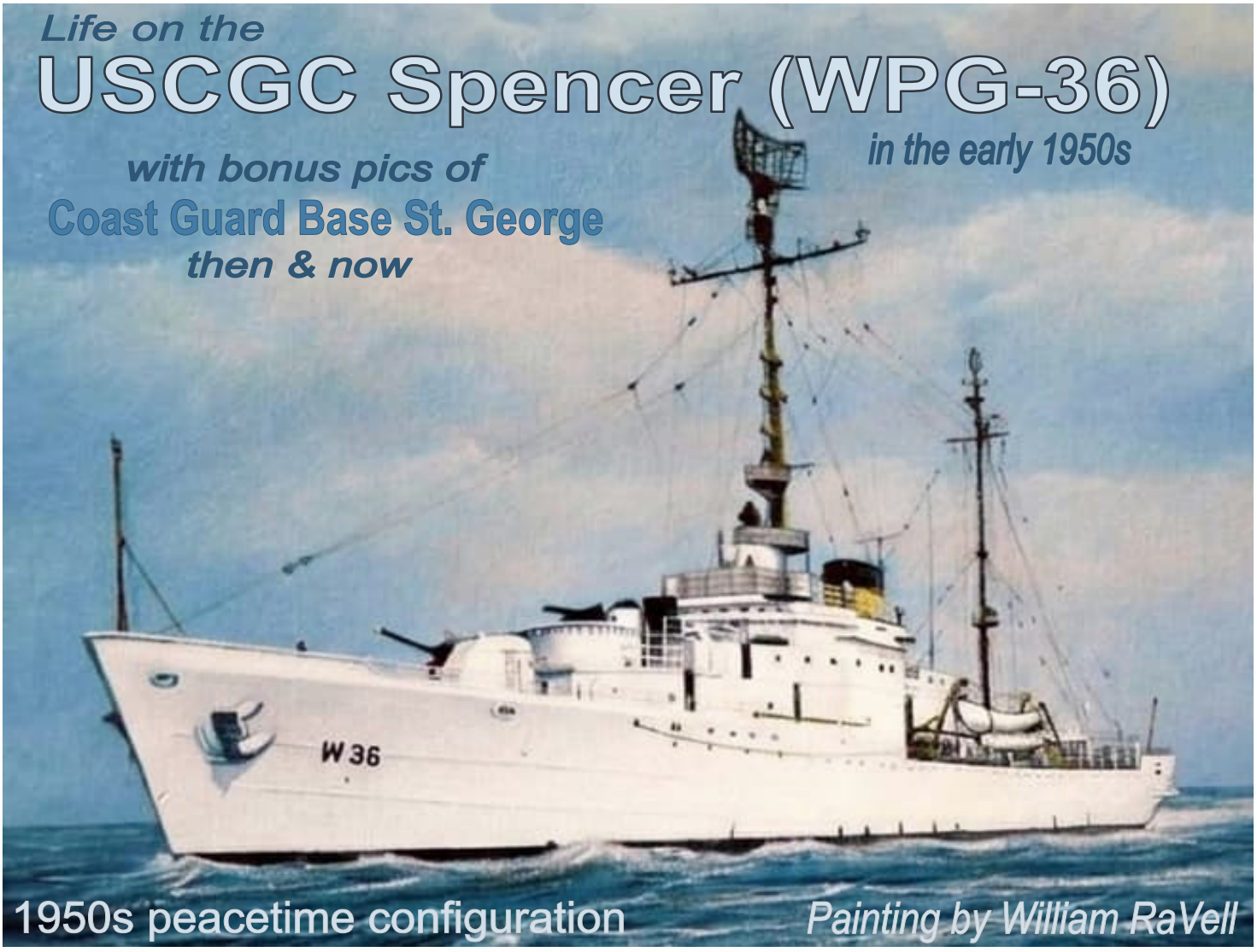
Headed for Station Dog (Delta), May 22, 1950

Life on the

USCGC Spencer (WPG-36)

in the early 1950s

with bonus pics of
Coast Guard Base St. George
then & now



1950s peacetime configuration

Painting by William RaVell

United States Coast Guard

Overview

a few sections from a very detailed article at the USCG Wikipedia webpage

The U.S. Coast Guard was formed by a merger of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service and the U.S. Life-Saving Service on 28 January 1915, under the Department of the Treasury. The Revenue Cutter Service was created by Congress as the Revenue -Marine on 4 August 1790 at the request of Alexander Hamilton, and is therefore the oldest continuously operating naval service of the United States. As secretary of the treasury, Hamilton headed the Revenue-Marine, whose original purpose was collecting customs duties at U.S. seaports. By the 1860s, the service was known as the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service and the term Revenue-Marine gradually fell into disuse.

In 1939, the U.S. Lighthouse Service was also merged into the U.S. Coast Guard. As one of the country's six armed services, the U.S. Coast Guard and its predecessor have participated in every major U.S. war since 1790, from the Quasi-War with France to the Global War on Terrorism.

