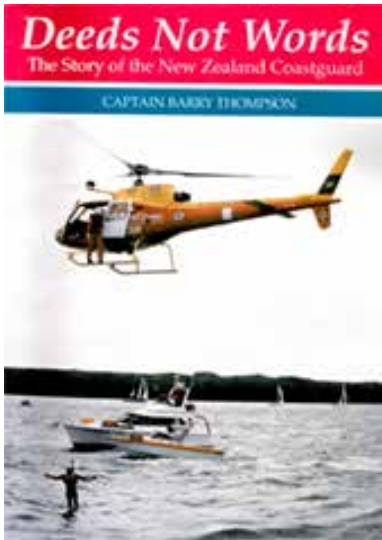


# 1 The Early Years



**The History of NZ Coastguard**  
by Captain Barry Thompson

*The crew of the Wiltshire was rescued by breeches-buoy, after the steamer was wrecked at Great Barrier Island in 1922.*

HODDER MOA BECKETT



Any connection between fighting on the South African veldt and saving lives in the waters off New Zealand may seem remote indeed. Yet two officers serving in the British Army during the Boer War had an indirect influence on those who were later to play a large part in the birth of the New Zealand Coastguard movement.

One, Roger Pocock, became conscious that the British forces fighting the Boers were ill-equipped by training and experience to match their wily foes. He realised that there was a constant need for the British Empire to be vigilant and alert to threats to its well-being. Upon his return home after the war, he appealed to his fellow countrymen and to the King's subjects throughout the Empire, urging them to volunteer their services in times of peace to provide 'the eyes and ears' of the Empire along all its frontiers. This Legion of Frontiersmen provided the basis for what was to become the New Zealand Coast Guard.

The other Boer War soldier whose vision was to have an influence on the infant service was Lord Baden-Powell, who was also a founding member of the Legion of Frontiersmen. His was to become very much a household name in Britain when he founded the Scout movement in 1907. Baden-Powell's influence later extended throughout the Empire and almost the entire world. New Zealand soon embraced first the Boy Scouts, then the Girl Guides and a little later the Sea Scouts. The Sea Scouts, too, were to have a significant input into the formation of the New Zealand Coastguard.

A number of energetic ex-seafarers were to interest themselves in the Sea Scout movement in Auckland during the 1920s leading, in due course, to the formation of an association which was to operate the breeches-buoy rocket life-saving apparatus. The true value of this venture was to be demonstrated when the members of this association assisted with the use of the breeches-buoy apparatus to save the crew from the steamer Wiltshire when she was wrecked on the south-eastern corner of Great Barrier Island in 1922.,

Roger Pocock envisaged the Legion of Frontiersmen providing disciplined bodies of men throughout the Empire, always ready and willing to answer the call of King and Country. This new volunteer organisation, begun in Britain in 1904, soon established itself through much of the Empire.

The Legion was paramilitary in nature, its members wearing uniform and holding military ranks. They were organised into

squadrons and troops along military lines. By 1908 New Zealand had embraced the Frontiersmen movement which was particularly active during the period leading up to and following the First World War. By the mid-1930s the force had recruited and established itself in many cities and towns throughout the country. One of the Legion's squadrons was based in Auckland.

Amongst the Auckland members in 1935 was John Eastmure, a veteran of the 1918 raid by the Royal Navy on the European port of Zeebrugge. The British attack and blockading of that harbour, where German submarines sheltered, greatly impressed John Eastmure, then first lieutenant of the minesweeper HMS Plumpton.. His experience at Zeebrugge also led indirectly to the formation and operation of the New Zealand Coastguard.

The combination of Roger Pocock's movement and John Eastmure's vision, nurtured at Zeebrugge, led after many years to the original founding of the New Zealand Coastguard Service. Thereafter, the vicissitudes of more than half a century were to have an influence on the Service now known as the Auckland Volunteer Coast Guard Service. It has become, in many respects a rather different service from that which Eastmure then envisaged.

By the latter part of the 1930s, the Auckland Ex-Sea Scout Association started to turn its thinking to a wider service. Captain John Eastmure had resigned as Master of the association in 1931, having joined the Legion of Frontiersmen in 1925, and at least two others in the association had, or were to join, the Legion, including a Captain Ron Daverne.

He shares with Eastmure at least some of the credit for founding the Coast Guard although, as will be seen, the question of who founded the Service was to prove to be the subject of much acrimony.

Even before the Boer War, as far back as 1860, a 'coastguard' had existed in Auckland. A unit numbering 62 officers and men was stationed at North Head, having been formed under the Militia and Volunteer Act. Trained by naval personnel and with each man armed with a pistol and a cutlass, it boasted five field guns as its main armament. However, the unit was not under military command. Its members were all volunteers who banded together at the time of the Waikato War to defend Auckland.

William Cush Daldy, whose name is perpetuated on Auckland Harbour today by the former Harbour Board tug William C. Daldy, was one the founder officers of the Volunteers in 1860. According to one account, in 1863 he led two companies in a 900 strong combined Navy-Army force sent to occupy the principal Maori settlements on the western shores of the Hauraki Gulf. When the Auckland Harbour Board was established in 1871 he became its first chairman.

A report, a copy of which is held in the Auckland Museum, stated 'The Auckland Coastguards did excellent service in the expedition to Miranda November 1863, and also with the Onehunga Navals in



*Captain John Eastmure.*  
*AUCKLAND STAR*

July of the same year, in driving back a force of Kingite Maori who had assembled a flotilla of canoes on the Manukau Harbour and were believed to meditate an advance upon the city’.

This old Auckland Volunteer Coastguard was later known as the Naval Volunteers, and popularly as ‘the Navals’. It came into being on 13 April 1860, was disbanded almost six years later and almost immediately was replaced by the Auckland Naval Volunteers. An article in the New Zealand Herald of 5 May 1972 on the present Auckland Coast Guard probably quite rightly refers to the Royal New Zealand Naval Volunteer Reserve, (formed in the 1920s as the RNVR before the birth of the Royal New Zealand Navy) as being the successor to ‘the Navals’. It refers to the New Zealand Coastguard Service as being one of its successors, too. This comment is hardly appropriate however as the present Service, now named the Auckland Volunteer Coast Guard Service, has no official recognition and is purely a private affair having more in common with the Legion of Frontiersmen out of which it grew. This later organisation was intended to serve a very different purpose and was only seen as having a military potential if the authorities chose to call upon its services. However, rather than being entirely apolitical, as will be seen later, some aspects of its operation were influenced to a significant extent by Captain Eastmure’s own political views.

In 1935 New Zealand was still in the grips of the Great Depression which had seriously stunted its growth and had seen so many of its citizens deprived of a decent standard of living. It was also the year that Michael Joseph Savage and his colleagues came together to form the first Labour Government, with its radical new social welfare policies and philosophy of state support from ‘the cradle to the grave’. This was also the year that Captain Eastmure sought permission from his commanding officer in the Legion of Frontiersmen to form a Maritime Section in Auckland. It was not pure coincidence that, in the first decade or two of the life of the New Zealand Coastguard, the fortunes of the new Service were to wax and wane to some degree with those of the Labour Governments which followed.

John Percival Eastmure was born at Brixton, London, on 28 October 1894. At the age of sixteen he went to sea as an apprentice in the Court Line, a well-known British tramp-ship company. He passed the examination for his second mate’s Certificate in Bombay, and in 1915 became the 3rd officer of HMS Lake Manitoba, an armed Royal Navy transport vessel. While serving in her he sailed with the first contingent of New Zealand and Australian troops escorted by HMS Hampshire.

and the Australian cruiser HMAS Sydney, both of which were later responsible for destroying the German raider Emden off the Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean.

