

Arrival of Owasco Delayed by Rescue

NORFOLK, Va.—The Coast Guard Cutter Owasco, due here this week after a year's absence, was diverted this morning for a medical rescue mission off Cape Hatteras.

A CG spokesman in Norfolk said the ship was ordered about 1:30 a.m. to rendezvous with the Norwegian Motor Vessel Noreffelt steaming about 200 miles southeast of the cape.

A message earlier from the merchant master said a crew member, a 22-year old steward, is showing symptoms of appendicitis. There is no doctor aboard the foreign ship.

Owasco and the Noreffelt are to rendezvous about 1:50 p.m., the CG spokesman said. Owasco's doctor, Lt. Cmdr. David A. Spelt, is to examine the woman to see whether emergency medical attention is necessary.

Owasco is equipped to per-

form an appendectomy, but the spokesman said the woman will remain aboard Noreffelt, if possible, until the ship makes a port or a helicopter can transfer to a hospital.

Although the rendezvous point is not far off Owasco's course to New London, CG officials couldn't say this morning whether she will make her scheduled arrival here Wednesday.

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Owasco Crewmen Cited in Vietnam

SUBIC BAY, P. I. — Seven members of the crew of Coast Guard Cutter Owasco were cited for bravery during a patrol of the ship off Vietnam and another has been promoted.

The awards and promotion certificate were presented by Cmdr. William R. Fearn of Norwich, commanding officer, during in-port ceremonies here recently.

Recipients of the highest awards, the Navy Commendation Medal, are Lt. Cmdr. David A. Spelt, Public Health Service doctor, and CG Seaman Neal R. Maisson, his medical assistant.

Letters of Commendation went to Lt. (j.g.) Guilford L. Mack Jr. and Donald M. Scheffer and Kenneth G. Bane, first and third class petty officers, respectively.

Also receiving a Letter of Commendation was Klaus J. Steinhurst, a first class petty officer. Neil E. Talley, a petty officer second class, was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal.

Both earned their citations while serving aboard other cutters off Vietnam.

Humberto Bonache of 188 First Ave., Center Groton, was promoted to chief petty officer.

The awards to Spelt, Maisson, Mack, Scheffer and Bane were for their actions under enemy fire while returning to the ship aboard a 30-foot Navy patrol boat following a medical visit to a refugee village.

Direct hits on an accompany- ing 30-foot vessel in severe danger from the enemy and the wounding of several crewmen. Spelt and Maisson transferred to that boat immediately and treated the injured. The latter also helped rescue a Navy crewman thrown overboard by the hits.

The other three conducted pumping operations to keep the boat afloat throughout the exchange of fire and afterwards engineered towing maneuvers as the boat returned to Owasco.

Talley was lauded for his part in keeping Cutter Campbell's main turbines, generators and other equipment in a state of engineering dependability while a member of an emergency engineering detail aboard.

Steinhurst was recognized for keeping engineering equipment aboard Cutter Winsa in "a high degree of performance" while Engineering Department petty officer and specifically for his handling of personnel in the performance of his assignment.

Owasco Lived in Constant Danger

NEW LONDON — "We knew we were in constant danger, but we never knew when danger might come."

This was how Cmdr. William R. Fearn of Norwich, captain of the Coast Guard Cutter Owasco, characterized the five combat patrols his ship made off the South Vietnam Coast.

It was the Owasco's job to keep strict surveillance on boats that might be carrying contraband men and arms to the Viet Cong. She also assisted Navy ships in gunfire support to U. S. Marine forces ashore.

A not-so-typical gunfire mission for the Owasco last Feb. 22, saw her working side by side with the Battleship New Jersey, "During the Tet offensive," Fearn recalled, "the two ships were requested to provide protection for 2d Marine Division forward observer posts north of DaNang near the Demilitarized Zone."

"It was nighttime and about 200 Viet Cong had slipped out of the DMZ and attacked the Marines. They called for

illuminating shells and a destructive barrage from the New Jersey.

"The Owasco emptied her magazine of 'star' shells, giving them light. We were firing one shell every five seconds," the skipper said.

