

# The Cutter

The Newsletter of the Foundation for Coast Guard History

Newsletter 12 Autumn 2003

% Coast Guard Museum/NW  
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## MONUMENTAL SUCCESS

Our biggest event of 2003 has been the construction of the Monument to a Century of Flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C. As you all know, when Orville and Wilbur Wright took their first flights, their ground crew were surfmen from the Kill Devil Hills Lifesaving Station. The famous picture of the first flight was taken by Surfman John T. Daniels.

Our fund-raising effort was led by VADM Howard B. Thorsen and RADM Robert Johanson. It was their idea to get involved, they put together the program, they created the fliers, they put up the seed money and each invested many hundreds of hours to make it happen. The target was \$60,000 for the Coast Guard pylon in the Monument. At this writing, we are very close to achieving that goal. Later in this newsletter is a list of all the contributors. Most are members of the Ancient Order of Pterodactyls, active duty and retired Coast Guard pilots and aircrew. Many others are concerned and caring Coasties. At least one contributor is a non-typical New Yorker who asked your editor about the Foundation as he wandered the waterfront one day. He sent \$125, as did so many others. It is still not too late. Thank you all. (Pictures and more on page 5)

## TAX DEDUCTION TIME

At this time of year many people consider the status of their itemized tax deductions. All contributions to the Foundation for Coast Guard History are tax deductible. This is a win-win opportunity. You pay less taxes, the Foundation gets funds to work with.



Coast Guard Pylon in Monument to A Century of Flight during construction at Kitty Hawk, N.C.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Although it is not over yet, 2003 has been full of activities and we hope, accomplishments of which you can all be proud. Every member is a full partner in our work. Whatever we do could not be done without each of you and your emotional and financial support.

We contributed to the new Historical Mural being developed for the Academy Library Reading Room sponsored by CGA Class of '62.

We contributed to the dedication of the new Kings Point Station building in honor of a Kings Point Merchant Marine Academy graduate and the only Coast Guardsman to be lost in the events of 9/11/01, LCDR Gilbert Granados, USCGR

For nearly two years we have been amassing articles to be published in September 2004 in a large-format (coffee-

table) book about the Coast Guard. Tom Beard is the editor, an enormous task. Several items of interest:

-Authors include Walter Cronkite, Admiral Paul Yost and Admiral Thomas Collins.

-There are over a dozen photographers contributing, in addition to official CG photographers.

-The book contains 352 pages with over 600 illustrations. It weighs more than seven pounds.

-The book contains twelve chapters covering such topics as CG History, Reserves and Auxiliary, Aids to Navigation including lighthouses, small boat stations, cutters, aviation, port security, intelligence in rum and drug wars and events of 9/11/01

-The cover will contain a large embossed Coast Guard medallion over the racing stripe.

This book will be a striking addition to every library, messdeck, wardroom and home of everyone who has ever had an interest in the Coast Guard. Look for it next September.

Our web site "fcgh.org" continues to be popular thanks to our web master Ken Laesser. We are receiving about 1000 "hits" per day and an average of 10 visits each day of some duration.

Through the good offices of CDR Ralph Eustis and the Battleship Massachusetts Association, we have preserved the oral history of Leland Rose, one of the oldest, if not the oldest living lighthouse keeper. He was reputed to be the last surviving member of the U.S. Lighthouse Service. He passed away in mid-November, but we have preserved his story.

This newsletter could not be long enough to list all the projects we have in mind for 2004. Whatever we accomplish, it will be totally because of your support.

## Newsletter changes

We are planning on major improvements to the newsletter. Starting with the next issue, we hope to include articles of historical importance written by our readers. The details are still being decided, but we do plan to **pay** for each article at the beginning rate of \$50 per published page. There are many budding authors in our membership and an abundance of stories. Share them with us and get paid for it, too. We prefer them to be sent by e-mail, but will accept them in any legible format. We hope we receive too many to publish all at once. If your article does not make the next issue, be patient. Send manuscripts to fredherzberg@isomedia.com or to fred@fcgh.org. Regular mail can go to either of our addresses on the top of the front page. Please write.

## New Books

Several of our members have recently taken hand to keyboard and added to the preservation of our history and our heritage.

Doug Kroll has written an exhaustive biography of *Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf*, Captain-Commandant of the Revenue Cutter Service, the uncle of the Life Saving Service and the father of the United States Coast Guard. This book has been needed for many decades. It was surely worth the wait.