As of December 2021, the U.S. Coast Guard's authorized force strength is 44,500 active duty personnel and 7,000 reservists. The service's force strength also includes 8,577 full-time civilian federal employees and 21,000 uniformed civilian volunteers of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. The service maintains an extensive fleet of roughly 250 coastal and ocean-going cutters, patrol ships, buoy tenders, tugs, and icebreakers; as well as nearly 2,000 small boats and specialized craft. It also maintains an aviation division consisting of more than 200 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. While the U.S. Coast Guard is the second smallest of the U.S. military service branches in terms of membership, the service by itself is the world's 12th largest naval force.

Core Values

Honor: Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all of our personal actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust.
Respect: We value our diverse workforce. We treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We encourage individual opportunity and growth. We encourage creativity through empowerment. We work as a team.
Devotion to Duty: We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

Service Mark ("Racing Stripe")

The Racing Stripe, officially known as the Service Mark, was designed in 1964 by Raymond Loewy Associates to give the Coast Guard a distinctive, modern image. Loewy had designed the colors for the Air Force One fleet for Jackie Kennedy. President Kennedy was so impressed with his work, he suggested that the entire Federal Government needed his make-over and suggested that he start with the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard Ethos

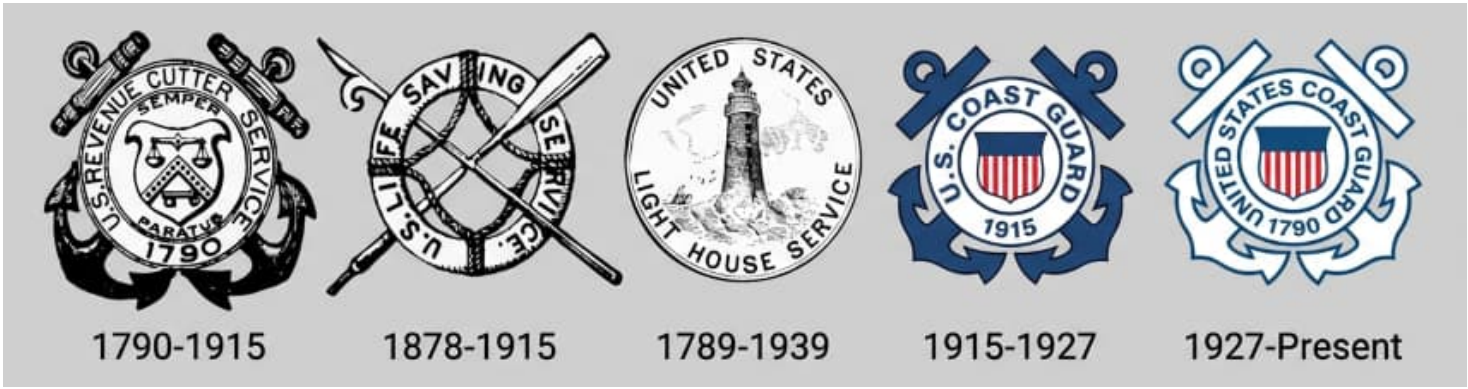
In Service to our Nation
With Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty
We protect We defend We save
We are Semper Paratus
We are the United States Coast Guard

"You have to go out, but you don't have to come back!"

This unofficial motto of the Coast Guard dates to an 1899 United States Lifesaving Service regulation, which states in part: "In attempting a rescue, ... he will not desist from his efforts until by actual trial, the impossibility of effecting a rescue is demonstrated. The statement of the keeper that he did not try to use the boat because the sea or surf was too heavy will not be accepted, unless attempts to launch it were actually made and failed."

U.S. Revenue Cutter Bear, circa 1890, on patrol off Alaska.
painting by James A. Mitchell, II

Point Adams Life-Saving Station, circa 1899



U.S. Coast Guard History

a short summary of the many pages found at the www.history.uscg.mil

The United States Coast Guard, one of the country's five armed services, is a unique agency of the federal government. We trace our history to 4 August 1790, when the first Congress authorized the construction of ten vessels to enforce tariff and trade laws and to prevent smuggling. Known variously through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the Revenue Marine and the Revenue Cutter Service, we expanded in size and responsibilities as the nation grew.

The service received its present name in 1915 under an act of Congress when the Revenue Cutter Service merged with the Life-Saving Service. The nation then had a single maritime service dedicated to saving life at sea and enforcing the nation's maritime laws. The Coast Guard began to maintain the country's aids to maritime navigation, including operating the nation's lighthouses, when President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the transfer of the Lighthouse Service to the Coast Guard in 1939. In 1946 Congress permanently transferred the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation to the Coast Guard, thereby placing merchant marine licensing and merchant vessel safety under our purview. The Coast Guard took over the administration of bridges over navigable waterways in 1967.

