

LORAN STATION UPOLU POINT

1947 LIFE ABOARD

By Robert E. Johnson

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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

RECEIVED
JUL 11 1956
9 July, 1956
U. S. COAST GUARD
Office CDR 17th CG District

ADDRESS REPLY TO

Commanding Officer
CGLORSTA, OCEAN CAPE
~~SEASIDE~~ P O A
Yakutat, Alaska

1956 JUL 30 PM 3 16

From: Commanding Officer, LTS, Ocean Cape, Yakutat, Alaska
To: Commandant(PO-2)
Via: Commander, 17th CG District (p)
Subj: Overseas Loran Station Survey

1. In accordance with Commandant (PO-2) ltr dated 22 May, 1956 FILE: A7 a narrative report of this officer's impressions of duty at this unit is herewith forwarded. Submission of this report was delayed pending receipt of some black and white photographs. As the pictures have not been returned as yet it was felt better to submit the report as is.

Frank L. Ryman, Jr.
FRANK L. RYMAN, JR.

P
26 July 1956
A7

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CO, UCLTS Ocean Cape ltr A7 of 9 July 1956

From: Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District
To: Commandant (PO-2)

1. Forwarded with enclosure.

G. A. Philbrick
G. A. PHILBRICK
by direction

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U. S. COAST GUARD LORAN TRANSMITTING STATION
OCEAN CAPE, YAKUTAT, ALASKA

Ocean Cape Loran Transmitting Station is located in the Northernmost part of the famous Alaskan "Panhandle" section. The Coast Guard lease is located in the Tongass National Forest. It fronts on the Gulf of Alaska in a small clearing by the beach. The Yakutat Peninsula extends from Mt. Fairweather to Mt. St. Elias with the St. Elias Range marking the inland boundary. The local terrain is a mixture of dense hemlock and spruce forest interspersed with extensive sections of sodden muskeg and countless small lakes.

The station is constructed of two "elephant" quonsets connected by a covered passageway. One building houses the recreation and mess deck, galley and quarters. The quarters are very comfortable with two men assigned to each room where they have desks, lockers, lamps, radios and beds with innerspring mattresses. The shower and head facilities are adequate. There is an excellent laundry room with two washing machines and an electric dryer. The Commanding Officer has a private room with head and shower.

The galley is very well equipped with an electric range, large refrigerator, walk freezer and chill box. Storage spaces for dry stores and equipment are more than ample.

The other building houses the engine room and loran hut. Electricity for the station is generated by two Fairbanks-Morse, two cylinder, Model 32-E-12 diesel engine generators. They are a reliable, rugged engine but require rigid maintenance under the low load conditions of operation.

Being the double-pulse master for the Goal chain, this station has four timers which is the only deviation from standard as the average loran hut. As this is written, the new timers are on the station but not yet installed. We hope to have this completed by this winter. The loran equipment provides practically no problem and is responsible for very little of the off-air time for which this unit can be charged.

Ocean Cape is classified isolated duty and families are no longer permitted. This officer was fortunate in having brought his family up prior to the establishment of this ruling and we find the living quite good. A certain amount of "roughing it" is necessary but conditions definitely are far from primitive. Our house has running water, three oil stoves and electricity. With the ability to order supplies direct from Seattle, the cost of living is very reasonable when compared to other sections of Alaska. There are two excellent grade schools, one in the Village and another in the C. A. A. area. Unless some change of policy takes place, this information is academic but is included should families again be permitted.

In addition to the Coast Guard facility, the Civil Aeronautics Authority has a rather large operation which is centered about six miles north of this unit. The air field consists of two runways of more than 7,000 feet each and one large hangar. There are numerous private aircraft in the area and Pacific Northern Airlines makes two scheduled stops in each direction every week. Juneau is about one hour's flight time by this line.

The C. A. A. personnel have their families here and they are friendly to the Coast Guard men, inviting them frequently to dinner and other social functions. Our official relations with the C. A. A. are excellent with a high degree of cooperation which works to the mutual benefit to both services. An example of this is the fact that they used our large SnoGo all winter. In consideration they plowed our roads for us and maintained the equipment which is a task they are far better equipped to do, both in facilities and trained manpower.

The climate is much as one would expect of Southeastern Alaska. There is a good deal of rain--over a 100 inches a year--and considerable snow in the winter. Most of the rain falls during the spring and fall months.

The winter snowfalls are quite heavy, even for Alaska. It averages between 15 and 20 feet and the record was set in the winter of 1954-55 with 31 feet. Actually, this isn't as disasterous as it appears. Nearly every snow storm is followed by a rain and warmer weather and the total snow on the ground seldom exceeds five or six feet. In the forests, however, the snow gets deeper and stays longer. Unfortunately, the access roads to this station pass through the forests making the snowplowing problem a little more difficult.

The recreation facilities and opportunities available to the personnel of this unit are considered superb. It depends, of course, a great deal on the individual. Hunting, fishing and boating are the three most promising recreational pursuits. There are ~~ix~~ several rivers on the penninsula which furnish some of the best sport fishing conceivable. The Situc, which lies about 10 miles south, has heavy runs of steelhead and dolly varden trout and silver salmon. The river can be reached by driving the beach from the station, by private airplane or on the cannery railroad. Other types of salt and fresh water fishing are even more accessible.

