

# The Guardian

From the "Heartland of America"



U. S. COAST GUARD

MEXUS 2012 \* Coastie Teachers \* CG-6535



# Contents

issue 5 ♦ 2012

Now that summer is here, it is time to take a moment and reflect upon the people and stories that impacted us the most over the last six months.

Across the district, many of us have found ourselves in new positions and new cities all while staying flexible and mission ready. As the new public affairs officer for the Eighth Coast Guard District, I find myself learning something new every day about the diverse missions and people of the very busy heartland. I am excited and honored to be able to tell you about the great things that are being done district wide.

The protectors of the heartland have volunteered, led, saved and lost. Through it all, they have remained vigilant, adaptable and prepared. Every story continues to show the perseverance and dedication of our Coast Guard men and women. We've only highlighted a few members and units in our following stories, but that does not detract from the countless daily sacrifices made by every member of the Coast Guard.

To all the members and units that we were not able to include in the following pages, we salute you. We thank you.

Have a great summer and Semper Paratus!

LT Lily Zepeda



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Is there an event you want covered in The Guardian? Do you have an opinion to be heard? Does your unit have anything newsworthy to report? If so, we want to hear from you. Call us at (504) 671-2020.



**The Guardian**  
From the "Heartland of America"



Cover photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephen Lehmann  
Rear cover photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Richard Brahm





A portrait of a MH-65C Dolphin rescue helicopter at Coast Guard Air Station Houston January 18, 2012. This image was made by a technique called 'light painting', and is comprised of 37 individual images. U.S. Coast Guard photo composite by Petty Officer 2nd Class Prentice Danner.





◀ A NASA training shuttle is flanked by law enforcement boats as it transits to the Johnson Space Center dock in League City, June 1, 2012. Crewmembers from multiple Coast Guard units and the Coast Guard Auxiliary helped guide the shuttle safely through the tight ship channel and under the Kemah bridge, as it works its way to Space Center Houston.

▼ (from left) Rear Adm. Roy Nash, commander of the Eighth Coast Guard District and Department of Homeland Security Secretary, Janet Napolitano look out over the Mississippi River during a tour of the New Orleans port, Aug. 8, 2011.

► The crew of a Coast Guard 25-foot Response Boat - Small from Station New Orleans practice high-speed maneuvers as part of a training evolution, Jan. 17, 2012.



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephen Lehmann



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephen Lehmann

▲ Two Coast Guard MH-65C Dolphin helicopter crews from Air Station New Orleans get into position on Lake Pontchartrain during a training evolution, Jan. 17, 2012.

► Crewmembers from Coast Guard Training Center Mobile take Calvin Moret on a tour of their facility, March 29, 2012. Moret, a Tuskegee Airmen, came to ATC to speak about his history with the historic



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephen Lehmann



What makes a great leader? That question can be subjective. Different things matter to different people. Some of the names that come to mind when asked who exemplifies a great leader are also varied. Some may mention well-known leaders of our time, such as Dr. Martin Luther King. Others may suggest someone closer to home, such as a parent, grandparent or sibling.

I recently had several members of Coast Guard Air Station Houston mention a particular person to me, and it made me want to know a bit more.

In the days leading up to Lt. Cmdr. Karen Cagle's retirement ceremony, I heard several people talking about her leadership reputation. Her reputation clearly preceded her. Personnel at Air Station Houston talked about Cagle in a way that could be summed up as this; people that were already stationed with her were glad they had the opportunity, and people elsewhere that were on their way to report to the air station were excited to work with her.

Cagle retired from the Coast Guard, after 24 years of service, April 29, 2012. I recently



# Lt. Cmdr. Kazren Cagle (ret.)

by PA2 Prentice Danner

caught up with her to ask her to reflect on her experience in leadership. I wanted to know how she got to be so revered and what her philosophy was. She made it clear that she cared about her co-workers. Below is my interview with Cagle.

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Prentice Danner:** What does being a good leader mean to you?

**Lt. Cmdr. Karen Cagle:** Being a good leader is 100 percent about taking care of your people and providing them with the tools and knowledge to be their very best. Great leaders must practice and truly believe in what they preach. If you don't, your subordinates and peers will see right through you.

