

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.

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WASHINGTON : A graphic and artistic record of the vital role of the United States Coast Guard in offensive action against the enemy will be exhibited at the National Gallery of Art from September 17 to October 8, with the showing of a special group of paintings and drawings by Coast Guard Combat Artists.

Although the paintings are the work of men who were professional artists in civilian life, the Coast Guard's small group of Combat Artists primarily are fighting men who perform their regular duties and paint or draw off duty.

Accompanying Coast Guardsmen on the ocean lanes and invasion fronts, the Combat Artists have been in on every important invasion--Guadalcanal, North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Tarawa, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan and, more recently, at Guam, Normandy and southern France. Since they sketch their pictures from first-hand experience in daily contact, they achieve great accuracy and strength and personal feeling in their work.

Typical of these fighting artists is Coast Guardsman William Goadby Lawrence, chief boatswain's mate, who was awarded the Silver Star Medal for "gallantry and intrepidity in action" during amphibious operations in Sicily and Salerno.

Another is John S. Gretzer, specialist, second class, who manned a 20 mm. gun in the same invasion and visualized in his drawings the Coast Guard's invasion operations. Hunter Wood, a former Combat Artist, painted scenes of the North African invasion.

Ken Riley, specialist, third class, brought back a sketch-book filled with action and sidelights on the bloody invasions at Tarawa and Saipan. Other battle scenes on Saipan were sketched by Jack B. Gildersleeve, specialist, third class, who spent ten days on the beach under Japanese bombing, strafing and mortar fire to record the action. Other Coast Guard Combat Artists, who have been in combat in the South Pacific and recorded it for history, include Norman Millett Thomas, chief specialist; John Floyd Morris, seaman, first class; Sandor Klein, chief specialist, and Ensign John Burton Norall.

Robert V. Tucker, specialist, third class, was aboard a Coast Guard-manned assault transport which landed troops on Normandy shores, while H. B. Vestal, boatswain's mate, first class, saw the same action from an infantry landing craft. Russell S. Dickerson, seaman, second class, made a permanent record in oils of the work done by the famed Coast Guard Invasion Rescue Flotilla in the English Channel during the assault on France. Tore Asplund, chief boatswain's mate, covered the Normandy invasion, then went on for invasion operations against southern France. On the convoy lanes, Michael R. Senich, specialist, first class, depicts anti-submarine warfare of the Coast Guard from aboard a destroyer escort.

The National Gallery of Art exhibit will include representative work from all of these fighting artists.