

A History of the United States Coast Guard Catalina, PBV-5, No. V-189

(This historical account has been compiled and submitted by Jack SHEA, USCGR, a former member of PBV # V-189 and edited only within limited prerogatives of the PBV Catalina International Association Newsletter editor. However within the editing process, all effort is made not to take anything out of context:)

SAGA OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD PBV V-189, 1941-1945

...This is a history of the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation manufactured and configured Catalina flying-boat, PBV-5, V-189, its pilots, navigators ; who, in many situations, accomplished the near impossible and the dedicated crews who flew and maintained her efficiency. On many of this aircraft's missions, the crew maintained it while in flight as well as on ground or in the water! ...In the USCG where the quantity of aircraft is limited, planes like PBV V189 did not always have designated crews. It depended on who had "The Duty"! Therefore there will be many unsung heroes who will escape being credited in this account, but within the spirit of the Coast Guard, "They Will Always Be There"! ... The USCG purchased PBV V189 from the US Navy as Bureau Number 2290 on 18 October, 1940 and renumbered to Coast Guard as number V-189. The aircraft was purchased for the special purpose of aerial mapping in conjunction with the US Coast and Geodetic Survey Service. V189 had been configured to include a mount for the Coast and Geodetic, nine lens, aerial camera in the "Waist Gunner's Compartment" by cutting an opening through the hull for camera lens surface visibility. This was considered the most advanced aerial camera in service ... This was the first of the PBVs to replace the sliding hatch for "waist gun blisters." The outboard section of the blister slid up and under the top inboard section of the blister (not too unlike a roll-top desk cover). It provided the gunner excellent access to field of fire. (Also, serve as an observation area for the navigator.) ... Following some tests and evaluations as related by ADM Willard J. SMITH USCG Ret., a former Commandant of the US Coast Guard, PBV V189 was assigned to USCG Air Station, San Francisco in April 1941. The first assigned crew under the command of LCDR George H. BOWERMAN with LT Willard J. SMITH as copilot/navigator, Aviation Chief Machinist Mate Dewey MOORE as plane captain, AMM 1st Class Frank ISAACSON as first mechanic, Radioman 1/c Gus DANNENBURG as first radio operator and RM 1/c E.S. COAKLEY as second radioman. Also assigned for mission purposes was a Captain KAY, US Coast & Geodetic officer. This crew and V189 were to conduct their first aerial survey assignment employing the use of a Norden Bomb-sight for aerial mapping ... It should be noted that the first Commanding Officer of USCG Air Station, San Francisco was LT George H. BOWERMAN. The station at that time was operating two Douglas "Dolphins" RD-4 (amphibian transport) aircraft; USCG numbers V126 and V128 as well as the newly assigned V189; that became a real "workhorse" ... There was much lacking in marine and aeronautical charts for Alaska; especially along the Alaskan Peninsula and Aleutian Islands areas. Therefore, this became an immediate task for the summer months of 1941 to include testing the expertise of the crew and feasibility employment of the PBV ... PBV V189 operated from both Kodiak Island and Dutch Harbor, Unalaska Island, Poor weather conditions and inadequate facilities resulted in less than objective accomplishments. I.e., at Dutch Harbor, aircraft servicing was all accomplished from mooring in too often uncooperative sea conditions. Carefulness with steady hands was a real must! ... On return to San Francisco in late August 1941, LT Willard Smith was assigned as the plane commander and V189 was to have a new mission. This mission included aerial photo-mapping coastal areas of; the Gulf of Mexico, east coast of Florida northward to the state of Maine. This project took all the months of October and November, 1941. By the way the copilot by now was Chief Aviation Pilot August KLEISCH. (It should be noted that LT KLEISCH later in 1945 distinguished himself in superb daring helicopter rescue in the snow-clad waste area of Labrador.) Even later, while on this mission, LT. Clement VAUGHN joined the crew of V189 as another copilot ... It is also of interest to note that while conducting the north-eastern area mapping area, V189 and crew utilized the facilities and service of CGAS Floyd Bennett Field. While there a Coast Guardsman, radioman Lois GUST met with NAP KLEISCH. August took Lois aboard on an explanation tour of PBV V-189 on an occasion to satisfy Lois's curiosity. Little was realized then, that later in 1944/45, Chief Aviation Pilot Louis GUST would be flying V189! ... It was also during this mission, that as affection grew for V189, the crew decided a name for their aircraft. The name "Queen Bee" was chosen perhaps due to its attraction at the time ... Shortly after the "Queen Bee's" return to San Francisco, late in November, 1941; the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 and the US was thrust into WWII. It is provided that when the United States is embarked within a declared war situation, that the Coast Guard is placed under control of the Navy ... On 15 December 1941, PBV V189 and crew were transferred to Navy Patrol Squadron Forty Four (VP-44) at Naval Air Station Alameda, California across the San Francisco Bay from USCG Air Station, San Francisco. This duty involved patrols to a distance of 800 miles offshore in sectors from the

