

**UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
USCGC JOSEPH GERCZAK
WPC 1126**

BLAZON



SHIELD: On a shield shaped as a keystone parted per fess dancette Gules and Argent, an aerial bomb palewise, throughout, nose to base counter-changed; all within a diminished bordure of the second.

SUPPORTERS: On either side positioned on a flourish in the style from the arms of Pennsylvania Celeste, detailed Azure, a horse rampant Sable, gorged by a Hawaiian lei Proper.

CREST: From a wreath of the colors Argent and Gules, in front of a representation of signalman insignia, an image of The Liberty Bell Gris, topped by a mullet Or, charged with a smaller mullet Argent.

MOTTO: On a scroll Gules, doubled Azure, the inscription “UNRELENTING COURAGE” in Argent letters.

SYMBOLISM

SHIELD: The shield in the shape of a keystone represents Pennsylvania, the state in which Joseph Gerczak was born. The pointed red and white division of the dancette heraldically illustrates the anti-aircraft gunfire and destruction of two of the seven Japanese dive bombers that attacked his ship, USS LST-66, as it stood in the Borgen Bay Area of New Britain on December 26, 1943. When planes attacked, Signalman Third Class Gerczak heroically fired his drums of ammunition into the enemy aircraft with unrelenting fury. With his ship struck by bomb fragments, each bursting successively closer, he dauntlessly continued delivering a steady stream of fire against the enemy until he was fatally wounded by a violent blast that forced shrapnel into his gun shield.

SUPPORTERS: The two black horses are suggestive of the ones on the Pennsylvania state flag. Each here is gorged with a Hawaiian lei symbolizing the home port of the ship in Honolulu. The horses stand on a flourish also based on the Pennsylvania flag elements with the shape and blue color now depicting waves.

CREST: The wreath adopts the first named metal and color from the shield and blazon. The stylized signal flags are taken from the signalman insignia, drawing a connection to the vessel platform aboard which Joseph Gerczak served and his rated occupation as Signalman Third Class. The Liberty Bell represents Philadelphia, Joseph Gerczak’s birthplace. The attached star at the top recalls the Silver Star that Joseph Gerczak was posthumously awarded for having gallantly given his life for his country.

SEAL: The coat of arms as blazoned in full color on a white round disc within a dark blue designation band, edged with a gold roped border and bearing the name “USCGC JOSEPH GERCZAK” at the top and “WPC 1126” at the base.