

## AFTERWARD

Like all good things it had to come to an end. The 300-day 10-month deployment in the waters off Vietnam came to an end on February 10, 1968 as the 311 ft Coast Guard Cutter steamed under the Golden Gate Bridge, amidst the spraying fireboats and to her pier at Alameda. It was a good ending, there were dignitaries, family friends, and many well wishers on the pier. There were balloons, flags, bands and giant Welcome Home Gresham signs strung all over the area. It was certainly a long journey, almost 75,000 miles since that bright Sunday in April. It was a journey filled with excitement at first, monotony as the months wore on, then satisfaction as the voyage came to an end. We didn't go over there and take the country by surprise, nor blast the enemy off the map, nor become overnight heroes all recommended for the Silver Star. We were not the big war heroes of the Coast Guard. We simply did our job, and we did it the best we knew how. It was not an easy task. It was not a task where you would have to dodge shells bursting all around you, nor meet the enemy hand to hand, it was a tedious task of surveillance of constant watching for infiltrators. We didn't catch any, but we watched and we kept a good watch. We knew that infiltrators could not possibly get by us, and if they attempted to we were ready. We trained hard and long, and kept right on training. We never missed a patrol because of engine trouble or any other failures. The GRESHAM replenished at sea almost fifty times without incident, receiving many tons of material and fuel. Although our exploits were never front page news, we know that our task was essential to the efforts of the Coast Guard and the Navy.

In retrospect, the crew of the GRESHAM can certainly be proud of the job they did, although it was long and tiring, it was effective. It was effective on the men also, it demonstrates how a crew can work together as a team, and how the men of the Coast Guard carry on the traditions set for them by their predecessors, and how they help to carry on in that tradition so that others may take up the challenge and echo the familiar words "Always Ready."