San Francisco area in search of any enemy sightings. This operation continued until the boreal spring of 1942 when VP-44 was sent to Hawaii. At this time however, V189 and crew were returned to the San Francisco Air Station. This aircraft was still under command of LT Willard Smith with a crew change of AMM 1/c Felix McNEIL replacing Frank ISAACSON and the addition of an aviation ordnanceman. (Although this first AOM's name is not provided, according to Chief Dewey MOORE, "this young man's parents sold property to the Coast Guard, that has become the Coast Guard's Elizabeth City, North Carolina Air Station!") ... With the dictates of necessity influenced by the war, no waste of time could be afforded for the crew of V189 in preparations for any mission assignment. The exacerbated need for more aerial mapping of Alaska prioritized the continuance of Coast Guard PBY V189's reassignment back to the task commenced in 1941. Retired ADM Willard Smith further recalled that within a month of May 1942 V189 with its crew departed San Francisco via Naval Air Station Sand Point, Seattle Washington on to Sitka, Alaska. From Sitka on Baranof Island they commenced mapping selected areas of southeast Alaska. Then they moved on for more detailed mapping of Kodiak Island and of course operating from the base on Kodiak. ... Pressing on from completion of Kodiak mapping, V189 flew to Unga of the Shumagin Islands where a small Naval Air Detachment facility was situated. The plane operated from moorings here while conducting mapping operations of the Alaskan Peninsula. This operation was fortunately conducted under much more favorable weather conditions than in 1941. Successful operations were conducted to as far as Unalaska, although Japanese were conducting patrols in this part of the Aleutian Islands. Some of the mapping activities required the aircraft to be flown at altitudes of 20,000 feet... In September 1942, the crew flew V189 and the two U.S. Coast & Geodetic mapping officers assigned with them back to the CGAS at San Francisco in completion of this phase of vital mapping operations ... it is worthy also to note that during the period from late 1941 to early 1943 PBY V189 took part in two rather unique and exciting off-shore rescues with Willard SMITH as pilot. The first was with the CGAS commanding officer, Norman NELSON acting as co-pilot, in response to remove a young Navy officer from a submarine located 350 miles south-southwest of San Francisco. The subject Navy officer was suffering from severe appendicitis. Departure from San Francisco took place at 0400 to be at the submarine location at first daylight. With use of the direction finder, no difficulty was incurred in locating the sub-boat; however as Willard SMITH recalls, the open-sea landing was challenging and rough in a confusing sea condition! ... The afflicted patient was transferred by a rubber boat to V189 without incident. The plane was light with fuel, so flight take-off was executed without difficulty. This patient's life was saved as a result of action taken! The second rescue situation took place in early 1943 for the removal of a badly injured man from a U.S. Navy tug-boat about 400 west of San Francisco. The tug was outward bound for Hawaii. Again this was with by this time LCDR W. SMITH, accompanied this time with Clement VAUGHN as co-pilot. (Crew not named!) ... Upon reaching the tug-boat, Admiral SMITH remembers that a controversial downwind landing was the required option to make the best of an ocean swell. The landing and consecutive take-off with the patient was correct and smooth. Smith credits this technique for open sea landing option from the wisdomed experience gained from veteran Pan American Clipper pilots ...

