

The Runner from the Stars Ended
with The Cuards:
A Shootout on the High Seas of
Fort Lauderdale.....

A U.S. SECRET SERVICE-U.S. COAST GUARD TRUE
HISTORICAL STORY

By Christian Durante

A burst of sunshine with its glow beaming down shines on your face, waves crashing on a beach with your toe's inches deep in the million particles of sand, an ever-light breeze finding its way in the strings, curls of your hair. Does it sound like paradise? Does it feel like paradise? To some it is, to some it is an escape from the hustle and bustle of life. Nevertheless, regardless of those distinctions listed above, numerous lives who were connected to the shores of Florida for all varied reasons collided together in a twist of fate on a warm sunny day in August on the seventh day of the month in 1927.

In early years of the 1920's and for our purposes in 1927, U.S. Secret Service Agents were known as "Operatives" not special agents as they are known today. "Operatives" traveled all around the world whether it was on an investigative or a protective mission. One such operative who did just that was

Operative Robert K. Webster. Operative Webster was born on November 11th, 1889, in Riga, New York. You could say being born on what was to become known as “Veterans Day” was a foreshadowing of his lifetime of service to his country.

A year before the United States entered World War I in 1917, Mr. Webster enlisted in the U.S. Army. Mr. Webster was stationed at Camp McClellan, Alabama as a Provost Guard. He was promoted to sergeant before his honorable discharge from military service. On January 18th, 1922, Mr. Webster entered training with the U.S. Secret Service. He graduated on March 1st, 1923, and was appointed to a commission as a “Operative”. He was eager to be effective and some of his posts of duty crisscrossed across the country from headquarters in Washington D.C. to Kansas to Texas and then to Atlanta, Georgia.



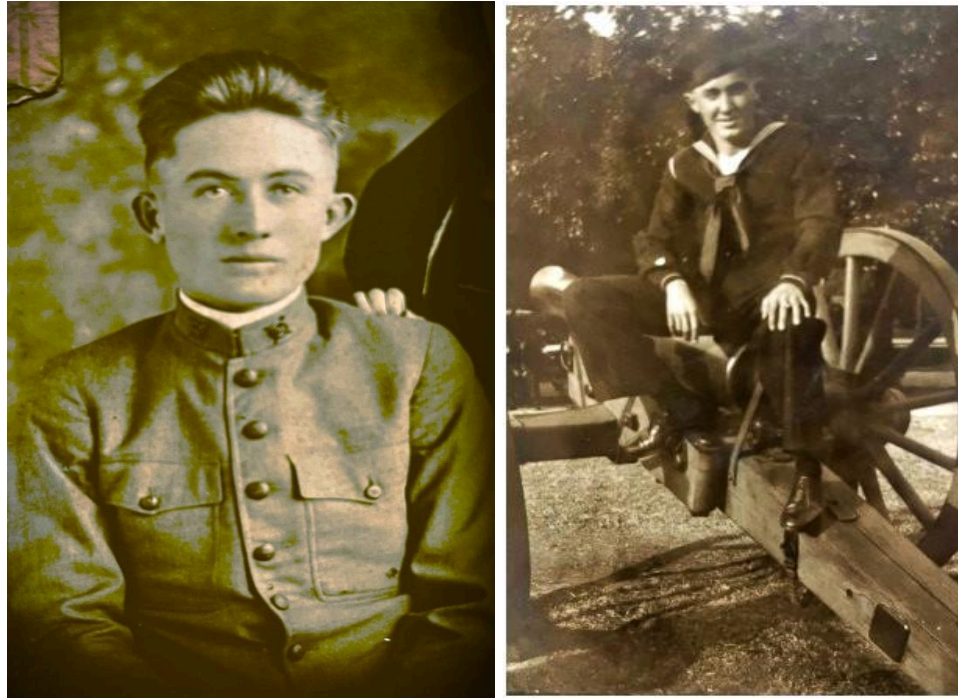
Pictured is United States Secret Service “Operative” Robert King Webster

Across the country there are honorable civil servants serving their country while also living their lives with their family. They provide the foundation of what it means to be an American. The quintessential americana values of “Duty, Honor and Country come naturally for them.

Another American who, much like Operative Robert Webster, served his country faithfully with such a devotion to duty is Mr. Sidney Cantwell Sanderlin. Sidney was born on January 27th, 1897, in Currituck, North Carolina. He was 1 of 4 siblings but the only one to join the U.S. Coast Guard. During the interesting course of research for this story, military research records were extremely limited in scope. I was able to find evidence that Sidney Sanderlin started his U.S. Coast Guard Service at the young age of 21 years old in April 1918 at U.S. Coast Guard Station 166 in Corolla, North Carolina close to his hometown where he grew up. He enlisted at the rank of “Surfman.” It is worth noting that his father was also a retired U.S. Coast Guardsman so essentially, he was following the footsteps of his hero.

