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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* (WAGL/WAG/WAGB/WMEC-38)

other names/site number *Eskimo*, USCG VIN CG042570

2. Location

street & number U.S. Maritime Administration National Defense Reserve Fleet, Suisun Bay [ ] not for publication

city or town Benicia [X] vicinity

state California code CA county Solano code 095 zip code 94510

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

X national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date: 14 Nov 2012

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official — Date: 5 SEP 2012

State Historic Preservation Officer, State of California
Title — State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action: 12/31/2012

United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* | Solano, California
Name of Property | County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [X] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [X] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
		site
1		structure
		object
1	0	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DEFENSE
United States Coast Guard facility
TRANSPORTATION
Water-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT
Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: United States Coast Guard Cutter

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Steel
walls: Steel
roof: Steel
other: Brass, stainless steel, copper, nickel, cupronickel alloy and aluminum, wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheet

Narrative Description

See continuation sheet

Summary Paragraph: USCGC *Storis* was built to be a sturdy, seaworthy vessel for armed convoy escort, icebreaking and supply missions as part of the Greenland Patrols during World War II. Constructed of welded steel, *Storis* is 230 feet in length with a beam of 43 feet, 2 inches. As required of all Coast Guard cutters, *Storis* demonstrated wide versatility as a multi-mission platform capable of law enforcement, search and rescue (SAR), salvage, and maintenance of lighthouses and other Aids to Navigation (AtoN). Naval architects and engineers designed *Storis* around her intended missions, incorporating the powerplant, fuel requirements, and supporting equipment into the design to enable the ship to meet those requirements. Developed by the Coast Guard concurrently with a class of 180-foot Seagoing Buoy Tenders, *Storis* reflected many of the design features that made the 180s one of the most versatile classes of ships ever to serve the Coast Guard. Yet, *Storis* was unique and exceptional in her own right. Longer and broader, *Storis* weighed in at approximately twice the displacement of the 180s and had a third more horsepower. She was the lone example of her class to be built. That *Storis* served the U.S. Coast Guard in many different roles for almost sixty-five years in some of the most punishing and dangerous ocean environments in the world is a testament to the durability, versatility and accomplishment of her design as well as the skill of her crews. Despite minor changes in appearance and major overhauls during her Coast Guard career, *Storis* retains a high level of historic and physical integrity.

Narrative Description: The decommissioned USCGC *Storis* (WAGL/WAG/WAGB/WMEC-38), built in 1941-42, was designed to be a sturdy, seaworthy vessel to fulfill the various multi-mission requirements of U.S. Coast Guard service. The only example of her class to be constructed, *Storis*' dimensions as given by her U.S. Coast Guard Cutter File at time of nomination are 230 feet in overall length; beam 43 feet, 2 inches; fully loaded draft 15 feet (1945) and loaded displacement 2,030 long tons (2006). The vessel is constructed of welded steel throughout, with metal and artificial fireproof materials used in finishing accommodation and working spaces. Wood is used sparingly in various locations throughout the ship, for furniture, trim and non-watertight partition doors. The ship was originally designed to serve as an ice patrol cutter and supply vessel for military installations on Greenland during World War II. The open forward Buoy Deck allowed for the handling of cargo and the launching, handling and retrieving of AtoN using the ship's forward boom. The aft crane was used primarily for launching and retrieving an amphibious support airplane that was stored on the after deck during World War II. Above the Main Deck there are two decks, containing the Commanding Officer's quarters, Radio Room and Wheel House. The superstructure has a Wheel House forward with full-width bridge wings. An exhaust stack is located atop the Upper Deck House just aft of amidships. There is one main mast and a short foremast. Alterations evident on the exterior include post-war changes in the type and appearance of transmitting and receiving antennas, onboard aircraft, utility boats and associated launching equipment, addition of exterior portholes along the main deck shell plating, minor superstructure expansion, modern replacements for the forward and after booms, changes in external armament and slight variations in paint/marking schemes. The vessel is powered by a diesel-electric propulsion system with a single propeller. Though decommissioned and in mothball status at the time of nomination, *Storis* retains a high level of historic integrity and is in excellent physical condition.

The hull has a reinforced bow, slightly raked and flared. The hull also has a cutaway forefoot as well as a reinforced 7/8-inch thick steel "ice belt" at the waterline to enhance icebreaking capabilities. The forefoot allows *Storis* to ride up over ice and crush it under her weight. Her hull has considerable slack in the bilge form which also contributes to her icebreaking ability.[1] Lateral ice pressure is transferred into an upward lifting force on the hull, rather than being transferred directly into the hull to trap or crush it. Bilge keels – long, longitudinal fins – are affixed to the hull, one on either side, at the turn of the bilge. These fins are designed to reduce the severity of rolling action in heavy seas. At the stern is the vessel's balanced rudder and single eleven-foot diameter screw. The propeller hub is shrouded in a "fairwater," a streamlined cover designed to enhance water flow around the propeller and rudder to reduce noise. The fairwater can also help to prevent ropes, chains or cables from becoming entangled in the propeller. The low, cruiser-type stern is rounded with significant – almost vertical –

[1] The slack translates into a rounded underwater hull form that, in cross section, resembles the shape of a stemmed wine glass.

tumblehome above the upper knuckle of the hull.

Each side of the bow has a hawsepipe above the Main Deck level through which the anchor chain passes from the windlass to the ship's 2,500-pound Navy-type anchors. The hawsepipes also serve as the storage support for the anchor stock, allowing the flukes to be drawn up to rest against the hull. Twelve, twelve-inch closed chocks are located at regular intervals fore and aft along both sides of the hull, six per side, for line handling. As originally constructed, the exterior shell plating of the ship's hull along the Main Deck was unbroken from the bridge wings aft to the stern. After World War II, brass portholes with deadlights and exterior brows were added to the exterior hull shell plating along the Main Deck level, six on the port side, nine starboard. While the lack of portholes would have helped with light discipline during wartime, the upgrade allowed outside ventilation and light to penetrate the ship's interior. The ship retains these porthole additions in her current configuration.

When originally commissioned, the vessel was under wartime direction of the U.S. Navy and painted gray or in various forms of oceanic camouflage, designed to help the ship blend in with her icy surroundings. Following World War II, the paint scheme changed to U.S. Coast Guard regulation colors with black below the boot top and white hull above with white superstructure, bridge wings, rails, gun shields and gun tub. The underwater hull was red. Armaments were painted black. The deck and top of cabin surfaces were painted No. 32 Blue Gray. The ship's deck machinery and mast were painted No. 24 Spar, a buff color. The exhaust stack was also painted in No. 24 Spar, but featured a broad black band encircling the top to conceal soot staining from engine exhaust. The vessel's unit number "W 38" was painted in black letters five feet in height located two feet, six inches below the deck level and with the foremost character twelve feet from the stem. The unit number was also painted in black letters three feet in height on the ship's quarters, adjacent to the rearmost chocks. The ship's name was painted in black, using small block letters, just aft of the unit number on the quarters.[2]

Following official adoption on April 6, 1967, the paint scheme would be updated with the addition of the U.S. Coast Guard "racing stripes." The design included a nine-foot wide red bar (No. 40) to the left of a nine-inch white and a eleven-inch blue bar (No. 41), each canted at sixty-four degrees. Centered on the red bar is the U.S. Coast Guard seal. These stripes were added to both sides of the ship with the trailing edge of the blue stripe just forward of the downturn of the forecastle bulwark. The ship's unit number dropped the "W" prefix, decreased in physical size and was moved forward, with the forward numeral just below the foremost chock. The U.S. Coast Guard seal was also added to both sides of the exhaust stack. Black billboard lettering was added to each side of the ship's hull along the shell plating, the foremost letter approximately even with the rear of the bridge wing structure, the upper edge of the letters even with the Main Deck. This lettering originally read "COAST GUARD" but as *Storis* operated in international waters, the billboard lettering was later modified to read "U.S. COAST GUARD" to further distinguish her from vessels of other nations. Representations of campaign ribbons were affixed to a board attached to the outboard bridge wings. Additional earned awards for excellence were painted on the bridge wings below the campaign ribbons and later, on the exhaust stack as well. Following October 1, 1991, as she assumed the role of "Queen of the Fleet," *Storis*' hull numbers were changed from black paint to gold to honor her seniority in the fleet. Following her decommissioning, all Coast Guard markings were removed from the ship leaving her with an all-white hull at the time of nomination.

As originally built, the ship was manned for wartime duties by seventeen officers and 131 enlisted men for a crew of 148 (1945). In her final years of operation as a medium endurance cutter, *Storis* was manned by twelve officers and seventy-four enlisted personnel, which, after the 1986 overhaul, also included female crew members.

Designers equipped *Storis* with an assortment of deck equipment, a seaplane, electronics, and armament to assist her in Greenland. The ship had two deck booms each with a capacity to lift up to twenty tons and both had

[2] U.S. Coast Guard, *Coast Guard Paint and Color Manual CG-263, 1 December, 1952*. U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC. Earlier unit numbers were similar but smaller in size.

electric hoists. The forward boom handled supplies, cargo and AtoN in the forward Buoy Deck and the aft boom serviced a Grumman J2F Duck amphibious biplane located on the fantail. To protect the ship from surface attack, *Storis* carried two single 3"/50 caliber guns, one on the bow and the other behind the exhaust stack. The ship carried four 20-mm Oerlikon cannons in single mounts to defend against aerial threats and depth charges to attack submarines. Additional anti-submarine weapons consisted of four Y-guns and mousetraps (rocket-propelled, forward-firing contact depth bombs). The armory was located aft of the Galley and gunnery lockers were on a half-deck beneath the captain's quarters. Additional armory stowage was on the Hold Level, forward of the reefers. In 1943, the Coast Guard equipped the ship with air-search radar, but technology was rapidly changing and the ship received a sophisticated radar set and sonar in 1945.

Safety at sea was a chief concern for the ship's crew during World War II because of the frigid waters off Greenland. The Coast Guard equipped the ship with four, 25-foot motor surfboats and multiple life rafts around the ship. Seawater temperatures frequently fell below thirty-two degrees and the survival rate of an individual that fell into those waters was measured in minutes. A person would drown because hypothermia set in quickly and would numb a man's limbs, preventing him from swimming. These concerns were just as valid when *Storis* transferred to the cold, treacherous and stormy waters near Alaska.

The open forward Buoy Deck, largely clear space at Main Deck level, allowed for the launching, handling and retrieving of AtoN using the ship's boom. This open space allowed the ship to carry small boats such as an LCVP (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel) and other cargo or supplies on deck in addition to the space in the hold below. The Forecastle Deck is accessed by two forward ascending ladders, one on either side of the vessel's forecastle bulkhead. Projecting aft from the center of the forecastle bulkhead is the base of the forward gun platform which had interior space to serve as the ready ammunition storage for the original 3"/50 caliber naval gun and the later 25-mm cannon that were mounted on the platform above. This space also served as a shelter for the crew to get out of the elements. There are watertight doors on the forecastle bulkhead on either side of the platform base. Inside the forecastle is the ship's Windlass Room, housing the equipment to raise and lower the ship's anchors. Another watertight door on the forward bulkhead of the Windlass Room area opens to the ship's paint and oil locker. This compartment has a carbon dioxide fire suppression system and shelves for storing the various paints and coatings used to maintain the ship's appearance. On the port side of the Windlass Room is the Boatswain's Locker, to starboard the Lamp Locker. Within these areas are stored tools, lines, shackles, chains and the steamboat jacks used to secure buoys and cargo to the deck. Repair parts such as lamp changers and batteries for AtoN are stored in this area to be readily accessible to the deck crew. Acetylene and oxygen bottles, used for welding/cutting torches, are secured beneath the access ladders to the Forecastle Deck.

Sections of removable bulwark are located aft of the forecastle on both sides of the ship. When these bulwark sections are removed, the buoy ports along the edge of the Buoy Deck are clear of obstructions, allowing deck cargo, small boats, AtoN, chain or sinkers to be launched or retrieved using the ship's retracting crane. J-Bar Davits are located at the buoy ports, port and starboard, and are used for lowering rescue swimmers to the water using a rescue strap. The strap is also used to recover the swimmer or lift Stokes Litters – rescue stretchers – aboard the cutter. A single removable watertight hatch in the deck just forward of the deck crane allows access to the ship's interior and dry stores compartment below. This hatch replaces the two hatches that originally occupied the Buoy Deck and accessed the ship's cargo hold, which was removed in 1972. Steel chain stoppers, added to the ship ca. 1952-53, securely holds buoy anchor chains during maintenance. The stoppers are attached to the deck at the forward gunwale edge of the Buoy Deck, just aft of the forecastle bulwark on both sides. Permanent pad eyes – painted white for increased visibility – are spaced out and welded to the deck allowing for the securing or "griping" of cargo and AtoN for maintenance or transportation. Two forty-six-inch cleats are mounted on the Buoy Deck, one port and one starboard at the after end of the forward bulwarks, just before the buoy ports. Two similar cleats are located adjacent to the freeing ports, port and starboard. Shore tie connections for sewage and gray water disposal are located on the port and starboard sides of the main deck just forward of the

superstructure. "Freeing ports" are located in the bulwarks, one port and one starboard, near the aft end of the Buoy Deck. These vertically grated scupper ports allow heavy seas to rapidly drain from the deck. As originally built, *Storis* had three freeing ports per side. Two were eliminated on each side with the forward expansion of the main deck superstructure in 1986.

At the after end of the Buoy Deck, a watertight door centered in the forward bulkhead of the Main Deck superstructure leads to interior spaces of the ship. This single entrance was added with the 1986 superstructure expansion to add berthing and lounge space for female crew. Forward descending ladders with round pipe railings are located on the outboard sides of the bulkhead, one port and one starboard. These ladders lead to the Upper Deck at 01 Level. Firefighting stations are located on the forward bulkhead, port and starboard, outboard of the ladders. As originally constructed, this center aft portion of the Buoy Deck, the turtleback, would have been the mounting location for the forward boom foot. Two watertight doors, to port and starboard of the boom foot, entered the Forward Vestibule area from the Buoy Deck.

At the extreme forward point of the Forecastle Deck is the ship's stem with an open bullnose. Above the bullnose is the jackstaff. At its uppermost point, the jackstaff holds the forward anchor light. Two sets of twelve-inch double bitts are also located port and starboard outboard of the capstans on this deck. A tubular steel railing originates just aft of the stem and surrounds the Forecastle Deck. There are gaps in the aft rail to allow access to this deck from the access ladders. The windlass controls are attached to the rail adjacent to the port ladder. At the rear of the Forecastle Deck is the forward gun mount. Originally equipped with a 3"/50 caliber naval gun, this position consisted of a round deck platform enclosed with a tubular steel railing and splinter shields. When the gun was removed in September 1948 prior to the ship's reassignment to Alaska, the base served as the storage rest for the top of the ship's boom, allowing the boom to be supported on the centerline above the deck rather than supported low on the deck to port and below the gun mount. In 1995, the position was reconfigured once again with the installation of a Mk38 Bushmaster 25-mm cannon. During World War II, the ship's mousetraps were mounted to the Forecastle Deck, just forward and outboard of the 3"/50 mount.

The ship's original fifty-foot tubular steel boom was mounted at the aft end of the Buoy Deck at the forward base of the superstructure. The boom vangs for the double-topping lift extended to the reinforced bridge wings. Two electrically powered vang motors were located on the forward bulkhead of the Main Deck near the bridge supports and were connected to operate the vangs, which controlled elevation and slewing of the boom.[3] Two other hoisters were located on the boom for operating the two lifting purchases. [4] The upper purchase was rigged as a single whip with a capacity of five tons. The lower purchase could be rigged as three- or five-part tackle with a maximum capacity of twenty tons. The boom was controlled by an open operator's platform located at a 'tween decks level beneath the Wheel House. *Storis* was the first Coast Guard cutter outfitted with this boom arrangement. The boom and associated handling equipment was removed in 1986, replaced by the installation of a modern, model MCT 5-37 Alaska Marine Crane mounted on the top of the superstructure expansion added at that time. The new telescoping boom crane offers a five-ton capacity at a ten-foot radius and can be slewed one hundred degrees to port or starboard from its mounting point on the centerline of the ship.

The Upper Deck superstructure is set back from the gunwales, leaving space for an exterior walkway from the forward area of the cabin structures all the way to the After Deck. The forward descending ladders to the Buoy Deck are located in the forward Upper Deck area on both sides of the vessel near the superstructure. The lateral crossdeck access to the boom controls was also located here and now leads to the control access ladder at the rear of the telescoping boom crane. Two floodlights are attached to the forward bulkhead of the superstructure to

[3] The vang system is made up of the motors, mechanical pulleys and associated cables that raise, lower and slew the boom (move from side to side).
[4] A purchase in this instance is a combination of one or more blocks reeved with wire rope.

illuminate the crane position and Buoy Deck. A tubular steel railing lines the forward section of the deck, with openings at the top of the ladders leading down to the Buoy Deck. The railing heads aft along both sides of the ship, terminating at the area where the ship's utility boats are located. Double mooring bitts are located on the port and starboard deck, adjacent to the forward corners of the superstructure and behind the bridge wings. The structure setback allows room near the aft end of the superstructure for five-ton capacity single-point davits with hydraulic knuckle boom and slewing capability. The starboard single-point davit was added during the 1986 overhaul. The port side davit was installed on the ship after a November 2000 accident caused by a mechanical and structural failure of the ship's original port dual-point davits. Both currently hold diesel-powered six-meter Hurricane Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats or RHIB. As historically equipped, *Storis* had dual-point davits on both sides of the superstructure which would have carried motorized work boats painted white and marked with "STO 1" or "STO 2" in black letters, representing the ship's name. In later years, there was also a "STO 3," an Avon inflatable boat which was stored on a deck cradle on the starboard side, aft of "STO 1."

Along the base of the superstructure are watertight hatches that allow access to interior storage compartments on a half-deck beneath the Commanding Officer's quarters. These include storage spaces for ammunition and survival gear used in the event the crew should have to abandon ship. There are watertight doors on the aft ends of the superstructure to allow access to the corresponding interior deck level. The forward doors access an "L"-shaped interior passageway connecting the port and starboard decks to the forward ascending ladder to the Radio Room and Wheel House on the port side. A wet suit locker and the Commanding Officer's quarters are also accessible from the port side passage. A forward ascending ladder on the port side leads to the 02 Level above. The aft watertight doors on the superstructure lead to the boiler room and engineering trunk. The shore power connections are located on the after end of the superstructure on both sides of the ship, below the overhang. A heavy electrical shore cable connects with the ship's electrical system to provide power when the ship is moored and the main engines and ship's service generators are shut down. The cable is suspended off the deck by stanchions along the base of the overhang and over either side along tubular steel supports that extend from the superstructure at the port and starboard aft corners of the superstructure. [5] The aft-facing bulkhead of the superstructure has a watertight entrance to the hydraulic room. A firefighting station is located here on the portside exterior. The main diesel fuel fill ports and valves, painted yellow, extend vertically approximately eighteen-inches from the deck at the aft corners of the superstructure. Two vertical ladders lead from the Main Deck to the Bridge Deck on 02 Level, accessing the deck space behind the incinerator room superstructure aft of the exhaust stack.

Double mooring bitts are located port and starboard, adjacent to the aft corners of the Upper Deck superstructure. At the After Deck gunwale, just aft of the bitts on the port and starboard sides, are racks holding self-inflating twenty-five-person life rafts, two per side. Thirty-five foot URC-23 tilt-mount transceiver antennas are mounted behind the life raft racks, one port, one starboard. The antenna bases are painted red as a warning to stay back due to the high power radiation levels associated with radio transmissions. At the forward edge of the aft bulwarks are another set of mooring bitts. One more set is located adjacent to the aftermost chock along the gunwale. Tubular steel railings run from the aft end of each utility boat davit area to the aft bulwark.

Two electric warping winches are located on the After Deck, port and starboard. These winches have multiple uses for line handling, and docking. Towing lines can also be drawn in using the winches. Two of the ship's four 20-mm Oerlikon cannon were mounted slightly outboard aft of the winches, one per side, until these weapons were removed following World War II. As originally constructed, the winches would have flanked the after crane used for handling the ship's amphibious airplane. In order to deploy a towing hawser, the crane would be rotated 180 degrees and secured with its boom over the aft end of the superstructure. The aft crane was removed from the ship early in 1968 after having been damaged during a salvage mission in heavy weather in mid-December 1967. A modern telescoping crane similar to the forward unit was installed during the 1986 overhaul but was later

[5] The ship's position at the dock would dictate which side the shore cable would run off the ship. In Kodiak, *Storis* typically moored with her port side against the dock.

removed during a dockside maintenance period ca. 1991.

Just aft of the former crane location is the ship's substantial towing bitt. Fuel for the ship's boats and portable pumps was stored in metal cans on jettison racks, port and starboard, on the fantail. In the event of a fire, the racks could be remotely disconnected to tip burning fuel cans over the side to protect the ship. An aft scuttle hatch companionway is located on the After Deck. This allows access to the Aft Vestibule below on the Main Deck. The deck hatches to the towing hawser storage in the lazarette and the escape trunk for the steering gear compartment are also located on the fantail, close to the centerline. A steel spar-colored rail is mounted to the deck adjacent to the aftermost hatch. A roller cable fairlead is located at the stern as well as a stern light below the rail on the outside shell plating of the stern. At the extreme aftermost point of the fantail is the ship's flagstaff which not only flies the U.S. flag while moored, but also displays a second white stern light when underway.

Depth charge tracks were located on the fantail during World War II, one port, one starboard. These were removed with the other antisubmarine weapons and antiaircraft cannons following the cessation of hostilities. Historically, when the ship carried aircraft, a hatch in the fantail deck allowed access to the gasoline trunk for the transfer of gasoline from internal storage tanks deep in the ship's stern to the aircraft tanks. *Storis*' Grumman J2F was removed from the ship in 1946 just after World War II. Prior to her deployment for Arctic assignments with the U.S. Navy in 1955, *Storis*' After Deck was raised with a wooden flight deck to carry a Bell HTL-4 light helicopter. The deck would give the helicopter a flat, unobstructed surface from which to take off and to land. The helicopter would prove invaluable in ice reconnaissance, searching out and identifying leads in the ice beyond the visual range of ship-based lookouts. Small by design, the helo could carry only one passenger in addition to the pilot. The flight deck was removed in 1965.

The Bridge Deck or 02 Level, is accessed from the Upper Deck by the forward ascending ladder near the aft end of the superstructure on the port side or the two vertical ladders at the aft end of the structure. The superstructure at this level houses a portion of the interior port companionway from the Main Deck to the Wheel House, the Radio Room and the bridge. Tubular steel railings run fore and aft from the ladders around the deck forward to the bridge wings. Life rings with automatic water lights are located on the after surface of each bridge wing. The wings extend the full width of the cutter's hull. When equipped with the original double-topping lift boom, the reinforced bridge wings supported the massive forces exerted by the boom tackle. The ship's side lights are mounted to the outboard surfaces of the bridge wings. The navigation areas on each wing are equipped with a pelorus for shooting true and relative bearings, a gyro repeater, and an auxiliary engine telegraph. These features allowed the vessel's navigation crew to closely maneuver to an AtoN station or a dock with a clear view of their intended location. Each side of the Wheel House has two square windows forward of the watertight door leading to the bridge wings. Each door has a fixed rectangular window for visibility and opens aft to the bridge wings, to the lee of the superstructure. The front bulkhead of the Wheel House has three large rectangular windows with wiper arms flanked by three round brass portholes and one large rectangular window with wiper outboard on each side for forward visibility. A steel visor screens the windows and portholes. A catwalk continues from the bridge wings forward to allow a small crossdeck walkway forward of the Wheel House. A tubular steel railing is set off of the exterior Wheel House bulkhead by stanchions. Floodlights are mounted to the front of the superstructure below the catwalk to illuminate the forward deck. Other floodlights around the base of the superstructure face aft.

The ship's original Wheel House configuration was similar to that of a trapezoid, with five portholes across the forward bulkhead. The shorter port and starboard bulkheads of the house angled out and aft at an approximately forty-five degree angle, each with four brass portholes. The entrance doors opened to the rear corners of the house, protected by the lee of the superstructure. A small, steel exterior visor was located above the forward portholes. The Wheel House was squared off and expanded during a yard period in Seattle in January 1966. This work also expanded the Coding Room at the rear of the 02 Level superstructure to full width and the exterior entrance was eliminated, allowing for interior access through the Radio Room as currently configured.

Aft of the Wheel House is the section of superstructure containing the Radio and Coding rooms. The Wheel House Top (Flying Bridge) at 03 Level is accessible off vertical ladders from the Bridge Deck. The ship's exhaust stack and engineering trunk is located aft of the Radio Room. Farther aft is the former location of the after gun mount, where the ship's aft 3"/50 caliber naval gun was located. This gun was carried from *Storis*' service in the Greenland Patrols through April 29, 1992 when it was removed from the ship. It was the last of its type in service aboard any U.S. warship. The superstructure was expanded in 1994 to enclose the area where the gun was originally mounted as well as the lower portion of the exhaust stack and associated equipment in order to install incineration facilities to reduce combustible waste materials rather than discard them overboard. These spaces are accessed through watertight doors on the port and starboard sides. Ventilation intakes are located on both sides of the superstructure. The top portion of the funnel extending above the new construction was painted white, replacing the No. 24 Spar. Painted signal flags on the outboard surfaces of the superstructure represented the letters "NRUC," *Storis*' official military call sign. Markings denoting earned honors for engineering and damage control excellence were also painted on the sides of the funnel along with the Coast Guard seal. A vertical ladder on the aft bulkhead of the superstructure leads to the deck area aft of the stack at 03 Level. Two stern lights are located on a short support spar mounted to the aft bulkhead, adjacent to the ladder.

The Wheel House Top at 03 Level, is accessible by vertical ladders mounted transversely to the outside bulkheads near the forward end of the house. A tubular steel railing encloses this level. The ship's call sign "NRUC" was historically painted in International Orange letters against a black background on the Wheel House roof. The main search lights (port and starboard) are mounted here on the Flying Bridge as well as a magnetic compass binnacle, signal lamp, binocular storage and pyrotechnics locker. Signal search lights outfitted as Aldis-type Morse signal lights with shutters, used to flash messages to other vessels across open water, are located port and starboard. A stanchion with a rotating mount steadies "Big Eyes" spotting binoculars for identification of distant ships or AtoN. A brass voice tube allows communication between crew standing watch on this deck and the Wheel House below. The compass binnacle is located near the centerline of the Wheel House and can be viewed by the navigation crew from below using a periscope. A gyro repeater and pelorus are located near the center of the Wheel House roof. The ship's domed INMARSAT satellite telephone antenna is mounted to the top of the Wheel House on a short support mast. The directional ship's 6MC intership loud hailer, used to broadcast verbal instructions or warnings over distance, is located forward on top of the Wheel House. LORAN "C" receiving antennas are mounted to the roof port and starboard. Two, twenty-three foot transceiver antennas are also mounted on this deck, port and starboard, at the aft corners of the Wheel House roof. During World War II, the forward 20-mm Oerlikon cannon were mounted on the forward corners of the Wheel House roof, one port, the other starboard, both served by nearby ammunition ready boxes. These were removed after the war.

The short foremast is situated at the forward centerline of this deck. Originally attached to a stanchion on the forward superstructure below the Wheel House, the ship's polished brass bell was later mounted to the lower portion of the foremast. Accessible to those who were standing watch on the Wheel House roof, "Storis 1942" is cast into the surface of the bell and the lettering painted black. A woven lanyard is attached to the clapper. Traditionally considered to be the soul of a ship, the bell was removed during *Storis*' decommissioning ceremony and has been placed into storage for safekeeping. The foremast also carries the ship's forward range light, a set of lower red, middle red/white and upper red navigation lights displayed while underway and the radio beacon, VHF and radio direction finder (RDF) antennas.

The signal flag lockers are mounted outboard, port and starboard. The signal flags were stored inside the open lockers on hooks labeled with the individual flag's alphanumeric or signal representation. Once the fitted fabric covers were removed from the lockers, the halyards could be snapped onto the required flags and hoisted directly from the locker interior. The deck at this level is enclosed with tubular steel railing. The outboard surfaces of the railings above the bridge wings held the ship's finished wooden nameboards into which relief letters "STORIS" were carved, along with the constellation of the Big Dipper (part of Ursa Major, the Great Bear) and the North Star, all representative of Alaska's heritage and state flag.

The base of the mainmast is located at the centerline of the Upper Deck House just forward of the exhaust stack. It is reinforced from the rear by a bipod support, the legs of which are secured at the aft corners of the Bridge Deck (02 Level) below. Along its forward surface, the ship's mainmast carries the ship's horn, remote spotlight, radar antennas, rear range light, lower and upper towing lights, whistle light and the Nancy beacon (for infrared signaling). The yardarm contains various antennas for military band and FM radio and the ship's anemometers for measuring wind speed/direction. Along the after surface are mounted a set of navigation lights such as those on the foremast as well as tubular steel rungs for access to the mast's upper surfaces. An enclosed observation "crow's nest" (Aloft Conn) is located near the top of the mast to provide an advantageous lookout for leads and potential tracks while operating in ice. At the topmast area are mounting surfaces for additional radar antennas, yard blinker lights and aircraft warning beacon. Cable receiving antennas run to the deck at 03 Level, serving as receiving antennas, while the high frequency antenna runs from the masthead to the jackstaff and the medium-frequency antenna runs to the antennas mounted to the Upper Deck near the aft bulwarks. The mast and its yardarm also serve as the upper mounts for forward, aft, port and starboard halyards used to fly national and courtesy flags, the U.S. Coast Guard ensign, navigational daymarks, and signal flags, including the flags that represent the letters of the ship's call sign. The masthead is approximately seventy five feet, six inches above the waterline at a fourteen-foot draft. Aft of the mast is the ship's exhaust stack. To the rear of the stack, four large floodlights are mounted to the deck at this area, illuminating the After Deck of the ship.

In the Hold Level – lowest interior deck – as throughout the ship, interior lighting is largely provided by fluorescent fixtures. Caged incandescent lighting would have been used originally, though many of these fixtures remain in use in various exposed locations throughout the ship, both interior and exterior. Many areas are equipped with red-tinted interior lighting to help preserve the crew's night vision. Interior deck surfaces are typically coated steel or commercial-grade flooring. Interior surfaces are generally painted white or neutral colors. Ventilation ducting and plumbing for water and other fluids are routed through the various compartments. All are insulated, coded for location and marked as to their function. Fire extinguishers, firefighting hydrants and hoses, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and drums of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) are located in various locations around the ship. Firefighting stations are color keyed with No. 13 Fire Red paint for high visibility. Damage control supplies are located and accessible at strategic points around the ship should they be needed in an emergency. Compartments, doors, hatches, frames and other structural features are labeled with codes to correspond with ship's drawings for damage control and maintenance. Sound-powered telephones are mounted in brass cradles in key locations throughout the vessel. This phone system operates with dynamic microphones that do not require outside electrical power and will continue to operate even if primary and emergency electrical ship service power fails. Yellow, battery-powered emergency battle lanterns are prominently located throughout the ship for illumination in the event main lighting power should fail. Luminous signage and markers on bulkheads, ladders, and interior fixtures allow crew members to quickly orient themselves to their location in the dark and find their way around interior obstacles and out of darkened spaces to points of escape.

The Hold Level of the ship has two freshwater storage tanks forward, with a Master-At-Arms storage space aft of the tanks. The compartment containing sewage retention and abatement facilities is the next space aft, followed by the vacuum flush room, flanked by ammunition storage spaces. The vestibule leading to the individual refrigerated storage facilities for meat (port side), dairy (centerline, forward) and fruits/vegetables (starboard side, aft) are next. In addition to the refrigeration equipment for the reefers, engineering stores are located in this compartment. Through-hull transducers for the ship's fathometers are located below the food storage area. The transducers are set into the lower hull in a watertight mounting ring, accessed below the deck in the reefer flat. Watertight exterior covers are bolted on by a diver to allow the transducers to be changed while the vessel was in the water. Directly behind the aft bulkhead of these spaces are the three forward diesel fuel tanks. Farther aft are the Lower Generator Room and the ship's three main diesel propulsion engines.

As naval architects developed plans for *Storis*, a diesel-electric propulsion system was selected for the ship due to

a short supply of high-speed reduction gears which were prioritized for naval warships. However, diesel-electric systems have some inherent advantages for vessels meant to operate in ice as the electric propulsion motors tend to be better able to handle the shock caused when the propeller strikes ice. The diesel-electric system also responded faster than a steam plant to changes in power demands, particularly important when maneuvering the ship close to docks or navigational hazards.

Storis was originally powered by a single 550-volt, 1,780-amp electric motor connected to three 275-volt, 1,780-amp Westinghouse generators. Each generator was coupled to a Cooper-Bessemer Model GN-8, four-cycle, inline eight-cylinder diesel engine for a combined total of 1,800 shaft horsepower. The plant drove a single, five-bladed nickel/aluminum/bronze alloy propeller that was eleven feet in diameter. Trial runs during her shakedown cruise on Lake Erie demonstrated that *Storis* had a maximum speed of thirteen knots at a calculated maximum cruising distance of 10,900 miles, maximum sustainable speed of 12.5 knots for a cruising range of 11,300 miles, a cruising speed of ten knots for a range of 15,500 miles or an economical speed of eight knots for 21,300 miles. [6]

During 1964, a major asbestos abatement project was undertaken to reduce the amount of the hazardous mineral insulation used throughout the ship. In 1972, after thirty years of service, the Coast Guard rotated *Storis* into an overhaul program to extend her service life. *Storis* headed to Seattle, where she was temporarily decommissioned to undergo this scheduled renewal. In addition to her mechanical systems being refurbished, the ship's cargo hold space was removed through reconfiguration of interior spaces, moving storage and workshop spaces into the former hold, which allowed for the crew berthing and shower areas to be updated and expanded into a larger area. As a result of the work, *Storis* was reclassified from a light icebreaker (WAGB) to a medium-endurance cutter (WMEC).

In 1986, *Storis* again underwent a major overhaul. Her original Cooper-Bessemer engines were replaced with supercharged General Motors Electro Motive Division EMD 645E V-8 diesel engines coupled to the ship's original Westinghouse generators. Each generator created 290 volts at 700 rpm for the single Westinghouse motor that ran between 160 and 170 rpm. Normal operations allowed any combination of one, two or three engines to run online. The new engines gave *Storis* a slight increase in top speed, to approximately fourteen knots. The modest forward expansion of the Main Deck superstructure provided berthing and shower space for female crewmembers on the port side and a crew's lounge to starboard. This expansion slightly reduced the size of the Buoy Deck and led to the deletion of two freeing ports from each side of the ship. This addition also increased the crew's roster to seventeen officers and seventy-four enlisted personnel. Sickbay was moved to a space aft of the new female berthing space. The original double-topping lift electric boom was removed from the ship and replaced with the modern Alaska Marine retractable crane, mounted on top of the new forward superstructure extension.

Approximate fluid capacities for *Storis*' tanks are: fuel - 108,430 gallons and potable water – 5,000 gallons. Fresh water could be created by distillation, using evaporators in the engineering space. In the late 1980s, *Storis* was equipped with two Cuno-Maxim Flash Evaporators for this purpose. The evaporators utilized the waste heat from the main diesel engines and were capable of making 1,250 gallons of water per day. With improvements in technology, *Storis* later was equipped for desalination with a reverse-osmosis purification plant which produced 4,800 gallons of water per day. This equipment provided greater endurance for the cutter, enabling extended patrol periods at sea.

In the space between the port side engine and shell plating in the Lower Generator Room, a forward ascending ladder extends to the Upper Generator Room above on the Second Deck. The lower bulk of the ship's main propulsion engines and generators are accessible here. The ship's waste oil tank and an oily water separator are located in this compartment. The rack for the ship's large locomotive-type starting batteries is located directly

[6] National Park Service. *Historic American Engineering Record No. AK-50: U.S. Coast Guard Cutter STORIS, Womens Bay, Kodiak, Kodiak Island Borough, AK*, 4.

beneath the control room on the centerline. The batteries are connected together to multiply their voltage and current. The engines are started by energizing windings in the propulsion generators that essentially turn them into large starter motors. Once the engines start, the generators switch over from the batteries to generate electrical power for the propulsion motor, driven by the engine flywheels.

Tool storage is also located in the Lower Generator Room. The main sea chest is located in the lower hull at this location, allowing for sea water to be drawn in for engine cooling and other uses. Aft of the engine room bulkhead are located the three aft diesel fuel tanks, the Main Motor Room for the electric propulsion motor, thrust bearing and journal and propeller shaft, the aft freshwater tanks and additional storage space for the Electrician's Shop and the Engineering Log Office.

The forepeak is at the extreme forward end of the Second Deck level followed by the chain locker for the ship's anchor chains. A Damage Control workshop with storage is aft of the forepeak. The sail loft and plywood storage is located here. An interior passageway runs aft from the DC shop to starboard of the ship's centerline. This passage accesses a series of workshops and storage areas. The Electronics Technician Workshop is on the port side and Repair 2 and the Morale Locker are to starboard. The deck hatch to the Master-At-Arms storage below is adjacent to the Morale Locker. Moving farther aft, dry stores are to port and Electricians' Mate storage to starboard. The watertight removable hatch on the Buoy Deck is overhead and space is provided in the vestibule beneath the hatch to lower pallets of supplies to the Second Deck for sorting and storage. A storage locker and the hatch to the sewage treatment compartment are located on the deck outside of the dry stores space.

The next compartment through a watertight door at the aft end of the starboard passage is the forward crew berthing space for twelve members of the crew. In addition to sleeping quarters there are shower and head facilities for enlisted crew located on the port side. Here, as in other locations throughout the ship, the principal material used in the showers and heads is stainless steel. The heads operate using a powerful Envirovac vacuum system to carry black water to the sewage collection tank where it can later be pumped into a sanitary sewer. A twenty-six-inch square hatch leads to the ammunition storage and vacuum flush spaces below. Above the deck hatch, a ladder in this compartment near the aft bulkhead leads to the Forward Vestibule on the Main Deck above.

A second crew berthing space is the next compartment aft through a watertight door near the centerline. This area sleeps twenty-four crewmen in a berthing space on the port side and fifteen in a space to starboard. A central passageway leads to the exercise room in the after portion of the compartment. Two ladders are located in this compartment. The starboard side forward ladder leads to the Forward Vestibule on the Main Deck, the port ladder aft, through a watertight trunk to the port side passageway on the Main Deck, just aft of the Galley. Watertight scuttle hatches in the deck adjacent to the forward and after bulkheads lead to the cold storage areas below. The forward diesel oil tanks extend upward to this level behind the berthing compartment.

