

## The Duane in Bermuda

By Bob Haviland

I was on my second weather patrol on the *Duane* - we'd been on Weather Station Easy and were now heading for Bermuda for Search and Rescue and also some well-earned R and R on 4 December, 1952. We'd picked up a pilot to navigate St. Georges Harbor, and as we were approaching the harbor, the pilot kept asking for a specific starboard-side buoy.

As all hands were looking for the buoy, the bow suddenly lunged to the starboard and the ship ran aground on a coral reef just outside the gut going into St. Georges.

At this point, the citizens of St. George realized that there was an incident occurring at sea, and they all gathered at a point just outside the harbor.

In a demonstration of their great appreciation of the U.S. Coast Guard, they were all cheering as we sat, stranded, on the coral reef. To make matters worse, the only thing available

to rescue us from the situation was a U.S. Air Force tug! The Air Force has airplanes—the Coast Guard has ships—this is a case of extremely embarrassing role reversal.

When the tug arrived—now this is the Air Force rescuing the Coast Guard—their feeble attempts to relieve us from our position on a coral reef at high tide were disastrous. At this point our Chief Warrant Officer, a thirty-year bosun's mate was on the bow and getting more and more frustrated by the way the tug was attempting to get our ship off the reef. Finally, he asked permission of our Commanding Officer, a full-fledged 4-striper Captain, to allow him to take command of the Air Force tug. The order was issued, we transferred him to the tug, he took over the helm, and within 20 minutes the *Duane* was relieved from her perch on the coral reef.

Now we were being towed by the Air Force tug, commanded by a Coast

Guard C.W.O., into the harbor at St. George and anchored.

The next day Navy divers from the Base in Hamilton come over to inspect the hull and the damage to our ship. In searching, they found that the missing starboard-side buoy was wrapped around our starboard-side screw.

The hull was damaged, the screw was damaged and the shaft was damaged. Now we were stuck in Bermuda until the *Bibb* could be relieved from her weather station to escort us, limping on one screw at a max speed of six knots, back to Boston.

We were in Boston for Christmas and then to Curtis Bay, Md. for repairs.