Then followed a period with the Grand Fleet based at Scapa Flow, Scotland. In 1916, while serving in minesweepers, he was appointed as first lieutenant of HMS Plumpton and it was while he was in her that he saw action at Zeebrugge in 1918 under the overall command

of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes. This action, considered to be amongst the finest in British naval history. Was to influence a great deal of Eastmure's thinking in his later years with the Coastguard.

After the war, and a further period in minesweepers, John Eastmure was released from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and obtained his foreign-going master's certificate. After three months as chief officer he was appointed to his first command and served for three years in command in several British tramp companies before resigning due to ill health.

Arriving in New Zealand in 1923, he served for a time as second mate with the Richardson Shipping Company of Napier. He followed this with a spell surveying with the Hawkes Bay Rivers Board and subsequently settled in Auckland. It was here that he finally 'swallowed the anchor.' entering the field of insurance. He fulfilled his desire to serve his country in a voluntary capacity by becoming a member of the Legion of Frontiersmen in 1925 and, in turn, founding the New Zealand Coastguard.

Captain Eastmure was, in many respects, an idealist. He was a sensitive man with intense feelings of loyalty to the Crown and to the Service which he was to found. He loved to be 'the Captain', to be seen in uniform, and some of his associates expressed their view that they saw him as being rather too full of his own importance for the good of the Service. He was seen as viewing the Coastguard as 'his navy' and he held firm opinions on the way 'his' Service should operate. Captain Eastmure was certainly a man who expected things to be done his way and inevitably, as the organisation grew, there were clashes. He was joined by other strong personalities, many of them fellow mariners, and this led to ructions and, at times, considerable ill-feeling amongst his close associates. Problems arose too with other Coastguard members who did not have the same disciplined background. For many years Eastmure had difficulty in accepting that some of the owners of the Coastguard auxiliaries were civilians at heart and did not expect to be so regimented and obliged to wear a uniform.

Eastmure was a tireless worker with a vision, but undoubtedly a controversial character who was not blessed with great tact or tolerance. At heart, however, he was essentially a kind man with a deep sense of duty. He was, without doubt, the central figure throughout the first twenty years of the life of the New Zealand Coastguard.

In 1935, with characteristic zeal, John Eastmure sought permission from his commanding officer, Major Palmer, to form a maritime section of 'A' Squadron, Legion of Frontiersmen.

The Legion had previously had quite strong links with the sea due to the numbers of ex-Royal Navy and Merchant Service officers and men who joined it. In 1912, only a year after the formation of the first unit of the Legion in New Zealand, there had been a maritime section whose commanding officer was a Captain J. M. Gardiner-Shaw of the

**1935** Union Steam Ship Company.

Presumably this was later disbanded for, with permission granted, Captain Eastmure set about the establishment of a marine section in Auckland. Within a short time it was drilling in its parent body's premises on the top floor of Tyler's Building in Anzac Avenue. The thinking behind Captain Eastmure's request was two-fold. Eastmure saw an opportunity for using nautical skills in the defence of the country in the event of war and, more immediately, for the benefit of the residents of the islands and lighthouses of the Hauraki Gulf. In keeping with the ideals of the Legion he saw the role of the maritime section as being that of teaching its members the skills of seamanship and navigation while also providing them with sufficient discipline and training to enable them to become quickly useful as recruits into the Royal and Merchant navies.

However, after a while it was realised that there were good reasons why the new section should be developed as a separate body and Captain Eastmure has recorded that, by 1937 and following the granting of extended leave from 'A' Squadron, he set it up as the New Zealand Coastguard.

He was soon receiving support from the Auckland Harbour Board which provided premises in the port area near the Viaduct Basin. Presumably, however, these premises were unsuitable for the Coastguard to carry out its parades as the hall of the Mission to Seamen in Sturdee Street was then used for that purpose.

**1937**

The 1937 date claimed by Captain Eastmure for the formation of the Coastguard as a fully autonomous unit is open to question and his claim to be 'the' founder of the New Zealand Coastguard is also open to doubt as will shortly be seen. There is clear evidence to suggest that another mariner played a significant part in the early years of the Coastguard.

The popular weekly news-magazine The Weekly News, published in Auckland, contained a major report for the week ending 17 August 1938 covering two-thirds of a page, headed 'COAST GUARD SERVICE TO THE RESCUE', and two lesser headlines 'Duty around Dominion's coast' and 'Preparing for maritime emergencies'.

**1938**

There were two accompanying photographs, one of which showed the breeches-buoy life-saving apparatus being used to haul the crew of the Wiltshire to safety. (See picture page 19). The article explained that the Service had been formed with an Auckland Division in the hope that other divisions would be formed in the chief ports of the country, and that a body of men would be trained in the use of the breeches-buoy life-saving apparatus. It also stated that 'The New Zealand Coastguards are modelled on the lines of the English service but in their ideals combine the saving of life in shipwrecks and other casualties with a determination to prepare for any emergency which is likely to occur in peace or war'.

On the subject of its formation, the article pointed out that the Service



had only been formed officially at the end of the previous month (July), its members already numbering about 50, and that it had been meeting for about nine weeks, with instruction in coastal navigation and the use of the breeches- buoy rocket apparatus being well under way. It appears that the Auckland Harbour Board was very helpful and would provide the tug Te Awhina for future training which was to include a mock shipwreck four times a year. (It is perhaps ironic that a few pages further on there was a report of the partial sinking of the Te Awhina off Hobson Wharf after she was holed by a propeller of the motor ship Essex which she was assisting to berth!)

In the report there was reference to a recent interview with Captain Eastmure and he was referred to as the 'Master of the Division'. It then stated that 'foundation members were ex- members of the Auckland Sea Scouts Association and its officers, who include Mr. R. Daverne as mate and Mr. K. Hall, as bosun, have all had varied sea experience'.

There was also brief but interesting reference to the Sumner lifeboat in the article with the words 'It is a coincidence that Mr. Charles Bowman, skipper of the Sumner lifeboat, the only other organisation in New Zealand with similar aims to the Coastguard, should have been in the Dover Patrol which kept the narrows of the English Channel open to traffic during the war, at the same time as Captain Eastmure'.

*Coastguards receive instruction in the use of the breeches-buoy for lifesaving.*

In the 17 August 1938 edition of the New Zealand Free Lance, another respected journal at that time, there is an article by its Auckland correspondent about the New Zealand Coastguards (Auckland Division) which, it stated, 'has been formed by a group of energetic seafarers, many of whom are former members of the now defunct Sea Scouts Association'. The article went on to state that 'Though the Coastguards came into organised existence only last week, there are fifty members already' and this article appears to have followed an interview with Captain Daverne who many years later was to serve briefly as president. It refers to 'R. Daverne, an experienced seaman, the founder of the new movement'.

Here is a clear statement that John Eastmure's claim to be 'the' founder can be challenged. Other documents which have come to light show that three meetings took place between December 1936 and June 1938 at which Ron Daverne was present with other members of the Calliope Sea Scout Group, with Captain Eastmure being present only at the last one which took place in the rooms of the Legion of Frontiersmen. At two of these meetings a Captain Wood, who earlier had been a Frontiersman and who was to become Coastguard's first president, was also present.