When Mr. Sanderlin joined the U.S. Coast Guard in April 1918, World War I was winding down and the war would be over in a few months that November. Much like many men his age during that time-period, Mr. Sanderlin wanted to serve his country while earning a decent wage. His career was starting out and his private life was blossoming. In June 1920, He married his sweetheart, Ms. Olive Rebecca Dough, of Pasquotank, North Carolina. A little over 2 years later, A daughter was born in January 1922 in Virginia Beach, Maryland followed by a son the following year. In the intertwining years of 1922 to 1927,

research only shows Mr. Sandy Sanderlin being posted to U.S. Coast Guard Base Six, USCG Duty Station CG-249, (Present Day Location of Bahia Mar Marina) at a rating/rank of Boatswain Mate.



Pictured is both a younger and older United States Coast Guard Boatswain Mate (BMC) Sandy Sanderlin.

Another honorable decent man that you should know about in this story is a Mr. Victor Lamby. Mr. Lamby was born in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania on January 10th, 1902. He lived a simple life and not much is known about him either through research or official documents. Some tidbits include that he was married in May of 1927 to Mrs. Dorothy O. Holland. At that time, it can be said that the age of his young bride was quite scandalous, she was only 16 years old.



Long Blue Line Alderman
Photograph of Motorman Machinist
Mate First Class (MoMM1) Victor
Lamby cut from the Miami Daily News
image.

These three heroes unknown to each other collided into fate on August 7th, 1927, in the sunshine state. It is the roaring 1920's. World War I has been over a couple of years and peacetime has taken hold in the United States. Just a year after World War I ended, The Volstead Act was passed by congress which prohibits the manufacture and sale of alcohol anywhere in the United States. Most Americans followed the law while some broke it. The 1920's were called "roaring" for a reason, it came with fast speed and times along with many opportunities for criminals to make money.

There was no shortage of gangsters who took liberty of the situation and engaged in the illegal transportation and sale of alcohol. The coastline of the United States is vast with miles of unintended shores, inlays, bayous, and inlets. A state that provided a vast array of coastlines was our sunshine state with over 5,000 miles. Florida provided an ample stomping ground

for both the seasoned and entrepreneurial alcohol smuggler and runner. One such smuggler was Mr. Horace “Jimmy” Alderman, he was known as the “Gulf Stream Pirate.” He had grown up outside Tampa and was a fishing guide in his younger years.

When a law-abiding life did not suit him anymore, he became involved in racketeering then graduated to rum running off the Florida Coast. One way where he cemented his reputation as “King of the Rumrunners” was by using super-fast boats outfitted with high-horsepower engines that often outran any boats in both the local law enforcement fleet and that of the U.S. Coast Guard. The 1920’s Prohibition Era was controversial in that you had a divided country who had different opinions on the ban of alcohol. You had law & order on one side which included the U.S. Coast Guard and then you had the bootleggers who felt impunity on the sea with their illicit cargo. There was a fortune to be made and it was not above the criminals to bribe both politicians and crooked law enforcement.



Horace “Jimmy” Alderman



Pictured is “King of the Rumrunners” James Horace Alderman

The crooked road of alcohol started with loads of shipments from the Caribbean to include both the Bahamas, Cuba and Bimini being taken by boat to the shores of the sunshine state. From there the whiskey, rum, wine, and beer were destined for cities all across the United States. On that August Day in 1927, It was not illegal alcohol that brought the lives of three brave souls in a collision course with “The King of the Rum Runners, “James Horace Alderman”. It was another criminal offense, counterfeiting.

On August 7th, 1927, U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert King Webster was assigned to the Atlanta Field Office. He conducted investigations much like modern secret service agents do in the present day. What brought him to the sunny shores of the sunshine state was an investigative tip of counterfeit \$20 & \$50 Gold Certificates that were flooding into the local economy there by opportunistic criminals looking to make a quick buck. He received intelligence that certain counterfeit gold certificates were passed in Bimini in a whiskey transaction.

When he arrived in Fort Lauderdale Florida, Operative Webster received orders from U.S. Secret Service Headquarters to seek the assistance of the local U.S. Coast Guard Base in securing transportation to Bimini to conduct the investigation. This was an early version of an interagency request of federal agencies working together in the interest of law & order. An example of a modern-day task force established to keep the public safe. The U.S. Secret Service was seeking the assistance of the U.S. Coast Guard.

In modern times, The U.S. Coast Guard has a presence in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The U.S. Coast Guard Base is called “Station Fort Lauderdale.” It is the “home base” station unit where my volunteer auxiliary flotilla is assigned. In August 1927, “Station Fort Lauderdale was known as “Base Six”. The U.S. Coast Guard Historical Records show that “Base Six” was established a year earlier in 1926 to combat the rampant illegal importation of alcohol from the Caribbean to the shores of Florida. Even before the establishment of “Base Six,” that area had a coast guard connection.



