

The CGA—Our Volunteer Third Navy

The hundreds of Pacific Coast boat owners who are hard at work with the Coast Guard Auxiliary have two things in common — an overwhelming interest in boating and an intense desire to lick the Japs . . .

by
ROBERT CLARK



The "Warwynne," Auxiliary vessel, puts out from the San Pedro Coast Guard base on a special mission.

FOR the third time in the memory of men now living, America's yachtsmen are doing their part to win a war. Yachting did its duty in World War I and during the Spanish-American War; and now in the present conflict, men who in peacetime spent each spare moment aboard their boats, find themselves again at sea serving in some capacity in the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

In Naval Districts on the Pacific Coast, especially, the organization of active Coast Guard Auxiliary units has been moving at an astonishing pace.

In contrast to the regular U. S. Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Reserve, the Auxiliary is a voluntary, non-military organization of motorboat and yacht owners giving of their time without pay, and who have two things in common: An intense desire to do what they can to lick the Japs, and an overwhelming interest in boating.

Recently, this writer had the privilege of accompanying the boats on patrol in Division II of the Auxiliary in the Eleventh Naval District at Los Angeles for the purpose of getting a story of their activities for *Pacific Motor Boat* readers. The author would like to give especial thanks to the Chief of Staff in the Long Beach Coast Guard Office, and to the Commanding Officer of the United States Coast Guard Station at San Pedro for the splendid co-operation and valuable aid they gave him.

On our arrival at the Coast Guard station, we met Mr. Robert Cannom, Junior Captain, Division II of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Cannom's job is to prepare schedules and to maintain a close liaison between the Service and the Auxiliary.

It would be difficult indeed to find a more gracious man or

a more efficient one. "I don't know what we would have done without Cannom," said Lt. V. A. Johnson, commanding officer of the station. "After December 7 he jumped right in and took hold like a regular. And the rest are all like him. I can't find words enough to praise the work each and every member of the Auxiliary has done. They have been of inestimable value to the Coast Guard."

Outside the office and alongside the Coast Guard dock were four boats of the Auxiliary. Not yet painted the regulation navy gray, they were slated for the change shortly. These four boats were the *Della*, a 39-foot cruiser capable of 18 knots; the *Audrey A*, a 39-foot cruiser powered by two Chrysler Crowns which can drive her at 15 knots; the *Warwynne*, a 50-foot cruiser with twin motors, capable of delivering 18 knots; and last, but not least, an un-named 24-foot runabout that is used as a dispatch boat—she'll do 25 knots.

"These four boats are in the Auxiliary for the duration," said Cannom. "Their owners have turned them over—lock, stock, and barrel."

"Do the owners skipper them?" we asked.

"No, these boats are under the command of my assistants. Here comes one of them now, Mr. H. B. Cooper."

Cooper turned out to be a youngish looking man who has those little marks about the eyes that come from squinting long and hard at distant horizons.

Cannom introduced us, explaining what we were there for. "Good!" said Cooper. "We've just got an assignment. Come on aboard."

We followed him down the gangplank to the *Warwynne*. Bow and stern lines were cast off and the skipper gunned his motors. The water churned under our transom and in



Auxiliary member H. B. Cooper, left, receives the day's instructions from Lt. V. A. Johnson, Coast Guard base commander.

a moment we were gliding down the channel.

"We try to parallel the regular service in every way we can," said Cannom. "For instance take this log book. All entries are made in the same form and in the same sequence as aboard a regular Coast Guard boat. If and when it should become necessary for our men in the Auxiliary to go into the regular Coast Guard Service either as officers or ratings, the changeover will not be so difficult. Our men will already be familiar with the routine."

The channel was widening now and the shoreline was dropping away rapidly as the *Warwynne* purred along at 18 knots. We looked ahead wondering what our destination was. Cooper must have read our mind because he said: "We've been ordered out to that lighthouse at the end of the breakwater to pick up a detail of one officer and a man. We do all the transferring of lighthouse personnel to and from the station."