The Upper Generator Room contains toolboxes, workbenches and service manuals/records. Toolboxes are located port and starboard forward in addition to the tool storage in the Lower Generator Room below. The deck in this area is largely open steel grating and the upper portion of the propulsion engines extend above the grating. The ladder to the Engine Room Vestibule on the Main Deck above is near the forward centerline of the compartment while the descending ladder to the Lower Generator Room is located on the port side. A vertical ladder to the watertight escape hatch on the overhead is located in the forward port side corner of the engineering space. This hatch locks open for emergency egress and exits to the Main Deck between the Chief Petty Officers' Mess and Crew's Mess above. The vessel's two 380-horsepower 250 kilowatt General Motors Detroit Diesel Model 6-71T diesel ship's service generators (SSDG) are located on the port (No. 2) and starboard (No. 1) upper sides of the compartment. The electrical system is 120/208-volt, three-phase AC. An enclosed operator's station is located across the aft portion of the compartment and is accessible port and starboard through doors leading from the decks adjacent to the SSDGs. The main motor electrical switchboard, monitoring panels for the ship's electrical systems and the control and monitoring consoles for the main engines are located in the operator's

station. This compartment overlooks the engineering spaces through glass windows above the lower engine console and is largely soundproofed because of high levels of ambient noise created by the engines and machinery while in operation. Otherwise ear protection is necessary in this area. The Upper Generator Room contains ventilation systems above to draw in outside air for engine combustion and ventilation for the engine room crew. Other engineering space auxiliaries include service air compressors and a number of pumps. Behind the aft bulkhead, the after diesel fuel tanks continue to this level from the Second Deck below.

The next compartment aft is the Upper Motor Room. A transverse descending ladder leads down and to port from the centerline of the ship to the lower motor space. An ascending ladder on the starboard side leads to the Emergency Generator Room on the Main Deck. The Electrical Shop, Logistics Office and storage are located on the port side and the ship's Machine Shop is on the starboard side. Aft of the Upper Motor Room are the aft freshwater tanks, the lazarette compartment for hawser storage and the ship's Steering Gear Room in the aftermost compartment, where the ship's hydraulic steering gear and emergency steering station are located.

The articulated mechanical linkage for the steering gear passes through the various Main Deck compartments along the port side overhead as it heads aft from the helm in the Wheel House to reach this space. The steering system utilizes an electro-hydraulic steering gear. Driven by an electric motor, a hydraulic pump provides fluid pressure to dual hydraulic rams connected to the rudder stock. Hydraulic fluid is directed to the port and starboard rams through a variable direction valve. The coupling between the motor and pump can be disconnected with the removal of a linkage pin. Hand cranks are provided to allow crew members to manually turn the pump to provide emergency steering in the event of a motor failure. The system has both helm mechanical and electrical rudder angle indicators. A brass gyro repeater is mounted to the overhead to assist in maneuvering the ship manually from this compartment in the event of a steering malfunction, the crew following orders issued over the sound-powered telephone mounted in the compartment. The ship could also be steered with chain falls via connection on the rudder tiller arms. A hydraulic bypass valve was installed in the rudder cylinder piping to allow free flow between the sides of the piston in order to move the rudder with chain falls. Speed was limited to five knots on chain fall steering. As originally equipped, *Storis* carried 1,500-gallon tanks, one port, one starboard, in the aft end of the second deck. These tanks were used to carry storm oil when the ship was originally built and later carried aviation fuel for the ship's aircraft. Fuel was pumped through a trunk to the After Deck above. The tanks were later removed when *Storis* no longer carried aircraft. Fuel storage was moved to the jettison racks on the fantail.

As originally constructed, the Main Hold, removed during the 1972 renovation, was located between the work space near the forepeak and the space currently occupied by forward berthing. Before being utilized for the forward sleeping and bathing facilities, this area was used for clothing and dry stores as well as spare parts storage for electronics. All of the original crew berthing and locker space belowdecks for 102 crewmen occupied the space now utilized for thirty-nine crew in the aft berthing compartments and for exercise space.

On the centerline of the ship on the Main Deck, a passageway starts at the watertight door off of the Buoy Deck, and heads aft. To port is the berthing compartment, restroom and shower facilities for female crew added in 1986. The compartment sleeps six. Across the passageway is a crew lounge space. The passage terminates at a door leading to the Forward Vestibule. In the vestibule, the entrances to Sick Bay and the forward door to the Crew's Mess and port side passageway are to port, the entrance to the Officer's Ward Room to starboard. The entertainment and telephone room entrance is in the middle of the aft vestibule bulkhead occupying a space that was once the ship's barber shop. A scuttle hatch to the crew's head and forward berthing compartment is just to port of the centerline of the deck and the descending ladder and watertight trunk leading to the aft berthing compartment is located on the starboard side of the vestibule's aft bulkhead. A locker for cleaning equipment is located inboard of the forward mess deck entrance.

The Crew's Mess on the port side features three sets of double mess tables mounted perpendicular to the shell plating along the outboard side of the compartment. Each set of tables has integrated vinyl seating for eight. This

area enjoys three of the added post-war portholes along the Main Deck's port side shell plating. The forward bulkhead has a stainless food service rack and television mount, the aft bulkhead of the mess has refrigerated juice and milk service chests, an ice machine and a coffee maker. Entered off the port side passageway in the Crew's Mess, the Galley is located amidships forward. The Galley is equipped with cooking, baking, food preparation and service spaces, with heavy-duty stainless steel used throughout this area. The refrigerator and a commercial-grade electric mixer are located port side forward, aft of the entrance to the Ward Room pantry. The Galley ovens, vented range, griddle and fryers are located along the after bulkhead. A stainless steel food prep counter with a sink occupies the middle of the Galley, directly opposite the range. A stainless steel food service counter is on the port side of the Galley opposite the mess tables. The scullery area for washing and sanitizing dishes is located outboard, directly aft of the Crew's Mess along the port side. The escape hatch in the deck from the engineering spaces below is located at the aft end of the Crew's Mess on the port side and is situated to prevent the hatch from becoming inadvertently blocked. Aft of the Crew's Mess and on the outboard side of the ship is the Chief Petty Officer's Mess. The CPO Mess contains a cabinet, coffee maker, hot plate and small refrigerator along the forward bulkhead and a table with dinette bench in the port side aft corner.

Continuing along the outboard side of the port side passageway, heading aft, are the berthing spaces for senior enlisted personnel. These spaces include a berthing compartment, shower and head for six Chief Petty Officers, a separate head/shower for First Class crew, the First Class Berthing for twelve and the adjoining First Class Lounge. Each head space is accessible from the passageway or from the interior of the associated berthing compartment. The ship's Armory is located in the aftermost compartment on the port side. Along the inboard side of the passageway are the entrance to the Galley, the watertight trunk containing the descending ladder to the aft berthing compartment and slightly farther aft, the port ladder ascending forward to the upper decks, Commanding Officer's cabin, Radio Room and Wheel House. A crossdeck passage connects the port and starboard passageways aft of the Galley. A Law Enforcement office is located forward off the passageway on the ship's centerline. It contained file cabinets, storage for enforcement gear and a computer work station for LE/OPS officers to use for reports and messages.

The Engineering Vestibule is accessed through watertight doors on the interior bulkhead of the passageway. The deck in this space is steel grate. The forward ladder descends into the Upper Generator Room on the Second Deck, the aft ladder, near the radio motor and generator sets, ascends to the Boiler and Blower Room on 01 Level. Aft of the engine room vestibule is a watertight door leading to the compartment containing the ship's Emergency Service Diesel Generator (ESDG), a 238-horsepower 150-kilowatt GM Model 6-71N Detroit Diesel. The ESDG uses a closed cooling system with radiator rather than using seawater. A battery charger is also located in this compartment. The descending ladder to the Motor Room is accessed on the starboard aft side of the ESDG compartment.

Farther aft along the port side passageway, past the engineering spaces, is the Gyro Room and the Aft Vestibule where the port and shorter starboard passageways meet. The companionway ladder ascending to the After Deck scuttle hatch is here. Repair 3 and the Exchange (ship's store) compartments are located inboard of the port passageway outside the Armory as is the deck hatch to the hawser locker below and a watertight door leading to the escape trunk from the steering compartment to the fantail. The entrance to the ship's laundry room on the starboard side is adjacent to the hawser locker hatch. Inside the laundry room are two commercial washers and two dryers. A linen locker in the aftermost stern compartment on the starboard side is accessed through the laundry.

The starboard door off the Forward Vestibule leads to the Officer's Ward Room. Served by food, refrigerated items and coffee from the pantry on the compartment's port side, this carpeted lounge and meeting area has a large table with chairs, couches and a television for use by the officers. The starboard side of the Ward Room has two brass, swing-arm sconce lamps. The inboard bulkhead of the Ward Room near the pantry is decorated with various photographs of the ship from her service life. Aft of the Ward Room is the starboard passageway. A linen

locker is inboard, just aft of the Galley. The starboard ladder ascending forward to the 01 Deck Level access to the CO's suite, Radio Room and Wheel House is located here, just forward of the crossdeck passage that connects the port and starboard passageways. Along the outboard side of the starboard passageway are staterooms for the officers. Heading aft, there are four staterooms, each with bunk, locker, desk and chair. Each space has a porthole. The officers' washroom has a shower and two toilets. Four more staterooms are aft of the washroom, including the engineer's stateroom (1-148-1-L) and the Executive Officer's quarters (1-156-1-L). The ship's office is located at the terminus of the starboard passageway. This area contains desks and locking file cabinets for important ship's papers such as crew files and operational/logistical records. A supply cabinet is located on the port side of the office, near the centerline.

As originally constructed, the Main Deck configuration had the toilet facilities for the crew portside forward, with five stools, five sinks and a shower space. The Crew's Mess was outboard, aft of the WC. A compartment once located at the forward end of the Mess Deck held a movie projector for showing movies in this space. Aft of the Crew's Mess was the Chief Petty Officers' Mess, ship's office, CPO bunk space (ten men), watch standers' bunk space (twelve men), CPO head and watch standers' head (one stool each). Sick Bay occupied the entire stern compartment area with an operating table, toilet space and medical supply storage. Inboard, in the space currently occupied by the Forward Vestibule, were pea and rain coat lockers. The ship's armory was located just aft of the Galley on the centerline. After the engineering trunk and Gyro Room, were a photographic dark room, auxiliary radio room (entered from the starboard passage), gasoline trunk space, officers' stores, and a crossdeck passage to the laundry room on the starboard side. The uses for the various starboard side Main Deck spaces remained largely the same over *Storis*' career. However, the aft two staterooms were originally configured for double occupancy.

The Upper Deck superstructure on 01 Level contains the Commanding Officer's suite and office. A half-deck below the CO's quarters contains several storage spaces. On the port side are gunnery lockers, an abandon ship locker and a quartermaster locker. On the starboard side are a Damage Control locker, radio locker and additional space for emergency supplies for abandoning ship. The half-deck compartments are accessed through exterior watertight hatches on both sides of the superstructure adjacent to the boat davits and just above the deck. The entry to the CO's quarters is located off a landing along the interior ascending ladder from the Main Deck to the Wheel House, accessing the suite at the port side aft corner. Inside the cabin, the CO's stateroom is located on the port side forward. This sleeping space has two round brass portholes, one in the forward bulkhead and the other on the port side. A wooden clothing chest occupies the port side and the bunk, the starboard. A similar first-class stateroom is located on the starboard side of the cabin, arranged opposite the CO stateroom, with the bunk on the port side interior bulkhead. The CO's head and shower, located at the front of the cabin on the vessel's centerline between the two staterooms, is accessible from either sleeping space. The remainder of the CO's cabin space has a desk, file cabinet, coffee table and a large wooden cabinet. Large brass sconce lamps are mounted to the starboard bulkhead. There is one brass porthole on the port side, two starboard. Up until the end of World War II, the Coast Guard had the rank of Commodore. With the extra stateroom, *Storis* could accommodate the flag rating and act as a flagship in command of a squadron of ships.

Aft of the CO's cabin within the superstructure is a wet suit locker that originally served as a pantry area containing a coffee pot, refrigerator and a heating plate to allow the ship's steward to prepare meals for the Commanding Officer. The food would be served in the CO's quarters. Aft of the locker and down a half-deck is a crossdeck passage, the bottom of the "L"-shaped interior passageway connecting the port and starboard decks to the forward ascending ladder accessing the CO's stateroom and leading to the Radio Room and Wheel House on the port side. The shipbuilder's plate and commemorative Northwest Passage plaque were mounted on the forward bulkhead of the crossdeck passageway. These were removed and placed in storage upon the ship's decommissioning. Interior descending ladders to the Main Deck are located at the port and starboard aft ends of the crossdeck passage. Aft of the passageway is the engineering casing for boilers, auxiliary equipment, the engine exhaust and ventilation ducting and the hydraulic powerplant. At the rear of this superstructure is the

watertight door to the hydraulic room.

The superstructure on 02 Deck Level contains the Wheel House and Radio Room. The Wheel House contains the ship's bridge, navigation equipment and chart plotting tables. The ladder from belowdecks enters the Wheel House through an interior door at the port side aft corner of the structure. There are three rectangular windows with wipers flanked by three round brass portholes and another rectangular window with wiper outboard on the forward bulkhead, allowing forward visibility for the bridge crew. Each side of the Wheel House has two square windows forward of the watertight doors leading to the bridge wings. The doors open aft, to the leeward side of the superstructure. For visibility, each door has a rectangular fixed window. The modern wheel stand with autopilot is in the center of the Wheel House flanked by a radar console to port and a modern propulsion control stand with engine telegraph to starboard. A second radar console is located near the starboard front bulkhead of the wheelhouse. Adjacent to the starboard radar console is a padded chair reserved for the CO. The voice tube from the flying bridge above is mounted to the overhead as well as the periscope for the compass binnacle. The ship's helm and periscope are wrapped and decorated with "fancywork," intricately knotted and woven cord that is lacquered.

The 1MC and sound powered phone connections were located on the starboard bulkhead adjacent to the chart table. The Ross fathometer and Radio Direction Finder (RDF) were mounted just to the port side of the forward bulkhead of the pilothouse. The Loran C receiver was located above the chart table. Searchlight controls were located just above and starboard of the helm station.

When commissioned in 1942, the ship's navigation crew relied on instruments such as sextants and alidade to determine position, augmented by early RDF equipment and LOng RAnge Navigation transmissions or LORAN. At the time of her decommissioning, *Storis* was equipped with satellite Global Positioning System receivers to help pinpoint her position. However, proficiency with the earlier instruments was still a required skill and a wooden cabinet in the Wheel House adjacent to the starboard bridge wing door kept sextants close at hand right up to decommissioning. There are large table spaces on the starboard side of the Wheel House, just behind the bridge to provide adequate work area to spread out navigation charts for course and position calculations. Cabinets in this area stored the volumes of necessary charts for *Storis*' area of operations. A fathometer, book case and coat hooks are located on the after bulkhead of the navigation space. The chart table area is separated from the navigation space of the bridge with a wood-trimmed partition bulkhead. A sliding panel allows communication between the chart tables and the navigation crew forward. The charts and traditional navigation procedures are supplemented with GPS plotters located in the after portion of the Wheel House. The Wheel House is also equipped with red-tinted light fixtures to preserve night vision. The lights were also shuttered via switches on the door to prevent light from escaping when a door was opened during "darken ship" periods.

As with navigation, the ship's Radio Room was also changed by advancements in technology. Originally packed from bulkhead to bulkhead with various bulky vacuum-tube transmitters and receiving equipment for military and commercial communications, the advent of solid-state technology, microchips, and satellite communications condensed and changed the ship's electronic communications equipment considerably. This equipment was housed behind the chart tables. Several safes are located along the starboard bulkhead. A Coding Room for classified communications is located in the starboard aft corner of the Radio Room.

Aft of the Radio Room on the exterior of the Wheel House is the ship's exhaust stack. An incinerator for combustible waste is located aft of the stack. This equipment was installed in an extension of the superstructure added during a 1994 dockside availability.

As originally built, *Storis*' Wheel House was smaller and had a shape forward approximating a trapezoid. Five round brass portholes were spaced across the forward bulkhead, four portholes on the port and starboard sides. A teak handrail ran across the interior bulkheads, held by brass stanchions. Large brass radiators were mounted to

the bulkheads. The wheel and stand were located slightly to port of the centerline with the gyro repeater to port and the binnacle and engine telegraph to starboard. The radio direction finder was located on the port side of the Wheel House. An enclosed Sonar Room was located in the aft corner of the Wheel House. The Radio Room was accessed off the interior passageway on the port side, near the descending ladder to the ship's interior. The Coding Room was a separate compartment on the rear of the Wheel House superstructure, accessed through an exterior door on the aft-facing exterior bulkhead.

Periodic equipment upgrades and structural changes changed the configuration of the Wheel House over time. In In 1983 the bulkheads encompassing the chart room at that time were removed to accommodate a new chart table that was installed into the house by cutting an opening in the flying bridge deck. Electronic equipment was relocated in the Wheel House to improve accessibility and a sliding status board was developed and installed in this space. The original brass wheel and stand were removed from the ship in 1986 and replaced with the current helm. [7] The pilothouse, which had been expanded laterally during the yard period in January 1966, received additional room when it was expanded forward slightly during the overhaul in 1986.

Following *Storis*' decommissioning on February 8, 2007, classified items such as electronic gear and records were removed from the ship. The builder's plate and large bronze plaque commemorating *Storis*' participation in the 1957 Northwest Passage mission were also removed and placed in storage. Official Coast Guard markings were erased from the ship by government mandate so that the ship could not be confused with an active, commissioned cutter. The hull unit number, Coast Guard stripes and seal were painted over, giving the vessel an all-white hull. This configuration is how *Storis* appears at the time of nomination. Aside from these minor cosmetic changes and some paint deterioration and rust staining from weathering, the ship appears largely as she did as an active cutter in her last years of service up until her decommissioning. *Storis* retains significant historic integrity and is in otherwise excellent physical condition. Most of her systems and equipment are believed to be fully functional. It would be possible to reactivate the ship to be able to sail under her own power.

Storis is currently moored as a custody vessel within the U.S. Maritime Administration National Defense Reserve Fleet at Suisun Bay, Benicia, Solano County, California. The ship has been at various moorings within the fleet since arriving in the spring of 2007. She is moored at the time of nomination at 38 degrees 5 min 7 sec N, 122 degrees 5 min 5 sec W, rafted together with the retired U.S. Coast Guard 180-foot buoy tenders USCGC *Planetree* (WLB-307) and USCGC *Iris* (WLB-395).

The nonprofit Storis Museum group, based in Juneau, is awaiting Congressional action for a requested donation of *Storis* for privately funded restoration and use as a museum ship and maritime education center, Alaska's first such institution.

[7] The wheel and stand are on display in the PX at U.S. Coast Guard Base Support Station in Kodiak.

United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* | Solano, California
Name of Property | County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [X] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Military/defense
Exploration
Science
Commerce
Engineering
Social/Humanitarian

Period of Significance
1942-1967

Significant Dates
1943-45
1957

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Toledo Shipbuilding Co., Toledo, Ohio

Period of Significance (justification)
This period encompasses all of the activities and accomplishments that establish the historic significance of USCGC *Storis*. This includes her service with the Greenland Patrol during World War II, her postwar transfer to Alaska and Bering Sea Patrols, the Distant Early Warning radar line construction in the Arctic, the circumnavigation of North America through the Northwest Passage and her first law enforcement/fisheries apprehensions.

United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* | Solano, California
Name of Property | County and State

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
By 1966, *Storis*' physical appearance had changed slightly with the squared-off Wheel House as reflected in her current configuration. While the majority of the period of significance falls into the period greater than 50 years in the past, by 1967, *Storis* had performed a wide range of missions, established her presence and settled into the major role she would play in the Alaskan maritime frontier up until her decommissioning in February 2007.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

See continuation sheet

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See continuation sheet

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

USCGC *Storis*
Name of Property
Solano, California
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary statement of significance:

USCGC *Storis* is significant under National Register Criterion "A" at a national level within the contexts of defense and maritime history as one of the last surviving vessels to have participated in the Greenland Patrols during World War II and for her long career as a law enforcement and search and rescue platform in the vast, stormy and treacherous Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska and Northern Pacific Ocean. *Storis* is significant under Criterion "A" in transportation, commerce, exploration and science at a national level of significance as one of the first American vessels to successfully circumnavigate the North American continent through the Northwest Passage. Under Criterion "A," *Storis* is nationally significant for her social/humanitarian activities as the last surviving vessel of the Bering Sea Patrol in providing medical, dental and judicial services to remote Alaskan villages as well as disaster relief in time of natural catastrophe, and for performing vital icebreaking and maintenance of the region's Aids to Navigation system. The oldest cutter serving in the U.S. Coast Guard fleet at the time of her decommissioning in 2007, *Storis* is significant at a national level in engineering under National Register Criterion "C." Within the context of the development of standardized multi-mission tenders designed to service Aids to Navigation with demonstrated versatility to perform other key duties, *Storis* – as the lone example of her class – represents a physically larger and further evolution of tender design. Her robust construction and versatility enabled the venerable cutter to serve over sixty-four years in U.S. Coast Guard service, carrying out missions associated with law enforcement, search and rescue, military support, Arctic exploration, humanitarian medical and disaster relief services, icebreaking and the maintenance of the country's Aids to Navigation system. Her integrity evokes a sense of historic design, representing the distinctive characteristics of the remarkably active and successful period of ship design and construction during the early 1940s.

Statement of Significance:

Laid down in 1941 and commissioned in 1942, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* (WAGL/WAG/WAGB/WMEC-38) is the only example of her class to have been built. As is the case with all U.S. Coast Guard cutters, *Storis* was designed to be a multi-mission platform to fulfill the various requirements of Coast Guard service: a sturdy and seaworthy vessel able to travel great distances across open ocean to perform military support, law enforcement, search and rescue (SAR), and icebreaking duties. *Storis* was also very proficient at servicing lighthouses and other Aids to Navigation (AtoN) or providing critical supplies and replenishment for remote villages and military facilities. *Storis* resembles the successful 180-foot Seagoing Buoy Tenders developed concurrently and built from 1941-1944, but is larger to incorporate greater cargo-carrying capacity and proportionately larger engineering spaces and storage tanks.

Though capable of a wide range of missions, *Storis* was specially constructed and commissioned for service as an armed ice patrol and supply vessel in the waters in and around Greenland during World War II. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, *Storis*' primary duties for the Greenland Patrol utilized her icebreaking capability to allow navigation of the island's icy fjords and her cargo-carrying capacity for base supply missions. She carried light anti-submarine weapons and deck armament for convoy escort duty. The deck armament was also intended to engage German units attempting to land shore parties on the island for espionage or the development of weather stations in support of Atlantic U-boat operations.

In the months immediately following World War II, Boston continued to serve as the ship's home port. From December 1, 1947 through September 15, 1948, *Storis* operated from home port Curtis Bay, Maryland, where she worked in a military support role and assisted with the construction of Long-Range (radio) Navigation stations. Upon completing her Maryland assignment, *Storis*' home port changed once again, this time to Juneau, Alaska, to assume law enforcement, SAR operations, and humanitarian missions through the Bering Sea Patrol. In 1955 and 1956, *Storis* deployed for Arctic operations with the U.S. Navy in support of hydrographic surveys and the construction of a chain of radar stations in the Arctic known as the Distant Early Warning Line or DEW Line.

Storis' most famous voyage began July 1, 1957 when the ship departed Seattle, Washington, in company with the smaller 180-foot cutters USCGC *Bramble* (WAGL-392) and USCGC *Spar* (WAGL-403). Assigned to the Commander of Task Force Five as part of the Hydrographic Survey Unit of the U.S. Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) Western Task Force, the small fleet sailed through the Bering Strait into the Arctic Ocean. Their goal was to determine the feasibility of the Northwest Passage as a route for cargo and military vessels. After rounding Alaska and leaving Point Barrow, their track brought them near the coast of Canada's Northwest Territories, towards Simpson Strait. After clearing Simpson Strait, the three ships turned northward and traversed the Rae, James, Ross, and Franklin Straits to Bellot Strait, overcoming shallow water, heavy ice and periodic thick fog as they went.

Throughout the voyage, the ships charted and recorded water depths and marked navigable channels with AtoN. The convoy became the first deep-draft vessels to transit the seventeen-mile Bellot Strait from west to east. Met by the Canadian icebreaker HMCS *Labrador,* the convoy sailed into the ice-free waters of Prince Regent Inlet. From there they proceeded through Lancaster Sound, Baffin Sound, and Davis Strait and into the Labrador Sea. Through the efforts and encountered hardships of the little convoy, the Coast Guard determined the Northwest Passage would not be a practical route for supply ships. However, the successful passage and the convoy's continuous soundings and surveys provided important information about the 4,500 miles of semi-charted waters through which it sailed.

When *Storis* emerged near Greenland at the east end of the Northwest Passage, she became the first American ship to have circumnavigated the North American continent. Upon her return to Seattle and her home port of Juneau, she had completely circumnavigated North America in one season, becoming the third American vessel to earn the honor. Following the Northwest Passage mission, *Storis* transferred to Kodiak, Alaska, her final home port, and went on to carry out an additional forty-nine years of faithful service to the U.S. Coast Guard, performing, as she was designed, various law enforcement, SAR and humanitarian/relief assignments.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, *Storis* made several significant apprehensions of foreign vessels illegally fishing in American waters. The ship underwent major renovations in 1972 that saw the elimination of her cargo hold and conversion from a light icebreaker (WAGB) to a medium endurance cutter (WMEC). In 1975, the ship provided vital icebreaking assistance to the tugs and barges carrying supplies and materials for the construction of the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline. A 1986 overhaul replaced the ship's propulsion engines and expanded her living quarters to include berthing and lounge areas for female Coast Guard personnel. *Storis* served as the command and control vessel during the catastrophic *Exxon Valdez* oil spill at Prince William Sound, Alaska, in 1989.

On October 1, 1991, after forty-nine years of service, *Storis* became the oldest commissioned cutter in the U.S. Coast Guard with the retirement of the USCGC *Fir.* As the "Queen of the Fleet," *Storis* had earned the honor of having her unit number "38" painted in gold on her hull. During the fall of 1992, with the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, *Storis* made a historic goodwill port call at Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. This was the first entry of a foreign military vessel into the port since 1854 when the British and French attempted to seize it during the Crimean War.

Storis was decommissioned from the U.S. Coast Guard on February 8, 2007 in an emotional ceremony that celebrated her more than sixty-four years of dedicated and decorated service. Under special commission, *Storis* sailed under her own power to Alameda, California, where she was transferred to the stewardship of the U.S. Maritime Administration for mothballing and storage among the National Defense Reserve Fleet in Suisun Bay, near Benicia, California. *Storis* retains a high degree of historic and physical integrity that is reflective of her successful design and the devoted care she received at the hands of her Coast Guard crews.

Of the major Coast Guard vessels that participated in the Greenland Patrol, only *Storis* remains following the July 2, 2012 reefing of USCGC *Mohawk* (WPG-78) in Florida. One auxiliary, the Arctic schooner *Bowdoin* (IX-50), is a National Historic Landmark in Maine. Four other, smaller, auxiliary vessels – former Coast Guard tugs and buoy

tenders – remain but have been altered and do not have the same high level of acquired historic significance. *Storis* is the last of the U.S. Coast Guard vessels that remain from the official Bering Sea Patrol. Of the Coast Guard vessels from the historic 1957 transit of the Northwest Passage, USCGC *Spar* was sunk as a reef in 2004 and USCGC *Bramble* was decommissioned and transferred in 2003 to a museum in Michigan for interpretive use. While *Bramble* retains a high level of physical and historic integrity and was listed on the National Register Aug. 1, 2012, she is currently closed, for sale and endangered at the time of this nomination.

A nonprofit Storis Museum corporation, based in Juneau, was formed in February 2007 as the ship was retired. The group has been working to secure a U.S. Congressional donation of *Storis* to allow her to return to Juneau for use as Alaska's first interpretive museum ship as the Storis Museum, a Maritime Museum and Education Center. Future plans may see the vessel utilized as a maritime training vessel for young men and women.

USCGC *Storis* (WAGL/WAG/WAGB/WMEC-38): "The Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan Coast"

With World War II raging in Europe and Denmark occupied by Nazi forces, on April 9, 1941, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Danish Ambassador Henrik de Kaufmann signed the Hull-Kauffmann Agreement, a treaty that gave America permission to construct military bases in Greenland in order to defend the island from German aggression and protect American and Danish interests. Greenland was extremely important to the United States for several reasons: the island held the world's only known minable deposit of the mineral cryolite, an important component in the production of aluminum, critical to the American aircraft and shipping industries during World War II. Greenland's location provided a pivotal stopover and refueling point for aircraft bound for England under the Lend-Lease Act. Meteorologists also found the location useful for forecasting the weather in Western Europe. The installations began to take shape when Admiral Harold Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, ordered the creation of the Greenland Patrol, a collection of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard vessels. The new force was officially organized over June and July 1941. The Navy assigned the patrol two missions: to assist the Army in building air bases and prevent the Germans from operating weather stations in Greenland.[1]

The need for a new specialized cutter to serve on the Greenland Patrol soon became apparent. According to Commander Frederick A. Hunnewell, the Coast Guard's chief of construction in the early 1940s, ". . . under a basic requirement for reliability the major technical characteristics of a Coast Guard cutter can well be given the following sequence of priority: seaworthiness, speed, cruising radius, deck equipment for assistance work, and accommodations."[2] The Coast Guard had already been working on a new design for a class of standardized 180-foot seagoing lighthouse/buoy tenders capable of ice operations. The design for the new Greenland Patrol cutter would reflect many similarities to the 180s including basic hull shape, diesel-electric drive and single screw. However, the new Greenland Patrol cutter featured larger cargo holds, weighed in at twice the tonnage of the 180s and had a third more horsepower.

The Coast Guard signed a contract on January 26, 1941 with the Toledo Shipbuilding Company of Toledo, Ohio. Shipyard workers laid the keel of their Hull No. 187 (CG Builder's No. 82) on July 14 of that year, following the design created by the U.S. Coast Guard. Cost for the new vessel was $2,072,889. The new cutter was originally to be named *Arctic*, but was laid down as *Eskimo*. As construction progressed and the new ship began to take shape, the State Department intervened and requested the adoption of a name that would be unlikely to offend the indigenous population of the areas the ship was meant to protect. Derived from a Scandinavian word "sirorssuit" meaning "great ice" or "blue ice," the new vessel became *Storis*.

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, this history of USCGC *Storis* is largely drawn from the ship's cutter file at the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office and Historic American Engineering Record No. AK-50.

[2] Johnson, Dr. Robert E., and Robert E. Williams, Commander (CDR), U.S. Coast Guard (retired). "Coast Guard Cutter Design, 1941-1990." *CG Engineer's Digest* (Winter 1992), 11-12.

Naval architects had designed *Storis* as an armed ice patrol and supply cutter and incorporated the Greenland Patrol's early experiences into the ship's design, giving her a reinforced steel hull for light icebreaking with a 7/8-inch thick high-strength steel ice belt at the waterline. The bow had a cutaway forefoot, allowing the ship to ride up onto ice and crush it under her weight. The hull would also have considerable slack in the bilge form, which would help counter the massive pressures exerted laterally by ice. As ice pressure would build, the force would lift the rounded hull from the water, rather than transfer directly into the hull to trap or crush it. This design would reduce the possibilities of getting "beset" in the ice and made *Storis* a tough, highly effective icebreaker. [3]

With growing tensions and concerns over the possibility of war with Nazi Germany, President Franklin D. Roosevelt placed the Coast Guard under the direction of the U.S. Navy with Executive Order 8929, dated November 1, 1941. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7 and subsequent declarations of war against the Axis Powers added urgency to the construction of the new cutter. Launched April 4, 1942, *Storis* was 230 feet in length and 43 feet, 2 inches in beam amidships. Displacement and draft would vary with her loading but *Storis*' typical fifteen-foot draft at a displacement of 1,715 tons and slender beam would allow her to navigate into the narrow fjords of Greenland to deliver supplies. The ship's single, five-bladed propeller was eleven feet in diameter and was driven by one electric motor powered by generators driven by three Cooper-Bessemer Type GN-8, inline eight-cylinder diesels. The three diesels had a combined output of 1,800 shaft horsepower, which could drive the ship at a top speed of thirteen knots with a range of 10,900 miles. At economy speed of eight knots, range increased to 21,300 miles. [4] The diesel-electric propulsion was well suited for work in the ice as the electric motor was able to better absorb the shock of the propeller striking ice compared to a traditional mechanical reduction-gear system. The diesel-electric system also responded faster than a steam plant to changes in power demands. *Storis* was the first tender fitted with a double top-lift boom, a feature that would be incorporated into later versions of the 180-foot tenders. Ultimately, *Storis* would be the only example of her class to be constructed. The Coast Guard commissioned the ship with the unit number WAGL-38 (Coast Guard, auxiliary, lighthouse tender) on September 30, 1942. She entered service as USS *Storis*, CG.

Heading into the war zone, manning *Storis* were seventeen officers and 131 enlisted men. The ship sported a camouflage paint scheme to help hide her from enemy lookouts. The U.S. Navy armed the ship with two 3"/50-caliber naval guns and four single-mounted 20-mm Oerlikon cannons. For antisubmarine duties, two depth charge tracks had been located on the quarters of the vessel. Four Y-guns – transverse mounted, side-firing depth charge launchers – were positioned on the stern. Toward the end of the war, two mousetraps (forward-firing, rocket-propelled contact depth charge launchers) were mounted near the bow. *Storis* carried type BK radar (1943) and type SL radar (1945) as well as QCL-2 sonar detection equipment (1945). *Storis* also carried a Grumman J2F Duck amphibious biplane used for aerial scouting and observation, ice reconnaissance and air-sea rescue. The Duck could also carry 650 pounds of bombs or depth charges for antisubmarine patrols. A crane mounted on the stern allowed for the launching and recovery of the aircraft.

Storis was assigned to Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Forces (CINCLANT)/Destroyer Forces, Atlantic (DESLANT). Stationed at Boston, Massachusetts, *Storis* conducted anti-submarine exercises in Casco Bay, Maine, until May 19, 1943 before escorting a convoy to Argentia, Newfoundland, and Narsarssuak, Greenland. In the waters off Greenland, *Storis* conducted operations as part of the important Greenland Patrols, the command ship of Task Unit 24.8.2. In company with other major cutters, *Storis* also acted as the lead ship in charge of a fleet of 125-foot

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[3] Brooks, Arthur E. Rear Admiral (RADM), U.S. Coast Guard. "USCGC *Storis* decommissioning." Speech presented at the decommissioning ceremony of the USCGC *Storis* (WMEC-38), Kodiak, Alaska, February 8, 2007.

[4] National Park Service. *Historic American Engineering Record No. AK-50: U.S. Coast Guard Cutter STORIS, Womens Bay, Kodiak, Kodiak Island Borough, AK*, 4.

patrol boats responsible for guarding this strategically important portion of the Arctic Circle against the establishment of German weather stations. Her logs indicate that she fired on the enemy on more than one occasion. [5] *Storis* also supported the U.S. Army in establishing airdrome facilities – known as "BLUIE" bases – for use in ferrying aircraft to the British Islands. *Storis* served as a supply ship, kept convoy routes open and conducted a multitude of other duties including search and rescue as well as escort and patrol duties. Critical weather and ice reports from *Storis*' patrols were relayed to Greenland and U.S. military bases that fed directly into Allied wartime planning and strategies. [6] The weather forecasts from Greenland were critical as they helped military planners predict weather patterns for Western Europe several days in advance.

On June 12, 1943, *Storis* joined the escort of United States convoy GS-24 from Narsarssuak to St. John's, Newfoundland, in company with the Coast Guard cutters *Mojave* – flagship (WPG-47), *Tampa* (WPG-48), *Escanaba* (WPG-77), and *Algonquin* (WPG-75). The convoy consisted of USAT *Fairfax* and cutter *Raritan* (WYT-93). At 0510 on June 13, dense black and yellow smoke and sheets of flame were reported rising from *Escanaba* by *Storis*' lookouts. The stricken cutter sank within just three minutes. *Storis* and *Raritan* closed in to investigate and rescue survivors while the rest of the convoy began zigzagging and steering evasive courses to thwart the attacks of enemy submarines that could be lurking nearby. At 0715 the two cutters returned, having rescued just two survivors even though both rescue vessels were on scene within ten minutes of the explosion. *Raritan* recovered one body. No explosion had been heard by the other escort vessels. The remainder of the *Escanaba*'s crew of 103 was lost.

In August 1943 *Storis* escorted a convoy to Frobisher Bay in the Canadian Arctic. The cutter searched for survivors of USAT *Nevada* on December 18, 1943. During January 1944, *Storis* broke ice in the Greenland fjords and transported supplies to various stations. From July 7, 1944 through October 31, 1944, she searched for German trawlers off northeast Greenland and then later performed escort duties in the waters around Greenland.

In July 1944, *Northland* (WPG-49) and *Storis* set out on a mission to capture a German weather station operating on the east coast of Greenland. By the time the Coast Guard arrived, the Germans had fled, but American personnel found a crude structure, radio transmitters, and *Coburg*, a damaged German trawler. In October 1944, *Northland* and *Storis* joined heavy icebreakers *Eastwind* (WAG-279) and *Southwind* (WAG-280) en route to North Little Koldewey Island to capture another German weather station. *Northland* was damaged in ice and *Storis* was assigned to escort the crippled cutter to port. Crews of *Eastwind* and *Southwind* pressed on, found and subdued twelve German soldiers and captured the German trawler *Externsteine* trapped in ice nearby. This was the only action of World War II where American military vessels captured a German surface ship.

Postwar missions and the Bering Sea Patrol

Following the war, the Grumman Duck was removed from the ship in 1946. Released from Navy control, CGC *Storis* was transferred from Boston to Curtis Bay, Maryland, where she was assigned military support tasks, supplying LORAN (LOng RAnge Navigation) stations at Greenland and Newfoundland in addition to being on standby for SAR or other emergencies. Effective September 2, 1948, *Storis* was reclassified as a WAG, or Coast Guard, miscellaneous auxiliary. Around this time, *Storis* shed her wartime camouflage and transformed in appearance with her painting in the regulation U.S. Coast Guard color scheme with a gleaming white hull. The forward 3"/50-caliber gun was also removed.