Among pilots "checked-out" by SMITH was LCDR George OLSON in PBY V189 during 1943. However, while George was flying a PBY-5A on another Alaskan aerial mapping mission, his plane collided with Mount Moffitt on Adak Island in which he lost his life. Ironically, the previous radioman, Louis GUST mentioned at Floyd Bennett Field, was one of two survivors as a Chief NAP. The other survivor was AOM 1/c Steve LIGOMINUS. GUST served dual rolls on this flight as both a co-pilot and radioman. Among the fatalities of this ill-fated aircraft was the inclusion of AMM 1/c Frank ISAACSON, previously crewing on V189 ... The V189 plane captain, ACMM Dewey MOORE stated in his remorse. "Frank ISAACSON was one of the best of his profession he ever knew." ... Pilot Willard SMITH qualified another pilot, LCDR Richard BAXTER who then assumed the plane commander's position of PBY V189. Then on 18 January, 1943 the Coast Guard was directed to establish at that time a highly classified long-range navigation (LORAN) system stations/placements as directed. The first of these LORAN stations for the Pacific Ocean area was a 'chain' of these in the Bering Sea. The USCG under LCDR John F. MARTIN undertook both construction and operation of this LORAN project ... To assess the projected sites, it was PBY V189 he was flown in ... In May 1943, LCDR BAXTER, with co-pilot ENS Harold BENNETT, flight engineers Edward APPEL and Tony GERBINO (both AMM 1/c), radioman ARM 1/c Alvin J. WESOLOSKI and ordnanceman AOM 2/c Herbert W. KLEIN departed CGAS San Francisco to take part in the transportation of men and equipment, etc., to the LORAN sites. The flight to the Alaskan LORAN chain project would include stopovers at Sand Point, Seattle again, then to Ketchikan on Revillagigedo Island of southeastern Alaska before proceeding on to Dutch Harbor to stage operations ... The LORAN sites chain would include such islands as Umnak north to St. George, St. Paul on to St. Matthew that was over 800 miles north of Dutch Harbor then west as far as Attu. Normally these inclusive areas have prolonged periods of extremely hazardous navigation

conditions, hence the expediency required to facilitate these navigational aids at such a critical period to assist allied ship and aircraft movement ... USCG Retired CAPT Richard BAXTER recalls that one of the most harrowing experiences on this project was at their arrival at Ketchikan! First of all it was not prepared to receive a seaplane; all buoys had been removed and in best of times was not noted as an anchorage for seaplanes. Then upon their arrival he tells of a large (56') converted yacht which came out to greet them. Immediately it was apparent that the crew of the craft hadn't worked with seaplanes. Their close quarter boarding approach was first of all first going to run through the seaplane's outboard antenna that ran from the vertical stabilizer to the outer wing tip. Next of course was the imminent threat to the fragile construction of the plane compared to that of the yacht. It was therefore necessary to fire flares strategically to repel these "apparent boarders" to safeguard "V189"! The problem with this well intentioned yacht-crew did not stop there. They advised us where to drop anchor, but lo and behold with great displeasure, V189 had been positioned such that the anchor fouled with a "cross-bay communication cable". To avoid any damage the anchor cable had to be severed and left behind. There were other more favorable assets though; Ketchikan was endowed with some of the best available charts for our use in the area. This was the result of the number of old pilots in this area who had progressively added the land features of the surrounding waterways, since instrument flying lacked technological advancement for them...Dutch Harbor too had its misgivings, the Japanese attack on the base left cause for limited service, few planes operated from here, so the flight crews had to serve as their own ground service crews, that often meant monitoring the aircraft from wind and weather effects as well as other security purposes. The wind especially could come up sudden and fiercely rough! There was also the occasion at Dutch Harbor when Baxter was advised that someone's Ford Tri-motor aircraft flying on some special mission for the Army Signal Corps was missing. Since our PB5 V189 was the only search-type of aircraft available with rescue mission trained crew, the aircraft was quickly re-equipped and headed for the north side of Kodiak Island that was considered the most likely area to start the search. Good fortune prevailed, as just offshore, the Ford Tri-motor aircraft was discovered to be partly protruding above the surface, with apparent survivors on the beach. Using the Coast Guard technique of setting down well off-shore, and then easing toward shore, soundings were taken along the way to insure a cautious progression to where a rescue raft could be launched. A couple of crewmembers went ashore to evaluate the situation. Three members were injured and were removed while the others chose to remain and await a tug to be sent from Kodiak Base, two days away. The survivors related how they had to kill a Kodiak bear as it proceeded to molest them right after the crash. Kodiak bears only come in one size – "HUGE" ... Leaving the fit survivors with the provisions they could, PB5 V189 took the injured men to Dutch Harbor. Intentions to deliver them to Cold Bay were negated by the extremely high seas there. All three men had serious injuries, one with a broken back. Also there were beaching crews and wheel assemblies only at Kodiak, Dutch Harbor and Adak at the time ... Before leaving Dutch Harbor for the more western reaches of the Aleutians, it was considered prudent to check the compass. As the aircraft was being readied on the "compass-rose", it was astounding to discover that the "compass rose" was prepared over steel reinforced concrete! Any thoughts of reliance for use of this compass-rose would be completely nullified if a qualified person had laid it out originally over such underlying distractions. Richard BAXTER related, "How many luckless fly-boys had been led astray on that horrible circle of iron within the concrete!"