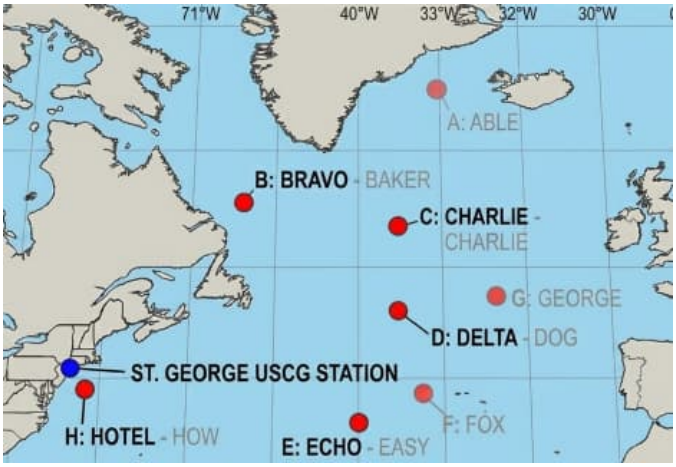
The Coast Guard is one of the oldest organizations of the federal government and until Congress established the Navy Department in 1798 it served as the nation's only armed force afloat. The Coast Guard protected the nation throughout its long history and served proudly in the majority of the nation's conflicts. The Coast Guard's national defense responsibilities remain one of its most important functions even today. In times of peace it operates as part of the Department of Homeland Security, serving as the nation's front-line agency for enforcing the nation's laws at sea, protecting the marine environment and the nation's vast coastline and ports, and saving life. In times of war, or at the direction of the President, the Coast Guard serves as part of the Navy Department.

The U.S. Coast Guard is simultaneously and at all times a military force and federal law enforcement agency dedicated to maritime safety, security, and stewardship missions. We save lives. We protect the environment. We defend the homeland. We enforce Federal laws on the high seas, the nation's coastal waters and its inland waterways. We are unique in the Nation and the world.

The Coast Guard's official history began on 4 August 1790 when President George Washington signed the Tariff Act that authorized the construction of ten vessels to enforce federal tariff and trade laws and to prevent smuggling. Known variously through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the "revenue cutters," the "system of cutters," the Revenue Marine and finally the Revenue Cutter Service, it expanded in size and responsibilities as the nation grew.

The service received its present name in 1915 under an act of Congress that merged the Revenue Cutter Service with the U.S. Life-Saving Service. The latter consisted of dozens of stations placed around the nation’s coastlines that were manned by dedicated crews willing to risk their lives to save those in peril on the sea, a role that meshed well with the Revenue Cutter Service’s core missions. The legislation creating this "new" Coast Guard expressly stated that it "shall constitute a part of the military forces of the United States," thereby codifying the service’s long history of defending the country alongside the nation’s other armed services. The Coast Guard began maintaining the country's aids to maritime navigation, including lighthouses, when President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the transfer of the Lighthouse Service to the Coast Guard in 1939. In 1946 Congress permanently transferred the Commerce Department's Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation to the Coast Guard, which placed merchant marine licensing and merchant vessel safety under its purview. The nation now had a single maritime federal agency dedicated to saving life at sea and enforcing the nation's maritime laws.

The **USCG** established eight (A-H) permanent **North Atlantic Ocean Stations (NAOS)** at the conclusion of World War II to fulfill the United States' commitment to the newly formed international weather ship network. By the end of the decade the number was reduced to the five that stayed active until they were all replaced by automated buoys beginning in the mid 1970s. Station A north of the Arctic circle was transferred to European nations control by 1950, and stations F and G were eliminated around the same time.



Do you speak “Able-Baker” or “Alpha-Bravo”?

The original eight stations supported by the USCG were established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in 1946. Because radio operators needed to identify them clearly over static, the stations were named using the standard phonetic alphabet of the era.

The "Able-Baker" Era (World War II to 1951)
The Joint Army/Navy Phonetic Alphabet (commonly known as the "Able Baker" alphabet), was used by American and British militaries during WWII and the immediate post-war years.

The eight stations supported by the USCG: Able, Baker, Charlie (or Coca in ’51 only), Dog, Easy, Fox, George, How.

By 1950 or so the number of active stations was reduced and around this time the alphabet changed as well:

The "Alpha-Bravo" Era (1952/1956 to Present)
This is the modern NATO / ICAO phonetic alphabet. In the early 1950s, the alphabet was revised to include sounds more universally recognized by non-English speakers (e.g., changing "Able" to "Alpha" and "Baker" to "Bravo").

The five stations supported by the USCG: Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, Hotel.

The Spencer is no more, but two Treasury class cutters were kept and restored:

USCGC Ingham (WHEC-35) floating museum at Key West, Florida
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHYQahQWEzo an 8 minute long tour of the Ingham
https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=718007197527093 a 4 min detailed tour of the Ingham CIC
https://uscgcingham.org/uss-inghams-specifications/ click on the photos to see a short spin around video of the area

USCGC Roger B. Taney (WHEC-37) floating museum at Baltimore, Maryland
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trDjxpY_XJo a 20 min tour of the Taney

What Color Is Your Hull?

Grey Hulls: United States Navy ships are painted gray to serve as camouflage, helping them blend into the horizon and sea haze to avoid enemy detection.

The choice of paint schemes on Coast Guard vessels helps identify their specific primary functions:

White Hulls: Most USCG ships are painted white to distinguish them from military warships, signaling their role as civil guardians of the sea. This "white hull" tradition highlights their role in maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and treaty enforcement. USCG vessels must be easily seen in distress situations by those they are attempting to rescue. The bright white also signifies the maritime rule of law and is considered "inherently nonthreatening" per international conventions. Because the Coast Guard's mission encompasses maritime law enforcement, environmental protection, and diplomacy rather than warfare, white hulls communicate a non-threatening, peaceful presence on the water.