For boating, Yakutat Bay offers trips of exceptional beauty and fascinating exploration. The photographic fan will find subjects of endless variety and perspective. A trip to the head of the bay more than compensates for the year of isolated duty. Tremendous glaciers, including the famous Hubbard and Malispina are just a few hours away by outboard boat in inland waters. The bay is sprinkled with islands of various sizes which are heavily populated with deer.

Any number of native guides stand ready to take the Coast Guard men to these places without charge.

Other game abounds in this area, including numerous Alaskan brown bear and moose. Due to the non-resident restrictions, however, few men attached to the unit will have an opportunity to take one of these animals. Moose frequently come into the station yard and brown bear are a common sight in the dump.

For the "indoor" sportsman, there is a rather limited social whirl. The C. A. A. Has a recreation hall in which they frequently have parties and dances to which the Coast Guard men always are invited. There are Saturday night dances in the village which are primarily attended by the native population. The Coast Guard men also are welcomed at these functions but this occasionally creates problems which will be discussed later.

The station receives liberal amounts of recreation gear from the District office. This includes games, baseball equipment, ice skates, etc. The baseball (softball) gear is used in hotly contested games with the C. A. A. and village personnel. The only game lost by the Coast Guard so far has been on in which the other team borrowed our pitcher. These games are highly enjoyed by all hands.

Mail arrives in Yakutat four times weekly via Pacific Northern Airlines. All mail from Juneau comes via air with first class and parcel post from the states going as far as Juneau by steamer.

Logostics for this unit are almost unbelievably good. The Air Detachment at Annette Island flies a supply trip every two weeks to bring fresh vegetables, fruit, etc. Every two months or less, an R5D flight delivers from Seattle. This enables the station to procur excellent fresh meats and produce at Seattle prices and the men are well fed with no great strain to the mess account.

Some dry stores and general stores items are flown in on the logistic flights, but ordinarily they are delivered by tender from the Coast Guard Base in Ketchikan. Emergency items always are flown in, either via commercial or C. G. plane. It is the opinion of this officer that the logistical support received here is very outstanding.

The only medical talent in the whole of Yakutat is the Coast Guard hospitalman. This fact probably is the source of the greatest single "headache" to the C. O. of this station. The final decision as to whether evacuation is required and other problems must be decided on the basis of incomplete diagnosis by the Hospitalman. This unit has been furnished a legal release form to protect the Service in any eventuality but there is an undesirable responsibility which seems also unavoidable from the humanitarian standpoint.

The greatest single disadvantage to this station is the fact that it is isolated only in classification. The fact that the C. A. A. personnel have their families here living in excellent government quarters at a fantastically low rental serves to seriously harm the morale of the married men on this unit. It is not intended to advance arguments against the Service policy in this writing, but the fact that the three "family" quonsets built on this station have been allowed to fall into rusting ruin while married men are separated from their families for a year has caused many a good technician to cast a dubious eye towards reenlistment. All have agreed that this would be the most desirable duty they had ever served if they could have their families along.

The young native girls of easy virtue located in the village of Yakutat also are a more or less constant problem. The steady paycheck of the Coast Guard men is an attractive lure and legal action in paternity cases is a steady threat to the erring sailor.

In conclusion and by way of summary, this officer would like to say that this tour of duty has been the highpoint of his sixteen years of service. This can be verified by the fact that he has extended his tour by one year.

Preference for assignment to this unit should be given the officer who enjoys the outdoor life and can get along well with people. Understanding and tolerance in dealing with the natives will earn respect for his crew and himself. They will return good and fair treatment with free guiding and boat trips and ready assistance in situation or accident.

It is suggested that the officer coming to Ocean Cape bring two sets of whipcord trousers, boots (such as Irish Setters, Chippewas, or similar) good heavy stockings, etc. The trousers which are best are the 50% orlon and wool. A good rain slicker and hat of light weight also are desirable.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

ADDRESS REPLY TO:
COMMANDER
17TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT
P. O. BOX 2631
JUNEAU, ALASKA



1956 AUG 27

P
22 August 1956
A7
Serial: 669-56

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From: Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District
To: Commandant (PO-2)

Subj: Overseas Loran Station Survey

Ref: (a) Your ltr dtd 22 May 1956 file A7; same subject

1. Delay in complying with reference (a) was caused by the time required to obtain copies of the Loran Survey Reports. Most stations air-mailed reports directly to Headquarters with no copy being sent to this office.
2. The reports have been reviewed by this division and the operations division and are considered to be complete and accurate with the exception of one additional note for LORSTA, Ocean Cape and LORSTA Cape Sarichef as follows:

LORSTA Ocean Cape has movies with excellent supply of films as a member of the regular movie circuit and LORSTA Cape Sarichef is quite often subject to earth tremors.

G. A. Philbrick
G. A. PHILBRICK
By direction

WWW.loran-dist.info
To be included with Loran Surveys
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