INTELLIGENCE IN THE RUM WAR AT SEA, 1920-1933

by LT Eric S. Ensign, USCG

With an Introduction by
Admiral Robert E. Kramek, USCG (Ret.)
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 1994-1998

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By Eric S. Ensign
Lieutenant, U.S. Coast Guard
Joint Military Intelligence College Class of 1998

Edited by Russell G. Swenson

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Admiral Robert E. Kramek
Commandant, United States Coast Guard, (Ret.)

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The Joint Military Intelligence College supports and encourages research on intelligence issues that distills lessons and improves support to policy-level and operational consumers.

This book reflects careful archival research by U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant Eric Ensign, who was a student at this College in the 1997-1998 academic year. The manuscript was originally prepared to fulfil part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science of Strategic Intelligence at this institution. His work holds enduring value, in light of the continuing countersmuggling missions of the U.S. Coast Guard and other national security organizations. Its publication offers one example of the variety of applied intelligence research carried out by over 100 successful degree candidates who graduate each year from this College's graduate program in intelligence studies.

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<*Russell.Swenson@dia.mil*>
Editor

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INTRODUCTION

The "lessons of history" are important tools in formulating the strategy, policy and tactics to protect our national interests. The lessons learned from the use of intelligence in the Rum War at Sea are totally applicable to today's War on Drugs. Over ninety-five percent of the drugs that reach our borders originate from source countries that rely on maritime smuggling routes. The value of intelligence as a force multiplier in the Drug War, like that chronicled by the author for the Rum War, cannot be overestimated. Still, these lessons had to be learned anew in the Drug War. In 1988 intelligence was a factor in approximately fifteen percent of drug interdictions. By 1998, it was the essential factor responsible for over eighty-five percent of all interdictions. It is disappointing to know that it took over a decade to convince the Intelligence Community, as well as other responsible agencies, that all-source, fused intelligence was the most important element of our maritime strategy, both for illegal drugs as well as illegal migration. All of the elements described by the author—interagency cooperation, all-source intelligence, counterintelligence, operational security, communications security, as well as HUMINT, COMINT and Imagery—have direct parallels to today's maritime interdiction operations. In this respect, the book is a valuable primer for any intelligence strategist.

Many of the challenges faced in the use of all-source intelligence for border interdiction operations are not readily apparent. In peacetime, border interdiction is the responsibility of domestic agencies. Involvement in these so-called "police operations" is prohibited for the Department of Defense as a matter of policy and law. The provision of intelligence obtained from national sensors to domestic agencies that are "non-subscribers" becomes problematic.

As a member of the armed forces, the U.S. Coast Guard, with domestic police power, has found itself in a unique position to use all-source intelligence, and to lead interdiction efforts. It is interesting to note that the Drug War represents one hundred percent of the Drug Administration's budget, forty percent of the U.S. Custom's Service budget, ten percent of the Coast Guard's budget, and one quarter of one percent of the Department of Defense budget. The Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATFs) should really be called Joint Interagency "Intelligence" Task Forces that fuse intelligence form all sources, for all users. This intelligence product has become the essential weapon in the protection of our borders and an immense force multiplier saving billions of dollars in the cost of vessel and aircraft operations.

I congratulate the Joint Military Intelligence College in educating our intelligence personnel in a "Joint" environment, making them cognizant of the lessons of history and the value of intelligence in protecting our national interests. This opportunity has provided the author the ability to accomplish his research and complete this valuable and useful work.

Admiral Robert E. Kramek, Retired
United States Coast Guard
Commandant 1994-1998

Chapter 1

THE COAST GUARD AND THE ONSET OF PROHIBITION

At midnight on 16 January 1920 America officially went dry. Unofficially, it never dried up. As America began its noble experiment with Prohibition no one could have foreseen the magnitude of illegal liquor importation, leading to rampant opportunism, government corruption, and organized crime. Prohibition made the Roaring Twenties roar. In this naive and challenging time the Coast Guard came of age, as the military service tasked with stopping the seaborne flow of illegal liquor. Facing the monumental task of defending the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico and Great Lakes shorelines, the Coast Guard turned to intelligence to bridge the capabilities gap between well-organized smugglers and under-resourced law enforcement. A natural question that appears not to have been addressed is "What role did the intelligence effort play in combating smuggling operations?"

Drawing upon declassified Coast Guard Intelligence Division records at the National Archives, this study brings to light the massive, all-source intelligence effort that formed the backbone of Coast Guard operations in the "Rum War at Sea." It shows how, through a concerted effort to direct operations based on intelligence, the Coast Guard was able to obtain and maintain dominant battlespace knowledge (DBK)[1] over the rum-runners through the end of Prohibition. DBK allowed the Coast Guard and other federal enforcement agencies to sustain an effective level of deterrence to liquor smuggling. This successful marriage of intelligence and operations is also a model of interagency cooperation in applying intelligence to a problem of national interest. At the conclusion of this study, the reader will understand how the fusion of intelligence and the Coast Guard's enforcement strategy acted as a force multiplier, allowing the Coast Guard to use DBK to its advantage in defeating a determined foe.

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[1] Dominant battlespace knowledge (DBK) is defined as the "ability to *understand* what we see and act on it decisively." The resulting "enhanced vision" of the battlespace is a significant military advantage, allowing military commanders to see clearly through the "fog of war" and make intelligent decisions to favorably affect the outcome of battle. The DBK concept was first put forth in the 1990s and was not therefore, by name, a part of the Coast Guard's strategy in the Rum War at Sea. However, the concept can be applied to the Coast Guard's actions as a theoretical framework to define and discuss the Coast Guard's concerted effort to maintain its "information edge" in the Rum War. Throughout this thesis, the term DBK is used interchangeably with "information superiority" and "information dominance" to show how the Coast Guard used information as a force multiplier in sustaining its successes over the rum runner through the end of Prohibition. National Defense University, *Dominant Battlespace Knowledge* (Washington, DC: NDU, 1985), UB251.U5D66, xi.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM FACING THE COAST GUARD

The Volstead Act, passed to enforce the 18th Amendment, ironically fueled America's popular resolve to stay wet. Although it outlawed the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol, it made no provisions against buying or drinking alcohol.[2] The risk in breaking the law remained with the seller. As America's thirst for alcohol grew, so did the numbers of those willing to supply it. Manufacturing and importing alcohol immediately became a very lucrative business.[3] Even though many individuals resorted to distilling alcohol for themselves, illegally acquiring alcohol meant for medicinal and religious purposes, or extracting alcohol from other preparations, the principal trade in illegal alcohol occurred through the importation of foreign alcohol into the U.S. by sea.[4] It was against this game plan that the Coast Guard waged an unrelenting campaign to detect, monitor, apprehend, and support the prosecution of those who smuggled alcohol on the high seas and navigable waterways of the U.S.

As the demand for alcohol increased, foreign distillers were only too happy to respond, in essence taking over the American liquor industry.[5] In Great Britain, domestic liquor sales were sagging and Prohibition opened the door for the exportation of British liquor to their crown colonies in the Western Hemisphere. In the Bahamas alone, liquor imports from Great Britain rose from 27,427 gallons in 1918 to 567,940 gallons in 1921,[6] then to 2.5 million gallons in 1922.[7] The liquor was then sold to American opportunists and organized crime syndicates who "imported" it into the U.S. This same scenario was repeated for the British crown colony of Belize and the French islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, located off the coast of Newfoundland. European and Canadian liquor poured into these outposts, where it was warehoused awaiting transshipment to the U.S. Vessels of all types and registries called on these islands, transforming quiet, isolated towns to "something like American mining settlement[s] in the days of the gold rush."[8] In a letter to Coast Guard Commandant Frederick C. Billard[9] the Anti-Saloon League of America reported liquor valued at $500 million was expected to be smuggled into the U.S. in

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[2] *The Prohibition Era: The Roaring Twenties,* prod. Charlotte Moore, dir. Clive Maltby, 50 min., A&E Home Video, 1997, videocassette.

[3] In the early days of rum-running, exorbitant profits of up to 700 percent were reported. Liquor costing $8 a case at the port of origin sold for $65 a case along America's shorelines. Hugh Garling, "The United States Coast Guard: Part II," *Nautical Magazine* 247, no. 2 (February 1992): 103.

[4] *The Prohibition Era: The Roaring Twenties.*

[5] Lawrence Spinelli, *Dry Diplomacy: The United States, Great Britain and Prohibition,* Ph.D. Dissertation (New York: History Department, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, New York University, 1984), 24.

[6] Spinelli, 28.

[7] Malcom F. Willoughby, CDR, USCGR(T), *Rum War at Sea* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1964), 29.

[8] Willoughby, 29.

[9] Rear Admiral Billard was the Coast Guard Commandant from 1924 to 1932, during the main Coast Guard effort to enforce Prohibition. His predecessor was Rear Admiral Reynolds, Commandant from 1919 to 1924, and his successor was Rear Admiral Hamlet who became Commandant in 1932 and led the Coast Guard until 1936.

1924.[10] At the same time, Commandant Billard himself indicated that by the summer of 1924, some 290 vessels, including steamers and sailing vessels, were steadily involved in the rum trade.[11]

The close proximity of islands such as the Bahamas and St. Pierre and Miquelon to the U.S. Atlantic coastline created additional problems for enforcement. In 1920, U.S. legal territorial waters extended only to three miles from shore, making the seizure of any non-U.S. flagged vessel operating outside that limit outside the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard.[12] The British government turned a blind eye to American Prohibition, and in the Bahamas and in Belize this compounded the problem as "a large portion of [the] American smuggling fleet was now sailing from [British] crown [colonies], with a cargo of Scotch whiskey,[13] under the protection of the British flag."[14] By the summer of 1921, a virtual "Rum Row" had been established off the New Jersey and New York coasts, where foreign-flagged rum runners supplied with liquor from the Bahamas, Belize, and St. Pierre and Miquelon waited three miles offshore for American contact boats to come out and purchase their liquor cargoes.[15] This was in plain sight and much to the chagrin of American enforcement officials. By the end of 1921, at least 20 known vessels made their home along Rum Row.[16]

Figure 1. Rum-Running Speedboat

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Speedboat," photograph (Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC: circa 1925).

[10] Wayne B. Wheeler, General Counsel, the Anti-Saloon League of America, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 24 July 1924. The location of this and other archival documents are noted in the bibliography.

[11] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Wayne B. Wheeler, General Counsel, the Anti-Saloon League of America, no subject, 25 July 1924.

[12] Willoughby, 29.

[13] In the early years of the Rum War, Scotch whiskey was the premiere liquor manufactured and shipped by British liquor firms to British interests in the Bahamas and Belize. The first Scotch whiskey produced entirely for the export market was "Cutty Sark," bottled by Berry Brothers, liquor merchants to Buckingham Palace. Spinelli, 28.

[14] Spinelli, 30.

[15] Willoughby, 23.

[16] Willoughby, 27.

While many larger vessels formed the foundation of the American "rum fleet," early rum-running opportunists also employed smaller vessels including speedboats, some capable of exceeding 40 knots, to outrun Coast Guard defenses.[17] Public sentiment on Prohibition was ambivalent, as evidenced by some marine engine companies giving away free machine guns as an incentive for would-be rum runners to purchase their engines.[18] It was a lawless and dangerous time. Liquor was smuggled into the U.S. right under the noses of the slower enforcement vessels, and the number of smuggling vessels involved in the rum trade was steadily increasing.[19] By 1924, liquor was entering the U.S. from sea not only via Rum Row, the Bahamas, and St. Pierre and Miquelon, but also from Canada via the Great Lakes, from Mexico via the Pacific coastline and the Gulf of Mexico; and from Cuba and the West Indies via the Southeast U.S.[20] The U.S. was under siege by American and foreign opportunists determined to cash in on Prohibition.[21]

COAST GUARD ORGANIZATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE RUM WAR

Although the Coast Guard would eventually become the lead U.S. agency charged with enforcing the Prohibition laws at sea, enforcement in the first few years of Prohibition was conducted primarily by state law enforcement officials with the help of 1,500 federal agents from the Treasury Department's newly established Bureau of Prohibition.[22] From 1920 to 1923, the Coast Guard, also falling under the Treasury Department, saw the enforcement of the Prohibition laws as an ancillary duty, subordinate to its primary mission of search and rescue. Accordingly, Prohibition was enforced only incidentally and given no more emphasis than any other Coast Guard mission.[23] But by 1923 it was clear America had no intention of abiding by its self-imposed ban on alcohol. It was also clear the Coast Guard would be compelled to play a leading role in the suppression of liquor smuggling into the U.S. by sea.

As the flow of liquor continued to swell, jurisdictional issues arose between the Coast Guard, the Customs Service, and the Federal Prohibition Bureau. The Coast Guard saw Prohibition enforcement as a Customs Service responsibility, whereas Customs looked to

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[17] Willoughby, 18.

[18] Lewis J. Tutt, Deputy Prohibition Administrator, Bureau of Prohibition, letter to Commander, USCG New York Division, no subject, 9 December 1931.

[19] Willoughby, 29.

[20] Willoughby, 17.

[21] One of the more famous early rum runners was Captain Bill McCoy. McCoy operated three sailing vessels out of Nassau, Bahamas and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, bringing liquor to Rum Row where he was said to have made a fortune. He was known along Rum Row for handling only good liquor and for being fair in his dealings. Through this reputation, his liquor became known as "the real McCoy," coining the American slang phrase meaning "genuine." Willoughby, 18.

[22] *The Prohibition Era: The Roaring Twenties.*

[23] Coast Guard missions in the early 1920s included the enforcement of navigation and anchorage laws, the safety of life and property at sea, protection of federal revenues, and the prevention of smuggling. Willoughby, 22.

the Coast Guard to take the lead role. Federal Prohibition agents were heavily involved in combating liquor on land and had little time for seaward enforcement. In January 1923, the Collector of Customs asked the Secretary of the Treasury to "clearly [outline] the respective functions of the Customs, Coast Guard, and Prohibition authorities."[24] One month later, the Assistant U.S. Attorney General implored the Secretary of the Treasury to assign responsibility for Prohibition enforcement along the entire U.S. coastline to the Coast Guard, as "neither the [C]ustoms nor the [P]rohibition [S]ervice [were] properly equipped for coping with the situation."[25] This put additional pressure on the Coast Guard to divert personnel and vessels from its other missions to law enforcement. In response, Commandant Reynolds addressed the Coast Guard's limited ability to enforce the Prohibition laws in a letter to the Treasury Department's Budget Director in May of 1923. He asked for an immediate additional appropriation of $5 million, to purchase roughly 100 additional small craft and fuel for Coast Guard cutters engaged in Prohibition enforcement.[26]

The Secretary of the Treasury agreed that the Coast Guard be given the main enforcement responsibility for stopping the influx of liquor by sea. In May 1924, a division of responsibilities for enforcement among the Coast Guard, Customs Service, and the Federal Prohibition Bureau were put forth in a Treasury Department directive giving the Coast Guard responsibility for enforcing the Prohibition laws on the waters along the "Atlantic Coast, Gulf Coast, Pacific Coast including Alaska, waters of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and waters of the Hawaiian Islands."[27] The Coast Guard was also given responsibility for most of the boundary waters between the U.S. and Canada. Knowing the Coast Guard was not adequately equipped for its new mandate, the Secretary of the Treasury also allowed the Coast Guard time to build and launch an effective enforcement capability.[28]

The Coast Guard's designation as the primary government agency responsible for enforcing the Prohibition laws at sea presented a formidable problem—how to effectively police 12,000 miles of U.S. coastline[29] with a force of only 75 commissioned vessels, most of which were not designed for law enforcement.[30] With 290 rum-running vessels

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[24] Collector of Customs, U.S. Customs Service, letter to the Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 24 January 1923.

[25] Mable W. Willebrant, Assistant U.S. Attorney General, letter to the Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 7 February 1923.

[26] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, memorandum for General Lord, Director of the Budget, subject: "Availability of the Coast Guard to Enforce Prohibition Law," 3 May 1923.

[27] McKenzie Moss, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; Directors of Customs and Special Agency Services; and Prohibition Commissioner, subject: "Territorial Responsibility in the Prevention of the Smuggling of Liquor," 2 May 1924.

[28] Moss, 2 May 1924.

[29] The U.S. coastline extends over 12,352.88 miles. "The United States," *Central Intelligence Agency Fact Book,* URL: <*http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/country-frame.html*>, accessed 9 July 1998.

[30] Treasury Department, Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1923 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1923), 458.

already identified by 1924, Coast Guard assets were outnumbered four to one. Additionally, in 1923, total Coast Guard personnel numbered only 4,140, including 206 commissioned officers, 395 warrant officers, 3,496 enlisted men, and 43 civilians. These 4,140 personnel were organized into 13 Coast Guard Districts, or geographical areas encompassing sections of the U.S. coastline, with a combined total of 237 active shore stations.[31] Under the guidance of its headquarters in Washington, DC, the Coast Guard force structure was designed to provide for its primary life-saving mission, rather than for a military blockade of America's shorelines. Clearly, additional measures would be required for the Coast Guard to be able to meet the challenge of confronting and stopping the flow of liquor into the U.S. by sea.

[31] Treasury Department, Annual Report for 1923, 458.

Chapter 2

RISING TO THE OCCASION: INITIAL MEASURES TO COMBAT THE RUM RUNNERS

The decision to place the Coast Guard squarely in charge of combating the influx of liquor on America's shores was a key turning point in Coast Guard history. The Coast Guard had been founded in 1790 explicitly for the purpose of suppressing smuggling, and by the 1920s the Coast Guard's attention had come to be divided among various missions, with increasing focus on the preservation of life and property at sea.[1] As a result, the Coast Guard was ill-equipped for the battle that lay ahead. The Coast Guard's response to this new threat, however, transformed America's smallest military service into a formidable fighting force and gave the Coast Guard a reputation for "getting the job done" that still defines the Service today. In a July 1924 letter to Mr. Wayne Wheeler, General Counsel of the Anti-Saloon League of America, Commandant Billard summed up the Coast Guard's challenge indicating "the duty of putting a stop to ... illegal [liquor] traffic at sea is the greatest and most difficult task that has ever been imposed upon any of the floating forces of the United States in time of peace."[2] He further set forth that "the Coast Guard has accomplished many difficult tasks in its history of over a century and a quarter, and it proposes to accomplish this one."[3] "Give us the tools, and we'll get on with the job."[4]

Various measures were taken to even the odds for the Coast Guard in facing the rum runner. Recruiting efforts were doubled, vessels were designed and built specifically to combat rum running, World War I-vintage destroyers were acquired from the Navy and added to the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling fleet, a doctrine for the prevention of smuggling was developed, and treaties were signed, all having some effect on the Coast Guard's ability to enforce the Prohibition laws.

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[1] The Coast Guard began as the Revenue Marine, more commonly known as the Revenue Cutter Service, organized by the first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, in 1790. With the construction of 10 revenue cutters, the Revenue Cutter Service was tasked with the protection of customs, as smuggling deprived the Treasury Department of legal duties on imports. In 1915, the Revenue Cutter Service was joined with the Lifesaving Service and renamed the United States Coast Guard. Although the Coast Guard continued to be tasked with the prevention of smuggling, in the years immediately following the Coast Guard's reorganization, the preservation of life and property at sea became a major focus for Coast Guard efforts. Although modern-day "search and rescue" still remains in the forefront of Coast Guard missions, the Coast Guard's legacy of combating smuggling during Prohibition lingers on as the Coast Guard remains actively engaged in preventing smuggling of all sorts on America's shorelines. Malcom F. Willoughby, CDR, USCGR(T), *Rum War at Sea* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1964), 21-22.

[2] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Wayne B. Wheeler, General Counsel, the Anti-Saloon League of America, no subject, 25 July 1924.

[3] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 25 July 1924.

[4] Harold Waters, "Five Flashes East," in *80 Years of Yachting*, ed. Bill Robinson (New York: Dodd, Meade & Company, 1987), 78.

COAST GUARD ENLARGEMENT THROUGH VESSEL ACQUISITION AND RECRUITMENT

One of the last things Commandant Reynolds did before turning over the reins of the Coast Guard to Rear Admiral (RADM) Billard in 1924 was to respond to a request from the Secretary of the Treasury to assess the problem of additional personnel and vessels the Coast Guard would need to prevent the illegal importation of alcohol by sea. Updating his May 1923 request for an additional $5 million, in October of the same year Commandant Reynolds issued a new assessment predicting the Coast Guard would be able to suppress liquor smuggling with a one-time appropriation of $19,099,500 to be used as follows: $10,800,000 for the purchase of 20 cruising cutters; $50,000 for purchasing two vessels from the Navy; $7,612,500 to build 203 cabin cruiser-type motor boats; and $637,000 for the purchase of 91 smaller motorboats.[5] Additionally, Commandant Reynolds asked for an annual increase in Coast Guard appropriations of $8,472,458 to provide for the cost of operating and maintaining the new vessels, adding and maintaining 3,535 new billets to the Coast Guard, and increasing the administrative force at Coast Guard Headquarters.[6] This brought the total request for additional Coast Guard funds for fiscal year 1924 to $27,571,958.

