was not always easy. Another solution was to change the way the light looked, for instance make one light steady and another nearby flashing. In 1797, "eclipsers" were installed on Cape Cod Lighthouse, in Chatham, Mass., making it the first light with an intermittent characteristic.

During the next century, the lighthouses changed with America's inventiveness, and a little bit of "Yankee know-how." A fog bell at White Head Light in Maine was powered by the tide. The flow of water wound a weight which drove the striking mechanism. Some later aids to navigation used automatic lightbulb changers.

The history of Navesink Light reads like a science primer. In 1841, the first Fresnel (pronounced fren-nel) lens used in this country was installed at Navesink. The lens, designed by a French optician, Augustin Fresnel, magnified the projected light through beveled prisms. A generator was installed in 1898 and Navesink became the first lighthouse to use an electric lamp, making it the most powerful lighthouse in the country, with 25,000,000 candlepower. Although the curvature of the Earth prevented ships from seeing the light itself beyond 22 miles, its beam was observed in the sky at 70 miles. The following year, Guglielmo Marconi transmitted from the light station the first ship to shore radio messages. In 1917, the first experimental radio beacon was installed there.

Innovation was the hallmark of lighthouse engineering and building lighthouses was often a test of the latest technology. Perhaps no light was more challenging than the granite tower built off the coast of Massachusetts on Minot's Ledge.

The rocks along the coast of Cohasset, Mass., claimed many ships and many lives in the early part of the 19th century. Between 1830 and 1840, 40 ships sank in this treacherous area. Perhaps the greatest tragedy came shortly before a lighthouse was completed when the steamer *St. John* ran aground in an October, 1849 storm and 99 people were lost, mostly Irish immigrants.

The Lighthouse Service constructed an iron skeleton tower on the Minot's Ledge between 1847 and 1850. The engineers believed the open columns would allow the sea to pass below without resistance.

The beacon was lighted on Jan. 1, 1850, but it survived barely a year. Storms in March and April the following year battered the light, loosening and bending cross braces in the pedestal framework.

A storm that began April 8, 1851 struck the fatal blow against the weakened structure. Sometime during the night of April 16, the main support stilt snapped and the tower swayed at the mercy of wind and wave.



The first Minot's Light Tower.

The two keepers rang the lighthouse bell, heard by the residents of nearby Cohasset even above the roar of the storm. They also sealed a note in a bottle and pitched it out to sea. The note, found by a fisherman the



The 128-year old current Minot's tower was recently reconstructed.

next morning, read, "The lighthouse won't stand over to night. She shakes two feet each way now."

The bell was silenced when the tower fell into the sea during the early hours of April 17. The two keepers donned life preservers and jumped into the ocean. One drowned and the other died of exposure on a bare rock.

Construction of a second tower began in 1855. The stubs of the previous stilts were removed and the uneven surface of the ledge was cut into steps. The work went slowly because the rock was only exposed at low tide and engineers were stumped by several problems.

One difficulty ingeniously solved

was how to keep the mortar from being washed away before it dried. Workers spread out a piece of muslin and covered it with mortar. Then the finished stone was laid on the muslin and plastered with mortar. Finally, the muslin was wrapped around the stone to prevent the mortar from dissolving in the seawater.

The second tower was lighted Nov. 15, 1860. Minot's Light stands today against waves that sometimes crest above its 97-foot peak. One lighthouse historian called Minot's Light "The single greatest engineering achievement" of 19th century lighthouse construction in this country.

Today, the life of a lighthouse keeper might seem idyllic but the word they used most often to describe their lives was lonely. The lights were isolated, often on remote islands; and keepers could only be away a few hours during the day, and had to remain at the light constantly during bad weather. The keeper's job revolved around maintaining the lamp, tower and quarters. When Lighthouse Service inspectors visited, the first thing they inspected was the dustpan. A polished dustpan was the mark of a good lighthouse. During the 1800s, lights used lamps that burned whale oil or lard. The quality of the light depended upon how well the wick was trimmed. Gradually, keepers were nicknamed "wickies."

The duties of a lighthouse keeper were tedious and often dangerous. In addition to the endless maintenance of light and structure, keepers had to be alert and ready to respond to vessels in distress. Many keepers were women who, like Katie Walker, assumed the duties their father or husband could no longer perform. Katie Walker remained keeper of Robbins Reef Lighthouse in New York harbor for 34 years.

Perhaps the most famous woman keeper was Ida Lewis. She was keeper of Lime Rock Lighthouse in Rhode Island for 32 years. Her fame was a result of the many daring rescues she performed. An excellent swimmer and an expert sailor, she made her first rescue as a teenager and her last at the age of 64. In all, she is credited with saving more than a dozen lives.

With electricity, keepers no longer had to remain awake all night and watch the burning wick. By the 1920s, lighthouses were built with equipment that did not even need a keeper to turn the light on. These "automated" lights were the most recent development in the advancement of lighthouse technology but also meant the end of an era. The days of the lighthouse keeper were numbered. In fact, with improved navigation, including such electronic aids as radar and radio navigation, lighthouses themselves were no longer as important as during the earliest days of the colonies.



A light was first built on Gurnet Point, near Plymouth, Mass., in 1768. Hannah Thomas became America's first woman keeper when she relieved her husband. It was destroyed by fire and rebuilt as twin towers. The north tower was used until 1924. Notice the earthwork remains of the Revolutionary fort and the round base of the second tower.



MISS IDA LEWIS, THE HEROINE OF NEWPORT.—PHOT. BY MANCHESTER BROTHERS, PROVIDENCE, R. I.—[SEE PAGE 481.]

Ida Lewis, keeper of Lime Rock Lighthouse, was featured by Harper's Weekly in 1869 as the "Heroine of Newport."

A life by the lighthouse

Abbie Burgess was 14 when she first went to Matinicus Rock, off the coast of Maine. Her father was keeper there for eight years. She helped him light the 28 lamps that warned ships away from the dangerous ledges in Penobscot Bay.

In 1856, winter supplies were running desperately low and Keeper Burgess decided to make a winter trip ashore to fetch food and medicine for his invalid wife. He left Abbie in charge of the light. Soon after he left, a storm blew in and he was unable to return for several weeks. As the gale raged, Abbie moved her mother and the children into the light tower for safety. The waves completely washed away their first home on the island, and from the tower, Abbie watched the destruction below.

"The new dwelling was flooded and the windows had to be secured to prevent the violence of the spray from breaking them in. As the tide came, the sea rose higher and higher, till the only endurable places were the light-towers. If they stood we were saved, otherwise our fate was only too certain. But for some reason, I know not why, I had no misgivings, and went on with my work as usual. For four weeks, owing to rough weather, no landing could be effected on the Rock. During this time we were without the assistance of any male member of our family. Though at times greatly exhausted with my labors, not once did the lights fail. Under God I was able to perform all my accustomed duties as well as my father's.

"You know the hens were our only companions. Becoming convinced, as the gale increased, that

unless they were brought into the house they would be lost, I said to mother: "I must try to save them." She advised me not to attempt it. The thought, however, of parting with them without an effort was not to be endured, so seizing a basket, I ran out a few yards after the rollers had passed and the sea fell

ed, its roars shuts out every other sound, even drowning our voices."

Gradually the storm subsided. Keeper Burgess returned to find his family and his light safe.

Although her family left the island after her father was no longer keeper, Abbie stayed and married the new assistant keeper. She remained on

Matinicus until 1875 when her husband was transferred to White Head Light, near Spruce Head, Maine. Abbie died in 1892, after spending 38 of her 52 years at a lighthouse. Shortly before her death, she wrote;

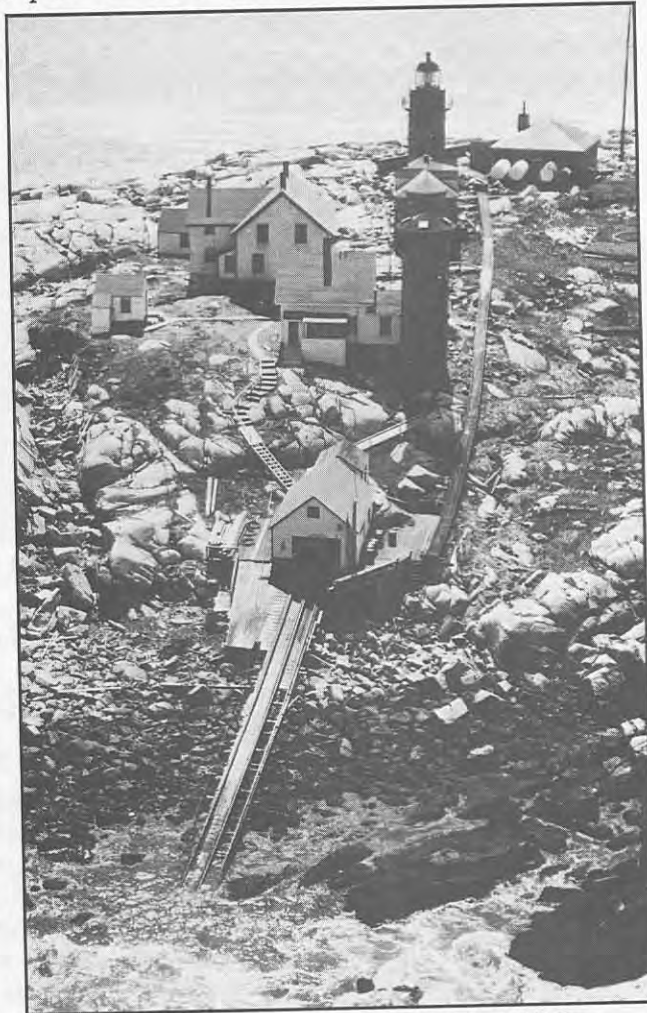
"Sometimes I think the time is not far distant when I shall climb these lighthouse stairs no more. It has always seemed to me that the light was part of myself...Many nights I have watched the lights my part of the night, and then could not sleep the rest of the night, thinking nervously what might happen should the lights fail.

"In all these years I always put the lamps in order in the morning and I lit them at night. These old lamps...on Matinicus Rock...I often dream of them. When I dream of them it always seems to me that I have been away a long while, and I am hurrying toward the Rock to light

the lamps there before sunset...I feel a great deal more worried in my dreams than when I am awake.

"I wonder if the care of the lighthouse will follow my soul after it has left this worn out body! If I ever have a gravestone, I would like it in the form of a lighthouse or beacon."

Many years later, the author and lighthouse historian, Edward Rowe Snow, erected a small lighthouse over Abbie Burgess Grant's grave.