Black Hulls: Maintenance vessels, like buoy tenders and harbor tugs. Signifies working vessels tasked with maintaining navigation buoys, clearing debris, and managing ice in harbors. Because these ships lift heavy, grimy buoys and maneuver around industrial piers, black paint is used to conceal grease, soot, rust stains, and minor abrasions.

Red Hulls: Icebreakers. These are painted bright red for maximum visibility in icy, snow-blowing conditions and to comply with international agreements.

For Further Reading: www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine

The U.S. Naval Institute maintains an online magazine with thousands of articles about the Navy and USCG life including narrative stories with photos that are easy to search by topic. It is mostly free to read and offers a subscription option that includes an audiobook-type service.
For examples start with *Ocean Station Duty* , *North Atlantic Weather Stations* and *tracking ice bergs*.

U.S. Coast Guard In Film And Television

Don Winslow of the Coast Guard (1943), based on the Don Winslow of the Navy comic strip, depicts a Coast Guard intelligence officer hunting down Japanese spies on the west coast of the United States during WWII.

Fighting Coast Guard (1951), depicts Coast Guard trained to help win WWII.

The Guardian (2006), depicts the Aviation Survival Technician (AST) program.

Pain & Gain (2013), starring Dwayne Johnson and Mark Wahlberg, depicted the Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces in action.

The Finest Hours (2016), A film portraying the rescue of the crew of SS Pendleton by coxswain Bernard C. Webber and the three other crewmen of Coast Guard Motor Lifeboat CG 36500.

Deepwater Horizon (2016), depicts the events of 20 April 2010 when the mobile drilling platform Deepwater Horizon suffered a mass casualty explosion that resulted in the deaths of 11 crew members. The film also depicts the Coast Guard's coordination and response in the immediate aftermath of the explosion.

Coast Guard Alaska: Search and Rescue, a series on The Weather Channel that features a Coast Guard search-and-rescue unit based in Kodiak, Alaska. Several series have spun off the original to focus on units based in Cape Disappointment and Florida.

Edward Semler -served in the USCG as master chief petty officer (E-9) then retired as a lieutenant (0-3E). He has written numerous books about life in the USCG which can be found at his website: **edsemler.com**

Around The World: A memoir documenting his 25-year military career, highlighting his time as a U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant and his assignments from 1982 to 2007.

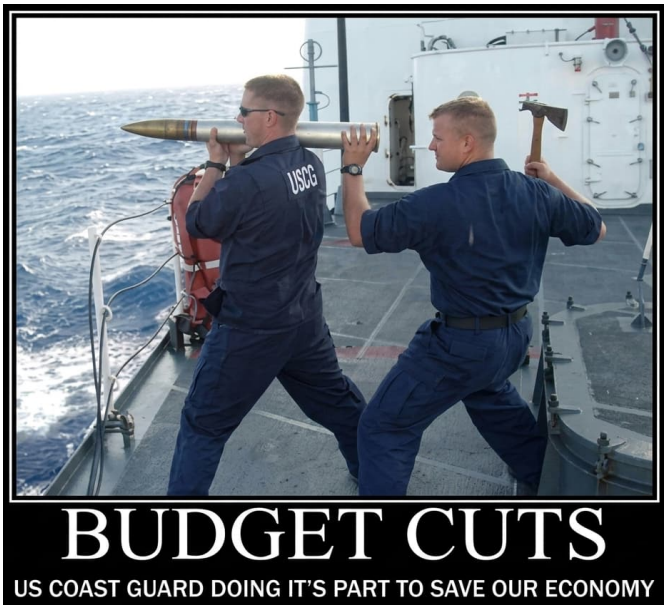
United States Coast Guard Cutter Sherman (WHEC-720) Circumnavigation Deployment 2001: A historical record tracking the cutter *Sherman's* rare around-the-world deployment, including enforcement operations in the Persian Gulf.

Thoughts On Being A Chief Petty Officer: A leadership-focused book exploring the unique responsibilities, culture, and expectations of the Chief Petty Officer rank.

Count On Us Coast Guard Cutter Dependable: Law Enforcement and Search & Rescue: A detailed look at the operational history, drug interdiction missions, and rescue profiles of the cutter *Dependable* (WMEC-626).

United States Coast Guard Tragedies: The Coast Guard saying, "You have to go out, but you don't have to come back" defines this book.

The Tragic End Of The Coast Guard Cutters White Alder, Cuyahoga, & Blackthorn: A historical account investigating the fatal collisions and losses of three distinct Coast Guard cutters.



A couple of E-2s with way too much free time on their hands!

Circa WWII *Circa 1950s* *Circa late 1960s* *Circa early 1950s*

Zippos were popular 1950s military tools because customized graphics could make a personal statement, while the windproof design offered critical utilitarian usefulness.