**PD:** Who were some of your early, pre-military leadership

influences? What about them stood out to you?

**KC:** I joined the military when I was 17, so I would have to say any "pre-military" influence came from my mother. My mother was a very independent and strong woman, God rest her soul. She instilled in me the importance of always being the absolute best in whatever you take on in life, and to never forget that each person you come across in life, no matter what their beliefs or lifestyle may be, is unique and special.

**PD:** What about influences throughout your military career? Who stands out?

**KC:** The absolute biggest influence was Capt. David Walker. His leadership guided me throughout my career

as an officer. He taught me the true meaning of sacrifice and dedication to your people. It is important to never forget where you came from or the struggles you may have overcome to get to where you are today.

**PD:** What advice would you give to a junior person with aspirations to advance into a command position?

**KC:** One of the things that truly angered me over the years was when I saw people take on projects or help people for the sole purpose of boosting their performance reviews. I don't think being a great leader is about you, it's about the people who work for you.

If you genuinely do things for them, you do not have to worry

about your evaluations, they will write themselves. I have seen terrible leaders who make it through the ranks because they look good on paper. Then there are those who are known as great leaders and still look good on paper. The latter is what I think you should strive to be.

**PD:** What are the most important attributes a leader should have?

**KC:** I believe that people are born leaders. So much of

who you are and how you were raised will mold the type of leader you end up being. I do agree that there are those out there that do not realize their leadership potential and can be given the tools to bring it to the surface, but I would argue that they were still born leaders.

To me, the most important attributes of a leader are respect for those below you as well as above you, loyalty to your people, true conviction and pride in your profession, and motivating all around you to be the very best they can be, not only in their profession, but in life.

**PD:** As the Operations Officer for Air Station Hous-

ton, what was your mantra, or what philosophy did you adopt to manage your staff?

**KC:** When I was coming up through the enlisted ranks as well as the officer ranks, I always saw a divide between the engineering side of the house and the operations side of the house. It was my goal when I became an operations officer to make that division go away. Air Station Houston has one goal and that is to provide a service to the public. In order to provide

that service, we have to be united as one team. My philosophy was that it didn't matter if you were facilities, administration, supply or maintenance, we all have an equal and essential part in the successful completion of not only for the mission but for the air station as a whole. I would like to personally thank Lt. Cmdr. Mark Lay, the engineering officer at Air Station Houston, for his leadership, compromise and friendship. Without it, my goal of destroying the division would not have happened.

**PD:** If you left one impression as a leader in your career, what would you want to have left?

**KC:** Without a doubt, I would want to

know that I took care of my people. All those I crossed paths with throughout my career had a true impact on the leader I became. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Cagle emphasized people as the number one concern for great leaders. Ensuring that, as a leader, you lead by example and inspire others to believe in the goal that you're trying to attain, is what makes a good leader a great one.

**If you genuinely do things for [the people who work for you], you don't have to worry about your evaluations, they will write themselves.**





**A** young Hannah Amos walks down the pier with her father to his sailboat. It's a bright, sunny day, perfect for sailing. Her father instructs her on which lines to untie as they prepare to get underway. Out on the water, the smell and feel of the air gives Amos a sensation she can't get anywhere else. She feels free.

"It was a passion we shared together," says Hannah Amos-McDowell, about her father and their shared passion for the water. Now married and a petty officer second class stationed at Coast Guard Aids-to-Navigation Team Panama City, Fla., Amos-McDowell still finds freedom out among the waves.

It's easy to say she's followed her bliss.

"Being a boatswain is who I am and who I've been my entire life," she says. "I've been around sailboats and sailing, and I'm really so grateful I've found a career that takes me out on the water and mimics that experience."

Recently, Amos-McDowell was awarded the Master

Chief Petty Officer Pearl Faurie Leadership Award for her roles in and outside of her unit.

Her command sent an endorsement letter recommending her for the award that read like a grocery list. A three-page catalogue of all her accomplishments as well as her time spent with the Humane Society.

"I didn't even know the award existed," said Amos-McDowell. "I just love helping people and doing good for the community and for

people that come in as seaman that have never been away from home before, are underage, and are coming to the spring break capital of the country," she says. "We do what we can to lead them in the right way, so they can make the right choices."