**("Compass-Rose": A circle marked in degrees, or sometimes in both directions and degrees, printed or inscribed upon a compass card, upon a chart for reference purposes, marked and upon the ground for use in compass swinging, or elsewhere displayed. –Compass swinging: The action of turning an aircraft about in different headings to determine the deviation of its compass. Note: This may be done in the air (air swinging) or on the ground (ground swinging))*

...PB5 V189 and crew were in the Aleutian Islands during the June 1942 Japanese invasion of Kiska (concurrent with Midway Islands attempt). It was also about this time that V189 departed Adak for Attu and while enroute, the plane's starboard engine quit from carburetor malfunction. It was by then however, a better choice to continue on to Attu, where they had to land off-shore and taxi as near as possible to the Navy's PatWing Four PB5A beaching area. The crew was able to "borrow" a carburetor and Aviation Machinist mates APPEL and GERBINO changed carburetors while over the water, with the aircraft secured to the beach. Satisfactory tests were achieved that evening of the summer's long lasting daylight ... Following the required effort at Attu Island, V189 was to proceed north in the Bering Sea to have the LORAN site facilitated on St. Matthew Island. However to find this island was not as desired. They had been briefed and studied in great detail; but as Baxter reported, St. Matthew was many miles from its charted location. BAXTER also related that

he had served on Coast Guard Cutter "TAHOE" for a portion of the 1935 Bering Sea Patrol, but had not visited this island, therefore he was not familiar with the true location ... Even as they confirmed its location and had been informed it was not inhabited, something was decidedly wrong! They saw with amazement some men with rifles on the beach. PBV-5 V189 was landed off-shore, and then proceeded toward the manned beach with V189's guns fully manned, ready for anything. It turned out that the US Navy's patrol craft CHARLESTON (PG-51) had previously landed a small contingent of four US Army men along with two natives. It was soon learned that these people had endured quite a saga commencing with their first night there. The tides had come in unpredictably high and ruined their radio gear beyond use as well as causing loss to much of their provisions including food. Fortunately the natives taught the soldiers fishing techniques and other ways to live off the land ... before V189 departed they left everything for sustenance including some reading material the crew had for all left behind. It was with some anguish as a complete report was provided the authorities at Dutch harbor that the Command did not believe what was conveyed at first, and then did not want to be questioned about "a few lost men"! BAXTER said, "That even the chaplain had to be brought into the act"! At a following occasion in 1943, PBV-5 V189 had the special task of delivering mail on its first flight to St. Paul Island of the Pribilof Islands. By then there were some 800 men made up primarily of New York and New Jersey National Guardsmen. It was discovered that this military force had one Christmas drop, (1942) from a B-17, with it spilling all over the landscape, as the island did not have a landing strip. The cherished mail pouches consisted disappointedly of official inquiries as to why they had not answered previous mail and requesting immediate answers to mail not received.

Along with that kind of "mail", the remaining mail pouches had boxes of "medals to be awarded"; there was no other personal mail! The V189 crew then believed they would have fared better had they dropped in on an enemy-held island ... The LORAN site was situated on a 45 foot rocky cliff on the south-west shoreline. In May and June of 1943 the entire island would be covered with snow, then melt, leaving terrain conditions deplorable. For this LORAN station to be viable it had to be self sustaining; thus dependably supported ... The directions for reprioritizing the establishment of great area LORAN sites were very unpredictable for the crew of PBV V189. The Bering Sea LORAN stations were under construction and nearing completion during the boreal summer of 1943 when a decision had to be made for a second chain of sites to cover the Western Aleutians from Adak to a 180 mile distance to a station on Amchitka Island, then another 250 miles west to Attu as it was re-secured from the Japanese...This crew of PBV-5 V189 had by now aligned an operational affinity to the point of their prerogative to rename the "Queen Bee" to "Aleutian Belle" to include the artful display that depicted an attractive Polynesian girl sitting on a sandy beach in a bright sun with an Alaskan snow-capped mountain in the background. This reflected a foremost thought for their reward from the background of reality! ... Finally in September of 1943, V189 and its crew completed their Alaskan mission requirements and were ordered back to San Francisco via NAS Sand Point, Seattle, WA for a major overhaul to the aircraft ... Upon completion of this mission, Official recognition stated: LCDR Richard BAXTER; LT Maurice L. BOWERS; ENS Harold BENNETT; Aviation Machinist Mates 1/c Edward APPEL and Anthony GERBINO; Aviation Radioman 1/c Alvin J. WESOLOSKI and Aviation Ordnanceman 2/c Herbert W. KLEIN in their PBV-5 number V189 played a very important role in building the Alaskan LORAN chain. They participated in many long-range and hazardous flights over the Bering Sea, along the Aleutian Islands and over the Gulf of Alaska to bring aid to others. They made 96 flights of 354 flight hours, mostly under adverse conditions with 200 of these hours requiring instrument flying. There was no other assistance at several of their destinations which increased their hardships and hazardous conditions. Further recognition was bestowed for their rescue of the men from the plane wreck off Kodiak Island and ongoing aid to others.