Long Blue Line Alderman
Aerial view of Coast Guard Base Six
during its Prohibition enforcement
days, showing its small aviation
hangar and rafted patrol boats.
(Courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale
Historical Society)

In 1875, that area of Fort Lauderdale where the base would eventually be established was known as the “Bahia Mar” Area of Fort Lauderdale. The area was the site of a life-saving station known as the “House of Refuge.” The “House of Refuge” were buildings that were built to rescue & shelter boaters when shipwrecks were common off the coast of Florida. Over time, “Houses of Refuge” which were operated by the predecessors of the U.S. Coast Guard which were the “U.S. Life Saving Service” then the “U.S. Revenue Cutter Service” became U.S. Coast Guard Station bases when the U.S. Coast Guard was formed in 1915.

U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert Webster knew that “Base Six” of the U.S. Coast Guard were well equipped to assist him in his investigative mission and he has no hesitance in seeking their assistance to help him with transport to Bimini. On Saturday, August 6th, 1927, Operative Robert Webster arrived at base six and asked the local coast guard commander of the base, Lieutenant Beckwith Jordan about the best way to travel to Bimini. Lieutenant Jordan told Operative Webster that if he returned the next day, Sunday, at 9:00am, He would be able to secure a U.S. Coast Guard Boat Crew to transport him both to and from Bimini.

The next morning, Operative Webster arrived early ready to do his duty for his country and the U.S. Secret Service. U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant Jordan was true to his word and provided Operative Webster with ample support on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard. A 75-Foot-Long U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Boat Cutter #249 nicknamed “Six-Bitter” with 7 Crewmen from

the base were provided. The U.S. Coast Guard Crew were as follows:

- Warrant Boatswain (BMC) Sidney Sanderlin (USCG Commander of the Cutter).
 - Motor Machinist Mate 1st Class Victor Lamby
 - Seaman 2nd Class (Cook) Jodie Hollingsworth
 - Petty Officer 1st Class Frank Tuten
 - Boatswain Mate John Robinson
 - Boatswain Mate Frank Lehman
 - The youngest of the coastie crew, 17-year-old Seaman 1st Class Hal Caudle.
- ***Plus U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert Webster***



**Group Photo of Personnel of United States Coast Guard Base Six
in Fort Lauderdale in 1927.**



Long Blue Line Alderman
Photograph of the 75-foot patrol boat
CG-249 from around the time of the
James Alderman incident. (From The

The wide-open seas between Fort Lauderdale and Bimini awaited these brave men but as fate would have it, another boat was in the waters, one which had a sinister intention with its mission. All the men of USCG Patrol Boat Cutter #249 were experienced with interdicting alcohol smugglers who frequented the local shores of South Florida. As a crew, they were all serving together on the patrol boat for a few months. The commanding officer of USCG Patrol Boat #249, Warrant Boatswain Sidney Sanderlin was appointed commanding officer of the patrol boat a couple of months ago after the previous coast guard crew was arrested for corruption.

As we discussed earlier in the story, James Horace Alderman, was “King of the Rumrunners” in these Caribbean waters between Bimini & Fort Lauderdale. He too was on a mission that day. Around 1:30pm, 32 miles off the coast of Fort Lauderdale, the crew of U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Boat Cutter

#249 aka “Six-Bitter” spotted a 30-foot motorboat with registration numbers V-13997 speeding towards Miami. The U.S. Coast Guardsman who was trained well in anti-smuggling tactics implored by the criminal elements in the waters between the Caribbean & Florida recognized the speeding motorboat as typical of a potential smuggler. USCG Petty Officer 1st Class Frank Tuten used his binoculars to take a closer look. He called his commander, Warrant Boatswain Sidney Sanderlin, for a second eye and to have a closer look at the boat in question.

Together, they saw that the speeding motorboat had no fishing gear visible, was riding low in the water and coming from a well-known departure area for smugglers. They spotted two men onboard, Mr. Horace Alderman and Mr. Robert Weech. Mr. Alderman was at the steering wheel while his engineer, a Mr. Robert E. Weech, was in the engine compartment of the speed boat. A decision was made by BMC Sanderlin to stop the boat. An apology was relayed to U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert Webster, who was observing all this onboard with interest, about the delay this stop would cause to his transportation to Bimini on his counterfeiting mission.

The crew of both boats spotted each other from ½ mile away. The U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Boat Cutter #249 lined up behind the smuggler’s speedboat. A command to “stop and turn off the engine” from the U.S. Coast Guard to Mr. Horace Alderman & Mr. Weech was ignored. A chase ensued but it was short-lived. The coast guardsman realizing that the speed of their patrol boat cutter was in no-way a match for the smuggler’s speedboat high-horsepower engine gave the order for gunshots to be fired across the bow of Mr. Alderman Speedboat. The

shots were fired from BMC Sidney Sanderlin using a Springfield Bolt-Action .30-06 rifle from the small cabinet armory aboard the patrol boat.