Alex Larzelere has written *The Coast Guard in WWI, An Untold Story*. This is amazingly detailed, relates gripping stories of heroism, chronicles the young Coast Guard involvement internationally and again has been long over due.

Those two authors have preserved our history. Malcolm Smith has preserved some of our heritage. In *I Never Liked Those C-130's Anyway...*, he tells stories about people we all know. Is it historical? Probably not. Is it factual? Partly. Is it entertaining? Without question! Reactions range from chuckles to guffaws.

All are good winter reading and make great gifts.

## **Modern Technologies Help Fight Terrorism and Solve Old Mysteries**

by Captain W. Russell Webster, USCG Ret.)  
Excerpts from Cape Cod Times

Beginning this summer, federal agencies will search the depths of North Atlantic waters off Boston to find three government shipwrecks in an effort to solve historical mysteries about the vessels' final demise. The vessels include the Coast Guard and Revenue cutters Escanaba and Bear that sank approximately 250 miles east of Boston, in 1943 and 1963 respectively, and the Lightship Nantucket that sank off Cape Cod in 1934.

The US Coast Guard, Navy and National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, the same agencies that located JFK Jr.'s airplane in July 1999, and Egypt Air flight 990 in November 1999, will again collaborate to locate these underwater objects. In addition to finding downed airplanes in 1999, the agencies were drawn together most recently after the 9/11 terrorist attacks to survey key ports, like Boston. These agencies are currently involved in a nation-wide project to bottom map the seaward approaches and channels in some ports.

In Boston, the Coast Guard is also using prototype sonar to map areas near important facilities and vessels. Baseline sonar images can later be referred to in order to detect anomalies when future threats point to underwater concerns.

These three federal agencies use these same technologies to solve old underwater mysteries. One such historical project was undertaken in June 2002. This inaugural test of joint US Navy and US Coast Guard underwater explorations led to the successful location and survey of the wreck of the USS Akron (ZRS-4), a Navy airship that sank off New Jersey in 1933 with 73 of 76 aviators perishing. During the survey mission, U.S. Navy nuclear research submarine NR-1

discovered the wreck site, created a detailed sonar picture and gathered data necessary to develop an analysis of naval aviation strategy in the inter-war period from 1919-1939.

So, how do the underwater sleuths determine valuable insights from a sonar image like the one of the aft section of the USS AKRON? Using a technique called "patterning," this picture that covers the area the size of a football field, along with survivor testimony, suggests the orientation or direction of the wreck at the time of the disaster. It also suggests that this section of the airship may have broken off from the main hull and hit the ocean floor violently, perhaps with enough force to have snapped the 785-foot duralumin hull in half. The incredible force of the impact likely explains the incredible loss of life for those who may have been in the aft section as well as opening the door for a hypothesis that suggests the few survivors may have swum from a hull breach near the forward section.

Although additional dives and research are necessary to be more conclusive, this joint service team has tentatively determined the causes of the worst air disaster in military aviation history.

Like the AKRON project, the three government wrecks off the Commonwealth have many questions that may soon be answered. Coast Guard ships, like the 10 cutters involved in ongoing Operation Enduring Freedom operations overseas, have worked with their Navy counterparts since 1799.

During World War II, Coast Guard personnel and ships were involved in virtually every maritime war effort, such as Normandy, D-Day, Guadalcanal, as well as domestic Beach patrols and port security.

The cutter ESCANABA (WPG-77), a 165-foot icebreaker from the Great Lakes, had distinguished itself in several wartime situations, including rescuing 132 people from the SS DORCHESTER. On June 13, 1943 while escorting a convoy to St. John's, Newfoundland,

ESCANABA exploded and sank within three minutes. Only two members of the ship's company survived the explosion while 101 crewmembers were lost at sea.

The cause of the explosion remains a mystery. The most probable explanation is that an enemy torpedo or mine caused the sinking. The Coast Guard is hopeful that the discovery of ESCANABA will provide insights to the exact cause of the sudden sinking.

This March marked the 40th anniversary of the Revenue Cutter and Navy Ship BEAR's sinking 250 miles east of Boston. For nearly fifty years the U.S. Revenue Cutter and Naval vessel BEAR tore through chunks of ice while on patrol in the Arctic. RCS BEAR played a key role during the 1897 Overland Relief expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska, when 300 sailors, who had been stranded on ships trapped by ice, were rescued. The Bear also delivered Siberian reindeer to native Alaskans, and served as a floating territorial courtroom.

