



Alexander Hamilton, the father of the Coast Guard, is buried in the Trinity Church graveyard in New York City.

Chapter 10

In the early 1960s, the Army decided to transfer the First Army Headquarters to Fort Meade, Md. The U.S. Coast Guard laid claim to Governors Island, seeing an opportunity to consolidate its spread-out forces in the New York City area.

During April of 1965, the usual monochrome of green that paraded to and fro about the island was interrupted. Khaki and white uniforms belonging to seven Coast Guardsmen were added to the varied military palette of Governors Island. The team, headed by Lieutenant Commander James Gracey, was tasked with preparing the island for the Coast Guard. Gracey, the first to arrive, was given temporary quarters in a wooden building where Brick Village stands now. He shared his quarters with a contingent of WACs that were stationed on the island at the time.

As with most of the ceremonies held on the island, the Chapel of St. Cornelius the Centurion and Fort Jay were the key sites in the transfer cere-

monies on June 30, 1966. At 2 p.m. a Coast Guard bugler sounded the church call and the chapel organist struck up Onward Christian Soldiers, as a Coast Guard color guard entered the chapel.

Rear Admiral I.J. Stephens, at that time Commander of Eastern Area and the Third Coast Guard District, received the Coast Guard standard from the color guard before taking its place with the array of historic flags already in the chapel. The Fort Jay Deactivation Orders were read and the firing of one of the Rodman guns atop the parapet of the fort was the signal for the Army to lower the National Ensign for the last time.

According to Admiral (ret.) Gracey, who was the first executive officer for the new Coast Guard base, the firing of the cannon shattered most of the windows inside Fort Jay and even others in Building 110. After the cannon was fired, the wadding used inside the cannon landed inside the moat. The recent weather had dried out the grass in the moat to the point the wadding material set the grass on fire.

The island's fire department responded and