

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

One of the Coast Guard's primary missions is law enforcement. Women as well as men work in all Coast Guard law enforcement assignments, including drug interdiction, illegal alien interdiction, fisheries law enforcement, marine safety enforcement, and oil and hazardous substances spill investigations.

There are many examples of Coast Guard women demonstrating outstanding achievements in Coast Guard law enforcement. Two of these follow.

LT June E. Ryan

LT June E. Ryan enlisted in the Coast Guard Reserves in 1983 and served for two years before being accepted into Officer Candidate School. She was commissioned as an ensign in 1985.

LT Ryan's first assignment as an officer was to USCGC Gallatin, a 378-foot cutter out of Governors Island, New York. She graduated from Maritime Law Enforcement School and qualified as a boarding officer. During her two years on Gallatin she was the boarding officer for two major maritime drug seizures.

In the first of these seizures, the Gallatin apprehended the fishing vessel Liedy with ten tons of marijuana on board. Three crewmen were arrested and convicted. In the second seizure, the fishing vessel Diana carried twenty tons of marijuana. Four crewmen were convicted, each receiving a sentence which will require serving a minimum of twelve years. LT Ryan was directly involved in the planning and execution of these boardings, leading the boarding teams, arresting the crewmen, and preparing successful case packages.

In 1987 LT Ryan was selected to command the 95-foot patrol boat USCGC Cape Morgan, home-ported in Maine. She boarded numerous

vessels in support of U.S. fisheries laws, many times in adverse weather conditions. During this assignment, Cape Morgan served as a test vessel for using drug dogs onboard ships, providing valuable information. While commanding Cape Morgan in northeastern U.S. waters, LT Ryan's efforts in law enforcement and search and rescue earned her the Coast Guard Commendation Medal.

LT Ryan has been assigned to the Coast Guard Maritime Law Enforcement School at Yorktown, Virginia, since 1989. Her accomplishments as an instructor are as impressive as those of a Boarding Officer. She attained instructor qualifications in short order, fully two months before the school standard. She is qualified to teach in three separate subject matters: boating safety, fisheries, and the use of force. She met the demanding requirements for and attained Advanced Instructor qualifications, one of only a handful of staff members to achieve this goal.

LT Ryan is the first female at Maritime Law Enforcement School to qualify to instruct in the use of force. This field demands expertise in 37 different defensive tactic techniques, requires solid physical fitness, and necessitates a strong knowledge of human physiology and first aid. She played a critical role in completely revising the defensive tactics chapter in the Coast Guard's Law Enforcement Reference Manual, a publication used Coast Guard-wide.

As a member of an International Training Team, LT Ryan trained Bermuda customs agents and police officers in all aspects of maritime law enforcement. Traveling to Nebraska she taught 75 state park officers the federal laws concerning boating while intoxicated, including physiology of alcohol and use of the breath analyzer.

In 1991 LT Ryan was selected

as the Maritime Law Enforcement School Senior Instructor, again the first female selected to this position. As Senior Instructor she is responsible for overseeing the development and training of more than twenty instructors and for continually revising and updating the course's topical outline to ensure Coast Guard Boarding Officers are receiving the latest and best law enforcement information.

As a collateral duty at Maritime Law Enforcement School, LT Ryan has served as the liaison officer to the Coast Guard Auxiliary responsible for training over 1200 members in boating safety and boating while intoxicated laws.

"Grandma" In The Gulf Gains Respect As One Of Unit's Top Guns

By PAC Tom Gillespie
Reprinted from *The Reservist*
February/March 1991 Edition

A Coast Guard 22-foot patrol boat jumps through the choppy seas of the Persian Gulf. Its 155-horsepower outboards push the grey bow up like a cobra ready to strike.

The bow gunner pops the charging handle of the 50-caliber machine gun, readying it. Her hands grab the two butterfly triggers. She squeezes off a quick burst, peppering a bobbing target 100 yards away.

PS1 Sandra Mitten, a 49-year-old grandmother from New Berlin, Wis., is quickly making a name for herself as one of the best gunners in the unit. She is one of about 300 port securitymen deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Storm. Her Milwaukee-based reserve unit arrived Sept. 15 and is responsible for waterside security at one of the main ports supplying multinational forces taking part in Operation Desert Storm.

Besides the fire power that a .50-

caliber can supply, PS1 Mitten says it's also a great stress reliever.

I'll have to admit that there have been times here that I've been real frustrated," she said. "When I start firing the 50, my adrenaline gets up, and by the time I've fired 200 rounds, my frustration is gone and my level of excitement is up to here," she said, touching her chin.

The modern-day Annie Oakley, as many are beginning to call her now, hasn't always been such a crack shot and had never fired a machine gun until she was called up in September.

"I felt real comfortable with it the first time I ever fired it, and really enjoy firing it," said Mitten. "When it came time to fire, Bob (Brinza, one of the boat's three crewmen) would say, 'Well, Grandma, what's your pleasure?' and I would say the 50."

An employee at a small-engine assembly company back home, Mitten jokingly says the job doesn't

allow her much time to fire the .50-caliber and seems embarrassed by her recent notoriety.

"Without sounding too conceited, it's a good feeling to know I'm one of the best gunners," she said. "I've worked real hard since joining the Coast Guard to learn new things. I feel proud that I've been given this opportunity."

Her pixie smile slowly vanishes as she recounts her reserve unit being called to Camp Perry, Ohio, for last minute staging. Most thought, she says, they would return home and be called for duty later, but her Port Security Unit 303 was immediately activated and given 12 hours to return home before departure for Saudi Arabia. None of them knew when they would return home.

"I guess my first feeling was disbelief," she said. "But I'm close to this group and thought that if I did have to go, there's no other people I'd rather go with. I also felt secure

knowing that the people I would be working with were people that would be doing everything they could to take care of me."

Mitten says she was apprehensive when first arriving but wasn't afraid.

"Now (fear) comes and goes," she says. "But I have faith in my coxswain (MKC Loren Sendek). When we first arrived, he sat Bob and me down and said we were going to do two things: not get anybody hurt and not get anybody wet," she said with a grin.

Mitten seems to have resigned herself to the role of grandmother of the unit, especially since her roommate is younger than her daughter.

"When this first started, people started calling me 'grandma,' and I wasn't sure if I liked it," she said. "But as time went on, that's all they ever called me. Even the Army guys at the living compound call me that — even people I don't know."

LT Ryan is the first female to receive a promotion to the rank of lieutenant commander in the Coast Guard. She is also the first female to receive a promotion to the rank of lieutenant commander in the Coast Guard.

As a member of an international training team, LT Ryan trained Bermuda customs agents and police officers in all aspects of maritime law enforcement. Traveling to Hoboken, she taught 75 state police officers the federal laws concerning boating while intoxicated, including provisions of alcohol and use of the breath analyzer.

In 1987 LT Ryan was selected to command the 85-foot patrol boat USCGC Cape Morgan, home-ported in Miami. She boarded numerous

boats in the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. She was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67.

LT Ryan was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67. She was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67.

LT Ryan was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67. She was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67.

LT Ryan was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67. She was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67.

LT Ryan was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67. She was also involved in the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight 67.