Activities of Coast Guard PBV-5 V189 In the South Pacific As Remembered By Its Crew For 1944-1945 ... The assigned crew, trained as a unit under the advisement of being involved with a classification of "secret and top priority" ... This unit departed USCG Air Station, San Francisco on 10 May 1944 for extended duty in the South Pacific, under the command of LCDR Clement VAUGHN with co-pilots Robert L. LAWLIS and CAP Louis "Pinky" GUST. Other flight crew members were: AMM1/c Anthony GERBINO and AMM1/c Oliver YOUNG as flight engineers; ACRM Ross CADE and ARM2/c Barney ALLEN as radioman and AOM1/c Jack SHEA as ordnanceman ... The prime purpose of this mission was to establish LORAN service in the Pacific war areas, concurrent with the actual war-fronts many times. The task included the surveying for the sites, then aiding the actual installation of LORAN station chains from Hawaii to the Marianas and Carolines. This allowed for the most important navigational aids for advancement operations toward the Japanese stronghold of Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Japanese homelands ... Again, it was LCDR John F. MARTIN who was in charge of all LORAN installations.

With him as second in command was LT Garrett HORDER. These two Coast Guard officers flew with us as required throughout the survey and installation progression ... It is worthy of note that since the aircraft would be operating in the tropical South Pacific, the decision had been made to remove the heavy deicer boots to improve range and in the forecast of not to incur icing conditions. It was discovered on the first 20.6 hour flight-leg that wing icing did occur with disturbing frequencies that caused us to have to fly in a sort of proposing flight pattern to either be at a desirable flight-gain altitudes or to descend low enough to melt ice build-up! Thus when NAS Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, T.H. was reached, the onboard fuel was about 300 gallons and all were thankful that navigation was right on target for this flight, as it was for the entire deployment! Also the PBY was at all times dependable for long range flights. Of course this dependability required the human ingredient established within the total crew known as "harmony." This was essential for all elements of efficiency, regardless of extended periods of confinement. It does require an unusual group of people to maintain harmony under many trying situations and V189's crew-mix was a most compatible assembly of officers and enlisted. PBY-5 V189 flew within all kinds of conditions that included landing and taking off from among obscure "coral-heads" throughout the atolls and islands of the Pacific Ocean. Also the entire flight crew maintained the aircraft without the aid of ground crew, with much of the servicing and maintenance taking place while floating in the water, whether in protected or unprotected areas. "It was not the time to drop tools!" ... While at Kaneohe Bay NAS, V189 had been ramped, where it could be treated for preventive maintenance, outfitted with armament and other provisional requirements. A LORAN receiver-indicator was installed and practical examination of the onboard equipment was combined in testing of the already operational LORAN system in the Hawaiian Islands and to survey for additional LORAN sites. It was during one of these operations, the aircraft landed at Hilo Bay, Hilo, Hawaii. A special treat was included in this stopover. Radioman Barney ALLEN had an aunt and uncle there and they