Ten minutes later, Cooper slid his twin-screw, 50-foot craft alongside the lighthouse dock as easily as if she were a 10-foot runabout. This was no simple job as it required a sharp turn in cramped quarters. We commented on his skill and he laughed.

"This is a cinch. Where it's really tough is when we take immigration officials out to board ships before they leave port. Getting the men aboard is usually easy enough, but by the time they have finished their work, the ships are underway. And then we have to pick the officer off while the boat is moving. Ever get caught in the 'slipstream' of a large vessel when she's underway?"

"No," we replied.

"It's no picnic, believe me! The slightest error and your small craft may get 'locked' alongside the larger one. If that happens you'll probably be pounded to pieces in no time."

"How do you keep clear, then?" we asked.

"Well, the first thing to do is to make a running contact—bow first," he replied. "I bring the patrol boat in on the lee side of the vessel, say the starboard side, and just as the bow touches the ship, the official jumps down on it. As he hits our foredeck, I spin my helm, gun my port engine, and 'wing-off' like an airplane in flight."

"That should be something to see," we said.

"Yes, especially if the wind is stiff and a heavy sea is running," observed Cannom dryly.

Fifteen minutes later we were back at the Coast Guard

station. For the moment there were no orders and Lt. Johnson wanted us to see the two buildings which house the canteen and the recreation room. "We're very proud of these additions to our station," said he. "Both of them were donated and equipped by the members of the Auxiliary. Let's go in the recreation building first."

Inside, a large single room had been fixed up to entertain the men off duty. In the center was a pingpong table. Nearby was a new console radio. Over in one corner stood a phonograph. Along one wall was a table covered with magazines, and next to this was a bookcase filled with books. Several pin-ball games were about, and these had been so adjusted that they could be played without putting in a nickle.

"Do you wonder that we think a lot of the Auxiliary?" said Johnson with a grin. "But wait till you see the canteen."

The two buildings stand side by side and are painted in the traditional navy gray to match the rest of the station.

"The women in the organization, called 'Bundles for Blue-jackets,' run the Canteen at night," said Mr. Johnson as he opened the door. "They serve coffee and doughnuts and cocoa to all comers. You should see these ladies. They have a regular uniform, complete with insignia denoting rank, from crew member to captain. And a pretty darn good looking crew, too!"

No detail had been overlooked to furnish an efficient means for providing eats for the men of the service. Behind a long serving bar was a huge, double coffee urn. Close by was a gas plate and near it a large electric refrigerator. The rest of the room was filled with long tables and easy chairs. On the front of the service bar was the only feminine touch in the place. It was a small sign, reading: *Don't Throw Cigarettes on Deck!*

"We've had a flock of movie stars down here to entertain the boys since these buildings were put up by the Auxiliary," said Lt. Johnson as we walked back to the dock. "And the pretty girls in the canteen do as much as regulations in keeping the men spruced-up."

There was still a lull in operations when we got back to the dock, so we cornered Cannom and asked him to tell us what some of the essential requirements were with respect to small craft in case a yachtsman wished to enroll with his boat in the Auxiliary.



The "*Warwynne's*" crew for the day includes three CGA members and a "rating"; left to right, Dr. H. L. Carpenter, Chief Bosun's Mate Holly, Robert Cannom and H. B. Cooper.

"I'd like to point out first," he said, "that we have about 75 boats in Division II of the Auxiliary that are skippered by their owners. They are subject to call in an emergency and have their own crews. Most of the time, however, these owners use their boats for pleasure. But that's not the case with the four boats tied up alongside the dock here. They are in the Auxiliary for the duration and are manned 24 hours a day by our members. When they leave the dock, it's on a definite assignment."

"How were they acquired for the Auxiliary?" we asked.

"In each case the owner signed a release form which offered his boat to our organization. This form of offer and acceptance by the Auxiliary constitutes merely a license for the use of the vessel. And this license may be relinquished at any time by the Coast Guard.