"Every experience with the junior enlisted is different. A lot of them when they're breaking in boat crew, they're terrified to be behind the wheel and to be a boat driver. So, I think the fact that I am a strong boat driver shows them anyone can do it," says

the way and I'll help you."

There's a lot more to this boatswain's mate than mentoring. She has daily work lists that differ depending on any number of variables. At any point in the week, she can be out on the water, checking buoys, training her fellow shipmates or maintaining their equipment. According to Amos-McDowell, she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I love the job because every day's different," she says. "I absolutely love work-

## "Being a boatswain is who I am..."

others. Wherever I can jump in and help people and animals in need, I do what I can."

Master Chief Petty Officer Pearl Faurie was the first woman to advance to the rank of master chief while serving in the SPARs in 1964. Joining the service in 1942, Faurie reenlisted in 1950 when the Coast Guard became involved in the Korean War.

The annual award of her namesake is given to a female service members who have displayed exemplary leadership. This year Amos-McDowell received that honor, and her work with the junior members of her unit played no small part in that.

"We have a lot of young of

Amos-McDowell. "I try to help them build the confidence they need to do anything they want to do regardless of their fears."

If being a good leader meant simply keeping your people safe and teaching them new skills, the world wouldn't be in such short supply, and there probably wouldn't be an award for them. As it is, there is more to it. There is also the aspect of career development.

"I work with each of our junior peeps," says Amos-McDowell. "It's kind of like 'What do you want to do? What can I do to help you get there? Let's work on this or that. Don't settle for second best. If you want to do what you want to do, let's do it all

ing outside, working with my hands, sanding, painting, being out in the environment, being out in the sun or the rain."

As she says this, she sighs.

"Of course, I can't now, because I'm pregnant and on light duty. I'm chomping at the bit to get out there and play, but... I can't." She sighs again.

Amos-McDowell is seven months pregnant, and while she might be a little discouraged about not being fully operational, it's only a matter of time until she's the one teaching her son which ropes to untie, which course to take and how to enjoy the freedom of a gorgeous day out on the water.



# R*for* **READINESS**

Story by PA2 William Colclough

**B**atteries. Check. Flashlight. Check. Waders and life jacket. Check. First-aid kit. Check. Stethoscope. Check. Having a go kit of crucial items handy is necessary when high water conditions strike. If boating safety is a matter of behavior, then the most crucial item for readiness is one's mind.

For Coast Guard Auxiliarist Taylor Williams, staying ready is as important as the Hippocratic Oath. Williams is not only the commander of Flotilla 15-3 in Memphis, Tenn., she is also a psychiatrist who teaches behavioral medicine at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center; she received her doctor of medicine degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2003. Her decision to become an Auxiliarist grafted a pair of scrubs into the fabric of the maritime community.

Every month, in between her duties teaching classes, she and her flotilla drill with Coast Guard Sector Lower Mississippi



▲ Coast Guard Auxiliarist Taylor Williams pilots an Hydratrek amphibious vessel on the lower Mississippi River near Mud Lake during a flood response exercise with a Disaster Assistance Response Team, March 1, 2012. The DART recertified members in the use and operation of proper personal protective equipment and flood punts. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Lt. j.g. Brian Miller.

River and the Disaster Assistance Response Team. Her flotilla conducts safety patrols aboard a 17-foot skiff in an area of responsibility that encompasses the Wolf River to McKellar Lake on the lower Mississippi River. A member of the Auxiliary since 2007, Williams is currently training to



◀ Taylor Williams (center), poses for a picture with other Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 15-6, pilots.

become a qualified DART crewmember.

"I googled it and discovered the Coast Guard Auxiliary, as I was interested in taking a boating-safety course when I moved to Memphis in 2004," said Williams. "Now, I am a flotilla commander and have the opportunity to get training and do meaningful work."

On March 1, she and her flotilla conducted a joint-training exercise with the DART, Tennessee Task Force Urban Search and Rescue Team, Memphis Fire and Police Departments and the Shelby County Sheriff's

Department. Training to become a coxswain aboard a 16-foot flood punt, Williams and four other Auxiliarists were one of 10 boatcrews divided into four teams. Their scenario - canvas and sweep a subdivision inundated with flood waters.