The last of these meetings took place on 21 June 1938, less than eight weeks before the stated date of the founding as reported in the New Zealand Free Lance. That article went on to say that Ron Daverne 'is the 'mate' of the new organisation, and was asked to accept command by several of the foundation members, but had to decline because of his present marine position; so Captain J. P. Eastmure consented to take charge'.

It is difficult to know today what actually did happen to bring about the birth of the New Zealand Coastguard but it is reasonable to assume that there were two organisations which brought it into existence. The groundwork was almost certainly laid within the Legion of Frontiersmen by Captain Eastmure but the Ex-Sea Scouts Association, which had similar ideals, then joined with Eastmure to form a separate body which became the actual Coastguard.

When one looks at the personalities involved in the meetings it becomes clear that many were already well-known to one another during the period of gestation between 1935 and 1938.

Captain Eastmure certainly appears to deserve the credit for setting up the Legion's Maritime Section in 1935, with aims similar to those of the parent body but with a marine involvement, while the Auckland Ex-Sea Scout Association members were familiar with the breeches-buoy life-saving apparatus and brought this expertise to the new organisation.

That meeting, in June 1938 at the Legion's premises, had a significant role in strengthening any previous association of the personalities involved, giving them further direction, with Captain Eastmure being agreed as 'in charge' and Captain Daverne as his second-in-command.

Both men appear to deserve credit for the founding of the Service





*Semaphore practice.*

which became known as the New Zealand Coastguard, although perhaps first credit must go to Eastmure.

There is in existence an undated letter from the Ex-Sea Scouts Association to Captain Sergeant, the Auckland Harbour Master, which makes reference to its General Meeting held on 21 June 1938. The Association was offering a trained crew to the Harbour Board to operate the 'Rocket Lifesaving Apparatus' (an item of lifesaving equipment which operated with a breeches buoy) and concluded by saying that 'it is our desire this service will be the nucleus of a Coast Guard and Coastal Patrol of a credit to the City of Auckland'. The letter was signed by Ron Daverne as the honorary secretary of the Association.

There followed some further correspondence and, of particular interest, is a letter dated 3 August 1938 which stated that at a general meeting held on 2 August 1938 'it was decided to change the name of the Auckland Ex-Sea Scout Association to the 'New Zealand Coast Guards (Auckland Division)'. This name is typewritten as the letterhead and this letter was also signed by Ron Daverne as honorary secretary. Supporting the view that the formation of the Coastguard was a joint effort are two further important letters.

One, dated 4 August, was addressed to Captain Eastmure from his commanding officer in the Legion of Frontiersmen, Captain Parsons, expressing his pleasure at 'the realisation of your objective' and congratulating 'you and your staff. The letter finished by offering the assistance of the Legion.

The second letter, dated 12 October 1938, was to the Director of Naval Reservists in Navy Office, Wellington, and was almost certainly from Captain Eastmure. Although the copy is unsigned the style of writing is typical of Eastmure, the writer making reference to tuition at Coastguard on minesweeping (Eastmure's First World War speciality) and mentioning Daverne by name, so that there is



little doubt as to its author. The interesting point, however, is that he wrote, 'Owing to recent information to hand, I am compelled to write as follows.

'I would be pleased if you would discourage any individual information concerning the above organisation, [the letterhead is of the New Zealand Coast-Guards] which is being used for my personal gain only.

'The organisation has been formed and organised, not by one member only, but by the continued efforts of all pioneer members'.

The letter mentions that the rules of the Coastguards were taken from the handbook of the Legion of Frontiersmen with some alterations and includes the phrase, 'Having in mind these rules when I undertook three years ago to form the Maritime Section...'

The author refers also to the uniform and badge being '... compiled by myself and being submitted to committee and duly passed...'

Doubtless these matters had been part of Eastmure's Coastguard planning and vision for some time. The letter is a little strange and perhaps suggests the first evidence that people were questioning Eastmure's motives and his claim to be 'the' founder in 1937.

This date was used by him when, in old age, he wrote about the Coastguard's early days. It may be that he genuinely made a slip over the date which the Weekly News and Free Lance articles attribute to 1938.

Later, in 1947, Mr. Tom Skinner MP is reported in Hansard when he asked questions in the House on Coastguard funding, as referring to 1938 as the formation date.

By 1939 the issue of who was 'the' founder was raised again and a letter dated 1 April from Captain Eastmure to a Mr. Renner categorically stated 'Mr. Daverne was not the founder of the N.Z. Coastguard and has nothing to do with the organisation'.

The second point certainly comes as a surprise and there is no other explanation or reference to the subject in the letter — just an isolated paragraph containing that one sentence.

Although we know that Daverne was later on naval service, this letter is dated five months before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Ronald Bell Daverne was a younger man, a very different personality from Eastmure being rather more modest, fun-loving and less of a driving force. Born a New Zealander, in 1908, Ron joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve at the age of 20 and then served at sea in merchant ships for several years before marrying and settling in Auckland. After a short spell as an insurance agent, he went back to sea but this time only on the Auckland harbour where he became a ferry master with the Devonport Steam Ferry Company. War service saw him back in the Navy as a Lieutenant RNVR, where he served as one of the two naval officers in charge of the boom defences guarding the approaches to Auckland.

Returning after the war to the ferry company, he finally retired from the ferries when the harbour bridge was opened in 1959. It was during this time that he resumed his earlier association with the Coastguard, becoming president in 1960, but this was not until after Captain Eastmure had retired as commanding officer. Daverne's untimely death in 1966 at the age of 58 put an end to the career of a colourful character, and one who also deserves credit for the founding of the New Zealand Coastguard and its early development.

The reader may make a personal judgement as to who founded the Coastguard and bear it in mind when considering the issue which became hotly contested in later years, as this account of Coastguard's history will reveal in due course. For the rest of his life Captain Eastmure was to insist that he was 'the' founder and, as will be seen, the matter was raised again on more than one occasion in the years ahead. However there is little doubt that the successful development of the Coastguard over its early years can be attributed very largely to Captain Eastmure, its first and longest serving commanding officer. For this he deserves the greatest credit. The early correspondence to the Auckland Harbour Board in the second half of 1938, announcing the formation of Coastguard, used an address of 20 Short Buildings, Queen Street, which was the address of Captain Eastmure's office. This appears to have been Coastguard's first address, even though it was soon to operate from an old signal tower on the Kings Wharf.

One of Captain Eastmure's dreams was soon attained when the fledgling Coastguard commenced a sea ambulance service to Waiheke and the other islands of the Hauraki Gulf in 1938. This operation was certainly one of Eastmure's great ambitions for the Service as it fulfilled one of his strong political beliefs regarding social welfare. He was convinced that it was the right of every citizen, living in places which were remote from hospital facilities, to have such a service and it gave him immense satisfaction that he had been able to accomplish this.

When the ambulance service first started it appears almost certain that 'auxiliaries' (privately owned craft, sometimes partly or fully manned by Coastguards) were used as the first Coastguard cutter was not recorded as being purchased until 1939. Certainly there were auxiliaries available to the Service at this time and one in particular, the Crusader, is mentioned by name.

She was owned by the Reverend Jasper Calder who was to become the Coastguard's chaplain about two years later and, as one of its early champions, a president of the Coastguard in due course. In providing this service, Coastguard members benefited too, as the ambulance service provided an opportunity for them to gain practical experience in seamanship and navigation. This would have stood many of the younger men in good stead when the following year war broke out and the training could be put to good use by those who then went to sea in the Navy and the Merchant Service. Captain Eastmure, as the



*The Coastguards parade for instruction.*

*B. SNOWDEN*

first commanding officer of the Coastguard, clearly intended that the Service should be a smart, well-disciplined organisation. Its members were required to attend regular parades, and it was not long before they were wearing a uniform, as early photographs show.

