

'We live our mission every day'

The Coast Guard and Astoria go way back

BY ERICK BENDEL | THE DAILY ASTORIAN



rowing up in Astoria during the 1970s and '80s, Eric Bruner, a U.S. Coast Guard captain stationed in Portsmouth, Va., enjoyed a panoramic view of the Coast Guard's presence on the North Coast.

From his bayside home on Chinnook Street, Bruner routinely saw

Coast Guard helicopters taking off from Air Station Astoria in Warrenton. While fishing, he would watch Coast Guard cutters cruising the Columbia River.

The Coast Guard was also there in close-up: Service members attended Astoria churches, enrolled their children in Astoria schools, befriended Astoria families — then, as now, imbuing the community with the “Coast Guard ethos,” Bruner said.

“You always had those folks coming through and got to know them,” he said. “They’ve always been a big part of the positive nature of the town.”

A patriot since birth, Bruner initially considered joining the U.S. Navy until two Coasties volunteering with the high school’s football coaching staff steered him in a

different direction.

“I took their advice, got into the Coast Guard Academy ... and here I am,” he said. “I am incredibly proud to be part of this organization and to be from Astoria ... Astoria made me who I am, and the Coast Guard is a big part of Astoria.”

Favorable waters

Astoria became an official Coast Guard city May 1, 2010, when the U.S. Congress approved the designation.

But the Coast Guard — a division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that celebrated its 225th birthday Aug. 4 — has helped shape the city since 1850, when the Revenue Cutter Service (the proto-Coast Guard) placed the first navigational buoys between Astoria and the Columbia River Bar.

In 1856, the revenue cutter Joseph Lane was stationed full time in Astoria, the first of many cutters to call the city home port, including the Alert and Steadfast



USCG 29-foot Response Boat: From Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment cruises under the Astoria Bridge on the Columbia River this spring. The 29-footer is crewed by a minimum of three crew members and can reach speeds of more than 50 mph. — PHOTO COURTESY OF PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS DAVID MOSLEY

moored at the 17th Street Dock. The buoy tender Fir is docked at Tongue Point, site of the Aids to Navigation Team and Electronic Support Detachment.

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