On September 15, 1948, *Storis* was reassigned to Juneau, Alaska. From Juneau, *Storis* assisted in establishing Alaskan LORAN radio stations. When not working on LORAN, her main activities were typical Coast Guard

[5] "Auxiliary Vessel 'Storis' Is Big Sister to Buoy Tenders." *U.S. Coast Guard Magazine*, (February 1957): 33.
[6] RADM Brooks. "USCGC *Storis* Decommissioning."

functions such as SAR, maintaining AtoN, supplying lighthouses, and keeping harbors open and navigable in the winter by breaking ice. *Storis* crewmen also performed civic missions ashore for the towns and hamlets across the territory. During her time in Juneau, *Storis* also received official assignments to the Bering Sea Patrol.

The Bering Sea Patrol had been established in 1895 to enforce sealing and fishing regulations as well as provide necessary services to outlying settlements far from major population centers. While protecting fish and seals was still a concern, when *Storis* was assigned to the Bering Sea Patrol, the duties included improving the Coast Guard navigation outposts in the Aleutian Islands, replenishing food and fuel supplies and providing mail service. Law enforcement was provided by a "Court Cruise," the transportation of a judge, public defender, a court clerk and a Deputy U.S. Marshal to hear cases in the remote regions. The cases could range from poaching, disorderly conduct or selling liquor to natives up through felony assaults, arson and murder. Prisoners would be transported from outlying areas to larger cities for transfer to authorities for incarceration. Other patrol services included medical care for natives and government personnel provided by the U.S. Public Health Service, nutritionists, Alaska Native Service welfare workers and educators. Scientists also accompanied the patrols for various studies. In the absence of clergy, the ship's commanding officer could perform wedding ceremonies. If the ship was unable to directly access a village, when *Storis* was equipped with helicopters, the aircraft would ferry medical personnel into the villages. These efforts brought much needed services and assistance to residents of these outlying areas that were located hundreds of miles from major cities and medical and government facilities.

On December 14, 1954, the *Storis* completed her first of many SAR missions in the United States. She responded to the crash of an amphibious U.S. Coast Guard UF-1G Albatross that went down on takeoff at Haines Harbor, Alaska. Three survivors were rescued and one body recovered. A little over a year later, on January 17, 1956, *Storis* led the waterborne firefighting efforts when the Juneau Cold Storage facility caught fire. A major business serving the Southeastern Alaska fishing industry, the conflagration threatened several neighboring businesses including the Alaska Steamship Line dock and hangars of Alaska Coastal Airlines. The navigation crew of *Storis* gently eased her bow against the shoreline and held her there as the deck crew directed streams of water across the adjacent street in an effort to suppress the fire and keep the flames from spreading to other buildings.

In addition to her typical Coast Guard duties, the Bering Sea Patrol and response to maritime and shoreside emergencies, *Storis* also carried out scientific missions for multiple federal agencies. During the summers of 1955 and 1956, the ship participated in the U.S. Navy's Arctic Operations. These smaller operations ultimately led to her most famous mission the following year.

Cutters Around the Continent: The Northwest Passage [7]

The Icelandic Sagas record that a Norseman named Erik the Red, banished from Iceland for criminal activities, sailed from Iceland to the southwest coast of Greenland in 985 AD. There he and the crews of the fourteen ships that survived the journey established a new home near the present-day airfield at Narsarssuak. From this small colony, Erik's son Leif made the first exploratory expeditions along the northeast coast of North America. Over the next five centuries, Norse mariners would probe along the coasts of present-day Canada and perhaps as far south as New England, New York and New Jersey in search of timber and new waterways to take them even further west.

It is not known how much knowledge of these early voyages survived into the world of the Renaissance. But in the

[7] Unless specified otherwise, information in this section is condensed from Capelotti, Dr. P.J., Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO), U.S. Coast Guard Reserve. *Across the Top of the World: The U.S. Coast Guard's 1957 Northwest Passage Expedition.* Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, March 2007 and Langjahr, Lucinda Wood, ed. "Notes from Calumet: Excerpts from the Journal and Letters of Captain Harold L. Wood, USCG, During the transit of the Northwest Passage by U. S. Coast Guard Cutters *Storis*, *Bramble* and *Spar*, 1957.

mercantile world of the late 1400s and early 1500s, after the conquest of the Middle East by the Ottoman Turks had closed overland trade routes from Europe to Asia, European nations increasingly sought new sea routes to Asia. For a century after Prince Henry the Navigator founded an institute of geographic research at Sagres, Portugal, both Portuguese and Spanish explorers fanned out across the southern Atlantic, eventually rounding both the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa and Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America. As Spain and Portugal appropriated these southern routes to the Spice Islands of Asia, other European nations looked north for new maritime routes to these same riches.

The first explorer after the Vikings to search in this northerly direction was Italian navigator Giovani Caboto, who sailed from Bristol, England, in May 1497 under the name John Cabot. After thirty-five days at sea searching for a Northwest Passage to China, Cabot found his way blocked by the Canadian coastline. No contemporary sources have survived from his voyage, but it is thought that he spent about a month along the coast of northeastern North America before returning to England. Cabot tried again a year later, but he and most of his fleet vanished from the seas and from history. By the time his son Sebastian Cabot tried unsuccessfully to locate the passage ten years later, it had become clear that a new and enormous continent lay between Europe and Asia.

For the next hundred years, navigators like Martin Frobisher, John Davis, William Baffin, Robert Bylot and Henry Hudson all probed the straits and bays that now are named for them. Often the price they paid for this lasting fame was shipwreck, mutiny and death. Humphrey Gilbert, an avid colonizer and half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, wrote a book on the mythical passage, then drowned in 1583 returning to England after trying to find it himself. When Hudson's Bay proved to be an ice-filled trap rather than a passage to the east, Henry Hudson himself, his young son, and seven crew members were set adrift during a 1611 mutiny. When William Baffin's explorations convinced him that no northern passage to the east existed, interest in the arctic waned for nearly two centuries. Ironically, Baffin's discovery of Lancaster Sound would become the main portal to the Northwest Passage, and one the U.S. Coast Guard would use 350 years later.[8]

The Northwest Passage is actually several passageways through the complex archipelago of the Canadian Arctic. According to Robert K. Headland of the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, England, seven different routes connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans via these ice-clogged seas. In the century since the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen accomplished the complete transit during 1903-1906 with his sloop *Gjøa*, more than a hundred voyages have been made through these passages by vessels from eighteen different nations. Even to reach the entrance to the Northwest Passage requires a difficult and dangerous feat of navigation. From the east, the way is challenged by thousands of enormous icebergs. These bergs, broken from the glaciers of Greenland in the east and Baffin Island in the west and reaching three hundred feet in height, drift southward through Davis Strait. From the west, vessels reach the passage through the Bering Strait, where the mass of the polar ice cap leans its bulk on the north coast of Alaska and blocks any passage for much of the year. After *Gjøa*, it would be nearly forty years before another vessel successfully challenged the passage. The Arctic patrol vessel *St. Roch* of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police took three seasons, from 1940 to 1942, to make a Northwest Passage transit. Under the command of her Norwegian-born skipper Henry Larsen, *St. Roch* sailed from west to east, in the opposite direction from Amundsen and Gjøa. [9]

While originally considered as a potential short-cut for intercontinental trade, in the early 1950s, as the Cold War escalated, defense planners had begun to look at the Northwest Passage as the first line of defense for North America. A 1952 meeting of scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology produced an idea for a system of early warning radar stations across the Canadian Arctic. This string of outposts would stretch from Point Barrow in Alaska 3,000 miles eastward to Baffin Island. The system as a whole was designed to detect incoming aircraft approaching from the north, over the pole from the presumed enemy, the Soviet Union. The stations were not

[8] *Across the Top of the World*, 6.
[9] *Ibid.*

meant to intercept or destroy aircraft. Once in operation, military planners expected to gain four to six hours of advance warning of an air attack coming from over the polar horizon. The extra time would allow for the rapid evacuation of cities and the air defense of vital industrial areas. Two years later, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved the project and ordered it built as soon as possible. Between 1955 and 1957 this string of installations, called the Distant Early Warning Line, or DEW Line, brought thousands of military and civilian personnel onto remote Arctic shorelines. The construction of more than fifty DEW Line sites and the emplacement of new weather stations required a massive sealift by the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS). This sealift delivered more than 2.5 million tons of cargo and 12 million barrels of fuel to the Canadian Arctic, all while maintaining alternate season supply runs to the U.S. Navy's Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica. At its peak, the DEW Line project employed over 7,500 civilian and military personnel. The line consisted of six main radar stations supported by twenty-three auxiliary and twenty-eight intermediate stations, with the smaller stations functioning to close gaps in the radar coverage of the main stations. It remains one of the largest and most complicated construction projects ever undertaken.

In the Spring of 1955, with the MSTS assuming the task of supplying the then-under-construction DEW Line stations, *Storis* was assigned to participate in the construction and supply of the station sites as well as an associated hydrographic survey in the Arctic Ocean. Commander Harold L. Wood, *Storis'* commanding officer, stated "...it was imperative [that] an ice-protected, relatively shallow-draft vessel was assigned to precede the supply ships into the central arctic waters, which had never been charted or sounded." This mission served to ensure that the route to be traveled by the supply ships was practical and safe. Wood had an intimate knowledge of his ship. From July 1940 until April 1943, he was assigned as assistant to the chief inspector, giving him direct participation during the construction of *Storis* in Toledo. After the ship's commissioning, Wood served as engineering officer for *Storis* as she entered service on the Greenland Patrol.

Operating as a hydrographic survey unit with the survey ship USS *Requisite* (AGS-18), *Storis* participated in summer operations in 1955 and 1956. According to Commander Wood's journal, *Requisite* was well suited for survey work but was seriously deficient for operations in ice as her hull plating and framing were very light for a vessel operating in those conditions. However, with *Storis* providing assistance in maneuvering through the ice, the two vessels rounded Point Barrow and were able to travel as far east as the longitude of Duluth, Minnesota. Along the way, important hydrographic information was collected that contributed to the successful completion of the first MSTS supply of the DEW Line. To assist in navigating the area, the after deck of *Storis* had been converted into a wooden flight deck for a Bell HTL-4 helicopter equipped for ice reconnaissance use. The helicopter proved its value in finding potential tracks through the icy waters.

The first charts, initially used by *Storis*, were nothing more than outlines of terrain, made from aerial photos. Wood wrote in his journal:

> The charts issued to the whole task force were effective outlines of the terrain, made from aerial photos. There was practically no horizontal control available to the cartographers, so although the land outlines were precisely correct, there were many instances discovered in which the represented land would be out of position by as much as three miles. In addition, for a linear distance of something like fifteen hundred miles, there were NO soundings on the charts...no water depths indicated. Our chore, the first year, was then to proceed into the area, taking soundings as we went, and then to add those soundings to charts which we reproduced as rapidly as we obtained information, and to return those charts, NOW containing hydrographic information, to the ships which followed us carrying supplies for the DEW Line.

During the second year, buoys set by *Storis* significantly improved navigational safety for the supply ships that followed. Commander Wood wanted to make an effort to transit the Northwest Passage in 1955, but the demands of her primary missions precluded it. Sonarman First Class Jim Loback, who reported on board *Storis* the day before

she left for the Arctic in 1956, remembered that "there was some scuttlebutt that we would be 'going around' [the continent] in '56, but it never materialized. In '57, I knew they were serious when they sent up the other two ships (*Bramble* and *Spar*)." [10]

MSTS Arctic Operations in 1957 were to be the zenith of this enormous effort. Besides DEW Line construction, bases would be resupplied in Greenland, Baffin Island, Labrador, and Newfoundland. More than a hundred ships and 12,000 military and civilian personnel from the U.S. and Royal Canadian navies, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Merchant Marine and the U.S. Coast Guard would be involved. Sealift operations for these missions were as hazardous as they were necessary. Previous years had shown that a continuous airlift prior to the annual breakup of pack ice in the Northwest Passage would bring less than ten percent of the cargo that the MSTS sealift could carry during the brief Arctic summer when sea navigation was possible. Only sealift operations could bring the tonnage of supplies into the Arctic required to build and maintain the forward defense of the DEW Line. But ships were vulnerable to being trapped by the greatest natural hazard in the Arctic: ice. For much of the year, the polar ice pack pressed down upon the northern point of Alaska at Point Barrow. Any ship caught east of this point when the ice moved in permanently at summer's end would be forced to winter there and would likely be severely damaged if not destroyed. Ice conditions often required underwater demolition divers to blast away grounded ice in order to provide clear approaches to beach areas for landing craft.

If U.S. naval ships were trapped north or east of Point Barrow, as had almost happened in the summer of 1956, they would need some way to break out. The only option was to the east, through the classic Northwest Passage of Amundsen and Larsen, towards escape into the North Atlantic. But the expeditions of *Gjøa* and *St. Roch* had taken advantage of (and at various points nearly been sunk by) areas of shallows and shoal waters unsuitable for deep-draft naval and cargo vessels.

Commander Wood's journal explained the solution:

> This year, then, the organization of the Hydro Survey Unit provided for three cutters, all ice-protected and all of a hull design which the Coast Guard has used for some years. The Navy had no ships of this particular type, so we (the Coast Guard Ships) were all loaned to the Navy for the Operation. The other cutters, *Spar*, from Bristol, Rhode Island, and *Bramble*, from Miami, Florida, came round from the East Coast, through the Canal, joining *Storis* at Seattle, 28 June. *Storis*, whose homeport at that time was Juneau, Alaska, had sailed from Juneau, for Seattle, on 20 June. [11]

The U.S. Coast Guard was given a special triple mission for the summer of 1957: find a usable Northwest Passage through which deep-draft ships could escape from the Arctic; conduct a detailed hydrographic survey of the route – extending the hydrographic sounding tracks begun by *Storis* and *Requisite* in 1955 and 1956; and then mark this new passage with AtoN. The mission would determine if the Northwest Passage was a feasible supply route between the Atlantic and Pacific, one that the U.S. military could use to escape the Article Circle when trapped by thick layers of ice and icebergs or in times of war. Military planners had especially high hopes for the Northwest Passage as a resupply route for the DEW Line.

To prepare for the mission, *Bramble* (WAGL-392) and *Spar* (WAGL-403) each received additional high-strength steel plating on their hulls and new stainless-steel alloy propellers prior to departing for Seattle. *Storis* took aboard two helicopters for ice reconnaissance. Petty officers who handled quartermaster duties on board *Storis* in 1956 refined their dead reckoning in the ice fields so that their navigation fixes were less than four miles off even after ten days of moving back and forth through the shifting ice. New whip antennae were mounted on board *Storis* to

[10] *Across the Top of the World*, 9.
[11] "Notes from Calumet," 2.

overcome the lack of radio connectivity experienced in Canadian waters during the 1956 cruise.

The expedition would be difficult. Early season operations in 1957 had already seen the worst ice conditions many Arctic veterans had ever experienced. Despite the use of helicopter reconnaissance and portable automatic weather stations emplaced on the polar ice pack north of Alaska, six different transport ships were damaged by ice before the Coast Guard task unit appeared on scene. Other difficulties would involve the lack of adequate charts; continuous daylight conditions, which limited the use of celestial navigation; magnetic shifts caused by the proximity of the North Magnetic Pole; and shifting winds that transformed open lanes of ocean into ice-clogged barriers in a matter of minutes. [12]

With their arrival in Seattle, *Bramble* and *Spar* were assigned to the Commander of Task Force Five as part of the Hydrographic Survey Unit of the MSTS Western Task Force. Designated as Task Unit 5.1.5, on July 1, 1957, *Storis, Bramble* and *Spar* set sail from Seattle with *Storis* as the unit flagship and Commander Wood in overall command. Together, the small fleet sailed through the Bering Strait into the Arctic Ocean. After rounding Alaska and leaving Point Barrow, their track brought them near the coast of Canada's Northwest Territories, towards Simpson Strait. For a portion of their eastward journey from Point Barrow, they were accompanied by the U.S. Navy heavy icebreaker USS *Burton Island* (AGB-1). As planned, *Burton Island* would turn back near Amundsen Gulf, leaving the Coast Guard cutters to carry on with the mission. After clearing Simpson Strait, the three ships turned northward and traversed the Rae, James, Ross, and Franklin Straits to Bellot Strait.

At one point while transiting the area of the Dolphin and Union Strait and Maud Gulf, all three vessels became trapped in heavy ice for several days. The three captains of the cutters had carefully planned and calculated their route off-shore, to ensure minimum exposure to the potential large heavy ice floes that trapped vessels between open water and the unforgiving rocky shoreline. A sudden illness of one of *Bramble*'s sailors required an emergency evacuation and a course change that brought the ships closer inland to facilitate the helicopter transport. After the airlift was completed, the ships made best speed away to open water. However, two miles off shore, the vessels became trapped by a heavily windrowed ice floe and began drifting at the mercy of the ice and Arctic wind. Initially, there was little concern as the vessels were more than two miles offshore and had more than ninety feet of water under their keels. Nevertheless, the crews tried valiantly to free themselves. They used the ships' booms to sling large cement buoy anchors from side to side in hopes of heeling themselves loose. Attempts were even made to blast the ice with dynamite and other explosives, but the efforts were in vain. As the days wore on, *Storis*, which had been loaded to a draft of 15 feet 6 inches, was being slowly squeezed out of the water, drawing less than nine feet. Commander Wood stated that, "...ice was completely under our ship, and there was very little water, if any under the keel." Another crew member, Radioman Chief Otis Shipp recalled "...all three vessels were popped to the top of the ice, lying on their sides looking like children's discarded toys. To make matters worse, the ice had wedged *Spar* against the stern of *Storis*...and buckled the plates. We were hoping and praying that we would not be pushed up against the barren shoreline." At about 700 yards from shore, the wind shifted, and *Storis* gradually dropped back into the water. The other vessels also were freed and they quickly took advantage of the small open leads in the ice, zigzagging their way to open water and continuing their historic voyage. [13] Had the efforts to free the cutters been unsuccessful, the Coast Guard would have abandoned the three ships in the ice and evacuated their crews. *Spar*'s efforts to free herself and assist the other ships sheared a section of propeller blade and divers had to brave frigid waters to conduct repairs.

Throughout the entire voyage, the ships charted and recorded water depths, set AtoN and built shore-based navigation towers to establish a safe route for other vessels to follow. Moving east, the convoy became the first deep-draft vessels to transit the seventeen-mile Bellot Strait from west to east. Met by the Canadian icebreaker

[12] *Across the Top of the World*, 10.
[13] RADM Brooks, "USCGC *Storis* Decommissioning."

HMCS *Labrador*, the convoy sailed into the ice-free waters of Prince Regent Inlet.[14] From there they proceeded through Lancaster Sound, Baffin Sound, and Davis Strait and into the Labrador Sea. The cutters officially completed their transit of the Northwest Passage on September 6, 1957.

When *Storis* emerged near Greenland at the east end of the Northwest Passage, she became the first American ship to have circumnavigated North America. With great fanfare, *Storis* sailed into Boston on September 24 for a special ceremony to recognize the achievement. Each cutter received a commemorative bronze plaque. From Boston, *Storis* made several other port visits on her way home via the Panama Canal. Upon her return to Seattle for supplies before moving on to her new home port of Kodiak, Alaska, to close out a historic 1957, *Storis* had completely circumnavigated the North American continent in one season, becoming the third American vessel to earn the honor.[15] The three Coast Guard cutters became the first American vessels to make the transit of the Northwest Passage and the first vessels to accomplish a convoy through the passage. Because of their efforts and experiences, the Coast Guard determined the Northwest Passage would not be a practical route for supply ships. However, the successful passage and the convoy's continuous soundings and surveys provided important information about the 4,500 miles of semi-charted waters through which it sailed.

Storis: ALASXAM ILAQAAN MAYAAQISNIIKACHXIIZAX – "Great Hunter of Alaskan Waters" [16]

Though still considered a light icebreaker, following the historic transit of the Northwest Passage *Storis*' primary functions shifted to enforcing laws and treaties of the domestic and foreign fisheries in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. These regions are some of the richest fishing grounds in the world and an enticing attraction for fishing vessels from other countries as well as those from domestic fisheries. It was realized that the unchecked capabilities of the world's fishing fleet could far outpace the ability of the marine life to reproduce, potentially causing the fish populations to be seriously depleted or even wiped out entirely. Among the earliest fisheries laws enacted were the 1889 laws protecting U.S. salmon fisheries. The Coast Guard also enforced the Lacey Act of 1900, which makes it unlawful for any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to import, export, transport, sell or receive fish or wildlife taken in violation of any U.S. law, treaty or foreign law. This legislation reflected some of the early missions of the Bering Sea Patrol. However, only since the end of World War II had conservation of living marine resources become of significant interest to the United States and other coastal nations. During the 1950s, the United States instituted the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Act, which implemented the International Convention for Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, as well as the Tuna Conventions and Northwest Pacific Fisheries Acts. [17] In addition to providing critical search and rescue services in the area near Alaska – some of the most treacherous seas in the world – *Storis* would monitor compliance of the domestic fishing fleet. The Coast Guard documented violations by foreign vessels but had little direct enforcement authority.

During the summer of 1958 the cutter assisted in the resupply of the DEW Line stations in the Arctic. On January 3, 1959, Alaska became the forty-ninth State in the Union. On April 7, 1959, the U.S. Coast Guard received an emergency request from the Russian Embassy in Washington, DC, to aid an injured Soviet sailor. The sailor had fallen into a hatch on a fishing vessel, hit his head, and suffered serious head injuries. Following International

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[14] HMCS *Labrador* was the first deep-draft naval vessel to transit the Northwest Passage and circumnavigate North America. She completed the voyage from east to west in the summer of 1954 as a demonstration of Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic regions of northern Canada. *Labrador* was sold for scrap in 1987.
[15] As *Spar* was home ported in Bristol, Rhode Island, when the three ships emerged on the east end of the Northwest Passage, she was closest to her home port and arrived home before the other vessels, which had longer voyages to their home ports in Florida and Alaska. *Spar* then became the first American vessel to circumnavigate North America in a single season and *Bramble* the second.
[16] The ship's official motto, in Inuit, as translated. "Storis Museum Bylaws," 1.
[17] *Protecting America's Fisheries*, 5.

Maritime and Admiralty Law and the spirit of the sea to help other mariners in distress, *Storis* set sail overnight in rough weather from Akuna Bay and met the Soviet trawler, *Piscavaya Industria*, 100 miles north of Pribilof Island in the Bering Sea. The Coast Guard removed the seaman and took him on board *Storis* where a navy doctor began treatment. Afterward, the Coast Guard flew the sailor to a hospital in Anchorage, Alaska, for further care. Later in 1959 *Storis* conducted her final DEW Line resupply mission as the Canadian government assumed the responsibility of resupplying the radar stations.

In the 1960s, *Storis*' mission in Alaskan Fisheries Patrol brought renewed emphasis on the Coast Guard's Living Marine Resources. Large fleets of Japanese and Soviet vessels had been moving in to harvest the abundant stocks of crab and bottom fish in Alaskan waters. Boarding teams from *Storis* frequently visited these vessels to verify their documents, logs, and catches. These vessel boardings and fishery surveillance were important to understanding the fishing fleet. Quite often, *Storis* patrols would track and plot the position of the fishing vessels only to find them just outside U.S. waters. However, as time passed, the foreign fishing fleet became bolder and flagrantly disregarded the territorial boundaries in search of big hauls within U.S. waters. The Bartlett Act, passed in 1964, prohibited foreign fishing in U.S. territorial waters and authorized the seizure of foreign vessels in violation. Amendments to the act broadened the protected area to include the twelve-mile contiguous zone, prohibited processing operations and provided a maximum penalty of $100,000.[18]

During January-February 1965 the cutter unsuccessfully searched for three Russian trawlers reported to be in the vicinity of the Unimak Pass. In March 1965, *Storis* intercepted the Soviet fishing vessel *Pavel Chebotnyagin* as she was illegally crabbing in restricted waters off Alaska and escorted the offender to international waters. On March 2, 1967, Soviet trawler *Srtm 8-413* was boarded and seized for fishing within one mile of shore. A $5,000 fine was levied against the ship's master in Federal court. This was the first Fisheries Patrol prosecution for a violation off Alaska. Just three weeks later, on March 22, *Storis* seized another Soviet trawler *Srtm 8-457* for violating the twelve-mile contiguous zone off Alaska. In subsequent years interceptions of Soviet and Japanese vessels illegally fishing Alaskan waters continued to constitute the majority of the ship's noteworthy activities. Two Japanese vessels, *Zento Maru No. 6* and *FS 2-2150* were seized on June 7, 1969, in Norton Sound for fishing within the twelve-mile zone.

Although the Bering Sea Patrol no longer officially existed after September 1964 when the State of Alaska assumed much of the responsibilities formerly provided by the service, *Storis* and her crew kept up the spirit of the mission, focused on visiting many remote islands and tribal communities to provide medical assistance and supplies. The Great Alaskan Earthquake on the evening of March 27, 1964 – Good Friday – would see *Storis* rise to the challenge of providing humanitarian and military support that would help a wide area of Alaska stricken by the quake and resulting tsunamis.[19] *Storis* was on patrol in the Bering Sea when word came over the military radio that a major earthquake had occurred at 5:36 p.m. local time, leaving devastation across wide areas of Alaska. Additional damage was caused by massive tsunamis that followed the original seismic event. *Storis* was directed to return to her home port of Kodiak, which had been severely damaged. Around mid-day on Easter Sunday, *Storis* entered Womens Bay and found her home port difficult to recognize with the resultant damage. *Storis* offloaded her helicopter and docked to refuel. Crewmen were briefly allowed to meet with family members that had been able to make it to the dock, but with communication and road networks largely cut off, many did not know how their families living outside the Coast Guard base had fared through the quake. After approximately ninety minutes, *Storis* cast off to head for Homer, Alaska. Other cutters were dispatched around Alaskan waters for relief. These included the high-endurance cutter USCGC *Minnetonka* (WHEC-67) and buoy tender USCGC *Sorrel*

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[18] *Ibid.*

[19] The earthquake and ensuing tsunami killed 128 people, 113 by tsunami action in Alaska and the coast of the Pacific Northwest. The quake registered 9.2 on the Richter scale, the second most powerful earthquake ever recorded, and caused approximately $311 million in damage.

(WAGL-296) to Prince William Sound, buoy tender USCGC *Bittersweet* (WAGL-389) to Seward and buoy tender USCGC *Sedge* (WAGL-402) to Valdez. At Homer Spit, *Storis* met a group of small vessels, tugboats and barges waiting for her to break a track through Cook Inlet to reach the devastated city of Anchorage. *Storis* escorted unloaded relief vessels from Anchorage on the return trip to open water. She stayed on station for three weeks escorting convoys to and from Anchorage before returning to Kodiak April 20.[20] In the years following the earthquake, *Storis* assisted the University of Alaska in the construction of experimental seismological stations in the Aleutian Islands. In August 1969, *Storis* would participate in another scientific study between the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey and the U.S. Geological Survey, east of Point Barrow in the Beaufort Sea.

While *Storis* and her legend continued to grow with her accomplishments and service in Alaskan waters, she forever endeared herself to the children of St. Paul, Pribilof Islands, in March 1965. En route to supply a LORAN station, the ship's CO, Commander Ricardo A. Ratti, received a radio transmission requesting a special visit from the ship's mascot, Red Dog. As dogs were forbidden on the island because of the migration of seals to the area, most of the children living there had never seen a dog before. Escorted to the school by two *Storis* crewmen, Red Dog was received with overwhelming excitement and enthusiasm from the children. Following the visit, Commander Ratti received numerous expressions of gratitude from the children.

The aft flight deck for helicopter support was removed from the ship in 1965. During a yard period in January 1966, the ship's Wheel House was reconfigured and widened to span almost the entire width of the 02 Level superstructure. *Storis* was reclassified on May 1, 1966 as an icebreaker with designation as a WAGB. With the adoption of new paint and color schemes in mid-1967, *Storis*' hull soon sported the now-familiar red, white and blue Coast Guard "racing stripes," CG emblems and the billboard lettering "COAST GUARD" along her sides.

From 1965 to 1970, *Storis* kept busy conducting search and rescue missions in Alaskan waters. On May 18, 1965, *Storis* rescued a Russian sailor and returned him to the fishing vessel *Dozorny* in Seward. *Storis*' crew took aboard the survivors from the sunken fishing vessel *Emerald C* and returned them to port on November 13, 1966. In a mission that typified conditions in the North Pacific and Bering Sea, between December 4 and December 11, 1967, *Storis* was tasked with assisting the tug *Alaskan Roughneck* and searching for the tug's missing barge consort, which had parted its towline in the high wind and seas. As *Storis* fought her way through heavy seas to close on the tugboat's reported position, the tug announced it had made it to a safe anchorage. By December 11, *Storis* had located and approached the unmanned barge. While preparing to run a towing hawser to the wayward vessel, the cutter's crew attempted to move *Storis*' stern crane into its storage position over the after end of the superstructure. The crane's cables bound in their sheaves and were cut when the ship rolled heavily to starboard, sending the crane crashing to the deck and over the starboard side. The broken crane smashed against the hull, its broken cables threatening to foul the ship's propeller. Despite the ship's heavy rolling, the crew managed to splice the cables to retrieve the crane from over the side and secure it to the fantail. After several attempts to secure a line aboard the barge, *Storis* was forced to abandon the effort after the giant swells threatened to bring the uncontrolled barge smashing into the cutter's hull. A Herculean effort brought the ship's surfboat and crew back aboard after a harrowing ride in the heavy seas. The following day, with wind speeds rising above fifty-five knots (63.25 miles per hour), *Storis* received a distress call from the Isthmian Lines' freighter *Steel Flyer*, which had lost its rudder in the storm. Sailing at full speed and making only three and a half knots in sixty-five foot seas, howling wind and blowing snow, *Storis* had a rough trip. "On the bridge, forward visibility is limited to maybe a quarter mile but it doesn't matter. All we can see through the spray and snow is a forest of enormous waves with equally huge breaking crests, all coming dead at the ship, seemingly bent on killing our ship and us along with it. The forward third of the ship routinely disappears underwater. One minute in this stuff is an eternity," wrote

[20] Recollection of Edward J. Barbarow, Chief Yeoman (YNC), U.S. Coast Guard (retired). *Storis* crew 1963-64. *Online Cutter File, USCGC Storis.*

Boatswain's Mate Malcolm Robert Dick in a letter home to his parents. [21] In spite of the punishment, *Storis* reached *Steel Flyer* on the evening of Wednesday, December 13. After *Storis* had fought her way through the storm to reach the freighter, the master of *Steel Flyer* decided that his vessel was in no imminent danger, despite the difficulty in maneuvering with a damaged rudder. *Storis* stood by until U.S. Navy salvage tug USS *Chowanoc* arrived to take the disabled freighter in tow. *Storis*' shattered aft crane would be removed from the ship at Lake Union Shipyard in Seattle during a repair availability in early 1968.

In one of her more dramatic law enforcement missions, on January 17, 1972, *Storis* found two Soviet fishing vessels within the territorial waters of the United States. Radar picked up the two vessels inside the protective zone and upon further investigation, *Storis* found the 278-foot fishing vessel, *Koljvan* offloading its catch to the 362-foot fish processor *Lamut* in violation of U.S. laws. *Storis* sent armed boarding parties aboard each of the Soviet ships and ordered them to the naval base in Adak, Alaska. While the ships were in route to Adak, *Lamut* attempted to flee with the Coast Guard boarding party still on board. After an intense one-hour chase, *Storis*' CO, Commander William P. Allen, received permission from the commandant to fire a shot across the bow of *Lamut*. *Storis* sent a message to *Lamut* that she was prepared to open fire and the Soviet vessel stopped. *Storis* arrested both Russian masters and took them into custody aboard the cutter. All three ships arrived in Adak and charges were assessed against the two Russian ships. In the end, the Soviets paid $80,000 in fines and $170,000 in an out-of-court arrangement with the United States, marking an end to the event. Afterwards, the Coast Guard awarded *Storis* with a Unit Commendation in Seattle. Commander Allen received a Meritorious Service Medal and the boarding party officers received Commendation Medals. After her dogged pursuit of the Soviet vessels, *Storis* earned the nickname "Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan Coast." [22]

Shortly after the *Lamut* chase in 1972, *Storis* was temporarily decommissioned for a yard period in Seattle and a major renovation after almost thirty years of commissioned service. During the MAJREN process, machinery was overhauled, the cargo hold was eliminated and the ship reclassified from an icebreaker to a medium endurance cutter (WMEC). With the change, the ship's complement was reduced. New utility boats and associated launching equipment were installed to the benefit of the boarding crews.

The 1970s brought about the most significant fisheries protection legislation that *Storis* would enforce, giving the Coast Guard more clout in dealing with fishing violations. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, adopted by Congress in 1976, established the 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone. [23] *Storis* and the Coast Guard also offered protection for other marine species such as whales, porpoises, dolphins, sea lions, otters, seals and polar bears under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972). Further protection came through enforcement of the Endangered Species Act (1973). [24] Four major fisheries apprehensions were carried out in the 1970s. Japanese fishing vessels were the primary culprits and *Storis* seized four separate ships for intrusions into American waters: *Kaki Maru* on August 18, 1970, *Kohoyo Maru 31* and *Ryoyo Maru* in April 1972, and *Kaijo Maru* in June 1979.

Storis' icebreaking capabilities continued to prove valuable for commerce and beleaguered vessels in danger. In 1975, *Storis*, along with the heavy icebreaker USCGC *Burton Island* (WAGB-283)[25] and buoy tender USCGC *Citrus* (WLB-300), provided icebreaking assistance to tugs and barges carrying vital supplies and construction materials to Prudhoe Bay for the construction of the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline. In January 1980, the *Storis* responded to an emergency involving two South Korean ships beset in ice near St. Mathew Island, Alaska. The

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[21] Dick, Malcolm Robert. "*Storis* Sea Story." Letter to parents dated December 8, 1967, 7.
[22] RADM Brooks. "USCGC *Storis* Decommissioning."
[23] *Protecting America's Fisheries*, 5.
[24] *Ibid*, 11.
[25] *Burton Island* had transferred from the U.S. Navy to the U.S. Coast Guard in 1966.

Gae Cheog, a cargo ship, was transferring supplies to the *Gae Yang*, a fishing trawler, when an ice flow enveloped both vessels. The *Gae Cheog* and *Gae Yang* were drifting towards the rocky coastline and the ships summoned the Coast Guard for help. *Storis* arrived on scene and freed both vessels from the ice.

During the 1980s, *Storis* continued to perform fisheries enforcement in the Bering Sea and issue citations. On March 27, 1983, *Storis* seized the Japanese fishing vessel, *Shinei Maru*, for fisheries violations, as well as the Japanese vessels *Hiyo Maru* and *Tomi Maru* on March 30. In September 1987, *Storis*' crew boarded the fishing vessel, *Mary Ellen*, and found three tons of illegally caught sablefish (black cod) on board the ship. In another incident the following month *Storis*' crew boarded another fishing vessel, *Rebecca Irene* and found a similar illegal catch of sablefish. The Coast Guard detained both ships, offloaded their catch, and fined both vessels.

Storis underwent another major overhaul in 1986. Her original Cooper-Bessemer main propulsion engines were replaced with GM Electro-Motive V-8 diesels. *Storis* underwent structural reconfiguration, as well, with the expansion of her superstructure to provide additional interior space for berthing and lounge facilities for female crew members. This addition increased the crew complement to seventeen officers and seventy-four enlisted personnel. The Wheel House also received a slight forward extension. The expansion of the Main Deck superstructure reduced the size of the ship's forward buoy deck and involved removal of the ship's original forward tubular boom. The boom was replaced with a modern Alaska Marine retractable crane to allow *Storis* to continue handling buoys and other heavy cargo forward. A second Alaska Marine crane was mounted on the after deck while the starboard dual-point boat davits were updated with a single-point hydraulic davit.

Storis' service and diversity in missions was once again demonstrated during the March 1989 response to the grounding and subsequent massive crude oil spill from the supertanker *Exxon Valdez* in Prince William Sound. As the Command and Control vessel for the cleanup operation, *Storis* and her crew worked with other Coast Guard cutters and cleanup vessels to protect the Alaskan wilderness from further devastation by spilled oil. *Storis* received the Operations Service medal for this mission.

Following the tradition of community and civic service established by other Coast Guard cutters and earlier *Storis* crewmen, a 1989 work party from *Storis* went ashore to rehabilitate the Unalaska City Cemetery in Unalaska, Alaska. Dating to the 1800s, the cemetery is the final resting place for several members of the U.S. Revenue Service, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy and British Royal Navy. Over the course of four visits, crewmembers restored the cemetery and burial plots of sailors from the Revenue Cutters *Haida*, *Terry*, *Rush* and *Bear*.

In a daring rescue attempt that has been captured on video and rebroadcast many times in the years that have followed, *Storis* responded to a distress call on March 15, 1990 from the grounded FV *Alaskan Monarch* on St. Paul Island. The fishing vessel had been attempting to enter St. Paul harbor when it was trapped in ice which threatened to drive the vessel ashore. *Storis* arrived on scene and her crew brought the cutter in as close as possible to the rocky coast, setting her starboard anchor to help hold her off the rocks and swing her bow into the seas. Under the strain, the chain soon parted. Despite the potential danger the cutter herself was exposed to, in pitching seas and heavy wind and ice, *Storis* crewmembers attempted multiple times to fire a towing line to the disabled fishing vessel. The fishermen were unable to secure the line. The situation deteriorated with the growing seas and ice slamming into the grounded vessel. The freezing water and ice swept across the deck of the hapless fishing vessel, threatening to capsize the ship. When grounding was imminent, a land-based Coast Guard Sea King helicopter from Air Station Kodiak safely removed four crewmen. The captain and chief engineer of the fishing vessel were swept overboard by the seas but were retrieved from the water by a rescue swimmer deployed from the helicopter. *Alaskan Monarch* was subsequently destroyed in place by the seas.

In a ceremony in Seattle on October 1, 1991, the Coast Guard decommissioned the lighthouse tender *Fir* (WLM-212). At the time, *Fir* had been in service for the U.S. Coast Guard for exactly fifty-one years and was the oldest commissioned cutter in the fleet. With *Fir*'s retirement, *Storis* became the oldest commissioned cutter in the Coast

Guard, earning her the title "Queen of the Fleet." When she emerged from a shipyard maintenance period, as the Queen, *Storis*' hull number "38" was changed from black paint to gold.

In April 1992, the aft 3"/50-caliber naval gun, the last of its kind in service on an American military vessel, was removed from the ship. Aside from small arms such as M-16 rifles, the ship's armament consisted of four Browning M2 .50-caliber heavy machine guns that could be mounted at points forward on the Forecastle Deck and near the stern on the After Deck rails.

