



U.S. Coast Guard Oral History Program

Interview of Donald Gillogly, Specialist 3/c (D), USCGR

U.S. Coast Guard World War II Veteran

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Donald Gillogly & his wife, Doreen Kisch.

Biographical Summary

Donald Gillogly was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado and grew up in Longview, Washington. At the age of 19 he enlisted in the Coast Guard in Portland, Oregon and received recruit training at Alameda, California. He was assigned to beach patrol duties at Cambria, California for the next 19 months. He became very involved with the dogs used on the beach patrols, eventually becoming a Specialist 3/c (D), which was the specialist rating for dog handlers in the Coast Guard during World War II. While at Cambria he took leave and married Doreen Kisch on April 27, 1943. From Cambria he was reassigned to security duties at Ayer Naval Auxiliary Air Station in Massachusetts. Their first child was born in Portland, Oregon while he was serving in Massachusetts. Discharged from the Coast Guard in the fall of 1945 from Seattle, Washington, they returned to Longview, Washington and later had three more children. Donald Gillogly worked as a pipefitter for a paper mill in Longview for the next 38 years, building several homes and raising four children. He currently lives in retirement in Ridgefield, Washington.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you born?

GILLOGLY: I was born at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me briefly about your childhood, where you grew up, attended high school, and why you decided to join the Coast Guard.

GILLOGLY: When I was 5 years old my parents moved to Longview, Washington taking me with them-- I attended all 12 years of schooling in Longview and lived at home with my parents and a younger sister. At the early stages of [World War II] I was 19 years old and a prime candidate for the draft so I went to Portland, Oregon with the intention of joining the Navy. But as luck would have it the Navy quota was filled for the following month and if I waited that long the Army would grab me. To make a long story short the Coast Guard recruiting office was just across the hall and I wanted no part of the Army---

INTERVIEWER: Thanks. Can you describe your experiences at boot camp (recruit training)? What kind of training did you receive? How was the food? What was the daily schedule like? What were the barracks like?

GILLOGLY: There were Coast Guard recruits from a large area around Portland, Oregon. As I remember there were 13 of us who got on the train in Portland, Oregon to go to Alameda, California-- Government Isle--where one of the boot camps was at that time for the three Naval Districts on the West coast. We went to Oakland California first and from there to Alameda by Greyhound bus. The first thing that happened when we got off the bus was to get marched to the barber shop for a G.I. haircut. From there we were marched to small stores for a complete change of clothing. At the same time we were issued a sea bag to put all of this in as well as personal items such as toothpaste, soap and one thin wool blanket. All the clothing was denim and everything had our rank and serial number stenciled on them. Also we got several shots for going overseas, such as yellow fever. Each of us was issued a *Blue Jackets Manual* and there were several knots to learn how to tie and semaphore signals. We had small boat training and how to launch a life boat as well. A big share of the time was spent on the parade ground doing close order drilling. There were several companies there and each company competed against the other for what was called the E flag. Everyone sooner or later got a shot at "KP" duty, I got mine on Thanksgiving Day on what was called the "China Clipp.er." I never did have to peel potatoes or empty and clean garbage cans so I guess I was lucky. The barracks was two-story as was typical of military housing at that time. There were 13 in the draft that went to Cambria by Greyhound bus as far as San Louis Obispo where Army trucks took over and hauled us to Cambria. I was there for 19 months when the base at Cambria was closed and was sent to the East Coast where I was until the war ended. From there to be discharged I was sent to Pier 9 in Seattle, Washington which took several weeks because of the work load. From there I returned to Longview where my folks were as well as my wife's folks. My wife was a neighbor gal who was the same age as myself. We were in the same class (1940) in high school and were married for 64 years when she passed away. That's a long time for someone to put up with me!

INTERVIEWER: When and where did you meet your wife? What was her maiden name? When and where were you married?

GILLOGLY: My wife, Doreen Kisch Gillogly, was a neighbor girl that I went to school with. We both were in the R.A. Long High School class of `40 and graduated together. She had two brothers that I ran around with when we were kids. Doreen and I never dated during high school days. It was a year later that we went together and become engaged. After I left boot camp and was sent to Cambria, about six months later, I got my first leave and that was when we were married in Vancouver, Washington, on our way back to Cambria. We had to get a minister out of bed in the early morning to perform the ceremony and, since I would not be 21 until July, I had to get my parent's permission to marry. It was always a sore point with me that I was old enough to be in the armed forces but not old enough to get married. That was April 27, 1943. After we were married, we rented a log cabin on Park Hill with a small house behind it in Cambria. The county park was down below the houses, and it had a swimming pool and a barbeque.

INTERVIEWER: When you arrived at Cambria was there already a Coast Guard presence there? An Officer-in-Charge or someone else to welcome you and get you set up? Where did you live as a Beach Patrol member in Cambria?



General muster at Cambria.

