



On Deck There



Gulf of Alaska, 1980 – For our Veterans Day edition of the “On Deck There” newsletter, US Coast Guard veteran, former SK2 David Hughes of Georgetown, Ill. Shares a story about his involvement in the largest SAR incident in Coast Guard history, the rescue of the burning cruise ship, MS Prinsendam. Photo courtesy of Dave Hughes.

Newsletter of Division 8 of the USCG Auxiliary’s 8th Western Rivers District. Division 8’s area of responsibility includes Central Illinois, Northeast Missouri (NEMO), and Southeast Iowa.



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Commander's Comments

By Butch Luhrsen, DCDR



Doug Keller, VFC is in almost weekly contact to be available to assist USCGC Sciotio.

Jessica Dawson, ADSO-DV is completing a workshop in graduate school for inclusive kayaking to enable disability accommodation and spent several hours working Diversity issues this month. Klaus Stendebach, FSO-VE visited with Hannibal Harbor & Jack's Marina visitors about the CG Auxiliary. Eric Dolbeare, IPFC will return from Afghanistan approximately Dec. 17 from a yearlong employment as an Agriculture Advisor.

Flotilla 84 (Floating Illini)

Flotilla 84 is having its final meeting of 2013 at Ted's Garage in Clinton on Dec. 6. The OPEX (Operation Clinton Lake II) planning team will begin planning for the June 6-8, 2014 exercise.

Shawn Burnley and Tom Keagle have been contacted about presenting another CPR / First Aid course to the crew of the SCIOTO. Keagle, Rich Wynne, and Shawn Burnley are working hard on the Navigation Rules 70 test and other coxswain in-port mentoring tasks with me and Jeff Poundstone.

Flotilla 84 is excited about the Auxiliary Leadership and Management School (AUXLAMS) coming to Peoria in March. Pam and I as well as Jeff and Anna Poundstone, Tom Keagle, Shawn Burnley, Jim Dunne and Rich Wynne have all committed to attend the 6-day C-School.

Pam, Jeff and Anna Poundstone, and myself, attended a joint Flotilla 81 and 85 meeting at the home of Don and Wanda Ackerman. A great dinner and a great time was had by all.

Flotilla 83 (Hannibal, Mo.)

John Davison, FC presented training to all the flotilla present on the ANSC 7025 Financial Report and Unit Inventory Record, ANSC 7007 Annual Unit Officers Report, ANSC 7017 Record of Meeting, Latest Flotilla By-Laws (2012 ed.). All got past copies, instructions, reviewed AuxMan and suspense dates.

Flotilla 88 (Lincoln Trails)

Calen Edgar is working on online public affairs course. Tom Gover and Penny Clay attended a district webinar on the ANSC 7025 form. Penny conducted a marine dealer visit.

Flotilla 88's annual Change of Watch will be held on December 4 at Pagliacci Restaurant in Mattoon.

Flotilla 85 (Peoria)

Flotilla 85 met in November at Don and Wanda Ackerman's in Deer Creek. Invitations were also sent to Flotilla 81 and to the DCDR and DCDR (elect). Thanks to all who attended and more thanks to the hosts, Don and Wanda.

The flotilla also met and began initial planning for 2014. Marlinspike seamanship is the training concentration for January. Next meeting will be January 16 at the MSD.

~Butch

P.S. Don't forget to RSVP for the Change of Watch and also be sure to not let the opportunity to attend the AUXLAMS C-School go by.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat

For Veteran's Day

George Poundstone farmed alongside his father, Richard, and brother, Samuel, on the family farm south of Ottawa in Farm Ridge Township. He enlisted when the 53rd Infantry Regiment formed in Ottawa in the fall of 1861. Never married, Poundstone was several years older than most of the young men who rushed to join the fight. He was chosen the regiment's flag bearer and headed the color guard unit. He led the way into battle carrying the flag. Both flag and flagstaff were large, heavy and cumbersome.



George C. Poundstone, Color Sergeant of the 53rd Illinois Infantry. Photo courtesy of The Ottawa Daily Times.

On July 12, 1863, the 53rd Illinois was among the Union regiments at the Battle of Jackson in Mississippi where the 53rd and several other regiments were ordered to charge the Confederate fortifications manned by approximately 20,000 soldiers. It was a gallant but disastrous charge, going into the fight with 255 men and officers, and coming out with only 66. They knew they'd be killed, wounded, or taken prisoner; but they stiffened their backs, got into formation and George Poundstone picked up his flag and led from the front.