USCGC Spencer (WPG-36) *"The Mighty Spencer"* NRDS

from a detailed history article from the uscg.mil official website:
https://www.history.uscg.mil/Browse-by-Topic/Assets/Water/All/Article/2082085/spencer-1937-wpgwhec-36/#

The "Treasury" class Coast Guard cutters (sometimes referred to as the "Secretary" or 327-foot class) were all named for former secretaries of the Treasury Department. The cutter *Spencer* was named for John C. Spencer, the 16th Secretary of the Treasury. He was born in 1788 in Hudson, New York, graduated from Union College in 1806 and studied law. He was admitted to the state bar in 1809 and began a law practice in Canandaigua, New York. He served during the War of 1812 and was elected to and served in the House of Representatives from 1817-1819. He then served in a number of state public offices before being appointed the Secretary of War by President John Tyler in 1841. He was appointed as the Secretary of the Treasury in 1843, following the resignation of Secretary Walter Forward that same year. Spencer resigned in 1844 and was nominated by President Tyler to the United States Supreme Court but was rejected by the Senate. He died in Albany, New York on 17 May 1855.

CLASS HISTORY:

The 327-foot cutters were designed to meet changing missions of the service as it emerged from the Prohibition era. Because the air passenger trade was expanding both at home and overseas, the Coast Guard believed that cutter-based aircraft would be essential for future high-seas search and rescue. Also, during the mid-1930's, narcotics smuggling, mostly opium, was on the increase, and long-legged, fairly fast cutters were needed to curtail it. The 327's were an attempt to develop a 20-knot cutter capable of carrying an airplane.

The final 327-foot design was based on the Erie-class Navy gunboats; the machinery plant and hull below the waterline were identical. This standardization saved money--always paramount in the Coast Guard's considerations--and the cutters were built in U.S. Navy shipbuilding yards. Thirty-two preliminary designs of a modified Erie-class gunboat were drawn up before one was finally selected. The healthy sheer forward and the high slope in the deck in the wardrooms was known as the "Hunnewell Hump." Commander (Constructor) F. G. Hunnewell, USCG, was the head of the Coast Guard's Construction and Repair Department at that time.

The Secretary class cutters proved to be highly dependable, versatile and long-lived warships--most served their country for over 40 years. In the words of one naval historian, John M. Waters, Jr., they were truly their nation's "maritime workhorses." Waters continued: "the 327's battled, through the 'Bloody Winter' of 1942-43 in the North Atlantic--fighting off German U-boats and rescuing survivors from torpedoed convoy ships. They went on to serve as amphibious task force flagships, as search-and-rescue (SAR) ships during the Korean War, on weather patrol, and as naval gunfire support ships during Vietnam. Most recently, these ships-that-wouldn't-die have done duty in fisheries patrol and drug interdiction. . .Built for only $2.5 million each, in terms of cost effectiveness we may never see the likes of these cutters again."

HISTORY: (1950-1956)

The Spencer served on ocean stations throughout the 1950s: 21 December 1949 to 11 January 1950 on Ocean Station How; 20 March to 4 April 1950 on Ocean Station Able; 28 May to 18 June 1950 on Ocean Station Dog; and she escorted the disabled motor vessel Belfri to St John's from 8 to 11 August 1950. From 14 August to 1 September 1950 she served on Ocean Station Baker; 15 November to 6 December 1950 she served on Ocean Station Easy; from 25 January to 15 February 1951 she was on Ocean Station How and while there, on 27 January, she helped fight a fire on board the motor vessel Meirdizengoff. From 20 April to 12 May 1951 she served on Ocean Station Baker; Ocean Station Dog from 30 June to 21 July 1951; Ocean Station Baker from 14 September to 5 October 1951; 5 to 27 December on Ocean Station How where on 19 December she assisted the motor vessel Atlantic Enterprise.

The next year (1952) she served on: Ocean Station Charlie from 8 to 28 March; 13 May to 4 June on Ocean Station Easy; 1 to 28 August on Ocean Station Charlie; 17 October to 8 November 1952 on Ocean Station Bravo. The *Spencer* offered medical assistance to the fishing vessel *Batavia* on 9 November 1952. On 12 to 13 November 1952 she towed the disable fishing vessel *Brighton* to Portland, Maine.

In 1953 she again sailed on ocean station patrols. From 16 January to 6 February she served on Ocean Station Echo; 17 April to 8 May on Ocean Station Delta; on 22 June to 13 July on Ocean Station Hotel; and on 30 October to 20 November 1953 she served on Ocean Station Bravo. On 14 January 1954 *Spencer* medevaced a crewman from the motor vessel *Vema* off Bermuda. Then it was back to the ocean stations. She served on: Ocean Station Bravo from 6 to 27 March 1954; 22 May to 12 June on Ocean Station Delta and again at Ocean Station Delta from 24 September to 16 October 1954. She finished out 1954 on Ocean Station Echo, where she patrolled from 6 to 31 December 1954.

Her next assignment was to Ocean Station Bravo, where *Spencer* served from 24 February to 18 March and again 24 to 28 March 1955. From 27 May to 17 June 1955 she served on Ocean Station Coca; Ocean Station Echo from 30 July to 20 August 1955; from 31 December to 22 January 1956 she served on Ocean Station Delta; Ocean Station Echo from 16 March to 6 April 1956. She served on Ocean Station Bravo from 13 to 30 July 1956 and on Ocean Station Charlie from 19 November to 11 December 1956.