Following the liberalization of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, the USSR dissolved in 1991, leading to the end of much of the Cold War hostility that had prevailed between the United States and Soviets since the end of World War II. In a show of thawing tensions and growing cooperative friendship between the U.S. and Russia, *Storis* made an official visit to the Russian port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on October 17, 1992. The Russian cutter PSKR *Volga* had visited San Francisco, California, to take part in the U.S. Coast Guard's two-hundredth anniversary in May 1990. *Volga*, part of the Russian Maritime Border Guard, an organization similar to the U.S. Coast Guard, was a patrol vessel in the former Soviet territories of the Bering Sea. While in Petropavlovsk, *Volga* moored beside *Storis* and entertained the American crew with an elaborate ceremony. The crews exchanged gifts and established friendships. The two cutters also participated in a joint exercise during the visit. Officials in both countries declared that the visit helped to forge a greater bond between both nations and the ships and crews that patrol the Maritime Boundary Line in the Bering Sea.

On November 16, 1992, Storis became the cutter with the longest service in the Bering Sea, surpassing the record of the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Bear* which had held that distinction since 1929. Even at fifty years old, *Storis* continued to serve as a major front-line Coast Guard cutter in one of the harshest ocean environments in the world. Despite her 1940s design, modern auxiliary equipment and electronics were added to extend her effectiveness. During the summer of 1994, an incinerator was installed in the aft gun tub and enclosed with an extension to the Wheel House superstructure. This allowed trash to be safely burned instead of being thrown overboard. During a dockside maintenance period in the summer of 1995, work crews built a new gun platform at the forward gun mount near the forecastle. Mounted in this position, a Mk 38 25-mm Bushmaster chain gun gave *Storis* additional firepower.

Even with advancements in communications and transportation technology available in the latter part of the Twentieth Century, there were still valuable services that *Storis* and her crews provided to residents of outlying areas far removed from population centers. Following the spirit once again of the Bering Sea Patrol, in late 1995, *Storis* visited the Pribilof Islands bringing with her a dentist, doctor, and two chaplains. This mission provided the first Christmas Eve service on St. George by a Russian Orthodox Priest in ten years. In May 1997, *Storis* visited the village of Atka, on Atka Island in the Aleutian Island chain. For two days the crew helped the village repair the school teacher's house and other facilities in the village.

As the new century approached, the pains of age began creeping up on *Storis*. In 1999, the ship suffered internal structural damage while breaking ice. Subsequent inspection and repairs led to restrictions on any future icebreaking operations to be performed by the veteran cutter. On November 25, 2000, *Storis* was pursuing a Chinese fishing vessel operating in U.S. waters. A boarding crew was lowered from the port side dual-point davit in the ship's Motor Surf Boat (MSB) to pursue and board the offending vessel. A mechanical malfunction in the davit's clutch system hampered the launch. The crew managed to lower the MSB to the water but before the davit falls could be disconnected, *Storis* rocked on a wave, lifting the small boat from the water and slamming its three-ton weight back down on the falls. Under the shock load, the aft davit arm snapped, dropping and capsizing the small boat and spilling the nine occupants into the frigid water. Two rescue swimmers in survival suits deployed from the ship and rescued the benumbed boarding crew. Efforts to recover the MSB were unsuccessful and it was sunk by small-arms and automatic weapons fire from *Storis*. Petty Officer David An received the Coast Guard medal for his lifesaving efforts. Shortly after the accident, the damaged port dual-point davit was replaced with the

current single-point davit. In a later failure, *Storis* would suffer a main motor fire in 2005, requiring a tow back to port for repairs.

Even as her career entered its twilight, *Storis* continued her vigilant protection of Alaskan fishery resources. On July 25, 2001, *Storis*' crew seized the Russian FFV *Petropavlovsk* for fishing more than five miles inside the United States Exclusive Economic Zone in the Bering Sea. The offending vessel was escorted to Dutch Harbor and turned over to a National Marine Fisheries Service Law Enforcement Unit. The case was settled with payment of a $320,000 fine.

For her final patrol, *Storis* embarked on a fifty-four day training and humanitarian mission, sailing out to assist the residents of isolated villages in the Aleutian Islands. One officer on board referred to some of the tasks performed during the cruise as "Legacy Missions," in honor of *Storis*' early years in Alaska. [26] Capt. Carl Cwiklinski, a U.S. Coast Guard Russian Orthodox Chaplain and Lt. Col. Les Williams, a dental officer from Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, were on board the ship to provide their specialized services to the native residents they visited along the course of the mission in the vicinity of Atka. Crew members repaired local AtoN and helped villagers repair Atka's tsunami warning system and the village's fire truck. The ship's health services technician visited Pelican to assist the community health aide with vaccination procedures and training on the operation of a telemedicine cart, a machine which allows health care providers to take photos of patients and send them to doctors for diagnosis and treatment guidance. [27] *Storis* completed her final patrol on December 3, 2006, when she docked in Kodiak.

After sixty-four years and five months of service and approaching the fiftieth anniversary of the historic Northwest Passage transit, the Coast Guard decommissioned *Storis* in an emotional ceremony held at Kodiak on February 8, 2007. Over the course of her career, an estimated 3,000 Coast Guard sailors served aboard her. *Storis* is credited with saving twenty-five vessels and 250 lives after sailing over 1.5 million miles. In her law enforcement capacity, 7,500 vessels were boarded and 100,000 people received the benefit of her humanitarian service.

Over her career, *Storis* earned one Coast Guard Presidential Unit Citation with Hurricane Device, one secretary of Transportation Outstanding Unit Award, eight Coast Guard Unit Commendations, seven Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendations, eleven Coast Guard Excellence "E" Ribbons, one Coast Guard Bicentennial Unit, one American Campaign Medal, one European/African/Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with Fleet Marine Force combat operation insignia, one World War II Victory Medal, four National Defense Service Medals, eight Arctic Service Medals, one Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, one Humanitarian Service Medal and one Special Operations Service Ribbon. [28]

Under special commission, *Storis* set sail from Kodiak for the last time on March 12, 2007 bound for Coast Guard Island, Alameda, California. She arrived on March 18. At Alameda, the ship's classified materials and equipment were removed and exterior Coast Guard markings painted over. She was placed in "out of commission, reserve" status on March 30. After a brief yard period at the Hunter's Point Shipyard for bottom maintenance and exterior sealing of her sea chests, in May the ship was moved deadship into the anchorage of the U.S. Maritime Administration's National Defense Reserve Fleet at Suisun Bay, where she remains as a custody ship at the time of nomination.

A nonprofit Storis Museum corporation, based in Juneau, was formed in February 2007 as the ship was

[26] Stuebner, Damon. E-mail correspondence, August 9, 2012.
[27] "Humanitarian Missions in Remote Alaskan Regions," U.S. Coast Guard D17 Media Release, November 20, 2006.
[28] U.S. Coast Guard. *Medals and Awards Manual*, COMDTINST M1650.25D. May 2008. U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC, and Storis Museum Web site.

decommissioned. The group has been working to secure a U.S. Congressional donation of *Storis* to allow her to return to Juneau for use as Alaska's first interpretive museum ship as the Storis Museum, a Maritime Museum and Education Center. Future plans may see the vessel utilized as a maritime training vessel for young men and women. Language approving *Storis* donation is included in U.S. Coast Guard appropriations bills being considered by Congressional committees at the time of nomination.

The U.S. Navy *Diver*-class USCGC *Acushnet* (WMEC-167) assumed *Storis*' duties and title "Queen of the Fleet," until she, too, was decommissioned March 11, 2011. At the time of nomination, the high-endurance cutter USCGC *Munro* (WHEC-724), based in Kodiak, patrols the Alaskan waters where *Storis* reigned for so many years.

The ships of the Greenland Patrol and Bering Sea Patrol

Of the major Coast Guard vessels that participated in the Greenland Patrol, only *Storis* remains following the July 2, 2012 scuttling of the former USCGC *Mohawk* (WPG-78) as a "veterans' memorial" reef near Sanibel Island, Florida. [29] One auxiliary, the Arctic schooner *Bowdoin* (IX-50), is a National Historic Landmark homeported in Castine, Maine. Three other, smaller, auxiliary vessels remain in the U.S. at the time of nomination but have been altered and do not have the same high level of acquired historic significance as *Storis*. These include the former U.S. Coast Guard tugboats *Manitou* (WYT-60), a commercial tugboat based in Port Huron, Michigan; *Arundel* (WYT-90), now the commercial tug *Erika Kobasic*, based in Escanaba, Michigan; and the retired 180-foot buoy tender *Sorrel* (WLB-296), the commercial salvage ship *Fearless*, operating from Southern California. Two other modified 180s are outside the country: the former USCGC *Citrus* (WLB-300) is the active patrol unit *Almirante Juan Alejandro Acosta* for the navy of the Dominican Republic and *Laurel* (WLB- 291) operates as a private party excursion boat in Trinidad. The other vessels that participated in the Greenland Patrols have been lost, scrapped, or otherwise have disappeared from the maritime registration records around the world.

It is a similar situation for the vessels that participated in the official Bering Sea Patrols prior to the end of those services in September 1964. While the U.S. Coast Guard continued some semblance of the Bering Sea Patrol as the Alaska Sea Patrol, the new name is more of a reflection of the geographic area of duties. The State of Alaska assumed most of the responsibility of providing essential medical and government services provided by the predecessor service. Of the major U.S. Coast Guard units that operated in the Bering Sea area during the time of the Bering Sea Patrol, only *Storis* and the Treasury-class high-endurance cutter USCGC *Taney* (WPG/WHEC-37) remain. While *Taney* did perform patrols in the Bering Sea, at the time of nomination, no official documentation is evident that *Taney* actually performed an official Bering Sea Patrol, transporting medical and judicial personnel to outlying settlements. *Taney* is a National Historic Landmark in Baltimore, Maryland.

The fate of Task Force Unit 5.1.5

Of the three vessels that participated in the Northwest Passage Mission, *Spar* was the first to be decommissioned, on February 28, 1997 at her moorings in Portland, Maine. In the following years, her ownership passed through several private hands but ultimately she was gutted and stripped for parts before being scuttled in one hundred feet of water in the Atlantic, approximately forty miles south of Morehead City, North Carolina, in June 2004. *Bramble* was decommissioned May 22, 2003 and turned over to the Port Huron Museum in Port Huron, Michigan, for use as an interpretive museum vessel. Citing financial hardship, the Port Huron Museum listed *Bramble* for sale as a potential yacht through a commercial ship broker in April 2010. The Port Huron Museum closed *Bramble* to the public on August 14, 2011. *Bramble* was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 1, 2012 through an effort independent of the Museum but at the time of this nomination, she remains closed, for sale and endangered. *Storis* remains in mothballs with the Suisun Bay National Defense Reserve Fleet.

[29] *Mohawk* was the last remaining example of her class and sister ship to the lost USCGC *Escanaba*.

Evaluation of the USCGC *Storis* for listing on the National Register of Historic Places

USCGC *Storis* is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C, supported by the pre-decommissioning study performed for the U.S. Coast Guard in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The oldest active cutter in the U.S. Coast Guard fleet at the time of her decommissioning, under National Register Criterion "A," *Storis* is nationally significant in defense and maritime history for her role as the last surviving major vessel to have participated in the Greenland Patrols during World War II, her Cold War participation in the construction of the DEW Line radar installations and for her long career as a law enforcement and SAR platform in the rugged ocean patrol areas of the Bering Sea and Northern Pacific Ocean near the State of Alaska. *Storis* is nationally significant for her social/humanitarian activities in providing medical, dental and judicial services to remote villages, disaster relief in time of natural catastrophe, and for performing icebreaking and maintenance of the country's Aids to Navigation system.

Under the obvious maritime theme, *Storis*' association with the 1957 Hydrographic Survey Unit of the U.S. Military Sea Transportation Service Western Task Force is the most significant event associated with the ship. She is significant as one of the first American vessels to successfully circumnavigate North America through the Northwest Passage. The Hydrographic Survey Unit's mission to determine the feasibility of the Northwest Passage as a route for cargo vessels was as potentially dangerous as it was economically important. It was ultimately determined that the passage was not practical for commercial shipping. However, hydrographic surveys conducted by *Storis* and the two smaller Coast Guard cutters accompanying her on the mission did produce the first reliable chart of the depths of the Northwest Passage. Because of the nature of the mission, *Storis* is eligible under the categories commerce, exploration and science.

The oldest cutter serving in the U.S. Coast Guard fleet at the time of her decommissioning in February 2007, *Storis* is significant in engineering at a national level under National Register Criterion "C." Within the context of the development of standardized multi-mission tenders designed to service Aids to Navigation (AtoN) with demonstrated versatility to perform other key duties, *Storis* – as the lone representative of her class – represents a physically larger and further evolution of tender design. Her design and construction influenced and hastened by the needs of war and assisted by new techniques such as welding, her robust construction and versatility enabled the venerable cutter to serve over sixty-four years in U.S. Coast Guard service, carrying out missions associated with law enforcement, search and rescue, military support, Arctic exploration, humanitarian medical and disaster relief services, icebreaking and the maintenance of the country's Aids to Navigation system. Despite working in vast, freezing saltwater ocean environments often swept with hurricane-force winds and mountainous waves, *Storis'* ultimate obsolescence took decades to arrive. In an era where typical naval vessels are considered "old" after a service life of ten to fifteen years, a useful and productive military career of over six decades is exceptional. Under Criterion "C," the vessel must retain "integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association." Her proposed return to Juneau and the Alaskan waters in which she patrolled for almost fifty years will restore the ship's integrity of location, context and sense of place. Although *Storis* underwent major overhauls in 1972 and 1986, the vessel's integrity has been maintained. Outwardly, the ship has undergone a variety of minor modifications since her construction; however, the ship evokes a sense of historic design. She represents the distinctive characteristics of the remarkably active and successful period of ship design and construction during the early 1940s.

United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* | Solano, California
Name of Property | County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
X recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # AK-50
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
X Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: LOC, U.S. Coast Guard HQ & Historian's Office
Washington, DC

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	580310	4215590
2			
3			
4			

Longitude and Latitude Coordinates:

38º 05' 04.38" N
122º 05' 03.17" W

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

All that area encompassed by the extreme dimensions of the moveable vessel's hull, superstructure and rigging. The UTM coordinates represent the vessel's midpoint while at her moorings within the MARAD National Defense Reserve Fleet at Suisun Bay, Solano County, Benicia, California.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary incorporates all area of the vessel as she is lying at her moorings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jim Loback (assistance from Jon A. Ottman, Warren, MI, and Daniel Koski-Karell, Ph.D., USCG, CG-47)

organization USCGC *Storis* Museum date 7/17/2012

street & number 10436 Teal Circle telephone (714) 968-8964

city or town Fountain Valley state CA zip code 92708

e-mail storismuseum@verizon.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See continuation sheet

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Rutherford, Scott, Boatswain's Mate (BM2), U.S. Coast Guard (retired).

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United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* | Solano, California
Name of Property | County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name U.S. Coast Guard Commandant (CG-84)

street & number 2100 2nd Street SW, STOP 7245 telephone (202) 372-3652

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20593-7245

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USCGC *Storis*
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Section number Photos Page 1

The photographs were commercially produced on Fuji Crystal Archive glossy photographic paper by a Fuji Frontier Model LP7100 Digital Printer Processor using Fujifilm professional photo chemical processing. The rear surface of each photo is hand-labeled with a Kuretake/Zig Photo Signature photo-safe archival pen. Digital image files were recorded on a Verbatim brand UltraLife Gold Archival Grade CD-R disc which is hand-labeled with a Sharpie brand CD/DVD compatible ink pen. Original negatives and digital files are in the possession of listed photographers, if known.

DESCRIPTION

Name of Property: United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*
City: (Vicinity) Benicia
County: Solano State: California

Photo 1 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0001
Photographer: Jim Loback.
Date Photographed: May 23, 2011.
Description of Photograph: The port bow of USCGC *Storis* as she rests among the U.S. Maritime Administration National Defense Reserve fleet at Suisun Bay, near Benicia, Solano County, California. View is generally to the south.

Photo 2 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0002
Photographer: Jim Loback.
Date Photographed: May 23, 2011.
Description of Photograph: Starboard bow view of USCGC *Storis*. View is to the southwest.

Photo 3 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0003
Photographer: Jim Loback.
Date Photographed: May 23, 2011.
Description of Photograph: Stern view of USCGC *Storis* at Suisun Bay. The former USS *Pigeon* (ASR-21) is to port, USCGC *Planetree* (WLB-307) is to starboard. View is to the northeast.

Photo 4 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0004
Photographer: Scott Rutherford.
Date Photographed: February 24, 2012.
Description of Photograph: View of Buoy and Forecastle decks and empty forward gun platform. The boom for *Storis*' forward extending crane is at right. View generally to northeast.

Photo 5 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0005
Photographer: Scott Rutherford.
Date Photographed: February 24, 2012.
Description of Photograph: Forward superstructure detail showing Wheel House and forward crane. View generally to southwest.

Photo 6 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0006
Photographer: Scott Rutherford.
Date Photographed: February 24, 2012.
Description of Photograph: Aft superstructure detail. View generally to northeast.

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Section number Photos Page 2

Photo 7 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0007
Photographer: Scott Rutherford.
Date Photographed: February 24, 2012.
Description of Photograph: Bridge view from the port side, showing helm and Wheel House detail toward starboard bridge wing door. Note the corded fancywork on compass periscope forward and the wooden sextant case on bulkhead aft of door. View is generally east.

Photo 8 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0008
Photographer: Jim Loback.
Date Photographed: June 29, 2009.
Description of Photograph: View of commanding officer's office space inside CO's quarters. The CO's berthing space is to port. View is forward to northeast.

Photo 9 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0009
Photographer: Jim Loback.
Date Photographed: June 29, 2009.
Description of Photograph: Crew's mess, looking forward, generally north.

Photo 10 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0010
Photographer: Jim Loback
Date Photographed: June 29, 2009.
Description of Photograph: The starboard crew berthing space in the forward berthing compartment. View is forward, generally to the northeast.

Photo 11 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0011
Photographer: Jim Loback.
Date Photographed: June 29, 2009.
Description of Photograph: The main propulsion engine control and monitoring station in the soundproofed booth within the Upper Generator Room. View generally north.

Photo 12 of 12 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_0012
Photographer: Jim Loback.
Date Photographed: June 29, 2009.
Description of Photograph: *Storis'* center and port side GM EMD 645 V-8 engines. The soundproof control room windows are visible to the left of the photo and the No. 2 SSDG is visible in the background on the far port side of the engineering space. View is to port, generally to the northwest.

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USCGC *Storis*
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Section number Additional Documentation Page 1

Additional Documentation - Figures

Name of Property: United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*
City: (Vicinity) Benicia
County: Solano State: California

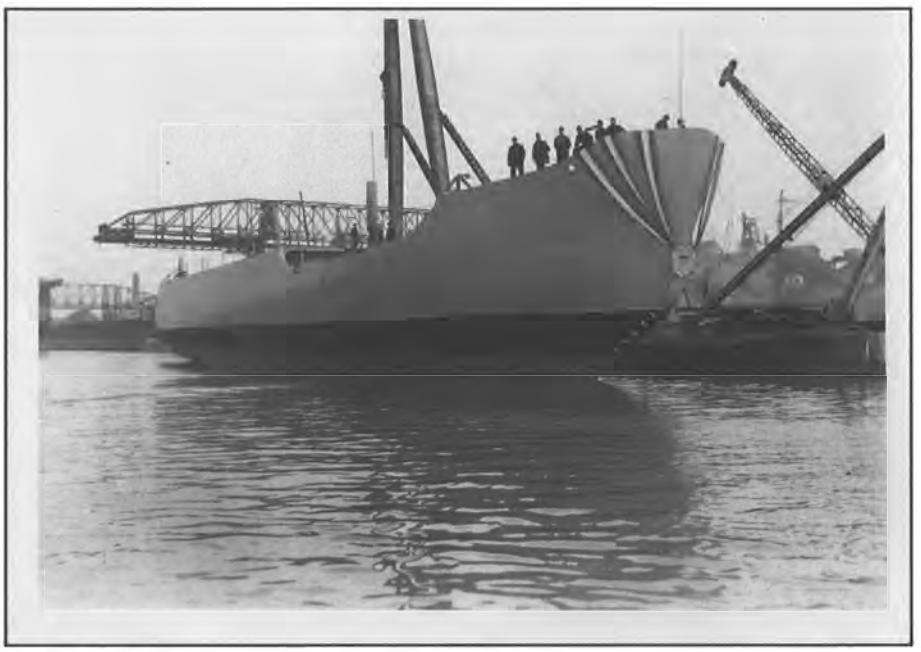

Figure No. 1 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0001
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: April 4, 1942.
Description of Photograph: Cutter *Storis*, moored along the outer shipyard wall in the Maumee River following her launch at the Toledo Shipbuilding Company, Lucas County, Ohio. Direction of view is roughly east. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

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National Park Service

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USCGC *Storis*
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Section number Additional Documentation Page 2

Figure 2 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0002
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: Unknown.
Description of Photograph: USS *Storis*, CG, in commission, camouflaged and serving as a member of the Greenland Patrol under the direction of the U.S. Navy. Note main 3"/50 caliber guns forward at the forecastle and aft of the exhaust stack. Two, single-mount 20-mm Oerlikon cannon are mounted at the forward corners of the Wheel House roof. Location and direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

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Figure 3 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0003
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: January 17, 1956.
Description of Photograph: *Storis* battles flames at the devastating Juneau Cold Storage Fire. The ship's navigation crew held the bow against the dock so the deck crew could direct streams of water onto the blaze. Direction of view is west. From the collection of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, Juneau, Alaska.

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Figure 4 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0004
Photographer: Bernard Merrifield, Radioman, Second Class (RM2). U.S. Coast Guard (retired).
Date Photographed: Summer 1957.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* moored in ice during the historic 1957 transit of the Northwest Passage. Exact location and direction of view unknown.

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Figure 5 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0005
Photographer: Unknown.
Date photographed: Ca. September 6, 1957.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* leads USCGC *Bramble* and USCGC *Spar* as Task Unit 5.1.5 transits Bellot Strait in the final stages of its historic journey through the Northwest Passage. Unknown direction of view from HMCS *Labrador*. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 6 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0006
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: March 22, 1967.
Description of Photograph: *Storis* apprehends the Soviet shrimp trawler *Srtm 8-457* for fishing within the twelve-mile contiguous zone off Alaska. Direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 7 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0007
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: ca. 1972.
Description of Photograph: An aerial view of USCGC *Storis* following the implementation of the new Coast Guard "Racing Stripes." Exact location and direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 8 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0008
Photographer: U.S. Coast Guard photo.
Date photographed: Unknown.
Description of Photograph: An aerial view of USCGC *Storis* following the 1986 yard period in which her Main Deck superstructure was expanded forward to incorporate berthing and lounge space for female crew. Also note the new forward Alaska Marine Crane. Photo taken in the Columbia River, near Longview, Washington. Direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 9 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0009
Photographer: Dmitry Lomivorotov, Omsk, Russia, Radio Operator, PKSR *Volga.*
Date photographed: October 17, 1992.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* is rafted to PKSR *Volga* of the Russian Maritime Border Guard during a historic visit to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

Figure 10 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0010
Photographer: Unknown.
Date photographed: July 1, 2002.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* out of the water during a drydock availability in Seward, Alaska. Note the cutaway forefoot at the bow, a design feature to assist with icebreaking. Note the hull number painted in gold, identifying *Storis* as "Queen of the Fleet." The ship's port side bilge keel is visible at the turn of the bilge. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 11 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0011
Photographer: U.S. Coast Guard photo.
Date photographed: December 2005.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* in moody seas while on patrol. Note the superstructure extension aft of the exhaust stack to incorporate the ship's incinerator. Also note the Mk 38 25-mm cannon mount at forecastle (under blue cover).

Figure 12 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0012
Photographer: U.S. Coast Guard photo, PA1 Kurt Frederickson, Public Affairs Detachment Kodiak.
Date photographed: March 12, 2007.
Description of Photograph: Under special commission, USCGC *Storis* departs Kodiak for the last time, bound for Coast Guard Island, Alameda, California, for deactivation and storage in the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) National Defense Reserve Fleet at Suisun Bay, near Benicia, Solano County, California.

Figure 13 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0013
Description: Vessel History, USCG Cutter *Storis* (WMEC-38), (sheet 1 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

USCG Cutter STORIS (WMEC-38)

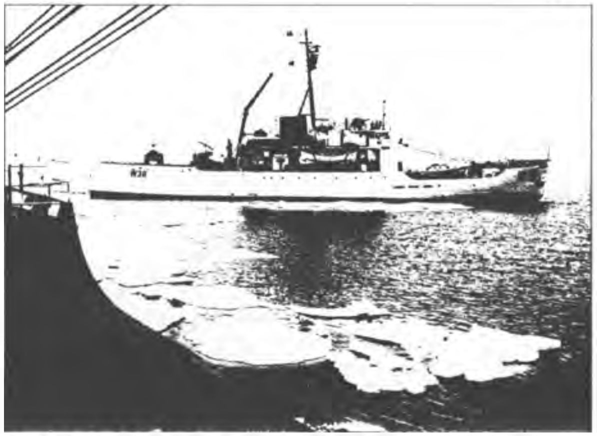
Kodiak, Alaska

Commissioned 1942

The keel of USCGC STORIS (WMEC-38) was laid down on July 14, 1941. STORIS was launched on April 4, 1942 and commissioned on September 30, 1942 as an ice patrol tender. Initially assigned to the North Atlantic during World War II, STORIS participated in the Greenland Patrols. She was tasked with patrolling the east coast of Greenland to prevent the establishment of German weather stations. During her first years, STORIS operated in the very waters from which her name was derived. "STORIS" is a Scandinavian name taken from the Eskimo word "sirorssuit" meaning "great ice."

Following the war, STORIS' homeport was changed from Boston to Curtis Bay, Maryland. On September 15, 1948, STORIS was reassigned to Juneau, Alaska where she participated in the Bering Sea Patrol, which entailed delivering medical, dental and judicial services to isolated native villages in the far reaches of the territory. At the same time, STORIS assisted in establishing Alaskan LORAN radio-navigation stations, provided supplies for the Defense Early Warning System and conducted hydrographic surveys in the uncharted waters off the arctic.

On July 1, 1957, STORIS departed in company with the Coast Guard Cutters BRAMBLE and SPAR to search for a deep draft channel through the Arctic Ocean and to collect hydrographic information. This historic transit ended a 450-year search for the Northwest Passage - a route for large ships across the top of North America. Upon her return to Greenland waters, STORIS became the first U.S. registered vessel to circumnavigate the North American continent. Shortly after her return in late 1957, the STORIS was reassigned to her new homeport of Kodiak, Alaska.



USCGC Storis during Northwest Passage on 12 September 1957 (USCG Photograph)

SPECIFICATIONS:
Length: 230 feet
Beam: 43'-2" feet Displacement: 2030 tons
Power Plant: Diesel Electric, Single Screw
Armament: One (1) 25MM Gun
Two (2) .50 cal machine guns
Crew: 12 Officers; 74 Enlisted
Built by Toledo Shipbuilding Company
Commissioned: September 30, 1942

In 1972, STORIS underwent a major renovation converting her from a light icebreaker to a medium endurance cutter. With the change in designation, there also came a change in primary duties. STORIS' primary functions shifted to enforcing laws and treaties of the domestic and foreign fisheries in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. STORIS underwent another major maintenance overhaul in 1986 that replaced her power plant and expanded her living quarters to include a new berthing area and lounge for female crew members.

STORIS provided nearly seven decades of service to the nation, routinely patroling the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea, she continued to perform her duties of enforcement of laws and treaties, search and rescue, homeland security, icebreaking, and military readiness with valor. Since 1991, STORIS held the distinction of being the oldest commissioned cutter in the Coast Guard fleet and bore the title "Queen of the Fleet" and proudly displayed her gold "38" hull numbers until decommissioning in 2007.

This project was prepared under the direction of HAER Maritime Program Coordinator, Todd Croteau and USCG Environmental Officer, Susan Hathaway. Brian Clayton, Contract Historian, prepared the historical narrative. Todd Croteau, generated vessel drawings from original Coast Guard records. Jet Lowe, HAER photographer, created large format photographs. Special thanks are given to Cmdr. Jim McCauley and the Crew, especially Ensign Josh Smith. Their help and assistance greatly benefited our project.

USCG CUTTER STORIS (WMEC-38) - 1942
KODIAK ISLAND COUNTY
KODIAK ALASKA
SHEET 1 OF 13
HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD AK-50
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

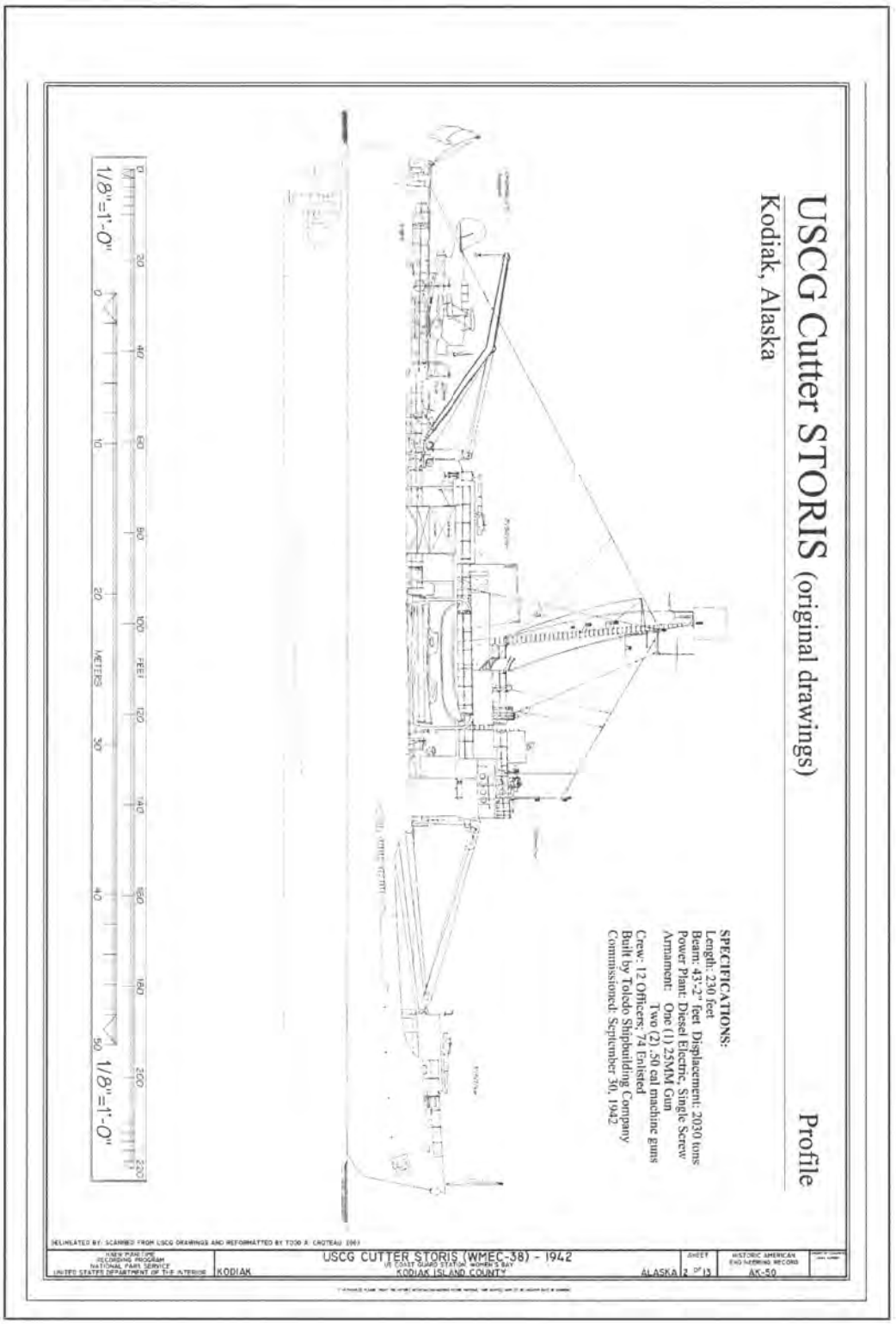


Figure 14 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0014
Description: Profile - Original Drawings, (sheet 2 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

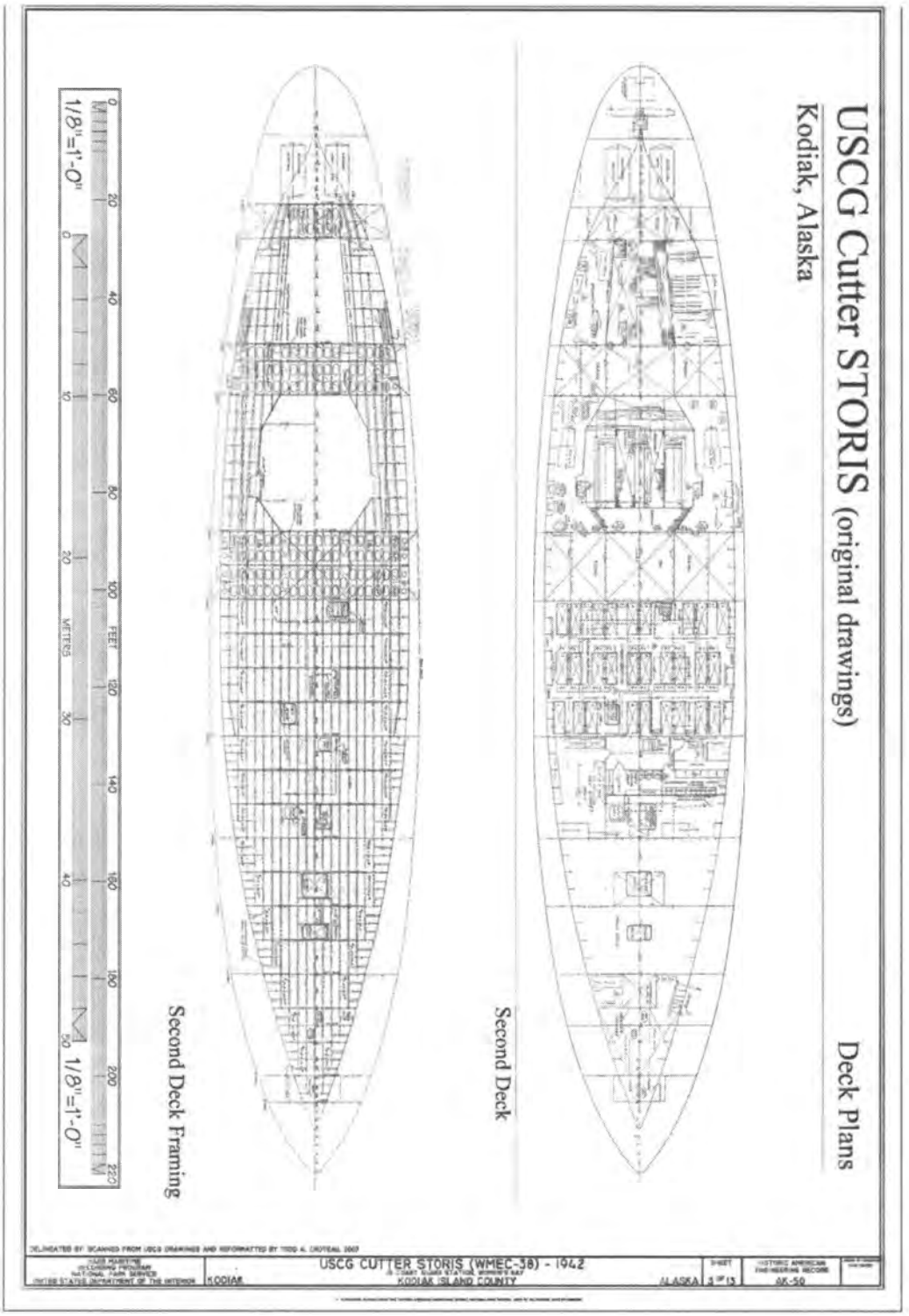


Figure 15 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0015
Description: Deck Plans, Second Deck, Second Deck Framing – Original Drawings, (sheet 3 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

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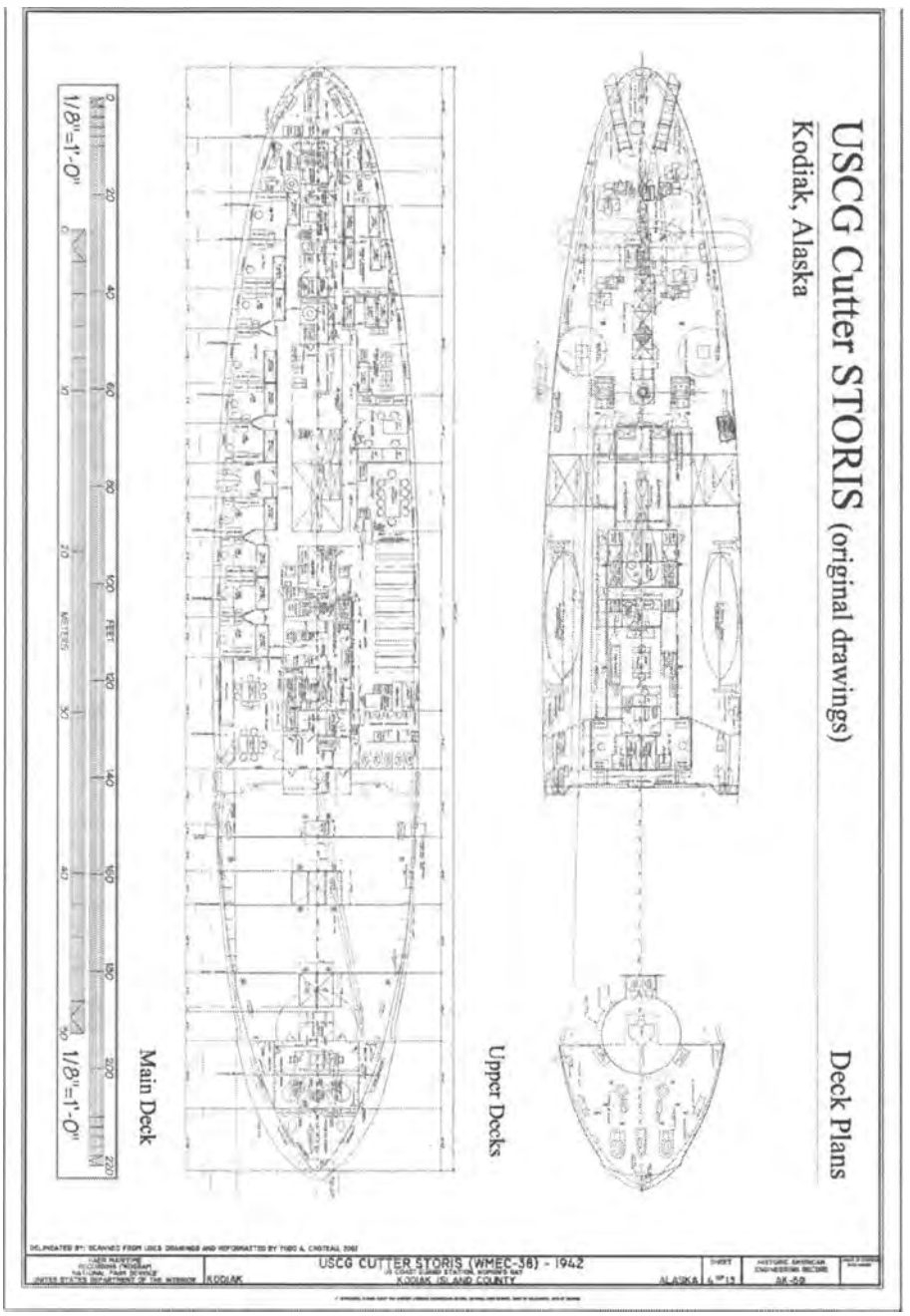