Almost every one of the 66 who returned was wounded.

Some died later. The color guard and bearers were all either killed or wounded. The colors, saturated with the life blood of the color bearer, Sgt. George Poundstone, were captured.

Sgt. Poundstone was shot in the chest and through the left eye by musket balls and grape shot. The ball emerged above his left ear. It's a wonder he didn't die instantly as he lay on the battlefield several hours. He was lying in no man's land, 500 miles from home, between two armies and with the battle going on around him.

What do you think of when you know you're dying? We do know he took his job as flag-bearer very seriously. He was carrying this flag, and he tore it off the flagstaff while he was lying on the battlefield. He wadded it up and stuffed it inside his jacket. He was trying to keep the flag from becoming a trophy of war by the enemy. The biggest insult in the war was not only to be routed, but to be routed and have the enemy take your flag as a trophy.

He was still alive when the battle ended. He was taken prisoner by the 1st Kentucky Brigade. The blood-stained flag was found stuffed inside his tunic. On July 13, he was sent to Vicksburg, Miss. His father was notified that he was wounded and where he was hospitalized by Elijah Stumph, a surviving member of the 53rd who returned home to marry George's sister, Elizabeth. Richard and Samuel took off by wagon to Vicksburg. Richard said that he was going to bring him back to the farm and either nurse him back to health or bury him. He died 12 days later in the hospital and had already been buried by the time his father and brother arrived.

An 1885 article in the New York Times mentions that the 53rd's colors were found in a closet in the War Department in Washington. A reporter investigated the finding of the mysterious blood covered flag and reported on the heroic attempt by George Poundstone to save the colors from capture as he lay dying.

Lying on the west side of Route 23 across from the Grand Ridge Cemetery lies the Poundstone Family Cemetery. It has long since closed and only a few graves are marked there. George is buried next to his mother and father, Richard and Elizabeth.

The flag is in the Illinois State Museum in Springfield.

The 1885 New York Times article is shown on the back page.

AUXLAMS C-School Coming to Peoria

Auxiliary Leadership and Management Course being held in March

"AUXLAMS is the Coast Guard Leadership and Management School course, adapted for the volunteer Auxiliary environment, and is taught by Coast Guard trained instructors. It is based on the Leadership Competencies, which lay the foundation for all leadership skills necessary to successful leadership in the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary. We have the AUXLAMS C-School coming to Peoria.

This is a facilitated and interactive course dealing with Self Awareness, Motivation, Strategic Leadership, Team Building, Ethics, Conflict, Management and Performance Problem Solving. AUXLAMS is the foundation course of the Auxiliary Leadership Continuum. Participant can earn AUXOP Leadership Credit. Auxiliarists are required to

successfully complete a minimum of seven (7) credits from three categories of courses to receive the AUXOP qualification. The list of courses in the leadership category includes the Auxiliary Leadership and Management School (AUXLAMS).

Successfully completing AUXLAMS will pay dividends for our members both in the Auxiliary and in real life for a long time."
~Jeff Poundstone, DCDR (elect)

AUXLAMS is also a prerequisite for Flotilla Commanders (FC) to attend the Auxiliary Mid-Level Officers Course (AMLOC-05A).

AUXLAMS recently received a favorable review by the Accreditation Council on Education

(ACE) and has been recommended for 3 upper-division undergraduate college credits. This is the first Auxiliary course to be reviewed by ACE and the only one with a college credit recommendation. Because of the college credit recommendation students must complete the entire course within this time frame. Students who have taken either A or B in the past are still invited to complete the course.

"I'm very excited about the AUXLAMS C-School coming to Peoria," said Jeff Poundstone, DCDR (elect). "Our members will never have an easier time than this to participate in this leadership course. Successfully completing AUXLAMS will pay dividends for our members both in the Auxiliary and in real life for a long time."

Division Change of Watch – Jan 11

The Division 8 Annual Change of Watch ceremony is scheduled to be held on January 11, 2014 at the Wingate Hotel in Peoria. Wanda Ackerman has been doing a great deal of the heavy lifting for this event.

Please join us for an evening of fellowship as incoming division commander, Jeff Poundstone takes the helm from the current division commander, Butch Luhrsen. Division staff officers and flotilla officers, both

elected and appointed will be administered their oaths of office.

A buffet style meal is being catered. Taking part in the Change of Watch and also providing some entertainment afterwards is Rielly Sanders, an entertainer and music major at Joliet Junior College.

