

BATTLE STREAMERS

There is no doubt that the Coast Guard cherishes its many peacetime activities. But it is also proud of its services in the wars of the United States. The "system of cutters" was only seven years old when several of its fleet fought in the Quasi-War with France. In this war and the War of 1812, these small, lightly armed cutters proved their worth against experienced European warships.

Embroidering the names of battles on flags may be traced to the early days of the republic. By the end of the 19th century, embroidery was discontinued in favor of inscribed silver bands around the color staffs. This too was changed in World War I in favor of small ribbons bearing battle names.

On 4 October 1967, the Commandant approved the recommendation to authorize the display of Battle Streamers with the Coast Guard Ceremonial Color. On the 178th Anniversary of the Coast Guard, 4 August 1968, Commandant Willard J. Smith, affixed the first set of Battle Streamers ever to adorn the Coast Guard Color. The impressive ceremonies were appropriately held at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The words of the Commandant on that occasion best summarize the purpose of Battle Streamers on the Coast Guard Color:

"From this date on, these streamers, together with others which may be bestowed on the Coast Guard at some future date, will adorn the Coast Guard Ceremonial Color whenever and wherever it may be unfurled. Let these Battle Streamers forever stand as a living memorial and a lasting tribute to our gallant personnel, who, by their deeds and heroic action, served the Coast Guard and their nation with glory and distinction in its hour of need."

The Coast Guard adopted battle streamers following the practice established by the U.S. Marine Corps without inscription on the ribbons or adornment by stars or other devices and are $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide by four feet long. The streamers are attached to the Coast Guard standard, replacing cords and tassels. Streamers will be affixed to the streamer attachment at the top of the flagstaff below the topping. The senior streamer will be fastened to the front of the streamer attachment, followed by the remaining streamers, in descending order, clockwise around the attachment. They are carried in all ceremonies, representing heroic actions in all maritime and naval encounters from 1790 to the Global War on Terrorism and beyond. The battle streamers may be displayed by major commands.

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UNIT AWARDS

1. Coast Guard Presidential Unit Citation: The streamer has nine stripes consisting of white, orange, white, corsaire blue, white, corsaire blue, white, orange, and white. The citation was awarded for meritorious achievement and outstanding performance in response to Hurricane Katrina from 29 August to 13 September 2005. The men and women of the Coast Guard were responsible for rescuing over 33,000 people, beginning clean-up operations of 9.4 million gallons of oil, repair and replacement of over 1,800 aids to navigation, and provided assistance and hope to hundreds of thousands of displaced citizens. For this specific award, members authorized the award will wear the ribbon with hurricane device.



2. Navy Presidential Unit Citation: The streamer is blue, gold, and red. The citation was awarded to Coast Guard vessels during World Battle II and also to 7 high endurance cutters and 27 eighty-two-foot patrol boats for participation in Operation SEA LORDS and Operation SWIFT RAIDER during Vietnam.



3. Department of Transportation – Secretary’s Outstanding Unit Award: The streamer has thirteen stripes consisting of orange, blue, white, blue, orange, white, blue, white, orange, blue, white, blue, and orange. On 3 November 1994, the Secretary of Transportation bestowed his highest award, the Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement (DOT Gold Medal), on the United States Coast Guard for a-period of high-tempo operations from 1 October 1993 to 30 September 1994. As the Secretary intended this recognition for the Coast Guard as a unit, the Commandant authorized the ribbon bar only, with gold frame, to be known as the Secretary’s Outstanding Unit Award. The award was again presented to specific units for their outstanding performance of duty in New York Harbor following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center from September 11, 2001 through October 22, 2001.



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4. Coast Guard Unit Commendation: The streamer has nine stripes consisting of blue, yellow, red, green, white, green, red, yellow, and blue. Awarded by the Commandant and by those designated, to any unit which has distinguished itself by valorous or extremely meritorious service not involving combat but in support of Coast Guard operations, which renders the unit outstanding compared to other units performing similar service.



5. Navy Unit Commendation: The streamer is green with two groupings of blue, yellow and red stripes. The commendation was awarded to Coast Guard units during World War II, to Coast Guard units comprising Squadron 1, Squadron 3, Division 11, Division 12, and Division 13 for actions in Vietnam, and both shore and afloat units for actions supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism.



6. Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation: The streamer has nine stripes consisting of blue, white, green, white, light blue, white, green, white, and blue. Awarded by the Commandant and by those designated, to any unit which has distinguished itself by valorous or meritorious achievement or service not involving combat but in support of Coast Guard operations, which renders the unit outstanding compared to other units performing similar service.



7. Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation: The streamer green with two groupings of yellow, blue and yellow; red center. The commendation is awarded by the Secretary of the Navy to any unit distinguishing itself under combat or non-combat conditions. The Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation has been awarded to Coast Guard shore and afloat units for services in Vietnam, Iraq, and elsewhere.



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8. Army Meritorious Unit Commendation: The streamer is scarlet. The commendation was awarded by the Secretary of the Army to the Coast Guard Port Security and Waterways Detail Vietnam for its operations in securing port areas and supervising the handling of ammunition and explosives in Vietnam between 15 October 1966 and 15 April 1967, 31 July 1968 and 31 January 1969, and 1 February 1969 and 31 December 1969.



CAMPAIGN

9. Maritime Protection of the New Republic: The streamer is alternating horizontal stripes of eight red (scarlet) and eight white. The streamer was adopted on 30 December 1981 to recognize the heroic actions of the Revenue Cutter Service--the forerunner of the U. S. Coast Guard--which served as the sole maritime defense force protecting our young Nation from 1790 to 1797. Most notably, the Revenue Cutter Service fought against French privateers who were seizing British and Spanish ships in American waters. The Revenue Cutter Service undertook actions of great value to the United States, including the Service's efforts to prevent maritime smuggling, thus securing a reputation for excellence that continues to embody the U. S. Coast Guard today.



10. French Naval War (Quasi-War with France): The streamer is light blue with two groupings of red, white and blue stripes. During the period 1790-1799, Alexander Hamilton's fleet of 10 small Revenue Cutters assumed the task of protection of American trade in the absence of a regular Navy. During the 1790's this fleet engaged French privateers who preyed on American merchant vessels. Although out-gunned, and outnumbered, the cutters distinguished themselves. The cutter EAGLE captured five French vessels and recaptured seven American vessels. Cutter PICKERING captured the L'EGYPTE CONQUISE, a vessel with twice the armament and three times the complement of the cutter.



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11. War of 1812: The streamer is scarlet with two white stripes. Twelve Revenue Cutters were called upon to participate in "the second battle for independence." The battle was barely a week old when the cutter JEFFERSON captured the first prize to fall to the American fleet, the merchantman PATRIOT. In all, the cutters took 18 enemy ships.



12. African Slave Trade Patrol: The streamer is cobalt blue center with stripes of white, cobalt blue, white, apple red, white, and cobalt blue. This streamer was adopted in October 1996 to recognize the Revenue Cutter Service's participation in eliminating the flow of slave traffic from Africa to the United States. International trading in slaves by U.S. Citizens and vessels was outlawed on 22 March 1794. In the middle years of the nineteenth century, Americans spoke out against the slave traffic flowing from Africa to the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. Navy joined England's Royal Navy to establish the African Slave Trade patrol, which for 20 years hunted and ran down the slavers who plied the Atlantic with their cargoes of human misery.



13. Operations Against West Indian Pirates: The streamer is cobalt blue center with stripes of black, white, black, and old gold. This streamer was adopted in October 1996 to recognize the impact that the Revenue Cutter Service had on the eliminating the pirate menace. By the early 1820's buccaneers sailing from the Caribbean had attacked nearly 3,000 merchant ships. The Revenue Marine was instrumental in driving the pirates from their coastal haunts. However, when the pirates moved to nearby foreign waters, pirate vessels often outnumbered and outgunned the Revenue schooners. The first major joint Navy and Revenue Service anti-piracy operation was conducted in 1822 against the pirates in the West Indies. By 1830, this menace to free shipping had been dealt a crippling blow.



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14. Indian Wars: The streamer is scarlet with two black stripes. The 1835 massacre of an army detachment by the Seminole Nation resulted in the deployment of American forces to the Everglades. The maneuverability and shallow draft of the Revenue Cutters proved beneficial in the performance of a myriad of duties, including troop, armament, and supply transportation, and the landing of Revenue Cuttermen to fortify settlements and pursue Seminole raiding parties into the treacherous Everglades.



15. Mexican War: The streamer is green with one stripe. In June of 1846, nine cutters comprising the first official squadron of Revenue Cutters commenced operations against Mexico in the Gulf of Mexico. This small squadron performed scouting, convoy, towing, and blockade duties, as well as transporting troops and supplies and carrying mail and dispatches. During the first expedition to Tabasco, the cutter FORWARD provided single-handed artillery support, and combined with the cutter McLANE to blockade the port.