invited all members to their beautiful home surrounded in lush Hawaiian natural beauty of tropical diverse flora, for dinner and most enjoyable respite of mission purpose ... Since arrival at Kaneohe on 2 June 1944, the next significant flight departure was on 9 June 1944 by way of Palmyra Island, then across the equator with due respect to "King Neptune" by initiation of "Polly-wogs" by the "Shellbacks" and on to Canton Island ... A LT George L. KELLEY at Canton was in charge of the Phoenix Islands' LORAN activities. From Canton, the project called for a master station and manned with a compliment of 25-26 men on Gardner Island (Now '1992' named "NIKUMARORO" of the Republic of Kiribiti!)** The assigned crew at Gardner Island was in the company of an indeterminate number of natives who resided about the lagoon on the surrounding two irregular, elongated and encircling islands. The majority of the natives were believed to have resided in or near the village of the lesser sized island. A major attraction at Gardner Island was a wrecked cargo ship on the reef adjacent to the opening of the lagoon! Following the several tasks performed in the Phoenix Islands area, a flight had been made to Johnson Island in the North Central Pacific. On an early morning takeoff attempt heading into the sun, the plane hit a dreaded, just submerged "Coral head." It tore a gaping hole in the hull and immediately sprayed massive amounts of water throughout the cabin. VAUGHN gave full power to get the plane on its "step" and came about to virtually fly the plane onto a sandy beach. VAUGHN's quick thinking or instinctive response demonstrated a pilot at his best! Fortunately the navy had the equipment on Johnston Island to hoist V189 for the attachment of beaching gear. From there V189's crew made the required repairs and patching, rinsed out all the salt water, dismantled guns and radio gear, etc. for proper functioning by the end of the third day and made off for its next destination Makin, Tarawa Islands of the Gilbert Group, then on to Funafuti of the Ellice Islands and back to Canton, the operational support site for this LORAN area ... It was during the two months of July and August 1944 that both, many flight hours (180.7) and a multitude of islands were surveyed or LORAN serviced. The island hopping included Florida Island at Halavo Bay in the Solomon Islands; Samari and Milne Bay, New Guinea; Australia at Brisbane; Noumea, New Caledonia; Viti Levu at Suva of the Fijian Islands; Upolu Island at Apia of British Samoa; then back again to Canton on to Kaneohe by way of Palmyra Island. The only time PBY 5 V189 had an engine failure was on 12 September 1944 soon after departure from Palmyra to Kaneohe. A safe turnaround was made back to Palmyra and the required replacement items were flown in from Kaneohe. Upon completion of the maintenance action and test flight, V189 was back enroute to Kaneohe...The accumulated flight hours and other factors were cause for both engines to be replaced before returning to the unfinished LORAN mission. This engine change activity was the only time that V189 crew was not allowed to do the job. It had to do with some Navy warrantee type of agreement to the providers of the facilities, equipment and material, etc. However upon completion of this work, V189 pilots LAWLIS and GUST flew with the Navy test-pilot for the required test flight; the regular crew flew a subsequent "shakedown" flight to determine their own satisfaction for continuing self-sufficiency operations.