Mrs. Ackerman has arranged a special room rate of \$77 for those desiring to stay the evening at the Wingate. When

calling to make reservations, please let the clerk know that you are with the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Wingate's number is 309-589-0033. After an evening out, you can work out in the gym, take a swim, and enjoy the Wingate's complimentary breakfast buffet.

The Division Meeting will be the next morning, Jan 12, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the MSD in East Peoria.

Division Training Day – Jan 18 – Become BQ Qualified

January 18 from 0900 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the 1st United Methodist Church in East Peoria is where and when the first Division Training Day of 2014 is being held. Training being presented will be the State of Illinois Safe Boating Course. There is no charge to our members or their families.

Lead Instructor Donald Ackerman, FC-85, would like to let everyone know that

successfully passing this course will also advance members who are currently in the IQ level of membership to the BQ level. BQ members may participate in the Auxiliary's on-the-water activities. A crew member must possess a BQ level of membership. So, don't hesitate. Contact Don Ackerman today to reserve a seat for yourself, your spouse and children.

If you are interested in becoming an Auxiliary Instructor, Mr. Ackerman will also provide the lesson plan, instructor notes, and chapters you will need to present. If you have passed the Instructor course and exam, please contact Don Ackerman for assignments.

We Have a Multiple Launch Detection

By Jeff Poundstone



I'd like to share a story for the Veterans Day edition.

I had the honor of serving with the 93rd Signal Brigade during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm in 1990-1991. 93rd Sig provided communications for the VII Corps, which consisted of a majority of the ground forces and included the 2200 tanks that traveled from Germany to the Iraq border. Our communications network was the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River. The VII Corps order of battle consisted of the 1st Infantry Division (Big Red 1), 1st Armored Division, 3rd Armored Division, 1st Cavalry Division, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the British 1st (UK) Armoured Division. Our British friends were the famed "Desert Rats" of World War II fame. I remember stating at the time that if this line-up were defeated in battle, we ought to just disband the country and join Canada.

I worked as a brigade operations sergeant in what we called the "syscon" or Systems Control; other units would call us the S-3 Operations Section. There were four sergeants and two captains on our graveyard shift. Army captains are the same rank as a Coast Guard Lieutenant. The downside to working on the night shift is that it was almost impossible to sleep in a tent in 120 degree heat. I didn't get a good night's sleep until I got back home.

On December 31, 1990, we invited the day shift guys to the syscon to celebrate the ringing in of the New Year. The brigade ops officer, Colonel Bob Fasulo and our brigade commander, Colonel Rich Walsh, along with

about half the day shift guys showed up. Master Sergeant Terry Ryan, my boss, a Desert Storm and Vietnam veteran was universally respected by officer and enlisted alike, had sausage and cheese, and a box of cookies his wife had sent. He then left the syscon and when he returned he had a 12 pack of ice cold beer. Since alcohol was banned in Saudi Arabia, he had found some Barbican, a local non-alcohol brew. Since it was New Year's Eve, and it was ice cold, it did smell and look a little like beer, we all cracked one open, toasted and celebrated at 1201a.m. Ryan had the Barbican stashed in the mess tent freezer.

My job was to monitor the status of communications of our subordinate battalions, working with the battalion operations to keep communications up with our subscriber units, both combat arms and the huge support trains.

Shortly after our New Year's Eve celebration the Air Force began attacking Iraqi command and control facilities and military targets. We heard later that Iraq had fired SCUD missiles at Israel. A SCUD was a ballistic missile that was taller than a three story building and packed full of high-explosives.

The build-up to the ground war was a busy time in the ops center. We were on the phones all night as the heavy divisions made their way from the ports out to the invasion staging area out in the desert along the Iraq border. Several nights after the onset of the air campaign, I was on the phone with Captain Dan Anderson, the operations officer for the 34th Signal Battalion. All of a sudden, I got cut off. I thought, "What the heck, who is using the flash over ride on me?" There weren't many phones who we gave the flash over ride capabilities to. I found out soon enough.

I answered, "93rd Signal Brigade, Sergeant Poundstone speaking Sir."

"Stand by for flash traffic," said the caller. Other headquarters began coming on to this conference call.

"Danger Main," answered the next one. Danger was the call sign for the Big Red One.

"Spearhead Forward," answered the ops officer from the 3rd Armored Division.

