

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION

of the
**CAPE BLANCO
 HERITAGE SOCIETY**



CBHS BOARD MEETINGS: Port Orford City Council Chambers at 10:00 AM on the 2nd Tuesday of every month.
PLEASE NOTE: our meetings are open to everyone who would like to attend. We invite and encourage anyone interested in CBHS to participate!

Life at the PORT ORFORD LIFEBOAT STATION



L to R: Dale Hansen at the Lifeboat Station; Dale met and married local girl Ruth McLintock; "Coast Guard Kids" growing up in Little America.

Excerpts from a tape recording made in 1998 by Dale Hansen (stationed 1941-1944): Dale enlisted in 1940 and came to the Port Orford Coast Guard Lifeboat Station sometime in Dec. 1940 or Jan. 1941. [His] bedroom was upstairs across the hall from the bathroom. The surfmen lived in Little America (Flake Street and Beacon Hill) with their families.

Nils Nilsson was Officer-In-Charge when Dale Hansen and Lester Holloway arrived at the station. Nils was transferred after Dale came to the station and became a Captain on a cutter. Elmer Winbeck was the commanding officer when the war came, followed by Lindquist.

In the basement was an enormous battery room in case of power failure. There was a double sink for washing clothes. Rigid inspections were held. Clothing had to be properly maintained and clean. Dungarees (now called Jeans) and shirts were washed here. Wool uniforms were cleaned with a cleaning solvent.

A surfman by the name of Don Nielson was living in Little America and he was the cook for the two of us here in the beginning. The person

least capable of doing their duties at the time was the cook. Dale was hurt playing football and was cook for awhile. They received \$36.00 a month and \$1.00 a day for subsistence was added. They thought they were rich!

It cost about \$15.00 a month to eat and they were very economical. Groceries were purchased at a market downtown. During the war, a commissary was established in town and all supplies came from there. Harold Cuffman was a cook who had gone to cooking school. He cooked a turkey for Thanksgiving but forgot to remove the insides before cooking. It created a terrible aroma. Fish, salmon and crab were obtained from the dock.

We would have one day off out of eight. [We] would go downtown to Margie's Cafe (it was Salsa Rita's at the time of this interview) and the movies. There was not enough time to go to Coos Bay by Greyhound but Dale eventually purchased a 1936 Chevrolet coupe and then had enough time to go to Coos Bay on leave. The Coastguardsmen played basketball with the local high

schools for recreation.

Lifeboat service required rigid daily training. They trained with the breeches buoy on the parade grounds when the weather was decent, and took the surfboat out for capsizing drills (Coxswain could only get the soles of his feet wet in this maneuver) at Garrison Lake and surf launching at Battlerock Park.

They had to know Morse code and the radio for transmitting and receiving messages. The telephone hung on the west wall of the mess room and it was

INTERNATIONAL MORSE CODE

	A	● —		N	● ●
	B	● ● ● ●		O	— ● — ●
	C	● — ● ●		P	— ● ● ●
	D	● ● ● ●		Q	— ● ● ●
	E	●		R	— ● ●
	F	● ● ● ●		S	● ● ●
	G	● ● ●		T	— ● ●
	H	● ● ● ●		U	— ● ●
	I	● ●		V	— ● ●
	J	● — ● —		W	— ● ●
	K	● — ● ●		X	— ● ● ●
	L	● — ● ●		Y	— ● ● ●
	M	● — ●		Z	— ● ● ●

	0	— — — —		5	● ● ● ●
	1	— — —		6	● ● ● ●
	2	— — ●		7	● ● ● ●
	3	— ● —		8	● ● ● ●
	4	— ● ●		9	● ● ● ●

In morse code. Each dot has a duration of 1s; dashes of 3s. Spaces between parts of the same letter: 1s; between letters of the same word: 3s; and between words: 7s (seconds).

a hand crank black telephone that went to the watchtower, the boathouse, the Captain's house and Art Hinderlie's house in Little America. We had to dial the operator for outside service. They were notified of ships in distress by telephone or flares.

During the war, there were beach patrols and all lights had to be off. They were told to shoot out any light that was left on. Dale and others would walk to Cape Blanco every night, taking a trail down to the beach from Little America. There was one fellow, Donald Grange, he grew up on a farm and had the longest stride. He could out-walk everybody, even the dogs that he carried back. We carried a 30.06, a 45 caliber pistol and wore a bandoleer of ammunition (*the bandoleer was for show*). There were armed guards at the dock during the war. A dirigible flew the coast every day in good weather. They were probably out of San Francisco, CA.

When the boathouse was [built], one of the workers got stranded on one of the large rocks and they had to shoot a line out to rescue him. The contractor who built the boathouse had to file a lawsuit in order to get paid. The reason for this was when

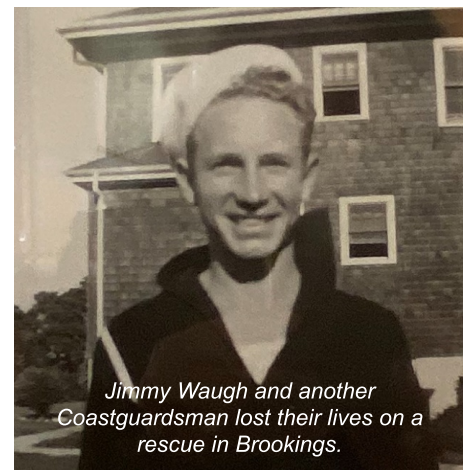
they were in the middle of construction, a storm hit and wiped out everything. This resulted in a major cost overrun. The contractor died while the suit was in the courts but his widow was finally paid.

An old well on the left side of the stairs to the boathouse is where they got good water that was pumped up to the water tower for storage. The steps to the boathouse were concrete in the beginning followed by wood (*quite a few were missing at the time of this interview and the wooden stairs no longer exist today*). Waves used to hit the doors of the boathouse and come inside. There was a cross current in the cove and it would have been impossible to launch if they did not install the concrete breakwater. The Coastguardsmen wore oilskins and life jackets at sea. Much better equipment is used today.

The Coast Guard was under the Navy during World War II with entire Navy rules and regulations. [We] would help fishing boats in trouble. Two rescues occurred while Dale was stationed here: The [Willapa](#) and [SS Larry Doheny](#). Jimmy Waugh spotted a flare, the

wind was blowing 105 mph and the spindrift was heavy. The motto was to make one attempt. Windbeck was in command of the lifeboat and had to wait until the time was right to launch the boat. When they got to the Willapa, there were 24 men sitting on top of the keel. Timing of the waves made it possible to take one man at a time off the vessel.

They put all 24 men into the front compartment of the 36-foot motor lifeboat. At the dock, a line had to be shot out to the lifeboat and it took 24 trips to bring the men to shore. Some of the men were taken to the station and others to the Legion Hall. ✨



Jimmy Waugh and another Coastguardsman lost their lives on a rescue in Brookings.

Become a MEMBER of the CAPE BLANCO HERITAGE SOCIETY



OUR MISSION: To provide interpretative and educational services for the Cape Blanco Light Station, Historic Hughes House and Ranch and the Port Orford Lifeboat Station. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and your donation is tax-deductible.

Mail this portion of the form with your check made out to:
Cape Blanco Heritage Society. P.O. Box 1132 Port Orford, Oregon 97465.

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