GILLOGLY: When we first arrived at Cambria from boot camp there were three older local fellows there getting the buildings that we used as a base. The Coast Guard leased several buildings along Highway 1 that made up our base. Keep in mind this was during wartime and gas, and tires were rationed so there wasn't the tourist trade that Cambria depended upon. The buildings that made up the base was a small hotel, used as a barracks, a restaurant that was our mess hall and the Cambria Chamber of Commerce building which was our "rec" hall. While my wife was with me we rented a small log home that had an unobstructed view up and down the coast. Last time we were at Cambria the complete area where the log home was is covered with hi-rises and Cambria has a moratorium on any new housing being built because there isn't enough potable water for more homes.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of training was provided for you as a “beach pounder”--coastal guard? How long were your average patrols? How often you report in while you were on patrol? How did you report in? How were you received by the residents of Cambria?

GILLOGLY: After we were there for a short while a commissioned officer, I think he was an ensign--we called them “shave tails” among other things, took command of the base. Just under the ensign was a career chief petty officer—

We had something like 12 posts along the coast and two four-hour shifts for standing watch. We had old World War I army field phones to report in to the base. At first we had no weapons of any kind while standing watches and then we had what was called an officers side arm, a pistol. The folks of Cambria were happy to have the Coast Guard there. It was the only source of revenue during wartime.

There was some things we had to know, such as if a plane flew over what it was--not to light a match while on patrol because it could be seen 20 miles out to sea. Up the coast about 20 miles at San Simeon there was an albacore fishery, a small country store and several homes. We checked to see if every building had the proper black out curtains; if the cars had what we called cat eye covers on the head lights for nighttime driving. At Cambria, after we were there some time there were sentry dogs sent there for patrolling the beaches. The dogs were trained at Army remount centers located in several places in the U.S. There were 16 dogs at Cambria with two men per dog and four trainers. The dog trainers never had to pound the beaches. All they did was feed the dogs, clean the kennels and look after the dogs in general. The dogs were donated by citizens with the understanding they would get them back after the war if they wanted. There couldn't be any female dogs and they had to weigh at least 35 pounds. There was stipulation on the different breeds: no St. Bernards or Great Danes. And certain breeds were better for certain areas such as Doberman Pinchers were best for the South Pacific where the Marine Corps used them a lot. There was one Doberman that accounted for 19 Jap snipers hidden in the brush. Also there were messenger dogs that carried messages across the lines where it was unsafe for a person to cross. Our dogs in Cambria were trained at San Carlos, California. Also in areas up and down the coast where there were long sandy beaches the patrolmen rode horses.

INTERVIEWER: How many Coast Guardsmen were assigned to the Cambria Beach Patrol Station? How many dogs?

GILLOGLY: I don't recall for sure how many of us were there but I think around 75. This included some specialty rates such as cooks, bakers, dog trainers and yeomen. At Cambria there were 16 dogs.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of weapons were you issued for your patrols?

GILLOGLY: When we first arrived at Cambria we had no weapons to patrol with and later on World War I Springfield rifles and sometimes in the mix there were Reising submachine guns--also a few .45 caliber automatic pistols.

INTERVIEWER: What area of the coast were you responsible for--from where to where?

GILLOGLY: We patrolled the coast from Cambria north as far as Piedras Blancas Light Station where there were lighthouse keepers and their families who lived there fulltime and kept a lookout up and down the coast as far as they could see. They could contact the Coast Guard and Signal Corps at Cambria by phone or short wave radio.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you sent after they closed the base at Cambria?

GILLOGLY: When the base at Cambria closed I was sent to a Naval air base where the Coast Guard had the base security. We manned the entry gate, patrolled around the hangers and the ammo dump. This was in Massachusetts and it gets really cold there. Christmas Eve there was 14 inches of snow and Christmas day we spent shoveling a path to the mess hall. This was about 50 miles from Boston and that was the first and only time I saw the ocean freeze. That's where I was when the war ended and after what seemed like forever I was sent to Pier 9 in Seattle to be discharged.

INTERVIEWER: When did you enlist in the Coast Guard and when were you transferred from Cambria to the East Coast?

GILLOGLY: I enlisted in the Coast Guard in October of '43 and my first Thanksgiving was at Alameda, California in boot camp. From there I was sent to Cambria where I was for my first Christmas. I don't remember the date the base there was closed but I was at Cambria around 19 months. [Until about April 1944.]

INTERVIEWER: On a typical beach patrol, did you and your partner (or dog) walk a section of the beach or position yourself someplace where you had a good view of the coast line and keep a lookout from there? Did you ever encounter local residents as you walked the beach? Were patrols round the clock or just during the night hours? What breed was the dog assigned to you and what was his name?

GILLOGLY: The coast line was divided up into posts. Any place that an enemy could possibly come ashore was a post. There were sections of the California coast that an enemy couldn't possibly come ashore so those areas weren't patrolled. The patrols were only at night consisting of two shifts, early and late, changing at midnight. Local residents never came on the beach at night because they never knew the current password and stood a good chance of getting shot. I was a dog specialist and never had to pound the beach. The four dogs I was responsible for were a Doberman Pincher named Cholo, a Red Chow named Wolf, a small mixed breed named Sandy and for the life of me I can't remember what the other one was.