The Secretary of the Treasury responded by recommending an increase in the Coast Guard's 1924 budget of $28,500,000.[7] After due consideration, in April 1924 Congress appropriated an additional $13,850,622, approximately half of the requested increase.[8] The reality of a limited budget forced the Coast Guard and the Congress to look for alternatives to the planned construction of new cutters. As a result, President Calvin Coolidge directed the U.S. Navy to make 20 World War I-vintage destroyers available to the Coast Guard for Prohibition enforcement.[9] Of the $13,850,622 allocated for the Coast Guard's expansion, $12,194,900 was for conditioning and equipping the destroyers for suitable Coast Guard use and for constructing 223 "cabin cruiser" type motor boats and 100 smaller motor vessels. The remaining $1,655,722 was for additional "operating expenses."[10] Congress also authorized additional personnel for the Coast Guard, to be paid for with existing funds.

Immediately after assuming office as the Coast Guard's new Commandant in April 1924, RADM Billard began a relentless war against the rum runners.[11] In his first written address to the Coast Guard, Commandant Billard rallied the Service behind the enforcement of Prohibition, reminding all hands that "[n]either the old Revenue-Cutter Service

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[5] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, memorandum for Assistant Secretary Moss, subject: "Additional Personnel and Material Needed by the Coast Guard to Prevent Illegal Importations," 12 October 1923.

[6] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 12 October 1923.

[7] Willoughby, 40.

[8] Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1924* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1924), 324.

[9] John A. Tilley, *Coast Guard Vessels of the Prohibition Era,* unpublished research paper, n.d.

[10] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1924,* 324.

[11] U.S. Coast Guard, Biography for Prohibition Era Commandants William E. Reynolds, Fredrick G. Billard, and Harry G. Hamlet, no subject, n.d. Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC.

nor the old Life-Saving Service ever failed in any duty given it to do, and it will not fail in its performance of this big task."[12] Commandant Billard clearly laid out the Coast Guard's course for his tenure as Commandant—to stop the flow of liquor into the U.S. by sea.

RADM Billard's first move was to acquire and recondition the 20 destroyers promised from the Navy. The destroyers were in various stages of disrepair, having been used hard in World War I.[13] To ensure the Coast Guard received the most seaworthy of the destroyers available, a board of five engineering officers was designated to oversee the selection and reconditioning process.[14] The board quickly chose 19 destroyers at the Philadelphia Navy Yard and one at the New York Navy Yard and began refurbishment.[15] Two other Naval vessels, a mine-sweeper and a sea-going tug, were also given to the Coast Guard to be employed in law enforcement. These two vessels were refurbished at the Norfolk Navy Yard, where they were laid up.[16] By the summer of 1925, all 22 vessels had been reconditioned and were placed in service.[17] Five more destroyers were provided by the Navy over the next year, bringing the total number of destroyers employed by the Coast Guard to 25 by 1926.[18]

Figure 2. Destroyers Converted for Coast Guard Use.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Destroyers Assigned to the Coast Guard," photograph (Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC: circa 1925).

[12] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to the Officers in Charge and Personnel of Coast Guard Stations, no subject, 25 April 1924. See Appendix.

[13] The destroyers burned oil, using steam turbines for propulsion. They could steam at speeds ranging from 26 to 30 knots maximum. Each vessel was equipped with its wartime main battery of three- and four-inch and 50 caliber guns. Additionally, each destroyer was mounted with a one-pounder quick-firing gun and various small arms. Harold Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits: Prohibition and the Coast Guard Patrol* (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1971), 58.

[14] Willoughby, 47.

[15] S.S. Yeandle, Aide to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, compilation of Coast Guard Efforts to Combat Rum-Running, no subject, n.d., 6.

[16] S.S. Yeandle, compilation, 6.

[17] Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1925* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1925), 422.

[18] Willoughby, 48-49.

Name	Length	Built at	Year
Ammen	293	Camden, NJ	1911
Beale	293	Philadelphia, PA	1912
Burrows	293	Camden, NJ	1911
Cassin	300	Bath, ME	1913
Conyngham	310	Philadelphia, PA	1916
Cummings	300	Bath, ME	1913
Davis	315	Bath, ME	1916
Downes	300	Camden, NJ	1915
Ericsson	300	Camden, NJ	1915
Fanning	293	Newport News, VA	1912
Henley	293	Quincy, MA	1912
Jouett	293	Bath, ME	1912
McCall	293	Camden, NJ	1911
McDougal	300	Bath, ME	1914
Monaghan	293	Newport News, VA	1911
Patterson	293	Philadelphia, PA	1911
Paulding	293	Bath, ME	1910
Porter	310	Philadelphia, PA	1916
Roe	293	Newport News, PA	1910
Shaw	315	Mare Island, CA	1917
Terry	293	Newport News, VA	1910
Trippe	293	Bath, ME	1911
Tucker	315	Quincy, MA	1916
Wainwright	315	Camden, NJ	1916
Wilkes	315	Philadelphia, PA	1916

Figure 3. The 25 Destroyers.

Source: Malcom F. Willoughby, CDR, USCGR(T), *Rum War at Sea* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1964), 49.

In addition to the 27 blue-water vessels acquired from the Navy, several other vessels were rapidly constructed to aid the Coast Guard in confronting its foe. The primary workhorse of the new anti-smuggling fleet would become the 75-foot patrol boat, or "six-bitters"[19] as they were better known, working with smaller picket boats and the destroyer fleet to keep the rum vessels under surveillance.[20] Construction on the new 75-foot patrol boats began in the sum-

[19] The 75-foot patrol boats were commonly referred to as "six-bitters," a reference to the vessels' length. Monetary values were also applied as slang terms for other vessels including the 125-foot patrol boats, knows as the "buck-and-a-quarters." Willoughby, 57.

[20] The 75-foot six-bitters were a jack-of-all trades for the Coast Guard. They were wooden hulled vessels with twin gasoline motors designed for 13 knots. Each boat carried a one-pounder gun mounted on the bow and two Lewis machine guns. Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits*, 60.

mer of 1924, with the first delivery of 17 boats coming later in October.[21] By the summer of 1925, 200 six-bitters were in service defending America's shorelines.[22]

Figure 4. 75-Foot Patrol Boats (Six-Bitters).

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Six-Bitters," photograph(Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC: circa 1925).

Other patrol boats built specifically for the enforcement of the Prohibition laws included thirteen 100-foot patrol boats, built in 1926, and thirty-three 125-foot steel-hulled patrol boats, joining the fleet in 1927.[23] The 125-foot patrol boats were designed to "trail mother ships on Rum Row in all weather," with sea-keeping ability considered more important than their limited 10-knot cruising speed.[24] Various other vessels were outfitted for law enforcement by the Coast Guard, and the construction of approximately 100 picket boats in 1925 rounded out the new anti-smuggling fleet.[25] Designed mainly for close inshore work, the picket boats, most of which were 36 to 38 feet long, would work in tandem with the six-bitters and other patrol boats to defend against smuggling into "bays, estuaries, harbors and river mouths."[26]

The Coast Guard also used seized vessels to its advantage by turning those seaworthy enough to be used by the Coast Guard into patrol boats.[27] This practice was slow to

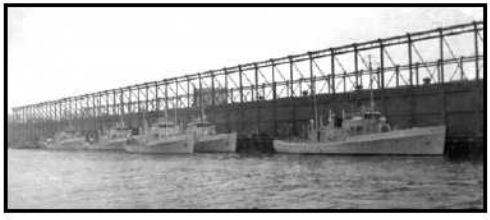

Figure 5. 125-Foot Steel Hull Patrol Boats.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "125-Foot Patrol Boats," photograph(Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC: circa 1927).

[21] S.S. Yeandle, compilation, 8.

[22] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1925,* 424.

[23] Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1927* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1927), 160.

[24] Tilley, *Coast Guard Vessels of the Prohibition Era.*

[25] The picket boats, also of wood construction, were driven by a single gasoline-powered engine. Most picket boats were capable of up to 25 knots and the Coastguardsmen on board were armed with machine guns, Tommy guns, and rifles. Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 59.

[26] Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 59.

[27] Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1926* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 396.

Figure 6. Coast Guard Picket Boats.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Picket Boats," photograph (Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC: circa 1925).

develop, however, as in the early days of Prohibition rum runners were allowed to simply buy back seized vessels.[28] A new law in 1926 scuttled this practice and gave the Coast Guard wide latitude in converting seized vessels for law enforcement work.[29] By the summer of 1926, sixteen former rum-running vessels were employed by the Coast Guard.[30] By the end of the Rum War, over 500 seized vessels had been taken over, with 232 of them used to enforce the Prohibition laws.[31] The advantage of using seized vessels in the Rum War was "enormously increased by [their] nondescript appearance and ... [it] spread consternation in the ranks of the enemy because of their inconspicuous appearance."[32]

As mentioned above, before the Coast Guard assumed the main responsibility for Prohibition enforcement, total Coast Guard personnel numbered only 4,140 in 1923. With the push to increase the service's material assets beginning in earnest by the spring of 1924, plans to raise the number of personnel followed suit. In May 1924, a campaign began to enlist recruits into the Coast Guard at 28 Navy recruiting stations across the country.[33] Use of the Navy's facilities was required as the Coast Guard had none of its own. Within the first month and a half, 1,255 additional enlisted men were brought into the Coast Guard and sent to Navy recruit training centers for military indoctrination.[34] By February 1925, the Coast Guard had acquired five recruiting stations of its own and discontinued its use of the Navy's facilities.[35] By the end of fiscal year 1925, the Coast Guard had enlisted an additional 3,230 men over the previous year.[36] The officer corps also grew, with 327 commissioned officers and 729 warrant

[28] One rum runner, the tug *Underwriter*, was seized and bought back by the rum syndicates four times in one year. Willoughby, 57.

[29] Waters, "Five Flashes East," in *80 Years of Yachting*, 84.

[30] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1927,* 160.

[31] Of the over 500 seized vessels acquired by the Coast Guard, at least 196 were surveyed and condemned, 40 were sold, 22 were transferred to other government agencies, and 232 were employed by the Coast Guard. Willoughby, 147-148.

[32] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "General Report and Recommendations Regarding Section Bases from Charleston to Galveston, Inclusive," 3 July 1928, 2.

[33] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1924,* 325.

[34] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1924,* 326.

[35] The five Coast Guard recruiting stations were located at Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; New York, NY; Norfolk, VA; and Philadelphia, PA. Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1925,* 419.

[36] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1925,* 420.

officers on the active rolls by June 1925.[37] The Coast Guard had thus doubled in size from 1923 to 1925.[38] The Coast Guard enlisted force continued to push the 10,000 mark, finally crossing it by 1928. After the repeal of Prohibition in December 1933, force levels dropped back to pre-War figures.

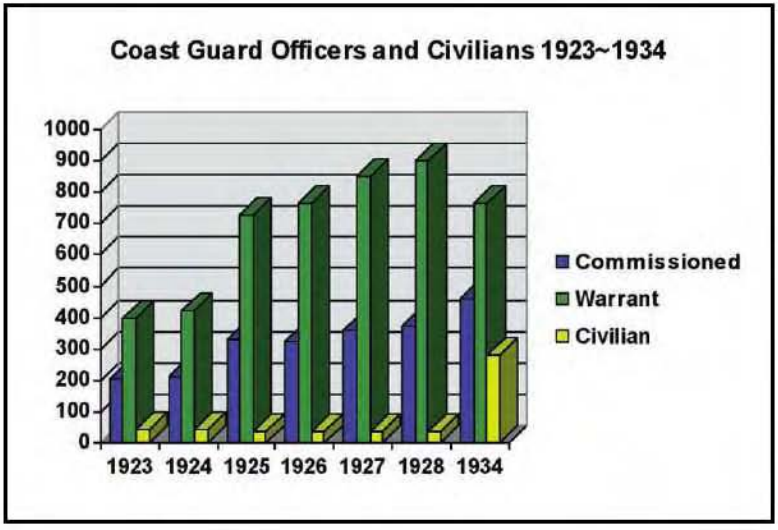

Figure 7. Officer and Civilian Enlargement.

Data Source: Treasury Department, *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Years 1923-1934* (Washington, DC: GPO).

[37] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1925,* 423.

[38] William P. Helm Jr., "Coast Guard Soon to Match Liquor Armada Ship for Ship," *Washington (DC) Evening Star,* 22 May 1925.

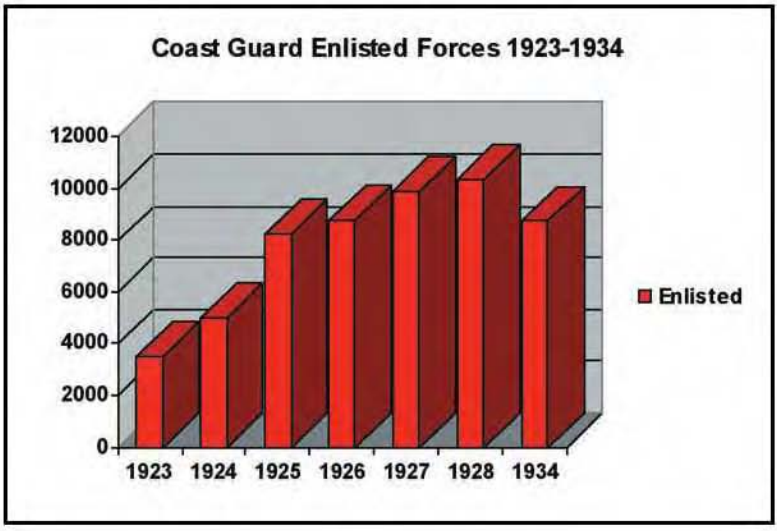

Figure 8. Doubling the Enlisted Force.

Data Source: Treasury Department, *Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Years 1923-1934* (Washington, DC: GPO).

OTHER MEASURES TO EVEN THE SCORE

In addition to enlargement through vessel acquisition and recruitment, the Coast Guard and the Congress looked for other ways to even the score between the Coast Guard and the rum fleet. The greatest impediment to effective enforcement of Prohibition at sea was the internationally recognized three-mile limit, limiting Coast Guard jurisdiction to those activities occurring within three nautical miles from shore.[39] Recognizing this problem early on, the Congress began negotiations with Great Britain to develop a treaty which would give the Coast Guard authority to board and seize British-flagged vessels outside of three miles if there existed reasonable cause. The treaty, signed with Great Britain on 23 January 1924,[40] allowed the Coast Guard to enforce U.S. law within a nominal12 nautical miles from America's coastlines.[41]

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[39] Willoughby, 31-32.

[40] Robert L. Jones, *The Eighteenth Amendment and Our Foreign Relations* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Publishers, 1933), 117.

[41] The "12-mile treaty" actually extended U.S. Custom's waters to the distance a foreign vessel could steam from the U.S. coast in one hour. This distance, generally considered to be 12 miles, actually depended on the maximum speed of the vessel in question. If the vessel could make more than 12 knots, the distance was greater. If the vessel's maximum speed was slower than 12 knots, the distance was shorter. Willoughby, 40.

With the 12-mile treaty now in force, the Coast Guard had enough room to deploy its newly equipped sailing fleet with some chance of success against the rum runners. To guide the new anti-smuggling armada, in July 1924 Commandant Billard promulgated a formal *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling* covering all Coast Guard forces involved in Prohibition enforcement.[42] The Commandant designated all destroyers, six-bitters, and picket boats as "special service craft," to be used exclusively in the prevention of smuggling.[43] He then set up a "Destroyer Force," assigning Commander W. H. Munter as its Commander and homeported the destroyers in New London, Connecticut.[44] The Destroyer Force was organized as a squadron, with five divisions of four vessels each. The Commandant also established Section Bases along the coasts, assigning various numbers of patrol boats and picket boats to each.[45] The general plan to suppress smuggling was for the destroyers to patrol assigned areas at sea, making first contact with suspected rum runners. The destroyers would then trail the suspects, handing them off to patrol boats within 20 or 30 miles of shore.[46] The patrol boats would be responsible for trailing the suspect vessels until they either entered the 12-mile limit and could be stopped and searched, or turned back to sea. While the destroyers and patrol boats patrolled offshore, the picket boats would patrol the shoreline to discourage the landing of alcohol on the beach.[47]

To ensure the rum-runners had no doubts about the Coast Guard's authority to enforce the Prohibition laws at sea, Commandant Billard also prescribed the use of force in accordance with Section 2765 of the Revised Statutes as follows:

> Whenever any vessel liable to seizure or examination does not bring-to, on being instructed to do so, or on being chased by any cutter or boat which had displayed the pendant and ensign prescribed for vessels in the Coast Guard, the master of such cutter or boat may fire at or into such vessel which does not bring-to, after such pendant and ensign has been hoisted, and a gun has been fired by such cutter or boat as a signal and such master, and all persons acting by or under his direction, shall be indemnified from any penalties or actions for damages for so doing. If any person is killed or wounded by such firing, and the master is prosecuted or arrested therefor, he shall be forthwith admitted to bail.[48]

Finally, to make Coast Guard vessels less conspicuous to the rum runners, Commandant Billard issued a directive that "all ... vessels engaged in law enforcement operations be painted Navy gray outside instead of [the traditional Coast Guard] white as at present, in order that they may not be so readily distinguishable, both day and night, when at sea."[49]

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[42] U.S. Coast Guard, *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling* (Washington, DC: USCG, 15 July 1924), 1.

[43] U.S. Coast Guard, *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling,* 2.

[44] Willoughby, 40.

[45] U.S. Coast Guard, *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling,* 6.

[46] S.S. Yeandle, compilation, 8.

[47] U.S. Coast Guard, *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling,* 9-13.

[48] U.S. Coast Guard, *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling,* 13-14.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EARLY EFFORTS AGAINST RUM RUNNING

Each of the Coast Guard's early efforts to stop liquor smuggling met with varying degrees of success. By June 1925, the number of Coast Guard vessels had grown from a moderate 75 vessels in 1923 to a fleet of 16 first-class cruising cutters, 17 second-class cruising cutters, 17 harbor cutters, 19 harbor launches, 20 destroyers,[50] 200 75-foot patrol boats, and approximately 100 picket boats.[51] Aided by the new 12-mile limit, the Coast Guard imposed a blockade against illegal liquor traffic along Rum Row and effectively disbanded the Row by early 1925.[52] This was in sharp contrast to the first few years of Prohibition where the Coast Guard prevented "no more than five percent of the U.S.-bound liquor from reaching its destination."[53]

As the Coast Guard's successes became known, the rum fleet became more secretive about its operations and more elusive to the now formidable anti-smuggling armada. Naturally, when smuggling is stopped in one area it tends to move to another, in a "balloon effect." This is what happened to the illegal rum trade. Once the Coast Guard's presence was felt and started impacting the livelihood of the rum runners, it was clear the "easy" days of smuggling were over. But for the Coast Guard, this meant the successes they had enjoyed over the period from late 1924 to 1926 would become increasingly rare. This was underscored in the 1927 Annual Treasury Report which indicated "[t]he fact that the Coast Guard must now search diligently to find the rum-running vessels, a number being undoubtedly engaged in the traffic, ... really occasions a greater burden and responsibility upon personnel and ships than was the case when rum row existed and the foreign liquor vessels anchored in groups near [U.S.] shores."[54] As the rum trade moved "underground" into the open sea, the Coast Guard entered into a battle of wits with the rum runners to attain Dominant Battlespace Knowledge and thereby greatly magnify the effectiveness of its newly commissioned fighting force.

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[49] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, New London Patrol Area, subject: "Painting of Cruising Cutters and Other Vessels Engaged in Law-Enforcement Operations," 26 November 1926.

[50] Five more destroyers were transferred from the Navy in 1926, bringing the total to 25.

[51] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1925,* 424.

[52] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1925,* 422.

[53] Hugh Garling, "The United States Coast Guard: Part II," *Nautical Magazine* 247, no. 2 (February 1992): 103.

[54] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1927,* 158.

Chapter 3

INTELLIGENCE AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark—
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk;
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,
And watch the wall my darling,
While the Gentlemen go by.