Figure 16 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0016
Description: Deck Plans, Upper Decks, Main Deck - Original Drawings, (sheet 4 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

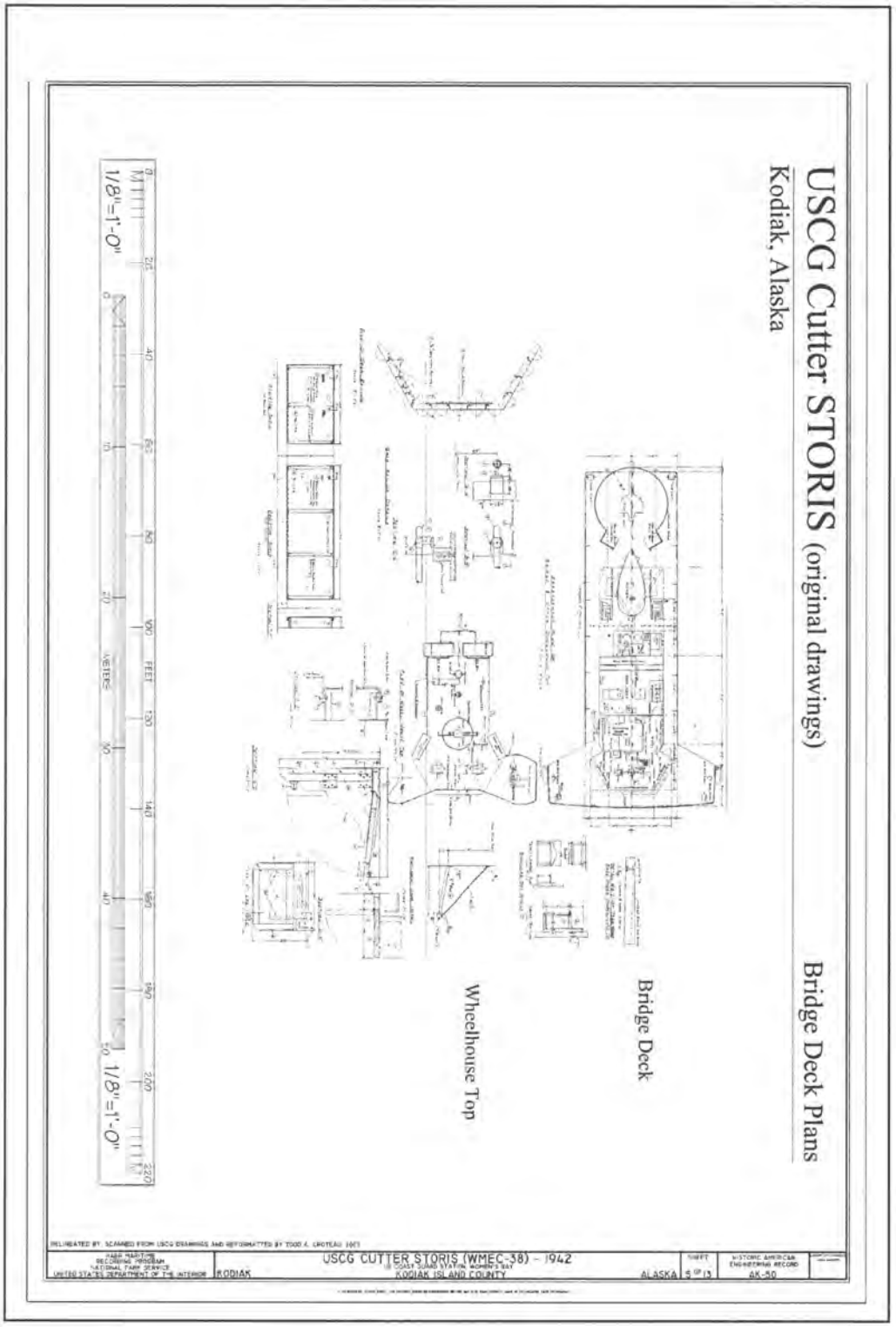

Figure 17 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0017
Description: Bridge Deck Plans, Bridge Deck, Wheel House Top – Original Drawings, (sheet 5 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

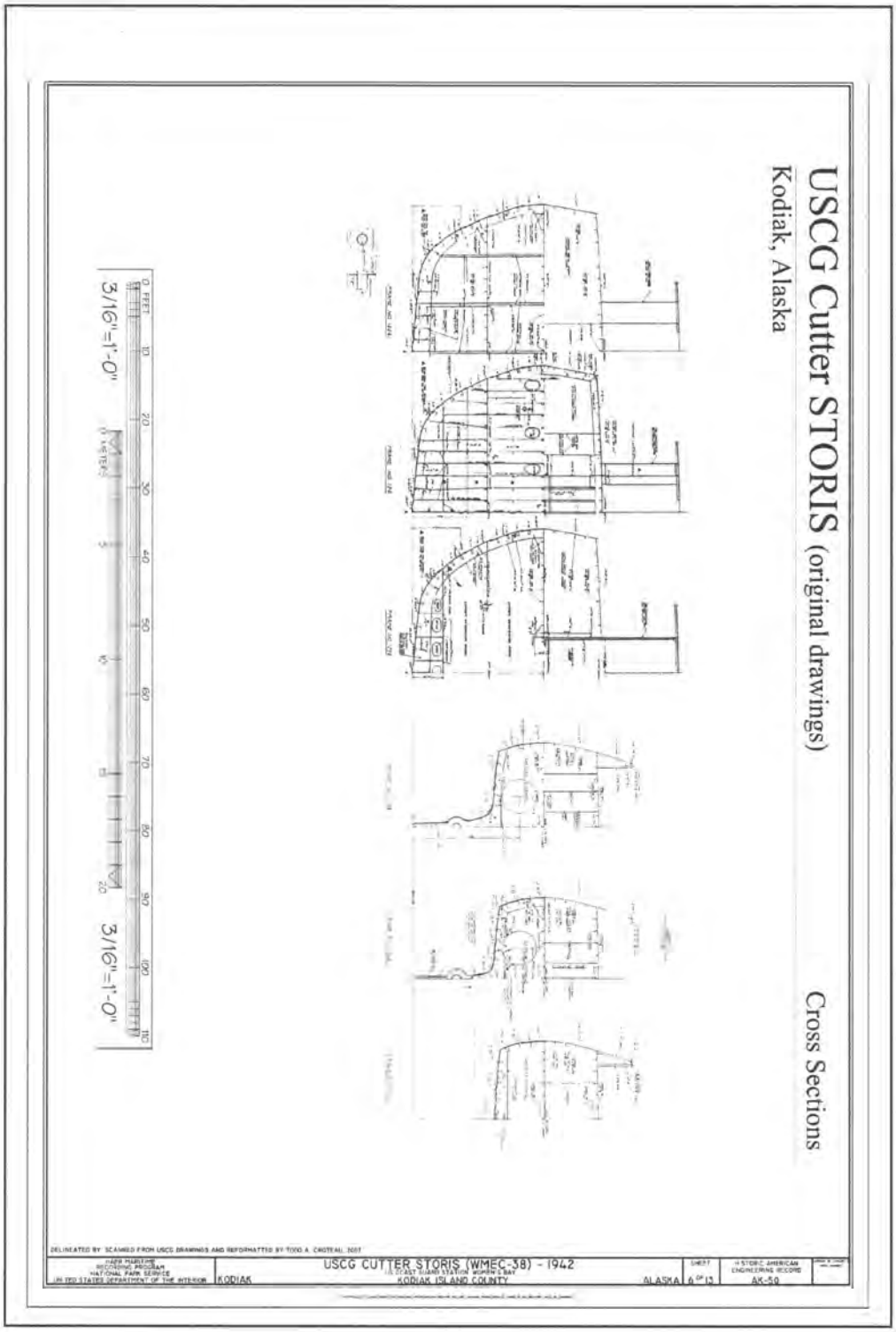

Figure 18 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0018
Description: Cross Sections – Original Drawings, (sheet 6 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

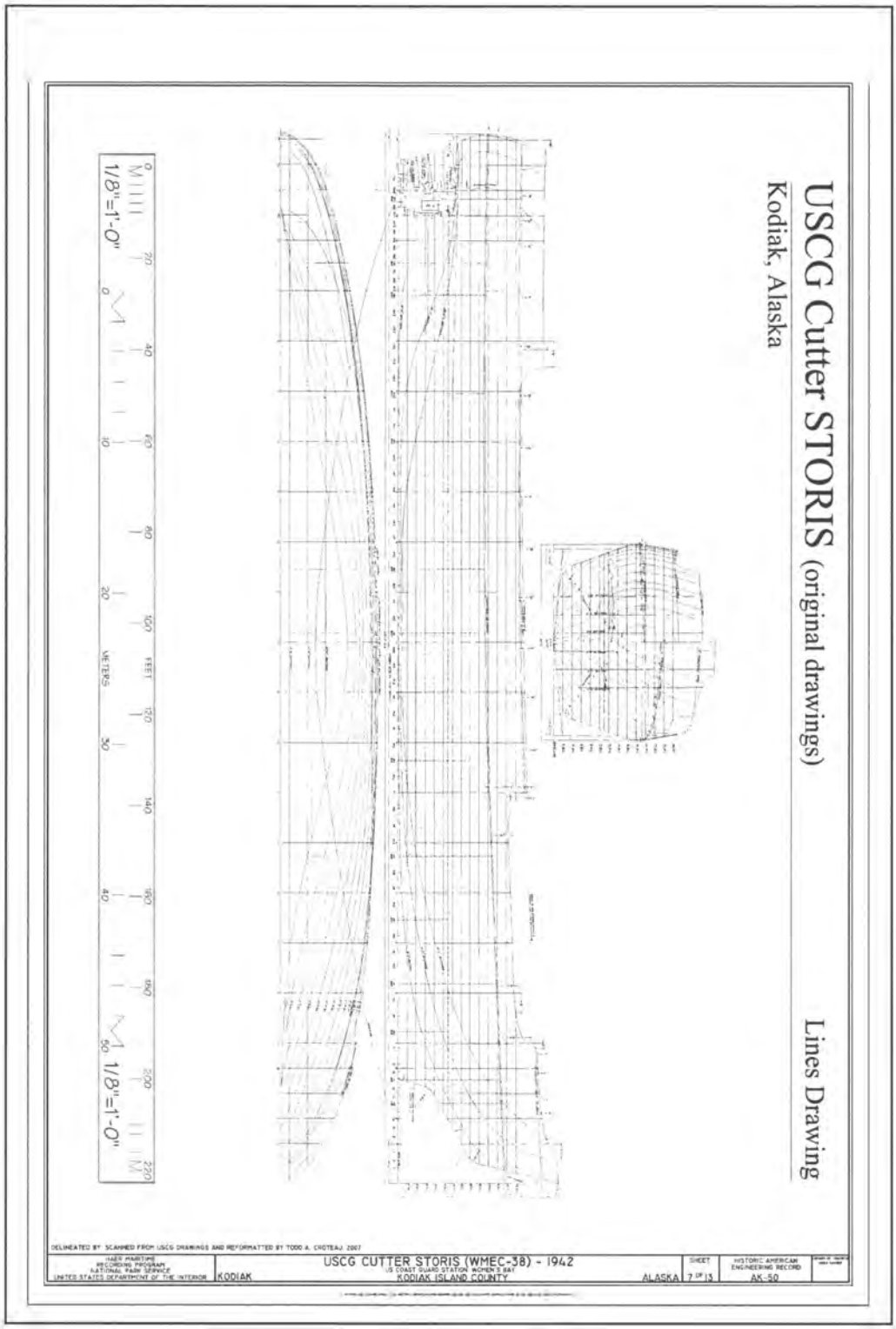

Figure 19 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0019
Description: Lines Drawing – Original Drawings. (Sheet 7 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

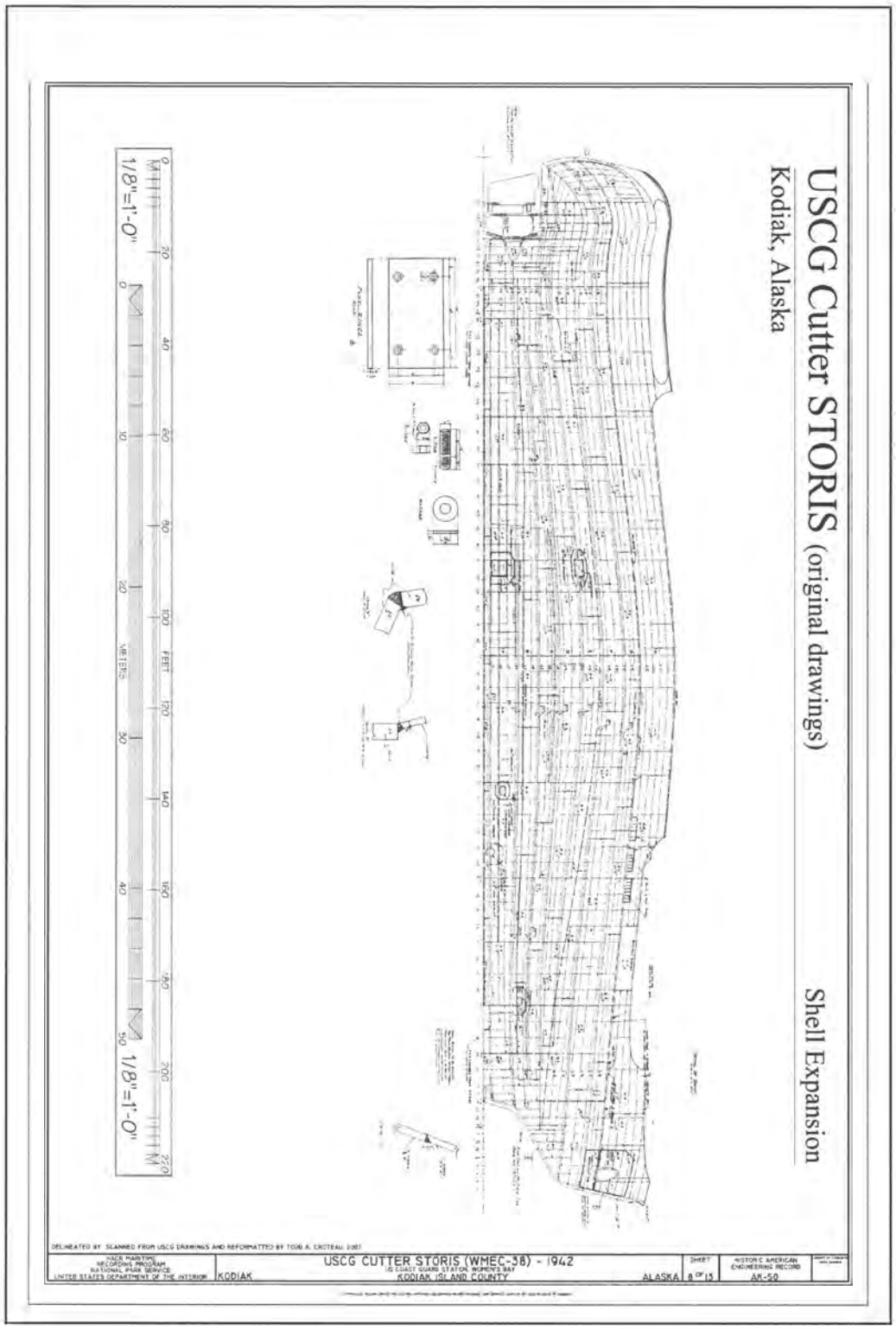

Figure 20 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0020
Description: Shell Expansion – Original Drawings, (Sheet 8 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

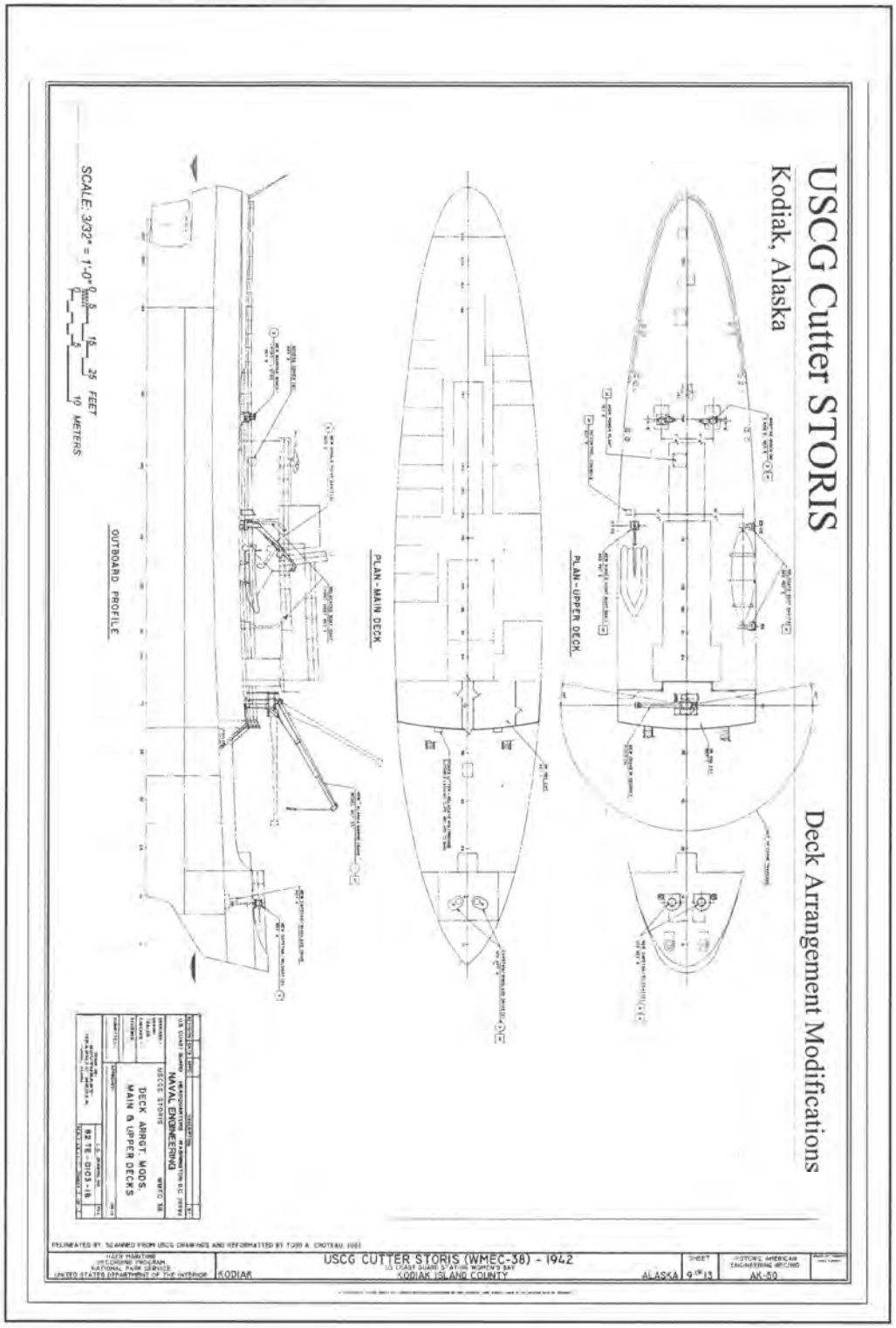

Figure 21 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0021
Description: Deck Arrangement Modifications, (Sheet 9 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

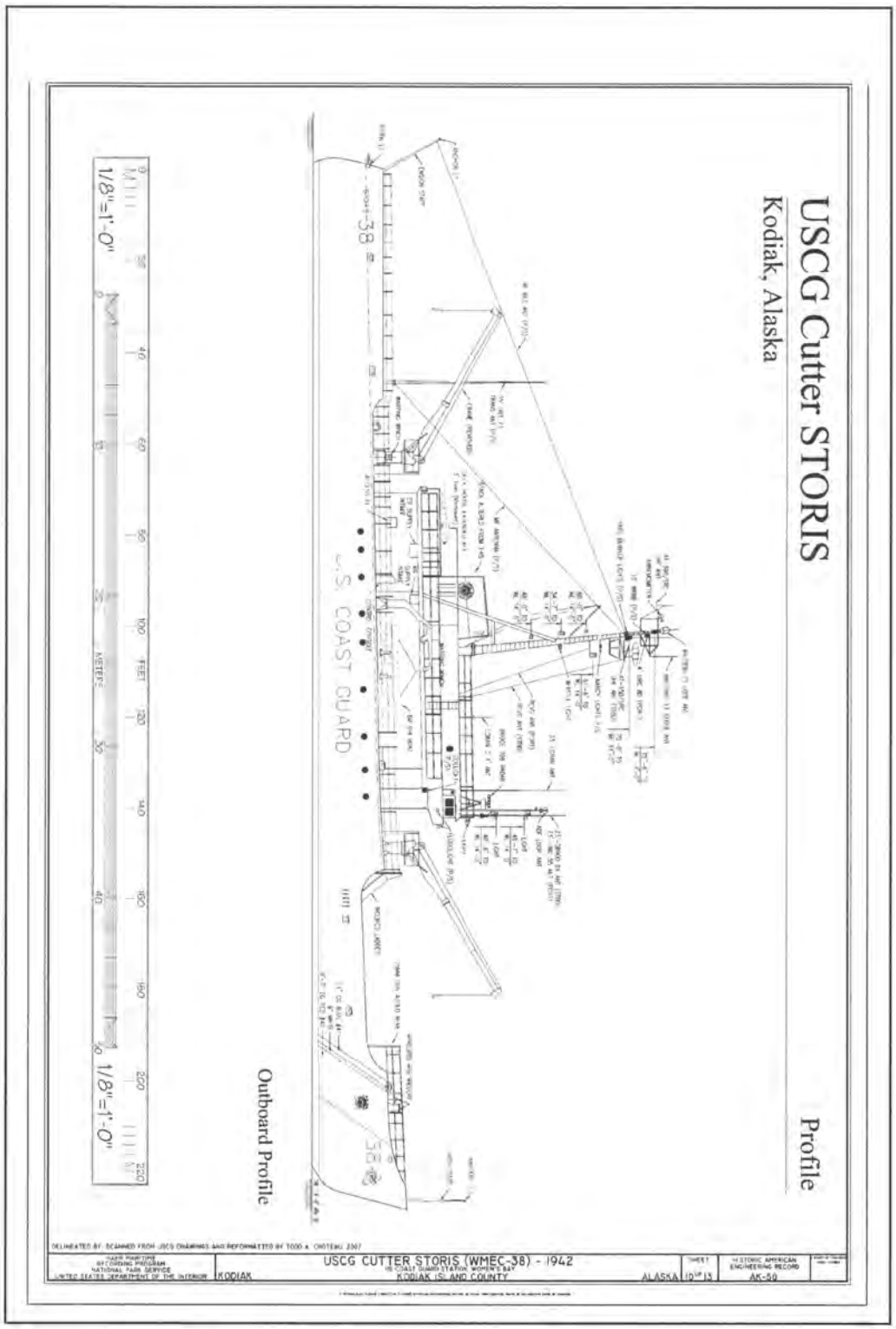

Figure 22 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0022
Description: Outboard Profile, (Sheet 10 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

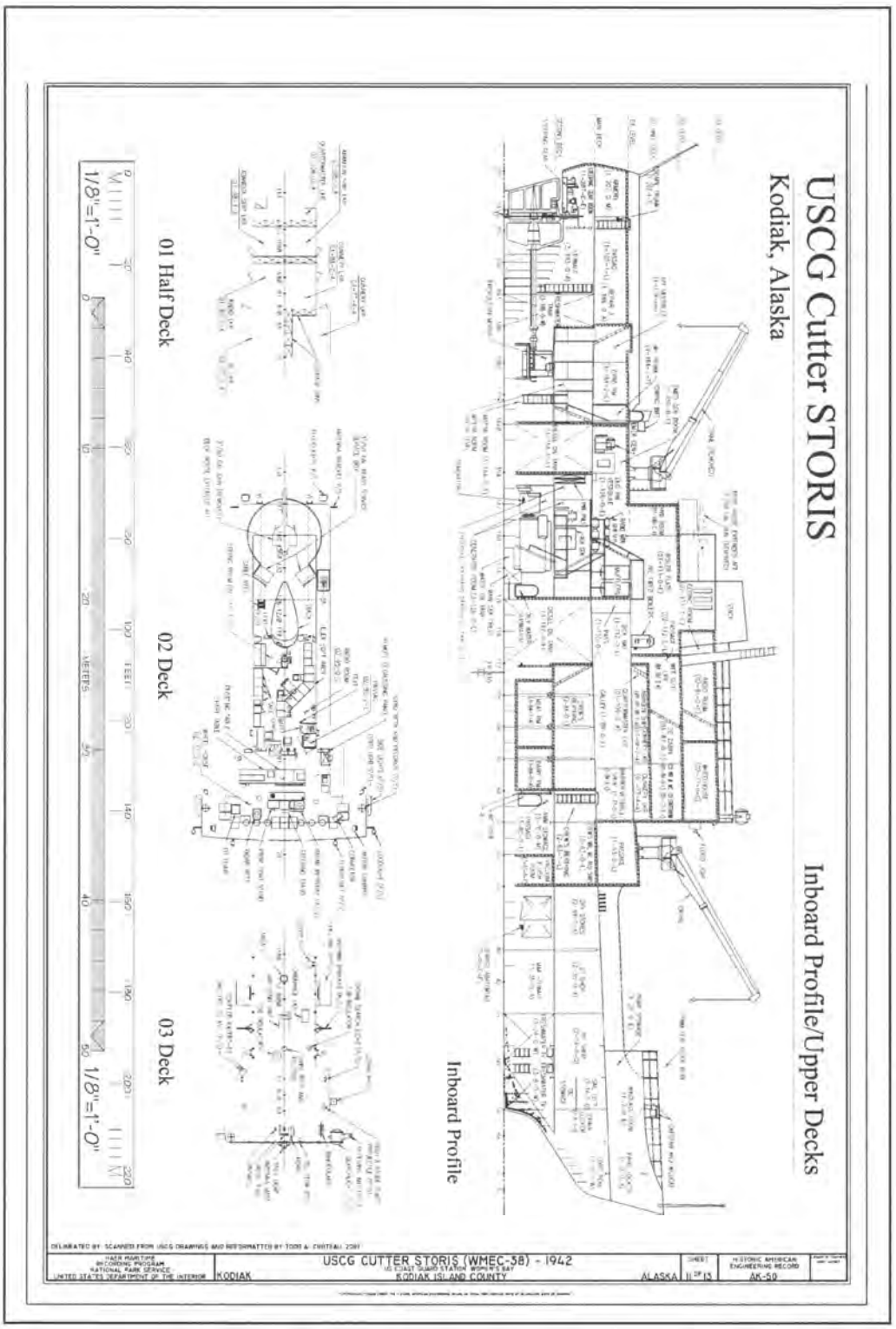

Figure 23 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0023
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U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
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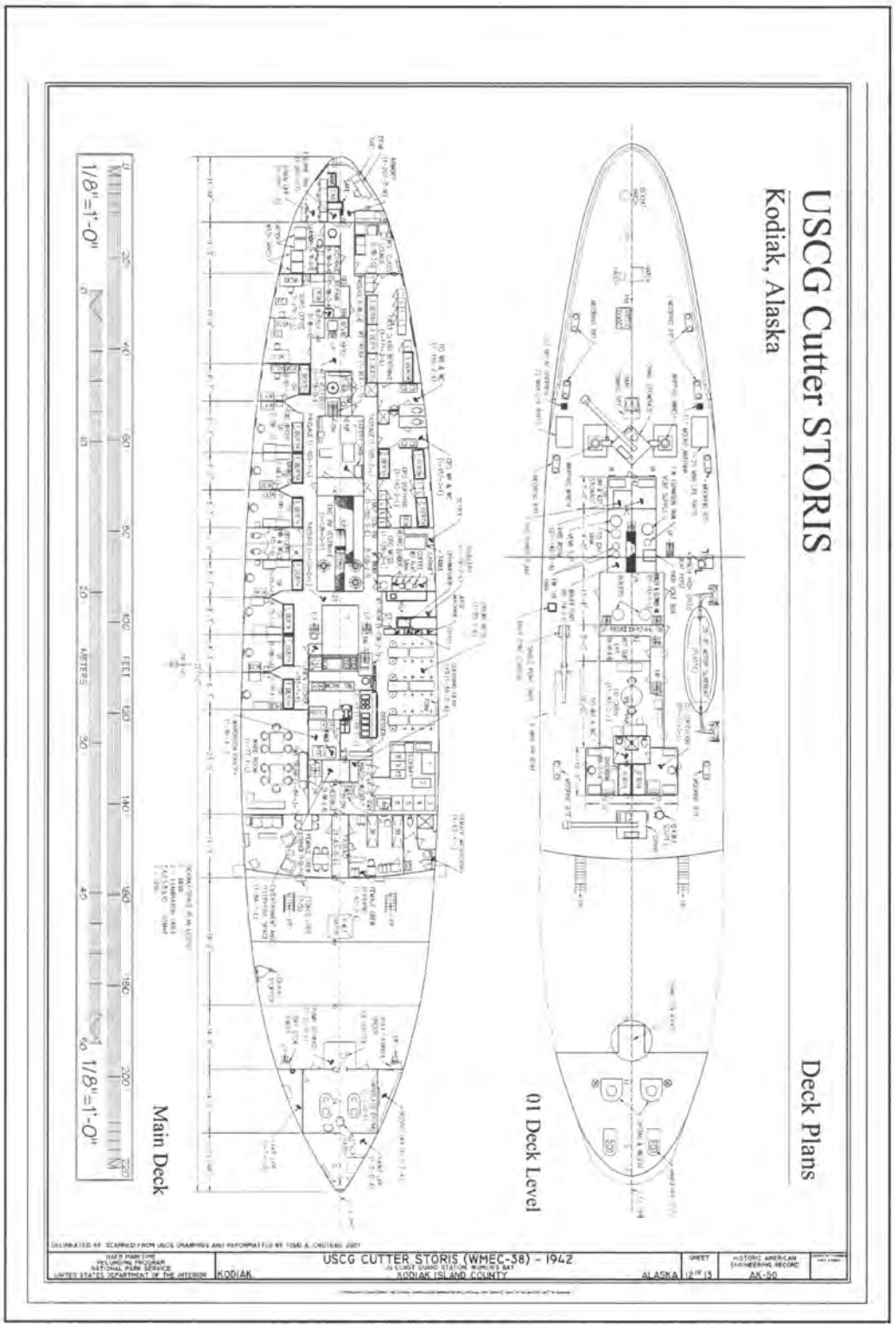

Figure 24 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0024
Description: Deck Plans, 01 Deck Level, Main Deck, (Sheet 12 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
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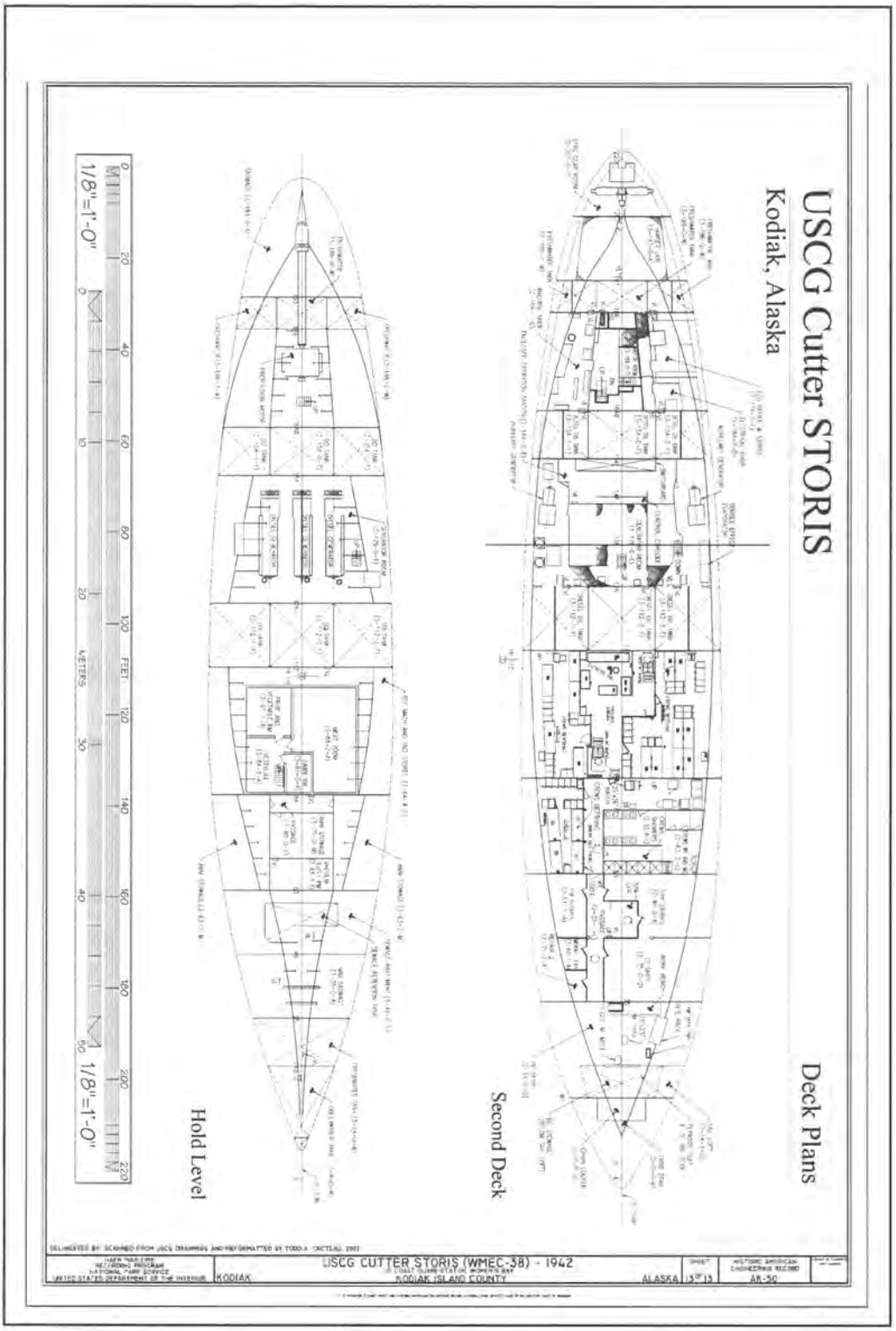

Figure 25 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0025
Description: Deck Plans, Second Deck, Hold Level, (Sheet 13 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Index - Additional Documentation - Figures

Name of Property: United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*
City: (Vicinity) Benicia
County: Solano State: California

Figure No. 1 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0001
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: April 4, 1942.
Description of Photograph: Cutter *Storis*, moored along the outer shipyard wall in the Maumee River following her launch at the Toledo Shipbuilding Company, Lucas County, Ohio. Direction of view is roughly east. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 2 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0002
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: Unknown.
Description of Photograph: USS *Storis*, CG, in commission, camouflaged and serving as a member of the Greenland Patrol under the direction of the U.S. Navy. Note main 3"/50 caliber guns forward at the forecastle and aft of the exhaust stack. Two, single-mount 20-mm Oerlikon cannon are mounted at the forward corners of the Wheel House roof. Location and direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 3 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0003
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: January 17, 1956.
Description of Photograph: *Storis* battles flames at the devastating Juneau Cold Storage Fire. The ship's navigation crew held the bow against the dock so the deck crew could direct streams of water onto the fire. Direction of view is west. From the collection of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, Juneau, Alaska.

Figure 4 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0004
Photographer: Bernard Merrifield, Radioman, Second Class (RM2). U.S. Coast Guard (retired).
Date Photographed: Summer 1957.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* moored in ice during the historic 1957 transit of the Northwest Passage. Exact location and direction of view unknown.

Figure 5 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0005
Photographer: Unknown.
Date photographed: Ca. September 6, 1957.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* leads USCGC *Bramble* and USCGC *Spar* as Task Unit 5.1.5 transits Bellot Strait in the final stages of its historic journey through the Northwest Passage. Unknown direction of view from HMCS *Labrador*. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 6 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0006
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: March 22, 1967.
Description of Photograph: *Storis* apprehends the Soviet shrimp trawler *Srtm 8-457* for fishing within the twelve-mile contiguous zone off Alaska. Direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 7 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0007
Photographer: Unknown.
Date Photographed: ca. 1972.
Description of Photograph: An aerial view of USCGC *Storis* following the implementation of the new Coast Guard "Racing Stripes." Exact location and direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 8 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0008
Photographer: U.S. Coast Guard photo.
Date photographed: Unknown.
Description of Photograph: An aerial view of USCGC *Storis* following the 1986 yard period in which her Main Deck superstructure was expanded forward to incorporate berthing and lounge space for female crew. Also note the new forward Alaska Marine Crane. Photo taken in the Columbia River, near Longview, Washington. Direction of view unknown. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 9 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0009
Photographer: Dmitry Lomivorotov, Omsk, Russia, Radio Operator, PKSR *Volga*.
Date photographed: October 17, 1992.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* is rafted to PKSR *Volga* of the Russian Maritime Border Guard during a historic visit to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky.

Figure 10 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0010
Photographer: Unknown.
Date photographed: July 1, 2002.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* out of the water during a drydock availability in Seward, Alaska. Note the cutaway forefoot at the bow, a design feature to assist with icebreaking. Note the hull number painted in gold, identifying *Storis* as "Queen of the Fleet." The ship's port side bilge keel is visible at the turn of the bilge. From the collection of the Storis Museum.