16. Civil War: The streamer is blue and gray, equally divided. The first maritime shot of the Civil War, fired by the Revenue Cutter HARRIET LANE across the bow of the confederate vessel NASHVILLE during the bombardment of Fort Sumpter, marked the beginning of Revenue Cutter Service participation in the War Between the States. Revenue Cutters aided in the crucial blockading of more than 3,000 miles of Confederate coastline, cutting vital southern supply lines.



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17. Spanish-American War: The streamer is yellow with two blue stripes. The sinking of the U. S. battleship MAINE in Havana Harbor in 1898 crystallized American sympathy for those seeking Cuban independence from Spanish rule. The Revenue Cutters were called upon, and eight cutters took part in the blockade of Havana. One cutter, MCCULLOCH, operated with Dewey at Manila Bay, four cutters patrolled the West Coast against raiders, and seven others worked with the Army guarding principle ports for Boston to the Mississippi passes. Heroic action by the tug HUDSON at Cardenas Bay, Cuba, resulted in the award of a special Medal of Honor at the direction of President McKinley.



18. World War I Victory: The streamer is double rainbow. Protection of the Allies' supply convoys was vital to victory in World War I. In mid-1917, six cutters formed Squadron Two of Division Six of the Atlantic fleet patrol forces. These vessels escorted many convoys between Gibraltar and Great Britain, and engaged German submarines in the Mediterranean. One cutter, the TAMPA, was lost with all hands in 1918 after safely escorting 18 convoys.



19. China Service: The streamer is yellow with two red stripes. Awarded for operations in China from 7 July 1937 to 7 September 1939 and from 1945 to 1957. On 18 January 1953 a Coast Guard aircraft was dispatched to assist survivors of a Navy plane crash in China waters. After making an open sea landing and recovering all survivors, the Coast Guard aircraft was unable to take off and crashed with the loss of five crewmembers.



20. Yangtze Service: (1926-27): The streamer is dark blue with two groupings of yellow and red stripes. U. S. Navy protected U.S. citizens against bandit and warlord forces in turbulent China. (1930-32) - Severe floods along the Yangtze River valley brought the U.S. Asiatic Fleet into action to aid millions of Chinese left homeless and hungry.



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21. American Defense Service: The streamer is yellow with two groupings of red, white and blue stripes. With the beginning of World Battle II in Europe, President Roosevelt required patrols off the entrances of U. S. ports as part of his neutrality proclamation. Coast Guard small craft patrolled every U. S. port, guarding against sabotage and other covert activities by the Axis powers.



22. American Campaign: The streamer is blue with two groupings of white, black, red and white stripes; with red, white and blue stripes in center. During the early months of U. S. participation in World Battle II, most U-boat victims were west of the longitude where control of convoys was passed to the British. Using all available means to limit losses, Admiral King, CNO, formed Hunter-Killer groups which included numerous Coast Guard small craft and cutters.



23. European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign: The streamer is green and brown with three stripe groupings: one of green, white and red, a second of white, black, and white stripes; and a center grouping of red, white, and blue stripes. Awarded for Coast Guard action in the European, African and Middle Eastern theaters, including landings at Salerno, Southern France, Anzio, Normandy, and North Africa.



24. Asiatic-Pacific Campaign: The streamer is gold with two white, red and white stripe groupings; with blue, white and red stripes in center. Awarded for Coast Guard operations in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater, including Pearl Harbor, and landings at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Makin, Luzon, and the Philippines.



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25. World War II Victory: The streamer is red with rainbow border groupings and two white stripes. A major task of the Coast Guard in WWII was antisubmarine warfare. Coast Guard cutters and Coast Guard manned naval vessels helped win the battle of the Atlantic, and rescued more than 4,000 survivors of torpedoings. These ships, among them ICARUS, SPENCER and DUANE, destroyed five U-boats. Another major Coast Guard task was operation of the landing craft that hit the beaches at Guadalcanal, Attu, North Africa, Salerno, Anzio, Tarawa, Makin, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Normandy, Southern France, Guam, Luzon, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and the rescue of survivors of sunken landing barges.



26. Navy Occupation Service: The streamer is white borders with a black and red stripe. Awarded to several Coast Guard vessels, including BUTTONWOOD, BIBB, and CHINCOTEAGUE for occupation of the territories of the enemies of the United States during and subsequent to World War II.