It was not successful in halting the smugglers speedboat and only after Mr. Alderman speedboat motor engine stalled, which happened moments later, did indeed stop the “King of the Rumrunners” in its tracks. A few yards from the stalled smugglers speed boat, BMC Sanderlin, shouted to Mr. Alderman and Mr. Weech, standard pre-boarding questions. He was unsatisfied with their answers, especially with their refusal to stop when first commanded too. Petty Officer 1st Class Frank Tuten took the helm of the patrol boat to rope it together with the smugglers boat. Meanwhile, BMC Sanderlin took a Colt .45 1911 model pistol from the cabinet armory and put it recklessly in his trouser pocket instead of a securely fastened duty holster. The first of a series of mistakes that took place in this dangerous interdiction operation.

An armed coast guard boarding party of men from USCG Patrol Boat #249 led by their commanding officer, BMC Sanderlin, started to board the speedboat of the lame-duck smugglers. Both Mr. Alderman and Mr. Weech were searched and detained. A search of the speedboat uncovered over twenty cases of illegal liquor under the hatch of the speedboat. They were now “under arrest” by the United States Coast Guard. Despite their unfortunate circumstances, Mr. Alderman and Mr. Weech were calm in their demeanors and offered no resistance.

With the suspects now under arrest and the illegal liquor haul confiscated, Mr. Alderman played on the coast guardsman sympathies and asked if he could grab a few personal effects valuables that were left on his boat. He outrageously claimed if not given permission too, he feared that his personal effects would go missing once his speedboat was turned over to U.S. Customs Officers. BMC Sanderlin, an honorable man, and coast guardsmen allowed Mr. Alderman to retrieve his valuables unmonitored.

In today's law enforcement era, which would be considered a major breach of security. In the prohibition era even with illegal alcohol smuggling rampant off the waters of Florida, the justice system did not give heavy sentences for this criminal offense. A first-time smuggler's typical sentence was a fine, seizure of their boat and sometimes even no jail time.

James Horace Alderman would not get that kind of sentence. He was a repeat federal offender for various crimes including aggravated assault. When he was stopped and arrested by the crew of U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Boat #249, Mr. Alderman was out on bond for another smuggling offense, smuggling undocumented aliens. This latest arrest would surely put him behind bars for a long time.

After Mr. Alderman retrieved his valuables from his speedboat, he boarded the USCG Patrol Boat #249 under escort by BMC Sanderlin. By now, some of the coast guardsmen had taken their military uniforms off to avoid heat stroke under the glaring sun of the Caribbean, while they were helping to pass the confiscated cases of alcohol from Mr. Alderman's boat to their

patrol boat. All the USCG weapons were back locked in their cabinet armory on the patrol boat while the transfer of the confiscated alcohol was taking place.

BMC Sanderlin went to the pilothouse of his coast guard patrol boat to radio his home station of “Base Six” of the U.S. Coast Guard in Fort Lauderdale of what transpired and to ask for further orders from the base. He was conflicted on whether to continue to Bimini on the U.S. Secret Service Mission of transporting to Operative Robert Webster there or to return to the coast guard base in Fort Lauderdale with his prisoners and seizure.

He was bent over the radio in communication with the base when Mr. Alderman sneaked into the pilothouse with a pistol that was not detected during his initial pat-frisk by BMC Sanderlin. From a distance of a few feet, Mr. Alderman without a second thought, shot BMC Sanderlin from behind with a bullet piercing his heart. BMC Sanderlin was dead before even hitting the floor of the patrol boat.



“His last call”An artist rendering of BMC Sanderlin unaware of his last moments at the radio.

Motor-Machinist Mate 1st Class Victor Lamby and U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert Webster were talking in the forward of the patrol boat when both saw BMC Sanderlin being shot down in the pilothouse. MMMC1 Victor Lamby started to crouch to make himself a difficult target to be fired upon while trying to make it to a nearby below deck hatch-door that led to the cabinet gun armory of the patrol boat. He was savagely shot down on the steps leading down the hatch by Mr. Alderman.

Although he was seriously wounded and paralyzed from the waist down by a bullet that entered his chest, nicked his lung, shattered his vertebrae, and lodged against his spine, he was able to drag himself to temporary safety between the engine compartments of the patrol boat to avoid being seen from the deck above. Mr. Alderman spotted a second pistol from the trouser pocket of now deceased BMC Sanderlin which he promptly picked up. Now, armed with two pistols in each hand, he rounded up Operative Robert Webster and the rest of the U.S. Coast Guard Crew. He lined them up on the stern of the patrol

boat. Mr. Alderman informed his federal prisoners of his devious plans for them without mercy.