Figure 11 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0011
Photographer: U.S. Coast Guard photo.
Date photographed: December 2005.
Description of Photograph: USCGC *Storis* in moody seas while on patrol. Note the superstructure extension aft of the exhaust stack to incorporate the ship's incinerator. Also note the Mk 38 25-mm cannon mount at forecastle (under blue cover).

Figure 12 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Fig_0012
Photographer: U.S. Coast Guard photo, PA1 Kurt Frederickson, Public Affairs Detachment Kodiak.
Date photographed: March 12, 2007.
Description of Photograph: Under special commission, USCGC *Storis* departs Kodiak for the last time, bound for Coast Guard Island, Alameda, California, for deactivation and storage in the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) National Defense Reserve Fleet at Suisun Bay, near Benicia, Solano County, California.

Figure 13 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0013
Description: Vessel History, USCG Cutter *Storis* (WMEC-38), (sheet 1 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 14 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0014
Description: Profile - Original Drawings, (sheet 2 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 15 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0015
Description: Deck Plans, Second Deck, Second Deck Framing – Original Drawings, (sheet 3 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 16 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0016
Description: Deck Plans, Upper Decks, Main Deck - Original Drawings, (sheet 4 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
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Figure 17 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0017
Description: Bridge Deck Plans, Bridge Deck, Wheel House Top – Original Drawings, (sheet 5 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 18 of 25 - CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0018
Description: Cross Sections – Original Drawings, (sheet 6 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
From the U.S. Coast Guard/Historic American Engineering Record Maritime Recording Program, National Park Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Figure 19 of 25 – CA_Solano County_USCGC Storis_Figure_0019
Description: Lines Drawing – Original Drawings, (Sheet 7 of 13).
U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*, U.S. Coast Guard Station Women's Bay, Kodiak Island County, HAER AK-50
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: USCGC STORIS (cutter)

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Solano

DATE RECEIVED: 11/16/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/14/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/31/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/02/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12001110

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	Y
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	Y

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The USCGC *Storis* is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A and C in the areas of Military/Defense, Exploration, Science, Commerce, Engineering, and Social History. Commencing with her participation in the World War II Greenland Patrol, the *Storis* engaged in a long and varied career in some of the harshest maritime conditions in the world. Commissioned in 1942, the vessel provided nearly 7 decades of service to the nation. She is the last remaining ship with integrity illustrating the Coast Guard's vital role in the wartime Greenland Patrol, as well as a key element of the postwar Bering Sea Patrol. The ship was one of the first American vessels to successfully circumnavigate North America through the Northwest Passage, participated in the construction of the Cold War era Dew Line radar, contributed to the scientific study of the Northwest Passage, and conducted extensive law enforcement, search & rescue, icebreaking, and humanitarian actions throughout Alaskan waters. The lone representative of her class of vessel, the *Storis* is a uniquely designed evolutionary model of 1940s era tender design reflecting the distinctive characteristics of a remarkably active and successful period of American ship design and construction.

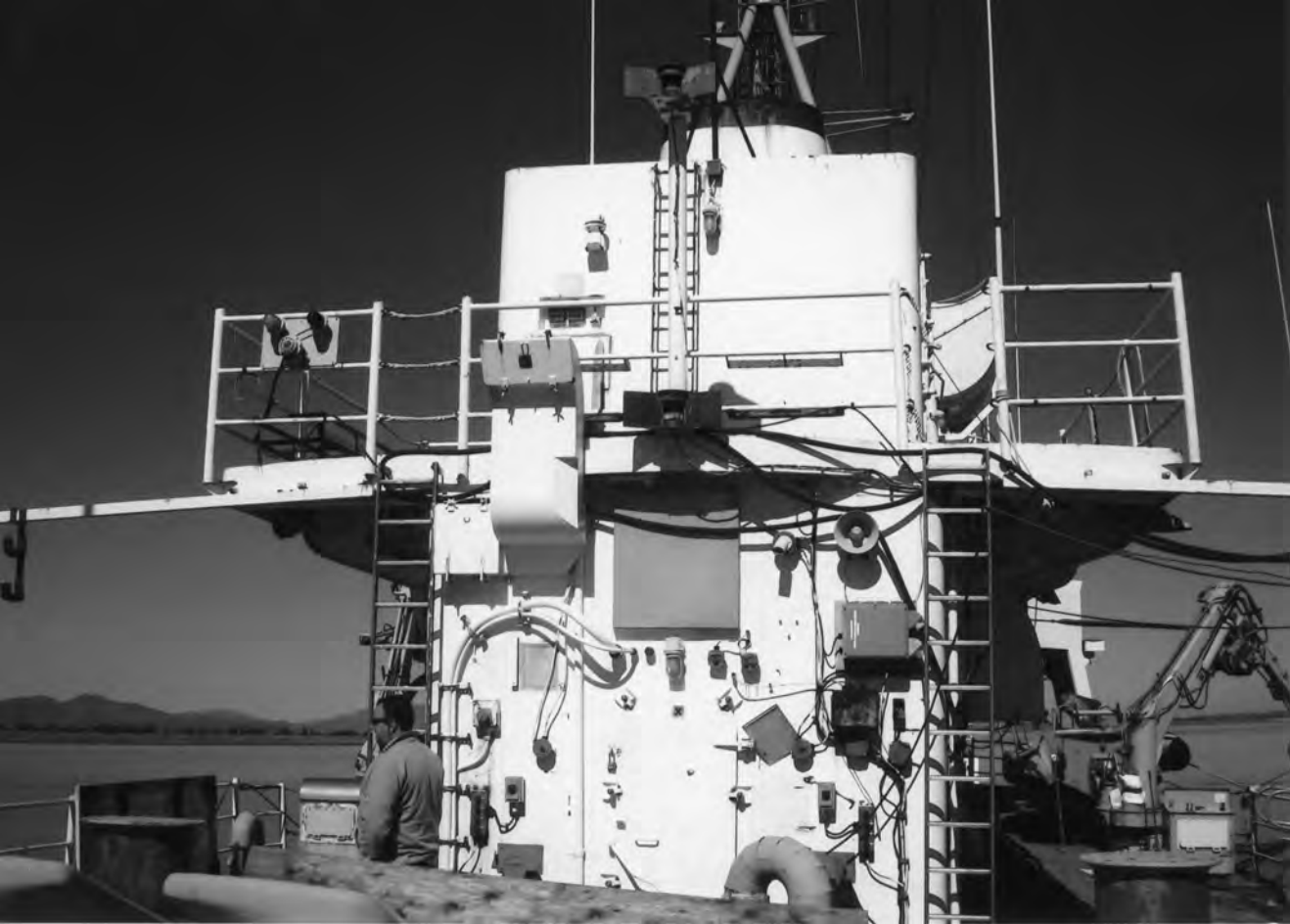
RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criteria A+C

REVIEWER Paul R. Lusignan DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE 202-354-2229 DATE 12/31/2012

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/(N)

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.




E CALL SYSTEM

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The National Map US Topo

VINE HILL QUADRANGLE
CALIFORNIA
7.5-MINUTE SERIES

U.S. COAST GUARD
CUTTER STORIS
SOLANO CO., CA
UTM ZONE 10
580310 E
4215590 N

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 10S
10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System of 1983
(zones 2 and 3)

Imagery.....NAIP, May 2010
Roads.....©2006-2011 TomTom
Names.....GNIS, 2011
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2010
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2000
Boundaries.....Census, IBWC, IBC, USGS, 1972 - 2010

UTM GRID AND 2012 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

U.S. National Grid
100,000-m Square ID
EH
Grid Zone Designation
10S

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with the
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.1

CALIFORNIA
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Cordelia	Fairfield South	Denverton
Benicia	Vine Hill	Honker Bay
Briones Valley	Walnut Creek	Clayton

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Interstate Route
US Route
Ramp
State Route
Local Road
4WD

VINE HILL, CA
2012

August 21, 2012

Commandant
US Coast Guard Headquarters
2100 2nd Street SW Stop 7238
Washington, DC 20593-7238

Michael W. Lewis
528 Mechwart Place
Columbus, Ohio 43230

RE: USCGC Storis

Dear Admiral Papp,

I am writing this memo as a proud veteran of the US Coast Guard and a former crew member of the USCGC Storis formerly based in Kodiak, Alaska. I served on the Storis as an EM3 from 1967 to 1969 under the command of CDR Hardy and CDR Byrd. Even though my days on the Storis were many years ago I will never forget the feeling I had while onboard to be a very proud part of our efforts to serve the State of Alaska and the USCG in our many SAR and humanitarian missions. I have recently been involved with the efforts of the Storis Museum (Storismeseum.org) to "save the Storis" and return her to her final resting place as a museum in Juneau as well as the efforts of Jon Ottman, Great Lakes Marine Historian and Historic Preservation Professional, to place the Storis on the National Register of Historic Places. Jon is also involved in the efforts to save the USCGC Bramble now located in Port Huron, Ohio.

In a recent visit to Juneau on a cruise with Holland American Cruise Line I spoke with the locals about the Storis and if they knew about the efforts to return her to Alaska. In fact I returned to the Red Dog Saloon, which I visited while on the Storis like many before and after me did as part of a liberty stop. The inside is covered with memorabilia from many USCG Cutters that visited Juneau. The Juneau locals and the Red Dog manager are all very excited to see her return to Juneau.

I don't think I need to tell you about the history around the Storis and how she has represented the US Coast Guard over her 60 plus years but I do, as a former crew member, want to ask for your help in keeping her afloat and returning her to Juneau, Alaska. As you also know in addition to Jon's National Register efforts there are bills that have been introduced in Washington DC by the US House and Senate that are connected to the efforts of the Storis Museum. At present I believe S 1665, Sec. 601 is caught up in the Washington political mess and we need that bill to move forward, your help will be appreciated.

In closing I would like to again express my appreciation for the US Coast Guard and how proud I am to have served my country under their leadership. I look forward to one day returning to Juneau, Alaska and board the US Coast Guard Cutter Storis so I can relive my days of years ago.

Thank you

Michael W. Lewis
USCG Veteran, #371997

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
Edmund G. Brown JR., *Governor*

OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
1725 23rd Street Suite 100
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov

September 5, 2012

Dr. Daniel Koski-Karell
PO Box 100418
Arlington, VA 22210-3418

Subject: **United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* National Register of Historic Places Nomination**

Dear Dr. Koski-Karell:

Enclosed please find the **United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Please note that 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60.6 (y) states that nominations of property under Federal ownership or control are submitted to the Federal Preservation Officer for review, comment, and certification.

As the State Historic Preservation Officer, I have review and comment authority in regards to Federal nominations. I have reviewed the nomination for *Storis* and in my opinion the nomination meets National Register criteria.

If you have questions regarding the nomination for *Storis,* please contact Jay Correia of my staff at 916-445-7008 or jcorr@parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures

THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
Office of History and Archaeology

550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565
Web: http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha
Phone: 907.269.8721
Fax: 907.269.8908

September 7, 2012

Re: 3330-1-2 United States Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*

Dr. Dan Koski-Karell
U.S. Coast Guard
P.O. Box 100418
Arlington, Virginia 22210-3418

Dear Dr. Koski-Karell:

I have been invited to review and comment on the National Register of Historic Places documentation for the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis*. I concur the ship qualifies for listing in the National Register as follows:

Criteria:	A (associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) C (embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction) *see below
Criteria considerations:	* see below G (achieving significance within the past 50 years) applies, and exceptional importance has been addressed
Areas of significance:	military/defense, exploration, science, commerce, engineering, social/humanitarian
Period of significance:	*see below
Significant dates:	1943-45, 1957
Level of significance:	national
Number of resources:	contributing: 1 structure non-contributing: 0
Historic functions:	defense, transportation
Current function:	vacant/not in use

The period of significance is not completed on page 4 of the nomination form sent to me. I presume the period starts when the ship was commissioned in 1942. Following similar reasoning, the ending date would be when the ship was decommissioned in 2007. If this is the case, as indicated above, the less-than-fifty-years old criteria consideration should be noted as applicable and explicitly addressed in the summary statement of significance. The test for the criteria consideration is "exceptional importance" and I believe the *Storis's* federal presence and search and rescue work in the Bering Sea fishery meets the test.

The documentation states in several places that the ship was the only one of its class constructed, which begged to me the question "why?" that I never found adequately answered in the documentation. Despite this, I think the documentation has enough information on the design elements of the ship to make it eligible under criterion C.

I understand you plan to forward the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, and I encourage you to do so. I am familiar with the efforts to get the ship to Juneau, Alaska and enthusiastically support them. Thank you for your cooperation with the efforts.

If you wish to discuss my comments, my direct telephone number is 907.269.8714 and e-mail is jo.antonson@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Antonson

Joan M. Antonson
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Jim Loback, Storis Museum, 10436 Teal Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708

15532 SW Pacific Hwy., #514
Tigard, OR 97224
11 September 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United State Coast Guard
2100 Second Street–Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Re: Nomination of STORIS to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Admiral Papp,

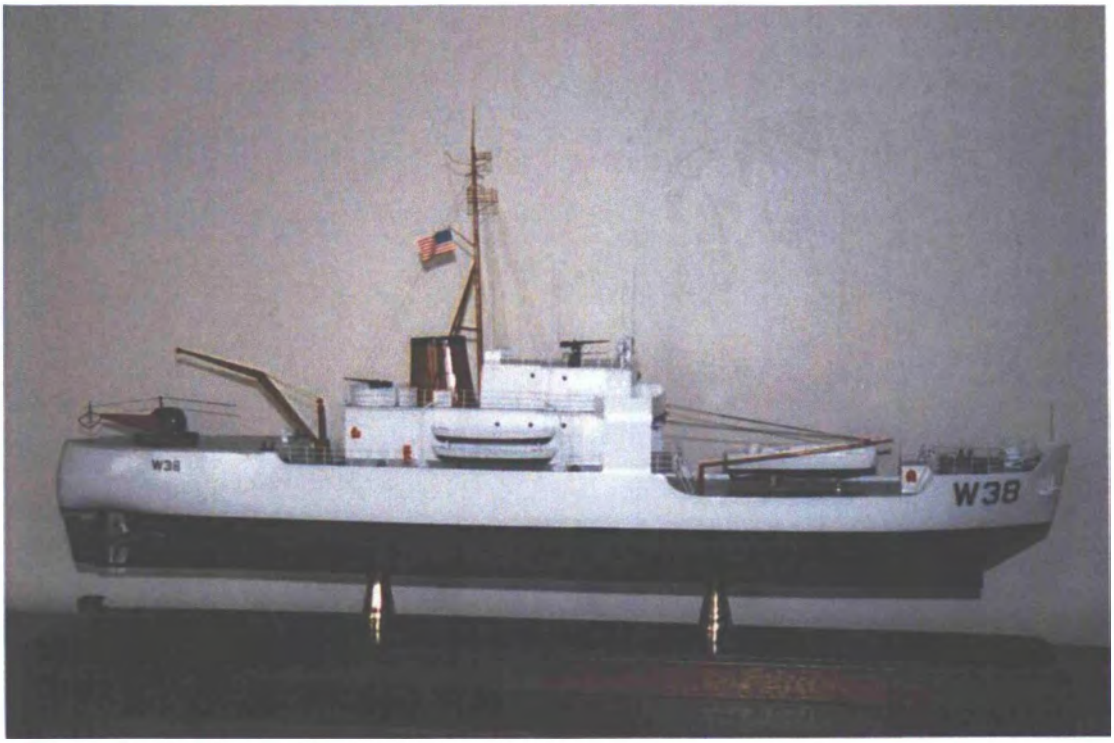
I had the honor and privilege to have served aboard the STORIS between 1969-70 and cannot overstate how humbling the experience was. Coming aboard after attending Commissary School, I do not think that I fully appreciated the history of the STORIS. It was only after I was welcomed aboard, that I came realize the amazing history of the ship. Going back to it's service during World War II as well as the fact that it became the first U.S. registered ship to circumnavigate the North American continent. We were always aware that the STORIS was a one-of-a-kind vessel and as a crew took that designation very seriously.

I can think of no more fitting tribute for the STORIS than to have it added to the National Register of Historic Places so that others can become aware of it's place in history.

I do want to share with you a picture of a model of the STORIS, which I proudly display in our family room and when we have guests, I proudly share with them the history of the ship that I so proudly served on.

Semper Paratus,

Harry D. Meyer


W38
W38

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

United States Coast Guard

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street SW - STOP 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901
Staff Symbol: COMDT (CG-47)
Phone: (202) 475-5687
Fax: (202) 475-5949

16475

SEP 12 2012

Honorable Elizabeth Patterson, Mayor
City of Benicia
250 East L Street
Benicia, CA 94510

SUBJECT: NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FOR THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD CUTTER *STORIS*

Dear Ms. Patterson:

The U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) has determined that the USCG Cutter *Storis* (WMEC-38) in Solano County, California, is a historic property eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). We are proposing to nominate this vessel for official inclusion in the NRHP. A summary of the NRHP nomination is enclosed for your information (enclosure (1)). This action is being performed pursuant to the authorities contained in Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the National Park Service regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60.9.

As part of the nomination process, the USCG is seeking your comments. Please provide any comments within 45 days from the date your office receives this letter. If we receive no response from your office within 45 days, we will assume you have no comments. We have also submitted the NRHP nomination form for the USCG Cutter *Storis* to the California State Historic Preservation Officer for review and comment.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions or desire additional information, please feel free to contact Dr. Daniel Koski-Karell at (202) 475-5683.

Sincerely,

E. F. WANDELT
Chief
Office of Environmental Management
U. S. Coast Guard

Enclosure: (1) Summary of NRHP nomination for USCGC *Storis* (WMEC-38)

Copy (w/o enclosure): J. Paul Loether, National Park Service
CG-84
CG-0942

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street SW - STOP 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901
Staff Symbol: COMDT (CG-47)
Phone: (202) 475-5687
Fax: (202) 475-5949

16475

SEP 1 2 2012

Honorable Linda J. Seifert, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors
675 Texas Street, Suite 6500
Fairfield, CA 94533-6352

SUBJECT: NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FOR THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD CUTTER *STORIS*

Dear Ms. Seifert:

The U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) has determined that the USCG Cutter *Storis* (WMEC-38) in Solano County, California, is a historic property eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). We are proposing to nominate this vessel for official inclusion in the NRHP. A summary of the NRHP nomination is enclosed for your information (enclosure (1)). This action is being performed pursuant to the authorities contained in Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the National Park Service regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60.9.

As part of the nomination process, the USCG is seeking your comments. Please provide any comments within 45 days from the date your office receives this letter. If we receive no response from your office within 45 days, we will assume you have no comments. We have also submitted the NRHP nomination form for the USCG Cutter *Storis* to the California State Historic Preservation Officer for review and comment.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. If you have any questions or desire additional information, please feel free to contact Dr. Daniel Koski-Karell at (202) 475-5683.

Sincerely,

E. F. WANDELT
Chief
Office of Environmental Management
U. S. Coast Guard

Enclosure: (1) Summary of NRHP nomination for USCGC *Storis* (WMEC-38)

Copy (w/o enclosure): J. Paul Loether, National Park Service
CG-84
CG-0942

September 12, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp,

Please accept this letter as an endorsement of the USCGC STORIS importance and historical value to the United States of America.

The STORIS not only provided a key military role but contributed in many other ways to the betterment of our country and individuals who received her services. Her deployments in the North Atlantic, Bearing Sea, and arctic regions were rugged in nature but she rose above those challenges to serve 64 continuous years and become 'Queen of the Fleet', the oldest active cutter in the U.S. Coast Guard at the time of her decommissioning. She was unique with the durability and versatility of her design as a multi-mission platform, a sturdy and seaworthy vessel able to travel great distances across open ocean which gave her special qualifications.

STORIS has contributed national significance to the United States in a number of ways. Beginning in 1942 with her World War II military defense and maritime history, for her role as the last surviving major vessel to have participated in the Greenland Patrols, to her long career as a law enforcement and SAR platform. She made a significant scientific contribution as one of the first American vessels to produce a reliable navigation chart and successfully circumnavigate North America through the Northwest Passage.

I can personally attest to her 1959 humanitarian services of the Alaskan native population during the period when Alaska became a formal U.S. State. The dedication and persistence to access medical and dental needs for our citizens so remotely located have certainly led to improved health conditions for these citizens. Our deployment of personnel via helicopter into native settlements was challenging but the spirit to succeed led to much success and gratification of the people involved.

During my tenure, the mission of SAR and saving lives (of which she is credited with saving 250 over her career) always remained the highest priority. She served a law enforcement role related to fishing treaties in the Bearing Sea and protected living marine resources. In 1975 STORIS broke ice in Purdhoe Bay to clear the way for construction of the Alaskan Pipeline. In 1989 she would respond to the massive oil spill of the Exon Valdez in Prince William Sound. She became affectionally known as the "Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan Coast" for her abundance of missions and interaction

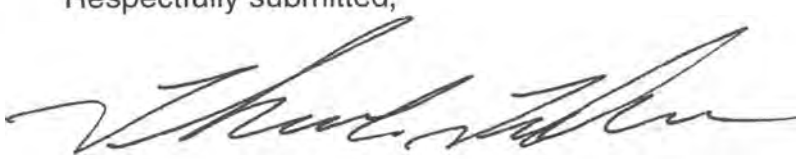
with the people. It is no wonder that a loving attachment exists from the people of the State of Alaska. When you help them grow, save their lives, protect their safety, and actively participate socially with local citizens, this attachment is clearly deserved.

Consider STORIS as a 'leader' and recognize that good leaders get involved in every aspect of their business. From the highest priorities of saving lives to the mundane chores of breaking ice and maintaining marine navigation safety. In the end, great leaders are remembered and served to future generations as great examples. STORIS clearly qualifies as such a leader and deserves the rewards of historical preservation for all our grandchildren to appreciate and enjoy.

I am proud to have served in the safety of this 'Proud Lady'. She has an incredible story to tell. She is truly unique and deserving of your approval in the National Register of Historic Places, and preservation as a Museum and Education Center for our future generations.

I stand by to personally assist her transition and continue to serve the USCGC STORIS in her new adventures.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Tucker, YN1MA, USCG 1959-1965
3280 Flemington Court
Pleasanton, California 94588
925-846-0317
tomctucker@comcast.net

cc: Storis Museum
c/o Jim Loback
10436 Teal Circle
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

11152 Sedgewick Court
North Royalton, Ohio 44133
September 14, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp:

As a "friend" of the United States Coast Guard and specifically, the **USCGC STORIS, W-38,** please accept this letter as an endorsement of the importance and historical value the USCGC STORIS was to the United States of America.

The STORIS provided a key military role and contributed several ways to the betterment of our country and individuals who received her services. Her deployment in the North Atlantic, Bearing Sea, and artic regions were rugged in nature, but she over came those challenges to serve 64 continuous years and become known as the "Queen of the Fleet", the oldest active cutter in the U.S. Coast Guard at the time of her decommissioning. She was unique with the durability and versatility of her design as a multi-mission platform, a sturdy and seaworthy vessel, able to travel great distances across open water which gave her special qualifications.

The STORIS has contributed to our country's defense and maritime development. Beginning in 1942 with her World War II military defense and maritime history, with her role as the last surviving major vessel to have participated in the Greenland Patriots, and to her long career as a law enforcement and SAR platform, all depict the significant role she has played in our country's history. In addition, she also made a significant scientific contribution as one of the first American vessels to produce a reliable navigation chart and successfully circumnavigated North American through the Northwest Passage.

The historical story the STORIS provides should be preserved for the future. I recommend the STORIS be nominated for the National Register, so all United States citizens have an opportunity to appreciate the value the STORIS has been to the history of our country.

Thanks in advance for your consideration and support.

Respectfully,

Dennis J. Tucker

15 September 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp,

It is my highest hope you consider placing the CGC Storis into the National Register of Historic Places. It was my great honor to serve two tours on her from 1983-1986 and 1993-1996.
My wife was born in Juneau, Alaska, and has fond memories of going on the Storis to watch movies when she was a young girl in the early '60s. They were the first motion pictures she ever saw.
I've been living and working in Kodiak since my retirement in 2001 and every time I mention being stationed on the Storis I get a thank you. I was also stationed aboard the CGCs Laurel, Firebush, Ironwood and was on the pre-commissioning detachment for the Spar. All in Alaska.
The true uniqueness of the Storis cannot be replicated and such a vital part of our history cannot and should not be forgotten.

Semper Paratus!

Sincerely,
EM1(Ret) Paul C. Friel

September 16, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard 2100
Second Street - Stop 7901
Washington, D.C. 20593-7901

Dear Admiral:

I am asking you for your support in the nomination of USCG STORIS to the National Register of Historic Places. This storied and illustrious ship began her historic career as the USS STORIS CG, and thus belongs as much to the history of our US Navy as to the annals of our US Coast Guard; the STORIS is a tangible and material example of cooperation between our two maritime branches.

As a veteran who served briefly (Navy, 1967-68) but honorably during the Viet Nam War, I salute the USCG STORIS, which guarded and faithfully protected American interests and American shores with distinction, permitting other American servicemen and servicewomen, worldwide, to guard and protect those same American shores, in other ways, in other uniforms.

I learned about the STORIS in 1975 from a beloved friend of mine, a "Coastie" if you will, who served aboard this famous ship in 1973-74. But many years have long since passed, along with my friend, and it has come to my attention that this wonderful and much honored ship, upon which my friend honorably served, is now up for nomination for inclusion in the esteemed National Register of Historic Places. And though you have probably "practically memorized" the considerable achievements of the STORIS (achievements to the credit of those who were privileged to have sailed on her and worked on her) what can I possibly write that will lend weight to her remarkable career that has not already been said?

I can only say this: It is my fervent hope that I can speak for my friend, whose voice is now silent except in my memory, and for thousands of other STORIS veterans and non-veterans like him, asking you to lend your weight in achieving the successful nomination of our "Queen of the Fleet", our "Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan (no, 'American'!) Coast", that she might be preserved and treasured by future generations of visitors from all over the world. Please, let it become a monument to the Americans who created in this one ship a tool as beautiful as (if not more useful than) a Charles Eames chair; a ship which personifies, by its several transitions over almost 7 decades, how "America knows how to beat swords into ploughshares". Please, let the STORIS become a memorial to the men and women who

served her and aboard her, in a century that permitted both genders to honorably serve their country. Please, let the STORIS become a remembrance and a promise to those who were (and those who will be) in distress, that rescue was (or will soon be) on the way.

The storied STORIS, a ship which served others for two-thirds of the American Century, perfectly embodies America's pre-eminent claim of "service to all", as no other ship has.

The STORIS was a "Warrior". The STORIS was a "Scientist". The STORIS was a national and international "Servant". Isn't it time now for the STORIS to become a "Teacher"?

Please. I urge you to nominate the USCG STORIS to the National Register of Historic Places. She is, quite simply both a National and an International "Treasure".

Respectfully Yours,

James M. Brundage-Neill
Somerset Parkside 1612 11th
Street, No. 1 Sacramento, CA
95814-5740

September 19, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street, Stop 7901
Washington, D. C. 20593-7901

Dear Commandant Papp –

I wish to ask for your help in ensuring that the retired Coast Guard Cutter STORIS be turned over to the Storis Museum Organization for the purpose of enshrining her as a Maritime Museum in Juneau, Alaska. This will become a true historical tribute to those who served on her.

My late husband had the honor and pride of serving on the STORIS 1951-1955, and was a member of the Bering Sea Patrol crew during that time. The mission of the STORIS at that time was to provide logistical and rescue support to light houses and Loran Stations while in Juneau.

Each summer the ship would head North out through the Aleutian Islands, the Pribilof Islands, and up the westward coast of Alaska, providing legal and medical aid to numerous Native Villages as far North as Nome. They even delivered a baby in the Armory of the ship near Unalakleet when weather prevented the return of Natives who were aboard for medical care from returning ashore. This child was named Storis after the ship.

It is my belief that the return of the STORIS to Juneau would provide a huge historical impact on the economy of Juneau for many years to come, allowing many to become aware of her proud history.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Theresa J. Wright
594 Cottonwood Road
Sebastian, Florida 32958

September 20, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street - Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Sir:

I worked as a civilian for the Coast Guard and also have several family and close friends who were in the Coast Guard. Many of us lived in Alaska when the STORIS was stationed there, in Juneau.

It just seems ideal and appropriate that this historis ship should be preserved and used as a museum in Juneau, for all of us, and our children, to know and remember this beloved ship and it's interesting history.

Sincerely,

Pauline L Kremer

Pauline L Kremer
2541 N Canal Street
Orange, California 92865

Sarah Pace
6310 Peoria-Reily Rd.
Oxford, OH 45056-9238
svpace@fuse.net

September 21, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp,

I can't think of a more worthy addition to the National Historic Register of Historic Places than the United States Coast Guard Cutter STORIS. Her place in maritime history is significant on so many levels.

64 years of service, saving lives, humanitarian efforts, receiving 47 awards and traveling 1.5 million miles is an incredible feat for one ship, beginning with WWII along the coast of Greenland protecting and supplying United States military stations and preventing the Germans from putting up weather stations. STORIS became the first U.S registered vessel to circumnavigate the North American Continent ending the search for the Northwest Passage in 1957. Picture a ship in frigid temperatures breaking ice to make a passage connecting the east and west through the arctic. Amazing. In 1975 she broke ice in Purdhoe Bay clearing the way for construction of the Alaskan Pipeline. Ironically, in 1987 she would return responding to the Exon Valdez oil spill tragedy. 1992 STORIS was the first foreign military vessel to enter the port of Petropavlovsk, Russia in 138 years. Heck, she even had a bit part in the movie The Guardian.

STORIS was no ordinary military ship. The arctic provides an environment challenging ship and crew to obstacles unimaginable by most of us. What a majestic career!

STORIS is dear to my heart. My grandfather, CDR F.B. Hunt, commanded her during WW II. I spent countless hours sitting on is lap as a child engrossed in the many stories of his travels. I look forward to the preservation of history two generations before me, that my children, grandchildren will also be able to embrace.

I sincerely hope STORIS will be given honor she deserves, being included in the National Historic Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Pace

Sarah Pace

Hunter Johnson
311 West Third
Beaver Dam, WI 53916

September 21, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp,

I write to you today regarding the USGC STORIS and her potential acceptance in the national registry maritime historical sites. The United States coast guard has a storied legacy of service to our country. The USGC STORIS has done more than her share in her sixty-four years of service to create and maintain this legacy, and a place on the registry is best way to honor and preserve all those who served upon this great ship.

The list of awards that have been bestowed upon the STORIS is almost as long as the distances the ship has traveled throughout her career. Whether defending America's shores during WWII or discovering the North West Passage the STORIS performed her duties in exemplary fashion. The ship was even pivotal in harnessing the vast natural resources of Alaska.

It is the duty of all patriots to preserve the ideals and history of this great nation. The history of our servicemen and women is a vital part of our nation's past and present. No ship is a truer embodiment of this spirit of excellence than The USGC STORIS. With your help, her story can live on to inspire others for generations to come.

Sincerely yours,

Hunter Johnson

22 September, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street - Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Sir

I would like to see the STORIS be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. I am retired from the U. S. Coast Guard. During WWII I was familiar with the operations of STORIS and other Coast Guard ships.

I had the opportinity to serve on STORIS from September 1963 to April 1965. We participated in many rescues and medical calls. After the 1964 earthquake in Anchorage, Alaska, we assisted in breaking ice for ships, barges and small vessels supplying aid to Anchorage. I am sure those that received this aid and assistance from STORIS would be very pleased to know that she is being honored.

It would also bring back memories to all of us who served on STORIS. The STORIS served for 64 and a half years. I am sure that many Alaskans living in the outlying villages were sorry when she was decommissioned.

Very truly yours,

Edward J. Barbarow

Edward J. Barbarow
2541 N. Canal Street
Orange, California 92865

LUCINDA W. LANGJAHR
P. O. BOX 65232
PORT LUDLOW, WASHINGTON 98365-0232
(360) 437-2797

September 24, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, USCG
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Re: Listing USCGC STORIS on the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Admiral Papp:

I am writing in support of efforts to have the decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter STORIS added to the National Register of Historic Places.

My father, CAPT Harold Wood, was CO of STORIS from 1955-58, and commanded her during her 1957 Northwest Passage expedition. He was also assigned to her as assistant to the project inspector, RADM Richard Schmidtman , during her construction , and sailed on her for a time on Greenland Patrol.

Those episodes constituted the bulk of my admittedly vague knowledge concerning the ship, until I read Section 8, the Statement of Significance, of the application for designation to landmark status. I felt a bit like one of the proverbial blind men encountering an elephant; my vision of her history was so limited. That history reads like an adventure novel, and provides great insight to so much of contemporary U.S. history. I think it also illuminates the "can do" attitude of those who choose to serve in the US Coast Guard, as well as illustrating the broad array of missions the service undertakes.

My husband and I attended the STORIS decommissioning in Kodiak in 2007. We were astounded at the number of people who made the effort to travel to Kodiak in February to mark the end of this gallant ship's career. It would be fitting to recognize her contributions by designating her as a National Historic Place.

Sincerely,

Lucinda W. Langjahr

Lucinda W. Langjahr

JMBM | Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP

Dennis J. White
Direct: (415) 984-9615
Fax: (866) 498-6749
DWhite@jmbm.com

Two Embarcadero Center, 5th Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3813
(415) 398-8080 (415) 398-5584 Fax
www.jmbm.com

September 28, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Re USCGC Storis

Dear Admiral Papp:

This letter is written to express my personal support for placing the Storis (I knew her as the USCGC Storis WAGB 38) on the National Register of Historic Places. She should be preserved because she was and is still well known in Alaska as the main presence of the United States Coast Guard in Alaska for many years. I had the privilege of reporting aboard the Storis in June 1967 as a boot Ensign, and when I walked down the fuel dock in Old Woman's Bay in Kodiak for the last time in February 1969, I realized I had been part of something very special, and I that lived through experiences of a lifetime. I was a deck officer and eventually served as the First Lieutenant. I loved the deck force. I am very thankful for the lives that we saved, for what I learned, for the life long friends I made aboard that ship, and for the opportunity to be part of her history. When I left her that day in 1969 she was alive. That last time I saw her was in June 2007 in Alameda, shortly after she was decommissioned. It is a sad thing to see a ship you loved, with so much history, on the verge of losing its life. The Storis belongs back in Juneau, where people can visit her as part of Alaska's history.

Very truly yours,

DENNIS J. WHITE of
Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP

DJW:djw

Mr. Galen A. Varon
304 Lewisburg Lane
Martinsburg, WV 25403

September 28, 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street - Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp:

In your address to Coast Guard Academy cadets on January 5, 2012, you said, "Our history is the very fabric of our Service…Teaching that history is our responsibility. As part of 'Honoring our Profession' we must be fluent in our history."

In an effort to preserve the legacy of one of the most prolific Cutters in Coast Guard history, the decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter STORIS has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is in line with your direction to ensure we are preserving Coast Guard history.

As a former Sailor of the Quarter onboard STORIS, I have taken great pride in preserving the STORIS' legacy and the heritage of other Queens of the Coast Guard Cutter Fleet. This has been evidenced by my two websites www.TheCutterSTORIS.info, www.The-Royal-Court-info and award-winning blog: "The American Queen" (URL: www.TheCutterSTORIS.info/1/blog).

As you know, the STORIS has been an instrumental part of Coast Guard, American and nautical history. She is on record for being the first US-flag vessel to circumnavigate the North American continent in 1957, she provided humanitarian support to over 100,000 Alaskans while conducting treacherous Bering Sea Patrols and stood duty for 58 years and four months in the Bering Sea—the current Coast Guard record which had previously been held by the Cutter BEAR. By ensuring the STORIS is registered as a National Historic Landmark, future generations will be taught about this exceptional Cutter and her service to this great nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most Sincerely,

Mr. Galen A. Varon

September 30, 2012

Murphy van Benschoten
14 S. Burberry Dr. #327
Madison WI>

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Admiral Robert J. Papp,

II was writing a short story about my parents, how they met, and their early years together. Those early years included my father (Lt. J.G. Thomas Morse Murphy) stationed on the USCG Cutter Storis during WWII. The photos dad had taken of the ship made the ship look big, but that was from the eyes of a little girl. I was greatly surprised to learn of the size and the exceptional history the cutter had during and after my father's time on the Storis. I also became aware of the USCG Cutter Storis' opportunity to be honored as Inclusion in the National Register of Historical Places. The USCG Cutter Storis has been decommissioned since February 8, 2007. Deciding what should be done with such a historical ship representing the United States in the many a mission during the war or after the war, would seem to be a simple and easy decision.

Also worthy of mention is the uniqueness of the USCG Cutter Storis, known as the "Queen of the Fleet." The uniqueness enabled the ship to be used as and ice breaker, reliable escort, serving on patrols, then, in 1948 was re-stationed to Alaska where it found additional life saving missions into the icy waters of Alaska.

Please consider carefully for the generations of future Americans who maybe unaware of the sacrifices their parents, grandparents and great grandparents made. Given them the additional opportunity to see and learn the importance the Coast Guard played in saving lives throughout America's history. The decision to place the beautiful and historic USCG Cutter Storis in the a National Register of Historical Places seems a simple one.

Sincerely daughter of a proud Storis crew member Lt. J.G. Thomas Morse Murphy,

Murphy van Benschoten

01 October 2012

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street - Stop 7901
Washington D.C. 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp:

I am the son-in-law of the late Lt. J.G. Thomas Morse Murphy. Lt. Murphy served on the USCG Cutter Storis during WWII. He was a graduate of the University of Akron, as well as Yale Law School. He raised a wonderful daughter, to whom I am married, and served his community well after military service. He often credited the military for enabling him to attend law school.

I can candidly state that I have never met or known (over thirty years) a more caring, intelligent, and unpretentious person in my lifetime. His only handicap was that he was a 4-handicap golfer (I'm being facetious).

I would consider it to be a great honor if you were to lobby on his, and the other men who served on the USCG Cutter Storis, to be matriculated into/on the National Register of Historical Places.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard L. van Benschoten
14 S. Burberry Dr., #237
Madison, WI 53719

Semper Servii
"Always serving"
1944 and into the future

COMANCHE
Former USN ATA 202 and USCG WMEC 202

October 28, 2012

To whom it may concern:

The Comanche 202 Foundation, owners and operators of the non-profit historic US Coast Guard Cutter WMEC 202 COMANCHE, support hardily the preservation of the US Coast Guard Cutter STORIS.