The BEAR sank while being towed by a skeleton crew en route to Philadelphia from Halifax. No one actually observed BEAR's sinking because flying boat rescuers could not loiter too long before a lack of fuel became a concern. With side scan sonar technologies, it is hoped that her exact resting site and circumstances at the time of her sinking will be revealed later this year.

Coast Guard records indicate that their lightships were involved in more than 237 collisions at sea, principally because past navigational methods called for other ships' captains to steer on the anchored lightships' continuous radio and sonar navigational signals. Anchored with giant truck sized mushroom anchors, lightships were helpless to the many ships on trans-Atlantic voyages that took radio bearings on the lightship and steered directly towards it. These ships were on tight schedules and sometimes did not slow down, even in reduced visibility.

For example, the lightship Nantucket was sideswiped in January 1934, shearing off the lifeboat, davits, and radio antennas. In April, 1934 the inbound RMS Olympic, the White Star Line's sister ship to Titanic, passed so close, the lightship's crewmembers came out to take photographs of the passing British liner.

Close calls like this caused the U.S. Lighthouse Service to issue a warning in early May 1934: "It is exceedingly dangerous navigation to proceed on a radio beacon directly for a lightship, counting on hearing fog signals in time to change course and pass safely. The vagaries of sound signals are well-known, and such signals may not be heard in time to avoid a collision, serious alike to the approaching vessel and to the lightship; the loss of the latter would dangerously affect all other navigation in the area."

Around 11 a.m. on May 15, the 133-foot, 630-ton lightship was rammed broadside by the 882-foot, 66,000-ton Olympic, on another trip. The lightship went swiftly to the bottom. Four crewmembers went down with the lightship and three others subsequently died of their injuries on board the liner. White Star was found to be solely responsible and paid for a replacement vessel.

In January 1998, a commercial diver, Eric Takakjian, found the lightship after three years of investigation. In July 1998, Takakjian and his crew dove on the wreck and positively identified the lightship by its distinctive circular chock in the bow. This group of divers staged three more diving expeditions through the summer of 2001. Marine lore generally held that the hull was cut in two by the impact of the Olympic. The Coast Guard even commissioned an artist to depict the ramming Takakjian determined otherwise.

The intact hull, according to Takakjian, rests on its port side in roughly 200 feet of water.

The deckhouse and aft mast have collapsed and now lie in a very rough semi-circle of debris around the site. The government hopes to verify Takakjian's findings and put this mystery finally to rest.

While the Coast Guard, Navy and NOAA collaborate to keep America's ports and waterways safer during the war on terrorism, they will also try to help solve long-standing historical mysteries.

## **BLM KEEPS OWNERSHIP OF LIGHTHOUSES**

Jamie Stuve, Executive Director of the Loxahatchee River Historical Society (LRHS manages the Jupiter Inlet lighthouse, Florida) reports that the property under the lighthouse is controlled by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rather than administered by General Services Administration for the USCG (as with St. Augustine.) BLM will **keep the lighthouse property** as the Coast Guard surpluses it.

The BLM will use a **community partnership** of the city, museum and other groups to manage the land. Preserving the natural areas around this lighthouse is of priority. And we know that this is an award winning restoration thanks to LRHS as well as CWO Cocking and his lens expertise. Under the new partnership, the LRHS will still give tours and be in charge of historical issues.

This decision will impact other lighthouses in similar situations. The BLM has taken an extremely positive approach to partnerships inside lighthouse communities. We should all be supportive of that effort as we learn more.

### **AWARD for ST. AUGUSTINE**

The St. Augustine Lighthouse has won a National Preservation Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

## **AND THE HEROES ARE...**

Listed below are the many contributors to the Monument to a Century of Flight (see page 1). If you don't see your name here and would like to have it included, see the previous newsletter at fcgh.org for information on contributing. The response has been most heartening. Pride in our heritage is alive and well. Listed below are all the donors on record as of 15 November 2003.

There have been four major donors who have pledged or contributed **\$10,000** each. They are:

Ancient Order of the Pterodactyl

EADS North America Inc.