The blue uniform of the officers with gold wire and the cloth cap badge of the Service, naval peaked cap, and rank insignia of gold braid on the cuffs, was similar to that of the Royal Navy except that some photographs show that a diamond was worn above the stripes in lieu of the familiar curl. Like the officers' cap badges those of the chief and petty officers also bore a resemblance to those of their counterparts in the Royal Navy, and the commanding officer wore four gold stripes on his cuff.

The question of the Coastguard uniform caused some concern to the Navy and it appears to have been the subject of the first of many controversies which arose between the two organisations during the first half of the Coastguard's life.

However, in 1939, when the uniform controversy flared up, it was amicably settled with the Coastguard uniform finally receiving the blessing of the Navy Office.

Later the diamond over the officers' stripes was replaced by 'crossed anchors' and this same device was also used on the sleeves of the non-commissioned officers.

It appears, from the account of Ken Kane who is one of the few pre-war Coastguard members still alive, that Captain Eastmure made this change because the uniform of the Women's' Royal Naval Service (the 'Wrens') incorporated the diamond (although their stripes were



of blue cloth rather than gold lace). That likeness was just too much for Captain Eastmure to accept for his Service. Some years later the 'crossed anchors' gave way to a single upright anchor.

*Instruction on the basics of marine engineering.*

The New Zealand Coastguard was an entirely voluntary organisation the activities of which were directed by a president and a commanding officer. It is clear that at least from the date of registration as an incorporated society in 1940 that each had quite separate spheres of responsibility.

The president was primarily concerned with business functions of finance, public relations and commercial administration, while the commanding officer was responsible for the maritime operations and for the training of members. These included provision for cadets, from 1944 and possibly earlier, until this part of the Service was disbanded in 1968.

Whether this structure was in use in the first year or two is uncertain, but there was almost certainly a commanding officer from the beginning, and the office of president certainly existed as early as 1938.

While there is ample evidence that Captain Eastmure was the first commanding officer and that he was primarily responsible for founding the Service the New Zealand Free Lance article, mentioned earlier, states that in August 1938 the president was Captain R.A.Wood.

Captain Reg Wood was, almost certainly, the first president.

Thanks to the help of his son, Captain Alec Wood, a retired Harbour Master of Hobart, Tasmania, we have some knowledge of this colourful and respected personality, although little is known of the

actual role which he played as the first president.

Reg Wood, who like Eastmure and Daverne was also a Frontiersman, appears to have been the founder of the Calliope Sea Scout Troop in 1921. (Captain Eastmure was later a member of this troop until, in October 1931, he resigned as Master. This term was used in his letter of resignation - presumably referring to Scout Master but perhaps that term was not then being used)

Following a career at sea as a youngster, some of it under sail, Captain Wood served in the Auckland Harbour Board for many years. Settling in New Zealand before the First World War, he stayed with them until retirement, with a break only for war service.

A veteran of the Boer War, serving in the Rhodesian Field Force after being recruited in England, he went overseas again in the First World War, in 1915 with the first New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

He was serving in the Mounted Rifles when the Admiralty caught up with him and ordered him to return to England where he later commanded a minesweeper. Upon retiring from the Auckland Harbour Board, in 1940 at the age of 60, Captain Wood went back to sea on the New Zealand coast and, later recalled for Naval service, he was in command of several small vessels.

With the Second World War over, he resumed his second sea-going career in the Merchant Service and at one stage was chief officer of the Melanesian Mission vessel Southern Cross. He died at the good old age of 89.

For Coastguard to operate successfully, there was an obvious need for the closest cooperation between those who held the offices of president and commanding officer.

The roles were complementary but one gains the impression that in the earlier years the commanding officer was the key figure, who significantly influenced the operation of the Service, and when things were going well he received much of the credit.

However, as will be seen later, there was a period in the mid- 1950s when this was far from the case. During this time there was a clash of personalities which certainly did not contribute to smooth running and the conflict reflected unfavourably on Coastguard. In 1939 the Service went ahead by leaps and bounds as it began to acquire its own vessels. The first was a 26-foot wooden launch designed by Mr. T. C. Windsor who recalls that, 'For providing the profile, lines drawings and table of offsets I was paid the vast sum of £2 10s 0d.'

Times have certainly changed! The order was placed for this ambulance cutter in August and it was built by Shipbuilders Ltd and launched on 9 December 1939. A second-hand petrol engine was fitted and she was equipped by the St. John's Ambulance Service with provision for the carriage of a stretcher. This pretty little craft with attractive lines appears never to have had a name but was always referred to as 'Cutter No. 1' Her wartime registration number, 1181, was painted on her bow in large white letters for almost all her early

1939

life.

Early financing of Coast Guard's activities was, in part at least, from the proceeds of Art Unions, the forerunner of today's lotteries. One drive for funds is recorded as being 'to raise funds for the building of a motor lifeboat to be used for the saving of life in any maritime emergency'. Tickets at sixpence each were for a first prize of £ 10, a second prize of £3 and a third prize of £2. Presumably the proceeds of this Art Union went towards the purchase of the cutter then building, and when it was drawn at a ball held in the Peter Pan Cabaret on 19 July 1939 it raised £14 15s 6d net.

Captain Eastmure had always seen the Coastguard as a valuable source of trained men who could be of great value to the nation in the event of civil emergencies or, at worst, hostilities against other countries. Clearly, the idea caught on and, by 31 August 1939, just four days before the outbreak of war in Europe, drills were being held twice weekly by the Auckland Division which had a membership of 60 active members and 30 reserves, including :

- 6 certificated masters, two held foreign-going certificates
- 4 certificated engineers • 2 certificated wireless operators
- 6 amateur wireless telegraphists • 2 electricians
- 6 qualified ambulancemen • 1 qualified shipwright

The Coastguard found itself obliged to transfer its headquarters from the King's Wharf signal tower after the outbreak of war: the reason is unknown but it was probably to allow the tower to be used for naval purposes. The Coastguard then shifted to the premises of the Tamaki Yacht Club and its first parade was held there on 19 September 1939.

The year 1939 was indeed a busy one. Amid all the activity on the water and the preparations for war there was a need to give more attention to shore-based activities too. So far attention had been focused on Auckland but thought was now being given to forming other divisions.

The first was the Thames Division, placed under the command of Mr. Bart Middlebrook who was later to become a well-known and respected personality around the Hauraki Gulf and was to contribute many valuable years to Coastguard service. This division first paraded on 18 September 1939 with 32 members.

At this time Coastguard still had no real legal status, so in October arrangements were made for the organisation to become an incorporated society. It was registered as 'The New Zealand Coastguard Incorporated', a name to which the word 'Service' was not added until November 1944, although the epithet was doubtless applied much earlier and would have provided an appropriate description.

Originally Captain Eastmure's name headed the list of signatures of those applying for the incorporated society status but for some reason it was crossed out. Perhaps he thought it preferable that his name should not appear on it. The first two signatures on the final application



*Invitation to a fund-raising ball at the Peter Pan Cabaret, before the Second World War.*

were those of two other individuals who were, in the coming years, also to play a significant part in Coastguard's development - those of Captains Attwell and Holloway.