Type: Treasury-class cutter Commissioned: Mar 1st, 1937

Length: 327 ft OA Beam: 41 ft Draft: 12 ft 6 in

Installed Power: 6,200 hp (4,600 kW)
Propulsion: 2 x Westinghouse double-reduction geared turbines; 2 oil-fueled Babcock & Wilcox boilers
Fuel capacity: 135,180 gallons (547 tons)

Range & Speed
Maximum Speed: 20.5 knots (38 km/h)
8,000-12,300 nautical miles at 11 knots (20.4 km/h)

Complement: 10 officers, 3 warrants, 134 enlisted (1966)
Commanding Officers (1950-1956)
CAPT Walter C. Capron, 1950-1951
CDR Karl O. A. Zittel, 1951-1952
CAPT Harold J. Doebler, 1952-1954
CAPT Quentin McK. Greeley, 1954-1956
CAPT John T. Stanley, 1956-1958

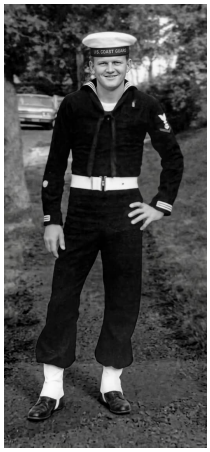
Sensors & Processing systems 1960s:
Radar: AN/SPS-29D; AN/SPA-52
Fire Control Radar: Mk-26 MOD 4
Sonar: AN/SQS-11

Armament 1966:
1 × 5 in (130 mm)/38 Mk30 MOD75
1 × Mk52 MOD3 Director
1 × Mk10-1 Hedgehog
2 (P&S) × Mk32 MOD5TT
4 × MK44 MOD1 torpedoes
2 × .50 cal MK2 Browning MG
2 × MK13 high-altitude parachute flare mortars

Target Ring patch: Popular but unofficial circa 1960 design.

"Ready to Serve" patch: Officially adopted in 1966

The infamous “salted coffee” incident, circa 1952



Lookin’ good in my properly bloused crackerjacks and gaiters with my Donald Duck hat!

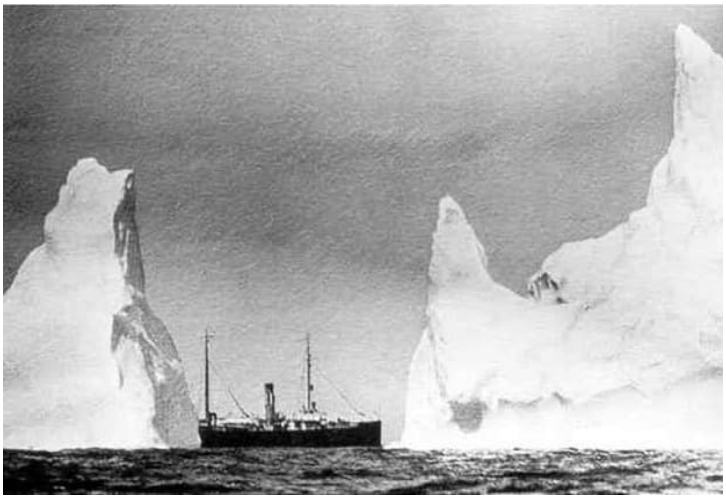
On April 17, 1943, the USCGC Spencer forced the German submarine U-175 to surface with a barrage of depth charges in the North Atlantic. After disabling the U-boat with intense gunfire, the Coast Guard cutter rescued 41 German survivors before the vessel sank.

Crew of the *Spencer* observing sister ship *Duane*, circa WWII

USCGC *Ingham*, circa WWII in the North Atlantic

Painting by Chief Warrant Officer William RaVell, USCG (Ret.)

USCGC *Ingham* circa unknown

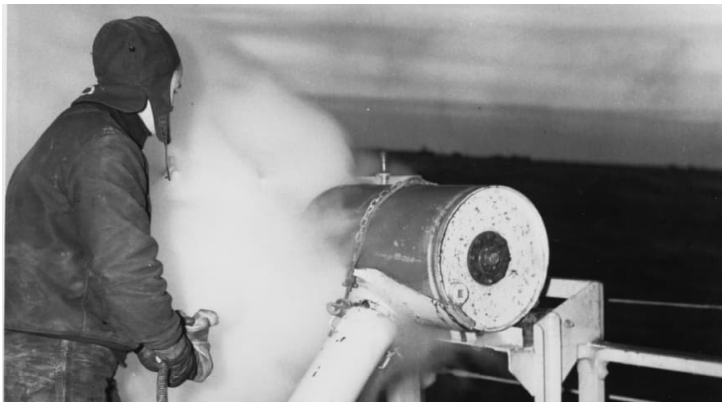


Circa 1914 USRC Seneca (International Ice Patrol; pre-USCG)

USCGC *Cambell*, 1966 (notice the lonely-looking rowboat!)

Frozen sea spray creates heavy ice buildup on vessels that can rapidly destabilize the ship, jam critical equipment, and cause capsizing.