The "neighborhood" was actually a portion of the lower Mississippi River near Mud Island. In May 2011, several neighborhoods and the grounds of the Sector Lower Mississippi River facility experienced heavy flooding, as historic high-water conditions present on the Red River cascaded down to the Mississippi River and deluged the





▲ A Coast Guard Disaster Assistance Team boatcrew and a Tennessee Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Team boatcrew make way on the lower Mississippi River during a field exercise, March 1, 2012. The DART recertified members in the use and operation of proper personal protective equipment and flood punts. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Lt. j.g. Brian Miller.

Memphis area.

"It's amazing when your depth finder says you're in six feet of water, but the GPS says you're on land," said Williams.

During the exercise, Williams and her flotilla crew practiced beaching craft and man-overboard drills, including cross-training as helmsman and boatcrewmembers.

As the boatcrews grid-searched "houses" along the river, a crewmember from the sector or a DART would treat other exercise participants who were simulating the effects of shock. Though she is a physician, Williams still took a CPR course to both ensure and enhance her compliance with

basic emergency first aid.

"The exercise on March 1 was my first DART training, so I have not been on any DART missions," said Williams. "But, I hope to be able to if needed."

Before she became a shipmate and "volunteer of volunteers" as an Auxiliarist, Williams provided care for servicemembers during a 15-month tour at a Veterans Administration hospital in Memphis.

If the 2012 flood season ebbs similar to last year's levels, Williams will be on call and ready. Whether this year turns out to be minor, epic or nothing at all, there is a doctor in the neighborhood.

And, she makes house calls - by boat.

# D8 breaks ground on new sector building

Story and photo by PA2 Prentice Danner



Rear Adm. Roy Nash, commander of the Eighth Coast Guard District, joined with Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston and Ellington Field Task Force members, as well as representatives of Mortenson's Federal Contracting Group to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Sector's new building at Ellington Field Jan. 31, 2012.

The new building is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2013. It is designed to facilitate the Sector in a more effective manner, and help to provide improved conditions for personnel. Sector Houston-Galveston is currently located at a 7-acre site on the Houston Ship

Channel in Galena Park. A planning proposal completed in August 2008 recommended the relocation of the unit to Ellington Field.

"The facility will be more efficient and provide better working conditions for our personnel and be less vulnerable to heavy weather conditions," said Capt. James Whitehead, commander of Sector Houston-Galveston.

The groundbreaking ceremony is the first step toward construction. It provided a chance for industry partners to come together and learn about the plans for the project.

"The new Sector building will

▲ Rear Adm. Roy Nash, commander Eighth Coast Guard District, joins with Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston and Ellington Field Task Force members, as well as representatives of Mortenson's Federal Contracting Group to participate in the groundbreaking ceremony for the sector's new building at Ellington Field January 31, 2012. The new building is to be completed in 2013.

have space available for our very important port partners. It will leverage technology and facilitate communications and synergies with our local, state and federal partners and vastly improve upon our maritime domain awareness," said Cmdr. Brian Lincoln, chief of the logistics at Sector Houston-Galveston.





# Leader, Teacher, Coastie

"Plans are nothing; planning is everything."  
What Dwight D. Eisenhower meant by these simple words is that plans are only as good as the planning that goes into them. The future can be an intimidating thing to think about, especially when you're a young man or woman coming out of high school. How do you begin prepare yourself for a new environment and responsibilities?

*Story and photos by  
PA2 Stephen Lehmann*





One day a week, each semester, each school year for the past three years, Coast Guardsmen from Aviation Training Center Mobile, Ala., have worked with the ROTC to offer a class in ASVAB and standardized test preparation to schools in the Mobile area. Over the course of those three years, they've helped approximately 540 kids come closer to their potential, while also exposing them to the type of values that can only come from the military.

On May 4, 2012, the instructors, students and program managers for the student training initiative shared a meal at the Coast Guard training center, celebrating

the third year of knowledge sharing and relationship building.

"It was a great marriage from the beginning," said Lt. Col. Robert Barrow (Ret.), ROTC instructor with Leflore High School. "These kids view the Coast Guard as their family. For the past three years, I can't think of a better program and involvement with the community than the relationships that these Coast Guardsmen have fostered with the students."