Sincerely,
Joe V. Peterson, MA
Director of Operations
Comanche 202 Foundation
Instructor, Military College Programs
Joint Base Lewis and McChord.

COMANCHE 202 FOUNDATION
403 Garfield Street South, Tacoma, Washington 98444
(253) 227-9678
Email ata202@live.com

US COAST GUARD TUG ASSOCIATION

RETIRED TUGBOAT ASSOCIATION

Wednesday, 31 October 2012

Malcolm R. Dick, Jr.
51 W Outlet Creek Rd
Shelton, WA 98584

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street, Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

re: CGC Storis

Dear Commandant Papp:

You undoubtedly will receive many letters supporting nomination of Cutter Storis to the National Register of Historic Places and I fully support the nomination. What you may not have heard is how much Storis and her crew mean to the people of Alaska, and how much she will be revered if she is moved back to Juneau.

I was a Seaman (shortly to become Bosun's Mate third) on Storis in May, 1968 as we left Seattle for our return to Kodiak, most of us nearly broke after three months of city lights. We stopped in Juneau for a short time during which we received liberty. Many of us made the rounds of Juneau's saloons, that first night, after which several of us finished the evening at a small restaurant. We (there were four or five of us) pooled our remaining money and had enough for one hamburger. A long, humorous argument ensued about how we were going to split one hamburger among several hungry seamen. The Juneau residents in the restaurant listened to us for a few minutes and collected, unbidden by us, enough money for all of us to have hamburgers, fries and cokes. They insisted we take the money with profuse thanks for what we Coasties did for all Alaskans. We suddenly felt pretty humble.

The next day, two fellow seamen and I hitchhiked out to see the spectacular Mendenhall Glacier. A young couple picked us up and said they would take us to the viewing site. The man, however, said he had to stop at his office for a moment, which turned out to be the local car rental agency. He returned to the car, drove over to an elderly pickup, and tossed us a set of keys. I'll never forget what he said: "I'm sorry but this is our only unrented vehicle. It's got a full gas tank and she's yours for the day. Just put the keys in the drop-box when you're done. We deeply appreciate all you Coast Guardsmen and what you do. " We told him we couldn't afford to rent the truck and he, rather indignantly, said it was his way of saying, "Thanks, USCG." We later returned the truck after having filled the gas tank. The man was a little upset that we filled the tank but we felt duty bound to do it.

Admiral Papp, Cutter Storis not only belongs to its crew and officers over the decades, but it belongs to Alaska and its residents. Hundreds of Alaskans and others are alive today because we Storis sailors and thousands of other Coasties over the decades, executed, then and now, rescues and other jobs that came our way. Storis is emblematic of all those Coasties over the years and Alaskans know that. The ship belongs in Juneau, open to the public, many of whom have their own stories to tell about how their lives were affected by the US Coast Guard, whether it was Storis or some other USCG unit. As proprietary as I feel about Storis, this is their ship, too.

My heart breaks as I see pictures of Storis moldering away in Suisan Bay, lost among the unwanted floating relics of times past. Storis deserves better than that, but, more important, the people of Alaska deserve to have their ship back home. I hope you agree.

Sincerely

Malcolm R. Dick, Jr.
USCGC Storis 6-66/6-68

Jess B. Cheatham
145 Argyll Circle
Pisgah Forest, N.C. 28768

NOVEMBER 2, 2012

Admiral ROBERT J. PAPP
COMMANDANT USCG

DEAR SIR:

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO PLACE USCG STORIS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES - THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BEING THE FINAL AUTHORITY.

MY SON, JESS B. CHEATHAM III SERVED ON THE STORIS 1977-78 OUT OF KODIAK. HE RETAINS A DEEP AFFECTION FOR HIS TIME ABOARD AND AFTER 34 REMAINS DEDICATED THE SHIP AND IT'S HISTORIC PAST.

I JOIN HIM IN ADDING MY VOICE TO THOSE ADVOCATING THAT THE STORIS BE GIVEN IT'S RIGHTFUL AND DESERVED FINAL BERTH AT JUNEAU, AK. THE MUSEUM# SHIP IN THAT LOCATION WOULD CELEBRATE AND HONOR THIS VAUNTED VESSEL AND IT'S MANY CREW MEMBERS WHO VALIANTLY SERVED OUR COUNTRY.

IN THE CLOSING, OMINIOUS DAYS OF WW II I SPENT A SHORT TOUR AT SEA ABOARD A T-2 TANKER. THE SEA TIME WAS A PHASE OF MY TRAINING AS A MIDSHIPMAN (USNR) AT KINGS POINT - USMMA Acad, LATER BEING ATTACHED TO HQ 8th ARMY YOKOHAMA, JAPAN. MY TIME AT SEA INSTILLED A DEEP AND ABIDING FOR TH SEA, THE SHIPS AND SAILORS ON HER WATERS. RESPECT

THE COAST GUARD MOTTO "SEMPER PARATUS" EXEMPLIFIES THE SPIRIT AND DETERMINATION "THE GUARD" EXHIBITS IN PROTECTING AND SERVING. ALL TOO OFTEN WE OVERLOOK OR FORGET HOW VALUABLE AND IMPORTANT "THE GUARD" IS TO OUR NATION'S WELFARE.

PLEASE! LET US HONOR OUR PAST BY BRINGING THE STORIS TO REST IN A PLACE OF HONOR AND RESPECT AND AND NOT IN MOTHBALLS OR SCRAP HEAP.

ADMIRAL, GOOD LUCK AND GOD SPEED!

Jess B. Cheatham, JR.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

Commandant
United States Coast Guard

2100 Second Street SW, STOP 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901
Staff Symbol: COMDT (CG-47)
Phone: (202) 475-5687
Fax: (202) 475-5949

16475

NOV 14 2012

MEMORANDUM

From: E. P. Wandell, Chief
COMDT (CG-47)

Reply to Dr. Daniel Koski-Karell
Attn of: (202) 475-5683

To: Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places and Historic Landmarks Division
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 2280
Washington, DC 20240

Subj: U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER STORIS, SOLANO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Ref: (a) National Historic Preservation Act Section 110, 16 U.S.C. 470h-2

1. The Coast Guard nominates the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter STORIS, moored in Solano County, California, for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The nomination package is enclosed (Enclosure (1)).

2. The California State Historic Preservation Officer's comments on this NRHP nomination were requested and received. They have been incorporated into this property's NRHP registration form where deemed appropriate.

3. Comments from appropriate local officials were solicited and none was received. Copies of this correspondence are included in the enclosure.

4. Several letters from members of the public supporting this nomination were received. Copies of this correspondence are included in the enclosure.

#

Enclosure: (1) NRHP nomination package for U.S. Coast Guard Cutter STORIS

Copy: CG-84 (with encl)
CG-09224 (with encl)

December 20, 2012

National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear National Park Service:

I am writing to express my support for including the US Coast Guard Cutter STORIS for listing in the National Register (12001110), currently located at the US Maritime Administration National Defense Reserve Fleet, Suisun Bay, Benicia, CA.

The STORIS is indeed a historically significant Coast Guard vessel, having served in commission from 1942 until 2007. During this extremely long period of service for a ship, the cutter saw action in the North Atlantic during World War II (on Greenland Patrol) before her storied career of service in Alaskan waters. From Bering Sea Patrol, the DEW Line resupply missions in the 1950s and 60s, the first circumnavigation of the North American continent in 1957, the first seizure of a Soviet Union fishing vessel in US waters in 1968, icebreaking in Prudhoe Bay to support construction of the Alaska Pipeline in 1975, her rescue of crewmembers from the F/V Alaska Monarch off St. Paul island in 1990, her port call at Petropovlask shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992 making STORIS the first foreign warship to enter that port since the Crimean War in the 1850s, to her being the "Queen of the Fleet" (oldest commissioned cutter) from 1995 through 2007, all while continuing to perform fisheries law enforcement, search and rescue, and other Coast Guard missions, the STORIS' history is truly significant.

In addition to the historical significance this vessel has for our country, and our 49th State, Alaska in particular, she has a personal family history for me, and probably many other Americans who served aboard her or were assisted by the vessel and her crew over her 65 years of service. My father served aboard STORIS in the late 1960s, and I had the privilege of sailing aboard her during a short patrol then. It instilled in me a love of the sea, and a desire to pursue a Coast Guard career myself. I did, and upon graduation from the Coast Guard Academy, I earned assignment to the STORIS as a deck watch officer in 1979. We thought the STORIS was an old ship then, yet she went on to serve in the fleet with distinction for another 28 years!

I urge you to accept the listing of the Coast Guard Cutter STORIS in the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Steven L. Hein, LCDR, USCG (Ret)
2781 Noble Fir Ct, Woodbridge, VA 22192

Elaine A. Jergons
1104 Virginia Ave
Midland, PA 15059

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp,

I am writing for your support regarding the nomination of the decommissioned USCGC STORIS to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This will insure the preservation of the legacy and rich maritime history of this extraordinary Cutter.

I strongly support the nomination based on the pre-decommissioning study preformed for the U. S. Coast Guard. The USCGC STORIS is in compliance, with Section 105, of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Cutter was found to be nationally significant in engineering design, commerce, exploration and science, defense and humanitarian support and maritime history.

The USCGC STORIS is personally significant to me for her strong seaworthiness during the missions of humanitarian support and disaster relief services. As the last Independent Duty Health Service Technician to serve aboard USCGC STORIS, I was privileged to provide medical aid to the isolated villages of Pelican and Atka during her last patrol. I have experienced three memorable years of caring for my crew, the citizens of Alaska and the general public. For all of these reasons, the USCGC STORIS is worth preserving to keep these memories alive and to teach the past and future generations about he illustrious career and her historic U. S. achievements.

Thank you for your support and kind attention to my request, Admiral Papp. I look forward to supporting and visiting the UGCGC STORIS as a museum and education center in Juneau, AK.

Sincerely,

Elaine A. Jergons, USC, U.S.C.G. Veteran

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

Dear Admiral Papp,

The CGC STORIS is currently in nomination for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. I am writing in support of that nomination.

I am a former Coast Guardsman serving from 1964-1970. I was a crew member of the Storis in 1969. Of all my unit assignments, the time aboard the Storis was the most memorable. The Storis's missions during that time ranged from fisheries patrol, ceasing illegal Japanese fishing vessels in Norton Sound, to humanitarian assistance aiding fellow mariners, a Russian fisherman with an eye injury, to, with aid from the CGC STATEN ISLAND, breaking out a tug and barge beset in the ice off the north coast of Alaska.

This is roughly, only one year's history of the 64 years of service this remarkable ship provided, most of which was in Alaskan waters. To me it seems to be the ideal platform for a maritime museum showing not only its story or even that of the Coast Guard, but of all the rich Alaskan maritime history.

Semper Paratus,

Sincerely,
James R. Henry RM1
3350 Strathmore Pl
Eugene, OR 97405

Admiral Robert J. Papp, Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street – Stop 7901
Washington, DC 20593-7901

To whom it may concern,

I served on board the Cutter Storis right out of boot camp back in 1976 to 1977. As part of the "Deck Force" for eighteen months it was an experience that made me a better person in more ways than one. I can honestly say that it was a life changing event and shaped my view of the Coast Guard that I still cherish to this day.

When I went to Reno Nevada for the 50th Anniversary of the circumnavigation cruise, I was one of the few from the 1970's era. Although I did see two of my fellow shipmates and they both commented on how the Storis was hands down the best ship they ever served aboard. It was so unique with it's ice breaking capabilities and rich history. I sensed a pride coming thru in their conversation even when one of them had served on board the Polar Star.

For the last twenty two years I've worked in radio in Dothan Alabama as well as Pensacola and Columbus Georgia. I've always told sea stories "on air" about various events that took place on board the Storis. Leading to three young men to join the Coast Guard versus the Army. It was the Storis and being stationed in Kodiak that motivated me more than anything else.

To me, the Storis, when I saw her in the Coast Guardsmans Manual along with pictures of the cutter Eagle and Bear should tell you a lot about the historical stature of this great ship. Most everyone I tell have no idea that it was the Storis that made the first trip thru the Northwest Passage under the American flag. That along with her rich sixty-four year history should make it a vital part of not only Alaskan history but Coast Guard history as well.

To let this great ship become razor blades would be a HUGE failure on all of us!

Please do whatever it takes to list the cutter Storis on the National Register of Historic Places. As a museum in Juneau it would do so much for Coast Guard. I say as much as the Weather Channels new tv show Coast Guard Alaska. Let's keep her history alive for future generations to see, touch and feel and to pass on so it's never lost and forgotten. It's too much a PART of the Coast Guard to let go!

Sincerely,

Jess B. Cheatham III

Jess B. Cheatham III

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION
U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER *STORIS*
SOLANO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* (WMEC-38) is located Suisun Bay near the City of Benicia in Solano County, California. It is a non-operating, decommissioned vessel owned by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). This U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) is moored in Suisun Bay along with other vessels in storage at the U.S. Maritime Administration's National Defense Reserve Fleet. It is accessible by water. USCGC *Storis* was commissioned in 1942 and was in active service for 64 years. It was decommissioned in 2007. Based on its historic character, the USCG intends to nominate this property for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA) (16 United States Code 470 *et seq.*) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to expand and maintain a national register of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Federal agencies are charged with identifying, evaluating, and nominating such properties under their control to the NRHP.

The Storis Museum, in cooperation with the USCG, has prepared a NRHP registration form for the USCGC *Storis*. It has been sent to the California State Historic Preservation Officer for review and comment concerning the USCG position that the property is eligible for listing in the NRHP. Pursuant to implementing regulation 36 Code of Federal Regulations 60.9, we are notifying local elected officials who may have an interest in the property and inviting them to comment on the nomination during the 45-day comment period. The property is described below.

Site Name and Location:

- USCGC *Storis* (WMEC-38)
- Located at the National Defense Reserve Fleet moorage in Suisun Bay near the City of Benicia in Solano County, CA

Owner:

- U.S. Coast Guard
  COMDT (CG-47)
  ATTN: Dr. Daniel Koski-Karell
  2100 Second Street SW – STOP 7901
  Washington, DC 20593-7901

Summary Description:

The USCGC *Storis* was built by the Toledo Shipbuilding Company in Toledo, Ohio and was commissioned as a USCG cutter in 1942. It is 230 feet long with a maximum beam of 43 feet and displaces approximately 2,000 tons. The USCGC *Storis* was designed to operate in North Atlantic waters around Greenland as a supply vessel with moderate ice-breaking capability. During World War II, USCGC *Storis* was based in Boston, MA, and operated chiefly in the North Atlantic conducting patrols, escorting convoys, and breaking ice.

In 1957, the USCGC *Storis*, along with USCGC *Bramble* (WLB-392) and USCGC *Spar* (WLB-403), explored the Arctic seeking a navigable route between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The deep draft channel discovered during this expedition established a navigable path for the long-sought Northwest Passage. After the cutters reached the Pacific Ocean, the *Storis* traversed the Panama Canal during its homeward voyage. Upon its return to the Atlantic waters off Greenland, the USCGC *Storis* became the first vessel to circumnavigate the North American continent.

In late 1957, the *Storis* was reassigned to Kodiak, Alaska. Following its arrival in Alaskan waters, the cutter's primary responsibilities shifted to enforcing the laws and treaties regulating commercial fisheries in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. USCGC *Storis*'s activity during the 1960s consisted largely of intercepting illegally operating foreign fishing vessels. The vessel underwent a major renovation in 1972 and was converted from a light icebreaker to a medium endurance cutter.

In 1975, the *Storis* carried vital supplies to Prudhoe Bay for the construction of the Trans-Alaska pipeline. In 1992, the cutter called at Petropavlovsk, on the Russian Kamchatka Peninsula, becoming the first foreign military vessel to enter the port since the Crimean War in 1854. The Coast Guard decommissioned USCGC *Storis* in 2007. At that time it was the oldest commissioned cutter in the Coast Guard. The vessel was subsequently taken to the U.S. Maritime Administration's National Defense Reserve Fleet moorage in Suisun Bay, California, for storage. It remains there today.

Summary Statement of Historical Significance:

This vessel is significant in the history of the United States Coast Guard. It is eligible for National Register of Historic Places listing under Criterion A for its association with the history of the Federal government's program to advance maritime safety and commerce through promoting navigation and the enforcement U.S. law in the Arctic and other northern waters. The USCGC *Storis* is also eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion C for its architectural and engineering significance. This vessel exemplifies how developments in marine architecture and maritime engineering during the first half of the twentieth century were applied to building vessels capable of

operating in northern waters including the Arctic. The qualities of the USCGC *Storis*'s design, materials, and construction methods are characterized by aspects that provided a vessel capable of safe navigation and operations in the north polar region's adverse environmental conditions. The USCGC *Storis* retains substantial integrity in terms of design, materials, and workmanship. It is a well-known U.S. Coast Guard cutter that saw continuous service for more than six decades and was involved in activities significant in American history.

Map and Photographs:

- National Defense Reserve Fleet – Suisun Bay location map.
- USCGC *Storis*, starboard side view, 1994.
- USCGC *Storis* at Suisun Bay, California, port side view, circa 2010.

National Defense Reserve Fleet – Suisun Bay Location Map

This is part of the "Port Chicago, Calif." 7.5' topographic quadrangle (U.S. Geological Survey 1959, photorevised 1968.)

USCGC *Storis*, starboard side view, 1994.

USCGC *Storis* at Suisun Bay, California, port side view, circa 2010.

Across the Top of the World

USCG Northwest Passage 1957

Across the top of the World

The U.S. Coast Guard's 1957 Northwest Passage Expedition

Written for the 50th anniversary of the expedition and the occasion of the decommissioning of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis

By Senior Chief Petty Officer
P.J. Capelotti, Ph.D., USCGR
USCG Historian's Office
2100 2nd St. SW., Washington D.C., 20593
(202) 372-4651/53

March 2007

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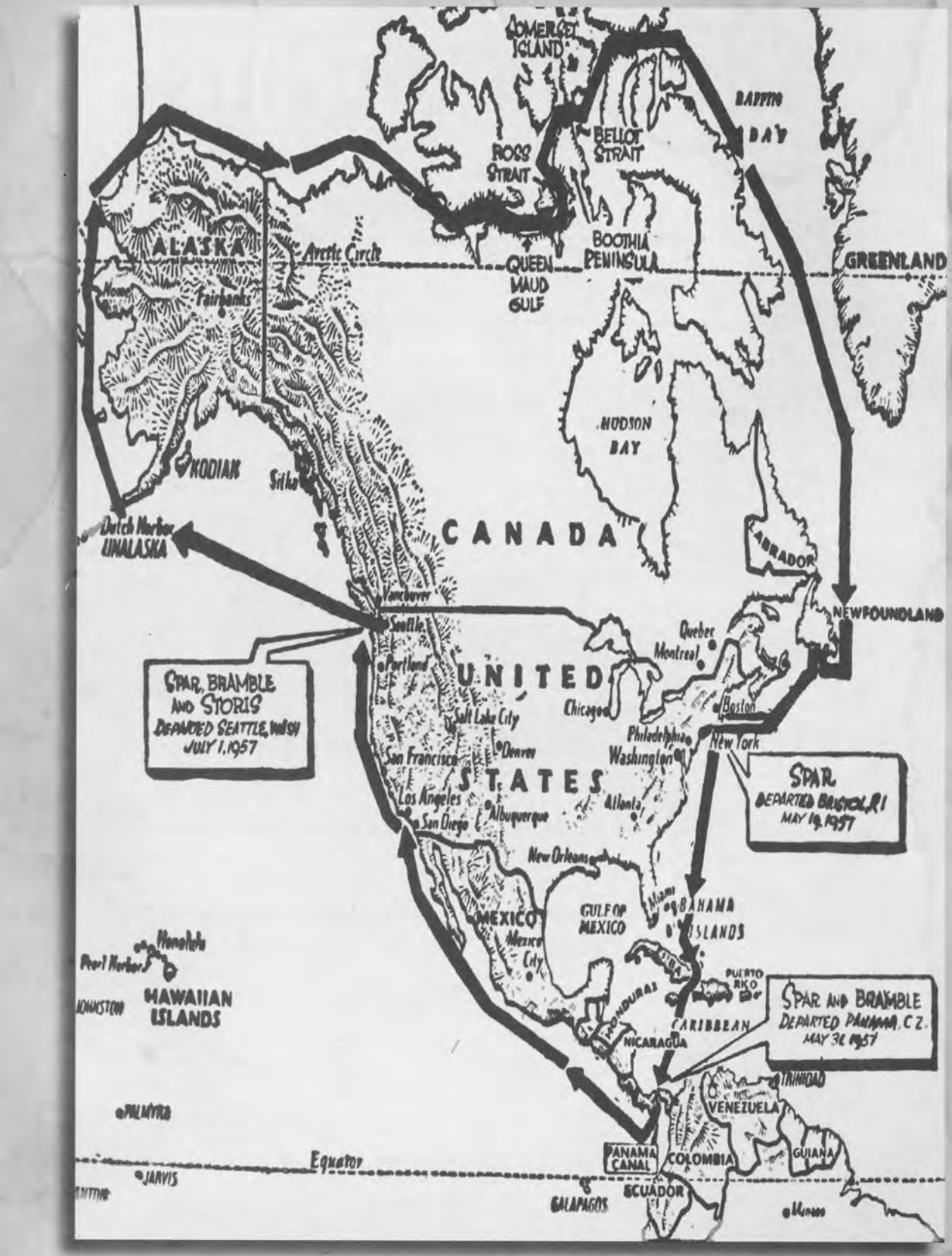
SOMERSET ISLAND
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Equator
JARVIS
ECUADOR
GALAPAGOS

Chapter 1

"We shall never cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."
-T. S. Eliot (1888 - 1965)

On the morning of Sept. 6, 1957, the U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender Spar reached the eastern side of Bellot Strait. Lt. Charles V. Cowing, Spar's young skipper, had a moment to write a special entry into the vessel's log.

1320: Arrived eastern point Bellot Strait having completed transit of Bellot Strait and the Northwest Passage in company with CGC Storis (WAG 38) and CGC Bramble (WAGL 402) and the HMCS Labrador. 109 days out of Bristol, Rhode Island.

Perhaps at this moment Cowing also took the opportunity to enjoy a deep breath. He had brought his buoy tender safely through a mythical passage the pursuit of which had killed scores of sailors and destroyed some of the most famous vessels in the history of exploration. In dry geographic terms, the narrow waterway of Bellot Strait separates the northernmost point of the North American continent with Somerset Island in the Canadian Arctic. But in terms of human longing, since the time of John Cabot this Northwest Passage had been imagined as a shortcut to the riches of the Orient, as a pathway to scientific achievement, as the glory road of Arctic exploration, and as the first line of defense for the continent of North America.

Spar's voyage had begun on May 19, 1957, in Narragansett Bay. In little more than three months, the buoy tender had visited Kingston, Jamaica; Balboa, Panama Canal Zone; Acapulco, Mexico; and Long Beach, Calif., before joining in Seattle on June 28 with the Coast Guard icebreaker Storis and Spar's sister buoy tender Bramble. Departing together from Seattle on July 1, 1957, the three cutters traveled through Unimak Pass on their way to Point Barrow, Alaska, where they began their attempt to break through the historic Northwest Passage. On Sept. 4, as they passed through a series of straits and gulfs named for Norwegian and British explorers and royalty, they reached the western edge of Bellot Strait, named for a French naval officer. There they met with the Canadian icebreaker HMCS Labrador. On the morning of Sept. 6, the four vessels transited the 17-mile strait.

1320: Arrived eastern point Bellot Strait having completed transit of Bellot Strait and the Northwest Passage in company with CGC Storis (WAG 38) and CGC Bramble (WAGL 402) and the HMCS Labrador. 109 days out of Bristol, Rhode Island.

The passage was clear of ice and took only two hours. Once on the eastern edge of the strait, the cutters steamed for Lancaster Sound and as they crossed the Arctic Circle heading homeward on Sept. 12, congratulatory telegrams rained down on the Coast

Guard cutters from admirals and department secretaries.

Eighteen days later, when Spar docked alongside its home pier in Bristol as the first American vessel ever to circle the entire North American continent, another telegram arrived from Dwight D. Eisenhower, the president of the United States. Within days, Bramble returned to its homeport in Miami as the second American vessel around the continent. Storis completed the expedition – and became the third – when it moored back in Seattle.

In addition to their triple feat of circumnavigation, the three Coast Guard vessels achieved several other firsts during their historic expedition. They became the first American vessels to make the transit of the Northwest Passage; the first vessels to accomplish a convoy through the passage; and Bramble and Spar became the first buoy tenders (and the only American buoy tenders) to make the Arctic voyage.

Geography of the Northwest Passage

The Northwest Passage is actually several passageways through the complex archipelago of the Canadian Arctic. According to Robert K. Headland of the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, England, seven different routes connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans via these ice-clogged seas. In the century since the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen accomplished the complete transit during 1903-1906 more than 100 voyages have been made through these passages by vessels from 18 different nations.

Even to reach the entrance to the Northwest Passage requires a difficult and dangerous feat of navigation. From the east, the way is challenged by thousands of enormous icebergs. These bergs, broken from the glaciers of Greenland in the east and Baffin Island in the west and reaching 300 feet in height, drift southward through Davis Strait. From the west, vessels reach the passage through the Bering Strait, where the mass of the polar ice cap leans its bulk on the north coast of Alaska and blocks any passage for much of the year.

Pursuit of the Northwest Passage

The Icelandic Sagas record that a Norseman named Erik the Red, banished from Iceland by criminal troubles, sailed with 25 ships from Iceland to the southwest coast of Greenland in 985 a.d. There he and the crews of the 14 ships that survived the journey made a new home near the present-day airfield at Narsarssuak. From this small colony, Erik's son Leif made the first exploratory expeditions along the northeast coast of North America. Over the next five centuries, Norse mariners would probe along the coasts of present-day Canada and perhaps as far south as New England, New York and New Jersey in search of timber and new waterways to take them even further west.

It is not known how much knowledge of these early voyages survived into the world of the Renaissance. But in the mercantile world of the late 1400s and early 1500s, after the conquest of the Middle East by the Ottoman Turks had closed overland trade routes from Europe to Asia, European nations increasingly sought new sea routes to Asia.

For a century after Prince Henry the Navigator founded an institute of geographic research at Sagres, Portugal, both Portuguese and Spanish explorers fanned out across the southern Atlantic, eventually rounding both the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa and Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America. As Spain and Portugal appropriated these southern routes to the Spice Islands of Asia, other European nations looked north for new maritime routes to these same riches.

The first explorer after the Vikings to search in this northerly direction was Italian navigator Giovani Caboto, who sailed from Bristol, England, in May 1497 under the name John Cabot. After 35 days at sea searching for a Northwest Passage to China, Cabot found his way blocked by the Canadian coastline. No contemporary sources have survived from his voyage, but it is thought that he spent about a month along the coast of northeastern North America before returning to England.

Cabot tried again a year later, but he and most of his fleet vanished from the seas and from history. By the time his son Sebastian Cabot tried unsuccessfully to locate the passage 10 years later, it had become clear that a new and enormous continent lay between Europe and Asia. For the next hundred years, navigators like Martin Frobisher, John Davis, William Baffin, Robert Bylot and Henry Hudson all probed the straits and bays that now are named for them.

Often the price they paid for this lasting fame was shipwreck, mutiny and death. Humphrey Gilbert, an avid colonizer and half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, wrote a book on the mythical passage, then drowned in 1583 returning to England after trying to find it himself. When Hudson's Bay proved to be an ice-filled trap rather than a passage to the east, Henry Hudson himself, his young son, and seven crew members were set adrift during a 1611 mutiny. When William Baffin's explorations convinced him that no northern passage to the east existed, interest in the arctic waned for nearly two centuries. Ironically, Baffin's discovery of Lancaster Sound would become the main portal to the Northwest Passage, and one the U.S. Coast Guard would use 350 years later.

Chapter 2

"Make voyages!
- Attempt them!
- there's nothing else..."
-Tennessee Williams (1911 - 1983),
Camino Real

Two centuries after Baffin, and after the defeat of Napoleon, an idled Royal Navy turned its attention to the problem of an Arctic sea route to connect the Atlantic and Pacific. In 1818, Admiralty Secretary John Barrow ordered two ships, HMS Dorothea and HMS Trent, to find a passage through the ice surrounding the North Pole and then to sail through the Bering Strait into the Pacific Ocean. The two ships, led by Cmdr. David Buchan and Lt. John Franklin, explored as far as the northwestern coast of Svalbard before turning back with the knowledge that no simple sea route over the polar sea existed.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN CAPT R.N.

John Franklin

Franklin returned to the Arctic as a captain in 1845. He was in command of an elaborate Royal Navy expedition with HMS Terror and HMS Erebus, two polar exploration vessels only recently returned from a pioneering exploration of Antarctica under the command of James Clark Ross. Franklin's ships were stopped in the late summer of 1846 by heavy pack ice in Wellington Channel, 12 miles northwest of King William Island. Franklin died in the spring of 1847; after living on board the vessels for 18 months, the two crews abandoned the ships and began a long and desperate march southward. All 129 officers and men perished, and a score of British and American expeditions set out to discover what had happened to Franklin and his men. Not until 1859 was a record discovered under a cairn on King William Island that unraveled the fate of the doomed expedition. While scattered remains of the men have since been located, the shipwrecks themselves have never been found.

One of the men who searched for Franklin was a French navy lieutenant named Joseph René Bellot. In 1851, Bellot joined the ship Prince Albert in an expedition financed by

Franklin's wife Jane. Unsuccessful in finding any trace of Franklin, Bellot instead discovered and traced a narrow channel of water that separated Boothia Peninsula – the northernmost point of land in North America and the place where the Royal Navy located the North Magnetic Pole in 1831 – with Somerset Island. The leader of the Prince Albert expedition, William Kennedy, named this strait after Bellot.

One explorer who read the story of Franklin closely was the Norwegian Roald Amundsen. Determined to avoid what he saw as Franklin's mistakes, Amundsen in 1903 chose for his Northwest Passage expedition a shallow-draft, 65-foot auxiliary herring sloop by the name of Gjøa. In this small vessel, Amundsen and his crew entered Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait, then turned south into Peel Sound and the uncharted waters of Franklin, Ross, and Rae straits.

After spending a year and a half at a place now called Gjøa Haven, and relocating the new position of the shifting magnetic pole, Amundsen maneuvered Gjøa through the rocks, shoals and shallows of Simpson Strait and around King William Island. These are the same waters that Storis, Bramble and Spar would create the first charts of 50 years later. Sailing into what is now called Amundsen Gulf, Gjøa in 1906 became the first ship to complete a northwest passage through the Canadian Arctic. Five years later, Amundsen would go on to become the first explorer to reach the South Pole and then, in 1926, the first to fly over the North Pole, in the airship Norge.

After Gjøa, it would be nearly 40 years before another vessel successfully challenged the passage. The St. Roch, perhaps the most famous ship in Canadian maritime history, took three arduous seasons, from 1940 to 1942, to make a Northwest Passage transit. Under the command of her Norwegian-born skipper Henry Larsen, St. Roch sailed from west to east, in the opposite direction from Amundsen and Gjøa.

As a Royal Canadian Mounted Police supply vessel, St. Roch possessed several unique capabilities, including an egg-shaped, two-foot-thick, ice-strengthened hull, and room on her decks for several dog teams. Heavy ice conditions forced Larsen to winter St. Roch at Cambridge Bay on Victoria Island. Freed from the ice in July 1941, Larsen eventually sailed to Gjøa Haven on King William Island and continued eastward against thickening ice. Trapped again at Pasley Bay, St. Roch grounded on a submerged shoal and barely escaped from being crushed. Reaching what he thought would be the safety of Bellot Strait in summer 1942, Larsen found his ship nearly crushed again by ice racing through the narrow strait. Reaching Halifax, Nova Scotia, that October, Larsen wrote laconically: "It had not been an easy trip."

As if to prove the point that ice conditions were never the same from one season to another, Larsen doubled back on the Northwest Passage in 1944, sailing east to west. Navigating St. Roch on a more northerly course, Larsen reached Vancouver in less than three months.

Henry Larson stands on the bridge of the St. Roch. The St. Roch was the second ship to sail the Northwest Passage and the first ship to sail it both ways in a single season.

Chapter 3: The Cold War's Impact

"You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war." -Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955)

As Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union and western democracies intensified in the late 1940s and early 1950s, both the United States and Canada sought to define the boundaries of any possible conflict. The possibility of a Russian air attack over the North Pole turned the Arctic into a potential battlespace. To demonstrate its sovereignty over this vast area, Canada sent the icebreaker HMCS Labrador through the Northwest Passage in 1954.

Two years earlier, defense planners had begun to look at the Northwest Passage as the first line of defense for the continent of North America. A 1952 meeting of scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology produced an idea for a system of early warning radar stations across the Canadian Arctic. This string of outposts would stretch from Point Barrow in Alaska 3,000 miles eastward to Baffin Island. The system as a whole was designed to detect incoming aircraft, not to intercept or destroy them. Once in operation, military planners expected to gain four to six hours of advance warning of an air attack coming from over the polar horizon. The extra time would allow for the rapid evacuation of cities and the air defense of vital industrial areas.

Two years later, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved the project and ordered it built as soon as possible. Between 1955 and 1957 this string of installations, called the Distant Early Warning Line, or DEW Line, brought thousands of military and civilian personnel onto remote Arctic shorelines. The construction of more than 50 DEW Line sites and the emplacement of new weather stations required a massive sealift by the Military Sea Transportation Service. This sealift delivered more than 2.5 million tons of cargo and 12 million barrels of fuel to the Canadian Arctic, all while maintaining alternate season supply runs to the U.S. Navy's Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica.

At its peak, the DEW Line project employed over 7,500 civilian and military personnel. The line consisted of six main radar stations supported by 23 auxiliary and 28 intermediate stations, with the smaller stations functioning to close gaps in the radar coverage of the main stations. It remains one of the largest and most complicated construction projects ever undertaken.

The Coast Guard Cutter Storis had already participated in the previous two summer operations in 1955 and 1956, operating as a hydrographic survey unit with the survey ship USS Requisite (AGS-18). DC2 Jim Loback, who reported on board Storis the day before she left for the Arctic in 1956, remembered that "there was some scuttlebutt that we would be 'going around' [the continent] in '56, but it never materialized. In '57, I knew they were serious when they sent up the other two ships (Bramble and Spar)."

MSTS Arctic Operations in 1957 were to be the capstone of this enormous effort. Besides DEW Line construction, bases would be re-supplied in Greenland, Baffin Island, Labrador, and Newfoundland. More than 100 ships and 12,000 military and civilian personnel from the U.S. and Royal Canadian navies, the

U.S. Army, the Merchant Marine and the U.S. Coast Guard would be involved.

Sealift operations for these missions were as hazardous as they were necessary. Previous years had shown that a continuous airlift prior to the annual breakup of pack ice in the Northwest Passage would bring less than 10 percent of the cargo that the MSTS sealift could carry during the brief Arctic summer when sea navigation was possible. Only sealift operations could bring the tonnage of supplies into the Arctic required to build and maintain the forward defense of the DEW Line.

But ships were vulnerable to being trapped by the greatest natural hazard in the Arctic: ice. For much of the year, the polar ice pack pressed down upon the northern point of Alaska at Point Barrow. Any ship caught east of this point when the ice moved in permanently at summer's end would be forced to winter there and would likely be severely damaged if not destroyed. Ice conditions often required underwater demolition divers to blast away grounded ice in order to provide clear approaches to beach areas for landing craft.

If U.S. naval ships were trapped north or east of Point Barrow, as had almost happened in the summer of 1956, they would need some way to break out. The only option was to the east, through the classic Northwest Passage of Amundsen and Larsen, towards escape into the North Atlantic. But the expeditions of Gjøa and St. Roch had taken advantage of (and at various points nearly been sunk by) areas of shallows and shoalwaters unsuitable for deep-draft naval and cargo vessels.

The U.S. Coast Guard was therefore given a special triple mission: find a usable Northwest Passage through which deep-draft ships could escape from the Arctic; conduct a detailed hydrographic survey of it – extending the hydrographic sounding tracks begun by Storis and USS Requisite in 1955 and 1956; and then mark this new passage with aids to navigation.

The expedition would be anything but simple. Early season operations in 1957 had already seen the worst ice conditions many Arctic veterans had ever experienced. Despite the use of helicopter reconnaissance and portable automatic weather stations emplaced on the polar ice pack north of Alaska, six different transport ships were damaged by ice before the Coast Guard task unit appeared on scene. Other difficulties would involve the lack of adequate charts; continuous daylight conditions, which limited the use of celestial navigation; magnetic shifts caused by the proximity of the North Magnetic Pole; and shifting winds that transformed open lanes of ocean into ice-clogged barriers in a matter of minutes.

Such obstacles became instant challenges for the Coast Guard crew. Petty officers who handled quartermaster duties on board Storis in 1956 refined their dead reckoning in the ice fields so that their navigation fixes were less than four miles off even after 10 days of moving back and forth through the shifting maze of ice. New whip antennae were mounted on board Storis to overcome the lack of radio connectivity experienced in Canadian waters during the 1956 cruise.

A newcomer to Storis in the fall of 1956 was a young ensign just graduated from the Coast Guard Academy, Richard Rybacki. When Rybacki arrived in Alaska, Storis had not yet returned from her 1956 Arctic expedition. "So they handed me a packet of TRs (Travel Requests), and told me to go out and do some recruiting for the Coast Guard Academy!" When Storis did arrive, Rybacki recalled, there was the usual reaction on board a Coast Guard ship when they see a new ensign arrive: "Great, a warm body. Let's put him to work!" If a new ensign had any advantage in the Coast Guard, it was the small size of the service. Rybacki already knew most of the officers in the wardroom. Over the next two years on Storis, he would spend nearly 90 percent of his time at sea.

When Storis suddenly returned to her homeport in the middle of a May 1957 cruise, the crew suspected something was up. When they were told to spend some time with their families because they might not be back for six months, rumor became fact. They were "going around." In a great synchronized wheeling operation that encompassed the entire continent of North America, three Coast Guard cutters set out in May 1957 to overcome the obstacles of the Arctic and to do what no American vessels had ever accomplished.

Chapter 4

"It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret."

-Jackie Joyner-Kersee

The first of the three cutters to start the continental circumnavigation was the Spar, which left her homeport of Bristol, R.I., on May 19, 1957. This followed a spring of modifications at the Coast Guard Yard in Curtis Bay, Md., where the hulls of both Spar and Bramble were strengthened with additional steel ice-belts at and below the water line in preparation for cruising in Arctic waters. These thick metal belts stretched from the bow aft of amidships, and would protect the hull from the effects of ramming through pack ice. Additional equipment loaded for the Northwest Passage included an evaporator for producing fresh water and a rotating Honeywell sonar unit, an early type of side-scanning sonar.

