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STAFF PHOTOS BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN  
**THOUGHTFUL STYLING** helps the newest Oak Island Coast Guard station blend into its coastal neighborhood.



STAFF PHOTO BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN  
**THE COAST GUARD** simply outgrew its previous quarters, built in 1932 with barracks for a crew of 10 men. Plans call for this building to be torn down.



PHOTO BY PATTY JONES  
**PREDECESSOR** of the 1932 structure, this turn-of-the-century lifesaving station is now a private residence, situated across the road from the station.

**NEW OAK ISLAND STATION OPENS**

**Coast Guard Duty Just Got Better**

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Amid the classy oceanfront homes of Caswell Beach, the new neighbor can hold its head high, so to speak. With its grey cedar shakes and dark blue accents on the graceful L-shaped building it could be mistaken for the local country club. Except that it has its very own lighthouse, the 34-year-old Oak Island Light.

This attractive newcomer on the block is the U.S. Coast Guard's new \$4 million Oak Island station, ready for occupancy in mid-March, the pride and joy of 33 men assigned there.

This Oak Island station is of considerable historic interest. The southernmost station in the Coast Guard Fifth District, its original building dated back to the turn of the century and its proximity to the Military Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point make it a potentially crucial location in time of crisis.

This multi-mission station takes care of search and rescue and law enforcement, while the 65-foot Coast Guard cutter *Blackberry*, homeported there provides aids to navigation.

*"When men come in from duty on the water and are really cold, the sauna is very useful."*

—J. D. Arndt  
 Senior Chief

Two buildings emerged from the architectural plans of Synthesis, Inc. of Wrightsville Beach, a firm that worked successfully to design a station whose look was appropriate to the environment at Caswell Beach.

Senior Chief J.D. Arndt proudly conducted a tour of both just a month after moving into his new home.

The larger building, 10,741 square feet in all, includes berthing, communications, mess, administrative offices and recreation.

A tempting scent of fried chicken

floated from the gleaming stainless steel kitchen, where "subsistence specialists," not cooks, feed the crew of 31 men and two women. Around the corner was an attractive visitor's area, where Arndt explained he hoped to get pictures on the walls and some green plants.

A spacious fitness room contains a rowing machine, weights, stationery bike, sauna and other equipment, comparable to a modest commercial spa.

"When men come in from duty on the water and are really cold, the sauna is very useful," Arndt said.

With a picturesque view of the Cape Fear River, the communications room is an impressive area, containing the most up-to-date technology for spotting and communicating with vessels. Arndt pointed out a ship anchored at some distance out; it's waiting entry into the Port of Wilmington.

Coast Guardsmen here don't lack for recreation. Even though their double-occupancy quarters are of comfortable size and attractive in smoky grey and blue, they can es-

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