

home, hardly a pleasant experience for the crews of those rough-riding ships.

## COAST GUARD'S CONTRIBUTION

The Coast Guard-manned naval vessels made an important contribution to the Allied victory in World War II, their performance comparing favorably with that of their counterparts with naval crews. It must be noted, however, that they composed only a small proportion of the Navy's amphibious, escort and auxiliary forces.

Moreover, most of their men were reservists, whose experience with the Coast Guard was limited to a few weeks of recruit training; they probably would have served as effectively had their uniforms' right sleeves not borne the Coast Guard shield.

The Coast Guard's most significant influence leading to these ships' successes was perhaps that of the commanding officers who commissioned them. Transports, cargo ships, LSTs, destroyer escorts and frigates were all commanded initially by regular officers of command rank, and their ships' effectiveness depended to a considerable extent on their own ability.

Many of the smaller vessels' commanding officers had been warrant or petty officers until they were promoted temporarily to commissioned rank; their years of experience in the pre-war Coast Guard enabled

them to meet the challenges of command.

Finally, the surfmen assigned to vessels manned by the Navy, to serve in landing craft and as mentors for landing craft crews while the Navy was learning the techniques of amphibious warfare, must not be forgotten. Their contribution to victory was second to none, far out of proportion to their numbers. ●



**Above:** The USS LST-67 lands troops through the surf on a Cape Gloucester beach in December 1943.

**Left:** Marines pull a jeep ashore from an LST during the Cape Gloucester invasion in December 1943.