...Completion of the Phoenix and Gilbert Islands by mid months of 1944 provided LORAN coverage for practically the entire Pacific war front as it existed. By this period, LORAN receivers were installed in over 1000 surface vessels and 7000 aircraft. Thus the progressing allied military forces required urgent installations westward of the Gilbert Islands to an alignment toward the Philippines. The Gilbert-Marshall chain extended from Makin Atoll to Kwajalein Atoll, a distance of about 450 miles in a southeast-northwesterly direction. This chain of stations consisted of a single slave stations at Makin and Kwajalein, a double master station at Rogeron (Lorraine) Island of Majuro as well as a monitor on Enigu Island of Majuro. The USCG moved into the Marianas soon after occupation in September 1944 that would improve assault directly toward Japan. Saipan was chosen for a single master station as well as one on Potangaras Island at Ulithi Atoll of the northwestern Caroline Islands; a double slave station on Cocos Island, Guam; and a monitor station at Ritidian Point on the most northern point of Guam. These island LORAN sites provided another directional chain about 500 miles long...To bomb Japan, it was necessary to route flights westerly from the Marianas and Volcano and Bonin Islands, to avoid the presence of Japanese forces along the Volcano-Bonin archipelago. Therefore accurate navigation was essential and provided by the LORAN signals...On a flight on 20 November 1944 from Tarawa to Eniwetok, a flight of some eight hours at about the halfway point, the main electrical junction-box caught fire ("J-B" is right under the main fuel tanks). All hands on board were notified, so while extinguishers were applied, the plane commander VAUGHN dropped altitude from 10,000 to near sea level, the radiomen, CADE and ALLEN, resolved the fire cause and soon had the electrical distribution back in operation...Upon completion of work at Eniwetok, it was on to Saipan and Guam. When anchored in the harbors of both Saipan and Guam, a duty crew of least two stayed aboard V189 at all times. A very alert watch was needed to prevent the un-captured "die-hard" Japanese from swimming out to the plane with the intention of destruction. Constant signal system was employed between every seaplane, using an Aldis-lamp, to report hourly to the seaplane tender as a security measure. Although on our arrival at Apra Harbor, it was "Thanksgiving Day" and before we had even dropped anchor, a message from the destroyer escort, "USS DUFFY" (DE-21), informed us that the Commanding Officer was inviting us to join them for the dinner of the occasion. It was certainly a time of thanks for a lot of things...The seaplane tenders were a source of parts and so many other necessities to of course include food for the crew and fuel for the plane. Although as allied progression was made throughout the visited islands/atolls by late 1944, caches of fuel and oil were never much of a problem as it had been earlier at places like Atafu, Hull Atoll, Gardner, Sidney, Funafuti or Apamama when there was little to expect or find in the way of either "gas stations or motels." Quite often on these previous island-hopping occasions, we would carry along extra fuel and oil supplies, etc. Despite the fact that as us Coast Guard types would appear so unexpectedly at some of the most out of the seemingly inappropriate places, and be questionably challenged so frequently, it was seldom as a threat and consequently we were treated with enthusiastic hospitality. Perhaps the only time we received any form of problem was at Halavo Bay, late in 1944. In the course of obtaining fuel, some rather officious New Zealander in charge of such disbursements wanted our commander to come up with cash or some other form of credit for the service. To this day, perhaps only Clement VAUGHN, our plane commander or that New Zealander may have the answer as to how the payment argument was settled? For being "allies", it was irksome to believe so much was expected from us! (It certainly did not coincide with any other relationship we had with New Zealanders!) ... The urgent need for LORAN stations was soon demonstrated. On 25 November 1944, one hundred eleven (111) B-29s bombed Japan! It was the first bombing attack on Tokyo since Doolittle's raid from the carrier "USS HORNET (CV-8) on 18 April 1942 with sixteen (16) B-25s. This B-29 raid would be the first of the following raids until the cessation of WWII. It was a thrill of pride for those of us to witness the sky darken the surface with this great "aluminum overcast" from that historical bombing assembly of B-29s ... The LORAN station on Saipan was not far from the B-29 field on Tinian and there were enemy raids that resulted in not only direct hit threats from the attacking aircraft, but also from fragmentation "rain" caused by the exploding defensive anti-aircraft projectiles. On one occasion, when Barney ALLEN had gone to obtain some needed radio parts, the Japanese bombed the island. As Barney was taking refuge in what he considered safe, a voice called out to him, that his refuge was a mobile fuel tanker! Fortunately, no casualty situation resulted from the raid ... The Marianas LORAN installation chain included a station on Ulithi that was completed in February 1945. Its signals were immediately put into use by the "21st Bomber Command" of the US Army Air Corps with additional navigation security for their multi air routing needs...Among the latter survey flights made by PBV-5 v189 was one to Yap island, still held at that time by the Japanese. For this flight, fighter aircraft support was provided by Navy fighter aircraft from Ulithi. They were so comfortably close to us that side numbers, "F(N)79" and "F(N)87" could be read...Following a few more "wrap-up" tasks in 1945, V189 and crew were allowed to return to USCG Air Station, San Francisco. This completed 104 mission flights with 604.1 flight hours...Some of the more memorable highlights recalled beyond