A Smuggler's Song, Kipling

ORGANIZATION AND EARLY OPERATION OF THE COAST GUARD INTELLIGENCE SECTION

The development of an Intelligence Section marked the turning of the tide in [the Coast Guard's] favor" in the Rum War.[1] The increase in personnel and vessels dedicated to the enforcement effort did push the "blacks"[2] away from America's shores, but was not enough to stop smuggling. The battle for information superiority was fought by both sides, but an understanding of the value of intelligence and the "all-source" approach of tapping the unique abilities of each intelligence discipline allowed the Coast Guard to support interdiction operations with well-fused intelligence. The modern-day intelligence disciplines of Human Resources Intelligence (HUMINT),[3] Communications Intelligence (COMINT),[4] Imagery Intelligence (IMINT),[5] and Open

[1] Harold Waters, "Five Flashes East," in *80 Years of Yachting,* ed. Bill Robinson (New York: Dodd, Meade & Company, 1987), 80.

[2] "Black" was a term used to distinguish rum runners of the Prohibition period. It was used extensively by the Coast Guard, Customs Service, and the Federal Prohibition Bureau in reference to rum running. The "black codes" was the name given to codes and ciphers used by rum runners in their attempts to maintain communications security (COMSEC) and avoid detection by enforcement officials.

[3] HUMINT is defined as "[i]ntelligence information acquired by human sources through covert and overt collection techniques." Central Intelligence Agency, *A Consumer's Guide to Intelligence* (Langley, VA: CIA Public Affairs Office, 1995), 54.

[4] COMINT is defined as "[i]nformation derived from the intercept of foreign communications by other than the intended recipients; it does not include the monitoring of foreign public media or the intercept of communications obtained during the course of counterintelligence investigations within the United States. COMINT includes the fields of traffic analysis, cryptanalysis, and direction finding, and is a part of Signals Intelligence (SIGINT)." CIA, *Consumer's Guide,* 52.

[5] IMINT is defined as "[t]he products of imagery and imagery interpretation processed for intelligence use." CIA, *Consumer's Guide,* 54.

Source Intelligence [6] as well as intelligence sharing between the Coast Guard and other federal agencies bolstered and sustained interdiction efforts.

Coincident with the promulgation of the Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling in July 1924, Commandant Billard tasked the Intelligence Section at Headquarters with "furnish[ing] all information obtainable bearing on the mission to Coast Guard Division Commanders, Destroyer Force Commanders, and District Superintendents," including "movements of rum ships, court decisions, interpretations of law, and other matters bearing on the mission."[7] This early mandate to support operations with intelligence was indicative of the importance the Coast Guard placed on intelligence support to the anti-smuggling fleet.

In 1924, the Intelligence Section was only a one-man operation, run by Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Charles S. Root. Reporting directly to the Commandant, LCDR Root served as a "clearing house for any and all information dealing with blacks and their movements."[8] In the early days of Prohibition, LCDR Root received information from patrolling Coast Guard cutters on the name, tonnage, homeport, nationality, vessel type, and ownership of each vessel frequenting Rum Row.[9] He maintained a wallchart at Headquarters with the name and noontime position of all suspected rum runners and he disseminated this information back to the fleet via "Intelligence Circulars," a precursor to the suspect vessel lookout lists maintained by the Coast Guard today in its war on drugs.[10] The immensity of the job soon exhausted LCDR Root's abilities to keep up with the need for timely, accurate intelligence and the extensive liaison duties required of his office. In early 1925, LCDR Root asked for and was given clerical assistance to help with the "large amount of secret correspondence with practically [sic] all Departments of [the U.S.] Government and with several foreign governments."[11] To further elevate the Intelligence Section's status as a valuable aid to the interdiction effort, in the summer of 1925, the Intelligence Section was designated Section "C" and placed directly under the Chief of Operations at Coast Guard Headquarters.[12] Following this pattern of growth, now Commander (CDR) Root was given

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[6] Open Source Intelligence is defined as "[i]nformation that is publicly available (for example, any member of the public could lawfully obtain information by request or observation), as well as other unclassified information that has limited public distribution or access. Open-source information also includes any information that may be used in an unclassified context without compromising national security or intelligence sources or methods. If the information is not publicly available, certain legal requirements relating to collection, retention, and dissemination may apply." CIA, *Consumer's Guide,* 57.

[7] U.S. Coast Guard, *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling,* 9.

[8] Harold Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits: Prohibition and the Coast Guard Patrol* (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1971), 63.

[9] Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 63.

[10] Waters, Smugglers of Spirits, 63.

[11] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Chief Clerk, Coast Guard Headquarters, subject: "Clerical Assistance," 3 February 1925.

[12] U.S. Coast Guard, "Proposed Re-organization Chart of U.S. Coast Guard at, and Outside Washington, DC," chart (Washington, DC: USCG, 31 July 1925).

an assistant, Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Clifford D. Feak, in early 1927.[13] As part of his introduction to intelligence work, LTJG Feak was instructed in cipher fundamentals under the guidance of the legendary Major William F. Friedman, of the War Department's Signal Corps.[14] The year 1927 also brought two new civilian personnel to the Intelligence Section: Major Friedman's wife, Mrs. Elisabeth S. Friedman, and Anna A. Wolf, both hired by the Prohibition Bureau and detailed to the Coast Guard to assist in cryptanalysis.[15]

The Intelligence Section, having grown from a one-man operation in 1924 to a force of five by 1927, continued to expand its responsibilities and its support to operations until the repeal of Prohibition in 1933. In 1928, the expanded duties of the Intelligence Section were laid out by CDR Root as follows:

> I. The Intelligence Office collects, sifts, and indexes all information which may be useful and which is obtainable from every possible source and holds this information available for immediate use or dissemination as the Commandant directs.
>
> II. It receives and distributes, by officer messenger, or under seal, all confidential correspondence received by Headquarters and has custody of the joint war plans and other secret files.
>
> III. It solves all enemy cryptograms and problems of like nature received from the forces afloat or afield and handles problems of like nature, received from other bureaus of the Treasury, as a matter of cooperation.
>
> IV. It handles and covers into the Treasury miscellaneous funds received from the Field as a result of operations against the enemy and handles other confidential funds in the sum of about $2,000 a month.
>
> V. The Office, under the direction of the Commandant, maintains liaison with other departments of the government in law enforcement and confidential matters.
>
> VI. It conducts all correspondence with the courts relating to the taking over of seized vessels by the Service.

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[13] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between CDR Root, Coast Guard Headquarters and MAJ Friedman, War Department, Signal Corps, 10:25 a.m., 24 January 1927, no subject, n.d.

[14] Charles S. Root, memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between CDR Root, Coast Guard Headquarters and MAJ Friedman, War Department.

[15] Elisabeth Friedman was hired as a Cryptanalyst at a starting salary of $2,400 annually. She was employed by the Federal Prohibition Bureau, but detailed to the Coast Guard's Intelligence Section. Roy A. Haines, Federal Prohibition Commissioner, letter to Civil Service Commission, no subject, 27 April 1927. Anna Wolf, a Junior Stenographer, was also employed by the Federal Prohibition Bureau and loaned to the Coast Guard to assist Mrs. Friedman. B. M. Chiswell, CAPT, USCG, letter to J. M. Doran, Commissioner of Prohibition, no subject, 24 February 1928.

VII. The Intelligence Office assists the Department of Justice and the United States attorneys in preparing important cases.[16]

Clearly identifying the Intelligence Section's main mission as "the dissemination of information to Units in the field," CDR Root further categorized his Section's responsibilities as being related to the dissemination of information, legal duties, liaison duties, the keeping of statistics, and miscellaneous duties.[17] Duties involving the dissemination of information included conducting espionage, the identification of personnel and vessels involved in criminal activities, and cryptanalysis of enemy codes and ciphers. Legal duties involved interpreting laws, court decisions, and international treaties; preparing law manuals and maintaining law files; and attempting to procure seized vessels for Coast Guard use. Liaison responsibilities included maintaining contact and promoting cooperation with the Departments of State, Justice, War, Navy, Labor, and Commerce; and interdepartmentally with officers of the Prohibition Bureau, Customs Service, Narcotics Service, Public Health Service, and Secret Service. The Intelligence Section maintained statistics on "all matters pertaining to Coast Guard intelligence" including the routing of incoming and outgoing secret correspondence and the recording of vessels seized by the Coast Guard.[18] Finally, miscellaneous duties included the "collection, preparation, and mailing of information, disseminated by means of secret and confidential letters, messages and confidential Intelligence Office Circulars."[19]

EVOLUTION OF INTELLIGENCE DISCIPLINES WITHIN THE COAST GUARD

In the 1920s, the all-out intelligence effort in support of anti-smuggling operations did not correspond neatly with today's intelligence categories of HUMINT, COMINT, IMINT, and Open Source Intelligence. However, the use of each type of intelligence was evident as the Coast Guard employed all means at its disposal to gain, interpret, and disseminate intelligence. Because radio was not widely used on rum-running vessels until the mid-1920s, HUMINT operations became a major focus of Coast Guard Intelligence in the early days of Prohibition. This was followed by an emphasis on COMINT as the rum runners and the Coast Guard turned to radio to transmit encrypted operational messages. From the beginning, airborne imagery collection provided a source for gaining photographic and positional data on rum-runners, albeit its full potential was not exploited until the later years of Prohibition. Finally, throughout Prohibition, the Coast Guard used Open Source Intelligence to increase its understanding of rum-running tactics and capabilities and to enhance its intelligence support to the fleet. Although each discipline was cultivated independently, they were employed in concert.

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[16] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to President, Regulations Board, subject: "Chapter 7, Regulations, Revision of. Duties of the Intelligence Office," 9 August 1928, 1.

[17] Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, encl (1), 1.

[18] Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, encl (1), 2.

[19] Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, encl (1), 2.

Human Resources Intelligence

HUMINT was the launching pad for the Coast Guard's quest for information superiority or DBK. In addition to early HUMINT collection on the vessels of Rum Row, the Coast Guard also ventured to foreign shores in its pursuit of DBK. In 1924, the Coast Guard Cutter *Tampa* was sent to anchor just off the French island of St. Pierre, eight miles south of Newfoundland. Here, *Tampa* came to rest "only a few hundred yards out from the waterfront, right in the middle of the rum armada," and commenced her intelligence-gathering work.[20] The crew of the *Tampa* recorded each vessel's name, rig, dimensions, draft, tonnage, probable speed, flag, and port of registry. *Tampa* then transmitted the collected HUMINT information via radio to Coast Guard Headquarters where it was analyzed by the Intelligence Section.[21] Other overt Coast Guard HUMINT collection included sending an engineering officer to Nova Scotia to study types of rum boats under construction and their propulsion systems.[22] The information obtained from various studies of rum-running vessels was used to prepare designs for Coast Guard patrol and picket boats.[23] This was accomplished by a "board of officers who studied the problem from every conceivable angle, and determined the types of boats most suited for efficient operation to combat illegal importations of liquor."[24] The information obtained from overt Coast Guard HUMINT collection was analyzed and fused with other information at Coast Guard Headquarters, processed into usable intelligence, then disseminated to the fleet via Intelligence Circulars.

In addition to overt HUMINT collection, the Coast Guard also convinced the Prohibition Bureau to employ several undercover agents and assign them to penetrate major smuggling bases in St. Pierre, Nova Scotia, Nassau, Bimini, Havana, and Curacao.[25] Contact was maintained with these agents using locked dispatch cases forwarded via the State Department in embassy pouches.[26] Through the years espionage[27] proved extremely fruitful for the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling effort. In a March 1931 memorandum for the Coast Guard Chief of Staff, the new Headquarters Intelligence Officer,[28]

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[20] Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 27-32.

[21] Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 32.

[22] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Recommendation that an Officer be Sent to Nova Scotia to Study Types of Rum Boats," 31 August 1929.

[23] S. S. Yeandle, Aide to Commandant, USCG, compilation of Coast Guard Efforts to Combat Rum-Running, no subject, n.d., 10-13.

[24] S. S. Yeandle, compilation, 10.

[25] Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 4. Also see Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 63.

[26] Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 4.

[27] Espionage is defined as "the clandestine collection of information (raw data) about the plans, intentions and activities of foreign governments, organizations and persons by human or technical means." *Espionage, Intelligence, and International Policy,* vol I, ed. Mr. Kenneth M. Absher (Washington, DC: Joint Military Intelligence College, 1998), 3.

[28] The incumbent Intelligence Officer, Captain Charles S. Root, died while on active duty and in 1930, LCDR F. J. Gorman was assigned as his replacement.

LCDR F. J. Gorman, credited five undercover agents working in Cuba since 1925 with "practically [bottling] up Cuba as a smuggling base."[29]

Although the Coast Guard launched a wholehearted HUMINT collection effort within its own ranks, it also relied heavily on "other sources," most of whom were simply informers who had no sympathy with the rum runners.[30] Most of the information received from informers pertained to large "mother-ships" departing foreign ports laden with liquor, and it included such details as "names, types, and quantity of contraband, time of departure, and destinations."[31] As an example, in January 1924 the Coast Guard received a report about the vessel *Butetown's* dispatching liquor to contact boats off Rum Row. The report not only gave the rum-runner's name, but also the destination, timeframe, cargo, and information on the master's financial status, indicating he would go bankrupt if he could not unload his cargo in a very short time.[32]

Anonymous HUMINT was not limited to information concerning vessels loaded with liquor. In August 1924, the Coast Guard received a report of a seaplane working with the rum fleet. The plane's name and distinguishing characteristics were reported to Coast Guard headquarters where the information was disseminated to Coast Guard units in the seaplane's operating area.[33]

To ensure informers were tapped for all information they were capable of providing, the Coast Guard occasionally placed informers onboard Coast Guard vessels during routine patrols to assist in the identification of blacks.[34] Although in most cases informers were reliable, this was not always the case. In 1928 the Coast Guard received a report that a "reliable" informer on Florida's West Coast was in fact a double agent, responsible for limiting the Coast Guard's success to the seizure of "only one or two boats on the West Coast of Florida in a period of some years."[35]

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[29] Five undercover agents in Cuba were maintained by the Prohibition Bureau from 1925 at a cost of $1,000 to $1,500 a month. They operated in exclusive support of anti-smuggling intelligence collection for the Coast Guard. In 1930, when the Prohibition Bureau was transferred to the Department of Justice, the undercover agents were "taken up on the pay-rolls" of the Customs Service, but remained operatives of the Coast Guard Intelligence Section. F. J. Gorman, LCDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to CAPT Chiswell, USCG, subject: "Travel Order," 11 March 1931, 3.

[30] Malcom F. Willoughby, CDR, USCGR(T), *Rum War at Sea* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1964), 107.

[31] Willoughby, 107.

[32] Unidentified correspondent, letter to Roy A. Haines, Federal Prohibition Commissioner, no subject, 18 January 1924.

[33] James S. Baker, Officer in Charge, Bellport Station, letter to Superintendent, Fourth District, subject: "Seaplane, Working with Rum Fleet," 21 August 1924.

[34] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Report of Special Narragansett Patrol, 24 March to 7 April, 1930," n.d.

[35] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Notes Taken From Mr. Owens of Foreign Control Section, Prohibition Service, March 28, 1928," 29 March 1928.

Much HUMINT was supplied from the State Department, collected by its overseas consulates. Regular dispatches detailing the arrivals and departures of vessels known to be engaged in liquor smuggling were received from Halifax and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia; St. John's, Newfoundland; Havana, Cuba; Nassau, Bahamas; Glasgow, Scotland; Vera Cruz, Mexico, and Bremerhaven, Germany.[36] In addition, the Coast Guard routinely requested that specific information, such as the trial speeds of foreign vessels, be collected by the State Department for analysis at Headquarters.[37] Occasionally, information regarding the status of vessels being constructed in foreign countries exclusively for liquor smuggling was provided, including the timetable for completion and the financial status of the owners.[38]

HUMINT information was also used to enhance the effectiveness of other intelligence disciplines. As the rum fleet started to equip its vessels with radio, Coast Guard patrols and other sources reported on the vessels involved and the types of radios being installed.[39] This allowed the Intelligence Section to keep tabs on which vessels were capable of communicating with their home bases via radio and, in turn, supported the Coast Guard's COMINT collection effort. HUMINT reporting also indicated the existence of radio broadcasting trucks which the rum runners moved from place to place along the Atlantic Coast and used to broadcast liquor orders to rum runners offshore.[40]

To further ascertain which vessels were involved in the rum trade, the Coast Guard compiled reports on vessels returning in ballast to ports in Nova Scotia and St. Pierre and Miquelon after supposedly fishing off the U.S. Northeast Atlantic coastline.[41] This effort was complemented by information received from local fishermen informing the Coast Guard where rum runners would anchor and pretend to engage in fishing.[42] When the vessels were boarded, they were often found to have legitimate loads of fish in their holds until HUMINT reporting indicated rum vessels were secreting loads of liquor beneath otherwise legitimate cargoes of fish and ice.[43] In response, the Coast Guard equipped its destroyers and patrol boats with "iron rods, with knobs on the end," to probe fish holds for

[36] Department of State, paraphrase of a telegram received from the American Consul General at Halifax, Nova Scotia, no subject, 26 June 1925.

[37] Secretary of State, letter to Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 12 April 1924.

[38] Secretary of State, letter to Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 14 April 1924.

[39] S. P. Edmonds, Commander, Base Fifteen, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Radio Receiving Set, Br. Schr. Varuna," 7 December 1925.

[40] E. T. Osborn, Officer-in-Charge, Coast Guard Station Little Beach, letter to Commander, Fifth District, subject: "Use of a Radio Broadcasting Motor Truck by Smugglers; Report of," 29 July 1931.

[41] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no Subject, 5 January 1926.

[42] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Cruising of George's Bank," 5 April 1927.

[43] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Recommendation by Mr. Thomas Finnegan, Veteran Deputy Collector, Boston, Massachusetts," 28 April 1928.

liquor.[44] This trend of concealing liquor under otherwise legitimate cargo grew within the coastwise trade and by the end of 1925 included not only disguises of fish, but also lumber, coal, sand, and similar cargoes to throw the Coast Guard off the scent.[45]

Hiding liquor under loads of legitimate cargo was one of several concealment tactics divulged to the Coast Guard by HUMINT reporting. In April 1930, the Coast Guard learned that some rum vessels were equipped with "double bottoms" used to conceal their liquor cargo.[46] False bottoms were also fabricated into automobiles used to pick up liquor loads from rum vessels along the Mississippi Delta.[47]

As rum runners increasingly organized into syndicates with each passing year of the Rum War, the Coast Guard compiled information on organized groups of rum runners and shared it with other government agencies to bring down the rum syndicates in any way possible. As an example, in March 1929, the Coast Guard received a report allegedly linking Al Capone with smuggling activities in Florida, whereby one gang was reportedly importing 60,000 cases of liquor a week into Palm Beach.[48] This information was shared with Customs and other law enforcement officials to counter Capone's efforts in the Southeast U.S.

Even our neighbors to the North supplied the Coast Guard with HUMINT information. High officials in the Canadian National Railways informed the Coast Guard of Canadian rum runners' intentions to market their wares at points along Lake Ontario and other areas of the Great Lakes.[49]

Although HUMINT was used extensively to gauge the amount of liquor seeping in through America's shores, probably the most telling use of HUMINT was in evaluating Coast Guard tactics against the rum runners. One of the most common practices to dissuade rum runners from delivering their cargoes was to picket known rum vessels for days at a time, waiting them out, until the rum runner either turned back to open sea or returned to its port of origin. In 1932, HUMINT reporting told the Coast Guard that the effects of being trailed by Coast Guard vessels were "very disconcerting to the rum-runners."[50]

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[44] B. H. Camden, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Boarding Duty," 3 August 1927.

[45] Mabel W. Willebrant, Assistant U.S. Attorney General, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 15 July 1925.

[46] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Proposed Letter to All Units Except the Destroyer Force, Regarding Use of False Bottoms, etc.," 19 April 1930.

[47] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 23 March 1929.

[48] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Florida Situation," 11 March 1929.

[49] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 2 June 1928.

[50] Commander, Norfolk Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Information Regarding Rum Running via Delaware Bay and the New Jersey Coast," 8 December 1932.

Communications Intelligence

The Coast Guard's COMINT collection program did not achieve full implementation until the mid-to-late 1920s. However, as early as 1924, just months after the Coast Guard was given the task of stopping the flow of liquor onto America's shores, LCDR Root began collecting intercepted messages from a small number of alleged rum runners who were already equipped with radio.[51] Unable to solve the crude codes himself, LCDR Root called on the U.S. Navy for assistance. After solving one message that led to a successful interdiction operation on Rum Row, the Navy concluded it "could not lawfully handle work of this nature," and "suggested the Coast Guard organize its own decrypting unit."[52] And that is exactly what the Coast Guard did.