Without an ounce of regret or the missed beat of sympathy that was previously shown to him by BMC Sanderlin, he informed the now captured coast guard and secret service operative crew of his plan for them. Mr. Alderman informed them that “I am going to burn your boat, take you all out to the gulf stream and force you all overboard, you are all shark bait!” He ordered his accomplice, Mr. Robert Weech, to cut the gas lines on the patrol boat and start burning it. Mr. Weech did not want to go with the plan, he refused to torch the patrol boat with the coast guardsman on board. A distracting shouting match ensued between the two criminals.

The Captive U.S. Coast Guardsmen and Secret Service Operative Robert Webster were ordered to begin praying.... they dropped to their knees to pray while death glared at them. Mr. Alderman with a “maniacal look” in his eyes ordered Mr. Weech to start the engines of their smuggler speedboat instead of torching the patrol boat plan. While Mr. Weech was busy starting the engines, the captives rushed Mr. Alderman to overpower him. They were quick but not quick enough with the hands of the smuggler.

U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert King Webster was the first brave soul to rush Mr. Alderman. He put his hands down that the other captives took as a signal of sorts. Mr. Alderman fired two gunshots in quick succession. For his bravery in the face of mortal danger, Operative Webster was shot in the head and killed. The second bullet hit U.S. Coast Guard Seaman 2nd

Class (Cook) Jodie Hollingsworth in the eye with shrapnel in the cheek and nose. He was seriously wounded.



A fight to the death ensues.....

When Operative Webster was shot, his 200lbs frame became dead weight and his body landed on Mr. Alderman pinning both hands that held the two pistols. Although Operative Webster was now dead and Seaman 2nd Class (Cook) Jodie Hollingsworth was seriously wounded, the rest of the U.S. Coast Guard Crew which consisted of Petty Officer 1st Class Frank Tuten, Boatswain Mates John Robinson, Frank Lehman and Seaman 1st Class Hal Caudle were now free to battle and try to detain Mr. James Alderman and Mr. Robert Weech.

An intense struggle of hand-to-hand close quarters combat ensued. Mr. Alderman was stabbed with an icepick, struck over

the head with a paint scraper which knocked him unconscious. Mr. Robert Weech was also struck in the head and thrown overboard but did not drown. He was hauled back on the patrol boat and with Mr. Alderman placed in leg irons for the time being.

The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Boat CG#249 were finally free but with a terrible cost:

- Warrant Boatswain (BMC) Sidney Sanderlin (USCG Commander of the Cutter) was dead.
- U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert Webster was dead.
- Motor Machinist Mate 1st Class Victor Lamby was near death, paralyzed and clinging to life.
- Seaman 2nd Class (Cook) Jodie Hollingsworth was seriously wounded with a gunshot in his eye.

They realized they needed to use the radio in the pilot cabin to call for back-up from Base Six in Fort Lauderdale. The rest of the crew rushed to the pilot cabin and for those who were not aware, they found their commander of the cutter, BMC Sidney Sanderlin, dead on the floor. A distress call was sent to Base Six which dispatched other patrol boats to rush to the scene. While they were waiting for back-up, they heard moaning from the engine compartment hatch below deck, it was Motor Machinist Mate 1st Class Victor Lamby lying on the floor in agony, paralyzed. The coast guardsmen swiftly and gently picked him up and brought him to the deck to await rescue with them.

When back-up arrived from Base Six, they were met with a horrific sight onboard, blood was splattered everywhere on the deck, a true fight to the death occurred on this patrol boat with its a distress flag flying above in the crisp blue air. A beautiful sunny scene brought unimaginable carnage to these guardians of the seas. The U.S. Coast Guard transported their dead and wounded back to Fort Lauderdale for treatment at the local hospital. Mr. Alderman and Mr. Weech were also treated under armed guard and sent to the local Broward County Jail.

The bodies of Warrant Boatswain (BMC) Sidney Sanderlin (USCG Commander of the Cutter) and U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert Webster were taken from the patrol boat and transported to a local funeral home. Back in Atlanta, Mrs. Webster was in the family apartment putting little Mary Jo to bed. The smiling infant was 8 months old. Her older sister, Anne, 2 years old, was playing in the nursery of the apartment. A joyous atmosphere typical of any other family was happening that night.

Suddenly, the phone rang. Mrs. Webster picked up the receiver at the other end, a voice on the other end asked, "Did you hear the news"? An unmistakable scream of agony was heard on the block, anguished cries of unspeakable horror. The neighbors of Mrs. Webster ran over to her apartment, going as far to break down the doors. When they were successful, they found Mrs. Webster on the floor inconsolable with her cries raging in sound across the night sky. A medical doctor had to be summoned to give her sedatives.

