

Coast Guardsman's Family Drops Anchor In Supply

BY DOUG RUTTER

After drifting around the world during a 24-year career with the U.S. Coast Guard, Bob Janeda and his family have finally dropped their anchor in Brunswick County.

A service career that took him up and down the East Coast and as far away as southeast Asia ended earlier this year with his retirement.

Janeda, who retired as chief engineer with one of the top ranks for an enlisted man, E-7, is glad he can finally settle down and get some work done around the house.

Starting out in Cape May, N.J., Janeda's duties with the Coast Guard took him as far south as Key West, Fla., and as far north as Groton, Conn. He also served in Italy, Thailand and the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Janeda said he boarded many sinking ships, fought fires on freighters and inspected Russian and Japanese trawlers. He earned more than 20 awards during his career, including two Coast Guard Achievement Medals.

"I've been around the world about three times and all over the East Coast," said Janeda, who was born in Pittsburgh, Pa. "There were a lot of good experiences that you couldn't get in a half dozen lifetimes as a civilian."

Although he spent the last five years of his Coast Guard career servicing ships in Baltimore, Md., the 52-year-old has a lot of sea stories to tell from his earlier years.

While serving aboard the Coast Guard Cutter *Cape York* out of Key West, Janeda said he was on a 400-foot barge when it sank in shark-infested waters.

He also was called on to help rescue refugees fleeing Cuba in the late 1960s. The Cubans tried to get to the United States on makeshift boats made out of barrels and boards.

"When we got to them, a lot of them hadn't eaten or drank for days," Janeda said. "We pulled out a lot of floaters too, people that didn't make it to the United States."



BOB JANEDA and his youngest daughter, Cynthia, look over photographs at their home in Supply.

Janeda, who served three years in the Army after high school, enlisted in the Coast Guard when he was 27. "I really couldn't tell you why I got in," he said. "It was just a stupid idea that turned out to be good."

As an engineer, Janeda had to be a "jack of all trades." He worked in engine rooms on ships and helped maintain boats and buildings and grounds at various Coast Guard stations. His job often required him to work with machines such as generators, motors and pumps.

"I've got all my fingers," he said proudly, holding up his hands for inspection. "Most engineers come out of the Coast Guard with different parts of their body missing."

Janeda said making friends in different states and foreign countries was one of the

best things about serving with the Coast Guard. "It was a great opportunity to save lives, to help people, and it was just great meeting them."

The family got used to moving every couple years, but settled in Supply in 1986. Janeda was serving in Baltimore at the time and, until his retirement, drove home every other weekend to see his wife and three children.

"I got tired of moving the kids from school to school and state to state," Janeda said. "It was getting to where they needed to be stationary."

The move to Supply was a homecoming for his wife, the former Mary Ann Caison, who is a native of Brunswick County. She said she had to get to know the county all over again after a 19-year leave of absence.

Although Janeda never served at the

Oak Island Coast Guard station, a retirement ceremony was held there May 30 so his family could attend.

Janeda said the guard has changed a lot since he enlisted. There's more opportunity for education and advancement than ever before.

"It's gone from do the best you can on your own to a much more organized and much simpler way," he said. "It was a whole lot harder when I joined."

Janeda, who served in the Army and has trained with the Navy and Air Force, speaks highly of what the Coast Guard gave him and what it still has to offer.

"I would definitely recommend the Coast Guard for something to start at," he said. "Even if you don't carry it on as a career, it would be a good source of training to use the rest of your life."



A YOUNGER AND SLIMMER Bob Janeda stands in front of the Coast Guard Cutter *Eagle*, docked in Groton, Conn., around 1968.

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