The use of radio among rum runners was still rare in the early days of Prohibition, but became more prevalent as the rum runners organized and looked for easier and securer ways to communicate with their land-based offices. In late 1925, LCDR Root joined forces with Mr. R. J. Iverson of the *New York Times* to set up a small intercept station in New York City.[53] For several years, this crude intercept station supplied the Coast Guard with the identification of amateur shore stations and radio-equipped vessels involved in the rum trade.[54] By 1927, the use of codes and ciphers among rum-running vessels was commonplace and with the help of the War Department's Signal Corps, the Coast Guard was developing a cryptologic capability of its own, under the Intelligence Section at Headquarters.[55] One of the first steps CDR Root took to resolve the backlog of encrypted messages piling up at Headquarters was to elicit the assistance of the renowned cryptanalyst, Mrs. Elisabeth Friedman.[56] Although Mrs. Friedman was not officially hired until 1927, she was temporarily employed under the direction of the Intelligence Section for several months in 1926 and had donated her services in solving enemy cryptograms on numerous occasions in the interim.[57] CDR Root also gained the assistance of the War

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[51] Director of Naval Communications, letter to Secretary of the Navy, subject: "Coast Guard," 21 January 1931.

[52] Director of Naval Communications, 21 January 1931.

[53] With an HF receiver, an Underwood typewriter, and a $500 advance, Mr. Iverson set up a listening post in New York City, staffed by an unnamed civilian intercept operator who drew an annual salary of $2,800 from the Coast Guard. R. J. Iverson, letter to CDR C. S. Root, USCG, no subject, 13 October 1925. Also see, R. J. Iverson, letter to CDR C. S. Root, USCG, no subject, 14 October 1925.

[54] Clifford D. Feak, LTJG, USCG, letter to R. J. Iverson, no subject, 1 February 1928.

[55] Charles S. Root, 24 January 1927.

[56] Mrs. Friedman began her career in cryptology in 1916 at Riverbank Laboratories, Illinois, where she developed code-making methods for the U.S. military. During parts of 1922 and 1923, she served with the Code and Signal Section of the U.S. Navy. She also served as a cryptanalyst for the U.S. Army. Together with her husband, William F. Friedman, the Friedmans gained a reputation as the "foremost [authorities] in the science of cryptanalysis in the United States." Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, memorandum for Major Hamlin, subject: "Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Friedman," 22 April 1927.

[57] Charles S. Root, 22 April 1927.

Department and the Coast Guard Repair Depot in manufacturing a wooden deciphering machine to facilitate Mrs. Friedman's work.[58]

Even though the cryptologic work being undertaken at Coast Guard Headquarters was initially limited to the expertise of CDR Root, LTJG Feak, Mrs. Friedman, and Mrs. Wolf, the lines between cryptology and communications in the Coast Guard soon faded as the Communications Section became the Intelligence Section's "right arm" in supplying the bulk of intercepted radio traffic to Headquarters for analysis. As the proficiency of Coast Guard radio intercept operators increased, the Communications Section, headed by Lieutenant (LT) E. M. Webster, began to assist the headquarters staff with solving enemy codes and ciphers.[59]

The first challenge for the Communications Section, however, was to equip the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling fleet with HF radios and set up a series of shore-based listening posts patterned after the one in New York. This was not a problem for the Destroyers and larger Coast Guard cutters as they were already equipped with radio. The patrol boats were also outfitted with radio as they were commissioned. Picket boats and smaller Coast Guard vessels had to be outfitted individually, with special equipment, to give them an intercept capability.[60] As the value of COMINT became increasingly evident, additional shore-based intercept stations were rapidly established in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Virginia, Florida, Alabama, California, and Washington State.[61]

To assist codebreaking efforts at Headquarters, a large volume of intercepted radio traffic was needed.[62] To bring this about, CDR Root issued a directive requesting that all "Commanding Officers of cutters while at sea, direct their radio operators to listen in and try to obtain all code messages being sent by Blacks equipped with radio apparatus."[63] This immediately created difficulties for overworked radiomen who were "already heavily loaded with [Coast Guard] traffic and that [had] no time [remaining] for any systematic listening in for Black traffic."[64] To address this problem, the Coast Guard quickly recruited and trained radio operators with prior Navy, Army, or commercial experience.[65] In addition, the Coast Guard placed heavy emphasis on the operations of shore-based intercept stations that could be devoted exclusively to intercepting rum traffic.[66] To meet the demand for COMINT intercepts, some shore-based listening posts instituted 24-hour communications

[58] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to CAPT Randolph Ridgely, USCG, no subject, 4 February 1927.

[59] Willoughby, 105-110.

[60] Willoughby, 107.

[61] Willoughby, 107.

[62] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Eastern Div., N.Y. Div., Norfolk Div., Desfor, N.L.P.A., Bases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 18, no subject, 12 October 1925.

[63] G. C. Carmine, Commander, New York Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Listening in for Black Traffic," 1 February 1926.

[64] G. C. Carmine, 1 February 1926.

[65] Willoughby, 106-107.

[66] E. M. Webster, memorandum to Intelligence Officer, no subject, 6 November 1928.

watches when able to do so.[67] To further support the COMINT collection effort, watches not dedicated solely to communications intercept were doubled at key times daily to allow systematic sampling of known black frequencies while still maintaining continuous coverage of Coast Guard operational frequencies as required by communications instructions.[68] As the intercepts started pouring into Headquarters, an instruction was issued to set forth "the method of preparing copy of intercepted radio traffic in code and cipher to facilitate its solution by the cryptanalytic unit of the Intelligence Office at Headquarters."[69] This was necessary to ensure uniformity of the reported traffic to better facilitate decryption efforts.

The proliferation of encoded and encrypted illicit radio traffic was in full flower by 1927, and the Coast Guard gained the assistance of the Prohibition Bureau in collecting the traffic needed for successful cryptanalysis. On the California Coast alone, agents of the Prohibition Bureau had compiled over 1,000 coded messages turned over to them by the commercial wireless services beginning in 1924.[70] Relying on the expertise of the Coast Guard's cryptanalysis unit, the Prohibition Bureau forwarded the intercepts to Washington for decoding.[71] This relationship proved very profitable for both the Coast Guard and the Prohibition Bureau with one exception—the time delay in having the cryptanalysis done in Washington created several missed opportunities for interdiction.[72] To mitigate this problem, in July 1928, the Coast Guard sent Mrs. Friedman to San Francisco to instruct selected Prohibition agents in the means of cryptanalysis.[73] At about the same time, the rum syndicates ceased their use of wireless services in favor of direct communications between rum ships and amateur radio stations ashore.[74]

As the means of communication between mother ship, supplier, and customer grew more sophisticated, so did the types of codes and ciphers used. Whereas in 1927 "only two general systems were in use,[75] changing only every six months, [by] mid-1930 practically

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[67] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, California Division, subject: "California Division; Communications," 24 April 1928.

[68] A. M. Martinson, letter to Commander, Florida East Coast Patrol Area, no subject, 1 May 1930.

[69] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commanding Officer CHELAN, subject: "Instructions for Transmitting Intercepted Messages to Headquarters by Cipher," 14 April 1932.

[70] C. A. Housel, Special Agent, letter to Ralph R. Reed, Supervising Agent, no subject, 16 December 1927.

[71] C. A. Housel, 16 December 1927.

[72] C. A. Housel, Special Agent, letter to Ralph R. Reed, Supervising Agent, no subject, 11 September 1928.

[73] C. A. Housel, 11 September 1928.

[74] C. A. Housel, 16 December 1927.

[75] The main code book used by Pacific Coast rum runners in the years prior to 1928 was *Bentley's Complete Phrase Code with Five Letters and Five Figures, Pocket Edition.* Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to H. J. Anslinger, no subject, 10 October 1927. $200 was allocated for the purchase of commercial code books for the Coast Guard in 1928, to be used in decoding enemy radio traffic. Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, memorandum for Mr. Minot, no subject, 31 August 1928.

every rum boat on the Pacific Coast had its own code or cipher."[76] This of course presented even greater challenges for the Coast Guard and the Prohibition Bureau in deciphering the plans and intentions of the rum syndicates.

As the syndicates grew, two rival organizations gained influence over the rum trade on the Pacific Coast. By 1928, the Hobbs Group and Consolidated Exporters Corporation, both operating out of Vancouver, British Columbia, controlled all of the illegal liquor entering the U.S. from the West.[77] Using a complex communications system, Consolidated Exporters employed three shore stations using different crypto-systems to communicate with each of its blacks, who in turn communicated with mother ships using still different crypto-systems.

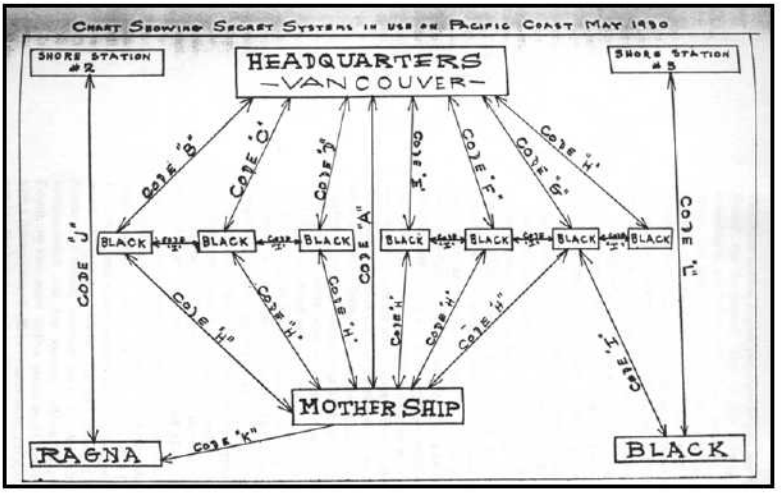

Figure 9. Consolidated Exports' Communications System.

Source: David Kahn, The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1967), 805. Used with permission.

As sophisticated as these systems were, however, they were no match for the skilled cryptanalysis of Mrs. Friedman. In the first three years working for the Coast Guard, Mrs. Friedman solved over 12,000 cryptograms, some of which were of a "complexity never even attempted by any government for its most secret communications."[78] Mrs. Friedman's work was so successful in infiltrating the rum gangs on the West Coast that it inspired Mr. Ralph R. Read, Supervising Agent for the Prohibition Bureau in San Francisco, to write "it is my opinion that [cryptanalysis] is the means which will enable this

[76] David Kahn, *The Codebreakers: The Story of Secret Writing* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1967), 803.

[77] Kahn, 803.

[78] Kahn, 804-806.

office eventually to entirely suppress commercial smuggling by sea upon the Pacific Coast."[79]

Back on the East Coast, rum runners had developed codes and ciphers of their own. One group was known to mix profanity in with their codes to make decryption more difficult.[80] Still another resorted to the use of cover terms—seemingly innocent words with cryptic meanings-to make their conversations as benign as possible.[81] All up and down the East Coast, rum runners had found the value in using unlicensed amateur radio stations to broadcast operating instructions and customer orders to vessels operating offshore. Among the Coast Guard's first efforts to counter this tactic was to have informers operate illicit radio stations of their own in attempts to lure shore-based rum runners into divulging their operating frequencies and other information.[82] When this did not yield the expected results, the Coast Guard sent a patrol boat outfitted with "special high frequency receivers" to the coast off Plymouth, Massachusetts "ostensibly to find certain 'dead spots,'" but actually to clandestinely sample illicit radio traffic emanating from the Plymouth area.[83]

These crude attempts at locating illicit radio stations, although relatively unsuccessful, were the preamble to the Coast Guard's widespread use of high frequency radio direction finders (HFDF) to locate both illegal radio stations ashore and rum-running vessels at sea. One of the first experiments in using HFDF to interrupt rum-running operations was conducted aboard the 75-foot patrol boat, CG-210. With the Assistant Communications Officer at Headquarters, LT Frank M. Meals, assigned as her captain, CG-210 was "fitted out ostensibly to conduct certain experimental radio work, but actually the purpose was to intercept and record certain radio traffic for the purpose of detecting and identifying persons, ships, and stations engaged in illicit operations."[84] CG-210 had onboard "a battery of high-frequency receivers [and] direction finders,"[85] including the prototype "X Type" direction finder shown below.[86]

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[79] Ralph R. Read, Supervising Agent, letter to Commissioner of Prohibition, no subject, 12 September 1928.

[80] F. J. Gorman, LCDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Commander, Intelligence Unit, New York, subject: "Radio Intelligence, Group 2; Code Seized," 28 January 1931.

[81] R. J. Iverson, letter to LTJG Clifford D. Feak, USCG, no subject, 16 February 1928.

[82] Eugene Blake Jr., Commander, Eastern Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Communications; Radio," 20 February 1928.

[83] Eugene Blake Jr., Commander, Eastern Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Rum Runners' Radio Communication; Investigation of," 17 February 1928.

[84] Willoughby, 109.

[85] Kahn, 806.

[86] C. T. Solt, Radio Electrician, USCG, letter to Communication Officer, subject: "Type X High Frequency Radio Direction Finding Equipment, Development and Test of," 4 December 1930.

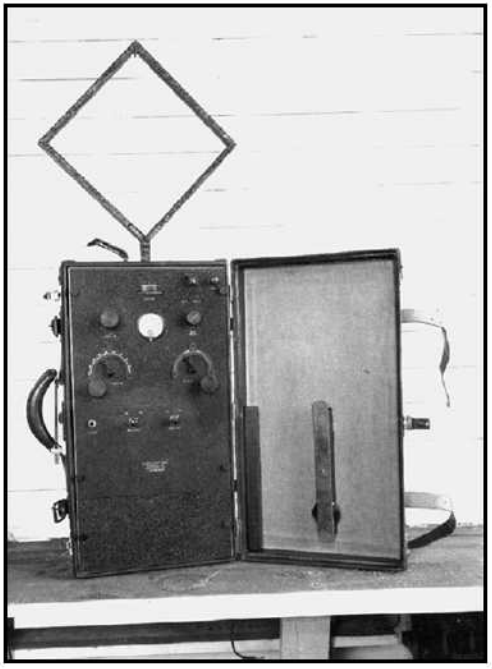

Figure 10. "X Type" Portable HF Radio Direction Finder.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Type X RDF," photograph (Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC: circa 1930).

In September of 1930, after several unsuccessful Coast Guard appeals to bring Major William F. Friedman[87] to active duty with that service,[88] the War Department released Major Friedman for two weeks to board CG-210 and conduct code-breaking experiments on the Coast Guard's new "floating cryptanalytic crime-detection laboratory."[89] While operating off the coast of New York, Major Friedman devised a system for breaking down the various codes used by blacks operating in and around New York Harbor.[90] He then read the decoded operating orders back to the rum ships, which had the effect of halting delivery of all alcohol along the New York coastline for several days.[91] In awe of this success,

[87] William F. Friedman graduated from Cornell University with a degree in genetics in 1912. He then worked at Riverbank Laboratories, Illinois, where he met and married Elizabeth Smith. During WWI, Friedman trained Army cryptologists at Riverbank. After the War, he was invited to take over the War Department Signal Corps' Code and Cipher Section, an offer he readily accepted. While with the Army, Friedman coined the term "cryptanalysis," as the science of code-breaking. In 1929, Friedman became the Chief of the Army's Signal Intelligence Service. In addition to his assisting the Coast Guard with cryptanalysis during Prohibition, Friedman is credited with breaking the Japanese "Purple Code" during WWII. Ladislas Farago, *The Broken Seal: Operation Magic and the Secret Road to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Random House, 1967), 61-63.

[88] Secretary of War, letter to Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 9 September 1930.

[89] Kahn, 806.

[90] Frank M. Meals, LT, USCG, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Major William F. Friedman, U.S.A.; Services Rendered by," 30 September 1930.

[91] Kahn, 806.

LCDR Gorman remarked that "[t]he resulting confusion to this group of rum ships was more than all the efforts of the destroyer force and the other units combined have been able to effect in months."[92]

The use of HFDF proved very profitable for the Coast Guard. This was true not only at sea, but also in locating and shutting down illicit amateur radio stations ashore.[93] With the cooperation and consent of the Department of Justice,[94] in the summer of 1930 portable direction finders were used to locate and close down six unlicensed stations in the New York area.[95] This success continued with several more illicit stations along the Northeast U.S. Coast located and put out of operation in 1931.[96] So helpful was the use of portable direction finders in identifying shore-based rum runners that by 1931, determining "the location of ... hidden station[s] [was] now but a matter of hours, where before it was one of months."[97]

HFDF was also used by the Navy to assist the Coast Guard in locating vessels of the rum fleet. Rum runners would frequently request bearings from Naval stations to maintain their positions at sea while waiting for the arrival of contact boats. The Coast Guard capitalized on this unintended COMINT gold mine by requesting that the Navy take bearings on all suspected rum-running vessels and transmit them, in code, to the nearest Coast Guard cutter.[98] With the Navy's assistance, this proved extremely beneficial to the Coast Guard's enforcement effort.

As the Rum War entered its second decade, the rum syndicates increasingly focused their efforts on the Southeast U.S. and the Gulf of Mexico. Consolidated Exporters set up an office in Belize, British Honduras in 1930 and began sending mother ships to infiltrate U.S. supply lines through its Southern approaches.[99] By this time Consolidated's hold on

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[92] Kahn, 806.

[93] To find illicit radio stations ashore, Coast Guard personnel placed portable direction finders in traveling bag monitors and took cross bearings from different locations in the area where the station was located. This allowed the Coast Guard to pin-point locations accurately and quickly, so the stations could be raided before illicit radio operators had time to sanitize their operations. Frank M. Meals, LT, USCG, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Use of Monitor by Radio Electricians W. B. Dawson and H. M. Anthony in the Location of Rummy Radio Station at 25 Hull Avenue, Grant City, Staten Island," 16 March 1931.

[94] The Coast Guard itself had no general police authority ashore and was not authorized to make investigations, inspections, raids, or seizures. This was done by agents from the Department of Justice with the Coast Guard supplying the necessary HFDF equipment and acting as "technical advisors." Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Coast Guard Intelligence Unit, New York, subject: "Intelligence Duty: Instructions," 5 December 1930, 2.

[95] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Unlicensed Radio Stations Used to Direct Smuggling Activities," 24 October 1930.

[96] Frank M. Meals, LT, USCG, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Raiding of Group 6 Radio Station, 98 Austin Street, New Bedford, Mass," 22 March 1931.

[97] Frank M. Meals, 16 March 1931.

[98] Willoughby, 105-106.

[99] U.S. Consulate at Belize, British Honduras, confidential memorandum for Colonial Secretary, no subject, 1 August 1932.

the liquor industry "completely surround[ed] the United States," with operations in Mexico, Belize, New Orleans, Miami, Havana,[100] Nassau, Halifax, and Montreal.[101] As Consolidated Exporters was well known for its use of radio to facilitate operations, this necessitated a Coast Guard response in shifting COMINT collection resources from the Pacific and Atlantic coasts to Florida and Louisiana.[102] Up to several hundred cryptograms a month [103] were being sent from Consolidated's shore site in Belize to its main headquarters in Vancouver by means of relay ships located off the California Coast.[104] The Belize station also communicated directly with mother ships in the Gulf of Mexico and with its agents in New Orleans.[105] By placing heavy COMINT emphasis on the Gulf region in the early 1930s, the Coast Guard was able to collect enough encrypted radio traffic to allow Headquarters cryptanalysts to break the crypto-system used by Consolidated and in turn have "two or three days in advance the operating orders of the rum-runners, giving contact times, positions, etc."[106] This was a windfall for the Coast Guard to the extent that in a 1931 letter to the Commander, Gulf Division, the Commandant credited attaining rum-runners' operating orders as "the most important single item combating rum [running,] .... [whereas] any other systems of intermittent trailing and dropping [rum-runners] [have become] totally ineffective as the organization of the rum-runners is so perfected that immediately orders are given to counteract the reported movements of the Coast Guard cutters."[107]

The success in COMINT operations against the large liquor syndicates culminated in the 1932 raid of the Consolidated agent's office in New Orleans. Here, federal agents seized hundreds of encrypted documents and elicited the help of Mrs. Friedman in solving them. Based on Mrs. Friedman's analysis, 35 rum runners were indicted for conspiracy and Consolidated's outfit in New Orleans was effectively disbanded.[108] Mrs. Friedman also helped solve another celebrated case involving the sailing vessel *I'm Alone*. In 1929, *I'm Alone* was fired upon and sank in international waters after refusing to stop for Coast Guard

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[100]One of the most successful rum-running operations based in Havana was under the control of "Spanish Marie." Spanish Marie literally controlled the illicit liquor trade between Havana and the U.S., with a fleet of 15 speedboats under her direction. She equipped her boats with radio and set up an unlicensed radio station in Key West that transmitted coded messages made up of seemingly harmless Spanish words and phrases. The Coast Guard broke the code, but let the station continue operating in order to obtain valuable intelligence. Willoughby, 119-120.

[101]Kahn, 810.