Matinicus Rock is a desolate island off Maine.

off a little, with the water knee deep, to the coop, and rescued all but one. It was the work of a moment, and I was back in the house with the door fastened, but I was none too quick, for at that instant my little sister, standing at the window, exclaimed, "Oh, look! look there! The worst sea is coming!"

"That wave destroyed the old dwelling and swept the Rock. The sea is never still and when agitat-



Lightship No. 85 serving on Nantucket Station, January 1920. This lightship station was established in 1892.

Sea duty: *Danger and boredom mark life onboard floating lighthouses*

The most dangerous duty in the Lighthouse Service was aboard lightships. These floating lighthouses anchored offshore where it was impossible to build a permanent tower. They remained on isolated stations for several weeks, through storms and fog. Because they marked the sealanes, several lightships were struck by passing ships navigating through the dark and fog. One skipper described his duty as "weeks of boredom, interrupted by moments of sheer terror."

One of the first lightships stationed off the shores of the United States was at Sandy Hook, N.J. in 1823. In 1908, that station was replaced by the Ambrose Channel Lightship, and later a light atop a fixed tower.

Storms were a constant threat to the lightships. *Five Fathom Banks* Lightship off the entrance to Delaware

Bay was struggling through a tempest Aug. 23, 1893. Waves washed over the vessel and carried away the lifeboats. Finally, the lightship was struck broadside by a wave and capsized. The assistant engineer was trapped below decks, but somehow managed to reach the surface after the ship sank. He clung to the wreckage for 16 hours until rescuers arrived. The other four crewmen were lost with the ship.

Sometimes storms claimed both ship and crew. During a hurricane in 1944, Lightship #73 disappeared from Vineyard Station near Cuttyhunk Island, Mass. All 12 crewmen were lost, but only two bodies were ever recovered. During the winter of 1918, the *Cross Rip* Lightship, stationed off Cape Cod, was carried out to sea by an ice floe and never heard from again.

Collisions with freighters and pas-

senger liners were a constant threat to the lightships. A skipper of the *Nantucket* Lightship said, "Some of the larger steamers passed very close aboard during a heavy fog. A few times almost grazing us." In fact, the *Nantucket* was finally rammed and sunk by the steamship *RMS Olympic*, the sister ship of *Titanic*, May 15, 1934. Seven crewmen were lost.

One particularly unlucky lightship was struck twice in one year. The lightship stationed off Fire Island in 1896 was hit head-on by the steamer *Eastern City* in March and then rammed by the steamer *Philadelphia* in May.

Lightships are no longer used in this country. These dangerous stations were replaced by towers, like those at Ambrose, Buzzards Bay and Breton's Reef or by large buoys, like those at Nantucket or Portland.

Smugglers, pirates and war

The American colonies were dependent upon England for more than manufactured goods and tea. When the French and Indians attacked settlers along the frontier, English troops came to the colonists' defense. But the cost of protecting and supporting the colonies forced the English Parliament to heavily tax products sent to America.

The colonists rebelled. In many cases, they simply refused to pay the English taxes and instead smuggled goods from other countries. Such patriots as John Hancock joined the smuggling trade and his sloop, *Liberty*, was seized by the British. Soon smuggling had patriotic overtones and became an acceptable means of earning a living.

Finally, war came and one of the rallying cries of the American Revolution was "no taxation without representation." America won its freedom but the eight-year war left the fledgling country nearly \$80,000,000 in debt with no way to fund its new federal government. To resolve the nation's financial problems, George Washington shrewdly appointed Alexander Hamilton as the first Secretary of the Treasury.

Hamilton, a New York lawyer and aide to Washington during the Revolution, realized the need to collect taxes and enforce tariff laws. He also knew Americans resented the taxes Congress passed and smuggling flourished even after the war. He proposed a seagoing police force to stop smuggling and raise revenues.

On Aug. 4, 1790, Congress authorized the construction of 10 ships to patrol the Atlantic coast. Hamilton instructed his customs agents to supervise their construction; a demanding job. The cutters had to be fast to overtake ships at sea; sturdy enough to sail off the coast and endure foul weather; yet shallow so they could pursue ships up rivers and still cost only \$1,000 apiece.

The first Revenue Marine cutter,

the *Massachusetts*, was built in Newburyport, Mass., and sailed in 1791. It was built too large and exceeded costs so it was quickly replaced. The *Scammel* was built in Portsmouth, N.H.; the *Argus* in Connecticut and the *Vigilant* in New York.

Hamilton was especially concerned about the conduct of the Revenue Marine officers. He knew that there was some resentment among merchants toward the Customs tariffs and agents. Hamilton's instructions to his officer's were clear: "They will always keep in mind that their countrymen are freemen, and, as such, are impatient of everything that bears the least mark of domineering spirit. They will, therefore, refrain, with the most guarded circumspection, from whatever has the semblance of haughtiness, rudeness, or insult."

The early captains and officers were experienced seamen, all were veterans of the Revolution and some may have even smuggled some themselves. On March 21, 1791, Hopley Yeaton, of Portsmouth, N.H., was appointed the

first skipper of the *Scammel* and the first naval officer commissioned by President Washington.

While 10 cutters could not stop all smuggling along the coast, Hamilton and his customs agents were pleased with the results: Revenues increased. Joseph Whipple, Customs officer in New Hampshire, wrote to Hamilton about the *Scammel*;

"The services performed by the Cutter I conceive to have been very important to the safety and preservation of the Revenue. The Coast which is assigned to her, that of New Hampshire and the District of Maine, extending nearly 300 miles, many of which afford convenient places for fraudulent practices which have been checked by the attention and vigilance of the officers of the Scammel. The services for the past year consisted in cruising the aforementioned Coast, in entering and examining the Vessel's papers, instructing the ignorant coasters, and in bringing to justice those who break or evade the law."



Massachusetts, the first Revenue Cutter, set sail in 1791, but was quickly replaced with a smaller, less expensive ship.

The cutters were quickly called upon to do more than law enforcement. The Continental Navy had been disbanded after the Revolution and the United States found itself without naval defense against England and France. American sailors were often impressed into service aboard foreign ships. Countries that refused to recognize the United States as a sovereign nation simply seized American vessels.

Relations with France deteriorated over America's neutrality in France's war against Britain. As hostilities increased, Congress assigned the Revenue Cutters the additional job of defending American ships. "An Act providing Naval Armament" passed June 14, 1797, directed the service "to defend the Sea Coast of the United States and to repel any hostility to the ... Commerce of the United States..."

Congress instructed the Revenue Cutters to increase the size of their crew and armament. After a Naval Department was established, Congress authorized the President to transfer the Revenue Cutters to the Navy as needed. That policy remains

in effect today: In times of war, the Coast Guard serves under the Secretary of the Navy.

Eight new cutters served with the Navy during the Quasi-War with France in 1798, including the *Pickering*, built in Newburyport. The Revenue Cutters seized 16 of the 20 French ships captured by the American Navy and assisted in capturing two more.

Only five of the eight were returned to the Revenue Marine at the end of the war. The cutter *Pickering* remained on naval duty and sank with all hands in September 1800, the first Revenue Cutter lost at sea.

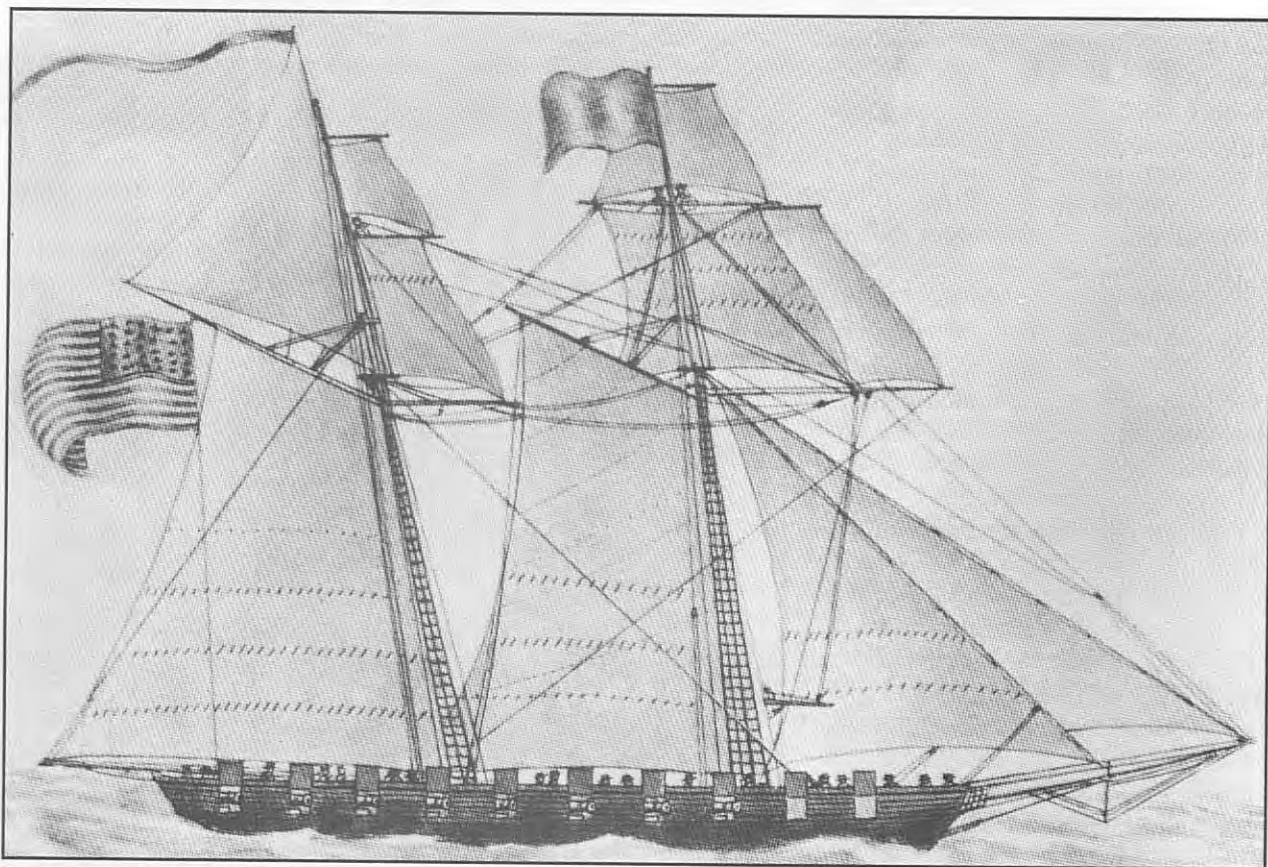
Revenue Cutters saw combat duty again during the War of 1812. In October 1814, the cutter *Eagle* sailed from New Haven, Conn., to rescue the American merchant ship, *Susan*, that was captured by a British sloop and the 18-gun brig, *Dispatch*.