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics

Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation

### **\$500 to \$1000 Donors:**

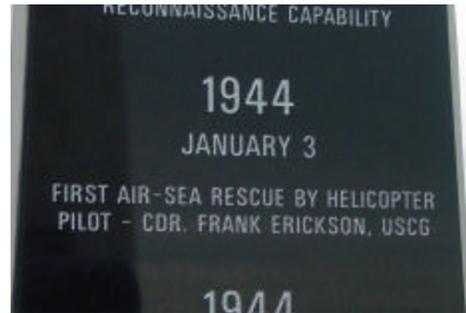
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Donors continued from previous page: CDR William L. Faulkenberry, CAPT John J. Fehrenbacher, CAPT James H. Ferguson, Lou Maher, Fleet Reserve Association, CAPT James E. Foels, LCDR Jim Fogle, Robert A. Fratangelo, CAPT George H. Garbe, LCDR Eric S. Gleason, CDR John A. Gloria, CAPT Stephen E. Goldhammer, CDR Edward M. Goodwin, CAPT Dana A. Goward, LT Jeffrey R. Graham, CAPT Richard J. Green, CDR Ronald J. Greto, CWO Paul S. Grimes, CAPT William S. Griswold, Richard Groepler, CAPT Garran C. Grow, Mr. & Mrs. Louis Gust, CAPT Charles F. Hahn, LCDR Richard A. Hahn, CAPT Arthur Hancock, CAPT Vivian Reese Harned, CAPT Barry A. Harner, LCDR Stanley W. Harris, CAPT James L. Harrison, Margaret N. Harvey, CDR Martin F. Heatherman, CAPT Michael D. Hendrickson, CDR Charles J. Hermann, VADM Richard D. Herr, Richard A. Higgins, CAPT Leslie D. High, CDR Bill Hodges, CDR Theodore H. Hofer, CDR Louis Hopper, Timothy J. Howard, CAPT Bernard A. Hoyland, Rick Hull, CWO4 Glenn L. Ishler, LT Mark Jackson, CDR Duane R. Jeffs, Clark Johnson, LCDR Eric G. Johnson, CDR Richard Kenin, CAPT Thomas C. King, LCDR Don J. Klingsberg, Gerald F. Kolosvary, CAPT Leonard E. Korenek, RADM William P. Kozlovsky, CAPT George E. Krietemeyer, Ed Kyllonen, CAPT Arthur E. Ladley, A. Robert Lafe, CDR Paul L. Lamb, LT LeRoy F. Lander, CDR Thomas E. Langmann, VADM Charles E. Larkin, Michael W. Lary, CAPT Russ Lentner, CAPT Imants J. Leskinovitch, LCDR Paul D. Litts, Joyce Ruddick, Eric Lofgren, CAPT John E. Long, Richard W. Long, John E. Longnecker, Dorothy Lumsden, CAPT Thomas C. Lutton, CAPT James T. Maher, LCDR Thurman T. Maine, LCDR Joseph Manjone, rank J. Manson, Eddie Mayenschein, CAPT Charles M. Mayes, CAPT Michael F. McCormack, RADM John D. McCubbin, John M. McGrath, LCDR Richard G. McLean, William F. Meininger, CDR Robert F. Mercier, CDR James L. Middleton, CDR Lonnie L. Mixon, CAPT Gerald K. Mohlenbrok, CAPT Lawrence R. Montali, LCDR James C. Montgomery, CAPT Charles E. Moorhead, CDR Robert T. Morhard, LTC, USAF Ted A. Morris, John Bear Moseley, Robert W. Mueller, CAPT Herbert H. Mulvany, LCDR Edward Murname, LCDR Billy E. Murphy, CAPT Edward W. Murphy, CDR Richard L. Murphy, Andrew D. Myers, CAPT Michael A. Neussl, CDR John H. Nicholson, Sandra Nystrom, Robert J. O'Leary, CAPT James C. Osborn, CAPT Thomas P. Ostebo, CDR Edward J. Park, CDR Mitchell A. Perry, CAPT William W. Peterson, LCDR Thomas R. Pigage, CAPT Peter A. Poerschke, Larry M. Post, CDR Terrence T. Post, CAPT Ronald M. Potter, James E. Potts, CAPT Robert F. Powers, CDR David L. Priddy, Guion M. Prince, LCDR James C. Quinn, CDR Theodore C. Rapalus, CAPT Charlie Ray, CAPT Donald M. Reed, CWO3 Robert C. Rescola, CAPT George L. Rettie, Thomas W. Rich, CAPT Billy E. Richardson, RADM Chester A. Richmond, CWO2 Donald J. Rifkin, Marilyn K. Rodgers, William A. Ross, CAPT Kenneth M. Roughgarden, Raymond W. Rusch, LCDR Robert P. Rutledge, LT Scott Michael Sanborn, CDR Jack Santucci, Jr., VADM Thomas R. Sargent III, CAPT Benjamin K. Schaeffer, LCDR James E. Scheye, CDR Norman S. Schweizer, CDR Jeffrey Seeley, CAPT Roger Shannon, Kenneth L. Sharlow Sr., LCOL Gerald D. Sickafoose, ADM Owen W. Siler, CAPT David W. Sinclair, RADM Orvan R. Smeder, LCDR Malcolm R. Smith, CAPT Arne Soreng, RADM Bennett S. Sparks, CDR Benjamin J. Stoppe, CAPT Sperry C. Storm, CDR Chip Strangefeld, FSO-FN USCG Aux 05/08 Martha C. Taylor, VADM Donald C. Thompson, Anne E. Tiehen, CAPT Paul W. Tiff Jr, CAPT Albert C. Tingley, CWO4 Richard L. Trevallee, LT Leon N. Velenchenko, CAPT Philip C. Volk, Albert G. Wageli, CAPT Arthur H. Wagner, CAPT Joseph A. Walker, CAPT Stan Walz, CAPT Robert J. Watterson, CAPT Gale H. Weaner, CDR Terry Weeks, CAPT Patrick A. Wendt, William T. White,