[102]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Radio-Intelligence; High-Frequency Receivers; Interception of Rum-Runner's Radio Traffic," 14 April 1931.

[103]Kahn, 803.

[104]U.S. Consulate at Belize, British Honduras, 1 August 1932.

[105]U.S. Consulate at Belize, British Honduras, 1 August 1932. Also see Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Contact Positions of Rum-Runners in Gulf Area," 15 May 1931.

[106]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Radio-Intelligence; Interception of Rum-Runner's Radio Traffic," 11 June 1931, 1.

[107]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 11 June 1931, 2.

[108]Kahn, 810-813

inspection. At the time, *I'm Alone* was flying a Canadian flag, which prompted some members of the Canadian Parliament to claim the attack was an act of war. Through the decryption of radio traffic known to have been sent from *I'm Alone*, Mrs. Friedman was able to prove the vessel had American owners and was flying a Canadian flag under false pretenses. This blunted Canadian claims that their sovereignty had been violated and saved the U.S. hundreds of thousands of dollars in restitution payments.[109]

With the value of COMINT to the battle for information superiority now irrefutably evident, in late 1930 the Coast Guard set up a satellite intelligence office in New York City, again under the command of LT Meals.[110] In his orders establishing the new unit, Commandant Billard indicated the time has come for "the practical application of ... intelligence, ... [to be used] as a valuable aid to patrol forces engaged in the prevention of smuggling."[111] This released Headquarters from its responsibility for central control over all intelligence activities and empowered the first field unit in the Coast Guard to do intelligence work. It was also necessary as Headquarters in its own right was swamped with the increasing amount of COMINT information pouring in from all directions. The New York Intelligence Unit was tasked with providing intelligence support to the units of the Eastern, New York, and Norfolk Divisions, and the Destroyer Force.[112] To do this, three additional six-bitters, including CG-131, CG-214, and CG-141, were equipped with special high-frequency receivers and HFDF equipment like their predecessor, CG-210.[113] Additionally, the Unit was staffed with eleven officers and 45 enlisted men, performing rudimentary cryptanalysis and providing time-sensitive COMINT-derived information to the anti-smuggling fleet.[114] By early 1931, the New York Unit had been designated as the official "training base" for Coast Guard intelligence officers, with the intention of training enough personnel to commission like units on the U.S. Pacific and Gulf Coasts.[115] This was realized in the fall of 1931,[116] as an officer, cryptanalyst, and six radiomen each, in specially equipped patrol boats,[117] were sent to Mobile and San Francisco.[118] With three regional intelligence offices in operation, the Headquarters cryptanalysis staff could now concentrate its efforts on "codes too complex for the field officers to solve."[119] To ensure proper oversight of the

[109]Kahn, 814-815.

[110]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 5 December 1930, 1.

[111]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, New York Division, subject: "Field Intelligence Units: Establishment and Operation of," 1 December 1930, 1. Included in Appendix A.

[112]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 5 December 1930, 1.

[113]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 1 December 1930, 2.

[114]Unidentified correspondent, transcript of LCDR Gorman's remarks following Admiral Billard's speech, no subject, n.d., 2.

[115]Unidentified correspondent, transcript of Mr. Watson's discussion with LCDR Gorman in San Francisco, no subject, 19 January 1931, 1.

[116]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Radio-Intelligence; Operation of Unlicensed High-Frequency Radio Transmitter in Gulf Division," 16 December 1930, 2.

[117]Unidentified correspondent, 19 January 1931, 1.

[118]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 14 April 1932.

[119]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 1 December 1930, 3.

Coast Guard's new coast-to-coast intelligence network, the Headquarters cryptanalyst staff was boosted from two to seven personnel in July 1931.[120] This rounded out the Coast Guard's COMINT collection strategy for the remaining years of Prohibition.

Imagery Intelligence

In the summer of 1924, the Coast Guard received a report of submarines being used to smuggle liquor into New York via the Hudson River.[121] With no air capability of its own, the Coast Guard obtained the assistance of the Fairchild Aerial Camera Corporation in locating and photographing the suspected rum runners.[122] A resulting photograph, taken at an altitude of 5,000 feet, showed two subsurface craft, each approximately 100 feet in length, transiting the Hudson River.[123] While it was never proved that these craft were involved in the illegal rum trade, the use of aerial photography in this instance marked the Coast Guard's first use of IMINT as an means of acquiring DBK in the Rum War at Sea.

Figure 11. Suspected Rum-Running Submarines.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Submarines, Possible Use for Smuggling," photograph (Records of the Coast Guard Intelligence Division 1922-1932, Record Group 26, Entry 297; National Archives Building, Washington, DC: 1924).

As more appropriations for the enforcement of the Prohibition laws became available, the Coast Guard expanded its IMINT program by establishing an air station at Gloucester, Massachusetts.[124] With the arrival of the Coast Guard's first seaplane in October 1926, the Coast Guard now had the capability to scout "over sea areas off the New England and

[120]Coast Guard appropriations for fiscal year 1931 included annual salaries of $4,000 for a cryptanalyst-in-charge, $2,000 for an assistant cryptanalyst, $2,000 for a senior cryptographic clerk, $1,800 for a cryptographic clerk, and $1,620 each for three assistant cryptographic clerks to be employed at Headquarters. Kahn, 807.

[121]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Chief, U.S. Army Air Service, subject: "Request for Aerial Photographs," 29 July 1924.

[122]W. V. E. Jacobs, Commander, New York Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Submarines, Possible Use for Smuggling," 14 July 1924.

[123]W. V. E. Jacobs, 14 July 1924.

[124]U.S. Coast Guard, Biography for Prohibition Era Commandants William E. Reynolds, Fredrick G. Billard, and Harry G. Hamlet, no subject, n.d.

Long Island coasts," giving the Coast Guard DBK in the area most notorious for rum running since the beginning of Prohibition.[125] The Loening OL-5 seaplane, built specifically for the Coast Guard, extended the Coast Guard's view of the battlefield to a range of 415 miles, and operated at a speed of 75 miles per hour.[126]

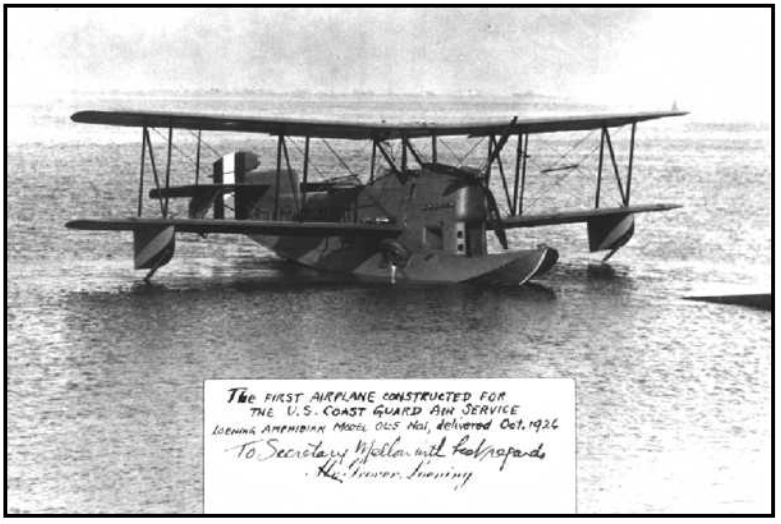

Figure 12. The Coast Guard's First Airplane

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Airplane," photograph (Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC: 1926).

By 1927 the Coast Guard had five seaplanes in its inventory, operating them from three different air stations along the Northeast Atlantic coastline.[127] To respond to the increased smuggling activities off the Florida Coast, in 1928 an additional temporary air station was set up at Fort Lauderdale.[128] With the Headquarters Intelligence Section stressing the need to obtain photographs of suspected rum runners at

[125]Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1926* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 391.

[126]Hugh Garling, "The United States Coast Guard: Part II," Nautical Magazine 247, no. 2 (February 1992): 105.

[127]The five seaplanes included three Loening amphibian planes and two Voight UO type aircraft. In addition to the air station at the Coast Guard patrol base in Gloucester, Massachusetts, an auxiliary air station was set up at Ten Pound Island, off Gloucester, and a second primary air station was established at Cape May, New Jersey. Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1927* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1927), 161.

[128]Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1928* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1928), 128.

sea,[129] in 1929 the Coast Guard Air Service searched a total area of 945,275 square miles and identified 5,113 vessels.[130] Based on the photographs obtained by both Coast Guard air and surface assets, an "identification book of blacks" was developed for the use of patrol forces in sorting out known rum runners from the myriad vessels operating near America's shores.[131] Lists of photographs needed to keep the book current were routinely disseminated to Coast Guard units capable of obtaining the necessary pictures.[132] This ensured the book remained a viable aid for Coast Guard units on patrol at sea.

Open-Source Intelligence

Placing its finger on the nation's pulse in response to Prohibition, early in 1924 the Coast Guard organized a campaign to obtain as much open-source information as possible concerning the plans and intentions of would-be rum runners. In May 1924, after learning of illegal activity in Gloucester, Massachusetts, LCDR Root contacted Miss Martha N. Brooks, Alderman for the City of Gloucester, and asked for her help to piece "together scraps of disconnected information—every available source," in hopes of gleaning information valuable to the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling effort.[133] Miss Brooks responded by ordering the Coast Guard Intelligence Section a subscription to the *Gloucester Daily Times,* at the City's expense.[134] Showing remarkable presence of mind, Miss Brooks added that the Chief of Police kept a confidential list of 28 suspected rum-running vessels which he would be glad to share with any bona fide Coast Guard person dispatched to collect it.[135] This face-to-face meeting was necessary owing to the fact that Miss Brooks appreciated "the difficulties of enemy spies and secret agents."[136]

The use of newspapers to keep abreast of developments in the rum trade became a staple in the Coast Guard's arsenal of tools for acquiring information dominance. By August 1924, the Intelligence Section had subscriptions to "several ... papers published in the Maritime Provinces and in New England Coast cities."[137] The information gleaned from these subscriptions was incorporated into Intelligence Circulars and disseminated to the fleet to assist in identifying suspect vessels for boarding.[138] One of the most valuable

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[129]Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, encl (1), 1.

[130]Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1929* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1929), 128.

[131]Commander, Eastern Division, letter to All Units, Eastern Division, subject: "Black Information," 24 December 1929.

[132]Commander, Eastern Division, 24 December 1929.

[133]Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Martha N. Brooks, Alderman, City of Gloucester, Massachusetts, no subject, 26 May 1924.

[134]Martha N. Brooks, Alderman, City of Gloucester, Massachusetts, letter to CDR Charles S. Root, USCG, no subject, 6 June 1924.

[135]Martha N. Brooks, 6 June 1924.

[136]Martha N. Brooks, 6 June 1924.

[137]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to CDR W. H. Munter, subject: "Intelligence Information," 23 August 1924.

[138]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 23 August 1924.

sources of information was the Halifax Morning Chronicle, which regularly reported the positions of vessels known by the Coast Guard to be engaged in liquor smuggling.[139] So profitable was the collection of open-source information to the overall interdiction effort that, by the summer of 1928, the Coast Guard was regularly reviewing headlines from Nova Scotia, Cuba, the Bahamas, and Bermuda, as well as several key U.S. cities. Additionally, telephone directories of principal U.S. cities and contiguous countries were kept on hand to assist the Intelligence Section in its analysis of rum-running activity reported in the open press.[140] This allowed the Coast Guard to keep abreast of developments regarding new smuggling craft and personnel involved in the illicit liquor trade.

The Coast Guard also turned to open-source intelligence to support its use of COMINT in gaining the operating plans of the rum fleet. With early black codes taken from two commercially available code books, the Coast Guard needed only purchase the same books to break the codes.[141] Ultimately, this success was short-lived as the rum runners and their codes became more sophisticated as the Rum War raged on.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND INTELLIGENCE SHARING

Correctly assessing the value of intelligence to the task at hand by an early date, the Coast Guard went one step further and began cultivating an intelligence-sharing network with other U.S. government agencies capable of supporting enforcement of the Prohibition laws. By building a rapport and sharing intelligence with agencies inside the Departments of State, War, Navy, Justice, Post Office, Interior, Commerce, and Labor, and the Shipping Board, as well as with other agencies of the Department of the Treasury, the Coast Guard was able to increase the value of intelligence to the enforcement effort.[142] The resultant pooling of resources of this "intelligence community" enabled the U.S. government to present a cohesive effort in battling an increasingly sophisticated enemy. Furthermore, it increased the government's collective level of DBK over the rum runners. In a 1928 letter to the Coast Guard Regulations Board, CDR Root detailed the extent of outside relationships maintained by the Intelligence Section at Headquarters:

> From the State Department information is obtained concerning the movements of vessels and persons abroad who are engaged in or conspiring to engage in the violation of the laws of the United States involving operations on the ocean and information concerning the attitude of other governments on subjects which are pertinent to our work.
>
> In the War Department the Intelligence Office of the Coast Guard is in correspondence with the Military Intelligence division of the General Staff (G-2), and with the Code and Cipher section of the Signal Corps.

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[139]W. H. Munter, CDR, USCG, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Intelligence Information, Whereabouts of Vessels Engaged in the Liquor Trade," 21 August 1924.

[140]Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 4.

[141]Charles S. Root, 10 October 1927.

[142]Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 1.

In the Navy Department the Intelligence Office is in contact with the Hydrographic Office and with the Communications Service.

In the Department of Justice the Intelligence Office works with the Bureau of Investigation, the division of Criminal Identification, and with those divisions which handle frauds against the Government, forfeitures in admiralty, and prosecutions involving breaches of the laws of the United States on the ocean. Direct correspondence is maintained with United States Attorneys in those districts where cooperation is good.

In the Post Office Department the office works, on occasion, with the Chief Inspector of that department which has charge of all its secret agents.[143]

In the Interior Department the Intelligence Office corresponds with the Geological Survey concerning boundary lines on the coast.

In the Department of Commerce we correspond principally with the Bureau of Navigation and the Steamboat Inspection Service.

With the Department of Labor liaison is maintained with the Bureau of Immigration in matters pertaining to the smuggling of aliens. (Alien running, smuggling, and narcotic and liquor running are very often performed by the same organization).

With the Shipping Board correspondence is maintained concerning the transfer of American vessels of foreign flag or registry. Vessels are never transferred without reference to the Intelligence Office of the Coast Guard.

In the Treasury Department liaison is maintained with the offices of the Assistant Secretaries, having supervision of Customs, Prohibition, Narcotics, and the Public Health Service and with those bureaus directed by them and, when necessary, with the Division of Secret Service.[144]

As the need for "instant" communication with these agencies became increasingly regular, the Intelligence Section hired an additional clerk who was regularly "dispatched to other Departments with urgent confidential communications."[145] Although the Intelligence Section maintained regular liaison with numerous agencies, the cooperation solicited from the Departments of State, Justice, and War, and the interagency cooperation with the Prohibition Bureau and Customs Service were the most beneficial for the Coast Guard. The Department of State was most helpful in supplying HUMINT information from its consulates overseas on the plans and intentions of foreign rum-runners to ship

[143]Post office boxes were used for clandestine communications with undercover Coast Guard operatives. The Chief Inspector provided and maintained the boxes under fictitious names and addresses at stations and cities convenient for Coast Guard use. Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 4.

[144]Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 2.

[145]Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, unaddressed letter, no subject, 22 August 1929.

liquor to the U.S.[146] The Department of Justice regularly investigated Coastguardsmen accused of conspiring with the rum runners as well as some rum runners who occasionally tried to impersonate Coastguardsmen to gain pertinent information.[147] The War Department supplied the Coast Guard with cipher devices to encrypt its own communications [148] as well as cryptographic training literature for the Coast Guard's use in building an effective cryptanalysis unit at Headquarters.[149] The Prohibition Bureau worked hand-in-hand with the Coast Guard in intercepting and decrypting illicit radio traffic and also in running informants along the Northwest U.S. Coast and in British Columbia.[150] So effective was this relationship that from 1926 to 1927, liquor shipments from Victoria, British Columbia, were reduced by 50 percent.[151] During the same timeframe, ship clearances from Vancouver, British Columbia, decreased over 70 percent, from 137,960 to 37,647.[152] Finally, the Customs Service provided assistance in intercepting encrypted radio traffic off the Florida and Gulf Coasts for forwarding to Coast Guard Headquarters.[153] The Coast Guard and Customs also exchanged Intelligence Circulars and Weekly Intelligence Bulletins [154] as a means of providing their front line forces with the most current intelligence available to either organization.[155] To solidify the working relationship between the Coast Guard and Customs, in the spring of 1931, LCDR Gorman accompanied two Customs Commissioners on a 10-day inspection of Customs and Coast Guard units operating in Florida and Cuba.[156]

So successful were the cooperative efforts in intelligence sharing among federal agencies that in 1928 the Coast Guard Commandant put forth a decision that:

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[146]Department of State, 26 June 1925. Also see Secretary of State, 12 April 1924, and Secretary of State, 14 April 1924.

[147]Bennet Sanderson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, letter to CDR Charles S. Root, USCG, no subject, 4 January 1926.

[148]Secretary of War, letter to Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 8 April 1924.

[149]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Ensign L. T. Jones, subject: "Cryptographic Literature," 31 July 1931.

[150]Ralph R. Read, Supervising Agent, letter to Seymour Lowman, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 9 April 1928, 3-5.

[151]Figures provided by the American Consul General at Vancouver show a decrease from 14,275 cases of liquor exported from Victoria in 1926 to 7,145 cases exported in 1927. Ralph R. Read, 9 April 1928, 5.

[152]Ralph R. Read, 9 April 1928, 5-6.

[153]Ralph D. Kern, Customs Agent, letter to Commissioner of Customs, no subject, 5 November 1928.

[154]Customs' Weekly Intelligence Bulletins provided "current general and specific information relating to smuggling of every character" to Customs officers to "acquaint [them] with the movements of vessels, vehicles, and individuals engaged in smuggling ... [and] to enable the officers in each district to be informed of the preventive activities and seizures in other districts." Commissioner of Customs, Bureau of Customs, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 10 February 1931.

[155]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commissioner of Customs, Bureau of Customs, no subject, 14 February 1931.

[156]F. J. Gorman, 11 March 1931, 1.

> [t]he officers in charge of any branch or unit of the Coast Guard, Customs, Prohibition, and Narcotic services, when stationed in the same city, shall meet in conference the first and third Monday of every month. The purpose of these conferences will be the interchange between the officers of all information and evidence relating to violations of the laws coming within their respective jurisdictions, in order that the same may be investigated and prosecuted in an effective and expeditious manner.[157]

Liaison with other agencies often went beyond operational sharing of information related to rum running. The Coast Guard also tapped the resources of appropriate government agencies to better train its own forces in the methods of collecting and interpreting intelligence. In January 1925, the Director of the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation [158] agreed to allow Coast Guard intelligence officers to attend the Bureau's three-week training program in New York.[159] In reciprocation, the Coast Guard provided the Bureau intelligence related to its operations, obtained incidentally in the enforcement of Prohibition.[160] The Coast Guard also relied heavily on the War Department for instructing Coast Guard officers in the ways of cryptanalysis.[161]

ALL-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO THE FLEET

The Coast Guard's creative use of different, yet complementary, intelligence disciplines represented an all-source effort to gain DBK and maintain the edge in information superiority as a means of magnifying the effectiveness of material assets in fighting the Rum War at Sea. It was a challenging task for the Headquarters Intelligence Section to correctly identify the Coast Guard's intelligence needs, collect the required data, process the information into usable intelligence, analyze and interpret the results, deliver the intel-

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[157]Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to All Divisions, Section Bases and Districts, no subject, 27 July 1928.

[158]In the 1920s, the FBI was known simply as the Bureau of Investigation, under the Justice Department. Sometime after Prohibition, the Agency became better known as the "Federal" Bureau of Investigation. J. Edgar Hoover, Director, Bureau of Investigation, letter to CAPT Charles S. Root, USCG, no subject, 26 June 1930.

[159]J. Edgar Hoover, Director, Bureau of Investigation, letter to CDR Charles S. Root, USCG, no subject, 21 January 1925.

[160]In 1930 the Coast Guard received a report of a white-slavery ring operating between the U.S., Cuba, and Panama. Unsuspecting girls in the U.S. and Cuba were lured to Panama on contracts as artists. Once in country, the girls were levied with huge debts incurred by their passage to Panama and placed in bars, cafes, and brothels where they were given a chance to "work off the debt." Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to J. Edgar Hoover, Director, Bureau of Investigation, no subject, 21 June 1930.