A new stainless steel propeller, designed to withstand the ice better than the usual bronze, was also installed at Curtis Bay. On the way south, at certain speeds, it caused such a shimmy and a loud, penetrating note throughout the entire ship that the Bramble had to go back into dry-dock in Miami until the problem was fixed.

Lt. Cmdr. Harry H. Carter was Bramble's skipper. "They had just transferred anyone who wanted to get off," remembered Carter. "So we had pretty much of a new crew for this voyage." The new crew was all volunteers who had signed up for the mission once it had

been announced. The challenge was even greater for Carter, who had no previous experience on a buoy tender like Bramble and had just reported on board himself when Bramble was being fitted out at Curtis Bay. However, he'd faced similar situations in his Coast Guard career. In 1943, due to the war-time emergency, he had graduated with a four-year degree from the Academy in only three years. Later he became a member of the International Ice Patrol though he had never seen any ice. "The Coast Guard believes you can do anything they tell you to do."

Carter found the Bramble in a sorry state. The hull plating below the waterline from stem halfway to stern had been cut away to be replaced with the heavier plate for work in the ice. The ship's small boats were fitted with portable fathometers for inshore survey work. Once in Miami, the operational plan required the loading of six months worth of specialized supplies for the Arctic expedition. During those months of April and May of 1957, stores of all kinds streamed on board the cutter. Three thousand books were added to the ship's library.

Both Bramble and Spar carried six officers and 54 men during the Northwest Passage voyage. Along with the 125 crew on board Storis and another 60 on board the USCGC Balsam participating in DEW Line operations, the Coast Guard had 305 men involved in the 1957 MSTS Arctic operations.

One of those sailors was a young damage controlman named Ron Kubeck, who had enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1955. While serving on board the USCGC Cook Inlet, he noticed a message seeking volunteers for an upcoming Arctic expedition. With experience as a scuba and hookah hose diver from Damage Control School in Groton, Conn., Kubeck's application to join the new expedition was approved, and in the spring of 1957 he reported on board Spar as the only damage controlman.

Spar steamed for Jamaica, arriving at sunrise on May 25. After the officers, chiefs and crew enjoyed a day of liberty, Spar continued on to the Panama Canal Zone. Bramble left her homeport of Miami, Fla., on May 26 and rendezvoused with Spar in the Panama Canal Zone. With Bramble in the lead, the two cutters convoyed toward Acapulco, Mexico, which they reached on Sunday morning, June 9. There, Lt. Cmdr. Carter made the most of his liberty by hauling in a 119-pound sailfish.

"I don't know how that story got around," remembered Carter, "but it's true. Four of us – a chief from Bramble and two folks from Spar – had rented a boat with a fisherman. You could catch sailfish out there without any effort at all. We landed five of them in that one day. You couldn't keep it unless you agreed you were either going to mount it or eat it. Well, I couldn't afford to mount it, so I decided to eat this fish that was almost nine feet long. I took it back to the ship, we threw it on the reefer, and it stayed there from June until we got back to Miami in September where I had it smoked." For the remainder of the expedition, the skipper of Spar, Lt. Charles Cowing, referred to Spar's sister ship as "the fish carrier from Acapulco and Miami."

The two vessels reached Long Beach, Calif., in mid June, and moored alongside one another. The log of the Spar recorded that she took on board 31,000 gallons of fuel and an LCVP. This landing craft would become one of the inshore workhorses during the Arctic charting and surveying to come. Continuing north along the western coast of the United States, Spar and Bramble reached Seattle on the morning of June 27, where they moored alongside Storis, which itself had just arrived from Ketchikan, Alaska, to have a helicopter landing platform placed in its decks.

Loback recalled meeting with the petty officers and chiefs who handled quartermaster duties on the other two vessels, to go over charts and courses. The sailors from Miami on board Bramble were already sporting their brand new Arctic foul weather gear with fur-lined hoods. "They were complaining about the cold, and we were still going out on deck without jackets."

In Seattle, the Coast Guard vessels, "three stubby little ships," as Newsweek referred to them, were attached to Task Force 5 under the command of Rear Adm. Henry S. Persons, USN, the commander of the MSTS Pacific Area. Task Force 5 was responsible for the supply of DEW Line stations on the Pacific side of Bellot Strait. The Coast Guard element itself was designated as Task Unit 5.1.5, and operated under the command of Capt. Harold Wood, the skipper of Storis.

Rybacki recalled the first meeting between

a stoic, pipe-smoking Capt. Wood and Adm. Persons, the overall task force commander. When the Coast Guard officers entered the room, Adm. Persons quipped that it was "good to have the Hooligan Navy here at the meeting." Wood, in a laconic reply his officers would retell for years when speaking of him, answered "We don't mind you calling us 'hooligans,' but it's the 'navy' part that we find objectionable."

After a U.S. Navy hydrographer reported on board Spar from the cable-laying ship USS Thor (ARC-4), the new task unit steamed north making approximately 250 miles per day. Kubeck remembered diving to check on some minor damage to Spar's prop after meeting some ice near the Aleutian Islands. The decision was made to continue on. "As I recall, the Russians intercepted our communications and cordially invited us to use their dry-dock facilities in Siberia, and we told them, 'thank you, no thank you.'"

On Wednesday, July 10, the convoy crossed the Arctic Circle (66° 33'N) and arrived off Point Barrow, Alaska, on the morning of July 12. There they made a rendezvous with the icebreaker USS Burton Island (after 1966, a Coast Guard vessel), and made preparations for steaming to the east. Throughout July 12, Bell helicopters flown by U.S. Navy pilots from Storis and Burton Island carried mail, personnel and equipment to the four vessels offshore.

At this point, Spar had already been away from Bristol for 40 days, and steamed for over 8,600 miles. The weather was good, and only scattered ice dotted the seas north of Point Barrow. But the crew could see the polar ice pack looming on the northern horizon, so it was no doubt with renewed seriousness that they sat through a training film titled "Cold Weather Operational Problems."

The task unit was put to work immediately, cruising six miles northeast of Point Barrow to conduct a series of soundings of a reported shoal. Charts of this survey were forwarded to the MSTS DEW Line fleet for use in its supply runs later that same month. Both the Burton Island and Storis were equipped with helicopters for ice reconnaissance; on July 13 they led the Spar and Bramble into the ice fields of the Beaufort Sea.

Burton Island assisted the three Coast Guard vessels in breaking through the solid field of ice that began about six miles east of Point Barrow. Continuous daylight made for generally mild weather conditions, and the cutters began what would become their regular routine of following narrow openings, or leads, in the ice fields. Following these leads, often discovered by the helicopters scouting ahead of the convoy, initially allowed the vessels to maintain regular daily mileage toward the east.

On July 17, an ice reconnaissance flight from the airstrip at Cape Parry had revealed severe ice conditions to the east. After taking on nearly 20,000 gallons of fuel from Burton Island, the Spar launched its small boat so Cowing could join Carter in a conference with Capt. Wood on board Storis. As the Burton Island left the convoy and returned to Point Barrow, Storis cautiously led the task unit into the Amundsen Gulf.

Chapter 5

"He that will not sail till all dangers are over must never put to sea."

-Thomas Fuller

For the next week, Spar began her oceanographic work of recording currents and seawater temperatures and depths. Meanwhile, Storis and Bramble lay in thickening ice at 70°04'N, just off Mackenzie Bay, Canada. Often, the two cutters drifted in ice-free lakes, or polynias, dodging small chunks of floating ice known as growlers and small icebergs called bergy-bits, while surveying the ice conditions ahead and waiting to continue the expedition eastward.

When progress along the northern coast of Canada did commence, it was slow and at times extremely dangerous. On an expedition when the daily miles made good averaged between 50 and 100, Bramble reported only five miles of progress on Aug. 1. Sailors recalled the sensation of standing watch on the bridge of Storis at midnight, watching the midnight sun go down not quite to the horizon, before it stopped and started to rise again.

From July 23 through Aug. 2, as Spar continued her soundings, the three ships struggled to maintain headway through heavy ice in Dolphin and Union Strait and Queen Maud Gulf. The situation came to a near-crisis on July 29, when Storis, ramming through ice floes, met hard, fast ice that would not be moved. Spar, just astern, slowed to avoid a collision, and Bramble in the rear stopped as well, trapping all three vessels for two days.

As northerly winds pushed more ice down onto the immobile vessels, ice floes forced their way under the Spar, the rudder jammed and the ship lost its steering control. Ice continued to press into Spar, pushing the cutter upward and into the hull of Storis. Spar's logbook recorded the scene on the morning of July 30: "Extreme ice pressure holding Storis in contact with this vessel's port side. Fenders rigged. Unable to maneuver. Propellers and rudders blocked by ice." The floes pushed the two vessels so close together that men were passing cigarettes back and forth to each other.

On board Storis, the crew attempted to maneuver the larger ship to keep from crushing Spar. "We were stuck," recalled Loback,

July 30: Extreme ice pressure holding Storis in contact with this vessel's port side. Fenders rigged. Unable to maneuver. Propellers and rudders blocked by ice.

"and there were rumors that they were going to start taking people off." Rybacki – who kept a personal diary of the expedition and still has it in his possession, almost 20 years after his retirement as a rear admiral – remembered the day vividly. "One of the lessons we learned along the way is emphasized in the notes I kept throughout the trip. And that was the power of the wind on the ice, and the fact that if you watched it carefully you'd be able to take advantage of the weather. It would make it a lot easier on you and the vessel, rather than just putting your head down and battering your way through the ice. The wind and the weather had such a great impact on the forces of the ice."

Kubeck remembered the 20-degree list making it very difficult to walk the Spar's decks. "I think if that happened to me today I'd be very concerned, but back then I had maybe the right attitude that nothing can happen to me; nothing is going to happen to any of us."

But Storis was having problems of its own. As it attempted to move off, ice jammed Storis' rudder first at 30 degrees left, then 5 degrees left. "We were at 'all stop,'" said Loback, "since the screws wouldn't turn over. One of the privileges of being a first class petty officer on board Storis was the chance to stand ice watch on the stern. Any time ice got too close to the prop, you'd notify the bridge and they'd stop the engine. These watches would last for an hour at a time. All of a sudden we were stopped and couldn't use the screws, and the rudders were frozen in."

One of the gunner's mates appeared with dynamite charges and attempted to blast Storis free. "I don't think they were that familiar with the dynamite," remembered Loback, "because they set the charges off quite a ways from the ship – which we were grateful for." In the afternoon, Rybacki recorded in his private log that the weather had cleared enough for a mail plane to deliver correspondence to the ship. He wrote: "Lucky as I am, I received three letters from my wife and one from my mother. Had the 8-12 watch today, so I went on watch immediately following the movie "Davey Crockett." Had a fair watch, busting the Spar out of the ice in which she was stuck. I learned what an amazing effect tide has on ice while chopping out the Spar."

Storis was not able to free herself until the afternoon of July 30. Rybacki noted in his private log that he slept in until 1000, sewed a patch on his shirt and even did a few exercises. So while the Storis was pinched in by ice, life went on. Nevertheless, discussions took place just in case life couldn't go on. "We talked about that," remembered Rybacki. "I think we all felt that we would be able to get out. My log shows that we were waiting for either the wind to shift or for the Burton Island to arrive and break us free. I think the concern was whether we would be able to break out and go east, which was our mission. We always felt we could break out and return west."

When Spar restarted her engines and turned her propellers, the crew felt a shimmy throughout the stern of the ship, evidence of a broken prop blade. Limping through the pack

ice, Spar followed Storis on Aug. 1 in splitting a path in the ice to free Bramble, trapped and unable to maneuver two-and-a-half miles astern. "We had 5,000 yards to go to get to them," Rybacki wrote in his log. "At midnight, we just reached them and started chipping them out. Had a lot of fun breaking the ice, but I got stuck and had to use the boom to get out once." Re-reading his young ensign's log, Rybacki found that at the same time Storis was fighting the ice, he was involved in a tussle with his executive officer over a lock he had issued but which the XO had lost. "So those kinds of things were going on while the ship was locked in the ice." In the larger scheme of things, this was also the same day that the DEW Line was declared operational.

Lt. Cowing stopped Spar the following day to check for ice damage. Divers found that a foot and a half of one of the propeller blades had been snapped off. Ice conditions improved on Aug. 2, and the crisis abated. That same day, one of the Bell helicopters from Storis surveyed the route ahead, landing and refueling on board Spar before returning to Storis. Bramble's log recorded 54 miles made good that day.

Cmdr. Carter recalled that, after the near-entrapment, the captains decided to proceed through the ice abreast of each other as much as possible. If one of the ships was stuck, then one or both of the other ships could try and force a passage to free the trapped cutter.

The vessels were able to proceed through Dolphin and Union Strait, continuing their ocean stations and surveying a previously uncharted island, before traversing Coronation Gulf on Aug. 4 and Dease Strait on Aug. 5. Feeling their way through small leads and cracks in the ice near the shoreline of Victoria Island, the cutters arrived at the desolate outpost of Cambridge Bay on the Aug. 6. Bramble broke the ice in Cambridge Bay and led in the other two cutters.

At Cambridge Bay, local authorities allowed the men a chance to go ashore for a rather bleak liberty. After landings by LCVPs from both Spar and Bramble, a day of recreation included visits to the local Hudson's Bay Company trading post; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police outpost; and two missions, one Anglican, the other Catholic. Rybacki went ashore with his fishing tackle and caught a few Arctic char.

Twenty Inuit families lived in a native village nearby. Unlike their Coast Guard counterparts from the Greenland Patrol during the Second World War, the men of the Northwest Passage expedition were forbidden by Canadian government regulations to visit or fraternize with the native population. Loback, who did not go ashore, recalled one sailor returning to Storis and removing his watch cap to reveal a shaved head covered in mosquito bites.

The task unit charted Cambridge Bay and its approaches. Broken, concentrated ice created difficult operating conditions for the convoy's small boats, as the LCVPs from

"I don't think they were that familiar with the dynamite," remembered Loback, "because they set the charges off quite a ways from the ship — which we were grateful for."

Bramble and Spar led a shallow water survey with portable fathometers. "We would take continuous soundings with the fathometer," remembered Loback, "and one of the hydrographic officers and I would use sextants to take angles and plot those against our soundings. We were operating with charts of the area that did not have good soundings."

Charts from these surveys would be used by the MSTS supply ships that would follow the Coast Guard convoy later that summer. While these surveys were being carried out, another small boat from Bramble assisted divers in scuba gear as they inspected the hulls of the three Coast Guard cutters. They found a four-foot section of Bramble's port bilge keel had been badly dented, and Spar would have to limp along until its prop could be replaced.

Besides the executive officer and assistant engineering officer on Storis, two young ensigns were assigned to Arctic diving operations. Rybacki was one of them. "If you've seen the film of the expedition ["Cutters Around the Continent"], there are a couple of heroic guys in their dry suits. I was one and

my classmate Bruce Solomon, who has since passed away, was the other. We went through 'tortuous' training in order to become qualified. While in Seattle we went to the YMCA for scuba-diving classes for one week!"

During one dive underneath Storis to extract a sonar transducer from its nest in the hull, Rybacki accidentally scraped a hole in his suit. "It was like a sharp needle. The water was 29.5°F. By the time they hoisted me on board with the boom, my foot was numb."

As for their ice-breaking methods, Cmdr. Carter recalled that swinging the Bramble's buoy crane back and forth with a suspended buoy mooring weight to rock the vessel back and forth was ineffective. So was using explosives to break a path through the ice. "You had to simply wait for the wind to shift and clear the ice. It never occurred to us that we would be stuck there. We just figured that sooner or later things would open up." If they were beset in the ice, the plan was to use an onboard supply of plywood to enclose the house and airlift most of the crew to safety. A skeleton crew would remain behind for the winter.

Leaving Cambridge Bay, the convoy continued east. The LCVPs continued their work around the ice-filled edges of tiny Arctic islands, ferrying men and supplies ashore for the construction of aids to navigation. Drilling through permafrost and rock, crews anchored steel bases for tripod towers that held navigational beacons and radar reflectors. Old buoys were repainted and reset, and new ones emplaced, including one of the spot where Storis touched bottom in Simpson Strait on Aug. 14.

"It's a very shoal body of water," Rybacki wrote in his personal log that day. "As was experienced by Storis today as we spent four hours on a shoal. Storis went aground." After they floated free, Storis completed setting a series of channel markers and then escorted the task force through the newly-marked channel.

Some towers needed removal, and one such incident remains in Cmdr. Carter's memory to this day. "We were operating in an area where the fog rolled in very quickly. Our shore parties had installed many aluminum towers for navigation, and the Storis sent us back to remove one of them. I didn't have any radar. We sent a crew ashore, they tore the tower down, came back to the ship and by then we were about 25-30 miles behind the convoy. Dense fog, no radar; so we just started plugging away. You could look over the side and see the bottom. I don't think we had more than three or four feet under the keel. So we moseyed along at about three knots and finally caught up, but I can tell you I didn't get much sleep that night."

During an LCVP deployment from Bramble, Cmdr. Carter realized the quickly-changing operational environment in which he and his crew were navigating. The LCVP deployed from Bramble to do some work on an island, but without supplies to sustain the crew if they were caught there. "We learned that shore parties in the Arctic have to be self-sustaining, because you never know if you are going to get them back or not. You can put them ashore and they can be working there when the next thing you know the fog shuts everything down and they can't find you. And if they can't subsist by themselves until you

find them, then you have a real problem. We came very close once. We put an LCVP ashore to take down a tower when the fog shut in. They didn't know where we were, and since we didn't have radar we didn't know where they were. It could have been very dicey, but suddenly the fog lifted and they found us."

Other distractions could alter the daily routine as well. Every morning Loback would make out the daily position report, have the navigator sign it, and have it ready by 8 a.m. One morning Loback could not find the navigator. He searched the entire ship, and finally found the navigator at the Storis' fantail, intently taking pictures of a polar bear. The bears would often appear at the fantail when the ship was operating in heavy pack ice.

Rybacki recalled the roar of ice as it pressed down on Storis when the vessel was anchored in Queen Maud Gulf. "Being the OD (Officer of the Deck), I thought, 'I've got to do something quick. I don't know whether the anchor is going to hold us here.' It was a time for learning to do some significant ship-handling, learning to react quickly to what was going on."

On Aug. 15, an MSTS convoy led by the USCGC Balsam arrived in Queen Maud Gulf, and for several days the small Coast Guard fleet exchanged mail and movies while Bramble and Spar continued with their aids to navigation work. A U.S. Navy film, "Land and Life in the Arctic," made a hurried pass through. A Coast Guard press release of the time claimed somewhat unconvincingly that such "movies were good even for the second or third time."

After refueling and re-supplying from the MSTS fleet, Task Unit 5.1.5 continued its intensive survey of Simpson Strait, while Balsam led its convoy more than 1,000 miles back to Point Barrow. On Aug. 23, Spar ran aground while surveying Douglas Bay, and Bramble towed her free. The same day, Capt. Wood made an ice reconnaissance flight from Storis all the way to Bellot Strait and back. "There were all sorts of unnamed islands in the area," recalled Loback. "So everybody was putting their own names on them, or their wife's name, but I don't think any of them ever got recorded. There's a Loback Island up there somewhere."

A week later, with their hydrographic and construction work in Simpson Strait concluded, the convoy commenced its long-awaited transit of the final leg of the Northwest Passage.

Chapter 6

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."

-Anatole France

The 300-mile voyage from Queen Maud Gulf to Bellot Strait was free of the perils that had thus far accompanied the expedition. Ice had moved out and "we just kind of sailed up there," remembered Loback. A survey around the southeast corner of King William Island provided a navigational track through Rae Strait, James Ross Strait, and Franklin Strait all the way to the approaches of Bellot Strait. Waiting for the American convoy at the western approaches of Bellot Strait on the morning of Sept. 3 was the Canadian icebreaker HMCS Labrador, which was similar in design and construction similar to the U.S. Coast Guard's Wind-class icebreakers.

On Aug. 24, Labrador, under the command of Capt. Thomas C. Pullen, RCN, had moved through Bellot Strait from east to west, preceded by a small sounding boat and two helicopters. Pullen discovered a good channel in the strait, with a minimum depth of 50 feet. Use of the strait would cut hundreds of miles off the usual Northwest Passage route around the northern end of Somerset Island.

For two days after the Coast Guard cutters met Labrador, each of the four vessels operated independently, each surveying a different sector of the western approaches to Bellot Strait. When the three Coast Guard

vessels were tied up alongside the Labrador, some of the Americans went on board Labrador to enjoy the Royal Canadian Navy daily rum ration, recalled Loback.

Finally, on the morning of Sept. 6, 1957, the four ships, led by Labrador, steamed 17 miles through an ice-free Bellot Strait and anchored at its eastern end. Following a centuries-old Arctic tradition, shore parties from each vessel landed at Fort Ross on barren and rocky Somerset Island in order to place historical documents describing their achievements underneath a rock cairn.

They were standing on appropriately historic ground. Pullen's crew discovered the cairn a week earlier, and found that it contained a series of messages from previous explorers, including one written by Henry Larsen of the St. Roch in 1942. They also located artifacts from HMS Fury, the British Arctic exploration ship wrecked on Somerset Island in 1825.

"Anchored in False Strait just north of the entrance of Bellot Strait," Rybacki wrote in his personal log that day. "The Labrador is moored alongside to port and the Bramble and the Spar to starboard. We had all nested together the night before awaiting morning before making our triumphant transit through Bellot. It was foggy in the morning so the episode was delayed until noon. I luckily had the noon watch so I have the privilege of saying that I was the first American OOD to go through Bellot Strait. We built a cairn at both ends of the strait, placing in them the names of all officers and crew of the ships participating in this project. Now that the party's over it's about time to head home."

Cmdr. Carter regretted not knowing more Arctic history before he commanded a vessel on a voyage through the Northwest Passage. "I would have spent more time looking [for artifacts of earlier expeditions]. The survey area that we ended up doing just before we went through Bellot Strait was where Franklin and his men all perished, and it would have been interesting if we could have spent more time there looking around."

Lt. Cowing returned to Spar to write his own special entry into the cutter's logbook. They had charted and pioneered a new route for deep-draft naval vessels through the Arctic, and in the process made Coast Guard history. Once on the eastern side of the strait, Labrador released the Coast Guard convoy so it could proceed homeward to the United States.

From Bellot Strait, the convoy continued its oceanographic research through Prince Regent Inlet, where Cowing sent a party ashore with a plaque and a flag to mark Spar's farthest north latitude attained on the expedition. In Lancaster Sound, Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, the crews took gunnery practice on drifting icebergs. The 3-inch deck guns made only small chips in the massive bergs.

In Baffin Bay, the crew of Spar listened to a lecture on the Arctic by Squadron Leader Scott E. Alexander of the Royal Canadian Air Force. The 44-year-old former Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman and Arctic expert had accompanied U.S. task force units in the Northwest Passage for three consecutive summers. Newsweek reported that during the 1956 expedition Capt. Wood of Storis had exclaimed: "Look at us. The Coast Guard leads the Navy – and who leads the Coast Guard? Why, a blankety-blank airman – and a Canadian at that."

"We were never really told how significant the expedition was," remembered Loback. "It was about 40 years later that I really understood what it was we had accomplished up there."

On Sept. 24, Spar completed her 14,000-mile circumnavigation of the continent at her homeport in Bristol, R.I., namesake city of Bristol, England, from where John Cabot had sailed in search of a Northwest Passage 460 years earlier. The Spar had been the first Coast Guard vessel to leave its homeport, and therefore the first to return. That made it the first American vessel to circumnavigate the continent. Kubeck had a special reason to feel a personal sense of triumph. "Coming into port, my mooring position was up near the bow at the anchor windlass. So I claim that, unofficially, I was the first American to circumnavigate the North American continent!"

But for other sailors, the meaning of the

expedition did not sink in for many years. Even though the Storis was greeted in Boston by the vice commandant of the Coast Guard, Capt. Wood was awarded the Coast Guard Commendation Medal, and a specially-commissioned bronze plaque was bolted onto the vessel to commemorate the expedition, the magnitude of the achievement was not immediately clear. "We were never really told how significant the expedition was," remembered Loback. "It was about 40 years later that I really understood what it was we had accomplished up there."

Bramble moored back in Miami on Oct. 1, and when Storis completed her transit of the Panama Canal Zone and returned to Seattle later that same month, one of the Coast Guard's most complex and daring expeditions came to a quietly successful conclusion.

"Being on an operation of that significance is very much like going through daily life without being aware that you are living through historic times," said Rybacki, now a retired rear admiral, as he reflected on why

he kept a journal of the expedition. "The significance of events is generally learned by people on reflection, after study, and only the very few observant people who are especially aware of the events of the day can appreciate what is going on. Most of us have to wait awhile, mature and learn a little bit more. Certainly a young ensign or j.g., married six months to a year, could not by any stretch of the imagination appreciate the significance of this long trip we were on. But I certainly grew to appreciate its significance over the years."

The Northwest Passage has been accomplished 11 times by American vessels, and 10 of these voyages were carried out by U.S. Coast Guard vessels, the only American naval vessels to do so. Storis, Bramble and Spar were the first of these 10 Coast Guard cutters to make the journey through the passage, establishing a tradition that was followed by the Coast Guard cutters Staten Island (1969), Polar Sea (1985, 1990), Polar Star (1988, 1989) and Healy (2000, 2003).

Chapter 7
The Skippers

"The wonder is always new that any sane man can be a sailor."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Cmdr. Harold L. Wood, USCGC Storis

Born and raised in Trenton, N.J., Harold Lambert Wood graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., and was commissioned an ensign, on June 8, 1936. He served on a variety of East Coast cutters and reached the temporary rank of commander during the Second World War (he achieved it permanently on April 15, 1949).

His Coast Guard experiences during the war prepared him well for the 1957 Northwest Passage expedition. From July 1940, until April 1943, he was assigned as assistant to the chief inspector during the construction of the Storis in Toledo, Ohio. After the commissioning of Storis, Wood served as engineering officer on Storis as the icebreaker entered service on the Greenland Patrol. For a year and a half, Wood served as engineering officer on board the Coast Guard-manned attack cargo ship USS Aquarius (AKA-16) during a series of assault landings in the Pacific in the Kwajalein islands, Guam, Palau, and at Leyte in the Philippines.

After the war, Wood served as engineering officer on the cutter Wachusett out of Seattle, then as executive officer on the cutter Duane out of Boston. After a headquarters tour, Wood took command of Storis in Juneau, Alaska, in June 1955, and participated for three consecutive summers in the massive lift of construction and supply materials that summer for the Distant Early Warning Line radar stations in the Arctic.

Some of Wood's other Coast Guard assignments included chief of operations and chief of staff for the 13th District. Upon retiring from the service, Wood worked as an engineer for Todd Shipyards in Seattle.

Lt. Cmdr. Harry H. Carter, USCGC Bramble

Born in Nebraska in 1921, Harry Hart Carter graduated from high school in Wisconsin and attended the University of Wisconsin before graduating from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and earning a commission as ensign in 1943. After serving in the North Atlantic on convoy escort duty with the cutter Argo and attending radar school at Harvard University, Carter served on board the Coast Guard-manned troop transport USS General George M. Randall (AP-115) in the Pacific.

After the war, Carter specialized in oceanography, meteorology and geophysics on board the cutter Tampa during International Ice Patrol cruises. He then reported to the Scripps Institute of Oceanography in La Jolla, Calif., where he studied for two years. Carter returned to the Grand Banks of Newfoundland to study ice from the decks of the Coast Guard's oceanographic cutter Evergreen, served with the service's oceanographic unit in Woods Hole, Mass., and completed a geophysics course at the University of California at Los Angeles. He attained the rank of lieutenant commander on Aug. 26, 1952.

Carter then served tours as executive officer and commanding officer of the patrol cutter Minnetonka in the Pacific. During this

time, his wardroom hosted a group of actors – including Walter Brennan in the role of Chief Petty Officer O'Malley – during the production of the 1954 film "Sea of Lost Ships." After a tour with the oceanographic unit at headquarters (during which he represented the Coast Guard at an oceanographic working group meeting at the Oceanographic Institute at Göteborg, Sweden), Carter was tapped in April 1957, to command the cutter Bramble during its Arctic mission with the U.S. Navy's Military Sea Transportation Service. Leaving the service in the early 1960s, Cmdr. Carter worked as an oceanographer for the Chesapeake Bay Institute of Johns Hopkins University before moving on to the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he retired in 1985.

Lt. Charles V. Cowing, USCGC Spar

Charles Vinal Cowing was born in Maine in 1915, and entered the Coast Guard as an enlisted surfman boatswain's mate in 1936. Prior to the Second World War, he served at lifeboat stations in both Maine and Massachusetts. From 1941 through 1943, Cowing served in the Office of the Captain of the Port in Boston, and then earned a commission at the Fort McHenry Training Station in Baltimore, Md. Through the remainder of the war, he served at Captain of the Port offices in New York and San Francisco.

After a post-war tour as executive officer on the patrol cutter Daphne out of Alameda, Calif., Cowing served in Antwerp, Belgium, under the senior merchant marine detail officer supervising the handling and stowage of explosives. Cowing returned to the United States and between September 1946 and February 1953 served as officer-in-charge of lifeboat stations in Massachusetts and California. After a collision between the USNS Benevolence and the SS Mary Luchenbach four miles west of Golden Gate Bridge in August 1950, Cowing received a commendation for supervising the rescue of 179 survivors from the Benevolence.

After brief tours in Alaska on board the tenders Bittersweet and Sedge, Cowing took command of the patrol cutter General Greene in Gloucester, Mass., in April 1954. Two and a half years later, after being promoted to lieutenant, Cowing took command of Spar in December 1956. The following summer, Charles Cowing became the first commander of an American ship to circumnavigate the North American continent.

The four commanding officers of the vessels that comprised the convoy through Bellot Strait, on Sept. 6, 1957, meet on the deck of the Canadian icebreaker HMCS Labrador prior to their historic transit. From left to right: Cmdr. Harold L. Wood, Capt. Thomas C. Pullen, Lt. Charles V. Cowing, and Lt. Cmdr. Harry H. Carter.

Chapter 8
The Cutters
"Land was created to provide a place for boats to visit."
-Brooks Atkinson

USCGC Storis

Storis: A Danish word meaning 'large ice,' referring to old pack ice that forms in the Arctic basin and drifts southward along the east coast of Greenland.

As a Coast Guard public affairs bulletin stated at the time of the Northwest Passage Expedition, there is literally no ship like the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis. A prototype pocket icebreaker, Storis served not only in that capacity but also as a buoy tender, cargo carrier, gun boat and aircraft carrier for both seaplanes and helicopters.

Storis was designed and constructed early in the Second World War as a replacement for the temporary fleet of small, hastily-converted fishing trawlers that had carried supplies from Boston to bases in Greenland in 1942 and 1943. At 230 feet long, Storis was more than 100 feet longer than the small Arctic trawlers it replaced, 43 feet wide and with a draft of 15 feet. Built by Toledo Ship-building in Ohio in 1942, Storis' rounded hull

copied the most famous ice-ship in history, the Norwegian polar exploration vessel Fram, and was designed to enable the ship to rise up and avoid destruction when squeezed by ice. At the time of the 1957 expedition, Storis carried a dozen officers and more than one hundred sailors.

Storis was first assigned to guard wartime convoys steaming from Newfoundland to Greenland. During the summer months of the Second World War, Storis patrolled the east coast of Greenland in search-and-destroy missions for weather stations established by the Germans. To extend its range, the ice-breaker carried a seaplane on its deck.

In 1948, Storis was transferred to the West Coast, where Juneau, Alaska, became its homeport. During the short summer months, Storis took up a long tradition of Coast Guard vessels serving on the Bering Sea Patrol. Carrying on board a federal judge, a doctor and a dentist, the cutter became a floating courthouse and clinic. While providing healthcare and judicial services to the isolated villages of the Aleutian Islands and as far north as Point Barrow, Storis also provided logistic support for scattered Coast Guard loran transmitter stations and lighthouses alike. Storis returned to Juneau in mid-fall to take up winter search-and-rescue work.

Storis joined the U.S. Navy's Military Sea Transportation Service during its summer operations in 1955 and for several summers thereafter participated in the re-supply of Distant Early Warning Line sites in the far north. At the same time, with USS Requisite, Storis formed part of a unit that in 1955 began the first hydrographic surveys in the central Canadian Arctic. The 1957 expedition with Bramble, Spar and HMCS Labrador was a continuation and expansion of the sounding tracks begun by Storis and Requisite in 1955 and 1956.

After the Northwest Passage Expedition, Storis returned to Alaska where she was stationed in Kodiak and used for search-and-rescue and fisheries law enforcement patrols. In 1986, the cutter's buoy deck was shortened to provide more space in the interior of the ship. Even after Spar was sunk off the coast of North Carolina to become an artificial reef and Bramble became a museum in Michigan,

Storis continued patrolling Alaska waters.

In November 2005, the Coast Guard announced that Storis would be decommissioned in early 2007. At the time, Vice Adm. Harvey Johnson, then commander of the Coast Guard's Pacific Area, called Storis "a gallant workhouse for the Coast Guard since World War II [that] has earned an honored place in Coast Guard history." Thus ended a long career of maritime service to America 65 years after it began, and half a century after the cutter made history in the Northwest Passage.

USCGC Bramble

Bramble: A thorny plant of the genus rubus in the rose family. Brambles include blackberries, loganberries and other closely related plants.

In 1939, when the Bureau of Lighthouses became part of the U.S. Coast Guard, it brought with it a requirement for a new and standardized vessel for multiple missions in the coastal environment. This need for a flexible work platform with a large open deck plan for servicing aids to navigation, conducting search-and-rescue and law enforcement missions, and breaking harbor ice in the winter, led to the design of the 180-foot buoy tender.

Between 1941 and 1943, 39 of these steel-hulled vessels were built, and all were named after trees, shrubs and flowers. With a fuel capacity of 30,000 gallons of diesel, the new tenders could steam for 12,000 miles at their cruising speed of 12 knots. Lowered to 8.3 knots, this range increased to 17,000 miles. A reinforced bow and ice-strengthened waterline gave the 180s icebreaking capability; a heavy-lift crane allowed salvage operations in addition to aids-to-navigation work; and deck guns and depth charge racks enabled military operations.

The vessels initially used the U.S. Navy designation of WAGL, which stood for "auxiliary vessel, lighthouse tender." Later, in 1965, the designation was changed to WLB, "seagoing buoy tender." Both Bramble and Spar were both from the third and last class – the Iris class – of 180s, and possessed 20 percent more engine power than the original Cactus class. All but one of the 39 180s were built in Duluth, Minn., by either the Zenith Dredge Company or the Marine Iron and Shipbuilding Company.

Bramble was built by Zenith and launched on Oct. 23, 1943, and commissioned by the Coast Guard on April 22, 1944. Bramble was briefly stationed in Cleveland, before undertaking aids-to-navigation work at her first permanent duty station in San Pedro, Calif. On March 1, 1945, Bramble was transferred to Juneau, Alaska, where she hauled supplies and serviced aids to navigation. After the war, Bramble was stationed first in San Francisco and in the summer of 1946 transferred to Honolulu, where she steamed for the Marshall Islands in support of Operation Crossroads, the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons.

Bramble returned to San Francisco in the summer of 1947, and was reassigned to San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1949, where she engaged in several search-and-rescue operations in addition to her regular aids-to-navigation duties. After four years in Puerto Rico, Bramble headed for Florida, where on July 1, 1953, she berthed in her new homeport of Miami Beach. It was from this port, with a complement of six officers and 54 enlisted men that Bramble steamed to join Spar on the first leg of the circumnavigation of the continent and the Northwest Passage Expedition on May 26, 1957.

Five years after the expedition, Bramble was transferred to Detroit to perform search-and-rescue, icebreaking, law enforcement and aids-to-navigation work throughout the Great Lakes. After 1975, the Bramble operated out of Port Huron and served in Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay. As she had during the Northwest Passage expedition, Bramble's ability to break ice allowed her to escort ships through ice and assist ships in distress. Among the many awards the cutter received during her career were the Department of Transportation Gold Medal, Coast Guard Unit Commendation, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation, Coast Guard "E" Ribbon, Coast Guard Bicentennial Unit Commendation, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal and the Coast Guard Arctic Service Medal.

Decommissioned in 2003, Bramble is now an integral part of the Port Huron museum, which also includes the lightship Huron and the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse.


W392

USCGC Spar

Spar: An acronym symbolizing the Coast Guard women's corps readiness to contribute to the war effort. It stands for "Semper Paratus - Always Ready," the Coast Guard motto.

Spar was built at the Marine Iron and Shipbuilding Company in Duluth, Minn.; launched on Nov. 2, 1943; and named in honor of the 11,000 women who served in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II. The Coast Guard commissioned Spar on June 12, 1944. That summer, the cutter reported to her first homeport of Boston, before relocating to Woods Hole, Mass., on Dec. 1, 1946. After five years on Cape Cod, Spar was relocated to Bristol, R.I. It was from Bristol that Spar departed, with six officers and 54 enlisted men, for the Northwest Passage expedition on May 19, 1957.

After the Northwest Passage expedition, Spar went on to cross the Atlantic in 1966 and return to the Arctic. Off the coast of Svalbard, Norway, Spar surveyed ocean topography and logged more than 17,000 miles while visiting ports in Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Ireland. In April 1967, Spar changed homeports to Boston, Mass., and then again, in March 1973, to Portland, Maine. From there, Spar worked to keep hundreds of aids to navigation on station amid the shoal waters and unpredictable weather of hundreds of uninhabited islands. Spar assisted in the massive oil spill cleanup operations after the tanker Argo Merchant ran aground off Cape Cod in 1976. In the winters, like Bramble on the Great Lakes, she carried out icebreaking operations in the Cape Cod Canal and Buzzard's Bay.

Spar was decommissioned on Feb. 28, 1997. Two days short of her 60th birthday, in 2004, the North Carolina State Division of Marine Fisheries sank Spar 20 miles offshore from Morehead City as an artificial reef. A new Spar, a 225-ft seagoing buoy tender based in Alaska, was commissioned in 2001 under the command of Lt. Cmdr. Joanna Nunan.

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IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST TRANSIT
BY UNITED STATES FLAG VESSELS OF THE

NORTHWEST PASSAGE

AND

CIRCUMNAVIGATION

OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTERS

STORIS — BRAMBLE — SPAR

MAY-SEPTEMBER 1957

PRESENTED BY
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
24 SEPTEMBER 1957