(continued on page 6)

A Proud Father on this Veterans Day

Written by Thomas J. Keagle, SO-PE



The freedoms we have in this nation are a direct result of the backbone and the blood of this country's young men and women in the military. It matters not where you call home, without a doubt your community has been touched by someone in the military service. As families and communities we have celebrated the successes and victories of our military and we have mourned the losses of our military heroes. As a local firefighter and EMS provider there have been several times that I have stood at the side of the road with my brothers standing at attention as a hearse carrying the body of a fallen American hero passed by.

Over the past 94 years, Veterans Day has evolved from the first Armistice Day or Remembrance Day to the Veterans Day that we have today. Today we remember and thank all of our veterans. We have community parades honoring our local veterans. Nothing makes you more proud to be an American than standing on a curbside, or on a small town square and watching our National Ensign pass by followed by men and women of all ages who have served our country in both peacetime and in battle.

Five members of my immediate family have served our nation during war time. My father, Ray Keagle served in the Navy during the Korean War. Dad served on the USS Altair AKS-32. All three of my children have served our country during wartime. My oldest Son Brian Keagle served on the USS Winston Churchill DDG-81. My daughter Trisha Carr has served in the Illinois Army National Guard as a medic for the past eight years. Trisha's husband Aaron Carr serves in the Air Force Reserves and just recently returned home from deployment. My youngest son, Travis Keagle is Army, serving with the 25th Infantry as a large

equipment mechanic.

I have nothing but respect for those who have served our country. I also respect the families of those who have served. I know firsthand the feeling of having a loved one in harm's way. When my children were deployed there was not a day that went by that I was not praying for their safety and the safety of those in their unit and that unit's leadership.

I also saw the loss to a family and to a community when we lose one of our young service members. It changes our lives forever, and makes us remember that freedom isn't free.

As we approach Veterans Day I thank God for the men and women of the United States Armed Forces both past and present and for the sacrifices they have made so we can live free. And I realize that they deserve our respect every day as well.



Tom Keagle's family knows about service to our country. Pictured above left is Tom's eldest son Brian. Next to him is his youngest, Travis. Travis is currently serving in Hawaii with the 25th "Tropical Lightning" Infantry Division. Below is ILARNG Sergeant Trisha Carr and her husband, USAF Reserve Sergeant Aaron Carr. Photos courtesy of Tom Keagle.

January 11
Division 8 Change of Watch
6:30 PM. Wingate Hotel in
Peoria.

January 12
Division Meeting. MSD in
Peoria. 10:00 AM.

January 18
Division BQ Training Day. 1st
UMC of East Peoria. 9-5.
POC: Don Ackerman

April 5
Division Meeting. Hosted by
the Bloomington Detachment
of Flotilla 88. Bloomington.
TBD

June 6-8
OPEX 2014
Clinton Lake

October 4
Division Election hosted by
Flotilla 83 in Hannibal, Mo.

On Deck There

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"We have a multiple launch detection," said the originator of the conference call, the Patriot Missile task force, "all stations prepare to copy." I never got a phone call like that before.

"You have a what?" I remember myself replying, maybe a little louder than normal. I looked over to Sergeant First Class Ray Monteil and said, "paper, paper, paper."

"We have a multiple launch detection," the Patriot guy kept going. "Bird 1 launch detected at 0307 local, 34.143635 North and 40.975488 East, vector 222 degrees; bird 2 launch..." I was writing as fast as I could. They had detected 10 launches of Iraqi SCUD missiles. Things just got real.

In the syscon we had a large map that had all of our battalion locations and the locations of all the VII Corps units that had our communications teams located with them. Sergeant Ryan started barking out latitudes and longitudes and a vector for each one. All the launch sites were in far Western Iraq. We found the location Sergeant Ryan gave and then put a protractor with a string fixed to it on the spot. Then I held the string along the azimuth. Sergeant Monteil was calling off a possible list of targets.

"Haifa, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Daharan, Riyad," Monteil said excitedly, "ay dios mio!"

"In English!" Sergeant Ryan barked at him.

"Right at us," he said.

"Alert the battalions and get our people in their bunkers and foxholes," ordered Captain Paul Condon. Ryan and Monteil called their battalion counterparts. I did a flash over ride conference call on my two battalions.

"Poundstone did you just Flash me?" demanded Captain Anderson. "Stand by Sir." Shortly after, the operations sergeant for 1st Signal Battalion, SGM David Phillips answered.

"Sir, Sergeant Major, we have inbound ballistic missiles towards our positions.