[161]Charles S. Root, memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between CDR Root, Coast Guard Headquarters and MAJ Friedman, War Department.

ligence to the fleet in a timely and useful manner, and finally, incorporate feedback [162] from the fleet into creating better finished products.[163] The chief result of this process was the Intelligence Office Circular, mailed under confidential cover to front-line Coast Guard forces approximately three times a week. The stated goal of the Intelligence Circular was to "improve the efficiency of Service operations by publishing such condensed information as will permit Force Commanders to correctly estimate the current situation and act accordingly."[164] By the summer of 1928, nearly 1,000 Intelligence Circulars had been issued by the Intelligence Section, each issue comprising approximately 200 copies.

Even as Intelligence Circulars provided useful general information related to rum running, they were often "amplified by special communications by mail, telegraph, or telephone when deemed necessary."[165] In providing this additional information, each cutter was assigned a patrol sector based on intelligence. Cutters were then given the names of rum-runners in their sector and other pertinent information such as each rum-runner's port of registry, cargoes, tonnage, the length of time the rum-runner had been in the area, when transfers might be effected, information on the ship's owners, and the name and owners of contact boats expected to rendezvous with the rum-runner.[166] Intelligence Circulars were also amplified by the dissemina-

[162]To ensure Headquarters maintained a "comprehensive picture of the current activities," Commandant Billard required each patrol boat to submit weekly reports detailing the "results of all activities, any information or rumors indicating present or prospective smuggling activities with actions taken or proposed to combat same, and, in general, all items of importance or interest pertaining to the objects of the patrol, together with such recommendations or plans as may be thought appropriate." Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commanders of Section Bases, Squadrons and Divisions of Offshore Patrol Forces, and Officers in Charge of other Patrol Boat Groups, subject: "Confidential Reports of Operations," 26 January 1928.

[163]Each of the steps listed are part of the "Intelligence Process." *Needs* indicates the requirements of the policymakers; *collection* includes the gathering of raw data for use in producing finished intelligence; *processing* and *exploitation* refer to converting large amounts of data to a form suitable for producing finished intelligence and include translating and decrypting data; *analysis* and *production* is the "integration, evaluation, and analysis of all available data" into usable intelligence products; *dissemination* refers to delivering finished products to the customer; and *feedback* refers to interacting with the customer to help identify intelligence gaps so that intelligence producers can "focus more precisely on customer needs." CIA, *Consumer's Guide,* 1.

[164]Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 4.

[165]Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 4.

[166]Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 66.

tion of "Suspect Lists,"[167] containing the names, photographs, and descriptions of all vessels, foreign and domestic, known to be engaged in liquor smuggling.[168]

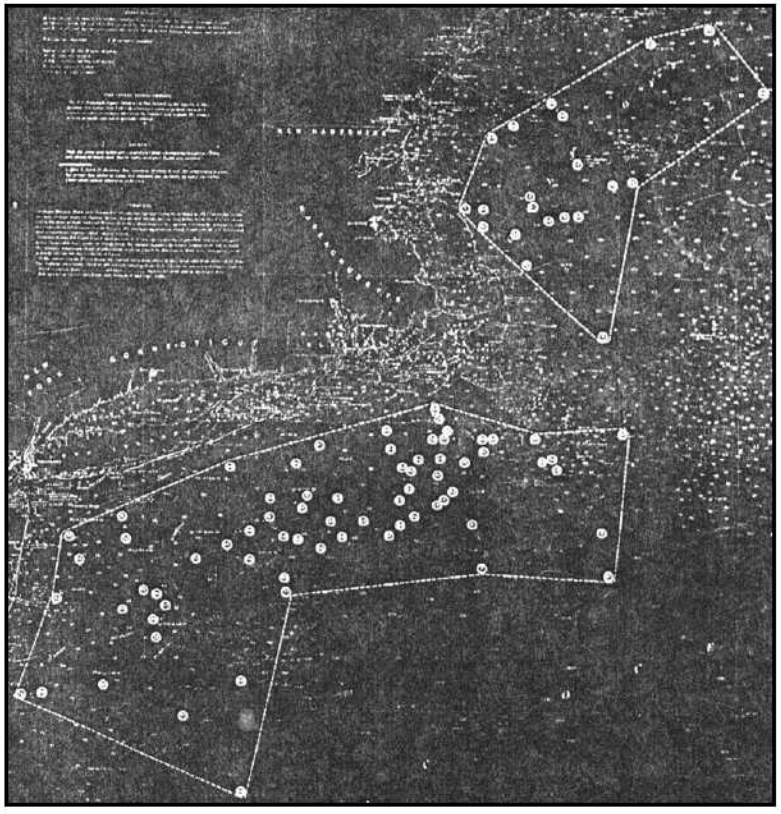

Figure 13. Black Locations Based on Intelligence.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Black Locations February 1-July 31, 1929," chart (Records of the Coast Guard Intelligence Division 1922-1932, Record Group 26, Entry 297; National Archives Building, Washington, DC: 1929).

As an example of the success the Coast Guard enjoyed through its application of all-source intelligence to the problem of Prohibition enforcement, CDR Root provided details of an "all-source" operation in 1928 where:

[167]Suspect Lists were probably the same product as the "identification book of blacks" discussed in the section on Imagery Intelligence earlier in this chapter. See, Commander, Eastern Division, 24 December 1929.

[168]Waters, *Smugglers of Spirits,* 75. Also see, Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 5.

[t]wo schooners whose movements were directed from New York by telegraph, were being operated out of Nassau. Telegrams were sent from Nassau by radio to a Miami address. Replies were sent from New York to Nassau in cipher by radio, indicating a land wire link from Miami to New York. The New York addressee was located and it was discovered that he was communicating with Bayport, Florida West coast, by land line telegraph. This office had on file information from a friendly hotel keeper at Brooksville, Florida, describing two schooners which might have been the ones concerned in the telegraphic correspondence. Three days after these vessels next sailed from Nassau, the Gulf Division was ordered to search 20 miles west of Bayport. The vessels were found, their game broken up, and the New York director left New York post haste for fear of arrest for conspiracy.[169]

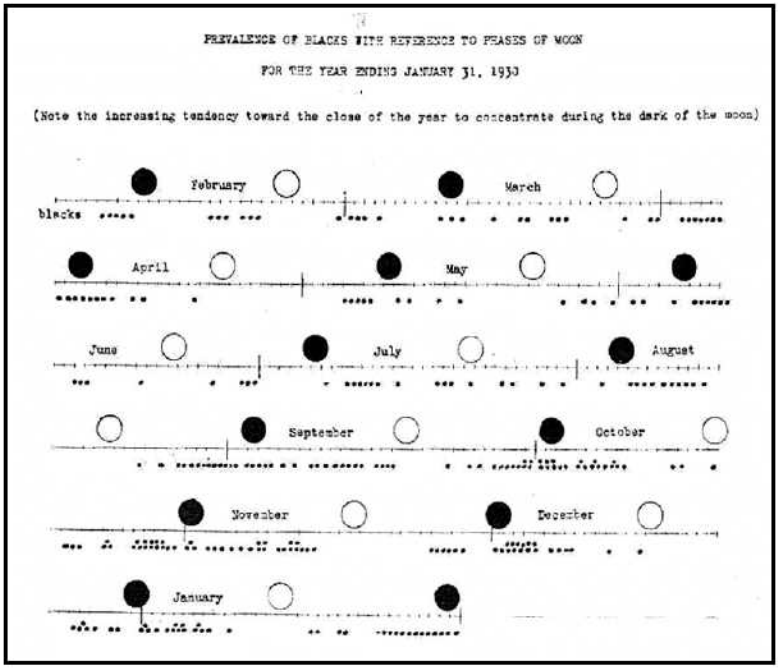

Figure 14. Smuggling Fluctuations with Moon Phases.

Source: U.S. Coast Guard, "Prevalence of Blacks with Reference to Phases of Moon for the Year Ending January 31, 1930," chart (Records of the Coast Guard Intelligence Division 1922-1932, Record Group 26, Entry 297; National Archives Building, Washington, DC: 1930).

[169]Charles S. Root, 9 August 1928, 7.

The Coast Guard's use of all-source intelligence was not limited to that readily obtainable through intelligence collection or that provided by intelligence sharing with other federal agencies. In an effort to forecast rum-running activity, the Intelligence Section used statistics of prior seizures and other information to generate charts showing the fluctuation of smuggling activity vis-à-vis phases of the moon.[170] This allowed the Coast Guard to concentrate its patrols at times more likely to yield the greatest results in the interdiction and apprehension of rum runners. Not surprisingly, illegal activity intensified during each new moon and tapered off during full moons.

As a measure of effectiveness of the Coast Guard's all-source intelligence program, in August 1928, the Commissioner of Prohibition, Dr. James H. Doran, announced liquor shipments to the U.S. by sea had been reduced 60 percent from 14,000,000 gallons in fiscal year 1927, to approximately 5,000,000 gallons in fiscal year 1928.[171] The relationship between the use of intelligence and the decline in smuggling was keenly felt among cutters in the anti-smuggling fleet, prompting the Commander of the Florida East Coast Patrol Area to write, "information received from [the Intelligence Section] is the best barometer of how things are going in my own particular area."[172] The all-source intelligence effort sustained by the Intelligence Section at Headquarters continued to provide operational Coast Guard units a level of DBK over and above that obtainable by even the most diligent efforts of the anti-smuggling fleet alone. It was appreciated by the fleet for its value to the enforcement effort and, in the end, considered an integral part of the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling operational strategy.

In summary, when faced with the dilemma of how to enforce the Prohibition laws with minimal assets, the Coast Guard launched a massive campaign using the intelligence disciplines of HUMINT, COMINT, IMINT, and Open-Source Intelligence to attain DBK over the rum runners and multiply the effectiveness of the anti-smuggling fleet. The collection, analysis, and dissemination of critical intelligence provided the Coast Guard a view of the battlefield otherwise unobtainable without the concerted effort of both the Intelligence Section at Headquarters and commanders on the front line. Through interagency cooperation and intelligence sharing with other federal agencies, the Coast Guard enhanced the effectiveness of the combined government effort to enforce Prohibition and furthered its own intelligence program in the process. The resulting all-source intelligence effort allowed the Coast Guard to employ its limited resources intelligently against the best-laid plans of the rum syndicates. The rum syndicates' own intelligence strategy can place the Coast Guard's efforts into some perspective.

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[170]U.S. Coast Guard, "Prevalence of Blacks with Reference to Phases of Moon for the Year Ending January 31, 1930," chart, n.d.

[171]In the days of Prohibition, U.S. Government fiscal years ran from July 1 through June 30 annually. "Rum Row and Finger Prints," The Outlook, 1 August 1928.

[172]Commander, Section Base Six, letter to CAPT C. S. Root, USCG, no subject, 9 April 1930.

Chapter 4

RUM RUNNERS' USE OF INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

"Oh, we don't give a damn for our old Uncle Sam
Way-o, whiskey and gin!
Lend us a hand when we stand in to land
Just give us time to run the rum in."

"'Tis easy and free for us boys out at sea
Way-o, whiskey and gin!
Pigs will all fly when the country goes dry
Give us the word, we'll run the rum in."

The Smugglers' Chantey, Joseph Chase Allen, 1921

Information superiority in favor of the Coast Guard in the Rum War was not obtained overnight, nor was this outcome uncontested. Organized crime syndicates as well as independent rum runners made various attempts to collect and use intelligence to protect their precious liquor cargoes. Rum runners used not only most of the standard intelligence collection disciplines, but also employed counterintelligence practices,[1] specifically communications security (COMSEC) measures and operations security (OPSEC) measures, to keep its plans and intentions out of the hands of the enforcement patrols.

INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AGAINST THE COAST GUARD

Although the rum-runners' intelligence collection efforts never reached the magnitude of the Coast Guard's, it was not from lack of trying. Determined blacks used all means at their disposal to try and learn the operating plans of the Coast Guard. But because the rum fleet did not have a large bureaucratic infrastructure to support its intelligence collection efforts, as the Coast Guard had, attempts at intelligence collection were often amateurish and clumsy and were routinely compromised by the Coast Guard's own intelligence successes and by the government's strict use of OPSEC and COMSEC to protect sensitive information. Nonetheless, attempts were made to use HUMINT, COMINT, and IMINT to gain usable intelligence and assist the rum runners in evading detection.

Probably the easiest and most reliable method of obtaining the Coast Guard's operating plans was to "turn" someone on the inside and bribe them into divulging useful intelligence.

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[1] Counterintelligence is defined as "[i]nformation gathered and activities conducted to protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted for, or on behalf of, foreign powers, organizations, persons, or terrorist activities." Central Intelligence Agency, *A Consumer's Guide to Intelligence* (Langley, VA: CIA Public Affairs Office, 1995), 52.

While this did not happen often, it did occur. In December 1925, while on patrol off the coast of New London, Connecticut, the destroyer *Cassin* intercepted a plain text radio message saying "BOOTLEGGER DO NOT COME IN TONIGHT NOT SAFE."[2] The captain of *Cassin* reported the sending set sounded much like those used on Coast Guard patrol boats, although when the message was intercepted the only other vessel in sight was another destroyer. As *Cassin* drew closer to New London, a Coast Guard six-bitter was observed entering New London from sea. The matter was investigated but there is no record addressing whether the six-bitter was involved.[3]

Another HUMINT method the rum runners employed was to impersonate Coast Guard intelligence officers and contact legitimate Coastguardsmen asking for information on Coast Guard operational plans.[4] Although it is unknown how often this tactic succeeded, in at least one case apparently related to rum running, a person was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney for violation of the statute against pretending to be an Officer of the United States Government.[5] Other clandestine HUMINT collection involved the use of "double agents" working as informants for the Coast Guard, while at the same time smuggling liquor of their own ashore and using their relationship with the Coast Guard to protect themselves and others engaged in the illegal rum trade.[6]

Little is known about the rum syndicates' attempts or successes in breaking Coast Guard codes and ciphers. As the codes used by the Coast Guard were developed by the War Department to provide secure military communications,[7] it is doubtful the rum syndicates had much success in this endeavor, if it was even attempted. To compensate, however, rum runners did use "other means" to intercept Coast Guard communications. In the summer of 1924 the Coast Guard learned that telephone lines at two New York City area Coast Guard stations had been tampered with. Suspected rum runners had scraped the insulation off of telephone lines and attached listening devices to collect COMINT information.[8] Subsequently, the Officers-in-Charge at Coast Guard stations were armed to protect themselves and government property from unauthorized intrusion. Evidence of another instance of phone tapping appeared in the summer of 1930, when a Coast Guard

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[2] P. F. Roach, Commanding Officer, CASSIN, letter to Commander, Destroyer Force, subject: "Intercepted Radio Message," 12 December 1925.

[3] P. F. Roach, 12 December 1925.

[4] H. F. Schoenborn, LCDR, USCG, letter to Assistant U.S. Attorney Bennet Sanderson, no subject, 6 January 1926.

[5] Bennet Sanderson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, letter to CDR Charles S. Root, USCG, no subject, 4 January 1926.

[6] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Notes Taken From Mr. Owens of Foreign Control Section, Prohibition Service, March 28, 1928," 29 March 1928.

[7] The Coast Guard purchased M-94 Cipher Devices from the War Department to encrypt its own operational communications. L. C. Andrews, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, letter to Secretary of War, no subject, 27 March 1924.

[8] W. J. Massey, letter to Commander, New York Division, subject: "Telephone Line Tampering with," 1 May 1924.

radio operator informed his commanding officer, over a private unlisted wire, that a code used by a particular group of rum runners had been successfully broken by the operator, and approximately 30 minutes later, the Coast Guard intercepted a radio message informing certain rum ships that "the Government had deciphered their code and that they should stop using it."[9] This prompted stricter COMSEC measures by the Coast Guard in handling all information related to its intelligence efforts against the rum runners.

The rum syndicates also had some success in physically intercepting Coast Guard telegrams sent via the wireless services. This occurred most often at the Havana office of the Western Union Telegraph Company and resulted in the Coast Guard's discontinuance of sending wireless messages to Havana.[10]

Finally, the rum syndicates also employed IMINT in limited attempts to learn the whereabouts of Coast Guard cutters on patrol. Hydroplanes were used off the Atlantic Coast to observe the location of Coast Guard patrol boats and then relay the information to rum vessels at sea.[11]

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE TACTICS AND DECEPTION TECHNIQUES

As the rum syndicates invariably knew the Coast Guard and other government agencies were targeting their communications for intercept, various measures were used to maintain levels of COMSEC and OPSEC sufficient to conceal rum-running operations from the enforcement agencies. In addition to the use of standard codes and ciphers, the rum runners also employed ingenious, sometimes comical, methods to protect their communications. To make the solving of codes and ciphers more difficult for the Coast Guard, some groups mixed profanity in with their coded messages.[12] Another tactic involved wording radio conversations as innocently as possible, by using cover terms to conceal the true meaning of words and phrases.[13] Rum runners also frequently changed their codes and eventually abandoned the use of wireless commercial carriers altogether in favor of direct ship-to-shore communications.[14] To better their odds at escaping detection, some rum syndicates broadcast "in the blind" to the rum ships offshore, in an effort to

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[9] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to CAPT Randolph Ridgely, USCG, no subject, 28 May 1930.

[10] Unidentified correspondent, memorandum for the Intelligence Division files, no subject, n.d.

[11] Commander, Section Base Eight, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Hydroplane Operating in the Vicinity of Chincoteague, VA," 28 December 1925.

[12] F. J. Gorman, LCDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Commander, Intelligence Unit, New York, subject: "Radio Intelligence, Group 2; Code Seized," 28 January 1931.

[13] C. E. Reeves, Special Agent, letter to Mr. Topham, no subject, 16 January 1928. Also see, R. J. Iverson, letter to LTJG Clifford D. Feak, USCG, no subject, 16 February 1928.

[14] C. A. Housel, Special Agent, letter to Ralph R. Reed, Supervising Agent, no subject, 16 December 1927.

deny the Coast Guard use of its new HFDF equipment.[15] Blacks also assumed periods of radio silence from time to time to confuse Coast Guard radio operators.[16]

Other more covert means of protecting communications included the use of hydroplanes to relay messages from ships of the rum fleet to shore stations and vice-versa.[17] Additionally, as late as 1925, carrier pigeons were used to communicate with certain rum schooners.[18] A rum syndicate in the New England area kept large numbers of carrier pigeons at its headquarters, releasing several of them each time shipments of liquor arrived off the New England coast.[19] Although it is unknown how successful this means of communication was for the syndicate, a carrier pigeon was captured by the Coast Guard off the coast of Massachusetts in December 1925, returning home after apparently completing its mission.[20] Blacks were also known to use the centuries-old method of communicating via messages in a bottle, albeit in the days of rum running the bottles were dropped in the vicinity of rum ships by hydroplanes for immediate recovery.[21] In January 1925, the Coast Guard Cutter *Seminole* beat the rum schooner *Alma R* to a bottle dropped by a seaplane in plain sight of the Cutter. Inside was the rendezvous location and time for the *Alma R* to meet certain contact boats that would have been sent out to meet her had the Coast Guard not intercepted the message.[22]

Probably the most ingenious method of disguising illicit communications was the practice of tying rendezvous locations at sea to certain songs played by a radio station on the New England coast.[23] Depending on which song was played at a prearranged time daily, rendezvous locations would shift between several predetermined bearings from a local landmark off the coast. Because each rendezvous location was exactly 28 miles from shore and all rendezvous were effected at dusk, all that was needed by the contact boats was the course to steer which was given by the different songs played on the radio.[24]

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[15] "Broadcasting in the blind" refers to transmitting a radio message without waiting for acknowledgment or receipt from the receiving station. It is used to conceal the identity and whereabouts of the receiver. C. E. Reeves, 16 January 1928.

[16] R. J. Iverson, letter to Chief of Division of Foreign Control, no subject, 14 March 1928.

[17] Commander, Section Base Eight, 28 December 1925. Also see, W. V. E. Jacobs, Commander, New York Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Smuggling in Vicinity of Base 1," 27 April 1925.

[18] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to George A. Parker, Federal Prohibition Administrator, no subject, 31 December 1925.

[19] George A. Parker, Federal Prohibition Administrator, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 5 December 1925.

[20] Charles S. Root, 31 December 1925.

[21] W. V. E. Jacobs, Commander, New York Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Joseph McDonald and Seaplane Attempting Contact with British Schooner ALMA R," 21 January 1925.

[22] W. V. E. Jacobs, 21 January 1925.

[23] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Further Suggestions Regarding Black Situation in Area "B"," 13 September 1929.

[24] William J. Wheeler, 13 September 1929.

To make locating illicit communications platforms more difficult for the Coast Guard, the rum syndicates also employed a "broadcasting truck" which traveled up and down the Atlantic Coast broadcasting orders to rum-runners lying offshore.[25]

Though the rum syndicates used these and other counterintelligence tactics to protect their communications from the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling fleet, by all accounts, they were rarely successful. That these methods were in fact known by the Coast Guard indicates the rum fleet's failure to keep their counterintelligence efforts secret.