Captain Frederick Lee on board *Eagle* realized small cannons were no match for the two British ships. He ran *Eagle* aground on Negros Head, Long Island. There his crew and 40 volunteers hauled the cannons up a steep bluff.

When the cannons were in place, the cuttermen opened fire against the British ships. The gunfire echoed along the beach for five hours. *Dispatch* alone fired 300 rounds. Twice the cutter's flag was shot away but, according to witnesses, it was replaced each time by a sailor "amid the cheers of his undaunted comrades and a whole broadside from the enemy."

The stubborn resistance of *Eagle's* crew finally drove off the British. The crippled cutter was refloated and sailed for New Haven. Along the way, the British finally captured it.

The speed of the Revenue Cutters proved an advantage against the heavier British warships. The British privateer *Dart* had seized almost 30 American ships in Long Island Sound before she sailed past Newport Harbor, R.I., Oct. 4, 1813. Captain John Cahoone aboard the cutter *Vigilant* took 20 volunteers and sailed out after *Dart*. Catching the sloop, Cahoone fired a broadside then boarded it. After a brief fight, the cutter *Vigilant* captured the privateers.



Revenue Cutter *Pickering* made 10 captures during the Quasi War with France.

Revenue Marine builds steam

Throughout the 19th century, the United States became increasingly dependent upon the maritime industry. Land travel was difficult then. There were few railroads, and travel by horse or coach was slow and uncomfortable. As sturdier ships were built, more Americans traveled by sea and more cargo was shipped onboard vessels.

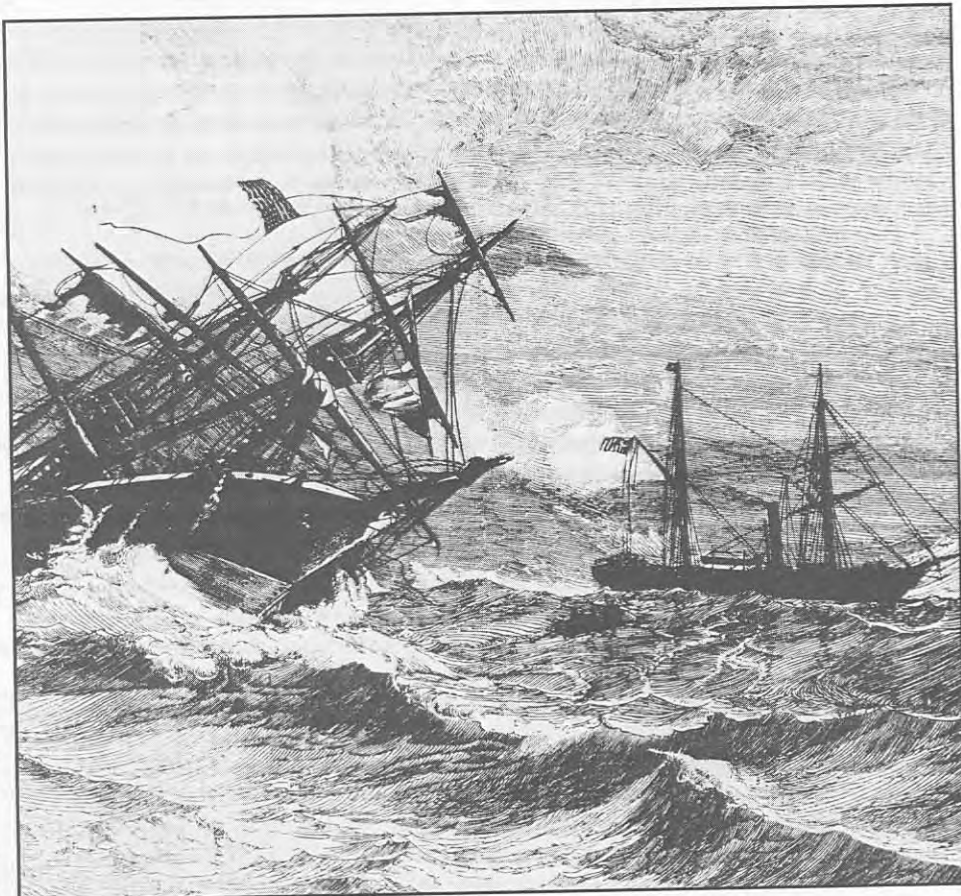
With more ships at sea carrying more passengers, the chance of disaster increased. Each year, nearly 90 American vessels were lost, and the North Atlantic coast was littered with the broken hulks of wrecked ships.

To reduce the loss of life, the duties of the Revenue Cutters were again increased. In 1832 cutters began making winter cruises along the coast to assist vessels in distress a practice continued today. The effort was so successful that search and rescue was officially added to the duties of the Revenue Marine Service in 1837.

For the service to keep up with the growth and changes of America's maritime industry, it needed to adapt and grow. In 1843, Secretary of the Treasury John Spencer, decided to put an experienced sea captain in charge of the Revenue Marine Bureau. He selected a New York sailor, a veteran of cruises to the Orient and former first lieutenant aboard the cutter *Alert*, stationed in New York. From his command of the cutter *Ewing*, Captain Alexander Fraser was promoted to become the service's first commandant.

Fraser established order and regulation to replace what was merely tradition. Spencer reported to Congress that under Fraser "Economy in expenditures and efficiency in service have been greatly promoted. The officers and men feel that the service has been elevated, and a corresponding zeal in the discharge of their duty has been strikingly exhibited."

Perhaps more important was Fraser's willingness to adopt the latest



A Revenue Cutter comes to the aid of a distressed packet ship.

technology for the cutters. Within a year of his appointment, the service began construction of a cutter powered by steam. The *Legare* was built by H.R. Dunham & Company of New York City and launched in 1844. The propeller-driven *Legare* is most famous for beating the side-paddler *Great Western* in a race off Sandy Hook, N.J. in 1844, but the early steam cutters were largely a disappointment to Fraser. He decided that future cutters would be built only on tested and proven designs.

Fraser also formed an early and temporary union between his cutters and the Lighthouse Service. The collectors of customs were directed to supervise lighthouses within their districts just as they did the cutters. The commanding officers of cutters inspected lighthouses and other aids to navigation.

The Revenue Marine supervised the first efforts by the federal government to create a system of life-saving stations. In 1848, Congress gave the Bureau \$10,000 to purchase life-saving equipment for New Jersey's coast.

The cutters continued to aid ships in distress. Captain Josiah Sturgis and the cutter *Hamilton*, of Boston, earned a distinguished reputation for their humanitarian work and assistance to mariners. One newspaper account said, "Having a perfect knowledge of the coast and experience of the dangers incident to shipping by a change of wind or a storm, Captain Sturgis always kept the cutter in a position where her services could be rendered most efficient in assisting vessels in distress. We hazard but little in asserting that he has rendered assistance to more than 100 vessels during the past winter..."

The Revenue Cutters returned to combat duty during the Civil War. Fifteen cutters patrolled the coast from Maine to New Jersey, guarding against Confederate privateers who disrupted Northern shipping. Rebel ships that successfully broke through the blockade of southern ports harassed ships and ports as far north as Long Island and Maine.

Captain Charles "Savvy" Read was a daredevil Confederate pirate. After seizing several boats along the New Jersey coast in June, 1863, he sailed north. He planned to bombard Portland and plant a Confederate flag on Maine soil.

The Revenue Cutter *Caleb Cushing* was moored in Portland. The captain had recently died and half the crew was ashore for his funeral. The new skipper, Lieutenant James Merryman, was sailing for Portland aboard the steamship, *Forest City*.

Read and his men rowed into Portland harbor on the night of June 24. In the darkness, they boarded the cutter and quickly captured the few men onboard. He sailed the cutter out of Portland, directly in front of *Forest City*, with Merryman aboard.

As soon as the alarm went up, a crowd gathered on the pier, ready to sail after *Cushing*. Three boats, loaded with armed volunteers went in pursuit, including *Forest City*. The steamers quickly overtook the cutter on the windless night.

Read fired on his pursuers until the rebels ran out of ammunition. The cutter was loaded with wartime ammunition, but when it was seized the first lieutenant threw the key to the stores overboard. Unable to escape or fight, Read blew up the cutter and surrendered.

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3rd Dated Portland 9th 1863.

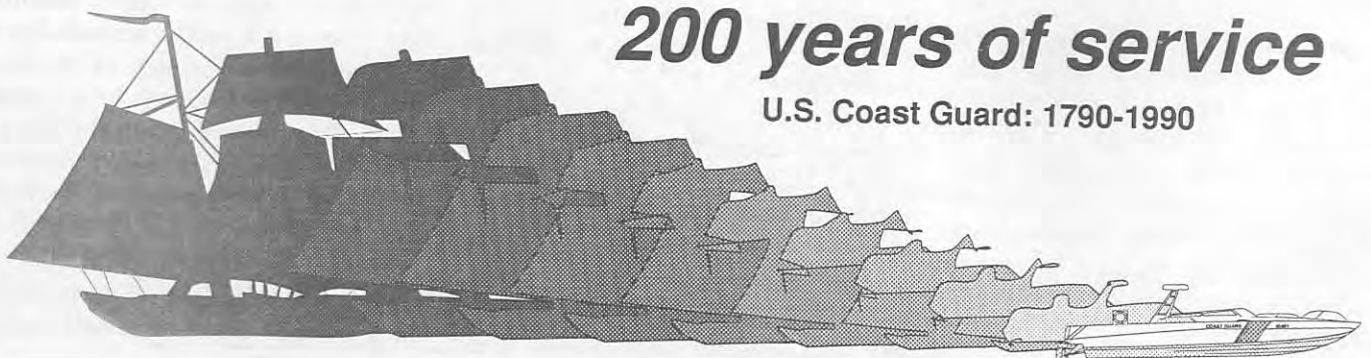
Rec'd, Washington June 27 1863, o'clock, min. M.

To Hon. S. P. Chase

Arrived here this morning at four o'clock was on board the steamer *Forest City* saw cutter blown up. Lieut Reid of rebel navy was in command & surrendered his sword to me. Twenty eight prisoners,
J. H. Merryman

35
/ 38.5

Lieutenant James Merryman sent this telegram to headquarters concerning the capture of the R.C.S. *Caleb Cushing* by Rebel forces.