"The owner estimates the present value of the boat, her equipment, stores, and supplies. After the owner signs this form, it is sent to the Senior Coast Guard Officer who makes arrangements to have the vessel inspected by someone in his office in company with the owner. They thoroughly check the condition of the boat and make a complete inventory of her equipment. If the craft is in good condition, authorization to accept the ship into the Coast Guard is made. After the war is over, the boat will be returned to the owner in the same shape as when he released her.

"This check is really very detailed," Cannom went on. "For instance on deck we list the number, condition, weight, and adequacy of the anchors. The material, length, condition of the anchor line and how it is stowed. Even the size of the ship's bell—measured across the mouth—is noted, also its condition, and where it is installed.

"In the engine room we check to see if carburetors have approved devices for preventing back-fires, and if each carburetor has a screened drip pan. The battery is checked to see if it is properly located and protected by a cover. Then the electrical connections are looked at to see if they are tight. The number of open switches in the engine compartment is listed.

"The galley, too, gets attention. We list the condition of pipes and joints in the cooking system. Note the type of fuel used and where the fuel tanks are located. We look to see if the stove has a drip pan and if the galley is properly ventilated. And whether this is natural or blower ventilation.

"But this is only a small list of all the items which must

be checked. Altogether there are over one hundred of these."

At this moment, Cooper came out of the station office looking very mysterious. "Come on," he said. "We've got to go over to Fish Harbor."

"What's up?" we asked.

"Oh, that's a military secret—can't tell you now."

A furtive glance passed between him and Cannom. Evidently we were going to see some action.

As we went down to the float, the enlisted man who accompanied us acted most secretive as he hoisted on deck a five-gallon tin can which had been slit open across the top.

Away we sped out around the point and into Fish Harbor. Here, tied up alongside one another, were dozens of purse seiners. Some inactive because they had been manned by Japanese now out of the area, others still operating with American crews.

Heading straight for one of the more disreputable appearing of these craft, Skipper Cooper throttled down. A head and torso which might have belonged to "Superman" emerged for an instant on the fishing boat, then disappeared down a hatch.

"Here it comes," we thought. "They must have caught somebody sabotaging the ship."

In a few moments we eased alongside. Cooper stopped his engines and the deck crew made fast their mooring lines. Several fishermen lined the rail of the other boat and looked down at us with blank expressions on their faces.

Our enlisted man grabbed the tin can and swung aboard the fishing vessel. "Looks like a can of TNT," we said to Dr. H. L. Carpenter, one of the Auxiliary members in the crew of the *Warwynne*. "Do you suppose they're going to blow something up?"

"Don't ask me," he grinned, shaking his head. "I wouldn't know."

The atmosphere seemed fraught with tension. Even the official Coast Guard flag at our masthead hung limp. Cooper avoided our questioning look, and the rest of the crew suddenly made a pretense of being busy at one thing or another.

Presently, we were aware of a commotion on the fore-deck of the fishing boat. Moving as nimbly as we could, and holding on to the handrail outside our cabin, we made our way to the bow of the *Warwynne* and stepped up on a hatch where we could see.



A fast run brings the "Warwynne" to her destination—the lighthouse at the end of the San Pedro breakwater, where small stores are delivered ashore. In the photograph at left, author Robert Clark stands second from right. (All illustrations accompanying the article "The CGA—Our Volunteer Third Navy" are official U. S. Navy photographs).

Several of the fishing boat's crew were clustered about our enlisted man who was down on his knees breaking up lumps of salt. This he poured into the tin can. Still we were mystified. Then someone got in our way and we couldn't see, so back we went to our former position in the stern.

In a couple of minutes our sailor scrambled aboard still carrying his precious tin can. He put it down just aft of the cabin entrance. Cooper slammed his engines into reverse, lines were cast off, and we backed out. Then sweeping about in a close arc, we headed back for the station—our mission accomplished.