The rum syndicates also employed various deception techniques in attempts to evade the Coast Guard's intelligence web. One of the most common tactics was to designate an unloaded known rum-running vessel and allow a Coast Guard cutter to picket it while other loaded rum ships secretly effected their planned rendezvous.[26] This often worked, but when it did not rum runners were known to have seaplanes drop flares to light up the night sky so that high speed contact boats could make their way around Coast Guard patrols on their way to and from shore.[27]

Another common means of deception involved the use of fish, ice, lumber, coal, and sand to conceal liquor placed in the bottom of cargo holds.[28] Otherwise legitimate fishermen would sail out to sea 150 miles or more and rendezvous with rum-laden mother ships. Once they had placed their newly acquired liquor cargo in the bottom of their fish holds, the fishermen would sail to known fishing grounds and simply "go fishing until sufficient respectability [had] been gathered to cover the contraband."[29] This not only allowed the fishermen to engage in their legal profession, but it also lessened suspicion from the Coast Guard as the vessels involved had been legitimately fishing for several days when making their way back into port.

Other vessels and even some automobiles used false bottoms, appendages, and other concealment measures to "run the rum in."[30] On the Gulf Coast and the East Coast of Florida, rum runners disguised as tourists would pick up liquor loads from ships east of Mobile and conceal the liquor in automobiles specially designed with false bottoms for

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[25] E. T. Osborn, Officer-in-Charge, Coast Guard Station Little Beach, letter to Commander, Fifth District, subject: "Use of a Radio Broadcasting Motor Truck by Smugglers; Report of," 29 July 1931.

[26] Commander, Destroyer Division Two, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Concentration Charts," 14 August 1932.

[27] Commander, Base Four, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Flares, Use of by Rum Runners from Planes," 2 November 1932.

[28] Mabel W. Willebrant, Assistant U.S. Attorney General, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 15 July 1925.

[29] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Patrol Areas," 9 December 1926.

[30] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Proposed Letter to All Units Except the Destroyer Force, Regarding Use of False Bottoms, etc.," 19 April 1930.

smuggling. They would then "caravan" the liquor to points west and north for further distribution inland.[31]

Occasionally rum runners resorted to drastic means to interrupt the flow of Coast Guard communications, in an attempt to foil interdiction efforts. In February 1929, a Coast Guard submarine cable was maliciously cut, presumably by rum runners, a development that had the effect of disrupting Coast Guard communications in the Virginia area for several days.[32]

Rum runners were also not above calling different Coast Guard stations, identifying themselves as official telephone operators from Washington, DC, and informing Coastguardsmen of supposed rum-running activity in certain locations, requesting immediate dispatch of Coast Guard vessels to investigate.[33] Once the local Coast Guard cutter was underway, it is presumed the rum runners then effected rendezvous in areas away from the decoy location given over the phone.

Occasionally, rum runners attempted to disrupt the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling effort through the use of disinformation. In July 1929, anonymous civilian sources reported the captain of a certain Coast Guard patrol boat was known to routinely loot liquor seized by his crew.[34] After thorough investigation, the patrol boat skipper was exonerated and the matter closed. While the unfounded accusations in this case did not yield the anticipated results—removal of the officer from command—they did serve to divert time and effort away from the enforcement effort to complete the investigation.

Deception techniques afforded some level of success for the rum runners, but successes were often short-lived as the Coast Guard became aware of "tricks of the trade" with each passing year of the Rum War. It is doubtful that any attempts by the rum runners to deceive the Coast Guard resulted in the attainment of even a minute level of information superiority for the rum runners for any notable period. The rum syndicates' efforts to gain DBK were further hampered by the Coast Guard's own use of OPSEC and COMSEC measures to protect Coast Guard operations and intelligence collection methods.

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[31] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 23 March 1929.

[32] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to J. Edgar Hoover, Director, Bureau of Investigation, no subject, 25 February 1929.

[33] R. W. Dempwolf, letter to CDR Charles S. Root, USCG, no subject, 15 November 1926.

[34] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Confidential Communication from Commander Klinger," 20 July 1929.

Chapter 5

THE COAST GUARD'S COUNTERINTELLIGENCE STRATEGY

To keep operational plans and intelligence collection methods out of the prying hands of the rum runners, the Coast Guard applied highly disciplined OPSEC and COMSEC measures to its daily operations. The combined effort to protect both operations and communications occasionally blurred the lines between OPSEC and COMSEC practices. However, the blending of counterintelligence methods allowed the Coast Guard to deny the enemy the use of information which would have been helpful in skirting the Coast Guard's enforcement effort. Although the two counterintelligence disciplines are divided here for clarity, in practice OPSEC and COMSEC were employed in concert, as a single strategy to attain a shared goal—denial of useful information to the enemy.

OPERATIONS SECURITY MEASURES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

In July 1924, when Commandant Billard laid out the Coast Guard's *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling,* he foresaw the need for secrecy in day-to-day Coast Guard operations, telling those at the forefront of the enforcement effort:

> [d]o not give out any information regarding what is being done or to be done. Refer all newspaper men and others seeking information about our activities to Headquarters. Carefully avoid discussions of or prognostications about what the Coast Guard intends to accomplish. We are not saying what we are going to do. When the job is done will be the time to give publicity—not before.[1]

This set the stage for a determined effort by the Coast Guard to protect details of its operations from those who stood to benefit from such knowledge. This was particularly important with respect to the opponent, and was reinforced by a second Commandant directive, also issued in July 1924, reminding members of the Coast Guard that "[c]ommunication with the enemy, whereby he may obtain any information whatever, is forbidden."[2] Keeping Coast Guard intentions out of the press was also a major security concern, evidenced by the Commandant's third directive, issued in August 1924, that "no officer give an interview to the press relative to the enlargement program of the Coast Guard except by specific authority first obtained from Headquarters."[3]

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[1] U.S. Coast Guard, *Doctrine for Prevention of Smuggling* (Washington, DC: USCG, 15 July 1924), 9.

[2] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to All Force, Division and Section Base Commanders and District Superintendents, subject: "Giving Aid and Comfort to and Communicating Intelligence to Smugglers," 7 July 1924.

[3] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to All Commissioned Officers of the Coast Guard, subject: "Publicity in Connection with Law Enforcement," 21 August 1924.

In addition to protecting Coast Guard operational plans and intentions, secrecy also extended to the protection of information gained by the Coast Guard in the accomplishment of its mission. To show the Coast Guard's resolve that intelligence information be kept in approved channels, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury responded to a 1925 request from the British Consul General in New York City for the names of vessels loitering on Rum Row with the opinion that "information of this character should be kept secret, in order to hamper, as much as possible, communication between liquor peddlers at sea and their confederates on shore."[4] Secrecy was especially important in protecting the Intelligence Section's successes in decrypting enemy codes and ciphers. In a letter to the Commander, Gulf Division, the Commandant stressed that "[t]he importance of secrecy in connection with radio intelligence cannot be over emphasized as, if it becomes known that the Coast Guard is in possession of a rum-runner's code, the code will be immediately changed and the work of solution must be done all over again."[5]

OPSEC guidelines for protecting intelligence were routinely followed in preparing operational Coast Guard correspondence. Reports considered confidential were prepared in accordance with Article 2422 of Coast Guard Regulations, which stipulated means for sending classified material.[6] Examples of confidential correspondence included weekly reports of operations sent to Headquarters by ships of the anti-smuggling fleet,[7] intercepted radio traffic sent for decryption by the Intelligence Section,[8] and Coast Guard Intelligence Circulars.[9] To further protect Intelligence Circulars, eventually only commissioned officers were allowed to read them.[10] Additionally, beginning in 1927, Circulars over six months old were destroyed by burning.[11]

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[4] L. C. Andrews, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, letter to Secretary of State, no subject, 17 March 1925.

[5] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Radio-Intelligence; Interception of Rum-Runner's Radio Traffic," 11 June 1931.

[6] One of the most common ways of sending classified correspondence between Coast Guard Headquarters and field units was via registered mail. The Coast Guard also instituted a "return receipt" system to ensure accountability for classified correspondence. H. F. Schoenborn, LCDR, USCG, letter to Radio Gunner Robert W. Finley, no subject, 28 April 1925. Also see, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commanders of Section Bases, Squadrons and Divisions of Offshore Patrol Forces, and Officers in Charge of other Patrol Boat Groups, subject: "Confidential Reports of Operations," 26 January 1928.

[7] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, 26 January 1928.

[8] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commanding Officer CHELAN, subject: "Instructions for Transmitting Intercepted Messages to Headquarters by Cipher," 14 April 1932.

[9] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to All Coast Guard District Superintendents, subject: "Intelligence Circulars," 21 February 1924.

[10] S. R. Sands, Fourth District Superintendent, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Intelligence Office Circular No. 519," 11 November 1925.

[11] J. L. Ahern, Commanding Officer, PORTER, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Destruction of Confidential Papers," 16 September 1927.

Even the Coast Guard's methods of obtaining information were kept secret. This resulted in sometimes confrontational exchanges between officers of the Intelligence Section and other enforcement officials who did not understand "the methods used by [the Intelligence Section] in deciphering the messages of the blacks were developed by the War Department and [were] considered strictly secret and confidential and [would] not [be] revealed in any case to other than commissioned and combatant officers of the military service[s]."[12]

So concerned was Commandant Billard with protecting the Coast Guard's intelligence collection methods that when setting up the Intelligence Field Unit in New York, he reminded LT Meals "not [to] divulge the modus operandi of the Intelligence Unit to other than Coast Guard personnel" and ordered that in no case "will copies of solved codes, nor information that a code has been solved, be given to other than responsible Coast Guard personnel."[13] In 1930 and 1931, when the Coast Guard enjoyed much success in locating and shutting down illegal shore-based amateur radio stations using portable HFDF equipment, the credit was given to "other agencies" to hide the Coast Guard's involvement and protect the methods involved.[14]

The Coast Guard was also very careful to ensure that those entrusted with intelligence were of the highest moral character by subjecting all prospective civilian employees and officers assigned to the Intelligence Section to "a most searching investigation of [their] past connections and activities."[15] By conducting thorough background investigations, the Coast Guard was able to root out any potential liabilities from its intelligence network.

COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY MEASURES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

> At the headquarters of the Coast Guard very little information can be obtained regarding either the plans or equipment of the government fleet. Every one who asks questions is eyed with suspicion. Experience has taught Coast Guard officials that spies may come cloaked as newspaper men, and that the

[12] Clifford D. Feak, LTJG, USCG, letter to Commissioner of Prohibition, no subject, 1 February 1928.

[13] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Coast Guard Intelligence Unit, New York, subject: "Intelligence Duty: Instructions," 5 December 1930. This was later amended to allow the furnishing of codes intercepted from the rum runners, as well as their solutions, to officers of the Justice Department and the Customs Service for use in law enforcement activities. Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Coast Guard Intelligence Unit, New York, subject: "Intelligence Duty; Instructions, Amendment of," 7 January 1931.

[14] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Unlicensed Radio Stations Used to Direct Smuggling Activities," 24 October 1930.

[15] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Chief Clerk, Coast Guard Headquarters, subject: "Clerical Assistance," 3 February 1925.

rum runners will utilize every thread of knowledge in an effort to destroy their enemy.[16]

This statement, made by an unidentified newspaper reporter at about the time the Coast Guard effectively disbanded Rum Row, was in reaction to the reporter's attempts to learn about the secret communications systems in development for use by the Coast Guard. Correctly identifying the benefits in protecting its own communications in early 1924, the Coast Guard made attempts to devise a suitable code for anti-smuggling operations.[17] Proposed codes were submitted to the War Department's Chief Signal Officer, Major William F. Friedman, for comment before being employed by operational Coast Guard forces. Unfortunately, none of the Coast Guard-developed codes provided a "degree of security [sic] ... sufficient to warrant [their] use for communication which must remain secret for a period of six or more hours."[18] As a result, the Coast Guard asked the War Department for permission to use the Army's M-94 cipher devices to provide operational Coast Guard forces a sufficient level of protection in secret communications.[19] Permission was granted [20] and in late Spring 1924, the Coast Guard placed its first order for 150 M-94 cipher devices and 1,000 cipher disks.[21] They arrived in June and were subsequently installed onboard designated Coast Guard cutters and at various shore stations for use in passing operational Coast Guard radio traffic.[22] To ensure the codes remained secret, the Commandant strictly prohibited the use of codes or ciphers and plain text in the same dispatch.[23] This was owing to the fact that much of the Coast Guard's own success in solving enemy codes was due to poor security measures on the part of the rum syndicates in mixing old codes with new ones and occasionally combining plain text with code when sending radio traffic.[24]

This same trial-and-error scenario was repeated in 1927 by the Prohibition Bureau as it began attempts at developing its own code for secure communications. This time the codes were submitted to the Coast Guard's Intelligence Section for comment and returned

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[16] "Radio Set is Devised to Aid Coast Guard Battle Rum Fleet," *Unidentified Newspaper,* n.d.

[17] Alvin C. Voris, LTC, USA Signal Corps, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Code System," 14 June 1924.

[18] Alvin C. Voris, 14 June 1924.

[19] L. C. Andrews, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, letter to Secretary of War, no subject, 27 March 1924.

[20] Secretary of War, letter to Secretary of the Treasury, no subject, 8 April 1924.

[21] The M-94 cipher devices acquired from the Army were marked "C.G." on the outer face and given serial numbers from 1 to 150. Cipher disks were expendable discs placed inside the M-94 to encrypt plain text communications. Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Chief Signal Officer, U.S. Army, subject: "Cipher Devices," 12 April 1924. The first shipment of 1,000 cipher discs cost the Coast Guard a total of $62.40, $60 for the discs and $2.40 for shipping charges. U.S. Army Signal Corps, shipping ticket for 1000 cipher discs delivered to CDR Charles S. Root, USCG, 24 April 1924.

[22] U.S. Army Signal Corps, 24 April 1924.

[23] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commanders, Southern Division, Northern Division, and Gulf Division, subject: "Intelligence," 23 March 1925.

[24] Willoughby, 113.

by Mrs. Friedman indicating they could be solved in nine minutes and were "not sufficiently secure for any important use."[25]

The Coast Guard did use its own codes and ciphers occasionally to communicate with officials outside of Coast Guard channels. Codes were developed for Coast Guard officers and Customs officials to communicate with each other in an emergency.[26] In 1928, CDR Root developed a cipher used to communicate HUMINT information from the Director of Investigations of the Canadian National Railways to the Coast Guard Intelligence Section concerning the smuggling situation on the Great Lakes.[27] On rare occasions the Coast Guard radioed the names of vessels arriving at or departing from foreign rum ports in plain English, a decision made in hopes of intimidating the rum-runners into scuttling their smuggling plans.[28] This tactic was only used when the benefits were deemed to outweigh the need for secrecy.

In addition to protecting codes and ciphers themselves, the Coast Guard instituted procedures to limit the amount of radio traffic passed between operational units to deny the opponent any opportunity to collect enough information to gain usable intelligence. In April 1926, Commandant Billard commissioned a board of two officers to "study the Coast Guard communications system in connection with daily reports of offshore rum running activities and to make suitable recommendations."[29] Based on the board's findings, Coast Guard Division and Force Commanders were ordered to report once daily, the going to sea or returning to port of Coast Guard vessels under their command and at the same time, the positions of any blacks noted at sea.[30] If there was no change in the operational status of Coast Guard vessels under their command and no blacks sighted on any particular day, then a report was not required. This had the desired effect of limiting operational radio traffic, but it also hampered the Coast Guard's ability to maintain information superiority by not knowing where its own forces were at any given time.[31] The measure was subsequently reversed in favor of using alternating codes for passing operational information and limiting the number of "leaks" in the process.[32]

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[25] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Philip Hamlin, no subject, 3 June 1927.

[26] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between CDR Root, Coast Guard Headquarters and Mr. Oftedal, Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition, 10:00 a.m., 5 January 1928, no subject, n.d.

[27] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, no subject, 2 June 1928.

[28] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Recommendation by Mr. Thomas Finnegan, Veteran Deputy Collector, Boston, Massachusetts," 28 April 1928.

[29] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to CDR W. H. Munter and LCDR G. E. Wilcox, subject: "Board to Recommend Improvement in Communication System," 5 April 1926.

[30] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Positions Coast Guard Vessels and "Blacks" - Routine Reports," 12 November 1927.

[31] L. V. Kielhorn, LCDR, USCG, letter to CAPT William J. Wheeler, USCG, no subject, 3 December 1927.

[32] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Proposed Change in System of Position Reports," 19 December 1927.

Controlling leaks was difficult but could be managed by strict adherence to established communications procedures. In addition to the frequent switching of operational codes, this included such measures as refraining from discussing classified information over open phone lines [33] and logging the receipt and transmittal of all coded messages.[34] On infrequent occasions when unclassified telegrams sent to Coast Guard operatives in foreign countries were intercepted by moles in the offices of the wireless services entrusted to deliver them, the Coast Guard simply changed its means of communication to avoid using the suspect wireless service.[35]

Additional controls were placed on the handling of Coast Guard crypto-gear by limiting the individuals allowed to decode operational messages arriving at Headquarters.[36] Only officers of the Intelligence Section, Communications Section, and the Commandant himself were allowed to decode messages and reveal their content.[37]

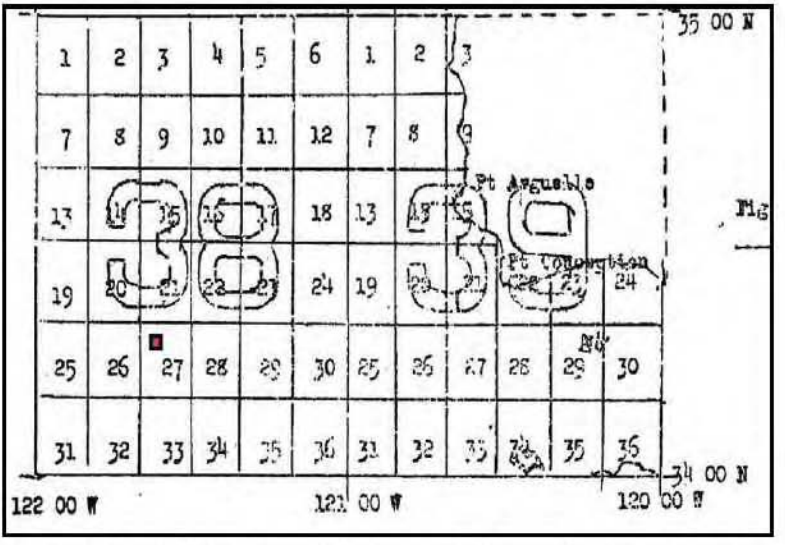

Figure 15. Naval Operations Chart Modified to Encode Vessel Positions.
Source: De Otte, D. F. A., Commander, California Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Code "F"; Standard "Squared Chart" for California Division," 29 January 1929 (Records of the Coast Guard Intelligence Division 1922-1932, Record Group 26, Entry 297; National Archives Building, Washington, DC). Annotated by author.

[33] Charles S. Root, CDR, USCG, Intelligence Officer, letter to CAPT Randolph Ridgely, USCG, no subject, 28 May 1930.

[34] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Eastern Division, subject: "Interception of Code Messages," 17 November 1926.

[35] Unidentified correspondent, memorandum for the Intelligence Division files, no subject, n.d.

[36] R. J. Mauerman, Assistant Communication Officer, letter to Night Decode Officers, subject: "Instructions to Night Decode Officers," n.d.

[37] R. J. Mauerman, letter to Night Decode Officers.