The bodies of Operative Robert Webster and BMC Sidney Sanderlin were transported to the local train station in Fort Lauderdale escorted by the Chief of the U.S. Secret Service Offices in both Florida/Georgia, Chief George H. Broadnax, U.S. Coast Guardsmen from Base 6 Fort Lauderdale, and the Local American Legion Post Contingent. Operative Webster discussed his future with his family early in his career in case he was lost in the line of duty. He wanted to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Slain at Sea



**ATLANTA MAN
IS SHOT DOWN
IN SEA BATTLE**

**Two Are Killed and Two
Wounded in Rum Boat
Seizure Off Florida**

R. K. WEBSTER SLAIN

**Coast Guardsmen Over-
power Runner in Face
of Deadly Fire**

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla., Aug. 8.
(AP)—Two alleged Miami rum runners,
little the worse for a fight on the
high seas with coast guardsmen in
which two government men were
killed and two more critically wound-
ed, were in Broward county jail here
Monday awaiting trial for murder.

Arraignment before United States
Commissioner John F. Spitzer at Mi-
ami was expected Monday as the
first step.

Horace Alderman, who, singlehand-
ed, is reported to have killed Robert
K. Webster, 48, Atlanta department of
justice operative; and Sidney Sander-
lin, 30, Virginia Beach, Va., boat-

ROBERT K. WEBSTER, Atlanta
secret service operative, who was
killed Sunday in a battle with
alleged rum runners off the Florida
coast.

Vintage Newspaper Headline on the loss of U.S. Secret Service Operative Robert Webster.

It was at his burial there that USSS Florida/Georgia Chief Broadnax made some poignant remarks on what operative Webster did and his two fallen federal colleagues from the U.S. Coast Guard. Chief Broadnax remarked “It was a brave and unselfish thing to do, to spring forward in the face of a revolver

to save their comrades. That is what these servants of the government did and three of them paid for it with their lives.” There were never truer words spoken! The Chief of the United States Secret Service, W.H. Moran also attended and brought along a contingent of operatives from headquarters.

United States Secret Service Operative Robert Webster was 30 years old when he died. Being a World War I Veteran and seeing additional military service on the Mexican Border in 1916 as the member of a militia company, Operative Webster was accorded both Military and Law Enforcement Funeral Honors. On August 17th, 1927, Chief Moran wrote Operative Webster Father, Alexander Webster to express his sympathies on Mr. Webster losing his son in part:

“Your son served for more than 4 years with credit, Robert was a loyal, capable officer and endeared himself to all men of the service with whom he came in contact. He made a record of which you may be proud, and, in his death, the service sustains a distinct loss.

The U.S. Secretary of the Treasury also sent a letter expressing a similar sentiment of loss. It was also reported that the Lions Club of Fort Lauderdale voted in their monthly meeting later in late August to send a message of sympathies to all the widows and colleagues of all the fallen federal personnel that fateful day in August 1927. In May 1939 during a Memorial Day ceremony, Chief of the U.S. Secret Service Frank J. Wilson and his leadership team at the agency conducted a graveside honor ceremony where they placed agency memorial wreaths on Operative Webster's Grave. It was an example of never

forgetting his ultimate service and a reminder that law enforcement never forgets..... His wife later moved to Miami, Florida later that same year, for a fresh start after so many years.....



Pictures from the 1939 U.S. Secret Service Memorial Service held for Operative Robert Webster on Memorial Day.

In Virginia Beach, Virginia, BMC Sidney Sanderlin was buried with a contingent of U.S. Coast Guardsmen from the Norfolk, Virginia Base handing both the funeral escort and burial honors. In what was typical of her generation, his wife, Mrs. Olive Sanderlin never remarried and died in January 1992 at 88 years old. She was a widow for 65 years....

As August 10th, 1927, approached, doctors held out little hope that U.S. Coast Guard Motor Machinist Mate 1st Class Victor Lamby was going to survive. He lingered in pain for three days in the hospital succumbing to his injuries and pneumonia in the left lung. While there, his superiors in the coast guard awarded him a “captain of the guards commission” at a somber

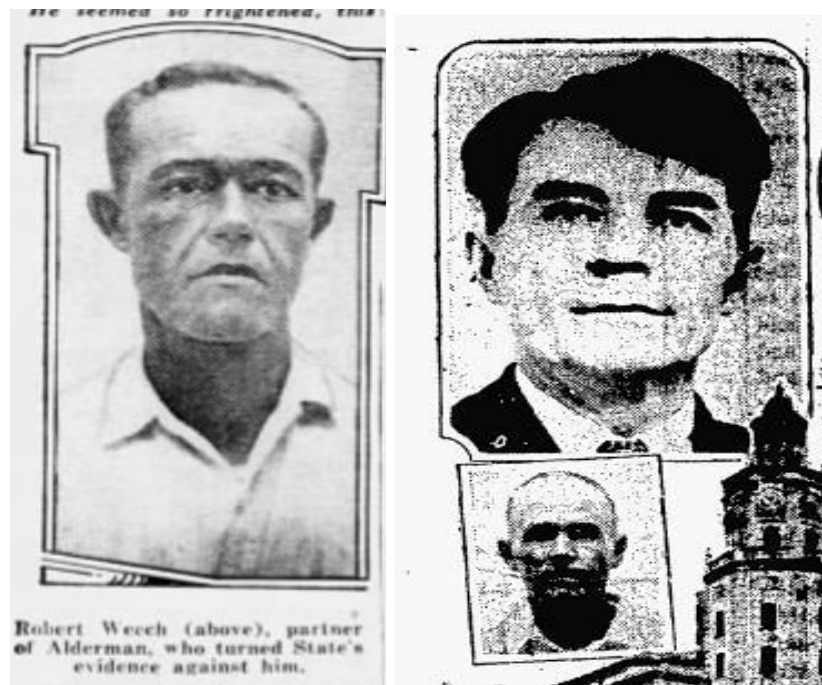
ceremony in the hospital. His wife was at his bedside when he gave his last breath. He was faithful to duty until the end with his dying words being “I could not throw up my hands” meaning he could not in good conscience surrender when challenged to do so by Mr. Alderman that fateful day.

