



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Coast Guard Mascots

Since mankind first took to the seas thousands of years ago, they always brought along members of the animal kingdom with them on board their ships. The animals were brought along for many reasons, such as a source of food, to fight rodent infestations, or for companionship. Coast Guard crews followed this ancient custom and adopted numerous varieties of mammals and birds, among others, as mascots and brought them along on their voyages. Many times these animals were actually enlisted in the service, complete with service and medical records, uniforms, and their own bunks. Here they were promoted for exemplary performance or were sent before a captain's mast to receive punishment from the skipper for some transgression or another and were "busted" back down to seaman. Many actually saw combat against the enemy, some were wounded, some died, and many were decorated. Quite a few even lived to a ripe old age and enjoyed a well-earned retirement ashore. Many of the shore units too have adopted a mascot to help them around the station and when they venture out on a patrol or a rescue. All Coast Guard mascots have served just as their human counterparts have, with courage, honor, and are "Always Ready" to go to those in need of assistance.

Here then is a sampling of some of those members of the animal kingdom who kept the crews of cutters and shore stations company, sharing in their hardships and dangers, and making life a little more tolerable just by being aboard.

Photographs (click on the thumb-nail image)	Original photograph caption (if any) and description.
	<p>Sinbad, the Coast Guard's most famous mascot. He was adopted by a crewman from the cutter <i>Campbell</i> prior to World War II. He was so beloved by the crew that they actually enlisted him in the Coast Guard. Sinbad served faithfully through thick and thin, surviving combat with the Germans and Japanese, causing a few international incidents with his antics, and even having a book written about him! Here he is at his battle station on board the <i>Campbell</i>, ready to take aim at a German U-boat!</p>



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Here we have Red Dog, the mascot of the famous Alaskan cutter *Storis*, which has been in service longer than any other ship in the Coast Guard.



Turk is a full blooded Golden Retriever and has been with Coast Guard Station Elizabeth City since 1996. So far he has achieved the rank of BMC (Chief Boatswain's Mate -- he's a Chief Petty Officer, one of the highest enlisted ranks!). Turk is considered to be a vital part of the crew at the station. He is taken care of through a military veterinarian, as well as the crew. His favorite past times are sleeping, playing with his Cong toy, chasing birds, and swimming.

Here is BMC Turk standing watch.

Our thanks to Sara Powell for letting us know about Turk!



Here we have Spike, the mascot of Coast Guard Station Willmette, visiting PSU 309 in Port Clinton, Ohio. Spike served as the mascot for Station Willmette from the fall of 1992 to the spring of 1994.



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A more recent Coast Guard mascot: Uri, the canine member of Coast Guard Station Calumet Harbor, sometime in the late 1990s, out on patrol. See Chicago in the background! Note that he is careful enough to wear his lifejacket, which is also known as a personal flotation device (PFD).

Our thanks to BMC Christopher Runt for letting us know about Uri.



BMC Christopher Runt, the First Lieutenant on board the Coast Guard Cutter *Shamal*, sent us this photo of his cutter's mascot, a camel named Shamal. Chief Runt let us know that:

"Our mascot is a camel named Shamal (rhymes with camel). In this picture he is on a bale of marijuana [that we seized]. If you notice, the bale has 'Product of Columbia' on it. We thought that was ironic."

Thanks Chief!



The mascot at Coast Guard Station Honolulu from March 2003 until April 2004 was "Seaman Muttley."



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Here we have Bear, the now-retired mascot of Coast Guard Station Kenosha, who served there from 1990 to 2000. Bear is a pure-bred Chocolate Labrador Retriever. BMC Chad Curth told us that Bear "was transferred from his kennel to Station Kenosha PCS on 4 June 1990 as a puppy. He loved to ride the Station's boats and even rode on the back of the Station's jetski. Kenosha's school children knew him by name because he was one of the most popular attractions at their yearly field trips to the Station. His medical care came from the Army veterinarians at the Great Lakes Vet Treatment Facility at Great Lakes Naval Training Center."