what has already been included specifically are: (1) Both Canton Island of the Phoenix Islands and NAS Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, T.H. were our homes away from home. (2) The months of July & August 1944 kept us on the go to some of the most memorable locations in the Central Pacific; i.e., from as far east as Western (British) Samoa at Apia on Upolu Island where Robert Louis Stevenson finished out his life. This was also very special in the form of pleasant accommodations combined with extremely pleasant hospitality. The latter extended for the "Maitre d' Hotel to invite the whole crew to visit a native home and enjoy a privileged relationship to their Polynesian culture not yet spoiled by progressive outside influences!—There was a special occasion that included taking the governing officer of the Phoenix Islands, a New Zealand colonel, with us to Gardner Island. We had our LORAN work to do and the Colonel had been invited for the occasion of celebrating the Queen of England's birthday. From the time we set PBY V189 into the lagoon, large canoes bringing the "Elders" of the village headed for our mooring, but to our amazement they were displaying an American flag! Their own protocol prevailed to display respect for those responsible for transporting their Governor. We too became integrated with the celebrating assembly and with only some bread and jam from our provisions, the sharing of this humble contribution became a very unsuspecting treat that nearly caused a riot for its demand from children and adults alike. They had savored "hardtack" until bread and jam was introduced! ... Many places fresh water wasn't always available. On Tarawa Island we were allowed a "helmet liner" half full of water to brush our teeth, wash, shave and sponge bath for the short time we were there. The others there had this as their daily routine. We were only passing through! — Our timing was a little off season as we visited Australia during the cool austral winter to only have "dress whites!" Then as inquisitive people wanted to know about our attire, suspecting that we were survivors from a torpedoed ship. They were somewhat appalled as we stated that we were Coast Guard; they replied, "But why, we have our own bloody Coast Guard?" Not being able to state more than that, most people thought we were lost. — As PBY-5 V189 was approaching Halavo Bay at Florida Island of the Solomon Islands, the recognition signal was given by radioman Barney ALLEN and acknowledged. As we continued our approach, Barney asked for landing instructions and what buoy to use. The Navy "signalman" in the control tower asked Barney to repeat his request and this query went on several times. Barney was getting a little miffed with this routine. Just before Barney was about to explode. A message read; "You haven't changed your sending since Boy Scout days." This line of message sending upset Barney even more. After going ashore, Barney was met by the "signalman"; it was his Navy brother! — PBY V189 encountered severe weather from time to time, including those well known thunderstorms so prevalent between Fiji and Samoa, that all planes best give detour to. But when secured to anchorage buoys at Majuro Island and again at Ulithi Atoll, the plane had to actually be tether-flown during some really ambitious gales. Other times conditions required such low level flight the plane was "wave hopping" to keep it in one piece. This technique gave the name "Flying-boat" a true meaning. -- Just before V189 arrived at Ulithi, a fierce storm blew some PBM flying boats out to sea after tearing them from their moorings, incurring a great loss of lives. ...In summation with pride in our sense of maintaining secrecy while accomplishing so much that contributed more than simply significant results to bring victory for the Pacific allied forces; it could hardly have been accomplished so well without the use of a PBY "Catalina"! ... The sad commentary though, is that within days of our return to San Francisco, US Coast Guard PBY-5 V189 was being totally dismantled for some indeterminate high level decision, while all its crew members were bestowed with distinguishing medals and additional forms of recognitions!

*(Special "Thank you", John M. "Jack" SHEA for sharing this superb historical account of an outstanding contributonal role that USCG PBY-5 V189 and crew made. Try as the Historian/Editor for this "PBY Catalina International Association" did, very little was available concerning this particular aircraft, except it being the first PBY-5 delivered to operational forces with "waist compartment blisters" instead of the previous sliding hatch configuration and that it was a Consolidated Aircraft Corporation/US Navy contract # C-70496 for inclusive US Navy Bureau of Aeronautics numbers 2289-2455. Further that BuNo 2290 was assigned to the Coast Guard with USCG number V189 assigned with special configuration requirements and equipped with Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasp engines model R1830-82. In Jack's cover letter with this "History of USCG Catalina Flying Boat PBY-5 V189", he confirmed the contract information with a copy of the official contract document and that the metal "Identification Plate" removed from V189 is now in the Coast Guard Museum. *Jack also included some interesting photo-copies of pictures taken of "Gardner Island" showing aerial views that displays its reef structure, two island configuration, native village site and one view inside one of the principal larger structures. To the editor who has been following the Amelia EARHART story since his childhood days of having his first flight with Amelia, the information and pictures provided by Jack contributes to the lack of validity to Mr. Richard GILLESPIE's reported findings in behalf of "The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery" (TIGHAR) as a press release in march 1992. Re: collected artifacts of Amelia's aircraft Lockheed "Electra" aluminum skin section and manual or map box (?), along with her personal effects, i.e., size NINE (9) shoe etc. (NOTE: Amelia wore a size SIX (6) to SEVEN (7) foot-wear!) —She had a good understanding but not "Big in her Feet"! And with regard to "Gardner" now renamed Nikumaroro since the Republic of Kiribiti was established in 1990, it has not been an uninhabited desert island for many many years. — So! Besides the flights made to this island by USCG PBY-5 V189 plus how many other aircraft were there over the years as well as ship visits, one that remained there at the reef-channel access as a rather permanent monument after its demise as a "shipwreck."*

*There remains at this time, the probability that perhaps one of these aircraft may have shed some skin at this atoll to account for what Gillespie displayed as part of Amelia's "Electra"?.... * US Coast Guard Museum is in Seattle, Washington.*