Sergeant Ryan says we have less than 10 minutes to impact," I said. They both hung up on me. I was their higher headquarters contact. They knew I spoke for the S-3 when I called, but they both seriously out ranked me. They didn't have to be nice.

I then started making local calls, to the people in the tents and shops at our own headquarters. I remember calling our headquarters supply tent and the PFC who answered asked, "Are you kidding Sergeant?"

"DO I SOUND LIKE I'M KIDDING?" he dropped the phone.

We could hear outside the tent people hitting the air horns and yelling, "INCOMING!"

A few minutes later, the headquarters first sergeant called Sergeant Ryan and told him that everyone was accounted for and in the bunkers. By that time, Colonel Walsh strolled in cool as a cucumber sat down and asked the captain for an update.

Sergeant Monteil kept looking at his watch. The colonel poured himself a cup of coffee. I asked him, "Excuse me Sir, but where are we going?"

"We stay right here," he said matter-of-factly.

Monteil didn't like that much. My flak vest was on the back of my chair. We never wore them at night inside the syscon. I picked mine up and put it on; then found my helmet and put it on too, going so far as to fasten the chin strap. The others watched me put my flak vest on; they then began reaching for theirs, strapping on the vests and putting their helmets on. Sergeant Ryan started laughing when he saw everyone going for their helmets and vests. Monteil looked at his watch again.

Suddenly the flap to tent entrance flung open and my day shift counterpart Sergeant Tom Ellis bopped in. Ellis was a communication guy from the Patriot unit assigned to our brigade. "We got 'em all!

(Continued on next page)

Patriots knocked them all out of the sky," Ellis bragged. They fell harmlessly into the desert.

"Nice work Ellis!" said Sergeant Ryan. He handed Ellis a nice warm can of non-alcohol Barbican.

The master sergeant looked at Monteil and me and just said, "Quit sitting around and get back to work."

A BATTLE FLAG'S HISTORY.

OTTAWA, Ill., June 19.—Dispatches stating that there had been found in the War Department at Washington a blood-stained, battle-worn flag of which the authorities know nothing, except that it is marked with the name of the Fifty-third Illinois Infantry, has been creating deep interest here. The Fifty-third Illinois Infantry was recruited at Ottawa, and was mainly composed of men from this county. On July 5, 1863, the regiment moved with Gen. Sherman's army against Jackson. On the 12th it was engaged in the battle of Jackson, going into the fight with 200 men and coming out with 60. The color guard of eight men was annihilated. George C. Poundstone was the Color Sergeant. The flag was riddled and the shaft broken by the fierce storm of shot, shell, and canister. To save the colors Poundstone was obliged to tear them from the staff. He received a canister shot in the thigh, but he stuffed the flag into the breast of his coat. Then came a bullet through the left eye, and Poundstone lay upon the field, drenching the colors with his blood. He was found by the Confederates and taken to Jackson. When they abandoned Jackson he was found with Capt. Bailey Smith, who had had his arm shot off, but could walk around. The Sergeant died at Vicksburg on July 23, and his body now reposes in the Poundstone family cemetery, a few miles south of this city. The survivors of the regiment residing here will take steps to have the flag brought to the State where it belongs.

The New York Times

Published: June 20, 1885

SK2 David Hughes and the Rescue of the Prinsendam

Veteran's Day Guest Column by former USCG SK2 David Hughes of Georgetown, Ill.

It was my first deployment on the United States Coast Guard Cutter Boutwell (WHEC-719). We were to do an ALPAT (Alaskan Patrol) which would take us away from our home port of Pier 36 in Seattle, Washington for approximately two months.



Petty Officer Hughes' home and duty station while serving in Alaska, the USCGC BOUTWELL. Photo courtesy of David Hughes.

At 19 years old, I was looking forward to making drug busts, watching whales and seeing my first Eskimo, and maybe answer a SAR case or two. After losing my lunch for a couple weeks, it was a beautiful thing feeling dry land under my feet in Valdez. It was time to explore when Captain Leroy Krum gave all of us liberty except those standing duty. As you can imagine, a few hit the local pubs, some went sightseeing and a few hiking.

It wasn't more than an hour or two, when the recall whistle blew on our ship and shore patrol frantically shot into all the local establishments looking for the young men who belonged to the Boutwell. Many crewmen raced across the gangplank in just a few minutes, but some could barely step up on it. When enough crewmen were on board, we were given the order to get underway. Most of us were still in our civilian clothes. As the ship was pulling away, a handful of men were left ashore.