200 years of service

U.S. Coast Guard: 1790-1990

After the war, the service continued to grow and expand. In 1871, the Secretary of the Treasury, George S. Boutwell, appointed a civilian to head the Revenue Marine. A native of Maine, Sumner Increase Kimball proved an able and thorough administrator and a man of vision. He led the service for seven years before he became General Superintendent of the Life-Saving Service, a position he held until 1915.

Kimball wrote the first regulations of the Revenue Marine and gave the service a system for discipline. He established an advancement system based on competition rather than political consideration. Kimball also established a two-year training program for officers on board the cutter *Dobbin*. In 1878, *Dobbin* was replaced by a new training ship, the cutter *Chase*, based in New Bedford, Mass.

In 1910, *Chase* was transferred to Arundel Cove, Maryland. As the size of the school grew, Arundel Cove

grew cramped. A new School of Instruction was established at the former Fort Trumbull in New London, Conn., in 1910, near the home of the present Coast Guard Academy.

After Kimball left to build the Life-Saving Service, the Revenue Cutter Service continued to build its own reputation for life-saving. Cutters, like *Gallatin* on the Massachusetts coast, remained at sea during storms and throughout the winter months to render assistance. During a gale in March, 1879, *Gallatin* assisted five widely scattered vessels.

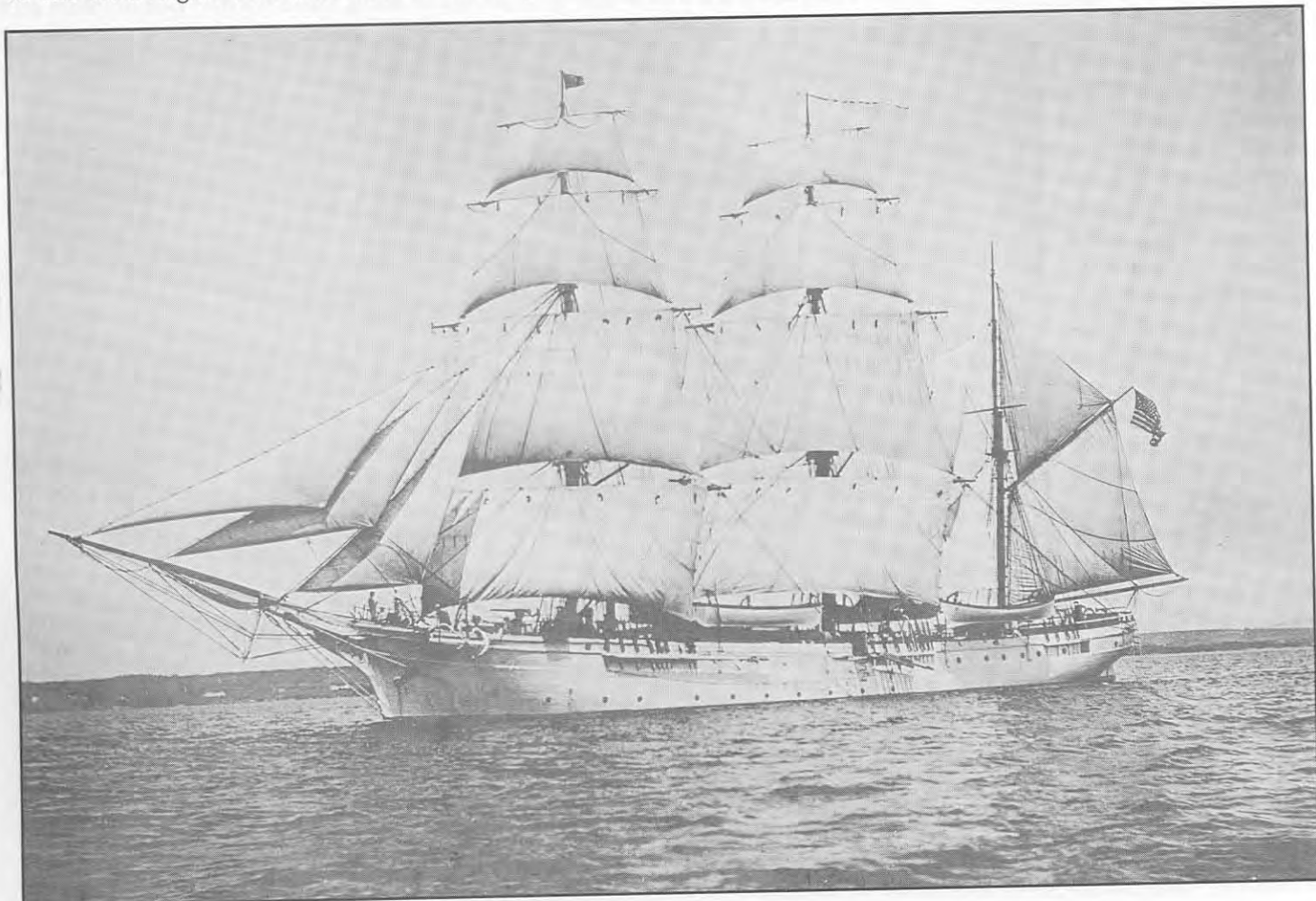
One of the most famous rescues of the century was performed by the Revenue Cutter *Samuel Dexter* on Jan. 18, 1884. The passenger steamer *City of Columbus* ran aground on Martha's Vineyard with 87 passengers and 45 crewmen. Through rugged surf and gale winds, *Dexter's* small boat ventured into the submerged wreck and plucked survivors from the rigging of the ship's masts. Between the efforts

of the *Dexter* crew and local Indians using a Massachusetts Humane Society boat, 29 people were rescued.

After the RMS *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank in 1912, the cutters *Seneca* and *Miami* began patrolling the North Atlantic to warn trans-Atlantic steamers of ice conditions. The Ice Patrol was made an official function of the Revenue Cutter Service in 1914.

The versatility of the Revenue Cutter Service was repeatedly praised by politicians and journalists. One service that performed so many missions seemed to exemplify American efficiency. Indeed, there was only one duplication of effort... to resolve. In 1912, the Captain Commandant of the Revenue Cutter Service, Captain E.P. Bertholf and the elderly Kimball, still General Superintendent of the Life-Saving Service, wrote a bill to join the two agencies.

In 1915, the bill passed and the Coast Guard was born.



The training cutter *Chase* served from 1878 to 1907.

"You have to go out"

If first settlers complained the new colonial lands were inhospitable, they got little sympathy from early American sailors. The North Atlantic waters are cold and unforgiving. The rocky coast is protected by submerged ledges and treacherous shoals. The violent winter gales can blow for weeks at a time.

The first ships in America were relatively small, usually about 100 feet in length. Driven by sails, they were at the mercy of the wind. Early navigation was not very precise so sailing on the open ocean was dangerous and time-consuming. Most ships traveled along the coastline.

Before railroads and automobiles, most cargo in this country was moved by ship. In 1789, 70,000 tons traveled by sea, by 1830 that increased to 500,000 tons and before the Civil War the volume grew to 2.6 million tons. This method of trade was called "coasting."

Coasting meant navigating the dangerous rocks and shoals. Ships were blown ashore by sudden storms or grounded in uncharted waters. As more passenger ships began the coastal routes, the chance for loss of life was great.

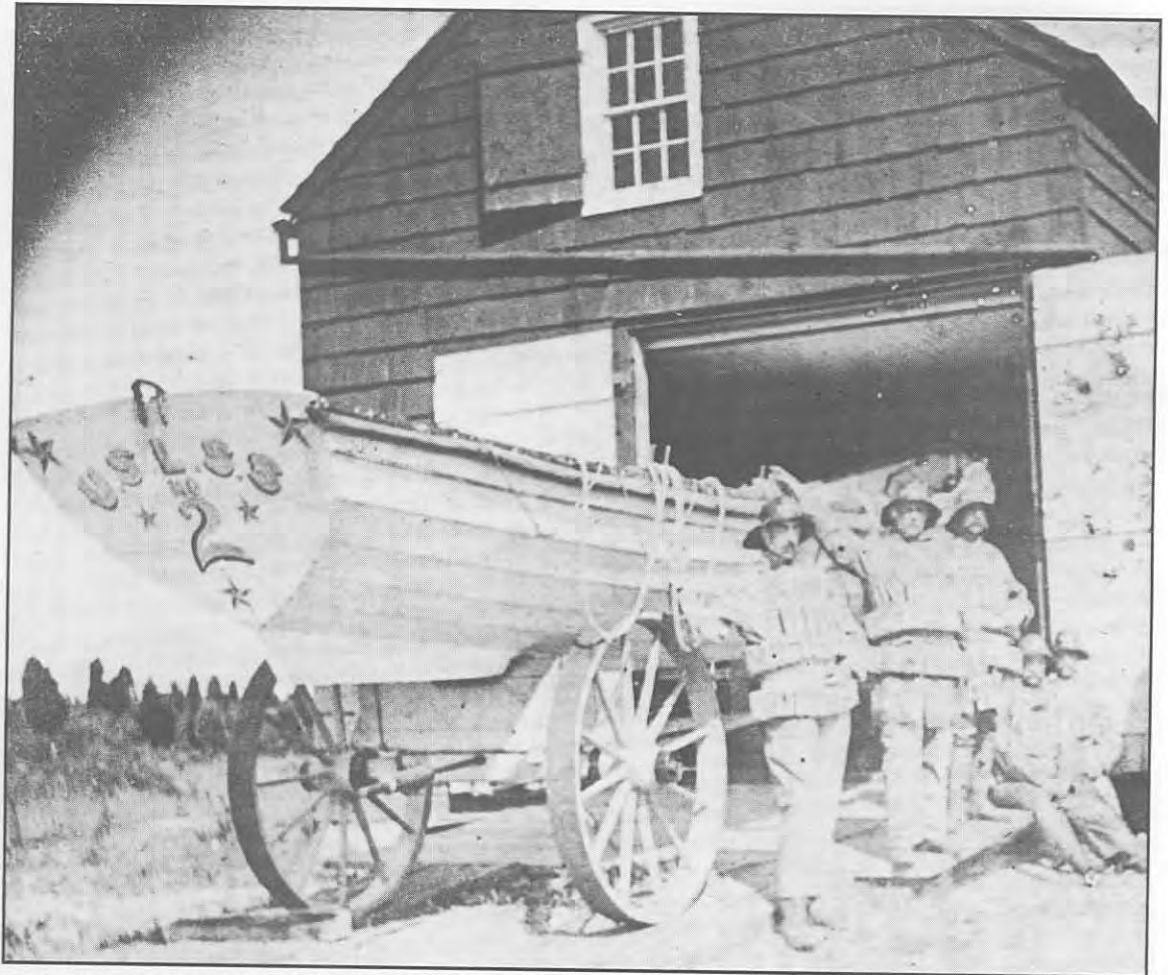
Even if victims of shipwrecks reached the shore, they could expect little help. In the winter months, survivors might die of exposure on the isolated beaches. The ill-fated schooner *Nottingham Galley* wrecked on Boon Island, Maine, during a winter storm in

1710. The crew survived the wreck, but there was no food on the island. They ate mussels and seaweed scraped from the rocks until they lost their fingers to frostbite. Finally, they resorted to cannibalism.