When the base at Cambria closed I don't know what happened to those dogs except going to other places that still needed security. I remember the Army base at Camp Roberts California had dogs and dogs were used at several military bases and airfields. The dogs were fed horse meat which came in frozen 50 pound blocks that were cooked in a large kittle with vitamins added. I don't know where the dogs we had at Cambria went to when the base closed, probably to other posts. The Coast Guard also had port security and dogs were used there also. When I was shipped to the East Coast the dogs there

were all different than at Cambria. The people who donated the dogs had a choice of getting them back after the war if they wanted them. After World War II ended there were several places where the dogs were de-trained. I don't know how that worked out. Also if I became attached to one of the dogs I had and the original owner didn't want it back I could have it. This happened in several cases where the trainer became very attached to the dog. As you probably know dogs are being used today for police work, sniffing out drugs, etc. There is a K-9 corps here where I live. They get their dogs from someplace in Europe, already trained and very expensive----

INTERVIEWER: During your time in the Coast Guard, did you have much contact with members of other branches of the Armed Forces? I understand the Army Signal Corps had taken over the Cambria Pines Lodge. How were the relations between Coast Guardsmen and the members of the other armed services? Were there rivalries, animosities or did you get along well? How about the relations with Navy personnel at the air base back east you were assigned to after Cambria?

GILLOGLY: While at Cambria the Coast Guard got supplies such as food and other things from Camp San Luis Obispo which was an Army camp about 40 miles from Cambria. No problems there. Army Signal Corps at Cambria, no problems there.

At the Naval air base located at Ayer, Massachusetts (Ayer Naval Auxiliary Air Station) the Coast Guard was in charge of all the base security which included manning the entry gate. This included issuing prophylactic kits to the guys going out the gate on passes or leave. Also the Navy pilots who had been overseas for three years in combat didn't give a damn for anything [and they] would try to bring some bimbo aboard--they even tried to bribe whomever was on the gate--and when that didn't work they would have the bimbo wait in the gate shack while they went to their barracks and got some blankets. It was quite cold sometimes. They would then take off with the bimbo into the woods that was all around the base for a one-night stand. The fence around the base was a four-strand barbed wire fence and the Navy guys would try to sneak some gal through the fence. Keep in mind this was war time and a lot of these gals had boyfriends or husbands overseas. Anyway this helped to cause friction between the Coast Guard and Navy. I was married then and my wife was back there [in Massachusetts] where she worked in a paper mill at Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Some way, I never did figure out how, she got pregnant and when seven months along she flew to Portland, Oregon and our first daughter was born. The daughter was six months old before I saw her. I tried to get a leave to come home then but all the response I got was "you may have been there for laying of the keel but you don't need to be there for the launching". That daughter is a grandmother today and I have eight great-grand kids and one in the mixer. Time goes on!!

INTERVIEWER: Any memories of how you spent your time waiting for your discharge in Seattle? What was the actual date of your discharge and what was your rate/rating/rank at the time you were discharged?

GILLOGLY: From the east coast we were sent to Pier 9 in Seattle which was a large discharge center for the Coast Guard after the war. Upon arriving at Pier 9 it was filled to capacity so we were sent to the huge Army camp at Fort Lewis, Washington to wait `till there was room at Pier 9. While at Fort Lewis I learned one thing: Army chow wasn't nearly as good as Coast Guard chow.

A system called the point system was used after the war for mustering out. It was set up this way, so many points for time spent in the Coast Guard, so many points for where served, like in combat and I think if wounded. So when I was sent back to Pier 9 from Fort Lewis they had figured out I lacked sufficient points to qualify for a discharge. So I was sent to the Coast Guard Lifeboat Station at Cape Disappointment at the mouth of the Columbia River on the Washington side to put in enough time to get enough points to qualify for discharge. There is a light house at Cape Disappointment and during the war it was painted with a camouflage scheme so it would be harder to see from out to sea. It seemed the Coast Guard always had to be painting something and that's what I did while getting the rest of the points needed to be discharged. I was there for around two months before I got my discharge papers which were mailed to me. The Cape is on the Washington side of the Columbia River around 80 miles from Longview and my father picked me up there to return to Longview. I was discharged in the fall of `45, I don't remember the actual date.

INTERVIEWER: What was your rate and rating at the time you were discharged.

GILLOGLY: I was a Specialist D third class when I was discharged.

INTERVIEWER: Can you briefly describe your career and life after you left the Coast Guard?

GILLOGLY: My civilian life consisted of working as a pipefitter for a paper mill in Longview for 38 years, building several homes and raising four kids. I now am a grouchy old man 90 years old but being 90 isn't too bad--I don't feel old, I don't feel anything `till noon, then it's time for my nap.

END OF INTERVIEW