No—there wasn't any military secret. For just at that moment the wind blew back the gunnysack which had been thrown over the top of the can and we saw its contents—four of the finest sea bass you ever laid eyes on!

Cooper's grin was a little sheepish as he said: "For someone in the Captain of the Port's Office—they look pretty good, don't they?"

We agreed that they did.

Back at the station, we were dispatched once again to the lighthouse, this time taking with us some small stores for the men out there. We stopped briefly at the inspection barge in the harbor and then proceeded.

Cooper pointed to starboard. "See that flag flying there? That's the Pan-American Clipper base. When the plane's in port, we maintain a 24-hour patrol about her—moving all the time. No unauthorized craft is allowed to approach."

At the present time, the Auxiliary is not doing harbor patrol at night looking for fires or saboteurs. The regular Coast Guard has taken over this duty which was performed for awhile by the Auxiliary after December 7. Nevertheless, watches are maintained throughout the day and night, and the Auxiliary boats are manned ready for instant action. And they get it.

Perhaps the Captain of the Port, Lt. Comdr. F. B. Higbee, wishes to inspect some part of his domain. If so, an Auxiliary boat takes him. Or it may be the immigration officers or other law-enforcement agents who must be taken aboard incoming or outgoing ships. Another Auxiliary job.

Patrolling of yacht regattas is yet another function of this organization. Locally, the patrol of the Mid-Winter Regatta of the SCYA, one of the most important events in world-wide yachting, was handled this year by the Auxiliary. As stormy weather prevailed during part of the event, there were several casualties. But the excellent seamanship of the Auxiliaries in assisting the yachtsmen undoubtedly kept this to a minimum.

Unfortunately, because we are at war, it is not possible to write of all of the activities of the Auxiliary. Many of them are of a military nature and must not be revealed.

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Decision Pending on 1942 International Cruiser Race

"There are all the more reasons for a race in 1942," say IPBA officers, "and there'll be one, if . . ."

AT a meeting of officers and delegates held March 28, the International Power Boat Association deferred until May the decision as to whether or not the now famous International Cruiser Race will be run this year.

Known also as the "Capital to Capital" race, the event was first established in 1928 over a 900-odd mile course from Olympia, Washington, to Juneau, Alaska. With varying starting and finishing points, it has been run each year since. Highest number of cruisers participating was in 1936, when 82 boats entered the competition. Throughout its 14-year history, the race has had a four-fold objective: to stimulate fellowship among yachtsmen, to provide an interesting contest, to popularize Pacific northwest cruising waters and to promote international goodwill.

Last year, 53 cruisers, of which 42 were contestants, participated, the race being held July 11 and 12 over a 140-mile course between Eagle Harbor in Puget Sound and Nanaimo, British Columbia. Calculating their starting times to finish at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, a majority of the boats left the starting point during darkness the night before, the earliest departing at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and the latest at about 10:00 a.m. Saturday.

In spite of the fact that wartime conditions and regulations would require certain adjustments, committee members are hopeful that the event can again be held this year. More than ever, they point out, it will provide a gesture of international cooperation, an opportunity for practice in navigating and skillful piloting, and a kind of "collective cruise" in which many boats can participate with the least interference with military considerations. Detailed plans, it was felt, may take the form of a two-day race, with an overnight stop to eliminate night-time running, and with Coast Guard Auxiliary boats performing all necessary patrol duties to eliminate any call on the services of vessels engaged in more important naval duties.

Pending final decision at a later meeting, the sponsors planned a full discussion of points involved with officials of the 13th Naval District, Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary personnel, and Canadian naval officials.

New officers elected at the March 28 meeting included J. P. Unicum, former secretary-treasurer, elected president; Paul Riggs, Tacoma Yacht Club, vice-president, and Roy Coy, Queen City Yacht Club, secretary-treasurer.



A few of the Reserve and Auxiliary boats active in the 11th Naval District tied up at the San Pedro Coast Guard Station.