Enlisted and commissioned officers, alike, have given their time to support this one-of-a-kind program in increasing volume over the last three years. According to Petty Officer 1st Class James Nakamoto, participation in

the program has never been an issue.

"We're growing in numbers every year," said Nakamoto. "The more the active duty members here on base hear about program, the more they see we're involved with it, the more people who want to come join up with us."

Nakamoto has been with the initiative since it was originally introduced in 2009. During that time, he's stepped in for instructors that couldn't make it and been the general go-to-guy for the program. It wasn't a surprise to anyone, then, that he was elected to head up the fourth year of ASVAB training, handing him, what Nakamoto calls "the golden reigns."

The instructors strive to remain objective, not pushing their students in one direction over another. With a background that involves both collegiate efforts and military service, Nakamoto is uniquely qualified to advise his students regardless what they decide.

"I'm an Army brat," said Nakamoto. "I grew up in the Army. I know the environment that they're going to be going into and I want to share that with them. If they decide to join the military, if they go to college, I've been to college. I have some un-

tant thing. By seeing that, it causes a different way that they approach their schoolwork, the way they treat each other and the way they treat their family at home."

The "dysfunctional environments" stated by Lt. Col. Barrow were on full display March 15, 2012, when three young men snuck into Leflore High School wearing the school colors and opened fire on a student. Fortunately, no one was injured, although 30 students were caused to flee and the school was put on lock down.

Environment is something I'm used to and the things they're experiencing, I've experienced, unfortunately, many times, myself."

Having come from an environment similar to Pritchard, Nakamoto knows the importance of having an outlet for emotions that might not otherwise have one. So, he and the other Coast Guard instructors took action.

"I asked if we could have a special session with students. No ASVAB, no math, no English, let's just talk about what happened," said Nakamoto.

## Their environment is something I'm used to and the things they're experiencing, I've experienced, unfortunately, many times, myself." -AET1 Nakamoto

derstanding of what they're getting into when they get there. I know what to expect. It's not an easy transition, whatever they choose."

But, before the students can take that step into the future, they must survive the present.

"Many of these kids live in, what might be considered, dysfunctional environments," said Barrow. "With this program, the kids are able to see that there are different and better ways to conduct your self. That's the most impor-

Most people probably couldn't relate to such an incomprehensible act of violence, but to Nakamoto, there was something eerily familiar about it.

"My home is, Fayetteville, N.C. The neighborhood I grew up in was just like Pritchard," said Nakamoto. "I rolled into Pritchard and I literally thought I was going to turn a corner and see my house. So, the environment that they're growing up in, it's familiar to me. The school they're going to is just like the one I went to. Their envi-

"That class was the most active class we had. The interactions between the teachers and students was very emotional, very open."

"They talked to us about it and they had the same attitude that I'd expect, considering I grew up in that environment. It's part of life. It's something they hear and see everyday and it's not easy. It never gets easier, but they've learned to cope with it. It's an unfortunate situation they have to deal with and we help where we can."



Story and photos by  
Petty Officer 3rd Class Richard Brahm

# AMERICA MEXICO

## WORKING TOGETHER, PROTECTING THE GULF



▲ SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Texas – More than 100 participants of the 2012 MEXUS exercise gathered in the hallway for a group photo at the Isla Grand Beach Resort, Apr. 26, 2012. The annual MEXUS exercise involves hundreds of participants from Gulf Coast states and Mexico, in which a major oil spill threatens both Mexican and U.S. coastal areas.

Handling any large oil spill is almost always an extremely difficult situation. Oil spill responses typically require multiple agencies from the federal, state and local levels working together to mitigate impacts to both the environment and the local citizenry.

Now imagine trying to do this across another country's border. How are you going to coordinate the movement of personnel and equipment across another country's bor-

der?

Well in the Gulf Coast region, that's when the Mexico/United States plan comes into play.

The MEXUSGULF exercise is held biennially and the number of participants varies year to year, but it typically involves hundreds of participants from Gulf Coast states from both the U.S. and Mexico.

The scenario usually entails

a major oil spill that threatens the coastal areas of both countries.

The MEXUSGULF plan is an extension of the joint contingency plan between the U.S. and Mexico regarding pollution of the marine environment by discharges of hydrocarbons or other hazardous substances.