The 1 Corps Marine general credited the Owasco and New Jersey with "significantly reducing casualties during the attack by providing gunfire support."

"The thing that impressed me most out there is the Navy's support of all units with their underway replenishment ships," Fearn said.

The Owasco participated in 43 "surps" during her patrols. "They always kept us well supplied with fuel, food, movies and spare parts," the skipper remarked.

In her periods off the line, the ship had repairs made at Subic Bay, Philippines. She also made a liberty call at Bangkok, Thailand, and spent three weeks in Hong Kong.

Ahead of the Owasco now is a

six-weeks leave and liberty period. New London began getting under way for a five-week weather patrol in the North Atlantic.

At the end of August the ship will go into the CG shipyard at Custer Bay, Md. for repairs.

Cutter Owasco Is Home

NEW LONDON — The Cutter Owasco was coming home from Vietnam and the excitement of the moment Wednesday ruffled through the waiting crowd.

Even the sun, which provided a beautiful day after a night of violent rain, seemed to greet the ship and her 15 officers and 144 crewmen.

As the Owasco nestled up to her berth at the Navy Underwater Sound Laboratory pier after an 11-months' absence, the crowd of 200 surged past the Coast Guard Band in a warm, noisy welcome for the crew.

Signs of Welcome
Children and adults alike held aloft signs bannered "Welcome Home John O'Neil," "Welcome Home Chief Dural," and "Hi, Mike."

"Daddy's coming," one little girl said excitedly.

"I'm going to give my daddy a big kiss on the cheek," little Lisa Bird of Mystic told a reporter.

Her dad, Chief Marvin F. Bird looked quite ready for a kiss from the little girl.

"Where did daddy go?" chided the two young sons of Lt. Cmdr. Richard H. Beiser, executive officer of the Owasco, as they searched the ship's bridge for their father.

Greeted by Flaners

At least two of the crewmen, Lt. (j.g.) Frank Nardoli of New York City and Radioman Z.C. Adam Stella of Brooklyn, had pleasant surprises waiting on the pier.

Their fiancées, Miss Annick Shaw and Miss Mary Ellen Tynan, were on hand to welcome them home. With reckless disregard for Lt. Nardoli's bristling mustache, Miss Shaw greeted her beau with a large kiss.

The official welcome came from Capt. Ira H. McMullen, representing 3rd CG District commandant, Rear Adm. Mark A. Whalen. Adm. Whalen's message congratulated the ship on the success of her combat patrol.

Also welcoming the ship in dock-side speeches were Rear Adm. Arthur B. Engel, superintendent of the Naval Guard Academy, retired Adm. Edwin J. Roland, former CG commandant; and Mayor Joseph F. Regan.

"We're thrilled to see you back home safe and sound," Adm. Roland told the crew. "I (j.g.) James L. Baur of Staten Island purchased for \$20 during a sign welcoming my nephew, Daniel Sheehan, a Sonarman. Sign mooded many of the crew.

On behalf of the people of New London, Mayor Regan expressed arm in arm to the waiting cars.

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By custom, the first depende!

to cross the quarterdeck was Mrs. William R. Fearn, wife of the Owasco's commanding officer.

As the captain held his wife into his arms, the crowd smiled and applauded and then followed to join Mrs. Fearn on the ship.

A rush of heartfelt kisses and hugs was followed by a stinging up of the tanned crewmen — about half of whom had new petty officers' "cross" or officers' old word braids to show off.

After a brief re-acquaintance period, the lucky crewmen with leave or liberty for the rest of the day began gathering their trunks, suitcases, gifts and souvenirs together to go ashore.

Boxes upon boxes of tape re-

orders, photographs, sound equipment, cameras, Moro Award from the Philippines, water buffalo horns, carved animals and chests from Bangkok and Hong Kong were brought on deck.

The most elaborate souvenir was Bangkok sampan, that Lt. (j.g.) James L. Baur of Staten Island purchased for \$20 during a sign welcoming my nephew, Daniel Sheehan, a Sonarman. Sign mooded many of the crew.

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The Owasco was home again.

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