As early as 1786, Americans acted to help the shipwrecked sailor. The Massachusetts Humane Society built a shelter on Nantasket Beach in Boston Harbor to protect survivors from the weather. Twenty years later they built a boathouse at Cohasset, Mass. Local volunteers used the boat and equipment but there was no assigned crew or formal training. Other boathouses followed, but they were located primarily around busy ports. The long stretches of barren coastline remained without haven or assistance for the shipwrecked.

The effort gained strength from other charitable agencies and business concerns, including the New York Life-Saving Benevolent Association and the Philadelphia Board of Underwriters. The federal government also attempted to reduce the loss of life by constructing lighthouses, improving coastal charts and having the Revenue Cutters patrol during the winter.

The coast of New Jersey was particularly dangerous. The passenger ship *Mexico* ran aground on sandbars there in 1837, claiming all 112 lives. At the time, New York City was the busiest port in the hemisphere. The dangerous approach to New York Harbor was a constant threat to the immigrants and cargo bound for the city. In the decade prior to 1848, 338 ships



The Spermacetti Cove Life-Saving Station, circa 1880.



The Plum Island Station Crew goes to the rescue. Surfboats were standard equipment on the East Coast.

wrecked along the New Jersey and Long Island coasts.

A Congressman from New Jersey, Dr. William Newell, sponsored a bill to spend \$10,000 for a series of huts along his state's coast to shelter the survivors of wrecks.

The Revenue Marine constructed the eight stations, the first at Spermacetti Cove, near Sandy Hook, N.J., and provided some equipment to be used by volunteers. Revenue Marine Captain Douglass Ottinger surveyed what was available at the time and purchased surfboats, mortars and, a recent invention, life-cars.

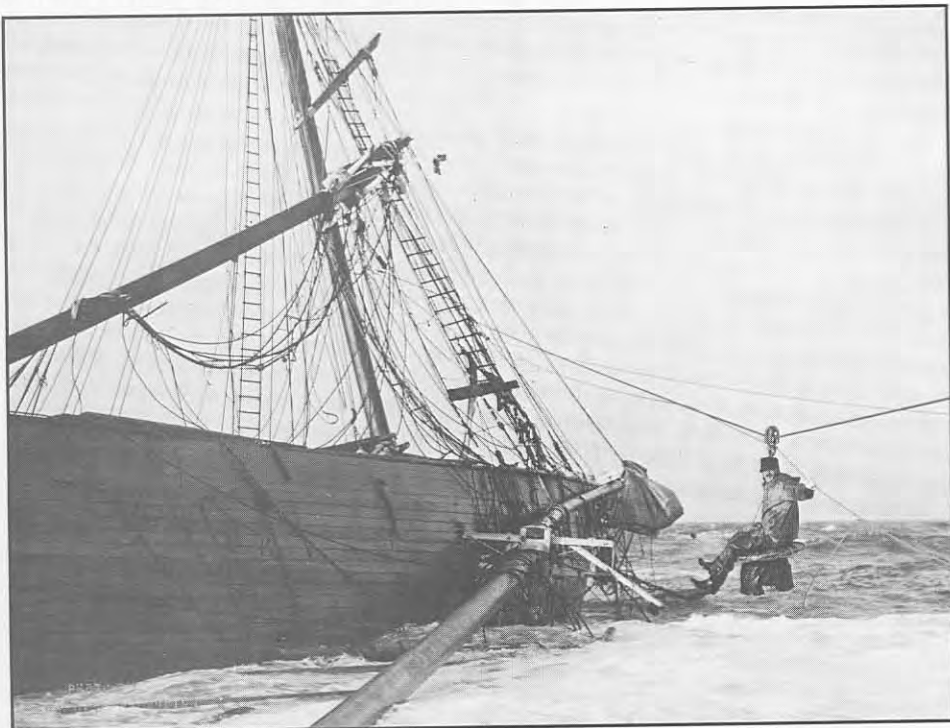
The life-cars were enclosed, watertight metal boats that could be hauled back and forth between the shore and a wrecked ship by a guideline. The life-cars were particularly effective along the Atlantic coast where storms and heavy surf could prevent rescuers from launching boats.

Like the Cohasset station, the stations did not have full-time personnel but depended upon volunteers from the local towns to use the equipment according to instructions Ottinger had printed.

Six months after the shelters were

complete, volunteers performed the first rescue of the U.S. Life-Saving Service. The British bark *Ayrshire* ran aground several hundred yards offshore from Squan Beach, N.J. Volunteers used a mortar to shoot a hawser to the ship. A pulley system

shuttled the lifeboat to the wreck and returned loaded with passengers. Of 202 persons aboard, 201 were rescued. One man died when he ignored the rescuers and attempted to ride ashore clinging to the outside of the life-car.



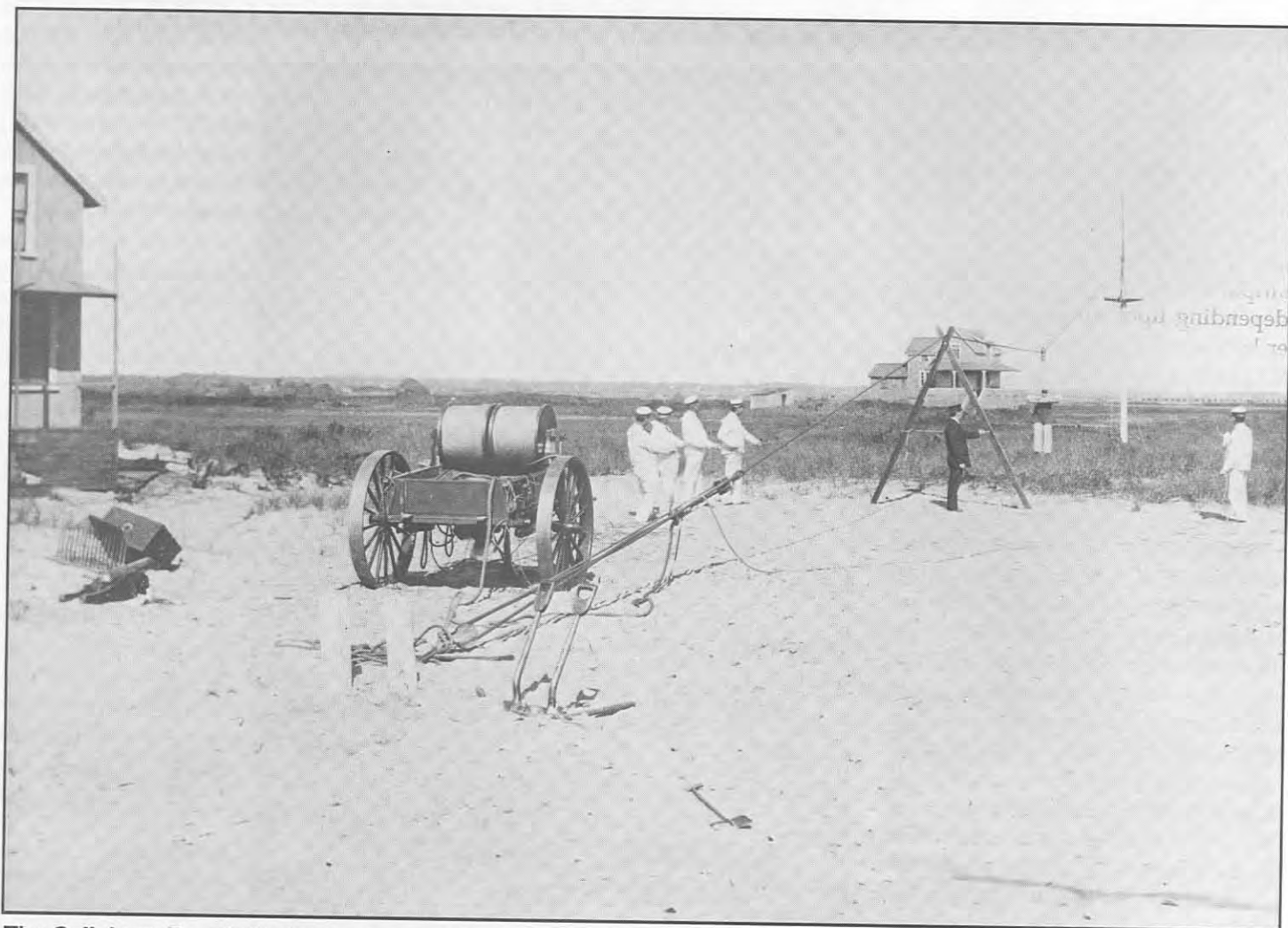
The last survivor of a Maine shipwreck is brought ashore.



A Life-Saving Service crew pose with their beach cart.

Within 10 years, 56 stations lined the shores of New Jersey and Long Island. Investment in life-saving was sporadic. There was no money for training or to maintain the equipment until the *New Era* disaster in 1854. The 1800-ton ship ran aground 500 yards off the coast of Asbury Park, N.J., and its master and crew quickly abandoned ship, leaving more than 500 German immigrants aboard. Nightfall delayed rescue efforts until the next day, and when the line-cannons were finally used, the lines snapped due to corrosion and decay. Some passengers were able to wade ashore, but more than 350 people perished.

As a result, paid keepers were hired in 1856 to direct the volunteers. More stations were built in New England under the direction of the Humane Society, and by 1874 stations stretched up the coast to Maine. However, there were no regulations and little administration.



The Salisbury Beach Station carries out the breeches buoy drill. Regulations required the drill weekly.

Sumner Kimball, then Chief of the Revenue Marine Division, organized the Life-Saving Service into one of the most efficient agencies of the federal government. In 1878, he became General Superintendent of the Service, the only person to hold that job.

The service used primarily two methods to rescue people from distressed ships. Surfboats or lifeboats were used to reach those who were farther from shore. Ships that were aground close by the beach could be assisted with the breeches buoy, or a life-car.

When ships were within a few hundred yards of the beach, the life-savers fired a projectile with a line attached over the ship. These were fired from small cannons, the most famous of these was the Lyle gun. Once the line was fastened to the ship, a pulley system was used to transfer the survivors in either the breeches buoy or the life-car, depending upon the surf conditions.

