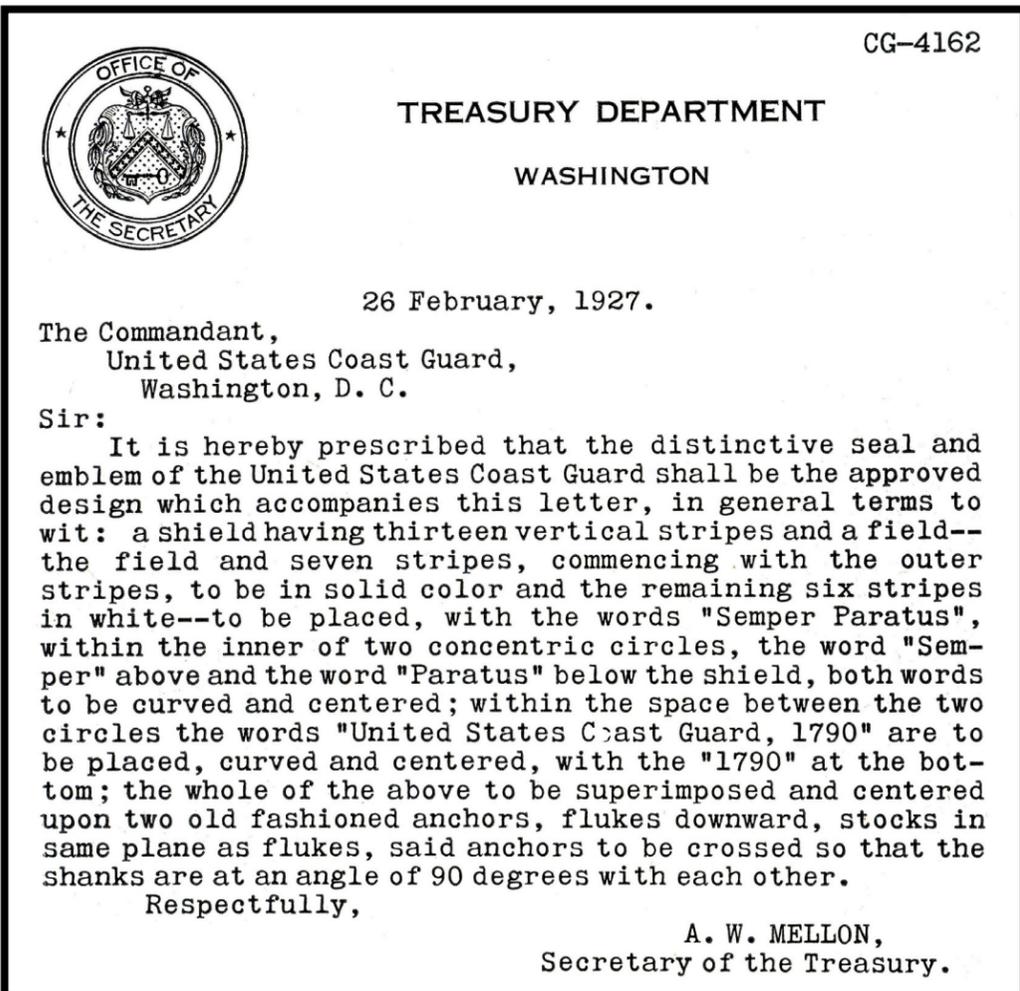


The Story of the COAST GUARD SEAL

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"Semper Paratus" - these words on the Coast Guard seal represent to all Coast Guard men the proud tradition of the Coast Guard for over a century and a half. The thought of the Coast Guard without its Latin, "always ready," is beyond our conception. Members of the service often see the Coast Guard emblem, with its shield and cross anchors, and its "Semper Paratus" with no thought of the history of that familiar seal.

Only in comparatively recent history, has there been an official emblem. For one hundred and thirty-seven years, the Coast Guard enforced the laws of the land, fought in its wars, and protected the life and property of its citizens without the dignity of an official emblem.



Communications Center but then an engineering draftsman at Headquarters, designed the emblem. He also designed the Pistol and Rifle Sharpshooter's Medal now issued by the service.

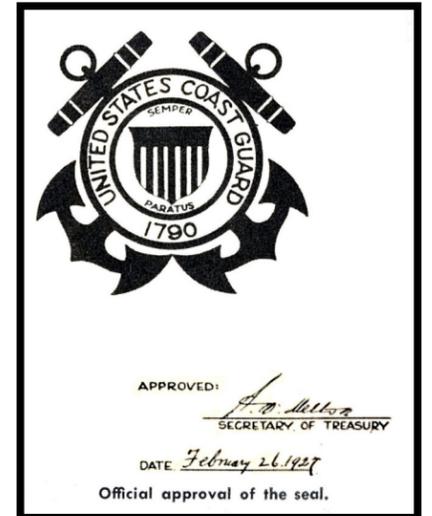
In 1927 the seal was officially authorized by the Honorable Andrew W. Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury, under President Calvin Coolidge. As shown in one of the accompanying illustrations, on the 27th day of February of that year, the Secretary wrote to the commandant of the Coast Guard, RADM Frederick C. Billard, approving the design of the official emblem and describing it in duly official language.

A Coast Guard civilian employee, Oscar H. Kee, now in the

However, back in 1790, when Alexander Hamilton founded the Revenue Cutter Service, there were no insignia and no uniform regulations for the crews of the first cutters. Nine years later, Congress got around to authorizing the revenue cutters to fly what is known today as the Coast Guard ensign and pennant. The only change in the ensign from that day to this was made in 1927 when the newly authorized Coast Guard seal was centered on the seventh red stripe.

So that the year 1927 brought the Coast Guard an official seal, with the words "Semper Paratus" centered above and below the shield, and the legend "United States Coast Guard - 1790" within the space between the two circles superimposed upon two old fashioned crossed anchors. After 137 years of faithful service, the United States Coast Guard had been rewarded with an official emblem.

The colors of the component parts of the official seal and emblem are as follows: the shield, top - navy blue; seven bars - red; six inner bars - white; two circles - navy blue; "Semper Paratus" - navy blue; "United States Coast Guard - 1790," in navy blue; all the background in both circles - white; rings on anchors - black; four bands on each anchor stock - black; stock of anchor - natural wood color; Shank, Arm, Fluke, Pea and Crow of Anchor - battleship gray; and background - white.



Before the official adoption of the present seal, the Coast Guard having nothing of the sort merely used an imprint, "U. S. Coast Guard" on the letterhead of the Treasury Department which, today as it did then, carries the Treasury scales and key emblem.

The origin and history of adoption of the motto, "Semper Paratus" is clothed in much mystery to this day. According to Mr. Kee, the origin goes far back probably into the 18th, century of the service. The motto seems to have been so associated and indicative of the character of the Coast Guard, that it was quite naturally included in the seal and emblem.

It is known that an editorial in the *Army and Navy Journal* dated November 26, 1864, on the subject of the Revenue Cutter Service stated in part: "Keeping always under steam and ever ready, in the event of extraordinary need, to render valuable service, the cutters can be made to form a coast guard whose value it is impossible at the present time to estimate." Whether this use of the English translation of "Semper Paratus" in the editorial was the first association of the expression with the Coast Guard or not is a moot question. Captain Stephen H. Evans, in his book, "A Definitive History of the Coast Guard" believes this occasion to be the first such association.