The HM Prinsendam, already listing to starboard, smoking, with a useless life boat dangling over the side. Photo courtesy of David Hughes.

After all of the hoopla, we were told that there was a cruise ship 300 miles out with an engine room fire and it was out of control. The ship was the MS Prinsendam.

She had approximately 520 passengers and crew onboard and mostly elderly. Oh, and there is a typhoon bearing down on their location. When we started off, the seas were at about 4 to 5 feet, but several hours later they were up to 30 feet.

The Captain of the Prinsendam gave the order for all (pajama clad) passengers to abandon ship at 0100 on October 4th (5 days before my 20th birthday).

The Boutwell with me and most of my shipmates made it to the scene. It was like a dream. The skies were gray, the wind was howling, with freezing rain and snow. The seas at this point were approximately 30 feet.

There was the cruise ship. Smoke was blowing through the portholes. The paint was bubbling on the deck and certain points on the hull. It was listing to one side with a couple lifeboats hanging with broken cables (not a good sign). There were lifeboats bobbing all over the horizon on the massive swells. One or two of them were close, but many at a distance.



An artist's rendition of the Coast Guard rescue of the HM Prinsendam in the Gulf of Alaska in 1980. Courtesy of David Hughes.

It was surreal seeing the whole picture. It was like a movie. We knew there were going to be casualties. We (our ship) were the on-scene commander. We went to work. My seasickness went away when the adrenaline kicked in. I'm sure the hangovers were a little tougher to shake off.

We knew there would be no way to accommodate 520 folks on our 378 ft. cutter, so we had a civilian cargo ship stand by. Its name was the "Williamsburg." She was over a thousand feet long, and had a great helo pad.



Small rescue boat from the USCGC Boutwell towing in a Prinsendam life boat full of survivors. Photo courtesy of David Hughes.

Our ship did come equipped with a HH-53 helicopter. The Williamsburg took on over 400 survivors. The Boutwell took the rest. I will never forget the sight of three CG helicopters and one Canadian Air Force Chinook, along with our small motor surfboats plucking people out of the lifeboats one at a time. Our ship would come alongside a lifeboat and lift one person out at a time with something that resembled a horse collar. A very dangerous procedure due to the 30 foot swells. One moment the boat would be parallel to the main deck and the next second it was three stories below. The timing had to be perfect.

I was on one of the small boat crews on one round, and pulling folks out of boats with a pulley system and a horse collar the rest of the time. Our crew worked like bees; a well-oiled machine. We finally pulled the last person on board and steamed toward Valdez.

The Boutwell then received a frantic call from Elmendorf Air Force base in Anchorage. "Where is my PJ?" They had a para-rescueman in a lifeboat somewhere in the Alaskan Gulf, with folks aboard. We turned the Cutter around and in a typhoon, steamed out to sea.

I remember there was heavy fog when we got to the area of the missing PJ. A good buddy of mine was on watch at the time and saw a flare making the fog glow. What an awesome feeling when they made the pipe; all personnel

on deck! To make a long story short, we got every last one of them. Everybody survived against incredible odds.

We got a hero's welcome in Valdez. Because we didn't lose one person in this massive rescue, the "Readers Digest" called it a "Miracle at Sea". To this day it is noted in the history books as one of the top 10 greatest rescues in Coast Guard history. In 2004 an author "H. Paul Jeffers", wrote a book called "Burning Cold: the Cruise Ship Prinsendam and the greatest rescue of all time". I was interviewed extensively for the book.

On our way back to our home port of Seattle, the crew was drained. Most of us hadn't had any sleep for 48 hours. We got another call, that there was an oil rig called the "Dan Prince" sinking in the Gulf of Alaska.

Yep! We rescued 29 crewmen. Now we were really spent. The United States Air Force F-16's saluted us with an escort as we entered Puget Sound. A US Navy tug ran point for us with fire hoses blowing as we pulled into the harbor. On the dock, the Navy and Army band was playing the Coast Guard march. Cannons boomed as we were ready to tie up. There were thousands of people there cheering and clapping.



Crewmembers of the USCGC BOUTWELL assist elderly survivors of a burning cruise ship up the cutter's rope ladder. Photo courtesy of David Hughes.

We each received a citation from Congress for our achievement. It was a good day to be a Coastie. To read into the rescue a little deeper, just check out the book.

Semper Paratus! David C. Hughes, I served in the United States Coast Guard from 1980-1989.