Here's Bear patrolling the beach in front of the Kenosha Pierhead Lighthouse on a stormy day. Chief Curth noted that Bear "retired from Active Duty on 13 October 2000. He is still alive and will turn 14 this year [2004]. He lives on a government pension (in the form of my paycheck, he lives with me and my wife). . .he is as good a Coast Guard dog as I've known."

So Bear is enjoying his well-earned retirement after serving his country. Thanks for letting us know about Bear, Chief Curth!



Here is Niki, a Husky puppy and mascot of the cutter *Cape Carter* (WPB-95309) in January, 1990.



Here is Bud, a Black Labrador Retriever, posing for the camera. Bud was a mascot of Coast Guard Group Moriches in the 1990s.

Thanks to BMC Mike Flannery for letting us know about Bud.



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Another photo of Bud. He served for eight years at Group Moriches. A former crewmate of Bud's, Mike Flannery, told us that he was "donated as a pup from a crewmember enroute to a ship and just couldn't keep him. Bud was an active member at Group Moriches until he was diagnosed with cancer and passed away at the age of 8. I guess you could say he died on active duty."



Here is Sam, a member of Coast Guard Station Scituate, in Massachusetts, just waking up from a nap in the sun sometime in 1990.

A former crewmate, Rick Pearce, noted that Sam was "brought there as a stray sometime in the mid 70's by someone who was stationed there. I was stationed there from 1987-1990. At that time Sam was about 12-13 years old. Sam would wander around the station during the day, making sure everyone was staying busy. At night he would sleep in the radio room and keep us company on radio watch during the graveyard shift. Whenever we got a call and sounded the SAR (search and rescue) alarm, Sam would run upstairs to the rooms where everyone slept and run up and down the hall, barking to wake everyone up (as if that alarm wouldn't!). On nice days he would get underway with us and ride on the bow, as far forward as he could. He preferred the 41-footer to the 44, and I can't say I blame him. I am told in his younger years he would go on all the calls, but I guess age had caught up with him and he just wasn't up to it every time. But when he did go, he was the happiest Coastie on the boat!"

Thanks to Rick Pearce for letting us know about Sam!



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Here we have Maximillian Talisman, Service Number 224-859, a pure-bred Boxer, who was a remarkable Coast Guardsman. He had a stellar career in which he was promoted to the rank of Chief Boatswain's Mate and served at sea on board a cutter for seven years (that's 42 human years)! He had enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1950 only three months after he was born. The photo's original caption read:

"Donald R. Haight, BM1 displays retirement orders of his old shipmate, Maxmillian Talisman, BMC/Dog. Max is retiring from active duty after some seven years aboard the Coast Guard Cutter KLAMATH. He will spend his time now at the home of BM1 Haight in Seattle. The 'chief' seems to be getting in some practice for those lazy retirement days ahead."



BMC Maximillian Talisman meets his replacement. The original photo caption read:

"'I'll take care of this new seaman, boys' is what BMC Maxmillian Talisman seems to be saying here. The pup is the new mascot on board the Coast Guard cutter KLAMATH and is relieving Max who retires with more than seven years afloat. All of his time was spent on the KLAMATH."



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Here Max is "piped off" his cutter for the final time with full naval honors. During his seven-year Coast Guard career, Max never received a mark of less than 3.4 out of a total of 4.0 on his service record and never received a mark below 4.0 for conduct! He did well on his standard test scores, qualified as a bridge-lookout, crossed the International Date Line twice and the Arctic Circle once, and earned the United Nations Medal, Korean Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal!



Here we have a mascot of the Revenue Cutter *Thetis*, somewhere up in Alaska in 1913. We don't know his name but we do know that by the time this photo was taken, he had served continuously at sea for 10 years -- making him the saltiest sailor-mascot to have served in the Coast Guard!

The Revenue Cutter Service was the forerunner of today's Coast Guard.



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Probably the largest mascot that ever served in the Coast Guard. Here is an unnamed black bear, another mascot of the cutter *Thetis*, taking a break from duty. He's cooling himself off by resting on a large piece of ice.