27. Korean Service: The streamer is light blue bordered on each side with white; white center stripes. Although the Coast Guard did not operate under the Department of the Navy in the Korean Battle, the Coast Guard instituted a port security program in response to executive order and manned a total of five Pacific weather stations in support of Korean operations. A number of LORAN stations were constructed to improve navigation in Korean waters, including a station at Pusan, Korea.



28. National Defense Service: The streamer is red with yellow center and two groupings of white, blue, white stripes. Awarded for service:
26 June 1950 – 28 July 1954,
31 December 1960 – 15 August 1974,
02 August 1990 – 30 November 1995, and
11 September 2001 – a closing date to be determined.



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29. Armed Forces Expeditionary: The streamer is light blue with border groupings of green, yellow, brown and black; red, white and blue center grouping. Awarded for post-Korean war services in which foreign armed opposition was encountered or hostile action was imminent. Three Coast Guard vessels and one shore unit conducted operations in support of the crisis in the Dominican Republic and 15 Coast Guard vessels, five shore units, and one special flight participated in the Cuban Crisis. In addition, Coast Guard service members manned 17 82-foot craft engaged in operation Market Time in Vietnam as early as 1965.



30. Vietnam Service: The streamer is yellow, with green borders, three red stripes. Coast Guard duties in Vietnam, beginning in April 1965, were numerous. In successful but dangerous efforts to limit supplies to the Viet Cong, Coast Guard service members boarded all suspicious craft and searched for munitions and other contraband. Coast Guard cutters also took part in hundreds of gunfire support missions, and conducted extensive aids to navigation operations, port safety operations, and merchant marine safety operations.



31. Southwest Asia Service: The streamer is black center with stripes of myrtle green, chamois, old glory red, white, old glory red, blue, chamois, and black. Awarded to various units for service in support of Operations DESERT SHIELD or DESERT STORM between the dates of 2 August 1990 and 30 November 1995.



32. Kosovo Campaign: The streamer has five stripes consisting of blue, red, white, blue, and red. Awarded to various Coast Guard units for service in support of Kosovo Defensive Operations.



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33. Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary: The streamer has fifteen stripes consisting of bluebird, old glory blue, white, old glory blue, bluebird, golden yellow, bluebird, scarlet, bluebird, golden yellow, bluebird, old glory blue, white, old glory blue, and bluebird. Awarded to numerous ashore and afloat units in action and support of the Global War on Terrorism within the area of operation.



34. Global War on Terrorism Service: The streamer is blue with yellow, red, and white stripes. Awarded to numerous ashore and afloat units in action and support of the Global War on Terrorism home based operations, such as NOBLE EAGLE.



35. Afghanistan Campaign: The streamer has thirteen stripes consisting of emerald, scarlet, black, white, scarlet, white, old glory blue, white, scarlet, white, black, scarlet, and emerald. Awarded to Coast Guard units and personnel deployed to Afghanistan in support of the Global War on Terrorism.



36. Iraq Campaign: The streamer has eleven stripes consisting of scarlet, white, green, white, black, chamois, black, white, green, white, and scarlet. Awarded to Coast Guard units and personnel serving in Iraq supporting OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.



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FOREIGN AWARDS

37. Croix de Guerre, French, World War II: The streamer is red with four green stripes. Twelve separate individual awards of the Croix de Guerre were made to Coast Guard service members for their involvement in the liberation of France.



38. Philippine Defense: The streamer is red with two white stripes. Awarded for Coast Guard participation in the Defense of the Philippines between 7 December 1941 and 5 May 1942.



39. Philippine Liberation: The streamer is red with one blue and one white stripe. Awarded for Coast Guard participation in the liberation of the Philippines between 7 December 1941 and 5 May 1942.



40. Philippine Independence: The streamer is blue with yellow border stripes and red, white, red center grouping. Awarded to Coast Guard individuals and units who participated in both the defense and liberation of the Philippines.



41. Philippine Presidential Unit Citation: The streamer is red, white and blue. The citation was awarded by the President of the Philippine Republic to Coast Guards service members serving in units engaged in either the defense of the Philippines or the liberation of the Philippines.



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42. Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation, Gallantry Cross with Palm: The streamer is red with gold center and eight double red stripes with palm. The citation was awarded to various Coast Guard afloat and shore units in recognition of meritorious service in Vietnam.



43. Vietnam Armed Forces Meritorious Unit Citation, Civil Actions Medal First Class Color with Palm: The streamer is dark green with two broad red stripes; two narrow red stripes in center and palm. Awarded to various Coast Guard afloat and shore units in recognition of meritorious civil action service in Vietnam.



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