USGC *Mellon* crew using mallets to remove sea spray ice



Steaming the ice off of a K-gun depth charge projector

Winter deployments on a "Treasury-class" cutter in the North Atlantic during the early 1950s were notoriously brutal. Ocean Station patrols lasted roughly 21 to 30 days and faced relentless freezing temperatures, massive swells, and claustrophobic living conditions. Shipboard spaces were built for utility and endurance, not comfort. They were cramped, filled with exposed overhead pipes and wiring, and strictly communal with limited options for privacy.

The "Ice Watch": Ocean spray would hit the ship's superstructure and instantly freeze. Heavy ice could cause the cutter to capsize. Crews used mallets, shovels, and steam hoses to chip ice off the lines, decks, and weapons systems.

Violent Motions: The North Atlantic winter generated waves frequently exceeding 30 to 40 feet. Cutters rolled heavily, so walking required careful timing with the ship's rolls or using lifelines if forced outside.

Sleep Deprivation: Sleeping in a rough winter sea was a challenging event. Sailors slept in multi-tiered canvas bunks, often using "bunk straps" or their own knees and elbows wedged against the frame to keep from rolling out onto the deck. The constant screaming of the wind, the groaning of the hull, and the crash of waves made deep sleep impossible.

Wet and Cold Clothes: Foul-weather gear of the 1950s (heavy wool, canvas parkas, and rubber boots) was not waterproof by modern standards. When the gear got wet it stayed damp for days.

Isolation and Boredom: When not on watch or chipping ice, sailors were confined to tight quarters below deck. Entertainment consisted of playing cards and games like cribbage and checkers, reading well-worn books, writing letters that wouldn't be mailed for weeks, or listening to shortwave radio when the atmospheric conditions allowed.

USCG Sonarmen *Duties & Gear*

research by Gemini (which is A.I. and can make mistakes)

A Sonarman Second Class (SO2) in the early 1950s (colloquially known as "ping jockey") was an E-5 petty officer responsible for operating and maintaining underwater sonar systems. They received specialized training in San Diego, California, or Key West, Florida where they learned the fundamentals of underwater acoustics and sound propagation and equipment operation and maintenamce.

SO2 Badge

While the Spencer was a legendary WWII cutter, her wartime QC-series sonar was largely obsolete or inactive by 1950. Until she was refitted with advanced AN/SQS-11 sonar later in the decade to counter Cold War Soviet submarine threats, her sonarmen spent the majority of their underway watches assisting other specialists in the Combat Information Center (CIC).

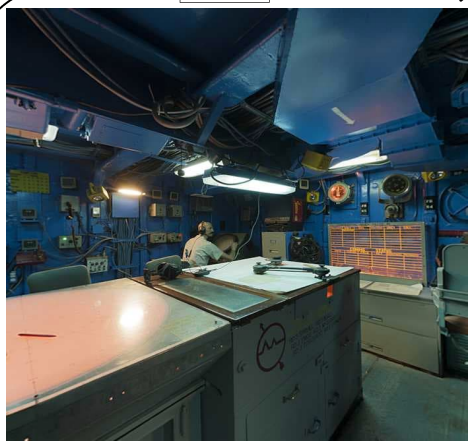
Combat Information Center (CIC) Operations

Information Gathering: Served as central clearinghouse for coordinating surface, air, undersea and communication data.
Plotting and Interpretation: Operated radar systems (SC air-search and SF or SU surface-search) and used plotting gear such as the Dead Reckoning Table (DRT) to track target courses, speeds, and closest points of approach.
Command Recommendations: Evaluated incoming data from radars and radios, and relayed tactical and navigational summaries directly to the commanding officer.
Position Fixing: Assisted the bridge in determining the ship's exact position during low-visibility conditions and when performing Ocean Station weather patrols by continuously tracking surrounding sea and air contacts.
Target Detection: Scanned for distressed vessels and downed military and commercial aircraft requiring assistance.
Collision Avoidance: Provided continuous surveillance for other ships during low visibility severe weather fronts.
Radio Telephony: Monitored essential voice communications with aircraft and surface units.