The crews at the stations were called surfmen. Typically, they were experienced sailors or fishermen who had proven their abilities against the sea. They drilled almost daily, and at night walked long beach patrols, keeping constant watch for distressed ships. The work was seasonal, depending upon shipping and weather but usually lasted from November to April. By the turn of the century, many stations were manned all year.

Newspapers sang the praise of these "soldiers of the surf" and "storm warriors." Even the official reports written by Kimball read like adventure novels. The Annual Report of the Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service are chronicles of human courage, and terrible tragedy.

Those tales were no more spectacular than the accounts by eyewitnesses. W.G. Nash, of Logansport, Ind., recounted a rescue he watched on the coast of Maine in October 1880:

"The English brig Kate Upham was driven into Western Bay, between Pond Point and the Crumples, during a fearful storm, and struck on a ledge near Fisherman's Island. She had lost her rudder, her boats, and was otherwise

injured. The brave crew of the life-saving station, with more courage than it required to face a battery [of guns], launched their surf-boat, and went to the rescue. Standing on Beal's Island, looking through my glass, I had a good view of the surroundings. It seemed impossible for a boat to live in such a sea. "Tempest tossed" was no longer an imaginary picture. On every hand the sea was breaking, and the life-boat, with her noble crew, seemed but the sport of the angry waves; one moment hidden in the trough of the sea, the next borne rapidly on a vast comber toward the ill-fated brig. While I could but admire the spirit that prompted the daring men to risk their lives in the noble service, it seemed a suicidal attempt; for the chances were looking greatly against them. By almost superhuman efforts they reached the brig and saved the crew-eleven men."

At times the odds set too heavily against the lifesavers and many died in attempting rescues. One of the most tragic incidents was the loss of the keeper, Capt. David Atkins and two crewmen, Elisha Taylor and Stephen Mayo of the Peaked Hill Bar station on Cape Cod. In the early hours of Nov. 30, 1880, the station boat was launched to assist the grounded sloop C.E. Trumbull. The crew reached the sloop and removed four crewmen, but the pilot and the skipper insisted on retrieving their baggage. The surfboat brought the first group ashore and returned for the others. While waiting in the rough surf for the two men, the surfboat was snagged by the sloop's boom and capsized. Four of the surfmen swam to shore, but Atkins and the others drowned in the icy waters.



Sumner Kimball led the Life-Saving Service for 37 years.

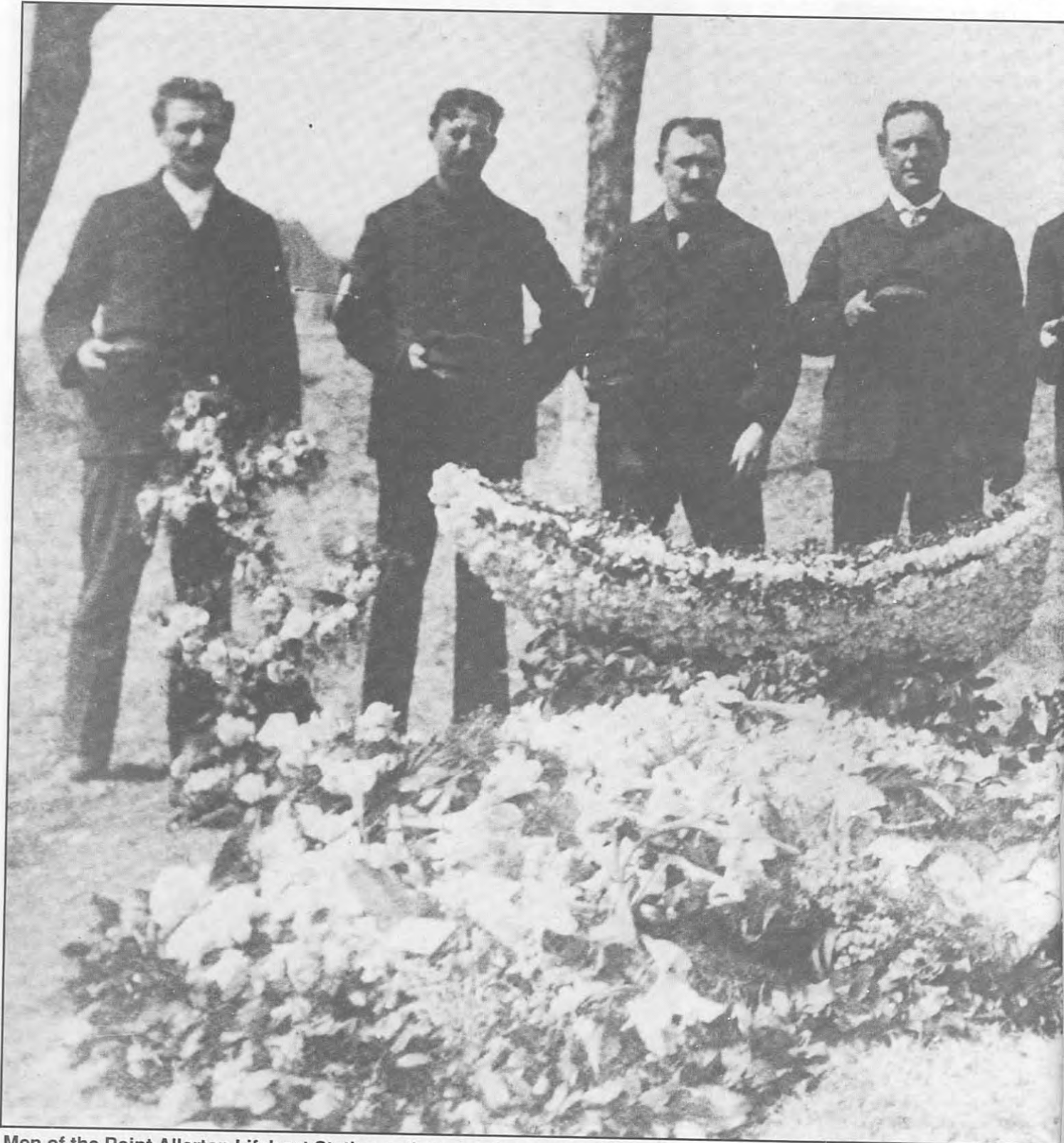
Probably the most famous of the life-savers was Joshua James. He first joined the crew of a Massachusetts Humane Society boat at 15 and earned his first bronze medal for heroism at 23. During his 75 years, he saved more than 600 lives.

He directed the rescue of five boats

off Nantasket Beach during the famous Blizzard of 1888. His crew worked without food or rest for 24 hours to rescue 29 people trapped on boats grounded by the storm. For these rescues, James received gold medals from the Humane Society and the federal government.

James finally joined the Life-Saving Service in 1889, at age 62 -- 17 years beyond the service's age limit. But he had no difficulty passing the physical examination required of the younger men, and he passed again at age 74.

Because of his outstanding service to the Humane Society, James was



Men of the Point Allerton Lifeboat Station gathered at the grave of the celebrated lifesaver Joshua James.

appointed first keeper of Point Allerton Life-Saving Station, Hull, Mass. His crews earned many awards for their daring rescues.

The rigors of rowing a surfboat through pounding surf and the practice needed to quickly assemble the breeches buoy rigging demanded reg-

ular training. James drilled his crews even in poor weather, as he did March 19, 1902. Two days earlier most of the crew of the Monomoy Point Life-Saving Station died while attempting to rescue the crew of a stranded barge. James clearly understood the dangers of his trade and the need for training.

James steered the boat through the surf for more than an hour. He ordered the boat ashore and leapt onto the beach. Glancing at the sea, he told his men, "The tide is ebbing." Then Joshua James fell dead on the beach.

James' last words were prophetic. With the new century, the days of the sailing ships were ending. Equipped with engines and better navigation, fewer ships ran aground. Soon the motor lifeboat replaced the open skiff as the Coast Guard ushered in a new era of life-saving.

In a biography of Joshua James, Sumner Kimball described the men of the Life-Saving Service: *"They are hardly known to their countrymen living inland; but to the inhabitants of the coast, especially that portion interested in our sea and lake commerce, and to those who follow the sea, they are well known indeed! To the latter, when the tropical hurricane or the chilling blast of the Arctic winter storm is driving their helpless craft into danger and possible destruction, or when the impenetrable fog envelopes them for days at a time, rendering chart and reckoning worthless, the assurance that a practically continuous line of keen-eyed and sleepless sentinels march and countermarch along the surf-beaten beaches or stand guard with warning signals in hand upon the jutting cliffs and headlands reaching far out into the sea for unwary victims, lends a comfortable sense of security. That this confidence is not misplaced is attested by the statistics, which show that of more than a hundred thousand lives imperiled upon vessels wrecked or in distress within the scope of the operations of the station crews ... less than one percent has been lost, and that a considerable portion of even this small percentage is made up of those whom no human agency could save..."*



Guardians of the Sea



The era of sail was ending with the close of the 1800s. The expansion of railroads reduced the coasting trade. Fewer sailing ships were built and technology made navigation safer. By World War I, steamships and motorboats, many equipped with wireless radios, were common.

The new century brought changes that would make Hamilton, Fraser and Kimball proud. In fact, Kimball helped create the biggest change. As superintendent, he helped draft legislation that merged the Life-Saving Service with the Revenue Cutter Service.

In 1915, Congress created the United States Coast Guard. Hamilton's fleet of 10 cutters had grown to 43 and Ottinger's eight huts had increased to 279 along both

coasts, the Great Lakes and some inland rivers. The Lighthouse Service was added in 1939.

The new service would continue the missions of its predecessors, and take on several new ones as well. The first of these was commercial vessel safety and inspection.

