

The U.S. Coast Guard and Quarantines

27 MAY 1796

Congress passed "An Act relative to Quarantine" and assigned "officers... [of the] revenue cutters, to aid in the execution of quarantine, and also in the execution of the health laws of the states."

31 July 1884

USRC *Tench Coxe* was "Placed on quarantine duty at Lewes, Delaware. August 2nd, arrived. 1884 Sept. 2 Ordered back to Philadelphia; arrived on September 10."

8 August 1893

USRC *Colfax* was "Ordered to Fort Monroe for quarantine duty. August 17th, arrived." On 18 October 1893 cutter ordered back to Wilmington, arriving there 25 October.

30 June 1900

Captain John Cantwell, USRC *Nunivak*, feared ships from Nome would spread smallpox up the Yukon Valley. He convinced the U.S. Army commander at St. Michael to declare a quarantine which the *Nunivak* enforced for three weeks. The cutter and its crew boarded and checked all vessels. Ships from Nome were sent to an island some ten miles distant. One writer noted that the spread of smallpox along the Yukon was made 'practically impossible by the work of the *Nunivak*.'

28 March 1906

USRC *Winona* was to "convey an officer of Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, from New Orleans, to Mississippi River, quarantine." On 29 March *Winona* was ordered "Proceed immediately to New Orleans and take Surgeon Edward Francis to Mississippi River, quarantine, and remain there until his inspection is completed."

14 August 1913

Crew of USRC *Apache* was ordered to be "vaccinated against typhoid."

6 December 1918

L.E. Ashton, a surfman from Station No. 305 in Nome, Alaska, departed with a dog sled team loaded with medical supplies on a 160-mile trek to assist native Alaskans suffering from the influenza epidemic. They arrived at Cape Prince of Wales seven days later, where they found 122 sick and 157 dead of the illness. Ashton converted the schoolhouse into a hospital, the post office into a dispensary and began burying the dead. By 20 February, when "the epidemic had spent its force," he returned to his station in Nome. (Per Bill Wells)

25 February 1799

Congress passed "An Act respecting Quarantines and Health Laws" that stated: "That the quarantines and other restraints, which shall be required and established by the health laws of any state...shall be duly observed by the masters and crews of the several revenue cutters..."

23 July 1885

USRC *Arundel* was "Turned over temporarily to Marine Hospital Service for duty as quarantine boat at the Capes of Virginia. Order carried into effect July 24, 1885." On 12 November 1885 *Arundel* was ordered returned to Revenue Marine.

12 October 1897

USRC *Apache* was ordered "to be isolated, no liberty granted to crew; disinfectants to be used freely. If no suitable anchorage at Galveston, proceed to Sabine Pass and await orders." On 28 October 1897 "Yellow fever in Galveston. Above orders not revoked. If change is desired, cruise Port Eads, Aransas or Sabine."

10 August 1905

USRC *Alert* was "Ordered to Gulfport, Mississippi, for quarantine duty. August 10th, to leave the 12th. 1905 August 12 Arrived at Gulfport at 5:30 p.m.. October 23rd [1905], relieved from further duty in connection with quarantine. Resume regular duties at Mobile."

13 February 1911

USRC *Winona* noted: "Case of small pox found on board. Proceeded to Quarantine station at Mobile for disinfection."

24 June 1914

Congress authorized the Secretary of Treasury to "detail for duty on revenue cutters such surgeons and other persons of the Public Health Service as...necessary" and for cutters with medical personnel on board to extend medical aid to crews of American vessels. This Act regularized assignment of Public Health Service personnel to revenue cutters, launching a partnership between the two services that survives to this day