Sadly few of the pre-war Coastguards are still living but there are still a small number of members whose recollections of those early days can throw some light on their activities. One who still has clear memories of his youthful association with Coastguard is Doug Hazard, an experienced 'blue water' yachtsman who is today a well-respected accountant and a director of many public companies. He remembers joining Coastguard about 1938, when the members had to go to the third floor of a building on Quay Street for their meetings. One of his most vivid recollections is of the smell of glue in what was a paper bag factory. This may have been in the old Union Steam Ship Company building but Doug's memory is short on this detail.

Doug speaks highly of the training he received at Coastguard in those pre-war days and considers that Captain Eastmure was a very good instructor. His training stood him in good stead when he joined the Navy under the 'B' entry scheme about 1940 and later became a specialist navigator. Hazard recalls liking Eastmure, whom he describes as totally dominant and a strict disciplinarian with an authoritarian manner.

His other recollections are that they wore mufti, not being required at the time to wear a uniform, and that, from time to time, he was obliged to sleep on board the No. 1 Cutter which was moored at Mechanics Bay. Another pre-war Coastguard with a good memory of those days is Ken Kane, now living at Thames.

He was on the committee in the early war years and recalls that in January 1940 the Coastguard was using the premises of United Ship Repairers in the same building that may have been associated with the paper bag factory to which Doug Hazard refers. Ken, too, remembers that Captain Eastmure, usually called 'The Skipper', was a strict disciplinarian 'who ran a good outfit'. Captain Eastmure originally attended parades in his Legion of Frontiersmen uniform but later wore the Coastguard uniform. When the outbreak of war was imminent, Captain Eastmure offered the services of Coastguard to the Navy (the membership totalled 85 when the war began) but the Navy did not see the value of Captains Eastmure's men in quite the same light. On the day war broke out it wrote to him advising that only naval reservists should look towards the Navy for war service. Fundamentally the Navy considered the Coastguard members more suitable for the Army — how insulting to a 'dyed in the wool' sailor! No doubt this did not impress Captain Eastmure and could only have fuelled his subsequent feuds with the Navy which proved to be so damaging to Coastguard and so impeded its progress and success.

Although in other respects the Service appeared to be making good progress, even these early days of its life were not without differences of opinion within its ranks.





*The launch of the first Coastguard cutter, in December 1939. NEW ZEALAND HERALD*

On 3 February 1940 a request was made to the secretary, signed by 14 members, calling for the resignation of Captain Eastmure. Presumably Captain Eastmure did not resign but dissatisfaction over some aspects of Coastguard's operation prompted a 'break-away' by part of the membership. This led, about this time, to the formation of the Coastal Patrol, based in the Launchman's Buildings now part of the National Maritime Museum and adjacent to the entrance.

One of the instigators of the breakaway was Captain Jack Attwell, an early supporter of the formation of the Coastguard and one who had signed the application in 1939 for the Service to become an incorporated society. He too had been deep-sea in his earlier years but had come ashore and became a ferry master on the Auckland Harbour. Like so many others in those days he had also been involved with the Calliope Sea Scout Troop and had taken an active part in several other youth or maritime organisations. From about the time that he formed the Coastal Patrol, it is apparent that Captain Attwell was to become Captain Eastmure's 'bete noire'.

There are few records of the Coastal Patrol but it was certainly formed about July 1940 with several disenchanted Coastguard members. A photograph taken outside the Launchman's Buildings shows Captain Attwell, the master, with his first mate, vice president and five others attired in various uniforms, with some of the cap badges almost certainly being those of the Coastguard Service. The intention appears to have been that the new organisation would not become involved in any of the paramilitary training of the Coastguard and

**1940**

would primarily concern itself with protection of those on the water, particularly when in difficulty. As far as a uniform was concerned, the intention was that they should wear a navy blue uniform with shoulder badges bearing the legend COASTAL PATROL (CIVIL) and that officers would wear their rank markings on top of the shoulder rather than on the cuff.

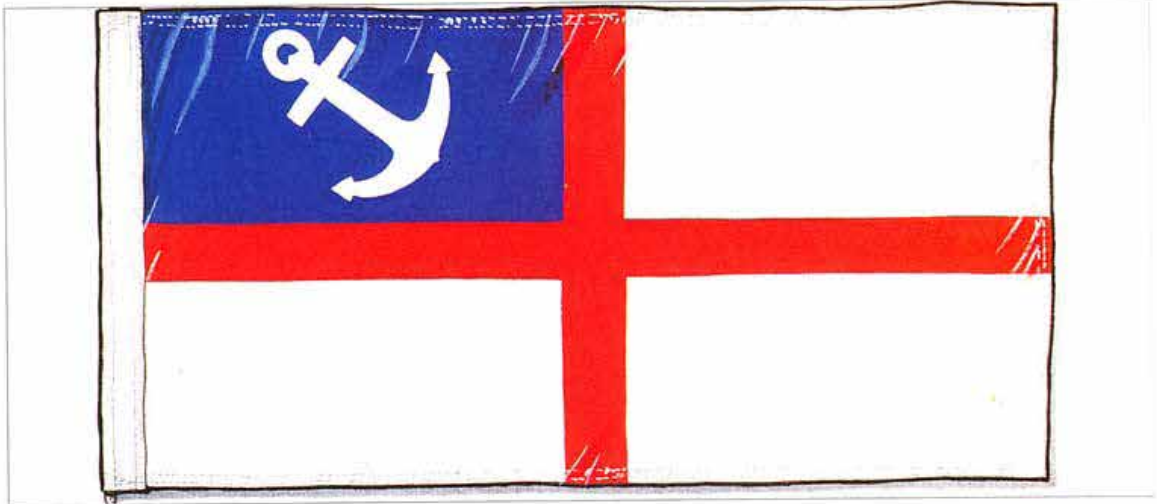
In parallel with the Coastguard experience, the new organisation found itself in correspondence with Navy Office having to explain its uniform proposals. The Navy required the group to add 'CIVIL' to the name on their uniforms, presumably to distinguish them from any organisation of a similar name and perhaps avoiding a reference to the Naval Auxiliary Patrol Service which was formed about this time with official status. The Coastal Patrol was not very long-lived; it faded away somewhere about 1943 although the actual date of its demise is now uncertain. Captain Wood's term as president of Coastguard finished in 1940 presumably because he went back to sea.

He stepped down to become a vice president and was followed as president by the Hon. F. E. Lark, a member of the Legislative Council, (the Upper House of Parliament which was abolished in 1950). In 1940, the Coastguard Headquarters was on the move again, this time to a building which later became the Catholic Social Building on the corner of Pitt and Wellington Streets.