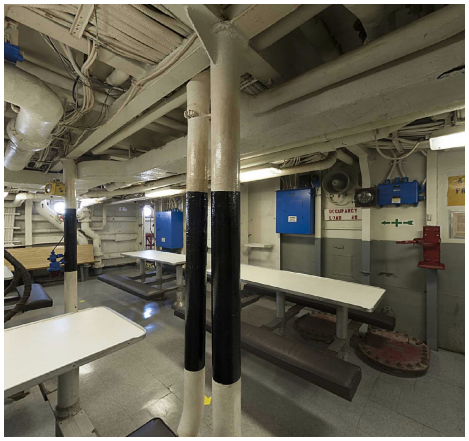
Sonarman Core Responsibilities

Acoustic Detection & Classification: Operated sonar sensors (QC/QGB series manual "searchlight" type and then SQS-11 with automated scanning in the later 50s) to detect the acoustic signatures of underwater objects and terrain.
Bathythermograph (BT) Drops: Sonarmen regularly deployed BT sensors into the ocean to map out the "thermal layers".
Fathometer Navigation: Operated the ship's fathometers to track underwater hazards topography.
Acoustic Transponder Tracking: Sonarmen used underwater communications equipment to cross-reference navigational signals and acoustic markers.
Emergency Search and Rescue (SAR): If an airliner or ship went missing in stormy Atlantic waters, sonarmen listened for acoustic distress beacons, hull tappings from capsized vessels, or submerged wreckage.
ASW Fire Control: Even in peacetime, the threat of sudden conflict was real. Sonarmen provided calibrated fire-control data linked to anti-submarine weapons, which may have included K-gun depth charge projectors or even aft depth charge tracks (which were removable and not usually installed on weather patrols during peacetime).
Harsh-Weather Maintenance: The North Atlantic winter ice and heavy seas routinely battered equipment. Sonarmen were responsible for the manual upkeep and repair of the sonar dome underneath the hull and the electronic racks inside the ship when possible.
Assisting Aerographer's Mates (AGs) with hydrogen-filled balloon launches:
In the early 1950s, handling hydrogen on Coast Guard cutters in challenging conditions was highly dangerous due to its extreme flammability and low ignition energy. Static electricity could easily trigger catastrophic explosions, which were worsened by high-pressure chemical generators in confined ship spaces. Compounding the danger, hydrogen burns with a nearly invisible flame, making daylight fires almost impossible to detect until they spread.

WORK → PLAY → SLEEP



USCGC *Ingham* CIC (restored)



USCGC *Ingham* crew mess (restored)

USCGC *Taney* crew bunk, circa 1930s

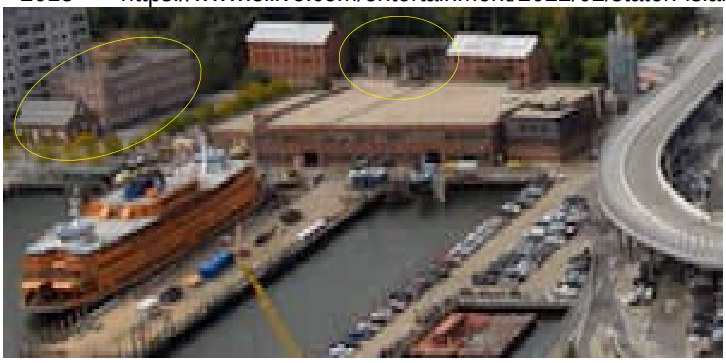
Coast Guard Base St. George

Originally the United States Lighthouse Service General Depot, the site adjacent to the Staten Island Ferry terminal was absorbed by the Coast Guard in 1939. The buildings on the southern edge were used for construction and repair of heavy lighthouse lenses, maritime anchors, buoys, and chains. The French Second Empire-style building on the western edge designed by architect Alfred B. Mullett flanked by barracks and warehouses became the Administration building.

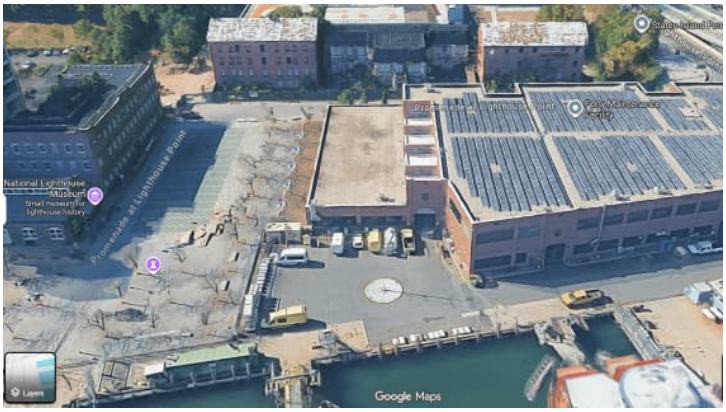
1952 (facing west, curved ramp is to Staten Island Ferry terminal)

1968 (facing east)

Many more photos and story at:
2013 https://www.silive.com/entertainment/2022/02/staten-island-under-construction-the-st-george-ferry-terminal-then-and-now.html



Campbell & Spencer 1957 (courtesy of Facebook group USCG)



Google Maps view (facing west) 2026

Gemini A.I. depiction of the Administration building in the 1950s

Lens foundry and workshop (restored for the Lighthouse Museum)

Creed of the United States Coast Guardsman by Vice Admiral Harry G. Hamlet, USCG Commandant 1932 to 1936

I am proud to be a United States Coast Guardsman.
I revere that long line of expert seamen who by their devotion to duty and sacrifice of self have made it possible for me to be a member of a service honored and respected, in peace and in war, throughout the world.
I never, by word or deed, will bring reproach upon the fair name of my service, nor permit others to do so unchallenged.
I will cheerfully and willingly obey all lawful orders.
I will always be on time to relieve, and shall endeavor to do more, rather than less, than my share.
I will always be at my station, alert and attending to my duties.
I shall, so far as I am able, bring to my seniors solutions, not problems.
I shall live joyously, but always with due regard for the rights and privileges of others.
I shall endeavor to be a model citizen in the community in which I live.
I shall sell life dearly to an enemy of my country, but give it freely to rescue those in peril.
With God's help, I shall endeavor to be one of His noblest Works...
A UNITED STATES COAST GUARDSMAN.

"Fair winds and following seas,
—we have the watch. Semper P"

Rear cover art by Gemini, which is A.I. and can make mistakes