



*The days of bootlegging, speakeasies and bathtub gin on land were called the “Rum War” at sea.*

The U.S. Coast Guard battled rum running—the smuggling of liquor from adjacent countries and islands—for nearly 14 years, at first with limited resources, and later with recommissioned destroyers and fast “picket boats.” But what began as a merry game of cops and robbers was soon played for keeps when organized crime moved in.

In this true story that reads like an old salt’s yarn, Rum War veteran Harold Waters recalls both the serious and lighter aspects of enforcing Prohibition. His personal observations recount a time when an attempt to enforce an exaggerated idea of morality led to corruption and carnage.

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HAROLD WATERS left New Zealand at the age of 16 aboard a ship bound for the United States. A year later in 1922, he enlisted in the Coast Guard by telling people he was 21. He served for 25 years, retiring, after service in the Pacific in World War II, with the rank of Lieutenant.

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