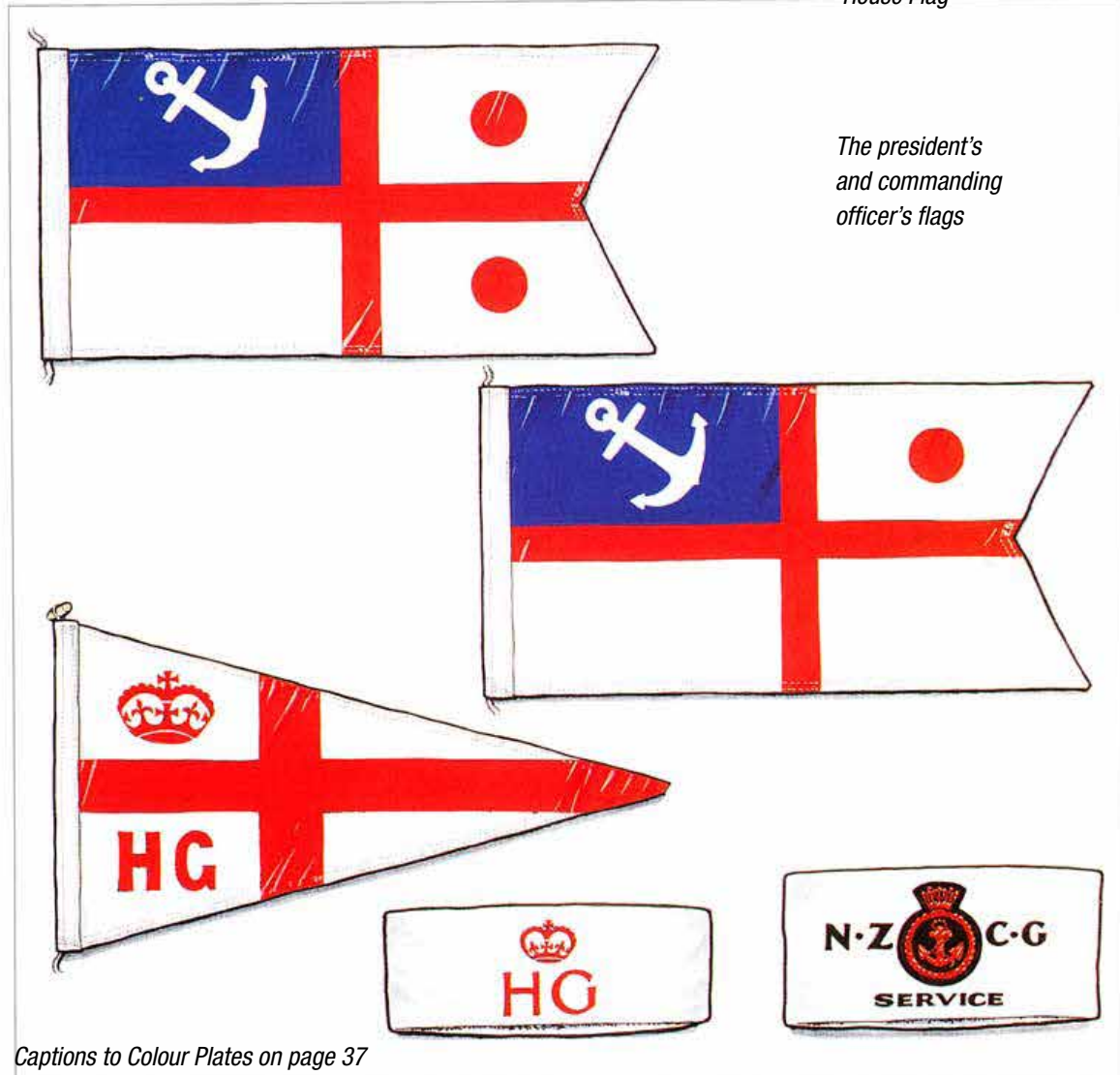
Ken Kane suggests that membership then was around 120- 150. The new headquarters building, owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Auckland, was a large wooden structure which had once been the Marist Brothers' school dating from the 1880s. It had been occupied, for many years before the Coastguard, by the advertising firm of Chandler and Co., and stood on a corner site adjacent to the St James Presbyterian Church Sunday School. These buildings were all demolished when the area was being prepared for the construction of the motorway approach in 1964. (A clump of pohutukawa trees, which had been in the Presbyterian Church grounds, is all that remains in the area as a reminder of the site of the historic building which was once a considerable source of pride to Coastguard).

The new building suffered damage by fire shortly before Christmas 1940 which, in the view of the Fire Department, was caused suspiciously and, in Captain Eastmure's opinion, as an act of sabotage. One is left wondering if he might have been referring to a deliberate act by his opponents in the Coastal Patrol but whoever caused the fire, the damage was not extensive to the building with repairs being estimated at just over £280. However the secretary's records were destroyed and little more is known about the Coastguard's stay there. The Coastguard appears to have vacated the building about a year later.

But in spite of all the moves and the knocks Coastguard must have been in reasonably good heart. In Coromandel a new Sub-Division was formed about this time. A well-known local personality, a Mr



*House Flag*



*The president's  
and commanding  
officer's flags*

*Captions to Colour Plates on page 37*

### **FLAGS OF THE NEW ZEALAND (later Auckland) COAST GUARD**

House Flag, (top), proportions 1:2 Captain Eastmure explained the reason for certain aspects of its design as :

White bunting — representing ‘honesty, justice and decency’. Cross of St. George — refers to the St. George’s Day raid on the port of Zeebrugge (23 April 1918), one of the Empire’s moments of glory at which Captain Eastmure was present.

Blue at hoist — faithful and genuine

White anchor, at an angle of 45° — security

The house flag was sometimes flown at the starboard yardarm but for some reason it was often flown by Service- owned cutters as an ensign.

### **The president’s and commanding officer’s flags**

Were of the same design as the house flag but had a red ball in the second or fourth quarter to distinguish them. This addition of the red ball closely follows the naval practice used for flag officers.

### **Home Guard pennant:**

During the war, when the Coastguard was a part of the Home Guard, Captain Eastmure was asked by the commanding officer of the 12th Battalion to design a suitable pennant to be flown by the cutters and auxiliaries when working with the Home Guard. It was flown at the starboard yardarm.

### **Armbands:**

Often not wearing uniform, members of the Home Guard and the Coastguard would not have been identifiable unless they wore something to indicate their Service. It is not certain now whether the Coastguard members were entitled to wear the Home Guard armlet as well as, or as an alternative to, the Coastguard one.

Strongman, assumed responsibility for its operation, while back in Auckland training continued. Some of this training was conducted afloat in the 84-foot auxiliary staysail schooner *The Caroline*. She appears to have been taken on charter for £150 per year with an option to purchase for £2600, although there is also reference to her having been loaned by a Mr. Cadman for weekend training.

Perhaps, for Captain Eastmure, the most satisfying event of 1940, and one which did much to vindicate all his hopes and aspirations for Coastguard, was the decision of the authorities to make the Auckland Division into the Maritime Section of the 12th Battalion of the Home Guard, based at Devonport, then under the command of Captain (later Major) H. H. Osmers.

Also about this time, or possibly a little later, the Manukau Sub-Division of Coastguard which had been formed earlier, became attached to the 8th Battalion of the Home Guard and operated on the Manukau Harbour. It had available two 50-foot and two 40-foot diesel launches and nine others, probably petrol-driven, ranging from 30 feet down to 22 feet. It also had twelve barges and the capacity to transport 1200 people.

The Maritime Section was used for water transport within this Home Guard area and the original intention was to train it as a land force too. Its status appears to have been that of 'a separate unit operating on the civil side of the Home Guard'. Ken Kane recalls that the privately owned 60-foot launch *Maritana* was also available to Coastguard and was used later for Home Guard exercises at Waiheke.

Afloat, it appears that the Coastguard vessels operating with the Home Guard may have worn a blue ensign, but such brief reference as is made of this flag does not make it clear whether this was the New Zealand national flag or possibly a defaced British blue ensign. At the starboard yardarm they wore a special pennant designed by Captain Eastmure comprising the red St. George's Cross of the Coastguard with a red crown and letters 'HG' in the hoist.

(Refer pages 36-37). One of these pennants later became one of Eastmure's prized possessions, when it was formally presented to him by Captain Osmers, at the time that the Coastguard involvement with the Home Guard ceased in 1944.

The father of a respected Auckland marine artist and personality, Gaynor Jackson Snr was an officer in the 12th. Battalion.