The funeral of USCG Motor Machinist Mate 1st Class Victor Lamby was held a couple of days later in Fort Pierce. They were military honors from the U.S. Coast Guard Station in Fort Lauderdale complete with a ceremonial firing squad. The local American Legion also took part in the funeral. After the funeral, the U.S. Coast Guard gave his wife of only a few months before his death, \$504, which at the time was equivalent to 6 months’ pay. U.S. Coast Guard Seaman 2nd Class (Cook) Jodie Hollingsworth who was seriously wounded in the fight to the death was severely disfigured and disabled for the rest of his life.

The rumrunner duo aka Mr. Alderman and Mr. Weech recovered from their injuries and under heavy police guard with Thompson machine guns monitoring their every move, they were indicted and brought up on charges for murder. The heavy police guard was necessitated because you had a local population who was sympathetic to the pirates and their resistance against law enforcement, especially the U.S. Coast Guard. There were even threats made against the Broward County Jail where they were held.

In January 1928, a federal trial was held for Mr. James Horace Alderman and Mr. Robert Weech in Miami. They were both charged with murder with an additional federal charge of piracy added. Mr. Weech decided his life was more than loyalty

to his criminal partner, so he decided to become a federal witness against Mr. Alderman. Although Mr. Weech's life was spared, he was sentenced to life in prison by the judge. Some would argue that sentence was worse than the federal death sentence imposed on his criminal cohort, Mr. Alderman. With a sentence of death by the judge, the question now arises, where should the "King of the Rumrunners," Mr. James Horace Alderman Hang????



Left is Mr. Robert Weech. Right is Mr. James Horace Alderman.

Almost immediately, an appeals process began along with pleas of clemency from Mr. Alderman's family, religious groups and even U.S. Coast Guard Seaman 2nd Class (Cook) Jodie Hollingsworth who lost an eye in the battle and was permanently disabled for life, the clemency was rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court and President Herbert Hoover, whose desk where the request for leniency was the last stop of hope for Mr.

Alderman. Mr. James Horace Alderman was going to meet his creator at last!

The saga of the hanging began..... First, the judge ordered Miami-Dade County to hang Mr. Alderman whose county is where the federal trial was held. There was a problem.... officials in that county did not know how to hang anyone being that it was never done before astonishingly. A second option was explored, building a scaffold atop the Broward County Jail on the roof. There was one issue, commissioners in that county wanted the federal government to both pay for the scaffolding and to have the roof insured against potential damage made from the construction.

This did not sit well with the federal government. The third and final location option of U.S. Coast Guard Base Six in Fort Lauderdale was explored and given complete blessing between the federal government and the judiciary system. An ironic location of the highest degree with Mr. Alderman's victims being stationed at the base. An execution date was set. The date selected also had significance, August 7th, 1929, was exactly 2 years to the day from when the King of the Rumrunners unleashed his bloodshed on the high seas. Now, the guardians of those high seas would get justice.

An airplane hangar on the base was selected for where the gallows would be erected. At 4am, a law enforcement caravan left Broward County jail enroute to U.S. Coast Guard Base Six in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Alderman was placed in a prisoner van with six deputies surrounding him. The law enforcement motorcade consisted of six carloads of police officers escorting the prisoner van which was additionally followed by a

procession of news reporters who wanted to witness the execution. The judge banned them from both access to the coast guard base and to witness the execution.

The law enforcement convoy sped at high-speed east on Las Olas Boulevard then turned south onto the beach road leading to U.S. Coast Guard Base Six. In the prisoner van, Mr. Alderman was eerily quiet with one exception, he spoke very briefly as if in prayer to himself stating, "Please don't let me die." Those were his last words on earth. The convoy sped past the gates of the base which swiftly closed on the reporters chasing the motorcade and those who waited outside the base all night for this moment.