The *Thetis* served in Alaska waters, sailing on the Bering Sea Patrol.



Here is the mascot of the Coast Guard icebreaker *Northwind*. Thanks to retired Coast Guard Lieutenant Jerry L. Echols, we know his name! Lieutenant Echols wrote:

"That dog is 'Oliver.' He was born aboard *Northwind*, in Greenland. His mother 'Dagmar' was the ship's dog before Oliver. I only had the pleasure of sailing with him for one Arctic patrol. He retired to an Oregon farm, in early 1954, when life at sea became a little to hard on him. He was relieved by 'Rosie.'"

Oliver sure looks outfitted for a trek through the arctic!

Thanks for letting us know about Oliver, Lieutenant Echols!



Unfortunately we don't know the name of this mascot of the Coast Guard Cutter *Northland*. The photo was taken sometime in the 1930s. Note his unique uniform and studded collar!



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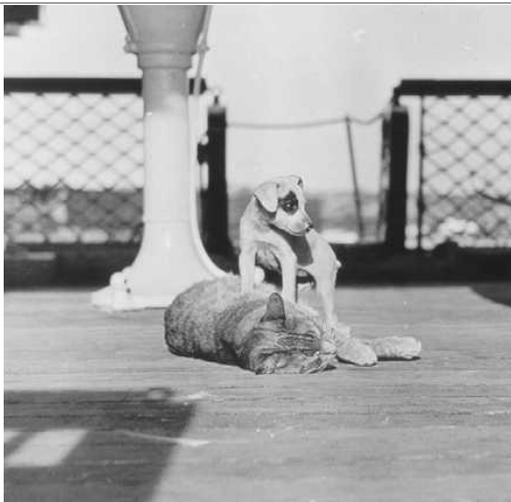


Here is Skunk, the mascot of the Coast Guard icebreaker *Eastwind*, sometime in 1947, standing watch. Note his properly fitting "dixie cup" hat!

Here is the mascot for a cutter somewhere up in Alaska. It's an eagle! We're not sure how the crew managed to keep the winged predator on board.



The *Thetis* crewmembers get the award for having the most mascots of the greatest variety! Here are two shipmates, an unnamed cat and dog, taking a break from duty somewhere up in Alaskan waters. They seem to be getting along well.



An unnamed dog is making sure that the cat is not shirking its duty.



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Here, Mars III on the left, and Muggins, the feline to the right, sharing space on board a cutter sometime in the 1920s.

Buccaneer, on patrol somewhere in Alaskan waters, enjoys a mid-day meal of canned shrimp.



Cats seem to have been the more popular mascot for the cutters serving in Alaska! Here's an unnamed young fellow making sure this commander is keeping a steady course.



The crew of the cutter *Perry* pose for the camera with their mascot, a very well-dressed goat with appropriate rank insignia and good conduct stripes.



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A penguin joins the crew of the Coast Guard icebreaker *Eastwind* during Operation Deep Freeze I. The annual voyages to Antarctica were named "Operation Deep Freeze" for obvious reasons.

According to one of the *Eastwind's* crew, who shall remain anonymous: "this one penguin kept hanging out with various *Eastwind* crewmembers while they were ashore. They originally painted a bow tie around his neck and button on his chest in grease (the penguin happily complied). The penguin then wiped the bow tie away by turning his head (hence the smudge in the picture). They then painted USCG on its stomach. He apparently loved it, and held a higher place in the penguin flock because of it."



The photo's original caption stated: "Speak, boy -- Coast Guardsman Raymond A. Wiascinski, engineman second class (right), and Seaman David E. Aikens try to coax friend Charlie into singing for part of his supper at Los Angeles Harbor Light. Charlie, a junior-sized California harbor seal, has been adopted by the station-keepers as their unofficial mascot."; 4 February 1966.



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"Chief Midgett clipping mascot dog at Coast Guard Lifeboat Station Chicamacomico [North Carolina]."; 15 June 1952.