Another who served in it at that time was a character who has since become a well-known Auckland yachting personality, D'Arcy Whiting.

He recalls that the Coastguards serving within the battalion constituted a very efficient unit with every reason to be proud of their efforts

The Coastguard certainly made a useful contribution to the Home Guard and no doubt the inspection by its Dominion commanding officer, Major-General R. Young, did much to raise the self-esteem of



its members and convince them of their value.

In the pre-war and early war years Coastguard officers and other ranks quite often took part in public parades. On the outbreak of war they marched down Karangahape Road as a symbol of support for the cause. Bob Wilson, who joined with one of the first intakes, probably in 1937-38, and later served as a petty officer, recalls that in 1940 coastguards lined part of the route at intervals of ten paces on one side of Broadway, Newmarket, for the funeral procession of the late Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage.

Like many others, Bob is proud of his war service in the Coastguard; he recently applied to the Defence Department, and was granted, the New Zealand War Medal. Together with two other war commemoration medals, he wore it proudly at the 1995 Anzac Day celebrations in his local Returned Servicemen's Association club in Henderson. In addition to his RSA badge on his suit he also wears a Coastguard lapel badge measuring about 25 mm x 12 mm, comprising the Coastguard crown and a silver anchor on a black circle having the letters NZCG below it. He proudly recalls that the badge was issued to him shortly after he joined, at a time before they regularly wore a uniform.

It appears that, in spite of the war, Coastguard was also able to keep up its good work with the ambulance service to Waiheke Island.\

Nurse Tribe, the local District Nurse, was a familiar sight there, in her jodhpurs with a satchel slung over her shoulder, as she rode her upstanding bay 'Sunny Boy' all over the island on her mercy missions.

The ambulance service attracted a fair amount of publicity for

*The Coastguard marches down Karangahape Rd.*



Coastguard over the years. It continued to run until about 1960.

The following newspaper report is typical of those which quite frequently appeared throughout those years :

### COASTGUARD TO RESCUE

The Coastguard Service made prompt response to an emergency call from Waiheke Island in the early hours of Saturday morning, when the request was to get a patient who was seriously ill to hospital. The call came to the central post by telephone at 1.30 a.m. from Rocky Bay, Waiheke, where a young woman was seriously ill with pneumonia. The patient had to be carried four miles across country to Rocky Bay, where she was met by the service launch, which reached Auckland at 6.30 a.m., and the patient was rushed to hospital.

The year 1941 saw yet another headquarters shift, this time to St. Mary's Bay where the Coastguard now had an office in the top floor of the premises of Collings and Bell, the noted boatbuilders. It also saw the Coastguard issued with battle dress, but the traditional naval peaked cap was retained, along with the Coastguard cap badge and rank markings. It is not quite clear whether it was 1942 or 1943 that saw further moves by the Headquarters.



*Meteor, briefly owned by Coast-guard shortly after the beginning of the Second World War.*





*The Caroline, once Lord Jellicoe's yacht, later loaned to Coastguard. She was used for training for a brief period in the early years of the Second World War.*

*NEW ZEALAND HERALD*

**1941**



*The Coastguard headquarters on the corner of Pitt and Wellington Streets.  
A. N. BRECKON*

However, there are indications ( that by August 1942 the Coastguard may have been based in Endean's Building at the bottom of Queen Street, although copies of letters are on file which were addressed to them at Wellington and Pitt Street during the year. Of course, the old address may still have been used by the correspondent, in error. It seems likely that perhaps the use of Endean's Building was only for a Coastguard administration office and that it served no other purpose.

**1942**

The demands made upon the Coastguard, as part of the Home Guard, do not appear to have significantly curtailed its work as an ambulance service. On 28 November 1943 there is reference to the 'Waiheke Station, New Zealand Coastguard, Rocky Bay', About this time, too, the Coastguard informed the local constable that a Mr. McAuslin has been placed in charge of the Coastguard station there.

The Coastguard cutter built for the Service in 1939 was still operating and during 1942 a second cutter, the *Minerva*, was purchased. There is reference to the Service having three vessels and a ten-oared cutter at this time. Whether a third, powered cutter was also purchased, or whether Coastguard was using a privately owned auxiliary, is uncertain, although the latter seems more probable. This third vessel may possibly have been the fast launch *Meteor* which had been purchased from Mr. Goodfellow for £600 about this time, but that ownership may have been short lived as the Defence Department is thought to have taken her over for military purposes.

About 1941 consideration was given to building a larger vessel and plans were drawn up. The project reached the stage where 'Tim' Windsor,

by then the designer at Shipbuilders Ltd, prepared a suggested profile and accommodation layout for a 56-foot patrol cutter for the Service. However, the project never went much further than this preliminary stage on the drawing board. It is difficult to imagine how the Service planned to finance her construction, particularly in wartime.

There are other indications that Coastguard's affairs must have been progressing reasonably well: by 1942, if not earlier, there were at least three Sub-Divisions, located at Thames, Coromandel, and Onehunga. There is evidence to suggest that there may have been two others; one at Mercury Bay and another at Warkworth. There is even reference to the intention of forming one at Gisborne but it seems doubtful whether this came into being. (Some pre-war correspondence concerning the formation of a division at Dunedin almost certainly came to nothing).

Ken Kane believes that the worthy Captain Eastmure was asked at some stage during the war to form the Naval Auxiliary Patrol Service, with the rank of Lieutenant, but that he declined. It may not be coincidental, however, that the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron (which provided the nucleus out of which the Patrol was eventually formed), had its club rooms in Endean's Building for many years and about 1942 Coastguard moved its office into that building. In 1943, the Hon. F.E. Lark stood down as president due to ill health, making way for Coastguard's long-time supporter, the Rev. Jasper Calder, who held the office until 1946. He had long been associated with Coastguard and was already its honorary chaplain.

Jasper Calder, an Anglican minister, was a remarkable character who

*The Coastguards march in public. Note their arm bands (see page 36- 37).*

JACKSON PHOTOGRAPHY







was as much at home running his launches as he was in his parish. He was born at Ponsonby in 1885, the son of a vicar who was later Archdeacon of Auckland. After education in Auckland and in London the young Calder also entered the ministry at the age of 25.

By the time he became president of Coastguard Jasper Calder had made a name for himself as an unconventional young parson and later as a respected evangelist and social worker. While a young curate in Whangarei he earned notoriety by taking part in a buckjumping contest on the spur of the moment and coming out the winner which, combined with his interest in horse racing (although he did not bet), earned him the nickname of 'the sporting parson'.

In 1920 he helped to launch the Auckland City Mission, being its head for the next 26 years. He pioneered the Health Camp movement, established camps at Oneroa, Ostend and Campbell's Bay and, in the depression, opened a soup kitchen and a doss house. He was awarded an MBE in 1935. After taking a holiday in California in 1941, Jasper Calder found himself working his passage as a seaman in a cargo ship bound for Sydney when the Pacific War broke out.

Jasper Calder was a very competent boat owner who had been boating for several years before his association with Coastguard. Over the years he owned at least three launches. He used these as Coastguard auxiliaries and also to run excursions for children (an estimated 6000 over the years), old folk and other deserving people, earning him the honorary popular title of 'chaplain to Auckland's yachtsmen'.