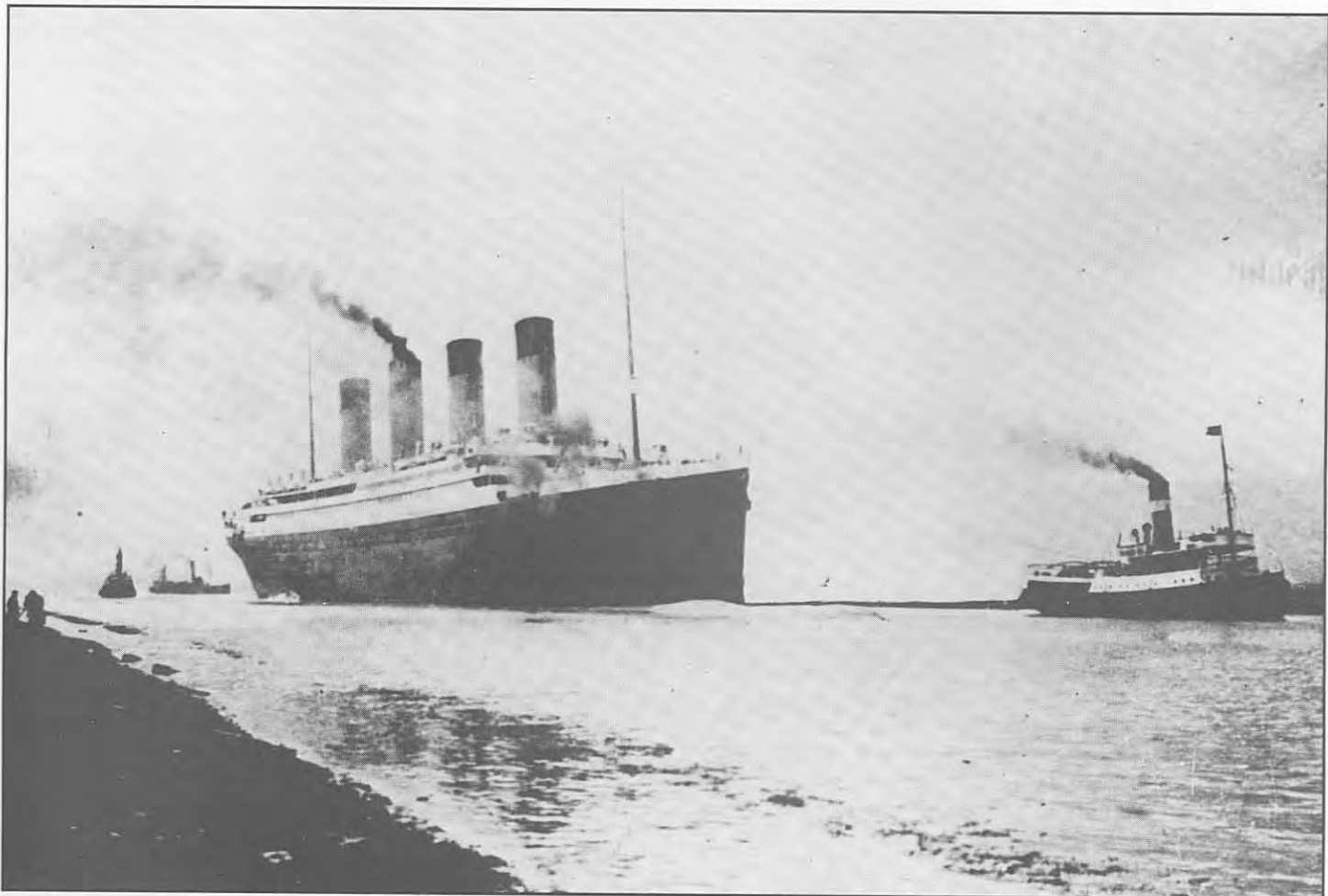
Lives at sea are only as safe as the ships they sail upon. From the earliest days, steamboats had a poor safety record. Faulty boilers exploded, catching the wooden decks afire. The excursion steamer *General Slocum* burned in New York's East River, in 1904. The fire claimed 957 lives, mostly women and children.

The Steamboat Inspection Service was unpopular because many people felt the federal government was interfering with the private sector.

Gradually, public sentiment grew to support needed regulation. The lack of sufficient lifeboats on the *Titanic* and other incidents of negligence prompted strong federal safety measures.

The Coast Guard gradually took over the job of the Steamboat Inspection Service. After 1936, the Coast Guard enforced all federal laws, including the safety statutes, on the high seas and in U.S. navigable waters. During World War II, Coast Guard personnel inspected vessels and supervised cargo loadings as part of the port security operations.

After the war, the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation was added to the Coast Guard.



RMS *Titanic* sails from Southampton on her only voyage. She sank April 15, 1912 after hitting an iceberg.

The first test of the young Coast Guard was Prohibition. The 18th Amendment outlawed making, transporting or selling liquor. But soon outlaws were everywhere, and the same gangsters who fought the FBI in Chicago and New York challenged the Coast Guard at sea.

The easiest way to get illegal liquor was to bring it from outside the country. Ships loaded with liquor waited offshore, outside U.S. waters, for small speedboats that ferried the contraband ashore in the dark of night. The job of stopping the flow of illegal booze fell to the Coast Guard.

Of course, fighting smugglers was nothing new for the Coast Guard — the Revenue Cutters had done it for 125 years. These new smugglers were



The crew of the CG-128 pose with booze seized in New York Harbor.



The Rum Runner *Mary Langdon* seized by the 75-foot patrol boat CG-237, June 10, 1925.

called "rum-runners."

At first the service had neither the men nor cutters to fight the rum war. In 1925, large numbers of new recruits were sworn into the service and 20 aging destroyers were borrowed from the Navy. The destroyers were based at Boston, New York and New London, Conn.

The destroyers couldn't catch the smaller, more maneuverable speed boats used by the rum-runners. So the Coast Guard built new patrol boats; thirteen 100-footers and thirty-three 125-footers, and small boats 75 feet long. More than 200 seized boats were turned over to the Coast Guard as well.

Bootleggers and gangsters were notoriously violent and smugglers traded gun fire with Coast Guard cutters. Three rum runners were killed in Narragansett Bay when they turned abruptly and were struck by warning shots as they tried to elude a patrol boat. Chief Boatswain's Mate Carl Gustafson was killed by machine gun fire while pursuing a smuggler off Montauk Point, N.Y. in 1925.

Prohibition ended in 1933 but the Coast Guard soon had new interests and another war to fight.

The Coast Guard earns its wings

1942. FDR was president. Clark Gable was the biggest star in Hollywood. And Coast Guard helicopters arrived at Floyd Bennett Field in New York.

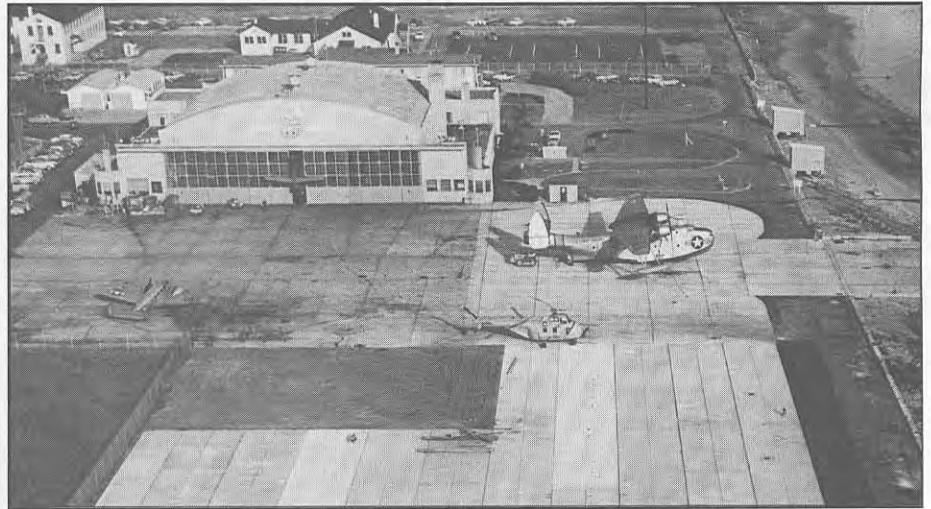
The air station was crucial in developing the helicopter for use in search and rescue. Cmdr. Frank Erickson made one of the first landings on a ship's deck in 1944 when he landed an HNS-1 on the deck of the Coast Guard Cutter *Cobb* in Long Island Sound. Erickson pioneered helicopter search and rescue by developing much of the equipment himself. He also flew the first life-saving flight when he delivered two cases of blood plasma to the Navy destroyer *Turner* after an on board explosion near Sandy Hook, N.J., Jan. 3, 1944.

Erickson made the first helicopter hoist of a man in 1945. The technique he developed is still used in

rescue operations today.

One of Air Station Brooklyn's most dramatic rescues took place in 1945 when a Canadian Air Force plane crashed in a remote area of Labrador. An HNS-1 helicopter was disassembled

at Brooklyn and loaded on a cargo plane. It was reassembled in Labrador to fly the rescue mission. Only 48 hours elapsed from the first distress message until the survivors were safe in hospitals.



Brooklyn Air Station on December 8, 1955.



Commander Frank Erickson stands beside an HNS-1 helicopter. This was the first production helicopter.

In 1941, another war came to the North Atlantic coast. Boston and New York were primary ports for supply convoys bound for embattled England. German U-boats attacked ships within sight of the coast and saboteurs threatened American ports and ships.

The Coast Guard operated under the Department of the Navy during World War II. Cutters moored in the Northeast were assigned to escort the convoy ships across the Atlantic. Beach patrols were assigned to watch for saboteurs and invasion. Coast Guard personnel supervised the operations of major ports to insure the safety of war materials.

Personnel assigned to the Coast Guard when the U.S. entered the war were quickly assigned to duty afloat on Coast Guard and Navy ships. To handle the work they left behind, ten thousand men were recruited in New England for the Temporary Reserve. TRs served on coastal boats, walked

beach patrols and worked as signalmen. Training schools for the TR's were established at Bourne, Fairhaven and Gloucester, Mass.; and Portsmouth, N.H.

Volunteers also patrolled the coast, watching for German submarines. The 2,000 boats of the Coastal Picket Patrol were operated by Temporary Reservists, Coast Guard Auxiliaries and members of the Cruising Club of America. They were later replaced by regular and reserve personnel of the Coast Guard.

Beach patrols, once a vital part of the Life-Saving Service, were revived. Coast Guardsmen and Temporary Reservists walked more than 3,000 miles of coastline, watching for enemy agents as well as ships in distress. The patrols, with dogs and horses, plodded along the beach around the clock, in any weather, all months of the year.

On the foggy night of June 13, 1942, Seaman John C. Cullen, of the Amagansett Station on Long Island,

N.Y., was making his six mile patrol when he spotted four men on the beach. While questioning the men, Cullen became suspicious. The group's spokesman first threatened the sailor, then tried to bribe him. Cullen, outnumbered, accepted the money and then, when out of sight of the men, raced to his station. An armed party of Coast Guardsmen returned to the beach, but the four men had disappeared. A search of the area uncovered four boxes of explosives buried in the dunes. The FBI was notified and the four enemy agents were caught. Their capture led to the arrest of four more saboteurs who had landed in Florida.

After the war, the service concentrated on organizing its varied missions. The official list of Coast Guard duties included: aids to navigation, law enforcement, military readiness, search and rescue, ice patrol, icebreaking, commercial vessel safety and motorboat safety.



