



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
WASHINGTON 20593

16 November, 1938

From: Commandant.  
To: Lieutenant (j.g.) A. E. Harned – Air Station,  
St. Petersburg, Florida.

Subject: Commendation.

Reference: (a) Flight Operation Report No. 94, Air Station, St. Petersburg,  
Fla., 17-18 October, 1938.

1. Headquarters notes that on the afternoon of 17 October, 1938, you took off from St. Petersburg, Fla., in Plane No. V-265, and flew in squally weather and low visibility to a point on the west side of San Salvador, in the Bahama Group, where you landed late that night in a 16 knot wind, with a heavy 30° cross sea, and removed a sick man from the S. S. REGINOLITE. After midnight you successfully took off and transported the patient to Miami, Fla., where you landed before daybreak and hospitalized the man,
2. Headquarters commends you for the skill and perseverance displayed by you upon this occasion, and the successful accomplishment of your mission,
3. A copy of this letter will be filed with your record.

By direction,

L. C. COVELL  
Assistant Commandant

Letter of Commendation (explanation for lower-level award inclusion in Roll of Valor):

TODAY IN COAST GUARD AVIATION HISTORY - 18 OCTOBER 1938 (1 OF 2): a Hall PH-2 flying boat #V-165 assigned to Air Station St. Petersburg, FL and crewed by LT A. E. Harned (AC); Ted McWilliams, AMM1c (CP); Avery Brace, RM1c; Joe Sabala, AMM1c; Walter Dykes, AMM1c, and Louis J. Lyons, PhM1c launched to medically evacuate a sailor from the S.S. REGINOLITE for undetermined intestinal trouble requiring emergency treatment 380 miles southeast of Miami, FL. Harned's logbook noted 1,052 miles to scene and back - or 6.3 hours out and 5.5 hours back (to Miami vice St. Petersburg)

[Excerpt from Coast Guard Magazine, December 1938, Volume 12, #2 pp 10-13]

Scarcely more than a month ago six members of the St. Petersburg Air Station embarked on an all -night flight that established a new long- distance record for Coast Guard mercy hops. A Hall flying boat manned by LT A. E. Harned, Ted McWilliams, AMM1c (co-pilot); Avery Brace, RM1c; Joe Sabala, AMM1c; Walter Dykes, AMM1c, and Louis J. Lyons, PhM1c, took off from St. Petersburg at 4:30 on Monday afternoon in response to a radio appeal from the Canadian steamer S.S. REGINOLITE, 380 miles southeast of Miami, in the waters of San Salvador. The REGINOLITE had requested emergency treatment and hospitalization for a sailor, Edison Bowes suffering from undetermined intestinal trouble. The Miami Air Station had no plane capable of making the flight so it became the lot of the giant Hall boat at St. Petersburg to span the Florida peninsula and continue southward to the scene of distress, a distance exceeding 500 miles; a round trip of 1100 miles. The Hall boat, carrying 850 gallons of gas and equipped to fly 2,000 miles, landed alongside the REGINOLITE shortly before midnight and was in the air again thirty minutes later with Bowes being made comfortable in one of the plane's bunks. The stricken seaman was rushed to a Miami hospital and soon thereafter the big Hall boat was on its way cross-country to St. Petersburg, arriving about noon with its tired and sleep-starved crew.

COAST GUARD FEAT (Editorial in St. Petersburg Times)

Efforts to win official commendation for Lt. A. E. Harned - St. Petersburg Coast Guard aviator who recently successfully completed the longest aerial errand of mercy in the history of the Nation's oldest armed service should not stop short of the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to this heroic young airman. High courage is a by-word in the Coast Guard marine and air forces: hazards are part of the daily task. But there was something above and beyond the call of duty, something especially fine and brave on the part of the young lieutenant and his crew of five in responding to the distress call that arose from the freighter Reginolite which was then midway between San Salvador Island and Crooked Island passage in the West Indies.

Nearly 200 miles in a seaplane overland where motor failure easily might have spelled disaster. On into the darkness of night and storm. Three hours of blind flying in pitch blackness. Locating the freighter, with only a radio beam to guide them. Landing in the angry waves. Transferring a stricken sailor from ship to plane. And then the desperate hazard of taking off from the rough sea. In the darkness, for the return flight to Miami where the patient was hospitalized and his life saved. Five hundred and sixty miles nonstop on the trip down; three hundred and eighty miles in storm and darkness coming back.

The Coast Guard has a saying. "You have to go out, but you don't have to come back." Lieutenant Harned and his men knew the chances were that they might not get back, but they went ahead and did the job just the same. They not only went out, but they came back, too.

The bravery of all of them deserves the highest commendation, but particularly to the young lieutenant on whose broad shoulders the supreme responsibility rested, there should come fitting recognition. The DFC is the symbol with which a grateful nation recognizes the brave deeds "above and beyond the call of duty" of 118 military and naval fliers. Surely, Lieutenant Harned's heroism falls well within the requirements for meritorious achievement necessary to receive this most valued of all flying awards. We would like to see him get it, and we hope the well-deserved award will be promptly forthcoming, for he richly deserves it. ###

Unfortunately, Harned's CO refused to put the aircrew in for a higher award since "that's what you're getting paid for"...