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CG Group Humboldt Bay



Above, portion of monument commemorating the first air-sea helicopter rescue by CDR Frank Erickson.

Right, VADM Howie Thorsen and RADM Bob Johanson alongside Coast Guard Pylon. At the bottom between them is the memorial enlarged below, commemorating the first trans-Atlantic flight by CG Aviator #1, CDR Elmer F. Stone, Pilot of Navy NC-4.



## NOBLE RECEIVES AWARD

Dr. Dennis Noble was honored Friday, 14 November in Astoria during the Columbia River Maritime Museum's 41<sup>st</sup>. Annual Meeting and Banquet. Dr. Noble received the coveted "Maritime Fellow" award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to maritime history.

Dr. Noble served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1957-1978 when he retired as a Senior Chief Petty Officer. He earned a B.A. from the University of Oklahoma and a Masters and PHD from Purdue. Dr. Noble is a prolific writer and maritime scholar, producing 11 books, 12 major publications and 15 National articles, most of which are about U.S.C. G. history. Dr. Noble has also appeared on the History Channel as an expert on such subjects as the U.S. Military in 1920's China (Sand Pebbles). The Ice Breakers of the Coast Guard, and the History of the Coast Guard. Dr. Noble recently was presented with the "Distinguished Public Service Medal" by the Coast Guard Commandant.

Dr. Noble is one of only 5 recipients of the Columbia River Maritime Museum's "Highest honor for contributions to maritime history." The designation requires the vetted recommendation of the Museum's professional staff and a unanimous vote by the full board of Trustees.

The Columbia River Maritime Museum is a no-profit educational institution dedicated to "The Collection, Preservation and Interpretation of the maritime history and culture of the Columbia River." The Museum is housed in a modern 45,000 square foot building on a 9 acre campus. Two, 210 foot Medium Endurance Coast Guard Cutters are home ported at the Museum's docks adjacent to the retired Lightship COLUMBIA (WLV-604). The Museum has recently undergone a 6.5 million dollar renovation, and features the nation's most outstanding motor lifeboat exhibit (44300).

## EURE RECEIVES AWARD

Glenn Eure, long time resident of the Outer Banks of North Carolina, received the "Order of the Long Leaf Pine" on 8 November. It is presented by the governor to North Carolina residents with a proven record of community service or dedication.

More than a hundred family members, friends and associates come to honor Eure for his civic dedication, especially to the arts community. It was also an opportunity to announce the formation of an art scholarship bearing Eure's name. Coupled with donations and a matching contribution, the fund added up to more than \$10,000.

A former Rotary Club president and Army Major, Eure has been the catalyst for a multitude of creative ventures, including the idea to build The Monument to a Century of Flight. (see related stories). He created the initial design, brought in two artists to build it, helped raise funds to make it happen.

The award is the highest honor a North Carolina resident can receive from the governor. Past recipients include the Rev. Billy Graham, Maya Angelou, Dale Earnhardt, Charles Kuralt.

"I really feel kind of guilty about this because there are a lot of people around here more deserving" Eure said.

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*That man or woman is successful who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much, who has gained the respect of the intelligent people and the love of children; who has filled their niche and accomplished their task; who leaves the world better than they found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it; who looked for the best in others and gave the best they had.*

**Robert Louis Stevenson**

Several preceding generations of the Stevenson family were the foremost constructors of lighthouses in the British Isles and were responsible for those constructed in the most difficult situations.