A Coast Guard beach patrol sets out on its trek. Horses and dogs were employed in many areas.



Members of the Atlantic Strike Team are lowered to the deck of the grounded Liberian tanker, *Argo Merchant*.

Growing concern for the environment added another mission in the 1970s. Shipwrecks involving oil tankers spewed thousands of gallons of crude oil on American shores fouling beaches, killing fish and wildlife. Already responsible for the safety of these vessels, the Coast Guard now tried to limit the damage they could cause.

In December, 1977, the Liberian tanker *Argo Merchant* ran aground 29

miles off Nantucket, threatening the Georges Bank fishing grounds with 7.3 million gallons of thick fuel oil. In the following six days, members of the Boston Marine Safety Office and the Atlantic Strike Team, a special pollution response unit, attempted to offload the cargo and refloat the tanker.

Gradually, the weather worsened. Winds increased to 30 knots and seas reached eight feet. Suddenly *Argo*

Merchant split in two. The oil emptied into the ocean.

Although the spill did not have the devastating environmental impact many people expected, the incident led to broad new laws and new Coast Guard involvement in tanker safety. The passage of the Tank Vessel Safety Regulations, a direct result of the *Argo Merchant* disaster, required tankers to carry current charts and navigation gear.



The Coast Guard supervised the removal of 140,000 gallons of fuel from the Maltese freighter *Eldia* after it ran aground on Cape Cod March 29, 1984.



"Call the Coast Guard!"

Whenever there's trouble on the water, whether it's a boat accident or waste washing ashore, people know to call the Coast Guard. From Toms River, N.J. to Eastport, Maine, they call the First Coast Guard District.

On any day you'll see the 3,000 men and women of the First District working hard at nearly a dozen jobs: safety inspectors aboard a foreign freighter, an aircrew flying a desperately ill infant ashore from a remote island, boarding officers counting and measuring the catch of a commercial fishing boat, a boat crew searching for a sailor lost at sea. In winter, our tugs break ice in New England's harbors and rivers.

These many jobs require coordination and careful planning. The staff offices in Boston oversee the operations of 32 cutters, 15 aircraft and more than 200 small boats to insure the safety of more than a million recreational boats and thousands of commercial vessels that sail the North Atlantic coast.



Just 100 years ago, navigation was uncertain at best, and ships often ran aground along the Atlantic coast. Today, radar and radio navigation is very precise and major accidents are infrequent.

The mariner can depend on many different aids to navigation to plot a course. The First District maintains 4,700 buoys that mark clear channels and dangerous areas.

Some buoys and lighthouses are equipped with radio beacons and radar beacons. Radio beacons emit a designated tone that is indicated on a chart, and can be tracked by a radio direction finder. Radar beacons transmit a signal that appears on the radar screen as a Morse code symbol and also appears on a chart.

Many sailors use LORAN (Long

Range Aid to Navigation), basically a grid of radio waves in many areas of the globe that allows exact precision plotting. Two LORAN transmitting stations are located in the First District.

As navigation improved, it was no longer necessary to use every lighthouse along the coast and some were extinguished. The technology that improved the lighthouses over the past 200 years also made it possible to replace the keepers. Some lighthouses are even solar-powered now, and many automated lights are equipped with radio relays to notify the closest Coast Guard station if there is a problem with the light.

The First District maintains 141 lighthouses, including many of the oldest in the country. Seven lights are still manned and will be automated within the next two years. Because it was the first built in America, Boston will be the last light to be unmanned, now scheduled for 1990.

To help preserve these historic structures, the Coast Guard attempts to find alternate uses for the keeper's quarters and other buildings at automated lighthouses. Many are used for Coast Guard housing or by other government agencies. Others are leased to non-profit groups for use as museums and hostels.



The crew of a buoy tender set a buoy in place.



Some people call the Coast Guard the law of the sea. Alexander Hamilton designed the Revenue Cutter Service to stop smuggling and enforce customs laws. Today the Coast Guard does that and much more.

Boarding officers enforce all applicable federal laws aboard U.S. vessels and all vessels operating in U.S. waters. The Coast Guard stops drugs,

combats piracy, and inspects vessels for compliance with safety and pollution regulations.

The First District is home to several large commercial fishing fleets. Working with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Coast Guard enforces federal fisheries laws to protect our national resource. Boarding officers inspect nets and equipment, and routine patrols keep boats away from restricted areas during spawning season.

The Coast Guard works closely with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to stop drug smuggling. The popularity of cocaine has reduced the amount of high bulk marijuana smuggling in the northwest Atlantic area.



The harbors of the First District are some of the most strategic ports for the military resupply effort. In addition to Boston and New York, the Navy operates critical bases at Groton, Conn., and Portsmouth, N.H. Maine's Bath Iron Works' shipyards in Portland and Bath are key ship repair facilities for both the Coast Guard and Navy.

In wartime, the Coast Guard must defend these vital areas from attack and sabotage. To prepare its personnel for that job, the Coast Guard trains with Department of Defense forces in realistic war games in the actual ports. In recent years, First Shield exercises have been held in Narragansett R.I., Portland, Maine, and Groton, Conn.

Under an agreement between the Department of Transportation and Secretary of the Navy, the First District Commander is also Commander of the Maritime Defense Zone Sector One, and in charge of all military forces assigned to coastal protection in the region. Sector One includes all the coast line of the First District and waters out to 200 miles.

During a war, Coast Guard personnel would provide security at pier and



Boarding officers review the fishing boat's papers, examine the catch and inspect the vessel for safety.

dockside facilities, keep the shipping lanes clear of underwater mines and conduct search and rescue missions. Other jobs might include anti-submarine warfare, salvage work, explosive ordinance disposal and surveillance and interdiction.



Things go wrong. Even against the best precautions, accidents happen. And when they do, the Coast Guard is ready to respond on a moment's

notice, literally. The small boats and helicopter crews are on immediate stand-by, and when the alarm sounds they drop everything and scramble to launch.

Personnel are specially trained for this work. Boat coxswains and crews practice plucking people from rough water. Many boats carry qualified emergency medical technicians. Helicopter pilots are trained to make difficult hoists to lift an injured person from the water or off the deck of a rolling boat.

When they go out, crews don't depend much on luck. Search and rescue is a science and Coast Guard personnel are experts. A search pattern is developed by the group or district



A Coast Guardsman walks a security watch during a MARDEZ exercise.

operations center based on weather and sea conditions, type of resource used, and size of object.

In addition to boats, cutters, helicopters and jets, the Coast Guard coordinates with state and local resources. Our communications network also puts other recreational boaters and commercial vessels on alert to watch for the distress.

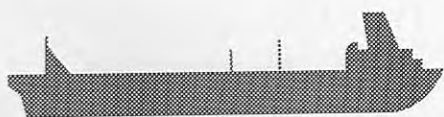


With more than a million recreational boats registered in the First District, there is potential for accidents. The Coast Guard works to reduce the danger on the waterways through several programs.

Coast Guard boat crews conduct thousands of safety inspections each year. Boarding officers check life preservers, fire extinguishers and distress markers. Enforcing all applicable laws, the officers may also cite boaters for reckless operation and drunk boating.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is a group devoted to boating safety. These volunteers teach free courses in boating skills and seamanship. Boaters may also get a Courtesy Motorboat Examination to insure their boats are ready for the water. Auxiliary members also use their own vessels to patrol and assist boaters.

The boating safety office coordinates major boating events such as regattas, processes boarding violation reports and registers boats used in salt water for the state of New Hampshire.



Oil tankers, foreign freighters, tankers loaded with liquified natural gas, barges, ferry boats; thousands of commercial vessels that pass through First District waters. The Coast Guard helps them sail safely.

Marine safety offices provide many



Rescue at Sea

A helicopter from Air Station Cape Cod hoists sailors from the stern.

Sleet and gale force winds battered the three helicopters as they hovered over the deck of the sinking Russian freighter 220 miles off the New Jersey coastline March 14, 1987. The *Komsomolets Kirgizii* had a 26 degree port list and was awash in heavy seas. Two C-130 aircraft from North Carolina located the distressed ship and stood by until the helicopters arrived from Air Station Cape Cod.

The first helicopter hovered 50 feet over the stern of the sinking ship. Twenty foot waves washed over the pilot house and gusts of 55-knot winds howled through the ship's superstructure and pounded the helicopter. The pilot searched 15 minutes for a place to drop the basket where it wouldn't snag in the ship's rigging. Because of the helicopter's

short fuel supply and the ship's dangerous condition, people rode up in the basket two at a time. The first helicopter hoisted 15 people aboard in 20 minutes, then departed for Atlantic City, N.J.

The vessel appeared to the pilot of the second helicopter that it might sink at any moment. He hauled up 16 more Russian sailors. The third helicopter picked up the remaining six. Everyone onboard was rescued safely. The freighter sank later that night.

President Reagan praised the helicopter crews for their daring rescues. In an award ceremony at the White House, he said, "*In your courage, your tenacity, your know-how, you summed up all that is best in the American spirit — in a word, all that is heroic.*"

services to the commercial mariner. All vessels more than five net tons are documented. The owner is given paperwork similar to an automobile registration that lists a document number, a description of the vessel and ownership. This paperwork must be completed before the vessel gets underway, and is inspected each time the Coast Guard boards the ship.

Merchant seamen must be qualified to work onboard commercial vessels. They are tested by the regional exam centers for a basic seaman's license and each subsequent advancement.

The vessels themselves are examined too. Inspectors check the vessel's

seaworthiness, lifesaving equipment and proper crew size. Vessels and seamen that fail don't sail.

The daily traffic of New England's busy harbors is monitored by port operations personnel who conduct routine safety inspections of shore facilities and establish safety and security zones in the harbor.

Marine safety units also protect the environment. If there is an accident or chemical spill, personnel from the pollution response section assess the damage and investigate the cause. When the source of a spill is determined, the Coast Guard can recover the cost of the clean-up work.

On the grounds of the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., is an old cannon; the same cannon used at Boston Light as a fog signal in 1719. Cast in 1700, the cannon was used for 132 years and is the oldest artifact of the service. That weathered brass cannon symbolizes the heritage of the Coast



Guard. Aids to navigation, such as fog signals, lighthouses and buoys, have steered millions of ships and boats to safety. To protect American mariners, the Revenue

Cutters fired their cannons on smugglers, pirates and enemies. To reach wrecked ships, the noble men of the Life-

Saving Service fired lines from small cannons and pulled the survivors safely to shore. The work of the surfmen, cuttermen and wickies was as diverse as the many mis-

sions of the modern Coast Guard, but they had one common, humane goal: That those who venture across the perilous tide may come safely home again.