The Coast Guard's most involved COMSEC practice was probably in encoding the positions of blacks located at sea and the positions of the Coast Guard cutters that reported them. To ensure an adequate level of secrecy for transmission over the radio, the Coast Guard developed an encoding procedure using standard squared Naval Operations Charts. As shown in the figure above, numbered blocks represent one squared degree of latitude and longitude. The larger blocks, in this case 38 and 39, each contain 36 smaller squares. To encode the position of a vessel located at 34 degrees 18 minutes north latitude, 121 degrees 37 minutes west longitude (indicated by the small red marker in square 27 of block 38 above), the following six digit number was recorded: 382732. The first two digits represented the block number 38, followed by the number of the smaller square 27. The fifth digit represented the exact longitude of the vessel east of the western edge of the small square where it was located, represented in single digits from 1 to 9. In this example, the vessel was located 3 minutes east of the western edge of small square number 27, or at exact longitude 121 degrees 37 minutes west. Therefore the number 3 was recorded as the fifth digit. The same reasoning followed for the final digit, representing the exact latitude of the vessel, expressed in single digits from the northern edge of the small square where it was located. In this example the vessel was located 2 minutes south of the northern edge of small square number 27, or at exact latitude 34 degrees 18 minutes north, giving the number 2 then as the final digit. To further encode a vessel's position, four-digit variable key numbers were added to the recorded position, lined-up on the left side of the series. To illustrate, using our example, the variable key number 6469 was added to the vessel's recorded position of 382732, using two zeros on the right end of the key number to align the key number with the left side of the original series, giving a new figure of 1029632. As numbers beyond six digits were not carried over, the 1 in this case was simply dropped and the encoded position was transmitted as 029632. Using the same key number, the process was reversed at Headquarters and the vessel's position was revealed. Changed daily, these key numbers added an additional level of security for passing vessel positions over the radio.[38]

The need to protect its own force and enemy positional information extended beyond the protection of Coast Guard-only communications. In the summer of 1924, positions of cutters and rum runners alike were openly displayed on a wall chart, containing the square numbers used to encode and decode vessel positions, located in the Operations Offices at Headquarters. As "dozens of unknown visitors [accessed] these offices daily," the means of encoding positional data was subject to compromise. As a remedy, the wall charts were replaced with plain charts not having the square areas. Additionally, all coded dispatches were sent only to the Intelligence Section for decoding. The Intelligence Section then simply relayed the geocoordinates representing vessel locations to the Operations Officer who in turn marked the chart with colored pins to designate the positions of different vessels. This concealed the Coast Guard's method of encoding the information while making

[38] D. F. A. De Otte, Commander, California Division, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Code "F"; Standard "Squared Chart" for California Division," 29 January 1929.

the end product, usable intelligence on enemy vessel locations, available to those who needed it for the prosecution of smuggling.[39]

The Coast Guard continued to protect its communications and operational plans through the end of Prohibition. By denying the enemy useful information through the strict use of OPSEC and COMSEC measures, the Coast Guard prevented the rum syndicates from benefiting enough from their own intelligence collection efforts to pose a dangerous or unified threat to the Coast Guard's monopoly on information dominance in the Rum War. With OPSEC and COMSEC guarding its flanks, the Coast Guard remained dominant on the information battlefield as the Prohibition era came to a close.

[39] S. S. Yeandle, Aide to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Radio, Telephone, and Telegraphic Reports on Smuggling Operations," 6 August 1924.

Chapter 6

THE COAST GUARD AND THE END OF PROHIBITION

Although Prohibition was not repealed until December 1933, as early as 1929 its future was in doubt, as several ominous events served to change public opinion in favor of repealing the 18th amendment. In an ironic twist of fate, Al Capone himself proved the 18th amendment unenforceable by his widespread corruption in Chicago and other U.S. cities and thus had a hand in his own eventual demise. The Valentine's Day Massacre,[1] in February 1929, was the final straw that convinced many Americans "the 'cure' was worse than the 'disease.'"[2] The first step in remedying the situation came when President Herbert Hoover appointed the "Wickersham Commission" to "[study] the problems of Prohibition enforcement."[3] After two years, the Commission released a watered-down report with no real recommendations to bolster the enforcement effort.[4] In October 1929, the Stock Market collapsed ushering in the Great Depression. With a failing economy and government revenues slipping, the Prohibition dilemma proved too much for a majority of Americans. Prohibition boosted crime. It cost the government a fortune in lost liquor tax and it cost over $300 million to enforce.[5] As a result, in 1931, a new presidential candidate, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, campaigned for repeal on the democratic ticket. His strategy worked and in 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was elected the first democratic president in 12 years. During his victory speech, President Roosevelt promised to repeal the Volstead Act, a promise he made good on shortly after taking office in January 1933. While waiting for individual states to ratify the repeal, President Roosevelt asked Congress to modify the Volstead Act to allow beer with an alcoholic content of 3.2 percent. Congress immediately complied and America began enjoying its "new deal" as the end of Prohibition drew nearer with each State convention. In November 1933, the 36th state needed to ratify the repeal of the 18th amendment, Utah, capitulated and on 5 December 1933, the 21st amendment made alcohol once again legal.[6] This put an end to the "big business" of rum running and allowed the Coast Guard to refocus its energies more evenly among its other missions. It also resulted in almost immediate downsizing of the Coast Guard's Prohibition assets, as all Prohibition enforcement agencies suffered severe reductions in appropriations under the Roosevelt Administration. All remaining destroyers were returned to the Navy and a formidable number of smaller Coast Guard boats were disposed of.[7] The Coast Guard's

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[1] On 14 February 1929, members of Al Capone's gang murdered seven members of a rival gang in an execution-style killing meant to serve as a deterrent to other local gangs against infringement upon Capone's claimed "territory." *The Prohibition Era: The Road to Repeal,* prod. Charlotte Moore, dir. Clive Maltby, 50 min., A&E Home Video, 1997, videocassette.

[2] Willoughby, 158-159.

[3] Willoughby, 159.

[4] Willoughby, 159.

[5] *The Prohibition Era: The Road to Repeal.*

[6] Willoughby, 159-160.

personnel strength was reduced by 170 temporary warrant officers and 1,600 enlisted men, with further reductions in subsequent years.[8] The Coast Guard continued, however, to enforce the maritime laws of the United States well beyond Prohibition, a mission that continues to characterize the Service even today.

COAST GUARD OPERATIONS IN THE WANING YEARS

As happens in most wars, the end of Prohibition came at a time when the Coast Guard was clearly in command of the battlefield. By the early 1930s, the Coast Guard had refined its anti-smuggling operations to the point where smugglers were forced to move their operations frequently, transiting from front to front, never gaining an effective stronghold anywhere along the U.S. coastline. The liquor assault that began with blatant law-breaking in plain view of enforcement officials along New York's Rum Row had been reduced to risky clandestine rendezvous, sometimes effected hundreds of miles offshore in attempts to evade Coast Guard defenses. As the Coast Guard's anti-smuggling campaign advanced on the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts, in the early 1930s the emphasis on liquor smuggling shifted to the Great Lakes, Gulf Coast, and Eastern Coast of Florida.[9] The Coast Guard responded in kind by reinforcing defenses in the affected regions with personnel, vessels, and intelligence collection assets including a Fort Lauderdale-based "undercover force" to combat the ever-present threat of corruption.[10]

In the waning years of Prohibition, the Coast Guard planned several new initiatives to help it maintain information dominance over the rum syndicates. The first of these included expanding the intelligence unit concept to all Divisions and Patrol Forces to "make the information obtained [through] intelligence ... immediately available to [every] officer in charge," giving the Coast Guard a "complete intelligence organization."[11] The plan included stationing two officers and eight enlisted men each at six to eight additional Intelligence Units, but was precluded by the repeal of the 18th amendment before it could be put into action.[12]

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[7] Willoughby, 160-161.

[8] U.S. Coast Guard, Biography for Prohibition Era Commandants.

[9] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Gulf Division, subject: "Cruising of Patrol Boats," 23 March 1929.

[10] William J. Wheeler, CAPT, USCG, Inspector-in-Chief, letter to Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, subject: "Inclosed Letters from Commanders Jones and Jack," 2 January 1929.

[11] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, New York Division, subject: "Field Intelligence Units: Establishment and Operation of," 1 December 1930, 2.

[12] Unidentified correspondent, transcript of Mr. Watson's discussion with LCDR Gorman in San Francisco, no subject, 19 January 1931, 2.

The Coast Guard also instituted plans to further increase its enforcement assets. With several destroyers decommissioned and returned to the Navy in 1930 and 1931,[13] the Coast Guard planned the construction of eighteen 165-foot patrol boats, with a cruising range of 6,000 miles at 12 knots.[14] In 1932 the first seven of the new 165-foot patrol boats were placed in service.[15] Two more followed in 1933 [16] with the remaining nine built after the end of Prohibition.[17] Headquarters' plans to organize the new 165-foot vessels into "one self-sustaining, mobile Special Patrol Force" never fully materialized as the program was preempted by the abrupt end of Prohibition.[18] Instead, beginning in 1934, the 165-foot patrol boats were converted into submarine chasers to provide for maritime defense in the years after Prohibition.[19]

Probably the most aggressive measure the Coast Guard contemplated to combat smuggling in the 1930s was the enhancement of its IMINT capability through the planned purchase of 19 additional aircraft. In the last years of Prohibition the Coast Guard established air patrol detachments at Buffalo, New York; San Antonio, Texas; and San Diego, California, to combat smuggling from Canada and Mexico. Six aircraft were transferred from the Navy to the Coast Guard for this purpose, in addition to the 19 already budgeted for.[20] The Coast Guard Air Service was essentially the only Prohibition-era Coast Guard initiative to survive the repeal action. In early 1934, just months after the nation was officially "wet" again, the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, consolidated all Treasury Department air assets under the Coast Guard's air arm.[21] This included the transfer of 15 various aircraft from the Customs Service and gave the Coast Guard a major air mission which was expanded to cover its primary mandate of search and rescue at sea. To this end, contracts for the planned 19 aircraft, ten Douglas and nine Grumman amphibian airplanes, were awarded

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[13] By the summer of 1931, thirteen of the original 25 destroyers obtained from the Navy had outlived their usefulness and were returned. These vessels included: *Ammen, Beale, Burrows, Downes, Fanning, Henley, Jouett, McCall, Monaghan, Patterson, Paulding, Roe, and Terry.* They were replaced with five additional destroyers from the Navy including: *George E. Badger, Herndon, Hunt, Welborn C. Wood, and Able P. Upshur.* Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1931* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1932), 152-153. In 1932, a sixth destroyer, *Semmes*, was added to help bridge the gap left by those destroyers having been decommissioned. Donald L. Canney, *U.S. Coast Guard and Revenue Cutters,* 1790-1935 (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard, 1995), 106.

[14] Hugh Garling, "The United States Coast Guard: Part II," *Nautical Magazine* 247, no. 2 (February 1992): 105.

[15] Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1932* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1932), 129-130.

[16] Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on The State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1934* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1935), 79.

[17] John A. Tilley, *Coast Guard Vessels of the Prohibition Era,* unpublished research paper, n.d.

[18] Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, letter to Commander, Destroyer Force, subject: "Policy in Re-Operation of New 165-ft. Patrol Boats," 16 December 1931.

[19] Tilley, *Coast Guard Vessels of the Prohibition Era.*

[20] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1934,* 80.

[21] U.S. Coast Guard, Biography for Prohibition Era Commandants.

as scheduled in early 1934.[22] Although they did not see service in the Rum War, these new aircraft were the catalyst for the Coast Guard's air-based search and rescue mission, a major focus of the Coast Guard's first post-Prohibition Commandant, RADM Harry G. Hamlet.[23]

Although some smuggling continued up to the end of Prohibition, by early 1933 it was "a mere trickle compared with before."[24] By combining personnel, vessels, aircraft, and intelligence, the Coast Guard created a unified front which allowed for a refined and highly effective enforcement strategy as the Rum War came to a close.

CONCLUSION: WINNING THE RUM WAR WITH INTELLIGENCE

In 1920 no one could have foreseen the magnitude with which liquor would be smuggled onto America's shores as the great experiment with Prohibition began. The proliferation of smuggling rapidly reached huge proportions and by 1924 it was clear a declaration of war was necessary to enforce American's self-imposed ban on alcohol. The Coast Guard responded with an aggressive campaign to stem the tide of liquor beginning in the summer of 1924. Throughout the decade-long struggle that followed, the Coast Guard fought the Rum War on many fronts. It doubled its personnel and more than quadrupled its afloat assets, lobbied for treaties to extend U.S. territorial seas to 12 miles, and developed explicit doctrine for the prevention of smuggling. These efforts, while impressive for such a small service, left the Coast Guard with a formidable challenge—how to make the most use of its forces to cover 12,000 miles of shoreline in stopping the flow of liquor into the U.S. by sea. With an approximate 200 vessels at sea at any given time, the only way the Coast Guard could have blockaded the nation's shores would have been to stage one vessel every 720 square miles of ocean within the 12-mile limit.[25] Obviously, this would have been ineffective had it been attempted. Instead, to bridge the gap between available forces and the expansive battlefield, the Coast Guard turned to intelligence and used it relentlessly to pursue, acquire, and maintain DBK over its increasingly sophisticated foe. It was the intelligent use of intelligence that allowed the Coast Guard to dominate the struggle for information superiority and in turn, multiply the effectiveness of its anti-smuggling force. Using the various intelligence disciplines, the Coast Guard was able to "familiarize [itself] with the operating orders of the rumrunners ... [and] take immediate action in the field on the information obtained."[26] Taken in their component parts, it is clear each intelligence discipline—HUMINT, COMINT, IMINT, and Open Source Intelligence—played a key role in the Coast Guard's ability to use information as a highly

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[22] Treasury Department, *Annual Report for 1934,* 80.

[23] U.S. Coast Guard, Biography for Prohibition Era Commandants.

[24] Harold Waters, "Five Flashes East," 85.

[25] Willoughby, 163-164. 12,000 mile shoreline figure is approximate and was taken from "The United States," Central Intelligence Agency Fact Book, URL: <*http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications /factbook/country-frame.html*>, accessed 9 July 1998.

[26] Unidentified correspondent, transcript of LCDR Gorman's remarks following Admiral Billard's speech, no subject, n.d., 3.

effective tool against the rum runner. Taken as a whole, it is evident the Coast Guard's all-source intelligence effort formed the backbone of its operations and successes over the rumrunner in the 14-year Rum War at Sea.

Protecting its operations with OPSEC and COMSEC measures, the Coast Guard was able to deny vital operational information to the enemy while ensuring the intelligence obtained by the Coast Guard remained secret and useful to the enforcement effort. To enhance the capabilities of other federal agencies involved in Prohibition enforcement, the Coast Guard cultivated an extensive intelligence-sharing network that continues even today. The resultant "pooling of resources" further enhanced the government's overall collection posture and resulted in increased successes against the rumrunner. This inter-agency commitment to a common goal—stopping the flow of liquor into the U.S.—was more than a unified intelligence effort by agencies of the U.S. government with the Coast Guard in the lead. It was one of intelligence's finest moments where the resulting marriage of operations to intelligence lasted literally until "death do us part," and allowed the Coast Guard and other federal agencies to achieve otherwise unattainable successes through the end of Prohibition.

The Coast Guard's direct, supportive, and mutually beneficial relationship of intelligence to operations in the Rum War at Sea provides a valuable lesson for future conflicts where intelligence will be looked upon as a key to obtaining and maintaining information superiority. The need for information dominance will remain critical as the ability to monopolize on DBK will likely be the deciding factor in future conflicts, much as it was in the days of Prohibition. The present and future applications of lessons learned in the Rum War are, therefore, readily apparent. Although this thesis focused on documenting the historical record of how the Coast Guard used intelligence to its advantage in the Rum War, the argument that an effective intelligence organization is critical to military success is still relevant today and may become even more so in the future, as information becomes the overriding key to both self-preservation and victory on the battlefield. This is probably the most important lesson we can take from the Coast Guard's efforts in the early 20th century—to make intelligence-based information superiority available to both high-level decisionmakers and to those on the front line.

In 1924, one officer with a vision for how intelligence could benefit the Coast Guard began a campaign to integrate all-source intelligence into every aspect of Prohibition enforcement. Relying on his intellect, foresight, and by keeping in focus a worthy goal, LCDR Root orchestrated a support effort so important, it proved the difference between winning the Rum War and just treading water for the Coast Guard. It would serve the Intelligence Community well not to forget this past success in looking ahead as we plan for intelligence support to conflicts yet to come. After all, we cannot know where we are going if we do not know where we have been.

APPENDIX: A KEY HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

ADDRESS THE COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD
AND REFER TO No. 601-64

HEADQUARTERS

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

WASHINGTON

April 25, 1924.

To the Officers in Charge and Personnel of Coast Guard Stations:

The Coast Guard is about to be enlarged for law enforcement work, and as soon as we have obtained the additional personnel and equipment as planed, the Service will be held responsible in the task of keeping liquor from being landed on the coasts of the United States.

Neither the old Revenue-Cutter Service nor the old Life-Saving Service ever failed in any duty given it to do. The Coast Guard has never failed, and it will not fail in its performance of this big task.

You men at the stations have guarded the Coasts in protecting and succoring life and property faithfully and well, and you must continue to so guard them because that remains your most important duty. But now in addition you must guard the coasts against the importation of liquor which is a violation of the Constitution of the United States that we have all sworn to defend. It is not for us in the Coast Guard to question the wisdom of any law or order; it is for us to obey, faithfully and loyally.

There will shortly be available a force of ships and patrol boats to keep the enemy (the rum runners) from reaching the coast. You men are the last line of defense. It is for you to see that no rum runner that has eluded our patrol craft lands on the beach or enters an inlet. You will have an important part to play in this warfare on those who violate the sovereign laws of the United States.

You men who are at stations in or near communities where rum running is prevalent will doubtless be subjected to all sorts of insidious propaganda and influences and, indeed, attempts may be made even to bribe you. Pay no attention whatever to propaganda or talk intended to injure your morale, and if any man attempts to bribe you, treat him immediately as you would any man who has grossly insulted you. I intend to have it known all along our coasts that any one who has an idea he can bribe or seduce a member of the United States Coast Guard in the performance of his duty is the biggest kind of a fool.

Avoid intercourse or association with rum runners or with persons interested in the nefarious rum smuggling game. You may be wholly innocent, but the very fact that you are known to associate with such persons is bound to injure the Coast Guard and may get you into trouble. The Coast Guard has a wonderful reputation for integrity and devotion to duty, and that reputation is going to be fully maintained. I have high hopes that no member of the Coast Guard will yield to temptation in this matter, but if there be one, and he is proven guilty, he need expect no mercy.. He will be given the severest punishment that it is within the power of the Coast Guard to impose. We have no room for traitors in the Coast Guard.

The exigencies of the Service may require, from time to time, the transfer of the personnel of the stations from one unit to another. I want you to understand fully that the transfer of any man will not be brought about or prevented or affected in any way by any outside influence whatever. Attempts may even be made to undermine your morale by suggestions that some man has been transferred because he was too zealous in enforcing the law. I am sure you are sensible enough to recognize any such talk as absolutely false. In some cases, which will be few, I trust, a man may be performing his duties at the place where he is stationed with sufficient zeal and efficiency; but you have no right to assume that as the cause. In the vast majority of cases transfers will be due simply to the necessities of the situation as Headquarters sees it.

I am counting on the men at the stations to render zealous, efficient, and devoted service in keeping with their splendid traditions. A man who does his duty fully need feel no apprehension and will be a credit to his Service.

This letter will be read aloud at a muster of all hands at each station.

Faithfully yours,

F. C. BILLARD

Rear Admiral, Commandant,
U. S. Coast Guard.

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

LT Ensign entered the U.S. Navy in 1981, serving first as a Korean linguist, then becoming responsible for developing training materials for Navy linguists worldwide. Following his graduation from University College of the University of Maryland in 1990, he received a commission in the U.S. Coast Guard. His early years as a Coast Guard officer were spent in Key West, Florida, where he was responsible for intelligence support for U.S. counterdrug efforts in the Caribbean, Atlantic and Eastern Pacific. A subsequent tour at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan exposed LT Ensign to other Coast Guard missions such as Search-and-Rescue, Ice-Breaking and Maritime Law Enforcement. In 1998, LT Ensign graduated from the Joint Military Intelligence College. His thesis, "Intelligence in the Rum War at Sea, 1920-1933," received the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint History Office's Award for Excellence in Archival Research. He currently serves in the Pacific Area Headquarters at Alameda, California as Chief of the Operational Intelligence Branch. LT Ensign has been awarded the Joint Service Commendation medal and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal.

BIOGRAPHY OF ADM ROBERT E. KRAMEK

In 1998, Admiral Kramek retired from the U.S. Coast Guard, having served as that Service's 20th Commandant. In his Coast Guard career, he served as both a Surface Operations Specialist and Naval Engineer, with extensive service in all regions, including the Atlantic, Pacific, Caribbean and Alaska. He was appointed by President Clinton to be the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator for the National Drug Control Program. Admiral Kramek's earlier assignments included Chief of Staff of the U.S. Coast Guard, commander of two Coast Guard districts, and head of the Haitian Migration Task Force. He also commanded the Coast Guard Base at Governors Island, New York, and the High Endurance Cutter MIDGETT. During his career, he initiated partnerships and bilateral agreements with the U.S. Maritime Industry and with foreign nations that have resulted in major improvements in safety and national security. The Admiral's awards include the Transportation Distinguished Service Medal, two Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medals, two legion of merit awards, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Special Operations Ribbon with silver star, the Humanitarian Service Medal with bronze star, and the Sea Service Ribbon with bronze star. Admiral Kramek currently serves as President of the American Bureau of Shipping—Americas Division.

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