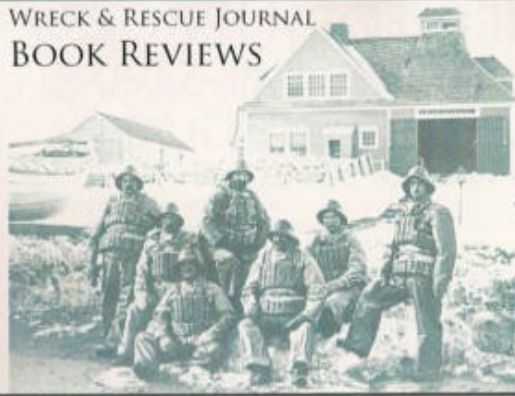


WRECK & RESCUE JOURNAL
BOOK REVIEWS



PRESENTING THE LATEST IN
COAST GUARD HISTORY PUBLICATIONS

The staff and contributors to *Wreck & Rescue Journal* are constantly on the search for new Coast Guard history titles to review. We will consider reviewing any book that has to do with the U.S. Life-Saving Service, U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, the United States Coast Guard, lighthouses, similar foreign agencies, shipwrecks, or other themes that affect the lives of search and rescue professionals. To suggest a title, contact the editor at johnjgalluzzo@hotmail.com.

THE HISTORIC NORTHWEST PASSAGE
AND THE CGC STORIS

By Dick Juge

AuthorHouse, 2007

1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200

Bloomington, IN 47403

www.authorhouse.com

Paperback, 299 pages, \$20.99

Dick Juge entered the Coast Guard for a specific reason. He left high school with half a year to go because time was running out for him to take advantage of the Korean War GI Bill. He admits that he was never much of a student anyway, and thought that getting away from home might help his mother, who, widowed, was raising the family on her own. He had no idea that in so doing, he would be making history.

Juge is probably the last Coast Guardsman one would expect to write his service memoirs. From page one he's frank and honest about the distaste he felt for the service when he was in. He counted the days until he got out, laughed when approached about re-upping and sprinted home to New Orleans the day he was free. But fifty years on, he's had a chance to reflect on what he learned and what he did during those short four years, and has realized what an amazing opportunity it was to gain some worldly experience. The theme of the book, in fact, is reflection. At the end of each chapter, Juge recaptures the life lessons learned at each stage of his Coast Guard career, from training at Cape May, through work in the northeast, the deep south, Alaska and home again.

Alaska is the star of the show, in many ways. Juge got there prior to statehood, when Alaska was still a territory. He also landed aboard his second cutter, the fifteen year old *Storis*. Soon, orders came through for *Storis* to head off on its historic voyage, to find the Northwest Passage across the top of the North American continent.

As soon as the convoy - *Storis*, *Bramble* and *Spar* - head

out the reader realizes that the world in which this event took place is not the world of today. Russian Migs take off when the cutters come within twenty miles of the coast, and the crew is called to battle stations. The cutters pass by DEW (distant early warning) line stations that are other indications that there is a Cold War being waged between the east and west.

Into the colder regions the cutters rode. As the trip continues, Juge's voice is joined by those of numerous shipmates. Letters home, logs, even contemporary memories are added to give a nearly day by day account of the famous voyage. In fact, Juge's voice fades as "STO" becomes the main character. The middle portion of the book reads like a ship's log, told through the eyes of the young men picked to make history.

At the end of the voyage, the *Storis* arrives in Boston for a grand celebration. In a truly precise historic moment, Juge visits the *Mayflower II* in New York City. While *Storis* was crossing the top of the world, the replica sailing ship was crossing the Atlantic. In the fall of 1957 *Mayflower II* visited New York City, prior to returning to a permanent berthing in Plymouth, Massachusetts. *Storis* continued down the East Coast, through the Panama Canal, and up the West Coast, completing the circumnavigation of the North American continent of 22,500 miles in six months.

Back in Alaska, mundane service life returns. Juge mentions visiting and supplying the Scotch Cap Lighthouse. Within a few years, the light would be gone, a casualty of the worst earthquake ever to hit Alaska. When one thinks of the isolation of such a lighthouse and the small number of people that ever visited it, one wonders just how many people alive today can claim to have seen it with their own eyes.

Before he leaves the service, the self-professed "class A bonehead" receives a Good Conduct Medal, to his own bewilderment. Four years end, and he leaves the service to get on with his life.

Juge's work is not a literary masterpiece, but as far as memoirs go, it's open, heartfelt and impressively thorough. The author has done a wonderful service by gathering the memories of his

surviving Northwest Passage cruise shipmates in one place. And more than just publishing a book, Juge has also created a CD of images from the cruise for purchase from his personal website, www.thehistoricnorthwestpassage.com.

This writing project began as a chance to pass on some words of wisdom to the author's grandchildren, and in the end turned into a very important document for students of Coast Guard history.