

# How it Started

At the outbreak of World War II, as the Coast Guard assumed more and more responsibilities, the Reserve was called into active duty.

The volume of munitions, supplies and equipment handled through our ports—going to our fighting men the world over—increased so rapidly that fire hazards, sabotage and damage of government property became a danger which had to be dealt with directly and immediately. In 1942 German subs were sinking vessels within sight of our shores.

In this desperate situation the

Coast Guard Auxiliary and, later, the Coast Guard Temporary Reserve were called upon to make their first great contribution to the successful prosecution of the war by the Allied Nations. A fleet of several thousand motor boats, yachts and fishing craft—in fact everything that could be gotten out for anti-submarine patrol—went out for observation and for attack. These vessels were manned largely by Temporary Reservists who had been trained in, and who had been enrolled from, the Coast Guard Auxiliary.



USCG Base Constitution Wharf, Boston.



View from 5th deck at Constitution Base showing lighthouse tied up to Finger Pier. Jeeps in foreground and picket boats in slip. White superstructure of *Sea Cloud* may be seen at end of pier.

An act of Congress authorized the Coast Guard to enroll, as members of its Reserve, volunteers who, without pay and on a part-time basis, would perform regular duties with full military authority and full military responsibility. Thus the Temporary Reserve of the Coast Guard, a unique organization with no parallel in any other branch of the armed forces of the United States, came into being.

The basic set-up of the Auxiliary was used for purposes of enrollment. The then existing Auxiliary Flotillas were expanded into Temporary Reserve Units and new Units were formed. By January of 1944, Division 5A consisted of 20 Flotillas or TR Units and a total of 4,687 men.

All TRs signed up for a 12-hour tour of duty each week "for the duration" and were sworn in to this military organization, becoming subject to the Articles of War while on duty. Trained and prepared for the work previously done by regular Coast Guardsmen, Temporary Reservists became proficient in the enforcement of rules and regulations governing waterfront security, the handling of small arms, military courtesy and drill.

Among the duties first assigned were patrol of the open coast, guard duty on piers and waterfront facilities and maintenance of boat patrols throughout the harbors. Soon the Temporary Reserve was handling fire fighting, supervision and control of the loading of am-