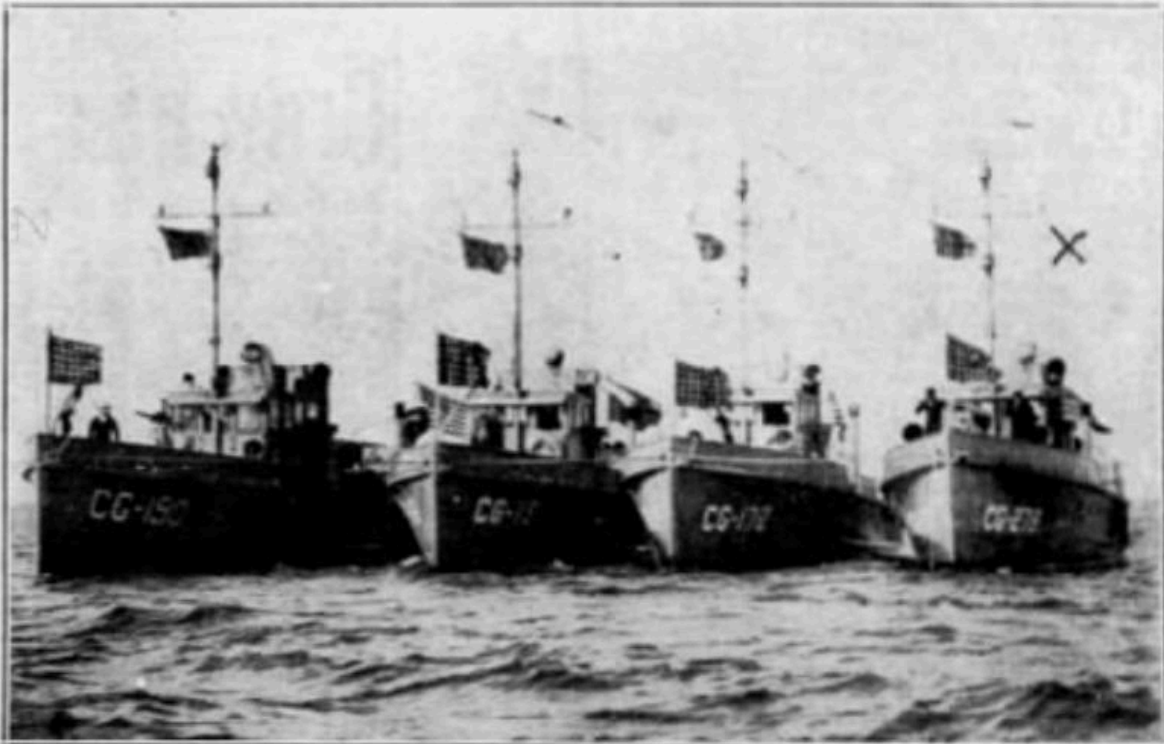
Security was extremely tight. A reinforced wired fence surrounded the base with guard towers in each of the four corners. A security detail detachment of coast guardsmen armed with pistols, rifles and machine guns patrolled the perimeter. They were aware of the threat of piracy supporters threatening to overrun the base to prevent the execution. As the convoy stopped outside the airplane hangar, Mr. Alderman chained with leg irons from head to toe exited the prisoner van to the bright Florida sunset that was beginning to rise in the blue sky. The heat with a slight breeze hit his face. The clinking of the chains against the concrete floor of the base was the only sound that he and the assembled small group of individuals allowed to witness the execution.



Circled is the Airplane Hangar where “The King of the Rumrunners”, Mr. James Horace Alderman would hang on United States Coast Guard Base Six in Fort Lauderdale.

Despite a ban of news reporters on the base and the security precautions that were undertaken, a local reporter snuck into the site of the execution dressed as a funeral undertakers’ assistant. The hangman’s noose was tightened around Mr. James Horace Alderman’s neck, his head was covered by black hood covering his eyes, his vision blinded when the floor was released under him thrusting him, 20 feet below the scaffold, where for 12 minutes, his neck not broken and his legs dangling in the air, he struggled until his last breath.....on this earth.....thus, concluding both the only and last hanging of an individual by the U.S. Coast Guard.

A Picture Alderman Would Hate



Coast Guard craft, of the type Alderman battled during his hectic career. But at the end, the Coast Guard —and the gallows—beat him.

Beginning in January 1928, the Coast Guard in Washington ordered new reinforcements to Fort Lauderdale: 300 men, twelve ships, and a pair of seaplanes equipped with top-of-the-line radios.

Alderman himself lies in lot 5, section C, of Miami Memorial Park, a cemetery in South Miami. The grave is situated next to a hurricane fence, and standing beside it one can hear the low noise of traffic from two expressways.

The grave is unmarked, and according to the cemetery's keepers, no one has asked to see it in many years. Alderman's original request was partly granted: he was buried in a white suit, but carried no rose to the gallows.

THE END.....