The MEXUSGULF plan provides standard operating procedures with respect to coordination, planning, logistics, and response in case of a pollution incident that may represent a threat to coastal waters or the marine environment of both countries.

This year, the MEXUSGULF exercise was held on South Padre Island under the blistering Texas sun. More than 100 personnel from multiple federal, state and local agencies, for both the U.S. and Mexico, converged at the Isla Grand Hotel to verify and test the changes made to the 2012 MEXUSGULF annex.

So how do you create, organize, and control an exercise for two countries, involving hundreds of people, who speak different languages?



▲ SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Texas – More than 100 participants of the 2012 MEXUS exercise gathered in the hallway for a group photo at the Isla Grand Beach Resort, Apr. 26, 2012.

Easy, you bring in a specialist and that's where Billie Robinson comes in.

Robinson serves as the Eighth Coast Guard District's Contingency Preparedness Specialist. "My traditional role for MEXUS is to coordinate the biennial exercises," stated Robinson.

Robinson coordinated a MEXUSGULF annex update workshop with U.S. and Mexican federal, state, and local representatives in Sept. 2011. The purpose of the workshop was to review lessons learned from previous exercises to identify areas of improvement and provide updates to the MEXUSGULF annex.

"The coordination, implementation, and update of the MEXUSGULF annex is the

joint responsibility of the Mexican Navy's, known as Secretaría de Marina, First Naval Zone and the U.S. Coast Guard's Eighth District," Robinson said.

From January to April 2012, Robinson coordinated three planning conferences and the execution of the 2012 MEXUSGULF annex seminar and tabletop exercise.

"The purpose of the tabletop exercise held in April was to test and validate the changes made to the MEXUSGULF annex that had been identified and proposed as a result of the MEX-

USGULF annex update workshop from 2011," Robinson explained.

The MEXUSGULF annex tabletop exercise culminated in the signing of the 2012 MEXUSGULF annex by Rear Adm. Roy Nash, commander of the Eighth Coast Guard District and Vice Adm. Arturo Lendeché Sofan, commander of the Department of the Navy Naval Zone One.

Coordinating any exercise, let alone one as large as MEXUSGULF, can be a daunting task. Robinson pinpointed three of the hardest aspects of coordinating the MEXUSGULF exercise that the Exercise Planning Team, consisting of U.S. and Mexican federal, state, and local representatives, were able to overcome.

•International agency repre-

▼ SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, Texas - Oziel Vela, a member of the Exercise Support Team at Exercise Support Branch Alameda, Calif., briefs members of the MEXUS exercise at the Isla Grand Beach Resort, Apr. 26, 2012.







▲ Rear Adm. Roy Nash, commander of the Eighth Coast Guard District, and Vice Adm. Arturo D. L. Sofan, naval commander of the zone one for the Mexican Navy, swap documents after signing an update to the 2012 MEXUSGULF Annex during the MEXUS 2012 exercise at the Isla Grand Beach Resort, Apr. 26, 2012.

sentative identification and schedule coordination.

- Getting the right people to the meetings on a regular basis.

- International communication at exercises.

- The use of simultaneous translation services, translation equipment, and roving translators.

- Bilingual presentations during workshops, seminars, and exercises.

- Encouraging Mexican and U.S. presenters to provide

PowerPoint presentations in both English and Spanish was a constant challenge.

To handle the multiple, varying situations that arise during the exercises, Robinson coordinated with the Coast Guard Exercise Support Team 3, located in Alameda, Calif. EST 3 is a four-person team consisting of Cmdr. Michael Dolan, Oziel Vela, J.R. Stafford, and Andrew Cheney.

This team helped provide support for the 2012 MEXUSGULF seminar and tabletop exercise by facilitating all planning meetings, the seminar, and the exercise, producing bi-lingual exercise-related

printed material, registration material and providing bi-lingual drafts of all meeting minutes.

“EST 3 consists of a highly dedicated team of Coast Guard civilians whose legacy knowledge of MEXUS-related exercise and coordination challenges has made them instrumental in the success of all MEXUSGULF exercises,” stated Robinson. “Their professionalism, quality of service, and willingness to go the extra mile makes them the benchmark for all EST’s throughout the Coast Guard.”