The logbooks of Sky Pilot (sailors' name for a clergyman afloat),

*Coastguard cutter Minerva was a mainstay of the ambulance service in the 1940s.*

**1943**

Crusader and Black Watch (he owned two boats with the latter name) make interesting reading and show him to have been a skilled navigator with a keen eye for the coastline and useful navigation marks. His logs are full of sketches — many in colour - and photographs showing the entrances to ports and anchorages, with special reference to points of pilotage value. The U.S. Coast Guard apparently appreciated his nautical skills and, according to his brother, gave him an honorary commission in that service teaching navigation to officer cadets.

He was a man of remarkable character who was intensely interested in his fellow men, particularly those who were less fortunate in life than himself. He went out of his way to assist them in many ways with the operation of Crusader and Black Watch, often bringing religious services to the residents of the islands in the Hauraki Gulf who would otherwise have been deprived of them.

Calder has been described as ‘a mercurial extrovert, who took pride and pleasure in being himself, with little regard for conventional manners or opinions of strait-laced people. He had a ready tongue, a flow of rough wit, and a consistent delight in doing the unexpected thing’. His strong sense of duty to the less fortunate citizens of Auckland and a knowledge of life in the raw made him a very understanding person. Coastguard was indeed fortunate to have had its long association with him.

As if there had not already been enough moves by then for its training venues, there was to be yet another.

*The Early Years A Home Guard exercise on the Manukau Harbour, during the Second World War, using the Coastguard for transport.*



Training commenced at Epiphany Hall in October 1943. The Church of the Epiphany, on the corner of Karangahape Road and Gundry Street, was Jasper Calder's church where once he preached his 'racy' sermons. Its hall was adjacent. Next door, towards the corner of Karangahape and Newton Roads was a pub, then called the 'Star' and later 'The Dog and Trumpet'.

One can not help but wonder how many pints might have been consumed, and salty yams spun, by the Coastguard members before parades in the hall next door.

Doubtless they would have been before, rather than after the parades, as these were still the days of six o'clock closing. Ken Kane does not recall the hall being actually used for drills, although he does remember its use for church parades in which Coastguards took part from time to time. During the four or so years that Coastguard was associated with the Home Guard, it served the nation well.

There were many exercises carried out in which the Home Guard was landed on 'hostile' shores for exercises. However, the association with the Home Guard lasted only until April 1944, by which time the war in the Pacific has turned strongly in the Allies' favour and fear of an invasion of New Zealand by the Japanese was no longer a threat.

The Service appears to have continued with its own affairs afloat, beside the duties of the Home Guard, and the No. 2 cutter *Minerva* was stationed at Ostend Wharf during the weekends.

In May 1944, more help came for the Service when the Marine Department made the 60-foot scow *Scot* available for training under a three-year charter for the peppercorn rental of £ 1 per year.

Training appears to have continued ashore, possibly in Epiphany Hall. Some changes in the original constitution were now apparently considered necessary, and these took place in November 1944, when the title of the organisation was altered to become 'The New Zealand Coastguard Service'.

Whether the decision to introduce a cadet scheme was part of this restructuring, or whether a decision to do so had been made in earlier years is uncertain, but during 1944 a number of cadets were admitted and formed an important part of the training programme. (There is some evidence to suggest that there may have been a youth development scheme a few years earlier).

These young men were given a wonderful opportunity for experience afloat, combined with community service.

By 1945, when Jasper Calder was in his second year as president, a decision was made to expand the ambulance service.

The cutters were required to make regular medical visits to Waiheke Island, which was without a resident doctor although by now it had a resident population in excess of 1000.

Dr. A. A. Corban was appointed in June as honorary medical adviser and surgeon and thereafter, for many years, these routine calls were made. They provided a much needed service to the residents who



*Rev. Jasper Calder.*

## 1944

## 1945

were otherwise obliged to make visits to Auckland to seek medical attention.

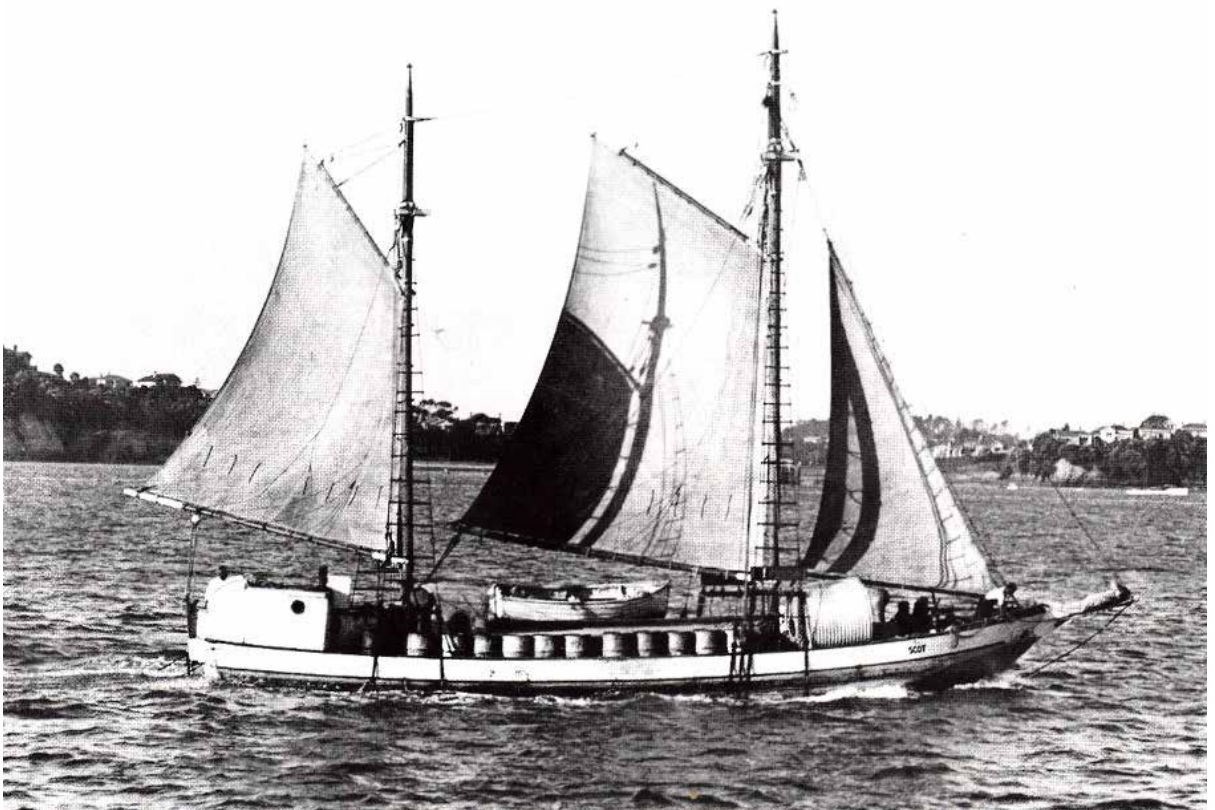
According to the Coastguard's 1945 annual report, No. 1 Cutter had steamed 3464 miles and No. 2 Cutter had covered a further 6132 miles during the previous 12 months.

Steaming more than 9500 miles on ambulance and rescue work and medical calls was a significant contribution by a Service which had lost many of its younger but relatively experienced members to the 'call to arms' imposed by the war.

It is no wonder that the people of the Auckland region were grateful for the Coastguard Service, which had justifiable pride in all that it was doing.

Captain Eastmure must have been able to look with great pride upon the Service that he had created, with the assistance of many other public-spirited people.

*The scow Scot in her trading days. She was later a Coastguard training vessel.*  
*NEW ZEALAND HERALD*







*Coastguard's first ex-Naval ML at Mokohinau Wharf, December 1948*