It wasn’t long ago, no more than the turn of a page in American history, that inequality kept the potential for greatness, be it man or woman, at bay. But through the evolution of civilization, a balance brought forth by forward thinking individuals paved the way for our country’s greatest asset, its people, to help change America and even the world.

Over the past 70 years, tremendous strides for ensuring individuals have the freedom to follow their rights to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” have been made, and this month, people and organizations across the country are celebrating the contributions made by women during Women’s History Month.

Contributions from women to our nation’s history weren’t officially recognized until 1978 and were originally only known as “Women’s History Week”. It was changed to encompass the entire month of March by an act of Congress in 1987.

Contributions made by women throughout history has played an integral and important role in the development of America, especially for its military, long before it was ever officially recognized as a month of remembrance.

On Nov. 23, 1942, the United States Coast Guard created the Semper Paratus, Always



▲ Sophie Klancar poses for a portrait in her home February 22, 2012. Klancar was the first femail foreign national to enter the Coast Guard as a SPAR. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Prentice Danner.

Ready women’s reserve, better known as the SPAR’s.

One of those SPAR’s was Sophie Klancar.

Sophie was born in Rob, Slovenia, and at the age of six, she and her two sisters were left in a private Catholic school while their parents went to America to start a better life.

By the time Sophie was 13, she decided to travel to the

United States. She made the long, eight-day trip aboard a boat by herself and unable to speak any English.

She landed at Ellis Island in New York City, where her family picked her up and brought her to Cleveland, Ohio, and to a new home in a strange country.

Although she was back with her family and had a new life in America, she was still en-



countering issues which made the transition difficult, especially with regards to finishing her education.

"I sat in the back, and I had to read, and actually use my English. They wouldn't let me use anything else," Sophie said. "I was tutored by a first-grade teacher an hour every day. She gave a lot to help us."

After going from first grade to high school graduation over the span of two years, she went to work in Milwaukee, Wis.

On a whim, while walking past a Coast Guard office in late 1944, she stopped in and took a test to see if she qualified for service in the SPARS.

"I passed a Coast Guard recruiting station and said to myself, 'You know what, that sounds like me'."

Sophie had recently lost her job and was in desperate need of employment. Her fears, however, were eased once she spoke to the recruiter.

"So she went ahead and stayed there and gave me the test. It came back and she said, 'I don't know what you were worried about, you did fine'," Sophie said.

After joining the Coast Guard, she hopped on a coal train on her way to boot camp.



"THE GIRL OF THE YEAR IS A SPAR"

"Along the way I had to change out of my seersucker uniform. It turned black from the soot expelled by the engine," said Sophie.

Some Coast Guard female recruits underwent regimented training at the Palm Beach Biltmore Hotel in Florida.

More than 7,000 women were indoctrinated in the 18 months that the training school at Palm Beach existed.

Most of the jobs conducted by SPARS weren't glamorous. The role of the SPAR's was to help fill shore-side jobs for their male counterparts, allowing Coast Guard men to deploy for missions such as transporting troops to the shores of Europe or protecting trade routes in the Pacific from German U boats.

Upon completing Storekeeper A-School, Sophie was stationed at an old customs building in New Orleans where she began and finished her tour.

Throughout American history, women have made tremendous contributions to both America and the military. From Susan B. Anthony to Harriet Tubman, women have been helping carve a path to prosperity and equal rights, all while defending what they believe in and paving the way for future generations to come.

DON'T BE A SPARE.. BE A SPAR



“Dale, Tom, Nando and Drew  
answered the call. They stepped  
forward and dedicated their lives  
to helping others – the only thing  
stronger than their desire to fly,  
was their desire to serve. And, they  
did serve – they served all of us.”  
- Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Bob Papp



*In remembrance of the fallen*

Lt. Cmdr. Dale Taylor  
Lt. j.g. Thomas Cameron

ASTC Fernando Jorge  
AST3 Andrew Knight



Coast Guard Fireman Anthony Gallegos performs underway training as part of the Reserve Boatcrew College Course in Port Arthur, Apr. 4, 2012. The course also covered different drills, including: towing, man over boards, basic engineering casualty control exercises, flooding control, proper use of the P6 de-watering pump, navigation exercises, survival swim, pyrotechnics use and night operations.

